

LANSING TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Originally Adopted
June 2, 2004
Revised and Readopted
April 19, 2017

LANSING TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The authority to develop and execute a comprehensive municipal plan for Lansing Township by the Lansing Town Board of Supervisors is granted in Minnesota Statutes, sections 462.351 through 462.364, and specifically in Minnesota Statutes, sections 462.355 and 462.356.

II. BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to reflect the values and goals of Lansing Township Residents. This information should serve as the basis for making decisions and evaluating decisions that will preserve and protect the identity and uniqueness of Lansing Township.

In July 2002, the Lansing Township Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an interim ordinance to protect the planning process and study legal, planning and zoning issues of concern within the Township. The (“Ordinance”) shall be known as the Lansing Township Zoning Ordinance and was approved and passed on June 2, 2004 by the Lansing Board of Supervisors.

Lansing Township has the authority under Minnesota Statute 462 to conduct planning and zoning activities. The Township is governed by an elected Township Board of Supervisors, consisting of five members, each elected for three-year terms by the Lansing electorate. Township Clerk and Treasurer are both appointed positions by the Township Board. Other employees working for Lansing Township would also be appointed by the Township Board.

III. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to identify problems, opportunities, issues and needs and organize public policy in a manner that serves the best interest of the greatest number of people in the Township. The Comprehensive Plan is generally acknowledged as a tool with which to guide growth. In rural Minnesota, it must guide rational decision-making in the face of limited resources and absence of growth. The Township seeks to balance residential development with agricultural, commercial/industrial and recreational uses.

The Comprehensive Plan is no more or less than a statement of public policy based on a common vision, with goals of where the Township wants to go and how it intends to get there. It is a general plan, which is intended to portray policies, objectives, concepts and relationships. It must have a degree of flexibility to be helpful in making decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses future growth with land use, quality of life, community facilities, environment, subdivisions, illegal dumping, and economic development.

The Comprehensive Plan represents the backdrop upon which future land use may develop in a rational manner.

The plan itself is one stage of the planning process that a community undertakes. Following the adoption of the land use plan, the Lansing Town Board will adopt a zoning ordinance to put the plan into effect. The difference between the land use plan and a zoning ordinance is that the former sets forth the objectives and goals of the community with respect to land use, while the latter is a regulatory device through which the plan's goals and policies are carried out or achieved.

The Comprehensive Plan is not infallible. Circumstances change and the plan must change also. It will therefore, need to be reevaluated periodically. If an amendment is proposed, it will be considered in light of its potential impacts on the environment, the neighborhood, the Township, the County and public services.

IV. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Lansing Township is located in Mower County, Minnesota. It is located in Township 103 North, Range 18 West. It borders on Udolpho, Red Rock and Austin Townships in Mower County. It is bordered by Freeborn County to the west and the City of Austin to the south.

The first settler in Lansing Township was H.O. "Hunter" Clark, who arrived in 1853, building a log cabin near what is now Oakwood Cemetery. Native Americans frequently camped in that same location, bands such as the Sac, Fox, Iowas and Sioux. The first railroad through Lansing Township was built in September of 1867. It passed from Owatonna to Austin. The Village of Maplevue was incorporated in 1945 and is independent of Lansing Township government.

In 1854, the Lansing United Methodist Church was incorporated. It was the second oldest operating Methodist Church in the State of Minnesota and considered a treasured Landmark until the members dissolved the Church in 2014.

In 1860, Patrick Eagan built a home in the Village of Lansing and later became the Lansing Hotel. It remained a hotel until the early 1900's

The Lansing Elementary School began in 1858.

The village of Ramsey was platted in 1873. It was at the junction of the Southern Minnesota division of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St Paul Railroads. In 2009, City of Austin annexed this area.

The village of Lansing was surveyed and platted in 1858.

The Lansing Post Office was established in 1858.

The Lansing Co-operative Creamery was incorporated in 1858. The Creamery building still stands today, but has not been in use as a Creamery for many years. Today it is being remodeled as a private residence.

