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TO: Rolland Sizemore, Jr.
Chair of Board of Commissioners

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Anthony VanDerworp, Director
Office of Strategic Planning

DATE: November 18, 2009

SUBJECT: Lima Township Master Plan Amendment Review

BACKGROUND

Lima Township (Township) submitted an Amendment to the Lima Township Master Plan on October 8, 2009, for comment by Washtenaw County, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Municipal Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. The Act provides the County an opportunity to provide comments, which are advisory only, to the Township. The comments must include, but need not be limited to, both of the following as applicable:

- A statement as to whether the proposed master plan is consistent with the plans of contiguous communities and applicable regional plans, and;
- A statement as to whether the proposed Amendment is consistent with the County Plan.

DISCUSSION

Office of Strategic Planning staff evaluated the proposed amendments according to the goals, objectives and recommendations of *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County*. The Office of Strategic Planning distributed the amendments to the Washtenaw County Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Washtenaw County Road Commission, Office of the Water Resources Commissioner and the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) for comment. Due to an abbreviated time frame, comments were asked to be delivered directly to Lima Township.

This document was reviewed by the Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Board on October 26, 2009. After acceptance of the report by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, the report will be submitted to the Township and the contiguous communities.

ATTACHMENTS

- Proposed Resolution
- Cover Letter
- Staff Report

A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT COMMENTS FROM THE WASHTENAW COUNTY
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ON THE LIMA TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN
AMENDMENT AND DIRECT THE COUNTY CLERK TO SEND COMMENTS TO LIMA
TOWNSHIP AND THE CONTIGUOUS LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 18, 2009

WHEREAS, Public Act 33 of 2008 (“the Act”) enables the County to submit comments on the proposed Amendment to the Lima Township Master Plan to Lima Township; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires that the comments include, but not be limited to, a statement whether the proposed revisions are considered to be inconsistent with the plan of any contiguous city, village, township or region, and a statement whether the proposed plan is considered to be inconsistent with the county plan; and

WHEREAS Lima Township submitted an Amendment to the Lima Township Master Plan; and

WHEREAS the revisions were reviewed for consistency with the goals, objectives and recommendations of *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County*; and

WHEREAS the amendments are forwarded to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners as a County staff report for review;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners accepts the staff report from the Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning on the Lima Township Master Plan Amendment, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners directs the County Clerk to send the comments to Lima Township and the contiguous local units of government.



Washtenaw County
Office of Strategic Planning

October 15, 2009 – Draft until Adoption

Arlene Bareis
Clerk, Lima Township
11452 Jackson Rd.
P.O. Box 59
Chelsea, MI 48118

Re: Lima Township Master Plan Amendment

Dear Ms. Bareis:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Lima Township Master Plan draft amendments. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, the Township Plan was reviewed by Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning and the Board of Commissioners.

Staff reviewed the proposed amendment in the context of *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County* (County Plan), plans of contiguous local units of government and the current Lima Township Master Plan (Township Plan). Staff found the proposed amendments to be consistent with the County Plan and the plans for the contiguous communities.

Worth commending is the Township's effort to create mixed use, pedestrian friendly commercial nodes where infrastructure currently exists. This development pattern provides an alternative to developing open space and farmland and minimizes the cost of service provision. The Township Plan also includes text in various locations discouraging sprawling or linear development patterns along Jackson Road – one of the primary places the community is likely to see development pressure.

Although the following recommendations are not applicable to the consistency with the County Plan, we strongly encourage the incorporation of the following to enhance the overall plan:

- The Future Land Use Plan Map identifies the Fletcher Road and Jackson Road intersection as an "activity center" while the text refers to these Village Commercial areas as "nodes". Additionally, the Jackson Road and Parker Road intersection is not circled on the map. The text and map should reflect the same terminology for consistency. The identification and encouragement of directing growth toward these "activity centers" is supported by the County Plan Landscapes Objective 2: Promote the development of new, compact, mixed use, transit-oriented activity centers."

- The Township expresses the importance of protecting agriculture and avoiding “uncoordinated, inefficient and hazardous strip development”. Currently the area between the two “nodes” is Agriculture (AG-1). Additional language or tools to keep commercial development from encroaching upon this 2-3 mile area of the Jackson Road corridor would be beneficial in directing growth and density toward appropriate areas of the Township, leaving less appropriate areas to remain natural or farmed and re-enforcing the Township’s commitment to agricultural and open space preservation. Possible tools include Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and TDR-like zoning ordinance provisions, such as Open Space Planned Unit Developments with Enhanced Development (OS-ED-PUD). The Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning has recently developed a model ordinance and master plan language for OS-ED-PUD which is available for local community use.
- The new section to the Implementation and Zoning Plan which provide descriptions on the purposes and characteristics of each zoning district is an important addition to the Township Plan. There are a few examples in which more consistency between text and the Future Land Use Map, as well as some clarification, is necessary: Not all Districts are covered in this description, the District names are often not consistent with those provided on the Future Land Use Map, and some districts are not present on the Map.

The attached staff report provides additional detail and background regarding County comments. Additionally, agency comments are provided containing further detailed recommendations and should be reviewed and considered. On behalf of the Office of Strategic Planning and the Board of County Commissioners, I would like to thank you for your contribution to promoting a shared vision for Washtenaw County.

