

# *Master Plan*

*Grattan Township, Michigan*



November 1, 2000

February 2007

The Grattan Township Planning Commission reviewed the text and statistics of the 2000 Master Plan, along with the land use maps.

After collecting updated statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Michigan Township Association, it reflected our growth was far less than that of surrounding townships and of Kent County in total. This was in keeping with the Master Plan goal of having more slow and controlled growth and preserving the rural character of the township.

We reviewed these numbers with both our lawyer and planner. They agreed with the Planning Commission that there was no reason to commence a procedure to amend the Plan or to adopt a new one. The notations and discussion of this is in the February 7, 2007 Minutes of the Planning Commission (attached).

This would allow this plan to become current until the next review in 2012.

Alan Rumbaugh  
Planning Commission Chairman

# Acknowledgments

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## Special Thanks to...

### Members of the Township Planning Commission

- § Cliff Bloom, Chair
- § Becky Gilinsky, Vice-Chair
- § Nancy Benner, Secretary
- § Cheryl Tolley
- § Bob Pope
- § Terry Nugent
- § Terry Kropf
- § Kean Kaliniak (former Township Planning Commission Member and Secretary)
- § Diane Timmons (Recording Secretary)

### Members of the Township Board

- § Rich Herweyer, Supervisor
- § Peggy Gurney, Clerk
- § Charles Palazzolo, Treasurer
- § Terry Nugent, Trustee
- § Mary Jane Anderson, Trustee

### Township Attorney=s Office

Mika, Meyers, Beckett & Jones, PLC

### All Grattan Township Citizens and Participating Individuals in the Master Plan Workshop Sessions

and

**LSL**

LANGWORTHY  
STRADER  
LEBLANC &  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

The preparation of this Plan was financially aided through a grant from the Kent County Community Development Program.

**This document replaces all prior Master Plans and future land use maps including, but not limited to, the 1989 Master Plan.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction	1
Community Profile	2
Population, Housing & Economy	2
Natural Features	8
Existing Land Use	13
Community Issues	18
Development vs. Farmland Preservation	18
Rural Atmosphere	18
Lake Protection	19
Commercial Intrusion	20
Groundwater Protection	20
Controlled Growth	21
Improved Roads	21
Infrastructure	22
Vision & Goals	23
The Plan	27
Agricultural Preservation	27
Rural Preservation	28
Low Density Residential	29
Moderate Density Residential	29
Business/Service	31
Industrial	32
Public/Quasi-Public	32
Other Recommendations	32
Using the Plan	35
Let It Be Your Land Use Guide	35
Refer To It In All Zoning Decisions	35
Be Flexible	36
Keep It Current	36
Use It As A Management Tool	37
Appendix - 1988 & 1999 Community Survey Results	38

# INTRODUCTION

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Located on the outer fringe of the Grand Rapids metro area, Grattan Township is a quiet rural and agricultural community in the midst of change. For well over half of the twentieth century, the Township remained relatively static, a quaint farm community, miles from anything, unaffected by development in far off Grand Rapids. By 1970, Grattan=s awakening had begun. The Township witnessed its first significant population increase between 1960 and 1970, and the growth has continued ever since.

While the community still retains much of its rural character, the signs of change are evident. Homes ring many of the lakes which dot the Township. The flow of traffic is steady on once lonesome roads. New housing lines most of the roads in the Township. The clamor for services by some of those who moved to the country to get away from urban living grows louder.

Despite the reality that Grattan has been discovered and is destined to grow, the Township still has the opportunity to manage the growth and protect the distinctive characteristics that make this such a desirable community. Farming is still the major land use. Abundant water resources are found in every sector. Haphazard commercial and industrial uses have not been permitted.

The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish a Township land use policy that will guide future zoning decisions in a manner consistent with a rational, well conceived planning philosophy. It is not the intent of the Plan to stop development. It is, however, the desire of both the Planning Commission and Township Board to control and direct future growth in a manner harmonious with the community=s natural character, existing land use patterns, available infrastructure, environmental resources, and adopted goals.

This document is the product of more than a year-long process during which the Planning Commission examined the community - its pattern of land use, the natural environment, and the people. Trends, issues, opportunities, and challenges were identified. Wide-spread community participation was sought to formulate a vision for the future. Finally, goals and recommendations were identified to establish a framework for future decisions regarding the type, location, and intensity of development to be permitted throughout the Township. The result is a balanced Plan which accommodates continued growth at a controlled level, consistent with the community=s ability to absorb it and in a manner that protects those features that symbolize Grattan and have attracted growth in the first place.

While much effort has gone into the preparation of this Master Plan, the work is never really finished. There are many recommendations that should be implemented. Most of these are related to changes in the zoning ordinance to provide the Township with the tools needed to fully implement the Plan. In addition, as noted in the last chapter of this document, the Plan should be regularly evaluated and updated, as needed.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The characteristics of an area, including physical, social and economic composition, shape the community and influence its future. In 1989, the Grattan Township Planning Commission prepared a Township Land Use Plan that included information about the many characteristics of Grattan Township. The process to update that plan is again being undertaken. This community profile will look at more recent social and economic demographics and compare them to those set forth in the previous plan for the purpose of establishing some baseline trends.

Courtland Township	Oakfield Township
Cannon Township	<b>Grattan Township</b>
Ada Township	Vergennes Township

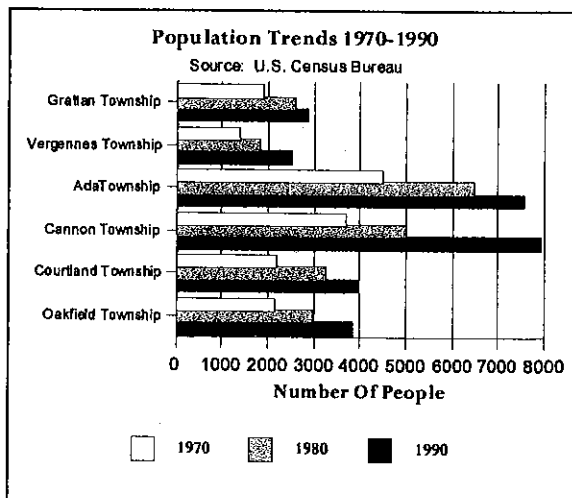
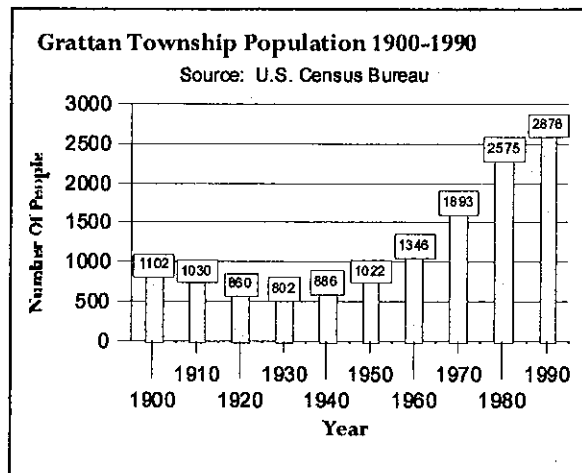
**Kent County Townships Surrounding Grattan Township**

## Population, Housing And The Economy

### Population

A historical look at the population of Grattan Township shows a decline from the turn of the century to approximately mid-century. Since 1940, the population has gradually increased to the 1998 population estimated to be just over 3,400 (National Decision Systems, 1999).

The 1980 U.S. Census showed that between 1970 and 1980, the Township experienced a 36% growth rate. This was over four times the rate of growth in Kent



County (8%) and over eight times the growth experienced in the State of Michigan (4%).

In 1990, the U.S. Census showed Grattan Township's population to be 2,876, a decade increase of just over 300 people since 1980 (2,575). This represents a population increase of 12%, less than half that in the previous decade (36%) and less than that of the townships surrounding

Grattan in Kent County for the same time period, but similar to the overall growth experienced in Kent County (13%). The Township's growth, however, significantly exceeded that of the State (0.6 %) for the decade. The number of Township households increased to 1,008 during the 1980's, with an average of 2.85 people/household, lower than the previous decade (3.11 people/household).

Over the 1990's, the estimated population of the Township has reflected a similar increase (12%) to the previous decade. This estimated increase is again less than that of the townships surrounding Grattan in Kent County. It is, however, greater than the growth experienced at the County (7%) or State (4%) level. The table below outlines the estimated growth over the 1990's for Grattan and its neighboring townships.

### Population Estimates For 1990-1996

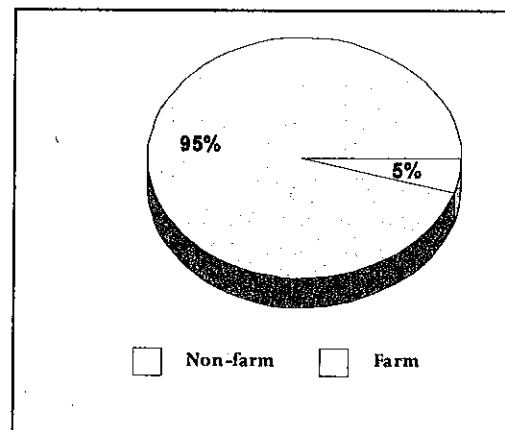
Governmental Unit	Census 1990	Est. July 1992	Est. July 1994	Est. July 1996	Change 1990-1996	
					Number	Percent
Kent Co.	500,631	512,266	525,656	536,103	35,472	7%
Grattan Township	2,876	2,975	3,105	3,224	348	12%
Vergennes Township	2,492	2,683	2,909	3,153	661	27%
Ada Township	7,578	7,959	8,457	8,859	1,281	17%
Cannon Township	7,928	8,495	9,280	10,170	2,242	28%
Courtland Township	3,950	3,957	3,998	4,461	511	13%
Oakfield Township	3,842	3,994	4,254	4,457	615	16%

Source: Office Of The State Demographer, Michigan Department Of Management And Budget

### Rural Population

The residents of Grattan Township live in rural settings. According to community surveys conducted in 1988 and 1999, a majority of township residents lived in or moved to Grattan Township specifically in search of a rural environment.

A rural environment often is characterized by farmland, open space, and natural features such as forests. It is not surprising that in the recent survey conducted to obtain input for this Plan, the survey respondents ranked individual goals of rural preservation and farmland preservation very high.

