

NORWICH TOWNSHIP

Master Plan

Proud of our past.....



.....Planning for our future

Revised December, 2022

MASTER PLAN

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Purpose of the Master Plan

The Master Plan is the legal document from which decisions are made by the Planning Commission members to address the current and future needs of the residents of Norwich Township as they relate to housing, commerce, industry, recreation, soil conservation, forests, open space and other applicable resources.

The Master Plan also addresses the location and character of streets, waterways, water front development, drainage, sanitary sewers, water supply systems, pollution control and prevention, and public utilities.

The adoption of a Master Plan is authorized by and required by P.A. 285 of 1931, as amended. The Master Plan was developed, adopted and published by the Planning Commission, and approved by the Township Board.

Adoption Process

Unless specified otherwise, the plan adopted by the Township under Michigan Planning Enabling Act (being P.A. 33 of 2008 as amended, M.C.L. 125.3801 et seq.) is to be the basis for a zoning ordinance pursuant to P.A. 207 of 1921 and P.A. 285 of 1931, as amended.

The Planning Commission reviewed the 2017 Master Plan and made amendments as needed.

In order for the Master Plan to reflect the desires of the community, the public, as well as the neighboring townships, they were encouraged to voice their concerns and opinions.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Norwich Township to maintain their current vision of encouraging the growth of residents who espouse the principals of abiding by the law, loving nature, honoring individual freedom and maintaining a community oriented lifestyle.

VISION STATEMENT

Norwich Township residents enjoy and wish to maintain the natural beauty of their environment: rolling hills, forests, streams, lakes and rural character of their Township.

VALUES

- Respect for all people
- Commitment to maintain the rural integrity of the Township
- Continuous improvement in all areas of service
- Commitment to health and well-being of the people of Norwich Township

Township Board approved DEC 14, 2022.

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GOALS

- Investigate road improvements/repaving/maintenance and the funding thereof.
- Pursue agreements with neighboring communities on issues of joint planning and zoning, and enforcement thereof.
- Ensure that the signage and junk ordinances are maintained and enforceable.
- Review cemetery expansion within the next five years.
- Remain informed and proactive regarding issues currently facing Townships and track current trends so as to be prepared if such issues arise.
- Review Master Plan periodically and perform a full review every five years.

The History of Norwich Township

Norwich Township was the 15th Township in Newaygo County. It was formed by the Board of Supervisors on January 8, 1872. The first meeting was held on the Monday following that date at the Cole School in District #6. The following officers were appointed at that meeting:

Supervisor:	Willard Barton	(1872 – 1873)
Clerk:	Fred A. Ganson	(1872 – 1883)
Treasurer:	Fred J. Voss	(1872 – 1883)

Hungerford:

In October, 1859, the Board of Supervisors of Newaygo County held a meeting and approved a state road from Big Prairie to Leonard (later renamed Big Rapids). This road went through what would later become Norwich Township. The Chicago and Western Michigan Railroad from Muskegon to Big Rapids was completed in 1873. The train stopped in Woodville, Lumberton and Hungerford.

The original Township Hall was located in the town of Hungerford, ¼ mile west of the railroad trestle where it crossed what is now Cypress Road. The original Township Hall was torn down when the current one was built.

Before 1904, the Post Office was in Tom Mills' grocery store. Around 1904, the Post Office was just west of the Old Township Hall and was run by Lantie Abel. Oscar Carlson, who was in his eighties, used to go to the Post Office for mail when Lantie Abel was the Postmaster. At one time, the Post Office was located in the home of George Seager east of the railroad trestle.

There were a few houses in Hungerford. Hank Rogers lived in the one next to the store. Andrew C. Peck lived across the tracks from the Township Hall. Pomeroy's lived a little west of what is now George Toogood's house.

East across the railroad trestle was the depot and some more houses. The Rieckman house was an old Company General Store. It had living quarters at one end, and the store in the other end. At that time, trains went by four

times per day. Hungerford was a flag stop. As the train came by the Guiher place, they waved from the tracks by the stock yards to flag the train. There were quite a few houses east of the Rieckman place towards what is now Art Rickert's place. Otto Carlson, Oscar's father, lived in one of those houses before Oscar was born. Stock yards were built just south of the Rieckman place to hold the sheep from the Sheep Ranch, which is still known by that name but National Forest now.

There was a narrow gauge railroad trestle crossing Hungerford Lake, which was the public swimming beach. These narrow gauge tracks were throughout the area from the woods out back of what was George Toogood's as far northwest as Usery Creek also known as Teachout Creek. A great deal of Norwich Township had tracks to move the logs out.

Jack Bailey lived in Hungerford in 1842. He was Superintendent of Yards and Lumber. Almont A. DeGroot, MD, 1832, practiced medicine and resided in Hungerford around 1879. The Ives Lumber Company was established in 1873. Lumbering ended in 1893 and Hungerford gradually became a ghost town by about 1926.

Lumberton:

Fred A. Ganson started a general store in Lumberton in 1882. Archibald Campbell was a merchant in Lumberton in 1882. The mills in Lumberton burned in 1884 and the Chicago and Western Michigan Railroad closed the railroad station in 1885.

Early Settlers in Norwich Township:

Records in a book owned by Oscar Carlson were in part as follows:

- Silas Lawrence, born 1835, owned 40 acres in Section 26 until 1876.
- Charles Turner, born 1839, owned 80 acres in Section 33 in 1871.
- Frank T. Barbour, born 1840, held 80 acres in Section 25 about 1871.
- Abram J. Hoag, born 1847, owned 120 acres in Section 33 in 1873.
- William Turner, born 1832, bought 40 acres in Section 27 in 1874. Later he bought 40 more.
- Edwin J. Ranney, born 1843, homesteaded 80 acres of land in Section 26 in 1871.

- Hezikiah Turner, born 1830, owned 80 acres in Section 27.
- John E. Hatfield, born 1833, homesteaded 40 acres in Section 26 in 1867. Later he purchased 120 more acres.
- William H. Bailey, born 1830, was a blacksmith and farmer in Section 16 in 1872.
- Alexander Lawrence married Charlotte Hoag. In 1867 they homesteaded 120 acres of land in Section 28.

At that time, Norwich Township had three permanent residents. The Lawrence's walked to Big Rapids to get their groceries. They blazed a trail. Their daughter, Nora, married Charlie Brown who built the house which is still standing just north of Oscar Carlson's house. When Oscar was a boy, the neighbors used to drive their collective cattle to Big Rapids on the old road by Hungerford, Turnbull Lake, and Alcohol Springs to what is now Woodward Avenue into Big Rapids. They drove them on across the river to the stock yards by the Railroad Depot.

Lumbering:

In 1870 the area, which later was Hungerford, was lumbered by Finla Pawling for Captain Ives. In 1882, George Sellinger had a mill on Section 20, Lumberton. It burned in 1884. In 1880, B.L. Ewing had a mill on Section 6, Rickert and Son had a mill on Section 17 and L.H. Kinney had a mill on Section 21. S.B. St. Clair had a mill on Section 20, David George on Section 32 and Ives at Hungerford. Barnhart and Judson mill was on Section 17, north of Lumberton and Wetzel Bros. and Reichart on Section 20. In 1872, Ganson and Campbell built a mill at Lumberton. All mills in Lumberton burned in 1884.

In 1882, the narrow gauge railways were built in the pines around Hungerford and throughout the Township. Captain Ives used six cars and one engine to draw 12,000 to 15,000 feet of logs per load and made fifteen trips per day. Cole and Woodmansee built a shingle mill on Section 32, which operated until 1884. They had a shingle mill on Section 14 by Turnbull Lake, which they moved in 1883.

In 1884, J.B. Beaumont had a mill near Hungerford on Section 16, which did a large business. In 1885, they cut 5,000,000 feet of lumber. Also, in 1884, David George had a mill on Section 32 on Brush Lake. The mill, along with

a great deal of lumber, burned at a loss of \$50,000. In 1883, Wetzel Bros. built a new mill on Section 14 and Isaac Tompkins built a mill on Section 34. Burnside and Clippengar built a mill on Section 8 and Samuel Thompson built a mill on Section 14. These were only listed for one year.

In 1884, Captain Ives had a modern gang mill, planing mill and shingle mill at Hungerford. An Ohio group of lumber dealers visited the Ives Mill. Captain Ives took the group to the woods where they chose a pine tree. Four men used axes and saws and cut the tree down in two minutes. Four minutes later, it was cut into four logs and loaded on the train. They went 2 ½ miles in four minutes, dumped the logs in the lake and an endless chain took them up to the mill. Seven and one half minutes later the logs were cut into lumber. Thus, it took twenty-one and one half minutes from the time the axes hit the tree until it was lumbered, edged, trimmed and loaded on the railroad car. In 1887, the Ives mill was closed, dismantled and shipped away.

Also, in 1884, the Thayer Lumber Company was assessed for pine timber in Norwich Township, Section 27 by what was Roy Olson's place. Barnhart and Judson had a good mill on Section 20 in Lumberton.

