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# Brant Township Master Plan

Brant Township, Saginaw County, Michigan

*Draft  
February 2005*

*For review and comment  
As required by the Township Planning Act*

*Prepared by the  
Brant Township Planning Commission*

*With the assistance of the  
Saginaw County Metropolitan Planning Commission*

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# Brant Township Master Plan

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Change is an inevitable fact of life. Communities will change over time, regardless of whether they *plan* for change or not. Brant Township is no exception — the community has changed over time and will continue to do so.

At this point, it is appropriate for Brant Township to examine present community conditions, evaluate the problems and opportunities facing the Township, and develop strategies for the future.

This document, the Brant Township Master Plan, is an attempt to quantify, assess, and respond to change. Also, the plan is both a statement and a vision concerning the Township's desire for its future growth and development. Furthermore, this Master Plan is a "basic plan" intended to serve the following purposes:

- Help members of the Township Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Township residents make informed decisions about how the community develops over time.
- Provide a legal foundation for the Township Zoning Ordinance.

- Encourage the establishment and implementation of land use and development policies that promote and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community's residents.
- Establish goals and policies relating to land use, development, and public services.
- Provide guidelines for the preservation and enhancement of Brant Township's character.
- Define a vision of the Township's future.
- Provide guidance to the process of reviewing land development project proposals.
- Identify positive actions that can be taken to assure that future development is consistent with the goals and policies expressed in this plan.
- Identify areas of the community that are suitable for different types of land use and development.
- Provide a basic plan consistent with the requirements of the Township Planning Act.

This Master Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Township Planning Act (P.A. 168 of 1959, as amended). Section 6 of that Act

charges the Township with the responsibility to "*make and adopt a basic plan as a guide for the development of unincorporated portions the township.*" The Brant Township Master Plan is meant to be just this sort of guide to development.

Brant Township prepared and adopted a "General Development Plan" in 1987. This Master Plan represents the first major update of the Township's recommendations for its future development. Keeping the Township's plan up to date is an important part of an overall program to manage the development of the Township.

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## Chapter 2

### Physical Profile of Brant Township

This part of the Master Plan provides an overview of the physical features and natural resources that shape Brant Township.

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#### A. Regional Setting

Brant Township is a rural community located within the southwestern portion of Saginaw County

Brant Township is bounded on the north by Fremont Township, on the east by St. Charles Township, on the west by Marion Township, and on the south by Brady Township. A small portion of the Village of St. Charles is located in the northeast corner of the Township. There are no other incorporated cities or villages within the Township.

In terms of larger cities, the Township is about 25 miles from Saginaw and 50 miles from Lansing.

There are no state highways that directly serve the Township. Several paved county primary roads provide the main access routes to and from the Township. Brant, Ithaca, and Townline Roads provide east/west access, and Hemlock Road provides a major north/south route. Other

county roads provide for the movement of traffic through and within the Township.

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#### B. Land Use and Development Patterns

Brant Township is a “standard” sized Michigan township that consists of 36 sections. The Township covers a land area of approximately 23,750 acres.

Information on existing land use in the Township has been derived from the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) as compiled and maintained by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and from aerial photography that is maintained by Saginaw County.

The major land uses found in the Township are discussed below.

*Agricultural land* (mostly cropland) is the largest single category, comprising about 52% of the total land area. *Forested land* makes up the second largest category, occupying about 39% of the Township. *Urban areas* (developed uses, including residential and commercial) occupy 6% of the total area. In Brant Township, this “urban” category is represented almost exclusively by single-family homes. Commercial development is limited to a small area near the intersection of Hemlock and Brant

Roads. This is the "Village Center" area known as Brant.

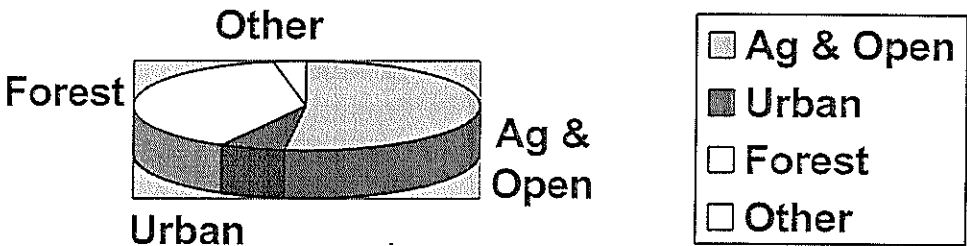
*Open land* (grass and shrub vegetation) makes up just less than 3% of the land area. *Open water* (such as lakes and streams) and *wetlands* are not significant features in the Township. These represent only about one quarter of one percent (0.25%) of the land area.

