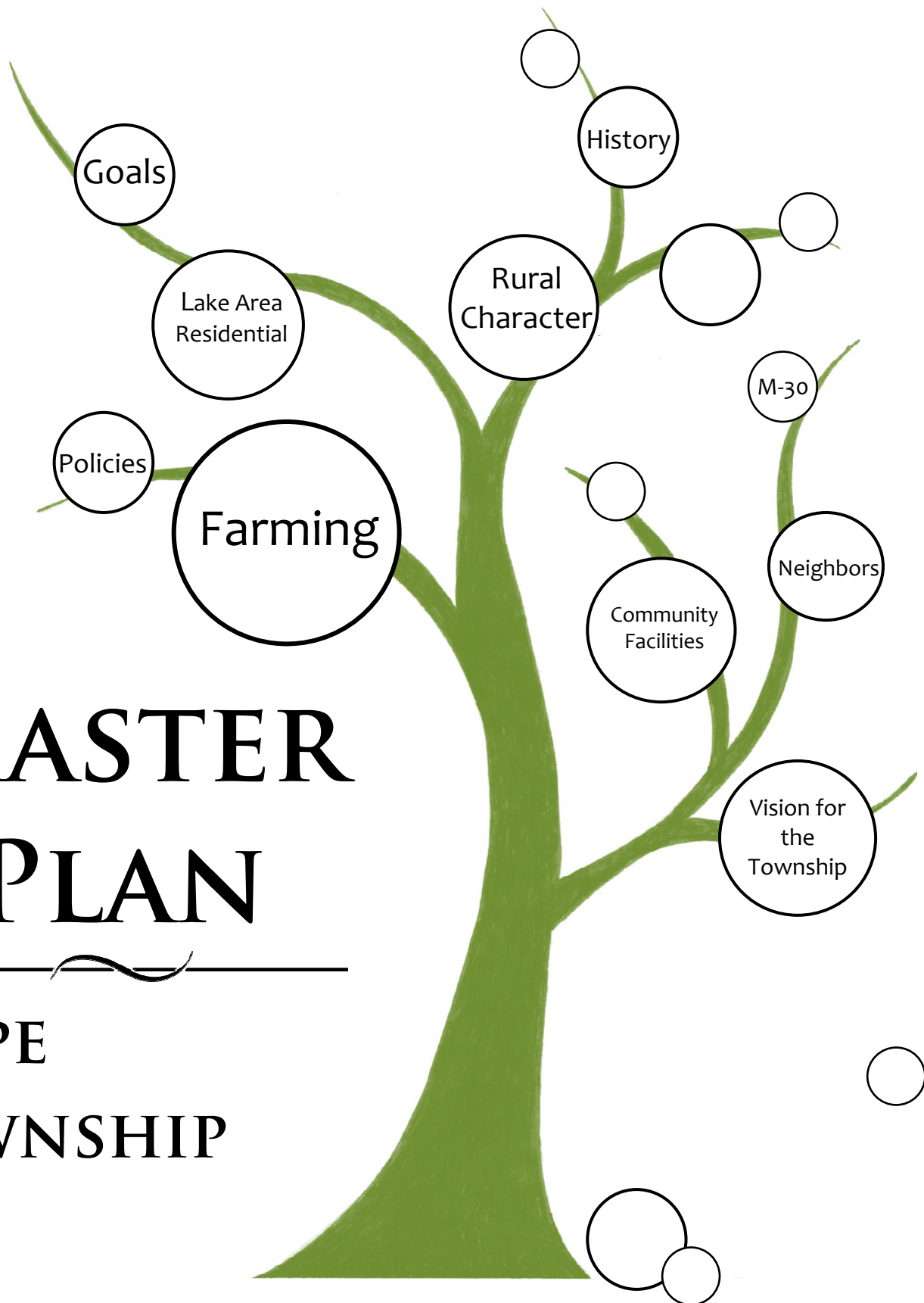


MASTER PLAN

HOPE
TOWNSHIP



HOPE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

PREPARED BY THE
HOPE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION

As Adopted by the Planning Commission: November 1, 2017

Planning Commission Public Hearing.....November 1, 2017

Adopted by the Planning CommissionNovember 1, 2017

Final Approval by the Township BoardNovember 41, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Andy Kobisa, Supervisor

JoAnn Wilke, Clerk

Starleen Eddy, Treasurer

Bob Davis, Trustee

Mary Jo Letts, Trustee

PLANNING COMMISSION

Marge Kobisa, Chair

Bob Davis, Vice-Chair and Township Board Representative

Diane Vaughn, Secretary

Wendy Faber

Nicole Kelley

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Andy Kobisa

CONSULTANT

Rodney C. Nanney, AICP

BUILDING PLACE

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**HOPE TOWNSHIP
MIDLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO
ADOPT THE UPDATED HOPE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Marge Kobisa and supported by Member Bob Davis:

Whereas, the Planning Commission completed a review of the 2009 Township Master Plan in accordance with Section 45(2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act [Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended (MPEA)], and determined that updates to the plan were necessary; and

Whereas, the Township initiated a process to prepare an updated Master Plan, and has provided all required notices consistent with the MPEA; and

Whereas, this Master Plan is intended to be the plan as provided for in the MPEA, and incorporated within this Plan is the zoning plan referred to in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended) as the basis for the Township's Zoning Ordinance; and

Whereas, the updated plan is a comprehensive document that includes specific goals and public policy recommendations, and is intended to serve as a guide for future Township decision-making related to land use, community development, and capital improvement projects; and

Whereas, the Planning Commission solicited public comment throughout this process, and submitted copies of the proposed Master Plan for review and comment to the county, surrounding jurisdictions, and other outside entities in accordance with Section 41(2) of the MPEA; and

Whereas, notices having been duly posted and published in accordance with the MPEA, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on November 1, 2017 to receive comments on the proposed Master Plan.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Planning Commission adopts in the whole this updated Hope Township Master Plan with the following amendments from the August 3, 2017 public hearing draft:

- (1) Revise Section 3 to insert a new subsection entitled "Integration of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan" in response to comments from the East Michigan Council of Governments.
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Marge Kobisa, Bob Davis, Nicole Kelly, Wendy Faber, Diane Vaughan
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstain: NONE

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Marge Kobisa
Marge Kobisa, Chair

Diane Vaughan
Diane Vaughan, Secretary

Dated: 11/1/17

**HOPE TOWNSHIP
MIDLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP BOARD TO
APPROVE THE UPDATED HOPE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Andy Kobisa
and supported by Starleen.

Whereas, the Township initiated a process to prepare an updated Master Plan, and has provided all required notices consistent with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008 as amended); and

Whereas, on November 1, 2017 the Planning Commission adopted the updated Master Plan with a revision to Section 3 to insert a new subsection entitled "*Integration of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan*" in response to comments from the East Michigan Council of Governments.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Township Board of Trustees concurs with the Planning Commission, and hereby approves in the whole the updated Hope Township Master Plan.

Be it further resolved that the Township Board hereby directs that copies of the adopted Master Plan be forwarded to Midland County, all local units of government contiguous to the Township, and other entities as required by Section 43(5) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Starleen, Bob, Mary, JoAnn & Andy
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Andy Kobisa
The Honorable Andy Kobisa, Supervisor
Hope Township

JoAnn Wilke
The Honorable JoAnn Wilke, Clerk
Hope Township

Dated: 11-14-2017

SECTION 2 MAJOR ISSUES

State and regional trends and changing conditions in and around the Township raise major issues potentially impacting the future of our community. It is important to identify and address these issues in the Master Plan to effectively plan for the next 20-plus years. Through evaluation of existing conditions in the Township and current community planning issues faced by other Michigan communities, the Planning Commission has identified a number of significant issues that are summarized in this chapter. Recommended policies to address these issues will be addressed in subsequent chapters of this plan.

WATER QUALITY

Wixom Lake and the Tittabawassee River is an important natural and recreational resource in the area. Protection of surface water quality involves making sure that the water that flows off the land and through the Township's drains and ditches to the river is as close as possible in quality to the rain or melted snow that fell on a woods or meadow. It is best if water runoff flows to the river slowly, much of it percolating into the soil and reaching the main waterway as groundwater, clear and cool.

The proximity of many private septic disposal systems associated with residences near the lake and river also creates some potential for degradation of water quality, especially as any seasonal cottages are converted to year-round living without corresponding upgrades to such systems.

Another issue affecting the quality and character of Michigan's inland lakes is the growing presence of invasive plant and animal species. Invasive species are non-native species that have the potential to become established and the potential to spread widely and cause ecological or economic harm or pose a risk to human health. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has referred to invasive species in their publications as "a top threat to biodiversity," because they compete with native species for food and habitat. Invasive species can also directly or indirectly kill or displace native species and degrade wildlife habitat and food sources. Such invasives also have the potential for significant economic effects on property values, tourism, utilities and industry, and can be a health risk to human health in some instances.

THE FUTURE OF HOUSING

Communities across Michigan are facing significant challenges with aging housing stock, including vacant or abandoned properties, blight, and conversions from owner-occupied to predominantly rental properties:

- Foreclosed, abandoned, and bank-owned properties create opportunities for vandalism, theft, and crime.
- Deferred maintenance, such as a lack of winterization or weatherization of vacant homes or seasonal cottages, can lead to structural damage, black mold, insect infestations, and other blight conditions that affect neighbors and the Township as a whole.
- Elderly residents may not have the resources or family support needed to adequately maintain their property as they have in the past.

Even in healthy communities with solid housing stock there is a need to upgrade obsolete infrastructure, including insulation, electrical systems, broadband Internet access, and heating/cooling systems to improve energy efficiency and better serve the needs of residents.

