

CHAPTER 4

LAND USE PLAN

The future of Brooks Township is, perhaps, best expressed by the township's land use plan. The land use plan identifies the range of development districts proposed for all sectors of the community. It details the location and extent of the township's programmed land use types.

The plan calls for a series of six (6) land use districts and four (4) conservation overlays.

The land use districts include:

- Public (P)
- Rural Residential (RR)
- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- High Density Residential (HDR)
- General Commercial (GC)

The conservation overlays include:

- Rural Character (RC)
- Preservation (PV)
- Highway Vista (HV)
- Greenbelts (G)

The identification and spatial arrangement of the districts and overlays were based on a comprehensive analysis and assessment of:

1. Existing land use character and development trends.
2. Analysis of the township's physical character (e.g. soils, water features, etc.).
3. Demographic characteristics and trends.

4. Planning and development goals as prepared by the Township Planning Commission based on the input of area residents, community leaders, environmental and planning professionals, the Brooks Township Board, and others.
5. The recommendations of the Brooks Township Land Use Vision.
6. The need and desire to protect the township's unique natural character.
7. Existing zoning regulations.
8. Development patterns of adjoining units of government.

PLAN DISTRICTS

The land use plan districts are displayed on the accompanying Brooks Township Future Land Use Map and described as follows:

Public - The designation "Public" represents undeveloped, natural, land areas under local, state, or federal ownership. The district's natural character, combined with the large amount of acreage comprising the district, contributes significantly to the township's desired rural atmosphere. The district is characterized by:

- a) Highly concentrated/connected large acreage sites, many in excess of 80 or more acres.
- b) Presence of old fields, prairie, or forests, as well as combinations thereof.
- c) Abundance of native flora and fauna, as well as the presence of certain

- threatened and/or endangered species.
- d) Naturally connected greenways highly beneficial to the movement of wildlife
- e) Abundance of surface water features conducive to the support of cold water fish species.
- f) Interspersed with, or contiguous to, undeveloped large acreage sites in private ownership.

The Brooks Township Master Plan calls for the Public District to primarily remain in a natural state with development highly restricted. Land uses should be generally limited to public outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife observation, canoeing, cross country skiing, and like activities. Certain managed areas may also be conducive to more intensive forms of recreation including outdoor camping and snowmobiling. Conversely, areas possessing unique flora and fauna should be protected from uses likely to significantly disrupt, or possibly destroy, these fragile resources.

Residential - The plan designates four (4) Residential Districts. These are classified as Rural Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and High Density Residential. While a majority of the township's residential area falls under the Rural Residential category, the delineation of four (4) districts was determined by the Planning Commission to be necessary to support the range of residential opportunities desired by

township residents. The districts are described as follows:

Rural Residential - The Rural Residential District represents those areas of the township programmed for the lowest level of residential density. Generally, Rural Residential areas are located distant from the City of Newaygo. Much of the district is interspersed among the lands occupying the Public District classification. The Rural Residential District is characterized by:

- a.) Large parcel development. The district is characterized by parcels of at least five (5) acres in size, however, it is common to find significantly larger sites. Many of the parcels are void of any development.
- b.) Lack of public water and sanitary sewer, nor are such facilities planned over the next twenty (20) or more years. Homeowners rely on the use of on-site wells and septic systems.
- c.) Lack of public water and sanitary sewer, nor are such facilities planned over the next twenty (20) or more years. Homeowners rely on the use of on-site wells and septic systems.

- d.) Much of the land area is used for outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, wildlife observation, nature photography, etc.
- e.) Limited system of public roads consistent with the area's low density residential rural character.

Low Density Residential - The Low Density Residential District represents those areas of the township programmed for relatively low levels of residential density. Most of the area identified for Low Density Residential is located in the southwest portion of the township, between the City of Newaygo and Hess and Brooks Lakes. Smaller Low Density sectors are found north of the city, and near Emerald and Sylvan Lakes. To some degree, the district serves as a transitional area, separating Rural Residential areas from the urbanized city. The Low Residential District is characterized by:

- a.) Parcels ranging from two (2) to five (5) acres in size.
- b.) Lack of public water and sanitary sewer, nor are such facilities planned over the next twenty (20) or more years. Homeowners rely on the use of on-site wells and septic systems.

- c.) Scattered presence of natural flora and fauna.
- d.) Roadway system is more highly developed (e.g. miles of road), when compared to the Rural Residential. This is due to the increased level (density) of housing development.
- e.) Close proximity to the City of Newaygo and the township's major lakes.

Medium Density Residential - The Medium Density Residential District is generally confined to the "platted" areas surrounding Hess Lake, Brooks Lake, John Ford Lake, Emerald Lake, and Sylvan Lake. Much of the district is represented by plats created years ago, prior to local planning and zoning efforts. Because of this existing or historic development, the characterization that follows may not be feasible in all cases. Similar to many other inland lakes throughout Michigan, shoreline areas were subdivided into small parcels and sold for seasonal cottage development. Over the years, cottages have either been converted to year round use or replaced by new housing development.

