

# **BURR OAK TOWNSHIP**

## **LAND USE PLAN**

The following Land Use Plan was modified and adopted after the effective date of the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act, being P.A. 33 of 2008. This new plan replaces a Land Use Plan adopted in 1999 and reflects a projection for future development to the year 2030.

Changes Approved: February 3, 2014

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Recognizing the need for a Land Use Plan, the Burr Oak Township Planning Commission developed a Land Use Plan in 1999. The need for a plan was recognized as the basis on which the Township zoning ordinance is based, as a guide for economic development and as a guide for capital improvement projects. The purpose of this plan is stated in Section 203 of the Zoning Enabling Act as follows:

Sec. 203. A 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, to ensure that uses of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships, to avoid the overcrowding of population, to provide adequate light and air, to lessen congestion on the public roads and streets, to reduce hazards to life and property, to facilitate adequate provision for a system of transportation including, subject to subsection (5), public transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, education, recreation, and other public requirements, and to conserve the expenditure of funds for public improvements and services to conform with the most advantageous uses of land, resources, and properties. A zoning ordinance shall be made with reasonable consideration of the character of each district, its peculiar suitability for particular uses, the conservation of property values and natural resources, and the general and appropriate trend and character of land, building, and population development.

This plan includes a basic inventory of community resources, an identification of current trends, a listing of land use related problems and opportunities. Finally, based on an evaluation of this information, a proposed future land use map was developed to reflect this evaluation and serve as a basis of future zoning recommendations to the Burr Oak Township Board.

The Land Use Plan provides the officials and citizens of Burr Oak Township with an efficient and reasonable guide to the orderly growth and development of the community. The plan is designed to reduce zoning conflicts and promote community-wide harmony.

### **Planning Process**

The revision to the existing Land Use Plan was based upon the process for development, review and approval established under the Michigan Planning Enabling act (P.A. 33 of 2008, being M.C.L. 125-3801 et seq.). The steps include:

- A survey and analysis of background information, a determination of problems and trends, and an assessment of future needs.
- A formulation of goals, objectives, and policies to serve as a guide for future development.
- A written and graphic plan designed to achieve the goals.
- Recommendations for implementing of the plan.

The planning process which is described in detail below is intended to produce a decision-making guide which reflects the views of the Township residents.

### **Review Community History**

Before we can understand why things are the way they are today, or will be tomorrow, we need to review the history of our community.

### **Review Existing Conditions and Past Trends**

With an understanding of the history of the Township, the next step in the planning process is to review the existing conditions and past trends, population and household characteristics, land use characteristics.

Reviewing the existing environment includes the brief review of land use, whether in the form of agricultural, residential or commercial / industrial development. This may be based upon existing land use or the potential that may exist through current zoning.

The analysis of population and housing data is to provide a projection of population over the next 20-year period.

Each community also has its own unique natural resource base in support of either additional development or identification of those areas that should be preserved in their natural state.

Once the data has been collected, the pattern of both existing and potential development areas can be utilized as a base for determining the future direction. A series of goals and objectives are included to assist in defining this direction. Such goals are intended to provide a broad perspective on preferred land use, with specific objectives oriented toward an action plan for implementation. These have been categorized into four categories: Open Space / Recreation, Agricultural Preservation, Residential Development and Commercial / Industrial Development.

Once we have reviewed existing conditions and past trends we can turn our attention to the future.

### **Assess Future Conditions**

Future conditions can be assessed with sufficient accuracy for general planning purposes through the use of projection techniques. Basic to all projection techniques is an understanding of the present conditions and past trends. Projections give us a “best guess” concerning future conditions. As more refined information is made available we can adjust our estimates of future conditions.

### **Determine Needs, Concerns, Advantages and Opportunities**

A listing of the community’s needs, concerns, advantages and opportunities is possible once the preceding steps are completed. This list will be a valuable aid in comparing the present conditions, and expected future conditions of the community, with the goals and objectives of the community which will be developed in the next step of the planning process. Such comparison permits the community to begin thinking of ways to achieve the goals and objectives which they have established. The implementation techniques which are included in this document are a reflection of the results of this thinking process.

### **Establish Goals and Objectives**

Once the planning process is complete up to this point the community will have a good basis on which to either initially formulate goals and objectives for development or revise pre-existing ones. The purpose of ‘Planning’ is to achieve community goals and objectives. Community goals and objectives should be reflected in the product of the planning processes – the LAND USE PLAN.

**Develop the Land Use Plan**

In this step of the planning process, the most appropriate, adequate and acceptable range of development standards, based upon the previous development goals for improving present and future development, are determined for use in developing the Land Use Plan.

As a product of planning research, national standards have been developed for land development to ensure adequate community health and safety. Such standards must be reviewed locally to determine whether each standard reflects the unique qualities of the community to which they, once modified, (if necessary) will be applied. Each of these standards must be acceptable to the community and be consistent with the previously established community goals and objectives.

If the direction of the proposed development is consistent with past practices, the plan may not be drastically altered from what was adopted in 1999. If changes are proposed, these should be based upon consistency with the goals and objectives established through this planning process.

The Land Use Plan will show the cumulative results of the planning process which include the determination of the best land use patterns as expressed by the desires of the community and as reflected in the goal and objective statements. It is developed based upon the findings from the analysis of data, existing patterns of development and public / governmental input.

Each of these land use categories will be shown on the Land Use Plan: agricultural, residential, commercial/industrial, open space/recreation and transportation.

The Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a general guide for policy decisions pertaining to community development. The plan requires periodic review as community attitudes change and as development trends become more apparent than projections could indicate.