THE FUTURE OF THE M-30 BUSINESS CORRIDOR

The Township is primarily a rural community. The M-30 commercial corridor is not large in land area, but it does contribute both to the tax base of the Township and to the character of the community. However, some buildings along the corridor are beginning to show their age, and vacancies along the state highway could attract less desirable commercial tenants. In addition, some parcels planned for commercial uses have reverted to agricultural land.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The lakes, river, and state forestland in the Township offer significant recreational opportunities for Township residents and visitors. However, in some cases there is only limited public access, especially for those that do not own waterfront property.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Road Condition and Connectivity

The Township's road infrastructure is predominantly rural in character. As with many Michigan townships, the condition and ongoing maintenance of local roads is of concern.

Complete Streets Legislation

On August 1, 2010, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed a package of bills into law that established the state's new "Complete Streets" policy. The intent of the "complete streets" approach to transportation planning is to ensure that all users (motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.) are safely accommodated as part of transportation improvements along a road corridor.

The Midland County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) are required to consider all users of the road right-of-way as part of the planning of future road projects, and to better coordinate road improvements with local governments and local transportation plans. For the Township, this state policy change also impacts local land use planning.

The 2010 law included amendments to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended) that modified the definition of "streets" to include all legal users, including bicyclists and pedestrians and expanded the elements that may be included in a master plan to encompass all transportation systems that move people and goods. The needs of all potential users of the Township's transportation network should be adequately addressed as road improvement projects are planned and implemented.

COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Since the 1980s, cellular telephones have progressed from a luxury item to a ubiquitous communications tool. During that same period, broadband Internet access also expanded from a service available primarily to research universities into an important, if not essential, component of business success and personal communication. The availability of communications

infrastructure (whether cellular, fiber optic, cable, wireless or a combination of services) with robust capacity has become a significant economic development and quality of life issue, especially for more rural communities like Hope Township.

This has also become a future planning issue for the Township with the 2014 decision of the state legislature to adopt what is now Public Act 52 of 2014, which makes it somewhat easier for phone companies in Michigan to discontinue traditional landline telephone service where cellular, cable or VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) telephone service options are available, beginning in 2017.

This new public act, combined with continuing demand from Township residents for more robust communications infrastructure capacity in all areas of the community, will require consideration of the need for additional communications towers and expansion of fiber optic cable and other communications-related infrastructure in the Township during the planning period of this Plan.

ENERGY

Decisions affecting land use directly affect energy use, and vice-versa. The expanding use of computers and other power-hungry technology in homes and businesses also necessitates further modernization and expansion of the local and regional power grid. One of the paths toward greater energy independence is through distributed energy generation from renewable resources, such as wind, solar, and geo-thermal. These small-scale power generation technologies located close to the user may:

- Increase the reliability of electrical power by serving as a supplement to the traditional electric power grid;
- Serve as an emergency power resource during blackout/brownout situations; and
- Decrease our reliance on energy production from fossil fuels.

A related issue for the Township is the need for expansion of network of natural gas service to provide residential and agricultural users across the entire Township with a more economical and efficient energy source for drying and heating equipment. Accordingly, the availability of reliable energy resources for Township residents, farms, and other business operations will remain an important local, regional, and statewide issue to be addressed during the planning period of this Master Plan.

THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is “third leg” of Michigan’s economy. Over the past decade, as the other two “legs” of the state economy, manufacturing and tourism, suffered through the deep recession, agriculture has remained healthy and productive. However, there are a number of farm-related issues that may have significant impacts on the future of agriculture in Michigan:

Changing Character of the Agricultural Economy

The predominant character of agriculture is changing in some areas of Michigan from a commodity farming model to more specialty farming and “value added” agricultural activities such as corn mazes, ‘U-pick’ operations, roadside stands, and local farm markets. Some “value added” income sources for farmers have the potential to adversely impact neighboring land uses. For example, the State of Michigan’s ongoing push for increased use of alternative and renewable energy sources encourages farmers to “farm the wind” by constructing wind turbines

or leasing land for commercial ‘wind farms.’ More recently, the Michigan Corn Growers Association supported a new law (Public Act 97 of 2011) that requires Michigan townships to allow equipment and storage facilities for on-site ethanol production of up to 100,000 gallons per year as a use “by-right” in agricultural zoning districts.

Impact of Increased Non-Farm Residential Development in Rural Areas

New non-farm dwellings near active agricultural operations increase the potential for adverse off-site impacts and resident complaints due to noise, odor, and dust typical of commercial agriculture. Non-farm residential development can also exacerbate traffic conflicts, increase the frequency of accidents involving farm equipment, and decrease the ability of farmers to easily transport equipment to non-contiguous parcels. The presence of only a few non-farm residences can adversely affect the stability of an agricultural area.

Aging Farmers and National Ownership Trends

According to a 2007 census by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the median age of farmers in the United States increased from 50.3 in 1978 to 57.1 in 2007. The majority of U.S. farmers are between ages 45 and 64, but farmers aged 65 and older are the fastest growing age group in this industry. The future of farming will depend largely on the availability and interest of younger generations to become farmers.

In addition, the commercial agricultural industry appears to be trending towards larger, corporate farming operations, where equipment and workers are transported from field to field, and even from state to state. Under this scenario, which may be related to the aging farmer population, there is less need at the local level for agriculture support services, and even less connection between the farmer and the local community.

SECTION 3

GENERAL GOALS AND POLICY PRIORITIES

This Master Plan has been developed by the Hope Township Planning Commission to provide a guide to the future development of the Township, for the benefit and welfare of all residents.

GENERAL GOALS OF THIS MASTER PLAN

The primary goals of the Hope Township Master Plan are to:

- ✓ Maintain productive agriculture and preserve the rural character of the Township.
- ✓ Provide for the prudent use of land and avoid overcrowding of land.
- ✓ Designate adequate areas of land for agriculture, residential, business, recreation, community facilities, open space, and other uses and purposes that are consistent with the desired character of the Township as expressed in this Plan.
- ✓ Establish a transportation plan, including the general location, character, and extent of existing and planned roads, bicycle paths, pedestrian ways, bridges, waterways, and other access and mobility improvements consistent with the Township's rural character.
- ✓ Establish a zoning plan as required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended).
- ✓ Protect surface and groundwater quality by encouraging the establishment, maintenance, and upgrading of effective private septic systems, public and private drainage systems and stormwater management improvements, and other pollution prevention measures.
- ✓ Make recommendations as to the redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted areas.
- ✓ Protect and conserve the natural resources and habitats of the Township.
- ✓ Ensure necessary and adequate services are available to Township residents.
- ✓ Fulfill the planning requirements and obligations outlined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended).
- ✓ Make recommendations for implementing the Plan's policies and proposals.

HOPE TOWNSHIP – GENERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

To assist in reaching the above goals, the following general public policy priorities have been identified for Hope Township as part of this Master Plan:

1. Continue to identify and to use all possible means to eliminate unsightly, unsafe, and blight-related conditions in the Township.
2. Keep and maintain the rural character of Hope Township.
3. Maximize opportunities for Township residents to be able to provide for their own food needs through gardens and non-farm keeping of bees, chickens, and other small farm animals on rural residential parcels.

4. Improve availability of broadband Internet and cellular telephone/data services throughout the Township.
5. Avoid over-regulation.
6. Expand the natural gas distribution network to cover the entire Township.
7. Encourage active citizen involvement in the Township government.
8. Update the Township Zoning Ordinance to implement the policies of this Plan.
9. Develop policies and ordinances for agriculture and natural resource protection.
10. In collaboration with local farmers and large property owners, consider the development and expanded use of available agricultural land preservation techniques.
11. Work with the county to ensure that Hope Township receives needed county services.

INTEGRATION OF THE COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

As noted in Section 1, *“The Master Plan is a comprehensive statement of policy for future development and natural resources preservation. It considers those elements necessary to promote public health, safety, and general welfare, and encourages the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.”* The reduction and mitigation of natural and man-made hazards related to land use, community development, and capital improvement projects fall within the scope of this planning document.

The policies and implementation strategies of this Master Plan are fully consistent with the recommendations of the 2013 Hazard Mitigation Plan for the County of Midland.

SECTION 4

PLAN FOR AGRICULTURE

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the long-term future of a healthy and vibrant rural economy based upon provisions for a full-range of agricultural land uses in the Township.

BACKGROUND

A major concern in the formulation of a Master Plan for Hope Township is the preservation of the Township’s agricultural character. The Township is an active and productive agricultural community and all efforts should be made to encourage its continuance. Conflicts between active agricultural operations and non-farm residential and non-residential land uses should be avoided wherever possible.

Prime agricultural land is a vital natural resource that has to be accurately identified and protected from non-agricultural land uses. It has to be recognized that good agricultural land is irreplaceable and that once this land is developed for other uses, it is lost to farm use forever.

The following characteristics are common in the areas designated for agriculture on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27:

- The quality of soils supports the existing agricultural activities.
- Limited land use infringements have taken place.
- The area has remained stable with minimal parcel splits taking place.
- Parcel sizes are generally large enough to support long-term agricultural operations.

As noted in Section 1 of this plan, the Township has approximately 8,560 acres of agricultural cropland and pastureland, comprising over 58% of the land cover in the Township. Stable and cohesive agricultural areas exist throughout the Township and in the surrounding region, creating the ability to maintain a healthy rural economy to support farming operations.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREA

Consistent with the agricultural goals of this Master Plan, the Township hereby establishes an agricultural preservation area, which shall consist of the areas designated for agriculture on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE POLICIES

To accomplish the agricultural goals as presented within this Master Plan for the preservation of agricultural activities in the Township, the following additional policies are set forth.

