

# DEXTER TOWNSHIP

## MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

6880 DEXTER-PINCKNEY ROAD  
DEXTER, MI 48130

TELEPHONE: 734-426-3767  
WWW.DEXTERTOWNSHIPMI.GOV

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## AGENDA

### April 08, 2026

### 6:00 PM

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**1) Call to Order**

**2) Approval of Agenda**

**3) Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2026.**

**4) Call for Public Comment on Agenda Items**

*a. Please state your name and address. Limit comments to 3 minutes. Please note that the public comment period is not a question-and-answer period; any questions from the public will be answered at a later date. If you would like a respond, please include your contact information on the sign in sheet.*

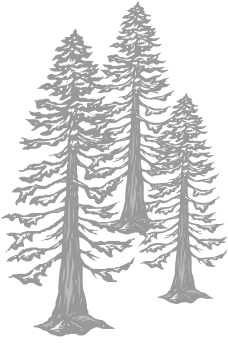
**5) Discussion Items:**

***a. Master Plan Review Committee Discussion Issues***

- i. Short-Term Rentals*
- ii. Bed & Breakfasts*
- iii. Agrotourism*
- iv. Renewable Energy*
- v. Data Centers*
- vi. Housing*
- vii. Other Items Warranting Discussion*

Dexter Township Master Plan Review Committee Agenda  
April 08, 2026

- 6) Other Issues, Comments and Concerns from the Committee Members**
- 7) Adjournment**



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## MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Wednesday March 18, 2026, 6:00 PM**

Present: Chairperson Chandra Hurd; Secretary Alicia Abbott; Dan Barry, Joseph Spiegel, Linda Selbert.

Absent: Joseph Spiegel, with notice.

Also present: Director of Planning and Zoning Fletcher Reyher and Recording Secretary Janis Miller.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Hurd called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.
2. **Approval of Agenda:**

Item 5) c. v. has been moved to the end of Item 5) Discussion Items as Joseph Spiegel, who is absent, needs to be part of the discussion.

*Motion by Abbott, supported by Barry, to approve the agenda as amended. Unanimous voice vote approval.*
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

**Regular Meeting minutes**

*Motion by Abbott, supported by Barry, to approve the meeting minutes of December 18, 2025, as amended. Unanimous voice vote approval.*
4. **Public Comment – 1<sup>st</sup> call:** (non-agenda items) Opened 6:06 PM.

Michelle Stamboulellis  
She thanked the Planning Commission for establishing this committee and asked if they would also explore a tree ordinance.
5. **Discussion Items:**
  - A) Introduction to the Committee:
    - i. Brief review of the Committee Charge and Committee Expectations  
DPZ Reyher stated the charge was to identify gaps in the Master Plan and future new land uses. The Committee is to review, identify, and set goals and then forward the determinations to the Planning Committee.
    - ii. The process of amending a Master Plan  
Supplemental material handout: DPZ Reyher reviewed the 9 steps to the process of amending a Master Plan.

B) 2024 Master Plan Overview

i. Dexter Township Master Plan Corner Stones

DPZ Reyher reviewed the 5 Cornerstones as determined by the Board of Trustees. The current Master Plan contains data & details with future plans and projections for the Township.

ii. Future Land Use, Zoning Plan, and Action Plan

The map acts as a policy guide regarding rezoning, long-term development, and future land use.

C) Master Plan Review Committee Discussion Issues

i. Short-Term Rentals

Short-term rentals are not permitted in Dexter Township. The Planning Commission is working on a definition of short-term rentals. The Bed and Breakfast Ordinance needs to be revised to emphasize owner occupied rentals. There needs to be clear reasoning in the Master Plan as to why short-term rentals are not supported. Discussion of ADU's (accessory dwelling units) as rentals.

ii. Bed & Breakfasts

Bed & Breakfasts are a commercial use, they generate income. If a property is non-conforming, the owner cannot expand the residence to make it a BnB. Bed and Breakfasts could be another type of income for farmers. It is suggested that the committee wait on BnB discussion until after the Planning Commission has a solid definition of Bed & Breakfasts and Short-Term Rentals.

iii. Agritourism

The Master Plan supports Agritourism. Agritourism consists of low intensity farm stands to high intensity special events.

iv. Renewable Energy

The Master Plan support renewable energy. Small scale residential renewable energy is permitted but the Master Plan needs to address larger scale renewable energy. The Board of Trustees Action Plan needs to reflect what has transpired in Dexter Township regarding renewable energy.

v. ~~Data Centers~~ moved to discussion below

vi Housing

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), as amended by Public Act 153 of 2024 (HB 5557), requires master plans to include a housing component that assesses current and future needs, including housing for all income levels, and promotes diverse, affordable, and attainable housing. Issues to address are affordability, Dexter Township's future needs, and currently there is no zoning for multi-family homes. The committee also needs to look at "tiny homes" as a way to diversify housing needs. There is pending state legislation that could impact this topic for the Master Plan Review Committee.

v. Data Centers

This topic will be addressed when committee member Joseph Spiegel is present.

vii. Other Items Warranting Discussion

**6. Other Issues, Comments and Concerns of Board Members and Staff:**

**Chair Hurd** – She thanked everyone for being on the committee and noted the next meeting is Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Adjournment:**

Motion by Abbott, supported by Donaldson, to adjourn at 8:11 PM.  
Unanimous voice vote approval.

Respectfully submitted,

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Alicia Abbott, Secretary

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Janis Miller, Recording Secretary

*Next meeting of the Master Plan Review Committee is April 8, 2026*



# DEXTER TOWNSHIP

## PLANNING & ZONING

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*"A Community For All Seasons"*

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## Memorandum

**To:** Dexter Township Master Plan Review Committee

**From:** Fletcher Reyher, AICP, Director of Planning and Zoning

**Date:** March 18, 2026

**Subject:** Key Master Plan Components for Potential Amendments

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### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Committee is to serve in a strictly advisory capacity by reviewing the existing Dexter Township Master Plan and providing policy-level guidance and recommendations to the Planning Commission. The Committee is not charged with drafting zoning ordinance amendments or making regulatory decisions, but rather with identifying potential policy gaps and long-range planning issues that may warrant future consideration.

If amendments to the Master Plan are ultimately recommended, three sections of the Plan are particularly important to evaluate:

1. The Five Cornerstones (policy foundation of the Plan)
2. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM)
3. The Zoning Plan and Implementation / Action Plan

Together, these elements establish the Township's long-term vision and the tools used to implement that vision.

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### **The Five Cornerstones:**

The Master Plan is built around five guiding themes referred to as the Cornerstones. These Cornerstones represent the Township's long-term policy direction and reflect both community input and the Township Board's strategic planning priorities.

Any amendment to the Master Plan should be evaluated against these Cornerstones to ensure the Township's long-range vision remains consistent and internally aligned.

### **1. Preservation of Agricultural Lands & Rural Character**

- Core Idea: Protect the AG-Core area to maintain farmland, open space, and the Township's rural identity.

- This cornerstone recognizes that a large portion of the Township’s rural character is tied to the preservation of agricultural land. The Master Plan identifies an Agricultural Core area that should be prioritized for long-term preservation.
  - The Plan recommends several tools to move beyond simple large-lot zoning and toward more permanent farmland preservation mechanisms, including:
    - Open Space Community Overlay (clustering)
    - Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
    - Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)
    - PA 116 farmland preservation
    - Agri-tourism support
  - These tools aim to maintain the viability of agriculture while allowing limited development to occur in appropriate locations.
- 

## **2. Protection of Our Natural Resources**

- Core Idea: Safeguard groundwater, wetlands, lakes, and tree canopy.
  - The Township contains significant environmental assets, including wetland complexes, lakes, and extensive tree canopy. Groundwater protection is particularly critical because all properties rely on groundwater as their sole drinking water source.
  - The Plan emphasizes linking environmental protection directly to land use regulation and long-term water quality goals. Recommended policy directions include:
    - Increasing wetland buffer requirements (from 10 ft to 25 ft)
    - Developing groundwater protection programs with EGLE
    - Establishing lake water monitoring and stewardship
    - Protecting heritage trees and educating residents about invasive species
- 

## **3. Management of Our Traffic**

- Core Idea: Ensure development does not overwhelm road capacity while expanding non-motorized transportation options.
  - Traffic management is a growing concern among residents. While traffic counts show relatively modest growth rates, survey responses indicate increased perception of congestion, particularly at key intersections.
  - The Master Plan recommends:
    - Data-driven traffic management using Level of Service (LOS) modeling
    - Requiring traffic impact studies for new development
    - Evaluation of key congestion points
    - Expansion of regional non-motorized trail connections, including the Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail
- 

## **4. Thoughtful Planning for Future Development**

- Core Idea: Allow limited, well-controlled growth that supports convenience without urbanizing the Township.
- Dexter Township is surrounded by established commercial centers in Dexter, Chelsea, and Pinckney. As a result, the Master Plan does not recommend large commercial districts within the Township. Instead, it focuses on limited, convenience-oriented services that support local residents.
- Key policy concepts include:
  - Allowing small convenience-oriented commercial uses

- Supporting broadband expansion
  - Encouraging clustered housing and open space development
  - Utilizing existing sewer infrastructure where appropriate
- 

### 5. Creating a Sustainable Community

- Core Idea: Balance economic, environmental, and social sustainability for long-term resilience.
  - Sustainability strategies focus on incremental actions that local government can reasonably implement. These strategies emphasize long-term resource protection while maintaining the Township’s rural character.
  - Examples include:
    - Encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
    - Supporting EV charging infrastructure
    - Allowing rooftop solar by right
    - Promoting green stormwater practices
    - Expanding recycling and composting programs
    - Strengthening regional planning collaboration
- 

#### **Future Land Use Map (FLUM):**

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) serves as the Township’s primary policy guide for land use decisions, including rezonings and long-term development patterns. Any significant changes to land use policy or growth patterns should be reflected on the Future Land Use Map to maintain consistency between planning policy and zoning implementation.

