

Chapter 7: Natural and Scenic Features

Goal: Preservation of the following natural features or amenities in Dundas.

- The Cannon River and its floodplain.
- Bluffs, steep slopes, and Big Woods remnants.
- Agricultural land on the periphery of town until it is ready for urban densities and can be annexed into the City.
- Open space and park lands.

Background

The most treasured natural features of Dundas are the Cannon River, its tributary creeks and streams, the bluffs and surrounding agricultural areas.²

The Cannon River valley consists of the river, floodplain, lowlands, river banks, and islands. The river bisects Dundas. There is only one river crossing available for automobiles. Grain milling once was a dominant presence on the river. However, only a crumbling mill and rusty turbines remain. The demise of the milling industry has allowed the river to revert to its natural character. It is now heavily wooded and only occasional park improvements encroach upon the river.

The Dundas portion of the river is not commercialized as it is in other locations. The residents prefer to keep it that way.³

Other important natural features in Dundas are the Big Woods remnants and steep slopes in the southeast corner of the City.

There are parks and ball fields that contain open spaces in the City. Policies for these spaces are in the parks and open space section of the plan.

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to preserve the environment and scenic beauty of the area.

² Dundas Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, June 17, 2002.

³ Dundas Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, July 15, 2002.

Insert Environmental Features map

Objectives

Specific objectives and policies related to the environment are stated below.

The Cannon River and its Tributary Creeks and Streams

Objective: Enhancement of the river, creeks and streams.

Policies:

NS 1 Dundas supports environmentally sensitive trail development along the river, creeks and streams.

NS 2 The City supports vegetative buffers along the river, creeks, streams, and wetlands to reduce erosion and maintain water quality and temperature especially large buffer zones around stream waters that support trout populations as well as reduced density along such streams.

NS 3 The City supports the development of a canoe landing that provides controlled access to the river.

Objective: Avoiding commercialization of the river.

Policies:

NS 4 The City supports ordinances and controls on the use of the river so that it does not become a party Mecca. This includes regulations on tubing, types of boats, and beer coolers allowed on the river.

NS 5 The City supports a natural vegetation buffer along the river so incompatible land uses are obscured from view while on the river.

NS 6 The City supports modest efforts to remove fallen trees and other debris from the river. (A route that is too free of "natural impediments" can lead to over-commercialization of the river.) However, in the case of ice dams caused by overhanging trees, the City will support the clearing of fallen trees to prevent flooding.

Objective: Avoiding incompatible land uses along the river.

Policies:

NS 7 The City supports uses adjacent to the river, creeks and streams that do not detract from their natural beauty.

NS 8 The City generally supports public ownership of the land adjacent to the Cannon River.

NS 9 Civic uses and trails near the river in the downtown area are acceptable.

Objective: Preservation of the water quality and natural landscape along the river valley.

Policies:

NS 10 The City supports the use of phosphate-free fertilizers on land inside and outside the City limits in accordance with Minnesota's Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law.

NS 11 The City supports education efforts regarding the use of phosphorous-free fertilizers and pesticides on urban and rural properties.

NS-12 The City encourages agricultural best-management practices to discourage pollution from field runoff and strongly encourages buffer strips and ponding.

NS 13 The City supports adoption of an ordinance that prohibits grass clippings or any other vegetative debris from being deposited in the street.

NS 14 The City supports and will encourage greater participation by households in the county sponsored household hazardous waste collection programs.

NS 15 The City encourages the strong county enforcement of septic tank regulations and individual sewage treatment systems.

NS 16 The City discourages developments of greater density than permitted in the Rice County "Urban Reserve District," outside the City, when appropriate services and systems are not in place.

NS 17 The City will not permit developments in the City when municipal water and sewer services are unavailable.

Objective: Preservation of the natural function of the flood plains to allow the expansion of the river during flood events.

Policies:

NS 18 The City will adopt and periodically update its ordinances to regulate development within the floodways and flood fringe districts so that floodwaters can flow freely and buildings are protected from 100-year floods.

Insert Floodway and Flood Fringe map

Bluffs and Slopes

Objective: Protection of the bluffs in the southeast section of the City and the views of the bluffs from a distance.

Policies:

NS 19 The City will evaluate and revise existing regulations and performance standards to ensure the protection of the bluff and wooded areas in the bluffs and discourage development in these areas. .

NS 20 The City will enforce vegetation management standards for clear-cutting and intensive vegetation clearing in the bluff impact zone.

NS 21 The City will work with agencies and protection groups to assess and preserve bluffs and thereby prevent any gradual degradation of the bluffs.

NS 22 The City supports maximum height standards so that developments on the top of the bluffs are not intrusive and blend into the surroundings.

NS 23 The City will require erosion control and sedimentation plans for development near bluff areas.

Wetlands

Objective: Preservation of wetland areas in the river valleys and other parts of the community.

Policies:

NS 24 The City supports the preservation of wetlands through vegetative buffers to protect water quality, wildlife and fish habitat and to provide for water storage and groundwater recharge.

Agricultural Land

Objective: Preservation of agricultural land in western Dundas and surrounding Bridgewater Township until it is ready for urban densities.

Policies:

NS 25 The City is opposed to the premature conversion of agricultural land to development.

NS 26 The City supports gradual, planned annexation of agricultural areas that minimizes leap-frog development that bypasses undeveloped property. (Relatively small undeveloped parcels may be located between the existing City limits and new subdivisions.)

Implementation Directions/Actions

Dundas will need to **communicate with other units of government** to implement parts of this plan. They will need to work with the DNR and Mill Towns Trail Board to implement the regional trail system. Involvement with Bridgewater and Rice County is necessary to assure that premature development on lots of less than 40 acres and leap-frog development does not occur until properties are ready to be annexed by the City. The City will also want to inform Rice County that it supports efforts to halt septic tank effluent from reaching the Cannon River.

Dundas or the DNR will need to **purchase property** along the river's edge to control land uses and implement the canoe landing and other kinds of improvements it wants to see along the river.

Dundas will need to **clear the islands** and develop useable park space on them. This project should be included in a capital improvement program.

Dundas will need to work with the DNR and **amend its local zoning ordinances** to control use of the river. The City will also have to enforce its flood plain zoning and shoreland provisions. A bluff protection ordinance and forest protection ordinance will need to be included in the zoning code revision. Finally, the City will need to adopt ordinances to prohibit phosphorous fertilizers and grass clippings from entering the storm drain system.

Insert Bluffs and Steep Slopes map

Insert Wetlands Map