

New Buffalo Township

Master Plan

***New Buffalo Township
Planning Commission
Berrien County, Michigan***

***Adopted September 15, 1998
Amended June 8, 2005
Amended August 12, 2009***

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Formation of this Plan involved a community effort guided by the New Buffalo Township Planning Commission with support from the Township Board. Their assistance and commitment to the Township is gratefully acknowledged.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION.....	1
Plan Rationale and Process	2
Zoning and the Master Plan.....	3
CHAPTER 2-COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC PROFILE.....	4
Population	4
Age	6
Households.....	6
Education	7
Income	7
Employment.....	8
Housing.....	8
Existing Land Use.....	9
Natural Features	13
Roadway Transportation.....	14
CHAPTER 3-ISSUE IDENTIFICATION.....	15
Assets and Issues.....	15
Recommended Actions.....	18
CHAPTER 4-GOALS AND POLICIES	22
Vision Statement.....	22
Residential Development.....	22
Town Center Development.....	23
Industrial/Commercial Development.....	24
Transportation and Traffic Management.....	25
Natural Resources Protection and Agriculture.....	25
Community Services and Facilities.....	26
CHAPTER 5-FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS	28
Agricultural/Residential	29
Low Density Residential	29
Medium Density Residential	30
High Density Residential	31
Public/Semi-Public.....	31
Recreation	32
Mixed Use Town Center	32
Highway Commercial.....	33
General Commercial.....	33
Industrial	34
Natural Resource Protection-Overlay Zone.....	34
Use of The Master Plan	35

APPENDICES

Maps:

- Existing Land Use
- Township Centers Map
- Natural Features
- Future Land Use

A History of New Buffalo Township

2005 Amendment Motion

2009 Amendment Motion

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION



*Alonzo Bennet-
Original surveyor
who platted much of
New Buffalo
Township*

Located on the shore of Lake Michigan in the southwest corner of the State, New Buffalo Township is a diverse resort community blessed with an abundant supply of open space, farmland, forests, and a variety of housing styles. The Township's geographic location (close to Chicago and on the main route to Detroit), and "gateway" status to Michigan, coupled with the locally owned and run shops help define the local character. To maintain the quality of life and the essential rural character of the township, a guide is needed to determine how growth decisions will be made that reflect residents' desires regarding the use of land.

New Buffalo Township has experienced an increase in residential and commercial building permits in recent years. As growth pressure continues coupled with the desire to attract new industrial development and employment to the area, a plan for orderly development is needed. The Master Plan serves as the land development policy guide reflecting community goals and philosophies in relation to the use of land. The Plan reflects land-use policies for the unincorporated areas of the township (the Villages of Grand Beach and Michiana have statutory authority to develop their own master plan/zoning ordinance under State Law).

The New Buffalo Township Master Plan looks forward to a twenty year time horizon, from 1998 to 2018. Accordingly, the elements of the Master Plan are not meant to be accomplished in the short term, but rather serve as the guide to growth, providing direction for the development decisions that will confront the township.

The Master Plan serves as the land development policy guide reflecting community goals and philosophies in relation to the use of land.

PLAN RATIONALE AND PROCESS

The basic rationale of the Master Plan is outlined in the Township Planning Act (Act 168 of 1959) and the related Township Rural Zoning Act (Act 184 of 1943). Knowing the purpose of the Master Plan is important for a number of reasons:

- Provisions of the Plan must be based upon the Planning Enabling Act in order to pass careful scrutiny by a court of law;
- The purposes of the Act outline the basic intent of the Master Plan, including the subjects of planning efforts; and
- When formulating the Plan, it is important that the community understand the direction in which the Plan is heading, since the purposes can provide the basis for future goals and objectives.

The basic rationale of the Master Plan is outlined in the Township Planning Act (Act 168 of 1959) and the related Township Rural Zoning Act (Act 184 of 1943).

The Act specifically identifies the purpose of the Master Plan "to promote public health, safety and general welfare, to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; ... and consider the character of each township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and population development." These guidelines serve as the foundation for the intent and use of the Plan.

In developing the Master Plan a logical process was followed which included the following steps:

1. An analysis of existing trends and conditions;
2. Discussion of problems, trends, and potentials, resulting in the establishment of a consensus on community Goals and Objectives;
3. The preparation of technical studies and maps;
4. The development of alternative plans for community growth;
5. Discussion and development of a consensus on the desired alternative; and
6. Adoption of a Plan, according to the Planning statutes.



Preparation of the Plan involved a ten-month process including a Town Meeting in November, 1997, and a Public Hearing in June, 1998. Monthly meetings were held with the New Buffalo Township Planning Commission and discussions were held with the Township Board. The issues identified during the process are reflected in the goals, policies, and direction for future land use outlined in this Plan.

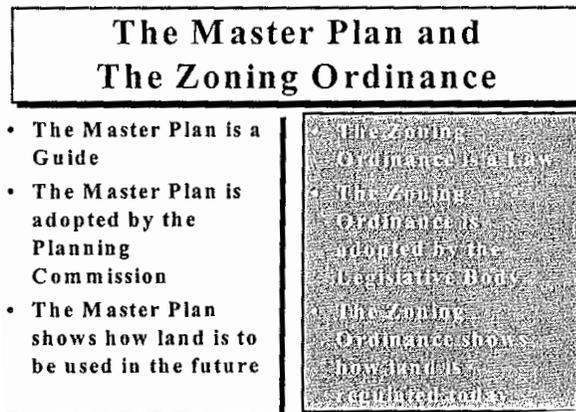
In addition, the adopted Plan will also involve:

1. Implementation of various Plan proposals, new zone districts, etc.; and
2. Periodic review and updating of the Plan as community conditions change; leading back to the first step of the planning process (see diagram above).

ZONING AND THE MASTER PLAN

There are important distinctions between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. While the Master Plan is a *guide* for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance *regulates* the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the township and its property owners.

Implementation of the Master Plan is realized through the Zoning Ordinance. Local control of land use (with some exceptions, such as certain state and federal land uses) is an accepted legal principle. Land use regulation is controlled through the separation of land into various use areas, called zoning districts. The rules governing these districts are contained in the Zoning Ordinance.



As a guide, the Plan is not meant to be rigidly administered; changing conditions may affect the assumptions used when the Plan was originally conceived. But changing conditions do not necessarily mean that the Plan must change. Rather, the township must examine those changes and decide if the conditions on which the Plan was based are still valid. If so, the Plan should be followed. However, as a general rule, the Master Plan should be reviewed by the community annually, and updated as necessary to reflect current land use trends and resident desires.

While the Master Plan is a guide for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present.

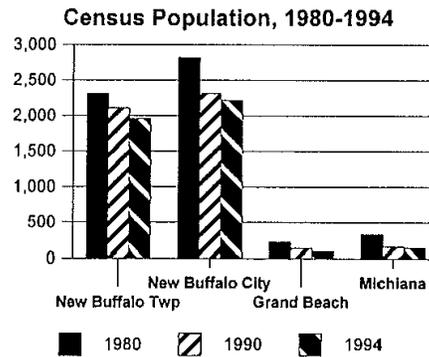
As a general rule, the Master Plan should be reviewed by the community annually, and updated as necessary to reflect current land use trends and resident desires.

Chapter 2

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC PROFILE

The influx of owners of year-round second houses in addition to the summer residents to New Buffalo Township and adjacent communities has created a number of different changes in the social and economic profile of the southwestern Michigan area. At first glance, for instance, the population of the township appears to be declining. The U.S. Census and Michigan Department of Management and Budget both base population numbers upon the number of year-round residents, not summer residents and second home owners.

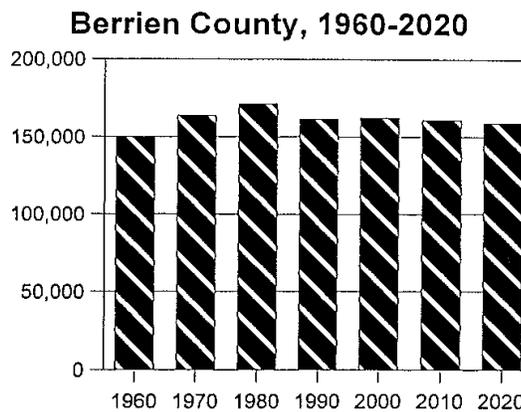
As social and economic trends are discussed in the following pages, it should be kept in mind that the data presented may not necessarily be representative of what is actually occurring in the community. Discussion of these trends is necessary in order to fully understand the issues that face New Buffalo Township.



Source: U.S. Census, Department of Management and Budget

POPULATION

The reported census population of New Buffalo Township has gradually decreased since 1980 when the total township population, excluding the villages of Michiana and Grand Beach, was 2,318. Between 1980 and 1990 the population of the township decreased by 9 percent, or 209 people. Michigan Department of Management and Budget (DMB) estimates show that this trend has continued, with the census population of the township continuing to decline by 7.3 percent between 1990 and 1994, a decrease of 155 people.



Source: U.S. Census, Department of Management and Budget

New Buffalo Township is not the only community experiencing these population changes, in fact, New Buffalo City as well as Grand Beach and Michiana villages have had similar declines. In 1980 the population of the City of New Buffalo was 2,821, by 1994 it was estimated to be at 2,217; a loss of 604 people or 21.4 percent. Grand Beach and Michiana villages have each had population declines nearing 56 percent, with losses of 126 and 186 people respectively.

Between 1980 and 1990 the population of the township decreased by 9 percent, or 209 people.

Another lakeshore community, Chikaming Township has experienced the same pattern of population loss. In 1980, the population of Chikaming was 4,302, in 1990 it had declined to 3,717. Nearly 14 percent of the township's year-round residents (585 people) had seemingly moved away. Changes between 1990 and 1994 were less dramatic, with only a 6 percent decline of 215 people. In contrast, Lake Charter Township has had population gains of 12 and 14 percent between 1980 and 1990, and 1990 to 1994 respectively, this township is to the north of Chikaming and may be influenced by the Benton Harbor area.

The summer residents and the multiple home owners who declare their residence elsewhere are not counted in the census and therefore are not included in the demographic data in this plan. Examination of the number of new homes constructed, average persons per household, and the number of seasonal residences in 1990, as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, can provide a more accurate estimate of the population of New Buffalo Township.

When seasonal housing units are multiplied by the average number of persons per household in 1990, an additional 982 people can be added to the 1990 population of the township; equaling 3,091 people ... a difference of sixty-eight (68) percent. Another 463 residents can be added to the township population since 1990 using the same methodology based on building permit data. As of 1998, roughly one-third (37 percent) of the population, or 1,321 New Buffalo Township residents, remain unaccounted for in Census numbers.

