

Markey Township Master Plan



**Markey Township
7400 East Houghton Lake Drive
Houghton Lake, Michigan 48629**

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WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

CHAPTER 1: YOUR COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN

A Master Plan is adopted by a community so that decision making will be made easier and more sound; a vision for the community can be realized; and quality of life can be improved and protected. This Master Plan is a guide to ensure that the Township's desires regarding future development are translated into action; rezoning, site plan review, special land use approval, and variances, one at a time. It is those every day decisions that, when added together, will create the future land use pattern for Markey Township.

The Master Plan consists of several elements, including a Community Vision, Goals, Policies, and Future Land Use.

- The Community Vision emulates the central goal of the Township.
- Goals and Policies define how the Township is going to achieve the vision.
- Future Land Use text describes what types of new development the Township believes would be most appropriate in the community, and suitable locations for such development; and
- The Future Land Use Map is an illustration of the long-range land use pattern of the Township.

When combined, all of these pieces fit together to create a picture of Markey Township twenty years from now.

Not everything identified in the Plan will happen overnight, the Master Plan is supposed to be a plan for the future that guides the present. Understanding this, the Plan should not be rigidly administered. Changing conditions can affect the original intentions of the Master Plan; flexibility exists so that these changes can be accommodated. While the Plan should be a flexible instrument, its recommendations should not be taken lightly. Adjustments should be made, when necessary, but must be justified based on changing conditions or shifts in community philosophy. The Planning Commission should regularly review the Master Plan to ensure that the township is still headed in the right direction if these circumstances arise.

The Master Plan can be used in a number of ways, but above all it should be consulted whenever land use decisions are to be made. Markey Township may also wish to add other elements to the Master Plan in the future, including a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), Housing Plan, or Recreation Plan. Markey Township should:

Refer To the Master Plan in All Zoning Decisions

One of the principal benefits of having an adopted Master Plan is the foundation it provides for sound zoning decisions. Just as the Plan is the policy guide for land use, zoning is the principal legal enforcement tool. The two should work in conjunction with one another to support controversial decisions and to assist in protecting the Township from potential litigation.

Encourage Other Decision-Making Bodies to Use the Master Plan

The Master Plan should assist in guiding every-day decision making efforts, from the capacity of improved roads to new schools. Working with other parties that can affect land use patterns in the Township, such as the County Road Commission, School District, and even adjacent townships, can help Markey Township in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Keep The Plan Current

An outdated Plan that is not referred to on a continual basis can make the Zoning Ordinance, and Township decisions weak. The Planning Commission should conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure that the Plan is kept current. Any amendments to the Plan can be done at that time to keep it up-to-date and consistent with Township philosophies. Perhaps several goals in the community may have been achieved since last year and new ones need to be established, or, several zoning decisions have changed the direction of development in a certain part of the Township. Where uses have been approved contrary to the Plan, the Plan should be amended to reflect these changes. By routinely following this procedure, the Master Plan will continue to be an up-to-date, reliable planning tool. When uses have been approved contrary to the Plan, the Plan should be amended to reflect these changes.

CONCLUSION

Communities have a responsibility to look beyond the day-to-day zoning issues and provide guidance for land use and development in the community through the Master Plan. A properly developed, well thought-out Master Plan can be of great value to the Township. The Master Plan can provide tangible benefits in improved quality of life, more efficient use of financial and other resources, a cleaner environment, and an economically healthy community. However, that value is directly related to the willingness of the Planning Commission and the Markey Township citizens to follow the Plan, and keeping the Plan current. It is hard work; but the rewards will make the effort well worthwhile.



WHICH WAY DO WE GO?

CHAPTER 2: VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES

Determining where members of the community think Markey Township should be in fifteen or twenty years may not be easy, but it is necessary. The planning process is based upon the assumption that a community-wide consensus of a common vision, and in turn, planning goals and policies must be established before realistic plans for future growth can be made. This process assumes that if everyone has agreed upon these goals and policies, that a plan for future growth (your Master Plan) will not just sit on a shelf, but will be consistently used by community leaders in their decision-making efforts.

As Markey Township continues to grow, the Master Plan will help direct land uses to appropriate locations within the township and assist in protecting those features that contribute to community character. Goals and policies state what the township hopes to achieve in the future; the remainder of the Plan serves as a road map so that these goals may be realized. In essence, the goals and corresponding policies identified within this chapter are the building blocks for Markey Township's future land use decisions.

COMMUNITY VISION

Markey Township will be a community that recognizes the importance of its visitors and residents. We will strive to protect the natural features and qualities of the township.

GOALS AND POLICIES

LAND USE GOAL

Markey Township will promote managed, sensible growth.

Markey Township recognizes that growth is inevitable. Managed growth will allow the Township to monitor changes on the landscape, appraise what is best for the community, and assess if further action is necessary for its protection.

