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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: October 5, 2021
Re: Preface & Chapter One – Community Preferences

Pursuant to the Robinson Township Master Plan Timeframe Flow Chart (TFC), attached is the first draft of the Preface and Chapter One – Community Preferences. While the TFC indicated we would draft a single chapter incorporating the existing Introduction and Planning Process chapters from the 2008 Master Plan, during our composition of the language we concluded that this chapter is more appropriate as two separate portions of the Plan. We anticipate you will agree.

Simplistic Master Plan Structure

As you know, the chapters have been designed to streamline the existing content, incorporate public contributions, eliminate unnecessary information, and revamp the format of the Plan into a denser and more useful document that is easy to reference. In addition, the three existing master plan documents (the original 2008 and subsequent amendments) will be combined into one document as a result of this process.

Typically, we will provide you a clean copy of the draft and a copy showing revisions from current Plan language, with reference to where said language is located. While we have done so for the Preface, since Chapter One is based on public contributions, the entirety of it is new and therefore only a clean copy is necessary.

Proposed additions are shown in bold text and proposed deletions are shown in strikethrough text. Below is a synopsis of the documents.

Master Plan Chapters

Preface and Chapter One

As you know, the beginning of master plans tend to contain numerous pages of historical information, demographics, and the like, which lose the reader and generally serve no purpose at the front of the plan. Alternatively at the beginning of the Plan, we believe it is important to establish the basis on which the master plan is designed with a clear explanation of findings that create its core content. Given this, the Preface and Chapter One outline the foundation pursuant to the law and the contributions of the public. In addition, the Preface explains how to use the Plan.

Chapter One – Community Preferences, contains a synopsis of the public contributions from the community survey and workshops. Related to the “How to Use this Plan” at the end of the Preface, this chapter contains the core values that will create Goals and Recommendations in subsequent land use chapters, from which the Planning Commission will review land use proposals. In addition, it includes important definition of terms to ensure the remaining content of the Master Plan is clear and unambiguous.

Planning Commission Considerations

As the Planning Commission deliberates regarding the proposed master plan chapters, we believe the following warrant your review and consideration. They are listed in no particular order:

- Whether the public contributions are accurately represented to establish the basis of subsequent chapter content
- Definition of terms

We will be prepared to discuss these items further at your October 12, 2021 meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Principal Planner

Attachments

cc: Frank Johnson, Supervisor

Preface
Robinson Township Master Plan
2022

Introduction

Throughout the nation most suburban and rural municipalities are experiencing considerable pressure to ~~convert~~ ~~put~~ land areas to new and different uses. Increased mobility and population growth in recent years have reduced or eliminated the once pronounced distinction between the urban, suburban, and rural way of life. ~~When considering the energy producing natural resources, one must recognize that the change will not only continue to occur but will occur at an ever increasing rate.~~ **(Moved from Chapter 1, page 1)**

As a community grows many new opportunities become available to its residents, but all too often, ~~the problems~~ **challenges are** created ~~overwhelm~~ **as a result of** the opportunities. The ~~problems~~ **challenges** of growth can be easily identified: the need for new schools, playgrounds and parks; water and sewer systems; police and fire facilities; increased volumes of traffic and travel time factors. In order for the desirable features of our environment to be passed on to future generations, reasonable but effective regulations controlling the use of our land, water and air resources must be established. **(Moved from Chapter 1, page 1)**

The ~~General Development Master Plan~~ **and coupled with** the ~~revised~~ Zoning Ordinance and its ~~Zoning~~ Map will, together, chart the course for an orderly progression of growth and development for Robinson Township. Planning and zoning have separate and distinct purposes but neither can be effective without the other. **(Moved from Chapter 1, page 1)**

Legal Requirement

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

Intent and Purpose

The Robinson Township ~~Planning Commission~~ has prepared this ~~General Development Master Plan, which outlines with~~ a statement of community **objectives values** and policies for resolving the current and anticipated ~~problems~~ **challenges of land use**, and for directing the future growth into desirable patterns. The ~~Master General Development Plan is what its name implies~~ a general guide for growth. It is the framework for future, detailed planning. As a broad, long range guide to community development, the ~~General Development Master Plan sets forth a comprehensive scheme showing the proposed analysis major thoroughfare system of the uses of land, and residential densities for Robinson Township in the future.~~ **(Moved from Chapter 2, page 2)**

The Robinson Township Master Plan addresses and directs proposed land use and development in a compatible fashion with existing and future uses, the natural environment, the availability of

public utilities, the capacities of transportation networks, the design and distribution of recreational opportunities and other public places, the linear relationship of the landscape including compatibility of structures, uses, and natural features, as well as numerous other planning and community attributes.

The Robinson Township Master Plan guides and accomplishes development that is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient and economical. In addition, the Master Plan promotes the sustainability of uses for current and future needs that best protect and enhance the public health, safety, community values, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare.

The Master Plan projects more than twenty years into the future and must be revisited at least every five years to ensure its legitimacy.

