

Burns Township

MASTER PLAN

2022-2042



ADOPTED AUGUST 17, 2022

BURNS TOWNSHIP FUTURE LAND USE PLAN 2022 - 2042

Prepared by the Burns Township Planning Commission

Dave Wyrick, Chairperson

Val Ritter

Bill Bowers

Mike Oliver

Chuck Croft

with support from Burns Township Board

Casey Glass, Supervisor

Shirley Riley, Clerk

Deborah Adams, Treasurer

Bill Bowers, Trustee

Darren Murray, Trustee

and

ROWE Professional Services Company

540. S Saginaw Street

Flint, MI 48507

Phone (810) 341-7500

Fax (810) 341-7573

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

BURNS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION, SHIAWASSEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN BURNS TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

WHERE AS the Burns Township Board established a Planning Commission to prepare plans for the development of the township, and

WHERE AS the Burns Township Planning Commission has prepared a draft update to the Burns Township Master Plan, and

WHERE AS that draft has been reviewed at a public hearing to gather public comments of the residents of Burns Township and surrounding jurisdictions following notice as required by Michigan Planning Enabling Act PA 33 of 2008, and

WHERE AS the Burns Township Planning Commission has determined that the plan is appropriate for the future development of the township, now

BE IT RESOLVED that Burns Township Planning Commission does hereby adopt the Burns Township Master Plan including all maps and documents included.

Moved by: Croft Yeas 5

Supported by: Ritter Nays 0

David Wyrick
Planning Commission Chairperson

Valerie D. Ritter
Planning Commission Secretary

8-17-22
Date

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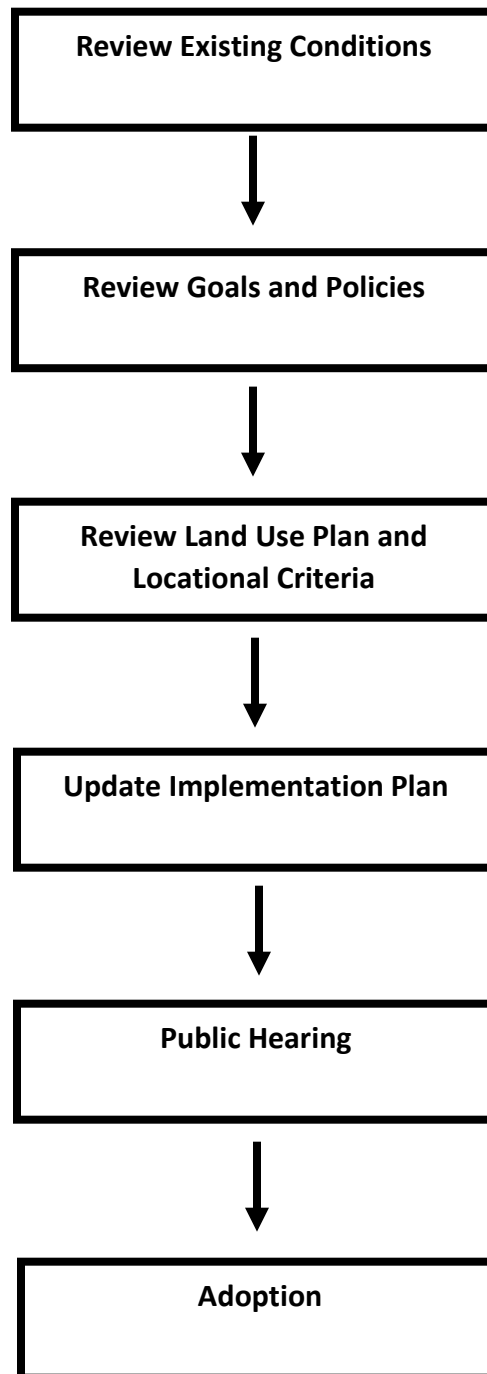
DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

In 1979, the Burns Township Planning Commission adopted a Land Use Plan. This plan was then incorporated into the Shiawassee County Land Use Plan adopted in 1980, which in turn served as the basis for development of the Shiawassee County Zoning Ordinance adopted in 1982. Since 1982, the Township has used the plan as a basis for recommendation on proposed zoning and special use permit applications within the Township.

In May 1999, the Township Planning Commission began the process of updating the Land Use Plan. The update process included updated information on land use, population characteristics, housing, soils, and agricultural activities as well as a Town Meeting / Visioning Session. The Planning Commission revised the plan's goals and policies, the future land use map and land use locational criteria. An implementation plan was also developed. The update was adopted by the Planning Commission July 11, 2000.

In October 2018 the Township began another review and update of the Township Master Plan, the first under the authority of the 2008 Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The planning process include an update to the information on land use, population characteristics, housing, soils, and agricultural activities. The Planning Commission revised the plan's goals and policies, the future land use map, land use locational criteria and implementation plan. The process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which shut down meetings for over a year, and the decision to wait on final approval of the until the draft Shiawassee County Master Plan update was available for review. Eventually the Township Planning Commission decided not to wait on the County's plan draft and following so revisions to the draft the update was adopted by the Planning Commission on August 17, 2022.

Figure 1
Plan Update Process



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan is designed to guide Burns Townships future development for the next 20 years. Within this plan are sections describing natural features, population and housing characteristics, current land use, land use locational criteria, land use needs, future land use, public input session summary, goals and policies and an implementation plan.

The plan recognizes that the principle land use will remain agriculture. Residential development will be predominantly rural residential with a small percentage set aside for possible subdivision development. Open space development will be encouraged to protect the rural character of the Township. Commercial uses will be permitted within close proximity to the Village of Byron. There is no plan to promote industrial development because of the lack of public water and sewer. If an increase in residential development does occur, then a need for more recreational opportunities may be required.

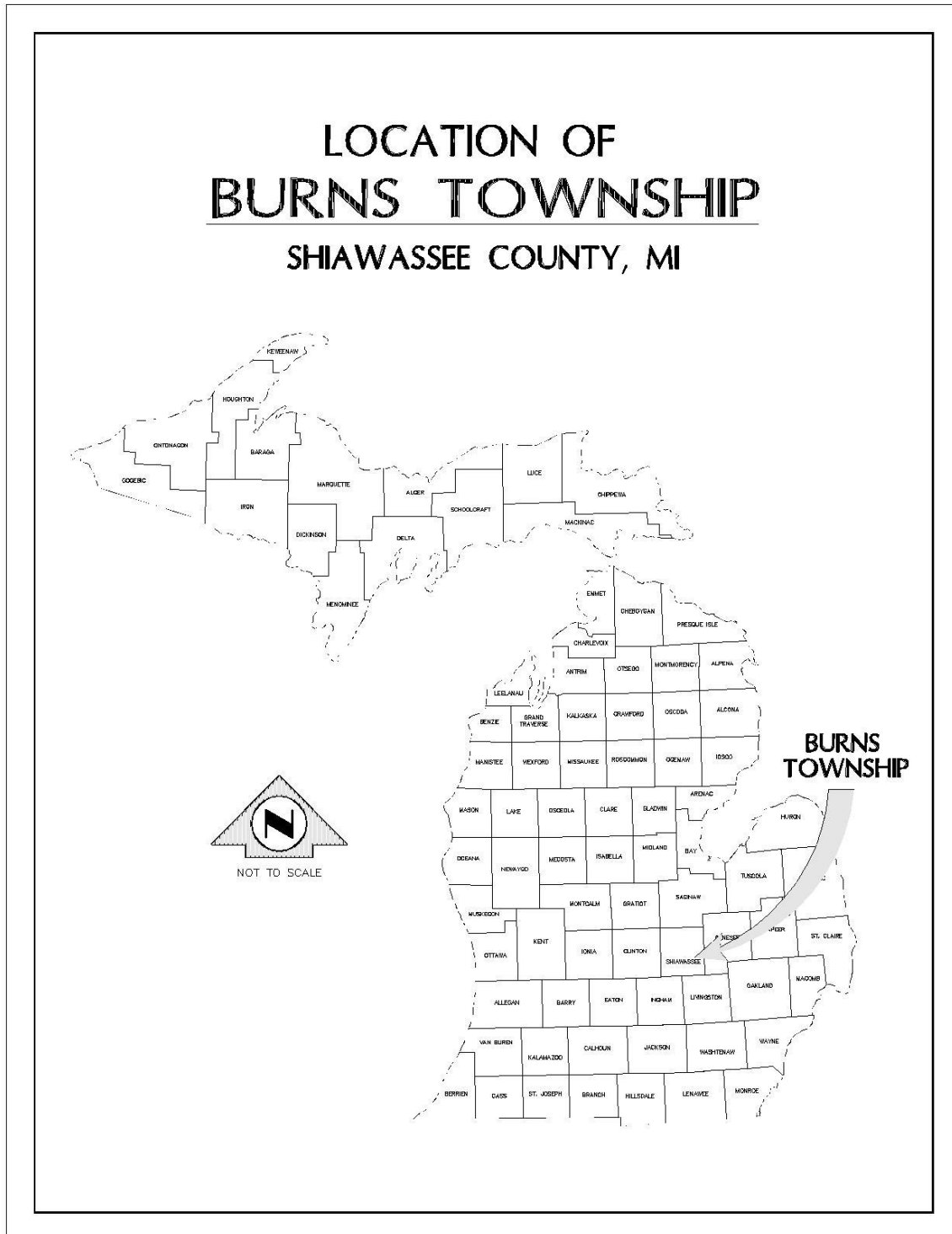
This plan will be implemented through changes to the County Zoning Ordinance and enforcement of the Township's Subdivision Control Ordinance. The plan will be used by the Township to evaluate proposed rezoning requests. When analysis of rezoning requests demonstrates that there has been a change in circumstance or Township policy or a mistake in the plan that affects the plans validity, the Planning Commission will amend the plan to address the change or mistake. The Planning Commission shall review the plan annually and perform a comprehensive update to the plan in five to ten years, as the pace of development dictates.

COMMUNITY LOCATION

Burns Township is located at the far southeast edge of Shiawassee County bordering both Genesee County and Livingston County (Map 1). Bordering the Township to the west is Antrim Township, to the north is Vernon Township, to the east is Argentine Township and to the south is Cohoctah. The Township is located approximately equidistance from M-52, I-69, I-96 and US-23. These are the major transportation routes located near the Township. M-52 is a major interstate that runs north-south. This interstate cut directly through Owosso which is located just to the northwest of Antrim Township. I-69 is a major expressway that runs northeast-southwest across the state. This expressway connects both Lansing and Flint and generates a great deal of traffic between the two cities. I-96 runs southeast to northwest across the state. This expressway connects the metro Detroit area with Lansing and Grand Rapids. US-23 runs north to south and connects Ann Arbor with Flint. From Flint this expressway connects with I-75 and runs through Saginaw, across the northern lower peninsula to the Mackinaw Bridge and into the upper peninsula. The close proximity of these expressways makes Burns Township an attractive area for people who work in the Flint and Lansing areas and chose to live away from these cities.

The Township borders are outlined by Miller Road to the north, County Line Road to the east, Lovejoy Road to the south and Geeck Road in the northwest corner of the Township. Major roads in the Township include Byron Road, an all-weather road connecting Byron with Durand and I-69, Silver Lake Road, a paved county primary road that connects Byron with the community of Argentine and City of Linden, and Bath, Grand River and Beard Roads which connect the township with areas to the west, including the City of Perry and the Villages of Bancroft and Morrice.

MAP 1 LOCATION



EXISTING LAND USE

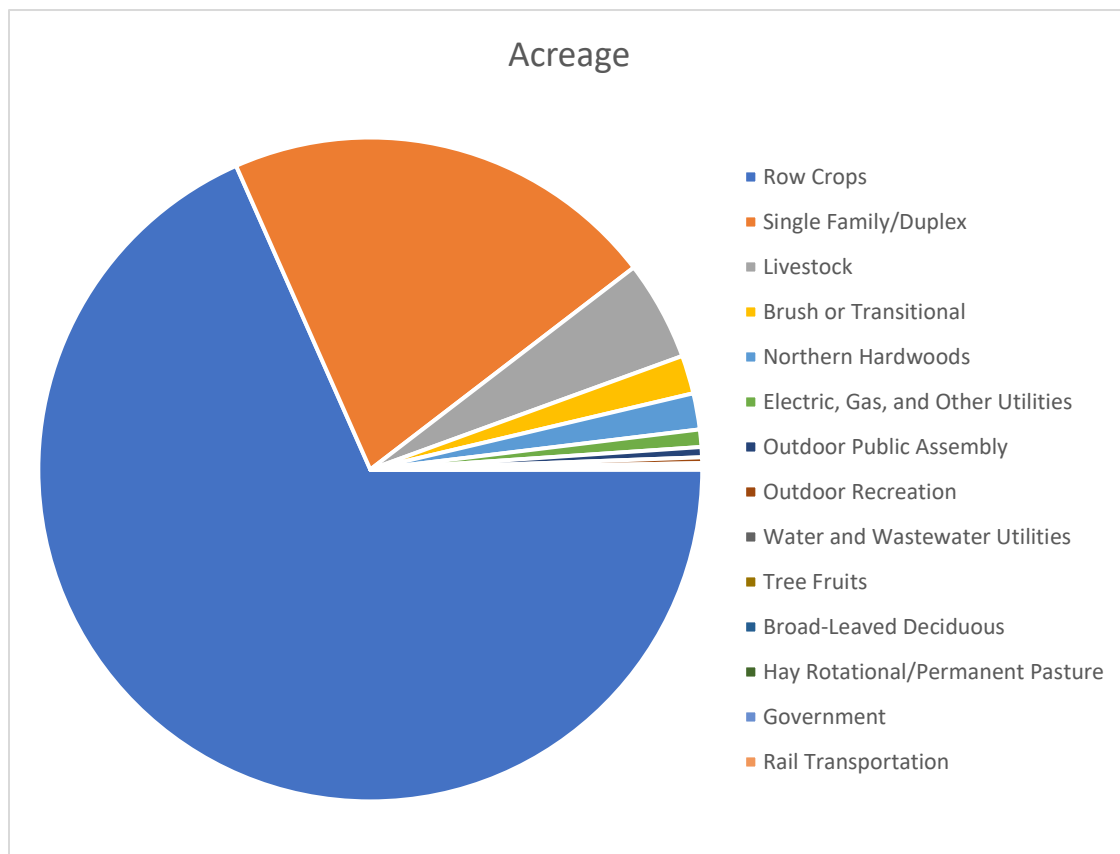
EXISTING LAND USE

The pattern of existing land uses is important to analyze in development of a plan for several reasons. These include the fact that existing uses are often long term and will remain as the use of the property over the course of the planning period. Another reason is the fact that existing land uses often limit the use that surrounding property can be put to (i.e.; you normally would not place industrial land uses in the middle of a single-family residential subdivision).

The Townships' existing land use patterns were first mapped in 1977 as part of the work on the 1979 Land Use Plan. Tax parcel data was not available, so a land use / land cover approach was used in the mapping. A second effort was undertaken in 1986 by personnel from GLS Region V with funding from the MDNR. Both used the land use classification developed for the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS). As part of the development of the plan's 2000 update the Townships' land use patterns were identified by the Township Planning Commission in the summer of 1999, through the conducting of a windshield survey supplemented by information from County aerial photography. This effort also used the MIRIS classification system and mapped land use / land cover, although dwelling units were also shown on the map.

For the current plan update, a Burns Township resident volunteered his services to produce a comprehensive existing land use inventory. Unlike previous land use maps which have used general categories, this map uses the National Land Cover Database (NLCD) as a basis, and describes more specific use types from those categories. . The map data was then reviewed by the Planning Commission and updated with assistance by This inventory was able to use for the first time a base map showing the tax parcel boundaries in the township. This allowed land use to be classified by parcel rather the more generalized land use / land cover maps. Because of the change in base map, a one to one comparison of the data from the 1999 and 2018inventories and the one conducted in 2020 is not possible. But a more generalized comparison can be conducted, and the new base map will allow for a more detailed land use survey moving forward.

Table 1 Existing Land Use 2019		
Land Use	Acreage	Percentage
Row Crops	1,4950	68.26%
Single Family/Duplex	4,638	21.18%
Livestock	1,062	4.85%
Brush or Transitional	408	1.86%
Northern Hardwoods	385	1.76%
Electric, Gas, and Other Utilities	185	0.84%
Outdoor Public Assembly	108	0.49%
Outdoor Recreation	61	0.28%
Water and Wastewater Utilities	23	0.11%
Tree Fruits	16	0.07%
Broad-Leaved Deciduous	11	0.05%
Hay Rotational/Permanent Pasture	8	0.04%
Government	6	0.03%
Rail Transportation	3	0.01%
Road Transportation	1	0.00%



Broad-Leaved Deciduous

Land containing broad-leaved deciduous trees are primarily concentrated in the northwest corner of the Township, south of Cole Road and west of Reed Road. In all this land use makes up 11 acres of the total land area of Burns Township.

Northern Hardwoods

Northern hardwood forests are the most plentiful forested land in the Township, occupying 385 acres. This land use is relatively evenly dispersed among residential areas of the Township, particularly on the east side north and south of the Village of Byron.

Hay Rotational/Permanent Pasture

These land uses comprise 8 acres of the land in Burns Township, The one parcel of land in this category is located in the northeast corner of the Township between Britton and McCaughna Roads.

Livestock

This land use category consists of the second largest agricultural land use following Row Crops, with 1,062 acres devoted to raising livestock. This use is relatively dispersed, but the largest concentration can be found toward the center of Burns Township.

Tree Fruits

The cultivation of tree fruits occupies 16 acres of land within the Township. The only parcel designated for this use type is located in the northeast corner of the Township at the corner of Byron and McCaughna Roads.

Row Crops

Row crops by far consist of the largest share of land use in Burns Township, with 14,950 acres—more than two thirds of all the land—dedicated to this land use. Row crops typically consist of traditional grain and bean crops, namely corn and soy. Most of the parcels cropland within the Township are continuous with one another, although parcels are generally larger in size and broken up less by other land uses in the western portion of the Township.

Single Family/Duplex Residences

Residential development in the Township is a significant land use in Burns Township. Individual dwellings are shown on the existing land use map as black dots to illustrate the density of residences. This category includes four types of residential structures (single family detached, farmstead, mobile home and multi-family residences). Single Family/Duplex residences cover 4,638 acres of land within the Township, the second highest after Row Crops.

This use type consists of both single-family residences and duplex (two attached single-family units) residences within the Township, as they are the predominant residential use. The different types of single-family residences identified in the survey are:

- Single Family Residential
- Farmstead

There is one subdivision located on the south side of Silver Lake Road, east of Byron (Black Oak Farm Estates) that contains interior roads. Three other roadside subdivisions are located directly west of Byron (Dyer Terraces, River View Subdivision and Shiawassee River Estates) while one small roadside subdivision is located near the north township line on Durand Road (Talbot Subdivision). The remaining homes are scattered throughout the Township. The largest concentration of single-family homes is located in the area surrounding the Village of Byron.

It can be expected that single family residences will continue to be developed in the Township during this planning period. Single homes on single plots of land should be the predominant type of residential development. Large subdivision developments are less likely to be developed due to the lack of public water and sewer services in Burns Township.

The 2013-2017 American Community Survey US Census identifies 35 mobile homes in Burns Township, which represents 2.3% of the homes in the Township. Mobile homes represent 5.8% of the total dwelling units for the County as a whole. The 1990 census showed 88 mobile homes in the Township. The decrease may have to do with homeowners replacing single-wide mobile homes with modular or stick-built homes over the past 23 years

Most of the mobile homes in the Township are concentrated in a development located east of Byron Road, south of McCaughna Road and north of Britton Road. The remaining mobile homes are scattered throughout the Township on individual plots of land and in some cases, they appear to be on the same plot as single-family homes.

Future development of mobile home parks in the Township will be difficult due to the lack of municipal sewer and water. These developments create a higher density of housing units and without municipal sewer, a rather large sanitary drain field would be required. Because the Township relies on ground water for household use, a detailed study of the hydrogeology of the proposed site would be advised if a mobile home park is proposed in the future.

Government

These land uses cover 6 acres of land and consist of indoor, government-owned facilities. The only facilities of this type are the fire station and Township Hall.

Outdoor Public Assembly

This land use takes up 108 acres in the Township, is used to designate public assembly areas that can be for residents and visitors to stay for short periods of time or several days. Currently, there is one parcel of land that has this land use category, and is an RV park at the corner of Reed and Bath Roads.

Outdoor Recreation

These land uses occupy 61 acres and are primarily outdoor parks and recreation facilities. There are two areas that are classified as outdoor recreation: a park north of Lehring Road along the Shiawassee River, and another park south of the Village of Byron.

Electric, Gas, and Other Utilities

Land with this classification makes up 185 acres of Burns Township, and consists of easements for electrical high-voltage lines, gas pipelines. The primary extent of this easement runs north-south on the western side of the Township, east of and parallel to Vernon Road, with another easement extending east from Geeck Road on the western border.

Rail Transportation

Land uses dedicated to rail transportation make up 3 acres of the Township, and include the railroad itself and its easement that runs north-south between Byron and New Lothrop Roads.

