



Planning for and accommodating future trends and development is an important responsibility of local governments. Holland Charter Township has been actively involved in planning its community since the adoption of its first Comprehensive Plan, the work for which began in the **1980's**. **Since that time, the community has** adopted several revisions to the Plan. These plans have been used by the Township as a basis for decisions concerning private land developments and for investing funds in necessary public facilities.

In addition, several other plans have been developed by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council for the US-

31 Corridor and our local transportation system. The Township also regularly adopts a separate Parks and Recreation Plan to better analyze the specific parks and recreation needs of the community and assist in qualifying for state and federal recreation funds.

The role of formulating and articulating the 2014 version of the **Comprehensive Plan (the “Plan”)** has been delegated to Holland Charter Township Planning Commission with advice and input from the citizens of the Township.

“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now”
Alan Lakein

Comprehensive plans, also known as master plans, offer information regarding the natural and manmade features of the Township, population characteristics and projections, goals and objectives for the future, thoroughfare plan, and significant

study of present land use conditions and current and future needs. New State mandates require that comprehensive plans be reviewed and evaluated every five years. The plan presented in this publication is a product of a careful review of existing land use and future needs of the community.

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan will assist Township staff, elected and appointed officials, with the management of current and anticipated growth pressures, and will serve as the foundation for many aspects of future decision making. In preparing the Plan, the following elements must be considered:

- **Must Have a Legal Basis**

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundation upon which zoning and related land use regulations and decisions are based. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as **amended**) **requires that the Township's** Zoning Ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to encourage

the use of lands in accordance with their character, and to limit the improper use of land. Therefore, the various elements of this Plan should establish an essential foundation for making land use decisions required by zoning and associated ordinances which regulate land use and development.

- **Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

The Plan serves as a resource document for public and private decision-making. The goals and objectives, the assessment of future land uses, and the plan implementation strategies serve as points of reference for the Planning Commission and Township Board during their consideration of zoning applications, development proposals, and investments in community infrastructure. Persons who are considering purchasing property or persons who are planning for a specific use of a property, should carefully evaluate the information provided in the plan to support their investment decisions.

- **Investment Trends/
Neighborhood Stability**

The Plan provides a statement of Township goals, policies, and physical plans regarding future land uses. This affords landowners, homeowners, prospective homebuyers, members of the business community and developers with a clear understanding of the changes that are most likely to occur in areas of the Township where they live, work, or do business. This knowledge influences a variety of investment trends. It also provides residents with some peace of mind as to the stability of their neighborhoods.

- **Program/Plan Coordination**

The Plan promotes coordinating plans, programs, and policies, as applicable, with other local governments, area-wide agencies and State agencies. The planning efforts of the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, the Ottawa County Planning Commission, the Michigan Department of Transportation, regional planning efforts and other public agencies will be influenced by the Holland Charter Township Comprehensive Plan.

*"It's not the plan that is important,
it's the planning"*

Dr. Graeme Edwards

Holland Charter Township will also carefully consider the plans of neighboring communities and will communicate proposed plans and programs to adjacent communities.

- **Environmental Protection**

The Plan includes an inventory of environmental features and discusses how they may impact the way our community develops. Policies and plans are adopted with intent to provide protection for all natural resources. The development and maintenance of high standards in order to protect natural features and community aesthetics combine to enhance the quality of life and the livability of the Township.

- **Direction...**

- **Where are we going?**

Township growth demands that we develop a plan for future development. The Plan provides the Township with

the tools and direction necessary to make decisions that will maximize our **use of the community's land**. The Plan suggests the needs for the community and translates those needs into recommendations and actions. While the Plan considers both the events of the past and the needs of the future, the decisions are ultimately based on where the community wishes to be today and into the future rather than be guided by where it has been in the past.



"You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."

Yogi Berra

- **Guidance...**

- **How do we get there?**

This Plan is a guide that will be used by the Planning Commission and Township Board to: make policy decisions as they

relate to land use, analyze physical development requests, and plan for and accommodate infrastructure needs. The Plan contains data and analyses describing the Township in its current condition while using that data to make forecasts of population growth and land use locations decisions. Plans of the past have been quite accurate in projecting the events of tomorrow.



This Plan establishes goals and objectives applicable to transportation, housing, public services and utilities, and establishes future land use areas and land development guidelines.

- **Flexible... Circumstance may require change!**

The Plan is intended to be flexible enough to allow it to respond to changing conditions and unexpected events.

Often the community may have to modify the adopted plan to integrate a new opportunity into existing plans. The Plan should not be revised arbitrarily, but rather only after a complete evaluation of its goals, objectives and policies. It is recommended that the Planning Commission conduct an annual plan review process to ensure that the plan reflects the most current conditions within the Township, and to assure that it remains an effective guide for day-to-day decision making. The annual review process should include a brief review of the existing goals and objectives to ensure that they correspond with the current objectives conveyed by the Planning Commission and Township Board.

"Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning"

Thomas Alva Edison

While the Plan must be flexible enough to accommodate the unforeseen, it must contain standards and policies which provide sufficient guidance to elected, appointed, and administrative officials

in the ongoing process of making land development decisions. The Plan is becoming increasingly important as a legal basis for making such decisions. A plan that includes specific goals, objectives, standards and policies encourages consistency in land use decisions, making them more legally defensible.

“Whatever failures I have known, whatever errors I have committed, whatever follies I have witnessed in private and public life have been the consequence of action without thought.”

