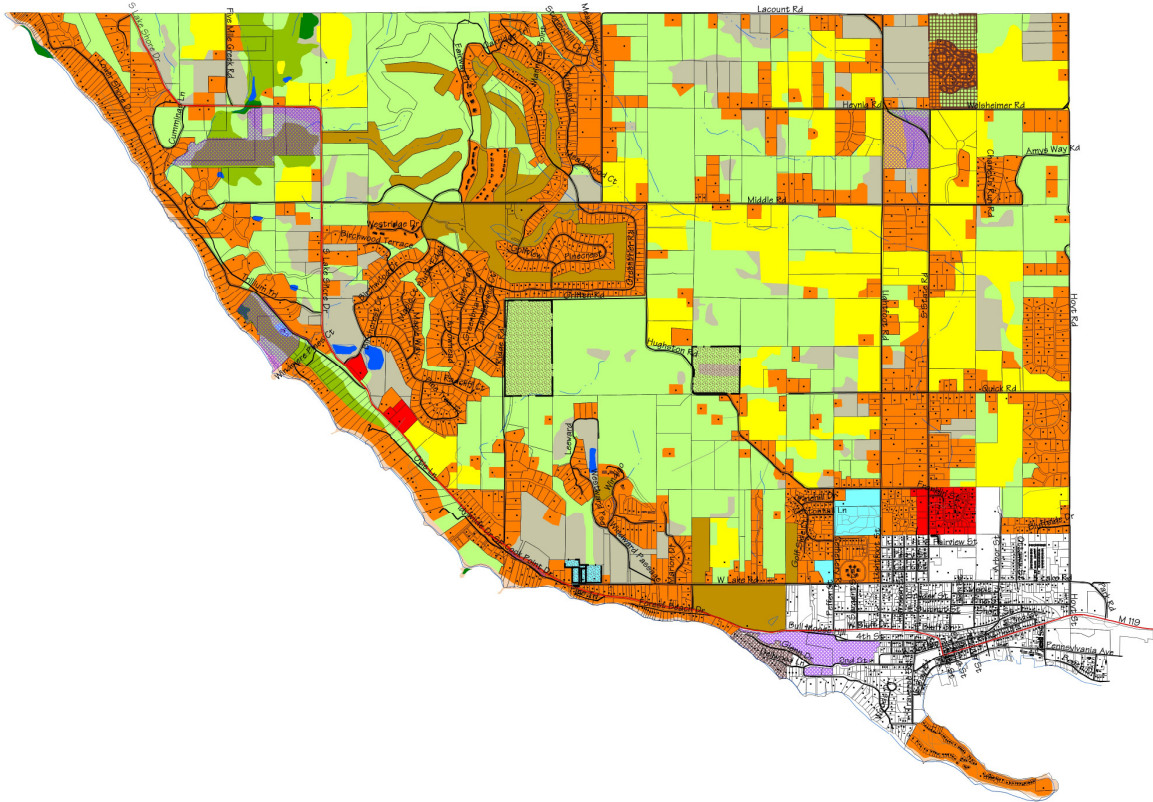


# *West Traverse Township*



## *Master Plan Update*

PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPTED: MAY 13, 2020

TOWNSHIP BOARD ADOPTED: JUNE 9, 2020

*West Traverse Township*  
***Master Plan Update***  
Emmet County, Michigan

Prepared by:  
*West Traverse Township Planning Commission*

Paul Mooradian, Chair  
Cindy Baiardi  
Dawson Moore  
Paul Repasky  
David Uutinen  
Thomas Varner  
Peter Wallin

*Past Planning Commission Member*  
Daniel Gorman

*West Traverse Township Board Members*

Robert Sandford, Supervisor  
Cindy Baiardi, Clerk  
Kristi Hollingsworth, Treasurer  
John Baker, Trustee  
Eva Lauer, Trustee

**Adopted**  
Planning Commission: May 13, 2020  
Township Board: June 9, 2020

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP  
MASTER PLAN UPDATE  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Title Page.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1-1
2. TOWNSHIP SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS .....	2-1
3. NATURAL RESOURCES .....	3-1
4. EXISTING LAND USE .....	4-1
5. COMMUNITY SERVICE, FACILITIES, AND TRANSPORTATION .....	5-1
6. COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES .....	6-1
7. FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	7-1
8. PLAN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION .....	8-1

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### **The Purpose and Planning Process**

The purpose of the West Traverse Township Master Plan is to provide guidelines for future development, while protecting the natural resources and rural character of the Township. This Master Plan presents extensive background information including socio-economic data on the Township; description and mapping of natural resources and existing land uses; and inventory of existing community facilities. The background information is analyzed to identify important characteristics, changes, and trends occurring in West Traverse Township. Community concerns were identified based on previous and on-going planning efforts, along with input from the Planning Commission. Goals and policies were developed to guide future development based on the background studies, key land use trends, economic factors, and community issues. These goals, along with a detailed map of existing land use, provided the basis for the Future Land Use Map which specifies where the various types of future development ideally will be located within the Township. This plan also provides suggestions for implementation of the identified goals and policies. The guidance provided by this Master Plan will be utilized in reviewing and updating the West Traverse Township Zoning Ordinance, as appropriate.

### **History, Location and Regional Setting**

In 1855, Emmet County was divided into four townships by the State Legislature of Michigan. Little Traverse Township included the present townships of Pleasantview, Friendship, Little Traverse and West Traverse. When the 1874 Homestead Act opened Emmet County for settlement, Friendship and Pleasantview Townships were created from the original Little Traverse Township. At that time, the northern boundary of Little Traverse Township was drawn to extend west to Lake Michigan.

In 1897, all land which lay west of Hoyt Road, excluding the Village of Harbor Springs, was organized as West Traverse Township. Harbor Point became part of West Traverse Township by virtue of lying west of Hoyt Road. The southern tier of sections of Friendship Township were also added to West Traverse Township in 1897.

West Traverse Township is located on the north side of Little Traverse Bay, in the western part of Emmet County, which is situated in the northwest region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. West Traverse Township is the smallest Township in the State, comprising approximately 13 square miles of the County's 468 square miles of land area. The Township's irregular size and shape is due to the shoreline of Lake Michigan. This shoreline also provides 48,300 feet of Lake Michigan frontage. The Township contains some of the most beautiful and diverse geographical and ecological lands in the state.

In addition to residential areas, farming lands, and open spaces, West Traverse Township also includes an industrial park, several golf courses, and a nature preserve (Thorne Swift).

The maximum distance from the north boundary to the south boundary is approximately four miles, with the east to west distance at nearly six miles. West Traverse Township is bordered on the south by the City of Harbor Springs and Lake Michigan, on the north by Friendship Township, on the east by Pleasantview Township, Little Traverse Township, and the City of Harbor Springs, and by Lake Michigan on the west. A small portion of the Township, known as Harbor Point, is



separated from the rest of the Township by the City of Harbor Springs and is accessible only by going through Harbor Springs or via Lake Michigan/Little Traverse Bay. The City of Petoskey, Charlevoix, and Traverse City are approximately 7, 25 and 72 miles southwest of the Township, respectively.

## **Enabling Legislation**

The development of a Township Master Plan is directed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, MPEA), as amended. This Act requires the plan to be called a “Master Plan” where previously they were referred to as “Comprehensive Plans”, “Land Use Plans”, or “Master Plans”.

The Act states that “A Master Plan shall address land use and infrastructure issues and may project 20 years or more into the future. A 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.”

## **The Status of Planning and Zoning in West Traverse Township**

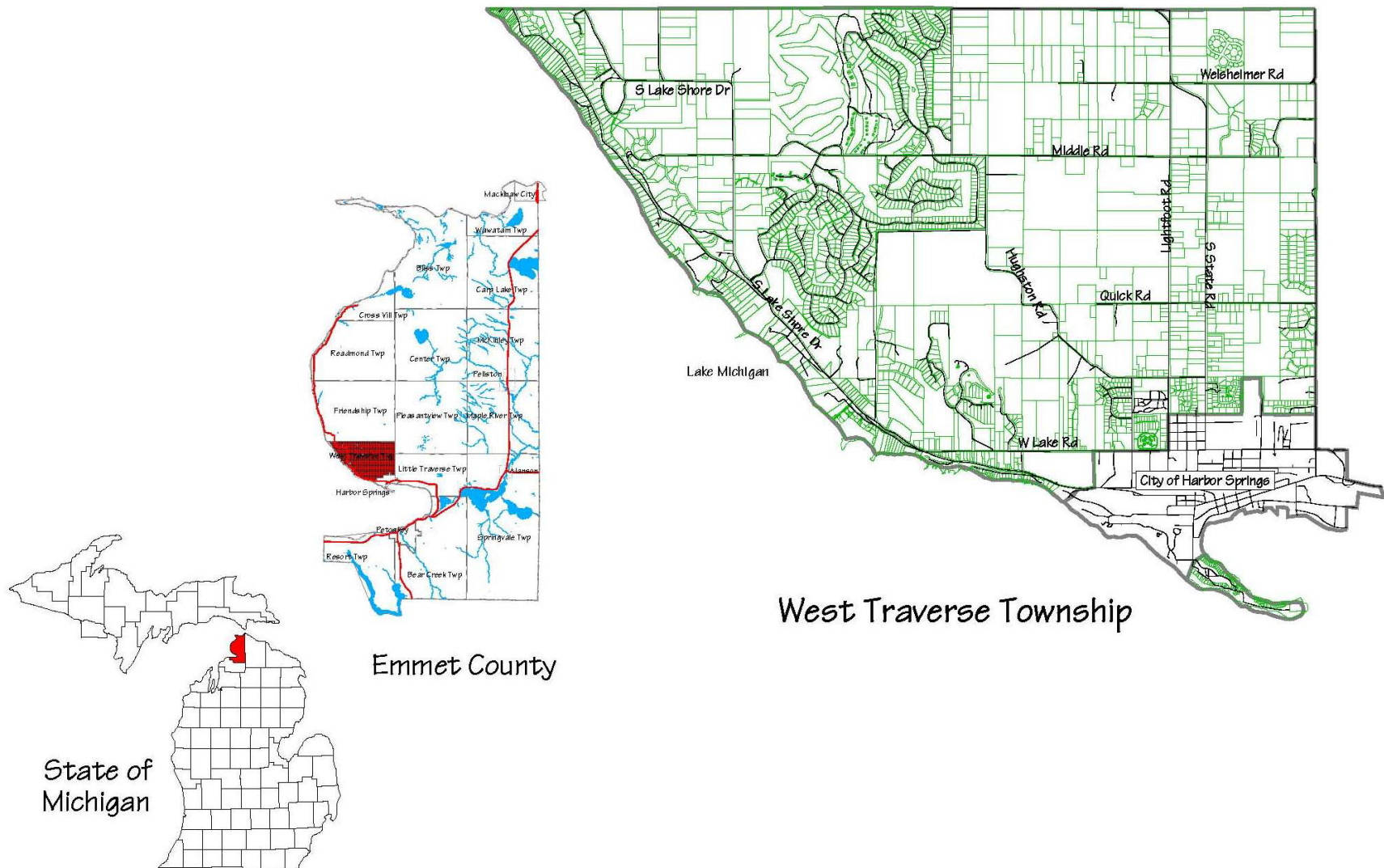
West Traverse Township adopted a permanent Township Zoning Ordinance in 1972 and adopted an initial Comprehensive Plan (now, according to the MPEA, a “Master Plan”) in 1981 and amended the Plan in 1993. Due to changes and growth pressures in the Township, the Comprehensive Plan was thoroughly reviewed and updated in 2008. The 2014 Master Plan Update for West Traverse Township utilizes information from the earlier planning efforts as a starting point, and updated the information as appropriate.

West Traverse Township established a Planning Commission in the early 1990s; however, a planning committee existed prior to the formal establishment of the Planning Commission. Since adopting the Zoning Ordinance in 1972, the Township has been responsible for the administration of zoning regulations in the Township. West Traverse, Little Traverse, Pleasantview, and Resort Townships are the only four townships, out of 16 townships in Emmet County, which have their own zoning ordinance. The other 12 townships in Emmet County fall under County zoning regulations and enforcement.

Updated zoning ordinances supported by up-to-date Master Plans are considered the main tool Michigan communities have at their command to control land use patterns and development pressures. In order to guide future development, West Traverse Township decided to develop a Township Zoning Ordinance coordinated with the Master Plan.

The Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians purchased and placed in tribal trust approximately 80 acres of property in the northeast part of the Township. The property is developed as housing for tribal members. This property has been placed in tribal trust and has sovereign nation status, thus is not under the jurisdiction of West Traverse Township.

Figure 1-1  
Location Map, West Traverse Township



## CHAPTER 2

### Township Social and Economic Characteristics

#### Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of West Traverse Township in 2010 was 1,606 persons (775 male - 831 female), an increase of 158 people, or 9.8% compared to the 2000 Census. For comparisons, the population of Emmet County increased by 0.5% and the State declined by 0.6% during the same decade.