The Thayer Lumber company had about 20,000,000 feet of pine still standing in Section 21 near Frank Wentland's. They had put in a large crew of men cutting it. The office was part of the Wentland home. When this lumber was cut, the lumbering in Norwich Township was done. The following notice was found in an old record book:

“1909 – April the 26

Notice – ther will be a stump job let on the sevent 7 of May to the losses bidder.”

Cemetery:

The Hungerford Cemetery records show the first recorded burials as Jonnie Hatfield, 18 years old, buried in 1877, and Rose Spaulding, 11 years old was buried in 1879. In 1930, Arthur Toogood was appointed Chairman of the committee to improve the cemetery grounds. Emery Toogood, his nephew, was appointed Sexton. Emery made a map of the original cemetery dated January 20, 1938. Herbert Ordish was Sexton from 1932 to 1935, William

Wentland from 1936 to 1939, Glenn Smith from 1940-1941, George Mordrow from 1941-1943, Walter Smith from 1944 to 1947, and William Wentland, again, from 1948 to 1964. Frank Wentland was appointed Sexton. A new map was drawn in 1963, including the additional, which was purchased from Arthur and George Toogood in 1942. A new storage shed was built for the equipment in 1943. Memorial Day programs, ending with flags being placed on soldiers' graves were started about 1930 and are still held today.

Township Roads:

Norwich Township has a lot of blacktop roads today. The first discussion of blacktopping was at the Annual Meeting in 1945. Each year, one or two side roads were grubbed, graded and graveled in preparation for blacktop. The residents of the Township raised four (4) mills, later reduced to three (3) mills for this purpose.

County Soil, Conservation Service Nursery:

On April 3, 1950, at the Annual Meeting, William Wentland moved that we loan the Newaygo County Soil Conservation Service \$200.00 to start a nursery. This was approved and the nursery has grown and produces many seedling trees, which were sent all over Michigan as well as to other states.

Schools:

In 1954, three Norwich Township School Districts, Cole, Hatfield and Hungerford, and Goodwell Township Fetterley School District held a meeting and decided to build a new school rather than continue to send area children by bus to Big Rapids Schools. The new school, Pineview, was built on the Cole School site and was occupied February 7, 1955.

Later, part of the Fifth District, Woodville, joined the present district and sent their children to Pineview. The school had four classrooms, lounge, gym and a modern kitchen. Grades K through 6 attended. It closed in 1994.

Current Township Hall

The Norwich Township Hall was built in 1926 and is located centrally in the Township at the corner of Cypress and 9 Mile Road. O & A Electric Cooperative wired the Township in 1938, and in 1942 the Hall was wired for electricity. In 1958, the stage was enclosed for a kitchen and restrooms. A kitchen sink and cupboards were added at that time as well. In 1969, the Hall was paneled and a new ceiling and light fixtures were added. It is now available to Township residents for meetings and parties for a fee. The fee helps to maintain the Hall. It is quite an asset to the community.

Lakes and Forests

Hungerford Lake is used by the neighborhood for swimming and fishing every summer. In 1952, a few children and their parents started cleaning out a place to swim on the north side, where the trestle crossed years ago. After several years of clearing by hand, the neighborhood took up a collection and hired a bulldozer to clear more area and push some sand in the lake.

Turnbull Lake is surrounded by private land. It was sold and the new owner fenced it off. A few neighbors have permission to fish there, but it is not open to the public.

Toogood Lake is privately owned.

Mud Lake is privately owned.

Most of the area in the northern part of Norwich Township is National Forest land and contains acres of wild land. There are also acres of Red and Jack pines planted. Years ago much of this area was fenced, and it is still known as the Sheep Ranch, where many deer are taken each November by hunters camping along the roads.

Gas/Oil Production:

In 1941, oil wells were drilled in the central area and in the southern area of

the Township. Some of the wells are still producing oil and the whole area is used for storage for gas piped from Texas in the summer and piped around to different areas for use in the winter.

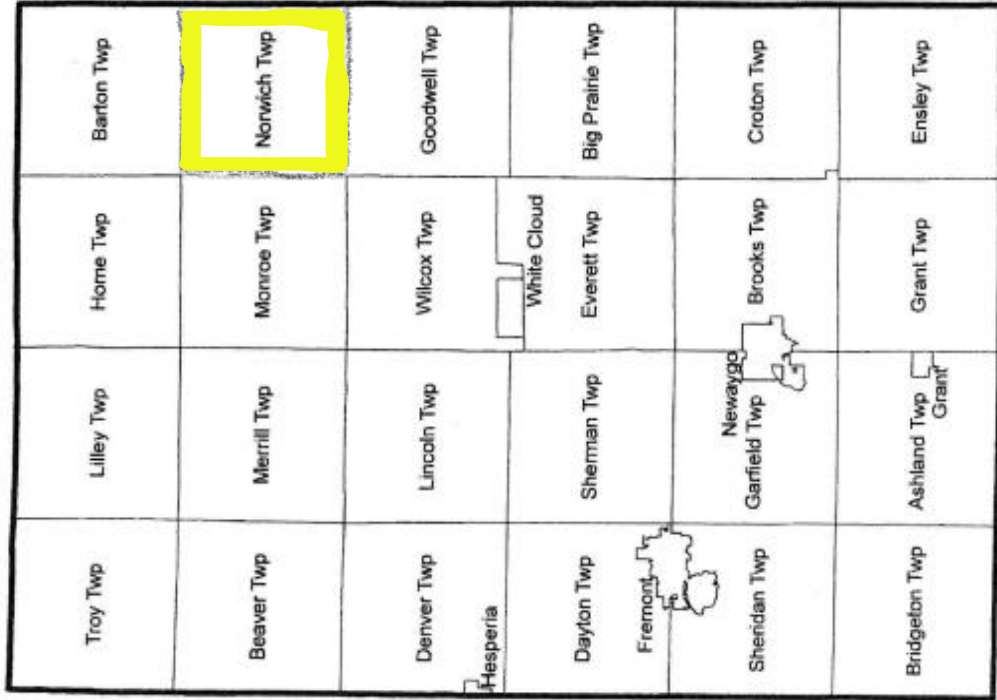
Other:

The voter registration records for Norwich Township show Henry Fortin registered in 1886, George Modrow in 1896, and Charles Peterson in 1899. George Ordish was registered in 1902, Richard Englund registered in 1903 and Pat Neville in 1908.

There were several cattle impounding and damage suits tried and recorded by the first Justice of the Peace for Norwich Township.

In 1922, the Township paid a bounty on crows, woodchucks and rats. From May 19th to July 21st, 1922, bounty of \$30.15 was paid for 51 crows, 34 rats and 21 woodchucks. The bounty was stopped and that was that.

Norwich Township, Newaygo County



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AESTHETICS:

It is the opinion of the residents of Norwich Township that junk is both unhealthy and unsafe. With that being said, well-maintained homes, businesses and recreational areas are an important element of a viable community and personal well-being of the Township's residents.

By improving the overall appearance of the Township, residents may feel more pride in their community, real estate will become more desirable and businesses may prosper.

- Ordinances must be clearly defined and enforced consistently so that residents and other property owners are aware of the expectations regarding property conditions.
- There should be effective ordinances to eliminate blight and junk on private property.
- There should be commercial sign standards that are conducive to an attractive and visually appealing community.
- There should be a program in place to assist residents in the enhancement of their property.
- The Township should pursue prospective grants available through Newaygo County for environmental enhancements.

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural land is determined to be an important, irreplaceable, and irrevivable natural resource. Having stated that, the majority of the land currently devoted to crops in Norwich Township is somewhat marginal, and eventually the poorest land in the township may be converted to other forms of use, such as residential or pastureland, or converted to woodlands (for example red pine plantations). Land use relating to the agricultural character of the Township such as horse stables, riding arenas, roadside stands, and similar uses should be allowed in agriculture areas.

BUSINESS

Currently there are no major business facilities within the Township. There are a number of home based types of business, which consist of uses such as day care. There is one gas station/convenience store located in Woodville, on the western edge of the Township.

There are existing farms within the Township, the majority of which are part-time operations with limited numbers of livestock, or small acreage cash crop farms, the majority growing hay with limited grain production. There is much average to low quality wooded land in the Township, and the majority of the woodlands produce some marketable timber, as well as pulpwood or firewood.

There are also some small automobile repair operators, which are currently operating with little regulation from the Township due to their small size. The two distinct types of home occupations are (1) those that are kept entirely within the dwelling and (2) those that occupy accessory buildings or outside storage of vehicles or equipment.

The intent of this plan is to allow these uses to continue, providing the character of the home and the residential neighborhood is maintained. Regulations regarding signage, outdoor storage, off-street parking, and permitted size of the home occupation should be included in the zoning ordinance. Home occupations that are not contained entirely within buildings shall be discouraged or, at the very least, limited in size and scope. Outside storage shall be limited to only one or two licensed vehicles. Outdoor storage of materials and supplies shall be prohibited.

Signage connected to commercial businesses in the Township can create unsightly appearances and detract from the residential/agricultural character of the Township. Sign clutter resulting from large, gaudy or imposing signs create an unattractive outdoor environment that may degrade the appearance and desirability of the Township.

