

# **BARTON TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN**

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## **FORWARD A GUIDE FOR USING THE TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN**

As Barton Township matures, a guide is needed to determine how growth decisions will be made that ensure that the Township's desires regarding development are translated into action. The Comprehensive Master Plan (The Plan) is intended to act as a guide to look forward to the 21st Century.

The Barton Township Planning Commission has a duty to look beyond the day-to-day zoning issues and provide leadership in guiding land use decisions through the Comprehensive Master Plan. A well thought out Comprehensive Master Plan can be of great value to the Township by improving quality of life, promoting the productive use of financial and other resources, working for a cleaner environment, and encouraging an economically healthy community.

However, the value of the Comprehensive Master Plan is directly related to the Township's willingness to follow it, and its diligence in keeping the Plan current by anticipating changing conditions. It is hard work; but the rewards make the effort worthwhile.

Development in the Township has prompted the completion of this Comprehensive Master Plan. It will be important that the Township, from this point, update and maintain its Comprehensive Master Plan as the area continues to develop. As a rule of thumb, a Comprehensive Master Plan should be reviewed by the Planning Commission at least every 5 years. Beyond this, the Commission should conduct an annual review to make sure that the actions of the Township during the year are consistent with the Plan's goals and objectives.

As a guide, the Comprehensive Master Plan is not meant to be rigidly administered; changing conditions may affect the assumptions used when the Comprehensive Master Plan was originally conceived. But changing conditions do not necessarily mean that the Comprehensive Master Plan must change. Rather, the Planning commission must examine those changes and decide if the principles on which the Comprehensive Master Plan are still valid. If so, the Comprehensive Master Plan should be followed.

The MICHIGAN PLANNING ENABLING ACT, Act 33 of 2008, governs the makeup of the Planning Commission, and contains the purpose and requirements of a Comprehensive Master Plan. This

Comprehensive Master Plan was developed according to the principles noted in the Act. According to Act 33, "A Comprehensive Master Plan shall address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future. A Comprehensive Master Plan shall include maps, plats, charts, and descriptive, explanatory, and other related matter and shall show the planning commission's recommendations for the physical development of the planning jurisdiction."

Knowledge of these Acts is important for several reasons:

1. Provisions of the Plan must be based upon the Planning Enabling Act to pass scrutiny by a court of law.
2. The purposes of the Act outline the basic intent of the Comprehensive Master Plan, including the subjects of planning efforts.
3. It is important that the Township understand where the Comprehensive Master Plan is leading them; the purposes can provide the basis for future goals and objectives.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN AND THE ZONING ORDINANCE?**

The relationship between the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance is often misunderstood. The Comprehensive Master Plan is a guide for future land use, and the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present. The Comprehensive Master Plan is not a binding, legal document. The Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the Township and its residents. However, it is important that zoning decisions have a well-established basis in the Plan.

The Comprehensive Master Plan includes a description of the community, outlines goals and objectives, and provides for a variety of land uses, ranging in intensity from agricultural to industrial. Implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan is realized through the Zoning Ordinance. Local control of land use (with some exceptions, such as state and federal land uses) is an accepted legal principle. Land use regulation is controlled through the separation of land

into various use areas, called zoning districts. The rules governing these districts are contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

Act 33 of 2008 prescribes the requirement for the Plan to contain a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan shall include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map, and recommendations for implementing any of the Comprehensive Master Plan's proposals.

The MICHIGAN ZONING ENABLING ACT, Act 110 of 2006, requires that "A zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan" precisely as that described in the Planning Enabling Act. Therefore, a municipality that adopts a zoning ordinance must first adopt a Comprehensive Master Plan.

## **HOW DOES THE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN AFFECT YOU AS A RESIDENT OR LANDOWNER?**

It is important that you understand how the Plan works and how it may affect you as a resident and/or property owner. For most, the Comprehensive Master Plan will not have any immediate impact; in fact, it may never directly affect YOU. However, as someone who is concerned about the future of the township, the Plan should be of great interest to you.

If you are a property owner you may have several interests, including not only your property but properties that are in a similar land use category and adjacent land.

As a homeowner, you will be interested in the properties in your immediate neighborhood. You will want to know what uses are proposed for vacant land in your area.

As an owner of vacant property, you will want to know what land uses are proposed for your property.

As a township resident you will be interested in overall concepts of the Plan, as expressed in the Goals and Objectives. These statements will give you an indication of the Planning Commission's view of the township now, and in the future.

## **HOW SHOULD YOU USE THIS PLAN?**

How you use the Plan will depend on your interest in the future of Barton Township but here is the procedure you should follow

### **Step #1**

**What land use is proposed for your property, or the area surrounding your property?** You will find this information on the Future Land Use map. This map is divided into separate land use categories. Find the category of land use in which your property is located.

### **Step #2**

**Determine how the Planning Commission views development in your area.**

The text of the Comprehensive Master Plan will describe the general direction within your area; it may be either specific, or it may be general.

### **Step #3**

**Determine the meaning of the land use designation for your property.**

In Step #1 you were asked to determine the land use category into which your property falls. In the Future Land Use chapter, there is a discussion covering each of these categories. Find the one that applies to you (the category in which your property lies) and read the discussion on the meaning of each land use designation.

Depending on the nature of your interest in the Comprehensive Master Plan, this may be as far as you go with your investigation. If you have a specific proposal which does not fit the Future Comprehensive Master Plan, you may want to research the Comprehensive Master Plan in more detail, beginning with the Goals and Objectives.

### **Step #4**

**Determine how the Plan and Zoning Ordinance affect your property.**

The Future Land Use designation will indicate to you how your property is planned for use in the future. The Land Use classification will relate to specific Zoning Ordinance districts. Once you are familiar with the Plan and how it affects your land, you will need to consult the Barton Township



Zoning Ordinance to determine the specific uses and regulations that apply to your land. You must meet certain minimum lot sizes, building setbacks, parking requirements, etc.

This does not mean that YOU cannot continue the use that you currently have. The Zoning Ordinance allows an existing use to continue, even if they do not meet the requirements of the Ordinance, if it met the requirements when the use was begun.

The Comprehensive Master Plan may impact the future use of your property, regardless of whether you are a vacant landowner, or a homeowner. As a resident of Barton Township, you will want to become familiar with the Comprehensive Master Plan since it will be used to determine how the township will develop.

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## SECTION 1 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**SUMMARY** - Barton Township is a rural community in extreme northeastern Newaygo County, Michigan. The township is bordered on the north by Lake County to the northeast by Osceola County and on the east by Mecosta County (**Figure 1 – Location Map**). Much of the land in the Township remains vacant and undeveloped. However, pressure for residential development is

**CONCLUSIONS** - An analysis of the existing physical characteristics and the future development potential in the Township concludes:

Existing physical characteristics, growth rates, and present utilization patterns indicate that the Township is well suited for residential and agricultural uses.

Large areas of the Township are unsuited for higher density residential development because of the lack of community facilities and the presence of large areas of prime farmland.

Pressure for residential development in the Township is likely to continue.

New residential development should be carefully planned and located to maintain viable units of agricultural production.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** - To accomplish the goals and objectives of the Master Plan, the following recommendations are made:

**Figure 1**  
**Location Map**



increasing. Residential and agricultural are the predominant land use activities, and the township is well suited to both.

Location Map.pdf

## 6 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

**Agricultural** - Since much of the Township land is best suited for agricultural uses, agricultural development should continue to be the dominant land use. Agricultural uses should be allowed to flourish and expand, while future residential uses should be restricted to certain areas of the Township. Large areas of the township should be devoted primarily to active agricultural activity. Associated residential and accessory uses, if on a separate parcel, should be kept to a minimum size but large enough to accommodate on-site well and septic. Currently, low-density residential uses are spread along county primary roads throughout the Township. Hilly terrain and lack of good agricultural soils makes low-density residential development possible in the central part of the township.

**Residential** – large lot residential densities are recommended for the township averaging five acres per home site. This will allow agricultural uses in addition to rural residential uses, with a minimum parcel size of five acres.

**High-Density Development** - The Township is not well suited for dense forms of urban development. Therefore, such development should not be considered without significant public improvements such as drainage, roads, the protection of adjacent uses and the public health, safety, and general welfare of residents in or near the development should be provided.

**Commercial Development** – Demand for commercial land uses is not strong. Future commercial development could be consolidated near existing commercial development. The existing commercial site is at the intersection of Cottonwood and 17 Mile roads This area should be reserved for local commercial uses and personal service establishments intended to serve local needs such as food stores, drug stores, hardware stores, dry cleaners, beauty salons and similar businesses.

**Industrial Development** - The Township is not well suited for industrial development. Industrial development should be diverted outside of the Township to adjacent communities better suited to accommodate it. However, some forms of light industrial operations, which do not adversely affect surrounding uses, and do not process objectionable materials could be supported in the future.

## 7 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### SECTION 2 THE CHARACTER OF BARTON TOWNSHIP

The character of any community can best be described by looking at its people and their surroundings. This chapter reveals the character of Barton Township and identifies the qualities that make it a desirable place to live.

## POPULATION

Barton Township had a population growth rate of 11.83% from 1980 to 1990, and growth rate of 31.14% from 1990 to 2000. However, in the past twenty years the township has seen a steady loss of population. The population has decreased from 820 persons in 2000 to just 710 persons in 2020, a decline of 13.41%.

Barton Township is surrounded by the neighboring townships of Home, Yates, Chase, Richmond, Green, Big Rapids, Norwich, and Monroe. It is in the extreme northeast corner of Newaygo County with Lake County to the north, Osceola County to the northeast, and Mecosta County to the east. Yates and Chase townships are in Lake County, Richmond is in Osceola County and Green and Big Rapids Townships are in Mecosta County. These eight surrounding townships will be analyzed for historical population comparisons and projected growth.

**Table 1**

<b>POPULATION HISTORY - 1990 – 2020</b>							
<b>ADJACENT TOWNSHIPS</b>							
<b>Township</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change # 1990-2020</b>	<b>Change % 1990- 2020</b>	
<b>Barton</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>13.78</b>	
<b>Yates</b>	585	714	761	790	205	35.04	
<b>Chase</b>	999	1,194	1,137	1,186	187	18.72	
<b>Richmond</b>	1,729	1,687	1,574	1,657	-72	-0.04	
<b>Green</b>	2,833	3,209	3,292	3,314	481	16.98	
<b>Big Rapids</b>	3,100	3,249	4,208	4,744	1,644	53.03	
<b>Norwich</b>	499	557	607	606	107	21.44	

<b>Monroe</b>	247	324	320	323	76	30.77
<b>Home</b>	202	261	232	232	30	14.85
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>1,202</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,428</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>22.73</b>

Barton Township has experienced very limited population growth the past 30 years. Only Richmond township to the northeast has seen a slower percentage population growth, having declined in population.

**Table 2**

<b>TOTAL POPULATION 2020</b>	<b>710</b>
<b>AGE</b>	
<b>Under 5 years</b>	53
<b>5 to 9 years</b>	40
<b>10 to 14 years</b>	32
<b>15 to 19 years</b>	46
<b>20 to 24 years</b>	35
<b>25 to 29 years</b>	53
<b>30 to 34 years</b>	42
<b>35 to 39 years</b>	53
<b>40 to 44 years</b>	40
<b>45 to 49 years</b>	31
<b>50 to 54 years</b>	62
<b>55 to 59 years</b>	74
<b>60 to 64 years</b>	44
<b>65 to 69 years</b>	40
<b>70 to 74 years</b>	29
<b>75 to 79 years</b>	25
<b>80 to 84 years</b>	9
<b>85 years and over</b>	2
<b>SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES</b>	
<b>5 to 14 years</b>	72
<b>15 to 17 years</b>	18

<b>Under 18 years</b>	143
<b>18 to 24 years</b>	63
<b>15 to 44 years</b>	269
<b>16 years and over</b>	578
<b>18 years and over</b>	567
<b>21 years and over</b>	535
<b>60 years and over</b>	149
<b>62 years and over</b>	126
<b>65 years and over</b>	105
<b>75 years and over</b>	36
<b>SUMMARY INDICATORS</b>	
<b>Median age (years)</b>	<b>40.1</b>
<b>Sex ratio (males per 100 females)</b>	90.3

The age distribution of the township shows a healthy age spread. One fifth of the population are seniors 60 years or older, and one fifth of the population are school age children under 18 years of age. However, the 18 to 24 age group makes up less than nine percent of the total population. This could be an indication that young people often must leave the community to find work or further their education. The largest cohort in the township is the age group 55 to 59 years.

## HOUSING

Only 12.7% of all housing units in Barton Township counted in 1990 were designated as seasonal or for occasional use, while the percentage for Newaygo County was 25. This shows that Barton Township is an owner occupied rural residential area.

