

April 14, 2017

Board of Trustees
Northfield Township
8350 Main Street – P.O. Box 576
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

Subject: Proposal to Update the Northfield Township Master Plan

Dear Board of Trustees:

At the request of the Planning Commission, we have outlined a process to work with the Township and other stakeholders to update the Master Plan, which was adopted in 2012. The Master Plan has served the Township well over the last 5 years, and the proposed update will build on the Plan by strengthening its policies, obtaining current public input, and expanding it to include more specific Subarea plans. We will also work with the Township to refine this scope to best fit your needs after discussion and your input.

A. PROPOSED WORK PLAN FOR MASTER PLAN UPDATE

- 1. General Updates.** The general updates to the Master Plan would include the following, as well assistance with noticing requirements, including preparing the required “Notice of Intent to Plan” letters and public notices:
 - **Data.** Much of the data in the Plan is prior to the 2010 Census and should be updated. Also, SEMCOG has updated population forecasts to 2040.
 - **Maps.** The maps in the Plan should be updated to include new information and other important map features. The most important update will be the Future Land Use map and its consistency with Township policies.
 - **New Policies.** This includes new policies based on activities in the Township over the last 5+ years.
 - **Removal of Outdated Policies.** This includes removal of recommendations where action has already been taken or policies may be outdated. We will work with the Township to identify these policies to determine whether to revise or remove them.
 - **Area Plan Changes.** Currently, the Master Plan has five (5) large subareas, the smallest of which is roughly 4 square miles. We recommend consolidating Subareas that share similar characteristics while shrinking other Subareas to address a unique characteristic of that particular Subarea. For example, current Subareas 1, 2, and 3 are predominantly rural residential and agricultural and these Subareas could be consolidated into a single Subarea. On the other hand, current Subarea 5 includes both lakes, downtown Whitmore Lake, and 3 expressway interchanges and could be broken up into a Lakes Subarea, a Downtown Subarea, and Interchange Subarea(s). While the upcoming Whitmore Lake Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework can serve as a Subarea to address downtown, the interchanges at Barker Road and Eight Mile Road, and part of Whitmore Lake, additional Subareas should be included to address other lakes areas and the interchanges at N. Territorial Rd. and Six Mile Road. This will provide for a greater level of specificity of the Township’s vision for these areas.

- **Zoning Plan.** The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that a zoning plan be included in a master plan that explains how the land use categories of the future land use map relate to the districts on the Zoning Map. The Master Plan currently has a Zoning Plan; however, with the recent repeal of the Enterprise Service (ES) District and Highway Commercial (HC) District, the Township should eliminate references to these districts in the Zoning Plan. Additionally, there are some inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Plan that must be corrected. For example, while the Zoning Plan includes a “C, Commercial” future land use classification, this category is not on the Future Land Use Map. Because the “C, Commercial” future land use classification is the only classification that recommends the General Commercial (GC) zoning district, this discrepancy must be corrected. Finally, the Future Land Use Map should be reviewed for consistency with the Zoning Map. If necessary, the Future Land Use Map will be updated.
 - **Implementation Matrix.** The implementation matrix will be at the end of the document and will list each of the projects necessary to implement the Plan, as well as a timeframe, priority, and responsible body. For example, the commercial development section may include certain Zoning Ordinance updates to be initiated by the Planning Commission within the next 1-2 years.
2. **Non-Motorized Plan.** With the adoption of Complete Streets legislation in Michigan, it is important for Northfield Township to plan for the appropriate interconnectivity of its current and future non-motorized and motorized transportation systems. While the Master Plan supports a non-motorized (e.g., pedestrian and bicycle) transportation system in the township and includes a map from the 2006 Non-Motorized Plan for Washtenaw County developed by the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS), the Master Plan should include a non-motorized inventory (including sidewalks) and include specific policies for how that non-motorized network will be developed. There are major considerations for a non-motorized system, which include the following:
- Update the WATS information, which should include any recommendations from WATS’ proposed 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan for Washtenaw County where appropriate.
 - Locations of high priority corridors within Northfield Township, including context sensitive conceptual designs.
 - Locations of opportunities to link to existing systems in adjacent communities (e.g., Lyon Township, Hamburg Township, Ann Arbor Township, etc.). For example, about 1,500 feet east of the Township’s northeast border is a 10-foot wide non-motorized trail in Lyon Township that connects directly to the Huron Valley Trail, Kensington Metropark, and Island Lake State Recreation Area. Also, about 1 mile north of the Township’s northwest border is the Lakelands Trail in Hamburg Township.
 - Potential outside funding sources.

A new map will be included in the Master Plan showing priorities for future non-motorized transportation and the design recommendations. Please note that the Master Plan is a document that plans for 20-30 years, so much of the development of a non-motorized system would not be imminent.

3. **Open Space Preservation Plan.** The Master Plan includes goals for preserving farmland and natural areas, but can be improved to have a stronger implementation plan. For example, the Farmland and Natural Areas Preservation Committee may have implementation policies that can be incorporated into the Master Plan. Additionally, we recommend including more policies that promote open space,

such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), the Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program and other Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs, and available grants. TDR is where development rights of a “sending zone” (e.g., a high quality agricultural or natural area) are transferred to a “receiving zone” (e.g., a targeted development area that is planned for higher densities where infrastructure is available). Receiving zones would be carefully identified areas where limited higher densities would not compromise the character of the area or the community’s ability to provide services.

