

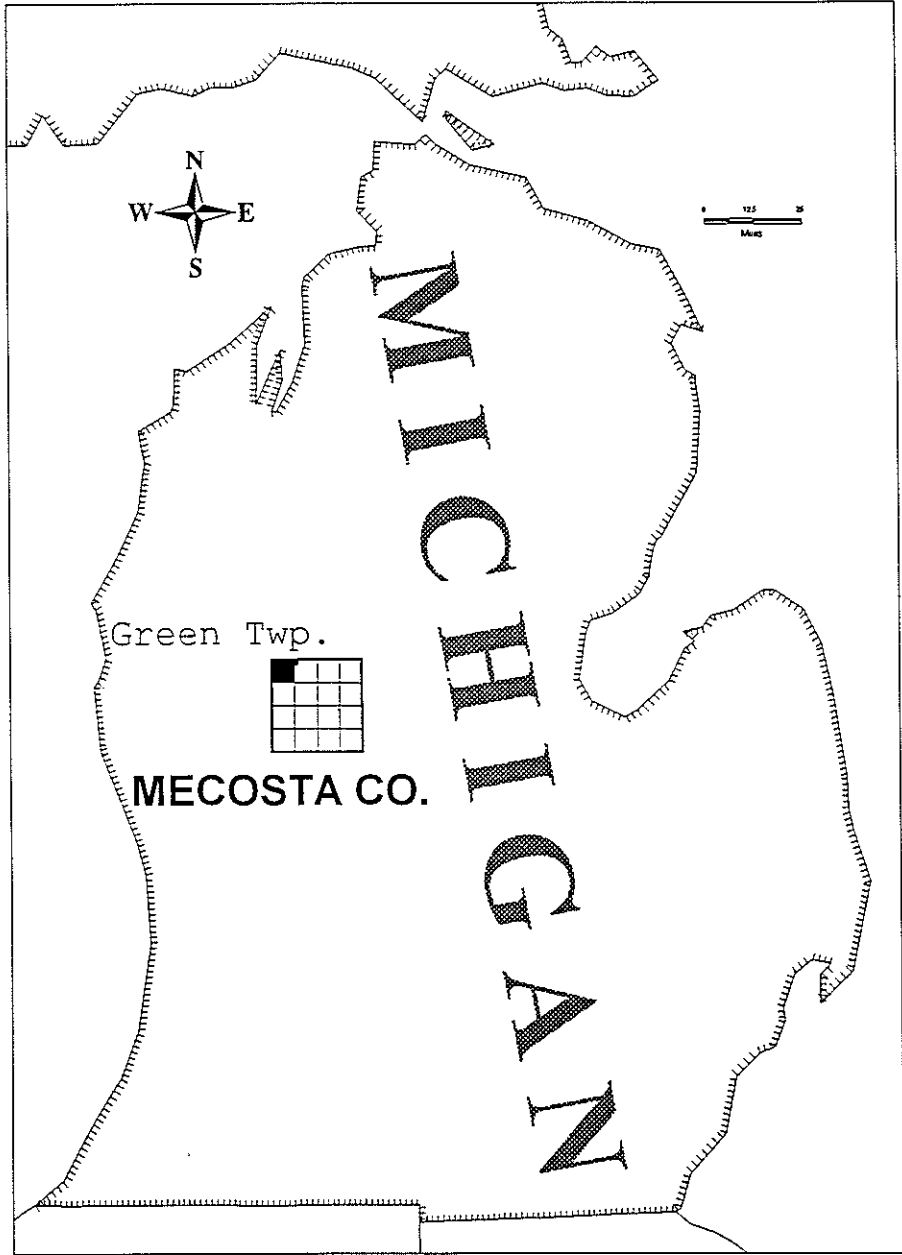
**GREEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP**

**MASTER PLAN**

**Prepared by:**

**Green Charter Township  
Zoning Planning Committee**

**Date: January 1999**



**GREEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Rural areas have experienced considerable growth pressures making it necessary to document current conditions and the goals of the township. The intent of Green Charter Township is to bring about an effective development strategy.

A Masterplan is designed to translate a communities values which should give direction for organized future growth, land use, public facilities and services. A Masterplan provides the legally recognized framework for making decisions about land use in the township.

This document is an indispensable tool for Green Charter Township in dealings with developers, builders, community groups and government agencies. It is vital in guiding specific land use decisions in the future.

Although the Master Plan is adopted by resolution and carries legal weight when applied to specific land use decisions, it is not considered law.

Considerable flexibility has been incorporated into this Master Plan allowing for adjustment and review, should conditions change over time.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORY OF GREEN TOWNSHIP

Green Township is numbered 16 north, range 10 west, of the congressional survey, and lies in the northwest corner of Mecosta County. It is bounded on the north by Osceola County, on the east by Grant Township, on the south by Big Rapids Township, and on the west by Newaygo County. Green Township also includes a little over two sections which naturally belong to Grant township, but are cut off from it by the Muskegon River, and therefore for convenience sake attached to Green Township.

The township was organized in 1858, while the county of Mecosta was still attached to Newaygo. It was one of two townships organized before Mecosta County was officially formed, in 1859. Jesse A. Barker was the first supervisor of Green Township.

The township was named for Andrew and Lewis H. Green who erected the first frame building, a house, in 1857. The lumber for this house came from Big Prairie, a distance of 30 miles. It was reported that all the mortices were cut with a mallet and old chisel as there was no auger in the area. This house was located in section 9 and a barn built in section 4 in 1859. The Green family were the largest owners of land, owning some 1400 acres. They worked hard clearing this land and earning a profit on the lumber. The home they built was also the first building erected in Mecosta County. At that time, only one-half of an acre was cleared in the present city of Big Rapids by a man named Zerah French.

The first white family in the area was James Montague who settled on section 27 in 1854. The first baby born to James and Laura Montague in 1855; her name was Helen. The first boy, Theophilus Humphrey, was born in the fall of 1857 to Charles and Jane Humphrey. The first death in the township was that of Mrs. Millard in 1859. John McFarlane and Betsey Turk took their wedding vows in front of the Justice of the Peace, Jesse A. Barker, and became the first couple to marry in Green Township in 1860. The first school built was a log building erected in May of 1858 in section 28. The first Post-office in 1864, in Paris. The census of 1860 gave Green Township a population of 246 and the one in 1880 listed a population 1,132. The equalized valuation in 1859 of Green Township was \$144,306.60.

No history of Green Township can be written without a brief mention of Paris. ( A more complete history of Paris was written by Patricia Todd. A copy is available at the township office.) John Parish was the first white settler in present Mecosta County, building his hut in present Green Township in 1851. He bought the land in 1853 and founded the village in 1865 calling it Parish. This name was changed later to Paris. He was the first Postmaster of the Paris post office.

