

Alabaster Township Comprehensive Development Plan



June 2004



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The Master Planning Process

Introduction

A Master Plan reflects the ideas and hopes of a community, translated into goals and actions. The Master Plan is a comprehensive guide to township development covering the next 10 - 20 years.

Master Plans:

- seek citizen input on needs and services;
- form a general statement of goals and objectives;
- provide an overall perspective for the future;
- develop a future land use map;
- guide the use of limited resources in an efficient manner;
- promote public health, safety, and general welfare;
- preserve the quality of the environment in the Township;
- guide future zoning decisions; and
- encourage cooperation and economic improvement through the goals and objectives of the plan.

Legal requirement for a Master Plan

Preparing a Master Plan is one of the major functions of a Township Planning Commission. The Township Planning Act of 1959 states that “the planning commission shall make and approve a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions of the Township.”

Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances

Zoning is public regulation of the use of land. A zoning ordinance controls how land is used today. It is law. A Master Plan is a set of policies, not a law. The master plan is the community’s vision while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. The long range goals of the Master Plan are the basis for a



zoning ordinance and zoning decisions. **State law requires that a zoning ordinance be based on an adopted plan.** Zoning decisions that are consistent with the Master Plan are more likely presumed to be valid if challenged in the courts.

A primary focus on the plan development was to make the planning process as transparent and inclusive as possible.

Upon recommendation from the Planning Commission, the Alabaster Township Board approved the expenditure to proceed with the update of its Comprehensive Development Plan. Spicer Group of Saginaw served as professional consultant for the process. During the 18 month process, a primary focus of the initial planning efforts was to garner public input and make the planning process as transparent and inclusive as possible.

In addition to the extra efforts taken to involve the public, the township followed proper notification procedures for neighboring communities, as required by Michigan Public Act 263 of 2001 so that those communities were made aware of and had the opportunity to comment on the plan.

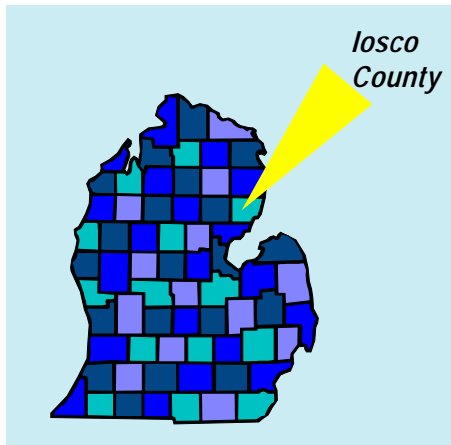
The process began with a review and analysis of existing conditions and land use in Alabaster Township. Then, a community input survey was developed and mailed to all residents of the Township in March of 2003. Feedback from this survey along with pertinent background data was used as the basis for the goals and future land use outlined in the master plan. The draft master plan was prepared by Spicer Group and delivered to the Planning Commission and Township Board for review. It was also mailed to surrounding entities who registered through the “intent to plan” process.

The final step in the planning process was a public hearing which is required by the Township Planning Act of 1959, as amended. This hearing, held on Saturday, May 29, 2004, provided an additional opportunity for public information and input. Final master plan copies were prepared and the Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission in June 2004. The Alabaster Township Board approved of the Plan by resolution on July 12, 2004.



Regional Setting

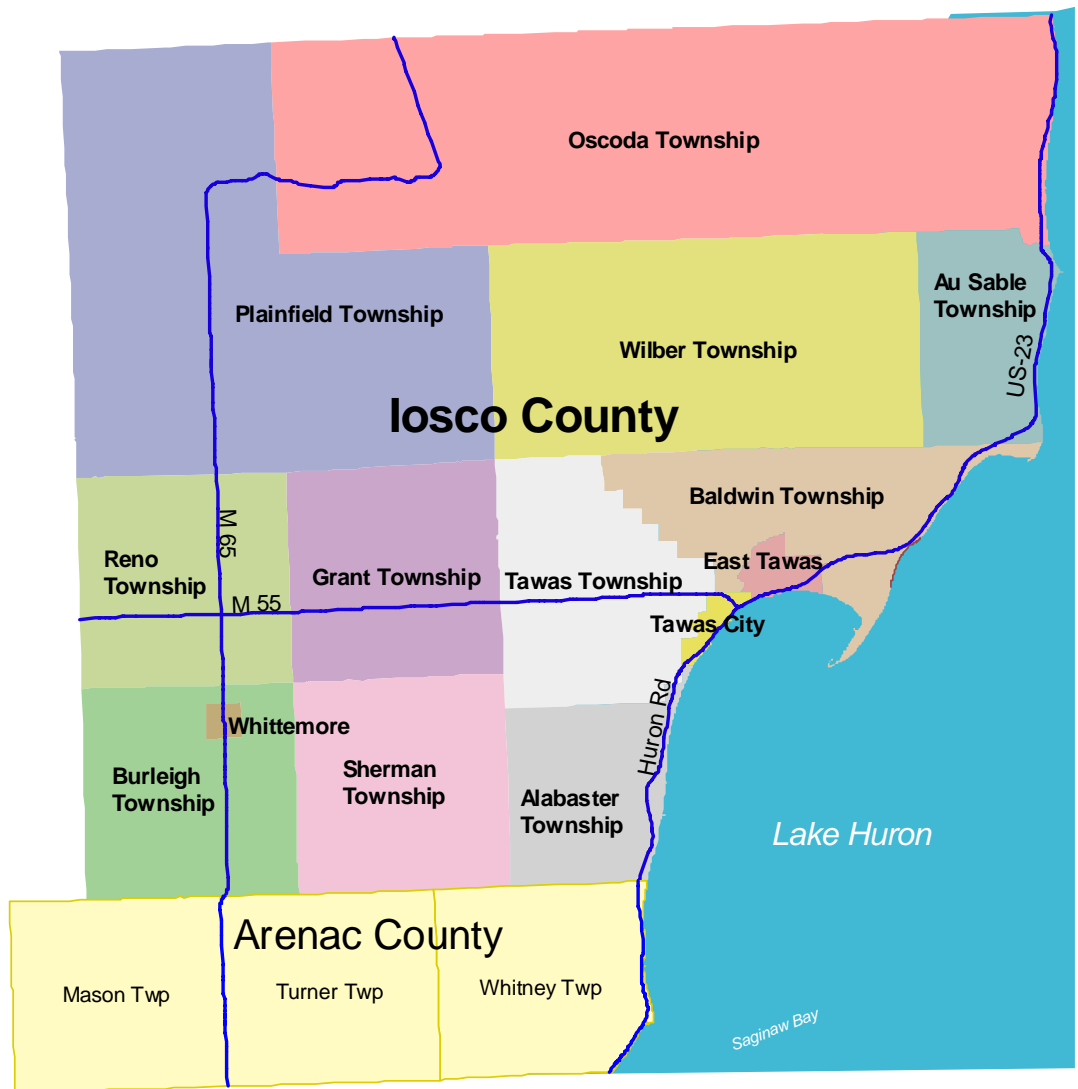
Alabaster Township, located in Iosco County in the northeast quarter of the lower peninsula of Michigan, is in the heart of Lake Huron's "Sunrise Side." The Township is bordered on the north by Tawas Township and Tawas City, on the west by Sherman Township, on the south by Whitney Township (Arenac County) and on the east by Lake Huron. Alabaster Township covers an area of 22.2 square miles. The township is located on the northern end of Saginaw Bay and its shoreline is one of the state's most popular areas for second homes, retirement homes, and recreation.



The major motor vehicle highway access to Alabaster Township is US-23, making the township easily accessible from I-75 and the urban centers of southern Michigan. Regional centers for shopping and commerce are located in the Tawas area directly to the north, AuGres (14 miles south), and Standish (29 miles south).



Regional Map



Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library - Iosco & Arenac Framework



Transportation

US-23 (Huron Road), located along the eastern border of the township, is the major roadway in Alabaster Township. Average daily traffic counts on US-23 in Alabaster Township are approximately 6,000 vehicles. Numerous small roadways and streets are located off of US-23, accessing clusters of cottages and homes along the shoreline. Some of these roads are privately maintained. There are also several private roadways located in and around the US Gypsum property.

Alabaster Road is the only roadway on which one can travel east- west across the township. Average daily traffic counts on Alabaster Road (500' west of the railroad tracks) in 1994 were 379 vehicles. A Township road map is given on the following page.

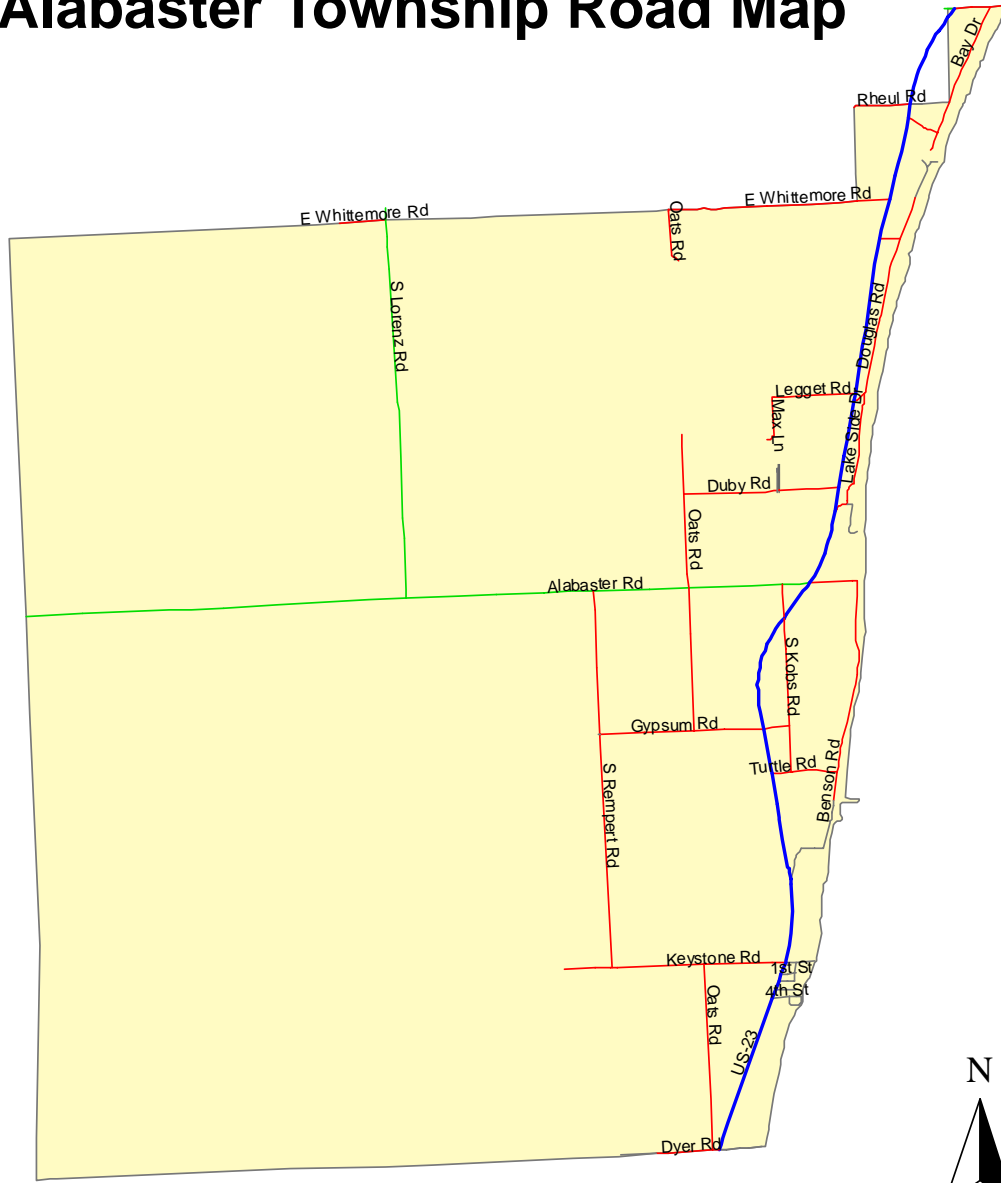
Municipal airports located near Alabaster Township are in Standish, Baldwin Township, and Oscoda. MBS International Airport in Freeland is the closest commercial passenger airport serving Alabaster Township. It is located approximately 75 miles to the south.





