

CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION

The St. Joseph Charter Township Master Plan provides guidance and recommendations for actions the Township should undertake in the coming years. A master plan is only useful as long as it is implemented and consulted when making decisions. For the vision to be realized, the Township must be proactive and garner the support and participation of local leaders, other public agencies, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents alike.

The Implementation Matrix builds on Chapter 3. Goals, Objectives, and Actions with a more detailed description of strategies the Township can use to initiate and undertake key recommendations included in the Master Plan. The actions and strategies identified in this chapter represent the “next steps” to be taken in continuing the process of community planning and investment.

Use The Plan on a Regular Basis

The Master Plan should become the Township’s official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement. Once adopted, it is essential the Plan be used on a regular and day-to-day basis by Township staff, boards, commissions, and departments to review and evaluate proposals for improvement and development.

To provide further education about the Plan, the Township should:

- Make copies of the Plan available online and provide hardcopies at the Township Hall for review or purchase.
- Provide a Master Plan orientation for newly elected or appointed officials and Township staff.
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals.
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from and as a result of the Master Plan.

Implementation Matrix

Because resources are limited, it is helpful to identify the relative priority of each project with the understanding that the Master Plan includes some ambitious projects and initiatives. Actions are listed with a “priority number” as follows:

- **Priority 1** actions are those that should be given immediate and concentrated effort. Any preliminary steps that must be taken to implement the action (such as seeking funding, changes in local ordinances, etc.) should also occur as required. Projects having a longer time frame should be revisited on an as-needed basis and be incorporated into other applicable long-term planning programs, such as a capital improvements plan or recreation plan.
- **Priority 2** actions are those that are important to implement the Plan, but either depend on commencement and completion of Priority 1 actions, or do not have the same immediacy.
- **Priority 3** actions are not as urgent and can be delayed for a longer period of time. These projects are more susceptible to budgetary constraints.
- In addition to a time frame, each action includes potential funding source(s) along with the entities with capacity or responsibility for implementation.

COMMUNITY AND PLACE		Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Potential Funding Source
Goal 1: Encourage a variety of housing choices					
<i>Objective:</i> Maintain the core of single family detached homes which form the basis of the Township housing stock while encouraging the development of some other housing types.					
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Develop a new Zoning Map reflecting the areas where mixed-use development is permitted. This can be done as an overlay district in defined or “floating” areas.		2	0-2 Years	Planning Commission, Township Board, Ordinance Dept.	Township
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Review the Zoning Ordinance to determine if any existing regulations inhibit implementation of the Master Plan and amend as necessary.		1	0-2 Years	Planning Commission, Township Board, Ordinance Dept.	Township
<i>Action 1.3:</i> Promote housing types often referred to as Missing Middle Housing in advantageous locations within the Township and in particular to improve transitions between residential, commercial, and other development areas.		2	Ongoing	Township, Others	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 1.4:</i> Maintain and rehabilitate the existing housing stock. This can include amending ordinances, enhanced code enforcement, adopting design guidelines for additions and renovations, and providing educational opportunities.		1	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Ordinance Dept. Property Owners	Public, Private, Grants
Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the identity of the Township					
<i>Objective:</i> Promote the character of the Township in a consistent, coherent manner. When entering or within the Township, a person should know that they are in St. Joseph Charter Township.					
<i>Action 2.1:</i> Enhance gateways to the Township at I-94, Niles Road, Napier Avenue, Hilltop Road, and Cleveland Avenue which may include unique signage, landscape, and architectural features.		1	3-5 Years	Township	Public
<i>Action 2.2:</i> Provide activities and destinations unique to the Township for residents and visitors.		2	Ongoing	Township, Others	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.3:</i> Inventory and document the unique elements of each neighborhood and ensure Zoning Ordinance requirements are appropriate to the desired characteristics.		3	0-2 Years	Township, Others	Public
<i>Action 2.4:</i> Coordinate transportation and land use planning to ensure road improvements are done in a strategic way benefiting both users of the thoroughfare and adjacent development.		1	Ongoing	Township, County, State	Public, Grants

TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY	Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Potential Funding Source
Goal 1: Provide safe, efficient, and connected transportation that serves multiple modes.				
Objective: Improve the network of trails, sidewalks, and streets that link Township neighborhoods, parks, and commercial areas.				
Objective: Improve east and west internal mobility with the Township.				
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize projects and funding.	1	0-2 Years	Township	Township
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Explore and integrate Complete Streets guidelines and or policies and coordinate with transportation planning agencies to identify potential projects.	1	0-2 Years	Township	Public, Grants
<i>Action 1.3:</i> Improve intersections to promote walkability, bikeability, and aesthetics.	2	Ongoing	Township, Others	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 1.4:</i> Coordinate with Berrien County Public Transportation and develop a bus rapid transit link along the Hollywood Road Corridor and the Niles Road Corridor.	3	+5 Years	Township Others	Public, Grants
<i>Action 1.5:</i> Establish a Park-and-Ride at I-94.	3	+5 Years	Township, Others	County, State & Grants
Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the identity of the Township.				
Objective: Provide increased opportunities to extend the walkability and connectivity between the Township and other areas.				
<i>Action 2.1:</i> Prioritize and implement projects identified in the Non-Motorized Infrastructure Map and continue to work with other agencies and local units of government to link-non motorized infrastructure.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.2:</i> Complete, fund, and implement a wayfinding and signage plan.	2	3-5 Years	Township	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.3:</i> Establish and/ or improve trail heads throughout the Township.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Public, Grants
<i>Action 2.4:</i> Reference the Sidewalk Inventory Map to prioritize and implement targeted sidewalk improvements, i.e. Maiden Lane, Napier Avenue, Hilltop Road, etc.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.5:</i> Construct a pedestrian and/ or multi-modal bridge over the St. Joseph River.	3	+5 Years	Township, Others	Public, Grants
<i>Action 2.6:</i> Incorporate requirements for pedestrian, bicycle, and other low-speed vehicle pathways in neighborhoods and developments.	2	0-2 Years	Township	Township

NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION		Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Potential Funding Source
Goal 1: Maintain, expand, and protect public access and connectivity to the natural features of the Township.					
Objective: Increase awareness, appreciation, and protection of natural features.					
Objective: Encourage a healthy lifestyle through greater access, use, and associated amenities.					
Action 1.1: Continue to develop a Hickory Creek Trail with corresponding trail heads and crossings that inter-connect with others such as the Village of Stevensville, City of St. Joseph, and City of Benton Harbor.		1	3-5 Years	Township, Others	Public, Grants
Action 1.2: Consider conducting a Trail Feasibility Study to determine existing conditions, access and connections, type of trails, property acquisition and or easements, community engagement and education, cost estimation, and inter-agency coordination.		1	0-2 Years	Township	Public, Grants
Action 1.3: Improve wayfinding and access to existing park and recreational areas		1	3-5 Years	Township, Others	Public,
Action 1.4: Launch an initiative to ensure that residents live within the desired 20-minute walk to recreation and open space areas.		3	3-5 Years	Township	Public, Private, Grants
Action 1.5: Consider amending the Zoning Map to avoid ambiguity of public versus private property regarding recreation, open space, and conservation areas.		2	0-2 Years	Township	Township
Action 1.6: Promote green infrastructure and storm water management in conjunction with the Berrien County Master Plan and Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan.		2	Ongoing	Township, County, Others	Public, Private, Grants

