



**GARFIELD TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN REVIEW AND
UPDATE - 2025**

2025 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Newaygo County, Michigan

Adopted: August 26, 2025

TOWNSHIP BOARD

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George Suchy

The Master Plan Update that follows, was prepared in accordance with the provisions in P.A. 33 of 2008, such that “At least every 5 years after adoption of a master plan, a planning commission shall review the master plan and determine whether to....amend the master plan or adopt a new master plan”. Further this update documents the review and findings of the Garfield Township Planning Commission during this process.

INTRODUCTION

What is a Master Land Use Plan and more specifically what is the role of a Master Plan and the process to prepare or update such a plan for Garfield Township.

In general, a Master Land Use Plan is always described as a forward-looking document. One that sets a course for the future of land use and development in Garfield Township. It is a shared vision of what Garfield Township “is”, what its’ residents value about living in Garfield Township and what the community in general desires the Garfield Township of the future to be.

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER LAND USE PLAN

The Master Land Use Plan for Garfield Township was adopted in March, 2019 and contains the following text detailing its’ purpose:

“This (2019) Master Land Use Plan is intended to guide Garfield Townships’ officials and citizens in making decisions about the use of public and privately owned land as well as public facilities and operations. It sets forth local goals and objectives for community growth and development issues and provides the information and local input that forms the sound rationale for decision-making by the Planning Commission and Township Board.”

The (2019) Plan was prepared under the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008...” Section 7 of PA 233 states that the general purpose of a master plan “is to guide and accomplish in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria: (a) Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient and economical. (b) Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development. (c) Will in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare.”

The Garfield Township Master Land Use Plan at its most basic

- Is a general statement of Garfield's vision, goals and policies providing an overview of the community's desires for the future.
- Assists in routine decision-making over land use, zoning and development matters.
- Forms much of the legal basis for the Township's Zoning Ordinance.
- Provides continuity across time and changes in local leadership.
- Provides a mechanism for consideration of the future of public investments or improvements in traditional local government projects.

LOCAL TRADITION

It should be noted that there exists a long-standing tradition of land use planning by the Garfield Township Planning Commission and Township Board. Garfield Township as a local government has been active in planning and adjustments to local zoning for over the past 45 years. The most recent Master Plans developed in 2002 and 2007 formed much of the basis for the 2019 Plan. Township-wide surveys on public services, development and quality of life issues have also been a constant over the years in Garfield Township starting back in 1979. Such surveys have been key in gauging both the optimism for the future and concerns for the present that are held by its residents and taxpayers. In addition it provides an excellent baseline for local attitudes and perceptions on local life, community needs and desires.

PROCESS

The process for review and update of the 2019 Master Land Use Plan began in the fall of 2024 and included the following steps:

Community Profile: A review of current demographic data and trends.

Community Input: A Township-wide Survey was distributed in December 2024. A summary of survey results is included in this document.

Planning Commission Input: The Planning Commission reviewed past and current land use decisions, zoning requests and general development issues and trends in the Township.

Goals, Policies and Strategies: The Planning Commission reviewed and updated the goals, policies and strategies in the 2019 Master Land Use Plan.

Implementation: The Planning Commission reviewed the current Master Land Use Plan Map.

Documentation: The total process involved in this 5 Year Review of the 2019 Master Land Use Plan is documented herein including minutes of the required public hearing and final adoption and endorsement by the Planning Commission and Township Board.

THE GARFIELD TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY

During this current Master Land Use Plan review process a community-wide opinion survey was distributed in December 2024. This replicated a process and the questions contained in a township-wide survey in 2018. Responses to both surveys made clear that Garfield Township residents:

- Are concerned about the future and how to maintain the rural, agricultural and open space quality of their community.
- Are very interested in maintaining the quality of their residential life and surrounding area or neighborhood.
- Are for the most part, long-term residents with many having lived in Garfield for over 30, 40 or even 50 years.
- Are generally positive about local services, the environmental character of the Township, their local quality of life, and their own plans for the future.

Community Profile

An important element of any local planning effort is to review demographic data and attempt to develop a reasonable estimate of future population levels. Population increases or decreases have a direct bearing on the demand for development and land use change.

“Anticipating the numbers and characteristics of future population is very difficult. Since the planner is unable to fully foresee and therefore to predict future...social and economic conditions, he can only project what he thinks will happen to present trends in the future. He must make assumptions about the future, assumptions which may be outmoded or invalidated....projection of population in small areas...is no easy task.” Source: American Society of Planning Officials - Population Forecasting Report

SUMMARY OF PAST POPULATION ESTIMATES

The following demographic data utilized existing U.S. Census data and Census Bureau estimates as well as regional population estimates from sources as indicated. It is indicative of the difficulty in making projections for smaller communities.

- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Council (WMSRDC) 2010 population estimate for Newaygo County of 57,871
- MSU University Extension 2013 population estimate for Newaygo County of 48,280
- U.S. Census Bureau 2017 population estimate for Newaygo County of 48,242
- WMSRDC 2020 population estimate for Newaygo County of 47,824, 47,539 in 2030, 47,256 in 2040 and 47,115 in 2045
- U.S. Census Bureau 2016 population estimate for Garfield Township of 2,517

- WMSRDC 2020 population estimate for Garfield Township of 2,511, 2,496 in 2030, 2,481 in 2040 and 2,474 in 2045.

The U.S. Census Bureau final count 2020 Population for Newaygo County was 49,978 and for Garfield Township it was 2,486

CURRENT PLANNING PROJECTIONS

Examples of recent projections and commentary on the population of the State of Michigan, Newaygo County and Garfield Township are contained below. Sources of the projections are indicated. Recognizing that Garfield Township is a component unit of Newaygo County and both are components of the State of Michigan - population trends and projections are closely interrelated.

- World Population Review Data: Newaygo County 2024 estimated population of 51,488 or an annual increase of 300 to 380 per year since 2020.
- Data USA: Newaygo County 2022 population of 50,130
- USA Facts: Newaygo County 2022 population of 50,886
- Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis: Newaygo County 2023 population of 51,108
- Neilsberg Research: Newaygo County 2023 population of 51,108
- Neilsberg Research: Garfield Township 2023 population of 2,567
- Neilsberg Research: “Over the last 20 plus years between 2000 and 2023, (the) population of Newaygo County increased by 3,084. In this period, the peak population of 51,108 was reached in the year 2023. The numbers suggest that the population has not reached its peak yet and is showing a trend of further growth.”
- Data Set Research: “In 2023 the population of Garfield Township was 2,567, a 0.94% increase year-by-year from 2022. Previously,

in 2022 Garfield Township population was 2,543 an increase of 0.79% compared to a population of 2,523 in 2021. Over the last 20 plus years between 2000 and 2023 (the) population of Garfield Township increased by 176. In this period the peak population was 2,586 in the year 2019. The numbers suggest that the population has already reached its peak and is showing a trend of decline.”

- Michigan Center for Data and Analytics: “Michigan’s population grew by 2.0 percent from 2010 to 2020. The United States population increased by 7.5 percent in this period. Michigan had the 46th slowest population growth rate among the 47 states that experienced population growth from 2010 to 2020. Michigan was among 19 states that experienced population decline from 2020 to 2022.”
- Michigan Center for Data and Analytics: “1. Michigan’s population is expected to experience slow growth (from 2022 to 2034) and then decline. 2. Michigan has shifted from a young, higher fertility population to an older low fertility population...decreasing births and increasing deaths are substantial contributors to the state’s projected slow growth and population decline. 3. As the baby boomers age into high mortality years, Michigan is projected to transition to sustained and steepening natural decrease (more deaths than births) through 2050. 4. Since the 1970’s, Michigan has typically had net negative migration. However future population growth in the state will be increasingly dependent on net positive migration. 5. Michigan is projected to have a slower growth rate and earlier onset of population decline than the United States.”

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS - 2025

- Newaygo County is projected to experience a modest annual increase of several hundred people per year in future population levels.
- The growth increases experienced in both Ottawa and Kent Counties in the last two decades, may continue to impact southern Newaygo County communities going forward.

“Kent County's population increased 12 out of the 12 years between year 2010 and year 2022.....Ottawa County is the fastest growing among the state's 10 most populous counties. In 2022, Ottawa County broke the 300,000-population mark and had a 1.57% population increase between 2020 and 2022.” Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- The State of Michigan’s aging population and lack of in-migration affects potential growth nearly everywhere in the State.
- Projecting a “stable to declining” population of Garfield Township in the ten to twenty year timeline will directly affect planning for future housing needs.
- The resident longevity responses as reflected in the recent Township Survey would seem to mirror the aging population situation that exists in the State of Michigan itself. This too will affect planning for future housing needs, possible pressures on retaining the Township’s agricultural character and future land use or development impacts.

Planning Commission Review and Analysis

The Garfield Township Planning Commission had an opportunity for several “round-table” and informal discussions on the types of issues/questions that are included in the Citizen Survey but also are fundamental to this current Master Plan review. Utilizing a base map of Garfield Township, Planning Commissioners were asked to review both historically and spatially, three general topics:

Favorable: What parcels or areas within the Township would individual Commissioners point to as past land use, development or zoning decisions that are considered to be a positive feature or element of the Township or have become modified over time...due to Township involvement and perhaps zoning enforcement...to become a positive element in the community?

- Mixed Use - Commercial Corridor: On M-82 west of Baldwin.
- MotoCross: On Spring Street north of M-82.
- Camp Newaygo Future Plans
- Sawmill on Ferris Avenue.
- Pickerel and Kimball Lakes: The “Lakes” area of Garfield is such a significant land use component and has a long history of various zoning and development matters.
- Ag-Residential Plan and District: West of Felch
- Muskegon River Buffer: Setbacks were increased to further protect the River.

Recent Challenges: Those land uses or parcels within the Township that have been the most challenging for the Planning Commission and

Township Board to work through, mitigate, approve or otherwise litigated by the Township or a private party.

- Shooting Range: On Wisner Avenue.
- “Old Woman’s Bend”: A unique area with a long history.
- Sawmill: On Ferris Avenue.
- Miscellaneous - Similar Requests: In recent years, Garfield Township has received a number of requests for scattered site, small scale “manufacturing”, craft, or construction operations. Sometimes these proposals are combined with existing residential properties. While generally viewed as favorable by the Planning Commission, going forward they discussed options to have a more defined/strategic approach or direction for dealing with these proposals.

Future Challenges and Opportunities:

- Small Scale Craft or Construction Operations: The Planning Commission discussed working towards a planning concept that would direct such uses and activities in an organized manner....possibly by designating a site or sites as best suited for such activity. Zoning text changes might follow.
- Pickerel and Kimball Lakes: Second tier residential growth in the area surrounding these lakes is seen as a significant opportunity for the Township.
- City of Newaygo: With the City of Newaygo having stabilized its downtown and expanded its commercial area, elderly housing and industrial base....what does the future hold for Garfield Township’s neighbor?
- Conservation Development: One trend in residential growth in West Michigan is condominium or planned unit projects....even with detached single family homes, vs. traditional platted subdivisions. The question is re: how to encourage use of the Conservation

Development and PUD options for new residential growth and are the current zoning provisions adequate?

- M-82: What options exist for future development along the M-82 Corridor....is that seen as a possibility, where and what type or types of development?
- Sawmill or Similar Businesses: The expanded sawmill on Felch Avenue has become a much discussed local issue. What if anything might have been done differently in re-looking at this matter...or more importantly are there any options to consider as part of this Master Plan Review that might be of help....to both the Township and involved neighbors?
- PA 233 of 2024: This state law transferred authority for siting decisions for new large-scale wind and solar projects from local officials to state regulators. This statute and any subsequent project do pose a real land use issue for Garfield

“Under PA 233 an applicant must first contact the local government to verify if it has adopted a compatible renewable energy ordinance (CREO). A CREO is an ordinance that provides for the development of utility-scale energy facilities within the local unit of government that is no more restrictive than provisions included in PA 233. If the local government has adopted a CREO the applicant must go through the municipality for approval and bypass the commission.” Source: Michigan Townships.org

COMMUNITY SURVEY - KEY FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the key findings or responses to the Township-wide survey that was distributed in December 2024. Later in an appendix, are the written comments that were received as well as a detailed tally of all responses.

- The open spaces, scenic and agricultural qualities of Garfield Township are considered as very important to local residents. In 2025 over 70% of all survey respondents indicated that it is important to them personally that Garfield remain as rural, agricultural and low density as possible into the future. The survey asked if Garfield Township would be able to remain as such, some 20 years into the future. While 46% stated that they felt it was possible, the remaining 26% stated that most likely would not happen and 28% were “not sure”. What was very telling is that the exact same scores to this question were given in the 2018 Survey.
- When asked if active farms in the Township should be protected from development or non-agricultural uses, the response was 71% Yes, 16% No and 13% Not Sure. In 2018 the response to the very same question was 65% Yes, 10% No and 25% Not Sure.
- That 16% of all survey respondents had been living in Garfield Township five years or less was an interesting and perhaps unexpected fact. On the other end of the scale some 66% of Township respondents have lived in this area 16 years or more. Many, many responses indicated that they had lived in Garfield 30, 40 or 50+ years. Those between 6 to 15 years of residency were a total of 12% of all responses.
- Planning for future housing types and needs is an important part of the master plan review. Future single family homes were seen as the most preferred option for future housing construction by a 90% positive score. Duplexes (45% Yes), Apartments (24% Yes) and Condominiums (32% Yes) did not reach the level of support as

single family dwellings. The Survey did reflect local support for Smaller Housing Options, a Senior Living Complex, or Accessory Dwellings for the Elderly Residents. This was seen as an important response needing additional consideration as part of the Master Plan review.

