

Vision

- ***Bridgewater Township*** is an special place to live and work.
- *Through sustainable agriculture and residential and economic development, we honor its heritage and maintain its rural character and small community values while preserving and enhancing the Township's natural beauty and resources.*
- **Agriculturally-related businesses, that are supported by township residents and embodied in township regulations, are encouraged in Bridgewater Township.**
- *We will practice responsible stewardship so that the Township can continue to provide a superior quality of life for current and future residents.*



Purpose and Intent

GOAL: Establish the necessary regulatory controls and standards to realize the vision and goals.

- The Town will maintain and establish a process to validate and keep the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance current.
- The Town will balance the needs of the community with the needs of property owners.

462.353 AUTHORITY TO PLAN.

Subdivision 1. **General authority.** A municipality may carry on comprehensive municipal planning activities for guiding the future development and improvement of the municipality and may prepare, adopt and amend a comprehensive municipal plan and implement such plan by ordinance and other official actions in accordance with the provisions of sections [462.351](#) to [462.364](#). "Municipality" means any City . . . and any town. (M. S. 462.352, Subd. 2.)

M. S. 462.357 OFFICIAL CONTROLS: ZONING ORDINANCE.

Subdivision 1. **Authority for zoning.** For the purpose of promoting the **public health, safety, morals, and general welfare**, a municipality may by ordinance regulate on the earth's surface, in the air space above the surface, and in subsurface areas, the location, height, width, bulk, type

of foundation, number of stories, size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot which may be occupied, the size of yards and other open spaces, the density and distribution of population, the uses of buildings and structures for trade, industry, residence, recreation, public activities, or other purposes, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, agriculture, forestry, soil conservation, water supply conservation, conservation of shorelands, as defined in sections [103F.201](#) to [103F.221](#), access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems as defined in section [216C.06](#), flood control or other purposes, and may establish standards and procedures regulating such uses.

Town Regulations must be consistent with or may be more restrictive than the county regulations.

M. S. 394.33 COUNTY PREVAILS OVER TOWN UNLESS TOWN MORE RESTRICTIVE.

Subdivision 1. **Not inconsistent.** The governing body of any town including any town with the powers of a statutory city pursuant to law may continue to exercise the authority to plan and zone as provided by law, but after the adoption of official controls for a county or portion thereof by the board of county commissioners no town shall enact or enforce official controls inconsistent with or less restrictive than the standards prescribed in the official controls adopted by the board. Nothing in this section shall limit any town's power to adopt official controls, including shoreland regulations, which are more restrictive than provided in the controls adopted by the county.

Agriculture

GOAL: Support viable and sustainable agriculture.

- The Town recognizes agriculture's valuable role in the local economy and will work to assist in preserving existing agricultural operations and encourage new forms of agricultural operations.
- The town recognizes the benefit to the town of developments/operations that provide a local market for agricultural products grown within the wider community or that provide support for the wider agricultural community.
- The Town will identify and implement zoning, programs and standards to support farm-related businesses.
- The Town will work to develop a transfer of development rights program that allows the Township the ability to retain land for agricultural or natural/open space purposes.
- To promote harmony between agricultural and residential land uses, the town will develop a good-neighbor policy.

Residential

GOAL: Manage the pace and quality of future residential development within the Township.

- Higher-density residential growth should be located in areas adjacent to the cities of Dundas and Northfield *or within designated rural residential zones or clustered development.*
- Residential dwellings should be placed on the parcel in a manner that respects the natural features of the property and allows for future development of the parcel. *The Township has a keen interest in appropriate placement of development on parcels with standards to guide such development.*
- Residential development should be placed on land that is least suitable for agricultural use and consistent with policies on public infrastructure.
- The Township will work with the neighboring cities and the County to avoid residential development in areas considered appropriate for future nonresidential development.

Natural Resources and Open Space

GOAL: Preserve and protect natural resources and open space.

- Preservation of open space should be encouraged in all new development, with a special emphasis on creating an interconnected greenway.
- Permanent preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas should be encouraged or required where possible.
- The Town will encourage a variety of natural recreational areas and facilities that are well-distributed throughout the Town.
- The Town strongly supports preservation and restoration of creeks, streams, soils, aquifers and air quality and will work to develop standards that better protect these resources from contamination, run-off and erosion.
- The Town will encourage opportunities to plant woodlands, prairie restoration, or improve other natural habitat and will seek grant funding, when available, to implement such projects.
- The Town will develop standards that promote reclamation of existing gravel mine sites and for development of new sites.

- **Interconnected bicycle/pedestrian trails with opportunities for camping would support area tourism. Efforts to improve recreation and scenic areas, such as prairie and woodland restoration and areas of safety improvements, should be identified.**

Infrastructure

GOAL: Provide criteria and guidance for future infrastructure development.

- New development should not occur until and unless there is sufficient road capacity and other utilities that are planned or in place to provide safe and efficient systems that are closely coordinated with the Township land use plan and the plans of surrounding areas.
- Rural non-residential development should be located where there is suitable road access and other supportive utilities.
- The Town will encourage modes of transportation, site design and other actions that conserve or promote energy at appropriate scales.
- The Town will work to develop regulations that require new construction or location of developments that bring heavy traffic (in volume, congestion, and/or weight) to be located in ten-ton road corridors and other primary corridors, such as State Highways #3, #246, #19 and planned CSAH 1.
- Development should fund necessary upgrades to the fire and ambulance system.
- The Town will incorporate the Town Road policy as the guiding document for transportation improvements in the Town. To assure consistency and coordination with others, the Town will review the goals of the plan with neighboring cities and governmental agencies.

- **The Town will establish setback standards to allow future corridor upgrades.**

Developing and Maintaining Relationships

GOAL: Develop and maintain productive alliances for Bridgewater Township.

- The Town will continue to stress coordination, communications and close cooperation with neighboring communities, the County and State agencies.
- The Town will honor and work within the existing annexation agreements with Northfield and Dundas and will consider improvements to the agreements as needed.
- The Town will actively engage and inform Bridgewater Township residents about the comprehensive plan.
- The Town will actively support agricultural land use to recognize the rural and farming backbone of the township.

Business

GOAL: Support businesses that are consistent with the rural character of the township.

- The economic cost and benefit to the county, school district, township and adjacent municipalities should be considered in any new development proposal.
- Job growth in small, privately owned businesses is encouraged. Township job growth should be focused on farm operation, agriculture-related businesses, and renewable energy. Craftsman and artisan businesses should be encouraged as a means of creating jobs as well as providing tourism benefits.