

# BUCHANAN TOWNSHIP

## MASTER LAND USE PLAN



Adopted December 19, 2012



**RESOLUTION # PC-12-01**

**TOWNSHIP OF BUCHANAN, BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION TO AMEND MASTER PLAN**

Planning Commissioner Gray offered the following resolution and moved for its adoption, supported by Planning Commissioner Wentworth.

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Buchanan Township Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development, and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the Buchanan Township Planning Commission prepared a proposed updated Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Buchanan Township Board of Trustees for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 6, 2012, the Buchanan Township Board of Trustees received and reviewed the proposed updated Master Plan prepared by the Buchanan Township Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the updated Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

**WHEREAS**, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Buchanan Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on December 19, 2012 to consider public comment on the proposed updated Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed updated Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed updated Master Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

**THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **Adoption of 2012 Master Plan.** The Buchanan Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2012 Buchanan Township Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps, and tables contained therein.
2. **Distribution to Buchanan Township Board and Notice Group.** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843 the Buchanan Township Board has not asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed updated Master Plan and therefore the approval granted herein is the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843 and therefore the plan is effective as of December 19, 2012. In addition, the Buchanan Township Planning Commission approves distribution of the adopted amendments to the Buchanan Township Board and Notice Group.
3. **Findings of Fact.** The Buchanan Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the Buchanan Township Board and public hearing, and with the assistance of Williams & Works (a professional planning group) and finds that the updated Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands in Buchanan Township.
4. **Effective Date.** The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.

**Resolution # 12-01-PC  
Township of Buchanan, Berrien County, Michigan  
Planning Commission Resolution to Amend Master Plan**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

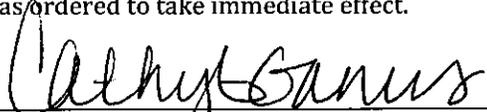
AYES: Timothy Gray, Dennis Wentworth, Janet Dehring, John Pitz, and Stephanie Wagner-Hemminger.  
NAYES: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.  
ABSENT: Thomas Pressey and Kimberly Scarpone.

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2012.**

  
Stephanie Wagner-Hemminger, Chairman

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Cathy A. Ganus, duly elected and acting Clerk of Buchanan Township, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Buchanan Township Planning Commission at a regular meeting of said board held on Wednesday, December 19, 2012, at which meeting a quorum was present by a roll call vote of said members as hereinbefore set forth, that said resolution was ordered to take immediate effect.

  
Cathy A. Ganus, Clerk

# MASTER LAND USE PLAN

## BUCHANAN TOWNSHIP

Prepared by

### The Buchanan Township Planning Commission

Stephanie Wagner-Hemminger, Chairperson

Timothy Gray, Vice Chair

Janet Dehring      John Pitz

Thomas Pressey      Kimberly Scarpone

Dennis Wentworth

Approved by

### The Buchanan Township Board

Jane Mitchell, Supervisor

Cathy Ganus, Clerk      Janet Dehring, Treasurer

Lynn Ferris, Trustee      Thomas VanAntwerp, Trustee

*with original assistance by:*

**McKenna Associates, Inc.**  
151 South Rose St., Suite 920  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

and

*and revision support from:*

**Williams & Works, Inc.**  
549 Ottawa NW, Suite 310  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Public Hearing December 4, 2002  
Adopted Originally on December 4, 2002  
Reviewed and Extended on December 19, 2012



BUCHANAN TOWNSHIP MASTER LAND USE PLAN

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

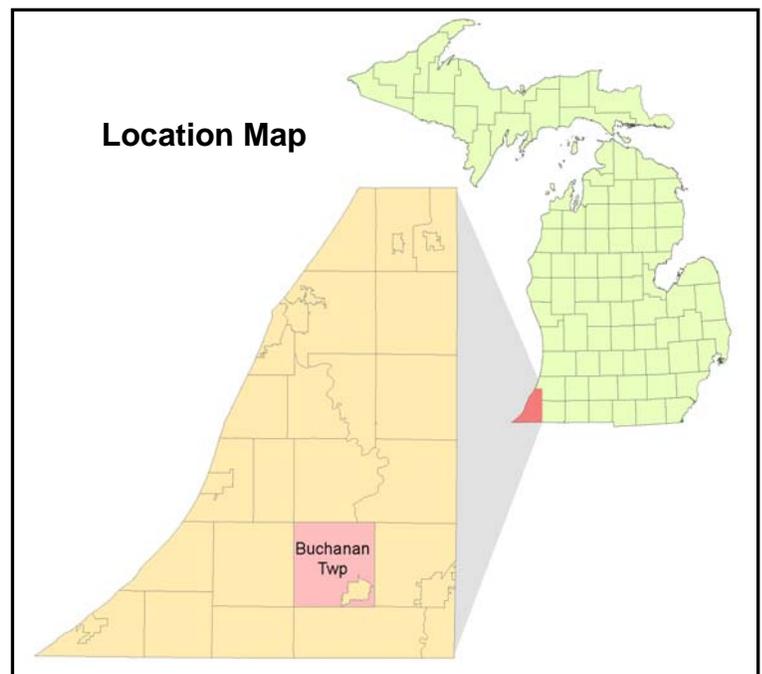
### Introduction

The Buchanan Township Master Plan has been developed to establish general policies to guide decision makers within the community as well as provide direction for the future growth and development of the Township over the next 10 to 15 years. Buchanan Township's identity has been established by its association and location directly west of the City of Niles, its proximity to South Bend, Indiana, and the community's agricultural and residential land uses. It is the intent of this Plan to provide the framework with in which land use decisions can be made which are consistent with the goals of this Plan.

The Master Plan defines those issues which are most important to the community. This was done through the combination of various sources and opportunities for resident and community input including a community wide survey and a visioning and consensus building workshop. In addition, an analysis of the existing features of the Township illustrates some of the defining characteristics within the Township. The analysis includes a survey of the existing land uses in the Township, population, economic and housing statistics, a description of the physical constraints and natural resources in the Township, and circulation patterns within the community. Based on all gathered information and with input from citizens, goals and objectives were developed which outline the desired growth and developmental patterns for the community over the next 10 to 15 years. These goals and objectives serve as the basis for future land use plans in Buchanan Township.

### Regional Location

Buchanan Township is situated in the southeast corner of Berrien County directly west of the City of Niles, in the southwestern section of Michigan's lower peninsula. Buchanan Township is approximately 15 miles north of South Bend, Indiana, 60 miles southwest of Kalamazoo, Michigan and 85 miles northeast of Chicago, Illinois. The Township is primarily rural and agricultural in nature with residential and commercial development concentrated in the City of Buchanan in the southeast corner of the Township.



## **Planning and Zoning in Buchanan Township**

Land use planning in the Township occurs at the regional level, the county level and locally. The following paragraphs discuss the entities involved and their activities.

### **Regional Planning: Southwestern Michigan Commission**

The Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is one of 14 Planning and Development Regions in the State of Michigan serving local communities and private entities within Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties by providing technical assistance, staff support, and information for a variety of federal, state and local programs. Economic development planning, grant writing, master planning and zoning ordinance development are some examples of the range of services provided by SWMC.

In addition, SWMC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) of which Buchanan Township is a member community. The SWMC works in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and participating local governments on transportation related issues. Specifically, SWMC manages transportation related activities through the development of work programs for local projects, coordinating and promoting public participation, and overseeing financial management of transportation projects. The SWMC's activities relative to the NATS include developing a standardized ranking system for pavement conditions, developing a Five-Year Investment Strategy and a three-year Transportation Improvement Program, assisting in the advancement of the Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail and continuing to recommend transportation related aesthetic safety improvements for the Eleventh Street "Michigan Gateway" in adjoining Niles Township.

### **County Planning: Berrien County Planning Commission**

It is the function of the Berrien County Planning Commission to make a plan for the development of the county in cooperation with municipalities. The Plan with accompanying maps, plats, charts and descriptive matter shall show the Commission's recommendations for the development of the County. The Plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding development of the County in accordance with present and future needs for best promoting the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, as well as for efficiency and economy in the process development.

### **Local Planning and Zoning: Buchanan Township**

The Township is served by a seven-member Planning Commission appointed by the Township Board under the auspices of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008). The Planning Commission is empowered by the Township Zoning ordinance to review and recommend action on site plans for proposed developments as well as in the evaluation of

special land uses and zoning ordinance amendments. Because the Planning Commission is limited to an advisory role under the local Zoning Ordinance, all final decisions authorized by the ordinance are the responsibility of the Township Board. Thus, the five-member Board is actively involved in the supervision of the planning and zoning function in Buchanan Township.



## CHAPTER 2 – POPULATION & HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The characteristics of the people in Buchanan Township, and how they live are an important part of the Master Plan. Therefore, Chapters 2 and 3 present the first section contains an analysis of the population, age, housing, and transportation characteristics of the Township. The source of this data for Buchanan Township and the surrounding area is from the United States Census of Population of 1990, 2000 and 2010.

### Present Population

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Buchanan Township experienced a 3.56 percent increase in population between 1990 and 2010. During this period Buchanan Township's population grew from 3,402 in 1990 to 3,510 in 2000 and 3,523 in 2010, an increase of 121 people. The greatest share of this growth occurred in the 1990s with an increase of only 0.37% from 2000 to 2010. The growth over the recent past suggests modest rates of growth and development and is consistent with communities in the area.

