

MORTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN - 2004

MECOSTA COUNTY
STATE OF MICHIGAN

ADOPTED JULY 13, 2004

NOTE: All data statistics shown in this Master Plan is updated from
the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.
All figures giving acreage for existing zoning districts are
approximate and are taken from the Morton Township
2010 Assessing Roll.

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DATE SCHEDULE OF AMENDMENTS, RESOLUTIONS AND CORRECTIONS

May 9, 2007 _____ Proposed Zoning Map

Amend Section 22, that which lies south of 9-Mile, bounded on the east by the Little Muskegon River and bounded on the west by 90th Avenue, currently shown proposed as C2 & R3, to be changed to A-2
Recommended by the Zoning Board – 04/15/2007
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 05/09/2007

Amend name of Proposed Zoning Map

To read “Morton Township Guide For Future Land Use As Per The Master Plan 2004
Recommended by the Zoning Board – 04/15/2007
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 05/09/2007

May 9, 2007 _____ Amend Proposed Zoning Changes

Page 17, last sentence amended to reflect name change of proposed zoning map.
Recommended by the Zoning Board – 04/15/2007
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 05/09/2007

Sept 13, 2011 _____ Complete update of all census data to 2010 Census figures and updated information/revision to other sections.

Introduction; Goals & Objectives; Proposed Zoning Changes: revision to text
Demographic Profile: deleted “Total Population” charts
Housing Chart: (updated with last 5 years data)
Economic Profile: (updated with 2010 census data)
Community Facilities: library updated, addition of District Health Dept #10 & Mecosta County Development Corporation
Public Safety Services: revisions and updates to all text
Existing Land Use: land use classifications updated with 2010 assessing data, addition of Tullymore and St. Ives resort communities
Recommended by the Planning Commission (Public Hearing) – 08/17/2011
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 09/13/2011

Feb 14, 2012 _____ Amend Goals & Objectives

Page 2, paragraph 3, delete current sentence, add new.
Recommended by the Planning Commission (Public Hearing) – 01/18/2012
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 02/14/2012
Summary published in Pioneer – 02/28/2012

Sept 15, 2016 _____ Updates & reformatting of information in following

Page 4: Paragraph 3 & 4 reformatted; updated 5-year permit chart.
Page 9: Name updates – hospitals.
Page 11: Update number of cabins available in SLL Park.
Page 16: Update to industrial (business) park information.
Page 15-17: Reformatted (added charts) to Existing Land Use classifications.
Approved by Planning Commission at regular meeting – 05/18/2016
Recommended by the Planning Commission (Public Hearing) – 08/17/2016
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 09/15/2016
Summary published in Pioneer – 09/26 /2016

April 16, 2019 _____ Updates of information in following
Page 8: Morton Township Library
Page 9: Hospitals & Medical Centers
Page 11: School Section Lake Park
Page 11: Added Solar & Wind Generated Energy
Page 12: Morton Township Fire/Rescue Department
Reviewed by Planning Commission at regular meeting – 01/15/2019
Recommended by the Planning Commission (Public Hearing) – 03/19/2019
Approved by the Morton Township Board of Trustees – 04/16/2019
Summary published in Pioneer – 04/30/2019

INTRODUCTION

The Morton Township Master Plan is intended to guide the future growth and development of Morton Township over the next ten (10) to fifteen (15) years. This plan will be based upon fairness, consistency and predictability. We recognize that in order to be successful, it must consist of partnerships with elected and appointed officials, residents, property owners, and businesses. The primary impetus for the development of this plan is the Township's desire to ensure that the community continues to be a place which exemplifies all of the desired characteristics associated with a resort, rural and agriculturally based lifestyle while simultaneously providing for measured growth and economic development. To this end, we will foster regulations, processes, and procedures to ensure fair and consistent treatment.

Morton Township is located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Mecosta County and is one of the fastest growing townships in the County. It lies within the bound of 12 Mile to the north, 6 Mile to the south, 60th Avenue to the east and 120th Avenue to the west.

Morton Township is home to five (5) resort and recreational areas, targeting retirees and recreational enthusiasts alike. These include the Canadian Lakes development, School Section Lake area, Tullymore and St Ives developments, and the Tri-Lakes (Blue, Mecosta & Round Lakes) area. These natural and recreation areas (including the associated residential developments) dominate the western half of the Township.

The Village of Mecosta is located in section 11 and 12 (northeast corner) of Morton Township where Michigan state highway M-20 crosses the east branch of the Little Muskegon River.

The development of this Master Plan will help Morton Township continue to be pro-active in their approach to planning by coordinating their efforts with those of the Mecosta County Planning Commission and the surrounding property owners' associations.

The Master Plan will first define those issues most important to a community. An analysis of the existing features and defining characteristics of the Township will be identified. The analysis will include a map of existing land uses in Morton Township, population, economic, and housing statistics, a description of the physical constraints and resources and circulation patterns of the community. Based on all gathered information and input from the citizens, goals and objectives will be created which outline the growth and development patterns for the community over the next ten (10) to fifteen (15) years. These goals and objectives will help create a future land use plan and circulation for the Township. Finally, the implementation section will present some key strategies the Township can use to meet its Master Plan goals and objectives.

By providing an outline for the development of Morton Township, the citizens are attempting to preserve, protect and enhance the desirable attributes of the community for the future residents of the Township.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In establishing a Land Use Plan, a component(s) is the formulation of a community's goals and objectives.

