

# HASTINGS AREA PLAN

## A JOINT FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



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Text adjustments are  
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# INTRODUCTION

## BALANCING GROWTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The Hastings Area enjoys many natural and economic advantages. It is located in the midst of the strongest economic region in Michigan, yet it is sufficiently removed from the hustle and bustle of the heavily urbanized portions of the region that it retains a strong rural, small town identity. Barry County, of which Hastings is the county seat, is the most heavily wooded county in the lower peninsula of Michigan and the County is home to nearly 250 lakes. Residents and visitors can readily enjoy these features even as they go about their day-to-day lives. The Thornapple River and its associated ravines wind through the community creating a beautiful and interesting landscape of rolling wooded hills and wetlands and offering recreational opportunities. The public institutions of the community - its schools, library and community organizations - offer a complete range of services and programming to round out the quality of life for local residents.

**The challenge facing the Hastings Community is how to manage the current and potentially accelerating rates of growth without undermining the qualities of life that distinguish the area from other emerging growth centers.**

Of course, a community with such advantages attracts growth and the pace of expansion of both residential and commercial development in the recent past provides compelling evidence that the development community has discovered the Hastings area. Since 1930, the population of Barry County has been growing steadily at about 2½% annually. Much of this growth has focused on the Hastings community. Unlike many central cities, Hastings has continued to add population while the surrounding Townships of Rutland Charter and Hastings Charter have shown a combined 16.9% rate of growth over the 1990s. Projections show that the three jurisdictions (the City of Hastings, and the two Townships) will continue to see steady growth, approaching a combined population of about 20,000, or about 2,200 new households by 2030, and upwards of 50,000 by the end of the century.

Clearly there is sufficient land available to accommodate these impressive-but-manageable rates of growth. The challenge facing the Hastings Community is how to manage the current and potentially accelerating rates of growth without undermining the qualities of life that distinguish the area from other emerging growth centers. This challenge has several dimensions.

**Loss and Degradation of Community Character.** Current development patterns strongly suggest that the growing population will generally migrate to undeveloped areas to form very low-density residential

neighborhoods. At an average of one to two acres per household and assuming the current household size of about 2.6 persons per household, the community will see 3,000 to 4,000 acres of the rural landscape consumed, largely by suburban sprawl patterns of development. Certainly, the areas offering the greatest attraction for development are those with the most desirable natural features. Thus, accommodating new development with old approaches will likely result in a significant loss or degradation of the region's unique rural, small town character.



**About 3,000 to 4,000 acres of rural land could be consumed by low density suburban sprawl**

**Traffic.** Low-density patterns of development require private automobile travel for every trip. The average household generates 9.55 trips per day<sup>1</sup> for everything from trips to work (often with two wage-earners going in separate directions), trips to shop, trips to children's events, etc. Thus the anticipated growth the area will experience will likely result in over 21,000 additional trips on local roads. This added traffic will necessitate the re-design of some roadways and intersections and it may foster additional congestion and delay on heavily traveled routes.

**Low density development patterns can be desirable in many locations, but must be planned with a clear understanding of their long-term implications**

**Wastewater.** Low-density development patterns cannot be economically served with public wastewater collection and treatment systems. Thus, private, on-site septic tank and drainfield systems have been used for many years as an alternative. With proper soil conditions in low-density development, these systems function effectively by disposing of contaminated wastewater to groundwater with little impact on public health. The average household produces about 300 gallons of wastewater daily, so the projected growth anticipated for the Hastings area may result in the disposal of about 660,000 gallons of wastewater each day to local groundwater sources.

**“Quality of Life.”** People move to communities like the Hastings area to take advantage of the rural, small town quality of life. There are many dimensions to the notion of quality of life and every person likely has a slightly different balance of those dimensions in mind when they use the term. But it certainly includes access to unspoiled natural features, an easy pace of life, a friendly community, a broad range of commercial and institutional services conveniently located, but not intruding on residential areas and thoughtful and efficient government making wise use of taxpayer resources for the long-term benefit of the community.

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Transportation Engineering, *Trip Generation*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

Like all communities in Michigan, the Hastings area includes a network of overlapping jurisdictions. At the local government level, there are the City of Hastings, Rutland Charter Township, and Hastings Charter and Carlton Townships, which rely on Barry County for land use and zoning governance. Other areas of governance that impact quality of life include public education, county and state roads, public health and economic development.