- Previous surveys have indicated that protection of the Muskegon River by careful regulation of the undeveloped land adjacent to the River has consistently been a priority. The response to this question in 2025 and in 2018 was over 80% positive in both surveys.
- The number of retail stores and services available in both Fremont and Newaygo are seen by Garfield residents as being adequate to meet most day-to-day shopping needs (80%+ positive answers).
- The response to the survey question on planning for small industrial operations in Garfield Township, continues to be mixed. In the 2025 survey a total of just under 40% responded favorably to the idea while 35% were negative with the rest being “Not Sure”. When asked the same question in the 2018 survey, the responses were very similar.
- Roads and road maintenance are always a topic of interest in any survey about local government services. Reviews on local roads in the Township did quite well overall - with 15% rating them “Excellent”, 47% “Good”, 35% “Fair” and the remainder as “Poor”.
- Reliable internet and cell phone service in the Township was seen as Fair to Excellent by over 80% of all respondents.
- The question on considering the purchase of open space for parks or other non-developed public use was given a positive response by some 56% of those surveyed, which was identical to the 57% “Yes” response in 2018. There were many positive written comments given on the Walking Trail at the Township Hall.
- Many more respondents indicated that Garfield Township has been fair in its planning and zoning policies - 45% positive vs. 15% negative. Ordinance enforcement on junk and blight situations

continues to be a priority with the public...as indicated by nearly 70% of all responses. There was more sentiment towards controlling growth in the Township (65%+) vs. promoting growth (less than 40%). More than half of the responses felt that local lakes are overcrowded. And, slightly more than 50% of all responses did not support the concept of a wind turbine farm or a solar farm in Garfield.

- A total of 90% of all survey respondents indicated that Garfield Township was a “Good to Excellent” place to live. Likewise 90% stated that their neighborhood was a “Good to Excellent” place to live and to raise children. Finally over 85% of all residents indicated that the overall quality of life in Garfield was “Good to Excellent”.

GOALS, POLICIES and STRATEGIES

Admittedly the goals and policies in the Master Plan are rather “high-minded” and aspirational, but the Planning Enabling Act in Sec. 7 (2) states “The general purpose of a master plan...will...best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare”...which is also aspirational. The intent here is to have the written statements in this section of the Master Plan attempt to describe local priorities and **defend** the Township’s Zoning Ordinance, when or if necessary.

The following is a summary of the review and findings as to each element in Chapter 5 of the current Master Land Use Plan (2019) along with any additions, revisions or a finding of “no changes needed”.

1. Page 44 - General introductory/definition section. No changes.
2. Pages 45 - 46: Master Land Use Plan Update. No changes.
3. Pages 46 - 48: Land Use and Growth. No changes.
4. Pages 48 - 49: Zoning and Related Ordinances. No changes.
5. Pages 49 - 51: Residential Land Use. No changes to the “Goal” section and its two goal statements. The following **amends** the Policies section for residential land use.
 - Continues to result in desirable residential growth that reflects the prevailing attitudes of a strong sense of community, safe neighborhoods that are an excellent place to live and to raise a family and will accommodate the needs of different age groups and income levels.”
6. Pages 51 - 54: Agricultural and Environmental Resources. **Is amended** to include the following;

Goal: To expand the Township's efforts:

In regulating those uses of land or structure that are unique due to their size, acreage commitment or other attributes, and while they find agricultural and open space lands necessary for their use due to their operational characteristics, basic uniqueness or special designation granted by the State of Michigan, they will require specific procedures that still focus on the health, safety and general welfare of Township residents.

Policies

4. To manage change in order to preserve the Township's existing character and rural lifestyle by recognizing and prioritizing consideration of the rural beauty of Garfield Township, the viability of its farmland, the natural systems that exist here and the health, safety and welfare of the Township's residents, the following strategies are directed at solar energy facilities that might be developed within the Township:

- *Update the Township's Zoning Ordinance standards for all types of solar energy systems or facilities.*
- *Continue to foster relationships for solar energy companies that might be operating in the Township to ensure that solar energy facilities are meeting Township expectations.*
- *Continue to monitor the Township's solar energy zoning standards to maintain relevancy with changing technologies or legal requirements.*
- *Permit solar energy facilities within the Township while still maintaining the Township's predominant natural setting, rural character and agricultural area.*
- *Protect nearby residents from noise, glare and aesthetic impacts through appropriate setbacks and landscaping improvements along the borders of solar energy facilities*

7. Pages 54 - 55: Commercial and Industrial Land Use. No changes proposed.
8. Pages 55 - 56: The Garfield Community. No changes proposed.

IMPLEMENTATION

One of the requirements within the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, is that the Master Plan include an explanation of the land use categories on the future land use map and how they relate to the actual zoning districts. The Garfield Township Master Plan of 2019 contains such an explanation on pages 60 - 66 of that document. The land use categories on the Master Plan Map have not been changed and include:

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

LAKE AREA RESIDENTIAL

SPECIAL PURPOSE CORRIDOR DISTRICT

SPECIAL PURPOSE MIXED USE DISTRICT

Again, a description of each land use category, its application and location within Garfield Township and its relationship with the Zoning Ordinance and Map is contained in the Plan section referenced above.

APPENDIX

GENERAL OVERVIEW - 2025 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN SURVEY RESPONSES

2025 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

I have lived in Garfield Township ____ years?

1. 0 - 5 years = 16%
2. 6 - 10 years = 8%
3. 11 - 15 years = 4%
4. 16+ years = 66%
5. Not a Township resident = 6%

Do you live in Garfield Township year-round?

1. YES = 84%
2. NO = 16%

2025 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

3.
 - a. The active farms or agricultural areas in the Township should be protected from development or non-agricultural uses/activity?
 1. YES = 71%
 2. NO = 16%
 3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 13%

Will the Garfield Township of twenty years from now (2044) still be as “rural, agricultural and low density development as it is in 2024?

1. YES = 46%
2. NO = 26%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 28%

Is it important to you that Garfield Township remain as “rural, agricultural and low-density” into the future?

1. YES = 73%
2. NO = 17%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 10%

2018 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

- a. Are there active farms or agricultural areas in the Township that should be protected from development or non-agricultural uses/activity?

1. YES = 65%
2. NO = 10%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 25%

Will the Garfield Township of twenty years from now (2038) still be as "rural, agricultural and low density development" as it is in 2018?

1. YES = 46%
2. NO = 26%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 28%

2025 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Planning for future housing needs is an important part of any Master Plan. Should the Township's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance encourage any of the following types of housing?

Single Family Homes:	YES = 90%
	NO = 5%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 5%
Duplexes:	YES = 45%
	NO = 39%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 16%
Apartments	YES = 24%
	NO = 59%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 17%
Smaller housing options	YES = 51%
	NO = 29%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 20%

Condominiums	YES = 32%
	NO = 52%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 16%
Second Homes	YES = 59%
	NO = 26%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 15%
Senior Living Complex	YES = 58%
	NO = 23%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 19%
Accessory Dwelling Units for the Elderly	YES = 65%
	NO = 14%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 21%
Existing Housing Options are Adequate	YES = 32%
	NO = 28%
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 40%

2018 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Should the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance encourage the construction of additional single family homes in Garfield Township?

YES = 57%
 NO = 22%
 NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 21%.

Should the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance encourage "second home" development (cabins or cottages for occasional or seasonal use)?

YES = 51%
 NO = 25%
 NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 24%

2025 TOWNSHIP Survey

The undeveloped land adjacent to the Muskegon River should be carefully regulated to protect the River?

1. YES = 80%
2. NO = 7%

3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 13%

2018 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Should the undeveloped land adjacent to the Muskegon River be protected from any intensive development?

1. YES = 82%
2. NO = 7%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 11%

2002 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Should the undeveloped lands adjacent to the Muskegon River be protected from any kind of development?

1. YES = 64%
2. NO = 25%
3. NOT SURE = 11%

2025 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

The Township should consider the purchase of open space or natural areas for parks or similar non-developed use?

1. YES = 54%
2. NO = 24%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 22%

2018 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

The Township should consider the purchase of open space or natural areas from parks or similar non-developed uses?

1. YES = 57%
2. NO = 21%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 22%

2025 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

The retail stores and other commercial services in Fremont or Newaygo are adequate to meet my needs?

1. YES = 81%
2. NO = 14%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 5%

2018 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Are there sufficient retail stores or other commercial services in Fremont or Newaygo to meet your needs?

1. YES = 79%
2. NO = 20%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 1%

2025 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

The Township's Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance should encourage the development of small industrial operations in Garfield Township?

1. YES = 37%
2. NO = 34%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 29%

2018 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Should the Master and Zoning Ordinance encourage the development of any/small industrial facilities in Garfield Township?

1. YES = 42%
2. NO = 38%
3. NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW = 20%

2002 TOWNSHIP SURVEY

Should industrial businesses or facilities be encouraged to locate in Garfield Township?

1. YES = 43%
2. NO = 45%
3. NOT SURE = 7%

GARFIELD TOWNSHIP 2025 SURVEY - ALL COMMENTS SUBMITTED

Any additional information you would like Garfield Township officials to know about or any questions/comments? Thank you.

1. We grew up in the area and moved back for family. We love the rural environment but would like to see the junk cleaned up. Wouldn't mind a single wind farm or solar development. George does a good job as Supervisor.
2. Would like to see the Township support the Fremont Community Rec Center.
3. Limit industrial operations in Garfield.
4. The zoning law needs to be changed - should have a minimum of 2 acres to build on.
5. Need 3 - 4 low income apartments. Duplexes, apartments, condos should be along M-82 and M-37 only.
6. Junk cars and auto parts on Baldwin Avenue.
7. The right to own property with little regulation should be encouraged.
8. I favor facilitating wind and solar farms for community energy diversification.
9. With as little snow as our area got, why are the plows out spending \$ on 1/8th inch of snow? If developments for sustainable power are being considered, what depth of research has been done. Will this get us a credit with GLE? It certainly would require citizen taxes to go up for funding. Would we get a vote/say when the time comes? If the energy projects would cost me in taxes with no GLE reduction, then I am NOT for these. Additionally, accurate and thorough planning needs to be done to determine viability (risk assessment, feasibility study).

10. The least government is the best government. Individuals should have freedom to choose the mistakes related to their own property. A large

solar project is yes, if individuals do this for themselves. No, if it is chosen for them or it takes away the pleasantness of their property or their choices.

11. Do something about the 5th wheel trailer being lived in on M-82 and have trash cleaned up.
12. No more people. Too much housing.
13. Our farmland is being used for housing. Keep our farmland for raising crops for us and animals.
14. Junk/blight ordinance needs to be enforced! Our beautiful township is looking like a junkyard. Bike lanes are needed along paved roads.
15. 5th wheel junk yard on 72nd. Why does this junkyard stay?
16. Area still needs to move forward and build towards critical infrastructure for the community and residents.
17. Pickerel Lake Road needs to be resurfaced. Speed limit signs on this road (are needed?) - too many speeders with lots of children in danger. Road gets too congested especially on holidays - backed-up traffic - unable to pass. Any way of making this road 1-way on holidays?
18. Ensure (that) Township ordinances are reflective of core values and aspiration of established population (residence and residents).
19. Seniors shouldn't have to pay for schools, should they?
20. Rural areas are great but junk cars and dilapidated buildings are not. There should be some kind of plan in place to remove unwanted junk that's been sitting in yards for over a year or more.
21. Junk and blight has been a major problem for many years.
22. Taxes too high. (3 times)
23. Neighbor buries and stockpiles junk (old cars). We have had to worry what he is burying could affect our well (drinking water). We sure enjoy the Township clean-up in the spring and fall. We also like the easy accessibility to the recycling dumpsters.
24. Development must be controlled by zoning and only allowed in areas that are designated commercial areas. Any constant commercial-like activity must be away from residential areas. Any large-scale complexes should be in designated commercial areas such as M-82.
25. Please leave Garfield Township as a rural country area with the natural resources that it has. I live in the country because that is what I prefer.

26. A nuisance ordinance for poorly maintained properties, including junk cars, trash in yard, etc. should be implemented and enforced.
27. Wind turbines are OK. Depends on where they are put.
28. I strongly feel there should be less restrictions on home businesses.
(twice)
29. Thank you. I know staff and board do so much behind the scenes to keep Garfield Township as great as it is. Appreciate you and your efforts. P.S. The Township Hall trail and recycling area are huge assets. I'm sorry people don't read.
30. I believe business growth is essential but we live here to get away from the "big city feel".
31. I appreciate all the Township officials do to maintain our rural life.
32. I like it here.
33. There are three instances I know of where people are living in sub-standard camping situations. The one of M-82 is an embarrassment to our Township.
34. Thank you for allowing our input.
35. Would like to know what type (of) housing is available to place on land. Used to be no trailers. Accepted now?
36. I really wish our township would have a paid person to pick-up dead deer or animals along our roadways. These rotting animals are repulsive, pollute our waterways and are a cause of disease....we pay lots of taxes. Animals should be reported by people that see them.
37. People bowfishing on lakes at night and shining. Building/replacing (cottages) with two-story monster houses. Use Township funds to help low income clean-up their property or improve property to prevent blight. Thank you for asking our opinions.
38. Number of voting signs should be limited. Home businesses should be (a) priority regardless of commercial zoning. Home businesses should be allowed anywhere in the township.
39. A business should be permitted on any property. Thanks for your efforts and consideration.
40. Thank you for your service.
41. Small business should be encouraged as an asset to the community.
42. Keep up the good work.
43. I think we should bring the zoning from the strip on 82 back into the rest of the township.
44. Please don't aim to pave all gravel roads. Vehicles speed up on asphalt.
45. Need to keep township cleaner.
46. The contract assessor is rude and lies. She trespassed with large, visible "no trespassing" sign in driveway. Tried to drive back through my field. I had to chase her down. Bad policy and technique. Fire her.
47. What I would welcome in Garfield Township: housing development and cottage industry-type of development or recreational development. What

I wouldn't like to see in Garfield Township: foreign-county backed developments like Gotion or any battery-type developments.

