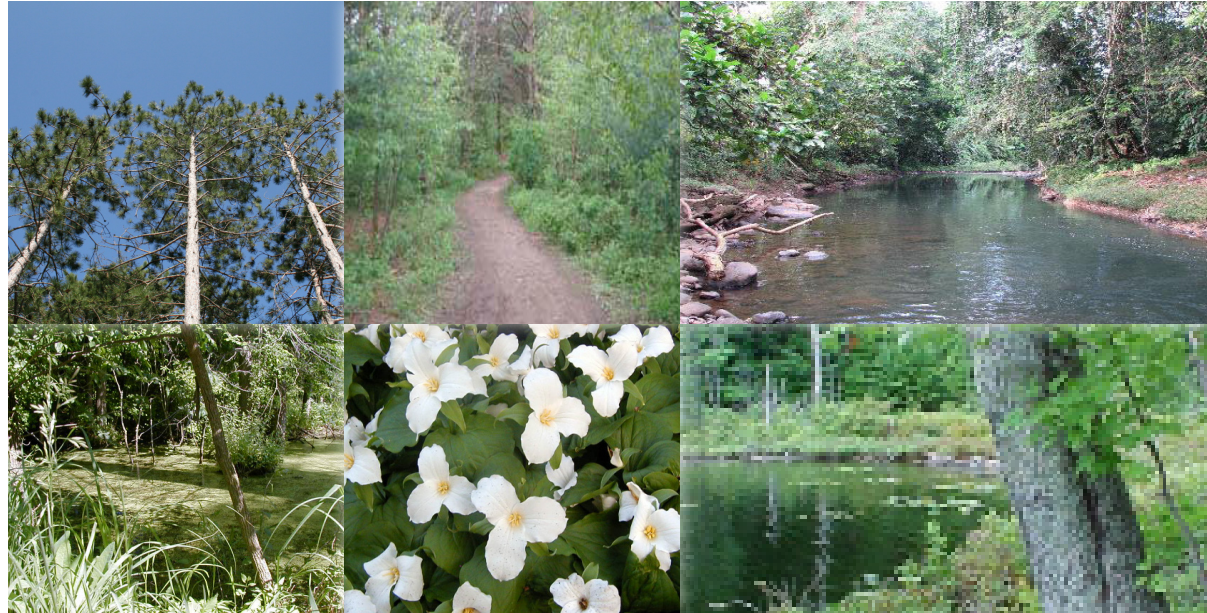


# Webber Township

*Lake County, Michigan*



## LAND USE PLAN

### 2018 Update and Supplement

Approved by the Planning Commission October 1, 2018

Adopted by the Township Board October 11, 2018

**WEBBER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**LAKE COUNTY, MICHIGAN**  
**(Resolution No. 201801-10)**

At a regular meeting of the Webber Township Planning Commission held on 1 (date) Oct 2018, at the Webber Township Hall, the following Resolution was offered for adoption by Planning Commission Member Bob Sanders and was seconded by Planning Commission Member Dan Cousar :

**A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED  
WEBBER TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD  
AND CONSTITUTING PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVAL OF SUCH  
LAND USE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3801 *et seq.* ("MPEA") authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Land Use Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared an amended Land Use Plan and submitted such plan to the Township Board for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on 14 (date) of June 2018 the Webber Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Land Use Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Land Use Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on 06 (date) August 2018 to consider public comment on the proposed amended Land Use Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed amended Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amended Land Use Plan is desirable, proper, and reasonable and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. ***Approval of 2018 Land Use Plan.*** The Planning Commission approves the proposed Land Use Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, descriptive matters, maps and tables contained therein.
2. ***Distribution to Township Board.*** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the Township Board has asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Land Use Plan and therefore, the approval granted herein is not the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843. In addition, the Planning Commission hereby approves distribution of the proposed amended Land Use Plan to the Township Board. The Planning Commission respectfully recommends to the Township Board that the Township Board give final approval and adoption of the proposed Land Use Plan.
3. ***Findings of Fact.*** The Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Land Use Plan provisions and maps, and input received from the Township Board and at the public hearing, as well as the assistance of a professional planning group. The Planning Commission also finds that the amended Land Use Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands within the Township of Webber.
4. ***Effective Date.*** The Land Use Plan will be effective upon the date that it is approved by the Webber Township Board.

YEAS: 6

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: Jackie Jacobs

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dated:

By Piedad Medina  
Pi Medina  
Planning Commission Chairperson

**WEBBER TOWNSHIP**  
**LAKE COUNTY, MICHIGAN**  
(Resolution No.       ) 2018 10 11

At a regular meeting of the Webber Township Board held on 11th day of October, 2018, at the Webber Township Hall, the following Resolution was offered for adoption by Board Member PAT WILLIAMS and was seconded by Board Member Ernie Wagatke

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PROPOSED  
WEBBER TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN UPDATE**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3801 *et seq.* ("MPEA") authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Land Use Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared an amended Land Use Plan and submitted such plan to the Township Board for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on June 14, 2018, the Webber Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Land Use Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Land Use Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on August 6, 2018 to consider public comment on the proposed Land Use Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed Plan; and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing was held, the Planning Commission voted to approve the updated Land Use Plan on Monday October 1, 2018, and recommended adoption of the proposed Land Use Plan to the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board finds that the proposed Land Use Plan is desirable, proper, and reasonable and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Adoption of 2018 Land Use Plan Update.** The Webber Township Board hereby approves and adopts the proposed Land Use Plan Update, including all of the chapters, figures, descriptive matters, maps, and tables contained therein.

2. **Distribution to Notice Group.** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the Township Board approves distribution of the amended Land Use Plan to the Notice Group.

3. **Findings of Fact.** The Township Board has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Land Use Plan provisions and maps, and input received from the Planning Commission and the public, as well as the assistance of a professional planning group. The Township Board also finds that the amended Land Use Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands within the Township of Webber.

4. **Effective Date.** The amended Land Use Plan shall become effective on the adoption date of this resolution.

YEAS: 4 - Pat Williams      Carole Hill  
     Fred Warren      Ernie Wogatzki

NAYS: \_\_\_\_\_

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: 1 - Don Casar

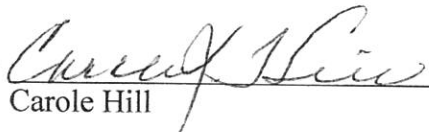
**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township of Webber Township Board of Trustees at the time, date, and place specified above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 10-11, 2018

By   
Carole Hill  
Webber Township Clerk

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## Appendix

- Summary of Land Use Plan Update Open House
- By Reference – Webber Township Land Use Plan, 2005-2025
- By Reference – Webber Township Land Use Plan Update, 2012

## Acknowledgements

### Webber Township Planning Commission

Pi Medina, Chairperson  
Ben Hill, Vice Chairperson  
Kelly McCune, Secretary  
Dan Cousar, Trustee  
Jackie Jacobs  
Bob Sanders  
SueEllen Siglow

### Webber Township Board of Trustees

Ernie Wogatzke, Supervisor  
Patricia Williams, Treasurer  
Kathryn Young, Clerk  
Dan Cousar, Trustee  
Fred Warren, Trustee

With Professional Planning Assistance from:

**williams&works**  
engineers | surveyors | planners



**SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION**

**Purpose of Update**

Prior to the adoption of this document, Webber Township had been implementing the Land Use Plan written in 2005. As the 2005 Land Use Plan states in its Introduction, constant social and other changes justify periodic review and maintenance of a land use plan, so the plan reflects current trends, objectives and challenges. In addition, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, being Act 33 of 2008, as amended, stipulates that a comprehensive master plan or land use plan be reviewed at least once every five years and revised accordingly as needed.

As part of the process to complete this 2018 Update to the 2012 Update, the policy elements of the 2012 document were scrutinized by the Township Planning Commission for relevance given today’s specific issues, trends and potential challenges. The Township reviewed the 2012 Plan for areas where it could be strengthened, corrected, updated, or otherwise changed to meet the current needs and desires of residents and property owners in the Township, without undermining the policy foundations set in the 2005 Land Use Plan document.

The Township found that the plan approved in 2005 reflects many current trends and conditions facing the Township today. Therefore, this update does not entirely replace the existing 2005 document. Instead, this 2018 Update serves both as a supplement to, and an update of, the 2005 Land Use Plan. It reflects the community’s concern for economic vitality, quality of life, rural character, and natural feature preservation, without replacing the 2005 plan. While the goals, policies, future land use component, and other elements of this update supersede Sections 6, 7

- State law requires that a plan be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.
- This 2018 Update is both a supplement to, and an update of, the 2005 plan.
- Zoning is one instrument which implements the policies of the plan.

and 8 of the former plan, both documents may be utilized because they together form the complete planning policy structure of Webber Township and provide background information and set the guidelines for an attractive, livable rural community. The effort to complete this update represents the Township’s commitment to implementing an up-to-date plan that reflects current needs.

