



Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

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**South Branch Township  
Proposal to Update Master Plan**

Date: March 7, 2018

**General Scope**

The Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) is submitting a proposal to work with South Branch Township to update their Master Plan. Our agency has a long history of providing services to communities in the region. For four decades, we have completed a wide range of planning efforts, including master plans, zoning, transportation planning, economic development, and water resource planning. With our knowledge base and experience in the area, we can provide tailored services that will meet the needs of the Township.

NEMCOG will work closely with the Planning Commission throughout the process to ensure the Master Plan fits the community’s specific planning needs. Our approach to assisting communities entails developing draft chapters that will be reviewed and refined by the planning commission. We will also lead an effort to “reach out” to the community to gather input and build support for the planning effort. NEMCOG will facilitate planning workshops to discuss draft chapters and lead public input sessions to gather views and ideas from the community.

NEMCOG will distribute draft copies of the Master Plan to all entities as required by the state planning statute. After the required community comment period, the Township Planning Commission will hold the public hearing. Copies of the adopted Master Plan will be distributed to all entities as required by the state planning statute. South Branch Township will receive printed copies of the adopted Master Plan as well as a digital copy of the plan and mapping data developed as part of the plan.

**The Planning Process**

**Notification**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, requires a Township to notify each township and county contiguous to the municipality, and if registered for this purpose each public utility company, public transportation agency, and railroad company owning or operating within the municipality or any government entity.

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- NEMCOG will complete this task with the assistance of South Branch Township. The notice will state the Master Plan will be submitted electronically to all required entities. If an entity requests a printed draft, the document will be submitted by first class mail. The Township should maintain an affidavit of mailing of the notification.

### ***Community Outreach***

Public involvement is an important component in the Master Plan update. The planning process will incorporate a citizen participation element that will support input from citizens, governmental, institutional and civic representatives and the private sector (general business, professional, and industrial).

- Draft sections of the Master Plan will be posted on the Township’s web site.
- Notices in the local newspaper can be used to inform residents of planning commission monthly workshops and topics to be discussed and are a means to invite people to attend meetings. The Township would be responsible for posting meeting notices at Township Hall and in the newspaper.
- One form of detailed public input will be used – either a public input survey or a public input session.

### ***Planning Approach***

- Existing plans and other documents relevant to the planning effort will be analyzed. Components of the current Master Plan such as goals, objectives, and implementation strategies will be reviewed. Appropriate information from community plans and the current Master Plan will be incorporated into the updated Master Plan.
- NEMCOG will work closely with the Township Planning Commission throughout the process. Draft sections of the plan will be prepared and presented to the planning commission for their review and input. Draft sections will be posted on the Township’s web page.
- In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, after the Township Board has approved the Master Plan for distribution, NEMCOG will send the draft plan to all entities for review and comment.
- After the 63-day comment period, the planning commission will then review all comments and, if deemed appropriate, have NEMCOG make necessary changes to the Master Plan.
- NEMCOG will assist the Township in setting up the legally required public hearing on the Master Plan including preparation of legal notices. One set of revisions to incorporate changes requested at the public hearing will be completed.
- Taking into account any public comments, the Planning Commission is then responsible for adopting the Master Plan. According to the state planning statute, the Township Board may exercise its authority to adopt the Master Plan by passing a resolution.

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- After adoption, NEMCOG will print and distribute final copies of the Master Plan to all required entities. The final plan will be posted on South Branch Township and NEMCOG’s Web Sites.

## Components of the Township Master Plan

### **Introduction**

The introduction chapter will contain information on the location and regional setting of South Branch Township, as well as the status of planning and zoning in the Township.

### **Socio-Economic Characteristics**

The chapter will present community characteristics such as: population, age distribution, racial make-up, disability status, households, income and wealth, education, employment, state equalized value, total housing stock, housing tenure, age of structures, housing conditions and need, and housing values and rent. Economic development data and activity such as income and poverty, employment and unemployment, and wage and salary, will be presented in this section.

*Note: This section will require major changes, since updated data and in some cases different data is available.*

### **Community Services and Facilities**

An inventory of existing community services and facilities such as water supply and sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, public utilities, transportation, public safety, medical facilities, recreation facilities and schools will be compiled into a chapter. Information from existing plans will be incorporated into this section. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, the following information should be included in the Master Plan and where appropriate mapped:

- .. The general location, character, and extent of streets, bridges, waterways, floodplains, waterfronts, boulevards, parkways, playgrounds, and open spaces.
- .. The general location of public buildings and other public property.
- .. The general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned or operated, for water, light, sanitation, transportation, communication, power, and other purposes.
- .. The general location, character, layout, and extent of community centers and neighborhood units.
- .. The general character, extent, and layout of the re-planning and redevelopment of blighted areas.

*Note: Minor changes will be made to this section.*

### **Natural Resources**

Information on the community's natural resources will be compiled from a variety of sources. Information may include the following: climate, geology, topography, soils, water resources, wetlands and woodlands, fish and wildlife, scenic features, sites of environmental contamination, and surface water, ground water and air discharge permits.

