

Chapter 7 - Future Land Use Recommendations

According to the US. Census Bureau, there has been a small, but steady growth in population since the 1960's. Development associated with this growth has generally been low-density single family residential. While residential growth is occurring in Mikado Township, according to the 2001 land use inventory, over 97 percent of the land area was classified as forest, farmland, non-forest open space, and wetlands. Less than three percent of the Township's land was used for urban related purposes, including extractive, commercial, industrial, utilities, institutional/recreational and residential development.

The final critical step in completing a Master Plan is to determine the types, location and intensities of development that will occur over the next twenty years. With the establishment of a Future Land Use Plan, Mikado Township intends to ensure that existing land uses such as residential, commercial and industrial can continue; that irreplaceable resources such as water, wetlands and forestlands and farmlands will be protected; and that reasonable growth can be accommodated with minimal land use conflicts or negative environmental impacts.

The Township Planning Commission with public input and assistance from NEMCOG updated the future land use recommendations for Mikado Township. Recommendations are based on an analysis of several factors including: social and economic characteristics, environmental conditions, existing land uses, available community services and facilities, existing patterns of land divisions, current zoning and community goals and objectives.

Land Use Planning Areas

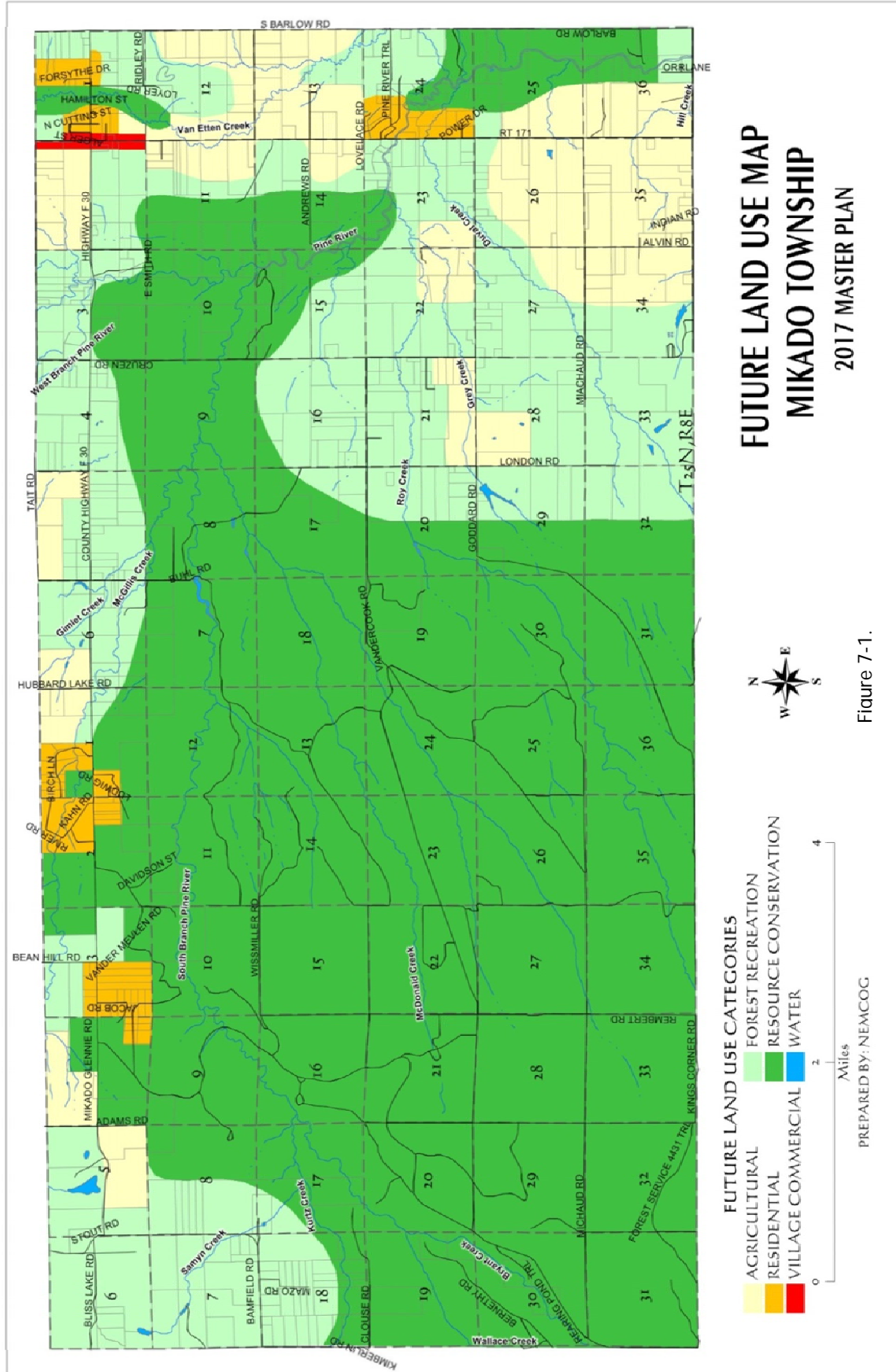
Listed below are the six different future land use planning areas. **Figure 7-1** is the Future Land Use Map of Mikado Township, which depicts the locations of future land use planning areas. This section will provide explanations of each land use planning area, including purpose, recommended development density and, compatible uses.