Taken together, the agricultural, open land, and forested categories make up almost 94 percent of the Township. This further emphasizes the rural character of the area. The distribution of major land uses is displayed as a pie chart in *Figure 2-1*. A general map of the major land use categories in the Township is included at the end of this chapter.



Figure 2-2  
Brant Township Land Use Distribution

Brant Township Land Use



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## C. Soils

According to the *Soil Survey of Saginaw County* issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the soils within Brant Township have been classified as the following major associations:

➤ ***Parkhill-Wixom Association***

These soils are described as nearly level and gently undulating loamy and sandy soils on water-worked till plains. Drainage is described as poor. The Parkhill-Wixom is by far the predominant soil association, occupying almost the entire Township. The Soil Survey reports that this association is mostly used for cropland. The soils are poorly suited to use for building sites and sanitary facilities due to wetness and slow permeability.

➤ ***Pipestone-Wixom-Belleville Association***. This association consists of sandy soils on lake plains and water-worked till plains. Their drainage is also described as poor. This association occurs only in a small area in the northwest corner of Brant Township. The Soil Survey states that most areas of this association are used for cropland or woodland. Wetness and poor

filtering capacity pose limitations for building sites and sanitary facilities.

➤ ***Wixom-Capac-Parkhill Association***. These sandy and loamy soils are found on nearly level or gently undulating terrain. They are found on water-worked till plains and other till plains. These soils tend to have poor drainage. These soils are found only in a very small area in the southwest corner of the Township. The Soil Survey states that wetness and moderately slow permeability are the main limitations of these soils for buildings and sanitary facilities. Most of the soils within this association are fairly well suited to cultivated crops if a drainage system is provided.

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## D. Water Resources

Brant Township is within the Saginaw Bay Drainage Basin. The area is generally drained toward the east and northeast by small creeks and agricultural drains that eventually connect with various branches of the Bad River. Large bodies of surface water are not significant features in the Township.

There are no public water supply systems in the Township, and

residents rely on wells for their drinking water and other water supply needs.

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## **E. Transportation System**

As mentioned earlier, there are no state highways that directly serve Brant Township. County roads provide for the movement of traffic through and within the Township. Several paved primary roads provide the main access routes to and from the Township. Brant, Ithaca, and Townline Roads provide important east/west routes, and Hemlock Road provides a major north/south route, with intersections at M-46 and M-57.

There are no commercial aviation facilities in the Township. The closest general aviation facility is the Chesaning Airport to the southeast. The closest commercial passenger airports are MBS International in Freeland in the northern part of Saginaw County, Flint Bishop Airport near Flint in Genesee County, and Capital City Airport near Lansing.

There are no active rail lines in the Township.



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Created 11/18/2004



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## Chapter 3

### Social and Economic Profile of Brant Township

This section of Brant Township's Master Plan contains an overview of the social and economic factors that shape the community. The topics covered here include population growth and composition, income levels, housing, and other relevant factors.

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#### A. Population Characteristics

The latest 2000 Census figures report that Brant Township has a population of 2,023 residents. This is an increase of eighty-one (81) people, or about four percent (4%) of the population, since the last official Census in 1990.

During this same period, Saginaw County also experienced a slight population loss of 0.9 percent. The State of Michigan's population grew by almost seven (7) percent from 1990 through 2000.

Historical population changes from 1950 to 2000 for Brant Township and Saginaw County are summarized in Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1.

From a long-term perspective, the Township's population has grown

steadily over the past five decades. From 1950 to 2000, Brant Township showed a net population gain of about 108 percent, meaning that the population has more than doubled. For comparison, the Township presently has 1,050 more residents than it did in 1950.

