



## CHAPTER 1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Charter Township of Waterford, located in the geographic center of Oakland County, Michigan, has grown from a farming community in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to a developed community of over 73,000 residents at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Township now faces the challenges of a mature community striving to maintain and improve its infrastructure and land use for the enjoyment and safety of its citizens. Municipal planning is a critical component of local government's exercise of power to address these challenges by providing for the physical and social infrastructure necessary for the general health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The primary long-range planning tool of the community, the Master Plan, is the only official Township document that sets forth policies to guide future land use in the community. The Township derives its authority to prepare and implement this policy document from the Township Planning Act, P.A. 168 of 1959 (as amended in 2001). The Master Plan provides a single, comprehensive view of the community's vision for its future. The Master Plan also serves as an aid in daily decision-making and guiding the Planning Commission and Township Board in their deliberations on zoning, subdivision, capital improvements, economic development, environmental protection, and other matters relating to land use and development. It is the basis for the Zoning Ordinance and other regulations, therefore it is important for every property owner to be aware of the contents of the Master Plan and the efforts to implement the goals and objectives contained within the community's Master Plan.

The Planning Commission developed Waterford's new Master Plan during 2000-2002 with significant citizen involvement. The Planning Commission was assisted by over 70 citizens who dedicated their time to participate in the master planning process. The process involved reviewing the Township's past and current land use patterns, as well as its physical, social, and economic characteristics. The Planning Commission organized nine Master Plan Subcommittees, with each subcommittee focusing on and reviewing a specific topic. The nine topics were: transportation and commercial corridors; environment; recreation and open space; historic district and neighborhood nodes; capital improvements and municipal services; economic development; education and public services; housing and demographics; and zoning ordinance and landscape aesthetics. The Planning Commission used the information and citizen views gathered during this process to prepare a Master Plan document to guide Waterford's future land use and development patterns during the next twenty years. This Master Plan was adopted by the Waterford Township Planning Commission on January 2, 2003.

### MASTER PLAN CONTENT

The Master Plan is organized into two volumes. The first volume contains the Plan itself, while the second volume contains supporting documentation used to develop components of the Master Plan. The second volume also contains sections reserved for the major documents that will be prepared as a result of Master Plan implementation. The first volume of the Master Plan is organized as follows:

#### Volume One – Master Plan

##### Acknowledgements

##### Chapter 1 – Executive Summary

##### Chapter 2 – Introduction

##### Chapter 3 - Geography and Brief History of Waterford Township

##### Chapter 4 - Organization of Waterford Planning and Zoning

##### Chapter 5 - Background Studies Summary

##### Chapter 6 - The Master Plan Public Participation Process

##### Chapter 7 - Subcommittee Goals and Objectives

##### Chapter 8 - Future Land Use Plan and Maps

##### Chapter 9 – Implementation

The first five chapters provide the past and current background of Waterford, the foundation upon which the new Master Plan is based. Chapter 6 provides a detailed overview of the three-year master planning process used by the Planning Commission. Chapter 7 contains a summary of the process used, and the proposed goals and objectives developed by each Master Plan Subcommittee. All of the goals and objectives outlined in this chapter were used by the Planning Commission as the basis for the seven Master Plan Goals. Chapters 8 and 9 provide the components of Waterford’s future land use and development policies and goals, as well as the objectives and strategies recommended for accomplishing the policies and goals.

The second volume of the Master Plan is organized as follows:

**Volume Two-Appendices**

- Appendix A - Background Studies**
- Appendices B through J - Master Plan Subcommittee Minutes**
- Appendix K - Public Participation Process Documentation and Reports**
- Appendix L - Traffic Analysis**
- Appendix M - Walkability Study**
- Appendix N - Transportation Plan**
- Appendix O - Community Facilities Analysis**
- Appendix P - Capital Improvements Plan**
- Appendix Q - Neighborhood Node and Area Concept Plans**
- Appendix R - Zoning Ordinance and Landscape Aesthetics Subcommittee Draft Ordinance Report**
- Appendix S - Waterford Recreation Plan**
- Appendix T - Wellhead Protection Plan**
- Appendix U - Oakland County International Airport Master Plan**
- Appendix V - Waterford School District Master Plan**
- Appendix W - Oakland County Service Center Complex Master Plan**

