



L A R K I N T O W N S H I P
M A S T E R P L A N

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Larkin Township Master Plan

Midland County, Michigan

Adopted March 9, 2005 by the
Larkin Township Planning Commission

Jerry Steger, Chair

Cathy Skalnican

Barry Yano

Duane Bremer

Karen Hitchcock

Dan Arriola

Prepared with the Assistance of Wade-Trim



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INTRODUCTION

Larkin Township is located near the center of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula in Midland County, just north of the City of Midland. It is a place where people have chosen to live, work, and play, and therefore is a place where certain services and facilities are required. Police, fire protection, parks, religious institutions, government centers, retail shops, meeting places and a host of other facilities are woven together by physical infrastructure and communication routes.

In support of these regular operations, the Township has created a number of commissions, including the Planning Commission. As one of its many duties, the Planning Commission has oversight responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the Township Master Plan. In part, Michigan State statutes provide that the purpose of a Township Master Plan is: to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; and to consider the character of the Township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development. The Township Master Plan includes narrative, maps, charts, and graphic material that provide a basis for the Planning Commission’s recommendations for the future development of the Township. The Township Master Plan is linked with the Township Zoning Ordinance, which is the regulatory mechanism through which the usage of land is governed.

The Master Plan is a realistic assessment of current conditions and an expression of the future goals and vision of the Township, defining the form and character it seeks to achieve. The plan provides guidance to both the public and the private sectors regarding a range of topics beyond future land use, such as economic and residential growth decisions. Finally, the plan will be responsive to the land use changes that occur within the Township. The development of land can be dynamic and alter significantly over time. Therefore, the plan must be flexible to these changes while still advancing the goals and objectives of the community.

AUTHORITY

The Township derives its authority to develop a Master Plan from Public Act 263 of 2001, which was recently adopted by the Michigan State Legislature to amend the 1959 Public Act 168, which provides townships with the ability to plan their community. Public Act 263 states:

“The township planning commission shall make and approve a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the township.”

The master planning process is cooperative and public. Input from the public and various governmental entities are gathered throughout the planning process. Public Act 263 requires a planning commission to hold a public hearing before the final adoption of a master plan. Also, Public Act 263 requires review of a master plan after a five-year period but allows for change at any time. It is important to note that a public hearing is required if a planning commission wishes to alter or amend a master plan after its original adoption. This process offers a planning commission the opportunity to analyze and address any significant changes to the community that may result in needed modifications to the plan. It also provides the opportunity to ascertain progress in implementing the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.





PURPOSE

This planning process has been designed to involve conscious selections of policies relating to growth and development in Larkin Township. The Master Plan serves to promote these policies through the following:

1. Provides a general statement of the Township's goals and a comprehensive view of the community's preferred future.
2. Serves as the primary policy guide for Township officials when considering zoning, land division, capital improvement projects and any other matters related to land development. Thus, the Master Plan provides a stable and consistent basis for decision making.
3. Provides the statutory basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance, as required by the State of Michigan.
4. Helps to coordinate public improvements and private development activities to assure the judicious and efficient expenditure of public funds.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The process of developing a document which is both meaningful to the community and feasible in its implementation must enjoy the participation of a larger stake-holding group. In order to garner this needed input, regular communication between the Planning Commission and Larkin Township stakeholders must occur. Knowledge regarding the concerns of the community was gained through multiple meetings, two public workshops, and a public hearing. This type of direct interaction with stakeholders allows for a more complete framework of the concerns and needs of Larkin Township community members.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Master Plan is divided into eight sections to communicate the most complete and accurate picture of the existing conditions within Larkin Township, as well as its vision for the future. These sections include an analysis of the greater region, population characteristics, existing land use, natural features, and community facilities. Additionally, the future character of the Township will be articulated through description of its goals and objectives, future land use, and plan implementation strategies. To supplement verbal descriptions, visual representations of data, such as photographs, maps, and other graphics, are also included. These sections represent the history and future of development within Larkin Township and therefore provide a guide for its continuing growth and evolution in the coming years.

