

# GREEN SPACE / NATURAL FEATURES CRITERIA

## Introduction to Green Space Acquisition Criteria

These criteria are intended to provide the Rochester Hills City Council and our citizens with a fair, rational and objective basis for the properties recommended for acquisition by the Green Space Advisory Board (GSAB). To this end we utilized several documents and key studies that reflect the wishes of our citizens and the judgment of experts:

1. The millage approved by voters in September 2005, which proposes that Rochester Hills “permanently preserve natural green spaces, wildlife habitats and scenic views; protect woodlands, wetlands, rivers and streams; and expand the Clinton River Greenway and other trail corridors...”
2. Planning documents prepared by local citizens, city staff, and natural resource experts, foremost among them the City of Rochester Hills Natural Features Inventory; the Greenways Opportunity Plan; and the City of Rochester Hills Master Land Use Plan. To the extent possible, definitions and values established in these “core” documents are incorporated in the criteria, i.e. natural area designations from the Natural Features Inventory are used to “score” wildlife habitat. Features such as woodlands, wetlands, and floodplains are also easily identified and quantified by reference to the City’s GIS maps.
3. Criteria prepared by other Michigan communities, including Washtenaw County and Oakland Township. We should note that we also studied the work done by communities as diverse as Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Wethersfield, Connecticut, before preparing our own list.

Because the task of selecting land is complex and potentially contentious, we also incorporated several “common sense” criteria into our list to ensure that our recommendations would hold up under close scrutiny:

1. They must be simple enough to facilitate the review of large numbers of property with different features without creating an administrative nightmare, but robust enough that experts and non-experts alike would agree on the decisions they yield.
2. They must be flexible enough to deal with unusual situations, such as the availability of outstanding properties with unusual features not anticipated in our criteria – hence the addition of the “other” category.
3. To be fiscally responsible, they must encourage gifts of property or the sale of property at preferential prices by civic-minded citizens. In addition, our criteria were chosen to be fully consistent with major public and private grant providers so that we could take advantage of matching grant opportunities.

## SUMMARY OF CATEGORIES

- A. WATER RESOURCES
- B. HABITAT PROTECTION
- C. RECREATIONAL / HISTORICAL VALUE
- D. OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER
- E. NEGATIVE FACTORS

## SCREENING / REVIEW CRITERIA

### A. WATER RESOURCES

1. Rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes. Does the property have frontage on or contain a perennial stream or lake?  
Yes = 5 points  
No = 0 points
  
2. Wetlands. Does the property contain or border wetlands identified by City of Rochester Hills Natural Features Inventory (NFI)?
  - a. Measure the percentage of wetlands within the property.
    - ~~75%~~ - 100% = 5 points
    - 50% - ~~74%~~ = 3 points
    - ~~25%~~ - 49% = ~~2~~ points
    - 20 0% - ~~20~~ = 1 points
  
  - b. Measure the total acreage of wetlands within the property.
    - >50 acres = 5 points
    - 40 - 50 acres = 4 points
    - 30 - 39 acres = 3 points
    - 20 - 29 acres = 2 points
    - 10 - 19 acres = 1 point
    - <10 acres = 0 points
  
3. Floodplain. Does the property ~~directly border~~ or contain ~~100-year~~ floodplain designation?  
Yes = 5 points 100  
No = ~~5~~ points 500
  
4. Steep Slopes. Does the property contain steep slopes?
  - >20% Maximum slope = 5 points
  - 10%-20% Maximum slope = 3 points
  - 5%-9% Maximum slope = 1 point
  - <5% Maximum slope = 0 points

**B. HABITAT PROTECTION**

1. **Wildlife Habitat.** Does the property contain Priority 1, 2, or 3 natural areas as identified in the city's Natural Features Inventory?  
Priority 1 = 5 points  
Priority 2 = 3 points  
Priority 3 = 1 point  
Not included = 0 points
  
2. **Woodlands.** Does the property contain woodlands identified by the city's Natural Features Inventory?
  - a. Measure the percentage of woodlands within the property.  
75% - 100% = 5 points  
50% - 74% = 3 points  
25% - 49% = 2 points  
0% - 24% = 0 points
  
  - b. Measure the total acreage of woodlands within the property.  
{ >50 acres = 5 points  
40 - 50 acres = 4 points  
30 - 39 acres = 3 points  
20 - 29 acres = 2 points  
10 - 19 acres = 1 point  
<10 acres = 0 points

*Handwritten scribble*

**C. RECREATIONAL / HISTORICAL VALUE**

1. **Clinton River Greenway Corridor.** Does the property have frontage on or contain part of the Clinton River?  
✓ Yes = 5 points  
No = 0 points
  
2. **Other ~~Trail~~ Stream Corridors.** Does the property have frontage on or contain part of the ~~Paint Creek Trail~~, Sargent Creek, Stony Creek, Paint Creek, or other stream corridor?  
✓ Yes = 4 points  
No = 0 points  
*Red Run, Hallway*
  