**Develop Recommendations for Implementation**

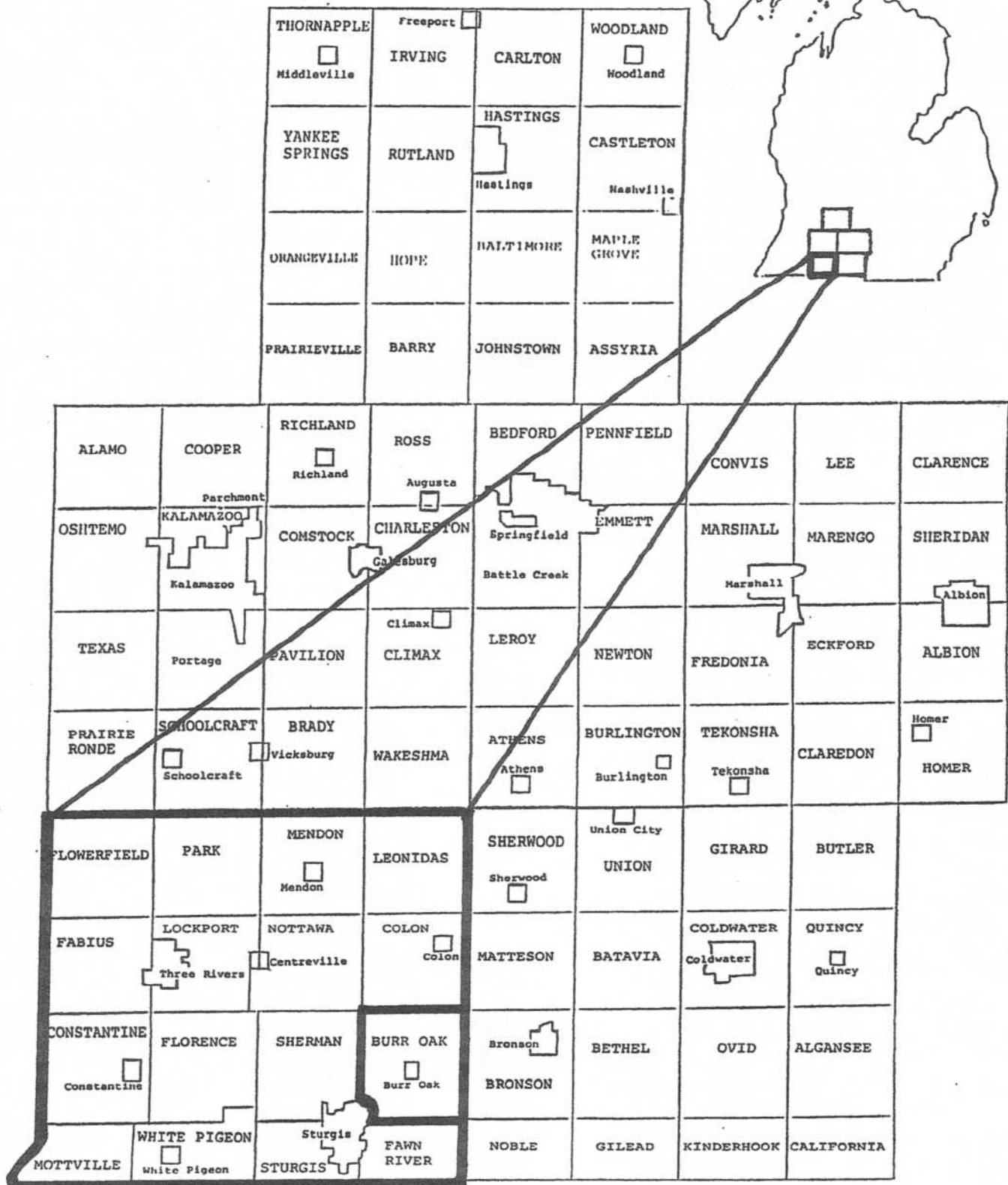
Once the Land Use Plan is complete, the community should decide how to get from here (existing development conditions), to there (the general land use development pattern as shown on the Land Use Plan). For that reason, a list of recommendations on how to implement the provisions of the development plan is usually developed as part of the planning process.

This step will include a specific schedule of future actions related to the plan implementation. The schedule may include an increased coordination with the Township Board or adjoining units of government in developing projects that are based upon this plan. It may include capital improvements associated with enhancement to development corridors or techniques that could be used in order to increase the preservation of farmland.

The implementation plan often includes the amendment or development of Township ordinances and programs to achieve the Township goals and objectives as reflected in the Land Use Plan. The will enable better coordination between the Plan and the zoning districts and the uses intended to be supported in each classification. The recommendations of the Burr Oak Township Planning Commission are shown in the RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION Section of this document.

# MAP 1

## LOCATION OF BURR OAK TOWNSHIP ST. JOSEPH COUNTY



## **BURR OAK TOWNSHIP HISTORY**

Early records indicate that Burr Oak Township was established in 1831, almost seven years before Michigan was admitted to the Union as the 26<sup>th</sup> state. The Township name is derived from the vast burr oak timber which originally covered this area. The earliest known settlers were Samuel Haslet and family and George Miller. By 1877 the area where the Haslet family and Miller settled was commonly referred to as the Elder Farley Farm. Additionally the Haslet family is credited with having the first child born in Burr Oak Township (1832).

Initially the primary occupation of the Burr Oak residents was farming. The Township proved very productive in wheat and corn. Additionally, both hogs and sheep were raised in large quantities. Numerous farms produced fruit, with apples being the main commodity. The Township's agricultural production also spawned industry. By the 1850s—70s the Township boasted of several industries: flour mill, foundry, stave and heading factory, grist mill, lumber yard, and distillery. This distillery, built in 1840, is the first recorded industry with the Township. This distillery was abandoned after five years of operation.

Key to the growth of the early Township was the Michigan Southern and Lake Shore Railroad. Established in 1851, the lay of the railroad dictated the location of the village of Burr Oak. Land for the railroad and the village of Burr Oak were donated by William Lock. Initially the "village" consisted of only the railroad station, "Lock Station," with the post office, "Burr Oak," being located four miles northwest of the "village." In 1852 the government directed that all post offices be located on rail lines. This directive meant that the "Burr Oak" post office would have to be moved to the "Lock Station" rail stop. The result produced a conflict over the name of the "village." In the end, the citizens of the Township decided that the village would be called "Burr Oak."

The Township has long been noted for its lakes and river. The names of these lakes and river have changed through time. Prairie River was originally known as Hog Creek. Swan Creek was initially called Big Swan Creek. Today's Prairie River Lake was originally Eberhard's Lake and Witt Lake is frequently called Adam's Lake.

Some of the firsts for the Township were: school – 1838, church – 1853, newspaper (The Burr Oak Acorn) – 1880, Opera House – 1885, and Electric Light and Power Company – 1908.