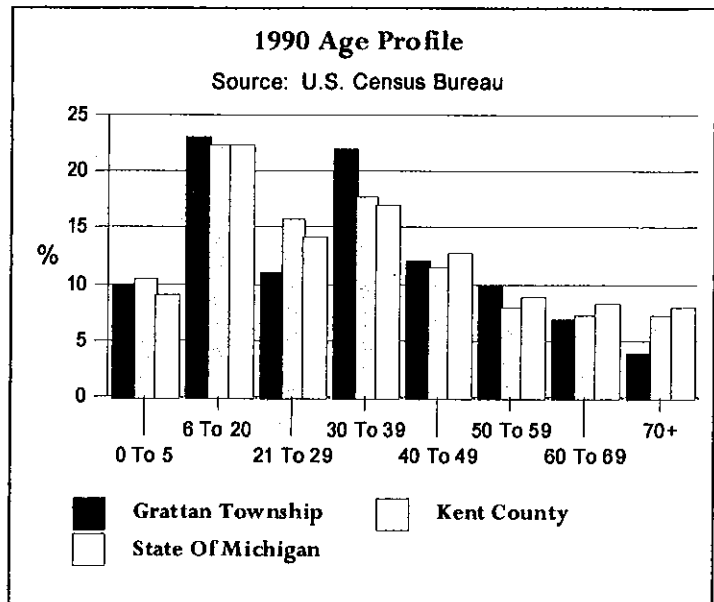


Likewise, Aover development of lakes@ and Aloss of farmlands@ were ranked as the most crucial problems in the Township. Clearly, maintaining the rural character of the community in order to minimize negative environmental consequences, protect the quality of life, and avoid premature demand for public services is a priority of the Township=s residents.

## Age

The median age for Grattan Township is 32.6, higher than that of Kent County, 30.7 years, and identical to that of the State of Michigan, 32.6 years.

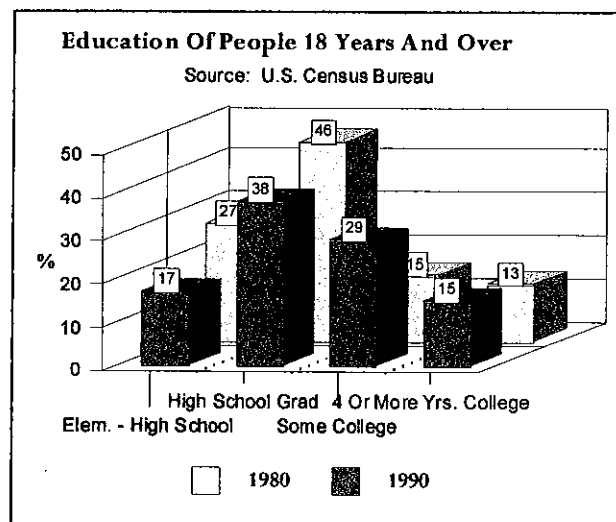
The distribution of Grattan Township population into age categories shows little deviation from the Kent County and State of Michigan populations. The exception is the population in their 20's and 30's. There are fewer individuals in their 20's and more individuals in their 30's compared with the County and the State, suggesting that the incoming/increasing population may be comprised of individuals in their 30's.



## Education

According to the 1990 Census, a majority of elementary through high school students in Grattan Township are enrolled in public schools (89%), either in the Belding, Lowell or Rockford public school districts. A majority of those attending college are also enrolled in a public institution.

A comparison of completed education levels, 1980 to 1990, shows an increase in the number of people in the Township who attained some or



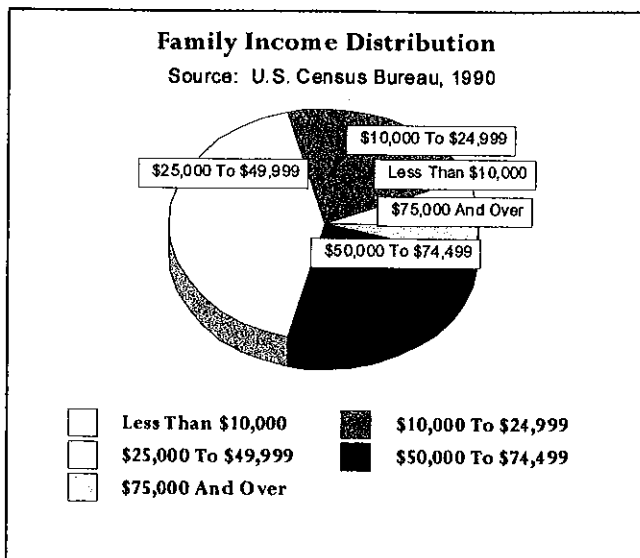
completed a college education. This may reflect those who at the time of the 1980 census were in high school and have since completed several years of higher education and may also reflect the character of new residents moving into the community.

A comparison of educational attainment in Grattan Township to educational attainment in surrounding townships is shown in the table below. Educational attainment in the Township was slightly higher than in Kent County. In comparison to the State of Michigan (77%), the Township has a larger population of high school graduates or higher, but a smaller proportion of college graduates (Michigan, 18%).

### Educational Attainment

Geographic Area	Percent High School Graduate Or Higher	Percent Bachelor=s Degree Or Higher
Kent County	78%	14%
Grattan Township	83%	15%
Vergennes Township	85%	19%
Ada Township	89%	37%
Cannon Township	88%	24%
Courtland Township	84%	15%
Oakfield Township	79%	6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990



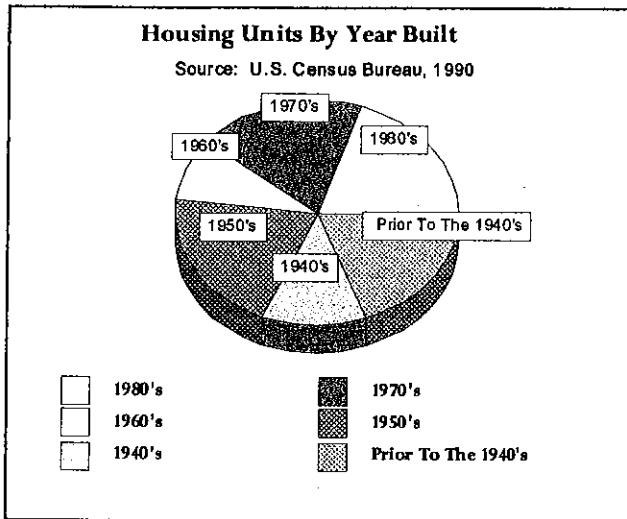
### Income

The median household income for the Township in 1990 was \$37,545, higher than Kent County (\$32,358) and the State of Michigan (\$32,533). In Grattan Township, 65% of the households had incomes between \$25,000 and \$75,000.

## Housing

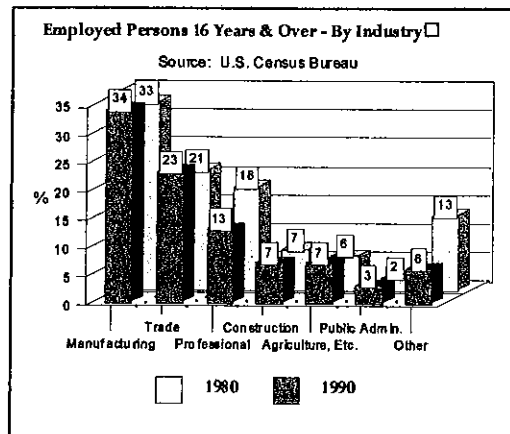
Surprisingly, for all its new growth, the Township's housing stock is relatively old. The median year in which housing units were built in the Township was 1959, very close to Kent County (1962). In comparison, the median year for most of the townships surrounding Grattan in Kent County ranges between 1970 and 1975.

During the 1950's, 249 housing units were built, similar to the number built in the 1980's (241 units). These two decades witnessed the construction of 41% of the dwelling units in the Township. This corresponds with the largest population increase in Grattan Township since the turn of the century which occurred between 1960 and 1980 (1,229 people). Nineteen percent of the homes in the Township were constructed before 1940.



According to the 1990 Census, the median value for a home in Grattan Township was \$69,400. This value is less than neighboring Vergennes, Ada, Cannon, and Courtland, but more than Oakfield Township (\$58,800) to the north. Of the existing homes in Grattan Township, 993 were occupied year-round, with 212 (17.6%) vacant or seasonal. Renter-occupied housing units were relatively scarce, only 62 or 5% of housing units in the Township.

Of the existing homes, 99% had wells as their source of water and 59% utilized septic tanks as their means of sewage disposal. Public sewer serviced 40% of the homes, mostly around three of the major lakes. Fifty percent of homes were heated mostly with bottled, tank or LP gas. Another 36% were heated by fuel oil or kerosene. These type of services signify the rural character of Grattan Township.



## Employment

Over half the Township labor force during the past two decades has been employed in the manufacturing and trade sectors. The largest group of residents worked in the manufacturing sector, both in 1980 and 1990. There was a shift, however, in jobs within the manufacturing sector from non-durable goods to durable goods between 1980 and 1990. Retail trade jobs led wholesale jobs in the Township in the trade category.

### Categories include:

**Manufacturing**  
 durable and non-durable goods  
**Trade**  
 wholesale and retail  
**Professional**  
 health, educational, and other professional services  
**Agriculture, etc.**  
 agriculture, forestry and fisheries  
**Other**  
 transportation, communications, and other public utilities, finance, insurance, real estate, and business, repair, personal, entertainment, and recreation services

A decrease was seen in the professional category and in the service related category (included in AOther@).

## Transportation To Work

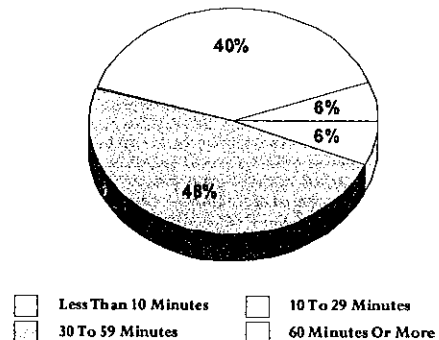
With limited means of public transportation available in Grattan Township, 82% of employed people drove alone to work (1990 Census). In 1980, 66% drove alone. This shift took place from the numbers who carpooled, from 26% in 1980 to 11% in 1990. The percentage of people who

walked remained the same in both decades, 2%.

For those who drove alone, 41% had between a 10 to 29 minute commute to their place of business. An even larger percentage, 50%, had a half hour to an hour commute. This indicates that many individuals are commuting to the Grand Rapids area and to other areas outside of the Township. Downtown Grand Rapids is approximately 20 miles from Grattan Township.