The FLUM translates the Master Plan’s Cornerstones into a spatial framework that guides where different types of development should occur. The map is based on a land suitability analysis that identified areas most appropriate for agriculture, residential development, and conservation.

The FLUM identifies six general land use categories:

<b>Future Land Use Category</b>	<b>General Purpose</b>
Agricultural Preservation	Protect working farmland and large agricultural parcels
Rural Residential	Maintain large-lot rural living patterns
Conservation Subdivision	Clustered residential development preserving open space
Lake Residential	Small-lot residential near inland lakes
Neighborhood Commercial	Limited convenience-oriented commercial uses
Institutional / Preservation	Public land, parks, and conservation areas

The FLUM serves as the primary policy guide for zoning decisions, rezonings, and long-term land use patterns. Any changes to land use policy or growth patterns should be reflected on the Future Land Use Map to maintain consistency between planning policy and regulatory implementation.

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#### **Zoning Plan and Action Plan:**

The Master Plan includes a Zoning Plan and Implementation Action Plan that identifies specific regulatory changes needed to implement the Plan’s policies. The Plan concludes that new zoning

## Key Master Plan Components for Potential Amendments

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districts are generally not required, but several targeted amendments to the zoning ordinance are recommended. These include:

### Zoning Implementation Priorities

- Incorporation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program
- Allowing Agri-Tourism uses within the Agricultural district
- Increasing wetland setback requirements
- Permitting renewable energy systems such as rooftop solar
- Encouraging EV charging infrastructure
- Updating Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations

### Action Plan:

The Master Plan also includes an implementation schedule identifying priority actions, responsible partners, and approximate timelines. These actions translate policy goals into concrete steps such as ordinance amendments, infrastructure coordination, and regional planning initiatives.

### Implementation Action Plan Progress Tracker:

#### Preservation of Our Agricultural Heritage:

Initiative	Target Year	Partners	Status
Encourage agricultural property owners to continue participation in the Farmland & Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116)	2023–2025	Michigan Office of Rural Development and Agriculture	Ongoing
Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow Agri-Tourism activities as a Special Land Use	2024	Township Board	Ongoing
Amend Article 14 to include a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) option to preserve core agricultural land	2024	Huron River Watershed Council	Not Started

#### Protection of Our Natural Resources:

Initiative	Target Year	Partners	Status
Amend Section 23.06 to increase the wetland setback from 10 feet to 25 feet	2024	Township Board, Huron River Watershed Council	Ongoing
Coordinate with Michigan EGLE to evaluate groundwater recharge areas and develop protective ordinances	2027	EGLE	Not Started

**Management of Our Traffic:**

Initiative	Target Year	Partners	Status
Work with partners to evaluate the Island Lake Road and Dexter-Pinckney Road intersection focusing on either an intersection realignment or installation of a roundabout to mitigate traffic backups.	2024	Washtenaw County Road Commission, Webster Township and the City of Dexter	Not Started

**Creating a Sustainable Community:**

Initiative	Target Year	Partners	Status
Amend the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) provisions to prevent their use as Short Term Rentals (STR's)	2024	Township Board	Not Started
Promote the use of EV Charging stations. Consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that requires EV charging stations at certain public and private facilities.	2025	DTE	Not Started
Amendment to Article 16: General Provisions to include renewable energy facilities as a use permitted by right on residential properties.	2026	Township Board	Completed
Work with Washtenaw County on the preparation of a Township hazard mitigation plan.	2028	Washtenaw County	Ongoing

**Thoughtful Planning for Future Development:**

Initiative	Target Year	Partners	Status
Continue collaboration with the Washtenaw County Broadband Committee to provide and increase high speed internet services to the Township.	2023-2024	Washtenaw County	Ongoing
Consider creating a zoning district that encourages affordable, smaller residential lots within a walkable neighborhood that could be used in conjunction with the Open Space Community Overlay District.	2023-2025	Township Board	Not Started

**Conclusion:**

The Cornerstones, Future Land Use Map, and Zoning / Implementation Plan function together as the central framework of the Dexter Township Master Plan. As the Committee reviews the Plan, particular attention should be given to whether these components continue to reflect the Township's long-term vision and whether any policy gaps have emerged since the Plan's adoption in 2024.

## Cornerstone

### Preservation of our Agricultural Heritage

Dexter Township has a variety of open spaces. These include 4,368 acres of agricultural land and 5,313 acres of MDNR, Metropark, and University of Michigan properties. Combined, these properties make up fifty (50%) percent of the total Township acreage. Together, these properties create the framework for a rural setting; a setting attractive to those seeking a lifestyle away from a city. It is unlikely that the 5,313 acres will be developed since it remains in public and university ownership and the properties are used for outdoor recreation and research. However, the 4,368 acres of agricultural land could be at risk.

Both the 2007 and 2022 community surveys indicated a strong preference by residents to protect agricultural activities within the Township. However, without ownership of the development rights little can be done to prevent the sale of agricultural property for residential development. Ordinance #43, the Dexter Township Zoning Ordinance (2020), Section 5.02 allows for single family residential on a minimum lot size of 5 acres or 1 acre with certain conditions. Since the last master plan in 2011, former agricultural properties have been converted into large lot single family parcels.

The map entitled, "Core Preservation Areas" (Map 10) defines three core zones in the Township. The Stable Zone is composed of State of Michigan, Huron-Clinton Metropark, and University of Michigan properties. These exist along the eastern and northern edges of the Township. The Moderately Developed Zone accommodates a significant portion of the Township's subdivisions which are developed along Dexter-Pinckney Road, Island Lake Road near the City of Dexter, and along North Territorial Road. The remaining zone, called the AG-Core is located in the south-central portion of the Township and comprises much of the remaining agricultural properties and farms. This is the zone that needs to be preserved in order for Dexter Township to maintain its agricultural heritage and rural character.

#### **BUILDING BLOCKS**

- » Continued use of Ordinance #43, Article 15 the Open Space Community Overlay District (OSC) to preserve open space and encourage the clustering of residential development.
- » Incorporate into Ordinance #43 the zoning tool referred to as the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Using the Core Preservation Areas utilize the AG-Core as the "sending" zone and the Moderately Developed Zone as the "receiving" zone. This program allows the private exchange of development rights using the minimum lot requirements between sending and receiving zones.
- » In coordination with the Washtenaw County Health Department develop a detailed map of soils that cannot support septic systems, have seasonal high-water tables, and high groundwater tables, and significantly limit the use of engineered on-site disposal systems on these properties.
- » Enact, with voter approval, a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program placing a priority on agriculturally productive land.
- » Encourage renewal of Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116) certificates.
- » Develop a farm-link program matching retiring farmers with current farmers or new farmers to keep land in agricultural production (<https://landforgood.org/resources/farm-link-programs/>).
- » Consider adding agri-tourism uses in Ordinance #43; Agri-tourism uses help supplement and add additional income to the agricultural operation.



# Cornerstone Management of Our Traffic

The comparison between the 2007 and 2022 surveys noted an increase in priorities focused on improving the quality of roads within the Township, traffic management, and non-motorized trails. Average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts available from the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) indicate a low annual increase in traffic counts on primary county roads within the Township. The map entitled, "National Functional Classification," (Map 16) shows the available AADT counts and estimated percentage of growth.

The WCRC data suggests that the selected road segments have an annual growth rate between 1% and 2%. However, between 2007 and 2022 residents perceive the traffic as a larger issue and open-source comments refer to traffic congestion and the lack of road capacity to manage the added residential growth. Each new residential dwelling typically generates 5 daily trips and 1 per peak hour.

Traffic congestion is a local perception and usually defined by the wait time to get through an intersection. A review of the data suggests there are three points where peak hour traffic gets congested. The first point is traffic entering the Township through downtown Dexter. The signals at Main Street and Baker, and Main Street and Broad Street cause significant delays especially in the PM Peak. Second, although there is no signal, the narrow rail underpass further slows traffic. Lastly, the intersection at Dexter-Pinckney and Island Lake Road causes delays. All these traffic points add to the low level of service (LOS) experienced entering the south portion of the Township. The 2019 Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) 2045 congestion forecast map still classifies the Island Lake Road segment between Dexter-Chelsea Road and Dexter-Pinckney as congested.

Non-motorized use has gained in popularity and WATS has been a regional advocate for trail development. The WATS 2018 Non-Motorized Trail Plan calls for the continuation of the B2B Trail through the County. A portion of the B2B traverses through the Hudson Mills Metropark on the east side of Dexter-Pinckney Road. The proposed Northwest Connector envisions a trail connecting Hudson Mills Metropark to the Mike Levine Lakelands Trail State Park. Survey respondents (78%) either strongly encouraged or encouraged the utilization of biking, hiking and walking trails in the Township.

