

Public/Private Sector Group Uses Proven Business Management Techniques To Implement Master Land Use Plans, Michigan Chamber Foundation Reports

PRNewswire
LANSING, Mich.

In an effort to find new, more effective ways to deal with land use issues and their impact on the quality of life, one Jackson-based group of public/private sector leaders has decided to change the way they play the game and rely on proven business management techniques to develop and implement their community's land use master plans, reports the Michigan Chamber Foundation.

"What this group is trying to accomplish demonstrates the need for local community leaders to rethink their traditional processes," said Jim Barrett, President of the Michigan Chamber Foundation and member of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council.

"The Michigan Municipal League, like the Michigan Chamber, has a very active interest in the Jackson pilot, since its members are seeking new ways to meet the competitive challenges facing communities across our state," confirmed Dan Gilmartin, Executive Director and member of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council.

Working with key representatives from the City of Jackson, Jackson County, Region II Planning Commission, Township Supervisors Association, Enterprise Group of Jackson, Consumers Energy, Jackson Office of Michigan State University Extension Service and a host of volunteers, the Greater Jackson Business and Community Alliance is seeking to identify ways to apply ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9000 and 14000 standards commonly used in manufacturing and other business sectors to ensure successful implementation of the community's land use master plans.

"The adoption of the City of Jackson's master plan, and very shortly a countywide master plan, creates an opportunity for the Greater Jackson area to accelerate the realization of its quality of life goals," said Greg Northrup, Project Manager for Developing Standards for Cooperative Regional Planning. "Specifically, working groups have started the process of drafting objectives to measure the community's future performance," added Northrup. "The project team working with volunteers has spent the last 12 months evaluating the master plans, along with those of several of the townships and has published FACT Sheets, which outline goals, best practices and identified standards where they exist."

According to Northrup, sample draft objectives for consideration include:

* Over the next five years, beginning in 2005, retain 70% of prime farmland for agricultural use, utilizing the baseline conversion rate of 1975- 2000.

* Increase the proportion of walkable neighborhoods by 10 percent per year as measured by areas rezoned to mixed uses and by miles of non-motorized infrastructure.

* Reduce air and water pollution from local sources by 10 percent, over a five-year period as measured by average driving distances per household in new residential land developments compared to developments built from 1995-2000.

"The alliance has made excellent progress in the first phase of what is viewed as a three-year effort to get ISO concepts and principles adopted by the governmental units in the Greater Jackson area," noted Bill Ross, Jackson City Manager. "During Phase II, it is our intention to start measuring our community's performance against selected standards. If we can get this done, we have a chance to begin evaluating methods to obtain improvements in our overall results."

A detailed report outlining Phase I of the project and a complementary case study are available online through several partner organizations at:

<http://www.peopleandland.org/projects/detail.cfm?project=50>
<http://www.barr.com/whatsnew/whatsnew.htm>

This study and future Citizen Planner training was funded by generous contributions from Consumers Energy, People and Land (W. K. Kellogg Foundation), and the Jackson Community Foundation.

The Michigan Chamber Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to plan, promote and conduct non-partisan educational research and programs regarding issues facing Michigan including, but not limited to, taxation, government regulation, health care, hazardous waste, crime, tourism and recreation, welfare, government spending and transportation. The

Foundation has provided fiduciary and administrative support to the project.

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber Foundation

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Web site: <http://www.michamber.com/>
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