TABLE 1: POPULATION OF AREA JURISDICTIONS (1990- 2010)					
Community	1990	2000	2010	% Change (1990 - 2010)	% Change (2000 - 2010)
Buchanan City	4,992	4,681	4,456	-10.73%	-4.81%
Buchanan Township	3,402	3,510	3,523	+3.56%	+0.37%
Bertrand Township	2,228	2,380	2,657	+19.25%	+11.64%
Oronoko Township	9,819	9,843	9,193	-6.38%	-6.60%
Niles Township	12,828	13,325	14,164	+15.32%	+6.30%
City of Niles	12,456	12,199	11,600	-6.87%	-4.91%
Weesaw Township	2,114	2,065	1,936	-8.42%	-6.25%

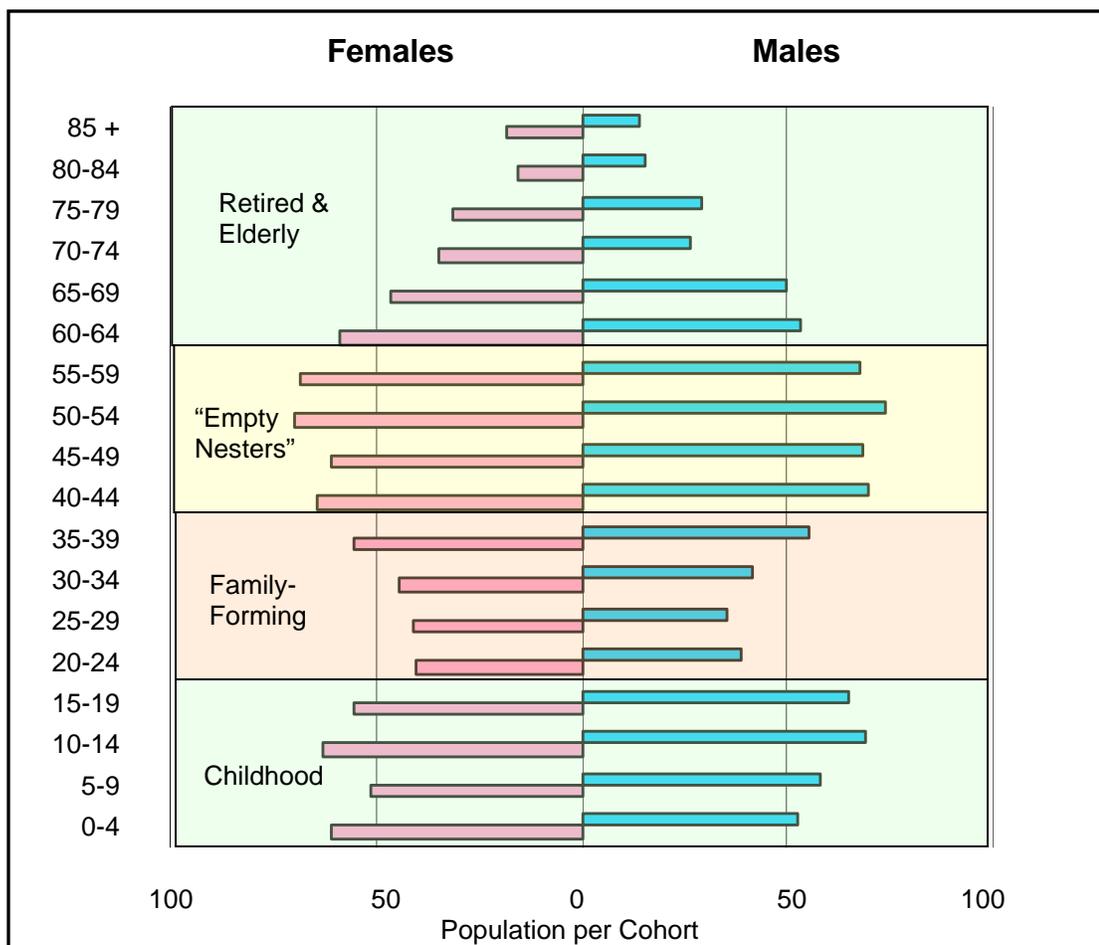
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990, 2000, 2010

Table 1 shows a comparison of the rates of population growth in communities surrounding Buchanan Township over the past twenty years. Two communities out of the seven grew at a higher rate than Buchanan Township and three communities experienced a decline in population. In most instances, the rate of population change (growth or decline) was less pronounced during the second decade of the period. A decline in the population of the Cities of Niles and Buchanan, suggests movement to the rural areas within the Township. Weesaw Township is in a region of Berrien County where there is little development, and the decline in population suggests movement of people in search of more opportunities or little growth in the Township's housing base.

## Population Characteristics

The number of men and women in the population is virtually equal, with males constituting 50.1 percent and females constituting 49.9 percent of the population. However, this distribution is slightly different than that of the Berrien County, with 48.7 percent male and 51.3 percent female, and the State of Michigan, with 49.1 percent male and 50.9 percent female. Typically a higher male population occurs in younger communities, because slightly more male children are born than female. As the population ages, the balance shifts with females having longer life expectancy than males.

**Figure 1. Buchanan Township 2010 Population by Age and Gender**



However, this characteristic is not found in Buchanan Township which reflects a slightly greater median age (42.4 years) than either Berrien County (41 years) or the State of Michigan (38.9 years). Further analysis shows that the male/female ratio in Buchanan Township has not shifted yet. Table 2, describes the age structure in Buchanan Township, as well as a comparison of the age structure for Berrien County and the State of Michigan. Approximately 27 percent of the

population of Buchanan Township was 18 years of age or younger in 2010, which is consistent with both the County and the State and virtually unchanged since 2000. It is also in this age group where there are slightly more males than females (489 males versus 459 females) but the difference occurs in the remaining three age groups. Buchanan Township has a lower percentage in the family forming years and a higher percentage in the mature to retirement age. The Township's median age of 42.4 years reflects the overall aging of the community's population, as the median age in 2000 was 38.3 years, an increase of 4.1 years over the decade. This is somewhat higher than that of Berrien County at 41 years and the State of Michigan at 38.9 years.

Age Group	Share of Population		
	Buchanan Township	Berrien County	State of Michigan
Pre-School (0-4)	6.4%	6.1%	6.0%
School Age (5-18)	20.5%	20.0%	20.8%
Family Forming (19-44)	27.5%	29.0%	31.5%
Mature Families (45-64)	29.6%	28.6%	27.9%
Retirement Age (65+)	16.0%	16.3%	13.8%
<b>Median Age 2010</b>	<b>42.4 yrs.</b>	<b>41 yrs.</b>	<b>38.9 yrs.</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010

Another key demographic for understanding growth and development patterns is the composition of households. The proportion of households in Buchanan Township that consist of married couples, 61.3 percent, is significantly higher than the rate for Berrien County, 47.8 percent, and the State of Michigan, 49.8 percent. The percentage female headed households comprise of total family households in the Township (12.4 percent) is lower than the County (12.9 percent) and the State (12.5 percent). At the same time, however, the average household size for both renter and owner-occupied households in the Township was 2.63 persons, slightly larger than the 2.43 persons in Berrien County or the 2.53 persons in Michigan. And the percentage of families with children under 18 years of age living at home in the Township was 37.6%, a significantly larger percentage than similar figures for Berrien County (28.4%) or the State of Michigan (29.8%).

What does all of this mean? Figure 1 above illustrates the breakdown of the Township's population by gender and 5-year age cohorts. The "baby boomer" generation consists of persons born after World War II between the years of 1944 and 1964. This cohort is evident in this figure and, as most communities in the midwest, Buchanan Township will face land use and housing challenges as the residential, shopping and recreational needs of this large cohort matures further.

This mirrors the rest of Berrien County, Michigan and the Midwest in general. Buchanan Township is a community of mature married families with older children, as well as persons of the retirement age. An older population has significant implications in the Township. If older residents are to remain in the community, alternatives to the single family house will have to be closely examined. While there is a greater percentage of families with children in the Township than elsewhere in the area, the majority of households are without children and this has implications for the schools. The school district is typically a catalyst for housing among families with children, and schools need enrollment to remain viable. With ample housing choices, including affordable housing available to the upcoming younger families, schools would continue to receive the enrollment. The mature families in the Township will soon become the “empty nester” households. Making alternative housing available to this group, more single family detached housing (still the dwelling of choice for families with school age children) would also be available for the younger families. This housing would likely be in a more walkable setting and located near the City of Buchanan.

**General Housing Characteristics**

In 2010, there were 1,640 housing units in the Township and increase of 86 since 2000. A dwelling unit could be an individual house, a mobile home, or a single apartment in an apartment house. Table 3 describes the tenancy and occupancy of the Township’s housing in 2010. Of the 1,640 dwelling units, 1,268 units (73.5%) were owner occupied, 83 units (7.9%) were renter occupied, and the remaining 289 units (18.6%) were vacant. Higher owner occupancy is generally desirable as it suggests a stable population base. Buchanan Township has a very high owner occupancy rate with relatively few rental units for the size of the Township’s population. This is expected in a rural township, especially with a mature to aging household population. Apartments and other rental housing tend to be located in urbanized areas where water and sewer, and other services, are available. The 289 vacant units are broken down as: 225 for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, 21 for rent, 33 for sale, 5 rented or sold but not occupied, and 5 of an other vacant status. In comparison, Berrien County has an owner occupied rate of 58.6 percent, a renter occupied rate of 23.4 percent, and a vacancy rate of 18.0 percent. The State as a whole has an owner occupied rate of 61.1 percent, a renter occupied rate of 22.9 percent, and a vacancy rate of 16.0 percent. Compared to figures from 2000, all three units of government reflect a slight decline in owner-occupied units, an increase in rental units and a marked increase in the percentage of vacant units.