Many of our early settlers have descendents still living in our Township. I will not mention any for fear of leaving out some. This is a brief history of the founding of our township, but many items are not included in this report, such as the railroad in Paris which was the Northern stop for a while, and it was reported that the citizens of Green Township gave liberally to its construction cost. Our residents suffered and faced starvation in the wilderness. An item in the Pioneer of December 31, 1868 tells of the hardship of the families in Northern Osceola County.

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R. A. SANTER "THE 1974 GREEN TOWNSHIP ATLAS"

SPECIAL THANKS TO CLARKE HISTORICAL LIBRARY, CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**A. REGIONAL LOCATIONS:**

Green Charter Township is located in the Northwest section of Mecosta County.

Although the township is mainly rural, the village of Paris sits in the approximate center. And, the city of Big Rapids approaches our Southern border.

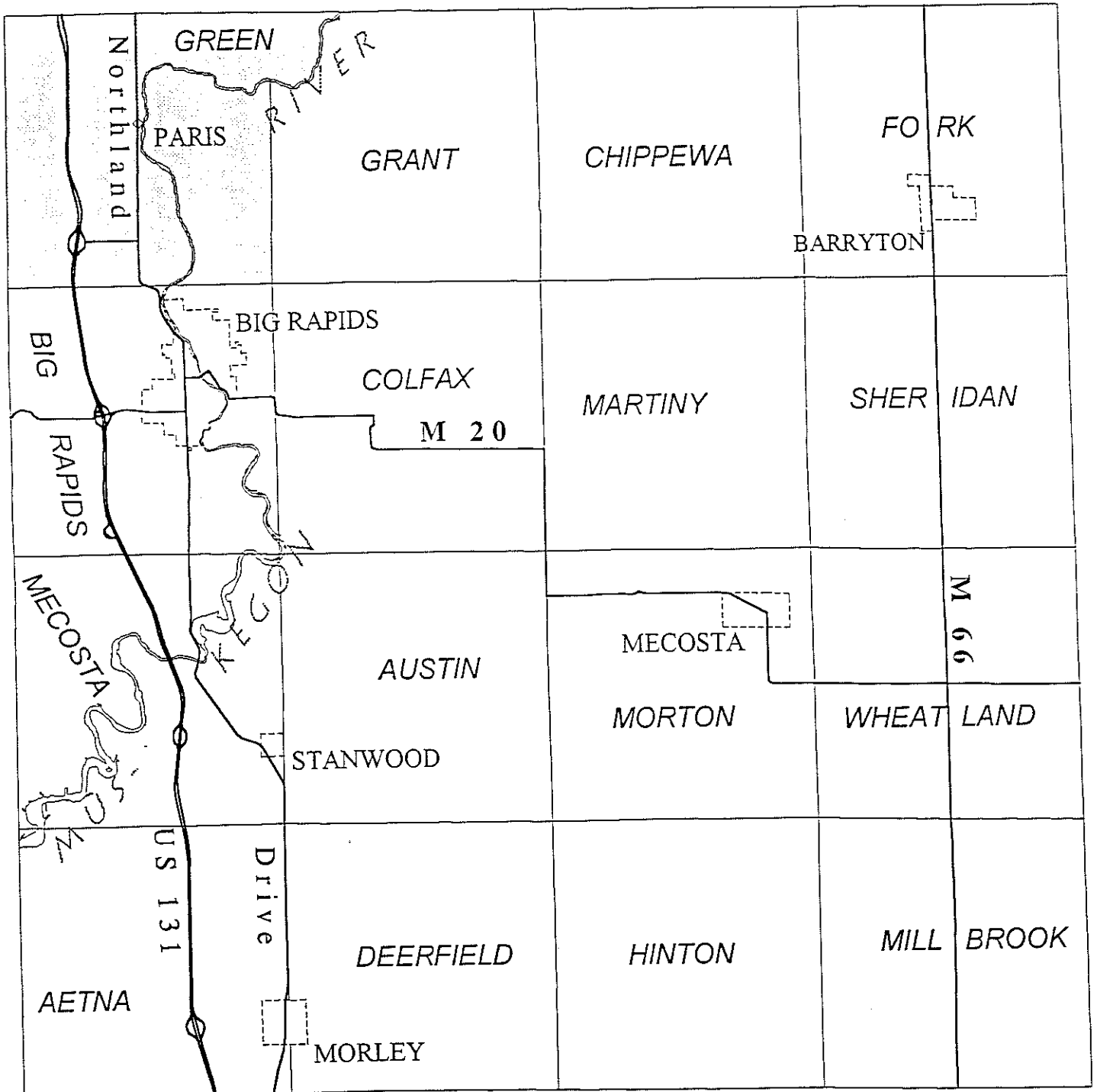
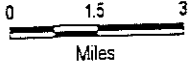
We have two major highways traveling through the township:

U.S. 131 and Northland Drive (Old U.S. 131)

Also, the Muskegon River travels the length of the township.

See attached map.

# GREEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP MECOSTA COUNTY MICHIGAN



**1990 CENSUS REPORT**

POPULATION OF GREEN TOWNSHIP	2,833	(B.R. twp. 3,094)
SQUARE MILES/GREEN TOWNSHIP	36.9	
DENSITY (Persons per sq. mile)	76.8	
In comparison, Mecosta County has	67.1	
Big Rapids Twp.	106.9	

**MEDIAN AGE OF PERSONS IN GREEN TOWNSHIP IS 31.1 YEARS**

Under 5	216
18-20	140
21-24	218
25-44	899
45-54	302
55-59	98
60-64	103
65-74	290
75-84	103
85 & Over	11

Green Township has 784 family households of which 662 are married and 83 are female head, no husband present.

Non family households	260
Householders living alone	184
65 and Older	50
Female Only	34

Big Rapids Township has 1064 households.

	<u>GREEN</u>	<u>B.R.TWP.</u>	<u>MECOSTA CO.</u>
Persons per household	2.71	2.91	2.66
Persons per family	3.10	3.16	3.06

**GREEN TOWNSHIP OCCUPIED HOUSING BROKEN DOWN BY RACE**

1023 White (5 being Hispanic)  
 15 Black  
 4 American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleutian  
 1 Asian or Pacific Islender  
1 Other Race

**1044 TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS**

**TOTAL HOUSING UNITS IN GREEN TOWNSHIP**

838 Owner occupied  
 206 Rental units  
170 Vacant or Occasional use  
**1214 TOTAL HOUSING UNITS**

**BREAKDOWN BY CONSTRUCTION:**

797 Houses  
 9 Duplex  
 50 Apartments  
 358 Mobile Homes

## POPULATION

According to the 1990 census, the township has a population of 2833 and a total of 1044 households.

Based on population projections later in this plan, the 2000 year population should be approximately 3116 with 1127 households.

In 1990, 40% of the population is less than 24 years of age, 49% between the ages of 25 and 64, and 10% over the age of 64.

