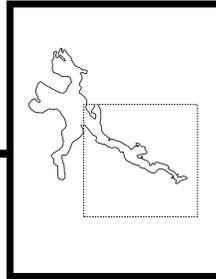


# Harris Township Comprehensive Plan

Approved by the Plan Steering Committee 9/19/06

Adopted by the Harris Township Board [Date]



## Plan Steering Committee

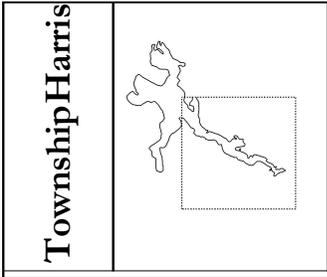
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# How this Plan will be Used

Harris Township undertook the creation of this plan because: it recognizes the limited scope of its authority over the range of critical actions affecting the Township, and, without such a document the Township could not properly articulate and defend its position on key decisions being made by the entities which do have the authority for those critical actions.

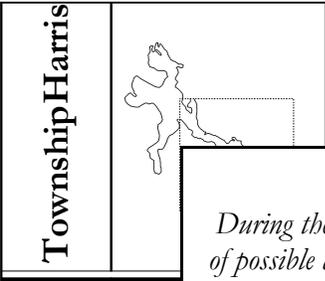
Thus, **the purpose of this plan** is to guide Township decisions and investments within its sphere of authority and to be used by the Township as the basis for its efforts to influence, coordinate and cooperate with other governmental entities that make decisions and investments within and affecting the Harris Township.

***The plan will guide Township decisions and investments regarding:***

- Township roads
- Recreation facilities
- Town buildings and sites
- Services

***Township will use the plan to:***

- Influence decisions by Itasca County concerning such functions as comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivisions, and roads.
- Coordinate actions with the City of Grand Rapids regarding cooperative approaches to land use, road and highway development, trails and recreation, fire protection, and similar matters.
- Foster cooperation with other townships and communities regarding wastewater treatment on lakes, fire protection, and similar matters.
- Initiate cooperation and coordination with other public and private entities (such as DNR regarding forest land and recreation facilities, and UPM-Blandin regarding forest land).



# Sense of Place

## ***This Plan and the Issue of Annexation:***

*During the course of the planning process the City of Grand Rapids raised the issue of possible annexation of portions of Harris Township. Although the issue has since quieted, it is important that the Township’s position relative to potential annexation be stated.*

it

What is that makes Harris

- The Township recognizes that the issue of potential annexation of portions of the community by the City of Grand Rapids exists and will remain on the table for the foreseeable future.
- It is the Township’s intent to remain an exurban/rural community integrated into and contributing to the greater Grand Rapids community but as a separate unit of government with its current boundaries intact.
- The Township believes the conditions supporting annexation as defined in state law do not exist at present.
- The Township recognizes that it will continue to undergo increased development. If this development is allowed at suburban densities, then some portions of the community might eventually show signs of the conditions supporting annexation.
- It is the intent of this plan to promote a type and density of development consistent with the community’s exurban/rural nature and to prevent the creation of conditions that would support annexation of parts of the township into the city.
- It is the Township’s contention that the future conditions set forth in this plan describe a Harris Township playing a vital, supportive, and necessary role for the greater Grand Rapids area within Itasca

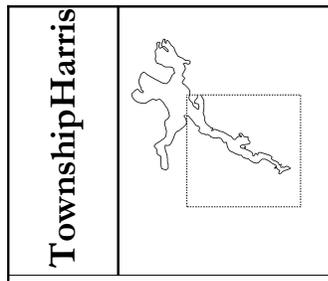
Township, Harris Township? What are the values and features that define the community and contribute to its positive sense of place? What factors, if lost or diminished, would reduce that essential “something” that makes this place special? To these questions, the citizens of Harris Township offer the following:

### ***Sense of Ruralness***

- Open space
- Rural landscape of fields and forest
- Low density of development
- Sense of personal safety
- Environmental quality – high quality ground and surface water, low ambient noise levels, dark night sky

### ***Ease of Access into Grand Rapids***

- Township Form of Government
  - Direct citizen involvement
  - Lower cost and complexity
- Employment
- Shopping
- Government
- Entertainment
- Social



# A Description

This chapter provides basic information about Harris Township, providing a basis for the comprehensive plan.

## Location and Land Use

Harris Township is located within Itasca County south of and immediately adjacent to the City of Grand Rapids [see Map 1]. The township's early settlement was based on agriculture and logging. Cabins and resorts were built on Pokegama Lake. Over time the township's proximity to Grand Rapids has led to an increase in year-round homes. The amount of agricultural activity has declined, most resorts on the lake have transformed into housing, and many seasonal cabins have shifted to year-round homes.

Commercial development has long existed along the Trunk Highway 169 corridor. South of the lake development has tended to be restaurants and convenience stores, whereas various enterprises have located north of the lake. Although the corridor is the only area with commercial zoning, there are a number of gravel pits and smaller commercial establishments scattered around the township. The exception is the Wendigo Golf Course, Resort and Conference Center located north of the lake; this site includes a restaurant.

In addition to a number of farms, the southeast quarter of the township also has an extensive amount of publicly and privately owned forestland. The University of Minnesota operates a research farm along the Harris Town Road. Since 1910, Camp Mishawaka has operated a summer camp for boys and girls along the north side of Pokegama Lake.

Nearly all the developable land around Pokegama and Hale Lakes has been developed. Other areas of the township have considerable amounts of acreage available for future development. In recent years, development activity has been modest and with the predicted overall growth in the Grand Rapids area, this trend is likely to continue.

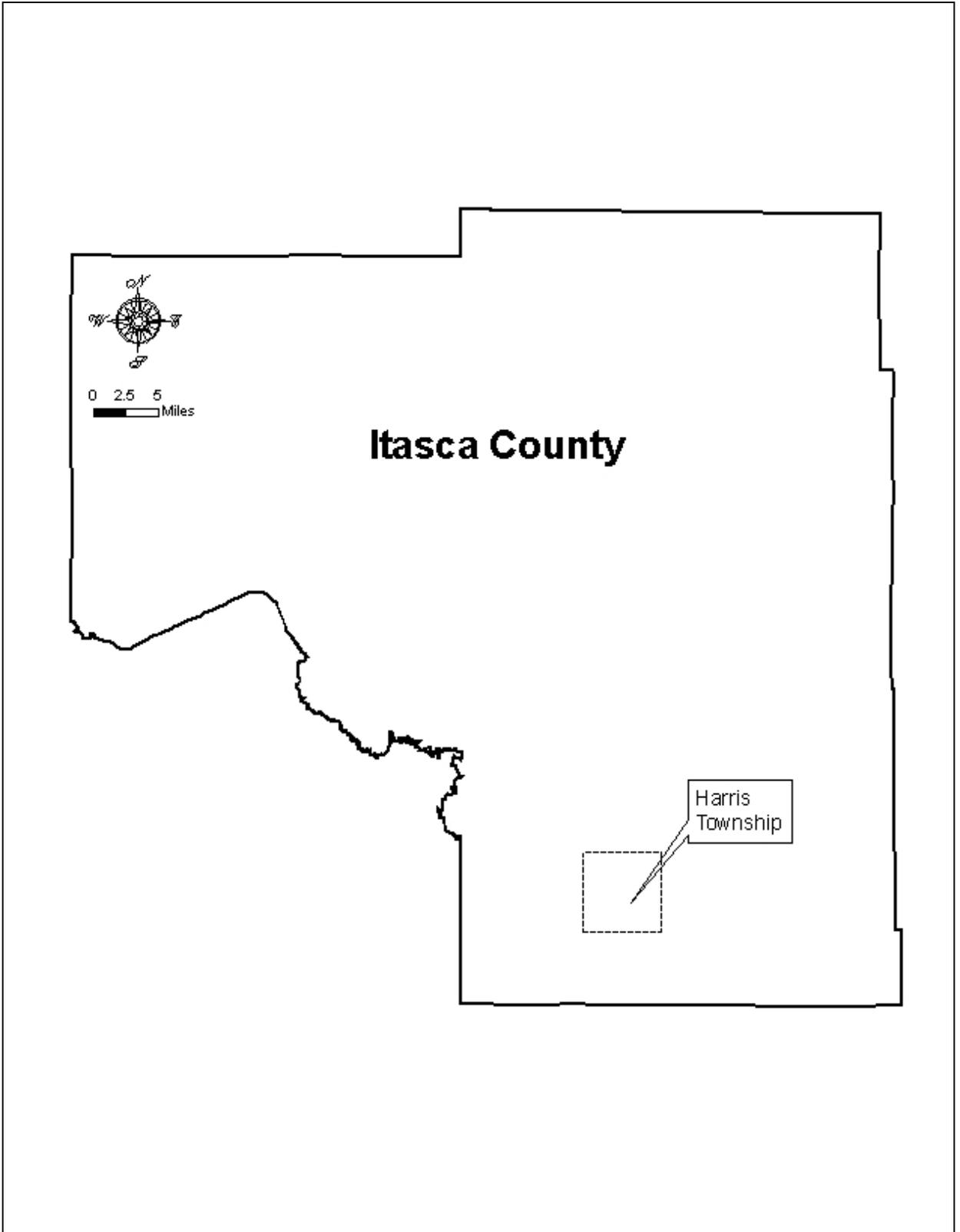
Itasca County exercises land use controls – zoning and subdivision – within the township. The bulk of the non-lakeshore portion of the township is zoned Farm Residential in which the minimum lot size is 2.5 acres (5.0 acres if livestock are on site); a small amount is zoned Rural Residential with a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres. Lakeshore areas are governed by shoreland zoning regulations. There are several commercially zoned areas along Trunk Highway 169.