The Lake State Railroad Company maintains facilities in Tawas City. The main track of their railroad grazes the northwest corner of Alabaster Township. Spurs run south out of Tawas City to the gypsum mining operations.

On Lake Huron, National Gypsum and US Gypsum Company each owns private offshore wharfs for loading freighters with crushed gypsum. The US Gypsum wharf is currently not in use and may not be reactivated in its present form.



Alabaster Township Road Map



-  County Local
-  County Primary
-  State Trunkline
-  Not a public road



Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library - Iosco Framework



Community Characteristics

General Description

Alabaster Township is mainly a rural township with a large concentration of homes located on the Lake Huron shoreline. Traveling inland, one finds forests to the far west, gypsum mines in the mid-portion of the township and small farms on the southern and northern fringes of the township.

History

The early development of the land area in and around Tawas City and Alabaster in the mid 1800's was based on attractive fishing in the Tawas Bay region. Logging began in Iosco County in 1853 when Gideon Whittemore came to log the area. Iosco County was formally organized in 1857 and Alabaster Township was formally organized by local citizens on March 31, 1866. The name "Alabaster" was selected because of the abundance of the white alabaster (or gypsum) rock that was discovered by state surveyor Douglass Houghton in 1837.

Gypsum mining became the major economic activity of the township when quarries were opened in 1862 in Alabaster Township. The logging and gypsum activities brought the Lake Huron and Southwestern Railroad (later known as the Detroit and Mackinac Railway) to the area in 1877. In 1880, General Russell Alger took over the railroad and extended it south to Bay County and north to Alpena, Cheboyganing and Mackinaw City. In 1895 it became the Detroit and Mackinac Railroad. One spur, originally named the Erie and Michigan (E&M) Navigation and Railway Company, ran from the Detroit and Mackinaw Railway into the town of Alabaster. In 1891, the Western Plaster Works was founded, and by 1902 that company had become the present United States Gypsum Company. In 1926, National Gypsum opened farther inland.

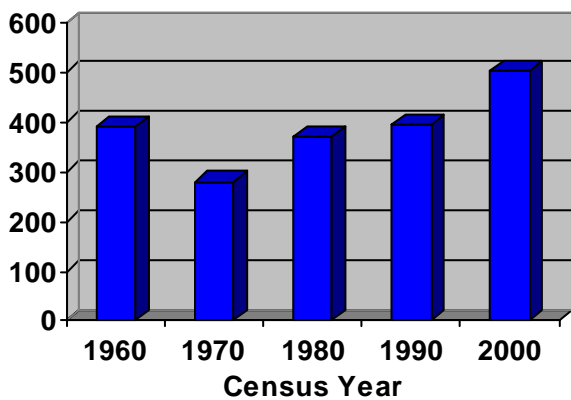


The mining operations gave rise to the village of Alabaster. The village consisted of approximately thirty company residences, the offices of the mining company, a school, two churches, a steam mill, town hall, mercantile building and the post office. The town does not exist today, with only a church functioning in the old village location.

The beautiful, sandy, and reforested Lake Huron shoreline has always been one of Alabaster Township's most attractive assets. It attracted residential development throughout the community's growth, but particularly grew after the 1940's. Shoreline residences include year-round and seasonal residences.

The township has little commercial economic activity. Residential development that is an outgrowth of seasonal recreation as well as U.S. Gypsum and National Gypsum are the major economic forces in Alabaster Township. Development in the Township has been restricted by the high percentage of land controlled by the State of Michigan, the gypsum mines, and other private wetlands.

Population in Alabaster Township



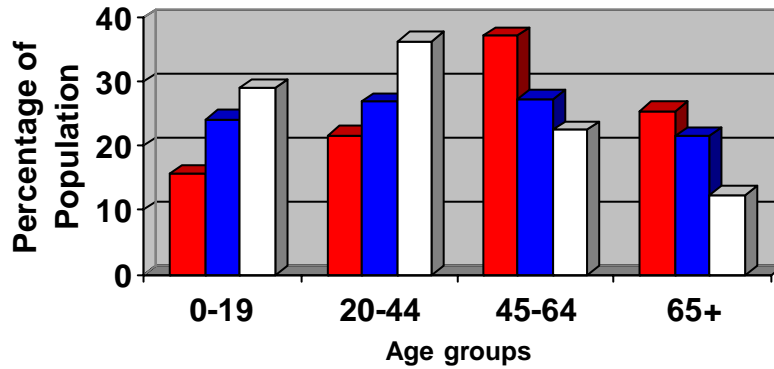
Population

Alabaster Township has a population of 503 people according to the 2000 census. Male and female breakdown is nearly equal with 254 males and 249 females. The population experienced a sharp drop from 1960 to 1970 and has grown steadily since that time. The relative increase from 1990 to 2000 was the largest in the past 40 years whereby the population grew from 394 people to 503, or 28%.

The population of Alabaster Township is older than that of Iosco County and the State of Michigan. This is a result of the large number of retirees who move to the shoreline area to make the Township their permanent home. The median age of Alabaster Township residents is 53.2 years. The median age of Iosco County residents is 44.2 years and that of the state is 35.5 years. Median age is that age at which half of the residents are above and half are below. Over 25% of Alabaster Township's residents are 65 and older. Only



Age Characteristics



■ Alabaster Township
 ■ Iosco County
 ■ Michigan

Source: US Census 2000

22% of the County’s residents fall into that age group and only 12 percent of State residents are 65 and older.

The numerical population breakdown is shown in the following chart. Over 96% of the population identified themselves as white when asked their race for the 2000 Census.

People in Alabaster Township		
Age Group	Number	Percentage
Age 0 - 19	78	15.6%
Age 20 - 34	53	10.6
Age 35 - 44	56	11.1
Age 45 - 54	83	16.5
Age 55 - 64	104	20.6
Age 65 - 74	80	15.9
Over 75	49	9.7
Total	503	100

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

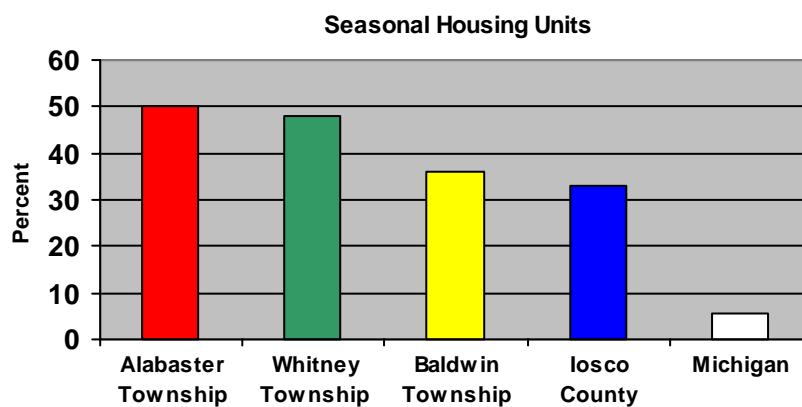
Alabaster Township has a large “part-time” population that is a result of the significant number of seasonal homes (discussed in the following section). The population swells as part-time residents use their cottage homes, especially during the summer. The largest increase occurs on the weekends but some summer residents use their Alabaster homes for weeks at a time.



Housing

Housing in Alabaster Township reflects the fact that there is a significant percentage of seasonal residents interspersed with the full-time resident population. Many of the seasonal residents own small cottages but others have all-season structures as second homes, particularly true along the Lake Huron shore. The Alabaster Township housing characteristics are fairly similar to the county, but quite dissimilar from the state overall.

There are 470 housing units in Alabaster Township. Slightly less than half, or 222 units, are classified as occupied, which means inhabited all year. Fifty percent are considered as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.



Source: US Census 2000

of the housing units are seasonal.

The remainder are vacant housing units. These numbers are similar to nearby shoreline townships. Whitney Township to the south has 49% of the housing units occupied and 48% are seasonal. Baldwin Township to the north has 55% of the housing units occupied and 36% seasonal. These townships are very different from the state where only 5.5%

When compared to the 1990 census, the percentage of seasonal housing in Alabaster Township has decreased slightly. In 1990, 55% of the housing units were classified as seasonal.

Because of the desirability of shoreline property, housing values in Alabaster Township are strong. The median value of owner occupied units in 2000 was \$144,400. This is much higher than the county figure of \$77,100 and higher than the state median of \$115,600. It is also worth noting that the median value for owner occupied housing units in 1990 was \$76,900, showing an increase of nearly 90% in the decade.



Employment

The employment statistics for Alabaster Township reflect the nature of this retirement/vacation community. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 51% of the residents of Alabaster Township over the age of 16 are in the labor force. This percentage is similar to Iosco County but different from the state where 65% of the population age 16 and over is in the labor force. The labor force is defined as a combination of those who are employed and those who are unemployed, but looking for work.

A retirement community: Nearly half of the residents of Alabaster Township over age 16 are not in the work force. Forty-three percent have social security income.

According to the Michigan Department of Career Development, the 2002 unemployment rate for Iosco County was 10.5%. This is an increase from 2000 when it was 7.4%. The 2002 rate for Alabaster Township was 3.2%, a slight increase from the 2000 rate of 2.4%.

For those Alabaster Township residents who are in the labor force, the average commuting time is 26.4 minutes. This commute time is higher than the county average of 21.7 minutes and the state average of 24.1 minutes. This suggests that most Alabaster Township residents in the work force are employed outside of the township.

Employers within the Alabaster Township include US Gypsum, National Gypsum, Alabaster Corners, Make Way Move All, Schwan Fine Foods, Blue Water Storage, Ferrellgas, the Indian Gift Shop and Crossroads Grill & Night Club.