Travel Time To Work - 16 Years & Over

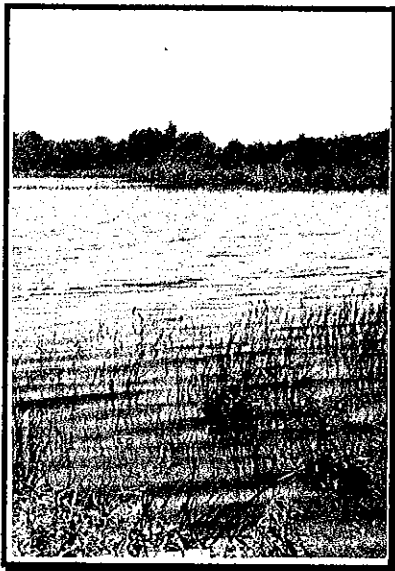
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990



## Natural Features

The character of Grattan Township is defined by a variety of physical features which both attract and pose limitations for new development. Many of these assets are extremely fragile, while others are more tolerant of man-made activity. Nevertheless, all combine to make Grattan Township the community it is. The presence or absence of these features in various areas of the community have greatly influenced the goals, policies, and recommendations of this Plan.

In addition to the many lakes, wetlands, and related watersheds, part of the western portion of the Township is located within the Bear Creek watershed. This is a significant watershed whose rehabilitation has been given a high priority by area governments, as well as the State of Michigan. There are significant wetland areas within the Township, including the unique and widely-recognized Saul Lake Bog. A significant amount of land in the Township is also comprised of forests and woodlots, providing a habitat for many species of wildlife.



### Lakes

Grattan Township is dotted with lakes. These range in size from large lakes stretching a mile or more in length, such as Big Pine Island, Big Crooked, and Murray Lakes, to small ponds, almost indistinguishable from the wetlands that surround them.

Development around these lakes varies depending on the size and the presence of wetlands. The larger lakes tend to be bordered, if not completely encircled, by single family residential development. Those areas left undeveloped tend to be undevelopable or more costly to develop due to soil conditions.

Several of the developed lakes - Big Pine Island, Big Crooked, Murray, and Rattigan - are served by public sanitary sewer. Big Pine Island Lake has its own system, while the remaining three lakes share a central treatment system.

These lakes are among the most significant natural features in the Township and truly make this community unique among most others in Kent County. Protection of the water quality and a desire to prevent over development of the surrounding lands have been cited in the Plan as major goals and policies.

## **Wetlands**

In addition to its extensive system of lakes, the Township is nearly blanketed with wetlands. Well over 4,000 acres, nearly 19% of Grattan Township's land area is encompassed by wetlands. When combined with the area devoted to lakes, approximately one-quarter of the entire Township is occupied by water.

This is both a limitation and an asset. While the wetlands limit development opportunities in many areas, they provide a natural feature that improves drainage, supports wildlife, and ensures that some areas will retain their rural character.



## **Forests**

Relatively few forested areas are found in Grattan. Approximately 2,000 acres or 9% of the land area are forested. Like the lakes, forests are distributed throughout the Township. The heaviest concentration is in the northwest quadrant.

Most of the Township's forest lands are deciduous. A few scattered evergreen forests are found among the deciduous forests, primarily in the northwest and northeast quadrants. In addition to contributing to the Township's character, the forests provide significant wildlife habitat.

## **Steep Slopes**

The topography is generally rolling terrain. Although elevations vary nearly 200 feet, from 800 to 970 feet above sea level, the majority of the land is between 850 and 900 feet in elevation. The Township's highest elevation is found in Section 11 near Lincoln Lake Road, south of Strotheide Road, while the lowest is in Section 13 where Seeley Creek flows out of the Township.

The most severe topographic variation generally follows a north/south band through the center of the Township, resulting in slopes greater than 12 %.

## **Soils**

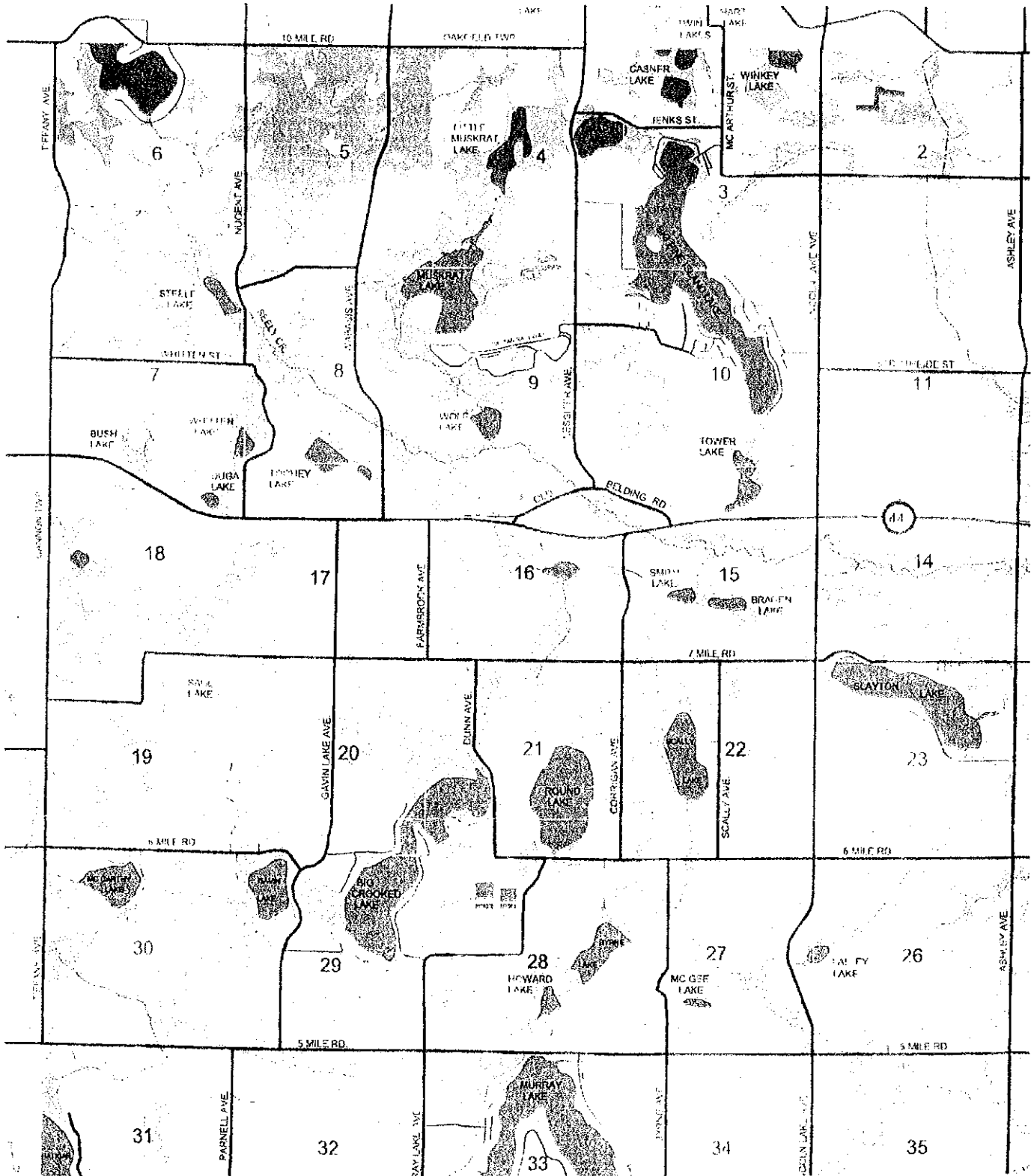
Loams (a combination of sand, silt, and clay) and sands are the predominant soil types in Grattan Township. Peat and muck are found in the level lowlands and wetlands. Glacial landscapes in the Township are exemplified by their random, unconsolidated soils

characterized by abrupt changes in soil structure. It is common to find several different soil types within any large parcel.

In general, Grattan=s soils are not well suited to residential development without public sanitary sewer. The majority of land in the Township has severe septic tank absorption limitations. The limited percolation ability of the soils restricts the capability of conventional on-site septic systems to provide adequate treatment of domestic wastewater. Select areas with slight or moderate limitations for septic systems are found in the northeasternmost section of the Township, adjacent to Big Pine Island Lake, along M-44, and between 5-Mile and 7-Mile Roads near the western end of the Township.

The Township=s soils also contribute to poor surface water drainage and run-off characteristics. Due to the abundance of lakes and the watersheds associated with those lakes, any intensive development will generally be located within a lake watershed, potentially leading to degradation of the lakes and their ecosystems.





## Existing Land Use

A rural, farm community on the threshold of change would be an apt description of Grattan Township. While most of the land throughout the community is comprised of farms, forests, and wetlands, there is a clear pattern of residential encroachment evidenced along nearly every road and around many lakes which signals the start of an emerging trend. According to the 1999 land use survey conducted for this Plan, just over 6 % of the Township=s land area is occupied by residential development (single family homes). This is up from an estimated 3 % in 1991. A summary of land use ratios, based on the 1999 existing use survey, is shown in the following table.

Land Use	Acreage	
	# of acres	% of total
Residential	1495	6.3
Commercial	12	.04
Industrial	6	.02
Public/Quasi-public	83	.35
Agriculture	8588	36.4
Orchard	1773	7.5
Vacant/open space	3826	16.2
Wetland	4382	18.5
Forest	2155	9.1
Water	1297	5.5
Total	23617	99.91

These figures indicate that despite the new construction activity in the Township, the predominant characteristics remain rural, undeveloped. In fact, less than seven percent (6.71 %) of the Township=s land area is actually developed. The remaining 93% is occupied by farms, orchards, wetlands, forests, lakes, and vacant fields. However, as one drives within the community, the perception is clearly that of increased development and loss of precious features.

The following pages describe the current pattern of land use in Grattan Township, by type of use.

## Residential

The largest form of development in the Township is residential. Single family homes are mainly found in two types of locations, concentrated on relatively small lots surrounding many of Grattan=s lakes and on relatively large parcels scattered along each of the Amile roads@.

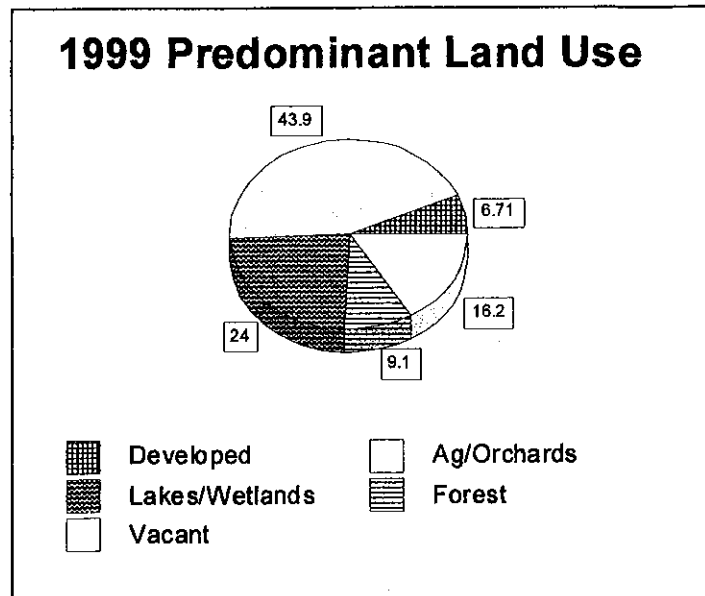
All of the Township=s year-round housing is comprised of conventional single family dwellings. There are no multiple or two family structures. While there is no conventional manufactured housing community, there are many individual manufactured units on single lots scattered throughout the Township and there is a seasonal mobile home community located in the northeast corner of the Township, at the northern end of Big Pine Island Lake.