Establishing goals determines the destination toward which the community's planning efforts are directed.

The primary objectives are that new development in Morton Township will be designed to preserve natural features, rural residential atmosphere, and similar elements intended to maintain our rural and residential structure. Specific objectives can be found in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Both, goals and objectives, are necessary components of the planning process as they provide the framework within which the plan is developed and the basis for determining future courses of action toward the physical development of the County.

The goals and objectives listed here are for Morton Township's general development for the future physical development of the community. They are intended to reflect the land use priorities of the Township, give direction to land developers regarding the Township's physical environment, establish a stated policy, and to assist the planning commission in assessing the impact of their planning decisions.

There may be some intentional overlap in the stated goals and objectives. This allows the Planning Commission to utilize the goals and objectives of a particular category without referring to the entire section and reiterates the importance of the identified policy. In addition, occasionally the objectives may appear to be in conflict. For example, economic development goals may conflict with environmental protection goals. Therefore, in these instances, it is the Planning Commission who will balance the importance of the conflicting objectives. The following goals and objectives have several purposes:

- ❖ To guide the Planning Commission when considering rezoning requests. The Planning Commission should reference the plan's goals and objectives to ensure compliance with the policies and intent of the master plan.
- ❖ To guide the Planning Commission when considering and reviewing Morton Township's Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances. The Planning Commission should compare the goals and objectives of the Township's Plans with those of Mecosta County to assure coordination and compatibility or to identify differences for discussion.

Finally, a Township's goals and objectives must not be stagnant. They should be reviewed at a minimum, on an annual basis, by the Planning Commission to ensure that the intent and purpose of the goals remain current.

PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

A careful and thorough study shows that Morton Township has a need for land zoned for multiple family complexes. There is now very little land identified for that. There are concerns about what the extra traffic; sewage disposal, especially around the lakes, rivers and streams; outdoor lighting; and noise would do to the now quiet, rural R-1 and R-2 areas. This seems to be more compatible with commercial areas.

Attached is a copy of the current land use (Zoning Map) and a copy of the Morton Township Guide for Future Land Use.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The most comprehensive source of data for Morton Township’s demographic profile is the updated 2010 Census figures. Additional demographic information is available online at <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

	Count <u>2010</u>	%	Count <u>2000</u>
TOTAL POPULATION _____	4311	+19.8	3597
HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE			
Total Households _____	1900	100.0	
HOUSING OCCUPANCY			
Total Housing Units _____	3301	100.0	
Occupied Housing Units _____	1981	60.0	
Seasonal, recreational or occasional use Units _____	1320	40.0	

Population Trends and Age Characteristics

The total population going from 3,597 people in 2000 to 4311 in 2010 is a 19.8 % increase. This shows a significant ten-year growth for the township. While Mecosta County was one of the slowest growing counties within a five County Region, Morton Township was the fastest growing township. The 2010 Census shows that Morton Township’s population under the age of twenty is 22% and the population over the age of sixty-five is 31%. This shows a definite trend towards a Morton Township population reaching retirement age.

Educational Attainment

The population of Morton Township is well educated. Over 93% were classified as high school graduates. More than 26% have a bachelor’s degrees or higher. In 2009, there were 721 citizens (25.years or older) of Morton Township enrolled in an education program.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

It is important to examine the housing stock in Morton Township because it serves as an indicator of the quality of life for residents in the community. Furthermore, housing information also acts as an economic gage for the community and surrounding areas.

Morton Township has 6404 parcels of land with 3167 total housing units.* Of this amount 1980 (62.5%) were occupied full time, 1187 (37.5%) were vacant or for seasonal, recreation, or occasional use, and 126 (4.5%) vacant. Higher occupancy is generally desirable as it suggests a stable population base, viable neighborhoods, and sufficient tax base. As the figures show, over half of Morton Township's housing units are either second homes or vacation homes.

*2010 Census Figures

New Residence Totals	
Year Built	Total
1940's	136
1950's	214
1960's	246
1970's	632
1980's	517
1990's	361
2000-2010	511

- The median year structure built is 1984, with two hundred built in 1939 or earlier.
- The trend for the last five (5) years is showing a slowdown in the building, with a higher construction value.
- The median dollar value in 2000 was \$127,000 with 2010 showing a median dollar value of \$156,600 for all owner-occupied housing units.
- The median asking price on vacant-for-sale-only housing is \$139,300.
- There are 112 housing units in Morton Township that are less than \$10,000.

Permits	New Residences		Mobile Homes in Parks*		Mobile Homes on Private Lots		Totals	
	Count	Value	Count	Value	Count	Value	Count	Value
2011	12	2,591,500	2	15,000	1	59,520	15	2,666,020
2012	7	1,225,000	1	30,000	3	48,580	11	1,303,580
2013	9	2,124,500	5	102,200	3	108,000	17	2,334,700
2014	4	850,000	1	64,000	0	0	5	914,000
2015	5	919,172	0	0	0	0	5	919,172
5 Year Total	37	7,710,172	9	211,200	7	216,100	53	8,137,472

*Includes Sunset Shores

ECONOMIC PROFILE

A major focus of economic development in Morton Township in the last 10 to 15 years has been tourism and resort business.

