

8.0 Future Land Use Plan

The objective of the Future Land Use Plan is to prepare a framework from which the Township can manage its future land uses for the next five to twenty years. This section recommends a sustainable land use strategy to ensure the goals and visions in the previous section can be realized by current and future generations of township residents. In addition, this section of the plan will serve as a guide for evaluating future zoning requests. Future land use recommendations were designed to complement the community goals and policies presented earlier. However, in instances where future land use recommendations become unclear due to changing conditions, the goals and policies should take precedence to preserve the intent of the master plan. Economic, social, and environmental changes may occur during the life of the plan document. Therefore, Township officials should be confident and dedicated in making necessary revisions addressing new factors and influences unforeseen during the master plan's development.

This plan serves to provide a comprehensive resource to incorporate the community's desired future development. The Township Zoning Act (Act 184 of 1943) states that "The zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, and to limit the improper use of land; to conserve natural resources and energy; to meet the needs of the state's residents for food, fiber, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, or other uses of land...". Therefore, because a zoning ordinance must be based upon the master plan, it is crucial that in the future land use planning process, all reasonable land uses are provided to residents and property owners.

The goal setting workshop introduced policy statements serving to guide future land use management. These provide the platform from which the proposed future land use categories are created.

The 1999 Existing Land Use map indicated statistics regarding land use in the township which should be considered in preparing the future land use classification:

- Slightly more than 1/3 of the township parcels are classified as developed.
- The largest developed land use classification is detached Single Family Residential accounting for over 2/5 of the total developed land area and about 16% of the total Township land.
- The second highest developed land class included government operations, primarily the HSASA and the Emmet County Road Commission accounting for nearly 1/5 of the total developed lands.
- The largest undeveloped land classification is private, upland forests accounting for nearly 23% of the township's land area.
- The second largest undeveloped land class is Outdoor Recreation/Preserve lands incorporating land conservancies, golf courses, and state forestlands at 16% of the total land area.

Northern Michigan is growing and is projected to continue growing at rates exceeding the national average. According to the *Michigan Population Update* in June 1997, published by the Michigan Department of Management and Budget, the growth rate for the Northern Michigan region from 1990-1996 was 9.1% (11.9% for Emmet County). Growth rates higher than the state average are expected to continue for Northern Michigan as the retirement segment of the population becomes a larger portion of Michigan's population. Little Traverse Township's average population projection (Table 2-2) by the year 2020 is anticipated to increase nearly 80% from 2,069 in 1995 to 3,723 in 2020. The planning and community development goal established in the previous chapter is to, "Generate strong community cooperation to effectively manage development concerns while preserving community character." Achieving this balance between development and sustaining community character is important when developing a set of future land use classes.

Future Land Use Classes

The Future Land Use Map presented in **Figure 8-1** on the following page indicates where each of these classes is located in the Township.

Natural Resource Conservation: Land within this class is considered protected open space within the township. These lands are set aside for undeveloped uses to protect natural and scenic resources considered important for maintaining community character and affording residents the opportunity to enjoy these resources in the future. These lands include the Mackinaw State Forest, Little Traverse Nature Conservancy, and environmentally sensitive lands best maintained in their native, natural state.

Outdoor Recreation: These lands are used to provide more organized public recreation opportunities which may consist of golf courses, boat launches, linear recreational pathways, and/or public parks. Associated facilities within this class include outdoor athletic facilities (ballfields, tennis courts, basketball courts), picnic pavilions, clubhouses, and related facilities serving a variety of activities and events.

Rural/Low Density Residential: This class is designed to preserve rural character while maintaining low residential densities. These areas should be located where utility extensions are unlikely and as a result should not be encouraged. The preservation of open space and rural character is paramount within this classification. Flexible development opportunities including open space/conservation design should be encouraged. Clustering is one method to achieve open space design. This technique relaxes setbacks, minimum lot sizes, and frontages. However, offering this design flexibility requires close attention to the density of the underlying zoning district. When clustering, it is important to ensure the overall density of the parent parcel is not exceeded. However, offering developers a density bonus is an option if there is an overall increase in the amount of open space preserved. Open space refers to lands having few restraints to development. The purpose of keeping these lands open is to protect lands capable of sustaining vegetation, native habitat, and offer opportunities for recreational uses. Those lands which have severe constraints (severe slopes, seasonal high water tables, poor soils) should not be intruded on and should not be calculated in determining overall density within any given zoning district. By examining locations of steep slopes and areas where soils have seasonally high water tables, these lands can be identified.

