



2008

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Planning Commission

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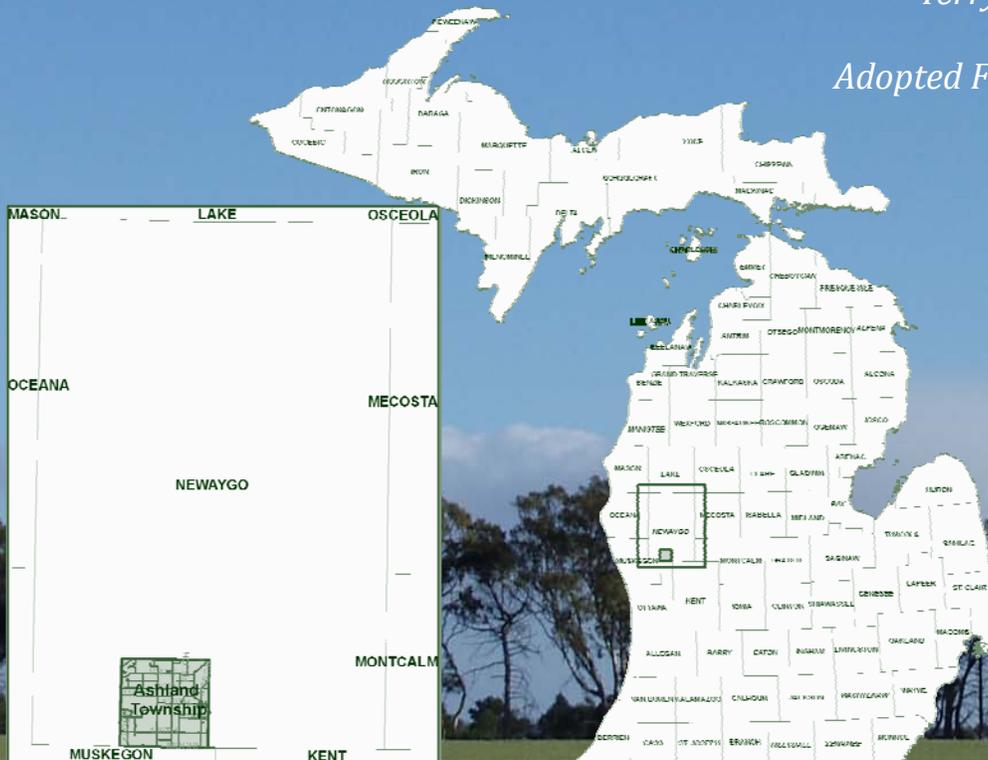
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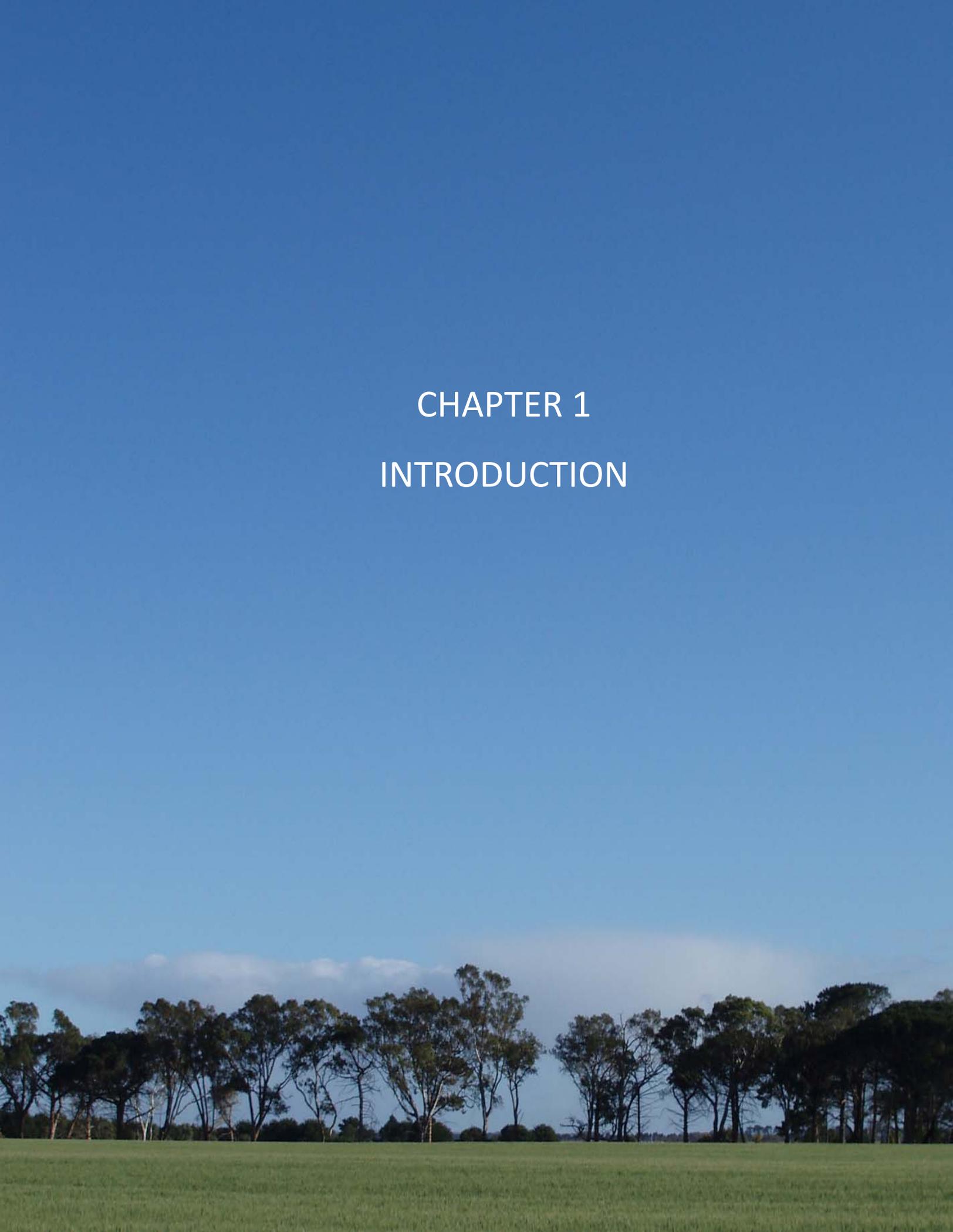
Adopted February 10, 2009



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A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground, a line of trees in the middle ground, and a clear blue sky with some light clouds in the background. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Ashland Township Comprehensive Plan is to provide broad-based guidance to township officials, private developers, and other organizations responsible for development and conservation efforts within Ashland Township. This Plan should be viewed as a useful advisory tool for local government officials and potential developers, as we strive for consensus on the manner in which our Township is developed. Throughout Ashland Township, there are a variety of uses and impacts that may be proposed for any given property; this Plan can be used to determine whether a particular area may be more appropriate than others for certain uses and/or developments.

This Plan benefited greatly from previous development-related plans commissioned by Ashland Township, Newaygo County, and other area municipalities, as well as plans currently in place in other Newaygo County municipalities. Much of the historic data included in this Plan, as well as data related to physical resources have been transplanted from these previous plans when appropriate. In the whole, this Plan includes historical data, current available demographics, existing services and land use information, future land use expectations, and anticipated future service needs. This Plan is expected to provide accurate and adequate information to advise and guide area leaders' efforts to direct Ashland Township into the future, while maintaining the appropriate balance between land development and conservation.

Ashland Township has experienced steady population and development growth since the completion of the Township's last Comprehensive Development Plan in 1981. The Township's elected Board Members and appointed Commissioners recognize the need for strong, guided planning efforts during periods of growth, and accordingly present this Plan to the people of Ashland Township as our effort to preserve this great township for our future generations.

Ashland Township has developed this Plan to help guide future growth within the Township through the year 2030, and to ensure growth demands are met through proper planning. The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a guide for Township officials, residents, property owners, business owners and developers to understand the Township's future growth needs. The Comprehensive Plan will also help the Township implement the necessary regulation and development rules for new development.

Legal Basis for Planning

Ashland Township's Planning Commission began the process of creating a Comprehensive Plan in July 2007. The Township notified Newaygo County that they had begun the planning process around this time. Michigan Act 168 of 1959 (amended in 1987 and 2001) gives Townships the right to create a "basic plan" to guide development and growth within the unincorporated areas of the Township.

The Township Planning Commission is authorized to make and approve a Master Plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the township. As a basis for the plan, the Township Planning Commission may undertake any of the activities outlined below.

- Make inquiries, investigations, and surveys of all the resources of the township.
- Assemble and analyze data and formulate plans for the proper conservation and uses of all resources, including a determination of the extent of probable future needs for the most advantageous designation of lands having various use potentials and for services, facilities, and utilities required to equip those lands.
- Meet with other governmental planning commissions to deliberate.

The Township Planning Commission may make use of expert advice and information which may be furnished by appropriate federal, state, county, and municipal officials, departments, and agencies having information, maps, and data pertinent to township planning. State, regional, county, and municipal officials, departments, and agencies are required to make public information available for the use of the Township Planning Commission, and may furnish such other technical assistance and advice as they may have for planning purposes.

In addition to the basic plan, by a majority vote of the members, the Township Planning Commission may adopt a plan for a geographic area less than the entire unincorporated area of the township if, because of the unique physical characteristics of that area, more intensive planning is necessary. Before adoption of this type of plan, the Township Planning Commission is required to hold at least one public hearing on the plan after giving notice.

In 2006, the Michigan Legislature began overhauling the Township Planning Act and other municipal planning legislation. Act 33 of 2008, the "Michigan Planning Enabling Act" (MPEA) was developed to further guide comprehensive planning in Michigan communities. MPEA improves upon the original 1959 Planning Act by requiring more stringent notification requirements to ensure better intergovernmental coordination, and further requires municipalities to address specific issues. Issues that must be addressed in a community's comprehensive plan starting in September 2008 are provided below.

- An existing-conditions survey and existing land use study
- An examination of future growth over a 20 year period
- Consultation with adjacent local units of government
- Review of transportation infrastructure; including the location of streets
- Review of land use and identification of the various land use categories
- Recommendations to areas in need of redevelopment and the location of blighted areas
- A Zoning Plan
- An implementation element

Although this plan was adopted prior to the requirements of MEPA becoming enforceable, Ashland Township has created this plan to meet the new requirements.

Plan Concepts

This Plan follows a number of basic concepts expected to help guide local planning officials' efforts to direct development and conservation efforts within the Township. The following concepts are incorporated into this plan:

Conservation: Flood prone areas, environmentally sensitive areas, natural beauty areas, and prime agricultural lands in rural areas should not be urbanized. Development in these areas should be limited to avoid negative environmental impacts, and to preserve the agricultural and historical significance of the county.

Development: Urban conservation and development activities should be centered in areas that have the full range of municipal services, including public water, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, telecommunications, and transportation that can adequately serve the present as well as an expanding population.

Public Services: It is not always feasible to extend public utilities to rural areas in order to accommodate new development in undeveloped areas. The availability of public services is a key component to economic development; non-traditional utilities, such as high speed internet and fiber optics are increasingly becoming required for efficient business.

Plan Components

This Plan contains a number of components that describe the current conditions of the county, as well as future projections and expectations. The basic components included in this Plan are as follows:

Township Profile: A discussion of the various facets of the Township; its history, demographics, economy, natural resources, services, and future projections.

General Goals: Goals were established to layout the Plan's philosophies and expectations. The goals are considered long-range and broad-based, and were used to establish the more-strategic objectives that follow.

Land Use Policies: The current status of land use and planning in the township are outlined, and the policies related to development and conservation on both urban and rural areas are discussed.

Component Plans: This Plan also includes smaller, more focused plans that direct important issues like road maintenance and circulation, zoning, and sprawl.

Plan Implementation: Proposals and techniques for the implementation of the Plan are identified. This is an important element of the Plan, as planning efforts are wasted without proper implementation efforts. This component will explore and outline some tools available to the county, its local governments, and the general public to best-implement the Plan.

Planning Process

This Plan followed a basic planning process that contained information-gathering and public input, data evaluation, the formation of goals and policies, and an implementation plan. Each portion of the planning process is outlined below:

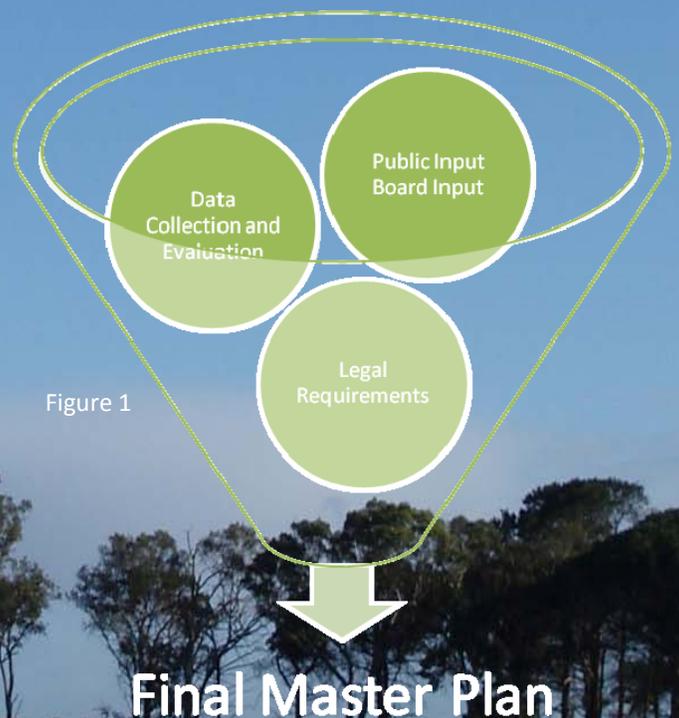
Information Gathering: Data sources such as the United States Census, the United States Geological Survey, local historical societies and libraries, and past local plans were used to gather information pertinent to this Plan. Additionally, information was gathered from area municipalities, healthcare agencies, recreation providers, policing agencies, and educational organizations to collect data on specific current and future needs.

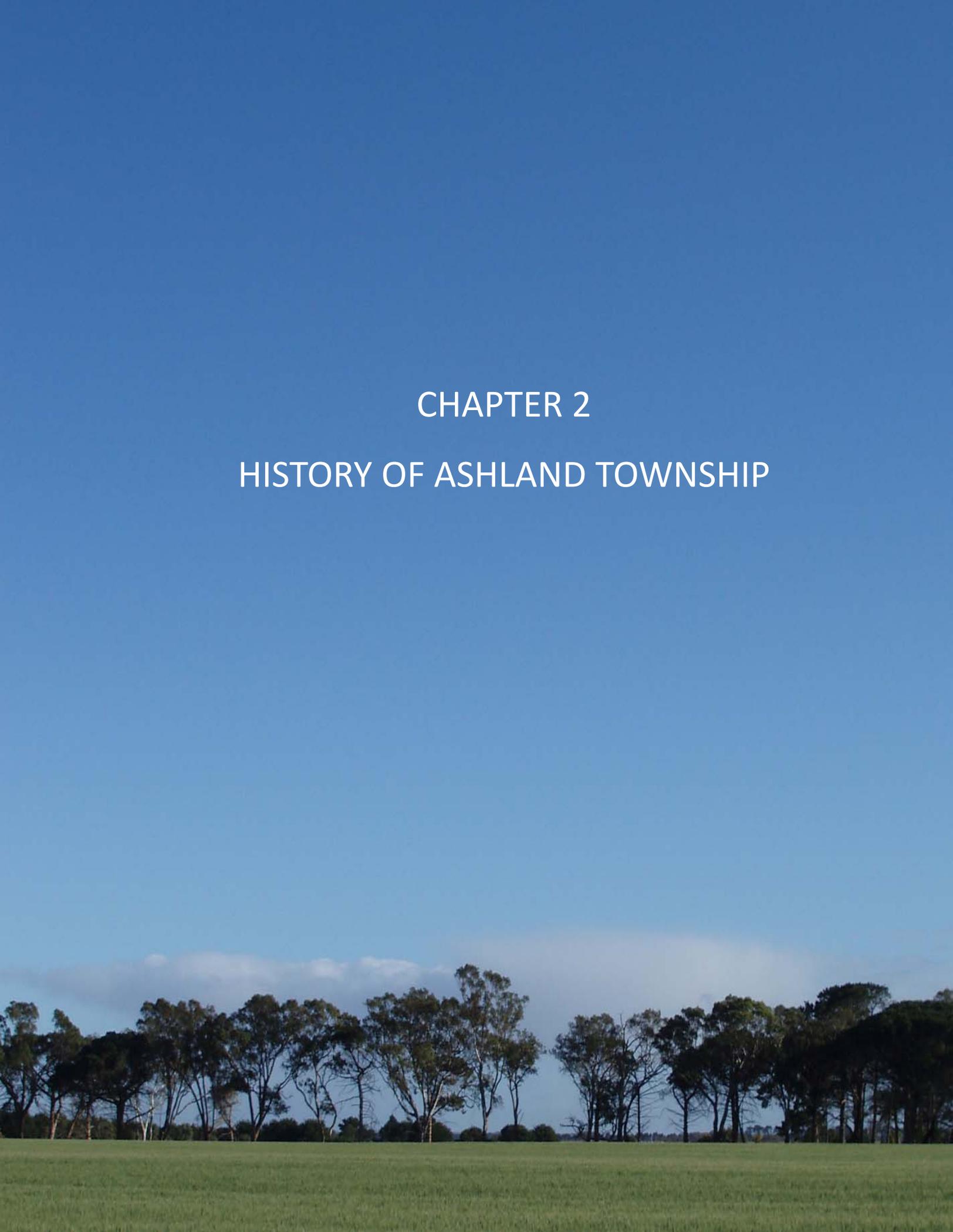
Public Input: A survey was distributed to township residents and businesses via the Township's annual newsletter, and a public hearing was held by the Township Planning Commission on February 9, 2009, to collect comments from the public. The results of these exercises are included in Appendices B and D.

Data Evaluation: Collected data was evaluated by the planning team and inserted in the Plan. Data sets collected relating to demographics were compared with previous trends, and other collected information was analyzed and interpreted to describe the Township.

Formation of Goals and Policies: Following the gathering of data and public input, broad-based goals were established to help guide local planning efforts. Each goal is used to guide a number of specific strategies and policies that, in the end, are expected to assist Township leaders in realizing each of the established goals.

Implementation Plan: A strategy for the implementation of the Plan was established to guide officials' efforts to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the Plan.



A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground, a line of trees in the middle ground, and a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds in the background. The text is centered over the sky.

CHAPTER 2
HISTORY OF ASHLAND TOWNSHIP

HISTORY OF ASHLAND TOWNSHIP

The area that is now Ashland Township, like much of Newaygo County was originally occupied by Native American Tribes; most likely the Ottawa Tribe. The first English settlers began to venture into Newaygo County in 1836, and it is believed that Ashland Township was first settled in 1850, as part of the fast growing Newaygo County lumber industry. The Township was named for all of the ash trees that covered its original landscape.

Ashland Township's first known settlement was located one mile north and one-half mile west of what is now the City of Grant. This initial settlement was rather small, as it contained only a few log cabins. The Township's second Settlement – Ashland Station – was considerably larger and more sustainable. A few pictures of the original Ashland center are shown to the right.

Ashland Township held its first governing meeting on April 2, 1855; it was hosted by Mr. Sullivan Armstrong. The Township's initial officers were Sullivan Armstrong, Ezra Burrill, George Fuller, Joseph Cady, Joseph Henderson, and Joseph Shippy.

In the early 1900s, Ashland Center was considered a very progressive lumber town, and was home to a lumber mill, a shingle mill, and 10+ stores. The population ebbed and flowed with the lumber trades throughout the early 1900s.

Ashland Township's growth since the mid 1800's has led to the formation of one charter city. The Village of Grant was formed in 1893, and was incorporated as a city in the mid 1970s. Grant was initially settled because of its proximity to the railroad line that connected the area to Grand Rapids, and is currently home to the last known wooden railroad water tower in the State of Michigan. The City's original train depot is still a focal-point of the city, currently being used as a local restaurant.



A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground. A line of trees, including several tall, thin trees and some denser foliage, runs across the middle ground. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon.

CHAPTER 3
TOWNSHIP DATA

TOWNSHIP DATA

This section provides data on Ashland Township's current demographic, economic, housing, education, healthcare, environmental, and municipal service characteristics. This section also compares this data to past trends and future expectations to best describe the Township's current status and likely future as it relates to these characteristics.

Demographics

Ashland Township's population has steadily increased since 1960, when 1,231 people resided in the Township. By 1990, the Township's population had grown to nearly 2,000, and by 2000, it stood at 2,570. By 2030, despite the State of Michigan's declining population base, the local population trend is expected to push Ashland Township's residency to approximately 4,000.

Ashland Township is located within Newaygo County, which is considered one of Michigan's fastest growing counties over the past 15+ years. Since 1990, the State has averaged an increase in population of approximately 0.51% per year. Ashland Township and Newaygo County have averaged annual population increases of 2.86% and 2.16% in that same time period, respectively. Although the current housing slump that has put new home construction at a virtual standstill across the State has had a negative impact on growth in the county over the past 18 months, overall, Ashland Township and Newaygo County are expected to rebound and continue its solid growth patterns through 2030; Figure 2 illustrates how Ashland and its immediate neighbors are expected to grow, while Figure 3 illustrates the same data for the

Township Survey results indicate that 70% of respondents listed Ashland Township's rural atmosphere as an important reason why they choose to live in the township.