**Township Vision**

Webber Township will continue to promote sustainability and thrive as a community where a harmonious balance is maintained between fostering economic prosperity and proper stewardship of its prized natural resources. The character of Webber Township will continue to be defined by tranquil lakes, vast woodlands, scattered farms, and abundant recreational opportunities. We will:

- Provide quality service ensuring all are treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect.
- Develop and strengthen relationships with public, private, and Township professionals.
- Acknowledge and enhance the potential for our residents to contribute service, feedback, and direction through technology, participation, training, and solicitation.
- Nurture a shared sense of common identity and purpose to enable this vision.

**The Relationship of Planning to Zoning**

Understanding the relationship between land use planning and zoning is important. Planning is essentially the act of planning the uses of land within a community for the future from a policy standpoint, while zoning is the act of regulating the use of these lands by law or ordinance.

The laws of the State of Michigan require that a community engage in land use planning activities, including the preparation of a Land Use Plan or Master Plan, prior to the initiation of a zoning ordinance in a community.

Land use planning is the process of guiding the future growth and development of a community. Generally, a document known as the Master Plan is prepared (in this case, the Land Use Plan), which addresses the various factors relating to the growth of a community. Through the processes of land use planning, it is intended that a community can preserve, promote, protect, and improve public health, safety, and general welfare. Additional considerations include: comfort, aesthetics, convenience, fire protection, community character, facilitating the adequate and efficient provision of transportation and utility services, walkability, recreation, and conservation of natural resources within the community.

Zoning is one of the instruments, along with capital improvements programming and the administration of local subdivision regulations, which implements the goals and policies of a plan. The enactment and administration of the zoning ordinance are legislative and administrative processes conducted by local units of government relating to the implementation of the goals and policies of the plan.

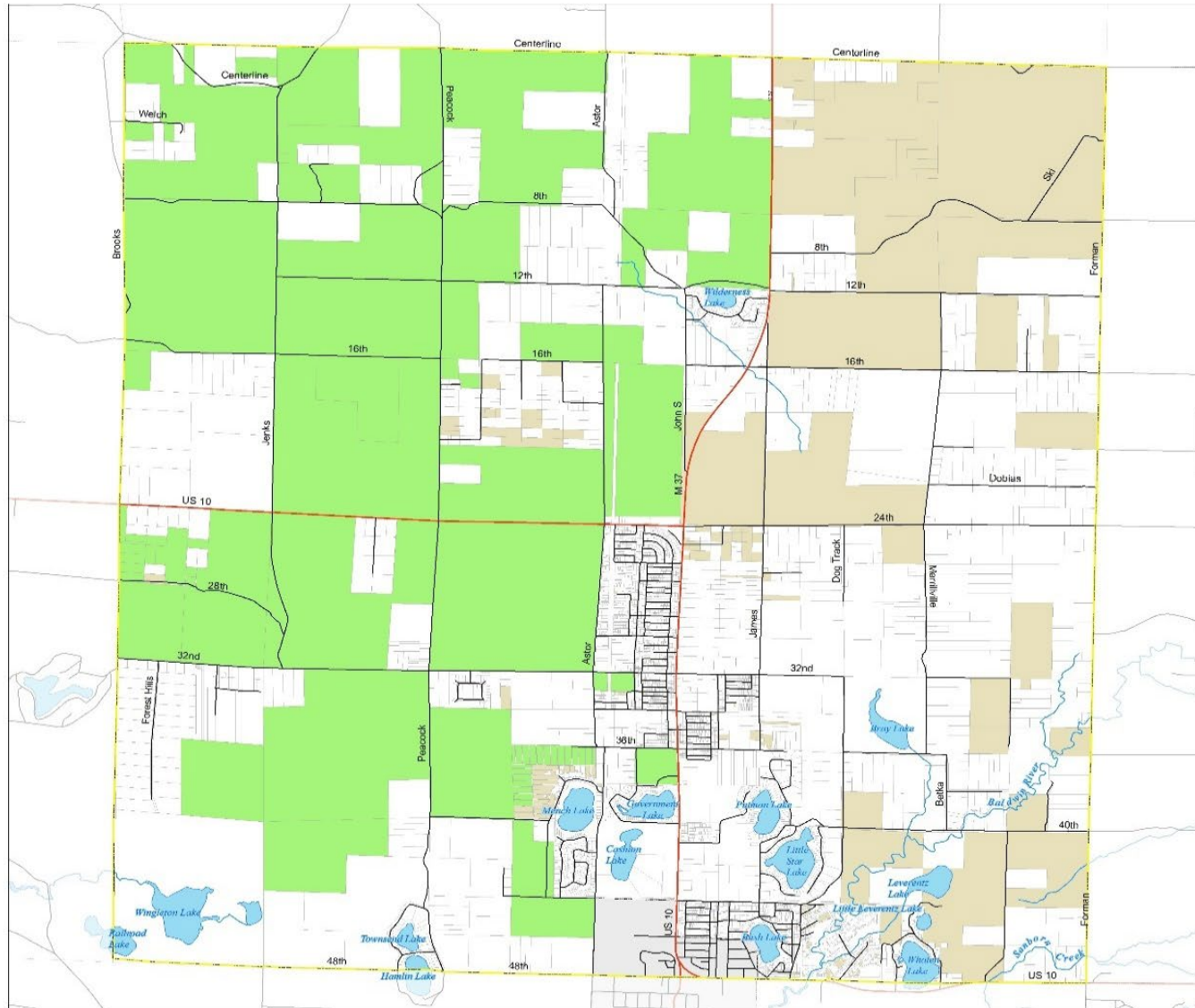
## **Community Description**

Webber Township is a rural northern Michigan community characterized by inland water bodies and prominent State and federal forests. About 89% of the Township is classified as open lands or woodlands. Much of this land is under State or federal control for the purposes of conservation and recreation, which ensures its long-term preservation.

The US Forest Service maintains almost one million acres of land as part of the Huron-Manistee National Forests, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources maintains an additional 63,500 acres as part of the Pere Marquette State Forest. These protected forestlands owned by DNR and the US Forest Service account for 10,400 acres of land in Webber Township, representing approximately 45% of the Township's total land area. These forests have historically been used for tree farming and passive recreation and help to define the Township's character. Map 1 on the following page generally depicts the extent of public forests in the Township.

Situated in Lake County, Webber Township is increasingly being discovered by tourists seeking to enjoy the small-town charm of Baldwin and the various fishing, hunting and other recreational opportunities in surrounding rural townships. In addition, Webber Township features several lakes that provide substantial recreational and aesthetic value for residents and visitors. Named lakes account for a cumulative surface area of 291 acres, and several are encompassed within the State and federal forestlands.

Map I. State and Federal Forestland in Webber Township



# Webber Township

Lake County, Michigan

## Legend

- Pere Marquette State Forest
- Manistec National Forest

\* This Wetlands Inventory Map is intended to be used as one tool to assist in identifying wetlands and provide only potential and approximate locations of wetlands and wetland conditions.

This map is not intended to be used to determine specific locations and jurisdictional boundaries of wetland areas subject to regulation under part 303 Wetlands Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. Only an on-site evaluation performed by MDEQ in accordance with Part 303 shall be used for jurisdictional determination. A permit is required from the MDEQ to conduct certain activities in jurisdictional wetlands.

1 inch = 1,500 feet



**Williams & Works**

**SECTION 2. UPDATE OF COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Sections 2, 3 and 5 of the 2005 Land Use Plan present the “profile” of Webber Township. Data and analysis on population trends, housing, transportation, land use and other matters are discussed in enough detail to offer a “snapshot” impression of the community. This Chapter will provide updates to that information, where such information is available and necessary to evaluate the relevancy of the 2005 Plan’s policies in 2018.

**Population Change**

With 2015 Five-Year American Community Survey estimates being recently published, it is appropriate to review the overall trends in population change. Population and demographic changes are among the most important measures to express growth or decline and its likely impact on existing and planned land uses in a community.

Since 1970, the Census indicates that the population of Webber Township has grown from 614 to 1,485 people in 2015, a 142% increase. Figure 1 illustrates that the Township experienced a large influx of residents between 1990 and 2000 growing from 930 to 1,875 people or by 102% during the 1990s. Between 2000 and 2015, however, the Township experienced a decline in population and lost about 21% of its population or nearly 400 residents.

Figure 2 compares the population change in Webber Township between 1970 and 2015 to that of neighboring communities. Even though Webber Township is the only community with a population decline between 2000 and 2010, Peacock and Webber townships experienced the greatest overall percentage increase of residents between 1970 and 2010 overall. As Figure 2 illustrates, this is likely because of Webber Township’s rapid growth in the 1990s, which offsets

the more recent decline when calculating long-term change. In addition, Figure 2 also shows that all of Webber Township’s neighbors have seen fairly strong growth overall within the past 40 years.

