

MARTIN TOWNSHIP 2013 UPDATE TO THE MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Martin Township Update to the Master Plan has been prepared by the Township Planning Commission under the provisions of the Township Planning Act, Public Act 168 of 1959 (MCL 125.321, *et seq.*), as amended. The Planning Act authorizes townships to prepare and adopt a plan for the unincorporated areas of the township. The purpose of that plan, according to the State Act, is to:

- promote the public health, safety, and general welfare;
- encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability;
- avoid overcrowding of the land by buildings and people;
- lessen congestion on public roads and streets;
- facilitate a transportation system, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and,
- consider the township's character and suitability for particular uses.

Although the 2013 Update to the Master Plan has no regulatory power, it states specific land development and preservation goals. These goals are intended to guide both the Planning Commission and the Township Board in making both day-to-day and long-range land use decisions.

The 2013 Update to the Master Plan has been developed based upon several factors: the existing natural resources of the Township; current land use trends; the need for different types of land use including industrial and commercial uses; the availability of public water and sewer; and the desired community character as expressed through work sessions with local officials conducted in the past.

State law states that each community shall review its Master Plan every five years, and determine whether the plan should be amended or whether a new plan should be adopted. The Martin Township 2013 Update to the Master Plan addresses land use policy for the next five years, and at the end of that period, the 2013 Updated Master Plan will be reviewed again to determine whether its' stated goals and policies need to be revised.

Use of the Plan

The 2013 Update to the Master Plan serves as a tool for decision making by providing information and rationale for land use decisions. In particular, the 2013 Updated Plan will assist local officials in the following:

- **Review of rezonings, and special use permits.** Applications for rezonings and special use permits should be evaluated not only in terms

of specific ordinance standards but also in terms of how well the proposed action will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.

- **Review of public improvement projects.** All future public improvement projects, including the construction of new facilities, utilities, or buildings must first be reviewed by the Planning Commission for consistency with the Update to the Master Plan, according to PA 168 of 1959. In particular, any public improvement project must be reviewed to see whether it is consistent with the planned future land use pattern in Martin Township. Public improvements projects include roads, public safety facilities, parks and recreation facilities, utilities, and any other public space, building, or structure.
- **Review of plats and site condominiums.** The subdivision of land, whether by plats or site condominium divisions, has a profound impact upon the character of a community and future public service needs. The Updated Master Plan provides policies to assist the Planning Commission with decisions as to location and design of subdivisions, and the adequacy of public services to meet the increase in demand placed upon the community by the increase in intensity of land use that logically follows land division. Policies for subdivision of land apply not only to residential land use, but to commercial and industrial land use as well.
- **Maintaining community character while managing growth.** Each community has a vision for their future, and a sense for their desired character. However, growth is inevitable in a thriving community. The 2013 Update to the Master Plan, more than any other document, provides direction for Township officials in managing growth while retaining the desired community character, and providing the best quality of life possible for current and future residents.

Preparation of the 2013 Update to the Master Plan

The Master Plan process was begun by the Martin Township Zoning Board in 2004. A work session was held in November of 2004 to identify community issues that would impact the Master Plan. This work session was attended by public officials from Martin Township as well as officials from the Village of Martin.

The Zoning Board continued work on the Master Plan in 2005. A community-wide open house was held on June 20, 2005, to gather citizen reaction to the proposed Master Plan. Approximately 25 citizens attended the open house. On January 10, 2006, a public hearing was held to obtain further citizen comment on the proposed plan. At the close of the public hearing, the Zoning Board adopted the Martin Township 2006 Master Plan.

In 2011, the Martin Township Planning Commission met in September to begin the work to review and update the Master Plan. Local authorities and surrounding communities were notified in December, 2011 of the intent to Update the Master Plan. Following a series of Planning Commission meetings between September, 2011 and March, 2013, minor changes to the text of the 2013 Update to the Master Plan were adopted. The draft of the 2013 Update to the Master Plan was presented to the Martin Township Board at their December 2013 meeting. Minor changes were recommended and adopted by the Township Board. Approval was given to distribute and/or make available the 2013 Update to the Master Plan to the local authorities and surrounding communities. The Update was made publicly available on the Township's website in January, 2014. The public meeting to hear comment is set for March 4, 2014.

CHAPTER 1
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Location and Geography

Martin Township is located in the southeastern portion of Allegan County, Michigan. Adjacent communities include Wayland Township to the north, Watson Township to the west, Gun Plain Township to the south, and Orangeville Township in Barry County to the east. The Village of Martin is located in the southwestern portion of the Township. Martin Township lies approximately 16 miles north of the Kalamazoo metro area, and approximately 27 miles south of the Grand Rapids metro area. The Lake Michigan shoreline is approximately 30 miles to the west.

Topography in the Township varies from gently rolling to nearly flat, with higher elevations located on the western side of the Township, falling to lower elevations on the eastern side in the vicinity of the Gun River.

Natural Features

Bodies of Water, Wetlands, and Woodlands. The Gun River and Gun Drain flow north to south through the eastern portion of the Township, from Gun Lake in the northeast through Section 36, where the river continues in a southwest direction and eventually joins the Kalamazoo River in Otsego Township.

Other bodies of water in the Township include Lake Sixteen, Fenner Lake, and Pratt Lake, along with other minor bodies of water. Wetlands are found in locations throughout the Township and are shown on the Hydrology Map which can be found in the Map Section.

Some wooded areas remain in the Township, but much of the land has been cleared for farming or other uses. Woodlands are shown on the Woodlands Map found in the Map Section.

Soils. Soils in the western half of the Township are classified as the Chelsea-Ockley-Oshtemo association, composed of excessively drained and well-drained soils of sandy and loamy material. In the central portion of the Township, soils are of the Capac-Rimer-Pipestone association, which are somewhat poorly drained soils formed in loamy, sandy, and silty material.

Along the eastern side of the Township primarily in the vicinity of the Gun River, soils are of the Glendora-Adrian-Granby association, which consists of poorly drained and very poorly drained soils formed in sandy and organic material. An area of the Sebewa-Colwood-Brady association exists in the southeastern area of the Township; this soil type is poorly drained loamy, sandy, and silty material.

In the extreme southeast corner of the Township, a small area exists of the very hilly Oshtemo-Chelsea-Ockley association, which is well drained.

In general, soils with slight or moderate restrictions for development are located in the western two-thirds of the Township, while soils with severe restrictions for development are located in the eastern one-third. For development purposes, detailed soils information must be determined by on-site analysis. The Soil Suitability Map found in the Map Section shows the locations of soils with slight, moderate, and severe limitations for both development suitability and septic suitability.

Prime farmland soils are illustrated on the Prime Farmland Map found in the Map Section. The majority of prime farm land soils are located in the western one-half of the Township. Some soils in the eastern half of the Township are considered prime farmland but are subject to flooding due to high water tables.

The eastern one-half of the Township is characterized by hydric soils which are often in association with wetlands. Hydric soils are high in organic matter and are poorly drained, resulting in severe limitations for basements and septic systems. Hydric soils are shown on the Hydrology Map found in the Map Section.