According to the 2010 census the Township had a population of 941 people. The population distribution is as follows:

Age Range	Number	Percentage
18 or younger	220	23.4
18-24	74	7.9
25-44	202	21.5
45-64	286	30.4
65+	159	16.9

The 2014 population estimate prepared by the State Demographer places the Township's population at 945. According to the Census Data, the total housing units in the Township are 408 and are further explained as follows:

Data Item	Number	Percent
<i>Occupancy Status</i>		
Occupied Housing Units	367	90
Vacant Housing Units	41	10
<i>Tenure</i>		
Owner Occupies with a Mortgage or Loan	187	51
Owned Free and Clear	116	31.6
Renter Occupied	64	17.4
<i>Vacancy Status</i>		
For Rent	8	19.5
For Sale Only	15	36.6
Sold not Occupied	1	2.4
For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	4	9.8
Other Vacancy	13	31.7

The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates 405 total housing units with the following housing information of the 379 occupied units within the Township:

Data Item	Number	Percent
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$56,369	
<i>Median Housing Value</i>	\$143,800	
<i>Median Gross Rent</i>	\$802	
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$56,369	
<i>Median Monthly Housing Cost</i>	\$881	
<i>Year Structure Built</i>		
2010 or Later	0	0
2000 to 2009	41	10.1
1990 to 1999	21	5.2
1980 to 1989	13	3.2
1970 to 1979	45	11.1
1960 to 1969	33	8.1
1950 to 1959	91	22.5
1940 to 1949	31	7.7
1939 or earlier	130	32.1
<i>Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Unit</i>	2.45	
<i>Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Unit</i>	2.74	
<i>Vehicles Available</i>		
No Vehicles Available	22	5.8
1 Vehicle Available	79	20.8
2 Vehicles Available	168	43.8
3 or More Vehicles Available	112	29.6

Housing units within the Township are served by individual sewage treatment systems that are regulated under Minnesota Statute and Rules.

V. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Climate. According to the Soil Survey of Mower County, Minnesota (June 1989), the average winter temperature is 15 degrees Fahrenheit and the average daily minimum temperature is six degrees Fahrenheit. In summer, the average temperature is 68 degrees F, and the average daily maximum is 79 degrees F. The total annual precipitation is 31.6 inches in April through September, which includes the growing season for most crops.

Average seasonal snowfall is 52 inches. Prevailing winds are from the south. At least one inch of snow is on the ground, on an average, 35 days of the year.

2. Water Resources. The Cedar River flows through the Township. The Township is part of the Cedar River watershed, which contains 487.6 square miles. The headwaters of the Cedar River are located six miles northeast of Blooming Prairie.

There are no natural lakes in Lansing Township or Mower County. The only pond in Lansing Township is the Ramsey Mill Pond. Spring Creek, Well's Creek, Wolf Creek, Murphy Creek (also known as County Ditch No. 26), Roberts Creek, Turtle Creek and Joint County Ditch No. 5 are located in the Township as are several unnamed creeks.

3. Soils. The main general soil types found in Lansing Township and their descriptions are:

- a. Marshan-Waukee-Hayfield association: Nearly level and gently sloping, poorly drained to well drained, loamy soils on outwash plains and stream terraces.
- b. Blooming-Maxcreek-Havana association: Nearly level to moderately steep, well-drained, poorly drained, silty soils on moraines.
- c. Sergeant-Brownsdale association: Nearly level, somewhat poorly drained and poorly drained, silty soils on till plains.
- d. Rossfield-Taopi-Faxon Variant association: Nearly level and gently sloping, well-drained and poorly drained, silty soils on uplands.¹

4. Geology. Mower County is underlain with limestone and dolomite. Sinkholes, caves and underground streams form in these "karst" areas. Fractures and fissures in the karst areas make groundwater resources susceptible to pollution from a variety of sources, including agriculture.²

5. Wildlife. The common types of wildlife found in the area include pheasants, foxes, partridge, turkeys, quail, cottontail rabbits, squirrels, raccoons and deer. Ducks, geese, herons, muskrats, and a few wild mink live near the riparian and wildlife management areas.

VI. ROADS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There are approximately 28 miles of Township roads. The following State and County Roads go through the Township: U.S. Highway 218, State Highway 251, Interstate 90, and County Roads: 2, 16, 25, 27 and 61.