For TDR and cluster development that considers potential density bonuses for preserving open space, we will include realistic illustrations (a layout plan and graphics) that show how these policies can be successfully implemented. We find that providing graphic illustrations whenever possible makes it much easier to communicate to developers and amend the Zoning Ordinance, if necessary.

If a TDR program is considered, we will identify criteria for receiving zones (e.g., areas with infrastructure that can support a fixed amount of additional density) and sending zones (e.g., agricultural land with high quality soils and sensitive environmental areas)

- 4. Whitmore Lake Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework.** With the recent approval of our proposal to Northfield Township to prepare a Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework, this is an excellent opportunity to incorporate downtown planning into the Master Plan. The Whitmore Lake Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework will begin soon and is expected to be completed in 4-5 months. The intent of the Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework is to continue the DPG’s work on the North Village Master Plan by looking at downtown Whitmore Lake and creating a vision of future development. The Strategic Action Plan will be based on public collaboration, consideration of real-life design scenarios of downtown Whitmore Lake, development of a design and connectivity framework, creation of downtown design guidelines, and adoption of a Strategic Action Plan and implementation schedule. As the Strategic Action Plan project progresses, we will format the Plan so that it can be seamlessly incorporated into the Master Plan. This will immediately increase the value of the Master Plan and reinforce the policies of the Strategic Action Plan by formally incorporating them into the Master Plan. Additionally, having the Strategic Action Plan adopted into the Master Plan will fulfill the planning criteria of the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program by having a downtown plan and identifying redevelopment sites.
- 5. Public Participation.** Much of the public input in the current Master Plan was obtained in 2010, which include a survey and two (2) planning fairs. Although the public input yielded excellent feedback, we recommend updating the public participation in the Master Plan with new data. Methods of public participation include surveys (online and paper), visioning sessions, and focus groups. We propose the following:

 - **Online Survey.** McKenna will host an online survey through its subscription to an existing online survey company (SurveyMonkey). We will work with the Planning Commission to prepare the survey (including the survey questions) before posting it. We will also solicit questions from the Township Board of Trustees, the Downtown Planning Group, and the Farmland and Natural Areas Preservation Committee. For consistency, many of the same topics in the 2010 survey will be addressed. However, we’ll want to obtain feedback regarding the proposed Subareas and current Township issues. Although the survey will be online, paper copies of the survey can be printed and we will input the paper results into the online survey database so that it is included with the results. We will work with the Township to solicit participation in the survey, and we will incorporate the survey results into the Master Plan.

- **Workshops.** One (1) or more public workshops can be held to solicit feedback on specific planning objectives as well as on the proposed subareas of the Township. McKenna will give an introductory presentation to inform attendees and give them all a shared base of knowledge about the process and findings to date (including the survey results). The McKenna facilitators will introduce the purpose and desired outcomes of the planning process, and will continue with a summary of the analysis of existing conditions of each Subarea. Possible focus areas include: expressway interchange areas, lakes areas, agricultural and natural features preservation, and non-motorized transportation.

McKenna will lead several exercises to encourage participation by all attendees, which could include one or more of the following: small group discussions, visual preference survey to stimulate ideas and illustrate potentials for consideration, “One Big Idea” or inspiration boards.

Next there will be discussion and prioritization of the issues, assets and visions identified during the small group sessions. Information gathered during the small group discussions will be shared with the larger audience to build consensus around planning

B. END PRODUCTS

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, McKenna will deliver 10 copies of the bound document along with 1 electronic copy (PDF) for your use.

C. SCHEDULE

If approved, we propose to complete the Master Plan within 8-12 months depending on the scope and the participation schedule of stakeholder groups.

D. FEES

McKenna’s fee for the complete Work Plan, as outlined above, is \$29,000 (see table below), which includes an online survey plus one (1) public workshop.

ITEM	TASK	FEE
1	General Updates: Update all formatting, data, maps, Subarea Plans, policies, and include an implementation matrix.	\$19,000.00
2	Non-Motorized Plan: Including specific policies and a non-motorized plan map.	\$4,500.00
3	Open Space Preservation Plan: Including a conceptual residential development layout and graphics for TDR and cluster developments.	\$2,000.00
4	Whitmore Lake Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Design Framework: Incorporate into Master Plan.	Included
5	Public Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Survey: Including preparing the survey, hosting it online, inputting results of paper surveys, and incorporating results into the Master Plan policies. • Workshops: Including preparation, materials, staffing, and production of finished products. 	\$2,500.00 (Online Survey) \$1,000.00 per Workshop
	PROFESSIONAL FEE	\$29,000.00, plus \$1,000 per workshop for more than 1 workshop.

If you are satisfied with the Work Plan described, then please return one signed copy of this letter for our files, authorizing McKenna to proceed. If the Township Board of Trustees would like us to present our proposal and answer any questions, we would be pleased to do so. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

McKENNA ASSOCIATES



Patrick Sloan, AICP
Senior Principal Planner



Paul Lippens, AICP
Director of Transportation and Urban Design
Senior Principal Planner

NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP, WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Signature

Title

Date

Name (printed)