

MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP

Master Plan

Iron County, MI



Prepared by:

Mansfield Township Planning Commission

Citizens and Property Owners of Mansfield Township

August 18th, 2021 Final

Amended January 13th, 2022

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Updated: 2026

Acknowledgements

Township Board

- *Supervisor: Brock Van Oss*
- *Deputy Supervisor: Clerk: John Leutz*
- *Deputy Clerk: Vance Hardt*
- *Treasurer: Rose Poynter*
- *Trustee: Mike Carey*
- *Trustee: George Minerick*

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- *Chairman: Russell Bauwens*
- *Member: John Gilner*
- *Secretary: Jeff Tushoski*
- *Member: George McCumber*

Updated with assistance from:



990 Lalley Road
Iron River, MI 49935

**MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP
RESOLUTION TO ADPOT THE MASTER PLAN
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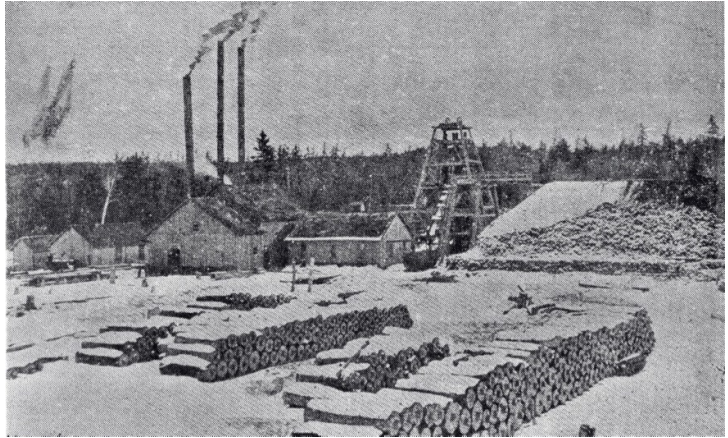


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CHAPTER 1 – HISTORY

Mansfield Township, the smallest Iron County township, was created in 1891 when Felch township left Iron County to join the newly organized Dickinson County. Meanwhile, “Crystal Falls Township gave up two geographical townships and one was added from lands received from Marquette County to form the present boundaries of Mansfield Township”.¹



Mansfield Mine in the 1890's

Logging and mining primarily brought people to Mansfield Township. The land was forested with pine and iron ore was discovered to be beneath the ground in 1889 by William Calhoun. The village of Mansfield, platted along the Michigamme River, was close to the mine being developed by the Mansfield Mining Company and the railroad spur that was extended to the mine from Crystal Falls in 1890. Tragedy struck on September 28, 1893 when the Michigamme River broke through the roof of the mine and causing 27 men to perish. Then in 1894, a forest fire swept through the village destroying practically every home adding to the mining families' already grim circumstances. The DeSoto Iron Company reclaimed the mine by diverting the Michigamme River and then later sold to the Oliver Mining Company. The mine produced a total of 1,462,504 tons of iron ore during its lifetime.

After the Mansfield Mine closed some miners turned to logging and others to farming. The Mansfield Location, a mining boom town, faded away. As time went on, some people still living in Mansfield Township commuted to Iron Mountain, Crystal Falls and other surrounding cities for employment.

North of the Michigamme River is the area in Mansfield Township known as Dykes District or Dykesville. Mitchell Dykes, way back in the 1880s began logging the area near the Fence River. Pine logs, cut in the winter, floated down the snowmelt swollen Fence River and the Michigamme River to the railroad spur in Mansfield during the spring. In 1950, due to the distance hardship (24.2 miles on mostly gravel roads) from Dykes District to Mansfield Township Hall and despite a declining population, Precinct #2 was built for voting and meetings. In 2017 twelve registered voters used the precinct which was closed after the November 2018 elections.

The Michigamme River cuts diagonally across Mansfield Township. In 1941 Wisconsin Electric, now known as We Energies, built Way Dam, named for Chairman of WI Electric Board Sylvester B. Way, to create the 7000-acre Michigamme Reservoir. “Steadily performing its intended purpose, the reservoir

¹ Mansfield Memories Committee (1991). *Mansfield Township Centennial 1891-1991*. Ishpening, MI: Globe Printing, Page iii.

helps keep electric rates low for area residents, stabilizes downstream river flows, and provides recreational opportunities while contributing significantly to the local tax base.”² The majority of shoreline is undeveloped wilderness owned by We Energies. Camping sites 12 - 14, 16, 20, 21 and 26 are found in Mansfield Township.

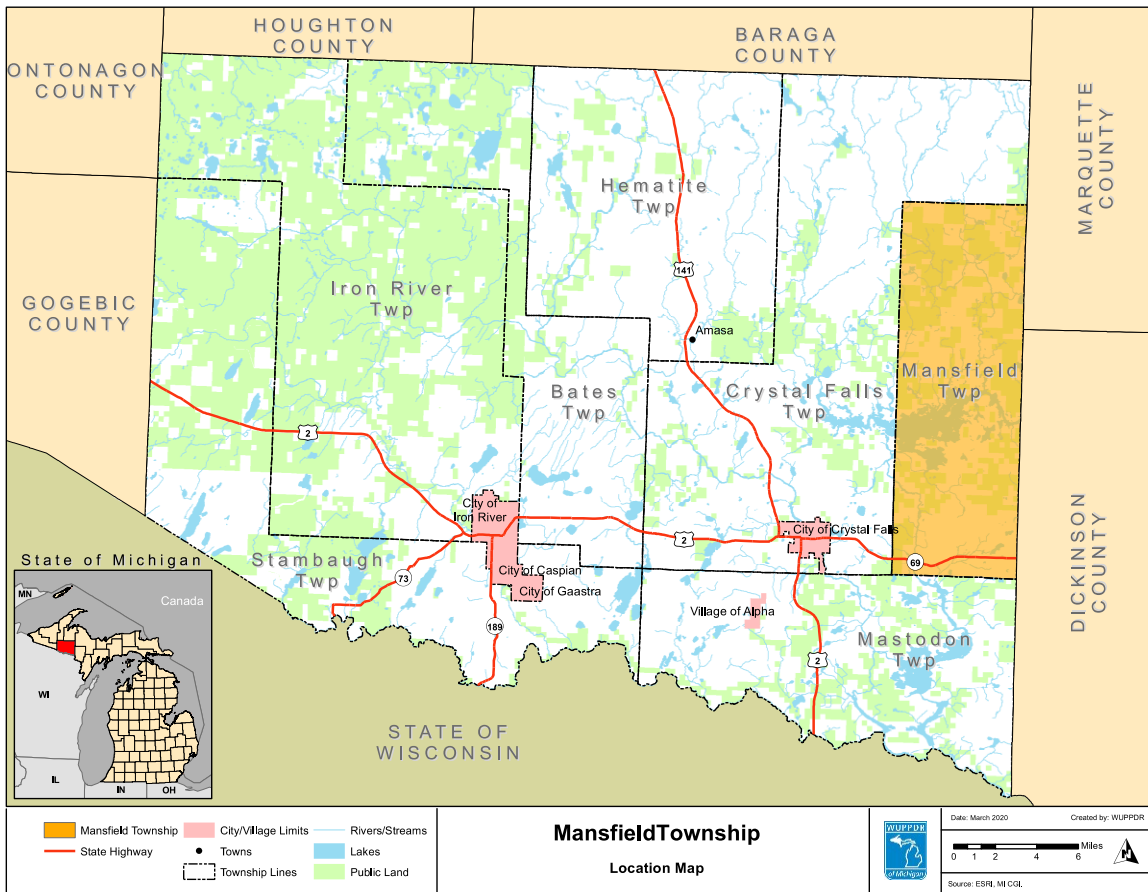
LOCATION OF MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP

Mansfield Township is located in eastern Iron County, Michigan. The total land area of Mansfield Township is 107.7 square miles or approximately 68,928 acres. According to the 2024 US Census Bureau the total population is 309 people; 158 males, and 151 females. The total housing units found in the Township are 293 with 156 (53.2%) units occupied by residents and 137 (46.8%) units labeled as vacant. Of the housing units occupied, 141 (90.4%) are owner-occupied and 15 (9.6%) are renter occupied.