Saginaw County has also shown a net gain in population of about 37 percent for the 50-year period discussed here. However, in terms of more recent trends, the County population has declined by over 18,000 people (almost 8%) since 1980.

Additional information on the make-up of the population based on the 2000 Census is shown in Table 3-2. The Township's pre-school age population (under 5 years) is slightly below the averages for Saginaw County and the state. The school-age population (5 to 17 years) in the Township is slightly larger than the County and state averages.

The Township's senior population (those 65 and over) is three to four percent smaller than the County and state proportions. The median age of Township residents is slightly older than Saginaw County residents in general and about one and a half years older than the average Michigan resident.



**Table 3-1**  
**Historical Population Changes**  
**Brant Township & Selected Government Units**

Unit	1950 Census	1960 Census	1970 Census	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	% Change 1990 — 2000	% Change 1950 — 2000
Brant Township	973	1,151	1,371	1,849	1,942	2,023	4.2%	107.9%
Saginaw County	153,515	190,752	219,743	228,059	211,946	210,039	- 0.9%	36.8%
Michigan	6,372,009	7,823,194	8,881,826	9,262,678	9,295,297	9,938,444	6.9%	56.0%

Source: U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing.

### Population Changes

**Figure 3-1. Population Trends**

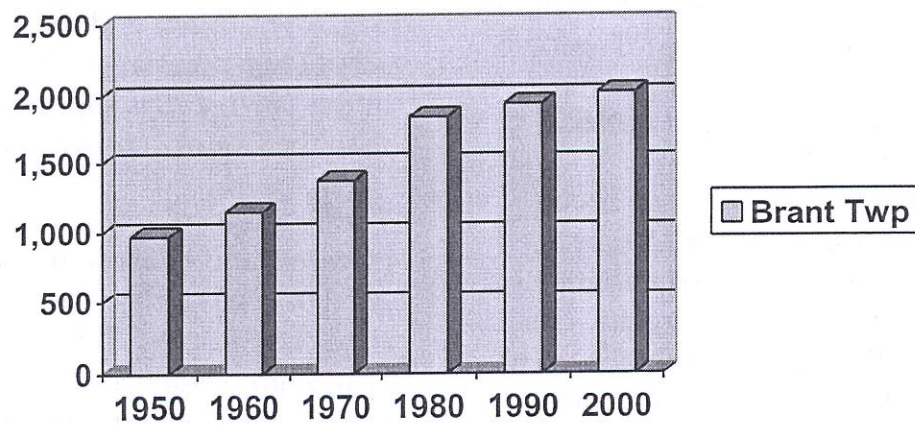


Figure 3-1



Table 3-2  
Population Age Profile

Community	Under 5 years	5 – 17 years	18 years & over	65 years & over	Median Age
Brant Township	110 5.4%	460 22.7%	1,453 71.8%	187 9.2%	37.1 years
Saginaw County	14,201 6.8%	41,689 19.8%	154,149 73.4%	28,331 13.5%	36.3 years
Michigan	6.8%	19.3%	73.9%	12.3%	35.5 years

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

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## B. Local Economy

### Income

Income data (Table 3-3) are useful in examining local economic conditions. Two types of income information are usually analyzed: *household* income and *family* income. To measure *family income*, the Census adds together the incomes of all members 15 years old and over in each family and treats the resulting figure as a single amount. *Household income* includes the income of the householder and all other persons 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Since many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income. The Census reports this data as *median* household and family income levels. The median is the “middle” – the point that divides the population into two equal groups, one that has income levels higher than the median and the other that has incomes below the median.

This information shows that, for the last Census, median household income in Brant Township was \$46,157. This figure was \$7,520 more than the countywide median household income.

Median family income in the Township was \$49,437. This income

level was \$4,923 higher than the Saginaw County average.

Another economic indicator is the *poverty level*, especially the portion of the population that is living below the poverty level. The Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than the threshold, then that family and every individual that is part of that family is considered poor. The poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. To give an example, the poverty threshold for a family of four (with two children under 18 years) in 1990 was \$13,254. In 2000, the poverty threshold for this same size family had been adjusted to \$17,463.

The percentage of Brant Township’s residents who were living below the poverty level in 2000 was 8.3%. The proportion of Saginaw County residents below the poverty level was 13.9%.

