



Fresh Coast Planning

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MEMORANDUM

To: Allendale Charter Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: January 29, 2024
Re: Draft Town Center – Master Plan

Pursuant to your direction at your November 6, 2023 meeting, attached is a draft Town Center chapter to eventually be incorporated into the Allendale Charter Township Master Plan (ACTMP) to serve a purpose similar to the 2013 ACTMP language regarding the same. As you will recall, you directed us to design a chapter with the same structure as the current ACTMP chapters and incorporate 2013 ACTMP language to the extent practicable as well as expand the content of the chapter, where appropriate, to be consistent with the structure of the other land use classification chapters.

We believe the attached document achieves that end. As you will note, it is an incomplete first draft because we have included a placeholder for accompanying graphic(s) to be designed as the language is completed to your continued direction.

Also attached is the Framework to accomplish adoption of the chapter. As you will note, the Framework contains the steps required to amend the Master Plan as well as approximate dates of completion. This amendment should be completed in about a year.

The Town Center concept has been scheduled for your discussion at your February 5, 2025 meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner

Attachments

cc: Adam Elenbaas, Supervisor

Chapter XXXX Town Center

Introduction

A Town Center concept is intended to provide a place where people can live, shop, dine, and experience other public and private services in a centralized environment that is a safe and healthy place to gather. A Town Center will provide a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use development that is attractive and easily accessible to the greater network of streets, pathways, residential areas, and commerce within the Township. It is also intended to serve as the primary location for social interaction and community events. Further, a Town Center accommodates all modes of transportation with emphasis on the pedestrian rather than the automobile.

The previous Town Center concept was intended along Lake Michigan Drive. As Allendale Charter Township experiences continued residential growth that is driving additional commercial growth the need to reapproach the growth patterns along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor becomes increasingly important in order to achieve the Town Center concept. In particular, as redevelopment demands occur along the Lake Michigan Drive frontage and within vacant properties adjacent to Lake Michigan Drive and intersecting streets, the Township needs to direct development that is consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Town Center concept. Otherwise, development will continue to be established with a design that is less likely to support the vision of a town center and create challenges for redevelopment in the future to accomplish a town center at a later time. Since the Township owns property that is positioned near Lake Michigan Drive, the opportunity exists to control how the Town Center concept develops and maximize the opportunity to redevelop and infill surrounding areas through design methods that will accomplish a community Town Center. The Town Center concept was initially supported through the community survey in 2011 and again in the 2015 Community Strategic Plan adopted in 2003.

The success of this Town Center will likely require a partnership between local government, private developers, state and regional government, and potentially other non-governmental organizations.

To accomplish this Town Center concept, the following goals are paramount in its formation. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve the goals are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Create village character elements
 - Establish a main street that may contain side streets of equal character
 - On-street parking
 - No front yard parking
 - Zero front yard setback unless a public space is between the lot line and the building, then a small setback could be accommodated
 - Accessible pathways designed for multiple modes of pedestrian transportation, including walking, bicycling, wheelchairs, and etcetera
 - Wide sidewalks abutting storefronts designed for walking, universal access, dining, and gathering
 - Two and three-story buildings

- Residential and office uses on second and third floors
- Projecting wall signage
- See-through storefront windows
- Decorative street lighting and or building mounted lighting
- Promote residential, office, and commercial retail mixed-use, whether within the same building or in close proximity to each other as a greater community design
- Provide for the elements of Complete Streets to accommodate motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users including those with disabilities
- Encourage a building scale and design that softens the physical appearance of large commercial spaces and promotes a welcoming pedestrian relationship
- Preserve the natural resources and groundwater quality of Allendale Charter Township

