

Chapter Four COORDINATED PUBLIC SERVICES

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the planned pattern of land use throughout the township. Chapter Four discusses the public services strategy in coordination with the planned pattern of land use. The character and feasibility of land use and development is influenced by the extent to which public services are available. In addition, the character of public services can directly impact the perceived quality of life in the community.

An important principle of the Future Land Use Strategy is that no new development should occur in the township unless public services are adequate to meet the needs of that new development.

On the other hand, public service improvements and the increased development that may result from such improvements should not jeopardize the township's preservation interests and commitment to managed growth and development. Thus, it is important that future public service improvements be coordinated with the planned pattern of future land use as described in Chapter Three.

Circulation and "Complete Streets"

As growth and development occurs, demands on the road network will increase. The additional development anticipated in this Plan will result in higher traffic levels. This increased traffic may lessen the level of service along some of the township's road segments. Conversely, it must be recognized that road improvements may well attract new development which, in turn, will place additional demands on the road network.

The township's road infrastructure currently fulfills its function reasonably well for vehicular traffic. This is due, in large part, to the existing low development density throughout most of the township and the presence of M-25 along with important paved thoroughfares such as State Park Road and Oak Beach Road.

However, opportunities for safe pedestrian and non-motorized travel are comparatively limited. Safe pedestrian and non-motorized travel have received greater and greater focus within the planning arena, on local, regional, state, and federal levels. The provision of opportunities for safe and comprehensive pedestrian and non-motorized travel has been found to encourage a healthier population, provide alternative means of recreation, and lessen congestion, air pollution, and the consumption of fossil fuels. The importance of safe and comprehensive pedestrian and non-motorized travel led to the Michigan Legislature to amend the Planning Enabling Act in 2010 to require a "complete streets" element in a master plan. The automobile as the sole design factor for roads is no longer the "norm."

"Complete streets" generally refers to the design of roads that takes into account the circulation needs of all potential users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users. The "complete streets" program emphasizes safety along roads for all users and users of all age groups. While recognizing that there is no single "complete streets" design solution that applies to all roads in all communities, the program emphasizes the need for new roads to be designed, and existing roads be improved, to facilitate their safe and efficient use by all prospective users within the context of the particular community's needs and character.

As a rural community, implementation of a "complete streets" program is different than that of an urban center such as in the case of Caseville. While an urban community may pursue sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, bus lanes, convenient public transportation stops, median islands, frequent and well-marked crosswalks, and other measures, rural communities such as Lake Township typically have fewer options and frequently focus on paved shoulders. However, even in rural communities, the need and feasibility of implementing a wider scope of "complete streets" measures increases in the community's planned residential and non-residential development areas, such as along the M-25 corridor.

The Huron County Road Commission has jurisdiction over local public roads except for M-25 that is under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation. Still, the township has the opportunity to provide input regarding road maintenance, design and improvements.

Circulation/Complete Streets Policies:

1. Greatest priority for road improvements will be assigned to those road segments whose current conditions present imminent danger to the public health, safety, and welfare, such as in the case of road impasses and flooding.
2. Functional classification of roads will dictate the priority of improvements when all other conditions are generally equal. The functional importance of the roads in the township, from highest to lowest, is: a) M-25 and county primary roads, particularly those segments servicing the Future Land Use Strategy's Suburban Residential Areas and Commercial/Industrial Areas; b) county local roads, particularly those segments servicing the Future Land Use Strategy's Suburban Residential Areas and Commercial/Industrial Areas, but excluding roads in a platted subdivisions and similar neighborhood developments; and 3) minor roads, such as local subdivision roads and similar neighborhood roads.
3. No new roads or road extensions should be undertaken except upon a clear finding of need to ensure public safety and welfare or to provide access to new development projects, such as the provision of access to lots in new subdivisions.
4. All roads will be designed and constructed to ensure safety for all users and long-term structural integrity.
5. All proposed future road construction will be evaluated for local and regional impacts on traffic flow, congestion, public safety, and land use. New road construction will be coordinated with other local and regional road improvements to address traffic movement in a unified, regional, and comprehensive manner.
6. The township will explore the development of a non-motorized circulation plan to encourage the provision of trails and linkages between neighborhoods, commercial centers, and other activity centers including in association with new residential developments. (See also "Recreation" section in this Chapter.)