Figure 8-2 presents a USGS topographic map revealing slope conditions in the Township. Note the steepest slopes (as indicated by the contours in close proximity to each other) are found in the northeast, northwest, southwest portions of the township.

Figure 8-3, the soil condition map, exhibits where soils with seasonal high water tables (within two feet or less of the surface) are found. The southeast and southwest parts of the Township include areas with these high water tables. These soils present little problem to areas currently serviced by sanitary sewer connections including Conway and Beach Road residential areas. However, local sanitary systems will likely have to be mounded and allowable building densities reduced to meet health department standards.

Minimum lot size within this class should not be less than 180,000 square feet or about 4 acres. The greatest width to depth lot ratio permitted should not exceed a 1:4 (specifically, the length of the shortest side of the parcel should never be less than one-quarter of the length of the longest side of the parcel). If the clustering option were considered, the developer may subdivide the parent parcel with a 50-75% density bonus for implementing an open-space preservation technique like clustering. This bonus should only be granted if the surrounding lands involved in the density calculation are permanently protected through open space preservation methods like a conservation easement, through a homeowner's association, and/or a purchase of development rights.

Examples of uses include agricultural operations, outdoor clubs, and low-density residential development.

Rural Neighborhood Residential: This class is designed as a transition between Rural/Low Density Residential and Moderate Density Single-Family Residential classes. Greater densities are associated with this class by establishing a minimum lot size of 85,000 square feet or about two acres. When establishing the width to depth ratios of parcels, the longer side of the parcel should not exceed four times the length of the shorter side. Conservation easements and clustering are also important techniques to consider because each provides an opportunity to keep undeveloped land surrounding development which can also serve as a buffer for residents.

Moderate Density Single-Family Residential: This class allows for more standard residential development on smaller lots. The single-family residential classification is intended to create neighborhoods. Such uses may include golf courses, churches, and day-care facilities. Recommended lot sizes are 45,000 square feet or slightly greater than one acre. Flexible design options should be encouraged to incorporate clustering, a technique also used for open space design. A recommended condition of the cluster option within this class is to require the density of the development to remain within the density specified of the underlying zoning district. Therefore if there is a 20 acre parent parcel a maximum of twenty residences would be permitted provided the remaining space is designated protected, open space through a conservation easement, homeowners association, purchase of development rights, or other means of keeping the balance of land undeveloped in perpetuity.

Recreation Residential: Cottages, seasonal homes, and associated residential uses are members of this category. Generally these activities are present along the waterfronts of Little Traverse Bay and Crooked Lake. Types of residential uses include site condominiums, second homes, private homeowners associations, and resort operations. These uses should be well defined and separated to prevent any interference. The density of development in this class is the highest among all the residential categories in the future land use plan. Most of the water and sanitary utilities offered to Township residents are located in this class and they will likely be necessary for this type of compact growth to continue. Onsite septic fields will be unlikely to service the needs many of these residents due to their close proximity. Further development will likely demand utility extensions to be available.

Multiple Family Residential: This class contains dwellings providing opportunities for affordable housing and alternatives to traditional subdivision development. Permitted uses include apartments, duplexes, and senior care services/facilities. This class also includes multifamily site condominiums, townhouses, and mobile homes. This type of development is encouraged to locate housing in areas well served by an existing transportation network and where utility service connections are provided or are likely to be extended. The undue concentration of any one type of housing in a single area should be discouraged. The density recommendations include 10 units per acre on average depending on the unit type. In addition, where multiple family housing adjoins single family residential units a minimum greenbelt of at least 20 feet should be considered to provide a distinguishable transition between uses.