In the early 1900s, the Township experienced industrial growth. This growth was initially centered on the manufacturing (Sheffield Manufacturing Company) and the textile industry (Baird Skirt Company). As recent as the 1960s, the Township had numerous manufacturing businesses.

In 1979, the old township hall located on Eagle Street was torn down and a new township / fire hall was built on Front Street.

In 1989, the Library located in the bottom level of the Community Building on Third Streets was moved to a new modern building built on Second Street.

Burr Oak Township has been a zoned community since the 1990's.

In 2000, the Township Board entered into a 425 Agreement with the City of Sturgis to protect the Township against annexation of any further land into the city.

The Township Board has consistently allocated funds to upgrade and pave roads in the township.

For a century and a half, Burr Oak has been primarily an agricultural Township. Farming has been first and foremost. Burr Oak Township continues to be primarily an agricultural township. The 2000 census indicates 44% of the male population is employed in some type of agricultural work.

It is noted that the amount of farm land in the township is shrinking due to commercial and residential development. Agricultural land is at a premium in value. In order to utilize as much of the land as possible to grow crops and economize the volume of water output by irrigation, the trend has become to remove tree lines and clusters of trees along the fields.

Corn is the primary crop of the Township. Throughout the years, gladiolas, potatoes, and watermelon have been planted for commercial use. During the harvest season, roadside stands can be found offering sweet corn, tomatoes, and other vegetables.

The change in the economy and the appearance of large chain stores in nearby communities has caused the Village of Burr Oak to lose many of the merchants in the Village and some of the industry.

Burr Oak Township is the home to many Amish families and it is not uncommon to see an Amish buggy or a team of horses pulling a wagon on the township roads. The Amish continue to use draft horses to farm their fields.

There are four churches located in the township: St. John's Lutheran Church, United Methodist, and Burr Oak Missionary which are all located in the Village of Burr Oak and Locust Grove Mennonite Church on Findley Road.

The Township maintains three cemeteries: the Burr Oak Township Cemetery located on the edge of the Village, Tobey Cemetery on Bill Hill Road, and Sanborn Cemetery on Middle Colon Road.

Burr Oak Township has five school districts within its boundaries. The children of the Township may attend any one of these schools by preference or by residential location. The schools are Burr Oak Community Schools which is a K-12 student body located in Burr Oak Township, Sturgis Public Schools, Colon Public Schools, and Bronson Community Schools. There is also a school for Amish children located on McKale Road.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS/PAST TRENDS**

### **Location**

Burr Oak Township is in the southeastern tier of townships in St. Joseph County, Michigan. St. Joseph County is bordered by the State of Indiana to the south, Cass County to the west, Kalamazoo County to the north, and Branch County to the east. Burr Oak is 6 miles from the county seat, Centreville. The community is 30 miles south of the City of Battle Creek. The Village of Burr Oak is in Section 23 of Burr Oak Township. The Township is bordered on the east by Branch County, on the north by Colon Township, on the south by Fawn River Township, and on the west by Sherman Township. Burr Oak is half way between Detroit and Chicago, and 4½ miles north of the Indiana line.

The community is 35.6 square miles in total area of which 34.6 square miles is Township and 1 square miles is Village. The community covers 23,188.30 acres. (Note: The term 'community' is used when data is only available for both the Village and Township combined.)

### **Transportation**

#### **Interstate**

The nearest limited access interstate highway is I-80/90 (the Indiana Toll Road) with an interchange six miles south of the Township.

#### **Federal & State Highways**

US-12 is a two-lane east-west highway which cuts diagonally across the extreme southeast corner of the Township (US-12 runs between Detroit and Chicago). M-66 is a two-lane north-south highway which runs through the western section of the Township (M-66 runs between Sturgis and Battle Creek).

#### **County Roads**

Primary roads of St. Joseph County located within the Township are Burr Oak Road, Halfway Road, Kelly Road, Lakeview Road, and Middle Colon Road.

#### **Railroads**

Rail service generally parallels US-12. There is currently no active rail service.

#### **Public Transportation**

There is limited public transportation within the Township. Elderly and some handicapped service are provided by the Commission on Aging (COA).

#### **Airports**

The Township is centrally located between two major airports: Michiana Regional Airport in South Bend, Indiana is located 50 miles west and the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport in Kalamazoo, Michigan is located 40 miles north. These airports offer daily scheduled air service, both passenger and freight. Kirsch Municipal Airport, located in Sturgis, Michigan, one mile southwest of the Township, offers chartered service and limited air freight service.

The influence of these two modes of transportation (rail and air) increases the potential for industrial development within the community.

## POPULATION / DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

### Population Trends

In 2010, the Burr Oak community was initially reported to have a total population of 2,611 with the Township having 1,783 and the Village having 828. The 1999 Plan presented population for the Township from 1950 – 1990, with Burr Oak Township evaluated in relation to Burr Oak Village and St. Joseph County.

Table 1 compares the 1970 through 2010 Census data for the surrounding governmental units and St. Joseph County.

**Table 1: Population**

| <b>Community</b>              | <b>1970</b>  | <b>1980</b>  | <b>1990</b>  | <b>2000</b>  | <b>2010</b>  | <b>% Change (1970–2010)</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Burr Oak Community            | 2,189        | 2,502        | 2,526        | 2,739        | 2,611        | 19%                         |
| <b>Burr Oak Township</b>      | <b>1,316</b> | <b>1,649</b> | <b>1,644</b> | <b>1,942</b> | <b>1,783</b> | <b>35%</b>                  |
| Burr Oak Village              | 873          | 853          | 882          | 797          | 828          | -5%                         |
| Colon Township                | 2,580        | 3,033        | 3,217        | 3,405        | 3,329        | 29%                         |
| Fawn River Township           | 1,471        | 1,639        | 1,571        | 1,648        | 1,477        | .4%                         |
| Sherman Township              | 2,101        | 2,756        | 2,978        | 3,248        | 3,205        | 53%                         |
| Bronson Township <sup>1</sup> | 1,236        | 1,331        | 1,228        | 1,358        | 1,349        | 9%                          |
| City of Sturgis               | 9,295        | 9,468        | 10,130       | 11,285       | 10,994       | 18%                         |
| St. Joseph County             | 47,392       | 56,083       | 58,913       | 62,422       | 61,295       | 29%                         |

<sup>1</sup> Located in Branch County

For the purposes of evaluating the data within Table 1, the 40-year period was utilized to analyze growth. The population in Burr Oak Township increased 25% from 1970 to 1980 and 18% from 1990 to 2000. The 2010 population is 35% greater than 1970 but is an 8% reduction from the 2000 Census. The population in Burr Oak Village has remained relatively stable with a 10% reduction from 1990 to 2000 and a 4% increase from 2000 to 2010. The 2010 population is 5% less than 1970.

