

Pennfield Charter Township  
**MASTER PLAN**

Adopted: May, 1999

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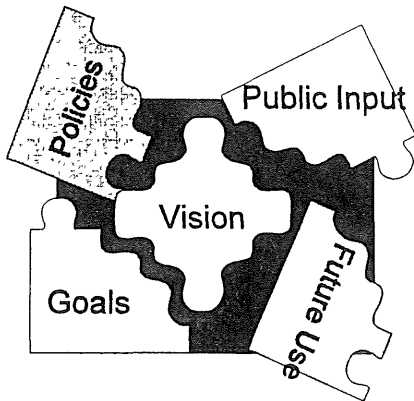
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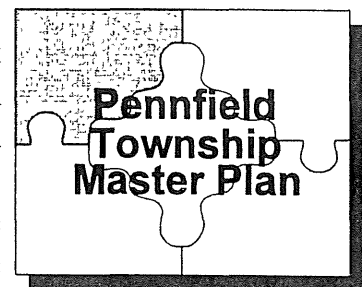
# INTRODUCTION WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?



The Master Plan is a policy document which sets forth recommendations for the future. This Plan, used in combination with the Zoning Ordinance, will assist in guiding future land use in Pennfield Charter Township. The Plan is the long-range policy guide for community development. Whereas, zoning is the short-term regulatory means of implementing the Plan.

A Master Plan is made up of a number of different components, including a Community Profile, Community Vision, Goals and Policies, and Future Land Use. The Community Profile discusses current trends and conditions in the township, while the Community Vision provides an overall focus to the Plan. Goals and Policies are used in combination with the Future Land Use section to improve and strengthen those aspects of the community in which citizens are proud, and to change those areas that have been identified as problems.

Public participation is the glue that cements the Plan. Not only does the public's input offer township leaders an opportunity to hear what citizens value (mix of urban and rural landscapes, neighborhoods, good schools, and natural features), but it also gives local officials insights into problems in the community and how the public thinks these issues should be resolved.



The potential for Master Plan implementation is far greater if the process of formulating the Plan is a partnership between Township officials and the general public. In turn, implementation of the Master Plan can provide tangible benefits in the form of an improved quality of life, more efficient use of resources, and an economically healthy community.

## **Using the Plan**

The Master Plan can be used in a number of ways, but above all it should be consulted whenever land use decisions are to be made.

## **Zoning Ordinances Need A Master Plan**

- ◆ In order for a community to strengthen the defensibility of its zoning ordinance, a Master Plan is needed that is designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability; and to limit the improper use of land ... to name only a few reasons prescribed by the Township Zoning Act.

## **Refer to the Master Plan In All Zoning Decisions**

- ◆ Use of the Master Plan ensures that the Township's desires regarding future development are translated into action, one decision at a time: rezoning, site plan review, special land use approval, and variance. It is those every-day decisions that, when added together, will create the future land use pattern for Pennfield Charter Township.

However, the Plan is more than the Future Land Use map. It is also the Vision, Goals, and Policies that, together with the Plan map, create the picture of the Township's future. Regulatory decisions should be carefully weighed against these guidelines.

## **Encourage Other Decision Making Bodies to Use the Master Plan**

- ◆ The Master Plan should assist in guiding decision making efforts, from the capacity of improved roads to new schools. Working with other parties that can affect land use patterns in the township, such as the County Road Commission and MDOT, County Parks Department, Battle Creek Public Works Department, the school district, and adjacent townships, can help Pennfield Charter Township in the implementation of the Master Plan.

## **Keep the Plan Current**

- ◆ An outdated Plan that has fallen into disuse can make the Zoning Ordinance and Township decisions weak. The Planning Commission should conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure it is kept current. Any amendments to the Plan can be made at that time to keep it up to date and consistent with community philosophies. Goals may be added or deleted, policies changed, or future land use designations revisited during such a review.

# ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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## ***Introduction***

Where uses have been approved contrary to the Plan, the Plan should be amended to reflect these changes. By routinely following this procedure, the Master Plan will continue to be an up-to-date, reliable planning tool.

Communities have a responsibility to look beyond the day-to-day zoning issues and provide guidance for land use and development in the community through the Master Plan. A properly formulated, well thought-out Master Plan can be of great value to Pennfield Charter Township. The Master Plan can help preserve the rural atmosphere that citizens value and encourage quality, sustainable growth that will allow Pennfield Charter Township to prosper well into the next century. However, the effectiveness of the Master Plan is directly related to the willingness of the Planning Commission, elected officials, and the citizens of Pennfield to follow the plan and keep it current. It is hard work; but the rewards will make the effort well worth while.

# CHAPTER 1

## COMMUNITY PROFILE



Understanding the changes that Pennfield Charter Township has undergone in the past can provide a direction for the future. Analyzing existing trends and conditions, assessing the available infrastructure, and identifying important community issues, will allow the Township to acknowledge the successes and failures of the past and anticipate what may happen in the years to come.

The following information provides the basis for the Goals and Policies recommended in Chapter 2. The data in this Chapter has been abbreviated, highlighting significant findings or establishing a baseline of information which will support subsequent portions of the Master Plan. Further detail on several of the sections to be discussed herein have been included in the Appendix.

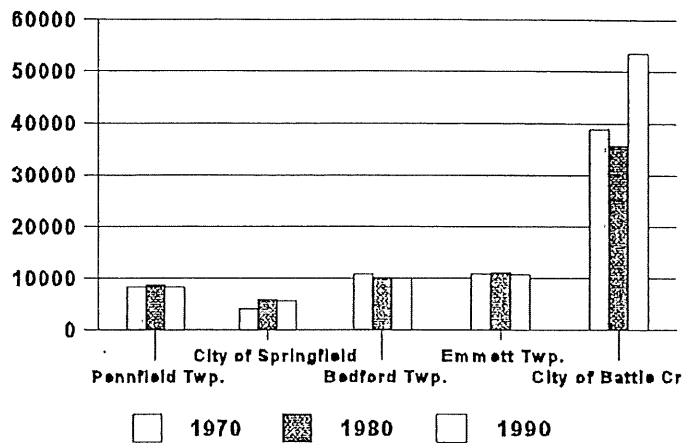
### Population, Housing and Economy

#### Population

Over the last couple of decades, population in Calhoun County has been relatively stable. However, over the eighties population declined by 3.95%, as population in the State of Michigan rose slightly by 0.35%. Population in the jurisdictions immediately adjacent to

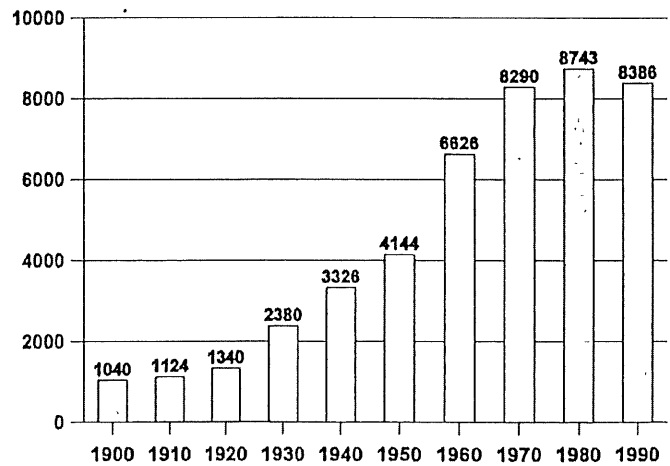
### Population 1970-1990

Source: U.S. Census



### Pennfield Twp. Population 1900-1990

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***  
***Community Profile***

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Pennfield Charter Township, including the City of Battle Creek, the City of Springfield, Bedford Township and Emmett Township (Battle Creek Area Transportation Study, May 1997), experienced slightly higher population losses of 4.58%. This decrease followed a similar trend set in the seventies, when population dropped by 2.52%.

Unlike its surrounding areas, during the seventies the population of Pennfield Charter Township actually increased (by 5.46%). During the eighties, however, it followed the declining trend common for its neighboring jurisdictions and decreased by 4.58%. While population change over these two decades expressed as a percentage may seem significant, it actually amounts to only a few hundred people. The dramatic change in population in Pennfield Charter Township actually occurred earlier, particularly over the fifties, when population grew by almost 50%. The 1990 U.S. Census determined population in Pennfield Charter Township to be 8,344 residents.

Over the 1990s, estimates show that the population of Pennfield Charter Township has grown by 6% which is twice as high as the corresponding figure for Calhoun County (3%) and almost twice as high as the State of Michigan (3.22%). The estimated 1996 population figure for the township is 8,876 residents. The table below compares population figures for Pennfield Charter Township over the nineties with corresponding data for Calhoun County and all jurisdictions surrounding Pennfield Charter Township within the county limits.

**TABLE: POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR 1990-1996**  
 Source: Office of State Demographer, Michigan Department of Management and Budget

Area Name	Census 04/90	Estimate 07/91	Estimate 07/92	Estimate 07/93	Estimate 07/94	Estimate 07/95	Estimate 07/96	Change in numbers	Change in percent
Calhoun County	135,982	137,243	138,315	139,169	139,562	139,976	140,112	4,130	3.0%
<b>Pennfield Twp.</b>	<b>8,374</b>	<b>8,542</b>	<b>8,630</b>	<b>8,716</b>	<b>8,746</b>	<b>8,829</b>	<b>8,876</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
Bedford	9,846	9,909	9,993	10,005	10,036	10,058	10,066	220	2.2%
Battle Creek	53,516	53,907	54,117	53,955	53,785	53,583	53,430	-86	-0.2%
Emmett	10,764	11,091	11,299	11,877	12,347	12,457	12,487	1,723	16.0%
Convis	1,739	1,748	1,755	1,755	1,746	1,748	1,744	91	7.5%
Springfield	5,582	5,620	5,645	5,666	5,655	5,665	5,654	72	1.3%
Marshall	6,941	6,982	6,991	6,991	6,965	7,185	7,251	310	4.5%

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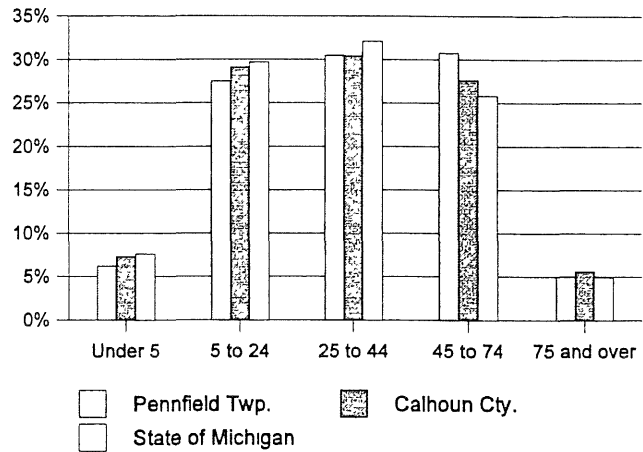
As the data show, Pennfield Charter Township has one of the highest growth rates in the county. Population projections by the Michigan Department of Management and Budget indicate that between 1996 and 2020 the population of the County will increase by 8 percent. Bearing in mind the statewide shift in population growth from urban to rural, it is reasonable to expect even higher growth rates for Pennfield Charter Township than those of the County as a whole which will most likely occur as a result of population transfer from the City of Battle Creek to the surrounding townships.