**Table 3**

<b>HOUSING</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	354
<b>Occupied</b>	300
<b>Vacant</b>	54
<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>	
<b>Total households</b>	295

<b>Average household size</b>	2.41
<b>FAMILIES</b>	
<b>Total families</b>	199
<b>Average family size</b>	2.79
<b>SELECTED HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE</b>	
<b>Households with one or more people under 18 years</b>	30.8%
<b>Households with one or more people 60 years and over</b>	34.9%
<b>Householder living alone</b>	24.1%
<b>65 years and over</b>	6.8%
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>	
<b>1-unit structures</b>	73.6%
<b>2-or-more-unit structures</b>	0.0%
<b>Mobile homes and all other types of units</b>	26.4%
<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>	
<b>Owner-occupied housing units</b>	89.5%
<b>Renter-occupied housing units</b>	10.5%

<b>HOUSEHOLDS</b>	
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	295
<b>AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER</b>	



Barton Township	<b>Under 35 years</b>	49
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has a large percentage of mobile homes (26.4%). This large number of mobile homes can account for the relatively low median home value. During the 1990's the number of mobile homes increased. In 1992, 100 percent of the new homes for which building permits were granted were either mobile or modular construction. In 1993, 92 percent of the new homes were mobile or modular. The average persons per household is 2.41 and the average family size is 2.79. Families typically consist of two or more individuals who are related by blood, kinship, or adoption. On the other hand, non-family households are made of people who live alone or share their homes with individuals they are not related to.

**Table 4**

35 to 44 years	55
45 to 54 years	61
55 to 64 years	61
65 to 74 years	46
75 to 84 years	21
85 years and over	2
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF HOUSEHOLDER</b>	
Less than high school graduate	17
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	142
Some college or associate degree	98
Bachelor's degree or higher	38
<b>YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT</b>	
Moved in 2017 or later	24
Moved in 2015 to 2016	38
Moved in 2010 to 2014	38
Moved in 2000 to 2009	70
Moved in 1990 to 1999	67
Moved in 1989 or earlier	58

Households are occupied primarily by people between the ages of 35 and 74. The largest number of occupants moved into their household between 2000 and 2009. All the housing units in the township are single-family, with the greatest period of construction occurring between 1980 and 1999.

**Table 5**

<b>HOUSING UNITS</b>	
Occupied housing units	295
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>	
1, detached	217
1, attached	0
2 apartments	0
3 or 4 apartments	0

<b>5 to 9 apartments</b>	0
<b>10 or more apartments</b>	0
<b>Mobile home or other type of housing</b>	78
<b>YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>	
<b>2014 or later</b>	4
<b>2010 to 2013</b>	6
<b>2000 to 2009</b>	24
<b>1980 to 1999</b>	111
<b>1960 to 1979</b>	64
<b>1940 to 1959</b>	24
<b>1939 or earlier</b>	62
<b>ROOMS</b>	
<b>1 room</b>	2
<b>2 or 3 rooms</b>	13
<b>4 or 5 rooms</b>	97
<b>6 or 7 rooms</b>	112
<b>8 or more rooms</b>	71
<b>BEDROOMS</b>	
<b>No bedroom</b>	2
<b>1 bedroom</b>	15
<b>2 or 3 bedrooms</b>	236
<b>4 or more bedrooms</b>	42
<b>COMPLETE FACILITIES</b>	
<b>With complete plumbing facilities</b>	294
<b>With complete kitchen facilities</b>	295
<b>VEHICLES AVAILABLE</b>	
<b>No vehicle available</b>	25
<b>1 vehicle available</b>	63
<b>2 vehicles available</b>	125
<b>3 or more vehicles available</b>	82
<b>TELEPHONE SERVICE AVAILABLE</b>	

<b>With telephone service</b>	283
<b>HOUSE HEATING FUEL</b>	
<b>Utility gas</b>	0
<b>Bottled, tank, or LP gas</b>	159
<b>Electricity</b>	16
<b>Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.</b>	26
<b>All other fuels</b>	91
<b>No fuel used</b>	3

## EXISTING LAND USE

The Barton Township Planning Commission collected information about the existing uses of land, using the categories described below. There are 318 residential parcels, 78 agricultural parcels, 4 commercial parcels, 210 vacant parcels, and 35 public/institutional parcels. **Figure 2** illustrates the location and percentages of these land uses.

### Agricultural

Agriculture is an important feature of the township. While only 21.4% of the land area is currently farmed, there are large tracts of active agriculture fields that mirror the best farmland soils. **Figure 3** illustrates the location and extent of prime agricultural soil and soils of local significance and active farmlands.

### Residential

Most of the residential uses of land within the township are single family homes, either site built or mobile/modular homes on individual lots. Some were intended for summer cabins or small cottages and have since developed into year-round residences. A number of these homes are on isolated lots, but in many instances, they tend to be grouped in small clusters of 2 to 5 homes. Most properties are established residential homes fronting on county roads.

### Commercial

Commercial land uses are in a few small locations throughout the township. The uses are for a telecommunications tower, golf course, tavern/restaurant, and consignment sales.

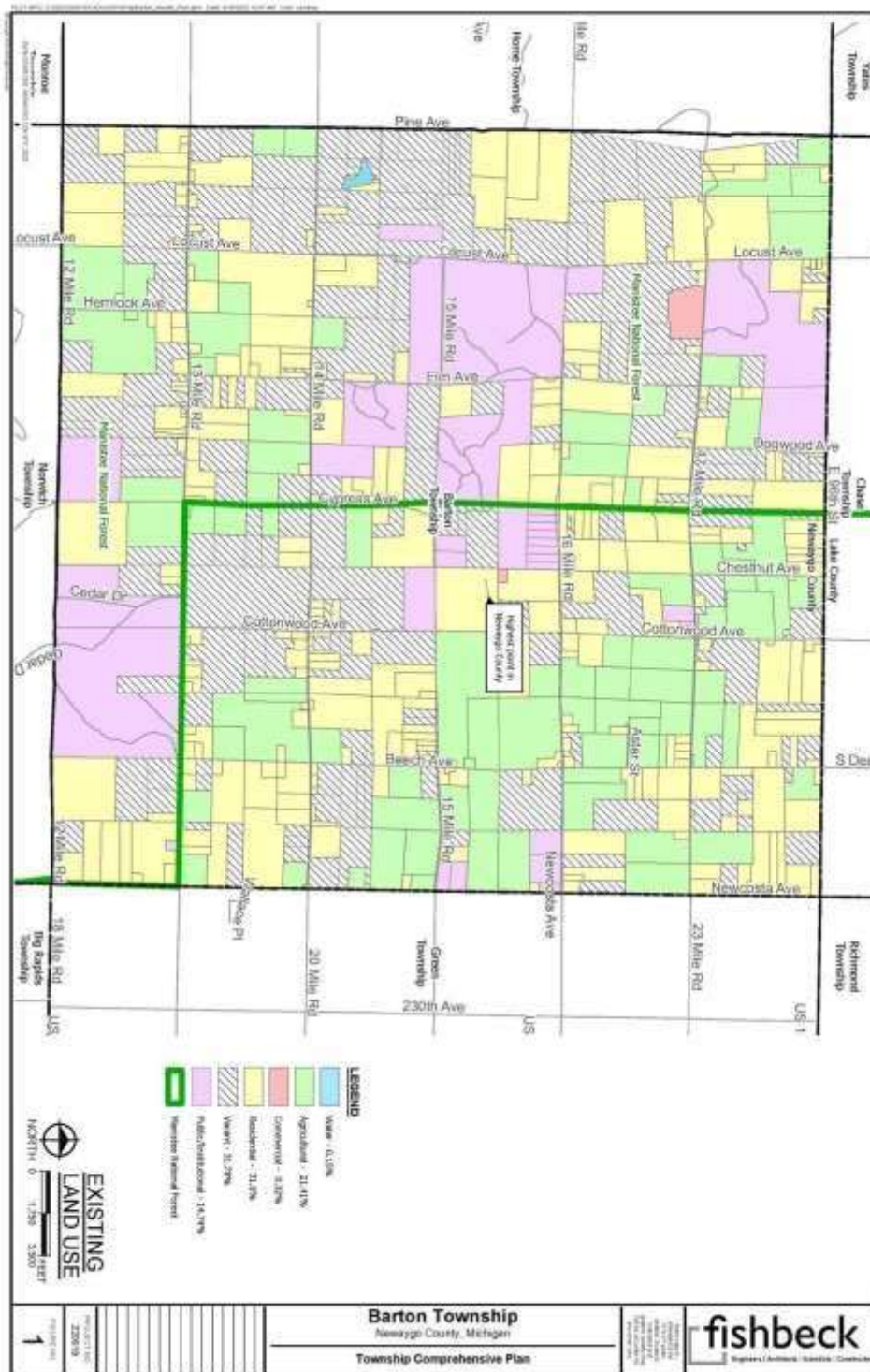


**Industrial**

There is no industrial land use currently in the township.

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Figure 2 – Existing Land Use



### **Public/Semi—Public**

These uses include Federal, State, and Township owned property, as well as churches, and other similar uses. The Township Hall Park and the Manistee National Forest lands account for the greatest number of acres included in this category. The National Forest boundary bisects the township east and west along North Cyprus Avenue as shown on Figure 2 Existing Land Use.

### **Vacant**

Vacant properties include uncultivated agricultural areas and land not otherwise used. Approximately one-third of the township's parcels are vacant land.

## **THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

The character of Barton Township is also reflected in its natural features; rolling hillsides, farmlands, woodlands, and open spaces help define those traits that draw people to the area. Major alteration or destruction of these natural features could produce far reaching impacts. Residents are aware of the quality of the environment and appear to support strong policies in favor of protecting the township's natural features.

### **The Value of Natural Features**

Natural features provide an essential element of the quality of life in Barton Township. In addition to the recreational value of the natural features, other benefits include:

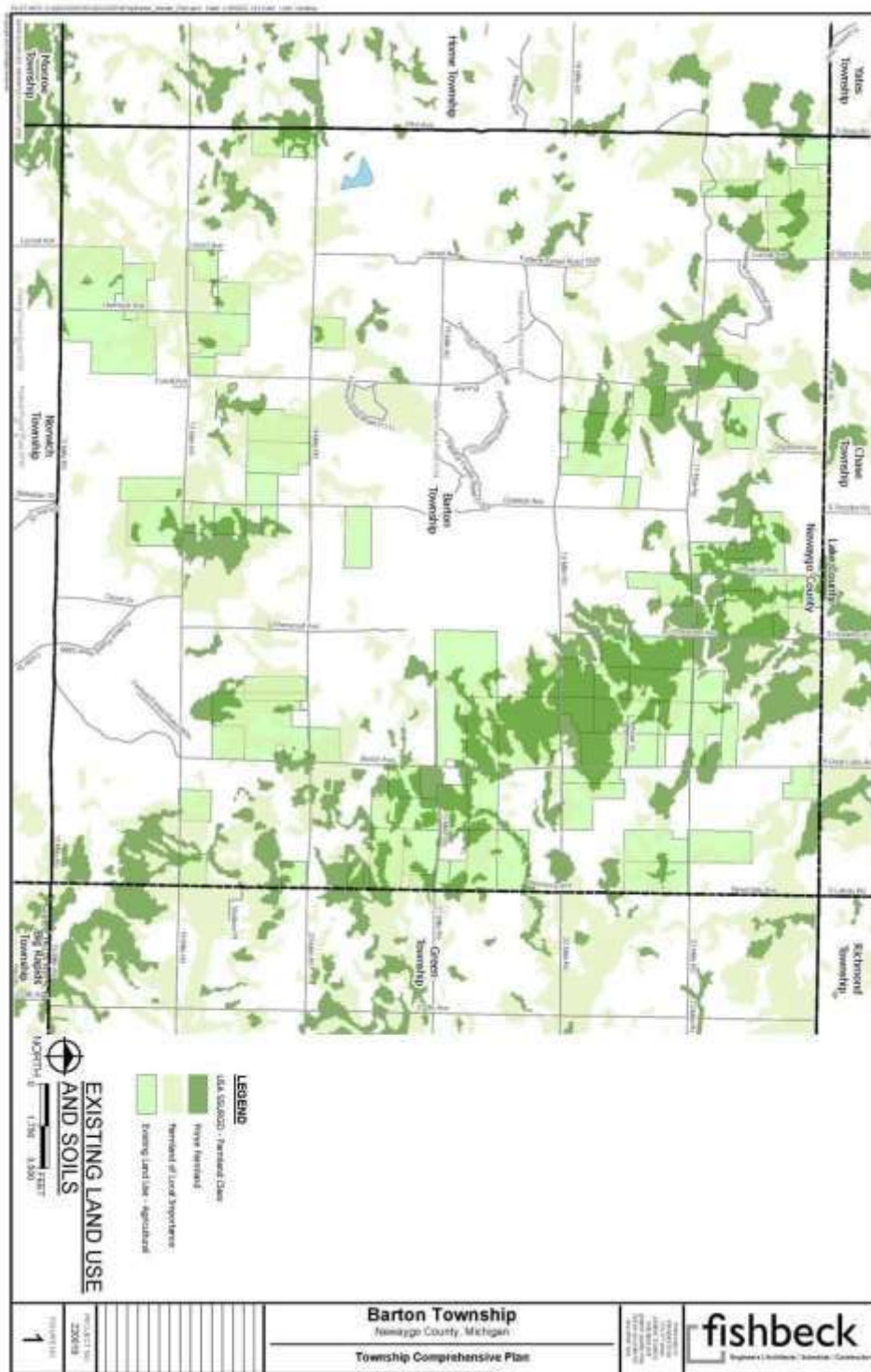
- Clean water supplies for homes served by wells
- Wildlife habitats
- Groundwater recharge and purification, flood control, pollution protection and the support of unique plant and animal life
- Productive agricultural land
- Gives the township an “open space” appearance and “elbow room”

### **Environmental Constraints**

Natural features can either improve or restrict development, depending on the type and extent of the feature. These lands include wetlands, poor soils, and areas of steep topography. Individual site investigations are needed to determine if specific problems are present.