Road Transportation

Road transportation as a land use is the smallest in the Township, only consisting of 1 acre. The sliver of land is an unpaved portion of right-of-way where Vernon Road ends, extending south from agricultural facilities to the north bank of the Shiawassee River.

Water and Wastewater Utilities

Water and wastewater utilities in the Township occupy 23 acres just north of the Village of Byron. The land is mostly forested, but includes two wastewater lagoons as well as the equipment needed to maintain them.

Brush or Transitional

Land described as brush or transitional makes up 403 acres of Burns Township. This use is based on the NLCD to include land that is generally barren and vacant. This includes land that is undeveloped and generally has brush vegetation, but also transitional vacant uses that are undeveloped upon.

Open space preservation should be an important part of the future land use to protect the rural character of the Township. These areas may contain species that are considered to be rare and may even be on the threaten and endangered species list. If possible, an effort to preserve these areas should be made and even possibly adopting an open space preservation ordinance.

Agricultural Land

This land use makes up the largest type of land use in the Township with over 72% of the total acreage. Agricultural land is the defining characteristic of the Township. The agricultural land uses identified in the 2020 survey include:

- Row Crops (including corn and soybeans)
- Small Grains (including winter wheat and oats)
- Tree Fruits
- Livestock Confined Feeding Operation

This classification includes large parcels with farmsteads located on them. The farmstead is shown as a black dot.

Row crops are raised in every section of Burns Township and by themselves represent almost 70% of the land use in the Township. Confined feeding operations are located in several locations in the Township and makeup 3.2% of the land use. Small grains and fruit tree orchards combine for only 24 acres.

This land use can be expected to decrease as a total percentage of land area as development converts the land to other uses. However, it is expected that this land use will remain the predominant land use in the area.

Forest Land

This category includes lots that are primary forest land. In some cases, there may be some farm or pasture land as well. The two principle types of forest in the Township are:

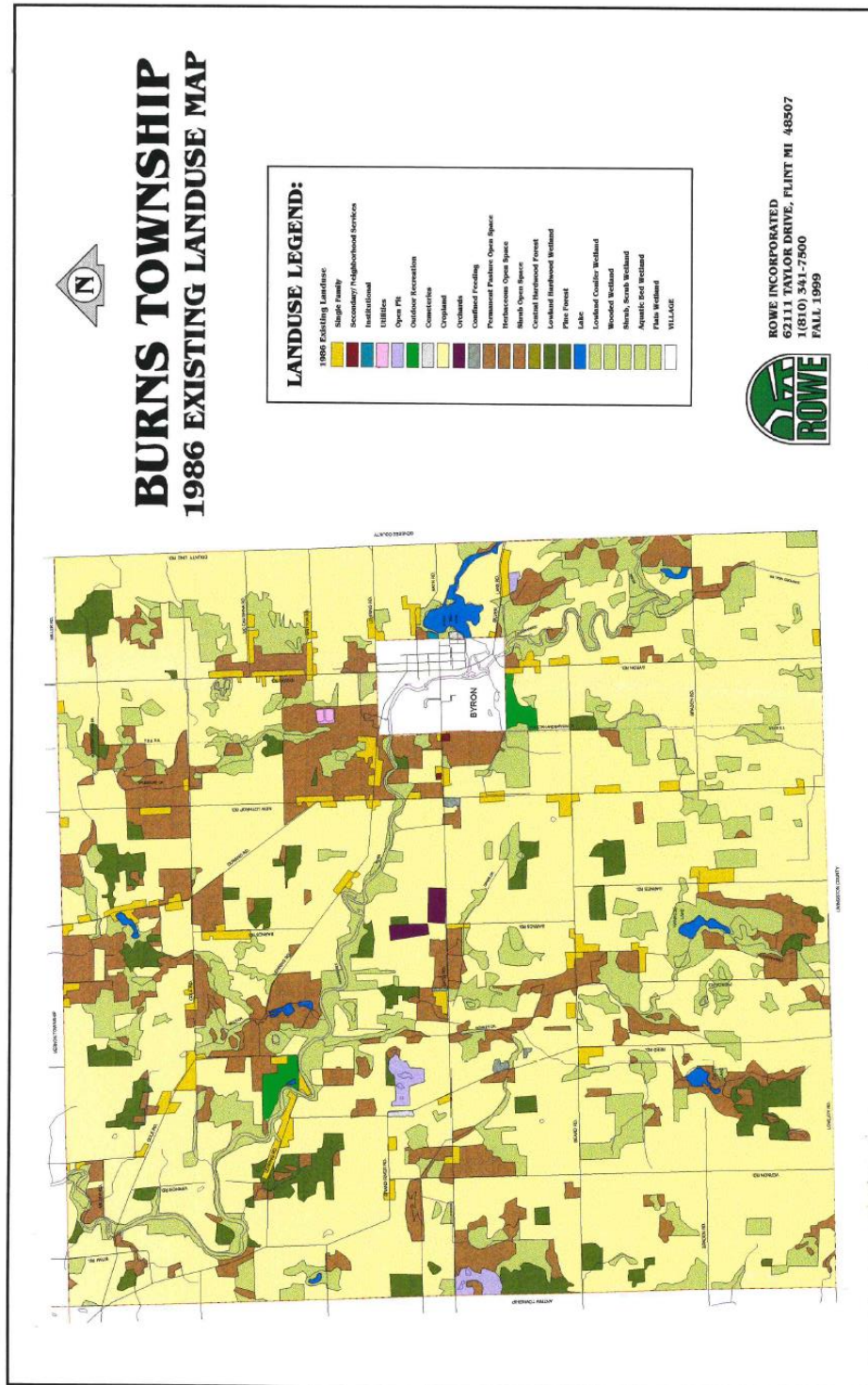
- Central Hardwood Fore
- Pine Forest

A look at the previous land use / land cover maps show the significant amount of forest land in the township on parcels where it may not be the principal use or land cover.

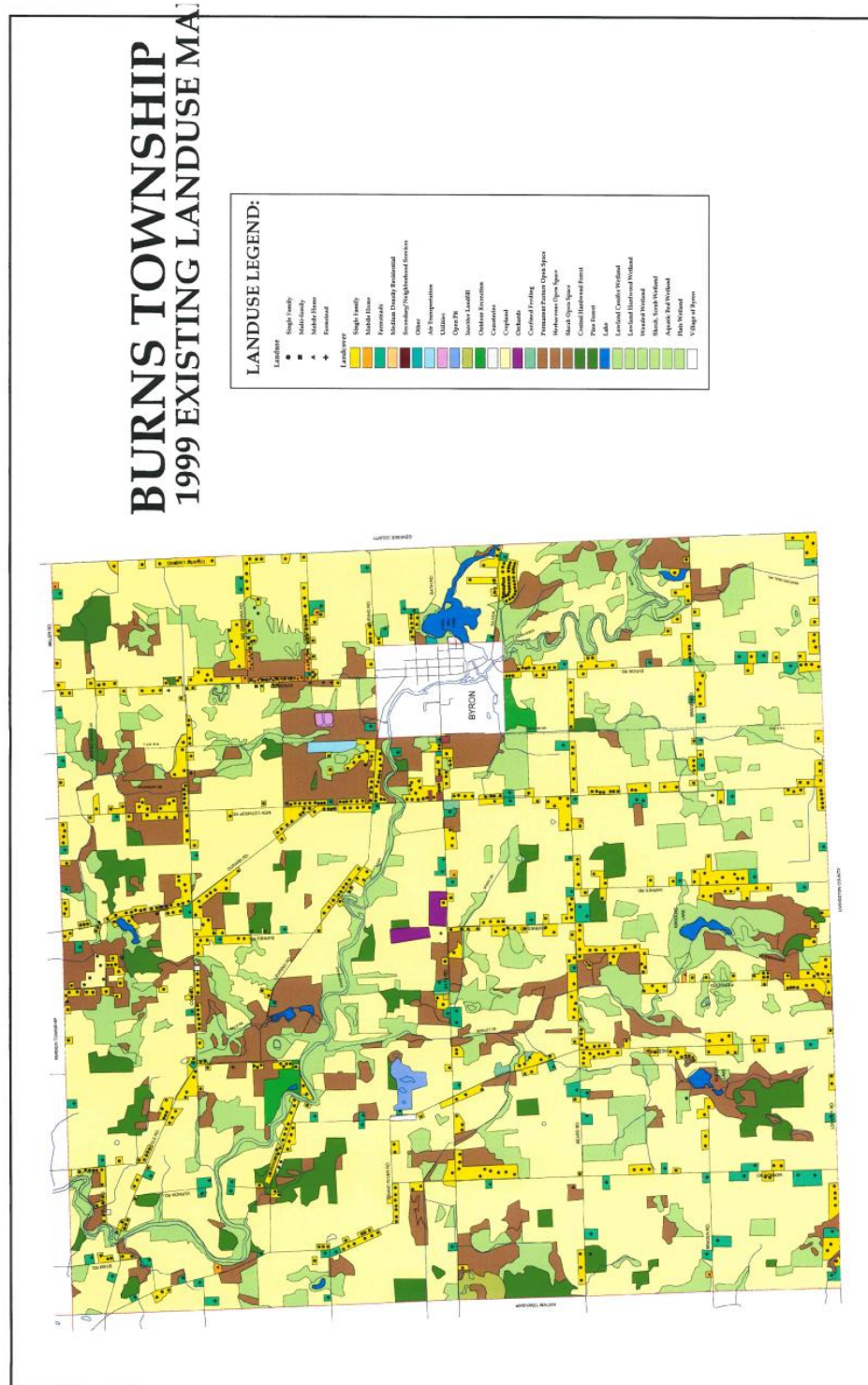
Forested areas help to define Burns Townships rural character. Once these trees are removed from the landscape it would take many years to regrow a mature forested area. However, it can be expected with the pressures of development that the forested areas

will be cut down for development. If possible, it would be advisable for the Township to ensure that the larger caliper trees be preserved. It may be possible to preserve the most pristine forest land by adoption of a tree ordinance, but this is a decision that should be made by the community.

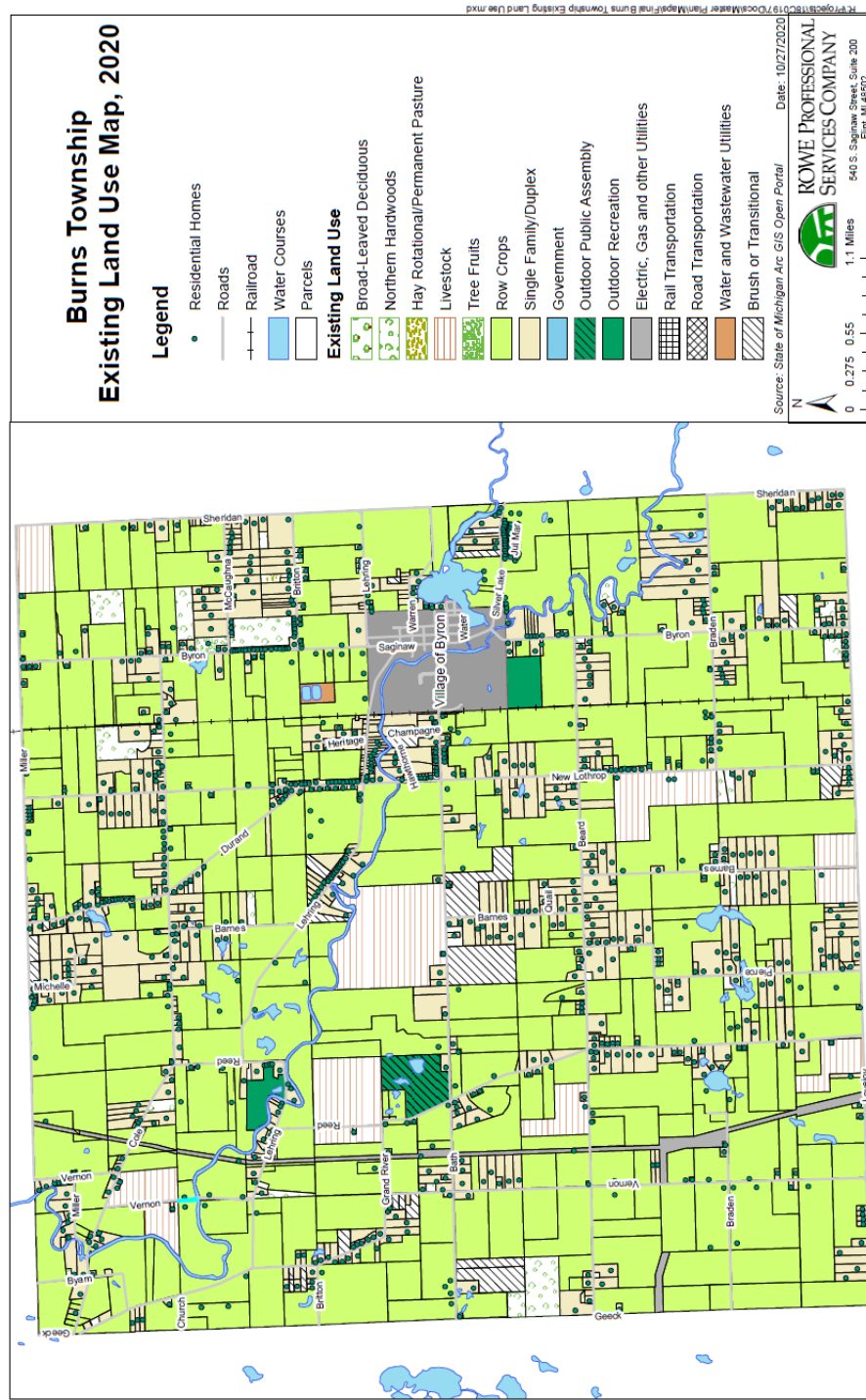
MAP 2 EXISTING LAND USE 1986



MAP 3 LAND USE/LAND COVER 1999



MAP 4 LAND USE 2020



AGRICULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Farming is the predominant land use in Burns Township. It is appropriate to study agricultural land use in the Township to identify its current characteristics and the trends for the future. Agricultural information on the township level is limited. Every 5 years, the United State Department of Agriculture conducts an agricultural census. Data is collected on a county level, providing a valuable frame of reference when considering the importance of agriculture in the land use planning process, but reveals little about the specifics of agricultural land use in Burns Township.

The importance of farming in Burns Township and the lack of township specific data necessitated further exploration of the agricultural characteristics of the community which was accomplished by conducting interviews with local citizens knowledgeable of the farming activities in the Township. The Planning Commission provided names and phone numbers of farmers who are representative of the farming community in the Township. Three farmers were contacted and asked questions which supplemented the county level data and provided a more detailed look at farming on the local level.

Farm Size and Income

County wide, from 1992 to 1997, the average farm size increased while the number of full-time farms decreased. These trends are associated with the consolidation of smaller farms into larger farm operations (Table 2). These consolidations were fueled by the economic pressures that made the larger farm operations more profitable than the smaller individual farm. However, these trends were reversing over the period 1997-2012, when average size decreased, and numbers went back up. This has corresponded with an increase in farm prices. It is anticipated that the drop-in farm prices that has occurred over the last 6 years may see another reversal in agricultural census information.

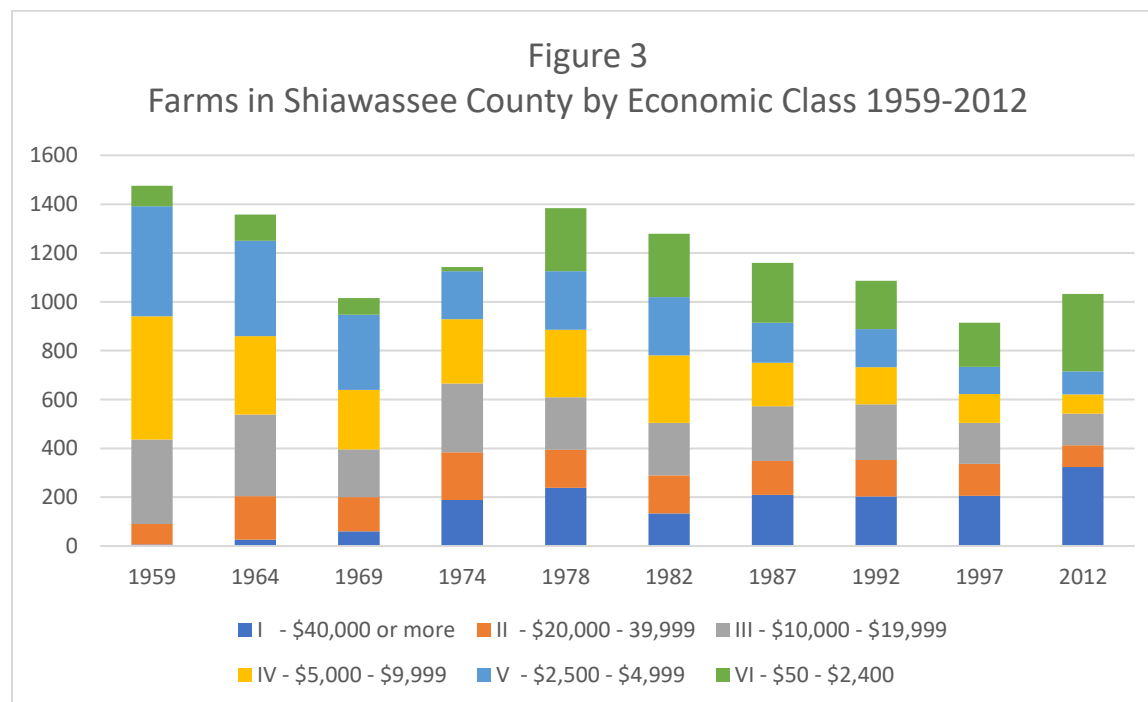
Table 2 Shiawassee County Farm Size & Number									
	1959	1964	1974	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2012
Average Farm Size	133.2	143.6	164	182	176	207	218	234	216
Number of Farms	N/A	N/A	N/A	1384	1386	1160	1086	915	1,033
1000 Acres +	1	3	9	14	14	28	39	35	52
500 - 1000 Acres	27	26	62	83	90	102	86	83	58

The trend towards increasing farm size is can also be seen by the number of farms per economic class. Over the past decade, as the number of farms has declined, the number of farms classified as producing \$40,000 or more has risen, while the number of farms producing less than \$40,000 has decreased substantially (Table 3 and Figure 3). This exemplifies the shift of smaller individual farms into the larger farming operations, due to economic pressures. This trend was supported by the farmers interviewed who indicated that the number of farms in the Township are decreasing and the larger farms are getting even larger.

Table 3
Shiawassee County
Farms by Economic Class

	1959	1964	1969	1974	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2012
Commercial Farms	1476	1357	947	1143	1384	1386	1160	1086	915	1,033
I - \$40,000 or more	6	26	60	188	238	133*	210*	203*	206*	324
II - \$20,000 - 39,999	85	178	140	196	156	156	139*	149*	131*	89
III - \$10,000 - \$19,999	345	334	196	281	215	215	223*	228*	167*	130
IV - \$5,000 - \$9,999	505	321	243	264	277	277	179	152	118	78
V - \$2,500 - \$4,999	450	391	308	197	239	239	164	157	112	95
VI - \$500 - \$2,499	85	107	69	17	259	259	245*	197*	181*	317

*1997, 1992, and 1987 data is based on a modified economic scale. (I - \$50,000 or more, II - \$25,000 to \$49,999, III - \$10,000 to \$24,999, and VI - Less than \$2,500) Most recent data is from Table 1 – Farms BY Value of Sales – 201 Census of Agriculture – County Data



Predominant Agricultural Products

A majority of farms within Shiawassee County earn their income from the sale of crops (Table 4). Reviewing the historical census data, in 1969 and 1978, livestock was the largest income generated. However, since 1978 the margin between crops and livestock has increased with crops now constituting 78% of all farm income by 2012. Discussions with local farmers indicate that this trend is somewhat reflective of Burns Township. Such a disproportionate dependence on crops might also indicate a priority in preservation of farmland county-wide, although it was generally agreed by local farmers that the quality of farmland in the northern part of the county is higher quality than in the township.

Table 4 Shiawassee County Income by Sources							
ITEM	1974	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2012
All Farm Products	\$29,015,000	\$36,063,000	\$43,046,000	\$38,425,000	\$42,186,000	\$45,200,000	\$145,170,000
Average per Farm	\$19,658	\$26,057	\$31,057	\$33,125	\$38,845	\$49,399	\$140,532
All Crops	\$16,151,000	\$16,265,000	\$23,458,000	\$19,956,000	\$25,440,000	\$32,637,000	\$113,439,000
All Livestock & Livestock Products	\$12,565,000	\$19,798,000	\$19,588,000	\$18,470,000	\$16,746,000	\$12,563,000	\$31,730,000

Interviews with local farmers indicated that the biggest cash crops in the Township were typically wheat, corn and soybeans. Other crops mentioned as being produced in the Township were alfalfa, hay, barley and specialty crops like pumpkins are becoming increasingly more common. This is reflected by the County, as a whole, with bushel production lead by corn and followed by soybeans, and wheat (Table 5). Barley, pumpkin and hay were not measured in the County Agricultural Census. Livestock production was headed by swine, milk cows, beef cows, and sheep, within the County. Farmers that were interviewed for the purpose of this analysis indicated that swine or hogs and dairy cows are the most important livestock in the Township.

