

ANDERSON TOWNSHIP GREENSPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CRITERIA FOR THE ACQUISITION OF GREENSPACE

One of the goals of the Anderson Township Greenspace Advisory Committee is to preserve or restore natural areas, including woods, farmland, wetlands, stream beds, and greenways, by recommending to the Board of Township Trustees of Anderson Township appropriate parcels for acquisition with monies derived from the greenspace levy passed by the voters in November, 1990, and renewed by the voters in November, 1995.

Ten criteria have been established to guide the Committee in evaluating parcels being considered for greenspace acquisition. The statement and question format of the criteria is intended to stimulate committee members to carefully question the value of the particular parcel to the Township's overall greenspace program.

1. NATURAL QUALITY: This criterion considers the natural resources and the vegetation cover of the parcel. Natural areas, including woods, farmland, wetlands, and streams, are valuable as greenspace. What is the quality of the growth? If wooded, are the trees mature or good secondary growth? Are there any endangered or special plants or animals, for example, an oldest or largest tree? Is this a wildlife (plant and animal) area? Are there prominent terrain features such as a creek, waterfall, or cliff? How fragile are the terrain and vegetation? Will its acquisition help preserve a watershed area? Does it have geographic or historical significance? Are there Indian mounds or evidence of early settlers?

2. VISUAL QUALITY: This criterion is a measure of the aesthetic appeal of the parcel. The general appearance and "feel" of the land should be appealing. Does the parcel contribute to the rural atmosphere of the Township? Does the lay of the land or the vegetation cover give the property a "special" quality?

3. VISIBILITY: This criterion attempts to measure the impact on the community. The public should have good visual access to the land acquired. How many people will see the area? Does it have significant frontage on frequently traveled roads? Is the parcel contiguous to a public park or other frequently visited facility? Will it be *perceived* as "greenspace?"

4. DEVELOPMENT: This criterion evaluates the susceptibility of the parcel to development. Special consideration should be given if the site is subject to imminent sale or development. Are infrastructure services (sewer, water, gas, electricity, road) readily available? If the parcel is not purchased soon, will it be developed? Are there alternative legal or political approaches (for example, zoning, endangered species, wetland law) to ensure preservation?

If the parcel is to be developed, can a portion be set aside as greenspace or can development take place without destroying the greenspace quality?

5. BUFFER: This criterion judges whether or not the parcel is an effective buffer between different or incompatible land uses. Is the parcel large enough to provide the desired

buffering effect? Is it an isolated parcel or does it or can it connect to other existing or future buffering areas? Does it provide a visual break or background for the adjacent structures or parcels?

6. GEOGRAPHICAL BALANCE: This criterion considers the distribution and balance of greenspace areas throughout the Township. Would this parcel provide greenspace for a part of the Township which otherwise enjoys little or none?

7. MAINTENANCE: This criterion rates the Township's responsibility for maintenance and potential exposure to liability for the parcel. Is the site free of major maintenance and liability problems? Are there exotic or invasive species that will destroy the quality of the greenspace? Are there hillside slippages, erosion problems, or excessive water run-off? Are there structures or encroachments that should be removed? Is the site subject to frequent flooding? Will the parcel's problems impact on neighboring lands?

8. COST: This criterion considers the cost of acquisition. The taxpayers deserve a good return on public funds. Is the parcel sufficiently large to make the purchase worthwhile in terms of legal costs, maintenance considerations, and public benefit? Can the parcel be acquired at a "bargain" price through negotiation and tax benefit to property owner? Have other methods, such as donation, conservation easement, and matching funds, been explored?

9. LINKAGE TO OTHER GREEN AREAS: This criterion measures how well the parcel fits into the scheme of existing and future green areas, parks, greenways, and pathways in the Township. Does the site abut existing parkland or greenspace? Does it lie along a drainage corridor or abandoned right of way? Will it provide a corridor for wildlife movement? Is the parcel so isolated as to be difficult to maintain or protect from encroachment or misuse?

10. CRITICAL GREENSPACE: This criterion asks whether or not the parcel is within the areas identified as critical greenspace zones, as ascertained by reference to the Committee's critical areas map. If the property is outside of these areas, does it have special qualities which nevertheless justify purchase and preservation? Does it include some special habitat, rare plant specimens, unusual wildlife, unique geological feature or exceptional vistas?

Adopted March, 1991; Revised October 5, 1998