The female population increased by 118 or 14.0 %, while the male population increased by 40 or 5.0 % between 2000 and 2010. The persons per square mile increased 9.84%, from 108.9 per square mile in 2000 to 120.8 per square mile in 2010. For Emmet County, the persons per square mile in 2010 were 69.9, while the State of Michigan density was 174.8 people per square mile. The Township encompasses 13.3 square miles of land area, while the County encompasses 467.5 square miles.

In discussing the population for West Traverse Township, however, it is important to note that the figure presented by the 2010 Census does not reflect the actual number of persons visiting, vacationing or residing in the Township during the summer months. This situation can be seen throughout much of Northern Michigan. The Census tally, taken on April 1st, does not count individuals as residents of West Traverse Township if they claim primary residence elsewhere.

Table 2-1 provides population statistics for West Traverse Township and Emmet County for the period from 1970 through 2010. The Township has experienced significant population growth during each of the decades between 1970 and 2010. The most substantial growth occurred between 1970 and 1980, when the Township population more than doubled. Between 1980 and 1990, the Township experienced growth of only 12.7 percent. Population increased by nearly 50 percent in the next decade (1990 to 2000) and greater than 10% between 2000 and 2010 when the rest of the County grew at a much slower pace, and the State actually lost population.

Table 2-1									
Population Changes 1970-2010									
West Traverse Township & Emmet County									
	1970	Percent Change	1980	Percent Change	1990	Percent Change	2000	Percent Change	2010
Emmet County	18,331	25.4	22,992	8.9	25,040	25.5	31,437	4.0	32,694
West Traverse Twp.	420	104.5	859	12.7	968	49.6	1448	10.9	1606
Source: U.S. Census Bureau									

## Age Distribution and Racial Make-up

Information on age distribution within a population can assist the community in matching public services to community characteristics and in determining what, if any, special needs specific resident groups may have.

Age distribution for West Traverse Township in 2010 reflects a population with a significantly higher median age than that of Emmet County or the State of Michigan as a whole, as illustrated in Table 2-2. It appears that young adults in the college years (18-24) are somewhat under represented in the Township and County as compared with the State of Michigan. The proportion of adults in the wage earning years (25-65) is also below the County and State norms. Table 2-2 provides the statistical comparison of the age distribution for the Township, County and State based on the 2010 Census.

At the time of the 2010 Census the median age for West Traverse Township was 54.4 years, quite a significant jump from the median of 47 years in 2000 and from a median of 38.5 years in 1990. It is important however, to remember that these statistics do not include the seasonal resident population which is likely to have a larger proportion of older persons.

For the past three decades the Township experienced decreases in the percent of pre-school age residents (under 5) and family-forming age group (20-34). All of these age groups are well below the County and State averages. There was, however, a significant increase in the percent of the over 50 age group and the retiree age group. In fact, the percent of 65 and older persons in West Traverse Township at 27.1 percent in 2010, was more than double the State's 13.8 percent for this age group and significantly higher than the County's 16.6 percent. The percent of persons in the 50-64 year-old age group at 29.7, was also higher than the County's 23.4 and the State's 20.4 percent.

According to the 2010 Census data the racial make-up of the Township is primarily white (1,519 persons). Native Americans are the primary minority population (61 persons), followed by 19 mixed race and 7 Asian. Population by ethnicity indicates 1,586 non-Hispanic or Latino and 20 Hispanic or Latino.

The 2010 Census reported that the West Traverse Township population of 1,606 all resided in households. None of the population was living in group quarters. In 2000 two people were in group quarters. The 2010 breakdown is as follows:

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Householder	723	45.0%
Spouse	470	29.3%
Child	343	21.4%
Own child under 18	268	16.7%
Other Relatives	29	1.8%
Non Relatives	41	2.6%
Unmarried partner	24	1.5%

Table 2-2 Population Age West Traverse Township, Emmet County, State of Michigan - 2010						
Age	West Traverse Twp.		Township %	Emmet Co.	County %	State %
	2010	2000				
Under 5	50	60	3.1	1,705	5.2	**
Under 18	278	309	17.3	7,389	22.6	23.7
18 and over	1328	1139	82.7	25,305	77.4	76.3
20-24	52	24	3.2	1,680	5.1	6.8
25-34	80	97	5.0	3,373	10.3	11.8
35-49	265	**	16.5	6,398	19.6	20.5
50-64	477	**	29.7	7,655	23.4	20.4
65 & over	436	272	27.1	5,437	16.6	13.8
Male	775	735	48.3	16,101	49.2	49.0
Female	831	713	51.7	16,592	50.8	51.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1606</b>	<b>1448</b>		<b>32,694</b>		<b>9,883,640</b>
Median Age	54.5	47.0		43.1		38.9
Source: US Census Bureau ** = data for this grouping not readily available						

## Income and Employment

Income statistics for the 2010 Census reflect information from the 2009 calendar year, because the Census was taken in April of 2010. Historically, income levels for Northern Michigan fall behind those found in the State as a whole. However, between 1990 and 2000 income for West Traverse households and per capita income rose above the State's. During the decade between 2000 and 2010 the median household income for both the Township and County rose significantly, surpassing the statewide median household income and the Per Capita income. Table 2-3 compares income statistics for West Traverse Township to Emmet County and the State.

Table 2-3 Income Statistics West Traverse Township, Emmet County and State of Michigan						
	Median Household Income			Per Capita Income		
	2010	2000	1990	2010	2000	1990
West Traverse Township	\$ 89,479	\$ 64,167	\$36,477	\$60,272	\$ 31,136	\$17,589
Emmet County	\$50,269	\$ 40,222	\$33,764	\$29,465	\$ 21,070	\$16,361
State of Michigan	\$48,669	\$ 44,667	\$40,260	\$25,482	\$ 22,168	\$18,370
Source: 2010 Census						

Another method of describing the economic characteristics of a community is to analyze the employment by occupation. A comparison of occupational employment for the Township, County and the State is presented in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4 Employment (by Occupation) West Traverse Township, Emmet County and State of Michigan - 2010					
Occupation	West Traverse Twp		Emmet County		State
	#	%	#	%	%
Management, professional and related occupations	352	51.0	5,238	30.7	33.6
Sales and office occupations	197	28.5	4,241	26.7	25.1
Service occupations	84	12.2	3,365	18.5	18.0
Construction natural resources and maintenance occupations	34	4.9	1,761	12.0	8.3
Production, transportation and material moving	24	3.4	1,249	0.5	15.0
<b>Total</b>	691	100.0	15,854	100.0	100.0
Source: 2010 Census.					

As shown by the data above, the majority of the jobs for the Township, County and State are classified as *management, professional and other related occupations*. In 2010 these jobs comprised approximately 51 percent of the total related jobs held by Township residents compared with roughly 31 and 34 percent for the County and the State respectively. This higher percent at the Township level is likely a contributing factor to the higher median household income (see Table 2-3).

## **Education**

Of the 1,271 people in West Traverse Township age 25 and older, 96.6 percent have attained an education of high school graduate or higher (increase from 95.5 percent in 2000); while 55.7 percent have also attained a bachelor's degree or higher (increase from 43.4 percent in 2000).

## **Housing**

An evaluation of housing stock can be very beneficial in determining community characteristics or housing needs. For example, a large percentage of seasonal housing units is indicative of an increased seasonal population, as is the case of West Traverse Township.

Statistics from the 2010 Census show a total of 1,410 (up from 1,102) housing units for West Traverse Township: 723 occupied and 687 vacant. The median value of owner occupied housing was \$358,800.

The average household size was 2.22 in 2010. This is further broken down to an average household size of owner-occupied units of 2.24, while the average household size of renter-occupied units was 2.10. The population in owner occupied housing was 1,419, and 187 in renter occupied housing in 2010. There were 157 households with individuals under 18 years of age.

The lure of lakefront living on Little Traverse Bay, combined with the abundant farmland, forestland and wildlife in the Township, has attracted many seasonal residents to West Traverse Township. When compared to the State as a whole, seasonal housing in the Township and County is significant.

## **Ownership**

In West Traverse Township in 2010, 87.7 percent of the permanently occupied housing units were owner-occupied, compared with 87.4 percent in 2000. The renter-occupied housing units in West Traverse Township in 2010 accounted for 12.3 percent of the total housing units, compared to 12.6 percent in 2000.

## **Housing Value**

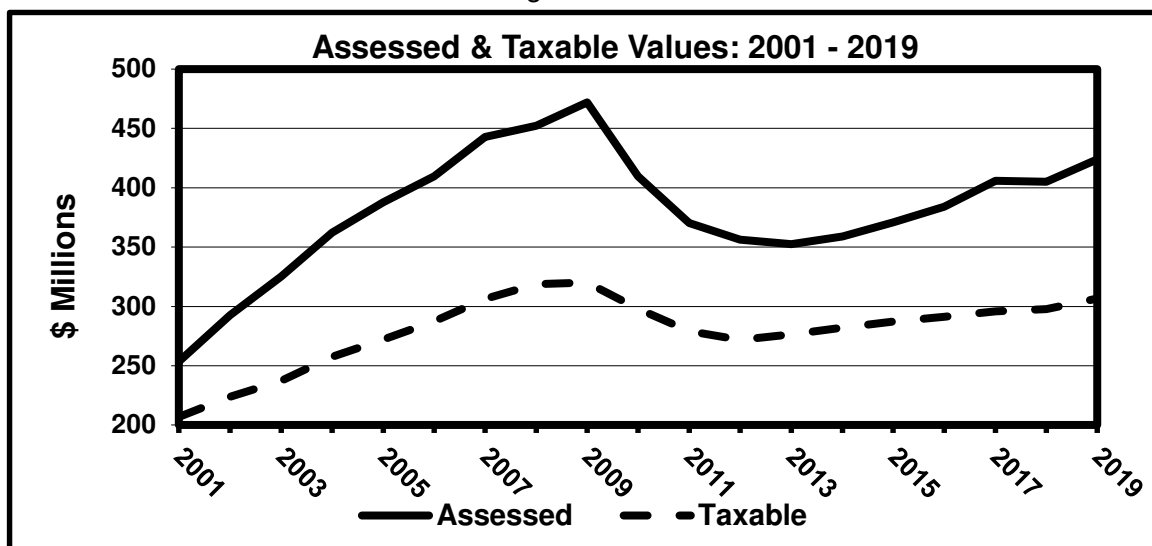
Another comparative measure for housing is value, as shown in Table 2-5. In 2010 the median value of owner-occupied year-round housing units was \$228,800 for West Traverse Township, an increase of 57% from the median value in 2000 and a 229% increase from the median value in 1990. This information, while collected by the Census Bureau is subjectively provided by the general population regarding what he or she thinks is the value of his or her house and should therefore, be used with caution.

Table 2-5 Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units West Traverse Township – 1990, 2000 and 2010			
Housing Values	Percent of Units		
	1990	2000	2010
Less than \$50,000	6.0	1.6	1.1
\$50,000 - 99,000	39.3	7.6	2.4
\$100,000 - 149,000	21.8	19.6	7.6
\$150,000 - 199,000	7.3	13.2	8.6
\$200,000 - 299,000	15.0	25.4	20.0
\$300,000 or more	6.4	32.6	60.0
Source: 2010 Census			

## Property Value

Property values can also be analyzed by reviewing State Equalized Value (SEV) figures. Figure 2-1 illustrates the dramatic changes in total taxable value and SEV figures for West Traverse Township between 2001 and 2019. Values peaked in 2009, dropped steadily through 2013 and then began to slowly rise to the 2019 values. By law, SEV, which constitutes a community's tax base, is equal to approximately one-half of the true market of real and certain taxable personal property. The total SEV for West Traverse Township increased by approximately 20.2% from 2014 to 2019 with Commercial land still making up the largest value of nonresidential classed property in the township. Figure 2.1 and Table 2-6 have been updated to reflect this growth.

Figure 2-1



The 2019 distribution of SEV values for West Traverse Township and Emmet County is illustrated in Table 2-6. As shown in the table, the majority of the West Traverse Township tax base continues to be derived from the Residential category.



<p>Table 2-6</p> <p><b>Distribution of the SEV</b></p> <p>West Traverse Township and Emmet County - 2019</p>				
Real Property:	West Traverse Township		Emmet County	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
Agricultural	1,061,600	0.2	46,360,155	1.2
Commercial	9,586,800	2.3	389,459,200	9.8
Industrial	0	0	14,629,500	0.4
Residential	410,058,750	96.8	3,393,404,725	85.9
Timber Cutover	0	0	0	0
Developmental	0	0	0	0
Total Real Property	420,707,150	99.3	3,843,853,580	97.3
Personal Property	3,018,750	.7	108,184,000	2.7
<b>Total SEV</b>	<b>423,725,900</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,952,037,580</b>	<b>100</b>
Source: Emmet County Equalization Department				

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Natural Resources**

#### **Natural Resources and Features**

Developmental policies should reflect the influences, advantages, and disadvantages of all natural features in an area. Housing, commercial, and industrial development and recreation areas all depend upon the area's natural resources and geologic features. West Traverse Township has a variety of topographic features that must be understood in order to implement the planning process into the form of a Master Plan. The natural resources and features section of the plan should be used as a guide to sound zoning proposals and regulations.

