

## **CHAPTER VIII COMMUNITY FACILITY NEEDS**

As the population of both Ada Township and the overall Metropolitan area grows in the future, the capacities and adequacy of existing community facilities are certain to be tested. To ensure that the public health, safety, convenience and quality of life of Township residents is not compromised by inadequate public facilities, it is important that the Township anticipate future community facility improvement needs, and put in place a program for developing and financing needed facilities. The Township has already conducted planning and has programmed specific facility improvements in certain areas. For example, the Township prepares and updates a Community Parks, Recreation and Open Space Protection Plan that identifies facility and financing needs for that specific program area. The Water System Reliability Study that is prepared every 5 years and submitted to the State of Michigan includes programming of needed utility system improvements. These related documents are drawn upon for the information contained in the following sections.

### **Road Improvement Needs**

In general, the Township's road network currently does not suffer from serious capacity, congestion or safety problems. However, as growth continues in Ada Township and in communities further east and north, current minor problems will grow more severe. Following is a description of planned and/or needed road system expansions, extensions and other improvements:

- Replacement of M-21 Bridge over the Grand River:

Total replacement of the existing M-21 bridge is planned by the Michigan DOT to be completed in 2009. Construction is expected to last for one complete construction season, starting in early spring and ending in late autumn. One lane of travel in each direction will be maintained during construction. Ada Township has communicated to the Michigan Department of Transportation its desire that the replacement bridge include a pedestrian/bicycle lane, separated from the vehicular travel lanes. The Township has also requested that consideration be given to providing some aesthetic enhancements to the design of the bridge, to ensure that it complements and reinforces the role of the bridge as a gateway to the Ada Village area.

- Implementation of street network expansion and "traffic calming" measures recommended for streets in the Ada Village area, as set forth in the Ada Village Design Charrette Final Report.

The Ada Village Design Charrette process that was conducted in 2006 resulted in identifying a number of traffic calming measures for streets in the Village. These measures include the following types of changes to the road network:

1. extension of two new streets from the Village to Fulton St. (M-21), one from Ada Drive and one from Headley St.
2. installation of two roundabouts in the Village, one in front of the Thornapple Village Center, at the intersection of Ada Drive and a new street extension to M-21, and one at the intersection of Headley St. and Bronson St.
3. narrowing of travel lanes on Thornapple River Dr. and Ada Drive, along with introduction of landscaped medians, to slow traffic.

4. conversion of the 5-lane portion of M-21 to a 4-lane boulevard, with a landscaped median.
- Intersection signalization at selected locations.

There is a growing need for traffic signals at one or more locations on Fulton St. (M-21 in the western portion of the Township, in order to provide gaps in the flow of traffic during peak traffic hours. Potential locations for conducting signal studies to determine whether signal warrants are met include the Fulton St./Kulross Ave. intersection and the Fulton St./Carl Drive intersection.

Safety improvements involving grade changes to improve sight distance are needed at the intersection of Egypt Valley Ave. and Knapp St. Completion of this project is a priority of the Kent County Road Commission, and is planned for completion in 2008. Although not included in the scope of the planned project, this intersection should also be considered for traffic signals in the future.

Two road extension projects that were identified as priorities in the 1995 Master Plan have been eliminated from the Plan in the 2007 update – the planned extension of Kulross Ave. south to connect to Ada Dr., and construction of a new bridge over the Grand River, to extend Snow Ave. to M-21.

The first of these projects, extension of Kulross Ave. to Ada Dr., is eliminated from the Plan due to development having occurred along the route that precludes the extension. In addition, there are significant wetlands along the extension route that would be negatively impacted, and which would add to the cost of the project.

The second road extension project removed from the Plan is the recommendation for an extension of Snow Ave. across the Grand River to Fulton St., at the eastern edge of the Township. As an alternative, it is recommended that a broader study of regional traffic mobility needs be conducted in the future, to consider whether an additional bridge is needed, and if so, to include study of a broader range of possible locations for an additional Grand River bridge.

### **Water and Sewer Utility System Needs**

The intent of this Plan is to direct future urban-character growth to areas of the Township which are already within the water and sewer service contract areas, and in proximity to the existing water distribution and sewage collection systems. The Plan also identifies the need for both short-term and potential long-term expansion of the service area to meet existing and long-term service needs.

Within the existing service areas, water and sewer main extensions have been made as needed to accommodate new growth, and serve existing developed areas where the need for public service has been recognized. These extensions have been financed in a variety of ways, including by private developer's for new subdivisions, by State grant funds to stimulate economic development, and through special assessment districts to serve existing developed areas.