1. Encourage non-farm residential development to be located away from prime agricultural land and active farm operations.
2. Promote the option for farmers to diversify their income sources through agricultural tourism and other value added agricultural activities consistent with Township Zoning Ordinance standards, such as agricultural processing, corn mazes, ‘U-pick’ operations,

direct marketing of farm products to restaurants and local stores, roadside stands, local farm markets, and farm-based bed and breakfast inns.

3. Encourage Township property owners of agricultural land to work with private nonprofit land trusts and conservancies with the power to buy development rights and establish private conservation easements.
4. Encourage the use of assessment policies that reflect the agricultural value of land that is part of an active agricultural operation.
5. Consider the creation of a farm incubator program or other cooperative effort to help young farmers get started in agriculture, and encourage seasoned farming experts in the Township to serve as mentors to young men and women interested in agriculture.
6. Invite Township property owners of agricultural land to work with private nonprofit land trusts and conservancies with the power to buy development rights and establish private conservation easements.
7. In consideration of the significant potential for noise, odor, and other adverse impacts, development of farm-based ethanol production facilities in the Township shall be discouraged.

SECTION 5

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

This chapter is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific land use policy recommendations for the future development of community facilities to serve the needs of Township residents in a manner that enhances the rural environment and is integrated with surrounding land uses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The following is a summary of key community facilities and services in Hope Township:

Proximity to Regional Cultural Centers

Hope Township is centrally located within an easy drive of two significant economic and cultural centers of Mid-Michigan: the Great Lakes Bay Region, which includes the cities of Midland, Bay City, and Saginaw along with Northwood University, Saginaw Valley State University, and Delta College; and the Mount Pleasant area with Central Michigan University.

Roads and Highways

Hope Township is centrally situated between major trunk lines and interstate highways and is not generally a destination for tourists or other travelers. The regional road network provides Hope Township residents with access to recreational and vacation opportunities throughout Michigan and elsewhere in the United States and Canada. This network also provides access for farmers and other producers to market their products efficiently throughout the region. Interstate highways also make driving to Flint or further within the modern commuter’s range. More information on this topic can be found in Section 7 (Transportation Plan).

Availability of Public Water and Sanitary Sewerage Systems

Hope Township does not have a sanitary sewerage system, and has no plans to establish one during the planning period. In response to ongoing challenges related to the overall quality of well water available in the Township, the Township Board initiated a Township-wide water main installation project in cooperation with the City of Midland and Water District One of Midland County, which was completed in 2014.

Recreation, Public Schools, and Other Facilities

Recreational opportunities abound in the state forests, on Saginaw Bay, and on the many rivers and lakes throughout the region. The Pere Marquette Rail-Trail, a 14-foot wide, 33-mile long paved trail from Midland to Clare, cuts diagonally across Midland County about five (5) miles south of the Township. In addition, the Midland to Mackinac Trail has its origin about a mile east of Hope Township near the intersection of Shearer Rd. and Sturgeon Rd. This cross-country hiking trail varies in condition and accessibility, while traversing generally northward mostly through state forestland. It is maintained by volunteer organizations and individuals.

There are five school districts within Midland County. Hope Township residents are provided educational opportunities through the Meridian School District.

Hope Township maintains the historic Township Hall building and an adjacent Fire Station on adjacent parcels in the unincorporated hamlet of Hope surrounding the intersection of E. Hull Rd. and N. Hope Rd. There is also a 66-acre Township-owned public park located at the northeast corner of E. Shearer Rd. and N. Middle Rd. This park has several baseball fields, playground equipment, bathroom facilities and a pavilion for the community's use. The Township owns and manages an active, 6.5-acre cemetery adjacent to the Township Park. There is also a historic Township cemetery east of N. Hope Rd. in Section 27 that is no longer active.

The locations of these Township-maintained community facilities are shown on Map 6 (Community Facilities) on page 24.

PRIVATE COMMUNITY SANITARY SEWAGE SYSTEM POLICIES

Private community sanitary sewage treatment systems shall not be permitted in the Township, except as part of a planned unit development (PUD) project as approved by the Township consistent with the policies of this Master Plan, including the following:

1. The development shall consist of a single land use type, as categorized by the Midland County Division of Environmental Health Services.
2. The development shall include significant preservation of important wetlands, natural features, open spaces or agricultural lands in the Township; including, at a minimum, permanent conservation of fifty percent (50%) of the land proposed for development.
3. Adequate replacement reserve shall be provided should the community wastewater system fail or improperly function; including a financial contingency sufficient to provide for future operation and maintenance, reservation of additional land area(s) for replacement facilities, and provision of adequate reserve capacity.
4. Extensive buffering and a substantial separation distance shall be provided from all abutting properties to minimize noise, light, and odor impacts from system operation.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICIES

To accomplish the community facility-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following policies are set forth regarding development of drainage facilities:

1. Storm drainage shall be included when evaluating the suitability of a site for development and when determining the appropriate density of development.
2. On-site grading and filling of land, and development of on-site private drainage facilities and improvements on any lot or parcel in the Township shall be adequate to prevent additional surface water runoff on to neighboring parcels beyond pre-development levels, and to properly deliver surface water runoff to established drainage courses.
3. Drainage systems shall be located and designed to prevent sediments and pollutants in surface runoff from entering watercourses and groundwater aquifers.
4. Drainage districts should be established as part of each development to ensure proper long-range maintenance of drainage facilities.

5. Stormwater run-off from any development area should not exceed that which existed under undeveloped, natural conditions, in terms of volume and velocity.
6. Stormwater management facilities should be provided on private property as part of any new development subject to site plan approval under the Township Zoning Ordinance. Retention or detention basin design, construction, and maintenance shall satisfy the Midland County Drain Commissioner’s applicable standards and requirements.

POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Robust capacity and a variety of options for broadband Internet access and cellular telephone service should be available to Township residents and businesses. As such, the Township will encourage Internet providers to extend high capacity fiber optic lines and infrastructure through the Township, and to provide broadband Internet access for all Township residents and businesses. The Township will also continue to encourage collocation of multiple antennae on existing cellular telephone towers, and construction of a limited number of new towers where necessary to provide complete coverage and a range of service providers to Township residents.

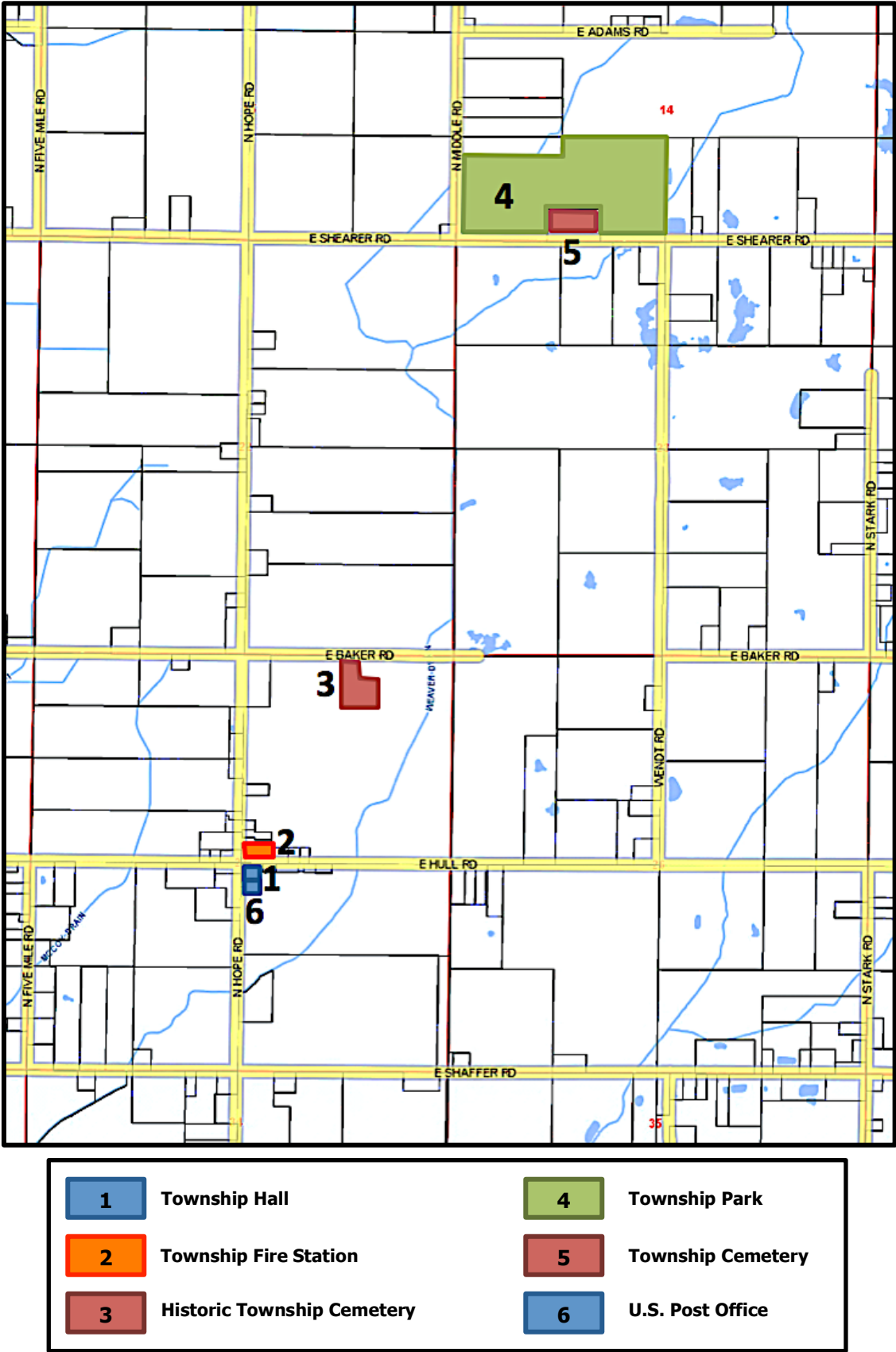
To accomplish the community facility-related goals as presented within this Master Plan, the following additional policies are set forth regarding the location and development of communications-related facilities and infrastructure in all sections of the Township:

1. All opportunities for collocation of additional wireless Internet and upgraded cellular telephone antennae on existing towers serving the Township shall be explored before construction of any new towers are permitted in the Township.
2. Any new wireless communications tower construction shall be located in a manner that substantially reduces or eliminates existing cellular telephone “dead zones” in the Township. New towers shall be constructed in strict accordance to the Township Zoning Ordinance’s limitations and standards for such facilities.
3. The Township should consider initiating a project to identify, map, and compile publicly-available data regarding capacity, ownership, and function of all existing fiber optic communications infrastructure in the Township, using available right-of-way records.
4. The Township should consider development and implementation of a community advocacy program to organize a targeted outreach effort by Township officials and residents to broadband Internet service providers.