This fragmentation of local and regional decision-making – either by geography or by areas of technical responsibility – can frustrate attempts to coordinate efforts for the protection and enhancement of quality of life in an area. In fact, as the population grows and the effects of that growth create varied demands on this fragmented governance structure, the response of one agency to a challenge could, and often does, work at cross-purposes to the policies of another.



**The unfortunate result of uncoordinated planning is often monotonous suburban residential development, strip commercial patterns on the roads, and ever-increasing traffic.**

These challenges are not unique to the Hastings area. Many communities in Michigan have struggled with the effects of growth on natural features, quality of life and local governance and have essentially “muddled through” reacting to one challenge at a time in an uncoordinated and frequently unsatisfactory manner. The unfortunate result is often monotonous suburban residential development, strip commercial patterns on the roads, ever-increasing traffic with longer and more congested commutes and marginalized or failing central cities.

But these challenges are not insurmountable. Thoughtful leadership, effective communication and careful planning can achieve a much better result. Through the adoption of this joint plan, the elected and appointed officials of the participating jurisdictions are committed to a better future for the Hastings area.

## THE HASTINGS AREA JOINT LAND USE PLAN

**Thoughtful leadership,  
effective  
communication and  
careful planning can  
achieve a much better  
result.**

In recognition of the challenges outlined above, the leadership of the City of Hastings, Rutland Charter Township, Hastings Charter Township and Barry County began a dialog on the topic of cooperative growth management. Beginning with a series of meetings among elected and appointed officials facilitated by recognized planning and land use experts, the three communities retained Public Sector Consultants to develop an issue paper on the nature of the challenges facing the Hastings area and the various alternatives that could be taken to address them. The purpose of this document was to provide all three jurisdictions with an objective, third-party analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. The paper published in January, 2007 evaluated 4 alternative approaches to planning and zoning:

- ◆ Status-Quo, all three jurisdictions continuing informal discussions on planning and zoning issues and cooperating on a case-by-case basis, but making most planning and zoning decisions on an individual basis.
- ◆ Form an Advisory, Multi-jurisdictional Plan in which each community would participate in the formation of a detailed plan to guide future growth, but application of the plan to local decision-making would be advisory only.
- ◆ Develop a Joint Zoning Overlay Requiring Interlocal Approval of Changes, in which each jurisdiction would develop a consistent set of standards governing growth and development in a defined portion of the community and incorporate those standards in their local zoning to assure that consistent patterns will emerge. Further, no change could be made in any local ordinance without the approval of other jurisdictions.
- ◆ Form a Joint Planning Commission with authority over all planning and zoning decisions within a defined portion of the community.

The issue paper concluded with a recommended approach that involved a hybrid of the second and third alternatives: Develop a detailed and compelling multi-jurisdictional plan and a coordinated approach to zoning. This recommendation was embraced by both Townships, the City and the County and on April 17, 2007, the Joint Planning Committee was formed, with each community committing funds to support the development of this Plan.

On August 26, 2008, the last of the participating jurisdictions adopted the Hastings Area Joint Land Use Plan. The planning process for this amended plan which recognizes the participation of Carlton Township was initiated on September 2, 2008.

**PURPOSE OF THE PLAN.**

The Hastings Area Joint Land Use Plan is a more detailed supplement to the master plans of the participating jurisdictions. It is not intended to replace the Master Plans of either Rutland Charter Township or the City of Hastings, although it may clarify and strengthen the terms of those documents. The development of this plan was specifically contemplated in the Barry County Master Plan, which includes Hastings Charter and Carlton Townships and, as a result, it is directly consistent with that plan.

**The development of this plan was specifically contemplated in the Barry County Master Plan.**

The plan includes a detailed conceptual plan for an approximately 32 square mile area of Barry County including all of the City of Hastings and the easterly two-thirds of Rutland Township, the westerly one-third of Hastings Township and an area of less than two square miles around Leach and Middle Lakes in southwest Carlton Township. It is intended to respect and protect existing natural features and the overall goals and land use planning of the three jurisdictions. It takes existing development patterns into account and it seeks to enhance and strengthen those patterns while fostering within a defined planning area the rational and sequential extension of desirable land use patterns and urban services.

