



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Wright County Northeast Quadrant Task Force

FROM: Mark Nolan

DATE: June 14, 2006

RE: Wright County Northeast Quadrant Land Use Plan  
Task Force Meeting #4 Summary  
SEH No. A-WRIGH0601.00

The following document summarizes the fourth Task Force meeting for the Wright County Northeast Quadrant Land Use Plan.

Date of Event: Monday June 5, 2006, 9:00am – 11:00am

Location: Wright County Government Center  
County Attorney's Conference Room

### Attendees:

|                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Donald Schmidt (Task Force member) | Joe Jacobs                         |
| Judy Weldele (Task Force member)   | Collen Allen                       |
| Ken Felger (Task Force member)     | Kimberly Holien                    |
| Greg Eckblad (Task Force member)   | Bill Warner                        |
| Jeff O'neill (Task Force member)   | Mo Rininger                        |
| Marc Weigle (Task Force member)    | Don Halonen                        |
| Dan Buckholtz (Task Force member)  | Mary Wetter                        |
| Tom Salkowski (Task Force member)  | Johns Heins                        |
| Gordon Weber (Task Force member)   | Vera Heins                         |
| Shannon Bye (Task Force member)    | Mark Nolan, SEH                    |
| Scott Deckert                      | Dan Jochum, SEH                    |
| Tom Zins                           | Lindberg Ekola, Ekola & Associates |

### Introductions

- Mark Nolan kicked off the meeting with an introduction of the consultants present and asked each meeting attendee to introduce themselves (see above).
- Mr. Nolan discussed the purpose of the meeting, which is to obtain input regarding land use issues. The first part of the meeting consisted of a Mr. Nolan discussing some of the land use goals from the previous comprehensive plan and possible new and revised goals for this project. The second half of the meeting consisted of small group discussions where land use issues would be further discussed.

### Project Update

- Mr. Nolan stated that the consultant team has completed the population projections where three different projections were completed. The first projection was based on the State Demographers population projections, the second projection was based on the historical population growth for Wright County between 1980 and 2000, and the final projection was a projection based on input

received from the municipalities within NE Wright County. As the land use plan evolves these numbers will be looked at as they relate to the land use scenarios that are developed.

- Mr. Nolan discussed the major themes that emerged from the SWOT Analysis Public Meeting and the previous Task Force Meetings. The following key themes were discussed in detail.
  - Rural Lifestyle and Quality of Life
  - Green/Open Space Preservation
  - Access to Quality Jobs
  - Balance Land Use and Annexation Planning with Development
  - Transportation
  - Proximity to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area
- Mr. Nolan discussed in detail the land use goals from the 1988 Plan and how some of the may still be valid for this Plan. More importantly, the draft new/updated goals were discussed in detail. The following new/updated goals were discussed.
  - To make the most efficient and economical use of public funds and investments.
  - To provide a wide range of opportunity for urban and rural development.
  - To protect agricultural land from encroachment by incompatible land uses
  - To protect, preserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment, and require development to take place in a manner which makes wise use of Northeastern Wright County's resources without degradation.
  - To enhance the strength of the Northeastern Wright County economy by supporting local industry and attracting quality jobs, enhanced tax base and new capital to the region.
  - To make improvements to the transportation system that balance travel, desired land uses and environmental factors by facilitating movement to and from regional highway facilities and supporting current and planned land use patterns.
- Several comments regarding the land use goals were discussed and are as follows.
  - Farmers need choice
  - Monticello Township is interested in agricultural preservation
  - Animal agriculture is very difficult today
  - Agriculture does provide green space
  - Many farmers are aging and looking at land as retirement money.
  - Because of the current land use plan and zoning, farmers find it difficult to sell their land for development
  - Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) should be considered
  - "Incompatible use" is a vague term
  - Rockford Township is no longer an Ag township
  - What is rural character? What does it mean?
  - Jobs in Wright County are important and some jobs can be located in Townships.

- Participants were reminded that the next Task Force meeting will be on Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. Mr. Nolan will be in touch regarding the location, which will most likely be at the County Government Center.