Content

Cornerstone Components

A Master Plan shall include:

- Maps, plats, charts and descriptive content showing the recommendations of the Planning Commission for the physical development of the unincorporated areas of the Township.

A Master Plan should minimally address the classification and allocation of land for the following, as can be reasonably considered:

- Agriculture, residences, industrial and commercial uses, public buildings and spaces, schools, environment, recreation and transportation, areas for redevelopment and various other characteristics of the Township.

A Master Plan should generally address and accommodate the location and extent of the following:

- Transportation networks (i.e. streets, bicycle facilities, railway, waterways, airports and pedestrian improvements).
- Waterways and waterfront developments
- Sanitary sewer and water supply systems
- Pollution prevention efforts
- Drainage
- Flood prevention and the maintaining of water levels
- Public utilities and structures

A Master Plan shall provide recommendations regarding the above cornerstone components, as applicable, as well as provide strategies to implement its proposals. Further, a Master Plan shall

provide recommendations regarding the redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted areas and the management of streets, grounds, open spaces, buildings, utilities or other facilities, as applicable.

Final Document

This design is intended to create the most comprehensive and effective Master Plan for Robinson 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 or attribute chapter, the Plan identifies goals, recommendations, and strategies, which are the basis for future development. The goals, recommendations, and strategies are designed as follows:

- Goals – These are community ideals 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.

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Introduction

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As a community grows many new opportunities become available to its residents, but all too often, challenges are created as a result of the opportunities. The challenges of growth can be easily identified: the need for new schools, playgrounds and parks; water and sewer systems; police and fire facilities; increased volumes of traffic and travel time factors. In order for the desirable features of our environment to be passed on to future generations, reasonable but effective regulations controlling the use of our land, water and air resources must be established.

The Master Plan coupled with the Zoning Ordinance and its Map will, together, chart the course for an orderly progression of growth and development for Robinson Township. Planning and zoning have separate and distinct purposes but neither can be effective without the other.

Legal Requirement

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

Intent and Purpose

Robinson Township has prepared this Master Plan with a statement of community values and policies for resolving the current and anticipated challenges of land use, and for directing future growth into desirable patterns. The Master Plan is a general guide for growth. It is the framework for future, detailed planning. As a broad, long range guide to community development, the Master Plan sets forth a comprehensive analysis of uses of land.

The Robinson Township Master Plan addresses and directs proposed land use and development in a compatible fashion with existing and future uses, the natural environment, the availability of public utilities, the capacities of transportation networks, the design and distribution of recreational opportunities and other public places, the linear relationship of the landscape including compatibility of structures, uses, and natural features, as well as numerous other planning and community attributes.

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Chapter One

Community Preferences

Introduction

Important to the residents and property owners of Robinson Township are the preferences by which they envision or define the appearance, character, and values of their community.

As provided in its entirety within the appendix, Robinson Township completed a community survey as well as three community workshops with the public to gauge the pulse of its property owners. While the workshop areas generally encompassed the entirety of the township, the discussions were focused on agricultural lands, residential uses, and the commercial overlay. The community survey engaged the public in the same discussions as well as other interests of the community, such as transportation and recreation. Together, the workshops and community survey provided the following values, preferences, attributes, and design mechanisms, which are used to develop the foundation on which most of the goals, recommendations, and strategies within this Master Plan are based.

Definition of Terms

In order to streamline the content of the community survey and workshop results, 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
 - Wildlife corridors
 - Natural field areas
 - Scenic vistas
 - Ponds and other bodies of water

Rural Character also includes 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. Open Space is not intended to include displays of art

or other cultural features; bridges, signage, utilities, and other essential service structures; or grade level features such as ponds.

- *Agriculture* – is recognized as the art or science of plowing and cultivating soil; raising and harvesting crops; and feeding, breeding, and managing livestock. Agriculture also includes:
 - Farmer’s markets
 - You-Pick activities
 - Agri-tourism such as corn mazes, tasting rooms, wedding venues, etcetera

Findings

Below is a summary of findings derived from the community survey and workshop results.

- *Core Values* – the following attributes have been identified as core values for the Township:
 - Preserve and maintain rural character and open space
 - Preserve and protect farmland from premature development
 - Provide buffers between residential development and agricultural lands
 - Cluster development to protect agricultural lands
 - Limit public water extensions to slow development
- *Agricultural Interests* – the following have been identified as important regarding agricultural lands
 - Restrict non-agricultural uses from agricultural areas
 - Promote agricultural growth
 - Provide for landscape buffers between agricultural land and an adjacent roadway or waterway
 - Multi-use pathways are appropriate adjacent to agriculture
- *Residential Interests* – the following have been identified as important regarding residential uses:
 - Cluster residential development
 - Provide for large lots as open spaces themselves
 - Maintain current density limits
 - Limit multi-family residential development
- *Commercial and Industrial Interests*– the following have been identified as important regarding commercial and industrial uses
 - No expansion of commercial or industrial uses without public water and sanitary sewer
 - Limit light and heavy manufacturing facilities
 - Traditional brick and vinyl commercial facades are most favorable
 - Mixed-use buildings should be discouraged