Table 3-3  
Local Income & Poverty Levels (2000)

Community	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	% of All Persons Below Poverty Level
Brant Township	\$46,157	\$49,437	8.3%
Saginaw County	\$38,637	\$46,494	13.9%
Michigan	\$44,667	\$53,457	10.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

### Employment

The major employment categories for Brant Township residents are shown in Table 3-4. This information shows the diversity of the local work force, with no single category dominating employment in the area.

In Brant Township, the top employment category is manufacturing (29.3% of total employment), followed by

educational, health and social services (16.2%), and then retail trade (12.6%) as the third highest category.

Other major employment types include construction, recreation and hospitality services, professional and managerial, miscellaneous services, finance, insurance and real estate, transportation, and public administration.

**Table 3-4**  
**Brant Township**  
**Employment by Type of Industry (2000)**

Employment Category	Number of Employees	% of All Employed Persons
Manufacturing	272	29.3%
Educational, health & social services	150	16.2%
Retail Trade	117	12.6%
Construction	68	7.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food service	66	7.1%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative	55	5.9%
Other services (except public administration)	48	5.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate	42	4.5%
Transportation & warehousing, utilities	36	3.9%
Public administration	34	3.7%
Information	18	1.9%
Wholesale trade	15	1.6%
Agriculture, forestry, mining	7	0.8%

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

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## C. Housing

An adequate supply of sound housing is important to every community. Housing data for Brant Township are shown in Table 3-5. This information shows that from 1990 to 2000, there was an increase of 82 housing units in the Township, an increase of 12.6%. This rate of housing growth is substantially higher than the housing growth that took place in the County (4.4%).

Home ownership is a strong trend in the Township, with over 93% of all homes occupied by owners. This trend is also evident in Saginaw County as a whole. Home ownership is generally viewed as a positive trend because it lends greater stability to a community.

Median housing values in the Township were reported at \$94,500

in 1990. This figure is \$9,300 higher than the median value for Saginaw County. Median housing values in the County in 2000 ranged from \$42,700 in Buena Vista Township to \$155,300 in Frankenmuth Township. In evaluating this information, it is important to note that the median value refers to the middle point of the range. This means that an equal number of homes had both higher and lower values than the median of \$94,500 reported for Brant Township by the 2000 Census.

In terms of structural characteristics, the 2000 Census reported that 87% of the housing in the Township (639 units) were detached single-family homes. At that time, 11% of the housing stock (83 units) consisted of mobile homes. This represents a decrease of 49 mobile homes since the 1990 Census.

Table 3-5  
Selected Housing Characteristics (1990 & 2000)

Unit	2000 Total Housing Units	1990 Total Housing Units	% Change in Housing Units 1990 –2000	Median Value of Housing (2000)	Percent Owner-Occupied (2000)
Brant Township	734	652	12.6%	\$94,500	93.3%
Saginaw County	85,505	81,931	4.4%	\$85,200	73.8%
Michigan	4,234,279	3,847,926	10.0%	\$115,600	73.8%

Sources: U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

## D. Community Facilities

Community facilities in Brant Township include the Township Hall, Post Office, and a fire substation, all located in the Brant Village Center. The Township also maintains a cemetery that is located on Brant Road a short distance west of the village. Other community facilities in the Township include churches of various denominations.

## Chapter 4

# Township Development Goals and Objectives

This section of the Master Plan presents the goals and objectives that have been developed to provide a strong, coherent direction for the future development of Brant Township. The formulation of these statements evolves from the desire to remedy existing problems, to maintain positive features, and to provide an attractive and functional community environment in the future. These goals and objectives form a key element of the Township Master Plan. Desired land use arrangements and proposed strategies for action are a natural outgrowth of established goals.

Some additional benefits of establishing these goals and objectives (policies) for the Township are:

- **Consistency** -- A comprehensive list of statements concerning a variety of planning issues can help avoid arbitrary decision-making in the future.
- **Efficiency** -- Clearly stated policies help to reduce the time spent on individual topics while providing sound planning principles to assist in the process.