0--5	216
5-16	470
16-18	97
18-20	140
21-24	218
25-44	899
45-54	302
55-59	98
60-64	103
65-74	187
75 & Older	103

**PHYSICAL FEATURES  
OF  
GREEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP**

Green Charter Township has a total of 5,430 acres of woodland or 22 percent of its land is wooded. A break down is as follows:

4,960 acres of hardwoods

420 acres of conifer

50 acres of mixed

The township has 3 small lakes, one each in sections 24, 25, 36. The Muskegon River also flows through it. This river cuts through the northwest corner of Grant Township and cuts off all of section 6 and parts of 5 and 7, with no direct route to the rest of Grant Township, they are part of Green Charter Township.

Because this map was primarily to show woods and water, the freeway and half mile roads are not shown, only the section lines.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The major land use in the township is agricultural and other non-urban uses. Scattered residential homes can be found on most section line roads of the township.

The major commercial area of the township is along Northland Drive from the South boundary of the township through the village of Paris. This area is comprised of a variety of sales and service establishments such as auto sales, auto wash establishment, mobile home sales, gas stations, restaurants, a motel, convenience stores, and related highway uses. Some of these lots are currently used for residential, although the residential uses are gradually being converted to commercial. Industrial land uses are generally located in the approximately 60 acres of industrial area near 19 Mile Road and 200th Avenue, approximately 2 miles East of the U S 131 Freeway interchange.

The major residential concentration in the township, is generally located along Northland Drive around 18 and 19 Mile Roads and North to the Village of Paris. Also located in this area is one existing Mobile Home Park and a Mobile Home Subdivision. Several additional residential subdivisions are located throughout the township along both sides of the Muskegon River as it turns East from Northland Drive between Hoover Road and 23 Mile Road.

## EXISTING ZONING

The zoning pattern in the township is similar to the existing land use pattern. The clear majority of the township is zoned for agricultural use, especially in the areas away from the Northland Drive corridor. Much of the remainder is zoned for one or one and two family residential, especially along the Muskegon River. Higher density residential zoning districts are non-existent at this time, except for approximately 60 acres North of Spruce Road and West of 205th Ave.

The major commercially zoned area of the township is located along Northland Drive. Smaller areas of commercial zoning are found along 195th Ave., Hoover Road and at the Freeway Interchange.

The township has industrial zoning between 19 Mile Road and Coolidge Road, West of 200th Ave. and at the Northwest corner of 20 Mile Road and Northland Drive.

## NEIGHBORING LAND USE AND ZONING

Because no community lives in a vacuum, the land use activities of adjacent communities play an important role in its development. This is especially true for Green Charter Township being in close proximity to the City of Big Rapids and also Big Rapids Township.

Both of the above mentioned communities which adjoin Green Charter Township to the South are currently used for residential, single family homes and community related small businesses. A second major land use in Big Rapids is Ferris State University and it's mandatory student housing. Roben Hood Airport, a part of Big Rapids Township, is situated on an East/West strip of land between the North perimeter of the city of Big Rapids and the Southern border of Green Township.

Green Charter Township, via Nineteen Mile Road, has convenient access to and from State Highway U. S. 131, the major connecting artery from southwest Michigan to the Northern part of the state. Parallel to Highway 131 and approximately 1 and 1/2 miles to the east of it, Northland Drive offers a commercial corridor through Green Township, leading to Reed City in the north and Big Rapids to the south.

The existing land use pattern in Green Charter Township is predominantly agricultural. Low to medium density residential with limited commercial and industrial uses also exist. The proximity of the Muskegon River along with the general accessibility of the area make Green Charter Township attractive for future growth.

## NEIGHBORING TOWNSHIPS

The existing land use of the townships adjacent to Green Charter Township is largely agricultural. There are extensive farming areas but also sections in each township that comprise single family homes and other residential development, for example along the Muskegon River in Big Rapids Township. Another important land use neighboring Green Charter Township is recreational activities in the Haymarsh Lake State Game Area in Grant Township. Commercial activities in most adjoining townships are along main road arteries and village centers.

## PUBLIC SEWER

A vital ingredient to the development of land is access to public sewer. As shown in Figure A, the land bordering 18 Mile Road West to Business U.S.131, North on Business U.S. 131 approximately 1/2 mile, and East to 205th Avenue has sewer service.

This sewer system is run by the Township and by contract, dated October 26, 1977, with the city of Big Rapids. This agreement is good for 40 years. In this contract, the city guarantees 350,000 gallons average daily flow. At the present time, the township is pumping less than 10%, giving the township lots of room for expansion. In 1977, the projection for 1995 was 350,000 gallons a day.

As you can see, the sewer system services Greenhaven Subdivision, homes on 18 Mile Road from the river to Northland Drive, homes on 205th Avenue to Spruce Road, a few homes on Mack Drive, and about 1/2 mile North on Business U.S. 131 from 18 Mile Road.

Medium density growth in Green Charter Township shall be restricted to the residential, commercial, and industrial districts, available to service by municipal sewer.

Map 3-7A

## TRANSPORTATION

The major transportation lines in the township are U.S. 131, Business U.S. 131, and Northland Drive. These are the major North/South roads in the township West of the Muskegon River.

East of the Muskegon River, the major North/South road is 190th Avenue.

Major East/West roads are 19 Mile Road, connecting us with Bitely and Newaygo County, 22 Mile Road to Hawkins, Hoover Road to Chippewa Lake, and 23 Mile Road East to Hersey.

## MAP

**CHAPTER FOUR  
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**

**A. POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

Based on historic trends and existing conditions the following population projections were developed. It is important to emphasize that population projections are simply estimates used to guide future land use decisions and should not be considered absolute growth figures.

Between 1980 and 1990 Green Charter Township did not enjoy any growth increase. Due to the growth of big Rapids and expected business growth over the next decade, we feel the township will show significant growth in the future.

We expect a growth of a modest 9.1% by the year 2000 and an additional growth of 12% by the year 2010. This will bring our expected population to 3,116 by 2000 and 3,490 by the year 2010.

**B. AGE GROUP PROJECTIONS**

Based on current demographic information it becomes clear that the township's population will be growing older. Our projections are shown in Table One.

**TABLE ONE**

**AGE GROUP PROJECTIONS**

AGE GROUP	ACTUAL 1990	PROJECTED	
		2000	2010
%24 and under	40.3	37.6	33.4
%25 to 64	49.4	51.8	52.6
%65 and over	10.3	10.6	14.0

## POLICY STATEMENTS

An essential step in the development of a community design is the establishment of a policy plan or statement. The drafting of such statements may entail a desire to remedy an existing or contemplated problem or may be based on a perception of a perfect community. Policy development is a paramount component of the Master Plan. Recommended land use arrangements and proposed enforcement strategies are a natural consequence of established policy.

An established policy is a necessary tool in the daily decision-making process. Local governing bodies can perform more proficiently when policy is established. Recurring problems consume valuable time that can be otherwise applied if policy guidelines are in place. Public trust in their government on any level is usually strengthened by a clear understanding of the planning process and the goals for the betterment of the community as a whole.