Figure 3 – AG Land Use & Soils



## **Wetlands**

Wetlands are defined by the MDNR as, "land sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life". "Wetland" is the collective term for marshes, swamps, bogs, and similar areas that are often found between open water and upland land.

Recently, with an increased awareness of ecological values, attitudes towards wetlands have changed. Once considered wastelands and sources of mosquitoes, flies, and unpleasant odors, scientists have discovered that wetlands are valuable natural resources that provide many important benefits to people and their natural environment. Wetlands help improve water quality, reduce flood, and storm damages, provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and support hunting and fishing activities.

Among the qualities that wetlands can add to development are:

- Assistance in the control of stormwater and floods
- Improving water quality through filtration of pollutants
- Serving as a groundwater recharge area
- Controlling erosion
- Providing critical habitat for wildlife
- Providing open space and aesthetic value

Significant wetlands in Michigan are protected by the Goemaere-Anderson Wetlands Protection Act, P.A. 203 of 1979. This act places restrictions on, and in some cases prohibits, dredging or filling/development within a wetland that is above the ordinary high-water mark of a lake and stream.

Wetlands which are contiguous to a lake or stream are regulated regardless of their size. The Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (MDEGLE) is responsible for reviewing development plans and requests for permits in non-contiguous wetlands (hydrologically isolated from lakes or streams) and land disturbances within 500 feet of surface water and wetlands, if they are greater than five acres in size, or if designated as essential by the MDNR

anywhere in the state, regardless of size. This review considers the location of the project in relation to mapped wetlands, existing soil types and vegetation, and depth to the water table. The Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) maps wetlands within the township. The MIRIS uses high altitude aerial photography to define areas where natural and manmade features exist. MIRIS information alone is not sufficient to evaluate all the wetlands within the township. The Planning Commission should request the results of a wetland determination prior to approving site plans or other zoning approvals to discover what impacts the project may create on existing wetlands. **Figure 4** illustrates the surface waters and wetlands in the Township.

### **Topography**

Topography in the township is flat to gently rolling, with some dramatic slopes. The highest elevation in Newaygo County is in the central part of the township at 1,349 feet. It is officially unnamed but sometimes referred to as "Grove Hill". There are some areas of the township with steep hills and sandy soil conditions. Site Plan Review criteria should guard against erosion. Topographic relief can provide visual interest to an otherwise ordinary development project. Small hills and ravines can be used to separate different, incompatible land uses, and provide appealing views.

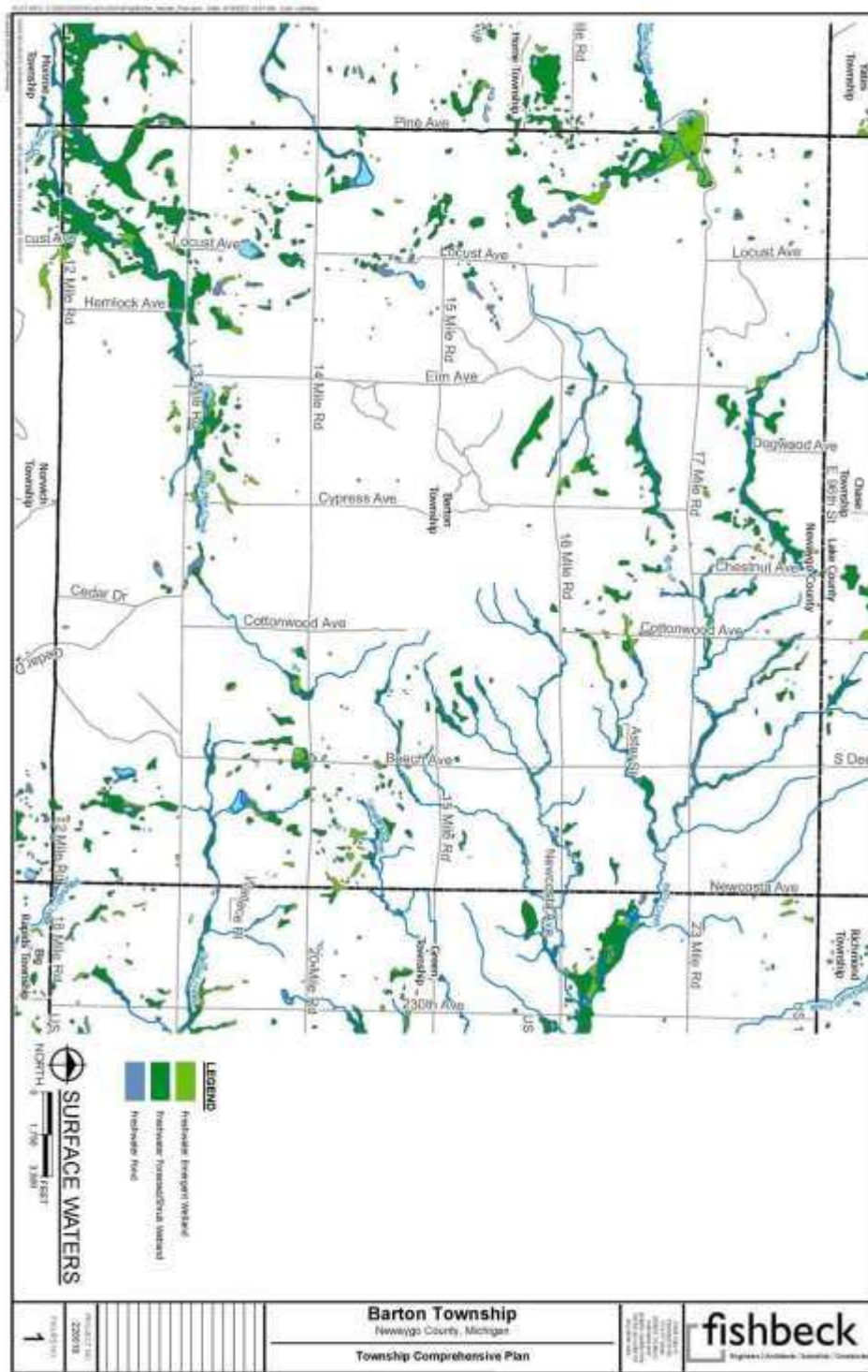
### **Surface Water**

Barton Township has a handful of streams, creeks and lakes, and a few subterranean springs. These springs combined with the light soil conditions, make Barton Township extremely sensitive to environmental pollutants.

### **Groundwater**

Since all township residents are dependent on well water, groundwater protection is a concern. Protection of groundwater aquifers is critical to the long term usefulness of a well system. To this end, consideration of a groundwater protection program for the township would be beneficial.

Figure 4 – Surface Waters and Wetlands



One of the greatest threats to the quality of surface water is non-point pollution. Rather than occurring from one major source, like a sewage treatment plant or industrial use, non-point source pollution comes from rainfall or snow melt moving over and through the ground. As this runoff moves it picks up and carries away natural and manmade pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, and ground water. In Michigan, the greatest causes of non-point contamination are agricultural practices, lawn chemicals and soil erosion. One of the most effective means of preventing non-point source contamination is through the protection of the water's edge.

### **Road network and traffic**

Compared to many communities in West Michigan, Barton Township's traffic conditions are very manageable. Traffic volumes are low, with comparatively few accidents. However, in the rural environment of Barton Township minor changes in traffic volumes can be noticeable to the residents; even slight increases in volumes can be perceived as major. Residents along streets that have traditionally carried very low volumes of traffic will note even small increases of traffic caused by scattered new development in the township

The heaviest volumes occur during the morning and afternoon peak hours, since the trips taken by these vehicles are primarily work oriented. Other peak times occur during the summer months and hunting seasons, when tourism and recreational activities increase. With no concentrated attractors within the township there are few locations that draw traffic in large volumes. Area roadways serve two purposes, to move traffic through the township and provide access to adjacent property. Each road within the township serves both purposes to a varying degree. Roadways are categorized based on their primary function of purpose and then placed in one of the functional classification categories.

The roads in Barton Township are ordered into two roadway functional classifications by the Newaygo County Road Commission (NCRC). This classification system assists the township and the NCRC in determining the order in which improvement projects should be completed. The Township can also use this classification system to assist in the determination of appropriate land uses along each roadway.

## County Primary Roads

County Primary Roads are those which serve longer trips, sometimes extending beyond municipal boundaries to connect to adjacent population centers or longer arterials. County Primaries are designed for moderate to large traffic volumes and speeds of 35 mph to 55 mph are permitted. Some access to adjacent development is permitted from roadways of this type, but on-street parking and curb cuts are regulated to preserve the capacity of the street.

- 13 Mile Road
- Beech Avenue
- 16 Mile Road
- Cottonwood (Hawkins) Avenue

These four major roadways attract traffic through the township or to points in the township. As the only through north-south roadways, Beech Avenue and Cottonwood (Hawkins) Avenue distribute traffic within the township to the local roadway systems. The county primaries, 13 Mile Road, and 16 Mile Road, connect the east -west sides of the township separated by Home Township and Mecosta County. They are the only paved roads which cross the Township in this direction.

Connections to US-131, which is the nearest state trunk line highway, may be made from 13 Mile Road East. The other area state trunkline, US -10, may be reached via Cottonwood (Hawkins) Avenue North.

The NCRC classifies the following roadways as County Primaries:





### SECTION 3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**QUESTIONNAIRE** - The planning process has included a survey of township residents examining issues and obtaining public opinion. In March 2022, the Planning Commission distributed a 25question questionnaire to all Township taxpayers. This process has allowed Township residents, with a variety of backgrounds and opinions, to come together to express their vision for the future of the Township. It is with this input and guidance that the Planning Commission has prepared this Master Plan. Of the 490 questionnaires mailed out 35% or 170 were returned. This rate of return yields **90% accuracy with plus or minus 5% degree of error**. The survey results provided many valuable insights into the preferences of township residents on a variety of subjects. A summary of the results is as follows:

Two-thirds of respondents have **lived in the township for 15 years or more** with 68.0% having **owned property in the township for more than 11 years**. Most respondents are **single-family homeowners** who **live on parcels of 5 acres or more**. 73.2% indicated “yes or maybe” to **paying a small millage to provide better fire and EMS protection**.

Most of the respondents (80.7%) felt that enforcement of **zoning regulations** was just right. Only 19.3% thought that zoning enforcement was either too lenient or too aggressive. An overwhelming number of respondents (93.9%) felt that Barton should be an **agricultural community**, while 63.0% felt that Barton should be a **residential community**. This is supported by the fact that 70.1% of residents say that “rural character” is the **primary reason residents locate in Barton Township**. In addition, protecting groundwater quality and preserving agricultural lands were the top two responses when asked **what issues are the most important in the next ten years**,

49.7% of respondents felt that lot size requirements for single-family homes should be **1 acre to 5-acre lots**, while 50.3% felt that lot size requirements for single-family homes should be **5-acres or more**. 48.2% responded “yes or maybe” to having a **separate residential zoning district**, while 51.8% nixed the idea. When asked about the **current minimum lot size of 5 acres**, an overwhelming majority (74.1%) responded that it should stay the same size in the future. Only 16.9% felt it should be decreased.

Regarding **home-based businesses**, one-fourth (24.1%) answered that they should be restricted to only the principal dwelling, be allowed only on farm parcels, or not allowed at all. Three-fourths (75.9%) answered that they should also be allowed in accessory buildings, including having outdoor storage and outside employees. Similar results were found in the preference for mobile homes in that 81.1% indicated that they would prefer that **mobile home parks** not be allowed in the township. Similar too, was the support for **mother-in-law apartments and guesthouses on the same property as the principal dwelling**. It was believed by 72.5% (“yes or maybe”) that “granny flats” should be allowed in addition to a single-family home.

