

Planning Commission Review Copy
Arlington Township Revised Master Plan
2019

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ARLINGTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

2025

Introduction

What is the Arlington Township Master Plan?

The Arlington Township Master Plan is a policy guide to determine how future land development will be guided over the next five or six years. It is a community driven process with the township planning commission serving as the conduit of community input and translating that input into a document that defines the vision of future land use and development. Just as important is the fact that all zoning decisions MUST be based on an officially adopted plan. Without an officially prepared and adopted master plan, there would be a high probability that local decisions affecting land use would be regarded as arbitrary and subject to litigation. Therefore, the master plan is more than an academic exercise. It is a necessary tool to insure the Arlington Township community develops consistent with the vision communicated by its residents.

What is the legal basis for preparing and updating a master plan?

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act was signed by the governor and enacted as Public Act 33 of 2008. Prior to 2008, each municipal type (cities/villages, townships, and counties) had their own planning act outlining the different procedures for preparing and adopting a master plan. Now all municipalities are authorized to undertake a master plan using the same procedures. Arlington Township is updating its plan under the provisions of PA 33 of 2008.

Why is Arlington Township doing this now?

The answer is simple. It's required by law. Per PA 33 of 2008 all municipalities are required to review its masterplan every 5 years. The Arlington Township's most recent land use plan was adopted in 2007. It was the product of a township wide community survey, asking opinions on a variety of development issues, such as what type of character would residents want to see preserved. The survey provided much of the basis upon which the current plan was formulated.

What process for community input was used in updating the plan?

In anticipation of updating the 2007 plan, the township planning commission sent out another community attitude survey in 2016. The survey was sent out to 1088 property owners. A total of 318 were returned, 257 by residents and 61 by nonresidents. This provided a good foundation upon which to formulate land use policies.

The top five concerns expressed by residents were 1) lack of employment opportunities, 2) condition of roads, 3) the lack of parks and recreation, 4) government communication, and 5) utilities. The top five concerns expressed by nonresidents were 1) lack of employment opportunities, 2) availability of senior services, 3) condition of roads, 4) utilities and 5) government communication. It's interesting to note that out of 20 quality of life criteria listed in the survey, both residents and nonresidents picked the same four in their top five.

On the positive side, both residents and nonresidents felt strongly that preservation of the township's rural character is very important. What this can mean is the master plan does **not** promote significant residential, commercial, and industrial development while retaining the township's rural character. It concentrates on preserving agriculture. Most residents would gladly trade a reasonable commute to work if it meant coming home to a rural setting.

One of the concerns expressed by both residents and nonresidents was the lack of utilities. To be clear, this does not mean municipal water and sewer. The availability of water and sewer would certainly challenge the ability to remain rural. Utilities in this case mean internet access, natural gas, cable for internet access. Having these available would not threaten rural character of the township

In addition to the resident input provided in the community survey, residents will also have an opportunity to express their opinions at a public hearing. A public hearing, advertised to the entire township, will be held by the planning commission after the draft of the plan is sent to the township board for review. In

addition, a draft of the land use plan will be sent to adjacent communities as well as utilities for their input.