The disparity in population numbers grows when Grand Beach and Michiana villages are included in the calculations. As these are both lakefront communities, a greater portion of their respective populations are considered to be non-permanent, or seasonal. When these are added to New Buffalo Township nearly half (48 percent) of the population of these three communities is unaccounted for (2,385 people out of 4,953 in 1998).

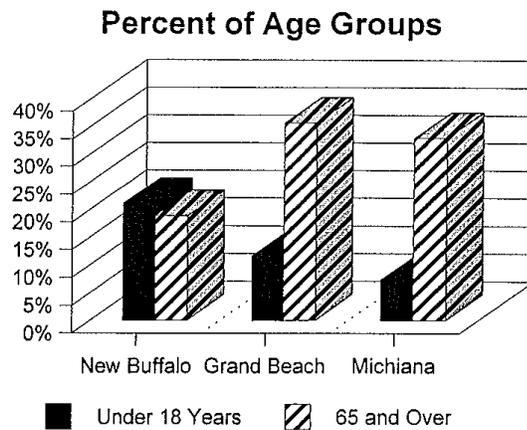
In addition, as discussed in the Township's *Plan for Planning* prepared in 1996, there are a number of factors which can further change the population of Berrien County and that of New Buffalo Township; including new home development, the creation and expansion of infrastructure,

new government policies, and the amount of land available for development.

AGE

According to census data, New Buffalo Township has a far greater percentage of young people than either the Village of Grand Beach or that of Michiana. In 1990, 21 percent of the population of New Buffalo Township was under the age of 18 while the percent of people of the same age group in Grand Beach totaled less than 12 percent. In Michiana only 7 percent of the population was under 18 years.

Additionally, there is a disproportionate number of people over the age of 65 in both villages as compared to the township.



Source: U.S Bureau of the Census

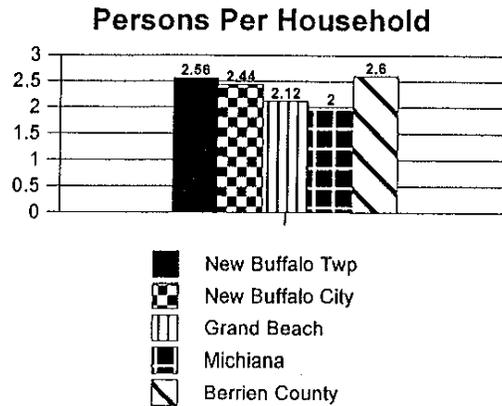
Communities which border Lake Michigan have experienced a large influx of retired persons who wish to live in prime vacation areas. The villages of Grand Beach and Michiana are no exception. While many Michigan residents chose to move "up north", above Clare, for a retirement area, many non-residents have chosen the southwest corner of the state as a retirement location. In addition, as transportation times have decreased, many workers and second home owners have chosen to commute over state lines for the benefit of lake shore living. The majority of the residents of New Buffalo Township, the City of New Buffalo, and the villages of Grand Beach and Michiana were not born in the State of Michigan. In fact, for every Michigan-born resident in New Buffalo there are four residents not native to the state. The City of New Buffalo has one Michigan-born resident for every five non-natives. Grand Beach has only 14 percent of its population having been born in Michigan, and only 6 percent of Michiana's population was born in this state. In contrast, 77.8 percent of the population of Michigan was born in Michigan, and in Berrien County 60.2 percent of the population is Michigan-born.

HOUSEHOLDS

New Buffalo households are made up of families, as evidenced by the greater number of persons under 18 than those 65 and over. When compared to surrounding communities, New Buffalo Township has a higher percentage of married-couple families. Sixty-three percent of the

total households in the township include married-couple families compared to approximately 56% percent found in New Buffalo City, Grand Beach Village, Michiana, and Chikaming Township.

The number of persons per household, likewise, supports that there is a strong family base found in New Buffalo. The graph on previous page illustrates the number of persons per household in the township, county and surrounding communities. The number of persons per household in Chikaming Township is similar to that of New Buffalo City, with 2.43 persons per household.



Source: U.S Bureau of the Census

EDUCATION

In 1990, the New Buffalo Township census population had a lower percentage than Berrien County or its adjacent lakeshore neighbors, of persons 25 years and over who had a high school diploma or higher. The percent of people 25 years and over in New Buffalo who had attained a high school diploma or higher was 70.9 percent, compared to 74.7 in the county and 79.2 in the City of New Buffalo. In addition, Grand Beach and Michiana had 71.6 and 86.8 percent, respectively, of those 25 years of older having attained a minimum of a high school diploma.

The large retired population of Grand Beach and Michiana coupled with the high cost of housing may explain the large number of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher. In 1990, 31 percent of those 25 years and over in Grand Beach had a minimum of a bachelor's degree, while Michiana had 35.3 percent with a bachelor's degree. The older population in these communities is well educated, likely had well-paying jobs and can afford to live in the expensive homes of Lake Michigan. The percent of college educated persons in New Buffalo was 17.9 percent in 1990.

INCOME

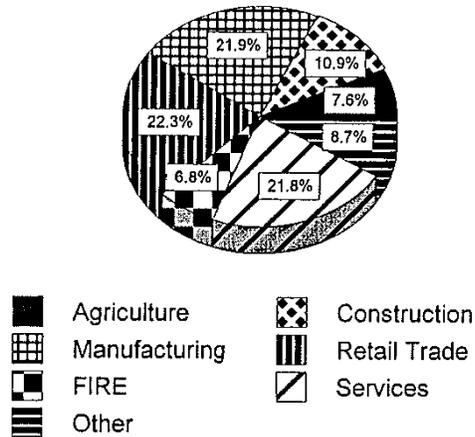
The median household income of New Buffalo Township residents was \$30,250 in 1990, only slightly higher than that of the City of New Buffalo (\$30,065). As may be expected due to the higher education levels, as well as the older population, in Grand Beach and Michiana the median household incomes of these communities was higher than that of the township or the city. The median household income of Grand Beach was

\$50,000 in 1990, while the median income of Michiana households was \$33,438.

EMPLOYMENT

The largest industry in New Buffalo Township is the retail trade industry which employs 22.3 percent of the work force of the township. The second and third largest employers, the service and manufacturing industries employ an equal share of the labor force, 21.8 and 21.9 percent, respectively. The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industry employs a considerable number of people for the size of the industry. Eight percent of those employed have farming, forestry or fishing occupations.

Employees by Industry

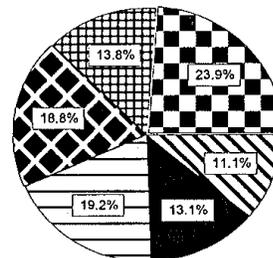


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The largest industry in New Buffalo Township is the retail trade industry which employs 22.3 percent of the work force of the township.

A large number of people who live within New Buffalo Township commute outside of the State of Michigan to go to work. According to the 1990 Census, more than one-third (37.4 percent) of all workers 16 years and over travel outside of Michigan. This number is greater than those who commute outside of New Buffalo City into Indiana and Illinois, 36.8 percent, to work. The percent of people who travel outside the State decreases dramatically as one travels north of New Buffalo. Less than 10 percent of workers 16 years and over travel outside of Michigan in Chikaming Township, and in Lake Charter Township this number is less than 3 percent. In Berrien County overall, 10.6 percent of the work force travels to another state.

Year Structure Built



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

A large number of people who live within New Buffalo Township commute outside of the State of Michigan to go to work. According to the 1990 Census, more than one-third (37.4 percent) of all workers 16 years and over travel outside of Michigan.

HOUSING

Housing within New Buffalo Township has grown at an equal rate since 1940. The greatest percent growth occurred between 1960 to 1969 when 236 housing units were constructed in the township,

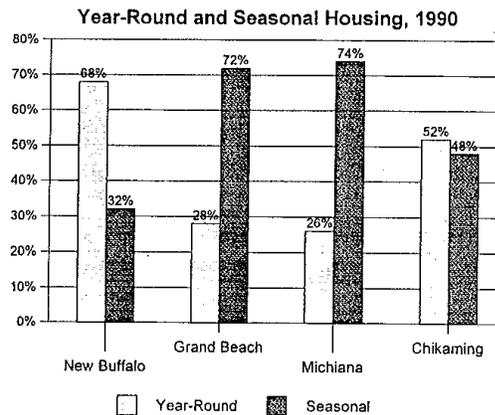
not including Grand Beach and Michiana villages. Although an overall decrease in the number of people for the past decade in New Buffalo was noted (-209), the number of homes built between 1980 and 1990 equaled 138; comprising approximately 11 percent of the total housing stock.

Construction activity since 1990 has increased within New Buffalo, however population numbers have continued to decrease. The Department of Management and Budget reported that New Buffalo Township lost 155 people between 1990 and 1994; yet during the same time period an additional 114 single family units were constructed, an increase of 8.5 percent.

The large number of new homes constructed have been for year-round use by non-residents. In 1990 the number of homes for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use composed thirty-two (32) percent of the total number of housing units in New Buffalo Township. Based on a recent land use survey, the majority of new residential development has occurred between Grand Beach and Michiana, as well as in the northwestern portion of New Buffalo. Continued new growth in these areas is likely only on a limited basis due to the availability of land.

The large number of new homes constructed have been for year-round use by non-residents.

According to the 1990 Census, seasonal housing units in communities adjacent to New Buffalo, such as Grand Beach and Michiana have a far greater percentage of seasonal homes, or homes for occasional use than in the township. Nearly three-quarters (3/4ths) of homes in Grand Beach and Michiana, 72 and 74 percent respectively, were reported by the Census to be used seasonally or occasionally and not as permanent residences (see graph) Chikaming Township has nearly half, 48 percent, of all housing for seasonal use. It may be observed that seasonal use is directly dependent upon lake frontage.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

EXISTING LAND USE

New Buffalo Township's location as well as its natural features have contributed to the way in which the township has evolved. New Buffalo Township is located in the southwestern corner of the State of Michigan. The Township's proximity to the Illinois and Indiana state border has promoted the creation of several significant transportation routes,

including 1-94, US-12, the C.S.X. Rail Road Line, and an Amtrak route. These transportation corridors have encouraged development associated with the transportation industry and have dictated the location of many uses within the township simply by their presence.

In addition, the natural features of New Buffalo, particularly the Lake Michigan shoreline, the Galien River, numerous creeks, and a rolling topography have attracted seasonal residents to the community, many of whom travel from the Chicago Metropolitan Area. Most homes in the township have been placed in locations which are best suited to take advantage of the natural views and settings of New Buffalo, while a majority of the commercial development in the township has occurred on major transportation routes.

Understanding the location of existing development can assist in determining future possibilities, potential liabilities, and may provide a new perspective to the citizens of New Buffalo about their township. Many areas are fully developed, such as along the lakeshore, and others are not, for instance to the east of 1-94. Agricultural lands contribute to the township economy and provide rural character; citizens will need to assess the importance of those lands to the community and whether preserving such areas will be a goal.