Concerning the future of commercial businesses and services in the township, 73.0% indicated that the **commercially zoned area should not be expanded**. In addition, 56.8% felt that **commercially zoned areas were not needed** in the township.

Most respondents answered that natural features in the township were important to them with **protecting the quality of well water sources** a top priority. 55.3% of the respondents indicated that **improving the township park** was important. The highest recreational priorities for respondents are **promoting more biking and hiking trails** and **playgrounds**.

Of the important issues facing the township, **improving township roads** was the third highest priority after water quality and preserving agricultural lands. This is supported by the fact that 72.5% stated they would agree to pay a **small millage to provide better roads**. However, 78.7% indicated that **roads in the township are adequate, good, or very good**.

A copy of the complete survey results is included in Appendix A.

**PUBLIC MEETING** - The Township also held a ***public meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ 2022***, to inform interested residents of the planning progress and to unveil the community survey results. This moderately attended session yielded some discussion. Mostly, the residents that attended seemed to be satisfied with the direction of the planning process.

## SECTION 4 PLANNING ANALYSIS AND LAND USE TRENDS

Barton Township faces many influences concerning future land uses. The Township is on the edge of potentially future development pressure from the Big Rapids/Reed City areas, which has resulted in increased growth in all surrounding townships. As land in these areas becomes less available and subsequently more expensive, prospective developers and homeowners may begin to look for land in other areas, particularly in rural settings. The proximity of Barton Township to US-131 and the attractive wooded and rolling terrain in much of the Township adds to the attractiveness of Barton Township to prospective homeowners.

It is useful to have a thorough understanding of population and other demographic characteristics of the township, to gain an accurate representation of existing conditions, a historical perspective, and to extrapolate future trends. The following tables provide information on population, number of housing units, median home values and rent and age of housing units.

### POPULATION TRENDS

The historical growth rates of Barton Township, surrounding Townships and the county are portrayed in Section 1. The township was home to 710 people in 2020. This was a decrease of 0.1% from 717 in 2010. Barton Township's rate of growth has been below the rate of growth of surrounding communities. Of the 8 surrounding Townships, Barton had the lowest growth rate by percentage. **Table 7 – Population Projections** shows population trends and projections from 2020 to 2040 for Barton Township and surrounding Townships.

An analysis of growth trends has been conducted, including a projection of population growth. **Table 7** is a forecast of the population growth in Barton Township. The growth analysis would indicate Barton Township might be expected to experience moderate increased growth. In the past decade however, the population for Barton Township decreased by 0.1 percent. Barton Township was the only township in the vicinity to decline in population. All surrounding townships increased in population. While Barton Township has not historically been a growth center for development it should expect growth in the coming years. Recent building permit data from the Township supports continued moderation in residential growth.

## BUILDING PERMITS

In recent years, increases in the Township's State Equalized Value (SEV) have been the result of residential construction. The amount of new construction, number of building permits, and the value of the average permit for new homes have been consistent. A close review of building permit data since 2016 establishes a good basis for analyzing this trend (**Table 6 – Building Permits**).

**Table 6**                      **Building Permits**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Single-family	3	2	2	2	0	1
Mobile Home	1	2	0	2	1	3

This information provides a profile of Barton Township as a location with a steady population growth, most significantly in the past twenty years. Based on the trends it can be anticipated that population growth will continue at a moderate rate and housing values will remain stable or increase slightly.

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

During the six-year period from 2016 through 2021, the Township averaged 3 residential dwelling permits per year, with no more than 4 permits in any year.

The lack of public sanitary sewer services and water and restrictive soil conditions limit the sustainability of concentrated development in the township. The trend experienced between 1990 and 2020 is expected to be typical of the expected growth over the next twenty-year period. Census data from 2020 shows there were 2.41 persons per household in the Township. Based on this household density and approximately 310 occupied housing units, the 2030 population could be estimated at 747 persons. Assuming this rate of increase continues, the year 2040 population projection for the Township is estimated at 783 persons, an increase of 10.28% over the 2020 population (**Table 7**).

<b>Table 7 – Population Projections</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2040</b>
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<b>Geometric Method (1990 to 2020) Annual growth rates of 0.46 percent</b>	710	743	777
<b>Adjacent Community Growth Rates (1990 to 2020) Annual growth rates of 0.76 percent</b>	710	764	822
<b>Arithmetic Method (1990 to 2020) Annual growth rates of 2.87 persons</b>	710	739	767
<b>Building Permits (2020 to 2021) Annual growth rates of 2.2 persons</b>	710	732	754
<b>Proportional Method 0.28% of Surrounding Townships</b>	710	739	767
<b>Average (Rounded to the Nearest 10)</b>	710	743	777

Source: RTC

It is expected that the bulk of this growth will consist of scattered residential development resembling what has historically taken place.

## HOUSING

A potential land use problem could occur throughout the area with the continued proliferation of scattered large-lot residential development. This has the greatest potential for making the eventual extension of public utilities impractical. Scattered large-lot residential development increases the future cost of providing community services. It will be essential for Barton Township to provide a balance between (1) the types of uses allowed, (2) the density of residential land uses, and (3) the location of these uses relative to each other and to residential areas.

**Table 8  
Projected Population and Housing**

Year	Population	Increase in Persons	Increase in Dwellings	Cumulative Increase in Acreage*
2020	710	---	---	---
2030	743	33	15	75
2040	777	34	15	150

\* = assuming 5 acres per unit

Source: RTC

## **SANITARY SEWER AND WATER SERVICES**

Potable water supply is limited to individual wells throughout the Township. Provision of a public water supply is not likely. Currently, all wastewater is disposed of through individual on-site septic systems and drain fields.

## **RECREATION (PARKS, LAKES, FISHING, BOATING, ETC.)**

There are currently no public access sites for water-related activities. There are public open space areas for recreation within the Federal Forest. The sole developed recreational facility is the 17-acre Township Park on 17 Mile Road. The Township may need to consider public recreational improvements in the future. Potential linkages should be considered that might create connections to nearby trails. Trail systems are a key component of the State's long-term recreational goals and could be a significant funding source for recreational opportunities in the future. However, the priority should be improving the township park, especially play equipment and related opportunities for younger children.

## **NEIGHBORING LAND USE AND ZONING**

Land uses surrounding Barton Township are open space, agricultural, and very low-density residential land use areas. The growth in Big Rapids and Green Townships has created considerable transformation in those areas over the past 10 to 20 years. These changes in land use densities and non-residential development could eventually influence development in Barton Township.

Most nearby Townships have their own zoning regulations. Some of the surrounding Townships have recently adopted updated master plans and recently revised zoning ordinances. Newaygo County does not maintain a Planning Commission and does not currently have a Master Plan.

Surrounding zoning and proposed land uses reflect the existing land use pattern. Most of the surrounding areas are intended for agricultural and residential development. Areas that are adjacent to Barton Township are zoned agricultural and low-density residential except for Chase

Township along the north border of the Township. Chase Township is not planned and does not have a zoning ordinance. Green Township along the east border of the Township is planned and zoned for a mixture of agricultural and low-density residential uses. Home Township along the west border of the Township is planned and zoned for agricultural use. Norwich Township along the south border of the Township is planned and zoned for agricultural use. In each case, much of the land adjacent to Barton is currently either vacant or agricultural land.

## **TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES**

Intrastate US-131 passes within 1 1/2 miles of the east border of Barton Township. The US-131 expressway provides excellent regional transportation for Township residents and provides convenient access. Because of its access and availability for development, US-131 may become increasingly desirable for commercial development and businesses requiring large land areas and visibility. This transportation linkage may also create a demand for adjacent residential development servicing future employment centers.

Transportation corridors not only represent the "circulatory system" of a community but also potential development opportunities. Sometimes they represent current or potential public services and utility corridors. Policy guidelines for the development of major transportation corridors need to be carefully thought out, especially regarding such issues as building setbacks, curb cuts, driveway spacing, commercial development, and frontage requirements. Visualizing each transportation corridor as a type of development "watershed" can be helpful in anticipating growth.

Given the residential character of the township, major improvements to existing roadways are not likely to be needed, other than routine maintenance, including resurfacing of roadways, shoulder, and drainage improvements. If the low intensity land resurfacing uses planned along most major roadways are maintained, even 13 Mile Road, Beech Avenue, 16 Mile Road, and Cottonwood (Hawkins) Avenue are not likely to need major improvements. Some intersections, such as 13 Mile Road and Beech Avenue, Beech and 16 Mile Road, and 16 Mile Road and Cottonwood (Hawkins) Avenue may require upgrading as traffic increases, but these improvements should be minor. However, "new" residents to the township are often used to having paved streets (along with other township services) and therefore have higher expectations of street maintenance than long-time residents.



Given the concerns about road maintenance, it may be desirable to eventually improve some of the unpaved streets in the township. However, the advantages of paving will have to be weighed by the residents in the area and a policy decision made as to whether paving will occur. Unpaved roads, while expensive to maintain, do tend to slow traffic, which many residents may see as promoting their overall quality of life. Others may view unpaved streets as a nuisance, with the problems of dust control, rutting, poor driving conditions in bad weather, and other difficulties. The Township should work with the Newaygo County Road Commission to develop and maintain a priority system for determining which streets should be paved, and when, with a goal to paving and maintaining higher traffic roads.

FINAL DRAFT

## **SECTION 5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The intent of this Comprehensive Master Plan is to provide how Barton Township may look forward to the next century. To set a direction for this period, the Planning Commission and Township Board established a series of goals and objectives covering the primary elements of the Comprehensive Master Plan. To produce these goals and objectives, the Planning Commission and Township Board considered several current and future concerns, as well as the results of the Community Survey. This survey was sent to each household within the township; in all 490 surveys were sent out. Of these, 170, or about 35%, were returned and tabulated. The full results and an analysis of the survey may be found in Appendix A.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Township has determined that the following goals and objectives will guide decisions for this Master Plan. The goals and objectives are based on discussions with the Planning Commission, Township Board, and the results of the community survey, as well as comments received through various public meetings.

### **LAND USE**

**GOAL - THE TOWNSHIP WILL PROMOTE A RURAL LAND USE PATTERN EMPHASIZING FARMING AND RESIDENTIAL USES**

#### **Land Use Objectives**

- Land use decisions will be based on the premise that residential and agricultural activities can coexist harmoniously.
- The potential environmental and economic impacts may include such factors as noise, traffic, drainage, groundwater pollution and the loss of natural features, such as woodlands and wetlands.

- The township does not need to provide for small, local, commercial service businesses.
- Land use densities will be kept low so that septic systems can be easily accommodated, and sufficient water supplies unaffected.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

GOAL - THE TOWNSHIP WILL STRIVE TO PROTECT ITS ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, SUCH AS WETLANDS AND WOODLANDS, FROM THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF NEW: DEVELOPMENT.

#### Environment Objectives

- Development in the township will be sensitive to the potential environmental impacts by integrating natural areas into proposed projects where appropriate, while preserving the environmental integrity and value of those areas.

The Township will use appropriate ordinances and review procedures for new development to implement the goal of preserving and integrating natural features and determine other methods of maintaining and enhancing these features.

Appropriate measures will be undertaken to protect the water quality of the township's water bodies and to ensure that groundwater resources are protected.

#### **QUALITY OF LIFE**

GOAL - THE TOWNSHIP WILL STRIVE TO PROTECT ITS SMALLTOWN RURAL ATMOSPHERE.

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## Quality of Life Objectives

- The township will continue quality enforcement of its ordinances with respect to property maintenance, zoning compliance, and protection of natural features
- The township will use appropriate ordinances and review procedures for new development to implement the goal of preserving and integrating natural features and determine appropriate methods of maintaining and enhancing these features.

FINAL DRAFT

## SECTION 6 FUTURE LAND USE

The study of the existing use of land provides a snapshot in time of the extent, type, and intensity of properties already in use and the locations of vacant land. It also helps find land use patterns and conflicts. Land use patterns develop according to geographic location, land use and zoning policies, and environmental, economic, social, and cultural influences. The location of buildings, the routing of a street or highway, and many other factors influence the shape of existing and future land use patterns.

The analysis of existing land use patterns leads to predictions of future development trends, based on present conditions and trends. The positive and negative aspects of past land use decisions can then be discovered and used to avoid past mistakes and plan for desirable orderly growth.

### AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL

This category is for agricultural uses as well as single family homes on lots of five acres or more. This category is intended to help the township maintain its rural qualities, since it is the desire of people within the township to preserve those traits which attracted them to Barton Township in the first place. Most of the land in this classification already has a strong rural character.

However, a large minimum size will not in and of itself preserve the rural character. In fact, no lot size requirement can make that guarantee. But this category will play a pivotal role in preserving the longstanding preexisting character. Intended for residences with large lots, generous setbacks, and careful placement on the lot to preserve natural features, these lands will help maintain the feeling of openness and tranquility prized by Township residents.