As noted, very little of the residential development is concentrated, except for the homes clustered around the lakes. Otherwise, platted subdivisions or similar arrangements of home sites are rare.

## Commercial

Retail, office, and service businesses are very limited. Those that do exist tend to be long-established uses occupying small spaces that they have occupied for years. Examples are the small convenience stores in Parnell and Grattan Center and the Grattan Bar in Grattan Center. Nearly all of the Township=s Acommercial@ activity is confined to these two locations. The major exception, which is not a traditional commercial use, is the Grattan Raceway located approximately one mile north of Grattan Center.

In addition to the limited business activity in Parnell and Grattan Center, there are other forms of business scattered amidst the farms and residences in the community. Some of these may be less desirable and generally consist of contractor=s yards and vehicle repair facilities located on the same lot as a residence and in proximity to other residences. These industrial-like uses have evolved over time and are no longer compatible with the surroundings. Heavy truck traffic, noise, dust, and other nuisance effects make these businesses inappropriate in the Township=s emerging residential areas.



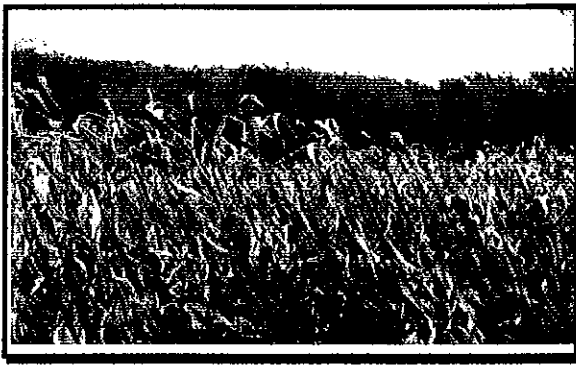
## **Industrial**

Grattan Township has no industrial development, per se. However, there are several agricultural distribution facilities, associated with a major orchard, which are akin to an industrial use. There is also a modest industrial area in Grattan Center.

## **Public/Quasi-public**

Churches, schools, cemeteries, public buildings, and parks fall into this category of uses. Like the commercial uses, public/quasi-public uses are found primarily in Grattan Center and Parnell.

## **Agriculture**



Agriculture is the largest single land use in Grattan Township, accounting for more than one-third of the community's entire acreage. These agricultural lands are found throughout the entire Township. While Grattan possesses many large tracts of farm land, the existing land use map illustrates how these lands are interrupted by the Township's many water features, as well as the emerging residential development.

In addition, a review of the Township plat map reveals many parcel splits in agricultural areas, making it less likely that these lands can continue to be farmed economically.

## **Orchards**

A specialized form of agriculture, several large orchards are located throughout the Township. These fruit-producing areas account for eight percent of all the Township's land.

## **Water**

One of the hallmarks of Grattan Township is its water. Believed to have more lakes than any other community in Kent County, the Township is dotted with lakes and ponds of all sizes and shapes. The largest of these - Murray Lake, Big Crooked Lake, and Big Pine Island Lake - are heavily developed. Some of the smaller lakes have also drawn residential development to their shores. However, many of the smaller lakes remain fairly pristine and undeveloped. This is most likely due to the proximity of wetlands and very poor soils surrounding those lakes. Approximately five percent of the Township's area is occupied by lakes and ponds.

## **Wetland**

With the abundance of lakes dotting the Township, it should be no surprise that there are also a number of associated wetlands. These features comprise an important environmental resource which occupies 19 % of the Township=s area. They are found in nearly every square mile of the Township and range in size from a few isolated acres to hundreds of contiguous acres.

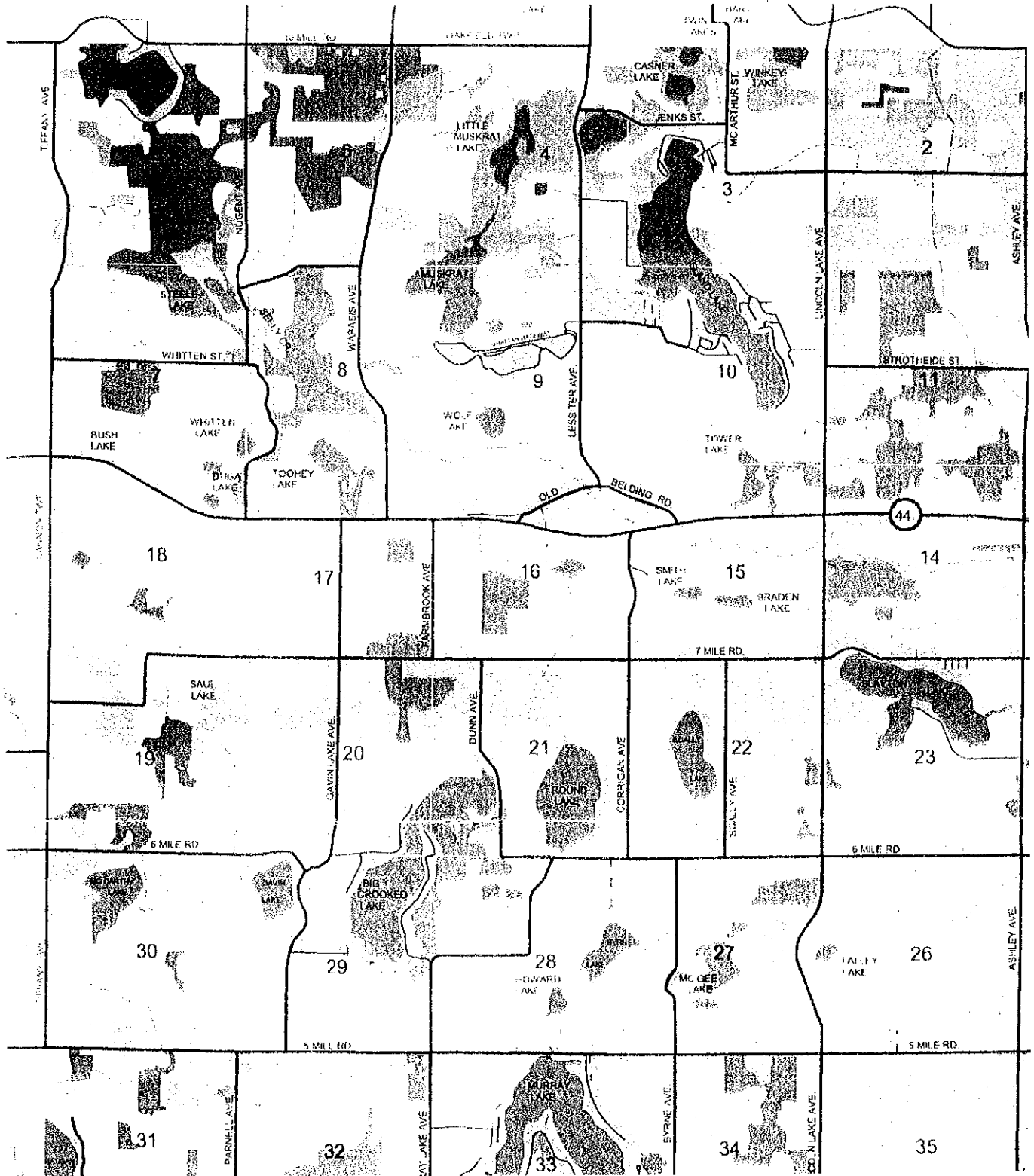
## **Forest**

Large tracts of woodlands occupy about nine percent of the Township. Like Grattan=s other natural features, forests tend to be scattered throughout the community. Most of the forests are deciduous. However, a few evergreen forests are found in various locations.



## **Vacant/Open Land**

Approximately 16 % of the Township=s land is categorized as vacant or open space, meaning that it is neither developed or devoted to any of the other land uses previously described, such as agriculture, forest, or water. In most cases, these lands are vacant due to some physical limitation, such as steep slopes or poor drainage, that makes them unsuitable for other uses.



# COMMUNITY ISSUES

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Grattan Township's planning process has been notable for the extent of community involvement throughout the work effort. In September of 1999, a community opinion survey was distributed to all households in the Township. Following the survey, the Planning Commission sponsored a Focus Group meeting to aid in the formulation of goals for the Plan. In addition, at each of the Planning Commission's work sessions throughout the planning process, citizen attendance and active participation were high.

One result of this extensive input, coupled with the Planning Commission's perspective, has been general consensus regarding the key issues facing Grattan Township. The following is a summary of the most significant issues and concerns expressed by the community, which significantly influenced the direction of this Master Plan.

## **Development vs. Farmland Preservation**

Agriculture comprises the largest single use of land in Grattan Township. Nearly every road in the Township is bordered by large farms or rolling orchards. Some of this agricultural land, however, is also dotted with recently constructed single family homes.

Clearly, Grattan Township is one of the new frontiers of suburban sprawl. Attracted by rural beauty, relative proximity to Grand Rapids, and affordable land prices, new residents continue migrating to the Township.

In search of a piece of rural countryside, these new home owners (with the exception of those surrounding the lakes) have generally elected to purchase acreage parcels fronting on the Township's main roads, rather than seek lots within clustered developments. In fact, such developments are essentially nonexistent in the Township.

The result is isolated homes, spaced a few hundred feet apart, lining the main roads and punctuating what were once unbroken expanses of crop and pasture land or rural vistas. The features that have lured these people to Grattan are being threatened by this unplanned, haphazard pattern of development.

## **Rural Atmosphere**

Despite the continuing influx of new homes in the community, Grattan remains essentially a rural community in terms of population density. However, those features most prized by life-long residents and newcomers alike, as exemplifying the Township's rural atmosphere, are gradually being eroded.

A long list of attributes has been cited throughout the planning process to define Arural@. These include:

- \$ trees
- \$ orchards
- \$ lakes
- \$ wetlands
- \$ farms
- \$ hills
- \$ sparse development
- \$ wildlife
- \$ gravel roads

While development cannot be halted, altogether, the protection of these community assets from unnecessary degradation is a major focus of the Plan.

## **Lake Protection**

Water is a significant asset in the community. Lakes and wetlands comprise approximately one-quarter of the Township=s entire area. Residential development abuts, and in some cases encircles, many of the larger lakes. Owners of seasonal and year-round homes have been lured by the views, tranquility, and recreational opportunity afforded by these lakes.