LAND USE POLICIES

- The Zoning Ordinance should be updated to reflect the intent, purpose and concepts of this Master Plan so that the vision of the Township may be realized.
- The Township will review land use and zoning changes of proposed development projects to ensure that adjacent land uses are not adversely affected; the same will apply to site plan reviews.
- The separation of dissimilar land uses through adequate landscaping, the provision of open space or buffer areas, and other means to limit conflicts between uses will be encouraged.
- Higher density residential and commercial development should be permitted in areas where public utilities are in place and where such uses are compatible with their surroundings.
- Intensive development should be permitted in the Township only where public services are available, residential areas will be unaffected, and environmental quality will not be compromised.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL

Markey Township will encourage all aspects of residential, rural resort and residential retirement community; with its character being defined by residential and seasonal homes, forests, agricultural lands, and commercial businesses.

Markey Township has a number of outstanding characteristics that define it as a rural resort and retirement community. From views of Houghton Lake, an abundance of vacation cottages, acres of state land, quality surface and ground water resources, small family-owned businesses, the absence of heavy industrial uses, and the presence of active agricultural operations, Markey Township offers a high quality of life to its residents. Each of these facets, as well as many others less tangible such as “sense of community”, cannot be readily substituted or replaced. It is the combination of these things that make Markey Township what it is, and what has drawn many residents to come and live here. Therefore, it is important to the Township and its residents that these characteristics are preserved and protected for future generations.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER POLICIES

Protection of groundwater resources, natural features, existing land uses, and other community character elements will be a consideration of the Township when reviewing development proposals.

The Township will preserve important views of the beautiful natural features of Markey Township, including Houghton Lake, woodlands, streams, and rivers by evaluating and implementing appropriate side yard setbacks and lot frontage requirements.

- The use of cluster development and other open space preservation techniques will be considered.
- Overlay zones for wetlands and other sensitive natural features will be used where additional setback, lot coverage, and impervious surface requirements would assist in their protection.
- New residential and commercial development will be consistent with existing uses in terms of scale, intensity, and purpose. New development, or the redevelopment of a parcel, should not visually compete with or overwhelm adjacent structures to the point of obscuring the original character of the area.

HOUSING GOAL

Markey Township will preserve and improve its existing housing stock and allow for a number of quality housing options for its residents.

HOUSING POLICIES

- Housing code enforcement and nuisance issues will be pursued to the best ability of the Township.
- Activities, such as an annual clean-up day, and other ways in which citizens can become informed about housing codes and property maintenance issues should be promoted by the Township to protect property values, build community pride, and improve neighborhoods.
- The Township will allow for a variety of housing choices, such as retirement villages, apartments, assisted living, and nursing homes, so that aging Markey Township residents can continue to be a part of the community.
- Appropriate locations for retirement homes/communities will be evaluated by the Township; these facilities should be sited in locations where residents will not be isolated from the community and where single-family residential uses will remain unaffected.
- High density residential development will be permitted where public services are available in the interest of public health and safety.
- The Township will review the requirements for site condominiums to ensure that appropriate measures are in place that will protect adjacent landowners from misuse.
- The Township will allow for secure, affordable housing opportunities, including starter homes, manufactured homes, and multiple family dwellings, so that existing residents and young families are not “priced out” of the community.
- The Township will encourage the construction of residential areas in the form of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that recognize the importance of preserving the township’s natural features, agricultural lands, and other contributing factors to community character.
- Accessory buildings on residential lots should be proportionate to the main building; the appropriate location and size of independent storage buildings, particularly on lots located across the street from the lakeshore, should be evaluated.
- Appropriate minimum floor area, maximum lot coverage, setback, building height, and impervious surface coverage requirements along the lakeshore should be assessed for the protection of water quality, community character, and to maintain lake views.



4321 Country Village Lane

Roscommon, Michigan

COMMERCIAL GOAL

Commercial development will be supported that provides needed services to Markey Township.

Residents recognize that commercial development in the township is necessary to serve the needs of the community and its visitors. Therefore, new commercial development should be encouraged in appropriate locations of the township that satisfy the needs of residents yet do not detract from the character of the community.

COMMERCIAL POLICIES

- **New commercial development will be designed to reflect the character of Markey Township, be of a scale that is appropriate for its surroundings, and have adequate parking.**

- Existing commercial businesses and the redevelopment of commercial properties within the Township should be encouraged to continue. However, in locations where businesses have struggled to remain viable, the Township should consider other, realistic uses of the property and alternative locations for new commercial development.
- The establishment of small, neighborhood commercial service areas that would provide gas, convenience goods, medical assistance, and similar products and services to residents should be located at key locations throughout the community.
- The Township will review existing sign regulations to ensure that signs which are permitted complement the community's character and are not excessive in size or number to ensure compliance with State Regulations.
- A small commercial area for uses that do not require a high level of visibility should be provided in the Township. This area would be accessible from a paved roadway and would not adversely affect adjacent land uses or permit uses that would require public services.
- A limited number of commercial businesses, including a restaurant, may be considered acceptable along the lakeshore as long as the area did not interfere with existing residential uses.
- Businesses that would provide year-round employment should be encouraged within the Township.

