

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

April 8, 2013

Town Hall Room, Meridian Municipal Building  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864

**Regular Meeting**

1. Call meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes
  - A. March 25, 2013 Regular Meeting
4. Public remarks
5. Communications
6. Public Hearings
7. Unfinished Business
8. Other Business
  - A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Concept Plan Review: 2099 Hamilton Road and 2095 Hamilton Road
9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports
10. New Applications
11. Site Plans received
12. Site Plans approved
13. Public Remarks
14. Adjournment

**Post Script:** None

The Planning Commission's Bylaws state agenda items shall not be introduced for discussion or public hearing that is opened after 10:00 p.m. The chair may approve exceptions when this rule

## **Planning Commission Agenda**

**April 8, 2013**

**Page 2**

would cause substantial backlog in Commission business (Rule 5.14 Limit on Introduction of Agenda Items).

Persons wishing to appeal a decision of the Planning Commission to the Township Board in the granting of a Special Use Permit must do so within ten (10) days of the decision of the Planning Commission (Sub-section 86-189 of the Zoning Ordinance).

### **Work Session Meeting**

1. Call meeting to order after adjournment of the Regular Meeting
2. Approval of agenda
3. Discussion
  - A. Master Plan Update Discussion
4. Public remarks
5. Adjournment

**TENTATIVE  
PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA  
April 22, 2013  
Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

**Regular Meeting**

1. Public Hearings
  
2. Unfinished Business
  - B. Zoning Amendment #13020 (Planning Commission), request to amend Section 86-2 Definitions and Section 86-564 Yard Encroachments Permitted to update and clarify regulations for decks and patios
  
3. Other Business

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
March 25, 2013**

**DRAFT**

5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill (7:02 PM), Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Salehi,  
Scott-Craig  
ABSENT: Commissioner Norkin  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak, Project Engineer Nyal Nunn

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Jackson called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**Commissioner Hildebrandt moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Ianni moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2013. Seconded by Commissioner Hildebrandt.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Jackson opened the floor for public remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, expressed appreciation for the Planning Commission packet being available online in a timely manner. He suggested an updated list of current Planning Commission members be placed on the Township website.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

**5. Communications (None)**

**6. Public hearings**

A. \*Special Use Permit #13031 (Public Works and Engineering), request to work in the 100-year floodplain to construct a pedestrian/bicycle pathway bridge over the Eberly Drain between Jo Pass Dr. and the Interurban Pathway.

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 7:02 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter  
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the special use permit (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 22, 2013.
- Applicant

Nyal Nunn, Meridian Township Project Engineer, spoke to the bridge as a single span, prefabricated bridge, which will minimize any disturbance to the surrounding area. He stated the bridge is of standard design and will promote and facilitate pedestrian activity while supporting the Township goal of improving the pathway system.

- Public  
Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke to the short distance (approximately 35 feet) which needs to be spanned and expressed appreciation that this bridge will create connectivity and is a safer alternative.

Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Cordill inquired as to the width of the bridge.

Mr. Nunn indicated the bridge will be constructed using the Township standard of eight (8) feet in width for bridges on the pathway system. He added the concrete pathway which abuts the bridge will be seven feet in width.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if this bridge is the same design as the bridge in Legg Park.

Mr. Nunn was uncertain; however, he indicated this is the same design as the bridge over the Smith Drain and the bridge between Central Park South and the Township Service Center.

Commissioner Salehi inquired as to where off-site the bridge will be constructed.

Mr. Nunn was unsure, but indicated it will be up to the contractor to procure the bridge structure from the manufacturer according to specifications.

Commissioner Salehi inquired as to the cost of the bridge.

Mr. Nunn responded the Engineering Department has not yet completed a cost estimate for the project.

Commissioner Scott-Craig asked who is paying for the bridge.

Mr. Nunn responded the cost would come from the Township Pathway Fund.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if the portion of the pathway being removed will be lowered or raised.

Mr. Nunn answered it will be lowered slightly. He added the reason for removing that section of the existing pathway is to accommodate Consumers Energy, since following the straight line of the existing pathway would run into the utility pole and Consumers has a ten (10) foot requirement.

Commissioner Ianni indicated the project did not appear to have an adverse impact on the environment and promotes the public safety and welfare by bridging the drain, increasing the bicycle paths and making the community more walkable.

Chair Jackson inquired as to the origin of the Interurban Pathway.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded at this point it is a Township project which goes from nearly Park Lake Road at Burcham across Okemos Road to Marsh Road. There have been discussions with Ingham County to possibly extend it in the future.

Commissioner Deits inquired if this project was included in this year's budget for pathways.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it has been on the Master Plan and once on the plan parts are constructed and maintained.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 7:17 P.M.

## 7. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #13021 (Zahra), locate a religious institution, a non-residential use in a residential district at 4133 Okemos Road zoned RA (Single Family-Medium Density) residential

Principal Planner Oranchak clarified the discussion of a 501 (c)(3) status at the last meeting relative to the definition of a religious institution in the Township ordinance. She indicated the Planning Department does not use the 501 (c)(3) status as a standard to measure whether this is an acceptable use, but rather how the request is presented and the type of activity.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Letter from the applicant, Dr. Naji clarified the intended use of the building to be one where individuals would gather during their religious holidays, commemorate their significant religious events, congregate to pray and offer group supplication, gather with friends to receive additional education through lectures and sermons on an informal basis (free from political influence)
- Dr. Naji's letter specifically addressed their intent that the establishment not be termed a mosque with a designated religious pastor holding regularly scheduled prayer services
- Township only requires a letter from the owner allowing the applicant to seek a special use permit (SUP) to occupy the building
- SUP is tied to the use, not the ownership of the property
- Property tax consequences of a religious institution not operating as a mosque would be a determination made by the Township assessor
- Concern with the Township writing the definition of religious institution
- Suggestion to use the IRS definition of religious institution as the standard
- IRS definition of a religious institution deals with the tax deductibility and tax exemption
- Township's liberal interpretation of religious institution to be inclusive v. exclusive
- Religious institution is a requirement for this use
- Definition of a religious institution already exists in the Township's zoning ordinance
- Most religious institutions in the Township are located in residential districts with a special use permit and none have been required to state they are a non-profit organization with a 501 (c)(3) status on their application
- Applicant has applied for 501 (c)(3) status
- Applicant stated in his letter(s) Zahra Institute is a non-profit organization
- Applicant had an option to apply for the special use permit as a social institution
- Since religious institutions, social institutions and other community organizations are under the same category as a nonresidential use in a residential district, the locational and developmental standards are the same
- Social institutions have different standards, primarily one of parking
- Concern with unnecessarily "raising the bar" for this particular group to establish proof of their non-profit status

- Religious institutions, by definition, accrue additional rights and privileges not afforded to non-religious, non-profit institutions
- Preference for the Township to be more systematic in its definitions
- Suggestion for the Planning Commission to address the definition of religious institution at a future date
- If the IRS determines they do not qualify for 501 (c)(3) status, it does not mean they are not a non-profit organization

**Commissioner Hildebrandt moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #13021 subject to the following conditions:**

1. Approval is based on the submitted application materials and the site plan and floor plans prepared by Liz Harrow, Architect dated received February 18, 2013, subject to revisions as required.
2. The applicant shall obtain all applicable permits, licenses, and approvals from the Township prior to any work taking place on the site. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approvals shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.
3. The final site plan and landscape plan are subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.
4. Any modification to the site to enlarge the use will require a modification of the special use permit.

**Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson

NAYS: Commissioner Salehi

Motion carried 7-1.

- B. \*Special Use Permit #13031 (Public Works and Engineering), request to work in the 100-year floodplain to construct a pedestrian/bicycle pathway bridge over the Eberly Drain between Jo Pass Dr. and the Interurban Pathway

**Commissioner Ianni moved to suspend Planning Commission Bylaw 6.4a to consider Special Use Permit #13031 the same night as the public hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

**Commissioner Ianni moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #13031 subject to the following conditions:**

1. Approval is subject to the plans prepared by Department of Public Works & Engineering, dated March 6, 2013, and the related materials submitted as part of Special Use Permit #13031, subject to revisions as required.
2. The applicant shall obtain applicable permits, licenses, and approvals from the Township, Ingham County, and the State of Michigan prior to any work taking place on the site. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approvals shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.
3. In no case shall the impoundment capacity of the 100-year floodplain be reduced.
4. Fill placed in the floodplain as part of the project shall be protected against erosion.
5. The applicant shall properly dispose of all excess materials from the compensating cut areas to an off-site location subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.
6. The disposed materials at the off-site location shall be protected from erosion and re-seeded subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.

Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Cut-to-fill ratio is 1.11:1.0 while the minimum ratio is 1:1

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Salehi, Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

- C. Rezoning #13010 (Planning Commission), rezone 5691 Babbitt Street from C-2 (Commercial) to RB (Single Family-High Density) residential

Commissioner Scott-Craig moved [and read into the record] **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval of Rezoning #13010 to rezone 5691 Babbitt Street from C-2 (Commercial) to RB (Single Family-High Density) residential.**

Seconded by Commissioner Hildebrandt.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Salehi, Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson



NAYS: None  
Motion carried 8-0.

**8. Other Business**

**A. Master Plan Objective: Redevelopment Readiness**

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the adoption of the Redevelopment Readiness Program best practices as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 21, 2013.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Life span of the program
- Additional goal in the Master Plan as an approach to incorporate the Redevelopment Readiness Communities program
- Distinction between the Redevelopment Readiness Program v. Redevelopment Readiness Program's best practices
- New goal v. new objective
- Possibility of modifying an existing goal

**It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to work on this issue during the Master Plan work sessions.**

**B. Future Work Session Discussion: Master Plan Update**

Chair Jackson proposed a work session after the first Planning Commission meeting to be held April 8, 2013.

**It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to hold a work session on the Master Plan Update after the April 8<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.**

**9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports**

Commissioner Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson and Commissioner Norkin attended a March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting where a talk on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) was given by Dena Belzer, Founder and President of Strategic Economics. He indicated this was a session sponsored by Tri-County Regional Planning Commission as a part of the long term view of the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Corridor. Commissioner Scott-Craig reminded fellow Commissioners and the public regarding TCRPC's series of vision sessions on the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Corridor to be held May 1-7, 2013 at various locations. He added TCRPC's website has links to both information and videos of the sessions.

Principal Planner Oranchak added sessions are also available on HOMTV.

**10. New applications**

- A. PUD #13-05044 (Champion Woods), request for a minor amendment to rearrange boundaries between units 39, 40 and 41.**

**11. Site plans received (None)**

**12. Site plans approved**

- A. Site Plan Review #12-94-9 (Jesus Melendez/Keystone Design Group Architects), request for Phase II remodeling (add covered walkway along front façade) of former restaurant building for Fiesta Charra at 5990 Park Lake Road, East Lansing.**

**13. Public remarks**

Chair Jackson opened public remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, clarified the presence of a Michigan state trooper from Iron Mountain in the audience.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

**14. Adjournment**

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary

# CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

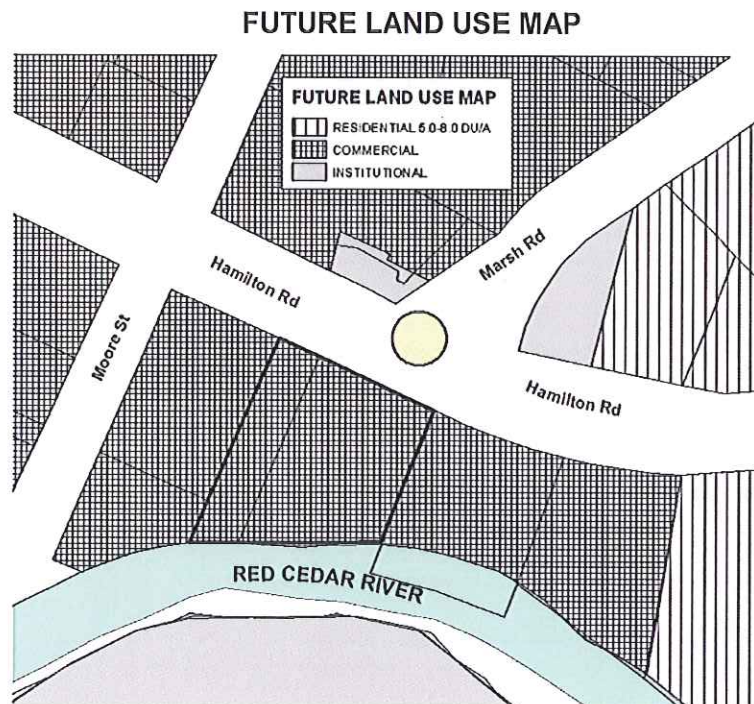
FROM: *Gail Oranchak*  
Gail Oranchak  
Principal Planner

DATE: April 4, 2013

RE: MUPUD Concept Plan – 2099 and 2095 Hamilton Road

The Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) ordinance includes a provision for applicant's to submit a concept plan for concurrent review by the Planning Commission and Township Board. The review provides both the Planning Commission and Township Board an opportunity to offer comments or suggestions on the design prior to formal MUPUD application. The review is informal; therefore a public hearing and associated noticing are not required.

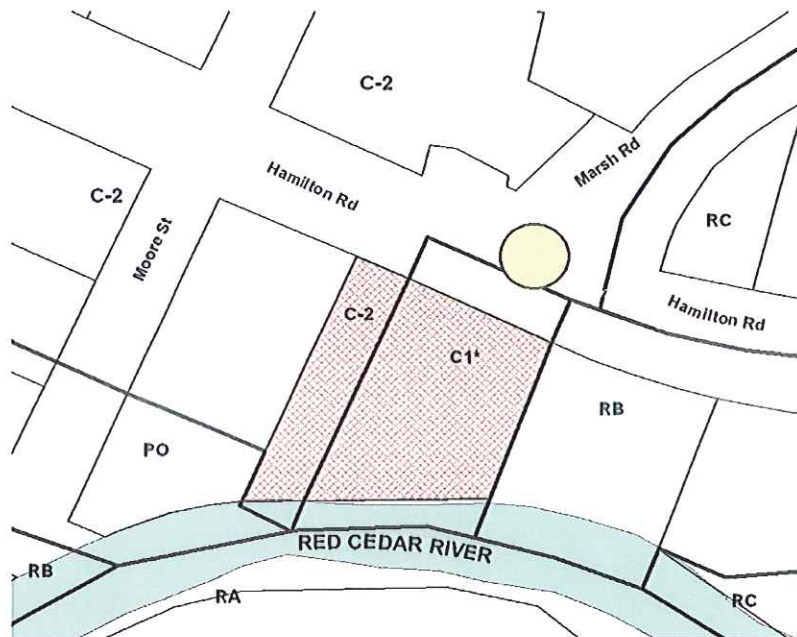
Pete Campbell owns two adjacent properties on the south side of Hamilton Road between Moore Street and the Hamilton/Marsh roundabout and north of the Red Cedar River. He proposes to develop the site as a mixed use planned unit development and the submitted plans show 12 two-bedroom rental units and 1,293 square feet of commercial space. The project site, the combination of the two properties, consists of approximately 100 feet of lot width along Hamilton Road and approximately .82 acres in lot area.