PARKS AND RECREATION POLICIES

The Township should maintain a separate Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Township, to identify specific recreation goals related to improvements to the existing Township park, and development of any new recreation or senior center facilities or programs. If developed and updated every five (5) years in accordance with the guidelines for community park, recreation, open space, and greenway plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), this plan would allow the Township to be eligible for matching grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other sources for specific projects.

Map 6 – Community Facilities Map



SECTION 6

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This section is intended to link the Township’s overall goals with specific land use recommendations by providing recommendations for the future use of land in the Township. The formulation of this land use plan was based on the goals and policies of this Master Plan, along with additional factors that include regional influences, existing land use patterns, significant natural features, and the need for various land uses.

INTENT

This land use plan is a policy document intended to guide future Township decision-making with regards to land use and community development. It is intended to provide a clear link between the Township’s goals and objectives and specific land use recommendations.

While the land use plan portrays the community’s vision for the future, implementation of this plan is the real key to achieving that vision. See Section 8 (Zoning Plan) and Section 9 (Plan Implementation) for recommended implementation strategies.

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND MAP

The following describes the land use classifications designated on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27, which is intended to show generalized land use, and is not intended to indicate precise size, shape or dimension. The recommendations of this land use plan also have a long-range planning horizon and do not necessarily imply that a particular near-term rezoning is appropriate. Phasing in of any changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map should be consistent with this land use plan, the goals and policies of this Master Plan, and the implementation and phasing guidelines contained in Section 8 (Zoning Plan).

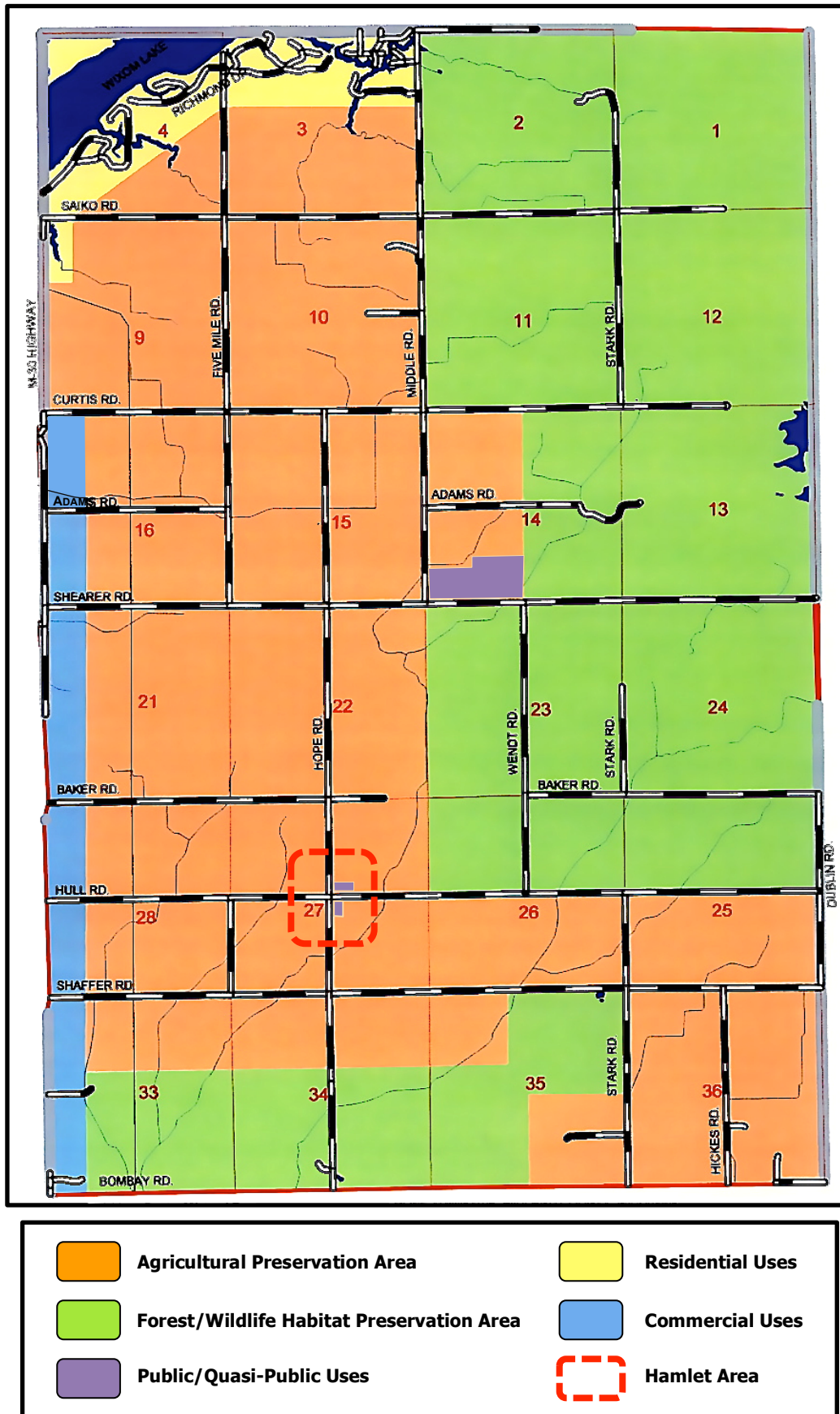
Table 4 – Land Use Classifications

| Classification | Description |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Agricultural Preservation Area | <p>This land use classification is intended primarily to accommodate agricultural land uses and very low density residential uses consistent with the Township’s rural character. Agricultural land uses would be characterized by traditional cash crops, fruits, and vegetables; raising of livestock and poultry; equestrian activities, nurseries and greenhouses; and similar uses.</p> <p>Rural residential development in the Agricultural Preservation Area should be limited to locations where the soils, terrain or other factors prevent active agricultural production.</p> <p>Anticipated dwelling unit density within the Agricultural Preservation Area classification is one (1) dwelling unit per acre on non-productive farmland only. Dwelling unit density on productive farmland is limited to one dwelling unit per five (5) acres.</p> |

Table 4 – Land Use Classifications

| Classification | Description |
|--|--|
| Forest/Wildlife Habitat Preservation Area | <p>This land use classification is intended primarily for state forestlands and other land areas dominated by significant natural features, such as rivers, lakes, wetlands, and dense woodlands. Uses and any physical improvements in these areas should be very low-impact, and consistent with the Township's rural character.</p> <p>Anticipated dwelling unit density within the Forest/Wildlife Habitat Preservation Area classification is one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres.</p> |
| Public/Quasi-Public | <p>This land use classification is intended to accommodate publicly-owned and operated facilities, places of public assembly, and private, non-profit or religious facilities that provide a public service to populations in and around the Township. Allowable land uses under this classification should include churches, cemeteries, schools, government buildings, post offices, auditoriums, parks, and indoor and outdoor recreation areas and facilities.</p> |
| Residential Uses | <p>This land use classification is intended to accommodate low-density residential uses consistent with the rural character of the area, as well as the capacity of the soils to accommodate individual private septic systems for each dwelling.</p> <p>Anticipated dwelling unit density within the Residential classification is one (1) dwelling unit per acre.</p> |
| Commercial Uses | <p>This land use classification is intended to accommodate the convenience shopping, food service, office, and personal service needs of the Township and the surrounding community. Development in these areas should be consistent with the Township's rural character. This classification on the map extends along an area adjacent to the east side of the M-30 state highway to a lot depth of 1,000 feet as measured east from the edge of the road right-of-way.</p> <p>This classification is designed to include various businesses, including retail and wholesale operations, contractor's establishments, small manufacturing and processing plants, plant nurseries, and storage facilities</p> |
| Hamlet Area | <p>This classification is intended to identify the general area of the unincorporated hamlet of Hope, Michigan, centered around the intersection of N. Hope Rd. and E. Hull Rd. and the location of the Township Hall, Fire Station, and Post Office. Existing land uses include a mixture of agricultural, residential, and public/quasi-public activities. Future development of the Hamlet Area should continue this historic development pattern, and may also include small-scale, low-intensity commercial uses limited to the convenience shopping, food service, office or personal service needs of local residents.</p> <p>Anticipated dwelling unit density within the Hamlet Area classification is one (1) dwelling unit per acre.</p> |

Map 7 – Future Land Use Map



POLICY GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is recognized that growth of the Township’s commercial tax base by prudent expansion of existing commercial zoning district boundaries along the M-30 state highway corridor would be beneficial to the Township, provided that future development is consistent with the goals of this Plan and the following additional policy priorities:

1. Compatibility of such commercial land uses and development with surrounding agricultural or residential land uses is a paramount objective of the Township. Owners of existing commercial facilities should be encouraged to design and maintain their site in a manner that minimizes potential conflicts with adjoining land uses related to noise, dust, odor, glare from exterior lighting or other factors.
2. Potential land use conflicts should be mitigated through proper site design, buffering, and screening improvements (such as berms, fences, dense evergreen plantings, etc.) as part of site plan approval for new commercial development.
3. New commercial development activity and any rezoning of land to a commercial zoning district should occur in close proximity to existing commercial development. The creation of an isolated area or “island” of commercial zoning or development should be avoided.
4. New commercial development and alterations to existing commercial sites along the M-30 road right-of-way should include provisions for landscaping improvements to beautify the road frontage and other open areas of the site. The use of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental tree and shrub species native to mid-Michigan and suitable for the proposed location and function are strongly encouraged.
5. A proposed expansion of a commercial zoning that is determined by the Planning Commission to be necessary to accommodate reasonable expansion of an existing, viable business operation in the Township is consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.
6. The quality of building design, placement, and composition is essential to provide a comfortable, human-scale environment in the Township, and to maintain the Township’s attractiveness and economic vitality. Accordingly, the following building composition guidelines are established for new commercial development along the M-30 corridor to maintain the visual environment, protect the general welfare, and ensure that the Township’s character and economic well being are preserved:
 - Architectural features and design variations should be incorporated into new buildings, including but not limited to projections, bays, recesses, enhanced façade materials, and variations in height, roof forms, and window patterns.
 - Side and rear building facades should include decorative materials and architectural features similar to those present on the front facade of the building.
 - New commercial buildings should have at least one (1) public entrance facing a road right-of-way.
 - Roof-top mechanical equipment, HVAC systems, exhaust stacks, and similar equipment should be screened by a parapet wall or similar device.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The Township will continue to support and encourage the continuation and growth of a robust rural economy, including a network of agricultural support services, including bulk feed and farm supply stores, farm implement sales and repair, and related businesses.

The Township will also encourage farmers to diversify their income through development of value-added farm-based tourism and entertainment activities consistent with Zoning Ordinance requirements. Such activities may include agricultural festivals and events, farm-based or seasonal recreational attractions (such as a petting farm or play area, corn mazes, hayrides, and seasonal displays), a winery or cider mill, a farm-based bed and breakfast inn, farm-based educational activities, indoor or outdoor facilities for group gatherings, a roadside stand or on-site farm market, and similar facilities and activities as accepted by the Planning Commission.

OPEN SPACE OR CLUSTER RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

New residential development should minimize land consumption and preserve open space and farmland, be consistent with the Township's rural character, and be compatible with surrounding agricultural uses and natural features. The use of open space preservation and clustering techniques are encouraged for new residential development in the Township.

Section 506 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended) requires that a township with a population of 1,800 or more *“shall provide in its zoning ordinance that land zoned for residential development may be developed, at the option of the landowner, with the same number of dwelling units on [not less than 50% of the required lot area] specified in the zoning ordinance..., if all of the following apply:*

- *The land is zoned at a density equivalent to 2 or fewer dwelling units per acre;*
- *[Not less than 50% of the development's overall land area] will remain perpetually in an undeveloped state by means of a conservation easement, plat dedication, restrictive covenant, or other legal means that runs with the land;*
- *The development does not depend upon the extension of a public sewer or public water supply system; [and]*
- *The development...is subject to other applicable ordinances, laws, and rules, including rules relating to suitability of groundwater for on-site water supply [and] to suitability of soils for on-site sewage disposal....”*

While not a requirement for Hope Township because of current population levels, the open space preservation or clustering option preserves rural character without reducing the number of permitted dwelling units allowed on a particular parcel, by reserving a minimum percentage of the site as permanently preserved agricultural land or open space, while reducing the required minimum lot area for each dwelling by the same percentage.

An example of an open space preservation or cluster development layout is depicted in Figure 3 on the following page.

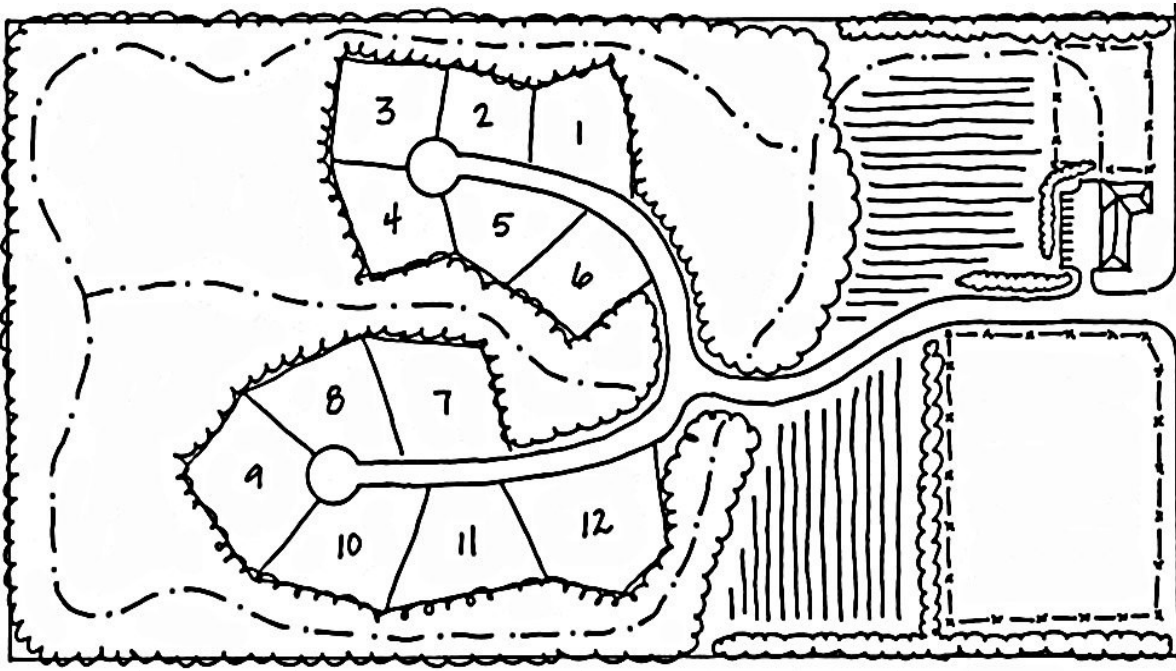


Figure 3 - Example of an open space preservation or cluster development, including preservation of significant natural features and active agricultural areas.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING PARK RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

A separate designation for manufactured housing park development has not been provided for on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27. Consistent with the goals of this Plan, the Township has made the following findings and established the following land use and development policies with regards to manufactured housing park residential land uses and development:

- The Township has provided, both in this Plan and in the Township Zoning Ordinance, for a variety of housing types to serve the needs of current and future Township residents consistent with the capacity of soils and roads, availability of potable water, protection of significant natural resources, and other factors.
- It is the intent of this Plan that the pattern of residential land uses and development in the Township be limited to selected areas as identified on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map).
- Predominant soil and subsurface conditions significantly limit the suitability of land in the Township for the types of intensive community wastewater treatment systems commonly used by manufactured housing parks.
- Because of the design limitations imposed by the Michigan Manufactured Housing Commission's General Rules, a manufactured housing park development cannot be compatible with Section 9 (Transportation Plan) of this Master Plan.
- The existing manufactured housing park development directly adjacent to the northwest corner of the Township, and additional manufactured housing park developments in the surrounding jurisdictions, are more than adequate in land area and capacity to serve the

regional and local needs of residents for this type of housing.

- Based on these findings, the Township has determined that there is no demonstrated need for additional mobile home park development sites in the Township.

This issue should be re-examined at least every five (5) years as part of the plan review required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), and this policy adjusted if determined necessary by the Township at that time.

HOME OCCUPATION POLICIES

Home occupations are those where the entrepreneur works from home, and can, within certain limitations, be almost any type of business. Some develop as people perform services elsewhere, but use part of their home as an office. Many tend to be service or direct marketing/sales oriented, and an increasing number are Internet-based businesses. Starting up a new business from home offers cost savings, and may increase the potential for success.

The Township will continue to permit home occupations in association with a residential land use, provided that the limited business activity does not adversely impact the residential character of the property or surrounding neighborhood. The Township will also encourage owners of highly successful and growing home occupations to relocate their operations to nearby commercial areas, as appropriate.

SECTION 7

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This chapter provides specific transportation-related policy recommendations based on the goals and objectives detailed in Section 3 (General Goals and Policy Priorities). An examination of the local transportation network is an important part of a Master Plan, as land uses and the means of transporting goods and people are interdependent elements of a successful community. The implementation of a functional transportation network depends upon adherence to sound planning principles and an effective collaboration between Township, County and State officials and private landowners.

COLLABORATION FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Federal highways through the region include I-75, running north-south approximately 14 miles to the east of the Township; US-10 running east-west approximately five (5) miles to the south of the Township; and US-27, running north-south approximately 20 miles to the west of the Township. In addition, the state trunkline highway M 30 runs north-south along the west boundary of Hope Township.

Roughly half of the public roads in Hope Township are paved. Primary roads are maintained by the Midland County Road Commission (MCRC) with funds provided by state gasoline taxes and county millage. Local roads are also maintained by the county, but improvements typically require local matching funds from the Township. There is also a network of local private roads serving the existing Wixom Lake area residential neighborhoods, which are maintained through private funding by the residents.

Because the Township does not have direct control over public roads within its boundaries, it is important that outside agencies with jurisdiction, including the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Midland County Road Commission, be kept aware of the Township's policy preferences and plans.

COMPLETE STREETS IN THE TOWNSHIP

Public Acts 134 and 135 of 2010 give new project planning and coordination responsibilities to county and state transportation agencies across Michigan related to implementation of the new "Complete Streets" policy established by the package of laws.