NATURAL FEATURE'S GOAL

The natural features of the Township will be preserved and protected through proactive planning, enforcement, and cooperation.

The natural features of Markey Township are valued and important. Not only do these resources serve important functions in the wild, they also enhance the quality of life of township residents, provide outdoor recreational opportunities, and attract visitors from throughout the United States. The forests, rivers, streams, wildlife, and wetlands, as well as Houghton Lake, are Markey Township. The loss or degradation of any one of these resources would adversely affect the community; this is why preserving their functional, aesthetic, and recreational qualities is so critical.

Township residents have acknowledged that more needs to be done at the Township level to ensure that their quality of life is maintained. Even though there are quantities of state-owned

land in the Township that are presently protected, the Township should also take measures to protect the community's natural features on private lands as well.

NATURAL FEATURES POLICIES

- The Township Board and Planning Commission will work together toward integrating environmental protection and sensitive land development concepts into the Township Zoning Ordinance.
- The Township will request the participation of County and State agencies when enforcement issues arise, particularly in regard to the use of state-owned resources and policies.
- High-density single-family homes, multiple family structures, and commercial businesses will only be permitted where approved sanitary service is available so that the potential for groundwater contamination or any other adverse effects may be limited.
- Through zoning, site plan review and education the Township will encourage approaches to land development that take natural features such as soil, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation into account in the process of site design and building design.
- In order to maintain lake quality and slow the potential progression of weed growth, education measures should be used to limit or eliminate the use of fertilizers on lakefront lawns.
- Markey Township officials should meet with surrounding townships to ensure sustained, environmentally sound uses of Houghton Lake and to address problems or issues (such as the use of road ends, docks, fertilizers, and the lake's capacity for recreational activities) that must be addressed as these communities continue to grow.
- Greenbelts, or buffer zones, should be used in transition areas between a use and a natural feature or two different land uses, such as a single-family home and a party store, to protect the integrity of Markey Township's resources.
- As part of the Zoning Ordinance review, the Planning Commission will consider regulations for impervious surfaces, marinas, landscape buffers, and other issues to protect ground and surface water quality.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE'S GOAL

Markey Township will encourage policies that attempt to limit growth pressures and reduce land use conflicts for the purposes of maintaining and preserving agricultural lands and operations.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

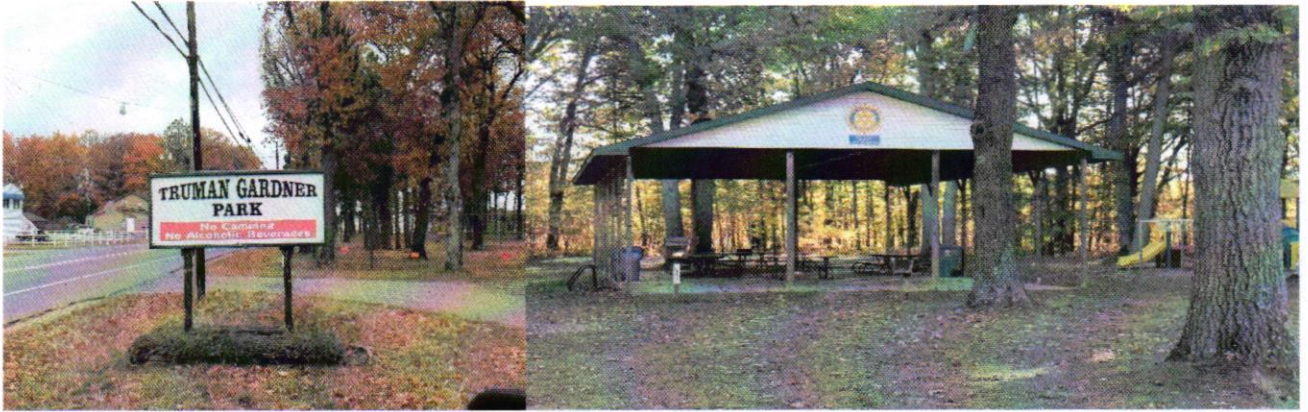
- Enrollment in the Right to Farm and Open Space Preservation Act, P.A. 116 of 1974 (now Part 361 of Public Act 451 of 1994, as amended) will be encouraged.
- Property tax assessments of qualified agricultural lands should evaluate the property based on its present use (agriculture) rather than its potential use (residential), this would help agricultural operations remain more economically viable.
- The use of cluster development and other open space/farmland preservation techniques should be provided for in the Zoning Ordinance that recognize the intent of the Right to Farm Act and the spirit of the Land Division Act.
- Adequate landscaping and buffer areas should be encouraged between farm and non-farm uses to limit potential land use conflicts from dust, noise, and odors associated with farming operations.
- Farmers should be supplied with information regarding conservation easements, land donations, and the potential tax benefits of permanently setting agricultural lands aside from development.
- Educate non-farm land owners, home buyers and others on the effects of rural living and agricultural operations to avoid land use conflicts.