Groundwater. According to data provided by Michigan State University Center for Remote Sensing, much of Martin Township consists of soils and underlying materials that are highly permeable and sensitive, resulting in a high risk for groundwater contamination from surface and sub-surface sources. Considerations for groundwater protection are included in the Master Plan.

Community Facilities

Township Community Building. The Martin Township Community Building, located at 998 Templeton within the Village of Martin, was constructed in 1979. The Community Building contains the Township Treasurer's office, storage for Township records, meeting room, and kitchen. Fire fighting vehicles are also housed in the fire station attached to the Community Building. The Township constructed a new library in a renovated building located across from the current Community Building.

Public Safety and Fire Protection. Martin Township shares fire fighting services with the Village of Martin. The Township is under contract to provide services to the Village in exchange for public water used for fire-fighting purposes. As noted above, the fire station is attached to the Community Building which is located within the boundaries of the Village. Fire fighting personnel include paramedics trained for emergency first aid. Martin Township maintains a mutual-aid agreement with adjoining communities.

Public safety is provided by the Allegan County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police. Patrols for the Township and Village are in part grant funded.

Library. Martin Township owns and operates a library located on 10th Street within the Village. The library is a member of the Southwest Michigan Library Cooperative.

Cemeteries. The Township maintains cemeteries located on both sides of 8th Street in Sections 20 and 21, and on the west side of 10th Street in Section 31.

Recreation. Martin Township does not maintain parks or recreation facilities. However a State of Michigan public access point is located in the Township on the north side of Lake Sixteen, with access from 120th Avenue. Gun Lake County Park is located where 124th Avenue intersects Patterson Road, just within the Wayland Township boundary.

A small renovated veterans' memorial park is located within the Village of Martin.

Educational Facilities. Nearly the entire Township is located within the Martin Public School District. Section 36 and the southern one-half of Section 25 are located within the Plainwell Public School District. One facility housing elementary, middle school, and high school grade levels is located within the Village of Martin. Martin is currently considered a Class D school for purposes of athletic competition.

East Martin Christian School is located in the settlement of East Martin, at the southwest corner of the intersection of 118th Avenue and 5th Street. Two buildings serve approximately 140 students in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Gun Lake Sewer and Water Authority. The Gun Lake Sewer and Water Authority is comprised of representatives from Martin Township, Yankee Springs Township, Wayland Township, and Orangeville Township in Barry County. The Gun Lake sewer system serves 40 customers located in the northeast portion of the Township, near Gun Lake. The treatment facilities are located within Orangeville Township just east of the Martin Township border.

The treatment plant has a capacity of 1.2 million gallons per day and has a yearly average of 400,000 gallons per day. Summer flows tend to be higher, at 500,000 gallons per day while winter flows average 300,000 gallons per day. Sufficient capacity exists to provide service to additional properties in Martin Township, provided that the costs of extending sewer lines could be met.

A map of that portion of the sewer system located in Martin Township can be found in Appendix A.

City of Plainwell Wastewater Treatment. The City of Plainwell waste treatment facilities serve several properties in Martin Township as well as the Village of Martin. Properties in Martin Township served include Dover Farms manufactured housing community, the US 131 Motor Sports Park, a car wash and Little Gem manufactured housing community. The Plainwell treatment plant has a capacity of 1.3 million gallons per day and a current flow of approximately 500,000 gallons per day.

Village of Martin Public Water. The Village of Martin constructed a water tower located in the center of the Village of Martin in 2003. The current water system was designed to service the Village of Martin for the next 20 years, with the capability of expansion if necessary. A well-head protection study was also completed for the Village, with recommendations for ordinances that will help insure the quality of water used by Village and Township residents. Properties in Martin Township that are currently served by the Village of Martin public water system include Dover Farms manufactured housing community, and the Hidden Ponds site condominium residential development.

The water system layout for the Village of Martin is included in Appendix A.

Transportation

Transportation facilities are shown on the Road Classifications Map in the Map Section.

The US 131 Expressway runs in a north-south direction through the Township, in a location approximately parallel to the Township's western boundary. Two interchanges are located within the Township: one at 124th Avenue and another at 116th Avenue. The expressway provides access to the Grand Rapids metropolitan area to the north and the Kalamazoo area to the south.

All of the County primary roads within Martin Township are paved, with the exception of those portions of 4th Street and 122nd Avenue that are County primary roads. The majority of roads in the Township are unpaved County local roads.

All season roads (those with no seasonal load restrictions) as well as seasonal roads (those not plowed or maintained in the winter) are illustrated on the Road Classifications Map.

No significant road improvements projects are planned in the near future for Martin Township. A portion of 122nd between 4th Street north and Patterson Road has been designated a County primary road and a section of Patterson Road between 122nd and Marsh Road has been designated a County primary road.

Improvements to County local roads are funded 100% by the local municipality in Allegan County, while improvements to County primary roads are funded by the local municipality at a rate of \$3,500 per mile, with the County funding the remainder of a current cost of \$350,000 per mile.

Traffic counts provided by Allegan County Road Commission for county primary roads in Martin Township are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Table 1: 24 Hour Average Daily Traffic of Martin Township County Primary Roads.

Date	Location	24 Hour Count
07/18/2011 - Monday	124th Ave. East of 6th St.	2545
07/18/2011 -Monday	4th St. South of 124th Ave.	289
08/11/2011 - Thursday	10th St. South of 118th Ave.	1957
07/20/2011 -Wednesday	116th Ave. East of 6th St.	1857
07/20/2011 -Wednesday	112th Ave. West of Marsh Rd.	279
07/20/2011 -Wednesday	2nd St. South of 118th Ave.	1023
07/20/2011 - Wednesday	118th Ave. East of 2nd St.	1114

Table 1 displays the traffic count on the county primary roads in Martin Township over a 24 hour period. Overall, the traffic counts have decreased since the previous traffic count listed in the 2006 Martin Township Master Plan. Decreases in traffic counts are generally due to development of alternate routes, an increase in gas prices, and/or a decrease in job availability. A portion of 122nd between 4th Street and Patterson Road was designated as a County primary road since the previous Master Plan in 2006, but an official traffic count has yet to be conducted.

Rail Road. One rail line exists in Martin Township running in a north/south direction, through the western one-third of the Township.

Social and Economic Characteristics

Population Growth **Table 2** displays the population of Martin Township, surrounding communities and Allegan County as a whole, from 1990 to 2010. From 2000 to 2010, Martin Township experienced a 4.6% increase in population. Allegan experienced a slightly greater rate of population growth at 5.4%.

Overall, Martin Township, the surrounding communities, and Allegan County as a whole did not experience the rate of population growth as evidenced from 1990 to 2000. However, Martin Township, along with Gun Plain Township, experienced the highest rate of population growth of the surrounding communities in 2010.

