

Pleasant Plains Township Master Plan

2024 Revision by:
Pleasant Plains Township Planning Commission

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Land Use planning is an exercise by local government to anticipate change, promote needed change, and to control or direct development in such a way as to benefit the entire community. It has the aim of harmonizing land uses and development activities with the social, environmental, aesthetic, cultural, political, and economic requirements of the community.

Pleasant Plains Township has been involved in a land use program since first formulating and adopting a zoning ordinance in 1971. While this ordinance has to some extent been effective in controlling development, ever changing conditions have prompted Township officials and residents to realize the need to provide a better planning direction for the Township. As a result, the Township board contracted with West Michigan Regional Planning Commission to provide professional assistance to the planning commission for the purpose of preparing a land use plan and updating the Township zoning ordinance.

This land use plan is the culmination of several months work by the Township planning commission and regional planning staff. It is a systematic assessment of the communities existing assets and conditions, a statement of community goals and policies, and a strategy that, when implemented by the zoning ordinance and other means, will guide public and private decisions in a direction capable of enhancing the quality of life within the Township.

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In particular, this plan recommends a future pattern of development. Other specific purposes and functions of the plan include the following:

- *protect and preserve the natural resources, unique character, and environmental quality of the community;

- *to set goals and establish policies for change and improvement;

- *to promote an orderly development process by which public officials and citizens are given an opportunity to monitor change and review proposed development;

- *to provide a background from which to gain a better understanding of the community and base land use decisions;

- *to establish a logical basis for zoning, subdivision design, public improvement plans and other work of the Township Planning Commission and Township Board, as well as other public and private entities dealing with the physical development of the township; and to serve as an official advisory document from which private organizations and individuals can determine how to relate their development projects and policies to the Township's policies for attaining orderly, efficient, and desirable uses of the land.

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CHAPTER II PLANNING ISSUES

The Planning Commission has maintained an observant look around the community. Members of the Commission have provided considerable insight and have listened with interest to the various discussions concerning planning, existing land use, population growth, and development trends. Through these discussions, numerous issues and questions relating to the Township's future development have been raised. The desire on the part of Township officials to address these issues is what has given rise to the understanding that future planning is needed and sets the stage for development of this land use plan.

Following are three general categories of issues facing the Township. The extent to which land use planning and regulation can be used to address these issues forms the implementation strategy contained in the last section of this plan.

Economy

The Township and area has a very limited economic base. This base provides relatively few jobs and many of the jobs are low paying and seasonal in nature. As a result, the area has a relatively low standard of living with a consistently high rate of unemployment. A very high percentage of the population is at or below the poverty level. These factors are reflected by a recent study that shows Lake County leading the state in the percentage of persons receiving public assistance.

Added to this is the fact that the Township has a large segment of the population over 65 years of age and who are living on fixed social security incomes. What can be done in terms of land use planning

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and regulation to attract new economic development and jobs to the area? Where should new industries and businesses be located?

Environment

Pleasant Plains Township is blessed with a high quality natural environment that is ideal for hunting, fishing, and a multitude of other outdoor recreational endeavors. This environment attracts thousands of tourists each year and many have chosen the area as a place of retirement. The area's forests also serve as a valuable resource in terms of wood products, and as a result, a base on which to create more jobs.

What can the Township do to protect the environmental quality of the Township, and as a result, public health and economic well being? How best should resources be utilized? What are the ramifications if environmental factors are ignored?

Identity

Much of the residential development that has occurred is of a cottage or seasonal type. **Just under one-half of the residential structures are occupied on a year-round basis (730 out of 1487).** New housing construction can be expected to take place in a similar fashion whereby less than one-half of new homes built will be occupied by permanent residents. How can the Township protect the property values of full-time residents? What can be done to guarantee minimum housing standards? How can land use conflicts between full-time residents and seasonal residents be minimized?

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CHAPTER III EXISTING CONDITIONS

Regional Settings

Pleasant Plains Township is located in the extreme south central portion of Lake County in the northwest quadrant of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. It is situated approximately 72 miles north of Grand Rapids, 66 miles south of Traverse City, 33 miles east of Ludington and 32 miles northwest of Big Rapids. By car, the trips to Grand Rapids and Traverse City take about 1 ½ hours and the trips to Ludington and Big Rapids roughly 40 minutes. To the Township's north is Webber Township, to the west is Lake Township, to the east is Yates and to the south is Newaygo County's Lilley Township. Pleasant Plains Township is comprised of 36 sections totaling 22,702 acres (35.1 square miles). The Village of Baldwin is located in the northern ¾ of Section 3 and encompasses approximately 480 acres of land within the Township.

Topography and Surface Geology

Apart from the numerous lakes, small depressions and river valleys and stream cuts that bisect the area, the topography of Pleasant Plains Township is generally flat. This is the result of the glaciers that occurred thousands of years ago, and their melt waters that laid down a thick blanket of sand and gravel called 'outwash'. An 'outwash plain' covers most of the Township and has a depth of over 400 feet. In Pleasant Plains, the upper level of material left by the melt water is primarily sand.

A small portion of the Township is attributed to a different glacial process. It is an area of 'ground moraine' and is located in the extreme southeast corner of the Township. The topography of this area is much more varied than that found in the rest of the Township and contains a mixture of unsorted sand, gravel and other material. This material was deposited directly by glacial ice and was formed by ice

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movements. Elevations exceed 900 feet in this area and are the highest of any in the Township. The areas with the greatest local relief and steepest slopes are associated with the Pere Marquette River. Along its course through the west central portion of the Township, the vertical drop from the top of the upland surface to the floodplain is, in some cases, in excess of 100 feet.