MDOT and MCRC are required through amendments to the Act 51 program, which prioritizes state funding of road projects, to consider all users of the road right-of-way as part of the planning of future road projects.

For the Township, these public acts also included amendments to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act intended to ensure that county and state road

Complete Streets.

A comprehensive approach to transportation networks, which integrates all facilities in the road right-of-way (travel lanes, shoulders, sidewalks and non-motorized pathways, driveway access, etc.) to abutting buildings and land uses.

The intent of the "complete streets" approach to transportation planning is to ensure that all users (motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.) are safely accommodated as part of transportation improvements along a road corridor.

agencies better coordinate road improvements with the Township, and will cooperate with the Township to implement transportation elements included in this Master Plan. This transportation plan is intended to conform to the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, and to establish Township priorities for future road improvements.

Why should the Township be concerned with “complete streets” laws when the county and state are responsible for the road network?

These public acts provide the Township with a more powerful mechanism to influence decision-making within county and state road authority bureaucracies, which is this transportation plan.

In the absence of written and adopted road policies, the default county or state standard would apply to any future road improvements, with little regard as to whether a particular road width or design is best for Township residents or the intended character of the community as expressed in this Master Plan.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

The County Connection is a bus service that provides transportation for Midland County residents. In addition to the County Connection, Midland County also offers Dial-a-Ride and Taxi Services. In addition, increasing numbers of bicyclists and others are using Michigan roads and highways for non-motorized transportation. The following non-motorized transportation policies are hereby established for this Master Plan:

1. The needs of all potential users of the Township’s transportation network should be adequately addressed as road improvement projects are planned/implemented.
2. To improve safety for bicyclists, paved or partially paved shoulders should be incorporated into all road improvement projects in the Township.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Managing access points on to the state highway and county primary roads by limiting the number of driveways permitted for each land use can help preserve the traffic movement function of the roadway. Proposed and existing land uses should provide the minimum number of driveways needed to provide access to a development site. Access management is usually implemented through the site plan review process, and these techniques are suggested as guidelines in that process. Each case will require an individual analysis to determine the appropriate action given the characteristics of the site and use.

If multiple driveways are proposed for access to a single development, appropriate spacing between driveways should be maintained consistent with the applicable MDOT or MCRC spacing standards. Even if only one (1) access point is proposed, the most appropriate location should be selected to preserve the function of the roadway and maximize public safety. Driveways located too close together are safety hazards and can negatively impact road capacity.

Commercial and other non-residential driveway access to parcels on opposite sides of a public road should be lined up across the roadway or located with sufficient separation distance to allow safe left-hand turning movements consistent with MDOT or MCRC standards. The use of

frontage roads, service roads and internal connections between commercial sites to provide for common or shared access is also encouraged. These access management alternatives to multiple individual driveways and “curb cuts” into the public road right-of-way can preserve roadway capacity and views from the road and maintain the character of the community.

ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN POLICY PRIORITIES

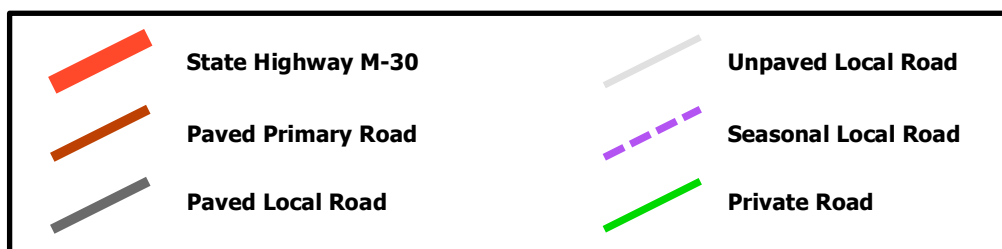
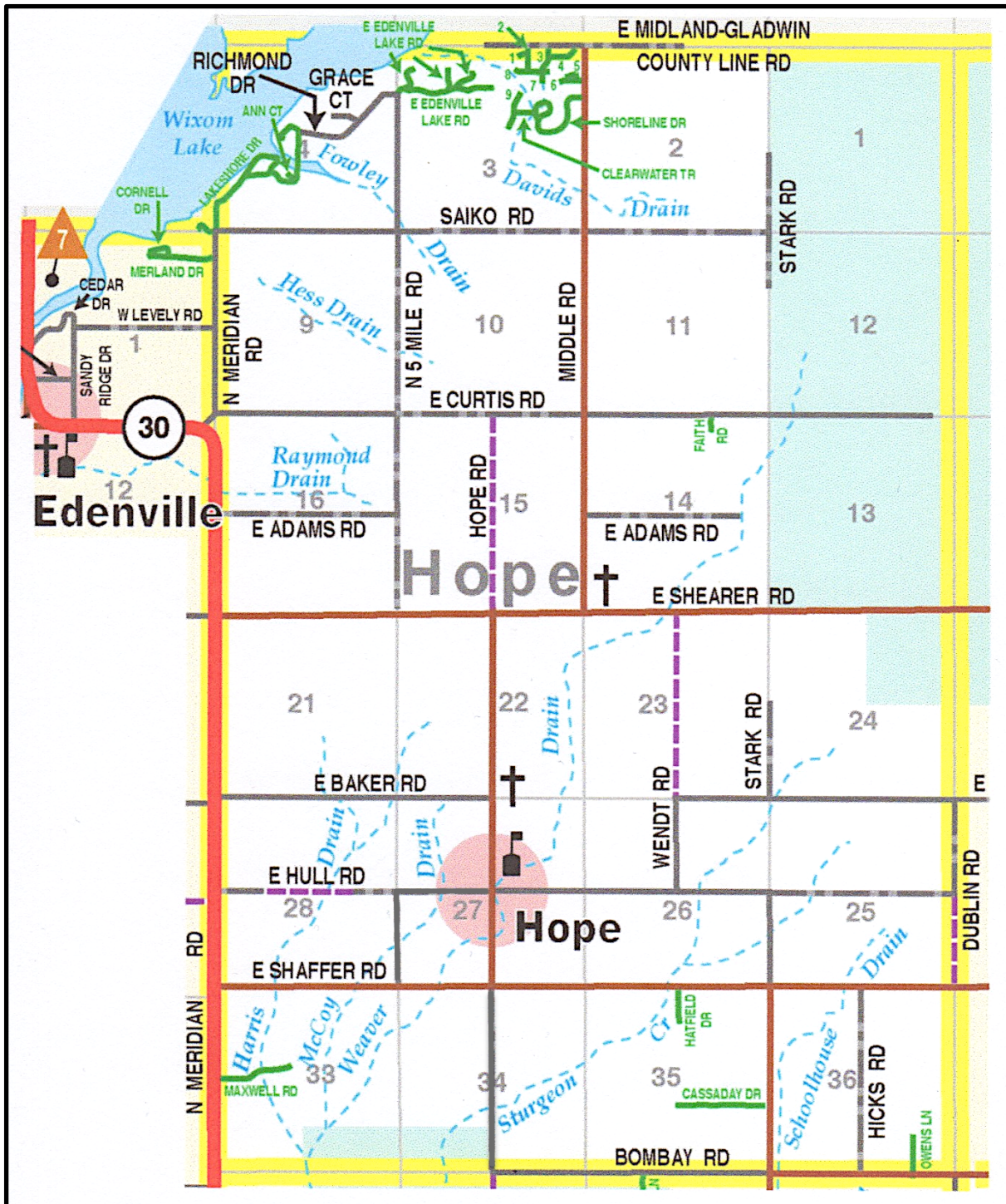
The following additional transportation planning policies are hereby established for this Plan:

1. Require internal road and pedestrian pathway connections between new developments and existing neighborhoods, and require the establishment of stub roads and future road connections to adjacent, undeveloped parcels as part of any new development.
2. Encourage MDOT and the county road commissions with jurisdiction to inspect and evaluate the condition of existing bridges and under-road culverts, and to prioritize repair and replacement of deteriorating road infrastructure in a manner that maintains road connectivity and access for Township residents.
4. Collaborate with county and state leaders to identify funding sources for local road maintenance, and encourage Township residents and property owners to consider the use of special assessment districts to help fund improvements to local roads and neighborhood private roads.
5. Encourage the county road commission to consider the specific needs of the Township’s farming community, in particular the need to move large pieces of equipment from field to field on the public roads, as part of determining the minimum necessary roadway widths and provisions for stabilized road shoulders associated with planned road improvements and maintenance.
6. To establish long-term redundancy in the Township road network, so that functional alternative connections are available to Township residents year-round in the event of a primary road closure due to flooding, washout, accident or construction activity, consider the upgrading of or improvements to the following roads in the Township:
 - Upgrade and improve Saiko Rd. in Sections 3 & 10 to a paved local road.
 - Improve Bombay Rd. between N. Hope Rd. and Stark Rd. to fix deficiencies in the road base and pavement.
 - Upgrade and improve E. Hull Rd. between M-30 and Five Mile Rd. from a seasonal road to a paved local road.
 - Upgrade and improve Wendt Rd. in Section 23 from a seasonal road to an un-paved local road.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN DESIGNATIONS AND MAP

One of the primary goals of this Plan listed in Section 3 (General Goals and Policy Priorities) is to “*establish a transportation plan, including the general location, character, and extent of existing and planned roads, bicycle paths, pedestrian ways, bridges, waterways, and other access and mobility improvements consistent with the Township’s rural character.*” In accordance with this goal, Map 8 (Transportation Plan Map) on page 37 has been developed to classify Township roads as either as “local roads,” which provide access to adjacent land in a neighborhood; or as “primary roads,” which include state highways and paved county public roads designed to provide routes for through traffic and connections to local roads.