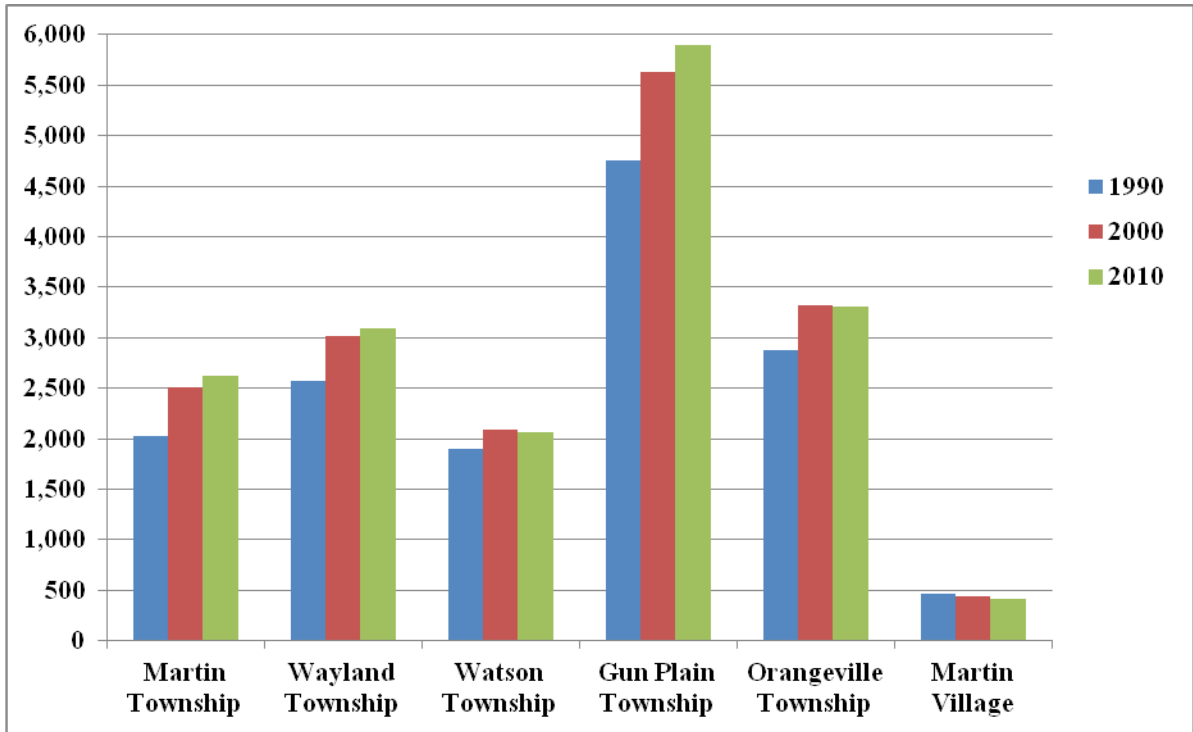
TABLE 2

Table 2: Population of Martin Township, Surrounding Communities, and Allegan County, 1990 - 2010.

	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 Change in Persons	2000-2010 Change in Percent
Martin Township	2,025	2,514	2,629	115	4.6%
Wayland Township	2,569	3,013	3,088	75	2.5%
Watson Township	1,897	2,086	2,063	-23	-1.1%
Gun Plain Township	4,754	5,637	5,895	258	4.6%
Martin Village	462	435	410	-25	-5.7%
Orangeville Township (Barry County)	2,880	3,321	3,311	-10	-0.3%
Allegan County	90,509	105,665	111,408	5,743	5.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000, and 2010.

Figure 1: Population of Martin Township and Surrounding Communities, 1990 – 2010.



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000, and 2010.

Ages of Population. Table 3 and Table 4 display the ages of the population in Martin Township for 2010. Since 2000, Martin Township has experienced a small shift from the 5 to 44 year old groups (4.7% decrease) to the 45 and older groups (4.7% increase). The median age for Martin Township residents increased from 35.1 years in 2000 to 37.3 years in 2010 or an increase of 2.2 years. The median age in Allegan County as a whole increased from 35.2 years in 2000 to 39.2 years in 2010 or an increase of 4 years. This trend suggests that the younger population is more likely to leave the region while the aging population is more likely to remain in the region.

TABLE 3: Ages of Population, Martin Township, 2010.

Age	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	188	7.2%
5 - 19 Years	626	23.9%
20 - 44 years	788	29.9%
45 - 64 years	690	26.2%
65 - 84 years	300	11.4%
85 and older	37	1.4%
Total Population	2,629	100.0%
Median Age	35.1 years	37.3 years

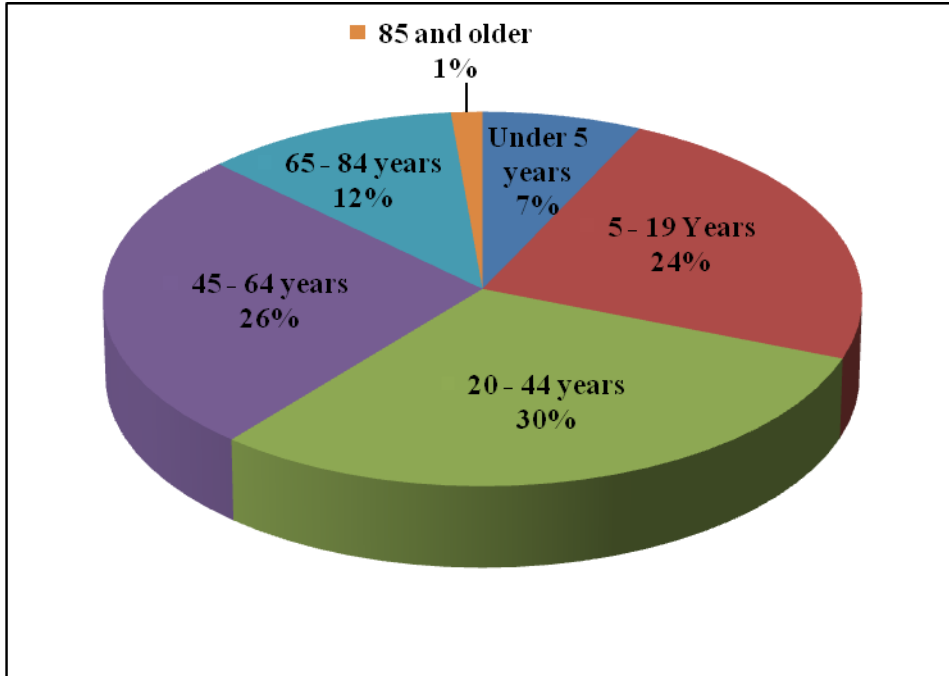
Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.

TABLE 3: Median Age, Martin Township and Allegan County, 2000-2010.

Allegan County	35.2 years	39.2 years
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Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.

Figure 2: Distribution of Age, Martin Township, 2010.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.

School Enrollment. Table 5 displays the distribution of school enrollment by grade levels for Martin Township and Allegan County as a whole. School enrollment is determined by counting the number of persons three years of age or older who are enrolled in a private or public school. From 2000 to 2010, Martin Township experienced a significant increase in the enrollment of all grade levels except High School, which experienced a decrease of 7.7% or 38 students. Martin Township has a greater percentage of Nursery/Preschool and Kindergarten enrollees than Allegan County; however, Allegan County has a greater percentage of College or Graduate School students than Martin Township.

