

CHAPTER 10. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Implementation strategies are a key component of any community's Master Plan. They determine how the Plan's guidelines and recommendations become reality. This chapter presents tools and techniques that community leaders, the Planning Commission, and Township Board may use to implement the Future Land Use Plan. The techniques can be used individually or in tandem to achieve the objectives and eventually the overall goals of this Master Plan. While the direct impact of some of the techniques cannot be immediately assessed, over time these procedures can effectively guide the land use decisions and development within Wells Township. The strategies presented in this Plan range from short-term to long-term to ongoing in nature. In some instances, entities in addition to Wells Township and its boards, commissions, and staff will need to cooperate in order to fully implement this Plan. In other instances, the Township's role may be that of facilitator or administrator. Financial investment may be necessary in some cases, as indicated under *Capital Improvements*.

It is recommended that this Implementation chapter be reviewed and/or updated more frequently than the five-year requirement, perhaps annually, so that the Township can gauge its progress and determine the best course for implementing planning projects and decision making in order to reach the previously stated goals and objectives within the longer planning period of 20 years.

Adhere to the Future Land Use Plan

The Township should strive to make decisions that are in harmony with the future land use plan. Proposed land uses should be consistent with the future land use designations.

Maintain Consistency Between This Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance will be the primary implementation mechanism to achieve the land use goals of this plan. This action item contemplates a comprehensive evaluation of the entire Zoning Ordinance, and other ordinances that influence the physical environment, in connection with the goals, objectives, and future land use plan. This may include a revision of the Zoning Map to better support the future land use map. It is generally accepted practice to provide zoning on a more frequent basis, perhaps yearly, whereas the Future Land Use Plan is a 20-year projection with mandatory reviews every five years.

The Planning Commission should lead the effort to evaluate the Zoning Ordinance. This is an extensive task with multiple elements. Any resulting amendments to ordinances may require the review of the Township's legal counsel and ultimately adoption by the Township Board.

Support the Preservation of Farmland and Open Space

The Michigan Department of Agriculture's Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program includes several instruments that the Township can help to promote. The program also authorizes the Township to participate in several methods to encourage agricultural operations.

Options that may be considered are:

1. Farmland Development Rights Agreements. This is a temporary, voluntary restriction on the land between the property owner and the State that protects the agricultural use of the land in return for tax benefits and special assessment exemptions. This tool is commonly known as P.A. 116.
2. Purchase of Development Rights. This is a permanent, voluntary restriction on the land between the property owner and the State that preserves the land for farming in exchange for a cash payment. This program is dependent on funding.
3. Conservation Easement Donations. Conservation Easement Donations are permanent restrictions voluntarily entered into by the landowner between the landowner and the State, preserving the land for either farmland or open space.
4. Designated Open Space Easement. This is a temporary, voluntary restriction on the land between the property owner and the State that maintains the land as open space in return for tax benefits and special assessment exemptions.
5. Local Open Space Easement. These are also voluntary and temporary, but represent an agreement between the landowner and the Township where certain tax benefits and exemptions from various assessments are made possible.

Strive to Continually Strengthen Quality of Life

Engaging in efforts to strengthen quality of life will lead to a more attractive community. This Master Plan suggests several endeavors that may lead to a maintained and improved environment for citizens.

1. Many townships accommodate their own park or recreational facility. Although there are ample recreational facilities located in nearby townships, and Wells contains sections of two state game areas, land owned by Wells Township may one day be useful as a park or nature facility within the Township. This is not of current urgent importance, but may become an attractive venture at a future date. It would benefit the Township to retain currently owned properties for this future purpose.
2. Maintenance of Township roads, including necessary improvements, impacts residents on a daily basis. Urban service areas that contain employment, business, industrial, commercial, educational, health, governmental, and recreational services are located outside of the Township, making connectivity in all directions important to the quality of life for Township residents.
3. The Township should continue to contract trash and recycling services via roadside pick-up for its residents. Related services such as the used-tire drop-off days may be expanded to address needs as they arise.

The following table summarizes many of the action items that may help achieve the policies of this Master Plan. It expresses a general proposed time frame of completion. In addition, likely partners in the process and potential funding sources are identified. The implementation concepts summarized below are intended to support citizen visions, the goals and the future land use framework, and implications all presented in earlier chapters of the Plan.

WELLS TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Legislative and Financial Measures to Facilitate Implementation

TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	PURPOSE	ANALYSIS	TIME FRAME (ON-GOING, SHORT-TERM 1-6 YEARS, LONG-TERM 7+ YEARS)	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE(S)	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	DATE COMPLETED
Land Use and Zoning	Address new ordinance needs, review current ordinances and revise or rewrite if necessary	Make ordinances more efficient and contemporary.	When updates are needed.	On-going	General Fund	Private Consultant/Legal Counsel, Township Board, Planning Commission, Property Owners	
	Review demographics as US Census figures are available, apply to Master Plan	Updated figures will aid in more accurate population projections.	Current figures provide conflicting projections. Accurate trend information helps guide decision-making.	On-going	N/A	Township Board, Planning Commission	
Farmland and Open Space Preservation	Update availability of funding of land use tools which preserve farmland and open spaces	As these funds are available, Township residents may benefit.	Availability of funding for these programs comes and goes.	On-going	Federal, state, county programs	Federal, State, County Agencies	
	Adhere to Future Land Use Plan	Future land use is guided by the Master Plan.	Procedures are set forth in this Implementation section.	On-going	N/A	Township Board, Planning Commission	
Transportation	Maintain Township roads	Maintain roadways.	Urban service areas are located outside of the Township.	On-going	Road Millage	Township Board, Tuscola County Road Commission, Adjacent Townships	
Community Facilities, Utilities and Services	Continue services which help residents dispose of trash items and aid recycling	Help Township residents dispose of trash and recycling materials.	This service helps maintain public health and safety, as well as property.	On-going	General Fund	Waste Removal Contract, Township Board, Planning Commission, Property Owners	
Monitoring Progress	Review of this Implementation Plan	Review and update progress.	This will help keep the plan relevant and useful.	On-going, perhaps annually, mandatory 5 year review	General Fund	Planning Commission	