The growth for Burr Oak Township exceeded St. Joseph County between 1970 and 1980 by 7% and between 1990 and 2000 by 12%. Burr Oak Township had significant growth between 1970 and 2010 (35%) which exceeded all surrounding units except Sherman Township (53%) and exceeded the County's growth as a whole.

Sherman Township (to the west) also experienced growth beyond the rate for the County, while Burr Oak Village, Colon Township (to the north), Fawn River Township (to the south), Bronson Township (to the east) had rates of growth equal to or below that of the County. The growth that has occurred within the City of Sturgis is somewhat unique for cities in southwest Michigan during the same period of time, as many have simply lost population to the surrounding Townships as more residents seek greater open space and a more rural lifestyle.

### Age Trends

Population growth is often reflective of in-migration based upon the desirability of the community and the age of new residents. Table 2 presents the breakdown in age categories for the same units of government listed in Table 1. This data reflects the general makeup of the population with the median age of 37.8 years which is more consistent with an urban setting rather than the older populations found in most rural areas.

**Table 2: Age Breakdown by Population (2010 Census)**

| <b>Community</b>             | <b>0 - 19</b> | <b>20 - 44</b> | <b>45 - 64</b> | <b>65+</b> | <b>Median Age</b>  |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|
| Burr Oak Community           | 774           | 733            | 732            | 372        | 37.8               |
| <b>Burr Oak Township</b>     | <b>508</b>    | <b>467</b>     | <b>525</b>     | <b>283</b> | <b>unavailable</b> |
| Burr Oak Village             | 266           | 266            | 207            | 89         | 33.1               |
| Colon Township               | 952           | 913            | 935            | 529        | 38.9               |
| Fawn River Township          | 389           | 419            | 430            | 239        | 42.4               |
| Sherman Township             | 843           | 764            | 1093           | 505        | 44.9               |
| BronsonTownship <sup>1</sup> | 390           | 408            | 377            | 174        | 38.9               |
| City of Sturgis              | 3,583         | 3,612          | 2,409          | 1,390      | 32.3               |
| St. Joseph County            | 17,415        | 18,003         | 16,774         | 9,103      | 38.7               |

<sup>1</sup> Located in Branch County

The data presented within Table 2 indicates that the number of residents under the age of 20 have contributed to the population growth within the Township.

Over the last decade the median age in the community rose slightly from 35.1 years in 2000 to 37.8 in 2010. This can indicate a combination of fewer children, older adults and more retirees in the population mix. The 2010 Census (initial general report STF-1) had the rural Township population below the age of 20 at 774 persons. There were 733 persons 18-44 years of age, 732 persons 45-64 years old and 372 persons over 65 years of age.

**Table 3: Age Breakdown by Percentages (2010 Census)**

| <b>Community</b>             | <b>0 - 19</b> | <b>20 - 44</b> | <b>45 - 64</b> | <b>65+</b> | <b>Median Age</b>  |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|
| Burr Oak Community           | 30%           | 28%            | 28%            | 14%        | 37.8               |
| <b>Burr Oak Township</b>     | <b>28.5%</b>  | <b>26%</b>     | <b>29.5%</b>   | <b>16%</b> | <b>unavailable</b> |
| Burr Oak Village             | 32%           | 32%            | 25%            | 11%        | 33.1               |
| Colon Township               | 29%           | 27%            | 28%            | 16%        | 38.9               |
| Fawn River Township          | 26.5%         | 28.5%          | 29%            | 16%        | 42.4               |
| Sherman Township             | 26%           | 24%            | 34%            | 16%        | 44.9               |
| BronsonTownship <sup>1</sup> | 29%           | 30%            | 28%            | 13%        | 38.9               |
| City of Sturgis              | 33%           | 33%            | 22%            | 12%        | 32.3               |
| St. Joseph County            | 28.5%         | 29.5%          | 27%            | 15%        | 38.7               |

<sup>1</sup> Located in Branch County

The age breakdown percentages for Burr Oak Township appear to be aligned with St. Joseph County for the age groups 0-19 and 65+ and they are very similar to the other townships. In comparison with the County, the percentages for Burr Oak Township are slightly lower in the age group 20-44 and slightly higher in the age group 45-64. The percentages for Burr Oak Township in the age groups 0-19 and 20-44 are lower than the City of Sturgis indicating there is a trend for younger people to live in the City but the percentages in the age groups 45-64 and 65+ are greater in the Township than in the City of Sturgis indicating the desire for a more rural lifestyle.

### **Housing Trends**

The makeup of the household unit (an occupied housing unit) may be in the form of a family household, married couples living together or single parents with a child under the age of 18, or a non-family household, with either unrelated individuals living together or single persons living alone. The data within Table 4 reflects the type of family households, with a high percentage of married couples (57.9%) within the Township.