Appendix A contains demographic studies and statistical analyses that were used as the foundation for the review and conclusions regarding existing land use and Waterford’s demographic, social, and economic patterns. A summary of Appendix A content is included in Chapter 5 of Volume One. Appendices B through J provide the official minutes of every Master Plan Subcommittee meeting held during April through September 2001. Appendix K contains examples of the public opinion tools and participation exercises used during the master planning process, as well as the reports on the results of these exercises. Appendices L and M contain respectively, analyses of the Township’s road system and the nonmotorized path system. These analyses will be used to assist in developing the initial Township Transportation Plan, which when completed will become part of Appendix N. All future versions of the Transportation Plan will be added to Appendix N. Appendix O contains an analysis of the Township’s community facilities. This analysis will be used to assist in developing the initial Township Capital Improvements Plan, which when completed will become part of Appendix P. All future versions of the Capital Improvements Plan will be added to Appendix P. One of the main strategies for implementing this Master Plan will be the preparation and proactive development of conceptual plans for the identified neighborhood node areas and major development areas. These plans, when prepared, will be added as part of Appendix Q. Appendix R will contain the report on the draft Zoning Ordinance that will be proposed as one of the primary tools for implementing this Master Plan. Appendices S through W will contain current and future plans prepared by other governmental entities and identified by the Planning Commission as important components of the Waterford Future Land Use Plan.

## **MASTER PLAN GOALS**

The Planning Commission established the following seven goals to be accomplished during the next twenty years. These goals exhibit a continuation of Waterford’s commitment to preserve and protect its natural environment, expand recreational opportunities for Waterford citizens, and maintain the level of municipal and public safety services. The goals also establish a commitment to create a walkable community and to improve the Township’s commercial corridors. Objectives and strategies were developed for accomplishing each goal. A detailed list of the goals, objectives, and strategies can be found in Chapter 9.

**Goal 1 - To Maintain, Improve, and Enhance Capital Infrastructure and Public Safety for the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Waterford Citizens**

**Goal 2 - To Improve and Enhance the Transportation Network within Waterford**

**Goal 3 - To Enhance the Walkability of Waterford**

**Goal 4 - To Create an Economic Climate Conducive to the Attraction, Retention, and Expansion of Business**

**Goal 5 - To Increase and Improve Recreational Opportunities for Waterford Citizens**

**Goal 6 - To Ensure and Enforce Land Use Development Practices that are Sensitive to Waterford’s Natural Environment**

**Goal 7 - To Retain, Enhance, and Promote Waterford’s Unique Character, Sense of Community, and Identity**

**FUTURE LAND USE**

The Planning Commission established a Future Land Use Plan and Map; these can be found in Chapter 8. As part of the Future Land Use Plan, land use designations were created to guide development during the next twenty years. The overall land usage, which is described in detail in Chapter 8, follows the existing general land use patterns. One noticeable change in future land use designations since the 1991 Master Plan is the distribution within the Commercial and Office designations. This reflects both the community’s understanding that it is entering its first redevelopment phase and the Master Plan goal to enhance its commercial corridors. In previous master plans three traditional commercial and office designations were used, Office, Local Business, and Community Business. Through this Master Plan, besides these three traditional designations, the Planning Commission established five area-specific designations in which they want to encourage a particular development focus. These five commercial-based land use designations are Regional Commerce, Central Community Business, High Tech Services, Planned Destination, and Urban Business. These new designations are applied through the Master Plan to specialized focal areas, particularly the center of the Township, the area south of the Oakland County International Airport, the Telegraph and Elizabeth Lake Road retail destination area, the easternmost section of M-59, and the major transportation gateways into the Township. The new designations are also intended to possess additional flexible planning tools in order to achieve the goals and objectives set for these areas.

The Planning Commission adopted the following land use designations that are used in the Master Plan Future Land Use Map:

**Public and Open Space Designations**

*Public Lands* – Designation for federal, state, and local government-owned property.

*Quasi-Public Lands* – Designation for private property offering public benefit, such as golf courses and churches.

*Private Common Areas* – Designation for residential development property reserved as private open space.

**Residential Designations**

*Single-Family* – Designation for property intended for single family dwelling units.

*Multiple-Family* – Designation for property intended for multiple family dwelling units.