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		Priority	Time Frame	Responsibility	Potential Funding Source
Goal 1: Provide additional access to goods and services at key locations within the Township.					
<i>Objective:</i> Make opportunities available for residents to have access within a 20-minute walkable distance.					
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Identify locations for additional commercial, retail, office, and mixed-use development. Ensure alignment with the Zoning Ordinance.		2	0-2 Years	Township	Township
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Explore opportunities to provide wireless internet at public and semi-public locations and community-wide expanded internet capabilities or services.		2	0-2 Years	Township, Others	Public, Private, Grants
Goal 2: Enhance the development and character of the Niles Road Corridor and other significant transportation corridors.					
<i>Objective:</i> Build upon the trend of a variety of land uses along main thoroughfares					
<i>Action 2.1:</i> Identity locations for additional residential, commercial, office, and mixed-use development.		2	0-2 Years	Township	Public, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.2:</i> Examine the efficacy of establishing a Corridor Improvement Authority.		2	3-5 Years	Township, County	Township
<i>Action 2.3:</i> Acquire further education and understanding of place-based design and the advantages of form-based codes or similar design guidelines.		2	3-5 Years	Planning Commission	Public
Goal 3: Continue to attract additional users to the industrial and business park sites.					
<i>Objective:</i> Provide additional employment opportunities and enhance the overall tax base of the community.					
<i>Action 3.1:</i> Collaborate with others to develop a strategic marketing plan.		1	0-2 Years	Township, Others	Public, Private,
<i>Action 3.2:</i> Work to become recognized as a Michigan Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC).		1	0-2 Years	Township, County, State	Township
Goal 4: Strengthen intergovernmental and interagency ties to enhance economic development.					
<i>Objective:</i> Work cooperatively with surrounding communities to improve success at retaining and attracting residents and investment opportunities.					
<i>Action 4.1:</i> Explore opportunities and develop procedures to further influence community-wide planning and development. Examples may include current efforts such as the Twin Cities Harbor Study, TwinCATS Long Range Plan, Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and yet to be identified future efforts such as a Napier Avenue corridor plan.		1	Ongoing	Township, Others	

Review of Development Regulations

A zoning ordinance establishes the types of uses allowed on specific properties and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted. Zoning is one of the most powerful tools in implementing planning policy. Adoption of the new Master Plan should be followed by a review and update to the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and various related codes, ordinances, and other development controls. Specific recommendations of the Master Plan that development regulations can address include:

- Managed growth in specific areas of the Township.
- The appropriate scale, character, and configuration of development.
- Enhancements to sidewalks, landscaping, and screening as redevelopment and reinvestment occurs in commercial areas.
- Protect and enhance recreation areas and natural features.
- Improving the Township's image as a development-friendly community through a simple and predictable review and permitting process.

Potential Funding Sources

The following is a list of possible funding sources the Township could pursue to fund implementation of the Master Plan. It is not a complete list and while information was deemed accurate at the time, the long-term availability of these funding sources cannot be guaranteed. As needed, Township should revise, update, and expand this list of potential funding sources. And while it is likely that many projects and improvements could be implemented through typical administrative or policy decisions and funded through conventional municipal programs, others may require special technical and/ or financial assistance.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): TIF funds utilize future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for improvements and incentivize further reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is reinvested in the area. Funds can typically be used for infrastructure, public improvements, land acquisition, and in offsetting the costs of development. The typical life of a TIF district in the State of Michigan is 10 years and it can be extended if approved by the county and state.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) on behalf of the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF), administers the CDBG program. CDBG is a federal grant program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Funds can be used by municipalities to help private businesses locate or expand in their community. They can also be used for infrastructure and enhance sense of place in low-and moderate-income communities. CDBG require matching funds by the municipality or benefiting business.

Brownfield Tax Incentive: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers the Brownfield Tax Incentive to assist clean up of former industrial or commercial areas that were abandoned due to environmental contamination concerns.

Recreation and Open Space Funding

Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF): Grants are available for both acquisition and development projects. \$15,000 - \$300,000 can be available for development projects such as playgrounds, nature interpretive areas, park roads and paths, and waterfront improvements. The required local match varies and grants are scored competitively across the State. There is an April application deadline and grants are issued Spring of the following year.

Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF): \$30,000 - \$100,000 available for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50% local match. There is an April application deadline and award recommendations are submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in November.

MDNR - Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant: \$30,000 - 100,000\$ available for Development projects only. 25% local match required. April application deadline, grants issued at the beginning of the year. (This type of grant is a reimbursement for project expenses.)

Transportation Related Funding

MDOT - Michigan Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program: 40% local match recommended, 20% required. Funds projects such as multi-use paths, streetscapes, historic preservation, and other safe alternative transportation options. Applications accepted year-round.

MDOT - Transportation Economic Development Fund: 20% local match required. Funds available to state, county, and city road agencies for highway needs relating to a variety of economic development issues. Applications accepted year-round.

MDOT - Rural Funds: 20% match required. Must get on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Loan Infrastructure Opportunities

USDA - United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development

SRF/ DWRF/ USDA: (State Revolving Fund/ Drinking Water Revolving Fund/ United States Department of Agriculture) Funding available for water and sewer projects. (State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, and US Department of Agriculture respectively)