<b>TABLE 3: HOUSING UNITS (2010)</b>						
	<b>Buchanan Township</b>		<b>Berrien County</b>		<b>State of Michigan</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Total Housing Units	1,640	100%	76,922	100%	4,531,231	100%
Owner Occupied	1,286	78.4%	45,063	58.6%	2,769,474	61.1%
Renter Occupied	83	5.0%	17,991	23.4%	1,037,147	22.9%
Vacant	289	17.6%	13,868	18.0%	724,610	16.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 ACS

## Growth in Housing

Table 4 shows the increase in total occupied dwelling units between 1990 and 2010 for Buchanan Township and adjacent communities. During this period, the number of occupied dwelling units in Buchanan Township increased by 12.30 percent with the greatest share of that growth occurring from 1990 to 2000. Interestingly, during the same period the total population increased only 3.56 percent. This is a common national trend as the average number of occupants per house decreases, as illustrated in Table 5. Weesaw and Oronoko Townships saw a decline in population while experiencing an increase in the number of occupied housing units.

The increase in occupied housing units followed the same area wide pattern as did the growth in population, with the highest in Niles Township, followed by Buchanan, Bertrand, Weesaw, and Oronoko. The two cities of Niles and Buchanan experienced a decrease in both total population as well as occupied housing units, but the average household size increased slightly.

**TABLE 4: OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS - 1990-2010**

<u>Community</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>% Change 1990 - 2010</u>	<u>% Change 2000 - 2010</u>
Buchanan City	1,990	1,915	1,713	-13.91%	-10.55%
Buchanan Township	1,203	1,307	1,351	+12.30%	+3.37%
Bertrand Township	828	903	1,014	+22.46%	+12.29%
Oronoko Township	3,193	3,295	3,433	+7.52%	+4.19%
Niles Township	4,745	5,252	5,523	+16.40%	+5.16%
City of Niles	5,177	5,094	4,691	-9.39%	-7.91%
Weesaw Township	745	798	845	+13.42%	+5.59%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010, ACS

## Average Household Size

**TABLE 5: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE - 1990-2010 (persons per household)**

<u>Community</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>% Change 1990 - 2010</u>	<u>% Change 2000 - 2010</u>
Buchanan City	2.5	2.41	2.60	4.05%	7.94%
Buchanan Township	2.82	2.66	2.61	-7.53%	-1.97%
Bertrand Township	2.69	2.64	2.62	-2.59%	-0.75%
Oronoko Township	3.08	2.98	2.68	-13.06%	-10.14%
Niles Township	2.71	2.52	2.56	-5.37%	1.77%
City of Niles	2.37	2.35	2.47	4.34%	5.23%
Weesaw Township	2.84	2.56	2.29	-19.33%	-10.50%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010, ACS

By way of comparison, in Berrien County the average household size in 2010 was 2.43 persons and in Michigan overall, households averaged 2.60 persons.

## Residential Building Permits

Table 6 details housing construction in Buchanan Township over the recent past. From 1997 to 2012, an average of over 16 homes were constructed annually. The rate of construction appears high when compared to the growth of population. However, when one looks at the number of lakes in the Township, it appears likely that a good percentage of the new housing is vacation or seasonal housing.

Furthermore, the effect of the recession is readily apparent in the later years of this table. Whereas the number of homes permitted from 1997 to 2007 was nearly 20 per year, since 2008 when the recession officially began, new home building permits have averaged only about 6 per year with 2011 seeing only one permit for the entire year.

<b>TABLE 6: NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PERMITS (1997-2012)</b>	
<u>Year</u>	<u>Construction</u>
1997	28
1998	13
1999	13
2000	22
2001	28
2002	14
2003	15
2004	32
2005	25
2006	17
2007	12
2008	8
2009	9
2010	7
2011	1

Source: Buchanan Township 2012

## Population Projections

The projection of population for a community over an extended period of time is subject to many variables, such as state-wide, regional and national population trends, in- and out-migration as well as the national and regional economy. The most significant factor affecting the permanent local population growth or decline is the availability of employment within a reasonable commuting distance. A reasonable method of projecting population growth involves taking recent trends in housing construction and projecting this construction activity into the future to determine the number of households. But this can yield misleading results when the rate of new home construction activity is as variable as it has been recently. For example, based upon the 2.61 persons per household reported in the 2010 census, and the average of 16 new residential building

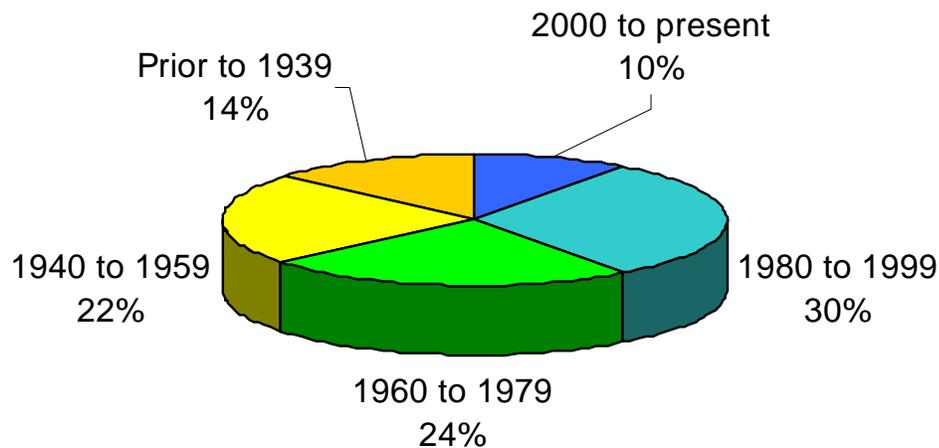
permits annually from 1997 through 2011, future population can be approximated as 3,941 persons in 2020 and 4,359 in 2030. On the other hand, using the average of 6 homes per year which has been the average since 2008, the 2020 population would increase to only about 3,679 and the 2030 population would be about 3,836. Lastly, it must be pointed out that this approach to population projection assumes that each new home is an addition to the housing stock and is not offset by any demolition of existing homes. It further assumes that all new home construction results in a year-round home, ignoring construction of seasonal homes. Most likely, the actual growth achieved will fall somewhere in the range described by these two approaches.

With the addition of more housing land will need to be appropriated accordingly. The size of the parcels can vary from a half acre to as much as five acres. Putting this into perspective, using half-acre parcels as an example, between and 156 and 418 acres over the next eighteen years would need residential status. Of course all parcels will not be a half-acre in size. There will be a range, and the land consumed will increase as the parcel size is increased particularly since a good percentage will continue to be vacation homes. The future population growth in Buchanan Township will be impacted by the goals and objectives of the Master Plan, the resources and constraints of the Township and the areas of Buchanan Township that are suitable for development and trends in the southwest Michigan marketplace. The decisions made by Buchanan Township regarding the plan will ultimately manage population growth.

**Housing Maintenance.**

With the slowing in the rate of new housing development, Township residents will increasingly face issues related to housing maintenance. As Figure 2 illustrates, over 60% of the housing stock in the Township is 30-years-old, or older. Older homes require renovation or repair, and in the next near future a significant portion of the housing stock will require some form of maintenance.

**Figure 2. Buchanan Township Age of Housing/Year Built**





## CHAPTER 3 TRANSPORTATION

### Transportation Analysis

Intensive land uses such as residential and commercial development require access to major roadways carrying larger volumes of traffic while industrial development requires accessibility and proximity to sufficiently constructed all-weather roads to accommodate the associated truck traffic. Therefore, to appropriately plan for future land uses within the Township, it is necessary to categorize and analyze the transportation and road systems within Buchanan Township. Roads also provide locations for public utilities such as water, sewer, gas, electric, and telephone lines. The road system is of vital importance for the overall well being of the Township and its residents.

### Road Classifications

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has developed the National Functional Classification System (NFCS) to classify all highways, streets, and roads according to their function. This system is recognized as the unofficial road classification system by transportation engineers and planners around the country. The various roads in the Township are illustrated on the Road Classification map on page 15. The NFCS designation is also responsible for determining those roads which are eligible for federal funding assistance.

### County Primary

Nearly 34 county primary roads are under the jurisdiction of the Berrien County Road Commission. The county primary roads in Buchanan Township are reflected as minor arterials and include S. Red Bud and E. Front/Niles-Buchanan Roads. County primary roads are generally paved and provide the primary means of travel within and through the Township. County primary roads generally accommodate local traffic with speeds of between 45-55 mph.

