

Fresh Coast Planning

950 Taylor Avenue, Ste 200
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240
greg@freshcoastplanning.com

Emma M. Posillico, AICP
616-490-9955
emma@freshcoastplanning.com

Brian Werschem
231-206-4821
bwerschem@gmail.com

Meghann Reynolds
616-610-7786
meghannr10@gmail.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Laketown Township Planning Commission
From: Emma M. Posillico, AICP *emp*
Date: February 20, 2019
Re: Proposed Master Plan Chapter Eleven & Appendix / Revised Chapter Seven, Chapter Eight, Chapter Nine, and Chapter Ten

Pursuant to the Laketown Township Master Plan Framework, attached for your review are drafts of proposed Chapter Eleven – Implementation and the Appendix to update the Laketown Township Master Plan.

The content of Chapter Eleven is new, as Implementation was not directly addressed in detail in the existing master plan documents. As such, you will note that there is not bold text indicating existing language, or strike-thru of existing language. The intent of this chapter is to serve as a guide for the utilization of the master plan when reviewing proposed zoning ordinance amendments, or when considering the master plan map in regards to future land use in the township. We do have one (1) item of note for your attention.

1. Terminology – It is our recommendation that the Master Plan Map Term “Manufactured Home Community” be removed from the master plan. In our experience, it is not common to utilize this term on the master plan map itself, although it shall be a permitted use listed in the zoning ordinance. Further, pursuant to our discussions, it is our recommendation that the Master Plan Map Term “Public/Semi-Public” be removed from use. We believe that such a term can be limiting for the land potential in a township, particularly given the amount of land that Laketown Township currently has noted as “Public/Semi-Public”. We recommend considering classifying those areas with their current Zoning District, pending discussion among the Planning Commission. These two (2) terms would need to be removed from both tables currently shown on page two (2) of Chapter 11.

As aforementioned, also attached for your review is the draft Appendix. The Appendix is separated into Community Mapping and a Community Profile. The Community Mapping Appendix will include Maps 1-6, which will be updates to maps in previous master plans. We continue to work with the maps provided and Ottawa County GIS to modernize the maps as much as possible, but did not want to delay the distribution of the remaining materials. We will provide updated maps as soon as possible. Maps 7-9 are maps that we typically include in master plans, but were not included in previous Laketown Master Plans. As such, the data is available to create these maps, pursuant to your discussion and further direction. In regards to the Community Profile portion of the Appendix, the base content was generated from previous master plans, in terms of data sets to consider (population, housing, economy, etcetera). However, the age of the existing data required updates, as well as content that the U.S. Census Bureau now provides that was not available previously. As such, you will note that there is not bold text indicating existing language, or strike-thru of existing language.

Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten

Pursuant to your direction at your January 4, 2019 meeting, attached are revisions to Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten. Given that the changes were not extensive and we believe the revision documents to be self-explanatory, we do not provide a synopsis of your direction

herein. In the instance you require a copy of your direction, please let us know and we will provide it to you.

Also included is a copy of the current Master Plan map. We will bring a large copy to the meeting for your discussion and forthcoming updates.

We will be prepared to discuss these items further at your March 4, 2019 meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

EMP
Associate Planner

Attachments

- ✓ Completed
- Remaining

Task	Components	Outcome	Timeline
✓ Organizational Meeting (Meeting #1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present Framework ● Identify responsibilities/limitations ● Identify subareas for Charrettes ● Gather important issues for each Charrette ● Notice of Intent to Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finetune Framework content and timeline ● Distribute Notice of Intent to Plan, if not completed ● Receive direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● April 2018
✓ Review of current Master Plan documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comprehensive review of current Master Plan documents to streamline content and reduce unnecessary or antiquated provisions by Fresh Coast Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gain understanding of current Master Plan ● Present streamlined chapters at appropriate future meeting(s) to serve as the base for each classification/chapter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● April 2018
✓ Pre-Charrettes Meeting (Meeting #2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present comprehensive summary of Master Plan documents with recommendations ● Present updated Framework for each classification/chapter ● Present outline and materials for Charrettes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission ● Finalize Framework content and timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May 2018
✓ Northern Township Charrette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct public participation charrette 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect valuable contributions from the public ● Analyze data for future chapter classification/chapter composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● June 25 (tentatively)
✓ Blue Star Highway Charrette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct public participation charrette 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect valuable contributions from the public ● Analyze data for future chapter classification/chapter composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● July 12 (tentatively)
✓ Agricultural Charrette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct public participation charrette 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect valuable contributions from the public ● Analyze data for future chapter classification/chapter composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● July 23 (tentatively)
✓ Additional Charrette (if identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Conduct public participation charrette</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Collect valuable contributions from the public</i> ● <i>Analyze data for future chapter classification/chapter composition</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>July 26 (if necessary)</i>
✓ Create Introduction and/or Community Composition Chapter (Meeting #3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide succinct document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● August 2018
✓ Create Agricultural Chapter (Meeting #3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Natural Features ● Relocate language from 1991 Future Land Use ● Relocate language from 1996 Future Land Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Agricultural Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● August 2018

- ✓ Completed
- Remaining

✓ Create Residential Chapter(s) (Meeting #3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft(s) created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Natural Features ● Relocate language from 1991 Future Land Use ● Relocate language from 1996 Future Land Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Residential Chapter document(s) to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● August 2018
✓ Update and incorporate Blue Star Highway Chapter (Meeting #4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Appendix A ● Relocate language from 1991 Appendix B ● Restructure 2008 Blue Star Highway Subarea Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Blue Star Highway Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 2018
✓ Create Commercial Chapter (Meeting #4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine Eldean property ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Natural Features ● Relocate language from 1991 Future Land Use ● Relocate language from 1996 Future Land Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Commercial Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examine Eldean property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 2018
✓ Create Industrial Chapter (Meeting #4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Natural Features ● Relocate language from 1991 Future Land Use ● Relocate language from 1996 Future Land Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Industrial Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November 2018
✓ Create Recreational & Facilities Chapter (Meeting #5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Community Facilities and Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Recreational & Facilities Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● December 2018
✓ Create Public Utilities Chapter (Meeting #5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Utility Services ● Verify topography limits for utility infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Public Utilities Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● December 2018
✓ Create Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Transportation Chapter document to the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● December 2018

- ✓ Completed
- Remaining

Chapter & Street Plan (Meeting #5)	Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Transportation	● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission	
✓ Create Environmental Chapter (Meeting #5)	● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Relocate language from 1991 Goals and Objectives ● Relocate language from 1991 Natural Features ● Relocate language from 1991 Future Land Use ● Relocate language from 1996 Future Land Use	● Provide Environmental Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission	● December 2018
● Create Zoning Plan, Master Plan Terminology Chapter (Meeting #6)	● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning	● Provide Zoning Plan and Master Plan Terminology Chapter document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission	● March 2019
● Create Appendix (Meeting #6)	● Draft created by Fresh Coast Planning ● Reorganize and relocate statistical data, maps, tables and the like	● Provide Appendix document to the Planning Commission ● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission	● March 2019
● Review & Create Master Plan Map (Meeting #6)	● Examine current Master Plan Map with Planning Commission ● Examine Eldean property ● Remove Public/Semi-Public	● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission and create draft Master Plan Map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examine Eldean property 	● March /April 2019
● Composition of draft Master Plan	● Compile first draft of Master Plan by Fresh Coast Planning	● Creation of first draft of Master Plan by Fresh Coast Planning	● April 2019
● Meeting with Planning Commission to present the draft Master Plan (Meeting #7)	● Present the first draft of the Master Plan to the Planning Commission	● Receive comments and direction from the Planning Commission ● Perform amendments to the Master Plan, if necessary	● April /May 2019
● <i>Composition of final draft Master Plan, if necessary</i>	● <i>Composition of amendments to the Master Plan by Fresh Coast Planning</i>	● <i>Creation of final draft of Master Plan</i>	● <i>TBD</i>
● Review of final draft of Master Plan, if necessary	● Present to the Planning Commission	● Receive approval for distribution to the township attorney for review	● May 2019
● Send Plan to the township attorney	● Present the proposed Plan to the township attorney	● Receive legal review of the proposed Plan	● May/June 2019

- ✓ Completed
- Remaining

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide attorney comments to the Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present attorney comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide any minor revisions, if necessary ● Receive approval for distribution to the Township Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● June 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Plan to the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present the proposed Plan to the Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive approval for public distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● June/July 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute Plan in accordance with Planning Enabling Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send copy to local governments and applicable organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive comment up to 63 days for local governments and applicable organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comment period satisfied by approximately July/August 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review comments (Meeting #8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present comments received to Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate comments, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● September 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-presentation Open House for Residents and General Public (Optional & Meeting #9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-presentation Open House to answer direct questions of the residents and general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address resident and general public inquires of the Master Plan prior to the final presentation ● Educate the public regarding the content of the Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● September/October 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present final Master Plan at Public Hearing (Meeting #9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation of final Master Plan to the Planning Commission and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educate the public regarding the content of the Master Plan ● Completion of Master Plan and adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● September/October 2019 (same day as the pre-presentation open house)

Chapter Eleven Implementation

Introduction

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide to the continued development of Laketown Township it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Laketown Township Planning Commission, the Board of Trustees, and Township staff. This is accomplished through a number of methods including adoption of ordinances, policies, and administrative procedures. Along with these methods, utilization of the goals and recommendations throughout this Plan, in addition to this chapter is imperative.

Zoning and Land Use Regulations

Zoning represents a legal means for the Township to regulate private property to achieve orderly land use relationships, and is the process most commonly used to implement community plans. The zoning process consists of an official zoning map and accompanying Zoning Ordinance text. The official zoning map divides the community into different districts within which certain uses are permitted. The Zoning Ordinance text establishes the permitted uses, regulations to control density, height, bulk, setbacks, lot sizes and accessory uses, among other physical and linear attributes. The Zoning Ordinance also sets forth procedures for special approval provisions and regulates accessory structures such as signs. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as the type of development.