The Canadian Pacific Railway is an important resource for transportation of local agricultural production.

¹ Source: General Soil Map, Mower County Minnesota, in Soil Survey of Mower County, Minnesota, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, (1989).

² Mower County Comprehensive Plan (1993), p. 11.

Electrical power is offered by the Austin Utilities and Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. Telephone central offices are located in Austin. Fire service is provided by the City of Austin. Natural gas is provided in select areas by Austin Utilities and Minnesota Energy Resources. The Sheriff's office is located in Austin, Minnesota. The First Responders are from Austin. The Town Hall is located in the village of Lansing at 26938 539th Avenue, Lansing, Minnesota 55950.

Lansing Village, an unincorporated village, has water and sanitary sewer systems. In 2012 a sewer district was added for the Andyville area that added 21 residences to the sanitary sewer system.

VII. UNIQUE FEATURES

Lansing Village is located in the northeast quarter of the Township. It is an unincorporated village. The village has sanitary water and sewer systems. In 2012 a sewer district was added for the Andyville area which added 21 residents to the sanitary sewer system.

There is an elevator, private Bible school, Church and post office in the Township.

There is one eighteen-hole golf course at Meadow Greens And in 2014 added an additional 9 holes making it a total of 27 hole golf course.

There is an auto stock car racetrack known as Chateau Speedway.

There are four businesses with liquor licenses: The Windrift, Meadow Greens, Lansing Corners and Chateau Speedway.

There is one auto salvage yard in the Township. There are two commercial waste disposal sites.

U.S. Highway 218, which runs north - south through the Township, has sites developed as commercial and residential.

VIII. CURRENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Lansing Township Estimated Market Values					
	Year	Total EMV	Agricultural/Rural	Residential	Commercial
	2015	\$176,312,900	\$116,292,100	\$47,812,100	\$9,046,100
% of Total			66%	27%	5.1%
	2010	\$129,939,250	\$74,139,250	\$48,130,950	\$6,124,300
% of Total			57%	37%	4.7%

New residential homes continue to be built within the Township. Agricultural land is the majority of the tax base because of high values of agricultural land. The Township lost many residential properties annexed into the City of Austin.

Agricultural land values in Mower County increased significantly in recent years. In 2013, average tillable land value rose by 45 percent when the average acre of tillable land was valued at \$7,600. The county is required to stay within 90 to 105 percent of all tillable land sales within the county. Values are declining slightly from their peak.

IX. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TREND

Residential development is a concern in the Township. Many individuals seek the beautiful natural environment of Lansing Township to build homes. There is a certain amount of “sprawl” spilling over into the Township from the City of Austin. There are currently conflicts between the historically rural character of the Township and the increased residential development. On the one hand, there is a history of agriculture providing the livelihood to the citizens. On the other hand, some citizens have purchased property and increased the tax value of the county by building new homes. The Township acknowledges this conflict and the need to balance it.

The future use and development of property in and around landfills needs to be planned carefully and responsibly to 1) protect human health, public safety and the environment at and near the landfills and 2) to accommodate local government needs and desires for land use with consideration for health and safety requirements. Construction and demolition debris contains waste that may be hazardous.³ Landfill size is important and effects the redevelopment of land and public services, wildlife habitats, wetlands, density of residential development, infrastructure needs, and the expansion of an economic base that must be balanced with individual property rights and community interests and goals.⁴

Industrial uses currently exist in the corridor along Highway 218, and it best benefits the Township at large to develop the growth of industrial uses. Lansing Township's future is not best formed as a destination point for the development of additional landfills, whether municipal, demolition waste, or solid waste landfills.

It is critical to balance the conflicts between the rural character of the Township and the potential for increased residential development and for industrial-type development. In order to do so, it will be necessary to maintain our high quality of life without threatening the safety, health, and welfare of citizens or damaging town roads.

³ Construction and Demolition Waste Landfills, Prepared for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Solid Waste, February 1995 (May 18, 1995 draft report)

⁴ See Generally Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Chapter NR 503, “On Time Disposal Landfills, Small Size Construction and Demolition Waste Landfills, and Intermediate Size Construction and Demolition Waste Landfills.” (Addressing means of regulating landfills).