- **Coordination** -- Established policies provide a single framework to guide actions by the Township Board, Planning Commission, and the public.
- **Stability** -- Policies tend to be general and long-range in nature. As such, they remain stable under a variety of changing community conditions.
- **Basis for Decisions** -- Established policies are necessary to provide a reasonable basis for adopting local land use controls such as zoning. Furthermore, clearly stated policies are helpful to the courts if called upon to judge the fairness of specific land use regulations.

The proposed goals and objectives for Brant Township are presented in the remainder of this section.

### General Land Use and Development

#### GOAL:

Arrange future land uses in a manner that will preserve the natural features and rural character that make Brant Township an attractive place to live.

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Make provisions to accommodate future residential, commercial, and other types of development in appropriate locations.

2. Encourage the *managed* growth of the Township through good planning and appropriate development controls.
3. Maintain Brant Township as an agricultural and rural residential community.
4. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands and existing farming operations.
5. Encourage the preservation of natural features and open space.
6. Discourage the placement of land uses that are incompatible with existing natural features.
7. Discourage the placement of land uses that are incompatible with surrounding development.
8. Regularly evaluate the Township Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance to determine their effectiveness, and update the documents as needed.

### **Residential Land Use and Housing**

#### **GOAL:**

Provide for residential development in a manner that results in both housing and neighborhoods that are safe, healthy, and attractive, while also providing a wide choice and adequate supply of dwelling units.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Reserve sufficient land for residential development in convenient, economical, and environmentally sound locations.
2. Consider making allowances for innovative development techniques (such as conservation development and clustering) that would permit development at higher densities, while also using the available land more efficiently and preserving natural features.
3. Encourage the development of housing opportunities.
4. Encourage regulatory measures that are necessary to ensure that both new and existing housing meets appropriate health and safety standards.
5. Encourage basic housing standards to ensure the compatibility of future housing with the existing housing stock.
6. Encourage the adoption and consistent enforcement of proper standards for home occupations.



### Commercial Land Uses

#### GOAL:

Encourage sound commercial development that is small in scale and compatible with the Township's character.

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage the development of commercial centers or clusters, as opposed to strip development.
2. Discourage "spot" commercial development.
3. Encourage beautification efforts in commercial areas through amenities such as lighting, signage, and landscaping.
4. Recognize that the Township is not a suitable location for major commercial or industrial development due to its rural nature and lack of infrastructure.
5. Develop appropriate standards to ensure that any future commercial and other non-residential development is in keeping with the community's character.

### Community Facilities and Services

#### GOAL:

Provide community facilities and services in the most efficient, effective, and economical manner possible.

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Work with the County Road Commission to address the Township's priorities for road improvements.
2. Ensure that future development does not exceed the Township's ability to provide supporting facilities and services.
3. Continually evaluate public safety services (such as police and fire) in relation to area growth.
4. Strive to build cooperative relationships with other townships, the county, school districts, and other appropriate entities to address issues of mutual interest and concern.

## **Natural Resources and the Environment**

### **GOAL:**

**Protect, maintain, and enhance the natural resources and environmental features of Brant Township.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Preserve the quality and natural state of environmentally sensitive areas, including surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, forested land, and wildlife habitat.
2. Protect the Township's residents from development that would degrade environmental quality.
3. Protect the Township's residents from development that would degrade the aesthetics, natural appearance, or character of the community.

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## Chapter 5

### General Development Plan

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#### A. Introduction and General Concepts

The Brant Township Master Plan is a general guide for future development. It is intended to direct future land use in ways that will result in a development pattern that is logical, economical, visually pleasing, and environmentally sound. A basic concept that has guided the plan's development is the desire to retain the rural character and natural features that make Brant Township an attractive place to live while, at the same time, adequately providing for future development.

This plan is designed to accommodate a reasonable amount of new development in a flexible manner. However, any such development that occurs must also be done in accordance with sound land use controls, and it must be consistent with the community's character and values. The major concepts that form the basis for Brant Township's plan are summarized below:

1. Drastic changes are not encouraged in the character and population of the Township. Brant Township wishes to remain a predominantly rural residential

and agricultural community. The Township's farmlands and rural setting will continue to dominate the character of the community.

