

# Introduction and Vision

## An Introduction to Bloomfield Township

*"We set out by ourselves. Night scene. Incredible silence of the forest. Effect of the moon through the trees. After half an hour we see a little clearing, a log-house."* – Alexis de Tocqueville, Journal Entry, describing his visit to the area that includes Bloomfield Township (July 23, 1831)

Not long after Bloomfield Township's incorporation in 1827, the well-known French historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, offered an incredible glimpse of wilderness life in and around Bloomfield Township. The first settlers of European descent had arrived in the Township just 11 years earlier. They consisted of physicians, educators and entrepreneurs. By de Tocqueville's visit, upwards of 30 families lived here. (Source: *Bloomfield Blossoms*, Smith, 1976.)

During the 120 years after de Tocqueville, Bloomfield Township grew slowly to 3,800 residents. Following World War II, a two decade long growth boom followed, boosting the population by a factor of ten before leveling out at today's 42,000 residents. In contrast to the 30 families in 1830, household numbers have grown to about 17,000. If de Tocqueville took a similar half hour horseback ride today, he could encounter 250 houses in some areas of the Township.

By some measures, Bloomfield Township has experienced little change during the last 35 years. However, while the population remains approximately the same, residents are appreciably older and increasingly diverse. Household sizes dropped, while the number of housing units increased. These more subtle measures will greatly impact how Bloomfield Township faces the future.

External forces may also play a role. Michigan's economic climate, based heavily on manufacturing, is undergoing marked transformation. However, Bloomfield Township benefits from a financial and service-oriented local economy, which is not affected as harshly by fluctuations in the automobile industry. In fact, with a highly educated, professional workforce and available undeveloped land, the Township is prepared for continued growth in the financial, service, health care and high technology sectors. Moreover, local

spending patterns present opportunities for expansion in the Township’s retail and restaurant markets.

With opportunity comes responsibility. To help guide Bloomfield Township successfully into the future, a Master Plan Update began in 2006. Managed by the Planning Commission, the process depended on wide scale outreach to Bloomfield Township residents and interested stakeholders, with hundreds responding. By entrusting its residents with goal setting and using all available resources to maintain contact with the public, the Township built the Master Plan on the hopes and goals of its residents. It was adopted on February XX, 2007.

## What is a Master Plan?



1976 Master Plan



1991 Master Plan

The master plan is a document created by the Bloomfield Township Planning Commission and adopted by the Township Board to guide the future growth and development of the community. A sound master plan helps ensure that Bloomfield Township remains a highly desirable community in which to live, work, or visit. This can be accomplished by preserving and enhancing the qualities of the community that the residents, businesses and property owners consider important.

The master plan identifies and examines a wide range of physical issues including population, housing, land use, transportation, neighborhoods, community facilities, and natural resources. The implications of each are analyzed and translated into a series of goals and policies for the Township. This effort culminates in the creation of a master plan, which provides recommendations for future land use, natural

features, transportation improvements, and special strategies for key areas in the Township. Because the plan offers a balance between the interest and rights of private property owners with what is best for the future of Bloomfield Township, this plan should effectively assist Township leaders in making substantive, thoughtful decisions for the community.

The Township Board, Planning Commission, and the public should continuously strive to ensure effective use of this document and should reference the master plan in order to:

- Review development proposals – to confirm the proposal meets all goals and objectives of the master plan.
- Review rezoning requests – to confirm the request is consistent with the Township’s criteria to consider rezonings including existing conditions, the future land use map, the appropriate timing of the change, consistency

with the goals and policies of the master plan, and potential impacts on the Township.

- Provide a basis for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map - to help realize and enforce plan goals.
- Understand expectations for the future land use pattern and desired land use types in the community to guide new development and redevelopment.
- Identify and recommend physical improvements to important resources such as roadways, access management, streetscape and entryways, non-motorized pathways, parks, and public facilities.

## The Planning Process

Bloomfield Township followed a comprehensive planning process in developing this Master Plan to ensure participation from the public, regional agencies, public officials, Township staff, and from experts in the different subject areas.

**Process Overview.** The document was prepared primarily in cooperation with the Planning Department, the Planning Commission, and Township Board. The following is an overview of the planning process followed:

- *Project Kick-Off.* At the beginning of the project, the Township got the word out to alert residents and others that the project was beginning. In accordance with the Municipal Planning Act, as amended, the Township also distributed a '*Notice of Intent*' to not only the required agencies such as surrounding communities and the County but also the regional planning agency, the airport, local utility companies and other jurisdictions that are involved in the Township. The project kick-off also began the process of data collection.
- *Public Involvement* – Once data collection was complete, the Township went well beyond the legal requirement for public outreach and conducted four public forums on natural features, the local economy and marketplace, and land use related matters of Township-wide interest. The Internet and cable television programming expanded the outreach efforts.
- *Draft Plan Preparation* – Based on comments received through the public involvement process, a draft plan was prepared and reviewed by staff, the Planning Commission, Township Board, and others. The document was revised based on their comments.
- *Agency Review and Additional Public Involvement* – Once the Planning Commission was satisfied with the draft plan, the Township Board passed

a resolution to initiate the required agency review period in accordance with the Municipal Planning Act.

- *Adoption process* – Upon completion of the agency review period, a public hearing was scheduled at a Planning Commission meeting. Following the hearing, the Planning Commission adopted the Master Plan.

**Summary of Public Involvement.** Bloomfield Township staff employed various public involvement techniques to promote participation in the planning process. In addition, the Township used this opportunity to build relationships for cooperative efforts and future implementation. The following is a list of efforts:

- Public Forums: Four public forums were conducted as part of the Planning Commission's review of key elements and draft chapters of the Master Plan. Over the course of all four meetings, there were approximately 200 residents and interested stakeholders who attended.
- Web and Cable Television Updates: During the course of the Master Plan update process, the Township regularly updated its website with progress reports and documentations. This gave residents and other interested persons the opportunity to stay abreast of the plan making activities and provide their ideas.
- Community and Agency Review Period: In accordance with the Municipal Planning Act, as amended, the agency review period was initiated in late October 2006.
- Public Hearing: Once a draft of the plan was completed and was reviewed by outside agencies and the public, a public hearing was held to allow an additional opportunity for public comment. This was held at a Planning Commission meeting February XX, 2007.

## Vision Statement

Early in the plan making process, the Township's Planning Commission established a vision for the plan. It was employed regularly by Commissioners as decisions were made about the plan's content. The vision set the tone for the plan and its emphasis by clarifying goals, objectives and recommendations. The Vision for the Bloomfield Township Master Plan Update is the following:

**BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP** will remain a premier residential community, offering its citizens pristine water features and woodlands, exceptional educational opportunities, exemplary municipal services and a vibrant, diverse and upscale business community.

**BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP** will remain Michigan's most desirable community in which to live.