**Commercial and Office Designations**

*Local Business* – Designation for property providing small retail, office, and personal services to the immediate residential area and the surrounding vicinity.

*Community Business* – Designation for property intended to provide retail, commercial, and office services to the entire community.

*Central Community Business* – Designation for property in the geographic center of the Township which allows the mixture of land uses including office, commercial, and residential.

*High Tech Services* – Designation allowing for the mixture of land uses including office, commercial, and clean industrial uses.

*Office* – Designation for property uses providing office services in landscaped settings and generating low-volume traffic.

*Regional Commerce* – Designation allowing for the mixture of land uses including office and commercial that take advantage of the proximity of the Oakland County International Airport and Automation Alley.

*Urban Business* – Designation intended to reflect and promote the eastern segment of M-59 with a mix of local and community business and residential.

*Planned Destination* – Designation intended to accommodate a variety of mixed land uses such as retail, recreation, entertainment, and residential intended to attract local and regional consumers.

**Higher Intensity Designations**

*Airport* – Designation of airport land uses.

*Light Industrial* – Designation for lower intensity industrial property uses.

*General Industrial* – Designation for the most intensive industrial property uses such as manufacturing.

In addition to the land use designations, the Planning Commission is also proposing three overlay designations. An overlay designation is a zoning tool that observes the specific zoning district attached to a parcel of land while adding new regulations to those of the underlying zone. The overlay zone also offers incentives to property owners and developers to achieve the goals of the Master Plan with respect to the overlay area. The overlay designation is useful for protecting areas with special characteristics, such as environmental or unique geographic qualities, and for encouraging mixed use development. For Waterford, the three overlay designations being proposed for implementation through the Zoning Ordinance are **Historic District, Open Space, and Gateway.**

**Overlay Designations**

*Historic District* - Overlay designation to allow planning for the economic viability and preservation of the Waterford Village Historic District.

*Open Space* - Overlay designation to allow development provided that natural features and open spaces are preserved.

*Gateway* - Overlay designation to allow for creative land uses, in tandem with strong aesthetic and landscaping improvements, to develop unique and dynamic gateways into the Township.

**Neighborhood Nodes**

Another new component of this Master Plan is the designation of the following eight locations for future development as neighborhood nodes:

- Andersonville Road and Dixie Highway
- Dixie Highway and Frembes Road
- Clintonville Road and Walton Boulevard
- Airport Road and Hatchery Road
- Pontiac Lake Road and Scott Lake Road
- Williams Lake Road and Elizabeth Lake Road
- Cooley Lake Road and Elizabeth Lake Road
- Cooley Lake Road and Williams Lake Road

These neighborhood nodes are intended to be used as thriving neighborhood gathering places, encouraging nearby residents to walk to and frequent establishments serving their convenience shopping needs. As this Master Plan is implemented, each location will be extensively analyzed and a neighborhood node plan will be developed.

## **TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

Several transportation improvement goals were recommended during the master plan citizen participation process and have been incorporated into this Master Plan. These improvement goals include enhancing walkability in Waterford, improving the Township's commercial corridors, constructing the Riverwalk, and the following proposed road improvement projects that are shown graphically in Chapter 8:

- Realign Airport Road at Williams Lake Road
- Realign Watkins Lake Road at Scott Lake Road
- Realign Elizabeth Lake Road at Williams Lake Road
- Extend Williams Lake Road from Gale Road to connect with Nelsey Road
- Extend Crescent Lake Road from Hatchery Road to Williams Lake Road
- Divide Warren Drive into two public streets, one to serve residential properties and the other to serve industrial properties
- Construct grade separations at the Frembes, Hatchery, and Watkins Lake Road railroad crossings
- Extend Coomer Road to connect with Oregon Blvd.
- Create linkages between existing residential developments, where economically feasible and it reasonably enhances neighborhood traffic and public safety vehicle access

Another analysis completed by staff is reflected in the proposed number of future traffic lanes on the major roads in the Township and is shown graphically in Chapter 8. These components will be used as the basis to prepare a Transportation Plan. The Transportation Plan will include sections discussing in detail the Township's thoroughfares, future road lane widths, access management, traffic calming, walkability, and other transportation issues anticipated to arise during the twenty-year period of the Master Plan.