2. In all future development, the plan advocates retaining the Township's natural features, farmlands and open space areas to the greatest extent possible.
3. The plan also advocates keeping the Township's farmlands in agricultural production, and it discourages the premature conversion of these lands to non-farm uses.
4. Additional rural residential development can be accommodated under the plan in a manner that is attractive, environmentally sound, and compatible with other land uses.
5. Provisions should also be made for the development of additional small-scale retail and service business establishments. These types of development should be directed into a designated business area, and not randomly scattered throughout the Township.
6. Due to its rural nature and lack of infrastructure, the Township is not a suitable location for major commercial or industrial development.

7. In all cases, future development must not create demands for public services that exceed the Township's capabilities to provide such services.

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## B. Major Township Land Uses

The future direction for Brant Township's land use and development pattern is mainly shaped by the community's natural features, and by the Township's desire to retain an attractive rural character. Beyond these concepts, it is necessary to describe the major land use categories that are recommended and to identify appropriate locations for these uses. The major land uses envisioned by this plan are outlined in the following discussion.

### *Conservation and Recreation District*

This planning district generally includes public lands within the Township that are dedicated to conservation and outdoor recreation uses. In particular, Ringwood Forest County Park and portions of the Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area that are located in the western portion of the Township are included in this category.

The Conservation and Recreation District is intended to preserve suitable rural lands for conservation, outdoor recreation, wildlife, natural features, scenic values, and other appropriate uses. However, this

district is not limited to public lands. It is expected that this planning district would include a range of rural land uses such as farming and forestry on suitable parcels. Also, the district might include residences under limited circumstances, such as a dwelling that would be related to the operation of a farm or that would serve as a caretaker's residence for a conservation area.

### *Primary Agricultural District*

This planning district includes those portions of the Township that are sparsely developed. These areas will be used predominantly for agriculture, forestry, farm dwellings, conservation and recreational areas, and other uses that are related to agricultural pursuits. Other activities closely related to agriculture, such as operations for packing and shipping locally grown produce, would also be appropriate here. Accessory uses such as home occupations should also be permitted with proper standards.

This planning district contains the prime agricultural lands in the Township. This district is further characterized by the following factors:

- It includes areas that are actively being farmed.
- It includes the areas containing the best (i.e., most productive) soils for agriculture.
- It includes areas that are committed to agricultural use due to enrollment in farmland

development rights agreements with the state (also known as "P.A. 116 agreements").

It is the plan's intent that current farmlands and other large tracts of land should be conserved for agricultural pursuits and related purposes. This district is characterized by parcels that are greater than one acre in area.

It is also the plan's intent to discourage urban development in these areas and to preserve their rural character. These areas will not require major public services such as water and sewer.

Within this planning district, residents who desire rural living can have that option, but not at the expense of farmland or farming operations. Non-farm uses will need to coexist with agriculture within this district.

#### *General Agriculture and Low Density Residential District*

This planning district is mainly intended for low-density residential development and some agricultural activities on lots that are one acre or more in area. The Agriculture and Low Density Residential planning district includes areas that have the potential for single-family home development, and that do not include the best farmland in the Township.

#### *Rural Residential District*

This district is intended mainly for single-family residential development in the Township Center of Brant. This Township Center is a logical area that could potentially be served by public water and sewer, should such services ever become available. At present, there are no plans to construct any public utility systems in the Township.

#### *Community Commercial District*

This planning district is designed to be a general-purpose business area for the Township. It will provide for some limited development of general retail and service businesses in the Township, primarily to serve the day-to-day needs of residents. Appropriate uses include small-scale retail businesses and service establishments. This district will also allow wholesale businesses, and some light manufacturing and processing uses, provided that the enterprises have minimal nuisance characteristics.

The Township's rural nature and lack of major infrastructure (especially sewer and water) tends to preclude its development as a commercial center. Therefore, extensive commercial development is not anticipated in the Township. The proposed commercial area is located near the existing businesses in the Brant Township Center.

As a general principle for the future, the Township should avoid

commercial or manufacturing development that is randomly scattered throughout the community.