### County Secondary

The County Road Commission is also responsible for the maintenance of 35.25 miles of secondary roads located in Buchanan Township. Their principle function is to collect traffic from nearby local and subdivision streets and link them to major collectors, such as county primary roads and state highways. Speed limits are generally limited to 35 mph in residential areas and 55 mph elsewhere. Rights-of-way are typically greater than subdivision streets but less than primary or state highway rights-of-way. Of the two roads in Buchanan Township, there are two classifications: Major Collectors and minor collectors. Major collectors in the Township include N. Main Street, N. Red Bud Trail, River Street, Bakertown, Walton Road, Glendora Road, Warren Woods Road, West Front Street; Galien Buchanan, and Range Line. Minor collectors include Madron Lake, and Garr Roads.

## **Subdivision**

Subdivision or local roads provide access for residents between and within residential developments and neighboring areas in addition to connecting to County secondary and primary roads.

## **Traffic Count Analysis**

Traffic volume counts are a numeric tabulation based upon usage of a particular segment of roadway. Traffic volume counts are tools used to determine if roads are meeting or exceeding their designated capacity. The Berrien County Road Commission maintains traffic volume counts for primary County roads, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) maintains data for state highways and interstates and the Southwestern Michigan Commission maintains traffic volume data for the Niles/Buchanan Transportation Study area which includes roadways within Buchanan Township. These 24-hour traffic counts, commonly referred to as Average Daily Trips (ADT), can help identify where volumes may be approaching or exceeding the design capacity of the road. Traffic counts are not consistently collected for major and local streets under a municipality's or County's jurisdiction but when taken do provide a "snapshot" of the current capacity and efficiency of the road and trends in vehicle travel.

## **County Roads**

According to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, traffic counts for County are conducted periodically. East Front Street turns into Niles-Buchanan Road east of the City of Buchanan and is classified as a "minor arterial" and is among the heaviest traveled experiencing approximately 8,500 vehicles per day as measured at Schimer Parkway in the Summer of 2009. Even greater volumes are found on Niles-Buchanan Road in the vicinity of the park & ride lot, which registered about 22,000 vehicles in August, 2009. This is an increase of about 21% in volume since 2000. Red Bud Trail, which provides a direct route between residential development in the southern part of the Township and the City of Buchanan and with the City of Berrien Springs to the north, handled approximately 6,350 vehicles per day in June, 2009. This is a significant increase from the approximately 2,000 vehicles per day recorded in 2000. Secondary thoroughfares within the Township include River Street which turns in to Walton Road provides direct access to U.S. 31 with approximately 3,900 vehicles per day recorded in July, 2009. These roadways are in the southern third of the Township and are generally impacted by the close proximity of U.S. 31 and the City of Niles. North of the city, traffic volumes substantially decrease serving primarily local traffic and those traveling north to Berrien Springs. Glendora Road is the main east/west road in the northern portion of the Township carried over 1,000 vehicles per day in 2000. These traffic counts suggest that all roads are within their design capacity, although with increasing volumes the community may experience greater levels of congestion on key arterials during the morning and afternoon rush periods.

## **Support for Complete Streets**

The goals and objectives of this plan support the promotion of high quality transportation infrastructure and non-motorized trails. This Plan further supports enacting complete streets policy, in the form of a Township Resolution or Zoning Ordinance amendments. Complete streets are roadways planned, designed and constructed to allow access to all legal users safely and efficiently, without any one user taking priority over another. Complete streets can result in increased safety for non-motorized users, improved public health, a cleaner environment, mobility equity and enhanced quality of life through increased modal choices and more inviting streets.

While Buchanan Township relies on the Berrien County Road Commission for local public road infrastructure and private developers for neighborhood street development, it can support policies that enhance safe and efficient travel for all roadway users. Michigan law encourages the Michigan Department of Transportation to give additional consideration to enhancement grant applicants with complete streets policies. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act has also been amended to stipulate that transportation improvements be respectful of the surrounding context, further ensuring that more equitable and attractive streets become reality.

The Township's objective will be to work jointly with surrounding communities and developers to promote healthy lifestyles for people of all abilities through the development of a non-motorized network. Suggested design elements may include sidewalks on both sides of a roadway or street; adequate lighting; pedestrian signals and signage; bike lanes; multi-use trails; and other features. Even though most of Buchanan Township is rural in character, these elements are feasible in certain parts of the Township where more intense residential development may be proposed.

Some features may be accomplished through simple road restriping and the addition of signage. Other projects may be more involved and may only be practicable when coordinated with major roadway reconstruction. The Township should work with neighboring communities, developers, the road commission, and other pertinent agencies in implementation of complete streets policy.

## **Buchanan Dial-A-Ride.**

Buchanan Dial-A-Ride is a curb to curb shared ride transportation service that provides service to the residents of the City of Buchanan and Buchanan Township. Same day curb-to-curb service is available for residents who need to travel with individual fares varying by jurisdiction.

## **Rail Transportation**

One railroad line traverses the Township through the southeast corner of the Township running between the City of Niles and Buchanan to the east and west. This rail line is part of the proposed high speed rail system. The line currently accommodates passenger service operated by Amtrak between the cities of Detroit and Chicago. A highspeed rail corridor has been designated between

Chicago and Detroit and passes through Buchanan Township enroute to a stop in the City of Niles. This access will provide a potential one hour commute to Chicago from Niles. This access may result in increased commuter use and require additional housing in the Niles (Buchanan Township) area, as the rail commute to Chicago becomes more attractive.

### **Air Service**

The Jerry Tyler Memorial Airport located at 2018 Lake Street in the City of Niles is the closest airport to the Township. According to the City of Niles, the airport is a “general utility airport”, owned and operated by the City of Niles. The airport serves general aviation needs in the Michiana area. Situated on the northeast side of the city at 2018 Lake St., the airport features a NW/SE 4,100 foot paved runway and a NE/SW 3,300 paved runway. Approximately 35 aircraft are based at the airport. The airport provides both corporate and recreational flyers with a conveniently located facility.”

The closest airport with commercial passenger service is the South Bend Regional Airport in South Bend Indiana which offers services from 5 carriers and with connections through Chicago O’Hare or Detroit Metro, service around the world. In 2007, the South Bend Regional Airport completed construction of a 1,100-foot extension to the north/south runway for a total of 7,100 feet. In 2010, a new airport terminal was constructed with a 45,000 square foot concourse, 5 new gates, and accessory facilities including a lounge, gift shop, and children’s room.





## CHAPTER 4 EXISTING LAND USES

### General Overview

Located in the southeast corner of Berrien County, Buchanan Township is near the City of Niles which serves as the industrial and economic center of the region. The predominant land use in the Township is vacant, wooded, or agricultural land. The topography of the area is varied with relatively flat areas in the southern section of the Township and rolling topography in the central and northern sections of the Township. Existing areas of vegetation, numerous lakes and ponds, the St. Joseph River and its tributaries, large amounts of agricultural land uses and a lack of intensive uses all add to the overall rural character of the community.

### Land Use Classifications

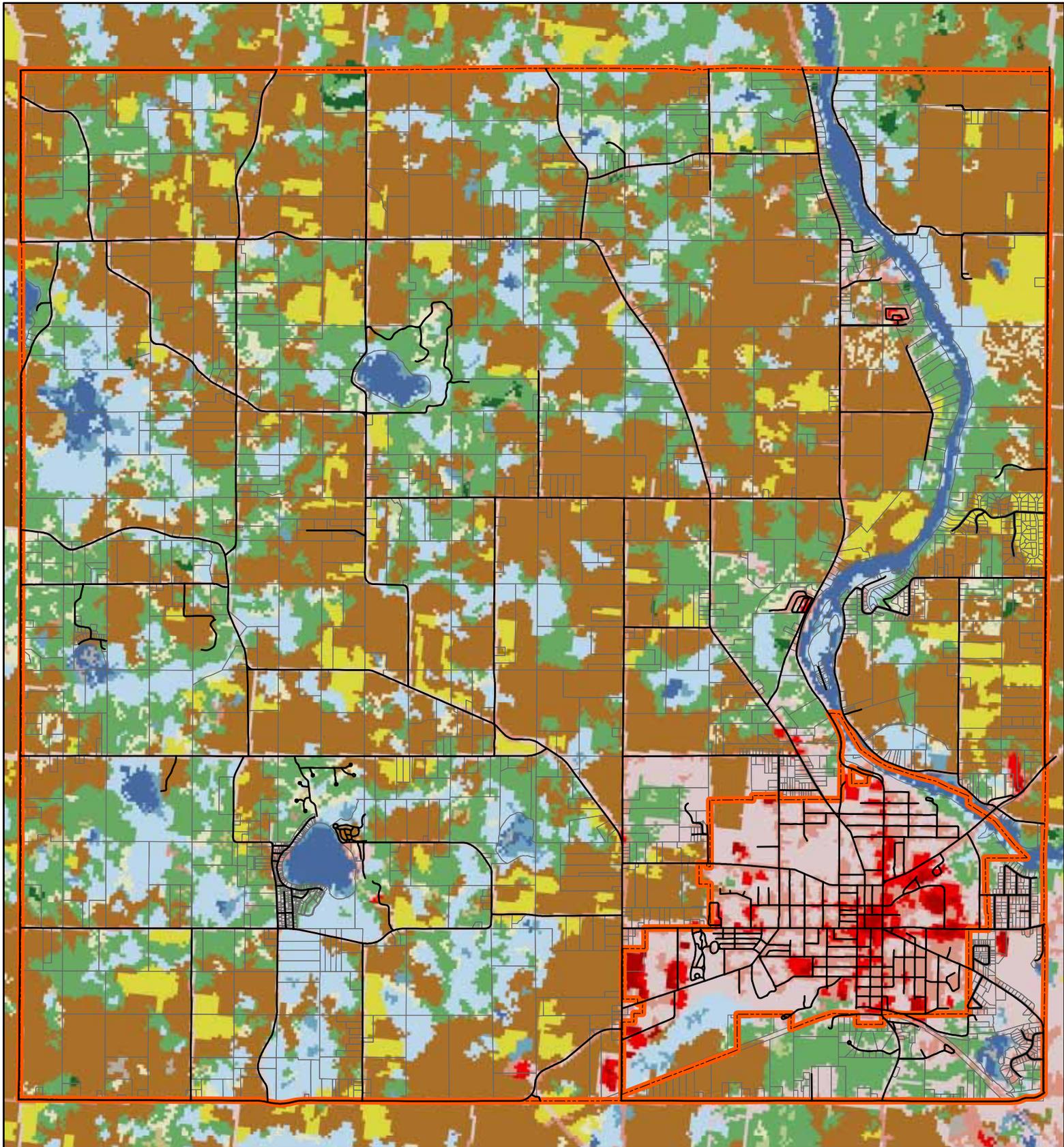
The following section outlines in more detail the location of particular land use and their characteristics within Buchanan Township. Existing land uses are developed from the US Geological Survey (USGS) through Berrien County. The land use data and the existing Land Cover map on page 18 was created by MLRC using 2006 satellite imagery and refined using land classification algorithms and previous land cover datasets.\* For the purpose of this revised Master Plan, the existing land uses are divided into the following MLRC categories.