The land and water of Mansfield Township is summarized in the table below.

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Township Land</u>
<u>UNDEVELOPED LAND</u>		
Multiple Use Forest	53,000	77%
Agricultural	6,000	9%
Water/Wetlands	8,328	12%
Total Undeveloped Land	67,328	98%
<u>DEVELOPED LAND</u>		
Single Family/Duplex/Seasonal Homes	1,000	1.5%
Resort/Camps	600	<1%
Commercial	0	
Industrial	0	

² Mansfield Memories Committee (1991). *Mansfield Township Centennial 1891-1991*. Ishpeming, MI: Globe Printing. Page 46

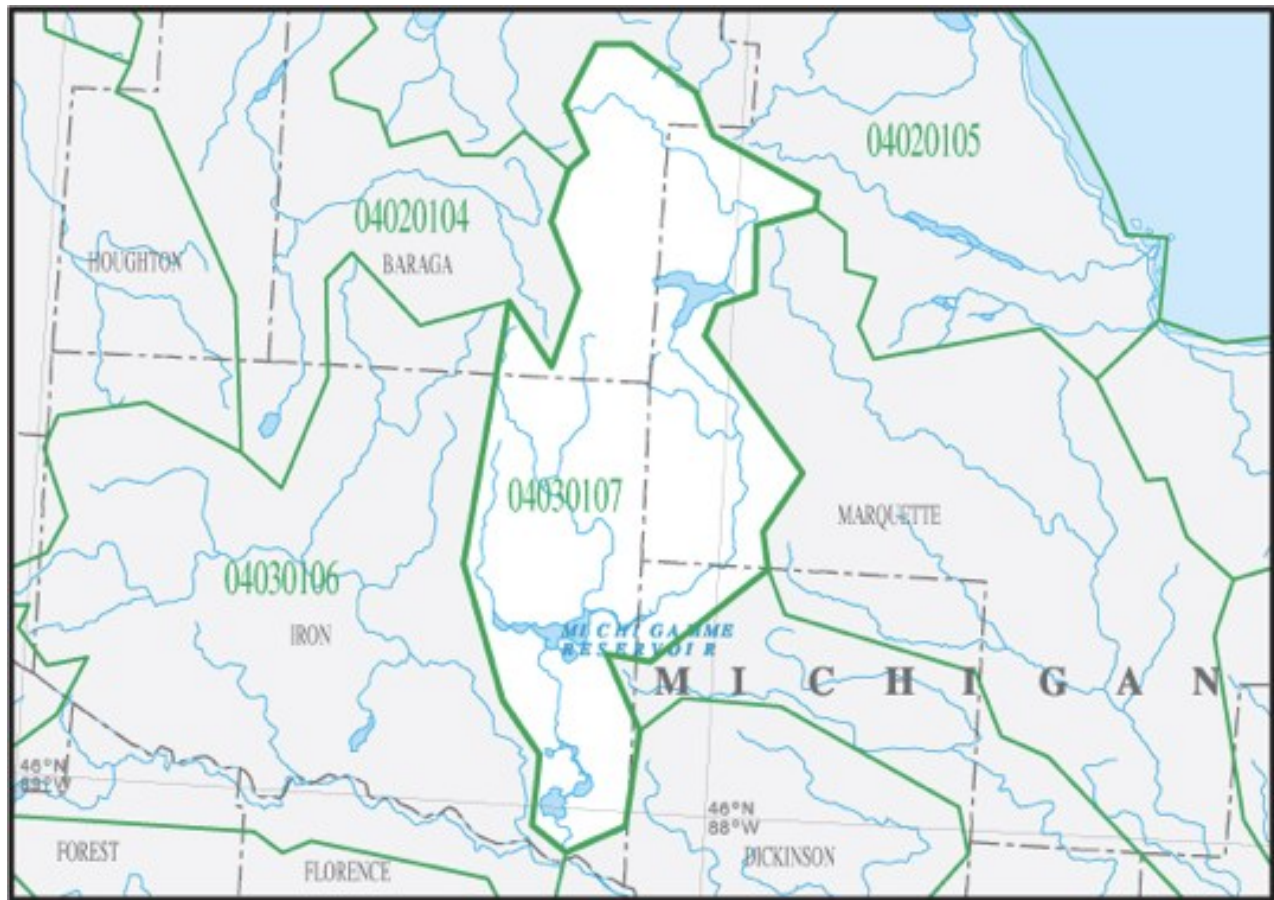


The majority of land in Mansfield Township is forestland and has been designated as Multiple Use Forest (MUF). Current zoning regulations require parcels of 40 acres or more with one residence allowed per parcel and is what gives Mansfield its unique rural undeveloped nature. MUF land is mostly privately owned for recreational pursuits and rural residences, but some is held by the state of Michigan and timber companies.

About nine percent of Mansfield Township is farmed in either 20 acre or 40 acre parcels. Property owners may have one residential home per parcel. One area known as “Mansfield Flats” had nothing to do with logging or mining for its namesake. The pioneers and some former local miners, who cleared this land knew it would be ideal flat farm land to grow vegetables and have a few cows, hogs, even sheep. The “Flats” is located in the Southeast corner of Mansfield Township. Other smaller areas of flat land also became farms. They are scattered throughout the township. The Dykes District located in the North has several 40-acre parcels that are still actively farmed. With a short growing season of only 84 days, Mansfield Township farmers are limited in what they can grow or produce. Potatoes, forage, hay, small grains, part time vegetable growing and maple syrup production are some of the crops produced in the Township. Small livestock operations such as cattle, goats, hogs and horses also exist in the Township.

Mansfield Township is about 77 percent forest land and at least twelve percent of Mansfield Township is covered by water and/or wetlands. Most of the township is within the Michigan

Watershed.* The Michigamme River cuts diagonally across the township and supports two hydro-electric dams, Way Dam and Hemlock Falls Dam. The Michigamme Reservoir is the largest body of water in Mansfield Township. It is primarily owned by WE Energies, the largest land owner and tax payer in Mansfield Township, and is formed by Way Dam. The majority of the land surrounding the reservoir is undeveloped forest with strategically placed We Energies run campsites and boat landings. There are numerous lakes, rivers, and wetlands throughout the township that are well known for marvelous fishing and other recreational activities. The majority of the area in Mansfield Township is undeveloped making great habitat for deer, bear, moose, eagles, wolves, coyotes, grouse, many bird species and numerous other wild animals.



***Michigamme Watershed**

The majority of Mansfield Township’s lakes, rivers, wetlands, and the reservoir are found within the Michigamme Watershed. The one exception is the headwaters of the Ford River, which is located just within the border of the township and Iron County. The following are a list of the lakes, rivers, and creeks that are found within the Mansfield Township borders. The majority of the Michigamme Reservoir is also found within the township, splitting it in half.

* Michigamme Watershed Map and list of all lakes, rivers and wetlands is on page 4.