Map 8 – Transportation Plan Map



SECTION 8 ZONING PLAN

The Township Zoning Ordinance is one of the most important tools available to implement the policies of this Master Plan related to the use and development of land. The purpose of zoning is to assist in orderly development and growth. It is also used to protect property values and investments. Because of the impact it can have on the use of land and related services, local zoning regulations must be built upon the foundation of a Master Plan and “zoning plan.”

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that a zoning plan be prepared as the basis for the Zoning Ordinance. This chapter is intended, along with the rest of the relevant parts of this Master Plan, to serve as the plan required by the Act. It functions as a link between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and as a guide to the implementation of future ordinance changes.

Zoning. Zoning is the division of a community into districts by ordinance for the purpose of regulating the use of land and buildings, their height and bulk, the proportion of the lot that may be covered by them, and the density of development.

Zoning is enacted under the police power of the State for the purpose of promoting health, safety and general welfare and has long been supported constitutionally by the U.S. Supreme Court and the Michigan courts.

ZONING DISTRICTS

The following are descriptions and general purposes of the categories within which the proposed zoning districts in the Township Zoning Ordinance are organized. The proposed zoning districts are summarized below. The specific district regulations can be found in the Zoning Ordinance:

Agricultural (AG) District

The purpose and intent of the Agricultural District is to provide areas for commercial agricultural and farming operations as well as limited residential areas. This district is established to conserve and protect agricultural lands as valued resources by preventing the encroachment of urban land uses in predominantly agricultural areas where geographic and economic conditions favor continued agricultural production. A range of farming activities shall be permitted in this zone in order to foster the continuation of agriculture in the Township.

Forested (FR) District

The purpose and intent of this district is to preserve the forests and woodlots of the Township while allowing residential development and a wide range of uses in such ways that will not detract from this end. To the greatest degree practicable, the integrity and contiguity of forestlands shall be maintained.

Residential (R) District

The purpose and intent of this district is to encourage attractive residential areas with compatible services and amenities. The district will govern areas already subdivided into small parcels or platted lots and those areas where smaller lots are appropriate. The land zoned for the

Residential District should conform to the corresponding areas as designated on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27. See Section 7 (Future Land Use Plan) for additional future land use policies associated with mobile home park residential development.

Commercial (C) District

The purpose and intent of this district is to provide locations for commercial and limited small industrial uses in the Township. Permitted uses are generally small in nature and are intended to serve Township residents and travelers on the M-30 state highway. The land zoned for the Commercial District should conform to the corresponding areas as designated on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27.

Public/Quasi-Public Services (PS) District

There are certain public and “quasi-public” land uses, including churches and other religious institutions, government buildings, parks, schools, and similar public facilities, which are not specifically addressed on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27. A new Public/Quasi-Public Services (PS) District is proposed to serve as the appropriate zoning classification for these land uses, subject to the following policies:

It is the policy of the Township that land may be rezoned to the PS District to allow for uses of a public or quasi-public character in areas of the Township designated for other land uses on the future land use maps, consistent with the following:

1. The location should be served by existing utility infrastructure and/or soils with adequate capacity for the intended occupancy of the facility.
2. The location should have direct frontage on and access to public roads that can safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by the facility. Locating public or quasi-public facilities on local roads or unpaved roads should be discouraged.
3. Public or quasi-public facilities should not be located on land designated as part of any “Agricultural Preservation Area” unless the soil conditions or other characteristics of a specific site make it unsuitable for long-term agricultural operations.
4. The location would be compatible with the surrounding area and adjacent land uses in terms of traffic, noise, scale, and intensity of planned activities on the site.

Quasi-Public. As used in this Master Plan, the term “quasi-public” refers to land uses that are not government-owned but provide a substantial and enduring public service, are institutional in character, or include public assembly or similar gathering space as part of their operation. Examples include schools, churches and other religious institutions, private clubs and meeting halls, private recreation facilities, and similar land uses.

Consideration of rezoning petitions for these zoning districts should also include Planning Commission evaluation of any potential issues of compliance with applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements associated with permitted land uses and development in the proposed zoning district, based on the size, location, configuration, and other characteristics of the subject land.

RECOMMENDED ZONING ORDINANCE CHANGES TO CONSIDER

As a principal tool for implementing this Master Plan, Township Zoning Ordinance standards should reflect the applicable policies of this Plan. The following is a list of recommended Zoning Ordinance changes consistent with the policies of this Master Plan. These changes should be considered with deliberation by the Planning Commission and Township Board as the need arises, or in conjunction with other planned Ordinance amendments:

1. **Illustrations, flowcharts, and tables.** Add illustrations and flowcharts to clarify and illustrate certain development review procedures, regulations, and defined terms; and consider grouping zoning districts and allowable land uses into a land use table format.
2. **Site plan and special use approval requirements.** The Township’s site plan and special use permit review requirements and review processes should be updated consistent with current zoning practices. Each time the Planning Commission reviews a site plan for compliance with the Township Zoning Ordinance, another step is taken in the process of implementing the policies of this Master Plan. Development review and approval is an important implementation tool to ensure that new construction is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan.
3. **Planned unit development.** Consider adding a Planned Unit Development (PUD) option for added flexibility. The PUD zoning district is established under the special district authority authorized by Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The PUD option offers considerable flexibility to the land developer to provide opportunities for site designs that respect the natural environment, result in efficient layout of infrastructure and public facilities, and minimize impacts on adjoining land uses.
4. **Screening, buffering, and natural resource protection.** Updated landscaping and screening standards should be added for projects subject to site plan approval, along with new natural resource protection standards, consistent with current zoning practices.
5. **Agricultural land uses.** Consider expanding the allowable land uses in the AG District to create additional opportunities for “agricultural tourism” and other value-added agricultural activities that allow farmers to diversify their income sources.
6. **Lot standards.** Consider updating lot and road frontage requirements to require direct frontage on a public road or approved and fully constructed private road.
7. **Home occupations.** Consider updates to the home occupation provisions to add a specific list of allowable and prohibited home occupations.
8. **Parking and exterior lighting regulations.** The Township’s off-street parking regulations should be updated consistent with current zoning practices; and new exterior lighting standards should be added for projects subject to site plan approval.
9. **Sign regulations.** The Township’s sign regulations should be updated to eliminate content-based regulation, update, add provisions for electronic message boards and sign lighting, add a specific statement prohibiting new billboards with a set of findings as to why new billboards should not be allowed in the Township, and ensure that the sign standards are consistent with current zoning and sign industry practices.

10. **New Public/Quasi-Public Services (PS) District.** Consider adding a new zoning district to the Ordinance and Official Zoning Map as a district in which churches and other religious institutions, government buildings, parks, schools, and similar public facilities are allowed “by right,” subject to site plan approval, to minimize the need for special use permit approvals for these land uses. This provision would help ensure that the Township is in compliance with the federal Religious Land Uses and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) that applies a strict scrutiny to local requirements for discretionary approvals (such as a special use permit) of religious institutions.

REZONING TO IMPLEMENT THE MASTER PLAN

Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27 and the associated elements of this Master Plan are intended to guide future changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map. The Master Plan should be a principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests. The Planning Commission should conduct a periodic appraisal of the Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map to ensure that all elements of this Plan are adequately reflected in the ordinance text and map, and that no changes to the Plan or ordinance are necessary.

Phasing of Zoning Map Changes

A key to successful Master Plan implementation is the timing of future changes to the Township’s Official Zoning Map, whether initiated by the Township or by petitioners. When considering whether a rezoning request is consistent with this Plan, the Planning Commission and Township Board should keep in mind that the Master Plan’s policy recommendations are based upon a ten to twenty year planning period.

While the Plan may identify certain Township lands for more intensive development, the time for such development may not yet have arrived. More intensive land uses and development should be phased-in over a period of time, consistent with the policies of this Plan and the infrastructure and land capacity available to support the development. The Planning Commission shall consider the following in making its findings and recommendations on proposed amendments to the Official Zoning Map:

A. Evaluation of existing zoning and development pattern.

Review the existing zoning and set of principal permitted and special land uses for compatibility with Master Plan policies, the surrounding development pattern, and site characteristics. Determine whether there are conditions or circumstances that warrant a change or reasonably prevent the site from being developed or used as zoned. Consider whether the boundaries and size of the proposed district are compatible with the surrounding area and the scale of future development on the site. The requested rezoning should not create an isolated or incompatible zone in the area.

B. The apparent demand for the types of uses permitted in the district(s).

Consider the apparent demand for the types of uses permitted in the district(s) in relation to the amount of land currently zoned and available in the Township and surrounding communities to accommodate the demand.

1. Consider whether there is a demonstrated market demand for more land to be classified in the district; and if so, whether this is the appropriate location.
2. Consider the availability of land already planned or zoned for the types of land uses and intensity of development possible under the proposed zoning district.
3. Consider the amount of land in the Township or adjoining jurisdictions that is already prepared and/or ready for development consistent with the proposed zoning district's intent and list of permitted land uses.

C. Availability of public services and infrastructure to serve all potential land uses.

Rezoning of undeveloped land to a more intensive zoning district should only take place in conjunction with the availability of public services and infrastructure to serve all of the potential land uses in the proposed district.

1. Capacity of soils, infrastructure, and public services to accommodate the allowable land uses in the district without compromising the health, safety, and welfare of Township residents or burdening public entities or the Township with unplanned capital improvement or operational costs.
2. Capacity of the existing road system to safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by uses permitted in the zoning district.
3. Capacity of existing police, fire, ambulance, schools, and other public services to serve all potential land uses on the site.