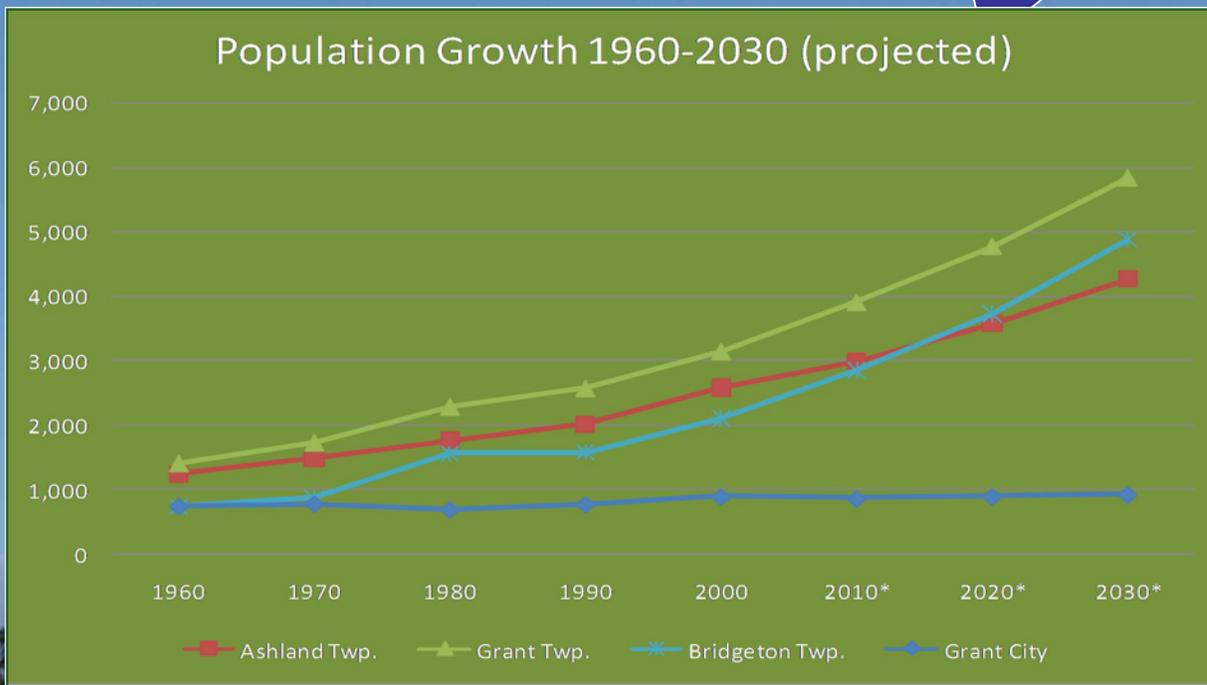
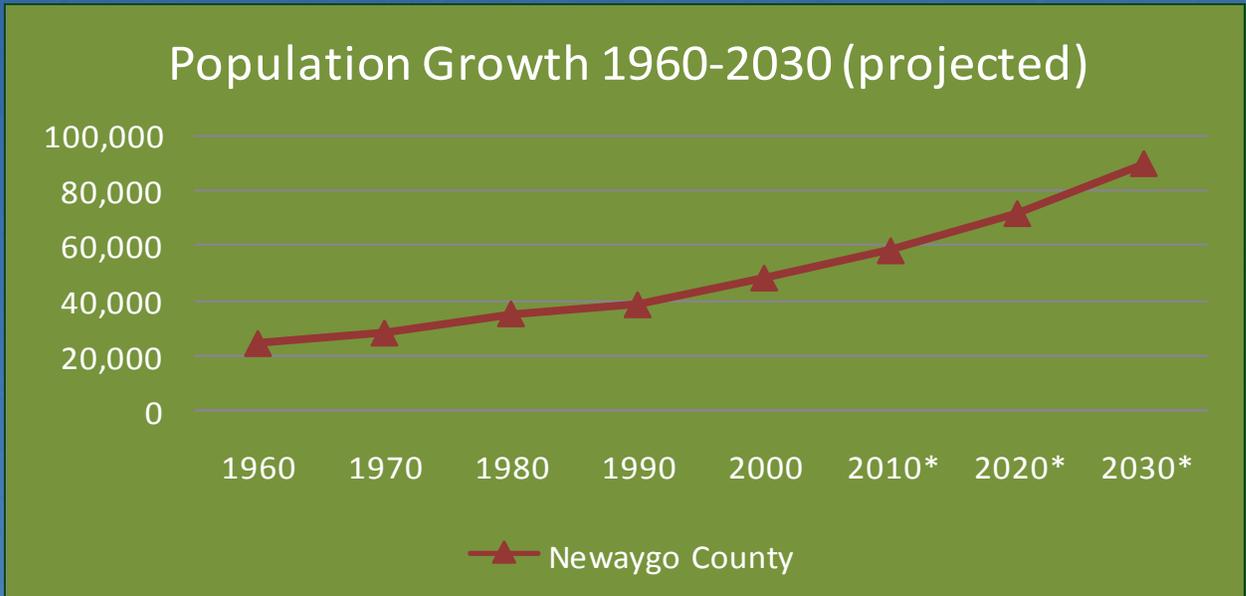


Figure 2 Source: U.S. Census, statistical projections

Figure 3 Source: U.S. Census, statistical projections



Certain areas within the county have been growing at a faster rate than others. The County’s incorporated cities have mostly felt steady growth since 1960, and all four are currently experiencing moderate growth rates. Figure 4 demonstrates the projected growth trend for Newaygo County’s four urbanized cities.

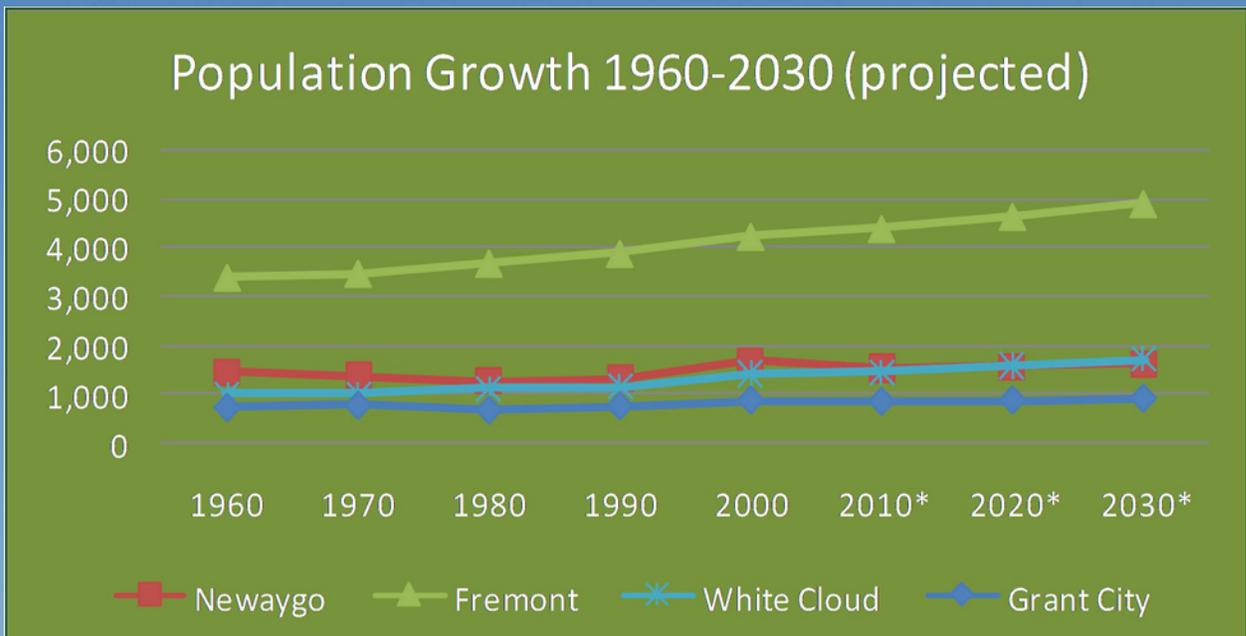
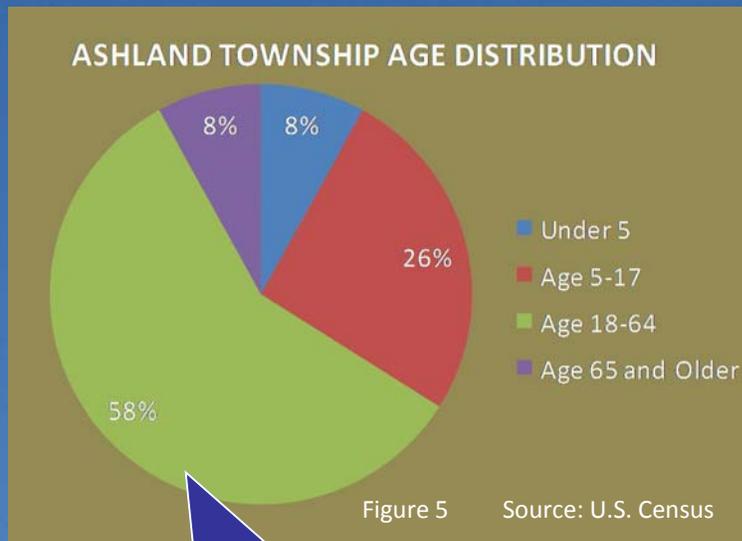


Figure 4 Source: U.S. Census, statistical projections



Ashland Township’s growing population is primarily comprised of individuals between the ages of 21 and 65, as more than 1,500 of the Township’s residents fall into that age range. Just over 200 residents in Ashland Township are 65 or older, and approximately 870 are under 18 years of age; nearly 200 of which are under age five. The Township’s age distribution is very similar to the County’s and the State’s distribution. However, Ashland Township and Newaygo County each have a considerably higher concentration of youths aged five to 18, and a smaller ratio of adults aged 18 to 64 than the State as a whole.



The Township is predominately comprised of Caucasians Americans, but also has segments of Hispanic residents. As is common in rural west-Michigan communities, Ashland Township is 93.5% Caucasian (Newaygo County is 94.8% Caucasian); the State of Michigan is 80.2% Caucasian. The Township’s Hispanic population accounts for 9.4% of the total population, which is greater than the State’s ratio of 3.3%.

The Township is predominately comprised of Caucasians Americans, but also has segments of Hispanic residents. As is common in rural west-Michigan communities, Ashland Township is 93.5% Caucasian (Newaygo County is 94.8% Caucasian); the State of Michigan is 80.2% Caucasian. The Township’s Hispanic population accounts for 9.4% of the total population, which is greater than the State’s ratio of 3.3%.

73% of Township Survey respondents indicated that they were over age 45.

The Township is predominately comprised of Caucasians Americans, but also has segments of Hispanic residents. As is common in rural west-Michigan communities, Ashland Township is 93.5% Caucasian (Newaygo County is 94.8% Caucasian); the State of Michigan is 80.2% Caucasian. The Township’s Hispanic population accounts for 9.4% of the total population, which is greater than the State’s ratio of 3.3%.

A community’s demographics are important in many ways; they affect a number of elements of Ashland Township, including economics, housing, education, recreational opportunities, and healthcare. The remainder of this chapter will explore how these and other important sectors of the Ashland Township community are organized and expected to change in the future.

Economic Information

As a small agricultural-based rural community, Ashland Township has limited resources to direct at economic development. However, Newaygo County has taken on the role of county-wide economic developer, and acts on behalf of Ashland Township in many facets: as many Michigan communities evaluate their economies and explore the efforts and changes that may be necessary to succeed in light of the State’s overall poor economic outlook, Newaygo County is making concentrated efforts to attract and retain businesses, improve the quality of life of the County’s residents, and make appropriate public investments to strengthen the local economy.

The strength of an area’s economy is dependent upon a number of interrelated factors. Population growth, employment rates, income levels, housing values, and other factors collectively describe an area’s economic status. Each of these topics are explored in separate subsections of this plan because their impacts are so wide-ranging and important to the success of the township that they do

not fit cleanly into a simple economic section. The remainder of this section will be dedicated to reviewing the efforts within Newaygo County to broadly affect the area's economy as well as the trends that currently exist within the individual factors that make up our economy.

In 1995, Newaygo County conducted a visioning effort to put together a Strategic Plan for a number of topics believed to be vital to the success of the County. The Plan yielded many goals; one of the most difficult, and most important was to create a private organization dedicated to the coordination of economic activities within the county. In 1999, the Newaygo County Economic Development Office (NCEDO) was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization, whose mission was to create a dynamic environment of economic opportunities for the Newaygo County community.

NCEDO is funded by the Newaygo County Board of Commissioners, a number of local municipalities within the County, the Fremont Area Community Foundation, and a number of private entities interested in promoting economic development efforts within Newaygo County. The NCEDO Board of Directors, comprised of community and business leaders, is guided by four economic development strategies, as outlined below

1. Retain Existing Businesses and Jobs
2. Attract and Grow New Businesses and Jobs
3. Enhance Tourism
4. Expand Awareness of Newaygo County

NCEDO's efforts over the past eight years have been clearly evident throughout the County, fulfilling many of its initial goals and helping strengthen the area economy. Below are some highlights of the first 8 years of NCEDO's existence:

- NCEDO has assisted a number of local jurisdictions with tax incentive and grant programs that have facilitated both private and public investments.
- NCEDO has conducted numerous business retention visits to employers within many of the communities in the county to ensure that their needs as local businesses are being met in Newaygo County.
- NCEDO facilitated the creation of the Newaygo County's first *Convention and Visitors Bureau* to help market the area as a tourist destination. The CVB exists to promote the County as a tourist attraction, and can be accessed by visiting their website: www.newaygocountytourism.com.
- NCEDO assisted the West Michigan Strategic Alliance in their efforts to foster innovation in the workforce. Their efforts resulted in a \$15 Million Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant award.
- NCEDO's 2004 County Profile was awarded a *Goal Advertising Award* by the American Advertising Federation for its high caliber of creative work.
- NCEDO has forged relationships with other well-respected and successful economic development organizations to share ideas, draw on organizational strengths and successes, and partner to strengthen the West Michigan economy.

Concentrated efforts pointed directly at encouraging and facilitating economic development are important to the strength of an area's economy, but an area's economic vitality is also dependent upon a number of other tangible community variables. Variables like property values, quality-of-life services, tourist activities, and employment trends are important indicators of Newaygo County's economic outlook. The remainder of this section will review the current status of these areas and provide information regarding their future projections. In the event that readers are interested in learning more about NCEDO's accomplishments or economic development efforts within Newaygo County, please visit NCEDO's website at www.ncedo.org.

Equalization Trends

The Newaygo County Equalization Department tracks property assessment and value data on properties within the County, and provides that data to the local municipalities. By tracking this information, Ashland Township is able to better understand which areas of the Township are experiencing private investments, and to what extent those investments are adding to the taxable value of the Township, the school systems, and the other taxing entities in the area.

For tax year 2007, the Township's total equalized value (all land, land improvements, and personal property) was \$106.5 Million. This value does not take into consideration any tax exempt properties (government or school-owned buildings, churches, etc.) or any properties that receive

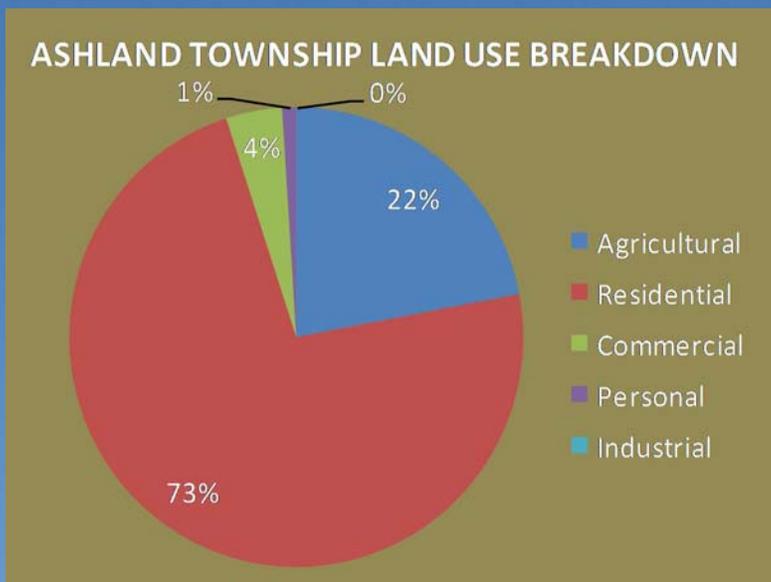


Figure 6 Source: Newaygo County Equalization Report

Industrial Facilities Tax (IFT) Abatements from the State of Michigan; it is comprised of the following infrastructure: Residential (72.80%), Agricultural (21.57%), Commercial (4.29%), Personal Property (1.15%), and Industrial (0.19%). In total, the Township has 1,671 real property parcels and 44 personal property parcels. The above chart illustrates this data.

The Township's assessed value grew by \$5 Million (8.27%) from tax year 2005 to tax year 2006, and by \$3.5 Million (5.35%) from tax year 2006 to tax year 2007. Today's growth rate in Ashland Township is certainly not at the same level as the growth realized in the late 1990s and early 2000s (the Township's value increased by 93.8% from 1999 to 2005, and by 103% from 1998 to 2008), but in comparison to much of the State, the growth is relatively healthy and steady. The State's overall

assessed value growth rate has decreased dramatically since 2001, but both Ashland Township’s and Newaygo County’s have remained relatively stable for the past five years. Ashland Township experienced approximately \$1.07 Million in new construction during calendar year 2007.

Ashland Township is in a unique situation, as it is much less-developed than many other Michigan communities. Therefore, it has been able to avoid much of the high residential and commercial vacancy rates that plague much of the State, and continues to grow its assessed value even as the State unemployment rate remains high and the State Legislature continues to waiver on the structure of the business tax system.

The following is a data analysis of the size and growth trends of the municipalities located in Newaygo County. The analysis is expected to help the readers of this Plan visualize how the growth patterns of the county relate to the county’s geography, and how, if at all, geography may play a role in the growth and development trends of Newaygo County.

The County’s five largest municipalities in terms of assessed value for tax years 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 are as follows (in descending order):

Tax Year 2005	Tax Year 2006	Tax Year 2007	Tax Year 2008
The City of Fremont	Brooks Township	Brooks Township	Brooks Township
Brooks Township	The City of Fremont	The City of Fremont	Croton Township
Croton Township	Croton Township	Croton Township	The City of Fremont
Garfield Township	Garfield Township	Garfield Township	Garfield Township
ASHLAND TOWNSHIP	ASHLAND TOWNSHIP	Grant Township	ASHLAND TOWNSHIP

In recent years, Brooks Township has overtaken the City of Fremont as the County’s largest municipality in terms of assessed value. However, aside from Ashland Township, which has been competing with its neighbor to the east (Grant Township) for fifth place, the composition of the top five has remained relatively unchanged since 2000.

The County’s five fastest-growing municipalities in terms of percentage increase in assessed value (real property only) from tax years 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 are listed in on the following page.



Tax Year 2005	Tax Year 2006	Tax Year 2007	Tax Year 2008
Monroe Township	Merrill Township	Home Township	Goodwell Township
City of Grant	Sheridan Township	City of White Cloud	Lilley Township
Grant Township	Sherman Township	Beaver Township	Bridgeton Township
Croton Township	Croton Township	Garfield Township	Ensley Township
ASHLAND TOWNSHIP	Home Township	City of Newaygo	Big Prairie Township

The County's five fastest-growing municipalities in terms of total dollar increase in assessed value for tax years 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 are as shown below. This list is far different than the top growth rates shown in Table 5. Ashland Township appears in three of the four years, and was 7th in the fourth year.

Tax Year 2005	Tax Year 2006	Tax Year 2007	Tax Year 2008
City of Fremont	Croton Township	Brooks Township	Brooks Township
Croton Township	ASHLAND TOWNSHIP	Garfield Township	Goodwell Township
Brooks Township	Brooks Township	Grant Township	Ensley Township
ASHLAND TOWNSHIP	Sheridan Township	ASHLAND TOWNSHIP	Lilley Township
Grant Township	Ensley Township	Ensley Township	Sherman Township

The remaining subsections of this section will be dedicated to Ashland Township's specific growth areas and current land use trends. While it is very important to track the overall investment and growth rates in the Township, it is also important to examine the types of investments and growth that are being realized.

Residential Growth: Ashland Township realized a 4.43% increase in its residential assessments from 2007 to 2008. A portion of this is accounted for by increases to the assessments of individual properties as is allowed by the State Constitution, not necessarily as a result of new investments. The Township did, however, realize a total of \$2,038,700 in new residential investments (new home construction, additions, upgrades, changes in use, etc.).

In 2005, 33 new homes were constructed in Ashland Township;. This number sharply declined for the calendar year 2006, when 15 new homes were constructed. The 2007 building year held steady with 14 new homes. Over the past three years, 62 new homes were constructed in the Township. In comparison to the three years that preceded the completion of Ashland Township's previous Master Plan (1978-1980), when 24 total homes were constructed and 29 mobile homes were put in place, Ashland Township investors seem to be moving away from pre-manufactured homes and mobile homes, and completing more stick-build homes today.

Commercial/Industrial Growth: Ashland Township's commercial and industrial property totaled \$4,792,900 in assessed value for tax year 2008. Overall, the Township experienced an increase in assessed value for this property category equal to \$79,200 from tax year 2007 to tax year 2008 (1.68%). Industrial assessments were up from 2007 by 0.05%, while commercial property assessments increased by 1.75% during that same period.

Agricultural Growth: Ashland Township's agricultural property totaled \$22,682,200 in assessed value for tax year 2008. This represents an increase of \$75,400 (0.33%) from tax year 2007.

