

## COMMUNITY INPUT

An important part of the development of the Master Plan is community input

### **Key Community Leader & Citizen Input Master Plan Project Brooks Township**

Public participation in the planning process can take many forms, including workshops/open houses, joint meetings with the Township Board, surveys, public hearings, and others. Public participation for this Master Plan entailed interviews with key community leaders, a public informational meeting, and regular planning commission work sessions.

#### Key Community Leader Input

Individuals identified by the Planning Commission as key community leaders were contacted by mail and then personally interviewed by the planning consultant.

**“You have been identified by the Commission as a Key Community Leader. As such, you have been recognized as an individual who has the potential to influence the township’s growth and development. Accordingly, the Commission seeks your opinion on the future of the township...”**

- ***What are the issues we face?***
- ***What opportunities lie ahead?***
- ***Should development be encouraged?***
- ***Is the protection of natural resources important?”***

The following highlights the responses of those interviewed. For more complete interview results, see Appendix A.

#### **Pressing issues facing the Planning Commission (as seen by Key Community Leaders)**

- A.** Maintaining open space
- B.** Preventing sprawl
- C.** Protecting the township’s unique natural features
- D.** Clean up of junk and trash
- E.** Traffic congestion/traffic impacts
- F.** Groundwater contamination
- G.** Overuse and abuse of state and federal lands and lakes and rivers by tourists and others
- H.** Loss of the township’s rural character

## What attracts people to Newaygo County and Brooks Township?



- ✓ The rural atmosphere
- ✓ Close proximity to urban centers
- ✓ Natural Features

## Residential Growth along Lakes and Rivers



Growth along the Township's system of rivers and lakes was seen as inevitable and should be planned for. If the construction of a sanitary sewer system is pursued around the lakes, a regional sewer authority should be formed to manage the system.

The township should pursue the acquisition of land along the Muskegon River. Existing organizations, such as the Nature Conservancy and the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, should be utilized as often as possible.

## Manufactured Housing

Expansion of the existing manufactured home parks, or the planned location of a new park in a designated area, is preferable to manufactured housing located sporadically throughout the township.

## Commercial

A majority felt that the township *should not* develop its own commercial center.



Instead, the township should recognize the City as its commercial center.

A majority expressed the opinion that the commercial growth at the M-37/M-82 intersection was replacing Newaygo's downtown as the area's regional commercial center. However, most indicated strong support for renovation of the city's core downtown. While constrained by layout, limited land area, and steep topography, the downtown was viewed as possessing "historic

charm” with strong linkage to the river. Most felt these assets should be capitalized upon.

### **Industrial**

Industrial development was identified as a somewhat controversial issue. The tax base is desirable for the township, but not the results of its location within the township, such as increased residential growth and perceived loss of rural character. Most would like to see future industry located within a planned industrial park setting, whether it be in Newaygo or the township.

On the matter of land annexation by Newaygo to support future industrial growth, a great majority felt that intergovernmental tax sharing agreements would be preferable to annexation.

### **Transportation**

M-37 should not be replaced or supplemented by a freeway but should be improved (e.g. passing lanes, remove curves, etc.).

## **Citizen Overview Master Plan Project Brooks Township**

### *Citizen Input from the Public Informational Meeting*

A public information meeting was held May 1<sup>st</sup> regarding the Master Plan and the Brooks Township Land Use Vision.

A written survey was given to those attending the meeting. Survey questions were similar to those that the key community leaders responded to.

The following highlights the survey responses of those who attended the meeting. For more complete interview results, see Appendix A.

### **Residential Growth along Lakes and Rivers**

- Residents were divided about whether Brooks Township could retain its rural character and whether 1 to 2 acre parcels were large enough to accomplish this.
- Ninety-five percent of respondents believed that sanitary sewers *should* be constructed around Hess and Brooks Lakes.
- A majority were in favor of stringent zoning regulations along rivers and streams in order to limit development. There was strong support, eight-six percent, for the

Township to purchase land along the Muskegon River for preservation.

- A majority, however, believed that Brooks Township should try to stop its population growth. This may be related to the common perception that limiting population can help to retain a community's character.

### Manufactured Housing

- Eighty-two percent of respondents did *not* believe that Brooks Township should permit mobile home parks to be located throughout the township, even if they were in planned and landscaped settings.



### Commercial

- Survey respondents were not in favor of the township encouraging any large, big box retailer to locate on M-82 or M-37.
- There was no desire to see commercial development along Croton Drive or M-82
- People were not in favor of allowing the City to annex land to accommodate new commercial development.

### Industrial

- Fifty-two percent of respondents were in favor of the township providing a location for industrial development, while forty-eight percent were not.
- Sixty-seven percent were not in favor of the City annexing land for additional industrial development.

### Transportation

- Overall, people seemed satisfied with the function of the road system in the township.
- Although the paving of roads in the township has often brought up by residents as a priority, fifty-seven percent of individuals did not want all roads to be paved. This may be a form of recognition that un-paved roads are a part of the rural character of the community.



- People were not in favor of a freeway being constructed through Newaygo County.
- People also were not in favor of widening M-82 to four lanes.

### **Environment**

- Over ninety percent of those surveyed were in favor of using local tax dollars to educate township residents on ways to protect the natural environment and establishing a solid waste recycling program.