

Chapter One

Introduction

Legal Requirement

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008 (MPEA), as amended, this Master Plan was created to serve as a guide for development within Crockery Township (the “Township”).

Intent and Purpose

The fundamental purpose of the Master Plan is to enable the Township Planning Commission to establish a future direction for the Township's physical development. The MPEA specifically gives the Township Planning Commission the authority to prepare and officially adopt such plans. In Crockery Township, the Board asserts the right of final approval of the Plan. This Plan will serve as a policy guide for the conservation of agricultural land and natural resources as well as for the physical development of property to be enjoyed by present and future Township residents. The Plan also will serve as the basis for the Crockery Township Zoning Ordinance (the “Zoning Ordinance”) regulating the use and development of land in the Township.

Section 7 of the MPEA provides that a local unit of government may adopt, amend, and implement a master plan. Per Section 33 of the MPEA, a Master Plan shall address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future. Section 45 of the MPEA requires that the Master Plan be reviewed every five years.

In the preparation of a Master Plan, a Planning Commission shall do all of the following, as applicable:

- Make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the planning jurisdiction with due regard to its relation to neighboring jurisdictions.
- Consult with representatives of adjacent local units of government in respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided.
- Cooperate with all departments of the state and federal governments and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social, and physical development within the planning jurisdiction and seek the maximum coordination of the local unit of government's programs with these agencies.

The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
- Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for one or more of the following:

- A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets and provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users.
- Safety from fire and other dangers.
- Light and air.
- Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
- Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
- Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
- Recreation.
- The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

Cornerstone Components

A master plan shall include maps, plats, charts, and descriptive, explanatory, and other related matter and shall show the planning commission's recommendations for the physical development of the planning jurisdiction. A master plan shall also include those of the following subjects that reasonably can be considered as pertinent to the future development of the planning jurisdiction:

- A land use plan that consists in part of a classification and allocation of land for agriculture, residences, commerce, industry, recreation, ways and grounds, public transportation facilities, public buildings, schools, soil conservation, forests, woodlots, open space, wildlife refuges, and other uses and purposes.
- The general location, character, and extent of the following:
 - All components of a transportation system and their interconnectivity including streets and bridges, public transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian ways, freight facilities and routes, port facilities, railroad facilities, and airports, to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a manner that is appropriate to the context of the community and, as applicable, considers all legal users of the public right-of-way.
 - Waterways and waterfront developments.
 - Sanitary sewers and water supply systems.
 - Facilities for flood prevention, drainage, pollution prevention, and maintenance of water levels.
 - Public utilities and structures.
 - Recommendations as to the general character, extent, and layout of redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted areas; and the removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment, change of use, or extension of streets, grounds, open spaces, buildings, utilities, or other facilities.

- For a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan shall include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.
- Recommendations for implementing any of the master plan's proposals.
- If a master plan includes a master street plan, the means for implementing the master street plan or elements in cooperation with the county road commission and the state transportation department shall be specified in the master street plan in a manner consistent with the respective powers and duties of and any written agreements between these entities and the municipality.

Final Document

This process is intended to create the most efficient and effective Master Plan for the community of Crockery Township. Its ultimate pursuit is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, property, and business owners as well as visitors to this Township.

How to Use This Plan

For each land use attribute chapter, the plan identifies goals, recommendations, and strategies. These are the basis for future development. The goals, recommendations, and strategies are designed as follows:

- Goals – These are community objectives derived from significant public input and Planning Commission oversight. These are applied most frequently during land use review to ensure a proposed development meets and is consistent with the core values of the Master Plan.
- Recommendations – These are pointed direction to achieve the goals. These are applied the strongest during land use review to ensure proposed development is consistent with the intent of the Master Plan.
- Strategies – In an effort to accomplish the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan, the strategies are the legislative methods to mandate certain physical form, through zoning ordinance or police power ordinances.

Chapter Two

Community Preferences

Introduction

In 2023 the Planning Commission began the process to update the Master Plan. Community engagement commenced with commercial and industrial property owner stakeholder interviews. Overall, commercial and industrial property owners felt that their current locations along M-104 and 112th Avenue are sustainable.

The biggest takeaway from the stakeholder interviews was a very mixed opinion on whether public sewer and expansion of public water was warranted. Some opined that public sewer may be of benefit for small commercial and industrial lot sizes with limited room for alternate drain field locations or a high water table. For some, maintaining a healthy workforce is a challenge. Public sewer may help develop workforce housing, thus strengthening employee availability. Other owners felt public sewer and expansion of public water would increase residential development, which would create a conflict with their commercial and industrial uses. From these interviews, it was determined that the greatest focus for the community survey would be residential development including senior housing.