Green Charter Township would benefit from establishing policies as follows:

1. **STABILITY:** An all-inclusive policy concerning a variety of planning issues can greatly reduce expensive arbitrary decision making.
2. **EFFICIENCY:** A policy declaration establishes the framework for the Township Board and Planning Commission to work with the public in the development of the Township policies in general and provide a stabilizing effect as the plan is modified over time.
3. **DECISION-MAKING AND COMMENTARY:** Policies are necessary to applying sound land use management and helpful to the courts in realizing equitable judgements. Specific regulations in the content of an overall plan for the community should apply.

## SURVEY RESULTS

Do you think there will be a demand for multiple family housing?

- 1. YES 36%
- 2. NO 64%

If there should be demand for such housing in the future, do you think the Township should specify particular areas for multiple housing?

- 1. YES 85%
- 2. NO 15%

Should the Township allow private homes to be used for commercial shops or stores?

- 1. YES 62%
- 2. NO 35% 5% UNDECIDED

Should residential subdivision developments be restricted to areas bordering on the Green Charter Township sewer system?

- 1. YES 65%
- 2. NO 28% 7% UNDECIDED

Do you think that houses are set back far enough from major roads to allow for future widening of busy roads?

- 1. YES 56%
- 2. NO 38% 6% UNDECIDED

Should the Township seek to restrict the location of mobile homes?

- 1. YES 69%
- 2. NO 27% 4% UNDECIDED

Should the Township seek to restrict the age and size of the mobile home?

- 1. YES 63%
- 2. NO 35% 2% UNDECIDED

**SURVEY RESULTS CONTINUED**

Should the Township seek to expand industrial development areas?

- 1. YES 75%
- 2. NO 23% 2% UNDECIDED

Should the Township seek to develop shopping centers?

- 1. YES 48%
- 2. NO 52%

Should the Township actively seek to bring in light industry?

- 1. YES 73%
- 2. NO 27%

Should the Township seek an additional freeway exit at it's North end?

- 1. YES 54%
- 2. NO 46%

Are you in favor of a Community Park?

- 1. YES 64%
- 2. NO 36%

## TOWNSHIP GOALS

As a vital component of the planning process, the following policy goals were developed by the Green Charter Township Planning Committee in consideration of the needs of the Township and the results of the community survey.

1. **GOAL:** Provide for a well-balanced land use pattern, meeting the needs of the community while minimizing conflicts between various land uses.
  - . Educate the Planning Committee, Township Board and Township residents of the goals and policies of this Plan.
  - . Strive for compliance with the Future Land Use Map embodied in this Plan to ensure a minimum of land use conflicts.
  - . Amend the existing Zoning Ordinance to correspond with the policies of this Plan.
  - . Protect agricultural and residential areas of the Township from incompatible, higher density land uses.
  - . Encourage compact commercial development to minimize expensive and unattractive strip development.
  - . Encourage industrial development in select areas to minimize conflicts with neighboring land uses.
  - . Encourage large scale development to locate in existing utility service areas to avoid costly sewer and water extensions.
  
2. **GOAL:** Preserve and protect important agricultural and forest lands and maintain the rural atmosphere of the Township.
  - . Limit higher density uses in existing agricultural areas designated as important agricultural lands.
  - . Encourage the preservation of wooded areas, especially along the Muskegon River.
  - . Encourage higher density development in areas that are not suitable for agricultural production, and land with public sewer.

- . Avoid rezoning land designated as Rural Residential to higher density uses.
  - . Avoid rezoning important agricultural lands to other than agricultural districts.
  - . Consider a zoning code and map amendment to include a prime agricultural lands designation or such techniques as restricting parcel sizes, establishing a maximum number of homes per area or creating a maximum depth per lot.
  - . Encourage participation in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (P.A. 116, 1974).
3. **GOAL:** Provide for safe, convenient and attractive residential environments for Green Charter Township residents.

- . Encourage continued residential uses in and around existing residential areas to provide housing for the majority of the Township's residents.
- . Specify particular areas of the Township for multi-family housing and mobile home parks to separate them from single and two family residential uses.
- . Discourage the conversion of residential properties to commercial uses in areas designated for residential land uses.
- . Encourage strict building and zoning code enforcement to help guarantee the safety and overall appearance of the Township's residential areas.

4. **GOAL:** Encourage economic development and improved employment opportunities in the Township.
  - . Actively seek to bring in light industrial activities to the Township.
  - . Encourage commercial development by developing attractive commercial areas with a minimum of traffic congestion.
  - . Limit large commercial areas to major transportation routes and consider limited neighborhood commercial areas in residential areas of the Township.
  
5. **GOAL:** Provide ample recreational opportunities for Green Charter Township residents.
  - . Encourage the development of a Recreation Plan to identify recreational needs and to allow the Township to apply for recreation grant monies.
  - . Encourage an adequate range of recreational opportunities for the residents and visitors of the community.
  - . Maintain all existing facilities.
  - . Preserve and maintain scenic and natural areas of the Township.
  - . Optimize the utilization of all existing facilities including Township, City, County and school properties and foster cooperation among various levels of government.

6. **GOAL:** Improve and maintain high quality public services to meet the needs of the community.
- . Coordinate public services between the Township, City and County whenever possible.
  - . Avoid high density development in areas of the Township that do not have public utilities, especially sewer.
  - . Closely monitor public sewer and other public services and expand or revise as necessary.
  - . Study the traffic patterns in the Township to identify alternatives to the present circulation problems.
  - . Work with the County in identifying needed road improvements and paving of Township roads.
  - . Encourage careful planning of future public service in the Township.

## CHAPTER SIX

### AGRICULTURAL COMPONENT

#### A. IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

A major conclusion from the community survey was that agricultural and wooded land as well as the rural atmosphere of the Township should be preserved. In addition, the preservation of farmland was a major goal of the Mecosta County Comprehensive Plan. The County Plan wants agriculture to be a fundamental importance to the economy and lifestyle of Mecosta County. As such, the County's most important farmlands should be preserved and maintained in agricultural production.

The major land use in Green Charter Township is agricultural. The township's most productive farm soils are found throughout the township and is used for that purpose except where residential housing appears along roadways and water accesses. These areas present the fewest land use conflicts and provide the best environment for farming in the Township. Green Charter Township should focus its strongest efforts to conserve land where continued agriculture is most likely.

## B. IDENTIFICATION OF IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL AREAS

The first step in the preservation of agricultural land is to identify the most important farmlands in the Township. Five factors were used in the identification of these areas:

1. Prime Agricultural Lands
2. Existing Agricultural Use
3. Size of Parcels
4. Act 116 Farmland
5. Conservation Reserve Program

The prime agricultural land in the Township is roughly 60% of the total area. Much of this area is also currently in use as active cropland, or livestock grazing.

The largest farmlands of the Township are located in the prime agricultural lands, and are under active cropland use. This is important, as large parcels make for more effective agricultural production and minimize the disruption of agricultural lands by non-agricultural uses.

