

CHAPTER FOUR

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The Goals and Objectives and the land use descriptions are based on comments from Planning Commissions, Township Boards, and citizen input. Majority of these items were in previous land use plans. Moran Township has not changed significantly to warrant massive changes to these items. Comments from the previous Planning Commission and the current Planning Commission and Township Board are used to provide the basis for this Master Land Use Plan.

Moran Township Planning Commission

Through meetings with the previous Township Planning Commission, numerous issues were discussed that provided insight into those concerns most apparent among the commission members. While these concerns ranged considerably in scope, they all have direct implications for land use planning and the preparation of a Master Land Use Plan for the Township. Below is a summary of the key concerns expressed by previous the Planning Commission.

1. Flexibility within a land use plan for Moran Township is a necessity. Based upon the lifestyles and attitudes within the Township and the Upper Peninsula in general, the land use plan must support the diverse needs of the Township residents and the immense beauty of this extremely rural area.
2. A critical concern of the Commission is the present and future effect the tourist trade will have upon the character of Moran Township. Most particularly, this concern focuses upon the evolution of the U.S. Route 2 corridor and the aesthetic/scenic qualities it contains.
3. Another primary concern of the Commission is the protection of the Township's natural environmental features, protection of the more sensitive areas including wildlife and natural areas, and maintaining the area's rural character.
4. The Commission is concerned over the increasing lack of safe drinking water found in private wells throughout the Township. Accordingly, public water and sewer services allowing for cost effective land development are critical.
5. The Commission is extremely concerned that the Township is already experiencing contaminated aquifers and water supply wells. The Commission is committed to providing public water and sewer service to those areas currently having contaminated drinking water wells.
6. The Commission is concerned that those areas with contaminated drinking water wells will increase with further development. The Commission intends to limit future development in those areas susceptible to ground water contamination. Only low density, residential uses that can support long- term sustainable on-site utilities will be

allowed. All commercial uses should be connected to public water and sewer systems when available.

2002 Brainstorming Session

In December 2002, the Township Planning Commission and Board were involved in a public brainstorming session regarding land uses. They were asked what images or things best defined the character of Moran Township. Their responses included:

- Natural Resources- forest/lake/views
- Mackinac Bridge
- Campgrounds
- Rural Character- slow pace, open space, unpaved roads, undeveloped lands, abandoned villages.
- History- French/Swedish/Indian
- Logging
- Fishing
- Wildlife-eagles
- Hunting
- The Rapids, The Dam
- CCC Camp along Brevort Road, trees planted along the road
- North County Trail
- Dunes/beaches
- Highway 2
- Blueberry picking
- Cranberries

They also described what uses or types of development they would like in the Township. The following is this listing:

Township Appearance and Character

- Not using snowfence along the dunes on US 2 (*use more attractive fencing, such as a wood split rail style*).
- (*Members agreed that the “What is this place” responses reflected the Township’s desired appearance and character*).
- (*Tree preservation is important*).

Housing

- Maintain existing lot sizes south of US 2. Maintain views and character.
- Allow for more housing development north of US 2.
- Have smaller lots along the north side of US 2 for housing. Not just within the PIG district boundaries.
- Restrict mobile homes to specified areas.
- Develop concentrated housing in PIG District. Maybe have multifamily with water and sewer.
- (*Divide the VCRC district to have businesses on the north side of US 2 and view preservation on the south side*).

Historical, Scenic, and Natural Resources

- The history of the Township is not well defined. Make the history available to the public.
- *(Two wonderful books on the history of the Township are Moran Township Sesquicentennial Edition and Moran Township-When the Moon is High and they are available at the Township).*

Public Services

- Have water and sewer in the PIG district as soon as possible.
- Maintain the ambulance service.
- Maintain the current fire department services.

Parks/Recreation/Trails

- Trails on public land need to be maintained and information about them available. Currently the trails are not maintained.
- Have the swimming pool open year round.
- Work on development of historic trails. *(Such as the old stage coach line along US 2. Concern was expressed about crossing private property).*
- Expand the golf course.
- Have a family type park. Cooperate with the schools in providing a family park.
- Have improved access to the lake. *(There was some question if this should be an objective).*
- *(There are a lot of bikers along US 2 in the summer; this is especially dangerous along dunes).*
- *(MDOT should construct bike trails along US 2 when they work on US 2).*

Economy

- Improve infrastructure in commercial areas. Reduce lot sizes to reflect municipal services.
- Support tourism.
- Have light industry for employment opportunities.

Transportation

- Have intersection lighting.
- Limit new driveways accessing U.S. 2.

Property Rights vs. The Public Interest

- Uniform setbacks for non-conforming lots.
- *(When should trees be removed?).*

Summary

After reviewing the data generated during the master land use plan process, along with the input received from the Planning Commissions and Township Boards, it becomes clear that there are a number of key issues within the Township.

A paramount concern is protection of the natural environment and rural character of the Township. The Township wants to adequately prepare for future growth to protect these resources. With this in mind, the Master Land Use Plan addresses the dynamics of preserving the natural environment while providing for increased development and population growth.

A second and related issue that must be addressed is the scenic views of the Township. U.S. Route 2 is the primary thoroughfare along the Township's coast. It is critical that the visual quality be protected throughout the entire Township. Included in the preservation of scenic view is exterior lighting. Exterior lighting can deteriorate the view of the night sky. Lighting should be eliminated where public safety does not require its use, especially where it interferes with the bridge's lights and in the outlying areas away from St. Ignace.

A third concern is utilities in the southern portion of the Township. Presently, the Township's South Study Zone is experiencing significant problems with drinking water due to excessive mineralization and contamination. A situation exists where both public water and sewer facilities are needed. This situation gains greater intensity as growth and development occur in the Township.