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## Section 7

### Action Program

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#### Introduction

The Lakefield Township Master Plan has been prepared to serve as a guide on both short-term and long-range issues which the Township will face as it develops in the future. Community planning issues were identified and discussed in Section 4 of this report. These issues were then used to formulate a set of general goals and more specific objectives that have been presented in Section 5. *These goals and objectives should serve as the basis for the tasks that the Township will undertake to translate the Master Plan into action.*

In addition, implementation of Lakefield Township's Master Plan should involve the following major elements:

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#### A. Public Involvement and Education

Public involvement and education are critical to the success of any plan. The community must be aware of the plan's existence and it must also accept the plan's findings and recommendations. The Planning Commission has the main responsibility for working to achieve

community involvement in the planning process and support for planning in general. This is a never-ending task.

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#### B. Acceptance and Use of the Plan by the Township Board

The current statutes do not specifically require adoption of the plan by the Township Board. However, as the elected legislative body of the Township, it is imperative that the Board members accept the Master Plan and use it in the governing process. As a first step in this direction, the Township Board should be asked to endorse the plan, following its adoption by the Planning Commission.

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#### C. Plan Updates

Community planning is a dynamic process. In order for the Master Plan to remain a viable document, it must be periodically updated. The Planning Commission should conduct a basic review of the document on an annual basis. Modifications should be made as necessary. The result is a plan that is always current and based on the best available information. These periodic plan updates do not need to be lengthy or elaborate. Depending on the subject matter, an update might be presented in a memo of a few pages. However, the Planning

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Commission should note that plan amendments must be handled in the same manner as the adoption of the original plan with respect to public notice and hearing requirements.

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#### **D. Update the Township Zoning Ordinance**

The Township Zoning Ordinance is expected to remain the single most important tool for plan implementation. As such, it is extremely important to update and revise the ordinance to reflect this Plan's land use recommendations.

Following adoption of the Master Plan, it will be appropriate to pursue an in-depth review and thorough revision of the ordinance.

The land use districts presented in the Master Plan have been designed to reinforce and strengthen the current Zoning Ordinance.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, and the identification of other desirable changes can be expected to result from the ordinance updating process.

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#### **E. Use the Master Plan In Zoning Decisions**

The Master Plan should be consulted prior to making zoning decisions. Experience indicates that the lack of such consultation often results in decisions that are in conflict with the

plan's recommendations. Zoning actions that are contrary to the Master Plan will diminish the public credibility of the document and will also limit the plan's potential benefit if the Township became involved in zoning litigation.

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#### **F. Maintain Consistency Between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance**

Once the Zoning Ordinance is revised to be consistent with the plan, this consistency must be maintained. If zoning decisions are made that are contrary to plan recommendations, it is important that the Planning Commission review the documents and consider a possible plan revision to reflect the zoning action. Plan amendments will also be necessary if issues arise where the plan does not offer sufficient guidance. In such a case, new or expanded material should be added to the plan to address the new issues.