Therefore, Township regulations should control, or outright prohibit the size, height, type, and location of signage. As there are currently so few businesses operating in the community; the prohibition of signage (particularly off-site signage) should not be a major problem for the few small businesses currently in existence, or likely to come into existence in the future.

The current zoning ordinance specifies a few parcels (with the addition of one for the bed and breakfast in Section 16 after the ordinance was adopted in 1999) where

a special use permit has occurred in response to requests from the then current parcel owner.

Due to the close proximity to Big Rapids Township and the City of Big Rapids, both of which have industrial park space available, any industrial facilities that inquire about the suitability of Township properties for locating industrial facilities should be directed to those two entities, White Cloud or Fremont. The lack of any type of wastewater treatment facility in the Township would be a severe handicap to an industrial facility, and the cost of adding this type of public utility may make it unfeasible.

CEMETERY

Hungerford Cemetery is currently governed by its' own set of regulations, and controlled by the Township Board. It has limited lots left for sale, and may need to be reviewed within the coming years.

COMMUNICATION

People need access to information and communication technologies in order to participate fully in modern society. Utilizing current communication technologies, Township officials, residents and commercial businesses will be able to access information, expand business opportunities and increase the benefits of the internet and high-speed media access.

AT&T (formerly Ameritech) provides the telephone line service within the Township. There are also a variety of internet services available ranging from satellite to fiber optic. Trustream through Great Lakes Energy is currently working to provide fiber networking throughout the Township.

Cell phone service is available; however, reception is spotty at best. Additional towers are needed to provide increased reception to Township residents.

EDUCATION

The citizens of Norwich Township recognize the value of education at every level. The following education opportunities are available to the residents of the Township:

Public/Private School Systems

- Big Rapids Public School K-12
- Crossroads Academy K-12
- White Cloud K-12
- Big Jackson School K through 4th grade
- St. Peter's Lutheran School Preschool through 8th grade
- St. Mary's Catholic School Preschool through 8th grade
- Mecosta/Osceola Career Center
- Fremont Career Center

Community Education Programs

Community education opportunities are available on a variety of topics through Artworks in Big Rapids. High school completion classes are offered on a regular basis through New Directions Alternative Education Center in Big Rapids.

Post High School Education

Ferris State University is within easy commuting distance from Norwich Township. There are also a number of other college and universities within a 60 mile radius of the Township.

Library Services

The Big Rapids Public Library and the White Cloud Public Library provide services to Norwich Township including interlibrary loans, study areas, internet access and technical support.

Environment/Mineral Development/Forestry

- Sand/gravel extraction (mining)
- Oil or Gas wells, and storage facilities
- Water resource protection
- Air quality protection
- Timber harvest/reforestation

The soil types of Norwich Township vary and contain some isolated spots of commercially developable gravel or sand. There are numerous smaller locations where sand or gravel have been removed in the past, and two or three locations that are still in some degree of operation.

In the past, little regulation has taken place, and the current zoning regulations contain detailed conditions that must be met in order to ensure safe conditions, as well as restoration of the sites.

While new sand/gravel mining projects are well covered in the ordinances, the utilization of established locations is problematic. Steps should be taken to recover the usable land and ensure that slopes are within acceptable ranges and topsoil and cover vegetation are established in any old or abandoned pits within the Township.

The Township may be wise to involve the Township attorney and consider taking steps toward preventing the largest of the existing pits becoming a responsibility of the Township to restore rather than the property owner's responsibility.

Historically, Norwich Township has seen a large amount of oil and gas exploration and production, as well as the storage of gas. While most regulation of these activities is handled by the State, there exists the potential for water, air, and surface soil contamination issues. Currently, the storage of gas has been concluded by the closing of the "Norwich Field" by the owners of the field, which was finalized in 2006.

While the Township has a limited area that the headwaters of the White River flow through, its' proximity to the water bottling facility in Stanwood, along with high quality and a good supply of groundwater makes Norwich Township a possible location for groundwater extraction activities.

Norwich Township is an area that has been under some degree of scrutiny for the potential location of water wells for the purpose of bottling water to be removed from the watershed. This is an issue that needs to be addressed in the zoning ordinances to ensure proper management and prevent any adverse environmental effects, as well as to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of the citizens, and ensure a safe and stable water supply for the citizens of the Township.

Air quality currently is very good. There are occasional complaints, which likely will become more common from residents that adjoin a residence that is heated by one of the "outdoor wood boilers". Typically the complaining party is affected by smoke blowing onto their property and in some cases into their residence. Setbacks, or regulations that deal with this problem may be needed. Height of smokestack may also be an issue in some cases, both from an aesthetics point of view, as well as allowing smoke to not become a problem for neighbors.

A considerable portion of the Township is covered in forest lands. Much of the rural character and beauty of the Township is a result of the presence of large, mature trees and wooded areas. Development that requires the entire removal of forested areas should be discouraged. Low Density Residential areas may be appropriate in forested areas, provided the design minimizes the destruction of trees and maintains an overall forested appearance.

The Township should support education of the residents as to the value of both forests as well as individual mature trees, and encourage the maintenance of both. Opportunities to inform residents of incentive/cost share programs for reforestation (for example red pine plantings) as well as selective timber harvests for income enhancement should be utilized. In general the Township should support a policy prohibiting clear cutting in mature forest areas.

GOVERNANCE

Norwich Township is governed by qualified, trustworthy individuals committed to improving the quality of life for the residents of the Township.

The Township consists of the following boards/individuals:

Township Board
Planning Commission
Zoning Board of Appeals
Zoning Administrator

Township Board: (5 members)

The Township Supervisor is elected to office for a four year term.

The Township Clerk is elected to office for a four year term.

The Township Treasurer is elected to office for a four term.

Two Trustees are elected to office for a four year term.

Planning Commission: (7 members)

Members of this committee include, a Chairperson, rotating Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and planning commission members. Individuals are appointed and approved to the Commission by the Township Supervisor and the Township Board.

Zoning Board of Appeals: (3 members)

Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals are appointed by the Township Supervisor and approved by the Township Board.

Zoning Administrator:

Appointed by the Township Supervisor and approved by the Township Board.

The elected/appointed officials should participate in training and education programs to enhance their knowledge base and therefore decision-making abilities.

There should be a process for reviewing and updating ordinances and codes. There should be an ongoing search process for grant opportunities to make improvements that will ease the tax burden for property owners.

Housing and Future Residential Development

For many years Norwich Township has maintained a minimum lot size of 5 acres, along with a requirement that all residences have a minimum of 330 feet of road frontage on a public road. Additionally, there is a requirement of a depth to width ratio of no more than 4 to 1. This type of development unnecessarily land-locks vacant land, destroys rural character, and will eventually create large areas of land with no access to public roads.

Looking forward, the Township may be well served by encouraging the use of new roads that are well designed and safe, serving back lot areas where homes may be clustered. This technique works even in existing woodlot or other areas. Dead end roads should be kept to a minimum by requiring stub roads that can eventually be used to connect to new streets. Direct access to major thoroughfares by individual home sites should be minimized through subdivision and site condominium regulations or Planned Unit Development (PUD) procedures. Private streets can maximize the development potential of section interiors. Private streets should be limited in number, restricted to serving only a few parcels, meet adequate construction standards, be of maximum length with turnarounds and ensure long term maintenance. They should also be constructed with suitable width, drainage and crowned to give the potential for them to be converted to public roadways.

Additionally, demand for manufactured homes in the Township may increase. Therefore, the Township should discourage mobile homes on individual parcels in residential areas. Instead, the Township should provide for manufactured housing

to locate in manufactured housing parks approved by the Michigan Manufactured Housing Association. With the lack of availability of municipal sewage service, mobile home parks within the Township may be impractical. The availability of such sites in close proximity in the City and Township of Big Rapids provides suitable options at the current time for anyone seeking such parks. Should a mobile home community be proposed within the Township, the burden of supplying both a water system as well as a municipal type sewage treatment facility rightly should rest with the developer.

Generally, housing sizes should be provided in a wide range to support a variety of housing opportunities and choices. However, houses of less than 1,150 square feet are considered incompatible with the existing housing stock of the Township. A minimum size of 1,150 square feet is recommended for all housing in the Township.

Additional considerations for future modifications of the zoning ordinance would be to require a minimum width for all dwellings, as well as minimum enclosed storage areas, aesthetic compatibility, and conformance to appropriate building codes.

For mobile homes, the ordinance should also require adequate anchoring, that all wheels be removed, that no towing mechanism be exposed, that they have peaked roofs, and that mobile homes be constructed in 1997 or newer as well as meet all Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations.

The accumulation of junk, junk vehicles and debris is restricted in the zoning ordinance. The accumulation of junk creates public health and safety concerns, as the junk creates habitat for rodents and insects and creates dangerous environments for children.

In addition, junk causes deteriorating property values and generally makes the Township a less desirable place to live. As the zoning ordinance provides for the enforcement of violations as a municipal civil infraction, aggressive and persistent enforcement of the ordinance must be a priority for the Township.