Residential

Residential development in New Buffalo Township may be divided into three distinct areas: along the Lake Michigan shoreline; between U.S-12/Red Arrow Highway and 1-94; and east of 1-94.

Lake Michigan Shoreline- The greatest concentration of single family homes can be found along Lake Michigan. These homes have been developed in several different phases and follow general development trends. The first part of lake shore development began in the northernmost portion of the township around Union Pier. These homes, apparently constructed during the 1920's as cottages and duplexes, are placed on small lots, and most have one level. New development and redevelopment of this area has been occurring, including a small multi-family condominium complex.

Camp Sokol was likely the next area to have been developed, or has remained a consistent use and has not been redeveloped. Camp Sokol is located to the south of the Union Pier cottages and contains a number of different cabins and bunkhouses with a club house and recreation area. This area appears to be simply for seasonal use.

Homes constructed between Camp Sokol and the City of New Buffalo, as well as the residential area between Grand Beach and Michiana, appear to be continually changing residential areas. Although these locations are

consistently residential in nature, what has changed is the type of structure on each site. Many homes have been built since the 1960's. However, these homes have since been added on to, remodeled or demolished in order to build larger, more expensive homes along the lake shore. Older homes appear to be either single level or bi-level, while new homes are generally three levels high with large picture windows designed to capture lakefront views. The area south of Camp Sokol is an attractive residential location offering views of Lake Michigan or the Galien River. New residential development is also occurring between Camp Sokol and Union Pier. Homes are being built on large lots as year-round residences .

Lastly, the newest trend in lake front development is represented by the Forest Beach community presently under construction. Located between New Buffalo and Grand Beach, Forest Beach is a gated community which contains estates, cottages, and villas. Forest Beach provides single and multiple family opportunities on a large acreage setting with multiple recreation areas, including a nature trail.

U.S.-12/Red Arrow Highway and I-94 - Development which has occurred between U.S.-12/Red Arrow Highway and I-94 differs in character from the shoreline development. East of U.S.-12 and Red Arrow Highway, single family homes are modest in size, of moderate density, well-maintained, mostly constructed since the 1960's and are adjacent to either the New Buffalo or Union Pier communities. Older homes are located off of Union Pier Road on 1st Lane and Community Hall Road. This small residential area has a great deal of charm as an older neighborhood. To add to this the old Union Pier School No.5 has been converted into a family home.

New residential development has been primarily concentrated along Galien River and in the southern portion of the township. A new development, the Whittaker Woods Golf Community, is currently in the infrastructure construction phase south of Wilson Road. In addition, an area for single family homes has been expanded near the corner of US-12 and Lubke Road and is known as Strawberry Hills. Strawberry Hills is adjacent to Judy's Motel and Mobile Home Park. There is one apartment complex within the township located between the Amtrak line and US-12.

East of I-94 - Homes located east of I-94 are lower in density than homes located to the west of the highway. Many of the residences located in this area are either present or former farmsteads. There are no large concentrations of residential development in this part of the township. Where land is not being used for agricultural purposes, the terrain is hilly with a large number of creek and river crossings, ravines, forests, and rural roads framed by overhanging tree canopies. One example of this may be found on the northern portion of Lakeside Road off of Union Pier Road.

Squaw Creek, South Branch of Squaw Creek, Blood Run, and several small tributaries travel throughout the eastern portion of New Buffalo Township. Several mailboxes and/or long dirt drives are found near these areas and may provide access to hunting cabins or residences, either seasonal or year-round.

Commercial

Commercial businesses are principally located around the major transportation route of US-12 and at the three interchanges of 1-94. The Township's position between Chicago and Gary's steel mills on one side and all of Michigan's lower peninsula on the other gives rise to heavy traffic. On an average day, over 30,000 vehicles enter, leave or pass through the township on 1-94. As many as 8,000 are commercial. Commercial establishments have developed which cater to the needs of truckers and motorists. Restaurants, truck stops, motels, gas stations, vehicle parts suppliers, mechanics, a truck driving school, and tow truck businesses have located at the Michigan/Indiana border and at the two interchanges.

One commercial location was identified within the township which appears to serve a market other than the highway traveler. Union Pier, located at the intersection of Union Pier Road and Red Arrow Highway, has developed as a commercial area which caters to seasonal and year-round residents. Although a post office and grocery store are provided in this area, other businesses include several art galleries, coffee shops, antique stores, unique furniture stores, and two inns; establishments usually associated with seasonal visitors and an affluent clientele.



*Sinclair Garage, Union Pier ca.
1937*

Other office, service, and retail establishments which cater to the needs of New Buffalo Township residents may be found in the City of New Buffalo or larger shopping locales such as Michigan City and Benton Harbor.

Commercial land uses not directly dependent upon a major transportation corridor include boat yards and golf courses. Two boat yards are located along the Red Arrow Highway near and on the Galien River and another is located at the south end of US-12. Two golf courses may be found in the township, one located south of Wilson Road and the other is a private course south of Marquette Drive.

Industrial

There are no identified concentrations of industrial development within New Buffalo Township. Isolated industrial uses within the township include a truss manufacturer, marine builder, tool and die company, steel castings company, a compressor manufacturer, and plastics company. These uses are primarily located along US-12 and Red Arrow Highway. The truss company is located in an agricultural area on Wilson Road and the marine builder is found south 1-94 on LaPorte Road.

Agricultural

Agricultural lands in New Buffalo Township, as mentioned earlier, are located in the eastern half of the township. Although some agricultural lands do exist west of 1-94 these are small parcels in comparison to the other, larger agricultural areas to the east. Corn and soybeans are the principal crops in the township, and there are several areas where cows, sheep, horses and llamas are raised. There was one intensive livestock operation identified as a piggery located near Squaw Creek south of Kruger Road.

Public/Quasi Public Lands

There were limited public lands identified within the township. Adjacent to the New Buffalo Township Hall is Memorial Park on Red Arrow Highway, and the publicly owned Galien River Sanitary Wastewater Treatment Facility located to the north of Memorial Park. The Glassman Road Park, is also located in this area adjacent to the Galien River. Across the Galien River from the treatment plant, the Galien River Access Site is managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

In addition, there is a water tower (owned by Chikaming Township) located at the end of Williams Court in Union Pier, several public utility sites throughout the township, Maudlin Cemetery on Lakeside Road, and a portion of Pine Grove Cemetery along US-12 in New Buffalo Township.

Three other locations were identified as being quasi-public uses; the E.C. Pete Wilkes Recreation Area / New Buffalo Rod and Gun Club between Galien River and Kruger Road, a church at the US-12/1-94 interchange, and the American Legion hall found near the corner of US-12 and Wilson Road.

Ironically, with Lake Michigan forming its western border, New Buffalo Township does not contain any substantial public access to the Lake. There is a small road-end beach at Townline Road.

NATURAL FEATURES

The existing natural features such as agricultural lands, forested areas, wetlands, and critical dunes have been identified and mapped as part of the planning program (see appendix). The inventory is based on information compiled by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Land and Water Management Division, Michigan Resource Information Services (MIRIS). The map information is based on 1978 data; however, it provides a useful overview of key natural features in relation to existing land use recorded at the time.

Overall, the map illustrates that vast portions of the unurbanized areas of the township contain forest land. This has been identified as an important natural attribute which adds to the overall character of the township. The forested areas coupled with the significant portions of land in agricultural production, comprise the vast majority of land found east of interstate I-94. Large wetland areas are found along the Galien River, primarily west of Red Arrow Highway. In addition, the Atlas of Critical Dunes (published in 1989) identifies the shoreline area located within Section 8, between Grand Beach and New Buffalo City as a Critical Dune Habitat. Planning considerations particularly for the wetland and critical dune areas will be necessary to minimize negative impact and to comply with State and Federal regulations.

ROADWAY TRANSPORTATION

New Buffalo Township contains three freeway interchange areas from I-94 (LaPorte Road, US-12, and Union Pier Road), six County Primary Roads (LaPorte between I-94 and New Buffalo City, Red Arrow Highway, Wilson Road, Kruger Road, Union Pier Road, and portions of Lakeside Road), and two State Highways (M-239 and US-12). Recent traffic counts have been compiled by the Berrien County Road Commission (November, 1997) for Red Arrow Highway and LaPorte Road. According to the latest 24 hour figures, Red Arrow Highway had 4,777 vehicle trips (1/4 mi. north of US-12), of which approximately 7.8% were commercial trips. For LaPorte Road, the 24 hour traffic count was 3582 vehicle trips of which 12.8% were commercial trips. According to the County Road Commission, roadways with commercial vehicle traffic of at least 8%-9% are generally considered commercial corridors. In addition, a 1994 State Survey of Interstate I-94 through New Buffalo Township revealed that average daily traffic (north and south bound) ranged from 28,000 to 31,000 vehicles per day with 23%-29% of this total commercial vehicle traffic. Appropriate planning procedures (access management, shared driveways, etc.), particularly for LaPorte Road will be necessary in the future to accommodate increased traffic volume.

Chapter 3

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

On November 4, 1997, New Buffalo Township conducted a public workshop held at the New Buffalo Elementary School to solicit input for the Master Plan for Future Land Use. The goals of the session were to: familiarize the general public with the intent and purpose of the Master Plan and its relationship to the zoning ordinance, and to gather resident's views on land use issues, concerns, and opportunities.

The workshop was attended by over 30 participants. Invited guests included representatives from surrounding communities, local neighborhood groups, business representatives, township officials, and other interest persons. Participants were placed in groups of six and assisted by a group recorder. The meeting was facilitated by community planning consultants from the firm of Langworthy LeBlanc, Inc. of Grand Rapids. Participants were asked to individually record their impressions of community assets & issues as well as goals for future development. Issues were then discussed at each table. Major "themes" were recorded by the meeting facilitators on flip charts based on individual group responses.

Participants were asked to individually record their impressions of community assets & issues as well as goals for future development.

The identified assets and issues were then prioritized by each participant by "vote." A summary of the meeting results is highlighted below. The corresponding score represents the votes for the highest priority assets and issues.

ASSETS AND ISSUES

The following were identified as Assets:

Location (Score: 15)

- *Proximity* to Lake Michigan, large cities (Chicago, Michigan City, Benton Harbor, St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, La Porte), hospitals, education facilities (higher), and employment centers.
- *Accessibility* to the lakeshore (through City of New Buffalo), I-94 (three interchanges), and US 12/Red Arrow.

Quality Of Life (score: 3)

Rural Community Character was identified as being an important part of the quality of life in the township; people cited open lands, water resources, small businesses (mom and pop stores), the resort atmosphere, safe environment, good schools, recreational activities

(water sports, golf, etc.), and in particular the people (relaxed) as important features that enhanced/defined the quality of life in the community.

