

2007 Master Plan Update Gaines Charter Township, Kent County, Michigan

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Submittal Deadline: Friday, March 23, 2007, 4:30 p.m.

I. Project Overview

Gaines Charter Township is comprised of 36 square miles and is located in southeast Kent County, Michigan. According to U.S. Census population trends, the Township had a 2005 population of 23,416. The Township adopted its current Master Plan in May of 2002. In the five years since that time, the Township has experienced increased development interest as a result of the continuing growth of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area, as well as the opening of the Southbelt (M-6) / Kalamazoo Avenue Interchange. This development interest has revealed that certain geographic areas in the Township require a greater level of scrutiny in determining the types of land uses that are most appropriate.

This project is an update of the Gaines Charter Township Master Plan, focused on specific geographic sub areas within the Township. The Township is seeking qualified planning Consultants to lead the project and work with the Planning Commission, Township Board, and Township staff in the completion of the assignment. The Planning Commission has determined that the update is to consist of the addition of a chapter, or chapters, to the Master Plan that presents planning analysis, policy recommendations, land use plans, and implementation strategies for the identified specific geographic sub areas within the Township. Additional changes to other chapters of the Master Plan may be needed to incorporate the sub area planning outcomes.

II. Public Participation

The Township recognizes that meaningful public participation is a critical element of the Master Plan. The Consultant, in cooperation with the Planning Commission and Township staff, will be expected to incorporate meaningful public participation elements at appropriate times throughout the Master Plan update. The Consultant will be expected to attend Planning Commission and/or Township Board meetings as required to assist in the public participation efforts.

III. Geographic Sub Areas

The attached map shows the approximate geographic extent of the proposed sub areas. In consultation with the Planning Commission, Township Board and Township staff, the Consultant will be expected to help define the sub areas in greater detail. The Consultant will also work with the Planning Commission, Township Board and Township staff to

determine if certain sub areas should be completed before others. The proposed sub areas are as follows:

Sub-Area #1 – Dutton

Dutton started in 1875 as Hammond Station and was the location of a train depot built by Michigan Central Railroad. Hammond Station became Dutton in 1882. The historic center of Dutton was at the intersection of 68th Street and Hammond Avenue. However, with the closing of the depot, a second “center” grew at the intersection of 68th Street and Hanna Lake Avenue. With the decline and eventual elimination of the railroad, Dutton’s growth slowed and the village settlement never achieved the classic look and feel of a traditional town center. Over the years, the Dutton area has seen haphazard development resulting in a mix of residential, commercial, office and industrial uses, often in conflict with one another. Although Dutton is an unincorporated area within the Township and has struggled to define itself, it still retains a strong sense of place.

Commercial success in Dutton faces the same challenges as any traditional retail center, such as loss of activity due to changing traffic patterns and the rise of large retail developments. However, the Dutton area has advantages as well; the Paul B. Henry Trail and the potential availability of the Post Property, an approximate 120 acres of land. This potential developable land, combined with the activity that could be harnessed from the Paul H. Henry trail, give hope to the Dutton area.

The Township envisions Dutton as a vibrant, pedestrian oriented, village center, with a unique mix of residential, commercial, offices, and industrial uses. Dutton should retain its historical character while at the same time offering modern amenities to a growing population. Although it is not expected to compete with the Kalamazoo Corridor, Dutton could offer personal services, specialty retail, and unique housing opportunities that help define it as its own unique “place” within the Township.

Sub Area # 2 – Kalamazoo Avenue and 84th Street

The Kalamazoo Avenue/84th Street intersection is an important intersection in the Township. At the southwest corner sits the Township Offices (opened in 2003) on a parcel approximately 80 acres in size. The plans for this property also include Prairie Wolf Park and potential fire department and community facility buildings. Another 80 acre parcel rests at the southeast corner of this intersection and has attracted development interest. Recently begun residential developments, such as Cobblestone Corners and Cook’s Crossing provide a potential market for local retail, while at the same time the Kalamazoo Avenue/M-6 Interchange 2 ½ miles to the north and the US-131/84th Street interchange 3 miles to the west, provide for a potential regional market. Another major contributor to this intersection is the South Christian property, an approximately 120 acre campus ½ mile to the north. Although there are no current school facilities on the property other than athletic fields, future school development will provide additional activity in this proposed town center area.