7. The township will work with the Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation to incorporate "complete streets" measures in road construction, maintenance, and improvements.
8. The township will evaluate proposed developments within the context of "complete streets" to ensure all users are afforded opportunities for safe and efficient travel within and between development sites including neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.

Sewage Disposal and Potable Water

There is no public water or sewer service in Lake Township. Residents rely on private wells and septic systems for potable water and sewage disposal.

As development densities increase, so does the need for public sewer and water. Industrial, commercial, and higher density residential land uses generally have greater sewage disposal and potable water needs than can often be met by traditional on-site facilities. Failure to provide adequate sewer and water facilities to these land uses can lead to health and environmental problems while the premature provision of these services can lead to accelerated and unmanaged growth and development.

Many of the township soils present severe limitations to on-site sewage disposal. Improperly operating septic systems can contaminate potable groundwater resources, lakes, and streams and this poses a public health threat. This condition highlights the critical relationship between land use, development intensities, and adequate measures for sewage disposal and potable water.

Sewage Disposal and Potable Water Policies:

1. All on-site sewage disposal and potable water facilities will be constructed and maintained in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Huron County Public Health Department, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and other applicable public agencies.
2. The township will support the introduction and extension of public sewer and water in the planned Suburban Residential Areas, where initiated and funded by private sector interests and in coordination with the policies of the Suburban Residential Area.

3. Public sewer and water services will not be introduced into planned conservation and agricultural areas except in response to a significant public health threat and where no other practical means of addressing the threat is available.
4. Any introduction or expansion of public sewer and/or water service, and associated infrastructure, will occur in a phased and incremental manner to ensure effective growth management.
5. The introduction or expansion of public sewer and/or water should be based upon sound engineering principles and infrastructure design that will facilitate incremental increases in demand on the system while, at the same time, will not create excessive capacity that will encourage expansion into planned conservation, agricultural and rural residential areas.

Storm Water Management

As buildings, parking lots and other impermeable surfaces associated with new development cover more of the township’s land surface, the quantity of storm water runoff increases. The vegetated landscape that previously absorbed and slowed much of the water associated with storms is replaced by impervious surfaces. Unless specific preventive measures are taken, this condition encourages flooding and property damage, as well as the pollution of local water resources due to soil erosion, sedimentation, and other runoff impurities. The township’s water resources including Rush Lake and the Pigeon and Pinnebog Rivers, and their associated wetlands, are vulnerable to degradation.

Storm water management is not a development issue only. While development can pose increased flood potential, improper maintenance of county drains and roadside ditches, and filling of wetlands, can increase flood conditions in agricultural and rural areas as well.

Though flooding, soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution may originate from site-specific circumstances, their impact can extend to adjacent properties and more regional areas including other downstream communities. Storm water management aims to minimize flood conditions and control the quality and quantity of runoff that is discharged into the watershed system (streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes, etc.) from a development site.

Storm Water Management Policies:

- 1) Increased runoff that may occur as a result of development will be appropriately managed to ensure that the quality of the water runoff discharged does not undermine the integrity of the township’s surface and ground water resources.
- 2) Proposed land uses will not be permitted if the level of service currently provided by existing storm water management infrastructure and/or existing drainage patterns will be decreased unless necessary improvements to such infrastructure or natural drainage courses are first made.
- 3) New and existing land uses shall comply with all local, county, state, and federal regulations regarding storm water management and soil erosion, including the regulations of the Huron County Drain Commissioner, except where local officials determine less stringent standards in site-specific instances are appropriate, the standards will not undermine the public health, safety and welfare, and the application of the standards are within the jurisdiction of the township.
- 4) Storm water management will emphasize “green infrastructure” – planned networks of functioning landscapes and other open spaces that minimize alterations to the natural landscape and drainage systems and lessen the reliance on storm sewer and similar “grey” infrastructure.
- 5) All development will be reviewed within the context of its impact on drainage corridors and surface and groundwater resources, including wetlands, to ensure discharge practices do not undermine the environmental integrity of these resources.
- 6) The township will maintain communication with the Drain Commissioner and Road Commission regarding drains and roadside ditches in disrepair.