**MUPUD Concept Plan Review – Campbell-Hamilton Rd.  
Planning Commission (4/4/13)  
Page 2**

Both lots are designated for Commercial use on the Future Land Use Map of the 2005 Master Plan. To the east of the site is an RB (Single Family-High Density) residential zoned single family residence and to the west is a C-2 zoned multi-tenant commercial building. The Red Cedar River is the site's southern boundary.

**ZONING MAP**



2099 Hamilton Road has been zoned C-2 for many years. 2095 Hamilton was conditionally rezoned from RC (Multiple Family, up to 14 dwelling units per acre) to “conditional” C-1 (Commercial) in 2007. In 2006, the applicant requested the rezoning of 2095 from RC to C-2 (Commercial) and offered to condition the rezoning on redevelopment as a mixed use planned unit development. The Planning Commission recommended denial to the Township Board. While under review at the Township Board, the applicant indicated a willingness to accept C-1 (Commercial) zoning with the condition the site would be redeveloped as a mixed use planned unit development thus the rezoning was approved.

One concept plan has been provided showing the commercial space along the east side of the building with two 2-story townhouse style units above the commercial and 10 2-story stacked townhouse style apartments (five over five) occupying the remainder of the building.

The following standards are found in the MUPUD ordinance standards:

- Buildings on C-1 zoned MUPUD sites abutting a residential district must not be taller than the height allowed by the residential zoning district, in this case 2-1/2 stories or 35 feet. A 3-story building is shown; the height dimension has not been provided.
- Allowed uses include any use permitted by right or special use permit in the underlying zoning district and single and multiple family residential uses up to a density of 14 dwelling

**MUPUD Concept Plan Review – Campbell-Hamilton Rd.  
Planning Commission (4/4/13)  
Page 3**

units per acre (redevelopment sites). The maximum density for the approximate .82 acre site is 11 units, density bonuses up to 18 units per acre may be acceptable.

- At least one amenity is required. Density bonuses may be allowed with at least one or more additional amenities.
- Yard, setback, lot size, type and size of dwelling units, frontage requirements and impervious surface standards are generally waived unless specifically required for a MUPUD.
- Building materials such as but not limited to wood, brick, clapboards, beadboard, glass and stone are preferred. Vinyl, aluminum and other metal siding should be avoided
- Architectural design should be pedestrian-oriented and sensitive to surroundings.
- Parking lots are encouraged to be on the side or in the rear of a building. Possibly explore the feasibility of connecting the proposed MUPUD's parking lot with the adjacent commercial property to the west providing both sites with access to Moore Street and the Hamilton Road roundabout.
- Required parking will be established as part of the MUPUD process. 30 parking spaces are shown. Bicycle parking will be required.
- Landscaping should be designed to preserve existing significant natural features; buffer adjacent sites and service areas; and add to the visual appeal of the area using a mix of evergreen and deciduous plants and trees with seasonal accent plantings.

**Planning Commission Option**

The Planning Commission may comment and/or offer suggestions on the project design.

**Attachment**

1. Applicant's request
2. Site plans and building elevations

March 11, 2013

**Meridian Township**

5151 Marsh Road

Okemos, MI 48864 1198

Kieselbach, Mark

(Director) Community Planning & Development

Phone: (517) 853-4506

Email: [kieselbach@meridian.mi.us](mailto:kieselbach@meridian.mi.us)

Subject: Proposed redevelopment of 2099 and 2095 Hamilton Rd. Okemos, MI.

Dear Mark:

I have been working with Ken Jones of Studio Intrigue Architects of Lansing on a revised proposal for the redevelopment of 2099 and 2095 Hamilton Rd. in Okemos. 2099 Hamilton is .265 acres and zoned C2. 2095 Okemos is .55 acres zoned C1 Mixed Use Planned Unit Development. Both sites currently have older rental houses on them. Both parcels are within the Downtown Development Authority.

My proposal is to remove the two older rental houses on the properties and build a mixed use building. The proposed building will have (12) two bedroom rental apartments and some commercial space on the first floor.

The site is on Hamilton Road with the access driveway located on the Marsh Road roundabout. The proposed development takes advantage of the views looking directly over the river at the wooded acreage of Ferguson Park.

The proposed building is very traditional in its design. The rental units will be priced at the higher end of the market and aimed at those with active life styles relying heavily on the river access and the opportunity for kayaking on the Red Cedar River.

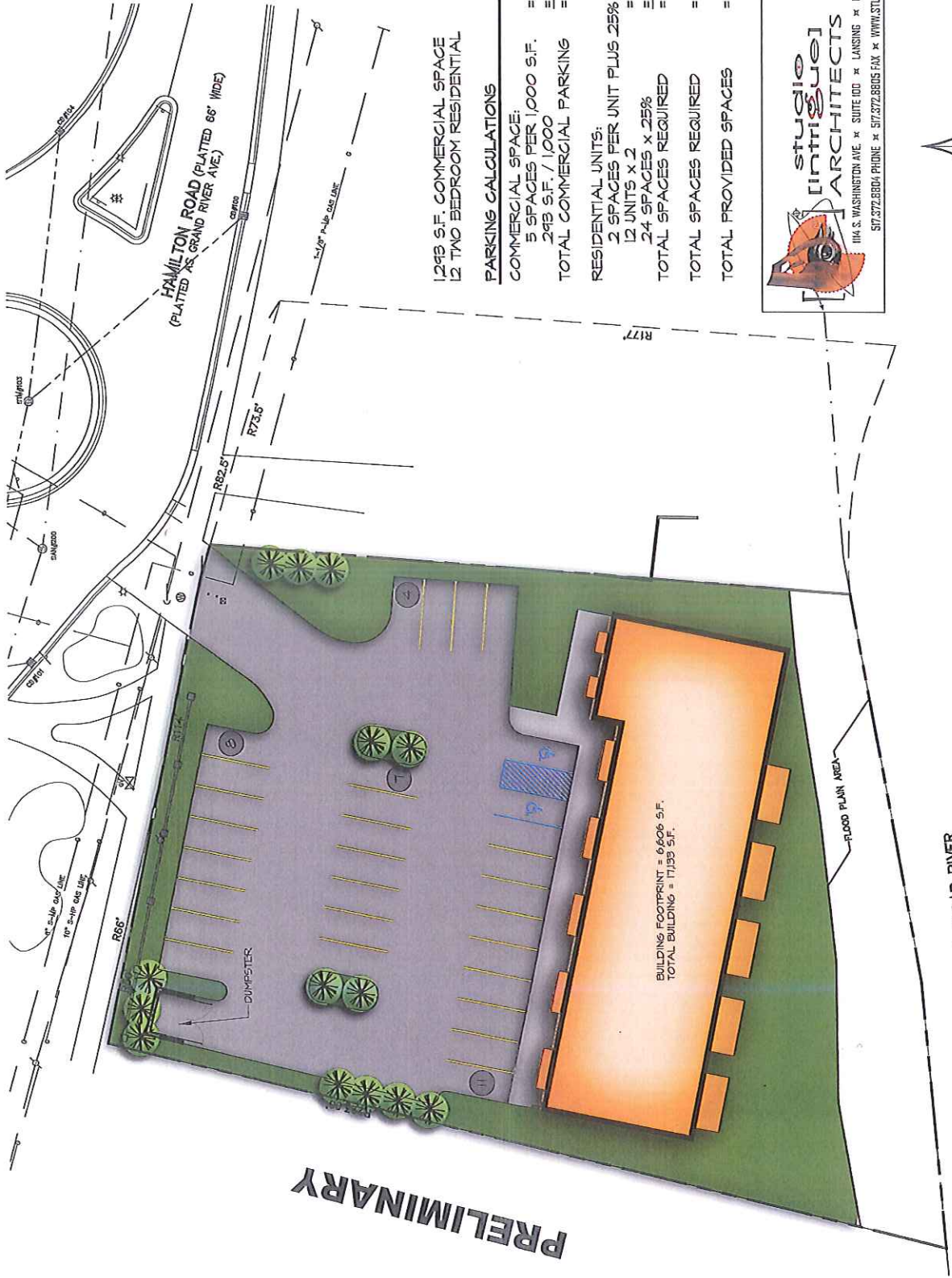
This property also provides walkable access to Meijer, Meridian Mall, numerous offices, professional centers, entertainment and dining establishments. This development will service the demand for residence options closer to the center of the city. This in turn helps reduce trips and promotes the walkability of the Township.