- ◆ Open Water - All areas of open water, generally with less than 25% cover or vegetation or soil, including the St. Joseph River and several natural lakes, such as Clear Lake and Madron Lake.
- ◆ Developed, Open Space - Includes areas with a mixture of some constructed materials, but mostly vegetation in the form of lawn grasses. Impervious surfaces account for less than 20% of total cover. These areas most commonly include large-lot single-family housing units, parks, golf courses, and vegetation planted in developed settings for recreation, erosion control, or aesthetic purposes.
- ◆ Developed, Low Intensity -Includes areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. Impervious surfaces account for 20 – 49% of total cover. These areas most commonly include single-family housing units.
- ◆ Developed, Medium Intensity - Includes areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. Impervious surfaces account for 50 – 79% of the total cover. These areas most commonly include single-family housing units.
- ◆ Developed, High Intensity - Includes highly developed areas where people reside or work in high numbers. Examples include apartment complexes, row houses and commercial or industrial uses. Impervious surfaces account for 80% or more of the total cover.

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\* The Multi-Resolution Land Characterization (MRLC) consortium is a group of federal agencies that coordinate and generate consistent and relevant land cover information at the national scale for a wide variety of environmental, land management, and modeling applications. See <http://www.mrlc.gov>.

- ◆ Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay) - Barren areas of bedrock, desert pavement, scarps, talus, slides, volcanic material, glacial debris, sand dunes, strip mines, gravel pits and other accumulations of earthen material. Generally, vegetation accounts for less than 15% of total cover.
- ◆ Deciduous Forest - Areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20% of total vegetation cover. More than 75% of the tree species shed foliage simultaneously in response to seasonal change.
- ◆ Evergreen Forest - Areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20% of total vegetation cover. More than 75% of the tree species maintain their leaves all year. Canopy is never without green foliage.
- ◆ Mixed Forest - Areas dominated by trees generally greater than 5 meters tall, and greater than 20% of total vegetation cover. Neither deciduous nor evergreen species are greater than 75% of total tree cover.
- ◆ Shrub/Scrub - Areas dominated by shrubs; less than 5 meters tall with shrub canopy typically greater than 20% of total vegetation. This class includes true shrubs, young trees in an early successional stage or trees stunted from environmental conditions.
- ◆ Grassland/Herbaceous - Areas dominated by grammanoid (i.e., grassy) or herbaceous vegetation, generally greater than 80% of total vegetation. These areas are not subject to intensive management such as tilling, but can be utilized for grazing.
- ◆ Pasture/Hay - Areas of grasses, legumes, or grass-legume mixtures planted for livestock grazing or the production of seed or hay crops, typically on a perennial cycle. Pasture/hay vegetation accounts for greater than 20% of total vegetation.
- ◆ Cultivated Crops - Areas used for the production of annual crops, such as corn, soybeans, vegetables, tobacco, and cotton, and also perennial woody crops such as orchards and vineyards. Crop vegetation accounts for greater than 20% of total vegetation. This class also includes all land being actively tilled.
- ◆ Woody Wetlands - Areas where forest or shrub land vegetation accounts for greater than 20% of vegetative cover and the soil or substrate is periodically saturated with or covered with water.
- ◆ Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands - Areas where perennial herbaceous vegetation accounts for greater than 80% of vegetative cover and the soil or substrate is periodically saturated with or covered with water.



# Buchanan Township

Berrien County, Michigan

## Land Cover - 2006

### Legend

- |                              |                       |                              |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Open Water                   | Consolidated Shore    | Pasture/Hay                  |
| Developed, Open Space        | Deciduous Forest      | Cultivated Crops             |
| Developed, Low Intensity     | Evergreen Forest      | Woody Wetlands               |
| Developed, Medium Intensity  | Mixed Forest          | Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands |
| Developed, High Intensity    | Shrub/Scrub           |                              |
| Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay) | Grasslands/Herbaceous |                              |



## **Soil Survey.**

The Soil Survey of Berrien County, Michigan, developed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and updated in 1991, provides a detailed evaluation of the soil capabilities and characteristics for those soil associations found in Buchanan Township and in Berrien County in general. This Plan will not directly reiterate the information found in the soil survey. It will attempt to place the information in context for decision makers in Buchanan Township.

Soils with some limitations for septic systems are illustrated in the Septic Suitability Map on page 20.

## **Surface Waters.**

The dominate water feature in Buchanan Township is the St. Joseph River. The St. Joseph River originates in Hillsdale County and meanders south and west dipping into Indiana before turning north into Berrien County, completing its 210 mile journey to Lake Michigan in the City that bears its name. The River is located in the northeast quarter of Buchanan Township also forming the northeast boundary of the City of Buchanan. The identity of Buchanan Township is closely tied to the St. Joseph River's proximity within the Township.

In addition to the River, there are numerous kettle holes, swamps, and lakes are located throughout the Township. More specifically, there are at least 30 ponds and lakes of various sizes located within Buchanan Township. The largest of which include Clear Lake, Madron Lake, Weaver Lake, Wagner Lake and Yellow Lake.







## CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Public Schools

The Buchanan Community School System operates two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. They are:

Moccasin Elementary School (pre-K to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)  
410 Moccasin Street, Buchanan, MI 49107

Ottawa Elementary School (grades 3 and 4)  
109 Ottawa Street, Buchanan, MI 49107

Buchanan Middle School (grades 5 to 7)  
610 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Buchanan, MI 49107

Buchanan High School (grades 8 - 12)  
401 West Chicago Street, Buchanan, MI 49107

### Buchanan Township Offices

The Township maintains an office building at 15235 Main Street serving the primary administrative and public service activities of the Township. The facility houses the offices of the Township Supervisor, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Zoning Administrator, Building Inspector and Assessor.

### Public Safety Services

The Township Fire Department operates on a volunteer basis covering the 36 square miles of Buchanan Township. The department maintains five emergency vehicles at its facility located at 15301 Main Street. The department is administered by a Fire Chief under the direction of the Township Supervisor and Township Board.

Police and Law Enforcement services in the Township are provided by the Berrien County Sheriff's Department and ambulance service is provided by the Southwest Michigan Community Ambulance Service (SMCAS). SMCAS is a non-profit, municipally owned and operated advanced life support ambulance service serving the residents and visitors of the greater Niles and Buchanan area in southwest Michigan.

### Public Water and Sanitary Sewer Availability

There are currently sanitary sewer services and facilities in Buchanan Township located directly adjacent to and around the perimeter of the City of Buchanan. The Joint Water/Sewer Board supervises the system and is a joint City/Township body. It makes policy recommendations

regarding operation of the city's water and sewer system, and oversees the cooperative agreement between the City and Township for provision of city water and sewer services to adjacent township areas. The Board includes two City representatives, two Township representatives, and one "at large" member. Currently, sanitary sewer service extends approximately 2,100 feet along Bakertown Road and to the landfill on Mayflower Road. No other area within the Township is currently serviced by sanitary sewer.

### **Sanitary Landfill.**

Berrien County Berrien County is home to three solid waste landfills including the Southeast Berrien County Landfill located 1540 Mayflower Road, immediately east of Buchanan Township. The landfill offers a wide range of services for both residential and commercial customers including, residential and commercial waste disposal, recycling services and roll-off container services.

### **Telephone, Broadband and Natural Gas Service**

Complete telephone service, via various land-line systems and wireless carriers, is available in the Township. There are two cellular telephone towers in the Township and DSL internet is available throughout the Township and Broadband internet service is available in most areas of the Township. In addition, in those areas where service is provided, Semco Energy provides the Township's residents with natural gas for heating, cooking, and hot water.

