

# How About the Master Plan?

## What Is It? Is It Necessary?

Every good zoning ordinance has a good master plan behind it.

A zoning ordinance is a set of laws governing the location, size and use of land and buildings with a political subdivision. It can't be written without some forethought as to what the community is going to look like in five, ten, fifty or one-hundred years from now.

This look into the future must be based on what exists now, what is hoped for, and what reason tells will most likely happen in a community.

**IN TECHNICAL LANGUAGE,** planners explain planning as:

"The application of intelligent forethought to the efficient development of the community during its growth."

The end product of this planning is the master plan. It's the long range goals for a community. It's not sacred but it provides a sound basis for wise decisions on zoning or land use.

Zoning is important to a growing community. The large number of court suits filed yearly in the county and the state over zoning attest to this importance.

Subdividers, builders, businessmen and just plain homeowners go into court regularly to attack or defend the zoning on their own or neighboring land.

Once a good zoning ordinance is developed it's important to keep it free from court-imposed changes which at times may be good law but not necessarily good planning or zoning in the eyes of the people who have to live with the decision daily.

**COURTS HAVE** held in many zoning cases that a master plan is a strong defense for a zoning ordinance.

If a community has a master plan, a judge is less inclined to change a section of the zoning ordinance. His reasoning is a master plan indicates the zoning ordinance was not based on whim.

**SPECIFICALLY WHAT** does a master plan say and do?

It suggests the density and location of future residential areas—how close together people will live in a community and where. This in turn helps to locate schools and recreational areas.

The density and location of present as well as future residential areas also indicates the best location and size of commercial developments. This, of course, is tempered by existing and anticipated regional shopping habits.

Density and location of residential areas also helps locate such things as churches and fire stations.

**NONE OF THIS** is based on whim. It's based on realities—existing roads, railroads, streams and lakes.

A quick look around Bloomfield Township will spot these natural barriers—the Grand Trunk Western Railroad right-of-way, Woodward Avenue, Telegraph, Square Lake Road, the Chrysler Expressway, Wing Lake and Long Lake.

**OTHER REALITIES** which affect the final master plan are the

incorporated areas of Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Pontiac which take big bites out of the township. What these communities do within their borders dictates to a real extent what the township can do in neighboring areas.

(See map on Page 10 for view of how these realities have divided township in to neighborhood planning units.)

Density and location of residential areas is tied to people—where and how they live now and in the future.

**THIS IS THE** core of good planning. It starts and ends with people. It begins with what they want their community to be and ends with an outline of what they will have to do to make it into their dreams.

Obviously the first step is population. What is it and what does enlightened estimates say it will be? Just how many people are being planned for?

**THE POPULATION** estimates, coupled with the natural barriers and the residential density desired, all add up to produce neighborhood units.

To make the units complete and self contained they need an elementary school, playground and neighborhood park at its center and convenient shopping nearby. Neighborhood shopping usually

serves two or more neighborhoods. A group of neighborhoods make up a community which is the basis for shopping centers, junior high schools, fire stations and the like.

**ONE OF THE** major benefits of planned neighborhoods and communities is property values.

Bloomfield Township's planning consultant George Vilican of Vilican-Leman and Associates of Southfield, declares in the township's master plan:

"A well conceived neighborhood will provide for lasting beauty and a stable residential environment which will, in turn, accrue to owners, investors, and lending institutions in the form of enhanced property values."

Vilican represents scores of communities in the Detroit metropolitan area. He has done work in several sections of the continental United States and its possessions.

**TO PROPERLY** conceive neighborhoods, planners need a set of mathematical ground rules. These come through experience and the educated study of existing communities, their strong points and weaknesses.

Bloomfield Township Special Section

Vilican has been a planning consultant for more than a decade. Prior to that he was in charge of long planning for Detroit.

**SOME OF THE** guides the planner uses are:

Ideal neighborhood elementary school population—400 to 600 pupils.

Ideal neighborhood population—3,000 to 5,000 persons.

Ideal school and playground sites—one acre for every 60 to 70 pupils.

Ideal neighborhood park—one acre per 900 to 1,000 persons.

Ideal neighborhood shopping areas—one acre per 1,400 to 1,800 persons.

Ideal neighborhood streets—20 per cent of the total area of a neighborhood with residential lots containing 12,000 square feet or more.

Ideal community population—four to six neighborhoods or 12,000 to 30,000 persons.

Ideal community shopping—one acre per 1,250 persons.

Ideal community recreation—one acre per 1,000 population.

Like all human ideals they are seldom met completely—they are the goals to shoot for.

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## Population Increase Still on in Township

During the past decade, Bloomfield Township's population increased a phenomenal 485 per cent.