Morton Township’s employment status for the population 16 years of age and over shows:

SEX	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	NOT IN LABOR FORCE	TOTAL
MALE	635	105	849	1589
FEMALE	555	32	1139	1726
TOTAL	1190	137	1988	3315

There are many employers who employ two or more people. The classification categories for these employers are as follows:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture Building Contractors Child Care Center Golf Courses Government Offices Hotel/Motels Insurance & Financial Institutions Manufacturing Establishments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical & Dental Offices Real Estate Offices Recreational Restaurants & Bars Retail Services Schools Service Establishments Wholesale Establishments |
|--|---|

Income and Poverty Status

Morton Township reports a median household income of \$46,953 on the 2010 Census with a breakdown of families listed below:

	Estimate
Families	1,320
Less than \$10,000	74
\$10,000 to \$14,999	35
\$15,000 to \$24,999	136
\$25,000 to \$34,999	120
\$35,000 to \$49,999	243
\$50,000 to \$74,999	330
\$75,000 to \$99,999	168
\$100,000 to \$149,999	176
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10
\$200,000 or more	28
Median family income (dollars)	51,757

However, these numbers are somewhat inflated as a significant portion of the 1320 families are also receiving both social security and retirement income. There are approximately 209 families receiving supplemental security income and/or cash public assistance. Approximately 11.1% of Morton Township’s population income is below the poverty level.

PHYSICAL CHARACTER - NATURAL FEATURES

The physical elements which make up Mecosta County and Morton Township are its natural resources. They include the geology, soil, topography, wetlands, water bodies, farms and forested lands as well as other characteristics of the County. Morton's agricultural history, abundant lake and river resources, recreation opportunities and existing natural features are some of the attributes which must be preserved and protected in the development of this plan. An analysis of these resources is basic to planning, because each of these resources provide both the opportunities and constraints on land use development. Understanding these resources and managing them wisely is the key to sound land use planning. It is the intent of this section to provide that understanding by reviewing the characteristics of the County's, and subsequently the Township's natural resources.

CLIMATE VARIABLES

Morton Township enjoys a relatively moderate climate. It seldom experiences prolonged periods of either hot or humid weather during the summer or extremely cold weather during the winter. The Township's growing season, important to its agriculturally based economy, typically lasts 128 days on average.

During the summer, the average minimum temperature is 56 degrees F and the average maximum daily temperature is 82 degrees F. Average rainfall during the year is 36 inches with 18.6 inches or 58% of this amount distributed during the typical crop season of May to October.

During the winter, the average minimum temperature is 11 degrees F and the average maximum daily temperature is 28 degrees F. In fact, 90% of the minimum temperatures between November and March fall below 32 degrees F. The average snowfall during the winter is 71 inches or 180 centimeters. The prevailing wind is from the southwest and averages ten (10) to eleven (11) mph.

SOIL TYPES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has mapped the location of various soil types found throughout the County and has created the Soil Survey of Mecosta County, Michigan. This book is a valuable resource of identifying the general characteristics of soils found throughout the Township. Features include the descriptions of the various soil classifications, yields per acre of crop, woodland management and productivity, sanitary facilities and physical chemical properties of the soils are identified.

WETLAND & FLOOD PLAIN AREAS

Wetlands, when viewed from a development and agricultural standpoint, are generally considered unproductive, useless, or wasted areas. They are actually extremely important to the Township's environment. The various bogs, marshes, potholes and ponds serve as natural systems for pollution mitigation from agricultural runoff and urban development. In addition, wetlands serve as the primary means of groundwater aquifer recharge. This is important due to the fact that all of Morton Township gets their drinking water from underground wells. Furthermore, wetlands provide necessary habitat for a diverse array of wildlife which are essential for breeding, nesting, feeding and providing protective cover. Finally, wetlands serve as an ecosystem's regulator of surface water by absorbing water during very wet periods of the year and releasing water during the dry periods. Wetlands over five (5) acres in size are protected by law and regulated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Small sized wetlands should also be protected through appropriate land management, site design, site plan review, and environmentally sensitive development.

Flood plains are located adjacent to rivers, streams, creeks, and lakes and are areas that are inundated with water during times of heavy rains or annual snow melt runoff. Flood plains serve as natural protection against flooding and are a safety valve for the collection and removal of storm water and excess surface water within a watershed. Development in flood plains should be discouraged or prohibited if at all possible in order to minimize potential property damage and loss.

SURFACE AND GROUND WATER RESOURCES

Approximately seven (7) percent of the surface area of Morton Township is covered with water in the form of lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, and creeks. This percentage increases to approximately eleven (11) percent if wetlands are included in the calculation. The major water resources are the Canadian Lakes, School Section Lake and the Tri-Lakes. There are 1,536 acres of lakes in Morton Township.

Seven-hundred and twenty-three acres is in the Canadian Lakes chain which includes East Canadian Lakes, Canadian Lakes, West Canadian Lakes, Far West Canadian Lakes, Lake of the Clouds, Dukes Lake, Lake Laura, Fawn Lake, Lake Tullymore, Killkenny Lake, Swan Lake and Sunset Shores Pond. Most of these lakes are man-made and are fed through springs and private water wells. These lakes are all private and open only to residents and their guests. Water is drawn from these lakes to irrigate the neighboring golf courses.

The Tullymore and St Ives complexes also include numerous lakes, ponds and streams. All are either natural or spring fed.

Blue Lake has two-hundred and thirty-five acres and has depths going from 10' at the shore to 50' in the center of the lake. It flows to the West Branch of the Muskegon River and channels into Lake Mecosta.