48. Clean up M-82 property.
49. Property taxes are too high.
50. Property taxes are too high.
51. Need to change speed limit between the lakes on South Gordon Road from 45 mph to 35 mph. People go too fast.
52. We need a new township board!! You have been on it too long and we need new people with new ideas. We need township board term limits.
53. The camper on 82/72nd street close to Bingham needs to go. It's been there years. It affects the appearance of the neighborhood. It brings down property values. I thought we had ordinances against this. Please get it removed.
54. We need a fire barn at the township hall.
55. Can anyone report junk/blight anonymously and if so, to whom.
56. Minimize government regulation. School taxes are too high. Private property owners and free market capitalism should determine growth and development not government. Minimize government regulation.
57. Taxes are entirely too high! Stop raising our taxes. You are taxing residents out of Garfield Township.
58. I've lived in Garfield for years. Enjoy the country setting - single home community. Notice the roads are being better taken care of.
59. Good job. God bless.
60. Very good survey.
61. Please address short term rentals.
62. Large solar or wind would ruin a lot of what makes this community great.
63. Small businesses are and do play a huge role in our rural community and should be allowed and monitored so too much growth does not happen. Spending locally helps a whole community.
64. I feel we allow too much property splitting and building on open space and ag land. We can't get that land and our rural atmosphere back once it is developed.
65. Solar only helps the land owner that wants it. It will majorly hurt my home and land value and I get nothing from it but an eyesore. There are so many reasons this is bad. If the township can stop this it needs to stop it.
66. My question is: where are the future generations supposed to eat if we install wind/solar farms.
67. Growth is inevitable but with proper planning and grace we can grow as a community and support our local and agricultural businesses.
68. No VRBO, no Airbnb should be allowed in residentially zoned areas. They should only be permitted by special use in multi-family or commercially zoned areas. A new zoning rule - all video still shots (trail camera) audio surveillance shall be restricted to the boundaries of the property owner. Steep fines are needed for a violation.

69. Township Assessor should not be allowed to drive on private property at will. Our property is posted at our driveway and she drove past our house and into our field without stopping at our house to ask permission. Very, very disappointed with her lack of professionalism.
70. Ride around the roads in the County sometime and observe all the dead trees and dead branches cluttering up the woods areas. If you really want to make rural Garfield Township look nice - you would have all the people who own the woods along the streets and roads in the rural areas clean up all the dead wood in the woods around their homes or used by the people who need it for heating purposes. Plus, it would make the whole rural areas look much neater and it would also get rid of all the trees down and the brush that are a hazard for fires. These areas can lead to some pretty big forest fires if they would ever catch on fire.
71. On Kimball Lake I don't think we are over-crowded but we are not big enough for these surfing boats. Camp Henry has 2 of them. It definitely is not crowded during the week when they are out but the wakes are tearing up the shorelines. I have lost 6 - 8 inches a year since they purchased them or had them given to the Camp. The drivers need to be much more aware and stay in the middle of the lake. They really need different boats or no boats.
72. Look at your tax bill. Are you getting what you've paid for? Where is the highway patrol that I'm paying for? People speed down my road uninhibited all the time. Where is the Drain Commissioner I'm paying for? My farm drains don't get cleaned out unless I clean them. It goes on and on. What a disgrace not a single question about the tax rates or how it is being used. Property is not taxed fairly. Farmers get breaks. Family to family sales get breaks. Amish get special use permits to avoid commercial rates. New property sales are taxed higher than old property sales, etc.. Taxes are too high. I don;t want "affordable housing" in our area. I do like the road improvements that have been done.



GARFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

2019 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER LAND USE PLAN

Newaygo County, Michigan

Adopted: March 12, 2019

Township Board

Supervisor: George Suchy

Clerk: Kristin Melvin

Treasurer: Jill Vandenberg

Trustee: Rob Kinniburgh

Trustee: Amy Ekkel

Planning Commission

Chairperson: Rob Kinniburgh

Harry Stroven

Ronald Huismann

Marilyn Melvin

Miriam Strohpaal

Gabrielle Blackwell

Dean Shue

Zoning Administrator

George Suchy

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"Planning is bringing the future into the present, so that you can do something about it now."

Alan Lakein

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER LAND USE PLAN

This Master Land Use Plan is intended to guide Garfield Township's officials and citizens in making decisions about the use of public and privately owned land as well as public facilities and operations. It sets forth local goals and objectives for community growth and development issues and provides the information and local input that forms the sound rationale for decision-making by the Planning Commission and Township Board.

This Plan was prepared under the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008 and there are three sections within that Act that will be detailed in this Plan, with the first two, following immediately below:

Act 33 defines "Master Plan" as "Any plan adopted or amended under this act. This includes, but is not limited to, a plan prepared by a planning commission....regardless of whether it is entitled a master plan, basic plan...land use plan, township plan, or any other term."

This Plan serves as the basis for the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance and other local land use regulations. Its' purpose and required content is further detailed in Sec. 7 of Act 33, which states as follows:

"(1) A local unit of government may adopt, amend and implement a master plan as provided in this act.

(2) The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- (a) Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient and economical.
- (b) Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its' suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
- (c) Will in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- (d) Includes among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:
 - (i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets.
 - (ii) Safety from fire and other dangers.
 - (iii) Light and air.
 - (iv) Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
 - (v) Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
 - (vi) Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
 - (vii) Recreation.
 - (viii) The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability."

It should be noted that there is a long-standing tradition of planning and/or reviews/updates to Master Land Use Plans

by the Garfield Township Planning Commission and Board. Their most recent efforts being in 2002 and 2007. The Planning Commission has determined through this current process, that much of the 2007 Master Plan was still valid and while certain elements were important to update or amend, many other land use concepts have carried through into this current Master Land Use Plan. As such this validates the consistency of the process and the Township's concern for on-going public input and a logical, local approach to land use regulations.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PLAN AND ZONING

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, or PA 110 of 2006 further reinforces this relationship between the process or act of planning for the future of one's community and the regulatory system (zoning) to be used to implement such plans.

Section 203 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act PA 110 of 2006 states:

"The zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to limit the improper use of land, to conserve natural resources and energy, to meet the needs of the state's residents for food, fiber and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service and other uses of land...."

The third element within Act 33 that directs the content of a Master Plan, but also reinforces the relationship between planning and the zoning ordinance, is contained within Sec. 33 (2), which states:

"A master plan shall also include...a zoning plan for various zoning districts, controlling the height, area, bulk, location and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan shall include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map."

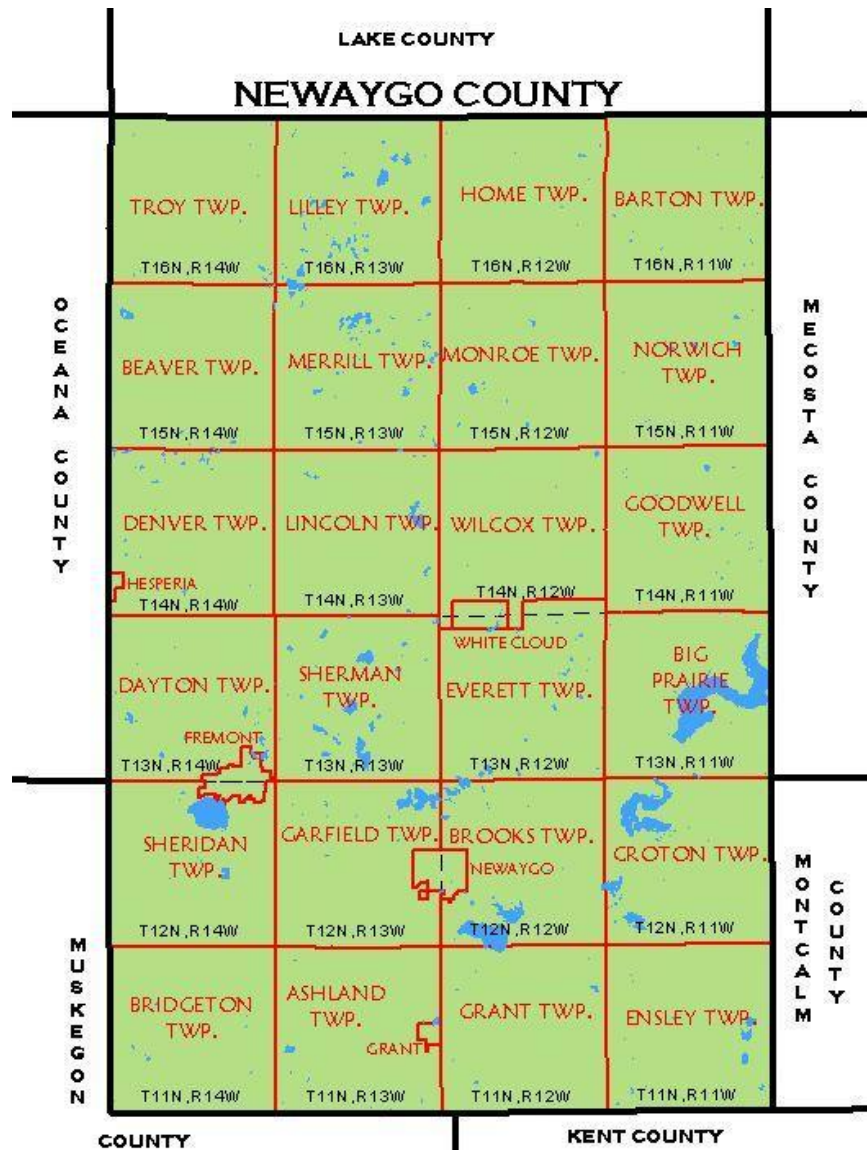
Here again, it is worth noting that the Master Land Use Plan does not directly control land use, but that responsibility is left to the Zoning Ordinance and various other Garfield Township ordinances. The final decisions on rezoning, conditional use permits and other land development applications are made by the Garfield Township Board.

PUBLIC INPUT

The following Plan text and map were prepared following an analysis of key local issues, existing conditions, community demographics and other social data, consultation with other units of government and extensive discussions between the Planning Commission and Township Board. In addition a community-wide opinion survey was distributed during the summer of 2018. Response to this survey was outstanding and the data obtained....which is detailed in a future chapter of this Plan...was key in the development of this Plan and its various planning objectives and proposals.

REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

Garfield Township is located in the southern third of Newaygo County Michigan, which is part of West-Central Michigan. Garfield is surrounded by Sherman, Brooks, Ashland and Sheridan Charter Townships and has the City of Newaygo as part of its eastern border, with the City of Fremont just outside its northwest boundary.



The topography and geology of Garfield Township is greatly affected by the Muskegon River watershed, which along with the Grand, Pere Marquette and White River watersheds all drain Newaygo County. Newaygo County is located within what is known as the Michigan Basin, which is a glacial aquifer consisting of sand and gravel from the Pleistocene glacial deposits. These deposits range from 100 to 800 feet in thickness throughout Newaygo County, although the majority of the County is covered in 200 to 400 feet of

glacial deposits. These glacial deposits are composed primarily of outwash (sand or gravel deposited by meltwater from a glacier) and till (unsorted glacial sediment). (The quality of the glacial till...better soils for farming...is more evident in the south of Newaygo County than the north.) The lateral and vertical complexity of these glacial deposits does not necessarily correlate to conditions on the surface of the ground. Garfield Township however, does have many areas of rolling topography and interrupted drainage which is reflected in the number of small "potholes" and marshes or wetlands. In the southern portion of the Township, the impact of what was once a significant drainage that is now the Muskegon River, is clearly evident. (Source: U.S. Geological Survey – Summary of Hydrogeologic Conditions.)

Garfield Township's early history is tied to the Muskegon River, the Michigan lumber boom of the mid-1800's and surrounding lumber settlements.

"The first Europeans to navigate the Muskegon River were French trappers who traded with the Indians well before recorded history. The earliest permanent settlement was a trading post on the Muskegon River that dates to about 1834. Another trading post was established at Old Woman's Bend..."

"A group of Chicago speculators was formed in 1836 to operate in lands and timber...The group proposed to hold by "squatter's rights" the mouth of all the streams north of the Grand River...until the land should come to market. One division of the group headed by Clark Knights and Augustus Pennoyer was to discover water power sites where they could build a sawmill. They employed Mitchell Charleau (a French trader who operated a trading post at what is now known as Croton) to pilot them up the Muskegon River....the party stopped at what is now Newaygo. Here Augustus Pennoyer and Jack McBride established claims at the mouth of the creek which they named Pennoyer. McBride built a

cabin there and lived in it, thus becoming the first permanent settler in the county....Augustus Pennoyer formed a partnership with Alexander Fulton...called the Muskegon Lumber Company. They chose the mouth of Pennoyer Creek as the site for their saw mill. The first sawmill was completed on September 1, 1837 and at once started to saw lumber. The first lumber cut was floated to Muskegon on rafts and was shipped to Chicago on board the schooner Celeste. Although Muskegon later became the lumber queen of the world, the first lumber ever shipped from Muskegon was from the Pennoyer Mill. For the next sixty years lumbering was the chief industry of the county. Lumbering operations determined the pattern of settlement of the county." (Some sources do indicate that more logs were floated down the Muskegon River during Michigan's lumber boom, than any other river in the world.)

The lumbering era in Michigan which began in the early 1800's was expected to last almost forever, but within 50 to 75 years, the vast timber resources of the Lower Peninsula were harvested and the many lumber settlements that had boomed within Newaygo County and elsewhere in this part of Michigan, went bust.

In 1851 Newaygo County was formed as an independent governmental unit. Before that time, it was part of Kent County. Initially Newaygo County had only two townships, Brooks comprised its western half and Newaygo Township the east. In 1852 Big Prairie Township was created out of the north 24 miles of Newaygo Township and from that date on both the original Brooks and Newaygo Townships were subdivided into the current 24. In 1881 Garfield Township was established from a portion of Sherman Township and what had been originally known as Brooks Township. (Source: "Formation of Newaygo County 1836-1912", Terry Wantz.)

While some of the local history that has shaped the Garfield Township of 2019 occurred just outside its boundaries...such as The Big Red Mill in Newaygo, the 1854 State Road to

Grand Rapids that became M-37, Fremont Canning Company that became Gerber...much of the Township's identity is tied to water. This of course includes such items as the log booms that floated the Muskegon River (and later the salmon/steelhead fishing "booms"), but also the long historical arc of Pickerel and Kimball Lakes from the lumbering era, to recreation and second-home development. For example, Little Switzerland Resort and Campground on Pickerel Lake, dates back to the late 1800's or Camp Newaygo, also on Pickerel Lake which began operations in 1927 with a lodge, garage and central bathhouse....both of which have grown over time and still advertise "peaceful and friendly" facilities in a pristine situation just a short drive north of Grand Rapids.

M-37 and M-82 are the main thoroughfares in Garfield Township, with M-37 being a major north-south State trunkline that runs from Battle Creek to Traverse City. Traffic volumes on M-37 south of its intersection with 82nd Street (M-82) just south of the City of Newaygo totaled 10,989 ADT (Average Daily Traffic). North of the 82nd Street intersection and through the City of Newaygo, traffic volumes increase to 14,948 ADTD. M-82 is the main east-west trunkline through Garfield Township connecting US-131 and the City of Newaygo with the City of Fremont to the west. Average Daily Traffic flows on M-82 through Garfield Township, totaled 8,236 vehicles. (Source: Michigan Department of Transportation, 2018).