JOINT PLANNING

The Township should consider working with neighboring communities under the Joint Municipal Planning Act (PA 226 of 2003) on local issues that would be better shared than dealt with individually. Benefits would include:

- Reduced costs by sharing consultant and zoning administration fees

- Avoiding the duplication of services
- Stronger defensibility of planning and zoning
- Reduced number of meetings and reviews between communities
- Shared vision of region
- Minimizing conflicting land uses
- Stronger protection of natural resources
- Reduction on infrastructure costs

PUBLIC SAFETY

The safety and well being of residents of Norwich Township and their property will be strengthened by personal safety practices, consistent and effective enforcement of laws, and effective emergency preparedness.

It is a primary responsibility of the Township to be prepared, and safeguard against disasters, whenever possible. Communities who plan and prepare for emergencies provide a sense of security for residents.

Police Officers:

The Township receives police protection from both the Newaygo County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police.

Ambulance Service:

Ambulance service is provided by an arrangement with a local service provider.

Fire Protection:

Fire protection is provided by an arrangement with a local service provider.

There is a current concern regarding the routing of 911 calls to the Newaygo area rather than the Mecosta County Central Dispatch, which is much closer to Norwich Township. At this time, residents must specifically request to be transferred to the closer dispatch area.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

Norwich Township contains several sections of land owned by the Federal Government. Much of that acreage is open to the public and is utilized for hunting, fishing,

cross country skiing, and horseback riding. Hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation is a major contributor to why people come to Norwich Township, and most residents either participate, or have family members who participate in one of these forms of recreation.

Some of the features that allow opportunities for future enhancement are listed below:

- Horse associated activity in sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, and 18, on the Federal Land in Manistee National Forest.
- Winter skiing activity in the same sections.
- Hunting in the National Forest and also private land.
- Snowmobiling in the National Forest and also on private land.
- “Other” recreational opportunities for residents.

Each passing year seems to bring additional activity associated with the horse use on the Forest Trails and its’ associated camping sites. The Federal Government currently manages all aspects including policing, service, maintenance, and improvement.

It would seem to be desirable for the Township to, at minimum, have open channels of communication with the entities involved, to ensure that the direction of the program is deemed compatible with the best interest of the Township residents. At maximum, the Township may decide to actively participate in some aspects of involvement, whether it is planning, seeking grants or funds to enhance or serve the users of the system, or to at least have input into the activities taking place in that location.

Cross country skiing takes place in winter in the sections identified above. Again, at a minimum, opening the communications between the Township, and those involved in servicing this activity would seem advisable.

Much recreational hunting occurs within the Township. Small game such as, coyote, deer hunting with either bow and arrow or gun, are all very commonplace across the Township on privately owned land, as well as the Manistee National Forest.

Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity in the Township. Whether on public or private land, many machines are operated within the Township. Snowmobile trespass complaints are becoming more common. Looking forward, the Township may

need to consider ordinances dealing with operation whether on private land or on the public road right-of ways.

“Other Recreational Opportunities” may deal with the existence (or lack thereof) of any indoor or outdoor recreation. There are currently no public parks owned or operated by the Township as well as no indoor recreation facilities of any kind. This may be a need that we have failed to recognize, or an opportunity to consider for the future. Even a public picnic area with some type of restroom facilities may be desirable. The “old railroad grade” may be an opportunity for recreation, whether it be biking, hiking, snowmobiling, or horse use that should be considered.

TRANSPORTATION:

Norwich Township is unique in that almost all of the roadways within the Township are paved for the convenience and safety of our residents, commercial businesses, and visitors. A balance between the influences of transportation on development, and development on transportation, must be reached in a manner that preserves the character of the area, allows for new development and is economically feasible.

There should be an improvement fund established to provide for ongoing maintenance of current roadways, as it is deemed one of the highest priorities of the residents. Our “Road Fund” is not going as far in improving/maintaining our roads as in the past.

Snow and ice should be removed as quickly as possible from the streets to ensure safe travel for residents. Traffic signs should be maintained to provide for safe travel through Norwich Township.

UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Great Lakes Energy currently serves all except a few homes on the eastern edge of the Township with electric service, which is served by Consumers Energy.

AT&T (formerly Ameritech) provides the telephone line service within the Township. There are also a variety of internet services available ranging from satellite to fiber optic. Trustream through Great Lakes Energy is currently working to provide fiber networking throughout the Township.

There isn't a natural gas utility company offering natural gas for home or business use in the Township, due to the low density of the residences as well as the cost of

extending pipeline from the closest area served, Big Rapids and Big Rapids Township. The Township will also seek to encourage the laying of lines to provide natural gas to its residents.

Telecommunication towers exist within the Township. The Township's policy on the installation of these towers is one of balancing the necessity of communications facilities with the desires and concerns of residents. Consequently, tower locations are expected to be located along interstate transportation corridors, of which the Township has none. The Township will encourage co-location using towers already established. Where this is not possible and towers must be located outside these parameters, the Township's policy will be to locate these facilities along the "old M-20" or 7 Mile Road corridors. For the most part, this means locating on property that actually borders the highway. Setback provisions and other standards protect both the safety and aesthetics of nearby residents and property.

There are two communications towers on the eastern edge of the Township (along old M-20, 9 Mile Road). The Township has tower sharing language in place in its zoning regulations, which encourage/require additions of cell phone services to be placed on existing towers where feasible.

There are no municipal water or sewage treatment facilities currently in the Township. All properties are served by wells and septic tank with drain field types of facilities, owned and maintained by the property owners.

Solid waste disposal is available from several providers, and there are neither public dumping facilities nor transfer stations in the Township.

Recognizing the growing needs and use of solar and wind generated power, the vision for Norwich Township is to allow personal solar and wind generators with limitations including appropriate setbacks, height requirements and other standards to protect both the safety and aesthetics of nearby residents and property. There is limited potential for commercial wind turbines and/or solar farms in the Township. Even though the potential is limited, the Township should develop standards, if allowed.

Conclusion:

An outdated Master Plan, that is not frequently reviewed, may weaken the decision-making process. The Planning Commission should conduct an annual review of the Master Plan, and amend it as appropriate.

Demographic and Population Information Norwich Township,
Newaygo County, Michigan
(Based on 2020 US Census data)

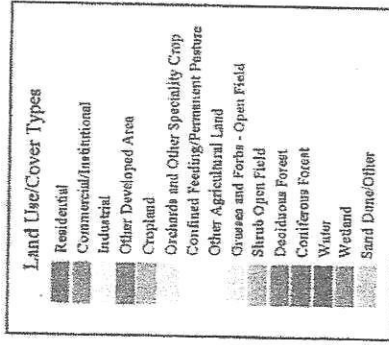
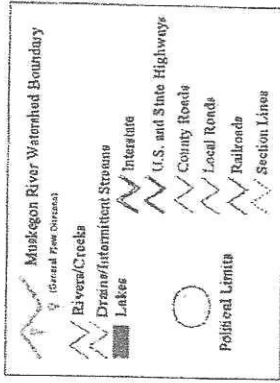
Total Persons:	607
Total Males:	313
Total Females:	294
Total White Persons:	575
Total Black Persons:	8
Total Native Americans:	4
Total Asian:	2
Total Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander:	0
Total Mixed Persons (2 or more races):	16
Total Non-Hispanic Persons:	599
Total Hispanic Persons:	8
Persons Under 5 years:	41
Persons 5 to 17 years:	252
Persons 18 to 24 years:	52
Persons 25 to 44 years:	140
Persons 45 to 64 years:	176
Persons 65 to 84 years:	83
Average Household Size (Persons Per Household):	
Married Family Households with Children Under 18:	131
Single-Parent Family Households with Children Under 18 (Male Householder):	20
Single-Parent Family Households with Children Under 18 (Female Householder):	26
Households with Someone 65 Years or Older Living Alone:	85
Total Housing Units:	280
Total Occupied Housing Units (remainder are vacant):	226
Total Owner-Occupied Housing (Other occupied are renters):	196
Foreign Born Persons (includes naturalized & non-citizens):	18
Total Population:	630
Persons (25 Years and Over) without a High School Diploma:	9
Persons (25 Years and Over) with Bachelor's Degree or Higher:	67
Total Persons (25 Years and Over):	401
Working Women (20 to 64 years old) With Children Under 6:	13
Working Women (20 to 64 years old) With Children 6 to 17 years old:	24
Working Women (20 to 64 years old) With Children Both Under 6 and 6 to 17:	4
Working Women (20 to 64 years old) Without Children Under 18:	51
Women (20 to 64 years old) - Not Working (i.e., not in Labor Force):	57
Total People (16 and Over) Employed:	390

Median Household Income:	\$46,563
Median Family Income:	\$50,000
Per Capita Income:	\$19,381
Persons Below Poverty Level in the past 12 Months:	72
Population used to determine Poverty Level:	626
Families in Poverty in the past 12 Months:	19
Total Families:	176
Households in Poverty in the past 12 Months:	19
Total Households:	176
Median Number of Rooms per Housing Unit:	5.9
Mobile Homes:	46
Total Houses:	280
Median Year Structure (Housing Unit) was Built:	1981
Median Year Current Householder Moved In:	
Median Gross Rent (in dollars) for units being rented:	\$725
Median (Owner-Occupied) Housing Value:	\$132,100
Median Owner Costs for Owner Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage:	\$128
Median Owner Costs for Owner Occupied Housing Units Without a Mortgage:	\$68