There are several practices that the Township could encourage to promote a rural character. These include:

- Increasing the setback for homes. If buildings were set back from the street, it would be easier to see natural areas along the street.
- Allowing only the most basic land uses by right and requiring most other land uses to obtain a Special Land Use permit.

One advantage of the Agricultural/Residential category is the ability to limit traffic impacts and environmental problems associated with intensive development, particularly since the township's natural features are important to residents. These sensitive areas, such as the wetlands, topography, and wooded areas, all influenced locations for this future use of land.

This category is intended for a minimum of **five acres** per parcel. Since the likelihood of public sanitary sewer and water services in the township is remote, the overall intensity of land use should be low, to prevent groundwater or surface water contamination. In some areas, lots may have to be larger than that allowed by the Zoning Ordinance to properly locate and construct septic fields and water wells. The Agricultural Residential category permits the construction of homes on moderate sized lots, where appropriate, yet allows the agricultural integrity of the area to be maintained.

## **RESIDENTIAL**

No strictly Residential land use category is proposed.

## **COMMERCIAL**

No strictly Commercial land use category is proposed.

## **INDUSTRIAL**

No strictly Industrial land use category is proposed.

## **PUBLIC/SEMI—PUBLIC**

All Federal, State, and Township owned properties, including parks and land within the Manistee National Forest and Public parks are included in the Agricultural/Residential category as well.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

The Master Plan provides a general guide for Township decision makers for the next 10-15 years. The Planning Commission and Township Board will frequently review the Plan to see how well it meets the needs of the township's residents. If needed, the Township should make those adjustments that will carry out the Plan's goals. Changes to the Plan may be needed as events unfold. The Township will wish to consider the following factors as growth continues.

### **Parcel Divisions**

As the township develops, new parcels will continue to spring from larger properties. The Planning Commission should monitor this trend to keep an eye on land use patterns. It would be helpful for the Commission to prepare a map at the end of each year to show where lot splits have occurred and at what size. If it becomes apparent that lot divisions are increasing in any given area, the Planning Commission could look at the planned uses for that area to ensure that the goals of the Plan are being maintained.

### **Rezoning Requests**

Over time the Planning Commission may receive requests for rezoning for such projects as site condominiums, small subdivisions, etc. Each must be reviewed to see how it complies with the Plan. The Planning Commission should monitor the number and location of these requests to see if there is an increase in the demand for lots smaller than what is provided for in the Zoning Ordinance. If the trend shows a marked increase in requests for more residential development, the Planning Commission may need to reevaluate that part of the Plan.

### **Variance Requests**

The Zoning Board of Appeals may receive requests for variances from the lot sizes required by the Zoning Ordinance. Except in unusual circumstances, such as steep slopes, poor soils, or other conditions directly related to the nature of the property, these variances should not be approved.

However, the number and locations of requests should be monitored to see if a pattern is evident. If the number of requests becomes excessive, the Planning Commission should discuss the issue with the Zoning Board of Appeals to see if any changes to the Zoning Ordinance are needed to cut down the number of requests. These changes could include a new zoning district, amending the lot size requirements, or other appropriate measures.



## LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION

The first major implementation step necessary for the Plan is to amend portions of the Zoning Ordinance to provide zoning districts that are compatible with the Master Plan designations. In particular, the AR District should be revised to require a five-acre minimum lot size and minimum lot widths. Special Land Use requirements and Site Plan Review requirements should be reviewed and addressed. Other provisions related to preserving the rural character of the township, may also be considered. In addition, a review of the Zoning Ordinance should include adequate environmental provisions to protect surface and ground water. The ***Future Land Use*** map, in conjunction with this Plan, should provide the guiding principles in determining the designation and configuration of zoning districts.

### Protection of Natural Features

Natural features have much to do with the quality of life in the township. Regulations should be devised that require applicants for development to investigate these features and indicate how they will be preserved as part of the development plan. Significant natural features and other natural characteristics, including but not limited to open space, stands of trees, brooks, ponds, floodplains, hills, and similar natural assets, should be included on all site plans.

Site plan review regulations should be strengthened to include such standards as:

- The uses proposed will not harm the public health, safety, or welfare. All elements of the site plan shall be designed to consider the site's topography, the size and type of plot, the character of adjoining property and the type and size of buildings. The site shall be developed so as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this Ordinance.
- The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by removing only those areas of vegetation or making those alterations to the topography which is necessary to develop the site in accordance with the requirements of this Ordinance. The Planning Commission may require that proposed uses will be buffered from one another

Figure 5  
Future Land Use



and from surrounding public and private property, especially for Special Land Uses.

Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that surface water drainage will not adversely affecting neighboring properties or nearby bodies of water. A Surface Water Overlay zoning district can be effective in guarding against impairment to surface waters and the drinking water supply. Provisions should be made to accommodate stormwater, prevent erosion and the formation of dust. The use of detention/retention ponds may be required. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected at intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular pedestrian traffic or create standing water.

The Planning commission may wish to require specific evidence that groundwater sources will be protected, and other environmental concerns met. Approval of the Health Department or other agencies, while required to develop the site, should not be the sole determining factor in this regard. The Planning Commission may specify what additional evidence it would like to see to make this determination, including additional soil borings, soil reports, hydrological tests, and other such evidence which may be submitted by the applicant and reviewed by the township prior to approval of the development.

## SECTION 7 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND LAND USE STRATEGIES

The landscape is a complex and fragile resource. The land, water, and vegetation are all linked to the ecology of the township. Once destroyed they usually cannot be replaced. In addition, the damage visible on one site may affect other distant areas. Groundwater pollution, for example, may be caused by an activity at one location, but affect groundwater sources miles away.

There are two development approaches to natural features: preservation and integration. Preservation measures should be used when natural features are so sensitive or valued that any change would be unacceptable, both aesthetically and environmentally. In these areas, development should be either prohibited or restricted to those projects which do not affect the environment. Wetlands and flood prone areas are examples where preservation techniques should be used.

Natural features may be included in development where they are an essential part of the township's character, but where minor changes would have only slight impact. Integration would allow for development providing it was compatible with the surrounding area by allowing natural features to remain as undisturbed as possible.

Existing land use patterns in Barton Township suggest continued growth, consisting primarily of residential development in the form of individual lots. Environmental conditions and access constraints limit growth in certain areas of the Township. As growth pressure from the Big Rapids and Reed City areas increases, it may become more challenging to maintain the low-density rural character that is the resident's vision for Barton Township.

Planning and management policies can lead to local programs that identify, incorporate, and utilize natural systems in land use practices. This approach is fundamental to the Township if it is to exist as a unique place to live or visit. Protection of the natural amenities of the Township and their ecological functions are a high priority. Planning and management guidelines can be used to maximize the quality of life and create a more pleasing environment. Without proper planning and management, haphazard development will occur. As the Township develops, there will be an increased demand for public facilities and services to serve the increased population and to protect the environment. This section discusses the management strategies of the Township Barton Township Master Plan Management Recommendations and considering the Township's future needs,

existing conditions, and goals. The following management practices can be administered through a variety of techniques including the Site Plan Review requirements of the zoning ordinance and other ordinances of the Township such as land division controls.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Public Streets** – While the design of public streets (county roads) is not the responsibility of the Township, there are ways in which the Township can influence the future maintenance and improvement of county roads. The highest priority road improvements (paving, widening, extensions, and realignments) should be clearly identified and a program established to implement the necessary changes. The Township should work closely with the County Road Commission to agree on road improvement priorities and related improvements such as bridges, road ends, trails, bikeways, and pedestrian ways.

**Private Streets** - Private streets may serve a legitimate purpose in areas where residential development is intended but would not achieve a high enough degree of density to maximize the conversion of otherwise rural land. Private streets can be effective tools for developing the interiors of sections, especially in areas where road frontages are already substantially developed. Typically, the developer is required to meet the Township's standards for road building and must establish a homeowner's association having the responsibility for road maintenance. In this way, the Township can regulate the quality of development and not be burdened with maintenance responsibilities. Private Street design standards are intended to set forth the minimum standards for all private streets occurring in Barton Township. For example, the minimum standards for local streets and intersections should align with the streets in existing subdivisions without jogs or sharp angles.

Streets should be arranged in proper relation to topography to result in usable lots, safe streets, and reasonable gradients. Streets should follow contours to minimize the effect of water drainage over the street or onto adjacent properties. Cul-de-sac streets that do not have a second connection to a county primary road or the equivalent should be limited in length. Special consideration may be given to longer cul-de-sacs under certain topographic conditions or other unusual situations. Cul-de-sacs should end with an adequate turnaround with a minimum radius of 50 feet for right-of-way and 35 feet for pavement.

Although private streets, by definition, are not under public control, the Township does have a stake in their design and maintenance. Poorly designed or maintained private streets can lead to many problems, such as inadequate access for emergency vehicles, poor snow removal, etc. This can lead to situations where residents ask the Road Commission to take over maintenance.

Although these problems cannot be completely avoided, the Township can pass measures to ensure proper design and construction and help avoid maintenance problems in the future. Private street regulations are oftentimes included in the Zoning Ordinance. However, more recent custom is for the township to create separate design and construction standards. This allows the Township Board to amend specific design standards without having to amend the zoning ordinance.

If private streets are proposed, they should be developed to the minimum design, construction, inspection, approval, and maintenance requirements as specified by the Township design standards. The layout of private streets in respect to their location, intersections, cul-de-sacs, vertical street alignment, street grades, street signs, horizontal curves, curb openings at intersecting streets, etc., should conform to Township standards.

Design standards for private streets should be less stringent for roads serving only a few parcels. Road standards should address pavement type, right-of-way width, depth of pavement and subbase, grades, curves, shoulders, curbs, culverts, and drainage. Basic design standards should be established.

Without design standards, private easements are constructed haphazardly and may be insufficient to carry traffic for extended periods. In many cases, these private easements provide access to numerous dwellings. Without the benefits of basic tools such as maintenance agreements, street names, and stop signs or in some cases, even a good understanding of property owner's rights of access, problems can occur for the township regarding repairs and maintenance as well as difficulties as the result of changes in property ownership. These easements should be identified, and an effort made to urge the affected property owners to establish maintenance agreements, and other improvements such as stop signs, street name signs and speed limit signs.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The goal of this plan is to protect and preserve the natural beauty and environmental quality of the Township. Barton Township has a variety of unique and environmentally sensitive land types

including State and Federally protected species and ecologically significant areas. Development activities can contribute to environmental degradation by contributing runoff of soil, herbicides, and pesticides into adjacent surface watercourses. A level of protection can be afforded to these water features by establishing a buffer zone adjacent to drainage ways. A setback of 100 to 150 feet can be very effective in preventing damaging runoff. Natural vegetative buffers in these areas absorb nutrients that might otherwise be carried downstream, and the resulting ribbons of green space can become recreational amenities in the form of linear parks. At a minimum, the Township should restrict building near watercourses by establishing a specified setback for structures and septic systems.

Existing residential development has primarily occurred along major roadways. As development progresses, an increasing number of interior parcels will be created. The creation of small subdivisions on private streets or the desire for long easements leading to back lots will undoubtedly occur. This is especially true for the low-density residential areas of the Township. Sensitivity to the placement of new roads, private street regulations, and the preservation of natural resources should be priorities.

Low-lying areas should be avoided for development. Typically, the lowest elevations represent wetlands, floodplain, or groundwater recharge areas. The lowest elevations in the Township are along the rivers and streams. The preservation of low areas represents concern for groundwater recharge and flooding. Therefore, developments in low elevations should demonstrate that flooding and impairment of groundwater recharge would not present a problem. Other important natural features include wetlands, lakes, rivers, streams, and forest. They add to the beauty of the Township and play an important ecological role by providing wildlife habitat, detaining storm water runoff, reducing soil erosion and sedimentation, and function as recharge areas for groundwater aquifers. They are the primary reason for the quality of life in Barton Township and should be preserved or left undeveloped.

Large, consolidated parcels provide excellent opportunities to preserve meaningful habitat areas and wildlife corridors. The Township's zoning regulations should provide strong regulations to protect natural features and environmentally significant areas. Overlay zones, environmental regulations, and design standards can all be incorporated into the zoning ordinance.

**Wetlands** - Wetland's management is an integral part of the Township's goals regarding protection from unsuitable growth and development, and a means to preserve water quality. Numerous areas of the Township are classified as wetlands. The Township should monitor development in or near wetlands and discourage development in wetlands. The Township should ensure that proper MDEGLE permits are secured if any filling, dredging, or development is proposed in wetlands.

The Township's Site Plan Review process is an effective tool to prevent development in wetland areas. Township wetlands are identified in **Figure 4 Surface Water and Wetlands**. Wetlands pose a great limitation to development for several reasons. Their water table makes them unsuited for septic disposal systems. To build on them, fill is required, which destroys the wetland and eliminates its role in the ecological system.