"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree long ago."

Warren Buffet

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The natural character of this area of Michigan - Newaygo County and Garfield Township - is in large part based on its open spaces, visual and natural features...the lakes, rivers, forests, rolling farmland....the undeveloped open space that is the backdrop for daily life in this part of the State. These qualities are what set this region apart from other places in Michigan. Here again the natural and the built or developed environments are the easiest to see and interpret. But, what of those factors that are not always visual and easily discerned. Community character is also composed of social, population and economic elements. What follows below attempts to tell the story of the "socioeconomic" or "community" character of Garfield Township and sometimes Newaygo County as a whole. It incorporates the most recent data that is available.

A SNAPSHOT OF NEWAYGO COUNTY

Population	48,280*	*2013 estimate
Median age	41.5 years	
Percent of people in poverty	17.3%	
Median home value	\$104,100	
Top 3 economic sectors:		
Educational services, health care and social assistance = 23.2%		
Manufacturing = 17.0%		
Professional, scientific and management, administrative =13.9%		
Acres in farmland	125,663 acres	
Source: Michigan State University Extension, 2017		

POPULATION GROWTH IN NEWAYGO COUNTY

- ✓ A total of 47,874 Newaygo County residents in 2000 and 48,460 in 2010.
- ✓ A total increase of 586 Newaygo County residents or a growth rate of 1.2% from 2000 to 2010.
- ✓ West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Council's (WMSRDC) Newaygo County population projection for 2010 (as used in the 2009 Master Plan) totaled 57,871 or a growth rate of over 20% from 2000 to 2010.
- ✓ The "2017 Annual Estimate of the Resident Population"(U. S. Census Bureau) indicates an April 2017 Newaygo County population totaling some 48,242 and a varying annual increase or decline over the past seven years:

2010	=	48,460	
2011	=	48,310	-150 or -.31%
2012	=	47,859	-451 or -.93%
2013	=	47,844	- 15 or -.03%
2014	=	47,759	- 85 or -.18%
2015	=	47,863	+104 or +.22%
2016	=	47,788	- 75 or -.16%
2017	=	48,242	+454 or +.95%

- ✓ The fastest growing municipalities in Newaygo County from 1990 to 2000 were:
 - Croton Township - 54.8% increase
 - Goodwell Township - 53.9% increase
 - Beaver Township - 45.8% increase
 - Big Prairie Township - 42.4% increase
 - Troy Township - 40.5% increase

- ✓ From 2000 to 2010 however the story is markedly different with only 14 municipalities in Newaygo County realizing positive population growth....and the remaining 14 cities and townships having experienced a decrease in their population base. In actual numbers vs. percentage of increase, the following six communities experienced the largest increase in population for the most recent Census period.

City of Newaygo - 306 persons or +18.3%

Ashland Township - 203 persons or + 7.9%

Croton Township - 186 persons or + 6.1%

Grant Township - 164 persons or + 5.2%

Ensley Township - 161 persons or + 6.5%

Big Prairie Township - 108 persons or + 4.4%

POPULATION GROWTH IN GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

- ✓ 2,464 residents in 2000
- ✓ 2,537 residents in 2010 or a 3% growth rate for the decade

Census data for surrounding communities:

	2000	2010	%	2016 Projection*
Garfield Township	2,464	2,537	+3.0%	2,517
Sheridan Charter Twp	2,423	2,510	+3.6%	2,671
Sherman Township	2,159	2,109	-2.3%	2,048
City of Newaygo	1,670	1,976	+18.3%	1,704
Brooks Township	3,671	3,510	-4.4%	3,477
Ashland Township	2,570	2,773	+7.9%	2,745

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION FORECAST 2020 TO 2045: WMSRDC*

	2020	2030	2040	2045
Garfield Township	2,511	2,496	2,481	2,474
Sheridan Charter Twp.	2,470	2,455	2,441	2,434
Sherman Township	2,084	2,072	2,059	2,053
City of Newaygo	1,964	1,953	1,941	1,935
Brooks Township	3,451	3,530	3,410	3,400
Ashland Township	2,723	2,691	2,691	2,683
Newaygo County	47,824	47,539	47,256	47,115

Source: Forecast by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission*

GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION – NEWAYGO COUNTY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

- ✓ In 2010 24,390 (50.3%) of Newaygo County residents were male and 24,070 (49.7%) were female.
- ✓ In Garfield Township in 2010, 1,242 (49%) residents were male and 1,295 (51%) were female.
- ✓ In 2000, a total of 55.5% of all Newaygo County residents were between the ages of 20 and 64 (employable years). By 2010 this age group had increased slightly to a total of 27,557 residents or 56.9% of the County's total population.

- ✓ In 2010 a total of 1,305 Garfield Township residents were between the ages of 20 and 64, or 51.4% of the total Township population.
- ✓ The age distribution for Newaygo County and Garfield Township in 2010 was as follows:

	Newaygo County	Garfield Township
Under age 5 (pre-school)	3,018 (6.2%)	151 (6.0%)
Ages 5 – 19 (school age)	10,357 (21.4%)	598 (23.5%)
Ages 20 – 64 (employable)	27,557 (56.9%)	1,305 (51.4%)
Ages 65+	7,528 (15.5%)	483 (19.0%)

The Census Bureau, through its Population Estimates Program, “produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities and towns”. Their projection for the age distribution of Garfield Township in 2016 is contained below and compared to that of 2010.

	2010	2016
Under age 5 (pre-school)	151	179
Ages 5 – 19 (school age)	598	524
Ages 20 – 64 (employable age)	1,305	1,238
Ages 65+	483	576

The median age (or midpoint, with as many residents above as below this point) for Newaygo County in 2010 was 40.9 years and in Garfield Township it was 42.1 years.

FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS – NEWAYGO COUNTY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

- ✓ Average household size for both Newaygo County and Garfield Township remained stable from 2000 to 2010.

Newaygo County: 2.68 persons in 2000; 2.60 persons in 2010.

Garfield Township: 2.92 persons in 2000; 2.93 persons in 2010.

- ✓ For Newaygo County, the number of households grew by 4.6% from 17,599 in 2000 to a total of 18,406 in 2010. In Garfield Township however, Census data indicates a drop in the number of households from 844 in 2000 to 826 in 2010. This comes after two decades of increases in household numbers from 1980 through 2000.

HOUSING – NEWAYGO COUNTY AND GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

- ✓ In 2010 there were 25,075 housing units in Newaygo County an increase of 8.1% over 2000 (23,202 housing units).
- ✓ A total of 18,406 housing units in Newaygo County were occupied in 2010 or 73.4% as compared to 17,599 occupied housing units in 2000 or a rate of 76%.
- ✓ In 2010, Garfield Township had a total of 1,089 housing unit of which 826 or 75.8% were occupied.

- ✓ By 2016 the Census Bureau estimated that 833 housing units in Garfield were occupied, of which 721 were owner-occupied and 112 were renter-occupied.

Garfield Township Housing – Year Built and Number of Housing Units*

2014 or newer	18	1970 – 1979	105
2010 – 2013	4	1960 – 1969	59
2000 – 2009	75	1950 – 1959	100
1990 – 1999	301	1940 – 1949	60
1980 – 1989	145	1939 or earlier	202

*Source: 2012 -2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate. US Census Bureau

PROPERTY VALUES IN NEWAYGO COUNTY

- ✓ Those municipalities in Newaygo County having the highest level of assessed value for all property in 2010 and 2019 are as follows:

Municipality - Assessed Value	2010	2018
Fremont City	\$169,678,700	\$152,105,050
Brooks Township	\$158,221,800	\$175,843,450
Croton Township	\$148,986,800	\$155,920,200
Garfield Township	\$106,963,000	\$115,132,700
Sheridan Charter Twp.	\$ 98,415,835	\$108,921,059
Ensley Township	\$ 94,109,800	\$109,875,000
Ashland Township	\$ 91,765,000	\$104,267,700

AGRICULTURE IN NEWAYGO COUNTY

Acres in age production	125,663 acres
Number of farms	923 farms
Average size of farm	136 acres
Average age of principal operator	56.2 years
Farm gate sales*	\$113,849,000
Newaygo County's top three areas of agriculture production by volume of sales:	
Milk and other dairy products from cows	
Vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes	
Cattle and calves.	
Source: Michigan State University Extension - 2015	

*Farm gate sales = whereby farmers sells agricultural produce – mostly food – directly to the consumer.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

- ✓ 81.8% of Garfield Township residents have a high school degree or higher.
- ✓ 85.8% of Newaygo Township residents have a high school degree or higher.

Garfield Township Residents*	18 – 24 yrs.	25 yrs. +
Less than high school	44	300
High school graduate	89	653
Some college	71	267
Associates degree	0	109

Bachelors degree	5	187
Graduate/professional degree	0	133
Total	209	1,649

*Source: American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates –
US Census Bureau

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT – GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

Garfield Township Residents: Median Earnings in the past
12 months*

Less than high school	\$19,674
High school graduates	\$27,813
Some College or Associates	\$35,347
Bachelors degree	\$46,500
Graduate or Professional degree	\$70,417

*Earnings are in 2016 inflation adjusted dollars.

COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS AND TRAVEL TIME TO WORK: GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

Place of Work	2010	2016
Works in Michigan	99.4%	96.5%
Works in Newaygo County	70.0%	58.0%

Works outside of Newaygo County	29.4%	38.5%
Works outside of Michigan	0.6%	3.5%
Travel Time to Work – Garfield Township Residents:*		
	2010	2016
Less than 10 minutes	22.7%	15.4%
10 – 14 minutes	18.7%	21.7%
15 – 19 minutes	15.7%	10.1%
20 – 24 minutes	6.4%	5.7%
25 – 29 minutes	0	3.2%
30 – 34 minutes	11.9%	9.2%
35 – 44 minutes	4.8%	9.5%
45 – 59 minutes	10.2%	15.7%
60 minutes or more	9.6%	9.6%
Mean travel time	23.5 min.	29.2 min.

* Source: 2012 -2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate. US Census Bureau

WHAT SOME SOURCES ARE SAYING ABOUT MICHIGAN'S FUTURE

1. January 2, 2018 MLive: "Michigan residents age 60 and older now almost quarter of state's population".

"Thanks to Baby Boomers, Michigan is a rapidly graying state...A rapidly aging population typically means a decline in the workforce which can create

shortages of qualified workers and stall economic growth. I also means a lower ratio of workers to retirees, making it harder to fund programs such as Social Security, Medicare and private pension plans."

"Michigananders age 60 will live for about 23 more years on average..."

"Michigan residents age 60 and older are more likely to live in an owner-occupied home than Michigan residents in general..."

"About 25% of Michigan residents age 60 and older in 2016 were employed compared to 20% in 2005."

2. December 20, 2017, The Detroit News: "More people moving into Michigan".

"More people moved to Michigan than left in 2017, the first such gain for the state since before 2001."

"The population increase in Michigan however was lower than the 0.7 percent increase reported nationally. And the state's 0.3 percent growth ranked it 32nd, tied with Alabama, New Jersey and Ohio."

"But the gains likely won't be enough to prevent Michigan from losing a congressional seat after the 2020 census."

3. August 31, 2017, The Center for Michigan: "See how population is changing in your Michigan county."

"Only four counties (Ottawa, Kent, Grand Traverse and Washtenaw) have grown more than 5 percent since 2010; six lost more than 5 percent over that time (Ontonagon, Gogebic, Montmorency, Schoolcraft, Alcona and Iron)....*No state in the country has as many counties as Michigan where the median age is 50 or above...only three other states (Montana, North Dakota and Hawaii) have counties with a median age that high.*

4. April, 2017 Michigan Future, Inc.: "A Path to Good-paying Careers for all Michiganders"

"Not enough of us work: Michigan is 40th in the proportion of adults who work. 400,000 fewer Michiganders are working today than in 2000.....Not enough of us work in good-paying jobs: 16 percent below the national average in wages and benefits per capita. In 2000 Michigan was 1 percent below."

WHAT DOES ALL OF THE ABOVE MEAN FOR GARFIELD TOWNSHIP

And so, the looming question in trying to evaluate the community profile of Garfield Township, is....what does all of this mean for our planning work and for the Garfield Township of today and 20 years from now ?

1. From the larger or macro perspective, we have come to realize over the past several years, that the dominant demographic feature of the State of Michigan is its' sizeable and "graying" (aging) population. Also, the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau projects the 2016 population of Michigan to be 9,909,600 which is only an increase of 25,960 over the 2010 State Census of 9,883,640....or an increase of .026%. Stability in Michigan's population level in the short-term may be the best that can be expected.
2. The demographic picture for Newaygo County however, is not one of stability, but rather a modest decline. Both the US Census Bureau and the work done by WMSRDC indicate that the growth boom of the 1990's that was experienced by Newaygo County and many of its constituent

communities is not expected to arrive again in the near or middle-term. However, the hoped for silver lining in all of this is that the projected decline in population for all of Newaygo is quite modest and a graph of the long-term projection would show a very small decrease over a long timeline.

3. One possible adjustment to a future population decline in some of the southern border communities in Newaygo County....and even perhaps Garfield Township with its proximity to both Newaygo and Fremont...is the continued growth and economic vitality occurring within the Ottawa and Kent County metro area. Obviously one crystal ball is as good as the other in this instance....but it should at least be mentioned.

4. The typical master planning scenario would look at population projections and divide that increase by the existing "person per household" family size in a given community to arrive at a potential number of new homes needed within a given timeframe. That resulting number is applied to an estimate of acreage/land consumption needed to contain these new homes....and assumptions as to density, lot size, location, etc. are then made accordingly. With a "stable to declining" population anticipated for Garfield Township, this planning exercise becomes moot....and instead the focus will be on how to continue to maintain the high-quality living environment within this community.

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY INPUT

As is reinforced throughout this document, this Master Plan is a reflection of the values and vision of the Garfield community. As such, engaging residents and all property owners to participate in this process is a critical component of this plan review/update. The approach used for

community outreach has been the distribution of a community-wide survey to alert local residents that “something is going on” in terms of the Master Plan review, as well as again asking for their input and suggestions.