We would like to present the design concept that we have come up with at the following meetings if possible: April 1<sup>st</sup> Downtown Development Authority, April 8<sup>th</sup> Planning committee and the April 7<sup>th</sup> Township board meeting. If you could see about getting us on the agenda for these meetings I would appreciate it.

Unfortunately, I will be out of town on business for two of the three meetings but Ken Jones from Studio Intrigue Architects will be able to give a brief presentation and answer questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this redevelopment project.

Sincerely,  
Pete Campbell



1,248 S.F. COMMERCIAL SPACE  
 12 TWO BEDROOM RESIDENTIAL

**PARKING CALCULATIONS**

COMMERCIAL SPACE: = 5 SPACES  
 = 15 SPACES  
 248 S.F. / 1,000 = 7 SPACES  
 TOTAL COMMERCIAL PARKING = 7 SPACES

**RESIDENTIAL UNITS:**

2 SPACES PER UNIT PLUS .25% EXPANSION = 24 SPACES  
 12 UNITS x 2 = 6 SPACES  
 24 SPACES x .25% = 6 SPACES  
 TOTAL SPACES REQUIRED = 30 SPACES  
 TOTAL SPACES PROVIDED = 30 SPACES

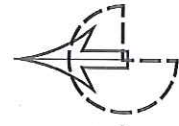
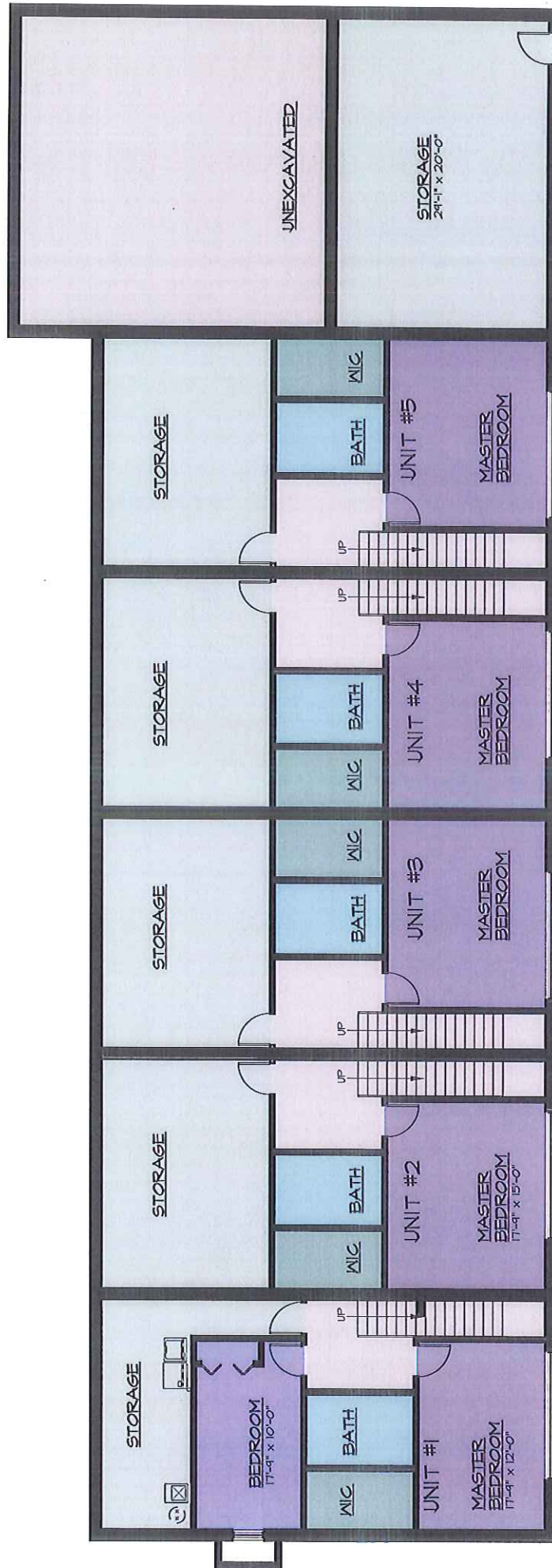
studio [intrigue] ARCHITECTS  
 114 S. WASHINGTON AVE. • SUITE 100 • LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48202  
 517.372.8804 PHONE • 517.372.8805 FAX • WWW.STUDIOINTRIGUE.COM