Figure 1. Population Change in Webber Township, 1970-2015

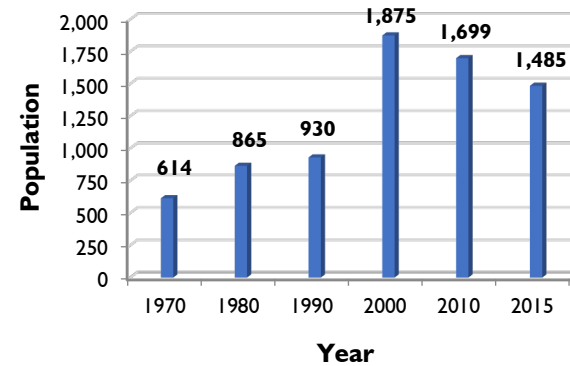
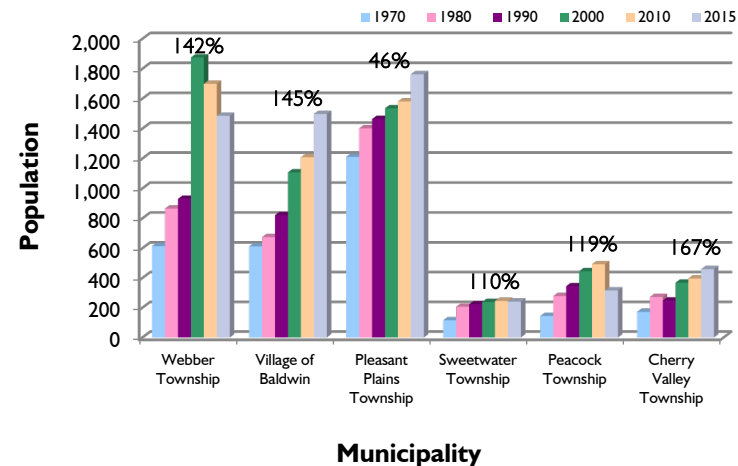


Figure 2. Comparative Rates of Population Change



To further compare population change in Webber Township to other communities in Lake County, Table 1 to the right lists Lake County municipalities and shows population change in those areas between 2010 and 2015. Table 1 also shows the population of Lake County and Michigan overall during the same time period. The table illustrates that Webber Township (excluding the Village of Baldwin) saw the largest population decline in the County during the last half decade. Table 1 also indicates that, despite the strong growth rate in some townships, declines in other areas of the County resulted in a relatively modest overall rate of decline for the County of 1.0%.

**Population Projections**

To estimate future population change, statistical averaging techniques were employed to project the Township’s likely population to the year 2030. These techniques may be helpful and offer one perspective, but are intended to provide a very general sense of future change.

Future growth trends may not parallel historical statistical trends in communities such as Webber Township that have experienced rapid rates of development, in part because developable acreage has been consumed over time. This is especially true in Webber Township, where a substantial amount of land area is owned by the State and federal governments for recreational and preservation purposes.

The following generalizations are limited in scope and are based on past trends documented by the United States Census Bureau and Webber Township staff. These projections for the Township have implications pertaining to future land use, the demand for various public services and capital improvements.

Table 1. Population Change in Lake County Communities, 2010 – 2015			
Jurisdiction	2010	2015	2010-2015
	Revised Count	Estimates	Percentage Change
Michigan	9,883,640	9,900,571	+0.2%
<b>Lake County</b>	<b>11,539</b>	<b>11,426</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>
Baldwin village (total)	1,208	1,497	+23.9%
Chase Township	1,137	1,144	+0.6%
Cherry Valley Township	396	459	+15.9%
Dover Township	395	444	+12.4%
Eden Township	487	606	+24.4%
Elk Township	985	896	-9.0%
Luther village (total)	318	292	-8.2%
Ellsworth Township (incl. village)	817	761	-6.9%
Balance of Ellsworth Township	697	667	-4.3%
Luther village (pt.)	120	94	-21.7%
Lake Township	862	715	-17.1%
Newkirk Township (incl. village)	632	699	+10.6%
Balance of Newkirk Township	434	501	+15.4%
Luther village (pt.)	198	198	+0.0%
Peacock township	492	316	-35.8%
Pinora township	717	761	+6.1%
Pleasant Plains Township (incl. village)	1,581	1,763	+11.5%
Baldwin village (pt.)	560	851	+52.0%
Balance of Pleasant Plains Township	1,021	912	-10.7%
Sauble Township	333	330	-0.9%
Sweetwater Township	245	241	-1.6%
Webber Township (incl. village)	1,699	1,485	-12.6%
Baldwin village (pt.)	648	646	-0.3%
<b>Balance of Webber Township</b>	<b>1,051</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>-20.2%</b>
Yates township	761	733	-3.7%

**Growth Rate Method**

This model assumes that the amount of population will increase over a period of time at the same percentage as previous growth rates. Webber Township grew at an annualized rate of 1.98% each year between 1970 and 2015. Under this method, the population would continue to grow at this rate in the future.

	Average Annual Growth Rate 1970 - 2015	2015 Population	Projection 2025	Projection 2035
Webber Township	1.98%	1,485	1,807	2,199

**Ratio Method**

This model assumes that Webber Township will maintain the same percentage of Lake County’s population in future years, which was 13.0% in 2015. According to estimates prepared by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, the County’s population is forecasted to be 11,435 in 2025 and 11,476 in 2035. Using this method, if the Township continued to account for 13.0% of the County, it would have the following population.

	2015 Population	Projection 2025	Projection 2035
Lake County	11,426	11,435	11,476
Webber Township	1,485	1,487	1,492

**Arithmetic Method**

This method assumes that the growth experienced in previous decades will continue into the future. From 1970 to 2015, the Township gained 871 persons or about 19.4 per year. Using this annual increase, it is possible to extrapolate the following.

	Average Annual Increase (Number of Persons)	2015 Population	Projection 2025	Projection 2035
Webber Township	19.4	1,485	1,679	1,872

**Building Permit Method**

The building permit method projects population based on current building permit data. It was determined that the Township has issued an average of about 5 residential building permits annually since the beginning of 2006 for new homes.

Assuming that the building activity will continue at this average rate, and utilizing the Township’s average household size of 2.12 persons (2015 American Community Survey), future population figures can be estimated. This method predicts that the Township will increase by approximately 10.2 persons per year.

	Average No. of Permits/ Year <sup>(1)</sup>	Pph <sup>(2)</sup>	2015 Population	Projection 2025	Projection 2035
Webber Township	5	2.12	1,485	1,801	1,903

<sup>(1)</sup> Based on building permit data provided by the Township.  
<sup>(2)</sup> Pph - Persons per household as per 2015 ACS.

To overcome some of the limitations of each of the projection techniques, the results from the four tables may be averaged. The following table presents the average of each of the four techniques with a resulting average set of projections.

**Table 2. Population Projection Summary**

	2015	Projection	
	Population	2025	2035
Growth Rate Method	1,845	1,807	2,199
Ratio Method	1,845	1,679	1,872
Arithmetic Method	1,845	1,487	1,492
Building Permit Method	1,845	1,801	1,903
<b>Average</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>1,945</b>	<b>2,243</b>

**Potential Impact of Correctional Facility**

Many communities in Michigan, and the State overall, have experienced population decline over the last decade, which is primarily attributed to the recent economic downturn. Nonetheless, the presence of a potentially viable prison facility in Webber Township has the prospect of bringing new growth to the community.

It has been estimated that the former Youth Prison in Webber Township has the potential to bring 500 new jobs to the community. When the former Youth Prison closed, it was estimated that about 56% of the employees that were laid off were residents of Lake County. Extrapolating that percentage to the number of potential employees yields an estimate of about 280 additional households that would take up residence in Lake County if the facility were to ever become fully operating. Webber Township comprised 13.0% of the estimated population of Lake County in 2015, and using extrapolation it can be estimated that about 37 households may be added to the Township if

the facility were to ever become fully operating. However, plans for the correctional facility and any likely spinoff economic development are unclear at this time.

**Housing Change**

Mimicking overall population declines, Table 3 illustrates that the number of housing units in the Township decreased by 2.3% in the past decade, from 1,513 units to 1,478 units, according to the Census and American Community Survey estimates. While total number of housing units decreased modestly between 2010 and 2015, the number of vacant housing units increased by approximately 11% and seasonal units were estimated to have dramatically increased to 882 units, or a 51% increase, in 2015. This coincides with the Township’s population decrease.