SURVEYS

An expert in crafting and implementing surveys, states that the main reasons why organizations (such as Garfield Township) should conduct citizen surveys include:

1. Uncover the answers. In a non-intimidating survey, you will learn about what motivates survey respondents and what is important to them and gather meaningful opinions, comments and feedback.
2. Evoke discussion. Survey respondents do want an opportunity to discuss topics that are important to them.
3. Base decisions on objective information. Conducting surveys is an unbiased approach to decision-making. Don’t rely strictly on “gut feelings” to make important decisions. You can collect unbiased survey data and develop sensible decisions based on its results.
4. Compare results. Survey results provide a snapshot in time of the attitudes....thoughts, opinions and comments of those surveyed. Multiple surveys over time will provide a baseline from which to compare results...again over an extended timeline.

Source: Susan E. DeFranzo – “The Four Main Reasons to Conduct Surveys”, 2012.

CONSISTENCY AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, which directs the activities that Garfield Township is undertaking in this process of a Master Plan Review and Update does stipulate what a Master Plan is to be....including “coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, (and) economical”. Further

the Planning Commission in preparing the Master Plan is to perform the following....(1) "make surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth, (2) consult....the adjacent local units of government, (3) cooperate with all departments of the state and federal government (and similar agencies), (4) deliberate and (5) (have) such lawful powers as may be necessary to...carry out the purposes of this act".

The Michigan Planning Guidebook (published in 2008 by Planning and Zoning Center, MSU Extension and the Michigan Association of Planning) is the single, exhaustive source dedicated to all those citizens and communities in Michigan that seek "to understand, create, and implement effective local master plans". In discussing the leadership role of each planning commissioner, the Guidebook states (page 17) "Planning needs to be done by following a process that involves all the stakeholder groups of the community and which looks not only at present issues but also emerging trends and future needs". Further the Guidebook (page 44) indicates that a Master Plan has several legal roles to play including, "To protect against challenges of arbitrariness...(and) to create public goals, objectives and policies for future growth....**based on broad public input**".

The next chapter of this Master Plan attempts to meet the spirit of the above statement in that it establishes public goals, objectives and policies for the future and most importantly it does so based on "**broad public input**". There is one more term that might be used to establish the background for the goals, policies and strategies section that follows next and that term is "**consistent**" or perhaps "**consistency**". A definition of these terms would indicate that it applies to a process "**marked by harmony, regularity or steady continuity, free from variation or contradiction... a consistent style in (an activity, such as planning)**". (Source: Merriam-Webster). And as the following pages attempt to portray, the planning process as employed by Garfield Township has been most consistent in

“involving all the stakeholder groups (citizens) in the community” and in looking “not only at present issues but also emerging trends and future needs”. The intent in the following is to show how the consistent actions of the past, in obtaining citizen input, evaluating the present condition or situation and deliberating the future needs/issues of this community have lead Garfield Township to its present situation. These multiple citizen surveys conducted over the decades form a significant foundation for planning concepts and proposals. Also, the stated goals, policies and strategies over these several prior Master Plan reviews and revisions have been consistent in terms of the principal themes and planning concepts.

1990 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP SURVEY

In summary, a 1990 survey of Garfield Township residents, on issues of planning, zoning, growth and change, offered the following insights:

- In 1990 54% of all respondents indicated that they had not changed addresses in the past 5 years.
- Garfield Township continued the daily export of its work force to Fremont, Newaygo, Muskegon, Grand Rapids and other locations outside the community.
- In 1990, 99% of those that returned surveys indicated that they owned their home.
- Those residents that felt it was important to protect the Muskegon River shoreline and adjacent lands from intensive development, increased by 15% from the 1979 survey up to a total of 78% positive.

- The “quality of life” rating for the Township dipped slightly from a 96% favorable rating (in the 1970’s) to that of 82%. Even at 82% favorable, that is an extremely positive statement about what the residents opinion is about their community.
- A slight majority (53%) of those surveyed did not want the Township to encourage second home development via any related changes in local zoning requirements.
- The most popular minimum lot size requirement fell in the range of ½ acre to 2 acres.
- There was a positive support for any Township programs/actions to purchase property for park and recreation use.

2002 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP SURVEY

In summary, the 2002 survey of Garfield Township property owners and residents offered the following insights and data.

- Nearly 9 out of every 10 respondents intend to remain Township residents in the near future.
- Open spaces and rural atmosphere were rated as the single dominant reason for living in Garfield Township. Lakes, farms and farming and recreational opportunities were secondary characteristics.
- Active farms or agricultural areas should be zoned exclusively for agricultural usage by a 2:1 margin.

- Undeveloped lands adjacent to the Muskegon River should be protected according to 65% of all respondents.
- The Township should consider other programs than zoning to conserve natural areas.
- Residents surveyed were unsure as to any purchase of open space by the Township (28% yes, 45% no and 28% not sure).
- Those surveyed were split as to the potential purchase of land along the Muskegon River for preservation.
- The potential purchase of development rights was not well received (49% against and 34 % undecided).
- Residents were likewise uncertain as to whether or not the Township should try to slow its rate of growth and development.
- Township residents were very supportive of a suggestion that the community invest in ways of educating it residents on how to protect the environment.
- WalMart or Meijer's may or may not be welcome in Garfield Township according to this survey... as local folks are split on this issue.
- Residents opted against supporting a concept whereby the M-82 frontage would be zoned for commerce.
- Garfield residents do not want to see M-82 widened to 4 lanes.

- 50% of Township residents were opposed to paving all roads in Garfield Township, however 43% of their neighbors do want to see all roads paved.
- All respondents were evenly split on the issue of encouraging industrial facilities.
- Garfield Township residents do not want:
 - mobile homes
 - rental apartments
 - duplexes
 - condominiums

They do however want single family homes and elderly housing.

- Those responding did express the following opinions:
 - The overall quality of life is maintaining.
 - The overall quality of life is not decreasing.
 - Development has not replaced natural beauty.
 - The area is however less tranquil.
 - There are not too many people moving into the Township.
 - Road quality is generally OK.
 - Shopping opportunities are adequate and convenient.
 - Employment opportunities can be improved.
 - Public services are certainly adequate.
- The perception is that the Township is doing a good job of enforcing its zoning or building restrictions.
- The most important problem facing Garfield Township is felt to be the potential loss of Garfield's rural character. The need for good roads, prevention of pollution of rivers or lakes, dealing with growth and

zoning and planning issues were seen as second tier concerns.

2007 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP SURVEY

The 2007 survey of Garfield Township property owners and residents offered the following insights.

- Once again the most positive attitude expressed was clear support for protecting active farms or agricultural areas from non-agricultural uses and exclusively zoning such areas for farming.
- In 2002 a total of 65% of all respondents supported protecting undeveloped lands adjacent to the Muskegon River from any type of development. In 2007 a favorable response on this proposal had slipped slightly to 58%.
- Based upon the survey response, most residents would not support the purchase of open space by the Township, nor do they support any attempt at a program for the transfer of private development rights.
- Age-50-and-over, male respondents felt that there were sufficient retail stores (and other commercial services) in the adjoining cities of Fremont and Newaygo to meet their needs. Males under the age of 50 and female respondents did not agree.
- By a slight margin...there was no support for the concept of Garfield Township purchasing land for development of an industrial park.

- Two of the more interesting responses dealt with change...has Garfield Township changed so much in recent years that it is too late to save open space or farms...and the response was "*no, it had not*". And, when ask if they were confident, that 20 years in the future (in 2027) the Township would still be described as "rural"....their overwhelming response being "*yes it would*".
- The preferred minimum lot size for residential purposes was tagged at being between 2.25 and 2.5 acres, which is an increase over earlier surveys.
- Responses to the "why I live in Garfield Township" question included the following top-rated characteristics:
 - open space
 - lakes
 - recreational opportunities
 - Muskegon River
- Garfield Township received very high marks as a place to live being rated between **excellent to good**. Respondents were equally positive about their neighborhoods as a place to live (also rated between excellent and good) and only slightly less favorable was their opinion re: Garfield Township as a place to raise children. The only negative rating received was in response to the question on "how do you rate Garfield Township as a place to work"...and that rating fell between "fair" to "poor". Garfield Township is also seen as a "good" place to retire to and a community with an excellent to good overall quality of life.
- When asked about certain characteristics of life in Garfield Township, the respondents were the most favorable towards the local recreational opportunities, access to quality health care, overall appearance of

the township and the ease of travel by car throughout this community. Residents appear to be the least happy with the shopping opportunities in the area, difficulties in biking or walking throughout the Township and the overall quality of new development.

- The survey asked for a rating on an extensive array of services currently available within Garfield Township. Those receiving the highest marks (a rating of *good*) for quality of service, included police services, fire protection, ambulance/EMS and traffic enforcement. The second tier, with a rating of *good to fair*, included garbage collection, recycling, snow removal, parks and public library. Those services with a *fair to poor* rating included land use planning and zoning, code enforcement, animal control and high speed internet.
- The 2007 Citizen Survey indicated that Garfield Township is a quiet, safe community with few traffic problems and no current concerns over growth or loss of the Township's rural character. Road conditions are only a minor problem, there is no perceived overuse of local lakes or rivers and run-down buildings or junk are being addressed. The highest rated "problems" within the community might be drugs, unwanted or incompatible land uses that have evolved and the need to prevent sprawl.
- When asked their opinions on a series of issue statements those responding to the survey:
 - Had no opinion regarding the premise that there is "too much residential development occurring along the Muskegon River". They appeared to be not certain how to respond to the question.
 - They did agree, but not strongly that the lakes in Garfield Township are overcrowded with homes.

- They also agreed, but much with much more conviction that the Township's rural character should be protected.
- As for growth and what should be done about it...the survey answers indicate no real opinion as to a proposal to promote growth in the Township...as the dominant answer was, "no opinion".

2018 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP SURVEY

The 2018 Garfield Township Survey was prepared by the Township Planning Commission and made available on the Township's web site as well as a mailer to all tax or property addresses (resident and non-resident). The survey provided respondents with the opportunity to rate a wide variety of local, quality of life, development and other general issues specific to Garfield Township. Historically the response to these surveys has been excellent and it was so again with the 2018 Survey having some 210 responses or nearly 20% of the total of surveys distributed. The actual totals to each question in the survey are included in the Appendix, along with a full listing of all written comments. What follows below is a summary of the prevailing attitudes and general thoughts of the Garfield community in 2018 as perceived via the actual numeric responses as well as all comments.

SUMMARY OF CITIZEN INPUT:

WHAT

- Garfield Township is seen as a good place to live.

- Garfield Township is viewed as a good to raise children.
- Garfield Township is thought to be a good place to retire to.
- Garfield Township is felt to have an excellent quality of life.
- Garfield Township enjoys a positive reputation as a “good place”.

WHY

- There exists a strong sense of community.
- It is an attractive and orderly place.
- Recreational opportunities in the area are outstanding.
- Extensive farmland or open spaces is a major characteristic of local life.
- Township government is seen as responsive and important to the reputation of the community.

CONCERNS

- Dilapidated buildings and junk stored outside in neighborhoods.
- Ordinance enforcement to deal with junk and blight.
- Overuse of lakes in the area and the Muskegon River.
- The loss of the Township’s rural character.
- Uncertainly as to if growth in Garfield should be either promoted or controlled?
- The Township needs to continue to be fair in their planning and zoning.

GARFIELD TOWNSHIP’S DESIRED FUTURE

- We desire to continue to see a viable and visible agricultural community.

- We desire well-maintained roads.
- We desire future consideration of pedestrian and bike paths or a non-motorized pathway system.
- We desire commercial and service development in limited and appropriate locations.
- We desire quality development vs. quantity.
- We desire more affordable single-family housing.
- We desire safe and well-maintained residential neighborhoods.
- We desire continuation of the numerous recreational options available to us.
- We desire consideration of additional recreational facilities and services.
- We desire a future that maintains the use and enjoyment of area lakes and the Muskegon River at their present levels.
- We desire to keep the small, rural township character that currently exists.
- We desire to see the natural features and setting within our township, maintained as best possible.
- We desire to see the continuation of a local government that works well for all township residents and enjoys a strong and positive reputation.

CHAPTER 4. THE PLANNING AGENDA

A number of existing and anticipated conditions are expected to affect Garfield Township in the future. These conditions are interwoven with the objectives and policies for planning that are a key component of this Master Land Use Plan. What follows is a discussion of the issues that the Planning Commission identified as being critical to the success of this planning project and for which the Master Plan Use Plan Update needs to provide a strategic direction.

MUSKEGON RIVER:

One of the most dominant natural resources in Garfield Township is the Muskegon River. It slices through the southeast corner of the Township, creating a land area that is generally difficult to access from elsewhere in the Township. The Muskegon River valley contains some of the most varied topography and vistas of any similar setting in the Lower Peninsula – from steep roll-ways to hairpin curves, shallow rapids to deep turbulent pools. It is a river of many qualities and a magnet for those wishing to recreate or reside within its influence.

Concerns include:

- How to best deal with development adjacent to the Muskegon River....to prevent it from becoming similar to the Pickerel and Kimball Lakes area, in terms of population and density of development.
- Protecting the river's shoreline and environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep banks and existing vegetation, that impact on water quality.
- A review of current planning and zoning options directed at protecting this resource, is needed.

AGRICULTURAL LAND:

Another dominant land use characteristic of Garfield Township is the extensive open, undeveloped and

agricultural property that still exists within this community. Past planning activities devoted substantial time and discussion on this key “quality of life” attribute of the Garfield community. Without the current open spaces and agricultural lands that can be found along nearly every road section within the Township, Garfield would be a very different place.

Concerns include:

- Can farming as it exists today in Garfield Township, realistically continue indefinitely?
- The local planning and zoning strategies used by Garfield Township as a means of controlling development in active agricultural areas have either been reasonably effective or the Township has enjoyed good fortune. Perhaps both have occurred. Nonetheless, what type of zoning strategies will work best going forward?

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

The single most difficult planning issue that confronts all rural communities with no or limited infrastructure, but with attractive, available and affordable undeveloped land...is how to direct residential development in a way that makes sense for all parties. This includes current as well as prospective residents; the community at-large which has an expectation as to “quality of life” issues (safety, convenience, etc.); as well as a land owner that expects an economic return on his holdings.

