

CHAPTER SIX

THE MASTER LAND USE PLAN

What does Moran Township want to look like in twenty years? The Planning Commission has used the information gathered in this document, along with public input, to illustrate how land use patterns in Moran Township will look in 2020.

The following land use classifications describe where growth should occur, at what intensity, and the types of uses permissible in each location. The Master Land Use Map shows these land use classifications. Although the map does not refer to property lines, it is important that future development follow the Master Land Use Map.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Urban Growth Center

People live and work here. In the next twenty years, this area will continue to grow. It is along US-2 and adjacent to an existing populated area, making it very accessible. Properties in this location are intended to have water and sewer services.

This is a mixed-use environment. Residential, commercial, and industrial uses are allowed here. Residential uses range from single-family detached homes to duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. The average density allocation is four units an acre. Higher densities may be needed to accommodate denser structures, such as townhouse and apartment buildings. Lower densities may be needed in areas not being served by public services.

Commercial uses range from small to large scale retail and service operations. These operations serve the near-by residents, tourists, and the traveling public. Careful site plan review is needed to insure impacts on adjacent properties are minimal. Commercial operations should not detract from neighboring uses. In some instances, they may enhance residential areas by allowing for mixed-use developments. However, more intense commercial uses need to be buffered from residential uses. One use, in particular, that needs to be buffered and regulated is sexually oriented business.

Industrial uses range from light manufacturing (prepackaged goods) to heavy manufacturing (dealing with raw materials). These uses provide employment for residents. Special use permits are needed to insure they will not negatively impact the surrounding uses. These uses are to be buffered from nearby residential and commercial uses.

Town Locale

This is the Village of Brevort area. Although it is rural in character, it can support future growth. This area is the Township's westernmost settlement consisting of restaurants, motels and limited retail establishments. Accessibility is good. It is situated upon U.S.-2 and supported by Ozark Road and Worth Road. While extension of the City of St. Ignace utility

services to this area is highly impractical and cost prohibitive, alternatives such as community wells and sewage systems can accommodate increased growth and higher densities.

Like the Urban Growth Center, this is a mixed-use area. Where services can provide for them, higher residential density, commercial businesses, and industrial operations can occur. Where they are not available, a density allocation of one unit an acre is appropriate.

Future Growth Area

These places are growing, but at a slower pace. These locations are not as accessible as the Urban Growth Area and Town Locale, but are adjacent to them. They are desirable due to their close proximity to natural features and service areas. These properties play a critical role in providing the visual landscape and wildlife habitat.

At this time there are no public water or sewer services available. Although no water or sewer services are planned, it would be possible to provide services or their technological equivalent. These services would be needed if rapid growth occurred at a density higher than one acre or to protect the sensitive natural features.

In some instances, residential development may occur on smaller lots that are clustered together. These developments may have reduced setbacks and lot size requirements if their design preserves significant natural features, such as wetlands.

Specialized Development Areas

These lands are along the outer edges of the development areas. Many parcels have steep slopes and are not as conducive to development. It is unlikely or unnecessary for water and sewer services to be provided in these areas. The primary use for these parcels is single-family residential at a density of one unit for every five acres. In addition, these areas may be appropriate for wind towers, landfills, and communication towers with approval of a special use permit. The special use permit process should be used to minimize the visual impacts of these land uses.

Rural Open Space and Development

These are the rural lands. They surround the more urbanized areas, but are not as suited for development. Generally, these lands have natural and cultural elements that present obstacles to development. These areas have wetlands or wetland characteristics. Some lands contain endangered/threatened species and habitats. Long-term protection of these features is critical to maintain the diverse natural heritage of the Township. The natural characteristics of these areas are similar to the surrounding public forestlands.

These areas have limited vehicle access reinforcing a very limited low-density development policy, such as having one unit on ten acres. Water and sewer services are not needed and should not be provided. Road improvements should be minimal. Infrastructure improvements should only be done on an “as needed” basis, and not be used to encourage growth.

In some instances, residential development may occur on smaller lots that are clustered together. These developments may have reduced setbacks and lot size requirements if their design preserves significant natural features, such as wetlands or endangered habitats.

