

Chapter 1

Introduction

Authority

Townships first came into existence in Michigan through the Northwest Ordinance passed in 1787. Townships are typically comprised of 36 sections, each 640 acres (1 square mile), for a total of 36 square miles in area. However, each of Kimball Township's 36 sections are larger than 640 acres in size, with the largest section containing 697 acres. The larger sections result in a total Township area of 23,968.1 acres or 37.45 square miles.

According to Michigan Legislation, there are two forms of townships: General Law and Charter. The biggest distinction between a General Law Township and a Charter Township lies in their ability to levy taxes and their source of revenue. Charter Townships have the ability to levy taxes without the vote of the people. However, General Law Townships are funded mainly through State Shared Revenues and do not have the ability to levy taxes on their residents without the vote of the people. Kimball Township is a General Law Township.

Kimball Township derives its authority to update its Master Plan from the Township Planning Act, Public Act 168 of 1959, Section 6, which states the following:

“The Planning Commission shall make and adopt a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the township. As a basis for the plan, the Planning Commission is hereby empowered to (1) make inquiries, investigations and surveys of all the resources of the township and (2) assemble and analyze data and formulate plans for the proper conservation and use of all resources, including a determination of the extent of probable future need for the most advantageous designation of lands having various use potentials and for services, facilities and utilities required to equip such lands.”

Purpose

The planning process is designed to involve conscious selections of policies relating to growth and development in a community. The master plan serves to promote these policies through the following:

1. Provides a general statement of the Township's goals and provides a comprehensive view of the community's preferred future.
2. Serves as the primary policy guide for local officials when considering zoning land division, capital improvement projects and any other matters related to land development. Thus, the master plan provides a stable and consistent basis for decision making.
3. Provides the statutory basis for the Township's Zoning Ordinance, as required by the Township Zoning Act, Public Act 184 of 1943.
4. Helps to coordinate public improvements and private development activities to assure the judicious and efficient expenditure of public funds.

Planning History

The most recent master plan for Kimball Township was enacted in November of 1986. Planning practice generally states the useful lifetime of a master plan to be between 10 to 20 years, depending on the growth and development of the community. During the past 15 years, from the time of the previously adopted master plan, Kimball Township has experienced a 20 percent growth in population. The residential growth activity and the age of the previous master plan promoted the development of this updated Master Plan.

Master Plan Organization

The Kimball Township Master Plan is comprised of three primary categories: background studies; goals and objectives; and the future land use plan for the Township. The background studies lay the framework for the Master Plan by providing the social, economic and environmental conditions of the Township. The goals and objectives chapter will be utilized as a guidebook for the decision-makers in the Township. Finally, the future land use plan is the vision of the Township, which will be realized through implementing the desired goals and objectives.