## Roads

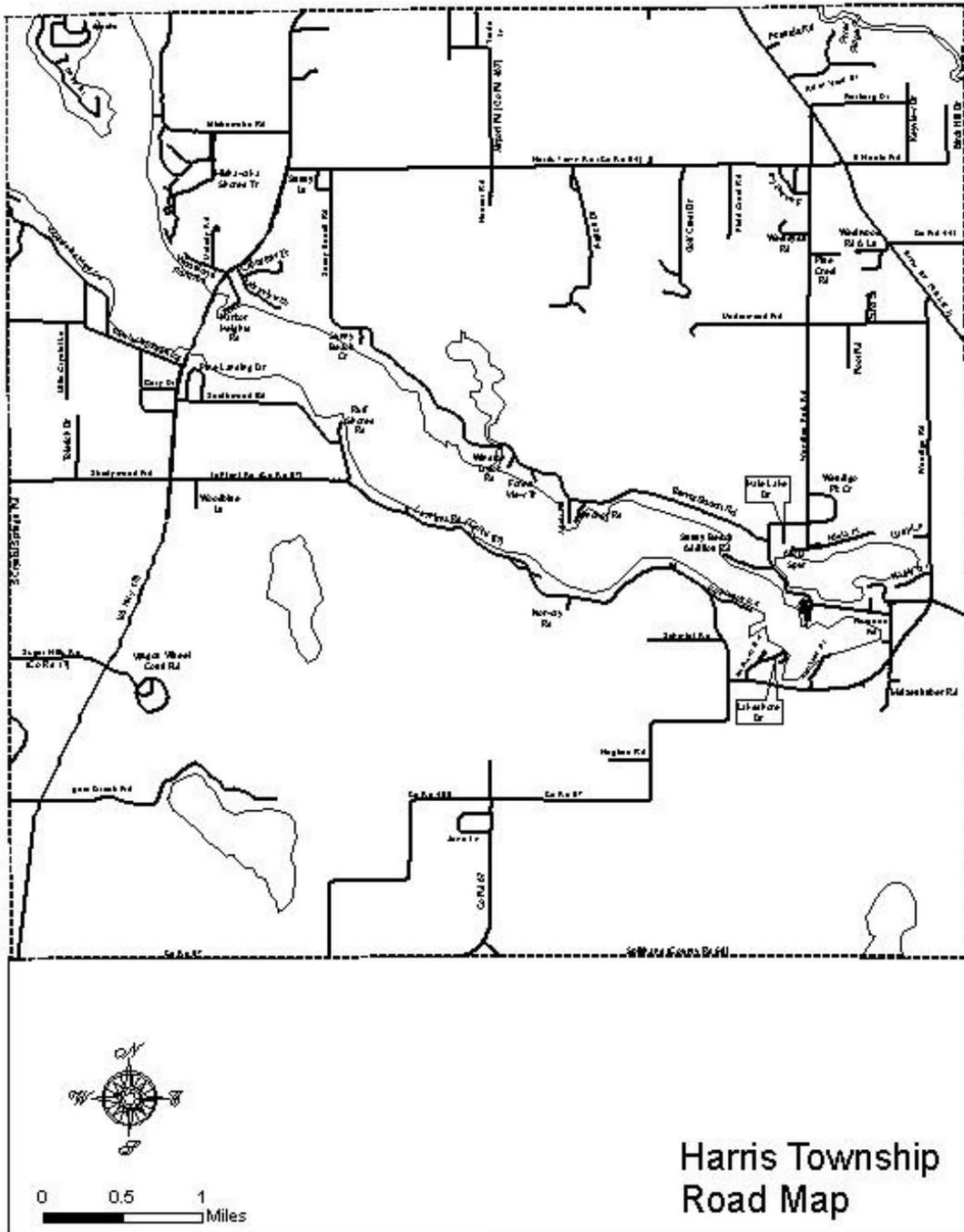
Trunk Highway 169 is the major roadway serving the township. It carries traffic north and south through the township directly into the major commercial sector of Grand Rapids. The highway serves as the primary transportation route for the bulk of the township. According to the *TH 169 South Access Management Plan* (ARDC, 2003) the portion of the highway in Harris Township is considered "Rural Access Management Area". Such areas are characterized by limited residential and commercial development and the highway is planned to operate at higher speeds through this area, typically at 50 mph or more.

County State Aid Highway 3, commonly known as the River Road, is the second most important transportation corridor. Running on the eastern side of the township, it plays a role similar to Trunk Highway 169 but without the extensive commercial traffic and far lower volumes.

**Map 1. Harris Township Location within Itasca County**



Map 2. Harris Township Roads



A third route into Grand Rapids from the heart of the township is County Road 457 or the Airport Road, which becomes 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue East in Grand Rapids. Despite its sharp curves, this road receives a fair amount of traffic since it provides an alternative to Highway 169 for direct access into Grand Rapids.

Country Road 64 or Harris Town Road, is the primary east-west route in northern Harris Township. Although primarily serving the immediate area, in recent years the road has seen an increase in through traffic including commercial trucks serving the burgeoning south Grand Rapids commercial area.

Other major County roads in the township include: CR 66 or LaPlant Road, which provides the east-west corridor along the south shore of Pokegama Lake; CR 67, which provides another east-west connection in the far south of the township; CR 437 or Crystal Springs Road, which provides access into the Stony Point area; and CR 250 or South Crystal Springs Road, which provides access south of the area.

The Township owns and maintains approximately 32.6 miles of roads throughout the community; of these 25 miles are paved. Township roads and their length are:

<b>Table 1. Harris Township Roads</b>			
<b>Road</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Miles</b>
<b>GRAVEL ROADS</b>		Norway Road	0.10
Bay View Place	0.29	Pennela Road	0.09
Bear Creek Road	1.71	Pine Crest Road	0.20
Breezy Lane	0.09	River Ridge Road	0.16
Carol Street	0.18	River View Drive	0.60
Crystal Park	---	Roots Road	0.28
Davis Road	0.08	Schmidt Road	0.47
Forest View Trail (Alpha Road)	0.08	Sunset Drive	0.17
Hauser Road	0.25	Sunset Lane	0.31
Hughes Road	0.27	Vroman Road	0.25
Jane Lane	0.49	Wagon Wheel Road	0.24
Melody Lane	0.24	Wendigo Heights Road	0.30
Metzenhuber Road	0.10	Woodland Park Road	0.30
Nancy Drive	0.25	<b>Total Gravel Miles</b>	<b>7.50</b>
<b>PAVED ROADS</b>		Norberg Road	0.61
Alicia Place	0.55	Pine Landing	0.46
Alicia Spur	0.08	Pine Street	0.11
Apache	0.20	Robinson Road	0.28
Aspen Drive	0.76	Romans Road	0.26
Birch Hills Drive	0.38	Ruff Shores Road	0.13
Birch Street	0.73	Southwood Road	1.39
Casper Landing (Troop Town)	0.20	Stoney Point Road	0.39

<b>Table 1. Harris Township Roads</b>			
<b>Road</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Cemetery	---	Sunny Beach Addition	0.33
Chippewa Drive	0.32	Sunny Beach Road - Park Road to Romans Road	---
East Harris Road	0.63	Sunny Beach Road - Park Road to Harris Town Road	5.38
Field Crest Road	0.46	Sunny Lane	0.22
Gary Drive	0.46	Tolerick Drive	0.40
Harbor Heights Road	0.32	Underwood Road	1.54
Isle View Road	0.31	Verde Lane	0.22
Jess Harry Corner	---	Wendigo Picnic Area	---
Key View Drive	0.50	Wendigo Park Road	2.77
Lakeview Drive	0.41	Wesleyan Road	0.26
LaPlant Road Landing	---	Westwood Lane	0.23
Little Crystal Lane	0.49	Westwood Road	0.23
Mishawaka Landing	---	Winebago Drive	0.13
Mishawaka Road	1.53	Winston-Taylor Road	0.09
Mishawaka Shores	0.56	Woodbine Lane	0.18
Mohawk Drive	0.07	Lundquist Road	vacated
Mornes Road	0.56	<b>Total Paved Miles</b>	<b>25.13</b>
			<b>TOTAL ROADS</b>
			<b>32.63</b>

## Recreation

Harris Township owns and operates a number of recreation facilities that serve residents and visitors.

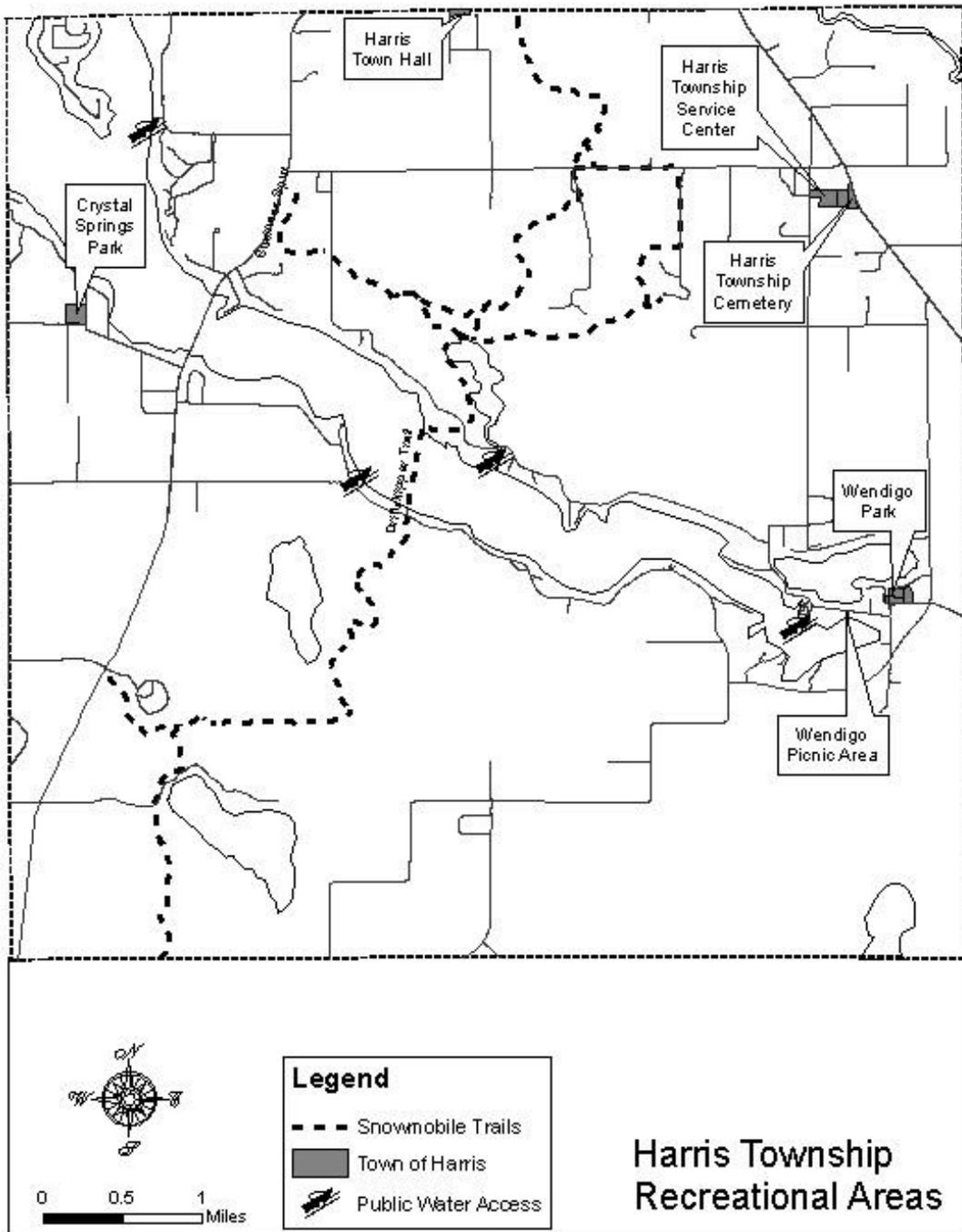
- Crystal Springs Park: baseball field with bleachers, hockey/skating rink with warming house, swings, climbing structures, basketball court, volleyball court, game court.
- Wendigo Park: baseball field (full fencing, skinned infield, bleachers), hockey rink with warming house, tennis courts.
- Wendigo Picnic Area: picnic tables, open space.
- Town Hall: basketball hoop at parking lot, Town Hall (indoor meeting area).