At a minimum, the zoning ordinance should include provisions requiring that development proposals obtain the necessary state and federal permits, including wetland permits, before consideration for a zoning permit. There should be requirements that all newly created lots be buildable (i.e., that lots must have sufficient non-wetlands area to meet minimum size, setback, parking, and accessory use requirements). The review process should guarantee that newly created lots and development applications meet the standards of the term "buildable lot" as defined in the ordinance, and a statement that lots created by circumventing this process are not legally developable or eligible for variance review.

**Water Quality** - Water resources are part of a fragile system that is potentially at risk. A combination of poor soils unsuitable for septic systems, a high-water table, and an increasing amount of rural development, may threaten the quality of the area's water supplies. Land use activities can negatively affect surface water quality due to soil erosion, impermeable surfaces (such as parking lots, private streets, driveways, and roofs), soil contamination, and recreational development. The preservation of water quality is important for plant and animal life and drinking water supplies.

One of the most significant threats to surface water is soil erosion, which deposits sediment into streams. One of the more effective means of controlling sedimentation is through watershed management. Watershed management involves a combination of land use and environmental analysis to determine actions to identify and address those areas that contribute to sedimentation of the stream system. A watershed approach is used to ensure that problems that are regional in nature are addressed, rather than attempting to find solutions on a site-by-site basis.



**Watersheds** – In actuality, a very small percentage of the total area of a watershed border directly on the water body. Yet a larger land area is drained by a flow system that transmits surface water from all land in the watershed. If, for example, improved drainage channels do not connect the bulk of a drainage basin to the water body, the movement of runoff may be slow. Much of the water may be retained, infiltrated, or evaporated. On the other hand, if the basin is interlaced with channels that together form an efficient flow network connected directly to the water body, little water is lost en route. Larger watersheds contain numerous smaller sub-basins. Smaller subbasins having rapid drainage should be protected from damaging pollution by limiting the extent and density of development.

Watershed management requires the cooperation of the units of government that lie within the watershed. Coordination of land use and development regulations is necessary to ensure that the actions of one community do not cancel out those of another. Specific regulations pertaining to soil erosion and sedimentation control practices, protection of wetland areas, increased water body setbacks, the use of greenbelts or buffers, and density reductions can assist in protecting water quality. However, these measures are most effective if done throughout the watershed.

**Groundwater Management** – Groundwater quality is a primary concern because all Township residents rely on groundwater for their domestic water supply through individual wells. Any substance that is placed or injected in the ground has the potential to affect groundwater quality. Therefore, protection of ground water supplies is a consideration that should be given high priority. Groundwater contamination can result from a variety of sources. Groundwater protection measures can begin with good surface water management. There is certainly a direct link between land use activities and groundwater protection. A problem of growing concern is the cumulative impact of contamination of a regional aquifer from non-point sources (i.e., those that lack a welldefined single point of origin), such as those created by intensive use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. In addition, small point sources, such as numerous domestic septic tanks, small accidental spills from both agricultural and industrial sources, and toxic substance leaks and spills by transportation activities threaten the quality of regional aquifers. Avoiding undesirable land use activities in recharge areas and wetlands should help protect groundwater quality.

In the past, strict standards regarding the location and depth of drinking water wells were not always followed. The Township still has numerous shallow wells at individual home sites. Scrutiny

should be given in the future to the depth and location of drinking wells and the type and location of septic systems.

Land use regulations, land acquisition, and education programs can play a key role in protecting groundwater. Examples of land use control activities include the following:

- Land use plans which consider groundwater vulnerability.
- Zoning ordinance and site plan review standards related to aboveground secondary containment, interior floor drains, and other topics.
- Purchase of land and/or conservation easements to provide a buffer around municipal well fields.
- Public education through public meetings, school-based classroom programs, library displays, cable television videos, public information flyers, and municipal newsletters.

Groundwater protection will become increasingly important as population densities in areas not served by public utilities continue to increase. As more people move to Barton Township, and more of those people come to rely on groundwater for their household water, protecting groundwater will be essential.

Zoning regulations applicable to groundwater protection are necessary. These include zoning requirements for site plan review and specific provisions for the storage of hazardous materials. Groundwater protection is a true example of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Low-cost contamination prevention measures can help protect against a spill or leak which could cost a community millions of dollars to remedy or, in some cases, destroy the primary water supply

## **AGRICULTURE**

**Agricultural Best Management Practices** - To date, agricultural lands have been mapped, and limited analysis has been conducted on the types of ongoing agricultural practices. It is proposed that the Township work closely with the Conservation District to promote and coordinate implementation of best management practices. Agricultural best management practices are farming practices designed to promote soil conservation. Since runoff from agricultural lands has the potential to be a major source of pollution, steps should be taken to reduce agricultural runoff to the extent possible.

## OPEN SPACE

Using a variety of good management techniques at the local level can help preserve open space. The Township can employ Site Plan Review, Planned Unit Development, or Clustering Options, as functions in the zoning ordinance. Privately funded Conservancies, local groups, or the Township itself can purchase development rights, use conservation easements, or purchase property outright. These techniques are intended to assist the Township in accomplishing its goal of preserving valuable open space. A conservation easement is a legal agreement in which the landowner retains ownership of private property but conveys certain specifically identified rights to a land conservation organization or a public body. Under provisions of a conservation easement, development and other activities that have the potential to diminish the scenic or environmental integrity of the land are limited or prohibited. Conservation easements provide an extremely effective tool for protecting environmentally sensitive lands, such as undeveloped shore lands and wetlands.

At a minimum, the township must provide in its zoning ordinance that land zoned for residential development may be developed, at the option of the landowner, with the same number of dwelling units on a smaller portion of the land than specified in the zoning ordinance, but not more than 50%, that could otherwise be developed, if less than 50%. This allowance will be called the “open space preservation option”.

## **SECTION 8 PLANNING AND DESIGN STANDARDS**

As the Township develops and as people continue to move into the Township in search of rural lifestyles, there will be increasing conflict between development and quality of life. The intent of this plan is to allow reasonable development to occur, provided growth does not destroy the quality of life that encouraged people to move to the Township in the first place. This section discusses some of these issues and presents recommendations for proper site planning and design.

The Barton Township Zoning Ordinance allows only agricultural and residential uses by right, and other institutional, commercial and recreational uses by Special Land Use. Regulations for Special Land Uses should include a requirement for a 25-foot undisturbed strip of vegetated buffer to absorb runoff nutrients from other areas, reduce erosion into the water, provide shade and cover for fish, and to provide screening. The ordinance should also require a 100-foot setback for buildings. Clear cutting within the strip is prohibited, the only clearing allowed within this strip is for dead and diseased trees and noxious plants.

### **MAINTAINING A RURAL CHARACTER**

There is a strong recognition in Barton Township that preservation of the rural character of the area is important to those who live in the township. Although Barton Township has a goal of maintaining its rural atmosphere, just how that is to be accomplished is difficult to define. There is some degree of unwillingness to adopt appropriate regulations, feeling that the extent of regulation necessary goes beyond that which would be acceptable.

However, there are some simple regulations that can be instituted which can help define and maintain the rural atmosphere of a community. These regulations are not overburdensome, do not unreasonably restrict the use of land, and do not require excessive enforcement or administration.

The objective of any regulation dealing with preserving rural character is to preserve as much of a building site as possible in a natural state. Reducing the manmade elements of the landscape is the key to maintaining a feeling of openness and nature. The following are examples of what can be done to achieve this important community objective.

Traveling through the Township, the scenery viewed is primarily rural residential farmlands, mingled with rolling lands covered with natural vegetation. One method that can promote the rural quality would be to maintain the required setback for homes. Setbacks help maintain the views of natural areas near the streets. Should substantial growth begin in the Township, further regulations of front setbacks and lot width may have to be considered.

## **HOME OCCUPATIONS**

Home occupations or home-based businesses are accessory business uses conducted in a home, usually by the residents of the home itself. Several home occupations such as hair styling, pottery, and electrical contracting currently exist within the Township and are among the various types of services or occupations that residents of Barton Township provide from their homes. Regarding home-based businesses, only one-fourth (24.1%) answered that they should be restricted to only the principal dwelling, be allowed only on farm parcels, or not allowed at all. Three-fourths (75.9%) answered that they should also be allowed in accessory buildings, including having outdoor storage and outside employees. The intent of this plan is to allow these uses to continue if the character of the home and the residential neighborhood is maintained. Accessory buildings should be used for home occupations only by Special Land Use permit. Regulations regarding signage, outdoor storage, off-street parking, and the permitted size of the home occupation should be included in the zoning ordinance.

## **SETBACKS**

Proper setbacks from property lines and the right-of-way should be provided for all land uses in the Township. Setbacks are necessary to maintain the character of an area, protect natural systems, buffer adjacent land uses, provide emergency access, provide for adequate light, ventilation, and air, and to create an aesthetically pleasing environment. Setbacks from rightsofway on major arterials promote safe vehicular movements, reduce noise levels, and preserve rural character. Setbacks in commercial areas should be sufficiently wide when adjacent to residential areas. Land uses along county primary roads should have greater setbacks than other local roads to provide room for future potential road widening.

## **JUNK/JUNK VEHICLES**

The township should restrict the unsightly accumulation of junk and junk vehicles. The accumulation of junk creates public health and safety concerns, as the junk creates habitats for rodents and insects and creates dangerous environments for children. In addition, junk causes deteriorating property values and makes the Township a less desirable place to live. Outdoor storage of junk should be prohibited and be properly regulated (e.g., fenced and screened). Therefore, the plan also recommends that the Township continue to enforce the ordinance to regulate existing junk and junk vehicle problems.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWERS**

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 mostly along major transportation corridors. Where it is practicable, the Township should encourage co-location, using tower locations or other existing structures already in existence. Where this is not possible and new towers are proposed for construction, the Township's policy should be to locate these facilities along highway or county primary road corridors. The most logical location in Barton Township is within higher elevations. Towers should be located within a reasonable distance from county roads, on property that borders the road. Setback provisions and other standards protect both the safety and aesthetics of nearby residents and property.

## **SMALL-SCALE SOLAR ENERGY (Primarily on-site use)**

Solar energy is a clean, readily available, and renewable energy source. The Township's policy on the installation of solar panels is one of balancing the need for supplemental energy in an environmentally sensitive way with the desires and concerns of residents. Consequently, solar panels for personal use may be acceptable in the Township perhaps under certain conditions. The adoption of regulations facilitating the use of solar energy within individual properties is consistent with being an environmentally friendly and energy conscious community. Solar Energy Systems should be considered a permitted accessory use in all zoning districts. Zoning regulations should facilitate the installation and construction of Solar Energy Systems so that systems are safe, effective, and efficient, as well as harmonious with the character of the adjacent area where located. Potential conditions could include the size of the solar panels, yard location,

parcel size, height restrictions, setback provisions and noise considerations. Future amendments to this ordinance may be necessary as technologies and market conditions may influence the frequency, density, and impacts of these systems.

### **COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES**

Commercial Solar Energy Facilities are deemed inappropriate for Barton Township.

### **COMMERCIAL WIND FARMS**

Wind Energy Facilities (wind farms) are deemed inappropriate for Barton Township.

### **HOUSING**

A serious concern as rural areas develop is the quality and condition of homes in the Township. To protect the Township and its residents from housing stock deterioration and related problems, the plan recommends that the zoning ordinance include regulations for all new dwellings in the Township. Such regulations should include a minimum dwelling size and/or dwelling width, approved sewer and water supplies, minimum enclosed storage area, aesthetic compatibility, and conformance to appropriate building codes. For mobile homes, the ordinance should also require that all wheels be removed, adequate anchoring be employed, skirting be properly placed, no towing mechanisms be exposed, and homes meet all H.U.D. regulations. These regulations should help ensure that all dwellings in the Township maintain the public health, safety, and welfare for existing and future Township residents.

### **WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENTS**

Proper regulations (such as setbacks, preventing removal of natural vegetation, and maximum land coverage) should be established. Non-residential land uses should be limited as surface water runoff from these uses includes many impurities harmful to water quality. The Township should establish an easily enforceable point along the shoreline from which to enforce setback regulations. The township should consider methods for management of waterfront property to protect them from degradation while making them available for public appreciation.

## **CONDITIONAL ZONING**

An owner of land may voluntarily offer in writing, and the township may approve, certain use and development of land as a condition to a rezoning of the land or an amendment to a zoning map. In approving the specified conditions, the township may establish a period during which the conditions apply to the land. Except for an approved extension, if the conditions are not satisfied within the time specified under this subsection, the land shall revert to its former zoning classification. The township shall not add to or alter the conditions approved under subsection (1) during the time specified. The period specified may be extended upon the application of the landowner and approval of the local unit of government. The township shall not require a landowner to offer conditions as a requirement for rezoning. Zoning Ordinance Provisions are recommended to help implement this "conditional rezoning" procedure. The Zoning Ordinance should be consistent with the policies and uses proposed for the area in the Township's Master Land Use Plan proposed for rezoning and uses allowed under the proposed rezoning should be compatible with other zones and uses in the surrounding area.