**Table 3. Housing Characteristics**

	2010	2015	% Change
Total housing units	1,513	1,478	-2.3%
Occupied housing units	638	539	-15.5%
Vacant housing units	849 (56.1%)	939 (63.5%)	10.6%
Vacant / seasonal units	583 (38.5%)	882 (59.7%)	51.3%

**Income**

While many communities across the state, as well as the state as a whole, have continued to rebound after the recent economic recessionary period, Webber Township and several communities in Lake County have not enjoyed that trend. Table 4 shows the change in median household income between 2010 and 2015. Median household income figures declined for Webber Township between 2010 and 2015 from \$20,893 in 2010 to \$18,885 in 2015. Webber Township’s decline of approximately 10% is comparable to many adjacent communities with

the except of Sweetwater Township. Incomes for Lake County and the communities within have historically been far below state income figures. Median household income in Webber Township in 2015 was less than one-fifth of median household income for the State of Michigan and only 62% of the County as a whole.

Table 4. Median Household Income, 2010 - 2015

	2010	2015	% Change
<b>Webber Township</b>	<b>\$20,893</b>	<b>\$18,885</b>	<b>-9.6%</b>
Village of Baldwin	\$16,979	\$15,625	-8.0%
Pleasant Plains Township	\$26,906	\$23,482	-12.7%
Sweetwater Township	\$26,458	\$30,893	16.8%
Peacock Township	\$35,625	\$31,964	-10.3%
Cherry Valley Township	\$36,429	\$32,250	-11.5%
Lake County	\$31,205	\$30,439	-2.5%
State of Michigan	\$48,432	\$49,576	2.4%

## Employment

Educational services, health care and social assistance stands as the primary employment sector in the Township with 22% of the employed population aged 16 years and older working in this field. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services is another major industry employing 14.4% of the employed population. Manufacturing and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing are additional major employment sectors as well employing 13.4% each.

Table 5. Employment by Industry

	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	7	2.5%
Construction	27	9.7%
Manufacturing	37	13.4%
Wholesale trade	1	0.4%
Retail trade	26	9.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5	1.8%
Information	3	1.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	37	13.4%
Professional, scientific, management, and administrative	0	0.0%
Educational service, health care and social assistance	61	22.0%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	40	14.4%
Other service	10	3.6%
Public administration	23	8.3%



**SECTION 3. VISION STATEMENTS AND GOALS**

A result of the effort to update the Land Use Plan is a series of vision statements, each supported by more specific goals. This Plan is rooted in the vision statements, which form the policy foundation of the Plan. The vision statements are intended to describe the desired end state of the Township within about a 10-year period, or so. While the vision statements are intentionally general, they are thought to be attainable if the more specific goals are achieved.

The vision statements define the values and vision the Plan must support. The vision statements define a desired end, are stated in positive terms, are bold but realistic, and reflect a consensus. The goals can be thought of as action steps or milestones along the way to achieving the vision.

Section 6 of the 2005 Land Use Plan lists goals and policies, which have been reviewed and updated with the following vision statements and goals which supersede those in the 2005 Plan.

**Open Space, Natural Feature, and Farmland Preservation**

**Vision Statement**

*Webber Township will boast vast open spaces, natural features, and productive and economically viable farmland for years to come.*

**Goals:**

1. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to permit approval of a planned unit development with open space that is non-contiguous with the developed portion of the planned unit development, where appropriate, to foster the permanent protection of contiguous tracts of open space.
2. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit conventional subdivisions via special land use in the residential districts, and include design standards for the retention of open space along main roadways.
3. Evaluate the need for a water feature overlay zoning district and other natural feature preservation techniques; and incorporate into the Zoning Ordinance if appropriate.
4. Explore alternative zoning solutions that protect farmland from the encroachment of development and minimize the fragmentation of agriculturally-productive land. Approaches may include fixed area ratio zoning, which allows one dwelling unit at a density standard with a maximum lot area to allow a farmer to sell lots while minimizing the impact on farmland; and sliding-scale zoning, which allows comparatively more nonfarm dwellings to be subdivided from smaller parcels than larger parcels, to help keep the integrity of larger farms intact.
5. Work with adjacent townships, the County, and others on publicizing, and being a resource for landowners interested in,

methods to preserve farmland, such as easements and Farmland Development Rights (formerly PA 116) Agreements.

6. Promote the standards of the Natural Rivers Act and other requirements, in relation to the preservation of water quality.
7. Partner with local and regional entities and legislators in investigating enactment of a local transfer of development rights program, to preserve designated agricultural land and open space while facilitating development in certain areas. Work with lawmakers to craft legislation, if transfer of development rights is deemed effective and practical.

**Tourism**

**Vision Statement**

*Webber Township will be home to an increased tourism industry rooted in the unique rural and natural character of the community and a growing recreation culture.*

**Goals:**

1. Support current efforts and encourage additional programs from the Lake County Chamber of Commerce, the West Michigan Tourist Association, and other entities in the promotion of the community, local events, agricultural tourism, and amenities.
2. Establish a Township website and/or work with the County on expanding and improving the County website, to ensure that potential tourists can easily access information on what Webber Township has to offer.
3. Review the Zoning Ordinance and amend it, as appropriate, to remove obstacles to land uses that may bring visitors to the community, such as bed and breakfasts, museums, art studios, period hotels, unique agricultural tourism establishments, etc.
4. Facilitate a discussion among local farmers, business owners, and others to define needs and to foster leadership and capacity in expansion of local agricultural tourism offerings and to link potential attractions in the Township with other amenities in the area.
5. Implement the objectives and Action Program of the Five-Year Recreation Plan, which includes plans for local and regional trails and other initiatives, in an effort to improve non-motorized mobility and increase connections to natural features.

**Economic Development**

**Vision Statement**

*Webber Township will develop a strategy for attracting businesses and increasing employment opportunities while striking a balance between the area’s cherished rural character and recreational resources.*

**Goals:**

1. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the minimum required front yard setback for commercial zones, to help facilitate development.
2. Explore the viability of the establishment of a recycling center, which would likely be privately managed. Locate the facility in an industrial area and buffer it from surrounding uses.
3. Work with neighboring communities and possibly a Northern Michigan college (so students can perform the work) in the completion of a market study to determine service gaps, identify potential businesses and tenants, and outline strategies for success. Implement the recommendations of the market study, if feasible.
4. Work with the County Brownfield Authority to ensure that any eligible or applicable properties in the Township become part of the Authority’s redevelopment plan.
5. Review existing available development incentives and potential grants geared toward assisting small businesses and develop systems to promote their use locally.
6. Continue to monitor infrastructure needs and to evaluate the need for water and sewer in areas planned for commercial and industrial use.

**Community Character**

**Vision Statement**

*Webber Township will establish its brand as a preferred community in which to live, work, and play, enhancing its unique ability to offer all three ideals in one place.*

**Goals:**

1. Encourage policies that strengthen and continue to foster the rural feel of the area.
2. Promote high-quality, well-maintained, and attractive commercial areas and residential neighborhoods through fair and clear zoning ordinances and sensible enforcement.
3. Contemplate amending the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate site design standards for commercial uses. Standards could include stipulating that certain outdoor lighting be turned off when not needed to maintain the community’s night skies, and other requirements intended to keep development from undermining the rural nature of the community.
4. Work with MDOT in crafting an access management plan and subsequent zoning language that requires adjacent properties to share driveways and service drives, to avoid the proliferation of curb-cuts along M-37/US-10. At the very least, amend the Zoning Ordinance to require a minimum distance between driveways and between driveways and intersections and require that adjacent parking lots be connected.
5. Promote housing rehabilitation programs in the community, such as Fivecap and True North; and work with the County to ensure that homes in Webber Township are renovated under the County’s CDBG Home Rehabilitation Program.

**Communication and Cooperation**

**Vision Statement**

*Webber Township will benefit from nurturing cooperative and productive communication within the community and with neighboring jurisdictions for the advantage of the overall region.*

**Goals:**

1. Look for ways to promote joint service delivery and a more consistent means of communication with the Village of Baldwin and neighboring townships. Contemplate strengthening mutual aid agreements, where necessary.
2. Explore the formation of a joint planning committee to address issues of mutual interest and establish such a committee if feasible and helpful.
3. Continue and strengthen inter-governmental dialogue and cooperation with neighboring communities on pertinent matters by sponsoring community issue forums.
4. Maintain and improve ongoing communication with the Road Commission to help foster superior road quality.
5. Promote the establishment of stronger connections with area churches, businesses, school districts, and other entities to develop and support programs that advance children and young adults.
6. Encourage cooperative and productive communication with the residents of Webber Township, neighboring jurisdictions, and local and regional agencies for the benefit of the Township and region.