**Table 4: Households (2010 Census)**

| <b>Community</b>              | <b>Married Couples %</b> | <b>Average Family Size</b> | <b>% Non-Family</b> | <b>Average Household Size</b> | <b>% Living Alone 65 and Over</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Burr Oak Community            | 57.9%                    | 3.20                       | 25.9%               | 2.78                          | 8.8%                              |
| <b>Burr Oak Township</b>      | <b>unavailable</b>       | <b>unavailable</b>         | <b>unavailable</b>  | <b>unavailable</b>            | <b>unavailable</b>                |
| Burr Oak Village              | 46.3%                    | 3.40                       | 29.5%               | 2.91                          | 9.2%                              |
| Colon Township                | 55.7%                    | 3.15                       | 30.8%               | 2.62                          | 11.7%                             |
| Fawn River Township           | 60.8%                    | 2.98                       | 24.2%               | 2.64                          | 9.1%                              |
| Sherman Township              | 75.8%                    | 3.01                       | 24.2%               | 2.62                          | 7.6%                              |
| Bronson Township <sup>1</sup> | 62.1%                    | 3.09                       | 21.3%               | 2.79                          | 7.7%                              |
| City of Sturgis               | 42.8%                    | 3.28                       | 35.6%               | 2.65                          | 13.0%                             |
| St. Joseph County             | 52.6%                    | 3.08                       | 30.0%               | 2.60                          | 10.4%                             |

<sup>1</sup> Located in Branch County

### **Overall Analysis**

Burr Oak Township appears to be benefiting from both immigrations into the community and natural population increase with births exceeding deaths. Even though the percentage of married couples is less than some of the other Townships, it is still a strong number that indicates a significant number of family households which present the potential for growth, or at least stability, to continue should such families remain within the community over the next twenty years. The 20-year life of a Plan is intended to track a generational perspective which is depicted in Table 2. The population for Burr Oak Township indicates that residents “age-in-place” which means they remain in their existing housing or within the same community so providing housing alternatives should be considered critical to support this trend.

### **Population Projections**

There are numerous methods for conducting population projections. A simple approach is to use the pattern over the past to project the future population. This growth rate method for projecting future population tends to remove the fluctuations from economic related cycles that may influence a 10-year period. Based upon the inconsistencies in the population between 1970 and 2010, a trend line method was used to derive a 3% increase projection for each five-year increment. The results would be a 2030 population of 2,028 people or an increase of 245 people over the period.

**Table 5: Population Projections**

| <b>2010 Census</b> | <b>2015 Projection</b> | <b>2020 Projection</b> | <b>2025 Projection</b> | <b>2030 Projection</b> |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1783               | 1844                   | 1906                   | 1967                   | 2028                   |

If the projections of decline in average household size remain consistent, and if the Township continues to attract more family households, an average family household size of 3 persons could be utilized to project the need for additional housing units. In this scenario, the increase of 245 persons would minimally reflect the presence of at least 82 households.

## **DEVELOPMENT TRENDS & STRATEGIES**

This section of the Plan will focus on those issues now facing the Township that may influence the direction of development over the next twenty years. The 1999 Land Use Plan utilized this section for an analysis of the economic conditions and trends and existing land use. This Plan will focus on the review related to development corridors, with the intent to utilize these corridors in support of more intensive development.

### **M-66**

M-66 is on the west border of Burr Oak Township's sections 6 and 7 and portions of 18 and 30. Commercial development exists on the west side of M-66 near Prairie River Lake and Grey Lake in Sherman Township. Most of this area is agricultural or residential in Burr Oak Township.

### **US-12**

US-12 is an east/west transportation route running east from the City of Sturgis through sections 25, 35 and 36 located in the southeast corner of Burr Oak Township. Commercial development exists on the southwest corner of US-12 and Halfway Road.

It is anticipated that this corridor could be utilized to expand the development along Halfway Road between US-12 and the Burr Oak Village.

### **Burr Oak Road**

Burr Oak Road is a north / south county road which begins in Burr Oak Township's sections 35 and 36 and runs north through the township. It is on the east side of Burr Oak Village. Currently zoning is agricultural with a small area of low-density residential near the intersection of Burr Oak Road and Deer Park Road. The area near Burr Oak Road and Deer Park Road is likely to absorb medium-density residential and high-density residential due to the proximity to the Burr Oak Village and public services.

### **Halfway Road**

Halfway Road is a north / south county road which begins in Burr Oak Village and extends south to the Burr Oak Township line and into Fawn River Township. There is one parcel on the west side of Halfway Road that is zoned commercial and one parcel on the east side of Halfway Road that is zoned industrial. The remaining area is residential and agricultural.

The 1999 Plan identified commercial development on the west side of Halfway Road between Burr Oak Village line and Witt Lake Road and industrial development on the east side of Halfway Road between Burr Oak Village line and Witt Lake Road.

It is anticipated that this corridor could support additional commercial and industrial development due to the population in Burr Oak Village and ease of access from US-12.

### **Kelly Road**

Kelly Road is an east / west county road which begins at Lakeview Road in Burr Oak Township's section 30 and runs east toward Burr Oak Village. Currently zoning is residential near the intersection of Kelly and Lakeview Roads and agricultural for the remainder of the road. In the 1999 Plan, the areas from Lakeview Road to the properties on the east side of Big Hill Road are identified as low-density residential. This is an area that is likely to absorb increased residential

development as growth continues to the north of the City of Sturgis and from the west of Burr Oak Village where there is the potential to access to public utilities.

### **Lakeview Road**

Lakeview Road is a north / south county road which begins in Burr Oak Township's section 30 and runs south into the City of Sturgis. Currently zoning is agricultural and residential. The 1999 Plan identified medium-density residential and high-density residential near Witt Lake Road with the remaining area designated as low-density residential. This is an area that is likely to absorb increased residential development as growth continues to the north of the City of Sturgis since there is the potential to access to public utilities.

### **Middle Colon Road**

Middle Colon Road is a north / south road which begins in Burr Oak Township's section 23 and runs north to Colon. Currently zoning is agricultural and will continue to remain agricultural.

### **Other Township Roads**

Akey, Baumeister, Big Hill, Carpenterson, County Farm, Cowles, Deer Park, Dwight, Farrand, Findley, Hackman, Happel, Kibilowski, Lafayette, Leverence, Maystead, McKale, Needham, Powers, Prairie River, Robinson, Shawtown, Spaid, St. Joseph, Start, Steinbacher, Stillwater, Sweet Lake, Townline, and Witt Lake.

### **Capital Improvement Programming (CIP)**

The need for development areas to be served by public utilities is not an absolute, but it is intended that as demand places greater focus on these areas, efforts will be made to invest in off-site infrastructure improvements (roads, utility lines, sewer, water, etc.) in support of more intensive land use. This demand has only presented itself within the Lakeview Road and Kelly Road development corridors with increased residential development.

A natural pattern for development exists for these areas to extend further into the Township. A primary focus on maintenance and improvements to the two state trunk lines and 5 primary county roads (Burr Oak, Halfway, Kelly, Lakeview, and Middle Colon) would serve as the basis for initial capital improvements for the Township.