The Planning Commission and Township Board should periodically review and make any necessary revisions to the zoning regulations to ensure that the recommendations of the Master Plan are instituted. Further, the Zoning Ordinance requires systematic and frequent updates to address needs resulting from land use trends, case law, and state statutes.

Relationship of Master Plan Classifications to Zoning Districts (Zoning Plan)

Complementing the text of the Master Plan is its map, which identifies land use classifications by which the Township organizes and intends future improvements and uses. These classification terms are intentionally general in nature so as to not necessarily be specific to one use or type of use permitted by the Zoning Ordinance and its map.

In other words, while the land use classifications are related to the Zoning Districts identified on the Zoning Ordinance map, as shown in the table below, specific future uses are determined by numerous natural and man made features of the landscape, such as public utilities, topography, soils, road improvements, surrounding uses, existing densities, etcetera, as well as other planning considerations such as compatibility, public safety, and access. Consequently, while the land use classifications of the Master Plan map are designed to serve as a guide for future uses they are not considered to be a mandate for immediate improvements, public, private, or otherwise.

Ultimately, while the Master Plan Map identifies areas for future uses, the feasibility of a use is determined by the consistency of the proposal with the map and text of the Master Plan; the compatibility with surrounding uses and infrastructure, and the Zoning Ordinance, including its regulations regarding lot size, height, area, bulk, location, etcetera for each of its Districts, and; the capability of the property supporting the -use related to the Zoning Ordinance.

Terminology

Table of Master Plan Terms & Zoning Ordinance Map District Terms

Master Plan Map Terms	Zoning Ordinance Map Districts
Agriculture	Agricultural (AG)
Rural Estate	Rural Estate (R-1)
Residential, Low Density	Low Density Residential (R-2)
Residential, Medium Density	Medium Density Residential (R-3)
Manufactured Home Community	Medium Density Residential (R-3)
Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial District (C-1) & General Business District (C-2)
Light Industrial	Industrial District (I-1)
Public/Semi-Public	-

Relationship of Master Plan Map Terms to Master Plan Chapters

Several Chapters of this Master Plan identify the goals, recommendations, and strategies regarding future land use in the Township. While the goals, recommendations, and strategies will likely always evolve, the intended uses related to the chapter titles will remain the same. Those chapter titles can generally be related to the Master Plan map terms as provided in the table below.

Master Plan Map Terms	Master Plan Chapters
Agriculture	Agricultural Uses
Rural Estate	Residential Uses
Residential, Low Density	Residential Uses
Residential, Medium Density	Residential Uses
Manufactured Home Community	Residential Uses
Commercial	Blue Star Highway, Commercial Uses
Light Industrial	Industrial Uses
Public/Semi-Public	Recreational Facilities, Environment

Master Plan Map

Within this chapter and the Appendix is the Master Plan Map of Laketown Township.

Appendix

Available within this appendix is the following data:

- Appendix A - Community Mapping
- Appendix B – Community Profile, Laketown Township

Appendix A

Community Mapping

Contents:

Following are the community maps as well as their established purpose, which are incorporated as part of the Master Plan. These maps are not intended to be limited to their purposes provided below but rather establish a minimum relationship to the Master Plan.

1. **Master Plan** – creates future land use classifications and delineates boundaries for certain uses of land
2. **Location Map** – shows Laketown Township within the context of Allegan County to illustrate connections to adjacent municipalities and the lakeshore
3. **Street Map** – documents existing network of transportation infrastructure to illustrate feasibility of supporting a proposed use
4. **Community Facilities** – establishes existing public water and sanitary sewer systems to illustrate feasibility of supporting proposed development
5. **Existing Development Patterns** – illustrates current land uses within the township
6. **Generalized Environmental Suitability for Rural Development** – indicates the location of soils within the Township that present severe limitations for both building and onsite septic systems
7. **Slope** – illustrates the impact that topography has on drainage
8. **Woodlands and Wetlands** – documents highly scattered pattern of woodland and wetland features
9. **Prime Farmland Soils** – classifies areas of the township on the basis of soil suitability for general agricultural crop production

Appendix B Community Profile

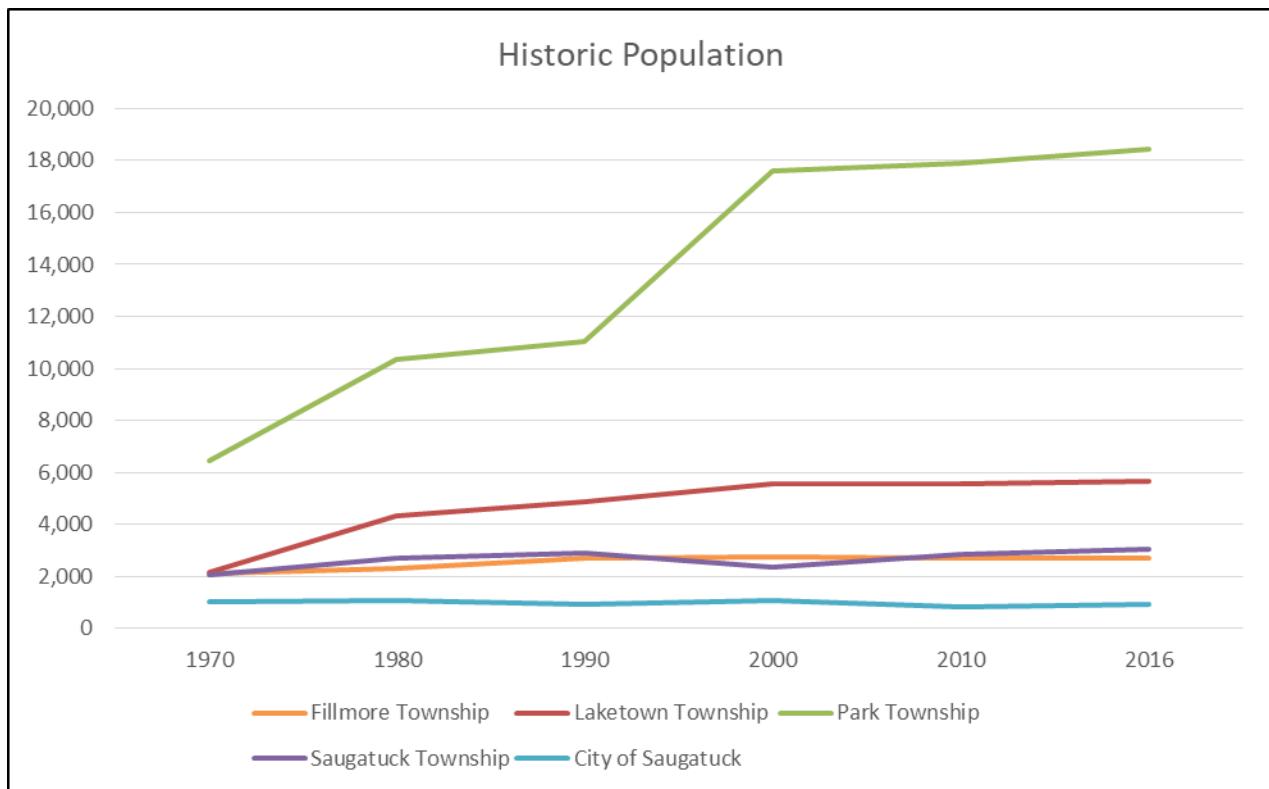
It is important to understand the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the township in order to understand our past, as well as guide future policy decisions.

Population

Historic Population Trends

As noted in the table below, Laketown was just behind Park Township for highest overall population growth within the region between 1970 and 2016, with a growth rate of approximately 160%. It should be noted that Park Township had a substantially higher population initially in 1970, a trend which has only increased as their population approaches 20,000 residents.

HISTORIC POPULATION- LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP & SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES, 1970-2016							
Community	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2016	% Change 1970-2016
Fillmore Township	2,126	2,307	2,710	2,756	2,723	2,712	27.6%
Laketown Township	2,175	4,332	4,888	5,561	5,573	5,647	159.6%
Park Township	6,461	10,354	11,060	17,579	17,915	18,440	185.4%
Saugatuck Township	2,067	2,701	2,916	2,376	2,866	3,067	48.4%
City of Saugatuck	1,022	1,079	954	1,065	821	942	-7.8%
Allegan County	66,575	81,555	90,509	105,665	111,385	113,666	70.7%
Ottawa County	128,181	157,174	187,768	238,314	261,376	276,583	115.8%
Source: US Census 1970-2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2016							



Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2016

Population Projections

Population projections were prepared by the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission from 2010 Census data. Laketown’s population is expected to grow 16.8% between 2016 and 2030, while it only grew 1.6% between 2000 and 2016. Saugatuck Township and Park Township are anticipated to have even higher rates of population increase, while Allegan County as a whole is projected to have a 19.2% increase in population from 2016-2030. It should be noted that neighboring Ottawa County is currently the fastest growing county in Michigan, growing 8.6% in population between 2016 and 2017, according to the U.S. Census. So while population growth has slowed over recent years, the population of Laketown Township is anticipated to continue increasing.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030					
Community	2020	2025	2030	% Change 2016-2030	% Change 2000-2016
Fillmore Township	2,732	2,757	2,783	2.6%	-1.6%
Laketown Township	6,051	6,325	6,598	16.8%	1.6%
Park Township	20,604	22,005	23,406	26.9%	4.9%
Saugatuck Township	3,416	3,652	3,889	26.8%	-14.6%
City of Saugatuck	871	844	817	-13.3%	-11.6%
Allegan County	123,454	129,476	135,498	19.2%	7.6%
Ottawa County	316,671	343,106	369,541	33.6%	16.1%

Source: West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, Percentage and Numeric Based Trend Projections

Current Laketown Residents

The information below is intended to be utilized as a generalized descriptor of current Laketown Township residents, based upon current Census data.