**SECTION 4. FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN**

The future land use framework is a compilation of descriptions and recommendations for future development and conservation in Webber Township. It serves as an overall framework for the management and regulation of future development and also serves as the basis for evaluating rezoning requests.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, specifically gives a Township Planning Commission the authority to prepare and officially adopt a Plan. When prepared, officially adopted, and maintained, the Plan should provide an advisory guide for the physical conservation of certain areas and for the development of other areas into the best possible living environment for present and future residents.

This section of the Land Use Plan update builds upon the goals and objectives and translates the Township’s vision into a future land use plan for physical development, improvement, and open space preservation. In addition, a zoning plan is provided, which relates the future land use categories to the current zoning districts of the Township, as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Planning is guiding land uses from a policy standpoint, while zoning is the act of regulating the use of land by ordinance or law. The future land use map, Map 2, and the supporting narrative below, is meant to be a guide for the Township as it contemplates rezoning and development applications. Map 2 is not a zoning map; but it will guide rezoning decisions along with the zoning plan.

**Future Land Use Designations**

**Agricultural**

The Agricultural future land use designation is meant to accommodate farming activities and agricultural uses. While agricultural operations are not a predominant land use in the Township, they contribute to its rural character and this designation seeks to encourage farmers to continue operating in the community. Non-farm development within these areas should be small-scale and relatively limited.

Future extension of water and sewer into these areas is not contemplated over the life of this Plan. Densities should therefore be low. Residential densities should be no greater than one dwelling unit per two acres. Furthermore, development that does occur should be considerate of natural features and should maintain rural views along roadways. Home sites that are clustered to maintain open space on the balance of a development site are encouraged, while home sites and driveways strung along country roads are discouraged.

**Natural Rivers Protection**

The Natural Rivers Protection designation is intended to protect the natural rivers in Webber Township, which are located in the southeast portion of the community. These areas include lands within 200 feet of the Baldwin River and some of its tributaries and Sanborn Creek. Lands within this designation may be used for a variety of low-impact purposes consistent with the Forest Residential and Recreation designations, although the Township must carefully review building plans and carefully monitor the locations of buildings and structures to minimize impervious surfaces that can contribute to nonpoint source pollution of these important natural features.

The Township should also consider enacting regulations related to protection areas, which would require that land adjacent to sensitive bodies of water be protected with planted materials to prevent soil erosion and degradation of the shoreline.

**Forest Residential & Recreational**

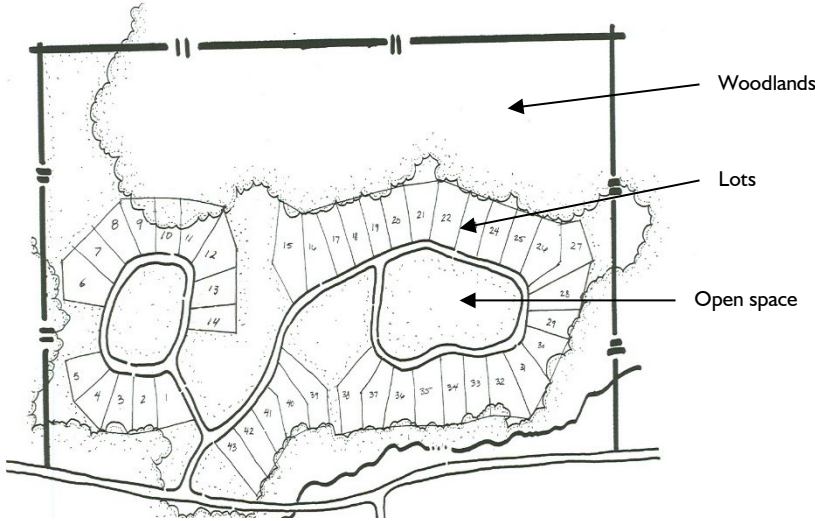
Forest Residential & Recreational is one of the broadest future land use designations and is established in recognition of the unique transitional nature of parts of the Township. This area of the Township includes private residential lands interspersed with over 10,400 acres of protected State and federal lands, along with some agricultural properties. The forests host many unique wildlife and ecological areas that are key to the character of the Township and are characterized by large corridors of mature woodland, undeveloped inland lake shoreline, wetlands, and other sensitive natural features.

In addition, the Township Park, State campgrounds and two privately-owned campgrounds fall within the Forest Residential & Recreational future land use designation. All of these lands are a vital component to the Township’s rural identity and livelihood and a key element of this Plan is to preserve such lands so that future generations may continue to enjoy the benefits of a well-preserved natural environment.

The primary goal of this designation is to foster the preservation of agricultural and forested lands while permitting low-density development and low-impact recreational uses. Sizeable undeveloped parcels exist, but most residential properties in the Forest Residential & Recreational areas range from approximately 10 acres to 40 acres in land area. Development that does occur should be considerate of natural features and should maintain rural views along roadways. Home sites that are clustered to maintain open space on the balance of

a development site are encouraged, while home sites and driveways strung along country roads are discouraged.

While much of this land is in public ownership, several properties are owned by private individuals or enterprises. This Plan encourages the continuation of privately-owned establishments which provide open space preservation, agricultural, and/or recreational amenities, but where development will occur, lands may experience low-density development integrated with the key natural features of the site. The intent is that recreation facilities stay in recreational use, but if development were to occur, it should meet the intent of the land use and rural preservation policies of the Plan and follow the predominant future land use designation surrounding the property.



Residential developments should be designed around the natural features and scenic open spaces of a site.

**Medium Density Residential**

This Land Use Plan update is intended to preserve the rural character of the community, but must recognize that demand for new residential development may increase in the future. The Medium Density Residential designation has been prepared in recognition of historic development patterns and the probable long-term future demand for family-oriented, single-family neighborhoods. It is anticipated that new development in these areas will result in attractive, walkable and inviting single-family communities of lasting value.

New development should be mindful of natural features, such as large expanses of woodlands, water features and scenic vistas. This Plan encourages new developments to be designed as open space communities, with single-family lots gathered around large expanses of green space. Open space communities can protect valuable environmental and aesthetic features which support the rural character of the Township. Conventional subdivisions that do not preserve open space may be permitted as special land uses, with standards that require landscape buffers to filter the view from major roads. Additionally, new development should provide sidewalks and walking trails to promote pedestrian safety, walkability, and interconnection between neighboring developments. New developments should extend from existing street networks, where possible, and provide functional connections.

Medium Density Residential areas have been planned adjacent to the Village and near existing development, to protect outlying areas of the Township from development, and are located in areas that may be most conveniently served with any extended water and sewer service. The predominant land use in the Medium Density Residential land use designation will be single-family dwellings at a density of approximately two to five dwelling units per acre.

**High Density Residential**

The High Density Residential designation encourages open space developments that preserve natural features, designed in such a manner as to retain those features as a buffer along the main roadway. Overall densities should be no greater than approximately five dwelling units per acre. Open space should be positioned to preserve pastoral views along roadways and to protect the most significant natural features within the development site. Pedestrian amenities and street trees should be incorporated into any developments.

The High Density Residential classification primarily accommodates single-family homes, but two-family, multiple-family and manufactured housing communities may also be contemplated. This designation also recognizes that a senior housing community in the Township is desirable. However, the Township is not served adequately by water and sewer and intense developments generally require such services. The Township seeks to protect groundwater quality and public health, and accordingly, multiple-family, manufactured housing or other intense developments are not appropriate at this time without public utilities. Nevertheless, if a comprehensive utility system is provided at some time in the future, the Plan will be updated and such residential uses may be found to be suitable at that time in appropriate locations near similar development.

**Limited Commercial**

The purpose of the Limited Commercial future land use designation is to perpetuate accommodation of establishments offering goods and services to residents. Desired uses include retail, personal service establishments, restaurants, financial institutions, professional offices, and similar uses. Developments should generally be of a smaller scale compared to the Commercial designation, and large-scale commercial

developments are not anticipated, as regional shopping destinations exist in nearby Baldwin or in other larger communities within about an hour's drive.

New Development should reflect the community's unique rural character and should depart from chain-store "box" styling to avoid a cluttered appearance along the corridor. Building facades should be constructed of high-quality materials to portray an aesthetic of permanence. Attractive landscaping, ground-mounted and low-profile signage, and efficient site illumination are encouraged in this area.

Additionally, mixed land uses, such as residential or offices over retail uses, or live-work units and similar arrangements are appropriate in the limited commercial designation, particularly on parcels that are too small for typical commercial development. This plan encourages creativity and flexibility in allowing sensible low-intensity development on these areas to encourage entrepreneurship in the Township.

Site access should be coordinated with neighboring properties to minimize traffic conflict points and to foster a safe environment for vehicular turning movements. This may be accomplished with shared access and connected parking lots and by requiring relatively large distances between street intersections and commercial driveways, where feasible.

This future land use designation is intended for properties fronting the eastern side of M-37/US-10 from the Township-Village boundary to Government Lake, on the western side of M-37/US-10 from 36<sup>th</sup> Street to 24<sup>th</sup> Street, and fronting US-10 from M-37 to just east of Astor Road.