**Age**

The median age for Pennfield Charter Township, 36.4 years, is almost identical with that of Calhoun County, 36.2 years, and only slightly higher than the median for the State of Michigan, 32.6 years. Median ages for neighboring Emmett Township and City of Springfield are slightly lower, 35.8 and 32, respectively. Only neighboring Bedford Township, which has a similar rural population, has a median age slightly higher (38.2) than the one for Pennfield Charter Township.

**Age Profile, 1990**

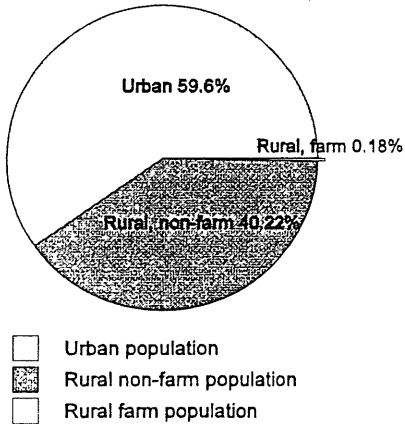
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990



The distribution of Pennfield Charter Township population into age cohorts shows little deviation from the Calhoun County and State of Michigan populations. The percentage of young people (under 25) is a little lower in Pennfield Charter Township in comparison with the county and the state. The percentage of those over 45 is slightly higher.

**Urban and Rural Population**

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



Since age distribution of Pennfield Charter Township residents is so similar to that in the region, it is to be expected in accordance with national trends, as the “baby-boomers” population reaches retirement age, the median age will continuously be including upward.

**Urban and Rural Population**

The residents of Pennfield Charter Township live in both urban and rural settings. However, the percentage of Pennfield Charter Township residents who, as of 1990, lived in an urban setting, (59.6%) was notably lower than the percentage in Calhoun County (70%) and the State of Michigan (71.5%). While the total percentage of rural population of the township was relatively high (40.4%), a

***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***  
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much smaller number of people (15 in 1990) actually lived on a farm. Thus, only 0.18% of the township population lived on a farm, and 40.22% lived in a non-farm rural setting. The small number of farm residents, as opposed to the large amount of land used for agricultural purposes is consistent with the growing national trend of fewer but much larger farm operations.

**Education**

As of 1990, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the total number of township residents enrolled in school was 2206, 4.4% of which were attending private schools. Twenty three percent of all residents enrolled in school were college students. According to the 1998 Michigan Education directory, there are 1,814 students currently enrolled in the Pennfield Public School District. A slight decline in school enrollment is projected by the School District for the near future. The projections indicate that 1,753 students will be enrolled in the Pennfield schools in the year 2003.

Educational attainment in Pennfield Charter Township is slightly higher than in Calhoun County as a whole, as well as in its adjacent jurisdictions.

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Percent high school graduate or higher</b>	<b>Percent bachelor's degree or higher</b>
Calhoun County	76.8%	13.8%
<b>Pennfield Charter Township</b>	<b>83.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
Bedford Township	73.8%	10.3%
Emmett Township	75.7%	10.9%
City of Springfield	75.7%	9.2%
City of Battle Creek	76.6%	15.8%

As compared to the State of Michigan, Pennfield Charter Township has a lower percentage of people with bachelor's or higher degree (Michigan has 17.5%), but higher percentage of people with high school diploma or higher (Michigan has 76.8%).

**Income**

According to the 1990 Census, the median household income for Pennfield Charter Township was \$31,672 and the median per capita income was \$14,234. These figures ( most likely reflective of higher levels of educational attainment and lower unemployment) were slightly higher than corresponding figures for the county, the state and neighboring jurisdictions. The median household income for the State of Michigan was \$31,020 and for Calhoun County was \$27,476.

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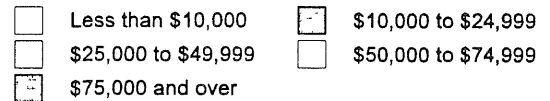
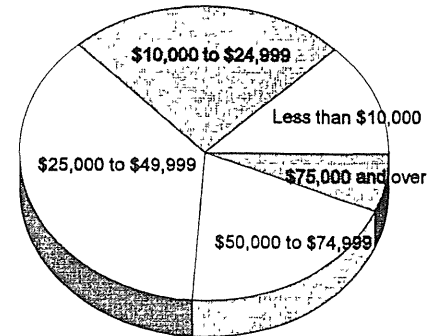
Nearly three quarters of the households in Pennfield Charter Township earn between \$10,000 and \$49,000, four out of ten earn between \$25,000 and \$49,000.

**Unemployment Rates**

As of 1990, the unemployment rate for Pennfield Charter Township was 5.9 percent, as compared to 8.9 percent for Calhoun County and 7.7 for the State of Michigan. Over the nineties, in accordance with the strong national economic performance, the unemployment rate for the township and the county as a whole kept steadily decreasing. In Pennfield Charter Township it reached its minimum value of 2.8 in 1997.

**Income Distribution**

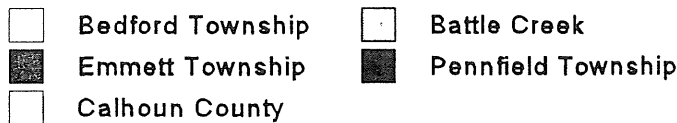
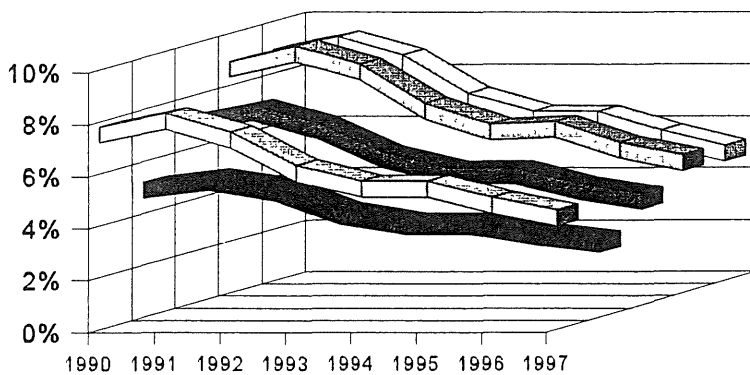
Source: U S Bureau of the Census, 1990



The number of unemployed persons in the township dropped from 225 in 1990 to 125 in 1997. The 1997 unemployment rate for Calhoun County was 4.3%, much lower than the 1990 figure,

**Unemployment Rates 1990-1997**

Source: Michigan Employment Security Agency



but still almost twice as high as that of Pennfield Charter Township. Adjacent communities, whose unemployment rates have also been dropping since 1990, had notably higher unemployment rates than Pennfield Charter Township. Bedford Township, for example, had a rate of 4.9%; Emmett Township, 4.0%; Convis Township, 4.6%, and the City of Battle Creek, 5%. Of the nearby townships, only Marshall Township had a lower unemployment rate in 1997 of 1.5%.

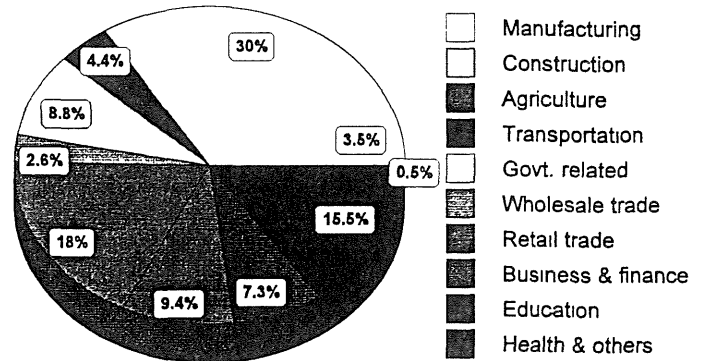
**Employment**

As one might expect, since the unemployment rates for Pennfield Charter Township have notably declined over the nineties and population has grown by roughly 6%, the number of employed persons in the township has increased as well from 4,125 persons in 1990 to 4,500 in 1997.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the largest segment of the township's residents were employed in the manufacturing sector (30%), particularly non-durable goods, followed by retail trade (18%). Since no large manufacturing operations exist in the township, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of the employed in the manufacturing sector commute to the adjacent City of Battle Creek, which is the home of large non-durable goods manufacturers such as Kellogg Co. (which alone employs over 3,400 people in the area), Kraft General Foods and Ralston Foods. The percentage of township residents employed in manufacturing (30%) is notably higher than for the county (24%).

**Pennfield Township Industries**

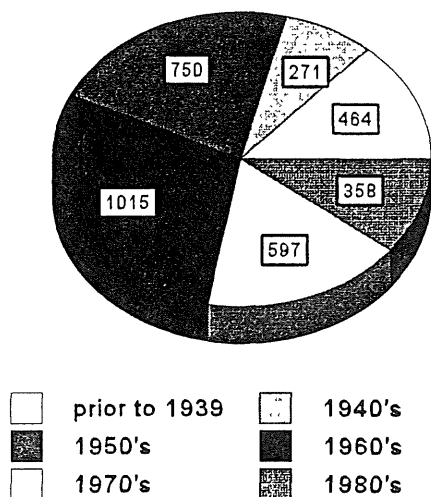
Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1990



**Housing**

**Housing Units by Year Built**

U S Bureau of the Census, 1990



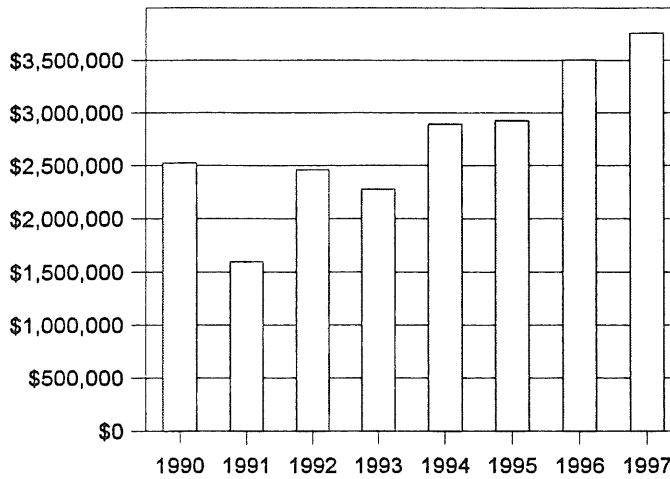
The median year in which housing units were built in Pennfield Charter Township was 1963, according to the 1990 U.S. Census. The median year of homes in Calhoun County as well as the City of Battle Creek is eight years older, with a median year of 1955.

Prior to the nineties, the greatest number of dwelling units was built over the fifties (750), the sixties (1,015) and the seventies (597), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This means that over half of the dwelling units in the township were built in the fifties and sixties. This data is illustrated in the adjacent pie chart.