While the focus of this plan is on the approximately 32 square miles including and surrounding the City of Hastings, its implications extend throughout the County. Essentially, the Hastings Area Joint Land Use Plan is a policy statement that indicates the intention of the entire community - including the participating jurisdictions - to encourage sequential growth within the area defined by the plan, and conversely, to promote the protection of large areas of contiguous rural lands outside the plan's boundaries. It seeks to direct growth to those portions of the region best able to accommodate it and, as a result, to minimize the unplanned and inefficient intrusion of development into areas not targeted for growth.

## PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There is remarkable compatibility among the master plans goals of the City of Hastings, Barry County (Hastings and Carlton Townships) and Rutland Township. Each plan recognizes the central role of the City of Hastings as the urban core of the community and all speak clearly about the need for and the desirability of cooperation to address larger-than-local issues and concerns.

The goals for each jurisdiction were developed from citizen surveys, public workshops and mobile planning sessions designed to define the values and issues of the Hastings area community. The following goals of the Hastings Area Joint Land Use Plan are a collaboration of the general goals held in common by each of the three municipalities.

**These goals are a collaboration of the general goals held in common by each of the three municipalities**

- ◆ Initiate and maintain a process for the City of Hastings, the Township of Hastings and the Township of Rutland to identify issues of common concern and to cooperatively resolve these issues in order to achieve shared objectives.
- ◆ Coordinate land use along municipal boundaries to achieve compatibility in density, use, function and design.
- ◆ Establish an urban services boundary around the City of Hastings within which public utilities and services are to be provided concurrent with and by new development in a phased and sequential manner with the level of service proportional to the type of land use proposed.
- ◆ Protect the valuable natural features and wildlife habitats of the City and Townships including wetlands, floodplains, wooded areas, steep slopes and water bodies.
- ◆ Develop stormwater management regulations to preserve and protect the quality of water in lakes, rivers and streams.
- ◆ Support the establishment of Transfer of Development Rights & Purchase of Development Rights Program as a means to preserve farm land.
- ◆ Develop and maintain access management regulations to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow along primary travel routes.
- ◆ Develop policies and standards for logical street connections from the City of Hastings to future developments in abutting lands in Hastings and Rutland Townships and mitigate traffic impacts from one community on another.

- ◆ Plan for a connected system of pedestrian and bicycle trails between neighborhoods and activity centers.
- ◆ Adopt zoning regulations common to each municipality to ensure consistency in the implementation of the Hastings Joint Land Use Plan.
- ◆ Develop, adopt and implement land use and utility policies for areas outside the urban services boundary which are compatible with and supportive of the goals, objectives and strategies of this plan.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

### URBAN SERVICES BOUNDARY

A key element of this Plan is the formation of an ultimate urban services area. Within this area, it is anticipated that urban level service will be gradually extended, as growth and local policies warrant it. Urban level services include public water and wastewater, law enforcement, emergency response, street maintenance, as well as such leisure services as parks, libraries and related facilities. The intent of the plan will be to establish a uniform level of public services and development patterns within the urban services area, regardless of the underlying jurisdiction.

**Urban level service will be gradually extended, as growth and local policies warrant it by adhering to the principle of “contiguity.”**

Urban levels of service will be extended in a rational and sequential manner to avoid “leap-frog” patterns and in conformance with the overall Joint Land Use Plan. The principle of “contiguity” will be adhered to in deciding when and where urban services will be extended.

This principle requires that a certain portion of a parcel be contiguous to land currently served by urban services in order for these services to be extended to the requesting parcel. This Joint Land Use Plan establishes a minimum standard of 40% of a parcel to be served must be directly contiguous to parcels served. Thus, a narrow right-of-way or other artificial connection would not suffice to meet the contiguity test. Contiguity requirements ensure that when communities grow, they grow from the center out and not through a series of “flag pole” and “leapfrog” development projects. Such developments take away resources from the urban core and often bring traffic and service problems that cost more than the revenue the new growth generates.

In addition to the requirement for contiguity other criteria should also be met in the determination of extending urban services. These criteria should include:

- ◆ The request should constitute a logical extension of public utilities and services, and sufficient capacity must be available to serve the proposed use;
- ◆ The proposed land use must be compatible with the Joint Future Land Use Plan Map and Plan policies;
- ◆ The proposed use(s) must not have substantial negative impact on adjacent land uses, roads and the delivery of public services;
- ◆ The site must be located on a paved road;

- ◆ Extensions of public utilities and roads will be the developers' expense.
- ◆ If more than one parcel requests services, urban services shall be provided for all.
- ◆ Where utilities are extended, along a road right-of-way, the contiguity principle shall apply to both sides of the street.