### **Commercial**

The Commercial future land use designation represents the desire to enhance existing commercial properties along M-37/US-10, and has been expanded to promote economic development in the Township. Similar to the Limited Commercial designation, architectural detail should be designed in a way as to avoid cluttered commercial appearance. High-quality building materials should be used for building facades, and site access should be coordinated with adjacent properties to minimize traffic conflicts.

Mixed land uses, such as residential or offices over retail uses, or live-work units and similar arrangements are appropriate in the commercial designation, particularly on parcels that are too small for typical commercial development. This plan encourages creativity and flexibility in allowing sensible low-intensity development on these areas to encourage entrepreneurship in the Township.

The Commercial land use designation is reserved for properties fronting M-37/US-10 to the east from just south of 36<sup>th</sup> Street to 24<sup>th</sup> Street and along the north side of US-10 to just east of Astor Street.

### **Resort**

The Resort future land use category is intended for areas which provide for recreation opportunities that harmonious with the development pattern of the Township. Desired uses include hotels, motels, parks, private recreation and fraternal clubs and organizations, campgrounds, and outdoor recreational facilities.

There are two locations in the Township which fall under this category, the Cloud Nine Resort on the east side of M-37/US-10 south of Ann Street, and a parcel at the southwest intersection of 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Dog Track Road.



**Light Industrial**

This Plan encourages light industrial development in only a few locations. Light industrial development is generally not believed to be compatible with the Township's natural character and industrial parks exist in nearby communities with substantial vacant industrial land available. Webber Township does not seek to provide competing light industrial space.

Light Industrial areas will be characterized by low-impact land uses, such as professional offices, research and development facilities, warehousing and distribution centers, light manufacturing, medical marijuana activities, etc. Development in the Light Industrial designation should be clustered in business park settings, or otherwise master planned and configured to foster shared driveways and coordinated access; individual curb-cuts to major roads for each site, as an example, is not suitable. Low-impact land uses will be coupled with generous landscaping to help buffer the uses from any adjacent residential uses. Properties will be well-maintained and free of outdoor storage, debris and clutter. Adverse impacts such as noise, dust, odors, and similar effects should be minimized.

**Zoning Plan**

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

In considering a request to rezone property in Webber Township, the Planning Commission shall consider the future land use map and the future land use descriptive narrative of this Plan. The succeeding table shall be used to evaluate the degree to which the proposed rezoning is, or may be, consistent with this Plan together with an evaluation of the specific request. The proposed rezoning decision shall also consider whether the proposed site may be reasonably used as it is currently zoned, whether the proposed site is an appropriate location for any and all of the land uses that might be permitted within the requested zoning district, whether there may be other locations in the community that are better suited to accommodate such uses and any potential detrimental impact on the surrounding property that could result from the proposed rezoning.

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

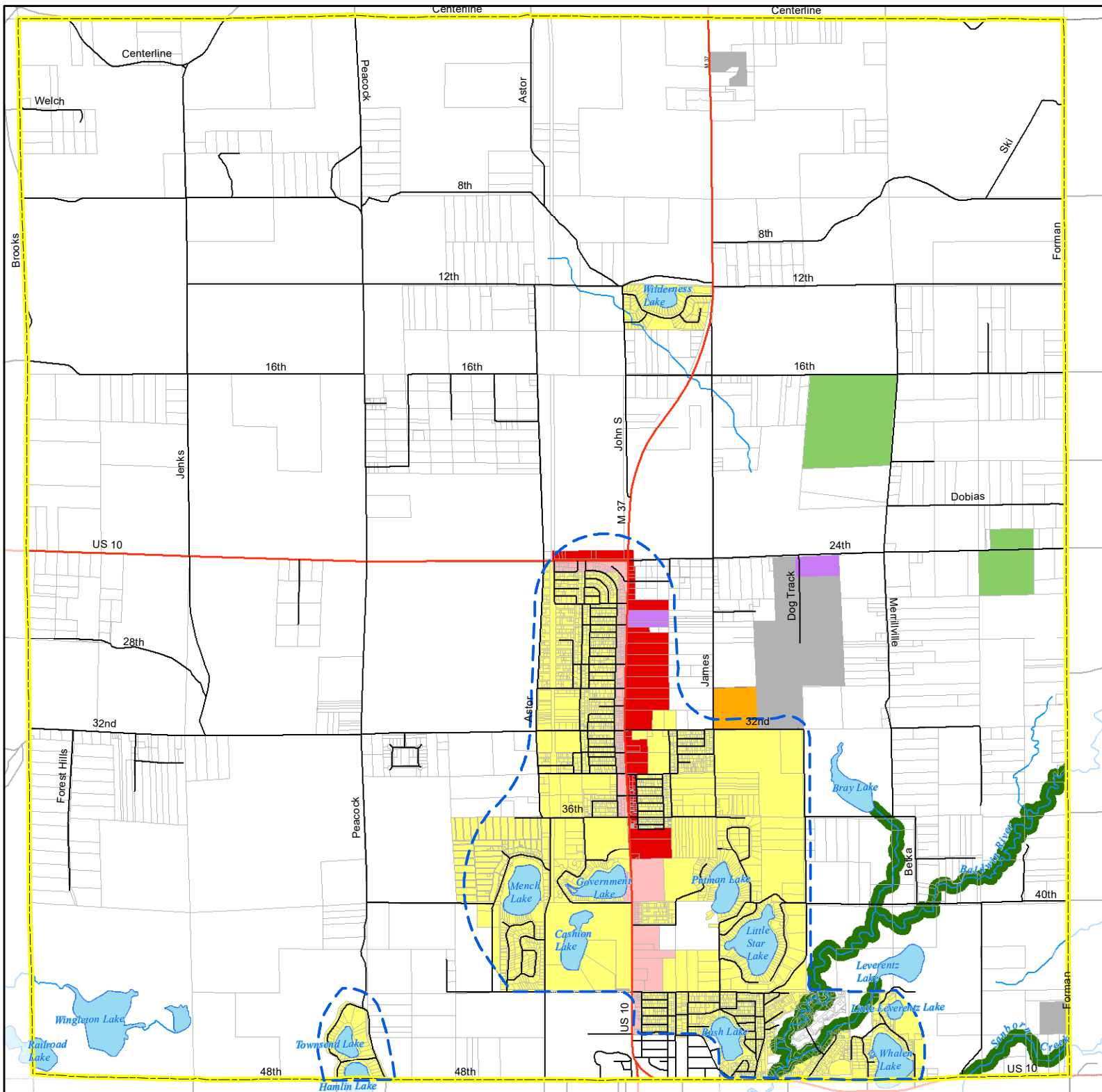
Table 6. Zoning Plan

Future Land Use Categories	Supporting and Compatible Zoning Districts	Additional Potentially Compatible Zoning Districts	Evaluation Factors and Features to Determine Eligibility for Additional Potentially Compatible Zoning Districts
Agricultural	Agriculture	None	
Forest Residential & Recreation	Recreational	None	
Medium Density Residential	Residential II	None	
High Density Residential	Residential I	Mobile Home Park	If public water and sewer is provided and new development includes open space and pedestrian amenities and is formed into a walkable community; and if compatible with and similar to adjacent land uses
Limited Commercial	Limited Commercial	None	
Commercial	Commercial	None	
Resort	Resort	None	
Light Industrial	Light Industrial	None	

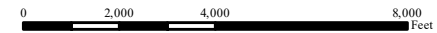
## Map 2 Future Land Use

### Legend

- Forest Residential & Recreation
- Agricultural
- Natural Rivers Protection
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Limited Commercial
- Commercial
- Resort
- Light Industrial
- Utility Service Extension Area



1 inch = 4,000 feet



**SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY**

The Master Plan update must be implemented if it is to serve as an effective guide for the Township. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Webber Township Board, the Planning Commission, and Township staff. The Plan can be implemented through ordinances, administrative procedures and other policy frameworks. This section describes the most important steps to take in implementing this Plan and should be used in conjunction with the goals and objectives.

Many of the strategies presented in this Section will be long-term in nature and in many instances, entities in addition to Webber Township will need to cooperate in order to fully implement it. In other instances, Webber Township's role is that of facilitator, marketer, or coordinator. Some of the approaches outlined below will require public and private expenditure. While a few of the Plan's policies are challenging and ambitious, they will be feasible with the commitment of the Township, property owners, residents, businesses, and regional entities.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

This Plan recommends a review of the Zoning Ordinance to identify zoning requirements inconsistent with the policies in this Plan. The Zoning Ordinance will be the primary implementation mechanism to achieve the land use goals of the Plan. Other ordinances that influence the physical environment should also be reviewed with regard to the goals, objectives and future land use framework.