North of Michigamme Reservoir

- Little Spring Lake
- Spring Lake
- Bates Lake
- Dishaw Lake
- Hickman Lake
- Fence Lake (Western Part)
- Little Sundog Lake
- Crescent Pond
- Shiner Lake
- Lake Thirty-Two
- Corbett Lake
- Spot Lake

South of Michigamme Reservoir

- Crotch Lake
- Lake Ellen
- Little Lake Ellen
- Wallace Lake
- Butler Lake
- Mitchell Lake
- Holmes Lake
- Dawson Lake

Rivers & Creeks

- Smith Creek
- Michigan River
- Fence River
- Noyes Creek
- Three Mile Creek
- Michigamme River
- Kukura Creek
- Parks Creek
- Ford River (Headwaters)
- Clarks Creek
- Numerous Un-named Creeks,
Ponds, Marshes, or Wetlands

Most of the developed land in Mansfield Township has residential houses on it. The houses are scattered throughout Mansfield Township. There is a combination of single family year-round residences and seasonal or recreational homes. Evaluation of the changes in household characteristics in a community can often provide valuable insight about population trends. Household relationships reflect changing social values, economic conditions and demographic changes such as increased life spans and the increasing mobility of our society. The following tables are based on the actual 2020 U.S. Census data and the 2024 estimated data provided by the U. S. Census for Mansfield Township.

Household Type – 2020	
Married family with children under 18	3
Married couples living together	67
Female householder with no husband	3
Male householder with no wife	1
Non-families	31
Total Households	105

Household Type – 2024	
Married family with children under 18	21
Married couples living together	91
Female householder with no husband	5
Male householder with no wife	1
Non-families	38
Total Households	156

In 2020, 47.2% of the households had someone who is 65 years of age, or older. The average household size was 2.20 and the average family size was 2.57. In 2024, 41.7% of the households have someone who is 65 years of age, or older. The average household size is 1.94 and the average family size is 2.13. The 2020 US Census Bureau indicates the total number of housing was 260. By 2024 that number had increased to 293. The high number of housing units versus total households is due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use second homes. The following chart compares the number of housing unit in Mansfield Township with the surrounding townships, Iron County and Michigan.

Mansfield Township and Surrounding Township Housing Statistics – 2024 US Census Bureau

Community	Housing Units	Occupied		Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Vacant	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Mansfield Township	293	156	53%	141	90%	15	10%	137	47%
Crystal Falls Township	1,308	746	57%	701	94%	45	6%	562	43%
Mastodon Township	770	377	49%	358	95%	19	5%	393	51%
Sagola Township	860	413	48%	384	93%	17	4%	447	52%
Republic Township	977	557	57%	490	88%	67	12%	420	43%
Iron County	9,046	5,337	59%	4,537	85%	801	15%	3,709	41%
State of Michigan	4,642,957	4,085,802	88%	3,023,494	74%	1,062,309	26%	557,155	12%

Mansfield Township Population Changes by Decade and Age

Year	Total Population	Ages 0-19	Ages 20-34	Ages 35-54	Ages 55-64	Age 65 +
1960	302					
1970	176					
1980	222					
1990	248					
2000	243	48	29	66	81	49
2010	241	24	10	69	67	71
2020	231	18	24	24	56	109
2024	309	39	29	68	44	129

Population characteristics and demographics are an important aspect of a township. The population of Mansfield Township was estimated to be 309 people as of 2024, according to the US Census Bureau. From 1990 to 2020, the population of Mansfield Township had been stable. But from 2020 to 2024, the population increased significantly. However, the population does swell during tourist seasons with property owners and vacationers who live and work elsewhere.

The people who live in Mansfield Township year-round commonly work in the tourism industry, farm, are retired, or work outside of the Township. There are a few who do home occupations.

The number of school age children has steadily declined since 2000. However, 2024 census data shows a sharp increase in school age children. The population that is retired or close to retirement age has continued to increase.

Recreation and tourism has always been important in Mansfield Township. Fishing and hunting was a necessity and enjoyable part of life when the area was first settled and during the logging and mining era.

Fishing, hunting and experiencing nature remain important activities for local and seasonal residents. Many families still rely on fish and wild game to supplement their food supply. Mansfield Township contains many cabins and hunting camps scattered throughout the vast forestland.

Tourism is economically important to the Township. Tourism activities are not limited to hunting and fishing opportunities, but also include snowmobiling, off road vehicles, camping and many types of boating. There are numerous campsites provided on WE Energies' land around the Michiganme Reservoir, which is part of Wilderness Shores Recreation Area. Camping is fee based and there are six sites available and two boat launch sites on the Reservoir owned by WE Energies in the Township. Dawson Lake Campground is owned and managed by Mansfield Township. Overnight camping is available for a fee for tents and RVs and there is a boat launch and a swimming area at the park along with other recreational facilities.

Other recreation activities that bring people to Mansfield Township include hiking, biking, berry picking, nature viewing, mushrooming, rock and mineral collecting, watersports and trapping to name a few. Mansfield Township also has 3 privately owned resorts that provide RV type camping, motel or cabin rentals. There are also two non-profit camps on large lake parcels that provide various recreational opportunities.

Bewabic State Park (Michigan Department of Natural Resources or DNR) manages the public boat launches at Lake Ellen and Holmes Lake. At this time there is no fee to launch a boat in those lakes or park a trailer for the day, however the DNR does require a Recreation Passport purchased through the State of Michigan to use these public landings.

Mansfield Township has very limited public services and utilities. There are no schools, senior citizen facilities, fire or police protection other than at the county level or from other townships. Most Mansfield Township children attend the Forest Park School District in Crystal Falls. Public water and sanitary sewer systems are not available in the Township. Developed properties maintain their own potable water and onsite septic tank systems. The Township does sell yellow garbage bags to property owners and residents that includes pickup on designated days.

Electric utilities are supplied to Mansfield Township by the Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) and WE Energies, while DTE Energy supplies natural gas to those properties along the natural gas pipe.

For many years there were two town halls. The main one is located at the intersection of Highway 69 and Way Dam Road. This hall is used for official local meetings and voting as well as parties and organized activities. The town hall has a stage, large open area for seating/tables, a full kitchen and is wheel chair accessible. In 2019, WIFI became available at the town hall.



A small-town hall is located in the Dykes District in northern Mansfield Township on Fence River Road, which was closed for use in 2018 after the November election. The Dykes Town Hall was previously used for one Township meeting per year that included a potluck dinner and for voting in the Dykes District due to the 25+ mile drive for the



residents who live there. However, due to the fact the building has many code violations and there are few registered voters living in that area the building is closed for use.



Dishaw Community Park, located east of the main Township Hall on the north side of M69, has a playground, baseball diamond, pavilion and a tennis court with basketball hoop that have fallen into disrepair. From 1911 to 1948 this was the location of the Mansfield School #2.

The site of the original Mansfield Mine and town, now a ghost town, is where the Mansfield Memories Pioneer Church is located on Stream Road. Dawson Lake Campground has a wigwam building that is available for rent as well as a lovely campground and other amenities.

The Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad Company train tracks cut through Mansfield Township

just south of the Michigan Reservoir.

One of the most important elements in the physical structure of a community is its road system. The basic objective of a road system is to accommodate vehicular movement safely and efficiently. Michigan Public Act 51 of 1951 requires that all counties and incorporated cities and villages establish and maintain road systems under their jurisdiction, as distinct from state jurisdiction. Counties, cities and villages receive approximately 61 percent of the funding allocated through Act 51 for local roads with the remaining 39 percent earmarked for state highways under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).



Mansfield Memories Pioneer Church

The state trunk line system includes state and federal highways which connect communities to other areas within the county, state and out state locations. These roadways provide the highest level of traffic mobility for the traveling public. More than half of the total statewide traffic is carried on the highway system, which comprises only eight percent of the Michigan roadway network length. State highways are designated with the prefix “M,” federal highways with “US”. A segment of Highway M69 is located in the Township passing through in an east west direction for approximately 15 miles.

Act 51 requires that all roads, streets and highways included in the county primary road system are known as county primary roads. The mileage of each road system is used as the basis for computation of road funding. Primary roads are considered those of the greatest general importance to the County. All other roads not classified as primary are considered local roads. The local road system contains the most miles in the Iron County, but has the lowest level of traffic. A Road and Mileage Chart is found on the next page. There are also many private roads in Mansfield Township maintained by the property owners with adjacent properties.

