

CHAPTER O  
IMPLEMENTATION

1. Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan for Lower Merion has been presented in the preceding sections. Some implementing methods were discussed as part of the commercial improvement program. This section presents a total view of the typical means available to aid in the achievement of the objectives and policies in the plan.

2. Zoning Ordinance

The original Zoning Ordinance of Lower Merion was adopted in 1927, and has been amended consistently to meet the needs of a growing township. It is one of the more important instruments for coordinating the Comprehensive Plan. An effective zoning ordinance provides for the orderly, compatible and desirable development of the community. The zoning ordinance regulates the use of land, the size and bulk of buildings, the areas and dimensions of land, yards, and open spaces, and the density or intensity of land use. Lower Merion has a modern zoning ordinance which reflects existing land use patterns, street patterns and natural features. The ordinance should not need any significant amendments to be compatible with the Comprehensive Plan. Because of the comprehensiveness of the zoning ordinance and the wide range of uses and densities permitted, the land use patterns suggested in the Plan can be readily implemented under existing zoning provisions. Only a minor adjustment is needed to implement the residential cluster provision. Therefore, the major use of the zoning ordinance to implement the Plan is in providing all of the control mechanisms necessary for the proper development of residential, commercial and industrial land use patterns.

3. Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

Subdivision regulations are a means of controlling the manner in which a parcel of land is developed once the use has been permitted. These regulations specify the details that must be shown with any building design to insure that specific sites are integrated into the utility system and land use patterns of the community. To accomplish this, Lower Merion has enacted a subdivision ordinance that deals with plan processing procedures, design standards, plan requirements, dedications, filing procedures, and other miscellaneous provisions. The ordinance was adopted in 1948 and has been recently modified so as to give the township a desirable degree of control over the land development process.

#### 4. Official Map

The official map is an important document which facilitates the implementation of portions of the circulation plan. It designates future and extended right-of-ways, and preserves these corridors from development. It is a clear statement of highway construction and open space intentions which should eliminate incompatible land use situations in the future. The township currently has an official map which should be updated to include the recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

#### 5. Building and Housing Codes

These codes establish minimum standards for building construction and for dwelling units. Building codes regulate new construction and major repairs or alterations to existing structures. In particular, they state acceptable structural standards and construction practices. Housing codes are concerned with residential units. They are designed to insure safe, sound, sanitary living conditions. The township has adopted the national building code (BOCA), which should be reviewed and revised as construction techniques change and new standards are devised.

#### 6. Capital Improvement Program

For many years the township of Lower Merion has adopted a capital improvement program (CIP) covering six year segments, which specifies five general categories of improvements. The CIP schedules selected physical improvements to be implemented over a period of years. These improvements are listed on a priority basis according to township needs and financial ability to deliver the improvements. The township also relies on the long range developments specified in the Comprehensive Plan and the relationships between each project. The inclusion of the Comprehensive Plan as a basic criterion emphasizes the importance of the CIP as a tool for implementing the plan. The major categories listed for funding in the CIP include administration, circulation, public safety, services to people, and services to property. The policy of the township is not to fund any new capital improvements that exceed annual reductions of debt service. The continuation of the CIP over the years should greatly enhance the ability of the township to implement many of the proposals contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

## 7. Community Development Program

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 was intended to consolidate several categories of programs into a single program of block grants. In particular the urban renewal and model cities programs, among others, were terminated and replaced with a list of eligible activities. Some of the basic activities for which funds may be used are:

- . Acquisition of real property that is blighted, needs rehabilitation, is appropriate for preservation, or is to be used for public works or open space and recreation
- . Acquisition and construction of public facilities such as streets, lighting, water and sewer systems, historic sites, senior citizen centers, malls and recreation facilities
- . Code enforcement in deteriorated areas
- . Rehabilitation of properties
- . Relocation payments
- . Special projects such as the removal of architectural barriers

As the program list indicates, the Community Development Program is the prime means of immediately accomplishing some of the recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. For this reason, close coordination of the plan with the Community Development Program can yield significant results over the next several years.