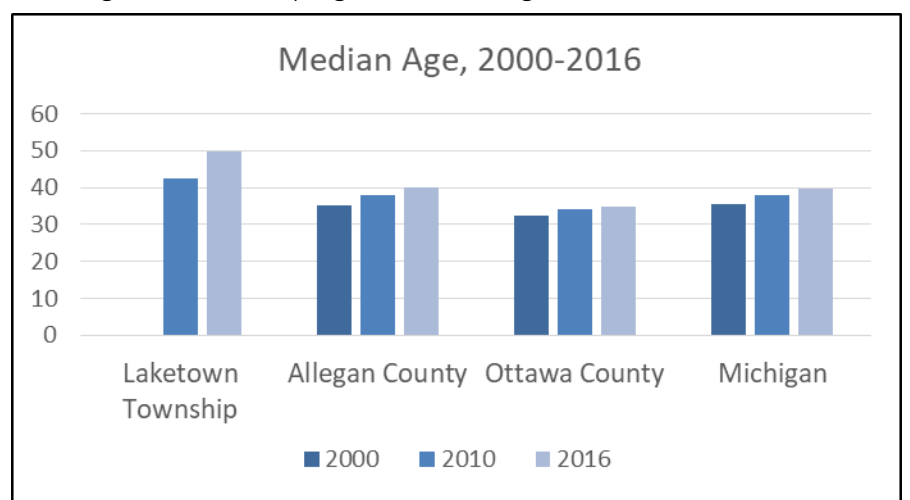
Age

The age of township residents provides an indication of economic, transportation, recreational and community needs for all age groups. Sensitive community planning can help Laketown maintain its high quality of life, while providing the opportunity for housing and services which benefit every segment of the population.

LAKETOWN AGE DISTRIBUTION						
Age Groups	1990	% of 1990 Total Pop.	2000	% of 2000 Total Pop.	2016	% of 2016 Total Pop.
Under 5	348	7.1%	314	5.6%	246	4.5%
5-14	773	15.8%	892	16.0%	714	13.0%
15-24	675	13.8%	682	12.3%	621	11.3%
25-34	967	19.8%	544	9.8%	419	7.6%
35-44	947	19.4%	994	17.9%	584	10.6%
45-54	540	11.1%	937	16.8%	1,058	19.2%
55-64	286	5.9%	572	10.3%	887	16.1%
65 and over	352	7.2%	626	11.3%	976	17.7%
Total	4,888	100.0%	5,561	100.0%	5,505	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey 2016 5-Year Estimates

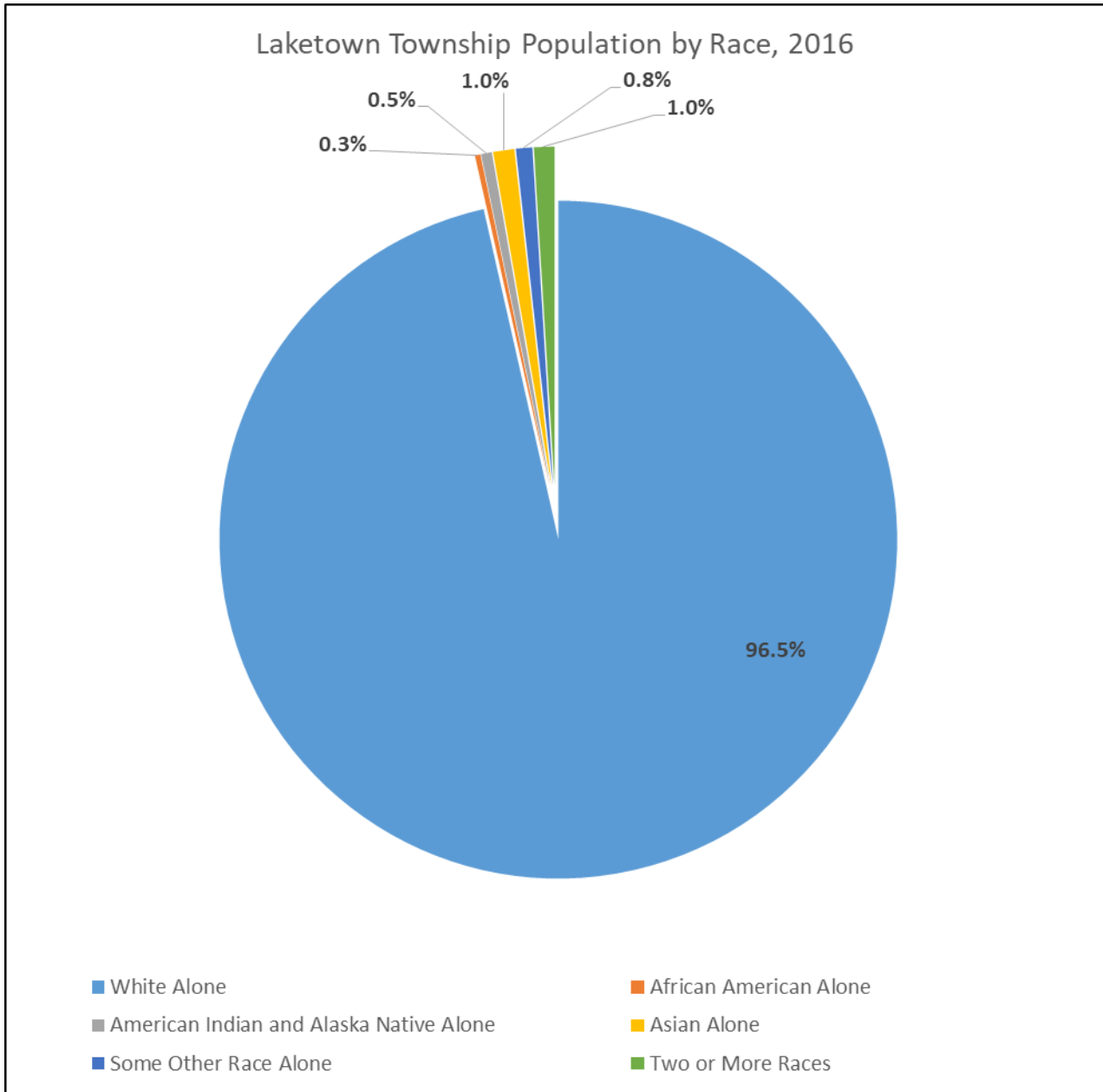
In 1990, nearly 69% of the population was between the ages of 5 and 44, the two largest age groups being 25-34 and 35-44 years old. In 2000, these two age cohorts had progressed to being between 35 and 54 years old, comprising nearly 35% of Laketown's population. By 2016, 53% of the township's population was 45 years or older. The median age in Laketown Township in 2016 was 49.6, which is significantly higher than many of the surrounding communities. This population age progression indicates that the population of Laketown, in alignment with the area as a whole, is growing older, and adequate provisions need to be in place to plan for an older population.



Source: U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2016

Race

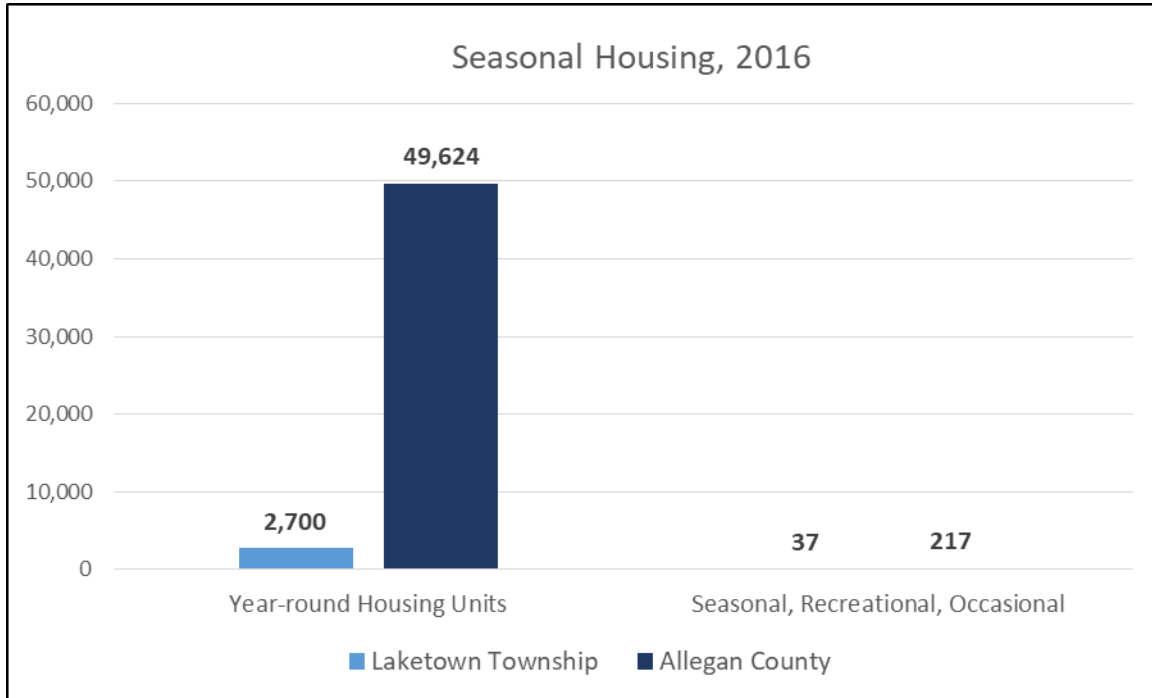
In 2016, 96.5% of the Laketown Township population identified their race as “White Alone”. The next highest race identified was “Asian Alone”, at 1.0% of the population. While this figure is comparable to many of the surrounding communities, it is important to be aware of and consider when analyzing the composition of the township’s residents.



Source: U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2016

Housing

In 2016, year round housing units accounted for 98.6% of the total housing stock in Laketown Township, versus 99.6% for Allegan County, indicating only a small seasonal population for both the township and county. This indicates a stable, full time population rather than a transient or seasonal population.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016

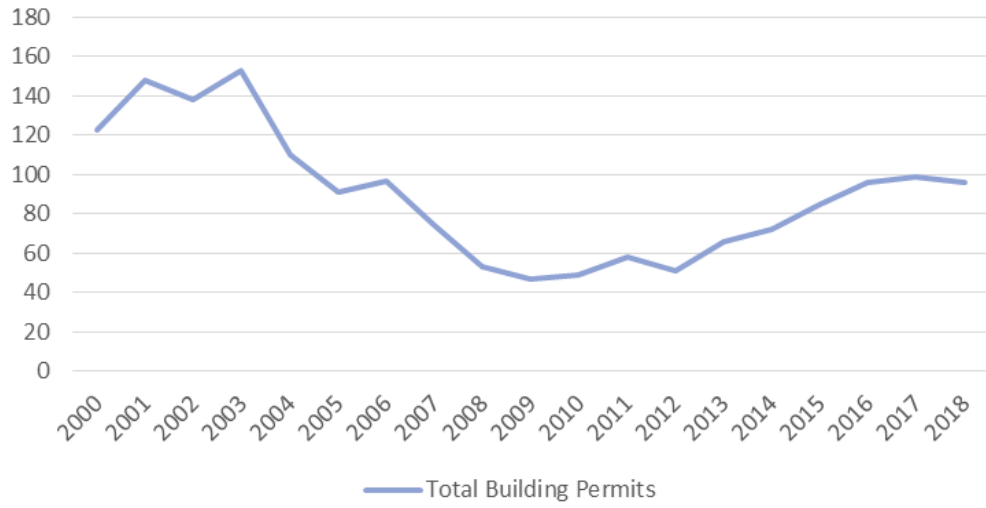
CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY FOR LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP

Year	Total Building Permits	Single Family	Duplex	Condo Units	Other
2000	123	31	0	11	88
2001	148	35	1	9	107
2002	138	31	0	14	100
2003	153	32	1	14	114
2004	110	25	*	15	70
2005	91	20	0	0	71
2006	97	19	0	0	78
2007	74	18	0	0	56
2008	53	14	0	0	39
2009	47	13	0	0	34
2010	49	3	0	0	46
2011	58	9	0	0	49
2012	51	15	0	0	36
2013	66	22	0	0	44
2014	72	20	0	0	52
2015	85	26	0	0	59
2016	96	23	*	3	70
2017	99	21	*	9	69
2018	96	20	*	9	67
Total	1,706	397	2	84	1,249

Source: Laketown Township, 2018

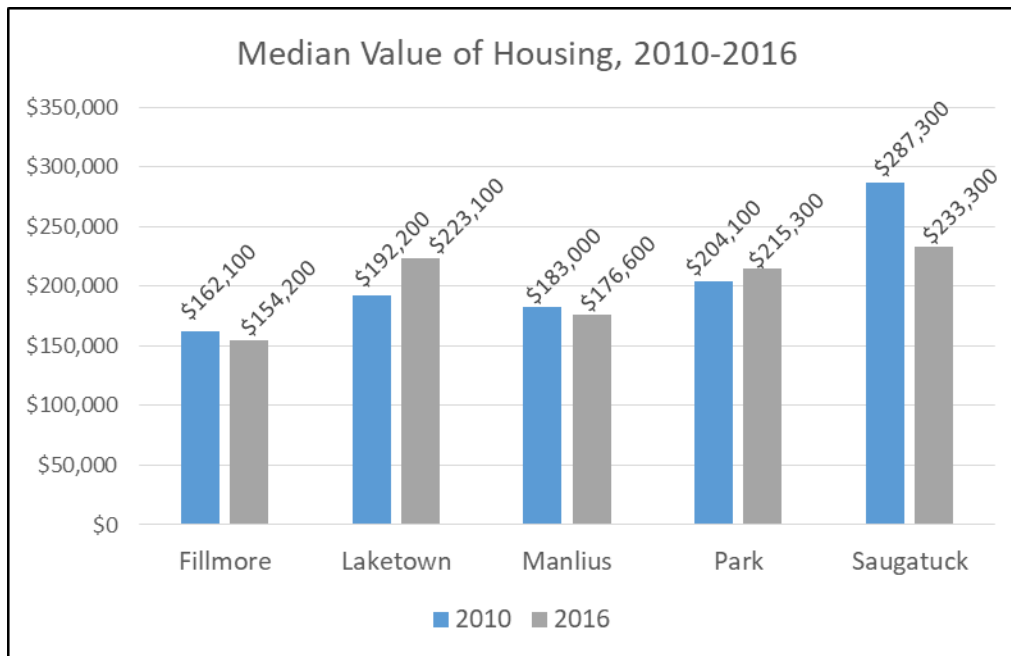
General Note: This information is listed as provided by Laketown Township. The township does not necessarily track building permits by such defined categories, which is why the Total Building Permits column does not equal a summation of the other four (4) columns. As an example, duplex permits issued are included in the condo unit figures for the noted (*) years.

Laketown Township Total Building Permits



Recent construction activity in Laketown Township peaked in 2003, then dropped until modest increases began in 2010, a trend that existed in many areas during and following the Great Recession. The total number of permits issued continues to increase though, as both single-family residential building permits and “other” building permits (which includes commercial uses) are on the rise.

The housing values of Laketown and other ‘lakeside’ communities illustrates the impact that Lake Michigan property values can have on median housing values. From 2010-2016, the median value of housing in Fillmore, Manlius, and Saugatuck decreased. In Laketown during that same time period, the median value of housing increased nearly \$31,000. This trend can be expected to continue as lakefront properties convert seasonal homes into primary residential dwelling units, and a shrinking supply drives prices higher.

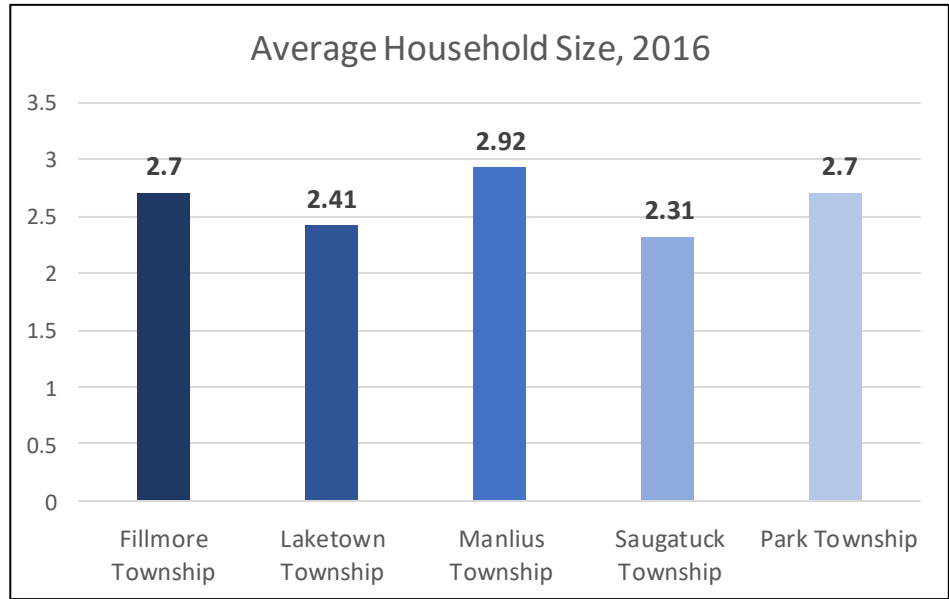


Source: U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016

Laketown and Saugatuck Township have distinctively smaller household sizes than neighboring communities.

Laketown's average household size has been steadily decreasing since 1980, from 3.13 persons to the current occupancy rate of 2.41 persons per household. Saugatuck is the only neighboring community with a smaller average household size of

2.31 persons. This figure also reflects the current trend of an aging population, with shrinking household sizes as township residents grow older in place.

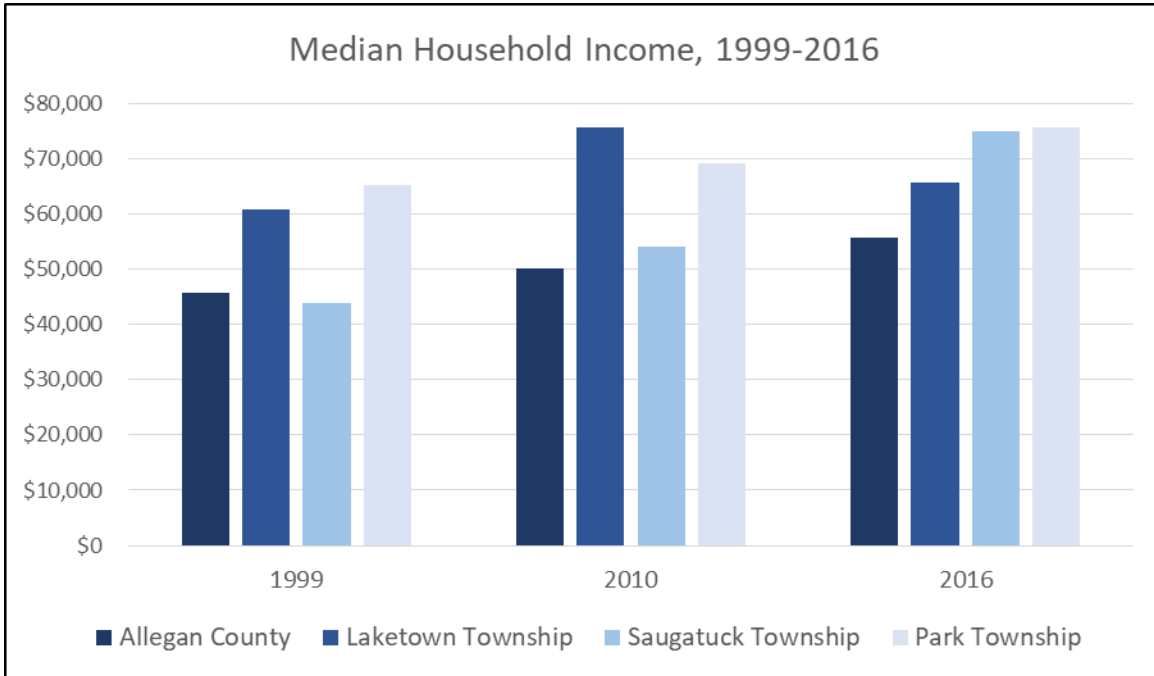


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016

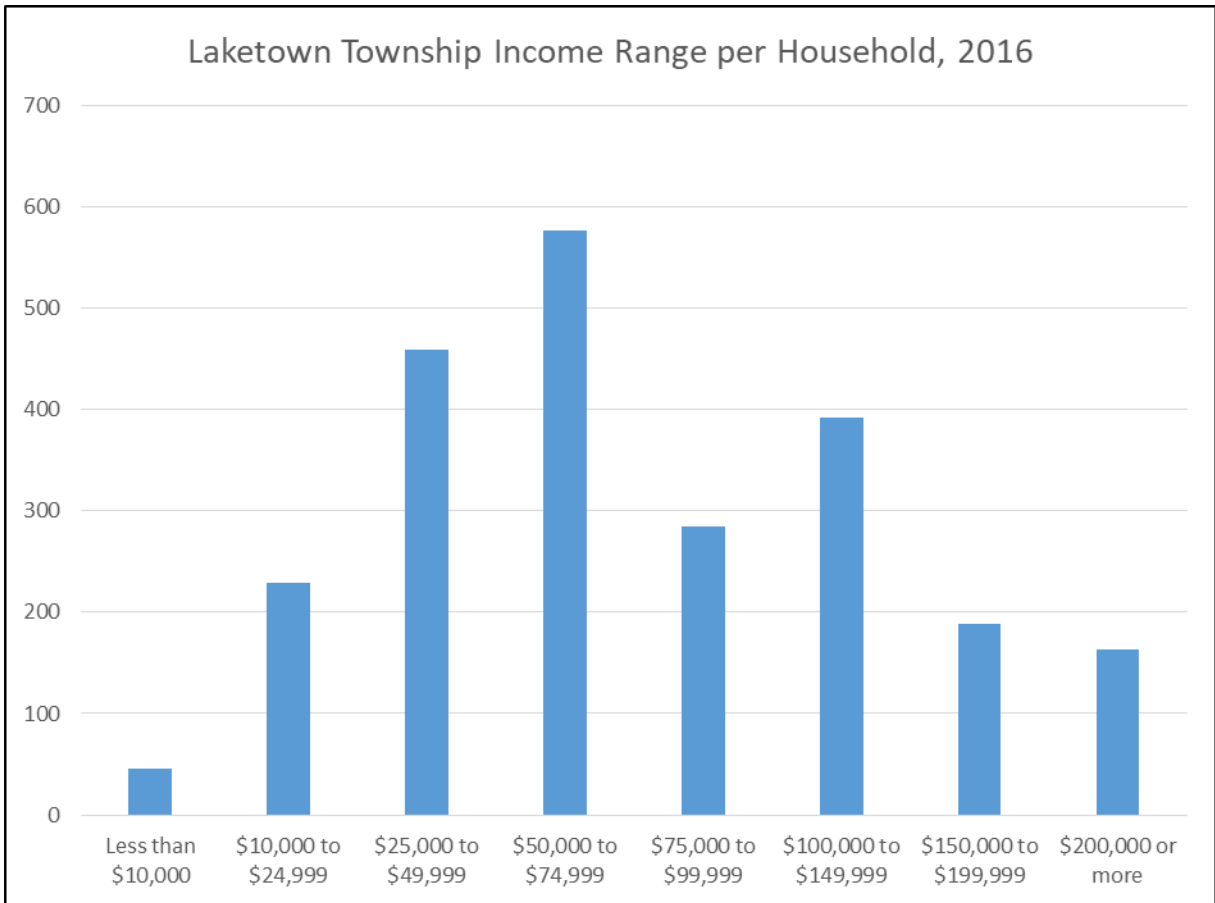
Economy

Income

Median incomes across the entire area have seen a steady increase since 1999, with the relative rank among townships remaining the same. Park Township retained the highest median income in 2016; however, Laketown had the highest area median income in 2010 at \$75,667. In 2016, that figure had decreased to \$65,642.



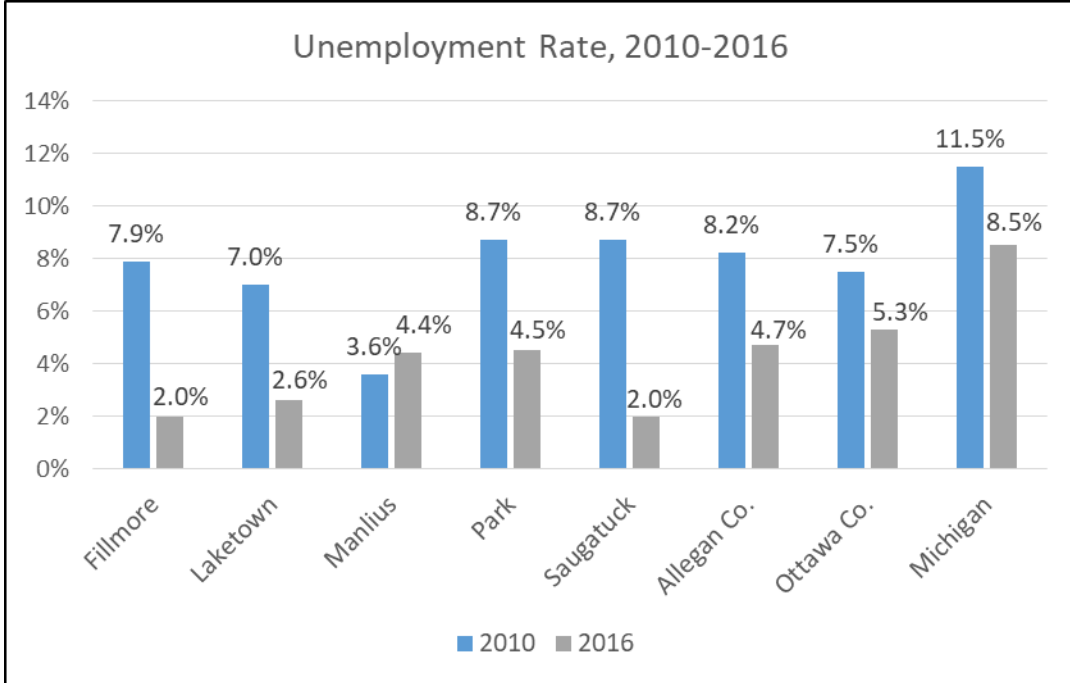
Source: U.S. Census, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016

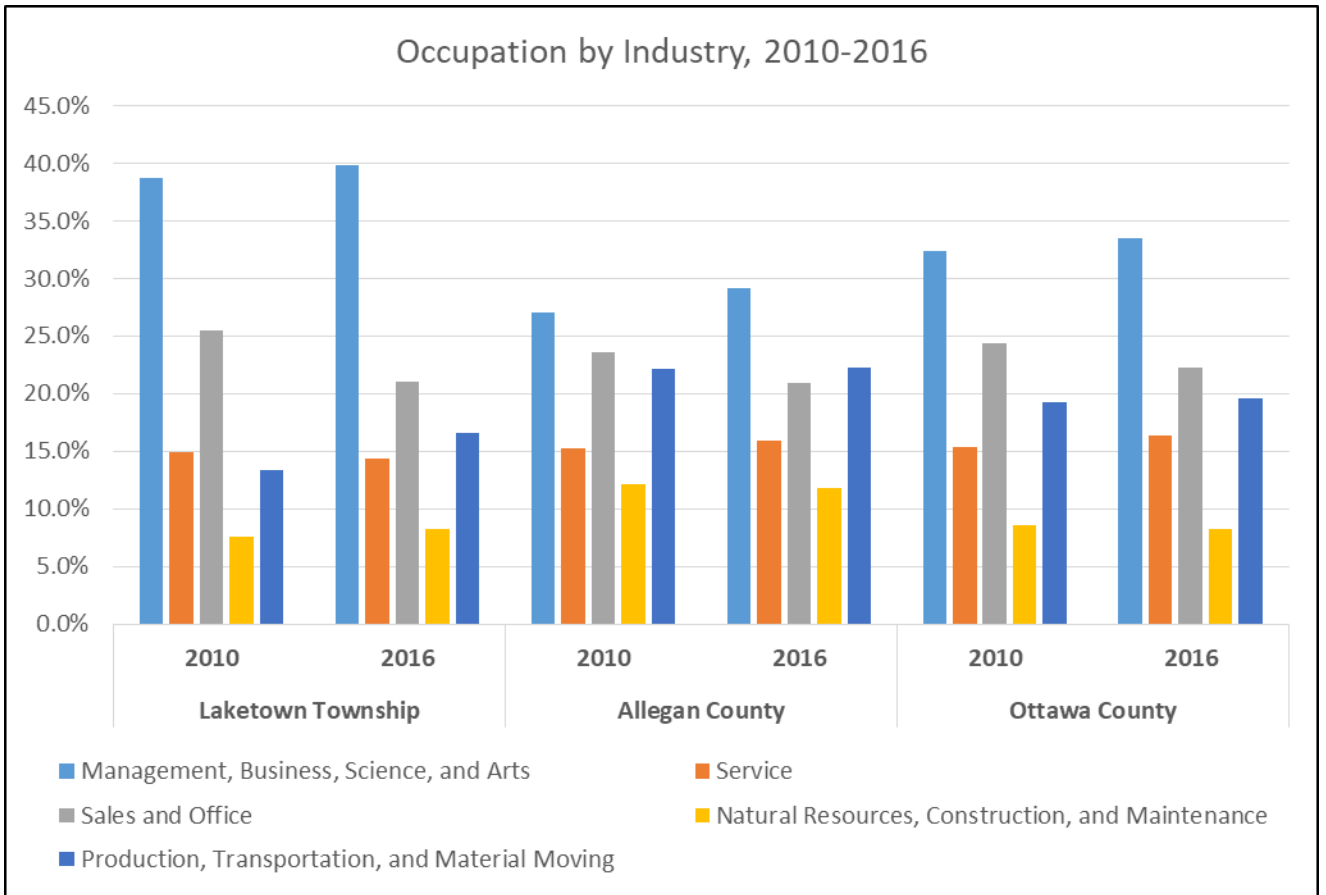
In considering the income range per household, the greatest percentage of households in Laketown Township earned between \$50,000 and \$74,999 in 2016. Approximately 31.8% of the total population had median household incomes of \$100,000 or more though. As median incomes continue to rank higher than surrounding regions, Laketown can expect more investment in their community related to housing and other residential related services.