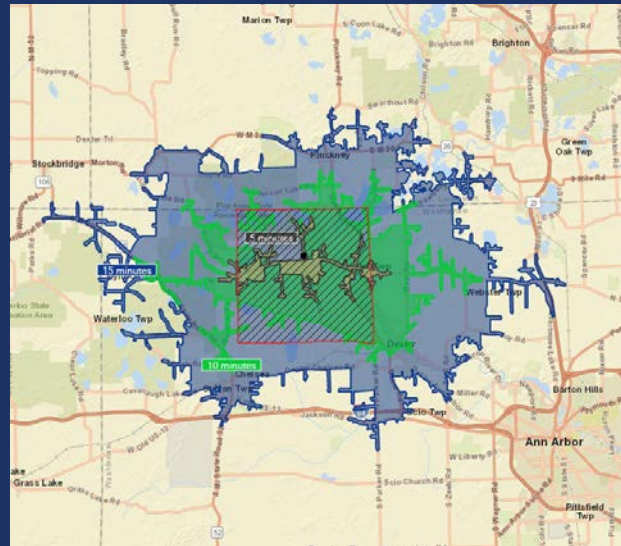
## BUILDING BLOCKS

- » Develop a baseline model, such as Synchro, that determines the Level of Service (LOS) at intersections and primary arterials throughout the Township. This model would then be used to evaluate the added traffic impact associated with new development and provide the Township with the necessary data to manage development outcomes.
- » Require developers to submit a traffic impact assessment that models the Level of Service (LOS) at key intersections to ensure that the LOS doesn't drop below level D.
- » Collaborate with WCRC and Webster Township on a study for the Island Lake Road and Dexter-Pinckney Road intersection to determine directional traffic flow, AM/PM Peak Hour counts and Level of Service (LOS) with a focus on potential intersection redesign.
- » Prepare a Township non-motorized plan that incorporates regional trail plan segments and determines potential shared roadways and design considerations for paved shoulders.
- » Work with WCRC, the City of Dexter, and MDOT to identify and correct dangerous road design and traffic patterns.

# Cornerstone

## Thoughtful Planning for Future Development

Sentiments toward commercial development have changed since the 2007 Survey. Those selecting that they “do not want commercial development” or “commercial development should be discouraged” fell compared to the 2022 Survey. Conversely, those selecting “commercial should be allowed with land use regulations” and “appropriate land use regulations” increased. When asked to identify what type of commercial development would be appropriate, grocery store and restaurant were selected. In the open-ended responses respondents suggested a farmers’ market and outdoor gathering spaces. Overall, responses in favor of commercial development focus on convenience and not destination businesses.



Dexter Township is uniquely positioned to access three commercial districts: Dexter, Chelsea and Pinckney. A 5, 10, and 15-minute drive time analysis from the intersection of Dexter-Pinckney Road and North Territorial Road was created. The adjacent map denotes the coverages within the Township in relation to the respective business districts and verifies the degree of access to these centers is within a reasonable drive. As a result, the Township is in a position where planning for a commercial district may not be necessary. However, a very concentrated business cluster may be appropriate to satisfy errand-oriented trips, such as a convenience store, farmers’ market, and/or coffee shop-bakery. The median household income in Dexter Township is forecasted to increase from approximately \$112,000 in 2022 to \$125,000 in 2027. Current expenditures for food purchased away from home is estimated at \$14 million and food purchased for the home is estimated at \$20 million and these expenditures are slated to increase. Obviously, the majority of these consumer expenditures flow (leak) outside of the Township to the surrounding business districts.

Other development-related initiatives that should be pursued involve the deployment of high-speed internet throughout the Township. Post-COVID work arrangements have shifted to remote, in-home offices, and hybrid work environments both of which require dependable, high-speed internet. Embodied in this shift from office-to-home work environment means a probable reduction in traffic which is a win-win for the Township. Further, survey respondents prefer large lot single family residences and open space subdivisions. Another way to preserve open space is to cluster smaller homes together within a larger tract of land.

### BUILDING BLOCKS

- » Recognize the business districts in Dexter, Chelsea, Pinckney and Ann Arbor as Dexter Township’s downtown. However, consider a small commercial hub at the Dexter-Pinckney / North Territorial intersection focused on errand-orientated businesses.
- » Continue collaboration with the Washtenaw County Broadband Committee to provide and increase high speed internet services to the Township.
- » Consider creating a zoning district that encourages affordable, smaller residential lots within a walkable neighborhood that could be used in conjunction with the Open Space Community Overlay District.
- » Encourage, or require, through zoning to utilize Multi Lakes Sewer Authority’s and/or Portage - Base Lakes Authority sanitary sewer services and minimize unused capacity.

# Cornerstone

## Creating a Sustainable Community

Sustainability is the ability to exist and develop without depleting natural resources for the future. The United Nations defined sustainable development in the 1987 report entitled, “Our Common Future” (also known as the Brundtland Report) as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental and social. To some degree sustainability is linked to population growth. Although Michigan’s population doesn’t increase at the same rate as east and west seaboard communities, recent trends have indicated Michigan will see modest growth and this growth will likely see a migration to urban areas in the State. The greater Ann Arbor urban area will continue to grow due to its excellence in the education, healthcare and technology sectors, and this growth will place added development pressures on surrounding communities like Dexter Township. At the local level sustainability is the balance between economic development and environmental outcomes and their impact on society.

Local sustainability strategies focus on those measures that can be advanced and implemented by the local unit of government. Often these sustainable community strategies are rarely legislative in nature but take the form of incremental projects and initiatives.

### **BUILDING BLOCKS**

- » Provide opportunities for affordable housing through the use of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s), smaller lot sizes, and encouraging cluster housing development.
- » Participate or encourage residents to use regional public transit options.
- » Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
- » Protect productive and prime agricultural lands to ensure future food production.
- » Collaborate with adjacent communities to address regional planning and transportation issues as a way to direct growth and preserve sensitive natural resources and farmland.
- » Encourage, or require through zoning, the installation of EV charging stations in commercial developments.
- » Incorporate EV charging stations in Township facilities, local and regional parks.
- » Promote energy efficiency in homes by permitting residential rooftop solar energy by right, providing materials and resources on weatherization, and encouraging the use of sustainable building materials.
- » Monitor and advocate for the replacement of tree canopy along County roads and within private developments that require local approval.
- » Continuation of Township-wide recycling and evaluate the concept of leaf composting in lieu of burning.
- » Promote the expansion of non-motorized shared pathways.
- » Reduce storm water runoff through green storm water infrastructure enhancements such as porous pavement, rain barrels, and bioswales.
- » Assess the Township’s vulnerability to risk including but not limited to toxic substances, transportation failings, and climate change.
- » Consider an overlay zone around Township lakes to control chemical usage.






## FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for Dexter Township has its foundation in the land suitability analysis. As outlined in the Land Use chapter, the land suitability analysis was developed to determine what properties were suitable for agricultural preservation and those properties suitable for non-agricultural purposes in the future. The result of that analysis concluded that a defined agricultural core existed in the south-central portion of the township and properties outside this core area would likely be developed for lower density, rural residential development. As a result, the FLUM has

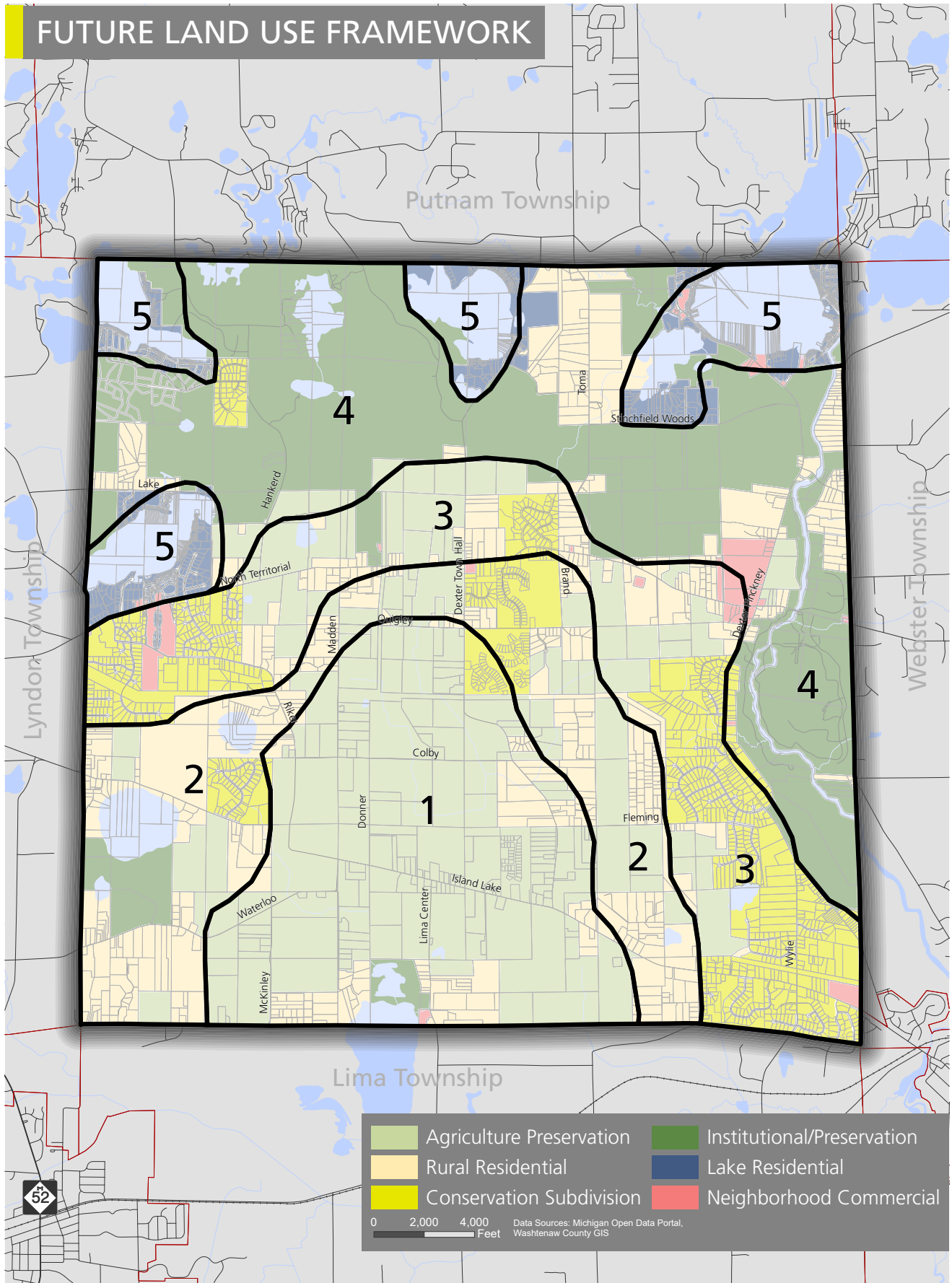
five distinct land use patterns as noted in Table 15 titled “Future Land Use Framework”.