- Resource Conservation
- Forest Recreation
- Agricultural
- Medium Density Residential
- Village Commercial
- Light Industrial

Resource Conservation

Mikado Township recognizes that the presence of wildlands contributes significantly to the quality of life and the rural character, which is valued by the Township residents. Locations recommended for this category includes much of the western half and approximately one third of the eastern half of the Township.

The Resource Conservation category includes all of the U.S Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands and large tracts of privately owned lands forest lands. Huron National Forest's Pine River Kirtland's Warbler Management Area is located in this area. One of seven Kirtland's Warbler management units in the Huron National Forest, the Pine River Unit covers 8,900 acres in the western part of the Township. Segments of the Pine River and its many tributaries flow through the area. Road access is limited and consists primarily of seasonally maintained county roads.



The Resource Conservation areas should be protected from intense development without denying private property owners reasonable economic use of the land. Primary uses to be encouraged in this category include hunting, fishing, skiing, hiking, camping, wildlife management and forestry management. This plan encourages the retention of contiguous resource areas, river greenbelts, wetlands, scenic areas and wildlife habitat.

The Resource Conservation category is designed to provide protection to environmentally sensitive areas, while allowing for very limited and low intensity development to occur. This development would be consistent with recreational and conservation uses. A development density of one dwelling per 20 acres is recommended for the category. Low density residential development (one house per 20 acres) would be allowed. Under a special use permit, properties located along primary county roads could have one house for every ten acres. To protect sensitive areas and maintain larger tracts available for other uses, clustering based on density equivalents (one house per twenty acres) should be encouraged.

The plan further recommends incorporating open space development options, river set-backs, native vegetation greenbelts, waterfront overlay zones, access management, and landscaping requirements into the Zoning Ordinance. This future land use plan recognizes that existing parcels within the planning area may be less than the recommended minimum lot size. The plan does not intend to restrict the construction of new residences or continued residential use of these existing parcels.

Forest Recreation

The Forest Recreation category is the second most extensive land use category recommended for the Township. The areas are concentrated in the eastern half and along the northern border of the Township. Many of the large tracts either have seasonal residences or are vacant. Locations recommended for this category are shown on the future land use map, **Figure 7-1**.

This category encourages the continuation of resource management and wildlands recreation activities. The plan recommends this category accommodates single family dwellings at an average density of one unit per two to five acres. Larger residential lots provide privacy and tend to maintain ecological integrity of the natural resources.

With the exception of County Roads F 30 and F 41 and portions of Kings Corner, Cruzen, Wissmiller, Goddard, Alvin, Michaud and Vandercook Roads; the transportation network is mainly gravel base, secondary county roads, The Township intends to work cooperatively with the Alcona County Road Commission to maintain and improve the road network. However, there are no intentions on upgrading the gravel road network to a paved road network. No municipal water or sewer service will be available. Buffers or physical separation from incompatible uses (commercial and industrial) are necessary when Forest Recreation areas are located next to more intensive development. The plan further recommends incorporating open space development options, river set-backs, native vegetation greenbelts, waterfront overlay zones, access management, and landscaping requirements into the Zoning Ordinance

Along with low density residential uses, forestry activities associated with timber and wildlife management would be considered compatible in this area. Other uses include vacation homes, hunting camps, parks, and playgrounds.