## **SCREENING/BUFFERING**

It may be appropriate for higher intensity uses to be screened and buffered from the view of motorists and adjacent residential homes. Screening refers to devices such as walls, fences, and compact planting of vegetation. Buffering refers to separating land uses, either by adequate setbacks or through a gradation of zoning districts (e.g., where commercial and single-family homes are buffered by apartment buildings).

## **DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS**

Development agreements could be used to restrict some future uses of property and are generally developed prior to the approval of a site plan. Development agreements ensure those ordinance requirements, and other mutually agreed upon items are enforced and may include the following: architectural character, maintenance agreements, and other natural and built environmental issues. Development agreements may also be associated with subdivisions and site condominium developments, which require formal recording of the agreed-upon issues within deed restrictions. Development agreements are legally enforceable by the Township.



Potential benefits might be gained using agreements in requests for conditional rezoning and in approving large development projects such as Site Condominium and Subdivision Developments. Agreements and deed restrictions may include reasonable restrictions, along with other conditions that may be part of the approval process. Examples of topics that might be included in an agreement might include whether public services and facilities are to be provided by the developer

## **SIGNAGE**

An abundance of signs can create an unsightly appearance and can detract from the residential and rural character of the Township. Sign clutter resulting from large, gaudy, or imposing signs can create an unattractive business environment that would discourage quality businesses from locating in the Township. Therefore, Township regulations should control the size, height, type, and location of signage. The regulations should be flexible enough to allow businesses to attract customers but not allow the signage to destroy the character of the community.

## **SUMMARY**

Through careful site analysis and site planning quality development can be realized. The objective of incorporating natural features into site development is to allow new uses of land that do not irreversibly damage natural site features and attributes. The result is cost effective development that allows preservation of natural features and systems, creating long term benefits for the environment and the community.

and restricting the scope of a precise use proposed under a requested rezoning.



## SECTION 9 ZONING PLAN

**FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES** - Barton Township has been divided into a single Future Land Use category to guide future development decisions, which includes zoning. The Future Land Use categories are to be viewed as recommendations. It is necessary to also review the Township's vision, goals and objectives and Future Land Use Map to gain a complete understanding of the expectations for future development. The proposed zoning district categories are described on the following pages and include:

- Agricultural/Residential (AG/RES) will correspond to the existing Agricultural Zoning District.

The proposed Agricultural/Residential areas will revise the existing zoning district and be called AG/RES Zoning District.

1. Agricultural Residential 5 Acre minimum

### **AGRICULTURAL/RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORY**

The intent of the new Rural Residential category is to provide areas for larger lot residential development to meet the desires of the residents of the township as expressed through the Community Attitude Survey. Township residents who responded to the survey preferred allowing larger lots as well as preserving natural features. A preponderance of small lots could cause the township to lose its rural character. Larger lot zoning is the desired method of preserving the rural character of neighborhoods, reducing the danger of fire hazards, protecting natural features and open space, and avoiding pollution from improper sewage disposal.

The majority of those who returned surveys agreed that lots should be no less than two or three acres in size. The Planning Commission studied many factors in determining the appropriate size of parcel for the Agricultural/Residential category. Reasons for maintaining the minimum lot size of five acres include:

1. Areas are near productive agricultural lands

2. The development trend is toward dwellings located on larger lots
3. The road system in the area is limited
4. Public water systems are not readily available to serve the area
5. Public sewer systems are not available to serve the area
6. The capacity of existing drainage courses to handle runoff from a large-scale development is limited
7. Significant waterways, woodlands, wetlands and other natural resources or wildlife corridors are present

Density-control mechanisms help to prevent the overcrowding of land, preserve open space, lessen congestion on public roads and facilitate the eventual provision of municipal services, which are all legitimate governmental interests. Larger lots are particularly appropriate where: (1) the property can be used as farmland or has significant natural features; or (2) the township's zoning restrictions are a reasonable way to avoid overcrowding and infrastructure problems.

A variety of factors were studied to determine the appropriate parcel size for the Agricultural/Residential zoned areas of the Township. Among them:

1. Inventory of current lot sizes (particularly of recently developed residences) to identify discernable trends toward large lot development in certain areas.
2. Identify areas where low-density requirements are necessary to protect existing, productive farmland. Larger lot zoning can be beneficial not only in preserving valuable farmlands, but also to isolate residential uses from the noise, dust, and over-spray which can result from farming.
3. Concentrate on the need for low-density development to promote traffic safety, preserve groundwater, and prevent erosion. It is important to focus on specific factors such as the existing quality of roads serving rural areas, poor sight distances because of steep grades or sharp curves, and areas where porous soils, grades, and high-water table conditions combine to pose a pollution risk from the use of private septic systems.

Therefore, larger minimum lot sizes are proposed for the Township where public utilities are not available; where smaller land divisions have not already occurred; where larger lots are the predominant residential land use type; or where other factors, such as soil or road conditions, dictate that larger lot sizes would serve the public health, safety, and welfare.

All the township is planned for the Agricultural/Residential category. This classification anticipates lot sizes of five acres with lot width of 300 feet. All uses that are not agricultural or single-family residential will be allowed only as Special Land Uses. Special Land Uses should be limited to golf courses, self-storage facilities, eating and drinking places, and retail sales businesses.

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE**

The Environmentally Sensitive category is intended to recognize areas of the Township that contain natural features such as lakes, streams, and wetlands. Large areas of Environmentally Sensitive land are located within the township and are primarily linear in shape following the banks of creek and the streams that transverse the township.

Development that does occur should be designed to minimize negative impacts upon the environment and natural features. Land uses within these areas should emphasize low density residential uses, including the use of open space to offer protection of environmentally sensitive features.

While protection of these features should be a priority, opportunity exists to utilize these areas for recreational purposes such as natural trails and environmental education for area schools and the public. It is the intent of this land use category to allow for reasonable development that preserves the character and environmental quality of these environmentally sensitive areas. Techniques to preserve their quality, such as utilization of natural vegetation buffer strips at the edge of waterbodies and utilization of small-scale water control measures for run-off from impermeable surfaces such as roofs and pavement, should be utilized in development proposals.

**ZONING STRATEGY** - As with any Master Plan, the planned areas should be implemented over time. A zoning strategy will be used to integrate future zoned land as needs and time dictate.



## **SECTION 10 METHOD FOR ACCOMPLISHING PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

### **PROCESS FOR DECISION MAKING**

A primary goal of the Plan is to provide for an orderly and rational process of growth. The Land Use Plan should be used as a guideline for making future land use decisions in the Township. The basic intent of the Plan is to maintain residential land uses. Therefore, to the extent possible, extension of other types of land uses into residential areas should be limited. Wherever possible, natural buffer zones should be utilized to separate other higher intensity types of uses such as multi-family residential or commercial developments, which could conflict with residential activities. Where natural buffer zones cannot be utilized, transitional land use zones should be provided between residential areas and higher intensity uses. Only land use changes following the Plan should be permitted. The Plan should be amended without haste when changing circumstances prompt unanticipated development types.

### **ROLE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, TOWNSHIP BOARD AND CITIZENS**

Besides preparing and adopting the Land Use Plan, the Planning Commission has various other duties including:

1. The powers and duties of the Zoning Board have been transferred to the Planning Commission.
2. Review and approve all Plans for construction of public facilities in the Township.
3. Review plats and other matters relating to land development and make recommendations to the Township Board.

### **ZONING ORDINANCE**

The primary mechanism for implementing the goals and objectives expressed in the Land Use Plan is through a Township Zoning Ordinance. The Land Use Plan itself has no legal basis to restrict or encourage development. Rather, the Plan serves as the basis for the rational

development and administration of a zoning ordinance that is specifically designed to accomplish the goals and objectives expressed in the Plan.

The Planning Commission does not have final authority for denying requests for development in the Township. Rather, this authority rests with the Township Board. The Planning Commission's responsibility is to make informed recommendations to the Board based on the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the objectives of the Land Use Plan, and the needs of the Community.

Meetings held by the Township Board and the Planning Commission are open to the public. Therefore, citizens have an opportunity and the responsibility to provide comments and discussion regarding development plans in the Township. The Township Board and the Planning Commission welcome participation from the citizens in the form of constructive comments. Public hearings will be held to allow all interested persons and affected residents to express their opinions and have their interests considered.



## **SECTION 11 KEEPING THE PLAN CURRENT**

### **MONITORING ACTIVITY IN THE TOWNSHIP**

To be a functional, decision -making tool, the Master Plan must be kept current. By recording various activities in the Township regularly, the Master Plan can be periodically updated to reflect the current conditions. This procedure will also help identify development trends that are not following the objectives of the Plan and may identify advantageous concepts that should be incorporated in the Plan. To keep the Plan current, accurate recording of the following is recommended:

1. Use building permits to locate new buildings.
2. Parcel splits.
3. Requests for rezoning and zoning variances, with notation of action taken.
4. A description of any development that would be noteworthy in assessing the growth of the Township.

### **MASTER PLAN**

Each year, the Planning Commission should spend one meeting measuring its progress on efforts to implement the Comprehensive Master Plan. Discussion of the Plan should include:

- a review of the Goals and Objectives to determine if actions taken during the previous year have enhanced or curtailed their fulfillment;
- a review of action taken on rezoning requests to determine if they have followed the Future Land Use
- a review of Plan language to determine any implementation actions which should be added.

## Keeping the Plan Current

- a review of the Implementation chapter to determine those which have been accomplished and those which still require action; and a review of changing conditions in the township, such as any major development, land sales, and other factors, as described in Future Development Trends (Chapter 4) to determine if any changes to the Plan are warranted.

Following this review, the Planning Commission should establish a work program for the coming year which includes action on Plan implementation.

Once a year a short narrative should be prepared summarizing the annual activity of the Planning Commission. A review should then be made of the year's activity to assess its compliance with the desired development Plan. If necessary, modification should be made to the Plan.

Every five years the Plan must be reviewed to compare the development that has occurred with the provisions of the Plan. If necessary, the Plan should be modified to reflect the current character of the Township. The goals and objectives of the Township should also be reassessed considering any changed conditions. As the Plan is modified, the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to determine if the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance agree with the revised Master Plan. Zoning changes should not be considered without being substantiated by the Plan.

Following adoption of the future Land Use Plan, the following steps should be undertaken to complete this process, and achieve zoning consistency:

1. Direct Plan to the Township Board, for their review and information.
2. Send Plan to the Newaygo County Planning Department for inclusion in countywide planning programs.
3. Meet with representative of County Planning Department to determine the status of the Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map, and determine the extent, if any, of required zoning changes.
4. Implementation of any necessary zoning changes.

## **MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS**

Usually, the need to review future land uses will result from a request to rezone property to a zoning district that does not fit the classification noted on the Plan. When this happens, the Planning Commission must first consider whether the Master Plan should be changed. If the Plan should be amended, that process should take place before action of the rezoning.

Regardless of the factors noted above, the Planning Commission should review the Plan at least once a year. The need for an update to the Plan will be based on the extent of the changes within the township, as indicated by these factors.

## APPENDIX A BARTON TOWNSHIP 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The first task in creating a Comprehensive Master Plan for Barton Township was to develop a survey of the township residents. The purpose of the questionnaire was to form a general picture of community attitudes and opinions regarding land use issues that might affect the content of the Plan. The Planning Commission wanted to give residents a means to provide some direct input to the Plan, although it was recognized not all would take advantage of such an opportunity.

The questionnaire was drafted and modified by the Planning Commission. A cover letter was included to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and encourage resident participation. The questionnaire was delivered via US mail to every taxpayer of record within the township. The method of distribution and collection resulted in an excellent return rate. Of the 490 that were distributed, 170 were returned and tabulated, for a return rate of 35%. The responses should be considered as reflecting the views of the entire township.

This Appendix contains an analysis and the results of the questionnaire.

### **Barton Township Survey Results**

Q1 Referring to the map of the Township, please indicate the area where you live or own property.

