

Executive Summary

Avon Township will experience greater pressure in the coming years to allow additional development which will result in the loss of additional farm land.

The township was requested in 2000 to develop a growth map for the township to help guide Stearns County officials in their decisions to approve or reject development requests.

The Board of Supervisors delegated to the Planning Board the task of preparing a preliminary growth map and supporting information to guide them in creating a final growth map to be presented Stearns County.

The result of this process was a Land Use Management Assessment Worksheet for each section of the township along with materials supporting the information contained in the worksheet and a growth map presented to Stearns County.

Why was it done?

The purpose of the review was to develop a benchmark of data to be used by the Planning Board and the Board of Supervisors to analyze requests from residents. Requests expected to be presented included single family dwellings, developers who want to develop multiple housing sites in the area and businesses including agriculture and non agriculture related businesses that want to start or expand in the township.

The information presented will be updated with current data as it becomes available. This process will allow the township representatives to do a better job of evaluating requests that are brought to them for action and decision.

The Stearns County Environmental Services department administers the current county ordinances related to land use and construction within the county. Avon Township adopted the county's Land Use Ordinance Number 209 with a few exceptions in July 2002.

The county requested the township to identify growth areas in the township to help them evaluate requests presented to them.

What's was the process?

In the spring of 2000 The Board of Supervisors asked the Planning Board to develop a preliminary analysis of the most likely growth areas in the township and to identify issues to be considered related to growth and development.

The Planning Board began working on the growth planning project in the fall of 2000 reviewing what information was available and how we could best develop documentation that could be used by the township to make decisions.

The Planning Board was also completing the analysis of the Stearns County Land Use and Zoning Ordinance Number 209 at the same time and recommended its adoption in May of 2002.

From November 2001 to December of 2002 the planning board collected and prepared documents to present the information in a format that would allow the Planning Board the ability to review information by section. Information was collected from the Stearns County Environmental Services department, the County Treasurer's department and the Soil and Water Conservation District.

This information was then presented at four meetings held in January 2003 to allow residents to see the information collected and to allow comments from the public concerning growth and development in the township. The dates and times for the meetings were published in the official township newspaper the Stearns Morrison Enterprise. In addition, an article was published in the Stearns Morrison Enterprise discussing the purpose of the meetings, the dates and times and what information would be available for residents to review.

Subsequent to the meetings the Planning Board reviewed the comments received at the meetings and developed a preliminary growth plan for the township including a map showing where the growth should be focused in the township. Generally, it was determined that growth should be limited to existing areas zoned R1 and R5 with a small amount of growth outside those boundaries. This map was passed on to the Board of Supervisors for their final review.

The Board of Supervisors reviewed the growth map at meetings in March 2003 and at later meetings. County officials from the Environmental Services department provided input and assistance in developing the final draft of the growth map. The final growth map was drafted and the township held a public hearing on September 3rd 2003 at 9 PM. Discussion at the public meeting revolved around where the growth is projected to occur and whether additional growth should occur near the rural townsite of St Anna. The final map included the area around St Anna as an area to be considered for concentrated growth. Another area west of St Anna was changed to moderate growth (R5) from concentrated growth (R1) and an area west of Middle Spunk Lake was changed from concentrated(R1) to moderate(R5) growth.

The revised growth map was approved on a split vote and was passed on to the county for further review and action.

The Following Data was Used to Review and Prepare the Growth Map

1. Hydrology of the Quarternary Water-Table System Map
2. Sensitivity to Ground Water to Pollution Map
3. Soil Survey of Stearns County Minnesota
4. Aerial Photo of the Township
5. Ground Water Sensitivity Map
6. Parcel Boundaries Map
7. Soil Type Maps
8. Water Table Maps
9. Stearns County Zoning Districts Map
10. Stearns County Biological Survey Areas Map
11. Stearns County Tax Records

The following information is included in a Land Use Management Analysis Document for each Section of the Township:

1. Land Use Management Assessment Worksheet.
2. Aerial photo (circa 1998)
3. Ground water Sensitivity Map
4. Parcel Boundaries Map
5. Soil Types Map
6. Topography Map
7. Water Table Map
8. Zoning Districts Map
9. Stearns Biological Survey Map

The Land Use Management Analysis Documents will be used by the Planning Board and Board of Supervisors to guide their decisions regarding development and construction requests in the Township. The documents will also be available to the public to guide them in any request for building permits, rezoning or development plats.