### **Land Use Small Group Exercise**

- Mark Nolan introduced and explained the exercise. Participants were asked to break up into three groups of 5 to 6 people. Each table was given maps and a list of questions to assist them with the exercise. Each table had a consultant facilitate the discussion and take notes. The following questions were asked and the responses follow the questions.

**What types of land uses should be encouraged at/near the following locations (note those factors you consider in your answers):**

#### **A. Adjacent to cities in the Northeast Quadrant**

- Urban type uses – commercial, industrial, residential
- Direct urban growth towards the cities
- Annexation understanding is vital
- Land values are important
- Property owners need to have information
- Cities, townships, and county need to work together
- Greenbelt or low density cluster development
- Two-mile radius from City limit needs to consider future annexation
- Need to consider future municipal services if annexation is going to happen in future (ghost platting)

#### **B. Around important natural/environmental features**

- Buffers
- More open space
- Parks
- Other natural areas
- Public Access
- Trails

#### **C. On prime farmland**

- Agriculture
- Cropland
- Feedlots
- 1/40 (one unit per 40 acres) density
- Compatible uses
- 5- to 10-acre lots

#### **D. Near transportation corridors (roads, trails, new, proposed, etc.)**

- Isolated rural residential development
- Clustered development to protect open space
- Limited industrial

- Limited industrial in rural areas should be limited
- Needs access via 9-ton roads
- Away from lakes and environmental areas
- Concentrate commercial use
- Land use/transportation planning integration
- Access management
- Preserve corridor priority
- Trail corridors
- ROW dedication (outlot for trail not easement)

#### **E. Other Locations**

- No comments.

**Please consider adjacencies between land uses. What uses would you consider “compatible” or “incompatible?” How does this affect your thinking regarding how land uses relate to each other? What about commuting patterns, both within and outside of the Northeast Quadrant area?**

- Question to the small group – is the County’s overall philosophy of directing more intense development to the cities (in or around) still valid?  
Acceptable?
- As the townships lose land area, they need to be able to make up the lost tax base somehow.
- Cities have not always held up to their end of the annexation agreements. Gravel pits are a concern. Honeywell building has sat vacant for 2 years.
- Terminology for land use categories is confusing – more clarity is needed
- Limited industrial development as outlined in the County land use plan applies to the western portion of the City of St. Michael. Interim or short term industrial activities can maybe fit but the City is trying to discourage more intense development in this portion of the City until urban services can be provided. This area won’t be served by water and sewer for a long time. Good roads are needed to serve development – 9 ton roads.
- Are we going to protect the important or primary natural resource features?
- The distinctions between land use categories is getting worse. This makes it more confusing.
- What development philosophy does each of the townships have?
- How long will this plan be good for? When will we do this again? Where do we want major development to occur in the townships if we do?
- There are pockets of land inside the City that are not developed and landowners do not want to develop. What will happen to these areas?
- Concerned about the definitions of feedlots and how restrictive the county is versus the state. Why do the County laws have to be more restrictive?
- Protection of natural features, open space and agriculture – some permanence is needed in some areas. Permanent easements are one tool.

- TDR, do these programs work? Afton, Washington County example. How is it working?
- Water quality needs more attention. As areas urbanize, more impacts on stormwater runoff and water quality.
- Mass transit, we are 20 years behind on building the system.
- We need more alternatives to the car.
- Wider highways are only going to bring more traffic, more people.
- Other than growth in cities nothing has changed in NE Wright County.
- Townships are worried if they can survive.
- 1/40 density could encourage only wealthy.
- One acre lots don't work.
- Two acre lots are a waste of land.
- Freedom vs. order.
- There is an ideal about "rural".
- Should the County consider 6 units per 40 acres in a PUD situation?
- Low impact/cluster development is needed.
- Small lots create sewer system issues.
- Urban growth with sewer and water should carry most of growth with low density out from that.
- TDR is a good way to go if it works.
- The more you grow the tougher preservation is.
- Identify what we are trying to preserve.
- What is the most reasonable size for a septic system? County believes it is 1 per 40.
- Unsewered lots should be a one acre maximum.
- Keep out sprawl with 1 per 40 zoning.
- Rural residential should be 1 unit per 10 acres.