Table 5 Shiawassee County Farm Production by Sources							
ITEM	1972	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2012
Soybeans (bu.)	1,004,000	1,215,750	2,053,658	2,264,901	2,251,049	2,578,669	3,377,091
Navy Beans (cwt.)	215,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oats (bu.)	405,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wheat (bu.)	817,000	542,705	500,627	514,717	1,274,136	1,188,692	1,826,314
Corn (bu.)	3,003,000	3,054,638	4,885,848	3,607,542	4,643,197	4,846,427	8,058,367
Sheep	5,400	1,417	1,841	2,055	2,356	1,041	1,116
Hens	199,400	87,367	35,861	32,128	3,647	(D)	(D)
Swine (est.)	22,100	15,360	19,325	26,158	20,623	6,839	1,046
Milk Cows	9,700	11,080	8,325	7,298	5,933	4,555	6,043
Beef Cows	2,600	1,677	2,169	1,617	1,545	1,105	1,584

Farming Issues

As part of the 2000 Master Plan a group of farmers were interviewed on the state of farming in the township. In 2019 a new focus group of 6 farmers were interviewed for the same purpose.

The farmers interviewed in 2000 felt that farming has been impacted the most by the changing economics of farming. As the price margins for the crops and livestock continued to fall, the farmers met with financial pressures related to their property values and taxes. In 2019 farmers were again facing a period of shrinking margins. However, they noted that this is following a period of between 2010 and 2014 (depending on the farm product) of strong margins. Although in 2000 the farmers felt that the result of the low margins was increased pressure on farmers to consolidate and/or to sell off land for residential development, the group in 2019 did not generally feel that there was an increased pressure at this point to sell off property for residences, and that the pace of consolidation is not as great as in other parts of the county. It was noted that while residential property values are improving and homes in the area do not seem to last long on the market, there has not been a significant uptick in residential construction.

An area of potential benefit to local farmers that was noted was the construction of new processing facilities in southern/mid-Michigan that might provide a market for some of their products. This includes Zeeland Farm Services processing plant (soybeans), Glanbica Dairy processing plant (milk) and Clemens processing plant in Coldwater (swine).

While the respondents in 2000 thought that a series of years with poor weather had been an issue, the participants in 2019 thought the bigger issue was greater unpredictability year in and year out. It was noted that periods of dry weather in the spring and fall had led many farmers to shorten their plan planting and harvesting time frames, requiring them to work longer hours each day to get crops planted and harvested.

With regards to increased government controls, it was noted that it seemed to take longer to get permission to clear a wood, but that in general government controls are no more restrictive than they were in the past.

The farmers interviewed in 2019 felt that the greatest changes in farming in recent years have occurred due to changes in technology including new seed varieties, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), self-steering systems and yield monitors and other changes that allow farmers to work more efficiently.

Other issues that have impacted farming over the last 10 – 20 years have been the increased tiling of fields which in turn has increased the discharge to county drains. This in turn has increased the need for more frequent clearing of the ditches to maintain their capacity to handle the drainage. This has occurred at the same time that the water table has risen, making it harder to keep the fields dry.

These Burns Township farmers, unlike the respondents in 2000, were unanimous in feeling that conflicts with residents have been minimal. There was a feeling however that non-farm residents don't appreciate the level of local employment that farming generates.

As noted previously, while the farmers interviewed in 2000 felt in some cases that the transfer of agriculturally zoned property to residential uses was a concern, the farmers that participated in the 2019 focus group did not believe that the current rate of farmland conversion was a concern and reported few conflicts between farmers and nearby residents. It was suggested that the changes to the Shiawassee County Zoning Ordinance prohibiting the creation of residential lots over 2.5 acres in most cases had helped to reduce the farmland fragmentation caused by conversion to residential building sites.

Other issues that the group identified as a potential impediment to their operations is the current quality of county roads and the lack of additional Class A roads in the area. They

noted that as their equipment continues to grow in size, it has become difficult to get it down the road and that seasonal frost laws and inadequacy of some local bridges has made it difficult to get deliveries of supplies in and shipment of product out.

Loss of Prime Farmland

Burns Township did not designate any area in the Township as “prime farmland” in the 1979 Land Use Plan. Therefore, non-farm development (mostly single-family residences) has been permitted to occur throughout the Township. However, there are several areas in Burns Township where the soils meet the qualifications of “prime farmland” according to the Shiawassee County Soil Conservation District Map (see Map 5). The largest portion of “prime farmland” is located in the southern half of Burns Township with other smaller islands located throughout the Township. It should however, be kept in mind that these soils meet the minimum qualifications for prime soils and some of these soils may not be as “prime” as soils in the other parts of the County. Reinforcing this was one of the interviewees who stated that some soils in Burns are not the best for growing crops, but other areas have good soil for crop growing.

There are several reasons for preserving prime farmland including:

- Prime farmland is the most efficiently suited to produce crops. It requires less fertilizer, labor, and energy than other soils and is normally more erosion resistant.
- The agricultural economic base of the state is dependent on continued availability of prime farmland. Although the sale of farmland for non-farm purposes often results in a one-time financial benefit for the property owner, taking the property out of production permanently reduces the agricultural production base. In 1986, Michigan farms produced \$3 billion in products. This is multiplied by the processing, transportation and marketing and translates into an agriculture/agribusiness sector valued at \$15 billion.
- Farmland preservation reduces rural sprawl and limits the costs associated with it. The principal non-farm development that replaces crop production in rural areas is low density single family residential housing. This type of development increases costs. As the density of residences within an area increases, tax receipts for a community also increase. However, costs associated with this type of development tend to increase and are always higher than the corresponding tax receipts.

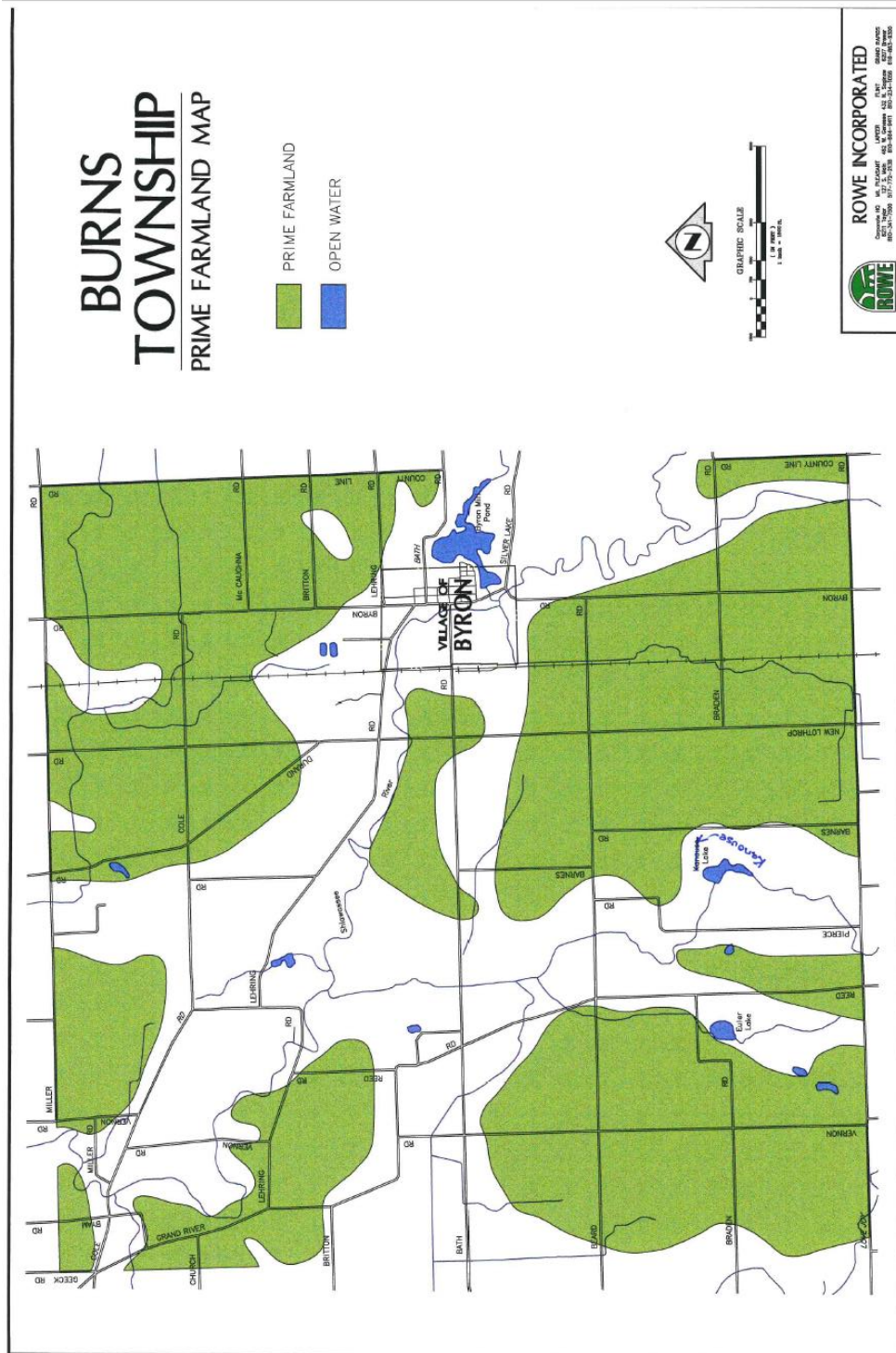
- Farmland preservation provides assurances to farmers within agricultural areas that non-farm residential development will not crowd them off their land due to rising land costs and nuisance complaints.

It has been argued that farmland preservation and controls are unnecessary due to the existence of PA 116 Farmland/Open Space Preservation Act, which established a voluntary program under which farmers would agree to restrictions on conversion of farmland to non-farm uses for a set period of years in return for certain tax benefits. While the program may have reduced the pace of farmland conversion in some areas, it cannot take the place of farmland preservation zoning because:

1. It is a voluntary program, there is no uniformity of coverage. A farmer enrolled in it is not guaranteed that their neighbor will enroll, which means that they could still be subject to the pressures resulting from development around them.
2. With the passage of Proposal, A in 1994, the tax benefits of PA116 have been reduced. A significant portion of the current enrollment in the Township is expiring in the next few years and re-enrollment can be expected to be reduced, unless the program see's favorable changes.

Comparing the 2020 land use map to the soil conservation district map illustrates that some of the areas designated as containing "prime farmland" have been developed for single-family residences, although most of the areas appear to still be under cultivation or are part of open space in the Township.

MAP 5 PRIME FARMLAND



NATURAL FEATURES

Burns Township's natural environment offers both opportunities and limitations on the type and extent of future development. Certain areas are unsuitable for septic systems, unstable for building foundations, poorly drained, and/or susceptible to flooding. While these factors place restrictions upon development, other natural resource factors present opportunities for development. For example, scenic attractiveness of the hills and fields offer a unique residential setting. It is helpful to examine these natural features, in detail, to determine both the opportunities and constraints to future development. This examination involves an inventory of natural features, and a determination of the capability of the natural resource base to support future development.

Geology

The surficial geology of Burns Township was formed by the extension of the Saginaw glacial lobe over the area 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. As the glacier receded, the landscape was carved by the ice and formed with the material deposits of silts, sand, gravel, and cobbles.

The landscape of Burns Township contains gently sloping to rolling areas, with steeper areas along the drainageways. The soils range from sandy and loamy on the outwash plains, terraces, and moraines, to loamy on the till plains, and mucky in the glacial drainageways.

Soils

In order to minimize construction costs and risks to the environment, future development should be encouraged in areas where the soils are most suitable for development. Poor soils present problems such as poor foundation stability and septic field failure. The three major soil characteristics considered in the analysis of soil conditions are drainage, foundation stability, and septic suitability characteristics. These characteristics differentiate the different soil associations discussed in this section.

Drainage is an important property of soils when considering development in rural areas that do not have a public sewer system because soils that have somewhat poor or poor drainage do not allow the "grey water" or effluent fluid that drains from septic drain fields to properly filter downward to the water table.

Foundation suitability is governed by frost heave, depth to water table, compressibility, shrink-swell potential and shear strength. Frost heave occurs during the winter months when water, which expands by 9% when frozen, freezes in the soil causing the soil to

expand when froze and contract when thawing occurs. Depth to water table can cause problems with leakage in basements and can exacerbate a soils' potential for frost heave. Compressibility of soils can cause a downward progression of foundations when a soil is not properly compacted during the building process. Compressibility can, in some cases, be corrected by amending the soil with a variety of soil particle sizes. A variety of sizes allows the fine particles to fill in the gaps between larger particles, hence creating a strong foundation for building. Shrink-swell potential is the relative change in volume to be expected with changes in the moisture content of the soil material, that is, the extent to which the soil shrinks as it dries out and swells when it becomes wet. Expansion and contraction or shrink and swell can cause foundations to crack, and in some cases cave. Shear strength is the ability of a soil to remain consolidated and in place. Typically, shear strength can be exceeded in areas where steep slopes are present, and the soil is saturated. When a soils shear strength is exceeded, the soil may move in a fashion that can be modeled by two wood blocks, one stacked on the other, sliding passed each other.

Septic suitability is a measure of the existing soils usefulness as a natural filter for septic system effluent. The terms slight, moderate, and severe are used to describe limitations of soils for development of septic facilities. Slight limitations indicate that site features are generally favorable for the indicated use and limitations are minor and easily overcome. Moderate limitations indicate that use and planning, design, or maintenance is needed to overcome or minimize the limitations. Severe limitations indicate that site features are so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increases in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance are required. Severe limitations for septic systems are found in areas that have an 18 to 25 percent slope. Slope is important to consider for septic suitability because the "grey water" may have a tendency to drain laterally opposed to the preferred downward drainage of septic drain fields. Any slope greater than 12% makes proper drainage of a septic system difficult. Although the construction of a septic system may be difficult, proper engineering could overcome this potential difficulty. The location of areas of steep slopes is discussed in more detail on page 34.

There are four major soil associations within Burns Township as shown on Map 6. According to the Shiawassee County Soil Survey, they are the Conover-Brookston, Miami-Conover-Brookston, Boyer-Wasepi-Spinks, and Carlisle-Gilford-Tawas Associations. A soil association is a landscape that has a distinctive proportional pattern of soils. It normally consists of one or more major soils and at least one minor soil, and it is named for the major soils. The soils in one association may occur in another, but in a different pattern. Soil associations are useful as a generalized tool that allows a person to look at different parts of a county and determine appropriate uses for the land. Although the characteristics have been described in this report, a more detailed analysis

should be conducted to determine the exact character of a soil in a specific geographical location and the suitability of a soil for development.

Conover Brookston Soil Association

The Conover-Brookston soil association is somewhat poorly drained and poorly drained, nearly level to gently sloping, loamy soils on till plains. This soil association covers approximately 50% of Burns Township, with the majority of the association found in the southern half of the Township. The poorly drained soils have a seasonally high-water table of less than 1 foot from the ground surface. The soils have low to moderate shrink-swell potential. Brookstone soils also have poor to fair shear strength. Use of these soils for sewage drain fields is not advisable due to severe limitations. Poor drainage, high water table, and moderate to slow permeability create an environment that is not suitable for construction of a sewage drain field.

Carlisle-Gilford-Tawas Soil Association

The Carlisle-Gilford-Tawas soil association are very poorly drained and poorly drained, nearly level, mucky and loamy soils on outwash plains and in glacial drainageways. These soils cover the smallest percentage of Burns Township and are located in the western central and southwestern part of the Township. These soils have a seasonably high-water table and, in some areas, may have water that puddles up on the ground surface. The soil survey indicates that the series has 0 feet to the water table from the ground surface. Carlisle soils have very poor drainage, high compressibility, poor shear strength, and poor stability for foundation building. Severe limitations for sewage-disposal fields exists due to very poor drainage, high water table, moderately rapid permeability, and unstable organic material. A moderately rapid permeability does not allow the “grey water” to adequately be filtered by the soil as it moves downward toward the water table. Organic material may decay causing gaps in the below grade soil and later a sewage drainage system may sink or crack due to the lack of support beneath the drainage pipes; ultimately, failure of the system may occur.

Miami-Conover-Brookstone Soil Association

The Miami-Conover-Brookstone soil association are well-drained to poorly drained, nearly level to steep, loamy soils on till plains. The largest area covered by these soils can be found in the north half and northeastern part of the Township. A small area in the southeastern corner of the Township also is characterized by this association. The Miami soils have one of the lowest seasonal water tables in the County at 4+ feet depth from the ground surface. This soil is usually well suited for foundation building and exhibits good drainage, low to moderate shrink-swell potential, medium to high compressibility and poor to fair shear strength. Where the Conover soils are a greater

percentage of the soil association there may be poor drainage and a seasonably high-water table making septic system construction difficult and basement construction more difficult. There is a slight limitation for sewage-disposal drain fields due to a 2 to 12 percent slope typical of these soils. Some areas have slopes of 12 to 18 percent and have moderate limitations for sewage drain fields. Other important characteristics of the soils in this series that are important to consider for a septic drain field are moderate permeabilities, seep areas and wet depressions.

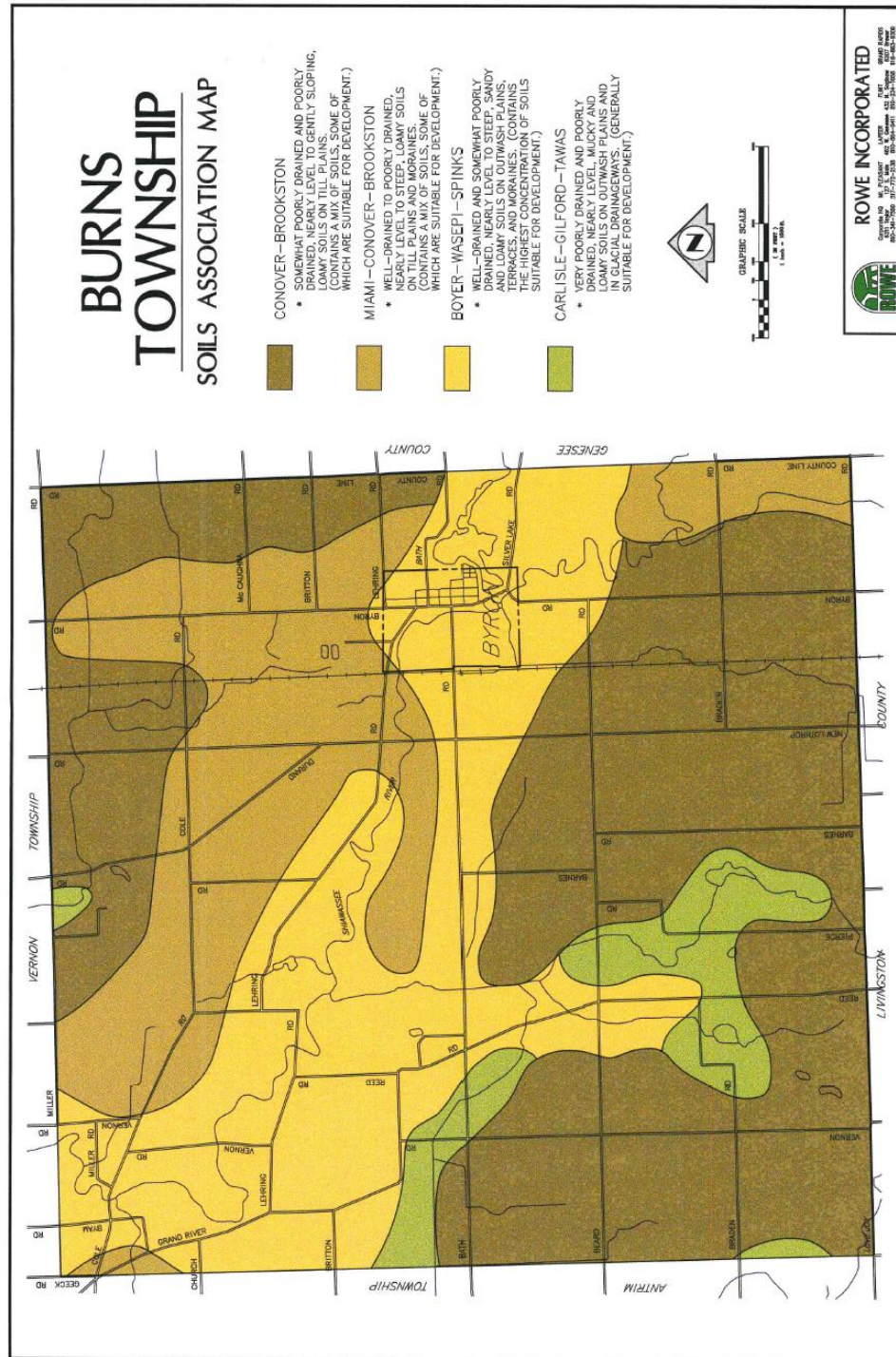
Boyer-Wasepi-Spinks Soil Association

The Boyer-Wasepi-Spinks soil association is typically well drained and somewhat poorly drained, nearly level to steep, sandy and loamy soils on outwash plains, terraces and moraines. This soil association is located in the north western part of the Township and cuts across to the eastern central part of Burns, following the path of the Shiawassee River. These soils are well suited for foundation building due to good drainage, slight compressibility and good shear strength. The seasonal high-water table is 4+ feet from the ground surface in some areas and 1 to 2 feet from grade in other areas. Slope is the chief concern when considering the Boyer series for septic drain fields. This soil has slopes that range from 12 to 25 percent. Slopes can range from 0 to 18 percent slopes with the Spinks soils and the permeability of this soil series may possibly contaminate shallow water wells. Severe limitations exist for sewage disposal fields due to somewhat poor drainage, seasonal high-water table and moderately rapid permeability.