Quality of Life Services

When a person or family decides to move into an area, a number of characteristics are carefully considered before an investment is made. The characteristics desired will certainly vary from family to family, but often center on services and opportunities that add to their "quality of life." For example, some decide to settle in a particular area because of the quality of the schools or the municipal services (parks, streets, etc.). Others choose to move into an area because of the cultural opportunities available, like museums, performing halls, galleries, etc., or because of the proximity of the area to another metropolitan area. The characteristics that make a neighborhood, city, township, or county a desirable place to live, work, or visit are important to the vitality of the community. This section will speak to some of the quality of life services that are available in/near Ashland Township, and ultimately make it an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Fine Arts: The Grant Public School District boasts a new Fine Arts Center that acts as the district's own performing and gathering site, as well as a destination point for speakers, concerts, community events, and special shows. The Grant Fine Arts Center (pictured to the right) seats 790 spectators.

Schools: Ashland Township is serviced by three main public school districts (Grant Public Schools, Newaygo Public Schools, and Fremont Public Schools); the Grant Public School District services the bulk of the Township, and the others service its extreme north and east portions. By and large, each of the Township's school districts is a highly-desirable school district because of their upgraded facilities, superior academic programs, and wide-ranging extracurricular programs.

Figure 7 Grant Fine Arts Center



In 2007, the Michigan Department of Education released its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Grades for all of Michigan’s Public Schools. Notable, six individual Ashland Township schools received “A” grades (the State’s highest grade), and no township schools failed to meet the AYP standards for the year. In 2006, only one area school failed to meet the AYP standards for the year; they subsequently increased their score and met the 2007 standards.

2007 MI Department of Education Adequate Yearly Progress Grades		
School District	School Name	2007 AYP Grade
Fremont Public School District	Daisy Brook Elementary	A
	Fremont Middle School	A
	Pathfinder Elementary	A
Grant Public School District	Grant Primary Center	A
	Grant Middle School	B
	Grant Elementary	A
Newaygo Public School District	Vera Wilsie Elementary	A
	Velma Matson Upper Elem.	B
	Newaygo Middle School	B

In addition to the successful local school districts, the well-funded Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (NCRESA) provides a number of educational services to the Township’s youth that includes mechanical engineering, CAD and GIS courses, engine repair, restaurant management, cosmetology, and many more interesting topics that prepare area students for post-high school employment and higher education. NCRESA also provides services to students with learning disabilities and other special needs.

There is more information on the education resources Ashland Township beginning on page 25 of this Plan.

Parks and Recreation: While Ashland Township provides no Township-owned recreational facilities, Newaygo County as a whole is a dream for all of those who love to experience the outdoors. The County boasts many acres of national forest, a number of great swimming and boating lakes (like Croton Pond, Hardy Pond, Fremont Lake, and Hess Lake). Other area recreation attractions include camping at Pettibone Park (16 campsites), Diamond Lake (52 campsites), Sandy Beach (200 campsites), and Ed H. Henning Park (60 campsites), exploring at the State’s largest desert (located in Big Prairie Township), canoeing or tubing down the beautiful Muskegon River, or visiting one of the many other natural wonders that exist in the county’s landscape. Most county facilities are within 15 minutes drive time of Ashland Township.

Private recreational opportunities located in Ashland Township include Little Sand Lake (52 acres), Chinook’s Campground, and Vic’s Canoes.

Croton and Hardy Ponds are likely the most-visited recreational resources that Newaygo County has to offer. The two ponds are large reservoirs that were formed by Consumers Energy in the early 1900s for the purposes of damming the Muskegon River to produce hydroelectric power (pictured to the right). The Croton and Hardy Ponds stretch for approximately 24 miles and include more than 120 acres of land available for hiking, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the greatness of Newaygo County.

The Dams that support the reservoirs are described in the Archeological and Historic Sites section of this Plan. They are certainly two of Newaygo County's greatest recreational and tourism assets.

Newaygo County also boasts access to the *North Country Trail*, which stretches more than 4,600 miles, the *Loda Lake Wild Flower Sanctuary*, which features 150 different species of plant life, and the *Coolbough Nature Areas*, where visitors can explore wetlands, prairies, and an old-growth oak and pine forest. Other recreational areas of interest include *High Roll-away Scenic Park*, the *Big Prairie Pine Forest*, and the *Steven S. Wessling Observatory*.

Ashland Township, Grant Township, and the City of Grant adopted, in 2007, a five-year Master Parks and Receptions Development Plan. The Plan focused on the recreational services offered by the City of Grant and the Grant Public Schools that Township residents are encouraged to enjoy.

The recreational assets of Ashland Township and Newaygo County are further discussed beginning on page 29 of this Plan.

Shopping: Newaygo County has a number of shopping districts. Most of the retail traffic is directed to the downtown areas of the county's core cities; downtown Fremont and Newaygo are the most-popular downtown destinations. However, suburban retail outlets in the townships that surround our cities are becoming very popular. Large national retailers are located just outside of Fremont and Newaygo, and the development that surrounds those retail centers include dining, grocery stores, discount retailers, farm suppliers, and hardware stores. In addition, sprinkled throughout the county are small farm markets and stores, where residents and visitors can purchase fresh produce, dairy products, and other locally-produced goods. The City of Grant offers limited retail amenities.

Figure 8 Hardy Hydro-Electric Dam



Proximity to Large Cities: Newaygo County is relatively rural in comparison to many of Michigan’s counties. While Newaygo County offers many of the amenities that the typical Ashland Township family needs on a daily basis (groceries, retail, entertainment, recreation, etc.), sometimes the area residents need to travel out of the county for work, shopping for specific items, dining out, etc. Accordingly, it is important to some that the township’s residents and visitors have access to the amenities afforded in larger cities. Much of Ashland Township is within ½ hour driving time of Grand Rapids and/or Muskegon, whose metropolitan areas boast more than 1 Million residents. It is convenient for County residents to have access to the Cities of Muskegon and Grand Rapids to meet their daily needs. Ashland Township’s proximity to other area Cities is displayed in Table 8.

Approximate Distance from Ashland Township

Kalamazoo	75 Miles
Lansing	105 Miles
Detroit	185 Miles
Chicago, IL	210 Miles
Indianapolis, IN	280 Miles
Cleveland, OH	335 Miles

Tourism

With the recent merger of the Newaygo County Tourism Council and the Newaygo County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Newaygo County is now better equipped to attract visitors to its communities. Tourism is an important aspect to many west-Michigan communities, as this part of the State is widely considered to be an attractive and affordable destination for both in-state and out-of-state travelers.

As an economic factor, tourism-related activities pump more than \$15 Million into Newaygo County’s economy. Some of the major tourist attractions in the area are the two hydro-electric dams, the natural and man-made waterways, and the various campgrounds and hotels that have been established throughout the area. In addition to the travelers that specifically seek Newaygo County as a destination point, many others visit the community as a stop in their otherwise larger vacation trip. Newaygo County’s proximity to US 131 and M-37, two major thoroughfares that connect the more-populated regions of Michigan to the vacation areas of the north, provides traffic into the county that otherwise may not have traveled into the area; the latter of which bisects a portion of Ashland Township. Ashland Township’s Little Sand Lake is home to a number of seasonal cottages and its public access areas on the Muskegon River attract campers, boaters, swimmers, rafters, and fishermen throughout the summer.

Ashland Township’s two main tourist destinations are the *Chinook Campground* and the areas along the Muskegon River that are popular for canoeing, tubing, fishing, and swimming.

A Tourism Profile of Newaygo County, which was completed in 2001, is included in Appendix D.

Employment

Accurate and up-to-date data specific to Ashland Township employment is limited. Accordingly, data collected on Newaygo County as a whole will be used throughout this section as a indicator of Ashland Township's overall employment demographics.

Many different factors affect an area's employment sector and overall job market. Social demographics like age, educational attainment, and experiences of the available workforce, geographical factors like the location of available employees, and other factors, like the overall concentration of working-age adults, each play key roles in the health and direction of an area's employment capabilities. These factors will be discussed at length throughout this portion of the Plan.

As of 2000, Ashland Township's labor force consisted of approximately 1,250 people (69.4% of the total population). The US labor force comprises 63.9% of its total population. Ashland Township's and Newaygo County's large concentration of working-age adults is a strong indicator of the area's ability to produce the appropriate quality and quantity of workers required to fill the employment needs of area businesses. The following table shows the county's labor force and employment figures of Newaygo County from 2002 through 2006.

Newaygo County	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Civilian Labor Force	21,200	21,925	22,514	23,356	24,305
Employment	19,275	19,700	20,668	21,612	22,774
Unemployment	1,925	2,225	1,847	1,743	1,531
Unemployment Rate	9%	10.2%	7.9%	7.5%	6.3%

The civilian labor force has grown steadily since 2002; during that same period, the unemployment rate has dropped by more than two percentage points. This indicates that although the labor force is growing, the availability of jobs for working-age residents is keeping pace adequately. According to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, the State of Michigan currently has the nation's second-highest unemployment rate (7.8% as of January 31, 2008); this is markedly higher than the current rate in Newaygo County (5.9% as of November 30, 2007). Relative to the State of Michigan, Newaygo County seems to be better-positioned to provide employment to its workforce. It is important to note that 47% of the Newaygo County labor force works outside of the county's borders; 4% work from home, and the remaining 49% work at jobsites within the County.

Although Newaygo County continues to maintain a solid employment base, it also continues to be considered a largely low- and moderate- income area according to the United States Department of Commerce. The county's household income trends are provided in the following table:



Households by Household Income - Ashland Township/Newaygo County	Ashland Township	Newaygo County
Under \$15,000	109	1,211
\$ 15,000 to \$ 24,999	99	1,545
\$ 25,000 to \$ 34,999	109	1,737
\$ 35,000 to \$ 49,999	195	2,687
\$ 50,000 to \$ 74,999	219	3,362
\$ 75,000 to \$ 99,999	30	1,684
\$100,000 to \$149,999	41	969
\$150,000 to \$249,999	8	202
\$250,000 to \$499,999	8	59
\$500,000 and Over	0	5

Income generated from specific sectors of the Newaygo County economy from 2002 to 2005 is outlined below.

County Personal Income (In Thousands of Dollars)	2002	2003	2004	2005
Farm earnings	7,224	9,105	12,722	13,451
Nonfarm earnings	448,890	467,879	493,268	512,869
Private earnings	343,322	357,846	379,766	395,052
Forestry, fishing, related activities	0	0	0	0
Mining	0	0	0	0
Utilities	0	0	0	0
Construction	25,850	25,005	26,402	28,616
Manufacturing	117,565	117,778	118,436	130,355
Wholesale trade	0	9,923	0	0
Retail Trade	37,755	38,225	42,270	44,441
Transportation and warehousing	9,346	0	11,237	11,830
Information	2,465	2,313	8,798	1,370
Finance and insurance	21,711	23,454	25,137	26,601
Real estate and rental and leasing	10,813	10,469	12,763	14,030
Professional and technical services	18,830	19,644	0	0
Government and government enterprises	105,568	110,033	113,502	117,817

Educational attainment is also an important factor in analyzing an area’s employment base. The educational attainment trend for Ashland Township and Newaygo County residents is demonstrated below.

Educational Attainment (2000)	Ashland Township	Newaygo County
Population 25+ Years	1,503	31,665
Less than 9th Grade	94	2,078
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	227	4,660
High School Graduate	674	12,765
Some College, No Degree	285	6,628
Associate Degree	105	1,921
Bachelor's Degree	78	2,435
Graduate or Professional Degree	40	1,178

Overall, more than 21% of Ashland Township residents over the age of 24 have not received their high school diploma. This is compared to the county rate of 21%, the State rate of 12.8%, and the national rate of 13.9%. These figures are from the 2000 Census. As the 2010 Census approaches, community leaders expect to see the local high school and college graduation rates rise closer to the national average.

Total employment within Ashland Township in 2000 was nearly 2,000. In Newaygo County in 2005, total employment equaled more than 17,000. Most of the local employment is made up of wage and salary employment, as opposed to proprietorships. The vast majority of the employment for Ashland Township and Newaygo county for these years is a result of non-farm employment.

Employment By Industry (Number of Jobs)	Newaygo County	Ashland Township
Total employment	17,246	1,195
Wage and salary employment	12,102	1,085
Proprietors employment	5,144	110
Farm employment	1,059	77
Nonfarm employment	16,187	1,118
Private employment	13,403	1,104
Government and government enterprises	2,784	91

Agriculture: Agriculture-related industries have always been a staple in Ashland Township's and Newaygo County's economies. A quick drive through the rural county should leave no doubt in an observer's mind that agriculture is an important economic driver.

In terms of total employment, Newaygo County's agriculture sector is actually shrinking at the same time farm-related earnings have increased by 87% (from 2002 to 2005). In 2005, farm earnings equaled almost \$13.5 Million; this was up from \$7.2 Million in 2002. During this same period, employment in the farm sector fell from 1,079 in 2002 to 1,059 in 2005. This likely speaks to increases in efficiencies and productivity in the agriculture sector that have allowed farmers and other employers to reduce workforce while increasing outputs and profits.

Manufacturing: Ashland Township has very few jobs that fit the manufacturing definition. However, Newaygo County has a reasonable strong and stable manufacturing sector. While the State of Michigan has been losing manufacturing jobs an alarming rate, Newaygo County has been able to avoid major plant closures and job losses. In 2002, the County's manufacturing sector produced \$117.5 Million in wages; that number rose to \$130 Million in 2005 (10% increase).

Other

Newaygo County's employment levels also feature a large concentration in the construction, service, healthcare, and retail trades, as well as the government employment sector. Proprietorships and entrepreneurial ventures provide more than 5,000 jobs in Newaygo County.

Housing

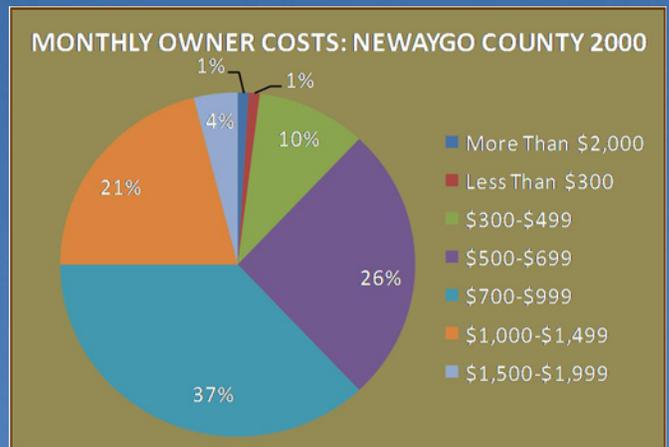
Newaygo County Community Services Center for Nonprofit Housing recently contracted with Gourdie-Fraser, a municipal consulting firm, for the development of a Housing Needs Assessment & Development Strategy for Newaygo County. This document was utilized to complete this section on Ashland Township's housing supply. This information is believed to be the most accurate and up-to-date, as it was mostly acquired via US Census 2000 data; the next full census will not be undertaken until 2010.

In 2000, Ashland Township had 927 housing units; 77% of which were single-family, detached units, 22% of which were mobile homes, and the remainder of which were multi-family units, boats, or recreational vehicles.

As of 2000, 26.7% of the Township's housing units were less than 10 years old and 29.4% were between 10 and 30 years old; this speaks to the growth patterns of the county from 1990 to 2000.

Information presented in Census 2000 indicated that 89.2% of the township's housing units were owner-occupied; the State of Michigan average is 74%. Grant Township features Newaygo County's highest rate of owner-occupied houses (91%), while the City of White Cloud featured the highest rate of renter-occupied units (42%).

Only 0.4% of Newaygo County's housing stock was considered to be 'substandard' in 2005; meaning that it lacked either complete plumbing or complete kitchen facilities. The City of Grant contained no substandard housing, as did Ashland, Goodwell, Sheridan, and Troy Townships.



As of 2000, the State of Michigan's housing stock featured mobile homes at a rate of 6.5%; Newaygo County featured mobile homes at a rate equal to 23.8%. Ashland Township featured mobile homes as a rate of 22.0%. The lowest concentration in Newaygo County is found in Sheridan Township (0.9%), and the highest concentration is found in Big Prairie Township (55.0%). Sheridan Township is the only Newaygo County municipality currently below the State of Michigan's average rate.

The median monthly costs for all housing units in Newaygo County with a mortgage equaled \$797 county-wide. This was highest in Ensley Township (\$924) and lowest in Norwich Township (\$589). The County median is substantially lower than the State of Michigan median (\$972). Ashland Township's median monthly housing costs for home owners with a mortgage is more than \$1,000 per month.

The monthly costs drop dramatically for housing units without mortgages. The State median is \$288 per month, while the Newaygo County median is \$246 per month.

County-wide rental costs average under \$450 per month; the municipality with the highest median monthly rent is Dayton Township (\$550), and the municipality with the lowest is the City of Grant (\$340). The State of Michigan median is \$546 per month.

As of 2000, the combined vacancy rate for owner-occupied and rental housing units in Ashland Township was 11.1%; this is greater than the national average of 9.0%.



Education

Ashland Township and Newaygo County are fortunate to be served by a number of highly-respected educational institutions. There are five main public school districts, one small district, six non-public schools, and the Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency located in the county. The public school districts located in Newaygo County that services students in the K-12 curriculum are listed below

Newaygo County School Districts (2007)

District/School Name	Enrollment	Status
NCRESA	Pre K-12	Public
Fremont Public	K-12	Public
Grant Public	K-12	Public
Newaygo Public	K-12	Public
White Cloud Public	K-12	Public
Hesperia Public	K-12	Public
Big Jackson School	K-6	Public
Fremont Christian	K-8	Private
Providence Christian	9-12	Private
Cornerstone Christian	K-8	Private
Grant Christian	K-8	Private
St. Michaels	K-8	Private
Fremont Seventh Day Adventist		Private

At the college level, Baker College has a program that operates in Fremont. At this location, the college offers undergraduate programs in business, education, computers, engineering, health sciences, and human services. Graduate programs are also offered in business, occupational therapy, and information systems. Courses are available on campus and online.

Aside from Baker College, Newaygo County residents have access to colleges and universities in Kent, Muskegon, and Mecosta Counties. Grand Valley State University, Ferris State University, Western Michigan University-Grand Rapids Campus, Muskegon Community College, Grand Rapids Community College, the University of Phoenix, and other institutions are available within reasonable driving distance of Newaygo County. And with the proposed expansion of Michigan State University's Medical School and the Thomas M. Cooley School of Law into the Grand Rapids Community, Newaygo County is well positioned to access the resources of the State's best higher-educational institutions.

Healthcare

Gerber Memorial Health Services (GMHS) is Newaygo County's primary health care provider. Their facilities include a 77-bed not-for-profit community hospital that offers a complete range of basic medical services. GMHS also provides a home health care program, internal medicine services, pediatrics, women's health services, rehabilitation and life wellness programs, and cancer, diabetes, and occupational medicine services. GMHS was established in 1918, and is the second largest employer in the county.

Family Healthcare operates facilities in White Cloud and Grant. Their Grant facility is dedicated to servicing low income, uninsured, underinsured, and insured patients. They offer services on a sliding fee scale. Services include general practitioner, pharmacy, dental, behavior health, and other basic health services. The Grant facility is a great benefit to Ashland Township residents, as it brings affordable, state-of-the-art health care to the area.

In 2006, Newaygo County began administration of a prescription drug card program. This program is in cooperation with the National Association of Counties, and is designed to provide prescription drug discounts to county residents. There are no fees for the program, and the cards are available to County residents at a number of locations throughout the County. Ashland Township residents can qualify for this service based on income.

Environment

An overview of Newaygo County's environment takes into consideration a number of resources, including climate information, natural and recreational resources, and solid waste and recycling needs/abilities.

Climate

In general, Newaygo County's climate is typical of a West Michigan community. The County fully experiences all four seasons, and experiences an average daily temperature of less than 30 degrees during the coldest months and an average daily temperature of more than 80 degrees during its warmest months.

Newaygo County experiences significant amounts of rainfall and snowfall each year, 32 inches of rainfall and 71 inches of snowfall, annually.

Because the area fully experiences all four seasons and receives adequate precipitation, the County's realizes a long growing season of 128 days; this is significant to the County's many agricultural-related businesses, as well as to private farmers. Ashland Township averages eight days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit and 16 days below zero degrees Fahrenheit each year.

Soils

It is important to understand the soil compositions of an area; especially in an area that relies on agriculture and tourism as a driver in the local economy. This is because some areas are better suited than others for development; drainage, soil stability, slope, etc. all affect whether or not an area represents an appropriate development site. Conversely, some areas are more appropriate than others for agricultural uses; converting those lands for development from agricultural uses may severely affect the area's ability to produce agricultural products.

Newaygo County contains eight district soil types. Ashland Township's large agriculture-based economy requires a focus on soil composition as it relates to agricultural soil suitability. Soil in the Township is generally divided into three categories: prime, fair, and poor. Currently, Ashland Township has approximately 8,340 acres of Prime Farmland, approximately 2,650 acres of fair Farmland, and approximately 625 acres of Poor Farmland. (source: 1981 Ashland Township Plan for Future Land Use.

Ashland Township's Soil Map is included in this document's Map Suite .

Water and Wetland Resources

The surface water and ground water resources of Ashland Township are plentiful. Much like the rest of Newaygo County, Ashland Township hosts multiple types of wetlands. There are three types of wetlands within the Township, as indicated on the attached wetlands map and further discussed below:

Lacustrine wetlands are located in and around the three lake areas within the Township. Although lake areas are popular for new development, the proper measures need to be taken to ensure plant and animal species that rely on lacustrine wetland areas are not adversely affected by the new development. The State already has buffering requirements, as does the Township's zoning ordinance. The Township should work to allow responsible recreational use of undeveloped lake areas, while preventing the destruction of lacustrine habitats.

