

I. INTRODUCTION



2013 Master Plan Update

A. Introduction

The master plan presented herein is a document created by Genoa Township to guide the future of this community. The intent of this master plan is to provide growth management strategies that help ensure a logical development pattern while maintaining community character and protecting natural resources. The plan also provides policies and actions for community leaders to consider. Some of the master plan recommendations will be implemented through amendments to the zoning ordinance text and map.

The implementation of the policies and actions in this plan will help ensure that Genoa Township remains a desirable community in which to live, work or visit by allowing residents, business owners and developers to make investments with a reasonable expectation of what will happen in the future. It is of extreme importance to emphasize those qualities of the Township identified by residents, businesses and property owners as highly desired. Recent development and population trends in Genoa Township make it easy to understand the need for a Township master plan update. Among the many reasons for the master plan are the following:

- Present a future land use map that illustrates how the Township should develop logically over time.
- Provide a legal basis for zoning and other regulations for the type, intensity and timing of development.
- Provide that, as development occurs, the most significant natural features are preserved or enhanced.
- Outline specific strategies to address situations where one land use is not compatible with an adjacent land use.
- Recommend traffic management tools to preserve roadway capacity and ensure traffic circulation harmonizes with land uses and neighborhoods.
- Address the changing desires and needs of residents.
- Provide a sustainable community with a land use pattern that translates into a diversified tax base to support the desired facilities and services with reasonable tax rates.
- Provide specific recommendations for access management, road improvements and site design along the Grand River Avenue Corridor and new Latson interchange area.
- Coordinate land use recommendations with anticipated land use changes and infrastructure improvements with the surrounding communities.

The development of this plan involved a process of identification and analysis of physical and socio-economic conditions affecting Genoa



Township. The impact of each physical and socio-economic factor on the community in the coming years results in a series of goals and policies for the Township. The master plan goals and future land use plan will assist Township leaders in substantive, thoughtful 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 forever. 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.

This master plan represents a continual effort by the Planning Commission and Township Board. A series of joint public meetings were held by the Board and Planning Commission to discuss the recommendations of the plan. Citizens, landowners and interested members of the general public also attended meetings and were involved with the discussion on the plan. A public hearing to present the draft plan was conducted prior to its adoption by the Township Board.

Genoa Township's last comprehensive master plan was completed in 1998, with amendments made in 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2013.

The Township regularly refines its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations in response to changing conditions, goals, and the law. Thus, this master plan represents the latest in a series of documents and ordinances which will help to ensure that the Township maintains its desired community character.



B. Goals

A key element in the preparation of the Master Plan is the development of community goals, which reflect the community's desires to respond to various issues. The goals must all be considered concurrently and within the overall context of the plan, as opposed to individually. The Master Plan provides guidance and direction towards the achievement of Township goals.

Land Use

- Accommodate a variety of land uses that are located in a logical pattern and complement community goals, the surrounding land uses, environment, capacity of roads and the sanitary sewer, and public water system capabilities.
- Provide land owners with reasonable use of their land in a manner that is compatible with adjacent land uses and the overall land use plan for the Township and the capacity of infrastructure.
- Promote harmonious and organized development consistent with adjacent land uses.
- Provide a variety of housing styles, types, and densities to support needs of residents.
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- Support “aging in place” by providing housing, recreation, and transportation options for seniors.
- Achieve well-planned, safe, balanced, and pleasant residential neighborhoods.
- Provide employment, shopping and recreational opportunities for current and future residents of the Township.
- Achieve high quality site and building design that contributes to strong neighborhoods, vital shopping districts, and desirable employment centers.
- Encourage quality industrial and technology-based development in appropriate areas of the township to diversify the tax base with room for future expansion, where not in conflict with surrounding land uses.
- Manage development by maintaining a growth boundary to encourage efficient use of land, protect farmland and natural features, and allow the efficient provision of public services, utilities, and infrastructure.
- Promote the development of a mixed-use town center along Grand River Avenue that creates a strong sense of community identity for Genoa.
- Create outlots in underutilized parking lots to provide locations for infill commercial development.

- Work with economic development agencies, such as Ann Arbor Spark, to attract new businesses and jobs, and encourage entrepreneurship.
- Preserve and encourage growth and sustainability of existing Grand River commercial after the construction of the Latson interchange.
- Promote neighborhood commercial nodes, where appropriate.
- Develop and maintain flexible codes and ordinances to meet the needs of current and future residents.
- Provide an integrated and phased design with careful consideration for new development at the Latson interchange.

Preservation of Natural Features

- Preserve the "quality of life" in Genoa Township by retaining significant, sensitive natural amenities such as water bodies, wetlands, slopes, mature trees and natural ecosystems.
- Encourage integration of natural features such as woodlands and wetlands into site development as aesthetic and functional features.
- Protect the quality of the community's lakes and water resources from overcrowding and overuse.
- Preserve the existing landscaping and natural features viewed along Township roads.
- Encourage and utilize best management practices for preservation of sensitive natural features.

Transportation

- Assure a multi-modal transportation network is available to support the current population and support managed growth through future improvements.
- Preserve the capacity and safety of arterial streets through access management.
- Evaluate impacts of traffic generated by development and work toward improvements concurrent with new development.
- Coordinate transportation improvements with county and state agencies.
- Promote "complete streets" through a non-motorized network to provide the opportunity for walking, jogging, and bicycling in a safe and comfortable environment.
- Consider transit-oriented development on former Zeeb/Preserves of Genoa property for future passenger rail train to Ann Arbor.
- Coordinate with MDOT to pursue the possibility of a narrow median along Grand River Avenue from the exit 141 Lake

Chemung interchange west to the Howell city limits to improve pedestrian safety, reduce vehicular conflicts, and to beautify the corridor.

Public Facilities and Services

- Coordinate with the adjacent townships and the cities of Brighton and Howell to provide area residents with high quality community services and facilities.
- Provide utility improvements only in locations best suited for development to support managed growth and provide a growth boundary to ensure development is consistent with infrastructure planning.
- Provide high-quality centralized parks, recreation facilities and open space to meet the needs of Township residents.
- Provide public spaces that meet the needs of Township residents and can expand or adapt to meet the needs of the future population.
- Establish a unique identity for Genoa Township through entry signage and streetscape design that provides a unique sense of place.