Ozark Agricultural Community

The Ozark Community is an agriculturally based community that is actively involved with farming operations. The history, nature, and charm of this community are unique in the Township. The visual quality of the area is spectacular.

The remoteness of this area protects it from most development trends. The intention of this land use classification is to maintain existing agricultural operations and lands, while allowing for growth. Future development should be compatible with existing farming operations and maintain the current visual experience throughout the Ozark community. Density allocation in this area should be one unit for every five acres.

Natural Resource Production

At present, this area is owned by a sand and gravel excavation enterprise and it is anticipated to remain as such for the near and distant future. Excavation type land uses are transitional in nature and do not represent the final end-use. Therefore all excavating uses need to have regrading and revegetation plans to restore the site to a condition that will allow future development to occur. The on going monitoring of the gravel operation to assure compliance with plans is also needed.

After the lands have been restored making future development possible, that area should be studied to determine an appropriate density. The density allocation should be dependent on the type of services that are going to be provided, the physical condition of the lands, and marketability.

A planned residential development that takes advantage of access to Lake Michigan and US-2 may be appropriate. All development should be planned and designed using the Goals and Objectives listed in this Master Land Use Plan.

Highway 2 Corridor/View Preservation

This whole corridor should be thought as viewing area, and not as a development area. The splendid and unique panoramic vistas and sights US-2 provides for residents and tourists, depicts the essence of the Upper Peninsula character and beauty. The Township should proactively preserve this corridor to ensure that the scenic views are not lost to development. This is not a place for tall or large size structures. Structures higher than two stories are not appropriate in this location. Billboards, communication towers, wind towers, and test towers and cell towers are not appropriate and should not be visible to those who pass through this corridor.

The area south of US-2 is what residents and visitors first see when coming from the Lower Peninsula. This area serves as the visual introduction to the region. There are beautiful panoramic views of Lake Michigan, the shoreline, Green Island, St. Helena Island, and the Mackinac Bridge. Structures should not obstruct these views.

Although there are water and sewer services provided in some locations along U.S. Route 2, these services should not be extended along the entire corridor or along Lake Michigan. Water and sewer services should only be provided in areas adjacent to the Urban Growth Center or the Town Locale. If water and sewer services were permitted to extend beyond the Urban Growth Center or Town Locale boundaries a sprawl-like pattern of houses and businesses would occur along the entire corridor. This type of development pattern would diminish the visual scenery, degrade natural resources, and negatively impact the quality of life. This area would no longer be unique.

It is understood that there are privately owned properties south of US-2. An appropriate density allocation in this area is one unit for every five acres of privately owned property. Development should be subtle and intermixed with natural vegetation whenever possible. A person should not be able to see development from US-2.

Higher densities of one unit an acre may be appropriate in some areas adjacent to the Urban Growth Center or Town Locale if they have public services. These higher density developments should be concentrated in specific locations that currently have residential qualities. This type of development should **not** be allowed throughout the corridor.

Exterior lighting shall be strictly controlled to protect the nighttime environment and the overhead views of the night sky. Any and all development (residential and commercial) that occurs on US-2, should comply with the access management provisions as described later in this section.

Forest/Recreation

This classification incorporates the majority of the Township. The vast amount of forested land provides the recreational amenities and visual scenery that define the Township. Land in this area is best suited to long-term protection through public ownership by the U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, or other conservation organizations.

Where private property ownership exists, the Planning Commission and Township should encourage the long-term protection of the natural environment through conservation easements, property exchanges with lands outside this classification, and sale or donation of the property to governmental agencies or conservation minded organizations. Any development that does occur should be restricted to extremely low-density, single-family development use. An appropriate density allocation for this area if needed, would be one unit for every forty acres.