3. **Adjacency / Connectivity.** Is the property adjacent to or potentially linked to "Hubs or Sites" as identified in the Oakland County Green Infrastructure Network?  
3 trails 5/0  
Yes = 5 points  
No = 0 points
  
4. **Scenic Views.** Does the property contain scenic views or provide access to a scenic view?  
Property contains panoramic or unusual scenic views = 5 points  
Property preserves access to panoramic or unusual scenic views = 3 points  
No unusual scenic views = 0 points

5. **Passive Recreational Value.** Is the property accessible for passive recreation (i.e., hiking, biking, fishing, etc) either from a publicly owned road, safety path, or trail?

Yes = 5 points

No = 0 points

6. **Historical / Cultural Value.** Does the property include the location or remains of a former structure or activity of historic significance in the community, such as an archeological site, native American village or trail, burial ground, or ceremonial ground?

Yes = 5 points

No = 0 points

7. **Community Planning.** Is the property located in a voting district that is underserved by existing parklands or public open space?

District with: <50 acres = 5 points

50 - 100 acres = 4 points

101 - 150 acres = 3 points

151 - 200 acres = 2 points

201 - 250 acres = 1 point

>250 acres = 0 points

*Reserve*

8. **Size of Property.** Total size of property in acres.

>50 acres = 5 points

40 - 50 acres = 4 points

30 - 39 acres = 3 points

20 - 29 acres = 2 points

10 - 19 acres = 1 point

<10 acres = 0 points

*Reserve*

**D. OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

1. **Any Other Unique Factors.** Does the property contain threatened or rare native plants or animals?

Yes = 5 points

No = 0 points

*To tree growth of other assets rare*

2. **Value Bargain Sale.**

a. Is the property offered at below "market value," (i.e., less than 2 X State Equalized Value).

Yes = 5 points

No = 0 points

b. Is any portion of the value offered as a donation or match for a grant?

Yes = 5 points

No = 0 points

3. **Development Risk.** Is property in imminent danger of being developed or altered?

Yes = 5 points

No = 0 points

*Adverse*

E. **NEGATIVE FACTORS**

1. **Environmental Hazards.**

a. Is the property or any adjoining property currently being used or has been used in the past for the following purposes: gas station, motor vehicle service or repair facility, commercial printing facility, dry cleaners, photo developing lab, junkyard, landfill, waste treatment, storage, processing, or recycling, or disposal facility?

Yes = (-5) points

*On Know* No = 0 points

b. Are any of the following currently being stored, discarded, or used or have been used in the past on the property or any adjoining property: automotive or industrial batteries, pesticides or other chemicals, paints, industrial waste, or other chemicals in drums or other containers or storage tank?

Yes = (-5) points

*On Know* No = 0 points

2. **Higher than "Market Value" Cost.** Is the property offered at a cost greater than 2 X the SEV established by the City of Rochester Hills assessor?

Yes = (-5) points

No = 0 points

3. **Any Unique Detractors.** Are there other unique factors, which were not covered in these criteria, that would detract from the property or cause it to be a detriment to our community?

Yes = (-5) points

No = 0 points

**GREENSPACE / NATURAL FEATURES CRITERIA SCORING SHEET**

**POINT RANGE: +5 points to -5 points**

- 5 = Lots of it
- 3 = Some of it
- 0 = None of it
- 5 = Negative Factors

Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Location: Section # \_\_\_\_\_ Sidwell # \_\_\_\_\_

**POINTS**

**A. WATER RESOURCES**

- 1. *Rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes:* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. *Wetlands*
  - a. Percentage points \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Acreage points \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. *Floodplain* \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. *Steep Slopes* \_\_\_\_\_

**B. HABITAT PROTECTION**

- 1. *Wildlife Habitat* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. *Woodlands*
  - a. Percentage Points \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Acreage Points \_\_\_\_\_

**C. RECREATIONAL/ HISTORICAL VALUE**

- 1. *Clinton River Greenway* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. *Other Trail / Stream Corridor* \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. *Adjacency / Connectivity* \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. *Scenic Views* \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. *Passive Recreational Value* \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. *Historic / Cultural Value* \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. *Community Planning* \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. *Size of Property* \_\_\_\_\_

**D. OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

- 1. *Any Other Unique Factors* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. *Bargain Sale*
  - a. Below Market Value \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Donation or Match \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. *Development Risk* \_\_\_\_\_

**E. NEGATIVE FACTORS**

- 1. *Environmental Hazards*
  - a. Current or prior use hazards (- \_\_\_\_\_)
  - b. Current or prior stored hazards (- \_\_\_\_\_)
- 2. *Higher than "Market Value" Cost* (- \_\_\_\_\_)
- 3. *Any Unique Detractors* (- \_\_\_\_\_)

**TOTAL POINTS**