The Boyer-Wasepi-Spinks soil association is the most suitable for development in the Township. The Carlisle-Gilford-Tawas and Conover-Brookston soil associations are the least suitable for construction due their limiting physical characteristics. The site-specific characteristics should be determined to avoid problems that may occur due to poor site selection for a given development.¹

¹ USDA, Shiawassee County Soil Survey, June 1974

MAP 6 SOILS



Wetlands

Wetlands are areas of land where water is found on the surface or close to the surface, either permanently or seasonally. They serve many functions, including the preservation of water quality by trapping sediments, absorbing nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, and trapping and/or detoxifying many heavy metals, pesticides, and hydrocarbons. Wetlands often serve as ground water recharge areas, replenishing ground water supplies. Wetlands within Michigan serve as a storage area for excess surface water, decreasing the severity of floods, and are the habitats for fish, fowl, and other wildlife, including several endangered species and wildlife associated with recreation hunting and fishing.²

In 1979, the State Legislature passed the Goemaere—Anderson Wetland Protection Act. The act was designed to provide for the “preservation, management, protection, and use of wetlands”³. The act outlines what is considered a wetland, uses permitted in regulated wetlands, and uses requiring permits. The act also permits some local control of wetland regulations, but only in the case of communities with adopted wetland maps.

The act defines a wetland as:

“Wetland” means land characterized by the presence of water at frequency and duration sufficient to support and that under normal circumstances does support wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh and which is any of the following:

Contiguous to the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream.

- Not contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream; and more than 5 acres in size; except this subdivision shall not be of effect, except for the purpose of inventorying, in counties of less than 100,000 population until the department certifies to the commission of natural resources it has substantially completed its inventory of wetlands in that county.
- Not contiguous to the Great Lakes, an inland lake or pond, or a river or stream; and 5 acres or less in size if the department determines that protection of the area is essential to the preservation of the natural resources of the state from

² Michigan Wetlands: Yours to Protect, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Pg. 3

³ Act 203 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1979

pollution, impairment, or destruction and the department has so notified the owner; except this subdivision may be utilized regardless of wetland size in a county in which the paragraph above is of no effect; except for the purpose of inventorying, at the time.⁴

There are no official state wetland maps that will conclusively identify which areas are wetlands and those that are not. One of two types of maps that are commonly used as references in determining wetlands are the Michigan DNR's Michigan Resource Inventory System's (MIRIS) Land Use/Land Cover Maps, which show wetlands mapped using 1978 infra-red aerial photography. The program normally did not map land uses/cover under 5 acres in size, which means that small wetlands contiguous to a lake stream or pond, which are regulated, don't show up (see Maps 2 and 3). The other program is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which also produces wetland maps. Although these maps are not based on Michigan's definition of a wetland, they do identify small wetlands that do not show up on the MIRIS maps. The wetlands map for this plan (Map 7) was prepared using the Fish and Wildlife Service maps.

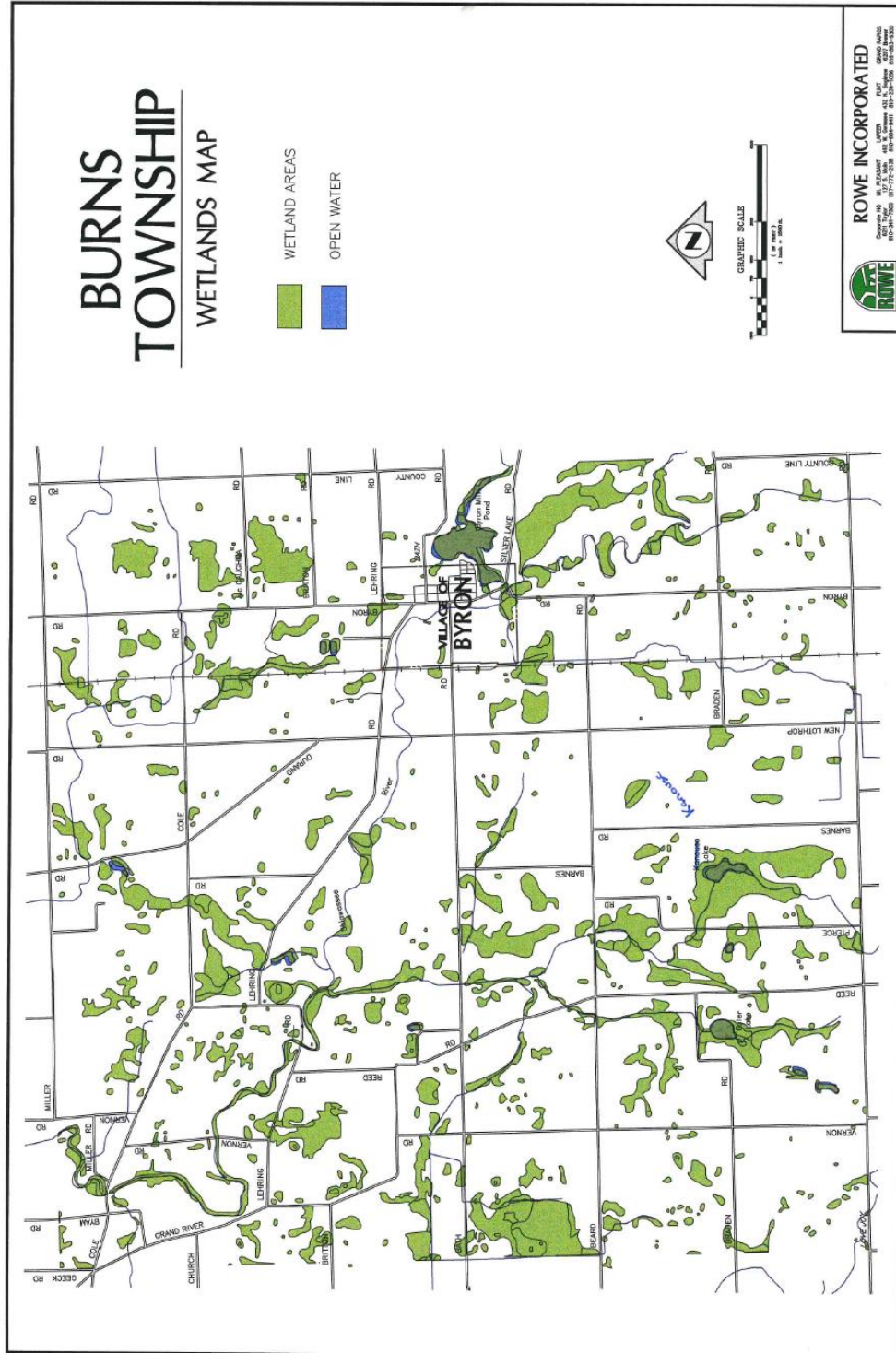
The wetlands cover a significant portion of Burns Township. Many wetlands are located by bodies of water within the Township, including the Shiawassee River in the northern and central section of the Township, the South Branch of the Shiawassee River, Euler Lake, Kanouse Lake and Byron Millpond. Wetlands are numerous and interconnected near the rivers, streams, and lakes. The remaining wetlands, within the Township, are scattered and range in size from .05 acre to an excess of 25 acres.

The presence of this numerous amount of wetlands places constraints against future development. The wetlands indicate unsuitable soils for septic fields, and if greater than five acres or contiguous to a body of water, regulatory concerns for the development of the site.

The Township should include consideration of identified wetlands in reviewing site plans, special use permits, and rezoning requests for recommendation to the County.

⁴ Ibid.

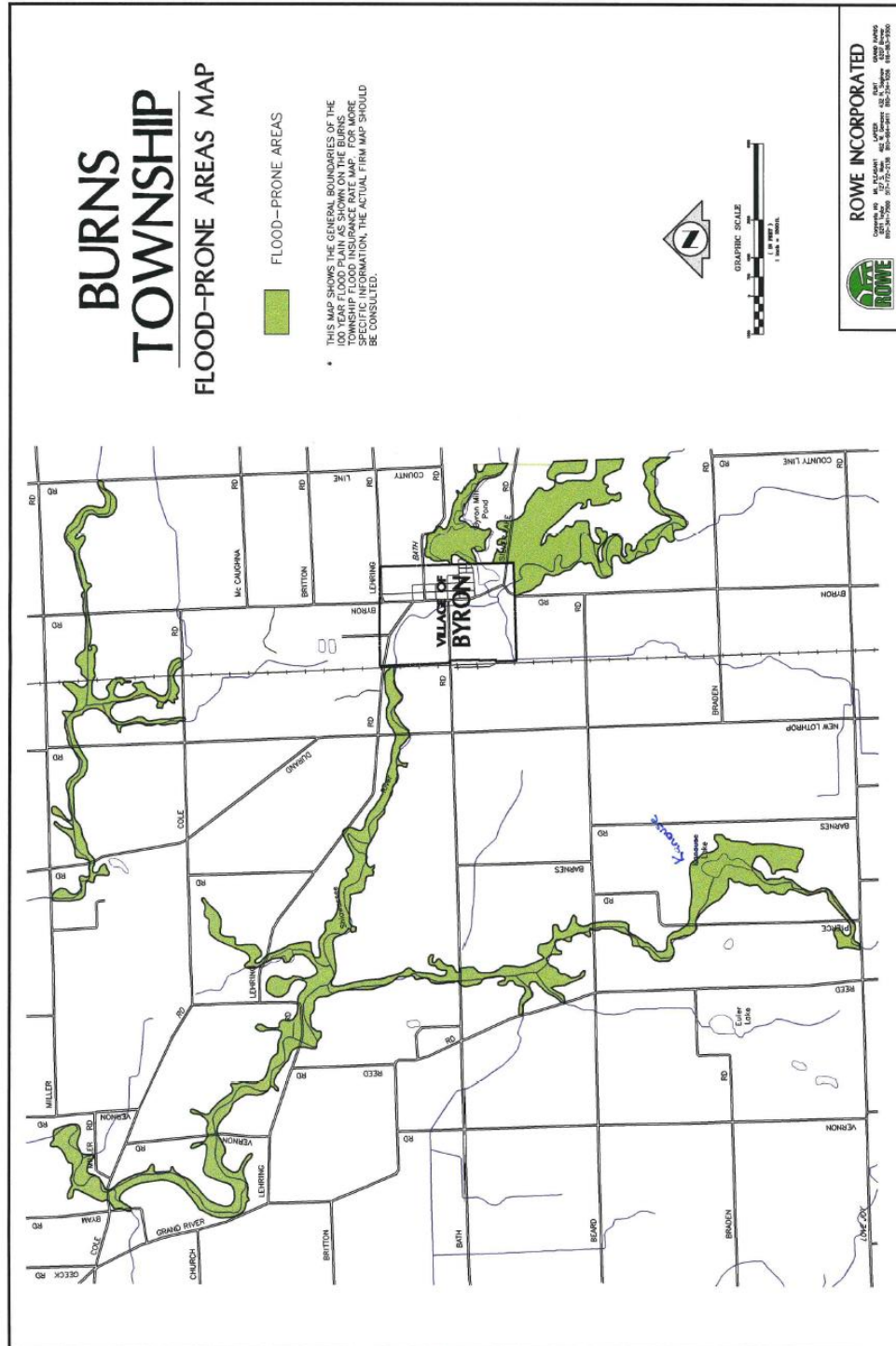
MAP 7 WETLANDS



Floodplains

Floodplains are areas that can be regularly expected to be inundated with flood waters, and are normally associated with rivers, streams and lakes. The Federal Emergency Management Agencies (FEMA) defines a flood plain as an area with a 1% chance of flooding in any given year (i.e.: the 100-year flood plain). In the United States, most regulation of floodplains is directly or indirectly handled by FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program. In Michigan the MDEQ assists FEMA in determining if a community meets the requirements for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) program. Under the program, local communities must adopt regulations to limit development within FEMA identified floodplains. In return property owners in the community are eligible to purchase flood insurance through FEMA. On July 23, 1991 Burns Township entered into the NFIP and on December 19, 1996 the Township adopted an intergovernmental agreement that enrolled the Township in the "regular" portion of the National Flood Insurance Program, which included the publication of a Township Flood Insurance Rate Map. In 2011 the map was slightly revised as part of the federal "modernization" program. The general boundaries of the floodplain designated on that map are shown on Map 8 but for further detail the actual FIRM map should be consulted. The flood-prone areas have been based on information from the U.S. Geological survey stream gaging stations at Byron, and an estimated depth of flow during the 100-year flooding event. Also, to further guide the development of the Township, information on seasonal high-water table from the Shiawassee County Soil Survey and the 1978 Land Use Plan can be used. As listed in the information described in the soil portion of this report, The Carlisle-Gilford-Tawas and Conover-Brookston soil associations may be prone to flooding (Map 8). Each site may have different soil characteristics to the soil so a flood plain or flood prone areas may need to be delineated when considering a site for development.

MAP 8 FLOOD-PRONE AREAS



Steep Slopes

Slope is an important development consideration associated with topographic features. Steep roadway grades, septic field failures, soil erosion, and excavation costs are some of the difficulties associated with severe grades. The areas of extreme slope (18% and greater) have been mapped (Map 9) to indicate the opportunities and constraints for potential development.

In Burns Township Sections 4, 6, 8, 9, 17, 23, 24, 28, 32, 33 and 34 have limited areas of steep slopes of 18% to 25%. A concentration of steep sloped areas can be found in Sections 32 and 33. Also, Section 9 has a concentration of steep sloped areas adjacent to the body of surface water, which is unnamed. East of Reed Road and North of Bath Road there is also concentration of steep slopes. The last sizable area of steep slopes is located just south Silver Lake Road and to the east of Byron Road.

Areas that contain severe slopes should remain undisturbed. These areas should be viewed as natural and aesthetic open space areas. If these areas are developed, sensitive site planning is required along these steep slopes to prevent soil erosion. Care must be taken to ensure that extensive grading is minimized and to ensure that other natural features such as vegetation and topsoil are retained.

BURNS TOWNSHIP

STEEP SLOPES MAP

SLOPES OF 18% TO 20%

• ALL UNSHADED AREAS HAVE
A SLOPE NO GREATER THAN 18%.

GRAPHIC SCALE
1 inch = 1 mile
1:62,500

ROWE INCORPORATED
10000 10th Avenue, Suite 100, Burnsville, MN 55337
Phone: 763-252-1000 Fax: 763-252-1001
E-mail: info@rowe.com

The map displays Burns Township with various roads and geographical features. Steep slopes (18% to 20%) are indicated by brown shading. The map includes labels for surrounding townships (Vernon, Antrim, Livingston) and counties (Genesee, Chautauque). A graphic scale bar indicates 1 inch equals 1 mile. A north arrow is also present.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

As part of the development of a Land Use Plan, it is important to examine the population characteristics of a community. The trends and characteristics of a community provide important indicators as to what future conditions could be expected and what implications from those conditions are expected. These factors include age, gender types, race, household composition, persons per household, and commuting patterns. Examination of these factors provide a firm rational for basing future planning decisions.

Population Growth

The population growth experienced by a township, affects the demand on land for residential uses, and can affect the character of the community. Burns Township's growth, since 1950, reflects the national trend, of increasing growth in rural areas (Table 6, Figure 4, Map 10). Burns Township hit its peak of population in 1980, with 1,752. The minimal decline between 1980 and 1990 of 81 people can be attributed to the economic recession in Michigan, in the early 1980s. For most of the decade, Michigan's population declined. The trend reversed in the second half of the decade, resulting in a total 0.4% increase in the population for the decade (Table 7). However, while the State population did not grow substantially between 1980 and 1990, but there was a significant increase form 1990 and 2000 and then the population slowly declined from 2000 to 2016.

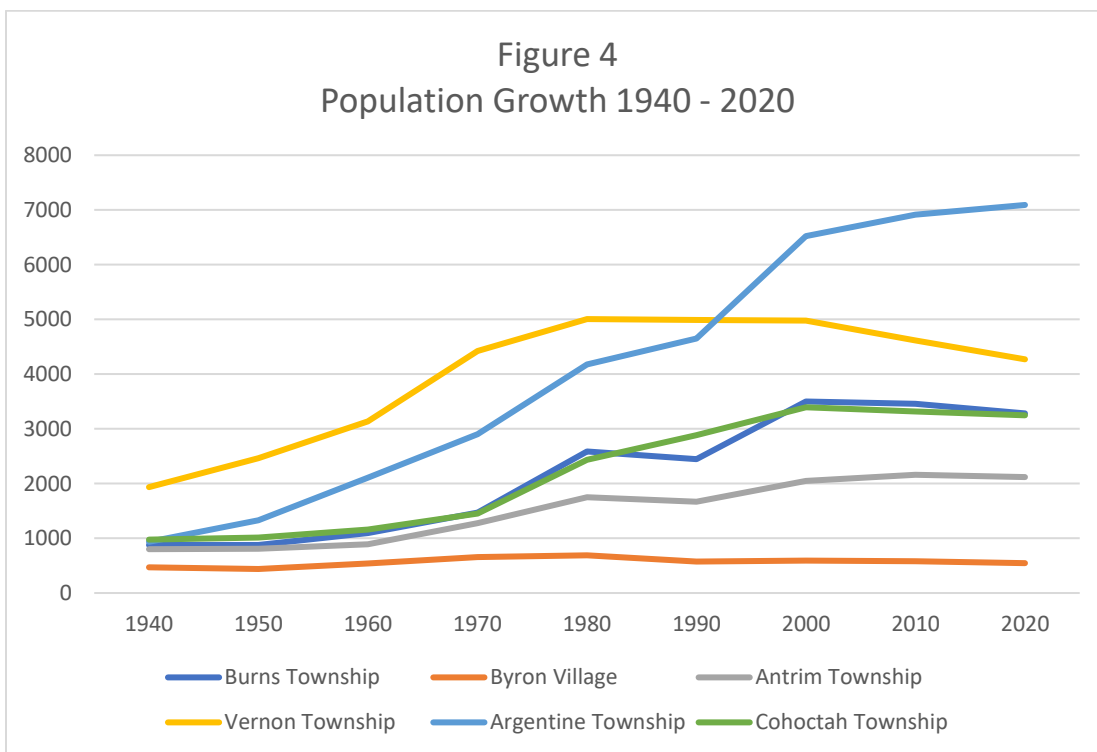
Burns Township touches the fringe of that suburban growth ring. Even during the moribund 80s, and again during the 2000's Livingston and Oakland Counties grew. Over that 30-year period Oakland grew by 200,575 people (19.8%) and Livingston by 80,678 (80.4%). As the growth continues to extend out from the Detroit metropolitan area, there should be increasing growth pressures on the township.

