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To: Ann Arbor Township Planning Commission  
City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission  
Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners  
DTE Energy/Michigan Consolidated Gas  
Comcast  
T-Mobile  
AT&T

From: Barton Hills Village

RE: Master Plan 2022

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In June 2010 Barton Hills Village adopted a Master Plan in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act PA 33 of 2008. Also in accordance with the Act, Barton Hills Village has conducted reviews of the Master Plan every five years. In 2015, no changes were proposed during the review, but in 2020, amendments were proposed by the Barton Hills Village Planning Commission. As required by PA 33, Barton Hills Village issued an Intent to Amend notice on December 15, 2020, followed by distribution of the proposed amendments for public comment on August 24, 2022. After consideration of all public comment received, the Planning Commission approved the final Master Plan 2022, which is enclosed for your information.



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Janice K. Esch  
Deputy Clerk  
Barton Hills Village



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Date

# BARTON HILLS VILLAGE MASTER PLAN



2022

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Cover drawing: "Barton Hills Entrance at North Barton Drive," May 4, 1927, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## ***1.1 Authority***

Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008 (the Act), communities are required to review their master plan every five years and update it as needed. The Village adopted its first master plan in 2010. After a review in 2015, the Village determined that no changes to the master plan were necessary. The Village began its next five-year review of the plan in 2020 and decided to amend it to reflect the changing needs of the community. The current master plan is the result of that review.

## ***1.2 Purpose of Master Plan***

The plan describes the goals for the future of the Village over the next 25 years and the policies that are intended to implement them. The plan also contemplates that the Village will review it at least every five years and amend it as needed to meet then-existing conditions and challenges.

Planning involves the conscious selection of policy choices relating to land use, development, delivery of services, enhancement of community character, and maintenance of a quality of life that meet the expectations of the community. The purpose of the Barton Hills Village master plan is to identify the goals, policies, programs, and strategies that the Village and its residents wish to pursue. The master plan involves a thorough investigation of past trends, current conditions, and alternatives for the future of the Village, with opportunities for community participation, expression of new ideas, and creation of concepts that will provide a solid basis for the Village well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## ***1.3 Methodology***

This first master plan for Barton Hills Village was not created in a vacuum. It was the result of many months of work, during which the Planning Commission and the Village Board of Trustees received and considered many comments from the public. Because it was the Village's first master plan, it may be useful to describe the process that led to the plan's adoption in 2010. The process for adopting this amended master plan follows much the same process.

After sending a notice of intent to prepare a plan, as required by the Act, the Planning Commission began to prepare the plan in mid-2008. With the help of staff and the Village's planning consultant, the Planning Commission completed a proposed plan in February 2009.

In helping prepare the initial drafts of the plan, staff reviewed and considered the master plan adopted by Ann Arbor Charter Township, the township in which the Village is located; the Washtenaw County document "A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County, Recommended Future Potential Landscapes"; the Clark Forestry report described in section 3.7 below; and a survey of Village residents conducted in 1999. In making revisions to the draft prepared by



staff, the Commissioners also considered comments from members of the public who attended the Commission's meetings during that period and either commented at the meetings or submitted comments in writing, or both. In addition, the Commissioners, many of whom have lived in the Village for many years, relied on their personal knowledge of Village affairs and the advice of the Village's professional planning consultant.

At its meeting on March 19, 2009, the Commission agreed to submit the draft of the proposed plan to the Village Board of Trustees for informal review and comment. Following the receipt of comments from the Board, the Commission revised the proposed plan and, at its meeting on June 9, 2009, directed the Village Clerk to post the revised plan on the Village web site and to publicize the posting in the Village newsletter, which is delivered to all residents. In the web site posting and newsletter, the Commission invited residents to review the plan and submit any comments on the plan to the Commission.

At its meeting on November 19, 2009, the Commission further revised the proposed plan following a careful consideration of the comments received from residents. The Commission then voted to submit the proposed plan to the Village Board of Trustees for formal review and comment, as required under the Act. The Board conducted that review at its regular meeting on January 11, 2010, approved distribution of the proposed plan at that meeting, and so notified the Commission Secretary.

In accordance with that notification, on February 4, 2010, the Commission Secretary submitted, as required by the Act, a copy of the proposed master plan for review and comment to:

- the Ann Arbor Township Planning Commission;
- the City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission;
- the Washtenaw County Planning Commission; and
- each public utility company and railroad company owning or operating a public utility or railroad within the Village, and any government entity that had registered its name and address for this purpose with the Commission Secretary.

In addition, the Commission requested that the Village Clerk post the proposed plan, as further revised, on the Village web site and publicize the posting in the Village newsletter. As before, the posting and newsletter invited the public to review the plan as further revised and submit any additional comments to the Commission Secretary.

Following the expiration of the 63-day period under the Act for receipt of comments by the recipients of the proposed plan described above, the Commission scheduled a public hearing on the plan, as required by the Act. The Commission Secretary published and submitted notice of the public hearing as required and also posted notice of the public hearing on the Village web

site and published it in the Village newsletter. The Commission held the public hearing on the proposed master plan at its special meeting on June 16, 2010.

After considering the comments received from the public at the public hearing, the Commission made final revisions to the master plan and approved the plan unanimously at its special meeting on June 16, 2010.

### ***1.4 Organization***

The plan is organized as follows:

- Part 1: This introduction.
- Part 2: History of the Village, both geological and human.
- Part 3: The planning context—that is, the Village’s location, existing land uses, available public services, and environmental conditions.
- Part 4: Goals. Goals express the Village’s long-term expectations and are general in nature.
- Part 5: Policies. Policies are specific statements that apply to the achievement of goals. When policies are officially adopted through adoption of the plan, they commit the Village to a course of action.
- Part 6: Implementation. Finally, the plan establishes implementation mechanisms that are specific, targeted courses of action devised to apply the Village policies.

## **2 HISTORY**

### ***2.1 Geological History***

Relatively flat sandstone and shale bedrock of the lower Mississippian period (a little over 300 million years ago) underlies the planning area, but is buried by glacial deposits 100 to 250 feet thick. About 14,500 years ago the front edge of a large continental ice sheet stalled for a time over the area. The forward movement of the glacial ice behind the front edge piled up a large amount of mixed rocks, sand, gravel, and silt, forming the “Fort Wayne” end moraine, the basis of the large ridges that form Barton Hills. Large and small boulders of somewhat rounded igneous rock are often found at the surface in the planning area, showing the morainal nature of the slopes and soils. The variation in soil depth and in relative amounts of sand, silt, and clay determine at least in part the type of forest cover in the Village today.