**SITE PLAN**

#11,144 N.T.S.  
 03/06/13

RED CEDAR RIVER

**PRELIMINARY**

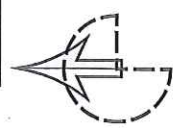
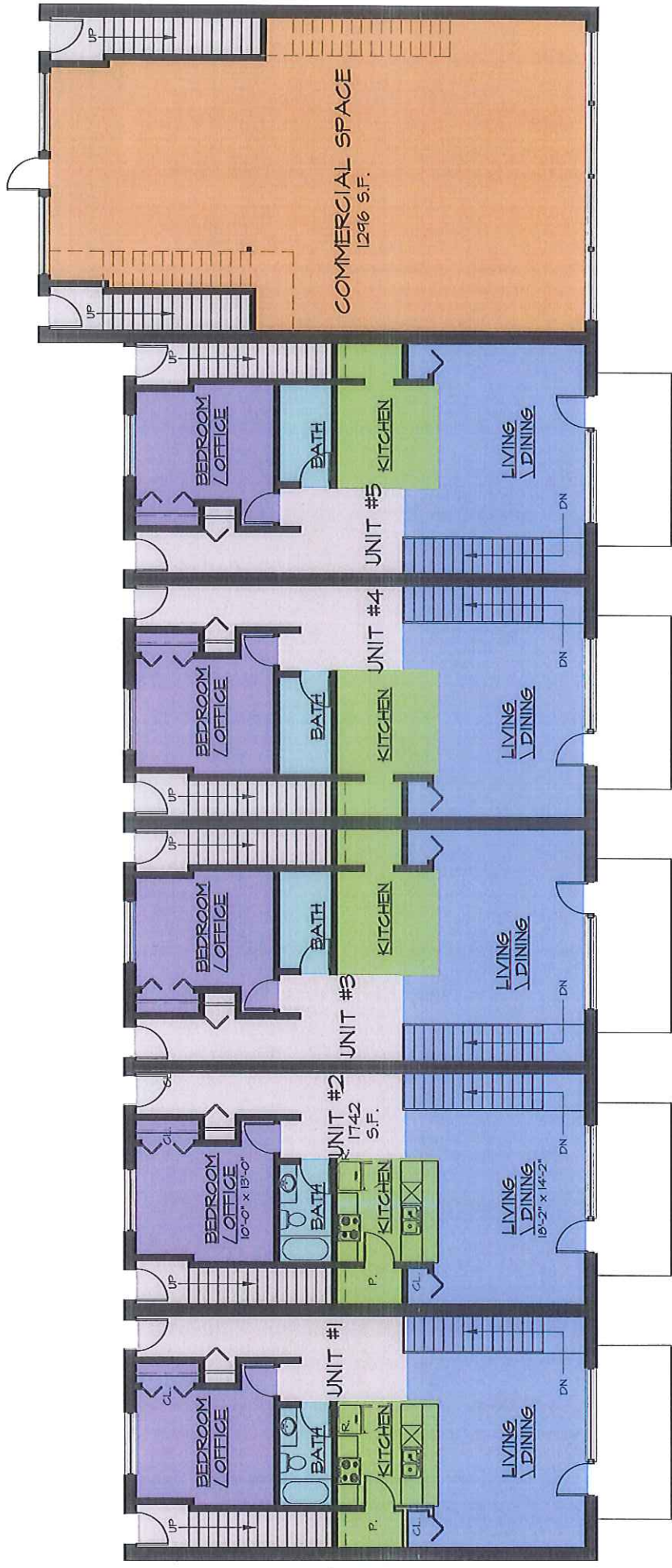


# BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

3/32" = 1'-0"

■ #11,144  
■ 3/06/13

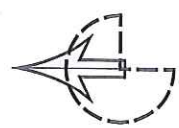
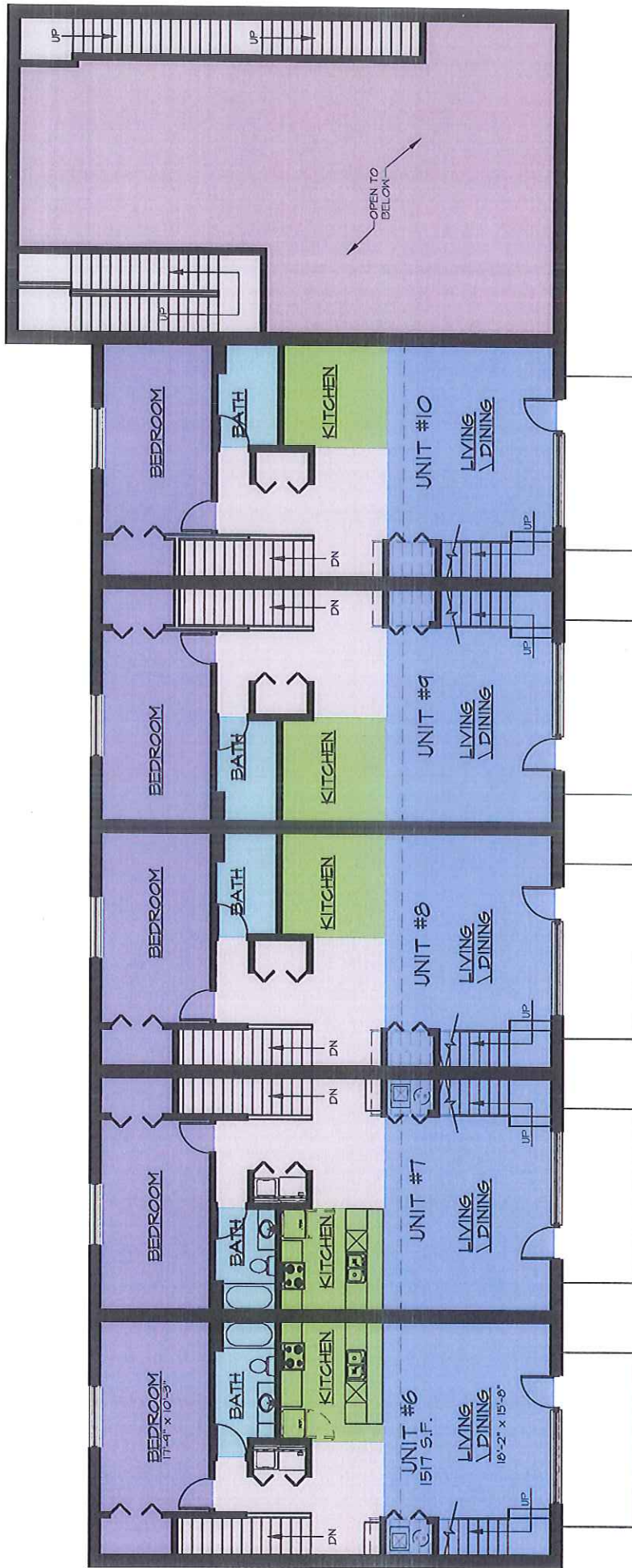




# FIRST FLOOR PLAN

3/32" = 1'-0"

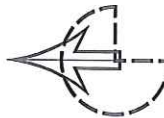
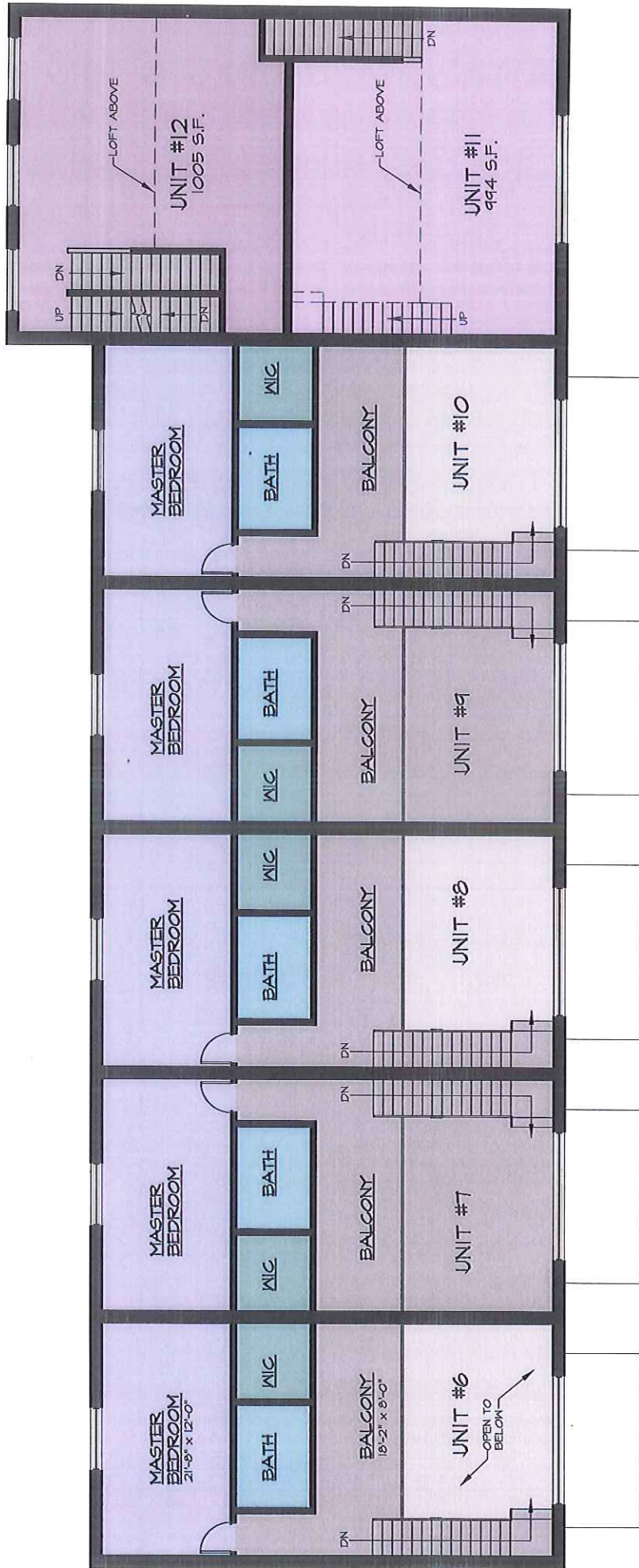
#11,144  
03/06/13