Land Use/Cover - 1998

Norwich Township

Newaygo County, Michigan

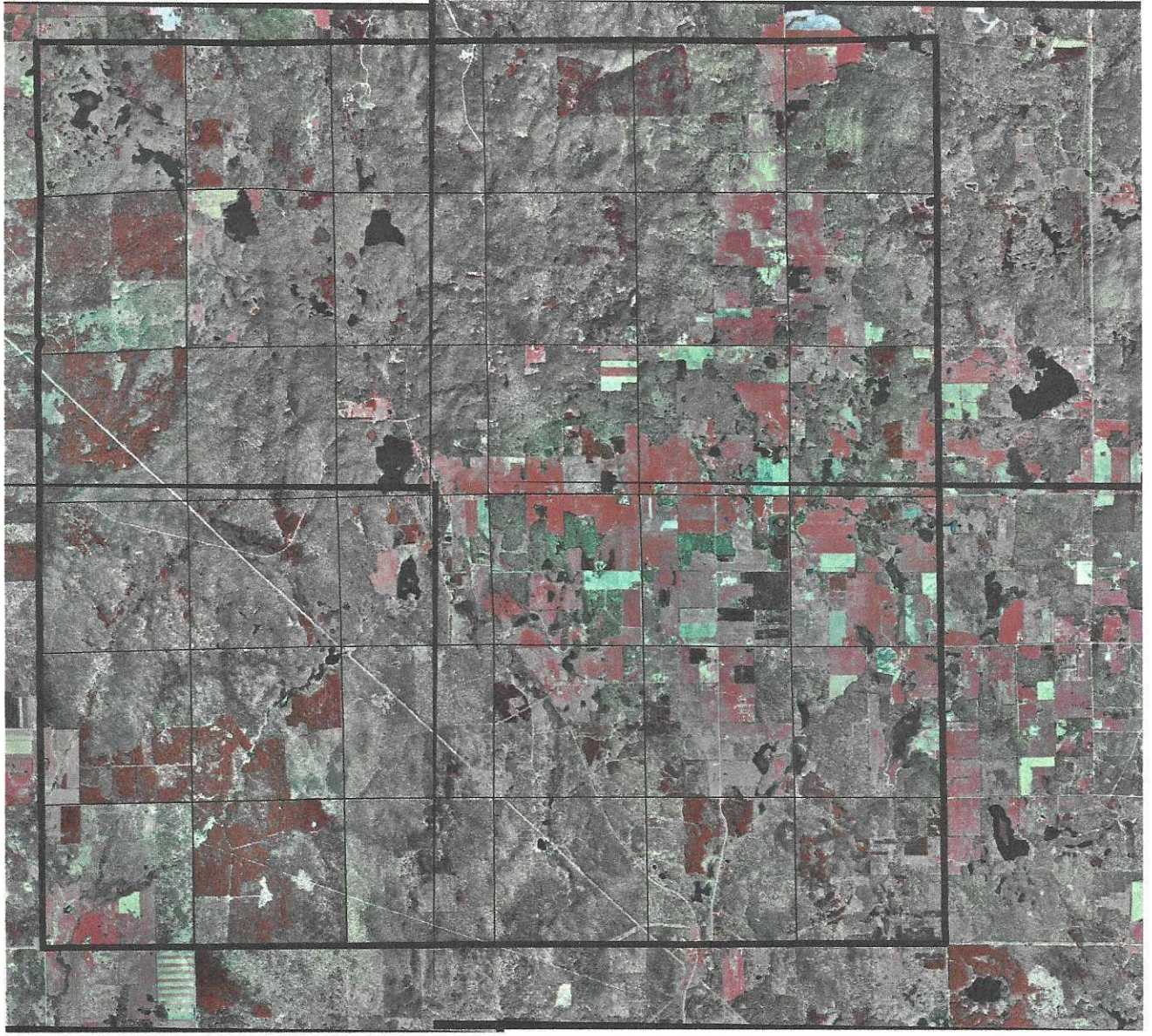


Data Source:
 Michigan Center for Geographic Information,
 Department of Geography and Information Technology, 2002.
 Land Use/Cover Data from the Michigan State University, Center for Remote Sensing
 & Geographic Information Systems, 2002.

Information Services Center
 Anna Water Resources Institute
 Grand Valley State University

Map Prepare: 01/14/2003

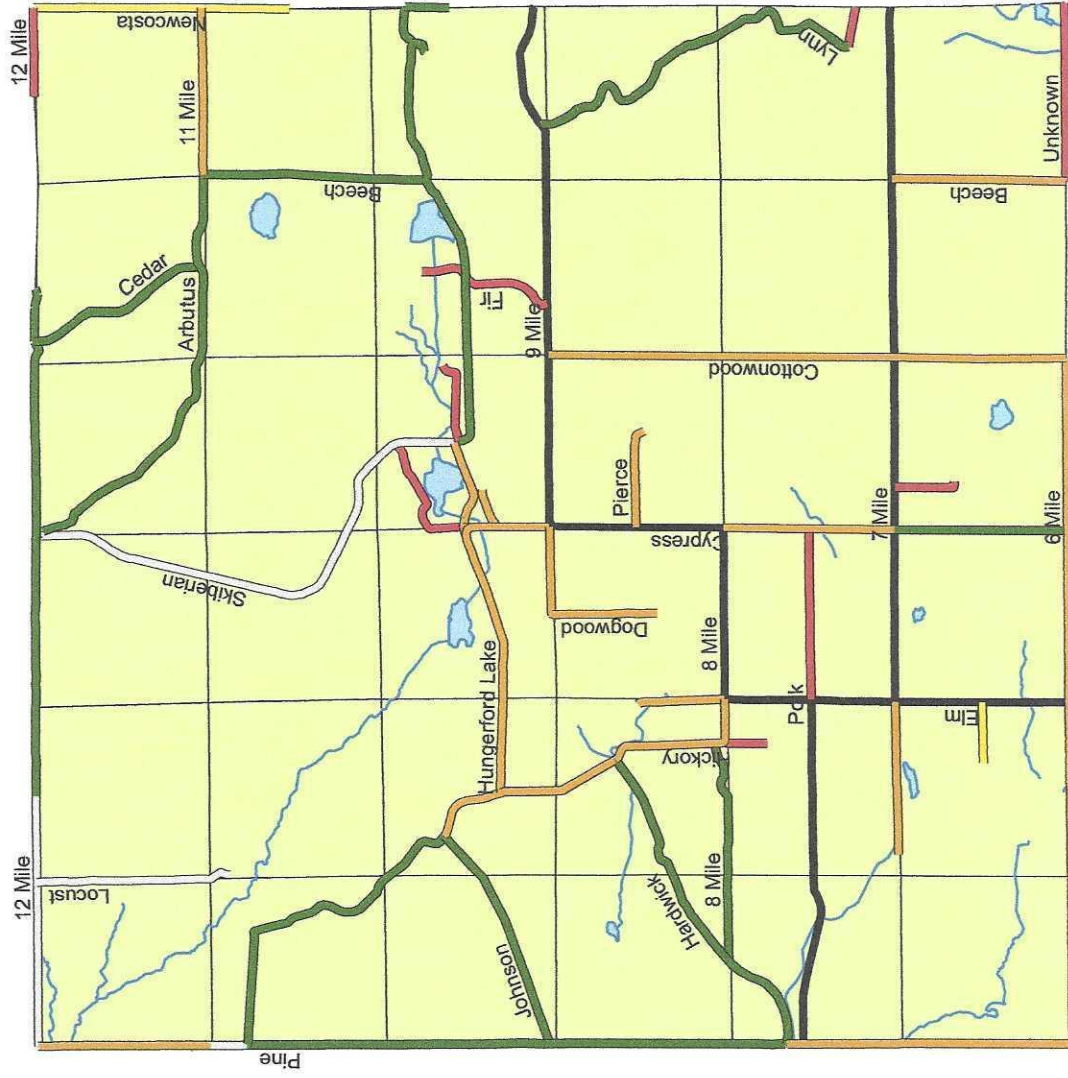
Norwich Township 1998 Digital Orthophoto Quads