A further criteria related to the sequencing of development will include an evaluation of the extent of development that has occurred in the most recent adjoining area that is proposed to receive urban services. In most cases, the urban services area should not be extended until the adjoining area has achieved about 75% build-out. For the purposes of this standard, a parcel may be considered "built-out" if it is developed (or committed to be developed) with an economically viable land use, consistent with this plan and receiving urban services. When about 75% of the developable area is considered built-out, adjoining parcels may be considered for a further expansion of the urban services area. This standard should be carefully considered, but may need to be applied flexibly as many factors can influence the rate of build-out.

In this way, inefficient extensions can be avoided and the Joint Land Use Plan will materialize in response to owner and investor growth objectives that comport with the plan.

While a complete suite of urban services will ultimately be provided in most parts of the urban services area, in a few isolated areas, the cooperating jurisdictions may agree on a more limited level of services, in keeping with the nature of those areas. For example, Algonquin Lake in Rutland Township and, Leech Lake and Middle Lakes in Carlton Township would be included in this limited service area as illustrated on the Future Land Use Map. The public services provided would likely be limited to public water and sewer in these areas.

The outer limits of the ultimate urban service area encompass an area of nearly fifteen square miles, with an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 acres either vacant or minimally developed. Thus, the ultimate urban service area includes sufficient land area to accommodate all projected residential growth in the three communities for many years. Certainly, not all growth will locate in the urban services area, so this Plan is based on the assumption that with effective growth management, the ultimate urban services area contains sufficient land area and extensions of services beyond its limits need not be considered throughout much of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**The ultimate urban service area contains sufficient land area such that extensions of services beyond its limits need not be considered throughout much of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

The Joint Future Land Use Map illustrates within the ultimate urban services area a “Preliminary Initial Urban Services Area.” This area is located within Rutland Township including developed or developing parcels along either side of M-37 west of the City to Tanner Lake Road and extending north and west to include approximately 30 acres at Tanner Lake and M-37. This comprises those lands which are or which will first receive urban services from the City of Hastings. An Urban Services Agreement between the City of Hastings and Rutland Township establishes the nature and type of services to be provided by the City for this area.

This “Preliminary Initial Urban Services Area” is part of a larger contiguous area recommended for Mixed Use in the Joint Future Land Use Map. In order for the urban services provided within this preliminary area to be extended beyond the boundaries illustrated on the Future Land Use Map the criteria noted above will need to be met.

#### FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

**Agricultural Preservation.** Rutland, Carlton and Hastings Townships have some high quality agricultural lands remaining in production. However, only a relatively small area in the northwest portion of the study area is affected by this plan. These lands lie outside the boundaries of the ultimate urban services area and such services would likely not be extended during the planning horizon of this Joint Land Use Plan. Agricultural lands typically include primarily field crops (corn, wheat, alfalfa, etc.) and pasture land. These areas help to give the community its rural character and the farming activity remains an important element of the local economy. The overall purpose of the Agricultural Preservation Land Use designation is to promote the continued use of quality farmlands for agricultural purposes, minimize the potential for conflict with more intense land uses, and preserve significant open space areas.

The primary land uses in this area should be farming, including large acreage farms, smaller hobby farms, estate-scale residential and related activities. The Joint Planning Committee will work to develop mechanisms to encourage the continuation of agriculture within the community, reduce potential adjacent land use conflicts, and recognize the legitimate interest of property owners to make economical use of their lands.

**Low Density Residential.** The Low Density designation anticipates high quality and aesthetic forms of development at a density of about one unit per acre,<sup>2</sup> creating a very attractive living environment for residents. The primary land use within this area will be detached single-family homes. Conservation design techniques will be encouraged, where



**The primary land use will be single-unit homes oriented to compliment natural areas.**

appropriate, to establish small pockets of natural lands either protecting important features or lands not otherwise suitable for development. These areas may include natural woodlots, wetlands, neighborhood parks and gathering spaces. The Low Density Residential area is found outside the ultimate urban services boundary, although there may be some locations where a limited suite of urban services may be extended. This may be done to enable open space conservation design developments especially in conjunction with transferable development credits, in which it may be necessary to site homes on lots that would otherwise be too

small to accommodate on-site systems. Utilities, particularly wastewater services may also be extended to address particular local needs, such as higher density patterns in lakeshore developments.