Concerns include:

- How to accommodate limited residential growth with minimal impact on the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood and the community at large.

LAKEFRONT DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATION

The evolution of Pickerel and Kimball Lakes in Garfield Township is really not that different from other lakes in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. With both of these lakes you have a beautiful natural setting that became “discovered” as the regional population became more mobile and affluent. What initially were only resorts and outdoor camps and a handful of seasonal cabins or cottages became many more cabins or cottages on many, many very small lots. As nearby larger cities grew and the general population became even more mobile and affluent, the importance of a “second-home” or the “lake-home” became a “Michigan Tradition”. Once the need for sanitary sewer in this area of the Township was resolved, a number of impacts emerged. Small, summer cottages have become more 3-season or year-round residences. Large single-family homes are now found along the shoreline of these lakes. And, what was once mainly a summer population boom is now much more year-round and with a high percentage of relocated - retiree residents. Increased population in a confined shoreline area can lead to a variety of zoning “issues”...from noise, to setbacks, storage and general land use. In addition, the rustic camps of the 1920’s, with their very limited facilities and promoting an “escape from city life” have also become much more substantial in terms of the footprint they occupy and the facilities, programs and population they serve.

Concerns include:

- A thorough review of the land use and recent development trends and issues in the Pickerel and Kimball Lakes area as they relate to the current zoning district and regulations is timely and appropriate.
- How to continue to maintain as much of the original natural character of these lakes as possible, through preserving existing vegetation and utilizing reasonable development regulations.

- How to best initiate a planning strategy for the properties occupied by the two major “camp” operations in this area of the Township? Such that it encourages an on-going relationship and review of their development proposals and needs.

M-82 CORRIDOR:

As the major, regional east-west route through southern Newaygo County, the M-82 corridor offers several planning challenges. M-82 connects the cities of Newaygo and Fremont....and ultimately provides the connector to M-120 and the Muskegon metro area. It carries a significant daily volume of traffic and historically this corridor is one area that has provided Garfield Township with various land use challenges.

Concerns include:

- Traffic volumes and speed.
- Conflicts between vehicles and Amish buggies or bicycle/foot traffic.
- Maintaining the existing and predominately undeveloped, or very limited development character of the M-82 corridor.
- Maintaining limitations on the amount and location of non-residential or non-farm land use in this corridor.

M-37 CORRIDOR:

The M-37 corridor south of the City of Newaygo is where most of the non-residential development activity for this region, has taken place in the last 10+ years. Municipal boundary lines in this sector have changed in the recent past, as have those once vacant parcels that now contain regional shopping facilities or national chains.

Concerns include:

- Evaluating the current mixed-use planning and zoning provisions for designated portions of this corridor to determine their effectiveness.
- Consideration as to how to prevent those negative attributes of a typical developed highway corridor...too many curb cuts, too large or too many signs, too much visual confusion.

SMALL SCALE COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES AND/OR ON-FARM BUSINESSES:

Historically, many rural township master plans saw agricultural areas as short-term holding areas that would eventually be converted to residential or some other non-agricultural use. Over time however, agricultural zoning districts began to be recognized as a vital mechanism for protecting a community's agricultural resource and way of life. It is this type of planning and zoning that Garfield Township has focused on over the past several decades. There are certain land uses that have been traditionally allowed within agricultural areas, such as feed mills or other ag-produce processing as being operationally suitable and necessary for support of agricultural uses. Here again Garfield Township has accommodated these types of activities within its Plans and Zoning Ordinance. What has evolved over the past decade or so and which has taken on increased importance is the impact of on-farm businesses within Garfield Township. In part this is due to the economic pressures of making a small acreage, single owner farm fiscally viable. And in some instances these small operations are being worked without modern mechanization. These factors have caused local pressure to approve small commercial ventures as an "on-farm business".

Concerns include:

- What is a reasonable and yet flexible approach to regulating, reviewing and authorizing these on-farm businesses?
- And by accommodating on-farm businesses through reasonable zoning provisions and standards, when...if ever... does the concentration of such uses and activity (traffic safety, operational characteristics, etc.) become a detriment to the original intent of the planning and zoning for agricultural properties in Garfield Township?

LAND USE:

The general character of Garfield Township, in terms of developed and undeveloped properties has not changed significantly since the last Master Plan. There have been a small number of scattered site new homes as well as a handful of limited industrial or commercial facilities built since 2007. As part of this current planning project, the Planning Commission and Township Board were asked as part of a mapping exercise to (1) locate those areas that have seen change or development since the last Master Plan and (2) locate those areas or locations of current or potential land use conflict. The following listings are in rank order based on the number of "votes" received.

Areas of most change since 2007:

- All or parts of the 48th Street Corridor.
- The M-82 Corridor (especially the western end of that corridor).
- Kimball and Pickerel Lake area.
- M-37 South of the City of Newaygo.
- Croswell Avenue south of M-82.
- Southernmost section of Bingham.
- Southernmost section of Wisner.
- West end of 88th Street.

- SW of the M-82 and Bingham intersection (increase in agricultural use).
- Area between Wisner and Bingham south of drain.

Areas of current or potential land use problems/conflicts:

- Kimball and Pickerel Lake area.
- On-farm businesses.
- South M-37 Corridor.
- Camp Newaygo
- Gun ranges
- Animals in residential areas.
- New large houses.
- Subdivisions moving east out of Fremont
- 48th Street
- West M-82 (Special Purpose Corridor).

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS:

In addition to the policies and strategies detailed in a previous chapter, there are a number of general planning assumptions that are interwoven into the details of this Master Plan and include:

- With the exception of development around Pickerel and Kimball Lakes and portions of the M-37 corridor south of Newaygo, Garfield Township enjoys a predominantly rural character with scattered homes on modest or large parcels, residences attracted to the magnet of the Muskegon River, and large-tract agricultural or open lands.
- An aerial view of Garfield Township makes clear the significant amount of wooded areas that exist within this community. Woodlots are scattered throughout the Township and reinforce this dominant characteristic of a low-density, rural and open space community.

- The principal highway routes into Garfield Township continue to be M-37 which connects directly to the Grand Rapids metro area and M-82 which connects the Cities of Fremont and Newaygo.
- Township residents, through survey responses over the past decades, continue to endorse and support Garfield Township as a “good place to live”, with an excellent quality of life, outstanding local recreational opportunities, a strong sense of community and good local government. All of these perceived qualities of this community need strong affirmation in this Master Plan.

CHAPTER 5. GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The planning goals, policies and strategies detailed within the following pages of this section of the Plan are rooted in the fundamental values of the citizens of the Garfield Township “community”. They have spoken via their input in Township-wide surveys and at public meetings and hearings. Clearly the residents of Garfield Township place a high value on individual property rights and on the natural features of

this community. The Planning Commission and Township Board recognize that while change is inevitable, the Township is committed to managing such change so as to enhance its' existing undeveloped spaces, active farmland and natural features. The following goal and policy statements attempt to advance those community values as described by Township residents and shape this Master Plan.

GOALS

Planning goals are statements that describe a desired end-state that the community-at-large finds attractive and achievable. Goal statements are *long-range* and *forward looking* - one or more decades into the future. For this Master Plan, there are a series of six broad goal statements, each supported by a series of more detailed or specific proposals.

POLICIES

The subcategories to these goals, are *policies*, which are more detailed in their structure and state measurable components.

STRATEGIES

The "bulleted" items listed below a specific "policy" are *strategies* or specific actions or definitive statements which can be taken by the Township to achieve a policy.

MASTER LAND USE PLAN UPDATE

GOAL: Prepare an updated Master Land Use Plan for Garfield Township that is flexible, reasonable and adequate to meet the needs and desires of Township residents, while maintaining the predominant rural character of the community. Such a Plan shall promote the public health, safety and general welfare of Garfield Township's residents, will encourage the use of land in accordance with its

character and adaptability and will conserve natural resources and energy.

Through application of this planning process, provide an atmosphere for decision-making by Township officials which continues the current quality of life, while protecting those characteristics of the existing natural and man-made environment that comprise it; and doing so in a way that is consistent with the fiscal and legal capabilities of the Township.

POLICIES:

1. To adopt and maintain an updated Master Land Use Plan that:

- ❑ Indicates where specific land use types should be placed.
- ❑ Will guide future decisions of the Planning Commission and Township Board on all issues dealing with growth, land use and development.
- ❑ Will suggest processes to eliminate or reduce incompatible land uses.
- ❑ Protects and enhances the environment through recognition and stewardship of the Township's natural assets.

2. To review and where necessary, revise the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance on a regular/routine basis:

- ❑ Ordinance changes will consider and incorporate the concepts and proposals contained within this updated Master Land Use Plan.

- ❑ Development techniques should promote the rational use of land and encourage the preservation of natural features.
 - ❑ Make “planning for the future” and not “reacting”, the driving force behind all land-use decision-making.
 - ❑ Ordinance revisions will consider and incorporate concepts and proposals in this Master Plan, such that:
 - ✓ Elements of Garfield’s unique character – both natural and cultural - are conserved.
 - ✓ Unique and sensitive natural areas are conserved.
 - ✓ Productive agricultural and forestry soils are conserved.
 - ✓ Multiple development options are available.
3. To continue to seek input and comment from Township residents on planning and development matters.

LAND USE AND GROWTH

GOAL: To achieve a well-balanced and sustainable mix of developed and undeveloped land uses – residential, non-residential and agricultural/open space lands, maintaining the quality living environment existing in Garfield Township and meeting present and future needs for housing, shopping, employment, recreation and agriculture in an efficient, economical and environmentally-practical fashion.

POLICIES:

1. To encourage and direct growth that:
 - ❑ Is orderly and planned.

- ❑ Separates residential, non-residential and agricultural/open space uses.
- ❑ Is consistent with the policies and proposals in this Master Land Use Plan.
- ❑ Is efficiently served by public roads, utilities and other public services.
- ❑ Provides a transition between residential and more intensive non-residential uses.
- ❑ Promotes the protection of natural features.

2. To avoid the type of growth or development that:

- ❑ Creates land use conflicts between different uses.
- ❑ Promotes sprawl or prematurely converts existing open/undeveloped land.
- ❑ Is a result of random zoning actions, converting properties to more intense zoning categories without an apparent need.
- ❑ Encourages the encroachment of conflicting land uses on active farms.
- ❑ Places more intensive land uses in areas with environmental limitations, such as floodplains, wetlands or unstable soils.

3. To manage growth such that:

- ❑ It matches the type of development to the physical characteristics or constraints of a given parcel or neighborhood.
- ❑ It directs all intensive development in an orderly manner and is contiguous to existing and similar properties.
- ❑ The process and procedures utilized fall within the fiscal and legal constraints of the Township.

ZONING AND RELATED ORDINANCES:

GOAL: To support and implement regulatory and other initiatives intended to protect and promote local, valuable and unique environmental resources.

POLICIES:

1. To provide design flexibility and diversity in development by:
 - ❑ Adopting zoning regulations that provide for design flexibility in the placement of development and support services or infrastructure.
 - ❑ Site design standards that encourage reduction in the length of utility extensions as well as providing for decreased paving and reduced roadway lengths.
 - ❑ Zoning requirements that provide for diversity of lot sizes, building densities and housing types to accommodate a variety of age and income groups; and create neighborhoods with access to open

lands, with open space amenities and a strong neighborhood identity.

2. To develop zoning regulations that:

- ❑ Provide an additional tool to protect areas within Garfield Township with productive agricultural soils, or forestry.
- ❑ Have multiple options for landowners to allow change or development and yet minimize the impacts on environmental resources.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

GOAL: To direct residential development in a manner that:

- ✓ provides adequate housing for all segments of the population, maintains the quality of existing residential areas, encourages variety and use of flexible development concepts and recognizes that the primary character of Garfield Township is agricultural, recreational and rural.
- ✓ accommodates new residential development in the Township in a manner that recognizes the opportunities and constraints of the Township, especially its' public services and facilities.

POLICIES:

1. To encourage residential development that:

- ❑ Is balanced in the types of housing it contains – having variety in household types, styles and prices and able to accommodate a range of income and age groups.
- ❑ Is safe, creative and results in a desirable residential----suitable for varying ages and income levels.
- ❑ Reflects the character of existing residential development, including housing types and densities.
- ❑ Is well matched to the specific parcel or property, in terms of the unique characteristics of the parcel or property.
- ❑ Places higher density residential uses in close proximity to major streets and other necessary public or commercial services.
- ❑ Integrates the physical or natural and the built or man-made environments in a way that compliments and enhances both.
- ❑ Promotes neighborhood and community identity.

2. To convert these residential planning policies into regulations, that:

- ❑ Conserve and protect existing residential areas or neighborhoods.

- ❑ Discourage activities that produce noise, dirt, odors, traffic and the similar nuisance factors.
- ❑ Encourage flexibility and creativity in residential design and in the placement of individual homes.
- ❑ Improves the overall design of residential development and the provision of permanent open space wherever possible.
- ❑ Promotes the rational use of land and the preservation of natural features.

2. To discourage residential development that:

- ❑ Is unplanned, sporadic and isolated.
- ❑ Is inefficient in consumption of land area and disruptive in terms of impacting future development access or extension.

AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

GOAL: To expand the Township's efforts:

- ✓ in the regulated use, enhancement and/or protection of environmentally significant or sensitive natural features such as watersheds, wetlands, woodlots, and shoreline, as well as important agricultural lands and open spaces.

- ✓ in promoting the reality that the existing natural assets within the Township provide a significant part of its local and cultural identity and adds economic value to the surrounding region.

POLICIES:

1. To manage change in order to preserve the Township's existing character and rural lifestyle by:
 - ❑ Discouraging the extension of public utilities or improvements into those areas containing active, viable farms and the best soils and situation to perpetuate farming activities.
 - ❑ Encouraging low population densities in all designated agricultural lands and on all environmentally sensitive parcels.
 - ❑ Encourage flexibility in those regulations that apply within the areas of highest agricultural use and value, as a way of providing growth options and yet not prematurely bringing development pressures on active farms.
 - ❑ Supporting the local economic base dedicated to farming and agricultural-related services.
 - ❑ Balances the rights of individual property owners with the right of the Township to use planning and zoning techniques to protect and enhance all elements of the local environment.