TABLE 5

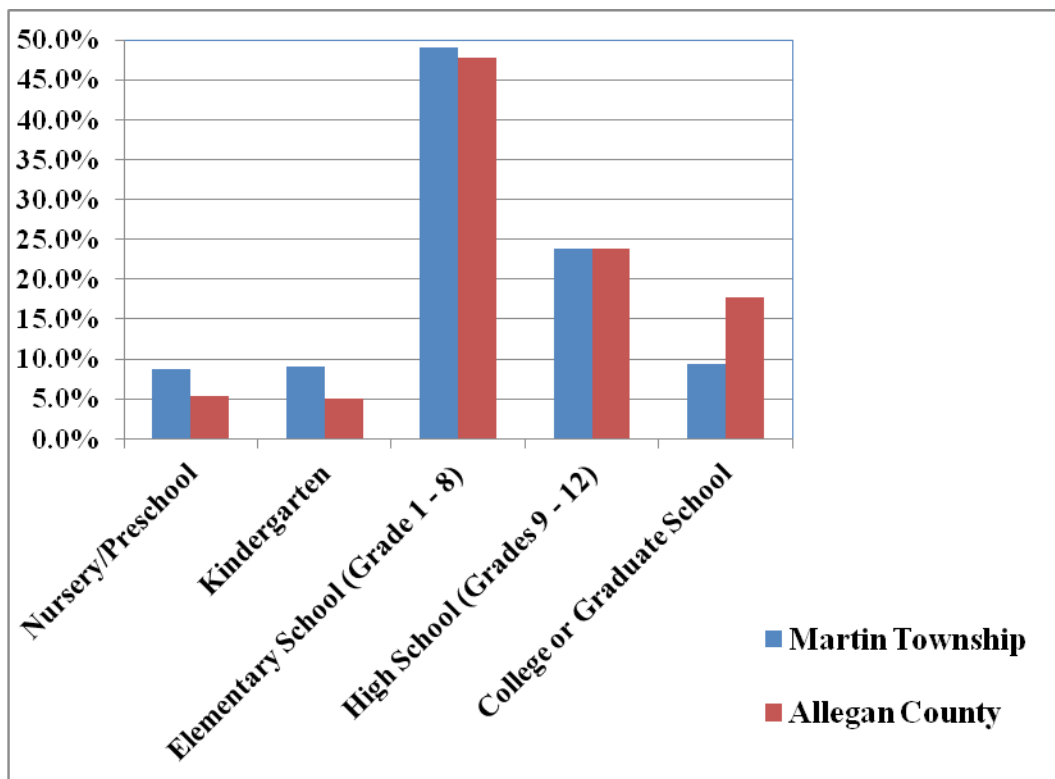
TABLE 5: School Enrollment, Martin Township and Allegan County, 2010.

Grade Levels	Martin Township		Allegan County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent

Nursery/Preschool	66	8.7%	1,555	5.4%
Kindergarten	68	9.0%	1,463	5.1%
Elementary School (Grade 1 - 8)	372	49.1%	13,668	47.8%
High School (Grades 9 - 12)	181	23.9%	6,823	23.9%
College or Graduate School	70	9.3%	5,093	17.8%
Population 3 years and older enrolled in school	757	100%	28,602	100%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2006 – 2010.

Figure 3: Distribution of School Enrollment, Martin Township and Allegan County.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010.

Households and Housing; Table 6 displays the number of households and housing units in Martin Township as reported by the 2010 US Census. Of the 1,027 housing units, 946 are occupied, and 81 are either vacant or seasonal. Of the 946 occupied housing units, 712 are Family Households and 204 units are Non-family Households. The average household size is 2.76 persons and the average family size is 3.17 persons. The 81 vacant or seasonal homes is a 90.2% increase from the 2000 US Census Data. This is most likely due to the

increased amount of foreclosed homes as evidenced throughout the State of Michigan.

TABLE 6

TABLE 4: Housing and Households by Type, Martin Township, 2010.

Housing/Household Type	Number	Percent
Total Households (Occupied Housing Units)	946	92.1%
Family Households	712	69.3%
- Married Couple Families	584	56.9%
- With Children Under 18 Years	337	32.8%
Non-Family Households	234	22.8%
Average Household Size	2.76 Persons	-
Average Family Size	3.17 Persons	-
Vacant Housing Units (includes seasonal)	81	7.9%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	777	75.7%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	169	16.4%
Total Housing Units	1027	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.

Income and Employment. Table 7 and Table 8 display the employment status and income of the residents in Martin Township and Allegan County as a whole. Martin Township and Allegan County have similar employment statuses, with a slightly higher unemployment percentage in Martin Township (5.9%) than evidenced in Allegan County (5.4%). The household, family, and per capita incomes are all higher in Allegan County as a whole than in Martin Township. However, the percentage of families with poverty status is slightly lower in Martin Township (7.9%) than in Allegan County as a whole (8.8%).

**INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT
MARTIN TOWNSHIP AND ALLEGAN COUNTY**

TABLE 7: Employment Status, Martin Township and Allegan County.

	Martin Township		Allegan County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population 16 Years and Over	1,903	---	85,239	---
- In Labor Force	1,323	69.5%	56,049	65.8%
- Employed	1,211	63.6%	51,416	60.3%
- Unemployed	112	5.9%	4,612	5.4%

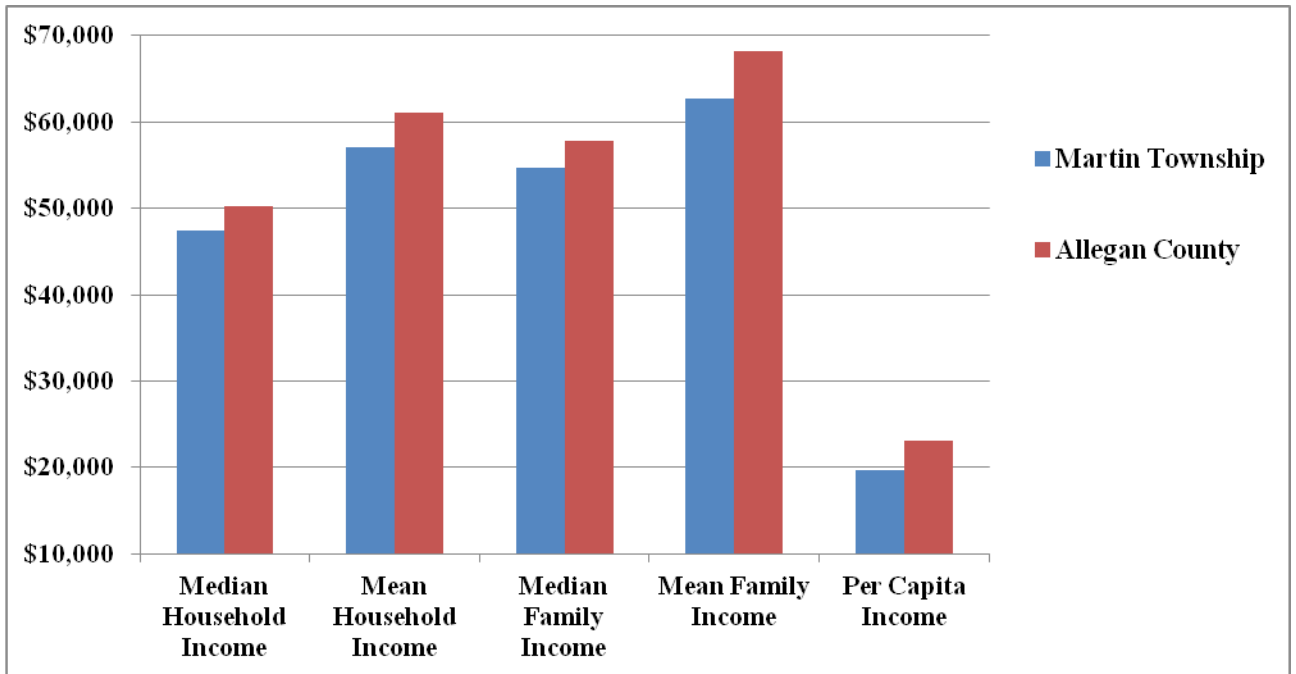
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010.