### **Cultural and Recreational Resources**

**Fernwood Botanical Gardens** is a membership-based botanical garden which includes an arboretum, prairie restoration, and gardens. The Nature Center was constructed as an office building in 1973-74 and converted to its present use in 1989. The Mary Plym Visitors Center also opened in 1989. Fernwood's mission is to enrich the lives of all people by stimulating the appreciation of nature, exemplifying harmony between people, plants, gardens, and wildlife, while using the distinctive natural and cultivated habitats.

**The Mud Lake Bog** property is located north of Elm Valley Road was formerly used as the township dump. After the Southeast Berrien County Landfill was opened, a group of residents petitioned the township to purchase the property and preserve the bog. In 1980 the property was purchased and a committee formed to supervise the clean up. Fernwood Botanical Gardens personnel agreed to oversee the cleanup and development of the Bog preserve.

The original committee, along with personnel from Fernwood, and many other volunteers were responsible for cleaning the bog and installing the board walks and other amenities. In later years, boy scouts have done repair work to the bog to help them with advancement.

In 1987 an award was presented to the Bog Committee by the Greater Michigan Foundation for their work on the Mud Lake Bog Nature Preserve. A rare complete bog, located on Elm Valley

Road, the preserve is used and visited by classes from Michigan and Illinois schools and colleges for study.

The bog is open to the public at no charge. There is a boardwalk winding through the bog along with an observation tower and picnic tables with a shelter. There are many rare and endangered plants, birds and other wildlife.

**Buchanan District Library.** Located on Front Street in the City of Buchanan, the Buchanan District Library owns approximately 45,000 items. These include print materials in regular, large print, magazine and newspaper; audio books in cassette, MP3, CD and playaway; films in VHS and DVD; video games in various platforms. The Library participates in the Southwest Michigan Digital Library where e-Books, audio books, music and movies are available to download. The Library also participates in “MeLCat” the statewide union catalog and resource sharing project to share materials among libraries in Michigan.

**Senior Center.** Located at 810 Rynearson Street in the City of Buchanan, the Buchanan Senior Center provides social, recreational and health programming for the area’s senior citizens. The Senior Center is supported by a voted millage levied by Berrien County and its services are available to all residents of the area.

**Boat Launches.** There are two public boat launch ramps in the Township. The MDNR offers a boat launch on the St. Joseph River on E. River Road. In addition, the Township maintains a boat launch on Madron Lake.

**Numerous Campground Facilities.** Buchanan Township is home to several camping opportunities. All are privately owned and operated but provide an important recreational opportunity for residents and visitors alike.

**Bear Cave Resort** is an RV park located on the St. Joseph River with a swimming pool, recreation area, lodge and recreation facilities. The site is promoted as having the only naturally formed caves in the State of Michigan and a Conference Tree here, used by the Potawatomi Indian braves as a lookout point to see approaching enemies coming down the river.

**Fuller's Resort and Campground** is an 80-acre facility located on Clear Lake. It offers log cabin cottages, full service and primitive campsites with about 400 feet of beach on the lake. The facility offer guests a place to relax and enjoy the area’s natural features.

**Life Action Family Camp** is a part of the Life Action facility located on 175 acres on Clear Lake. The facility offers a broad range of services and is promoted as a family-oriented, religious facility where one can escape the daily routine and reconnect with their family and meet their spiritual needs.

**Red Bud MX** is a nationally-known motocross racing park located in the Township on Red Bud Road. Sometimes referred to as Red Bud Track and Trail, the facility offers a variety of off-road tracks for motocross racing, practice and leisure enjoyment. Periodically, the facility sponsors

regional events bringing tourists and motocross enthusiasts to the area for camping and to enjoy this popular spectator sport.

## CHAPTER 6. DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In crafting a Land Use Plan, one of the primary components is the formulation of a community's goals. Establishing goals determines the direction toward which the community's planning efforts should be directed. The development goals are a necessary component of the planning process as they provide the framework within which the plan is developed and the basis for determining future courses of action regarding the physical development of the County.

First and foremost, the goals are translated into the Future Land Use Map. As such, their primary use is in guiding the Township's land use decisions. This, of course, means that the goals are important to private property owners and developers; providing guidance as to how the Township will approach land use decisions. Indeed, changes to the zoning district map should generally not be approved if they are in conflict with the Future Land Use Plan Map.

A second use of the goals is in guiding the Township in making decisions in regard to Township activities, especially capital investments. For example, if one area of the Township is to be preserved for farming and open space, and another area dedicated to residential development, then the Township's decisions on where to invest in building a new playground or park should reflect the future need for a playground in the more populated area. Likewise, provisions such as open space zoning should focus on those areas that the Township plans for agricultural preservation.

A final use of the goals is to guide future programs and projects of the Township. For instance, if a goal, which is very important to the local community, is to expand employment opportunities, then not only would the Future Land Use Map identify areas for the expansion of business and industry, but there might be an objective to create a local economic development organization.

At a very minimum, the goals are applied to a Future Land Use Map, which is a legal foundation for the exercise of zoning authority. Beyond this bare minimum, the contents of the Master Plan, and the use of the goals depends entirely on the desires of the local community.

The purpose of this Chapter is to describe the land use and development goals of Buchanan Township. These goals are based on the community's opinions as expressed in the Public Visioning Workshop and a Community Survey undertaken when the plan was originally prepared in 2002\*, as well as upon the preceding analysis of the community's resources and development trends.

### Rural Character

The primary and over-riding goal of the community is the **preservation of rural character**. This goal received the highest priority in the Community Survey, with support from over 88 percent of respondents. This goal was also the highest priority of those who participated in the Public

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\* Although survey input is more than ten years old, the Planning Commission believes the policies embraced by the survey respondents remain reflective of broad community attitudes and perspectives.

Visioning Workshop. Thus, it is the desire to preserve the Township's rural character that underlies many of the other land use and development goals.

The importance of rural character necessitates that the Planning Commission describe what it is that rural character means. This term is used widely and can convey several different meanings. In the context of Buchanan Township, rural character means low population density, and the quality of life factors that results from a low population density. These factors include lack of traffic, lack of crowding, open spaces and natural resources, shopping and jobs located in the City of Buchanan and other cities, and quietness and serenity.

### **Agriculture and Open Spaces**

Agriculture is an important land use throughout the Township. However, due to topography and drainage, active agricultural production is not as extensive as it is in other townships. Equally as important to the landscape and land use patterns of Buchanan Township are the extensive woodlands, pastureland, the many small lakes, and the St. Joseph River.

A fundamental aspect to preserving rural character is the protection, preservation and enhancement of the agricultural, woodland, and open space uses of the majority of the land in the Township. This Plan pursues the goal of preserving agriculture and open space by discouraging development in agricultural and open space areas.

The Michigan Right to Farm Act limits local regulation of legitimate commercial agriculture and it protects farmers from nuisance complaints related to generally accepted agricultural activities. While farming is considered to be a valuable land use for the purpose of this Plan, agriculture is no more or less important than woodlands and open space uses. The primary consideration is to maintain a low population density by discouraging the conversion of agricultural and open space lands for development. At the same time, the Township may work with farm operations to enable ancillary agricultural activities, such as agri-tourism or tasting rooms, which expand the range of profit centers for farmers while maintaining a low-intensity and rural atmosphere.

### **Residential**

The population of the Township will likely to experience relatively modest population growth over the next 15 years. Based on recent trends, the Township could see over 400 acres of new residential development by 2030 (assuming 2-acre lots on average).

With the goal of preserving rural character, the residential development goal is to have more dense residential development – lots under one acre in size, and duplexes and multi-family development – located in and adjacent to the City of Buchanan. Additional residential developments should be encouraged to be located near the existing residential.

Until a recent amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, single-family housing was allowed throughout the Township on lots one acre or larger in size. However, to preserve the rural

character, the Zoning Ordinance was amended to increase this minimum lot size to two acres in the Agricultural District, which comprises the vast majority of the land area in the Township. The intent of this increase was to reduce the potential overall density that is permitted, as well as permit a more effective use of open space design techniques. In adopting the increase in lot area, the Township encountered very little objection as most residents supported the intent.

The Open Preservation Development amendments to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act were intended to encourage the preservation of open space by requiring 50% of a residential development to remain in open space while allowing a developer to reduce lot area and frontage to result in the same development yield as would otherwise be permitted. The Township may evaluate alternative techniques to further encourage this form of development, especially in areas with important natural features that may be protected.

### **Commerce**

One of the most noticeable trends in the previous 50 years, is the change in Americans' shopping habits. Commercial strip development and shopping malls are being supplanted by traditional downtown and central business districts. Downtown Buchanan remains the commercial hub of the area for neighborhood retail needs, but regional shopping can be done in a number of other locales, including St. Joseph, MI, and South Bend, IN, or even Chicago IL. Modest suburban commercial development is also found east of Buchanan on Niles-Buchanan Road.

In order to preserve the Township's rural character, it is the goal of this Plan for new commercial development to be located in the City of Buchanan when it can be accommodated there, and in the areas of the Township immediately adjacent to the City, when necessary. If commercial development meets a need in the Township, it should be of a service or low key retail nature.

### **Industry**

Industrial land use is a function of four primary factors: available land, available infrastructure, access to markets, and access to labor. There are subsets of each of these such as access to markets which include rail as well as trucks and access to labor which includes quality schools and a quality living environment. Nevertheless, these four are the major ones.