Lake Mecosta has two-hundred and ninety-seven acres of water with depths going from 5' at the shore to 39' in the center. Lake Mecosta is the only lake in Morton Township that has a public access site.

Round Lake has one-hundred and fifty-five acres of water with depths going from 5' at the shore to 45' in the middle of the lake.

School Section Lake is the other large lake located in Morton Township, covering one-hundred and twenty-six acres of water. The southern end of the lake starts at 5' depth then goes to 19' in the center, but the upper/middle portion goes from 5' to 33' in depth.

The Dead Stream, Schrader Creek, Dye Creek, Gilbert Creek, Burden Creek, Cole Creek and the East and West Branches of Little Muskegon River run through the Township. There are also some smaller lakes and ponds found throughout the Township.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Morton Township Hall

Located at 290 W. Main Street in the Village of Mecosta, the current hall was constructed in 1982, and enlarged in 1999. The Township Hall provides office spaces for the elected officials and support staff. This includes the Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, Trustees, Assessor, Building Official, and Ordinance and Zoning Administration. The Township Hall is used for the monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Morton Township Library

Morton Township Library is a dynamic force in the community that creates a friendly environment, nurtures intellectual freedoms, encourages lifelong learning, offers open access to resources, supports new technologies, respects cultural diversity, and embraces the future. A new state of the art library was constructed in 2011 through the generous support of the Morton Township taxpayers. This facility offers large and small meeting rooms for public use; a large children's programming area to accommodate weekly children's programs plus a dynamic summer reading program for all ages; a designated area for teens; a comfortable quiet reading area; several computers for public use; and wireless internet connection throughout the building. The library also offers personalized computer classes and educational and entertaining humanities programs throughout the summer. Morton Township Library houses over 37,000 volumes of books, audio books, movies, magazines and newspapers. The library is also a participant in the Michigan Electronic Library Catalog (MeLCat), a statewide catalog that allows library users to request materials from over 350 libraries of all types. The materials are sent directly to Morton Township Library for pick-up. The new library facility also offers a business center including a fax machine, copy machine, scanner and reference area. The friendly and professional staff are eager to serve you!

Mecosta County Commission on Aging/Senior Center

The Mecosta County Commission on Aging is a township service supported through a millage tax. The agency provides various activities, programs and assistance to senior residents of Mecosta County/Morton Township. The agency is located in the Senior Center facility located at 12954 80th Avenue.

Mecosta County Drain Commissioner

The Mecosta County Drain Commissioner's office is located in the Mecosta County Services building located at 14485 Northland Drive in Big Rapids and has jurisdiction for the maintenance and management of all of Morton Township's lakes and sewer systems.

District Health Department #10

DHD #10 Health Department is located in the County Services Building on Northland Drive in Big Rapids. The many services offered by the county health department include the following: issues well and septic permits for construction projects, evaluates condition of current well and septic systems, dispenses emergency preparedness information, compiles county health and data statistics, monitors food service establishments, offers family planning and reproductive health services, administers immunizations, offers public health programs including hearing and vision screening, and monitors sanitary codes and water supplies.

Hospitals & Medical Centers

While there is not a hospital facility located in Morton Township, Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital is located in the City of Big Rapids, which is 20+ miles to the north of Morton Township. Located to the east about 30+ miles is McLaren Central Michigan Hospital, located in Mt Pleasant, and to the south about 15+ miles is Spectrum Health Kelsey Hospital, in Lakeview.

Morton Township does have two medical centers available to residents which include Spectrum Health Family Medicine Canadian Lakes, located at 8354 100th Avenue, and Michigan Primary Care Partners – Eastside, located at 8541 105th Avenue.

Mecosta County Development Corporation

A collaborative effort between Mecosta County, the City of Big Rapids, Ferris State University, Big Rapids Township, and other local partners, the MCDC's mission is: to facilitate and initiate economic development that expands and diversifies the Mecosta County economy, thereby creating job opportunities for area residents. The organization has three primary areas of focus: facilitate communication and cooperation between local organizations, business people, communities, and governmental units; retain and expand area businesses, bringing together partners capable of meeting their evolving needs; and market Mecosta County by promoting the attributes that make it a great place for business to enhance development opportunities. Their website is an excellent source for visitors and residents alike to find information regarding Mecosta County.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Chippewa Hills School District

All of Morton Township is located within the Chippewa Hills School District. A consolidation of smaller districts, Chippewa Hills covers the north-central and eastern section of Mecosta County.

The only school building located in Morton Township proper is the Mecosta Elementary School located at 555 E. Main Street in the Village of Mecosta. This school houses grades Kindergarten through 4.

The Chippewa Hills Intermediate School located on Arthur Road in Sheridan Township is the newest addition to the school system, with new classrooms housing grades 5 to 8, opening in the fall of 2002. This building was funded by a millage voted on in 2000.

The Chippewa Hills High School located at 3226 Arthur Road in Sheridan Township was opened in 1971 and has had several renovations through the years.

Intermediate School District

The three Mecosta County based school districts belong to the Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District which operates a Career Center within Mecosta County serving high school juniors and seniors. The intermediate school districts were created to provide specialized instruction on a regional level that could not otherwise be provided by an individual school district. These services include instructional opportunities for gifted and disabled children, Head Start and Preschool Programs, vocational and career related programming.