Under the special approval process in the Township's zoning ordinance, recreational camps and clubs (recommended on ten acres or more) and golf courses and resorts (recommended on twenty acres or more) would be allowed with site plan approval by the township planning commission. Additionally, gravel pits with site reclamation plans, saw mills, retail commercial enterprises related to recreational activities and home occupations would be allowed under the special approval process, provided the activity is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

This future land use plan recognizes that existing parcels within the planning area may be less than the recommended minimum lot size. The plan does not intend to restrict the construction of new residences or continued residential use of these existing parcels.

Agricultural

Mikado Township recognizes the presence of farmland contributes significantly to the scenic and rural character valued by the Township residents. The Agricultural land use designation is intended to encourage the continued existence of farms in the Township. The nine designated areas are primarily located in the eastern portion and along the northern border of the Township, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, **Figure 7-1**.

This category encourages the continuation of farming in the Township. Farm dwellings and agricultural accessory buildings are allowed, as well as crop production and raising of livestock normally associated with farming activities. The plan recommends this category accommodates single family dwellings at an approximate maximum density of one unit per five to ten acres. Plant nurseries, greenhouses, bed and breakfast inns, churches, and forest and wildlife preserves are also allowed.

Special uses may be allowed if they are designed to be compatible with the primary uses. Where compatible with surrounding uses, private clubs, veterinary services, human care facilities, mobile home parks, golf courses, publicly owned buildings and publicly owned parks would be allowed with an approved site plan under the special approval process.

With the exception of County Roads F-30 and F-41, and portions of Kings Corner, Cruzen, Wissmiller, Goddard, Alvin, Michaud and Vandercook Roads, the transportation network is mainly gravel base, secondary county roads. The Township intends to work cooperatively with the Alcona County Road Commission to maintain and improve the road network. No municipal water or sewer service will be available. Buffers or physical separation from incompatible uses (commercial and industrial) are necessary when Agricultural areas are located next to more intensive development. The plan further recommends incorporating open space development options, river set-backs, native vegetation greenbelts, waterfront overlay zones, access management, and landscaping requirements into the Zoning Ordinance

Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential development category is primarily designed to accommodate single-family dwellings on lots with a minimum size of one half acre. The medium density residential category is intended to preserve existing residential development where land has already been subdivided into smaller lots and to expand specific areas for future residential growth adjacent to F-30 and F-41.

Principal uses would include single family dwellings and two-family dwellings. Special uses may be allowed if they are designed to be compatible with the residential setting. Other uses to be considered include home occupations contained within the dwelling; mobile home parks; bed

and breakfast facilities; churches and associated structures; parks and playgrounds; schools and libraries; community buildings and publicly owned buildings; public utility buildings; and publicly owned and operated parks. The township should require site plan review and special approval for all uses other than individual single and two family homes. Development regulations within waterfront areas should be designed to address Township residents' concerns regarding water quality and streamside protection.

Older platted subdivision areas contain lots created prior to implementation of the Mikado Township Zoning Ordinance. These lots-of-record are smaller than minimal lot sizes in current residential zoning requirements. Future development regulations should recognize these conditions and provide for the reasonable continuance of their use and character. Renovation and redevelopment of existing streamside properties is expected to continue as seasonal residences are replaced by year round homes. The renovation and redevelopment should be sensitive to the protection of native vegetation greenbelts.

Due to a lack of public water and sewer service available, higher density residential uses, such as apartments, townhouses, condominiums, mobile home parks, convalescent or nursing homes and manufactured home developments should be restricted. If adequately engineered wastewater disposal systems are included as part of the design, higher density development can be considered.