Industry also means employment opportunities for residents. To the extent it is feasible, this Plan supports the expansion of industry within current location(s) and provides for such opportunities. Especially, continued economic development efforts targeted at the industrial park are to be encouraged. To support the goal of preserving rural character, the industrial development goal of this Plan is to locate all new industry in the existing industrially zoned areas. If additional industrial land is required, it should be located in or adjacent to the City of Buchanan.

A small node of specialized industrial and heavy commercial uses is found on Walton Road immediately east of the River. Although well located in terms of commercial traffic access to US-31, this location is not ideal for further expansion as it is surrounded by low density residential

uses. Yet the Township is supportive of these business activities and will seek to accommodate the uses, perhaps with a specialized zoning amendment that enable it to remain and flourish, without promoting an expansion of otherwise non-compatible uses and activities.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

The City of Buchanan lies within the borders of Buchanan Township. The City's future will have an absolute impact on the future of the Township. The quality of the City's housing stock, the vitality of its central business district, and the sustainability of its industrial base will directly impact the Township. It is also a gateway to the Township for people driving west on Niles-Buchanan Road. Indeed, many of the preceding goals called for locating more intense land uses within or adjacent to the City. A vital City is in the Township's best interest. Therefore land use compatibility is incorporated into this Plan, one of the bases for fostering inter-governmental cooperation.

Overall, the Plan will seek to support City development by planning for compatible land uses wherever the Township abuts the City or other adjoining jurisdictions. This is consistent with past practices and the Township is committed to working to assure cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions whenever possible.

## CHAPTER 7 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This Chapter of the Plan presents the Master Land Use Plan for Buchanan Township for the next fifteen years. Included in this Chapter is the Future Land Use Map which graphically displays this Master Land Use Plan.

### **Agriculture and Open Space**

The Master Land Use Plan calls for the majority of land within the Township to remain in agriculture, woodlands, or open space. This land use category includes all of the Township with the exceptions of the City, certain areas adjacent to the City planned for more intense development, and several existing and emerging residential areas.

The extension of utilities such as water and sewer lines, encourages the development of higher density lots within agriculture and open space areas. By removing the physical constraints of needing a sufficient area for the location of a well and septic system, developers are provided the opportunity to maximize the yield of buildable lots within a particular parcel in areas traditionally reserved for lower density residential land uses. The availability of public utilities thus facilitates the suburbanization of the community and the erosion of the community's rural character.

This Plan recognizes that residential development will continue to occur in agriculture and open space areas as lots are divided in accordance within the constraints of the Township Zoning Ordinance and State Land Division Act. However, it is the intent of this plan to promote the efficient use of land in such a way as to encourage effective site planning, minimize residential sprawl, maintain suitably sized parcels for farming and agricultural activities and minimize the conflicts which arise from residential land owners locating in areas previously restricted to agricultural activities and uses.

Maintaining lower density land use through strict zoning and land division requirements, preventing the extension of utility services to agriculture and open space planned areas, and the encouragement of innovative and unique site planning for rural residential land development that results in the maintenance of large useable agricultural parcels (such as open space or cluster housing developments), are a means to an end for the Township to ensure the preservation of rural character and agricultural farm lands for the current and future residents of Buchanan Township.

### **Residential Development**

To the degree that there is likely to be substantial development in Buchanan Township in the next fifteen years, it will most likely be residential development. This Master Land Use Plan calls for four types of residential land use categories.

The first category is *urban residential*. This category includes those areas that are adjacent to and near the City of Buchanan. Generally, these areas have already been developed on smaller,

suburban-scale lots, usually less than an acre in size. The intent of this category is to protect and enhance these residential areas. Construction of housing on vacant lots in these areas is generally encouraged as is improvement of undeveloped tracts of land for residential uses. Neighborhoods in this district should be scaled for family housing and include amenities to enable safe and convenient travel by motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. In selected areas, small concentration of community services uses, such as professional offices or convenience commercial uses may be appropriate.

The second category is the *urban growth* area. While the intent of this Master Land Use Plan is to encourage more dense residential development approximately one-half acre in size, and duplexes and multi-family development - to be located within the City of Buchanan, this Master Land Use Plan recognizes that additional land for such uses might be needed. The purpose of the urban growth area is to identify areas where it might be appropriate to one day extend the City's infrastructure to facilitate more dense development patterns that can generally be accommodated in other areas in the Township. It is in these areas where the alternative housing choices for mature households would be developed.

A third category is *lake residential* development. This category represents the often dense development around inland lakes. Lake residential development has its own set of characteristics. For example, it is common to have the designated front and rear yards reversed, with the rear yard fronting on the street. There is also the need to address water craft storage, length of docks, and marine engine repair facilities, uses not typically associated with residential development.

Clear Lake and Madron Lake are planned for lake residential development much of which is already existing. However, it must be stressed that not all land shown in this category should or is intended to have access to the lakes. Lake residential is likely to contact conventional residential development along with residential development reflecting the influence of the land. Furthermore, the very small lot development of the past is discouraged. Clustering of dwellings on parcels could result in preservation of land adjacent to lakes and may entail the installation of community water and/or wastewater systems scaled to serve a small pocket of the area near the lake. Around the undeveloped portions of the lake, residential densities should not exceed two units per acre.

The final residential category is *rural residential*. This category includes several areas that have been developed for residential or seasonal recreational use. The purpose of this category is to protect and enhance the existing development in these areas. Construction of housing on vacant lots in these areas is generally acceptable. As well, the development of undeveloped tracts of land for residential uses is generally acceptable. New development should be accommodated on larger lot sizes, generally one acre or larger in size. Note that much of the land in this category is planned near the St. Joseph River. Topography in these areas makes for superior residential development sites. However, high density is not encouraged.

### **Commercial Development**

This Plan calls for all new commercial development to be accommodated within the City of Buchanan to the extent that is possible. The Township desires to discourage sprawl and strip commercial development that threatens the viability of existing commercial areas.

However, should the need arise for additional area for commercial development outside of the boundaries of the City of Buchanan, such development should occur east of the City along Niles Buchanan Road. However, some of this area is currently used for single family residential development. Therefore it could be termed an area of traditional land use. Any commercial development would need to recognize the limitations of lot size and parking. Therefore, limited commercial office, or mixed use is recommended.

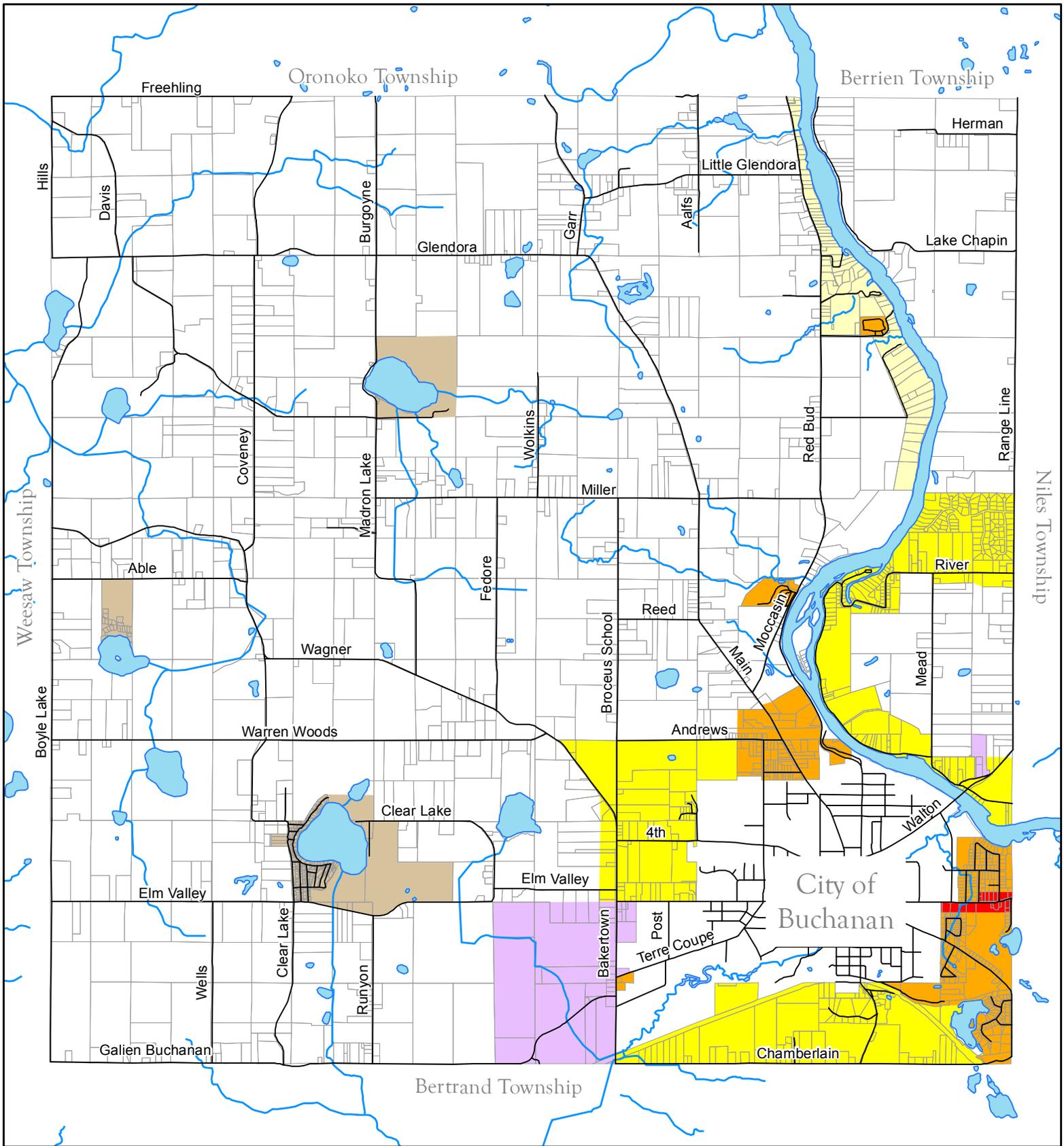
### **Industrial Development**

This Plan calls for new industrial development to be located in the existing industrial park area. The Township currently has sufficient land zoned for industrial development, southwest of the City of Buchanan. This area is proximate to the railroad and could have utilities when they are needed. The linkage to US-31 US-12 also increases the development opportunities in this area.