In addition, the Township maintains four boat accesses on Pokegama Lake – Troop Town, LaPlant Road, Woodtick Lake, Mishawaka Road. There is a non-maintained carry-in access on Hale Lake on county administered tax forfeited land.

Several trail systems serve the community as well. The Driftskipper Snowmobile Trail runs north-south through the middle of the township; this trail connects with an extensive system south of Harris Township and provides access into and through Grand Rapids. In the southeast corner of the township is a cross-country ski / hiking trail system in the Golden Anniversary State Forest.

The township also includes state and county administered tax forfeit public lands open for general recreation. These are roughly 200 acres near Woodtick Lake; Golden Anniversary State Forest (state and county – 1100 acres); and approximately 730 acres in several clusters in the southeast quarter near Carlson and Munzer Lakes.

Map 3. Harris Township Recreation Facilities



## Population

As noted in Table 2, Harris Township has gained population in the past decade at a rate greater than that for Itasca County as a whole. This trend is continuing. At the same time, the number of households is growing as a result of more people and lower average household sizes.

	Census & State Estimate			Change	
	1990	2000	2004	1990-00	2000-04
<b>Harris Twp</b>					
Population	2,888	3,328	3,385	15.2%	1.7%
Households	1,028	1,290	1,343	25.5%	4.1%
Persons/HH	2.81	2.58	2.52	-8.3%	-10.5%
<b>Itasca County</b>					
Population	40,863	43,992	44,242	7.7%	0.6%
Households	15,478	18,103	18,282	17.0%	1.0%
Persons/HH	2.64	2.43	2.42	-8.0%	-8.5%

Table 3 presents population figures for the communities that border Harris Township as a means to show the dynamics of change in this area. It should be noted that the City of Grand Rapids is absorbing Grand Rapids Township through orderly annexation during this period.

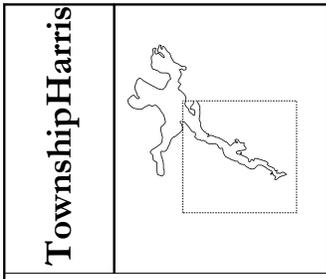
Community	Census & State Estimate			Change	
	1990	2000	2004	1990-00	2000-04
Grand Rapids, City*	7,976	7,764	8,478	-2.7%	9.2%
Grand Rapids, Twp*	3,199	3,378	2,469	5.6%	-26.9%
Harris Township	2,888	3,328	3,385	15.2%	1.7%
Cohasset	1,970	2,481	2,556	25.9%	3.0%
Arbo Twp	832	898	882	7.9%	-1.8%
LaPrairie / Trout Lake	1,946	2,273	2,357	16.8%	3.7%
Blackberry	698	717	723	2.7%	0.8%
Total	19,509	20,839	20,850	6.8%	0.0%

\*Orderly annexation of Grand Rapids Township began in 2000 and will be completed by 2010.

State Demographers Office population forecasts have Itasca County growing modestly from 43,992 in 2000 to 46,560 in 2020. This will increase if the proposed Minnesota Steel, Excelsior Energy's Mesaba One, and UPM-Blandin Paper Company projects become reality.

## **Township Government**

Harris Township has the powers and authorities of an urban town as provided in Minnesota Statutes 368.01. The Township provides a number of services including roads, recreation facilities, and operation of the Harris Township Cemetery and fire protection, which is contracted from the Grand Rapids Fire Department. The Itasca County Sheriff provides police protection.



# Factors Influencing the Future

An essential aspect of a plan is identifying the forces that impact the community and understanding how, within the dynamics of those forces, the community can affect desired change. Some factors, such as economic forces affecting the local paper mill, are global in scope upon which the local community has no influence. Others are purely local and well within the jurisdiction of the township’s authority. Included in these local forces are the needs and desires of township residents. Many forces lie somewhere in between, outside the Township’s direct legal authority but capable of being influenced by directed action.

## Factors Influencing Community Change

Each of the following boxes reviews a key factor affecting how Harris Township will develop over the foreseeable future.

<b>Factors Influencing Changes to Community</b>	<b>Change Factor:</b>	
	<b>ACCUMULATED IMPACT OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Nature of Change Factor</b>	<b>Impact on Harris Township</b>	
Years of continuous development, especially in small lots along the lakes, have accumulated impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Failing septic systems (real or potential) leading to degradation of lakes’ water quality.</li> <li>▪ Increase in traffic volume, speed, and safety issues on road systems.</li> <li>▪ Increase in real estate values and property tax base.</li> <li>▪ Increased wear and tear on township roads.</li> <li>▪ While the lake remains attractive as a recreational resource and provides value to real estate, there is increased perception of a diminished recreation experience.</li> </ul>	

**More Detail:** The draft *South Central Itasca County Wastewater Management Plan* (September 2005) identified areas of potential concern regarding pollution from Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS) within a six-township area. Analysis determined the most important criterion was system density. Four of the areas of concern identified are wholly or partially within Harris Township – three areas noted as Pokegama Lake South (Stony Point and east, Wendigo Arm/Hale Lake, Mishawaka to Woodtick Lake) and one as Pokegama Lake East (Isleview Addition). If septic system failures are discovered in subsequent investigations, the proposed wastewater management plan recommends as an alternative to extending central sanitary sewer service that some form of

coordinated management of individual sewage treatment systems be instituted through a newly formed sanitary district.

<b><i>Factors Influencing Changes to Community</i></b>	<b>Change Factor:</b>
	<b>CHANGE IN POPULATION DYNAMICS</b>
<b>Nature of Change Factor</b>	<b>Impact on Harris Township</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smaller average sized households lead to more housing units.</li> <li>▪ Increased mobility allows people to live further from town.</li> <li>▪ Increased mobility increases number of trips generated per household.</li> <li>▪ Conversion from second home cabins to year-round residences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in traffic volume, speed, and safety issues.</li> <li>▪ More year-round residents for involvement in community affairs and activities.</li> <li>▪ Increased wear and tear on township roads.</li> <li>▪ Demand for additional roads.</li> <li>▪ More housing developments.</li> </ul>

<b><i>Factors Influencing Changes to Community</i></b>	<b>Change Factor:</b>
	<b>UNFORESEEN OR UNANTICIPATED IMPACT OF LEGAL DEVELOPMENT ON PREVIOUSLY UNDEVELOPED LAND</b>
<b>Nature of Change Factor</b>	<b>Impact on Harris Township</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changes in land ownership and economics drive development of previously undeveloped (and assumed to remain undeveloped) land such as farms, forested areas, marginal shoreland, former gravel pits, and the like.</li> <li>▪ Increase in demand and land values encourages subdivision of land parcels into the minimum size required by zoning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loss of defining rural open space such as farm fields and forests.</li> <li>▪ New housing development is at densities greater than previous development.</li> <li>▪ Increase in housing opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Increased wear and tear on township roads and demand for new roads.</li> <li>▪ Increase in land value and property tax base.</li> <li>▪ More year-round residents for involvement in community affairs and activities.</li> <li>▪ Residents, especially longer term ones, perceive a general diminishment of sense of ruralness (which can take many forms such as loss of dark night sky, more ambient man-made noise, increased traffic, loss of open land to hike/play in, etc.).</li> </ul>

<b>Factors Influencing Changes to Community</b>	<b>Change Factor:</b>	
	<b>GRAND RAPIDS GROWTH &amp; EXPANSION</b>	
<b>Nature of Change Factor</b>	<b>Impact on Harris Township</b>	
Grand Rapids is growing in terms of economic dynamism and physical boundaries, with much of this activity physically trending in Harris Township's direction. This factor includes the general increased activity in the greater Grand Rapids area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intensified commercial development further south along Highway 169.</li> <li>▪ Increase in employment and business development opportunities for existing and potential new Harris residents.</li> <li>▪ Maintained pressure to create rural subdivisions at or near minimum required lot sizes in the township.</li> <li>▪ Increase in vehicular traffic on arterial roads, especially commercial trucks and general auto along Harris Town Road.</li> <li>▪ Increased airport traffic and subsequent noise pollution.</li> <li>▪ Increased use of public boat accesses on Pokegama Lake causing, in some cases, user conflicts.</li> </ul>	

**More Detail:** By 2010 the City of Grand Rapid will have completed its orderly annexation of Grand Rapids Township (portions of which will also be annexed into LaPrairie and Trout Lake Township). The annexation is one symptom of the city's growth, generally in a southerly direction. Major commercial development has occurred along Highway 169 south driving substantial new road development that both serves the current development and encourages additional activity; land prepared for development and land designated for near-term industrial development about Harris Township. In addition, the new Grand Itasca hospital and emerging medical complex on Golf Course Road is fueling development pressure and vehicle traffic in this direction. Neither the city's (2003) nor the county's (2000) comprehensive plan envisions the city's further expansion to the south; however, neither do they rule out that event.

<b>Factors Influencing Changes to Community</b>	<b>Change Factor:</b>	
	<b>INADEQUATE GOVERNMENT CONTROLS</b>	
<b>Nature of Change Factor</b>	<b>Impact on Harris Township</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rezoning of land from Farm Residential to Rural Residential.</li> <li>▪ Official acceptance of non-residential uses in rural residential areas diminishes sense of ruralness.</li> <li>▪ Subdivision regulations tend to foster standard conventional lot layout and not to encourage more rural designs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development at densities greater than what is considered exurban or rural.</li> <li>▪ Commercial uses that are spot located within residential areas.</li> <li>▪ Subdivisions more suggestive of suburban not rural development styles and attributes.</li> </ul>	

**More Detail:** It is important to differentiate between suburban, exurban, and rural development densities. According to the memorandum submitted by the Administrative Law Judge in the matter of "Petition for Incorporation of Columbus Township and Petition by Forest Lake to Annex Certain Portions of Columbus Township" (OAH 15-6051-16937-BA) "a suburb is an area that is now or about to become connected to urban services, specifically sewer and water, and other

areas that are defined by large residential lots, not connected to water and sewer should be more appropriately defined as exurban.” Quantifiable definitions of development density were offered in a paper on rural development in the Northwest US as follows:

- Urban – 0.6 acres/unit;
- Suburban – 0.7-1.7 acres/unit;
- Exurban – 1.8-20.0 acres/unit;
- Rural – greater than 20.0 acres/unit.<sup>1</sup>

By these definitions the Rural Residential zone is actually suburban in density.

## Community Survey

Perhaps the key planning factor centers on the perceptions and desires of the community’s residents regarding how they understand their community to be today and wish it to be in the future. While such views and wishes may not always reflect objective reality of what is possible, they do motivate actions. In this light, it is critical to gain an understanding of them.