The Medium Density Residential District is characterized by:

- a.) Parcels of up to one (1) acre in size as follows:

- unplatted areas - one acre; and
- existing plats - less than one acre provided on-site water and sanitary requirements can be met.

(It is noted that this district is characterized by a lack of public water and sanitary sewer. Homeowners rely on the use of on-site wells and septic systems. In this district, the township strongly supports initiatives by district property owners to investigate and, as needed, implement provisions for public utilities in order to prevent degradation of ground water and surface water resources.)

- b.) Scattered presence of natural flora and fauna.
- c.) Roadway system is more highly developed (e.g. miles of road), when compared to the Low Density Residential District. This is due to the increased level (density) of housing development.
- d.) Close proximity to the township's major lakes.

High Density Residential - The High Density Residential District represents those areas of the township programmed for the highest levels of residential density. The district also provides opportunity for the

placement of manufactured home parks and apartments. Due to a lack of demand, as well as a lack of public infrastructure, the geographic extent of the High Density Residential District is fairly limited.

The district is characterized by:

- a.) One (1) acre parcel size for single-family detached homes, with larger size sites, with an overall minimum of five (5) acres recommended for apartments and manufactured home parks. The plan recommends that apartment complexes be developed at not less than one (1) acre per housing unit with a half (0.5) to one (1) acre additional provided for each unit. This is to provide for adequate parking, on-site drainage, septic and well siting, space for recreation and proper buffers between this and other uses. It is recommended that manufactured home parks establish a base site area of not less than ten (10) acres, with additional increases based on increasing park size.
- b.) Lack of public water and sanitary sewer. The plan recommends that apartment and manufactured home park developments either secure public utilities from the City of Newaygo, or construct on-site,

approved, packaged systems capable of supporting the proposed development. Linkage to city utilities should be based on arrangements acceptable to the Brooks Township Board.

- c.) Close proximity to major, all-season, roads.
- d.) Close proximity to the City of Newaygo and public facilities and services.

General Commercial - The Master Plan calls for one (1) commercial district, referred to as General Commercial. As detailed on the Future Land Use Map, the General Commercial District is located as a liner strip, east of M-37, between approximately 88th Street and M-82. The General Commercial District provides for a wide range of business related facilities and services including offices, financial institutions, general retail, restaurants, convenience stores, service stations, and similar facilities. The district does not provide for industrial uses.

The district is characterized by:

- a.) Minimum one (1) acre parcel size.
- b.) Lack of public water and sanitary sewer.
- c.) Immediate proximity to M-37.
- d.) Close proximity to the City of Newaygo and associated public facilities and services.

Due to the district's relationship to M-37, and resultant high visibility and impact on traffic, the Master Plan recommends that development in the General Commercial District:

- 1.) Maintain landscape buffers along M-37.
- 2.) Limit the number of curb cuts on M-37. Where feasible, use of shared entry drives should be encouraged.
- 3.) Where feasible, implement cross (drive) connections between sites for purposes of vehicular movement from one site to another (as opposed to re-entering M-37 in order to reach an adjoining site)
- 4.) Where feasible, use shared parking in order to reduce the degree of paved surface area.
- 5.) Restrict the placement of billboards and other unnecessary signage.

CONSERVATION OVERLAYS

In addition to the Future Land Use Districts, the Master Plan calls for a series of supplementary Conservation Overlays. These are displayed on the Brooks Township Future Land Use Map and described as follows:

Rural Character and Preservation Overlays

- These are conservation overlays designed to protect the township's system of lakes, rivers, and streams. The Rural Character Overlay includes those areas currently developed, whereas, the Preservation Overlay encompasses locations of a more pristine character. Development standards should:

- a.) Promote natural vegetative buffers/greenbelts along water bodies.
- b.) Where feasible, require the placement of buildings and structures distant (e.g. 100+ feet) from the actual water body in order to encourage the preservation of natural shoreline vegetation, limit shoreline erosion, promote a high quality fisheries habitat, maintain property values, and limit contamination of the ground and surface water resource.

It is recognized that existing development, particularly in the Rural Character Conservation Overlay, may prevent the full implementation of the above standards. However, efforts should be made to achieve the highest levels of protection possible.

Highway Vista Conservation Overlay

- The Highway Vista Conservation Overlay calls for the preservation and maintenance of a natural vegetation strip along the township's major roadways. These include M-82, M-37, and Croton Drive. Development standards should:

- a.) Provide for a minimum twenty-five (25) feet natural vegetation buffer along both sides of each roadway.
- b.) Require new power lines to be setback behind the natural vegetation strip.
- c.) In non-commercial areas, limit signs to small (residential) name plates.
- d.) Encourage wildflower plantings in the non-developed public right-of-way and in clear zone/corner locations.