4



Norwich Township Roads

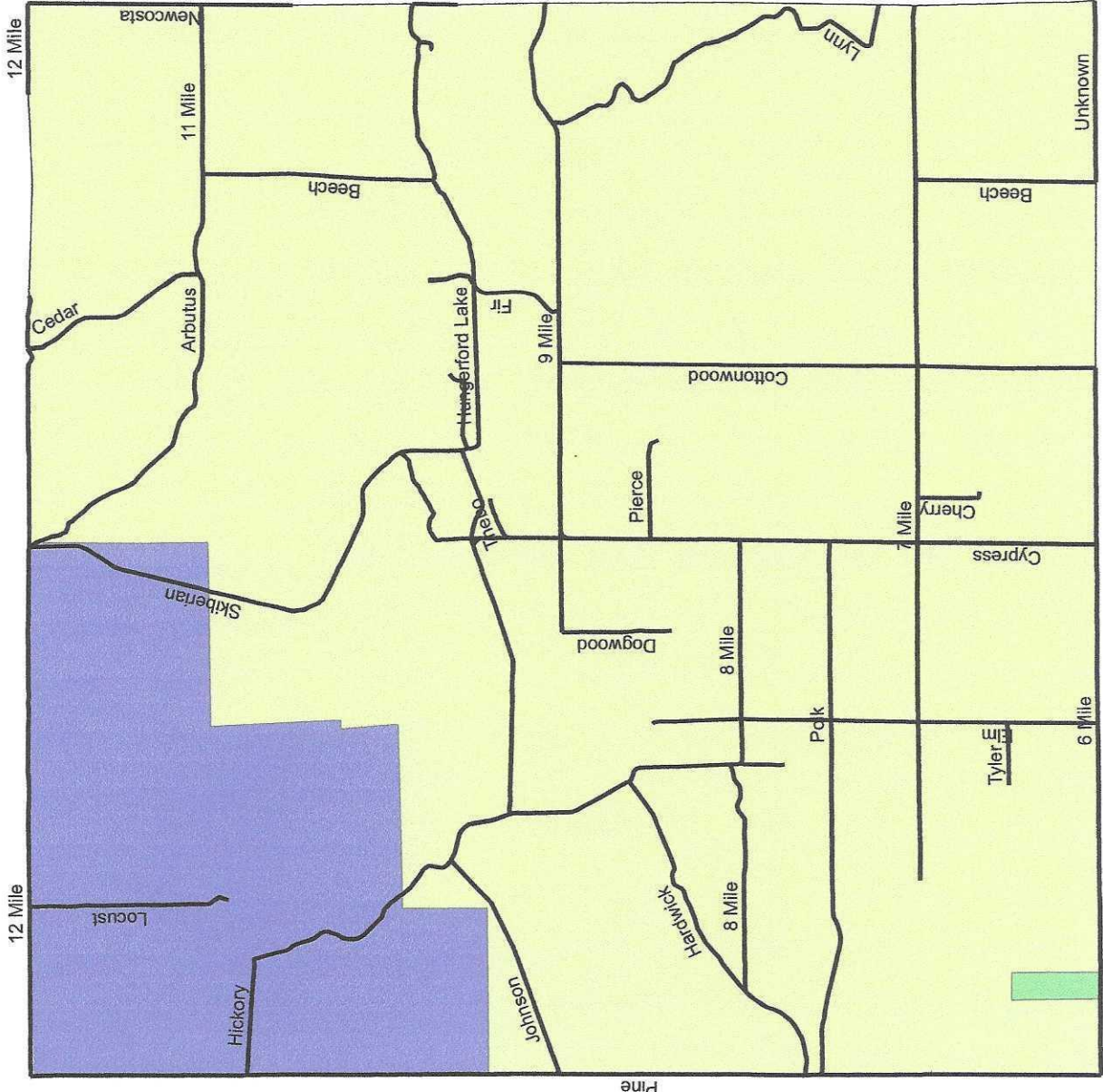


- Primary Bituminous
- Local Bituminous
- Local Gravel
- Local Unimproved
- Local Seasonal
- Unknown Type

4



Norwich Township School Districts

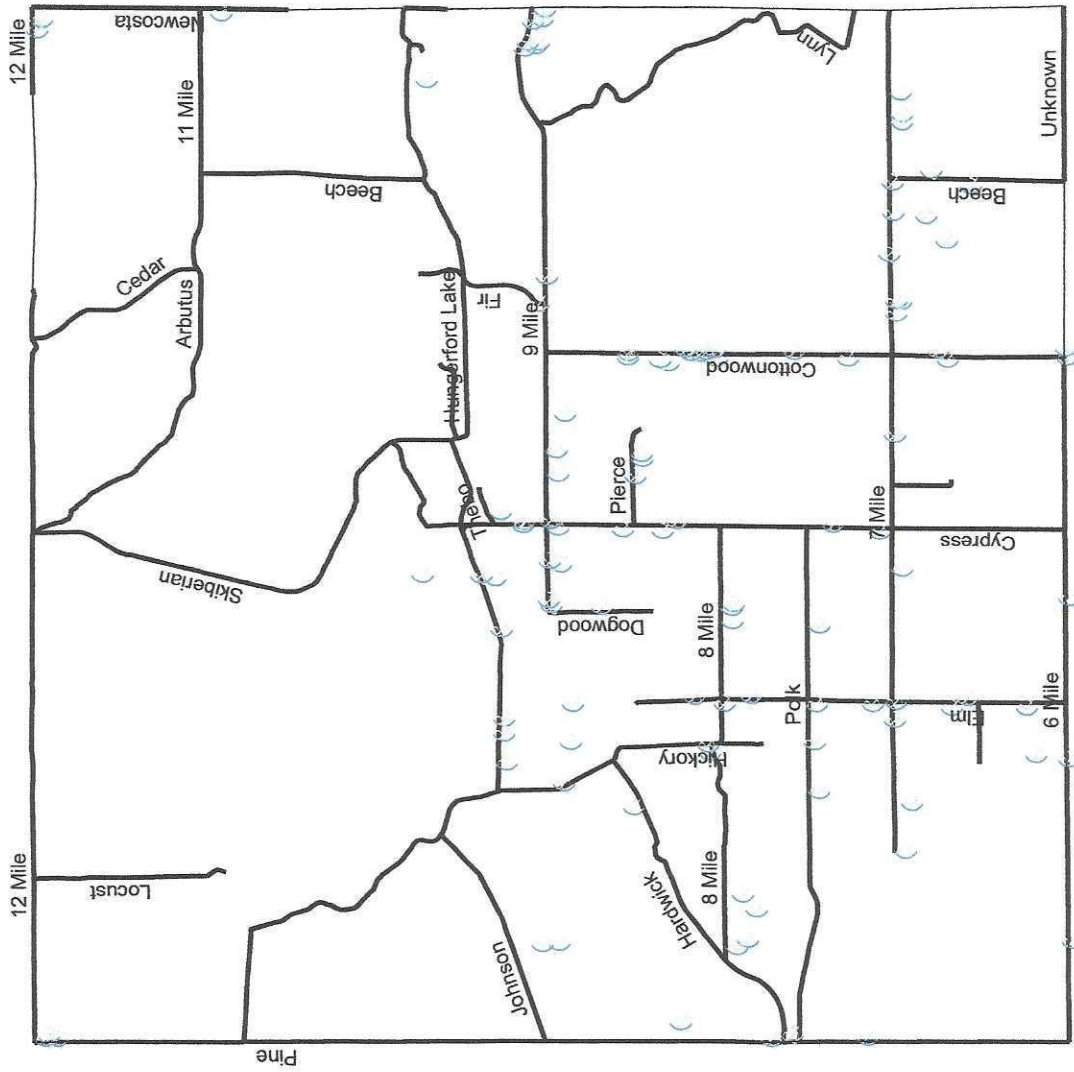


- Big Jackson Public School
- Big Rapids Public Schools
- White Cloud Public Schools

4



Norwich Township Wells



Well Location

4

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Community Survey Results

Norwich Township, MI





Things to Remember...

- 36 returned surveys
- People answered based on their situation and knowledge, not necessarily on information
- Reinforce things you already know, learn some new things about your community
- Board & Planning Commission members – you can't make everyone happy 😊

Question #1

What do you think are the three most important township issues that need to be addressed in the future?

- Road maintenance & repair
- Maintaining rural character & natural resources, managing future growth
- Junk cleanup
- Zoning ordinances/enforcement



Question #2

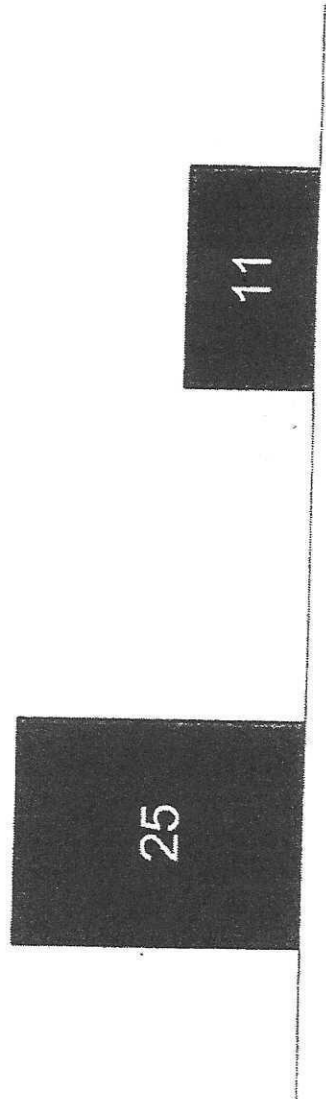
What do you want the township to look like for your
children and grandchildren?

A safe & clean rural township with
protected natural resources



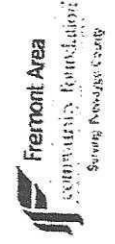
Question #3

Are you happy with the township's 5 acre
minimum lot size?