In 1974, the state legislature enacted the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, Act 116. This act provides for the holding of farmland development rights, which indicate a significant commitment to preserving specific parcels of farmland. As indicated in PA116 Map, these areas are located throughout the township.

In the early 1980's, the Right-to-Farm Legislation was established in the state. Simply saying, those Agriculture operations following, "generally accepted agriculture procedures and practices shall be exempt from nuisance lawsuits and complaints." In interests of preserving agriculture, this township plan is in support of this legislation.

### C. AGRICULTURAL AREAS

An analysis of these five factors led to the identification of the important farmlands in the Township. These areas are displayed in the Essential Agriculture Land Map.

Agricultural Areas are intended for active agriculture, low density single family dwellings and specialized rural uses that would require large land areas. Open space areas, woodlands and scenic views are to be preserved as important features of this area. Activities that would interfere with agricultural production or that would create pressures for conversion to other uses, such as public utility extensions and land subdivisions, should be avoided.

**CHAPTER SEVEN  
RESIDENTIAL COMPONENT**

**A. RESIDENTIAL NEEDS**

A diverse range of residential living environments currently exist in the township, including one and two family subdivisions, rural farmsteads, scattered residential homes, a mobile home park and apartment buildings. This plan identifies three major residential areas: rural residential, and low, medium and high density residential. This will guarantee a mix of living environments to meet the housing needs of all Green Charter Township residents.

**1. LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

The major residential area, in terms of total population expected, is the low density residential area. Based on the population projections of this plan and on current land use statistics for the township, a total of 663.75 acres of land will be required for one and two family subdivisions by the year 2000.

**ASSUMPTIONS**

Projected population (Year 2000) = 3116 = 3116 persons  
Subtract rural farm residents (1990) = 63 = 3053 persons  
Divided by persons per household (1990) 2.71 = 1127  
Households  
Multiply by % of population in one and two  
family homes (1990) = 77% = 885 households  
Multiply by acres per household (Est.) = .75 = 663.75 acres

The township has roughly 1260 acres of residential subdivisions in use with over 580 acres zoned for either one family residence (R-1) or one and two family residence (R-2). The existing area zoned either R-1 or R-2 more than meets the projected maximum acreage required.

**TABLE TWO  
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL USE**

<u>RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Existing Use	1460
Existing Zoning (R-1 or R-2)	1640
Projected Need	663.75

**2. MEDIUM AND HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

Because of the projected aging of the townships population and the continued growth of Ferris State University, more residents will likely be in the transitional stage of housing. This indicates that there will be a greater need for apartments and mobile home parks. Therefore, the plan provides for an increase for multiple family housing and mobile home parks to 10% of the total dwelling units of the township. The number of persons per household is reduced from 2.71 to 2.0 for apartments and 2.5 for mobile home parks to account for the smaller family size associated with higher density living.

**ASSUMPTIONS FOR APARTMENTS**

Projected Population (Year 2000) = 3116 = 3116 persons  
 Subtract Rural Farm Residents (1990) 63 = 3053 persons  
 Divide by Persons Per Household (Est.) 2.0 = 1526 Housing Units  
 Multiply by Percent in Apartments (Est.) 10% = 152 Housing Units  
 Multiply by Acres Per Housing Unit (Est.) 0.2 = 30 Acres

**ASSUMPTIONS FOR MOBILE HOME PARKS**

Projected Population (Year 2000) = 3116 = 3116 Persons  
 Subtract Rural Farm Residents (1990) 63 = 3053 Persons  
 Divide by Persons Per Household (Est.) 2.5 = 1221 Households  
 Multiply by Percent in Mobile Home Parks (Est.) 50% = 610 Households  
 Multiply by Acres Per Household (Est.) .3 = 183 Acres

**TABLE THREE**

**MEDIUM AND HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL USE**

<u>USE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
<b>APARTMENTS</b>	
Existing Use	5
Existing Zoning	200
Projected Need	30
<b>MOBILE HOME PARKS</b>	
Existing Use	35
Existing Zoning	235
Projected Need	183

The areas presently zoned for both apartments and mobile home parks (R-3), exceed the projected need for the year 2000, as indicated in Table 3.

## **B. RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The plan identifies three major residential areas. This section will discuss the rationale for the location of these areas based on acreage, services available, and compatible land uses.

### **1. Rural Residential Areas**

The Rural Residential Area consists of outlying open space, agricultural land, and scattered residential homes. The intent of this area is to maintain the rural residential atmosphere of the community with large lots and low density uses (density of roughly one unit per acre). It is designed for a mix of low density residential, agricultural, and forest land uses, and should serve as a buffer area between residential and agricultural areas.

The survey respondents desired to maintain the rural atmosphere of the township and preserve agricultural land. As a result, the Future Land Use Map provides large areas of land for rural residential development, while preserving the most important agricultural lands for active production. These areas are not required to be served by sanitary sewer and water systems, but may have access to them in the future. Larger lot sizes should be required to protect ground and surface waters and to maintain the rural character of the township. These areas are located in order to serve as buffer areas between important agricultural land and urban residential areas or other higher density uses.

## **2. Low Density Residential Areas**

Low Density Residential Areas consist of relatively small lots intended for either one or two family residential uses (density of 2-3 units per acre). Compatible non-residential uses such as schools, churches, and neighborhood parks are also permitted in these areas. By limiting the permitted uses in these areas, the township can help to ensure a safe and attractive living environment for its residents.

Low Density Residential Areas are intended to be located adjacent to existing single family developments and existing or proposed public sewer. This will minimize the cost of future public services, encourage an efficient and attractive residential area, and limit the encroachment of residential development into rural and agricultural areas of the community.

## **3. Medium And High Density Residential Areas**

With Ferris State University and the City of Big Rapids South of Green Charter Township, a continuing demand for affordable housing will likely increase. These areas should be carefully located because of their effect on neighboring land uses, traffic patterns, and the provision of public services. By consolidating uses, it will be possible to minimize conflicting uses and reduce the cost of community services associated with urban development.

### **a) Medium Density Residential Areas**

Medium Density Residential Areas are intended for single and two family residential homes and related uses; such as schools, churches, and parks. The density is projected at 4 to 6 units per acre, allowing small lot residential subdivisions and mobile home parks. The intent of this area is to encourage a planned mix of affordable housing, including site built modular housing and mobile home parks.

## **B. High Density Residential Areas**

High Density Residential Areas are located in the Southern most part of the Township and may be developed when complete public services are available. Public sewer is the only service available currently, but with addition of water services and storm drains, high density residential could develop.

High Density Residential Areas include multi-family housing (4 or more units), apartment building, condominiums and senior citizen housing. These areas should have access to complete public services and be located on major transportation routes. They should also be located adjacent to similar land uses or commercial areas to minimize land use conflicts.