Mansfield Township has three bridges, M69 Highway and Old 69 Road bridges over the Michigamme River and the Fence River Road bridge over the Fence River. The Michigan Department of Transportation inspects the bridges and determines if repairs need to be done.

Roads under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation are evaluated on the basis of pavement condition, ride quality, friction and rutting. Surface conditions are determined by the amount of deterioration such as cracking, faulting, wheel tracking, patching and other defects. Determining ride quality is subjective, but is based on the degree of comfort experienced by drivers and passengers. The Mansfield Township Board determines road repairs as funds are available. Funding for road repair and construction is limited and projects are completed when possible.



There is no public transportation in the Township at this time.

Iron County boasts over 260 miles of extensively groomed and well-marked snowmobile trails, two of which cross through Mansfield Township for a short distance. Iron County has opened some paved

roads to ATV/UTV/ORV use by adopting the Iron County Off-Road Recreational Vehicle Ordinance.

Mansfield Township Roads and Mileage

Roads	Primary	Local
Alto		<0.1
Camp 1		0.5
Camp 5	1	
Channing	3.3	
Davis		0.45
Dawson Lake		1.3
Drakes Road		0.5
Fence River		2.4
Fence Lake		0.5
Franks		0.21
Gravel Pit		0.5
Kania		0.8
Kopf's		1.5
Lake Ellen		1
Lake Mary	0.6	0.9
Mansfield Cut-off	6.5	1
Noyes		0.5
Old Mansfield Location		1
Peterson		3
Phelans		1
South County Line		0.8
Stream		1.5
Maple Lane		0.1
Way Dam		3.1
Way Dam/Channing	5.7	
WPA/Noyes	2	
Wright		1.5

CHAPTER 2 – ZONING PLAN

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Since the 1920s, courts throughout the United States have recognized that governments can impose reasonable regulations on the use of privately owned land. Local governments focus considerable attention reviewing plans for new development to prevent problems and conflicts before they materialize. Land use regulations protect the overall appearance of the community, protect the natural features that residents value, and help minimize the cost of local government services. Local governments exercise land use authority through local planning and zoning.

Development of land in Michigan is structured in a manner intended to provide for smooth transitions in zoning. In addition to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, property owners need to be aware of state environmental laws and historic designation laws. In a state where many properties are located on or near one of our 11,000 lakes, property owners must also have an understanding of easements and riparian rights.

While state law controls the ability of local governments to regulate the use of land through zoning, every local community has its own rules and regulations governing the use of land.

Mansfield Township's history of zoning began prior to 1980, when serious attention began to focus on zoning. In 1983 the first Zoning Ordinance Manual was developed and adopted with the understanding that it is a continuous work in progress. At that time, the Zoning Board continued its work on the manual and in 1998 an updated Zoning Ordinance Manual was adopted. As can be imagined, many changes were required to identify, define and establish the current zones and zoning ordinances. All properties were zoned or re-zoned based on land use. Colored maps were developed for each zone and new ordinances, as well as updated ordinances were included in the manual. As expected, work continued on the Zoning Ordinance Manual with amendments in 2001 and 2005.

In 2006 the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006) required that the Zoning Board be established as a Planning Commission. The deadline to establish the ordinance creating a Planning Commission was July 1, 2011. Mansfield Township's Planning Commission was established in January of 2007 with the included responsibility of developing a Master Plan for the township.

The Planning Commission began to develop a Master Plan and continue to update/revise the Zoning Ordinance Manual with amendments in 2008, 2014 and 2015. A fully updated manual, which included the amendments from 2001, 2005, 2008, 2014, 2015, 2022, and 2025.

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires a zoning plan be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance. It must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the township and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted. The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the Township. These matters are regulated by the specific terms in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mansfield Township's Master Plan sets forth the goals, objectives and strategies for future growth and development in the Township. It includes specific strategies for managing growth and change in land uses and infrastructure in the Township, and will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once each

five (5) years. This Chapter is the Zoning Plan, which, along with the rest of the relevant parts of this Plan, is intended to guide the implementation of and future changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance. The Master Plan should be the principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests.

MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP LAND USES

Mansfield Township has nine zoning districts. The following is a list of those districts.

R-1—Residential-1 is intended to establish and preserve quiet single-family neighborhoods as desired by large numbers of people, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such a district. The minimum lot area is 25,000 square feet.

AR-3—Agricultural/Residential-3 is intended to establish and maintain those areas which are suitable for a wide range of medium density residential, recreational and agricultural activities. The minimum lot area is 3 acres.

R-10—Residential-10 is intended to establish and maintain for low intensity use those areas which are suitable for a wide-range of low density residential and recreational activities. The minimum lot area is 10 acres.

RR—Resort-Residential is intended to establish and maintain for residential and recreational use those areas which are suitable for high-density recreational development. The minimum lot area is 90,000 square feet.

L-1—Lake-1 is intended to preserve the scenic character of the designated lakes and its bordering lands, the natural quality of the water itself while providing controlled recreational opportunities and low-density residential use.

Keyhole development or funnel development will absolutely not be a permitted use. The minimum lot size is 90,000 square feet.

A-20—Agricultural-20 is intended to establish a district in which agriculture and certain related uses are encouraged as the principal use of land. The minimum lot size is 20 acres.

A-40—Agricultural-40 is intended to establish a district in which agriculture and certain related uses are encouraged as the principal use of the land. The minimum lot size is 40 acres.

MUF—Multiple Use Forest has been created to conserve significant natural resource characteristics found within the township. Land within this district is intended to be used primarily for low-density residential and industrial activities such as forestry and mining, as well as low-density recreational activities associated with forest land.

C—Commercial is intended to establish areas for commercial facilities.

Land Use Matrix

The following matrix details specific uses of each zoning district by permitted principal use, permitted accessory use and special land use by permit only.

Zoning Districts	R-1	AR-3	R-10	RR	L-1	A-20	A-40	MUF	C
Minimum Lot Area	25,000 sq. ft.	3 acres	10 acres	90,000 sq. ft.	90,000 sq. ft.	20 acres	40 acres	40 acres	N/A
Permitted Principal Uses:									
Single family dwelling	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Two family dwelling		X	X						
Public Parks	X								
Playgrounds	X								
Residential facility, daycare	X		X	X					
Home Occupations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Two family dwellings		X	X						
Churches		X	X						
Schools		X	X						
Libraries		X	X						
Parks		X	X						
Recreational: parks, golf course, campgrounds		X	X						
Traditional agriculture		X	X			X	X		
Grow/harvest forest products								X	
Low intensity recreational park, golf, camps								X	
Outdoor recreational like hunting, fishing								X	
Hunting Camps								X	
Light agriculture								X	
Stores, services +many others, see p. 20 MT Zoning Ordinance									X

Zoning Districts	R-1	AR-3	R-10	RR	L-1	A-20	A-40	MUF	C
Minimum Lot Area	25,000 sq. ft.	3 acres	10 acres	90,000 sq. ft.	90,000 sq. ft.	20 acres	40 acres	40 acres	N/A
Permitted Accessory Uses:									
Barns, other buildings and structures		X	X			X	X		
Private garages	X			X	X				
Private garages and greenhouses		X	X			X	X		
Shed for yard tools and wood	X			X	X				
Roadside stands sell agricultural or other products		X	X			X	X		
Kennels		X	X			X	X		
Riding Stables		X	X			X	X		
Devices for irrigation of agricultural land		X	X			X	X		
Playhouse	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Pens	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Swimming pools, sauna, and bathhouses	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Special Land Uses by Permit:									
Two family dwellings						X	X		
Multiple family dwellings-condominiums		X							
Mining		X				X	X	X	
Junk yards						X	X		
Veterinarian offices and animal clinics						X	X		
Other similar uses and structures	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sanitary landfills								X	
Sawmills, pulp mills, heavy industry								X	
Public shooting , archery ranges								X	
Golf courses	X								
Light agricultural on > 5 acres	X								
Traditional agriculture								X	
Schools	X								
Churches	X								
Utilities	X								
Private parks	X								
Public parks				X	X				
Swimming pools, sauna, and bath houses	X	X							
Cemeteries		X	X						
Resorts and lodges			X						
Bathing facilities				X	X				
Recreational decks				X	X				
Ski hill developments				X					
Rental units				X					
Resort conditions				X					
Condominiums				X					
Single Family Residence									X