Recommendations

- Establish a public/private partnership to construct a main street that provides for future expansions of side streets of equal character
- Require village orientation of commercial store fronts with apartment living and or office space above stores
- Require new development to incorporate a universally designed sidewalk/pathway system that ultimately connects with abutting developments to produce a larger, accessible and connected community for pedestrians
- Require a central park, public space, or other civic amenity to accompany the village orientation
- Design connective recreational paths
- Require architectural elements for all uses to enhance roadside image
- Continue to require development to incorporate the design concepts of “Complete Streets” into existing and future streets
- Provide safe trails and sidewalks between destination land uses and along roadways for pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, and all non-motorized users to create a walkable and connected community
- Require commercial development to blend into abutting single family neighborhoods through methods that soften the impact of the use
- Require physical design features that are welcoming and attractive to encourage the traveling public to enter the Town Center and engage with merchants, the environment, and each other.
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new development that are in accordance with Ottawa County’s Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Require the layout of new development, residential, commercial, or otherwise within the Town Center to be logical extensions of existing or adjacent development, where possible. This shall apply, at minimum but not necessarily limited to, lot layout, road extensions, pedestrian pathway extensions, and open spaces.
- Create a Town Center Overlay District within the Zoning Ordinance to provide for form-based codes, which include:
 - Build-to lines instead of minimum setbacks, which would require the specific location of the front of a building as either a zero front lot line or a precise setback from the front lot

line, so as to create uniformity of buildings on each side of the street, as found in a typical village

- Appropriate village height and bulk requirements
- Front Yard parking is prohibited, and parking may only be located within the street or rear yard. Rear yard parking shall be screened by buildings and or with landscaping or other elements to soften the impact of vehicles
- The accommodation of office and or residential space above storefronts
- Minimum design standards of building façade and signage
- The establishment of pedestrian friendly streetscape
- Concrete sidewalks in front of stores
- Street and wall mounted lighting
- Civic amenity elements
- Provide design incentives, such as additional building height beyond the maximum permitted, to encourage private investment in public utilities, civic amenities, or other improvements that are necessary for the collective public good
- Require connective public spaces in addition to those required by the form-based codes

[INSERT CONCEPT IMAGE – UPDATE PREVIOUS – SHOULD NOT TERMINATE INTO CIVIC SPACE]

- ✓ Completed
- Remaining

Task	Components	Outcome	Timeline
✓ Drat Notice of Intent to Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send notice to township to distribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October 2023
✓ Review previous Town Center language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FUTURE – Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create structure of Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies ○ Incorporate groundwater provisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report findings to Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 2023
✓ Create Town Center Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● February 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other Chapter Updates? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updates to any other chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● March 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Zoning Plan, Master Plan Terminology Chapter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Revise zoning map accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Zoning Plan and Master Plan Terminology Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● March 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Appendix, if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Appendix document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● April 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Master Plan Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine current Master Plan Map with Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission and update Master Plan Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● April 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Composition of draft Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compile first draft of Master Plan by Fresh Coast Planning ● Update Table of Contents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of first draft of Master Plan by Fresh Coast Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting with Planning Commission to present the draft Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present the first draft of the Master Plan to the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission ● Perform amendments to the Master Plan, if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Plan to the township attorney 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present the proposed Plan to the township attorney 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive legal review of the proposed Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide attorney comments to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present attorney comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide any minor revisions, if necessary ● Receive approval for distribution to the Township Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● July 2024

- ✓ Completed
- Remaining

Planning Commission			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Plan to the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present the proposed Plan to the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive approval for public distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● July 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute Plan in accordance with Planning Enabling Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send copy to local governments and applicable organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comment up to 63 days for local governments and applicable organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comment period satisfied by approximately October 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present comments received to Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate comments, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Public Hearing Notice to NIP List 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft public hearing notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send public hearing notice to Township to send to NIP recipients and publish in paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● October/November 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present final Master Plan at Public Hearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation of final Master Plan to the Planning Commission and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educate the public regarding the content of the Master Plan ● Provide recommendation of adoption to Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November/December 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recommendation provided to the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transmittal of final Master Plan to the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adoption of the Master Plan by the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● December 2024/January 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notice of Adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft Notice of Adoption letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send adoption letter to township to send to NIP recipients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● January 2025