## ***2.2 Development History***

“Wooded hills . . . valleys . . . beautiful water . . . an elevation that overlooks Ann Arbor and the picturesque Huron River Valley . . . artistic homes and congenial neighbors . . . privacy without seclusion . . .”

So begins a real estate brochure from the early 1930s, proclaiming the virtues of the area now known as Barton Hills. From the Native Americans who frequented the riverbanks, to the early settlers who described the landscape as striking and appealing, to the current residents who often stay for a lifetime, the natural beauty and ambiance of the community continue to be valued highly.

Native American populations along the Huron River probably peaked at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. European settlement in Michigan began in earnest after the War of 1812, and the first sales by the Government Land Office in the Barton Hills area occurred between 1825 and 1830. Sometime in the 1870s a farm was purchased by James Allen, who sold the property to the Towars Wayne County Creamery in 1896. The Towars Farm raised cattle and operated a dairy until about 1912, centered in buildings located just east of Whitmore Lake Road across from the Upper Entrance. Cattle grazed on the bare hillsides too steep for farming and drank from the meandering Huron River, with only natural vistas between them and their neighbors at the settlement of Foster upstream. The Towars Farm property was acquired by Huron Farms, a development subsidiary of Detroit Edison, as part of its plan to construct a series of hydroelectric dams along the Huron River.

Barton Dam was built in 1912-1913, along with staff homes, three of which now house Barton Hills Village staff. Shortly thereafter, the prestigious Olmsted Engineering firm of Brookline, Massachusetts was engaged to design a residential community of gracious country homes. The first home was built on Underdown Road for Detroit Edison executive William Underdown, followed by a stately dwelling constructed on Corrie Road for Detroit Edison President Alex Dow. Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation was formed in 1922 and “Supervisors Plat Barton Hills” was approved by the Ann Arbor Township Board of Supervisors in 1924.

Barton Hills Village embodies the land planning philosophy of the Olmsted firm—to bring harmony between natural and man-made features. What was conceived by the Olmsted firm back in the 1920s remains today. Parcels and roadways were arranged with an artistic eye towards using the topography to best advantage, following the contour of the land, and not slashing through it. Home sites were envisioned with unobstructed vistas of water, as evidenced by early photographs of the first houses which highlight the excellent views of the Huron River from Underdown and Corrie Roads. (Since then, trees have been allowed to grow and obstruct many water views.) Paths through the parks and ravines offered opportunities to enjoy the natural setting. Olmsted believed that scenery could have a powerful psychological effect on people, rejuvenating the spirit and fostering a sense of community, rejuvenating the spirit and fostering a sense of community.

As a resident drove through the lower entry, they would leave the city behind. A tree-lined road, Barton Shore, with open views of agricultural landscape and meadows, would carry visitors along with the recreational spaces and Barton Pond. This would facilitate walks, access to the Village Green with areas for tennis and games, to the Boat Club for sailing, fishing, swimming, and skating, and along the shore areas for picnicking. The road turning North at Spring Valley would lead into the private area and Country Club Hill. The [original] site of the Country Club was the highest point, with the best view of the Pond.

*(Restatement of Olmstead Brother's intent for Barton Hills)*

In keeping with this philosophy, restrictions attached to each deed for property in the original plat of the Village specify generous setbacks and stipulate that all homes are subject to the approval of an architectural review committee. While each home has its individual personality, there is a common connection to the physical surroundings that define the Village.

Several homes were constructed before the economic restraints of the Depression slowed growth. By the 1940s Barton Hills had become an expensive liability for a public utility, and Detroit Edison resolved the situation by offering to the residents of Barton Hills all its unsold lots, equipment, and the right to collect taxes on the property already sold under a \$20,000 mortgage arrangement. In exchange, the resident owners assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the community. This was accomplished by the formation of Barton Hills Improvement Association, which took title to the remaining unsold properties, along with Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation, which continued to be responsible for maintaining the water system, roads, and other services. The community grew as the residents developed experience in self-management, attracting owners with a variety of architectural preferences in home design.

In the early 1970s, residents decided to seek municipal status. On December 12, 1973, Barton Hills Village became the first home rule village in Washtenaw County. A Board of Trustees was elected to oversee municipal services. Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation continued to be responsible for enforcement of the restrictive covenants, care of undeveloped land, and architectural review. Barton Hills Improvement Association was dissolved about the same time, as all the developed residential lots had been sold, with Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation receiving title to the remaining parcels.

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## 3 THE PLANNING CONTEXT

### ***3.1 The Planning Area***

Barton Hills Village is located in Washtenaw County, within Ann Arbor Charter Township and adjacent to the City of Ann Arbor. The Village has a total area of 0.8 square miles (500 acres or 2.0 km<sup>2</sup>). It is bounded by Whitmore Lake Road to the east, Ann Arbor Township properties along Stein Road and Country Club Road to the north and west, and the Huron River and Barton Pond to the west and south. The planning area is shown in Map 1.

### ***3.2 Population***

The population of the Village has decreased slightly since the 1980s. In 1980, the Village's total population numbered 357 persons. The most recent U.S. Census from 2020 reports the population at 316 persons. The Village does not expect significant changes in population over the period covered by the plan due to a lack of available land area planned for new development and demographic characteristics.

### ***3.3 Transportation***

The planning area has limited accessibility from only three points: two roadway accesses off Whitmore Lake Road on the east and one access from Maple Road and Foster Bridge on the west. Maple Road is limited in capacity by the one lane Foster Bridge and the at-grade rail crossing just south of the bridge.

The Village is accessed via the Lower Entrance (Barton Shore Drive), the Upper Entrance (Underdown Road and Barton North Drive), and the West Entrance (Country Club Road). Connecting routes from these entrances include Whitmore Lake Road, Country Club Road via Foster Bridge and Maple Road, Barton Drive, and the M-14 expressway.

There are no railroads or public bus service within Barton Hills Village, although both rail and bus service are available nearby in the City of Ann Arbor. Riparian travel is limited to personal recreational crafts.

The roadways in the Village are shown on Map 1.

### ***3.4 Location***

The planning area is located within two or three miles of major commercial centers on Plymouth Road, Washtenaw Avenue, Carpenter Road, and Maple Road. In addition, downtown Ann Arbor, the Briarwood Mall, the Oak Valley Shopping Center/Meijer area, and the increasing commercial development along Jackson Road in Scio Township provide complete coverage of the existing and potential market in the planning area. These commercial developments are more than sufficient in terms of location, retail floor area, and range of goods and services offered to meet the existing and future needs of Village residents.

Similarly, motels, restaurants, gas stations, and other transportation-related commercial services are fully developed along Plymouth and Jackson Roads, at the Plymouth Road and North Territorial Road interchanges on US-23, and at the Zeeb Road interchange on I-94. These service areas are just a few miles from the Village and only a few miles apart from one another, and they meet the needs of motorists both on local roads and on US-23, M-14, and I-94. Thus, commercial services of this character are not needed in the Village.

Consequently, this plan does not anticipate a need to locate any additional commercial services in the Village. Further, there are no locations within the Village boundary that are suitable for commercial services.

The planning area also is part of the Ann Arbor Public School District. Elementary, middle, and high schools are in the City of Ann Arbor near to the planning area, and children in the planning area are served by school buses provided by the District. Accordingly, the plan does not anticipate the need to locate any schools in the Village.

### ***3.5 Existing Land Uses***

As shown on Map 2, all of the Village's planning area has a relatively fixed land use pattern because of existing development, lot sizes, and location.

#### **3.5.1 Residential.**

The great majority of land in the Village is used for single-family residential homes, placed on lots of varying sizes and shapes as laid out by the Olmsted firm in harmony with the topographical features of the community. While many homes were already established when the current zoning ordinance was adopted, the features of the original community philosophy are reflected in set back and height limitations designed to prevent overcrowding and undue congestion of population, and to promote adequate light, air, and reasonable access. Integrity of lot configuration and management of accessory structures support this use.

#### **3.5.2 Recreation and open space.**

Development for recreation has been historically focused on Barton Hills Country Club, Barton Boat Club and the Village Green, which offer open space for informal recreation and enjoyment. There are also three private parks designated in the original Olmsted design and given Native American names: Cayuga ("canoe pulled out of water"), Minoma ("good water"), and Otsego (welcome water"). Significant opportunities exist for the creation of other parks and open spaces around the watercourses and natural features such as Waterfront Park adjacent to Barton Shore Drive. These areas are shown on Map 2.

Many new residents in the Village are young families with children. Increased opportunities for families to gather in community parks can enhance appreciation for the natural features and

encourage environmentally-friendly activities like removing invasive plants and creating rain gardens.

### **3.5.3 Agricultural.**

Agricultural land in the Village provides a buffer for the community, reflecting its agrarian roots and value of natural areas. The undeveloped parcels near the Lower Entrance traditionally have been privately farmed, offering a refreshing introduction to those exiting the expressway or arriving from the city. Portions of such agricultural land may be kept in a managed natural state to further enhance the feel of “country living” rather than an urban setting. The large undeveloped parcel of land forming the northeastern border of the Village traditionally has also been privately farmed, and referred to as the “North 40.” No proposal to develop these agricultural areas has ever been adopted by the community. However, the Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation, which owns the property, may choose to preserve the North 40 as a wildlife and/or natural vegetation preserve.

In 2021, in response to residents’ concerns about the use of agricultural pesticides and herbicides, the Maintenance Corporation entered into an agreement with US Fish and Wildlife, and Ducks Unlimited, to create a prairie and wetlands preserve on the North 40. The agreement stipulates that there will be no farming or development in the area for 15 years. This agreement fulfills one of the four goals of the Clark Forestry Study, an ecological assessment commissioned by Barton Hills Village in 2003 and available from the Village Clerk’s Office.

### **3.5.4 Municipal.**

The Village administrative center was dedicated on January 12, 2009. The title “Walter Esch Hall” was designated by the Barton Hills Village Trustees on July 10, 2017, to honor Mr. Esch’s 68 years of service and commitment to the Barton Hills community. This building, with the maintenance buildings and related buildings located nearby, comprise the municipal use shown on Map 2.

### **3.5.5 Other uses.**

Other land uses, such as manufacturing and industrial, office and research, and high density housing not only are incompatible with the existing uses in the Village, but are unnecessary. As discussed above concerning commercial uses, there are abundant opportunities for a wide variety of such other uses in the immediate area and no need for them in the planning area.

Finally, the existing land uses in the Village fit well with the uses contemplated in the master plans of the City of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township. Both those municipalities contemplate that low density housing and green spaces—including parklands, open spaces, and agriculture—will play an important role in the townships surrounding the City. Such green spaces complement the more urban portion of landscape of the City. The Village, with its emphasis on low-density residential uses, open space, and agriculture, offers a significant

transition zone between the City to the south and the balance of the Township to the north and east.

### ***3.6 Public Services***

The services provided by the Village include a public water system, refuse collection, road maintenance under an agreement with Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation which owns the private roads, care of public lands and buildings, and security services. As stated earlier, the Village administrative office building, including meeting space, will be sufficient to meet the community's needs in the foreseeable future.

Ann Arbor Township provides fire, rescue, and emergency services to the planning area. The Township has two fire stations that provide adequate coverage to all parts of the planning area.

The planning area is in the Ann Arbor public school district. All existing schools that serve the planning area are located in the City of Ann Arbor, and there are no plans to construct public schools in the planning area.

#### ***3.6.1 Security***

Security shall continue to be an ever-evolving initiative for Barton Hills Village property and residents. Investing in services, equipment, and personnel to continue to improve the capability to provide a secure community shall remain a top priority. The Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, supplemented by security services from the Village, provide sufficient police services for the planning area.

### ***3.7 Environmental Conditions***

The Village's gently rolling landscape is dominated by woodlands, wetlands, agricultural lands, and the Huron River (including Barton Pond). These features help define the character of the planning area and distinguish it from the urban character of the City of Ann Arbor.

The existence of sensitive natural features throughout the Village puts limits on the development potential of land and has resulted in the preservation of agriculture, open space, and natural features. Natural features also add amenities and value to the Village's existing residential development. Following is a description of the primary natural features that constitute the Village's environment. It is based on the report entitled "An Ecological Assessment of Forests and Natural Areas for Barton Hills Village" prepared by Clark Forestry, Inc. dated November 18, 2003. Map 3 indicates in a general manner where these features are located.



### **3.7.1 Woodlands.**

#### ***Oak Woodlands.***

Oak woodlands occur in a few small areas, usually on hilltops and convex south facing slopes where the soil is thin or excessively drained. Here there are still many canopy gaps or small trees that allow a fair amount of light to reach the forest floor. The soils are slightly drier than the dry-mesic forests, usually as a result of southern or western aspects and shallow soil depth. Tree growth on these sites is limited by the dryness, and these areas usually have a partly open, park-like appearance, more closely resembling oak savannas than deep forests. Oak woodlands are a last refuge for many formerly widespread oak savanna species, most of which require partial sun to survive. These areas include many species that are strong savanna indicators, including large-leafed aster, long-awned wood grass, woodland sunflower, horse gentian, and black-eyed Susan. The natural diversity of most sites is very good to excellent with many species of native wildflowers that have undoubtedly persisted for many hundreds of years.

#### ***Oak forest.***

This natural community forms the matrix of the natural forests in the planning area. It is the most abundant forest type, making up the dominant vegetation, especially in the western 2/3 of the Village. The best quality blocks of dry-mesic oak forests occur on the moraines between Barton Pond shoreline and Barton North Drive/Country Club Road.

#### ***Riparian forests.***

These are mesic sites with medium amount of available moisture, intermediate between dry and wet. Pockets of sugar maple, beech and basswood have existed for many years in Barton Hills in the narrow, moist ravines where they were protected from fire and had adequate moisture. They quickly colonized surrounding woodlands once fire and grazing stopped.

Riparian forests occur on steep to gentle morainal slopes with deeper, richer soil than the drymesic forests that usually surround them. These areas are mostly found along and bordering the streams in the lower portions of the small valleys that drain uplands above. Here the nature of the slopes allows more light to come through the canopy than on a level area. There are four such major stream valleys with mesic oak woods within the Village, although this type occurs in other smaller areas of richer soils as well.

#### ***Young hardwoods.***

Young hardwoods are recently established forests on former pasture sites dominated by a mixture of native hardwood trees, all generally less than 60 years old. The dominant species are black walnut, basswood, American elm, red maple, sugar maple, red oak, and white oak. Young hardwood stands occur mostly above the sloping hillside moraines and mostly north of Barton North Drive and east of Underdown Road.

***Shrub/hardwoods.***

This describes areas that support a mixture of some native hardwood trees, together with both native and exotic shrubs and various plantings of other species such as pines and spruce. The condition and composition of these areas is quite variable and reflects the influence of heavy pasturing, heavy invasion of exotic species, a somewhat higher density of home sites, and more influence from managed landscapes than in other parts of the Village. In general these areas are not closed-canopy forest, as the native tree component is scattered and of variable density, ranging from only a few trees per acre to close to 50% canopy coverage. The predominant native tree species includes American elm, basswood, black cherry, ironwood, red maple, shagbark and bitternut hickory, and occasional red and white oak.

***Pine (conifer) plantings.***

Several plantings of pine were made around 1923-1925 when the planning area was newly under the management of Huron Farms. These pine plantations were planted in open areas primarily west of Underdown Road and on both sides of the uplands bordering the stream valley in Minoma Park. The species planted included Scots Pine and Norway Spruce (both native to Europe), and red and white pine (both species which are native to the Lake States but do not naturally occur in Southern Michigan). These plantings were successful and have provided aesthetic diversity in the Village for many years. The plantings exceed 70 years in age and are nearing maturity.

**3.7.2 Wetlands and Wet Meadow.**

Though wetlands occur commonly along the Huron River corridor both upstream of Barton Pond and below Barton Dam, the impoundment of the river inundated the large wetlands that once bordered the river shore. Small isolated wetlands do occur in several areas. Some are disturbed, but others are in good condition and were probably once connected to larger wetlands along the river shore prior to impoundment.

Located along and northeast of Barton Shore Drive just inside the southeast entrance to the Village, this is a former hay meadow or crop field. It is very wet and fairly flat and has retained a number of interesting wetland species, foremost among those being the small yellow lady's slipper. There are also a few scattered big-bluestem plants here, a native prairie grass that indicates the site likely had a prairie history. Purple loosestrife, a European invasive species, has invaded the meadow, but has been controlled by mowing.

However, many species of native plants and wildflowers are threatened by the spread of nonnative species, including invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn trees, garlic mustard, and dames rocket. Increased resident awareness of these invasive plants could lead to a reduction in their spread and appreciation for native wildflowers and trees. The heavily wooded areas and

steep slopes pose potential risks associated with forest fires and landslides. Removing fallen trees and branches is important to prevent the spread of wildfires.

### **3.7.3 Shoreline.**

The shoreline areas, mainly along Barton Shore Drive, are relatively disturbed areas where road construction and placement of fill soil have eliminated most native vegetation between the road and Barton Pond. This zone is characterized by a high percentage of exotic and invasive species and contains a mixture of wetland and upland species as well as a mixture of forest and shrub dominated areas. Dominant trees include cottonwood, European black alder, black locust, box elder, black walnut, black willow, and basswood.

### **3.7.4 Streams.**

There are four major stream valleys that drain the upland fields between Forest and Underdown Roads, and a fifth small stream valley located east of Juniper Lane. All are spring fed, but their flow is augmented by drainage of the surrounding uplands in each stream-shed during periods when there is excess soil moisture. These perennial streams all drain into the Huron River. Streams provide an important water source and serve as a critical habitat component for many species of wildlife, including deer, small mammals and songbirds.

It is well known that some uncommon species of migrant songbirds such as Acadian flycatcher and Louisiana water thrush nest solely in forested stream valleys, and the planning area provides potentially the best quality habitat for those and similar species within a large area of Washtenaw County. Likewise, if large wide-ranging mammals such as coyote move through southern Michigan, it is likely they would travel along the river corridors where cover (trees and forests) and water are plentiful. While they are too small to provide permanent breeding habitat for large mammals, the streams and forests in the Village would provide needed habitat for those animals as they move through the region.

Streams also support their own suite of native species, including small fish, herptiles (frogs and turtles), and aquatic invertebrates (water dwelling insects) such as mayflies, stoneflies and caddis flies. These species feed on and help decompose organic matter such as leaves and twigs falling into the streams and in turn are fed on by fish and crustaceans, thus they are an important part of the aquatic food chain.

### **3.7.5 Wildlife**

Finally, the Village is home to a variety of native animals, including deer, foxes, coyotes, black squirrels, wild turkeys, pheasants, and hawks. While deer are a native species and beautiful to look at, the exponential increase in their numbers constitutes a threat to native plant species as well as other residential plantings. Deer also create a safety risk to road traffic and potential transmission of disease. Annual culling of the herd in Barton Hills Village is used to reduce these

risks. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has banned feeding deer in the entire lower peninsula of Michigan, including both public and private lands.

## 4 GOALS

Goals are broad, fundamental statements a community has identified in order to accomplish a desired future for the community. Goals express long-term rather than short-term expectations and are often expressed in such general terms that it is difficult to measure the degree to which they have been attained. However, goals establish the overall framework and basis for more specific elements of the plan.

The order in which the following goals are listed does not reflect or imply their relative importance.

### ***4.1 Preserve the Village's Character***

There are many factors that define the character of Barton Hills Village. As described earlier in the plan under section 3.7, "Environmental Conditions," the natural scenic beauty of the Village, with abundant trees, wildlife, undeveloped areas, and the extensive shoreline along Barton Pond and the Huron River, combine to create an ambiance of privacy without isolation. Contributing to this ambiance are the winding private roadways devoid of curbs and sidewalks, minimal street lighting, the use of rural mailboxes, limited commercial establishments, and active agricultural areas. The community overwhelmingly supports preservation of this character.

### ***4.2 Assure Consistency with Existing Land Uses***

The dominant use of land in the Village is for single-family residential homes. Maintenance of lot integrity, limited recreational development and the existing country club, and preservation of agricultural uses provide for some flexibility to individual needs with overall stability in community land use. Existing residential areas should be protected from potentially adverse impacts of incompatible development. New buildings and additions should be in keeping with the existing character of the community and compatible with the site.

### ***4.3 Preserve and Protect Natural Features***

Living in a natural setting requires continued responsible management to maintain the balance of humans, flora, and fauna. Landmark trees, healthy vegetation, control of invasive species, free movement of wildlife, and the ecological health of the Huron River are all aspects of Barton Hills Village that require attention, preservation, and protection.

#### ***4.4 Protect the Natural Conditions of Watersheds***

Watersheds, or the drainage sub-basins in the Huron River drainage basin, are important systems on which to focus for protecting the Village's natural features, especially wetlands and stream corridors.

A watershed is an ecological unit that also serves as a factor in land use planning. If not carefully planned, land use activities and development practices within an area can have a detrimental effect on a watershed. The protection of elements within a watershed, such as steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands is essential to maintaining stream flow, restricting storm water runoff, and preserving surface water quality. Stream flow, runoff prevention, and overall surface water quality have a direct correlation to the long-term health of the community. The safe recharge of groundwater resources, preservation of prime soils, and conservation of habitat for flora and fauna are all benefits of strong watershed protection.

#### ***4.5 Preserve Open Space***

Open spaces, like those represented by its parkland and agricultural areas, are an important part of the Village's character. Preservation of open spaces also supports the plan's other goals: preservation of the Village's character, protection of natural features, protection of the natural condition of watersheds, protection of existing residential areas, and maintaining a cooperative relationship with neighboring government entities. Open spaces also provide an opportunity to showcase rain gardens, native plants, and other environmentally friendly activities to encourage resident participation in preserving the natural beauty of the Village.

#### ***4.6 Cooperate with Planning in Neighboring Municipalities***

Village residents value their citizenship in Ann Arbor Township and support the Township master plan, especially in the areas of green space preservation and thoughtful development. The Village also supports the efforts of the City of Ann Arbor to encourage appropriate development in the City and support green spaces and agriculture in the townships surrounding the City.

Because the aquifer supporting the Village drinking water supply lies in the Township to the north of the Village, it is also a Village priority to support Township efforts to manage land use wisely for the benefit of all and to encourage protective policies of natural resources through the efforts of local and state agencies such as the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

Traffic patterns and volume on the roadways outside Barton Hills Village are of significant importance in providing adequate connections for Village residents, and the Village supports the Township's efforts to assure a rational transportation plan for the entire area. The Village will encourage regional transportation planning that supports maintenance of the Foster Bridge and Whitmore Lake Road/Barton Drive access points to the Village, including efforts to maintain and improve the M-14 entrances and exits along Barton Drive.

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## 5 POLICIES

### ***5.1 Introduction***

Policies define courses of action for the Village. While goals tend to be general in nature and provide a vision for the community, policies establish clear positions on particular topics. Policies are often quantifiable and are directly associated with a goal. When policies are adopted, they commit a jurisdiction to courses of action. Those courses of action are carried out through implementation plans, which define the actions the Village plans to take, such as an amendment to the zoning ordinance or the establishment of a new natural features preservation program. Implementation recommendations are included in next part of this plan. Following are the policies established for the Village.

### ***5.2 Land Use Policies***

#### **5.2.1 Existing land uses.**

Existing land use patterns will be preserved and protected, and significant changes in current land use in the Village are not supported.

The Future Land Use Plan for the Village is shown in Map 4.

#### **5.2.2 Growth.**

SEMOG estimates indicate a stable population in the Village, based on previous population rates that have barely fluctuated in the past 25 years. Assuming that land use does not significantly change in the Village, the community can be considered to be at or near full development level without anticipation of notable changes in population density. There is also little anticipation of expansion of the Village boundaries.

#### **5.2.3 Recognition of restrictive covenants.**

The restrictive covenants attached to deeds on all properties in the original plat for Barton Hills are key to the character of Barton Hills Village. The Village recognizes that the restrictive covenants are legally enforceable and will coordinate its planning efforts so those efforts are not inconsistent with the covenants.

### ***5.3 Agricultural Use Policies***

Private farming of existing agricultural areas will be supported, provided, however, that any such agricultural activity utilizes organic methods and materials. Although new designations of agricultural uses are not anticipated, existing areas have been designated as Agricultural Preservation District.

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## ***5.4 Natural Features Policies***

### **5.4.1 Generally.**

Consistent with the philosophy of “judicious use of the axe,” as articulated by the Olmsted firm (the original designer of the Village), natural features will be preserved and protected. Efforts will continue to protect and wisely manage natural resources to achieve balance and harmony. This may include protection of landmark trees, control of invasive species, implementation of recommendations from the Clark Forestry report described in section 3.7, “Environmental Conditions,” and other studies, and educational efforts to apprise residents of best management practices.

### **5.4.2 Watersheds.**

Watersheds provide a visual and physical structure to the Village and have an important role in maintaining balance in the environment. The Village will work to preserve and protect existing watersheds and will monitor and control impervious surfaces to protect water quality. The Village will also work to coordinate watershed policies with neighboring municipalities. These efforts will include enforcement of ordinances regarding septic systems and erosion control and continuing education for residents regarding best management practices. The efforts also may include participation in area groups such as the Huron River Watershed Council and Community Partners for Clean Streams.

### **5.4.3 Streams, watercourses, and wetlands.**

Streams, watercourses, and wetlands will be used as part of the drainage system of the Village. To the maximum feasible extent, their character and ecological health will be maintained or improved. These features will be protected from disturbance by construction and from pollutants and sediment that might be carried by surface water run-off.

### **5.4.4 Woodlands.**

The high-quality woodlands in the Village, as described in section 3.7, “Environmental Conditions,” are critical to the environmental health, aesthetic beauty, and character of the community.

- Woodlands will be preserved in order to protect water and soil quality, buffer air and noise pollution, preserve wildlife habitats, and preserve aesthetic values and the natural beauty of the community. Associated flora and fauna will also be preserved. Construction that is permitted in or adjacent to wooded areas or significant specimen trees will be planned, built, and maintained so that existing healthy trees and vegetation are preserved to the maximum feasible extent. The diversity of woodlands will be protected to improve their long-term stability.
- The location, species, and quality of wooded areas or individual trees will be considered during the review of construction proposals to determine preservation requirements.

- The type and density of uses and structures permitted in and adjacent to wooded areas will be compatible with the objective of preserving woodlands.
- Specimen and landmark trees that must be removed for permitted development or construction will be replaced based on an equivalency measure to the extent practicable.
- Associated native flora and fauna will also be preserved. Invasive species will be identified and controlled.

#### **5.4.5 Steep Slopes.**

Steep slopes associated with watersheds are sensitive in that threats to steep slopes can adversely affect water quality. Slopes also foster local biodiversity and contribute to the community's aesthetic character. Slopes will be considered in terms of soil types as well as steepness.

- Areas of steep slopes will be protected. Protection of steep slopes will reduce erosion potential, maintain slope and soil stability, control amounts and velocities of surface water run-off, and protect an aesthetic resource.
- Construction that is permitted on or near steep slopes will maintain or enhance the natural contours, vegetation, and drainage patterns. Existing land form will be a major factor in the land use and site planning processes. The primary objective will be preservation of natural contours rather than alteration by grading. The location of steep slopes in the Village is noted on Map 3.

#### **5.4.6 Renewable Energy on Residential Sites.**

Private energy generation, via solar panels or wind turbines serving a residential site, is becoming more achievable with advances in technology. The use of these technologies for private energy generation is consistent with the Village's desire to preserve natural features and the environment, as they assist in curtailing greenhouse gasses and disruptions in commercial electrical service.

As part of the Village's commitment to supporting carbon neutrality, the installation of solar panels is encouraged. Other climate-friendly innovations to reduce carbon pollution should be explored, including geothermal, small private turbines, insulation, etc. Our neighboring communities, Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor Township and City of Ann Arbor, are actively engaged in developing plans for sources of alternative energy that the Village can benefit from.

However, to be consistent with the Village's desire to preserve the community's character, the installation of these technologies should align with the following policies:



- Private solar panels should be installed on the rooftops of existing or replacement buildings, or ground-mounted where they are not easily visible from a Village road.
- The Village is open to new technologies that will mitigate the effects of climate change including sustainable materials, water preservation, and emerging methods of energy generation such as geothermal, solar collectors, heat pumps and other delivery methods.
- Some wind turbine designs, due to the potential for noise or their height interrupting views, make them incompatible with the Village's character. However, small private turbines that are quiet and screened from the Village roads by buildings may be acceptable.

## ***5.5 Transportation Policies***

Protecting the existing access points to the Village off Whitmore Lake Road and over Foster Bridge is key to the Village. Similarly, preserving the current road system in Barton Hills Village is fundamental to the character of the community. For these reasons, the existing road system and access points will be preserved and protected. The Village also will cooperate with regional planning efforts to support and encourage public transportation and non-motorized transportation throughout the region.

## ***5.6 Public Service Policies***

### **5.6.1 Public services generally.**

Barton Hills Village municipal services include a public water system, refuse collection, road maintenance under agreement with Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation which owns the private roads, and care of public lands and buildings. The Village is committed to environmentally sound practices in maintaining these systems.

The Village also provides security services that supplement police services provided by the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department. Other services, such as public libraries, schools, public transportation, and public recreational facilities, are provided in whole or in part by other entities and municipalities. Expansion of the public services provided by the Village is neither needed nor desired by the community and will not be supported.

### **5.6.2 Public water system.**

Maintenance of the public water system in Barton Hills Village is of the highest priority. Continued monitoring and fulfillment of state regulatory requirements will be fully supported. Funding for future improvements will be pursued as needed. Responsible use of the aquifer must be a priority.

### ***5.7 Public Utility Policies***

The Village will continue to work with electrical service providers and natural gas subsidiaries, in connection with the provision of those services to the planning area. In particular, the Village will work closely with electrical service providers to assure the maximum possible uptime for electric utility service in the planning area. The Village also will evaluate both overhead lines and underground utilities and their routes for proper alignment, effect on the appearance and character of existing and future development, and effect on trees and other natural features before construction. Overhead lines and easements or rights of way for overhead and underground utilities will be located to avoid disruption of stands of trees and specimen trees.

Surface equipment will be judiciously placed as part of landscape design and will be screened from view.

### ***5.8 Commercial Wireless Communication Facilities Policies***

Commercial wireless communication facilities will be permitted in the Village in accordance with the following policies.

1. The number of facilities permitted will be the minimum necessary to provide a reasonable level of service to the public.
2. The location and design of facilities will respect the character and property values of the area of impact.
3. Co-location of antennas will be required to concentrate facilities in the fewest number of locations.
4. Facilities will be designed and located to minimize intrusion on existing and future residential areas and the Village's natural landscape.
5. Facilities will be designed to provide for the safety of adjacent properties and people.
6. Removal will be required if a facility becomes obsolete, inoperable, or unused.

### ***5.9 Dark Sky Initiative***

The Dark Sky Initiative is an effort to reduce nighttime light pollution in the Village. A growing body of evidence links the brightening night sky directly to measurable negative impacts, including increased energy consumption, disruption of ecosystems and wildlife (especially birds), and detrimental effects on human health. Residents are encouraged to properly shield all outdoor lights. If safety is a concern, motion detection lights and timers can be installed.

## 6 IMPLEMENTATIONS

### **6.1 Introduction**

Policies in this master plan must be implemented by the Village's administration, Planning Commission, and Board of Trustees. To be effective, the plan must be a key consideration in decision-making. Used in this manner, the plan will provide advance notice to landowners and prospective developers and an assurance of stability to property owners and residents. The plan can be a forum for modifying certain policies, with all affected parties involved, including Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation, when conditions underlying the plan change or new opportunities arise. Thus, in terms of policy implementation, the plan is for communication and for reference.

The following implementation strategies are specific, targeted courses of action intended to apply the policies established earlier in this plan.

### **6.2 The Zoning Ordinance**

The major instrument of implementation is the Village zoning ordinance. Application and amendment of the ordinance will be conducted with an understanding of and adherence to the community values and goals set forth in this plan. Land will be zoned in a manner consistent with uses and densities designated in the plan.

### **6.3 Natural Features Protection Ordinances**

The Village will investigate new ways to protect natural features through the adoption of specific natural features protection ordinances or amendments to the zoning ordinance. Such measures may include a wetland and watercourse protection ordinance and a natural features setback ordinance that includes the protection of steep slopes and woodlands.

In addition, the Village will use available resources in the careful management of natural features in the planning area, including federal and state requirements, the recommendations of the Clark Forestry Report, the Ann Arbor Township soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance, and relevant provisions of the Ann Arbor Township master plan. The Village will pursue interagency and intergovernmental cooperation when appropriate in managing natural resources.

### **6.4 Impervious Surfaces**

The Village, working with the Huron River Watershed Council and the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's office, will prepare policies, standards, and ordinances for limiting the increase in impervious area resulting from new construction in the Village to the minimum that will be consistent with reasonable use of the land.

## ***6.5 Storm Water Management***

The Village will use the studies made by various agencies to prepare policies, standards, and ordinances for managing storm water run-off in the Village. These policies, standards, and ordinances will be consistent with regulations for wetlands, natural features, and management plans for watersheds.

## ***6.6 The Restrictive Covenants***

The Village recognizes that architectural review of new construction according to, and the enforcement of, the restrictive covenants are the sole responsibility of the Barton Hills Maintenance Corporation. However, the Village will support and work with the Corporation as appropriate and legally permissible to assure that this plan, and the Village's ordinances, standards, and policies are not inconsistent with the restrictive covenants.

## ***6.7 Plan Monitoring Program***

The planning process, in order to be effective, must be continuous. The Village's master plan must have a character that encourages its regular use in the planning process, as it represents the Village's policies for the future. If the plan is to perform its proper function in a continuous planning process and serve as the official reference for discussions and decisions on planning and land use matters, it must be kept up to date. A program for regular revision of the plan is therefore necessary.

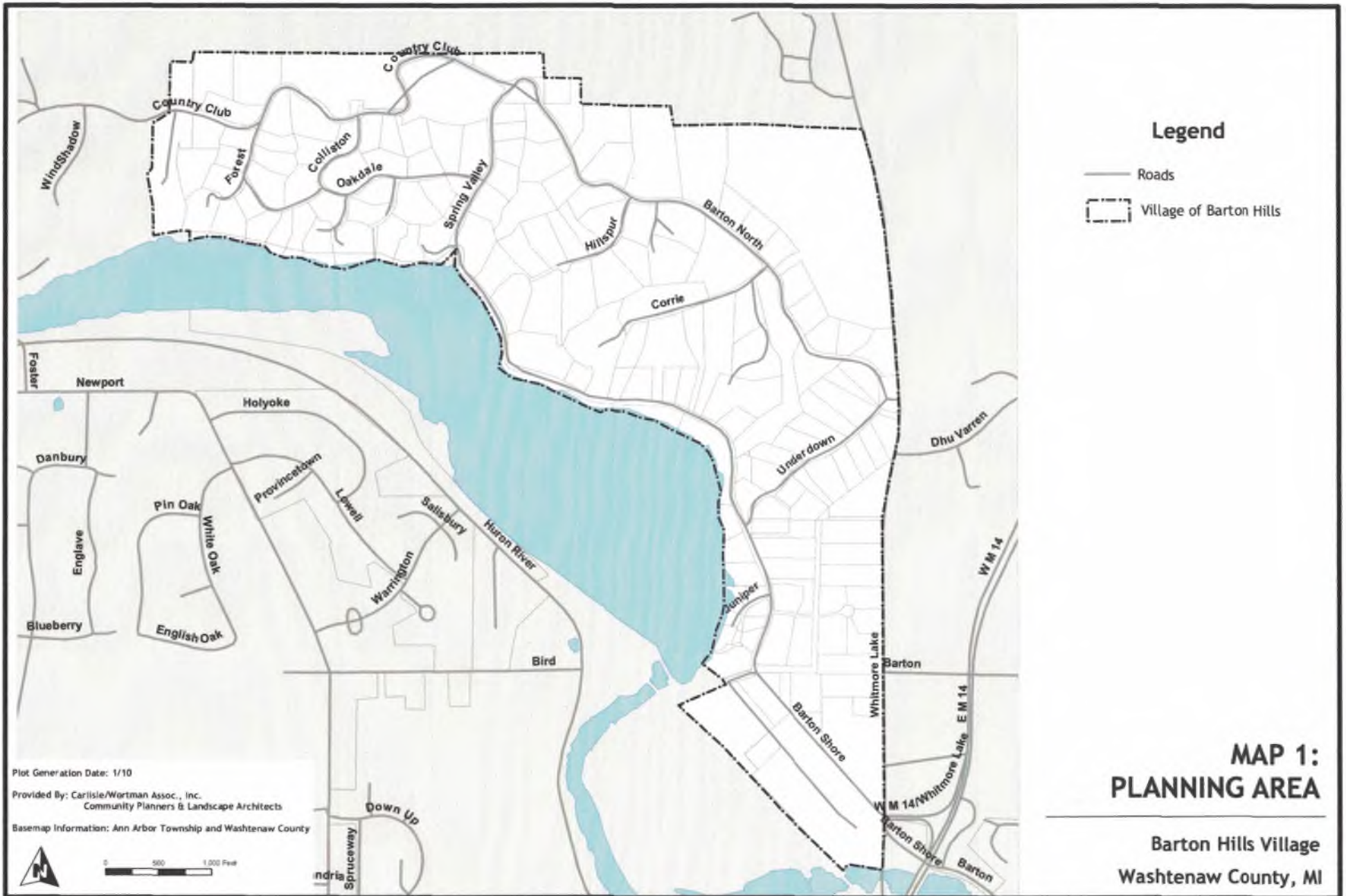
In addition to keeping the plan up-to-date, a regular monitoring program has other benefits.

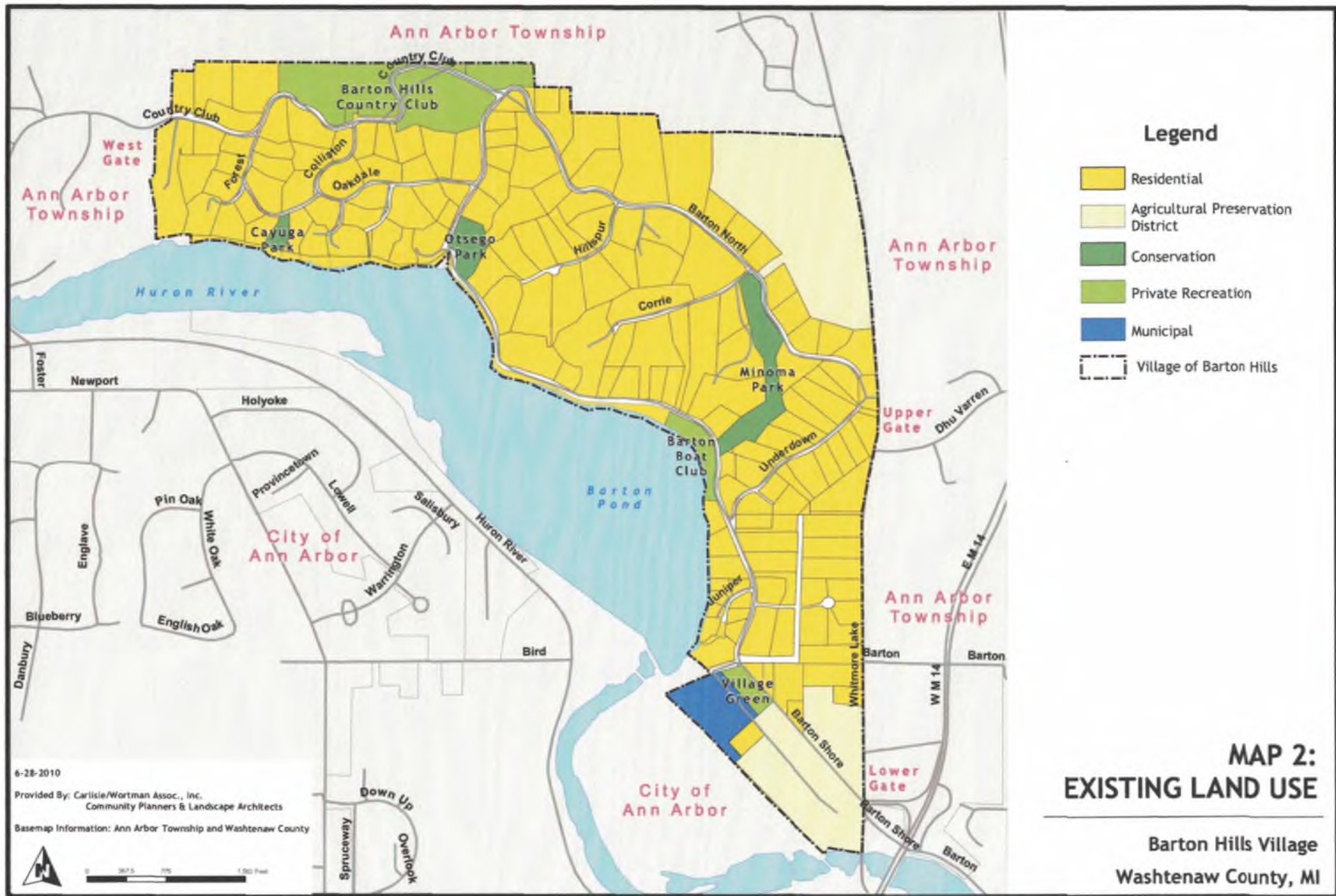
First, the program broadens the area of community agreement on development policies over time. The process invites open reconsideration of alternatives to major decisions and encourages exploration of new issues and secondary questions.

Second, review of the plan at regular intervals will broaden and deepen the Planning Commission's and Village Board's knowledge of the plan and help to identify its shortcomings. Along with the plan's use in day-to-day decision-making, a regular review process will assure that the plan will be a living document. The plan's policies and objectives, while firm and definite, must not be frozen in time.

The monitoring program will consist of an annual review by the Planning Commission, the results of which will be transmitted to the Village Board in a report. This review might result in a recommendation to change a portion of the plan. A more comprehensive review of the plan should be made at intervals of no longer than five years to comply with the State of Michigan enabling legislation.

This program also will enable the Planning Commission and Village Board to see the implications of accumulated annual revisions in perspective and to make proper adjustments. Thus, annual reviews may indicate the need for a major review in less than five years.





**Legend**

- Residential
- Agricultural Preservation District
- Conservation
- Private Recreation
- Municipal
- Village of Barton Hills

**MAP 2:  
EXISTING LAND USE**

**Barton Hills Village  
Washtenaw County, MI**

6-28-2010  
 Provided By: Carlisle/Wortman Assoc., Inc.  
 Community Planners & Landscape Architects  
 Basemap Information: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County