The table below shows the population percent changes in Burns Township as well as for the jurisdictions surrounding Burns Township. According to this data, Burns Township had that largest population change between 1970 and 1980 at 75.54% and then had the second largest population change between 1990 and 2000 at 43.09%. The change between 2000 and 2010 was a drop of 1.2%

Table 6
Population Growth
1940 - 2020

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Burns Township	878	878	1,094	1,472	2,584	2,446	3,500	3,457	3,280
Byron Village	469	439	542	655	689	573	595	581	545
Antrim Township	801	807	890	1,277	1,752	1,671	2,050	2,161	2,116
Vernon Township	1,935	2,466	3,138	4,422	5,006	4,989	4,980	4,614	4,273
Argentine Township	936	1,330	2,106	2,901	4,180	4,651	6,521	6,913	7,091
Cohoctah Township	976	1,015	1,160	1,454	2,436	2,885	3,394	3,317	3,246
Shiawassee County	41,207	45,967	53,446	63,075	71,140	69,770	71,687	70,648	68,094

Data from Decennial Census 1940 - 2020

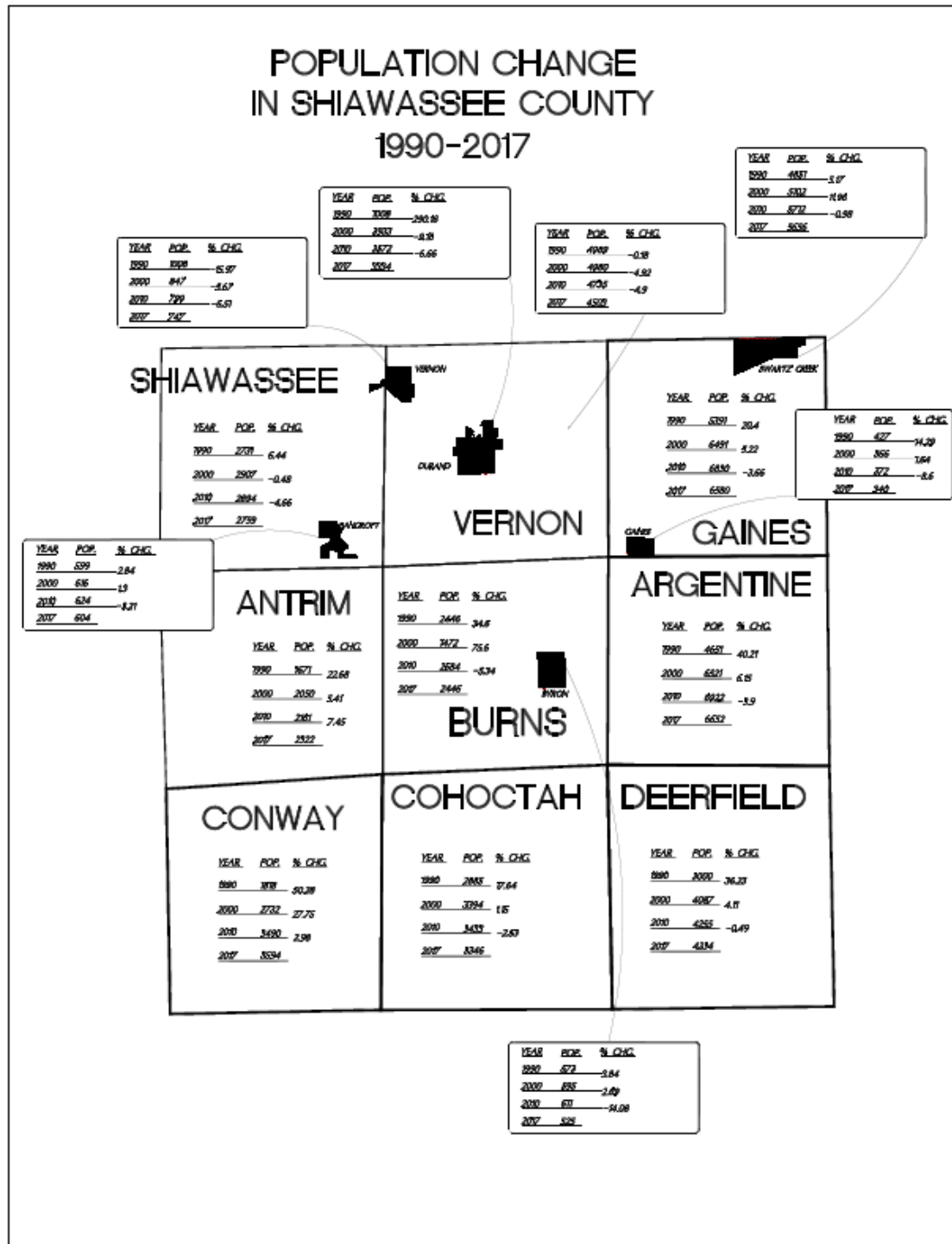


Data from Decennial Census 1940 - 2020

Table 7
Population Percent Change
1940 - 2020

	1940–1950	1950–1960	1960–1970	1970–1980	1980–1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2020
Burns Township	0.00%	24.60%	34.55%	75.54%	-5.34%	43.09%	-1.22%	-5.12%
Byron Village	-6.40%	23.46%	20.85%	5.19%	-16.84%	3.83%	-2.35%	-6.19%
Antrim Township	0.75%	10.29%	43.48%	37.20%	-4.62%	22.68%	5.41%	-2.08%
Vernon Township	27.44%	27.25%	40.92%	13.21%	-0.34%	0.18%	-7.34%	-7.39%
Argentine Township	42.09%	58.35%	37.75%	44.09%	11.27%	40.20%	6.01%	6.15%
Cohoctah Township	4.00%	14.29%	25.34%	67.54%	18.43%	17.64%	-2.26%	-2.14%
Shiawassee Co	11.55%	16.27%	18.02%	12.79%	-1.93%	2.74%	-1.44%	-3.16%
Data from Decennial Census 1940 - 2020								

MAP 10 POPULATION CHANGE



Age

In 2020, the greatest concentration of population in the Township was within the ranges of 45-54, with 18.4%, and 65-74, with 13.7% (Table 8). This was consistent with the surrounding communities and indicates that a majority of the citizens of Burns Township, are adults, possibly with teenage children at home as well as retirees.

Table 8
Age
2020

Age	Burns Twp.*		Byron Village		Antrim Twp.		Vernon Twp.		Argentine Twp.		Cohoctah Twp.		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 5 Years	136	4.9	38	6.7	63	2.9	76	1.7	240	3.7	168	5.0	3,576	5.2
5 to 9 Years	160	5.8	31	5.5	92	4.3	256	5.7	270	4.1	138	4.1	4,025	5.9
10 to 14 Years	176	6.4	21	3.7	142	6.6	190	4.3	397	6.1	181	5.4	3,953	5.8
15 to 19 Years	264	9.6	39	6.9	133	6.2	204	4.6	447	6.8	135	4.0	4,441	6.5
20 to 24 Years	83	3.0	63	11.1	116	5.4	254	5.7	313	4.8	232	6.9	4,018	5.9
25 to 34 Years	196	7.1	65	11.4	206	9.5	317	7.1	523	8.0	266	8.0	7,839	11.5
35 to 44 Years	292	10.6	86	15.1	291	13.5	426	9.6	863	13.2	297	8.9	7,957	11.7
45 to 54 Years	508	18.4	68	12.0	385	17.9	784	17.5	1065	16.2	500	15.0	9,498	13.9
55 to 59 Years	204	7.4	38	6.7	188	8.7	580	13.0	791	12.1	413	12.4	5,147	7.5
60 to 64 Years	200	7.3	44	7.7	258	11.9	365	8.2	542	8.3	457	13.7	5,266	7.7
65 to 74 Years	377	13.7	51	9.0	221	10.3	666	15.0	785	12.0	376	11.2	7,415	10.9
75 to 84 Years	133	4.8	18	3.1	50	2.3	271	6.1	254	3.8	141	4.2	3,534	5.2
85 Years and	28	1.0	6	3.1	14	0.6	72	1.6	53	0.8	40	1.2	1,507	2.2
Median	45.2	-	40.2	-	45.8	-	52.4	-	48.1	-	50.0	-	43.0	-
Total	2,757	100	568	100	2,159	100	4,461	100	6,543	100	3,344	100	68,176	100

Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

* Figures for Burns Township do not include Village of Byron

Gender Types

The national trend for gender distribution is for females to slightly outnumber males (Table 9). This is shown by Shiawassee County, as a whole, and Byron and Vernon Townships. The presence of more males than females in Antrim, Argentine, Burns, and Cohoctah Townships is not great enough to be of any significance.

Table 9 Gender Types 2020							
	Burns Twp.	Byron Village	Antrim Twp.	Vernon Twp.	Argentine Twp.	Cohoctah Twp.	Shiawassee County
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Males	52.8	49.6	50.5	49.8	52.5	53.5	49.5
Females	47.2	50.4	49.5	50.2	47.5	46.5	50.5
*U.S. American Community Survey, 2020							

Racial Distribution

The population of Burns Township is homogeneous, with 92.7% of them reported as white (Table 10). This distribution is similar to the Village of Byron and Shiawassee County, as a whole. Nationally, the trend is for greater racial diversity in the population. Increased in-migration of residents into the Township can be expected to marginally increase the racial diversity of the Township's residents over the next 20 years.

Table 10 Race 2020						
	Burns Twp.		Byron Village		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	3,041	92.7	508	93.2	62,239	91.4
Black or African American	0	0.0	0	0.0	319	0.5
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	15	0.5	1	0.2	223	0.3
Asian	12	0.4	2	0.4	288	0.4
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	0.0
Hispanic origin (of any race)	79	2.4	7	1.3	2,024	3.0
Some other race	5	0.2	0	0.0	188	0.3

Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Household Size

The trend of smaller household sizes or persons per household began nationally at the beginning of the century. Statewide, average household size has dropped from 3.42 in 1950, to 2.49 in 2010. Several socio-economic factors influence the size of a household. The move as a society from agriculture to technology and the increased economic pressure of raising and educating children, have contributed to the decline in the average number of children that families have chosen to have. Another phenomenon affecting households is the breakup of nuclear families. Causes of this trend include the increase in divorce rates and births out of wedlock. This has resulted in an increase in the number of single parent households. In general, another factor in the declining household size is the aging of our society as a whole. As a family of two parents and two children grows older, each of the children leave home to establish new households. This leaves one household of two people, and two new households of one person each. The result is a decrease in the number of people per household, a stable population, and an increase in demand for dwelling types, specifically differing types from the traditional single-family

detached home. This appears to be a trend experienced by Burns Township, as its household size has decreased over the past two decades (Table 11). The implications for the future are that, even with little or no population growth, the Township could experience a demand for additional dwelling units. If population growth is significant, the impact on housing demand will be increased.

Table 11 AVERAGE PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD			
	1990	2000	2010
Burns Twp. (excluding Bryon)	3.04	2.98	2.77
Byron Village	2.78	2.73	2.79
Antrim Twp.	3.04	2.95	2.70
Vernon Twp.	2.81	2.65	2.52
Argentine Twp.	2.85	2.82	2.67
Cohoctah Twp.	3.20	3.02	2.82
Shiawassee County	2.78	2.64	2.54
State of Michigan	2.66	2.56	2.49

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000, 2010

Household Composition

Household composition is a term used to describe the general makeup of a household. Household composition may be broken up into five categories:

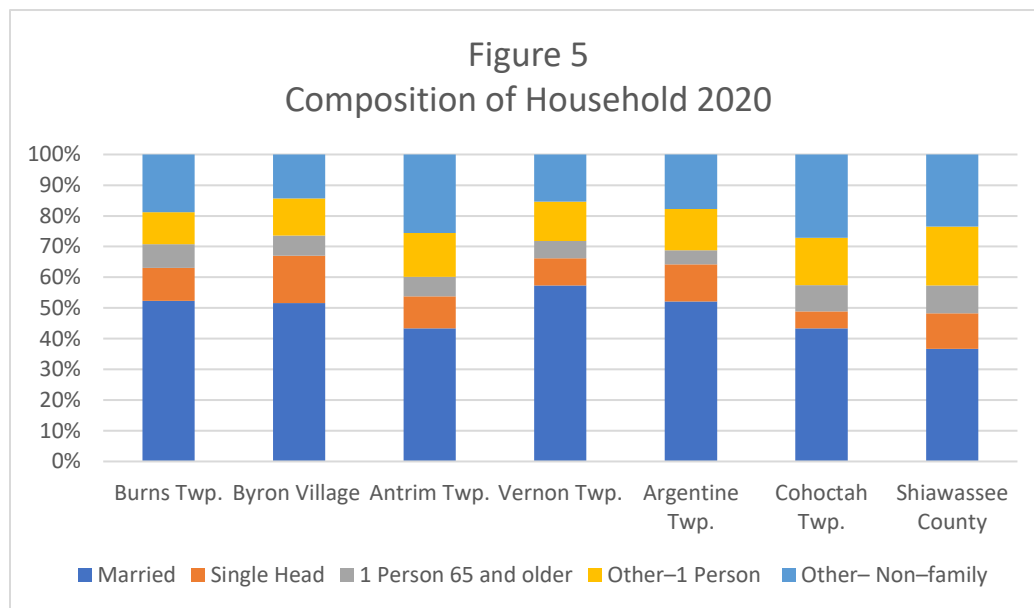
- Married couple families, composed of both spouses, with or without children.
- Single head of household families, containing one parent and a dependent.
- One-person household, 65 years or older.
- Other one person, less than 65 years old.
- Other non-family

Household composition is an important factor to consider. It's interconnection with age, income, and housing demand, make it a key element to the population characteristics of a community. Table 12 and Figure 5 illustrates the household composition of Burns Township as well as other surrounding communities and Shiawassee County.

Table 12
COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLDS

		Burns Twp.		Byron Village		Antrim Twp.		Vernon Twp.		Argentine Twp.		Cohoctah Twp.		Shiawassee County	
# of households in each category	relative % of each type of household	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married		676	63.9%	141	63.5%	464	54.6%	1,323	70.3%	1,580	63.6%	757	57.0%	14,176	51.1%
Single Head		139	13.1%	42	18.9%	112	13.2%	206	10.9%	367	14.8%	97	7.3%	4,485	16.2%
1 Person 65 and older		99	9.4%	18	8.1%	68	8.0%	128	6.8%	136	5.5%	149	11.2%	3,495	12.6%
Other—1 Person		135	12.8%	33	14.9%	153	18.0%	297	15.8%	410	16.5%	269	20.3%	7,408	26.7%
Other— Non—family		243	22.9%	39	17.6%	274	32.2%	353	18.8%	537	21.6%	474	35.7%	9,101	32.8%
Total		1,058	100%	222	100%	850	100%	1,881	100%	2,484	100%	1,328	100%	27,762	100%

Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey



Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Burns Township contained the second highest percentage of married family households. This large percentage of married couples in the Township, 63.9%, is easily explained by the large percentages of people within the age cohorts that are typically associated with the child rearing years and the lack of multifamily housing units. Married family households generally demand single family detached dwellings. In comparison, other types of households, such as a single head or a household over 65, usually have a greater demand for multifamily and other affordable housing styles. The Township's low percentage of these other household compositions, in comparison to the surrounding areas, is probably a reflection of the lack of differing housing styles, that result from the absence of municipal water and sewer.

Residence

Table 13 indicates that 90.1% of the residents in 2020 had lived in the same house since 2019. This figure was marginally lower than Village of Byron (91.8%), and Shiawassee County (91.4%). Burns Township also reported the second lowest percentage of residents who had resided elsewhere in the county in 2019, but now live in Burns Township (3.2%), and a higher percentage of people who had resided elsewhere in the State (4.9%), as opposed to the County average of 3.3%. The indication is that the Township's population is relatively more "mobile" than its neighbors, but a resident is just as likely to be a long-term resident.

Table 13 RESIDENCE One Year Ago						
	Burns Twp.		Byron Village		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Same House	2,442	90.5%	516	91.8%	61,110	91.4%
Same County	87	3.2%	0	0.0%	3,048	4.6%
Same State	133	4.9%	46	8.2%	2,179	3.3%
Other State	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	540	0.8%
Foreign Country	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	19	0.02%
Total Population	2,698	–	562	–	66,896	–
Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey						

Commuting Characteristics

Place of work is an important characteristic to study because it indicates the labor market that residents rely upon for employment. If most residents work in the community in which they reside, that community can have an impact on the growth of their community by actively promoting continued economic development and job growth. Rural bedroom communities tend to have modest employment bases that do not significantly impact employment by their residents.

Table 14 BURNS TOWNSHIP TRAVEL TIME TO WORK		
Time (minutes)	Number of People	% of Total Workers
Less than 10	68	4.4%
10-14	163	10.5%
15-19	126	8.1%
20-24	126	8.1%
25-29	126	8.1%
30-34	281	18.1%

Table 14 BURNS TOWNSHIP TRAVEL TIME TO WORK		
Time (minutes)	Number of People	% of Total Workers
35-44	268	17.3%
45-59	220	14.2%
60 or more	171	11.0%
Total	1,550	100.0%
Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey		

Census information does not indicate the number of people who live and work in Burns Township, but the number must be quite small given the small number of businesses in the Township. Table 14 does show that over half of the residents travel at least 30 minutes from home to work, it appears most residents work in adjacent or nearby counties.

Population Projections

Population projections are an inexact science, particularly when they involve a relatively small existing population base. In a community such as Burns Township, the decisions of a few land owners, to develop their property, can have a significant effect on population growth. For the purpose of this plan, ROWE has prepared two alternative population projections, using different approaches. Whichever projection the Township chooses to use in preparing their plan, they should be aware of the tenuous nature of the projections. Changes in population and housing are a key indicator that should be examined as the plan is updated or maintained.

Population Projection Method 1

Method 1 is a simplistic approach that assumes that the Township will continue to grow at the same rate over a previous period of time. Alternative 1 assumes that the growth rate will mirror the rate over the period 2000 – 2010, while alternative two uses the longer average growth rate based on the period 2000 – 2010 (Table 15). Alternative 2 is more optimistic and assumes that the downturn in development that occurred during much of the period 2000 – 2010 will rebound to more historically consistent rates from pre-2000.

As can be seen, when projected over the period 2010 – 2040 it results in dramatically different outcomes.

Table 15 POPULATION PROJECTION – BURNS TOWNSHIP METHOD 1				
	2010	2020	2030	2040
Burns Township Alt 1 – 2000-2010 rate -.1% / 10years	2,876	2,847	2,819	2,790
Burns Township Alt 2 – 1990-2010 rate +24% / 10 years	2,876	3,566	4,422	5,483

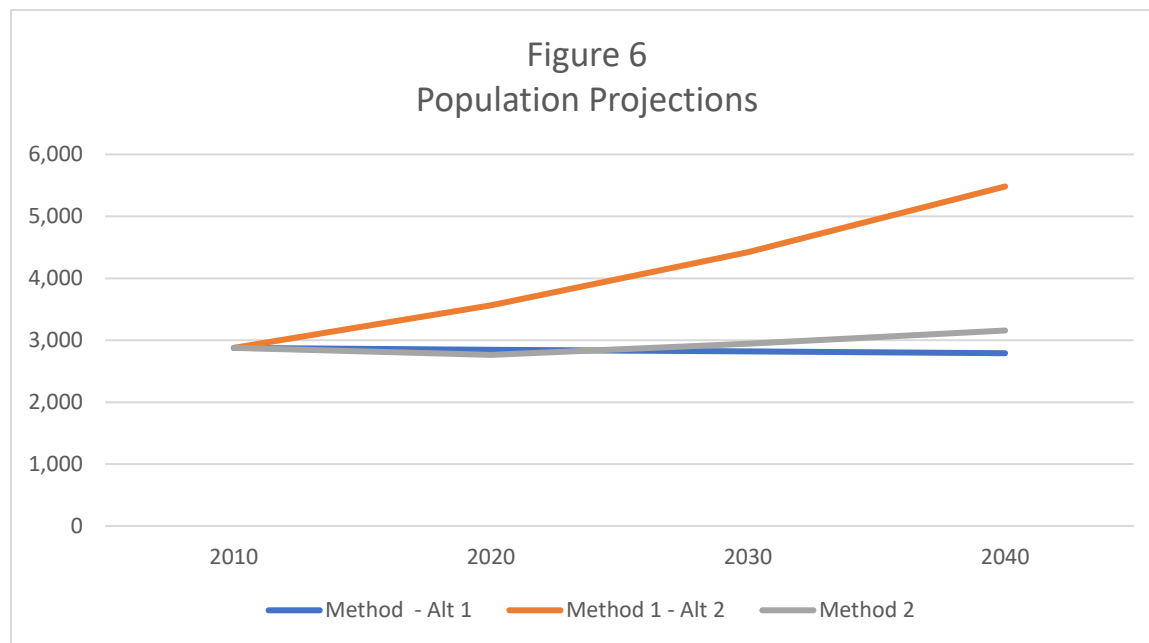
Population Projection Method 2

The population projection portrayed by method 2 (Table 16) is achieved by taking the average number of housing starts per year over the period 1990 – 2017, assuming an average vacancy rate of 5% and a slowing decreasing household size.

Table 16 POPULATION PROJECTION – BURNS TOWNSHIP METHOD 2				
	2010	2020	2030	2040
Population	2,876	2,736	2,944	3,157
Dwelling Units	1,146	1,171	1,308	1,445
Vacancy Rate	2.3%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Household size	2.52	2.46	2.37	2.30

This method then projects a slight drop in population in the 2020 census followed by modest increases in population over the following 20 years.

The results of the three projection methods are illustrated in Figure 6.



Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Population Characteristics Summary

In summary, the residents of Burns Township appear fairly typical of the rural townships in the southern half of Shiawassee County. Their ages are fairly evenly distributed with a heavier concentration between the ages of 5-19, and 30-49. The households, in Burns, are mainly composed of married couple households. The average household size is expected to continue to fall as people have smaller families and their children grow and establish households of their own. This will result in an increase in the total number of households, even during times of static population growth. The township's future growth is unclear. The past several decades it has experienced significant population growth, as a result of in-migration of households from the Flint and Detroit Metropolitan Areas, but future economic growth will impact that. The racial composition of the Township is more homogeneous than Shiawassee County as a whole but increasing diversity can be expected.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

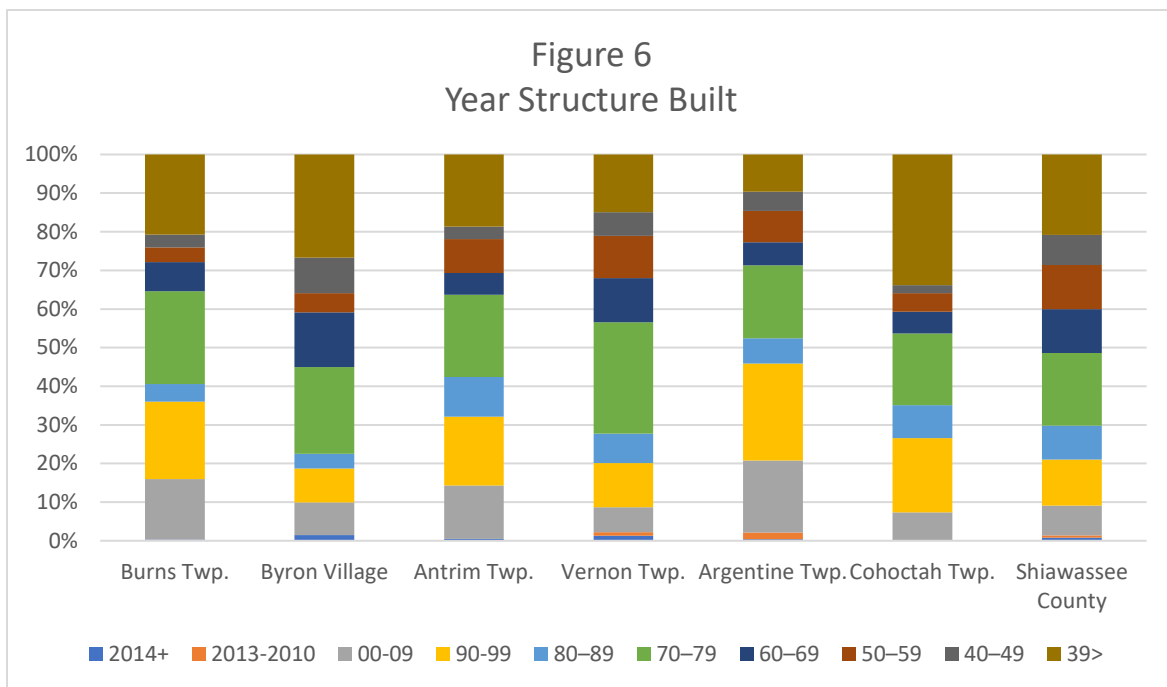
Housing characteristics are important when considering land use decisions. For example, if data indicates a large population of senior citizens live within a community but housing data indicates a deficiency in the number of senior type housing units then it would be important for the plan to provide for an increase in senior type housing. The following sections display and explain the results of the housing characteristics analysis in the Township.

Housing Growth

Table 17 and Figure 6 illustrates that the housing stock in Burns Township is generally newer than in Shiawassee County, as a whole. In 2020, about 64.5% of the housing stock had been built since 1970, in Burns Township, compared to only 48.6% in the county, as a whole. Conversely, about 28.6% of county homes were built prior to 1940, compared to only 20.7% in Burns Township. Over a quarter of the housing in the Village of Byron was built before 1939.

Table 17
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

		2014+	2013-2010	00-09	90-99	80-89	70-79	60-69	50-59	40-49	39>	Total
Burns Twp.	#	4	0	208	266	60	318	101	51	44	275	1,327
	%	0.3%	0.0%	15.7%	20.0%	4.5%	24.0%	7.6%	3.8%	3.3%	20.7%	100%
Byron Village	#	4	0	22	23	10	59	37	13	24	70	262
	%	1.5%	0.0%	8.4%	8.8%	3.8%	22.5%	14.1%	5.0%	9.2%	26.7%	100%
Antrim Twp.	#	4	0	119	154	89	184	48	76	28	161	863
	%	0.5%	0.0%	13.8%	17.8%	10.3%	21.3%	5.6%	8.8%	3.2%	18.7%	100%
Vernon Twp.	#	29	20	149	263	175	663	262	252	139	344	2,296
	%	1.3%	0.9%	6.5%	11.5%	7.6%	28.9%	11.4%	11.0%	6.1%	15.0%	100%
Argentine Twp.	#	12	48	524	700	186	527	167	228	140	270	2,802
	%	0.4%	1.7%	18.7%	25.0%	6.6%	18.8%	6.0%	8.1%	5.0%	9.6%	100%
Cohoctah Twp.	#	0	0	108	279	123	270	81	70	31	491	1,453
	%	0.0%	0.0%	7.4%	19.2%	8.5%	18.6%	5.6%	4.8%	2.1%	33.8%	100%
Shiawassee County	#	225	168	2,340	3,599	2,653	5,688	3,438	3,461	2,347	6,297	30,246
	%	0.8%	0.6%	7.7%	11.9%	8.8%	18.8%	11.4%	11.45	7.8%	20.8%	100%
Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey												

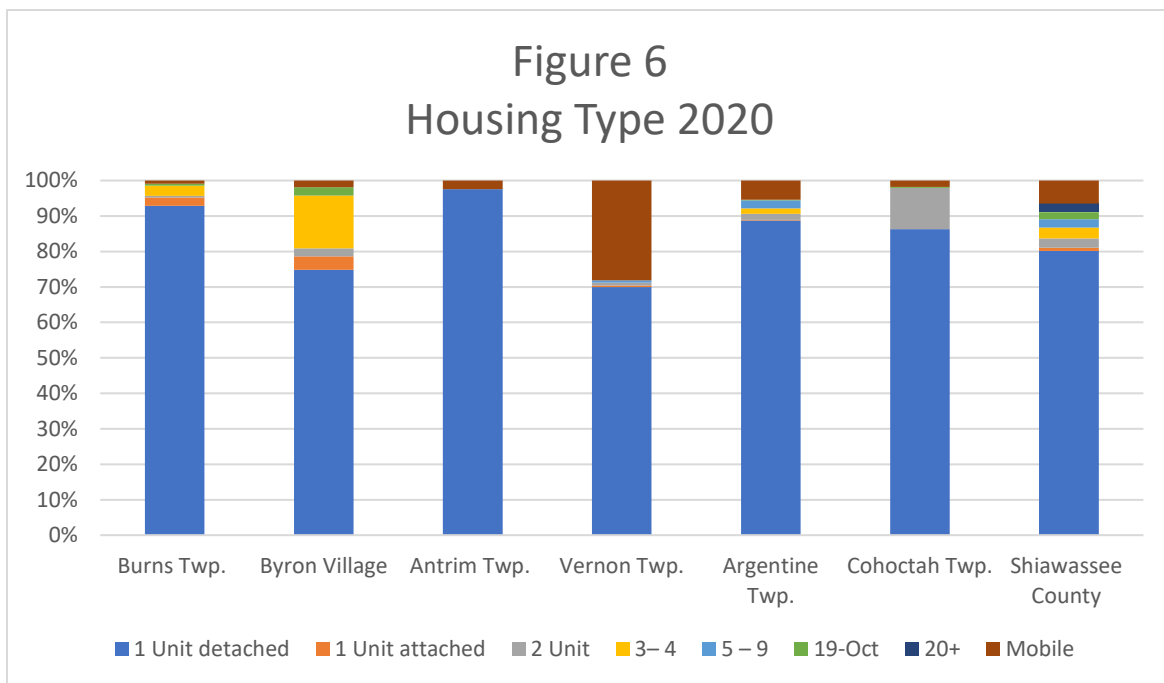


Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Housing Types

Table 18 shows that 92.9% of the homes in the township, are stick built single-family homes or mobile homes, compared with 80.2% in Shiawassee County as a whole. If this trend remains, it could result in lower growth rates. Housing analysts predict that the two largest housing markets in the next 10 years will be seniors and young adults. Both groups tend appear to prefer multi-family dwellings.

Table 18 HOUSING TYPES														
	Burns Twp.		Byron Village		Antrim Twp.		Vernon Twp.		Argentine Twp.		Cohoctah Twp.		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 Unit detached	1,233	92.9%	196	74.8%	842	97.6%	1,608	70.0%	2,486	88.7%	1,254	86.3%	24,245	80.2%
1 Unit attached	31	2.3%	10	3.8%	0	0.0%	10	0.4%	6	0.2%	0	0.0%	265	0.9%
2 Unit	6	0.5%	6	2.3%	0	0.0%	18	0.8%	48	1.7%	169	11.6%	797	2.6%
3– 4	39	2.9%	39	14.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	44	1.6%	0	0.0%	915	3.0%
5 – 9	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15	0.7%	62	2.2%	0	0.0%	728	2.4%
10 - 19	6	0.5%	6	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	4	0.3%	601	2.0%
20+	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	727	2.4%
Mobile	12	0.9%	5	1.9%	21	2.4%	645	28.1%	151	5.4%	26	1.8%	1,968	6.5%
Total	1,327	100%	262	100%	863	100%	2,296	100%	2,802	100%	1,453	100%	30,246	100%
Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey														



Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Housing Value

The value of housing is generally related to its age. While this is not always the case, as the market value of some older homes are higher than for newer homes, generally newer homes are worth more than older homes. Table 19 shows that the median housing value in Burns Township, in the period 2016-2020 was \$157,700, compared to only \$127,500 in Shiawassee County. The Village of Byron's median housing value is \$22,300 less than the median value of the Township as a whole.

Rental Housing

Because rental housing is such a small portion of the housing market in the township, its value is a minor indication of the cost of housing for township residents. That being said, both village of township rental housing tend to be significantly lower than the county as a whole.

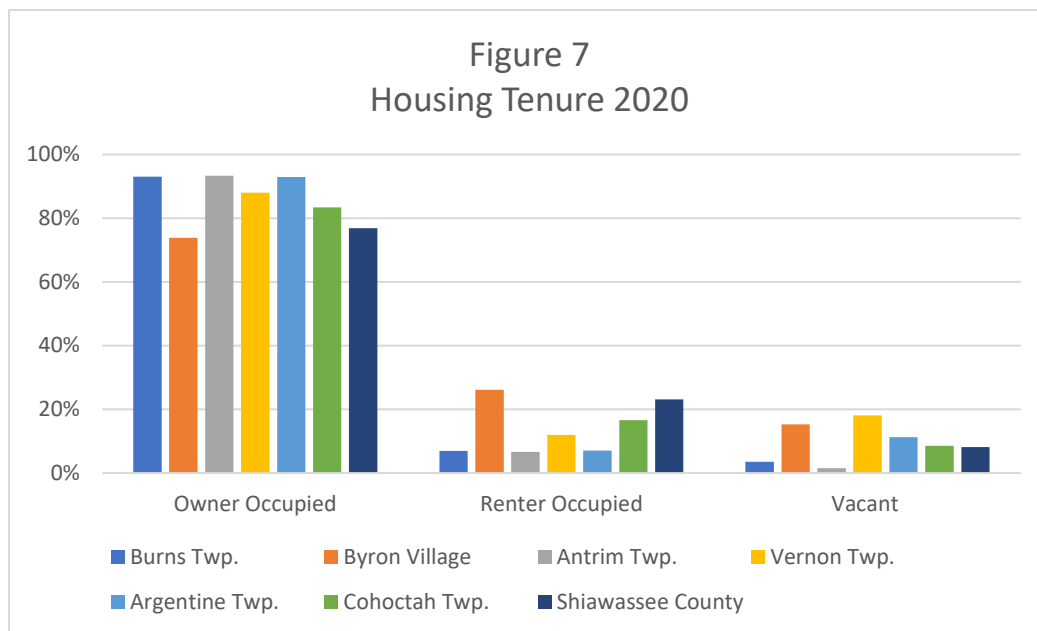
Table 19 Housing Value, 2020						
	Burns Township		Byron Village		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Specified owner-occupied units	1,190	100%	164	100%	21,358	100%
Less than \$50,000	39	3.3%	13	7.9%	1,695	7.9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	191	16.1%	42	25.6%	5,623	26.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	310	26.1%	41	25.0%	5,712	26.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	402	33.8%	46	28.0%	3,877	18.2%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	134	11.3%	16	9.8%	2,934	13.7%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	102	8.6%	3	1.8%	1,159	5.4%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	3	0.3%	3	1.8%	270	1.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	9	0.8%	0	0.0%	88	0.4%
Median (dollars)	\$157,700		\$135,400		\$127,500	
Reference: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey						

Table 20 Gross Rent, 2020						
	Burns Township		Byron Village		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Specified renter-occupied units	67	100%	55	100%	6,055	100%
Less than \$500	9	13.4%	9	16.4%	1,036	17.1%
\$500 to \$999	34	50.7%	34	61.8%	3,988	65.9%
\$1,000-\$1,499	24	35.8%	12	21.8%	869	14.4%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	124	2.0%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	0.2%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$3,000 or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	27	0.4%
No rent paid	23	-	3	-	349	-
Median (dollars)	\$545		\$534		\$742	
Reference: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey						

Housing Tenure

Table 21 and Figure 7 shows that there was a higher proportion of owner-occupied units, in the Township (93.0%), than in the County (76.9%). This correlates with the higher proportion of multi-unit developments in the County, which generally tend to be rental units.

Table 21 HOUSING TENURE														
	Burns Twp.		Byron Village		Antrim Twp.		Vernon Twp.		Argentine Twp.		Cohoctah Twp.		Shiawassee County	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner Occupied	1,190	93.0	164	73.9	793	93.3	1,655	88.0	2,308	92.9	1,108	83.4	21,358	76.9
Renter Occupied	90	7.0	58	26.1	57	6.7	226	12.0	176	7.1	220	16.6	6,404	23.1
Vacant	47	3.5	40	15.3	13	1.5	415	18.1	318	11.3	125	8.6	2,484	8.2
Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey														



Source: Estimate from 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Housing Summary

Burns Townships' housing stock has increased by over 64 percent since the 1970 and although housing growth has dropped since the onset of the "Great Recession" as the region's housing market rebounds, renewed housing starts can be expected. However, the rate of growth may be reduced from the period 1990 – 2005 due to the lack of opportunities for multi-family housing development. The majority of the homes in the Township are single family and the trend for development of single-family homes opposed to multiple family units should continue due to the lack of public water and sewer and the somewhat rural location of the Township. Value of the houses in the Township remained higher on average than the county as a whole. Most of the homes in the Township are owner occupied with only slightly more than 10% of the homes being renter occupied.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Burns Township has a few facilities it operates in part under its responsibilities as a township and in part as a result of responsibilities its assumed.

Township Hall

Burns Township has a range of responsibilities under the Michigan constitution and various state laws. The township is responsible for maintaining up to date assessments of the value of all parcels in the township as well as certain classes of public property and to maintain records on those past and current assessments. The township is responsible for collecting taxes levied to township property owners. And the township is responsible for administering local elections and maintain election records and equipment. In addition, the township clerk is responsible the maintenance of other records including minutes of meetings and current ordinances.

The township hall serves as the primary location for all of these activities as well as the conducting meetings of the Township Board and the Township Planning Commission. The current hall was built in 1983. Increases in space needs since 1983 include:

- Secure storage for election equipment and information which must be kept for six years and voted ballots which must be kept for 22 months
- Room for Absent Voter Counting Board (AVCB). AVCB election inspectors must be sequestered from all other activity and have adequate room to process and count the absent voter ballots.
- Additional office space. The clerk needs to have access to their office on election day to register new voters. Currently the AVCB uses the office on election days and the clerk uses the back of the meeting room as an office. Also, separate offices for Clerk, Treasurer and Supervisor would be beneficial. When the hall was built in the early 1980's the clerk worked from their home as well as the treasurer and supervisor. Now the clerk and treasurer work from the township office. When clerk, treasurer, and supervisor are all working at the same time in the office it is not adequate space to work and answer phones and speak with tax payers, individuals getting ballots or other township business that is being handled.
- Elections continue to change and with the additional absentee voters and increased requirements from the Bureau of Elections more secure storage space is required.
- The township may soon be required to add a second voting precinct. The township currently has 2,850 registered voters. When that reached 2,999 registered voters

the township will be required to add the second precinct. Placing the second precinct in another location in the township could complicate the voting process, but if it were to be accommodated in the same building as the current precinct, additional room for that precinct's voting machine, waiting space for voters and room for election workers would be required.

- Currently table and chairs, election equipment, fire materials and the assessor files are located in the meeting room, reducing the area available to be used by community members renting out the room for events

Fire Hall

The current fire hall was built along with the township offices in 1983. The new building was in partially a result of the conversion in 1978 of the Byon Fire Department into the Burns Township Fire Department. At the time of the construction of the fire hall the training and equipment needs of the department have increased, resulting in an increased need for storage and training areas.

In 1983 when the current Fire and Township Hall was built, the fire department had around 6 "Scott Packs" (Self-contained Breathing Apparatus) carried approximately 3000 gallons of water total for all trucks, relied on Jaws of Life from DVA ambulance service in Durand and all medical call were handled by Byron Area Ambulance Service in downtown Byron, and not every truck had a radio.

In 2022 Burns Township Fire Department is equipped with 16 SCBA on the apparatus as well as a filling station, carries a total of 8000 gallons of water with 2 of the trucks carrying 3000 gallons or more per truck, 2 apparatus fully equipped with Jaws of Life, a truck equipped to supplement the contracted ambulance agency that responds from bases in either Durand or Perry, and equipped with cold and swift water rescue equipment. The same space that was required previously for much smaller apparatus and less equipment, just does not meet the requirements to adequately serve our citizens with the types of calls we are now required to respond to.

Training requirements in 1983 were 66 hours to become a firefighter and no ongoing education requirements. In 2022 216 hours of training are the requirement of becoming a firefighter and at least 35 hours per year required for continued education. Dedicated training facilities are key to keeping our firefighters trained especially with the unique schedules of paid on call firefighters not always being able to meet as one large group.

Recent studies have linked more cases of cancer to firefighters due to the new materials found in our burning homes and cars, it is recommended by NFPA to wash gear after any exposure to combustible materials and at least twice a year. This requires an on-site gear cleaner as well as room to have backup sets of gear while that gear is washed.

Furthermore, adequate shower facilities are essential to ensure that these contaminants are not taken home to firefighter's families or contaminate their vehicles. It is now also recommended that the Personal Protective Gear firefighters wear is kept in a separate room to reduce contamination from Apparatus exhaust.

[Community District Library](#)

Burns Township participates in the Community District Library. The Byron /Burns Township branch is currently housed in the Byron High School. This creates several difficulties for the library and its users:

- The library is allowed to operate out of the library with the consent of the school administrators. The school administrators can decide at any time whether the public library needs to vacate from the school for any reason. Given the desire by the administrators to limit "strangers" from entering their schools, it is easy to foresee a time when they might be viewed as a risk to student safety.
- The Byron Branch hours are limited to 20 open hours to the public compared to the 26 hours at the smaller branches of the CDL. The school location makes it difficult to have more flexible hours.
- The closing of Byron schools due to inclement weather and other issues means the public library often closes. This could be weather, construction, over Winter and Spring breaks depending on if school staff or custodians are in the building.
- The impact of library technology services Byron library patrons do not receive but are available at other branches include; no color printing, no copies, no faxing, no wireless printing, limited wifi, and computers that are outdated.

Public reluctance to come into a school building during school hours remains a big challenge in Byron. Many patrons are not comfortable entering a school for general library services. The library is effectively not usable to the general public 9 months a year until 3:00 p.m. each day.

Consideration of a New Township Hall

- Based on the space and use needs outlined above, the Burns Township Board has been considering the construction of a separate township hall. This would:
- Allow the existing building to be revised to better meet the needs of the Fire Department Provide for a new facility with the space to meet the needs of the township's elected officials now and in the future
- Provide for a larger meeting space to meet the needs of township residents for public and private gatherings
- Provide a location for the Community District Library branch that would permit it to operate more efficiently and provide better service to the residents in the community.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION SUMMARY (From the 2000 Land Use Plan)

Creating a Vision of the Future for Burns Township

On February 9th, 2000 a Town Meeting was held by the Burns Township Planning Commission to give the public an opportunity in guiding the next 20 years of development in Burns Township by sharing their views of the future with the Township Planning Commission. Information collected at this meeting was used for drafting Goals and Policies for the Land Use Plan Update.

The meeting was attended by approximately fifty citizens of Burns Township and a few people from surrounding communities. Upon registration, people were asked to sit at tables in groups of not less than six people per table. This resulted in five roundtable discussion groups. A brief presentation was given by a ROWE staff member, regarding the past trends and current conditions that exist in Burns Township. These trends and conditions included population, housing, natural features, agriculture, and similar Township characteristics. The next section of the meeting was titled “prouds and sorries” which gave a chance for each roundtable group to select and present the groups three “proudest prouds” and three “sorriest sorries”. The groups were instructed to brainstorm to determine their “prouds” and “sorries” and then allowed to voice their opinions to the members of their group. The top three “prouds and sorries” were selected and then they were presented by each roundtable to the audience.