While the primary land use within the Low Density Residential area will be single-family detached housing, some mix of uses may be appropriate to serve nearby population areas. Compatible uses may include institutional land uses (e.g., schools and churches) and recreational uses, like parks and playgrounds.

Developments occurring on lands in this future land use category should have direct access to a paved roadway, and innovative storm water runoff detention and treatment will be encouraged to protect water quality and features. New residential developments in this designation area should incorporate amenities such as trails, interconnecting trail easements, parks and open spaces.

**Moderate Density Residential.** The moderate density residential designation may include some existing neighborhoods, but it is generally intended to provide future land use designations for the undeveloped areas located on the edges of the City of Hastings and areas that are anticipated to be within close proximity to urban services, primarily those lands within, but on the outer edges of the City, and adjacent lands in Rutland and Hastings Townships.

<sup>2</sup> Slight density increases may be contemplated within this category where transferable development credits (TDCs) have been obtained.

Some areas in Rutland Township, in particular the northern portions of Sections 23 and 24, are proposed for residential density somewhat higher (four dwellings per acre) than recommended by the 2004 Rutland Township Master Plan. This adjustment is incorporated in this Joint Land Use Plan as this area will be included in the Ultimate Urban Services Area and also abuts the planned Mixed Use Area which will allow the Moderate Density Residential category to serve as a transition to areas planned for lower densities.

Lands in Hastings Township which are within the Joint Planning Committee study area are recommended as Urban Planning Areas in the 2005 Barry County Master Plan. The densities and land uses in the County Plan are compatible with the recommendations of this plan which calls for a combination of Low and Moderate Density Residential uses.

Public water and wastewater will be required for development in this area and residential densities are anticipated to be approximately three to four dwelling units per acre for single-unit detached housing. Higher density development of up to six detached units per acre, or up to ten units per acre may be considered where transferable development credits are obtained to support the density. Growth within this district should occur only in increments beginning in areas already served or adjacent to areas served with utilities in or near the City of Hastings and extending outward based on the contiguity criteria noted previously.



**Pedestrian facilities and connections will be a key feature of moderate density neighborhoods.**

The primary purpose of this designation is to establish human scale, walkable neighborhoods. Flexible conservation design mechanisms will be encouraged, as appropriate, to establish open space preserves and neighborhood recreational facilities. Playgrounds and sitting areas to provide opportunities for recreation and social interaction should be incorporated in new development. Developments should include pedestrian walkways and street layouts should be designed to connect with future developments as they occur. Pedestrian facilities should be incorporated into new developments and should be positioned to join with walkways within future developments.