Income

The age of the Township citizens is reflected in its Social Security and retirement income statistics. Over 40% of the households in Alabaster Township have Social Security income. This percentage is nearly

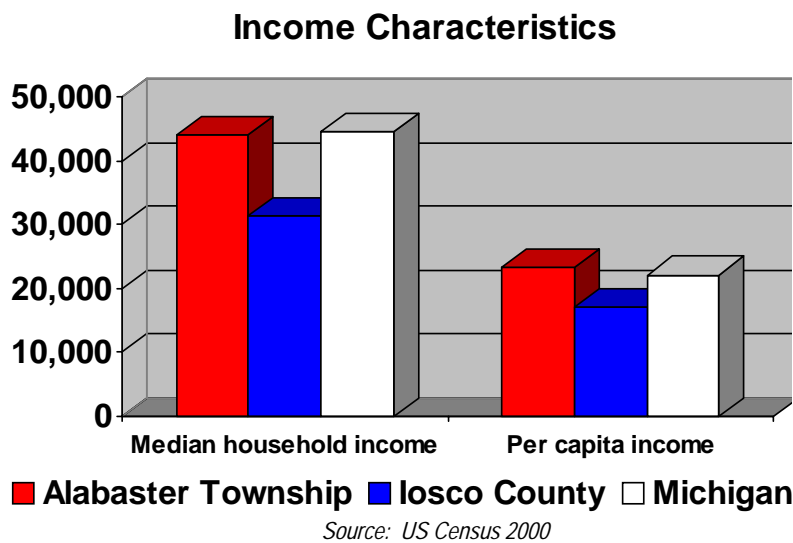


identical to Iosco County but much higher than the state, where 26.2% of the households have Social Security income. Similarly, 33% of Alabaster Township households have retirement income (which is considered separately from Social Security Income), whereas 19% of state residents have retirement income.

Income statistics for Alabaster Township show that its residents are more affluent than Iosco County residents but are very similar to those

of the state. Median household income for Alabaster Township was \$44,000 in 2000. The median household income for Iosco County was \$31,321 and for the state was \$44,667. Median household income is a measure that shows the income level at which half of all households are above and half are below.

Per capita income (average) for Alabaster Township was \$23,384. Per capita income for Iosco County was \$17,115 and for the state was \$22,168.



Poverty statistics for Alabaster Township are better than that of Iosco County and the state. Slightly more than 6% of individuals in Alabaster Township live below the poverty level, whereas 12.7% and 10% percent live below the poverty level in the county and state, respectively.



Community Facilities

Police protection in Alabaster Township is provided by the Michigan State Police, the Iosco County Sheriff, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Fire protection and first responder service in Alabaster Township is contracted with the volunteer Tawas City Fire Department. Dial 911 service and ambulance service is provided by Iosco County.

Alabaster Township lies entirely within the Tawas Area School District. Alpena Community College operates a campus in Oscoda Township, at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, and it offers classes in East Tawas.

The Crossroads Grill & Night Club is the only property in the township with sanitary sewer service. Thirty-six homes in the southern part of the township have water from the Sims-Whitney water system and seven homes in the northern part of the Township are supplied water by the Huron Shores Regional Utility Authority.

Alabaster Township is located in the Iosco-Arenac District Library service area. The closest member library is located Tawas City.



Natural Features

Topography and Soils

Topography

Topography in Alabaster Township is relatively flat ranging from 580 feet above sea level along the lake plain to 656 feet above sea level in northern parts of the township. There are some steep slopes in the area between US-23 and the lakeshore, particularly in the northern portion of the township. Within the gypsum mining areas there are steep excavations that are up to a hundred feet deep.

Alabaster Topography: *Relatively flat with some steep slopes between US-23 and the lakeshore.*

Prime Farmland

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, there are no naturally occurring prime farmlands in Alabaster Township. Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding. Some of the land in Alabaster Township is identified as “prime farmlands if drained” or as “farmland of local importance”. Farmland of local importance is classified as such by the local Soil Conservation District.



Erodibility

A soil concern in terms of land use planning is that of erodibility. Erodibility categories are determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service . Soils are classified by examining several factors, such as the soil type itself (i.e. sand or muck soils are more likely to erode than clays), the slope, and rainfall. Highly erodible soils can pose special challenges for development, which need to be addressed on a case by case basis.

A map depicting farmland and erodibility categories is shown on the following page.

Climate

Iosco County's climate is considered a Cold Middle Latitude climate where the coldest monthly mean temperature goes below 27 F and a long season of cold weather and a significant winter snow cover develops. In this climate the westerlies dominate all year. As such, weather changes are frequent. Average rainfall is approximately 30 inches per year and average snowfall is approximately 50 inches per year. Summer months have average high temperatures around 80 degrees with cool evenings in the 50's. Winter months see average highs in the 20's and 30's with lows in the teens and 20's.

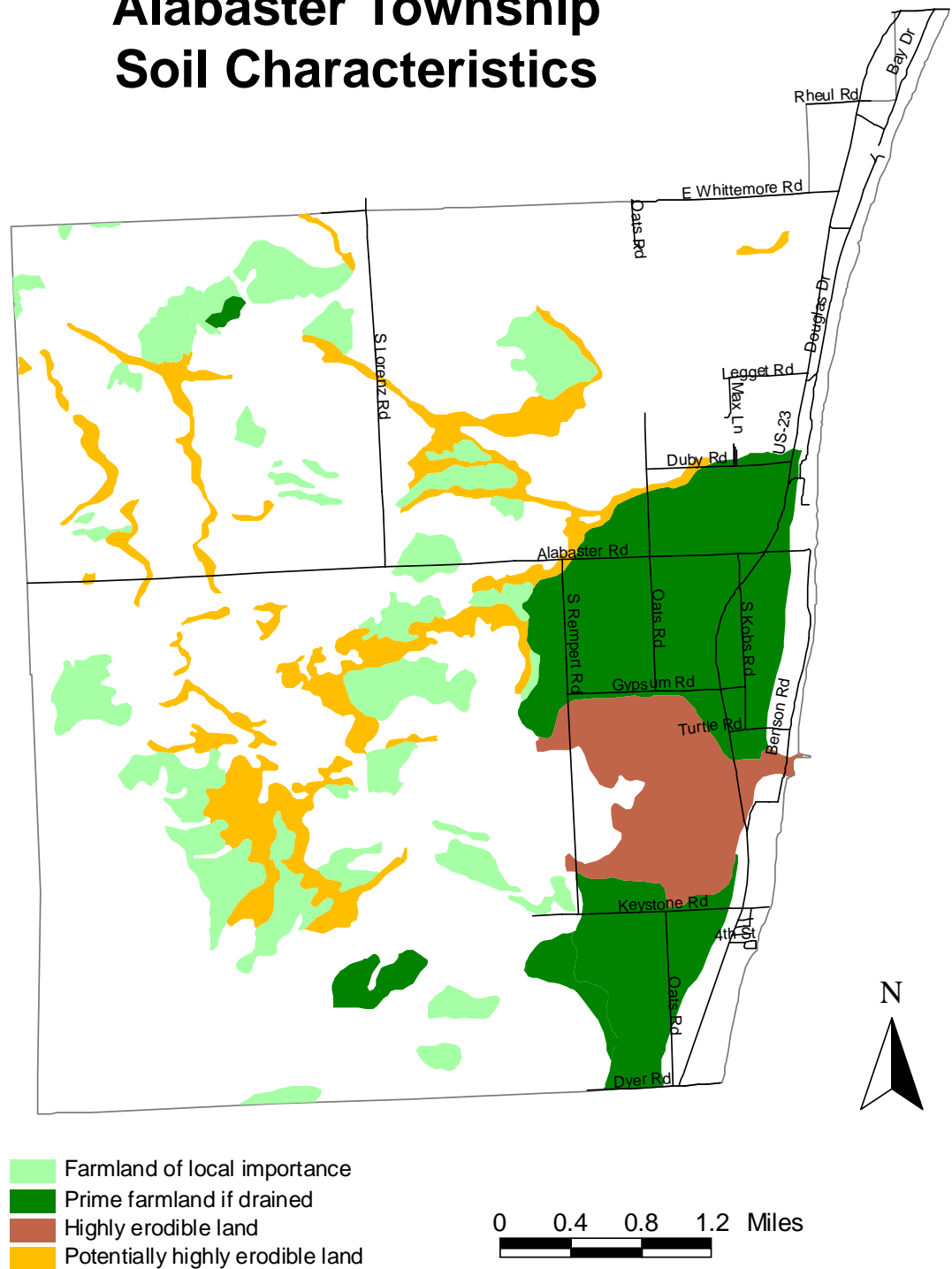
Lake Huron

Lake Huron is the most significant natural feature in Alabaster Township. It affects the local climate with cooling breezes in the summer and provides moderation to the frigid arctic blasts in the winter. The lake is the main reason that all of the seasonal homes exist in the Township, as it entices summer water enthusiasts to the area.

Because shoreline erosion is an environmental concern of considerable significance and because shorelines are continually changing, caution should be used in considering development and construction along the lake shore. Substantial state and federal regulations impact such development. Caution was not observed along many sections of shoreline



Alabaster Township Soil Characteristics



Source: Soil Survey Geographic Data Set from the Natural Resource Conservation Service



on the Great Lakes; consequently, the forces of wind and wave and the actions of man have caused a great deal of property loss in some areas of Michigan. The State has strongly recommended that communities adjacent to high risk erosion areas enact special zoning regulations or adopt other types of land use control that restrict development in these areas.

Other waterways and wetlands

All waterways in Alabaster Township flow towards Lake Huron. Significant drains in the township are the Alabaster-Whitney Drain, which flows from north to south, Mason Creek, which crosses Alabaster Road and flows to the southeast, and the Proper Creek, which is located in the northeast area of the township near Lorenz and Whittemore Roads. In 2004, US Gypsum redirected drainage of its property through a newly constructed channel to Lake Huron.