## **GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

The following goals and objectives have been established as a guide to development decisions. These statements also serve to direct the recommendations of the Township Planning Commission as an advisory body to the Burr Oak Township Board.

### **A. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL:** Preserve to the maximum extent possible the Township's most productive agricultural areas and to avoid conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Protect the most productive farm lands in the Township and take steps to encourage long-term commitments to agricultural activities in the identified areas.
2. Discourage residential land development activities in agricultural areas which would lead to land use conflicts or adversely affect farming operations and the economic viability of agricultural activity.
3. Encourage livestock operations and similar activities to locate away from residential areas, and, plan for the protection, of those operations that cooperate, from the encroachment of residential uses.
4. Utilize a "growth boundary" to separate residential areas from agricultural areas and support Michigan's Right to Farm Act and statewide farmland preservation programs.
5. Support and encourage farmland preservation through the guidelines of the St. Joseph County Farmland Preservation Program.
6. A protection of agricultural uses from non-agricultural activities is a recognized goal of the Future Land Use Plan. The intent of farmland preservation within this Plan is to protect agriculture as an important economic base within the community and to restrict the encroachment of residential development into these areas when other areas of the Township are more suitable for such development.

### **B. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

**GOAL:** Plan for adequate year-round open space areas to meet the needs of the residents of the Township and preserve and enhance the Township's natural features and rural character.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Control lakeshore and stream bank development to assure that development does not directly or indirectly destroy these areas, while protecting land owner and property owner rights.
2. Encourage conservation and protection of natural, scenic, lake, wetland and wooded areas for public enjoyment.
3. Encourage the provision of adequate open space and recreational facilities in any major residential development proposal.
4. Restrict floodplain development except for recreational purposes.

5. Encourage the use of conservation easements to conserve open space.
6. Preserve woodlands for their importance of storm water infiltration, thus reducing flooding and minimizing water pollution.
7. Preserve natural features as parkland in open space development to help alleviate problems associated with storm water runoff.
8. Preserve natural features to maintain existing infiltration of storm water.
9. Develop Recreation Plan and gain MDNR approval.
10. Provide education about the availability, location and requirements of properly disposing of pet waste in recreational areas.

### **C. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL: Plan for a choice of housing types, location and environments to accommodate individual capabilities and preferences of current and future populations.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Plan for growth and development to occur in a controlled and orderly manner which will provide for residential living, yet, will not over develop lake and river areas.
2. Discourage extensive residential strip development with individual driveway access along major transportation arteries.
3. Discourage extensive single lot residential development in areas of high agricultural activity.
4. Discourage residential development in flood prone areas and regulate residential development in natural areas which would be significantly damaged by uncontrolled development.
5. Encourage the preservation, renovation, and maintenance of existing housing and protect existing and future areas from conflicting land uses which would decrease their desirability as residential areas.
6. Higher density development may occur when serviced by sanitary sewer services provided the development of sanitary sewer and safe drinking water do not create a burden upon the Township.
7. Encourage more intensive residential development in the southwest portion of the Township, within close proximity to the City of Sturgis, where higher densities exist and have the greatest potential to be supported by public utilities in the future.
8. Encourage minimizing hard surfaces in new construction and redevelopment projects to reduce runoff and improve infiltration.
9. Promote the reduction of impervious surfaces for the protection of water quality, natural features, and open space.

### **D. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

GOAL: Plan for suitable areas for the orderly development of a variety of commercial and service activities to serve the needs of the projected population.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Encourage commercial and service facilities to locate in cluster developments where essential public services can be economically provided and traffic can be accommodated without increasing traffic congestion.
2. Discourage lengthy strip commercial development along major transportation arteries.
3. Discourage commercial locations which could create land use conflicts with residential areas.
4. Encourage minimizing hard surfaces in new construction and redevelopment projects to reduce runoff and improve infiltration.
5. Promote the reduction of impervious surfaces for the protection of water quality, natural features, and open space.
6. Require erosion and sedimentation control as a mechanism to protect health, safety and welfare of residents through protection of water and soil resources.

#### **E. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL:** Industrial development should occur in locations which meet the following objectives.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Industrial development should occur in a manner which provides for direct access to major roadways without relying on residential access streets.
2. Industrial development should occur at locations and in a manner to minimize impacts upon adjacent land uses.
3. Light industry may be provided for in areas where essential public services can be provided, operating efficiency maximized and congestion and public hazard minimized.
4. Encourage minimizing hard surfaces in new construction and redevelopment projects to reduce runoff and improve infiltration.
5. Promote the reduction of impervious surfaces for the protection of water quality, natural features, and open space.
6. Require erosion and sedimentation control as a mechanism to protect health, safety and welfare of residents through protection of water and soil resources.

#### **F. TRANSPORTATION**

**GOAL:** Plan for efficient, safe and convenient access to the transportation network.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Encourage the County Road Commission in the improvement of the road network to accommodate future vehicular traffic in an efficient manner.
2. Use economical funding methods when maintaining and developing roads.
3. Regulate land development to minimize congestion and assure that the road system serves as designed.

4. Require proper road design in major residential developments.
5. Review the existing road system to determine the primary function of each road (access to property, collection of traffic, or major movement of traffic).
6. Require all new roads to be constructed to County Road Commission specifications.

## **G. UTILITIES**

GOAL: Plan for the timely development of necessary services—sewer, storm drains, and water lines—in accordance with present and planned future needs of the Township.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Carefully assess future needs.
2. Require all development to connect to utility services, when available, in a timely manner.
3. Require all new apartments, mobile home parks and similar medium to high density developments to provide a central sewage disposal system until such time that sanitary sewers are available.
4. Permit single-family residential development in areas not serviced by sanitary sewer provided lot sizes are consistent with public health requirements for septic systems and Township residential and environmental policies.
5. Assess future storm water management needs and goals.
6. Develop storm water management policies that include quality and quantity of storm water.
7. Encourage storm water management for the protection of health, safety and welfare of community residents.
8. Encourage policies that use best management practices (BMPs) to minimize, collect, and treat storm water.
9. Utilize the delineated Sewer Service Area to plan for growth and development.
10. Identify areas that are suitable and unsuitable for septic systems.
11. Identified and / or map designated county drainage system, including all points of discharge to natural systems.
12. Encourage a program for identifying and eliminating illicit discharges.
13. Encourage a program that labels outfall structures that discharge runoff to natural systems.
14. Identify and map potential area for wind energy to be generated.

