

CHAPTER 8

Future Land Use Recommendations

Overview

While growth is occurring in Blue Lake Township, according to the 2016 land use inventory (see Chapter 4), 91.3 percent of the land area was classified as forest, farmland, or open space including forests, non-forest open space, wetlands, agriculture, and water. Approximately 5.3 percent of the Township's land is developed, including property used for commercial, industrial, institutional/recreational, and residential purposes. Through land use planning and land use controls, Blue Lake Township intends to ensure that existing forest, open space, and recreational land uses can continue; that irreplaceable natural resources such as water, wetlands, and forestlands will be protected; and that reasonable growth can be accommodated with minimal land use conflicts or negative environmental impacts.

Future land use recommendations for Blue Lake Township were developed by the Planning Commission. Recommendations are based on an analysis of several factors including: the pattern of existing land use, social and economic characteristics, environmental conditions, available community services and facilities, the existing patterns of land divisions, and community goals and policies.

Land Use Planning Areas

Listed below are the six different land use planning areas used to develop the future land use recommendations, and the corresponding zoning district. Due to the large amount of State-owned land, the limited private land area for development, the environmental characteristics of the Township with the many lakes as well as the economy of northern Michigan, the Planning Commission determined there is not a need to accommodate extensive growth at the present time or within the planning period covered by this plan. Therefore, the Future Land Use map presented in this chapter is strikingly similar to the current Zoning Map (adopted November 2006). Detailed explanations of each land use planning area will follow. **Figure 8-1** is the Future Land Use Map of Blue Lake Township which depicts the locations of land use planning areas.

Future land use categories	Related zoning districts
Conservation - Reserve	Conservation Resource District
Farm - Forest	Agricultural District
Rural Residential	Rural Residential District
General Residential	Residential District
Waterfront Residential	Lakeshore Residential District
Local Commercial/Light Industrial	Commercial and Industrial District

Conservation - Reserve: The Conservation-Reserve category is the most extensive land use category recommended for the Township. All state owned lands within the township are shown within the Conservation-Reserve category. Primary uses to be encouraged in the Conservation-Reserve areas include research/education, recreation (such as hunting, fishing, skiing, hiking, camping), and forest management. This plan encourages the maintenance/protection of contiguous reserve areas, river set backs, wetlands, quiet areas, scenic areas, and wildlife habitat.

The Conservation-Reserve category is further designed to provide protection to existing recreation property, areas planned for future recreation use, or other environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources, while allowing for very limited and low intensity development to occur. This development would be consistent with recreational and conservation uses. A minimum lot size of 40 acres is anticipated for the category. Very low density residential development (one single-family house or dwelling unit for every 40 acres) would be allowed. To protect sensitive areas and maintain larger tracts available for other uses, clustering based on density equivalents of not more than one single-family house or dwelling unit per 40 acres should be required in these areas.

Farm-Forest: The Farm-Forest land use category has been designated consistent with the Township's goal to encourage farmland preservation and recognize the importance of economic viability of farming and forestry operations. This future land use category has been designated consistent with the Township's general goal to "retain the scenic and rural character...", as well as the residential goal to "retain the Township's rural character, while providing suitable housing opportunities for the varied economic and lifestyle needs of the residents. The Township will encourage methods of preserving open space, natural resources, farmlands, and rural character of the Township, and at the same time assist landowners who want to reduce or discontinue farming. The methods could include innovative zoning provisions that allow for the preservation or conservation of essential natural resources, farmland, open space and allowing for forest management. Some methods which other communities have employed to help protect and preserve agricultural and forest land while protecting a landowner's economic investment include the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), clustering requirements for non-agricultural uses, and tax breaks or incentives for continuing agricultural use. It is recommended that these alternatives be investigated for possible application in Blue Lake Township, as a way to balance economic rights with the forestry and agricultural goals. This future land use category is supportive of the Agriculture related zoning districts. The maximum density proposed for this area is one unit per fifteen acres.

Rural Residential: The Rural Residential land use category has been designated consistent with the Township's goals to "maintain an ecologically sound balance between human activities and the environment to retain the Township's scenic and rural character" and to "retain the township's rural and scenic character, while providing for suitable housing opportunities..." . While the designation of Rural Residential land use category will not prevent the conversion of farmland to other uses, it will help to control the scale and rate of conversion and direct attention to areas where farmland conversion may be an issue. The rural residential category is intended to have a maximum density of one unit per 2.5 acres.

The Township will encourage methods that accommodate the needs of preserving open space, natural resources, farmlands, farming, and rural character of the Township, and at the same time assist landowners who want to reduce or discontinue farming. The methods could include

innovative zoning provisions that allow for the preservation or conservation of essential natural resources, farmland, or open space. Some methods which other communities have employed to help protect and preserve agricultural land while protecting a landowner's economic investment include the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), clustering requirements for non-agricultural uses, and tax breaks or incentives for continuing agricultural use. It is recommended that these alternatives be investigated for possible application in Blue Lake Township, as a way to balance economic rights with agricultural preservation goals.

General Residential: The General Residential development category is designed to accommodate single family dwellings at a maximum density of one unit per one and one-half acres. The large residential lots provide privacy from neighbors and/or other development. This development is located on roads with light vehicular traffic. No municipal water or sewer service is currently available. Buffers or physical separation from potentially incompatible uses (industrial and agriculture) may be necessary when located adjacent to this type of development. Additional provisions are recommended to be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a cluster development pattern to avoid or minimize development impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, forests or farmland. This Residential land use category is consistent with the Township's resource goal to "Maintain an ecologically sound balance between human activities and the environment to retain the Township's scenic and rural character."

Waterfront Residential: To preserve the scenic beauty, property value and environmental integrity of areas adjacent to the lakes in the Township, a "Waterfront Residential" designation has been established. With a specialized designation it is possible to develop and strengthen residential standards specific to the unique environment found in waterfront areas. The Waterfront Residential designation is utilized along all privately owned lakefront property in areas of existing lakefront residential development. Development regulations within the waterfront residential area should be designed to address Township residents' concerns regarding congestion of the local roads, water quality and shoreline protection. Keyhole development or high-density second-tier development should be prohibited within this land use category.

Local Commercial/Light Industrial: The Local Commercial/Light Industrial future land use category is designated to accommodate local commercial or light industrial uses compatible with the limited services and environmental sensitivity of the Township. The Local Commercial/Light Industrial future land use area is designed to provide sites for a variety of retail and service establishments, as well as wholesale activities, repair operations, retail operations that require large outside storage areas, manufacturing, and other low-impact commercial or industrial operations. Due to the limited services and the sensitive environmental features of Blue Lake Township, very limited additional areas are planned for industrial use within the Township. It is anticipated that industrial operations will be more attracted to nearby cities of Mancelona or Kalkaska where increased services are available. This land use category is compatible with commercial uses and light industrial uses.

Blue Lake Township
Kalkaska County, Michigan

Figure 8-1: Future Land Use