- Good Schools
- Good People
- Safe Community
- Churches

Natural Features (score: 2)

- Lake Michigan
- Wooded areas
- Rivers
- Open lands

Recreation Opportunities (score: 2)

As mentioned under quality of life, recreational resources, particularly involving water, are important to township residents. Other interests as well, such as golf, biking trails, walking paths, pedestrian friendly areas, and specifically parks are assets to the community.

Transportation (score: 1)

The Township's location serves as an important transportation corridor to the State of Michigan;

- the major transportation routes of I-94 and US 12 connect New Buffalo Township to major mid-western cities (Detroit, Chicago, etc.) by highway,
- Amtrak and C.S.X make this connection by rail, and
- Lake Michigan and the marina in the City of New Buffalo allow movement on water.

Drinking Water (score: 1)

Many residents feel that they have high quality drinking water and water resources (but others noted they do not have a good water supply).

Small Businesses

The unique resort/mom and pop stores found within the township are important to its residents. Locally owned, small scale merchants were identified as an asset to the town and the need for more was identified. The spirit of entrepreneurship is a source of pride for community members. Residents do not wish to have large scale, chain businesses locate throughout the area.

Rural Community Character was identified as being an important part of the quality of life in the township; people cited open lands, water resources, small businesses (mom and pop stores), the resort atmosphere, safe environment, good schools, recreational activities (water sports, golf, etc.), and in particular the people (relaxed) as important features which enhanced/defined the quality of life in the community.

The unique resort/mom and pop stores found within the township are important to its residents.

Labor Force

As part of the people and quality of life issues raised earlier, labor force was mentioned as an asset of the township. The following were identified as Issues/Concerns:

Need For Industries (score: 14)

The need for clean manufacturing industries was cited as being the single greatest issue of concern in the township. Reasons for this include:

- tax base
- retention of community members (school enrollment is declining)
- year round jobs (not seasonal or low paying)
- desire/need for high paying jobs
- ability to attract quality development

The need for clean manufacturing industries was cited as being the single greatest issue of concern in the township.

A research and development park was also mentioned as being a desirable use.

Water And Sewer Supply/ Infrastructure Improvements/Public Services (score: 7)

- The township does not have adequate water and sewer infrastructure; township members felt that infrastructure owned/run by the township is necessary, particularly since services are desired on the east side of I-94.
- Road condition was also cited as an issue.
- School improvements/money for remodeling and funding is necessary.
- Public transportation should be encouraged/developed.
- A community center/recreation center for kids is needed.
- Obtain a township police department.

Affordable Housing (score: 5)

The availability of rental housing and housing for young families (starter homes) should be increased and encouraged.

Taxes

Taxes are too high for second/third (house) homeowners.

Loss of Community Character

- Citizens were concerned about the development of chain retail stores in the township.
- Inappropriate signage is an issue.
- Development needs to conform to existing design elements already present within the township (roof lines, building size, height, etc.).
- Maintain resort atmosphere.

Casino Development (score: 2)

Concerns over potential impacts

Seasonal Traffic (score: 1)

The influence of seasonal traffic on transportation infrastructure in relation to:

- cost effectiveness
- capacity
- priority

Lack of Lakefront Access (score: 1)

Non-Conforming/Incompatible Uses (score: 1)

Issues related to the Zoning Ordinance were raised, particularly where residential and commercial or industrial businesses are located adjacent to residential areas. A review of zoning districts and permitted as well as special exception uses was recommended.

Businesses

- consistent hours are needed; places should be open earlier/later to accommodate time zone differences
- there is no designated business district within the township

Intergovernmental Cooperation

A spirit of cooperation among surrounding communities needs to be encouraged. Overall area needs should not be restricted by political boundaries. Services should also be coordinated (police, water/sewer).

A spirit of cooperation among surrounding communities needs to be encouraged. Overall area needs should not be restricted by political boundaries.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (italic. indicates actions previously identified by the Planning Commission at a work session)

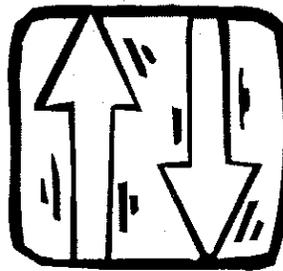
To address the issues identified above, the following actions were suggested. These statements have been further articulated into goals, policies, and land-use recommendations as outlined in the subsequent chapters,

Industrial/Commercial

- Develop a year-round industrial sector that provides clean, high paying jobs (research and development, etc.). In order to attract these businesses, infrastructure and tax abatements should be created and grant monies pursued.
- Create commercial/industrial nodes at interchange locations in order to separate potential conflicting land uses and to take advantage of the existing transportation system (west on US 12 and M-39).
- Business hours are needed which conform to residents' schedules (time change zone).
- Study commercial development alternatives for Red Arrow Highway (commercial or non-commercial).
- Provide water and sewer to accommodate existing as well as new development (residential, commercial, and industrial).
- Promote an attitude to support economic development.

Transportation

- The intersections of Red Arrow and U.S.-12 and Red Arrow and Townline Road/Union Pier should be evaluated for safety. Measures to improve visual distance, signage, markings, and other traffic management techniques should be evaluated.
- Semi-truck traffic on Red Arrow needs further enforcement: cooperation with MDOT and enforcement officials on weight limits, hours of operations, and routes should be a priority.
- Bike paths/pedestrian amenities/ multi-use trails should be pursued, particularly on U.S.-12.



Agriculture/Natural Resources

- Develop a linear park/connecting trail system that would connect to the state trail system

- Coordinate with Berrien County on the acquisition of land for public use in the township
- Review and update park/recreation plan
- Encourage development that is sensitive to the environment, minimizes soil erosion, and preserves habitat
- Evaluate impacts on water quality from intensive livestock operations
- Encourage protection of surface and ground water resources.
- Do not take extreme measures to preserve agricultural lands.
- Obtain access to Lake Michigan
- *Increase the number of designated parks and land*
- *Encourage the preservation of the Galien River*
- *Explore the feasibility of developing a nature preserve*
- *Provide for active and passive recreation opportunities*



Community Services

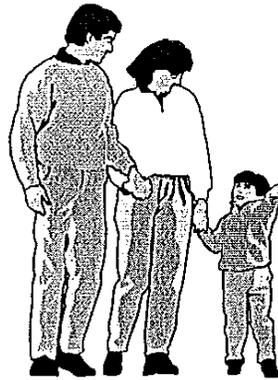
- Encourage the development of a medical facility within the township
- Construct a community/youth center
- Cooperate/coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions in regards to schools, planning, zoning, law enforcement, and other services
- Regulate signs/billboards
- *Increase the capacity of the Township Hall*
- *Ensure that water and sewer services are adequate for future growth*
- *Expand services such as ambulance, fire, and police*

Community Character Goals

- Build community pride through the support of civic organizations and neighborhood associations
- Allow development that complements rural balance; this may be done by managing traffic, preserving/promoting open space, etc.
- Preserve natural features

Housing

- Provide a wider variety of housing opportunities, particularly for low income individuals and young couples/families by promoting more rental housing and affordable homes
- Review width to depth ratio of lots; eliminate alley lots
- *Promote controlled residential growth*



Chapter 4

GOALS AND POLICIES

As communities grow, they need a direction for future development. While the Master Plan helps determine what kind of community is desired, the goals and policies provide the instrument for achieving this direction. Goals and policies serve as guidelines which take into account the social, physical, economic and political considerations and provide a more detailed focus to the Township's vision. These statements reflect the philosophy of the community in terms of future development and the remainder of the Plan is based on the desire to implement those intentions. The overall vision serves to further articulate the Township's development philosophy.

The vision, goals, and policies which follow, have been established by the Planning Commission with public input including a Town Meeting held on November 4th, 1997 and workshop sessions held with the township board and township residents. They have been amended based on the Town Center Zoning Project (appendix A) conducted in 2009 as well as the Town Meeting held in conjunction with that project, which was held on November 4th, 1997 and workshop sessions held with the township board and township residents.

VISION STATEMENT

New Buffalo Township will be a rural-resort community with a variety of employment opportunities and manufacturing industries compatible with a rural-resort community, a year-round affordable housing mix, and a diversified shopping experience that is supportive of local businesses. Residential neighborhoods and commercial/industrial areas will be served by adequate water and sewer service and pedestrian amenities, enhanced public services and facilities (police, fire, medical, social services, school facilities, etc.), and a safe and efficient transportation system. A cornerstone to the community character is the resort economy, second home development, and proximity to Lake Michigan coupled with a plentiful supply of recreational facilities, natural resources/open space, and a cooperative spirit with adjacent communities.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL	The township will encourage housing development that will balance the desire to serve a variety of interests while minimizing negative impact on the natural environment and rural character.
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Policies



- Develop land use policies that will encourage a variety of housing types, particularly for low and moderate income individuals and young families while respecting the resort and second home development in the community.



- Preserve open space and natural features by encouraging cluster development and open space subdivisions particularly in areas identified as environmentally sensitive or significant.
- Promote controlled growth by ensuring that new housing does not unduly burden existing or planned public services as a condition of approval.

TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT

GOAL	The township will provide opportunities for pedestrian-oriented mixed use development that enhances the quality of life for township residents, creates attractive gateways to the New Buffalo community, and serves the commercial needs of the surrounding area.
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Policies

- Develop land use policies that support the town center concept and encourage a mix of uses, create a sense of vitality and activity in these areas, and connect and interact with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Provide zoning and design standards and encourage planned unit developments in order to achieve stated township objectives for the town center areas.
- Permit higher density development in these areas when amenities, high quality neighborhood planning, and/or affordable residential units are provided.
- Encourage high and medium density residential transition areas surrounding the town centers.
- Identify necessary infrastructure improvements such as roads, sidewalks, and bike paths in the town center areas.

- Coordinate with the City of New Buffalo to achieve consistency along corridors and to develop desired character standards for these areas.

INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL	The township will strive to create quality employment opportunities by encouraging planned industrial and commercial development with adequate public services appropriate for a resort community.
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Policies

- Develop year-round manufacturing employment opportunities that encourage clean, high paying jobs.
- Identify appropriate location(s) and facilitate services (utilities, road access, etc.) to support industrial development.
- Direct neighborhood commercial shopping development to areas with proper transportation access such as the existing freeway interchange areas (US-12 and M-239) and the Town Center areas.
- Investigate state and federal grant funding opportunities to support economic development projects and enhanced infrastructure.
- Establish an Economic Development Committee to assist in infrastructure development and business recruitment efforts.
- Re-examine zoning and design standards (setbacks, architectural features, landscaping, etc.) for Red Arrow Highway, and US-12 south of the City Limits.
- Address the blighted appearance of US-12 south of the City limits to the State line.
- Promote mixed use development in the township, particularly within the Town Center areas, with a variety of commercial, retail, office, and residential uses.
- Coordinate commercial development opportunities with the City of New Buffalo so as not to create redundant commercial centers but complimentary areas serving different segments of the greater community.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

GOAL	The township will foster a safe, efficient and well maintained transportation network appropriate for a resort community.
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Policies

- Apply access management principles to development adjacent to the State trunkline highways (US-12 and M-239) to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow.
- Coordinate with the Berrien County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation to identify and address roadway safety hazards (signage, markings, truck routes, etc.) in the summer months with particular attention on the Red Arrow/US-12 and Red Arrow/Union Pier intersections.
- Enhance Public transportation opportunities to meet the needs of various population segments such as youth and seniors.
- Develop a bike path system and pedestrian amenities throughout the township with particular emphasis on US-12 and Red Arrow Highway. A bike path and walking trail is needed along Red Arrow Highway from the northern township border with Chikaming to Grand Beach/Michiana to the south.



NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURAL

GOAL	The township will encourage the protection and enhancement of natural resources such as surface and ground water resources, woodlots, and critical habitat.
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Policies

- Review and update the Township’s Recreation Plan and submit to the Department of Natural Resources for approval. The plan shall include both active and passive recreation opportunities.
- Identify and acquire additional land for preservation and recreational purposes. Particular emphasis shall be placed on access and preservation of the Galien River, the feasibility of establishing a nature preserve, and improved access to Lake Michigan.
- Coordinate with Berrien County on the acquisition of public lands and in seeking development grants from the Department of Natural Resources and other entities.

- Adopt and implement development review standards which protect the quality of water resources, critical habitat, and minimize soil erosion along lakefront areas. This could further be accomplished through the use of “natural resource protection overlay zones.”



- Develop a linear park that will connect to the State trail system.
- Develop zoning standards which minimize the negative impacts of agricultural practices adjacent to other uses and the natural environment (i.e. intensive livestock operations, etc.).
- Develop policies to preserve and stabilize high risk erosion lakeshore property.
- Encourage development of agri-tourism and farm-related activities in rural portions of the Township through changes in regulations and promotion of existing uses.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

GOAL	The township will develop and improve community services, facilities, and development regulations to support existing and planned residential and commercial development appropriate for a resort community.
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Policies

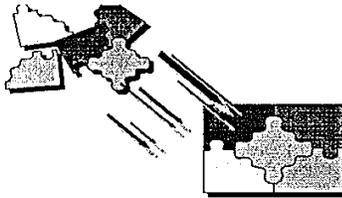
- Extend water and sewer locations to appropriate locations.
- Provide the appropriate level of fire, police, and ambulance protection based on the needs of the population and size of the township.
- Explore the feasibility of expanding the capacity of the Township Hall and constructing a community/youth center.
- Encourage the development of a medical facility within the township.
- Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions in regards to planning/zoning compatibility, law enforcement, and school issues.
- Support neighborhood associations and civic organizations that encourage community pride.



- Require applicants for land development projects to ensure that adequate utilities/septic systems or wells, roads, fire and police services, and other township services are present to serve the proposed uses.
- Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance with particular attention to regulations for special land uses (communication towers, etc.) and criteria for rezoning requests.
- Implement and enforce land use regulations that encourage appropriate land division practices, eliminate blighted conditions, and encourage compatible architectural scale and style.

Chapter 5

FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS



Future land use patterns and recommendations are presented in this chapter and are outlined on the Future Land Use Map. The land use classifications have been developed within the context of the issues, goals, and values identified by the community throughout the course of the process.

While the plan acknowledges that new development will occur, the orderly development of new growth is emphasized

While the plan acknowledges that new development will occur, the orderly development of new growth is emphasized. Prior to the amendments to this Plan in 2009, public utilities were not widely available east of I-94. As a result, the interstate created an informal boundary within the Township with new development being encouraged to locate to the west of that boundary while the east remained primarily rural, open, and agricultural. However, with the development of the Four Winds Casino (as well as a proposed water park and convention center development), utilities will become available to portions of the Township east of I-94, on Route 12, and on Lakeside Road.

The availability of utilities creates new opportunities for development in areas of the Township where larger tracts of land are available. But instead of opening up the plan to provide for development whenever the utilities are provided, two Town Centers have been created to encourage the clustering of future development as well as to provide amenities and services to support the increased density and population. By concentrating the development in these centers, the rural character and atmosphere is preserved throughout the majority of the Township. Within the Town Centers, the mix of uses provides amenities to support the density, which allows for increased affordability.

The proposed land-use designations which follow should be viewed within the context of the issues and policies identified within the Plan and represent the long-term policy recommendations of the Township.

AGRICULTURAL/RESIDENTIAL

A vast portion of the eastern half of the Township (east of I-94) consists of large lot development, farmland, several creeks and the South Branch of the Galien River. In addition, an active farmland area exists west of I-94 between LaPorte Road, US-12, and the City of New Buffalo that is planned to remain in agricultural use. If the Township were to extend its public water/sewer system, these areas would likely be the last to be served by such a system.

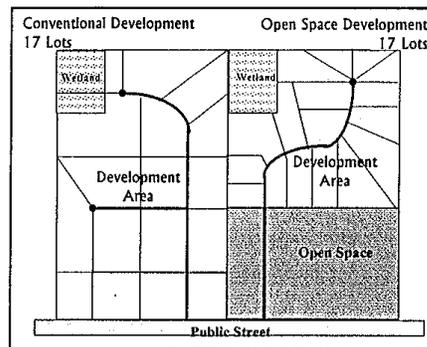
The intent of this category is to protect natural features such as river/creek resources, wetlands, and forests, while preserving valuable open space and minimizing impacts on farmland. Lots in this area are currently served by private septic and well systems. Adequate land for these private systems is necessary to minimize future health and safety concerns. *Permitted residential densities are recommended to be one unit per two (2) acres.* Techniques such as Planned Unit Development (PUD) or clustering could be used to help achieve the objectives of this category, particularly in areas with significant natural features such as wetlands or flood plains.

What is Cluster or Open Space Development?

Clustering concentrates development in a limited area, with the overall, or "gross density" of the site remaining the same. Although clustering may increase the net density within a smaller area, the gross density must still fall within the requirements of the Master Plan and subsequent zoning regulations.

Cluster development does not increase the number of homes, but does allow the preservation of valuable open space. Approving cluster development through a planned unit development (PUD) provides the opportunity to ensure that land will be kept free from future development.

Apart from being a requirement of the PUD, preserved



open space may be deeded in equal parts to the property owners. Regardless of ownership, the remaining acreage would not be permitted to be developed with additional housing units.

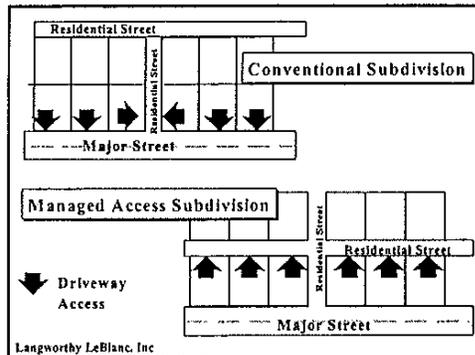
The Plan recommends that planned residential densities exceeding 3 units per acre will be required to have public water and sewer as a condition of approval.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Currently, low density residential uses dominate much of the landscape in New Buffalo Township, particularly east of Red Arrow Highway and US-12. The intent is to keep the majority of the Township in low density residential use while encouraging such techniques as cluster

development and open space subdivisions to maintain the rural character of the Township.

The Low Density Residential category is intended to accommodate existing residential developments and future site condominium developments and subdivisions. In addition, there are several farms that exist adjacent to these areas. Adequate buffers and development standards should be prepared to protect the rights of the farmer while minimizing the impact on existing and new residential development. While most areas within this designation may eventually be served by public utilities, it is recognized that some areas will not be served during the planning period. *Permitted residential densities would be up to three (3) units per acre.* Managed Access subdivisions would be encouraged along Primary County Roads to provide for safe and efficient land development patterns.



MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Medium Density Residential classification serves as a residential transitional use and is located in several places adjacent to the City of New Buffalo and commercial and industrial designations. The areas adjacent to US-12 (north and south end) just east of Red Arrow have been designated under this classification. This classification also includes the manufactured home community and adjacent area located south of the City. The areas surrounding the high density and mixed use areas at Exits 1 and 4 in the Township have been designated medium density, as well as an area previously designated industrial adjacent to the existing Whittaker Woods Golf Community in the southwest corner of the Township.

The medium density category is intended to promote compact development in areas where future services are planned, and limit scattered residential development in the outlying areas. These areas are intended to be served by water and sewer utilities and are often adjacent to non-residential uses, existing higher density developments and/or County Primary or State Highways. These areas are also intended to provide a buffer and serve as a transition for the existing rural development surrounding the medium density. *Recommended densities would be 3 to 6 units per acres (above 3 units per acre would require public water and sewer service).*

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

An important policy established for residential development within the Township is to “develop land use policies that will encourage a variety of housing types...in the community.” To achieve this objective it is recommended that the Township establish areas where higher density development will be encouraged. The intent of this category would be to designate appropriate areas where a variety of housing styles would be encouraged at appropriate densities to provide affordable housing options.

High density residential is designated along a portion of US-12 and Red Arrow Highway to the west of Exit 4, in the southwest corner of the Township, and immediately adjacent to the Mixed Use Town Centers. In general, these areas should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and be within walking distance to activities of daily living, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. The high

density residential adjacent to the mixed use areas are well-suited to allow residents to walk to commercial areas and provide easy access to convenience goods and entertainment. This category would support a broad range of housing types and price levels that can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community. Affordable, year-round housing is highly encouraged in these areas given the lack of this housing stock. Developments which encourage neo-



Ladies Day at Grand Beach Golf Course ca. 1918

WHAT IS NEO-TRADITIONAL DESIGN?

The return to traditional and sustainable planning practices is known as Neo-traditional Design or New Urbanism. It differs from conventional design because it focuses on physical change of the urban environment through the traditional design elements of city making; public spaces, infrastructure, buildings, and parks. It combines these elements to construct places beyond the autonomy of the individual project, interest, or property.

traditional design principles would be encouraged (see diagram for explanation). *Recommended densities would be 6 to 8 units per acre.*

PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

This includes public lands owned by the Township, and quasi-governmental land such as the waste

[High density development] would support a broad range of housing types and price levels that can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.

water treatment plant, etc. It is intended that these lands will remain in public ownership and use during the planning period. In addition, it is recommended that additional parkland be considered for development for the southern half of the Township in recognition of the growing population base and distance to existing recreation land.

