



CHAPTER 3
COMMUNITY POLICIES AND PLANS



Various inputs into community policies and plans

The community policies and plans advocated in this document were informed by a variety of observations, opportunities, and concerns, including the following:

- Regional planning efforts
- The community planning survey
- Existing land use
- Various other observations, opportunities, and concerns addressed in Chapter 2

Countywide future land use

It is important to take into account any regional plans for future land use prior to the development of a future land use plan. The countywide future land use map included in the 2000-2025 edition of the Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan recommends residential development on the outskirts of the Village of Grass Lake as well as in the vicinity of Wolf Lake and Little Wolf Lake (see the Countywide Future Land Use map). Industrial Development is recommended within the I-94 Corridor at the Mount Hope Road Interchange. Agriculture is recommended for the vast majority of Grass Lake Township outside of the Village. In fact, most of that land is in the Plan's agricultural preservation area. Possible greenways throughout the Township are also identified. Greenways on the northern and southern borders of the Township recognize the Waterloo State Recreation Area and the Sharonville State Game Area. Other proposed greenways follow other publicly owned land as well as water resources.

Community planning survey

The Township distributed a community planning survey to property owners with the 2016 winter tax bills. The survey was also made available through the Township's website. A total of 490 surveys were returned to the Township. The primary purpose of the survey was to obtain input that could be utilized by the Planning Commission to develop Township goals and objectives. Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the survey responses are summarized below. A complete analysis of the survey is located in Appendix C of the document.

Future land use. The following future land use issues were identified by the survey:

- Maintenance of the Township’s existing rural agricultural/ residential character was important to 85.9% of respondents
- Protection of the Township’s natural features was important to 95.9% of respondents
- A small majority of respondents (52.0%) supported additional residential development;
 - A large majority of respondents (74.3%) supported single family homes in rural areas and one acre parcels were identified by 39.6% of survey respondents
 - A small majority of respondents (52.7%) also identified housing options for seniors
- A significant majority of respondents (66.5%) supported additional commercial development
 - Interstate 94 interchanges at Mt. Hope Road and/or Clear Lake Road were identified by 67.1% of respondents while West Michigan Avenue, between Willis Road and the western Grass Lake Village Limit, and East Michigan Avenue, between the eastern Grass Lake Village Limit and Francisco Road, were identified by 56.7% and 50.9% of respondents, respectively
 - A small majority of respondents (50.9%) did not support limiting development to administrative/professional services along Michigan Avenue
- A significant majority of respondents (70.3%) supported additional light industrial development

Quality of life and community services. The following quality of life and community service issues were identified by the survey:

- 85.5% of respondents rated Grass Lake Township as an excellent or good place to live
- 67.1% of respondents rated the Grass Lake Charter Township Fire Department as excellent or good
- 66.3% of respondents rated the Township’s administration and employees as excellent or good
- 57.1% of respondents rated the Township’s parks (e.g., Sports & Trails Park, etc.) as good or average
- 34.8% of respondents rated the Township’s highways, roads, and streets as excellent or good
- A majority of respondents (63.2%) supported a senior center

- A significant minority of respondents (48.3%) support a community center
- A majority of respondents (57.1%) supported a regional wellness center
- A significant majority of respondents (73.4%) supported the development of sidewalks and bike/pedestrian paths while non-motorized facilities to/from schools and in residential/commercial areas were identified by 83.2% and 62.9% of respondents, respectively
- A significant minority of respondents (48.1%) supported a millage to further develop and maintain township parks and trails

Goals and Objectives

The Goals of the Master Plan provide the underlying basis for future land use decisions by capturing the overall vision for Grass Lake Township. Goals help express the character and level of growth that will be acceptable, as well as the quality of life the Township will be able to offer its residents.

The Grass Lake Area contains a mixture of developed and rural characteristics. The “built” areas face the challenge of ensuring that existing and future neighborhoods and businesses remain attractive to residents and investors. The direction for the undeveloped areas will be the preservation of rural qualities that have made Grass Lake Township a desirable place to live. Therefore, the Community Vision may be expressed as:

Community Vision

The character of Grass Lake Charter Township will be defined by its rural, agricultural surroundings, with planned areas of commercial and industrial development designed in keeping with that character.

Goals and Policies

Community Character Goal. New development will generally reflect existing rural character, while offering a variety of commercial and industrial uses suitable for the shopping and employment needs of residents.

Community Character Policies

- The principal land uses in the Township will be residential, with varying densities situated in appropriate locations. Infrastructure will play a key role in determining suitable types and densities of development. Generally, more intensive development

will be directed to planned areas, generally in or near the Village or near I-94, while other areas will remain as low density residential development accompanied by related uses.

- The encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into residential areas will be discouraged by using appropriate land use patterns and zoning practices, such as landscape and open space buffers.
- Site plan review standards and zoning regulations will be adopted to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the township.