Surface Hydrology

The surface hydrology or drainage network of the Township involves the Pere Marquette River and its major tributaries, as well as numerous small lakes and wetland depressions. The Surface Hydrology Map illustrates the major water features of the Township and the land area that each of the more significant streams drain.

The Pere Marquette River flows into the Township from the east in Section 13. From there it meanders west and exits the Township in Section 18. Two major tributaries of the Pere Marquette are the Little South Branch of the Pere Marquette River and the Baldwin River. The Little South Branch enters the Township in the extreme southeast (Section 36) and meanders northwest through Sections 35, 26, and 27. The Baldwin River enters the Township in Section 2 and flows diagonally to the southwest through Sections 3 and 10 before converging with the Pere Marquette in the south central portion of Section 16. Lesser tributaries of these rivers include: Danaher Creek which drains directly into the Pere Marquette in Section 18; Jenks Creek which drains into Danaher Creek; and Sanborn Creek which flows into the Baldwin River in the southeast corner of the Village of Baldwin.

Cedar Creek, in the extreme southern portion of Sections 32 and 33, flows into and out of the Township on its way to its confluence with the Big South Branch of the Pere Marquette River in Newaygo County.

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As can be seen on the Surface Hydrology Map, the majority of the wetlands located in the Township are associated directly with lakes or river and stream courses. In many cases, these wetland areas lie within the relatively narrow flood plains of the various streams and are bounded by valley wells which separate them from the flat upland surfaces. Other wetland areas, such as those found in Sections 9 and 30, are associated with low depressions found within the outwash plain.

Most of the lakes within the Township are termed ‘ice-block lakes’ or ‘kettle lakes’. These were formed at the end of the glacial period and are the result of large blocks of ice that remained after the glacier receded. They melted to form water-filled depressions within the outwash plain. These lakes are typified by having no surface inlets or outlets. The L. Lakes and Jenks Lake are examples.

Soils

While a detailed modern soil survey is not yet available for Lake County, several assumptions can be made concerning the general capability of the soils in Pleasant Plains. Broad soil classifications (see Generalized Soils Map) indicate that the soils of Pleasant Plains Township are not conducive for agricultural use, are generally well drained and consist of highly permeable coarse textured material such as sand and gravel. In areas of high housing density, or other intensive use, these are conditions that constitute a potential hazard. In such areas, the contamination of shallow wells and the leaching of nutrients from on-site septic systems into surface waters are more readily possible. The areas having the poorest drainage, and as a result, the most severe limitations with regard to development generally occur near or within the floodplains of rivers and streams and are characterized by lowland forests and wetlands. An area of the Township containing poorly drained soils that is not associated with a major river or stream is the Sterling Marsh area located in the southwest portion of the Township.

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The following is a brief discussion of the various soil groupings found in the Township. It is based on the 'Forest Soils Report' of Lake County that was completed for the Northwest Michigan Prime Forestlands Identification Project. The discussions relate directly to forest soils potential and can only be broadly applied in reference to developmental limitations.

GRAYLING SOILS (A1): These soils are deep, sandy, and excessively drained and occur on the nearly- level to gently-sloping outwash plain. The soils have low to medium-high forest production potential and low to moderate reforestation potential. The major tree species found on these soils are jack pine, pine and oak. The water table fluctuates to within 5 feet of the surface within this soil grouping.

GRAYCALM-GRAYLING SOILS (A2): these soils are excessively to somewhat excessively drained soils found on the outwash plain and low moraines. They generally occur on topography that is nearly-level to steep. The erosion hazard is slight to steep depending on the slope. The majority of these soils are forested with oak and aspen. Forest production and reforestation potential is low to medium-high depending upon the tree species and droughtiness of the soil. Scattered wet spots occur within this area of soils.

RUBICON, MONTCALM-GRAYCALM SOILS (B1): there are only three small areas of this soil grouping located within the Township. They are deep and sandy and somewhat excessively drained. They occur on level surfaces within the outwash plain. Because of this, the erosion hazard is slight but increases to severe with slope. Forest productivity is medium-low to very high depending on the tree species. Red and white pine has the highest productivity potential. Reforestation potential is low to

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high and again dependent upon the tree species involved. The major forest types presently occurring are aspen and oak.

CROSSWELL SOILS (D2): these are moderately well drained deep, sandy soils that occur primarily on the outwash plain and to some extent on the low terraces along drainage ways. They occur on nearly-level to gently-sloping surfaces and pose a slight erosion hazard. Forest productivity is variable and ranges from low to high. Reforestation potential is high for white pine. The major tree species associated with this soil grouping are lowland hardwoods, aspen, and jack pines, oak and red and white pine. There is a seasonally high water table but it generally does not reach to within five feet of the surface. However, inclusions of somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained soils are found in some areas within this soil grouping.

AUGRES, FINCH AND WINTERFIELD SOILS (E4): These are somewhat poorly drained soils that are sandy in texture and that occur on some of the low flats and beaches adjacent to drainage ways, bogs and on flood plains. They are generally covered with lowland hardwoods, swamp conifers, and aspens and white pine in the drier areas. Because of wetness, there are moderate to severe limitations with regards to construction. Forest productivity is low to medium-high, but because of wetness, heavy equipment movement would be limited and reforestation constrained. Development is similarly constrained as a seasonally high water table fluctuates.

ROSCOMMON AND TAWAS SOILS AND FLUVAQUENTS AND HISTISOLOS (F4): This soil group is a complex of poorly drained mineral and very poorly drained organic soils. They occur in swamps and drainage ways within the outwash plain. They consist of sandy, loamy, clayey and organic soils. The soils are primarily forested with swamp conifers, lowland hardwoods and aspen. Most areas

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exhibit low to medium-low productivity and because of wetness, commercial harvesting and reforestation is not recommended. They are not suitable for development.