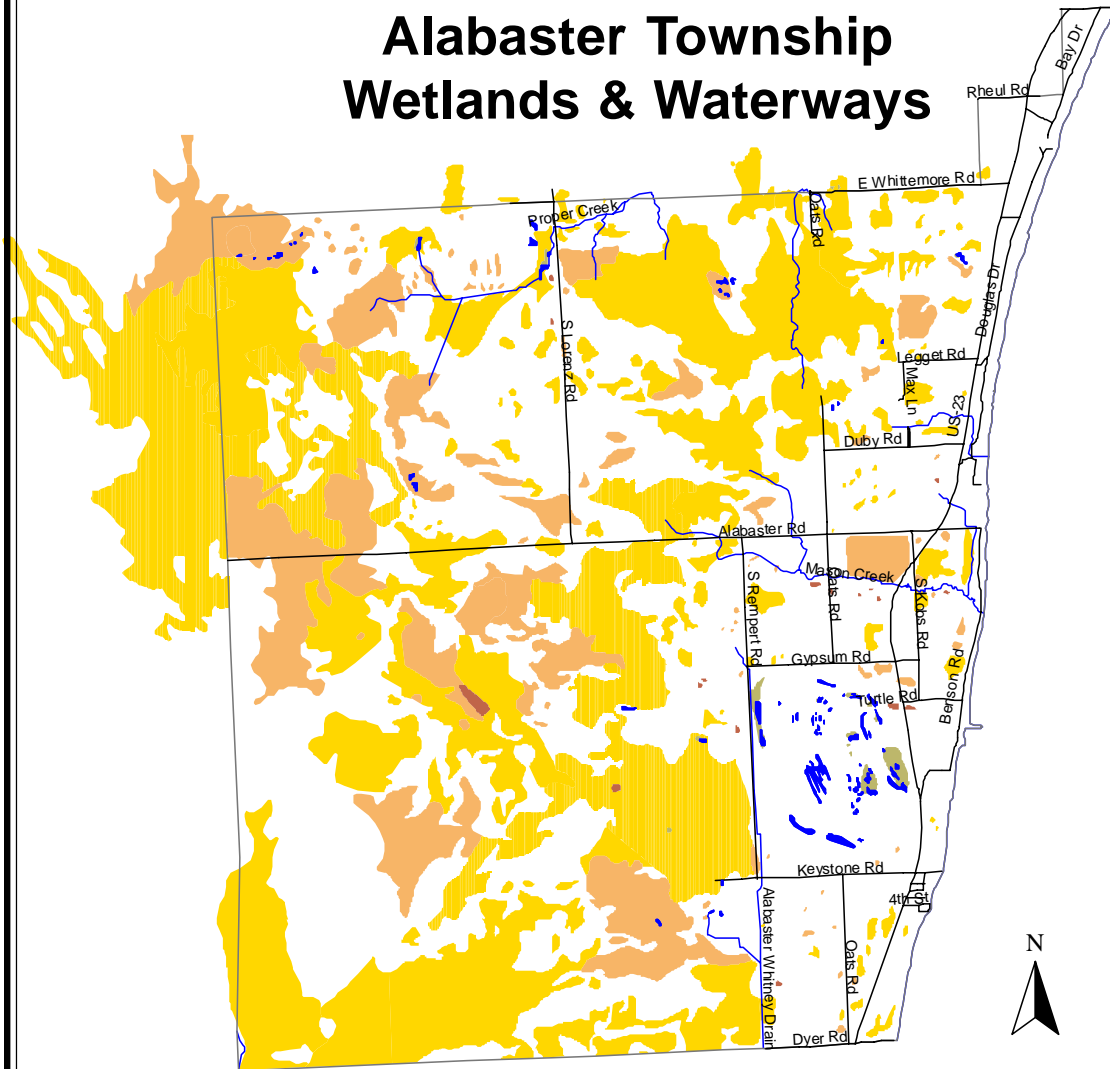
There are no officially designated inland lakes within the township. However, within the gypsum mine properties there are many private ponds used for hydraulic retention to settle out suspended solids from mining operations.

According to the National Wetlands Inventory, over 6000 acres of land within Alabaster Township (45%) are classified as wetlands. These are shown on the Wetlands Map on the following page. Wetlands can limit development in a specific area and each type and extent must be carefully examined before proceeding with development. Any parcel of land should be thoroughly investigated regarding environmental concerns before proceeding with development.

At the heart of Michigan's wetland regulatory program is Part 303, Wetland Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Act 451 of 1994), formerly referred to as the Goemaere-Anderson Wetlands Protection Act, P.A. 203 of 1979. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Land and Water Management Division administers the permit program. This legislation was passed to protect wetlands by restricting their use to certain activities (fishing, boating, farming, among others) while permitting other activities only after permit approval by the State of Michigan. Permits are approved only upon a review of an environmental assessment filed by the peti-



Alabaster Township Wetlands & Waterways



Wetland Types

- Emergent
- Forested
- Open Water/Unknown Bottom
- Scrub-Shrub

0 0.5 1 1.5 Miles



Water features

Emergent - Characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens. This vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years. Dominated by perennial plants.

Forested - Characterized by woody vegetation that is at least 20 feet tall.

Scrub-Shrub - Includes areas dominated by woody vegetation less than 20 feet tall. Includes true shrubs, young trees, and trees or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions.

Source: National Wetlands Inventory



tioner that shows the avoidance of wetland resources to the greatest extent possible and minimization of unavoidable wetland impacts. Under the Act, the following wetlands are protected:

- Wetlands contiguous to an inland lake, pond, river, stream, or similar natural water course. Wetlands adjacent to the drains and creeks in Alabaster Township would fall in this category.
- Wetlands five acres in size, or larger, in counties that contain a population of at least 100,000 people. Since Iosco County has less than 100,000 people this category does not apply to Alabaster Township.

A local unit of government has the authority to create wetland regulations that address wetlands not protected by the state. Alabaster Township may wish to investigate this option if it is concerned about loss of wetlands due to development.

Wells and Groundwater Protection

Michigan's groundwater is vulnerable to contamination because many aquifers lie close to the surface of the ground and many aquifers are not protected by layers with low permeability (such as clay and shale). In Alabaster Township, this is especially important because nearly all residents rely on wells for drinking water. A wide range of activities can contribute to groundwater contamination. In Alabaster Township activities of particular concern are waste and wastewater disposal, mining, water well construction and soil borings, and storage and handling of hazardous substances.

The groundwater contamination problem can become more severe if more seasonal residents become full time residents. Septic fields on small lots that struggle to accommodate increased use and more intensive use of lawn fertilizers are some of the groundwater threats associated with increased numbers of full-time residents.

According to David Schmidt, environmental sanitarian for the Iosco County Health Department, wells in Alabaster Township have to be especially deep and need to be dug through salt water to get to the fresh water. The salt water can erode well casings and contaminate the deep water supply.



Gypsum Mining

Gypsum and the accompanying mining operations are a significant feature in Alabaster Township. United States Gypsum owns approximately 4300 acres of land in the township, from which it extracts 350,000 tons of gypsum annually. National Gypsum owns property in Alabaster Township that it uses to load Great Lake charter ships with gypsum mined in Grant Township and shipped to Alabaster by rail.

The United States Gypsum facility is one of the largest gypsum mines in Michigan and in the United States. Presently it ships all quarried rock by highway trucks.

Annual land use requirements for mining are approximately 8.6 acres. Open-pit mining is accomplished by continuous mechanical methods. Mining displaces approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of overburden annually. The overburden is used to construct access roads, partially fill previous excavations (about 40% of the total), construct wetlands, and other reclamation activities on-site.

The significant land use planning issues associated with the gypsum mine and its operations are described below:

Removal of Overburden Approximately 45 feet of existing soil over the gypsum needs to be removed. This displaces woodlands, wetlands and natural topography. Mining impacts natural biological systems, interrupts natural drainage courses, impacts local hydrology, and affects wildlife. Under state and federal law wetland loss is mitigated by creation of 1-1/2 acres of new wetland for each acre disturbed by mining.

Change/Impact in Public Infrastructure Expansion of the quarry has resulted in closure of public roads and rights-of-way and the rerouting of drainage features. The mining companies have also helped pay for upgrades to local infrastructure, including roads, new drainages and public water systems.

Positive Effects of Gypsum Mining Local mining has histori-



cally been one of the highest taxpayers in the county. Mining has provided many full-time, high-wage jobs and has supported local businesses in the area. During the past 20 years, employment at US Gypsum peaked at 100 in 1999. Currently, US Gypsum's employment is 17. The assembly and holding of large tracts of land by the gypsum companies have preserved areas of the township that may have otherwise been developed.

Adverse consequences of Gypsum Mining Problems attributed to gypsum mining include dust in the air, land vibration, and visual appearance during the mining and reclamation activities. Historically, employment at the gypsum mines has been very cyclical which can cause problems with the local economy.

Reclamation and/or Restoration of the Land Mined lands are managed and reclaimed following state and federal guidelines and regulations. US Gypsum has undertaken reclamation projects and is planning additional steps. The 2003 Site Plan prepared by US Gypsum for the Alabaster Township Planning Commission indicates that the company has expended considerable effort toward demolishing its shoreline mill and stock pile. This effort resulted in a visual improvement of the roadside.

State Forest and Woodlands

The western portion of Alabaster Township is nearly all part of the AuSable State Forest, accounting for 3,433 acres. Significant other privately owned woodlands exist adjacent to the state forest property. Woodlands are valuable natural features that serve as windbreaks, aid in the absorption of rainwater, replenish oxygen, create natural beauty and character, and provide wildlife habitats. The woodlands in Alabaster Township are used for hunting, snowmobiling, other recreational activities, and logging.



Existing Land Use

The existing land use is an important piece of data to analyze the existing characteristics in a community. In many cases, the existing land uses have set a pattern that is unlikely to change. In other areas there may be vacant or underused land that can be evaluated for its development or conservation value.

In order to provide a detailed account of the Existing Land Use, the consultants first used aerial photography to develop a draft of the land use map. After a draft was developed, the consultants used the draft as a guide and drove each road in the Township in December of 2002. They corrected the map as needed to identify land that was used for agriculture, commercial development, and residential development and to identify land that was currently wooded or vacant.

Land Use Classifications

The land uses in the Township are divided into eight classifications for purposes of mapping. General definitions are given below.

Agricultural

This classification is intended to accommodate primarily agricultural land uses, farm dwellings, and non-farm dwellings that are in keeping with the agricultural character. Agricultural land uses would be characterized by traditional cash crops, animal raising, horse boarding, and pasture lands.

Residential, Single Family

This classification is for areas with single family dwellings and accessory structures. There are no multi-family dwellings in the township.

Commercial

Included in this category are all parcels containing commercial facilities.



Extractive

Included in this category is land used for the extraction, processing and storage of gypsum, including the operating of heavy equipment and the outside storage of equipment and materials.

Port

This category identifies land that is used exclusively for processing and shipping of materials.

Public/Semi-Public

Land area in this category is used for public and government buildings, parks and cemeteries. Schools, both public and private, as well as religious institutions, are included in this classification. This category also includes utility easements, road rights-of-way, and other infrastructure that requires land, such as lagoons and pump stations.

Vacant

All existing vacant or undeveloped parcels are included in this category.

Wooded

Land area that is covered with forests and trees.

Land Use Analysis

The chart to the left shows how land is currently being used in Alabaster Township.