RECREATION

There are several large parcels of land that have historically served a recreational purpose within the Township that are included under this category. These include: Camp Sokol, New Buffalo Rod & Gun Club, Chicago Farm Camp, and the marina adjacent to the Galien River. All of these uses are adjacent or in close proximity to residential areas. While their continued recreational use is encouraged, measures should be instituted to ensure compatibility with established surrounding neighborhoods.

MIXED USE TOWN CENTER

Two areas in the Township have been designated Mixed Use Town Center. The first is located at Exit 1 off I-94 at LaPorte Road. This area is significant in that a majority of the development activity and interest occurring in the Township has been here. This corridor also serves as a gateway to the Township as well as to the City of New Buffalo. The second area is located at Exit 4 east of I-94 at US-12. This area is another important gateway to the Township due to the traffic along US-12. With the utilities available from the nearby casino, this site will have the access, services, and frontage to support the proposed town center development.

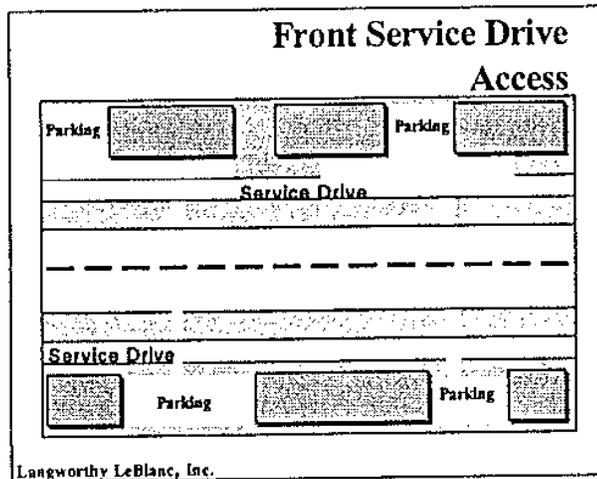
The mixed use town centers should be developed as vibrant, walkable neighborhoods incorporating both residential and nonresidential uses. Appropriate land uses may include residential, public, institutional, office, business and personal service uses, and retail commercial land uses. Such uses may be located in mixed-use buildings, or in separate, single-use buildings located on the same site but designed as integrated development.

Development in the mixed use areas should be pedestrian oriented and automobile uses or uses geared toward the automobile should be strictly designed to maintain the overall character and vision of the area. Standards should be established as part of a new mixed-use zoning district to ensure that new development is human scale (not automobile-scale) and includes civic spaces and amenities. It is recommended that the Township and City of New Buffalo work together to ensure consistency along these corridors. A new zoning district in each community may be necessary to accomplish the mixed use concept.

The Township should provide a density bonus for developments that provide certain amenities or achieve stated objectives. High quality neighborhood design and affordability would be looked upon favorably to receive a bonus. *Recommended densities would be 8 to 12 units per acre with opportunities for up to 12 units per acre based on neighborhood design, amenities, and meeting stated objectives of this designation.*

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

There is currently demand for commercial land adjacent to the I-94 Freeway Interchange areas and entrance corridors into the City of New Buffalo. The Highway Commercial category would be designated to accommodate large scale commercial development dependant on efficient transportation access and proximity to the interstate system.

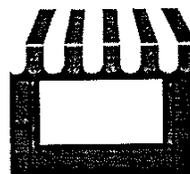


Two areas have been designated for this category; the LaPorte Road Corridor south and east of I-94 and land adjacent to the US-12/I-94 interchange (east and west of the interchange). This category is intended for uses such as truck stops, drive-thru facilities, and hotels, etc., that generate high traffic volume. Planned developments in conjunction with access management principles would be applied to these areas.

To minimize traffic congestion and improve aesthetic appearance, several design recommendations would be implemented. These include: generous setbacks, shared driveways, sign limitations, reduced lighting levels, and landscaping. Driveways would be located as far from a public street intersection as possible to minimize traffic impacts. Shared access drives would be encouraged to reduce the number of curb cuts and traffic congestion (see diagram).

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

These areas are intended to serve neighborhood areas or the community at large to meet the daily



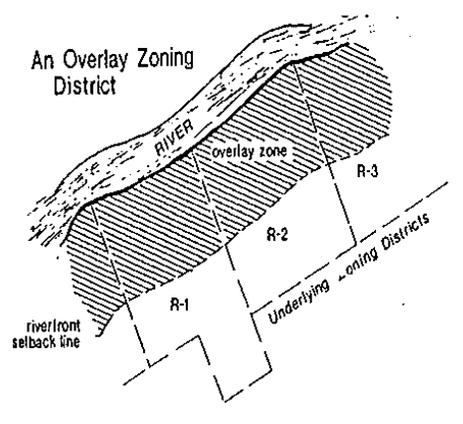
shopping needs. Generally smaller scale developments would be encouraged in these areas compared to the Highway Commercial category. Areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods should be of an appropriate size and scale and linked to their surroundings through pedestrian amenities, architectural variety, and compatible street/parking design.

INDUSTRIAL

There are several planned industrial areas within the Township. Policies have been established for industrial development to encourage year-round manufacturing employment opportunities supported by appropriate utilities. The areas identified could serve as new locations for future light industrial development. Two of these areas currently serve industrial uses (land adjacent to US-12 south of the City limits and US-12 near the State Line), and a third area is planned south of Wilson road between the CSX Rail lines. However as a general policy, industrial development will be encouraged first to areas that currently maintain appropriate utility service and transportation access. Based on a recent analysis conducted by the Township's engineer, the existing industrial area east of US-12 at the State Line (Section 19) best meets this criteria.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION – OVERLAY ZONE

The Lake Michigan Sand Dunes (referred to as “Critical Dune Habitat”) and the Galien River and its tributaries have been recognized throughout the planning process as important natural resources that enhance the Quality of Life within the Township (see Natural Features Map). These resources provide recreational opportunities as well as important environmental benefits. For instance, the Galien River and adjacent lands serve to hold flood waters, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, maintain water of high quality, and provide recreational value. It is recommended that appropriate management techniques such as overlay districts be implemented to further protect these attributes.



An overlay zoning district is a mapped zone that imposes an additional set of requirements upon those of the underlying zone district. In an area where an overlay zone is established, the land must

be used under the conditions and requirements of both zones, the most restrictive requirements prevailing in case of conflict. There are several techniques that can be used to achieve the desired results which could include: additional building setbacks, lot width, and septic setbacks; natural vegetation strips, and limited non-residential activity. Overall, these techniques would serve to protect the specified natural resource without creating a more restrictive district for all land in proximity to the identified areas.

USE OF THE MASTER PLAN

It is important to understand that the Future Land Use Plan is a policy guide to direct future growth and development within the Township. It is a tool that should be used closely with the Township's Zoning Ordinance and other land development regulations. Township decisions including those of the private sector should follow the Plan. However, there are several guidelines which should be followed in the use of this document. Overall the plan should:

- *Be used as a guide for future land use.* The plan is an illustration of the long-range land use pattern for the Township based on the goals and policies;
- *Be used in all zoning decisions.* Requests for rezonings, special use permits, and plat reviews should all be carefully reviewed in conjunction with the goals of the Master Plan;
- *Be flexible to adjust to changing circumstances.* Unanticipated opportunities and unforeseen problems can require a shift in direction. The Plan should be amended to reflect these changes; and
- *Be kept current.* On a semi-annual basis, the Planning Commission should set aside one meeting just for the purpose of reflecting on the past years and considering possible amendments to the Plan. It is unrealistic to expect the Plan to remain unchanged for its 20 year life. Updates will be necessary and should take place as conditions change such as in land use, social and economic characteristics, and/or changes in Township land use policies.