#### **Historic Role of Resources**

Historically the area was inhabited by the Native American Indians. The Indians fished the lakes and streams, hunted in the forest, trapped and did some gathering of food items such as fruits and nuts. European settlers were attracted to the area because of trapping and fishing. Later the prime forest within the area attracted lumbering companies. Once the forest was harvested the land was either given up for taxes or sold as farms. At the same time the extensive logging was going on, large summer resorts began to be developed, and many of these still exist.

#### **Forest Types and Animals**

Maple, beech, birch, red oak and pine are the predominant commercial trees found growing in the well-drained loam soils within the Township. The hardwoods give way to swamp conifers in areas where the soils are not drained and consequently remain wetter.

In the past the variety of forest types gave rise to a variety of wildlife. Pine marten, fisher, otter, beaver, mink, muskrat, deer, squirrel and black bear were all hunted or trapped by the local people. Logging destroyed most of the natural habitat for wildlife. Only the squirrels and deer remain in large numbers.

#### **Geology**

The Geology section is divided into two areas of study, the Subsurface Geology (bedrock) and the Surface Geology (overburden). Bedrock is generally concealed by a mantle of unattached, loose fragmented rock and soil. Surface geology refers to the surface glacial deposits within an area. By categorizing these many deposits into general soil associations, certain assumptions about the material can be made. Those assumptions will be in the area of soil suitability for wells, septic systems, and the soil's ability to support the various types of land uses.

The hilly portions of the Township are called moraines. The steep slopes along the Lake Michigan shoreline are old beach fronts of a much larger Great Lakes Water System, which was in place several thousand years ago. The moraines, like those of the Alps, from which the term was derived, were formed along and to some extent, under the margin of the ice sheet. They contain not only gravelly material, but also a confused mixture of stony clay, sand, cobblestone, etc. varying greatly in texture and general make-up within a short distance. In general, the moraines are thickly strewn with boulders, and thus are in striking contrast with outwash plains, on which small stones and large sandy areas appear. Within this morainic

area, however, there are large valley-like lowlands, with flat or very gently undulating beds. Typically, the beds are swampy and poorly drained. From these valleys, there is a somewhat abrupt rise to the elevated moranic areas. These valleys appear to have held local lakes during the melting back of the glacier. The swampy areas are generally to the north east of the Township, as an example, the center portion of Pleasantview Township.

## Soils

The movement of glaciers over bedrock material creates additional soil material which is added to the soils already carried by the glacier. The tons of pressure and slow movement of the ice turned solid rock into an extremely fine ground material. The finely ground soil was deposited and transported by melt-water and ice in a disorderly fashion. Some of this material came from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and some from Canada. Thus, we have the scattered patterns of soil types that are seen on the soils map of West Traverse Township. Because of this scattering and mixing of soil types, specific statements have to be made with regard to type and location of soils. Any detailed work dealing with soils should refer to specific data within the Emmet County Soils survey.

The degree of limitation of the soil types provides a measurement by which the impact of a particular soil association can be gauged. Figure 3-1 illustrates which portions of the Township are predominantly covered by which soil association. The following is a brief description of the limitations of the soil associations within West Traverse Township:

Emmet Association: Deep, well-drained, gently sloping to very steep, loamy soils on moraines.

Blue Lake-Leelanau Association: Deep, well-drained, nearly level to very steep, sandy soils on moraines.

East Lake-Blue Lake-Kalkaska Association: Deep, well-drained nearly level, sandy soils on lake beaches and outwash plains.

Deer Park-Dune Land Association: Deep, well-drained, nearly level to very steep, sandy soils on lake beaches and dunes.

**Emmet Association:** This Association makes up most of the sandy loam moraines in the county. It makes up 20 percent of the county. It formed in well-drained sandy loam materials.

Emmet soils make up about 80 percent of this Association. The other 20-percent is made up of minor soils. These minor soils are somewhat poorly drained Charlevoix soils and poorly drained or very poorly drained Ensley soils in the low spots. Some of the larger valleys contain organic Carbondale and Linwood soils.

Most of these soils can be used for crops or pasture. Livestock and dairy enterprises are important. Woodland areas occur throughout the Association, mainly as small farm woodlots. Water erosion is a hazard if the soil is left bare over the winter. Strip-cropping systems are used extensively to control erosion. These soils are suitable for recreation areas and for urban development, having few limitations for these uses.



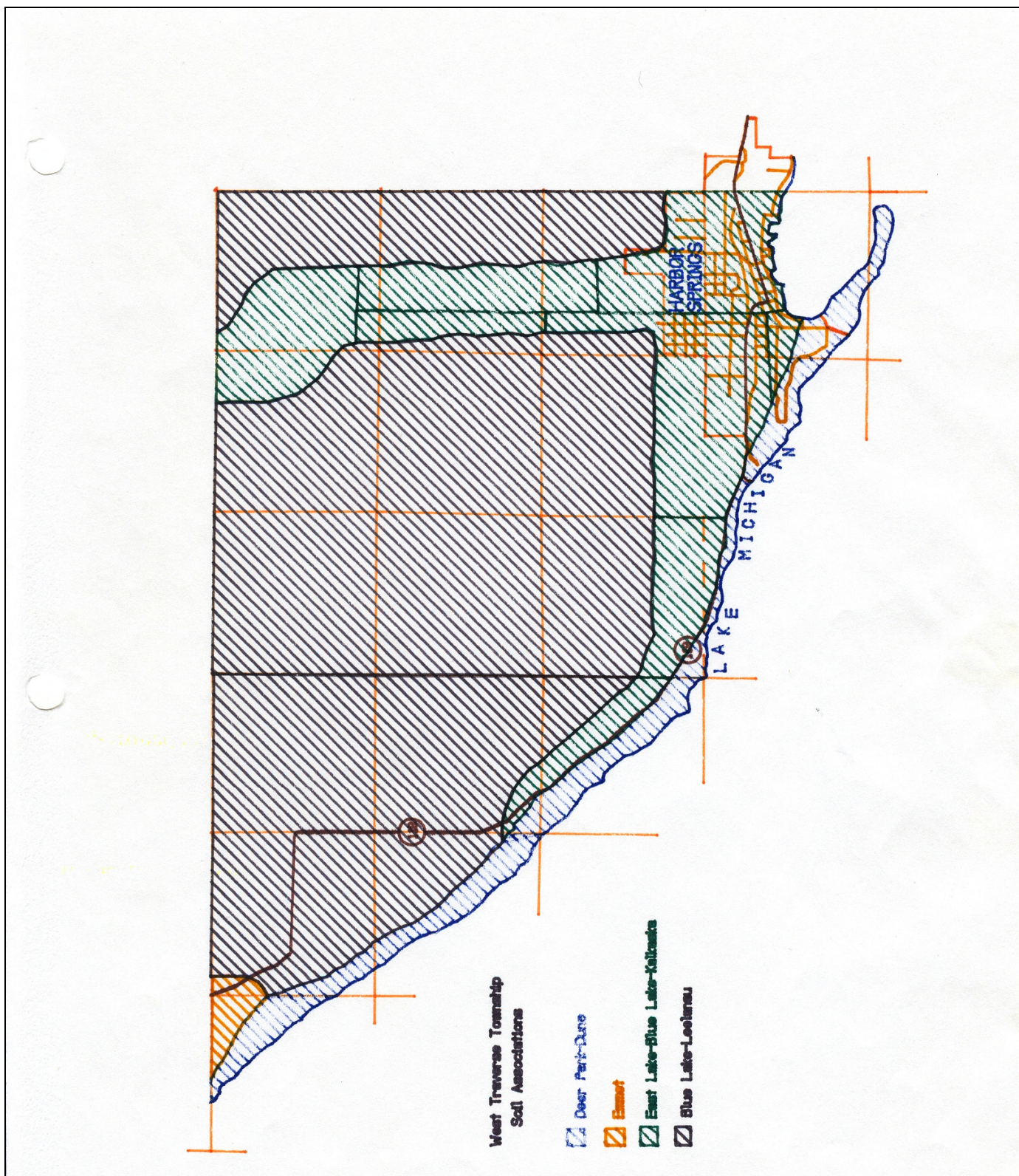


Figure 3-1: West Traverse Township Soil Associations

**Blue Lake-Leelanau Association:** This Association includes the hilliest areas in the Township. It is the most extensive group of soils within the Township. The soils are nearly level to very steep.

Blue Lake soils make up about 65 percent of this Association, and Leelanau soils, about 25 percent. The rest of the Association consists of well-drained and poorly drained minor soils. Blue Lake and Leelanau soils are well drained and formed in loamy sand and sand. Blue Lake soils have dark-brown subsoil and Leelanau soils have a light yellowish-brown to dark-brown subsoil. Both soils have several layers of loamy sand and sandy loam at a depth of 24 to 60 inches. Many of the drainways are occupied by poorly drained or very poorly drained Ensley soils.

The soils in the Association are medium to low in natural fertility. They are somewhat draughty and erode easily in areas where the vegetation is sparse. They are subject to both soil blowing and water erosion.

The wooded areas are covered with such northern hardwoods as sugar maple, beech, ash, aspen, paper birch, hemlock and scattered red and white pine. The cleared areas are cultivated and used for pasture and hay or left idle. The hilly areas are well suited to recreational uses. They have few limitations to use as camping areas, picnic areas, hiking trails, and bridle paths. These soils have a high potential for sustained- yield forests.

**East lake-Blue Lake-Kalkaska Association:** Deep, well-drained, nearly level, sandy soils on lake beaches and outwash plains.

The soils in this Association lie in outwash plains and valleys and on some of the lake beaches. The soils are nearly level, except for steep escarpments at the edges of some of the outwash plains and lake plains.

East Lake soils make up about 25 percent of the Association, Blue Lake soils, about 25 percent, Kalkaska soils, about 25 percent; and minor soils, the remaining 25 percent. East Lake soils formed in sand and gravel deposits, Kalkaska soils in deep sand, and Blue Lake soils in deep loamy sand and sand. Small areas of somewhat poorly drained Au Gres soils and poorly drained or very poorly drained Roscommon soils and other minor soils are intermixed with the well-drained soils.

The soils in this Association have medium to low natural fertility. They are somewhat draughty and are subject to soil blowing in areas where the soil is exposed.

A large part of this Association was cleared and farmed at one time. Some areas are suited for limited farming. At present many of the cleared areas are lying idle, are pastured, or have been planted to pine. Reforestation is important on these soils.

This Association is well suited for recreational purposes.

**Deer Park-dune Land Association:** Deep, well-drained, nearly level to very steep, sandy soils on lake beaches and dunes.

This Association consists of sandy and some gravely shoreline soils along Lake Michigan. The active dune soils are next to Lake Michigan shoreline.



Deer Park soils formed on stabilized dune topography. Dune land is nearly level to very steep. It consists of active sand dune formations.

The soils in this Association have low natural fertility and low available water capacity. They are subject to severe soil blowing if the vegetation is removed. In areas where these soils are stabilized, they are covered with northern hardwoods and a mixture of red and white pine, scattered hemlock, and northern white cedar. These soils are mainly suited to woodland.

## **Soils Impact on Land Use**

The degree of limitation of soils provides a measurement by which the impact of a particular soil Association can be gauged. Major indicators of the ability to use the land can be described as follows:

1. Soils with a high water table at various times of the year have severe limitations for residential development. A high water table makes it difficult to keep dry basements, install and maintain public utilities, and support driveways.
2. Soil texture has an influence on limitation. Clay soils have a high shrink/swell potential, and can cause foundations to shift and crack.
3. Sandy soils, with low available water capacity, provide unique problems when attempting to establish and maintain lawns, shrubs and trees.
4. Bedrock at or near the surface becomes a major limitation as it is impossible to construct an operating septic system and difficult to locate basements and foundations.
5. When combined with gradient factors, many soils have a more severe limitation due to the fact that septic systems located in steep slope areas have side hill seepage.
6. Very sandy soils may allow unfiltered effluent to enter and contaminate shallow ground water supplies. Clay soils prevent proper functioning of septic system drain fields as they do not allow for absorption of effluent.

Each of the above points can be expanded into an economic impact. Because of the influence of the different soil types upon the Township, this natural resource takes on an important significance.

Although this list of soil Associations seems exhaustive it is only the beginning. All large developments proposed within the Township should be analyzed first for their soil Associations and then the individual soils and their limitations should be studied with a summary presented by the applicant to the Planning Commission for review. These limitations are outlined in the Emmet County Soils Survey.

## **Septic Limitations**

Based on the soil types, Figure 3-2 identifies general areas with potential soil limitations for septic systems. The limitations are either related to steep slopes of greater than 18%, hydric (wetland) soils or both. These limitations do not automatically preclude the development of specific sites. Developers should realize, however that construction on some soils may be more costly, in time and money. Due to technological changes, the options for waste disposal systems are evolving, and thus the significance of the identified limitations may be reduced in the future. A more detailed analysis of soils by the District Health Department will determine the

suitability for siting a septic system. Health Department approval is required by State law for private systems.