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***Community Profile***

**Newly Built Dwelling Units- Total Construction Cost**

Source: Pennfield Township



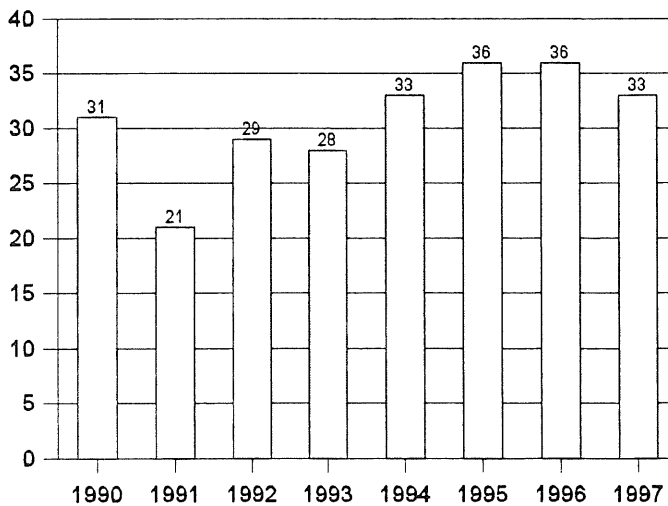
According to the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study performed in May 1997 the number of dwelling units in the metropolitan area has changed notably over the last 15 years. During the seventies the area experienced a dramatic growth in number of dwelling units, over 13%. The growth rate slowed significantly to only 2.12% over the eighties. Figures for 1996 show an overall growth of 2.83% for the first six years of the nineties. The recent demolition of 100 dwelling units as part of the I-94BL Route Relocation project offset what would have been, otherwise, a higher growth rate.

In accordance with national housing trends, the number of dwelling units in the City of Battle Creek did not significantly increase over the last couple of decades. It was 22,975 in 1980 and 23,215 in 1996, a gain of only 240 housing units or barely 1%. The adjacent urban area of the City of Springfield gained only 5 dwelling units between 1980 and 1996. In sharp contrast, all surrounding townships experienced steady housing gains.

Pennfield Charter Township gained a total of 446 units between 1980 and 1996, and had a growth rate of 7.84% over the eighties and 5.30% over the nineties. Emmett Township's growth over the nineties was even higher, 15.70%. The two townships, adjacent to the City of Battle Creek on the south (Leroy and Newton) also absorbed a significant part of the urban area growth. Over the

nineties, they both experienced housing growth higher than that of Pennfield Charter Township. Leroy Township had a housing growth rate of 7.9% and Newton Township was 10.40%. As of 1996, the total number of units in Pennfield Charter Township equaled 3,738.

**New Homes in Pennfield Township**



A more detailed breakdown of residential construction costs over the nineties shows that with the exception of two setbacks, one in 1991 and one in 1993, the total construction cost for newly built homes in the township has gone up each year, rising from a total of \$2,525,240 in 1990 to \$3,762,367 in 1997.

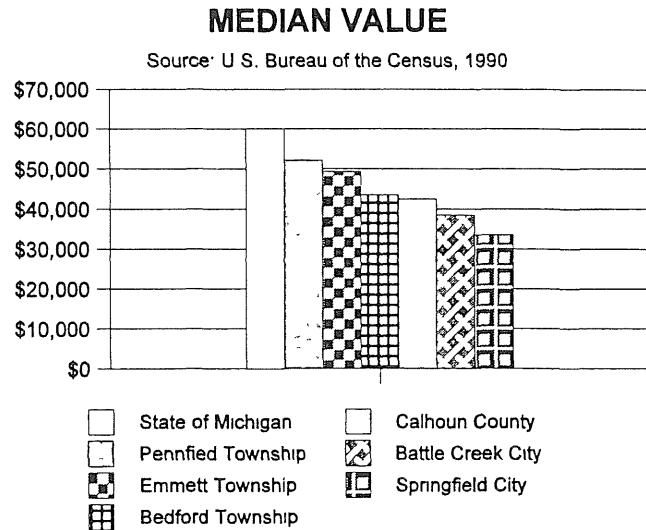
## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

### ***Community Profile***

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The 1990 U.S. Census recorded that 9.5% of all housing units in Pennfield were vacant, as compared to 11% for the State of Michigan and 7% for Calhoun County. Of the occupied housing units, 78% (2,154 units) were owner occupied and 22% (696 units) were renter occupied. This compares to 71% percent owner-occupied vs. 29% renter-occupied both for the State of Michigan and Calhoun County. Higher owner-occupancy is reasonable to expect in areas with more rural character such as Pennfield Charter Township.

The median value of owner-occupied homes in Pennfield Charter Township, as of 1990, was \$51,200. This was lower than the median value for homes in the State (\$60,100), but significantly higher (perhaps due to the relatively newer housing stock in Pennfield Charter Township) than the median value for Calhoun County as a whole (\$42,400). It was also higher than the median values for the nearby townships of Bedford and Emmett. The City of Battle Creek and City of Springfield had even lower median values, which is to be expected since such urban areas have typically older housing units on smaller lots.



## **Existing Land Use**

Existing land uses in Pennfield Charter Township include residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and public/quasi-public. The southwest corner of the township, especially along M-66 is characterized by relatively intense development patterns while the northern and eastern portions of the township are predominantly agricultural or undeveloped. Natural features such as lakes, wetlands, rolling terrain, and woodlands abound throughout the community.

### **Residential**

Residential uses are classified as single family, duplexes, and multiple family. Single family homes and farm residences are the predominant type of residential land uses. Multiple family housing was identified in only a few locations in the southwestern part of the township, behind commercial development along M-66; between Hopkins Street and Bartlett Drive; at the north end of Garrison Road; and in a residential subdivision at the very southwest corner of the township near Derby Road, Glendale Avenue, and Viking Drive.

Two-family residences, however, were found in several locations, especially in the more densely developed residential subdivisions in the southern and western portions of the township. They were non-existent in the rest of the township, where farm residences, large tracks of agricultural land, and vacant natural areas, are the dominant land use. Only a very limited number of individual manufactured homes were found at the time of the land use survey. No manufactured home parks have been developed in Pennfield Charter Township.



The overwhelming majority of single family and farm residences in the township are single story. Most homes are neatly kept. Some of the residential developments exhibit additional nice features. There are areas of neglect, however. Homes located in some single-family residential and agricultural areas show serious signs of low upkeep.

Most of the Township's rural residential development is stretched along the main roads. While residential subdivisions are found in the southwestern quadrant of the township, the rest of the township's residential land use is situated in strip fashion. This pattern of linear residential development has left the central portions of the sections bounded by these roads (for example, the one formed by East Avenue N., Baseline Road, Struwin Road and Poorman Road) as largely inaccessible and, often, due to rolling topography, even hard to see. At the same time, this pattern has contributed to the preservation of these hard to access areas.

While much of the Township's housing is relatively modest, a new subdivision of upscale homes, Elwood Place, is under construction. Lots are offered for sale ranging between \$17,500 and

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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### ***Community Profile***

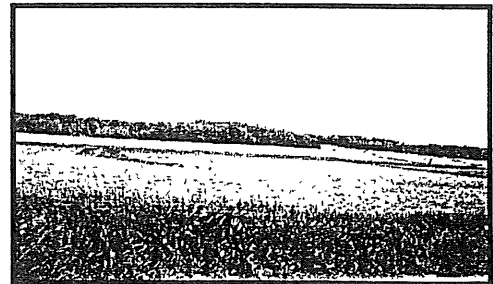
\$36,000. It is located near the south edge of the township, off 9 1/2 Mile Road (Palmiter). Other similar developments already exist close to the western edge of the township off Morgan Road. Even more upscale homes, in the Whitegates site condominium development, are situated further north along North Avenue near Halbert Road, in the proximity of St. Mary's lake and its nearby golf course.

A local landmark is the Greencrest Manor, a beautiful Bed and Breakfast establishment, located off Halbert Road, west of North Avenue and in the vicinity of the residences overlooking St. Mary's lake. Iron gates leading to an immaculately kept formally landscaped pathway, classic architecture, stone facade and a beautiful garden make the Greencrest Manor a unique world-class asset to the community.

### **Agricultural**

A significant amount of Pennfield Charter Township's land remains devoted to agriculture. While evidence of active agricultural activity in the form of farm equipment was notable around dozens of smaller lot single-family residences, the majority of the land used for agriculture consists of very large tracts. Agricultural lands are typically located in the interior of sections or larger areas bounded by major roads and encircled by nonfarm homes, although they are immediately adjacent to the roads in the less developed portions of the township.

Most of the large agricultural parcels are devoted to crop raising. However, the raising of cattle and beef was identified as another agricultural use. In addition to the above listed agricultural land uses, a large dairy farm was identified, immediately adjacent to the township, west of North Avenue. A Christmas tree farm is also located east of East Avenue and north of Morgan Road.



While found throughout much of the Township, most of the active agriculture is scattered and often punctuated with non-farm, single family dwellings. The two largest concentrations of contiguous agricultural land are found in the northwestern and southeastern quadrants of Pennfield.

### **Commercial**

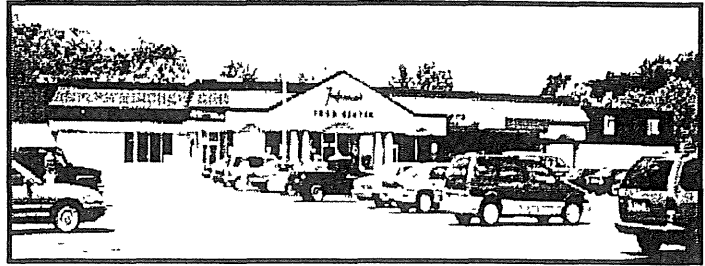
Business development in Pennfield Charter Township is most intense along the south portion of Capital Avenue NE (M-66). While the Capital Avenue NE corridor has some chain commercial establishments, most notably fast food restaurants, a gas station and Capital Square shopping center, the majority of the commercial development is local. Examples include the only motel in the township (the Michigan Motel), an animal hospital, a local restaurant, a realty office and other similar uses.

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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### ***Community Profile***

Other commercial establishments along the less intensely developed northern segment of M-66 include a grocery store, bowling lanes, florist, and a green house. Some heavy commercial uses, such as vehicle repair establishments are also scattered along the Township's main artery. In addition, there are vacant lots between existing commercial buildings, where infill commercial may be located in the future. The typical land use pattern along M-66 includes a commercial strip immediately flanking the road, behind which are located residential areas, followed by agricultural and vacant lands located further away from the road.



Commercial development is not, however, confined to the M-66 corridor. Neighborhood businesses are scattered in some of the residential areas, including a laundry near Viking Drive, a small general store strip on Bellevue Road, and a medical office on North Avenue and Purdy Drive. A few home businesses, such as a garden implements store, were also identified in the area. Commercial establishments also exist along the outside boundaries of the township, most notably along North Avenue.






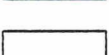
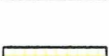
In addition to local doctors' offices, there is one large medical establishment in the township. This is the Battle Creek Medical Neuro-rehabilitation Center, located on a large and well-landscaped lot near the upscale homes along St. Mary's lake at the western edge of the township, west of North Avenue.