Bernard Baruch

- **Necessary... State law demands we follow a plan**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) outlines how a planning commission is created, who may serve on it, and outlines the basic requirements for a master plan, including the basis for future goals and objectives. The plan must include the information required by the Planning Enabling Act in order to pass careful scrutiny by a court of law should local zoning or planning decisions be questioned.

Although this Plan states specific land use and development goals and objectives, and proposes specific land use arrangements, it holds no regulatory power. It is prepared as a foundation for, and depends primarily on, the Township’s Zoning Ordinance for its implementation.

What can we accomplish through the plan?

Planning is the process of formulating goals, objectives and plan implementation strategies applicable to the overall physical development of the community. One of the most important elements of a master plan is the establishment of goals and recommendations that will help attain the stated objectives. To be effective, the goals and recommendations must balance **the community’s desires with rights of individuals and technical evaluation.**

The goals, objectives and plan implementation strategies established by this Plan address the following important goals and objectives:

GOALS

- ◆ **Establish a land use plan that recommends where residential, commercial, industrial and public facilities and development is situated.**
- ◆ **Recommend a transportation network to serve a developed urban Township in conjunction with the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, Ottawa County Road Commission, and the Michigan Department of Transportation.**
- ◆ **Document and analyze available public facilities, utilities and infrastructure to provide guidance for future locations.**
- ◆ **Review the adequacy of parks, open space, and recreational facilities .**
- ◆ **Provide policies to protect the natural environment and landscape.**
- ◆ **Explore opportunities for intergovernmental and inter-agency cooperation.**
- ◆ **Encourage public involvement in a continuing planning process.**
- ◆ **Promote the interest of the citizens at-large as opposed to those of individuals or special interest groups.**

OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To conserve and protect property values by preventing incompatible land uses from locating adjacent to each other.
- ◆ To record and protect our natural features and environment.
- ◆ To maintain and promote the area's employment and tax base.
- ◆ To promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community.
- ◆ To provide a source of information upon which future land use and public investment decisions can be made.
- ◆ To provide guidelines for the development of public facilities and infrastructure.

How does the Plan Affect Residents, Property Owners and other Stakeholders?

- **Property Owner**

Township property owners will learn how the community envisions the use of

their land today and into the future, how the uses of neighboring properties might directly impact their property, and where public facilities are slated for the future (e.g. parks, road improvements, etc).

- **Homeowner**

Homeowners must be interested in the properties in their immediate neighborhood and the types of future development the Plan proposes for vacant land in the vicinity.

- **Residents**

Some residents do not fall under the previous two categories, it is likely that they rent or otherwise occupy property within the Township without owning it. All Township residents need to understand the overall concepts of the Plan, as expressed by its goals and objectives and where the various types of land use are located. These statements will give an **indication of the Planning Commission's** view of the Township now and in the future. Residents are not always property owners, but they have similar inter-

ests regarding available services and quality of life issues.

- **Business Owners**

The location and land use relationships of businesses in the Township should be of interest to all business owners. High quality business activity should be a priority of every master plan. Manufacturing and other industrial-related business owners should consider how the plan might impact future expansions, and how transportation improvements might serve their operations.

Follow These Steps In Order to Use this Plan:

1. **Determine where your property/neighborhood is located on the Future Land Use Map.**

The Future Land Use Map (See Map 1 in Appendix A) illustrates several future land use categories and attempts to allocate land uses in a manner that: maximizes compatible uses, utilizes space efficiently, and identifies natural features and sensitive environments; all of which

is supported by a sound transportation and utility system.



2. Determine what types of land uses and future development guidelines the Plan contemplates for your property and adjacent properties.

Review the different land use designations contained on the [Future Land Use Map](#) (see [Map 1](#) in [Appendix A](#)) and determine which future land uses are contemplated for your area. This map indicates the desired direction of growth and development in your area. These descriptions may be specific or general in nature, they are intended to provide direction to the Planning Commission as to planned land uses within the Township. Depending on the nature of your interest in the Plan, this may be as far as you carry your initial investigation.

3. Determine how the Plan may influence specific land development proposals.

If you have a specific development proposal, you should review the Plan in more detail, beginning with the goals and objectives for various land uses and other subject areas that are listed throughout the document. These elements of the Plan establish specific policies applicable to residential, commercial and industrial development, future investments in public services and infrastructure, and serve as the foundation for the Plan's development guidelines and implementation recommendations. These goals and objectives are indicators of how the Township contemplates the nature and outcomes of future development that may occur in the Township.

4. Determine how the Plan impacts the use of your property.

The future land use designation applicable to your property indicates the nature and intensity of the planned use for the property. The designation does not influence your property's current use, nor does it mean that you must change the use that is currently established. Land

use regulations are established by the Township's Zoning Ordinance, not by the Future Land Use Plan. Contact the Township Offices if you have questions regarding the zoning regulations applicable to your property.

Importance of the Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Commission intends that this Plan have a positive and productive impact on the future of the community. That impact will, under ideal circumstances, influence community image, quality of life, and the appearance and design of future land development and redevelopment projects. It also aims to have a positive influence on investments in, and expenditures for, public facility and infrastructure improvement projects.

If the Plan's ongoing mission is accomplished, it will have a positive impact on property values, and will help mold the Township into an even better place in which to live, work, play, shop, and do business.