## **Watersheds**

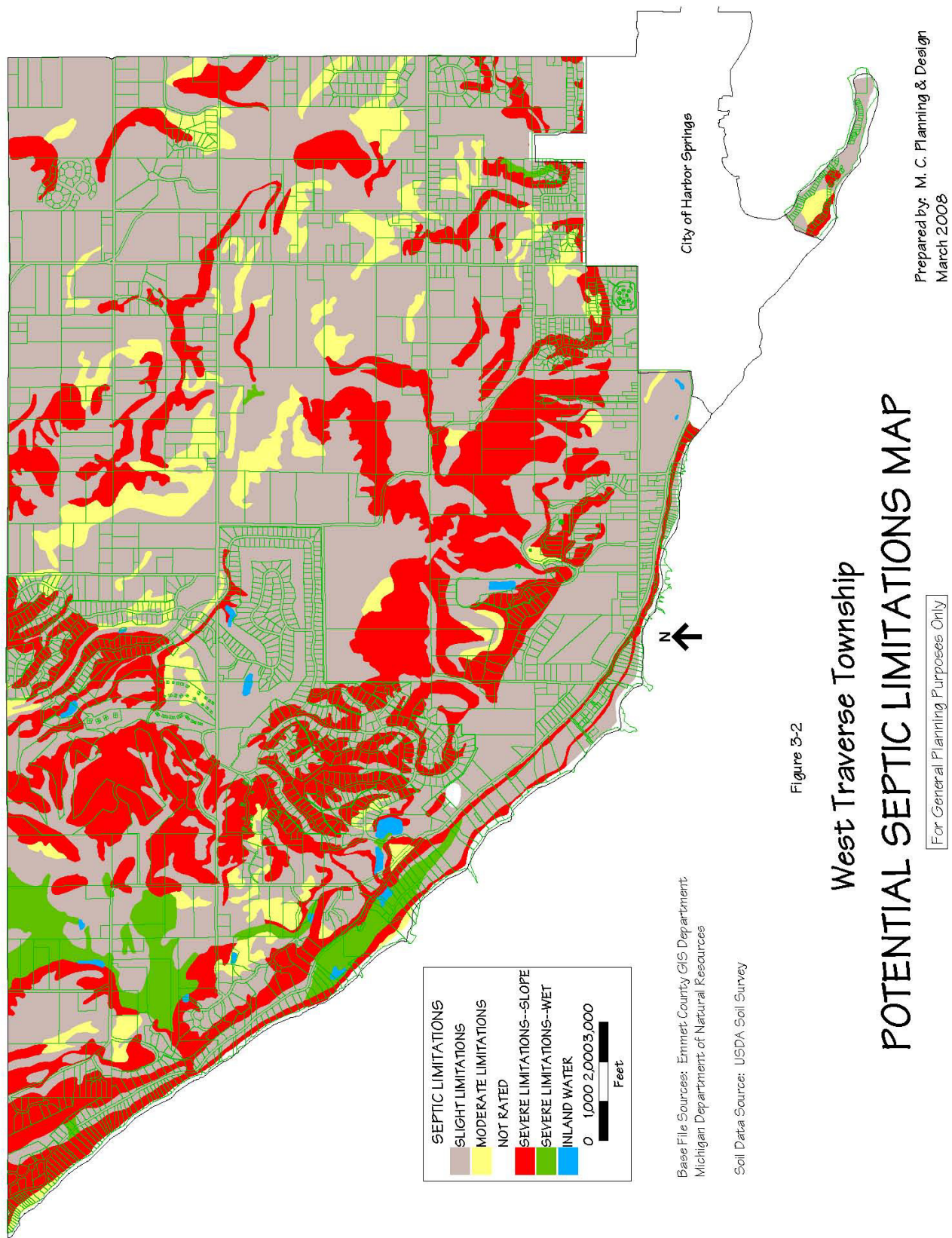
The lay of the land, or topography, determines the direction water falling on the surface will drain. In turn, the topography also outlines the size and shape of these drainage basins. One of these basins is called a watershed. Precipitation accumulated in these watersheds supplies water to streams, lakes, underground reservoirs and overall water table. The movement of the water through the soils acts as a purifier. Then, man taps the various supplies of water that yield quantities sufficient for his needs. But, after the water is used, it contains impurities that need to be removed before the water can be returned to the natural environment. Inefficiencies or complete neglect of treatment are often the case because of the economics involved in such treatment operations. More conscientious attempts at water purification are coming about now with the increased legislation and monitoring by governmental agencies. Though regulations can bring unexpected expenses to communities that were unknowingly polluting their water resources, each corrected situation means a better chance for fresh water in the future.

Several small drain-ways within the Township drain into Lake Michigan. There are two large drain-ways within the Township. Five Mile Creek drains an area in the Northwest portion of the Township and the Franklin Park drain-way drains the Birchwood Farms area and flows east and through Franklin Park and then into drainage ways within the City of Harbor Springs.

## **Water Features**

The enjoyment of outdoor water activities is a well-known recreational attraction. The activities include swimming, boating and sport fishing. Water sports are available because of the high quality of the water we have in the Township. West Traverse Township has only one useable lake which is Lake Michigan. This Great Lake provides fishing, boating, sunbathing, water sports and acts as a climate moderator. Lake Michigan is the second largest of the Great Lakes and it is a major contributor to the popularity of the West Traverse Area.

Five Mile Creek, the only creek within the Township which runs year round, is also the only sizeable cold water creek between Harbor Springs and Mackinaw City. Although the stream is also completely under private ownership, part of the watershed is protected under agreements with the Little Traverse Conservancy.



## Topography



The surface characteristics of an area are explained by its topography, which is described through the measurement of elevation above sea level. These changes in elevation add character to an area as well as noteworthy considerations for development. The steeper grades may be an enticing location for single-family homes but the potential hazard to natural areas is greatly increased. Regulations are necessary to manage how and where development can occur in order to ensure the environmental issues associated with building on steep slopes are adequately addressed. Construction costs associated with development on steep slopes increase both for the individual and the public as services are provided. This is not suggesting that all construction should take place on level terrain, but consideration should be given to increased environmental risks and the associated expenses.

West Traverse Township has topography which is similar to other northwestern Michigan Townships which border Lake Michigan. Most seem to have steep old beach fronts with the hinterlands offering heavy relief caused by glaciations. The steep slopes of the old beach fronts offer extreme problems regarding building and caution should be used when building is allowed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Existing Land Use**

#### **Township Description**

West Traverse Township is located along the Lake Michigan Shoreline, on the northern side of Little Traverse Bay. The shoreline area of the township has some sand dunes and very steep topography, but the majority of the township is gently rolling land with few developmental limitations. The township is a resort-based community of 8,521 acres that is very scenic. The Heritage Highway traverses the township and provides views of Lake Michigan.

2019 Township Assessing Records indicate 2,077 residential properties (comprised of 1,375 properties with a structure and 702 vacant properties), 176 Commercial/Industrial use properties, and also 182 properties with Agricultural use buildings.

#### **Patterns of Land Divisions**

As development occurs, larger tracts of land are generally broken down into smaller parcels. Therefore, studying the existing pattern of land divisions is one way to analyze the status of land use and development. Land division patterns for West Traverse Township are discussed below.

In 2019 parcel sizes in the Township range considerably, with the largest parcel in the Township being nearly 200 acres and privately owned. The Little Traverse Conservancy owns parcels in the Township as well, which total approximately 487 acres.

Small lot developments, site condominium projects, or larger planned unit developments (PUDs) are interspersed throughout the inland portions of the Township, such as Birchwood and Windward. Other small tract land divisions continue to occur as small parcels along the roads are split from larger parcels. In terms of land division patterns, it is worth noting that some of the newer residential developments in West Traverse Township are being created as site condominiums or PUDs rather than traditional subdivisions. These developments are created under different state statutes and often include commonly owned open space.

#### **Existing Land Use Statistics and Characteristics**

West Traverse Township's land area is 13 square miles. The map of existing land use, shown as Figure 4-1, illustrates the distribution of land uses within the Township. Table 4-1 shows the percent of the township in each land use category. The existing land use map is a compilation of data from the State of Michigan, Emmet County, aerial photo interpretation, Township Planning Commission input and additional field checking.

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians currently has approximately 80 acres in West Traverse which is held in trust with the United States of America and used for residential purposes. Because federally recognized tribes have sovereign nation status, exclusive jurisdiction for Native American affairs rest with the Tribe and the federal government. Local units of government have no control over where the LTBBOI purchases land and what land is taken into trust for its benefit. Over the years, West Traverse Township has developed a positive relationship with LTBBOI leaders and continues to maintain open communications regarding development plans as they may occur.

<b>TABLE 4-1: Existing Land Use - 2013 WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP</b>		
Land Use/Land Cover Category	Acreage	Percent of Township
Residential	2,896.2	33.9
Upland Forest	2,812.6	33.0
Agricultural	1,219.0	14.3
Nonforested	746.4	8.7
Recreation	466.8	5.5
Lowland Forest	204.5	2.4
Commercial	74.7	0.9
Beaches	59.8	0.7
Institutional	21.0	0.2
Water	16.4	0.2
Wetlands	15.9	0.2
Industrial/Extractive/Util.	0	00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>8,533.3*</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Source: Michigan Resource Information System, Emmet County, West Traverse Township Planning Commission and MCP&D. * Slight difference in total Township acreage due to rounding.		

### Residential

As can be seen from Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1, the amount of land being used for residential purposes was nearly 34 percent of the township in 2013. The pattern of residential development within the Township is shown in Figure 4-1. Residential uses are primarily located along the lakeshore, within the Birchwood Farms and Windward developments, and along the main roads.

### Upland Forests

Forests which include upland hardwoods and conifers account for 33 percent of Township land area in 2013. Wooded areas are found throughout the Township, as shown in Figure 4-1, with the largest areas in the center portion of the Township. In 2019 approximately 251 acres are protected in conservancy preserves and many private lands are protected with conservation easements.

### Agricultural

As shown in Table 4-1, agricultural lands occupy over 14 percent of Township land area in 2013. As shown in Figure 4-1, the active agricultural lands are dispersed throughout the Township.

## **Nonforested**

The nonforested land category consists of herbaceous open and shrub land. As shown in Table 4-1, the percent of nonforested land in the Township is nearly nine (9) percent in 2013. Nonforested lands are scattered throughout the Township, as shown in Figure 4-1.

## **Recreation**

Recreation currently comprises just over five (5) percent of West Traverse Township. The recreation lands in West Traverse Township consist of Township owned or leased properties including Ridge Road 80, the Cook property, and Thorne Swift Preserve, (see Chapter 5); as well as two golf courses, Birchwood Farms (private) and the Harbor Point Country Club (quasi-private).

## **Lowland Forest and Wetlands**

The lowland forest areas in the Township comprise nearly two and half percent of the Township. These areas are often classified as forested wetlands.

Wetlands include land that has sufficient water at, or near, the surface to support wetland or aquatic vegetation. These areas are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland areas may also include land which supports lowland hardwoods and conifers. Wetland information was not verified by field inspection when these maps were compiled. Thus, the areas shown as wetlands by Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) may not actually meet State and Federal criteria for legally regulated wetlands.

Wetland areas comprise less than one percent of the Township in 2013. As shown in Figure 4-1, a significant portion of the wetlands in the Township are located in the northwest portion of the Township. Wetlands also occur in scattered locations throughout the Township which have not been developed.

## **Commercial**

Table 4-1 shows that the amount of land developed as commercial is just under one percent of the Township. The commercially used land is primarily located in Franklin Park and along State Road, with very limited additional businesses located along Lakeshore Drive.

