
Introduction

Chapter One

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Planning Legislation

THIS PLAN IS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE TOWNSHIP PLANNING ACT, P.A. 168 OF 1969 AS A BASIC PLAN. IT SERVES AS THE GUIDE FOR THE ZONING ORDINANCE PURSUANT TO THE TOWNSHIP RURAL ZONING ENABLING ACT, P.A. 184 OF 1943.

The Comprehensive Plan

The Marion Township Comprehensive Plan is a guide to the future use of land in Marion Township. The Plan contains an inventory of existing and projected conditions, goals and objectives, a series of future land use designations, and a future land use map. Together these elements are used by the Planning Commission and the Township Board to guide development decisions.

Inventory of Existing and Projected Conditions

Many chapters of the Comprehensive Plan provide an inventory of specific conditions. For example, various chapters present a summary of the demographic, natural resource, land use and public opinion characteristics of the community. This data allows the Planning Commission and Township Board to both develop and implement a Plan based on an assessment of the existing and future needs of Marion Township.

Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives, often called policy statements, aid in decision making based on principles the township has decided are vital to the future well being of the community. The goals and objectives state what the community plans to do when faced with certain decisions. For example, the Township may enact a policy of promoting the protection of wetlands from conversion to residential uses. If the Township is faced with a site plan or rezoning which necessitates the alteration of a wetland, the Township in accordance with its Comprehensive Plan policies, would not support such an action. Policy statements present what the community would like to accomplish over the long term and should be supported by action. Goals and objectives also provide valuable background in the development of the future land use map.

Future Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan also contains a description of the kinds of land uses planned for the future. The Plan designations are general in nature, identifying portions of the Township for agriculture, residential, and commercial/industrial uses. A future land use map complements this text by depicting the township lands designated for each kind of use. The future land use map reflects the physical constraints identified by the inventory and the policy directions identified through goals and objectives.

Planning documents are thinking documents. A community, through its Plan, expresses its thoughts and desires for the future.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Plan is intended to be a tool to assist decision making for a number of planning related issues. The Plan and its supporting documentation contain most of the data necessary to assist elected and appointed officials and the public with:

1. Zoning Decisions in Correspondence With the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan blueprints the future of Marion Township. Zoning decisions should be in keeping with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The township's Zoning Ordinance, when aligned with the Comprehensive Plan, will be the Plan's main tool for implementation.

2. Land Use Decisions

A primary function of Marion Township government is the recommendation and review of land use decisions that preserve the health, safety and welfare of its residents. Decisions regarding special uses, variances, site plans, and transportation are regular agenda items for the Township Board and Planning Commission. The Comprehensive Plan provides necessary land use information for making difficult decisions.

3. Public Infrastructure

Prime development land combined with highway access and location within easy commuting distance of several major labor markets make Livingston County one of the fastest growing areas in southeast Michigan. This rapid growth is steadily moving from the southeast corner of the county to the rest of the county, including Marion Township, and straining local infrastructure. The Plan is a component of the decision making process when proposing public services. Roads also play an important role in growth. To be fiscally responsible and give the township a measure of control over future growth, new infrastructure must correspond with the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Vision

The development of this Plan required many different entities concerned with the future of Marion Township to work together. Through a combination of public meetings, surveys, and inventories of existing land uses, the community has developed this Plan to preserve and protect the character of Marion Township.

How the Comprehensive Plan was Prepared

The current Marion Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in October 1992. With the passage of more than ten years, Township development pressures and substantial population growth, the 1992 Comprehensive Plan no longer reflected current conditions and issues. Marion Township recognized the need for an updated Comprehensive Plan and began preliminary work. In the spring of 2002 the Township hired the Livingston County Department of Planning to assist the Marion Township Planning Commission with the preparation of the Plan. A Comprehensive Plan Survey was sent out to each Township property owner during the summer of 2002 to obtain citizen input in the Plan, and neighboring communities were notified that the Township had initiated this Comprehensive Plan process. From the spring of 2002 through the spring of 2004, working sessions were held during monthly regular or special meetings of the Marion Township Planning Commission. A public open house was held on January 13, 2004 to present a preliminary draft of the Plan and the final draft of the Plan was sent to neighboring communities and the Livingston County Planning Commission for review on September 15, 2004. A Marion Township public hearing on the Plan was held on November 10, 2004, and was adopted by the Marion Township Planning Commission on January 25, 2005.