Three of the largest lakes in Kent County are located in Grattan Township. Preservation of the lakes and watersheds containing the lakes is extremely important to the Township and its residents for many reasons, including the following. First, the lakes and watersheds are an integral part of the Township=s natural environment. Second, the lakes are important to the local economy. Finally, during the process leading to the adoption of this Plan (as well as countless zoning and other meetings during prior years), it was abundantly clear that the residents of the community put a high priority on preserving the lakes and preventing further overcrowding and overdevelopment around these water bodies. The residents of the Township have always desired to protect their lakes and related watersheds.

However, relatively high densities, overuse, and, in some cases, on-site septic systems have diminished or, at least, threatened the continued desirability of the lakes. In many cases, the land that can be developed has been developed. Many of the remaining undeveloped areas immediately abutting the lakes are wetlands incapable of being developed. In some cases, infill lots endure amidst the homes lining the lakeshore, but large developable tracts are rare. Degradation of water quality and further development around the outer fringe of the existing developed areas are the most serious planning issues. Even some of the pristine undeveloped lakes are threatened. New development on or near the lakes should be minimized to better assure adequate on-site sewage disposal, to

minimize overuse of and safety hazards on the waters, and to limit the disturbance of important lake-related ecological systems.

Funneling is another lake-related issue. The term relates to the practice of giving off-lake properties access to a lake or permitting owners of a significant number of properties to have access to the lake through a relatively narrow lakefront area. Funneling results in potentially more intense lake use than would normally occur if a property or lot was used for a single family home. Along with this practice comes an exacerbation of typical lake-related problems such as shore erosion from watercraft, oil and gas spillage from power boats, increased noise, conflicts among lake users, increased lake maintenance costs, and potential loss of property values.

## **Industrial/Commercial Intrusion**

Two issues have been identified relative to the existing and future development of businesses within Grattan Township. First, there is an established trend of certain uses of a commercial or industrial nature (excavators, contractors, truckers, vehicle repair, etc.) locating throughout the Township, many of which are illegal. These are typically business activities involving outdoor storage and heavy equipment which are carried on adjacent to the owner's home in rural areas of the community. However, such uses are generally incompatible with other residential development and can create a nuisance due to noise, traffic, and/or unsightliness. As the community continues to experience an influx of new residents, such incompatibilities will be seen as more and more offensive and intrusive.

The second issue regarding business development relates to the need for commercial establishments in the Township. In general, the community recognizes the need for some limited services in scale with and complementary to the character of the Township. Strip centers and linear commercial development along the major roadways, however, are considered alien to the long-term vision of Grattan Township. The number and location of service centers distributed within the Township have been debated by the Planning Commission in an effort to balance convenience with need.

## **Groundwater Protection**

The extensive areas devoted to water, coupled with poor soils and the general lack of public sanitary sewer throughout most of the Township, provide strong reasons for being concerned about the groundwater. Private wells are the source of drinking water throughout the community. Therefore, protecting the groundwater from infiltration of chemicals and waste is a significant issue.

Sources of contaminants could include effluent from septic systems, agricultural chemicals, and animal waste. While the County Health Department has jurisdiction over the approval of wells and septic systems in the Township, land use policy related to the type and intensity of development is the province of Grattan Township.

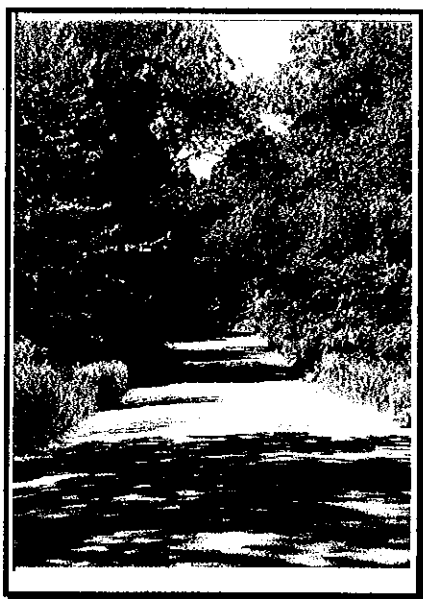
## Controlled Growth

In the 1999 opinion survey conducted by the Planning Commission, one position was very clear. Although most respondents did not desire to stop growth completely, the overwhelming majority (88 %) believed that growth and development should at least be controlled and restricted. Only 14 % stated that growth and development should be able to occur with little or no restriction. In fact, 55 % of the respondents believed that growth should be tightly controlled and restricted.

This philosophy has generally guided the Planning Commission through its process of preparing this document. Realistically, the community understands that the door cannot be closed to development. However, the issue discussed throughout the process has been that of balancing new growth with the desire to protect the community assets such as the natural features and agricultural lands.

## Improved Roads

A classic growth related issue surfaced from discussions regarding the condition of many of the Township=s existing roads, primarily those that are still yet to be paved. While some persons living along those roads clamor for improvements (mainly paving), the



majority have identified the dirt and gravel roads as characteristic of a rural community. They note that paving such roads will only attract more traffic and more development, leading to the further deterioration of the rural qualities that are so inviting to so many. In fact, the Township has several natural beauty roads.

Roads, like public water and sewer, are major components of a community=s infrastructure, the public facilities that support development. While unpaved roads may be a nuisance to those who must drive them with any frequency, they are a part of living in the country, like farm odors, car/deer collisions, and a ten mile excursion to the grocery store. There are many trade-offs that come with the decision to live in the country.

## **Infrastructure**

The present infrastructure and public services within the Township are ill-equipped to accommodate significant increases in development. Public utilities in Grattan Township are minimal and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. While some sectors of the Township have natural gas and cable television, large areas remain unserved. There is no public water system. Public sanitary sewer is available in only limited areas and is not capable of significant expansion. Unpaved roads abound. Many of these roads are substandard in terms of width, visibility, and in some cases, grade. No public transportation system exists for the community, while only limited service is even available on a quasi-public basis for select populations via Hope Network or similar philanthropic organizations. There is no Township police department. While the Township's fire department is exemplary for a volunteer unit, funding and equipment are limited. Area medical centers are located considerable distances from the Township. Finally, the school districts which service Grattan Township are facing overcrowding, a condition that will continue to worsen as new development occurs, not only in this Township but other communities which share these districts, as well.

All of these factors point toward the need for carefully planned and well managed growth in the Township. This is reinforced by the results of the public input process undertaken for this Plan. Intense suburban development is not appropriate and cannot be economically or physically supported in Grattan Township.

# VISION & GOALS

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This chapter comprises the framework for the Master Plan. It articulates the community's wishes for the future of Grattan Township and identifies steps to be taken to make those wishes reality.

## **Vision**

*Over the next 20 years, Grattan Township will continue to enjoy its rural character and natural abundance through a proactive program of managed growth designed to guard and preserve those qualities that make this community unique – lakes, wetlands, wildlife, farms, gravel roads, peace and quiet, and low density/country residences. This rural community will surround two defined town centers, Grattan Center and Parnell, offering a sense of place and identity for the Township, locations for community events, and settings where residential and nonresidential uses can be appropriately placed without conflict.*

## **Community Character**

**Goal: Retain Grattan Township's rural character.**

Policies:

- 1) Maintain low density residential development and provide incentive programs for the preservation of natural features.
- 2) Limit paving of existing gravel roads.
- 3) Encourage the preservation of Grattan Township's heritage by encouraging the preservation and restoration of historical structures and encouraging historical architecture.
- 4) Strengthen and enforce existing zoning related to home-based businesses to retain the rural character of the Township.
- 5) Require large setbacks from the roadway to preserve the rural atmosphere
- 6) Protect water and wetland resources, including native vegetation which contributes to water quality.
- 7) Limit billboards and signs.

## **The Environment**

**Goal: Create contiguous areas of open land to protect and promote wildlife, woodlands, and watersheds for the long-term health of the community and public enjoyment of the natural resources.**

Policies:

- 1) Encourage/host educational programs for Grattan Township citizens about the value of the environment.
- 2) Identify and protect wetlands.
- 3) Encourage use of native plants in developments and maintain natural habitat.
- 4) Concentrate commercial in limited and defined areas around Grattan Center, Parnell, or 4-Mile/Lincoln Lake Road to protect the remaining rural areas of the Township.
- 5) Work with land trusts and other organizations to permanently protect open space.
- 6) Encourage the development of parks in the Township.
- 7) Restrict development around the lakes and the size of boats, motors, etc. on the lakes to protect water quality.
- 8) As an incentive to encourage open space preservation, reduce or eliminate minimum lot size requirements while maintaining appropriate overall density limits.

## **Land Use**

**Goal: Maintain the natural beauty of Grattan Township with a reasonable mix of business and residential development.**

Policies:

- 1) Encourage the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions and make the PUD option more desirable to developers.
- 2) Control the spread of private roads.
- 3) Establish a program for periodic review of gravel roads for maintenance, rather than for paving.
- 4) Limit commercial development to areas where such uses already exist or are planned, where adequate access is available, and where sufficient area is available for such development.
- 5) Permit home-based businesses, and provide for their continuation until such time that the commercial use is greater than the residential character of the property.
- 6) Industrial development should not be encouraged in Grattan Township until appropriate infrastructure is available.
- 7) Provide reasonable zoning standards to protect property owners, and property values.

- 8) Landscape the Township Hall to reflect the natural features and characteristics of the Township.
- 9) Direct new commercial development to Grattan Center, Parnell, and 4-Mile/ Lincoln Lake Road.
- 10) Discourage large commercial businesses within the Township
- 11) Direct larger developments to areas with paved roads and other needed infrastructure in place.

## **Managed Growth**

**Goal: Provide for managed growth within the Township by encouraging smart development that maintains the rural and scenic character of the community.**

Policies:

- 1) Create disincentives for conventional parcel splits and large lot subdivisions while offering incentives to preserve the natural features and rural perception of a site.
- 2) Preserve open space and encourage only controlled development around the lake areas.
- 3) Maintain the quiet rural atmosphere by limiting new business activity within the Township.
- 4) Preserve the rural experience by encouraging smart growth through the use of innovative regulatory tools and development techniques.
- 5) Identify areas appropriate for higher density development while requiring a community water/sewer system for such development.
- 6) Direct residential development along major roads and visually shield them from the roadway.
- 7) Protect areas that have significant environmental features while providing for controlled growth in areas that are more appropriate for development.
- 8) Provide consistent enforcement of zoning and related regulations throughout the Township.

## **Community Facilities & Services**

**Goal: Provide a level of community services and facilities appropriate for a rural residential community.**

Policies:

- 1) Identify land within the Township that is appropriate for public use or enjoyment and seek methods of preservation.
- 2) Identify ways to slow traffic on Lincoln Lake Road between M-44 and 5-Mile Road.
- 3) Encourage a greater police presence within the Township beyond patrolling M-44.