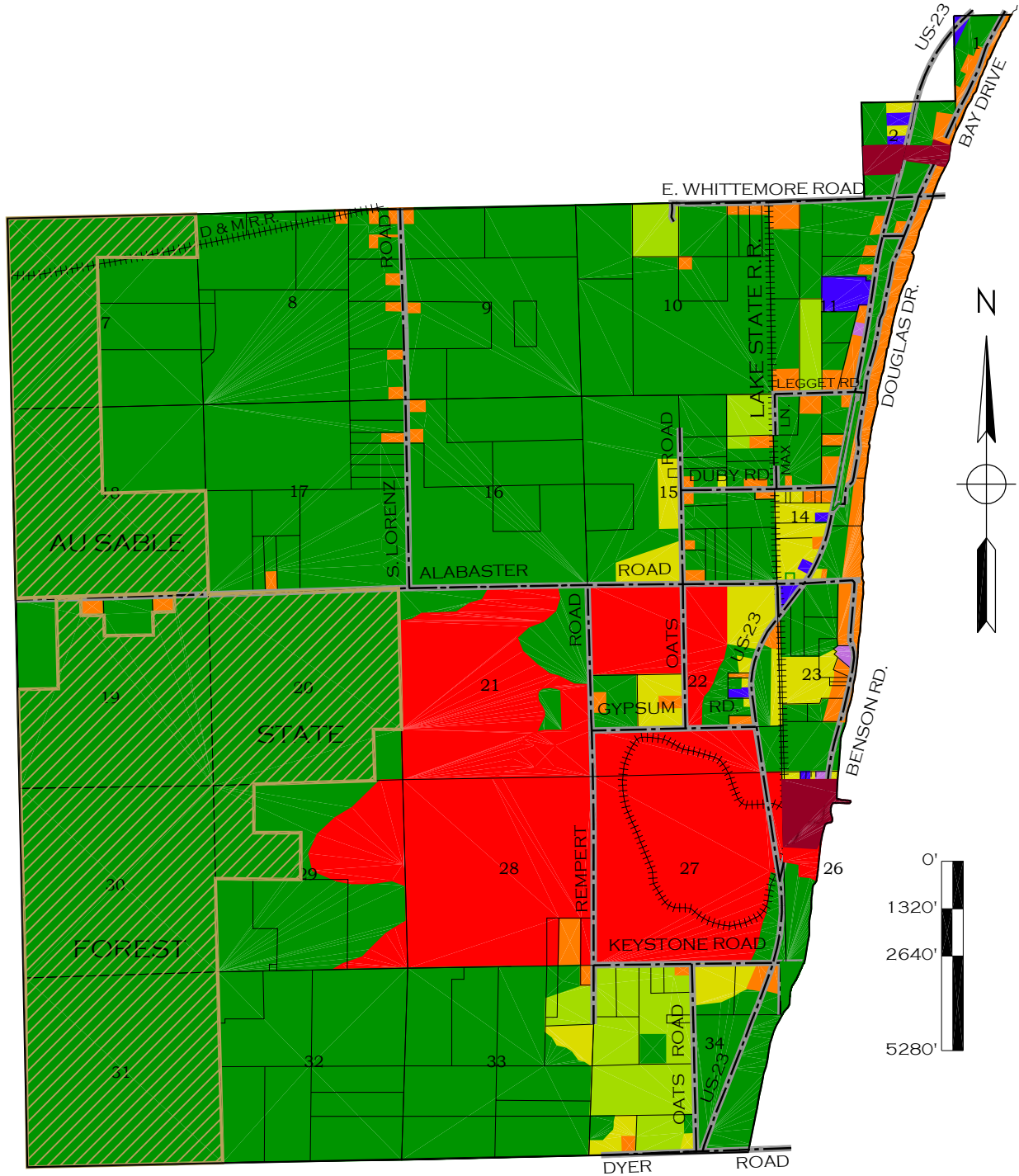
Land Use In Alabaster Township		
Type	Acreage	Percent
Agricultural	434	3.2%
Commercial	69	0.5%
Extractive	2316	17.0%
Public/Semi Public	5	0.1%
Port	74	0.6%
Residential	553	4.1%
Vacant	398	2.9%
Wooded	9718*	71.6%
Total	13,567	100.0%

** includes 3,433 acres of State Forest Land which could also be considered public/semi public land - 25% of the total*

Source: 2002 Driving Survey












EXISTING LAND USE MAP



ALABASTER TOWNSHIP
IOSCO COUNTY, MICHIGAN

LAND USE LEGEND

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------------|---|----------------|---|------------|
|  | - AGRICULTURAL |  | - EXTRACTIVE (MINING) |  | - RESIDENTIAL |  | - VACANT |
|  | - COMMERCIAL |  | - PUBLIC/SEMI PUBLIC |  | - STATE FOREST |  | - WOOD LOT |
|  | - PORT DISTRICT | | | | | | |

Agricultural

Agricultural use accounts for 3.2% of the land in the township. Most of the agricultural land is located in section 34 at the south end of the township.

Commercial

Alabaster Township currently has less than 70 acres of property that are considered commercial. Most of it is scattered single sites located along US-23.

Extractive

Extractive land use is the second largest use in Alabaster Township at 2391 acres. All of this is U.S. Gypsum property.

Port

Land identified as port is used exclusively for the processing and shipping of Gypsum via Lake Huron.

Wooded

Wooded lands account for the largest land use in Alabaster Township at 9,718 acres or 71.6%. This is almost all of the land that is located away from the shoreline that is not used for gypsum mining. Nearly 8 sections of this wooded land on the west side of the township is state forest property. This state forest land could also be considered public/semi-public. Much of the wooded land is used for hunting, with several hunt clubs located in the township. One of the largest is the Tawas Bay Hunt Club, which owns property in sections 8, 9, 10, and 16.

Residential

Residential use accounts for approximately 4% of the land within the township. Most of it is located along the Lake Huron shore.

Vacant

Approximately 3 percent of the land, or 398 acres is considered vacant. Vacant land is generally clear of most trees and is not used for agricultural purposes.

Public/Semi-Public

There are limited public and semi-public land uses in Alabaster Township. The only existing ones are the cemetery, the Bible Church and the Township Hall.



Community Input

To determine the future direction of Alabaster Township, the planning commission actively sought opinions of permanent and seasonal residents of the Township. Input from the community was gathered primarily in the form of a mailed survey and a town meeting.

Business firms active in the township were provided the same opportunity to participate (initial survey and commission meetings) as all township property owners. The township's largest employers attended, participated, and contributed ideas at meetings. In addition, the Iosco County Economic Development Forum Business Expansion Survey summary is attached in the Appendix.

In March of 2003, community input surveys were mailed to all property owners in Alabaster Township, providing them an opportunity to express their opinions regarding the future of the Township. The Township mailed 520 surveys; 245 were completed and returned for a 47.1% response rate. Nearly 45% of the survey respondents were full-time residents of the township. The remainder were composed of seasonal residents and owners of non-residential property.

On Saturday, May 24, 2003 a community input meeting was held at the Alabaster Bible Church. Because Alabaster Township has such a large number of seasonal residents, a weekend date was chosen to allow them to participate also. Approximately 70 people attended this meeting.

Results from the community input survey and the public meeting are summarized in the paragraphs on the following pages.



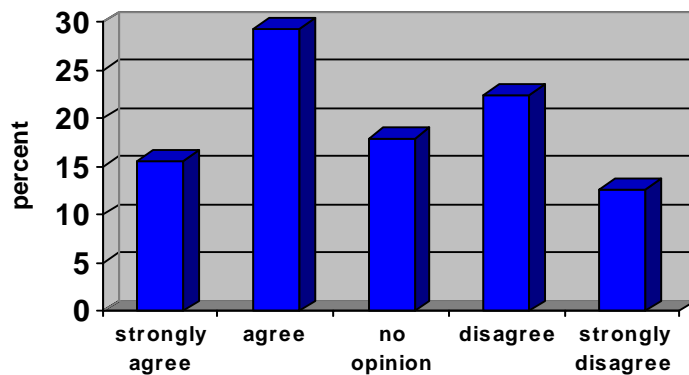
Community Input Survey

General

Survey respondents were mixed on their opinion about general growth in the township. Nearly 45% wanted to see Alabaster Township grow in population in coming years but over 35% did not want

population growth. Slightly over half the respondents wanted to see additional development in coming years, but nearly 1/3 did not.

I would like to see Alabaster Township grow in population



agree with the statement that the Township should plan for more housing choices such as townhomes, condominiums, and rental apartments.

Residential

Nearly half of the survey respondents wanted Alabaster Township to plan for more single-family homes. About 1/4 had no opinion and the other 1/4 did not want more single family homes. More than half of the respondents did not

Survey respondents overwhelmingly preferred residential development that preserves and maintains natural features and open space.

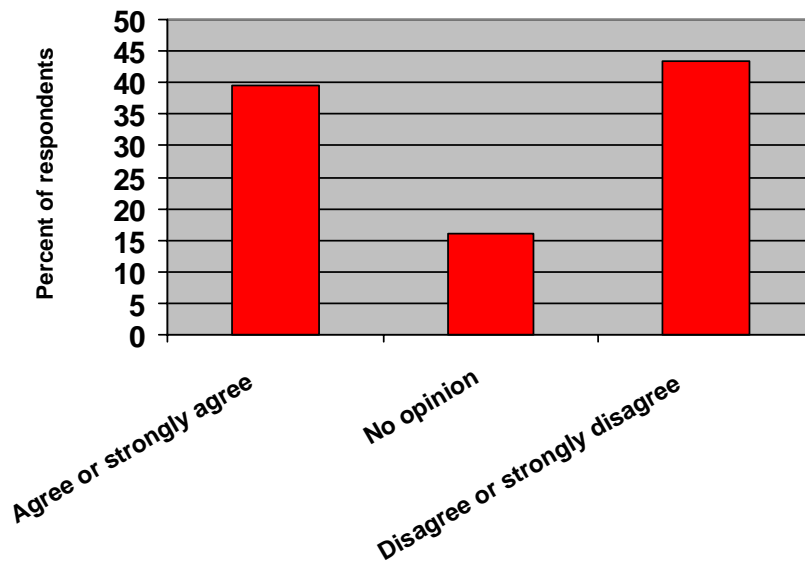
Survey respondents were most united on their opinions regarding preserving and maintaining natural features and open space. Nearly 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I would prefer residential development in Alabaster township that can best preserve and maintain natural features such as forests, wetlands, and shoreline.” Over 75% preferred residential development in Alabaster township that preserves open space.



Commercial

As with residential growth, survey respondents had mixed opinions regarding commercial growth in the township. Nearly 40% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Very little or no commercial growth is the only appropriate option for Alabaster Township” while 43.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

Very little or no commercial growth is the only appropriate option for Alabaster Township



Only slightly more than 1/4 of the respondents felt that future commercial development in Alabaster Township should include a mix of “big box” retailers. Over 45% felt that future commercial development should not include “big box” retailers.

When asked where commercial growth should be located, the area that received the highest response was near

Townline Road and US-23, with 40% of respondents selecting that area. Townline Road and US-23 is currently a commercial zoning district. Additionally, 28.2% of respondents identified the US-23 and Alabaster Road area as preferred for commercial development. This area is also presently zoned for commercial use.

Industrial

Nearly 50% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Alabaster Township needed a more diverse industrial base in order to grow its economy and provide more jobs. One-third of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that idea and the remainder had no opinion.

Over 3/4 of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “We should plan for the potential re-use of the mining lands in Alabaster Township.”



When asked where industry should be located, nearly 60% of the respondents selected the answer “near commercial areas”. Over 3/4 of the respondents felt that the township should plan for the potential re-use of the mining lands.

Agricultural

While Alabaster Township does not have a large proportion of agricultural lands, survey respondents felt they were important and worth preserving. Over half strongly agreed or agreed that agriculture is an important feature of Alabaster Township’s landscape and nearly 65% strongly agreed or agreed that Alabaster Township should preserve agricultural land. Only 7.3% did not feel agricultural land should be preserved. Nearly half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “using agricultural land for new development is an appropriate way to accommodate growth”.

Other Concerns

Respondents were mixed on their opinions regarding Alabaster Township providing additional public recreational opportunities that are not yet available on State land. Nearly 44% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that those opportunities should be provided and 32.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

Opinions on improving road accessibility were divided also. Slightly more than one-third strongly agreed or agreed that east-west road accessibility needed to be improved and the same proportion felt that way for north-south road accessibility. Slightly less than one third disagreed or strongly disagreed with those statements on road accessibility.

Alabaster Township residents like the quiet, rural feel and natural beauty of the area.

Open ended responses

The last two questions in the survey asked respondents what they liked and disliked about Alabaster Township. Nearly 2/3 gave a written response about what they liked. The most frequent response



related to the quiet, rural feel and the natural beauty of the area. Other common responses were the Lake Huron shoreline and simply, “the way it is”.

Slightly more than 45% of respondents wrote an answer to what they disliked about Alabaster Township. The most frequent response was no sewer or no water. The second most frequent response related to blighted areas and upkeep of homes.

