

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

and why do we prepare one?

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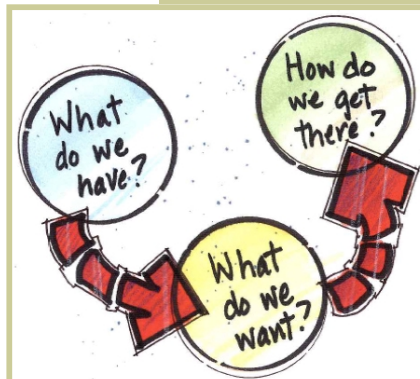
A Master Plan is a blueprint for the future. It is a comprehensive document, long-range in its view, that is intended to guide development in the City for the next 10 to 20 years. The Master Plan sets public policies regarding growth and development. The information and concepts presented in the Master Plan are intended to guide local decisions on public and private uses of land, as well as the provision of public facilities.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Master Plan process begins with an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, including a review of the City's regional setting, development history, transportation network, community facilities, and population characteristics. Upon completion of this analysis, the Planning Commission will host a *Community Open House* and *Visioning Workshop* to gather public input. Goals and objectives will then be formulated. Finally, the Planning Commission will develop a plan for Land Use, Community Facilities and Services, and Transportation. The Master Plan will also evaluate Commercial and Industrial areas, the County Fairgrounds, and the City's Gateways. Upon completion, a public hearing will be held as required by law.

MASTER PLAN VS. ZONING ORDINANCE

Zoning is a regulatory mechanism for controlling the classification and regulation of land use. It is law. The Zoning Ordinance controls land uses based on today's conditions. Unlike the Zoning Ordinance, the Master Plan is a set of policies, not a law. While the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map regulate current and proposed land use, the Master Plan is intended to guide land use decision-making over the long term (10 to 20 years). The Master Plan is a community's "vision," while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. State Law requires that the zoning ordinance be based on an adopted plan. Therefore, the Master Plan forms the basis upon which zoning decisions are made.



WHY DO WE PREPARE A MASTER PLAN?

The Municipal Planning Act of 1931 states that the planning commission shall make and approve a plan for the physical development of the municipality. In addition, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 requires that the zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote and accomplish the following objectives:

- Encourage use of land in

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will make a difference
for generations to come.*

- accordance with their character and adaptability.
- Conserve natural resources and energy.
- Meet the needs of residents for food, fiber, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land.
- Insure that uses of land be situated in appropriate locations and relationships.
- Avoid overcrowding of population and lessen congestion of transportation systems, and other public facilities.
- Facilitate provision for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, water supply, recreation, education, and other public improvements.
- Promote public health, safety and general welfare.