Height, Placement, Floor Space and Setback Regulations

Zoning District	Setbacks				Land Area	
	Front	Side	Rear	Building Height	Minimum Lot Size	Minimum Lot Width
L - 1	30 Feet	20 Feet*(B)	30 Feet	40 Feet	90,000 Sq Ft	300 Feet
R - 1	40 Feet	20 Feet*(B)	25 Feet	40 Feet	25,000 Sq Ft	125 Feet
AR - 3	30 Feet	30 Feet	30 Feet	40 Feet	3 Acres	200 Feet
R - 10	30 Feet	30 Feet	30 Feet	40 Feet	10 Acres	300 Feet
RR	30 Feet	20 Feet*(B)	30 Feet	40 Feet	90,000 Sq Feet Rental Unit 3,000 Sq Ft	300 Feet
C*	30 Feet	5 Feet	20 Feet	40 Feet	See Section 400 of Zoning Ordinance	
A - 20	30 Feet	30 Feet	30 Feet	40 Feet	20 Acres	330 Feet
A - 40	30 Feet	30 Feet	30 Feet	40 Feet	40 Acres	660 Feet
MUF	30 Feet	30 Feet	30 Feet	* (A)	40 Acres	None

***Footnotes:**

(A) Height at any point on a structure shall not exceed the horizontal distance to any lot line.

(B) A detached garage not exceeding fourteen (14) feet in height may be located within six (6) feet of a side lot line.

Section 301—All attached accessory buildings and structures, including garages, open porches, and breezeways, shall be considered a part of a building in determining the height and placement regulations. All unattached buildings shall be located not less than that specified in setbacks, from any side lot line, and not less than the required setback of the main building on the premises.

Section 302—All land divisions must be approved by Mansfield Township Assessor and Mansfield Township Zoning Administrator prior to any split. The assessor or the designee shall maintain an official record of all approved and accomplished land divisions.

Section 400—On lots in Zoning District C (Commercial) no structure shall be erected or maintained with thirty (30) feet of the boundary line of any Residential Districts. Where a district boundary line divided a lot into two (2) districts, it shall be treated as a lot line for purpose of the setback provisions of this Ordinance.

Section 401—All lots abutting any body of water, including but not limited to inland lakes, rivers, streams, creeks and impoundments shall maintain a minimum setback of one hundred (100) feet for the construction of structures. Waterfront setback is measured by horizontal plane, not following the contour of the land.

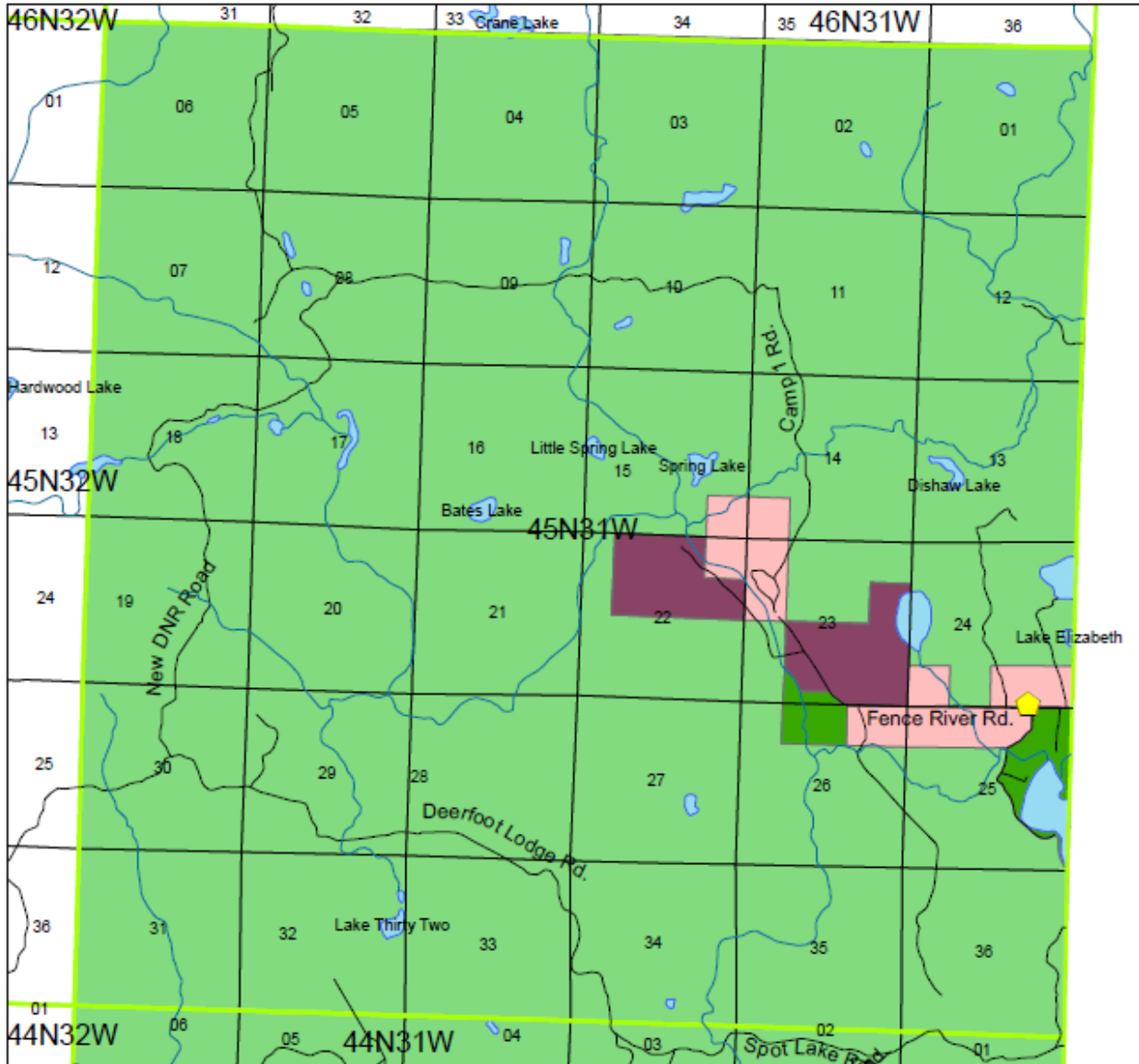
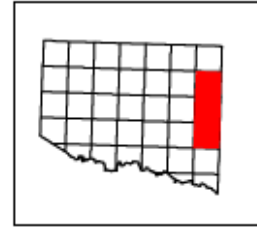
The setback on a nonconforming parcel of land with water frontage shall be that which provides the greatest protection and enhancement of the qualities of water bodies sought to be protected by the setback regulation and which also recognizes the need for structures to have responsible side and front yard setbacks.



Date: 8/4/2021

Mansfield Township Zoning T45N R31W

Current/Future Land Use Map



Legend

- Mansfield Township Hall
- Railroads
- Highway M69
- Roads
- Town/Range
- Section Lines
- A20 - Agricultural (20 Acres)
- A40 - Agricultural (40 Acres)
- L1 - Lake (90,000 Sq. Ft.)
- MUF - Multiple Use Forest (40 Acres)
- R1 - Residential (25,000 Sq. Ft.)
- R10 - Residential (10 Acres)
- RR - Resort-Residential (90,000 Sq. Ft.)