## **H. COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

GOAL: Plan for a range of community facilities and services to meet the present and future needs of the residents of the Township.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Encourage local police and fire facilities to locate with respect to functional service area requirements as the community develops.

2. Encourage educational facilities to locate with respect to present and future development patterns.
3. Encourage places of public assembly to be located so as to be easily accessible to the majority of the public.

## **I. ENVIRONMENT**

GOAL: Protect the community's natural features/resources.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Control lakeshore, river and stream bank development to assure development does not directly or indirectly destroy these areas.
2. Restrict floodplain development except for recreational purposes.
3. Preserve and protect present lake, scenic, marshlands, woodlots and wildlife habitats.
4. Protect water and air quality.
5. Require assessment impact studies on the environment by any proposed industrial/commercial developments.
6. Encourage the protection of wetlands for the importance of the functions they play in protecting residents' health, safety and welfare from problems such as flooding and poor water quality.
7. Encourage wetlands protection within an ecosystem context (protecting adjacent uplands, waterways, and vegetated buffers as well).
8. Habitat Preservation. Develop a plan to protect high priority areas.
9. Encourage use of native vegetation to protect air, land and water quality; buffer noise and air pollution; preserve wildlife habitat; and preserve aesthetic value and community beauty.
10. Create a greenways plan or encourage greenways and green infrastructure as important natural transportation corridors for wildlife, and for the protection of other natural features.
11. Protect groundwater for its importance to health, safety and welfare of residents.
12. Protect groundwater as an important natural resource.
13. Encourage coordination of efforts to protect floodplains with adjoining communities and the County.

## **FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

The Future Land Use Plan seeks to coordinate the varying interests of farmland preservation with residential development and commercial and industrial uses along development corridors within the Township. The following eight (8) designations of land use are presented on the Future Land Use Plan map as follows:

- A. Agricultural / Open Space
- B. Limited Residential Development
- C. Public
- D. Low-Density Residential
- E. Medium-Density Residential
- F. High-Density Residential
- G. Commercial
- H. Industrial
- I. Resource Protection Overlay Zone

### **A. AGRICULTURAL/OPEN SPACE**

The predominant land use in the Township is agricultural. This designation of land use is also based upon data from soil surveys, with areas identified as prime farmland. With the vast majority of soil types supporting some type of agricultural use, the area designated will generally encompass all other lands not specifically designated for more intensive development.

### **B. LIMITED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Lake areas in the Township that do not have access to sewer are shown with this designation. Concern for environmental impact including the potential for water quality degradation has resulted in identifying these areas as "limited development." A low density and clustering of any development to minimize environmental impact are among the recommended land use policies for these areas.

The regulations for this district are intended to avoid contamination or destruction of streams and lakes and to protect the riparian rights of waterfront property owners.

### **C. PUBLIC**

Areas presently or planned for public purposes are shown accordingly on the Future Land Use Map.

### **D. RESIDENTIAL – LOW DENSITY**

A large portion of the southwest quadrant of the Township is shown as residential low density. By providing an ample area with a variety of sites for future residential growth, such growth can be guided to discourage a scattered proliferation of development which would undermine the agricultural preservation goal.

### **E. RESIDENTIAL – MEDIUM DENSITY**

Potential locations for higher density residential (more than 3 dwelling units per acre) are encouraged within Burr Oak Village (not shown on future land use pattern) and in areas of suitable road access and proximity to public utilities, such as designated near the Burr Oak Village and near the City of Sturgis.

### **F. RESIDENTIAL – HIGH DENSITY**

An area of high density residential use (more than 4-5 dwelling units per acre) is shown in the southwest corner of the Township and to the east of Burr Oak Village. High density residential

use is encouraged in areas of good road access and in close proximity to public utilities.

#### **G. COMMERCIAL**

Two areas for potential commercial development are shown within the Township. These areas acknowledge the historic role of the village, travel patterns and projections of future development patterns. Each area has been designated to meet the Township Land Use Plan commercial development goal and objectives.

#### **H. INDUSTRIAL**

Industrial development potential is shown south of the Village of Burr Oak. This facilitates the growth of the Village and capitalizes on the existing road networks (rail and interstate-federal/state highways) within the Township. This projected development pattern suggests substantial industrial growth capability, sufficient to meet the goals and objectives of the Land Use Plan.

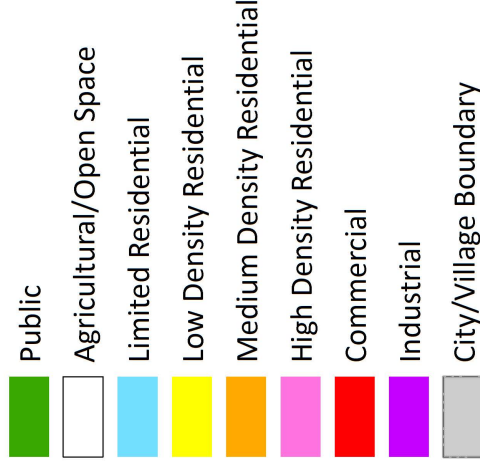
#### **I. RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY ZONE**

The Township is fortunate to have several lakes and high quality streams that provide recreational and aesthetic value. By identifying and delineating these areas, the township can utilize an overlay zone to protect these natural resources. Properties included within these geographical areas retain their underlying zoning classification, but are subject to additional requirements specified in the overlay district ordinance. The Resource Protection Overlay Zone builds on established local preservation policies.

These plan designations serve as the foundation for zoning and are to be considered the starting point for review of any request for rezoning of property. Where the proposed rezoning is clearly inconsistent with the plan designation, a request for plan amendment should first be initiated in support of such a request. Otherwise, inconsistency with the Plan would be a strong position for denial of the request. Where the proposed rezoning is to a less intensive zone than intended by the Plan, the Plan need not be amended, but the Planning Commission and Township Board should consider whether development of the area for a less intensive use may reduce the potential for the intended outcome. Thus, commercial zoning within an area designated industrial would be acceptable provided sufficient area exists for future industrial development.