The Natural Environment: Features Needing Protection

Wetlands

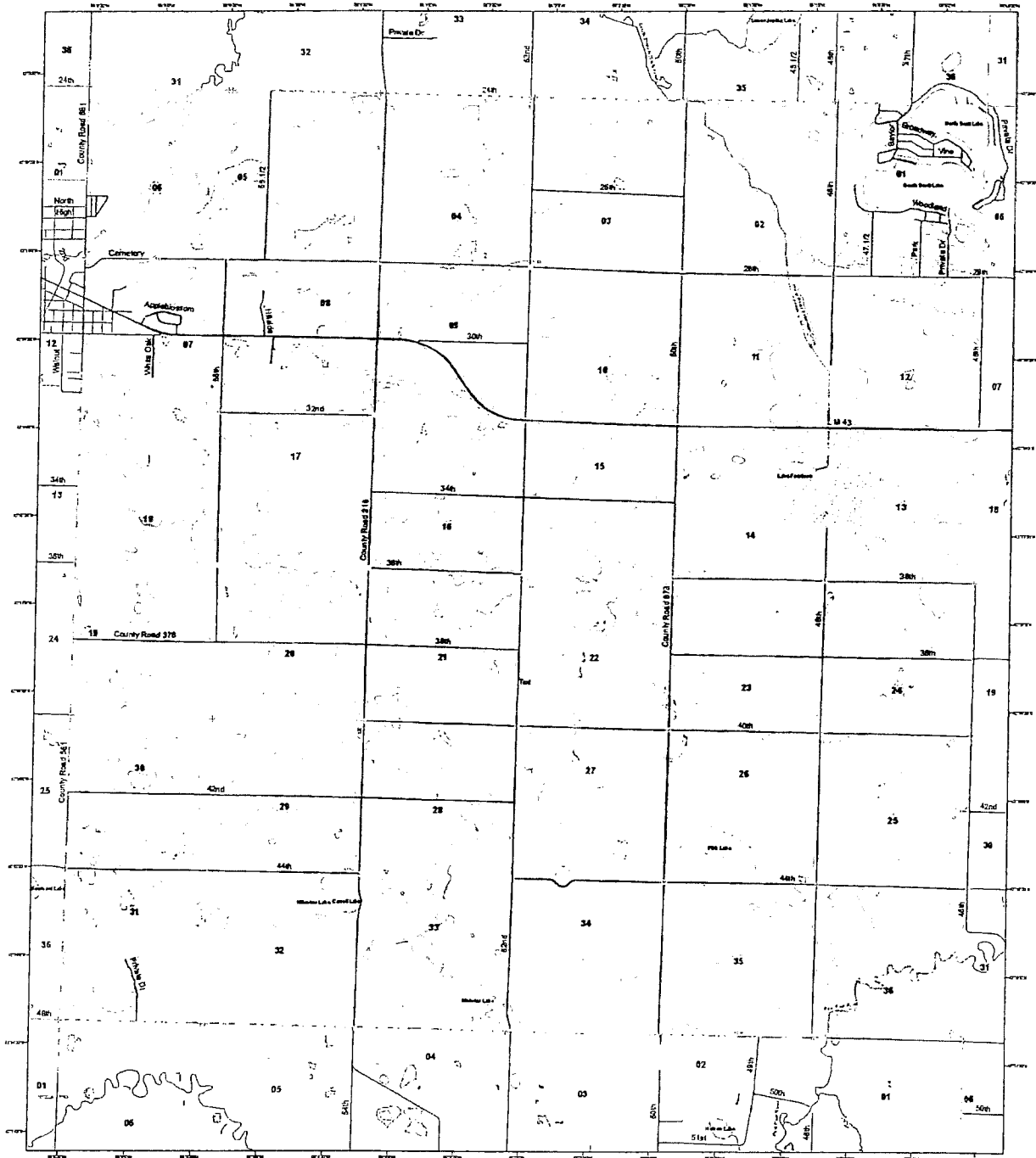
The term “wetlands” is defined as “land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as swamp, marsh, or bog”. Wetlands are often found between open water and upland areas. They are one of the largest contributors to good water quality by filtering run-off water or rain water before it enters an aquifer.

In the past, wetlands have been looked upon as wastelands, sources of mosquitoes and unpleasant odors. Now they are recognized as serving the function of “kidneys” with their ability to cleanse run-off of potential harmful nutrients before recharging the ground water supply. There are wetlands scattered throughout the township and are estimated to amount to about 200 acres.

Wildlife Corridors

A wildlife corridor is a continuous natural protected pathway along which native wildlife species can move in relative security between high quality natural wildlife habitats. The land through which wildlife must pass when passing between habitats may consist of residentially developed areas and public road rights-of-way. These corridors work best when they are sparsely developed.

The various wildlife corridors located throughout the township typically follow natural drainage corridors. Although these areas are difficult to develop care should be taken preserve these valuable areas whenever possible.

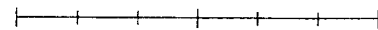


Arlington Township Soil Type Map, 2006



VN Buren County GIS, 2006
219 Paw Paw St
Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 657-8243
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0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Soil Type	
arlingtn	muck
SOIL_TYPE	mucky peat
	sand
complex	sandy loam
loam	silt loam
loamy fine sand	silty clay loam
loamy sand	

Water Quality

Perhaps there is no more important element to quality of life issues than the availability of clean water for human consumption. Michigan has seen several cases where municipal and private water supplies have been contaminated by chemicals. The most recent issue has been the discovery of PFAs, and acronym for a series of chemicals not found in the natural environment. These chemicals are used in some industrial processes and were discovered in public water supplies and private wells. The suspected cause has been leakage from sanitary landfills.

There are no landfills in the township but there are pits relating to sand and gravel mining. These pits are below grade and thus closer to the water table. The intentional or inadvertent dumping of household waste, industrial cleaning supplies, gasoline or oil-based waste or farm chemicals poured on land or in pits can easily pose a hazard to aquifers and public health. Once discovered, ground water contamination can have an extraordinary impact on health and property values of a community

Surface water, particularly lakes, are also vulnerable to intensification of land use adjacent to bodies of water. Lakes have inordinate value as recreational and aesthetic resources, as demonstrated by the demand for lake front or lake access property. The danger is intensification of development around lakes caused by the run-off of nutrients generated by use of fertilizers, storm water run-off, and poor septic system management.

The use of the site plan review process as part of the township zoning ordinance allows the township to require new development to have effective storm water management from impervious surfaces. These are constructed surfaces such as rooftops, roads, and parking areas covered by impenetrable surfaces such as asphalt. These materials seal surfaces, repel water, and prevent precipitation and snow melt from infiltrating soils. With greater run-off, the amount of water that is able to filter down into the groundwater supply becomes smaller and smaller. Greater run-off may also lead to temporary flooding. Stormwater management is an important component to maintaining precious natural resources of groundwater and surface water.