Palustrine wetland habitats are scattered throughout the Township and may be the most difficult type of wetland to protect. The provided Wetlands map will help the Township understand on a property-by-property basis where wetlands exist. Thus, if development is proposed on these properties, the Township can ensure the proper County and State mitigation requirements are met. Also, properties with large wetlands or high concentrations of wetland areas are ideal for preservation.

Riverine wetlands are located along the Muskegon River and the larger stream areas throughout the Township. The Township already requires a buffer along the "River District". However, based on the Wetlands map, the river district may need to be extended and/or buffers across other waterways may be necessary. The Township should also ensure the proper State guidelines are met for properties containing riverine wetland areas.

Little Sand Lake, Blood Lake, and Blanche Lake are the Townships three natural lakes, while the Muskegon River is present in the Township's northwest sections, and a number of streams and drains wind throughout the remainder of the Township's geography. The Wetlands Map on the following page shows the Townships current wetland resources.

Protecting these important Township assets is a top priority of Ashland Township and the State of Michigan. The State of Michigan is known throughout the country as an *outdoor wonderland*; with its many inland lakes, rivers, and streams, Ashland Township is a true reflection of this reputation. The Township's beautiful natural resources are very sensitive environmental assets. Events like agricultural nutrient runoff, irresponsible recreational use, and sprawl development are a few issues that are known to negatively affect these natural resources, and even lead to environmental problems and water quality issues. Limiting potential problems at the local-level is the best solution to ensure Ashland Township's natural resources - specifically, its waterways - are available and enjoyable for years to come.

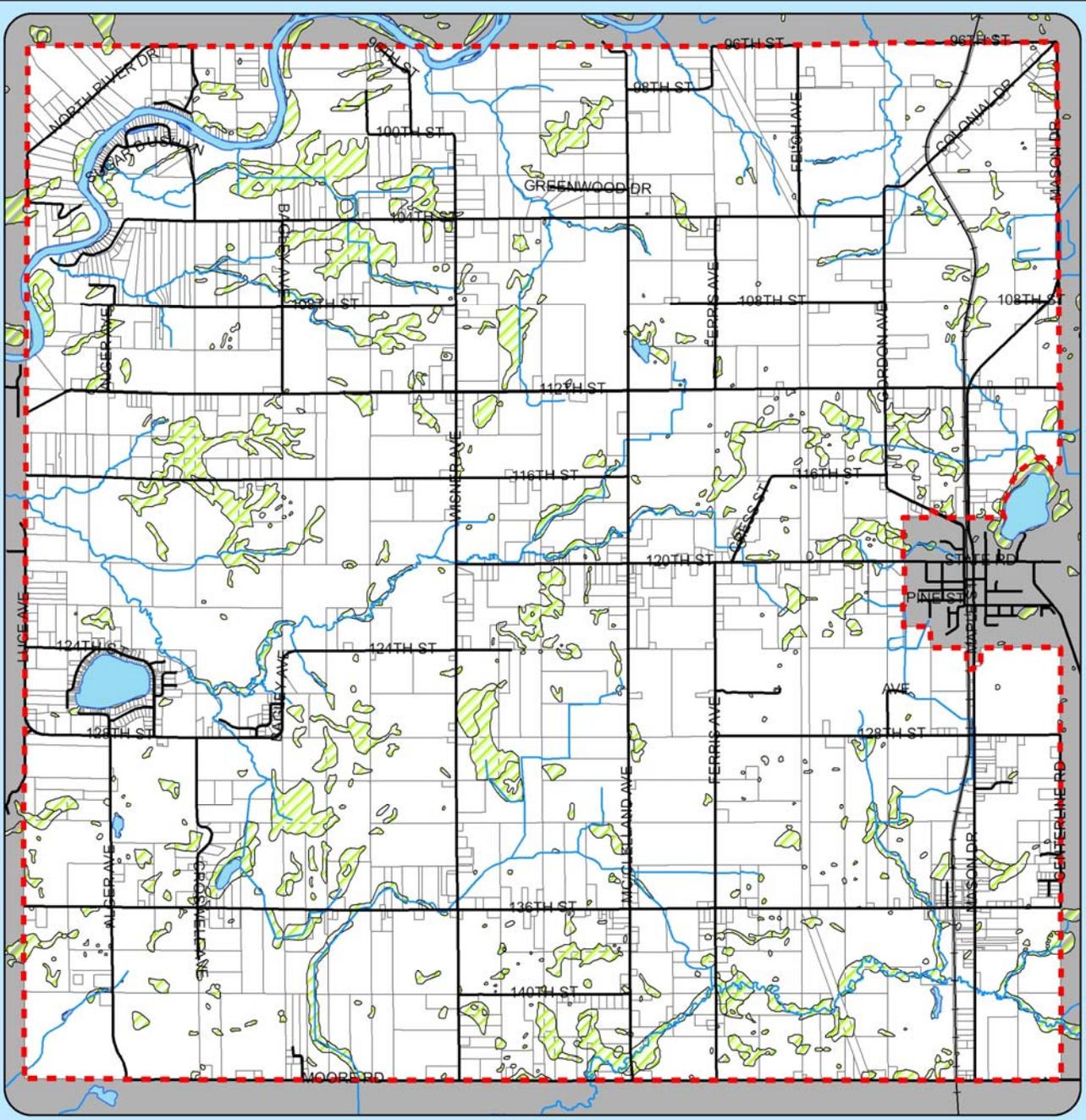
The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has developed a set of water quality standards to be applied to waterways throughout the State of Michigan. In addition, the DEQ is attempting to discern water quality status of the State's surface waters and develop methods to obtain the assigned water quality standards. Along with Michigan's legal requirements and standards, the State is also bound by the Federal Clean Water Act, which requires the State to recognize issues in its water ways and to develop a Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) plan for discharging nutrients into its waterways.

Within Ashland Township, the Muskegon River, Blanche, Blood and Sand Lakes, as well as several creeks are affected by the State's water quality standards. The sections below discuss various water quality issues and how to best balance future development with environmental standards.

The 2008 Michigan Water Quality Report, which was developed by the DEQ, discusses water quality and containment issues for inland lakes, rivers, and streams. The DEQ report also discusses how water quality issues relate to certain endangered or threatened species. At the time this plan was adopted, all Michigan lakes are under a statewide fish consumption advisory for high mercury levels.

The three ways Ashland Township can help support water quality at the local level is to require the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for non-point source stormwater runoff, define and limit development in wellhead protection areas, recognize and cap abandoned wells, and ensure that the proper State permits are sought prior to any new development.





-  Parcels
-  Lacustrine
-  Palustrine
-  Riverine



Ashland Township, MI 2008 Master Plan Wetlands

Sources:
Hydrography, NWI & County Boundaries -
Michigan Center for Geographic Information
Parcels, Roads & Railroads -
Newaygo County Geographic Information Systems



Non-point source runoff, or storm runoff, can lead to pollutants entering the Township's surface waters. The DEQ released a draft non-point source runoff report with BMP implementation methods in December 2007. This should be reviewed by the Township to help the local officials better understand the potential impacts of runoff.

Currently, the Township does not provide potable water to the public. Without a main well or wells, wellhead protection is difficult. However, the individual well systems should all pull from the same aquifer. Some areas, called excellent recharge areas, are better for allowing recharge of the groundwater system. It is the Township's best interest to prevent certain types of development in excellent recharge areas. It may be expensive to determine where excellent recharge areas exist, but grant monies and technical assistance may be available from the State of Michigan.

Solid Waste and Recycling

In 1999, Newaygo County contracted with the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission to produce a Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan for the County. The Solid Waste Management Plan determined three goals to be the focus of the county over the next 10 years.

1. Establish and maintain an integrated solid waste management system which provides for the protection of public health and safety.
2. Build an educated public where citizens are informed about and understand solid waste management issues and concerns, as staffing allows.
3. Maintain, support, and expand recycling programs and facilities.

The Solid Waste Management Plan provides an outline of all known existing solid waste resources (landfills, transfer stations, processing plants, etc.), including information on size, location, capacity, and life expectancy of each of the facilities; it also provides a procedure to follow when considering the creation of *new* solid waste facilities in Newaygo County. Additionally, it provides a summary of any known problems and deficiencies with the existing solid waste system, examines how projected growth and land use patterns will affect the current system, and suggests alternative measures to address the current deficiencies and meet the anticipated future needs of the County.

Requests for additional information on the specific objectives of the 1999 Solid Waste Management Plan, and the individual datasets used to determine its recommendations may be directed to the County Administration or the County Drain Commissioner's Office. A copy of the plan can be obtained from either County Department.

Ashland Township is home to one solid waste transfer station.

The concept of recycling and reusing discarded products is directly related to the County's Solid Waste Plan. So, in 2004, a non-profit organization was formed to help address the recycling needs of Newaygo County. *Recycling for Newaygo County* was formed as part of a collaborative effort between the Newaygo County MSU Extension and the Newaygo County Board of Commissioners to provide recycling services to the area residents and businesses and also to educate the public on the importance of recycling. Ashland Township residents can access any of *Recycling for Newaygo County's recycling drop off stations; there is currently one locate on the campus of the Grant Public Schools. The Ashland Township Board makes an annual contribution to Recycling for Newaygo County's efforts to provide recycling services to area residents.*

Recreation

In January 2007, the Ashland Township Board, in cooperation with the City of Grant and Grant Township, approved a joint Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The focus of the Plan was to direct local resources to the facilities owned and operated by the City of Grant and the Grant Public Schools, and to encourage Township residents to utilize the City's and School's public facilities in lieu of developing new facilities in either of the rural townships.

The City of Grant operates Blanche Lake Park, the Ryan Benson Skate Park, and the Grant Community Center, while the Grant Public Schools operate a number of on-campus play structures, play fields, and sports courts. The Grant Public Schools also provide a public fitness center to all residents within the school district's boundaries; most Ashland Township residents qualify for the free membership.

In addition to the Township's efforts to provide services, Newaygo County provides a number of recreational opportunities within the county that are available to Ashland Township residents. The County's 2006 Master Parks and Recreation Plan outlines the services available and the future goals of their Recreation Department.

Municipal Services

Public Safety

The Residents of Ashland Township are serviced by two main police forces and a volunteer-based fire department. The Newaygo County Sherriff's Department patrols all aspects of the county, including Ashland Township, as does the Michigan State Police. The City of Grant provides emergency coverage to the Township on an as needed basis through a mutual aid agreement with the County Sherriff's Office. Life EMS, an emergency service and transportation provider, is located in the City of Grant.

The County Sherriff's Department recently entered into a lease agreement with the City of Grant to house four Deputies and one Sergeant in the Grant Police Department. This is expected to make the Sherriff's Department more accessible in the southern portion of the county, and ultimately decrease response time in emergency situations in townships like Ashland.

Overall, the Sherriff's Department provides traffic enforcement, accident reconstruction, marine patrols, a dive and rescue team, county parks patrol, alcohol enforcement, and a mounted division. The Road Patrol Team is responsible for daily patrol of the county, while the volunteer Sherriff's Posse provides security coverage for special events, crime scenes, plane crashes, manhunts, floods, drowning events, forest fires, roadblocks, and evacuations.

The township features a volunteer fire department, which is a result of Ashland Township, Grant Township, and the City of Grant combining their resources to form an inter-jurisdictional department. In addition, most of this department provides First Responder services for medical emergencies that arise within the three municipalities.

Newaygo County provides dispatch services for the entire county. The County Central Dispatch office provides 911 services to all policing jurisdictions 24 hours per day. This service is funded through a surcharge on phone lines in the County.

Transportation

The Townships road system is primarily serviced by the Newaygo County Road Commission through State of Michigan Act 51 monies generated by the State Gas Tax. The Township also levies a special millage to provide additional funding for the maintenance of it's local roadways.

The movement of people and goods is an important aspect of all growth plans. The transportation element examines the existing transportation infrastructure and any deficiencies that may exist

Next, the relationship between land use, future growth and necessary improvements to the transportation system will be examined. If necessary, improvements to the transportation system will be recommended and funding sources will be discussed.

The Township hopes to realize its future vision for transportation needs – safe streets to walk, bike and drive, and has established the following transportation-related goals and objectives”

1. Protect Sensitive Areas

Limit impervious surfaces in sensitive areas.

Maintain the character of rural areas without jeopardizing safety.

2. Find the necessary resources to maintain the existing street infrastructure

Create developers agreements that allow developers to pay for roadway improvements.

Seek out grant money where applicable.

Determine the likeliness repairs will be necessary and forecast the budget far enough in advance to make said repairs.

Review the most recent State and County road repair plans and repair programs.

3. Provide safe access for pedestrians to recreational areas and employment centers.

4. Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation with the State’s access management program to preserve M-37 while providing necessary ingress and egress to future businesses along the roadway.

Ashland Township is north-south accessible via Michigan Route 37 and County Road B-35. East-west access is possible through the City of Grant via West 120th Street. A simple grid system is setup which creates easy connectivity throughout the Township and into the neighboring counties and municipalities.

The initial and most essential step in developing balanced transportation plan that addresses future growth is the classification of the function of streets indicating the service they were designed to provide. Ashland’s roadway system consists of a combination of “collectors” and local streets. The various functional classifications are defined as follows:

Major Roads – Michigan Route 37 (M-37) is classified as a minor arterial since it provides access north and south throughout the Township, across the County and into incorporated municipalities.

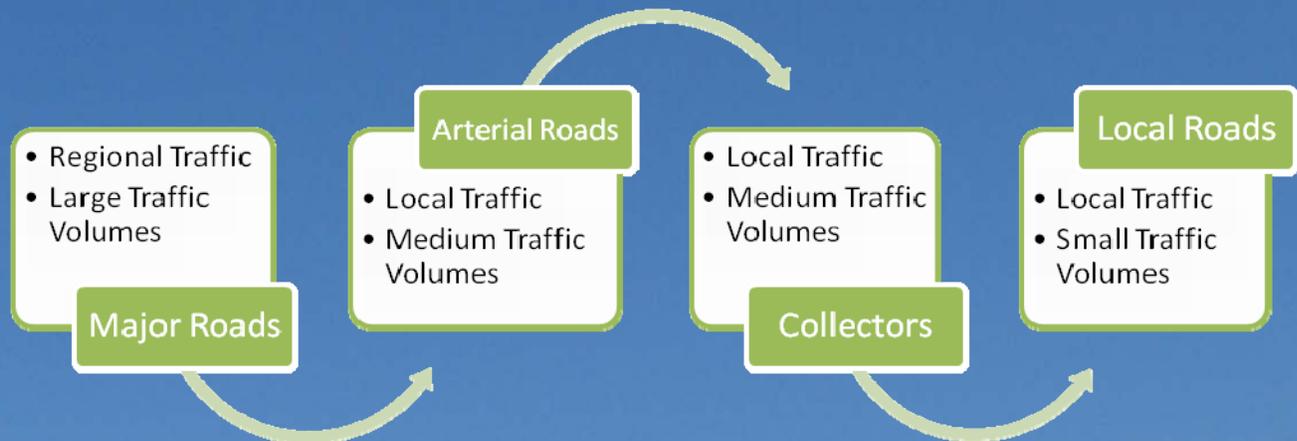
Collectors – The designated collectors connect subdivisions and populated areas to other parts of the Township and Ashland Center and provide access to M-37 and B-35.



Neighborhood Collectors: Neighborhood collectors connect the various residential neighborhoods to the collector system.

Local Streets, Cul-de-Sacs and Alleys: Local streets, cul-de-sacs and alleys provide access to residential housing within a neighborhood.

The Township has a simple grid system of streets and a variety of ways to access arterials and collectors streets. New subdivisions should connect to the existing street system, only creating new street systems for internal circulation in new subdivisions.



The ability for a roadway system to carry traffic can be measured quantitatively using Levels-of-Service (LOS) analysis. LOS reflects the analysis of a number of factors affecting the free flow of traffic, including: the degree of congestion, speed and travel time, traffic interruption, freedom to maneuver, safety, driving comfort and convenience. LOS calculations are generally accepted standards and are used in traffic impact analyses to determine the affects new developments have on roadways.

LOS standards and future traffic impacts are directly related to land use. In other words, the actual proposed future use of land, including the intensity of the future land use, directly affects the LOS of adjacent roadways and intersections. The commonly accepted LOS definitions for the six classification categories are listed in Appendix C.

Level of service D is acceptable for short periods of time; for example, the AM and PM peak hours. Level of service C or better should be standard in off-peak hours. These standards provide a basis for evaluating the impacts of proposed development projects and may be used as the standard for exacting off-site improvements, impact fees or in conjunction with adequate public facilities ordinance.

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has three programs that potentially could program road repairs for Newaygo County: Michigan Five-Year Transportation Plan, the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP - for State roadway repairs in rural areas) and the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (Tribal TIP).

The Five-Year Program and the STIP program both show improvements planned for the County, but none within the Township limits. No Tribal TIP projects are scheduled. There was no information available from the Newaygo County Road Commission for potential repair projects in the Township. The Township should work with the County and State to have roadways under the respective jurisdictions programmed for necessary repairs.

Pedestrian paths (walking trails, sidewalks) and bike paths are not prevalent throughout the Township. Due to the rural character of the Township, sidewalks are inappropriate in most cases. In some cases, sidewalks could be important for safe pedestrian circulation within new residential subdivisions. The Township should consider requiring internal sidewalks within new residential subdivisions as a requirement for subdivisions approval.

Bike trails and pedestrian trails could also be beneficial for the public's transportation, safety and recreational needs. Ideally, bike and pedestrian trails from the City of Grant to Blanche Lake or other recreational areas within the Township would be beneficial. The Township should consider working with the State for a bike/pedestrian trail along M-37 and/or utilizing the "Rails-to-Trails" program to provide bike/pedestrian access along the railroad area.

The Township should minimize the amount of financial impact by passing the financial burden of creating new infrastructure onto developers. The Township can creatively allow for the development of streets and infrastructure through properly executed public works agreements.

For the continued maintenance of Township-maintained streets, the Township should forecast the budget to anticipate repairs for existing streets and sidewalks based on best practices for age and use standards.

The following policy recommendations should be implemented within Ashland Township to adequately maintain the local road system:

Roadway Maintenance and Levels-of-Service

- Create standards to require developments of significant impact to perform traffic impact studies;
- Use future land use patterns and population projections to understand the impact of new development on the existing infrastructure;
- Work with Newaygo County Road Commission to project the need for maintenance and repair of Township roadways;
- Require new development to mitigate impacts through bearing the cost for their proportionate share of maintenance and repair of affected roadways;
- Require developers to maintain and repair internal roadways for new subdivisions, likely through requiring the establishment of a homeowners' association who would be held responsible.

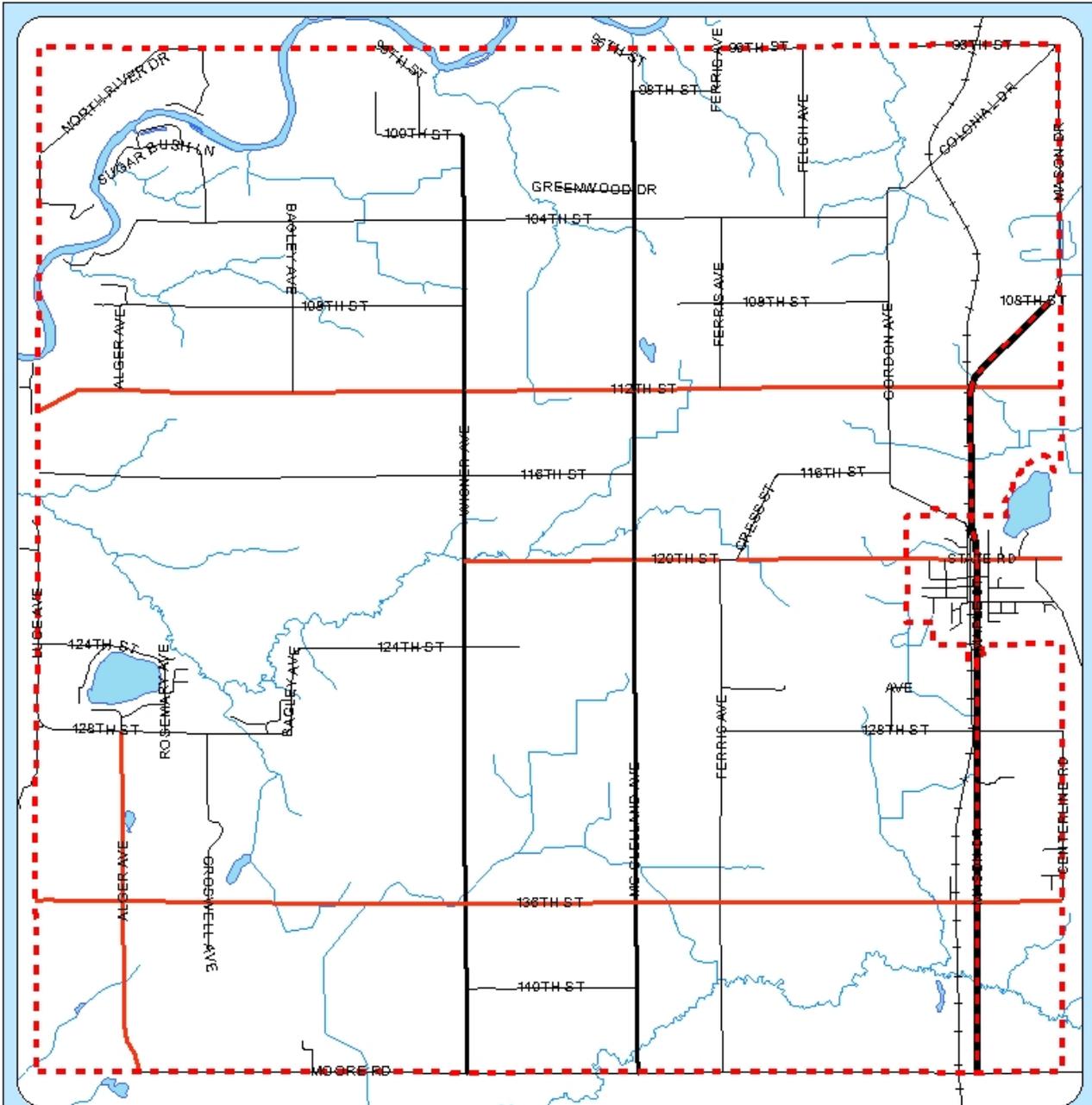
Pedestrian and Bike Paths

- Create standards for new subdivisions of a specific size to create internal pedestrian circulation (sidewalks);
- Consider the creation of a bike trail from the City of Grant to Blanche Lake, and along M-37;
- Consider the use of grants, such as the Rails-to-Trails program, to utilize the existing railroad system for transportation and recreational needs.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Keep an open dialogue with the County Road Commission concerning schedule and needed road repair and maintenance needs;
- Review the State and County programmed road repair plans as new items are published.