TABLE 8: Income, Martin Township and Allegan County.

	Martin Township	Allegan County
Median Household Income	\$47,361	\$50,240
Mean Household Income	\$57,033	\$61,119
Median Family Income	\$54,721	\$57,831
Mean Family Income	\$62,691	\$68,204
Per Capita Income	\$19,743	\$23,108
- Percentage of Families with Poverty Status	7.9%	8.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010.

Figure 4: Income, Martin Township and Allegan County.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010.

Employment by Occupation: Table 9 displays the distribution of employment in Martin Township by occupation, industry, and class of worker. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations provide the greatest number of jobs for residents in Martin Township. Sales and office occupations provide the fewest jobs. Educational services, health care, and social assistance bypassed manufacturing as the industry responsible for providing the greatest number of jobs. Private wage and salary workers constitute the largest number of workers.

TABLE 9 : Employment by Occupation, Industry, and Class of Worker, Martin Township.

Occupation	Number	Percent
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	287	23.7%
Management, professional, and related occupations	277	22.9%
Service occupations	224	18.5%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	213	17.6%
Sales and office occupations	210	17.3%
Industry		

Educational services, health care, and social assistance	259	21.4%
Manufacturing	237	19.6%
Construction	138	11.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	104	8.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	100	8.3%
Retail trade	93	7.7%
Other services, except public administration	80	6.6%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	73	6.0%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	42	3.5%
Wholesale trade	35	2.9%
Public administration	27	2.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	23	1.9%
Information	0	0.0%
Class of Worker		
Private wage and salary workers	990	81.8%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	118	9.7%
Government workers	103	8.5%
Unpaid family workers	0	0
Total Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	1,211	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010.

Value of Housing Units. Table 10 displays the value of housing units in Martin Township based on a sample size of 745 owner occupied housing units. The majority of the homes are valued from \$100,000 to \$149,999, while the second largest category includes the homes valued from \$150,000 to \$199,999. Since 2000, housing units in Martin Township have increased, but have remained within a range considered affordable by contemporary housing standards.

TABLE 10
TABLE 10: Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units*, Martin

Value in US Dollars	Number of Units	Percentage of Units
Less than \$50,000	56	7.5%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	145	19.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	264	35.4%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	168	22.6%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	76	10.2%
\$300,000 - \$499,999	31	4.2%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	5	0.7%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0
Median Value	\$132,700	---

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010.

*Values are based on a sample of 745 owner occupied housing units.

CHAPTER 2
EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING

Martin Township is composed of 36 square mile sections, except that portion of the Township that falls within the incorporated Village of Martin. The Village lies primarily at the intersections of Sections 19, 20, 29 and 30.

Agricultural Land Use

The primary land use in the Township is active agriculture. Agricultural lands include cropland, pasture, farmsteads, lands occupied by farm outbuildings, and confined feeding operations. According to data provided by Allegan County, agriculture comprised 73.03% of the total land use cover in Martin Township in 1996. The amount of agricultural land has decreased by 9.62% since 1978. The area of lands zoned for Agricultural uses is over 19,000 acres, or 88.7% of the land in the Township.

Crops grown in Martin Township include wheat, hay, corn, beans, and crops suited for muck farming. A large facility for the raising of young chickens exists in the northwest corner of Section 20. Other agricultural enterprises include greenhouses, egg production, livestock, dairy, chickens, deer, and mink.

Within the Agricultural (AG) zoning district, farms and farming activities are permitted, as well a number of uses that are permitted by special use permit. Single-family homes are permitted on lots with a minimum size of one acre. While one acre lots sizes exist in the AG district, the majority of lands remain in larger parcels of 20 to 160 acres.

PA 116 Lands. Martin Township includes a large number of acres enrolled in PA 116, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation program. PA 116 offers landowners an opportunity for property tax deferral in return for keeping property in use for agriculture or open space, rather than development for non-agricultural purposes. While the contract for some properties enrolled in PA 116 will expire over the next 10 years, many properties in Martin Township are enrolled for much longer periods. The Prime Farmland Map in the Map Section shows properties enrolled in PA 116 as well as the expiration date.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Lands. Martin Township has a limited amount of land preserved through the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, as administered by the State of Michigan. The properties are located in Sections 7, 8, 9, and 17, and are shown on the Prime Farmland Map.

Residential Land Use

Residential land use comprised 3.97% of total land use in Martin Township in 1996. Residential land use has increased by nearly 99% since 1978.

Residential zoning districts cover approximately 1,910 acres in the Township, or about 8.7% of the Township.

Residential concentrations occur near the Village of Martin; around Gun Lake; around Lake Sixteen, Fenner Lake, and Pratt Lake; and in other scattered locations throughout the Township. Most of the non-farm residential development in the Township (excluding lakefront development) occurs in individual lot splits along major and minor county roads, rather than within platted subdivisions or site condominium developments.

A large area zoned Rural Estates (R-1) is located south of the Village of Martin on both the east and west sides of 10th Street. A smaller area zoned R-1 is located on the south side of 120th Avenue in Section 18. The minimum lot size in the R-1 District is one acre and farming is permitted with the exclusion of feedlots and poultry farms.

The Low Density Residential District (R-2) is located adjacent to the Village of Martin; around Lake Sixteen, Fenner Lake, and Pratt Lake; and south of the Gun Lake area along Patterson Road. Other areas of R-2 zoning exist in Sections 18, 22, 23, 30, and 36. The R-2 District permits single and two-family dwellings as well as a number of uses by special use permit. Lots in the R-2 District may be 15,000 square feet if not served by public water and sewer, and may be 8,500 feet if served by public water and sewer.

The area of R-2 zoning south of Gun Lake encompasses 156.2 acres. The 251 single-family homes proposed for this area will be served by the Gun Lake Sewer system and a private water system. The Township has given preliminary plat approval to this development.

The Medium Density Residential (R-3) zoning district is located in several areas of the Township. One area includes the homes within Martin Township that front on Gun Lake as well as adjacent parcels to the south. Other areas of R-3 zoning include manufactured housing communities located south of Lake 16, north of the Village of Martin, and just east of the US 131 Expressway interchange at 116th Avenue. An area of R-3 zoning also exists in Section 23.

