

MASTER PLAN

BUEL TOWNSHIP

BUEL TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

1986

Revised 2018

BUEL TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

TOWNSHIP BOARD

Supervisor:	Scott Straffon
Clerk:	Lisa Wood
Treasurer:	Kim Stencil
Trustee:	Jeff Gordon
Trustee:	Mark Stencil

TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Chairman:	Carl Gordon
Vice Chairman:	Dennis McIntire
Secretary:	Judy Decker
Members:	Mark Vincent
	Eric West
	Greg Holbrook
	Jeff Gordon

Planning Advisor/Attorney: Brian M. Garner
 bmgarner@taylorbutterfield.com

Adopted by Township Planning Commission:	, 2018
Approved by County Planning Commission:	, 2018
Accepted by Buel Township Board:	, 2018

RESOURCE MATERIALS

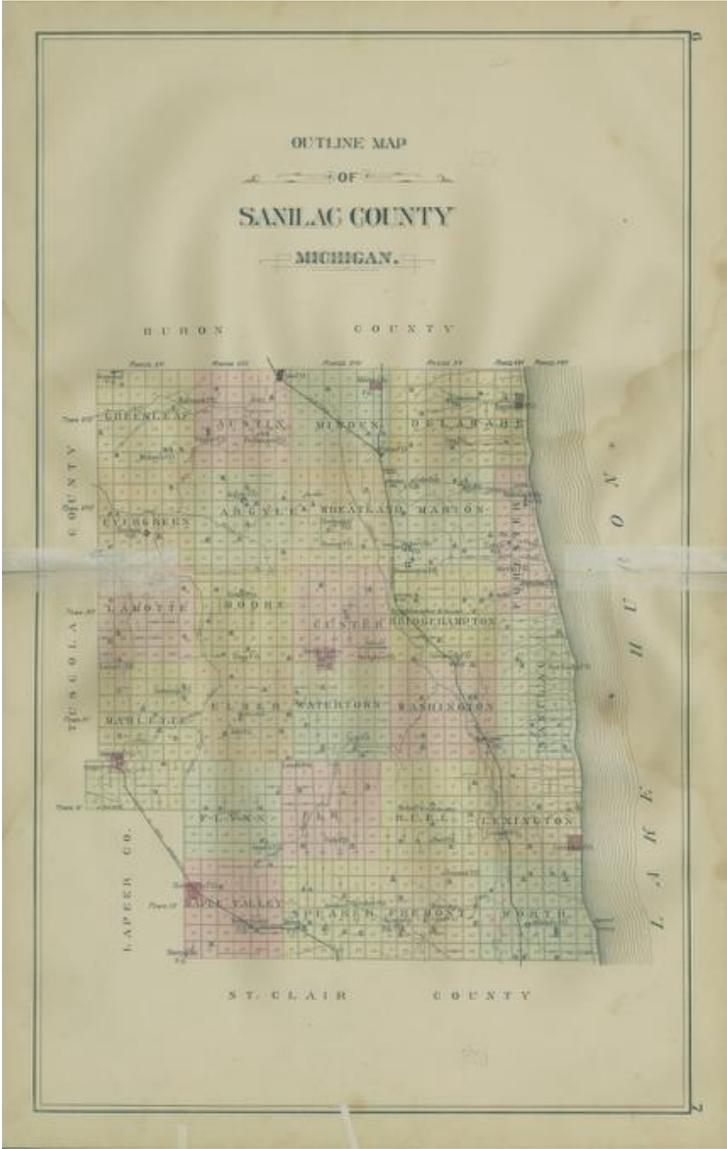
Buel Township Assessment Records (1985)
Buel Township Planning Commission Land Use Inventory (1985)
Buel Township Zoning Ordinance
Elk Township Land Use Plan (1983)
Elk Township Zoning Ordinance
Fremont Township Zoning Ordinance (2016)
Fremont Township Master Plan (2015)
Overall Economic Development Plan for Sanilac County (1979)
Sanilac County Development Objectives Report (ECMPOC) (1974)
Sanilac County Drain Commissioner Records (1984)
Sanilac County Environmental Features Report (ECMPDC) (1973)
Sanilac County Equalization Report (1984)
Sanilac County Physical Features Report (1973)
Sanilac County Register of Deeds Records (1984)
Soil Survey of Sanilac County (1961)
Watertown Township Master Plan (1984)
Watertown Township Zoning Ordinance (1985)
U.S. Census Data (2010)
Current and Old Plat Maps

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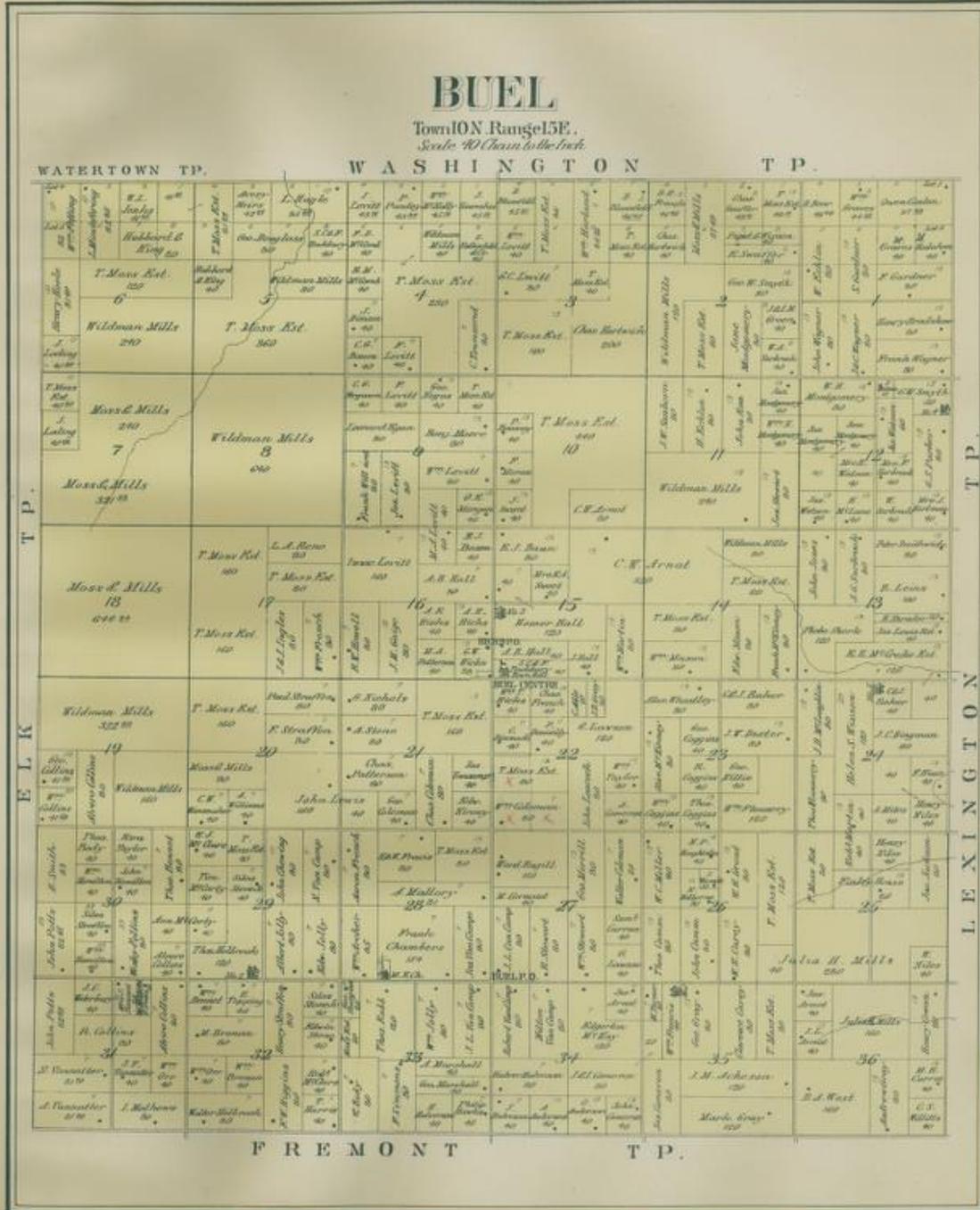
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SECTION 1: HISTORY

Sanilac County



According to the 1850 census, only three townships existed in Sanilac County: Sanilac, Lexington, and Worth. Worth and Lexington Townships were close to their present size, and Sanilac Township included the rest of the territory in Sanilac and Huron Counties. By 1860, the townships of Fremont, Speaker, Maple Valley, Buel, Elk, Washington, Marlette, Bridgehampton, Forester, and Austin had been organized. Buel is located west of Elk, south of Washington, east of Lexington, and north Fremont.



Buel Township

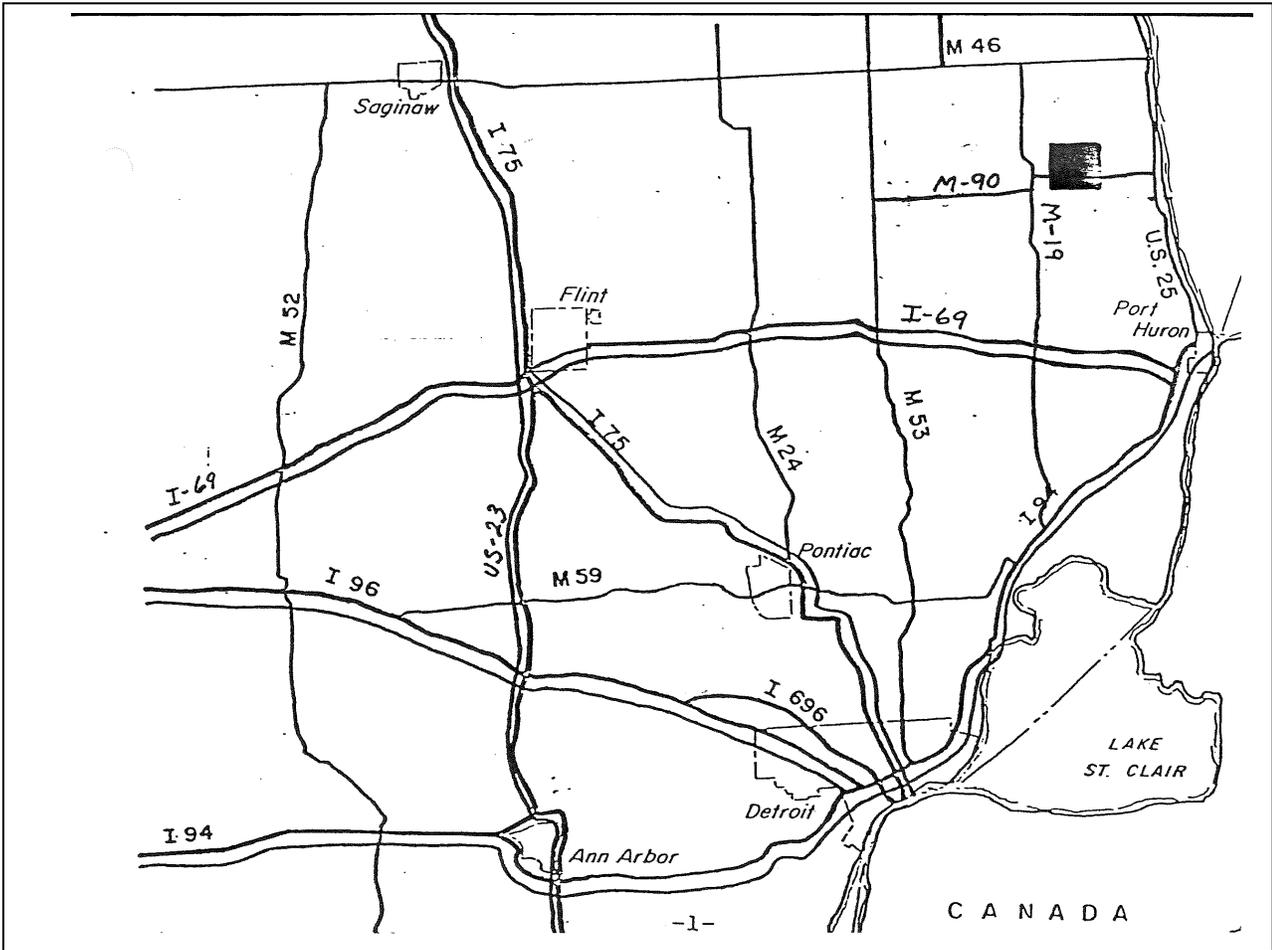
Political unrest in Ontario and the promise of jobs in the lumber mills brought many people to Sanilac County. These settlers were of Scotch, Irish, and English nationalities. Buel Township was first settled by Ezra Van Camp in 1852. However, Ezra was murdered thirteen years later, in 1865, by a man named Rowdy Reed. Ezra was found with a wagon wheel over his throat or chest. For years everyone thought it was an accident, but Rowdy finally confessed to killing Ezra after he killed someone else.

Buel Township grew quite rapidly after it was first settled in 1852. Buel Township grew large enough to open its first post office in 1856. The post office was closed just five years later in May 1861; however, it was later reopened from November 1867 until July 1901. This rural post office was named after a farmer, George W. Hicks, who served as the first Postmaster from September 6, 1893 until January 9, 1895. Other notable officials in Buel Township include: Andrew Grey who served as the Township Supervisor in 1864, John Lewis who served as the Township Supervisor in 1878, and Homer Hall who served as the Township Clerk in 1877. According to the 1880 (693 residents) census and 1890 (853 residents) census, the population in Buel Township grew by 23.1% in those ten short years.

SECTION 2: EXISTING LAND USE

Regional Location

Buel Township comprises approximately 37.5 square miles of area located in the south-central portion of Sanilac County. The Village of Peck is immediately west of the Township and the City of Croswell is just east of the Township. It is approximately 75 miles north of the City of Detroit via M-19 and I-94 and approximately 25 miles northwest of the City of Port Huron via M-90 and M-25. Access to the Interstate Highway 69 is about 30 miles away via M-19.



Land Uses

Existing land use within the Township has been cataloged by the Planning Commission Members. The data was obtained by means of a field survey of the entire Township. The land use classifications, correlate with proposed zoning district classification, together with an additional classification for public and semi-public uses. The land use classifications are as follows:

Public and Semi-Public Uses

Agricultural

Residential (Houses and Manufactured Homes)

Commercial

Industrial

The inventory of existing land uses as shown on the following two maps was compiled in 1985. The maps identify areas of the Township in which the particular land uses occur and the specific locations of certain structures. The first map identifies residential uses. The second map locates commercial and industrial development, as well as public and semi-public land uses.

Agricultural land uses have not been specified on the maps due to the fact that agriculture occupies virtually the entire Township, with the exception of the sites which have been designated for other buildings. Individual farm houses have been shown but other agricultural structures have been omitted from the maps due to the very large number of buildings involved. Further detail as to the agricultural uses within the Township will be contained in Section 3.

Existing Land Uses

Single family residential uses in Buel Township are generally found on the frontage of section-line roads, particularly certain paved roads—Peck, Kilgore, Hall, and Marlette. Small

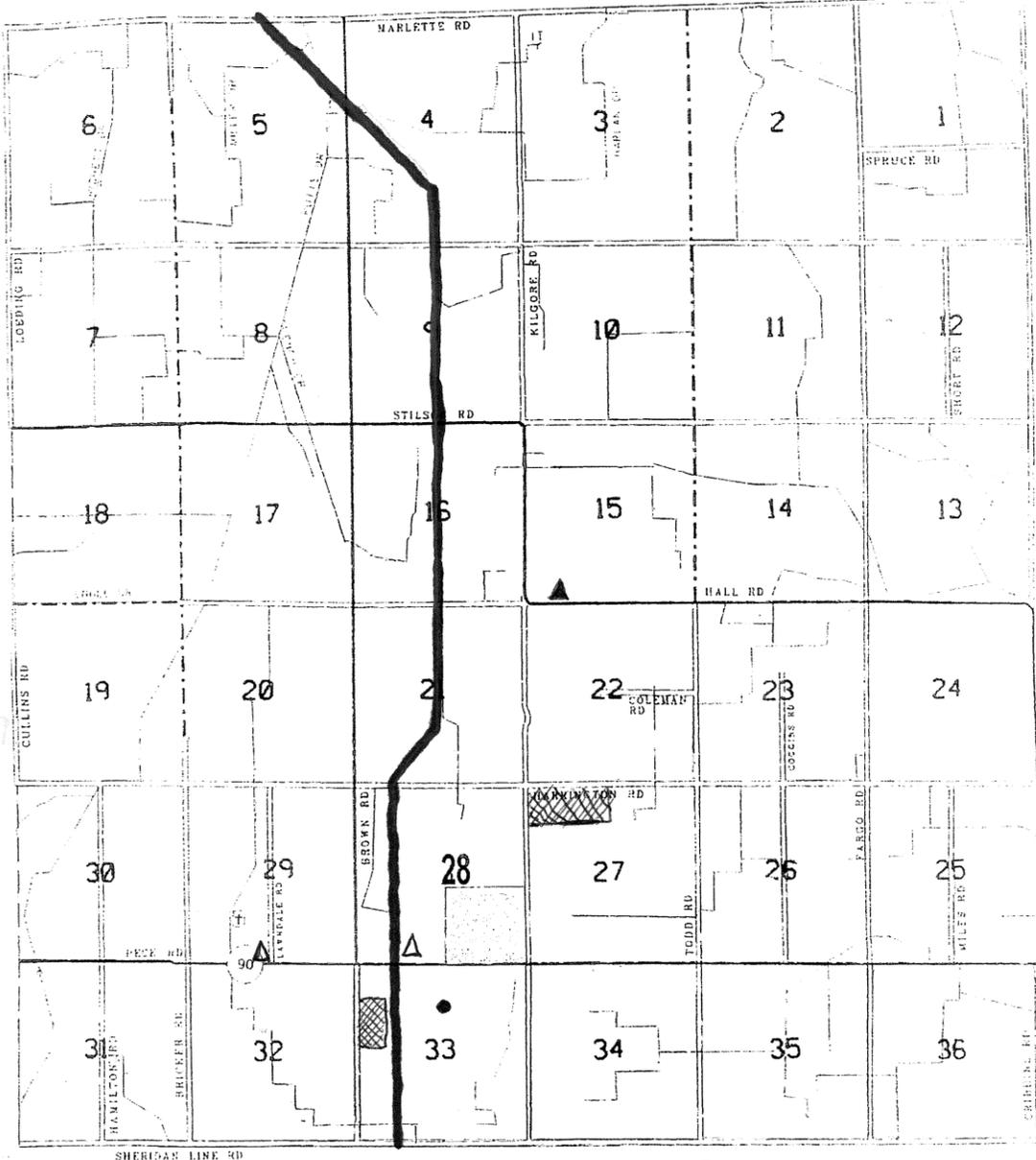
property divisions for residential development also exist along Hamilton, Short, Fargo, Harrington, and Wagner Roads.

There are no apartments in the Township. There is one mobile home/manufactured home park in the Township. However, there are a number of manufactured homes scattered throughout the Township on individual parcels.

Commercial and industrial land uses are located in the southern one-third of the Township, primarily in the vicinity of M-90, Harrington, and Wagner Roads. A few other commercial-industrial uses, primarily gravel pits, exist in the township.

The public and semi-public category of land use contains several different uses. Government owned and operated land uses are the Township Hall on Hall Road. Semi-public land uses include the Buel Methodist Church on M-90, the Potter house Church on M-90, and the federally operated V.O.R. station, also on M-90. The V.O.R. station provides airplane guidance signals.

As indicated previously, the vast bulk of the Township is made up of agricultural land. Much of that land is considered “prime” farmland and much of it is currently enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program pursuant to the Public Act 116 of 1974. The productive quality of the land and its present use will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections. Most of the land is used for traditional field crops and livestock operations.



BUEL TOWNSHIP MAP

- ▲ TOWNSHIP HALL
- △ CHURCH
- V.O.R. (OMNI)
- ▨ GRAVEL PIT
- I.T.C. TRANSMISSION LINE

SECTION 3: SOIL RESOURCES

Soils

One of the major factors affecting growth and planning for Buel Township is the soil. The soil survey for Sanilac County, prepared in 1961 and supplemented in 1976, provides detailed information as to the soil types and suitabilities. The part of the survey dealing with Buel Township has been analyzed and the information has been assembled as to the suitability of the various general soil types for certain specific uses. The general soil association map of the Township, which follows, is useful in understanding the relative areas of soil groups on an overall Township scale. Soils in different parts of the Township can be compared and the areas most suitable for certain types of development can be identified. This general soil map is particularly useful for overall land use planning programs. Agricultural programs for preservation or development as well as proposed commercial, residential or highway developments can be better evaluated using this map. The soil associations found in Buel Township and the general physical qualities of the soils involved in each association are described as follows:

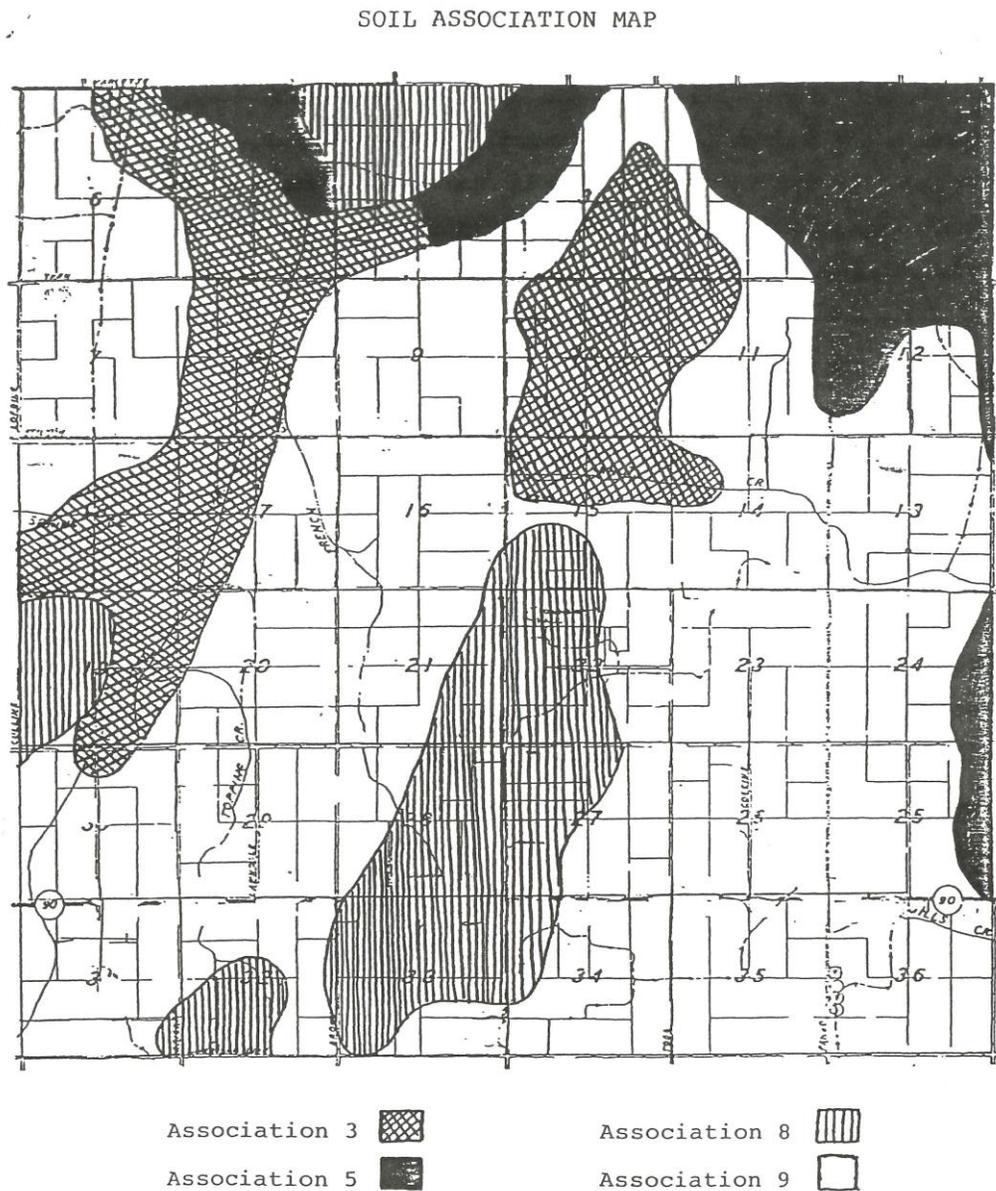
Association 3: Peat-muck. Level; very poorly drained; black to dark grayish-brown, extremely acid to mildly alkaline.

Association 5: London-Iosco-Parkhill. Nearly level; very poorly to imperfectly drained; dark grayish-brown to black loamy sands and clay loams; medium acid to mildly alkaline.

Association 8: Montcalm-McBride-Rubicon. Undulating to hilly; well-drained; pale brown to very dark grayish-brown to black; loamy sands, sandy loams, and sands; strongly to slightly acid.

Association 9: Parkhill-Capac. Nearly level to undulating; very poorly drained to imperfectly drained; dark grayish-brown to nearly black loams and clay loams; neutral to mildly alkaline.

The locations of the above described soil associations are clearly shown on the map below..



Drainage

Buel Township lies within two watersheds. Most of the westerly portion of the Township lies within the Elk Creek drainage basin. The remainder of the Township, constituting about 60% of the Township area, is contained within the Black River watershed.

The Township has an extensive system of agricultural drains under the jurisdiction of the Sanilac County Drain Commissioner. Most of the farmland in the Township has been tiled for drainage and connected into these public drains.

The west side of the Township is serviced primarily by the Potts Drain. This drain traverses the west side of the Township from the south to north. Lesser drains in this part of the Township are the Hunt, Seymour, Archer, Topping, Thomas, Wannamaker, French, Engel, Geding, Rickett, Maedel, Seifert, Elk and Buel, Miller, Baum, and Roskey Drains. The primary drains in the eastern portion of the Township are the Mills, McClelland, Arnot, and Papst Drains. Also serving this portion of the Township are the Imlay, Taylor, Smith, Watson, Dutchman Creek, Garland, Wager, and Vincient Drains.

While the existing drainage system has done a good job in providing improved agricultural drainage, it has contributed to erosion and silting. While the creation of no new drains is anticipated, there needs to be a continuous effort to maintain and improve the existing drains. The existing drains are shown on the drain map on the following page.

ESTABLISHED PUBLIC DRAINS



- | | | | |
|----|------------------|-----|----------------------|
| ①. | Potts Drain | ①6. | Baum Drain |
| ②. | Thomas Drain | ①7. | Roskey Drain |
| ③. | Hunt Drain | ①8. | Mills Drain |
| ④. | Wannamaker Drain | ①9. | McClelland Drain |
| ⑤. | Topping Drain | ②0. | Imlay Drain |
| ⑥. | Archer Drain | ②1. | Taylor Drain |
| ⑦. | French Drain | ②2. | Arnot Drain |
| ⑧. | Seymour Drain | ②3. | Watson Drain |
| ⑨. | Engel Drain | ②4. | Smith Drain |
| ⑩. | Geding Drain | ②5. | Dutchman Creek Drain |
| ⑪. | Rickett Drain | ②6. | Wager Drain |
| ⑫. | Maedel Drain | ②7. | Papst Drain |
| ⑬. | Seifert Drain | ②8. | Vincent Drain |
| ⑭. | Elk & Buel Drain | ②9. | Garland Drain |
| ⑮. | Miller Drain | | |

Agriculture

The productive soils of Buel Township have resulted in substantial agricultural activity. Without a doubt, agriculture is the most significant economic activity in the area. It is also the most significant use of land in the Township.

As can be seen on the following map, most of the Township can be properly designated as prime farmland. Michigan State University has mapped Sanilac County as to location of prime farmland and unique farmland. Approximately 80% of the 23,900 acres of land in Buel Township is rated as being prime farmland. Please refer to the map on the following page.

Due to the highly productive land within the Township, it is a virtual certainty that agriculture will remain the primary industry for the foreseeable future. In addition to the obvious incentive to keep the productive land in agricultural use, there is also a legal obligation imposed on much of the farmland within Buel Township. That legal obligation consists of the farmland agreements entered into pursuant to Public Act 116 of 1974, known as the Farmland Preservation Act. In exchange for certain property tax benefits, the participating land owners have entered into the binding deed restrictions which prohibit the non-agricultural development of the property for ten or more years. The extensive participation in this program will further insure that the prime Buel Township farmland will remain available for agricultural production.

SECTION 4: POPULATION

Past Population Data

In order to do intelligent long-range planning, one of the key considerations is to be able to anticipate population size. In determining the likely future population, one of the most reliable pieces of evidence is the past population growth trend. Fortunately, we have very accurate historical figures as to population due to the decennial U.S. Census.

The following table contains the population growth figures for Buel Township, the surrounding townships, and Sanilac County as a whole.

Municipality	1980	1990	Growth	2000	Growth	2010	Growth
Buel Township	890	844	-5.2%	1,237	46.6%	1,265	2.3%
Elk Township	1,535	1,465	-4.6%	1,584	8.1%	1,526	-3.7%
Fremont Township	847	787	-7.1%	913	16.0%	1,051	15.1%
Lexington Township	2,958	3,028	2.4%	3,688	21.8%	3,658	-0.8%
Washington Township	1,525	1,557	2.1%	1,636	2.1%	1,659	1.4%
Watertown Township	1,346	1,235	-8.2%	1,376	11.4%	1,320	-4.1%
Sanilac County	40,789	39,928	-2.1%	44,547	11.6%	43,114	-3.2%

The overall population of Sanilac County, in 2010, has grown about 5.7% since the 1980 census. The Buel Township population increased by approximately 42.1% during that same period. From 1980 to 2010, Buel Township grew at a rate of a little over seven times that of Sanilac County as a whole.

Population Projection

The following table contains the United States Census Bureau population estimates for 2016:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Growth</u>	<u>2016 Estimate</u>	<u>Estimated Growth</u>
Buel Township	890	844	1,237	1,265	2.3%	1,258	-0.6%
Sanilac County	40,789	39,928	44,547	43,114	-3.2%	41,761	-3.1%

The overall population of Buel Township is estimated to have grown about 41.3% over the past thirty-six years. However, it appears to have decreased by about 0.6% from 2010 to 2016.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1980</u>
Sanilac County (TOWNSHIPS)	43,114	44,547	39,928	40,789
Argyle Township	759	770	820	912
Austin Township	665	673	639	802
Bridgehampton Township	854	911	845	974
Buel Township	1,265	1,237	844	890
Custer Township	1,006	1,036	1,018	1,122
Delaware Township	856	930	961	1,071
Elk Township	1,526	1,584	1,465	1,535
Elmer Township	804	790	774	829
Evergreen Township	924	995	907	1,042
Flynn Township	1,050	1,040	914	963
Forester Township	1,011	1,108	919	958
Fremont Township	1,051	913	787	847
Greenleaf Township	781	804	667	746
Lamotte Township	919	981	949	1,065
Lexington Township	3,658	3,688	3,028	2,958
Maple Valley Township	1,221	1,114	1,022	1,009
Marion Township	1,659	1,803	1,831	1,741
Marlette Township	1,763	2,051	1,910	2,029
Minden Township	545	633	670	710
Moore Township	1,203	1,262	1,238	1,318
Sanilac Township	2,431	2,609	2,362	2,284
Speaker Township	1,483	1,408	1,171	1,265
Washington Township	1,659	1,636	1,557	1,525
Watertown Township	1,320	1,376	1,235	1,346
Wheatland Township	488	530	513	582
Worth Township	3,894	4,021	3,146	3,058

VILLAGES

Applegate	248	287	297	257
Carsonville	527	502	583	622
Deckerville	830	944	1,015	887
Forestville	136	127	153	159
Lexington	1,178	1,104	779	765
Melvin	180	160	148	171
Minden City	197	242	233	284
Peck	632	599	558	606
Port Sanilac	623	658	656	598

CITIES

Brown City	1,316	1,328	1,244	1,158
Croswell	2,447	2,467	2,174	2,073
Marlette	1,875	2,104	1,924	1,761
Sandusky	2,679	2,745	2,403	2,216

Square Miles: 961**Acres: 615,040****2015 Taxable Valuation: 1,539,732,404**

SECTION 5: PUBLIC SERVICES

In doing long range planning for the Township, one of the most important requirements is to provide adequate public services. The public services available to the residents of Buel Township are provided by a number of local government agencies and private enterprises. The available services include roads, drainage, fire protection, police protection, health care services, libraries, parks, garbage collection and education. These specific services are in addition to the general administrative services provided directly by Buel Township, such as ordinance enforcement, property tax administration, and general government.

Roads

Buel Township is served by state Highway M-90, which crosses the Township from east to west. This highway provides access to Highways M-25 and M-19. Both of these highways in turn provide direct access to I-69 to the south.

Other than the state highway, there are only a few paved roads in the Township. These are Marlette, Stilson, Hall, Brown, Kilgore, Todd, and Wagner Roads. None of these roads are paved for the entire distance across the Township. However, Brown Road is paved for five miles extending north from M-90 to Marlette Road. Also, the combination of Stilson, Kilgore, and Hall Roads provides a paved route east and west across the center of the Township.

The approximately 58 miles of local gravel roads within the township are in as good condition as most gravel roads in other parts of the County. Buel Township has spent considerable sums in maintaining and improving these roads. The Township also expends funds for brush spraying and cutting, brining, mowing, and graveling. The Township also participates in roadside ditching agreements in which the cost of ditching improvements are divided between the Sanilac County Road Commission, the Township, and the property owner. The Township also participates in the installation and improvement of bridges.

Fire Protection

Buel Township provides fire protection to its citizens by contracting with Croswell, Peck, and Applegate. The City of Croswell provides fire protection services to the eastern part of the Township. Peck serves the western part of the Township. Applegate provides fire protection for the northern area. Mutual aid agreements also insure that other surrounding fire departments would be available for assistance in case of major fires. Due to the small population and tax base of the township, it is unlikely that the Township would consider forming its own fire department in the foreseeable future.

Police Protection

Buel Township is served by the Sanilac County Sheriff's Department and the State Police. The Sanilac County Sheriff's Department is headquartered in the City of Sandusky. The Peck and Croswell police departments are available to respond to calls within the Township when dispatched by the Sheriff's Department. It is anticipated that the existing police agencies will be able to provide adequate police service for the Township for the time being. As is the case with most general law townships, Buel Township does not directly employ any police officers and it is not anticipated that any Township police department is going to be created.

Health Care Services

The primary health care facilities for the residents of Buel Township are the McKenzie Memorial Hospital in Sandusky, the Port Huron Hospitals, and the Marlette Regional Hospital.

Ambulance service for the Township is provided through the City of Croswell. The Township makes occasional contributions to help purchase new equipment. Residents served by the ambulance are charged a fee for service. The Township assists in collecting those fees from residents who are delinquent. By participating in the ambulance financing, the Buel Township Board guarantees its residents adequate ambulance service.

Supporting medical services are also provided by the County of Sanilac. The County operates a medical care facility, and the County Health Department, in the City of Sandusky. The State operates a mental health facility, which is also located in the City of Sandusky.

Public Parks

Public parks are provided as a result of County taxes being paid by the residents of Buel Township. These taxes support county parks which may be used by Buel Township residents. In addition, the State of Michigan operates the Minden City State Game Area and Lakeport State Park, both of which are nearby.

City and Village parks in Croswell, Peck, and Lexington provide additional recreational facilities to Township residents.

Sanitation

Garbage collection within Buel Township is provided by Knox Disposal, Waste Management, and Jeff Disposal, which are private businesses. Individual residents can contract with either operator for garbage pick-up at their residences. In addition, Waste Management, in adjacent Washington Township, accepts trash brought by Township residents on a fee basis. Due to the availability of private collection, Waste Management, and landfill facilities, and due to the relatively low density of the Township population, there appears to be no immediate need for Township involvement in a solid waste disposal operation.

At present, all of the sewer service in Buel Township is provided by private septic systems. Development based on septic systems is therefore completely dependent upon county health department approval after on-site soil testing.

There is no municipal water system within the Township. There is also no evidence of any need for such a system. Residences and business within the Township are being adequately served by private wells.

Drainage within the Township is being provided by cooperation between the Sanilac County Drain Commissioner and the Buel Township Board. The extensive drainage system within the Township has been previously outlined in Section 2 of this document.

Education

Buel Township is served by four school districts. These districts (Crowell-Lexington, Peck, Carsonville-Port Sanilac, and Sandusky) provide kindergarten through 12th grade education. Crowell-Lexington serves the eastern part of the Township. Peck serves the western part of the Township. The Sandusky and Carsonville-Port Sanilac districts serve only a very few properties in the northern portion of the Township. Also available to the residents of Buel Township is the Sanilac Career Center located in Elk Township.

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY GOALS

Community goals formulated by the Planning Commission are the key to the planning process. These goals should be the framework for both public and private decision making. In an attempt to accomplish this purpose, the Planning Commission has established the general goals described below. It should be remembered that this determination has been made in 2018 and should be revised as changes occur within the Township in future years.

General Development Goals

1. Encourage major development to occur in areas where adequate road access and adequate septic facilities can be provided.
2. Discourage scattered development which creates higher governmental service costs and results in conflicts between land issues.
3. Encourage the use of lands for the particular purposes for which they are best suited.
4. Encourage development to occur in ways which have the least adverse effect on the natural environment.

Agricultural Goals

1. The Township should identify its prime agricultural lands which need to be preserved in order to protect the agricultural base of the Township.
2. The Township should continue to encourage participation in the Farmland Preservation Program (P.A. 116 of 1974) in order to prevent its agricultural economy from being taxed away.

3. The Township should adopt appropriate zoning ordinance provisions to protect prime farmland from indiscriminate development.

Housing Goals

1. The Township should utilize the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance to encourage appropriate development of housing in all price ranges.
2. The Township should continue to insist upon building inspections and enforcement to insure quality construction of housing.
3. The Township should encourage housing development in areas where adequate septic systems can be installed, and adequate road facilities exist.

Commercial and Industrial Goals

1. The Township should discourage spot zoning and instead encourage concentration of commercial development in appropriate locations.
2. The Township should reserve areas for industrial and commercial development which are in close proximity to a class A road (M-90 and Todd Road).
3. The Township should select commercial and industrial areas which can be appropriately buffered from nearby residential or agricultural land uses.
4. The Township should encourage sufficient industrial development to provide jobs for the youth of the community.
5. The Township should utilize site plan review powers through its planning commission in order to guarantee that commercial and industrial development will allow for adequate parking and appropriate screening from residential areas.

Community Facilities Goals

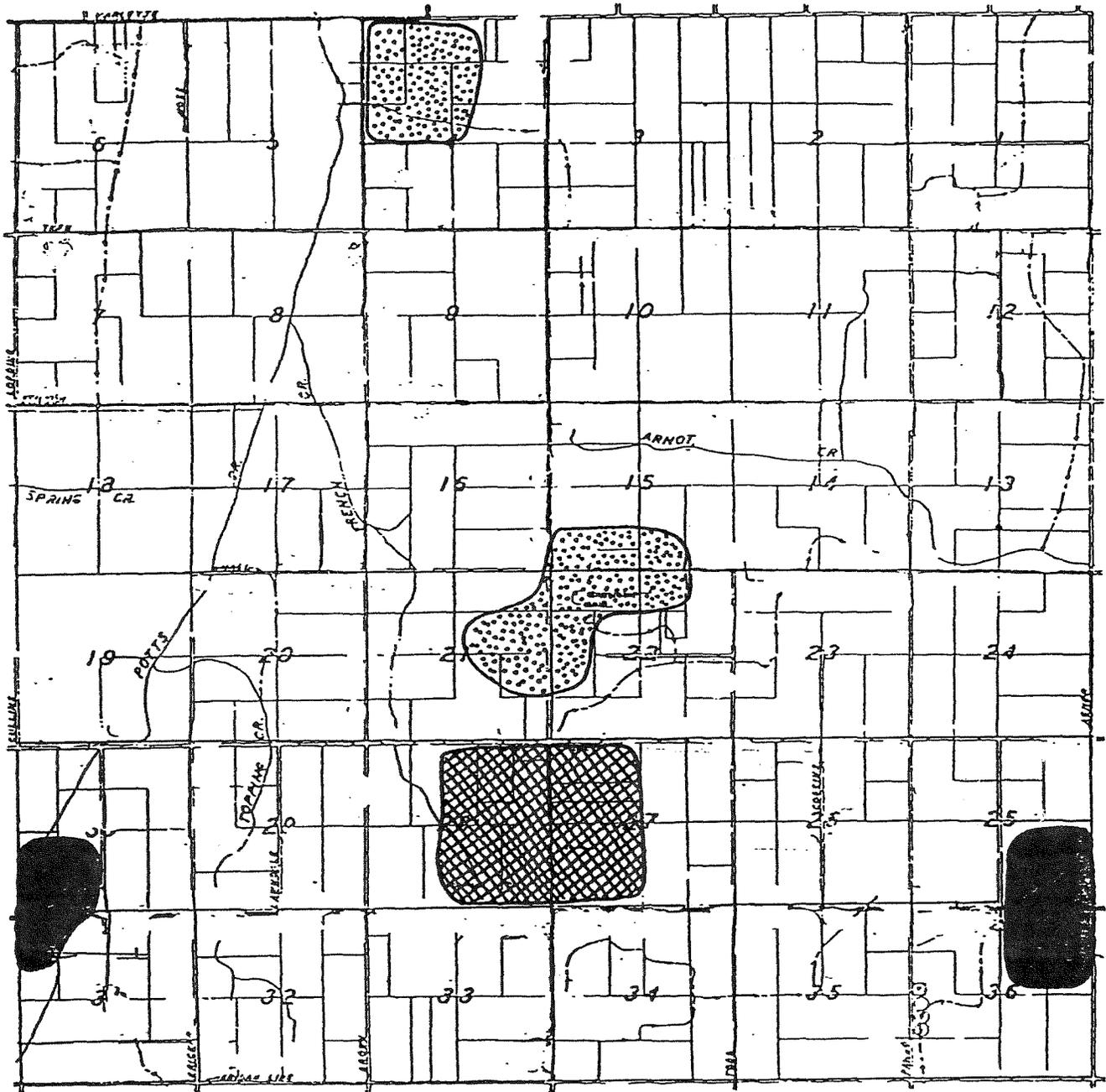
1. The Township should continue its efforts to improve and properly maintain the Township road systems.
2. The Township should continue to provide adequate agricultural drainage through cooperation with the County Drain Commissioner.
3. The Township should continue to work with Croswell, Peck, and Applegate to provide park, library, and fire protection services for the area.
4. The Township should continue cooperative efforts with the City of Croswell in order to provide needed ambulance service.

SECTION 7: LAND USE PLAN

The following is a brief description of the general land use categories shown on the Land Use Map on the next page.

1. **Agricultural** designated land includes most of the Township. This is proposed as a very low density population area. It is intended to reserve these areas for residences on acreage parcels, farming, and other types of open space use. Included in this category would be general agriculture, woodlots, flood plains, and certain recreational activities.
2. **Residential** land uses are planned primarily in those areas which have soils suitable for septic tanks and which have good road access. The Plan proposes that any residential subdivisions, mobile home parcels and subdivisions, duplex or apartment units and similar residential uses be located within these areas. Residential growth would be encouraged to expand in a logical progression.
3. **Commercial Areas** have been located along M-90 at the western and eastern boundaries of the Township in order to provide easy access for the shopping needs of the residents of the Township. Site plan review powers should be used to encourage appropriate development.
4. **Industrial Development** is being encouraged to expand near the center of the Township north of M-90. This would be a logical extension of the already existing industrial uses involving gravel extractions and processing, as well as a slaughter house. This area would have ready access to a class A highway and is located on land which is conducive to septic systems.

BUEL TOWNSHIP
LAND USE PLAN MAP
PROPOSED FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



- | | | | |
|--------------|---|------------|---|
| Agricultural |  | Commercial |  |
| Residential |  | Industrial |  |