Residential Development Goal. Development will be encouraged which reflects, and preserves, the community values and character of Grass Lake Township by supporting existing developed areas and promoting a variety of new residential development in locations that support the Community Vision.

Residential Development Policies

- A variety of housing densities and choices will be encouraged in locations appropriate for the type and density of housing required to satisfy the varying needs and incomes of the residents of the area.
- Development of residential areas will be encouraged to provide adequate open space buffers from adjacent roadways to preserve rural views.
- Residential densities will be appropriate to the level of public services available. Moderate and higher densities will generally be located in areas where public water and sewer services can ensure a healthy living environment. Where public utilities are not available, low density development will be permitted, with a strong emphasis on the preservation of groundwater quality, support for existing agricultural operations, and rural character.
- Where appropriate, planned development will be encouraged, with open space or cluster development, to recognize the importance of preserving natural features, agricultural lands, with the intent to maintain our rural character.
- Where development is permitted along major roadways emphasis should be placed on providing internal roadways, rather than allowing direct access to the roadway for individual lots.

- The separation of dissimilar land uses through adequate landscaping, the provision of open space or buffer areas, and other means to limit conflicts between uses will be encouraged. Residential areas will be protected from the encroachment of industrial and commercial uses.

Farmland Protection Goal. The Township will encourage the protection of active farmland as a valuable resource for the community and take measures to ensure that farming operations are adequately buffered from residential development.

Farmland Protection Policies

- Land use decisions will support the desire of individual property owners who wish to keep their land in active agricultural production.
- Applicants for approvals of residential development in agricultural areas will be informed of the importance of agriculture to the community and the need to adequately inform new residents of activities related to farming operations.

Natural Features Goal. The natural beauty and features that make this area a desirable rural/village community will be preserved and enhanced by encouraging responsible development that respects the small town and rural character of the area.

Natural Features Policies

- Higher density residential development and commercial and industrial land uses will only be permitted where public sewer service is available, within the designated service boundary, so that the potential for ground water contamination or any other adverse environmental effects may be limited.
- Greenbelts, or buffer zones, should be used in transition areas between development and a natural feature or between two potentially incompatible land uses to protect the integrity of the area’s natural resources.
- The Village and Township will pursue the preservation (through acquisition, donation, easements, or other similar means) of areas that merit permanent protection from development, such as sensitive natural features, desired park lands, or public open spaces.

- Development in the area will be evaluated through zoning, site plan review and other available means to encourage site and building design that take into account natural features, such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation.

Business and Industry Goal. Businesses locating in commercial areas of the community will be of a scale appropriate to the small town and rural character desired by residents. Commercial and industrial uses will be located in areas that provide sufficient infrastructure and where they do not infringe on existing or planned residential areas.

Business and Industry Policies

- The Township, in conjunction with surrounding communities and countywide organizations, will encourage new businesses in appropriate locations that will promote employment opportunities and economic stability.
- New commercial and industrial uses along major roadways will utilize access management techniques to minimize traffic congestion and hazards.
- Commercial development will provide needed goods and services to area residents. Development will be encouraged to locate in existing buildings and zoned locations whenever possible. Where this is not feasible, new construction will be consistent with the character of the area and will not encroach upon residential uses.

Community Facilities and Services Goal. Update and manage facilities and services in an economically efficient manner that closely associates types and densities of development with infrastructure capacity and capability.

Community Facilities and Services Policies

- The Township will continue to work together with Jackson County and other appropriate agencies to delineate where public infrastructure would be most appropriate.
- Future land use patterns should reflect densities appropriate for areas served by public services. Utility services should not be provided where the Township intends to encourage the preservation of rural character.
- An assessment will be continued by the Township of the feasibility of building and maintaining an expanded community water and sewer facility, potentially involving multiple townships.

- Transportation considerations will be of primary importance during site plan review, particularly the use of access management techniques to limit the number and placement of drives along major roadways.

Community Cooperation Goal. Promote community cooperation to provide an adequate level of services that do not duplicate efforts that conserve Village and Township funds, act to improve the quality of life of both communities, and ensure that growth follows the direction established by the Master Plan.

Community Cooperation Policies

The formal coordinating committee will be continued whose primary objective is to ensure that the Master Plans of each community are consistent and followed by both the Village and Township.

- Membership should represent both elected officials and planning commissioners from each community. Specific duties should include:
 - advocating implementation of the Master Plan
 - continuation of dialogue regarding common issues
 - review of requests for alterations to service area boundaries
 - recommendations for future implementation steps
 - review of projects of significance to both communities
- Site plan and development approvals should be coordinated with MDOT and the Jackson County Department of Transportation to ensure that access management techniques are employed along Michigan Avenue (old US-12) and other major transportation routes within the area.