## **Beaches**

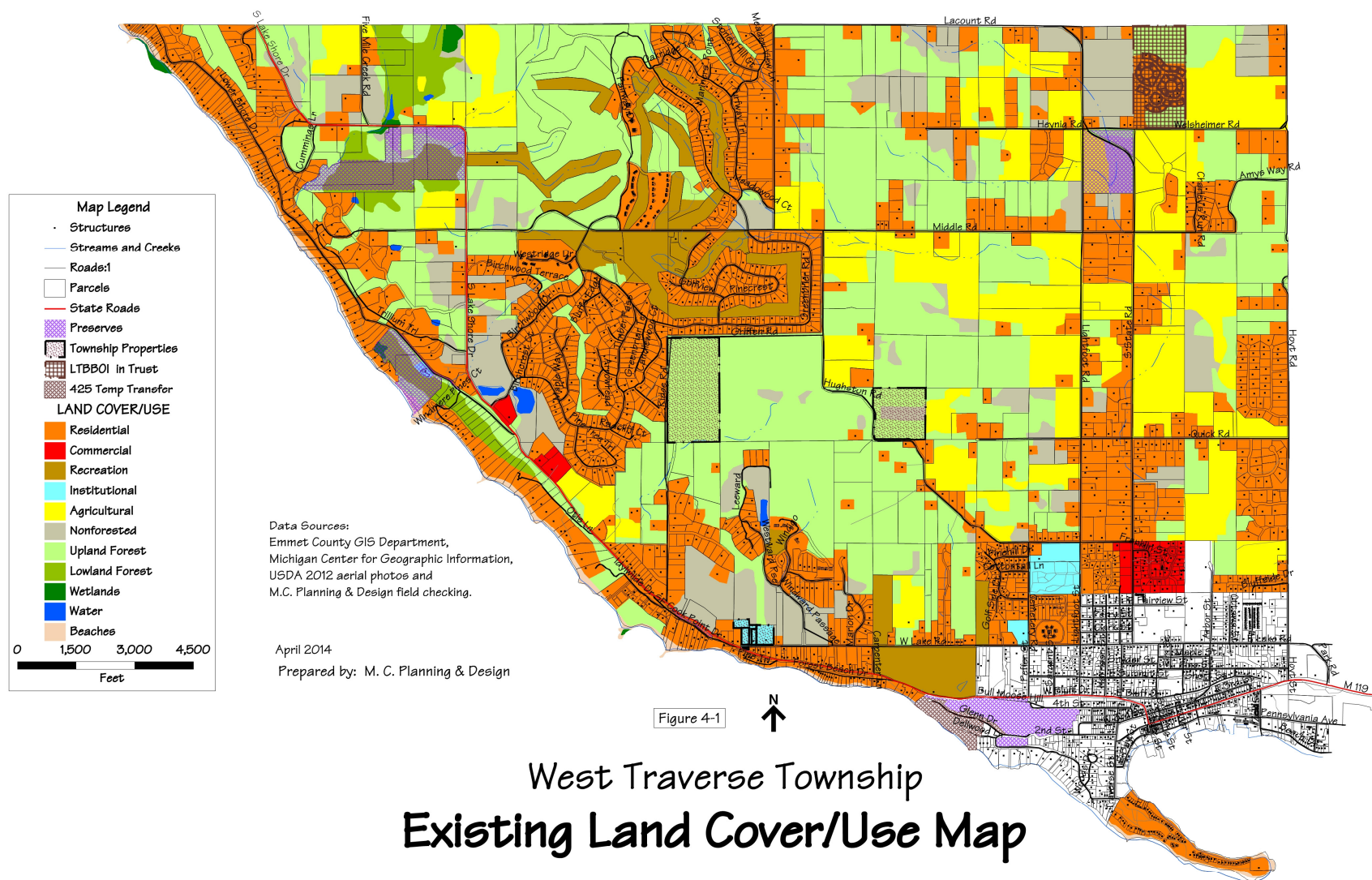
Table 4-1 shows that the amount of land designated as beaches in West Traverse Township is less than one percent.

## **Institutional**

Table 4-1 shows that the amount of land classified as Institutional in the Township is less than one percent. This category includes the Township Hall and associated property, a church and a cemetery.

## **Water**

Table 4-1 shows that the amount of land classified as Water in the Township is less than one percent.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Community Services, Facilities, and Transportation**

It is important to take into account all of the existing services, facilities and transportation options that exist in and around a township for planning purposes. By knowing what services, facilities and transportation options exist, we are able to better plan for the future.

#### **Water and Sewage Disposal Systems**

Two public water systems are available in West Traverse Township, one owned and operated by the City of Harbor Springs and the other by West Traverse Township. The City of Harbor Springs system serves approximately 105 residential customers primarily located on Harbor Point, Pine Trail, Forest Beach Drive, and along M-119 up to the intersection with Lake Road. In an area west of State Road and adjacent to the City of Harbor Springs, the West Traverse Township system serves approximately 150 residential customers. Due to the number of public water customers, the Township has installed a water storage facility on property zoned “Public District”. Additionally, a few areas are served by private community water systems, including Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club, Windward and the Franklin Park Commercial-Industrial area.

Portions of West Traverse Township are served by two separate sewer systems which are operated and maintained under contract with the Harbor Springs Area Sewage Disposal Authority. The Harbor Point area is served by the City of Harbor Springs system. Pine Trail and Forest Beach Drive are served by the West Traverse Township sewer system. A limited number of developments provide private community septic systems in the Township, including some at Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club. However, most Township residents rely on on-site private wells for domestic drinking water and individual septic systems for disposals. All private drinking water wells and septic systems are regulated by the Health Department of NW MI.

There are a few residential developments which have community wells but have individual septic systems. This is the approach taken with the Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club and Windward developments. It allows for development on small lots where achieving the required isolation distance between individual wells and individual septic fields would have been difficult.

Two important determinants for siting a septic system are soil suitability and depth to bedrock. Chapter Three – Natural Resources discusses the geology and soils of the Township, and Figure 3-2 shows areas with potential septic limitations.

#### **Transportation and Road Maintenance**

Public roads within the Township are categorized as follows (lengths are approximate):

State Route	5.6 miles in length
County Primary Paved	8.1 miles in length
Local Paved	20.98 miles in length
Local Gravel (including seasonal)	1.9 miles in length

The only State route through the Township is M-119, the north/south route which approximately parallels the shoreline of the Township. It is a State highway under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation and is designated as a Scenic Heritage Highway due to

the natural beauty along the route. The total distance of M-119 passing through West Traverse Township is approximately 5.6 miles.

Lake Road, State Road, Quick Road, and Middle Road are classified as County primary roads by the Emmet County Road Commission.

The remaining public roads in the Township are classified as local roads, including approximately 20.98 paved miles and approximately 1.9 miles of gravel roads. The following are the public gravel roads in the Township:

Middle Road	0.53 miles (west of M-119)
Griffin Road	0.76 miles - seasonal
Ridge Road	0.62 miles (north of La Canada) - seasonal

Additionally, there are a significant number of miles of private roads within several residential developments.

Lower Shore Drive (approximately 2.8 miles) is designated as a Natural Beauty Road. This is a designation for county roads which have outstanding natural features along their borders. Qualifying criteria include native vegetation and/or open space with scenic or natural vistas. Singly or in combination, these features set a Natural Beauty Road apart from other roads as being something unique and distinct.

Within the Township, certain public roads and segments of roads have been built as all season roads to handle heavy truck traffic year round. These roads are designated as a “Class A” or “All Season” Roads. The following roads and road segments are designated as such:

- Lake Road (1.19 miles from Harbor Springs City Limits west to M-119)
- Quick Road (from State Road east 0.76 miles)
- State Road (Harbor Springs City Limits north to Township line, 2.88 miles)
- Middle Road (State Road west 1.74 miles to Hughston Road)
- Franklin Street (0.55 miles)
- Hoyt Road (Harbor Springs City Limits north to Heynig Rd, 2.35 miles)

The Emmet County Road Commission provides road maintenance and snow removal services on all public non-seasonal roads within the Township. Additionally, there are a number of private roads as well as seasonal roads serving residential developments. The maintenance and repair of private roads is typically handled through a private association.

## **Recreation & Public Lands**

A Recreation Committee was formed by the West Traverse Township Board in the early 1990's. The Recreation Committee continues to serve in an advisory capacity to the Township Board concerning recreation matters. This Committee is responsible for updating the 5-year Recreation Plan.

A brief summary of recreational lands and opportunities is provided in this section. Details pertaining to recreational facilities, goals and future projects are provided in the West Traverse Township Recreation Plan.

The West Traverse General Fund finances approved operations, facilities maintenance and improvement and capital development of recreational areas and parks. Funding for the maintenance and operation of Thorne Swift Nature Preserve is provided by special voted millage of up to 0.25 mills that has been continually renewed every four years by the Township voters.

West Traverse Township has a long standing agreement with the City of Harbor Springs that provides Township residents the opportunity to use the City's recreational facilities, specifically the City Beach, the skating rink and Kiwanis Park. The Township's share of the cost of operating these facilities is paid out the Township's General Fund and typically runs approximately \$13,000 annually.

Thorne Swift Nature Preserve: The Thorne Swift Nature Preserve consists of a 30 acre tract of land with 1,000 feet of Lake Michigan beach frontage located off Lower Shore Drive that is owned by the Little Traverse Conservancy and leased to and operated by West Traverse Township. The Preserve was initiated in 1981 when Elizabeth Kennedy donated the property to the Conservancy.

The Preserve features the Elizabeth Kennedy Nature Center containing a multitude of educational displays, over a mile and a half of hiking trails, a dune observation platform, a pond observation platform, a gazebo, an amphitheater and offers seasonal guided programs. The Preserve grounds are open daily from mid-April to mid-November from 10am to ½ hour after sunset, and the Nature Center building is open daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day. There is a minimal parking fee for visitors, while West Traverse Township residents and Little Traverse Conservancy members enjoy free parking.

West Traverse Township currently owns approximately 132 acres of land which is set aside for recreational and other Township purposes. These parcels are described below:

Cook Property on Lake Rd: This approximately 10-acre parcel is an undeveloped Community Park in Section 10 of the Township across from the Township Hall. The land was purchased for possible future expansion of Township facilities. The south side of the property has 825 feet of frontage on Lake Rd. while the north and east property lines border the Windward Association. The property currently has ~~one residential structure~~, three accessory structures and two large on-site sewage disposal systems serving approximately 28 lots in the Forest Beach Association plus 15 lots in the Pine Trail Association. A paved parking lot is directly across from the Township Hall. The terrain is mostly flat to moderately sloping and contains mature hardwoods and open areas.

Ridge Road "80" Township Public Park: This 81.4-acre parcel is located in the southwest portion of Section 3 and has road frontage on Ridge Road to the west and Griffin Road to the north. The east and south property boundaries border private property. The terrain is mostly moderate to steep slopes. The area is enjoyed predominately by local people for hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, horseback riding and hunting (as regulated by the DNR). Snowmobile trails run along Ridge and Griffin Roads.



## **Community Facilities**

### West Traverse Township Hall

The Township Hall is of frame construction with a concrete basement and was built in conjunction with the Grange in 1897. The parking lot next to the building is paved. The main level of the hall consists of a large meeting room for Township and community use. The downstairs houses the Township offices and a storage room.

### Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by the Harbor Springs Area Fire Authority. The Department is a volunteer association of the City of Harbor Springs, Little Traverse Township, Pleasantview Township, and West Traverse Township. The West Traverse Township Supervisor represents the Township on the Harbor Springs Area Fire Authority.

### Police Protection

Police protection is provided by the Emmet County Sheriff's Office, headquartered in Petoskey with a Road Patrol sub-station on M-119 between Harbor Springs and Petoskey, one at the Pellston Airport and one at the EMS Eppler Rd. station. The Michigan State Police are dispatched from the Gaylord Post as needed.

### Ambulance Service

Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service is provided by Emmet County EMS working out of three new stations; Mackinaw, Harbor Springs and Petoskey. Current staffing includes one ambulance and two crew members at Mackinaw, three ambulances and four crew working various hours at the Harbor Springs Station and three ambulances at the Eppler Station with four crew members along with office personnel. All locations provide 24/7 coverage.

The Birchwood Farms Golf and Country Club Security are “First Responders” who voluntarily provide service to the Township.

Both services are dispatched by the Cheboygan Charlevoix Emmet (CCE) 911 facility and therefore all requests for emergency services simply need to dial 911. Because it is an enhanced 911 facility, the caller's location, even if on a cell phone, is automatically identified on the dispatcher's screen.

### Airport Authority

The West Traverse Township Board appoints a representative to the Harbor-Petoskey Area Airport Authority.

## CHAPTER 6

# Community Goals and Objectives

This chapter lists the goals and objectives for each of the functional areas studied by the Planning Commission. A series of public investment, land use and organization policies constitute the balance of this chapter.

“Goals” are general statements of shared values that assist local decision makers in implementing objectives and taking action.

“Objectives” are the stated means by which West Traverse Township may reach its goals.

### General Goals

Township Planning is based upon and undertaken for the protection of the public health, safety and welfare of residents and visitors of West Traverse Township.

West Traverse Township will seek to manage and guide growth to maintain and enhance the high quality of rural life for residents and visitors through implementation of this Master Plan.

Township decision-makers should balance the public interest in sound land planning as expressed by and embodied within this Master Plan, with the rights and interests of private property owners when considering land use decisions.

Retain the existing quiet, scenic, rural and historical character of West Traverse Township by promoting the conservation and/or preservation of forests, view sheds and vistas, open space, water resources, shorelines, historic places and farms.

### NATURAL FEATURES

Goal: *Preserve and enhance West Traverse Township's natural features and environment for the betterment of its residents.*

#### Objectives:

Encourage landowners to use conservation easements to protect and preserve open spaces, such as scenic views, farmlands and forest areas.