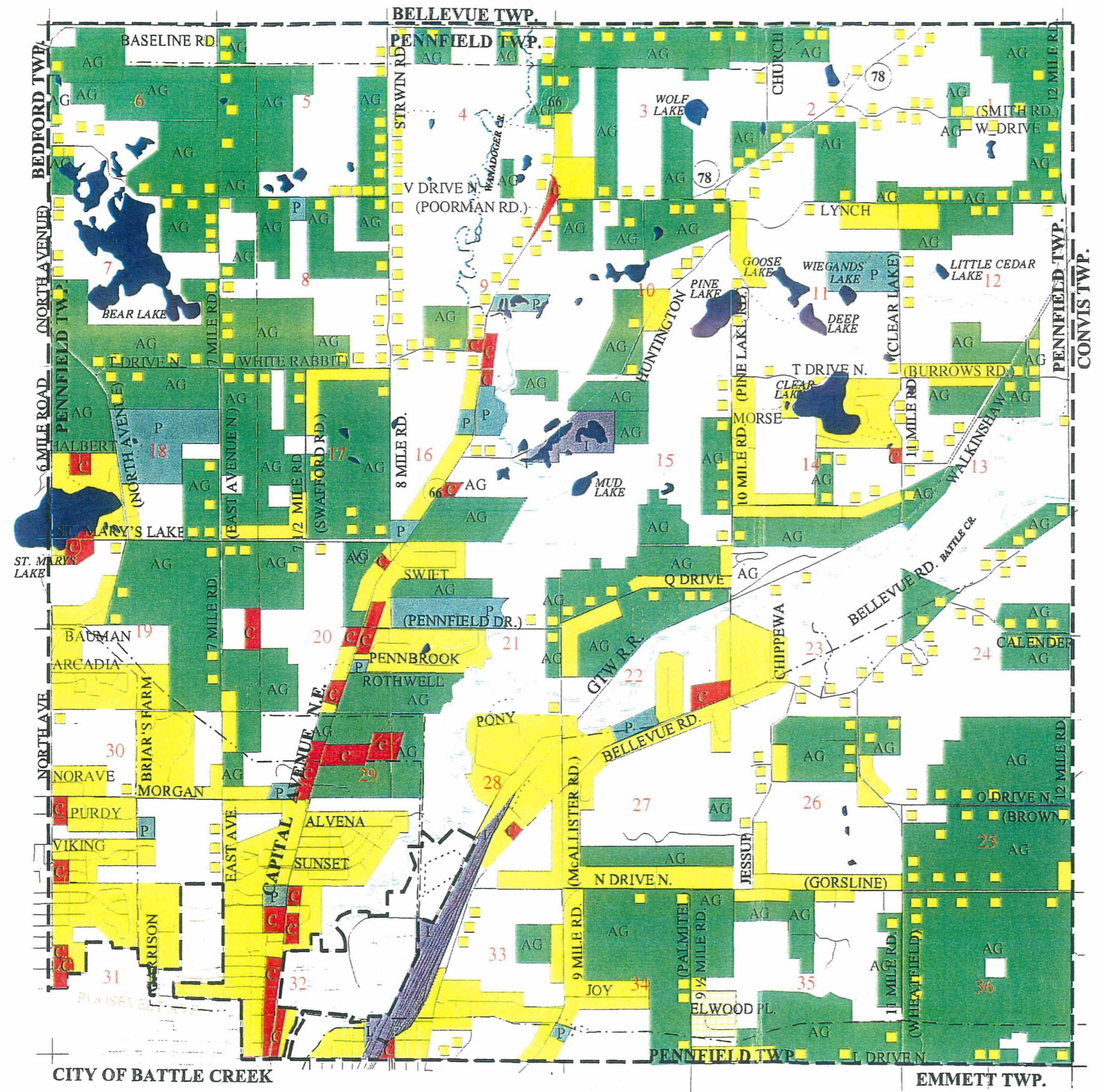
### **Industrial**

Several industrial uses are scattered throughout the township. A former extraction facility, now used by a construction business, is situated off Huntington Road; a Consumers Energy Company operation is located off the southern portion of Bridgen Road; and a gravel and sand mining operation is adjacent to the southeastern corner of the township. The township is crossed by railroad tracks, supplemented by a train car repair facility. Additional commercial and industrial uses are found adjacent to the tracks.

# Pennfield Charter Township, Calhoun County

## Existing Land Use

Residential	
Commercial	
Agricultural	
Industrial	
Public	
Vacant	
Upcoming Residential	



## **Public and Quasi-Public**

There are several public, quasi-public, and recreational areas in Pennfield Charter Township. These include two golf courses, the beautifully landscaped Hicks Cemetery, located on both sides of Capital Avenue NE near its intersection with White Rabbit Road, the Sportsman's Club of Battle Creek east of Clear Lake Road, and the Pennfield Community Park off Pennfield Road, east of Capital Avenue NE.

Adjacent to the Pennfield Community park is one of the Pennfield schools and the school bus garage. Another school is located off Purdy near the southwest corner of the township. A former school building, now privately owned, is located off Poulsen Avenue. North Pennfield Elementary School is located on Poorman Road, between East Avenue N. and Sturwin Road. One of the Township's two fire stations is off Bellevue Road, while the main station is on M-66, adjacent to the Township offices. Several church sites are also scattered around the Township, including Pennfield Assembly of God on Bellevue Rd., Calvary Baptist Church on Capital Ave. NE, Harmony Missionary Baptist on McAllister Rd., Christian Reformed Church on Wagner Drive, East Side Church of Christ on Capital Avenue NE, Church of the Nazarene on Morgan Road, Grace Community Church on Pennfield Rd., Pennfield Presbyterian Church on St. Mary's Lake Rd., and Baseline United Methodist Church on Baseline Road. A private church retreat, the Peace Camp Ground, is situated east of the northern segment of Capital Avenue NE.



The recreational opportunities for Township residents are greatly enhanced by the immediate proximity of Bailey Park, which is under the jurisdiction of the City of Battle Creek. A stadium for the minor league baseball team, The Battle Cats, is located in the park.

## **Natural Features**

Pennfield Charter Township has a wide variety of natural assets including numerous inland lakes, wetlands, woodlands, Wanondoger Creek, and the Battle Creek River. These natural areas contribute substantially to the high quality of life that current Pennfield Charter Township residents enjoy and are a strong attraction for new residents.

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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### ***Community Profile***

The Township's lakes are located almost entirely in the northern half of the community. Its largest, St. Mary's Lake, is found in the extreme west end on the boundary with Bedford Township. St. Mary's Lake is rimmed with single family homes. The other large lake in Pennfield Charter Township which has experienced substantial residential development is Clear Lake, located in the northeast quadrant of the Township.

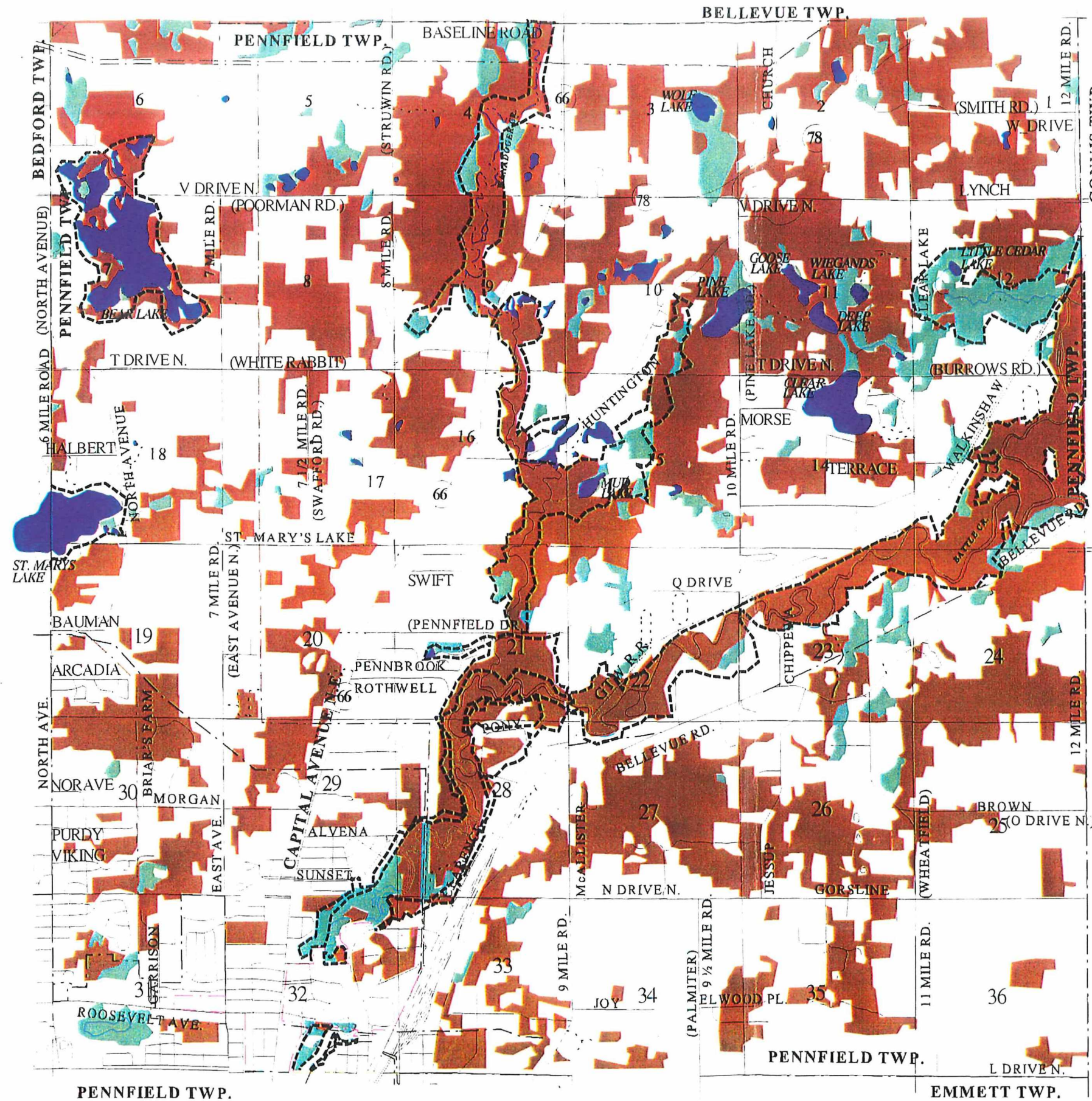
Wetlands are scattered throughout the Township, but are mainly found near Pennfield's other water features – Battle Creek River, Wanondoger Creek, and the various lakes. Some wetlands are found in the southern half of the Township, but the most extensive wetlands are in the northeast quadrant. Other low lying flood plain areas line both sides of the Battle Creek River and Wanondoger Creek.

Woodlands are also found in abundance, greatly contributing to the rural character and potentially luring future residents. Bands of woods line the banks of the Battle Creek River and Wanondoger Creek. Other significant stands of trees surround the undeveloped lakes. And still others are found scattered amidst the Township's remaining agricultural lands.

# Pennfield Charter Township, Calhoun County

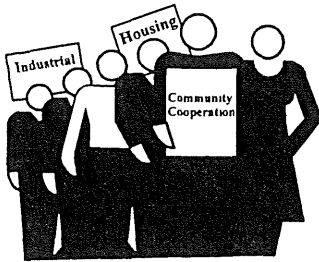
## Natural Features

- Wetlands
- Woodlands
- Open Water
- Flood Plain



## CHAPTER 2

# ISSUES



Knowing what the citizens of Pennfield Charter Township think about different types of land uses, locations for growth, and those aspects of community character that are important to them is essential to the success of the Master Plan. To solicit public input, the Township actively involved a number of stakeholders through the creation of a focus group. The focus group provided thoughtful insight into community issues and identified a variety of concerns. In addition, public participation was sought on an individual basis by distributing a community survey to all township residents.

