

Chapter Five

IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGIES

Introduction

This Master Plan establishes a strategy for growth, development and preservation in Locke Township. The Plan is comprised of graphic and narrative policies intended to provide basic guidelines for making reasonable, realistic community decisions. It establishes policies and recommendations for the proper use of land and the provision of public services and facilities. The Plan is intended to be used by local officials, by those considering private sector developments, and by all residents interested in the future of the Township. The Plan is a policy document. As a policy document, the Plan's effectiveness is directly tied to the implementation of its policies through specific tools and actions.

The completion of the Plan is one part of the planning process. Realization or implementation of the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan can only be achieved by specific actions, over an extended period of time, and through the cooperative efforts of both the public and private sectors.

Implementation of the Plan may be realized by actively:

- 1) Ensuring Township-wide knowledge, understanding, and support of the Plan, and the continued communication with and involvement of the citizenry.
- 2) Regulating the use and manner of development through up-to-date reasonable zoning controls, subdivision regulations, and building and housing codes, and other regulatory tools.
- 3) Providing a program of capital improvements and adequate, economical public services to accommodate desirable land development and redevelopment.

The purpose of this Chapter is to identify implementation tools and where applicable, specific actions to be pursued.

Public Support, Communication and Community Involvement

Citizen participation and understanding of the general planning process and the specific goals, objectives and policies of the Plan are critical to the success of the Township's planning program. Understanding and support of the Plan by local citizens can greatly enhance its implementation. This enhancement may be found in citizen support for bond proposals, special assessments, zoning decisions, and development proposals.

In order to organize public support most effectively, the Township must emphasize the necessity of, and reasons for long-range planning and the development of the Master Plan. The Township must encourage citizen participation in on-going community planning efforts.

Specific actions to be undertaken to encourage public understanding and support of the Township's planning program, and the continued communication with and involvement of the citizenry, are as follows.

- 1) Ensure that copies of the Master Plan are readily available for viewing at the Township Hall.
- 2) Post the Future Land Use Map of the Master Plan in the Township Hall where it is clearly visible.
- 3) Establish a Township web site and make the Master Plan and a listing of current events pertaining to planning and zoning matters available on the site.
- 4) Through public notices, the Township's newsletter, Township Hall postings, and other means, apprise residents of meetings that will address development proposals as the projects move through each stage of review and deliberation.
- 5) Maintain a posting at the Township Hall that identifies proposed developments and land use decisions under consideration, and where individuals may acquire additional information on such matters.

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- 6) Periodically hold special meetings for the specific purpose of discussing the Township's planning efforts and providing residents with the opportunity to share concerns and suggestions.
- 7) Include in the Township's newsletter, articles that discuss the Township's planning efforts and land use decisions currently under deliberation.
- 8) Post the newsletter at the Township Hall and other public sites for public viewing.
- 9) Encourage Neighborhood Watch programs in each neighborhood to promote cooperation and communication.

Land Development Codes

Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance is the primary tool for implementing a Master Plan. A zoning ordinance regulates the use of land. A zoning ordinance generally divides a community into districts and identifies those land uses permitted in each District. Each district prescribes minimum standards that must be met such as minimum lot area, lot width, and building setbacks.

Zoning regulations for townships are adopted under the authority of the Township Zoning Act, P.A. 184 of 1943, as amended. The purpose of zoning, according to the Act, is to (in part): *"...regulate the use of land and structures; to meet the needs of the state's citizens for food, fiber, energy, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land; to insure that use of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships; to limit the overcrowding of land and congestion of population, transportation systems, and other public facilities..."*

An important zoning tool regarding authorized uses in each district is the differentiation between *"uses permitted by right"* and *"special land uses"*:

Uses Permitted by Right: Uses permitted by right are the primary uses and structures specified for which a particular district has been established. An example may be a dwelling in a residential district.