Classification	Acres	% of Total
A20	2810	4.08
A40	2651	3.85
L1	681	0.99
MUF	61693	89.57
R1	120	0.17
R10	360	0.52
RR	561	0.81
Total Acres	68876	100%



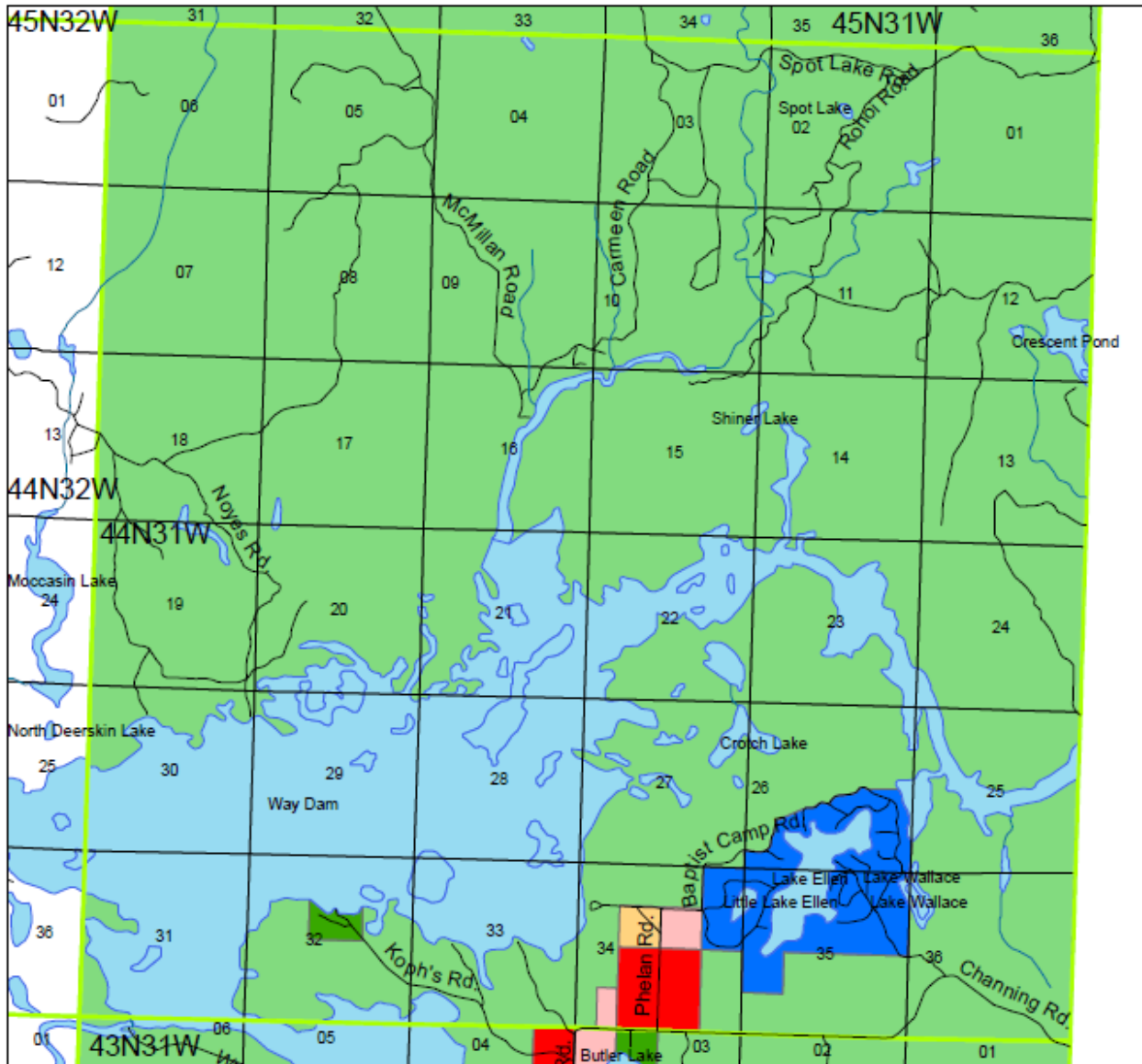
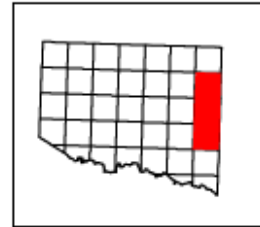
1 inch = 4,704 feet



Date: 8/4/2021

Mansfield Township Zoning T44N R31W

Current/Future Land Use Map



Legend

- Mansfield Township Hall
- Railroads
- Highway M69
- Roads
- Town/Range
- Section Lines
- A20 - Agricultural (20 Acres)
- A40 - Agricultural (40 Acres)
- L1 - Lake (90,000 Sq. Ft.)
- MUF - Multiple Use Forest (40 Acres)
- R1 - Residential (25,000 Sq. Ft.)
- R10 - Residential (10 Acres)
- RR - Resort-Residential (90,000 Sq. Ft.)

Classification	Acres	% of Total
A20	2810	4.08
A40	2651	3.85
L1	681	0.99
MUF	61693	89.57
R1	120	0.17
R10	360	0.52
RR	561	0.81
Total Acres	68876	100%



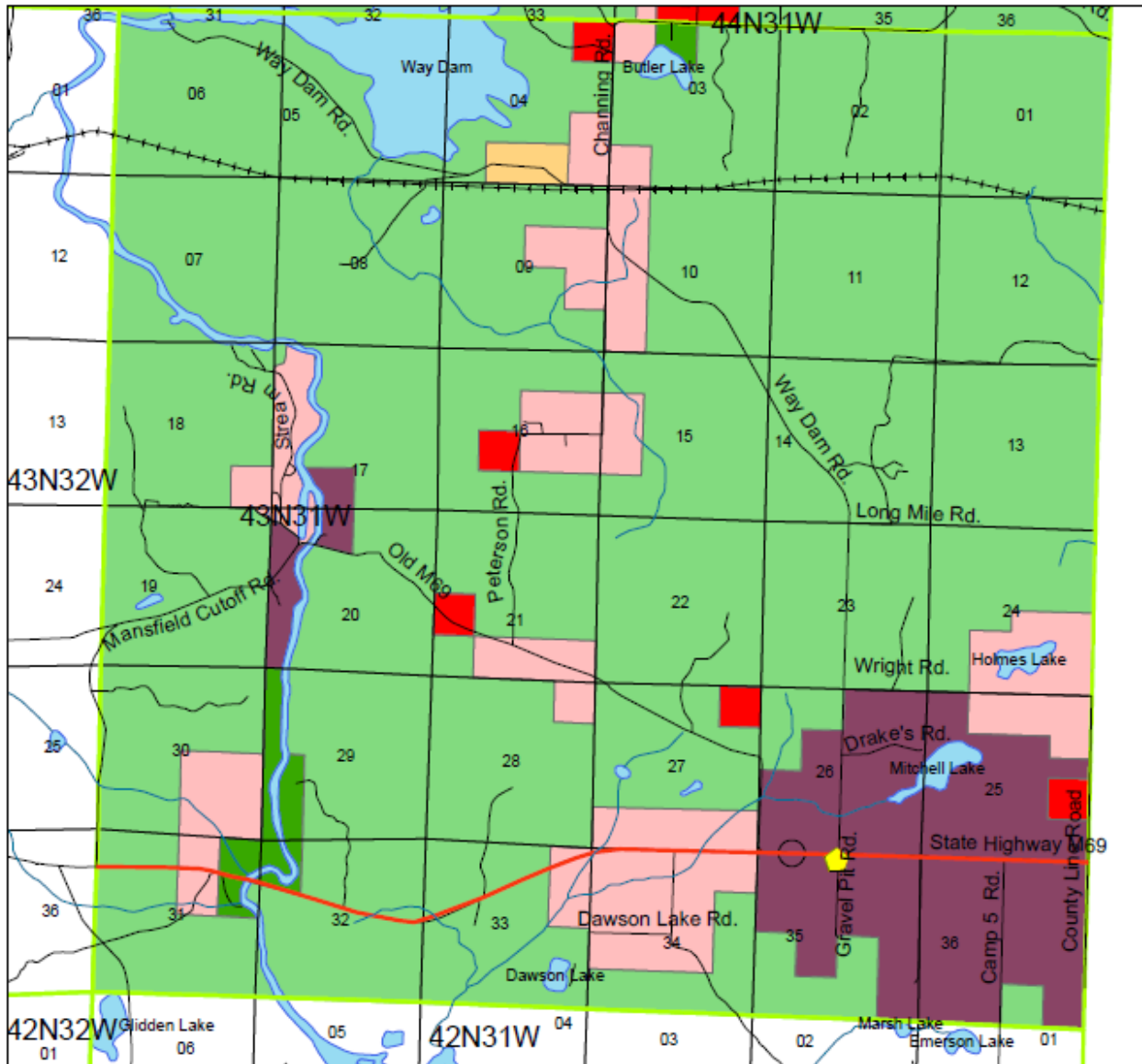
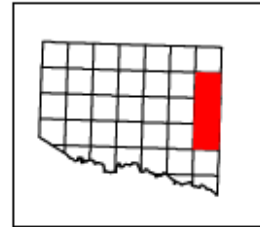
1 inch = 4,704 feet