Complete detailed responses to the survey questions are given in the Appendix.

Community Input Meeting

An open forum-style meeting was conducted by the Spicer consultants in which more opinions from Alabaster residents were gathered. During the 90 minute meeting, the moderators summarized key results from the survey and then asked for opinions on the same general topics as the survey. The meeting was specifically scheduled for the Memorial Day weekend and on a Saturday morning, as that is when many of Alabaster’s seasonal residents first arrive in the Township and was a day and time when most residents, both seasonal and permanent, could attend. More than 70 people participated in this visioning session.

Citizens provided very thoughtful input that showed their overall grasp of how various growth issues would affect the township. For example, attendees realized that commercial and industrial growth may be desirable if it were located away from the shoreline, but each may also need costly infrastructure to develop. Or, they felt that condominiums or a planned unit development may be feasible but it needed to be done within very specific site plan guidelines that addressed appearance, aesthetics and the protection of shoreline views. As with the mailed survey, many attendees expressed the opinion that they were not in favor of a large retail or fast-food chain store development.

A list of all comments is summarized in the Appendix.



In addition to the public workshop, a meeting was held during the Labor Day weekend, again, in order to allow *all* of the Township residents an opportunity to review the draft of the overall plan. The meeting was designed to allow both seasonal and full time residents the opportunity to review the draft future land use map and to learn more about the planning process. Approximately 55 people attended this meeting. Several individuals had questions for clarification but no objections were expressed.

In accordance with State law, the Township Board approved the draft of the plan for distribution to all registered entities, including neighboring and adjacent communities and the County. No comments were received from any of the entities in regard to the Comprehensive Development Plan.

On Saturday of Memorial Day weekend in 2004, the Alabaster Township held a public hearing to take comments on the Comprehensive Development Plan. Approximately 25 people attended the meeting. There were questions and statements regarding future development, especially as it related to land currently under the control of the existing gypsum operations. There were questions and further explanation as to the intent and purpose of the different future land use categories. There were no comments that required alteration of substantial change to the planning document itself.



Community Goals & Objectives

Articulating goals about what should change and what should stay the same is especially important when a community is defining its direction for the next ten years. Based upon the community input, Alabaster Township has developed goals for its future.

GENERAL

Alabaster Township is described as a quiet community where residents enjoy the “up-north” atmosphere that features woodlands and a beautiful lakeshore. To the maximum extent possible, these lands should be preserved and maintained.



Goal: Preserve and maintain the natural beauty of the Township.

Use the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to regulate and manage growth and its impact on the Township.

Goal: Prevent the proliferation of blighted structures and unused or dysfunctional vehicles and recreational items.

Develop, adopt and enforce a blight ordinance.

Use all available tools to enforce the blight ordinance.

Goal: Protect environmentally sensitive lands with sound land use policies.

Goal: Preserve the Township’s water system by protecting the groundwater

Develop ordinances to protect groundwater and the environment at and around waste disposal sites.



Investigate and pursue the availability and use of wellhead protection programs and act to protect wellheads

Ensure that commercial, industrial or other intense land uses are designed to minimize the pollutants potentially reaching groundwater sources.

Goal: Preserve and protect the quality of life and the friendly open atmosphere of Alabaster Township.

Continually strive to improve two-way communications with Township stakeholders.

Continue to recognize the diverse range of stakeholders within the Township.

Work to prevent the rural road network of the Township being used as an alternate route between M-55 and U.S. 23.

RESIDENTIAL

Because Alabaster Township residents have mixed opinions on the need for residential growth, it is important that any such growth be properly planned so as not to interfere excessively with the existing rural character of the township. Alabaster Township residents are united on the need for residents to maintain their property to avoid eyesores. The township needs to put measures in place that will encourage homeowners to properly maintain their residences.

Goal: Maintain quality housing.

Maintain an inventory of all nonconforming uses and structures throughout the Township.

Develop, adopt, and enforce a blight ordinance.

Maintain adherence to building codes for all new construction.



Goal: Carefully plan for future residential growth.

Identify specific areas that would permit more intense residential growth than currently found in the Township.



Determine and incorporate into the zoning ordinance provisions that allow for impact assessments of large scale developments.

Develop standards for unique residential development, such as planned unit development, open space development, and conservation development for areas along the shoreline or in reclaimed mining lands.

Goal: Plan for the redevelopment of housing along the waterfront.

Maintain an inventory of all legal nonconforming structures, lots, and uses.

Evaluate changes in county, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations and adjust ordinances as necessary.

Goal: Encourage residential development that preserves and enhances open space and natural features.

Provide non-monetary incentives to developers who preserve open space in new residential developments.

Goal: Maintain and preserve the character found in existing neighborhoods.

Develop policies and standards that allow the Township to carefully evaluate the impact that commercial or other types of higher intensity land uses would have on existing residential areas.

Develop an ordinance to guide off-site developments' access to the lake. Address funneling issues.



Goal: Provide non-monetary incentives to developers who employ creative development options, such as planned unit developments, cluster developments, etc.

Identify incentives for developers and include them in the zoning ordinance.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Respondents to the public input survey provided mixed opinions on the need for additional commercial development. Where allowed, commercial development in Alabaster Township will be attractively arranged to serve the local community and its visitors.

Goal: Limit future commercial uses to specified areas.

Goal: Consider light commercial options in planned unit developments.

Goal: Set design and impact standards for future commercial development and redevelopment.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The community input survey results indicated that residents felt that Alabaster Township needed a more diverse industrial base in order to grow its economy and provide more jobs. However, the type and location of that development needs to be considered carefully and planned so as not to interfere with the natural rural flavor of the township.

Goal: Recognize industrial uses as an asset to the Township's economy

Plan for light industrial growth in specific areas.

Encourage retention of existing industrial and extractive uses and support continued improvement of these existing industrial areas



Goal: Recognize, through zoning and scheduled or directed capital improvements, the importance of transportation (rail, water, and road) to industry within the Township.

Goal: Set impact standards for future industrial development and redevelopment.

Goal: Coordinate industrial retention, development or redevelopment with the County's economic planning efforts.

Goal: Plan and coordinate traffic flow requirements with industry in a proactive manner.

AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE

Township residents feel that the preservation of agricultural land is important in Alabaster Township. Efforts should be taken to avoid using farmland for non-agricultural development purposes.

Goal: Encourage the preservation of agricultural land and open space.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Alabaster Township is very limited in available public services and infrastructure. As growth occurs, the Township needs to be mindful of the need to service that growth with affordable and safe infrastructure.

Goal: Take into account the available existing services within the community when considering new development or redevelopment.

Goal: Work to encourage cooperation and coordination between the Township, the County, and nearby municipalities in terms of capital improvements and infrastructure in order to reduce costs, set priorities and seek additional funding.

Goal: Develop policies to maintain well water quality within our well-based community.



RECREATION

By managing the development of recreational facilities and providing a variety of recreational opportunities, Alabaster Township can continue to improve the quality of life for residents. Sensitive natural areas should be carefully preserved while expanding the recreational amenities of the community.

Goal: Work with surrounding communities and the State to improve the state land so it provides additional recreational opportunities and public access.

Goal: Work, through the development of non-motorized trailways, to provide safe routes for biking and walking.

Goal: Identify ways to improve public access to the water without relying on easements.

Goal: Develop ordinances to manage the development of commercial or multi-unit camping facilities.



Future Land Use

Introduction

The future land use discussion in this Plan has a ten to twenty year horizon. The land uses outlined in this section of the Master Plan serve to convey the community’s desire to promote growth in specific areas while striving to maintain, enhance, and protect the northern beauty of the Township.

Keep in mind that some of these changes will not take place next year or five years from now, but possibly ten to twenty years from now. These proposed changes should serve as a guide. Every goal stated will not be accomplished, nor will every parcel of land be developed as shown.

As a reminder, these proposed changes will not be effective until the zoning is changed to allow development of the varying types to occur. For example, while the future land use map may indicate an area for commercial, the area may not be *zoned* commercial until the land users request the change and the Township Board approves it.

The future land use map is a *guide* for development for the next 10 - 20 years. Not every parcel will develop exactly as shown.

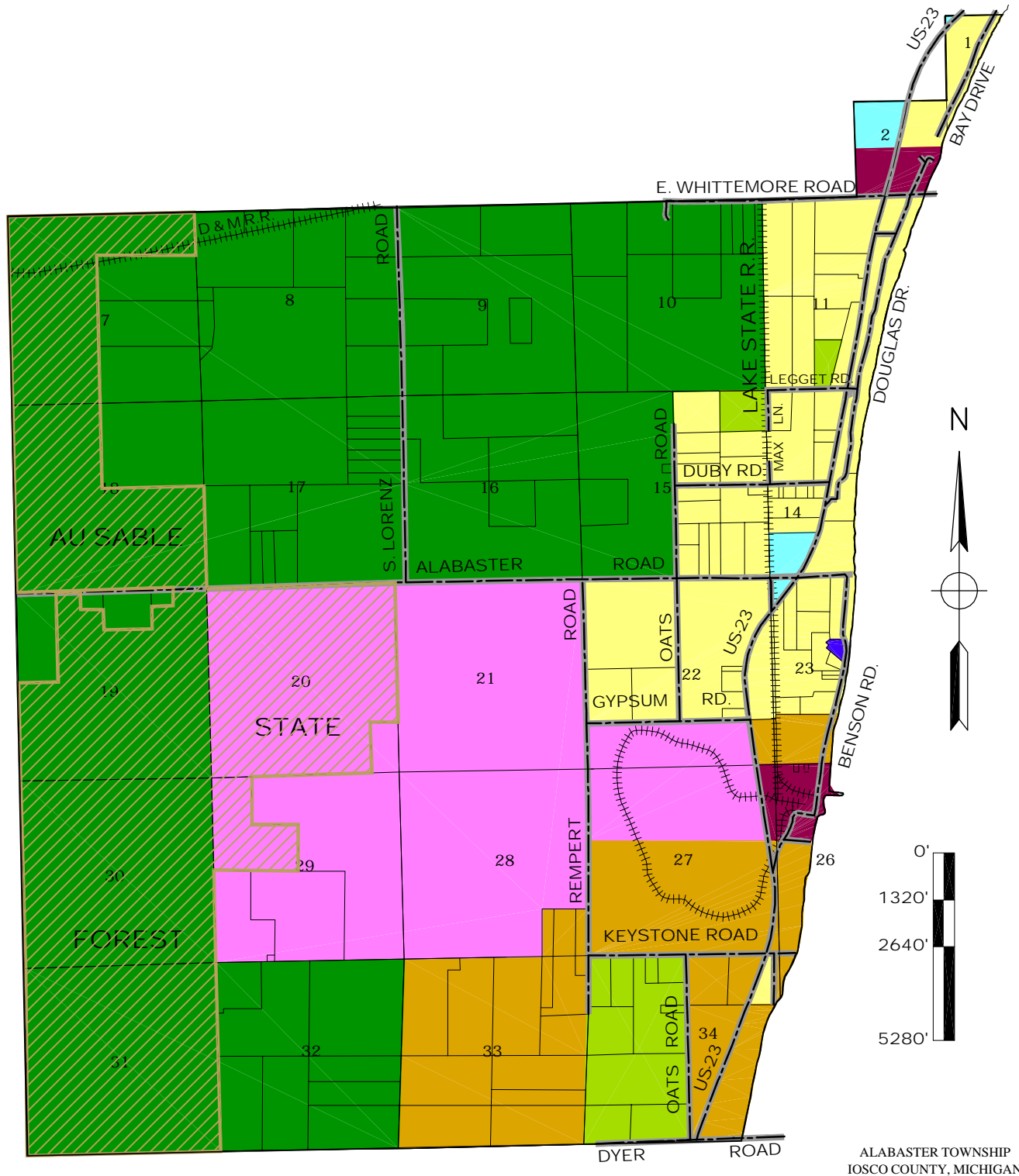
The future land use map is shown on the following page. A discussion of the proposed future land uses begins below.