A focus group meeting was held with Pennfield Charter Township citizens and decision makers on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998 in which a variety of assets and liabilities were identified in the Township. More than 50 citizens provided their perspective regarding the broad variety of issues that exist in the township. Additional issues also arose during a visioning session held with the focus group on September 21, 1998. Finally, broader insights were obtained through a community attitude survey in which nearly 30% (1,004) of the Township's households participated.



The information and opinions derived from these sources helped shape this Master Plan. A summary of the issues is provided on the following pages.

### **Community Character and Quality of Life**

The Township is at a cross-roads. In terms of overall land area, it is still a rural community with extensive farm land and valuable natural features. However, its population and location on the edge of a central city are characteristics of a suburban community. One of the central issues of the Plan is to maintain a balance between this urban/rural split.

- Continued growth of Pennfield Charter Township is desirable, but new development must be managed and planned.
- Development should be balanced with a variety of residential, commercial, & industrial uses.

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

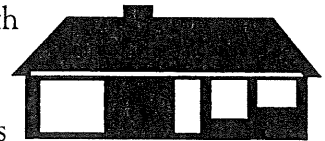
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### ***Issues***

- Maintain/preserve character.
- Pennfield is growing due to taxes, access, slow pace, low crime, schools, neighborhood environment, and fewer problems than other townships.
- Pennfield lacks central focus/identity.
- Deteriorating neighborhoods and residential developments should be improved.
- Development should be concentrated in the southern and central parts of the Township where services are available or can be reasonably provided. The north and east parts of the community should remain rural.
- Sufficient density should be permitted to support the public services that are in place.

### **Housing**

Along with its distinct urban/rural character, the Township is faced with the need to accommodate a very diverse population. Housing for varying incomes, ages, and life styles must be provided within the community. This means large lot single family homes in the country, as well as retirement homes near the center of commercial and service activity, and everything in between. This is not to suggest that all forms of housing should be permitted in all corners of the Township. Densities should be appropriate to the availability of services. But all housing choices should be accommodated someplace in the community.



- Concentrate housing (higher density) near M-66.
- Desire to provide “balanced” housing opportunities – affordable, senior citizen, high-end, etc.
- Provide appropriate areas for different housing styles.
- Designate areas for higher-end large lot development.
- Minimize traffic congestion near residential areas, particularly near M-66.
- There is a need to spruce-up and revitalize the older housing stock (homes built between 1945-1955).
- Attention should be given concerning how new housing areas will impact agricultural lands. Also scenic areas should be preserved as part of new housing development
- Provide alternative housing for disabled-young adults; there is a need and few options available (compatible, single floor housing is needed)
- There is strong demand for retirement housing (new retirement housing complex under construction has more inquiries than space).
- Ordinance enforcement is needed, particularly for multiple family residences, along with incentives for revitalization.

***Issues***

- Buffers are needed between residential and commercial areas to minimize traffic and noise impacts.

**Business and Industry**

Pennfield Charter Township has traditionally favored a balance of residential and nonresidential uses in order to ensure the availability of jobs and services for its residents, and to minimize the tax burden on the home owners. Historically, however, some of the land use decisions relative to business locations have created conflicts with residential uses or resulted in scattered business development, rather than a cohesive core district. Reversing some of the past trends while still promoting economic expansion will be a major planning challenge.

- Commercial development should be located along M-66.
- If possible, light industrial development should be encouraged.
- Encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into residential neighborhoods should not be permitted.
- There is a need for more businesses that will create jobs.
- There is a need for more community shopping opportunities.
- Attract businesses that will be good neighbors rather than just any type of business.
- M-66 should be the business core, focus should be on concentrated development rather than scattered and spot commercial development along the entire strip.
- Concern over annexation.
- Emphasis on M-66 should be focused on the Meijer property and M-66 Bowl parcels.
- Establish other areas for convenience commercial, such as North Avenue.
- Neutral feeling about the need for an industrial park (not strong support for or against).
- Planning process should take into consideration the I-69 connector that is planned through the Township and the implications for further commercial/ industrial development.



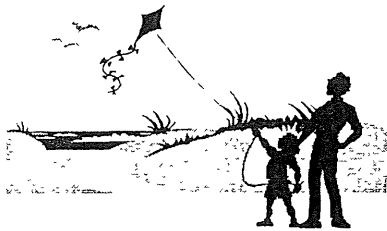
**Natural Features**

Strong sentiment has been expressed by the community regarding the impact of new development on the natural environment. Groundwater contamination, poor drainage, loss of trees and wildlife, and other impacts should be considered as part of land use decisions, especially in those areas of the Township still considered rural.



- Growth and development is alright so long as the township’s natural areas are preserved.
- Soil erosion and sedimentation caused by new developments is a concern.
- Use cluster or open space developments to preserve rural character.
- Ground and surface water quality is important.
- No new subdivisions should be allowed if area is not good for sewer and drainage.
- St. Mary’s Lake is getting crowded, too much development.

**Recreation**



While the Township’s residents have access to a variety of parks and recreational amenities nearby, few opportunities are currently available within the community. Natural assets such as the lakes and rivers exist but have not been utilized. Recreation will become an element of the infrastructure that must be addressed soon to accommodate the demands of current and future residents of the community.

- More recreational opportunities are needed in the Township, perhaps a mixed outdoor recreation facility that could be used by all ages.
- Linear park development should be encouraged along the river and linked to other trails, walkways, and Battle Creek parks. This would make the best use of Township funds, and could be used for a number of activities for all age groups.
- A bike route should be developed along Brigden Drive, to McAllister Road, to Pennfield Road. The County Road Commission would be interested in working with the Township on this project.
- Use of “open space developments”, and whenever possible, having the developers connect their open space areas to the Township’s; or, trails connected to the linear park should be encouraged.

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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### ***Issues***

- Connect linear parks to the existing parks in the City of Battle Creek, and to the schools for a “Recreation Corridor”.
- Identify desirable properties for park locations, including along the river.
- A waterfront park would be a good idea, the possibility of a boat or canoe livery on the river could be examined.

### **Community Facilities and Services**

Many of the community facility issues relate directly to the need to properly manage the provision of services and consciously link density and land use with service availability.

- Public sanitary sewer and water should be extended to serve more Township residents. The lack of utilities has slowed growth.
- New development should be allowed only if adequate services are available.
- The Township should indicate areas where growth should be, and plan for utility extension. A “service area” boundary should be considered.
- Access to all areas of the township is a problem.
- A Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is needed for township roads and infrastructure.
- Pennfield Road should be extended west to North Avenue

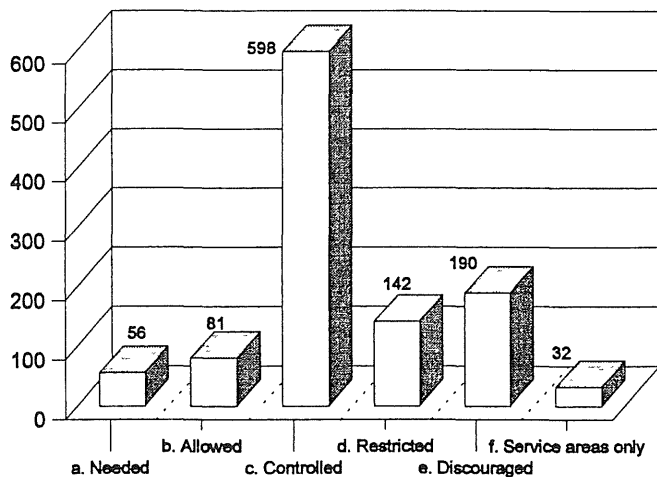
## Community Survey Summary

Several themes, primarily related to community character and quality of life issues, emerged from the community survey which was developed and administered by the township. Residents strongly felt that the natural areas and rural character of the township should be preserved. In addition, the general consensus among those surveyed was that new development is generally not objectionable, as long as the township controls growth and adequate public services are available.

**Please select ONE statement that best describes your feelings about growth and development in Pennfield Charter Township? (Choose one)**

- a. We need more growth and development throughout the Township.
- b. I believe growth should be allowed to take its course with as little government interference as possible.
- c. **Growth is desirable, but the quality and location of growth and development should be controlled.**
- d. Growth should be allowed under certain circumstances but tightly restricted.
- e. New development within the Township should be discouraged because it will destroy the community character.
- f. Growth should only be allowed where public water and sewer are available to serve it.

**Attitudes Towards Growth**



The majority of respondents, nearly 60%, felt that growth is desirable but its quality and location should be controlled. Few believed that more growth is needed, but even fewer believed that it should be only restricted to areas where public sewer and water are available.

**How important to you are each of the following factors in making Pennfield Charter Township a desirable place to live? (Rank each)**

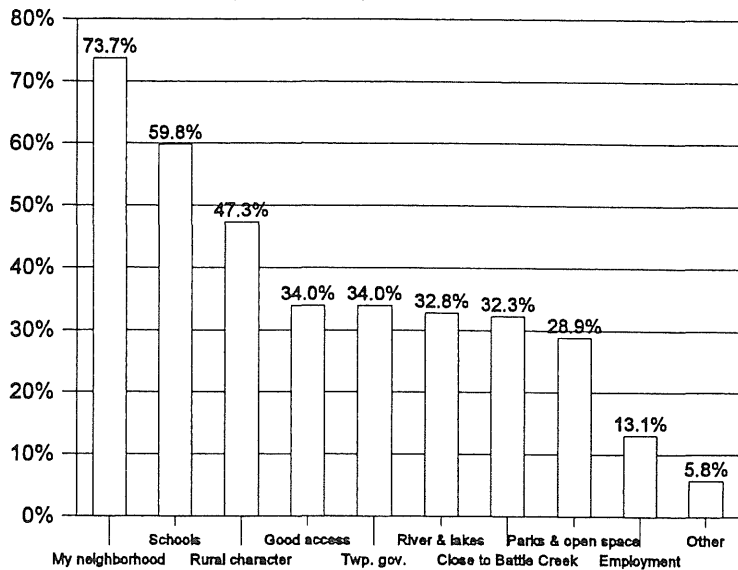
- a. Rivers & lakes
- b. Schools
- c. Good access
- d. Twp. government
- e. Employment opportunities
- f. My neighborhood
- g. Parks & open spaces
- h. Rural character
- i. Close to Battle Creek
- j. Other

# *Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan*

## *Issues*

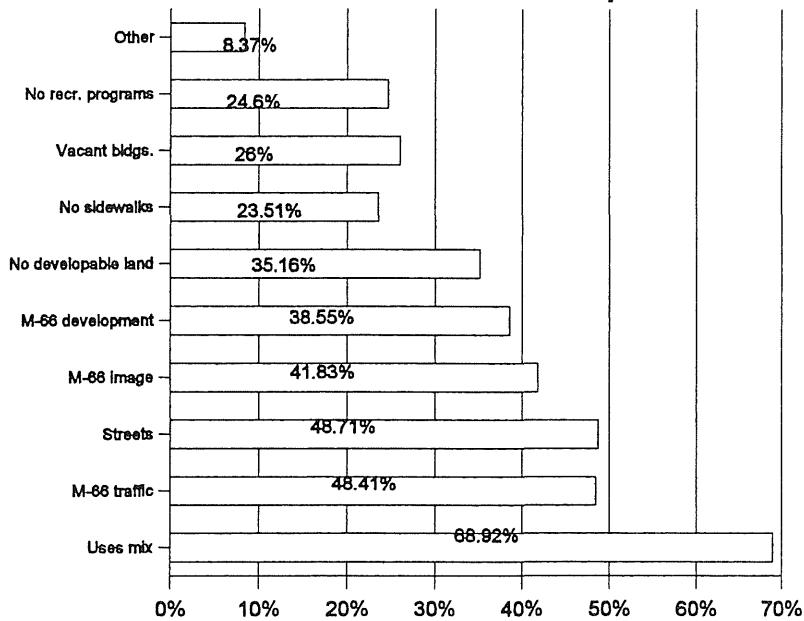
Neighborhood quality was pointed out as the most significant factor that makes the Township a desirable place to live. Other such factors include the availability of good schools and rural character. Employment opportunities in the Township were the least important factor.