The R-3 District permits single family, two family, and multi-family dwellings as well as manufactured housing. Lot sizes range from 4,500 feet per dwelling for multi-family dwellings served by water and sewer to 15,000 square feet for single-family dwellings and other uses not served by water and sewer.

Currently, manufactured homes within manufactured housing communities in Martin Township account for 208 housing units.

Commercial Land Use

Commercial zoning in Martin Township accounts for just over 490 acres, or 2.3% of the land area. Commercial land use excluding the US 131 Motor Sports Park comprised .2% of the total land use (or just over 44 acres) in Martin Township in 1996.

Commercial development in Martin Township is primarily located near the US 131 Expressway interchange located at 116th Avenue, at the western boundary of the Township. That area between the western boundary of the Township and US 131 is zoned entirely for C-2 General Business, and includes the US 131 Motor Sports Park. Additional commercial uses in this area include manufactured housing sales, a gas station, and storage facility. Several residences also exist in this area. On the Township boundary to the west, uses in Watson Township include both commercial and industrial land use.

To the east of US 131, C-2 zoning exists to just east of 11th Street. Uses here include a car wash, truck sales, tire sales and automotive repair. C-2 zoning also exists in an area near Gun Lake on the south side of 124th Avenue. Uses here include a US Postal Service facility, floor covering, well drilling, self-storage, and deck and patio building with outdoor storage of materials. Commercial uses are located within Wayland Township on the north side of 124th Avenue.

An additional area of C-2 zoning exists in the southeastern-most corner of the Township, along 112th Avenue in Sections 35 and 36. The depth of the C-2 zoning is approximately 1,320 feet or one-quarter mile. A commercial use existed in this area at one time, but currently no commercial uses occur in this area.

Areas of C-1 Neighborhood Business occur in two locations in the Township. Service and retail uses are permitted in the C-1 district, as well as restaurants without drive-in service. One area is adjacent to the US 131 interchange at 124th Avenue, in the northwestern corner of the Township. No commercial uses currently exist in this area, and the area is enrolled in Conservation Reserve.

Another area of C-1 zoning occurs at the intersection of 124th Avenue and 10th Street in the unincorporated area known as Shelbyville. Uses here include an auto repair business. Vacant commercial structures, vacant parcels and residential uses occur here as well. On the north side of 124th Avenue, within Wayland Township, commercial uses include a restaurant and a vacant commercial building.

Industrial and Extractive

Industrial zoning and land use comprise 88.5 acres in the Township, or .4% of the land cover. A concrete, asphalt and leaf recycling operation along with stone washing exists in Section 17. A scrap and salvage yard exists on the north side of 122nd Avenue in Section 2. Smaller industrial uses exist in Sections 1 and 33. Active extraction operations are located in various locations in the Township, and are included on the Community Facilities Map found in the Map Section.

Parks and Recreation

One public access point owned by the State of Michigan and maintained by the Department of Natural Resources is located in Martin Township on the north side of Lake Sixteen with access from 120th Avenue. This access point is shown on the Community Facilities Map found in the Map Section.

CHAPTER 3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives that follow are largely the result of an issues identification process called a S.W.O.T., which prioritizes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats impacting a community. The Martin Township S.W.O.T., held on November 3, 2004, included members of the Martin Township Zoning Board, the Martin Township Board, as well as officials from the Village of Martin.

In addition, Goals were established by the Martin Township Zoning Board (now Planning Commission) as a result of analysis of data regarding land use trends and natural features, as well as identification of desired community character.

The Goals and Objectives reflect a community vision which values the agricultural and rural heritage of Martin Township, the desire to continue a village pattern of development established by the Village of Martin, and a desire to capitalize on the visibility and access afforded by the US 131 Expressway.

1. Goal: Capitalize on visibility and access provided via the US 131 Expressway interchange at 116th Avenue (M-222).

Objective: Plan for commercial development near the 116th Avenue (M-222) interchange where businesses opportunities are enhanced due to visibility, access, and the possibility of service by public utilities.

Objective: Plan for industrial development near the 116th Avenue (M-222) interchange in locations where large, undeveloped parcels are served by adequate access and the opportunity for service by public utilities.

Objective: Develop necessary ordinance language to assure desirable industrial and commercial development in regard to access, signs, parking, landscaping, pedestrian access, and desired permitted uses.

Objective: Through the development review process, manage development along 116th Avenue (M-222) to minimize problems associated with “strip” development, while recognizing the opportunities provided by visibility and access provided by 116th Avenue (M-222).

Objective: Capitalize on the presence of the US 131 Motor Sports Park; promote the Motor Sports Park and new businesses that are associated with the Park as a possible tourism destination.

Objective: Participate in any efforts by Allegan County to promote economic development that may impact Martin Township or the surrounding area.

2. Goal: Plan for areas of commercial development at suitable locations throughout the Township.

Objective: Plan for commercial development near the US 131 Expressway interchange at 124th Avenue where businesses opportunities are enhanced due to visibility and access.

Objective: Plan for extending commercial development along 124th west off of Patterson Road.

Objective: Through the development review process, manage development along 124th Avenue to minimize problems associated with “strip” development, while recognizing the opportunities provided by visibility and access provided by 124th Avenue.

Objective: Develop necessary ordinance language to assure desirable commercial development in regard to access, signs, parking, landscaping, pedestrian access, and desired permitted uses.

3. Goal: Preserve the traditional small town pattern established by the Village of Martin, and “market” this character to stimulate growth yet preserve the essential character of the community.

Objective: Plan for areas adjacent to the Village of Martin and near Gun Lake to be developed with principals of New Urbanism which may include traditional block layout, strong pedestrian amenities, useable parks and greens, traditional housing styles, a mix of housing types, and opportunities for neighborhood commercial uses. Prepare ordinance language to permit this type of

development; prepare a concept plan that substantially illustrates the desired fabric of development; market this area to developers.

Objective: Market Martin as a desirable place to live for those seeking a small-town atmosphere and affordability within commuting distance of both the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo metro areas.

Objective: Interface with local merchants to determine their needs and to map a strategy for economic development that includes both the Martin Village center and areas outside the Village limits.

4. Goal: Plan for areas of residential development that will permit a variety of housing types; develop ordinance language that will result in quality residential development.

Objective: Plan areas in the Township for non-agricultural residential development within platted subdivisions or site condominium developments in location where conflicts between active agricultural and non-agricultural uses are minimized.

Objective: Develop ordinances to regulate residential site condominiums and platted subdivisions.

Objective: Plan areas for multi-family housing; develop ordinance language that ensures quality multi-family development.

Objective: Plan for specific areas for manufactured housing development; establish a separate Manufactured Housing zoning district.

5. Goal: Preserve the rural and agricultural elements of Martin Township that are essential to providing the framework for small town character, and that contribute to the economy of the local area.

Objective: Meet with agricultural community to assess concerns and desires for future land use in Martin Township.

Objective: Develop preservation techniques for valued natural areas and agricultural areas in the Township.

Objective: Develop zoning regulations that permit “value-added” opportunities in the agricultural districts, such as farm markets, processing of products for food or beverage, recreation and tourism, and other agricultural enterprises.