Special Land Uses: Special land uses are uses and structures that have been generally accepted as reasonably compatible with the primary uses and structures within a district. However, because of their character, they may present potential injurious effects upon the primary uses and structures within the district or are otherwise unique in character. As a result, these uses require special consideration in relation to the welfare of adjacent properties and to the Township as a whole. An example may be a commercial stable in an agricultural district.

Special land uses require a heightened level of scrutiny in their review and officials are afforded greater discretion in determining whether a particular special land use is appropriate on a particular site.

Another important tool is the requirement for the submittal of a site plan illustrating proposed alterations and improvements to a parcel. Such a plan assists local officials to determine if the development complies with all standards of the Zoning Ordinance and if it is designed to encourage compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Adoption of zoning regulations by the Township Board provides the legal basis for enforcement of zoning provisions. The ultimate effectiveness of the various ordinance requirements, however, is dependent upon the overall quality of ordinance administration and enforcement. If administrative procedures are lax, or if enforcement is handled in an inconsistent, sporadic manner, the result will be unsatisfactory. The Planning Commission, Township Board, and staff are responsible for carrying out zoning/development related functions including the review of development plans and site inspections, community/developer liaison, and other functions. Each of these functions can require a substantial investment of time. Adequate staff levels and/or consulting assistance are necessary to ensure that these essential day-to-day functions are met and appropriate development is facilitated.

The Township first adopted zoning regulations more than 40 years ago, and has periodically updated its zoning provisions to address changing conditions and policies in the Township. The last comprehensive update of the ordinance occurred in 1999. With the adoption of this Master Plan, the Township's zoning ordinance should again be carefully reviewed to identify any amendments that may be beneficial to implement the policies of the Plan and facilitate efficient day-to-day zoning administration.

At a minimum, the following regulatory areas should be investigated and, where deficiencies may be identified, amendments should be adopted to ensure coordination between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

- 1) Appropriate schedule of Districts to implement the Plan's policies, including clear purpose statements for each District.
- 2) Appropriate delineation of authorized uses in each District, including those authorized as *"uses permitted by right"* and as *"special land uses."*
- 3) Appropriate site development standards of each District to ensure the purpose of the District is implemented.

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- 4) Appropriate site plan and special land use review procedures including sufficiency of information required to make sound decisions, scope of approval standards, clarity of procedures, and opportunities for comment by varied public bodies including police and fire departments.
- 5) Appropriate site development standards addressing:
 - a) landscaping/screening, outdoor lighting, environmental protection, access management along thoroughfares, and off-street parking;
 - b) preservation of the Township's character and environmental integrity; and
 - c) conflicts between land uses.
- 6) Facilitation of beneficial innovative development patterns, including mixed-use areas and open space developments.
- 7) Clear provisions addressing all administrative and enforcement matters to ensure consistency in the application of the Zoning Ordinance, including provisions addressing site plan review, review of special land uses, and amendments.
- 8) Inclusion of adequate green space areas as part of new development, including both residential and nonresidential development.
- 9) Inclusion of provisions to ensure multi-unit residential developments, including platted and condominium subdivisions, undergo appropriate review for conformance to the Zoning Ordinance.

Subdivision Ordinance

When a developer proposes to subdivide land, the developer is, in effect, planning a portion of the Township. To ensure that such a development is in harmony with the Master Plan, the subdivision or resubdivision of residential and nonresidential land must be adequately reviewed. A subdivision ordinance establishes requirements and design standards for the development of plats including streets, blocks, lots, curbs, sidewalks, open spaces, easements, public utilities, and other associated subdivision improvements. The Land Division Act, P.A. 288 of 1967, as amended, provides the authority for municipalities to adopt local ordinances to administer the provisions of the Land Division Act.

With the implementation of a subdivision ordinance, there is added insurance that development will occur in an orderly manner and the public health, safety and welfare will be maintained. For example, subdivision regulations can help ensure developments are provided with adequate utilities and streets, and appropriately sized and shaped lots. Adopting a local ordinance addressing the creation of subdivisions can encourage a more orderly and comprehensive manner for the review and approval of subdivision plats.