- 4) Explore the need and feasibility of developing a local ambulance base within the Township within a new facility.
- 5) Encourage the development of a local post office
- 6) Encourage a community water/sewer system within Grattan Center
- 7) Require community utility system for larger developments that is acreage and density based (do not encourage larger Township-wide community water/sewer system).
- 8) Identify and seek funding sources to purchase and develop parkland.
- 9) Seek the development of pocket parks and playground areas for children.
- 10) Seek out park space with lake access (develop a lakeside park) for public open space and swimming area, but not boat access.
- 11) Develop an off-road multi-use pathway system and safe on-road bike lane network throughout the Township.
- 12) Inventory existing formal/informal trails and paths within the Township.
- 13) Explore the feasibility of a small playground/park area in Grattan Center.
- 14) Keep and maintain the gravel roads within the Township.
- 15) Encourage co-location for future cellular communication towers.

## **Agriculture**

**Goal: To preserve prime and important agricultural lands in the Township for continued farming.**

Policies:

- 1) Minimize the number of non-farm dwellings permitted within those agricultural areas to be preserved.
- 2) Formulate and adopt new zoning regulations designed to promote responsible land use practices that will minimize intrusion of development into designated agricultural areas or substantially reduce the loss of farm land in these areas.
- 3) Strengthen the Township=s commitment to wise land use planning, zoning, and enforcement of land use regulations.
- 4) Actively promote the use of innovative agricultural preservation techniques to the extent possible.

**Goal: Assist the Township=s farmers to the extent possible in preserving their right to farm and the economic viability of those farming operations.**

- 1) Minimize regulation of farming activities to allow farmers to exercise the greatest latitude possible, provided the health, safety, and welfare of the community are protected.
- 2) Actively support Federal and State legislation designed to retain farming as a vital part of the national economy and a critical thread in the fabric of the community.

# THE PLAN

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The Plan is more than a final document. The text, tables, and maps that fill these pages are representations of the concerns, philosophies, and visions of the community through its Planning Commission. A great deal of effort went into the formulation of this Master Plan. Many meetings were held. Dozens of interested citizens attended work sessions. A Atown meeting@ was held, with over 50 participants from around the Township. And, of course, a formal public hearing was held. Many hundreds also gave their time to the process in other ways, such as participating in the community opinion survey.

It may now be tempting to pronounce the Plan completed and move on to other things. If this happens, the long, involved process of planning will have been no more than a time-consuming exercise. Now the work really begins. The Township Planning Commission and Township Board, along with the many public officials responsible in one way or another for the day-to-day development activities in Grattan Township, must consciously adhere to the adopted goals and recommendations outlined in this Plan document.

The purpose of the Plan is to serve as a guide for short-term land use decisions, as well as long-range community strategies. Before such decisions are made, the Plan should be consulted and carefully evaluated to ensure that those decisions will be consistent with the intent and spirit of the Plan.

The land use categories used in the Plan and the accompanying Future Land Use Map are described below. It is important to note that these do not always correspond to zoning districts. Zoning regulations and district boundaries should, indeed, reflect the Plan recommendations. But while the Plan is long-range in its scope, the zoning ordinance is short-term and will not immediately reflect the same patterns as the Master Plan.

## **Agricultural Preservation**

Consistent with the goals and policies articulated previously in this document, a major emphasis is placed on supporting the continuation of farming as an essential land use in the Township. During the process used to formulate the Plan, the goal of preserving prime and important agricultural lands was given almost universal support. Farming has played a major role in the history of Grattan Township and is key to its economy and culture. Intensive development clearly threatens farming and related agricultural uses. While much of the Township=s existing land is farmed, there is no easily discernable pattern which distinguishes farmland from developed land. This, in fact, illustrates one of the major land use issues in the Township, i.e., residential development has permeated much of the farmland in all sectors of the community.

The Plan map identifies for preservation those areas that have the greatest long-term potential for preservation. This classification was based on several factors in combination.

First, only parcels of 40 acres or more were generally considered viable for agricultural preservation. Those that have been split into smaller pieces, even though they may still be farmed, have already been subjected to development influences. Second, lands currently farmed or contiguous with farmland were included in the classification. Finally, those lands which met the previous two criteria and could form a relatively cohesive pattern, rather than isolated spots or islands of agricultural activity, were included.

The resulting configuration is a rather meandering shape found in three general areas of the Township - northeast corner, southwest quadrant, and southeast two-thirds. These are the areas where agricultural preservation should have the highest priority. It is not intended to suggest that other agricultural or nonagricultural lands are unimportant or unworthy of Township preservation. However, these other areas are more susceptible to the pressures and influences of nonfarm development due to the encroachment of single family homes and the creation of relatively small parcels nearby, and require different preservation techniques.

In order to further the Township's efforts to preserve farmland, zoning regulations should be adopted to emphasize the important public purpose of protecting food and fiber production and to minimize the extent to which potentially incompatible nonfarm development will be permitted to encroach into these designated areas. Permitted residential densities in this area should be very low, with overall densities no greater than one unit per five acres. Any new residential development should be limited and designed to minimize conflicts between agricultural and residential uses and to help preserve the most important farmland in the Township.

## **Rural Preservation**

Most of the Township's land area is designated as Rural Preservation. This encompasses the developed and undeveloped lands that remain rural and, in most cases, still exhibit those features considered most important to the rural character of the community - lakes, wetlands, open spaces, woods, fields, hills, and wildlife.

Much of the land in this category has begun to experience parcel splits and accompanying single family home development scattered along the main roads. The purpose of this land use category is to define those areas of the Township where controlled low density residential development can be permitted, but which should respect the character of the land and surrounding area.

Residential densities in this area should be limited to no more than one unit per three acres overall. In addition, it is recommended that the Township adopt zoning regulations that reinforce the Master Plan goals and policies through planned unit development provisions, cluster zoning, and other incentives to preserve the rural assets of the community. Through the use of such techniques, permitted densities can actually be increased slightly, but with less impact on the rural character.

## **Low Density Residential**

The areas designated for Low Density Residential development are generally found adjacent to or near the Township=s lakes and tend to be those areas where development already exists. Many of these areas have been platted and contain very small lots.

Due to the fragile nature of the lakes and their environs, further intense development should be discouraged. While infill development can occur on existing lots, new subdivisions comprised of small lots should not be permitted. The Plan puts a high priority on preventing further overcrowding and additional expansion of intensive development near the more developed lakes within the Township, as well as preserving and preventing intensive development on those lakes which are not already significantly developed. Further, intensive development of already developed lakes and significant development of yet relatively pristine lakes will degrade water quality, threaten drinking water aquifers, place further strain on already inadequate utilities and infrastructure, and threaten the environment.

Densities should range between .5 units per acre and two units per acre, depending on the availability of public sanitary sewer. In addition, the Township zoning regulations affecting lakefront development should be examined and updated accordingly.

## **Moderate Density Residential**

It is the Township=s desire to provide a reasonable range of housing options<sup>1</sup> within the community. These options may include condominiums, multiple family developments, manufactured home parks, and other moderate density, moderate cost residential opportunities.

While acknowledging the potential desirability of such housing choices in Grattan Township, it is also recognized that there is a need to consider appropriate locations and

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<sup>1</sup> Planning for Moderate Density Residential development is complicated by a lawsuit filed by a developer seeking to construct a 663-unit manufactured home park at the northeast corner of M-44 and Tiffany Avenue. This lawsuit was in its early stages when this Master Plan was approved. In the course of this litigation, the Kent County Circuit Court has ruled that provisions of the Township=s zoning ordinance which require special land use approval for manufactured home parks do not comply with the Mobile Home Commission Act. The Township=s attorneys have appealed this ruling, but the case and the appeal may not be resolved for a number of years.

Unfortunately, the Township=s ability to guide moderate density, moderate cost housing is not completely within its control because of this pending lawsuit. If the court were to order the proposed manufactured home park to be permitted, this one development alone has the potential to increase the Township=s population by nearly 50%. This would place a significant strain on public infrastructure and the public school system, and would change many of the assumptions upon which this Plan is based. This development would more than satisfy the need for moderate cost housing within the Township, as well as in much of the surrounding area.

Until the uncertainty created by this litigation can be resolved, the Township must be cautious in considering any additional moderate density, moderate cost residential development.

relationships. There is now, and is expected to remain throughout the planning period, a general lack of adequate infrastructure (including, but not limited to public water system, public sanitary sewer system, suitable development soils, community services, arterial roads, etc.) to support this type of relatively intense development. In addition, the Township generally lacks a commercial or employment base to complement the concentrated population of such developments.

The Future Land Use Map does not designate a specific site for such development. Unlike commercial, and even industrial, land uses for which some pattern has already been set, there is no moderate density development pattern in Grattan Township. However, this section of the Master Plan does provide a list of planning criteria or parameters which may be used to identify appropriate locations in the future. These may be used as guidelines for evaluating specific requests as they may arise.

The characteristics of sites which would be appropriate for moderate density residential development include the following. The most appropriate MDR sites should meet at least four of these criteria.

- § Proximity (within one and one-half miles) to existing or planned business/service centers, as identified on the Future Land Use Map;
- § Direct access to M-44;
- § Direct access to Lincoln Lake Road;
- § A preference for sites which do not contain land designated for Agricultural Preservation on the Future Land Use Map or contain sensitive environmental features (wetlands, hydric soils, steep slopes, lakes and streams);
- § Availability of public water and sewer, or suitability of soils and hydro-geological conditions for approved community water and sewer systems;
- § A recommended overall density of not more than four units per acre, taking into account all types of moderate density residential uses.

With regard to vehicular access, in particular, it was believed that access to Belding Road, a major east/west State highway (M - 44), was an important attribute for moderate density housing which would accommodate the predominant traffic flow to and from major shopping and employment centers in metropolitan Grand Rapids. However, recent traffic studies have shown that Belding Road is already substantially burdened and will begin to experience significant capacity problems at major intersections to the west. In order to address the existing and continued traffic demands along M - 44 and lessen congestion on the public roads and streets, both within and west of Grattan Township, it is recommended that moderate density development be placed in such locations as would afford convenient north/south movement and, therefore allow for dispersal of the traffic, providing access to alternate travel routes to and from Grand Rapids via 5 Mile Road, M21, or I-96, in addition to the M - 44 route.

Considering the severe limitations on the suitability of the Township for intensive development on a widespread basis, moderate density residential development should be encouraged only on a limited basis for discrete areas (not greater than 40 acres) within the

Township. The scale of such projects should also be in keeping with township trends in population and land development. A maximum of 20% of total dwelling units in multi-family developments or in manufactured home parks would be an appropriate mixture, provided there is a demonstrated need in the Township and surrounding communities for this type of housing and provided there are adequate lands in the Township to support this density. On average in Kent County, for example, approximately 5.4% of dwelling units are in manufactured home parks. The average size of manufactured home parks in Kent County is 169 sites.