In spite of the fact that this was from a low base, there is every reason, planners say, to believe that the future will be one of steadily increasing development.

**IF THE FUTURE** rate of growth were to be a straight line projection of the 1950 to 1960 growth pattern, then full development could be anticipated by 1985.

In all likelihood, there will be a tapering off prior to full development caused more by the holding of vacant land for higher prices than by any slackening off of the demand for land in the township.

**BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP'S** ultimate population has been projected to be 67,600. The 1980 figure will probably be about 50,000. The ultimate and maximum figure is an important one for the

township. This is the population the township must be able to service with all of the various public facilities that make up a well-rounded community.

Even though a completely built-up township may not be achieved in 20 or 30 or even 40 years, some of the land for various needed facilities should be provided for well in advance of the ultimate expected population.

**IN MANY INSTANCES** physical improvements, when made, should reflect proper sizing, or provision for expansion, to serve the community's population holding capacity.

Utilities in particular will require adequate sizing to allow for the full expected population.

It would be a waste of public funds to provide enough capacity to handle only immediate needs, when expansion will require a duplication of facilities.

## Four Roadway Classes Found in Master Plan

In reviewing local roads, planners defined the basic types of roads together with their characteristics.

**Expressway:** Limited access route for carrying heavy traffic long distances. Normally requires a 300 to 350-foot right-of-way with six or eight lanes and a dividing center strip.

**MAJOR THOROUGHFARE:** Unlimited access route for carrying lesser traffic loads lengthy distances.

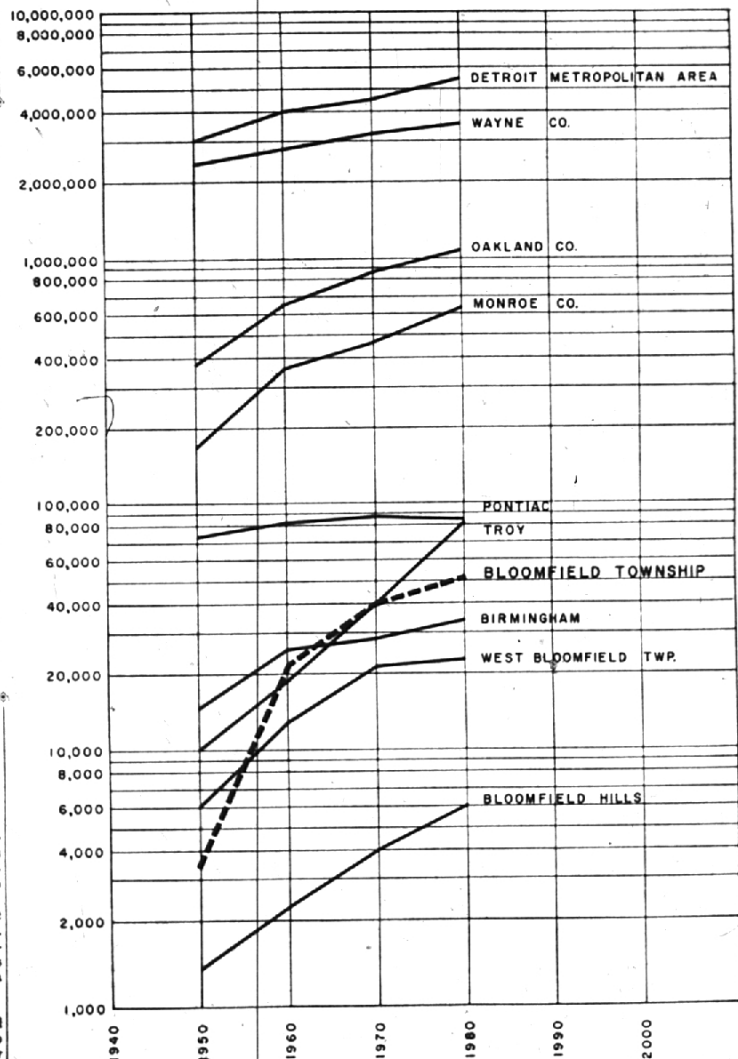
Depending on traffic loads, rights-of-way should range from 120 to 150 feet with four, six or eight lanes and a dividing center strip for left turn movements.

**SECONDARY THOROUGHFARE:** Unlimited access routes which collect traffic from residential areas and provide access to the major thoroughfares.

They will carry lighter traffic loads and only for short distances. An 86-foot right-of-way is adequate for secondary thoroughfares where two or four lanes without a center strip can be provided.

**MINOR STREET:** This should only serve to provide access to residential areas and not carry traffic without an origin or destination in the area served by this local street.

Rights-of-way of 60 feet with two moving lanes are recommended for minor streets.



POPULATION PROJECTIONS