D. Compatibility with the surrounding area.

Evaluate the proposed district and existing zoning of surrounding properties in terms of all allowable land uses and the district intent. Determine the adjacent uses and their general character. Consider the surrounding vicinity on both sides of the road and all sides of the site. Finally, determine whether development that could occur on the subject site is compatible with the surrounding character in terms of traffic, noise, scale, and types of uses in comparison to current activities in the area. Isolated and abrupt changes in land uses and densities not consistent with Master Plan objectives and policies are considered spot zoning and are not recommended planning and zoning practice.

E. Consistency with Master Plan future land use recommendations.

Determine whether the intent and all of the allowable uses within the requested zoning district are compatible with the future land use designation(s) for the site, as shown on Map 7 (Future Land Use Map) on page 27.

1. Rezoning inconsistent with this Plan. A rezoning inconsistent with this Master Plan should only be considered where specific findings are made that demonstrate conditions have changed significantly since the Plan was prepared, and/or new information supports a change. In such cases, the Township may first consider an amendment to the Plan.

2. Phasing in of new development. The future land use recommendations of this Master Plan are based upon a ten to twenty year timeframe. Consider whether the timing of the proposed rezoning is appropriate, given trends in the area, infrastructure capacity, and other factors.

MORE ZONING TOOLS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Following is a list of several additional zoning-related tools and techniques that can be used by the Township to implement the policies of this Master Plan:

| Zoning Tool | Description |
|---|---|
| Site Plan Review | Each time the Planning Commission reviews a site plan for compliance with the Township Zoning Ordinance, another step is taken in the process of implementing the policies of this Master Plan. Development review and approval is an important implementation tool to ensure that new construction is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan. |
| Planned Unit Development (PUD) Option | The PUD zoning district is established under the special district authority authorized by Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The PUD option offers considerable flexibility to the land developer to provide opportunities for site designs that respect the natural environment, result in efficient layout of infrastructure and public facilities, and ensure mitigation of negative impacts on adjoining land uses and the Township as a whole. |
| Development Agreement | Although there is no explicit legislative authority for such agreements, many Michigan communities have used development agreements to achieve a mutual understanding between the developer and Township concerning the conditions under which development can occur. Development agreements are often negotiated as part of a planned development approval, allowing the community and developer to address complex issues that cannot be adequately addressed on a typical site plan. Development agreements might prove useful to achieve desired developments in the Township, especially if or when a mixed-use development is proposed. |
| Form-Based Zoning and Building Composition Standards | Although there is no explicit legislative authority for form-based zoning, some Michigan communities are adding building design and appearance standards to local zoning ordinances. The intent of form-based zoning and building composition standards is not to mandate certain architectural styles or materials, but rather to achieve a more uniform streetscape where adjacent buildings share common design elements, height, number of stories, and other characteristics. |

SECTION 9 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

To be effective, this Plan must be used as part of daily decision-making in the Township. Policies in the Master Plan are implemented, for the most part, by day-to-day administrative actions of the Township officials and staff, decisions made by the Planning Commission, and the actions of the Board of Trustees. Although the Township may have responsibility to prepare and maintain this Plan, implementation also necessitates coordination with the outside agencies that have some jurisdiction in the Township.

Townships have several means at their disposal to implement a Master Plan. The Township's power includes control of land use enforced by zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and other ordinances. The following is a summary of some of the plan implementation tools available to the Township:

ZONING ORDINANCE

See Section 8 (Zoning Plan).

REGULATION OF LAND DIVISION

Land may be divided into smaller parcels by one of three methods: by metes and bounds descriptions, by platting under the Land Division Act (Public Act 288 of 1967, as amended), and as a condominium under the Condominium Act (Public Act 59 of 1978, as amended).

- A. **Metes and bounds land division.** By metes and bounds, review at the Township level is essential to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and other Township regulations.
- B. **Subdivision plats.** Subdividing, or platting, is a more complex method of land division and is regulated by the Land Division Act and any local subdivision regulations. The Township's review should be coordinated with those of county and state agencies with jurisdiction. Subdivision review should be used as a means for the Township to ensure that proper infrastructure planning and construction occur without public expense, and that natural features are protected.
- C. **Condominium subdivision or site condominium.** The condominium is the third method of land division. In this method, purchasers acquire fee simple rights to described physical spaces in which dwelling units may be constructed (residential site condominiums are most common, but the process may also be used for non-residential developments). The site condominium is a variation on the principle of land division involved in subdividing. However, the Condominium Act does not provide a specific review process, as does the Subdivision Control Act.

Since the issues and interests are the same from the Township's point of view in either approach to land division, the Township's review process for site condominiums should be as similar as possible to that exercised in subdivision review. The site plan review

process should be used to review proposed site condominium developments. Completion of all improvements shown on an approved site plan must be assured by appropriate financial guarantees.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

One of the most important non-regulatory tools the Township has available to implement this Plan is a “Capital Improvements Program” (CIP). The Township can use a CIP to implement Master Plan recommendations for new or expanded public facilities, plan for major expenditures, and ensure that public funds are used wisely and efficiently.

What are capital improvements?

Capital improvements are physical facilities that require substantial investments to construct/develop, and are intended to last/be used for a long period of time. Examples include:

- fire engines, bulldozers, and similar large equipment purchases;
- treatment plants, water or sewer lines, street construction or reconstruction, and similar infrastructure improvements;
- libraries, schools, government buildings, and similar building projects; and
- replacement, expansion, or major repair of existing facilities and equipment.

“Gray area” projects that could also be considered “operating” expenses outside the scope of a CIP include vehicle and small equipment purchases, repairs, and remodeling projects.

What is a Capital Improvements Program?

A CIP identifies the community's capital needs; ranks them by priority; coordinates their scheduling over a specific number of years; and determines the best funding method(s) to pay for them. The first year of the CIP is the capital budget, and as each year is completed a new year is added at the end. Many CIPs are organized into three (3) sections:

1. Overview of the CIP process, along with a list of the benefits the community will derive from the capital improvements;
2. Financial data, including charts outlining historical revenue and expenditure data, projected revenue, expenditure, and debt service; and a
3. Description of projects recommended for funding in the CIP period, including a justification for a project's inclusion in the CIP, the project's relationship to the Master Plan, and how the project will be financed within the community's fiscal capacity.

The CIP should cover a six (6) year period, updated annually, with the first year representing the community's capital budget. The document lists the proposed capital improvement projects and expenditures by:

- Location, date of construction, and relationship to other existing and proposed facilities;
- Cost, means of financing, and sponsor; and
- Priorities over the CIP time period and geography of the Township.

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, any municipality with jurisdiction may prepare and adopt a CIP, but it is typically mandatory for most cities and villages and for those Michigan

townships that “alone or jointly with one or more other local units of government owns or operates a water supply or sewage disposal system.”

What are the Benefits of Using a CIP?

The CIP is a tool to enable and improve the Township’s ability to balance its capital needs and available financing over a multi-year period. The following are some of the additional benefits of adopting and maintaining an up-to-date capital improvements program:

- A CIP helps to ensure that new public facilities and infrastructure improvements meet Master Plan objectives, spreads large capital expenses over time, and breaks large projects into phases.
- An up-to-date CIP will alert residents and developers of the Township’s intention to make certain improvements in particular places at particular times. This helps coordinate private investment, minimize inappropriate development proposals, and restricts development from occurring at a too rapid rate.
- The process of adopting and updating a CIP increases opportunities for public input on and public support for proposed capital improvements.
- The CIP process helps to identify public projects with substantive long-term value to the community vs. those that may have only “seemed like a good idea at the time.”
- Use of the CIP “tools” by the Township enables private businesses and citizens to have some assurance as to when public improvements will be undertaken.

FINANCING

Successful implementation of these projects will depend on the ability of the Township to secure the necessary funding for community planning and project implementation. In addition to the Township’s General Fund, there is an ever-changing range of potential federal and state government sources, community foundations, and other sources for grant funding and loans which the Township may be eligible for to complete a particular project.

The first step is to develop a capital improvements program to identify potential projects, anticipated costs, and potential sources of funding. Once a specific project has been identified, the most appropriate sources of grants and other revenues to supplement local funds can be considered. The following are examples of potential financing tools:

1. **Millage.** A special millage can be used to generate revenues for a specific purpose.
2. **Bond programs.** Bonds are one of the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for a specific community project and are paid off by the general public with property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of projects that generate revenues. The bonds are then retired using income generated by the project.
3. **Grant programs.** The State of Michigan periodically makes grant funding available for park development, land acquisition, and other public purposes. Local community foundations and private foundations may also have funding available for projects that fit their specific grant-making criteria.

PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM

To be effective, the planning process must be continuous. and must be part of the day-to-day decisions that affect the physical character of the Township. The Master Plan is a representation of the Township's policies for the future. If the Master Plan is to perform its proper function, it must be reviewed regularly and updated as conditions warrant.

The Planning Commission should evaluate the Master Plan regularly to ensure that Township policies are consistent with the objectives of the Master Plan. A comprehensive Master Plan review is required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act at least once every five (5) years.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

The necessity of citizen participation and understanding of the planning process and the Plan cannot be over-emphasized. A carefully organized public education program is needed to build support for and ease implementation of planning proposals. Residents' failure to support planning efforts, special assessments, zoning, or public improvements is more often than not the result of public misunderstanding of long-range plans. To organize public support most effectively, the Township must emphasize the reasons for the planning program and encourage citizen participation in the planning process.

Public education can be achieved through an informational program involving talks by the Township Planning Consultant and other experts, preparation of newspaper or Township website articles, and presentations at public meetings on current issues. Periodic community opinion surveys should be considered as another means by which Township officials can gauge changing attitudes and priorities.

A significant share of the responsibility of implementing this Master Plan rests on private efforts. Even one resident can have substantial influence in determining the appearance of the Township and influencing public opinion. The influence of an alert and informed citizenry may well compensate in a large part for limitations in the authority vested in the Township.