Sincerely,

Anthony VanDerworp, Director
Office of Strategic Planning
Washtenaw County

AV/ad

Attachments
Staff Report

Cc: Dexter Township
Village of Dexter
City of Chelsea
Sylvan Township
Scio Township
Freedom Township

Lyndon Township
Webster Township
Lodi Township
Sharon Township



Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning

Staff Report

RE: Lima Township Master Plan Amendments – Washtenaw County Review

Staff Report Date: October 15, 2009

Background

The Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning received the draft Lima Township Master Plan amendments (Township Plan) on October 8, 2009. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, the County is to provide comments to the Township, which must include two statements of consistency:

- A statement as to whether, after considering any comments received by contiguous local units of government, the proposed amendments are consistent with the plan of contiguous communities, and;
- A statement as to whether the proposed amendments are consistent with the County Plan.

The proposed amendment was reviewed for consistency with *A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County* (County Plan). Due to the time frame, the Washtenaw County Department of Development Services, Department of Parks and Recreation, Road Commission, Department of Public Health, Office of the Water Resources Commissioner and the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) were made aware of the amendment, but comments were not included in this staff report.

Summary of Update/Review in context of County Plan

The Township Plan Amendment introduces a new Village Commercial Area which is “envisioned as mixed use area designed to complement and blend with the rural character”. The intent of this district, as well as the language encouraging these mixed use areas to be pedestrian friendly is to be commended. The Plan further describes that these districts are intended to function as commercial “nodes” at the Jackson Road and Parker Road intersection and the Jackson Road and Fletcher Road intersection. If not referenced elsewhere in the Township Plan, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study Non-motorized Plan should be referenced for recommendations on incorporating non-motorized access and safety improvements. There are two notes related to the creation of these “nodes”:

1. The Future Land Use Plan Map identifies the Fletcher Road and Jackson Road intersection as an “activity center”. If this term is intended to reference these Village Commercial areas or commercial “nodes” as given in the district description, the map should reflect the same terminology for consistency. Additionally, the Jackson Road and Parker Road intersection is not circled. The identification and encouragement of directing growth toward these “activity

centers” is supported by the County Plan Landscapes Objective 2: Promote the development of new, compact, mixed use, transit-oriented activity centers.”

2. The Township expresses the importance of protecting agriculture and avoiding strip development including language in the Commercial Goals and other portions of the Plan speaks to the goal of avoiding “uncoordinated, inefficient and hazardous strip development”. Currently the area between the two “nodes” is Agriculture (AG-1). Additional language or tools to keep commercial development from encroaching upon this 2-3 mile area of the Jackson Road corridor would be beneficial in directing growth and density toward appropriate areas of the Township, leaving less appropriate areas to remain natural or farmed and re-enforcing the Township’s commitment to agricultural and open space preservation.

It is recommended to include specific language and provisions for implementing tools such as Transfer of Development Rights and similar programs to further supports the Township’s commitment to its agricultural heritage. TDR-like zoning ordinance provisions, such as Open Space Planned Unit Developments with Enhanced Development (OS-ED-PUD), would further the Township’s ability to manage growth and development in a way which protects natural resources, open space character, and the efficiency of providing services. The Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning has recently developed a model ordinance and master plan language for OS-ED-PUD which is available for local community use.

Although agricultural preservation is addressed as an objective within the plan, an important part of maintaining the agricultural sector is the viability of the local and regional agricultural economy. Lima Township should consider adding a goal, objective, or a policy that supports and/or endorses the five-county Southeast Michigan Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP) to help support agricultural producers in the Township and the region as well as encourage new agricultural and food system economic opportunities. Visit the FSEP website <http://www.fsepmichigan.org> for more information on the program.

Also included in the Lima Township Master Plan Amendments are new sections to the Implementation and Zoning Plan, specifically descriptions on the purposes and characteristics of each zoning district were added. The following are comments on this portion of the Amendment:

1. An expressed purpose is to “guide development to prevent future conflicting land uses (i.e. high density residential adjacent to agricultural operations).” However the Future Land Use Map has high density residential adjacent to agricultural operations to the southwest of the Jackson Road and Parker Road intersection. Careful consideration of transitions and land use development patterns should be considered to minimize potential land use conflicts here.
2. The Agriculture (AG-1) description states that the “regulations of the district are designed to exclude or discourage uses and building that demand substantial public or private services”. This is not included as a goal of the Recreation

Conservation (RC) District but may be equally appropriate for inclusion in this section.

3. The AG-2 Agricultural District is intended to enable the “incorporation of environmentally fragile areas...into low density subdivisions; to retain...a predominately open space character”. Including language on implementation tools such as clustering will balance the needed housing and services with the preservation of natural resources and sensitive areas, and further strengthen the intent of this district. This language should be echoed in the Rural Residential (RR) and Suburban Residential (R-1A & R-1B) districts.
4. The District names given in this Zoning Plan amendment do not always match those in the Future Land Use Plan Map. This therefore leaves the reader to match districts by abbreviation, leading to further confusion. For example the map does not indicate “Urban Residential”, but rather a “Suburban-Medium Density” and “Medium Density Residential.” Likewise, Low Density Residential (R-2A) is not indicated on the map by that name, but rather as “High Density Residential”. The text refers to LI as “Light Industrial” while the map calls this area “Limited Industrial”. Consistency between the text of the Township Plan and the maps will add to the legal defensibility of the document. Additionally, Mobile Home Residential (MH) and Office (O) are not indicated on the map.
5. General Commercial District discusses the importance of steering the community away from strip and linear development and instead encouraging cluster development. The consistency of this language throughout the text as it relates to commercial development is consistent with the principles of sustainable development patterns and the Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County.
6. Some of the districts addressed in other portions of the plan are not present in these Districts and Dimensional Standards of the Implementation and Zoning Plan. For example, there is no Village Commercial District covered although it is introduced as a new district earlier in the amendment. The Public Facilities District is also missing from this section of the text.

Review of Plan in Context of Contiguous Community Master Plans

The proposed Township Plan amendment is consistent with the master plans of adjacent communities.