Agricultural

Alabaster Township will continue to maintain existing agricultural land uses in the township but will not expand them. Agricultural use is contained in an area in the southeast portion of the township in section 34 that is approximately one mile long and one-half mile wide and a parcel north of Legget Road in section 11 in the northeastern portion of the township. If necessary, agricultural land would be diverted to open space residential.



FUTURE LAND USE



ALABASTER TOWNSHIP
IOSCO COUNTY, MICHIGAN

- | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| | FORESTRY/RECREATION | | RESIDENTIAL | | EXTRACTIVE (MINING) |
| | AGRICULTURE | | OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL | | PORT DISTRICT |
| | COMMERCIAL | | PUBLIC | | STATE FOREST OVERLAY |



Commercial

Alabaster Township wants to limit commercial growth to specific areas that will service the needs of local residents and not detract from the natural beauty of the township. Future land use shows commercial land use for the area west of US-23 just north of Alabaster Road, known as Alabaster Corners. To preserve the area's natural beauty, the township intends to strictly limit signs.

Extractive

Extractive mining covers nearly four square miles in the center portion of the township in the future land use map. Sections 20, 21, 29, and nearly all of section 28 are shown for extractive mining. These reflect US Gypsum's desire to move mining into some new areas to the west of where it currently mines, including properties currently owned by the State of Michigan. The Township is in support of US Gypsum's efforts to move west and onto state land to follow the natural course of alabaster. In these efforts though, the Township does not foresee a useful land trade between the State and the mining operations for land along Lake Huron. As reflected in this document, this property is intended for residential use.

Alabaster Township has worked extensively with both existing extractive uses in the Township throughout the entire life of both facilities. During the past several years, the continuation, possible expansion or even the shuttering of the facilities has been discussed. The unique location of the extractive land uses and the proximity of the active and inactive mining lands to Lake Huron make them potentially attractive for a variety of uses. While there are no known plans, nor even any intent, to lease, sell or offer any property at this time, the intent of this future land use category is to provide the continuation of this use for extractive purposes only. The subsequent land use of these areas is open space residential.

This plan is intended to serve as a guide and cannot reasonably predict every change which may occur in the coming years. As such, the extractive future land use is intended to remain in place. The sale of this property for any use other than extractive would result in a significant change to the areas immediately adjacent to the extractive lands and to the Township as a whole. Should this occur, a significant re-



view of the area itself and of this comprehensive development plan must be undertaken prior to any change in use or request for rezoning.

Forestry/Recreation

Forestry and recreation will cover approximately 1/2 of the land in the township in the future land use map. Residents felt strongly about preserving the woodlands in the township, as they provide much of the natural beauty that exists in the area. Low density residential uses will continue to exist and expand here. Recreational opportunities will continue to be provided through hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, etc. As discussed in the description of extractive lands within the Township, US Gypsum may be interested in pursuing additional mining operations on the State-owned property, even possibly further west than is shown on the future land use map. The Township, while aware of this, is confident that this map adequately reflects the use of the land in the Township until a plan update is required in five years.

As the focus of the local land owners, businesses and other stakeholders change, so may then, the future land use map. As stated earlier, while a land trade between the State and one or more of the mining companies may be pursued, any trade resulting in the creation of park land on the shore of Lake Huron would be in contradiction to this plan, which identifies this land as residential. As with the extractive lands in the Township, the subsequent land use of these areas is open space residential except in the case of further pursuit of gypsum for extractive purposes. Either long term change would require a thorough review of this plan.

Port District

Future port areas are those areas around the existing industrial facilities where gypsum is processed for shipping. The intent and function of these future port areas are to adequately maintain and provide necessary transportation and mining related functions while establishing standards which buffer and balance the needs and demands of the extractive ,uses with the needs and desires of adjacent residential uses, especially in terms of noise.



Open Space Residential

The Township would like to use open space residential areas for unique residential development that preserves the natural features of the area, such as shorelines, woodlands, ponds and rolling hills. Housing developed here would most likely be more dense with large common areas left for open space. Limited commercial applications that meet the needs of the residents in the area may also be contained here. Areas in Alabaster Township that are designated as open space residential are some of the reclaimed mining lands in section 27 and other areas in sections 33 and 34.

Public

The only public or semi-public future land use indicated in the township is the cemetery in section 23. However, it is worth noting that the Au Sable State Forest property is public property in addition to forest. Additional uses for forest property will be sought.

Residential

Traditional residential future land use areas are mostly in the northeast portion of the township. Nearly all of the residential lots east of US-23 have already been developed, so little change will occur there. There is potential for more residential development west of US-23, including subdivisions. Certain non-residential uses, such as parks, churches, and schools, are also compatible with and permitted in residential areas.



Implementation

A plan, any plan, is only as useful as its implementation. Throughout the development of this plan, special emphasis has been placed on creating a document that would be easy to read, understand and implement.

This Plan is intended to be used by all Township officials, Planning Commission members, Zoning Board of Appeals members, Township Board members, those making private sector investments and by all citizens interested in the future development of the Township. The completion of this Master Plan is the foundation of the community planning process. The implementation of the goals and objectives of this plan is the next step. This must be an ongoing effort and can only be achieved through cooperation of the Township officials, the Township citizens and the private sector.

Key steps for the implementation of this Plan include:

1. Community knowledge and support of the Plan.
2. Zoning and Building Code updating and enforcement. Zoning must follow the concepts expressed in the Future Land Use map or both the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance will lose their effectiveness and enforceability.
3. Use of available incentives and the creation of new preservation and conservation development incentives in zoning and land use activities. An example of this would be to require or provide an incentive for providing open space in a new residential development.
4. Consistent use of the Plan to ensure that new or expanded developments follow not only the letter of the Comprehensive Development Plan and Future Land Use Map, but the intent of the plan as well.



Community Support

At the outset of this planning effort, the Township realized that its unique population presented challenges in terms of educating its residents about the planning process and making sure that ample opportunities were provided for public participation.

With extensive efforts, including a mailed survey and weekend meetings designed to accommodate both seasonal and permanent residents, the Township attempted to provide ample opportunities for all residents and stakeholders to participate in the planning process. It is important that the efforts to keep the public informed are maintained. The Township has taken steps to ensure orderly future development for Alabaster Township and it should be promoted to the citizens to foster support. Lack of citizen understanding and apathy can hinder the implementation process. There are several ways to increase citizen awareness, including:

1. Notify township residents via newsletters that the plan is complete. Share community input and goals. Keep the plan visible and available for citizens to use at all Township meetings.
2. Seek media attention regarding the Plan and the public hearing for the Plan.
3. Display the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map at the Township Hall.
4. Cite the Master Plan in Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals decisions along with consulting the plan during requests or discussions for capital improvements. The actions of the Township should establish the Plan as the justification for these decisions as well as the accepted development path for the Township.

Code Updating and Enforcement

The zoning ordinances and zoning maps must correctly reflect the goals and land use areas identified in the Master Plan. These docu-



ments must work together. Without this, the desired community results will be difficult to achieve. The zoning ordinance accomplishes many things. It separates incompatible uses of the land, protects property values, dictates development spacing, protects natural resources and prevents overcrowding of the land. The zoning ordinance also guides the process for development by addressing site plan review and approval, special use approval, and controls over signs.

A thorough review of the existing zoning should be done to address any inconsistencies and outdated aspects. In particular, updating the Township's zoning ordinance would allow the township to write zoning requirements that allow for things such as conservation development and design standards based on the unique natural features found throughout Alabaster Township.

Consistent enforcement of the zoning ordinances and building codes are the next tools used to implement the Plan. Therefore, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Commission and Township officials should be knowledgeable of the Plan and its intentions. Many of the community's goals can be utilized and implemented from strict adherence and enforcement of codes.

Use of Development Incentives

The Township Board and Planning Commission members must take an active role to propel the desired development or limit development within a community. This can include grant requests, tax issues, special assessments, and development incentives. To keep a community vital, local government must be aware of all the tools at hand.

Some of the incentive tools available for such co-development in Alabaster Township are:

1. The TEA-21 Program, using transportation funding. These moneys are available through the Michigan Department of Transportation and include such activities as historic preservation, landscaping and beautification, pedestrian pathways, and roadway improvements.



2. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund administered through the Department of Natural Resources. These funds are generally used for park, recreation, or environmental improvements.
3. Development incentives administered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. These funds are used for a wide variety of projects that are all tied to increasing employment.
4. Cooperative efforts in terms of planning are especially important in Alabaster Township. This includes cooperation with surrounding communities and the County, especially as they relate to county-wide initiatives and efforts that are consistent with the Township's adopted plan.

Other Funding Sources

Three other specific funding sources that are available for capital improvement projects are described below:

Dedicated Millage: Special millages can be used to generate revenues for a specific purpose. Examples that may be relevant in Alabaster Township would be to fund road improvements, recreation programs or improvements, or funding for a farmland or open space preservation program, such as purchase of development rights.

Special Assessment: A special assessment is a tax or levy customarily imposed against only those specific parcels of real estate that will benefit from a proposed public improvement, such as a roadway, or sanitary sewer line.

Bond Programs: Bonds are among the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for specific community projects and are paid off by the general public via property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of projects that generate revenue (i.e. parking



structure or community pool, etc.). These bonds are retired using income generated by the project.

Revisions and Updates

The Master Planning process is continual and ongoing. The Master Plan must be reviewed at least once every five years according to the new Township Planning laws passed in 2001. The planning commission or a committee of the planning commission should initiate the review to make one of the following determinations:

- no update is needed
- the existing plan needs to be amended
- a new plan needs to be written.

While a thorough review should be conducted every five years, the plan itself should be used so routinely that the Township will know far in advance of the required five year review if the plan is consistent with the development, pending development or development pressure that the Township is feeling.

Annually, and especially at five year intervals, a plan review should be done to ensure that the plan still reflects the current goals and desires of the Township. Generally, a plan needs to be updated or rewritten at least once every ten years in order to be responsive to new growth trends and current Township attitudes, including possible residential trends such as a growth in year-round residents, changes in median age or income.



Appendices



Planning Alabaster Township's Future – Community Input Survey Results

520 surveys distributed in March 2003. 245 surveys returned. 47.1% response rate.

N.A. = no answer, **blue** numbers are totals of “strongly agree” + “agree” or “strongly disagree” + “disagree”

1) Age:

.4% under 18 0% 18 to 24 10.6% 25 to 44 56.7% 45 to 64 31.8% 65 and over .4% N.A.

2) Is your primary residence in Alabaster Township?

43.3% yes 55.5% no 1.2% N.A.