- Encourage the use of open space/conservation designs for site development.
- Discourage development in areas designated as unsuitable such as steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands and poor soils.
- Encourage the use of the Emmet County Soils Survey when reviewing large developments within the Township.
- Continuing review of Township Zoning Ordinance to reflect the goals and objectives of the Township Master Plan.
- Provide for the preservation of scenic sites, such as M-119 and Lower Shore Drive, and open space.
- Encourage the use of combined driveways along public roads.
- Provide for the preservation of the Lake Michigan Shoreline.
- Support the water setback section of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Continue to support The Thorne Swift Nature Preserve.

- Protect the Rural Character of West Traverse Township.
- The long term quality and conservation of natural resources, water quality protection and environmental protection must be considered of significant importance when making land use decisions.

## TRANSPORTATION

Goal: *Coordinate the development of the transportation network with the overall development of the township's human and physical resources.*

### Objectives:

- Promote the maintenance and enhancement of transportation infrastructure within West Traverse Township.
- Discourage strip commercial development within the Township.
- Encourage land controls which will minimize development problems including residential, commercial and outdoor advertising, which interfere with the transportation function of arterial and principal collector roads.
- Minimize congestion on roads and highways by using well-designed access points and intersections, and by minimizing accesses along county and state thoroughfares.
- Encourage the scenic nature of M-119 be preserved.
- Encourage the development and maintenance of bike paths and walkway connections throughout the Township.

## WATER AND WASTEWATER

Goal: *Protect and improve our water heritage to ensure the health and well being of the township's residents.*

### Objectives:

- Require the protection of the waters of Lake Michigan through zoning setbacks and other regulations.
- Encourage the use of community wells/water systems where appropriate.
- Encourage the proper maintenance of the private water and wastewater systems within the Township.
- The long term quality and conservation of natural resources, water quality protection and environmental protection must be considered of significant importance when making land use decisions.

## RECREATION

Goal: *In conjunction with the Recreation Committee, develop the local park and recreation system which:*

- *Provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities for the township residents with a major focus on passive recreation.*
- *Is related to the use capacity of the environment.*
- *Wherever possible, is designed for multiple and year round use of the facilities.*

### Objectives:

- Make full use of State and Federal assistance programs to develop and fulfill the objectives of this Plan.
- Work on goals and objectives even if Federal funds are not available.
- Encourage additional Lake Michigan access site for public use, encourage intergovernmental agreements between townships and villages to provide recreational services, and possibly develop cooperation with adjacent governments.

- Improve the awareness of the township owned 80-acre parcel as an area of low impact recreation for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, etc.
- Encourage bike/pedestrian trails throughout the township.
- Encourage the preservation of natural resources and protection of the environment, including Township owned lands.

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Goal: *Encourage the economical development of community facilities and related services that will provide each citizen with the best possible public services within the township.*

#### Objectives:

- Recognize the importance of township public land to the community.
- Where appropriate, require the development of shared septic, water, access road and/or pedestrian trail infrastructure in future housing developments. Such infrastructure should conform with and be designed to readily connect to future projects.
- Encourage the use of Township property for a future Township Hall and Recreation Area.

### HOUSING

Goal: *Promote the maintenance and enhancement of the rural character and environmental quality in West Traverse Township while balancing the need for new residential development.*

#### Objectives:

- Focus on conservation design and mixed use design techniques.
- Protect steep slopes and wetlands.
- Encourage the retention and maximize the creation of greenbelts and buffers within future developments.
- Encourage areas of increased density contingent upon the use of open space/conservation design methods of development.
- Encourage the proper development of a wide variety of housing types including; single family homes, cluster development, site condos and multifamily homes.
- Encourage on-site management of storm water.

### COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal: *Provide for the orderly development of commercial properties within the township.*

#### Objectives:

- Allow, with controls, home occupations as viable economic activities without altering the character of neighborhoods and residential areas.
- Incorporate best management practices and low impact development techniques to reduce amounts of impervious surfaces and storm water runoff.
- Require on-site management of storm water.

Goal: *Support the surrounding communities as they plan for year round manufacturing and industrial development.*

#### Objectives:

- Encourage the development of industrial facilities within planned parks and other designated areas.
- Discourage strip development.

## LAND USE POLICIES

- In making land use decisions, utilize the Township Master Plan.
- Preserve all natural resources to the extent possible.
- All developments should be guided by land use controls.
- Encourage new developments to be placed in areas outlined in the Future Land Use Map which is incorporated as part of the Township Master Plan.
- If necessary, update and review all Township Ordinances.
- Encourage the use of conservation design with a mix of lot sizes and housing types, along with open space for recreation.
- The long term quality and conservation of natural resources, water quality protection, and environmental protection must be considered of significant importance when making land use decisions.
- Secure open spaces by utilizing planning tools and techniques, including but not limited to:
  1. Working with local and state government, land trusts, conservancies and others to protect identified conservation and recreation areas.
  2. Support the purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, conservation easements and other available methods that voluntarily preserve natural and/or cultural resources.
  3. Encourage interconnected tracts of land as trail corridors and wildlife areas.
  4. As supported by the survey of Township residents, consider the purchase of unique parcels to protect sensitive resources and valuable vistas.

## CHAPTER 7

### Future Land Use Recommendations

#### Overview

Through land use planning and land use controls, West Traverse Township intends to ensure that existing forest, open space and recreational land uses can continue; that irreplaceable natural resources such as water, wetlands and forestlands will be protected; and that reasonable growth can be accommodated with minimal land use conflicts or negative environmental impacts.

Future land use recommendations for West Traverse Township were developed by the Planning Commission with assistance from the Zoning Administrator and Planner. Recommendations are based on an analysis of several factors including: public input from previous citizen surveys, the pattern of existing land use, social and economic characteristics, environmental conditions, available community services and facilities, the existing patterns of land divisions and community goals and policies.

Possible environmental constraints were identified in the Township, as shown on the generalized Potential Septic Limitations Map, see Figure 3-2. The analysis considered land ownership and protected lands, developed areas, commercial areas, slopes, hydric soils, septic limitations, views, parks and lake access and trails. This map was also used as another tool in developing the Future Land Use Plan for West Traverse Township.

#### Land Use Planning Areas

Listed below are detailed explanations of the eight different land use planning areas in the future land use recommendations. **Figure 7-1** is the Future Land Use Map of West Traverse Township which depicts the locations of land use planning areas.

- Conservation and Parkland
- Farm / Forest
- Single Family Residential (including a waterfront overlay)
- Mixed Residential
- Residential Buffer
- Institutional
- Planned Unit Development (PUD)
- Commercial - Light Industrial

The **Conservation and Parkland** category includes existing public lands, park lands, as well as land owned and protected by a land conservancy as preserves. Uses proposed in the Conservation and Parkland area include public forestry, wildlife habitat, recreation and similar open space uses. Approximately 487 acres in this category are owned by the Little Traverse Conservancy, and 132 acres are owned by the Township. While approximately 424 acres of additional land is protected under conservation easements held by local land conservancies, those properties are not open to the public and therefore are not included in this category.

The **Farm/Forest** land use category has been designated consistent with the Township's goal to encourage farmland preservation and open space. This future land use category has been

designated consistent with the Township's general goal to “retain the existing quiet, scenic, rural and historic character...”, as well as the housing goal to “promote the maintenance and enhancement of the rural character and environmental quality in West Traverse Township while balancing the need for new residential development.” The Township will encourage methods of preserving farmlands, open space, natural resources and rural character of the Township, while assisting landowners who want to reduce or discontinue farming. The methods could include innovative zoning provisions that allow for the preservation or conservation of essential natural resources, farmland, open space and forest management. Methods to help protect and preserve agricultural land while protecting a landowner's economic investment include the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), clustering requirements for non-agricultural uses and tax breaks or incentives for continuing agricultural use. These alternatives will continue to be investigated for possible application in West Traverse Township as a way to balance economic rights with agricultural and open space preservation goals. This future land use category is supportive of the Agriculture and Forest related zoning districts. The maximum allowable density is one unit per two acres.

The **Single Family Residential** category is designed to primarily accommodate single family dwellings at a maximum density of one unit per acre. The large residential lots provide privacy from neighbors and/or other development. The areas designated for this type of development are located on roads with light vehicular traffic. Buffers or physical separation from potentially incompatible uses (industrial and agriculture) may be necessary when located adjacent to this type of development.

Additional provisions are incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a cluster development pattern to avoid or minimize development impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, forests or farmland. This Single Family Residential land use category strives to maintain an ecologically sound balance between human development activities and the environment to retain the Township's scenic and rural character.

To preserve the scenic beauty, property value and environmental integrity of lakefront areas, a **"Waterfront Residential Overlay"** land use designation is also used. This specialized designation contains residential standards specific to the unique environment found in waterfront areas. The Waterfront Residential designation is utilized in shoreline areas of lakefront residential development. Development regulations within the waterfront residential area are designed to address Township residents' concerns regarding water quality and shoreline protection.

The **Mixed Residential** category is primarily designed to accommodate single-family, two-family and multiple-family dwellings including on lots varying in size. Residential uses, such as apartments, townhouses, condominiums, mobile home parks, convalescent or nursing homes and manufactured home developments would be allowed provided the water and wastewater issues can be adequately addressed. Community uses such as parks, churches, schools or cemeteries, in addition to bed and breakfast facilities, may be allowed in this area if designed to be compatible with the residential setting.

The **Residential Buffer** land use category is designed to provide residential uses on smaller parcels and will serve as a transition between the higher intensity and greater density provided for in the adjacent zoning districts in the City of Harbor Springs and the lower density zoning of the Township. The maximum residential density in this area is slightly less than two units per acre.

The **Planned Unit Development (PUD)** future land use category is intended to accommodate the existing Planned Unit Developments (PUD), such as the Birchwood Farms and Windward

developments, which incorporate small lot residential, open space and some recreational facilities. Due to the unique nature of this type of development, PUDs are designed to provide a more desirable living environment by retaining the rural and natural character of the township through the preservation of open spaces, woodlands, streams, ponds, water frontage, hills and similar natural assets. The PUD type of development encourages a unified and potentially more desirable development of large areas of land based on an overall plan which provides a balance between physical improvements, community needs and site amenities such as scenic views, open space, recreation areas and environmentally sensitive areas. The density of the PUD future land use areas varies and is based on the underlying zoning, since such developments are accommodated in a number of zoning districts. The location, size and specific details of any new PUDs will be determined on a project by project basis with the initial project proposed by the property owner. Therefore, the only areas designated as PUD on the Future Land Use Map are those which have been developed as such and are expected to continue as such.

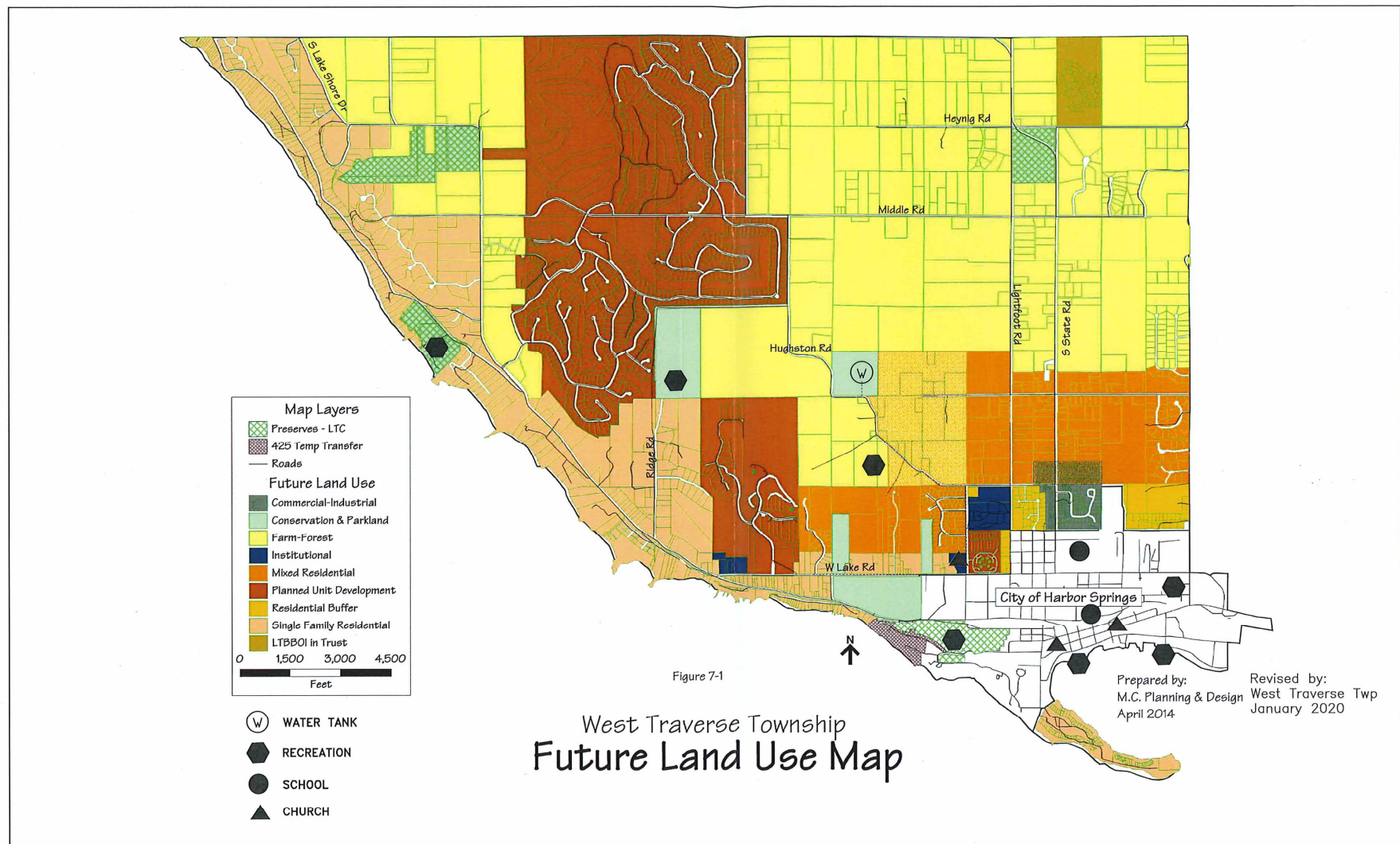
The **Institutional** category is designated to accommodate existing institutional uses including Township owned properties, a church and a cemetery.