Collectively these five framework typologies paint a picture of a low-density, rural community with access to significant open spaces and outdoor recreation amenities. Except for several small local businesses there are no large commercial districts within the Township, which is consistent with the Cornerstones, where the Township recognizes and supports the adjacent downtowns of Dexter, Chelsea, and Pinckney rather than encouraging commercial development within the Township. The map on the following page shows generally where these land use patterns are located in the township (the numbered black outlines on the map).

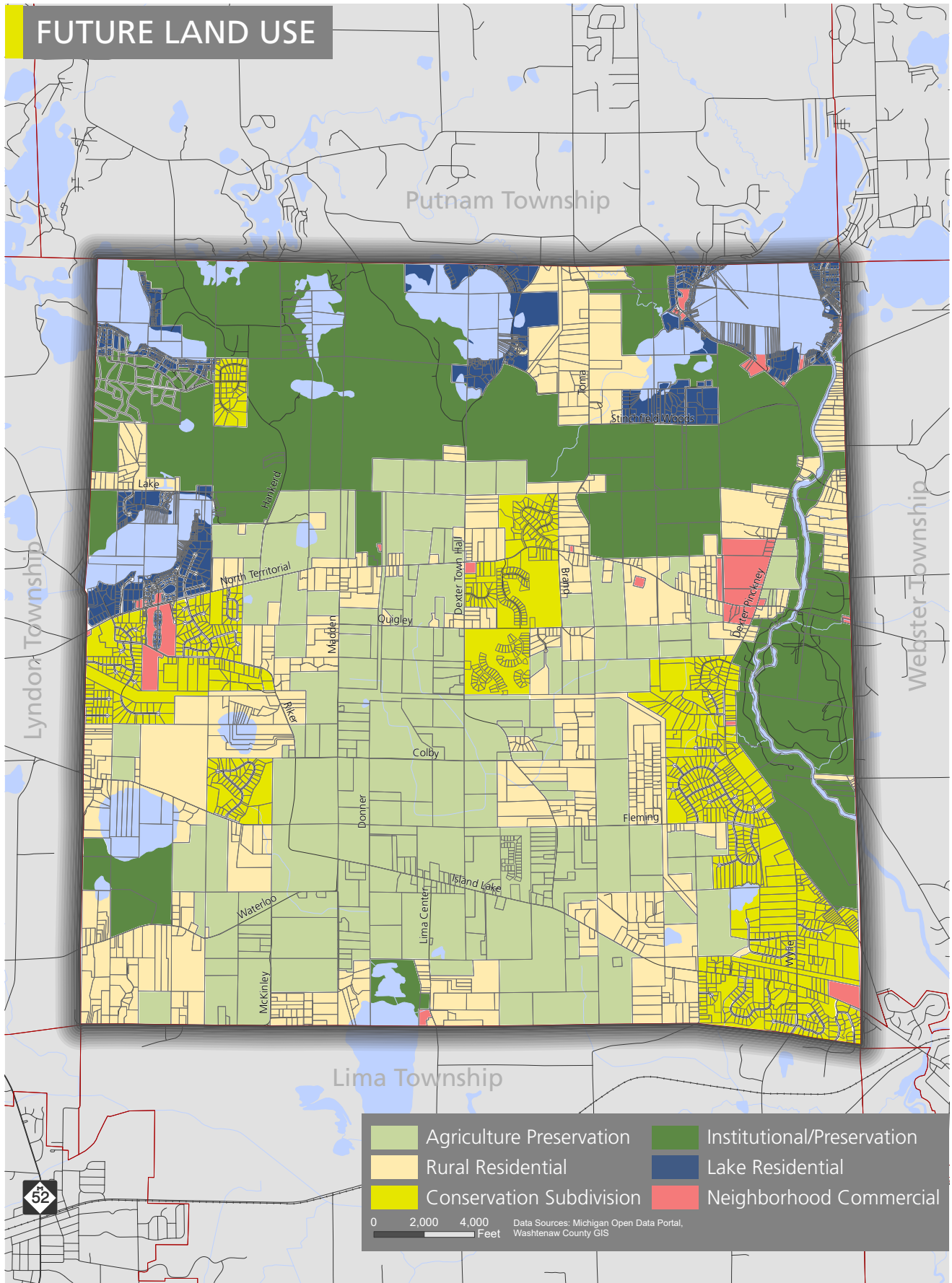
**Table 15: Future Land Use Framework**

Type		Land Use Pattern	Description
1		Working Agricultural	Located in the south-central portion of the Township.
2		Low Density Rural Living	Located in the southern portion of the Township emanating from Agricultural Preservation area.
3		Low Density Suburban Living	Includes many of the platted and site condominium subdivisions that are adjacent to HCMA, UM, and State properties.
4		Natural and Sensitive Areas	Properties along the eastern edge and north portion of the Township.
5		Waterfront	Residential and commercial adjacent to the Township’s inland lakes.

Map 21: Future Land Use Framework



Map 22: Future Land Use Map



**Table 16: Future Land Use & Existing Zoning**

Proposed FLUM	Intent	Proposed Uses	Zoning District(s)	Acreage
Agricultural Preservation	Preserve working agricultural properties and high value agricultural land.	Farms, orchards, vineyards, and large lot residential single family.	AG	6,123
Rural Residential	Provide for large lot rural style living and maintain the agricultural and rural nature of the Township core.	Farms, orchards, vineyards, and large lot residential single family.	RC, RR, PR	4,349
Conservation Subdivision	Provide for subdivision style development in a way that preserves the natural and rural character of the land by encouraging the clustering of smaller lots within the subdivision and the preservation of land around the clusters.	Low to medium density single family residential in planned developments.	RR	2,687
Lake Residential	Permit small lot and residential cottage style development around the lakes using regulations intended to accommodate small lots and protect water quality.	Waterfront single family residential.	LR	1,662
Neighborhood Commercial	Provide for limited commercial and light industrial uses within the Township.	Small, single site retail and service businesses that serve local residents.	C	292
Institutional / Preservation	Maintain public and quasi-public properties, parks, and conservation lands.	Large open spaces with some limited passive recreation amenities.	CU, PA, PR	5,824

## ZONING PLAN

Based on the relationship of Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to the Township zoning ordinance (#43) there are no new or modified zoning districts needed to accomplish the implementation of the future land use map. There are, however, several recommended revisions that should be considered to implement the Cornerstones and these include:

- 1. Transfer of Development Rights.** Incorporate into Article 14; Planned Unit Development, a provision that encourages the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's) from the core agricultural zone to the moderately developed zone based on the land suitability analysis. A TDR program seeks to preserve landowners' asset value by moving the right to build a house(s) from a location where agricultural preservation is encouraged to a location where development is encouraged. The TDR process is usually associated with a planned unit development and the development rights are transferred from the sending zone (agricultural core) to the receiving zone (moderately developed zone). The approved planned unit development is eventually recorded at the County Register of Deeds which memorializes the transfer of development rights from the sending parcel to prevent future development on the same parcel.
- 2. Agri-Tourism.** Allow within the Agricultural District (AG) agri-tourism opportunities, Section 5.03. These activities, conducted on the agricultural property, help provide an additional revenue stream to the property owner.
- 3. Wetlands.** Amend Section 23.06 C. to increase the setback from a wetland from 10 feet to 25 feet to provide extra protection from fertilizer and pesticide infiltration.
- 4. Renewable Energy.** Amend Article 16; General Provisions to include a section on personal scale renewable energy, such as, solar, residential wind, and geothermal facilities.
- 5. Electric Vehicles (EV's).** Amend Article 16; General Provisions to include use of electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations in public facilities, parks, and commercial businesses.
- 6. Accessory Dwelling Units.** Accessory dwelling units (ADU's) provide added housing opportunities in housing markets with high demand and low supply, like the greater Ann Arbor market. However, accessory dwelling units are being converted into short term rentals (STR's) which negates their value as an additional long-term housing unit. Consider amending the Accessory Dwelling Standards, Section 17.02(D), in the zoning ordinance to prohibit the use of ADU's for STR's.



