207 Environmental Planning Standards

207.01 Purpose and Intent

Existing natural features and amenities that would add value to the development or to the community as a whole, or which are nonrenewable and critical to the County's economy and quality of life, should be preserved, conserved, and/or protected in the design of a subdivision (major, minor and commercial/industrial). Subdivisions should also reflect the uniqueness of the site, responding to its topography, soils, woodlands, wetlands, streams and creeks, flood plain, species habitats, aquifers and archaeological, cultural and historical resources.

All efforts should be taken with respect to the requirements of this section to ensure that natural resources are sufficiently protected and preserved. Trees or other substantial vegetation should not be removed from any subdivision nor any change of the grade of the land affected until approval of a Preliminary Plat for a Major Subdivision (residential, commercial, or industrial) or the approval of a Minor Subdivision has been granted.

In designing a subdivision (major or minor) the developer/subdivider shall comply with the requirements of this section of the Huron County Subdivision Regulations. In designing a site to accommodate development, it is strongly recommended that building envelopes be placed on a parcel in locations that minimize impact to natural features.

In considering an application submitted under the Subdivision Regulations, the County Engineer's Office, Soil and Water Conservation District, County Planning Commission, and County Commissioners should follow the standards of this section.

Developers/subdividers shall work with the Planning Department, Huron Soil & Water Conservation District, U. S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), to comply with the environmental guidelines of this section.

207.02 Comprehensive Land Use Plan Policies

The following are recommendations from the Huron County Comprehensive Land Use Plan relative to the natural environment and have been adopted by the County Commissioners:

A. Preparing guidelines that provide for development while protecting natural resources and promoting guidelines to all units of local government.
B. Utilizing geographic information systems, as available, to evaluate development proposals at the County and local level.
C. Discouraging development within woodlands and prohibiting development in wetlands, and encouraging the use of open space subdivisions to minimize impact on these resources.
D. Encouraging land preservation through fee-simple or conservation easement acquisition or donation.
E. Discourage straightening of natural streams unless substantial property damage from erosion or potential flooding outweighs environmental concerns.
F. Encouraging wide wooded and vegetative buffers along all streams and tributaries following guidelines of the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service.
G. Prohibit development in the 100-year flood plain.
H. Discouraging inappropriate development over or adjacent to groundwater recharge areas and aquifers.
I. Discouraging development of prime agricultural soils, timber production areas and sand and gravel locations.

See Huron County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Chapter 6, Natural Resources, Section 5 for additional recommendations.

207.03 Planning Considerations

The following considerations are provided as a general guidance to planning a Major Subdivision:

A. Preserving Resources in a Development

In the design of open space systems in a subdivision, a decision must be made early in the process as to which natural resources should be preserved. Any site may contain a combination of mature woodlands, wetlands, prime agricultural soils and floodplain among others.

Selecting the priority resources to be preserved will identify those portions of a site that are therefore set aside for development. The decision should be based upon the quality of natural resources on site, preservation efforts on adjacent parcels and in the general vicinity, and the unique characteristics of the site that affect its developability (e.g. topography, soil suitability for leach fields, etc.)

In many cases development of a site may be clustered into one or more subareas, with

the open space flowing throughout the balance of the development. The residential portions of the site should be linked with the open space set asides to provide residents access through pedestrian paths or trails. The open space set aside can also be intended to create a transition or buffer between the residential portions of the development and adjacent working farms.

In general, building lots should not be placed in natural resource areas. As required elsewhere by the Subdivision Regulations, certain resources are to be protected and placed in permanent open space reserves. If building lots are placed in a resource area, the building envelope should be located to minimize its impact and the balance of the lot located in the resource area could be placed in no-build reserve on the Final Plat.

B. Designing Open Space Systems

Open space reserves should be designed to preserve and maintain mature woodlands, fields, pastures, meadows and orchards, stream corridors, etc., and should create sufficient buffer areas to minimize conflicts between residential areas and conflicting uses, including working farms.

Open space areas should be continuous and not designed in unconnected fragments. Open space within a neighborhood should build upon existing natural areas, such as streams and/or ravines. Active recreation areas such as parks and playfields with recreation equipment, should be connected to the area. Components should not be linear or narrow unless protecting a linear feature such as a stream corridor, hedgerow or tree line. Consideration should also be given to providing for interconnected wildlife corridors.

Pedestrian connections should be provided so residents have other options than using the road network. The open space should also abut existing or potential open space land on adjacent parcels.