It is also important to note that under state law, manufactured homes are allowed in any residential area if the structure meets all requirements set for site-built homes. Additionally, a manufactured home development would be compatible with the multiple-family portion of the residential area. However, given the soil limitations for septic system drain field operation, compact mobile home parks could not be accommodated unless adequately engineered wastewater disposal systems are included as part of the design.

Village Commercial

While much of the commercial services for Mikado Township are met by facilities located in the Harrisville, Oscoda and Lincoln, the Township wishes to set aside an area to accommodate additional local commercial uses. The Township recognizes the importance of maintaining the community identity of Mikado. A small commercial center serving the needs of Township residents, tourists and persons passing through on F-30 and F-41 is important to retaining the community identity. The designated area is located along F-30 and F-41 within the area considered the "Town" of Mikado.

The Village Commercial category is designed to accommodate small scale retail, service and some public service uses. Due to a lack of public water and sewer service, higher density and large scale development is not recommended in the township. This area incorporates existing residential and commercial uses. The existing commercial uses are primarily retail and service types of uses. Allowed uses in commercial zones would include retail and service stores, professional offices, banks, schools, restaurants, taverns, fraternal organizations, and rental units. Use requiring special approval would include gas stations, auto repair businesses, auto sales and service, drive-in food and drink establishments, veterinary service and hospital (not including kennels), motels and residences within a commercial establishment.

Efforts should be undertaken to improve the appearance of the commercial center. The townships intends to pursue funding sources to develop and implement a streetscaping plan. The plan may include tree planting, street lighting, curbs, parking lots, landscaping and

sidewalks. Ordinances to regulate blight and building conditions in the business district should be enforced.

It is recommended the Township adopt regulations for site plan review, access management, sign, billboard and landscaping to maintain traffic safety and minimize any negative visual impacts of development along the main roads. It is further recommended the Township implement zoning that allow for cluster commercial development that would share driveways and parking lots, and create pedestrian friendly environment, while maintaining open space, protecting sensitive areas and minimizing visual impacts.

Light Industrial

Industrial parks are located in nearby communities of Harrisville, Lincoln and Oscoda. The facilities provide necessary utilities and services, and have sites available for industrial type operations. Furthermore, analysis of soil conditions on the natural resource section found soils to be poorly suited for septic fields. Given existing industrial parks in adjacent communities and the lack of public water and sewer service in Mikado Township, large scale industrial development is not accommodated in this plan. The industrial future land use category is designed to provide sites for wholesale activities, warehouses, retail operations that require large outside storage areas, and light manufacturing operations. Operations are subject to performance standards relative to impacts on the community. This district is compatible with a business district, but not compatible with residential districts without a required buffer. Light industrial land use area should be located on suitable soils, with proper infrastructure and on county primary roads. It is anticipated these would be located near the community of Mikado close to areas identified as village commercial.

Special Issue Areas

Roads

Money for maintaining county roads comes from state and local sources, including Mikado Township. The Township is working under a four year capital improvements road plan. A 1.5 mil road millage generates funds for road work. The Township pays 50 percent of the cost of upgrading roads to a paved surface. The Township intends to work cooperatively with the Alcona County Road Commission to maintain and improve the road network. However, there are no intentions on upgrading the entire gravel road network to a paved road network.

Another major transportation issue in the Mikado Township is the repair and upgrading of bridges. Eleven of the 13 bridges in the Township have been upgraded or replaced. The Township contributes 5 percent, up to \$15,000 for bridge replacements. Work should continue on upgrading the bridges, setting a high priority for bridges on the critical bridge list.

Waterfront Residential

To preserve the scenic beauty, property value and environmental integrity of areas adjacent to rivers and streams, the plan recommends developing a "Waterfront Overlay Zone" designation along sections of the Pine River and its major tributaries. With such a specialized designation it will be possible to develop residential standards specific to the unique environment found in waterfront areas. Development regulations within the waterfront residential area should be designed to address Township residents' concerns regarding water quality and shoreline protection. Compatible land uses are one single-family dwelling on each lot and parks and playgrounds.