Appendices

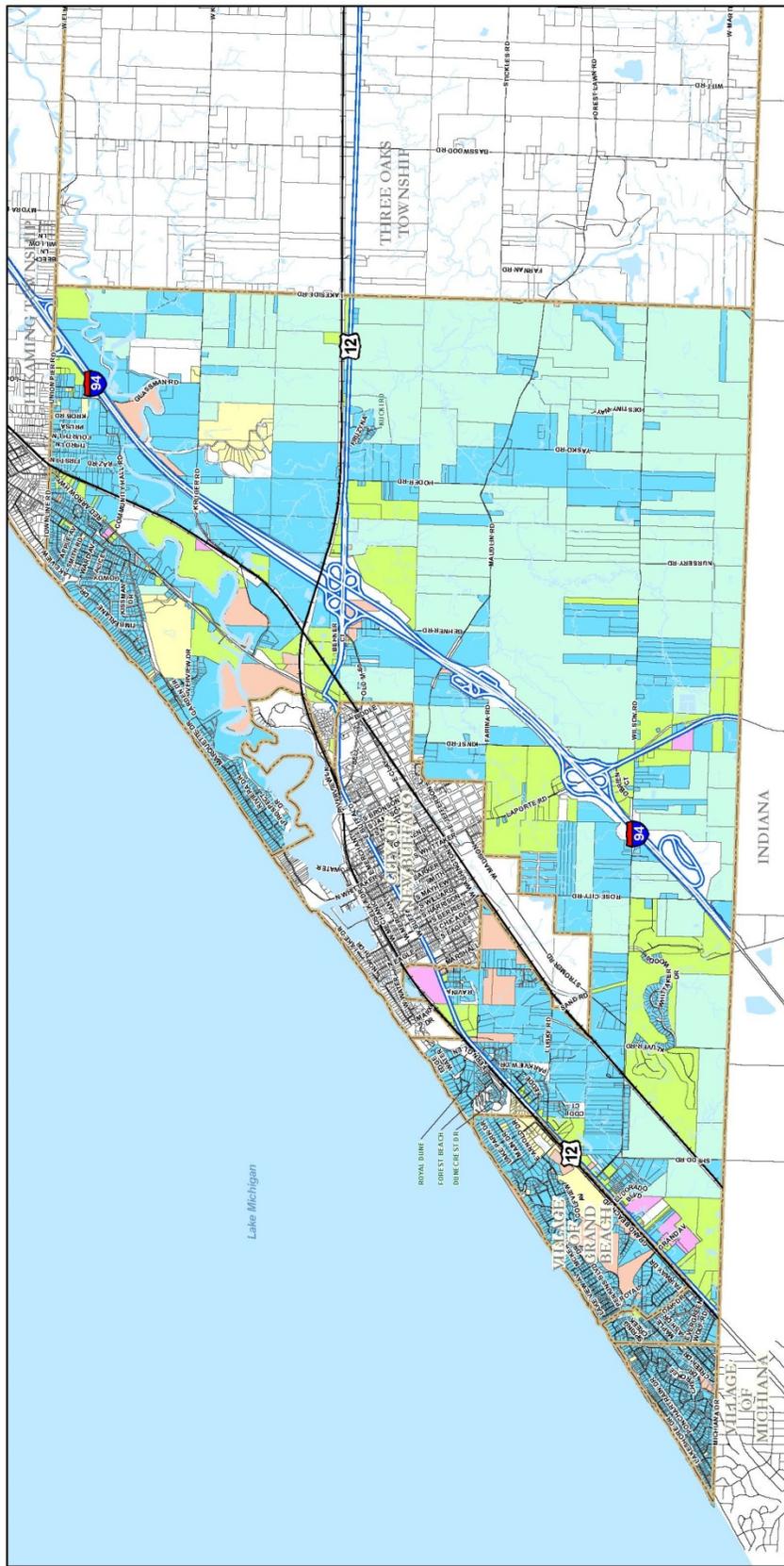
List of Maps

- Existing Land Use
- Natural Features
- Future Land Use

A History of New Buffalo Township

2005 Amendment Motion

2009 Amendment Motion



Data Source: Berrien County GIS, 2008

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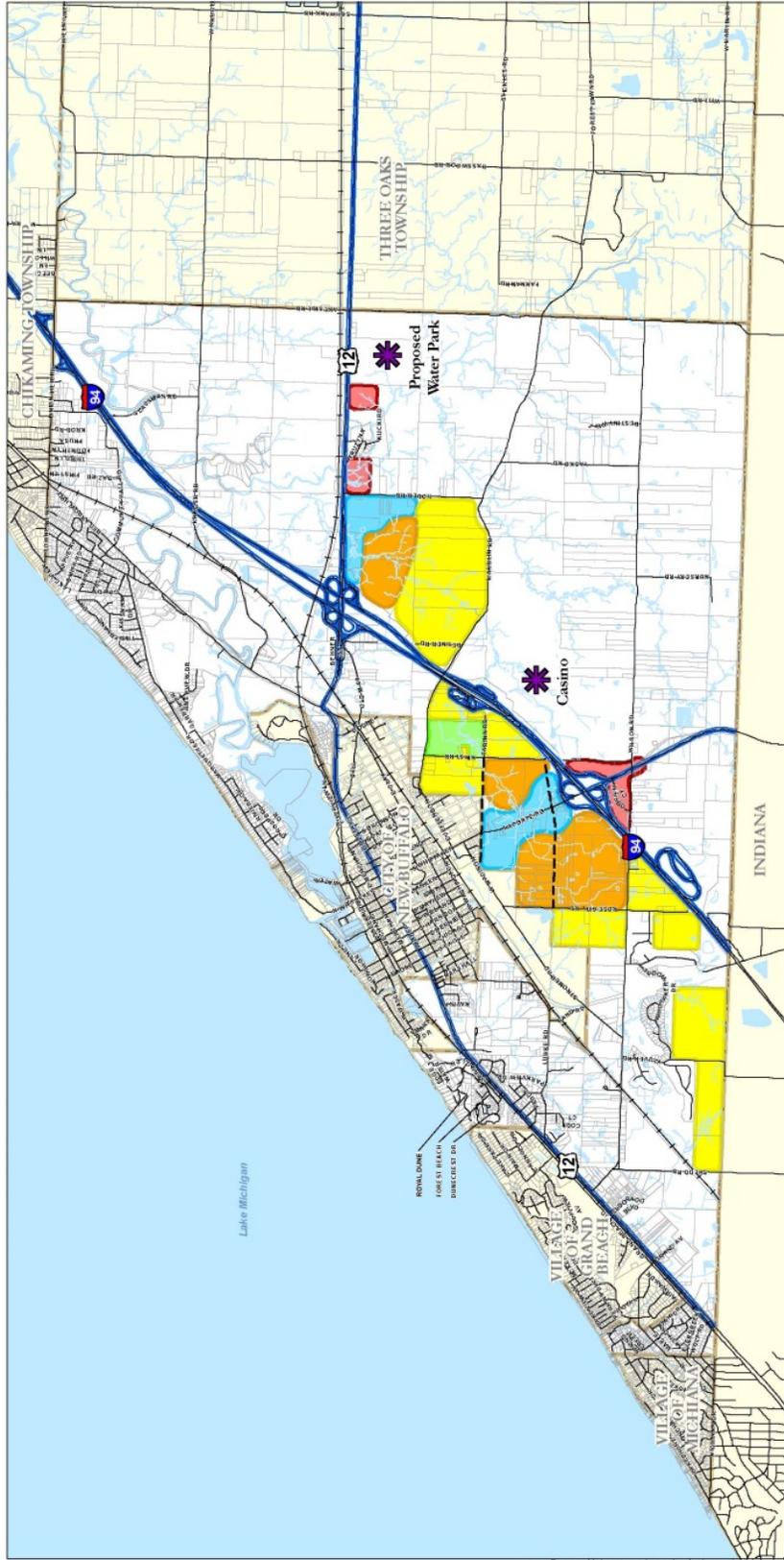
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Existing Land Use Map

Draft

New Buffalo Township, Berrien County, Michigan

Print date: 6/16/2008 8:20:53 AM Project: Berrien\New Buffalo\GIS\Map\121 Map.mxd



Township Centers

Draft

New Buffalo Township, Berrien County, Michigan

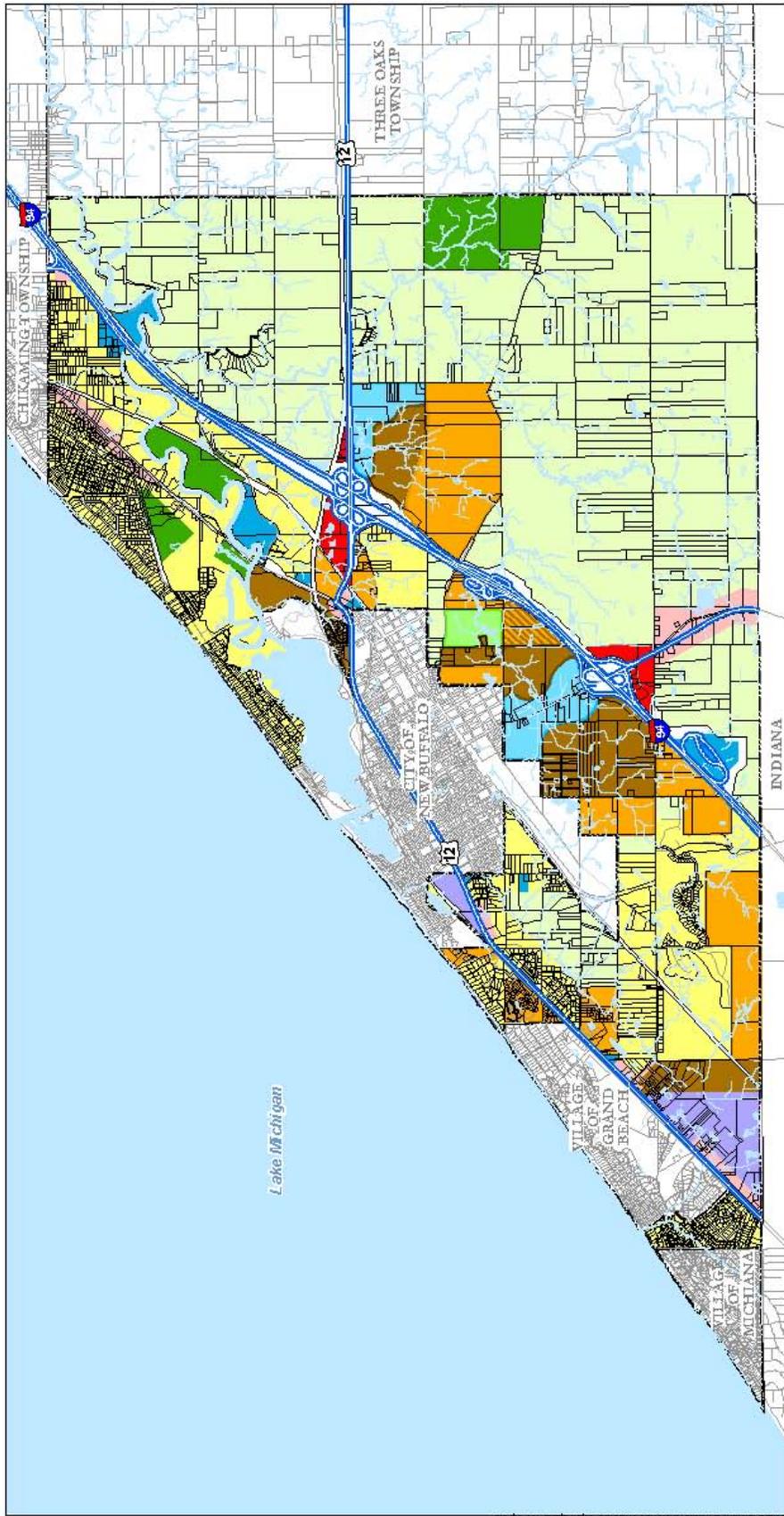
Data Source: Berrien County GIS, 2008



- Commercial
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Town Center
- Environmental Conservation Easement
- Proposed Road
- Surrounding Municipalities
- Parcels
- Railroad
- Water



10/17/08



Base Map Source: Berrien County GIS, 2008
 Data Source: Laingbry, LaBac, Inc. 9/09



- Agricultural/ Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- General Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Quasi Public
- Recreation
- Environmental Conservation Easement
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Medium or High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Town Center

Proposed Future Land Use Map

Draft

New Buffalo Township, Berrien County, Michigan



12/08/09

A History of New Buffalo Township

When the last ice age ended, the receding glaciers left the enormous gouges that filled to become the Great Lakes. Glacial and fluvial deposition created the inland areas, while dunes along the shore were left by the retreating shoreline. In historic times the southeast corner of Lake Michigan contained alternating wetlands and forests of beech, oak, and maple.

In 1675 Father Jacques Marquette was the first European explorer, coming down the Saint Joseph River, which he called the River of the Miamis after the Indian tribe living along its banks. Four years later another Jesuit, Rene Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, and a party of 14 came up around the bottom of the lake in canoes. By then, the Miamis were being displaced by the Potawatomis, who farmed in villages in the summer and migrated to winter hunting grounds in the fall. They lived in dome-shaped wigwams or large, bark-covered huts. They made maple sugar and enjoyed a bounty of fish and game. During the passenger pigeon migrations the flocks of the large birds were so thick they could be felled "even with poles and clubs wielded by men standing on dunes."

The Potawatomis were originally friendly. There was some intermarriage with the settlers. But Shawanoe Chief Tecumseh persuaded them to enter the War of 1812 on the side of the British. White man's diseases and liquor had even more effect than war, however, and in the Chicago Treaty of 1833 the Indians ceded all of Berrien County except a few reservations.

