

Chapter 7

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This Plan was prepared to protect and improve the quality of life in DeWitt Charter Township. However, as important a benchmark as this updated Comprehensive Development Plan represents, the initiatives proposed in this Plan will not implement themselves. It will take continued support and commitment for many years.

The central ingredients to successful Plan implementation will be:

- Commitment by the Planning Commission, the Board of Trustees, and staff of the Township.
- A citizenry educated on the vision in this Plan. Information about farmland protection options, neighborhood conservation and implementation of the growth management strategy need to reach citizens or they may not understand why and how local decision-making is directed to implementing this Plan.

FOCUSING ON PRIORITIES

As the body principally responsible for preparing and maintaining a Comprehensive Development Plan for a community, but one which also has substantial responsibilities in review of proposed developments for zoning compliance, it is easy for a Planning Commission to become distracted with ongoing tasks or ad hoc, controversial issues. Still, the Planning Commission needs to prioritize its tasks relative to implementation of this Plan. Time needs to be set aside for high priority items. These include the preparation of an annual report and work program for the next year, drafting updates to the Zoning Ordinance, assisting the Township Board with any capital improvements or public land acquisitions or disposals, and the five-year Plan update. These are discussed below.

ANNUAL TASKS

As required by the Township Planning Act, the Planning Commission should prepare an annual report to the Township Board on all the activities it undertook in the previous year, with a special focus on actions taken to implement this Plan. A proposed work program that identifies priorities and projected expenses for the next year should also be prepared and submitted in time to be included in the annual budget process.

TOP PRIORITIES

The Planning Commission cannot be expected to implement all of the measures listed in Chapter 3 (Vision, Goals, and Policies), Chapter 4 (Future Land Use), and Chapter 5 (Zoning Plan) alone. Many of these can only be accomplished with support from the Township Board and with help from other agencies or groups both within and outside of the Township. It is essential that discussions begin with each of these entities so that

they understand the goals, find agreeable common ground where there are differences, and obtain a commitment to a common action.

Photo 7-1

Preserving the Natural Environment, while Accommodating New Homes and Linking them throughout the Township are Key Priorities of this Plan



Photograph by Stephen C. Musselman

LIST OF RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES

The following activities should be the key priorities of the Planning Commission and Township Board for the next five years:

1. **South Central Neighborhood Conservation and Commercial Revitalization Plan** (see Special Planning Areas Map 4-2)
 - Create a South Central Neighborhood Conservation and Commercial Revitalization Plan. One portion would be a subarea plan for neighborhood conservation and improvement in the south central portion of the Township on each side of US-27BR. The other portion would be a subarea plan for revitalization, reuse, and redevelopment of commercial and industrial uses along US-27BR.
 - Adopt and implement a housing conservation code and enforcement program.
 - Select the best option for linking interested homeowners (existing and prospective) to state and federal low interest loan and home improvement programs.
 - Explore the costs, benefits and feasibility of establishing a brownfield redevelopment authority and downtown development authority to assist with improvements in the subarea. If appropriate, establish and implement one or both of these entities.
 - Prepare an access management plan for south US-27BR.
 - Select the best option for linking interested business owners (existing and prospective) to state and federal low interest loan and business improvement programs.

2. Zoning & Related Ordinance Amendments

- Update the Township Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with this Plan as outlined in Chapter 5 and other relevant parts of this Plan.
- Review other land development regulations in the Township (such as land division and subdivision regulations) and update as necessary to be consistent with this Plan. Especially require interconnected streets and trails with each new development.
- Add lock-in driveway's regulations along undeveloped land throughout Township as part of the access management regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.
- Establish right-of-way preservation standards in the zoning and subdivision regulations consistent with the recommendations in Chapter 6.
- Increase zoning setbacks along arterials and collectors based on the future ROW line as discussed in Chapter 6.
- Add transit friendly design standards to the zoning ordinance to improve safety and convenience for children and seniors who use transit service along US-27BR and implement through site plan review.
- Add interconnected bicycle and pedestrian circulation system standards to the site plan review standards of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Adopt an adequate public facilities ordinance to ensure that each new increment of development will be adequately served by public facilities at the time it is ready for occupancy.

3. North Central Commercial Development and Mixed Use TND Plan (see Special Planning Areas Map 4-2)

- Facilitate public and property owner input into a north central area Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Plan, as described in Chapter 4. Based on the public and property owner input, prepare a conceptual TND Plan for development east of US-27BR, north of Webb Road and west of Wood Road with appropriate form-based code zoning amendments to ensure the desired development occurs as intended.
- Prepare an access management plan for US-27BR north of Webb Road on both sides of the road.
- Determine and then adopt development restrictions to accompany expansion of public sewer along north US-27BR and the timing for such an extension. Clearly identify desired commercial uses along the corridor along with the scale and mass of desired development. This activity should be done concurrent with, or as a part of the preparation of the access management plan (described above), and depending on the timing, possibly coincident with the development of the TND plan as well.

4. Opportunity-Based Initiatives

- Work closely with MDOT, the Clinton County Road Commission, the Capital City Airport Authority, the City of DeWitt and other abutting jurisdictions to implement the road improvements proposed in this Plan.
- Develop a Greenway Plan which identifies trail locations and options for creating the trails, as well as identify appropriate implementation tools for acquisition of title or development rights from willing sellers, and set up funding mechanisms for implementation. Link all parts of the Township and insert trail connections with trails in similar plans of adjoining jurisdictions.

- Create bike paths along key Township roads as they are repaved/extended/restriped where warranted.
- Design and implement a major tree-planting program along Township Roads in order to preserve rural character, slow traffic, and thereby improve travel safety and the visual interest of each drive.

5. Duty-Based Initiatives

- Educate all citizens about the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of the updated Comprehensive Development Plan and provide technical assistance in the integration of these elements into property owner development and redevelopment efforts.
- Use capital improvement programming process to assist with staging infrastructure improvements.
- Work with adjoining jurisdictions to ensure affordable housing needs in this part of the County are met.
- Use this Plan in the analysis and review of proposed rezonings, zoning text amendments, site plans, and new or amended master plans of adjoining jurisdictions submitted to the Township for statutory review and comment.
- Exercise the inter-jurisdictional review authority of draft plans and plan amendments in ways to improve local decisions by guiding them toward integrated and coordinated solutions based on the core policies in this Plan.
- Monitor neighboring jurisdiction and County agency decisions and periodically inform other local governments and the County Board of Commissioners on the status of efforts to implement this Plan.
- Join efforts with others outside the Township to modernize planning and zoning enabling legislation and to authorize or use new tools to better manage growth and preserve open space.
- At least once each five years, the Comprehensive Development Plan should be thoroughly reviewed and jointly updated by the Planning Commission and the Township Board.