Colleges & Universities

While there are no schools of higher learning located in Morton Township, Ferris State University is located in Big Rapids and Central Michigan University is located in Mt. Pleasant. Both of these universities offer several educational programs, including associates, bachelors and master's degrees and some doctorates in specialized fields. Mid-Michigan College also has a branch in Mt. Pleasant offering selected subjects.

MECOSTA COUNTY/MORTON TOWNSHIP PARKS SYSTEM

School Section Lake Park

Located two miles west of M-20 at the intersection of 9 Mile Road and 90th Avenue, School Section Lake Park provides 85 acres of recreational activities. The park includes 162 modern camp sites and seven camping cabins. The park has a large picnic area with shelters, four pavilions, and a sandy beach. The park also hosts a family group camp with six rustic cabins and a main lodge, housing a kitchen and dining area.

Village of Mecosta Parks

There are two municipal parks in the Village of Mecosta, Pine Tree Park which is located east of M-20 and south of Hayes Street. The second park, Bromley Park is located south of Main Street (M-20) between the Little Muskegon River and Cedar Street.

Private Parks

Both Canadian Lakes and the Tri-Lakes have several private parks located throughout their areas, but they are only for the residents of these individual communities.

UTILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Electric

Consumers Energy provides electrical service to all those properties north of Buchanan Road in Morton Township. South of Buchanan is serviced by Tri-County Co-op of HomeWorks.

Natural Gas and Propane

Consumers Energy provides the natural gas service to most of Morton Township Communities. There are, however, some areas that still depend on propane gas. The propane users get their supply from a number of propane companies in the area.

Communications

CenturyLink is the main local telephone service provider in Morton Township. With the deregulation of long-distance telephone service, many different national carriers service Morton Township for long distance service. There are also two cell towers to provide cellular service.

Solar & Wind Generated Energy

Morton Township supports the effective use of both solar and wind generated energy systems and promotes the safe, effective and efficient use by providing reasonable standards and restrictions which in turn will preserve the public health, safety and welfare for our residents.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

There are four air strips in Morton Township. The only public airstrip is owned by the Village of Mecosta located at the northeast corner of M-20 and 90th Avenue. This air strip has grass runways for small planes only. The other three air strips are all privately owned. The largest one is located at northeast corner of 100th Avenue and 7 Mile Road and is owned by the Canadian Lakes Property Owners. This one too has a grass runway. Then there are two smaller, privately owned landing strips.

The only public transportation offered in Morton Township is the Mecosta/Osceola Area Transit Authority which offers an on-demand “Dial-a-Ride” public transportation system operating in both Mecosta and Osceola counties. The system operates from 4:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Mecosta/Osceola Central Dispatch (911)

911 dispatch system for Mecosta and Osceola Counties is located on Northland Drive, north of the City of Big Rapids, near the Village of Paris, and is staffed with a full-time director and multiple staff providing cad dispatching of all law enforcement, fire, and EMS services within the two counties.

Mecosta County EMS

Mecosta EMS staffs multiple facilities, one on M-66 just north of Arthur Road, and one on 5 Mile Road and 110th near the community of Altona. The main station is in the City of Big Rapids, on Northland Drive.

Morton Township Fire/Rescue Department

There are two (2) fire stations located within the Township of Morton. Station 1 is located at 8260 100th Ave., in Canadian Lakes. This is the primary station with a meeting/training room, full kitchen, and is a licensed shelter for the Red Cross. Station 2 is in the Village of Mecosta at 200 E. Hayes Street. The department consists of firefighters and first responder medical personnel. Stations are staffed Monday through Friday, 7:00AM – 4:00PM. The roster varies at times from 25 or more trained staff. The department’s goal is to have rosters of 30-40 whenever possible.

Morton Township Fire/Rescue has one (1) Engine, Tender, Grass/Brush truck, and Rescue in each station. The Engines are NFPA 1901 class A. The Tenders are identical units. They carry 3500 gallons of water. The Grass/Brush trucks are four-wheel drive units capable of off-road firefighting. The Rescue in Station 1 carries hydraulic extrication equipment along with all the state required medical equipment for a non-transport MFR unit. Station 1 also houses a 95’ Ariel platform that provides various capabilities from firefighting to a multitude of different rescue possibilities. A mobile cascade trailer with 10 – 6000 PSI breathing air cylinders for refilling purposes at fires and SCUBA incidents.

Morton Township Law Enforcement - Mecosta County Sheriff's Department

Morton Township's law enforcement is provided through the Mecosta County Sheriff's Department, whose mission is to provide the highest quality of law enforcement that it can provide to the residents of Mecosta County with professional, courteous and compassionate service. The Sheriff's Department maintains a fleet which includes patrol cars, unmarked units, four-wheel drive vehicles, an animal control vehicle, and vehicles utilized by the Dive/Rescue and Fire Investigation units.

Michigan State Police Department

The Michigan State Police do not operate an actual post in Mecosta County. Morton Township is served by a post located in the City of Mt. Pleasant, which covers the counties of Isabella, Clare, Osceola and Mecosta. These officers utilize the Morton Township fire station to start and stop their shift, store their patrol cars, and write their reports. Historically, three to five troopers have been stationed there.

Canadian Lakes Security

The Canadian Lakes Property Owners Corporation have security vehicles that patrol the roads in Canadian Lakes. They employ full time and part-time personnel who man these vehicles, seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day. Members of the CLPOC also volunteer to patrol Canadian Lakes throughout the year. If and when an emergency arises, they call 911 at Central Dispatch who respond with either a Sheriff or State Police Patrol or DNR, depending on the nature of the call.