The **Commercial** category is designated to provide areas of general commercial development and to allow for the establishment of neighborhood shopping centers, personal services, professional offices and tourist services. Due to the availability of the additional commercial areas in the adjacent City of Harbor Springs, at present there is no plan to expand this area beyond what is currently designated.

The **Light Industrial** category is designated to accommodate small to moderate scale light industrial development needs of the Township. This area is located immediately adjacent to the City of Harbor Springs in order to have better access to the necessary support services and facilities. Due to the availability of the additional industrial areas in the adjacent City of Harbor Springs, at present there is no plan to expand this area beyond what is currently designated.

**Temporary Transfer of Property:** A temporary transfer of property agreement, also known as a 425 agreement, between the City of Harbor Springs and West Traverse Township was signed on December 20, 1986 for a period of 50 years to run through December 20, 2036. The property included under this agreement is commonly known as Glenn Beach. The agreement is renewable for another 50 years by mutual consent. If not renewed, the property reverts to the Township, although the City retains ownership of any utilities it installed.





## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Plan Adoption and Implementation**

#### **Draft Plan Circulated for Comments**

The updated draft West Township Master Plan was transmitted to the Township Board for review and comment in January 2020. The Township Board approved the draft plan for distribution on January 14, 2020. Following the Board's approval for distribution the proposed plan was distributed to the adjacent Townships, as well as to Emmet County Planning Commission on January 16, 2020 for review and comment. Comments were received from the County.

#### **Public Hearing**

A public hearing on the proposed Master Plan for West Township as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, as amended, was held on May 13, 2020. The legally required public hearing notice was published in the Harbor Light newspaper on April 22, 2020. A copy of the public hearing notice is reproduced at the end of this chapter. During the review period, the draft plan was available for review on the Township's website or at the Township office.

The purpose of the public hearing was to present the proposed Master Plan to accept comments from the public. In addition to the Planning Commission members, two Township Board members and four residents of the township attended the public hearing.

The public hearing began with a brief explanation of the planning process. Plan development included several Planning Commission workshop meetings, and input from the Township Board. During the hearing, maps of existing land use, color coded resource, and proposed future land use recommendations were presented.

#### **Plan Adoption**

Following the public hearing on May 13, 2020, the Planning Commission formally adopted the West Traverse Township Master Plan, including all the associated maps on May 13, 2020. Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, on September 9, 2008, the Township Board asserted the right to approve or reject the Master Plan. The Township Board formally adopted the plan on June 9, 2020.

#### **Legal Transmittals**

Michigan planning law requires that the adopted Master Plan be transmitted to the Township Board, as well as to the adjacent Townships and the County Planning Commission. Copies of these transmittal letters appear at the end of this chapter.

#### **Plan Implementation**

A Master Plan is developed to provide a vision of the community's future. It is designed to serve as a tool for decision making on future development proposals. A Master Plan will also act as a guide for future public investment and service decisions, such as the local budget, grant applications, road standards development, community group activities, tax incentive decisions, and administration of utilities and services.

According to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, comprehensive planning is the legal basis for the development of a zoning ordinance. Section 203 of the Act states in part: "The zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to limit the improper use of land, to conserve natural resources and energy, to meet the needs of the state's residents for food, fiber, and other natural resources, places to residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land, to ensure that uses of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships, to avoid the overcrowding of population, to provide adequate light and air, to lessen congestion on the public roads and streets, to reduce hazards to life and property, to facilitate adequate provision for a system of transportation including public transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, education, recreation, and other public requirements, and to conserve the expenditure of funds for public improvements and services to conform with the most advantageous use of land resources, and properties."

### **Zoning**

The Zoning Ordinance is the most important tool for implementing the Master Plan. Zoning is the authority to regulate private use of land by creating land use zones and applying development standards in various zoning districts. A zoning ordinance regulating land use activities has been in effect in West Traverse Township since 1972. The Ordinance has since been revised numerous times. For over four decades the Ordinance has provided guidance in regulating the location, density, and standards for local development. The Zoning Ordinance should now be reviewed to ensure the Ordinance is consistent with the goals and the Future Land Use Plan presented in this Master Plan.

### **Grants and Capital Improvement Plan**

A Master Plan can also be used as a guide for future public investment and service decisions, such as the local budget, grant applications and administration of utilities and services. Many communities find it beneficial to prioritize and budget for capital improvement projects, such as infrastructure improvements, park improvements, etc. A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is one tool which is often used to establish a prioritized schedule for all anticipated capital improvement projects in the community. A CIP includes cost estimates and sources for financing for each project, therefore can serve as both a budgetary and policy document to aid in the implementation of a community's goals defined in the Master Plan. The West Traverse Board of Trustees has adopted a resolution to take responsibility for preparing the CIP.

**West Traverse Township**  
**Master Plan Public Hearing**  
**May 13, 2020**

The West Traverse Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing as part of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on **Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 7:00pm** in the West Traverse Township Hall at 8001 M-119, Harbor Springs to accept comments on the proposed West Traverse Township Master Plan 2020. Because of the Covid-19 situation, the Planning Commission may choose to hold the meeting over a virtual platform rather than at the Township Hall. Notice of this change and instructions for how to connect to the virtual meeting will be posted at least one week prior to the meeting date at [www.westtraversetownship.com](http://www.westtraversetownship.com)

The draft Master Plan is available on-line at <http://www.westtraversetownship.com> or hard copies can be viewed at the West Traverse Township office when it is once again open to the Public. For additional information, contact David White, West Traverse Township Zoning Administrator at (231) 499-5296. Written comments may be submitted in advance of the public hearing to: David White, Zoning Administrator West Traverse Township, P.O. Box 528, Harbor Springs, MI 49740 or sent via e-mail to [Zoning@westtraversetownship.com](mailto:Zoning@westtraversetownship.com)

David White, Zoning Administrator

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP  
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MAY 13, 2020

Chairperson Mooradian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Meeting was conducted via telephone conferencing.

Roll Call: Wallin, Baiardi, Moore, Repasky, Uutinen, Varner, Mooradian.

Visitors: Bob Sandford, Dave White, Eve Lauer, Joe Graham, Beverly Osetek, Annie Mooradian.

Approve Agenda: Mooradian wanted to add: Discussion of Master Plan as B under Old Business.

**Mooradian made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted with the one addition under Old Business. Uutinen seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Public Comments: Joe Graham suggested that this meeting on the Master Plan be held again when it is possible for people to attend the meeting in person. He felt that it is an important subject and people should be able to have a good discussion about it. Mooradian pointed out that the Planning Commission has been having detailed discussion about the Master Plan for over a year and a half. There have been prior Public Hearings on it as well as it has been discussed at the Township Board meetings. Beverly Osetek agreed with Graham's suggestion about another Public Hearing for the Master Plan in the future. Mooradian was cutting in and out on the phone, so it was difficult for some people to hear him.

Approve Minutes: **Baiardi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 5, 2020 as presented with one change on Page 4: in the second sentence at the top of the page, change *Board of Review* to *Zoning Board of Appeals*. Uutinen seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Public Hearing on the Master Plan: Mooradian opened the Public Hearing on the Proposed West Traverse Township Master Plan 2020 at 7:15 p.m. The Public Hearing was advertised in the local paper.

Dave White stated that as per state law, the Planning Commission has received back the Master Plan after review by the various entities in Emmet County and the Emmet County Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is holding this Public Hearing, which is required, before it goes back to the Township Board for their consideration. The Master Plan has to be reviewed every five years.

West Traverse Township  
Public Hearing and Regular Planning Commission Meeting  
May 13, 2020

Joe Graham stated that after viewing the Future Land Use Map, it appears that there is a significant expansion of the Commercial/Industrial zone. He understands that it does not change the zoning, but it does open the door for future changes. He is opposed to that change because it would directly affect his property. He stated that when the Master Plan was discussed at the Board meeting, Supervisor Sandford voted no on the Plan and it appeared that it was directly related to the Future Land Use Map change. Graham agreed with him. He thinks that there are currently very good buffers between the Commercial area in West Traverse Township and the Residential area. Once the buffer is gone, it would create more conflict as it expands. He pointed out that there are currently several open spaces available in the Commercial area as well as in the adjacent Commercial area in the City of Harbor Springs. Mooradian pointed out that the Master Plan is supposed to look out at the next 20 years. It is just a conceptual possibility for future land use. Graham asked if someone could come to the Township and ask to change the zoning and point out that it is shown in the Future Land Use Map.

Beverly Osetek stated that she does not agree with the Future Land Use Map because where she lives is a stop gap to Commercial expansion. She said that it is a neighborhood. She will be asking the Township Board not to approve it and doesn't even want it on a piece of paper.

There were no other questions.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

### OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of the Master Plan: Mooradian said that he understands how the property owners feel and they have valid comments. Wallin wondered if the Township really needs more commercial areas. The Township is a residential/farming community and he doesn't know if the conceptual Future Land Use Map with the expanding commercial area needs to be in there. Varner is new to the Planning Commission. He does agree with Wallin in wanting to preserve the neighborhoods, but he would like to get a bit more educated on this. Uutinen empathizes with the property owners, but he feels that the conception of expanding the commercial area should stay on the Map. He thinks that when this was proposed, he felt that the Township was moving forward. Personally, he did not see the commercial district growing in that area because there is commercial property available. So, he said that he agrees with Wallin and he also does not feel that the Township needs any more commercial area. Moore empathizes with the property owners, also. He thinks that the Planning Commission has a mandate to look into the future. He agrees with most of the comments so far and he doesn't see much of a need for the expansion. It is hard to guess out a few decades. Repasky looks at it as what it is called, a Future Land Use Map. The responsibility of the Planning Commission is to provide direction. He said it is not an easy choice and there is no intent to offend anybody. He would like to stay

West Traverse Township  
Public Hearing and Regular Planning Commission Meeting  
May 13, 2020

with what is currently in the Master Plan as far as the Future Land Use Map. Baiardi agreed with Repasky as far as leaving the Map as is. There are no actual changes to anything. Mooradian agrees with Repasky and Baiardi. It follows the guidelines of the Zoning Act and how Master Plans work and what is supposed to be thought of while working through the process. Wallin wanted to clarify that he feels that if all the commercial property has not been used in five years, possibly it can be re-visited then.

**Repasky made a motion that the Master Plan 2020, as written, be recommended to the Township Board for approval. Baiardi seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Wallin – no, Repasky – yes, Uutinen – yes, Varner – yes, Baiardi – yes, Moore – no, Mooradian – yes.**

Review Memo From Emmet County Planning Commission Regarding West Traverse Township Ordinance Amendments:

The Township Board gave conditional approval last night on Ordinance No. 1 provided the Planning Commission makes no substantive changes at this meeting. Mooradian reviewed the findings and suggestions of the Emmet County Planning Commission. There was one suggestion that was agreed upon to make a change to the following sentence to read: **“AGRI-TOURISM BUSINESS.** Farms which engage in agriculturally- related tourism operations. Other uses may be considered as deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission.”