In 2006, a Water System Reliability Study, as required by Part 12 of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, was prepared by the Moore & Bruggink, the Township's engineering consultant. The Study included inventory of the current water distribution system, current usage, projections of future service area population and water usage, and evaluation of capability to meet future needs. The Study projects the service area population to grow from 5,658 in 2005 to about 9,340 by the

year 2020. Average daily water use is projected to increase to approximately 2.14 million gallons per day, a 59% increase above current usage of 1.35 mgd.

The study identifies several water main interconnection needs, to provide more looped mains and fewer dead-end mains in the water distribution system, thereby increasing redundancy in the system and increasing service reliability.

With regard to the public sanitary sewer system, this Plan recommends that the Township consider extension of public sewer service across the Grand River at Fulton St., to provide service to the existing concentration of commercial uses and commercially-zoned land in the vicinity of the Pettis Ave. /Fulton St. intersection. Land uses in this area include two restaurant/liquor-licensed premises, a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> restaurant/bar, a day care center and other commercial buildings. There are at least two properties which do not have proper on-site waste disposal drain fields. They rely on use of sanitary waste holding tanks which require frequent pumping. The proximity of on-site waste disposal systems to the Grand River in this area creates an enhanced risk of discharge of pollutants to the river.

It is recommended that the Township conduct an engineering and feasibility study, to determine the costs of extending sewer service, and an analysis of whether it would be economically feasible and acceptable to finance the system expansion through a special assessment district. Expansion of the system east of the river would also require approval of the City of Grand Rapids, pursuant to the terms of the Service Agreement between the City and the Township.

The Water and Sewer System Master Plan maps contained in the Appendix depict the general potential layout of existing and future water and sewer mains if the entirety of the defined service area for these utilities was ever needed to be served. It should be noted that, aside from the water main looping and interconnection needs identified in the Water System Reliability Study referenced above, and the suggested feasibility study to extend sewer service to the immediate vicinity of the M-21/Pettis Ave. area, this Plan does not recommend or anticipate the extension of utility services to currently unserved areas that are not planned for a development intensity that would warrant public utility services, unless there are significant public health issues from widespread septic system failures or well contamination.

### **Park and Recreation Facility Needs**

Park and recreation facility needs of the Township are identified in the Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, adopted by the Township Board in February, 2007. The Plan identifies the following major park and recreation improvement needs in the Township:

- Continued development of Roselle Park, as called for in the Roselle Park Master Plan.
- Ada Township Park improvements, to include a new sand volleyball court and replacement playground structures.
- Establish water trail map and signage on the Grand River
- Portable plastic ice sheet for Leonard Field Park
- Interpretive signs, Grand River Nature Trail/Preserve and Roselle Park
- Develop a neighborhood park in the Ada Drive corridor, between the Village and Spaulding Avenue.
- Re-develop Leonard Park with band shell/gazebo and ice rink/labyrinth surface.
- Acquire land to connect Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve to Leonard Field Park.
- Acquire Kent County Road Commission garage site for use as a community center / senior center.
- Develop a neighborhood park in the northern portion of the Township.

- Acquire other high priority open space properties, with funding from the Parks and Land Preservation millage.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan also identifies and prioritizes the types of land that the Township considers important for permanent preservation in a natural and/or undeveloped condition, and identifies implementing tools available for accomplishing permanent protection of open space lands.

### **Other Community Facility Needs**

#### **Fire Protection:**

As the population of the Township has grown, Ada Township has made investments in upgrading its fire protection facilities. In 1990 the Fire Department added its first full time employee who divided this time between the fire department and zoning enforcement. In 1995 the Department added a full time Fire Chief and in 1997 added a second full time employee who divides his time between the fire department and building and grounds duties. The Department continues to heavily rely on paid on call fire fighters.

The Department operates out of two stations; Station 1 at Fulton and Bronson is staffed Monday through Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm, and Station 2 on Knapp west of Honey Creek. The geographic location of the two stations provides effective coverage and prompt response times to the entire Township.

The Fire Department operates three pumpers, one tanker, two brush fire pickup trucks, and two rescue squads.

A study conducted for the Township by the Michigan Fire Chiefs Association recommended that the fire department have one fire fighter on shift 24 hours a day 7 days a week, in addition to the current staffing level during the day.

#### **Wireless Telecommunications Infrastructure:**

Based on the consultant-prepared analysis of existing and potential wireless antenna and tower sites that was completed in 2005, there is a need for additional wireless telecommunications signal coverage in two areas of the Township - in the Ada Village area, and in the vicinity of the Knapp St./Pettis Ave. intersection. Through either co-location on existing structures in these two areas, or through construction of new towers, the needs within the Township for "hub" wireless sites would be met, according to the 2005 Study Report. The study identified the jointly managed Ada Township/Forest Hills Public Schools elevated water tower located east on the Forest Hills Eastern school campus or the footfall field lighting poles on the campus as possible co-location opportunities.