



# INTRODUCTION

**A** community Master Plan can be described as visionary, resourceful, informative, and, in many cases, historical. It is a long-range policy document that is intended to guide future decision-making related to land use and community development. It is intended to portray a clear statement of community goals and objectives - a vision of the future – and plans to achieve the vision.

## WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A community's Master Plan is a blueprint for the future. It is a comprehensive document, long-range in its view, and intended to guide development in the Township over a period of 10 to 20 years. The Master Plan sets forth public policies that will be followed regarding growth, development, and redevelopment. The information and concepts presented in the Master Plan are intended to guide local decisions on both public and private uses of land, as well as the provision of public facilities.

***Master Plan  
= Guide***

## WHY DOES A COMMUNITY PREPARE A MASTER PLAN?

The Township Planning Act of 1959 states that **“the planning commission shall make and adopt a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the Township.”** The Act also states that the plan should be used to:

- ✍ promote public health, safety and general welfare;
- ✍ encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability;
- ✍ avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people;

- ✍ lessen congestion on public roads and streets;
- ✍ facilitate provision for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and
- ✍ consider the character of each township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trends in land and population development.

## **WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE?**

Zoning is a regulatory mechanism for controlling the classification and regulation of land use. It is law. The Zoning Ordinance controls land uses based on today's conditions.

Unlike the Zoning Ordinance, the Master Plan is a set of policies, not a law. While the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map regulate current and proposed

***Zoning  
Ordinance  
= Law***

land use, the Master Plan and its maps and policy statements are intended to guide land use decision-making over the long term. The Master Plan is a community's "vision," while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision.

**State law requires that the zoning ordinance be based on an adopted plan.** Therefore, the Master Plan forms the basis upon which zoning decisions are made. With a Master Plan in place, zoning decisions consistent with the plan are presumed by the courts to be valid; it is up to the challenger to prove the municipality's action is not valid. Without a Master Plan, the courts may find the Township's argument to be weaker, leaving the community more vulnerable to a negative ruling.

## **THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Clyde Township initiated the Master Plan process by working with its planning consultant to prepare an inventory and analysis of existing conditions - an environmental scan. The Planning Commission reviewed its regional setting, development history, existing land use, natural features, and population characteristics. Problems, opportunities, and community assets were identified. The existing conditions analysis findings are provided in the Appendix of this document.

Concurrent with the completion of the existing conditions analysis, the Planning Commission mailed a Citizen Survey to a sample of all property

owners within the Township. Once the survey results were available, the Township Planning Commission reached out to the public for additional input through the Visioning process. Representatives from a variety of interests within the community came together on June 25, 2002 to discuss the future of Clyde Township and assist in preparing a Vision Statement.

The next step in the process was for the Planning Commission to develop its goals and objectives statements. Using the valuable input from the citizen survey and the Visioning process, a series of goals and objectives were formulated to guide the "Plan" elements of the Master Plan.

The final task was to prepare a Land Use Plan and Thoroughfare Plan to guide future development. The final "Plan" chapters were prepared with direct references to the goals and objectives. In addition, action items for plan implementation were incorporated into the final document to chart a path to make the plan a reality. It is important to note that the Land Use Plan Map is intended to show generalized land use and is not intended to indicate precise size, shape or dimension. In addition, the recommendations of the Land Use Plan have a long-range planning horizon and do not necessarily imply that short-range rezoning is appropriate.

The final step in the planning process was to garner additional public input through a public hearing, which is required by the Township Planning Act. This final segment of the process provided an opportunity to receive public input prior to the adoption of the plan.

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