Future Land Use Plan

The form and vitality of any community is defined largely by how its citizens see the way land is used and how that use relates to their daily life. As a result, the way we use the land is linked directly to the quality of life of Grass Lake Township. The Future Land Use element of the Master Plan is designed to recognize existing development patterns, relevant demographic trends, and the Township's Goals and Policies.

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

As growth occurs it will be necessary for the Township to address difficult zoning issues brought on by the pace and increasing complexity of development plans by residents and property owners. The need to provide flexibility, coupled with the Township's desire to manage its growth, may create the need for innovative zoning solutions, such as clustering provisions, planned unit development regulations, and other techniques.

It will also be important for the Plan to be used consistently. A plan which is not actively followed and implemented may lead to problems for the Township in the future. Failure to follow the Plan may help discredit any attempt to use the Plan as a defense for actions which may be challenged by property owners or developers.

Likewise, consistent and vigorous use of the Plan will lend credibility to the community's attempts to implement controversial decisions on rezonings or other zoning actions. While the courts of the State of Michigan do not recognize the absolute authority of the Master Plan, they do lend much more credibility to actions supported by careful planning than those which appear to be taken arbitrarily against an individual property owner.

Finally, it is critical that the Plan be read in its entirety. Rather than attempting to isolate individual statements that may appear to support one position or another regarding the Future Land Use for the Township, the Planning Commission must consider the intent of the Plan as a whole. This requires a careful reading of the Plan to ensure that all of the Plan's considerations are included in the evaluation of any change.

Future Land Use

The heart of the Master Plan is Future Land Use. The future land uses shown on the Future Land Use map as well as future decisions by the Township will be based on several factors, including the following.

- **Community Character.** The goals and policies adopted as part of this Plan express the kind of community Grass Lake's residents' desire. A strong desire to maintain the rural character of the community is a driving force behind this Plan.

- **Adaptability of Land.** Environmental constraints have also played a part in the Plan. Of particular importance is ensuring that particular lands are able to accommodate their planned use. Of special concern is the need to protect groundwater resources by limiting higher densities and intensities of land use to where public utilities are available or can be made available.
- **Community Needs.** The Township also determined the various uses that were needed in the community. Locations for a wide variety of land uses were determined in appropriate and desirable locations.
- **Available Services.** Where the intensity of development dictates, measures should be planned to accommodate that development. Other services were also considered, including such services as adequate fire protection and other public safety measures. Road improvement issues should also be considered.
- **Existing Development.** The use of land in the future is influenced by how land is used today. Where new uses are introduced, special consideration will be given to how those uses affect uses already established nearby.

Future Land Use Classifications

Agricultural

Maintaining community character and conserving open space have been heavily emphasized throughout the process of developing the Master Plan. While it is recognized that large scale farming operations may be phased out over time, the desire to maintain an atmosphere conducive to continued agricultural activities has also been expressed among Township officials and concerned citizens. Consequently, the majority of the area recommended for agricultural uses were identified as part of the county-wide Agricultural Preservation Area identified in the *Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan*.

Portions of the township are well suited for larger lot, and agricultural use, due to the attractiveness of the township's rural setting. Grass Lake Township is trying to recognize the needs of those residents who wish to live in a lower density, rural setting, while at the same time ensuring that those same residents will not greatly affect agricultural operations or change the area's the rural character. Consequently, the area of the Township recommended for agricultural uses is greater than that proposed in the previous edition of the Master Plan

There is a general tendency to farming as a temporary use until land is converted to residential, commercial, or industrial uses. This may be appropriate in some areas where public utilities, land prices, property divisions, and growth pressures have made farming

difficult. But, in truth, farming is as much of an industry as manufacturing. While the tax benefits and employment base are not the same, farming does provide jobs and a product for sale in the marketplace. Viewing farming as an essential industry can have a profound effect on the programs developed for its continuation.

However, much of the responsibility for preserving farmland does not lie with the government; the most important link is the property owner. The pressures on small, local farm enterprises come from many sources, including:

- Land speculation drives up land values, affecting assessments on existing farmland.
- Urban sprawl brings new residents who want to live in a "rural" environment. These residents, having moved from urban areas, are often unprepared for the ordinary effects of farming. Odors, tractors and equipment along the roadways, crop dusting, and other necessary activities conflict with their expectations of rural living.
- Economic conditions, which manipulate market conditions for the crop being produced, will affect the ability of individual farmers to continue to farm profitably.

Farmers may also see their farmland as a source of retirement income. Therefore, a key to farmland preservation is the cooperation of the property owner. Farm owners may enroll in various preservation programs, such as P.A. 116, but any farmland preservation program must provide the proper incentives and motivation that will permit continued farming.