Agri-Tourism



Accessory Dwelling Units

**Table 17: Action Plan**

Preservation of Our Agricultural Heritage		Partners
Encourage agricultural property owners to continue in the Farmland & Open Space Preservation program (PA 116)	2023-2025	Michigan Office of Rural Development and Agriculture
Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow Agri-Tourism activities as a Special Land Use under Article 28.	2024	Township Board
Amend Article 14 to include the elective use of the Transfer of Development Rights option to further the preservation of core agricultural properties.	2024	Huron River Watershed Council
Protection of Our Natural Resources		Partners
Amend Section 23.06 C. to increase the wetland setback from 10 feet to 25 feet.	2024	Township Board, Huron River Watershed Council
Coordinate with Michigan EGLE to evaluate where groundwater recharge areas are located within the Township and then construct an ordinance that prevents contamination of this resource	2027	EGLE
Management of Our Traffic		Partners
Work with partners to evaluate the Island Lake Road and Dexter-Pinckney Road intersection focusing on either an intersection realignment or installation of a roundabout to mitigate traffic backups.	2024	Washtenaw County Road Commission, Webster Township and the City of Dexter
Creating a Sustainable Community		Partners
Amend the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) provisions to prevent their use as Short Term Rentals (STR's)	2024	Township Board
Promote the use of EV Charging stations. Consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that requires EV charging stations at certain public and private facilities.	2025	DTE
Amendment to the Article 16: General Provisions to include renewable energy facilities as a use permitted by right on residential properties.	2026	Township Board
Work with Washtenaw County on the preparation of a Township hazard mitigation plan.	2028	Washtenaw County
Thoughtful Planning for Future Development		Partners
Continue collaboration with the Washtenaw County Broadband Committee to provide and increase high speed internet services to the Township.	2023–2024	Washtenaw County
Consider creating a zoning district that encourages affordable, smaller residential lots within a walkable neighborhood that could be used in conjunction with the Open Space Community Overlay District.	2023–2025	Township Board



# DEXTER TOWNSHIP

PLANNING & ZONING

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DEXTER, MI 48130

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*"A Community For All Seasons"*

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## ***Discussion Issues and Policy Considerations***

Dexter Township Master Plan Review Committee

April 08, 2026

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**Purpose:** To review, evaluate, and provide recommendations regarding updates to the Dexter Township Master Plan.

**Focus:** Policy-level guidance and long-range planning issues. Address gaps in the current Master Plan related to emerging and evolving land uses that were not adequately anticipated at the time of adoption.

**Committee Recommendations:** Should be consist with existing Township ordinances and zoning regulations and framed at a policy level appropriate for inclusion in or guidance from the Master Plan.

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The following topics were identified as areas where emerging or evolving land uses may warrant discussion during the Master Plan review process. These issues focus on long-range planning considerations rather than specific zoning amendments.

For each topic, the Committee should consider whether the current Master Plan adequately reflects Township policy or whether additional policy guidance may be appropriate.

In several cases, these uses are already addressed through the Township's Zoning Ordinance or through recent Township Board direction. The Committee may determine that the Master Plan should either clarify existing policies or that no amendment is necessary.

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### **Short-Term Rentals (STRs):**

Short-term rentals typically involve renting a dwelling for periods shorter than thirty (30) days through online platforms. These uses have expanded rapidly in many communities, particularly in areas with lakes, recreational amenities, or tourism activity. STRs can be defined as a *“commercial activity consisting of renting a dwelling or unit for a term of not more than thirty (30) nights.”*

#### **Local Context**

The Township's current zoning ordinance does not permit short-term rentals as a distinct land use. The Township Board previously considered whether to adopt a general ordinance allowing / regulating short-term rental but ultimately declined to adopt such regulations. As a result, short-term rentals remain prohibited under the Township's current zoning framework.

The current Master Plan references short-term rentals only once (pg. 69), within the Zoning Plan, which recommends amending the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) provisions of the zoning ordinance to ensure ADUs are not used as short-term rentals.

The Township Board has directed the Planning Commission to review the Bed and Breakfast provisions of the zoning ordinance to clarify that Bed and Breakfast establishments represent the primary lodging use permitted in residential areas and that such uses maintain on-site owner occupancy while guests are present.

### **Potential Planning Considerations**

Short-term rentals can introduce a transient occupancy pattern within areas historically planned for permanent residential use. Common planning concerns associated with STR activity include:

- Noise and late-night activity
- Parking congestion on narrow residential or lake roads
- Trash management and property maintenance
- Coordination with emergency services

These issues raise broader planning questions about whether transient lodging uses are compatible with residential neighborhoods and lakefront areas.

### **Potential Master Plan Consideration**

While STRs are currently prohibited, the Committee may wish to evaluate whether the Master Plan should more clearly articulate the Township's rationale for maintaining residential districts primarily for long-term occupancy.

### **Possible Policy Considerations:**

- Maintaining the stability of residential neighborhoods
- Preventing the conversion of housing into transient lodging uses
- Protecting the character of lakefront and rural residential areas

### **March 18, 2026, Discussion:**

- The Planning Commission is actively working on a definition for STRs and land use clarifications.
  - The B&B ordinance needs revision to emphasize owner-occupancy.
  - The committee noted that the Master Plan needs clearer reasoning articulating *why* STRs are not supported. ADU use as rentals was discussed as a related concern.
-

## **Bed and Breakfast Establishments:**

Bed and Breakfast (B&B) establishments represent the primary small-scale lodging use currently contemplated in the Township’s zoning framework. These uses generally involve limited guest accommodation within a dwelling where the property owner remains on site during guest stays. The Township Zoning Ordinance defines Bed and Breakfast as “*A residential facility that is owner-occupied in which overnight accommodations are provided or offered for compensation, including the provision of bathing and lavatory facilities and a breakfast meal.*”

### **Local Context**

Bed and Breakfast establishments are currently a special land use in all residential zoning districts and are subject to standards outlined in Sec. 17.04(K) along with the special land use standards outlined in Article 28 – Special Land Uses.

The Township Board has directed the Planning Commission to review the existing Bed and Breakfast provisions to ensure they clearly distinguish this use from short-term rental activity and reinforce the expectation that the property owner remains on site while guests are present

This review process is currently underway by the Planning Commission and Township staff.

### **Potential Planning Considerations**

Bed and Breakfast establishments may provide limited tourism opportunities while remaining compatible with rural residential environments because they typically involve:

- Small numbers of guests
- On-site owner management
- Operation within an existing residential structure

Because the owner remains on the property, these uses are often viewed as less disruptive than lodging uses that operate without on-site management.

### **Potential Master Plan Consideration**

The Committee may wish to consider whether the Master Plan should explicitly recognize Bed and Breakfast establishments as the Township’s preferred form of small-scale lodging that maintains owner occupancy and compatibility with surrounding residential areas. B&Bs are only mentioned one time in the Master Plan (pg. 31) in the context of revenue generating for farms.

### **March 18, 2026, Discussion:**

- Noted as a commercial income-generating use.
- A non-conforming property cannot expand to become a B&B.
- Committee consensus was to hold deeper B&B discussion until the Planning Commission produces solid definitions for both B&Bs and STRs.

## **Agritourism and Special Event Facilities:**

Agritourism activities allow farms to diversify income through tourism, recreation, and educational experiences connected to agricultural operations. Examples may include farm markets, winery tasting rooms, seasonal festivals, educational programs, and farm-related events.

The Township's Master Plan already recognizes agritourism as a potential opportunity within the Agricultural District. The Plan notes that agritourism activities conducted on agricultural properties can provide additional revenue streams for farms while connecting visitors to local agriculture. Examples identified in the Master Plan include barn weddings, farm markets, corn mazes, winery tastings, demonstration farms, and seasonal agricultural events.

### **Current Township Ordinance**

The Township zoning ordinance already permits several agritourism-related activities, including wineries and special event facilities, subject to Planning Commission review through the Special Land Use process.

The Zoning Ordinance defines a Special Event Facility as:

“A facility where large-scale public or private events are held on a regular basis, provided that the facility is incidental and accessory to the primary agricultural or residential use of the site. Special event facilities may include the sale and consumption of food, beverages, and other goods.”

To maintain compatibility with rural areas, Special Event Facilities must meet several ordinance standards, including:

- Minimum 20-acre lot size
- Minimum 600 feet of road frontage
- Access from a paved major or minor thoroughfare
- the presence of a commercial farm operation
- Outdoor dining or entertainment areas located at least 100 feet from any lot line
- Planning Commission review of hours of operation

Accessory uses may also include managerial facilities, restaurants, educational facilities, and limited lodging for guests associated with the event facility. These standards are intended to ensure that event venues remain connected to agricultural uses rather than operating as stand-alone commercial event centers within rural areas.