In addition to the transportation data and recommendations contained in this section of the Plan, the Road Circulation Plan included in Appendix C was previously prepared by the Ashland Township Planning Commission. The Plan was designed to review circulation patterns and make recommendations to the Township Board to best-address any circulation-related issues that may affect the township.

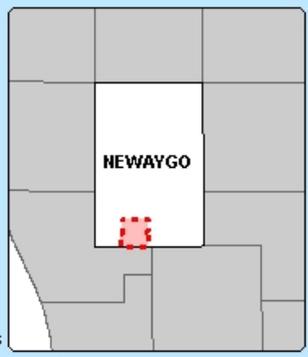
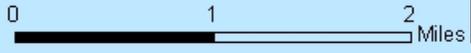


-  Minor Arterial
-  Collector
-  Neighborhood Collectors
-  Local Streets



Ashland Township, MI 2008 Master Plan Transportation and Roads

Sources:
Hydrography & County Boundaries -
Michigan Center for Geographic Information
Parcels, Roads & Railroads -
Newaygo County Geographic Information Systems



Technology and Communication

Ashland Township's residents and businesses enjoy a number of 21st Century technologies. Services like high speed and wireless internet, cellular phone coverage, cable/satellite, and VOIP are all offered in the area. Ashland Township's rural nature makes coverage for these types of technology much more limited than in more densely –populated areas, but overall, the technology is readily available in the Township. For example, some residents do not have DSL or Cable services available to them; typically, the further they are from the City of Grant or the M-37 Corridor, the less available these two services are. Many residents are serviced by a wireless internet tower located on the City of Grant's water tower. This service makes internet access available in much of the Township.

Survey results indicate that many residents are not fully satisfied with the level of services that these technologies afford them. It will continue to be a difficult task for Township officials to find the right balance of rural character and atmosphere and the level and amount of technology services, as typically, these services are much more sustainable and affordable in less-rural areas.

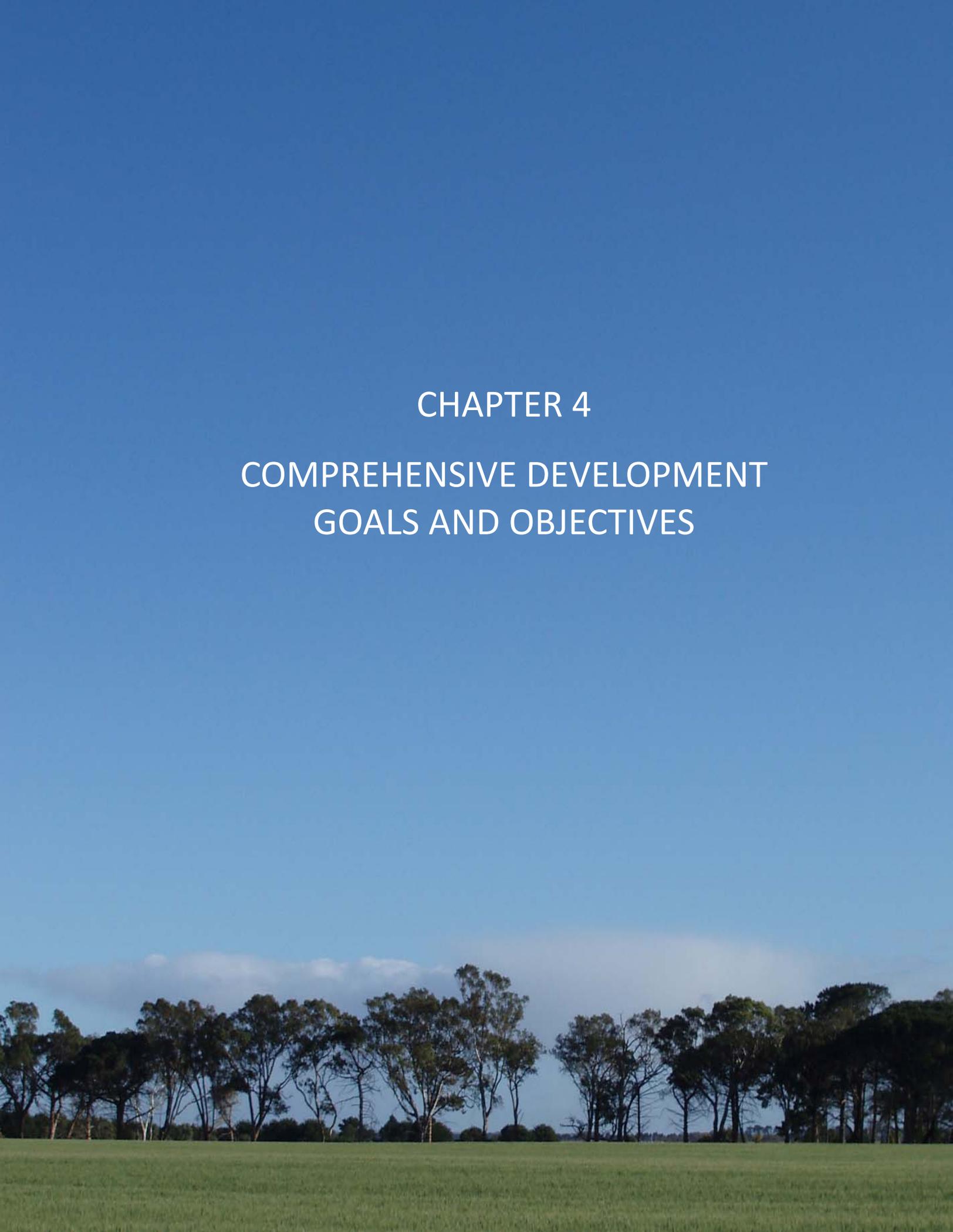
41% of Township Survey respondents indicated that they were "not satisfied" with the level of cell phone service in the Township, while 46% indicated that they were "not satisfied" with the level of high-speed internet service..

Intergovernmental Services

Intergovernmental services are those that are provided in cooperation with multiple municipalities. The rural nature of Newaygo County makes cooperation and sharing a fundamental concept of good governing. Ashland Township is part of a number of cooperative efforts that save taxpayers and provide improved services.

The Ashland-Grant Fire Department is the most recognizable cooperative venture. The City of Grant, Ashland Township, and Grant Township jointly fund and govern the department. Without the efforts of all of the involved jurisdictions, the Ashland–Grant Fire Department would not be as well-staffed, well-prepared, or well-equipped as it is today.

Other area joint services include the Newaygo County Economic Development Office, which is funded through property tax dollars and member contributions and the Grant Area District Library, which is supported by the Grant Area communities.



CHAPTER 4

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The process of developing the goals and objectives that will guide Ashland Township into the future began in April 2008, when the Ashland Township Planning Commission and Township Board collectively produced and distributed a two-page survey to gauge the opinions of Ashland Township's community members on a number of township services, private services, and perceived needs. The primary means of dissemination of the surveys to the potential respondents was via the Township's annual newsletter, which is mailed to every address in the Township. The survey results are described below:

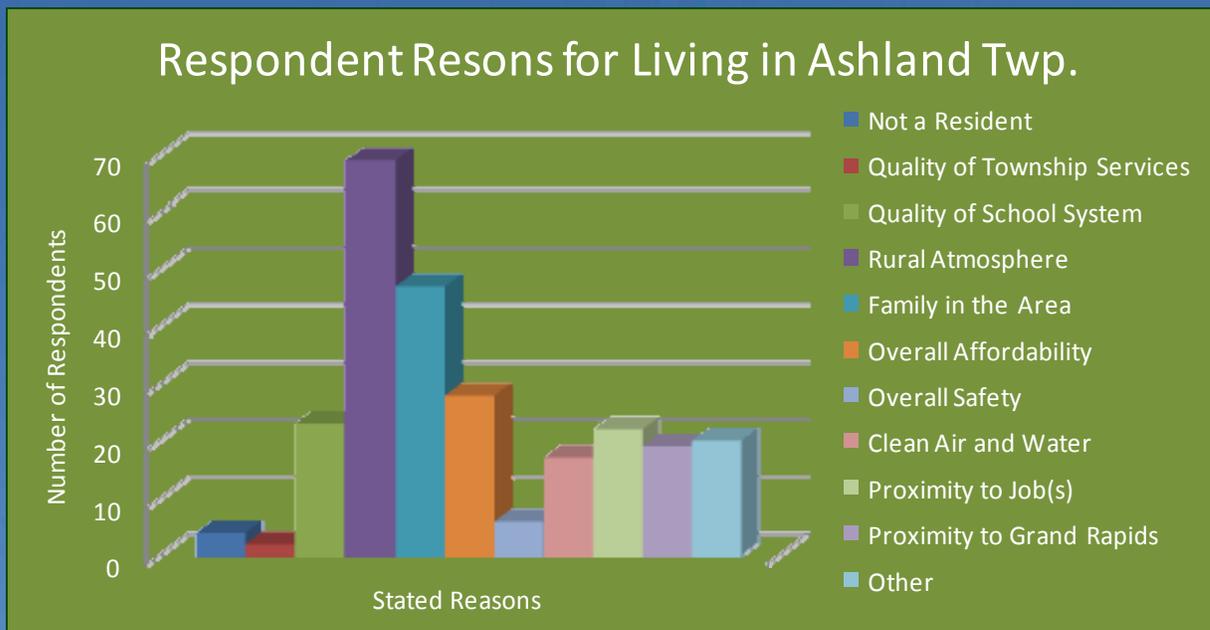
98 responses were received, and 258 residents were represented in the responses. 63 children under the age of 18 were also represented in the results. The following statistics were derived from the valid survey responses.

The median respondent age range was 35-44, and the two most-frequent responses were from the 35-44 and Over 65 age groups (each group accounted for 25 responses). This is not uncommon for most surveys, as older population groups tend to be more willing to respond to these types of surveys.

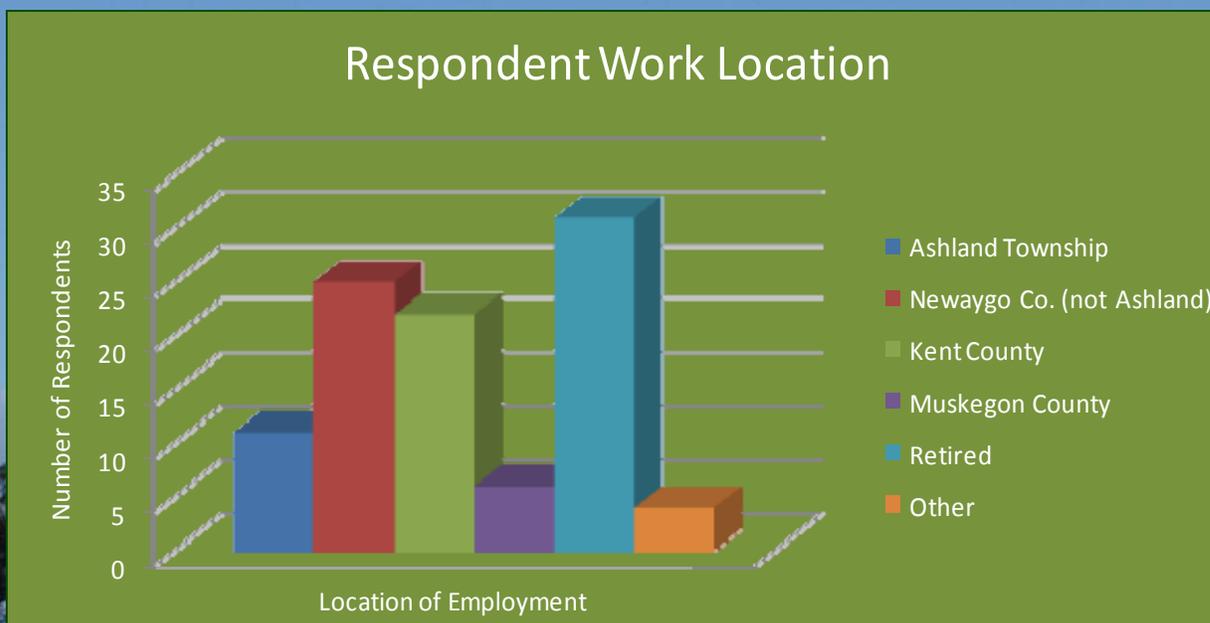
52% of the survey respondents indicated that they have lived in Ashland Township for more than 20 years and 20% indicated that they have lived in the township for 11 to 20 years. The following graphic illustrates all responses to this portion of the survey.



Survey respondents were asked to indicate the three most important reasons why they live in Ashland Township. The most frequent response was that the Township’s rural atmosphere was an important reason for residing in Ashland Township. The following graphic illustrates all responses to this portion of the survey.

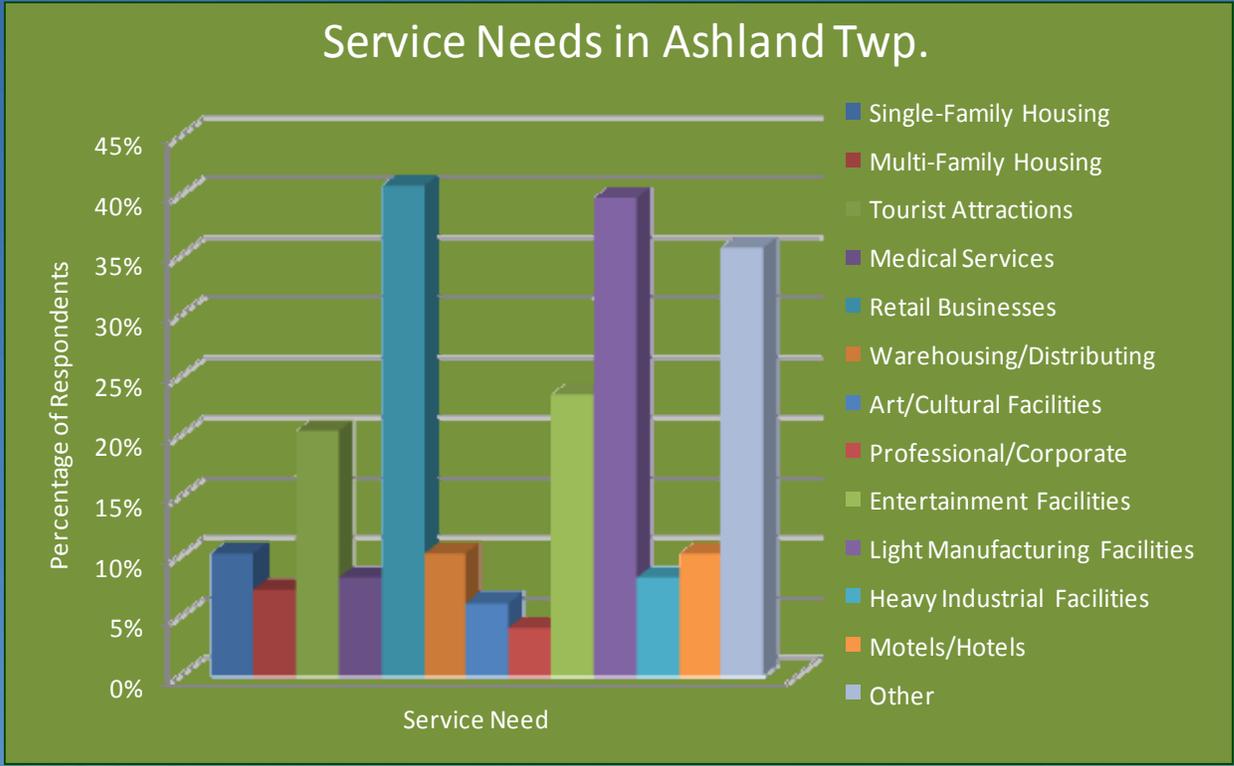


Respondents were asked to indicate where they were employed. 33% indicated that they were retired and 27% indicated that they worked in Newaygo County (but not in Ashland Township). 30% of the respondents indicated that they traveled outside of Newaygo County for employment. The respondents that actually indicated that they worked (and were not retired), 58% work in Newaygo County, and 42% work outside of the county. The following graphic illustrates all responses to this portion of the survey.

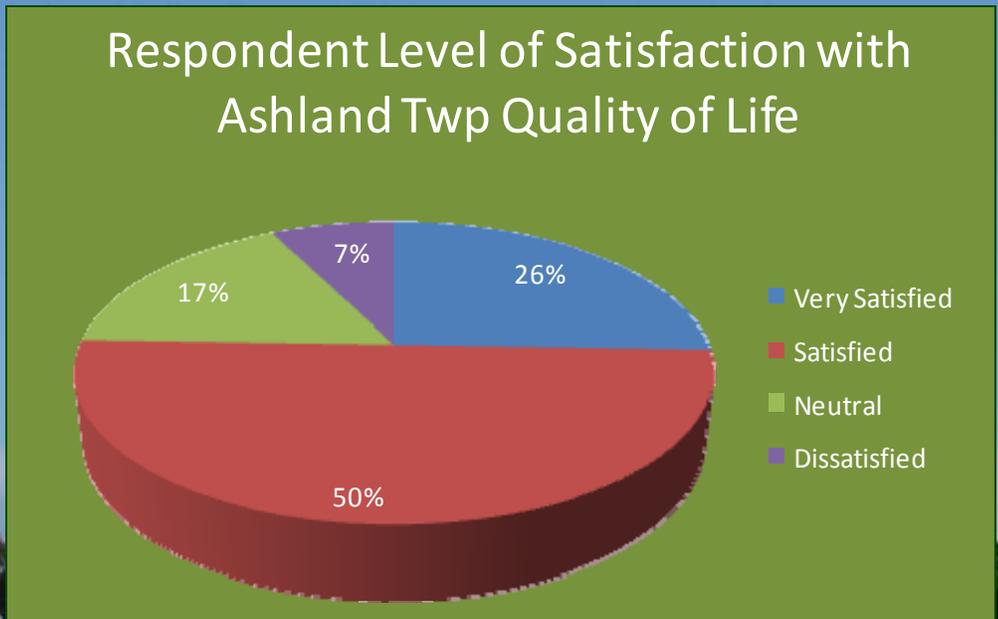


Respondents were asked to indicate what services, if any, were needed in Ashland Township. 41% indicated that retail businesses were needed, and 40% indicated that light manufacturing facilities were needed. The following graphic illustrates all responses to this portion of the survey.

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall level of satisfaction as a Township resident. 76% of re-



spondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. Only 7% indicated that they were dissatisfied. The following graphic illustrates all responses to this portion of the survey.



85% of respondents indicated that they were not planning to move from Ashland Township within the next five years. The following graphic illustrates all responses to this portion of the survey.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction on a number of area private and public services. The responses are indicated in the following graphics. The following two graphics illustrate all responses to this portion of the survey.



In addition to the results of the community survey, the goals and objectives included in this Plan take into consideration anticipated population growth and related effects, infrastructure needs, current and future land uses, and township history and heritage. The goals and objectives outlined below are expected to put Ashland Township in a position to sustain any future population growth or commercial development, maintain its desirable rural character, and make provisions to provide the private and public services and amenities that are valuable to our current and future residents and business owners.

Like many rural areas in Michigan and across the nation, Ashland Township is growing and developing. Residents of the Township are interested in keeping the rural character of the community, while trying to increase the availability of services in the area. Though growth is inevitable and necessary in order to bring more services to the area, regulating growth through the principles discussed herein is the only way to pursue the appropriate balance that residents desire.

Goal 1: Maintain the Existing Rural Character of Ashland Township

- Objective 1a Identify the M-37 Corridor and the adjacent areas as the most appropriate geographical areas for commercial and industrial development.
- Objective 1b Develop zoning regulations that allow for development to occur in appropriate areas and limit development in inappropriate areas.
- Objective 1c Adequately manage growth and sprawl by encouraging residential growth in assigned concentrated areas where services like public utilities, high-speed internet, cable, and refuse removal are readily available.

Goal 2: Preserve Existing Township Farmland

- Objective 2a Create a program that allows farmland owners to transfer and/or sell the developmental rights of prime farmland to encourage development within the Township that does not eliminate prime farmlands.
- Objective 2b Develop zoning regulations that assist farmland owners in utilizing prime farmlands on a year-round basis.
- Objective 2c Educate public on the importance of farming and farmland in Ashland Township.

Goal 3: Protect Ashland Township's Natural Resources

- Objective 3a Encourage the use of natural vegetative buffers to protect local water bodies from nutrient runoff and erosion.
- Objective 3b Encourage the use of private stormwater filtering systems to reduce the impact of contaminated stormwater runoff.
- Objective 3c Enact appropriately restrictive building setback, density, and septic system requirements in area in and around bodies of water.