## **Business/Service**

There is only modest commercial development in the Township. According to the opinion survey and Planning Commission discussions, there is not a strong desire for widespread commercial in the future. Indeed, there is a desire for some limited convenience service at specific locations, but these should be compatible with the character of the community, complement the business development that already exists, and not create the appearance of commercial strips.

Three areas, distributed throughout the Township, have been designated for business/service development. The most prominent of these is the area within Grattan Center, where some long-established businesses have been part of the community for many years. The Township is committed to supporting Grattan Center as the main focal point of the community. Therefore, additional commercial development along M-44 should be discouraged. In fact, the Planning Commission considered the corner of M-44 and Lincoln Lake Road as a possible commercial site and expressly determined that neither that site nor other areas along M-44 would be appropriate for business or commercial development due to traffic safety, planning, and other reasons.

The second concentration of business/service uses is proposed in Parnell at the northwest corner of Parnell Road and 5-Mile Road, on and adjacent to land currently occupied by a small convenience store. Parnell is a picturesque country setting well known throughout the area for its magnificent, gleaming white St. Patrick=s Church and adjacent school and cemetery. Even the existing store is a landmark of sorts and could serve as the catalyst for some expanded development.

A third area is planned to accommodate some modest business/service development at the northeast and northwest corners of 4-Mile Road and Lincoln Lake Road. Four Mile Road is the dividing line between Grattan and Vergennes Townships. The south side of 4-Mile Road is planned for commercial development. Therefore, such activity on the Grattan side of the street would be appropriate.

It is very important that business/service areas be carefully planned and concentrated, rather than be allowed to Asprawl@ out along the main roads within the Township. Commercial and business services are readily available in adjacent communities, such that there is no demonstrated need for a significant number of new business or commercial

locations within the Township. Furthermore, given the rural character of the Township and the lack of utilities and infrastructure, significant additional commercial uses would place an undue burden on the community.

## **Industrial**

Grattan Township does not envision any intensive industrial development within the planning period. However, there are a number of excavation businesses scattered throughout the Township in proximity to residences. It is the intent of the Plan to provide a location where these uses can be accommodated in an environment that is both conducive to the use and compatible with the surroundings.

The location designated on the Future Land Use Map is on the north side of 4-Mile Road adjacent to the railroad tracks and east of the proposed business/service area described above. This area has access to Lincoln Lake Road, is relatively unobtrusive, and is near other lands planned and zoned for business development.

It is recommended that the Township zoning ordinance be amended to establish specific standards regarding the type and quality of development to be permitted in this location.

## **Public/Quasi-Public**

Lands designated as Public/Quasi-public are Township owned lands and facilities, as well as institutional uses such as churches, schools, and cemeteries.

## **Other Recommendations**

### **Zoning Ordinance Update**

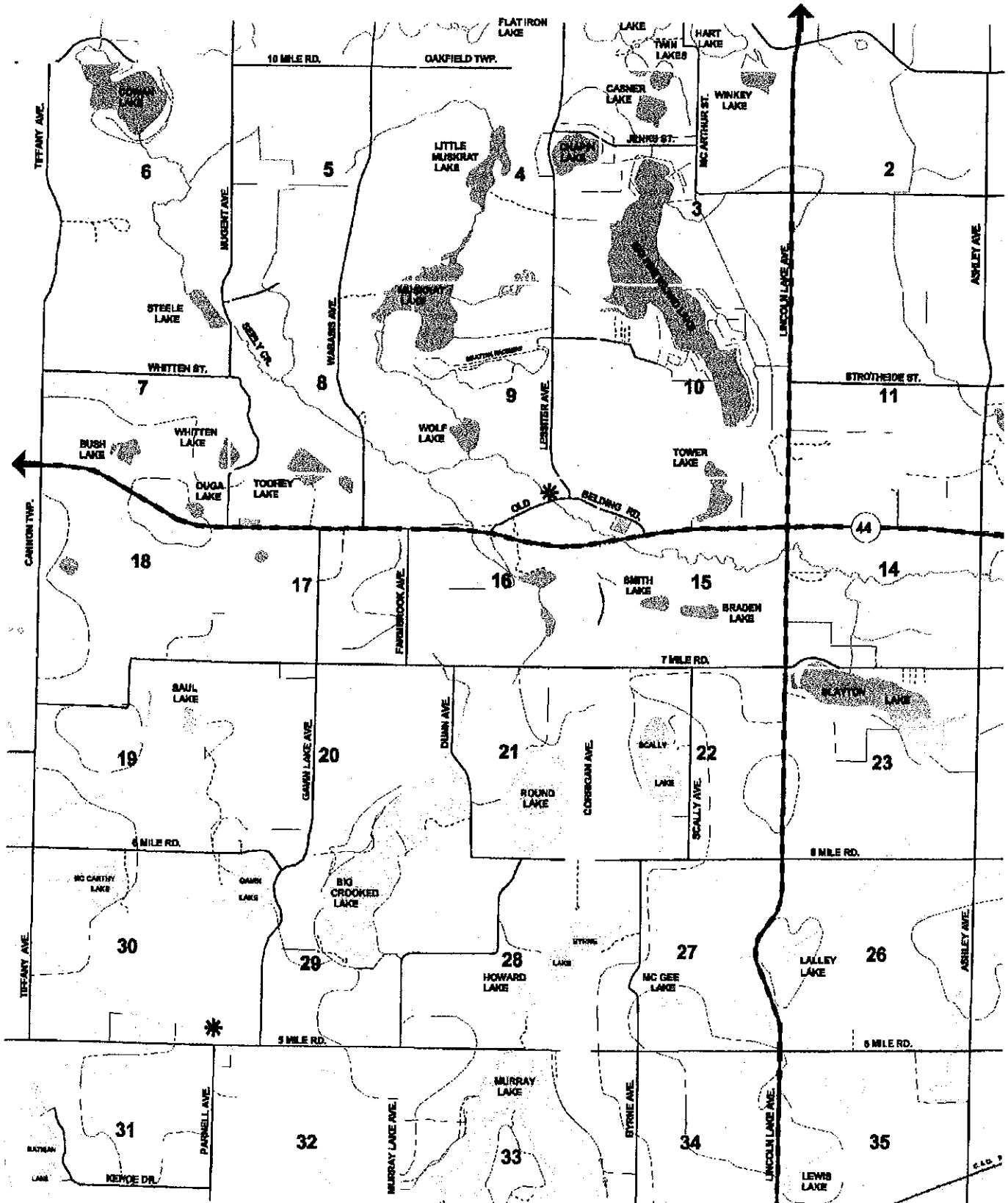
Much of the Master Plan's future implementation will depend on zoning regulation. Upon adoption of this Plan, therefore, the Grattan Township Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed and updated, as needed, to ensure that the necessary tools are in place to support the recommendations and policies contained in this document. Specifically, the number of zoning districts should be evaluated to correspond more closely with the land use categories used in the Master Plan. New techniques, such as cluster zoning options and density bonus incentives, should be incorporated into the ordinance, as well. Separate agricultural preservation and rural preservation regulations should also be adopted.

### **Environmental Protection**

Protection of the Township's many sensitive features and preservation of its rich natural character will require more than basic zoning regulation. Other, more specific, measures that should be considered include wetland, native habitat, and woodland and natural features ordinances that go beyond local zoning and afford

greater control over site-specific conditions.

Techniques specifically aimed at lake and watershed protection should also be considered. These may include increased minimum lot size and/or width requirements for lakefront lots, as well as stricter regulation of docks, funneling, and lake access.



# USING THE PLAN

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To conclude, some explanation is appropriate regarding how the Master Plan should be used. First, it is essential to understand that the Plan is a **policy guide**. It is not an ordinance and does not replace zoning. The Plan is supposed to work hand-in-hand with zoning and other Township development tools. A few important things to know about the Plan are:

## Let It Be Your Land Use Guide

Remember that the Master Plan is a guide for **future** land use. The Plan Map may not look like the zoning map or the existing land use map. It really shouldn't. The Plan Map is an illustration of the long-range land use pattern of the Township, based on the goals and strategies adopted as part of the Master Plan.

The Plan is land use policy. Township decisions, as well as those of the private sector, should follow the Plan. New streets, parks, public improvements, etc. should be consistent with the land use policies adopted as part of the Master Plan.

## Refer To It In All Zoning Decisions

One of the principal benefits of having an adopted Master Plan is the foundation it provides for zoning decisions. Just as the Master Plan is the policy guide for land use, zoning is the principal legal enforcement tool. The two should work in conjunction with one another.

As the Planning Commission and Township Board are faced with making zoning and land development decisions (rezoning, site plan review, special use permit, planned unit development, plat reviews, etc.) the relationship of those requests to the Master Plan recommendations should be a primary consideration. A request to construct a commercial use in an area planned for residential development, for example, would be contrary to the Plan and should not be approved, unless the Plan is determined to be in error for that particular location or conditions have changed significantly since the Plan was adopted.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to initiate a change to existing zoning boundaries so that they more closely conform to the Plan recommendations. This could help avoid conflicts at a later date.

## **Be Flexible**

As important as it is to use the Plan as a guide, it is equally important to recognize that the Plan must be flexible. Changing circumstances, unanticipated opportunities, and unforeseen problems can require a shift in direction. Such mid-course adjustments are not unusual, though they should not be a frequent nor an easy occurrence.

However, just because a deviation from the Plan may be appropriate in a specific instance, doesn't mean that the Plan is no longer relevant and should be ignored from that point on.

When these conflicts arise, the Plan should be formally amended to reflect the change.

That way it will remain an up-to-date policy guide over time.

Another practice the Planning Commission is encouraged to adopt is to conduct a regularly scheduled (typically annual) review of the Plan. Even if no changes have been warranted during the course of the prior year, it is wise to take time to consider the continued relevance of the Master Plan. This is a good time to make amendments to keep the Plan current and consistent with Township philosophies.

## **Keep It Current**

The most often heard reasons for not following a Plan are that it is out of date or is no longer relevant. It seems many communities undertake a master planning effort with the idea that once the plan is completed, the job is done for twenty years, when it will again be time to do a new plan. With this philosophy, the community's plan will become obsolete very quickly.

As noted previously in this document, it is **essential** to keep the Master Plan current. On an annual basis, the Planning Commission should set aside one meeting just for the purpose of reflecting on the past year and considering possible amendments to the Plan.

It is unrealistic to expect the Plan to remain unchanged for its anticipated 20-year life. Neither the Planning Commission nor its professional advisors can predict the future. While the Plan provides a broad framework for land use decisions, site-specific issues may arise that were unanticipated and deserve close scrutiny. Where uses are approved contrary to the Plan, the Plan should be amended to reflect the change. By routinely following this procedure, the Plan will continue to be an up-to-date, reliable planning tool.