Sub Area #3 – Southwest Corner of the Township Roughly Sections 31 and 32

Sections 31 and 32 are located in the southwest corner of the Township and are still quite rural in nature. Section 31 still retains many large parcels, with some large lot residential uses as well. Section 32 is home to a large mining operation that will be nearing completion in the next few years, as well as similar uses. Many of the parcels in Section 32 are also larger in size. The 2002 Master Plan identified the vast majority of Sections 31 and 32 as Planned Unit Development – Business Technology (PUD-BT), in anticipation of that type of use, which would be similar to uses to the south in Leighton Township and to the west in Byron Township. However, there is an approved 165-unit residential development at the northeast corner of 100th Street and Eastern Avenue, and developers have expressed interest in developing the southeast corner of 100th Street and Eastern Avenue as residential as well.

The Township envisions this geographic area as potentially offering a strong employment base, thus the current land use designation created in 2002. However, since that time, there has been no activity in this part of the Township related to industrial and/or technology related business. Although the Township wishes to attract meaningful employment opportunities to this section of the Township, it recognizes that the vision must be more creative and diverse. With the US-131/100th Street interchange located 1-2 miles to the west, and located within commuting distance to both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, this portion of the Township could attract important business and residential activity.

Sub Area #4 – Division Avenue – 68th Street to 84th Street

The east side of the Division Avenue corridor between 68th Street and 84th Street acts as one of the oldest commercial areas in the Township. Over the years, the Township has experienced difficulties in managing the relationship between commercial and residential uses in the area. Many of the commercial properties are restricted in their development/redevelopment by small lot sizes, setback requirements, etc. The corridor is also home to some of the Township's oldest and most dense residential areas. Combined, these two issues present challenges. On the positive end, Division Avenue itself is currently undergoing road and streetscape improvements, and the Township has begun the process of establishing a Corridor Improvement Authority. Division Avenue has also been identified as a potential future route for increased and improved mass transit by the RAPID, which provides transportation services to the Grand Rapids metro area.

The Township envisions the Division Avenue corridor as a viable commercial destination, while at the same time offering protections to the existing and future residential uses. The corridor should build upon the recent road and streetscape improvements by adopting land use policies that will sustain the corridor as an attractive commercial area that is accessible to both automobiles and pedestrians.

IV. Scope of Work – Section A

This section will focus on the development of planning principles, data collection and analysis, and the formation of recommendations and a land use plan for the sub areas.

1. Planning Principles

The Consultant will work with the Planning Commission and Staff to determine the planning principles to use as a base for the sub area planning exercises. This step would include reviewing the current goals and objectives in the Master Plan, and determine if any changes and/or additions are needed.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

The Consultant will be expected to perform data collection and analysis regarding the following issues:

- a. Demographics (if needed, based on current Master Plan information)
- b. Land Use Analysis
- c. Market Analysis (if needed, based on available funding)
- d. Streetscape / Visual Character
- e. Pedestrian and Traffic Circulation
- f. Physical Design Standards

It is understood that certain of the sub-areas may warrant more or less data analysis than other sub-areas. It is also understood that Township staff shall be prepared to assist in the collection and analysis of data, when appropriate, to help defray cost.

3. Information Pertinent to Data Collection and Analysis

- a. Master Plan – 2002
- b. Zoning Ordinance
- c. Division Avenue Study – 1989

4. Develop Recommendations for Sub Areas

Prepare sub area land use plans and policy recommendations for the future development of the selected sub areas, as applicable.

V. Scope of Work – Section B

This section will provide for implementation strategies and the incorporation of the sub area planning exercises into the existing Master Plan.

