

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This chapter of the Plan presents tools and techniques that citizens, community leaders, and Township staff can use to implement the land use plan. These implementation measures are workable if there are people in the community with vision and tenacity who are willing to invest the time and effort required to make them work. Community improvement requires a compelling vision; persistence; the flexibility needed to respond to changing needs, opportunities, and circumstances; and an ability to achieve consensus. The tools and techniques identified in this chapter are capable of being implemented under current enabling legislation.

Public Policy and Administrative Actions

Cooperation between Units of Government

Maximum impact will be achieved if the Township is able to achieve cooperation from other units of government. The benefits of governmental cooperation are readily apparent in the Fire Department, which has entered into cooperative ventures with the City of South Lyon. Road improvements require regional cooperation because decisions regarding Township roads are made by the Road Commission for Oakland County, Michigan Department of Transportation, and SEMCOG. These other agencies must be aware of the Township's land use planning objectives.

Development Impact Analysis

Impact analysis is a policy tool that is intended to describe the probable outcome of a proposed development project. Typically, an impact analysis involves the identification, quantification, and evaluation of environmental, economic, social, physical, and other impacts resulting from the development. An impact analysis often will also identify measures that can be taken to alleviate the impacts. For example, a traffic impact analysis would typically identify new signalization, changes in road geometrics, and other measures that might be necessary to accommodate the traffic generated by a proposed development.

An impact analysis is most effective if the Township establishes explicit guidelines and then participates with developers in completing the impact analyses. The guidelines should identify appropriate sources of information, formulae to be used in calculating impact, and reasonable assumptions to be used in the analysis. The Township can assist by creating and maintaining data bases deemed necessary to complete the impact analysis.

The benefit of impact analysis is not just in identifying mitigation measures that would profit from developer participation. Impact analysis also benefits the Township by identifying future public service capacity problems, by identifying the types of development or features that generate the least impact, and by providing information to the Township that can be used to study and evaluate development over time.

Prior to making impact analysis a requirement, the Township must first identify the types of impacts it wishes to evaluate, and it must establish appropriate guidelines for analyzing each impact. Then, the Township must determine when an impact analysis is warranted. The need for an impact analysis might be based on the size of the development (proposed number of dwelling units, floor area of non-residential uses), its location (in or near an environmentally sensitive area, on a high-traveled road), or the type of development. One approach might be to conceptually define a "development of township-wide impact" for which development impact analysis would be required. For example, the Zoning Ordinance requires a Traffic Impact Statement for residential projects containing 100 or more dwelling units and commercial, office and industrial developments involving 100,000 sq. ft. or more of floor space.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

Fiscal impact analysis is a special type of impact analysis that involves the projection of direct, current, public costs and revenues associated with a proposed development. It involves a description and quantification of the public costs (police, fire, public works, transportation, and educational facilities) that come about as a result of development, as well as the revenues generated from property taxes, user charges, intergovernmental transfers, and other fees.

As with other types of impact analysis, an impact analysis is most effective if the Township establishes explicit guidelines and then participates with the developer in completing the impact analysis. The guidelines should identify the appropriate method (average-costing, marginal-costing, or econometric), sources of base data, and appropriate demographic multipliers.

Fiscal impact is one of several other types of analyses that the Township typically completes in the course of reviewing a proposed development proposal. The results of a fiscal impact analysis should be just one part of development review and should not be the sole basis for approval or disapproval of a particular land use.

It requires special expertise to analyze a fiscal impact analysis. Developers tend to inflate tax benefits and other revenue generators, and understate costs that the Township will incur.

Master Plan Updates

Community planning is a continuous process that does not terminate with the completion of Master Plan. Communities are in constant change and planning is an ongoing process of identifying and responding to change. In order to sustain the planning process and generate positive results, maintain momentum, and respond to change, the Master Plan should be reviewed and updated at least every five years. In fact, review every five years is now required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008).

Establishing Priorities

The Master Plan contains a multitude of recommendations. There is insufficient staff or volunteer support to implement all of the recommendations in a carefully planned, deliberate manner. Consequently, priorities must be established as soon as the Master Plan is adopted. Participants involved in setting priorities should include Township staff, the Planning Commission, and other Township officials who should be involved in implementation of the Plan.

Information and Education

The success of the Master Plan depends to a great extent on efforts to inform citizens about the Plan and the possible need for regulatory measures to implement the Plan. Successful implementation requires the support and active participation of residents, property owners, and business owners. A thoughtfully prepared public education program is needed.

For example, citizens should be made aware of the need to protect groundwater recharge areas, endangered ecosystems, and unique or sensitive environmental areas. They must be informed about voluntary and regulatory methods of assuring protection of these areas. Efforts should be made to identify the benefits to be achieved from new regulations.

Similar educational programs are recommended as an integral part of other aspects the implementation plan. Educational programs should generally precede establishment of new regulations.

Design Standards Manual

One component in the Township's information/education program should be the preparation of a design standards manual. The purpose of the manual is to describe the type of development desired in the Township and the types of natural features and visual resources the Township would like to protect, even as development occurs. The benefit of a design standards manual is that it can be used to communicate concepts and ideas that are not appropriate for the zoning ordinance. Design issues typically included in such a manual include architecture, building orientation, parking and circulation, landscaping, utilities, lighting, signs, and access management. Some of the issues typically covered in a design manual will be addressed in the form-based code (see below).