Yes

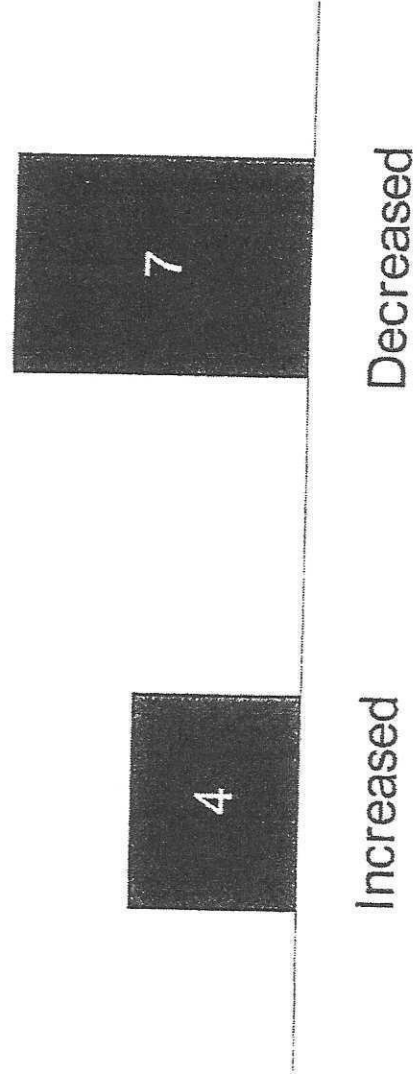
No





Question # 3 (continued)

If you answered no, should it be increased
or decreased?



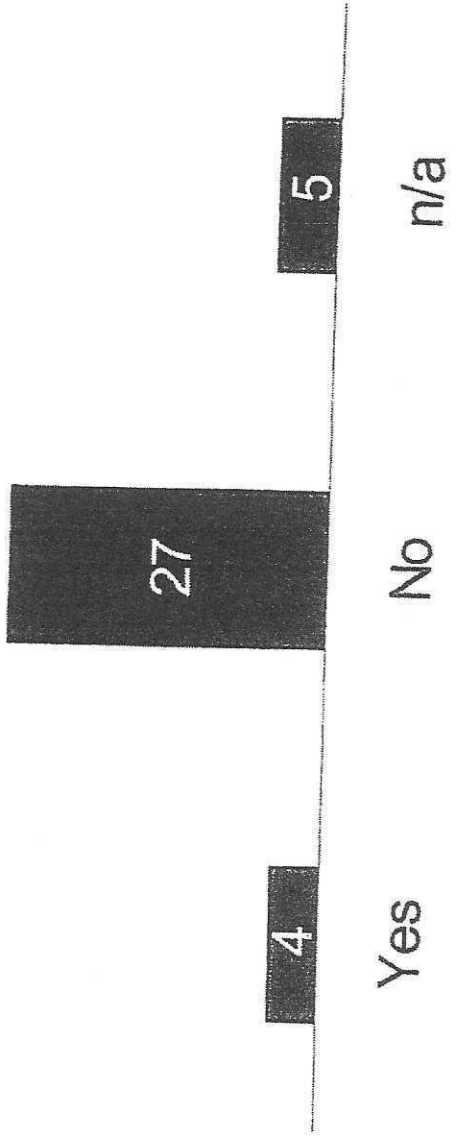
Question #3
Explanations

- Those who said “increased” would like at least 10 acre minimums to maintain rural character
- Those who said “decreased” believe:
 - People only need 2-3 acres to build a house
 - Smaller lots will lead to an increased tax base
 - Larger lot sizes make it difficult for younger and low income families to find housing



Question #4

**Do you want to see more intensive
development in the township?**



Question #4
Explanations

- Those who said “no” wanted to maintain the township’s rural character
- Those who said “yes” wanted small business growth and an increased tax base



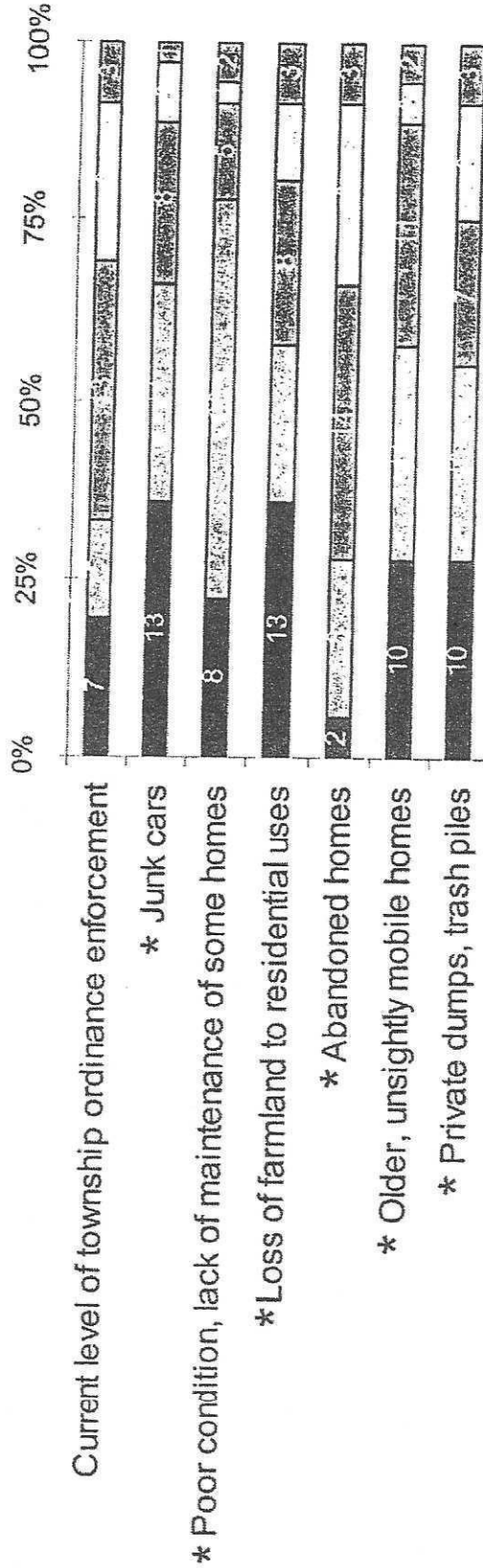


- 18 respondents wanted to keep single-wide homes
- Provide housing for low income families
- Would like to see standards for maintenance and upkeep

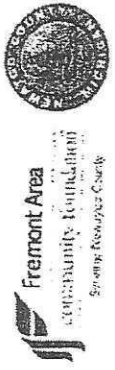


Question #6

How much of a problem are the following conditions?