Exterior lighting shall be strictly controlled to protect the nighttime environment and the overhead views of the night sky. There should be minimum road and infrastructure improvements. Water and sewer facilities should not be allowed to be extended into the forest/recreation area.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN

As expressed in Chapter 3, the natural environment in Moran Township is unique and significant. Additional policies regarding the development of these areas and their surrounding areas are warranted. Development should be contingent upon, although not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Any development within 1,000 feet of Lake Michigan or any water body in the Township should be scrutinized to determine its impact on the natural environment. Specific attention should be given to vegetation, wildlife, erosion, traffic, runoff, noise levels, soil composition, visual character, and water quality. A natural buffer area along Lake Michigan should be maintained. Only the minimal removal of natural vegetation should be allowed.
- Any development within 1,000 feet of the natural or archeological features described on Figures 8, 9, and 10 of the Master Land Use Plan should be scrutinized to determine if it impacts on the natural environment. Specific attention should be given vegetation, wildlife, erosion, traffic, runoff, noise levels, soil composition, visual character, and water quality. Natural buffer areas between the natural or archeological features and proposed development should be maintained.
- Any development of land containing or adjacent to wetlands should be scrutinized to determine their impacts on the natural environment. Developments should not affect surface and ground water quality, or other wetland areas. The filing or dredging of wetland areas should be kept to a minimum. Natural buffer areas between these areas and any development should be maintained. Only minimal removal of natural vegetation should be allowed.
- Any development of sensitive lands should be scrutinized to determine the impacts on the natural environment. Sensitive lands include areas having: grades of 12% or more, river and stream banks, high risk erosion areas, bluffs and cliffs, sand dunes, and islands. Natural buffer areas between these areas and any development should be maintained. Only the minimal removal of natural vegetation should be allowed.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The transportation needs of any community cannot be ignored. In the broadest sense, a transportation system provides for all forms of mobility. Vehicular mobility, however, is the predominant method of movement for residents, businesses, and visitors within Moran Township. Although recreation trails are not the predominant method of travel, they have great importance to the residents and visitors to the Township. The Township's transportation network, like others throughout the State, has been shaped by the fundamental necessities of today, including employment, recreation, schools, shopping, and tourism. The transportation system requires attention in order to maintain an efficient and safe system for everyone.

All roads and streets (and their improvements) in Moran Township should be thought of as an enhancement to the community and not as detractor. Streets should be designed to reflect "context sensitive design" objectives, whenever possible. Context sensitive design is a movement towards flexible road design instead of conforming to the "one size fits all" philosophy that currently exists when streets are designed. Design standards for roads serving the Urban Growth Area should differ from roads serving rural areas. Generally, roads should be designed to meet their location and usage needs, and not their potential full capacity needs. Road should be designed so that they look like they belong in this specific location.

Rights-of-way for all street classifications should be the minimum necessary to accommodate the roadway, transit-related improvements, sidewalks and utilities necessary for existing and planned development.

US-2

During the summer months, vehicular traffic congestion can become a crucial problem. The large amount of tourists to the Township and to the Upper Peninsula creates a steady flow of traffic along US-2. This route is the Township's main thoroughfare and many businesses and residents depend on it for their access. This is the area where access management is needed the most.

US-2 extends 26 miles through the Township. The majority of it is two-lane with five-lane stretches in the Urban Growth Area and Town Locale. MDOT has stated the segment between these areas is at capacity and improvements are needed. MDOT's policy is to preserve the existing road system while addressing safety and operational issues. Consequently MDOT has been using passing lanes as ways to alleviate vehicle congestion. This approach has been successful in the Upper Peninsula and throughout Michigan. MDOT plans to construct a new passing lane in this segment between May and October of 2003.

The Township should support and endorse MDOT's policy of using passing lanes instead of widening the roads. This current policy allows for relief in traffic, while preserving the existing character of the US-2 roadside. A four or five lane highway through the Township is not representative of Moran's or the Upper Peninsula's rural character. US-2 should continue to remain a two-lane road with passing lanes, except in the Urban Growth and Town Locale Areas.

Local Streets and Roads

Local roads and streets provide safe and convenient access to homeowners, businesses, employees, and service vehicles. Roads should be carefully planned and designed. The effects on the user, the pedestrian, and the property along the roadside should be considered during road projects. All road designs should:

- Avoid difficult driveway approaches by providing adequate spacing between access points on opposite sides of the roadway.
- Avoid too many intersections connecting with major streets.
- Provide safe intersections with short curb radii to improve pedestrian access.
- Promote consolidated driveways and interconnections between developments whenever possible.
- Maintain gravel roads outside of urbanized areas.
- For drainage control, curb and gutters should only be used in the urbanized areas, while ditches are used elsewhere.