Structures should be sited at least 50 feet from the ordinary high water level of the streams and rivers in the overlay zone. Maintenance of up to 35 feet native vegetation protection strips should be required; landowners on developed lots should be encouraged to re-establish native vegetation greenbelts. The recommended minimum lot size is 30,000 square feet and the minimum lot width on the water is 100 feet. However, many older platted subdivisions in waterfront areas contain lots created prior to implementation of the Mikado Township Zoning Ordinance. These lots are typically smaller than minimal lot sizes in current residential zoning requirements. Future development regulations should recognize these conditions and provide for the reasonable continuance of their use and character.

Keyhole development or high-density second-tier development with shared private waterfront access may be allowed with restrictions to limit density and development size. Keyhole development may increase the threat of shoreline erosion, surface pollution, increased noise and conflicts between lake users.

Water and Sewer

According to information obtained from the USDA Soil Survey, much of the township has severe limitations for septic system drain fields. The limitations include depth to water table, wetness, poor filtering capacity and ability to perk water. The analysis of soil constraints can be found in Chapter 4 of this plan. Due to a lack of public water and sewer service, higher density residential uses, such as apartments, nursing homes and manufactured home developments as well as higher density commercial and industrial development should be restricted. If adequately engineered wastewater disposal systems are included as part of the design, higher density development can be considered.

The Master Plan did not include a detailed study of septic systems in the community of Mikado. However, given the high water table and fine soils, localized problems are likely. The cost of developing a public sewer system would be prohibitive. This plan encourages upgrading of individual septic systems to mounded or secondary treatment systems. The Township should also pursue funding sources to assist landowners with upgrading septic systems or possibly developing cluster systems where appropriate.

Streetscape Planning Area

During the visioning workshop and subsequent planning commission workshops, the community identified streetscape as a priority. The area identified as needing streetscape renovation is at the village crossroads covering an area one-quarter mile north and south on F-41 and one mile east and west on F-30. Both the design and implementation of streetscape projects are very costly endeavors. It is recognized the Township could not complete such a project with its current budgetary constraints. In order to complete this needed project; the township will explore supplemental funding sources such as grants, loans, volunteer donations, and special assessments.

Open Space Development

Methods which other communities have employed to help protect and preserve privately held forest and farm lands, while protecting a landowner's economic investment include the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), conservation open space development standards, clustering requirements for residential uses and tax breaks or incentives for continuing forestry and farming use. The conservation open space residential and commercial development design standards are effective means to preserve scenic views, rural character, farmland, meadows,

woodlands, steep slopes and wetlands with a target of preserving 50 percent of the land within a development. It is recommended that these alternatives be investigated for possible application in Mikado Township, as a way to balance economic rights with wildlands preservation goals.

Community Facilities

With the assistance of community organizations and hundreds of hours of donated time, the Township has been able to develop the Mikado Civic Center and recreational facilities. The strong sense of community and working together for the common good attitude will surely achieve similar feats in years to come. This plan supports community efforts to further develop recreational facilities such as ball fields and community facilities such as a museum or expansion of the library. Mikado Township should pursue state and federal funding to help develop facilities. Grants typically require matching funds, a requirement that will be easy to meet given past fund raising efforts.

Hazard Mitigation

The Alcona County Hazard Mitigation Plan ranked wildfires as the number one hazard, followed by shoreline flooding, riverine flooding, severe winds, and winter weather hazards. Jack pine forests, with a high propensity for wildfires, dominate the landscape in the west. Areas with a high potential for flooding are located along the Pine River and its tributaries; where the soils are fine and less permeable; and are associated with wetland complexes. Where possible the community should work towards minimizing the threats of the identified hazards.

Prevention: Government administrative or regulatory actions or processes that influence the way land and buildings are developed and built. These actions also include public activities to reduce hazard losses. Examples include planning and zoning, building codes, capital improvement programs, open space preservation, and storm water management regulations.

Natural Resource Protection: Actions that, in addition to minimizing hazard losses, also preserve or restore the functions of natural systems. These actions include sediment and erosion control, stream corridor restoration, watershed management, forest and vegetation management, and wetland restoration and preservation.

Emergency Services: Actions that protect people and property during and immediately after a disaster or hazard event. Services include warning systems, emergency response services, and protection of critical facilities.