A survey of residents and landowners was conducted as part of the planning process. The following summarizes the core themes generated by the results. A detailed presentation of survey findings is in the Appendix.

- Harris Township is perceived as a rural community. Various rural values and attributes are vitally important to the residents.
- Ease of access into Grand Rapids is an important feature of the township.
- Pokegama Lake is seen as perhaps the community’s defining recreation and natural resource.
- There is essentially no desire to see any part of the township annexed by Grand Rapids.
- The township form of government is a defining attribute of Harris Township. It is perceived as having a desirable lower level of government complexity and lower property taxes. Even if it meant preventing annexation by Grand Rapids, there was little support to incorporate as a city. However, at the public forum to review the draft plan, the clear majority of those present favored at least a review of the pros and cons of incorporation.
- Major land use related issues focus on the southward expansion of Grand Rapids and concern about failing septic systems.
- Transportation related concerns are widely shared including speeding and increased traffic volumes.
- Recreation facilities should be retained, especially the public boat accesses on Pokegama Lake.

## Assessment

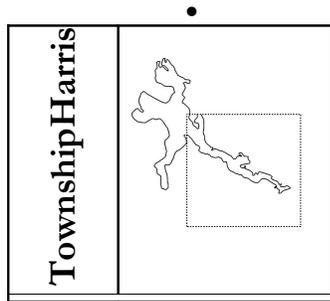
Of the many conclusions that can be drawn from the background material and the review of factors influencing change in Harris Township, the ones deemed most appropriate and critical to the development of the comprehensive plan are:

- Itasca County in general and the Grand Rapids area in particular will grow in terms of population and economic activity over the next decade or so. Harris Township will likely grow at a rate greater than the rest of the county possibly gaining 190-225 people living in 75-90 households between 2000 and 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> David M. Theobald, “Defining and Mapping Rural Sprawl: Examples from the Northwest US”, Natural Resource Ecology Lab and Dept. of Recreation and Tourism, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, September 16, 2003.

- Commercial, industrial, and residential development in southern Grand Rapids will continue with much of it occurring in the TH 169 corridor.
- Most development within Harris Township, with the exception of the TH 169 corridor, is residential. The non-lakeshore area north of Pokegama Lake can best be described as exurban while that south of the lake can be labeled as rural. It is likely that the remaining undeveloped land along Pokegama Lake will be developed residentially within the next 10-15 years.
- Wastewater treatment, most especially along the densely developed stretches of Pokegama and Hale Lakes, will be a growing concern. The township is participating in the SCIGPB effort to identify needs and a preferred management approach. The SCIGPB has determined that extension of central sanitary sewer service into these areas is not feasible and is, instead, promoting a sanitary district to manage individual on-site treatment systems.
- Although Itasca County will soon update both its comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance, it is unlikely that the county will make changes such as introducing larger minimum lot sizes in rural areas.
- Highway 169 will experience increase traffic volumes but the road is capable of handling them. However, conflicts at certain intersections – LaPlant/Southwood and Harris Town roads will likely increase.
- The Harris Town Road will see increased traffic including substantial rises in through commercial truck traffic, which will be accessing businesses in southern Grand Rapids. This will cause issues regarding volumes (noise, turning conflicts), loss of rural character, and safety (at such intersections as Wendigo Park Road and River Road).
- There will be growing pressure to upgrade and straighten Airport Road. Because it will serve the expanding industrial area immediately within Grand Rapids, there will be pressure for increased use of the road by commercial trucks.
- The township’s recreation facilities are sound, needing maintenance but no major upgrades.
- Boat accesses on Pokegama Lake need attention due to increased use. The Troop Town access has user conflicts between boaters and swimmers, even though it is not a designated beach. The LaPlant Road and Woodtick accesses have limited parking. And the Hale Lake access is essentially unusable with no parking, narrow width, and steep slope.
- It may be necessary to devise a system of designated motorized and non-motorized trails that permit town residents and visitors to move through the community and safely access Grand Rapids.
- It is clear that residents perceive Harris as a rural component of the greater Grand Rapids area community and desire that this complementary relationship continue in the future.
- Residents prefer to retain the township form of government although they are willing to consider incorporation as a city if that is required to avoid annexation.
- Harris Township has a range of options for implementing this plan including exercising its powers as an urban township, seeking incorporation as a city, and coordinating, cooperating, and influencing others to act in concert with township’s interests.



# The Future Harris Township

In this chapter Harris Township defines the type of community it desires to be over time. The Township will seek consistency with this description as it makes future decisions and investments, prepares responses to proposals, and undertakes initiatives.

## Goal: A Rural Community

*It is Harris Township's goal that it will be a fully intact, rural, predominantly residential community complementing the greater Grand Rapids area and Itasca County as a whole, whose rural qualities will vary as appropriate within the township, and whose central physical feature is the clean and attractive waters of Pokegama Lake.*

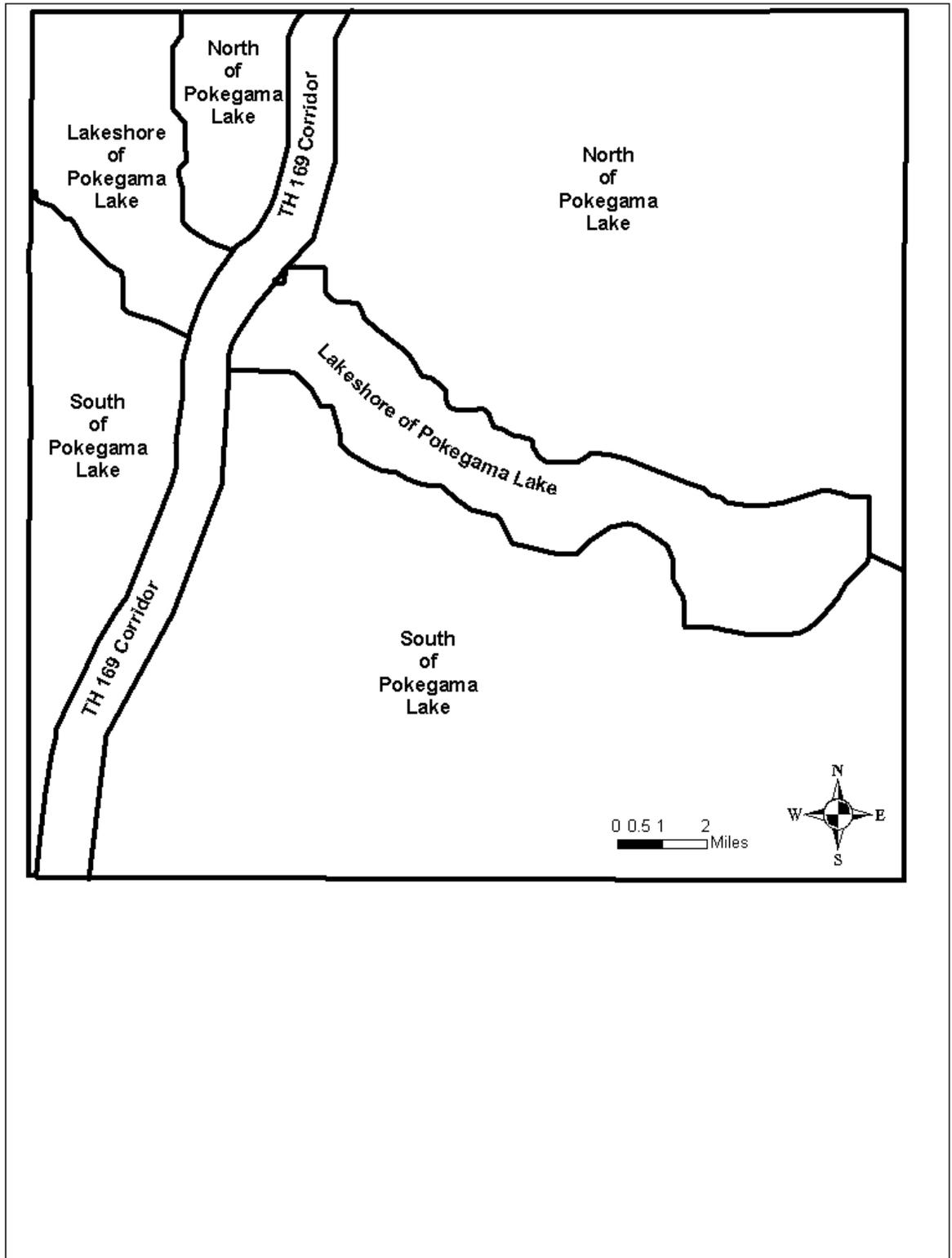
**The attributes that describe the essence of the future Harris Township are:**

- An integral, valuable, component of Itasca County providing recreational opportunities, especially in the form of Pokegama Lake, offering a mix of rural residential conditions, and acting as the attractive southern gateway to Itasca County and the Grand Rapids area.
- The sense of being a rural community in terms of types of land use, density of development, and environmental characteristics such as low levels of man-made noise, dark night sky, and general feeling of openness.
- Pokegama Lake as the keystone natural feature in the community providing superb recreation opportunities and scenic views.
- A community whose territorial extent remains as it is today.
- Continuation of the township form of government.

## Land Use

For each of four major subsections of the township—lakeshore, north of Pokegama Lake, south of Pokegama Lake, and the Highway 169 corridor – the following narrative offers a description of the future land use types and patterns and an initial understanding of the opportunities for action and change relative to those future land uses.

Map 4. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Areas



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### Lakeshore of Pokegama Lake

*North and south shores, including the first tier inland, of Pokegama Lake plus Hale Lake.*

The Details Description General

Residences, mostly year-round homes with some seasonal ones, will occupy all developable land, essentially everything that is not wetland or publicly owned, around Pokegama and Hale Lakes. The vast majority of homes will be single, detached units although many will be rebuilt versions of the ones there today. The land on the non-lakeside of the access roads (e.g., Sunny Beach Road) will also be near totally developed but at lower densities than along the shore.

- In areas where individual on-site wastewater treatment systems are failing participate in sub regional planning and management efforts to cooperatively implement appropriate corrective actions such as commonly managed individual systems or localized clustered systems as opposed to the extension of centralized sanitary sewers.
- Existing public space, even if relatively narrow lots, is retained for public access to the lake (for fishing, swimming, carry-in watercraft, trails).
- Public access to Hale Lake needs attention although no obvious, relatively inexpensive solution is at hand. This situation includes finding way for lakeshore owners to launch and retrieve boats.
- It is probable that existing resorts will eventually convert to residential development.
- Vigorous efforts will be made to bring all lakeshore property into conformance with shoreland management standards regarding vegetation and beaches.

