

Introduction:

The fundamental purpose of a master plan is to enable a community to establish a direction for physical development, capital investment, and growth. It represents a shared vision about what a community is, what its residents value, and what the community designs it to become.

Updating the Township's Master Plan is envisioned as a three year process divided into three key phases:

1. *Community Engagement (2014-2015)*
2. *Study + Analysis (2015)*
3. *Master Plan Update/ Adoption (2016)*

This document, the **Community Vision** represents the culmination of the first two phases and more than a year of work by community members, officials, and consultants. It echoes the community's concern for the natural beauty of its surroundings and commitment to retain and strengthen quality of life.

Once the third phase is completed, the master plan will be an "umbrella document," bringing together other plans and studies, presenting a coordinated approach to future growth and areas of preservation, as well as describing future land use recommendations, funding, and implementation strategies.

Purpose: (Setting the Stage)

"In 2030, about half of the buildings in which Americans live, work, and shop will have been built after 2000. We have a vital opportunity to reshape future development." - Arthur C. Nelson, December 2004

The challenges to accommodate future development vary by region and although growth will likely not be as dramatic in the **Township**, it is by no means off the hook in needing to consider its development future. Modest growth if left unchecked will disrupt the small town tranquility, natural environment, and overall **quality of life**. Patterns of sprawl and the ensuing disinvestment threaten both the Township and surrounding areas.

Concurrently, demand from both young and old is increasing for more **compact, walkable, and high quality living, entertainment, and work environments**. Beginning with the end in mind, the Township must make important choices about the kind of community and overall quality of life it hopes to achieve. To that end, this document and ongoing planning efforts look to address these issues.

Additional Information/ Resources available at: www.miplace.org

Focus on Place: What is Place Capital:

In order to prosper, communities everywhere seek to build capital, specifically human, social, cultural, natural and infrastructural. In turn, how we channel these types of capital influences our well-being and success. Increasingly, the key to build and leverage these types of capital, is to focus on place. *Place Capital can be defined as the shared wealth, built and natural, of the public realm.*

Why are we struggling to generate Place Capital:

Today, public places often receive relatively little focus and investment beyond what is minimally required. The various disciplines, institutions, and governments have been siloed from one another and their relationships to Place Capital. National retail and advertising propogates Anytown, USA. On top of this, transportation investments usually degrade the destinations of Place Capital, favoring the movement of capital **through** places.

Placemaking as a means of creating Place Capital:

In response to our placeless environment, the significance of place is growing. Now, more than ever, we go where we like! The collaborative efforts people take to improve places that matter to them - **Placemaking** - strengthens the connection between people and the places they share. Seeing ourselves as co-creators, placemaking capitalizes on local assets, inspiration, and potential to create places that contribute to community health, happiness, and well-being.

* Source: Kent, Ethan. "Place Capital: The Shared Wealth that Drives Thriving Communities." *Project for Public Spaces*. Web.



Riverview Park



Visioning Image



St. Joseph Charter Township Hall