LUPTON AND LOXLEY SOILS (G-L/G-2): These are very poorly drained organic soils that occur in Bogs and drainage ways within floodplains or on the outwash plain. Tree species include swamp conifers, lowland hardwoods and aspen. Forest productivity is low to high but harvesting and reforestation is not recommended due to wetness. Development is severely restricted by wetness and other soil properties.

Existing Land Use

The map entitled 'Existing Land Use' illustrates the current composition and patterns of land use in the area. From the map it can be seen that the majority of the Township is undeveloped and that roughly 85% of its area is forest covered.

The development that has occurred is principally centered south of the Village of Baldwin and the inland lakes. Development is also evident along the M-37 corridor, the Pere Marquette River and several of the primary and secondary roads. The settlements of Marlborough and the Village of Baldwin serve as the more major historic centers of Development.

Residential development is primarily single family in nature and heavily water oriented. Conventional houses, mobile homes and trailers are all commonly found types of structures. **The 2020 census shows that over one-half of the homes of the area are second homes or homes that are held for seasonal or occasional use (757 out of 1487).**

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The manner in which residential development has occurred is somewhat atypical of most rural Townships in that considerable acreage is platted (see Platted Areas Map). Many of the plats are located adjacent to the inland lakes and presently support most of the higher densities of development. While almost all of the subdivisions are at least partially developed, considerable, if not the majority of available lots are currently undeveloped. This is due in some part to the small size (25' X 100') of many of the lots and to a larger degree on over-abundance of lots that were created based on past over-expectations of the area's development potential.

The major areas of commercial activity outside of the Village of Baldwin are located south of the village along M-37. The highest concentrations are found within one mile of the village and in the strip lying within one-half mile north of the M-37/76th Street (Big Star Lake Road) intersection.

The commercial establishments are generally tourist oriented and consist of motels, cabins, restaurants, real estate sales offices and recreation based retail outlets. Service establishments catering to both the resident and transient population are also located within this corridor. The possibility of extending the Commercial Corridor South on M-37 to the County line would increase the amount of commercial sites available for more business, such as Marihuana Facilities.

There is presently only one industrial establishment located within the Township and it is situated in Section 10, southeast of the Village of Baldwin.

Apart from the wooded and undeveloped portions of subdivisions, the forested areas of the Township are generally uncommitted for uses other than commercial forestry, wildlife management and recreation. The largest landholder of forestland is the U.S. Forest Service. It manages nearly 10,000 acres of land under a diversified management plan that includes policies and strategies dealing with commercial forestry, recreation, environmental preservation and resource conservation.

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Another public landholder of forestland is the State of Michigan. Through the Department of Natural Resources, land management policies similar to those of the U.S. Forest Service are carried out. The land holding of the state includes approximately 200 acres within the Township. The most notable of these provide public access to several of the area's rivers, lakes and streams.

Private holding of forest land ranges from small individual parcels to large tracts owned by private corporations and associations. These are to a large degree held for recreational purposes such as hunting and fishing and to a lesser degree commercial forestry. Most of the private forests are unmanaged.

Other important land uses within the Township include the Baldwin Airport located along M-37 south of Baldwin, several churches and the Baldwin Community Schools.

The following narrative paragraphs summarize the acreage and relative spatial significance of each of the major land uses comprising the Township as well as the land ownership within the Township.

Population and Housing

The following discussion summarizes several of the more significant aspects of the Township's population and housing characteristics. The other important aspect of the Township's population is the fluctuation that occurs due to such factors as the influx or loss of seasonal residents, vacationers and transient traffic. While accurate or detailed accounts of these fluctuations are not available, based on the fact that **housing units are about the same as the number of permanent residents**, it is justifiable to assume that the Pleasant Plains Township fluctuations result in population counts which (on the yearly average) greatly exceed base census figures.

To accommodate an expected permanent population of nearly 2,000, the next 15 years will bring about an overall increase in the number of full-time housing units. Through conversion and new

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construction, the increase is expected to be in the range of **25 and 80**. This would bring the total number of occupied year-round housing units to between **750 and 820**, depending on an average household size ranging from 2.3 to 3.0 persons per household. Because of the generally depressed local economy, the demand for the low cost housing is expected to be higher. Manufactured and multi-family housing units could, therefore, have significant influence on the make-up and character of some future residential developments, **as well as tiny houses**.

The condition of existing housing is an issue that has been of great concern to local officials and has serious implications for the community as a whole. The area's generally depressed economy and the resultant low income and poverty status of many full-time residents has to a degree contributed to substandard housing conditions. Since some homeowners simply cannot afford to maintain their homes, adding to this problem is the fact that many of the older substandard housing structures were not originally constructed for full-time occupancy but are of either a cottage or temporary nature. Many of these are used but not suited for full-time use and many are held by absentee owners that have allowed them to reach a dilapidated and idle condition. Several have in fact been abandoned.

Taken as a whole, the existence of substandard housing represents a serious set of problems to the community in terms of public health and safety, the property values of other properties, the overall community's image and the ability to attract new investments. Through a combination of improved job opportunities and government supported programs, the housing needs of full-time residents may over time be alleviated.

Seemingly, many absentee owners have few ties to the community. As a result, few of them have intentions to replace, reconstruct, or demolish the structures falling into this category. Without

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appropriate incentives, these structures could continue to have serious adverse impacts on the community.

Transportation

There are approximately 30 miles of paved roads within the Township, not including village streets. Approximately 25 miles of Township roads are improved but not paved. There are also several miles of unimproved dirt trails throughout the Township and many miles of dedicated but unopened public right-of-way in partially developed plats. M-37, a major state trunk line, traverses the center of the Township in a north-south direction. U.S.-10, another major trunk line forms or closely parallels the boundary between Pleasant Plains Township and Webber Township to the north. U.S.-10 runs northwesterly from Bay City to Midland, Clare and Reed City to Baldwin before turning north and west, terminating at the car ferries in Ludington.

