

Future Land Use Categories

Blaine Township envisions its future land use patterns to follow a residential density pattern that congregates higher density residential development around and next to the Lower and Upper Herring Lakes while dissipating in density further away from the lakes. Blaine Township has six future land use categories, three of which are related to preserving the natural resource assets of the township and three of which focus on residential development. The future land use categories are as follows:

Residential High Density
Residential Medium Density
Residential Low Density
Rural Medium Density
Rural Low Density
Nature Preserve

There are only three main types of uses Blaine Township is focused on within these six categories: passive and active recreation, residential, and agriculture-related. The difference is the density and intensity of these uses. In addition, the “how” development of the uses occurs is very important to preserving rural scenic character.

Residential High Density

Located around the Lower and Upper Herring Lakes, the Residential High Density area of Blaine Township is planned to have the highest density in terms of houses. Small seasonal and year-round houses are found. We expect some additional residential development around Upper and Lower Herring Lakes, along small sections of Herring Creek between the lakes and along several of the county and township roads in the area will occur. We expect that the character of the residential development will continue to be defined by small, lakefront cottages. This form of land development will continue due to the desire to own lake frontage. However, attempts to acquire property in order to construct larger residential units should be actively managed by the township. Therefore, careful consideration when developing land along lakes and streams warrants thoughtful consideration of existing character of the area, densities, setbacks, and other dimensional requirements as well as environmental protection measures. Well and septic siting and integrity are key issues in the development of the properties surrounding the Lower and Upper Herring Lakes and Herring Creek.

Residential Medium Density

Located around the Lower and Upper Herring Lakes, the Residential Medium Density area of Blaine Township may be platted subdivisions planned to have moderate density with larger houses, possibly full time residents. The intent of Medium Density Residential is to establish standards for the development of larger homes for residential uses within the Township. This district also includes existing

one-family developments within the Township which have similar lot area and character, as well as areas with which such development appears likely and desirable.

Residential Low Density

Residential Low Density is established to accommodate the development of residential properties emphasizing a semi-rural character within the following general areas of the Township: (1) Much of this district parallels the shores of lakes but is inland of the higher density areas. Typically, the land rises from the lake plane to the higher ridges above and will likely never be provided with public services including water and sewer. (2) This district also includes existing one-family developments within the Township which have a similar lot area and character, as well as areas within which such development appears likely and desirable. Residential low density lot sizes are typically larger.

Rural Medium Density

The Rural Medium Density areas of the Township straddle the M-22 corridor, between the Upper and Lower Herring Lakes, and the north side of Herron Road, planned for rural medium density development. Medium density rural development will continue to be the dominant land use. Since some of this area fronts the M-22 corridor, careful consideration to maintaining the scenic rural character along the transportation corridor is important. Limiting the number of access points to M-22, use of vegetative screening, and placing homes in the rear of the lots are a few important land development techniques utilized in this area.

Rural Low Density

At the lowest density in the township, Rural Low Density areas are where farms and large lot residential developments are found. This area is intended to recognize the unique and scenic rural character of Blaine Township by encouraging active and inactive agricultural activities such as fallow fields, farms, and orchards, in addition to low density residential development. As 35% of the land in Blaine Township is farmland, a priority goal is to preserve, enhance and stabilize the land now used for farming, forestry, large-acreage residential and other open space uses. We recognize that it is important to establish large acreage holdings and those current owners deem such holdings desirable and appropriate. Consideration of the relationship between the agricultural community and residential landowners must be monitored to ensure that the important economic contribution of farming is supported while at the same time balancing the residential property owners' perspective. Using a cluster development pattern would allow for some continued residential development with the remaining portion of the lot left in an agricultural or open space easement for future protection. Other policies that would be preferred include siting requirements for new residential development, open space requirements, and incentives for development that meet township farmland vitality policies.

Nature Preserve

This category includes land that is owned outright by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy or Benzie County Conservation District. The Nature Preserve District is intended to recognize these lands as a protected area of importance for wildlife, flora, fauna, or features of geological or other special interest. These areas are open to the public and are reserved and managed for conservation. These conservation groups may develop a system of trails for public use or encourage other forms of public use according to the conservation goals of this organization. The Township does not expect any residential development in these areas.