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Date: July 17, 2007
To: Maple Grove Township Planning Commission
From: Rebecca Houghtaling, MUP, RPCV
Subject: Findings from Community Survey Analysis

Following is a section by section summary of findings from the analysis of the Maple Grove Township Community survey. Findings are bulleted for quick reference and are followed by summary information. In addition, a compilation of survey responses is also provided for reference, notable for responses to Questions 20 – Questions 25. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Russ, Ken, or myself at 231.941.8505.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

- Survey responses were divided nearly equally between residents and seasonal residents; however, ninety-seven (97) percent of respondents own their homes in Maple Grove Township
- Seventy-eight (78) percent of respondents live in single-family homes
- Eighty-four (84) percent of survey respondents were between the ages of 45 – 64, 65 – 74, and 75+; however, in the 2000 Decennial Census individuals over forty-five years old made up only forty-one (41) percent of the population.
- Most respondents expressed no intention of leaving the township, and a majority of those who intend to remain in Maple Grove Township for the remainder of their life are long-time residents of the township
- Seventy (70) percent of respondents live in two adult family households
- The highest level of education for fifty-eight (58) percent of the adults for which information was provided was either a *High School* or *College no degree*

Summary

Respondents represent both year-round and seasonal residents; however, the demographic make up of the respondents (e.g., age, home ownership) does not accurately reflect the demographic profile of the township when compared with the 2000 Decennial Census. As a result, Maple Grove Township Planning Commissioners are advised to weigh the survey responses accordingly. For instance, when reviewing Housing and Zoning questions (i.e., Question 17: Types of Affordable Housing Needed), the majority of respondents preference for single-family residences needs to be viewed in light of the fact that seventy-eight (78) percent of respondents live in single-family homes.

Responses to General Issues

- When asked what was a priority for Maple Grove Township to address over the next five (5) years, respondents categorized eight (8) of the fifteen options as *highest priority*, including
 - Attracting new businesses
 - Preserving educational quality
 - Preserving forest lands
 - Protecting drinking water quality & ground water supply
 - Protecting open spaces
 - Protection of the Manistee River, streams, and lakes
 - Tax Burden
- Respondents ranked three (3) of the fifteen as *high priority*, including
 - Location & quantity of new developments
 - New or upgraded town facilities (other than schools)
 - Recreational opportunities
- Development of ATV/Snowmobile Trails was the only response to be ranked *Lowest priority*

Summary

While respondents expressed the desire for Maple Grove Township to place the highest priority on Attracting new businesses, Preserving educational quality, Preserving forest lands, Protecting drinking water quality & ground water supply, Protecting historic properties & sites, Protecting open spaces, and Protection of the Manistee River, streams, respondents also indicated their desire for the township to place the highest priority on addressing the Tax Burden. To accomplish the preservation and protection of the township's natural and cultural resources may require additional expenditures, which may impact the Tax Burden. Given the potential conflicting goals of township residents, the township is advised to explore creative ways (possibly through inter-jurisdictional cooperation) to balance these potentially conflicting desires.

Responses to Community Facilities and Services

- Seven (7) of the fifteen questions on community facilities and services received *Don't know* responses; thereby indicating either respondents had "no experience or basis upon which to judge" the quality of town facilities and services
- Respondents were split between *Don't know* and *Good* on the School System
- Categories which received a majority *Good* ranking included
 - Cemetery Maintenance
 - Manistee National Forest
- A majority of respondents felt that Road maintenance and Reconstruction was *Adequate* or *Good*
- The only facility and services category to receive a majority of *Excellent* responses was the Library

Summary

Maple Grove Township Planning Commission will need to utilize other resources to evaluate community facilities and services based on the *Don't Know* responses from the community. Other sources include, but are not limited to, facility staff and user groups.

Responses to Land Use and Growth Management

- Forty (40) percent of respondents returned a *Maybe* response regarding the encouragement of clustering homes as an option for new residential subdivisions
- Forty-two (42) percent of respondents supported permitting higher density residential and commercial in already developed areas to help preserve rural character in other areas
- Forty (40) percent of respondents returned a *Maybe* response regarding provision of density bonuses to residential developments which create affordable housing

Summary

There are possibilities for educating Maple Grove Township members on tools which can help preserve the rural character and promote affordable housing by offering incentives to a developer as means of facilitating preservation of the township's rural character and natural resources along with future developments.

Responses to Natural Resources, Open Space, & Cultural Resources

- A majority of respondents indicated a *Very Important* level of importance for all of the natural resources, open space, and cultural resources questions, including
 - Identify and protect prime wetlands
 - Preserve forest land
 - Protect aquifers
 - Protect floodplains
 - Protect hillsides
 - Protect open space
 - Protect rivers
 - Protect surface water
 - Protect the drinking water
- Protecting the drinking water and no response both received the highest number of responses

Summary

Protection of the township's natural resources is of the utmost importance to respondents, and Planning Commissioners are advised to incorporate data from this section with devising goals and objectives.

Responses to Economic Development

- A majority of respondents consistently indicated either an *Important* or *Very Important* level of importance for
 - Attract new tourism
 - Attract new light industrial
 - Attract new retail
 - Identify in advance locations for new commercial and light industrial development
- Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated the need for another type of retail business, industry, or service that does not currently exist in Maple Grove Township. Of the offered suggestions, 82 percent suggested a grocery store.

Summary

Economic development initiatives are overwhelmingly supported by survey respondents; however, the trends in Michigan's economy suggest that attracting light industrial operations is highly unlikely. Thus, the Planning Commission is advised to consider Economic Development opportunities that include other areas and opportunities.

Responses to Housing & Zoning

- Most respondents expressed a preference for single-family and elderly housing in Maple Grove Township; this may be in part given that ninety-seven (97) percent of respondents are home owners of predominantly single-family homes and respondents are nearing or of retirement age
- Respondents were split between *Lowest* and *Moderate* on Manufactured Housing
- Most respondents returned a *Lowest* or *Low* response for Multi-family and Two-family housing types
- Fifty-three (53) percent of respondents expressed a need for affordable housing in Maple Grove Township, and respondents gave a range from \$125 to \$700 per month with a majority of indicating a price between \$400 and \$600.
- Fifty-six (56) percent of respondents were *undecided* on how the Maple Grove Township Zoning Ordinance is working, with the other half of respondents roughly evenly divided between belief that is working well and belief that is not working well
- Fifty-six (56) percent of respondents are *undecided* if Maple Grove Township is appropriately zoned, and only twenty-five (25) percent responded *yes* the township is appropriately zoned

Summary

Respondents were generally in favor of single-family residents; however, since 90 of the 93 respondents are home owners this should be taken into consideration with extrapolating from the survey data (e.g., when determining future land use definitions, mapping, and drafting goals and objectives). While over half of respondents expressed a desire for affordable housing, there was a significant range in the amount respondents considered appropriate for affordable housing.

Responses to Vision, Goals, & Objectives

*Please refer to Maple Grove Township Master Plan Survey Responses for an alphabetical listing of respondents answers to Questions 20 through Question 25.