Date: 8/4/2021

Mansfield Township Zoning T43N R31W

Current/Future Land Use Map



Legend

- Mansfield Township Hall
- Railroads
- Highway M69
- Roads
- Town/Range
- Section Lines
- A20 - Agricultural (20 Acres)
- A40 - Agricultural (40 Acres)
- L1 - Lake (90,000 Sq. Ft.)
- MUF - Multiple Use Forest (40 Acres)
- R1 - Residential (25,000 Sq. Ft.)
- R10 - Residential (10 Acres)
- RR - Resort-Residential (90,000 Sq. Ft.)

Classification	Acres	% of Total
A20	2810	4.08
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L1	681	0.99
MUF	61693	89.57
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R10	360	0.52
RR	561	0.81
Total Acres	68876	100%



1 inch = 4,704 feet

CHAPTER 3 – VISIONS & ISSUES

Significant effort and time was put into obtaining community input in the original development this Master Plan. These efforts included a public attitude survey that sent out with the Winter Property Tax Bills to 418 residents and property owners in Mansfield Township. The response rate was 33.5 % (140 responses). The responses from these efforts were used in the original development of this plan.

While it is important to affirm the significance of environmental issues, the two Townhall meetings following the survey revealed that electorates were primarily concerned with population decline, economic opportunity, and affordable internet access.

Water and land responses:

- 95%—protect natural areas such as: lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands.
- 87%—maintain zoning ordinances protecting water quality and scenic views.
- 69%—protect water quality by inspecting private sewer and septic systems.
- 84%—actively protect our natural resources from invasive species.

Land responses:

- 92%—large open undeveloped areas are needed for quiet, solitude, outdoor lifestyles and to encourage future generations to learn and enjoy skills like: hunting, fishing, boating, and snow activities.
- 78%—forested and undeveloped lands should be protected for future generations to enjoy.
- 59%—protect and preserve farmland; do not subdivide it.

Administrative and general responses:

- 90%—inform people about major township issues
- 80%—develop township website with meeting announcements and other information.
- 50%—we’re pleased with the direction the township is taking.

In addition to the survey, three Community Visioning Meetings were held at the Mansfield Township Hall in 2017. Input was received and implemented accordingly to this Master Plan. Prior to those meetings a prospective vision statement had been developed by the Planning Commission to be used as a starting point along with the handout in *Figure 1*. That vision statement was used at the public meetings to further develop a community wide vision with goals, objectives and strategies from first discussing what the current issues or problems are and then possible solutions. The following is a list of issues that have been developed.



Figure 1

Issues:

- Population Decline
 - *Population has been declining for many years not only in Mansfield Township but in Iron County as well.*
 - *Population aging/young people leave for college and jobs.*
- Boom/Bust Economy
 - *Mining jobs initially brought people to Mansfield but mining is not a sustainable resource meaning when the ore was gone so were the jobs.*
 - *Early logging practices tended towards clear cutting large tracts of land. Some of this land was turned into farm land but much was left to regrow on its own taking several generations to regrow in order to be logged again.*
- Employment
 - *Very few jobs in Mansfield Township*
 - *Long Commute, current jobs are in Crystal Falls, Iron Mountain, Iron River, Marquette/Ishpeming*
- Unpredictable Internet Connection/cellphone connections
 - *Makes telecommuting difficult*

Vision:

- Encourage responsible agricultural/renewable resources
- Encourage managed and limited growth
- Encourage tourism
- Increase cell towers to make internet and cell phone usage better
- Improve recreation areas: Dawson Lake Campground/Tennis Court/Baseball Diamond
- Seek opportunities for senior housing and recreation

How can these desires be accomplished?

To accomplish community directions from the survey and related visioning sessions with the community, this Master Plan maps a path showing, visions, goals, objectives, and individual strategies (action steps). A vision comprises peoples' values, wishes, fears, and desires. A vision may seem a somewhat idealistic and intangible view of the future. Visioning addresses:

- What are people saying about the community?
- What do the headlines in the paper read, in five, ten or 20 years?

The visioning process will be continued to develop a set of goals, objectives and strategies that move today's community toward the consensus community vision.

- Goals show individual components of the vision.
- Objectives are achievable points of reference targeted to achieve goals.
- Strategies are procedure or policy statements of the township's proposed action designed to achieve the objective. Strategies show how objectives will be implemented.

Vision for the future: Mansfield Township, a scenic rural area lying within the Michigamme River watershed in Iron County, Michigan, is a place of natural beauty, solitude and country living striving for managed growth and economic opportunities while addressing tourism desires of environmental stewardship.

- The Way Dam/Michigamme Reservoir is a popular recreational facility located in the Township. WE Energies owns the majority of the land surrounding the reservoir and does provide recreational opportunities and facilities. These opportunities and facilities include boat launches, campsites, and other access points. Land surrounding the reservoir is undeveloped. The Township recognizes the popularity of this water body and would like it to stay undeveloped, keeping the recreational facilities as they are currently. This may require the Township to become a more active partner with WE Energies or even a stakeholder through various strategic acquisitions of property. This is an effort to maintain the unique, undeveloped waterbody. Boating, fishing, water trails, hunting, and other outdoor and water recreational opportunities are available at the reservoir and surrounding land. The Township would like to preserve these features and develop similar recreational opportunities. The Township would like to preserve the lakes and wetlands along with the entire Michigamme Reservoir including the Fence River and the entire Michigamme River shores.

CHAPTER 4 – MASTER PLAN

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Mansfield Township, a scenic rural area lying within in the Michigamme River watershed in Iron County, Michigan, is a place of natural beauty, solitude and country living striving for managed growth and economic opportunities while addressing tourism desires of environmental stewardship. The Mansfield Township Master Plan is intended to provide best practices which comply with Michigan’s State and local laws and regulations.