Year-round development in the Township is generally well served by hard surfaced roads, although adequate maintenance and snow removal is seen as a problem by many residents. Those areas served by hard surfaced roads will likely attract a larger proportion of new residential development than other areas. Nearness to existing hard surfaced roads will also be a major consideration when attempting to locate appropriate sites for new industrial development.

Pleasant Plains is being accessed by two major highway arterials.

At the present time, the rail line is in operation. This line provides rail access between Ludington/Manistee and Grand Rapids. The east-west line terminates in Ludington where the Michigan

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Wisconsin Transportation Company operates car ferries to and from Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The car ferries provide seasonally scheduled service for trucks, automobiles and passengers.

The Baldwin Municipal Airport has facilities to accommodate small aircraft. It is located on M-37, just south of Baldwin. It is within easy reach of many of the major tourist attractions of the area and should be viewed as an undeveloped asset to the community in terms of its ability to attract new business and tourists. It is also the home of the modelers (planes, cars, etc.).

If not properly planned, constructed and maintained, the opening of additional roads could create problems of liability (traffic hazards) and finance for the Township and County. For this reason, the use of platted road right-of-ways, which are not now officially open, should be discouraged until such time that they can be justifiably programmed for improvement to modern safety design standards. This assures public safety and has the added benefits of concentrating growth in areas already accessed by improved roads and facilitating the efficiency and low cost of providing future services and utilities.

Other areas where potential transportation problems can be avoided or minimized are along M-37 and U.S.-10. Along these routes, numerous intersections and curb-cuts have the potential for limiting traffic movement and highway capacity. For the sake of safety and efficiency, commercial strip type development should be discouraged and unnecessary curb-cuts avoided.

Public Utilities

The Village of Baldwin has a public water system that serves approximately 300 homes. Twenty one of these homes are located in nearby unincorporated areas of the Township. A public sewer system is in the Village of Baldwin. The majority of homes in the township must rely on both private wells and septic systems.

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Since many of the highest densities of development are occurring in areas which exhibit a combination of rapidly permeable soils and high water tables and/or are near to surface waters, the potential for contamination to water resources from septic effluent is likely to increase. To reduce the potential of contamination, proper maintenance and installation of septic systems is crucial. Until public sewers are installed, land use controls capable of effectively regulating septic system location and density are controlled by the County Health Department.

In addition to a recognizable public health need to institute density controls in residential areas, the area's general lack of a suitable public infrastructure (water and sewer) is seen as a major detriment on its ability to attract commercial/industrial investments. The eventual provision of these facilities are, therefore, seen as being important to the area's future growth potential, as well as overall public health and safety.

Other essential services such as electrical and telephone are available to all homes and businesses. Underground natural gas facilities, cable television and internet serve the Township's residents and businesses in several areas in and near the Village of Baldwin.

Economic Characteristics

Because of a general lack of accurate and detailed information, it is difficult to make an in-depth analysis of the economic structure of the Township.

The area's retail trade, entertainment, recreation, repair service and real estate sales establishments all depend directly on tourist dollars for a large portion of their income. Establishments such as wholesale

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outlets, business services, finance and insurance are also directly or indirectly related to the tourist dollar.

Two other basic industries, manufacturing and forestry, are important to the economy but are not presently serving a role as significant as tourism.

Another major influence on the local economy in terms of employment is the segment that comprises health and education services and public administration. This segment of the economy provides 31 percent of the area's employment opportunities.

The remaining segment of the economy consists of the construction, transportation and communications industries.

1. Private wage and salary workers comprise less than one-half of the workforce as compared to over three-fourths for the state as a whole.
2. Government workers represent over one-third of all workers. Government jobs add only their own income to the economy and do little to generate spin-off opportunities
3. Median household and median family incomes are less than one-half those of the state as a whole.
4. The poverty status for various segments of the population range from two to three times the levels for the state.
5. Retired and pensioners.

These points illustrate the need in Pleasant Plains Township and Lake County as a whole for increased employment opportunities and a broader, more diversified economic base. For the Township, the initial steps in doing so involve this land use plan.

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Its implementation will not only promote the wise use of those land resources that presently support the local economy, it will also identify and recommend appropriate locations for various types of land use. This will help to alleviate future land use conflicts and thus encourage new developments to locate here.

CHAPTER IV GOALS AND POLICIES

Planning goals are statements that express the community's long range desires and serve to provide direction for related planning activities. Each goal accompanying policies reflect the general strategy that the community will pursue to attain its goals. Following are examples of goals and Policy statements that could be used in response to various land use issues that exist in the Township.

GOAL #1: Governmental and Public Safety

Development of the Pleasant Plains Township owned property on M-37:

- 1.1 Build a dedicated Township Hall with offices.
- 1.2 Build additional structures to support the expanding Fire Department. The current Township Hall/
Fire Department building will be dedicated to Fire Department use.
- 1.3 Build other structures as needed to support the Township infrastructure.

GOAL # 2: The Environment

To ensure that new development takes place in an environmentally consistent and sound manner and that the potential for flood hazard, soil erosion, and disturbances to the natural drainage network and surface and groundwater contamination are minimized, thereby protecting natural resources and preserving scenic and environmental quality as well as minimizing the public burden.

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POLICIES:

2.1 Maintain land use restrictions along the Pere Marquette River and its tributaries pursuant to the Natural Rivers Act, Act 231 of 1970.

2.2 Through zoning and site plan review encourage approaches to land development that take natural features such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, important forest lands and other natural vegetation into account in the process of site design.

GOAL # 3 Residential Developments

Encourage a general low density pattern of residential development consistent with the rural character found in most areas of the Township and encourage higher densities in areas appropriate for such development.