Not all Indians left. Pokagon, second ranking Potawatomi chief, a Catholic convert described as "the reality of the noble red man of whom we read", who may have lived near the mouth of the Galien river and had later established a tribal village in Bertram Township, sought and received permission to move his settlement to Cass County. His descendant, Simon Pokagon, educated at Oberlin, petitioned Lincoln and Grant for payment for lands. An honored guest at the 1893 World's Fair, Simon was celebrated as "internationally known as writer, poet and lecturer."

Meanwhile, the United States continued its westward expansion. The territorial legislature of Michigan created Berrien County on October 29, 1829. By the next year the federal township and range system of land survey had outlined the section roads that define inland borders today. Michigan created New Buffalo Township on March 23, 1836, just before it became a state. Five days later the Village of New Buffalo was incorporated. The township included what are now Three Oaks and Chikaming Townships until they were split off in 1856.

The city of New Buffalo came into being because of a violent October storm in 1834, when Captain Wessel D. Whittaker grounded his schooner Post Boy in the mouth of a small stream called State Creek near the present village of Grand Beach. The ship was destroyed, but Captain and crew survived the disaster and walked to Michigan City, where there were taverns that could provide food and shelter. There Whittaker hired a rig and headed north for St. Joseph to report the ship's loss to its underwriters. On his way up the coast, he was struck by advantages and beauty of the spot where the Galien River passed through Lake Potawatomi into Lake Michigan. Lake Potawatomi, since drained by the sawmills, was, by varying accounts, two miles long, a half mile wide and up to ninety feet deep or four miles long by a mile wide and fourteen feet deep. It is now just "a lazy bend in the river."

After completing his business in St. Joe and paying off his crew, he went by stage coach to the land office in Kalamazoo, where he made arrangements to acquire a large tract of land around the harbor mouth. He then returned home to Buffalo, New York, where he sold half interest to his employers, Jacob Barker and Nelson Willard for \$13,000.00. They named their new city New Buffalo.

Spring found Whittaker back and ready to begin settlement. The first building was a 15 x 14 foot log cabin at the corner of Whittaker and Merchant Streets, where the first four settlers, Wessell Whittaker, Henry Bishop, Freeman Clough and William Hammond slept on pine boughs laid across one side of the room. Soon there was Whittaker & Co.'s waterfront warehouse and store, a lodging house for travelers and a sawmill. The first woman to arrive was Mrs. Eber Knight, whose descendants still live here. A land boom was in progress in the Northwest Territories, and more settlers, many of them Whittaker's relatives, followed him there, until development was stalled by the national Panic of 1837.

Transportation was a problem. The road from LaPorte was described by one traveler as "villainous ... out of one mud-hole into another the whole distance." A lakeshore road had been authorized in 1833 from St. Joe to Indiana, but only the section south of New Buffalo was passable. Over it a stage coach ran a mail run.

Harbor improvement was a priority. After a favorable Army survey in 1838, the government built a lighthouse in 1839. Unfortunately it lasted only until 1857, when it became the first local victim to the lake's shifting shoreline.

But now there was a third alternative. Railroads had begun to stitch the country together with iron thread. The Michigan Central Railroad was chartered in 1846 to build a line to a point near the Indiana boundary and Lake Michigan. New Buffalo was chosen as the end of the line.

Passengers and freight would have to shift to other means to continue to Chicago or other points west. Good times seemed inevitable, and, for a short while, times were good indeed. The final tracks were laid in the spring of 1849; 200 people celebrated the arrival of the first train. That year over 100,000 people rode the Michigan Central. Many stopped at New Buffalo for a few hours, or if the weather was bad enough, a few days. New hotels, restaurants, and stores thrived. The railroad built piers and improved the harbor. Three new Ward Line steamers, Pacific, Traveler, and Cleveland, ran to Chicago and Milwaukee.

Sidetracks appeared every mile or so along the railroad, opening up the lumber industry. Logs were picked up on the sidings and transferred to ships headed across the lake. In 1850 one steamship company alone purchased 7,000 cords of wood.

Then in 1853, only four years later, the Michigan Central extended its line through Indiana to Chicago. The passengers didn't stop. The boom was over. The town lost half its size. Some buildings went by flat car to Three Oaks, where the lumber industry would thrive for another twenty years.

But land had been cleared; improvements made. Soon there was a new group of settlers, German mostly. Wilson Road was called Germany Road. J.M. Patton published the first newspaper, The Vindicator, in 1856. J.V. Phillips was the first lawyer, serving for nearly forty years. Churches were built: a Catholic Church in 1858, Methodist in 1861 and German Evangelical in 1862. The first Baptist Church was established in a former dance hall at the corner of Merchant and Barton streets. For decades it had the largest congregation and church building. The Berrien County Medical Association was formed in New Buffalo in 1870.

The roads opened to the North as well as the south, with as many as sixteen coaches a day between New Buffalo and St. Joe. In 1870 this route was covered by a new railroad line, which was required to have a stop every five miles for the benefit of the farmers. The next to last stop was Townline, which quickly acquired a post office and became Union Pier. By 1880 the township's population was 1,198, an increase of 376 people (46%) over the previous twenty years.

Just fifty miles across the lake, Chicago had been incorporated the year before Captain Whittaker's fortuitous storm. In 1890 it was a colossus preparing to celebrate itself in the Colombian Exposition. New Buffalo could not compete with its harbor, its industry, or its size, but it could benefit nonetheless.

Isaac O. Smith farmed 165 acres on the lakefront between New Buffalo and Union Pier. In 1893 he built a resort hotel for travelers on their way to the Exposition. It had ten rooms, a ballroom and ten cottages. Part of the

foundations of the hotel and one of the cottages (much modified) remain today.

Thus began the parade of visitors from the west. In 1903 The Congregational Assembly for Bible Students of the Middle West built a summer camp called Potawatomi Point. Camp Sokol opened in 1905 and is still an important part of the township. The YWCA opened its Forest Beach Camp. Other youth facilities included the Jewish Camp Tell Hai and the Chicago Commons Camp for boys.

Floyd. R. Perkins bought 600 acres of dunes and woodlands for a shooting preserve, then expanded it to form the Grand Beach Company. By 1911 there were almost fifty cottages, a nine-hole golf course and a train stop. Ten years later the majestic Golfmore Hotel opened, with 175 rooms, dining, dancing, tennis, horseback riding, swimming, 27 holes of golf and a ski jump. Its burning, in 1939, returned Grand Beach to the residential community it is today.

The railroad became a significant local employer in 1921 when the Pere Marquette line put in new tracks, coaling stations, a roundhouse and a 56 room hotel. Local industry - a pickle factory and a glass factory - and local farms continued and prospered, but the growth industry was the people from across the lake. In the 1920's families rented small uninsulated cabins for a week or a month, arriving first by train and then by motorcar on US-12. Even in the Depression of the 30's they came if they could afford it. A Tourist Information Center was opened in 1934. After a hiatus for the Second World War, many of the renters were moving to the suburbs. The city dwellers who did come wanted more. They were repeat visitors and tended to buy as well as rent. The cabins gradually gave way to winterized second homes, which seem to become larger and more elaborate each year. Marina facilities started when Harold and William Guhl offered two boats for rent and live bait in 1947 and grew into today's dredged harbor with moorings on both sides of the bridge. The village became a Home Rule City in 1965. While industry continues to grow slowly (plastic injection molds, steel castings, and wooden trusses) and farms continue to operate (from soy beans to llama ranching), the new businesses are restaurants, antique stores, bed-and-breakfasts and even hotels. Partly by plan and partly by geography, New Buffalo Township is still, as its 1928 arch proudly proclaimed, The Gateway of Michigan.

Quincy White, Secretary
New Buffalo Township Planning Commission

Bibliography

My major source is The New Buffalo Story 1834-1976, the New Buffalo Area Bicentennial Committee. All quotations are from it except as noted below.

Some material was taken directly from the predecessor to this Plan, Sketch Development Plan for New Buffalo Township (1978) New Buffalo Township Planning Commission.

Other useful sources were:

Chikaming Township Master Land Use Plan 1992-2021 (1992)
Chikaming Township Planning Commission

Profile of New Buffalo Township (1998 draft) Berrien County Economic Development Department

Nature Magazine vol. 15 no.1 (1930) (Simon Pokagon)

Primitive Man in Michigan (1925)

Legends of the Old West (1875)

New Buffalo Recollections (1985) Savage (Lake Potawatomi)

Early-Chicago Reminiscences (1882) Cleaver (LaPorte Road)

Special thanks to Bonnie Kliss and the New Buffalo Public Library

2005 Amendment Motion

I move to amend and update the New Buffalo Township Master Plan adopted September 15, 1998, by adding the following two provisions:

Over the last five years there has been a growing market for new residential development far beyond what was anticipated when the New Buffalo Township Master Plan was adopted in September, 1998, as shown by the following chart:

Year	Number of building permits issued for new single family homes	Value
2005 (through June)	39	\$12,150,867
2004	61	\$12,863,315
2003	45	\$8,339,066
2002	29	\$6,966,035
2001	18	\$4,206,750

On the other hand, there has been no demand for additional space for new industry since 1998.

The Planning Commission recently received three petitions for rezoning industrial land for residential development.

Therefore, the Future Land Use Recommendations for industrial areas on page 38 of the Master Plan are hereby amended to encourage in appropriate circumstances rezoning from industrial to any residential or commercial district for a use that is planned to be implemented upon the rezoning in a manner that meets the approval of the Township Board.

II

In a recent twelve-month period the New Buffalo Township Planning Commission considered applications from five developers for a total of 111 new units, of which 95 were approved. Residents have expressed concern over the increasingly rapid pace and uneven quality of development. There is nothing to indicate that the pace will slacken in the future. The New Buffalo Township Master Plan anticipates new development, but also underscores the importance of orderly development of new growth. This focus is particularly appropriate in low density residential areas.

If the maximum densities permitted by the Zoning Ordinance were applied across the board, the rural nature of the Township would be severely

compromised. While these limits perform a function in individual cases, they do not accurately describe the Township as it exists, and they are not acceptable for new development. Without being specific, this Master Plan requires development that exceeds the minimums and meets or exceeds similarly developed surrounding property. One way to have creative development that reflects the rural character of the community and protects the natural features of the surrounding area is the creation of open space areas and the clustering of development areas within the project site.

These amendments, if approved, shall be included in an **Addendum #1 to the Master Plan**, which shall also contain the following:

The following motion was passed by the New Buffalo Township Planning Commission on August 10, 2004: "Taking into account the facts that this Planning Commission adopted the New Buffalo Township Master Plan on September 15, 1998, that the circumstances then are essentially the same now, and that the major unknown then, the possibility of a casino and its effects, is still unknown, Dee Batchelder moved, seconded by Harold White, that the Planning Commission determine not to commence the procedure to amend the plan or adopt a new plan at this time but to defer such action until the effect of a casino is more certain or other considerations make an amendment or new plan desirable."