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### North of Pokegama Lake

*Non-lakeshore areas north of Pokegama Lake including along Mississippi River and Jess Harry Road area.*

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The Details Description General

This is a rural residential area with an increasing number of homes found in subdivisions sensitively designed to retain rural attributes such as existing farm fields and wooded areas. Agriculture will be a less evident use. Home businesses and occupations will be present but not businesses unassociated with a home. The exception will be pre-existing businesses.

- Development will be a mix of single lots and subdivisions. Changes in County subdivision regulations will be sought to require that all subdivisions retain and enhance rural attributes by utilizing conservation or cluster design techniques.
- Especially along major arterial routes such as Harris Town Road, development will be encouraged to have deeper setbacks, and, where subdivisions are involved, to orient structures so as not to face or line the roads.

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### South of Pokegama Lake

*Non-lakeshore areas south of Pokegama Lake on both sides of Highway 169.*

The Details Description General

This portion of the township has the greatest rural feel to it, especially east of Highway 169 where agriculture and forestry are the dominant land uses. Most residential development is in single lots with a small number in subdivisions sensitively designed to retain rural attributes.

- Farms, forestry, and residential uses on large lots dominate this area.
- Home occupations and businesses, a hallmark of rural living, will be present.
- Various non-zoning techniques, such as purchase of development rights, will be considered to retain private agricultural and forestry uses that require large land parcels.

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### Highway 169 Corridor

*Strip of land roughly 600 feet along either side of Highway 169 the length of Harris Township.*

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<b>The Details Description General</b>	<p>This is seen as the scenic southern gateway to Grand Rapids. Taking advantage of the dramatic causeway crossing of Pokegama and the series of steeply sloped curves, the corridor will limit commercial development to large lot, less intensive uses so as to create a “soft” transition between the rural area and the highly developed area in the city. South of the lake the uses will focus on food and beverage and convenience stores.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commercial development limited to area currently zoned commercial, with the exception of one area along east side south of Harris Town Road that would connect two existing commercial areas.</li> <li>▪ South of Pokegama, development would be primarily focused on food and beverage and convenience store items for lakeshore and area residents and users, and drive by traffic. The area zoned commercial on the west of the highway in this area should be based upon a fixed distance from the highway as opposed to following the section lines and thereby make the land more usable for development.</li> <li>▪ North of Pokegama, commercial development is that which requires highway access and visibility, large lots and open areas (e.g., auto dealerships, contractors, storage, etc.) – idea is to keep intensive, small lot development within GR where services exist and intense traffic can be better handled.</li> <li>▪ There would be no off-site signs (billboards) within the corridor.</li> <li>▪ Work with MnDOT to implement corridor management practices to minimize turning conflicts and ease traffic flow.</li> </ul>

**Community Functions and Systems**

While land use is geographic in its perspective, there are community functions that operate across the breadth of the township. The following addresses these in terms of the preferred future situation and opportunities for action.

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**Recreation**

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The Details Description General

Crystal Springs and Wendigo parks are retained and updated as township level recreation facilities. All boat accesses are retained and enhanced as needed and possible. A system of dedicated motorized and bicycle / walking trails to access Pokegama Lake and Grand Rapids is created in cooperation with other entities.

- Troop Town access has improved parking.
- In coordination with County, Hale Lake access is improved to permit kayak/canoe carry-in or, if warranted by demand and feasibility, unloading/loading of boats from trailers; parking could be provided at the existing parking area at the Wendigo Picnic Area.
- Boat access capacity enhanced by County and Township ordinance prohibiting overnight parking.
- Work with Grand Rapids, Itasca County, and user groups on creating trail connections into Grand Rapids along major travel corridors (River Road, Airport Road, Mishawaka/Horseshoe Lake Roads.
- New through roads provide safe walking/bicycling use.
- Encourage state and county to retain all existing publicly owned lands that support recreational opportunities, sound forestry management, and/or sustain desired rural character.

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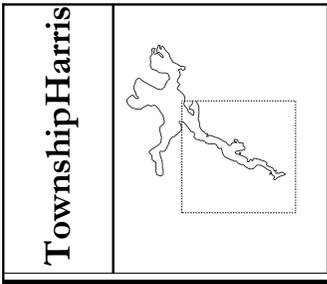
## Roads and Transportation

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General Description	<p>The two primary access routes through the township and into Grand Rapids are Highway 169 and the River Road (CR 3). The Harris Town Road is the major east-west route. All three handle commercial through truck traffic.</p> <p>The Airport Road is a secondary access route into Grand Rapids but primarily for local traffic. It is not a designated through truck route.</p> <p>All other roads are local roads providing direct access to land or collecting traffic from local roads to feed to the primary road routes.</p>	
The Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highway 169 north of Pokegama Lake will be a limited access route with the following policies used to the extent possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to Trunk Highway 169 should be provided by existing public street connections. However, due to low densities it may be necessary to provide direct private access to some properties. However, an additional public intersection or private access point should be introduced only where it can be clearly demonstrated that it is not feasible to attain access from the local road network.</li> <li>○ New public street connections should be constructed with turn lanes and/or bypass lanes on Trunk Highway 169, consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.</li> <li>○ Direct private access to Trunk Highway 169 is discouraged. Existing access to private property that does not conform to access policies may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when the land use is intensified, the property redeveloped, or the highway improved.</li> <li>○ New access to private property should be provided by the existing local road network wherever possible. If reasonably convenient and suitable access is not attainable from the local road network, a parcel may be allowed one direct access to Trunk Highway 169.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Harris Town Road will see more through traffic but to help retain the corridor's rural attributes only residential uses are to be located along it.</li> <li>▪ Airport Road may be improved through a realignment or redesign of the current alignment. Improvements will be aimed at increasing general vehicle safety and providing safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. It is preferred that the road not be designated a through truck route.</li> <li>▪ Development between Sunny Beach Road and Harris Town Road will be encouraged to: make primary connections via Harris Town Road, and / or, to provide through route access to minimize additional traffic on Sunny Beach Road.</li> <li>▪ The following intersections will be considered for realignment: Crystal Springs Road near park; Harris Town Road / River Road / East Harris Town Road; and Wendigo Park Road / River Road.</li> <li>▪ Detailed reviews of the Sunny Beach and LaPlant-Southwood Roads will be conducted to determine what</li> </ul>	

**Governmental Services & Other**

<b>The Details Description General</b>	<p>Harris Township retains the township form of government and provides services appropriately. Where necessary it contracts for and/or cooperates with other units of government to provide needed services at the lowest cost to its residents. The Town actively strives to influence the actions of units of government and entities with jurisdiction over certain features and activities within the township to ensure compliance with this comprehensive plan and other Town goals and policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Township plan is integrated into updated Itasca County comprehensive plan. Certain changes to the County’s zoning and subdivision ordinances are made to implement plan concepts.</li> <li>▪ Township routinely uses comprehensive plan as basis for commenting on land use, transportation, and other related issues made by Itasca County.</li> <li>▪ Township participates in implementation of solutions to local wastewater treatment problem areas.</li> <li>▪ Township has a formal voice in the governance of services for which it contracts such as police and fire.</li> </ul>
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# Strategies to Achieve the Future

Harris Township has identified several strategies intended to foster the future conditions described in this plan. Under each strategy is a series of actions some of which can be taken unilaterally by the township and others that require coordination with other units of government. The implementing actions are listed in a rough order of priority within each strategy.

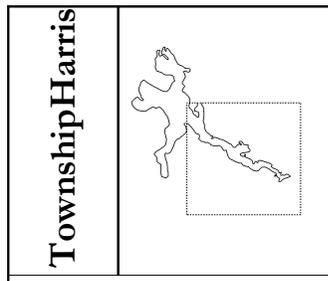
	<b>Land Use</b>	
	<i>Recognizing that primary authority for land use controls rests with Itasca County, establish cooperative relationships with the County to secure the type and administration of land use controls essential to implementing this plan.</i>	
	<b>1</b>	Township adopts this comprehensive plan.
	<b>2</b>	Request Itasca County to formally adopt the Township plan as a detailed component of the updated County comprehensive plan.
	<b>3</b>	Request Itasca County to make a number of changes to its zoning ordinance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Modify commercial zone along TH 169 as per this plan.</li> <li>▪ Provide language defining “interim” uses, which are uses with specified time limits in which they are allowed to exist.</li> <li>▪ Define “home businesses” as interim uses and not permitted as conditional uses.</li> <li>▪ Provide for reduced lot sizes in cluster or conservation subdivisions.</li> <li>▪ Increase road setbacks along Harris Town Road and require enhanced vegetation in setback area.</li> </ul>
	<b>4</b>	Request Itasca County to make a number of changes to its subdivision ordinance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Require the use of cluster/conservation subdivisions within Harris Township.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the use of clustered wastewater treatment systems (as may be recommended by the SCIGPB wastewater project).</li> <li>▪ Create an “agriculture / forestry preservation overlay district” for the area south of Pokegama Lake and east of TH 169 with a residential unit density of not greater than 4 units / 40 acres; minimum lot sizes would remain as under current zoning.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	Through the SCIGPB encourage the undertaking of a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional planning process that examines growth and development issues, patterns, and options in the “greater Grand Rapids” area.	

<b>Roads &amp; Transportation</b>	
<i>Achieving effective implementation of Township transportation objectives requires working agreements with MnDOT, Itasca County, and the City of Grand Rapids.</i>	
1	Work with MnDOT and Itasca County to implement the TH 169 access management plan recommendations.
2	Work with Itasca County and City of Grand Rapids to insure that Airport Road (CR 457) is not designated as a commercial through truck route.
3	Conduct study of Sunny Beach Road, LaPlant-Southwood Roads, and Mishawaka Road regarding how to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle use of these roads or travel corridors.
4	Work with Itasca County to reconfigure the Harris Town Road / River Road / East Harris Town Road intersection as a true four-way intersection.
5	Work with Itasca County to improve safety at the Crystal Springs Road intersection near the Crystal Springs Park.
6	Implement Township Road Policies regarding establishment, maintenance, and vacation of Township roads.

<b>Recreation</b>	
<i>Focus is on retention and maintenance of existing facilities.</i>	
1	Retain and maintain all existing parks and picnic areas.
2	Participate on the Itasca County Trails Task Force to facilitate planning and development of trails through and within the community.
3	In conjunction with Itasca County adopt an ordinance prohibiting overnight parking at all boat accesses.
4	Evaluate viability and possibility of acquiring land to provide increased parking for the Troop Town access.
5	In conjunction with Itasca County and MDNR (1) improve Hale Lake access as a carry-in access, and, (2) assess need and feasibility to upgrade the access to accommodate trailered boats. In both cases develop and designate parking area for access users at Wendigo Picnic Area.

<b>Wastewater Treatment</b>	
<i>Pursue solutions to wastewater treatment issues that feature innovative use on-site approaches including cluster or shared facilities as opposed to the extension of sanitary sewer.</i>	
1	Participate in SCIGPB wastewater planning process and cooperate in resulting implementation recommendations as appropriate and consistent with this plan.
2	Work with Itasca County to secure conformance with individual on-site wastewater treatment regulations.