### **Potential Planning Considerations**

Agritourism can support the long-term viability of farms by diversifying income sources and increasing public awareness of agriculture. Activities such as farm markets, seasonal festivals, winery tastings, and educational programs can strengthen connections between residents and the Township's agricultural community.

At the same time, certain agritourism activities (particularly larger events) may generate impacts that differ from traditional agricultural operations. Potential considerations may include:

- Increased traffic on rural roads
- Noise associated with events or large gatherings
- Seasonal visitor activity and parking demand
- Lighting associated with evening events

**Potential Master Plan Consideration**

The review committee may want to consider whether the Master Plan’s current language is sufficient to:

- Highlight the potential benefits of agritourism for farm viability and community engagement.
- Acknowledge the impacts of larger events on rural infrastructure and quality of life.
- Reference the Township’s existing ordinance standards as guidance for balancing economic development with rural preservation.

The Master Plan could either maintain its current language if the committee feels the existing recognition is adequate, or it could be updated to more explicitly address community impact, community compatibility, and the role of Planning Commission review in ensuring agritourism supports the Township’s agricultural goals.

**March 18, 2026, Discussion:**

- General committee consensus that the Master Plan supports agritourism.
  - The committee noted the spectrum from low-intensity uses (farm stands) to high-intensity uses (special events) as a framing consideration.
-

## **Renewable Energy and Biofuel Production:**

Renewable energy technologies are expected to become increasingly common as utilities and energy providers move toward Michigan's goal of achieving 100 percent clean energy generation by 2040.

Renewable energy infrastructure may include:

- Wind energy systems
- Solar energy installations
- Battery storage facilities
- Biofuel production facilities

These technologies can provide opportunities for landowners and agricultural operations to diversify income sources. In particular, anaerobic digesters at livestock farms can produce renewable natural gas through the digestion of organic materials such as manure and food waste. The resulting biogas may be used to generate electricity, heat, or vehicle fuel while also providing a waste management benefit.

Although renewable energy technologies were not extensively addressed in the Township's current Master Plan, these uses have become more common in rural communities and may introduce new land use considerations related to siting, scale, and compatibility with surrounding properties.

### **Current Township Ordinance**

Dexter Township has already established zoning regulations addressing several renewable energy technologies, including:

- Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS)
- Solar Energy Systems
- Biofuel Production Facilities

In November 2024, the Township Board approved amendments to the Zoning Ordinance allowing utility-scale wind, solar, and biofuel production facilities as Special Land Uses, subject to Planning Commission review and specific development standards. These standards address issues such as site design, setbacks, landscape buffering, and decommissioning requirements.

The Zoning Ordinance also regulates smaller-scale renewable energy systems, including residential windmills and roof-mounted or ground-mounted solar installations.

### **Potential Planning Considerations**

Renewable energy development can present several land use considerations for rural communities, including:

- The potential conversion of agricultural land for energy production
- Visual impacts on rural landscapes
- Environmental considerations related to water resources, soils, and wildlife habitat
- Infrastructure needs and long-term site restoration after facility decommissioning

**Potential Master Plan Consideration**

Because the Zoning Ordinance already regulates renewable energy facilities, the role of the Master Plan would be to provide general policy guidance rather than establish regulatory standards.

The Committee may consider whether the Master Plan should more clearly address renewable energy development in relation to:

- Supporting the long-term viability of agriculture, including farm-based renewable energy opportunities
- Protecting natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas when evaluating potential locations for energy infrastructure
- Maintaining the Township’s rural character while accommodating emerging energy technologies
- Providing general guidance on balancing economic opportunities with potential land use impacts

**March 18, 2026, Discussion:**

- The Master Plan supports renewable energy. Small-scale residential is already permitted.
  - The committee noted the Master Plan needs to more explicitly address *larger-scale* installations.
  - The Action Plan should be updated to reflect what has transpired in the Township on this topic.
    - Township Zoning Ordinance already regulates large scale and personal renewable energy development. See Sec. 17.06(B) (C) (D) (E) (F) & (H) of the Township Zoning Ordinance.
-

## **Data Centers:**

On February 17, 2026, the Dexter Township Board of Trustees approved a 180-day moratorium on all requests seeking approval to construct and operate data centers in the Township, effective immediately. The intent is to allow the Township more time to study the short and long-term impacts and costs of data center development in the Township.

At the state level, House Bills 5594–5596 (Data Center Regulation Act) would introduce a one-year moratorium on data center development, preventing state and local government from issuing permits for data centers until April 2027, giving lawmakers time to address concerns about energy demands and community impacts.

Michigan is attractive for data center development due to its cold climate (which reduces cooling costs) and tax exemptions approved by the Legislature. These market pressures make it important for the Township to establish clear Master Plan policy.

## **Township Position**

Dexter Township recognizes the growing interest in large-scale data centers, driven by the demand for cloud computing and digital infrastructure. At the same time, data centers are associated with substantial electrical demand, large building footprints, and impacts on the Township’s rural character, natural resources, and existing infrastructure.

The Township’s goal is to ensure that any proposed data center development is carefully evaluated and regulated to protect community interests, natural features, and quality of life for residents. The current 180-day moratorium provides time to assess the potential short- and long-term impacts and to consider policy and ordinance updates that align with the Township’s Master Plan and vision for sustainable growth.

## **Key Issues**

- High energy use – facilities often require 100–500+ MW power loads
- High water use for cooling systems – competes with local needs and affects watersheds
- Environmental impacts related to energy consumption, cooling, and backup generation
- Large building footprints (100,000–1,000,000+ sq ft) inconsistent with rural character
- Limited local economic benefit – relatively few long-term jobs created
- Potential strain on rural infrastructure and electrical transmission systems
- Need for stricter regulations and transparency regarding impacts
- Requirements for renewable energy use

## **Planning Rational**

**Electrical Infrastructure Impacts:** Large-scale data centers require significant electrical capacity and transmission infrastructure that may not be compatible with the Township's rural infrastructure and land use pattern.

**Limited Local Economic Benefit:** While data centers represent significant capital investment, they typically generate relatively few long-term employment opportunities compared to other employment uses.

**Land Consumption:** Large building footprints and extensive security infrastructure can be inconsistent with the Township's desired development pattern and rural character.

**Environmental Considerations:** Data centers may introduce environmental impacts related to energy consumption, cooling systems, and backup generation that are inconsistent with the Township's sustainability goals.

### **Potential Master Plan Consideration**

The Committee should consider whether policy language should be added to guide future decisions. Outright prohibition of data centers in the zoning ordinance is not legally defensible; accordingly, the Township's approach must focus on meaningful regulation rather than exclusion.

The Master Plan should establish the policy foundation for a strong regulatory framework that protects rural character, agricultural land, and environmental resources while setting clear expectations for where and how data centers may be considered.

### **Regulatory Approach**

The Master Plan should direct data centers to limited, specifically defined locations that meet infrastructure criteria and establish policy expectations for strong performance standards. The goal is not accommodation for its own sake, but ensuring that if a data center is proposed, the Township has a defensible, well-grounded regulatory framework that prioritizes agricultural preservation, rural character, and environmental protection.

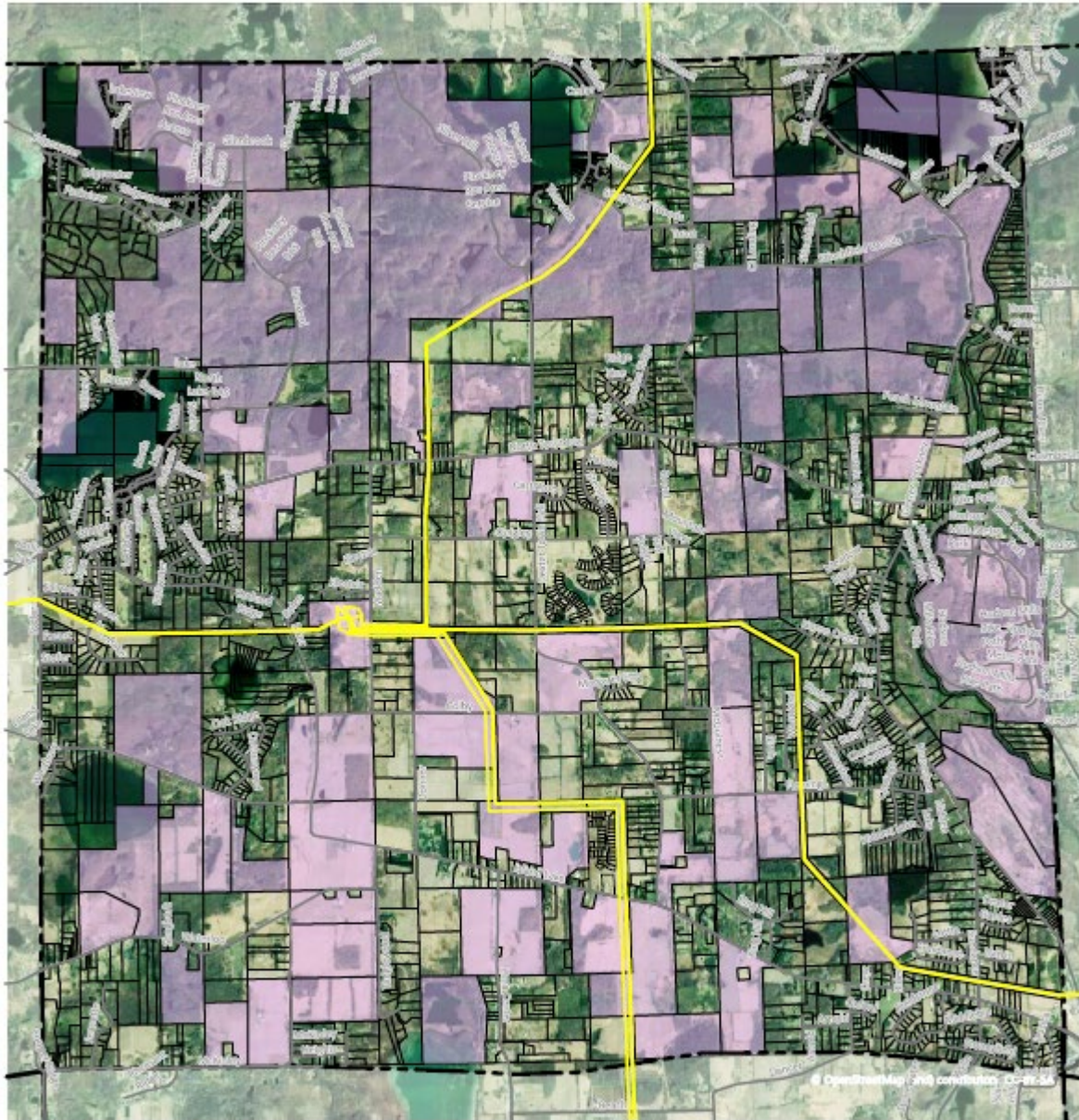
### **Draft Master Plan Policy Language**