**Factors Making Township a Desirable Place to Live**



### **To what degree are the following conditions a problem? (Rank each)**

**Problems in the Township**



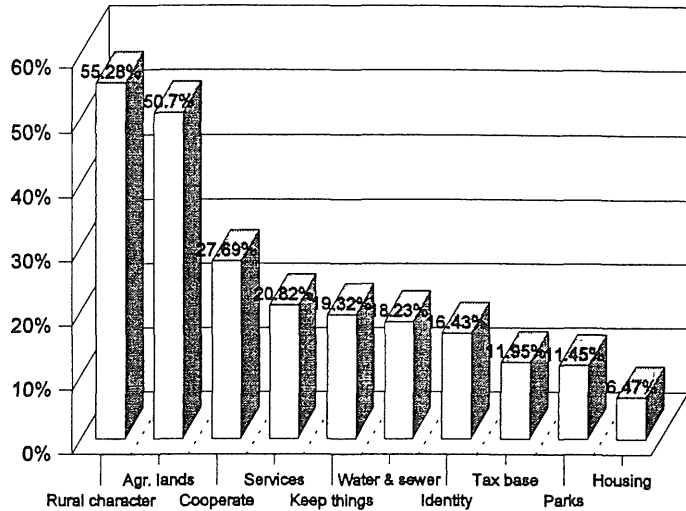
- Traffic on M-66
- Commercial development along M-66
- Mixing industrial/commercial uses in residential areas**
- Availability of suitable land for new development
- Image of the Township along M-66
- Existing vacant buildings
- Condition of the Township streets
- Availability of recreation programs for various age groups
- Lack of sidewalks
- Other

The biggest concern for the residents of Pennfield Charter Township, according to the results of the survey, was the intrusion of commercial and industrial uses on residential areas. A majority of the respondents also viewed the various aspects of development along M-66 as a significant problem for the Township. Nearly 55% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with either traffic, commercial development or the Township's image along M-66. The existence of vacant buildings and the lack of available recreational programs for all age groups were regarded as relatively minor problems.

**Rank each of the following in terms of their importance to you. The Township should:**

- a. Preserve agricultural lands throughout the Township.
- b. **Preserve the rural character of the Township.**
- c. Increase the community's tax base.
- d. Create more housing opportunities.
- e. Extend water and sewer lines throughout the township.
- f. Cooperate with surrounding communities to provide services.
- g. Provide more parks and recreational opportunities.
- h. Keep things as they are now.
- i. Create a distinct identity.
- j. Improve existing public services.

**What Should the Township Do?**



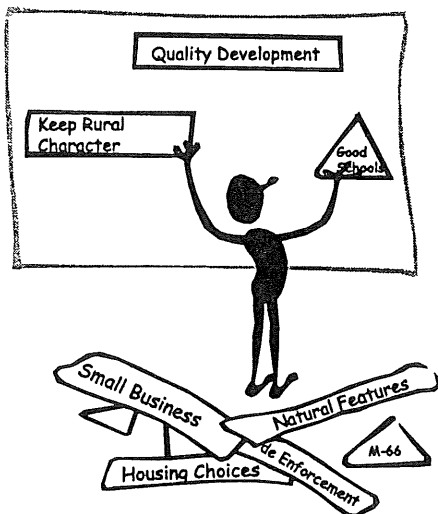
Most respondents agreed that the Township's top priorities should be to preserve its rural character and agricultural lands. Many also believed that the Township should focus its efforts on improving public services, perhaps in cooperation with other communities. As was evident by the responses, few people were of the opinion that the lack of diverse housing opportunities is a problem that the Township should address.

None the statements that were used to assess the respondents' attitude towards development and the needs of the Township generated very wide approval. Just over a third of the respondents agreed that "Growth and development is all right as long as the Township's natural areas are preserved." A quarter of the respondents strongly agreed with "Development should be allowed if adequate services are available to serve it (water, sewer, roads, police, fire)." Thus, attitudes towards development appeared relatively positive as long as certain conditions apply. The need for housing types and the lack of community identity were not viewed as important concerns.

## CHAPTER 3

# VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES

Pennfield Charter Township will face many opportunities and challenges within the next twenty years. Population and housing trends have shown a progressively decreasing urban population and a rapidly increasing rural population. As Pennfield is a mixture of both urban and rural, the township will face the challenge of ensuring that its “built” environment, that is its existing neighborhoods, businesses, and infrastructure, remains attractive to residents and investors while the rural portion of the township is developed in a way that complements the urban environment and preserves the rural qualities that have made Pennfield Charter Township a desirable place to live.



This Master Plan will assist in strengthening the southern, urban portion of the township; it will direct growth within the township to the most suitable locations; and will assist in protecting those features that contribute to the rural character of the community. The Pennfield Charter Township Vision summarizes the overall planning direction of the community; what levels of growth will be acceptable, what types of development are desirable, and what sort of quality of life the township will be able to offer its residents.

The Goals and Policies that support the community Vision were developed within the issue identification process, which was accomplished through a public involvement exercise. A focus group meeting was held with citizens and decision makers of Pennfield Charter Township on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998 in which a variety of assets and liabilities were identified in the Township. More than 50 citizens provided thoughtful insight into the wide variety of issues that exist in the township.

A second focus group meeting was held on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998 to develop a Community Vision, and Goals and Policies that would address the issues identified in the June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting while strengthening community assets. The Goals and corresponding Policies identified within this Chapter are the building blocks for Pennfield’s future land use decisions. As each Policy is used to satisfy each Goal, Pennfield Charter Township will become that much closer to achieving its Vision.

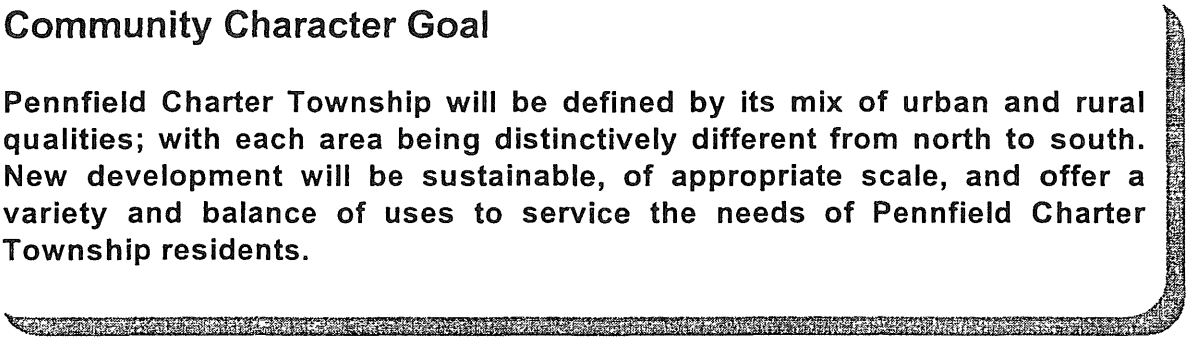
## **COMMUNITY VISION**

Pennfield Charter Township will be a progressive community that attracts development which reflects the rural flavor of the township's natural features, agricultural lands, open spaces, and existing development patterns; the Township will also strive to maintain and enhance its existing "built" environment by managing growth in an economically efficient manner that considers the needs of its residents and the ability of the community to provide adequate services and facilities, such as roads, water and sewer, police, fire, recreational opportunities, and quality schools.

## **GOALS and POLICIES**

### **Community Character Goal**

**Pennfield Charter Township will be defined by its mix of urban and rural qualities; with each area being distinctively different from north to south. New development will be sustainable, of appropriate scale, and offer a variety and balance of uses to service the needs of Pennfield Charter Township residents.**



### **Community Character Policies**

- ▶ A broad variety of land uses will be situated in appropriate locations throughout the township; infrastructure will play a key role in determining suitable types and densities. An urban services boundary will be utilized to concentrate new development in built areas, while rural locations will experience low density residential development.
- ▶ The township will address maintenance issues and code enforcement to the best of its ability in order to preserve the character and sustainability of Pennfield neighborhoods. In addition, the upkeep and improvement of infrastructure, such as lighting, sidewalks and gutters will be supported by the township to strengthen neighborhood identity.
- ▶ The encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into residential areas will be discouraged by the township.
- ▶ Site plan review standards and zoning regulations will be adopted to preserve the character of urban, and rural, portions of the township and encourage a high quality, aesthetically pleasing environment. Protection of environmental areas will also be a consideration.

## **Housing Goal**

**Encourage development which reflects, and preserves, the community values and rural character of the township by supporting existing Pennfield neighborhoods and promoting a variety of new residential development outside of the M-66 corridor.**

## **Housing Policies**

- ▶ A wide variety of housing choices, such as condominiums, retirement villages, manufactured housing communities, apartments, and single family residences will be permitted in appropriate locations to satisfy the varying needs and incomes of Pennfield residents.
- ▶ Residential densities will be appropriate to the level of public services available. Moderate and high density residential development will be located in the southwestern, urban portion of the township where public water and sewer services can ensure a healthy living environment. Those portions of the township where public utilities are not available and rural character should be preserved will be limited to very low density residential development.
- ▶ The township will encourage the construction of residential areas in the form of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and open space, or cluster subdivisions that recognize the importance of preserving the township's natural features, agricultural lands, and other contributing factors to rural character.
- ▶ New residential development within the M-66 corridor should be required to utilize access management techniques to increase safety and reduce turning movements on the primary roadway. In addition, the development of residential subdivisions away from the M-66 corridor will be encouraged to minimize traffic congestion and loss of rural views.
- ▶ The integrity of existing neighborhoods should be supported by upgrading neighborhood infrastructure, such as lighting, signs, sidewalks, and curbing to enhance visual appeal as well as property values.
- ▶ The separation of dissimilar land uses through adequate landscaping, the provision of open space or buffer areas, and other means to limit conflicts between uses will be encouraged. The encroachment of industrial and commercial uses in residential areas will be discouraged by the township.