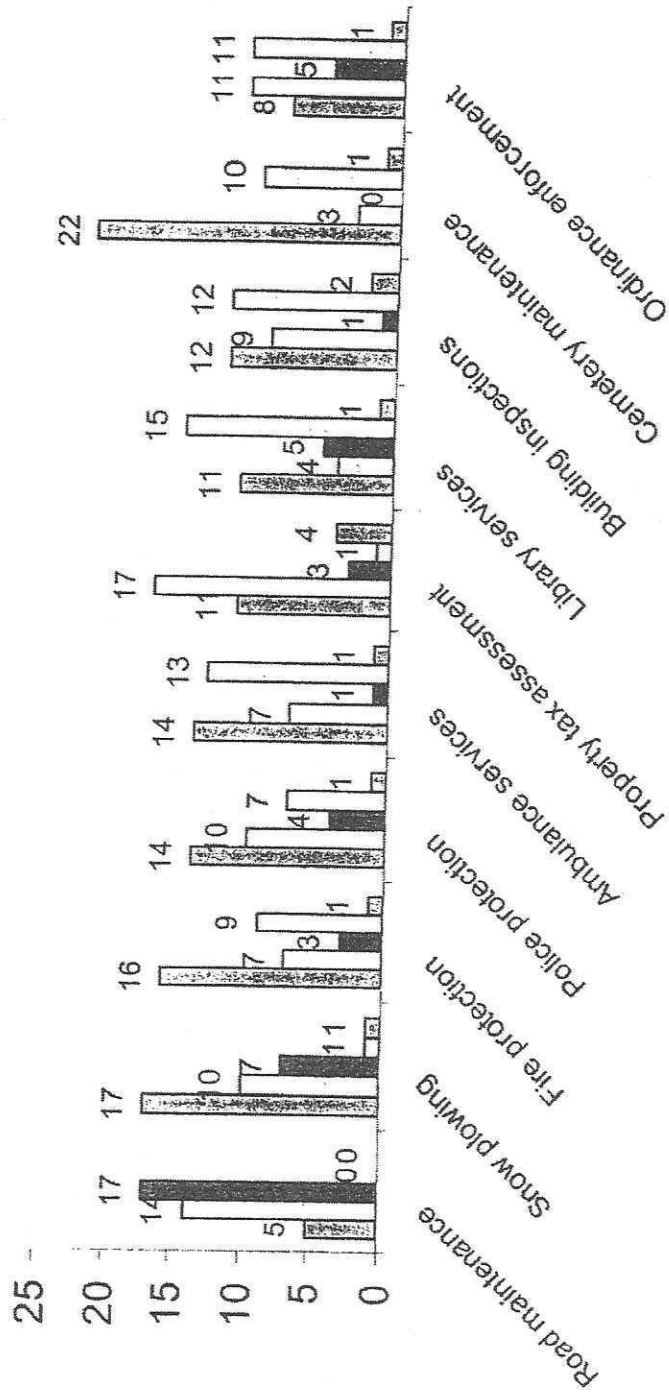


Big problem
 Small problem
 No problem
 Unsure / no opinion
 n/a



Question #7

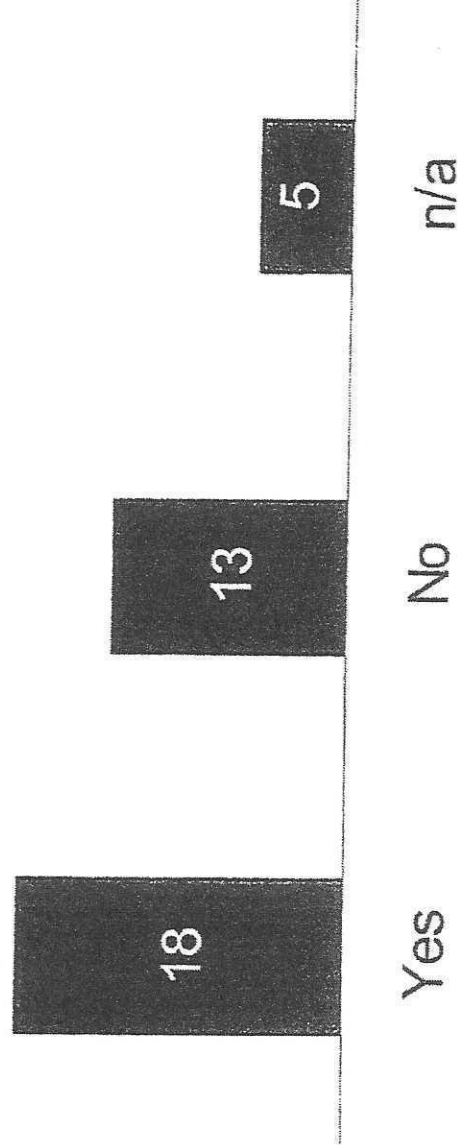
How would you rate the following services?



Good
 Fair
 Poor
 Unsure / no opinion
 n/a

Question #8

**Do you feel that there are nuisances that
need to be addressed?**



Question #8
Explanations

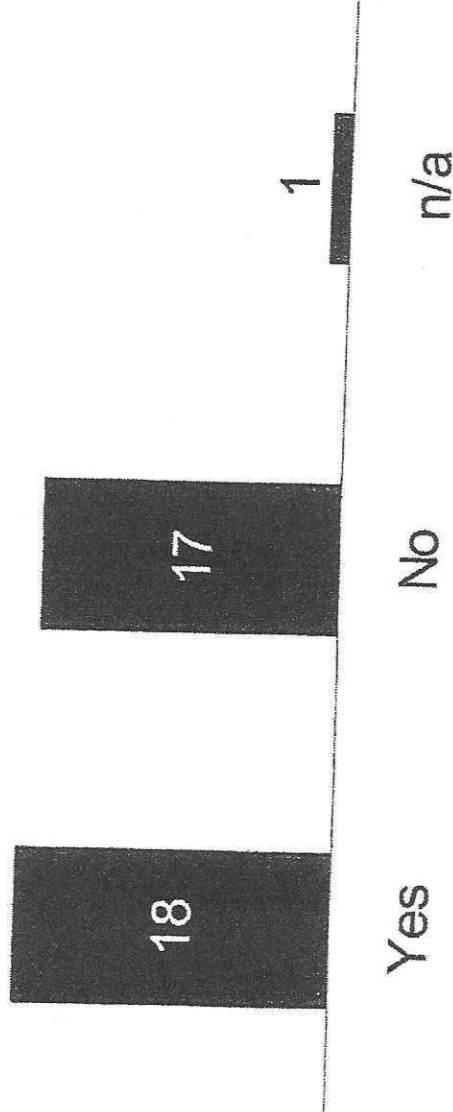
- Junk cars (*Pineview School)
- Junk/trash piles
- Abandoned/old/unkept homes
- Trash burning, loose/barking dogs,
“camping” in yard





Question #9

**Would you support an increased millage
for road maintenance/improvement?**

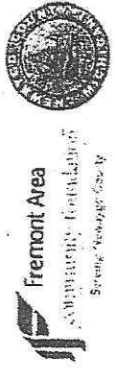


Question #9

Explanations

- Those who supported an increased road millage said:
 - There is a need for road improvement
 - As traffic and construction costs increase, current road tax is not enough

- Those against an increased millage said:
 - We pay enough
 - We can't afford to pay more
 - Roads are fine



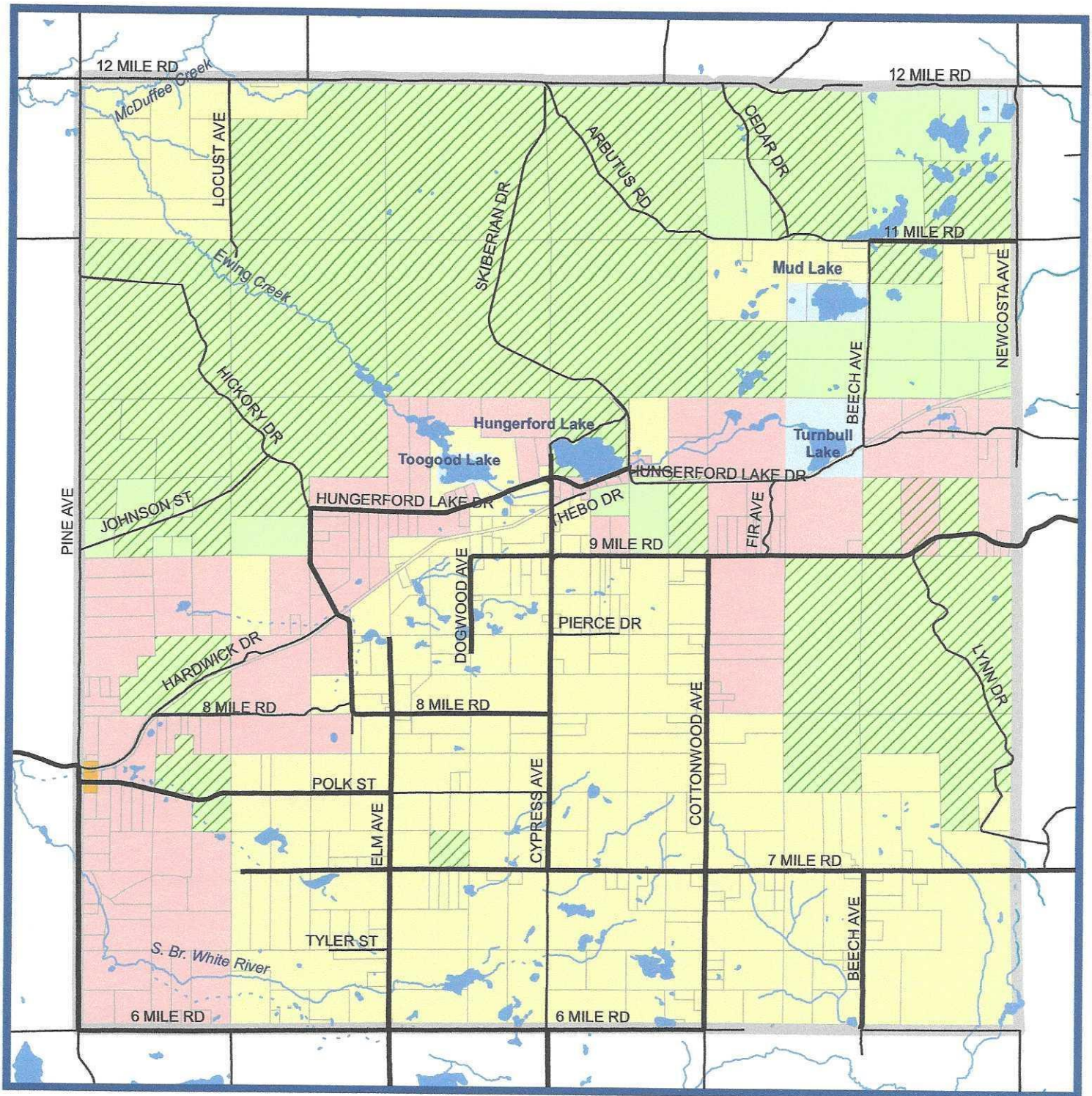
Additional Comments

- Several respondents thanked the township for reaching out to them for their opinions and said you were doing a good job
- Additional need for stricter ordinance enforcement, particularly junk
- Roads should be fixed completely, not just patched





- Increased policing of speeders
- Need for high-speed internet access
- “Stay off my land and mind your own business”



Norwich Township - Newaygo County, MI

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Township Limits |  Agricultural |
|  Parcel Line |  Rural Residential |
|  Federal Land |  Lake Residential |
|  Lake |  Commercial / Industrial |
|  River/Creek |  Wilderness |
|  Drain | |
|  Paved Road | |
|  Unpaved Road | |

Future Land Use Map

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Data Sources:
 Michigan Center for Geographic Information
 Newaygo County GIS
 Newaygo County MSU Extension

October 2022