## **C. Traffic Generation**

A potential problem associated with the location of higher density residential use, is the generation of traffic. As traffic increases, the safety and convenience of township roads will decline. For these reasons the plan recommends a more detailed analysis of traffic patterns and needs to be done periodically. The safety, convenience, and growth of the township would be improved with the addition of entrance and exit ramps to U S 131 expressway at Meceola Road.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### COMMERCIAL COMPONENT

#### A. COMMERCIAL NEEDS

Economic vitality is essential to the township's continued high quality of life. Commercial development is necessary to maintain that vitality, providing employment opportunities and assuring a stable tax base. However, over half (52%) of the township residents did not favor expanded shopping centers in the township. The role of the Master Plan is to identify the commercial needs of the township and to ensure that the location and establishment of commercial areas is compatible with neighboring uses and that public facilities are adequate to support the area.

The major commercial area in the township is located along Northland Drive, from 18 Mile Road through Paris North to 23 Mile Road. Along this corridor presently, 140 acres are zoned commercial; of which 85 acres are not being used.

Highway Commercial Areas include a wider range of activities, such as an auto wash, auto repairs, outdoor sales, drive-in restaurants, filling stations, hotels, motels and shopping centers. They are designed to serve the needs of both the township residents and the traveling public.

#### B. COMMERCIAL AREAS

The Master Plan recommends that the major commercial area of the township remain along the Northland Drive corridor, North of Big Rapids (Business U. S. 131). This area contains vacant parcels currently zoned for commercial use. These vacant parcels should be developed prior to re-zoning any additional commercial land.

The Future Land Use Map places Highway Commercial Areas along the 19 Mile Road entrance and exit ramps at the 131 Expressway.

There is ample commercially zoned land available for commercial development in the township. Less than 40% of the area zoned for commercial use is actually being used for commercial activities. Proper infill development in existing commercial areas should satisfy the commercial needs of the township for the next 15 to 20 years.

**CHAPTER NINE  
INDUSTRIAL COMPONENT**

**A. INDUSTRIAL NEEDS**

Industrial development is the second component of a sound economic development policy. Over 75% of the township residents desired expanded industrial development and 73% felt that the township should actively seek light industry. The industrial base of a community plays an important role in its economic strength and prosperity. Industrial activities provide both employment opportunities and tax monies to the township. The goal of the master plan in industrial development is to provide the proper location of industrial uses in relation to existing services and adjacent uses.

Green Charter Township has more land zoned for industrial use than is being used, or will likely be used within the planning period. As shown in table six, there are 90 acres zoned for industry, while only 40 acres are actually being used.

TABLE SIX

	<u>ACRES</u>
INDUSTRIAL USE	40
INDUSTRIAL ZONING	90

**B. INDUSTRIAL AREAS**

The plan recommends that future industrial development be in a smaller geographic area, adjacent to public sewer and accessible to major transportation routes. Not only will this reduce the cost of future utility extensions, it will minimize conflicts with neighboring land uses and create a more functional industrial area. A planned, compact and functional industrial area will be much more attractive to development than scattered industrial uses in a large area requiring costly service extensions.

The plan recommends that future development of light industry be along 18 mile road between Northland Drive and 220th Ave. This area is easily accessible to sewer, the airport and the U S 131 Expressway.

The current industrial area is scattered throughout the township, along 18 Mile Road in section 31 and along 19 Mile Road and Coolidge Road in section 27. As these areas are existing they will remain industrial, but none of these areas are within reasonable access to sewer.

## CHAPTER TEN

### RECREATIONAL ELEMENT

#### A. PREFACE AND CLASSIFICATION

Parks and recreational facilities provide an essential part to a well-balanced society. They offer an opportunity for physical exercise, and a chance for play and relaxation. The providence of recreational facilities and programs is an expected and standard part of local government planning and management.

##### 1. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Recreational activities of a great variety, such as skating, field games, playground, crafts, etc., are concentrated and easily accessible to Green Township within the school district areas and can be further developed in centrally located areas as the region develops.

##### 2. COMMUNITY AND COUNTY/REGIONAL PARKS

Paris Park, located within the boundaries of Green Township contains a multitude of attractions: camping, picnicking, trout ponds, the Muskegon River for tubing, canoeing, as well as fishing, and a playground which includes equipment for young children to enjoy. Also a refuge for general and injured wildlife is of great interest. The annual event of "Springtime in Paris" attracts hundreds of spectators.