	<b>Governmental Services &amp; Other</b>	
	<i>Retain Township form of government and for services and programs that exceed Township authorities establish cooperative ventures with other governmental entities.</i>	
	<b>1</b>	Consider various means to enhance communication between the Town Board and residents and to better inform residents about township activities.
	<b>2</b>	Undertake a workshop to learn about incorporation as a city and annexation including the general pros and cons, costs, and benefits. This could be followed up by a specific analysis of the option to incorporate as a city and an evaluation of the impact of various annexation scenarios.
	<b>3</b>	Initiate discussions with the City of Grand Rapids and other communities contracting with Grand Rapids Fire Department for services regarding revamped governance structure whereby contracting entities have say in certain decisions (e.g., equipment purchases, etc.).
	<b>4</b>	Continue contracting with Itasca County for grading and snowplowing of Township roads.
<b>5</b>	Evaluate options for the provision of additional police protection.	



# Appendix: Community Survey

This appendix contains the text of the “Harris Township Comprehensive Plan Survey” prepared March 21, 2006 for the Town of Harris by Applied Insights<sup>north</sup>. In order to reduce bulkiness, this version of the document does not contain the written comments, which can be obtained from the Township.

## Purpose

A crucial part of the comprehensive planning process for Harris Township is gauging public opinion on key issues and topics. A survey was determined to be the most cost effective means of obtaining this input from the broadest range of residents and property owners.

The information gained from the survey will be instrumental in preparing the plan.

## Methodology

The consultant and Steering Committee jointly designed the survey. Surveys were mailed to 1,533 property owners using a mail list obtained from Itasca County. Recipients included year-round residents, seasonal property owners, business owners, and owners of undeveloped land. Included with the survey form were a cover letter, map of Harris Township, and postage paid return envelope. There was no follow up reminder sent to respondents. Responses were mailed to the consultant who entered the data and analyzed the results using SPSS<sup>®</sup> statistical software.

A total of 638 completed and usable surveys were returned for a response rate of 42%. This is considered to be at the high end for a survey of this type with no follow up prompt. Thus, the findings should closely reflect the true feeling of residents and taxpayers regarding the issues covered by the survey.

## Findings

This section offers narrative, tables, and figures presenting the findings generated by the survey.

### Respondent Information

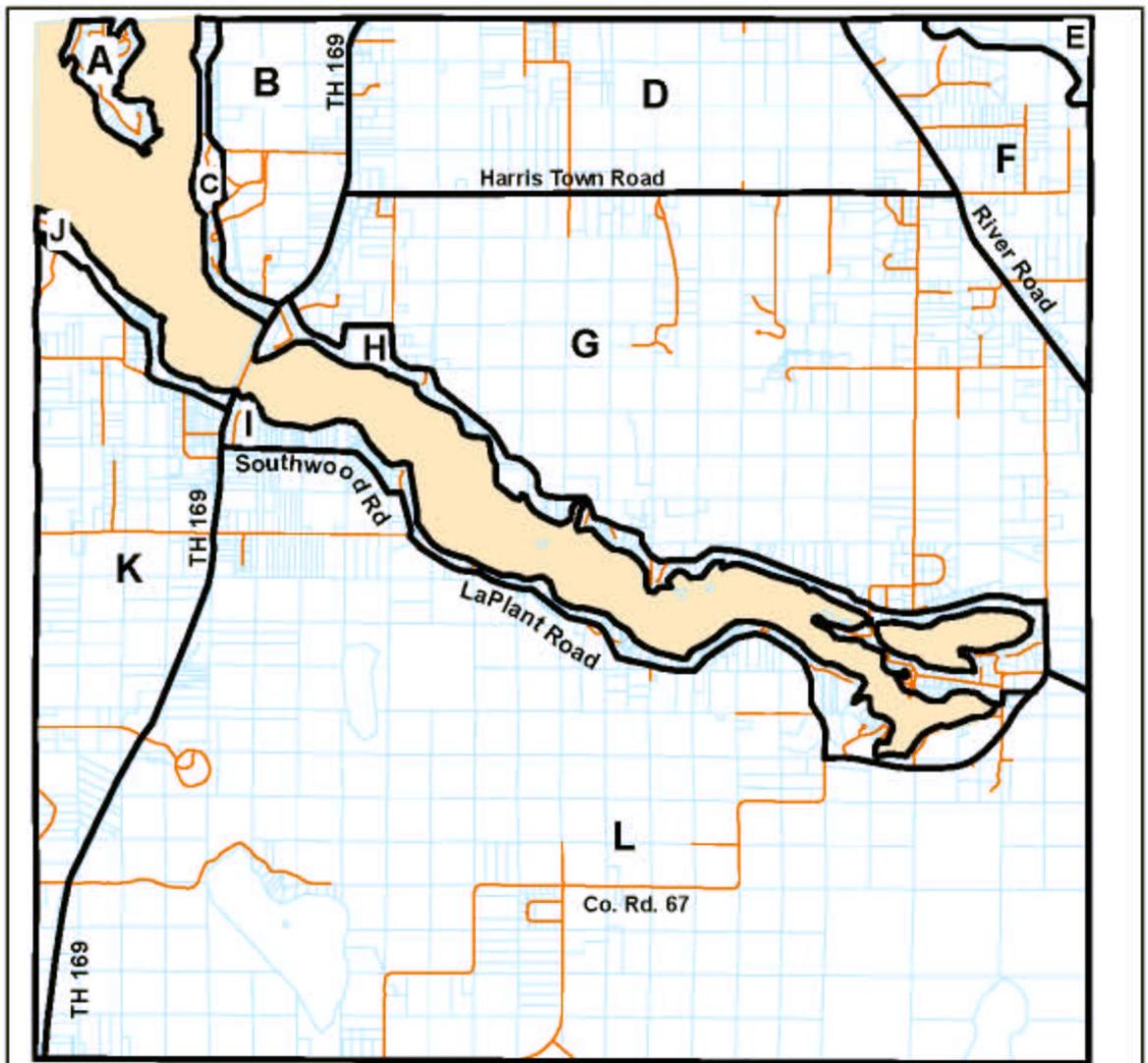
The survey was mailed to all taxpayers within Harris Township including year-round residents, seasonal property owners, and owners of businesses and undeveloped land. The following shows the resident status of the respondents [note: percentages will exceed 100% as people could check multiple categories]:

- 520 (81.8%<sup>2</sup>) were year-round residents.
- 67 (10.5%) owned undeveloped land. Of these, 24 were township residents.
- 64 (10.0%) were seasonal property owners.
- 36 (5.7%) owned businesses in Harris Township. Of these, 21 were township residents.
- 20 (3.1%) owned farms. Of these, 16 were township residents.

Table 1 shows where respondents lived or owned property/business in the township (see map for boundaries).

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all percentages will be of the number respondents answering the specific question. There were 638 completed surveys, but not all respondents answered every question.



- A : ISLEVIEW ADDITION
- B : NON-LAKESHORE, NORTHEAST OF POKEGAMA AND WEST OF 169
- C : LAKESHORE, NORTHEAST OF POKEGAMA AND WEST OF 169
- D : NORTH OF HARRIS TOWN ROAD BETWEEN 169 AND RIVER ROAD
- E : JESS HARRY ROAD AREA
- F : SOUTH OF MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND EAST OF RIVER ROAD
- G : NON-LAKESHORE, BETWEEN HARRIS TOWN ROAD AND POKEGAMA AND EAST OF 169
- H : LAKESHORE, NORTH SIDE OF POKEGAMA AND EAST OF 169 AND AROUND HALE LAKE
- I : LAKESHORE, SOUTH SIDE OF POKEGAMA AND EAST OF 169
- J : LAKESHORE, SOUTH SIDE OF POKEGAMA AND WEST OF 169
- K : NON-LAKESHORE, SOUTH OF POKEGAMA AND WEST OF 169
- L : NON-LAKESHORE, SOUTH OF POKEGAMA AND EAST OF 169



<b>Table 1. Where Respondents Lived or Owned Property/Business</b>		
<b>Area</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Isleview Addition	35	5.5%
B. Non-lakeshore, northeast of Pokegama / west of 169	24	3.8%
C. Lakeshore, northeast of Pokegama / west of 169	27	4.3%
D. North of Harris Town Rd between 169 & River Rd	37	5.8%
E. Jess Harry Rd area	3	0.5%
F. South of Mississippi River / east of River Rd	37	5.8%
G. Non-lakeshore, between Harris Town Rd & Pokegama & east of 169	131	20.6%
H. Lakeshore, north side of Pokegama / east of 169 & around Hale Lake	86	13.5%
I. Lakeshore, south side of Pokegama / east of 169	80	12.6%
J. Lakeshore, south side of Pokegama / west of 169	14	2.2%
K. Non-lakeshore, south of Pokegama / west of 169	57	9.0%
L. Non-lakeshore, south of Pokegama / east of 169	104	16.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 2 presents the number of years respondents have lived or owned property in the township.

<b>Table 2. Length of Time Lived In/Owned Property/Business in Township</b>		
<b>Number of Years</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 – 5 years	129	20.8%
6 – 10 years	100	16.1%
11 – 20 years	151	24.3%
21 – 30 years	116	18.7%
31+ years	139	22.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There are no strong patterns between where respondents live and the number of years they have been in the township, but a couple minor relationships can be noted:

- A fifth of the most recent residents (1-5 years in township) have located in Area G where they represent about a fifth of the residents. However, in several other areas they are the single largest group by tenure status – F (40% of the respondents); C (38%); and B (30%).
- The respondents who've lived in the township the longest are slightly more represented in Areas D, J, K, and L. Because of this, these areas should see property turnover at higher than average rates in the near future.

Respondents were asked to provide information about the size and composition of their households. The following summarizes the results:

- 1-person households were 11.4% of the total.
- 2-person households were 56.3%.
- 3+ person households were 32.3%
- The average household size was 2.52 persons, which is identical to the average household size for the township in 2004 as estimated by the US Census Bureau.

- 150 households (24.3%) had children under the age of 18.

### Community Qualities & Issues

One of the key questions in the survey concerned respondents' opinion on the degree to which certain features contributed to a positive quality of life in the township. Table 3 presents the findings.