C. Greenway Guidelines

Greenways are natural corridors or buffers. They can consist of a natural area and pedestrian trails. Greenways are typically found along major streams and their tributaries, as a recreational path and as a wildlife corridor. Greenways should be integrated into the design of all subdivisions if possible.

Greenway buffers can serve a valuable role in filtering stormwater runoff adjacent to stream and creek systems. These buffers function as a trap for pollutants and excessive nutrients dissolved or suspended in storm runoff. Slowing runoff velocity allows stormwater to be absorbed into the soil and to be taken up by vegetation.

Defining the appropriate buffer width is based upon soil permeability, slope, vegetation in the buffer and the amount and type of pollutants likely to be found in

the runoff. At a minimum such buffers should be 50 feet in width.

The following general guidelines are provided relative to greenway widths, which are determined based upon the type of greenway proposed:

1. Pedestrian Path or Trail - A minimum of 20 feet in width, with a path of five to ten feet in width consisting of asphalt, gravel or mulched surface.

2. Buffer along Stream or Creek - A minimum of 50 feet in width; consult with Huron Soil & Water Conservation District.

3. Wildlife Corridor - Up to 300 feet or more in width.

A pedestrian path or trail should be used to provide recreational opportunities and should connect neighborhoods with open space features such as a park, pond or a stream corridor. Such paths or trails should meander through the open space reserves and should have sufficient points of interest along the paths or at the end points.

Greenway corridors established in a subdivision for the purpose of wildlife habitat should range in width up to 300 feet or more. The recommended width should be based upon consultation with the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District and naturalists from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. Such buffers may be located along a stream or creek system, or adjacent to a wetland, pond or lake.

D. Reserves

Two platting options are available for permanently designating and preserving open space features. A reserve can be placed on the plat to permanently set aside open space features for common use by subdivision residents and/or the general public. Reserves should be dedicated to a Homeowners Association, public entity or non-profit land trust or other conservation organization. A conservation easement should also be dedicated for reserves. Reserves are a strong legal tool for protecting open space features.

As an alternative when open space features and natural resources are located on individual subdivision lots, a no-build reserve can be designated on the plat. A no-build reserve would, in general, preclude the placement of buildings and other structures in the designated area unless otherwise stated. No-build reserves also should include language that the protected natural resource should not be disturbed by the property owner.

207.04 Aquifers and Aquifer Recharge Areas

A. Intent

Aquifers are important geologic features that serve as a source of potable water. Aquifer recharge areas are geologic features that encourage the replenishment of aquifers by surface water. Aquifers and aquifer recharge areas should be protected from adverse impacts by development to ensure water resources are conserved for use by current and future residents and businesses. Developers/subdividers should work with the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District in addressing these issues.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures should be taken:

1. Any development should take into account the type of groundwater resource over which it is to be built.
2. The Huron County Health Department and Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water should be consulted by the developer during the Preliminary Plat phase of development.
3. Aquifers and aquifer recharge areas should be placed in permanent platted no-build reserves and/or protected through deed restrictions and conservation easements.

207.05 Flood Plains

Refer to the Flood Plain Regulations adopted per Title 6, Flood Plain Management and Huron County Commissioners Resolution 07-426, effective January 11, 2008, together with Huron County Commissioners Resolution 10-398 (11-23-2010) effective 01-19-2011, and 12-060 (3-01-2012) effective 03-31-2012.

207.06 Forests

A. Intent

Land to be subdivided or developed should be designed and improved to minimize impact on existing forest resources, including hedgerows and treelines. Improvements shall conform to existing topography in order to minimize clearing or alternation of existing plant communities, especially woodlands and other forest resources, and to minimize associated stormwater runoff and soil erosion impacts that would damage woodlands.

Developers/subdividers and builders should place structures and improvements as far removed from existing vegetation as possible. Baseline data of existing forest resources should be based upon Huron County aerial photographs, which may be field verified by the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District.

Lots should be laid out with consideration of existing hedgerows and tree lines between fields or meadow to ensure their ongoing protection and preservation.

Hedgerows and tree lines should be designated "no build" zones on plats if not placed in an open space reserve or conservation easement.

Major subdivisions should minimize impacts on large woodlands (those greater than five acres), especially those containing many mature trees or a significant wildlife habitat. Also, woodlands of any size on highly erodible soils with slopes greater than 10 percent should be avoided. Building lots should be located outside these areas or "no build" zones should be designated on the plat within individual lots, to protect the woodlands.