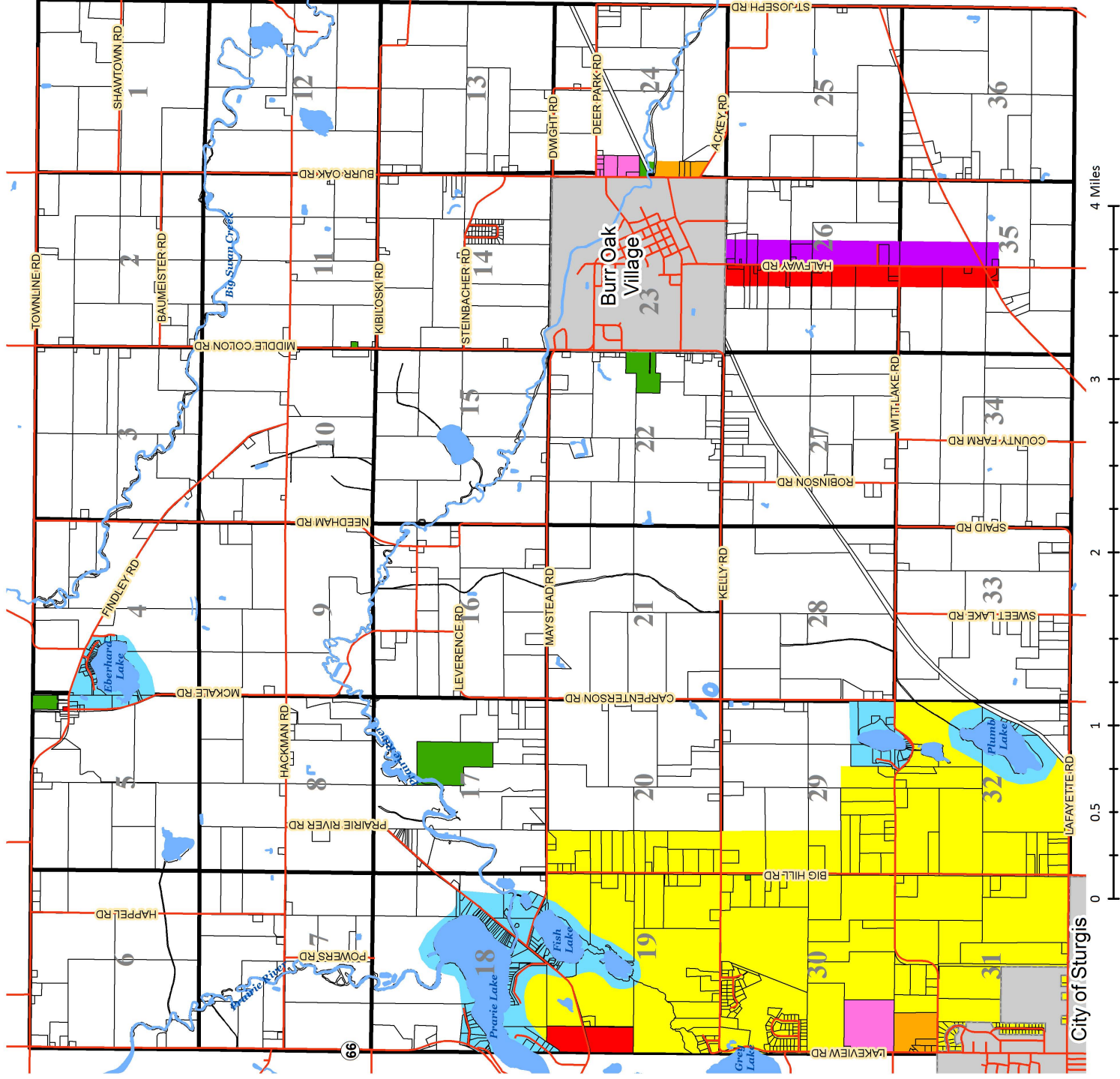
# Burr Oak Township Future Land Use

St Joseph County, Michigan



The information contained herein has been supplied by the local unit of government. St Joseph County assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the map or the districts herein depicted.

Produced by: St. Joseph County  
Land Resource Centre (269) 467-5576  
Geographic Information Systems Department



## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. UPDATE ZONING ORDINANCE**

The current zoning ordinance has been in effect since June 1, 2002. Zoning is the main tool which is used to achieve the recommended land use pattern. Once the Land Use Plan is adopted, future zoning decisions should be based on the policies of the Land Use Plan. It is critical that the Plan serve as a general guideline for these growth areas, with consistency in regulation through the compatible zoning districts. Zoning changes which are not consistent with the Land Use Plan should be denied, or if appropriate, an amendment to the Land Use Plan should precede the zoning change. It is necessary that amendments to the Zoning Ordinance be made periodically in order to gain greater consistency with the intent of the Plan.

### **B. DEVELOP A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

While the Land Use Plan is primarily intended to serve as the foundation for the Zoning Ordinance, it can also be utilized to initiate consideration of other plans, programs and ordinances that may serve the Township. The section of Development Trends and Strategies introduces the coordination of public utilities and infrastructure within a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The Township Board should review plans for each public infrastructure and building improvement to assure consistency with the Land Use Plan (Section 61 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MCL 125.3861). Capital improvements by or in the community should consider the policies of the Land Use Plan.

### **C. UPDATE COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN**

As population growth brings new residents into the community, greater focus may be on providing recreational facilities to serve the various demands for target populations, whether in the form of playgrounds for kids or walking paths for adults. Provisions for community parks should be made that are consistent with the policies of the Land Use Plan. The recreation plan should be reviewed annually and updated every five years so as to maintain eligibility for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant programs.

### **D. FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAMS**

Should farmland preservation programs be expanded at the County and State level, this Plan shall provide the initial basis for consistency of those applications through the "Agricultural" designation. Expanded opportunity for agricultural business development should also be a consideration within possible zoning ordinance text amendments.

### **E. DEVELOP SUBDIVISION (AND CONDOMINIUM) REGULATIONS/ORDINANCE**

Subdivision regulations or a subdivision ordinance and condominium regulations should be adopted which is consistent with the Land Use Plan. Plat reviews should be conducted to assure compliance with the residential development goals and objectives of the community.