

## Introduction

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### Description and Purpose of Master Plan

Generally, the master plan is a guide for the future that recommends how the township should develop in order to meet community goals. A sound master plan helps ensure a logical development pattern that will result in a highly desirable community in which to live or work. A plan allows residents, business owners and developers to make investments with a reasonable expectation of what will happen in the future. In essence, the plan represents a balance between the sometimes competing interests of the environment, individual landowners and the community overall.

The plan directs the intensity and arrangement of various types of land uses and promotes design that complements the character of the township. The plan will strive to provide a complementary mix of land uses intermingled with impressive natural features to create a sustainable, livable community.

The master plan goals and future land use plan will assist township leaders in decisions, which consider the long-term implications for the community. These community-wide implications may not be immediately apparent to the individual property owner or citizen, but the impacts of each decision are linked and become visible over time. Poor planning decisions are difficult to eliminate; most linger for a long time. The master plan can be viewed as a community blueprint for the future, a mechanism to help ensure each decision fits as part of the whole.

Among the many reasons for the master plan are the following:

- Present a future land use map that illustrates how the township should develop over time.
- Provide a legal basis for zoning and other regulations for the type, intensity and timing of development.
- Ensure that as development occurs, the most significant natural features are preserved.
- Outline specific strategies to address situations where one land use is not compatible with an adjacent land use.
- Recommend improvements to intersections and roadway sections needing attention due to rapidly increasing traffic volumes.
- Address the changing desires and needs of residents.
- Desire to provide a sustainable community and a land use pattern which translates into a diversified tax base to support the desired facilities and services.
- Provide specific recommendations for redevelopment along Macomb Street.
- Coordinate land use recommendations with anticipated land use changes and infrastructure improvements with the county.

### Legal Basis for Plan

The Grosse Ile Township Plan is prepared under the authority of the Township Planning Act (P.A. 168 of 1959, as amended) which authorizes the planning commission to prepare a master plan. The purpose of this plan is set forth in section 2 of the act as follows:



GROSSE ILE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

*The purpose of plans prepared pursuant to this act shall be to promote public health, safety and general welfare; to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; to avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people; to lessen congestion on public roads and streets; to facilitate provision for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and to consider the character of each township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and population development.*

The planning commission has the role to prepare the plan, and is holding public meetings and hearings to assure full opportunity for citizen participation in the preparation of the plan. Once fully drafted, this plan will be revised based upon comments received at public meetings, and adopted by resolution of the planning commission.

**Comparison of Master Plan to Zoning**

The master plan provides general direction on the future development pattern. Some of the master plan recommendations will be implemented through amendments to the zoning ordinance text and map. However, the master plan itself does not change the zoning ordinance or zoning of any property. Some of the differences between the master plan and the zoning ordinance are listed below:

MASTER PLAN	ZONING ORDINANCE
Provides general policies, a guide	Specific regulations, the law
Describes what should happen in the future over the next 5-20 years, not necessarily the recommended land use for today	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions
Adopted under the Township Planning Act, Public Act 168 of 1959, as amended	Adopted under the Township Rural Zoning Act, Public Act 184 of 1943, as amended
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups	Deals only with development related issues under Township control
Flexible to respond to changing conditions	Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change
Adopted by the Planning Commission	Adopted by the Township Board

**Previous Planning Efforts**

**1969 Comprehensive Plan:** Grosse Ile Township has a strong history of community planning. The first plan was adopted in 1969. This plan placed considerable emphasis on preserving natural open space and the waterfront character of the community. This plan set the framework for focusing on Macomb Street as the core of the community with higher density residential in that area and lower density residential maintained elsewhere.



**1989 Master Plan:** The township adopted the next comprehensive update to the plan in 1989. This document evaluated conditions that existed in the community during that time, including demographics, economic conditions, natural features, land use patterns, transportation, public facilities and infrastructure. Based upon an analysis of these elements, recommendations were made relative to future land use, roadway, utility and recreational facility improvements.

**Grosse Ile DDA:** In 1993, the Grosse Ile Township DDA completed an urban design plan and a tax increment financing plan for streetscape improvements along Macomb Street. These improvements included complete reconstruction of Macomb Street, drainage improvements, sidewalks, landscaping, ornamental street lighting and pocket parks. Construction of the roadway, drainage, sidewalk and street light improvements was completed in 1998.

**Macomb Street Design Standards:** In 1996, the township planning commission adopted a subarea master plan for the Macomb Street Area. This plan included detailed design standards for development in this area. The primary purpose of the plan was to develop a sense of compatibility with neighboring businesses and residential uses, creating a strong identity for the community. In addition, it was intended to establish continuity to the site features of each redevelopment/development project.

**Open Space Greenways and Bikepath Plan:** The township has developed a Greenways and Bike Path Plan that focuses on creating a network through the community to provide non-motorized circulation and enhance the ecological function of the natural environment. Grosse Ile Township has implemented a program for acquiring lands for the purpose of maintaining open space. Using funds generated through a millage, the Township has purchased over 400 acres of land for preservation as natural open space.

**Grosse Ile Municipal Airport Land Use Plan:** The plan for the township airport includes a brownfield redevelopment plan and a marketing plan that takes a proactive approach towards recommending future land uses, phasing options, key redevelopment opportunities and design objectives for the Grosse Ile Airport Commerce Park. The plan outlines an implementation strategy based on the existing opportunities and available economic development incentives for brownfield redevelopment.