POLICIES:

3.1 Establish density standards that are consistent with the natural capability of soils to handle on-site septic systems and which promote the preservation of the Township's valuable surface and ground water resources.

3.2 Encourage the highest densities of development to occur in locations access, future public utilities and services can be most economically and efficiently provided.

3.3 Adopt subdivision regulations in support of land use goals.

3.4 Encourage the re-plating and redesign of existing undeveloped plats that contain substandard lot sizes.

3.5 Encourage the building of "Tiny Houses" within Pleasant Plains Township, especially on platted lots.

GOAL # 4 Commercial Developments

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Provide for the basic service and shopping needs of the Township's residents and visitors by allowing commercial development to take place in designated areas in a manner which limits commercial strip development, minimizes conflicts with surrounding land uses and prevents unnecessary conflicts with the movement of traffic along major highways.

POLICIES:

- 4.1 Adopt subdivision regulations in support of land use goals,
- 4.2 Limit commercial development to a few concentrated areas.
- 4.3 Encourage the clustering of commercial uses and limit the number and spacing of driveways.
- 4.4 Promote high quality commercial development through local site plan review.
- 4.5 Reserve appropriate areas within the Township for new commercial development.
- 4.6 Extend the commercial corridor south on M-37 to encourage new business growth.

GOAL # 5 Industrial Developments

Provide for and encourage the growth of light industrial development in areas that are easily accessible by major transportation facilities and which are capable of being most economically and efficiently served by public utilities and services.

POLICIES:

- 5.1 Establish and reserve one or more appropriate sites within the Township for future industrial purposes.
- 5.2 Promote high quality industrial development through local site plan review.

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GOAL # 6 Economic Developments

To increase the tax base of the Township and the number and availability of jobs within the community, by improving the economy, the Township's ability to provide services and general quality of life in the area.

POLICIES:

- 6.1 Reserve appropriate areas within the Township for new commercial development.
- 6.2 Reserve appropriate areas of land within the Township for new industrial development.
- 6.3 Minimize delays due to review and processing of development regulations.

GOAL # 7 Land Use Conflicts

Discourage and avoid conflicts between incompatible land uses.

POLICIES:

- 7.1 Prevent the wide scale scattering of intensive land uses in the rural country-side.
- 7.2 In areas of higher density, provide for the separation between conflicting land uses by designating suitable transitional districts or requiring greenbelt or buffer areas.

GOAL # 8 Roads

Make provisions for road improvements that will promote growth in a way that is consistent with adopted goals and policies relating to land use.

POLICIES:

- 8.1 Limit the number of driveways along major highway arterials by encouraging the shared use of driveways by commercial establishments all through the commercial corridor, even if extended.
- 8.2 Encourage clustered development.
- 8.3 Adopt subdivision regulations in support of land use goals.

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8.4 Discourage the development of additional local streets in un-platted areas; adopt minimum standards for local streets.

8.5 Discourage the opening of dedicated but unopened rights-of-way in underdeveloped plats until such time that they can be improved to county road commissions standards.

GOAL # 9 Housing

To improve the quality of housing, and to provide a wide range of housing opportunities within the Township.

POLICIES:

9.1 Permit construction of single family homes, placement of contemporary quality mobile homes and construction of multiple housing at acceptable densities.

9.2 Minimize delays due to review and processing of development regulations.

9.3 Adopt regulations necessary to prevent establishment of substandard housing units.

9.4 Encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock where possible.

9.5 Place special emphasis on meeting the housing needs of low and moderate income residents, the disabled and senior citizens **thru the Tiny House Ordinance.**

9.6 Permit construction of Assisted Living Facilities as acceptable sites.

GOAL # 10 Quality of Life

To prevent the establishment of uses which, by their existence, tend to lower the quality of life within the community.

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POLICIES:

10.1 Adopt regulations necessary to prevent establishment of substandard housing units.

10.2 Adopt regulations necessary to prevent outdoor storage of household equipment, household goods and other materials where objectionable.

10.3 Adopt regulations requiring the adequate setting and screening of those land uses which tend to have a blighting influence on the community.

10.4 Provide necessary resources and expertise to enforce the provisions of the zoning ordinance.

10.5 Encourage separation between different adjacent land uses.

GOAL # 11 Recreations

Support diverse recreational opportunities for all residents and visitor groups.

POLICIES:

11.1 Develop recommendations which identify the recreational needs of the community and set forth a strategy for the acquisition and development of recreational facilities.

11.2 Cooperate with the village, the school system and Lake County in providing the area-wide recreational facilities that would serve residents and visitors.

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CHAPTER V LAND USE PLAN

Perspective

The findings and assumptions made from the analysis of Pleasant Plains existing conditions and discussions relating to the various issues facing the Township provided the background for formulating the proposed plan.

As proposed, the plan is in one aspect a statement of goals and policies. In another aspect, the plan entails the allocation of land uses to land areas according to various natural, manmade and socioeconomic factors. As a whole, the plan attempts to strike a balance between the need and desire to protect and preserve the Township's valuable resources and rural character with the need and desire to accommodate and promote new growth and development.

The previous section highlights the goals and policies set forth for the Township and briefly describes general land use categories. The proposed land use plan map illustrates the general pattern of land use that development would be encouraged to follow.

Land Use Categories

The pattern of land use recommended is comprised of several general categories, each representing different types and/or varying intensities of use. Each classified district is intended to illustrate the general locations for which the various types of land use and/or intensities would be permitted.

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Natural River District

The natural river area is that area comprising the Pere Marquette River and its tributaries within the Township and all lands lying within 400 feet of the rivers or streams.

