



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER:

- ❖ Discussion of today's conditions and tomorrow's projections
- ❖ Discussion of challenges and opportunities
- ❖ Discussion of the environmental quality goals, objectives and policies

INTRODUCTION

Through regulations, programs and incentives, the city encourages the preservation, restoration and improvement of the natural environment in a mixed setting of urban and agricultural development. As Colwich has matured, open spaces and environmental sustainability has assumed a higher priority in public policy. A community that embraces sustainability must continually improve the relationship between the developed and natural environment.

Continuing growth and development has the potential to negatively affect the city's environmental resources, particularly natural open spaces, water quality and tree cover. Protecting environmental resources helps maintain the community's livability standards.

The development of strategies to help mitigate the effects of development, residential and industrial, on the environment are first and foremost when planning for the future of Colwich.



TODAY'S CONDITIONS & TOMORROW'S PROJECTIONS

TODAY'S CONDITIONS

Colwich's attractiveness as a place to "live, work and play" depends on preserving and enhancing the natural assets of the community while simultaneously nurturing economic growth and social vibrancy. The natural fallout of development is the loss of tree canopy and grassy surfaces by the increase of impervious surfaces and traffic congestion.



TOMORROW'S CONDITIONS

There is growing awareness of the contributing factors to climate change and an increasing willingness to lower greenhouse gas emissions and better protect the natural systems that provide valuable ecological services.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Water Resources

Colwich has both surface and groundwater resources. There are streams, creeks, aquifers, and a 16-acre "lake" integrated into the natural systems that form the basis of the local water cycle. The streams convey stormwater flows, the lake provides fishing, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities to enhance the community's aesthetic appeal.



Stormwater

As in any urban area, ensuring surface water quality will be a continuing challenge as further development occurs. Preventing pollution at its source is a more effective method to protect surface water quality than treatment after contamination has occurred. An approach to controlling water pollution and providing flow control is through proper review of all developments assuring that hard surface retainage and storage of water runoff is designed for the lowest impact on the environment.

Each individual, business, and government entity is a potential contributor to water quality improvements by

reducing or eliminating soil erosion; limiting the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers.

Critical Areas

Colwich's natural environment is composed of a variety of land-forms, soils, water courses and vegetation. Construction and development activities alter the natural environment. Some areas of Colwich have topographical, geological, hydrological and vegetation characteristics that are compatible with development of varying intensities while other areas are incompatible. The city regulates land use and development activities to protect public health, safety and welfare as well as critical areas – such as wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, floodplains and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas that are especially susceptible to the negative impacts of development.



Flood Areas

Flooding is caused by excess surface water runoff and is exacerbated when eroded soil from cleared land reduces the waterway's natural capacity to carry water. Construction and development activity within the floodplain reduces the floodway capacity causing significant public safety problems, extensive property damage and habitat destruction.

Floodplains exist on the western borders of Colwich along the Cowskin Creek. Under the National Flood Insurance Program some floodplain development is allowed if eligibility requirements are met. The city regulates land use and land alteration activities to minimize the potential for damage from flooding.

Tree Canopy

The city's urban tree canopy provides habitat, stormwater management services, oxygen, carbon capture, and act as a buffer for noise and visual pollution. Beyond the trees themselves, vegetation and soils in natural areas reduce the velocity, temperature and amount of water flow during storms. Development projects that result in tree



loss rob the community of all of these critical ecosystem services.



Waste and Materials Management

While recycling and composting have increased dramatically over the past several decades, almost two-thirds of all material discarded nationally still goes to waste in landfills or incinerators. Colwich citizens have participated in some type of recycling, composting and waste reduction program for over a decade. The city provides residents living on the outskirts with a recycling container to assist those residents who do not have recycling service offered through a private contractor.

GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL

Maintain a safe, healthful and pleasant living environment in all areas of the present and future community.

OBJECTIVES

- OBJ-1. Maintain reasonable subdivision and development standards to assure adequacy of design and physical facilities.
- OBJ-2. Provide potable water, sanitary sewer, electrical power, gas, cable, internet and telephone service to all existing and future residential, commercial and industrial development.
- OBJ-3. Develop storm drains and protection where needed to prevent flood damage, unsanitary conditions, and hazards to travel.
- OBJ-4. Establish an environmental review procedure for proposed new development to assure maximum retention of desirable features and thorough assessment of the impact upon the natural and man-made environments.
- OBJ-5. Encourage public participation in all aspects of community development planning, particularly those processes and actions involving



environmental evaluation of development alternatives.

OBJ-6. Maintain effective subdivision and development standards to assure adequacy of design and physical facilities, particularly potable water supply and wastewater disposal.

OBJ-7. Maintain a solid waste disposal policy and closely monitor disposal practices for compliance with the policy.

OBJ-8. Encourage waste stream reduction through promotion of recycling.

OBJ-9. Protect and preserve floodplains and other sensitive natural environments.



POLICIES

EQ-1. Expand water rights, develop and implement water conservation programs.

EQ-2. Expand sewer capacity and improvements as needed.

EQ-3. Explore additional market for recyclable materials and promote composting

EQ-4. Provide adequate stormwater drainage for current and future city growth