*Note: Minor changes will be made to this section.*

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**Existing Land Cover/Use**

NEMCOG will compile and map existing land uses in the South Branch Township. Residential, commercial, central business district, industrial, institutional, recreational, open space, forest, and wetland land cover/uses will be mapped. The existing land cover/use map and discussion of the land cover/use pattern will be included.

*Note: Minor changes will be made to this section. Not much has changed in land cover since the 2006 master plan. So therefore this proposal does not include a full land cover/use mapping update utilizing aerial photo and GIS. Instead the planning commission will be supplied a land cover/use map for review and will identify sites where land cover/use has changed, for example areas that have possibly converted from commercial to residential.*

**Community Goals and Objectives**

The planning commission will examine goals and objectives from the current Master Plan to identify those accomplished, those to be continued, those to be deleted and new goals to be added. Information gathered from the community input session will be used to help guide this effort. In addition, other Township plans and community plans will be reviewed and appropriate information incorporated. Based on these several sources, NEMCOG will draft goals and objectives. The South Branch Township Planning Commission will review and finalize proposed goals and objectives.

*Note: This section will require a full review by the planning commission. Minor changes are anticipated.*

**Future Land Use Recommendations**

A future land use plan, including a computerized future land use map, will be prepared for South Branch Township. Elements of the plan, compiled during earlier stages of the planning process will be used as the basis for developing the Future Land Use Plan. The plan should incorporate the future land use needs of the community, such as residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, natural resource, open space and recreational uses. A copy of the future land use map and plan should be put on display at the Township Hall.

*Note: With the guidance of NEMCOG, this section will be analyzed by the planning commission to determine if changes are necessary to the Future Land Use Map and associated text.*

**Implementation and Adoption**

The final chapter will contain information on implementation tools and a zoning plan. This section will include a record of the approval process, such legal transmittals, public notice and minutes of the meeting where the plan was approved.

*Note: Minor changes are anticipated.*

**Deliverables**

NEMCOG will provide draft electronic copies of each planning element as completed. PDF format version of draft sections will be posted the Township’s web page. NEMCOG will prepare the full draft and distribute it to all entities, as defined in the Michigan Planning Enabling PA 33 of 2008 for review and comment. After the public hearing and plan adoption, copies of the final approved Master Plan will be provided to each South Branch Township Planning Commission member. The final adopted Master Plan will be sent to each of the above entities as per PA 33 of 2008.

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- NEMCOG will send notices of intent as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA). There will 18 notices sent to townships, counties and agencies.
- NEMCOG will supply draft motions, resolutions and the public hearing notice for Township use.
- The Planning Commission will be supplied with electronic draft sections prior to meetings. After review and changes have been completed, the Planning Commission will be provided a full completed electronic draft for final review and submission for required 63 day community and agency review.
- NEMCOG will send draft and final master plans to communities and agencies as required by the MPEA. These will be provided in electronic format (CD) for a total of 18 copies.
- Upon completion of the project a total of ten (10) printed copies of the final Master Plan with supporting text, tables, charts and other documentation will be provided to the Township.
- The plan will be provided in electronic format (CD) in Microsoft Word and PDF format. GIS and maps datasets will be provided.
- NEMCOG will provide 24" x 36" color Existing Land Use and Future Land Use maps for display purposes at Township Hall.

### **Services to be provided by South Branch Township for Master Plan Preparation**

South Branch Township will make available, free of charge, all existing information pertinent to the planning process. This will include Township maps, reports, data on local building activities, any file information on the social or economic conditions within the Township, any information concerning existing public services and facilities, and other existing file material related to plan preparation. The South Branch Township Planning Commission also agrees to provide input and guidance throughout the Master planning process. This approach will work towards identifying community concerns or controversy at the earliest possible stage. The Planning Commission agrees to assist NEMCOG with the existing land use update by identifying changes in land use that have occurred since the last Master Plan.

### **Project Staff**

Denise Cline, NEMCOG Deputy Director/Chief Planner, will be the project lead, primary staff person responsible for development of the plan and facilitating all meetings.

### **Proposed Timeline and Project Costs**

The timeline is greatly influenced by requirements in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Given the Township Board must first approve the plan for distribution, then adjacent communities have 63 days, and finally a legal notice of 15 days prior to a public hearing, this plan review and approval time could take approximately three months.

Given the extended plan comment period required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act it is estimated the planning process will be budgeted over two fiscal years. This will include the public hearing and adoption of the plan.

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The Township agrees to maintain membership in the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments for the duration of the project.

**Project Costs**

Master Plan and Mapping	\$4,945
Meetings (4 meetings)	\$1,500
Expenses (administration, mileage, printing, supplies)	\$1,440
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$7,885</b>

If the South Branch Township requests work activities outside this scope, there would be additional charges, based on time and materials expended by NEMCOG staff. The additional charges would be determined and agreed upon, prior to NEMCOG proceeding with the expanded scope. Also, cost for additional meetings requested by the Township, not including the four (4) meetings identified in this proposal will be \$425 per meeting.

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