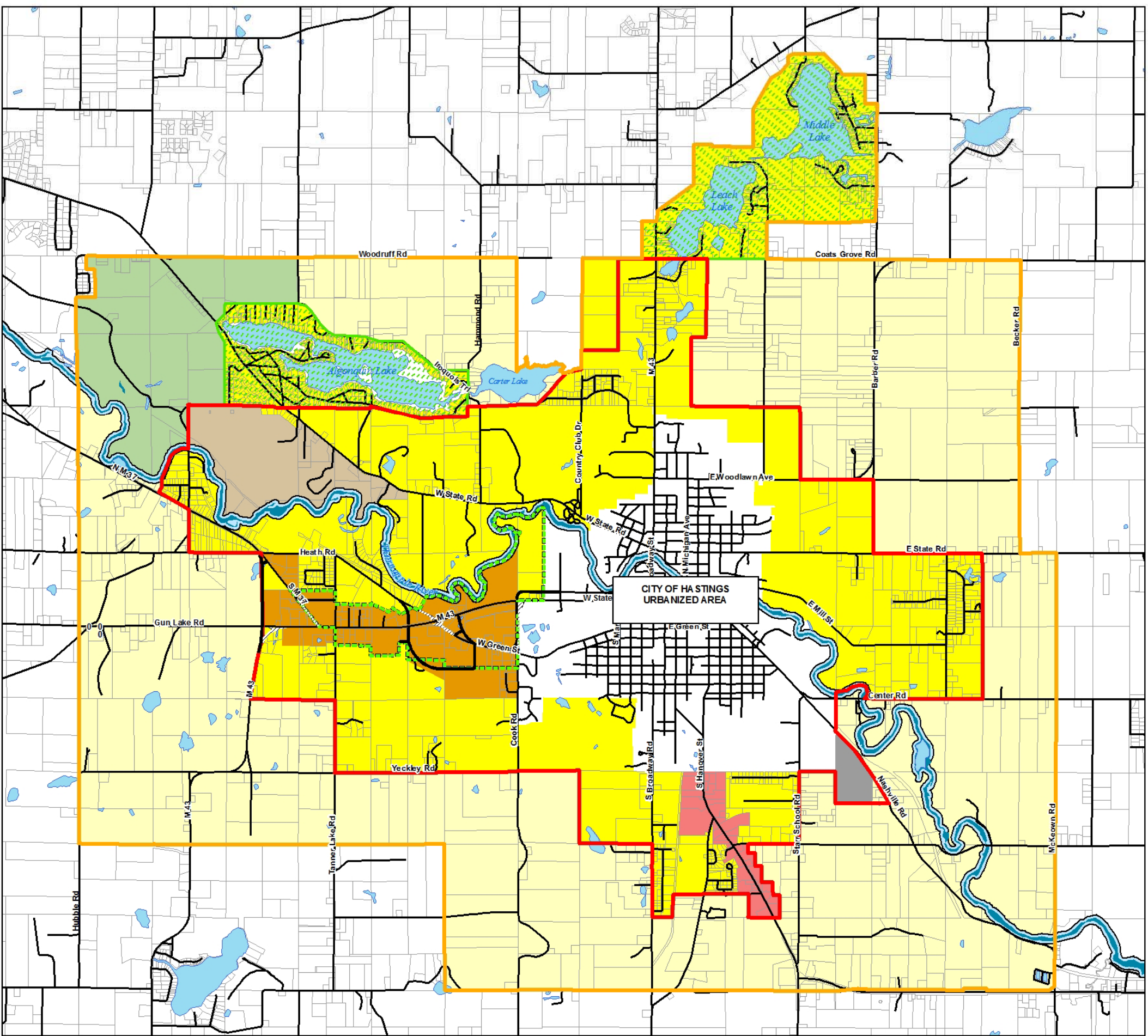
Algonquin, Leach and Middle Lakes are also contained in this designation. These areas have experienced significant development and are likely to remain attractive places for additional building and recreation. In this case, development regulations should recognize and encourage existing patterns of development, while applying intelligent

and realistic standards that support the long-term viability of the lake. These lakes are reflected within a limited water/sewer service area, as only public water and wastewater services are likely to be extended to this neighborhood during the planning horizon of this Plan. The County Zoning Ordinance classifies Leach and Middle lakes area in the Lake Residential district with varying lot area, depending on the availability of public water and wastewater, consistent with the MDR designation.

**Mixed Use.** The Mixed Use Area land use designation is intended to diversify land uses in various locations to serve a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial demands. These uses may include quality local and regional-scale commercial development, high density single-family attached and detached homes, duplexes, condominiums, and apartment complexes mixed with compatible light industrial uses. This designation also contemplates the possibility of senior housing.

# JOINT FUTURE LAND USE / URBAN SERVICES AREA

HASTINGS TOWNSHIP  
 RUTLAND TOWNSHIP  
 CITY OF HASTINGS  
 CARLTON TOWNSHIP

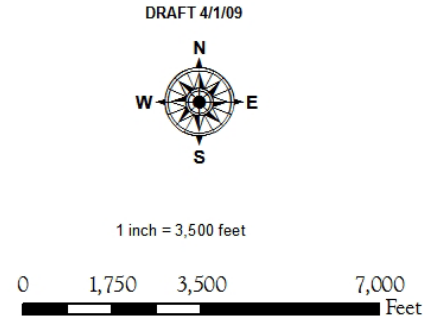


**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- Future Collector Streets (General location of a future street which may be needed for improved access. Exact location and need for the street determined when property actually is proposed for development.)
- Possible Road closure
- Preliminary Initial Urban Services Area
- Ultimate Urban Service Area
- Water/Sewer Service Area
- 100' buffer along Thornapple River