Objective: Develop zoning regulations that permit residential development in rural areas that preserves open space and rural views such as conservation subdivisions or open space Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

Objective: Develop zoning policies that coordinate with the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPS) for site selection and odor control for new and expanding livestock production facilities; undertake public information efforts to inform current and future citizens of the realities of living in a farming community.

6. Goal: Preserve natural resources in the Township and provide areas for both passive and active recreation.

Objective: Develop a Recreation Plan that will enable the Township to apply for grants through the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources; consider a joint plan with the Village of Martin.

Objective: Identify areas in the Township which have value for long-term preservation due to the presence of wildlife habitat, significant views, or other recreation potential.

Objective: Develop ordinance language for development near wetlands and along water bodies including lakes, rivers, streams, and drains.

Objective: Develop ordinance language and promote community education regarding groundwater sensitivity and protection.

7. Goal: Develop and maintain an adequate transportation system in the Township.

Objective: Plan for the locations of new roads, streets, and access roads in the Township which will serve future and existing land uses.

Objective: Through development review, require that new residential, commercial, and industrial development provide connections to future and existing roads and streets, and to adjacent parcels.

8. Goal: Maintain communication with local law enforcement officials as population and intensity of land use increase in Martin Township and the surrounding area.

CHAPTER 4

PLANNING ANALYSIS AND FUTURE LAND USE

This section contains the recommendations, strategies, and policies which will guide the development of Martin Township for the next five to ten years. The Future Land Use Plan establishes the pattern of land use desired by the community, but that pattern must be re-evaluated every five years according to State of Michigan law.

The Goals and Objectives presented in the preceding chapter as well as principals of sound land use planning are the foundation upon which the Future Land Use Plan is based. The Future Land Use Plan consists of the text within this document as well as the Future Land Use Map.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Future Land Use Plan recommends a number of different Future Land Use Categories. The following descriptions explain the type of land use, the intensity of that land use, and the locations for proposed uses. Policies and rationale guiding the establishment of those uses are also provided, as well as implementation steps for carrying out the recommendations of the Plan.

The future land use recommended for an area may be the same as the zoning already existing in the area, while in some cases the future land use recommended is different from the existing zoning. Future Land Use Categories may or may not correspond to zoning districts existing in the Township; in some cases, a new zoning district is recommended as an implementation strategy.

The Future Land Use Map does not change the existing zoning in an area. A property owner or the Township will need to apply for a rezoning at some point in the future if the future land use category is different from the existing zoning. Meanwhile, a property owner must use the property as it is currently zoned.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Five residential land use categories comprise the residential portion of the Future Land Use Plan for Martin Township. These categories are: Agriculture and Rural Estate; Rural Residential; Medium Residential; High Density Residential; and New Urbanism. Several principals will guide the future of residential development in Martin Township. These are:

- Residential development in the majority of the Township will continue to occur on land divisions outside of platted subdivisions or site condominium

developments. A rural character will continue to predominate in most of the Township.

- New residential development in the rural, agricultural portions of the Township should be permitted to occur in open-space planned unit developments which will preserve rural views, natural features, and the rural character that predominates in most of the Township. Lot sizes in OS-PUDs should be flexible to encourage permanent preservation of rural features.
- Residential development will continue to occur near existing residential concentrations near the Village of Martin and Gun Lake. These concentrations should occur as platted subdivisions or site condominiums that are reviewed for desirable neighborhood design that includes optimal vehicle and pedestrian circulation, preservation of natural features, provisions for recreation areas, and connections to adjacent neighborhoods and uses.
- Residential development should also occur as new urbanism developments either as residential uses alone or in conjunction with commercial and public uses. New urbanism developments should occur on sites served by public water and sewer, and in locations where a traditional village pattern is desired.

Agricultural and Rural Estate Land Use

The Agricultural and Rural Estate land use category makes up the majority of the Future Land Use Map. While agricultural land uses have declined in Martin Township, agricultural uses still comprise the majority of land use. Both the AG Agricultural zoning district and the R-1 Rural Estate zoning district will be located within the Agricultural and Rural Estate land use area.

The minimum lot size for residential uses in the AG and R-1 zoning districts is one acre with 165 feet of lot width. A recommendation is that OS-PUDs be permitted within both the AG and R-1 districts, with the flexibility to reduce lot sizes from one acre in order to permit clustering of home sites to preserve rural views and rural character on the site. OS-PUDs may also permit additional lots than would not otherwise be available under existing zoning, in order to offer an incentive for land developers to use the OS-PUD method.

Implementation Steps:

- Continue to communicate with the agricultural community regarding further measures to preserve active agriculture, such as the sliding scale method, quarter-quarter zoning, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).

- Include in the Zoning Ordinance reference to regulations administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture regarding Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPS) for livestock production facilities. Incorporate standards recommended by the Michigan Department of Agriculture when reviewing new development located in or near active agricultural areas.

Rural Residential Land Use

While areas recommended for Rural Residential uses are designated on the Future Land Use Map, other areas in the Township will be considered for Rural Residential uses based upon the following criteria: declining active agricultural uses; areas of transition between farm and non-farm uses; soils suitable for on-site septic systems; and adequate roads.

Medium Density Residential Land Use

Medium density residential land use is recommended for those areas adjacent to existing residential concentrations in Martin Village and the Gun Lake area. Where public water and sewer is available, the minimum lot size will be 15,000 square feet with 100 feet of lot width. Where no public water and sewer is available the minimum lot size will be 25,000 square feet with a minimum of 125 feet of lot width.

High Density Residential Land Use

High Density Residential development is recommended to occur in areas served by public or private sewer and water and where adequate access exists. High Density Residential uses include multi-family communities consisting of attached apartments or attached condominiums. Design guidelines for multi-family developments will include adequate internal access, pedestrian walkways, preservation of natural features, provisions for recreation within the development, and pedestrian and vehicle links to adjacent commercial or public properties. In addition, the zoning ordinance should include standards for maximum numbers of units per building.

Currently, the zoning district which accommodates multi-family uses in Martin Township is the R-3 Medium Density Residential and Mobile Home Park District. This district also permits single-family and two-family dwellings as well as mobile home parks. The High Density Residential Areas on the Future Land Use Map are recommended to develop as multi-family uses only, or a combination of two-family and multi-family uses, and are recommended to develop under a zoning district created exclusively for multi-family uses.

Implementation Steps:

- Create a zoning district that will replace the existing R-3 Medium Density Residential and Mobile Home Park District. The new R-3 district will permit multi-family attached apartments and condominiums and will provide guidelines for quality multi-family development.

Manufactured Housing Community

Currently, Martin Township has three manufactured housing communities. The Future Land Use Map recognizes the locations of two of these communities. The area currently occupied by a manufactured housing community located just north of the Village of Martin boundary on the west side of 10th Street is recommended for future Medium Density Residential land use.

The Master Plan does not recommend additional areas for Manufactured Housing Communities, since this type of dwelling unit currently comprises 18.2% of the total number of housing units.

Implementation Steps:

- Manufactured Homes are recommended to be permitted in a newly created Manufactured Housing Community district. Design and development standards must be approved by the State of Michigan Mobile Home Park Commission.