# SECOND FLOOR PLAN

3/32" = 1'-0"

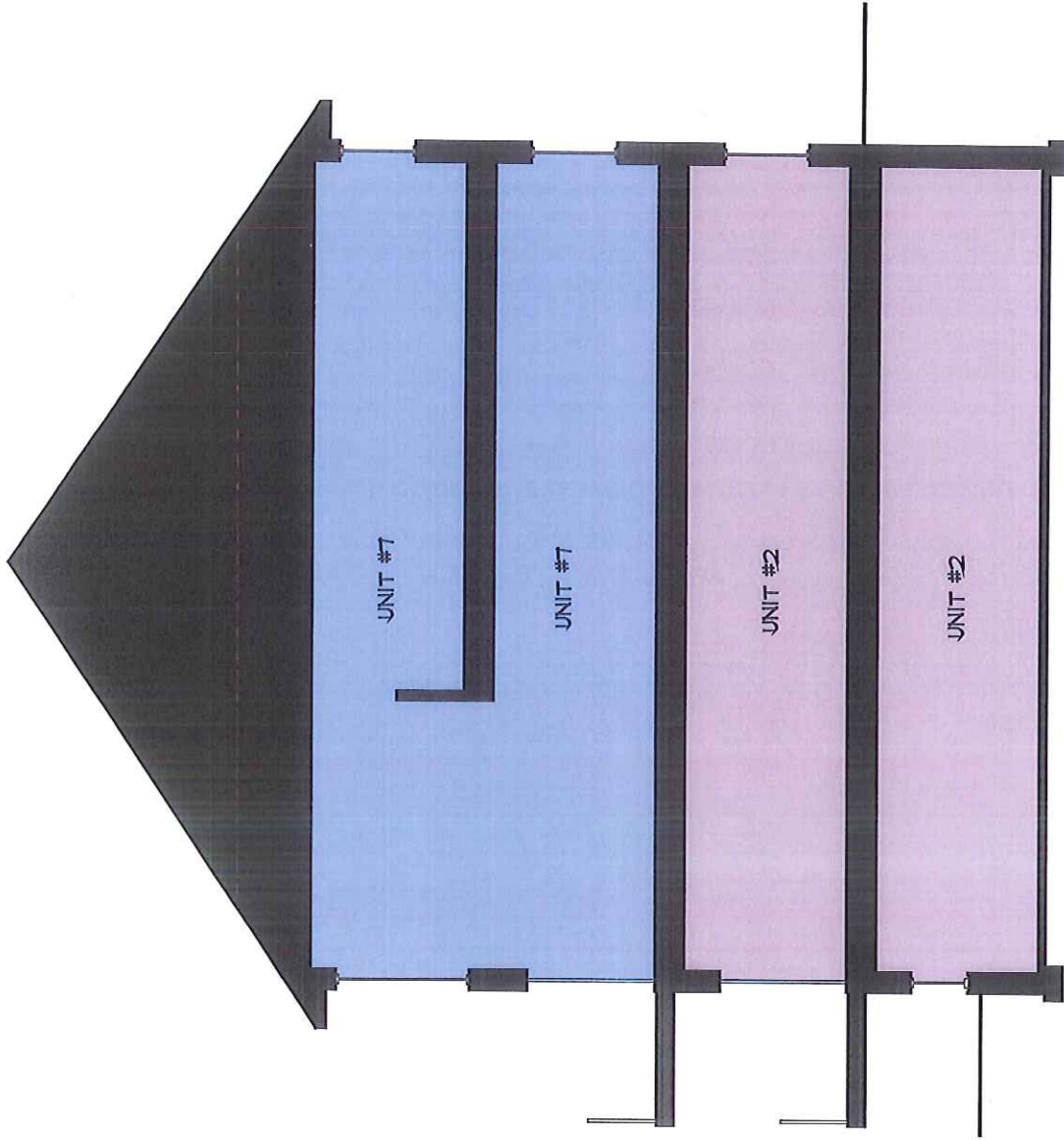
■ #1144  
■ 03/06/13



# THIRD FLOOR PLAN

3/32" = 1'-0"

#11.144  
03/06/13



# BUILDING SECTION

#11.144  
 03/06/13

1/8" = 1'-0"