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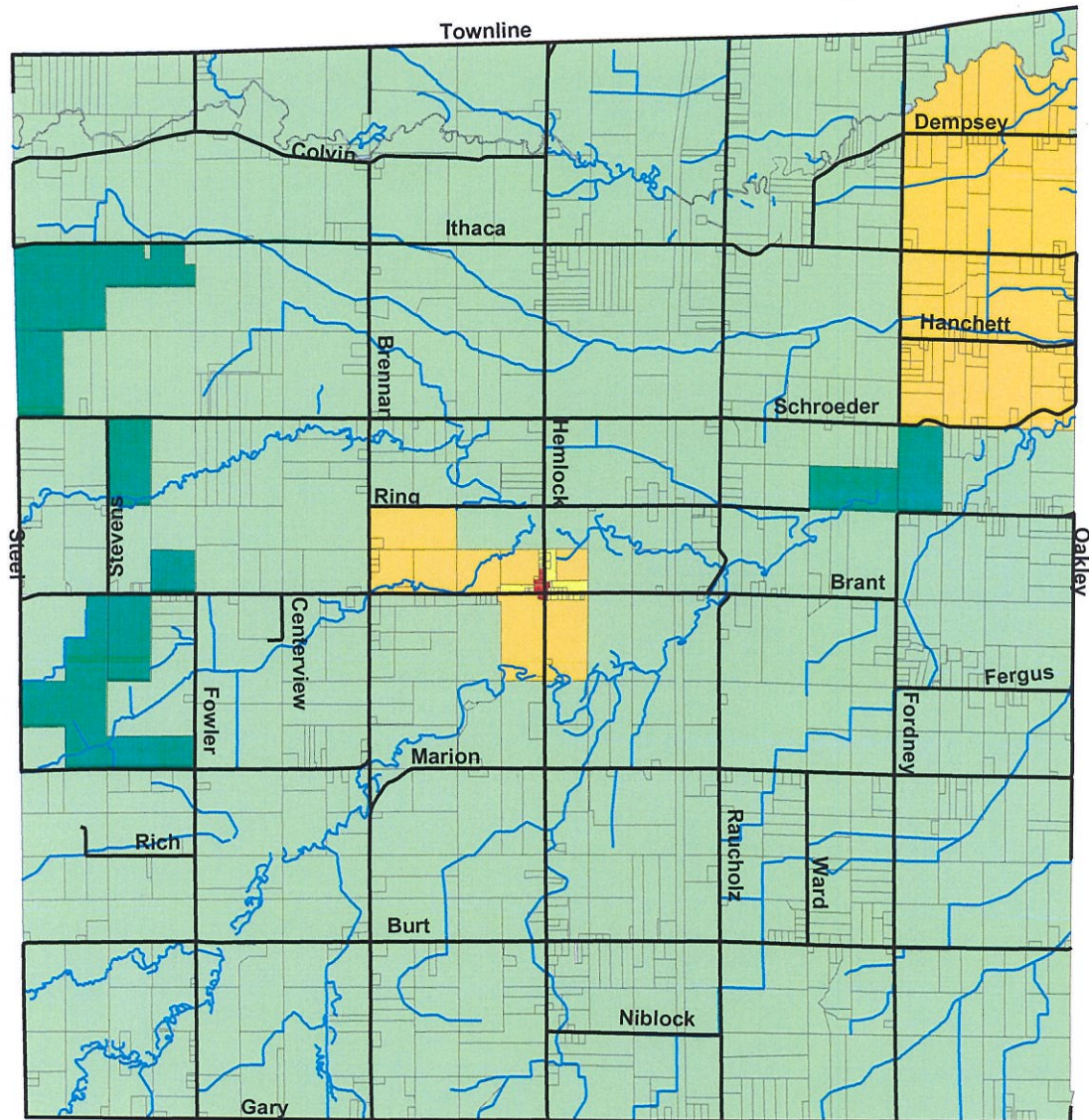
### C. Future Land Use Map

The recommended locations for the planning districts are shown on the Future Land Use Map. The Township's official Future Land Use Map is a large, display-size map that is maintained separately from the plan text. However, the map is incorporated as part of the Master Plan by reference.

It is also important to note that the Future Land Use Map is *NOT* a Zoning Map. Instead, the map is intended to serve as a guide for shaping the Township's long-range land use and development pattern. The map is also intended to guide zoning and other land use decisions as development occurs.