Woodlands in poor condition with limited forest management potential or value can provide suitable locations for residential development. When any woodland is developed, great care should be taken to locate all areas to be disturbed or impacted by buildings, roads, yard septic disposal fields, etc., in areas where there are no trees or obvious wildlife areas, to the fullest extent practicable.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures should be taken:

1. Site Planning

a. All efforts should be taken by the developer/subdivider to place lots, buildings, structures, utilities and other improvements as far removed from forest resources as feasible.
b. Topographical changes to site should be minimal and should not substantially alter existing storm water runoff patterns.
c. Utilities should be designed not to intrude into forest areas designated or intended for preservation. To the extent possible, utilities should be placed in street rights-of-way.

2. Building Placement

a. Developers and builders proposing the placement of buildings and structures on wooded sites should ensure that a ten-foot zone as measured from the building's foundation be designated as an area in which no trees will be preserved.
b. Impervious surfaces should not be located adjacent to forest preservation areas.

3. Construction Practices

a. Trees intended to be preserved on a site should be protected during all construction activities by placement of temporary protective fencing

at the boundary of the tree drip zone, and the placement of signs indicating such along the protective fencing.

b. No construction activity, storage of building materials and equipment, or other surface disturbances should occur within the drip zone of a tree designated for preservation.

207.07 Historical, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

A. Intent

Land to be subdivided or developed should be designed and improved to minimize its impact on historical, archaeological and cultural resources. Developers and builders should place structures and improvements as far removed as possible from existing historical, archaeological and/or cultural resources. They should coordinate with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) in identifying, cataloging and preserving such resources. Location of these resources should be based upon the Ohio Historic Inventory and records of OHPO, local inventories, surveys, studies and reports, and additional surveys as required by County Planning Commission.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures should be taken:

1. Historical, archaeological and cultural resources should be preserved on site and integrated into the development. Alternately, open space may be used to buffer historical resources from new development.
2. Subdivisions should be designed so that lot layout does not intrude upon historical resources. Roads should be oriented so that the public can view the resources.
3. Resources that are set aside on a site should be placed in permanent platted reserves and/or protected through deed restrictions and conservation easements. Another option would be to set aside resources for purchase by, or donation to, the County or an appropriate preservation organization.

207.08 Hydric Soils

A. Intent

Hydric soils are not appropriate locations for buildings and on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems, particularly leach fields. Home sites and on-site wastewater systems shall not be approved on hydric soils. New construction within these soils shall be at the discretion of the Huron SWCD and/or per the recommendation of a soil scientist who has performed soil borings on and reviewed the site. All parcels shall have adequate subsurface and surface drainage. The County Health Department and the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District maintain a list of hydric soils.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures shall be taken:

1. Homesites and on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems shall not be located in hydric soils.
2. Development shall be concentrated on that portion of a site that does not contain hydric soils.
3. Open Space Subdivision techniques shall be used in designing a site. *(See Section 203.03)*
4. Hydric soils shall be placed in an open space reserve on a plat or placed in no-building reserves on individual parcels on a plat.
5. Individual lot splits will not be approved if a building envelope and on-site wastewater system cannot avoid being placed in non-hydric soils.

207.09 Prime Agricultural Land

A. Intent

Prime agricultural land is a nonrenewable resource and is critical to Huron County's economic base. Development should minimize its impact to agricultural land. Where appropriate such land should be placed in a no-build reserve on a plat and/or protected through a conservation easement.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures should be taken:

1. Development should be located on land not classified as prime agricultural land.
2. Where feasible development should be concentrated on a portion of the site with the balance left in a natural state for agricultural purposes and configured such that it can be easily farmed.
3. Open Space Subdivision techniques should be used in designing a site.
4. Prime agricultural land that is set aside on a site should be placed in permanent platted no-build reserves and/or protected through deed restrictions and conservation easements.