Community Survey

As provided in its entirety within the Appendix, a community survey was sent out to all property owners within the Township. This survey asked for the owners' opinion on everything from rural character, agricultural preservation, residential development, and the potential growth of commercial/industrial uses.

In order to streamline the content of the survey responses, the following terms are recognized as defined below:

Rural Character – is recognized as the natural features of the earth that minimize the visual exposure of buildings, structures or other man-made features and which create scenic character. It is also recognized as the natural features of the earth that provide environmental buffers and/or habitat that is characteristic of the Township. Features are found to include:

- Woods, woodlots, forest areas and trees
- Wetlands
- Natural vegetation
- Wildlife habitat
- Natural field areas
- Scenic vistas
- Farmland, which is recognized as part of the natural features that are organized and managed by man.

Open Space – is recognized as areas of land unoccupied by buildings, structures or other man-made features, that are preserved to be unoccupied by buildings, structures or other man-made features within a project.

Community Workshop

Additionally, a community workshop was held to gather more public input. As part of the workshop, visual preferences of different development topics were captured. The resounding theme from the workshop was that residents would like to maintain the rural character of Crockery Township through strategic, carefully considered development. Below is a compilation of the survey and workshop data.

Participant Demographics and Living in Crockery Township

Four hundred six owners of Crockery Township took the public survey. There was a very even spread of respondents between the ages of 35 and 65+. Only 9% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 34. Thirty-eight percent of respondents have lived in the Township over 20 years. Of respondents, 39% said they would recommend living in the Township and 37% were neutral.

Agricultural and Rural Character

Crockery Township has historically been considered a rural and predominantly agricultural community. Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents supported continued growth at its current pace. Workshop attendees relayed a strong preference to protect the agricultural lands and rural character of the community. Seventy-two percent of survey respondents said ease of travel within the Township was good/excellent and 71% said rural character is good/excellent. However, when asked about access to healthcare facilities, 33% said it was poor and 28% said it was fair. When asked about access to shopping amenities, 39% said it was poor and 32% said it was fair. Overall, residents in the Township are supportive of policies that are designed to protect the rural look and feel of the community and appear to be willing to forego quick access to commercial/retail and professional services in order to protect the rural character of the community.

Rate of Development

Survey respondents felt that the current rate of development in general is about right (58% agree), again, with a desire to protect the current visual character.

Residential Development

Growth of single family neighborhoods may be supported through directed improvement and repairs to public roads. While large acreage lots were preferred, those attending the workshop suggested that any small lot development locations should be located predominantly north of M-104 near Nunica proper and the current Hathaway Lakes development. Open space, playgrounds/recreation opportunities, and street tree requirements were preferred for developments. Dark-sky-friendly street lighting was also preferred.

Senior housing was supported/very supported by 47% and was opposed/strongly opposed by 16%. Again, workshop attendees suggested locations predominantly north of M-104 for this type of density housing. Small scale, one-story, free-standing homes were preferred over multi-level buildings. There was some desire for walkable senior housing with proximity to services and public transit (if/when available).

Mixed commercial and residential use was supported/very supported by 27% and opposed/strongly opposed by 39%. Duplexes (15%), apartments (17%), and Townhomes (18%) scored lower, though there was a positive reaction to development that incorporated multiple housing types within a mixed-use development. The community may be supportive of a limited mixed use downtown development district. They do not support an increase in taxes to encourage this development, but may be supportive of a policy that permits such uses.

Commercial and Industrial

Survey respondents felt that economic development policies should be designed to allow for, but not necessarily encourage commercial or industrial development.

Public Services

Survey respondents felt that educational and recreational opportunities are good/excellent. If the Township had extra funds, highest priorities for public services were roads, internet, and fire/EMS, prioritized in that order. However, when respondents were asked if they would support a tax increase for these services, no service scored 50% or higher even if we combined the likely/highly likely categories. The three highest scores were Fire/EMS (46%), road repair (48%), and expansion/improvements of parks and recreation (43%).

Summary

1. Residents prefer a rural setting and support the protection of agricultural land
2. Continued development at the current pace is supported if orchestrated with protecting the visual character of the community
3. Commercial/Industrial development should continue at its current pace without any plans to encourage infill.
4. Senior housing may be supported in the right location. Multi-level senior apartment buildings were not preferred.
5. Two-story mixed use development with public space may be supported in the right location.
6. The potential of public utilities related to development should be discussed.