Township Feature	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rural environment (less intense development, low traffic volumes, openness).	65.1%	27.7%	2.2%	4.0%	1.0%
Lack of noise and man-made light at night.	58.9%	30.8%	4.3%	4.7%	1.3%
Pokegama Lake as a recreational resource and physical presence.	56.6%	32.5%	8.0%	2.2%	0.6%
Ease of access into Grand Rapids for jobs, retail, and services.	54.0%	38.5%	3.8%	1.4%	0.5%
Recreation opportunities within the township.	28.4%	46.1%	19.4%	4.8%	1.3%
Feeling of personal safety.	50.3%	41.3%	5.9%	1.9%	0.5%

For the most part, there was generally uniform distribution of opinion on these community features relative to where respondents lived in the township. However, there were some contrary trends as follows:

- 21% (as compared to overall figure of 6%) of the people in Area B disagreed that “lack of noise or man-made light” contributes positively to the township. Being closer to Grand Rapids (light) and TH 169 (noise) may explain this attitude.
- Compared to the community average of 3%, 27% of the people in Area F and 14% of those in Area L disagree with the statement that Pokegama Lake is a positive feature. As possible explanations, Area F is far from the lake and Area L, although relatively close, is heavily rural in nature. Quite naturally, the highest positive ratings were from the five lakeshore areas.

When the responses shown in Table 3 are examined by length of time respondents have lived in the township there are few differences but a couple minor trends do appear. The most recent residents (1-5 years in township) are slightly less fervent about the positive value of ruralness. Further, they are slightly less strong in their view of Pokegama as a positive quality. These attitudes may reflect the fact that the town's newest residents, by choice or lack of options, tend to locate on non-lakeshore property, closer to Grand Rapids.

A set of two questions asked the respondents to offer their opinion on a list of land use and transportation related issues. Tables 4 and 5 show the results.

Land Use & Development Issue	Don't Know / Unsure	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Serious Problem
Southward expansion of city of Grand Rapids.	7.2%	47.9%	20.2%	24.8%
Failing septic systems.	39.3%	25.2%	23.9%	11.6%
Density of housing in my area of township.	7.4%	64.3%	23.8%	4.5%
Density of housing in other parts of township.	30.1%	43.7%	21.3%	4.9%
Lack of enforcement of zoning decisions (e.g., variances).	38.4%	36.3%	16.4%	8.9%
Too much commercial development in township.	15.3%	62.3%	17.1%	5.3%
Inappropriate uses allowed in rural residential areas.	35.5%	36.9%	20.9%	6.7%

<b>Table 4. Opinion on Land Use and Development Issues as Problems in Harris Township</b>				
<b>Land Use &amp; Development Issue</b>	<b>Don't Know / Unsure</b>	<b>Not a Problem</b>	<b>Minor Problem</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>
Airport noise.	4.3%	76.8%	15.2%	2.2%
Not enough commercial development in township.	22.8%	61.5%	13.1%	2.6%

For the most part, opinion was generally uniform on land use problems relative to where respondents lived, but several contrary trends emerged:

- Inappropriate land uses in rural areas was cited as a minor or serious problem substantially above the community average of 28% by people in Area C (40%) and Area H (38%).
- Lack of zoning enforcement was seen as a minor or serious problem by 56% of the people in Area C compared to the town average of 25%. Other areas where respondents viewed zoning enforcement as a problem were Area B (35%) and Area H (32%).
- Failing septic systems were cited as a minor or serious problem substantially above the community average of 36% by people in Area C (56%), Area H (55%), and Area A (47%).
- Density of housing was seen as a minor or serious problem by local residents in their neighborhoods of Area J (43%), Area H (40%), and Area A (34%) compared to the overall figure of 28%.

<b>Table 5. Opinion on Transportation and Traffic Related Problems in Harris Township</b>				
<b>Transportation / Traffic Related Problem</b>	<b>Don't Know / Unsure</b>	<b>Not a Problem</b>	<b>Minor Problem</b>	<b>Serious Problem</b>
Speeding on township or county roads.	9.3%	29.0%	42.7%	19.0%
TH 169 traffic volumes, speeding, or turning conflicts.	6.3%	41.4%	40.0%	12.4%
Intersection of Crystal Springs Rd / Little Crystal Springs Rd (at park).	45.0%	36.6%	15.0%	3.4%
Intersection of TH 169 / Harris Town Road.	6.7%	54.7%	30.2%	8.7%
Safety issues on LaPlant / Southwood Roads.	34.2%	28.1%	27.9%	9.8%
Safety issues on Sunny Beach Road.	36.8%	28.5%	27.4%	7.3%
Safety issues on Mishawaka Road.	39.4%	31.0%	22.9%	6.6%
Safety issues on Airport Road.	34.7%	37.4%	22.3%	5.6%
Intersection of Harris Town Road / Wendigo Park Road.	24.8%	52.5%	18.1%	4.6%
Intersection of Harris Town Rd / River Rd / East Harris Rd.	28.6%	50.0%	19.1%	2.3%

While respondents throughout the township viewed many transportation and traffic issues similarly, when the issues are examined by where people live, especially by those most likely to be affected by an issue, the following findings emerge:

- In all areas over half the respondents cited speeding as a minor or serious problem with the community average being 62%. The highest level of complaints came from Area J (79%) and Area B (67%).
- Among respondents along the Southwood / LaPlant roads 39% feel safety issues on these roads are a minor problem and 21% feel they are a serious problem; 30% feel safety issues are not a problem on these roads.
- Among respondents along the Sunny Beach Road, 42% feel safety issues on these roads are a minor problem and 15% feel they are a serious problem; 28% feel safety issues are not a problem on this road.
- 52% of the respondents in Areas A, B and C feel that that the Mishawaka Road is a minor or serious traffic problem.

## Annexation

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The City of Grand Rapids is in the process of annexing most of Grand Rapids Township and has a ever-increasing trend of southward development, especially along TH 169. In light of this, the survey sought respondents' opinions on the matter of annexation. It must be noted that there have been no proposals or overtures regarding annexation of any part of Harris Township. But, given the historic and current situation, it was deemed appropriate to examine community opinion on this vital matter.

The first question on annexation was a straight up query as noted in Table 6.

<b>Table 6. Should any part of Harris Township be annexed by another community?</b>		
<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	332	53.5%
Yes	34	5.4%
Maybe	185	29.8%
No Opinion	69	11.1%
Total	620	100.0%

The second question in the set posed several hypothetical scenarios and asked if the respondents supported or opposed them.

<b>Table 7. Opinion on Hypothetical Annexation Actions</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Strongly Oppose</b>
Annexation of Isleview Addition (A on map) by Grand Rapids.	3.1%	10.9%	45.2%	16.1%	24.7%
Annexation of Jess Harry Road Area (E on map) by another township.	2.5%	12.2%	50.3%	16.3%	18.6%
Annexation to Harris Town Road by Grand Rapids.	2.8%	10.8%	28.1%	27.4%	30.9%
Annexation to north shore of Pokegama Lake by Grand Rapids.	2.0%	5.4%	26.4%	24.6%	41.5%

Over three-quarters (77%) of respondents in the Isleview Addition neighborhood opposed or strongly opposed being annexed by Grand Rapids.

There were only three respondents from the Jess Harry Road neighborhood so no statistical analysis is possible. However, one respondent supported annexation by another township while two opposed the move.

There were 163 respondents in the area considered in the third annexation scenario – annexing south to the Harris Town Road (Areas A, B, C, D, E, and parts of F). Of them, only 11.2% supported annexation by Grand Rapids and 20.6% were unsure of their opinion. The majority, 71.2%, opposed annexation.

The fourth scenario added two more neighborhoods (G and H) to a possible annexation scenario by which the city would expand all the way to Pokegama Lake. Within this area there were 363

respondents. Opposition to annexation grew to 79.6% while support dropped to 6.8%; 22.0% were not sure.

Perhaps the strongest legal measure Harris Township could take to prevent future annexation would be to incorporate as a city. However, a review of the written comments finds that many people live in Harris Township precisely because it is not a city with its perceived higher taxes and urban related issues. Responses to a question on whether Harris Township should become a city to prevent annexation reflect that sentiment:

- 16.9% of the respondents support becoming a city to avoid annexation.
- 37.4% oppose becoming a city.
- 45.7% are unsure. Many of the written comments noted that the issue is complex and not all information, pro and con, on annexation or becoming a city is yet available.

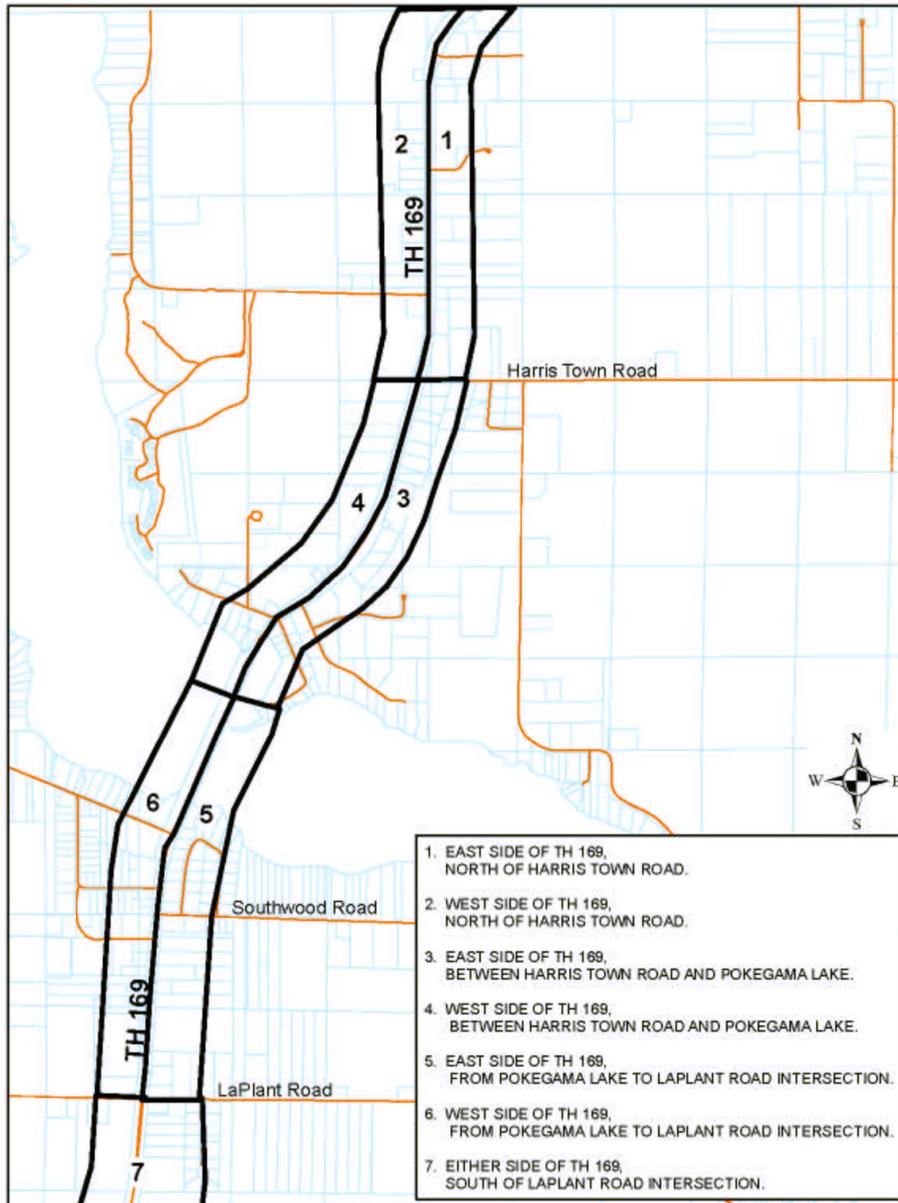
#### **Development**

Commercial development has long existed along TH 169. With intensive development along the highway in Grand Rapids moving ever southward, the issue of future activity is critical to the community. Respondents were asked to give their opinion regarding various options on future commercial development along the highway. Table 8 shows their answers and the following map identifies the segments being considered.