The Future Land Use Map portrays a land use pattern for Brant Township as the community develops over an extended period of time (i.e., 15 to 20 years). This means that achieving the land use pattern shown on the map will likely be a very gradual process. The relationship of this long-range concept to short-term land use decisions (especially zoning) is discussed further in the Township's *Action Program* for carrying out the Master Plan.

# Brant Township Future Land Use Map



## Legend

### Future Land Use

- Conservation and Recreation
- Primary Agriculture
- Agriculture and Low Density Residential
- Rural Residential
- Community Commercial



0 3,700 7,400 14,800 Feet





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## Chapter 6

### Action Program

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#### Introduction

The Brant Township Master Plan has been prepared to serve as a guide on both short-term and long-range issues which the Township will face as it develops in the future. The Master Plan includes a set of general goals and more specific objectives that have been presented in Section 4. *These goals and objectives should serve as the basis for the tasks that the Township will undertake to translate the Master Plan into action.*

In addition, implementation of Brant Township's Master Plan should involve the following major elements:

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#### A. Public Involvement and Education

Public involvement and education are critical to the success of any plan. The community must be aware of the plan's existence and it must also accept the plan's findings and recommendations. The Planning Commission has the main responsibility for working to achieve community involvement in the planning process and support for

planning in general. This is a never-ending task.

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#### B. Acceptance and Use of the Plan by the Township Board

As the elected legislative body of the Township, it is imperative that the Township Board members accept the Master Plan and use it in the governing process. As provided by the Township Planning Act (Act 168 of 1959, as amended), the Brant Township Board has asserted its right to approve or reject a plan recommended by the Township Planning Commission. The Board believes that the exercise of its right in this manner is in the best interests of the Township.

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#### C. Plan Updates

Community planning is a dynamic process. In order for the Master Plan to remain a viable document, it must be periodically updated. The Planning Commission should conduct a basic review of the document on an annual basis. Modifications should be made as necessary. The result is a plan that is always current and based on the best available information. These periodic plan updates do not need to be lengthy or elaborate. Depending on the subject matter, an update might be presented in a memo of a few pages. However, the Planning

Commission should note that plan amendments must be handled in the same manner as the adoption of the original plan with respect to public notice and hearing requirements.

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#### **D. Annual Implementation Program**

As an extension of the annual plan review process mentioned previously, the Planning Commission should also evaluate the implementation progress that has been made in the previous year. Following this review, the Planning Commission should prepare a list of specific objectives to be accomplished in the coming year and over the next five years. This list should then be ranked to identify the Planning Commission's priorities, and it should include both capital and non-capital projects.

The Planning Commission should submit the draft implementation program to the Township Board for review. The Township Board and the Planning Commission should then meet jointly to discuss the program and to reach a consensus on the Township's priorities for plan implementation in the coming year. Like the plan updates, the annual implementation program can be a simple report in a memo format.

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#### **E. Update the Township Zoning Ordinance**

The Township Zoning Ordinance is expected to remain the single most important tool for plan implementation. As such, it is extremely important to update and revise the ordinance to reflect this Plan's land use recommendations.

Following adoption of the Master Plan, it will be appropriate to pursue an in-depth review and thorough revision of the ordinance.

The land use districts presented in the Master Plan have been designed to reinforce and strengthen the current Zoning Ordinance.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, and the identification of other desirable changes can be expected to result from the ordinance update process.

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#### **F. Use the Master Plan In Zoning Decisions**

The Master Plan should be consulted prior to making zoning decisions. Experience indicates that the lack of such consultation often results in decisions that are in conflict with the plan's recommendations. Zoning actions that are contrary to the Master Plan will diminish the public credibility of the document and will

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also limit the plan's potential benefit if the Township became involved in zoning litigation.

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### **G. Maintain Consistency Between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance**

Once the Zoning Ordinance is revised to be consistent with the plan, this consistency must be maintained. If zoning decisions are made that are contrary to plan recommendations, it is important that the Planning Commission review the documents and consider a possible plan revision to reflect the zoning action. Plan amendments will also be necessary if issues arise where the plan does not offer sufficient guidance. In such a case, new or expanded material should be added to the plan to address the new issues.