Multiple-family are preferred in areas requiring transitional land uses. Locating this class on major transportation corridors along commercial uses, especially neighborhood commercial is a means of achieving this transition. Due to the higher density and trip generation potential of multi-family developments, these uses should be situated with suitable ingress and egress options are provided directly to a major thoroughfare or collector street.

Government Service: This class includes government owned locations where services and facilities are provided. Those included are the HSASA, Emmet County Road Commission Complex, Harbor Springs Airport, and Township Hall. This class excludes state forest lands in the Mackinaw State Forest which are located in the Natural Resource Conservation class.

Institutional: This class includes quasi-public and private services and facilities within the Township. All facilities and services relating to religious activities, medical centers, senior care homes, private utilities, and education are included. The location of new elements in this class should be carefully reviewed for their compatibility with surrounding uses and transportation corridors likely to be affected with their associated uses.

Neighborhood Commercial: Suitable commercial activities should be complimentary to neighboring land uses for this category to serve as an appropriate buffer for adjoining noncommercial areas. This category includes portions of the Township which are either presently in a transition to more intense uses or are likely to become more intense during the planning period. While the Township recognizes commercial growth is necessary and beneficial to an extent, this growth should not offset the importance of maintaining the attractiveness and rural character of the residential neighborhoods surrounding these areas. Therefore, appropriate uses should have sufficient buffering

requirements to provide visual screening and to mitigate noise levels from increased traffic and activities associated on the property. Anticipated traffic increases should not necessitate the need for a turning lane, a left-hand turning lane, and/or more than one access drive, all of which are commonly associated with high traffic volume establishments. Only low-impact commercial uses should be proposed within this class. Ideally, uses should conform to the present natural surroundings and preserve existing vegetation to the greatest extent possible. This can be achieved by increasing required landscaping area, maintaining setbacks, minimizing paved area wherever possible and encouraging site design to conform to the lands contours rather than requiring excessive grading and leveling. Activities on the property should be confined within enclosed buildings and should not require any outdoor storage (involving materials exposed to the elements due to the absence of a permanent structure). Parking areas should be limited in size and should be located in the rear yard of the property whenever possible. Suitable commercial uses involving professional services and limited retail should be consistent with these concepts.

General Commercial: This class includes business serving the larger needs of the community and often serves residents outside the Township. General commercial/office uses should be located with access to major thoroughfares including M-119. Examples of these uses include retail centers, strip malls, hotels, health clubs, and related activities.

This class is likely to face excessive curb cuts as additional businesses fill in along primary transportation routes. One option to eliminate this traffic hazard is through the use of access drives. This option will assist the Township to maintain uniform traffic flows while providing suitable access for vehicles entering businesses in this class by requiring increased spacing between drives. This method should be encouraged wherever possible. In addition, lowering the signage heights of properties will provide unobstructed views for motorists and enhance community character rather than creating an urbanized appearance. Landscaping, natural vegetation buffers, and uniform signage requirements will enhance the appearance, convenience, and safety for both the patrons of businesses and township residents.

Industrial/Manufacturing: The Township contains an industrial park and areas for light manufacturing. Activities within this class include the design, assembly, finishing, and packaging of products. Light manufacturing operations are defined as wholesale operations, warehouse facilities, and manufacturing processes involving the prefabrication of materials and activities generally not creating adverse conditions (noise, dust, pollution) for adjoining properties. The main elements of sound industrial site design include: controlled site access, service areas located at the sides and rear of buildings, convenient access, visitor parking and on-site circulation, screening of outdoor storage, work areas, equipment, emphasis on the main building entry and landscaping. Industrial parks require infrastructure involving wider entrances and access roads. Demands on transportation systems also become important. Traffic management design is necessary to manage tractor-trailers, oversize vehicles, and heavy equipment involved in transferring raw materials, work-in-process, and final products. Where industrial uses are adjacent to non-industrial uses, appropriate buffering techniques such as setbacks, screening and landscaping need to be provided. New developments should be designed to preserve existing stands of trees wherever possible. These elements arranged in concert with each other will establish a transition zone to greatly limit interference with other land uses.