- Define Data Centers: *“A facility primarily used to house computer servers, data storage systems, networking equipment, and associated infrastructure including cooling systems, backup power generation, and telecommunications equipment.”*
- Allow for digital infrastructure industries, including hyperscale and edge data centers, in limited areas that leverage reliable electrical power, fiber networks, and transportation corridors while minimizing impacts on surrounding land uses.
- Direct large-scale data centers to areas with existing industrial character, high-voltage electric transmission access, and proximity to fiber backbone infrastructure.
- Require data center facilities to incorporate buffering, architectural screening, noise mitigation, and energy-efficient design.
- Data center developments should be strongly encouraged to utilize renewable energy sources, waste heat recovery, and water-efficient cooling technologies.

### **Recommended Implementation Actions**

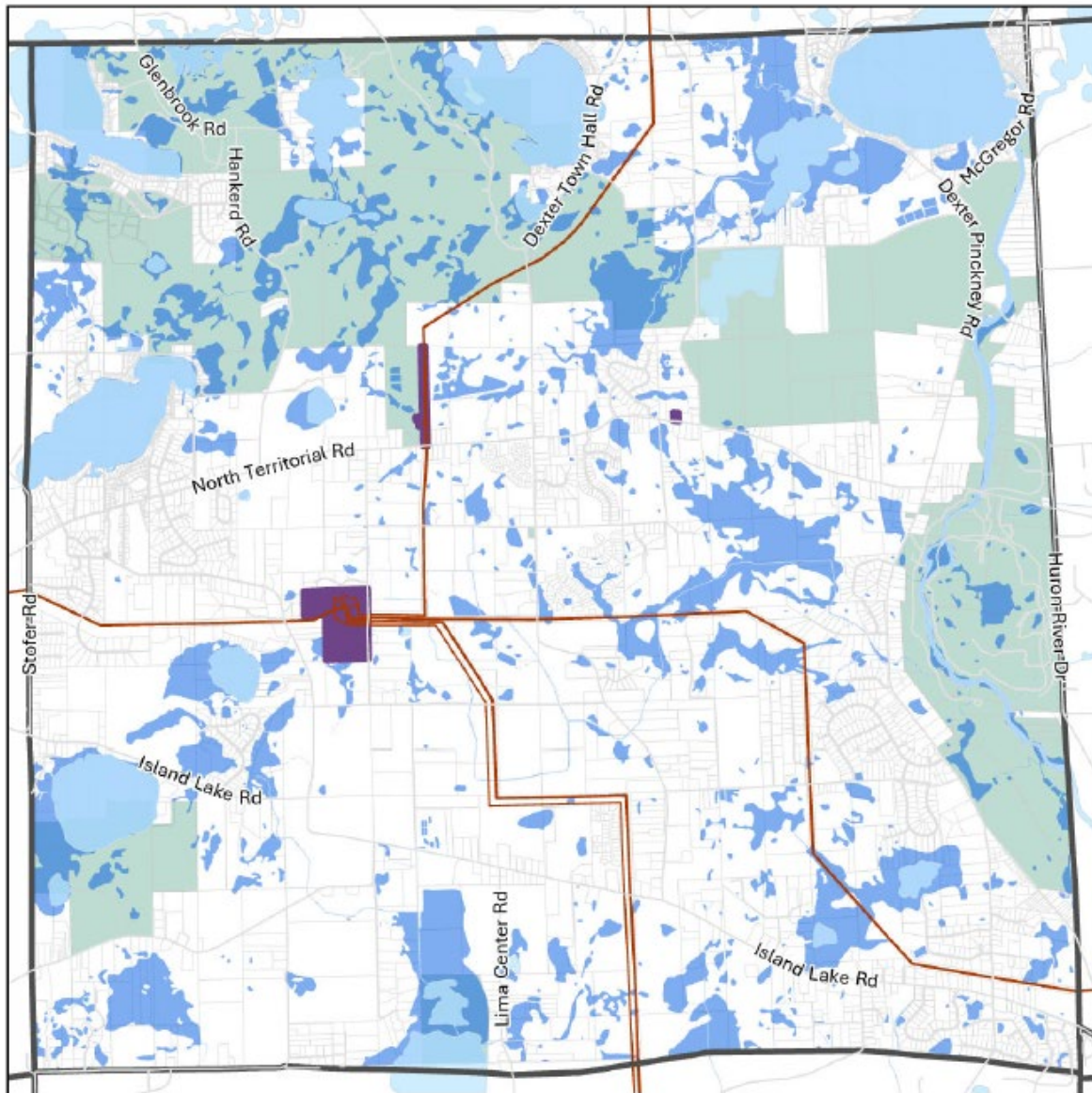
- Update zoning to define Data Center / Digital Infrastructure Facility
- Establish data centers as a special land use requiring Planning Commission review
- Coordinate with utilities on electrical capacity planning
- Map fiber internet and electrical transmission capacity
- Develop design and buffering standards

The maps below illustrate two layers of geographic context relevant to data center siting in Dexter Township. The first map shows high-voltage transmission lines overlaid with parcels of 50 acres or more. The second map shows the same transmission lines overlaid with protected and environmentally sensitive lands, including parks, state land, lakes, rivers, and wetlands, which represent meaningful constraints on where large-scale industrial development could feasibly occur. Together, these maps are intended to support the Committee's policy discussion.



**Dexter Township Transmission Lines**

- Transmission Lines
- Parcels 50 acres or greater



- Transmission Lines
- Electric Substations
- Protected Lands
- Wetlands
- Lakes and Rivers
- Parcels

Electrical Infrastructure, Wetlands,  
and Protected Lands  
Dexter Township  
Washtenaw County, Michigan



This map is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may not be accurate. The information is provided with the understanding that the conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.

Date: Washtenaw County, SEMCOG, State of Michigan  
Prepared by: Carlsle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Date: December 9, 2025



## **Housing Needs:**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), as amended by Public Act 153 of 2024 (HB 5557), requires master plans to include a housing component that assesses current and future needs, including housing for all income levels, and promotes diverse, affordable, and attainable housing.

### **Current Plan Strengths**

The Dexter Township Master Plan (2024) incorporates several elements responsive to these requirements:

- Anticipates 329 new residents and 350 new households by 2045 (pg. 8)
- Provides social characteristics of the Township including age, race, disability, education attainment, and income (pgs. 5–12)
- Recommends considering a zoning district that encourages affordable, smaller residential lots within a walkable neighborhood in conjunction with the Open Space Community Overlay District (pg. 63)
- Recommends providing opportunities for affordable housing through ADUs, smaller lot sizes, and cluster housing development (pg. 64)
- Action Plan recommends amending ADU provisions to prevent their use as Short-Term Rentals (Table 17, pg. 70)

### **Areas for Strengthening**

The Master Plan should strengthen the connection between its recommendations and the new state requirements through clear policy statements that:

- Acknowledge the need to plan for diverse housing options
- Identify areas where these options are appropriate
- Develop more specific strategies to achieve housing goals

The Plan's Future Land Use Framework (Table 15) identifies three land use patterns related to housing: Low Density Rural Living, Low Density Suburban Living (Conservation Subdivision), and Waterfront. Additional language may be necessary to show how a variety of housing types could be incorporated into these patterns.

### **Pending State Housing Legislation**

The following package of bills proposes statewide zoning reforms to increase housing supply and reduce local restrictions. The Committee should be aware of this legislation as it may constrain future local land use decisions:

- HB 5529 - This bill establishes in the Land Division Act a minimum parcel size, for land divisions, and minimum lot size, for subdivisions, of not more than 1,500 square feet for a detached single-family residence if the parcel is accessible to and will be served by public water and public sewer.