The overall amount of farmed land continues to decline as farmers are forced to sell land to subsidize their operations, and as more farmers retire and stop working the land. As expressed throughout this Plan, the Township's intent is to preserve as much of its agricultural land as possible, for as long as possible, and will take no actions which would preclude the use of land within its borders for farming.

While it is the intent of the Township to maintain agricultural operations for as long as possible, there is a general recognition that much of the land in this classification will eventually be converted from farm and vacant fields to residential use. However, the strong desire on the part of township residents to preserve their privacy and the rural character for which they moved to the area, dictates a need to limit density.

Another factor used to classify Agricultural lands was the limited ability of the Township and other authorities to provide utilities, paved roads, and other services to areas that are planned for more intense development. Lower development densities will permit the Township to provide an appropriate level of services to match the need.

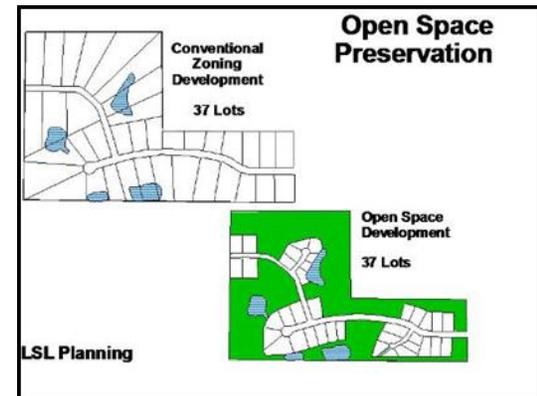
While the conversion of lands from agricultural to residential use is expected, this must be accomplished in a manner that allows the Township to manage development of these areas. Accordingly, zoning policies will seek to follow a consistent pattern of building on previous development, rather than creating isolated parcels of relatively higher density development in agricultural areas.

Preserving the rural character is important since it was for this reason that many people moved to Grass Lake Township. There are a number of practices which the Township could encourage to promote the preservation of the rural environment, including:

- Increasing the setback for homes within the Agricultural areas. Rather than viewing a strip of homes along the street, increasing setbacks would maintain a view of natural areas.
- Encouraging the preservation of trees.
- Minimizing urban vegetation (manicured lawns, flower gardens, etc.) in areas visible from the roadway. Native plantings should be maintained in these areas.
- Increasing the zoning requirements for road frontage. This would further separate the distance between homes and allow for a more "open" feeling.

Open Space Preservation. While clustering, or “Open Space Preservation” development may increase the net density for a smaller area of a larger parcel, the overall density would still fall into the requirements of the Future Land Use Plan. It would also allow for the preservation of significant natural features, provide open space for recreation, or allow the continuation of farming on interior land areas.

Open Space Preservation development provides for a concentration of development in a limited area, with the overall, or "gross density" of the site remaining the same. Although clustering may increase the net density for a smaller area of a larger parcel, the gross density should still fall into the requirements of the Master Plan and subsequent zoning regu-



lations. The object of Open Space Preservation is not to increase the number of units developed, but to regulate the amount of land disturbed by structures, lawns, and drives.

Allowing Open Space Preservation through the use of a planned unit development (PUD) provides the opportunity to ensure that land will be kept free from future development. Apart from being a requirement of the PUD, preserved open space may be deeded in equal parts to the property owners of the cluster with restrictions on individual sales, requiring approval of a majority (or greater number) of the remaining owners. Regardless of ownership, the remaining acreage would not be permitted to be developed with additional housing units.

Open Space Preservation also permits the Township to consider development design options that go beyond the traditional “cookie cutter” lot designs often shown for larger developments.

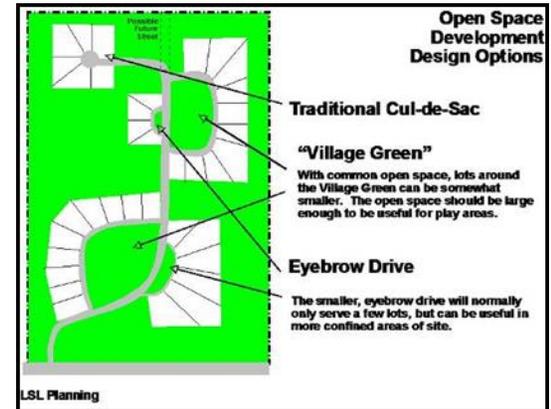
Other land use techniques may become available for use in these areas, such as a local program for the purchase or transfer of development rights, private property restrictions through land donations or conservation easements, as well as other available public and private land preservation methods.

An amendment to the Township Zoning Act in 2002 required Townships to have Open Space Preservation language in their zoning ordinances, provided certain criteria were met.

Low Density Residential

A significant portion of the south-western area of the township, south of the Village, has been placed within the Low Density Residential classification. Another designated area north and east of the Village, but south of Interstate 94, has also been placed in a Low Density Residential classification, including Tims Lake Preserve.

