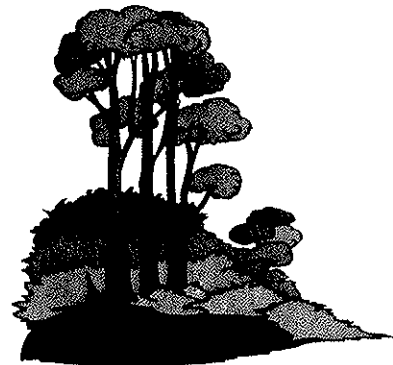


FROHN TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive Zoning & Land Use Plan

(Revised February 25, 2014)



Frohn Township Comprehensive Zoning & Land Use Plan

ORIGINAL AUTHOR: Robert Morgan

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REVISED BY: Frohn Township Comprehensive Plan Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Guidelines for the Physical, Economic, and Social Development of Frohn Township.

SOURCE OF COPIES: Frohn Township Clerk
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ABSTRACT: Frohn Township is located in the southeastern part of Beltrami County, Minnesota. The Long Range Plan is based on an extensive review of existing information about Beltrami County and an updated analysis of the local natural and human resources with respect to their potential role in the development of Frohn Township. With the emphasis on maintaining an agricultural economy and developing tourism and recreation, both based on the use of renewable resources, the Plan includes a Land and Water Use Plan, a Transportation Plan, and a Parks and Recreation Plan. The upgrading of local transportation facilities and the controlled development of the land and water resources are the major elements of this Plan. It is also recommended that local citizens and their elected officials implement building and zoning regulations.

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INTRODUCTION TO FROHN TOWNSHIP

The citizens of Frohn Township are concerned about the future development of their township. The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to establish a land use plan that outlines in very general terms the goals of our township. Providing the rationale, in both practical and legal sense, for the regulations that will restrict how land may be used. Its purpose is also to provide information to prospective citizens (those looking to move into Frohn Township). Knowing the goals of a community enables that person to make a better decision on whether or not they would like living there preventing further problems and dissensions within the community. Our goal is to preserve the rural character we have all enjoyed. This means preventing overcrowding which leads to stress on both the land and the people who live on it. It is also our goal to preserve agricultural and other open lands and to promote the public health, safety and general welfare of our township. We have seen the Bemidji area grow quite rapidly in the past forty years. Along with this growth, we have seen major problems occur such as the need for a highway bypass, the need for new sewer and water facilities to the Nymore area and to the industrial park, the need for an adequate sewage treatment facility in Bemidji, the need for an expanded area subject to airport zoning regulations, and many other needs. These major projects have been completed, but with continued expanding growth and continued need for goods and services, the area continues to grow and expand.

The people of Frohn Township, in order to limit the physical, economic, and social cost of this type of development, drew up and adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1976, and a Land Use Ordinance in 1977. This updated Comprehensive Plan is a revision of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, to more fully reflect the issues affecting the township in 2014 and into the future.

A Comprehensive Plan is necessary to define the township's goals of controlled and orderly development and efficient use of township resources. Based on the township's Comprehensive Plan, the township can adopt and update as needed a viable zoning ordinance that reflects the needs and wishes of the township residents. The plan attempts to inventory the resources of Frohn Township and to establish the long range goals and objectives of the people and their community, so that the regulations in the Zoning and Land Use Ordinance will be coherent. When the leaders of the community understand the township's resource capability and its social-economic structure properly, they are then best able to make positive decisions regarding future change and development.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Frohn Township (2010 population of 1,433) is located in the southeastern part of Beltrami County. The boundaries extend from the eastern city limits of Bemidji to the western edge of Andrusia Lake, and from the Mississippi River on the north to the center of Grace Lake and the lower half of Wolf Lake on the south (see map). It is approximately seven (7) miles from the center of Frohn Township (town hall) to central Bemidji (post office).

The western third of Frohn Township has a clay-based soil and is best suited to small agricultural operations, such as the raising of beef and dairy cattle and small livestock and the cultivating of small grains and hay. Farm/agriculture in this area was established in the early 1920s. Although farm/agriculture was the mainstay of many families in this part of the township in the past, it was not the large and profitable occupation that was and is typical of most of Minnesota 100 to 150 miles to the south and west. Indications are that the future of farm/agriculture, as it exists in Frohn Township, will continue.

The southeastern quarter of Frohn Township has two large lakes (Wolf and Grace) which have extensive lake shore development of summer and year-round homes and fishing, hunting, and recreation resorts. Tourist and recreational activities have been prominent in this area since the 1950s.

The remainder of the township, which has sandy-based soils is generally covered with second and third growth pine forests, occasionally with mixed stands of oak, aspen, birch, and scattered marsh and swamp areas. Approximately 3,000 acres of the forest and wetland environment is publicly owned and serves the purpose of public hunting, fishing, and recreation along with the continued production of timber resources.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The population of Frohn Township is very diverse. The largest concentration of population exists on Grace Lake, Wolf Lake, and the Mississippi River, including Stump Lake. The activities of most of the people in Frohn Township are linked very closely to those in Bemidji.

The wage-earner in most of the year-round resident families in the township is employed, at least part time, by a Bemidji-based commercial or industrial establishment. The children in these families attend schools within the Bemidji School District. Health and welfare facilities and programs are available to the people of Frohn Township through Beltrami County, whose central offices are located in Bemidji. Fire protection is provided by the Bemidji Fire Department and snowplowing of township roads is contracted.

In the early 1970s, a trend began in the Bemidji area of city residents moving outside the city limits to live in the country. Most of these people kept their jobs in Bemidji, or if they moved in from other parts of Minnesota or the United States they shortly secured employment in Bemidji. This desire to have a country home was instigated by such factors as crowded cities, traffic congestion, crime, high taxes, cheaper land prices, a desire to get back to the land, to enjoy the open space of the countryside, and for many other reasons. With them, the people brought the luxuries of city living in modern dwellings, along with the children who now had to be bused to school, the need for extended mail service routes and the need for improved roads to commute to work and back. The result of this movement of people and increased demand for living space sent the prices of land skyrocketing. In 1970, land only ten miles from Bemidji with a sandy soil and growing jack pines was selling for \$20 per acre or less, whereas in 2000 the same land, if available, was selling for over \$650 per acre, and in 2011 was selling for over \$1,200 an acre.

The people of Frohn Township have been directly affected by this activity. Most of the township is within 10 to 12 miles of Bemidji. Land has been speculated on, and some

people have profited by selling their land to developers. Land, however, is not a renewable resource, and once it is gone, it is gone forever. Land that is used for housing developments, highways, and industrial and commercial enterprises ceases to produce food and fiber. People must live somewhere, though, and this is one of the major reasons that the people of Frohn Township looked into land use planning as an alternative to helter-skelter development and the uncontrolled wasting of the land resource. The question that faces Frohn Township citizens is, "How can we benefit from the growth in our community without destroying the existing resources and the social and economic character of people?" Controlled growth through planning and the implementation of land use (zoning) regulations appears to be a positive step in that direction. Although it is difficult to plan and zone at the township level, we believe it to be necessary in preserving the human and natural character of the community. This grass roots government control gives most of the citizens a voice in the decisions made about the future development of the township. Socially, economically, and ecologically, this procedure should help maintain the balance of one small community.

LONG RANGE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives should be general in nature to be valid over an extended period of time. They serve only as a guide in the future development of specific programs and will need to be adopted to the changing conditions as new technology, legislation, and economic patterns develop.

In general, the long-range goals and objectives that the citizens of Frohn Township hope to achieve are:

1. Protect the agricultural lands from the encroachment of urban development in the primary farm/agricultural district(s).
2. Preserve the rural lifestyle within the township by controlled development, through the implementation and strict enforcement of planning and zoning ordinances.
3. Protect the water resources, including the groundwater, from unnecessary pollution and degradation through the implementation of sanitary regulations and population density limits where necessary.
4. Encourage the positive character of rural America in community sufficiency and local grass roots democracy through community activities that promote the values of honesty, responsibility, humility, respect, and love in regard to the land and its people.
5. Promote community interaction and cooperation through the upgrading and maintenance of existing roads.
6. Conserve the natural assets and resources of the area to provide a tolerable living environment for future generations through the wisest and best use of the land and water resources.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The major existing transportation system in Frohn Township is a network of county-state-aid highways (CSAH), county roads, and township roads. The network forms a rectangular or sectional pattern within the primary agricultural areas. This is due to the land ownership pattern and early agricultural development in the township when citizens maintained their own roads. The location of lakes and the large areas of pine forest and marsh in the eastern half of the Frohn Township have determined the road network in that area. The main arteries of traffic movement are Roosevelt Road (CSAH 8) and Power Dam Road (CSAH 12). They form an east-west directional movement between Bemidji and the outlying areas of Frohn Township and the eastern part of Beltrami County. Roosevelt Road and Power Dam Road were built and maintained using state and federal funds as the major sources of revenue. Grace Lake Road (CSAH 4) forms a part of the southern boundary of Frohn Township with neighboring Farden Township in Hubbard County, serves the residential lake shore area of Grace Lake, and joins U.S. Highway 2 four miles from the Bemidji city limits. All of these highways run east-west. The only CSAH within Frohn Township running north-south are Wolf Lake Drive (CSAH 25) which serves the western Wolf Lake area and the northeastern part of Grace Lake and Swenson Lake Road (CSAH 27).

County roads #403 (VanBuren Avenue), #407 (Sunnyside Road), #27 (Swenson Road NE), #27 (Parker's Lake Road NE), and #413 (Otter Road NE) are north-south routes, and county roads #404 (30th Street) and #406 (Mill Street) are east-west routes. Of these roads, Sunnyside and Swenson Road are the major links between the northern and southern portion of Frohn Township. Sunnyside is five miles long, serves the western half of the township, and is mostly paved. Swenson Road is two miles long and forms, along with Wolf Lake Drive, a main north-south route in Frohn Township. Swenson Road and Parker's Lake Road have been paved and are major north-south routes from the southern boundary of Beltrami County to Tenstrike. Beltrami County continues to upgrade the county roads.

Township roads total approximately 33 miles, most of which have a gravel surface. They appear adequate for the present population use. In the future, as development occurs, there will be a need to maintain or upgrade additional roads to serve the people, the school buses, the mail carriers, etc. It is recommended here that since the cost of road building and maintenance is quite prohibitive on a township's financial resource, that the township takes action to control the growth of developments and their placement in respect to existing roads and highways by means of a land use ordinance. Access to major travel routes, Roosevelt Road and Power Dam Road, should also be limited to prevent multiple approaches along these corridors, which could increase the hazard of traffic accidents. Wherever possible, approaches should front on a feeder road, which intersects at a right angle to the main highway and should not be allowed on curves or within 100 feet of a major intersection.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

One of the most important resources of Frohn Township is the natural beauty of the land, the many lakes, the Mississippi River, and the extensive wooded area. Currently, the resort and services industries of the Bemidji area benefit from the economic activities created by this type of environment. The future of tourism and recreation as an economic resource to Frohn Township will be dependent on how these natural qualities are used and developed.

An asset, which the township has, is the nearly 3,000 acres of publicly owned land. While this land does not directly produce revenue in the form of taxes, it continuously produces timber and wildlife. It also acts as a surface and groundwater buffer and provides recreational and open space for residents and visitors alike. For the most part, these lands are unsuited for general agriculture and rural housing developments. Since 1970, there has been a greater emphasis on year-round recreation. Winter activities that are evident in Frohn Township are ice fishing, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, ice skating, winter camping, and snowshoeing. Spring, summer, and fall activities include swimming, fishing, hunting (ruffed grouse, white-tailed deer), water skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, camping, and canoeing.

The obvious advantage of recreation-based economics is that it uses a renewable resource. Recreation that does not destroy the environment in which it occurs is non-consumptive—the land can be used again and again by many persons to achieve the same positive benefits of exercise and relaxation.

LAND USE PATTERN

The manner in which land is used and developed in an area can be a benefit or hindrance to future growth or maintenance of the area. Most of Frohn Township has been developed over a period of 90+ years by various individuals and agencies with a variety of goals and objectives. Development had been relatively slow through the 1960s, which gave the people involved time to consider most of the effects of their actions. In the past 40 years, there has been a surge of development in the Bemidji area, of which Frohn Township has become a direct recipient.

A good land use plan is essential from the standpoint of maintaining a renewable resource base, a relatively clean appearance of the lakes and countryside, a clean adequate supply of groundwater, and a viable transportation and utility system. The Land Use Plan should consider the human and natural resources of Frohn Township and their interaction within the county and among the large communities in the region. A study of the present land use pattern in Frohn Township revealed at least three distinct types of development. The western third of the township, from a half mile south of the Mississippi River, is primarily used for agricultural activities. The Mississippi corridor and area lakes, which include Wolf and Grace Lakes, contains lake shore residential homes, seasonal summer homes, and resorts used mainly for recreational and leisure-oriented activities. (Housing subdivisions are being developed mainly near Wolf Lake, Stump Lake, and along the Mississippi River; this is the Shoreland District and is administered by Beltrami County). The remainder of the township has farms and many rural residences scattered over the area of lighter, sandy soils and interspersed with blocks of public forest and wetland areas.

Rural residential areas are developing within the township, and will continue to do so within the guidelines of the Zoning and Land Use Ordinance, since most of the township is within easy commuting distance of Bemidji. There are no large commercial enterprises. No major industrial plants are located in Frohn Township. It is the hope of this committee that the future land use requirements of Frohn Township will continue to value the rural lifestyle. The population in the United States is growing and increasing,

and the demand for resources is increasing at a high rate. Because of this, there will be a greater demand on the agricultural sector of Minnesota and the nation to provide food and fiber. The advantage of using land for agricultural production is that it is an operation that uses a renewable resource (soil) if good conservation practices are followed. Therefore, we believe that as much of the land in Frohn Township that is suitable for agriculture should be kept in agricultural production.

Another large demand on the land of Frohn Township will come in the form of desired living space. If this growth is uncontrolled, both the area people and their resources may suffer. One of the strongest controls on growth is made possible by the adoption of subdivisions regulations, currently administered by the county. If high-density living areas develop in Frohn Township it will destroy some of the reasons people have for moving into a rural area. The net result of many close but separate water, sewage, and utility systems is the wasting of resources and the pollution of the land and underground water supply. It is the belief of most of the people of Frohn Township and the Comprehensive Plan Revisions Committee that five acres is an absolute minimum lot size necessary to avert most of the problems that are inherent with modern living in a rural setting where no sewer or water lines are available.

The third major future land use requirements in Frohn Township will be the demand for land and water-based recreation. The present mobility of people and the availability of leisure time will give more people the opportunity to enjoy the lakes, rivers, forests, and natural scenery of the countryside. If land is specifically dedicated for this purpose within the township, and if the type of activities that do not destroy the land are promoted, this recreational demand becomes compatible with other activities and the resource is renewable. However, if the land and waters are destroyed and lose their natural cleanliness and beauty, the demand for recreation in the area will reverse itself.

**SUBDIVISION CONSIDERATIONS or THE IMPACT OF RURAL
SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENTS**

For the purpose of this analysis, a subdivision shall consist of dwellings erected on parcels of land of less than ten acres. The Minnesota Green Acres Law allows a landowner who owns ten tillable acres or more to apply for taxation of his or her land based on agricultural value rather than market value. Therefore, there exists an economic incentive for agricultural use of the land.

Each parcel uses a common water supply, even though there may be a separate well on each parcel. The groundwater is a shared resource. Solid wastes generated in subdivisions are disposed of at the transfer station. (If the wastes are not handled properly, the neighbors are affected.) A subdivision resident enjoys the open space of the countryside, the farmlands, the woods, and the wetlands. (The landowner pays the taxes on his or her land and everyone shares the cost of public forests and waters.) A subdivision resident expects the nearest public road to be maintained, whether or not he or she has frontage on it. A subdivision resident expects to have phone services, electricity, school bus service, and rural mail delivery or initiate it in a rural area. Only the installation of electricity is prorated; the other costs are passed on to the community.

The major impact of subdivisions on Frohn Township occurs in:

1. The increased road building or maintenance cost.
2. The loss of actual or potential agricultural land, which tends to restrict agricultural operations and devalues the agricultural resource base.
3. The social and cultural breakdown of the local agricultural community. This breakdown occurs because eventually the number of subdivisions and residents become greater than the number of those involved in agriculture. The result being the majority rules and the community is abandoned as a viable agricultural community.

The townships surrounding Bemidji in a 10 to 12 mile radius, including those in the northern part of Hubbard County, have a resident population that is heavily dependent on the economy of Bemidji for a livelihood. If the townships encourage the development of subdivisions intentionally or through the lack of a responsible plan for residential development, then the action of the Bemidji City governments to extend its corporate boundaries (annex) may occur without consulting the township or recognizing its authority to maintain the integrity of the township's boundaries. A responsible government must plan and act in the best interest of the majority of the people it serves.

SANITATION REGULATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Sanitation in this document refers to the conditions and rules of health and practice of drainage and disposal of sewage. Sanitation within a community should be considered with respect to how each living unit maintains healthy conditions and how each unit's activities may affect the health of the neighborhood. Individual septic systems are the main wastewater treatment systems used in the township. Frohn Township follows the guidelines of Beltrami County Sewage and Wastewater Treatment Ordinance, which in turn is governed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Rule 7080. The present use of individual septic systems dictates that rural residences be adequately spaced to insure a sanitary water supply and to prevent the need for installation of costly community sewer systems.

LAND USE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The foregoing information on the economy, population, present land use, and future needs indicate a continual change within Frohn Township and the Bemidji area. The purpose of this plan is to direct changes in the development of Frohn Township for the benefit of this community.

The City of Bemidji is expected to continue to expand. There will continue to be people from other areas moving into the township at random points. Subdivisions will have a much greater impact than the family which moves onto agricultural property, but with proper planning and controls, the subdivisions will not cause the township undue financial hardship.

Agriculture will remain as a partial economic base for some of the residents and as a subsistence activity for others. Requiring a minimum lot size of 40 acres in primary agricultural areas will insure that the better soils will still be available for food and fiber products.

Future commercial development in Frohn Township is, for the most part, prohibited as the market and facilities for such operations are available in Bemidji.

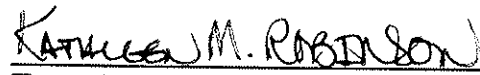
The development of outdoor recreation depends on many variables including access to beautiful lakes and forests, the ability of the person to find and enjoy what he or she is seeking, the chance for adventure and challenge in a non-urban environment, and many others.

The adoption of this land use development plan, administered through the Frohn Township Zoning and Land Use Ordinance, will control the orderly growth and future development of Frohn Township in a manner that encompasses the wishes and needs of all township residents.

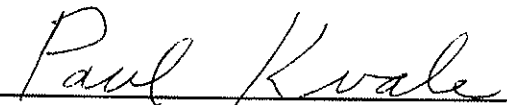
Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Frohn Township this 25th day of February, 2014.


Township Chairperson


Township Supervisor


Township Supervisor


Township Supervisor


Township Supervisor

Attest: 
Township Clerk