- Since not lots are served by both public water and public sewer in Dexter Township, there would not be an immediate effect. However, some single-family neighborhoods may choose not to hook into public water or sewer to avoid these regulations.
- HB 5530 - This bill amends the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act to state that "*A zoning ordinance must not impose a minimum parcel size of more than 1,500 square feet on land zoned for a detached single-family residence if the parcel is accessible to and will be served by public water and public sewer.*"
  - The impact would be the same as HB 5529.
- HB 5531 - This bill amends the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, specifically the site plan process. The amendments limit additional studies to only "studies or other documents that are reasonably necessary to evaluate the proposal to which the site plan relates considering the nature, scope, and intensity of the proposed use." The amendments then address what subsequent studies can be requested, and that the local government "*shall not request additional studies or documents to impose new or additional requirements to the change or to reopen issues previously reviewed and approved.*" The amendments also give municipality 60 days after receipt of a site plan, that the local government shall approve, reject or conditionally approve the site plan or initial site plan approval. Initial site plan approval does not include "*administrative completeness determinations, conceptual or sketch plan reviews, or recommendations made as part of the review process.*" Reasons for denial and how to appeal must be included in any denial.
  - The impact would be that final site plan would need to be efficient to meet the 60-day window and that reasons for denial would need to be well-written. The 60 days may not be enough in some instances, particularly if a special land use or conditional rezoning was associated with the development proposal.
- HB 5532 - This bill amends the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, specifically the protest petition process for rezonings in cities or villages. For rezonings that increase the authorized number of dwelling units, different rules for the petitions are proposed - owners of at least 60% of the area of land proposed for rezoning or owners of at least 60% of the area within 300 feet of the boundary of land proposed for rezoning.
  - It would essentially make those protest petitions more difficult. For Dexter Township, a City of Dexter annexation and rezoning would then have an easier hurdle for the rezoning.

Other items that are being contemplated are:

- ADUs, permitting them by right on properties where residential uses are allowed and single-family dwellings have been established, and establishing regulations for their treatment, including excluding them from dwelling unit density calculations, setback and dimensional requirements relative to the principal dwelling, and exempting them from parking requirements.
  - The Township allows ADU's in some instances but not Lake Residential. The impact would be additional units in lakefront areas, impacts on water and sewer systems, and a lack of design control.

- Duplexes by right in single family zones (unclear if there is a limitation like service by public water and sewer).
  - The Township does not allow duplexes in single-family areas. This could result in more units which would have impacts on sewer and water systems and roads.
- Minimum floor area requirement of 500 square feet.
  - The Township's minimum floor area for a single-family or multiple-family dwelling is 1,000 sf with an additional 100 sf for each bedroom. This proposal would allow for smaller dwelling units in all zoning districts.
- Parking minimum of 1 parking space per 1 residential unit
  - The Township's Zoning Ordinance requires 2-several parking spaces per dwelling-unit. In the Lake Residential Zoning District, parking minimums are a restraint on growth and the size of houses. The proposal would take that tool away.
- Front yard minimum of 15 feet and 5 feet for side yards - unclear where it would apply
  - While the side yard setbacks would work in the LR, they would be much smaller for the RR. The front yard setback would be contrary to the very specific front yard requirements by street in the Township and affect the character of areas and possibly health and safety.

### **Relationship with Short-Term Rentals**

If HB 5585 passes and ADUs are permitted by right without owner occupancy requirements, it may conflict with the Township's current direction on restricting ADUs from use as STRs. The Committee should note this potential regulatory tension in its recommendations.

### **March 18, 2026, Discussion:**

- Key issues identified: affordability, future population needs, and the gap that the Township currently has no zoning for multi-family homes.
- The committee flagged "tiny homes" as a housing diversification consideration to address. Pending state legislation was noted as a material factor for the committee's work.

## **Other Items for Committee Discussion**

The following additional topics were raised during the Committee's review process and may warrant discussion, though they were not assigned to a specific member for primary analysis.

### **Fertilizer Ordinance**

Dexter Township staff have been working in partnership with the Huron River Watershed Council to develop a local fertilizer management ordinance intended to protect the Township's lakes, rivers, wetlands, and other water resources from nutrient pollution. This draft ordinance will be considered by the Township Board in the coming months.

Excess nutrients from lawn fertilizers can enter nearby waterbodies through stormwater runoff. These nutrients can contribute to algal blooms, declining water quality, and ecological degradation, which can negatively impact recreational use, aquatic habitat, and property values. The proposed ordinance establishes basic standards intended to reduce these impacts while still allowing responsible landscape management.

The draft Dexter Township Fertilizer Ordinance (Ordinance No. 45) includes the following key provisions:

- **Seasonal Application Restriction:** Application of manufactured fertilizers would be prohibited between November 15 and May 1, when frozen or saturated ground conditions increase the likelihood of nutrient runoff into nearby water resources.
- **Waterbody and Wetland Protection Buffer:** Fertilizer application would be prohibited within 50 feet of the high-water mark of surface waterbodies and wetlands, establishing a natural buffer to reduce nutrient loading into lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands.
- **Definition of Fertilizer:** The ordinance regulates manufactured fertilizers commonly used for lawn and landscape maintenance. Organic materials such as compost, manure, lime, and wood ash are not included in this definition.
- **Agricultural Exemption:** Agricultural operations producing farm products are exempt from the ordinance provided they follow the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) for nutrient utilization as published by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
- **Enforcement:** Violations would be treated as a municipal civil infraction, with a civil fine of \$200 per violation, with each day a violation continues considered a separate offense. The Township's Ordinance Enforcement Officer would administer enforcement.

The proposed ordinance is designed as a targeted water-quality protection measure, primarily focused on fertilizer use near sensitive water resources rather than broad regulation of lawn care activities across the Township.

Staff will continue working with the Huron River Watershed Council and Township Board to provide outreach and educational materials to residents if the ordinance is adopted, helping property owners understand best practices for protecting local water resources.

**Land Division Act – Public Act 58 of 2025**

Public Act 58 of 2025 (formerly HB 4081/SB 23), signed December 23, 2025, significantly amends Michigan's Land Division Act. Key changes include:

- Raises the maximum non-subdivision lot splits for the first 10 acres from 4 parcels to 10 parcels
- Allows local governments to authorize even more splits beyond this threshold
- Takes effect March 24, 2026 / March 24, 2027

Milestone	What It Means	Effective Date
<b>Local Ordinance Authority</b>	<b>Municipalities can “opt-in” early.</b> Townships, cities, and villages gain the legal authority to pass ordinances that <i>allow</i> these higher-density divisions immediately.	<b>March 24, 2026</b>
<b>Statewide Default Increase</b>	<b>This becomes the automatic state law.</b> If a local municipality <i>has not</i> passed its own ordinance on the matter, the default state-level limit automatically increases to 10 parcels for the first 10 acres.	<b>March 24, 2027</b>

The Committee should consider what this means for Dexter Township's agricultural preservation goals and whether Master Plan language should be updated to acknowledge this shift in state law and its potential impacts on rural land fragmentation. Land divisions are still subject to local zoning laws (minimum lot size requirements, minimum width, access requirements, etc.). Local governments now have the authority to adopt ordinances that allow a greater number of divisions than the state baseline. This means municipalities and counties can tailor land division standards to fit local planning goals.

- Old Rule: The first 10 acres of a “parent parcel” could generally be divided into a maximum of 4 distinct parcels.
- New Rule (State Default): The default limit for the first 10 acres increases to 10 parcels.

Submitted: Thursday, February 26, 2026  
Please publish in the Sun Times News on: Wednesday, March 04, 2026

**NOTICE OF  
DEXTER TOWNSHIP  
MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING  
AND 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2026  
6:00 P.M.**

**Dexter Township Hall  
6880 Dexter-Pinckney Road, Dexter, MI 48130  
(734) 426-3767**

**PURPOSE**

The Dexter Township Master Plan Review Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Planning Commission and Township Board. The purpose of the Committee is to review, evaluate, and provide policy-level recommendations regarding the Township Master Plan. The Committee's work focuses on long-range planning issues and identifying areas where the current Master Plan may not provide sufficient policy guidance for emerging and evolving land uses. The Committee's recommendations are intended to help ensure the Master Plan provides clear, consistent policy direction to guide future land use decisions. Members of the public are invited and encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion.

**2026 MEETING SCHEDULE**

The Master Plan Review Committee will also meet on the following dates:

April 8, 2026  
June 17, 2026  
September 16, 2026  
December 16, 2026

All meetings will be held at 6:00 P.M. at Dexter Township Hall, 6880 Dexter-Pinckney Road, Dexter, MI 48130, unless otherwise posted.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members of the public are welcome to attend and provide comments at the meetings. Written comments should be addressed to the Master Plan Review Committee, 6880 Dexter-Pinckney Road, Dexter, MI 48130, or sent via email to the Director of Planning and Zoning at [dpz@dextertownshipmi.gov](mailto:dpz@dextertownshipmi.gov). All correspondence must be received by 12:00 PM (noon) on the meeting date.

This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Michigan Open Meetings Act), being MCL 15.265(4), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, being Title 42 Chapter 126 and Title 47 Chapter 5 of the United States Code. Dexter Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon seven days' notice to the Master Plan Review Committee. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Office Manager at the address and/or phone number above.

Michelle Stamboulellis, Dexter Township Clerk

Dated: February 26, 2026