This land use category enhances the conservation of rural character and preservation of sensitive natural resources. Public utilities traverse these areas and could easily expand to service proposed Low Density Residential developments. The Focus Group discussions held during the development of the previous edition of the Master Plan revealed considerable concern about the quality of groundwater that will be available in the future. Until access to public utilities is more readily available, protecting the source of well



water will be very important for the long term welfare of the Township’s residents. Development in this classification must be carefully reviewed to ensure that any potential for groundwater problems is noted.

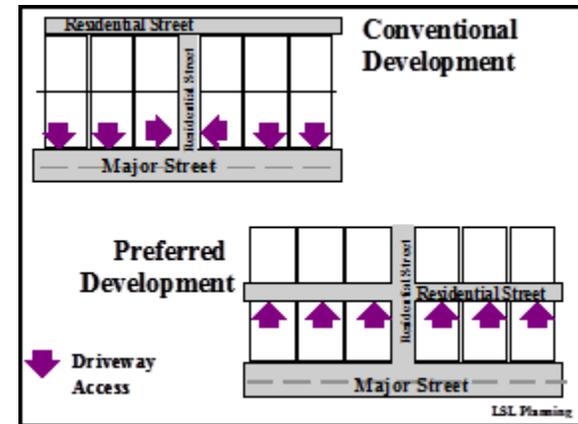
It is also likely that a significant amount of the residential development in this classification will occur along existing roadways. Although development of this nature is not unusual in rural areas, it does present some practical problems. The number of driveways along these roadways may create traffic problems, particularly in areas of relatively narrow lot widths. Although individually these driveways do not generate excessive amounts of traffic, an increase in their number on a busy roadway over time can present problems with additional turn movements, especially where vehicle speeds are high.

As development along roadways increases, property owners are also more likely to demand better maintenance. Residents indicated that improvements to existing roadways were an important issue. Maintenance concerns, including paving of gravel roads will likely become apparent as more development occurs.

Finally, homes spaced out along roadways, particularly when near the street, tend to detract from the rural character of the area when the view is more of buildings than of open space. A byproduct of strip residential development, the inefficient use of land, also occurs when homes are placed near the front property line.

A number of properties in the township are divided into relatively large lots, with the frontage taken up by individual homes. This type of development tends to create relatively deep lots which leaves sizeable areas cut off from road access and essentially unusable. Although the Land Division Act (PA 288 of 1967, MCL 560.101 *et seq.*), as amended, has improved this situation by limiting lot width to depth to a ratio of 1:4, it is still possible to create large areas of relatively isolated land.

While this may not be a problem for the original and some subsequent owners, others may look for opportunities to use the back portions of these lots for further development and seek variances or other approvals from the Township to do so. Therefore, access to interior properties will continue to be an important consideration in reviewing future development proposals.



Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential uses are intended to be concentrated near the Village limits, where access to utilities is more readily available, residential services are provided, and roadways are sufficient to accommodate increased traffic, or can be improved to accommodate such traffic. For example, an area located to the northeast of the Village is set aside for the extension of Medium Density Residential development. A smaller area of existing development further north is also recognized. In some portions of this area, this designation reflects existing development patterns while providing additional land for higher density development. The densities permitted, however, will require proper provisions for sanitary sewer and water service, either through public systems, or approved private, community systems. Zoning at these densities should generally not occur until utility issues are resolved.

It is the express intent of the Plan to provide for greater intensities of residential development and to avoid the potential for strip commercial development to extend south of I-94 along Mt. Hope Road, leading to the Village. An emphasis in the Medium Density Residential area will be to ensure that residential development takes place in a manner that allows the Township to properly manage development, protect environmental and natural resources, and plan for infrastructure necessary to support new development.

As with other residential designations, zoning policies will seek to follow a consistent pattern of building on previous development rather than creating isolated parcels of relatively higher density development in low density areas. This means that rezoning requests consistent with this land use classification will be evaluated to ensure that new residential development does not create pockets of higher densities in areas where low density development is currently predominate. Rather, the Medium Density development will be encouraged to build on already existing areas of similar densities, particularly ones already served by public sewer.

General Commercial

Two areas of General Commercial have been shown on the Future Land Use map. The first is west of the Village along Michigan Avenue and is intended to complement the pattern of development already occurring in the area near the Village. The second larger area is east of the Village, on the south side of Michigan Avenue, and contains the Township's Downtown Development Authority (DDA). It has been determined that commercial development of a general nature should be limited to areas nearest the Village, where the greatest concentrations of residential development occur. Further, it is the express intent of the Township to avoid providing competing lands with the development within the Village core. Instead, the designated areas are intended to provide locations for commercial development that otherwise would not be able to locate on the smaller properties within the Village.