Refer to the Huron County Future Land Use Map in the back of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

207.10 Riparian Corridors

A. Intent

Land to be subdivided or developed should be designed and improved in reasonable conformity to existing topography and vegetation in order to minimize impacts on existing riparian corridors, including stream-side vegetative cover, storm water runoff, water quality and species habitat. Developers/subdividers and builders should to the extent possible place structures and improvements as far removed as feasible from stream and creek riparian corridors. Location of existing riparian corridors should be based on Huron County aerial photographs and/or USGS 7.5-minute quad maps, either of which may be field verified by the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures should be taken:

1. Grading, removal of vegetative cover and placement of new buildings and structures shall not be permitted within 50 feet from the top of bank of an intermittent stream and within 75 feet from the top of bank of a perennial stream. Such areas should be placed in a no-build reserve or watercourse easement on the Preliminary Plat and Final Plat or Minor Subdivision.
2. Open space reserves in subdivisions should be located to maximize the preservation of riparian corridors.
3. Underground utilities may be placed in the buffers indicated under Subsection 1 above, however, following construction, the disturbed area should be returned to a natural, vegetative state within six months of completion of the construction activity.
4. If the Ohio Department of Natural Resources places a designation on a riparian corridor in Huron County, then the buffer standards of Ohio Department of Natural Resources should apply.
5. Roads should not be located in buffers.

207.11 Steep Slopes

A. Intent

These regulations apply to all hillside terrain areas in both Major and Minor Subdivisions. Hillside areas are defined as areas with a maximum slope of 10 percent in any direction. The developer should submit sufficient detailed information as to geologic conditions, topography, soil types, and underground water level in order that a determination can be made by the Planning Department in consultation with the County Engineer's Office as to the safety of development of the particular location.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures shall be taken:

1. The requirements in Table F will be the basis for determining the minimum lot area for a single-family home. The County Engineer's Office and/or the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District will verify the slope. The lot area will be determined by charting the average ground slope of the terrain and the minimum lot area. Rounding will be made to the nearest five-foot frontage interval.

Table F: Steep Slope Minimum Lot Area Requirements

Average Slope	Minimum Lot Area
10 to 20 percent	1.5 times the requirement of Table D
20+ to 25 percent	2.0 times the requirement of Table D
25+ to 30 percent	2.5 times the requirement of Table D

2. A grading plan shall be submitted showing contour lines at five-foot intervals where average slopes exceed 10 percent. Elevations are to be based on the sea level datum (NAVD88), if available. The approximate lot layout and dimensions shall be shown for each lot and each building site. For proposed building sites, plat shall show existing topography, location and size of each building site, and approximate proposed finished grade of streets prior to consideration of the Final Plat. The grading plan shall include existing and proposed grades, including the rights-of-way and up to the minimum building setback line, and shall be reviewed by the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District and/or Ohio EPA for adequate erosion and sedimentation control.
3. For information regarding cuts, fills and compaction of fill, refer to the Engineering Code.
4. Retaining walls may be required whenever topographic conditions warrant or where necessary to retain fill or cut slopes within the rights-of-way. Such requirements shall require the approval of the County Engineer.
5. The regulations in Table G shall govern the front yard and side yard requirements in subdivisions on steep slopes.

Table G: Required Setbacks on Steep Slopes

Slope	Minimum Setback for Front Yards and Side Yards
10 – 25 %	25 feet
25 – 30 %	30 feet

6. Grading or removal of vegetative cover shall not be permitted on land with existing steep slopes, except when:

   a. The contiguous area of steep slopes is less than 20,000 square feet.
   b. There is sufficient area outside of riparian corridor and wetland buffers for required erosion and sedimentation control measures.

207.12 Wetlands

A. Intent

Land to be subdivided or developed shall be designed and improved in a way that does not impact delineated wetlands and reduces impacts on non-delineated but preserved wetlands. In particular, land disturbance should not negatively affect the water quality of wetlands. Location of existing wetland resources shall be based upon delineation studies conducted by the developer for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Where deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission or Huron Soil & Water Conservation District, an applicant for a subdivision should undertake a study to delineate a wetland. Such study shall be prepared by a qualified professional under guidelines established by the Ohio EPA or the Army Corps of Engineers. Such study shall be completed by the applicant and approved by the Ohio EPA or the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submittal of a Preliminary Plat.

B. Protection Measures

The following protection measures shall be taken:

1. Grading or removal of vegetative cover shall not be permitted within 25 feet of a wetland. Such 25-foot buffer shall be placed in a no-build reserve on the Preliminary Plat, Final Plat or Minor Subdivision, and a conservation easement considered, with consultation by the Huron Soil & Water Conservation District.
2. Open space reserves in subdivisions shall be located to include preserved

wetlands.

3. Utilities shall not be located in a wetland, wetland buffer or a conservation easement.
4. Topographical characteristics shall not be altered in a way that will negatively affect the water quality and quantity of a preserved wetland, as determined by the Ohio EPA or Army Corps of Engineers.