The objectives of this district are to prevent economic and environmental damages due to flooding or intensive development patterns; to preserve the value and character of the river system; to protect local flood retention and runoff capability, fish and wildlife, water quality, and scenic and aesthetic qualities; to retain historical and recreational value; and to protect individuals from buying lands, which because of environmental hazards, are unsuited but intended for intense development.

Development within these areas should be restricted to primarily recreational and low density residential uses. Permitted uses as set forth in the DNR's Pere Marquette River Natural River Zoning Rules include:

- Private camping
- Operation of water craft
- Fishing and hunting
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Emergency and public utility maintenance, and
- Single family homes related uses and alterations subject to the approval of the zoning

administration and the rules set forth in the Natural Rivers Ordinance.

Rural Forest District

The land use concept forming the basis of the rural forest area is one that is primarily oriented to providing two major types of use; recreation/environmental preservation and commercial forestry.

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Rural forest areas are those areas of the Township that are essentially undeveloped forest land. They contain many environmentally sensitive areas, as well as the Township's best soils for commercial forest production. The vast majority of the areas are under federal and state ownership and management.

Together with the natural river areas, Pleasant Plains forest lands are its biggest asset. Each year, thousands of tourists are attracted by them. Hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling and cycling are among the activities seen. Because of the bountiful forest, and an ever increasing demand for forest products, commercial forestry within Pleasant Plains is expected to increase. The jobs and other economic benefits that growing forest products industry can provide to the community are important factors to consider in attempts to improve the quality of life in the area.

The ability of the Township to retain those natural environmental qualities that attract tourists while encouraging expanding commercial forest activities will require land use controls that allow for adequate buffers between these often conflicting uses. For this reason, development that would alter large tracts within these areas should be discouraged. In doing so, it is hoped that the amount of land that comprises the natural wilderness environment remains abundant and that land removed from possible commercial forest production can be minimized.

It is recommended that residential use of these areas be limited to a low density rural residential nature. Any proposed major developments affecting this area should be encouraged to locate on the fringe of the outlined rural forest district. This will not only serve to retain the wilderness/forest resources, but direct major growth to areas reserved for more intensive development. This will have the added effects of increasing the feasibility of public utilities and service in the more highly developed areas and reduce the demand for public services (roads, etc.) in outlying areas.

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The large lot, low density nature of permitted residential use of the area will, however, serve the needs of many residents who do not desire to live in a subdivision or within an incorporated area, but desire to live in a rural or country setting.

Resort Residential District

The resort residential district is comprised primarily of those areas of the Township that are outside of the natural river district but which are still directly oriented toward surface water features. The district contains many existing platted areas and some of the high densities of existing permanent and seasonal types of residential use.

In this district, it is recommended special attention be given to ensuring that the degradation of surface and ground water is held to a minimum, because of highly permeable soils and high densities of development already in existence, new residents should be required to install septic systems at a minimum of 150 feet from lakes and streams. Unless community sewers are to be provided, new subdivisions should be required to have large lot sizes.

To preserve the high quality lake environment, protection of as much lakeshore in its natural state is recommended. The desired types of development should be of a permanent nature with efforts directed toward preventing the establishment of substandard or temporary living quarters such as travel trailers.

Cottages and retirement homes are considered compatible and the primary development types to be encouraged. The establishment of mobile home parks should be discouraged in these areas. In the long range, it is recommended that these areas have priority in the provision of public sewer service.

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Single Family Residential District

This district roughly parallels the major improved primary and secondary roads. Through the employment of modern subdivision standards and practices, development within this district should be controlled with the intention of facilitating the ability to efficiently provide future services such as public sewer and water to the majority of permanent Township residents.

The district is comprised of locations that are generally not directly related to the Township's water features and as a result do not have as high a degree of desirability for retirees and seasonal residents to locate their homes and cottages. The district includes several established plats which support some of the highest densities of existing residential development in the Township. The district also includes several large tracts that could serve as new residential development areas.

It is recommended that this district support the major thrust of new, year-round residential development in an effort to remove some of the development pressures from the preceding more environmentally sensitive planning districts. Traditional single family homes, duplexes, mobile homes and subdivisions oriented toward the resident population are the desired development types.

Residential Districts – General

This plan recognizes that for all the districts in which residential use is permitted, there may be the need for some residents to conduct business at or out of their home. However, commercial activities which exceed the traditional scope of home occupations are to be located within the industrial or commercial zone.

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All property and structures should be maintained and used in a manner which minimizes any blighting influences on adjacent properties. Towards this end, all houses should provide adequate indoor storage of household equipment and other stored material. Any junkyards and similar operations should be screened from view.

Commercial District

This district is intended to provide adequate land to meet the need for future commercial development. Such new development should occur in the vicinity of M-37 to the County line, where most of commercial development already exists. Specific steps should be taken to prevent excessive strip commercial development due to traffic and aesthetic problems caused by such development and increase the cost effectiveness of providing utility services.

Industrial District

This district is intended to provide and reserve adequate land for future industrial development. Such development is crucial to the improvement of the economy of any community. Such land should be located for easy highway or rail access and should be adequately separated from residential uses and districts. The land within the district should be reserved for uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, forest product processing and research facilities which provide significant additions to the community's economy and tax base.

Multi-Family Residential District

This area lies in close proximity to the Village of Baldwin and the service and amenities that it provides. It is recommended that this area be reserved for multi-family or apartment type development including Assisted Living Facilities.

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CHAPTER VI IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the overall planning process, the adoption of a land use plan is not the end product. Simply stated, the plan is an on-going statement of Township policy that is intended to serve as a guide for local decision makers.

Upon adoption of the Land Use Plan, the next task for the Township involves putting the plan and its goals and policies to work. This will involve the enactment and/or revision of local laws and ordinances. Collectively, they will serve as the tools for implementing the plan.

Following are some of the implementation tools and recommendations that the Township should consider as methods for putting the land use plan into action.

Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance presently exists in the Township pursuant to Public Act 184 of 2006 (Township Rural Zoning Act). Because the zoning ordinance should be based upon a land use plan, it should be revised and updated to reflect the plan's new goals and policies. All formerly mapped zoning districts and provisions should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Amendments to the zoning ordinance should include:

1. The designation of zoning districts that correspond with the land use plan. For the new districts, the following general provisions are recommended:
 - Rural Forest – Establish a housing density limit in the rural forest zones. A minimum lot size of 1 to 2 units per acre is recommended.

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- Resort Residential - Establish a minimum building lot size of 10,000 square feet in existing platted areas. Establish a minimum lot size of 15,000 to 20,000 square feet for proposed new subdivisions, if they are not to be provided with centralized sewer and water services. Require all new on-site septic systems to be installed at a minimum of 150 feet from lakes and streams. Prohibit the establishment of substandard or temporary dwelling units;
 - Single Family Residential – Establish a uniform minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet in the single family residential district;
 - Multi-Family Residential – Reserve an area for multi-family development, but discourage its development until such time that public sewers and/or water can be provided;
 - Commercial District – Establish a minimum setback for commercial uses and limit the square footage of signs; and
 - Industrial – Anticipate future industrial needs and the potential for future industrial opportunities. Base the rezoning of land for industrial use on conditions that exist at the time of an application for rezoning, including the recognition that unique opportunities might exist that favor the rezoning of land to industrial use. Establish provisions for the creation of an industrial park.
2. In all districts, avoid the land-locking of rear parcels by requiring on-street frontage, easements every 500 feet, or the equivalent, through use of access drives.
 3. For each district, identify those uses that will be allowed by a special land use permit.

Subdivision Regulations

Townships are given the authority to regulate and control the subdivision of unincorporated land within their jurisdiction pursuant to Public Act 288 of 1967, otherwise known as the Subdivision Control Act; and pursuant to Public Act 246 of 1945, as amended, which also authorizes Township boards to adopt

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ordinances and regulations. The overall purpose of both state acts is to promote and secure the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

With a local subdivision ordinance, townships can have a voice in the physical design and layout of subdivisions, as well as set specific uniform standards for streets, utilities, and other improvements. The subdivision ordinance would require conformance of plats with the zoning ordinance, and allow additional controls to assure that development occurs in an orderly manner. As a recommended minimum requirement, plats should not be allowed to develop immediately adjacent and parallel to arterials and primary roads without some provision for limiting the number of sites having direct highway access.

Site Plan Review

This is a procedure commonly used in combination with a zoning ordinance whereby applicants for zoning approval must show conformance with the bulk regulations (yards and setbacks) by submitting a site plan for review or approval. The planning commission or zoning administrator then reviews the site plan for compliance and also for impact upon the community. An approved site plan is then filed as an official document.

It is recommended that all commercial and industrial development, as well as subdivisions, multiple family housing, planned unit developments, and other development to encompass more than 5 acres, undergo site plan review by the planning commission. It is also recommended that the Township's site plan review process include standards for environmental protection.

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Planned Unit Development

The Planned Unit Development concept is employed by many communities to encourage innovative and imaginative project design. As a development type, it permits flexibility in site design by allowing buildings to be clustered. It allows buildings to be clustered through mixtures of housing types such as detached houses, townhouses, and apartments; or by combining housing with ancillary uses such as neighborhood shopping centers. It allows better design and arrangement of open space and the retention of such natural features such as forests, slopes and floodplains. As a regulatory tool, it allows variation in many of the traditional controls related to density, setbacks, use and open space.

Mobile Homes

It is recommended that standards governing the placement of mobile homes be instituted. Mobile homes should be permitted in districts where residential uses are permitted, provided that they adhere to standards pertaining to their installation and are compatible with adjacent uses and the character of the area. Suggested standards could include provisions that require: foundations or concrete pads; minimum square footage of dwelling space; minimum setback; minimum unit widths.

Nuisance Control

It is recommended that ordinances controlling the placement and operation of junkyards be upgraded and enforced. Minimum standards should be instituted. Provisions and standards governing the outside storage of goods and material in all districts should be adopted by ordinance and incorporated into the zoning ordinance.

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On-Going Planning

The land use plan will need to be revised, updated, and modified as major changes occur. For this reason, planning should be a continuing process in order that the plan and its goals and policies can remain current and realistic. It is recommended that the land use plan be updated as needed, but at a minimum of at least once every 5 years per State statute.

Recreation

The Township has prepared a recreation plan to identify the recreational needs and opportunities of its residents and set forth the strategy for filling those needs.

Capital Improvements Programming

Although funding sources are scarce, there is a need in the future for major public improvements such as sewer and water systems. These may become crucial from a public health standpoint in the high density areas and are vital if major economic development is to be attracted to the area. Because of this, the Township should consider a capital budgeting program; such a program would enable scheduling of improvements over time and according to priorities.

As funding allows, **the development of additional Fire Department buildings on the Township property on M-37 should take place as soon as possible to better accommodate and protect their equipment, after the new Township Hall has been completed, or in conjunction with.**

It is recommended that the Township enlist the cooperation of other local units of government in the coordination and support of major capital improvements that would benefit the entire area.

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It is further recommended that Pleasant Plains Township cooperate with the Lake County Planning Commission, adjacent townships, the Village of Baldwin, the DNR, the U.S. Forest Service, and WMRPC in efforts to promote, improve, and coordinate land use planning and management throughout Lake County.