CIRCULATION PLAN

East-West Routes - While there is not one road in Morton Township that goes all the way from east to the west, the most direct east-west routes are 7 Mile from 70th Avenue going west to 100th Avenue, 9 Mile from M-20 going west to 90th Avenue, Pierce Road from 100th Avenue going west to 120th Avenue and on in to Stanwood and Buchanan Road from 80th Avenue going west to 120th Avenue and beyond. All of these roads are paved.

State Highway M-20 - As the primary east-west corridor between Big Rapids, Remus and further east into Mt. Pleasant, M-20 handles a high volume of local and commercial traffic as it takes a meandering course northwest through the County from Remus to Big Rapids.

Morton Township Roads - State highway M-20 traverses through the northern third of the Township including the Village of Mecosta where it has developed into the Village Main Street. Much discussion and controversy has taken place with the Michigan Department of Transportation's plan to relocate and reconstruct M-20 further south through the center of the Township. M-20 serves as the primary east-west corridor through the Township. Buchanan Road, 7 Mile Road and Pierce Road also serve as east-west transportation corridors through the central and southern sections of the Township. 70th Avenue is the only road which runs almost the entire length north and south through the Township, ending at 11 Mile Road to the north.

For future transportation planning, Morton Township supports the repair and resurfacing of the existing M-20 highway corridor as opposed to the relocation of the highway further south along Buchanan Road as previously proposed. In addition, the Mecosta County Road Commission is encouraged to continue its efforts relative to the maintenance and resurfacing of the County primary roads located in the Township. To promote redevelopment efforts within the Village of Mecosta, the Michigan Department of Transportation is encouraged to reconstruct M-20 through the Village of Mecosta and include such urban design features as new sidewalks, curbs and gutters, improved lighting and landscaping along the central business district corridor.

EXISTING LAND USES

Land Use Classifications

The following section outlines in more detail the location of particular land uses and their characteristics within Morton Township. Existing land uses were divided into different categories in order to analyze the existing pattern of development. This analysis will help to define which characteristics the County would like to preserve and enhance.

Agricultural

Morton Township's 2016 Zoning Figures Show:		
Classification	Total Parcels	Total Acres
A-1	1	160
A-2	365	9577.62
A2 -PUD	1	26.82
A-2/R-1	3	560

For the purpose of this land use analysis, agricultural land is defined as any land that is used for raising field or tree crops or utilized as a resource in animal husbandry. Agricultural land uses represent the single largest land use within the County.

This shows that Morton Township’s agricultural activity occupies approximately one-third of the land area within the Township. The majority of this activity is located in the southeastern quarter of the township, bounded by 9 Mile Road on the north, 90th Avenue on the west, 6 Mile Road on the south and 60th Avenue on the east. It is the primary goal to preserve this land for agricultural (farming) land uses. As prime agricultural land, this area is proposed for little or no development including ribbon or spot residential development along major County roads.

Approximately 44.7% of Mecosta County is forested. This equates to 163,391.46 acres of forested land in the County. While some of this land is included in the Manistee National Forest and the Pere Marquette State Forest, much of it is held in private ownership.

Morton Township includes the forested land in their A2 zoning, but that portion of Pere Marquette State Forest which is in Morton Township, is zoned as Wetlands.

Residential

Morton Township's 2016 Zoning Figures Show:		
Classification	Total Parcels	Total Acres
R1	5169	4417.205
R1(PUD)	142	518.64
R-2	371	3832.602
R-3	109	432.18
R-4	79	96.054

Residential land uses have developed in two primary locations. The first is east and south of the business district of the Village of Mecosta. The second is the resort areas and subdivisions adjoining the various lakes within the western half of Morton Township. New residential development is proposed to continue within the Canadian Lakes development as well as in other lake and resort communities of the Township.

Nearly the entire western half of the Township is proposed for residential and recreational use. Residential development is discouraged for the southeast quarter because this is prime farmland. In addition, residential development is limited north and south of the Village of Mecosta as a result of the location of the State-owned land and numerous wetlands in the area.

The biggest planned resort, residential community located in Mecosta County, with over 90% of it in Morton Township, is the Canadian Lakes Resort Community. This encompasses approximately 5,000 acres. There are 3896 parcels with 1757.20 acres zoned as R1 in Canadian Lakes. There are 23 parcels with 8.79 acres zoned as R3, and 33.88 acres zoned R4, known as Sunset Shores.

There are two additional resort and residential communities located in Morton Township; The Villages at Tullymore and St Ives. The Villages of Tullymore encompass approximately 800 acres, predominately zoned R1. This includes 197 lots and 44 condo sites offering upscale residential development. Currently, the Village of Hamlet, Village of Camelot, the luxury vacation home ownership – Residence Club, and a world class clubhouse are in full operation. Future Development will include the village of Limerick, a Wellness Center, a Commercial Village, an assisted living area and a nature trail.

St Ives currently has an additional upscale clubhouse with an exercise facility, a 42-room hotel, meeting rooms, and an indoor pool.

Both clubhouses boast excellent dining and banquet facilities and are open to the public for meals and special events such as weddings and conferences.

