

Kent COUNTY

November 2001

Detail

Administrator's Office

Urban Sprawl Subcommittee

The Urban Sprawl Subcommittee completed and presented its findings and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners after fifteen months of study. Board Chair Steve Heacock appointed the Subcommittee in early January 2001. Members included Tom Postmus, who chaired the Subcommittee, Jack Horton, Harold Mast, Paul McGuire and Rick Smoke. Dave Guikema and Al Vanderberg served as staff for the Subcommittee. The mission developed by the Subcommittee was "To learn how County government can impact urban sprawl and to recommend a position regarding urban sprawl to the County Board of Commissioners."

The Subcommittee defined sprawl as "The rapid urbanization of rural areas and green spaces." The Subcommittee heard testimony from individuals representing more than 20 organizations. Many intriguing facts were learned, such as:

- ◆The Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area was ranked 6th nationally in terms of urbanization-sprawl for metropolitan areas with a 1 million plus population by the USA Today Sprawl Index.
- ◆Kent County farmland is being developed at a rate faster than any other County in Michigan.
- ◆The urbanized area in Kent County has increased by 78% over the past 20 years but population has increased by 18% over the same timeframe.
- ◆Typical negative results of sprawl include racial and income segregation, loss of green space, stormwater and septage problems, traffic congestion, loss of economic viability of agriculture and related business and in many cases, urban areas are left without the necessary population to support municipal infrastructure and services.

The Subcommittee's final report includes five recommendations to the Board of Commissioners:

- 1) The County should work closely with the Grand Valley Metro Council on its Blueprint II initiative.
- 2) The County should establish a Green Space Preservation Program by creating Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR), encouraging local units to zone residential property denser around regional County parks, and establishment of a Transfer of Development Right (PDR) Program if State legislation is adopted allowing this.
- 3) The County should engage in educating residents about local sprawl issues which have an impact on the community in partner with the Kent/MSU Cooperative Extension office via the Land Use Educator position.
- 4) The County should support establishment of consistent Countywide standards for stormwater drainage and sanitary sewer systems. The County should also review and recom-

mend possible changes to the Kent County Water Supply Regulations and Sewage Disposal Regulations.

- 5) The County Board of Commissioners should support the Kent/MSU Cooperative Extension United Growth for Kent County initiative with a resolution of support.

The Board of Commissioners approved this report and authorized County Administrator/Controller Daryl Delabbio to begin implementation of the recommendations, most of which will require further Board action to initiate.

Bureau of Equalization

Annual Apportionment Report

The Bureau has recently completed the annual Apportionment report for the County Board of Commissioners. This report contains all millage levy requests from all townships, cities, villages, school districts, community colleges and authorities which request to levy millage for the year. The report contains all July levies as well as the upcoming December levies. All millage must be voter approved. The Bureau reviews the canvass of votes for confirmation on the levy requests, determines the rollback fractions necessary under the statutes and verifies the final requests. All levies are compiled in the Apportionment report and must be approved by the County Board of Commissioners during their October Apportionment meetings.

Secondly, the Bureau continues to conduct the appraisal and sales studies in each township and city on the county to determine their level of assessment. The studies are in the final stages and must be completed and mailed to the State Tax Commission by December 31 annually.

Purchasing

Internet Auction Site – GovDeals.com

Periodically, the Kent County Purchasing Department will offer an alternate method to dispose of County owned vehicles at the following internet auction site (GovDeals.com). The GovDeals.Com, Inc. internet site provides services to various governmental agencies which allow them to sell surplus and confiscated assets via the Internet.

The Purchasing Department has already offered a couple of police cruisers through the web site and has had success with the items offered. Anyone can register as a bidder and bid on items available. Along with the spring and fall auctions the County currently provides, be sure and look at the GovDeals.com internet auction site for available items in the future.