Although the Township's Zoning Ordinance was recently rewritten, the document is still in draft form and a comprehensive audit should be conducted. The zoning plan on page 14 attempts to correlate the future land use designations with existing zoning districts, but in some cases,

new, consolidated or modified zoning districts may be found to be more analogous with the future land use designations. This Plan encourages a review of permitted densities in the various districts, permitted uses, and other requirements to look for ways to simplify the Zoning Ordinance.

The following summarizes many of the changes that may need to be contemplated, although other amendments to the Zoning Ordinance may also be helpful. The following recommendations, at a minimum, should be explored:

- A. The Zoning Ordinance should be revised to allow approval of a planned unit development with open space that is non-contiguous with the balance of the planned unit development. This flexibility can result in larger, connected areas of protected open land.
- B. Conventional subdivisions can be permitted as a special land use, with standards in place that require a specific amount of open space be kept free from development along the roadway to maintain a natural vegetative buffer. Standards should encourage developers to take vegetation, topography and other features into consideration during site layout.
- C. The need for a water feature overlay district should be evaluated, and said district should be included in the Ordinance if necessary to help protect critical features. In addition, a new district or new provisions that permit multiple-family residential uses under specific conditions may be incorporated into the Ordinance, to help facilitate the development of senior housing.
- D. In addition, some zoning districts in the draft Zoning Ordinance may be consolidated to streamline use of the document, and to ensure that districts are sufficiently different to justify their application.

- E. The Zoning Ordinance may be amended to incorporate fixed area ratio zoning and sliding-scale zoning, in an effort to minimize farmland fragmentation.
- F. Given the objective of promoting tourism in the community, the Zoning Ordinance should be combed to identify any potential unreasonable restrictions on tourist-related land uses, to further encourage tourism-related activity. Examples include bed and breakfasts, museums, art studios, period hotels, unique agricultural tourism establishments and other uses. Uses should, however, be compatible with the rural character of the Township.
- G. The minimum required front yard setbacks in the two commercial districts may be reduced. This is recommended because many properties that fall within these districts are relatively shallow and the large setbacks may be an obstruction to development. However, with the potential for reduced front yard green space, it may be appropriate to evaluate the need for enhanced landscape standards.
- H. Design and performance standards related to commercial development may be incorporated into the ordinance. Standards should pertain to lighting and other features of a site, to ensure that the rural character of the Township is respected as development occurs.
- I. Access management standards should be contemplated, in conjunction with MDOT, for M-37/US-10 to maintain traffic flows, avoid the proliferation of driveways, and to help minimize conflicts with other motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- J. Subdivision ordinances should be amended to prohibit homes strung along country roads, to avoid excessive curb cuts in high-speed areas.
- K. The Township should amend the zoning ordinance to allow for alternative energy facilities in appropriate locations. Such facilities could be either small scale, private facilities intended to supplement electricity usage for a residence or larger scale facilities used for regional power generation.

**Utility Service Expansion Area**

The “utility service expansion area” shown on Map 2 represents the area where the Township anticipates water and sewer service at some time in the future. This area is the population center of the Township and to promote protection of groundwater resources and public health, an objective is to ultimately provide utility services.

Policies that direct the location of public water and sewer are an important growth control mechanism. Water and sewer would allow the community to direct new growth to the future utility expansion area; the Township will be in the strongest position to guide growth and development in accord with the Plan.

Policies that influence or control wastewater facilities can help to protect the quality of potable groundwater; and the integrity of water as a natural, aesthetic and recreational resource. Many neighborhoods that surround the lakes are relatively dense compared to other parts of the Township and are supported by septic systems. The Township should assess the impact of these septic systems on the sustainability of the lakes and implement feasible approaches to help protect the lakes from effluent and other pollution.

In order for this technique to be effective, the Township must develop mechanisms to evaluate the need for utilities in the community. This strategy contemplates a comprehensive approach to utility services including a capital plan for utility extensions and a utility service boundary, and a local rate structure, if feasible.

**Open Space, Natural Feature and Farmland Preservation**

The Michigan Department of Agriculture’s Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program includes several instruments that the Township can help to promote. The program also authorizes the Township to

participate in several methods to encourage the continuance of agricultural operations. Following are tools that should be endorsed and advertised by the Township, to the extent possible:

- A. **Transfer of Development Rights.** A transfer of development rights program would identify “sending zones” or areas to be preserved – such as agricultural lands and sensitive environmental areas – and “receiving zones” or planned development areas. The sending zones are areas where farmland and open space preservation is most important and the receiving zones are areas where development is appropriate, and may include other municipalities such as the Village of Baldwin. A program would permit a landowner to dissolve development rights from a property in a sending zone, and sell the rights to someone seeking to increase density in a development in a receiving zone.

Legal authority to establish a transfer of development rights program is unclear, as State enabling legislation has not been enacted. The Township may work with legislators to craft such legislation to promote transfer of development rights as an effective and viable means to preserve open space and farmland. As the Township explores the possibility of creating a program, procedures and regulations that govern the transfer of rights should be aligned to meet local objectives.

- B. **Farmland Development Rights Agreements.** This is a temporary, voluntary restriction on the land between the property owner and the State; which protects the agricultural use of the land in return for tax benefits and special assessment exemptions. This tool is commonly known as P.A. 116.
- C. **Purchase of Development Rights.** This is a permanent, voluntary restriction on the land between the property owner and the State that preserves the land for farming in exchange for a cash payment.

This State program is currently not funded, but may be in the future.

- D. Local Open Space Easement. These are also voluntary and temporary, but represent an agreement between the landowner and the Township; where certain tax benefits and exemptions from various assessments are made possible.
- E. Conservation Easement Donation. Conservation Easement Donations are permanent restrictions voluntarily entered into by the landowner between the landowner and the State; preserving the land for either farmland or open space.
- F. Designated Open Space Easement. This is a temporary, voluntary restriction on the land between the property owner and the State; which maintains the land as open space in return for tax benefits and special assessment exemptions.

**Complete Streets**

This Plan supports complete streets policy. Complete streets are thoroughfares that are planned, designed and constructed to allow access to all legal users safely and efficiently, without any one user taking priority over another. Users in Webber Township include pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, users of assistive devices, snowmobilers, and truck-drivers. Complete streets can result in increased safety for non-motorized users, improved public health, a cleaner environment, mobility equity and enhanced quality of life through increased modal choices and more inviting streets.

In addition, another key motivation to enact complete streets policies is that Michigan law encourages MDOT to give additional consideration to enhancement and other grant applicants with such policies. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act has also been amended to stipulate that transportation improvements be respectful of the

surrounding context, further ensuring that more equitable and attractive streets become reality.

The Township’s objective will be to work jointly with surrounding communities to promote healthy lifestyles for people of all abilities through the development of a non-motorized network. Suggested design elements may include sidewalks on both sides of a roadway or street; pedestrian signals and signage; bike lanes; local and regional multi-use trails, such as those planned for in the Five-Year Recreation Plan; and other features. Even though Webber Township is a rural community, these elements are feasible in many developed areas of the Township. More urban pedestrian features are not likely to occur in the community at this time.

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

**Water Quality**

Several significant lakes, streams and wetland areas exist within Webber Township and the natural functions of the water features should be maintained. The unique beauty and significant recreational value of these features is also critical to maintaining quality of life for many Township residents and the livelihood of the region, which is partly rooted in tourism associated with fishing in the area’s water features. To help ensure that water features in the community remain healthy and intact, the Township may consider the following strategies.

- A. The Township should evaluate the effectiveness of existing stormwater control mechanisms and contemplate additional or



more innovative methods to manage stormwater. The way stormwater is handled can affect water quality. Stormwater standards may be strengthened with requirements or incentives that promote conservation and use of existing natural site features in stormwater system design to reduce the quantity and velocity of runoff and to reduce pollutants. Webber Township has extensive natural areas which innately help to manage stormwater, but to help ensure that stormwater is managed as a resource, any new development should contemplate best practices such as bio-retention swales and permeable pavements. Best practices help to avoid large areas of pavement near a water body, which can cause runoff and pollution issues. New standards can require that natural features be preserved or recreated and impervious surfaces be minimized to the extent possible, to help ensure that runoff is reduced and processed naturally.

