

A Letter from the Township

Michigan law requires every municipality that provides zoning to have a comprehensive land use plan (master plan) and to review it at least every five years. Although St. Joseph Charter Township's plan has been reviewed from time to time, the last complete revision was done in 1993. To address changes since then and to prepare for the future, the township contracted with Wightman & Associates to assist in preparing a new master plan. Members of the Wightman staff worked with a steering committee of township residents, employees and officers to identify current concerns and future possibilities for land use and prepare this Community Vision document. Information was gathered through workshops involving township residents and a graphic image preference survey.

Some of the questions that were asked included: What makes St. Joseph Charter Township a desirable place to live? Is it a good place to run a business? Do we have adequate recreational opportunities? Do we have good transportation options, including non-motorized options? Do we have the kinds of housing that new residents will be looking for? What changes could make the township a better place to live and work? How well are we relating to our neighbors: St. Joseph & Benton Harbor cities, Lincoln, Royalton & Benton townships & Shoreham Village? How can the Township create resiliency to deal with unforeseen developments in climate, economic conditions, population and government?

The goal for the Master Plan is to guide land development projects in the township for the next five to twenty years. When private and public projects are proposed, the Master Plan will help make sure that they fit the township's vision for the future. When funds become available for public investment, the Master Plan will have desired projects ready to start.

The next Master Plan will be successful if it contains reasonable and achievable goals that contribute to the safety, welfare and happiness of township residents and visitors. It should also contain some aggressive goals that may not look possible now, but will keep us looking ahead. It needs to be a living guideline, one that is referred to often and revised as conditions change. We appreciate the efforts of all who have contributed to this study.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Fisk
Michelle Alger
Bill Thomas

Mark Curtis
James Hahn

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Acknowledgements

Master Plan Steering Committee

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St. Joseph Township Board

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