2. To manage the type and extent of those activities and land uses that would support the primary focus of "farming" in the agricultural areas of the Township and retain the rural and farms character of these areas and yet may not always be "agricultural" in type of operation, by:
 - ❑ Developing guidelines to ensure that "On-Farm Businesses" will meet the legitimate public health, safety and welfare concerns of Garfield Township.
 - ❑ Developing guidelines to ensure that the type, location and extent of "On-Farm Businesses" will not change the existing rural character of any farming neighborhood or area in Garfield Township.
 - ❑ Create a reasonable yet appropriate administrative process for reviewing permitting proposed "On-Farm Businesses" within Garfield Township.
3. To utilize all available planning and zoning concepts to protect natural resources of local or regional significance by:
 - ❑ Site planning techniques that direct development, but recognize and protect natural features such as wetlands, floodplains, woodlots and unique situations.
 - ❑ Regulate development in the shoreline "zone" -- that strip of land adjacent to the water's edge -- as the best and easiest technique available to aid in the improvement of water quality and stabilization of shoreline to prevent erosion.

- The use of easements, land trusts or deed restrictions when and where appropriate to preserve environmentally sensitive areas.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

GOAL: To direct the type, location, quality and quantity of commercial and industrial development to ensure a scale and type/nature of non-residential growth that is appropriate for this community, is aesthetically attractive, meets the needs of Township residents and is compatible with adjoining uses.

POLICIES

1. To provide for a commercial development pattern that:
 - Does not attempt to replicate the regional shopping facilities existing within the adjoining cities of Fremont and Newaygo
 - Uses office or service uses as a transitional development between residential areas and more intense development.
 - Encourages the development of limited commercial zones or districts that provide “convenience or neighborhood service”.

- ❑ Utilizes the neighborhood commercial center concept in specific locations where it places needed services conveniently accessible to residential areas.
- ❑ Limits the number of curb cuts on major thoroughfares through innovative site planning or the use of service drives.

THE GARFIELD COMMUNITY

GOAL: To recognize the responsibility placed in the Planning Commission and Township Board by the residents of Garfield Township who continue to affirm their affection for and strong support of “The Garfield Community”.

POLICIES:

1. To continue to be a leader in working with other units of government and organizations in:
 - ❑ Coordinating planning efforts with surrounding municipalities directed at realizing a well-planned and economically viable region.
 - ❑ Cooperating with area communities in the evaluation and implementation of public service delivery options.
 - ❑ Partnering with organizations and governmental entities promoting a common vision directed at a sound, viable region, benefitting all participants

and being considerate of local character and community.

2. To plan and maintain the Township's public facilities and services, so as to effectively service the needs of current and future residents.
- Based upon resident input received in the most recent Township-wide survey, initiate a detailed process to determine the level of interest in expanding financial support for road improvements, purchase of open space for parks or other uses, and the addition of pedestrian/bike pathways in Garfield Township.

CHAPTER 6 - IMPLEMENTATION

As discussed in previous paragraphs, the Master Plan's function is to establish a decision-making framework by providing the direction and rationale needed to make sound land use decisions. The Master Plan does not necessarily determine the timing of development, but rather sets forth recommendations as to what type of land uses are reasonable for Garfield Township, where and under what conditions they can be established.

This Master Plan is intended to be sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing conditions or unforeseen factors. Comments have been made in this text as to the current economic and development climate in the State of Michigan and how this has altered recent trends in land use. As to what our collective future in Michigan might look like in five years at the time this Master Plan will undergo its next review and update, is certainly much more open to speculation than in any time in the recent past.

This Master Plan is intended to provide guidance in the following areas:

Review of rezonings, special land uses and other development proposals. Consistency of the proposed

activity with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan is part of the development review process.

Review of public improvements. Public improvements, be they streets or roadways, new facilities or structures, or utility extensions or upgrades are to be reviewed by the Planning Commission for consistency with the Master Plan. While this is frequently less of an issue in rural townships with limited utility systems and with a roadway network that is typically the responsibility of the local county road commission...it is nonetheless an important statutory responsibility. The relationship of future land use patterns to proposed public expenditures for public improvements can be a critical planning function.

Review of residential developments. Subdivisions, site condominiums and even scattered site lot splits for new housing, all have a significant impact on the character of a rural township and on future growth patterns. This Master Plan provides policy direction to assist the Planning Commission in their decision-making process as to the location and design of subdivisions or site condominium projects.

Maintaining community character. In the community surveys for Garfield Township that were taken over the past several decades, the one consistent concern of the majority of all respondents is that the rural character of this community to maintained. Change and/or growth are inevitable in every community. How that change or growth is directed and managed is key to preserving community character or otherwise promoting a new or desired community character. This Master Plan is intended to be a statement by the Township and by its residents as to the intended future character of this community. It also

provides those strategies intended to assure as best possible, that the future direction taken by Township leaders will be consistent with the community interests and perceived community character.

Planning Commission Annual Work Program. It is recommended that the Planning Commission prepare an annual work program in January of each year. This not need be an overly complex process or work product, but rather an exercise that establishes what the Commission hopes to accomplish in the coming year. It is intended to encourage informal discussion on emerging issues within the Township or what regulatory adjustments may be necessary based upon recent activities. This process should correlate well with the statutory requirement for an annual report to the Township Board on the year's activities of the Planning Commission.

Planning Commission Training. Fortunately, West Michigan is well-served by a number of training options for citizen planners, including those sponsored by individual counties, the Michigan Townships Association, the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service and the Michigan Association of Planning. These programs have been reasonably priced and with minimal travel requirements, they fill an important function for all planners in this area of the state. Resources are tight for any municipality such as Garfield Township, but it is hoped that a training line item can be part of future annual budgets.

Coordination with the Cities of Newaygo and Fremont. There is a significant history of regional planning activities that span this geographic area of Newaygo County, extending from the townships surrounding the City of Fremont...over to those municipalities abutting the City of Newaygo. Based on past planning efforts and existing

documentation, it is clear that community character/image is highly regarded by area residents. Even though each municipality has its' own focus and challenges, to continue this local tradition of planning coordination and discussion can only benefit this area and help maintain the small town and rural character that is so highly prized.

DESCRIPTION OF MASTER LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION:

- This land use designation does encompass the majority of the land area of Garfield Township.
- Existing large undeveloped tracts of land and active farms are a vital part of Garfield's identity and deserve special recognition in order to preserve the rural character of the Township.
- The Township will continue to utilize zoning options intended to extend and preserve the rural character of this Plan area, but also permit limited single family housing in a way that preserves natural features and minimizes any disruption to adjoining uses.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL:

- This Master Plan designation includes those areas of soil types that are well-suited or adequately-suited for residential development.
- The general location for Rural Residential land use is the southern third of the Township.
- The Rural Residential designated area also includes woodlots, rolling open fields and the impressive sweep of the Muskegon River valley.....all making for a very desirable location for housing.

- River Road, a major local roadway, which is in excellent condition does bisect the Rural Residential area making for good east-west access.
- Past planning has called for a “stable, large lot residential setting on soils that can handle a private well and septic system on the same lot”. This guideline appears to be working well. Housing numbers have grown in this area and it continues to be an excellent alternative to adding stress on agricultural lands.
- Planning, as well as zoning regulations in support of planning concepts, will continue to keep residential density compatible with the rural, open space character of this area of Garfield Township.

LAKE AREA RESIDENTIAL:

- The Pickerel and Kimball Lakes area has always been a special place in the history of this community....from the early logging days to its’ initial development of summer vacation cottages and a mixture of resort and camp development
- The site is a scenic, rolling setting in the northeast corner of the Township, containing two large lakes and within an hour’s drive to a metro area of slightly less than 1 million people.
- With development of a sanitary sewage collection and treatment system for this area of the Township, a very important planning concern of past years, has been resolved. Specifically the water quality and viability of these two lakes, as well as stabilizing the residential areas around these lakes....even to the extent of promoting the conversion from part-time to permanent residences.
- Past planning efforts by the Township voiced a concern that the addition of a sanitary sewage system might promote second-tier development in properties

adjacent to but not with direct lake access. To date that has not occurred, but remains as an open planning issue.

- The expansion of the large summer camps in the Lake Residential Area.....in terms of more permanent facilities but also more seasonal utilization, poses a current planning concern for the Township. Both facilities have a long history in this area, but changes in use and direction have occurred.

SPECIAL PURPOSE CORRIDOR DISTRICT

- This Plan Area is intended to meet a perceived need for a limited area in the western section of Garfield Township for convenience commercial uses.
- In addition several non-residential uses have historically located and expanded in this segment of the M-82 corridor and a special purpose district is seen as the best solution for allowing, yet regulating these activities.

SPECIAL PURPOSE MIXED USE DISTRICT

- The M-37 corridor south of Newaygo has historically seen a very typical "highway corridor" mixture of various land uses and development type and intensity.
- The Mixed Use designation for this area along with the necessary zoning provisions is intended to accommodate flexibility in development type and trends in this general area.

ZONING PLAN

As was mentioned in the first chapter of the Plan, Sec. 33 (2) of Act 33, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, requires that a Master Plan include a "Zoning Plan". The "Zoning Plan" is to include an explanation of the various categories on any future land use or master plan map (as is done in the previous section) and tie these land use categories to the districts on a zoning map.

Master Plan Designation: **Agricultural Conservation**

Corresponding Zoning Districts:

AG: Agricultural Enterprise District – Applies to those areas of Garfield Township where it is necessary and desirable because of existing agricultural enterprises as well as soil and natural conditions well suited to productive agricultural capability, to preserve, promote, maintain and enhance the use of the land for agricultural purposes.

AG-R: Agricultural Residential District – Has as its basis the distinct purpose of preserving the integrity of the Agricultural Enterprise District in Garfield Township. It provides for residential development in a rural setting adjacent to agricultural zoning and uses.

Master Plan Designation: **Rural Residential**

Corresponding Zoning Districts:

RR: Rural Residential District – Is intended for application in those areas of Garfield Township where soils have limited constraints for residential development and yet are some of the poorest agricultural soils in the Township.

GR-1: General Residential District – Is intended to provide for single-family residential development of a desirable character and at an average density of population comparable to existing development patterns in Garfield Township.

MRO: Muskegon River Overlay District – Is intended to apply to land adjacent to the Muskegon River so as to preserve the quality of water resources and the aesthetic and scenic values of the Muskegon River.

Master Plan Designation: **Lake Area Residential**

Corresponding Zoning District:

LFR: Lakefront Residential District: Is intended to provide for desirable single-family residential development of both permanent and seasonal homes along the shoreline of Kimball and Pickerel Lakes in Garfield Township. And to do so in a way that protects the property, aesthetic and recreational values of these shoreline areas.

Master Plan Designation: **Special Purpose Corridor**

Corresponding Zoning District:

CD: Corridor Development District: Is intended to accommodate a limited amount of non-residential development within the westernmost segment of the M-82 Corridor in Garfield Township. This District provides for the continuation of residential and agricultural uses within its boundary, but also appropriate zoning flexibility to allow limited commercial, industrial and institutional development.

Master Plan Designation: **Special Purpose Mixed Use**

Corresponding Zoning District:

C: General Commercial District: Is intended to accommodate a variety of retail uses with regulations and conditions designed to promote the economic viability of arterial-oriented commercial development in a safe and convenient manner. The location and extent of the C District is the M-37 frontage south of the City of Newaygo.

PLANNING AND ZONING MATRIX

Master Plan Designation = Corresponding Zoning District

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION = AG AGRICULTURAL
ENTERPRISE

AG-R AGRICULTURAL
RESIDENTIAL

RURAL RESIDENTIAL = RR: RURAL RESIDENTIAL

GR-1: GENERAL RESIDENTIAL

MRO: MUSKEGON RIVER OVERLAY

LAKE AREA RESIDENTIAL = LFR: LAKEFRONT
RESIDENTIAL

SPECIAL PURPOSE CORRIDOR = CD: CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT

SPECIAL PURPOSE MIXED USE = C: GENERAL
COMMERCIAL

APPENDIX

Dear Garfield Township Resident:

Your Township Board and Planning Commission are currently reviewing the Township's Master Plan which was last updated in 2009. State law requires all communities review their Master Plans on a regular basis. Garfield Township has a long and proactive history of concern for the future of this community and its residents. Our Master Plan reflects that concern and it is timely to again look at where our community is headed and what the future might bring. The purpose of this survey is to obtain a better understanding of the current attitudes and thoughts of our residents and taxpayers. We would like to know what you think about the future of Garfield Township. Please complete the following survey and return it by August 1, 2018 to the Garfield Township Hall, 7190 Bingham Avenue, Newaygo, MI. 49337. We look forward to receiving your comments and input. Thank you for your help and interest.

Additional copies of this survey are available at the Township Hall or on-line at garfieldtownship.org.

Garfield Township Board
Garfield Township Planning Commission

1. My gender is 59% Male 41% Female?
2. My age is 0% under 18 1% 18 to 29 7% 30 to 39
6% 40 to 49 14% 50 to 59 30% 60 to 69
42% 70+?
3. I have you lived in Garfield Township avg. of 31 years?
I am not a Township resident.
4. Do you live in Garfield Township year-round? 83%
Yes 17% No
5. Are you retired? 61% Yes 39% No. Did you move
here to retire? 22% Yes 78% No.