Development within the General Commercial classification should be planned with specific consideration of such factors as compatibility with surrounding existing and planned land use; traffic safety and convenience; shared driveways and parking areas; consistent site elements, such as signs, landscaping and lighting; roadway improvements, including such elements as turning and deceleration lanes; and other factors that are consistent with the neighborhood and rural character.

Driveways will be located as far as possible from other driveways and any street intersections to minimize traffic conflicts, but generally not less than 150 feet. In most situations only a single driveway will be permitted unless a professional traffic study determines that a second drive is needed to accommodate higher volumes of traffic.

Highway Commercial/Light Industrial

Land has been placed into this mixed use classification to recognize the unique character of a narrow strip of land bordering I-94. The nature of development within this area will be affected by several factors, including the ability to accumulate sufficient land area for development sites, whether or not utility services become readily available, and whether the interchange at Mt. Hope Road is improved. As events unfold, the exact nature of development may become clearer. Regardless, many of the same design elements of controlling driveways, adequate landscaping, buffering from adjacent uses, and other similar requirements will still be necessary. Because this land use area runs parallel to I-94, the Township should also be concerned about the view from the highway to buildings and parking areas. Efforts should be made to discourage the placement of loading areas, outside storage and other unattractive features in areas clearly visible from the highway.

Highway Commercial/Light Industrial uses will generally be limited to those areas which are or may be served by public utilities. Certain highway commercial/light industrial uses may be permitted without utilities, but will usually be restricted to those operations which do not require large scale waste disposal or water use, such as auto repair businesses and small machine and fabricating shops. However, providing public water and sanitary sewer to these areas should be a high priority for the Township.

Highway Commercial/Light Industrial properties will generally have the following characteristics:

- Access to an appropriate roadway capable of accommodating the weights and/or volumes of trucks.
- Availability of public utilities.
- Sufficient property to accommodate generous setbacks for parking, loading, and other activity areas.

- Designed to limit any negative effects on existing homes or other uses.

The negative effects of this intense land use may be minimized by limiting highway commercial/industrial development to the areas bordering I-94 (e.g., interchanges with surface roads and other areas of the corridor contained in the Township’s Local Development Financing Authority (LDFA). These areas present better opportunities for more intensive development. The intent is to allow for economic and employment opportunity expansion within the Township without detracting from the rural character of the rest of the community.

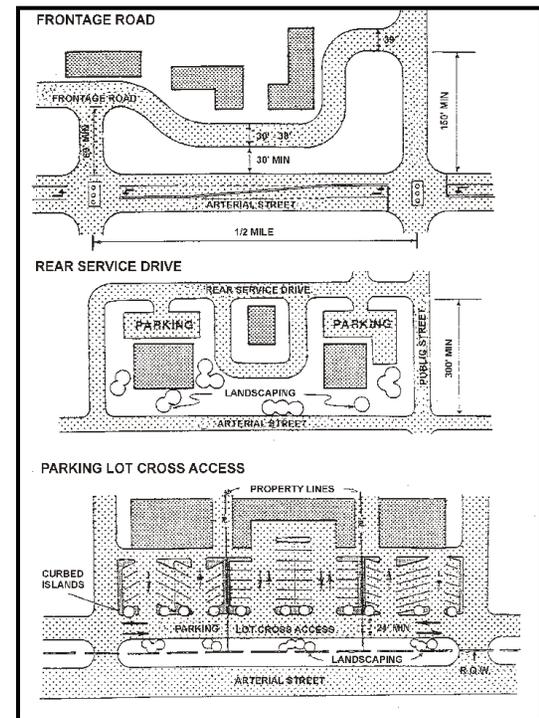
Mt. Hope Interchange. The Township has elected to allow future development around the Mt. Hope interchange in order to determine the type and style of development desired. Therefore, a mixed designation of Highway Commercial/ Light Industrial is shown. Both the highway commercial and industrial land uses planned near this interchange will benefit substantially from the newly designed and constructed interchange.

Clear Lake Interchange. The larger Highway Commercial/light industrial area, at Clear Lake Road, while intended for more intensive development, should be tightly restricted to the properties nearest the interchange, rather than encroaching on residential and agricultural development further to the north and south.

The uses intended for this classification will generally be those which emphasize highway related service, such as service stations, restaurants, and other related uses. Managing access to individual properties will receive strong consideration during the review of individual sites. The use of combined drives, service drives, and well planned access points will be stressed.

Public

This designation has been added to reflect a number of the school, church, and government-owned lands scattered throughout the township. The largest areas of public lands occur north of I-94, in the Waterloo Recreation Area and in the southwest for the Sharoville State Game Area.



Zoning Plan

The Master Plan provides the legal basis for zoning in Grass Lake Township. Accordingly, the plan is required to contain a special plan element, known commonly as the zoning plan, by Michigan’s planning and zoning enabling acts. As noted in the Michigan Planning Guidebook (May 2008), “special plan elements are often prepared to establish a legal basis for a local regulation, such as a zoning plan to serve as the basis for zoning regulations.”