Census Information

2024 Key Demographic Indicators (Esri)

2024 Total Housing Units 1,487

2024 Owner Occupied HUs 508

2024 Renter Occupied HUs 222

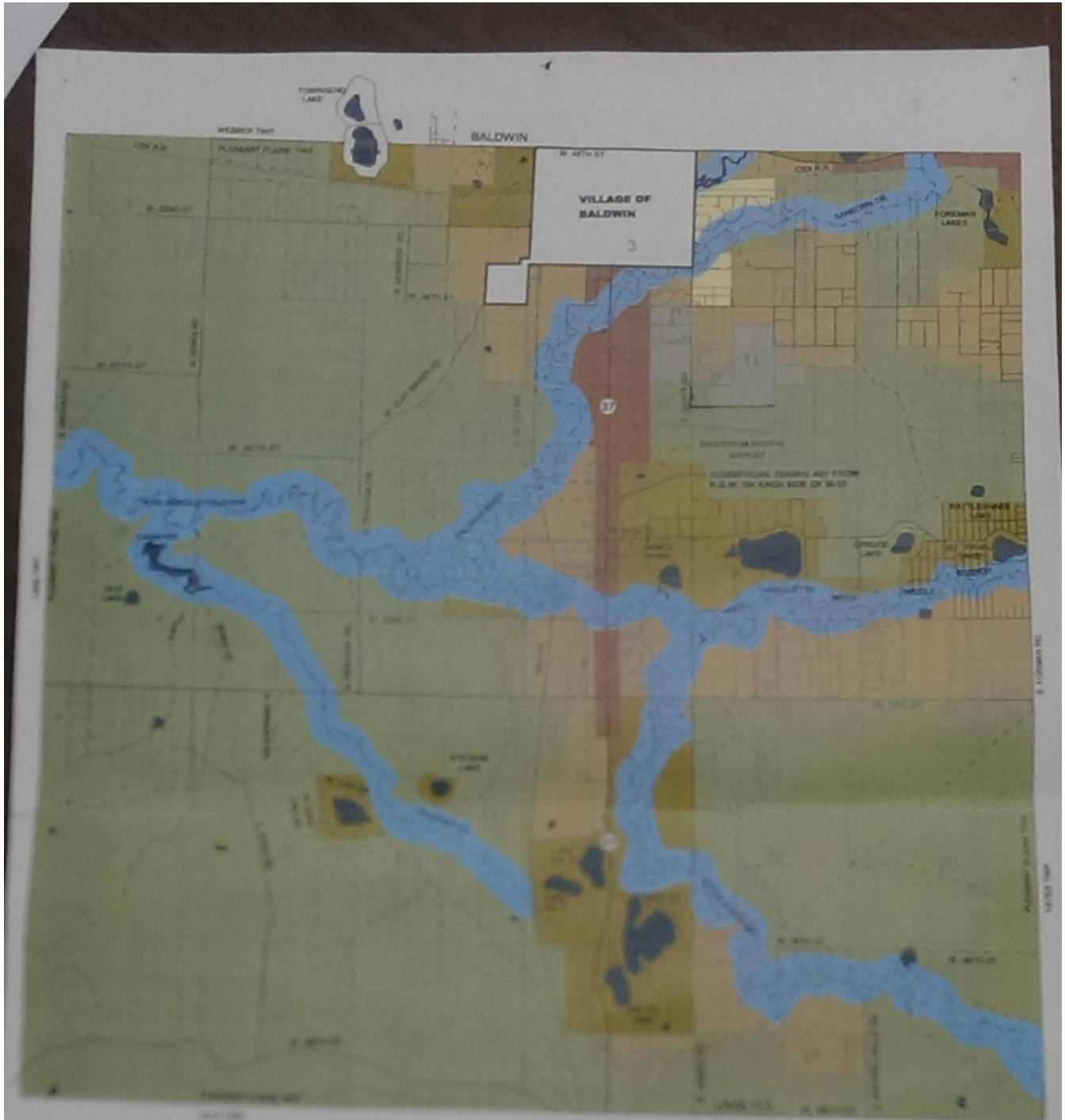
2024 Vacant Housing Units 757

Source: [Esri](#)

2020 Total Population 1,603

Source: [2020 US Census of population](#)

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ZONING DISTRICTS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| [Light Green Box] | R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL |
| [Light Orange Box] | R-2 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (MEDIUM DENSITY) |
| [Light Yellow Box] | R-3 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (HIGH DENSITY) |
| [Light Brown Box] | R-4 DOUBLE-DUPE DUPE RESIDENTIAL |
| [Blue Box] | W-1 WETLAND RESERVE DISTRICT |
| [Light Green Box] | W-2 WETLAND RESERVE DISTRICT |
| [Red Box] | C-1 COMMERCIAL GENERAL DISTRICT |
| [Grey Box] | I-1 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT |

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS IS THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP REPRODUCED TO IN THE PLEASANT PLAINS TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE.



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RESOLUTION

The PLEASANT PLAINS TOWNSHIP BOARD, recognizing the need for an updated “MASTER PLAN” for the Township, hereby offers the following resolution;

WHEREAS, the Township Board having directed the Township Planning Commission to also serve as the Township “MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE”, and

WHEREAS, said “MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE” having been directed to revise the “MASTER PLAN”, for the Township, and,

WHEREAS, the “MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE” having updated the “MASTER PLAN” for the Township as directed, and having presented said Plan to the Township Board for approval and adoption, and

WHEREAS, the Pleasant Plains Township Board having reviewed said “MASTER PLAN” as presented, and

WHEREAS, the “MASTER PLAN” as presented, having met the needs of the residents, especially the needy and underserved areas of our Township,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Pleasant Plains Township Board hereby approved and adopts the “MASTER PLAN, as presented by the Township Planning Commission, on this

____ day of _____, 2024.

The forgoing resolution offered by Board member: _____

Second offered by Board member: _____

Upon roll call vote, the following voted:

“Aye”: _____

“Nay”: _____

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Jessica Hanna, Township Clerk

Date