Agricultural Lands

Farming Economy

Maintaining a viable agricultural economy goes hand in hand with maintaining rural character, valued highly by residents and nonresidents alike. Therefore, it's no surprise that Van Buren County's economy is driven by agriculture, accounting for over 70% of its farmland in crops. In 2007, Van Buren County ranked first in the state of Michigan and in the nation in blueberry production. Five years later it was still number one in both the state and the nation with about with about 8,500 acres or just over 13 square miles given over to blueberry crops. This because the soils are naturally acidic, and are often called "blueberry soils". The county also benefits from the proximity to Lake Michigan which makes the environment cooler in warm weather and warmer in cold weather.

In 2007, there were 1232 farms in Van Buren County; in 2012 there were 1113, a decrease of about 10%. The average size of a farm in 2007 was 150 acres; in 2012 it was nearly the same at 157 acres. In 2007, the average age of the principal operator was 55; in 2012 it was 59.

More needs to be said about this. It is likely that in 2019 the average age of principal operator grew older. Aging farmers is far from being unique to Van Buren County. But there are ramifications to this phenomenon and they relate to development. The question becomes "what to do with the family farm when no one else in the family is interested in farming"? The popularity of farming as an occupation has been declining for decades.

In addition, a farmer views the farm as his or her retirement income. This means that someone has to buy it when it comes time to retire. If no one in the family or the community is interested in purchasing it, the farmer looks to other resources for the purchase. These other resources frequently are developers or agents that want to split off lots for residential development, often resulting in development

pressure. The minimum size of a lot in the A Agriculture District is two acres with 200 feet of road frontage. This may prove to be problematic in preserving the rural character Arlington Township as well as supporting existing agricultural operations.

Van Buren County remains a community of family owned farms. Overall this is a plus given that family owned farms are tied to the community far more than corporate owned farms. Of course, the down side is the size of the farm and the resulting income from the produce and animals sold. In 2007 the market value of farm products sold was \$141,000; in 2012 it was \$175,000, an increase of 24%. However, the average net cash farm income in 2012 from the average farm was \$42,826, not including an average government payment of about \$10,000.

Implications for Development.

There are challenges presented to maintaining agriculture as the central component of Van Buren County's and Arlington Township's economy. These challenges come in the form of scattered development pressure, namely residential development. Successful farming often needs to get larger in order to remain economically viable. Uncontrolled residential and commercial growth prevent this from happening by a "halo" effect. This is the driving up of assessed values of land that now have houses on it, land that was suited to agriculture. Fragmentation of land suitable for farming will make it increasingly difficult for farming operations to remain viable.

Uncontrolled growth will also put a burden on additional services, such as schools that have to pick up students off regular routes. Fire and police protection will also be burdened.

Land suitable for farming is irreplaceable, particularly the "blueberry soils" in the county. The policies set out in a well-defined master plan can not only help to preserve agriculture but also help retain the rural character of Arlington Township.

Farmland Preservation

Given the central issue that farmland is to the economy and quality of life in Arlington Township, a viable farmland preservation policy should be considered as a central component in the updated master plan.

A number of statistics relating to agriculture in Van Buren County were discussed earlier in this narrative. The statistics are also representative of Arlington Township. Statistics relating to growth, particularly residential, will be forthcoming in this narrative. They will show that farmland preservation efforts have been mixed, suggesting that more can be done. Adopting a master plan that seeks to preserve agriculture is important to the future of the township. There are several benefits of such a policy including:

Economic

- Strengthens the agricultural economy
- Strengthens the total economy through diversification
- Lowers infrastructure costs to taxpayers
- Increases property values
- Provides a long-term business environment for agriculture
- Allows opportunities for organic farming

Environmental

- Controls flooding and erosion
- Protects water quality
- Provides wildlife habitat
- Preserves land, a non-renewable resource
- Retains natural character
- Protects drinking water and aquifer recharge areas
- Preserves scenic open space

Social

- Provides a local and fresh food supply, including organic produce
- Provides recreational opportunities
- Provides a future for young farmers
- Reduces traffic congestion
- Encourages a sense of community

Demography and Housing

Population Growth

When the last master plan was adopted, data from the 2010 US Census was not available. This narrative is able to provide demographic data from the 2010 census reports and in some cases provide current estimates of population. Overall, most communities in Van Buren County, as well as the county itself, witnessed **slow population growth**. A few communities even showed a slight population decline.

In 1990, Arlington's population was officially listed as 1,929. This was a modest 2.4% increase from 1980. From 1990 to 2000, the population grew to 2,075, an increase of 7.5 %. From 2000 to 2010, the population remained steady at 2,073, registering almost no growth. But that doesn't mean that there were no changes in the population. The senior population (65+) increased from 13.8% to 17% while the 0-17 age group essentially remained the same at 27%. The age group of 18-64 decreased from 58.4% to 55.6%. In summary:

- Township grew by 2.4% between 1980 and 1990;
- By 7.5% between 1990 and 2000;
- Almost no growth between 2000 and 2010.