**FUTURE LAND USE**

- AG - Agricultural Preservation (High quality agricultural land; primary use is agriculture and related activities)
- LDR - Low Density Residential (Single family dwellings; one acre min. lot size; open space / cluster developments encouraged; transfer development credits may allow slightly higher density; no public utilities)
- MDR - Moderate Density Residential (Single family detached dwellings; maximum density 4 units per acre with public utilities; transfer development credits may allow density of 6-10; preserve open space; connect public streets between subdivisions; walkable neighborhoods; senior housing)
- MU - Mixed Use (Variety of uses, residential, commercial, industrial in compatible setting; attached dwellings - townhouses, condominiums, multi-family, senior housing; greater density than MDR; water & sewer requires contiguity; walkable neighborhoods; shopping opportunities nearby)
- C - Commercial (General retail, office & service uses for local residents and passing traffic; residential on second floor; landscaped along street; sidewalks; urban services required with contiguity; minimize driveways; service drives and parking lot connections; downward lighting)
- I - Industrial (General industrial uses; urban services required with contiguity; site design standards include landscaping, lighting, signs, facade treatment such as brick, stone, wood, glass; storm water management using low impact design (LID) techniques)
- A - Airport Commercial (Commercial & industrial uses which do not need highway exposure but need land for future expansion; urban services not required)



The Mixed Use planned area proposes somewhat greater densities than the Low Density Residential and Moderate Density Residential area and therefore developments in this area would be ideal for application of transferable development credits.

One of the goals of the mixed-use areas is to reduce the need for some automobile trips to the city and may offer walkable living and shopping opportunities when residential areas are linked to commercial areas with



## **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

safe pathways and sidewalks. Given the location of the Mixed Use designation along the M-37 corridor, it is also reasonable to anticipate larger, regional-scale commercial uses. However, it will be important that transportation in this area remain safe and efficient by limiting access points onto existing roads and careful design of any new roads. Development should occur sequentially, avoiding inefficient “leap frog” development that create gaps. Urban services will eventually be provided throughout the Mixed Use Designation, but water and wastewater extensions will require contiguity of development to assure an efficient pattern.

An important element to be addressed in this area is the likelihood of increasing traffic on Heath Road in Rutland Township extending onto Green Street moving into the City. In its current configuration, the Heath/Green/M-37 intersection is poorly aligned and with the emerging regional commercial development in the Mixed Use area, additional congestion at this location can be expected.



**A goal of this plan to direct more intense commercial concentrations areas with the existing infrastructure to support them.**

This Joint Land Use Plan outlines a conceptual interconnectivity plan (at left) for this area and for some of the regional commercial uses planned or anticipated. This should be regarded as a concept only and more detailed traffic and civil engineering analysis is required to complete such an analysis. However, the objectives of this concept should be clear. They are, the minimization of the number of access points on M-37 in keeping with the M-37 Corridor Study, the promotion of greater interconnectivity to promote retail and business synergy and to reduce impacts on the regional road network, the safer alignment of the Heath/Green/M-37 intersection, and the reduction of regional commercial traffic on Green Street extending into the City’s residential neighborhoods.

**Commercial.** In addition to a demand for new residential areas, the population growth that the study area has experienced in recent years results in an increased need for commercial and professional services. While it is the goal of this plan to direct heavy population growth and commercial concentrations or development patterns to areas with the

existing infrastructure to support them, modest scale, carefully contained commercial areas are desired outside of downtown Hastings. When designed properly and connected to nearby residential areas, these commercial areas reduce the need for some automobile trips to the city and may offer walkable living and shopping opportunities for residents.

An area along M-37 south of the City of Hastings currently contains commercial uses, and this plan seeks to support and strengthen this area. This area is likely to see a continuation of highway-oriented uses which may become more intense and efficient with the provision of urban levels of services.

The area immediately east of the Hastings Airport is an emerging commercial and industrial area and it offers space for newer uses that do not need highway exposure, but require land for expansion. The most efficient patterns of development in this area can be achieved with an eventual extension of urban levels of services. However, given its relatively isolated location, water and wastewater extension to this area may be unlikely in the near term future.

**Industrial.** The Industrial area is contained in a limited area near the southeast portion of the city of Hastings and adjacent properties in Hastings Township. This designation is intended to provide for environmentally sustainable and context-sensitive land uses. Specific uses in the industrial area may include professional offices, manufacturing, processing, assembly operation, transportation, warehousing, similar uses, and limited heavy commercial and retail. Due to the intensity of uses, utilities will be provided to serve these properties as required and as an extension from contiguous properties.