The MPEA —the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008), as amended— requires “a zoning plan for the various zoning districts controlling area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises” because Grass Lake Township has an adopted zoning ordinance (Sec. 33 (2) (d)). The MZEA —the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006), as amended— requires the planning commission to adopt and file with the township board “a zoning plan for the areas subject to zoning” in Grass Lake Township (Sec. 305 (a)). Finally, the MPEA also requires the zoning plan to “include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map” (Sec. 33 (2) (d)).

Zoning Districts

Chapters 5 through 13 of the Zoning Ordinance establish and define the following zoning districts (please see the Zoning Map):

Agricultural District (AG) — This District is intended for large tracts used for farming, or farm lands which are idle, and single-family dwellings. Agricultural uses and other uses generally associated with agriculture, single-family residential development on larger lots, and related non-residential uses are provided within the district. The overall purpose of this District is to preserve larger tracts of land for agricultural use while allowing for residential development at appropriate densities.

AG DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
	Front	Side	Rear
Yards	60 ft.	30 ft.	50 ft.
Building Height	35 ft. (2½ stories) maximum		
Lot Requirements	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
	200 ft	2 acres	Maximum 20%
Dwelling Unit Minimum Sizes	# Stories	Total UFA	Ground Floor
	1	1,000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft.
	1 1/2	1,000 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.
	2	1,600 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.

Single-Family Residential District (R-1) — This District is intended primarily for single-family dwellings. Agricultural uses and other uses generally associated with agriculture, single-family residential development on larger lots, and related non-residential uses are provided within the District.

R-1 DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
Yards	Front	Side	Rear
	35 ft.	15 ft.	25 ft.
Building Height	35 ft. (2½ stories) maximum		
Lot Requirements	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
	150 ft.	1 Acre	Maximum 20%
Dwelling Unit Minimum Sizes	# Stories	Total UFA	Ground Floor
	1	1,000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft.
	1 1/2	1,000 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.
	2	1,600 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.

Single-Family Residential District (R-2) — This District is composed of those areas of the township whose principle use is and should be single-family dwellings on moderately sized lots. The regulations of this district are designed to preserve and enhance those areas that are suitable for higher densities of residential development. In addition to the dwellings permitted in the zoning district, certain non-residential uses are permitted which have been regulated to make them compatible with the principal uses of this District.

R-2 DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS					
Yards	Front	Side	Rear		
	25 ft.	10 ft. minimum /total 25 ft.	25 ft		
Lot Requirements	Residential uses - With public sanitary sewer		All uses and residential uses without public sanitary sewer		
	Lot Area	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Width	Lot Coverage
	10,000 sq. feet.	80 feet	½ acre	100 feet	30%
Building Height	No main buildings and no structures shall exceed a height of two and one-half (2½) stories, but not exceeding thirty-five (35) feet.				

Multiple-Family Residential District (R-3) — This District is intended for a wider variety of residential uses, including low rise multiple family dwellings, located where access to utilities is more readily available, residential services are provided, and roadways are sufficient to accommodate increased traffic, or can be improved to accommodate that traffic. Accordingly, densities of residential

development will be dependent on utility and public services. Development should incorporate the preservation of open space and natural features. Sound design practices should be used to provide a quality living environment to residents.

R-3 DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
Single Family Dwellings and Non-Residential Main Buildings			
	Front	Side	Rear
Yards	35 ft.	15 ft.	25 ft.
Building Height	35 ft. (2½ stories) maximum		
	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
Lot Requirements	100 ft	½ Acre (21,780 sq. ft.)	Maximum 20%
	# Stories	Total UFA	Ground Floor
Dwelling Unit Minimum Sizes	1	1,000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft.
	1 1/2	1,000 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.
	2	1,600 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.

Manufactured Housing Community District (R-4) — This District is intended to encourage an appropriate location for manufactured home parks and single family residential developments in areas where the natural resource base is capable of supporting that development and the property is served by the necessary public services and infrastructure.

R-4 DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
	Front	Side	Rear
Yards	35 ft.	15 ft.	25 ft.
Building Height	35 ft. (2½ stories) maximum		
	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
Lot Requirements	100 ft.	½ Acre (21,780 sq. ft.)	20%
	# Stories	Total UFA	Ground Floor
Dwelling Unit Minimum Sizes	1	1,000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft.
	1 1/2	1,000 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.
	2	1,600 sq. ft.	850 sq. ft.

General Commercial District (GC) — This District is intended for commercial development of a general nature near areas where greater concentrations of residential development occur. The designated areas are intended to provide locations for commercial development that might otherwise not be able to locate on the smaller properties within the Village. The General Commercial District

is distinguished from the Highway Commercial District by relying less on auto dependent businesses and providing more services related to township and area residents.