## **Business and Industry Goal**

**Pennfield Charter Township will promote the development of new, small businesses through the formation of a Business Association. Businesses will be of a scale appropriate to the size of the community and concentrated in the Township's southwestern quadrant.**

## **Business and Industry Policies**

- ▶ Pennfield Charter Township will establish a Business Association to seek and attract new businesses that will encourage additional employment opportunities and economic stability in the township. The Association will act in conjunction with surrounding communities and organizations.
- ▶ The southern portion of the M-66 corridor will continue to be used for commercial purposes. A theme or streetscape project which identifies the corridor as the Pennfield Business District should be developed to build community pride, generate consumer interest, and promote business growth.
- ▶ New commercial and industrial growth will occur only in the southern portion of the township where existing infrastructure can be used most efficiently; the use of access management techniques to minimize traffic congestion will be encouraged.
- ▶ Commercial development will provide needed goods and services to township residents. Development will be encouraged to locate in existing structures whenever possible. Where this is not feasible, new construction will be consistent with the character of the area and will not encroach upon residential uses.
- ▶ The important contributions of residential and pedestrian components in the success of creating a sustainable commercial environment for businesses will be emphasized in planning considerations, for example, creating stronger connections with Bailey Park and the Battle Creek linear trail system.



## **Natural Features Goal**

**Preserve and enhance the natural beauty and features that make Pennfield Charter Township a desirable rural/urban community through responsible development, growth and planning.**

## **Natural Features Policies**

- ▶ High density single family homes, manufactured home communities, multiple family structures, and commercial and industrial businesses will only be permitted where public sewer service is available, within the designated service boundary, so that the potential for ground water contamination or any other adverse environmental effects may be limited.
- ▶ Greenbelts, or buffer zones, should be used in transition areas between development and a natural feature or between two potentially incompatible land uses to protect the integrity of Pennfield Charter Township's resources.
- ▶ The Township will pursue the preservation (through acquisition, donation, easements, or other similar means) of areas that merit permanent protection from development, such as sensitive natural features, a corridor for a linear park, or open space areas within private developments.
- ▶ Through zoning, site plan review and education, the township will encourage approaches to land development that take natural features, such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation into account in the process of site design and building design.
- ▶ The township will adopt regulations which control point-source and nonpoint-source pollution to ensure that the integrity of the area's ground and surface water resources, such as Battle Creek River, Wanondoger Creek, and the numerous inland lakes of Pennfield Charter Township are protected.



## **Recreation Goal**

**Enhance recreational opportunities for residents of all ages by maintaining existing facilities and identifying new possibilities that will satisfy recreational deficiencies in the community.**

## **Recreation Policies**

- ▶ The township will strive to support the many good recreational facilities which exist in and near Pennfield Charter Township, such as Bailey Park (adjacent to the Township in Battle Creek), a golf driving range, golf courses, bowling alley, and sportman's club so that they may remain as viable recreational resources for residents.
- ▶ More neighborhood parks will be developed that strengthen neighborhood interaction and offer opportunities for passive recreation, such as picnicking.
- ▶ The Township will commence dialogue with the City of Battle Creek and land owners to extend the linear trail along the Wanondoger Creek to Pennfield School and eventually further north to Huntington Road. Using the Consumers Energy right-of-way, the trail should be connected to Pennfield's business district. Whenever possible, developments will be encouraged to connect to the proposed linear trail system.
- ▶ The possibility of developing the new township well field into a community park for use by all age groups will be explored.
- ▶ Funding for parks development, such as grants, endowments, conservation easements, and donations of land and money will be sought to improve and expand the recreational facilities of the Pennfield Charter Township, in coordination with members of the community, a working committee, and the Calhoun County Community Development (CCCD).
- ▶ The township will prepare a local Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify specific needs, set priorities, and determine sources of funding.
- ▶ The township will coordinate with the Calhoun County Road Commission to develop a bike route along Brigden Road, to McAllister Road, and then to Pennfield Road. Transportation Enhancement funds through MDOT will be sought for this project.



## **Community Facilities and Services Goal**

**Update and manage facilities and services in an economically efficient manner that closely associates types and densities of development with infrastructure capacity and capability.**

## **Community Facilities and Services Policies**

- ▶ The township will create an urban services boundary which delineates where public infrastructure would be most appropriate. Future land use patterns should reflect densities appropriate for areas served by public services. Where the township intends on preserving rural character, expanded infrastructure should not be made available.
- ▶ An assessment of the feasibility of building and maintaining a community water and sewer facility, potentially involving multiple townships, will be undertaken by the township.
- ▶ Transportation considerations will be of primary importance during site plan review, particularly the use of access management techniques to limit the number and placement of drives along M-66.
- ▶ New parking lots will be required to be paved and water drainage controlled through the zoning and site plan review process.
- ▶ The Calhoun County Road Commission and Pennfield Charter Township should undertake a feasibility study for the extension of Pennfield Road and Morgan Road to provide better east/west access in the township.
- ▶ New standards for development, particularly related to the installation or upgrading of infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, lighting, water, and sewer, as well as access management techniques should be implemented.
- ▶ Coordination will be sought with the Pennfield School System, community service organizations, police department, and other entities to ensure that the social needs of the residents of Pennfield Charter Township are being satisfied, or can be improved.

## **Community Cooperation Goal**

**Promote community and interagency cooperation to conserve Township funds, improve the quality of life of Township residents, and ensure that growth follows the intentions of this Master Plan.**

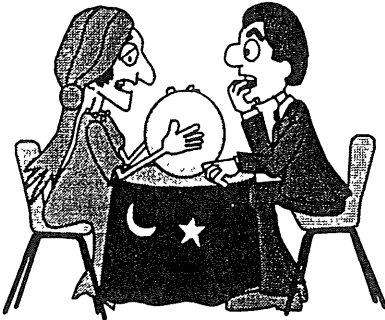
### **Community Cooperation Policies**

- ▶ Coordinate with MDOT and Jobs Commission to receive Transportation Enhancement Funds for streetscape improvements.
- ▶ Work with the County and the City of Battle Creek to make connections with the Battle Creek Trail System; obtain MDNR Recreation Enhancement Funds and Transportation Enhancement Funds for development of the trail.
- ▶ Encourage local businesses to create a Business Association or local Chamber of Commerce that will represent business interests in Pennfield. Investigate the feasibility of creating a Downtown Development Authority (DDA).
- ▶ Discuss with adjacent townships plans for future development.
- ▶ Coordinate with MDOT and the Calhoun County Road Commission to ensure that access management techniques are employed along M-66 and other major transportation routes within the Township.
- ▶ Coordinate with the Calhoun County Road Commission to discuss the possibility of developing additional east-west connections throughout the southwestern quadrant of the township to lessen traffic on M-66 and allow for more interior development.
- ▶ Actively consult with all area Public Works departments regarding land use issues, particularly related to areas of wellhead protection and the management of infrastructure to ensure that groundwater quality is protected and that infrastructure is used to its highest level of efficiency.
- ▶ Work with the City of Battle Creek, County Board of Public Works, and adjoining townships regarding future water service.



## CHAPTER 4

# FUTURE LAND USE



If we all had a crystal ball or a magic fortune teller, perhaps we would know what the future holds for Pennfield Charter Township, then again... maybe we don't need any help. Determining what the Township will look like twenty years from now may not be as hard as it seems.

As a community, you have the power to determine the type, density, and location of new development that will occur. Development can occur haphazardly and unplanned, or Pennfield Charter Township can be a cohesive community with a healthy business district, sound employment opportunities, wide open spaces, rolling farmland, safe and efficient transportation corridors, numerous recreational opportunities, and quality housing.

The Master Plan is an important tool for the Township to use to determine its own future, rather than taking whatever may come its way. Two elements of the Plan are especially critical in shaping the future of the community. First, is the vision, along with the goals and strategies, described previously in this document. These are public policy statements which establish the framework for the overall Master Plan. They describe what the community should be and how it will get there.

The second important part of the Master Plan is the future land use map. This graphic illustrates the desired arrangement and relationships of land uses in the Township, based on the vision, goals, and policies. To some extent it is an ideal toward which Pennfield Charter Township should strive; but it also reflects the reality of current conditions and land use patterns. Therefore, it is achievable if the Township officials, citizens, and business leaders are committed to it.

It is also important to understand some basic principles behind the Future Land Use map.

- ◆ This is not zoning. While there may be some correlation between the Zoning map and the Future Land Use map, there will also be some significant differences. The idea behind the Master Plan is to make things better for the future and, if necessary, undo (over time) some of the mistakes of the past.

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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### ***Future Land Use***

- ◆ One of the major issues identified by the Focus Group was the incompatibility of land use in some parts of the Township, i.e., industrial and commercial next to single family homes, isolated businesses in the midst of rural residential areas, etc. The Future Land Use map attempts to correct some of these situations by designating such areas for what they should be rather than what they are now.
- ◆ Future Land Use categories don't correspond to zoning districts. The land use categories are much broader than zoning districts and only reflect a desired outcome, not the specific uses, lot sizes, and other development requirements of the zoning districts. However, the two should complement one another. Each of the future land use categories shown on the map designates an appropriate use for various areas of the Township. These use categories are described on the following pages.
- ◆ Pennfield Charter Township is a community which exhibits two distinct characters -- both urban and rural. The Future Land Use map, along with the Plan's goals and policies, attempts to accommodate this dichotomy. A definite distinction is drawn between the city/suburban and the countryside environments. In addition to the land use designations, themselves, the Plan establishes a boundary to separate those areas of the Township where intensive development should be concentrated, along with the necessary public support facilities and services; from those areas where low density development may be permitted, but in concert with the natural environment and not at the expense of dispersed public services.

The "Urban Services Boundary" defines a compact sector of the community where a substantial public investment in infrastructure has already been made to support existing and anticipated development. Planned extensions of this infrastructure within the boundary can occur over time in a prudent and responsible manner. In years to come, as the area within the boundary is developed its limits can be extended outward, but in a logical manner, similar to the outward motion of ripples on a pond rather than the linear extension of tentacles. Conversely, it is the intent of the Plan to keep the rural countryside as natural and unspoiled as possible. Consistent with this goal, the Plan recognizes that the extension of the public infrastructure into such areas would only attract more development and would incur substantial public cost prematurely.

## **FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS**

### ◆ ***Agricultural Preservation***

While the Township is growing and many of its lands are gradually witnessing a transition from rural to urban, there remain significant areas of rural open spaces, many of which continue to be actively farmed. Agricultural operations are scattered through much of

## ***Pennfield Charter Township Master Plan***

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### ***Future Land Use***

rural Pennfield Charter Township. Unfortunately, many of these farms are being impacted by the encroachment of rural, non-farm residential development.

Pennfield Charter Township is not noted for its rich agricultural lands. Nevertheless, substantial acreage throughout the community remains in agricultural production. These farming operations not only contribute to the economic well-being of the Township but comprise a significant element of its prized rural character.

Two significant agricultural areas remain relatively intact. These are in the northwest and southeast quadrants of Pennfield Charter Township. Some competing development has spread to these areas; but large contiguous tracts of active agricultural land remain the predominant use in these areas. The Plan seeks to protect these areas from undue pressures from competing non-farm development, but permits the farmers some alternative use of their property, as well. Therefore, non-farm residential should only be permitted at very low densities (one unit for every 20 to 40 acres).