Design standards should be implemented to ensure functional and aesthetic developments. Site design criteria should include signage, landscaping, lighting, site utilization, access control, and building façade design. Extensive landscaping and buffering measures should be implemented. Buildings should be designed with high quality building materials such as stone, brick, and other natural materials.

## FUTURE ROADS

The Joint Future Land Use Map illustrates a number of future collector roads. These are general or conceptual locations only and are illustrated to portray a need for a future road on these vacant lands as they develop.

A collector street serves to collect traffic from local streets and direct it to the major street system.

The exact location and alignment will likely not be determined until the property is proposed for development, at which time the Planning Commission in that particular jurisdiction will make a final determination on the need for the road and agree to its final location.

Payment for the road will also need to be determined by Township officials but for the most part payment for roads will be by developers. Illustrating these future roads on the Future Land Use Map, is an indication that such roads will improve access and that such roads must be part of any development for that property.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Joint Planning Committee and communities represented by its membership are committed to moving from planning to implementation in the use of this Joint Land Use Plan. Therefore, the following specific action strategies are incorporated both to establish the key next steps in the planning process and to establish benchmarks the communities may reference to measure progress in plan implementation.

1. **A Consistent Zoning Overlay.** To implement the “blueprint” set forth in this Plan, specific tools will be needed. The Zoning Ordinances of the City of Hastings, Rutland Charter Township and Barry County provide a range of land use regulatory tools. Many are consistent with the objectives of the plan, but some are not. Furthermore, each ordinance is different from the perspective of lot dimensions, land use definitions, administration standards and special land uses.

**For the community to function effectively in a unified and consistent manner, coordinated zoning is essential.**

For the community to function effectively in a unified and consistent manner, coordinated zoning is essential. Therefore, this task, which was envisioned in the Public Sector Consultants Issue Paper, will involve the development of a consistent set of zoning provisions for each community to incorporate within its zoning ordinance. These will modify local standards, procedures and the zoning maps so that the zoning staff and Planning Commissions for the City, Rutland Township and Barry County will treat similar applicants and request with similar procedures. Finally, since these consistent, yet separate, zoning standards form an essential part of this joint planning effort, the three ordinances must provide that no one jurisdiction may amend or adjust the provisions of its ordinance that impact this Plan without the approval of the others.

2. **Transferable Development Credits.** A part of the Barry County Master Plan and the concept behind this plan is the objective to encourage more intense land uses in areas that have the proper infrastructure and amenities to service it. A part of this is the proposed formation of the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) ordinance by Barry County. Such an ordinance will establish areas in the County where local and regional objectives are best served if development is discouraged and, conversely, areas where development should be welcomed. However, discouraging development should not mean loss of development value for some and an increase for others. Therefore, the TDR program would allow land owners seeking value for their land to

have the option to sell development rights only while keeping the land. The development rights would be transferable to other locations in the County where development is sought.

To make such a system work, it will be necessary to create incentives to encourage these transfers to occur. In the context of this Joint Land Use Plan, these incentives will consist of greater residential densities and higher commercial intensities in portions of the Hastings Area for developments that include acquired transferable development credits.

This mechanism is not yet in place at the County level, so its implementation as part of this Plan must be timed to the finalization of the County's program. Nevertheless, the Joint Planning Committee and the communities they represent are committed to cooperation with this approach and anticipate that a part of the implementation of this Plan will be the designation of several "receiving" zones where additional density or intensity may be contemplated.

3. **Equitable Service Agreements.** The City of Hastings provides a complete suite of urban services to its residents. A goal of this plan is to extend such services in a rational and sequential manner within the urban services boundary outlined in this Plan. While state law provides several mechanisms to enable utility and service extensions between jurisdictions, many require a shift in jurisdictional authority. In the Hastings community such a shift is neither desired nor necessary.

This strategy contemplates the creation of an overall service extension agreement between the City and Rutland and Hastings Townships. It would set forth the nature of the services to be extended, the rates to be paid and the mechanisms for governance of those services. As future extensions are desired, they would be governed by individual agreements structure to be compatible with the overall service extension agreement.

4. **New Roadway Alignments.** This plan contemplates adjustment of several of the roads on the east side of Rutland Township, adjacent to the City. These adjustments will take the cooperation of the Road Commission, MDOT, the Township and the affected property owners. However, as growth and development continue in this most desirable portion of the community, each must be compatible with the larger plan. Eventually, a system of service roads and realigned roads and highways will provide better service to the community and the land uses adjoining these roads.