studio  
[intrigue] ARCHITECTS

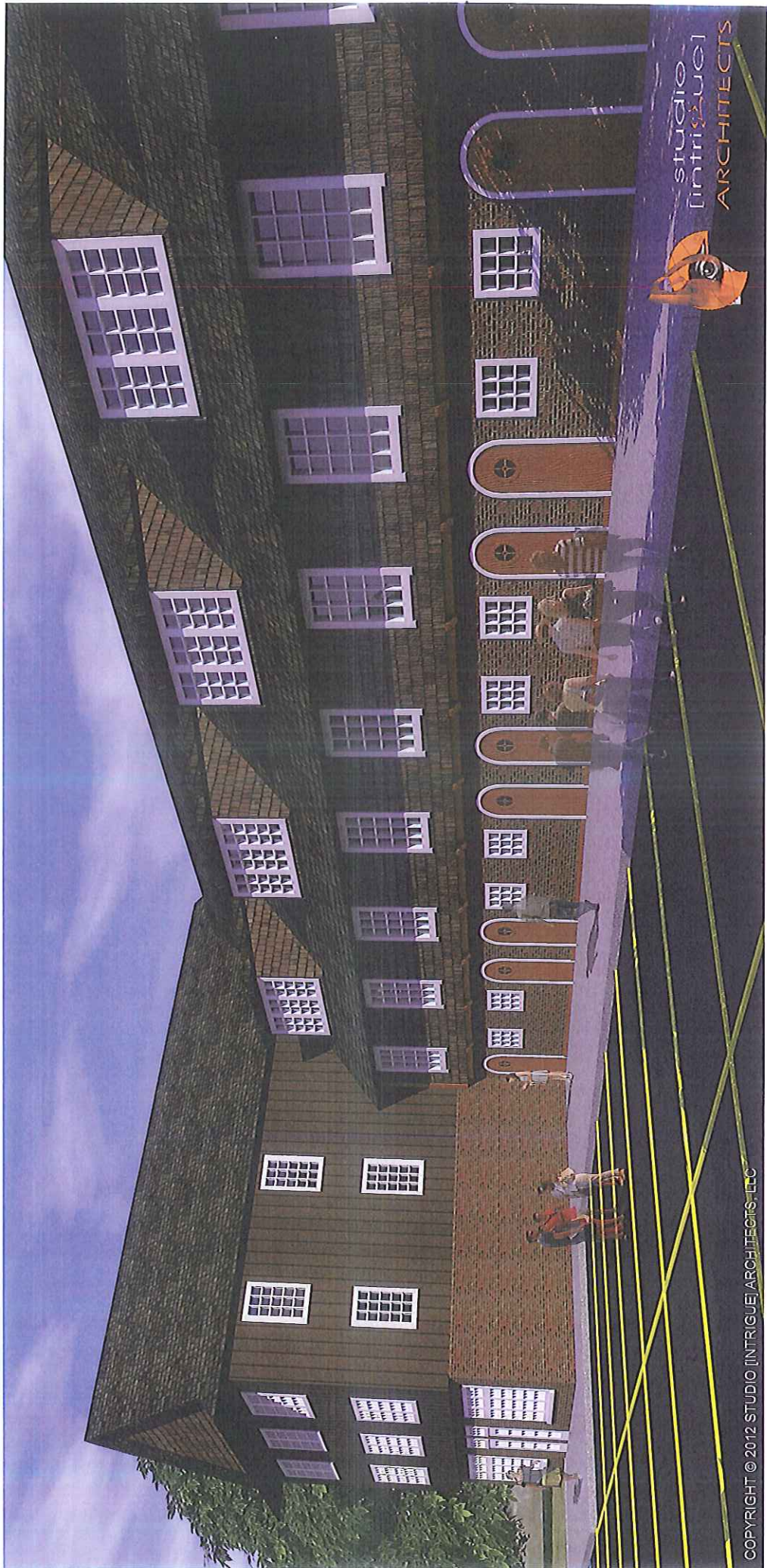


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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 5, 2013

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: *Gail Oranchak*  
Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner

RE: Master Plan Update

At the last meeting, Chair Jackson recommended scheduling a work session to renew work on the Master Plan update begun in 2010 and the Planning Commission agreed. A work session has been scheduled immediately after adjournment of the April 8 regular meeting. Chair Jackson has specifically requested Commissioners review the Infrastructure Chapter of the Master Plan.

Following is a synopsis of the Planning Commission's past work on updating the 2005 Master Plan.

In 2010, the Planning Commission conducted the five-year review of the Master Plan (required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008) and concluded a limited update of portions of the Master Plan was needed. One reason for a limited update was the lack of up-to-date census data. Items mentioned included: aligning policies in the Master Plan with Township Board policies, looking at the commercial components of the Land Use Plan; adding new policies for such topics such as aesthetics; and considering the connection between rural residential land and sewer capacity.

The Planning Commission began the update process by reviewing and preparing revisions to the Master Plan Goals and Objectives however work was interrupted in 2011 when the Township Board requested the Planning Commission delineate an urban service boundary on the Future Land Use Map of the 2005 Master Plan. The Planning Commission returned to work on the Goals and Objectives, completing the update and transmitting it to the Township Board in April, 2012. In November 2012, the Planning Commission complied with the Board's request to add an "energy conservation" component to the Goals and Objectives concluding its work on the Goals and Objectives.

In April, 2012, the Planning Commission renewed its effort to update targeted sections of the Master Plan. Minutes from the April 23, 2012 and May 1, 2012 work session meetings are attached for information purposes.

**Attachment**

1. April 23, 2012 Planning Commission Work Session minutes
2. May 14, 2012 Planning Commission Work Session minutes

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MINUTES

APPROVED

APRIL 23, 2012

5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
Town Hall Room, 517-853-4560

PRESENT: Chair Deits, Vice-Chair Jackson, Commissioners Honicky, Cordill, Hildebrandt, Norkin,  
Scales and Scott-Craig  
ABSENT: Commissioner Goodale  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak  
PUBLIC: None

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Deits called the work session meeting to order at approximately 7:10 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**3. Public Remarks**

None

**4. Discussion**

A. Computer use and public meetings

- Create and adopt policy for computer use at meetings
- Restrict internet use during meetings
- May look as if Commissioners not paying attention
- Consult Township Board before using at public meetings
- Do the bylaws already restrict use?
- Possibly amend Bylaws
- At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair convey to public Commissioners are not using the internet but have adopted a policy to receive reports electronically in lieu of hard copies, cost saving and environment preserving
- Electronic site plans could replace costly paper plans in some situations
- Site plans may lose detail if only viewed on screen
- Ability to enlarge area-by-area
- Start with small format reports and things that come on 8 1/2 x 11 now
- Planning staff will be required to convert to platform compatible with Commissioner devices
- Eliminates need for police cadets to deliver packets
- Option for Planning Commissioner to pick up packets at the office
- Option for mail delivery; expensive
- Use of Google Earth and Google Maps less costly
- Individual commissioners decide whether to accept electronically
- Policy to cover packet delivery and computer use
- Transmit staff reports as Word documents; allows for editing by Commissioners

- Flexible policy, discretion of Commission or Chair based on the case
- Policy should give Chair discretion to require computers be turned off for a period of time
- Logical eventuality of computer installation on the Town Hall Room dais
- Word files vs. .pdf
- Staff frame the debate by drafting a policy

B. 2005 Master Plan Update

- Staff provided a history of the Planning Commissions actions related to updating the 2005 Master Plan
- Revised Goals and Objectives sent to the Township Board on Nov 14; the Board has not reviewed them in entirety; only USB portions
- Make documents available to the community on the Township website when distributed to required agencies to prepare the for future public hearing
- In the meeting minutes report the Planning Commission's progress toward completing the 2005 Master Plan update and advising the public that working documents are available on the Township website for review and comment
- Remind Township Board they have received complete Goals and Objectives to review for distribution
- Preliminary decision to look at commercial, infrastructure and implementation chapters
- Status of economic census data, come back to at a future date
- Decisions to build schools and housing and preparation of the 2005 Master Plan reflect demographic data available at the time
- Changing circumstances highlighted in 2010 census of population data
- Long form census eliminated after the 2000 census
- Experts in demography question data resulting from the Census Bureau's current practice of collecting socio-economic data
- 2010 census data showed Master Plan population projections were very optimistic
- 2010 census data reflected in changes to Goals and Objectives
- Respond to changing demographics by focusing on infill, redevelopment, walkability, as opposed to new housing, new schools, physical infrastructure in past plans
- Update the 2005 Master Plan demographic data
- Identify economic development issues to pursue
- Impact of increasing numbers of foreign students with positive economic impact who are not being captured in census
- Socio-economic class of foreign students expect high quality housing
- U.S. government policy proposal to issue green cards for investment and job creation
- MSU active recruitment of overseas students to address drop in state high school graduation rates
- Financial benefit to attract out-of-state and foreign students who pay out-of-state tuition
- Regional policy discussion: retain foreign graduates by connecting to U.S. employers to eliminate competition from outside the country
- Lansing won't keep them unless high end commodities are available locally not via on-line
- Capstone is an example of adapting to this market, BMW dealer, DTN Management practices
- Clean air, clean water and no one-child policy will keep them here
- Long-term regional implications of MSU's policy to attract wealthy foreign students
- Lodges I & II visits by Commissioner showed students don't know where they live or the services available in Meridian Township
- Grocery store nearby; improved marketing needed