Goal: The current Mansfield Township Zoning Ordinance, which will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, is adopted in this Master Plan. The Plan serves as the basis and foundation for the present and future zoning ordinances. The Township intends to continue traditional land use zoning in accordance with this Plan, though newer zoning trends will be considered. The existing zoning ordinance, most recently amended in 2025, is consistent with and represents the Township’s goals for development. New development will be planned in accordance with existing zoning districts and the zoning map as of that date. The present zoning ordinance represents the Township’s present intentions and vision for land use.



Objective: Zoning ordinances ensure proper use of the land, waters, forest, farmlands and wildlife habitats of Mansfield Township.

Strategy: Research regulations for alternative energy and energy storage facilities.



Objective: Property owners know the land use requirements of their zoning districts.

Strategy: Investigate regulations for short term rentals. This may include classifying where they can occur, what restrictions or regulations are imposed, and how enforcement of regulations occurs.

Strategy: Zoning districts, lot size requirements, setbacks and ordinances are provided to current and future property owners.

Objective: The ordinance provides procedures for rezoning and settling disputes regarding splitting of parcels.

AGRICULTURAL

More than 98% of the agricultural lands within Mansfield Township are used as cropland, the most commonly harvested crops being potatoes, small grains, and hay. Other agricultural land uses are small farming operations growing vegetables, raising livestock and making maple syrup. Agriculture is one of the largest employers in Mansfield Township. There are a few areas of farm acreage that are idle. Agricultural lands in the Township are located throughout most areas of the Township. Those areas of the Township reflecting a stronger agricultural character than the balance of the Township is along the Township's main corridor, State Highway M-69.

Farming conditions in Mansfield Township are supportive of long term economically viable small farming operations. There are comparatively limited areas of "prime farmland" soils; comparatively small



farm acreages and comparatively limited areas of expansive and contiguous farmland. These conditions decrease the long term economic viability of large scale farming in the Township.

Goal: Provide opportunities for the continuation of farming within the Township while, at the same time, recognize the overall limited long term economic viability of farming in the Township and the appropriateness of providing alternative land uses for existing farmland areas while still preserving large tracts of farmland.

Objective: To support the economic viability of farming in Mansfield Township.

Strategy: To the extent that new residential development is permitted in planned agricultural areas ensure that existing zoning districts are enforced according to the zoning ordinance.

Strategy: Explore the extension of utilities or other public improvements, such as a public water and sanitary sewer system, that would not jeopardize the integrity of these agricultural areas.

Strategy: Support the creation of new facilities for production and marketing of food including meat and produce.

FORESTLANDS

Goal: To maintain the diversity and large expanse of the forests in the Mansfield Township. Ensure that healthy forest management principles will serve the forest ecosystem, recreation, wildlife habitat improvement, endangered species protection, water quality and forest products. Manage forest lands with sound accepted Silvicultural-practices.

Silviculture is the practice of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values.

LAKES, STREAMS AND WETLANDS

Mansfield Township has a wealth of pristine natural waters that are essential for: providing clean safe swimming for residents and vacationers, maintaining fish populations, supporting near shoreline animal feeding and habitat areas and keeping the township's wild north-woods character.

Goal: To protect ground water, lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and their associated shorelines.

Objective: Review and strengthen requirements if conditions or practices warrant change.

Strategy: Maintain current lot size, setbacks, width and frontage requirements in all zoning districts.

Strategy: Study the impacts of implementing a greenbelt on the shoreline of all lakes, rivers, and streams within the Township.

Objective: Slow the spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

Strategy: Implement a clean, drain, dry educational program for all boat launch sites including signs to alert boaters. Erect an alert warning sign at boat landings where invasive species are present.

Strategy: Provide invasive species identification on township website.

Strategy: Develop prohibitions for emptying bait containers, aquariums and private ponds into Township waters.

Strategy: Study the impacts of implementing a greenbelt on the shoreline of lakes, rivers, and streams will help to preserve water quality within these waterbodies.



Portable boat wash used at a public boat launch in Mansfield Township to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

RECREATION & TOURISM

Goal: Promote a Township-wide Recreational Plan.

Objective: Create a structured plan that guides the development, maintenance, and improvement of parks and recreation facilities throughout the Township and aims to:

- Secure Funding
- Improve Access and Accessibility
- Create Community Connectivity
- Preserve Natural Resources

QUALITY OF LIFE

Goal: A plan for managed growth by bringing Mansfield Township into the twenty-first century while maintaining a rural lifestyle and sustaining a vibrant community, a healthy space to raise a family and a place to retire comfortably.

Objective: Work on partnerships to develop senior housing, hospitals, clinics, health care, home health care, dental and vision providers.

Strategy: Post a list of providers and hotline numbers on the website.

Strategy: Post emergency response information on the website.

Objective: Determine increased need for high speed broadband internet and cell tower service so residents can work from home.

Strategy: Support these service companies if/when they want to come through Mansfield Township.

Objective: Promote cultural events in the area to foster community spirit.

Strategy: Brainstorm events for the Township Hall (open mikes, folk dancing, drumming circle, book group, movie nights)

Strategy: Support Mansfield Memories in sponsoring parties and events.

Objective: Develop heritage based recreation

Strategy: Support the mission of the Mansfield Pioneer Church.

Strategy: Develop a heritage trail of local sites such as mines and bridge sites in the Michigamme Reservoir and Way Dam.

Strategy: Work with Iron County Heritage Trail to get all of Mansfield on their map.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Promote economic development in Mansfield Township by keeping in contact with the Iron County Economic Development Alliance.

Objective: Develop a growth plan for the community that balances economic growth with rural living.

Strategy: Set aside land in AR-3 and R-10 zoning districts to meet the growing demand for green cemeteries.

Strategy: Research regulations for alternative energy and energy storage facilities including the benefits and drawbacks.

Strategy: Investigate regulations for short term rentals including development of regulations and methods of enforcement.

Objective: Promote the unique features of living in Mansfield Township.

Strategy: Develop a “Why I Chose Mansfield” brochure with a link on the website.

Objective: Establish areas for commercial development, while maintaining the rural character of Mansfield Township.

Objective: Become engaged and get certified as a redevelopment ready community to get access to Michigan Economic Development Corporation community development block grants.

Objective: Require mining or oil and gas drilling companies to purchase bond insurance for road repairs caused by heavy equipment/truck damage to paved or gravel roads.

COMMUNICATION

Goal: Governmental bodies are welcoming, transparent, solicit the community’s ideas and keep residents informed on major issues.

Objective: Maintain and enhance the township website.

Strategy: Publish agendas on the website well in advance of meetings.

Strategy: Publish timely results of surveys, policy decisions and the minutes of all township meetings.

Strategy: Publish cultural and community events on website such as Mansfield Memories’ Events.



CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Develop a plan to fund repairs and construction as needed.

BEAUTIFICATION

Goal: The Township will develop a rural beautification plan.

Objective: Enforce ordinances and collect fines to eliminate blighted areas.

Strategy: Eliminate roadside trash, junk cars, dilapidated trailers, etc.

Strategy: Restrict dumping on properties.

Strategy: Encourage collaboration with other townships for all types of recycling.

Strategy: Encourage residents to install animal proof trash boxes for trash bag collection near the roadside.

Strategy: Prohibit residents from placing non-trash items for pick-up because they remain on the roadside for a long time.

Strategy: If new Iron County hazardous waste facility opens, advertise on website and encourage all residents to use.

Objective: Develop and/or enforce ordinances to restrict light and sound pollution.

Objective: Enable residents the opportunity remove unwanted, large waste volumes locally and at a reasonable cost.

Strategy: Provide a recycling program and large dumpster/garbage cleanup twice a year.

Strategy: Cooperate with Iron County in the development of a hazardous waste collection site within or near the Township.



APPENDIX

Sources

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2024 sex, age, and household

<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S0101?q=Mansfield+township,+Iron+County,+Michigan+>

Iron County Lakes and Streams Partnership Brochure.