Emergency Services

Lake Township receives fire protection services from the Caseville Area Fire Protection Association, with the fire station being located in Caseville – about four road miles from the central region of the township. Police protection services are provided by the Huron County Sheriff’s Department, and the State Police during times of need and most particularly along the M-25 corridor. Ambulance service is provided to township residents by the Village of Elkton, located approximately 13 road miles south of M-25.

As community growth and land development increases, so does the demand for emergency services. It is important that the township ensure that adequate fire and police protection services are available to existing and future residents and property.

Common industry standards regarding fire protection suggest a maximum service radius from a fire station in low density residential areas of approximately 3 miles, and an approximately 3/4 to 2 mile service radius in commercial, industrial, and high-density residential areas. The vast majority of the township is not within these recommended ranges, with the western third receiving the best level of service.

There are no widely accepted standards for police protection levels and is frequently measured as a function of public satisfaction.

Police and Fire Protection Policies:

1. The township will require the provision of fire protection infrastructure (wells, water lines, etc.) for all new developments which are of such size and density that on-site infrastructure is considered critical. On-site fire protection infrastructure will generally be considered necessary for residential developments that concentrate building sites on lots of approximately one-half acre or smaller.
2. The township will continually monitor police and fire protection needs and services to minimize and/or prevent emergency services deficiencies and explore improving service levels. Considerations for expansion of services will include both the expansion of joint services with neighboring municipalities and the establishment of independent operations.

purposes decreases as housing and other land uses consume more of what was open space and potential outdoor recreation land. Recreation lands must be appropriately located within the community if ease of access is to be enhanced.

Recreation Policies:

1. The township will periodically monitor the extent to which area residents are satisfied with the scope and accessibility of recreation opportunities in the local area.
2. Should sufficient public sentiment warrant, the township will pursue the development of a state-approved five-year recreation action plan that provides a specific action plan aimed at providing needed township facilities and enable the township to compete for state and federal recreation grants.
3. Where there is a demonstrated demand for recreation improvements, as financial resources may become available, the township will strive to provide recreation facilities in a manner that recognizes the particular needs of its residents.
4. The township will encourage the provision of open space and recreation areas within future residential development projects such as platted and condominium subdivisions, to facilitate close-to-home recreation opportunities.
5. The township will make the short and long-term maintenance of recreation facilities a priority including adequate funding to support such efforts.
6. The township will ensure that all recreation facilities are accessible by all persons, including encouraging recreation sites in planned residential growth areas and facilitating access within each park site for all persons, irrespective of physical limitations of prospective users.

Recreation

Lake Township does not operate any recreation sites. Within the township, residents have available to them the Albert E. Sleeper State Park and the Rush Lake State Game Area, two county-operated Lake Huron access/beach sites (Philp Park and Oak Beach Park), a Michigan Department of Transportation roadside park (Thompson Park), and a private golf course. Outside of the township are the recreational facilities and services of the regional public school facilities and programs, the parks and recreation programs of nearby municipalities including Caseville, and the several other parks/campground facilities operated by Huron County Parks.

The well-being of the township's residents is affected by the availability of recreation opportunities, and the type and ease of accessibility to nearby opportunities are important.

Demands for recreation opportunities increase with population growth. Available land for recreational

Information and Technology Access

Our society has been dramatically molded by advanced technology including wireless communications, the internet and computer programs and applications. Availability of reliable cellular phone service and high-speed internet access (broadband) is now commonly linked to quality-of-life measures. Local, regional, and global economies rely heavily on these tools including persons and entrepreneurs who work from their home. Emergency services are greatly enhanced when access to such technology is readily available including the generation of and analysis of data to improve efficiency and levels of service.

Personal communications and leisure time are significantly linked to cellular phones and internet surfing. Personal and business research and consumer

purchasing through the internet is a regular practice in many households. Today, access to information and technology services is a priority among entrepreneurs, businesses and jobseekers.

Rural areas frequently experience a reduced level of access to reliable cellular service and high-speed internet. Lake Township is no different in this regard.

Technology and Information Access Policies:

1. The township will communicate with local broadband providers to explore impediments to enhanced services and options to improve services.
2. The township will communicate with local municipalities to explore joint efforts to attract broadband providers and improve services on a regional level and in a coordinated manner.
3. The township will periodically evaluate zoning provisions to minimize impediments to cellular service while, as the same time, ensuring potential negative impacts of cellular towers for area residents are minimized.

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