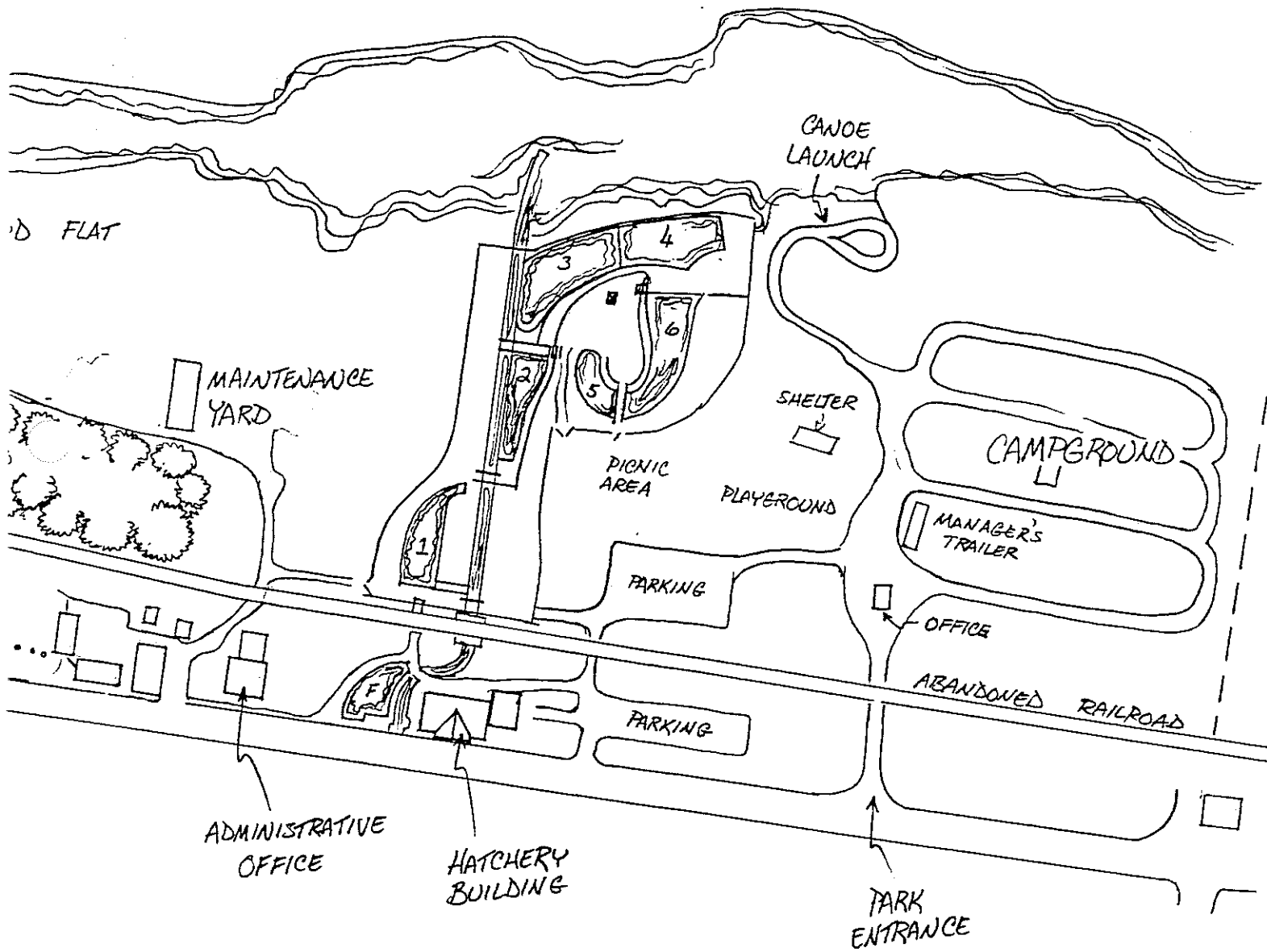
## B. RECREATION INVENTORY

1. According to standards for park development, Green Charter Township is interested in providing recreational areas in compliance with the needs of the population, present and future, and the community as a whole. The township has within its boundaries, the Paris Park, a part of the Mecosta County Park System. Also, a small neighborhood park serves the residents of Greenhaven 1 and 2, Northgate Manor, and Burgess Subdivisions.
2. The greater percentage of children from Green Charter Township attend school in the Big Rapids school district, a smaller number going to Reed City Schools. This close proximity and affiliation gives Green Charter Township residents access to numerous additional community parks.

### C. ANALYSIS OF RECREATIONAL NEEDS

In order to assess the recreational needs of the township, the existing recreation areas must be evaluated. Population characteristics identify the need for recreational planning (see 1990 census report, page 3-2). Recreational activities influence seasonal fluctuations in population that can have an economic impact due to increased retail sales, fees, and charges. Tourism and recreation are considered a growth industry; a desirable source of expansion. Urban populations seek leisure-time activities away from the congestion of densely populated cities. Green Charter Township has within its boundaries; Paris Park, the Muskegon River, and the Paris Fish Hatchery. Campgrounds and theme-parks can also be a category considered for future developments to stimulate recreational as well as business expansion. Paris Park can be improved by greater overall facilities to attract and hold public use.

Expansion of recreational needs is of great importance, yet has to be realistically contained within the realm of purpose.

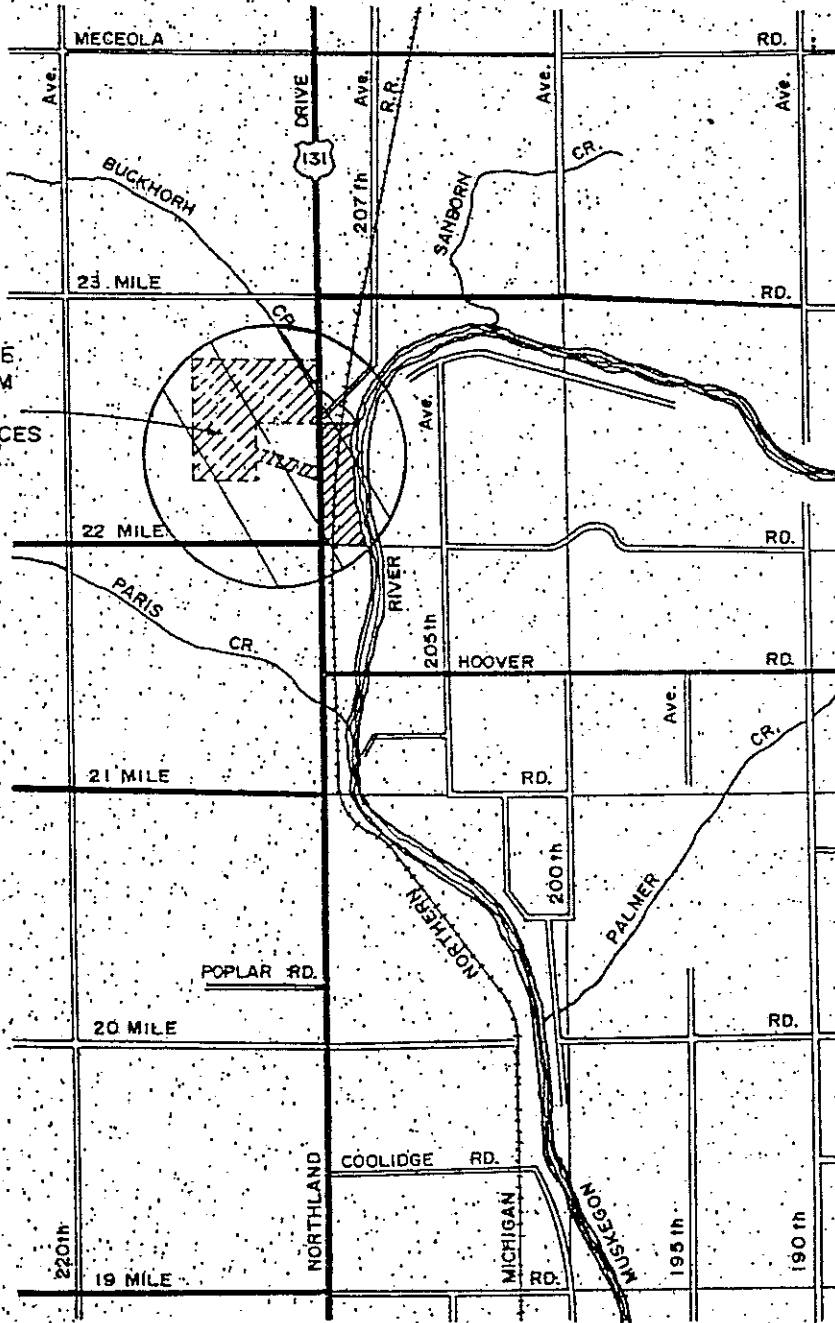


# Paris Park

## Mecosta County Parks

MAP 9

PROPOSED FUTURE  
ACQUISITION FROM  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