New Urbanism Land Use

The character of Martin Township is largely shaped by the location of the Village of Martin located in the southwest portion of the Township. The Village is composed of a commercial center and small residential lots. Streets are curbed, and sidewalks serve the entire Village. Martin elementary, middle, and high schools are located within the Village limits. The Village pattern is a valuable asset, and the community desires to replicate this pattern in suitable locations.

The New Urbanism model for land use is recommended for locations in the Township that have the potential for being served by public or private water and sewer, are near existing concentrations of development, and will be ideal locations for (or will provide access to) public amenities such as parks, schools, libraries, and shopping opportunities.

New Urbanism design includes traditional block layout, strong pedestrian amenities, parks and greens of a useable size, traditional housing styles, a mix of housing types, and opportunities for neighborhood commercial within the

neighborhood. A concept plan for New Urbanism design is included with the Master Plan document.

Those areas recommended for New Urbanism land use are equally suitable for Medium Density Residential land use, according to those recommendations found in the preceding section describing Medium Density Residential land use.

Implementation Steps

- In advance of development proposals, prepare ordinance language to permit and regulate New Urbanism development.
- While many different plans for New Urbanism development are acceptable, a drawing has been added in Appendix C for understanding the New Urbanism concept

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Two primary opportunities for commercial development exist in Martin Township. One is the potential that exists from the presence of two US 131 Expressway interchanges in the Township. The interchanges offer an opportunity for both the motorist traveling through the Township, and the residents of Martin Township and surrounding Townships. The second opportunity is for neighborhood-style commercial development that can meet the day-to-day needs of residents of the community, and that might occur in the vicinity of the Village of Martin and Gun Lake.

Since opportunities for shopping exist in both the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo metropolitan areas as well as the Allegan and Plainwell areas, commercial development in Martin Township will continue to be limited. However, shopping that meets the day-to-day needs of residents as well as those visiting Martin will continue to be needed.

Commercial

Commercial uses are planned for that area adjacent to the US 131 Expressway interchange at 116th Avenue (M-222) including the area that encompasses the Motor Sports Park and that is currently zoned for C-2 General Business. In addition, a limited area near Gun Lake, west of existing C-2 zoning along 124th Avenue, is planned for Commercial.

An area near the settlement of Hooper in the extreme southeast corner of the Township is zoned for C-2 General Business uses. Rationale for commercial development in this area no longer exists, and the presence of C-2 zoning is a difficult situation for those non-conforming existing residential uses in the area, and for landowners who wish to establish residential uses. Therefore, a

recommendation of the Master Plan is to rezone that area from C-2 to AG Agricultural.

A section of land 1/8 of a mile deep along the entire south side of 124th Avenue between US 131 and 10th Street in Martin Township is designated in the 2013 Update to the Master Plan for Commercial land use. Commercial uses, including those that may occur in the vicinity of the Motor Sports Park, are recommended to be served by paved roads.

Commercial Planned Unit Development (C-PUD)

That area on both sides of 116th Street between the Expressway and the Village of Martin corporate limits is planned for Commercial Planned Unit Development (C-PUD). The depth of the area recommended for C-PUD ranges from 500 to 1000 feet. Uses in the C-PUD area will include those uses currently permitted by the C-1 and C-2 General Business Districts, and may include other uses as determined by the Township Board.

C-PUDs will be regulated by ordinance language that requires aesthetically pleasing signs, lighting, and landscaping; strong pedestrian amenities including links to adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods; green infrastructure; access that limits the number of turning movements on 116th Avenue; and other design considerations.

The area shown on the Future Land Use Map for C-PUD extends for approximately one-quarter mile along 116th Avenue. If this entire area developed with a floor to area ratio of 20% at a depth of 660 feet, approximately 348,000 square feet of commercial space would be available to the community. While the development of that number of square feet is not likely to occur, an option exists for a wide range of commercial opportunities on either side of 116th Avenue.

The area recommended for C-PUD land use may also be considered for commercial uses under conventional C-1 or C-2 zoning. However, in order to ensure quality commercial development along 116th Avenue, commercial development standards that address building facades, access, connectivity, signs, landscaping, setbacks, and parking should be included in the Zoning Ordinance. Storm water management facilities that provide visual assets and that minimize the need for retention and detention should be encouraged.

Implementation Steps

- Review and revise requirements for signs, lighting, access, landscaping, parking, architecture, and storm water management in both C-1 and C-2 Commercial districts.

- Prepare requirements for a Commercial Planned Unit Development (C-PUD) district in Martin Township.
- Rezone areas near the settlement of Hooper from C-2 to AG Agricultural.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

While industrial land uses occur in scattered locations in the Township, no additional undeveloped areas exist that are zoned for industrial development. The area near the US 131 interchange at 116th Avenue, adjacent to the Expressway and north of that area planned for Commercial uses is recommended for industrial land use. This location potentially provides adequate access and the possibility for utilities.

Any Industrial uses proposed for this area that are permitted only by Special Exception Use should occur near the US 131 Expressway, rather than fronting on 11th Street. Any industrial uses proposed for this area should be developed with design standards that will be compatible with future residential uses that may occur on the east side of 11th Street. Quality industrial design can result in developments that are an asset to the community and that are compatible with a wide range of other land uses.

The I-1 Industrial District in the Martin Township Zoning Ordinance regulates industrial development in the Township. The I-1 chapter should be reviewed for uses permitted by right and by special exception use permit. In addition, the I-1 chapter should include standards for industrial development that include considerations for access, signs, lighting, landscaping, architecture, and storm water management. Storm water management facilities that provide visual assets and that minimize the need for retention and detention should be encouraged.

Implementation Steps

- Revise the I-1 Industrial District chapter to include adequate standards for industrial development, including standards for access, signs, lighting, landscaping, architecture, and storm water management.

CONSERVATION

Parks and Recreation

An area between Fenner and Pratt Lakes is planned for Conservation land use. This area is currently preserved under PA 116 until the year 2073. Opportunities for water-based recreation, the presence of wetlands, and the central location of this area make it suitable for a possible future Township park and natural area.

Other area of the Township may be suitable for parks and recreation and can be identified through the process

Implementation Steps:

- Develop a Recreation Plan that will enable the Township to apply for grants through the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources; consider a joint plan with the Village of Martin.
- Identify areas in the Township which have value for long-term preservation due to the presence of wildlife habitat, significant views, or other recreation potential.

Conservation of Natural Resources

Martin Township is comprised largely of soils that have a high level of groundwater sensitivity. Wetlands are located throughout the Township. Most of the Township is in the Gun River Watershed, and a portion of the Township is located within the Rabbit River Watershed.

Martin Township officials are committed to preserving the natural resources of the Township for current and future citizens, and have included action steps in the Master Plan that will facilitate this preservation:

Implementation Steps:

- Develop ordinance language and promote community education regarding groundwater sensitivity and protection.
- Include the recommendations of the Gun River Watershed Management Plan and the Rabbit River Watershed Management Plan and consider any model ordinance language when drafting regulations or establishing land use policy that may impact bodies of water, wetlands, and groundwater in Martin Township.