## **Use It As A Management Tool**

ANo street, square, park, or other public way, ground, or open space, or public building or structure, shall be constructed or authorized in the township... until the location, character, and extent thereof shall have been submitted to and approved by the planning commission...@ This provision, taken from Section 10 of the Township Planning Act, requires the Planning Commission to review all public improvements for conformance to the Master Plan prior to their final authorization. In the event the Planning Commission disapproves such a project, a majority vote of the Township Board=s membership is required to override that action. If the Planning Commission does not act in 60 days, approval is automatic.

This provision is not intended to give the Planning Commission veto authority over public improvements, but to ensure that formal consideration is given to the relationship of such improvements to the Township Master Plan. In evaluating that relationship, the Planning Commission should look at consistency with land use, as well as the impact of the proposed improvement on other Plan recommendations.

Along the same lines, the Planning Commission may also participate in the preparation of a Capital Improvements Program (CIP). This is an annual process conducted in many communities to prepare a continuing list of needed improvements, identify funding sources, and set priorities. The CIP can be an invaluable tool for implementing the direction set by the Master Plan.

# **APPENDIX**

## **1988 & 1999 Community Survey Results**

## 1988 SURVEY RESULTS

1. HOW STRONGLY DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Prime agricultural land should be preserved	64.4	26.0	4.6	3.7	1.3
Township should encourage new homes	10.9	29.1	17.6	24.8	17.6
More stores/services should be encouraged	15.1	23.7	13.2	30.8	17.2
New commercial only along major roads	49.3	35.7	6.4	5.4	3.2
More industry needed in township	10.3	22.0	18.9	28.1	20.6
New industry only in special areas	51.0	36.2	5.8	4.7	2.3
Home, should have priority over farms	3.4	5.8	14.4	33.7	42.7
Mobile home parks should be encouraged	3.2	11.0	8.6	20.4	56.9

2. HOW STRONGLY DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?  
 NEW SINGLE FAMILY HOMES SHOULD BE LOCATED. . .

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In rural areas	15.2	48.5	15.0	10.3	11.0
In agricultural areas	5.5	16.8	15.8	30.7	31.2
In or near lake shore areas	12.7	44.4	17.9	13.6	11.4
In Grattan Center	20.5	47.6	22.8	5.6	3.5
In existing residential areas	26.7	60.8	7.0	3.5	2.0
In a subdivision	14.9	38.9	18.8	14.1	13.4

3. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE TOWNSHIP?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Parks and recreation	8.7	40.9	23.0	15.5	11.9
Streets and roads	3.3	44.3	4.5	31.2	16.7
Public drains	3.9	30.5	40.3	15.4	9.9
Public sewers	6.7	39.6	37.6	9.4	6.7
Fire protection	14.4	44.6	28.0	11.3	1.8

4. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HELP PAY TO IMPROVE OR PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Parks and recreation	22.4	53.2	24.4
Street and roads	45.4	34.1	20.6
Drainage	19.2	52.8	28.0
Public sewer	23.1	58.9	18.0
Public water	18.4	64.3	17.3
Fire protection	65.9	16.8	17.2

5. TOP THREE REASONS TO EXPLAIN WHY RESPONDENT LIVES  
IN OR MOVED TO GRATTAN TOWNSHIP.

	<u>Total</u>
Prefer rural environment	32.3
Closer to water and natural environment	28.7
Recreation opportunities	12.2
Affordable housing	10.1
Closer to work	5.1
Lower taxes	5.0
Quality of schools	4.4
Other	2.2

## 1999 SURVEY RESULTS

# Grattan Township Land Use Survey Final Draft Report

## What best describes your place of residence

Lakefront.....	48%
Country home/large lot .....	31%
Farmstead .....	10%
Seasonal Cottage.....	6%
Grattan Center .....	3%
Subdivision .....	2%
Other .....	<1%



## How long have lived in Grattan Township

More than 20 years.....	34%
1-5 years .....	19%
10-20 years.....	19%
5-10 years .....	18%
Live outside Township.....	6%
Less than 1 year.....	5%

## What is your age

>60 years.....	29%
50-59 .....	27%
40-49 .....	26%
30-39 .....	15%
<29 years.....	3%

## How much property do you own

<2 acres.....	49%
2 - 5 acres.....	21%
10 - 20 .....	10%
20 - 100.....	9%
5 - 10 acres.....	8%
> 100.....	4%

## Why did you move to Grattan

Lakes & Streams.....	1.4
Open Space .....	1.5
Low Crime Rate.....	1.7
Property Taxes.....	2.2
Housing Prices.....	2.4
Recreation Opportunities .....	2.5
Quality of Schools .....	2.7
Family & Friends.....	2.9
Church .....	2.9
Availability of Housing .....	3.3
Close to Work.....	3.4

Very Important					Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5	

**One statement regarding growth and development in Grattan**

- Growth is desirable w/ quality and location controlled ..31%
- Growth should be allowed and tightly restricted .....24%
- No development around lakes .....14%
- Growth allow w/ little government interference .....10%
- Discouraged.....9%
- With water and sewer .....5%
- Stopped completely .....5%
- More Development.....4%

**Where do you most often shop**

- Ada/Cascade .....7%
- Northland .....12%
- Belding .....13%
- Rockford.....15%
- Greenville .....15%
- Lowell.....17%
- Knapps Corner .....21%

**To what degree are the following conditions a problem**

- Over development of lakes .....2.1
- Loss of farmlands .....2.3
- Increase housing development & growth .....2.5
- Loss of rural character.....2.5
- Mixing industrial and commercial in residential areas ...2.7
- Traffic on M-44.....2.8
- Water quality of lakes .....2.9
- Condition of township gravel roads .....3
- Dependability of public utilities .....3
- Lack of public utilities.....3.6
- Lack of business and services.....3.8
- Lack of recreation.....3.9

Very Important				Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

**Rank each of the following in terms of their importance to you**

- Preserve rural character .....1.9
- Preserve agricultural lands .....1.9
- Provide a location for commercial development.....2.3
- Improve existing roads.....2.3
- Cooperate w/surrounding communities for services .....2.5
- Keep things as they are now .....2.7
- Increase existing police services.....3
- Create a public farm market.....3.2
- Extend public sewer in township.....3.3
- Allow more development .....3.3
- Provide affordable housing for seniors/young.....3.5
- Increase Township tax base.....3.7

Very important				Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

2 of 3  
09/21/99 Final Draft

**To what extent would you wish to have the following goods and services**

- Gas .....2.9
- Grocery .....3.3
- Convenience Store.....3.4
- Restaurant.....3.4
- Hardware.....3.6
- Pharmacy .....3.8
- Doctor .....3.9
- Car Wash .....4
- Hair salon .....4
- Drive-in restaurant.....4.1
- Video .....4.2

Very Important				Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

**To what extent should the following features contribute to the township's character**

- Trees .....1.2
- Orchards.....1.3
- Lakes .....1.3
- Wetlands .....1.7
- Farms.....1.7
- Hills .....1.7
- Sparse Development.....1.9
- Large Parcels .....2
- Grattan Center .....2.7
- Gravel Roads.....3

Very Important				Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

**Should Grattan have more or fewer of the following housing types**

- Single Family.....1.8
- Senior facility .....2.1
- Affordable housing.....2.2
- Estate type housing .....2.2
- Low Income-housing .....2.5
- Condos .....2.5
- Rental property .....2.7
- Mobile home park.....2.8

More	Same	Fewer
1	2	3

**For the Master Plan**

Jan,

The front cover can be changed and I would think the date would be February 2007?

On the back of the cover, I would think we would want to indicate we have reviewed and approved the current version of the Master Plan with a write up such as:

The Grattan Township Planning Commission reviewed the text and statistics of the 2000 master plan along with the land use maps.

After collecting updated statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Michigan Township Association, it reflected our growth was far less than that of surrounding townships and of Kent County in total. This was in keeping with the Master Plan goal of having a more slow and controlled growth and preserving the rural character of the township.

We reviewed these numbers with both our lawyer and planner. They agreed with the Planning Commission there was no reason to commence a procedure to amend the plan or to adopt a new one. The notations and discussion of this is in the February 7, 2007, minutes of the Planning Commission.

This would allow this plan to become current until the next review in 2012.

Alan Rumbaugh  
Planning Commission Chairman

## **Jan Breimayer**

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**From:** <AlanRumbaugh@aol.com>  
**To:** <janberimayer@comcast.com>  
**Cc:** <grattantownship@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 08, 2007 11:39 AM  
**Attach:** Master Plan and Barn Storage Ordinance.doc  
**Subject:** Planning Commission Assignments

Jan,

I had two assignments to do from the meeting.

One was to write something for the next newsletter to alert the citizens we have a new "Barn Storage" ordinance. (Denny is to write one for the Excavator Ordinance.)

It was suggested we needed to let the citizens to know of these changes. In addition to the Newsletter, Frank suggested the web site and TV so we need to get Gloria involved.

Second was to have some sort of notice on the copies of the Master Plan that we did review the current plan and felt it was still valid and did not need to have any revisions.

Perhaps Frank can review my write-ups and offer any suggestions/ideas for changes.

We also want to plan on mailing the agenda and back up materials out to the planning commissioners earlier to allow them more time for there study.

Let's plan on mailing the packages out by Monday, February 26. That will give them a week for their review.

If an issue comes up after that for Planning Commission review, it will have to wait until the following month.

I have started working on the agenda and the two issues we have now are the T-Mobile tower and Frank wants to review the storm water run off ordinance for private roads/driveways.

We will also review the bonus points for any new PUD that may come up. This would be especially true for wetland areas.

Alan

**February 8, 2007**

**For the next Grattan Township Newsletter:**

To the citizens of Grattan Township:

An Ordinance for Storage of Boats, Recreational Vehicles, etc. in Existing Farm Buildings has been put in place to allow for an orderly process if you have a farm building and would like to rent it out for seasonal storage.

If you plan on doing this, you can review the ordinance on the Grattan Web site. It will give you guidelines for safety and signage. The permit can be obtained through the Zoning Administrator, Gregg Converse. He can be contacted at 691 7075

2/8/2007

**FOR THE NEXT GRATTAN TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER – FROM THE PC CHAIRMAN**

To the Citizens of Grattan Township:

An Ordinance for Storage of Boats, Recreational Vehicles, etc. in existing farm buildings has been put in place to allow for an orderly process if you have a farm building and would like to rent it out for seasonal storage.

If you plan on doing this, you can review the Ordinance on the Grattan website. It will give you guidelines for safety and signage. The permit can be obtained through the Zoning Administrator, Gregg Converse. He can be contacted at 691-7431.