The results are as follows:

Table 1 —

“Proudest Prouds”

1. Rural character
2. Mixed wild life
3. River and mill pond

“Sorriest Sorries”

1. Communication of events
2. Land abuse + junk cars
3. Excessive growth

Table 2 —

“Proudest Prouds”

1. Lots of farmland and woodlands - rural character
2. Good school system
3. Absence of manufactured and mobile homes

“Sorriest Sorries”

1.
 - a. Downtown buildings rundown
 - b. Road commission doesn't listen
2.
 - a. Not enough community activities for young and old
 - b. No good restaurants
3. Not enough businesses to serve the community

Table 3 —

“Proudest Prouds”

1. Rural area
2. Schools
3. Low taxes tied with farmland

“Sorriest Sorries”

1. Vacant downtown
2. Bad gravel roads
3. Don't plow roads tied with mobile houses

Table 4 —

“Proudest Prouds”

1. Ambulance
2. Fire department/schools
3. rural setting

“Sorriest Sorries”

1. Sorry looking downtown
2. Trespassers
3. Sprawl

Table 5 —

“Proudest Prouds”

1. Home styles both old and new
2. Open areas
3. Diversity of land

“Sorriest Sorries”

1. Land use too restrictive for building homes
2. Too many home sites with junk cars on property
3. Township growing too fast, let’s not change our Township

The third and final activity allowed the participants to participate in a session titled “imaging or visioning”. During this part of the meeting the participants are asked to imagine what they would like to see happen in the community over the next 20 years. This session started by a brainstorming session. Participants were asked to imagine Burns Township in the year 2020 from a balloon, helicopter or some other device which would allow them to have a bird’s eye view of the Township. They were then asked to list everything about the Township that pleased them. Upon completion of this aerial look the Township they were asked to write down their top five visions of the future Burns

Township. Each roundtable group then presented their top five visions to the entire audience.

Their top visions were:

Table 1 —

1. Well located housing
2. A clean well-maintained river and mill pond
3. Well-developed family recreation area
4. Farming still active
5. Several cluster developments

Table 2 —

1.
 - a. Renovate downtown with 19th century theme - clean it up
 - b. Designated areas for mobile, manufactured or subdivisions
2.
 - a. No subdivisions
 - b. No mobile homes
 - c. Good Roads
 - d. Slow down progress
 - e. New schools
 - f. No small parcels
 - g. Still rural character
3.
 - a. No manufactured homes
 - b. Renovate depot
4.
 - a. Designated areas for agriculture
 - b. All commercial development in downtown area
5. No response listed

Table 3 —

1. Historical downtown
2. Keep farmland
3. No malls, Wal-marts or McDonalds
4. Contain Village limits
5. Clustering Homes

Table 4 —

1. No industry
2. Downtown with community supported business
3. Open space
4. Schools in good condition
5. Good emergency services

Table 5 —

1. No heavy industry
2. Expand Village area with historic theme
3. See farms still here
4. River cleaned and beautiful
5. Senior housing

COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES

Introduction to Goals and Policies

One of the most important parts in a land use plan is the Goals and Policies section. This section will be referred to during the next 20 years to guide Burns Township in decisions concerning the future development of the community. Understanding goals and policies is important in utilizing a land use plan. It also important to understand the link between the goals and policies and the strategies used to implement the plan. It should also be noted that although the approach toward attaining a goal may change over time, the goal itself should remain the same. The association between goals and policies is defined as:

A **goal** is a destination that has been established by community input. It is the vision established by the community of where we see Burns Township in 20 years. Goals provide basis for future policies. Goals are only general statements that do not define how to specifically obtain the desired goal. Policies guide the community in its effort to obtain a goal.

A **policy** statement is a guide that lays out the way in which a goal may be obtained. Policy statement serve the governing body as a guide that will direct their decision making to obtain the goal selected by the community.

A **strategy** is a proposed action intended to implement the plan. In this case we also use the term to describe guidelines that will be incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan section.

Most planning commissions dedicate a worthwhile amount of time to the formation of a goals and policies statement. The Burns Township Planning Commission is no exception. Data collected during the land use planning process (population, housing, natural features, agriculture, etc.) have been analyzed and discussed. On February 9th, 2000 a town meeting was held at the Burns Township Hall to provide an opportunity for the public to share their vision of the future with the Planning Commission. The information collected at this meeting has been used to help form the future goals and policies of the community. This meeting established the following categories:

- General Goals
- Residential Policies
- Commercial/Industrial Policies
- Sensitive Land and Natural Resources Policies
- Agricultural Policies

These policy statements can be used to:

1. Update the current land use map
2. Coordinate Government Programs
3. Support public relations for community programs
4. Make area-wide programs consistent and stable

The policy statement within the Land Use Plan points out an important aspect of township growth values. The public viewpoint in land policy for those subject areas that are listed above is a public matter. Democratic processes will approve or disapprove such leadership. In the policies of the Land Use Plan, township residents are saying, essentially, that in all township areas everything cannot be provided for everyone.

Therefore, as a representative of the “will of the people”, the Township Planning Commission is taking the stance that it is not in the business of providing every resident that which the resident demands. In other words, there is no such thing as total gratification for every township citizen or development interest in all areas of the Township. In summary, this land use plan is an effort to outline a development scheme that is at least reasonable to the individuals’ preferences, yet very attentive to the maintenance of the health, safety, general welfare and morals of the total community.

THEREFORE, the Burns Township Planning Commission offers the following list of goals and policies for community consideration.

General

Goal 1: Planning and decision making within the Township is coordinated with surrounding jurisdictions and other levels of government.

Objective:

- This plan recognized the need to develop consistent planning programs across the Township which are compatible with the planning programs of neighboring Township’s and the Village of Byron

Policy/Actions:

- The Planning Commission will establish a regular schedule of meetings with other Townships, the Village of Byron, and the County to coordinate planning and zoning issues.

- To deal with conflict between local and regional concerns on the basis that such issues should be settled at the level which is closest to the grass roots and still embraces the scope of the issue.
- To relate local and County planning to State and Federal Actions.

Policy/Actions:

- The Planning Commission and Township Board will include information from MTA and MAP as well as other relevant sources on critical planning issues at Board and Planning Commission meetings.
- The Township will encourage the re-establishment of an annual county planning presentation on issues relevant to the county, townships, cities, and villages.
- To cooperate with the school districts in the Township to achieve the best possible educational system.

Policy/Actions:

- The Planning Commission will invite a representative of the Byron Schools to a meeting at least once a year to discuss issues of common concerns.
- The Planning Commissions shall refer projects under their review to the relevant school district for comments where appropriate.

Goal 2: The rural character of the Township is maintained.

Objective:

- The Township supports review of the open space development provisions in the County Zoning Ordinance to identify how open spaces development can be encouraged.

Policy/Actions:

- Recommend that the County establish a working group including farmers, developers, realtors, rural residents, and township officials to identify ways of providing incentives for open space development.

Goals 3: A well-balanced land use pattern capable of meeting present and future community needs in an efficient, economical, and aesthetically pleasing manner is maintained.

Objective:

- To deal with the question of growth in relation to achieving quality of life rather than on the assumption that all expansion is always beneficial.

Policy/Actions:

- In evaluating a proposed project, the Planning Commission shall review the potential impact on surrounding land uses, the environment and the township's ability to provide incentives for open space development.
- To support development of urban land uses in the areas close to the Village of Byron so that the rural areas retain their character.
Policy/Actions:
 - Future land use classifications for medium and high density residential as well as commercial uses should require location near the Village of Byron.

Goal 4: Excellent infrastructure and government services are provided at a scale appropriate for the townships size and character.

Objective:

- To provide for orderly growth so that services demanded to support that growth will not be beyond the ability of the people to provide through taxation.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classification for medium and high density residential as well as commercial uses should require adequate community services.
- To encourage the development of an integrated road and pedestrian network which provides efficient, safe, and pleasant movement of people and goods within the Township and throughout the region.

Policy/Actions:

- In evaluating a proposed project, the Planning Commission shall review the proposed road, street, and non-motorized transportation facilities for compliance with the standards in the County Zoning Ordinance
 - Work with the Village of Byron in the development of a joint nonmotorized transportation plan to link the village and township with other parts of the county and region.
- To improve and maintain the road system in the Township at a level consistent with proposed development densities both with regard to demand and the ability to generate income to maintain the roads.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classification for low, medium, and high-density residential uses should require direct access to an existing county primary road

adequate community services, while access to commercial uses should require direct access to an all-weather road.

Objective:

- To provide adequate facilities to ensure the township is able to provide the necessary level of services to the community.

Policy/Actions:

- Evaluate strategies to provide for greater space for administrative and fire protection services
- Evaluate strategies for providing an alternative location for the Burns Township / Byron branch of the Community District Library.

Goal 5: Development occurs in a manner that protects the Township's natural features and resources.

Objective:

- To recognize the natural resources of the Township, such as the river and mill pond, and environmental factors and to maximize the capabilities of these resources through sound planning and management techniques.

Policy/Actions:

- In evaluating a proposed project, the Planning Commission shall review it for compliance with the standards in the County Zoning Ordinance related to protection of natural features.
- To attain a development pattern that respects natural features such as flood plains and soil characteristics.

Policy/Actions:

- Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance program.
- Direct the development in the Township so that residents with special needs such as income and/or mobility limitations can find housing, recreation, and services appropriate to their lifestyle.

Policy/Actions:

- Promote establishment of standards in the zoning ordinance for "visitability".

Residential

Goal 1: Residentially platted areas should be designed to integrate compatible land uses in proper proportion and balance to protect against activities that produce incompatible noise, dust, odors, and/or heavy traffic

Objectives:

- If subdivisions or site condominiums develop, they should be in locations
 - a. That are not in important agricultural areas.
 - b. That take advantage of the best residential soil conditions so that expensive centralized sewage collection systems are not required.
 - c. That provide adequate ground water.
 - d. That do not create a traffic hazard.
 - e. That will not require the improvement of roads designed for rural and farm production.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classifications for medium and high-density residential should include these criteria.
- Subdivision and non-subdivision development should be encouraged to cluster in order to maintain a rural character by protecting natural setting and open space areas.

Policy/Actions:

- Recommend that the County establish a working group including farmers, developers, realtors, rural residents, and township officials to identify ways of providing incentives for open space development
- The Township will work and plan to establish a condition of adequate housing for all residents in healthful, safe, convenient, and attractive neighborhoods.

Policy/Actions:

- The Future Land Use Plan shall provide for a range of housing appropriate for the township's capabilities.
- The existing housing stock in the Township should be maintained in a sound condition through strict enforcement of housing code and the zoning ordinances.

Policy/Actions:

- Work with the County Community Development Department to identify homes that are in violation of the adopted building code.
- The rapid development of rural residential homes should happen in a way that the residential land use complements and accents natural features of topography, soils, woodlots, and other environmental features, and maintains the rural character of the community.

Policy/Actions:

- Work with the County Planning Commission in the development of zoning standards for development of homes on individual lots that address natural features.
- Residential development near the Shiawassee River should be designed to benefit from the scenic potential of the riverside locations that includes the visual impression from the river. Any adjacent steep slope should be protected at all times.

Policy/Actions:

- Work with the County Planning Commission in the development of standards for development of homes on individual lots that address steep slopes
 - Work with the County Planning Commission in the development of site plan standards addressing protection of river views.
- New construction should be encouraged that considers barrier free design for the elderly and the handicapped.

Policy/Actions:

- Promote establishment of standards in the zoning ordinance for “visitability”

Commercial/Industrial

Goal 1: Limited commercial and industrial development will occur over the planning period and will be directed to appropriate areas.

Objectives:

- Commercial development should be related to an overall balanced land use pattern. Spot development of commercial areas is discouraged.

Policy/Activity:

- Future land use classifications for commercial development should require location near the Village of Byron.
- Convenience level commercial facilities should be developed to be easily accessible to existing concentrations of residences in the community. This should include pedestrian access where feasible. The development of these facilities should be based upon realistic determination of market potential so that excessive speculation and abandonment of commercial buildings will not occur.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classifications for commercial development should include this criterion.
- High standard of building construction and maintenance should be encouraged in commercial areas.

Policy/Actions:

- Work with Community Development Department to establish design criteria for commercial development.
- Commercial land uses should be developed in such a manner that they do not harm adjacent residential areas.

Policy/Actions:

- In evaluating a proposed project, the Planning commission shall review a proposed development for compliance with the standards in the County Zoning Ordinance regarding setbacks and buffering.
- Commercial businesses should be encouraged to occupy areas around the village.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classifications for commercial development should require location near the Village of Byron.
- General commercial developments should be directed to the Village downtown business district.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classifications for commercial development should take into account available development sites in the Village of Byron.
- Burns Township does not foresee industrial development. In the case of a demonstrated need for an industrial site in the Township, sites should afford direct access to all weather roads, have access to municipal water and sewer, and should be close to the Village of Byron.

Policy/Actions:

- Future land use classifications for industrial development should require location near the Village of Byron.
- Home occupations and home businesses will be allowed in a manner that does not disrupt the character of surrounding residences within the guidelines of accepted zoning practice.

Policy/Actions:

- Work with the County Planning Commission in the review of the home occupations requirements to ensure that they allow the broadest range of uses suitable without threatening the creation of nuisances to surrounding residences.

Sensitive Land and Natural Resources

Goal 1: Sensitive lands, such as open space, wetlands, flood plains, steeply sloped areas, and natural resources are protected by the Township to the extent that local laws and policies allow.

Objective:

- Burns Township promotes the wisest possible use of our natural resources for present and future generations.
- The Planning Commission identifies several natural open space areas in a six-category outline- woodland areas, wetland areas, floodplain areas, major sloped areas, lakes and streams, and prime agricultural areas.

Policy/Actions:

- Impacts on natural open spaces areas should be a criterion for review of any development.
- The above natural resources elements should be recognized as vital parts in the total environmental pictures and should be retained in their own highest and best use. Not precluding orderly and harmonious development, these areas must be retained for public health and welfare.

Policy/Actions:

- Promotion of the idea that natural resources are useful and effective tools to shape development and, therefore, should be used to achieve this policy.
- Use of review procedures that would ensure that land developers save all large trees whenever possible.
- Use of review procedures that encourage developers to provide open space and recreation facilities as part of their overall development design.
- Require developers to provide information on the adequacy of ground water and the effect a proposed use of ground water may have on adjacent water users, when reviewing major developments with anticipated effects on ground water.
- Development along Shiawassee River should be coordinated to promote its use as an interlocking natural system.

Policy/Actions:

- Impact on the maintenance of the Shiawassee River as a natural system should be a criterion for review of any development.
- The area has a critical shortage of surface water for recreation. The Shiawassee River and adjacent lands need intensive conservation efforts.
- Flood control projects should be coordinated with water-based recreation areas.
- Parks and open spaces should be preserved from conversion to other uses.
- Burns Township should cooperate fully with adjacent political units in the wise use of surface and groundwater.
- Consider the feasibility of incorporating parks and recreation with any reclamation project i.e., surface mining or landfill. Also, this could be considered for a buffer zone for existing operations.

Policy/Actions:

- Work with the County Planning Commission in development of incentives to incorporate parks and recreation with any reclamation project.

Agricultural

Goal 1: The agricultural base of the Township is maintained.*Objectives:*

- In the important agricultural areas, agriculture should be designated as the primary land use with all other land uses as exceptions. At the same time, the Township recognized that from a County perspective even prime farmland in Burns Township is not as productive as many areas in the northern portions of the County. The Township wished to maintain a place for agriculture in the Township over the planning period while recognizing its decreasing prevalence in the community.
- Good agricultural land should be retained for agricultural proposed in cluster developments.

Policy/Actions:

- Recommend that the County establish a working group including farmers, developers, realtors, rural residents, and township officials to identify ways of providing incentives for open space development.
- Restrictive ordinances limited noise, animals, odors, etc. in the important agricultural area should be confined to those requisites for the health and safety on the public. They should not inhibit normal agricultural practices and operations.

Policy/Actions:

- Consideration of any regulation that may restrict farming operations should be evaluated for compliance with the Right to Farm Act.
- Random or spot development in agricultural areas and open space areas should be discouraged to ensure the economic viability of agricultural enterprise. These areas should be used when considering the rezoning of these lands for other uses.

LAND USE NEEDS

A township should take an accounting of its acreage needs for various types of land uses expected to impact the area during the planning period. Burns Township should look at residential, agricultural, open space, and the commercial/industrial categories.

Residential

Residential land use needs are figured from population projections and expected settlement choices of future residents. Township goals and policies for residential growth enter into the analysis. Table 22 and 23 on the next page show the residential acreage expected to be settled. These projections are based on the following:

- a) 90% of the homes will be the rural residential type, 10% will be in rural subdivisions.
- b) In Community Description section of the plan it was estimated that 137 new dwellings would be constructed between 2020 and 2030 and again between 2030 and 2040.
- c) Each rural residential dwelling settles at least 1 acre. Past subdivision densities have been at 2.3 dwellings/acre.

The sum for the planning period becomes 256 acres. One of the issues that results from this analysis is that all the rural growth will have quite an impact on limited availability of sites for rural settlement. Within the planning period there may be newer settlement patterns developing that will penetrate the interior of the 640-acre sections in order to find country estate sites. Already many 10.1-acre parcels have been “carved” into many farmland parcels on half-sections of land. Subdivisions may also probably switch from rural roadside to interior section types with new road construction.

Table 22 Residential Land Use Needs 2020 - 2030				
House setting	% of Type	# of New Dwellings	# of Dwellings per Acre	Total Acres
Rural Residential	90%	123	1	123
Medium Density	10%	14	2.3	6
High Density	—	—	—	—
Sub-Total	100%	173	2.6	128

Table 23 Residential Land Use Needs 2030 - 2040				
House setting	% of Type	# of New Dwellings	# of Dwellings per Acre	Total Acres
Rural Residential	90%	123	1	123
Medium Density	10%	14	2.3	6
High Density	—	—	—	—
Sub-Total	100%	173	2.6	128

Agriculture

Land needs for farming can be described from the point of view that asks, “Why retain agricultural land?”

There are several public purposes that are achieved with the retention of agricultural land.

- Conservation of energy – prime soils require less energy to farm. Non-prime soils require more treatment, more trips of farm machinery, and more expensive conservation techniques.

- Prevention of urban sprawl – retention of farmland causes communities to develop a more compact urban area.
- Maintenance of open space – valued by urban people as well as rural.
- Retaining natural systems and natural processes – farmland retention has a series of environmental side benefits that meet objectives of wetland and watershed protection and establishment of wildlife habitats. Forests filter the air and serve as windbreaker.
- Control of public costs – public service and facility costs of farms and farmland are low.
- Promotion of local self-sufficiency – agriculture capitalizes on the quality of local natural resources – our soils. Also, local agricultural is less sensitive to national policy decisions than most industries. Agriculture is stable and communities with a strong farmland base are more self-sufficient.
- Preservation of local economic base – farming is a critical element of the County and Township economy.
- Preservation of rural lifestyle – it is a legal court tested right for communities to maintain a rural lifestyle. That lifestyle seeks to preserve the strength of the farm family and the agricultural setting.
- Maintenance of regional, state and national agricultural reserves.
- Farmers, as a community in themselves, would like to see farmland maintained for farmland use.

Natural Resources and Sensitive Areas

Through the goals and policies section for this topic, a need way determined for a green space corridor along the Shiawassee River. There is the potential for this river to be saturated with riverside housing with no benefit to anyone. Homes along the river are fine as long as they are built far enough back from the river. Forests and wetlands are common throughout the Township and are managed by the individual landowners. The need for these lands relates to flood control, sediment entrapment, prevention of soil blowing, oxidation of chemical and biological pollutants, and ground water replenishment. Some of the wetlands also provide a setting for unique agricultural activity.

Commercial/Industrial

There is no goal or outstanding locational advantage in the Township to consider the establishment of a need for a commercial/industrial area. The Ann Arbor Railroad siding may provide an optional side for a few small industries. Convenience commercial enterprise may develop west of Byron to serve the expanding number of urban family country estate dwellers in that area.

Recreation

There is a golf course in Byron along with a village riverside park. The Shiawassee River is a popular canoeing stream with a riverside County park a mile northwest of the Township. An historic area is the Knagg's Bridge with a Grange Hall in Section 6. The Shiawassee River is the Township's main recreational resource. The Byron School District and Durand District have several open space play areas and athletic fields. The Township states that these areas are an efficient service to the community for those kinds of needs. With more subdivision development neighborhood play lots and open space areas may become a part of Township development programs.

LAND USE AREAS LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

The land use areas are drawn after the acreage needs are determined. All the other information and policies presented in this plan form the considerations that produce the Land Use Plan Map. These areas are the Township's interpretation of the advised uses to the year 2020. It is understood, because new information becomes available quite often that this plan will be updated at least every three years.

All maps have legends that label the symbols on the map, but the planning areas require more background explanation to make their intension complete.

There are seven land use planning categories:

1. Agricultural/Rural Residential
2. Low Density Residential
3. Manufactured Home Park/Subdivision
4. Commercial
5. Industrial
6. Large Natural Feature Complexes
7. Public and Non-Profit Organizations

Map 11 illustrates the location of future land use planning areas.