➤ If you check "yes," please proceed to question #3. If you check "no," please go to question #4.

3) How long have you had your primary residence in Alabaster Township?

4.5% 0 - 2 years 4.9% 3 - 5 years 8.6 6 - 10 years 13.5% 11 - 20 years 13.9% over 20 years

➤ Please skip the following questions as they pertain to other residents in Alabaster Township and go to question #6.

4) Since you do reside permanently in Alabaster Township, can you please tell us your role in the Township community:

34.7% seasonal resident 11.8% owner of non-residential property

➤ If you are a seasonal resident, please proceed to question #5. If you are an owner of non-residential property, please go to question #6.

5) How long have you been a seasonal resident of Alabaster Township?

Red are % of total respondents

4.5% 0 - 2 years 6.1% 3 - 5 years 6.9% 6 - 10 years 9.0% 11 - 20 years 15.9% over 20 years

6) Number of school age children residing with you:

73.9% none 4.1% one 9.4% two 1.6 three .8 four or more N.A. 10.2%

General

7) I would like to see Alabaster Township grow in population in the coming years. N.A. 2.0%

15.5% strongly agree 29.4% agree 18.0% no opinion 22.4% disagree 12.7% strongly disagree
44.9% 35.1%

8) I would like to see additional development in Alabaster Township in coming years. N.A. 2.0%

16.3% strongly agree 35.1% agree 13.9% no opinion 18.8% disagree 13.9% strongly disagree
51.4% 32.7%

9) I would like to see Alabaster Township plan for more single-family homes. N.A. 1.6%

15.5% strongly agree 33.5% agree 26.9% no opinion 13.1% disagree 9.4% strongly disagree
49.0% 22.5%

Planning Alabaster Township's Future – Community Input Survey Results

10) The Township should plan for more housing choices, such as townhomes, condominiums, and rental apartments. N.A. 2.4%

12.7% strongly agree 18.8% agree 13.1% no opinion 27.3% disagree 25.7% strongly disagree
31.5% 53.0%

11) Alabaster Township should plan for a variety of options based on income. N.A. 3.3%

8.6% strongly agree 26.1% agree 23.3% no opinion 20.0% disagree 18.8% strongly disagree
34.7% 38.8%

12) I would prefer residential development in Alabaster Township that can best preserve and maintain natural features such as forests, wetlands and shoreline. N.A. 2.9%

58.0% strongly agree 31.4% agree 2.9% no opinion 3.3% disagree 1.6% strongly disagree
89.4% 4.9%

13) I would prefer residential development in Alabaster Township that preserves open space. N.A. 3.7%

40.0% strongly agree 37.1% agree 11.0% no opinion 5.7% disagree 2.4% strongly disagree
77.1% 8.1%

Commercial

14) Future commercial development in the Township should be focused on the seasonal tourist industry. N.A. 5.3%

9.4% strongly agree 21.2% agree 19.6% no opinion 30.2% disagree 14.3% strongly disagree
30.6% 44.5%

15) Future commercial development should be located:

40.0% on or near Townline Road and US23 22.9% no opinion
28.2% on or near Alabaster Road and US23
15.5% other: Most frequent hand written response was "none"

16) Future commercial development in Alabaster Township should include a mix of "big box" retailers.

6.5% strongly agree 20.0% agree 20.4% no opinion 20.8% disagree 25.3% strongly disagree
26.5% 46.1% N.A. 6.9%

17) Very little to no commercial growth is the only appropriate option for Alabaster Township. N.A. 1.2%

18.8% strongly agree 20.8% agree 15.9% no opinion 30.2% disagree 13.1% strongly disagree
39.6% 43.3%

Industrial

18) The Township needs a more diverse industrial base in order to grow its economy and provide more jobs. N.A. 2.4%

16.3% strongly agree 33.5% agree 14.7% no opinion 18.4% disagree 14.7% strongly disagree
49.8% 33.1%

19) Industry in Alabaster Township should be located:

59.2% near commercial areas 14.3% no opinion
4.5% near State land
20.0% other: most frequent hand written response was "none"

Planning Alabaster Township's Future – Community Input Survey Results

20) We should plan for the potential re-use of the mining lands in Alabaster Township. N.A. 1.2%

36.7% strongly agree 38.8% agree 9.8% no opinion 6.5% disagree 6.9% strongly disagree
75.5% 13.4%

Agricultural

21) Agriculture is an important aspect of Alabaster Township's economy. N.A. 3.3%

11.0% strongly agree 35.9% agree 31.4% no opinion 15.1% disagree 3.3% strongly disagree
46.9% 18.4%

22) Agriculture is an important feature of Alabaster Township's landscape. N.A. 2.9%

14.3% strongly agree 37.6% agree 29.0% no opinion 13.5% disagree 2.9% strongly disagree
51.9% 16.4%

23) Alabaster Township should preserve agricultural land. N.A. 2.5%

20.8% strongly agree 44.1% agree 25.3% no opinion 5.3% disagree 2.0% strongly disagree
64.9% 7.3%

24) Using agricultural land for new development is an appropriate way to accommodate growth. N.A. 2.9%

2.4% strongly agree 24.1% agree 22.4% no opinion 28.6% disagree 19.6% strongly disagree
26.5% 48.2%

Other Concerns

25) Alabaster Township should provide additional public recreational opportunities that are not yet available on State land. N.A. 3.3%

13.1% strongly agree 30.6% agree 20.8% no opinion 19.2% disagree 13.1% strongly disagree
43.7% 32.3%

26) Alabaster Township needs to improve east-west road accessibility. N.A. 2.9%

9.4% strongly agree 26.1% agree 30.6% no opinion 22.9% disagree 8.2% strongly disagree
35.5% 31.1%

27) Alabaster Township needs to improve north-south road accessibility. N.A. 4.9%

11.0% strongly agree 23.7% agree 29.8% no opinion 22.9% disagree 7.8% strongly disagree
34.7% 30.7%

Planning Alabaster Township's Future – Community Input Survey Results

28) What do you like about Alabaster Township?

66.5% of respondents wrote in at least one item. Most frequent responses were:

- Rural country feeling/quiet/peaceful/natural beauty – 35.1%
- Lake Huron shoreline – 16.4%
- “The way it is” - 9.8%
- No industry – 5.3%
- Township government - 4.1%

Sample responses

Garbage pick-up on tax role; no industry, open spaces; good township administration & zoning; natural pristine setting; like the communication that lets me know what's happening; good beaches; tranquility and fresh air; township government appears to not waste tax money on unnecessary expenses; quiet; great road service in winter; an “up-north” experience with deer and other wild animals; the fact we have no fast food restaurants; peaceful; small town feeling; good township governing board – they value our input & try to help when possible;

29) What do you dislike about Alabaster Township?

45.5% of respondents wrote in an answer (It should be noted that some of the respondents included “dislikes” with their “likes” in question 28.) Most frequent responses were:

- No sewer/water – 11.0%
- No commercial area or businesses - 5.7%
- Blight/homes not kept up – 6.1%
- High taxes – 3.3%
- Lack of recreation opportunities/public access to water – 2.8%
- Mining lands - 2.9%

Sample responses

Garbage pick up should be earlier in the week; no city water, sewer; no good stores to buy a variety of things; lack of necessary police protection; lack of zoning controls produced checkerboard of uses; without an overall master plan for the mining areas, the twp. will be at the mercy of the developers whose objective differs from the twp and surrounding neighbors; tax base high compared to surrounding communities; a sidewalk, walkway system would be great; consider a PUD in the old gypsum property; control dust on roads; weeds & brush in ditches; inconsistent development of commercial areas along US-23 (storage facility, etc.); no public access to water; township offices only open one day per week; junk cars and trash in yards; no restaurants; 50 foot lot size along water is way too small; USG's unused bucket system in the lake needs to be used or removed;

General observations

- 56.7% of respondents in 45 – 64 age group; nearly 75% do **not** have children living with them
- Alabaster Township is not the primary residence of 55.5% of respondents
- Natural features and open space should be maintained
- Residents love the peace and quiet, natural beauty of the area
- Slim majority of respondents want additional development
- Respondents divided on the need and type of future commercial development
- Township should plan for potential re-use of mining lands
- Agricultural land should be preserved
- No real strong opinions on the need for new roads
- Written responses show residents are passionately divided on the need for water/sewer services

ALABASTER TWP.

Community Input

May 24, 2003

Meeting was opened at 9:05 a.m.

Likes:

- The Lake
- Hasn't changed much, just the way it is
- Peaceful
- "Up North" but close services (hardware, hospital...)
- Friendly People
- Township Newsletter/Communication
- Rural Nature of Area, Wildlife
- No Big-City Politics
- Douglas Drive-like the way it is

Dislikes:

- Lots Too Small- 50' too narrow
- Tax Assessment in a Different Month?
- Lack of Public Access to the Lake
- Lack of Convenience Commercial
- Planning is Great- need some progress
- Lack of Cell Phone Service (Verizon might work)
- Snow Plows Destroy Mail Boxes
- Cable Needs to be Expanded (TV, Internet)
- Water Better with Reverse Osmosis

Residential:

- Prefer Single-Family Homes
- Concern with Actual Structures- should be well-built and look nice
- Concern about Impact of New Development (traffic, etc.)
- Continued Enforcement of Zoning Ordinance
- Width of Lot, Setbacks, other Regulations
- Senior Housing (Retirement Village)
- Growth is Inevitable- plan for it
- Planned Unit Developments
- Bring Residential, Community Follows

Commercial:

- Keep Commercial Away from Lake
- Commercial- something unique- Interesting
- Appropriate Design for Up North
- Put it in Tawas
- Keep Commercial in a Core Area
- Do Not Line US-23 for Stretch
- Commercial needs Sewer & Water
- Not in Favor of Added Cost of Utilities
- Would Like Some Commercial Growth
- Would Like Some Commercial- more committed to community
- Have to be on US-23- ONE area
- No Tax Abatements?
- Is There Potential for Medical?
- Possibly Mixed Use Development of the Lake- light commercial
- Location Discussion
- North & South of Twp. Line
- Resort Type O.K. on Water
- Townline Rd. Most Appropriate- 2 people
- Fast Food Out
- Resort Not Preferable
- Support Tax Base
- Unfair to put Cost of Utilities on Citizens
- Must ADD to the Tax Base

Industrial:

- Raise in Industrial- raise in jobs
- An Industrial Base is Good, in the "Background"
- Industrial Development Could Raise Taxes
- Industry Would Result in Raise in Truck Traffic
- If not Alabaster, the Region Needs Industrial Growth
- Industrial development Should Go on Former Mining land
- Industrial Park with light Industrial
- Out of Sight
- No Need for Industrial Park

Agricultural:

- Yes, We All Have to Eat
- We Should Preserve the Agricultural Land
- More Agricultural Land Needed
- Agricultural Land Could Be "Specialty Ag. Land" (blueberries, asparagus)
- Forest Best Resource

- We Live Here, Not Tourists
- Not for High Intensity Animals

Other Concerns:

- Leave Douglas Dr. –As is
- Do Not Want Sidewalks & Curbs
- Agenda for "Gypsum" Property
- Bike Paths
- Size/Height of New Homes Block Views of Other Resources
- Lack of Public Access to Water
- Grooming of Shoreline

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.