Greenbelt Conservation Overlay

- The Greenbelt Conservation Overlay represents those areas of the township identified by the Land Use Vision as critical habitat for the preservation of unique flora and fauna. Development standards should:

- a.) Promote low density development that has minimal impact on the natural environment.
- b.) Promote maintenance of the natural habitat.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

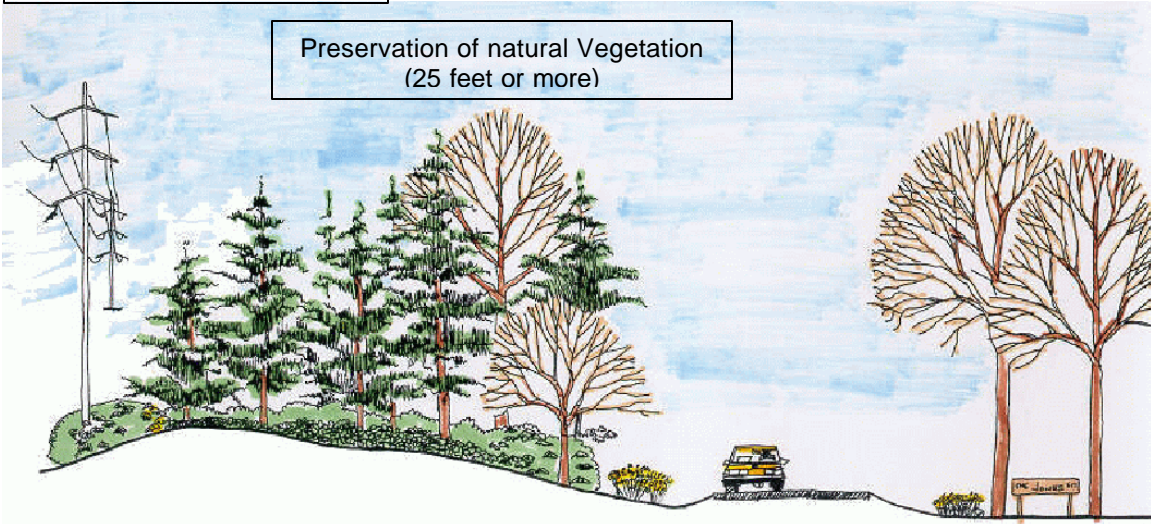
The Master Plan does not provide for an Industrial District. Due to the township's close proximity to the City of Newaygo Industrial Park, combined with a lack of public utilities and non-existent demand, the plan recommends that future industrial development be oriented to the city.

The Planning Commission will monitor industrial land area needs and, if necessary, amend the Master Plan to reflect industrial land area needs.

Highway Vista Overlay

New power lines setback

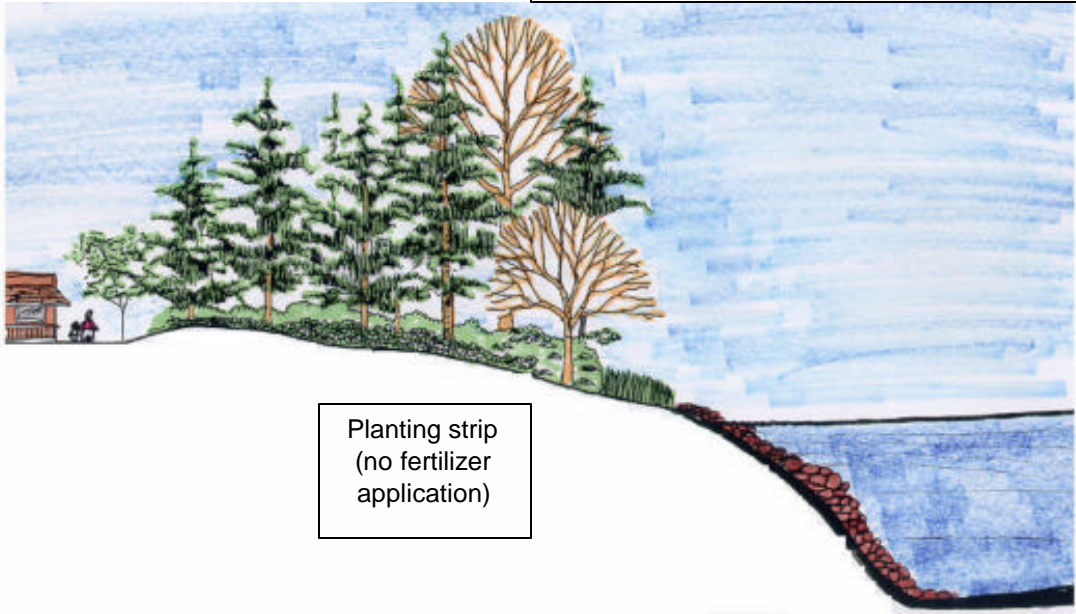
Preservation of natural Vegetation
(25 feet or more)



Wildflower plantings in the non-developed public right-of-way and in clear zone/corner locations

River, Tributary and Lakefront Overlay

Signs limited to small (residential) name plates



Planting strip
(no fertilizer application)