- Focus not necessarily on students but graduates and parents
- Meridian Township can do a much better job marketing itself and its attractions to students and others in East Lansing
- Capstone residents do not know where they live—East Lansing, Okemos, Meridian Township
- Sync Master Plan with the communities' economic development initiatives
- Meet with economic development counterparts before finalizing updates to an economic plan
- MSU students will find Meridian Township organically
- Marketing opportunities like business flyers/cards stuffed in SBS bags
- Flyers in community buildings about Township website to inform about activities in Meridian
- Tweeting to #MSU to inform; HOM-TV responsibility
- Demographic shifts exposed, population aging, actions considered by the state to reverse the trend of young people leaving
- Fitting the economic piece into the Implementation Chapter
- Update the demographics for now or go further
- Implementation requires both demographic and economic information but requires a framework based on goals and objectives
- Work on implementation while waiting on economic data based on demographics as we know them now and revised goals and objectives
- What is the impact of actual slow growth on the Master Plan
- Other chapters have materials that need to be updated
- Staff can do data and map updates where information is available
- Planning Commission homework for the May work session, read through the Future Land Use and Implementation Chapters with tonight's discussion in mind identify where change is needed and how to get creative and embody change in the chapters
- HUD Sustainable Communities Grant kickoff on Monday April 30

**5. Public remarks**

None

**6. Adjournment**

Chair Deits adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MINUTES

APPROVED

MAY 14, 2012

5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
Town Hall Room, 517-853-4560

PRESENT: Chair Deits, Vice-Chair Jackson, Commissioners Cordill, Hildebrandt, Scales and Scott-Craig  
ABSENT: Commissioners Honicky, Norkin, Goodale  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak  
PUBLIC: None

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Deits called the work session meeting to order at approximately 7:15 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**3. Public Remarks**

None

**4. Discussion**

A. 2005 Master Plan Update

- Review of the Future Land Use and Implementation Chapters
- Line 230 is not up to date on the Urban Services District
- Status of "special study areas"
- Named study areas result of high number of variance requests due to non-conforming status of lots
- Zoning overlay district adopted in response to Lake Lansing study area
- Staff conducting research for possible zoning ordinance amendment regarding accidental destruction of non-conforming structures
- Rewrite Lines 12-15, Paragraph 2 Page 1, delete named special study areas
- Okemos Integrated Plan initiated by DDA but never formally adopted
- Planning Commission delayed consideration of zoning amendment for four properties outside the DDA but zoned commercial in anticipation of DDA adoption of Okemos Integrated Plan
- New ordinances such as MUPUD and C-PUD provide options other than variances in Okemos and Haslett study areas
- More options may be available through further regulatory changes identified generally in an Implementation chapter
- Work with the Okemos DDA, HUD/Grand River Corridor group, and Haslett Corridor Improvement Group to incorporate their interests
- Possibility of expanding DDA area
- Master Plan focus generally on redevelopment rather than one area such as the DDA

- Revise Line 11 “emphasis on residential” for consistency with revised goals and identify other options such as mixed use-residential that were not available in the 2005 Master Plan
- MUPUD represents changing vision
- Development type represents maturation of the Township
- Residential vacancy not high per 2010 census but bringing prices down
- Data on the number of approved but significant chunks of undeveloped lots in subdivisions
- The community will continue to be primarily residential
- Build-out analysis includes all land in the Township based on underlying density
- Many caveats in a build-out analysis, is one necessary?
- Portland as example of city to rural
- Put all data in a plan appendix
- Replace language of growth with language of sustainability
- Planning for an elderly population as opposed to a bigger population
- Two-wave population versus one-wave; boomers as first wave, need a second wave or young people
- Cooler downtown/Meridian Mall, smaller units to live in 5-10 years to take care of student loans
- Understand the character of the next population wave and the housing options they will desire
- Co-housing as an option particularly for an aging population
- Remember concept of regionalism and Lansing as center of Tri-County region
- Meridian Township’s place in the regional plan
- Sensible to have an urban center in Meridian Township for better flow, more efficient use of the corridor, transit lines populated all the way down the corridor. Not the center but a nucleus.
- Making it less difficult to try options for designs not on the ground now
- Developers avoid the Township because of rules and regulations
- Revised Goals and Objectives sent to the Township Board on Nov 14; the Board has not reviewed them in entirety; only USB portions
- Master Plan Future Land Use Chapter creates the vision for the future: options for Grand River such as multi-use; leave eastern the way it is, population does not warrant growth out there
- Immigration as the growth factor in the U.S. and Meridian Township
- Vision of dynamic downtown, preserved rural environment, road diets and opportunities for bicycling
- Commissioner Hildebrandt to prepare a draft “vision”
- Send information to staff to disseminate
- Move all data into an appendix with summary in the plan document
- General statement to show ample capacity available for at least the next 20-years. Without substantial population growth or new development, renovation and improvement of existing housing
- General statement explaining not all data in the document. One statement summary to make document more readable than discussion of population projections. “Given lack of substantial population growth renovation and improvement of existing housing, rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing commercial areas to attract younger generation.”
- Focus on sustainability. Future is management for sustainable development.
- Sustainability implies better efficiency in use of resources, shift in perspective and vision warranted by current realities
- Two-word phrase hadn’t expected to see as much of – Smart Growth
- Complete Streets is Smart Growth
- Line 832. Add “The presence of a thriving farmers market in Meridian and others nearby is an area that may bring a limited amount of specific agricultural activity to the Township in years to

come and this should be encouraged. The possibility of having small local specialty agricultural services in the eastern side of the Township that serve the farmers market and local agriculture should be something we would look for as an alternative to adding value in the eastern Township.”

- Revise ordinances to allow agriculture on smaller lots
- Visioning, pull data out into appendix, addition regarding agriculture
- Share ideas via e-mail to staff
- Elaborate on discussion of Greenspace Plan in the Master Plan
- Amend zoning ordinance to require SUP if site development encroaches into Greenspace Plan area
- Using Greenspace Plan to encourage making connections shown in the Plan
- Encourage applicants to abide by it and pay attention
- Greenspace Plan not an ordinance
- Line 218. Revise “advisable to investigate options to incentivize or otherwise promote compliance”
- Study the Hannah Farm MUPUD area.
- Road Commission position on Complete Streets – bike lane discussed in larger scope of overall plan, Township or developer fund widening. Loss of vehicle capacity with bicycle lanes.
- Alternative plan and strategy to get bikes to MSU
- Not necessary to have actual Complete Streets route in the plan but a guide for desired route
- Need to have some type of safe crossing across Hagadorn Road if a cross country trail ends at the railroad
- Hannah is the natural place for a bicycle crossing
- E-mail Gail with information for all commissioners
- Implementation Chapter not too much to do
- Very general statements about Smart Growth
- Scott-Craig to propose vision for bike trail east of Hagadorn Road along river/RR
- Hannah doesn’t work for bicycles unless the median is removed

**5. Public remarks**

None

**6. Adjournment**

Chair Deits adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner