

Harris Township

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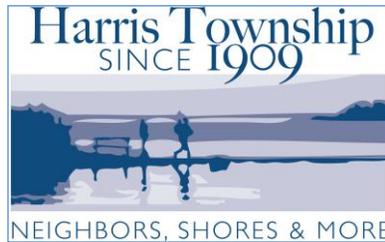
Comprehensive Plan

# Harris Township Comprehensive Plan

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## 2012 Update

Original plan adopted by the Harris Township Board 11/8/2006  
2012 Update adopted by the Harris Township Board 6/27/2012



### Harris Township Town Board

Larry Key, Chair  
Dennis Kortekaas  
Gary Rosato

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HARRIS TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012

Chapter 1



# Using the Plan

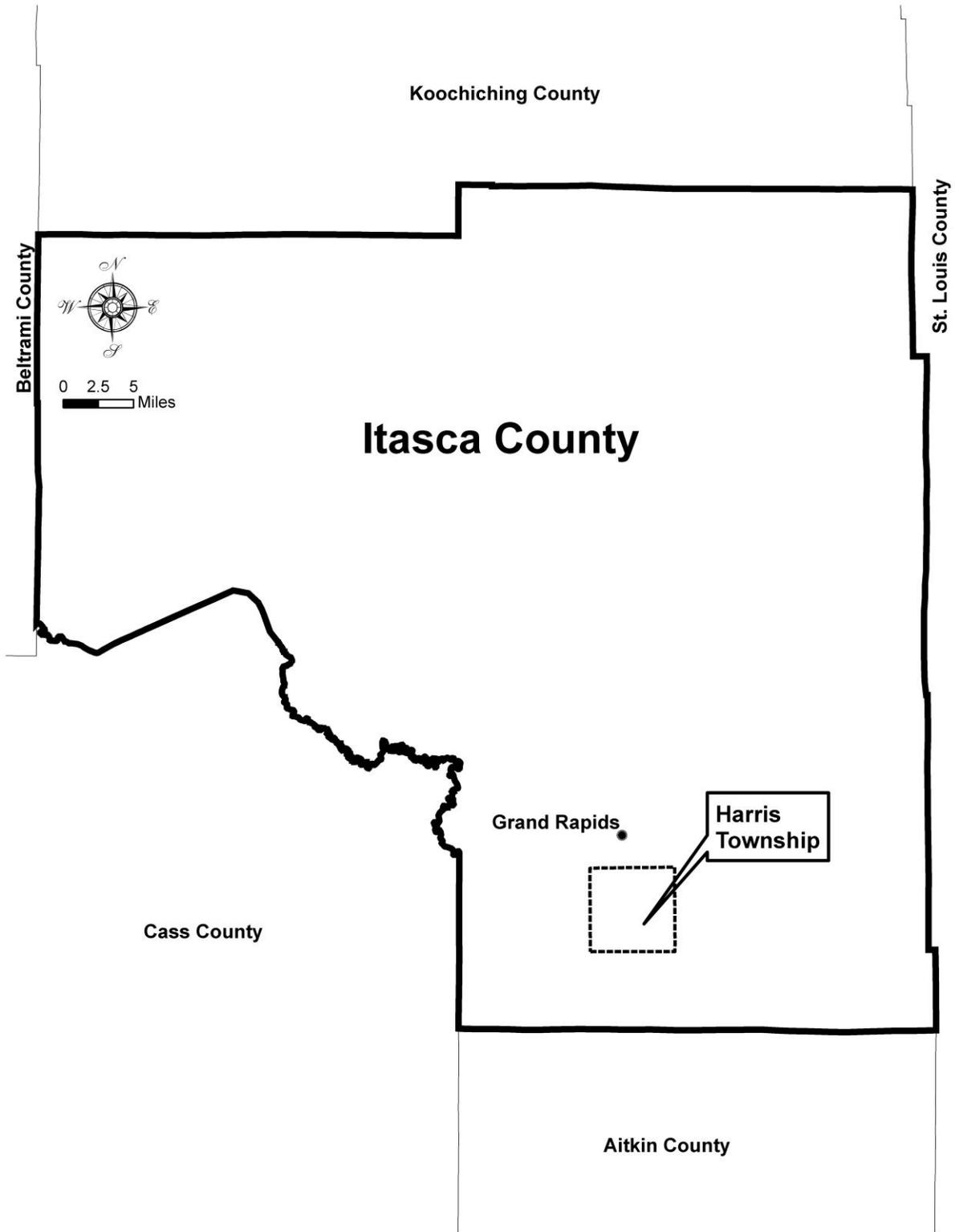
**The purpose of this plan** is to guide Township decisions and investments within its sphere of authority and to be used by the Township as the basis for its efforts to influence, coordinate and cooperate with other governmental entities that make decisions and investments within and affecting the Harris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

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

- Land Use
- Roads & Transportation
- Recreation
- Wastewater Treatment

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

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



Map 1. Harris Township Location within Itasca County



## Sense of Place

What is it that makes Harris 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
- Opportunities for recreation

### ***Pokegama Lake***

- Premier recreational resource
- Defining natural asset of community

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

- Employment
- Shopping and services
- Governmental services
- Entertainment
- Social / Religion / Education

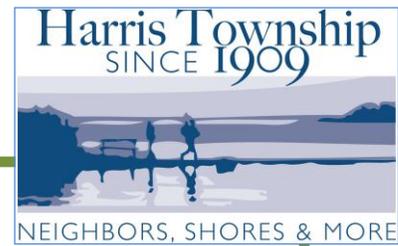
### ***Township Form of Government***

- Direct citizen involvement
- Lower cost and complexity

HARRIS TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012

Chapter 3



# Community Context

## Community Overview

### 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 primary land use is lakeshore residential and rural residential. Most commercial uses are situated along the Highway 169 corridor with gravel pits and smaller establishments scattered around the township. The major recreational commercial business is the Wendigo Golf Course, Resort and Conference Center located north of the lake. Camp Mishawaka operates a large summer camp for boys and girls along the north side of Pokegama Lake. The southeast quarter of the Township has a number of farms and an extensive amount of publicly and privately owned forestland.

Nearly all the buildable 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); however, a small amount is zoned Rural Residential with a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres. The majority of the lakeshore portion of the Township is zoned Rural Residential. The lakeshore areas are also governed by shoreland zoning regulations. There are several commercially zoned areas along Highway 169.

A recurring issue has focused on the enforcement of county land use regulations especially in response to violations. Related to this is the practice of “grandfathering” certain uses, such as gravel pits, so they do not have to meet regulations that were updated after their initial permits were issued. Some residents are frustrated by what they perceive as inadequate action by the county to correct these situations.

Proper wastewater treatment, especially along the densely developed stretches of Pokegama and Hale Lakes, has long been a community concern. The Township had participated in the South Central Itasca County Planning Board’s effort to identify needs and a preferred management approach. However, that planning board has dissolved. Harris is now on its own to determine what actions must be taken to protect Lake Pokegama’s water quality.

Other potential concerns regarding water quality are the connections between Pokegama and Woodtick and Hale Lakes. Small diameter culverts connect the two smaller lakes to Pokegama. There is some concern that the exchange of water through these connections may be inadequate to maintain desired water quality. Also, the area around the Woodtick Lake connection including the Sunny Beach Road is susceptible to flooding.

## Roads

The major transportation routes serving Harris Township are:

- Highway 169 serves as a primary transportation route in the Township. It carries traffic north and south through the Township directly into the major commercial sector of Grand Rapids.
- County State Aid Highway 3 (River Road) runs on the eastern side of the Township providing access to Grand Rapids; it has much less traffic than Highway 169.
- County Road 457 (Airport Road) provides direct access into Grand Rapids.
- Country Road 64(Harris Town Road) is the primary east-west route in northern Harris Township.

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/Shadywood 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 32.8 miles of roads; of these about 25 miles are paved. The Appendix contains a listing of these roads along with a map.

Highway 169 will likely continue to experience an increase in traffic volume but the road is capable of handling it. However, conflicts at certain intersections – LaPlant/Southwood Road and Harris Town Road may increase. Also, there is a need to address perceived safety concerns along the highway from Harris Town Road to Grand Rapids.

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 traffic volume (noise, turning conflicts), loss of rural character, and safety (at such intersections as Wendigo Park Road and River Road).

The town has identified the need for a new road connecting Sunny Beach Road and Harris Town Road midway between the Wendigo Park Road and where Sunny Beach Road intersects Harris Town Road. This new road would reduce traffic volumes on the twisty, narrow Sunny Beach Road, provide additional access to a large area currently served by just two exit points, and open land for development.

Finally, the town recognizes the need for a new road to essentially parallel the Mishawaka Road where it runs north along Lake Pokegama. This section of road has numerous safety issues related to road alignment, boat access area, and increasing traffic volumes. A parallel roadway would alleviate these issues and serve future development.

## Community Facilities

Harris Township owns and operates a number of facilities serving residents and visitors.

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

- Five boat accesses on Pokegama Lake – Casper Landing, LaPlant Road, Woodtick Lake, Mishawaka Road, Robinson Road [see Map A-2 in Appendix].
- Service Center: maintenance facility, offices for maintenance and treasurer, meeting space.
- Harris Township Cemetery.

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the township explored concepts for upgrading and possibly relocating several community facilities—cemetery, maintenance buildings, and town hall. Engineering students at Itasca Community College interning with SEH generated background information and design concepts. A public meeting was held at which the need for the changes and the students' concepts were discussed. The highest need is to consolidate the town's various maintenance facilities onto a single site on land adjacent to the cemetery. Expansion and enhancement of the cemetery will occur in response to need and as resources allow. A decision on building a new town hall or remodeling the existing one will wait until the need arises.

In general the Township's recreation facilities are sound with only minor upgrades required. However, boat accesses on Pokegama Lake may need attention due to increased use. The Casper Landing access has user conflicts between boaters and swimmers, even though it is not a designated beach. The LaPlant Road, Robinson Road and Woodtick accesses have limited parking. Parking lots, especially the one at the Mishawaka access, are inadequate for larger vehicles and trailers.

There is a desire for recreational trails that connect various parts of Harris Township to Grand Rapids to permit Township residents and visitors to safely travel into the city. Three general corridors for consideration are: Pokegama Lake causeway north on west side of Highway 169 to the Mishawaka Road/Horseshoe Lake Road; Airport Road to Sunny Beach Road; and along the River Road. Multiple use trails should be considered where feasible.

## Population

Between 1990 and 2000 Harris Township's population grew 15.2% from 2,888 to 3,328. The number of households grew from 1,028 to 1,290, or 25.5%. Both rates of growth far outstripped overall growth in Itasca County's population (7.7%) and households (17.0%).

However, between 2000 and 2010 the situation changed dramatically. Harris' population declined to 3,253 (-2.3%) although the number of households increased slightly to 1,297 (0.5%). Meanwhile, Itasca County's population grew by 2.4% and the number of households increased 3.7%.

From 2000 to 2010 Harris became an older community. Every age group over age 50 grew during this period while every group under that age declined with the exception of modest gains in the 25-34 age group.

The State Demographic Center (SDC) has not issued population projects since the 2010 Census. In its 2007 projection the SDC had projected higher levels for both Itasca County and Harris for 2010 than actually occurred. Both the county and Harris felt the negative impacts of the recession particularly the reduced activity in the housing market. It is reasonable to assume that the county will grow especially given the boost from the new regional economic development projects. It is also reasonable to assume that Harris will see at least modest growth as the lingering impacts of the recession ease.

## Township Government

Harris Township has the power and authority of an urban town as provided in Minnesota Statutes 368.01. The Township provides a number of services including the maintenance of roads, recreation facilities, and the operation of the Harris Township Cemetery. Fire protection is

contracted from the Grand Rapids Fire Department; the Itasca County Sheriff provides police protection.

Residents have consistently stated their desire to remain a township. They are, however, willing to consider incorporating as a city if that is required to avoid annexation by Grand Rapids.

## Factors Influencing Community Change

A number of factors impact Harris Township. Obviously, it is not within the power of the township to influence a number of these dynamics. Nonetheless, knowing the forces at play is critical to ongoing township decision making.

### Accumulated Impact of Existing Development.

Years of continuous development, especially in small lots along the lakes, have accumulated impacts.

#### Impact on Harris Township:

- Failure of septic systems (existing or potential future) leading to degradation of lakes' water quality. With the dissolution of the South Central Itasca County Planning Board the township may be forced to be more proactive in addressing this issue.
- Increase in traffic volume, speed, and safety issues on road systems.
- Increase in real estate values and property tax base.
- Increase in wear and tear on Township roads.
- While the lake remains attractive as a recreational resource and provides value to real estate, there is an increase in perception of a diminished recreation experience.

### Population Dynamics

Smaller average-sized households lead to more housing units; increased mobility allows people to live further from Grand Rapids; increased mobility increases number of trips generated per household; conversion from second home cabins leads to more year-round residences.

#### Impact on Harris Township:

- Increase in traffic volume, speed, and safety issues.
- More year-round residents for involvement in community affairs and activities.
- Increase in wear and tear on Township roads.
- Demand for additional roads.
- More housing developments.

### Impact of Development on Previously Undeveloped Land

Changes in land ownership and economics drive development of previously undeveloped (and assumed to remain undeveloped) land such as farms, forested areas, marginal shoreland, and former gravel pits. Increase in demand for land and land values encourage subdivision of land into the minimum size parcels required by zoning.

#### Impact on Harris Township:

- Loss of defining rural open space such as farm fields and forests.
- New housing development is at densities greater than previous development.
- Increase in housing opportunities.
- Increase in wear and tear on Township roads and demand for new roads.
- Increase in land value and property tax base.
- More year-round residents for involvement in community affairs and activities.
- Residents, especially those who have lived in the Township for a longer time, 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.).

### Grand Rapids Growth and Expansion

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.

#### Impact on Harris Township:

- Intensified commercial development further south along Highway 169.
- Increase in employment and business development opportunities for existing and potential Harris Township residents.
- Maintained pressure to create rural subdivisions at or near minimum required lot sizes in the Township.
- Increase in vehicular traffic on arterial roads, especially commercial trucks and general auto along Harris Town Road.
- Increase in airport traffic and subsequent noise pollution.
- Increase in use of public boat accesses on Pokegama Lake causing, in some cases, user conflicts.

### Government Controls

Rezoning of land from Farm Residential to Rural Residential. Allowance of non-residential uses in Rural Residential areas diminishes sense of ruralness. Subdivision regulations tend to foster standard conventional lot layout and do not encourage more conservation-style designs.

#### Impact on Harris Township:

- Development at densities greater than what is considered exurban or rural.
- Commercial uses that are spot located within residential areas.
- Subdivisions more suggestive of suburban not rural development styles and attributes.
- Inadequate prosecution of violations of county land use controls and regulations.

## This Plan and the Issue of Annexation

When the 2006 plan was developed, the issue of potential annexation of parts of the township by the City of Grand Rapids was a serious issue. However, no annexations occurred and the City has since indicated it has no desire to initiate annexation of any township land. On the other hand, the potential for annexation initiated by township property owners under new state legislation remains a concern. As a consequence, the township devoted considerable attention to this matter, especially as it might apply to future development in the Highway 169 corridor.

It is Harris Township's contention that the future conditions set forth in this plan describe the Township as playing a vital, supportive, and necessary role within the greater Grand Rapids community of Itasca County. As such, it is the Township's intent to remain an exurban/rural community integrated into and contributing to the greater Grand Rapids community but that operates as a separate unit of government with its current boundaries intact. Further, the Township intends to use its plan to promote a type and density of development consistent with the Township's exurban/rural nature and to prevent the creation of conditions that would support annexation of parts of the Township into the City.

The Township recognizes that economic development southward along Highway 169 may eventually force consideration of annexation of the corridor in order to support appropriately designed development. A complicating factor is state law which allows property owners to petition for annexation without any recourse to oppose such action by the township. It is the Township's intent to pursue actions that: maintain development at intensities not requiring utilities and city services, and, create cooperative agreements with Grand Rapids regarding consideration of annexation if and only when conditions may warrant such action.

Chapter 4

HARRIS TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012



# The Future Harris Township

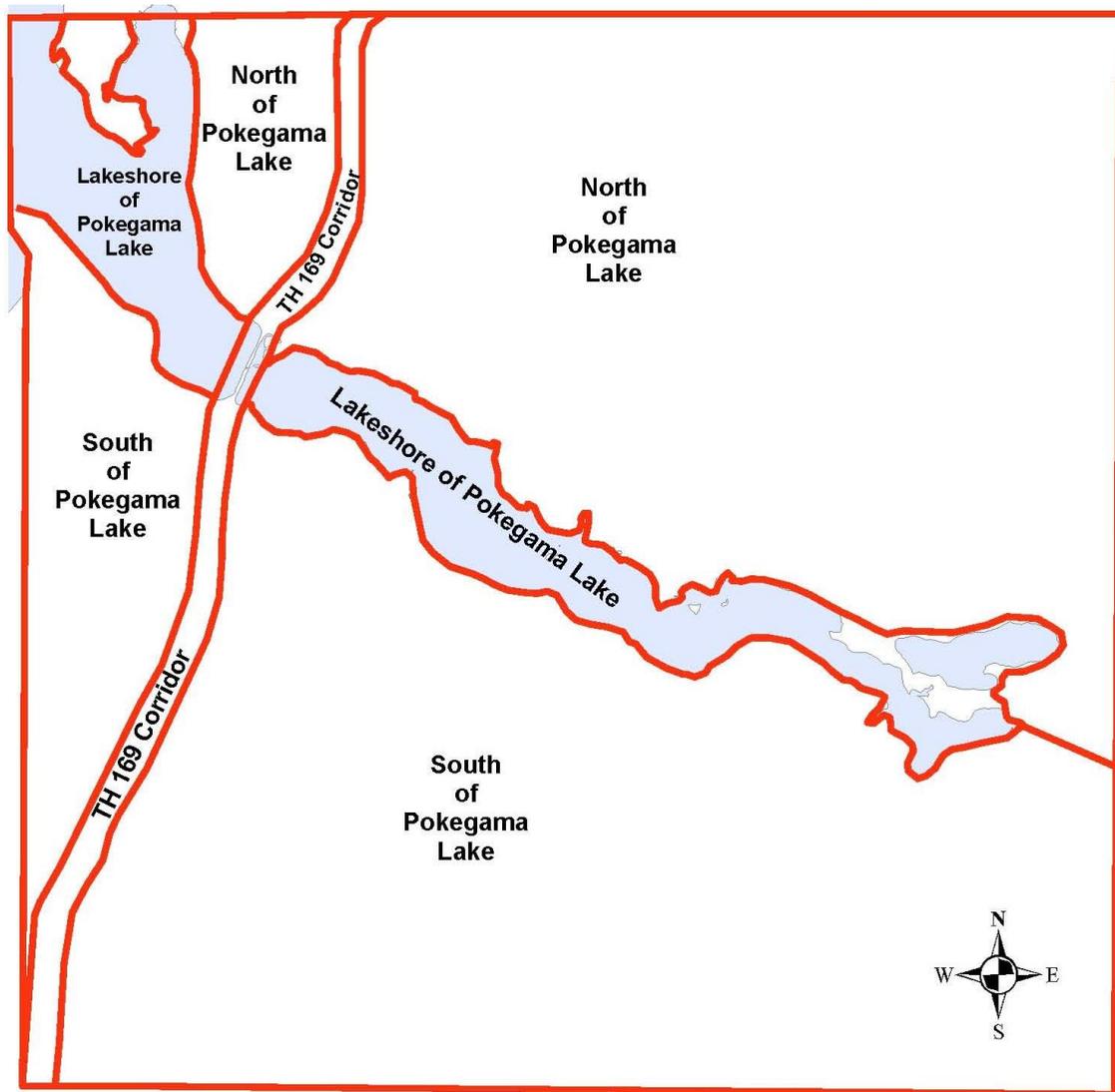
## Goal: A Rural Community

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 Township whose territorial extent remains as it is today.
- Continuation of the township form of government.

Map 2. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Areas



## Land Use

The following describes the desired future situation for three of the Township's four major subsections – lakeshore, north of Pokegama Lake, and south of Pokegama Lake. The Highway 169 corridor is being treated as a separate topic.

### Pokegama Lake Lakeshore

All developable lakeshore land will be occupied by year-round and seasonal residences. Much of the property on the non-lakeshore side of the access roads (e.g., Sunny Beach Road) will be developed for residences but at lower densities than along the shore. Existing public space, even relatively narrow lots, will be retained for public access to the lake (for fishing, carry-in watercraft, trails). The Township will pursue efforts to implement acceptable and effective methods to remedy areas where individual on-site wastewater treatment systems are failing.

### North of Pokegama Lake

Residential development at exurban densities will dominate this area although extensive areas of undeveloped private land will remain either through the landowner's choice or market forces. Agricultural activity will gradually decline. Home businesses and occupations will be present. Except for pre-existing businesses there will be no businesses unassociated with a residence.

Although the issue of "grandfathered" uses primarily has arisen in this area it is a topic that applies throughout the township. The township prefers that the county amend its land use controls so that existing uses that have been "grandfathered" under previous but now superseded regulations are required to meet the new regulations to the extent possible; this requirement would be triggered by an application for a permit to modify the use.

### South of Pokegama Lake

This portion of the Township will retain the greatest rural feel to it, especially east of Highway 169 where agriculture and forestry are the dominant land uses. Most residential development will be on single, large lots. Home occupations and businesses, a hallmark of rural living, will be present. The large tracts of public and privately owned forest land will remain as actively managed forestland that is also available for recreational purposes.

## Highway 169 Corridor

This area 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 of the Township and the highly developed area of the City. South of the lake the uses will focus on food and beverage and convenience stores.

- Commercial development will be limited to the area currently zoned Light Industrial/Commercial, with the exception of one area along the east side of the Highway and south of Harris Town Road that would connect two existing commercial areas.
- South of Pokegama Lake, development will 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 Light Industrial/Commercial on the west of the highway in this area would 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.
- North of Pokegama Lake, commercial development will be that which requires highway access and visibility, large lots and open areas (e.g., auto dealerships, contractors, storage, etc.) – the idea will be to keep intensive, small lot development within Grand Rapids where sewer and water services exist and intense traffic can be better handled.
- There will be no off-site signs (billboards) within the corridor.

Highway 169 north of Pokegama Lake will be a limited access route with the following policies used to the extent possible:

- Access to Highway 169 would be provided by existing public street connections. However, due to low densities it may be necessary to provide direct private access to some properties. 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.
- New public street connections would be constructed with turn lanes and/or bypass lanes on Highway 169, consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.
- Direct private access to Highway 169 will be discouraged. Existing access to private property that does not conform to access policies could remain in use, but may be

subject to modification or closure when the land use is intensified, the property redeveloped, or the highway improved.

- New access to private property would 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 Highway 169.

### Community Facilities

All existing recreational facilities will be retained and upgraded as appropriate. This includes boat accesses at which attempts will be made to expand parking. Connections to regional recreational trails, including those within Grand Rapids, will be sought to provide enhanced flow through Harris. Where possible, roads will be improved to provide safe walking/bicycling use. State and County will be encouraged to retain all existing publicly owned lands that support recreational opportunities, sound forestry management, and/or sustain desired rural character.

A master concept site plan will be prepared for township property including the cemetery. Town facilities that may be located there are: an expanded and enhanced cemetery, consolidated maintenance facilities, and a new town hall. First priority for implementation is given to the maintenance facility followed by improvements to the cemetery. The decision to build a new town hall or remodel the existing one will be made when the need arises.

### Roads

The two primary access routes through the Township and into Grand Rapids will be Highway 169 and the River Road (CR 3). The Harris Town Road will be the major east-west route. All three routes will handle commercial through truck traffic.

The Airport Road will be a secondary access route into Grand Rapids but primarily for local traffic. It will not be a designated through truck route. Improvements will be made to enhance safety but the road alignment will not be changed.

All other roads will remain as local roads providing direct access to land or collecting traffic from local roads to feed to the primary road routes.

A new, mid-point connecting road between the Sunny Beach and Harris Town Roads will be encouraged to minimize increases in traffic levels on Sunny Beach Road, provide an additional emergency access for the northern lake shore area, and make land available for residential development. Map 3 shows optional routes for this road.

A new road parallel to the Mishawaka Road as it heads north would alleviate safety issues along this section of road, provide access to developable land, and facilitate traffic flow in and out of southwestern Grand Rapids. Map 4 shows a likely alignment for this new road.



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EXHIBIT C – NEW ROADWAY ALIGNMENT  
MISHAWAKA ROAD IMPROVEMENTS  
HARRIS TOWNSHIP, MINNESOTA



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HARRIS TOWNSHIP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012

Chapter 5



# Action Plan

Harris Township has identified strategies intended to bring about the future conditions described in this plan. Implementing actions are identified for each strategy.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <b>Land Use</b>   |
|   | <b>Recognizing that primary authority for land use controls rests with Itasca County, establish cooperative relationships with the County to secure type and administration of land use controls essential to implementing this plan.</b>   |
| 1 | Adopt this updated comprehensive plan.  |
| 2 | Request Itasca County to incorporate the updated Township plan into the to-be updated County comprehensive plan.  |
| 3 | Request Itasca County to amend its zoning ordinance to include the South Grand Rapids Entrance overlay district for the Highway 169 corridor.   |
| 4 | Encourage the county to enforce all land use and sanitary ordinances through vigorous and consistent action.  |
| 5 | Request Itasca County to amend its zoning ordinance to the effect that at the time of an application for a new permit modifying the use in question, which is “grandfathered” under previous regulations and requirements, would be required to meet, to the degree possible or feasible, the newer, more stringent requirements for such uses. |
| 6 | Work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and US Army Corps of Engineers to initiate a preliminary review of possible issues involving inadequate connections between Pokegama Lake and Woodtick and Hale Lakes.   |

### Highway 169 Corridor

**Seek to maintain the corridor as the attractive entrance to the greater Grand Rapids area.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Negotiate cooperative agreement with Grand Rapids regarding consideration of annexation if and only when conditions may warrant such action.  |
| 2 | Encourage MnDOT to restripe Highway 169 from the Grand Rapids limits to Harris Town Road to include safe turning lanes.   |
| 3 | Request Itasca County to update its comprehensive plan and land use controls (zoning and subdivision) to include a South Grand Rapids Entrance overlay district for the Highway 169 corridor. |
| 4 | Encourage residents to form a non-profit organization to cooperate with MnDOT regarding ongoing maintenance of the Pokegama Lake causeway.  |

### Roads & Transportation

**Effectively implement transportation objectives through working agreements with MnDOT, Itasca County, and the City of Grand Rapids.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Work with MnDOT and Itasca County to implement the Highway 169 access management plan recommendations.   |
| 2 | Work with County, landowners and developers to implement creation of a new connecting road between Sunny Beach Road and Harris Town Road.      |
| 3 | Develop plans for the Mishawaka Road parallel bypass road.   |
| 4 | Work with Itasca County to reconfigure the Harris Town Road / River Road / East Harris Town Road intersection as a safe 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.   |

## Community Facilities

**Focus on retaining facility functions and reducing operating costs while meeting community needs.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 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 | Prepare a master plan for the community center complex.   |
| 4 | Initiate implementation of the community center master plan as per the plan.  |
| 5 | Evaluate viability and possibility of acquiring land to provide increased parking for Pokegama Lake accesses.                         |

## Wastewater Treatment

**Pursue solutions to wastewater treatment issues.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Evaluate options for providing effective wastewater around Lake Pokegama.                               |
| 2 | Work with Itasca County to secure conformance with individual on-site wastewater treatment regulations. |

## Governmental Services & Other

**Retain township form of government and establish cooperative ventures for services and programs that exceed Township authorities.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Consider various means to enhance communication between the Town Board and residents to better inform residents about Township activities.  |
| 2 | Conduct regular meetings with County and City staff to discuss issues of mutual concern.  |
| 3 | Negotiate an agreement with Grand Rapids regarding the Highway 169 corridor by which the City agrees not to annex any land within the township until commercial development in the corridor abuts the city/township border. |
| 4 | Work with statewide township associations to pursue changes in the state's annexation by ordinance legislation to provide legal recourse for townships.   |
| 5 | Continue to contract for grading and snowplowing of Township roads, where appropriate.  |

HARRIS TOWNSHIP  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2012



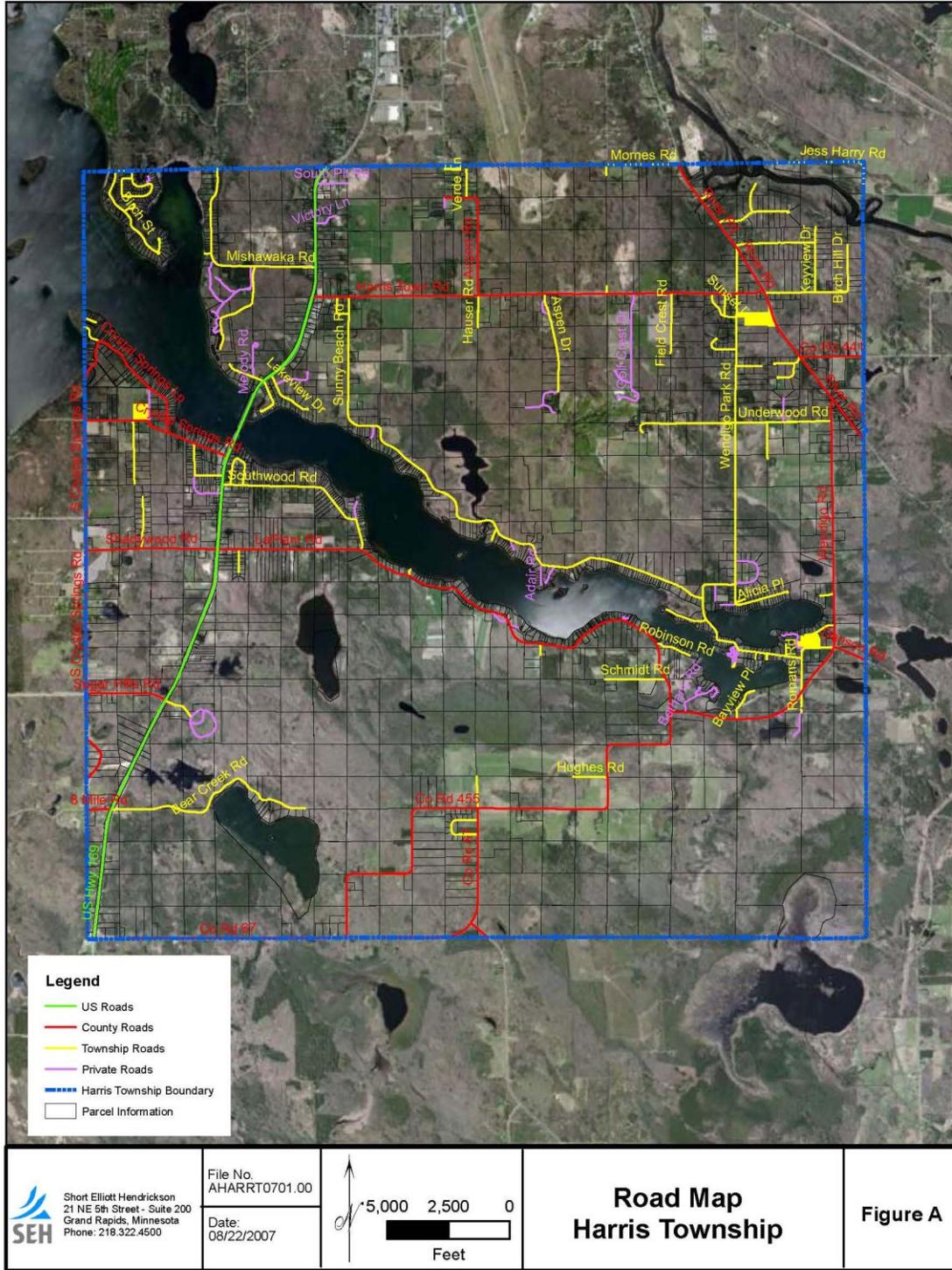
# Appendix

## A. Roads

| Table A-1. Harris Township Roads |       |                           |             |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Road                             | Miles | Road                      | Miles       |
| <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        |
| Davis Road                       | 0.08  | Roots Road                | 0.28        |
| Forest View Trail (Alpha Road)   | 0.08  | Schmidt Road              | 0.47        |
| Hauser Road                      | 0.25  | Sunset Drive              | 0.17        |
| Hughes Road                      | 0.27  | Sunset Lane               | 0.31        |
| Jane Lane                        | 0.49  | Vroman Road               | 0.25        |
| Melody Lane                      | 0.24  | Wagon Wheel Road          | 0.24        |
| Metzenhuber Road                 | 0.10  | Wendigo Heights Road      | 0.30        |
| Nancy Drive                      | 0.25  | Woodland Park Road        | 0.30        |
|                                  |       | <b>Total Gravel Miles</b> | <b>7.50</b> |
| <b>PAVED ROADS</b>               |       |                           |             |
| Alicia Place                     | 0.55  | Pine Landing Drive        | 0.46        |
| Alicia Spur                      | 0.08  | Pine Street               | 0.11        |
| Apache Drive                     | 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        |
| Chippewa Drive                   | 0.32  | Sunny Beach Addition Rd   | 0.33        |
| East Harris Road                 | 0.63  | Sunny Beach Road – Park   | 4.25        |

| <b>Table A-1. Harris Township Roads</b> |              |  |              |
|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| <b>Road</b>                             | <b>Miles</b> | <b>Road</b>                                  | <b>Miles</b> |
|   |              | Road to Harris Town Rd                       |              |
| Field Crest Road                        | 0.46         | Sunny Beach Road - Park Road to Wendigo Road | 1.35         |
| Gary Drive                              | 0.46         | Sunny Lane                                   | 0.22         |
| Harbor Heights Road                     | 0.32         | Tolerick Drive                               | 0.40         |
| Isleview Road                           | 0.31         | Underwood Road                               | 1.54         |
| Key View Drive                          | 0.50         | Verde Lane                                   | 0.22         |
| Lakeview Drive                          | 0.41         | Wendigo Park Road                            | 2.77         |
| Little Crystal Lane                     | 0.49         | Wesleyan Road                                | 0.26         |
| Mishawaka Road                          | 1.53         | Westwood Lane                                | 0.23         |
| Mishawaka Shores                        | 0.56         | Westwood Road                                | 0.23         |
| Mohawk Drive                            | 0.07         | Winnebago Drive                              | 0.13         |
| Mornes Road                             | 0.56         | Winston-Taylor Road                          | 0.09         |
| Norberg Road                            | 0.61         | Woodbine Lane                                | 0.18         |
|   |              | <b>Total Paved Miles</b>                     | <b>25.3</b>  |
|   |              | <b>TOTAL ROADS</b>                           | <b>32.8</b>  |

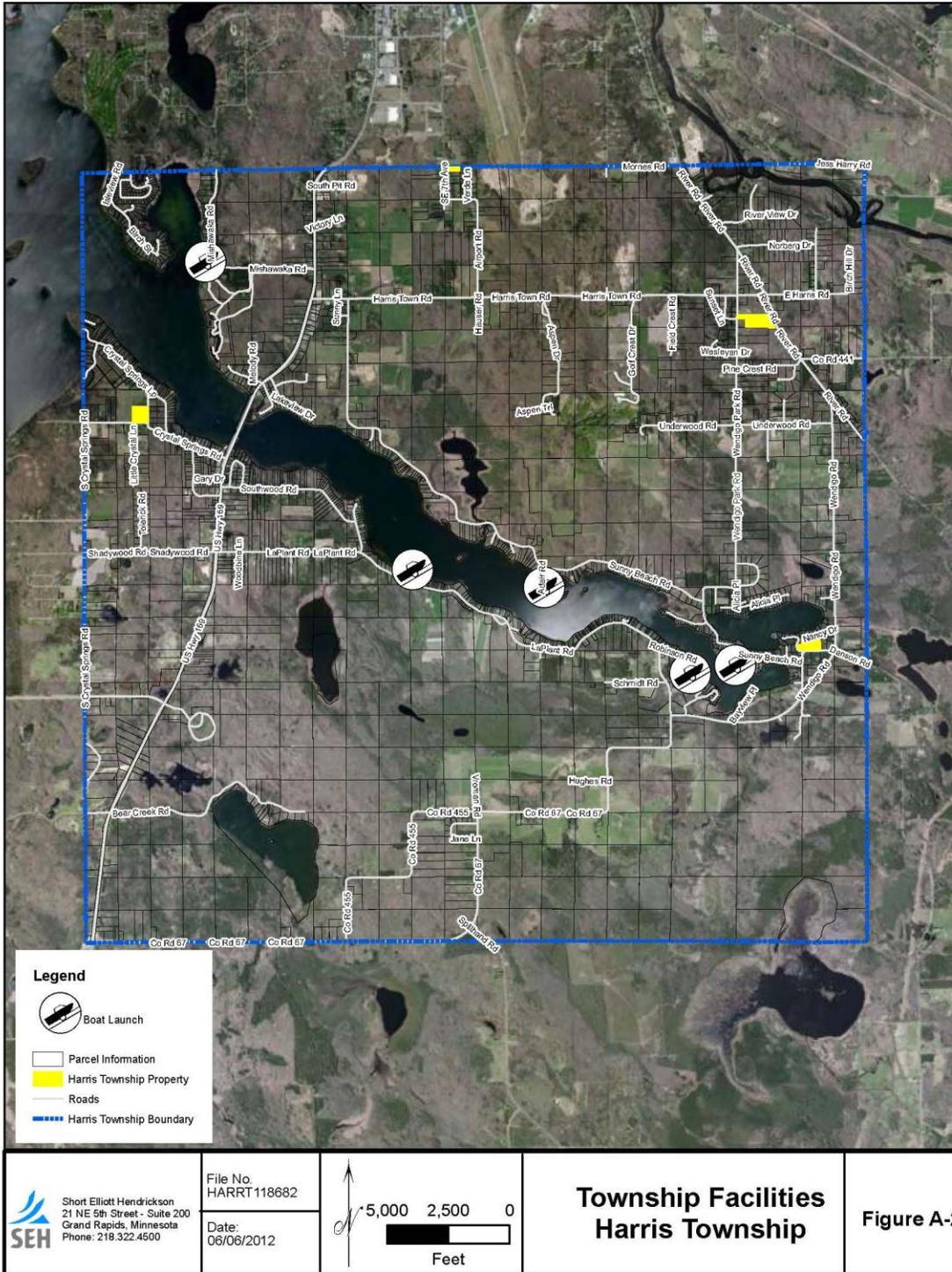
Map A-1. Harris Township Roads



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## B. Community Facilities

Map A-2. Harris Township Facilities



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## C. Population

**Table A-2. Harris Township Population, 2000 and 2010**

| Age Group    | 2000         | 2010         | Change       |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <5           | 158          | 161          | 1.9%         |
| 5-9          | 195          | 187          | -4.1%        |
| 10-14        | 279          | 207          | -25.8%       |
| 15-19        | 274          | 210          | -23.4%       |
| 20-24        | 145          | 127          | -12.4%       |
| 25-29        | 112          | 136          | 21.4%        |
| 30-34        | 168          | 169          | 0.6%         |
| 35-39        | 254          | 180          | -29.1%       |
| 40-44        | 299          | 192          | -35.8%       |
| 45-49        | 349          | 255          | -26.9%       |
| 50-54        | 284          | 297          | 4.6%         |
| 55-59        | 202          | 319          | 57.9%        |
| 60-64        | 174          | 243          | 39.7%        |
| 65-69        | 152          | 203          | 33.6%        |
| 70-74        | 133          | 153          | 15.0%        |
| 75-79        | 82           | 104          | 26.8%        |
| 80-84        | 33           | 64           | 93.9%        |
| 85+          | 35           | 46           | 31.4%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>3,328</b> | <b>3,253</b> | <b>-2.3%</b> |

Source: US Census

**Table A-3. Harris Township and Itasca County Population and Household Trends**

|                        | Census |        |        | Change    |           |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|
|                        | 1990   | 2000   | 2010   | 1990-2000 | 2000-2010 |
| <b>Harris Township</b> |        |        |        |           |           |
| Population             | 2,888  | 3,328  | 3,253  | 15.2%     | -2.3%     |
| Households             | 1,028  | 1,290  | 1,297  | 25.5%     | 0.5%      |
| Persons/Household      | 2.81   | 2.58   | 2.51   | -8.3%     | -2.8%     |
| <b>Itasca County</b>   |        |        |        |           |           |
| Population             | 40,863 | 43,992 | 45,058 | 7.7%      | 2.4%      |
| Households             | 15,478 | 18,103 | 18,773 | 17.0%     | 3.7%      |
| Persons/Household      | 2.64   | 2.43   | 2.40   | -8.0%     | -1.2%     |

**Table A-4. Grand Rapids Area Population, 1990 – 2010**

| Place                  | Population |        |        | Change    |           |           |
|------------------------|------------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                        | 1990       | 2000   | 2010   | 1990-2000 | 2000-2010 | 1990-2010 |
| Itasca County          | 40,863     | 43,992 | 45,058 | 3,129     | 1,066     | 4,195     |
| Grand Rapids, city     | 7,976      | 7,764  | 10,189 | -212      | 2,425     | 2,213     |
| Harris Township        | 2,888      | 3,328  | 3,253  | 440       | -75       | 365       |
| Grand Rapids, township | 3,199      | 3,378  | 0      | 179       | -3,378    | -3,199    |
| LaPrairie              | 438        | 605    | 665    | 167       | 60        | 227       |
| Arbo Township          | 832        | 898    | 867    | 66        | -31       | 35        |
| Cohasset               | 1,970      | 2,481  | 2,698  | 511       | 217       | 728       |
| Trout Lake Township    | 810        | 951    | 1,087  | 141       | 136       | 277       |
| Blackberry Township    | 698        | 717    | 880    | 19        | 163       | 182       |
| Spang Township         | 229        | 262    | 264    | 33        | 2         | 35        |
| Wildwood Township      | 144        | 193    | 193    | 49        | 0         | 49        |
| Splithand Township     | 247        | 256    | 250    | 9         | -6        | 3         |
| Wabana Township        | 401        | 487    | 537    | 86        | 50        | 136       |

## D. Highway 169 Corridor

In addition to negotiating an agreement on annexation within the corridor with Grand Rapids, Harris is to seek an overlay district within the County’s zoning code. For the purpose of discussion the district could be called the “South Grand Rapids Entrance” area.

The intent of the overlay district would be to provide land use and development regulations similar to those of Grand Rapids so as to encourage appropriate development in this corridor. These regulations would overlay or be enforced in addition to those of the basic land use zoning classifications in the corridor. The County has used this concept along Highway 38 and for the mining areas of eastern Itasca County.

Generally speaking, the overlay district would apply as follows:

- North of Pokegama Lake:
  - No commercial development on the west side of the highway, reserve routes for frontage and backage roads at least as far as Harris Town Road, no offsite billboards, building and site design requirements, and the like.
- South of Pokegama Lake:
  - No offsite billboards, off site impact standards (e.g., noise and dust), vegetation and plantings, and limit commercial development to currently zoned areas and those areas with existing conditional use permits.

Specifically, the district would incorporate many aspects of Grand Rapids’ land development regulations (Chapter 30 of the city code). Among the key components would be:

- Article V Subdivisions:
  - Design Standards (Division 3) and
  - Required Improvements (Division 4).

- Article VI Zoning:
  - Site Development Standards (Division 7) and
  - Large-Scale Commercial Development Standards (Division 14). The following text is from the city code and describes the purpose, intent, and applicability of these standards.
    - *Purpose.* The purpose of these standards are to ensure large scale commercial development is to provide compatible design, size and layout considerations to the unique built and natural environment of Grand Rapids.
    - *Intent.* The intent of these development standards is to provide standards that influence building and site design of large scale development that creates a smaller scale, feel and relationship to the small town atmosphere of Grand Rapids. Large scale commercial development has the potential to distract, disrupt or adversely impact the natural and built environment of Grand Rapids and the surrounding area. When properly implemented, the standards contained in this section minimize impacts to better integrate these developments within the context of the community. This section establishes standards that regulate the location, appearance and function of buildings; off-street parking and circulation; vehicular and pedestrian access; loading areas; yard spaces; and preservation of natural site amenities. It is not the intent of the City of Grand Rapids to unnecessarily over-regulate large scale commercial development when these uses provide retail services and create market dynamics that are a benefit to the greater good of Grand Rapids and its market area.
    - *Applicability. New large scale commercial development.* The standards contained in this section apply to commercial development that has a building footprint area exceeding 70,000 square feet.
    - This section of the code also addresses site design and building design.

## E. Community Facilities Master Site Plan

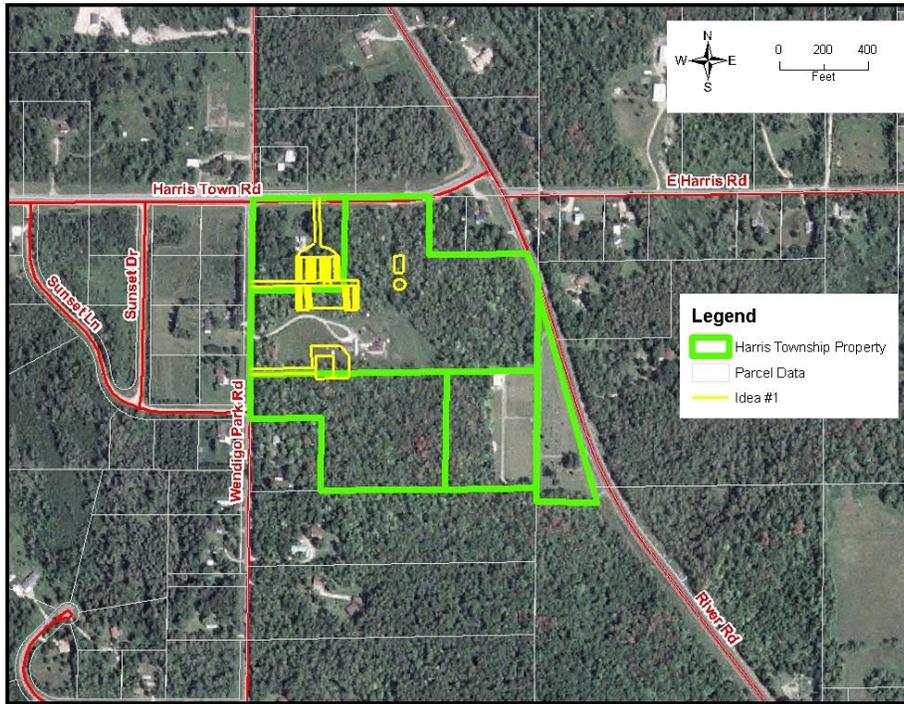
Harris Township undertook a process to define the need for potential improvements to its cemetery, town hall, and maintenance facilities. The process began with work done by Itasca Community College students working for SEH, Inc., the township's engineering firm. The students conducted research, generated ideas, and crafted presentations for consideration by the Town Board. The students' work was focused on the location of all these facilities on a single site, already owned by the Township that encompassed the cemetery and primary maintenance building.

Those concepts were presented to the community at a meeting on January 18, 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to gather input to aid in the design of a potential consolidated community center on property adjoining the Harris Cemetery. It was emphasized that the Town Board had made no decision to actually building any or all parts of the potential new complex. The meeting generated many ideas that helped the Town Board make its initial set of decisions regarding the improvements.

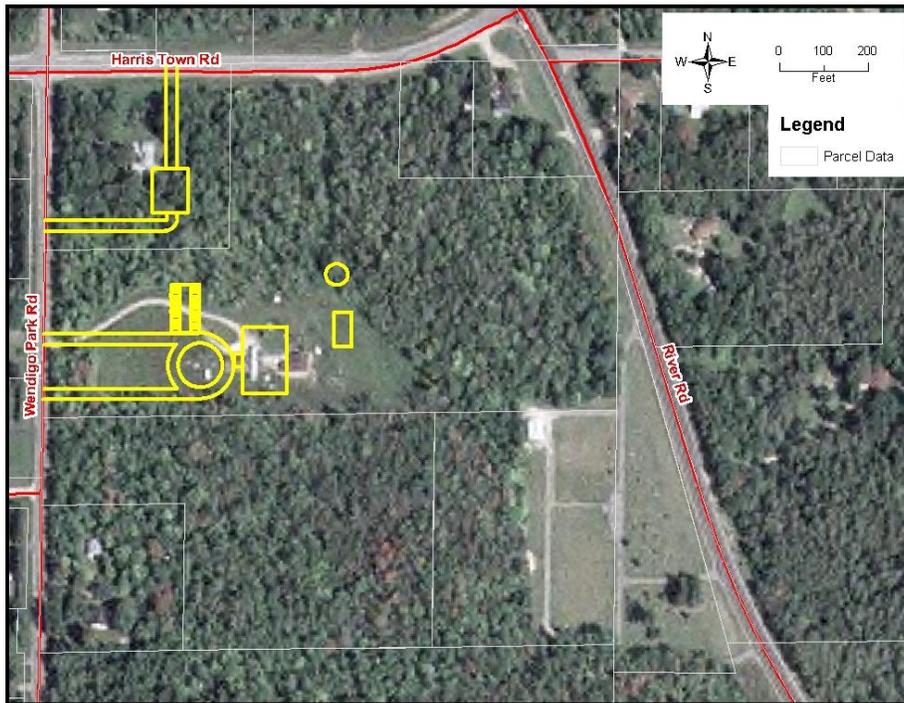
This Appendix contains:

- Schematics of three possible site development concepts.
- Schematic of a possible cemetery expansion.
- Summary assessment of alternative approaches that could be taken by the Town Board.
- A listing of design considerations based on the input at the public meeting.