A sliding scale zoning approach should be employed, along with cluster or open space zoning techniques, to not only protect the agricultural lands but to preserve the rural character in those areas where agriculture remains the predominant use.

#### **◆ *Rural residential (maximum 1 unit/2 acres)***

In Pennfield Charter Township, as in so many other communities throughout Michigan, there is a need to protect the significant natural features that give the community its character, but also to recognize the attractiveness of such areas for residential development. Spacious, rural homesites are highly desired by a relatively large segment of the population. The Master Plan provides an option for such persons; but stresses the need to keep densities low (no more than one unit per two acres) and to maintain harmonious relationships between such development and the area's natural features. By providing such rural development areas, the Plan attempts to relieve pressures on the Township's remaining concentrations of farm land.

#### **◆ *Low density residential (1.1 to 3.5 units/acre)***

Density refers to the suggested number of units per acre, not the type of residential unit. Low density residential areas can be developed at densities of up to 3.5 units per acre where public sanitary sewer is available. The designated low density residential areas of the Township are confined to the southwest quadrant of the community, within the defined Urban Services Boundary. Most of the urbanized portion of the Township is designated Low Density Residential, consistent with the established and desired future character of that area.

◆ ***Medium density residential (3.6 to 6 units/acre)***

The recommended density in these areas is 3.6 to 6 units per acre. This increase in allowable units may make it feasible to develop two family dwellings, town houses, condominiums, or manufactured housing communities in addition to conventional single family homes.

◆ ***High density residential (6.1 to 12 units/acre)***

A range of 6.1 to 12 units per acre is recommended for this category. This area is best suited to multiple family housing, but other forms could be allowed as well. Like the medium density category, high density reflects existing patterns or is recommended in areas where transition or buffering is needed between low density residential areas and non-residential areas. The significant concentrations of High Density Residential are on the west side of East Avenue, between Morgan Road and Roosevelt Avenue; at the north end of Garrison Road; and adjacent to the Battle Creek River, between Rothwell Lane and Alvena Avenue.

◆ ***Commercial***

Due to relatively liberal land use policies of the past, commercial uses are found in various locations of the Township. However, the two most significant concentrations of business activity are along M-66, between Pennfield Road and the south Township boundary, and along North Avenue, between Morgan Road and Roosevelt Avenue.

The Master Plan designates these two areas as the future commercial locations. Neither is fully developed and, in both cases, some redevelopment of marginal uses would be appropriate. Sufficient land exists in these commercial locations to serve the long-term needs of Pennfield Charter Township. While most of this land is a linear strip configuration along traffic arteries, there is one large area on the east side of M-66 east of the Morgan Road intersection, that affords an opportunity for concentrated retail/service development.

Existing isolated spots of commercial in outlying areas should not be expanded. This will prevent the spread of incompatible conditions with current and future residential or similar uses, and will promote the development of those areas that are designated for commercial use.

◆ ***Industry***

This category includes manufacturing, processing, assembly, distribution, and warehousing activities. One large concentration of industrial activity is shown on the plan map, rather

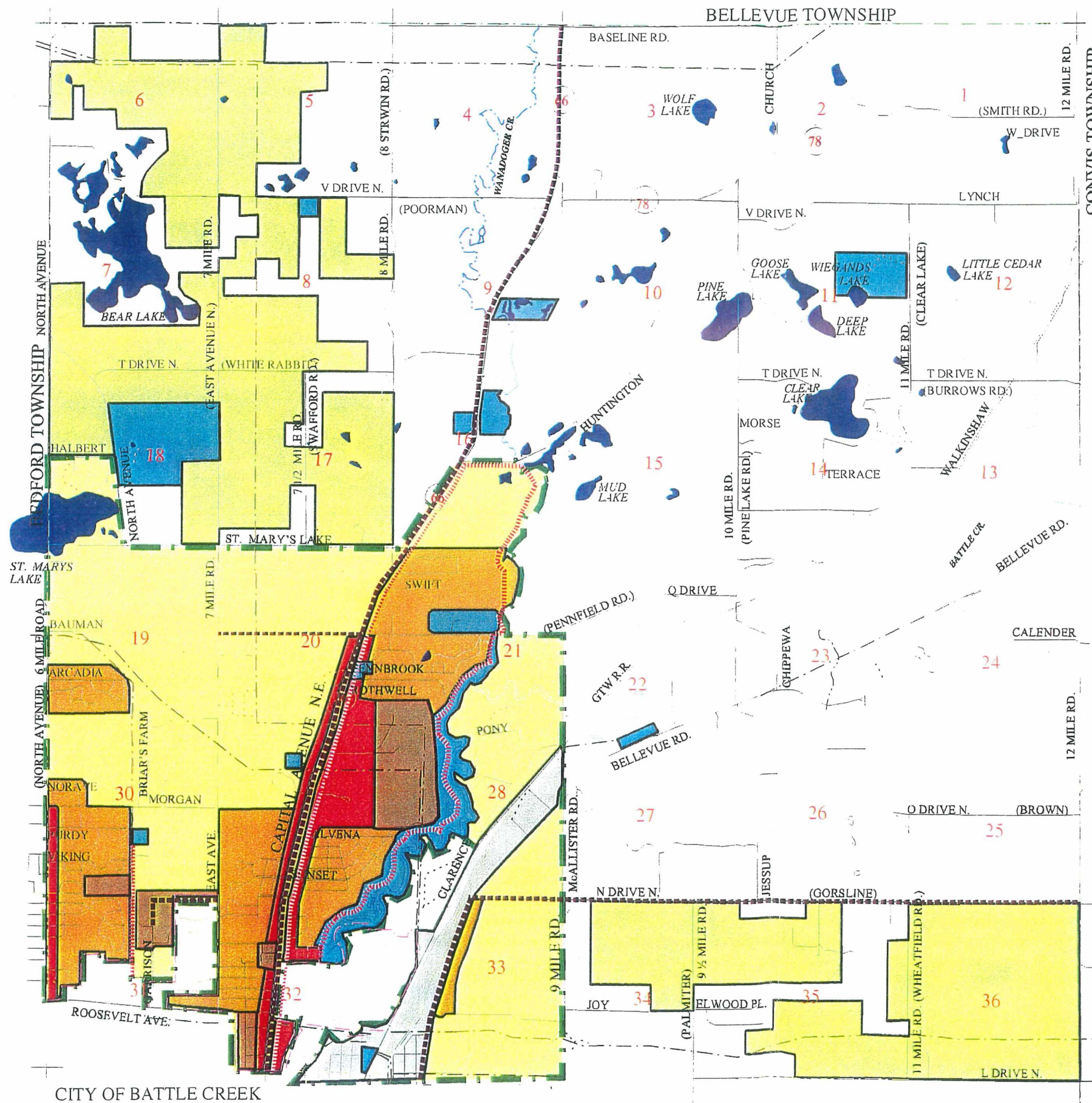
than isolated parcels scattered across the community. This is located in the southcentral part of Pennfield Charter Township and generally follows the railroad tracks from the southern Township boundary to the eastern edge of the Urban Services Boundary. Some redevelopment of existing residential lands in the southern part of this area is also envisioned.

◆ ***Public/Quasi-public***

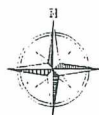
Lands and facilities devoted to public or quasi-public uses are included in this category. Specific uses include public buildings such as Township offices, fire stations, and schools, along with facilities such as the water tower and cemetery. Parks and recreation lands are also included in this category. The most significant recommendation for new lands designated Public/Quasi-public is the creation of a linear park and trail system along the west side of Wanondoger Creek, extending from Bailey Park north to Huntington Road. Another potential open space and recreational asset for the community lies near the geographic center of the Township, east of Huntington Road, where gravel mining operations have left water features which could provide combined opportunities for both recreation and development.

# Pennfield Charter Township, Calhoun County

## Future Land Use



- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Street Improvements
- Urban Services Boundary
- Nonmotorized Trail



## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

While the Master Plan is an essential tool to be used in guiding the Township's future, there are other companion tools that should also be considered as part of an overall community development program.

- ◆ The most critical of these is the Zoning Ordinance. As noted elsewhere in this Plan, the Zoning Ordinance is the companion piece to the Master Plan for controlling land use. Unfortunately, the Township's existing zoning ordinance needs to be rewritten. The current ordinance lacks some of the important techniques necessary to fully implement the Plan. Districts do not correspond to the planning goals outlined in this Master Plan; basic tools for influencing the quality of development, such as site plan review and special land use approvals, are inadequate; and other regulatory provisions, such as agricultural and natural resource preservation techniques are not available.
- ◆ An organized, systematic approach to Capital Improvements Programming should be undertaken by the Township. Conducted as part of the annual budgeting process, the CIP process should be initiated by the Planning Commission or a subcommittee with participation from the Planning Commission. A major emphasis of the CIP is to reinforce the relationship between the Township's expenditure of public funds and its Master Plan.
- ◆ A Parks & Recreation Master Plan should be prepared to address some of the "quality of life" issues expressed during the planning process. Such a plan is a prerequisite for obtaining State funding for any park or recreation project. The planning effort should be conducted jointly with the school district.
- ◆ The Township Master Plan stresses the importance of an "Urban Services Boundary" as a basis for critical land use decisions. While not intended to be an impenetrable fence to keep people in or out, the boundary does denote that area within which public expenditures for infrastructural improvements should be focused. Areas outside the Urban Service Boundary may be developed during the planning period, but at very low densities so as not to necessitate extension of the public utilities or create demands for other costly and untimely expenditures. Over the course of the planning period, the boundary should be regularly evaluated to ensure its continued relevance, as well as the Township's policy commitment to it.
- ◆ The Township should prepare a Wellhead Protection Program to define and protect the public water supply well field recharge area. Such a program, when completed, should be incorporated into the Township Master Plan.

# APPENDIX A

## Resolution of Adoption

**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
PENNFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
MASTER PLAN**

**WHEREAS, the Pennfield Charter Township Planning Commission is empowered by the Township Planning Act, No. 168 of 1959, as amended, to make a Plan for the unincorporated areas of the Township and to amend the Plan as needed from time-to-time; and**

**WHEREAS, the Township Board of Pennfield Charter Township created a Planning Commission for the purposes stated in the Township Planning Act; and**

**WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has prepared, with the assistance of its Master Plan Committee, staff and consultants, a Plan for the unincorporated areas of the Township; and**

**WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has provided opportunities throughout the preparation of the Plan for participation by the community and their elected representatives; and**

**WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has held a public hearing on its proposed Plan on March 15, 1999 in accordance with the requirements of the Township Planning Act; and**

**WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has considered the public comments offered at the hearing and throughout the process and has refined the Plan accordingly;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Pennfield Charter Township Planning Commission hereby adopts the Master Plan for Pennfield Charter Township, dated May, 1999, along with the text, maps, charts, graphs, and other descriptive materials contained within the document; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of the Plan shall be submitted to the Calhoun County Planning Commission, in accordance with the requirements of the Township Planning Act.**

**Motion by:**

**Supported by:**

**AYES:**

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:**