Golf Courses - Canadian Lakes offers three (3) private golf courses, The Pines, 9 holes; Highland, 9 holes; and the Royal, 18 holes which are open only to residents and their guests. Additionally, both St. Ives and Tullymore have two nationally ranked public 18-hole golf courses which are open to the public.

Commercial

Morton Township's 2016 Zoning Figures Show:		
Classification	Total Parcels	Total Acres
C-1	65	132.338
C1/R1	4	7.967
C-2	64	324.778
C-3	62	325.371

There are three commercial centers in Morton Township. One is centered in the Village of Mecosta, a second at the four corners of 11 Mile (M-20) and 90th Avenue and the third at the northwest corner of the intersection of 9 Mile Road and 70th Avenue just north of the Township Industrial Park. A retail area has also developed on Buchanan Road as part of the Canadian Lakes development.

New commercial development is encouraged to locate first and foremost in the existing business district along M-20 in the Village of Mecosta. Secondly, Morton Township has designated the intersection of 9 Mile Road and 70th Avenue as an industrial and commercial center. Finally, the Canadian Lakes development is proposing the development of a neighborhood commercial center along Pierce Road to service the growing resort community’s population. Scatter or “spot” commercial activity should be discouraged along major County roads and located only in the previously mentioned districts.

Campgrounds

Morton Township's 2016 Zoning Figures Show:		
Classification	Total Parcels	Total Acres
CAMPGR	3	120

Morton Township has three (3) parcels zoned as campgrounds. Two (2) of these are for Mecosta County Park (School Section Lake Campground) and the other one (1) is 120 acres for the Canadian Lakes Campgrounds.

Industrial

Morton Township's 2016 Zoning Figures Show:		
Classification	Total Parcels	Total Acres
I-1	9	155.39

There is one business park consisting of 226.13 acres located within Morton Township zoned C-3, and to include all permitted uses in C-1 and C-2. This area is located on 9 Mile Road directly west of highway M-20. This location provides suitable transportation

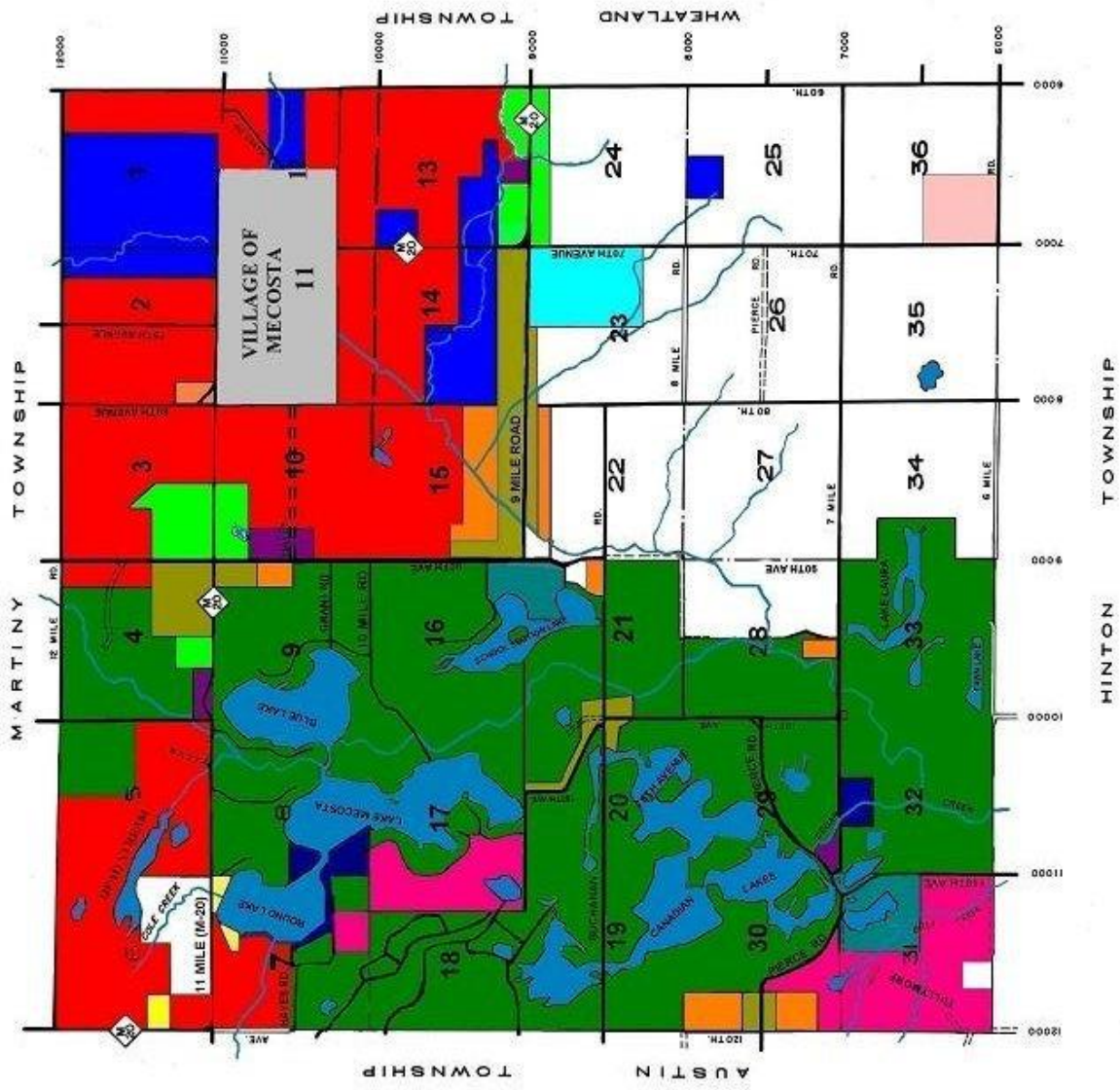
access to the state highway and is arranged in a park like setting.