- Goal 4: Promote Recreation as a Social and Economic Benefit to Ashland Township**
- Objective 4a Encourage collaboration with the City of Grant, Grant Township, Newaygo County, and other area service providers to development trail systems and other recreational facilities that encourage exercise, social gathering, tourism, and non-motorized transportation within and around Ashland Township.
 - Objective 4b Develop policies that promote and attract tourism-related activities like golf, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, boating, and fishing that attract visitors to Ashland Township and support the Township’s rural character and heritage.
 - Objective 4c Educate Residents on the services currently available to senior citizens, low/moderate income persons, and other residents of Newaygo County via the numerous public programs, service organizations, and private companies located throughout the county.

- Goal 5: Develop Policies to Ensure the Local Roadway System is Adequately Maintained and Upgraded as Needed**
- Objective 5a Create standards for requiring developments of significant impact to perform traffic impact studies .
 - Objective 5b Use future land use patterns and population projections to understand the impact of new development on the existing infrastructure.
 - Objective 5c Work with Newaygo County Road Commission to project the need for maintenance and repair of Township roadways.
 - Objective 5d Require new development to mitigate impacts through bearing the cost for their proportionate share of maintenance and repair of affected roadways
 - Objective 5e Require developers to maintain and repair internal roadways for new subdivisions.

The five main goals and corresponding objectives outlined in this plan were derived directly from the input received from residents via surveys, public hearings, public meetings, and other lines of communication. Each goal is expected to guide Ashland Township in a direction that best represents the needs and desires of our residents, business owners, and public officials.



CHAPTER 5

LAND USE



LAND USE

Understanding land use patterns is important in developing the Township's zoning plan and directing future growth. Land use is defined as the categorization of the use of land for the purposes of regulating future uses and growth as a means of public policy. The following section discusses existing land uses and the proportion of each land use to the Township as a whole. Later, future land uses will be discussed, and two scenarios for guiding future growth are provided:

1. Maintain the current land use and zoning patterns, providing commercial uses along M-37, recognizing higher residential densities along the "lake" and "river" districts, with "rural residential" allowed through the rest of the Township; or
2. Recognize the implementation of a *Transferable Development Rights* (TDR) Ordinance and the preservation of farmland and forested areas. In this future land use scenario, forested lands and farmlands are recognized for preservation and cluster-style developments are more appropriately placed near existing higher-density areas.

Current Land Use Patterns

The following chart lists the various land use classifications found within the Township (these do not necessarily correspond exactly with established zoning districts, which will be discussed in the ZONING PLAN section of this Plan). Descriptions follow.

Land Use	Proportion
Agricultural	35.73%
Commercial	0.12%
Forested	14.43%
Industrial	0.25%
Institutional	0.09%
Recreation	0.98%
Residential	18.23%
Rural Residential	28.26%
Utilities	0.84%
Vacant	0.36%
Water	0.70%

Agricultural Uses

Agricultural uses are defined as farmlands, whether for livestock, crops or both. The difference between agricultural uses and rural residential designations is the active agricultural use existing on the land.

Commercial Uses

Highway Commercial uses are located along M-37 and provide commercial and retail services at a regional level.

Forested Areas

Forested areas are indicated on the existing land use map and include the Manistee National Forest and smaller tracts of non-state designated forested areas located throughout the Township.

Industrial Uses

Light industrial uses are located along the railroad tracks east of M-37.

Institutional Uses

Churches like the Grant Wesleyan Church, Harvest Bible Church, the Ashland Center Church of Christ, and the Northland Church of Christ are located in Ashland Township. This category also included municipal uses like cemeteries and township halls.

Recreation

Brigadoon Golf Club is the major recreational facility within the Township. The course is privately-owned, but is open to the public without any membership requirements.

Residential Uses

Residential areas are densely-populated areas.

Rural Residential Uses

Areas considered as “rural residential” are existing residential areas where agricultural uses or further residential development could occur, but currently sporadic residential use patterns exist. Rural residential densities are less than low-density residential uses as discussed above, and are more inline with existing agricultural uses.

Utilities

Utility areas refer to areas of the Township utilized for the provision of public utilities like electricity, cable television, telephone, etc.

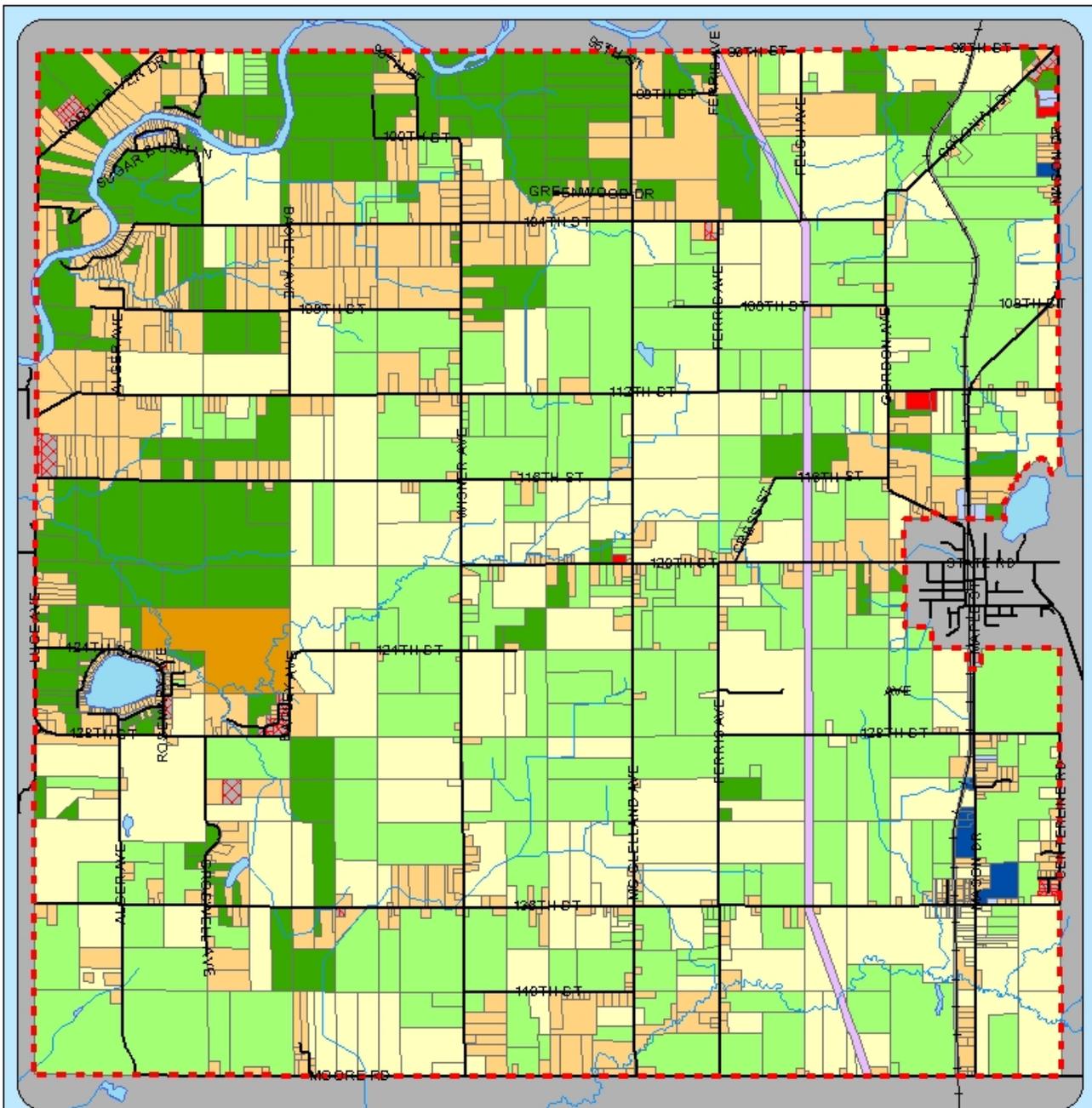
Vacant Lands

Undeveloped lands are open pastures currently zoned for rural residential development that are currently not developed, approved for development or in use for agriculture. Vacant lands are those which have been approved for development that have not been developed or where development has occurred, but the property remains unoccupied.

Water Areas

The Muskegon River is the major river which intersects Ashland Township’s northwest corner. Sand Creek and Greenwood Creek are major waterways in the Township that are shown as potential flood areas on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). The location of Sand and Greenwood Creeks and the FEMA flood designations are located on the attached maps.

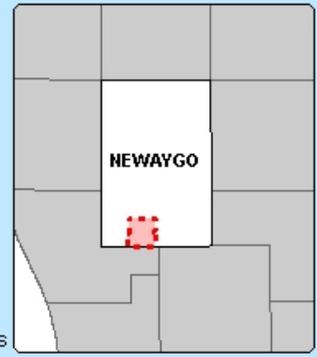
Three lakes exist in the Township: Sand Lake, Blanche Lake, and Blood Lake. Sand Lake is located on the west side of the Township near Brigadoon Golf Club and is surrounded by dense residential development. Blanche Lake is partially located in Grant Township and the City of Grant, but Ashland Township’s boarder is in close proximity to the northern and western shorelines of the lake. Blood Lake is also located on the southwestern side of the Township, southeast of Sand Lake. Low-density development surrounds both Blanche and Blood Lakes, as well as some undeveloped areas that may be attractive for future development (need to see surrounding area).



- Forestland
- Agricultural
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Recreational
- Institutional
- Utility
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Vacant



Ashland Township, MI 2008 Master Plan Existing Land Use



Soil Data:
Hydrography & County Boundaries -
Michigan Center for Geographic Information
Parcels, Roads & Railroads -
Newaygo County Geographic Information Systems

Sprawl Avoidance Strategies

Ashland Township's population has grown substantially since 1960, and is projected to nearly double in population by 2030. If left unchecked, rapid growth can quickly lead to urban sprawl.

The absence of public services, like sanitary sewers and drinking water can also inadvertently lead to urban sprawl. For example, if public water and sewer services are not available for new construction within an area, private well and septic systems are then required to accommodate the incoming growth. In general, private well and septic systems must be installed on larger parcels of land, which in turn encourages growth to be spread out – thus encouraging sprawling growth.

Increased residential growth further requires commercial growth in order to provide jobs and services for new residents. Increases and variations in land uses can dramatically change the fabric of a community, and often leads to the creation of incompatible uses in some areas.

It is important for the Township to address potential incompatibility of uses and the preservation of agricultural land. This section will discuss sprawl issues and strategies that Ashland Township should consider implementing to avoid potential sprawling growth. Some common sprawl avoidance strategies are listed below:

- Directing growth to existing urbanized areas;
- Encouraging denser, concentrated growth;
- Identifying and preserving environmentally sensitive areas;
- Providing programs that encourage agricultural land preservation;
- Exploring wastewater treatment options for subdivision development.

Agricultural Land Preservation

In order to maintain Ashland Township's rural quality of life, it is important to address issues of sprawl and agricultural land preservation. Maintaining existing agricultural lands will help ensure projected growth will not change the character of the community. The State currently provides several programs that help encourage property owners to voluntarily preserve agricultural properties. The "Right to Farm Act" also helps protect existing agricultural lands from legal action brought by new residential growth that is incompatible with on-going agricultural practices. However, the Township will need to take greater action to encourage and maintain agricultural land uses.

Right to Farm Act

The Right to Farm Act, enacted in 1981, was developed to prevent lawsuits by new property owners that found existing agricultural practices to be a nuisance. While this Act helps protect existing agricultural uses from impeding growth, it does not encourage increased agricultural uses or provide methods to make land uses compatible through buffering or other means.

As part of the Right to Farm Act, the Michigan Department of Agriculture has adopted Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) that guide activities on agricultural properties with the purpose of protecting the environment and neighbors of agricultural areas from sounds and smells coming from agricultural properties. Ashland Township should review the GAAMPs and consider adopting the practices by reference. GAAMPs can be used as code enforcement measure for existing properties, and the State's "site selection" GAAMP criteria could be used when approving future agricultural development.

State Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Programs

The Michigan Department of Agriculture has developed the "Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program" which discusses five methods of preserving undeveloped properties and agricultural lands.

Farmland Development Rights Agreements are temporary restrictions on the land between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land for agriculture in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments. The specific State guidelines and restrictions for the Farmland Development Rights Agreements is fully explained as part of Public Act 116.

Conservation Easement Donations are permanent restrictions on the land between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land for either open space or agriculture.

The Agricultural Preservation Fund is a fund established to assist local units of government in implementing a local purchase of development rights program. (As of the date of this Comprehensive Plan, the State did not currently have funding for this program. Ashland Township should work with the State to see when funds become available if they plan on using this funding program).

A Local Open Space Easement is a program that allows Ashland Township to create a program where temporary restrictions can be made on the land between the Township and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land as open space in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments. Ashland Township may have to work with Newaygo County on implementing this program in order to have the County provide the necessary tax breaks and other potential incentives.

A Designated Open Space Easement is a temporary restriction on specially designated lands between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land as open space in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments.

Transferable Development Rights

As touched on under the Agricultural Preservation Fund, purchase of development rights or transferable development rights (TDR) programs are a useful way to solve two issues in Ashland Township: preserving open space and directing new development into concentrated areas.

TDR programs work by allowing owners of land designated for agricultural or open space preservation to sell their residential development rights to another land owner. In other words, a landowner can purchase development rights from an agricultural property and combine the allowable density from the purchased property and a property slated for residential development onto one property. In return, the property owner that has sold his development rights officially places his property “out-of-play,” and into agricultural preservation.

The increased density purchased by the property owner interested in creating homes can develop the property in a manner that allows for concentrated development which is dense enough to allow community sewer treatment services or use of public water and sewer services if developed near the City of Grant (if Grant is interested and able to provide water and wastewater services to new development within the Township).

In order for TDR to work in Ashland Township, the Township should perform the following:

- Enter into discussion with the City of Grant to see if capacity is available for water and wastewater treatment;
- Only allow TDR development to occur within designated growth areas;
- Areas where the Township does not desire further development should be set aside for agricultural preservation. Those properties are indicated on the future land use map;

Work with Newaygo County and other townships, where residential growth is expected to continue, to allow areas to be preserved within Ashland Township and densities to be used in townships where growth is desired. Intergovernmental coordination will bring the greatest opportunity for the Township to preserve agricultural lands.

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan and corresponding map represents Ashland Township's preferred land use categories and their anticipated arrangement. The map identifies preferred locations for different land uses envisioned by the Ashland Township Planning Commission. All future land use categories correlate to at least one of Ashland Township's existing zoning classifications.

This Plan is expected to guide local decision-making related to land use, and should be viewed as a general outline for such decisions. The areas identified on the Future Land Use Maps are intended to act as general boundaries, and should not be construed to represent precise dimension, size, or shape, and should not be assumed to represent immediate or imminent zoning reclassification.

The Future Land Use Plan represents the Township's long-range planning goals.

Future Land Use Categories

Rural Residential: This land use category is designed for low-density, single-family housing. This area may include some two-family housing and agricultural land adjacent to residential properties. Currently, most of the Township is zoned for rural residential uses.

River District: This land use category is designated to protect the Township's river resources from high-density development. Riverfront and river-view residential uses are the most-likely uses for this land-use category. Currently, the Township has a zoning overlay that provides for this use.

Lake District: This land use category is designated to protect the Township's lake resources from high-density development. Lakefront and lake-view residential uses are the most-likely uses for this land-use category. Currently, the Township has a zoning overlay that provides for this use.



Agricultural: This land use category is designated to agricultural-related uses; residential uses are allowed in conjunction with agricultural functions. This type of use is allowed in the Township's current Zoning Ordinance under the Rural Residential District.

General Business: This land use category is designated for commercial activities that provide goods and services to the community and typically do not involve manufacturing or industrial activities. Typical allowable activities would include retail, food service, repair services, gasoline filling stations, professional offices, and workshops. This type of use is allowed in the Township's current Zoning Ordinance under the Commercial District.

Light Industrial: This land use category is designated for light industrial activities and will act as a transitional zone between General Business and General Industrial categories. Typical allowable activities would include storage, warehousing, and activities also allowed in the General Business district. This type of use is allowed in the Township's current Zoning Ordinance under the Commercial District.

General Industrial: This land use category is designated for general industrial activities. Typical allowable activities would include heavy industrial activities, manufacturing activities, trucking depots, energy production activities, adult businesses, and activities also allowed in the General Business and Light Industrial districts. This type of use is allowed in the Township's current Zoning Ordinance under the Commercial District.

By separating the Township's current Commercial District into three separate future land use categories, the Township Planning Commission is in a better position to direct certain type of commercial uses into more appropriate commercial areas within the Township. All of the outlined Future Land Use Categories officially correspond with an existing adopted Zoning District.

Action Items



Enhance key entry points or gateways to the Township



Coordinate with the City of Grant and Grant Township to improve the appearance of the M-37 Corridor.



Explore opportunities to increase availability and reliability of high speed internet and cellular phone services



Coordinate with the Newaygo County Road Commission to improve the Township's road system



Encourage commercial development activities to occur in existing commercial areas.



Encourage the usage of TDR Ordinance to preserve open space and farm land and, and avoid sprawl conditions.



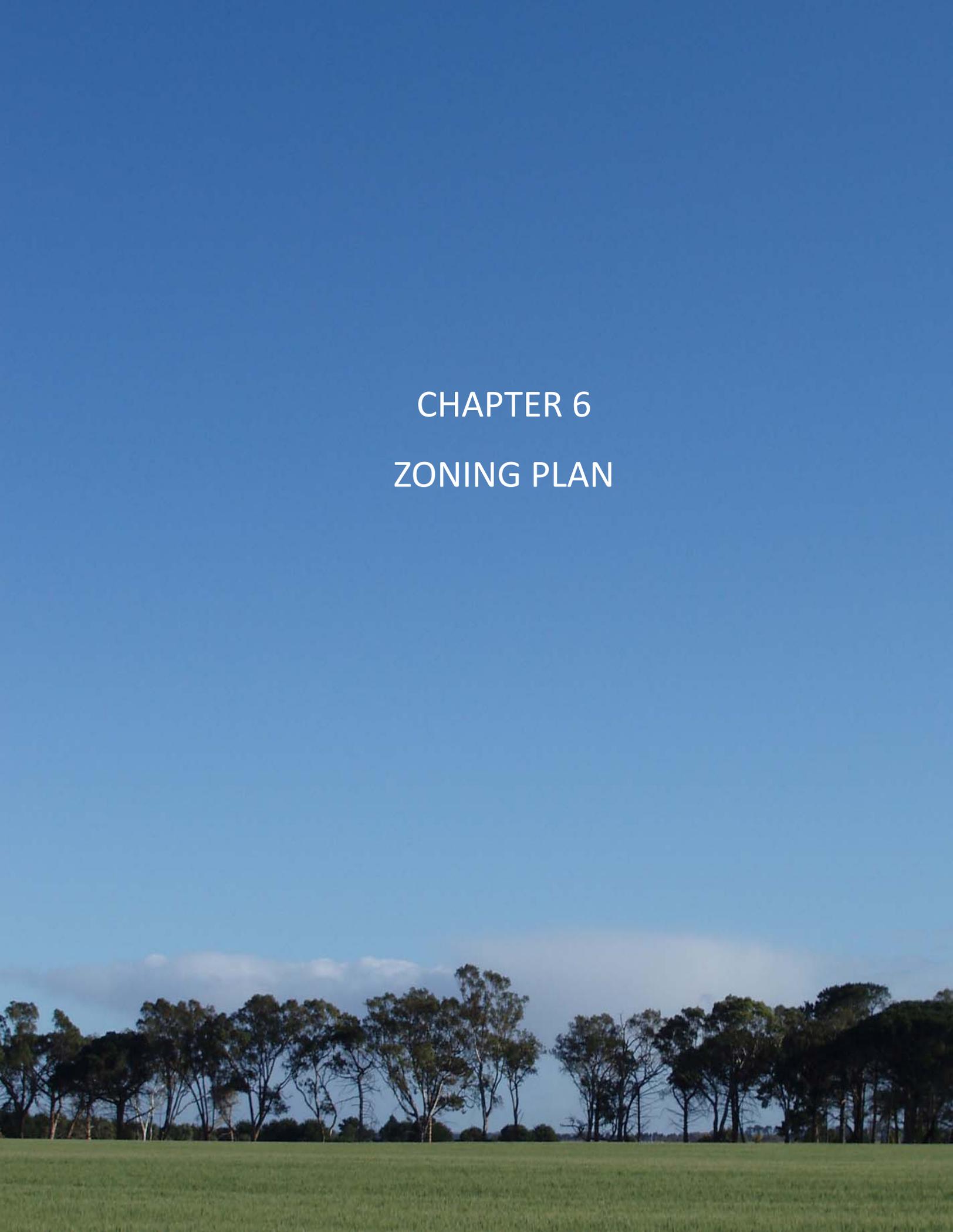
Adopt updated zoning ordinance to better-reflect the Township's land use goals.



Encourage relocation of existing outdoor storage facilities to areas appropriately buffered from public view.



Encourage the incorporation of low impact, high-efficiency and sustainable development practices

A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground. A line of trees with green foliage runs across the middle ground. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon.

CHAPTER 6
ZONING PLAN

ZONING PLAN

The Township plans to begin the comprehensive rezoning process upon adoption of this Plan. This Zoning plan discusses some preliminary issues that will need to be addressed as part of the comprehensive rezoning process. However, the items discussed herein are not an exhaustive list of issues that will be, or may need to be addressed. Moreover, it may be that specific items discussed in this section will need to be modified at a later date. It is likely that other issues will arise as the zoning revisions are being made that were not anticipated upon adoption of the Master Plan. The rezoning process will deal with issues that may or may not be discussed herein, but it will ultimately be driven by the goals, objectives and policies developed in this plan.