The communities adjacent to Arlington Township exhibited similar trends, namely a slight aging of the population and a slight decrease in the school age cohort. No community exhibited large increases or decreases in population. Van Buren County itself had a total population of 76,263 in 2000, up from 70,060 in 1990. This was a growth of 8.8% However, the population in 2010 was 76,258, registering almost zero growth. The 2017 estimated population for the county was 75,353, or a growth of .2%.

- Van Buren County grew by 8.8% between 1990 and 2000;
- Almost no growth between 2000 and 2010;
- Only .2% from 2010 to 2017

Age Group Shifts

Even though there was minimal growth in Arlington Township, there were changes in the age group composition. The primary change was in the 65+ age group. **It increased from 12.1% in 2000 to 17% in 2010.** The remaining age groups remained essentially the same.

There were age group shifts in Van Buren County. **The 65+ age group increased from 12.3% in 2000 to 13.8% in 2010.** The 18-64 age group increased from 59.6% in 2000 to 60.7% in 2010. **The 0-17 age group decreased from 28% in 2000 to 25% in 2010.**

What are the implications of an ageing population? The logical answer is a demand for increased of senior services. This was evident in the community survey that was taken in 2015. It also means less disposable income for a community since many seniors are on fixed incomes. Also, support for school millage issues declines. In some communities, the single-family housing stock deteriorates because needed repairs are put off because of a lack of disposable income or just the inability to keep up with maintenance. Another result is that if there is little new housing construction, there are fewer opportunities for younger families to move into a community and therefore fewer opportunities for growth.

Factors Relating to Growth

Several factors influence population growth either negatively or positively. Here are some of the main ones.

1. Economic factors influence growth rates the most and these factors can play out on many scales, world, nation, state, and county included. Employment opportunities are the most important, namely finding gainful employment within a reasonable commuting distance.

In spite of Arlington Township being very rural in character, the category that employed the most township residents in 2010 was in the retail sector, most likely cashiering. This was followed by manufacturing, health care, education, hospitality, construction and #7, agriculture. Given the township's lack of commercially or industrially developed land, a safe conclusion would be that a very large percentage of township residents commute a fair distance to work.

The national and state economies have seen very low unemployment rates, with the trend starting in 2013 and continuing through the writing of this document. In spite of the strong economy, both the county and the township have seen only low to moderate growth. Evidence of this was seen in the .2% growth rate Van Buren County experienced from 2010 to 2107. Similarly the township has not seen a substantial number of new housing starts in the same period.

2. Schools are also a factor in growth. If the economy is a macro factor, schools are a micro factor. The quality of the school system is an important consideration for families moving into a community.

Arlington Township is mainly served by the Bangor Community School District. It has a preschool providing early childhood education. It also has an elementary school, middle school and high school. A Virtual Vantage Academy is also included in the school district. The Academy offers on-line classes to help students transition from high school to college. The school

district offers a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) curriculum. However, the students within the district fell below the state average for all students in proficiency scores, 27% for the district compared to 33% for the state. This may be due to being “underfunded”.

The southern tier of sections in the township is served by the Lawrence Public School District. There are two schools in the district, a K-6 elementary school and a combined middle and high school for grades 7-12. As of this writing, there are 399 students in K-6 and 348 in 7-12.

Serving Arlington Township as well as the entire county is the Van Buren Technology Center located in Lawrence. The Center offers 24 career and technology programs, 16 of which offer college credit. Programs include robotics, health care, fire science, and culinary arts. The Tech Center is highly regarded and viewed as an asset to the residents of the county.

3. Natural environment plays a role in determining where people live. Open space, natural features, buildable soils, and water supply all influence where families want to live. Arlington Township has an abundance of open space with much of it being used in viable agricultural operations.

Roughly the northern part of the township is included in the Black River Watershed and the southern part is part of the Paw Paw River Watershed, accounting for approximately 4,400 acres. Both watersheds have protection plans, with the Paw Paw Watershed having a high priority for protection and preservation because of its high percentage of its natural land cover remains in spite of increasing development pressure throughout the region.

Surface water in the form of lakes and streams are popular part of the natural environment. Arlington Township has a total of 265 acres of lake surface area, divided among six lakes, three in the Black River Watershed and three in the Paw Paw River Watershed. The largest of the six is South Scott Lake at 118 acres with North Scott Lake at 73 acres. Fisk Lake and Lake Fourteen have 30 and 20 acres respectively.

Lake development represents a number of challenges for natural resource management. For example, both North and South Scott Lakes are surrounded by a high density of detached single-family dwellings, many of which are on lots with a road frontage of 30 feet. Some of these lots are in old plats; others are on lots with metes and bounds descriptions. The density and development pressure in this area will continue to be a challenge for natural resource conservation, specifically maintaining water quality. This can easily become problematic for lake development without a sanitary sewer system.

With the exception of Section 1, the remainder of the township is in very low-density development. This includes agricultural lands, undeveloped land and woodlands. Uncultivated land and woodlands provide a variety environment for a variety of plants and animals. Other benefits include breeding and feeding areas for birds, insects and mammals, moderate the effects of winds and storms, absorb air pollutants, just look nice!