Access Management

Access management is a set of proven techniques that can help reduce traffic congestion, preserve the flow of traffic, improve traffic safety, prevent crashes, preserve existing capacity, and preserve investment in roads by managing the location, design, and type of access to property. Access management focuses on the number, location, and design of driveways as they relate to the following elements within the road right-of-way: travel lanes, medians, passing lanes, dedicated turn lanes, and signal operations. Access management should be applied to all county and state roads. The following points should be addressed in the zoning ordinance and during development reviews and rezonings:

- a. have ample spacing requirements between driveways,
- b. restrict the number of lots fronting on busy roads,
- c. regulate the location, spacing, and design of driveways,
- d. encourage shared access to parcels,
- e. separate driveways from intersections,
- f. restrict turning movements into and out of driveways,
- g. encourage front or rear access drives
- h. connect streets, roads, and access easements whenever possible,
- i. promote internal connections,

Trails

Moran Township, like the rest of the Upper Peninsula, is known for recreation. An important component of recreation is trails. These trails, especially ones used by snowmobilers, bikers, and hikers, attract tourists and are part of the Township's economic base.

Since the majority of the Township is in public ownership, there are many trails available to the public. It is estimated that there are over 67 miles of trails for off-road recreational vehicle use. There are over 55 miles of trails for snowmobile use and 37 miles of trails for hiking. Currently there are no dedicated bike trails in the Township, however, people frequently bike in the right-of-way of US-2. Since trails are important in this region, the Township should continue to work with landowners to increase the amount of trails.

US-2 Bike Trail

One item that would greatly enhance the Township would be a paved bike trail along US-2. Currently, people bike on the shoulder of the road, which can create dangerous situations. Having a dedicated bike trail in this area would allow people to enjoy the visual scenery safely. Not only would this trail offer a pleasant recreation activity in the Township, but also it could be used to create a bike trail connection between the Upper and Lower Peninsula. When MDOT improves US-2, the Township should have them construct a bike trail within the right-of-way.

North Country National Scenic Trail

An existing trail project in the Township is the North Country National Scenic Trail. The North Country National Scenic Trail was established by Congress to create a national hiking trail extending from the State of New York to the State of North Dakota. The trail is patterned after the Appalachian National Trail. This initiative provides for a hiking trail with a 1,000-foot buffer zone of natural habitat along the side of the trail. This hiking corridor is to be protected in its natural state for future generations. In Moran Township, the US Forest Service and a system of volunteers oversee the North Country Trail. The trail starts in St. Ignace, follows an old railroad grade along the north side of Chain Lake, crosses through the southwest corner of St. Ignace Township to re-enter Moran Township south of Castle Road, then follows along the south side of the road and exits Moran Township after crossing the Brevort River to cut across the extreme south west corner of Brevort Township. The trail re-enters Moran Township, skirts the south and west shores of Big Brevort Lake, then angles northeasterly to cross the Carp River before exiting the Township to continue on its way towards Lake Superior and eventually North Dakota. It should be noted that the trail impacts private lands only along the north side of Chain Lake in Moran Township. Moran Township should continue to endorse this project.

Overall, the Township should promote improvements that connect urban areas and scenic natural resources.

RECREATION

Majority of Township, about 80%, is publicly owned. This vast amount of land provides great opportunities for recreation. Popular activities include snowmobiling, fishing, hiking, ATVs, camping, and hunting. The Moran Township Parks and Recreation Plan describes the recreational needs for the Township. The listed projects were developed from public input. Since these projects reflect citizen's demands, the Township should endorse the Parks and Recreation Plan. When the Township Planning Commission or Board has an opportunity to help finalize a listed project, they should pursue it.

SPECIAL USES

Certain uses that have unique characteristics or more intensive natures require additional consideration prior to their approval. These uses have the potential to impact neighboring properties and the entire community. Decisions for their approval are more discretionary in nature and are made to insure impacts are as minimal as possible. The purpose of designating special uses is to allow practical latitude for property owners or developers to use a parcel of land while maintaining protection of the health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare of neighbors and the community at large. Uses that require additional attention include, but not limited to: automobile service stations and commercial garages, drive-in restaurants, junkyards, landfills, mobile home parks, wind energy conversion systems, telecommunication towers, and sexually oriented businesses.