A small node of specialized industrial and heavy commercial uses is found on Walton Road immediately east of the River. Although well located in terms of commercial traffic access to US-31, this location is not ideal for further expansion as it is surrounded by low density residential uses. Yet the Township is supportive of these business activities and will seek to accommodate the uses, perhaps with a specialized zoning amendment that enable it to remain and flourish, without promoting an expansion of otherwise non-compatible uses and activities.

It is not envisioned that there will be additional industrial land during the life span of this Master Land Use Plan. However, should the need for such arise, then land immediately adjacent to the existing industrially zoned areas should be considered for inclusion.





# Buchanan Township

Berrien County, Michigan

## Future Land Use

### Legend

#### Future Land Use - 2012

- Agriculture and Open Space
- RR, Rural Residential
- LR, Lake Residential
- UGA, Urban Growth Area
- UR, Urban Residential
- C, Commercial
- I, Industrial



**Williams & Works**

Data Source: Michigan CGI



## Zoning Plan

Section 33, (2), (d), of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires that Master Plans adopted after September 1, 2008 include a Zoning Plan to explain how the future land use categories in this Plan relate to the zoning districts incorporated in the Township’s Zoning Ordinance. The following table relates the more general future land use categories with the zoning districts and discusses features and factors to be considered in reviewing requests to rezone lands in the Township consistent with this plan.

1. Future Land Use Categories	2. Supporting and Compatible Zoning Districts	3. Potentially Compatible Zoning Districts*	4. Evaluation Factors and Features*
Agriculture and Open Space	Agricultural  Recreational	Planned Unit Development    R-1 Low Density Residential , R4L Lakefront Residential	<p>PUD rezoning may be appropriate in any portion of the Township if the form of development is consistent with the intent of the district. The Zoning Ordinance will govern decisions to undertake a PUD rezoning.</p> <p>In those portions of the Agriculture and Open Space future land use designation that are immediately adjacent to areas planned as Rural Residential or Lake Residential, a rezoning to R-1, or R4L may be appropriate if such an extension represents a logical addition to existing zoning and features or measures are in place or proposed to minimize the potential for unplanned expansion of more intense uses</p>
Rural Residential	R-1 Low Density Residential, R4R and Recreational	Planned Unit Development	PUD rezoning may be appropriate in any portion of the Township if the form of development is consistent

1. Future Land Use Categories	2. Supporting and Compatible Zoning Districts	3. Potentially Compatible Zoning Districts*	4. Evaluation Factors and Features*
			with the intent of the district. The Zoning Ordinance will govern decisions to undertake a PUD rezoning.
Lake Residential	R4L Lakefront Residential, RE - Recreational, R-1 Low Density Residential and Agricultural	Planned Unit Development	PUD rezoning may be appropriate in any portion of the Township if the form of development is consistent with the intent of the district. The Zoning Ordinance will govern decisions to undertake a PUD rezoning.
Urban Growth Area	R-1 Low Density Residential R-2 Medium Density Residential	Planned Unit Development  R-3 Multiple Family Residential, R5 Manufactured Housing	PUD rezoning may be appropriate in any portion of the Township if the form of development is consistent with the intent of the district. The Zoning Ordinance will govern decisions to undertake a PUD rezoning.  In areas immediately adjacent to the City of Buchanan where municipal utility could be extended, higher density residential patterns could be considered, if otherwise compatible with surrounding uses.
Urban Residential	R-2 Medium Density Residential; R-3 Multiple Family	Planned Unit Development	PUD rezoning may be appropriate in any portion of the Township if the

1. Future Land Use Categories	2. Supporting and Compatible Zoning Districts	3. Potentially Compatible Zoning Districts*	4. Evaluation Factors and Features*
	Residential and R-5 Manufactured Housing	CS - Commercial Service	<p>form of development is consistent with the intent of the district. The Zoning Ordinance will govern decisions to undertake a PUD rezoning.</p> <p>In areas immediately adjacent to the City of Buchanan where municipal wastewater and water service could be made available, neighborhood-scale professional offices or convenience businesses located on heavily traveled roadways may be contemplated if appropriate features or measures are in place or proposed to minimize the potential for unplanned expansion of more intense uses features</p>
Commercial	CS - Commercial Service	R-2 Medium Density Residential; R-3 Multiple Family Residential	Higher density residential development may be appropriate in areas planned for commercial land uses when effective buffers can be provided between potentially incompatible uses resulting in a high amenity, attractive development
Industrial	IND Industrial	CS Commercial Service	Where industrial land uses generate a need for locally-oriented commercial uses to serve the employment centers, the Planning Commission may consider the inclusion of such uses in

1. Future Land Use Categories	2. Supporting and Compatible Zoning Districts	3. Potentially Compatible Zoning Districts*	4. Evaluation Factors and Features*
			<p>a Commercial Service district where there are features or other measures to prevent the proliferation of strip commercial that would undermine the industrial character of the area.</p> <p>In other areas of the Township planned for Industrial uses and which include intense land uses or uses with potential off-site impacts, the Township may consider alternate or new zoning designations.</p>

\* In considering a request to rezone property in Buchanan Township, the Planning Commission shall consider the future land use map and the future land use descriptive narrative of this plan. The foregoing table shall be used to evaluate the degree to which the proposed rezoning is, or may be, consistent with this plan together with an evaluation of the specific request. If the future land use category in Column 1 matches with the listed compatible zoning district in Column 2, the rezoning request may be considered consistent with this Master Plan. If the proposed zoning district is listed as potentially compatible (Column 3) with the future land use category, the Planning Commission and Township Board will refer to the evaluation factors and features presented in Column 4 to guide a decision on the request. In addition, the Township will also evaluate the proposed rezoning to consider whether the site may be reasonably used as it is currently zoned, whether the proposed site is an appropriate location any and all of the land uses that might be permitted within the requested zoning district, whether there may be other locations in the community that are better suited to accommodate such uses and any potential detrimental impact on the surrounding property that could result from the proposed rezoning.

In all cases, this Zoning Plan shall be applied as a guideline for the Planning Commission and Township Board subject to the appropriate application of the discretionary authority permitted by statutory authority, case law and good planning practice. Nothing in this Zoning Plan will preclude the Planning Commission and Township Board from considering amendments to this Master Plan to better serve the public interests of the community.

## CHAPTER 8 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Crafting the proper legislative “tools” with which to “make the plan happen” is a logical and necessary extension of the planning process. Without the tools, the efforts in developing the Plan will have little benefit. It’s like making a shopping list without having any money to make the purchases.

Zoning legislation is the primary “tool” with which to make the Plan happen. A Zoning Ordinance should be prepared which reflects the policies in the Plan. For example, if the Plan emphasizes preservation of agriculture, then the Zoning Ordinance should contain provisions which are intended to preserve farmland. Similarly, for those communities who wish to promote economic development, the Zoning Ordinance should contain provisions which advance industrial and commercial development. Zoning is to the Plan what money is to the shopping list.

Effective administration of the Zoning Ordinance is absolutely critical to achievement of any of the Plan’s goals and objectives. Zoning administration consists of the following components.

- Preparing the appropriate land use management regulations.
- Applying the regulations to the zoning map.
- Using the regulations, such as site plan review and special use permits, with discretion.
- Making changes on the zoning map to reflect the objectives of the Plan.
- Granting variances which recognize legitimate practical difficulty without undermining the integrity of the Zoning Ordinance
- Inspecting proposed development for compliance with the regulations.

These responsibilities are divided among the Township Board of Trustees, the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator. It takes a “buy in” by all four bodies for the Zoning Ordinance to effectively achieve the goals of the Plan. If even one entity lacks an understanding of the relationship between the Plan and the Zoning Ordinance serious mistakes can be made, not only defeating the purpose of the Plan, but also putting the Township at risk for legal challenges.

The understanding of the relationship between the Plan and the Zoning Ordinance can be achieved through training and continuing education. Legislation affecting land use is introduced by lawmakers at state and national levels every year. Some of these initiatives eventually are made into laws. Awareness of these legislative changes and judicial opinions are critical to effective zoning administration. Continuing education for current board and commissions as well as basic training for new members is vital to the success of any Plan.