Housing

Arlington Township's very low density translates to single family detached dwelling units. In 2017, roughly 60% of the housing units were owner occupied, 14% were renter occupied, and the remainder classified as vacant. New housing starts largely consist of manufactured housing units. The median value of a single-family house in the township was \$120,000 and the average sale price was \$160,000.

Population growth is clearly a function of new housing starts. In spite of very low mortgage rates over the last 7-8 years, new housing starts have been slow. In 2018, it is estimated that there were less than 10 building permits issued for new housing units. The lack of public sanitary sewers will ensure that the township will be a single-family dwelling unit community.

With a limited number of new housing starts, it is important to preserve the stability of the current housing stock, if the township is to remain attractive to new families. This means enforcement of current housing and anti-bligh codes.

Goals and Objectives

Definitions of Goals and Objectives

A goal is a broad statement about the long-term expectation of what should happen as a result of the program, in this case the township land use planning program. An objective is a statement describing the results to be achieved and the manner in which they will be achieved.

For example, a family's goal may be to take a vacation in the next twelve months. That is the long-term expectation. The objectives will be specific actions needed to be taken to make the vacation possible. The most effective objectives are SMART which stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

To continue the example, saving \$100 per month for 12 months is an example of a SMART goal. It's specific, as in \$100 and 12 months. It's measurable, as in a specified amount of money each month. It's achievable, maybe. It's relevant in that the money saved is targeted to a vacation, and it's time-bound with a definite time limit (12 months).

Outcome objectives can be classified as short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term. For the purposes of this report, short-term will be within 12 months or less; intermediate-term will be within 1-3 years, and long-term will be within 4-5 years.

The successful implementation of the township's updated master plan must accommodate and adapt to the desires and values of its residents. Arlington Township will achieve these goals and objectives by employing appropriate policies and plans, including the township zoning ordinance as well as other ordinances consistent with Michigan enabling legislation.

Township-wide Goals

1. To create an optimum human environment for the current and future residents of Arlington Township, an environment that will meet their physical, social, and economic needs, while preserving the rural character of the community.
2. To preserve and promote rights of individual property owners while preserving the aesthetic character of the township
3. To relate land use to the natural characteristics of the land and the long-term needs of the township, rather than to short-term economic gain.

Agriculture Development and Preservation Goal

Preserve the agricultural economic base of the township and protect its productive farmland from incompatible development. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Periodically re-evaluate the zoning boundaries of the A Agriculture District to allow for expansions of existing agriculture operations. (long term)
2. Encourage specialty farms and agriculture recreation to enhance agriculture-tourism business opportunities such as “you-pick” operations, farmers markets, farm tours, corn-mazes, farm to table dining, and cannabis operations. (immediate)
3. In the event the township receives a request for a single-family residential development via site condominium development, encourage the use of cluster development zoning. (long term)

Residential Development Goal

Within the overarching goal of maintaining the township’s rural character, encourage a variety of **affordable** residential dwelling types in the geographic areas best suited for residential development. The mix of housing will be consistent with the needs of the changing economy and population. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Give consideration to permitting “small house” development, thereby addressing affordable housing needs. (Intermediate)
2. Provide for smaller lot residential development near service centers, like the city of Bangor. (immediate)
3. Discourage lot divisions that create narrow frontage lots that exceed 1 to 4 width to depth ratios. (immediate)
4. Continue code enforcement efforts that address outdoor storage of junk and unsafe housing. (immediate)
5. Maintain the predominance of low density rural residential development as transitions between active farming and higher density residential development. (intermediate)
6. Protect rural residential development from incompatible nonresidential land uses. (immediate)

Commercial Development Goal

Provide for the basic service and shopping needs of residents by directing commercial development to suitable areas but in a manner that limits commercial strip development, minimizes conflicts with surrounding land use and prevents unnecessary conflicts with movement of traffic along M-43. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Promote high quality commercial development through the use of site plan review and special use permit standards. (immediate)
2. Discourage unsafe strip commercial development along M-43 by adopting access management standards. (intermediate)
3. Adopt “mixed-use” zoning which allows for combinations of commercial and light industrial uses within the same zoning district. (intermediate)
4. Allow for ample commercially zoned property near road intersections and other commercial uses, thereby encouraging new commercial development to locate near existing commercial development. (intermediate)
5. Utilize special use permit regulations of the zoning ordinance to address unique characteristics of commercial businesses that would contribute to the availability of services for township residents. (immediate)

6. Explore the strategy of permitting specialized commercial uses as uses subject to a special use permit in the A Agriculture District rather than pursue the rezoning of property. (immediate)

Industrial Development Goal

Encourage the location of non-polluting light industry in areas without damaging the environment, contaminating ground and surface water, spoiling the scenic beauty of the township, or overburdening local roads. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Recognize that promoting agribusiness can legitimately be part of expanding the township's industrial base. (immediate)
2. Allow for industrial uses that do not require large quantities of ground water usage and waste disposal (intermediate)
3. Zone for industrial uses as close to municipal services as possible, such as electric, gas, and solid waste services. (intermediate)
4. Utilize site plan review and special use permit standards that require loading and unloading at the rear of the building, attractive landscaping and buffers for nonindustrial uses that may be adjacent. (immediate)
5. Develop a commercial and industrial mixed-use zoning district which would form symbiotic relationships between businesses.