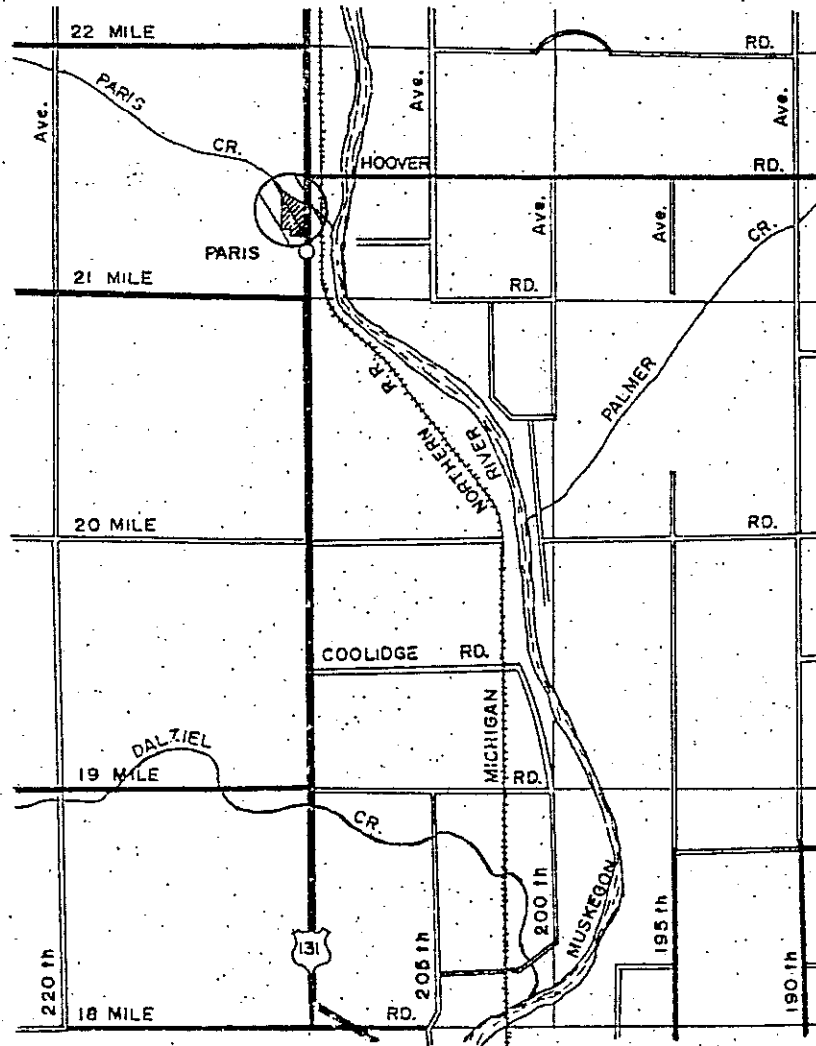


PARIS PARK #1

AND FUTURE EXPANSION SITE

LOCATION IN GREEN TOWNSHIP

MAP 10



PARIS PARK #2

( TO BE DEVELOPED )

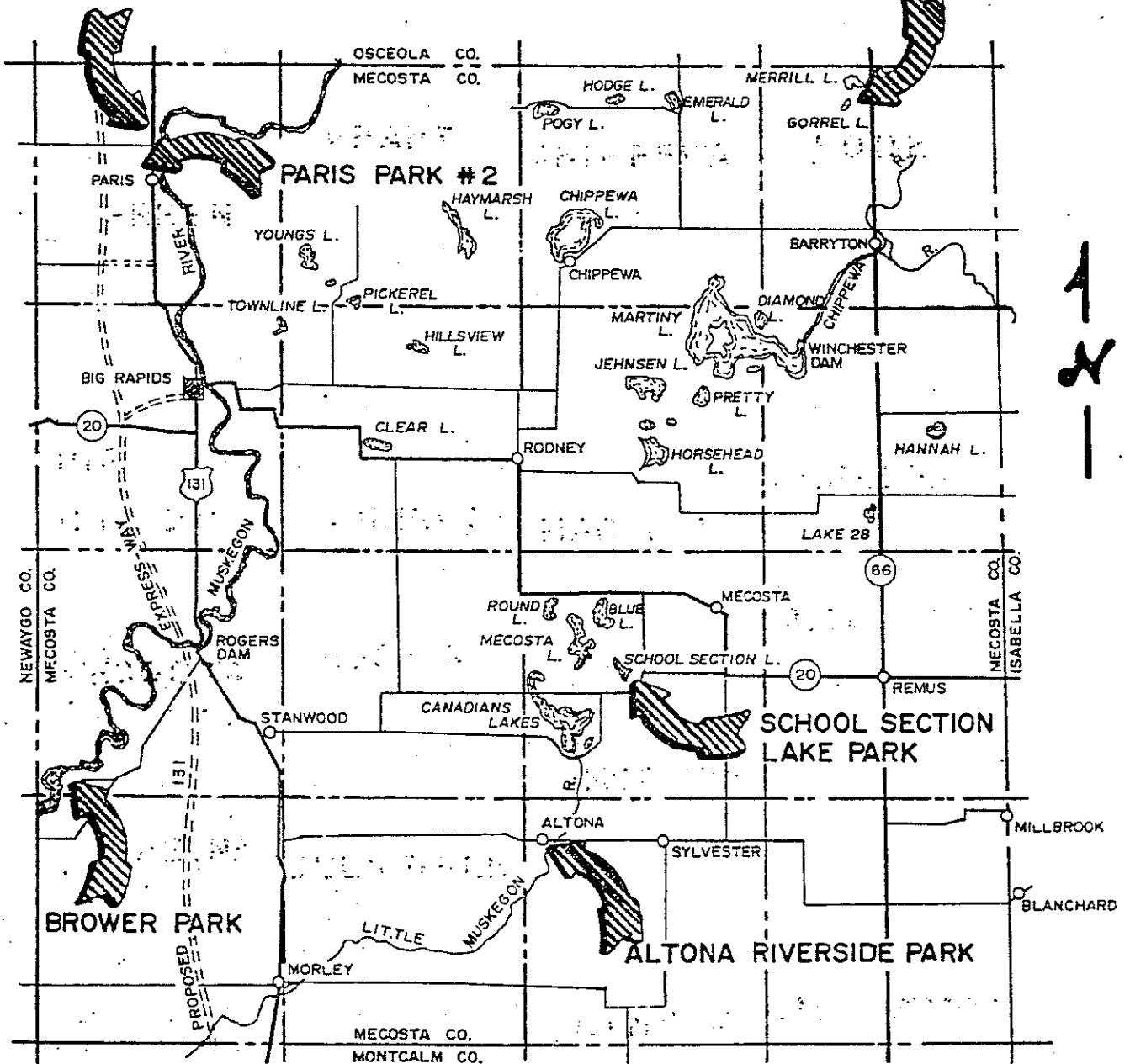
LOCATION IN GREEN TOWNSHIP



MAP 8

PARIS PARK # 1

MERRILL LAKE PARK



MECOSTA COUNTY PARKS

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Existing facilities to be updated and improved for maximum utilization.
2. Riverfront property development will be given utmost attention to preserve the natural beauty, keeping in mind the recreational value and attraction of the Muskegon River for tourism.
3. Continuation of Paris Park events, like "Springtime in Paris", the fish hatchery, picnic areas, tubing and canoeing.
4. New developments in residential subdivisions or site condominiums shall provide recreation areas for their residents.
5. Support development of "Rails to Trails" for non-motorized vehicles only.