Employment



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2016

The unemployment rate in Laketown Township decreased from 7.0% in 2010 to 2.6% in 2016. While this is a notable decline, it was mirrored in many local communities and counties, as the area continues to recover from the Great Recession.

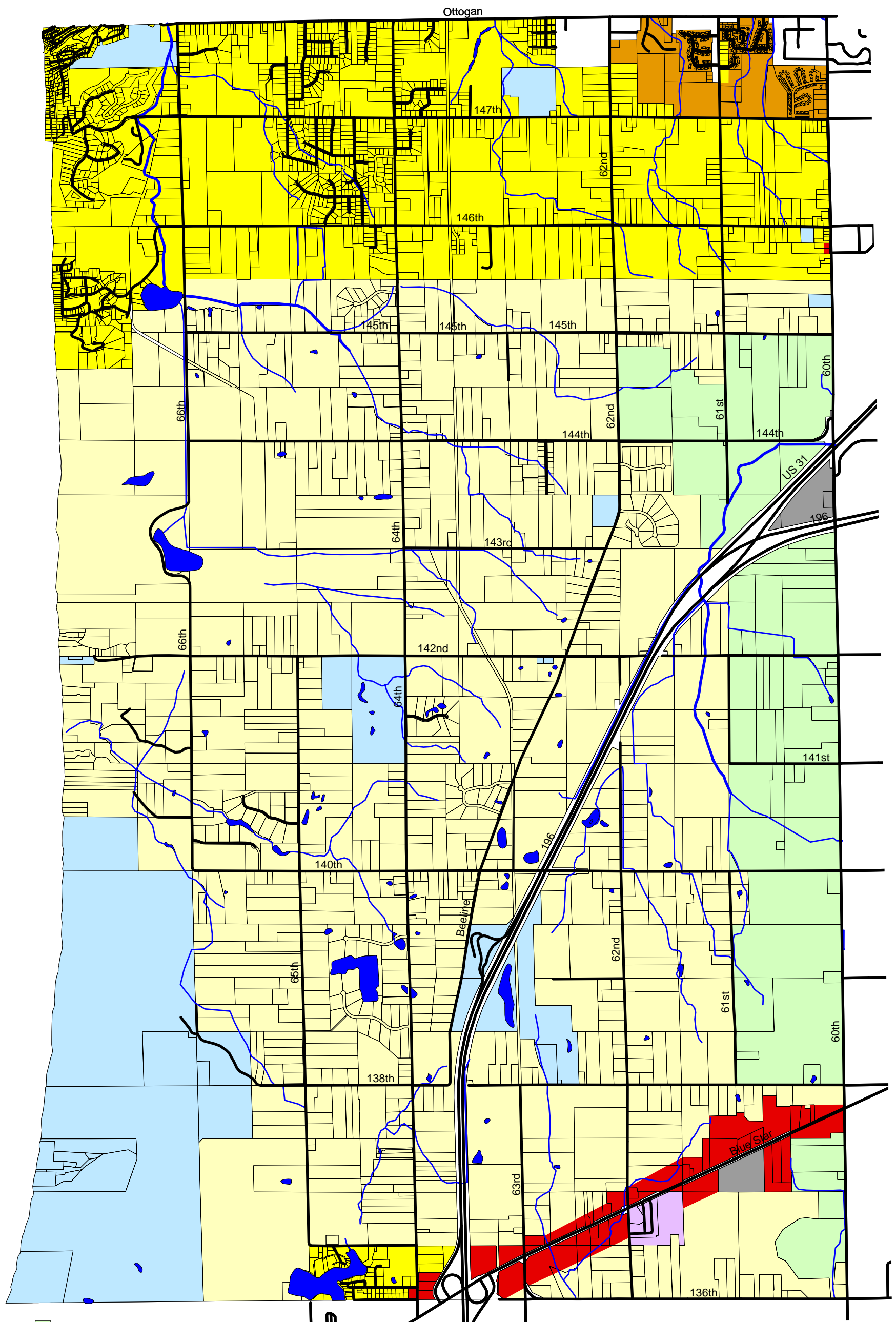


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2016

The chart above compares the Occupation by Industry of Laketown residents from 2010 to 2016, with surrounding Allegan County and neighboring Ottawa County. It is important to note that these figures represent employees that live in Laketown Township, but may not necessarily work in the township. In both 2010 and 2016, the majority of Laketown residents were employed in the “Management, Business, Science, and Arts” industries. This majority trend was also reflected in Allegan and Ottawa Counties. The smallest industry represented in 2010 and 2016 was the “Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance” industry, in Laketown Township, as well as Allegan and Ottawa Counties.

COMMUTER PATTERNS IN LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP 2000-2016				
Laketown Township	2000		2016	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than 5 minutes	58	2.0%	47	1.7%
5 to 9 minutes	355	12.7%	319	11.6%
10 to 14 minutes	688	24.6%	654	23.7%
15 to 19 minutes	736	26.3%	700	25.4%
20 to 29 minutes	638	22.8%	541	19.6%
30 to 44 minutes	121	4.3%	313	11.4%
45 to 59 minutes	109	4.0%	93	3.4%
60 or more minutes	93	3.3%	87	3.2%
Total	2,798	100.0%	2,754	100.0%
Source: U.S. Census, 2000; American Community Survey 2016 5-Year Estimates				

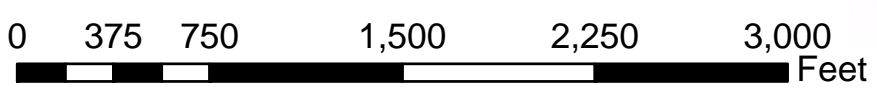
When analyzing employment in an area, it is also pertinent to consider commuting patterns of residents, as the length and ease of a commute does factor heavily into a person's decision where to locate. With limited means of public transportation available in Laketown Township, reliance on personal automobiles is the primary mode of carrying people throughout the area. In 2016, 62.4% of the working population in Laketown Township spent not more than 20 minutes commuting to work, which is just slightly less than the 2000 Census figure of 65.6% of the working population commuting 20 minutes or less.



- A, Agriculture
- RE, Rural Estate
- LDR, Low Density Residential
- MDR, Medium Density Residential
- MHC, Manufactured Home Community
- C, Commercial
- I, Light Industrial
- P, Public/Semi-Public

Future Land Use Laketown Township Allegan County, Michigan

Source:
Base - Allegan County Land Information Services
ELU - MIRIS 1998 Orthophotos, field-verified by LSL



LSL
LANGWORTHY
STRADER
LEBLANC &
ASSOCIATES, INC.

June 24, 2005

Chapter Seven Recreational & Facilities

Introduction

Laketown Township offers a number of recreational and community facilities to its residents and visitors, including seven parks, six owned by Laketown Township and one owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a Land Conservancy Nature Preserve, lakes, pathways, and a Michigan Department of Transportation rest area. A summary of several of the larger facilities in Laketown Township is provided below.

Parks and Recreation

The Huyser Farm

The Huyser Farm is a 102-acre parcel at the corner of 142nd Avenue and 64th Street. The Huyser Farm Subcommittee, a part of the Township Parks Commission, has developed a long-term strategic plan for the preservation, development, and maintenance of the farm. The plan intends that Huyser Farm will become an educational and ecological center that will draw visitors to the area. The Land Conservancy of West Michigan holds a conservation easement on the property insuring that the lands will be enjoyed by the public for years to come.

Laketown Township Beach Park

This 2.7 acre park, located at the western end of 142nd Avenue, has two hundred feet of Lake Michigan frontage and is used for swimming and other beach related activities. A large sand dune separates the parking area and the beach, which is traversable by a wooden stairway leading up and over the dune. The stairway helps to protect the fragile dune environment while affording visitors access to the lake.

Sanctuary Woods Preserve

Sanctuary Woods Preserve is approximately forty acres in the northwestern corner of the township, on 66th Street near Ottogon Street/**32nd Street**. Phase I and Phase II of development of the park have been completed. Phase III development is a long range goal and includes restoration of the historical Interurban Bridge, interpretive signs, trail signs, improved erosion control, and restrooms.

Saugatuck Dunes State Park

Saugatuck Dunes State Park offers 1,000 acres of land with two and a half miles of shoreline, located within Sections 28, 33, and 34 along the west side of the township. In 2010, the Phase I General Management Plan for Saugatuck Dunes State Park was approved, which designates management zones that reflect the land preservation goals and recreation programming for different areas within the park. Currently, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is in

the process of developing a Phase 2 General Management Plan to establish long-range action goals for the park as a whole.

Pathways

There are 10.25 miles of non-motorized pathway in the township, including a north-south corridor that connects with Saugatuck Township to the south and Park Township and the City of Holland to the north. Future goals for pathways in Laketown Township include the expansion of the system with priority for pathways to Saugatuck Dunes State Park and Laketown Beach, **as well as along the Blue Star Highway**. In addition, a 500-mile route from Indiana through Michigan (US Bike Route 35) follows the west coast shoreline **of Laketown Township** through to the eastern upper Peninsula to Sault Ste. Marie, Canada.

Lakes

There are also several lakes in the township, including Gilligan Lake, Goshorn Lake, and Kelly Lake, offering fishing, swimming, and boating amenities to residents and visitors.

Community Facilities

Historic Town Hall

The former Township Hall is located on 142nd Street just west of Beeline Road. In 2000, a historical marker was erected on site. The Parks Commission has considered moving the building to other locations for the purpose of installing restrooms or educational meeting space.

Township Hall Recreation Complex

The Township Hall Recreation Complex is a 6.4 acre park that features a softball diamond, soccer field, picnic gazebo, and meeting place for classes and indoor activities.

Laketown Township Five-Year Community Parks and Recreation Plan

Laketown Township approved a new five-year recreation plan in October 2017, known as the 2018 Community Parks and Recreation Plan, which includes a comprehensive Action Program and Capital Improvement Plan, and serves as a guide for the future development of recreational opportunities and parks within the township.

In conjunction with that plan, we have concluded that the following goals are principal for maintaining the long-term success of Laketown Township's parks as well as recreational and community facilities. Several of the recommendations and strategies to achieve success provided below are concepts identified in the Action Program of the 2018 Community Parks and Recreation Plan.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Provide and maintain a park, trail, and open space system including access to Lake Michigan that is responsive to the needs and priorities of the township ~~residents~~ **citizens**
- Ensure that future park sites (local and centralized) are identified and preserved
- Provide public facilities and services that are adequate to serve the needs of township ~~residents~~ **citizens**
- Provide ~~residents~~ **citizens** an opportunity to pursue recreational activities on a year-round basis
- Encourage and assist private land owners in developing preservation strategies for their properties
- Develop access to recreational facilities for ~~residents~~ **citizens** with limited physical abilities
- Maintain a plan for the identification and protection of historical sites within the township
- Provide recreational opportunities for all age groups
- New community facilities and services should be placed in locations convenient to the populations for which they were planned

Recommendations

- Better utilize the Saugatuck Dunes State Park by connecting it to existing pathways in Laketown Township
- Provide adequate public recreation access to the lakeshore and other water resources throughout the township
- Acquire and otherwise protect open space in developing areas to maintain the rural character of the township and assure adequate recreational opportunities in the future
- Work with other Laketown Township commissions to integrate requirements for developers of raw land to provide park sites, trails, or open spaces as a part of development planning
- Collaborate with neighboring communities and organizations to establish and expand a network of greenways as corridors for wildlife and trails for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and other recreational activities

Strategies

- Implement the Action Program and Capital Improvement Plan outlined in the 2018 Community Parks & Recreation Plan, **as amended**
- Acquire additional property suitable for development of active and passive recreation, funding through the general fund, donor funds, and grant funds
- Develop and implement ordinance language that requires new land developments to expand non-motorized opportunities throughout the township using a combination of shared use paths and bike lanes

- Apply for grant funds from a variety of sources, such as Allegan County, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund through DNR, as well as private foundations and sources
- The Township Board should continue to support the implementation of the 2018 Community Parks & Recreation Plan, **as amended**

Chapter Eight Municipal Utilities

Introduction

This chapter of the Master Plan reviews the municipal utility services provided to Laketown Township. It does not consider private utilities, such as gas, electric, or broadband services, as Laketown Township has little to no control over those utility services. The residents and businesses of Laketown Township receive water and sanitary sewer utility service from one of three sources: 1) privately-owned wells and septic systems; 2) City of Holland; or 3) Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority.

Privately-owned Systems

The majority of the township is served by privately-owned wells and septic systems, which are common in rural areas where public water and sewer are not available. Private wells and septic systems serving single properties are regulated by the Allegan County Health Department. In certain areas of the township, soils and the high water table may limit the development capacity of the land, as poorly drained soils can have severe limitations for septic disposal fields.

City of Holland

Laketown Township has utility agreements with the City of Holland to supply public water and sanitary sewer service in the northern portion of the township, systems that are operated and maintained by the Holland Board of Public Works (BPW). The Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Holland is jointly owned by Laketown, Park, Fillmore, Zeeland, and Holland Townships and the City of Holland. Historically, public sanitary sewer has been master planned for all areas north of 145th Avenue. However, sanitary sewer has only been built in specific areas north of 146th Avenue, driven by higher density development. Public water has been expanded adjacent to the public sewer, and extended beyond the public sewer in some areas south of 146th Avenue, such as the Castle Park area. Public water and sewer can be further extended south as capacity allows and as governed by agreements with the City of Holland.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority

Laketown Township has utility agreements with the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority (KLSWA) and Saugatuck Township to supply public water and sanitary sewer service in the southern portion of the Township surrounding Goshorn Lake, systems that are operated and maintained by KLSWA. Historically, public sanitary sewer has been master planned for the area south of 138th Avenue and west of 63rd Street. Public water has been expanded adjacent to the public sewer, and extended beyond the public sewer to Island Lake Road. Public water also extends east on 136th Avenue to The Ravines development in Saugatuck Township, but connections to Laketown Township from this water main are somewhat limited.

Public water and sewer may be further extended north as capacity allows and as governed by existing agreements with KLSWA member communities that jointly own the Waste Water Treatment Plant

(Saugatuck Township, City of Saugatuck, City of Douglas). Laketown Township is not currently a member of the KLSWA, but proposed utility extensions within the township are reviewed with the Authority to evaluate overall system impacts.

In considering utilities for commercial development, it is imperative to study the Blue Star Highway corridor, which currently has no public water or sanitary sewer. Previous planning efforts have identified the lack of utilities in this area as one of the key impediments to orderly and well-planned commercial development in this area of Laketown Township. At the Blue Star Highway public workshop, held in July 2018, attendees identified the lack of public utility expansions as a top weakness in the Blue Star Highway corridor. These respondents also recognized the expansion of public utilities as an opportunity to encourage more orderly development in this area. Water and sewer system expansions are often funded by prospective developers or businesses interested in those services. However, there were also workshop attendees that recognized the lack of public utilities in the Blue Star Highway corridor as a strength for lower intensity land uses.

As a result of various planning meetings, and coupled with modern planning principles, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for planning for public utility expansion in Laketown Township. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations and Strategies

Goals

- Provide public facilities and services that are adequate to serve the needs of township residents and can accommodate future growth and expansion
- New commercial and industrial development should be directed to selected areas which have public utility services or are planned to receive them
- Prior to considering major development along the Blue Star Highway, an extended public utility system or individual private systems must be evaluated, based on their ability to adequately service the existing and future needs along the corridor in a cost efficient and coordinated manner

Recommendations

- Land use and utility services should be coordinated to insure that greater intensity of growth occurs only where utility services are provided or planned
- When reviewing site improvement plans or preliminary plats, work with developers to ensure that sanitary sewer and public water facilities are expanded within the township
- Maintain a positive relationship with neighboring communities to ensure proper coordination of sewer and water service extensions in the future

Strategies

- Development or strengthening of regulations applicable to groundwater protection are necessary to ensure adequate well water supply and safety for the future. These include zoning requirements for site plan review, secondary containment of storage areas for potentially hazardous materials, and specific provisions for the storage of hazardous materials

- Provide adequate protection of groundwater sources
- Improve ordinance controls for hazardous material storage and outdoor uses that could negatively impact groundwater
- Conduct a groundwater aquifer quality study, if existing evidence reveals water quality concerns
- Establish or maintain density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems, unless public sewer is present

Chapter Nine Transportation

Introduction

Transportation in Laketown Township is influenced by a number of agencies, from the township itself, to the Allegan County Road Commission, to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Planning for transportation at the local level often falls to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area. An MPO is the designated local decision-making body that is responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. As such, the MPO is federally mandated to administer transportation planning within its boundaries.

The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) operates as the MPO for portions of Ottawa and Allegan Counties that includes Laketown Township. The MACC generates data on traffic and roadway conditions within its jurisdictional boundaries, including the Average Annual Daily Trip (AADT), which is a simple measurement of the business of a road. For the roadways in Laketown Township where MACC computed AADT in 2017, traffic volumes ranged from 230 trips (138th Street at 60th Street) to 3,186 trips (64th Street at the Blue Star Highway). Compared to neighboring municipalities, the City of Holland and Fillmore Township, traffic volume in Laketown Township was relatively low. This was reflected in the Master Plan public workshops held in 2018, as very few participants emphasized traffic as one of the primary weaknesses or threats to Laketown Township.

The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council is also tasked with rating the condition of Federal Aid roads within their jurisdiction to help identify and prioritize future road resurfacing projects. In 2018, MACC rated 25% of the roads in Allegan and Ottawa Counties as poor, 25% of the roads as good, and 50% of the roads as fair. MACC published a report that includes a map color-coding which roads received specific rankings. There were roadways in Laketown Township that received poor, fair, and good rankings. **The citizens of Laketown Township have historically supported tax millage increases to maintain and improve local roadways.** ~~It should be noted that 64th Street was definitively ranked “poor” within Laketown Township boundaries.~~

Existing Roadways

The two purposes of roadways within the township are to move traffic and to provide access to adjacent property. Each road within the township serves both of these purposes to a varying degree. The roads in Laketown Township are classified into four roadway functional classifications. This classification system assists the ACRC and the MDOT in determining the order in which improvement projects should be completed. The township can also use this classification system to assist in the determination of appropriate land uses along each roadway.

Expressways

This category includes major highways, often under county or state jurisdiction, which serves trips between communities and other major activity centers throughout a region. Roadways of

this type are designed to provide the highest level of traffic mobility, usually traveling at speeds ranging from 65 to 75 miles per hour (mph). Since the primary function of the expressway is to provide mobility, access to adjacent land uses is limited in order to optimize capacity along the roadway. Both I-196 and U.S. 31 within the township are classified by the ACRC as Federal and State routes. The Blue Star Highway is categorized as an inter-county highway route.

County Primary Roads (Paved)

County Primary Roads are those which serve longer trips within an urban area, sometimes extending beyond municipal boundaries to connect to adjacent population centers or larger arterials. County Primaries are designed for moderate to large traffic volumes and speeds of ~~45~~ **35** to 55 mph. Some access to adjacent development may be permitted from roadways of this type, but on-street parking and curb cuts are regulated to preserve capacity of the street.

The ACRC classifies the following roadways within the township as County Primaries:

- 60th Street
- 64th Street
- 66th Street (north of 146th Avenue)
- 136th Avenue (east of 64th Street)
- 140th Avenue (east of 64th Street)
- 146th Avenue (east of 66th Street)
- ~~Washington Avenue (Blue Star Highway)~~

County Local Roads (Paved)

These roads collect and distribute traffic to and from the higher classified systems. These roads tend to accommodate slightly shorter trips and are generally designed for moderate traffic volumes and speeds of 35 to 45 mph. Traffic mobility is often sacrificed through additional curb cuts to provide more access to adjacent property.

County Local roads within the township, as classified by the ACRC, include:

- **Ottogan Street/32nd Street**
- 61st Street
- 62nd Street
- 63rd Street
- 65th Street
- 66th Street (between 146th and 140th Avenues)
- 138th Avenue
- 139th Avenue
- 140th Avenue (west of 64th Street)
- 141st Avenue
- 142nd Avenue
- 143rd Avenue
- 144th Avenue
- 145th Avenue
- 147th Avenue
- Beeline Road
- Island Lake Road

County Local Roads (Unpaved)

The remainder of the county roads within the township provide access to individual properties, with limited continuity and mobility. These roads are designed for low volumes and speeds of 35 mph or less. These streets are linked by other paved County Local roadways to other land uses or County Primary roads.

Unpaved County Local roads within the township include:

- ~~142nd Avenue (limited portion east of 62nd Street and west of I-196)~~
- 62nd Street (limited portion south of 142nd Avenue and west of I-196)
- 61st Street (north side of 138th Avenue) – **seasonal roadway**

Other Roads

The remainder of the roads in the township are classified as subdivision streets or private roads.

Multi-modal Transportation

While roadways are the predominant method of transportation throughout Laketown Township, it is necessary to emphasize alternative methods of transportation as well. The prevalence of bicycling and walking continues to increase as alternative modes of transportation, with positive impacts for both the environment and health of township residents and visitors. It is important to ensure that travelers that are not in vehicles have safe routes throughout the township as well, connecting places of residence, business, recreation, and education. The maintenance and expansion of pathways for bicycles and pedestrians is emphasized in the Residential, Recreational and Community Facilities, Blue Star Highway, and Environment Chapters.

As a result of various planning meetings, and coupled with modern planning principles, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for planning for effective modes of transportation in Laketown Township. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- An emphasis on interconnected drives and streets should be promoted so that internal trips can be made without compelling drivers to exit and enter multiple times
- A system of integrated shared use paths should be promoted for all new developments to provide safe walking routes to surrounding stores and uses
- Establish adequate transportation routes to ensure the safety and well-being of Township residents

Recommendations

- Developers should work with the Allegan County Road Commission and the Allegan County Sheriff's Department to improve traffic safety (sight distance, sign visibility) and coordination of improvements when preparing Site Improvement Plans and Plats
- Interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote access management along Blue Star Highway
- Provide all land uses with adequate access to the road system
- Strive to minimize traffic disruptions on thoroughfares, while keeping through traffic off of the local residential streets
- Strive to create a multi-modal transportation system, encompassing bicycles, pedestrian, and automobile traffic

Strategies

- Require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should apply to roadway extensions, to ensure inter-connected neighborhoods.
- Consider adopting Access Management Regulations to the Zoning Ordinance, in particular along the Blue Star Highway
- Establish site plan review procedures to consider shared driveways in heavily traveled corridors
- Modify the Zoning Ordinance to require pedestrian pathways in new developments

Complete Streets Plan

In 2010, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act was amended to require that master plans account for "all legal users" of the transportation system within the municipality. The amended Act, in part, states that the Master Plan must include, "among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following: (i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets and provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users."

This Chapter of the Laketown Township Master Plan, Chapter 9 – Transportation, as well as other provisions throughout the plan regarding pathways, roadway improvements, and lessening roadway congestion, identify key means to implement complete streets. As a result, the township is compliant with this amendment.

Chapter Ten Environment

Introduction

Laketown Township's natural features have played a significant role in the development of the township. Many residents live in Laketown Township due to its woodlands, Lake Michigan shoreline, sand dunes, wetlands, and other natural features. It is these features that provide the rural character so valued by township residents. In fact, during the public input workshops held in 2018, approximately 45% of attendees responded that the rural character is what attracted them to live in Laketown. Lake Michigan yielded the second highest response rate to the question at 26%.

Natural features and open space contribute to the township's outstanding quality of life. Some of the general benefits of protecting and conserving these features include economic opportunities in areas such as agriculture, tourism, and recreation; protecting the supply for municipal and private water systems; providing habitats for wildlife; flood control; pollution protection; aesthetics; as well as educational opportunities, among others. As such, accommodating growth while maintaining rural character is a challenge faced by many growing communities. As identified by public input workshop participants, it is of primary importance to consider the preservation of rural character when making development decisions.

The township contains state protected, sensitive dune formations, federally protected floodplains, and an abundance of sandy soil types. Active use of these features, whether for resort and year-round homes on the Lake Michigan shoreline, or extraction of mineral resources, has been the practice throughout the development of the township. As knowledge of the value of these resources has increased, more controls over their use have been implemented by federal, state and local laws. The reasonable application of these laws should ensure that the resources so valued by the township will be present for future generations to enjoy.

The following description of natural features and their associated regulations assists in establishing the character of the natural environment for the analysis of suitable land uses, and helps in evaluating the development potential of the land within the township. This evaluation is necessary to determine potential environmental constraints to development and to assist in determining the ability to integrate these natural features into development proposals.

Sand Dunes

The dunes along Lake Michigan form the longest stretch of fresh water dunes in the world. In addition to their scenic value, dunes serve as a natural barrier to water and wind storm damage. However, the lakefront setting of the dunes has made dune areas highly desirable sites for residential development. A large portion of the existing exposed sand dunes, which are extremely sensitive to any development impacts, is protected in the Saugatuck Dunes State Park.

Legislative efforts have been made to assure an adequate balance between preservation and development of these environmentally sensitive areas. Critical dune areas are currently regulated by

Part 353, Sand Dunes Protection and Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451 as amended, through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). This statute was most recently amended in August, 2012. Presently, the Act requires a permit for those activities which significantly alter the physical characteristics of a critical dune area or for a contour change in a critical dune area. Permit applications are typically required for the construction of a house or garage, building a road or driveway, installing a septic system, installing retaining walls, and sand removal.

Floodplains

In 1980, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) determined the 100- year floodplain boundaries within Laketown Township and issued a Federal Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). The FIRM is used to determine the applicability of flood insurance for properties within the designated floodplain area. Floodplains are protected by the MDEQ and state permits are required for most types of development within the floodplain.

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by the MDEQ as, "land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life, and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh." The MDEQ has identified wetlands throughout Michigan through interpretation of aerial photography, topographic data, as well as soil inventories. The MDEQ makes wetland inventory maps available to assist property owners with identifying the location of any wetlands on their property and whether the wetlands are regulated.

While wetlands can represent a limitation to development, they may also be a valuable development site amenity. Rather than viewing natural features such as wetlands as preventing development, they should be valued for their opportunity to provide innovative site and building integration that use existing site features as building amenities.

Significant wetlands in Michigan are protected through Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, P.A. 451 of 1994, as amended. The MDEQ has certified that all county wetland inventories required by Part 303 were complete as of January 2007. This has ensured that all non-contiguous wetlands over five (5) acres in size are regulated regardless of county population, making permit requirements uniform in all counties. The MDEQ is responsible for reviewing development plans and requests for permits in wetland areas and performing site determinations.

Waterways

Waterways include the lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and in some cases, wetlands of Laketown Township. The land surrounding the township's waterways is often the most sought after property due to the environmental, aesthetic and recreational benefits that are associated with local waterways. Lake Michigan property that lies vacant is more often viewed as a financial residential

investment than either for conservation easements or low impact development, such as parks or public access points. These areas, if not currently developed, will need continued attention as ownership or land development intentions change.

Through careful site analysis and site planning, quality development that preserves the natural environment can be realized. The result is cost effective development that allows preservation of natural features and systems, creating long term benefits for the environment and the community. As a result of the public workshops coupled with modern planning principles, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for carefully considering the natural environment in planning for the future of Laketown Township. In addition, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect environmental resources, such as wetlands, tree lined streets, and other natural features, from the negative impacts of new development
- Land use shall preserve rural character
- Provide adequate protection of groundwater sources
- Incorporate natural features into site development, to allow new uses of land that do not irreversibly damage natural site features and attributes
- Preserve woodlands and wetlands which are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character and open spaces
- Provide and maintain a park, trail, and open space system including access to Lake Michigan that is responsive to the needs and priorities of the township residents
- Ensure that future park sites (local and centralized) are identified and preserved

Recommendations

- Require applicants to identify natural resources or sensitive areas of the township during the site plan review process for residential, commercial, and industrial developments to ensure compliance with the goals of the master plan. This consideration does not apply to individual single-family lots, home occupations, accessory buildings, and other incidental land uses.
- Establish greenbelts around natural resources to preserve and ensure public access
- Encourage developers of raw land to provide park sites, trails, or open spaces as an integral part of development planning
- Encourage a compatible balance of protection of natural assets and reasonable residential land use should be achieved between through careful consideration of low density residential development design that includes and the preservation of the township's unique natural features, in particular the critical dune areas
- ~~Require clustering of housing and the utilization of natural features into the design of new residential development~~
- Require the preservation of existing trees between the public street and dwellings

Strategies

- The township should use appropriate ordinances to implement the goal of preserving natural features and determine other methods of maintaining and enhancing the unique natural features of the township
- Development or strengthening of regulations applicable to groundwater protection are necessary. These include zoning requirements for site plan review, secondary containment of storage areas for potentially hazardous materials, and specific provisions for the storage of hazardous materials.
- Conduct a groundwater aquifer quality study, if existing evidence reveals water quality concerns
- Provide adequate protection of groundwater sources
- Establish density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems and which promote the preservation of the rural character of the township
- ~~Require~~ Encourage development to utilize open space preservation techniques, clustered housing techniques, and other amenities and features to preserve rural character and protect the environment
- Investigate a millage or alternative township program for land acquisition to provide for the preservation of rural character and/or open space in perpetuity
- Establish or strengthen educational programs for Laketown Township youth regarding the unique natural features in their community, and how to preserve them for future generations
- Update natural resource identifications on a specified interval, so as ownership and/or land development intentions change, valuable resources may remain protected
- Acquire and otherwise protect open space in developing areas to maintain the rural character of the township