Transportation Goal

Preserve the traffic carrying capacity of roadways within the township to minimize costly improvements, minimize pedestrian and bicycle conflicts with vehicles, and reduce vehicular crashes. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Undertake a M-43 corridor plan to encourage safe driveway spacing and preserve the rural vistas of the roadway. (intermediate)
2. Adopt an access management plan along M-43 to minimize driveways and establish ample setbacks for businesses to permit ROW expansion for possible road widening. (intermediate)

3. Prohibit flag lot development along roadways to reduce driveway conflicts
4. Require site plan review by the Van Buren County Road Commission for all nonresidential development and for residential development that may have sight line limitations, such as curves and grades. (immediate)

Environment Goal

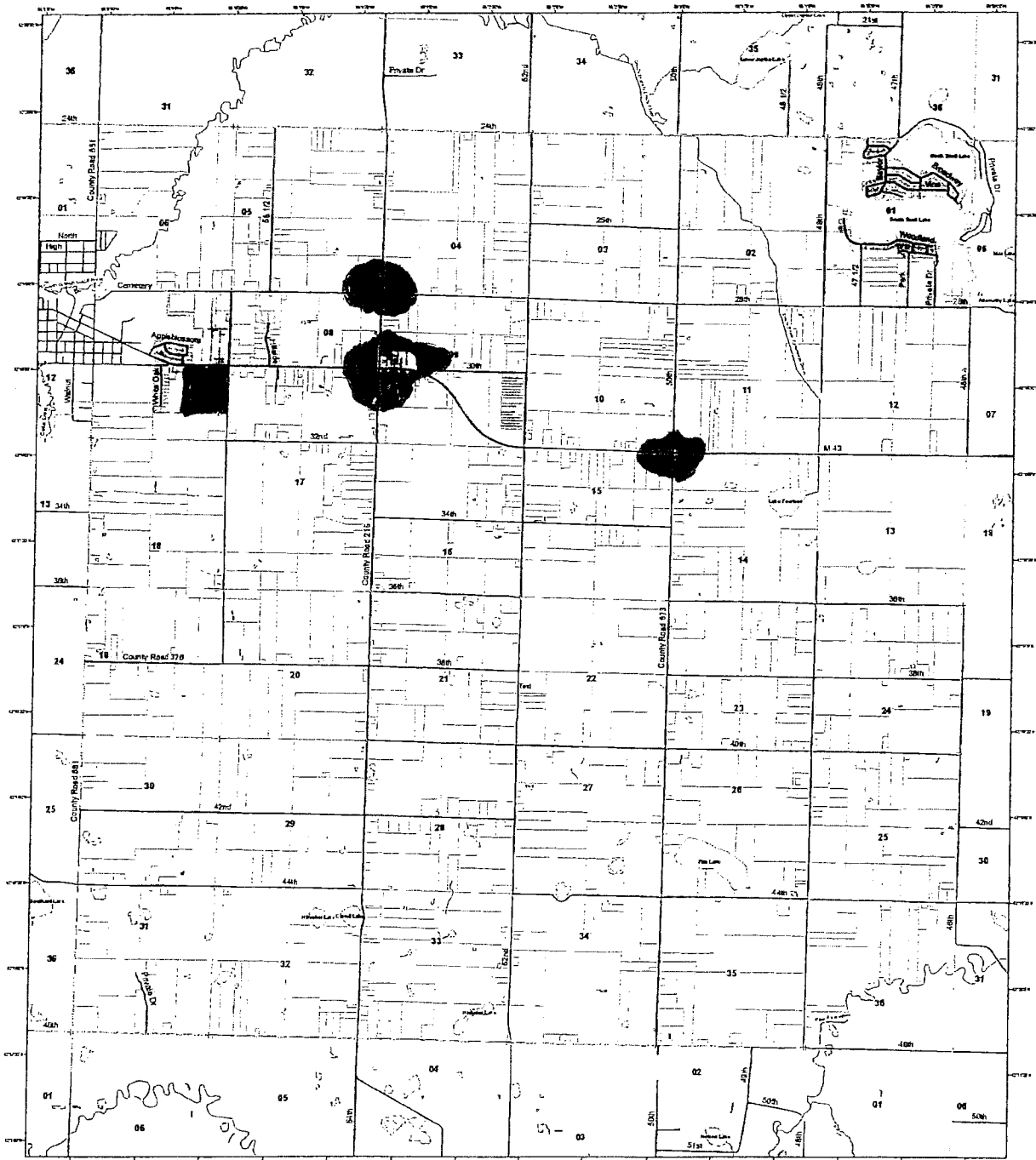
The environment and natural beauty of the township must be protected. New development must be done in a manner that reduces the risk for soil erosion, flooding, and the natural drainage network. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Ensure that any land development protects natural features, such as wetlands, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation through the process of site plan review and special use permit authorization. (intermediate)
2. Protect known wildlife corridors and areas of natural habitat through the site plan review and approval process. (immediate)
3. Require that new development with large areas of impervious surface have storm water detention and retention systems approved by the Van Buren County Drain Commissioner. (immediate)

Governmental Administration Goal

Administer governmental services relating to land use in a timely and legally sound manner. This goal will be reached by pursuing the following objectives:

1. Always make sure that rezoning decisions are based upon the policies contained in the official land use plan. (immediate)
2. Update the current zoning ordinance to reflect the many amendments adopted and to reflect current development standards. (immediate)
3. Follow recommended public hearing and administrative procedures prepared by the township attorney to ensure minimal litigation exposure. (immediate)
4. Review the current land use plan every 5 years. (long-term)



Arlington Township Master Plan 2019-2025



VN Buren County GIS, 2006
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www.vbco.org

- Agriculture
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Office/Commercial, Light Industrial



Discussion of the Revised Master Plan

The proposed master plan remains consistent with the values and opinions of township residents (and non-residents, but either land owners or business owners) as expressed in surveys conducted in 2007 and 2016. As seen from the housing and demographic analysis discussed previously, the last eight years have seen little change in the desire of residents to maintain the rural character of their community. It's obvious that rural character does not mean large scale farming operations and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO's). It often includes hobby farming, orchards, and organic farms. But it also means open space, wildlife habitat, wooded areas, and wetlands. Plus, it affords opportunities to be outdoors and listen to the sounds of nature.

The future master plan's vision is the next 5-6 years, anticipating that the plan will be reviewed consistent with the requirements of the Michigan Planning Act. That vision makes a compelling case for preservation of agriculture and open space, thus remaining consistent with the land use patterns of the previous master plan.

Agriculture and Very Low Residential Development

The 2019 land use plan proposes fully 20 square miles of land within the township to be in agriculture and open space. The past few years have seen requests for new businesses that may have tangential relationships to agriculture. These include the manufacture of wood products, wineries, solar farms, and trucking operations. Often agriculture areas have commercial and industrial uses provided that they support agriculture. Some farms have integrated businesses as part of the total farming operation. These may include cider mills, wineries, corn maze, and farm to table restaurants.

If the township wishes to expand its economic base, thereby creating jobs and increasing tax base, the challenge will be to assess each case and determine if it can fit into the goal of the land use plan and maintain the township's rural character. The site plan review and special use permit provisions of the zoning ordinance are valuable tools with which to establish conditions, thereby ensuring

compatibility with adjacent property. Nevertheless, the long-term view of maintaining rural character should be paramount in addressing these situations.

Perhaps the best example of job expansion and tax base creation is the decision by the township to permit all components of the medical marijuana industry to locate in Arlington Township. There are two aspects of the industry that are allowed by special use permit in the A Agriculture zoning district. These are growing operations and processing operations. Typically growing and processing operations are on the same site. Other aspects of the industry, namely quality control laboratories, provisioning or sales facilities, and transport facilities, are permitted in other areas of the township and will be addressed later in the report.

Medical marijuana is a specialized agriculture industry. It uses open and enclosed areas to grow the product while also processing the plants, usually into oil-based products. It can be classified as an intensive operation, meaning a large volume of plants can be grown in a relatively small area. There is potential job creation and increase in tax base with a relatively low demand for services. With safeguards established through the site plan review process and the issuance of a special use permit, these uses can contribute much to the township while maintaining the rural character of the community.

Included in the land area planned for agriculture is large lot single family development. This equates to a minimum lot area of one acre with a minimum road frontage of 150 feet. Therefore, someone wanting to build a rural non-farm house in an area planned and zoned for agriculture would request a zoning change to the R-3 Very Low Residential District. The rezoning request would be in compliance with the policies of the land use plan.

Low Density Residential Development

Arlington Township is overwhelmingly a single family detached housing community. New housing starts consist largely of manufactured housing. The R-2 zoning district allows about 2.5 units per acre, with a minimum lot area of 17,000 square feet and minimum lot frontage of 100 feet. Without municipal sewer this

density is relatively high for a rural community. Therefore, this density is planned for those areas most accessible to services, namely the city of Bangor.

Medium Density Residential Land Use

The area near North Scott Lake and South Scott Lake are among those areas planned for the Medium Density Residential category. This category corresponds to the R-2 Single and Two Family Residential zoning district. The density for single family development is about 2.5 units per acre but for duplex development, the density is about 3.6 units per acre.

The existing development around both lakes likely exceeds 4 units per acre, given that it largely consists for old plats and metes and bounds descriptions. This is high for an area without sanitary sewer. Use of fertilizer and poor management of individual septic systems can threaten the water quality of the lake. Overbuilding on a lot, namely adding bedrooms to an existing house, also can threaten lake viability by stressing the capacity of the septic system and the quality of the water. Attempts to increase the residential density around the lakes, by whatever means, should be resisted.