**Grosse Ile Township Recreation Master Plan 2001-2005:** This plan serves to update the previous Recreation Plan produced by the township in 1995. The plan includes updated recreational goals and objectives, recreation inventory, and a 5-year capital improvements program, which includes recreational improvements to the Centennial Farm, Airport recreation area, and other small parks and construction of bike paths.

**Build-Out Plan:** An analysis of the residential build-out for the island was adopted in 1999. This build-out plan includes an analysis of the limitations of the public infrastructure to support additional development, including utilities and roadways.



## Master Plan Process

The master plan represents an eleven-month effort by the planning commission, township officials, residents, community organizations and representatives of the business community. Development of the plan involved collection and analysis of data on land use, environmental, transportation, infrastructure and socioeconomic conditions. The recommendations of the plan are based upon this information and input from the public. The process is more specifically described as follows:

**Existing Conditions Report:** The first step in the planning process was to obtain a description of the area's physical and social features. The current conditions of the township provide an understanding of what the township's strengths and weaknesses are and serve as a base for future recommendations.

**Public Participation:** Public participation was conducted by inviting the general public to an evening workshop designed to identify issues, rank the importance of the planning-related issues, and suggest actions to address each of the issues. A summary of the key points raised at the workshop are discussed later in this chapter.

**Analysis and Recommendations:** Based on the data collected from the existing conditions report, public participation results and the experience of staff and consultants, information was then analyzed and recommendations were made for the future of the township. This information was presented to the township for review and comment.

**Plan Completion and Adoption:** Once consensus was reached amongst township officials, a public hearing was held to present the recommendations of the plan and to solicit public input prior to adoption. Based on public comments, the plan was revised and the document was adopted by the planning commission.

## Public Participation

An essential component of any master plan is the success of the public participation process. Efforts were made by the township to involve the citizens of the community and other interested parties included a public workshop, numerous meetings with the township planning commission and township officials and a public hearing.

The public workshop was conducted on January 23, 2002 with township planning commissioners, elected officials and citizens of the township. Approximately 50 participants were in attendance. The public workshop had two goals, the first of which was to use public participation as an opportunity to orient participants to the master plan process. This was accomplished by explaining the planning process, the purpose of a master plan and the schedule for the plan preparation. The second goal was to ensure that participants had the opportunity to discuss issues that should be addressed in the plan and a vision for how the community should look in the future.

Participants were led through a series of exercises which helped to develop a vision for the future of Grosse Ile Township. First, participants were divided into small groups and asked to describe Grosse Ile as it is today and describe what they like about the community. Participants were then asked to describe what they would like Grosse Ile to be like in 20 years. Time was then spent generating strategies which would help accomplish this vision or resolve issues.



The prevalent themes that came out of the workshop were slowing down the pace of development and preserving the natural residential character of the township. The overall results of this visioning session are summarized below.

**Natural Features and Character:** The single quality that was identified most frequently in the workshop as to what makes Grosse Ile a great place to live was the prevalence of natural features which contribute to Grosse Ile Township's unique character. Nearly every workshop participant indicated that the water resources, natural setting and vast amount of open space were important factors in determining whether to live in Grosse Ile Township. Preservation and maintenance of these resources was one of the key issues discussed by the participants.

**Future Development:** Township residents recognize that there will be a demand for new development, most of which is likely to be residential in nature. Residents also realized that the township must plan for land uses other than residential, such as small-scale commercial and office and light industrial/research. In general, participants did not oppose new development in the township, as long as the growth is planned, environmentally sensitive, and does not adversely affect the township's natural character. Limits on the extent of new development in the township should be established and development should not be allowed to locate haphazardly. The most suitable locations for new development must be carefully considered to avoid or minimize any potential negative affects upon natural features.

**Residential Neighborhoods:** The residential neighborhoods within the township serve as the primary land use and are the source of pride for the residents. One of the top priorities discussed included maintaining the quality of life the residents have come to expect within the township. The existing neighborhoods consist of well-maintained homes situated on wooded lots. Efforts should be made to ensure that future development complements these existing neighborhoods and preserves both natural and historic resources.

**Non-Residential Uses:** The Macomb Street area was seen as the “town center” of Grosse Ile and participants expressed the desire to create a walkable environment that incorporates higher intensity mixed-uses and outdoor public areas such as a town square or gazebo, with successful neighborhood goods and services and multiple family residential. Macomb Street should incorporate a Main Street character with traditional design that fits Grosse Ile.

Light industrial and research uses where also desired near the airport in the southern region of the township. Participants felt that the township should actively market the research park and locate appropriate businesses that will supplement the tax base and provide jobs for residents.

**Transportation:** The input at the public workshop revealed a general satisfaction with the current roadway system in Grosse Ile Township. The participants appreciated that the township was isolated from high traffic volumes and congestion. The two bridges, both the county and toll, could benefit from improved streetscape and maintenance, and there was discussion of exploring the option of a third bridge.



Most of the discussions regarding transportation dealt with non-motorized travel. The participants expressed a strong desire to see continued expansion of the pathways. Bike paths were desired along key roadways, such as along East and West River Roads, as well as off-road through open space.

**Community Facilities and Services:** As a rural township, limited facilities and services can be offered. Residents were generally satisfied with existing community facilities and services and the quality school district was identified as one of the key assets to the community.

The need to provide additional recreational facilities was discussed. Participants expressed a desire to develop neighborhood parks, community pool, skating rink and a recreation center. In addition, public access to the water was identified as a priority for some of the participants.