The *Michigan Zoning Enabling Act* (MZEA—PA 110 of 2006) and the *Michigan Planning Enabling Act* (MPEA—PA 33 of 2008) both require that all local zoning actions/decisions be based on a plan. This is important because zoning decisions have a great impact on individual and collective property rights, and accordingly must be adequately researched, prepared, and adopted.

The Zoning Plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the Township. It must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the township and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted. The MZEA requires that land development regulations and zoning districts created through the act be made in accordance with a plan. This Plan fulfills that purpose for Ashland Township, as it will focus on Ashland Township's current zoning districts and its plan for future zoning decisions, and also includes an explanation of the relationship between this Master Plan and the zoning ordinance of Ashland Township.

Currently, Ashland Township has four established zoning Districts; Rural Residential, Lake Residential, River Residential, and Commercial. The stated objectives, taken directly from the adopted Zoning Ordinance, of the zoning districts are as follows:

1. **Rural Residential District:** A residential district in which agricultural operations, as defined in this ordinance, are included as principal uses.
2. **Lake Residential District:** A district controlling the spatial location of year-round residential, summer home and cottage development, and other uses in such a manner so as to preserve and protect the scenic resources and water quality of the lakes in Ashland Township.
3. **River Residential District:** A district controlling the spatial location of year-round residential, summer home and cottage development, and other uses in such a manner so as to protect against the loss of life, property, scenic resources and water quality along the Muskegon River floodplain, including its major tributaries. The expressed purpose of this district is to restrict development within flood prone areas, and to protect its water quality through the wise setting of septic systems.

4. **Commercial District:** A district for concentrating general convenience-type retail businesses and personal service uses, which are deemed desirable and appropriate to the Township.

The Township’s current Zoning Ordinance was originally adopted in 1982; it has been amended on multiple occasions since. It is the goal of this Zoning Plan to more-adequately define the current and future zoning classifications, and to prepare Ashland Township to adequately accept and guide future growth and development.

Ashland Township’s current Zoning Classifications and their individual adopted bulk requirements are as follows:

Zoning Classification	Rural Residential	Lake Residential	River Residential	Commercial
Min Lot Area	30,000 sqft	30,000 sqft	30,000 sqft	30,000 sqft
Min Lot Width	100 ft	100 ft	100 ft	100 ft
Max Lot Coverage	20%	20%	20%	15%
Front Setback	33 ft	30 ft	50 ft	50 ft
Side Setback	10 ft	5 ft	10 ft	10 ft*
Rear Setback	10 ft	25 ft	25 ft**	25 ft*
Max Building Height	35 ft	35 ft	35 ft	35 ft

* If the property abuts another commercial property, no side or rear setback is required.

** If property does not back up to river frontage, Rural Residential rear setbacks apply.

Throughout the development of this Plan, a number of additional zoning classifications for Ashland Township have been identified. The classifications shown below represent proposed zoning classification that the Planning Commission should consider implementing as it reviews its current zoning ordinance and the Future Land Use portion of this Plan.

Zoning Classification	General Business	Light Industrial	General Industrial
Min Lot Area	30,000 sqft	40,000 sqft	50,000 sqft
Min Lot Width	100 ft	125 ft	175 ft
Max Lot Coverage	30%	30%	25%
Front Setback	30 ft	30 ft	100 ft
Side Setback	10 ft	20 ft	75 ft
Rear Setback	10 ft	25 ft	75 ft
Max Building Height	35 ft	35 ft	50 ft

** If property does not back up to river frontage, Rural Residential rear setbacks apply.

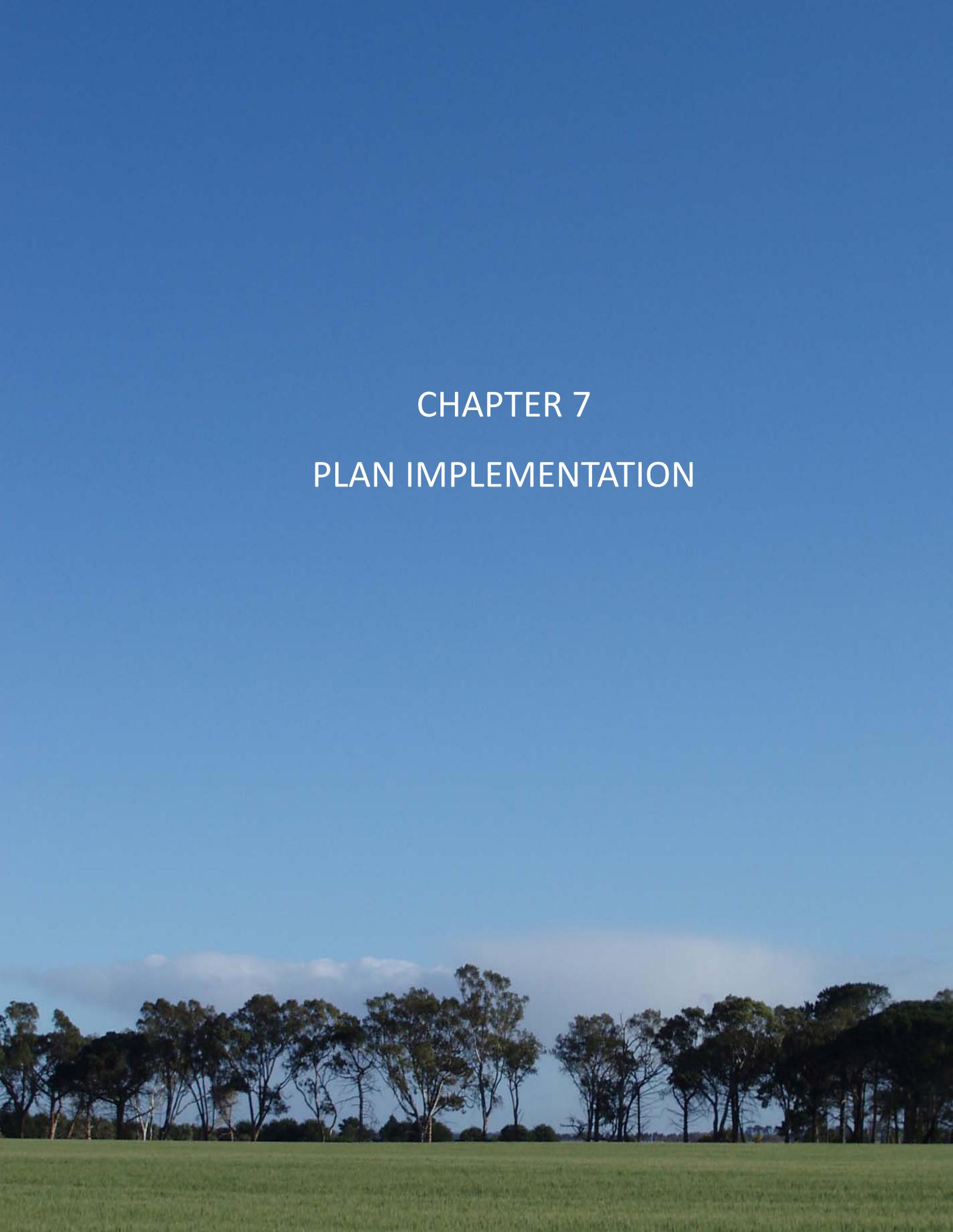
It is expected that the General Business, Light Industrial, and General Industrial classifications will replace the current Commercial District, as well as some portions of the Rural Residential District. As per the Future Land Use Map, these areas will generally be concentrated along the M-37 Corridor.

It is further expected that the Low Density Residential classification will replace both the River District and the Lake District. These two current districts were designed to accomplish the same goal of protecting the Township's water resources. These changes are outlined on the Future Land Use Map.

As part of the Master Plan process, Ashland Township is charged with designing a program to move from the current zoning structure to the proposed Future Land Use categories. Upon completion of this Plan, it is the intent of the Ashland Township Planning Commission and the Ashland Township Board to begin work to update the Township's current Zoning Regulations and corresponding Zoning District Boundaries.

The Ashland Township Planning Commission will work directly with its consultant, its residents, and business owners to transition the current district boundaries to meet the expectations of the Plan's Future Land Use Chapter. It is expected that minimal non-conforming uses will exist as areas of the Township are zoned to meet goals of The Plan; the updated Zoning Regulations will account for this via special regulations and allowances for such situations. Eliminating the subsequent non-conforming uses will be accomplished over the long-term life of this Plan; strict adherence to the suggestions outlined in this Plan will assist in this accomplishment.

The Township's zoning regulations will provide for land use requirements, height, area, bulk, and density requirements, special conditions, district locations and boundaries, processes for petitioning the Planning Commission and appealing their decisions, and other pertinent regulations with the confines of the current State Law.

A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground. A line of trees with green foliage stretches across the middle ground. The sky above is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds near the horizon.

CHAPTER 7

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

If this Master Plan is to serve as an effective guidebook for promoting and continuing appropriate development in Ashland Township, it must be implemented in an appropriate manner, and on a continuous basis. The primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Township Planning Commission and the Township Board. This is done through a number of methods including adopting/recommending zoning ordinances, providing educational programs for local land use and zoning boards, and creating/implementing administrative procedures that promote appropriate development and/or conservation. It is important for the Township Planning Commission to provide accurate interpretations of applicable laws.

The Ashland Township Master Plan was prepared with input from other area units of government, township residents, various township boards, and planning staff. The Plan was created and adopted in an open and *cooperative environment*, and it is anticipated that in order to be fully successful, its implementation will require concerted efforts from all township staff, boards, and commissions. Following is a summary of the recommendations contained in this Plan and some alternative implementation strategies for each (for additional goals/objectives please refer to the corresponding section of this Plan):

Roadway Maintenance and Levels-of-Service

- Create standards for requiring developments of significant impact to perform traffic impact studies.
- Use future land use patterns and population projections to understand the impact of new development on the existing infrastructure.
- Work with Newaygo County Road Commission to project the need for maintenance and repair of Township roadways.
- Require new development to mitigate impacts through bearing the cost for their proportionate share of maintenance and repair of affected roadways.
- Require developers to maintain and repair internal roadways for new subdivisions.
- Create standards for new subdivisions of a specific size to create internal pedestrian circulation (sidewalks).
- Consider the creation of a bike trail from the City of Grant to Sand Lake, and along M-37.
- Consider the use of grants, such as the Rails-to-Trails program, to utilize the existing rail-road system for transportation and recreational needs.
- Keep an open dialogue with the County Road Commission concerning scheduled and needed road repair and maintenance needs.
- Review the State and County programmed road repair plans as new items are published.

Education

- Work with Grant Public Schools (GPS) and Newaygo County Regional Education Service Agency (NC-RESA) to ensure population increases and the Township's plans for growth are conveyed for proper school planning.
- Work with GPS and NC-RESA to ensure the proper impact fees are being levied to accommodate school impacts caused by new growth.

Land Use

- Implement and enforce the land use patterns shown herein through zoning changes.
- Work with stakeholders and businesses to ensure land use patterns do not hinder business development.
- Direct residential growth to cluster areas near the City of Grant, where public utilities are available.
- Discourage or prohibit development in forested areas and wetland areas, without proper permits or mitigation.
- Coordinate with the City of Grant and other neighboring communities to encourage appropriate zoning and land use decisions in areas that adjoin each municipality.
- Develop a Corridor Master Plan for the M-37 corridor and the heavily-traveled gateways into Ashland Township.
- Develop an implementation and maintenance plan to adequately mark the main gateways into Ashland Township with identification signage.
- Coordinate with The City of Grant, Grant Township, Garfield Township, and Brooks Township to improve the aesthetics of the M-37 corridor that connects The Cities of Grant and Newaygo.

Zoning Plan

- After adoption of this plan, begin the comprehensive rezoning process in order to implement the "zoning plan" and other items discussed in this Plan.
- Implement a TDR ordinance to best ensure farmland preservation and forest preservation.
- Develop policies that promote agricultural uses and deter sprawl development.

CHAPTER 8

MAP SUITE



CHAPTER 9

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

MASTER PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

**RESOLUTION TO REFER THE 2008 ASHLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN TO
THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD**

October 13, 2008

WHEREAS, the Ashland Township Planning Commission has worked over the past six month on the development of a new Master Plan in accordance with Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008; and

WHEREAS, The Ashland Township Planning Commission has received input from its members, the general public, and its consultants on the content of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Ashland Township Planning Commission is seeking input and approval from the Ashland Township Board

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION to submit the 2008 Master Plan to the Ashland Township Board for Review and Approval

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE 2008 ASHLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN
FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

October 14, 2008

WHEREAS, the Ashland Township Planning Commission has submitted a draft Master Plan to the Ashland Township Board for approval; and

WHEREAS, The Ashland Township Board has reviewed the draft Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, The Ashland Township Board believes that it is in the best interest of the Township's residents and businesses owners that a professionally-crafted Master Plan be implemented in Ashland Township to adequately direct and accept growth;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD to approve the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan as submitted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD to authorize the Ashland Township Planning Commission to submit the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan to the local governments and agencies required by Public Act 33 of 2008 (Michigan Planning Enabling Act) for review and comment.

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

**RESOLUTION TO SET PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE
2008 ASHLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

October 13, 2008

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION to open a public comment period from December 8, 2008 through January 12, 2009 to receive public comments on the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION to set a Public Hearing for February 9, 2009 at 7:30 PM at the Ashland Township Hall to discuss the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan.

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE 2008 ASHLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

February 9, 2009

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION to approve the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan.

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2008 ASHLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

February 10, 2009

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD to adopt the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan as submitted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ASHLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD to authorize the Ashland Township Planning Commission to begin implementation of the goals and objectives of the 2008 Ashland Township Master Plan in accordance with Public Act 33 of 2008.



June 20, 2008

Dear Interested Party,

The Ashland Township Planning Commission has begun the process of reviewing and reassessing its Master Plan. Over the next three to six months, the Township's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance will both be updated to meet the current and future needs of our residents.

We request that you act as a partner in this effort, and accordingly submit your comments regarding the documents as they are prepared and provided to you for review.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact the Ashland Township Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

Franklin Peterson

Franklin Peterson
Township Consultant

November 30, 2008

Dear Government Leader,

The Ashland Township Planning Commission has completed a draft of its proposed 2008 Master Plan. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, we are providing you with a copy of the proposed Plan. Please take some time to review the Plan. If you have any comments or suggestions, please submit them in writing to the Ashland Township Planning Commission by February 9, 2009.

The Plan is included on the enclosed CD as a .pdf file. If you are unable to view the file, please contact me at 269-719-9146, and I will make arrangements to have a hard copy of the Plan delivered.

Sincerely,

Franklin Peterson

Franklin Peterson
Consultant

Ashland Township Master Plan Local Government Review Recipients

Recipient	Medium	Address
West Michigan Shoreline Redevelopment Commission	Email	scarlson@wmsrdc.org
Newaygo County Planning Commission	Email	herdyr@ncats.net
City of Grant	Email	dlafave@cityofgrantmi.com
Grant Township	Email	dIdeater@ncats.net
Brooks Township	Email	Isalacina@riverview.net
Bridgeton Township	US Mail	11830 S Warner Ave, Grant, MI 49327
Sheridan Township	US Mail	PO Box 53, Fremont, MI 49412
Garfield Township	US Mail	7190 S Bingham, Newaygo, MI 49337
Casnovia Township	US Mail	245 Canada Rd, Casnovia, MI 49318

Newaygo County Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: January 20, 2009
Place: Newaygo County Board of Commissioners Room
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Harry Robinson, Karl Stressman, James Bokelman, Phil Starr, Mark Pitzer,
Jim Maike

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Ryan Coffey, Marcy Dix

Opened By:

Chairman Harry Robinson opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 p.m.

Reading/Approval of Minutes: Phil Starr moved to accept the 11-18-08 minutes as presented, James Bokelman seconded. Ayes-All, MC

Communications and Bills: Another series of PA 116s was received. At 6:30 p.m. on February 4, 2009, there will be a parliamentary training session in the Board of Commissioners Room. All commission members are invited to attend.

Public Comment: None

Reports of Officers and Committees:

- A. **County Parks Board:** There are still open positions on two parks committees.
- B. **River Zoning Review Board:** The board met on November 19, 2008. The issue of a family cabin was tabled and a deck was approved.
- C. **Comprehensive Status Report:** Phil Starr moved to place the Comprehensive Status Report on file, Karl Stressman seconded. Ayes-All, MC.
- D. **Land Use Agent:** Ryan Coffey asked that the agenda be amended to change the Comprehensive Plans listed for Big Prairie and Lincoln Townships to Zoning Ordinances. Gerber is considering erecting 7 windmills on property that is located in Sherman and Dayton Townships and has submitted a proposed ordinance to both townships. The ordinance follows state guidelines. Before windmills are built, a met tower will be put up for one year to monitor weather and then taken down.

He made another map, this one for the Croton-Hardy Business Alliance. The Land Use Steering Committee is looking at a more comprehensive project to meet mapping needs.

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance has submitted proposals to Rails to Trails for projects to build/improve trail systems going into and out of urban areas, providing a transportation network. Newaygo /Brooks Township trails might be eligible for funding.

Lincoln Township reported that it never received feedback on its zoning ordinance the first time that it was submitted to the Commission.

- E. White River Zoning:** None
- F. Review Board:** None

Unfinished Business: Goal #12, to encourage the use of alternative energies will be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

New Business:

A. Ashland Township Comprehensive Plan:

Phil Starr moved to recommend approval of the Ashland Township Comprehensive Plan pending review by a consultant or attorney, Pitzer seconded. Ayes-All, MC.

B. Big Prairie Township Zoning Ordinance:

Karl Stressman moved to recommend approval of the Big Prairie Township Zoning Ordinance, seconded by James Bokelman. Ayes-All, MC.

C. Officers/Meetings/Committees:

Jim Maike moved to nominate Harry Robinson as Chair, Phil Starr seconded. Ayes-All, MC.

Phil Starr moved to nominate Mark Pitzer as Vice-Chair, James Bokelman seconded. Ayes-All, MC.

Phil Starr moved to nominate James Bokelman as Secretary, Mark Pitzer seconded. Ayes-All, MC.

Jim Maike moved to hold meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., James Bokelman seconded. Ayes-All, MC.

Mark Pitzer moved to appoint Phil Starr to the Land Use Steering Committee, seconded by James Bokelman. Ayes-All, MC.

D. Lincoln Township Zoning Ordinance

James Bokelman moved to recommend approval of the Lincoln Township Zoning Ordinance, Jim Maike accepted. Ayes-All, MC.

E. Wilcox Township Comprehensive Plan

Jim Maike moved to recommend approval of the Wilcox Township Comprehensive Plan pending attorney review, James Bokelman seconded. Ayes-All, MC.

Public Comment: none

Miscellaneous: Mark Pitzer reported on Van Buren County's ordinance restricting phosphorous for lawn fertilization. This is an issue for counties with shallow rivers and lakes. A similar ordinance has been passed in other counties. Bay County's ordinance has been challenged in court. Jim Maike reported that lake boards are examining the issue.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Marcy Dix

APPENDIX B

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

Ashland Township Community Survey

Ashland Township is in the process of evaluating its goals for future land use and development, and will be seeking residents' ideas and comments about certain issues in our community. We need your valuable input; you and your family play a critical role as we plan to serve our community's long-term needs and desires. Please take a few minutes of your time to share your input. ALL responses are important and will be kept confidential. Surveys may be returned to the Ashland Township Office at 2019 W. 120th Street (PO Box 457) or via fax to 231-834-0446. If you have questions or comments please call the Township Supervisor at 834-7535. Thank you for your input and your support!