1. Implementation Strategies

The Consultant shall develop implementation strategies that detail how the land use plans and policy recommendations can be achieved. In developing the implementation strategies, the following items shall be considered:

- a) Existing Ordinances – Evaluate existing ordinances.
- b) New Tools – Recommend new tools that can be utilized (new ordinances, new policies, new zoning districts, etc.).
- c) Timing – The implementation strategies should be prioritized based on a recommended timeframe.
- d) Who? – Which Township Department, Board or other agency shall be responsible for the specific implementation strategies.

2. Incorporate the Sub Area Plans into the Master Plan.

The Consultant will be required to incorporate the sub area planning results into the existing Master Plan. The changes may include a new chapter for the sub area analysis and possibly revisions to Chapter 9 “Goals and Objectives”, Chapter 10 “Future land Use Plan”, and Chapter 11 “Implementation Strategies.”

VI. Deliverables

The following deliverables are required upon completion:

- a) 5 copies of compiled research findings
- b) 5 copies of the draft plan
- c) 25 color copies of the updated Master Plan.
- d) 1 electronic copy of the updated Master Plan in Word Format
- e) 1 electronic copy of the updated Master Plan in .pdf Format.

VII. Proposal Requirements

Five (5) original copies of the proposal must be submitted. The proposal must be sealed in an envelope (or other similar packaging) and shall be clearly marked “Gaines Charter Township – Master Plan Update”. The proposed consultation fees shall be submitted in a separate sealed envelope (see below for details). Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be accepted. Proposals received after the deadline will be rejected and returned unopened to the submitting Consultant. A Consultant may submit more than one proposal, provided that each proposal fulfills all the requirements.

All proposals must be received by **4:30 PM on Friday, March 23, 2007**, after which time they will be taken into consideration by the Township. All proposals must include the following information:

- a. **Cover Letter** – The cover letter shall be signed by the employee who will act as the Project Manager and lead contact person throughout the Master Plan update.
- b. **Company History/Staff Experience** – A narrative giving a brief history of the company, experience with this type of project, as well as the background of the main staff persons that will be involved in the Master Plan update.

- c. **References** – A list of references, preferably from municipalities similar to Gaines Charter Township, with whom the Consultant has previously worked.
- d. **Samples** – Related work samples from the lead contact persons.
- e. **Professional Disclosure** – Gaines Charter Township expects that any potential conflicts be stated as well as how these potential conflicts may be remedied.
- f. **Extent of Project** – Based on your review of the current Master Plan and other relevant information, provide a recommendation on the scope of the update.
- g. **Timeline** – All proposals must include a proposed timeline for completion of the project.
- h. **Cost Proposal**– In a separate sealed envelope, marked “Gaines Charter Township Master Plan Update Cost Proposal,” please set forth the proposed fees and costs to be billed for the work. The cost proposal should NOT otherwise be included with any part of the rest of the response to this RFP. The cost proposal must include a fixed price agreement with an associated fee schedule for extra meeting costs and items, should they be required.

VII. Selection Process

Selection of a Consultant will be made at the discretion of the Gaines Charter Township Board, based on recommendations from the Planning Commission and Township staff.

Selection of a Consultant will be based on the following criteria:

- a) Experience of the Consultant with similar projects. 40%
- b) Professional qualifications of the key staff persons assigned to the project. 30%
- c) The Public Participation Plan. 20%
- d) The content of the Proposal. 10%

The Township reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals. All submissions or parts thereof, made by the Consultant become property of Gaines Charter Township and are subject to Freedom of Information Act release.

Qualifications will be reviewed by the Township over a two week period following the **March 23, 2007** deadline. The Township will select one or more Consultants for the purpose of being interviewed. Interviews may be scheduled during the beginning weeks of April. During the review process, the Township reserves the right to request additional information or clarification from the Consultant or to allow corrections for errors or omissions.

After the Township selects a Consultant, and is unable to negotiate a mutually acceptable contract with that Consultant, the Township may choose to enter into negotiations with the second ranked Consultant identified during the selection process.

The Township reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at any time.