

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Planning Process

The purpose of the Cross Village Township Master Plan is to provide guidelines for future development, while protecting the natural resources and rural character of the Township. This plan presents extensive background information including socio-economic data on the Township; description and mapping of natural resources; and inventory of existing community facilities. The background information is analyzed to identify important characteristics, changes and trends occurring in the Cross Village Township. Community concerns were identified based on a citizen survey conducted in 2003, previous planning efforts, public participations, and input from a Master Plan working group. Goals and policies were developed to guide future development based on the background studies, key land use trends and community issues. These goals, along with a detailed map of existing land use, provided the basis for the Future Land Use Map which specifies where the various types of future development ideally will be located in the Township. This plan also provides suggestions for implementation of the identified goals and policies. While the Township intends to remain under County Zoning, guidance provided by this Master Plan can be utilized to communicate the Township's vision to the County and to influence changes to the County Zoning Ordinance. In addition, this plan will be utilized in decision making at the Township level as well.

Location and Regional Setting

Cross Village Township is located in the northwest portion of Emmet County, which is situated in the northern tip of Michigan's lower peninsula. Due to the coastal location Cross Village Township is much smaller than the standard geographic township in land area (9.75 square miles).

Cross Village Township is bounded on the north and west by Lake Michigan, on the east by Center Township and on the south by Readmond Township. Figure 1-1 illustrates the Township's proximity to a number of other communities in Michigan.

Cross Village is a natural destination point for travelers in Emmet County, as it stands at the northern end of M-119, a state designated Scenic Heritage Route, that extends north from Harbor Springs following the Lake Michigan shoreline. This road is renowned for its natural scenery, particularly the bordering hardwood forests. En route to Cross Village, the traveler passes meadows, occasional panoramic views over Lake Michigan, historic cottages, tree stands that bridge the road in canopy fashion, minimum village services (at Goodhart) and antique shops. The road winds and twists to encourage slow speed and enhance the enjoyment of the scenic tour. While Cross Village is the terminus of M-119, it is not the end of the road, as Shore Drive continues northeast out of the Township into Bliss Township.

Cross Village has a rich and varied history that includes Native American history. The village has buildings of architectural interest and it is likely that continued growth, including tourist visitation, will generate new business opportunities. There are no central water or sanitary sewer services in the Township.

Historical Context

Cross Village has a rich and varied history, which is known to date back to the 1600s. Members of both the Ottawa (now know as Odawa) and the Ojibwa Indian tribes resided in this area, at least part of the year—primarily in the spring, summer and fall. Locally available materials, include birch bark, porcupine quills and black ash were used in the baskets which they then used as a means of trade.

Jesuit priests visited the Village in the late 1600s and established a mission. It is believed that the original cross on the bluff may have been erected by Father Marquette.

In the mid-1800s, the population of the area began to diversify as more people of European descent moved into the area. It was during this period, that the village was relocated off the shore.

The major early industries were fishing and timber. Other industries and business developed in the area to support these primary industries and the people they employed. Such supporting industries included a mill to process the timber and a cooper to produce the barrels for the storage and transporting of the fish.

In 1855, Father Wiekamp came to Cross Village and built his convent. The convent grew rapidly, and was self-supporting with its agricultural enterprises; it ultimately owned over 2000 acres of land in various townships.

The town continued to grow and thrive until the mill closed in 1911 due to the lack of timber resources. Other businesses suffered as well from the mill closing and some merchants moved out.

It was the fire in 1918 that completely devastated the town, destroying five large stores, the hotel, the post office, the Presbyterian Church and about 25 houses. Over 300 people were left homeless. Although many merchants had originally planned to rebuild, very few did. The many vacant lots in the heart of Cross Village are still a reminder of the fire.

Cross Village is named in at least three languages. It was called “L’Arbre Croche” by the early white traders for a tall, crooked fir tree on the bluff a few miles north of Middle Village (this tree long since cut down). “Waganaskisi” was the Odawa name meaning “crooked tree” and “Anamiewatigoing,” “tree of prayer, or cross,” is still the Indian name for the village.¹

¹ Chaney, Laura, Cross Village: A Selection of Tastes, Art and Memories, Cross Village Community Services. 2001.

The Status of Planning and Zoning in Cross Village Township

Cross Village Township is currently covered under County-wide Planning and the County Zoning Ordinance. Emmet County has engaged in formal land use planning since the early 1970's and enacted County-wide Zoning in 1972. The first Plan was prepared as a two part Plan: a Future Land Use Plan and a Sewer and Water Facilities Plan with the purpose to establish a Land Use Policy and address facility needs of the county. The Comprehensive Plan was more recently updated in Emmet County, with the Emmet County/City of Petoskey Comprehensive Plan, completed in July 1997.

Zoning is the principal means of land use controls in the County. Within Emmet County some municipalities and Townships have enacted and hence administer their own local zoning, while others remain under county zoning. Land Use within Cross Village Township is regulated under the Emmet County Zoning Ordinance. The Emmet County Planning and Zoning Department provides staff for administration of the County zoning ordinance.

Cross Village Township has had Planning Committees at various times through its history. In cooperation with Emmet County Planning Commission, the local Planning Committee or Township Board reviews local zoning issues and development proposals in Cross Village Township and makes recommendations to the County. The Township's recommendations on zoning and development, while under the jurisdiction of the County Zoning Ordinance, have no legal standing but are given consideration by the County Planning Commission. To increase local control over future development, Cross Village Township has developed this Township Master Plan. Updated Zoning Ordinances supported by up-to-date Comprehensive Land Use Plans are considered the main tool Michigan Communities have at their command to control land use patterns and development pressures.

In the development of this Master Plan, the Cross Village Planning Committee reviewed the information from previous master planning efforts, including the most recent formal effort in 1991. The 2002 Build-out Study conducted by the Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources (H.A.R.B.O.R., Inc.) provided valuable background information and was a catalyst moving this master plan process forward (See Appendix D). In 2003, the Township conducted a Citizen Survey to provide input at the start of the Master Plan process. The information from the previous effort provided the groundwork and foundation for beginning this planning process.