Commercial/Mixed Land Use

The proposed allocation of land planned for commercial development represents a departure from the 2010 land use plan. The intent is to provide the township with more flexibility in making decisions related to zoning administration. The 2019 plan deviates from the 2010 in two ways.

First, instead of drawing finite lines on a map showing areas planned for commercial development, it draws a generalized circle around an area suggesting that any area within the circle may be considered for commercial development. This approach also has the advantage of clearly distinguishing it from the official zoning map, since the plan is often confused with the zoning map. An approach like this is feasible, given that the township has good discretionary tools at its disposal, namely site plan review and special use permit provisions.

Second, the category also contains light industrial uses. This recognizes that current land development practices already integrate both uses in a development, even within the same building. Ideally, the township should provide an area for industrial development. Often this is done by allocating a specific area for industrial development. This approach takes the pressure off the township by including light industrial development in a mixed office/ commercial/industrial land use category. If adopted in its current form, a mixed office/ commercial/industrial zoning district would have to be adopted to implement this concept.

As a follow-up to the discussion of the medical marijuana industry, the dispensing, inspection via laboratory facilities, and the transportation components of the industry would be permitted in this category.

Note: the policy of permitting **recreational** marijuana facilities in the township has not yet been addressed.

Master Plan Implementation

The primary mechanism for implementing the policies contained in the revised master plan is the zoning ordinance. There are other ordinances available to the township such as noise and blight ordinances, but there is no question that the workhorse is the zoning ordinance.

The zoning ordinance consists of two parts, the zoning text or the wording of ordinance and the zoning map. The latter actually applies the regulations contained in the text to specific properties throughout the township. Every parcel or lot in the township has been designated with a specific zoning district and subject to the regulations of that district.

Given its importance to carrying out the policies contained in the plan, it's critical that the zoning ordinance be kept current. Over the course of the last several months, the township has witnessed a significant growth in demand for new business. This has resulted in a number of zoning amendments adopted to ensure

that the new development is consistent with the township's value of maintaining a rural character. These amendments have been "tacked-on" and have not been integrated into the body of the zoning ordinance text. This needs to happen for the sake of effective zoning administration and public transparency.

During this zoning text updating process, the entire zoning ordinance should be given a comprehensive review to ensure that all of its sections are current and meet proper legally tested standards. This process should begin shortly after the revised master plan has been adopted as official township land use policy.

APPENDIX

Draft resolution Board of Trustees approval of the revised plan

Draft letter of transmittal of plan to adjacent communities and utilities

Draft resolution Planning Commission adoption of the revised plan

Arlington Township Board of Trustees
Approval Resolution
Master Plan Update

WHEREAS, the Arlington Township Planning Commission has been established pursuant to the Michigan Planning Commission Act, PA 33 of 2008; and:

WHEREAS, the Arlington Township Planning Commission had during calendar years 2018 and 2019 reviewed the 2010 Master Land Use Plan and prepared an updated text and revised future land use plan map for the purpose of guiding orderly growth; and

WHEREAS, the Arlington Township Board of Trustees has been kept informed during the process of preparing the revised plan and has reviewed the updated text and revised future land use plan map:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Arlington Township Board of Trustees approves the updated text and revised future land use plan map and refers it back the Arlington Township Planning Commission for distribution of the plan and map to the required governmental units and public utilities for comment and, once received, to hold at least one (1) public hearing to gather comments before adopting the revised text and map.

Resolved this _____ day of _____ 2019 at regular meeting of the Arlington Township Board of Trustees

Model Letter of Transmittal
Updated Master Plan for Arlington Township
All Adjacent Communities and Public Utilities

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2019 updated master plan for Arlington Township. It represents a revision of the 2010 land use plan and is a reflection of a 2016 community survey

The plan has been approved by the Arlington Township Board of Trustees. However, before the Planning Commission can adopt the plan it must be sent out for review to all adjacent communities and public utilities serving the township. Pursuant to the Michigan Planning Act PA 33 of 2008, those reviewing the plan have _____ days to submit their comments to the Planning Commission. Once the review time has expired, the Arlington Township Planning Commission will hold a minimum of one public hearing and invite comments from all interested parties.

The public hearing is scheduled for _____ 2019.

We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,

Planning Commission Chairman

Arlington Township Planning Commission
Adoption Resolution
Master Plan Update

WHEREAS the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006, as amended, stipulates that a zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare ...and to conserve the expenditure of funds for public improvements and services; and

WHEREAS, Arlington Township Planning Commission has during the calendar years of 2018 and 2019 reviewed the 2010 Master Land Use Plan and prepared and updated text and revised future land use plan map for the purpose of guiding orderly and efficient future growth and development of Arlington Township; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Michigan Planning Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, published notices of a public hearing, inviting all abutting municipalities and interested parties to attend and provide comments on the proposed updated Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing was held on _____, and public comments were heard; and

WHEREAS, the Arlington Township Planning Commission has given due consideration to the public comments and filed the public comments with the township clerk:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Arlington Township Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the Arlington Township Master Plan Update

Resolved this _____ day of _____ 2019 at a regular meeting of the Arlington Township Planning Commission