RECREATION RESOURCE'S GOAL

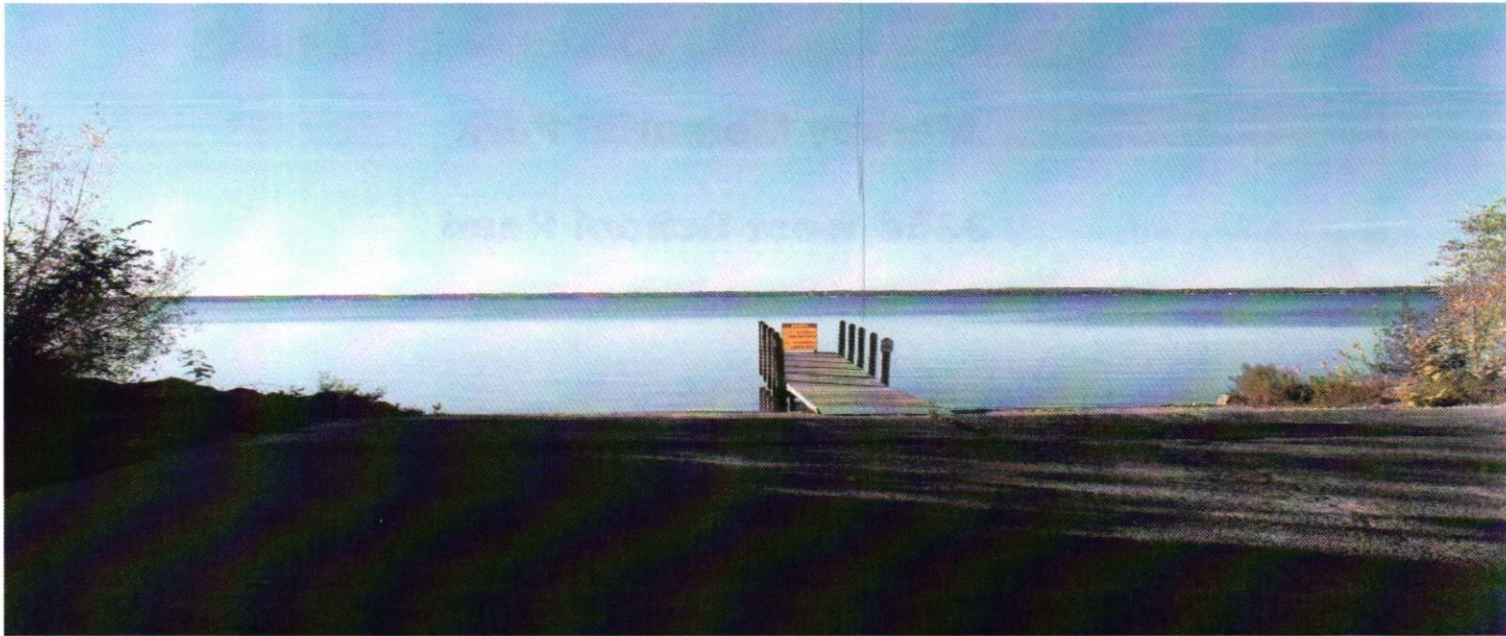
The recreational opportunities that exist in Markey Township shall be realized, supported, and/or enhanced for persons of all ages.

RECREATION POLICIES

- The township will coordinate with the County Road Commission to examine the possibility of separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic to increase the safety of walkers, joggers, rollerbladers, bicyclists, and others along County Road 100 and 300.
- The development of identification signs for bicycle routes and walking paths should be examined by the township.
- A separate Township Recreation Plan should be developed to assess the recreational resources of the community and to allow the Township to be eligible for recreation grants from the Michigan DNR.
- The Township will work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on creating a link with the state's M-55 snowmobile trail system and examine the possibility of a land "swap" that could accommodate additional township recreation needs.
- Canoeing along the Cut River should be promoted in conjunction with the DNR and public service organizations.
- All Markey Township Parks should be improved and upgraded for use by all residents and visitors of Markey Township.
- More recreational opportunities for young people and seniors should be developed, including a teen and senior center, soccer fields, tennis and shuffleboard courts.



Truman Garder Park
County Road 100



DNR Launch Site
County Road 100