A proper mix of agricultural, residential, business and industrial uses is the best direction in which to lead the Township's growth.

X. TRENDS IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Lansing Township is in a dramatic period of change. Farms are found throughout the countryside. Farm size is increasing, and this has been a trend since World War II. At the same time, people working in towns have moved to the Township to enjoy the Township's beautiful, but fragile, landscape with its oak savannas and gently rolling hills. The balance of non-farm residences and farming is a tension, which the Township must carefully balance.

It is of paramount importance that good agricultural land continues to be used for that purpose. Livestock, particularly dairy and hogs, was once a part of nearly every local farm. The dairies have diminished until only a few remain today. It is believed that the number of hog farmers has also decreased over time. Larger confinement operations have replaced smaller operations. This has been and will continue to be a concern of Township residents.

Lansing's location near the City of Austin creates another set of both conflicts and opportunities. The City continues to grow and people find Lansing an ideal place to live. The additions of non-farm residences, and industrial/commercial-type land uses have removed agricultural land from production. These complexities are part of what encouraged residents to consider land use planning within the Township.

XI. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES

It is the goal of the Township to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the residents. To do so, it is necessary to balance development interests and ensure that land use is developed such that it is compatible with the natural environment. The goal is to conserve and protect the unique natural, historic and physical resources of the Township. It is a goal to maintain agricultural quality land as agricultural land where possible, particularly land with a crop equivalency rating of 60 or greater.

A. Development.

Much of our land in the Township is currently used for agriculture. The Township's goal is to maintain agriculture as a use in the Township, and to control residential development and industrial uses as deemed appropriate.

The following policies shall be considered to meet these goals:

1. Discourage development that can create a nuisance or is injurious to public health and safety, which is not consistent with the rural character and future plans;

2. Encourage the expansion of rural housing in higher density residential areas while limiting the unnecessary removal of prime agricultural land from production;
3. Employ appropriate setback requirements for housing, subdivisions, feedlots and other industrial/business related uses in a manner to balance residential, agricultural, business and industrial uses.

B. Environmental Protection.

The optimum quality of life for Township residents is sought by protecting the natural environment, preventing pollution, and meeting the needs of current residents and owners of land without compromising the ability of future generations. The Township's goal is to conserve and protect its unique and sensitive natural and cultural landscapes.

The following policies shall be considered to meet these goals:

1. Protect air quality and livability by appropriate setbacks on development;
2. To protect wildlife habitat areas through orderly development;
3. Encourage farm practices that protect soil and prevent water degradation.

C. Transportation and Roads.

Lansing Township will continue to maintain Township roads and protect, preserve and maintain roads and right-of-ways in a manner consistent with safety and efficiency.

The following policies shall be considered to meet these goals:

1. Organize commercial traffic to direct it to areas and roadways most able to withstand such use.
2. Ensuring that maintenance costs are shared fairly among all road users.
3. Providing maintenance and improvements as needed to ensure safe and efficient travel.

XII. IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan, as noted in the introduction, is merely the planning tool for the Township to follow for the future physical growth and development of the Township. Zoning is a legal device used to implement the plan policies and goals.

It is the Township's intent to enact an ordinance to control certain land use issues, while protecting roads, minimizing nuisances, providing safety measures, and protecting property values through setbacks and other zoning tools. The mission of the Township in preparing the Comprehensive Plan and proposed Zoning Ordinance is to help ensure local control over land uses, by developing a land use plan and ordinance to retain the rural character of the Township. The Township should balance competing interests to continue a high quality of public health, safety and welfare for its citizens.

Lansing Township and its citizens understand that a proper balance must be achieved between adopting such procedures and measures to protect the environment and the necessity of fostering a strong, healthy, and sustainable economy in the Township, including the production of livestock and grain, and other activities, whether the endeavors are accomplished by its private citizens or public entities.

The Lansing Township Comprehensive Plan and any proposed Zoning Ordinance is deemed to provide such a balance of interests and is designed to support and effectuate these goals and policies.

Adopted on this 19th day of April, 2017.

BY THE TOWN BOARD

Chairperson

Attest: _____
Clerk