<b>Highway Segment (see following map for locations)</b>	<b>Yes, all types</b>	<b>Yes, most types</b>	<b>Yes, but limited</b>	<b>None</b>
1. East side of TH 169, north of Harris Town Road.	20.3%	26.8%	39.5%	13.4%
2. West side of TH 169, north of Harris Town Road.	18.2%	25.4%	40.2%	16.1%
3. East side of TH 169, between Harris Town Road and Pokegama Lake.	14.3%	23.1%	40.7%	21.2%
4. West side of TH 169, between Harris Town Road and Pokegama Lake.	11.8%	16.6%	38.5%	33.1%
5. East side of TH 169, from Pokegama Lake to LaPlant Road intersection.	11.4%	14.9%	38.9%	34.8%
6. West side of TH 169, from Pokegama Lake to LaPlant Road intersection.	12.3%	17.7%	43.6%	26.4%
7. Either side of TH 169, south of LaPlant Road intersection.	13.6%	16.3%	40.8%	29.2%

A series of questions concerned sewage treatment, both existing situations and possible future approaches. Currently, most respondents use on-site septic systems:

- 89.7% of respondents have an on-site septic system for wastewater treatment.
- 1.9% have a holding tank.
- 1.3% use a clustered septic system.



When asked what was the condition of their wastewater treatment system, the vast majority (88.8%) responded that it was “operating as designed” while only 1.0% said that it was failing. A small number (4.1%) were not sure and for 5.9% the question did not apply (e.g., for undeveloped land).

However, when asked if they believed there were systems failing within their area of the township, a large number of respondents (29.2%) replied that, yes, systems were failing. Most (57.7%) were unsure and 13.1% said there were no failing systems.

As to possible future approaches for handling wastewater treatment in their area of the township, support was strongest for continuation of on-site systems.

- 87.6% support on-site septic systems for their neighborhood.
- 23.3% support a sanitary sewer system for their neighborhood.
- 18.3% support the use of holding tanks.
- 16.9% support clustered septic systems.

Because a sanitary sewer system would represent a major investment, both public and private, it is of interest to know where initial support for such an approach is highest. In no area was support much greater than a third of the respondents, but the areas with the highest levels were:

- Area H (lakeshore, north side of Pokegama, east of Highway 169, and around Hale Lake) – 34.1%.
- Area I (lakeshore, south side of Pokegama, east of Highway 169) – 33.3%.
- Area D (north of Harris Town Road between Highway 169 and River Road) – 31.4%.
- Area C (lakeshore, northeast of Pokegama and west of Highway 169) – 30.8%.
- Area A (Isleview Addition) – 30.3%.

## Recreation

The Township provides several parks and boat accesses. Respondents were asked about their use of the facilities and their opinion on the need to keep and upgrade the facilities.

Facility	Percent Using
Crystal Springs Park	23.7%
Wendigo Park	25.6%
Town Hall	31.0%
Boat Access	88.9%

Table 10 presents the respondents' opinions regarding the future of these facilities.

Possible Action	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Continue Crystal Springs Park as is.	14.3%	37.3%	43.6%	4.1%	0.7%
Make improvements to Crystal Springs Park.	8.4%	22.3%	58.5%	8.0%	2.8%
Close Crystal Springs Park.	0.8%	2.2%	41.5%	26.8%	28.8%
Continue Wendigo Park as is.	11.6%	36.8%	44.1%	6.3%	1.2%
Make improvements to Wendigo Park.	8.0%	24.1%	57.5%	8.4%	2.0%
Close Wendigo Park.	0.8%	1.8%	37.2%	30.0%	30.5%
Build a new neighborhood level park in my area of township.	2.7%	4.9%	33.8%	35.5%	23.1%
Secure / build additional recreation space along Pokegama Lake.	8.3%	21.9%	29.2%	21.5%	19.1%
Make improvements to Pokegama Lake boat accesses.	18.4%	38.2%	25.7%	12.6%	5.0%
Require dedicated open space as part of all new subdivisions.	30.6%	29.8%	27.2%	7.3%	5.0%

Overall there was little support (7.6%) for a new neighborhood level park. The areas with the highest support were:

- Area D – 17.1% strongly agreed or agreed there was a need in their neighborhood.
- Area B – 14.3%.
- Area F – 13.9%
- Area C – 11.1%

**Police & Fire Service**

Two questions addressed police and fire services. At present, the Itasca County Sheriff's office provides police protection within the township. Respondents were asked if they desired to keep this approach, pay for additional specific patrol time by the sheriff's office, or create a township police department.

- 85.6% prefer continuing the current system.
- 12.1% would like to see the township pay for additional patrol time.
- 7.3% want to have a township police department.

Harris Township contracts with the Grand Rapids Fire Department for fire protection. This service currently costs \$83,000 per year. Since it is a contractual relationship, the Township has no representation in determining Fire Department policies, equipment purchases, and the like. Respondents were asked their opinion on possible future approaches to providing fire protection to the township.

- 53.3% prefer continuing with the current system.
- 39.3% would like the township to seek a joint powers agreement (with the City and other area townships) so as to participate in governance of the Grand Rapids Fire Department.
- 7.3% favor the creation of a township fire department.

**Survey Form**

On the following pages is the survey form used in the Harris Township community survey.

1. Your status as a resident in the Town of Harris [check all that apply]:

- Year-round resident     Seasonal resident                       Own farm  
 Own undeveloped land (separate from residence)     Own business in township  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what area do you live/own property in the Town of Harris [see map on back of cover letter]?

- A     B     C     D     E     F     G     H     I     J     K     L

3. How many years have you lived/owned property in the Town of Harris: \_\_\_\_\_ years.

4. How many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

How many are in the following age groups: 0-17 \_\_\_\_\_ 18-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-59 \_\_\_\_\_ 60 and over \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Indicate the degree you feel each of the following contributes to a positive quality of life in the Town of Harris:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rural environment (less intense development, low traffic volumes, openness).					
Lack of noise and man-made light at night.					
Pokegama Lake as a recreational resource and physical presence.					
Ease of access into Grand Rapids for jobs, retail, and services.					
Recreation opportunities within the township.					
Feeling of personal safety.					

6. Which of the following are land use and development related problems in the Town of Harris:

	Don't Know / Unsure	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Serious Problem
Inappropriate uses allowed in rural residential areas.				
Lack of enforcement of zoning decisions (e.g., variances).				
Failing septic systems.				
Density of housing in my area of township.				
Density of housing in other parts of township.				
Too much commercial development in township.				
Not enough commercial development in township.				
Airport noise.				
Southward expansion of city of Grand Rapids.				

7. Which of the following are transportation and traffic related problems in the Town of Harris:

	Don't Know / Unsure	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Serious Problem
Speeding on township or county roads.				
TH 169 traffic volumes, speeding, or turning conflicts.				
Intersection of TH 169 / Harris Town Road.				
Safety issues on LaPlant / Southwood Roads.				
Safety issues on Sunny Beach Road.				
Safety issues on Airport Road.				
Safety issues on Mishawaka Road.				
Intersection of Harris Town Road / Wendigo Park Road.				
Intersection of Harris Town Rd / River Rd / East Harris Rd				
Intersection of Crystal Springs Rd / Little Crystal Springs Rd (at park).				

8. For each area along TH 169, indicate if zoning for general commercial (retail and services) development should be permitted.

	Yes, all types	Yes, most types	Yes, but limited	None
East side of TH 169, north of Harris Town Road.				
West side of TH 169, north of Harris Town Road.				
East side of TH 169, between Harris Town Road and Pokegama Lake.				
West side of TH 169, between Harris Town Road and Pokegama Lake.				
East side of TH 169, from Pokegama Lake to LaPlant Road intersection.				
West side of TH 169, from Pokegama Lake to LaPlant Road intersection.				
Either side of TH 169, south of LaPlant Road intersection.				

9. Given the historic southward development of Grand Rapids and the annexation of Grand Rapids Township, it is appropriate to consider the potential for future expansion of the city into Harris Township.

Should any part of Harris Township be annexed by another community?

Yes  No  Maybe  No opinion

What is your opinion about the following **hypothetical** annexation actions?

	Strongly Support	Support	Not Sure	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Annexation of Isleview Addition (A on map) by Grand Rapids.					
Annexation of Jess Harry Road Area (E on map) by another township.					
Annexation to Harris Town Road by Grand Rapids.					
Annexation to north shore of Pokegama Lake by Grand Rapids.					
To prevent annexation Harris should seek to become a city.					

10. What type of wastewater treatment system do you have?

On-site septic  Clustered septic system  Holding tank  Other  
 None/does not apply

11. What is the condition of your wastewater treatment system?

Operating as designed  Failing  Not sure  Does not apply

12. Do you believe there are wastewater treatment systems failing within your area of the township?

Yes  Not sure  No

13. What approaches to handling wastewater treatment would you consider for your area of the township?  
 [check all that apply]

On-site septic  Holding tank  Clustered septic system  Sanitary sewer system  
 Other

14. In the past year, has someone in your household used one of the following recreational facilities in Harris Township? [check all that apply]

Crystal Springs Park  Wendigo Park  Town Hall  
 A public boat access on Pokegama Lake

15. What is your opinion of the following possible park and recreation actions?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Continue Crystal Springs Park as is.					
Make improvements to Crystal Springs Park.					
Close Crystal Springs Park.					
Continue Wendigo Park as is.					
Make improvements to Wendigo Park.					
Close Wendigo Park.					
Build a new neighborhood level park in my area of township.					
Secure / build additional recreation space along Pokegama Lake.					
Make improvements to Pokegama Lake boat accesses.					
Require dedicated open space as part of all new subdivisions.					

16. Currently, police protection in Harris Township is provided by the Itasca County sheriff's office. Which of the following actions regarding police protection do you support? [check one]

Continue as is     Pay for additional sheriff patrol     Create own police department

17. Harris Township contracts with the Grand Rapids Fire Department for fire protection. This service currently costs \$83,000 per year. Harris has no representation in determining Fire Department policies, equipment purchases, and the like. Which of the following actions regarding fire protection do you support? [check one]

Continue as is  
 Seek joint powers agreement so as to participate in governance of Grand Rapids Fire Dept.  
 Create own fire department

Please provide any written comments you wish to offer here or on a separate sheet of paper. Thank you!