**Moore made a motion to recommend Ordinance No. 1 of 2020, the amendments of Section 202, Section 305, Section 306:2 Section 309:2, Section 310:2 and Section 733, to allow Commercial Event Facilities in the A-1/A-1-A, C-1 and I-1; to allow Agri-Tourism in the A-1/A-1-A District; and to provide for standards for Commercial Event Facilities with the following change: Strike *including but not limited to* and add *Other uses may be considered as deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission.* The change was based on the Emmet County Planning Commission’s recommendation. Uutinen seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Baiardi – yes, Varner – yes, Moore – yes, Uutinen – yes, Repasky – yes, Wallin – yes, Mooradian – yes.**

The Township Board did not give conditional approval for Ordinance No. 2, so after discussion at this meeting, it will be voted on and sent back to the Board for their review. The Emmet County Planning Commission and Township Board’s response to this Ordinance was that it was too restrictive as far as solar not being allowed in the front yard. There was a suggestion to allow, under certain circumstances, the use of the front yard when the side or rear yards cannot be utilized. Mooradian stated that if that change was acceptable, then possibly it should follow the same as the side yard and rear yard which requires a Special Use Permit. If a setback of

250 ft front yard setback was used and a Special Use Permit added, the walls and roof would have to be talked about as to whether those would fall under a Special Use Permit, also. He said that when we prohibited solar in the front yard, we made the concession not to require a Special Use Permit for installations on a building. Because we are now considering allowing solar in the front yard, should we now also consider making building installations require a Special Use Permit. There was discussion as to the fact that some people would not have enough property to be eligible for the 250 ft setback, so they should be allowed to put solar on their house with no Special Use. All other standards would still have to be met. Uutinen thought that the 250 ft setback would be fine as long as the neighbors were informed of the use and it went through the Special Use process. Varner and Wallin agreed with Uutinen. Moore wanted to verify that the original amendment stated that solar placement on the house did not need a Special Use, but the side and rear yard placement would need one. Annie Mooradian agreed that even with the 250 ft setback in the front yard, the neighbors should still be able to have a say in the project as well as it would need the Special Use Permit. Someone with an open field in their front yard could want to put in solar panels and they would not be shielded at all. Eve Lauer thanked the Planning Commission for listening to the Township Board and what they had to say. She also appreciates what the Planning Commission has put into this process. Dave White thinks that this would be a good compromise.

**Repasky made a motion to recommend Ordinance No.2 of 2020, an ordinance to amend Section 202, Section 305 and Section 734, to provide standards for solar energy with the following changes: Under Yard Location and Setbacks, strike *ground-mounted or pole-mounted accessory solar energy panels shall not be located in the front yard*. Replace that sentence with *Ground-mounted or pole-mounted accessory solar energy panels shall be allowed in the front yard with a minimum setback of 250 ft in all districts*.**

**Uutinen seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Wallin – yes, Repasky – yes, Uutinen – yes, Moore – yes, Varner – yes, Baiardi – no, Mooradian – yes.**

The Emmet County Planning Commission did not have any suggestions when reviewing Ordinance No. 3. The Township Board had some concerns regarding the non-rigid materials for accessory buildings and sent the Ordinance back to the Planning Commission for further discussion. The Planning Commission had a lot of discussion regarding the accessory building materials in their review of the Ordinance before it was sent to the Township Board. Some of their examples were a pallet shed, sawhorses, 2x4 and tarps. Mooradian pointed out that when a building gets to 200 sq. ft. or more, it becomes a building code issue and that was one of the reasons that the Planning Commission felt that it was not right to allow the non-rigid material. The building code defines non-rigid materials as temporary structures. Mooradian feels that the



West Traverse Township  
Public Hearing and Regular Planning Commission Meeting  
May 13, 2020

building code and the Township codes back up the temporary structure definition. Repasky said that he doesn't feel that it is a bad thing for someone to put up a temporary structure, but also said that he has seen a lot of structures put up that are not maintained. If these temporary structures were allowed, enforcement would most likely be an issue. Also, how do you define temporary? Moore had comments regarding the suggestion that non-rigid would be easier for people who could not afford to build a regular accessory building. That would also apply to tarps, semi-trailers, etc. He thinks the Ordinance should stay the way it is. Uutinen said that he is satisfied with the way the Ordinance is written. Wallin said that he was not necessarily in favor of soft structures, but if it was under 200 sq. ft, it might be alright. Varner also wanted to know what is temporary and how do you enforce it. Also, the structure would need to have sides on it. He likes where the Ordinance is right now. Baiardi is good with the Ordinance as it is. Mooradian agreed that he likes it as is, also. Joe Graham thinks that what he is hearing is that non-rigid siding is an acceptable structure, but it seems like there is a lot more concern about appearance, but hopefully this would be covered under blight. He thinks that it is a very restrictive ordinance. He said that making it allowable in a side or rear yard would take care of the visual issues. Annie Mooradian stated that the non-rigid structures do not apply to farm activities. She wanted to know what the safety is with these types of structures, especially with snow loads and high winds. Dave White said that some of these structures are safe, but not all because of how they are built. He said the issue usually arrives after the first winter.

**Moore made a motion to recommend Ordinance No. 3 2020 to the Township Board, an ordinance to amend Section 202 and Section 407 as written. Uutinen seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Uutinen – yes, Moore – yes, Varner – yes, Baiardi – yes, Repasky – yes, Wallin – yes, Mooradian – yes.**

Zoning Administrator's Report: Dave White presented his written report.

Township Board Representative: Baiardi thanked everyone who came out to vote.

Planning Commission Comments: Mooradian stated that the Planning Commission will hopefully be discussing more about training at the June meeting. There was discussion about having a Special Meeting to discuss an application for a Site Plan Review.

Public Comments: Joe Graham appreciates being able to listen to the discussions at the Planning Commission, especially the Master Plan. Annie Mooradian said thank you to the Planning Commission. She did not realize how much they put into each and every item. She told Graham that he needs to understand that there would never be a change to his property, as far as zoning, as long as he owns it.

Proposed: May 13, 2020  
Approved:

West Traverse Township  
Public Hearing and Regular Planning Commission Meeting  
May 13, 2020

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be June 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.  
There will be a Special Meeting for a Site Plan Review on May 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn: **Wallin made a motion to adjourn.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Submitted by:

Dawson Moore, Secretary

Transcribed by:  
Susan Matsko  
Township Secretary

Proposed: May 13, 2020  
Approved:

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
JUNE 9, 2020**

Supervisor Sandford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person as well as through telephone conferencing.

Roll Call: Lauer, Baker, Hollingsworth, Baiardi, Sandford.

Visitors: Jim Osetek, Dave Green, John Riggs, Paul Mooradian, Jim Bartlett, Annie Mooradian.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda and Additional Items: The agenda was approved by consensus.

Public Comments: None.

Approve Minutes: **Lauer made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 12, 2020 as presented. Baker seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Correspondence: The correspondence was reviewed.

Thorne Swift Report: John Riggs presented his report.

Master Plan – Proposed 2020 Update: The Planning Commission, at their May 13, 2020 meeting, voted to recommend Board approval for the Proposed Master Plan – Update 2020. There was discussion regarding the Future Land Use Map and the proposed expansion of the commercial district. Mr. Osetek stated that he was not in favor of the proposed expansion. Paul Mooradian explained the Planning Commissioner's discussion about the proposed expansion of the commercial district on the map and why they felt that it was appropriate. Jim Bartlett agreed with Mooradian in that looking forward is one of the responsibilities of the Planning Commission. He said that he is reluctant to approve the Plan as presented with the future expansion of the commercial area. Bartlett agrees with Sandford and Baker that this might be moving too quickly and the residents of the Township should have a say in this decision.

**Hollingsworth made a motion to approve the Master Plan – Proposed 2020 Update as presented. Baiardi seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Baiardi – yes, Baker – no, Hollingsworth – yes, Lauer – yes, Sandford – no.**

West Traverse Township  
Regular Board Meeting  
June 9, 2020

Zoning Ordinance Amendments:

Ordinance 2 of 2020 – Solar: Ordinance 2 of 2020 was returned to the Planning Commission by the Township Board for further review of ground or pole mounted solar panels as a special use in all zoning districts in the front yard with a 250 feet setback from the front lot line. The Planning Commission agreed to those changes.

**Baker made a motion to approve Ordinance 2 of 2020 – Solar as it now stands with the correction of the omission of the word *and* in B-1, the third line. Lauer seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Hollingsworth – yes, Baker – yes, Lauer – yes, Baiardi – yes, Sandford – yes.**

Ordinance 3 of 2020 – Accessory Buildings: Ordinance 3 of 2020 was returned to the Planning Commission by the Township Board for further review of not permitting accessory buildings using non-rigid materials. The Planning Commission voted 7-0 to leave the amendment as initially proposed. Lauer felt that there are cases where the soft materials can be used and are very well constructed. Hollingsworth and Baker agreed with Lauer. Paul Mooradian stated that the Planning Commissioners felt that the issue of the soft materials is too much of an enforcement issue. He said that they are considered temporary structures as far as structures go. He pointed out that the County response to the zoning amendment had no comments about the non-rigid materials. Annie Mooradian said that she has concerns about safety.

**Sandford made a motion that Ordinance 3 of 2020 for accessory buildings be approved as presented. Baiardi seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call Vote: Lauer – no, Hollingsworth – no, Baiardi – yes, Baker – no, Sandford – no.**

Township Hall Façade Renovation: Plans from Michelle Kruzel were previously distributed to the Board members. Sandford reviewed the specifics of the scope of the project.

**Sandford made a motion to table further discussion on the hall renovation until further notice due to the situation in the construction industry and until everything else returns to something relatively normal. Baker seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Opening the Township Hall: Baiardi is waiting to get definitive instructions when it will be approved to open the Township hall. She said that there will be a notice on the door to

West Traverse Township  
Regular Board Meeting  
June 9, 2020

encourage people to use the drop-box for taxes, ballot applications, etc. Guidelines will be followed. The Secretary will be gone until June 29 and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to keep the hall closed until her return.

Township Website: HARBOR, INC. will be updating its website. They provide the Township its website, so a decision will need to be made as to what the Township wants to do for a future website. The Township will pursue proposals from Gaslight Media and Common Angle to set up the Township with its own website.

Clerk's Report: Baiardi presented her report.

Treasurer's Report: Hollingsworth presented her report.

Planning Commission: The next meeting will be June 17 and there will be continuing review of the Bosker project. There will be discussion regarding Ordinance 3 – 2020.

**Baker made a motion to approve the expense of \$1,000 for an MTA Planning Commission educational online program. Lauer seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Zoning Administrator's Report: David White presented his written report.

Recreation/Thorne Swift Committee: No report.

LTBBOI Litigation: No report.

Supervisor's Report: Sandford presented his report.

Approve Payables and Payroll: **Lauer made a motion to approve the payables and payroll as presented. Baker seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

Public Comments: Dave Green had comments regarding the non-rigid siding accessory buildings and the Township hall renovations. Paul Mooradian had comments regarding the Township hall renovations. He thanked the Board for their support for the Planning Commission online training modules.

West Traverse Township  
Regular Board Meeting  
June 9, 2020

Board Comments: Baiardi stated that the flag outside needs to go back up.

Adjourn: **Baker made a motion to adjourn. Baiardi seconded the motion.**

**Vote: All yes.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be July 14, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Cindy Baiardi, Clerk

Transcribed by:  
Susan Matsko  
Township Secretary

Proposed: June 9, 2020  
Approved:

**West Traverse Township**  
**Resolution to Approve the West Traverse Township Master Plan Update**

At a regular meeting of the Township Board of West Traverse Township, Emmet County, Michigan, held at the West Traverse Township Hall on June 9, 2020 at 6:00 pm, the following resolution was:

Offered by: Hollingsworth and supported by: Baiardi.

**WHEREAS**, the West Traverse Township Planning Commission adopted the West Traverse Township Master Plan Update at its meeting on May 13, 2020, after deliberation of comments received at the properly noticed public hearing held on May 13, 2020 in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, as amended), and following distribution of the draft plan to planning commissions of the adjacent townships, the city of Harbor Springs, Emmet County and to the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians for their respective comments; and

**WHEREAS**, the West Traverse Township Board on September 9, 2008 asserted its right to approve or reject the plan in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, as amended);

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the West Traverse Township Board hereby approves the West Traverse Township Master Plan Update, including all associated charts and maps.

**With a roll call vote of YES or NO as follows:**

Baiardi: yes Baker: no Hollingsworth: yes Lauer: yes Sanford: no

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED:** ✓ **REJECTED:**       .

STATE OF MICHIGAN       )  
                                      )  
COUNTY OF EMMET       )

I, Cindy J. Baiardi , Clerk of West Traverse Township, Emmet County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the West Traverse Township Board at a meeting held on June 9, 2020, the original of which is on file in my office. Public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in compliance with Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan 1976, as amended.

Signed: Cindy J. Baiardi  
Cindy J. Baiardi, West Traverse Township Clerk

Date: June 9, 2020

**WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP**

**P.O. BOX 528**

**HARBOR SPRINGS, MI 49740**

**PH. 231-526-7361 FAX 231-526-0028**

**Letter of Transmittal**

**Date:** June 16, 2020

**To:** Adjacent Communities and other Interested Parties

**Transmitted by:** e-mail

Website Posting

**Attn:** Planning Commission Chair or Clerks

**We are transmitting one (1) copy of the adopted Master Plan Update for West Traverse Township.**

**Remarks:** As per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, I am transmitting the adopted West Traverse Township Master Plan Update to you on behalf of the West Traverse Township Planning Commission.

If you have any questions please contact Paul Mooradian at 231-526-7361.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Cindy J. Baiardi

Clerk and Board Representative to PC

cc: Paul Mooradian, PC Chair