6. Please circle the response which most closely describes your feelings or attitudes towards the following. 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Not Sure/Don't Know
- a. Are there active farms or agricultural areas in the Township that should be protected from development or non-agricultural uses/activity? 1 = 65% 2 = 10% 3 = 25%
 - b. Should the undeveloped land adjacent to the Muskegon River be protected from any intensive development? 1 = 82% 2 = 7% 3 = 11%
 - c. Should the Township consider the purchase of open space or natural areas for parks or similar non-developed use? 1 = 55% 2 = 21% 3 = 24%
 - d. Should the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance encourage the construction of additional single family homes in Garfield Township? 1 = 57% 2 = 22% 3 = 21%
 - e. Should the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance encourage "second home" development (cabins or cottages for occasional or seasonal use)? 1 = 51% 2 = 25% 3 = 24%
 - f. Are there sufficient retail stores or other commercial services in Fremont or Newaygo to meet your needs? 1 = 79% 2 = 20% 3 = 1%
 - g. Should the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance encourage the development of any/small industrial facilities in Garfield Township? 1 = 42% 2 = 38% 3 = 20%
 - h. Will the Garfield Township of twenty years from now (2038) still be as "rural, agricultural and low-density development" as it is in 2018? 1 = 46% 2 = 26% 3 = 28%

7. Please circle the number that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Garfield as a place to live.	42%	51%	6%	1%	0%
Neighborhood as a place to live.	43%	46%	7%	4%	0%
Garfield as a place to raise children.	36%	44%	7%	2%	11%
Garfield as a place to work.	8%	27%	19%	15%	31%
Garfield as a place to retire.	44%	44%	5%	3%	4%
Overall quality of life in Garfield.	38%	52%	9%	.5%	.5%
Garfield officials are responsive	25%	26%	11%	9%	29%

8. Please rate each of the following characteristics of living in Garfield Township:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Sense of community.	20%	51%	22%	2%	5%
Overall appearance of Township.	13%	63%	20%	4%	0%
Recreational opportunities	29%	49%	15%	2%	5%
Access to affordable housing..	8%	44%	28%	4%	16%
Access to health care.	23%	45%	20%	5%	7%
Reliable internet and cell phone.	15%	37%	22%	22%	4%
Overall quality of roads.	9%	49%	34%	8%	0%
Overall reputation of Township.	19%	52%	11%	3%	15%
Quality of new development.	6%	26%	24%	3%	41%

9. To what degree, if at all are the following seen as problems/issues in Garfield Township?

Not a problem Moderate Problem Don't Know
Minor Problem Major Problem

Crime	25%	42%	17%	1%	16%
Drugs	12%	28%	21%	6%	33%
Too much growth	42%	25%	15%	5%	13%
Too little growth	44%	18%	18%	3%	16%
Noise	46%	28%	17%	6%	3%
Number of livestock/fowl	50%	21%	11%	8%	10%
Dilapidated buildings/junk	17%	33%	35%	13%	2%
Traffic	47%	32%	18%	3%	0%
Incompatible development	40%	26%	10%	7%	17%
Losing open space	35%	32%	12%	8%	13%
Overuse of area lakes/river	30%	28%	22%	11%	9%
Loss of rural character	39%	30%	18%	4%	10%

9. To what degree, if at all, are the following seen as problems/issues in Garfield Township?

Other _____

1. Speed on Centerline.
2. Lake residents trying to enter onto area roads because of blind spots and speed.
3. No parks.
4. Fireworks anytime.
5. Guns shooting.
6. Too lenient on letting Amish in.
7. Not enough follow-up on zoning issues of those who are not in compliance.
8. Longevity of sewage treatment system.
9. Camp Newaygo Day Camp.
10. Old apartment at Croswell and M-82.
11. Inconsiderate driving especially during the rush hour traffic flow.
12. Camp on Pickerel Lake has ruined our peace and quiet.
13. Light pollution.
14. Lack of diversity.
15. Tax burden.
16. Roads.
17. Failure to enforce zoning ordinances. Lots of junk....M-82 just west of Baldwin is an example. Outrageous what this Amish guy gets away with.
18. Trash/junk in yards.
19. Lawn maintenance.
20. Big Air.
21. Cost of sewer system.
22. Yards full of junk.
23. No more pig farms.
24. Sewer cost.
25. Propane cost.
26. People from City dumping trash.
27. I like it here. (rated all items as # 1 – Not a problem)
28. 80th Street east of Luce is already sinking and causing it to be unsafe for all the traffic, walkers, bikers, horses, autos.
29. Gravel roads.
30. Patching roads.

10. Please circle the number that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Too much development on Muskegon River	9%	20%	43%	24%	5%
Lakes are overcrowded	17%	34%	26%	21%	1%
Township's rural character should be protected	45%	41%	9%	3%	2%
We should promote growth in Garfield	10%	30%	28%	24%	8%
We should control growth in Garfield	20%	49%	17%	9%	4%
Junk/blight ordinance enforcement is a top priority	31%	40%	16%	9%	3%
Signs should be limited	20%	38%	29%	10%	3%
Garfield has been fair with their planning/zoning	12%	39%	39%	7%	3%

Should Garfield Township pursue developing recreational facilities such as ball fields, walking paths, picnic areas, etc. for Township residents? 55% Yes 23% No 22% Not Sure/Don't Know

Should Garfield Township ask its residents for additional (designated) millage to address 23% Yes, 66% No, 11% Not Sure or Depends ? (fill in the blank)

If yes, how would you like to see those tax dollars spent?

Keep roads in real good condition and beautifying the river edges.

Increase road millage to 5 mills.

Roads or sheriff's road patrol.

For its own fire department.

If anything fix the sewer charges.

Expand water/sewer on M-37.

It depends for what.

Ballfields.

Walking and biking paths.

(1) Fire/safety/police. (2) Roads. (3) Public recreational areas.

On the roads I live on....a gravel road (Ferris).

Improve and maintain Township.

Fire department.

Recycling

Recycling. Protection of the environment. Promoting non-toxic use of land and water.

Bike paths, ball fields, picnic areas.

Township parks, places for kids – roller rink, places to get the young people off their cell phones.

Bike paths, junk removal/enforcement, roads.

Bike paths.

Restore/replace roof on schoolhouse.

Depends on what it'd be for. Public services, like police, fire, maintenance.

Conserve resources, i.e. riverfront property, woods, etc.

Additional Comments:

High taxes control growth...that's a good thing.

Taxes already too high.

I'd be OK if not outrageous amount.

I would need to know why/what the Township is asking for first. Need a purpose or unmet need.

Depends on project.

Less taxes not more taxes.

I think a list of things they want to do should be brought to the residents and then ask for a millage.

Garfield Township currently is served by three Fire Districts....Fremont Fire for roughly that area of the Township west of Baldwin Avenue, Newaygo Fire for that portion of the Township east of Baldwin Avenue and Grant Fire for that area of the Township south of the Muskegon River. Fire and medical emergency response is an important and fundamental governmental service. As part of this survey, Township Officials are interested in your comments re: (1.) any personal experience(s) you might have had with a fire or medical emergency, and (2.) any thoughts, concerns, suggestions you might have re: fire service in general in Garfield Township. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. Please add your comments below:

Fire protection seems adequate

Emergency response was good.

So far so good.

The good news is that I have not had to utilize any services.

We had a fire when we moved here and the response was excellent. (9209 S. Ferris)

Had a care fire in past that Newaygo responded to and no problems....did good. Had a house fire that Fremont responded to and their response was good. No medical experience to judge. (6955 Croswell)

Late husband died from a heart attack in the middle of night and 911 had first responder here very fast. That was in 2009.

Good ambulance service to 80th Street.

Service not used at this time.

Medical emergency went real well and timely.

Excellent.

On 2 February, 2007, my burning wood shed would have consumed my entire residence. The Fremont Fire Department responded in a timely manner and put out the fires promptly and efficiently. Relatively minor damage to the garage roof and gable end. Complete loss of the woodshed and about 5 cords of wood.

We should have our own fire department regardless of amount of calls due to raising cost of outside departments.

No concerns at this time.

No experience.

Never used.

The emergency services seem to be fine. My only experience has been with ambulance and first responder. Very prompt and excellent service.

Good job.

I have not seen an issue with the current service as far as fire protection and medical.

We have only had one medical emergency that required a response. The response was prompt and professional.

Adequate.

We have had no experience with any fire department so far – thank goodness.

Both fire and medical transport very good and fast.

We have not had to use the fire department services, but are totally confident in the capabilities of the Newaygo Fire Department and the Fremont Fire Department.

No contacts.

Is there one telephone number to call regardless of the fire district you are in?

One time 31 years ago I had a house fire. The fire department responded excellently.

Fire departments do a good job.

No experience noted at this time.

Stop trying to get your own fire department. I am concerned about your petty infighting with other townships.

Fortunately we have not had any interaction with the Fire Departments.

I have not had to deal with them so I have no comment.

Years ago when our neighbor's cottage burned, we felt that the fire response was excellent. We appreciated how they immediately protected our cottage.

I am a mail carrier and there isn't much of Garfield Township south of the River. Newaygo Fire should service that, not Grant.

Any additional information you would like your township officials to know or questions/concerns?

Rick on Gordon Avenue has too many ducks and chickens. This not a farm. Noise and smell is very bad. His house inside is not clean and livable. (SAD) Please do something about it.

You can put another 25 speed limit sign by 285 Frederick. Not that it'll help. People that come from other places visit friends or family members fly down my road, let they're (sp) dogs, that aren't spayed or neutered wander around. By the tobacco shop they treat the road like an extension of the parking lots...back out not paying attention to on-coming traffic. I wouldn't mind more stores and shops on the main roads, but let them pay the taxes. I could take 'em or leave 'em.

We live on Pickerel Lake Road. Some of the holes in the road were patched but some were not.

Please place more priority to our gravel road. We deserve more based on the taxes we pay.

We use our 80 acres there for mostly hunting. (Kent City address).

Sad about the pretty maple tree gone in front of the Township Hall.

There are a lot of dilapidated homes/mobiles that should be held to a higher standard. The rural/small town character should be preserved. A few choice retail stores should be brought in so that

residents don't have to drive an hour to GR or Muskegon, however a few moderately-priced housing developments would also benefit many who can't afford more expensive homes, but don't want to live in a trailer.

Halfway down Allen Street on the north side of the street, there is a small white house that has chickens running around (in) the street and they are dumping all their garbage and trash in the backyard! Which might call rats and other animals. Please look into this. It's really getting bad.

Have asked for Centerline Road (1 – 3 miles north of M-82) to be cleaned up. Please cut the grass and weeds. Sometimes weeds grow out onto the road and you can't even see the guard rails. Sometimes the weeds have grown tall enough to brush my car windows. Other roadsides are cleaned up. Why not Centerline? It looks like this Township doesn't care about us on Centerline. How about some spray?

Nice survey!

Not allow fences next to lakes.

Limit poultry along lake....pollutes lake and noise.

Fix the sewer costs that rise year after year. Also as a resident why do I have to pay extra to Great Lakes for electric to cover costs.

I think the Township should take an active role in mitigating nutrient pollution in Kimball/Pickerel Lakes both from riparian's (fertilizer on lawns) and from poor agricultural practices which allow sediment, manure and fertilizer from rainstorms to enter the inflow streams to Kimball.

Very concerned regarding narcotics and drug labs in our County. Lakes and streams polluted by farms, etc. is another concern. We really need a more active and visible program for recycling. Thank you.

Expand water and sewer services along M-37 at the south end...below M-82.

This is a great township to live in. Thank you.

Quality of life and recreational opportunities need to be protected, that's what makes this area a good place to live.

I think the Township Assessor should read her plat book.

We need our own fire department.

Keep it rural. Keep it quiet.

Thanks for your efforts. We love our Township.

An ordinance, with enforceable penalties, should be adopted to ensure homeowners lawns are mowed and controlled.

Fire protection based in the Township is necessary.

Total property taxes are too high. Sewer rates are ridiculous. My taxes at home with 9.5 acres, 2 barns plus a house valued at much more...are still less. (Lowell).

I love Garfield Township.

We are lifelong residents of Garfield. Love the Township.

You are doing a good job – keep it up. Thank you.

We are very glad that we moved into Garfield Township. Even though our contact with any officials has been limited, each person we have talked with has been extremely helpful.

Many homes with trash and old boats, cars, trucks, pallets, toys, lumber all over front yard. One home of Pickerel Lake now has put chain link fence around his front yard and now has many ducks and chickens roaming free in his yard. This should not be allowed in a residential area. We need yard-animal codes to protect property values. (Ada)

Really have no issues with our Township. My only hope is that any ordinance is equally enforced across the board so we don't become another "Good Ole Boys Club" as in some other areas.

I would like to see strict zoning ordinances and enforcement to clean up property in the Township. Also, who in the world approved the locating of certain businesses on M-37 as you enter Newaygo? A trash company and several tree cutting companies. Welcome to beautiful Newaygo.

We live on Pickerel Lake Drive – just off Centerline. One Pickerel Lake Drive there is a residence that looks like a junk yard – it seems with the high taxes and sewer and lake weed fees we pay, people should keep their property presentable.

We should consider forming our own fire department.

Fixed income residents have a real hard time paying such high taxes.

There is excessive amounts of horse manure on the roads on some Sundays. This is in poor taste and rude. The Amish should be required to license their buggies since they use all the public roads.

The additions of parks, bike paths. No more HUD/Habitat Homes that lower property values.

Medical has always responded quickly. I have never had to use fire. I think fire service for our Township should be in our Township.

Sure would be nice to see bike trails or bike lanes along our roads. Is it possible for those of use living on the south side of Muskegon River (west 96th St.) to become part of Ashland Township?

We are summer weekend residents. We love our place on the Muskegon River and couldn't think of anyplace we would rather go.

We are never for any type of millage or tax increase as long as our basic needs are being met as a community. The relatively low tax base in Garfield Township is an attractive asset about our township. Getting in touch with some Township officials can be RIDICULOUSLY difficult at times.

Please preserve the one-room school building as best as possible. Please install LED lights for the American Flag in parking lot (the one at the cemetery is lit up very nice). Please send emails or mailings of Township Hall meetings/reports. Please help promote recycling in our Township...great having the bins nearby.

How much use is the parks getting now? I have been to several in the last month and there are few people there. Unless you include play areas, splash pads, roller blade paths, etc. the parks don't seem to be used much.

This Township is incredibly noisy. There needs to be sound ordinance in place. Dogs, cycles, ATV, boat motors all run unregulated. Also the Township is getting too much junk. Look at the old furniture, trash cars, etc. We look sloppy.

As a cottage owner I wish we could have a way to give input regarding taxation since we cannot vote in Garfield Township. I am grateful for your work as well as this survey. We enjoy our summers at Kimball Lake. Our only real complaint is the ongoing high price for our sewer service. Is there any way to address that?

We live in little Mexico on Mundy and stuff is always dumped along the road. Tires, deer, diapers. Also there's a creek that runs into the River and on Mundy they dump TV's into this creek all the time. I pay such high taxes for living on the River, I would appreciate a cleaner, safer, road. I mean the road commission is right on our road and maybe No Dumping signs. Guard rail where creek is to prevent dumping. Thank you.

