

## Welcome to Lansing Township

Lansing Township, founded in 1842, originally occupied 36 square miles in the northwestern corner of Ingham County. In 1847, the State Legislature decided to move the seat of government from Detroit to Lansing Township. Many Legislators felt that the Capitol needed to be more centrally located and more strategically secure than Detroit, which bordered a “foreign nation.” There were howls of laughter and ridicule when Ingham County Representative Joseph Kilborne made a motion from the floor to select Lansing Township as the next site of the State Capitol. The Detroit Legislators thought it was a joke, but many other Legislators joined in and after many days of bickering and bargaining, Lansing Township was the choice of compromise. And for the next two years Michigan’s State Capitol was located in Lansing Township.

The platting and incorporation of the City of Lansing in 1849 began a process of annexation that has profoundly changed the physical shape and political position of the Township. Although the Township grew rapidly through the first half of the 20th Century, increasing from 1,353 in 1900 to almost 12,000 by 1969, it lost population and land to the City of Lansing through annexation and the City of East Lansing also began to encroach on its eastern border. Today the Township consists of 5 noncontiguous areas covering a little less than 5 squares miles. It borders on Delta, Delhi, Meridian, and Dewitt townships,

and the cities of Lansing and East Lansing.

Despite its small land base, Lansing Township continues to be home for more than 8,000 people and remains an important part of the greater Lansing Community. Until 2006, General Motors operated 2 large factories that manufactured parts for tanks during the Second World War, jet engines during the Korean conflict, and was the facility where the original electric car—the EV-1—was produced in the early 1990s. Eastwood, a recently constructed 350,000 square foot lifestyle center featuring 60 shops, a state of the art 18-screen cinema, and popular restaurants, is located in the northeastern section of the Township. It has become a busy destination for locals and visitors alike. The Township’s many stable residential neighborhoods continue to offer a range of housing options to residents. Waverly Community Schools provide excellent educational opportunities for children living on the Westside, while children on the Eastside are able to take advantage of neighborhood and magnet schools operated by the Lansing Public School district.

Lansing Township is dedicated to the provision of high quality public services for its citizens, and those from surrounding communities. Highly qualified, full time police and fire departments provide public safety services in all areas of the Township, and assist public safety agencies in surrounding communities through well-established mutual aid agreements.



Owned and operated by the Township for more than 60 years, West Side Water provides potable water to more than 5000 people in parts of Delta Township, the City of Lansing and throughout the entire west side of Lansing Township.

## Planning Process & Purpose

Land use decisions fundamentally influence the quality of life in every community. Due to their scale, many of them involve a substantial investment of resources, and are thus often difficult and even prohibitively costly to reverse. Poor decision-making can lead to mistakes that are intractable and even catastrophic. On the other hand, wise decisions can promote future prosperity and a high quality of life. Therefore, it is essential that the relationship between land use decisions and other development activities, and the future well being of a community is understood—and understood as thoroughly and comprehensively as is possible.

Comprehensive planning is a process through which a community can come to such an understanding by establishing long range goals and devising strategies to achieve them. By evaluating prevailing social, economic, and environmental conditions, and understanding community preferences, a comprehensive plan can help a community to move toward a desirable future. This endeavour culminates in the production of a document known as the “Master Plan.” The Master Plan will pro-

vide the Lansing Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission with an official policy to guide community development for the next 25 years and beyond. To paraphrase the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 (the state statute which both requires and enables communities to make master plans), the purpose of the Master Plan will be to “guide and accomplish” development that is coordinated, harmonious, efficient, economical and best promotes public health, safety, prosperity, and the general welfare (see Section 125.3807 of P.A. 33 of 2008). As mentioned before, the Master Plan should be comprehensive and, according to the Planning Enabling Act, can address and promote a system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets; safety from fire and other dangers; light and air; healthful and convenient distribution of population; good civic design and wise and efficient use of public funds; public utilities; and recreation.

It should be emphasized that the Master Plan is not intended to be a static document, and should not be thought of that way. It is a “living document” that will need to be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure its relevance amidst changing conditions. Recent events in our economic markets underscore this need. As required by the Planning and Enabling Act, the Plan-

*“At least every 5 years after adoption of a master plan, a planning commission shall review the master plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the master plan or adopt a new master plan”  
Section 45.(2) of the Michigan Avenue Planning Enabling Act of 2008.*