Agricultural/Rural Residential

This is the largest acreage land use plan category. Agriculture is more common than rural residential settlement and is expected to remain important throughout the planning period. Changes in the A-2 zoning district in 2001 limiting residential lots to 2.5 acres has limited the impact of residential development on farmland. This land use category recognizes developing pressure for rural housing yet discourages higher densities that would require extension of village services. Open space/cluster development that protects the rural character of the community is encouraged.

In order to preserve the rural character of the community over the long-term development of the Township, it is proposed to modify the A-2 zoning district to promote open space development and reduce the potential buildout of the Township. The proposed changes in the A-2 zoning district would include increasing the minimum lot size in the A-2 district

from 40,000 sq. ft. to 60,000 sq. Ft. and providing a 50% density bonus for future development which permanently preserves 30% or more of a development as open space

In order to preserve the rural character of the community over the long-term development of the Township, it is proposed to modify the A-2 zoning district to promote open space development and reduce the potential buildout of the Township. The proposed changes in the A-2 zoning district would include increasing the minimum lot size in the A-2 district from 40,000 sq.ft. to 60,000 sq.ft. and providing a 50% density bonus for future development which permanently preserves 30% or more of a development as open space. The Township does not expect these provisions to have any significant impact in the short term because the current value of farmland as home sites does not make it worthwhile to undertake the improvements such as a private road which would be necessary to gain the bonus density. However, as development increases, and building sites become scarce and their value increase the economics of open space should begin to take hold.

Low Density Residential

These areas are desired locations for rural subdivisions. Development includes single-family residences, their accessory structures and uses associated with residential areas including schools and churches.

These sites are characterized by direct access to a paved County Road. All the areas currently mapped are existing subdivisions along with some open spaces that are preferred location for future subdivisions. Future development should be located near the Village of Byron, with access to community services, on county primary road, are not in important agricultural areas, with soils that pose slight limitations to septic systems, that provide adequate ground water and are in an area that does not create a traffic hazard.

The appropriate zoning for this land use category is R1-A if the site has no sewer and sewer is not anticipated. If the site has sewer or sewer is expected to be available to the site, the appropriate zoning classification is R1-B, R1-C or R-1D.

Mobile Home Subdivisions

This classification represents areas suitable for mobile home parks and mobile home subdivisions. The mapped area identifies an existing mobile home subdivision in Section 12 and includes adjacent vacant land east of the existing development.

Locational criteria for future mobile home sites include property located on a county primary road, within one mile of the Village of Byron, with either access to Village water and sewer or the capability of providing community water and sewer systems.

This classification corresponds with the R-T zoning district.

Recreational

This category identifies areas appropriate for private and public recreational facilities. Mapped areas include an area that is behind the Mobile Home Subdivision that is recommended as a neighborhood playground, community play fields, and picnic area. A private campground is also recognized.

Recreational facilities are permitted in all agricultural and residential zoning districts.

Commercial

This category identifies sites that would be appropriate for local commercial. Any development would depend on close attention paid to each site development in order to ensure that it developed into a well-defined zone of activity, without the deterioration and blight common to poorly organized areas of commercial/industrial property.

The site should be located adjacent to the Village of Byron, on a County Primary road, preferably at a road intersection and adequately buffered from residential areas that should be relatively close by. In considering rezoning of property in the Township to commercial the availability of land in the Village downtown should be taken into consideration.

Corresponding zoning would be O-1 or B-1

Industrial

This land use classification covers areas appropriate for light industrial development. Because the Township does not have municipal water and/or sewer, this plan does not propose future industrial sites. However, if a site is proposed, the locational criteria the Township would use would be a site on an all-weather road with access to municipal water and sewer and within a mile of the Village of Byron.

The equivalent zoning district would be M-1.

Large Natural Feature Complexes

This includes all the low-lying areas and, where found, adjacent steep slopes. Uses in these areas should recognize the flood retention qualities of this land and probable aquifer recharge capabilities. Much specialized agriculture is practiced on these lands. The wetlands serve as open space corridors and give the Township a unique, natural form

that blends with the adjacent upland uses. The Shiawassee River flood plain is estimated from soils information. Better definition of the floodplain is important for housing will undoubtedly encroach upon it for that “best view” of the river.

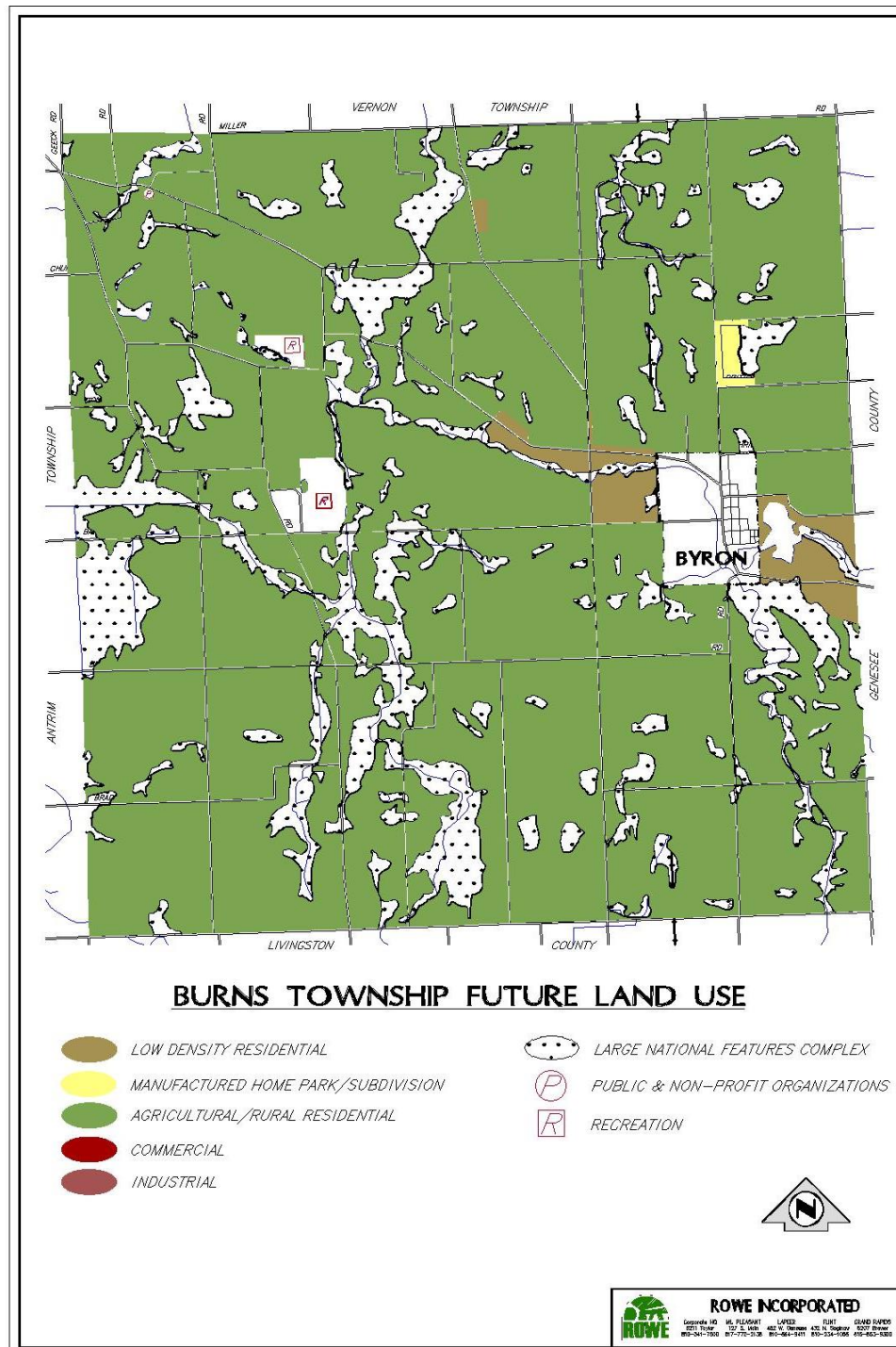
There is no comparable zoning classification for this category, although most of the land in this category is zoned A-2.

Public and Non-Profit Organization Sites

These are spot locations of government, religious, education, institutional or clubs, lands and buildings.

Most of these uses are permitted in all the agricultural and residential zoning districts.

MAP 11 FUTURE LAND USE



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

This section of the land use plan identifies tools and steps to maintain and improve the living environment of Burns Township. Implementation and use of the information that follows will help the Township realize the guidelines set forth by this plan and ensure that the goals and policies as well as updates/maintenance is made to the plan. Updating and maintaining the plan is crucial to affirming a plans validity and usefulness. If the plans data base is not reevaluated periodically, preferably annually, changes in the community or policy may cause what was good for the community a year ago to be outdated and in some cases detrimental to the Township. This section should also be evaluated on an annual basis to assure that the plan is truly what the community has envisioned as the future Burns Township.

In order to implement this plan, it will require the close cooperation of the Planning Commission and Township Board. The following text describes the steps required for implementation of the land use plan and tools that should be used to reach the goals of this plan.

Zoning

One of the pre-eminent tools used by communities to reach the goals of their land use plan is zoning. Zoning is a regulatory power given by the State to local municipalities through zoning enabling acts. In Burns Township, the relevant enabling act is the County Zoning Act because as a township without its own zoning ordinance, the Township falls under the County's zoning ordinance. The County Zoning Act authorizes the County to establish zoning ordinances controlling the use of property and the height, bulk, and location of buildings on property within the Township. The act requires that the zoning ordinance be based on a plan. The County Land Use Plan, which was adopted in 1980, was an amalgamation of the sixteen township plans adopted the previous year. This Township Plan replaces the plan adopted by Burns Township in 1980, and it is the Township's intent that it be incorporated into the County's Land Use Plan and serve as the basis for land use decisions both at the Township and County level.

As noted in the Future Land Use section of this plan the Future Land Use classifications are in most cases related to the County Zoning Ordinance Districts. The relationship is outlined below.

TABLE 24 Zoning / Future Land Use Comparison	
County Zoning District	Township Future Land Use Plan Classification
A-2 Agricultural Production Rural Residential Open Space District	Agricultural/Rural Residential
No specific district but normally zoned A-2	Wetlands - Conservation
R-1A One Family Rural Residential R-1B One Family Low Density Residential R-1C One-Family Medium Density Residential R-1D Two-Family Residential	Low Density Residential
R-T Mobile Home Development	Mobile Home Park/Mobile Home Subdivision
O-1 Office and Administrative B-1 Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial
M-1 Light Industrial	Industrial
No specific zoning	Public and Non-Profit Sites

This most significant change from the current zoning ordinance that is recommended by this plan is the modification of the A-2 zoning district to increase the minimum lot size to 60,000 sq. ft. and to provide incentives for open space residential development including provisions of a 50% development bonus for a preservation of at least 30% of a development for open space.

Burns Township recognizes that this change would impact all 14 townships in Shiawassee County that fall under county zoning. In implementing this plan, the Township proposes to promote the open space revisions to the A-2 district among the

other townships in the county and to move forward with a proposal to amend the ordinance if it is supported by the other townships.

Other proposed changes to the current county zoning ordinance include:

- Promote establishment of standards in the zoning ordinance for “visitability”
- Development of zoning standards for development of homes on individual lots that address natural features
- Development of standards for development of homes on individual lots that address steep slopes
- Development of site plan standards addressing protection of river views
- Establish design criteria for commercial development
- Review home occupations requirements to ensure that they allow the broadest range of uses suitable without threatening the creation of nuisances to surrounding residences
- Amend zoning ordinance to require developers to provide information on the adequacy of ground water and the effect a proposed use of ground water may have on adjacent water users, when reviewing major developments with anticipated effects on ground water.
- Development incentives into the zoning ordinance to incorporate parks and recreation with any reclamation project

Other Tools

Besides the zoning ordinance, State law has provided local communities with authority to adopt other special ordinances that can be used to enforce the goals and policies of a land use plan.

Subdivision Control/Land Division Ordinances

Although the State’s Land Division Act requires the developer of a subdivision to submit a proposed plat before a Township for review and approval, it also authorizes a Township if it wishes, to prepare a subdivision control ordinance. In 1995, Shiawassee County prepared a model subdivision control ordinance for all the townships in the County to use as the basis for a locally adopted ordinance. In 1998, Burns Township adopted a Subdivision Control Ordinance based on the County model, but with some local variations.

Capital Improvements Plan

A capital improvements plan is a plan for the development or acquisition of land, buildings, municipal infrastructure or capital pieces of equipment and for their maintenance.

The County Road Commission maintains the public roads, although it often requests Township participation in the cost of maintaining or upgrading the roads, particularly the “local” roads (those roads that are not part of the county primary road system). Burns Township can impact, to some extent, the work that is done on the local roads by prioritizing with the road commission those roads they wish to improve.

The County Drain Commissioner maintains the County’s drains. The Township is involved in their maintenance to the extent that they are assessed for a portion of most drain district improvement due to the benefit accrued to public land and to the extent that the Township is normally the first point to receive drainage complaints. The Township should be aware of the impact that urbanization has in increasing drainage requirements for developing land

Other Implementation Strategies

The following are strategies that involve other approached besides those listed above:

- The Planning Commission will establish a regular schedule of meetings with other Townships, the Village of Byron, and the County to develop consistent planning programs across the Township which are compatible with the planning programs of neighboring Township’s and the Village of Byron
- The Planning Commission and Township Board will include information from MTA and MAP as well as other relevant sources on critical planning issues at Board and Planning Commission meetings.
- The township will encourage the re-establishment of an annual county planning presentation on issues relevant to the county, townships, cities and villages
- The Planning Commission will invite a representative of the Byron Schools to a meeting at least once a year to discuss issues of common concern
- The Planning Commission shall refer projects under their review to the relevant school district for comments where appropriate
- Recommend that the County establish a working group including farmers, developers, realtors, rural residents and township officials to identify ways of providing incentives for open space development
- Work with the Village of Byron in the development of a joint nonmotorized transportation plan to link the village and township with other parts of the county and region
- Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance program
- Work with the County Community Development Department to identify homes that are in violation of the adopted building code.

Five-Year Strategic Plan

In order to implement the key goals and objectives of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission has prioritized the following strategies over the next five years (Table 25). These strategies should help to inform the Planning Commission as it identifies its work goals for the annual planning report to the Township Board. The Planning Commission should track the completion status of strategies on this list even if they are not a responsible party.

Table 25 Strategic Plan		
Strategy	Responsible Party	Deadline
Recommend that the County establish a working group including farmers, developers, realtors, rural residents and township officials to identify ways of providing incentives for open space development	-Township Planning Commission -Township Board -County Farm Bureau -County Home Builders Assoc.	2022
The Township evaluate alternatives and select a solution to address the space needs of the township staff and Fire Department	-Township Board	2022
Work with County Planning Commission to amend zoning ordinance to require developers to provide information on the adequacy of ground water and the effect a proposed use of ground water may have on adjacent water users, when reviewing major developments with anticipated effects on ground water.	-Township Planning Commission -Township Board	2023
The Planning Commission and Township Board will include information from MTA and MAP as well as other relevant sources on critical planning issues at Board and Planning Commission meetings.	-Township Planning Commission -Township Board	2023 – 2024
The township should implement the selected alternative for addressing the space needs of the township staff and Fire Department	Township Board	2023
The township will encourage the re-establishment of an annual county planning presentation on issues relevant to the county, townships, cities and villages	-Township Planning Commission -Township Board -County MTA	2024
Conduct five-year review of Master Plan	Township Planning Commission	2027

PLAN MAINTENANCE

The land use plan should not be considered a static document or a document that is not to be changed in the next 20 years. Changes occur all the time in communities and

these changes may require that changes or updates be made to the plan. For example, if suddenly a large increase in population occurs to the extent that public water and sewer systems are needed then the plan should be updated to need these needs. Below are steps that the Township will adopt to ensure that the plan is adequately maintained and updated.

Updating the Data Base

The formation of this plan was made by certain assumptions concerning the growth of the Township. These assumptions are contained primarily in the plan's data base. It is important for the Township to regularly monitor these assumptions to determine if these assumptions are still valid. If the assumptions become invalid, the Township must determine what the changes in circumstance mean for the plan goals and policies.

1. Population Growth — Projected growth presented in the Population section of this report forms the basis of the land use plan. As noted in the narrative following the projection it is based to a large extent on assumptions regarding the future that can't be known for sure, and the projection should be continuously monitored. One way of double checking these projections is the U.S. Census. The projections in this plan are based on the 2010 population figures. The U.S. Census will be conducted in 2020 and by the time the plan is ready for its five-year review much of the population data should be available. has begun being updated and soon the 2000 census figures will be made available. The Township should use this material to determine the validity of these projections
2. Housing Growth and Mix — The plan makes assumptions on the growth of housing in the Township over the planning period and assumes that, at this point, the development will be almost exclusively single family residences due to the lack of municipal water and sewer in the Township.
3. Adjacent Planning and Zoning — Changes or proposed changes in land use plans or zoning maps of adjacent townships should be reviewed to consider their impact on the Township's plan. If the Township has an opportunity to be involved in the planning review process before the adjacent community makes a decision regarding the planning or zoning matter, it provides the Township with the opportunity to influence the adjacent community's decision.
4. Transportation — The Township should monitor changes in condition of roads within the Township. The County Road Commission's road

improvement schedule for area roads should also be reviewed annually for their impact on the plan.

5. *Utilities* — The plan does not currently anticipate the development or extension of utilities into the Township. If these improvements occur, the effect on the development potential of the property should be evaluated. Generally, when public utilities are extended in rural areas development usually follows and this should be taken into account.

Reviewing the Plan Goals and Policies

After reviewing any changes in the community description information outlined in this plan, the Township should review the goals and policies. Specifically, the Township is looking for goals or policies that are no longer relevant due to changes in conditions or policies that have proven ineffective in addressing goals. The Township should also attempt to gauge the attitude of the public and try to reflect those changes in attitude to the extent to which that is appropriate. Those items that are identified should be deleted or modified to better suit the current situation. The plan should be officially amended to incorporate the changes in the goals and/or policies and the basis for the changes should be reflected in a public hearing record.

Incorporating Plan Review into Rezoning Request Review

Rezoning and special use permit requests may present a situation in which it is clear that the current plan needs to be updated. It is important to incorporate review and amendment of the land use plan as part of the Township's consideration of such requests. This is covered in more detail in the subsection on using the land use plan for zoning reviews.

Using the Land Use Plan for Zoning Review

As noted before, the primary method of enforcing a land use plan is the zoning ordinance. In order for that to be done effectively, the community's rezoning and special land use permit request and site plan review procedure should be structured so land use goals and policies are considered. Because the Township falls under the authority of the County Zoning Ordinance, the Township's review of a proposed rezoning, site plan, or special use permit are recommendation to the County.

Rezoning Requests

In considering a rezoning request, the primary question to ask is: "Does this request conform to our land use plan?" Three subsidiary questions follow that; "Was there an

error in the plan?”, “Have there been changes in the goals and policies of the plan?”. Answering these questions should answer the question of whether or not the rezoning requested is appropriate and that should frame the evaluation of the rezoning request within the context of the plan.

This method of analyzing a request rests on the assumption that a request that complies with a valid plan should be approved and that one that does not comply with a valid plan should not be approved. Further, it assumes that the three circumstances that would invalidate a plan are a mistake in the plan, a change in condition that invalidates the assumptions upon which the plan was built on, or a change in the goals and priorities that the Township set for itself.

Mistakes

A mistake in a plan can be an assumption made based on incorrect data, an area on the land use map that is incorrectly labeled, or other factors that would have been corrected prior to adoption of the plan if the mistake had been identified.

Changes in Conditions

A plan is based on the assumption that certain conditions will exist during the planning period. If those conditions change, the goals, policies, and land use decisions that made sense when the plan was adopted may no longer be valid, and a rezoning that was not appropriate before the conditions changed may now be appropriate.

Change in Policy

In the end, a plan is based on the future vision of the community held by the Planning Commission/Township Board. When that vision changes, the plan should change to reflect the new vision. When a zoning issue results in a change in vision, a decision can be made that is contrary to the current plan, as long as that changed vision is explicitly incorporated into the plan.

Two point of caution should be made. First, the three factors used for consideration in rezonings (mistake, change in conditions, change in goals or policy) can work in reverse. They can make a proposal that otherwise seems appropriate, inappropriate. For example, a community may have set aside an area in their land use plan for commercial development based on the assumption that utilities were being planned for extension into that area. If at some later date it turns out that utilities were not going to be extended into that areas, the rezoning to commercial would not be appropriate.

Secondly, these factors should not be used to create excuses for justifying a decision to violate the land use plan, or to change it so often that it loses its meaning. There are changes in conditions or mistakes that may occur that may not have a significant effect

on whether or not a rezoning is suitable. These should not be latched on to as a “reason” to approve or disapprove a request. In addition, the Planning Commission should not modify policy without significant evidence that the policy is no longer appropriate or does not represent the best interest of the Township.