To: Roger Millar – Smart Growth America
From: Dexter Mitchell, Township Manager
Buena Vista Charter Township, Michigan
Subject: Smart Growth America Technical Assistance Progress Report #3

Below is an update on how we are progressing on implementing the Smart Growth America team’s recommendations as they relate to community development activities in Buena Vista Charter Township.

1. **Fort Saginaw Mall Site**

   Our last progress report noted that Buena Vista and its neighbor – Saginaw, Michigan – were competing to be selected as the site of a future Delta College “Saginaw Center” satellite campus. Unfortunately, the College decided in late April to begin a site selection process in Saginaw rather than Buena Vista, noting especially Saginaw’s downtown, sense of place and the presence of major “new economy” employers. While we were disappointed in the College’s choice, we remain steadfast in the belief that the old Fort Saginaw Mall site – the Buena Vista Town Center – can be a vital, interesting place if designed and built according to sustainable, new urbanist principles.

   Since that time, we have been approached by three developers, who are interested in all or a portion of the site for retail, senior housing and medical. Though senior housing is not part of the current site plan, the Township recognizes its potential value as part of a larger, mixed-use project that brings activity to the site. Currently, we are working with those developers, who are all still at “concept” stage. Please see the attached application packet, which we developed in May and states all of the application requirements necessary for consideration to develop the Township’s and DDA’s Town Center site.

   Next week, the DDA is holding a Strategic Planning session, facilitated by the Township’s planning consultant, to discuss options related to disposing of the Town Center property in a coordinated, effective and efficient manner – issue an RFP, list the site with a broker, etc.

2. **Outer Drive Properties**

   The Township Administration, Attorney and planner have met and discussed ramping up the code enforcement and dangerous buildings actions against the most offensive of the hotel structures, which is adjacent to Township Hall. The SGA report’s recommendations concerning the Outer Drive properties and defunct hotels/motels will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, which is still being drafted.

3. **Neighborhood Stabilization**

   The Township has partnered with Habitat for Humanity, who is performing rehabilitation services on 44 homes over two years, some of which are adjacent to the commercial core.
Further, the “Brush of Kindness” program has been implemented in Buena Vista with Habitat, wherein property owners can pay $100 to buy paint and equipment, and after doing so, volunteers will come and perform the labor. The most recent neighborhood sweep effort, including volunteers from the Township’s largest employers and the Community Foundation, took place August 8th through the 13th and was a major success.

Thank you again for your assistance, and please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Cc: Hon. Dwayne Parker, Township Supervisor
Sarah Traxler, AICP, McKenna Associates