Answered: 145 Unanswered: 25

	<u>Total</u>
Reed City Area Public Schools	93
Big Jackson School District	41
Big Rapids Public Schools	11

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### Choice

Q2 What best describes the type of property you own in the Township? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 170 Unanswered: 0

Choice

Total

Appendices

Vacant Land	42
Primary residence	100
Secondary residence	15
Commercial business	0
Rental housing	2
Agricultural	44

Q3 What size parcel(s) do you own in the Township? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 170 Unanswered: 0

	<u>Total</u>
1.0 acre or less	4
1.1 to 5.0 acres	23
5.1 to 10 acres	29
10.1 to 20 acres	25
20.1 to 40 acres	36
40.1 or more acres	59

Q4 How long have you owned property in the township? (Select only one)

Answered: 169 Unanswered: 1

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
5 years or less	34
6 to 10 years	20
11 to 30 years	58
31 years or more	57

Other 11

Choice

Q5 which of the following best describes your residential status in Barton Township? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 167    Unanswered: 3

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Single family homeowner	101
Single family renter	0
Seasonal resident	16
Farm resident	29
Mobile/modular homeowner/renter other 34	20



Less than a year

1 - 5 years

23

6 - 9 years

9

10 - 15 years

9

More than 15 years

87

Q7 How did you originally obtain your property in the township?

Answered: 168 Unanswered: 2

Purchase from a family member or relative

Q8 In your opinion, what is the primary reason residents locate in Barton Township? (Select only

Q6 How long have you lived in Barton Township?

Answered: 138 Unanswered: 32

Choice

Total

10

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Inherit	23
	30
Other	115

one)

Answered: 167    Unanswered: 3

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rural character	117
Proximity to US-131	4
Low taxes	6
Proximity to Big Rapids	19
School District	1
Other 20	

.....

Q9 What three issues do you feel are most important for Barton Township in the next ten years?  
 (Select only three)

Answered: 163    Unanswered: 7

	<u>Total</u>
Water quality in the streams of the township	65
Preserving agricultural lands	93
Protecting the quality of water well (groundwater) sources	99
Improving public services (emergency fire, police)	28
Improving the quality of existing roads	81
Providing public services in a cost-effective manner	27
Developing more recreational resources	18
Single-wide mobile homes allowed everywhere in the township	18
	17

.....

Q10 In your opinion, should the Township have mobile home parks?

Answered: 157    Unanswered: 13

Choice

Total

Choice

Other

Yes	25
No	132

.....

Q11 In your opinion, should the Township have commercially zoned areas?

Answered: 155    Unanswered: 15

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	67
No	88

.....

Q12 In your opinion, should the Township have improved recreational park?

Answered: 150    Unanswered: 20

Choice

Total

.....

Q13 In the future do you want Barton Township to be a farming community?

Answered: 164    Unanswered: 6

Choice

Total

154 No    10

.....

Q14 In the future do you want Barton Township to be a residential community?

Answered: 154    Unanswered: 16

Choice

Total

.....

Yes

83

No

67

Yes

Yes	97
No	57

Q15 In the future do you want Barton Township to expand the commercially zoned areas?

Answered: 152    Unanswered: 18

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	41
No	111

.....

Q16 Should home-based businesses be encouraged? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 158    Unanswered: 12

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Not at all	9
Only within the principal dwelling	42
Within the principal dwelling and in accessory buildings	107
Including outdoor storage	39
Including employees and other family members	46
Only on farm parcels	10
	17

---

Q17 Should the Township do more to promote any of the following recreational opportunities?

(Select up to three)

Answered: 120    Unanswered: 50

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Playgrounds	55
Picnic areas	52
Biking and hiking trails	62
Tennis courts	1
Basketball courts	11
	16
	24

---

Other

Ball fields  
Other

Q18 Would you be willing to pay a small millage to provide better roads?  
Answered: 167 Unanswered: 3

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	44
No	46
Maybe	77

.....

Q19 Would you be willing to pay a small millage to provide better fire and EMS protection?  
Answered: 164 Unanswered: 6



Q20 Currently, all parcels in the township have a minimum lot size of 5 acres. Do you think it should

Answered: 166 Unanswered: 4

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Increased	15
Decreased	28
Stay the same	123

---

Q21 Presently, there is not a separate "Residential" Zoning District. Do you think the township should have separate areas strictly for residential uses?

Answered: 164 Unanswered: 6

Yes	<u>Total</u> 20
No	85
<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	56
No	44
Maybe	64

---

be...?

Choice

Maybe 59

.....

Choice

Less than 1 acre

1 to 3 acres

3 to 5 acres

one) Answered: 165 Unanswered: 5

Total

10

33

39

Q22 Many townships have varying residential lot size requirements for single-family residences. What do you feel should be the minimum lot size in Barton Township? (Select only

Q23 Please describe how you feel about the roads in the township. (Select only one)

Answered: 169 Unanswered: 1

	<u>Total</u>
Very good condition	0
Good condition	26
Adequate condition	107
Poor condition	27
Very poor condition	9

---

Q24 Would you support making second homes such as "mother-in-law apartments" and guesthouse on the same property as the principal dwelling?

Answered: 167 Unanswered: 3

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	74
No	46
5 to 10 acres	66
10 or more acres	7
No minimum lot sizes	7
Other	3

---

Choice

Maybe 47

---

Q25 Do you feel that enforcement of zoning violations is...?  
Answered: 135 Unanswered: 35

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Too aggressive	10
Too lenient	16
Just right	109

---

Q26 If the township were to send out a newsletter, would you prefer that it be...?

Answered: 168 Unanswered: 2

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Total</u>
Monthly	16
Quarterly	70
Twice a year	57
Once a year	17
Not at all	8

---

Q27 The township is looking for volunteers. If you have not participated previously, is it because...?

Answered: 151 Unanswered: 19

	<u>Total</u>
You are too busy	39
Don't care	0
Confident someone else will do it	7
Don't believe you can help	25
	80

---

Choice

Other

Q28 If you would be willing to help the township with a newsletter or in some other capacity, please add your name here.

Michael Cline

Ann Counts  
Everett E. Townsend - Grace  
James T. Reardon  
Caleb Stratz  
Kevin and Charity Marek  
Roger Diehl  
Terri Lynn Hope Meier - physical outdoor projects - maybe sit on a board. Cook  
Jenelle VanHouten  
Upgrade township hall. Straighten the flagpole. "Please" Perry Borntreger  
Mark Viel  
Doni and John Cassidy  
Todd Phelps Becky

Dan Paulucci  
Not sure - seems a lot of LOCAL favoritism  
Nancy M. Todd  
Sandy Anderson  
Cliff Youngs # 231-510-4216  
Clint Sinclair

Answered: 21    Unanswered: 149

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Q29 Do you have any other comments?

Some of the questions are not clear enough to answer with confidence

In my opinion we don't need subdivisions or trailer parks to generate tax revenue. Our township is close enough to Reed City, Big Rapids where there are trails and ball diamonds soccer fields.

No need to build any of these when hardly no one will use them. Maybe a handful once or twice a year. We are country folks in a farm community. We generate our own recreation.

A Master Plan of growth and development come on Hawkins (bar/restaurant) is enough unless you can get a Sam's Club and who's road are you going to fix. Surely not everyone's that should be left up to Newaygo County not township.

We live in rural area because its quiet. My family has been in this township all our life. We don't need change. We get that enough with all the crazy government bullshit. Just simple quiet peaceful living.

I'm thinking a few wants to change things, sell lots make some money but I bet the majority of us

like our township just the way it is.

Randy Snavley

Well done survey

---

I love my old schoolhouse and the area it is located in. The only request I would have is a better online way to pay taxes directly to Barton Township as others have adopted.

No

17 Mile and Beech need to be paved between Cottonwood and 22 Mile Road.

---

Beech is terrible in the winter and 17 Mile floods when we get a heavy rain in the summer.

None

---

I am happy with the way things are currently run. I believe that most residents have enough property that adding any more parks and picnic areas is not necessary. I am not opposed to businesses run out of homes, but I also would not want a commercial trucking company driving past my house 20 times a day either.

---

We have water that stays in the road because the ditches are higher than the road. If the ditches were dug out that would eliminate that problem.

---

Lot's

---

I would like to have the township have more control over biosolids waste being out into the township. Especially with permits and test results and where it is being done to protect our water shed.



The same for oil and gas drilling and big irrigation wells being used for farm use because of the chemicals being injected through the irrigation systems.

---

I grew up in Barton/around Barton and eventually was able to purchase land in Barton to return and build a house one day. I like things the way they are, the area has grown up with singlewides popping in everywhere. I don't care to see another trailer park or subdivision, or anything built on less than five-acre parcels. If people want to build on less than five acres, there are places that are zoned to do that. And personally, only the builders' profit when subdivisions are created. Also not interested in "mother-in-law apartments". Five-acre parcels should remain the minimum for building.

I am also interested in keeping Nestle/Blue Triton from developing water pumping stations OUT of Barton, as they have a habit of exploiting the permits they get and then setting up additional pumping stations across county lines as they did in Evert Township. (SaveMIwater.org for details)

Thank you, Andre Benoit 616-430-6634, andrebenoit2001@gmail.com

Keep us a rural community!

---

No mobile home courts, draws crime and drug activity.

Enforce running on right-of-way and in yards (clean up junk!!)

---

Pave one mile every year until all roads are paved. Start with 17 Mile west of Hawkins.

Thanks for collecting our input.

---

I love living in Barton Township. It fits my needs perfectly.

---

So, the logging trucks and others and have someone monitor they do not pass sign

---

It is a real pleasure to live in this area and have for many years. I will be moving to assisted living sometime this year.

---

The Township has been a great place to live and raise a family. I really like the open spaces and access to recreational trails.

---

I think every resident should be heard by the board and area residents about their needs and if approved by all neighbors and majority of Board such expectations should or could be made.

Maybe even majority of neighbors unless said neighbor is affected directly with noise, smell, or sight. This would be negative affect, not controlling neighbor. I know... sensitive subject and hard to define.

I'm about freedom to do as you wish on your property but also about not having others infringing beyond their borders.

---

We hope to keep our property natural.

Tru-Stream via Great Lakes Energy is still "exploring" in our area. There should be an initiative for people to log their interest to get us on the schedule for construction.

Land is only for Deer Hunting

---

Upgrade township hall.

Straighten flagpole. "Please"

Put the volunteer opportunities in the newsletter



---

I like things the way they are.

---

How do you find out volunteering opportunities?

I am 85 and I don't know how I feel day to day. Hoping for the best!

---

E 18 Mile Road SUCKS to have to drive down every day. I've talked to the county several times and they've told me it's on the township to pay for improvements to the road.

---

Keep Barton Township as it is

We really appreciate Kyle Luce and all his hard work to improve our area, to enforce trash regulations and following up with police department and community members.

We continue to hope trash, scrap/junk regulations will be enforced. Along with burning trash in our living communities.

Broad band internet is very important. GLE is bringing it to the rural areas, but I'm concerned it won't go to my property because not populated enough. Please do what you can to encourage broad band throughout Barton Township.

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Taxes are too high for seniors to pay now. Haven't made any improvements to house or land and our taxes get higher every year.

---

Should have a trash day at hall yearly as other townships do.

You need to improve gravel roads

---

Moving from a more residential area cell phone and internet service good - hope to get service on 13 Mile Road

---

Residences should not become junk yards such as the one at 7323 E 17 Mile Road. It's full of junk cars and such and garbage. I do not want rats in my cabin or around it.

---

Why isn't there any natural gas for residents and we need a fire department to lower homeowners' insurance

---

Tax Assessment should be uniform better than it is docking seasonal when they may use it less doesn't make sense and is unfair.

---

Pine Ave. could use a guardrail of some type before someone fall off west edge near 12180 N Pine as they have in the past been hospitalized. This could be a joint venture with Home Township. Safety people need to get on the ball.

Logging in the future on Pine Ave. needs to be coordinated with Home Township. The Pine Ave. was torn up.

SANDRA ANDERSON IS A GREAT TOWNSHIP OFFICIAL.

Let people do what they want with their land!!!

---

Stop the Hunting Clubs from buying everything up.  
We enjoy the rural setting of Barton Township. We are currently finishing building a home on our property and moving to Barton Township from a suburban area further south.

---

I owned property for just over 1 year. Sold January 2022

Only here in summer and fall

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None

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I would provide "Free Ditching" for 17 and 18 Mile Roads- Hawkins Road west 3 miles if two would "or with my help" and two support get with road commission for permit and approval.

Get rid of Road Patrol.

911 supposed to be funded by cell phone taxes.

Commission on aging - though a very good idea appears that the cost/meal served is excessive.

I was born in a farmhouse in Barton two. and live in Barton two for 24 years as I don't live there anymore and still am a active tree farmer and I think that such land should be cleared as timber cut over.

The road we own property on has been neglected for years. I don't know if its because we live on a road between two townships and neither one wants to take care of it or what, but some gravel once in a while in the mud holes would be nice. Thank you, Duane Nelson,

---

See attached

I'd like to see wider promotion of the various trails and hiking opportunities. I live in Kalamazoo and if I hadn't bought this property for hunting, I would not have known about these trails.

Thanks for putting the questionnaire out, I think it's a great idea.

We need to change the speed limit on 13 Mile. I can't get out and walk due to risk of being hit!

Answered: 49 Unanswered: 121

FINAL DRAFT