1. What is your gender? Male 52% Female 48%
2. What is your age?
 Under 18 0% 18-24 1% 25-34 9% 35-44 16% 45-54 26% 55-65 22% Over 65 26%
3. How many years have you lived in Ashland Township?
 Not a resident 4% Less than 1 0% 1 to 4 13% 5 to 10 10% 11 to 20 20% More than 20 52%
4. How many people live in your household? **Median: 2 People**
5. How many children under the age of 18 reside in your home? **Median: 2 Children**
6. Please check the three most important reasons you chose to live in Ashland Township:
 Not a Resident 4% Family in the Area 48% Clean Air and Water 17%
 Quality of Township Services 2% Overall Affordability 29% Proximity to Job(s) 22%
 Quality of School System 23% Overall Safety 6% Proximity to Grand Rapids 19%
 Rural Atmosphere 70% Other: See "Additional Comments"
7. Where do you work?
 Ashland Township 11% Kent County 22% Ottawa County 0%
 Newaygo Co. (not Ashland Twp.) 26% Muskegon County 6% Mecosta County 0%
 Montcalm County 0% Retired 32% Other 4%
8. In your opinion, which services are needed in Ashland Township (mark all that apply)
 Single-Family Housing 10% Retail Businesses 41% Entertainment Facilities 23%
 Multi-Family Housing 7% Warehousing/Distributing 10% Light Manufacturing Facilities 40%
 Tourist Attractions 20% Art/Cultural Facilities 6% Heavy Industrial Facilities 8%
 Medical Services 8% Professional/Corporate 4% Motels/Hotels 10%
 Other: See "Additional Comments"
9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of life offered to you as an Ashland Township resident?
 Very Satisfied 24% Satisfied 48% Neutral 16% Dissatisfied 7% Very Dissatisfied 0%
10. Do you plan to move from Ashland Township in the next five years? Yes 15% No 85%
If yes, why? See "Additional Comments"

11. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of Ashland Township

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	No Opinion
Availability of Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordability of Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Atmosphere	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Property Tax Rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic Volumes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail/Shopping Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Township Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zoning Regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Red highlighted boxes represent median responses

12. Please identify your level of satisfaction with the following public/private services in Ashland Township:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	No Opinion
Fire Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety from Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Condition of Streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ambulance Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sewer Services (where applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality of Drinking Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electric Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Gas Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Propane Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cable TV Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellular Phone Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Speed Internet Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Library Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for Senior Citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks and Recreation Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Red highlighted boxes represent median responses

Additional Comments:

See "Additional Comments"

Survey Comments

1. Likes peace and quiet, nature, trees, wildlife that are alive and protected. Needed services include high-speed internet, fiber optic lines, city sewer, regular TV, cable, cell phone towers, and a tornado siren near little sand lake
2. For the amount of taxed I pay, my son should be able to ride the bus to school, and not have to share books at school because his name is at the end of the alphabet.
3. Retired. We need a medical lab for blood work and x-rays for all the people. The ones we have now are only for the Dr's patients (Family Healthcare). I have to go to Gerber or Sparta. We also need some kind of regulations and building permits for elevated hunting blinds. They should not be allowed close to roads. Overlooking other people's properties, and built so high. They are an eyesore and breach of privacy of others. We also need someone to check the conditions of some of these junky trailers that are not fit to live in. Plumbing and sewers are not to code. Junk everywhere, and sewers dumping into the creeks
4. No new services needed. Leave rural atmosphere, open spaces, farmland, and wildlife. 112th could use some work. Leave 104th dirt. Leave McClelland between 112th and 104th seasonal road - all part of rural character. Less people, more open spaces/wooded areas with no houses.
5. Need fast food restaurants. Ryzebol Farms went in about 1.5 miles from my house, noisy manure trucks are constantly going back and forth in front of my home. I would like to have access to cable TV and internet. I lose a lot of calls on cell phone due to poor services of area.
6. I live on Ferris Ave, and at times it is very rutted, with sections that are always potholes.
7. Road improvements are only made in some areas. We pay a road tax, but certain roads are not serviced and everyone you talk with points the finger at someone else, thus ending in a stalemate and nothing being done.
8. We have good business opportunities for self employed away from the cut throat competition on GR. No services are needed in Ashland. Keep it as rural, and some family homes - we live close enough to services to drive to them. If I was planning on moving, it would be because of too much development. Though it is probably a very safe community, the fact that I was robbed just over a year ago causes me to mark dissatisfied with "safety from crime." To say anything else would make me a hypocrite. Overall, I like Ashland. I would hate to see it become the City of Grant.
9. Need better internet accessibility
10. Need cable television, high-speed internet, and more cell towers. May move to be closer to entertainment, retail, and job opportunities. Technology is lacking.
11. Please maintain our roads and keep taxes reasonable
12. Moving due to job change
13. Need a park for mobile homes so they are not scattered everywhere. Too many billboard signs. Too much substandard housing allowed (112th Street between Alger and Bagley). Too much junk, especially automobiles in people's yards.
14. Moving because of our wonderful milk farmers and roads (lack of upkeep). Two of the main reasons we moved here from Muskegon - quality of drinking water and air - have both disappeared and there is nothing that can be done about it. Why did we allow it? Tax dollars?
15. Need more restaurants
16. Retired. I feel that more roads should be paved. Put a road tax on the ballot to be voted on.

17. Disabled. Please make an attempt at addressing the fact that the factory cow farm is spreading cow waste too close to Sand Creek and run off points to Muskegon Rive. The wide loads are damaging the sides of the roads.
18. We like the rural atmosphere of this area. That's why we chose to live here. We really don't want to see more industrial build up or more subdivision-type housing developments. Please try to encourage agricultural endeavors, not heavy industrial.
19. Retired. Planning to move because husband passed away. We've loved living in the country for 40 years, but since my husband passed away, I'm afraid I'll have to be leaving in the next few years.
20. Do not become an attraction for unemployed. Do not become a haven for more losers. If you feed them, they will come, then we move. We feel that stability is necessary. Any change must be gradual. Taxes must be kept as low as possible.
21. Retired
22. I love the newsletters and updates about local events in our county/township. Keep them coming. Also, is it possible to include a tidbit about pet ordinances? We have a problem with roaming pets (dogs) and barking near our house. Thanks.
23. 112th Street needs better maintenance. Assessment Board should review appeal with property owner present and explain why an appeal is rejected. Newly assessed homes should never be taxed above their market value at time of assessment.
24. Cable Service is not available - why? Natural Gas is not available - why? Need "no littering" signs on roads. Need better dust control on dirt roads. Dangerous hills on the corner of McClelland and 120th and also McClelland and 112th
25. Property values keep going down, but my taxes keep going up. I built a corn crib/tool shed, but you say it's not an agricultural building.
26. Slow land development. Would consider moving if more houses are built - we want to live in a rural area. We do not need any new taxes - people are leaving because they can't afford it here. We don't need anything changed - Leave area rural and zoned agricultural.
27. Cut the grass along the road more often. Keep the corners cut so you can see the cars coming. Phone bills are too high. People 65+ should only pay 1/2 of the amount of land taxes. Lower Taxes - too many people are losing homes. Don't just raise taxes every year.
28. Keep the twp rural. Do not want any jobs in the actual township. Rural roads need safer speeds - drivers are too fast. Do not need any retail or shopping.
29. Would be nice if you furnished a stamped envelope as long as you wanted the survey.
30. Roads are in poor condition in many areas. Telephone service is sketchy at best. Cell phone service varies with provider. High speed internet is not available - would purchase if it was. Plow service is also very poor.
31. My daughter and granddaughter want me to move closer. Clean up homes that have junk yards. I was told that an ordinance would be passed to make people get junk out of their yards. I have not seen anything being done.
32. We don't need any more subdivisions in Ashland Township. Two Tibby Towns are enough (Elder and Centerline)
33. Keep as much open land as possible for farming. We enjoy our quiet rural life. Our neighbors are not right on top of us and we get along. People are friendly and mind their own business. WE have lived in Newaygo CO. for over 30 years, and like the idea of keeping it in a rural setting with limited over-building and development. Keep land open for space and farming.
34. We wish there were more rules on letting dogs run free. Our neighborhood is bad.

35. I'm being taxed more than my house is worth. Thank you.
36. Taxes too high for what we get, especially in Grant.
37. Have a good day
38. Prefer minimal governmental interference. That, to me, is the rural atmosphere.
39. Would love to have high-speed internet access outside of the general downtown Grant area. Also, park with a nice playground and kiddie splash park for the kids.
40. Keep the twp rural.
41. Wish we could get natural gas and high speed internet services. I think the township should do all it can to help residents recycle. You should have a trailer at the township hall like the school does.
42. Need Meijer or Home Depot
43. Drop the flood plain laws on Sugar Bush. It's stupid.
44. Property taxes are too high for retirement. We need higher amperage service from the electric company. Telephone lines seem to need much updating. Roadways not being adequately marked also lines on roads, very unsafe.
45. We enjoy access to waterways. Township needs recreational sites.
46. Township needs storefront food and healthy living co-op. Moving because of jobs and gas prices. Electric Co. left a mess when clearing trees under electric lines. Telephone service is terrible. Zoning regulations make it too difficult to improve property affordably.
47. Township needs no new services. It's nice and peaceful.
48. Township is a great place to live.
49. Would like to see natural gas line along 120th to Wisner
50. I will sell my land because taxes are too high. I cannot afford to own land in Ashland Twp. I will buy vacant land elsewhere. Sincerely, Shaun Westerling.
51. Plan to move to larger home closer to GR
52. Need Restaurants and transportation. May move; depends on gas prices.
53. Retired
54. Need restaurants - something not to "grassy spoon." I would like to see the main road (M-37) through town a little more appealing and inviting (i.e. grounds keeping, flowers, and signage). Something that says "this is a nice, well-kept community."
55. Keep farmland and road conditions. We loved the area (moved from GR), but now too many empty houses and no jobs in Ashland Twp. Overall, we are satisfied with everything (fire dept., farm, woods, and the Town of Grant).
56. Township needs curbside recycling, bike/walking paths, and speed control on back roads. May move to be closer to work or public lands for recreation. Overall, this is one of the best townships to live in Newaygo County. Please keep it rural! Not suburban. Please don't cut the trees along the roads and don't pave every gravel street - keep it country.
57. Spouse works in Newaygo Co. Township needs DSL or Wireless Internet.
58. Township needs recreational facilities, walking and biking trails, and parks. Through the master planning process, will there be periodic meetings? Will citizen committees be formed to study aspects of township life? Township has no amenities except three cemeteries, a closed dump, and one boat launch 40 feet wide with no docking and mixed with swimmers.
59. Moving to be closer to work
60. May find larger home that may not be in Ashland Twp.

APPENDIX C

ASHLAND TOWNSHIP ROAD CIRCULATION ANALYSIS

Ashland Township Road Circulation Plan

In a rural community such as Ashland Township, circulation proposals must recognize the constraints imposed by any established traffic patterns. Accordingly, because there are no major traffic pattern problems in the current system, this Circulation Plan will primarily focus on operational improvements designed to increase capacity of the existing road network. Such improvements include upgrading road surface quality, upgrading intersections, installation of new or revised signage or signalization, turning lane additions, and the development of ordinances to preserve road quality.

Various traffic reports were reviewed in the context of preparing the Township's Circulation Plan. Additionally, the county and state supplied traffic counts, accident reports, and car/deer collision data to assist in the effort, and the local school system provided information on the anticipated needs of their busing system.

Vehicular Transportation

Today, motor vehicles are the primary means of transportation in Ashland Township. Routine travel by local residents and workers, and traffic from other municipalities (for work, shopping, etc. in and around Ashland Township) comprise the bulk of the Township's daily traffic. Most of the commercial businesses and farming establishments located in Ashland Township are dependent on trucking for the shipment of materials and goods. Ashland Township is also dissected by routes that carry regional truck and automobile traffic, which significantly add to the local traffic volumes. The Highway and Primary road system is a vital transportation facility of Ashland Township.

Traffic Circulation Concept

Ashland Township's current traffic circulation pattern is focused on M-37, which is a State Highway, and B-35, which is a county primary road, for north-south travel. Other parallel roads such as Wisner and McClelland serve as alternates, but their effectiveness is diminished because they are not constructed to primary road standards, and travelers must tie back into B-35 or M-37 to cross the Muskegon River.

The east-west travel is limited to 112th Street, which is a primary road, and the route of 120th to Wisner to Bagley to 128th that services the City of Grant. Moore Road parallels, but it's limited because it is constructed of gravel. 136th Street crosses the township, connecting the M-37 corridor with B-35, but it is not rated appropriately for heavy truck traffic.

Several key roadway links and extensions have been previously studied, and roadway improvements have been identified. These include the following proposed improvements:

- High-reflective sign posts at all "T" intersections
- 108th and Ferris needs a culvert to prevent washouts
- "Deer Crossing" signs on 136th Street
- The implementation of a truck ordinance and signs
- Upgrading Sylvan to blacktop with turn-around on Sand Beach Drive
- 136th and Crowell remove banks from road edge to allow water runoff
- Speed Limit signage to slow traffic on the curves on Crowell Ave
- The addition of a left turn lane on the intersection of 120th and McClelland to eliminate congestion at the Township Hall during voting and meeting dates
- Remove or replace one-lane bridge over railroad on Colonial

- Ask the county to make one mile of Moore Road east of M-37 into a Primary Road

Roads that have been identified as needing constant maintenance and improvements while preserving their rural character:

- Moore Road west of Wisner
- 136th west of Alger
- North Croswell going down to the river
- One mile of 108th west of Wisner
- Alger south of 108th
- Ferris between 108th and 104th

These improvements will increase safety, services available, and the longevity of the current roads.

Circulation Plan

A Circulation Plan must deal with regional requirements as well as local needs and land considerations. The Circulation Plan will strive to keep the rural integrity and safety at the forefront, while improving circulation for our growing community.

Improvements require cooperation and funding at different levels. As a basic premise to formulating the Circulation Plan, utilization of existing roadways with widening, upgrading, and reconstruction is advanced to the extent practical. The Township Board will evaluate the township's needs each year to best-allocate the road improvements according to the funds available.

Road Classification

In a properly-designed circulation system, each roadway should be designed in accordance with its function; that is, the service that it will be expected to perform. Generally, the road system in Ashland Township can be classified into three functional categories: arterials, collectors, and local roads.

The classification system is really a system of grading for the individual roads. The major road classification carries regional or large traffic volumes to the next level roadway, distributing regional traffic to an arterial system, which in-turn distributes to the next level of roadway, the collector system, which in-turn distributes traffic to a local road, giving individual property access.

In practical application with a developed township, it is not possible in all instances to achieve such circulation principle; however, a close approximation is possible in Ashland Township. With respect to right-of-way designation, due to the built environment and historic resource sensitivities that may be adversely affected if a direct application of the roadway classification system were to occur, adjustments in the roadway design criteria will be necessary on a case-by-case basis where existing conditions dictate such modification.

Roadway Improvement Proposals

- State Roadways: These roadways link important population centers with one another or with other regional roadways. The state roadway in Ashland Township is M-37. This road carries

heavy traffic volumes and serves to carry commuter traffic. Road right-of-ways are as defined by the state for the particular roadway maintained in their jurisdiction.

- County Arterial Roads: These roads include B-35 that runs north-south on the west edge of Ashland Township. County Arterial Roads carry medium to heavy volumes of traffic, and direct traffic onto the regional roadway network. Road right-of-ways are as defined by the county for the particular roadway maintained in their jurisdiction.
- Ashland Collector Road: Collector roads provide connection between local residential development, employment centers, and downtown commercial centers and higher order roads such as M-37. Typically, these roads have only two lanes and carry low to moderate volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. Collector streets in Ashland Township are 120th, Wisner, 124th, Bagley, 128th, and 112th. Road right-of-ways are as defined by the county for the particular roadway maintained in their jurisdiction.
- Local Streets: The remaining township roads fall within this classification. These streets are residential streets designed to provide direct traffic to properties and are expected to carry low volumes of traffic to higher order roadways. Roadway surface varies from asphalt to gravel and/or sand surfaces. These roadways will be the ones most under consideration for improvement by the Township Board review process. Improvements will be considered with the agricultural lands rural residential character in mind without adversely affecting growth and development of the township.

This document was prepared and approved by an approved Ashland Township Planning Commission Subcommittee. Members of the Planning Commission Subcommittee that served, approved, and submitted this document were:

Jim Wilde, Chair
Diane Bullis
Gary Nelsen

APPENDIX D
PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

**Ashland Township
2008 Proposed Master Plan
Comments**

February 9, 2009

Page	Comment
4	Conservation - includes flood prone, sensitive, natural beauty, agriculture. Natural beauty is described as waterways.
7	Development - includes public services. Services should include high speed internet, cell phone service, and aerial digital tv.
9	Population growth in 2000 was 2570, with a 28.7% growth. If growth rate continues 2010 could be as high as 3200 population and 2030 could be near 5400, not 3000 as predicted.
15	Development indicates limited resources. Saving agriculture should therefore include agriculture zoning instead of or in addition to PDRs and TDRs.
18-20	Sand Lake has forty foot wide accesses for the general public. With time and funding these could be expanded. The access on the north side of the lake is extensively used by township and nearby township residents for swimming, boat launching, skiing, and fishing.
21	The work force is indicated as 1250, the narrative on page 20 indicates it to be nearly 2000. The chart states total as 1195. What is correct?
25	This states that agriculture is strong, which it is but needs protection, some has been lost to the 10.1 acre land splits which should be addressed. Living units does not include boats and Rvs. Rvs are allowed by the zoning ordinance as temporary units for a designated time.
	This states that there are 8340 acres of prime farmland and 625 acres of poor farmland. Does the poor farmland have good percolation properties for residential?.
	Wetlands at Sand Lake is minimal due to natural banks and development. River wetland protection is included in the zoning ordinance with the retention of natural vegetation at the shoreline.
	Water quality is noted, should also include related subject of invasive fish population.
	What about well protection?
	Solid waste should be addressed for a resolution of the land occupied by the closed township dump. Possibly restore the land for use as waste water treatment for the townships population center including Sand and Blood lakes as well as Meyer Grove subdivision.
29	Recreation should include Sand Lake accesses, Muskegon River rafting, sports shop outdoor deer archery trail.
30-33	Road infrastructure should address private roads as a local road. Zoning ordinance requires these roads meet NCRC requirements.
	Classification of B35 is not indicated.
	Walk and bike paths needs further definition. Will they accessible for snow mobiles, four wheelers, and golf carts. How would their use be controlled?
	Developments could include subdivision waste water treatment and community type wells including fire hydrants.
34	Subdivision roads are under the control of the NCRC once they approve the design and construction. The maintenance is their responsibility paid for by county and gas taxes. However, something could be in ZO or parcel splits for private roads.
	Technology and communication is only available near M37. What happens to planning for the rest of the township. Farm, special use businesses and in home businesses should not be neglected possibly franchise requirements.
37	Survey responses is reported at 258, only 10% Instead of meeting the minimum requirements of the Enabling Act, the recommendations of the act could have been employed using citizen committees could, and still can be used to give further input on some subjects such as agriculture, commercial, heavy industry, and bike paths (recreation).
	Survey did not ask anything about farming.
	Survey did not ask anything about technology available to residents or use, business or pleasure.

41 Results from survey for light industry, heavy industry, and retail business were not included in planning discussions.
1c Development - public utilities, needs technology elaborated on.
2a Farmland development - missing discussion on zoning for agriculture as an option. MSU Extension land use planner spoke to the planning commission indicating that due to the economic conditions in the area that zoning for agriculture was a better option than PDRs and TDRs. This process has been in place in Dayton and Holton townships for a few years with little residential growth.

42 4b Swimming, boating, skiing, and fishing by the community sometimes outnumber resident use of Sand Lake.
5d Maintenance of subdivision roads is under NCRC jurisdiction, this would mean that property owners would be taxed for their NCRC road as well as NCRC roads at large. Private roads where this could be employed are not addressed. See previous notes.

43 Land use, agriculture, see previous comments.
44 Manistee Forest does not extend into the township.
Industrial uses east of railroad does not have road access, new roads not in this plan.
Institutional category universally includes hospitals, schools, nursing homes and prisons, not government uses.
Churches listed are not on the land use plan.
Recreation, golf course, should remain a special use in a broader zone. What happens if the area goes out of business?
Sand Lake in addition to a residential use has township accesses for recreation, see previous

47 comments.
Public services - is noted as sewer and water is not available, but could be planned for near Sand and Blood lakes and near the City of Grant for industrial/commercial use and certain large subdivisions . See previous comments.
Concentrated growth is in the ZO as "cluster" mandated by the state with waste water treatment as a requirement.
GAAMPS has requirements for proximity for uses within a certain distance to a certain quantity of residences and also different distances from zoned residential uses.

48 Farm preservation means described, see previous comments on zoning for agriculture.
49 GAAMPS is referred to in the ZO no need to add provisions in ZO, especially since they change, one has already occurred this year. Would mean that amendment would be needed every time there is a change in GAAMPS.
Grant is not interested in sharing waste water treatment. A franchise agreement was tried when Subway was built requiring a sewer mandated by the health department. This resulted in Grant annexing the property and the township losing the tax base.

50 River District title is given twice, one is Lake District.
50-52 General Industrial includes "adult businesses" . What is this? Adult entertainment is not wanted.
Plan does not show accesses to commercial west of rail road. Are new roads being planned?
Better entrance view to the township on M37 is noted. Maybe the area at the south end of the township could remain farm land to better show open space.
The plan for manufacturing (40 to 80 acres) and larger retail, big box stores (40 to 60 acres) and regional shopping (100 to 120 acres) is not planned for, only smaller operations with a cutback in the overall commercial zone. Better retail was commented on in the survey.

53 Districts also presently have special use provisions.
54 General Industrial - Can the fire department serve 50 foot height provision?
Changes in river and lake districts. Shorelines are already protected by setbacks and vegetation in the river district. Reference the Sand Lake Management Plan.

56 NCRC has only authority, township may advise only.
NCRC required 100 foot right of way at Meyer Grove subdivision. Could this be the beginning of a walk/bike path?

57 Coordination with others is supposed to have happened with this plan. Required reviews have occurred according to this narrative. This review was only to see that all the requirements of

the
enablin
g act
were
address
ed, not
how
they

were addressed. It may be beneficial to have their review for how this plan fits overall county planning. Perhaps a request could be made to the MSU Extension, land use planner. Aesthetics on M37 - as commented on earlier, possibly keep southern part of the corridor as agriculture and add landscaping requirements for new commercial/industrial development.. Increase the right of way on the east side of M37 to at least 100 feet to allow for a feeder street between properties, resulting in fewer driveways on M37. This cannot be done on the west side due to the proximity of the rail road.

Appendix

Road map - Identify M37, B35 and NCRC primary roads.

Soils map -
• There is identification of the composition of the soils that are numbered, nor what combination of what soils make good agricultural soils. This is not the USDA system.

Future
• Access to light industry and heavy industry west of rail road not addressed.

land use -
• See previous comments on "Institutional". All that are listed are not shown.
• Need waste water treatment and possibly community well facilities.
• There is little growth for commercial. As shown following undulating property line creates more exposure of one district to another.
• I understand that there may be a later plan than the one post on the township web site that I used since the notice did not indicate where plans were available or where written comment could be sent. If what I have is the latest then creeks and lake districts, except for Sand Lake contained in the narrative are not shown.
• Suggest that symbol for zoned areas be done in pattern as well as color, so that, if printed, the individual zones can still be read.

Comment from Roland Braasch, 12634 Sylvan Avenue, Grant Michigan.

These comments were presented to the Ashland Township Planning Commission on February 9, 2009. Some items were clarified to Mr. Braasch, others were corrected at his request, and the remaining concerns are hereby noted.