Development within the General Commercial District will be planned with specific consideration of such factors as compatibility with surrounding existing and planned land use; traffic safety and convenience; shared driveways and parking areas; consistent site elements, such as signs, landscaping and lighting; roadway improvements, including such elements as turning and deceleration lanes; and other factors that are consistent with the neighborhood and rural character.

GC DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
	Front	Side	Rear
Yards	35 ft.	15 ft.	40 ft.
	No parking is permitted in the required front yard	25 ft. if abutting a Residential District or use	
Building Height	30 ft. (2½ stories) maximum		
Lot Requirements	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
	100 ft	15,000 sq. ft.	Maximum 40%

Highway Commercial District (HC) — This District is intended primarily for uses emphasizing highway related service, such as service stations, restaurants, and other related uses. Managing access to individual properties will receive strong consideration during the review of individual sites. The use of combined drives, service drives, and well planned access points will be stressed. Efforts will be made to discourage the placement of loading areas, outside storage and other unattractive features in areas clearly visible from the highway.

HC DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
	Front	Side	Rear
Yards	With service drive in front yard	35 ft.	25 ft.
	With no service drive in front yard	40 ft.	
	No parking is permitted in the front yard		
Building Height	30 ft. (2½ stories) maximum		
Lot Requirements	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
	200 ft	1 acre	Maximum 40%

Light Industrial District (LI) — This District is intended for Industrial uses generally limited to those areas that are or may be served by public utilities. Certain industrial uses may be permitted without utilities, but will usually be restricted to those operations not requiring large scale waste disposal or water use, such as automobile repair businesses and small machine and fabricating shops.

Industrial properties will generally have the following characteristics:

- Access to an appropriate roadway capable of accommodating the weights and/or volumes of trucks.
- Availability of public utilities.
- Sufficient property to accommodate generous setbacks for parking, loading, and other activity areas.
- Designed to limit any negative effects on existing homes or other uses.

The intent of the District is also to provide opportunities for more intensive development that allows for economic and employment opportunity expansion within the township without detracting from the rural character of the rest of the community.

LI DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS			
	Front	Side	Rear
Yards	50 ft.	50 ft.	40 ft.
	No parking is permitted in the first 35 ft. of the front yard from the front lot line	No parking, loading or other activities are permitted in the first 25 ft. of the side yard from the front lot line	No parking, loading or other activities are permitted in the first 25 ft. of the rear yard from the side lot line
Building Height	60 ft.		
Lot Requirements	Lot Width	Lot Area	Lot Coverage
	150 ft	1 acre	Maximum 40%

Rezoning Criteria

The most common zoning application of the Master Plan is during the rezoning process. Accordingly, a rezoning should be required to meet set criteria in order to be considered consistent with the Master Plan. Sec. 150.381 (c) of the township’s zoning code contains standards which satisfy this requirement:

- Is the proposed rezoning consistent with the policies and uses proposed for that area in the Township’s Master Plan?
- Will all of the uses allowed under the proposed rezoning be compatible with other zones and uses in the surrounding area?

- Will any public services and facilities be significantly adversely impacted by a development or use allowed under the requested rezoning?
- Will the uses allowed under the proposed rezoning be equally or better suited to the area than uses allowed under the current zoning of the land?

Relationship to the Future Land Use Map

The remainder of this chapter equates the various zoning districts included on the zoning map with the various categories included on the future land use map.

Agricultural areas — The following open areas are included on the future land use map:

- **Agricultural areas** — Agricultural areas are addressed generally on the future land use map. The following zoning district equates to those areas:
 - **AG** — Agricultural District

Residential areas — The following residential areas are included on the future land use map:

- **Low-density residential areas** — Low-density residential areas are addressed generally on the future land use map. The following zoning districts equate to those areas:
 - **R-1** — Single-Family Residential District
 - **R-2** — Single-Family Residential District
- **Medium-density residential areas** — Medium-density residential areas are addressed generally on the future land use map. The following zoning districts equate to those areas:
 - **R-3** — Multiple Family Residential District
 - **R-4** — Manufactured Housing Community District

Commercial and light industrial areas — The following commercial areas are included on the future land use map:

- **General commercial areas** — General commercial areas are addressed generally on the future land use map. The following zoning districts equate to those areas:

- **GC** — General Commercial District
- **Highway Commercial/Light Industrial areas** — Highway commercial/light industrial areas are addressed in general on the future land use map. The following zoning district equates to those areas:
 - **HC** — Highway Commercial District
 - **LI** — Light Industrial District

Public Areas — The following public areas are included on the future land use map:

- **Public** — Public areas are addressed generally on the future land use map do not equate to any district on the zoning map.