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MEMORANDUM

To: Jamestown Charter Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: July 7, 2018
Re: Comprehensive Review of the 2014 Master Plan

Pursuant to the Master Plan Framework, this memorandum serves as our comprehensive review of the 2014 Jamestown Charter Township Master Plan (JCTMP). The purpose of this review is to examine the master plan language related to recent land use trends, changing conditions, and to ensure compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Act 33 of 2008, as amended. In addition, our review serves to identify provisions in need of reorganization, replacement, or update.

Given this, our memorandum is structured to address the JCTMP in order of the chapters as they appear within the document. For simplicity, we have not included reference within this memorandum to any terminology suggestions, writing format needs, or other minor modifications that require revision within the plan. We will perform those changes without your direction and immediate oversight. However, we will provide a document showing those proposed changes with each chapter we present to you.

Overall, we remain satisfied with the structure of the JCTMP, with the exception of Chapter Ten, which we explain further below. As some of you know, the ultimate design of the JCTMP is to establish goals for each land use, recommendations to achieve those goals, and strategies to accomplish the goals and recommendations. Consequently, it is important to keep this format in mind as we provide recommendations below.

In addition, it is important to note that a master plan is a policy document and the zoning ordinance is law. Considering this, we prefer to avoid a master plan that contains provisions specific to types of land uses permitted, dimensional requirements, density, and the like. As you will review in our comments below, we note several occurrences in this regard, which we recommend are removed.

Introduction & Community Profile

As you will note, the Introduction and Community Profile chapter contains two (2) sections. While the content of each can remain, we believe it is appropriate to add a third section explaining how to use the master plan. As you will note in our separate correspondence regarding this chapter (pursuant to the Framework), we have included language explaining how the goals, recommendations, and strategies influence each other.

Chapter One – Agricultural Uses

Strategies

- (Page 4) – Our main suggestion within this chapter is to relocate two (2) of the Recommendations to the Strategies, which you will note in our separate correspondence regarding this chapter.

Prime Farmland Soils

- (Page 3, third paragraph) – In addition, we intend to discuss the existing and future public utility infrastructure with the Township Superintendent of Water and Sewer to examine opportunities to better protect prime farmland from industrial

development, where applicable. While industrial development needs in the township are significant, it is important to manage the loss of agriculture for industrial uses, particularly considering the value of prime farmland.

Chapter Two – Residential Uses

Density

- (Page 5) – The Introduction of Chapter Two includes a density reference that we recommend is removed. As aforementioned, specific density numbers are a function of zoning and should be avoided within a master plan. Excluding density from the master plan will reduce a potential “handcuffing” of the Planning Commission during certain site plan reviews, and prevent conflict in language amendments inconsistent with specific densities of the master plan, which are otherwise consistent with the goals and recommendations of the JCTMP.

Land Need Projections

- (Page 5) – The Land Need Projections utilized to forecast residential population, expected home sites, and related acreage is likely outdated. We are currently researching modern projection methods and anticipate presenting new approaches when this chapter is reviewed.

Chapter Three – Village of Jamestown

Overall, we believe this chapter can remain as written. We note one (1) Recommendation that should be relocated as a Strategy.

Chapter Four – Forest Grove

Overall, we believe this chapter can remain as written. We note one (1) Recommendation that should be relocated as a Strategy.

Chapter Five – Commercial Uses

Land Need Projections

- (Page 12) – Similar to that of the Residential Uses chapter, the Land Need Projections utilized to forecast commercial land needs is likely outdated. We are currently researching modern projection methods and anticipate presenting new approaches when this chapter is reviewed.

General Notations

- As noted in the Master Plan Framework, it may be appropriate to create a 32nd Avenue overlay chapter and an M-6 overlay chapter (if not otherwise incorporated into the existing Commercial Uses chapter)
- We note one (1) Strategy that should be relocated as a Recommendation.

Chapter Six – Industrial Uses

Land Need Projections

- (Page 15) – Similar to that of the Residential Uses and Commercial Uses chapters, the Land Need Projections utilized to forecast industrial land needs is likely outdated. We are currently researching modern projection methods and anticipate presenting new approaches when this chapter is reviewed.

General Notation

- We note two (2) Strategies that should be relocated as a Recommendation.

Chapter Seven – Public & Recreational Facilities

Overall, we believe this chapter can remain as written. We note one (1) Strategy that should be relocated as a Recommendation. In addition, we will present an additional Recommendation and Strategy for your consideration.

Chapter Eight – Public Utilities

Overall, we believe this chapter can remain as written. However, prior to presenting any revisions, we have requested review by the township engineer and Superintendent of Water and Sewer to confirm its contents remain accurate and or relevant.

Chapter Nine – Transportation

Overall, we believe this chapter can remain as written. However, prior to presenting any revisions, we have requested review by the township engineer to confirm its contents remain accurate and or relevant.

Street Plan

- As you will note within the Master Plan Framework, we propose addressing the required street plan within the Transportation Chapter. While the township does not own any of its roads, the basis for the legislation that requires a street plan is to ensure that communities consider “complete streets,” which address motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the like. The related language will likely be brief to satisfy the MPEA.

Chapter Ten – Future Land Use

Below we provide a synopsis of our recommendations to the Future Land Use chapter.

General Notation

- Blend its relevant provisions into the appropriate land use chapters and Chapter Eleven – Implementation, and eliminate the remainder provisions and the chapter itself. We suggest this action based on the following recommendations.

Futuring Workshop

- (Page 26-27) – Eliminate all provisions regarding the Futuring Workshop given that the information is 14 years old and a new community master plan survey is being conducted.

Master Plan Classifications

- (Page 27-31) – Relocate the classification descriptions to Chapter Eleven – Implementation given that the Zoning Plan references the same
- Eliminate all references to density for the aforementioned reason noted in the Chapter Two section of this memorandum. In addition, remove all references to permitted uses and other ordinance provisions since uses and the like are more appropriately located within the zoning ordinance. Identifying uses in the master plan pre-determines what is permitted prior to establishing the uses and their limitations within the zoning ordinance and its map, among other provisions.

Chapter Eleven – Implementation

Overall, we believe this chapter can remain as written. We note some suggestions to improve the provisions within the Introduction.

Futuring Report

As aforementioned, given the age of the Futuring Report and because Jamestown Charter Township is conducting a new community survey, as well as potential public workshops, we believe the results of this Report are outdated and can be eliminated.

Planning Commission Direction

While additional revisions to the master plan may be appropriate following public input through the community survey, potential workshops, and the like, we believe the aforementioned are minimally necessary to adequately provide an update to the plan. We will be prepared to discuss these items further at your July 17, 2018 meeting.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner