

TOWNSHIP OF FLYNN
SANILAC COUNTY, MI

MASTER PLAN

July 11, 2017

FLYNN TOWNSHIP BOARD

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I. EXISTING RESOURCES

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF FLYNN TOWNSHIP

The County of Sanilac was established by proclamation of Territorial Governor Lewis Cass on March 28, 1820. It was named for a chief of the Wyandotte Indian tribe. The county was initially governed as part of Oakland County (1820) and later as part of St. Clair County (1827).

Before the organization, which took place in 1869, Flynn Township was attached to Elk Township. The township was named for Thomas Flynn, who was one of the first settlers, and the first Supervisor. The other Supervisors have been:

- Richard Nicholl 1870-1871
- M. J. Kolts 1872-1873
- Purdy Jones 1874
- A. W. Payne 1875-1876
- James McGregor 1877-1881
- James Baldwin 1882

William Fitch was the first settler, stopping on section 36 in 1857. William Flynn came about one year later, and soon after they were joined by William McGregor and R. J. Nicholl.

“The first school-house in the township was a frame built in 1869, at Omark. The rest of the village consists of the post office. About the time the township was organized a Methodist Church was also established, but no building has ever been erected, the services having been held in the school-house at Omark. A large marsh runs across Flynn Township from southwest to northeast. This has been cleared of the heavy timber, but is not yet in tillable shape. When it becomes so, and is properly drained, the land will be very fertile; but at present a large part of the township is new.” (Written in 1884 by the Chapman Brothers.)

In 1871 a major fire swept across Sanilac and Huron Counties and left a blackened waste behind. No lives were lost but the property damage was significant. In the fall of 1881, another major fire originated in the North Branch area and swept the entire Thumb. In four (4) hour’s time, the fire turned the Thumb, including Flynn Township, into a waste land. Three hundred (300) lives were lost in the region and fourteen thousand (14,000) people were made homeless as a result of this fire. However, residents did not abandon the area. Instead, the citizens rebuilt the community.

The dairy business in Flynn Township began to expand early.

Flynn Township continues to have a strong agricultural economy and receive high yields from its fertile land. Flynn Township has a large dairy farm with over 3,000 milking cows.

B. LOCATION

Flynn Township is comprised of 36 square miles of land located in the southwest corner of Sanilac County.

Flynn Township is located 17 miles north of Imlay City on M-53 and 4 miles east on Peck road. Flynn Township is approximately 45 miles from Port Huron, 50 miles from Flint and 68 miles from Detroit. The proximity of each of these cities creates a certain amount of development pressure on the Township.

C. EXISTING LAND USES

Existing land uses within the Township have been identified as:

- Public
- Agricultural/Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreational

Public Land Uses

The Public Land use includes churches, cemeteries, park, nature center and governmental uses. Facilities belonging to Flynn Township are: Senior Center, two (2) Cemeteries, Park and Nature Center. Public land uses is a small amount of the total Township land area. The Senior Center, where Township business is held, is located at 5251 Shephard road, Brown City, MI 48416.

There are two (2) cemeteries owned by the Township, two (2) cemeteries located within Flynn Township and one (1) cemetery located outside the Township. These are: Omard Cemetery on Peck road, Kerr Cemetery on Sullivan road located in Marlette Township and the Amish Cemetery on corner of Bailey & Willis roads.

Churches located in the Township include Omard United Methodist on Peck road west of Isles road and Fellowship Bible Church on Peck road east of Baldwin road.

Agricultural/Residential Land Uses

Flynn Township is made up mostly of agricultural land. There are fewer total farms than in the past, due to farm enlargement and consolidation. Agriculture remains the most important part of the Township's economy. A significant proportion of the agricultural land is enrolled in the Michigan Farmland Preservation Program (PA 116 of 1974). The program provides tax relief in exchange for agreements not to develop the property for non-agricultural uses for a specified period of time.

Most of the agricultural production comes from large farm operators. Many of the smaller farms are rented to large farm operators. However, there are several small farms operated the Amish families throughout the Township.

The preservation of agricultural land within Flynn Township is one of the objectives of this Master Plan and the Township Zoning Ordinance. Agriculture land for preservation is dependent upon a number of factors. Consideration must be given to soil fertility, farming history of particular parcels and the size of parcels. Designating prime farmland for preservation purposes must also look at the probable future growth of the Township.

The single family residential areas in Flynn Township are scattered throughout the Township. These residential areas, in the absent of a municipal sewer system rely on private septic systems. At the present time there is no demand for moderate to high density residential property and no such demand is anticipated in the foreseeable future. Consequently residential development is included with agricultural.

Commercial Land Uses

Very few parcels in the Township are noted as commercial parcels. These areas are presently being used for these purposes. There is no additional demand anticipated for these uses in the foreseeable future.

Industrial Land Uses

At the present time, there is no zone for Industrial Land Use. There is a radio tower on Montgomery Road approximately ½ mile East of Maple Valley Road.

Recreational Land Uses

Park – 5251 Shephard Road. 10 acres. Pavilion, Playground Equipment, Campfire Ring and seating.

Nature Center – 3290 Peck Road. 524 acres. Hunting, Fishing, Hiking, Horse Back Riding, Boating.

D. SOILS

Type of soil within the Township will influence land use. The various types of soil, as shown on the map developed by the Soil Conservation Service, is classified into five (5) groups in Flynn Township with group 1 being the most common.

E. DRAINAGE

The Cass River watershed provides the natural drainage system in the northwest portion of the Township. With the Black River watershed provides the natural drainage system in the rest of the Township.

In both watersheds, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has very strict standards which must be followed to prevent pollution.

II. POPULATION AND HOUSING

A. INTRODUCTION

In any planning study, overall view of population and future trends is necessary. Before a community can develop plans to encourage desirable land use, it must anticipate the rate of growth it can expect and any limits it might wish to impose upon this growth. Past trends, current levels and future expectations of population growth are all important elements in helping to determine land use decisions. Recreational land needs, commercial and industrial space requirements are all directly related to the size of the population.

B. POPULATION TRENDS

People have been leaving the urban centers to live in rural communities such as Flynn Township. However, many continue to work in the urban areas.

Table 1 shows the population growth for 1980 – 2010 for Sanilac County and all Townships which border Flynn Township.

TABLE 1

Comparative Population Growth

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>+/- %</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>+/-%</u>
Sanilac County	40,789	39,928	44,547	12 %	43,114	-3.2 %
Flynn Township	963	914	1,040	14 %	1,050	1.0 %
Burnside Township	1,772	1,753	1,920	10 %	1,864	-2.8 %
Elk Township	1,535	1,465	1,584	8 %	1,526	3.0 %
Elmer Township	829	774	790	2 %	806	2.0 %
Marlette Township	2,029	1,910	2,051	7 %	1,763	-14.0 %
Maple Valley Twp.	1,009	1,022	1,114	9 %	1,221	9.0 %

The Comparative Population Growth rate for Sanilac County using the 2000 and the 2010 census data shows an average -3.2% decrease. The total population for Flynn Township between 2000 and 2010 was a positive 1.0%.

C. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The population of Flynn Township in 2010, when compared to the rest of Sanilac County, can be characterized as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Population Characteristics – 2010 Census

	<u>Flynn Township</u>	<u>Sanilac County</u>
Population	1,050	43,114
Male	51.5%	49.4 %
Female	48.5%	50.6 %
Median Age	35.8 years	42,8 years
65 Years and Older	12.2%	17.6 %
Households	360	17,123
Average Family Size	3.41	2.97

D. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The housing stock in Flynn Township changed somewhat between 2000 and 2010 as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Flynn Township Housing Characteristics

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Total Housing Units	333	401
Owner Occupied	82.9%	83.9%
Renter Occupied	17.1%	10.2%
Vacant	9.3%	10.2%
Average Population / occupied Dwelling unit	3.11	2.9

E. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Census records indicate the following residential construction activity within the last 3 decades as shown in table 4.

TABLE 4

New Dwelling Units in Flynn Township

<u>1980 to 1989</u> 21 units	<u>1990 to 1999</u> 61 units	<u>2000 to 2010</u> 61 units
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III. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. INTRODUCTION

Public improvements can direct or at least influence the growth of the Township. The impression created by a community is at least partially related to the quality of the public facilities which it provides.

The Township has a Senior Center located at 5251 Shephard Road which is a paved primary road which is open for public use. Use of the Senior Center, other than the established Senior Group, must be reserved for a fee.

B. SEWER AND WATER

Flynn Township has no public sewer or water services. All sewer septic and water wells are privately owned.

C. ROADS

An adequate road system is one key element that influences growth within a community. Every effort should be made to limit zoning for future development of roads with sufficient capacity for that development.

Marlette Road, Maple Valley Road, Peck Road and Shephard Road are the only paved roads in the Township and cross the entire Township. These major roads are the primary link between the Township and other communities within the region.

Local roads in the Township have a gravel surface. There are some private roads and drives which serve single family residential areas.

When subdivision plats and site condominium projects are presented for approval by the Township, adequate right-of-ways should be required from the developer. Site plan review should also be utilized to limit traffic ingress and egress so as to minimize the traffic hazards caused by multiple driveways.

D. FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection service in Flynn Township are provided by a volunteer fire department operated by the Brown City Fire Authority.

Firefighting services are paid from fees for fire runs and appropriations from the Township general fund.

E. TOWNSHIP HALL

Flynn Township built a new Senior Center in 1994. The Center is used for Township meetings. There are no offices within the Senior Center.

F. PARKS AND RECREATION

The Township has a Park and a Nature Center which are open to the public from dawn to dusk. The park is 10 acres and located at 5251 Shephard Road which is a paved primary road. The Nature Center is 524 acres and located at 3290 Peck Road also a paved primary road. Both the park and Nature Center are open to the public from dawn to dusk. Located within the Township on Montgomery road ½ mile west of Shephard Road is 200 acres of State land open to the public, as well as 64 acres a ¼ mile east of Willis and Juhl Road.

G. SCHOOLS

There are four school districts within Flynn Township; Brown City School District, Marlette School District, Peck School District, as well as Sandusky School District. Most of Flynn Township is located within the Brown City School District. See page 15 (VI. Maps)

IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals formulated by the Township are the cornerstone of the planning process. These goals should be the framework for making decisions. In order to be reasonably capable of being achieved, the goals must be tempered by recognition of financial, social and political realities.

Goals must be distinguished from objectives. Goals are generalized. Objectives are the specific targets to be achieved. The objectives are implemented by the ordinances and policies of the Township.

The function of the planning process is to identify and describe the problems which exist, to anticipate the problems which might emerge in the future, and to devise solutions. Accordingly, the Township Planning Commission has identified the following goals and objectives. These goals and objectives should be periodically reviewed as changes occur in the Township.

A. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Goal

Encourage an attractive community in which to live, work, farm and enjoy life. Land should be regarded as an extremely important asset and its use should be consistent with long range development values.

Objectives

Preserve the natural amenities of the Township, including topography, drainage, rivers, flood plains, soils and wood lands.

Separate incompatible land uses.

Discourage scattered development which consumes extensive land areas, creates excessive costs in providing community services, generates greater traffic problems, increases land speculation, and makes agricultural land preservation more difficult.

B. AGRICULTURAL/RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Goal

Protect the areas of the Township which are best suited for agriculture in order to maintain the economic and social benefits of a strong rural community.

Objectives

Discourage non-farm development in and adjacent to those areas of the Township which have been designated as agricultural land in this Master Plan.

Encourage farmers to enroll their land in the Farmland Preservation Act (PA 116 of 1974) in order to receive property tax relief and preserve the land for future farmers, particularly in the prime farming areas of the Township.

C. COMMERCIAL AREAS

Goal

Provide adequate commercial areas at appropriate locations to handle the various types of goods and services needed in the community.

Objectives

Encourage commercial facilities only where good road access and adequate parking can be assured.

Coordinate commercial development with the cities of Brown City and Marlette

D. INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Goal

Provide Flynn Township with a realistic tax base and employment opportunities by encouraging diversity of industrial development

Objectives

Locate industrial uses near certain compatible commercial uses rather than near agricultural/residential areas.

E. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Goal

Provide adequate and convenient community facilities to meet the needs of the residents.

Objectives

Assure the availability of adequate park and recreation space.

Encourage cooperation with the school district in providing recreation facilities and programs.

Correct existing road inadequacies.

Continue to improve and develop the fire department.

Assist the ambulance service to assure the best possible service for Township residents.

F. RECREATIONAL AREAS

Goal

Promote ecotourism and a community friendly environment.

Objectives

Park – Improve playground equipment. Upgrade Pavilion as needed.

Nature Center – Create and improve trails and Wildlife Habitat throughout the Center

V. MASTER LAND USE PLAN

A. CONCEPT OF THE PLAN

Planning is a process of preparing for the future. The Master Land Use Plan for Flynn Township is intended to prepare for that which will probably happen and to bring about those things which the community wants to happen. This long range plan enables the Township to establish goals, objectives, and policies so that the individual Township decisions can lead to the fulfillment of the plan.

This Master Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a guide for future development. Its goal is to improve the general welfare of the community through orderly development. Periodic review of the proposals contained in the Plan should be undertaken so that changing future conditions will not be overlooked.

The Land Use Plan is based on the concept of limiting growth to areas where municipal services can best be provided at the least cost to the taxpayer. By concentrating development in those areas shown on the Land Use Plan, it should be possible to coordinate township and city services and other community services. Locating development areas on or near the major roads will improve circulation and cause less congestion in the future. Consolidated development makes more economical use of fire protection, transportation, recreation, and school facilities.

In addition, concentrating development can help preserve agricultural lands and other natural resources. By planning for a variety of land uses (agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and public) in a logical pattern of development, the Township will become a more balanced and desirable place in which to live, work, farm, and enjoy recreational opportunities.

B. GENERAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

The following is a brief description of the general land use categories shown in the Land Use Plan:

Agricultural and Rural Residential areas are planned for most of the Township. These are proposed as very low density areas. These areas will be the last served by utilities or other community facilities. Included in this category would be farms, woodlots, and residential development on larger parcels of land. The concept for these areas is to protect and preserve those lands needed for farming or residential use from urban development and also to avoid unnecessary public expenditures caused by sprawling development. Soil maps, aerial photographs, existing land uses and plat maps were used as basic information in identifying agricultural areas to be preserved.

Commercial areas are sparse. Presently being used for these purposes. There is no additional demand anticipated for these uses in the foreseeable future.

Industrial areas are not yet zoned within the Township.

Public and Semi-Public Land Uses: Include Cemeteries, park, nature center, and churches. These land uses are not separately identified on the map.

Recreational: Park, Nature Center, and State Land. See Page 8 (F. Parks and Recreation)

C. LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Carrying out the Plan is of as much importance as the Master Land Use Plan itself. The basic function of planning is to prepare a general plan for future development and then to take the necessary steps to bring the plan to realization.

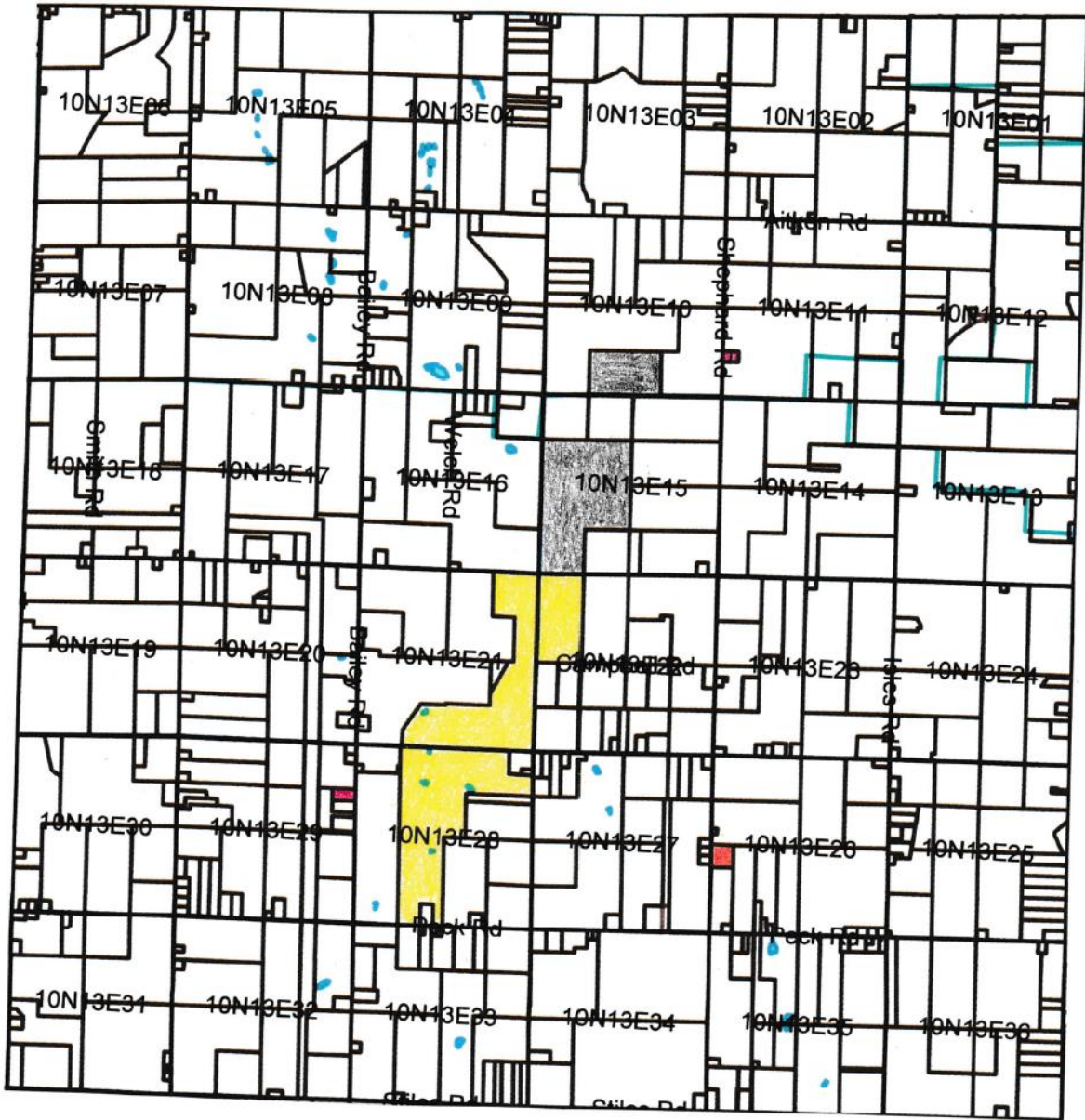
The implementation of the Plan will be carried out mainly through the following three processes:

1. Regulation of the use and development of property pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, Sanilac County Airport Zoning Ordinance per Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Act 10 of 2006, and other Township ordinances.
2. Provision by the Township and County of public improvements and public services in coordination with the Plan.
3. Public understanding and acceptance of the Plan.

It is intended that future decisions by the Flynn Township Board, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals will be consistent with this Plan.

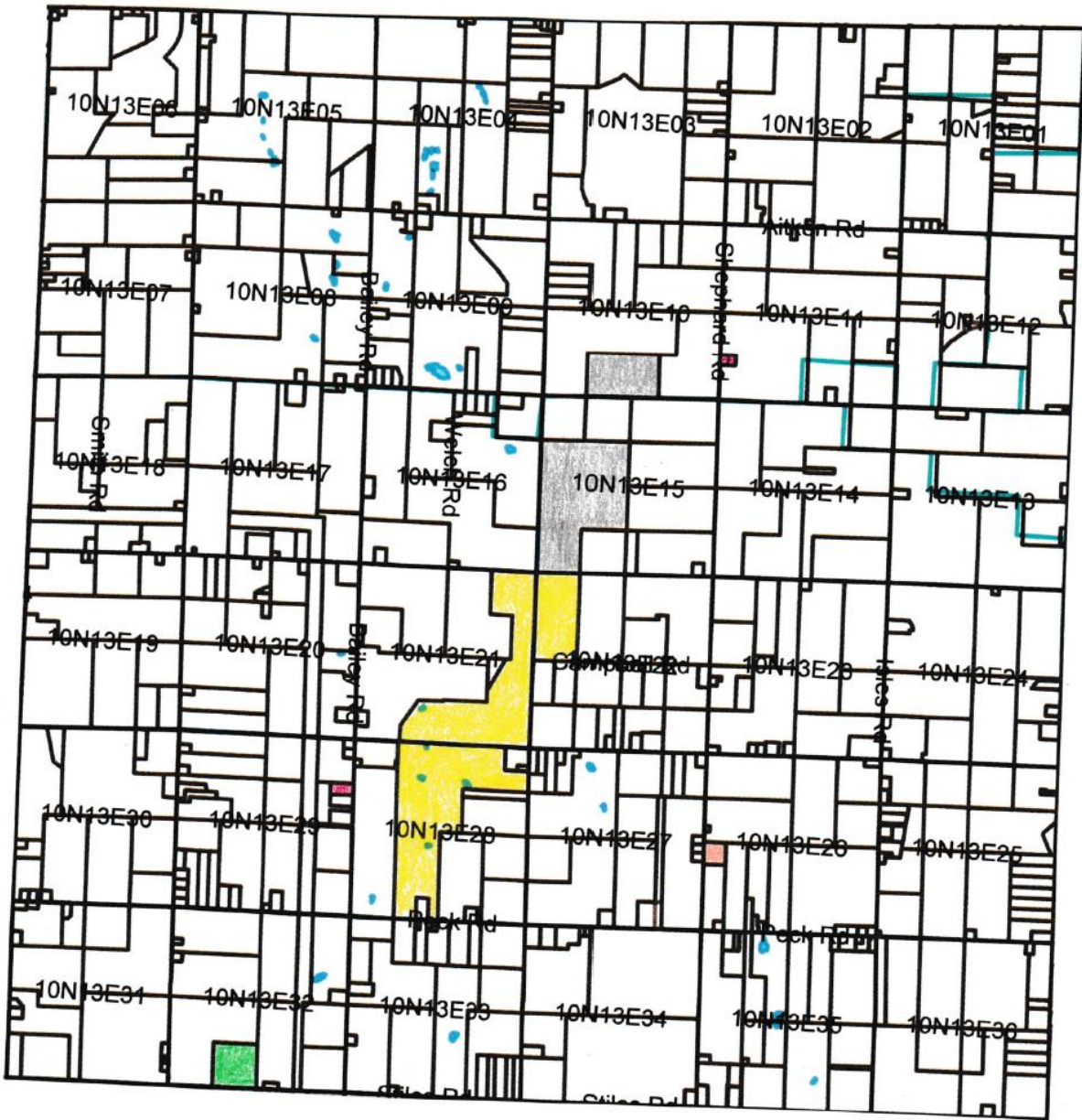
VI. MAPS







FLYNN TOWNSHIP EXISTING LAND USE MAP



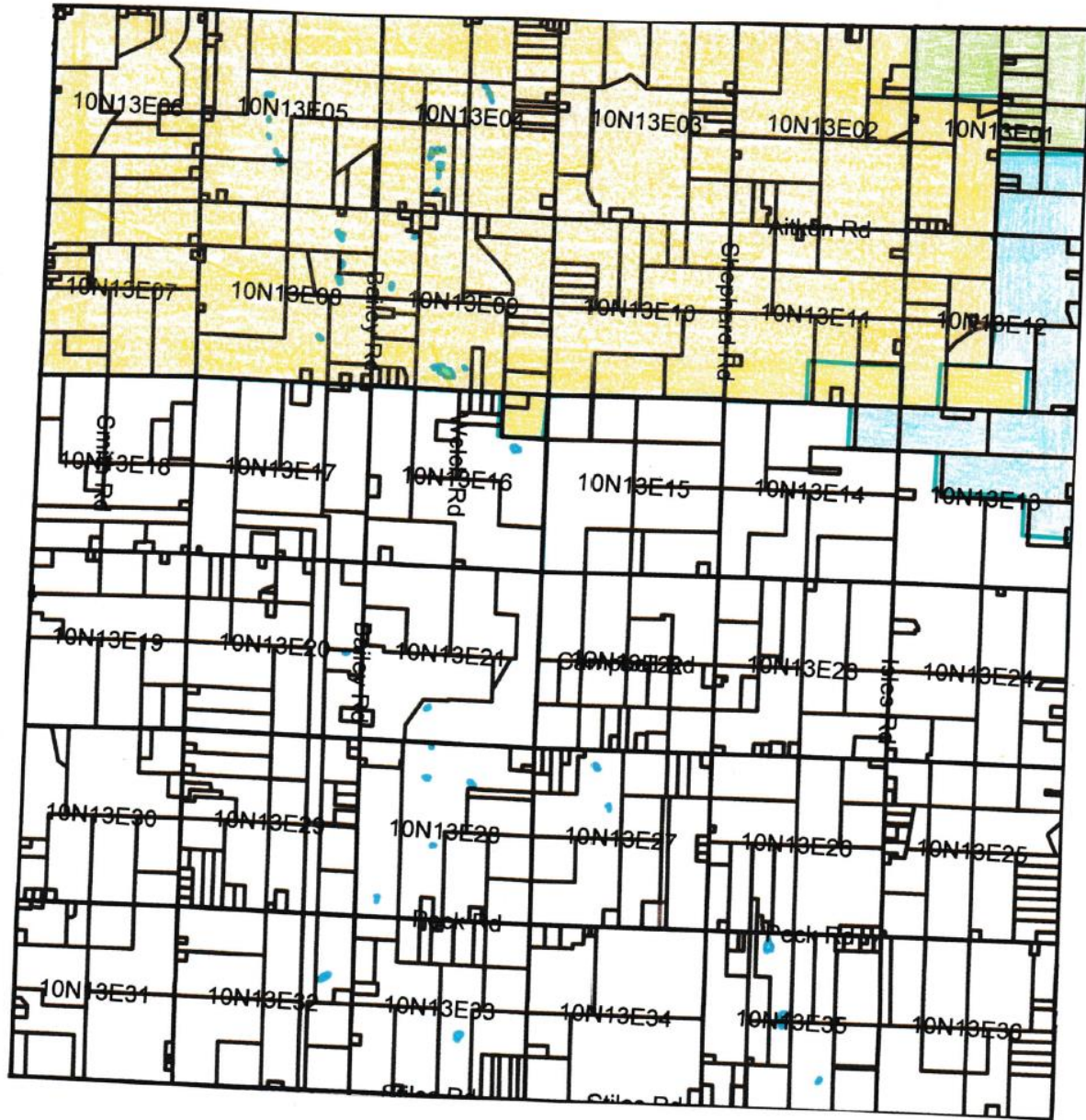
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| — AGRICULTURAL-RESIDENTIAL | — NATURE CENTER |
| — COMMERCIAL | — PARK |
| — INDUSTRIAL | — STATE LAND |




FLYNN TOWNSHIP FUTURE LAND USE MAP




- | | |
|--|---|
|  — AGRICULTURAL-RESIDENTIAL |  — NATURE CENTER |
|  — COMMERCIAL |  — PARK |
|  — INDUSTRIAL |  — STATE LAND |

FLYNN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAP



-  — BROWN CITY
-  — MARLETTE
-  — PECK

-  — SANDUSKY