Of equal or perhaps greater importance is the adoption of a "land division ordinance." While a subdivision ordinance addresses unified residential developments of multiple units (plats), nearly all of the residential development in Locke Township to date has been incremental land divisions for the purpose of establishing a single home site. A land division ordinance assures that these incremental divisions meet certain minimum zoning ordinance standards such as lot area and width. The Land Division Act referenced above also provides municipalities with the authority to adopt a land division ordinance. Such an ordinance can ensure consistency in review and approval practices. Locke Township has adopted such an ordinance. The ordinance should be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, updated to address identified deficiencies.

Other Special Purpose Ordinances

While zoning and subdivision regulations are the most frequently used tools for the regulation of land use and development, the control of land use activities can extend beyond their respective scopes. Special purpose rules and regulations can complement zoning and subdivision regulations and further the implementation of the Master Plan. Such ordinances may address matters pertaining to noise, public nuisances, outdoor assemblies, and junk. The Township should evaluate its current special purpose ordinances and determine what new ordinances, and/or amendments made to current ordinances, may be beneficial to further implement the Master Plan.

Capital Improvements Programming

The orderly programming of public improvements is to be accomplished in conjunction with the Master Plan. The use of capital improvements programming can be an effective tool for implementing the Master Plan. In its basic form, a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a complete list of all proposed public improvements planned for a six year period (the time span may vary), including costs, sources of funding, location, and priority. It is a schedule for implementing public capital improvements that acknowledges current and anticipated demands, and recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the community. The CIP is not intended to encourage the spending of additional public monies, but is simply a means by which an impartial evaluation of needs may be made.

The CIP outlines the projects that will replace or improve existing facilities, or that will be necessary to serve current and projected land use development within a community. Advanced planning for public works through the use of a CIP ensures more effective and economical capital expenditures, as well as the provision of public works in a timely manner. Few communities are fortunate enough to

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have available at any given time sufficient revenues to satisfy all demands for new or improved public facilities and services. Consequently, most are faced with the necessity of determining the relative priority of specific projects and establishing a program schedule for their initiation and completion.

This Master Plan does not recommend significant increases in public services or infrastructure at this time, and includes no recommendations for the introduction of public sewer or water. However, as the Township grows and increased demands for public services and infrastructure improvements surface, the benefit of capital improvement programming may be particularly applicable in Locke Township.

Maintaining a Current Master Plan

Successful implementation of desired policies requires the maintenance of a current Master Plan. The Master Plan should be updated periodically. The Plan must be responsive to community changes if it is to be an effective community tool and relied upon for guidance. Periodic review of the Plan should be undertaken by the Planning Commission, Township Board, and other officials to determine whether the Plan continues to be sensitive to the needs of the community and continues to chart a realistic and desirable future. Community changes that may suggest amendments to the Plan include, but need not be limited to, changing conditions involving available infrastructure and public services, growth trends, unanticipated and large-scale development, and changing community aspirations. The importance of maintaining a current Plan is reflected by the 2002 amendment to the Township Planning Act that requires a Planning Commission to review its Master Plan at intervals not less than five years to determine whether amendments or a wholly new Plan is necessary.

Important questions that should be asked during a review of the Plan should include, at a minimum:

- 1) Does the Plan present valid and current inventory data (Appendices)?
- 2) Does the discussion of planning issues and goals/objectives (Chapter Two) continue to be appropriate for the Township today and, if not, what additions, deletions or other revisions should be considered.
- 3) Does the Future Land Use and Public Services Strategies (Chapters Three and Four) continue to reflect the preferred strategy for addressing development, preservation and public services and, if not, what revisions should be considered.

Amendments to the Plan, or the preparation of a wholly new Plan, should follow the minimum procedures delineated in the Township Planning Act in addition to measures the Township believes will enhance the planning process. The Township should seek substantive community input on possible changes during the early stages of deliberations as it has done in the past.

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