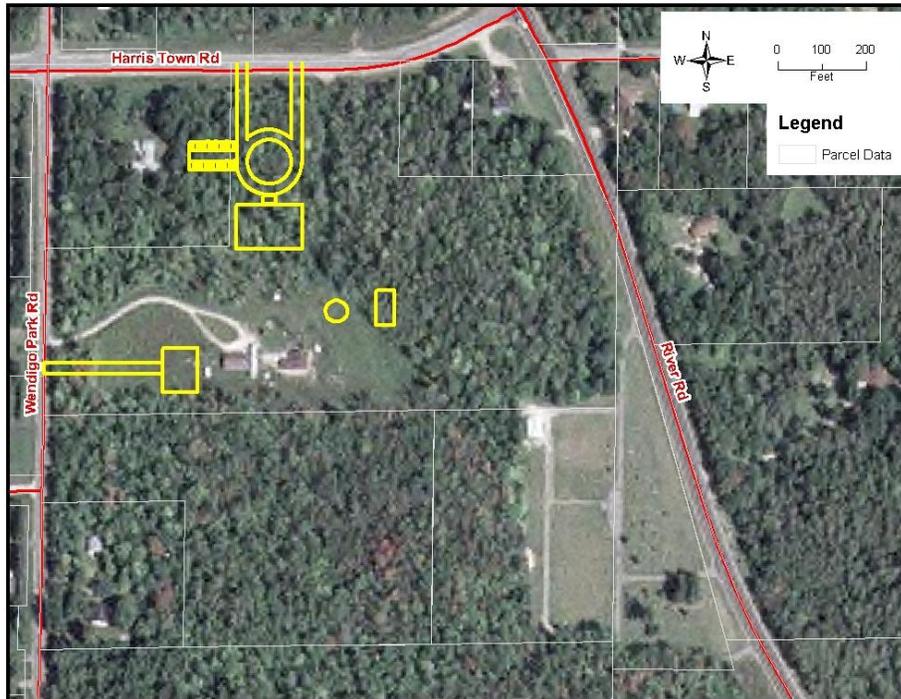
Concept 1.



Concept 2.



**Concept 3.**



*Cemetery Expansion*



HARRIS TOWNSHIP  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE - COMMUNITY COMPLEX DISCUSSION  
 PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

|                   | <u>DO NOTHING</u>   |  | <u>USE</u>  |  | <u>REUSE</u>  |  | <u>NEW</u>   |   |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|
|                   | Advantages  | Drawbacks  | Advantages  | Drawbacks  | Advantages  | Drawbacks  | Advantages   | Drawbacks   |
| TAXES             | no increase, spend money on more pressing items, i.e. roads, trails, etc. |  | no immediate increase, potential increased costs for hall up-keep |  | no immediate increase   | money could be used for more pressing items                  | potential increase, money could be used for other items            |   |
| PARKING           |   | very limited   |   | very limited   | moderate improvements could be made                               |  | optimal design could be achieved                                   |   |
| TOWNSHIP PROPERTY | use other property for resale   | not a central location, site may be annexed into City of GR. | incorporate cemetery memorial area, use other property for resale | not a central location, site may be annexed into City of GR. | incorporate cemetery memorial area, use other property for resale | not a central location, site may be annexed into City of GR. | centralized maintenance area, use existing property for resale     |   |
| SECURITY          |   |  |   |  | improvements could be made  |  | optimal design / systems can be achieved                           |   |
| BUILD GREEN       |   |  | dual use windbreak in cemetery                                    | green burials in cemetery could affect water quality         | incorporate energy saving options                                 | costly to retrofit existing facility                         | in-floor, zone, geothermal heating options and other energy savers |   |
| HALL RENTAL       |   | too noisy, too small   |   | too noisy, too small   | improve audio / video system                                      | could potentially take away from local businesses            | optimal audio/video system   | could potentially take away from local businesses |
| MAINT. / UP-KEEP  |   | high cost of operation & up-keep on existing buildings       | centralized maintenance area                                      | maintenance garage will need exhaust system                  |   | potential to open up more problems with remodel              | incorporate maintenance free features                              |   |
| OTHER             |   |  | cemetery improvements- benches, wells, windbreak, etc.            |  | cemetery improvements- benches, wells, windbreak, etc.            |  | cemetery improvements- benches, wells, windbreak, etc.             | possible road congestion                          |

## Site Design Criteria

These criteria apply to site design including types of facilities and activities desired on the site along with locational considerations.

### **“Must have” features:**

- Adequate parking
- Maintenance garage
- Play ground
- Recreation: tennis, baseball
- Plan for expansion

### **“Nice to have” features**

- Pavilion
- Park
- Picnic area
- Community garden
- Maintenance garage
- Ice rink
- Trails
- Archery range
- Camping
- Swimming
- Plan for potential expansion
- Well/pump at cemetery

### **Site Design: General**

- Retain northeast and northwest corners until they are definitely not needed for future complex development, then sell for private development.
- Insure that site lighting does not disrupt neighboring properties
- Don't degrade view of site from adjoining properties
- Fence around property, especially high use areas (protect adjoining property)
- Memorial park in northwest corner
- Position parking lot so it can be used by town hall and cemetery
- Locate town hall and maintenance operations in a single building or situate them close together
- Replant trees
- Site control (security, access roads, etc.)
- Lighting for security

### **Site Design: Roads / Circulation**

- Provide direct access to town hall from cemetery
- Internal connections/roads/paths
- Do not create a road across the parcel that could become a de facto through street.
- Separate access flow for town hall and maintenance facility
- Consider adjusting road speeds lower to promote safety (all three roads)
- Harris Town Road / River Road are better access points than Wendigo Park Road

### **Site Design: Cemetery Expansion**

- Well/pump available
- Expand as warranted by need
- Structures (e.g., columbarium) to look “rural”
- Allow mausoleums
- Designated area with small plots for in ground placement of urns – a sort of in the ground columbarium
- Parking has to be expanded
- Shelter for gathering out of the weather
- Good road access for processions
- Benches
- Memorial area – with tree plantings, for spreading of ashes
- Make dual use of windbreaks – for memorial tree plantings, ash spreading, etc.
- Disposal area for flowers, holders, vases, etc.

### **Town Hall Design**

These criteria apply to the Town Hall. These can be applied to a remodeling of the existing facility or construction of a new building.

- What can we afford?
- Market the building so it gets used and generates revenue
- Consider space for other community functions (e.g., early childhood classroom)
- Bigger office
- Large town hall (300 person capacity)
- Separate small gathering area
- Zone heating
- Storm porch with coat room
- Consider most efficient heating systems (e.g., dual fuel, in-floor heat, geothermal, etc.)
- “Green” energy efficient
- Good acoustics
- Handicapped accessible / meet ADA requirements
- Separate entrances to each meeting room – do not require going through one for access
- Restroom upgrades / more stalls
- Arrange so possible to rent two rooms at same time
- Kitchen design and features based on intended functions,