Morton Township recognizes the need of both commercial and industrial development to the community's tax base. The current business park and other zoned C-1, C-2, and C-3 areas provide for this contingency. Industrial usage will and can be addressed on a need-by-need basis.

Wetlands

Morton Township's 2016 Zoning Figures Show:		
Classification	Total Parcels	Total Acres
R1/WETL	3	4.1
R-2/WE	3	164.25
WETLAN	100	852.141

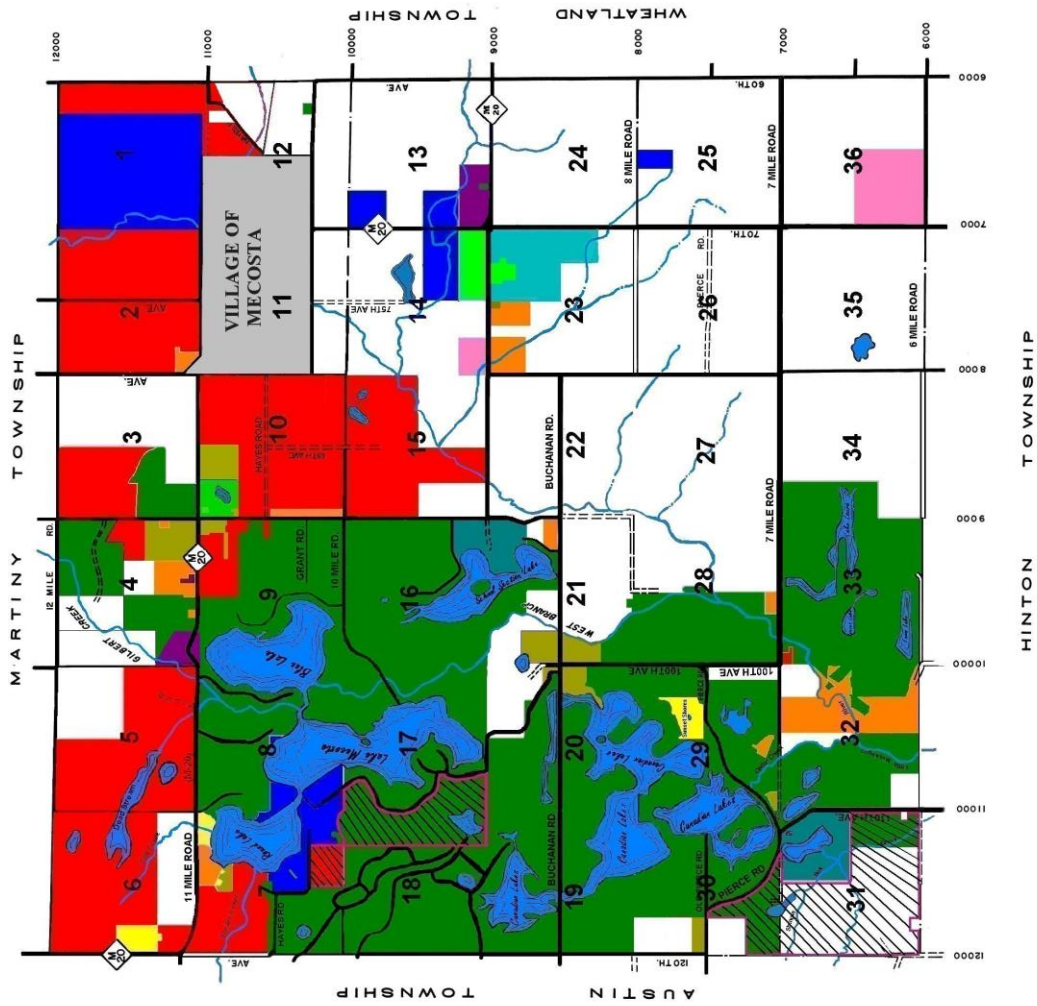
Morton Township's current zoning figures show 103 parcels with a combined 857.14 acres zoned as wetlands. There are another 3 parcels with a total of 164.25 acres that are zoned as a combination of agricultural, residential, or commercial with wetlands.



PUD	VILLAGE OF MECOSTA
A-2	CAMP GROUND
A-1	WETLAND
R-4	I-1
R-3	C-3
R-2	C-2
R-1	C-1

**MORTON TOWNSHIP
GUIDE FOR
FUTURE LAND USE
AS PER THE
MASTER PLAN 2004**
updated 05/09/2007

MORTON TOWNSHIP SECTIONAL ZONING



- RESIDENTIAL 1
- RESIDENTIAL 2
- RESIDENTIAL 3
- RESIDENTIAL 4
- AGRICULTURAL 1
- AGRICULTURAL 2
- PUD
- COMMERCIAL 1
- COMMERCIAL 2
- COMMERCIAL 3
- INDUSTRIAL 1
- WETLANDS
- CAMPGROUND
- Village of MECOSTA

Updated as of 8/27/2013