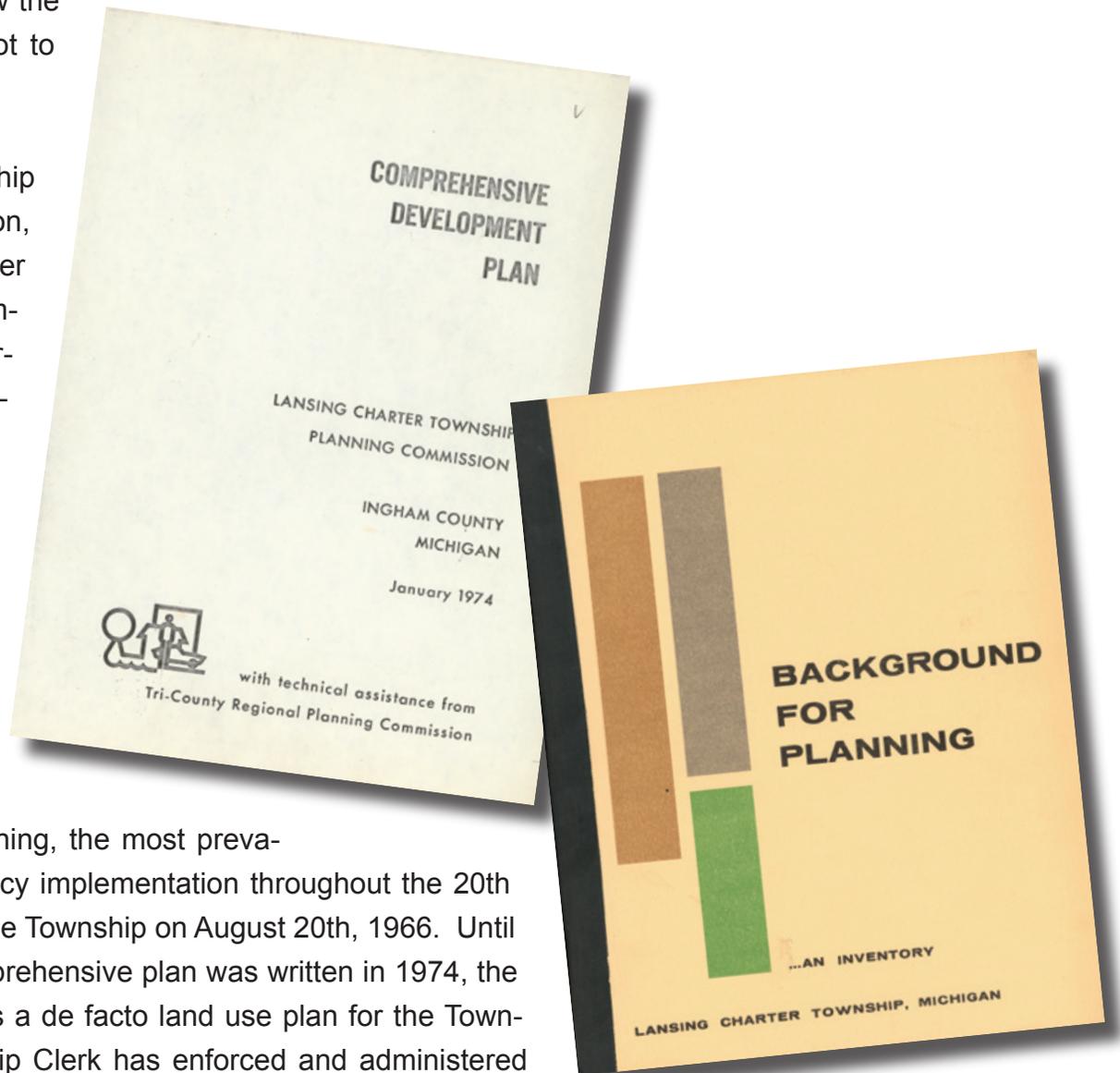
ning Commission should review the plan and decide whether or not to revise it every 5 years.

Beyond guiding the Township Board and Planning Commission, it is also hoped that the Master Plan will be touchstone for community-based and entrepreneurial initiative; and that it will inspire individuals, organizations, and businesses to pursue its objectives independently and in cooperation with the Township government.

## Previous Planning Efforts

Planning is by no means new to Lansing Township. Zoning, the most prevalent instrument of planning policy implementation throughout the 20th Century, was first adopted by the Township on August 20th, 1966. Until the first, and most recent, comprehensive plan was written in 1974, the zoning ordinance functioned as a de facto land use plan for the Township. Since 1966, the Township Clerk has enforced and administered these regulations.

In 1974, the Planning Commission oversaw the writing of the first master Plan titled “Comprehensive Development Plan.” Prepared with technical assistance from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, this document was



accompanied by an extensive study of existing conditions in the Township and also contained the first Future Land Use map used by the Township. The accompanying document, Background for Planning ... An Inventory, cataloged the demographic, economic, and environmental characteristics and offered recommendations concerning community facilities and infrastructure including schools, public safety, parks, administration, potable water, sanitary and stormwater sewers, solid waste disposal, energy and communications infrastructure.

In 1983 the Township Board created both their Downtown Development Authority and Economic Development Corporation. The Township hired a full-time Planning Direc-

tor in 2002 to coincide with its effort to seriously focus on development and redevelopment. The Downtown Development Authority Board adopted a Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan in 2003, and realized its first priority when the Eastwood DDA area was master planned in 2005. That document, entitled Eastwood, a Living Center extensively analyzed the Eastwood district, established an ambitious vision for sub areas and the entire district, and recommended strategies for implementation of those plans. Also in 2005, a brief "concept plan" studied non-motorized transportation networks in and around the Eastwood district. Several other studies have been prepared which analyze particular development opportunities in the DDA.



## Using this Document

The Lansing Township Master Plan is divided into several sections that provide background information and recommendations for future decisions and policy making. These sections describe community goals and objectives, Lansing Township's demographic characteristics, the composition and condition of its housing stock, economic conditions, environmental features and issues, land use characteristics, and potential strategies for meeting goals and objectives.

Although the document can be read from front to back, each section can be used alone to answer questions related to specific issues. Almost every section concludes with a brief summary that has been drawn from the preceding discussion and recommendations for future actions. Sections following this introductory include

1. A community vision and goals section which delineates the values and goals which frame this study and have informed its recommendations;
2. A community profile describing the demographic characteristics of Lansing Township and implications for local economic development and land use policy;
3. An economic profile describing current economic conditions at the local, regional, and state level and implications for local economic development and land use policy;
4. A housing inventory describing the characteristics and condition of the Township's housing stock and related policy recommendations;
5. A natural resources & environment section describing important natural features, the impact of human activities on the environment, and implications for local economic development and land use policy;
6. A brief summary of public facilities;
7. An analysis of current land use patterns, zoning, and recommendations for future land use patterns and recommendations for addressing known and anticipated issues arising from non-conforming and illegal land uses, undesirable development patterns, and opportunities for positive change and growth;
8. A summary of policy and programmatic recommendations concludes the master plan and is intended to a brief guide for Township policy makers, residents, property owners, and the business community.



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