- B. The EPA Nine Elements approved watershed management plan process evaluates the condition of water features and prioritizes resource protection needs. The Nine Elements are guidelines used to develop effective watershed plans for threatened or impaired waters. Such a watershed management plan would involve working with neighboring communities, as appropriate, to follow the technical requirements of the EPA. Essentially, the planning process sets goals for water quality and identifies a process to meet them. Section 319, Nonpoint Source Management Program, of the Clean Water Act, can help provide funding through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for watershed planning and technical assistance.
- C. On a more local scale, if needed, the Township could employ its own analysis of individual lakes to define carrying capacity, or the number of boats or other watercraft that can be on the lake without being destructive to water quality and boater safety. This threshold

is related to many factors, including the size of the lake, its depth, its shape, bottom soils and bank characteristics, the number of homes on the lake and the extent of impervious surfaces, the degree of public access, and the number of visitors attracted to the lake. If Township residents wish to preserve carrying capacity and prevent excessive boating from degrading lake quality, an analysis of carrying capacity is a likely first step in evaluating current lake access policies; especially if the Bush Lake public access will be developed in the future. The process may include several steps, including an analysis of physical characteristics, development intensity and land uses, mooring activity, definition of the net traversable acreage of the lake, and a build-out analysis.

#### **Adhere to the Future Land Use Framework**

The Township should strive to make decisions that are in harmony with the future land use framework. Nevertheless, the policies of this Land Use Plan update should be viewed as flexible, and they should be revised as the character of the community changes over time. The Plan should be reviewed and periodically updated, as needed, at least once every five years to remain current and to meet statutory provisions. As stated in the description of the zoning plan on page 13, proposed land uses should be consistent with the future land use designations. However, the Planning Commission may determine that a proposed land use would not be consistent with the applicable future land use designation, but would not be incompatible with the underlying policies of the Plan, and would represent a logical extension of land use. It may therefore be a preferred alternative to the Plan, and the Plan may be amended accordingly.

**APPENDIX****Summary of Land Use Plan Update Open House****2012 Plan**

The purpose of the Land Use Plan Update Open House was to present final draft plans to the community and to provide an informal forum for additional participant comments on the creation of the plan. The Open House was noticed in a general circulation newspaper and conducted on August 15, 2011. Approximately 10 people participated.

The session included an overview of the entire plan. Large display-size presentation boards were placed around a meeting room, exhibiting the mapping, policies and background data of the plan for easy reference. In addition, copies of the plan were available for review at the meeting, as well as digital files for take-home.

Participants were encouraged to ask questions about the process and the plan's policies. Generally, input from participants was positive and relatively limited. Recommendations from participants pertained to the future land use designation of the prison facility, and the boundary of commercial future land use along M-37. The Planning Commission is committed to citizen input and contemplated the recommendations at a subsequent regular meeting and determined it to be in the best interest of the Township to support minor changes to the draft plan in response to public comment. Those changes are reflected in the plan.

**2018 Plan**

See following pages

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Webber Township Planning Commission  
**Date:** May 19, 2017  
**From:** Andy Moore, AICP  
**RE:** **Visioning Workshop Results**

Webber Township is in the process of updating its Land Use Plan to guide growth and development within the community. Citizen input is vitally important to the planning process, and the Township will be using this input to assist in reviewing and updating the Plan's land use policy statements. To this end, the Township held a visioning workshop to garner opinions of Township residents and business owners.

The event was conducted in one two-hour session at the Webber Township Hall located on Springtime Street on Thursday, April 27, 2017 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. A total of about 20 people participated in the event. The Township undertook an extensive campaign to advertise the meeting to the public. A press release was published in the Lake County Star, members of the Planning Commission personally invited a number of members, and flyers were posted in several locations in the community. The materials utilized to publicize the event are attached to the end of this memorandum.

The event was open to the public and intended to give community residents an opportunity to voice concerns about current land use and development trends, and the impact these trends may have on demographics, agriculture, aesthetics, open space, natural features and transportation in the Township. The meeting included a facilitated group discussion intended to aid participants in identifying and prioritizing the factors that may affect the quality of life in the Township immediately and in the next twenty years.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the process of the workshop and its results. In addition, this memorandum places the output from the Visioning Workshop in the broader context of the planning process.

The visioning activity was intended to develop a general consensus among the participants as to the likely result of a continuation of the current development trends in the Township, and what those trends may imply. This process will also assist the Planning Commission in articulating the values of Township residents. The information garnered from these activities will be significant to the later phases of the plan preparation process, as described later in this report.

**The Visioning Process.** The purpose of the Visioning Workshop included developing general consensus among the participants as to the likely result of continuation of current development trends, and generating potential solutions to perceived issues.

Williams & Works directed the workshops and facilitated group discussions. The atmosphere was open and informal, although the meetings followed an established format to assure a functional outcome. Refreshments and food were provided and participants were encouraged to engage the process to provide the Township with the benefit of their experience, expertise and perspectives. The visioning workshop was structured as follows:

1. **Welcome and Overview** The consultants from Williams & Works provided a brief introduction to the process and an overview explanation of how the results of the activity will be incorporated into the updated Webber Township Land Use Plan.
2. **Land Use Images.** In this activity, a series of slides were shown representing land use conditions common in Michigan communities. Participants used a sheet of paper to note their impressions of the scenes. When all of the slides were shown, Williams & Works led a general discussion of the images and the land use issues they may illustrate. The primary purpose of this activity was to help the participants begin to think about the multiple dimensions of land use, infrastructure and growth as a precursor for the visioning exercise. This activity also helped to “break the ice” among participants.

Several issues were raised in the context of these images, including the design of compact commercial developments, natural features, unplanned strip mall development and utilities. Community members noted that these issues are especially relevant to a visioning session since they will likely continue to impact the Township in the future.

3. **Visioning Exercise.** Due to the small number of participants, one large group discussion was held to discuss the most important opportunities and threats confronting Webber Township.

Members of each group were asked to contemplate their impression (or vision) of an “ideal” future for Webber Township and to individually list opportunities that support the realization of their “vision.” Conversely, they were also asked to individually list threats that might impede the realization of their vision. The facilitator then led a discussion in which participants shared their lists of opportunities and threats and a group list of all ideas was developed. Once the group list was prepared, the facilitators worked with the groups to identify common items and to further expand on the descriptions to be certain that all understood each item.

The group members then ranked the list by using colored stickers to identify the most important threats and the most important opportunities. The participants received two blue dots, two red dots, and two green dots. Each participant used the following ranking system:

Blue: Greatest importance, Numeric Rank = 3  
Red: Second most important, Numeric Rank = 2  
Green: Third most important, Numeric Rank = 1

This process forced participants to select among the numerous items on the list and focus on the items of greatest interest to them. By assigning a numeric value to the colored stickers, the facilitators used a simple sum of the responses to identify threats or opportunities of highest priority according to group rankings.

**Results.** The tables on the following page include the “Opportunities and Threats” input from the workshop. In each case, the “opportunity” or “threat” is listed as drafted by the group. The statements have been ranked according to total points received during the visioning exercise.

Finally, it is important to understand that because participants were forced to identify only the three most important listings on the opportunities and threats list, many of the items were not ranked. This does not mean that these items will be overlooked in the process. But it does mean that, relative to the other listings that were ranked, they may have a lower priority – at least in the minds of the participants of the workshop.

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Score</b>
Clean up junk	15
Tourism as business opportunity – attract them	15
Opportunities for self-employment & entrepreneurs	9
Affordable housing	5
Business/services for locals	5
Lakes/Streams for fishing/canoeing	3
Public recreation to attract new residents/visitors	3
Youth-centered activity; i.e. mini-golf	3
Redevelop old subdivisions	2
Resorts/campgrounds	2
Senior housing	2
Wide shoulders for bikes	2
Bike trails/sidewalks	1
Community center	1
Increased local events	1
Shops/gardens/trees	1
Expand water/sewer	0
Open spaces are plentiful	0
Streetscaping - M37	0

<b>Threats</b>	<b>Score</b>
Lack of community pride & participation	10
Too many rules, inflexibility	6
Lack of planning/zoning enforcement	6
Blight & no improvement or progress	6
Resistance to change	5
Lack of private money	4
Lack of natural gas	2
Too restrictive ordinances	2
Improper zoning districts	2
No internet	2
Existing business don't want competition	1
Unimproved roads	0

**Next Steps.** The next step is the review of vision statements and goals, which form the policy foundation of the Land Use Plan. The vision statements and goals are used to help guide land use decision-makers when faced with development requests. Vision statements and goals also lead toward implementation steps that may include amendments to different ordinances in the Township, as well as additional studies.

The vision statements are generally defined as a desired state or condition a community is striving to achieve. It should be fairly long-term in nature and yet within the reach of a community to attain. The vision statement should be reflective of the values and attitudes of the community; and, therefore, it should enjoy broad-based support. Generally, a vision statement should be stated in positive terms.

By contrast, the goal is often described as a milestone to achieving, or a sub-element of, the vision statement. Goals are more specific than vision statements and should have some measurable aspect so that progress toward the goal may be measured.

As the planning process proceeds, the Planning Commission will review the future land use map and narrative descriptions and implementation strategies. Implementation strategies outline how the Township may achieve its vision statements and goals. These will be specific strategies and will describe who should do what, when it should be done and with which resources.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions.