



Carlisle | Wortman
ASSOCIATES, INC.

117 NORTH FIRST STREET SUITE 70 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104 734.662.2200 734.662.1935 FAX

MEMORANDUM

TO: Highland Township Planning Commission

FROM: Megan A. Masson-Minock, AICP, Principal

DATE: January 17, 2025

RE: Master Plan Draft Revisions per County Agencies

Please find attached a revised draft of the Highland Township Master Plan, with revisions recommended by the Road Commission of Oakland County (RCOC) and Oakland County Economic Development staff. The following updates have been made:

- A policy to collaborate with the Friends of the Shiawassee Rive and the Huron River Watershed Council to preserve the watersheds at the Township’s borders has been added per a recommendation of Oakland County Economic Development staff.
- In the “Natural Resources” section, reference to the Huron and Shiawassee River watershed is proposed as recommended by Oakland County Economic Development staff.
- As noted by Oakland County Economic Development staff, Michigan Natural Features Inventory data was updated in 2017. Updated maps and references have been added to the draft.
- A section on Invasive Species with reference to the Oakland County Cooperative Species Management Areas (CISMA) has been added per a recommendation of Oakland County Economic Development staff.
- Per a recommendation from the RCOC, the description of the road hierarchy has been updated.
- The traffic counts and crash data have been updated to 2020 data provided by the RCOC.

*Benjamin R. Carlisle, President John L. Enos, Vice President Douglas J. Lewan, Principal
David Scurto, Principal Sally M. Elmiger, Principal R. Donald Wortman, Principal Craig Strong, Principal
Paul Montagno, Principal Megan Masson-Minock, Principal Laura Kreps, Principal
Richard K. Carlisle, Past President/Senior Principal*

- A section on public transportation noting that Highland Township is served by the Western Oakland Transportation Authority has been added, per a recommendation by the Oakland County Economic Development staff.
- Based on recommendations from Oakland County Economic Development staff, sections on Household Waste Disposal and Hazard Mitigation have been added.
- The existing land use map has been updated per Township staff.

The next steps for the approval of the Master Plan, per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, is as follows:

- A Planning Commission public hearing.
- Planning Commission recommendation to the Township Board.
- Approval by the Township Board, who adopts the Master Plan.

Thank you for your continued contributions to the Master Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC
Megan Masson-Minock, AICP
Principal



QUALITY LIFE THROUGH GOOD ROADS:
ROAD COMMISSION FOR OAKLAND COUNTY
"WE CARE."

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Gary Piotrowicz, P.E., P.T.O.E.
Deputy Managing Director
County Highway Engineer

Planning and Environmental
Concerns Department

31001 Lahser Road
Beverly Hills, MI
48025

248-645-2000

www.rcocweb.org

October 30, 2024

Beth Corwin, Planning and Development Director
Charter Township of Highland
205 N. John Street
Highland, MI 48357

Re: Notice to Review Draft Master Plan for Highland Township

Dear Ms. Corwin,

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) had the opportunity to review the draft of the updated Master Plan for Highland Township, as it relates to transportation, and has the following comments regarding the plan.

Draft Master Plan, page 57, (Principal Arterials), "Principal Arterials are at the top of the NFC hierarchy." Principal Arterials are number three in the hierarchy, behind "Interstate" and "Other Freeway."

Draft Master Plan, page 57 (Traffic and Crash Counts), last sentence: "Table 9 lists the Township's most heavily traveled roads in 2018." The Table of Contents entry and Table 9 itself are labeled 2020.

Draft Master Plan, page 59, (High Crash Intersections, 2016-2020), first sentence: "Table 10 indicates the intersections with the greatest number of recorded crashes within the Township." SEMCOG has High-Frequency Crash data ranked by 2019-2023 five-year total here: <https://www.semcog.org/high-frequency-crash-locations>

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft of the Master Plan for Highland Township. We look forward to working with Highland Township to create a vibrant community with a safe and efficient transportation network.

Sincerely,

Brad Knight

Brad Knight, Director
Planning and Environmental Concerns
& Information Technology

December 19, 2024

Ms. Beth Corwin
Planning & Development Director
Highland Charter Township
205 N. John Street
Highland, MI 48357

SUBJECT: County Code No. MP 24-10, Oakland County Department of Economic Development, Division of Planning & Local Business Development's staff review of Highland Township Draft Master Plan Update.

Dear Ms. Corwin:

On November 4, 2024, the Oakland County Department of Economic Development (OCED), Division of Planning & Local Business Development (PLBD) received a mailed letter (dated October 28, 2024) from Highland Township initiating the review and comment period for the proposed **Highland Township Draft Master Plan Update, (County Code Master Plan No. 24-10)**. Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, which took effect September 1, 2008, Oakland County, adjacent municipalities, and other jurisdictional authorities have 63 days to submit comments on Master Plan updates.

This review for the draft Master Plan will NOT go before the Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) due to the annual waiver period that was initiated at the last CZC meeting on December 4, 2024. The information herein is a cursory review that has been conducted by staff and will be sent to adjacent communities, other jurisdictional authorities and Highland Township within the 63-day comment period. This is in accordance with other adjacent communities and jurisdictional authorities that also have 63 days to submit comments directly to Highland Township. Comments on the plan must be submitted by January 3, 2025. This review has been submitted within the designated time period and focuses on borderline changes, Oakland County initiatives, and suggested best practices.

***** This review and recommendations did not go before the Coordinating Zoning Committee. *****

Staff Recommendation

Based on the review of the surrounding communities' Master Plans, Highland Township Draft Master Plan's proposed update is not inconsistent with the plan of any City, Village, or Township that received notice of the draft plan. Oakland County has not prepared a countywide development plan, so there is no countywide plan with which to compare the draft amendment. PLBD staff is recommending that Highland Township proceed with the approval process for the draft Master Plan. Following is a cursory analysis and summation of the draft Master Plan update.

Select Summary Analysis of Content

Highland Township is proposing an update to the Township's Master Plan. Per our records, the Planning staff at Oakland County has reviewed changes to portions of the Master Plan over the years with the last being in 2018 (County Code # 18-07). Highland Township shares a border with four adjacent communities consisting of Milford Township, Rose Township, White Lake Township in Oakland County and Hartland Township in Livingston County. The following is a review of changes along the borders of the Township.

Future Land Use Plan

The proposed Future Land Use (FLU) plan, when compared to the FLU plan of the 2000 Master Plan and past FLU amendments, very few changes have occurred at the boundaries. The most significant changes to the FLU plan are as follows:

- Separation of *Medium & Small Residential* into singular categories of *Small Lot Single Family Residential* and *Medium Lot Single Family Residential*.
- Combination of *Medium & Small Residential*, *1.5 to 3 acre* and *LV Zoning* classifications.
- Separation of *Agricultural and Rural Residential* into separate classifications.
- Elimination of *Open Space Residential* which most properties within this category were reclassified as *Medium Lot Single Family Residential* while remaining properties became *Agricultural* or, in a few cases, a change to *Rural Residential*.

While some of these changes occur at the border, the changes are viewed as a correction to the map as it relates to the existing land use as a result of the combination and conformity of the classifications.

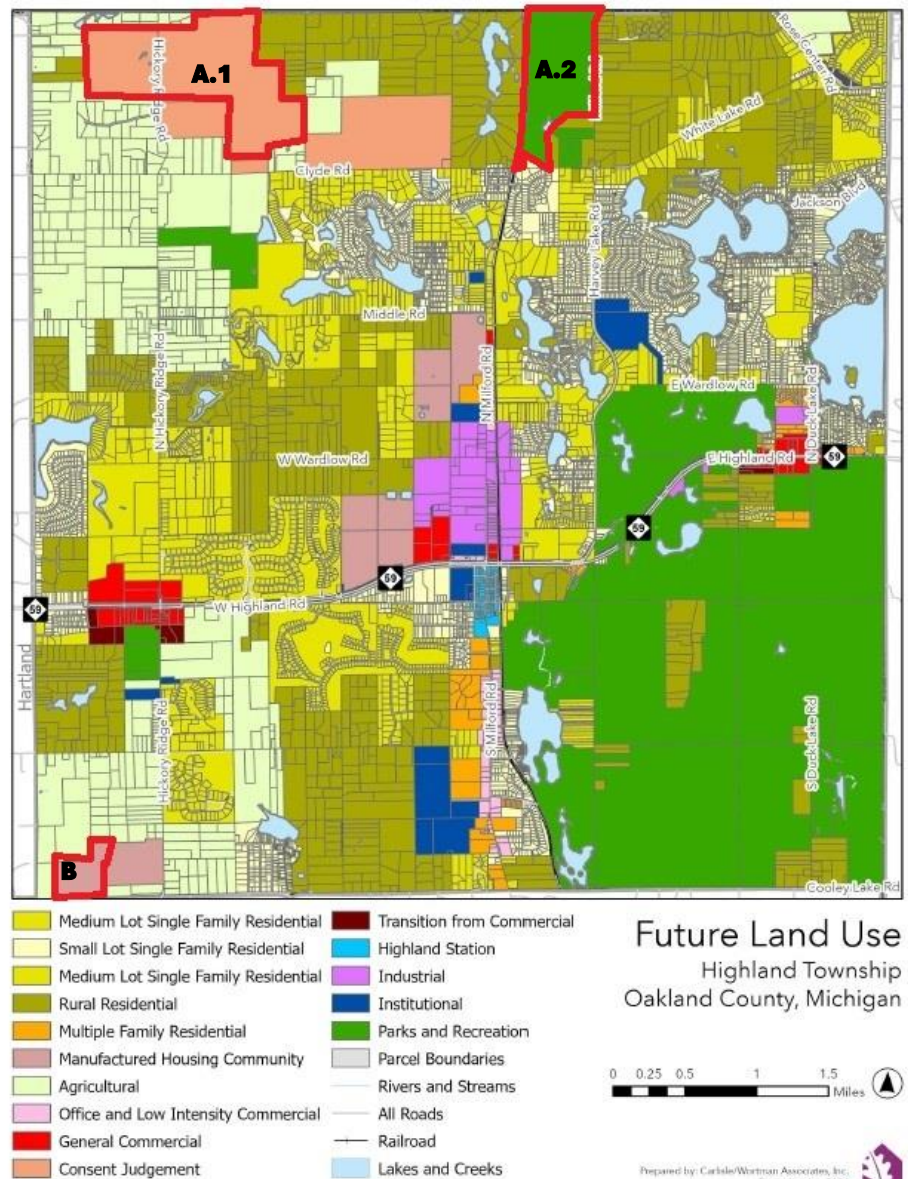
Borderline changes are most prevalent in the following areas (outlined in red):

A. Rose Township (North): There are two (2) changes at this border:

1. A property (Tax ID# 11-05-100-015) was a mix of woodland, wetland and farmland with extraction/mining operations on the property since the mid-1990s. The property and others that are adjacent are being used for sand/gravel mining have been classified under the new description of "Consent Judgment". The new FLU classification of the property recognizes the existing mining/extraction operations. **This remains a compatible border.**

2. A property (Tax ID# 11-03-200-015) known as 6555 N. Milford Road is Oakland County's Highland Oaks Park. The property has been represented on the FLU map under the *Parks & Recreation* classification. This is a change from what was *Agricultural and Rural Residential*. The change in FLU represents the existing use of the property. **This remains a compatible border.**

Map 2: Future Land Use



- ### B. Milford Township (South): An expansion of the "Manufactured Housing Community" land use in this area has been represented as it appears the existing manufactured housing community expanded in 2017 on to an adjacent property (Tax ID# 11-31-300-006). The development is built out and remains buffered by

natural woodland and wetlands along the border. The FLU map acknowledges the existing use on the property. **This remains a compatible border.**

The FLU map and plan have been updated and strengthened in the proposed draft Master Plan.

Recommendations

While beyond the scope of this review, staff notes the following recommendations Highland Township may wish to consider clarifying specific goals/objectives and/or to strengthen the plan for ease of use. Many of these recommendations are based on Oakland County initiatives and topic-related best practices that can be further utilized as a tool for the community. Please see the following recommendations for the Draft Master Plan listed below:

1. Update *Natural Resources* information with the following:
 - a. Update the *Michigan Natural Features Inventory* (MNFI) data which is currently referencing 2004 information (pg. 55-57). In 2017 MNFI data was updated. Oakland County has online tools where MNFI data can be obtained and/or MNFI maps can be created at: <https://oakgov.maps.arcgis.com>. Please contact our staff if assistance is required in producing a map or collecting MNFI data for the draft Master Plan.
 - b. Include best practices from Oakland County Cooperative Species Management Areas (CISMA) <https://oaklandinvasivespecies.org/>. Such information should be considered in the plan's efforts to combat invasive species. Additional information pertaining to this topic can help support the initiatives promoted in *Natural Resources* portion of the draft Master Plan.
 - c. Acknowledge the major watersheds that are in Highland Township. The Huron River Watershed and Shiawassee Watershed penetrate the township's borders. Cooperating and aligning preservation goals and objectives with such conservancy groups as the Friends of the Shiawassee River <https://shiawasseeiver.org/Shiawassee-River-Water-Trail> and the Huron River Watershed Council <https://www.hrwc.org/> could help strengthen the preservation goals and policies within the draft Master Plan (pg. 15-18)
2. Incorporate a hazard mitigation plan or elements that could be used in a hazard mitigation plan. Oakland County's PLBD staff is making a deliberate effort to encourage communities to consider the natural and manmade hazards and associated risks to communities and integrate their hazard mitigation priorities and strategies into their Master Plans, when applicable. This is particularly relevant for hazard mitigation related to infrastructure, utilities, natural features, major assets, and historic districts/structures. Such initiatives may be added to the Township's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), as stated within the policies of Goal #5 and Goal #6 (pg. 21-22), if applicable or may represent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) eligible projects. Through FEMA, communities may be eligible for nationally competitive, annually awarded Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grants for planning and project work. Communities responding to and recovering from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President are also eligible for Public Assistance (PA) Funds for emergency work and permanent infrastructure projects. Mitigation opportunities resulting from declared disasters, specifically through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), are a source of potential funding following major disaster declarations. For more information, please utilize the 2023 Oakland County Hazard Mitigation Plan: <https://www.oakgov.com/home/showpublisheddocument/19847/638362558661900000>
3. Acknowledge that Highland Township is provided public transportation services through the Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA) as of January of 2020. WOTA is currently funded by the 2022 Oakland Transit Millage. Services pertaining to WOTA can help strengthen the goals and objectives within the *Transportation & Traffic* portion of the draft Master Plan (pg. 59-66).
4. Include information about the Township's household waste disposal opportunities. Highland Township has offered a semi-annual household waste collection program in the past and currently directs residents to use ERG Environmental Services in Livonia for household waste/recycling. Such information can strengthen the goals within the plan. If the Township is pursuing other household waste/recycling disposal opportunities, Oakland County offers household waste events through the No Haz Collection program. Please reference the Oakland County Planning services table at the end of this review which provides more information about

technical services provided by our office and offers such opportunities to properly dispose of household waste.

Oakland County Technical Assistance

A summary of programs offered by the Oakland County Economic Development Department that are relevant to Township of Highland Township have been included on the final page of this review.

Oakland County Technical Resources

Oakland County compiles existing and future land use statistics for the county as a whole and for each community using generalized land use definitions. These documents are included as reference and to provide a snapshot of the Township's existing land use and development patterns. Please visit our website at: <https://www.oakgov.com/community/community-development/planning-services> to access this information.

Conclusion Summary

Highland Township Draft Master Plan Update has sound strategies that are beneficial to the plan and the Township's future. Demographic information, traffic projections and housing needs have been restructured and updated for the 2024 plan. The document is well written and has a considerable amount of information gathered through the "Visioning Session" and promotes obtainable goals that should prove to be a useful tool to guide growth and natural preservation within the Township.

Our review includes recommendations that we hope will strengthen the overall plan, but at no point are our recommendations required. Oakland County does not have a Planning Commission or County Master Plan to do a full comparison and contrast of the information. Our staff review of the proposed Master Plan and a cursory review of adjacent communities' Master Plans have found Highland Township Draft Master Plan Update to be not inconsistent with those adjacent communities.

If there are any questions or comments about this review and analysis, please do not hesitate to contact me at (248)858-0389 or email me at krees@oakgov.com. There will not be a motion made on the recommendations of this review by the CZC. A copy of this review will be made available to Highland Township and the surrounding jurisdictions as noted below.

Respectfully,



Scott E. Kree | Senior Planner
Oakland County Department of Economic Development
Planning and Local Business Development Division

CC:

Milford Township
Rose Township
White Lake
Hartland Township
Road Commission for Oakland County
Oakland County Parks
Oakland County CZC members & staff

***** This review and recommendations did not go before the Coordinating Zoning Committee. *****

Oakland County Planning Resources

The Oakland County Department of Economic Development (OCED), Division of Planning & Local Business Development (PLBD) offers a variety of programs to support Oakland County communities with innovative programming and assistance to create attractive destinations in which to live, work and raise a family. The chart below details those programs offered by the PLBD (a division of the OCED). Current participation in these programs and opportunities for future involvement are noted on the right of the chart. Additional information on all OCED programs can be found at www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland.

Program	Mission	Township of Highland Township's Opportunities and Current Participation
Environmental Stewardship	Provide information, plans and options to promote conservation of the natural environment while supporting sustainable economic growth, development, and redevelopment.	Highland Township supports development that is cognizant of natural resource protection and management. County staff members are able to act in a supporting capacity with grant application identification, open space protection, and sustainable development practices as requested.
Historic Preservation Assistance	Support local efforts to maintain and enhance architectural and heritage resources through sustainable practices to enrich the quality of life for all.	County staff is able to assist with potential design concepts for adaptive reuse of any historic structures within the community.
Land Use & Zoning Services	Prepare and provide land use, zoning, and Master Plan reviews for communities to enhance coordination of land use decision-making.	Highland Township continues to send Master Plan Updates and Amendments to the County for review fulfilling the legislative requirements. Other coordination services are available upon request.
Trail, Water & Land Alliance (TWLA)	Become an informed, coordinated, collaborative body that supports initiatives related to the County's Green Infrastructure Network	The County fully supports the expansion of non-motorized facilities and protection of the natural environment. Oakland County can aid the community in non-motorized planning efforts through education and the identification of potential funding sources.
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (OCBRA)	Provide assistance in the County's Brownfield initiative to clean-up and redevelop contaminated properties	The OCBRA can assist and coordinate with the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE, formally MDEQ) along with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), as needed, in an effort to prepare designated brownfields for redevelopment with the County's BRA.
Oakland County Household Hazardous Waste Program (NoHaz)	Help Oakland County residence to have an option for the proper disposal of household hazardous waste	Highland Township is not a participating community in the NoHaz program. Township Residents currently do not have access to this program. NoHaz allows residents to participate and properly dispose of household hazardous waste.

***** This review and recommendation did not go before the Coordinating Zoning Committee. *****



2024 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

DRAFT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

January 2025

Acknowledgements

Planning & Zoning Department

Elizabeth “Beth” Corwin, P.E., AICP, Planning Director

Lisa G. Burkhart, AICP, Zoning Administrator

Kariline P. Littlebear, Zoning Administrator

Planning Commission

Grant Charlick, Chairperson

Chris Heyn, Vice Chairperson

A. Roscoe Smith, Secretary

Beth Lewis – Township Board

Kevin Curtis

Mike O’Leary

Scott Temple

Russ Tierney

Guy York

Township Board

Rick Hamill, Supervisor

Tami Flowers, Clerk

Jenny Frederick, Treasurer

Judy Cooper, Trustee

Brian Howe, Trustee

Beth Lewis, Trustee

Joe Salvia, Trustee

Consultant

 Carlisle|Wortman, Associates, Inc.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Goals and Policies: The Preservation, Development, and Success of Highland Township.....	8
Future Land Use Plan	22
Background Studies	32
Natural Resources.....	48
Transportation and Traffic	54
Community Facilities and Services.....	62
Existing Land Use.....	69
Resources	79
APPENDIX.....	82

Table of Maps

Map 1: Regional Setting	2
Map 2: Future Land Use	29
Map 3: Natural Features Inventory	48
Map 4: County Road Classification Map	55
Map 5: National Functional Classification MAP	57
Map 6: Community Facilities Map	63
Map 7: Wellhead Protection Areas Map	67
Map 8: Existing Land Use Map	70
Map 9: Vacant and Transitional Lands Map	76

Table of Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Master Plan Purpose and Process.....	4
Figure 2: Highland Township Population Trends and Projections, 1960 - 2020	29
Table 1: Population Trends, 1990 – 2020 and 2050 Forecast.....	29
Table 2: Housing Unit Trends, 2000 - 2020.....	29
Table 3: Household Size and Occupied Housing Units, 2000 - 2020	29
Table 4: Age Group Comparison, 2020.....	29

Figure 2: Percent of Population by Age, 2020	29
Table 5: Characteristics of Occupied Housing Units	29
Table 6: Population Projections, 2000 - 2050.....	41
Table 7: Comparative Real SEV for Highland Township, 2010 - 2021	42
Table 8: Real SEV Comparison, 2021.....	43
Figure 3. Employment by Industry Sector, 2020.....	45
Table 9: Traffic Counts, 2020	58
Table 10: High-Crash Intersections, 2016 - 2020	55
Table 11: Recreation Facilities Inventory.....	61
Table 12: Generalized Land Uses, 2001, 2010, 2015 and 2021	70
Table 13: Vacant and Transitional Lands Index.....	73

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Planning in the Township

Planning is a process that involves the conscious selection of policy choices relating to land use, development, delivery of services, enhancement of community character, and maintenance of a quality of life which meets the expectations of Township residents. The purpose of the Master Plan is to identify the goals, policies, programs, and strategies which the Township and its residents wish to pursue. The Master Plan has involved a thorough investigation of past trends, current conditions, and alternative futures for the Township. The overall process has been structured to allow for broad participation, expression of new ideas, and creation of new concepts that will carry the Highland Township well into the 21st century.

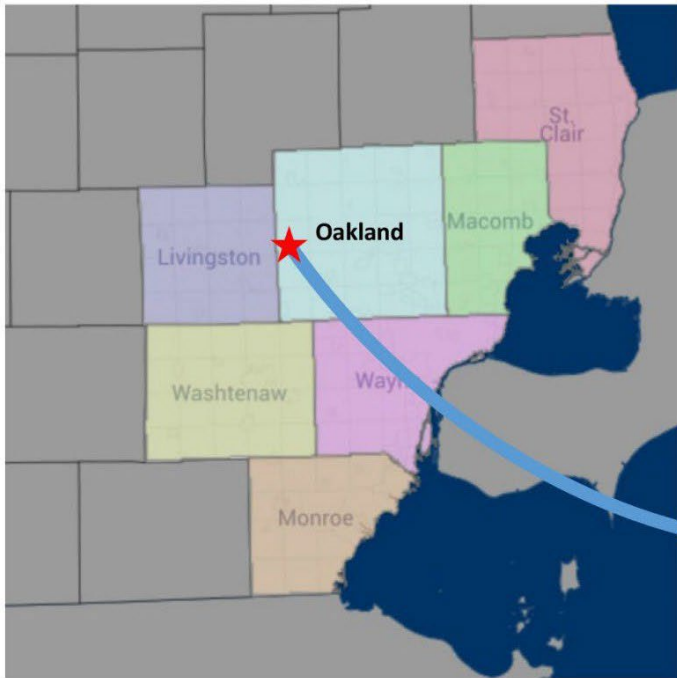
It is the responsibility of the Township Board and Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan on behalf of the Township. Highland Township derives its authority to prepare a Master Plan from the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008. The Act requires that at least every five years, the Planning Commission should review the Plan and determine whether amendments may be necessary.

An important prerequisite to community planning is to develop a common understanding of the current state of the Township as well as anticipated trends. Information gathered through this process is critical to the accurate projection of future needs and development patterns and the formulation of goals, policies, and strategies.

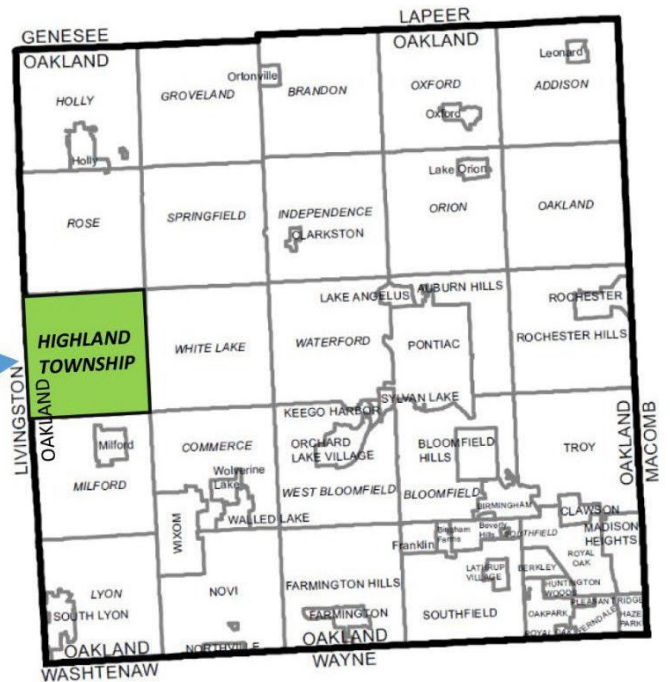
The Township has maintained an up-to-date Master Plan with reviews of the 2000 Master Plan, a 2013 consolidated Master Land Use Plan Map and a series of micro-area analysis updates over the years. The latest micro-area analysis was completed in 2018.

The seven (7) micro-area analysis are included in the appendices of this Master Plan and where applicable on the Plans Future Land Use Map.

Map 1: Regional Setting



Southeast Michigan



A number of studies have been conducted to evaluate existing and future conditions in Highland Township and update previous planning efforts.

Regional Setting

Highland Township is located in west central Oakland County, Michigan and is approximately thirty-six (36) square miles in area. The Township is bordered by Milford Township to the south, Rose Township to the north, White Lake Township to the east and Hartland Township (Livingston County) to the west.

Considering Highland's proximity to US-23 (via M-59) the Township has maintained a rural character by practicing educated land use management techniques and being officially recognized by the state government as Michigan's first designated equestrian community. According to data provided by SEMCOG, in 2015 over 75% of land use in Highland Township is residential, agricultural, or open space.

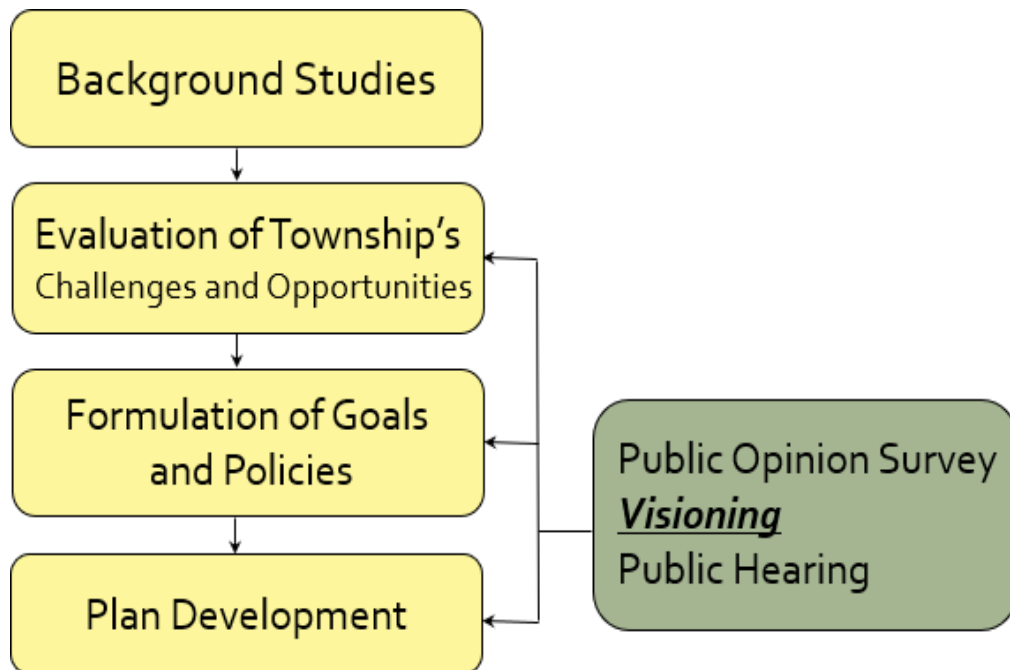
Master Plan Purpose and Process

The purpose of a Master Plan is to establish a broad framework of goals, and within that, a plan of action that is well suited to the community's wants and needs. As the crux of the Master Plan, the Goals and Policies chapter is informed by research, an analysis of the existing landscape, and most importantly, feedback from the community. The following goals and policies are also supported by other documents cited in the appendix of this plan.

Early in the planning process, the community was asked to describe the Township's strengths, its challenges, and its vision for the future. From this comprehensive discussion, the Planning Commission has identified goals - general statements that define the character of and direct land use preservation and development. For each goal, this chapter recommends a set of policies - a plan describing how the goals can be put into action. With the understanding that a community is organically ever-changing, the broadest statements in this Master Plan - its vision and goals - are the most resolute. The policy framework

does not commit the Township to any recommendation. Rather, policies represent the Township's commitment to achieving its goals by creating a path for action. The Township can review its progress and build upon the following recommendations and/or correct its course of action while remaining steadfast to its goals.

Figure 1.



Creating a Vision

A three-phase process was used to create a vision for Highland Township. Each phase is described in more detail below.

Phase 1 of Public Engagement – The Survey

Prior to the May 18th Visioning Session, the Township invited a randomized sampling of residents to complete a survey that was mailed to select households. The survey received 417 responses. Of note, 82% of respondents were satisfied with access to goods and services, with a similar majority wanting to limit commercial development to strategic locations such as the Livingston/Milford Road area. When asked which new service the Township should prioritize, the most common response was “pedestrian/bike paths.” The second most common response was “improving local roads.” Overall, most respondents expressed that Highland Township is a safe, quiet, family-friendly place with rural charm.

Phase 2 of Public Engagement - The Visioning Session

The Visioning Session was hosted by the Planning Commission. It began with a presentation on the purpose of a master plan and the importance of public engagement. Then, participants went to the event’s four “stations,” described below.

Stations

Each station used posters to highlight a topic that is applicable to land use and will most likely affect Highland Township during the next five (5) to ten (10) years. These four (4) topics are: Residential Development, Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Features, and Business. Following introductions, the attendees divided themselves into four (4) groups, which rotated through each station. The goal of this format was to stimulate group conversation, while allowing every attendee an equal opportunity to comment on each topic. Throughout the evening, Planning Commissioners facilitated discussions at each station and transcribed participants’ comments onto large sheets of paper. Images of each

poster are in the appendix.

Voting

After spending about twenty (20) minutes at each station, participants “voted” for comments that held the most importance to them by placing stickers next to the comments that were handwritten on large sheets of paper.

Conclusion

The prevailing sentiment of the evening was to preserve the rural character of Highland Township. Participants voiced opposition to small residential lots and multi-family dwellings. Though regional housing shortages and market trends tend toward new housing development, participants wanted to avoid the addition of suburban housing and large commercial footprints, to remain distinct from neighboring communities, and to preserve the Township character.

Some participants contemplated how to grow strategically. For example, participants discussed the aging population and the need for affordable assisted living facilities. Some discussed how business development might be concentrated in major transportation corridors and how the town center should attract smaller businesses. Participants who desired improvements largely focused their comments on transportation and infrastructure. For example, many participants suggested the development of non-motorized pathways and expansion of high-speed internet. Sewer expansion was a widely contested proposition.

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**GOALS AND POLICIES:
THE PRESERVATION, DEVELOPMENT,
AND SUCCESS OF HIGHLAND
TOWNSHIP**

Goals and Policies: The Preservation, Development, and Success of Highland Township

Goals and subsequent policies form the basis upon which more detailed decisions can be made. Several of the following policy recommendations are supported by the white paper titled, “Agricultural Uses in Highland Township: Preserving Rural Character by Expanding Economic Opportunities.” This paper was published in April 2018 and will be included in the appendix of this Master Plan.

Goal 1:

Maintain the rural, historic character of Highland Township while supporting contemporary necessities/requisites by managing growth, preserving natural resources, and upholding agricultural land use.

Policies

1. Support small- and large-scale farming and agricultural uses.
2. Establish a utility service district to limit expectations of where future sanitary sewer service and water would be extended by public investment and where it would not.
3. Implement design guidelines that incorporate natural, historic, or community-oriented features in non-residential districts.
4. Preserve agricultural and open space views along the road corridors that contain visually prominent rural open spaces. The corridors containing visually prominent rural open spaces were identified in the proposed addendum to the 2000-2020 Master Plan: *The Economic Viability of Agricultural Lands*, January 2019.
5. Encourage residents with property in natural environments to work with a land conservancy to establish an easement to protect the land from future development.
6. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to implement design guidelines that serve to

maintain or promote natural, historic, or community-oriented elements in non-residential districts.

7. Consider the use of special zoning districts or overlay zoning districts (i.e.: regional corridor district and/or neighborhood corridor district). Promote a small-town image at the Township's core intersections by considering additional standards for elements such as landscaping, streetscape, sidewalk furniture, lighting, architecture, and/or signage.
8. Encourage the long-term protection of farmland resources. Create a Solar Zoning Ordinance through which the Township can specify desired regulations, such as those regarding soil quality, groundcover, and decommissioning.

Goal 2:

Advocate for the enhancement and preservation of natural features and a healthy ecosystem within and surrounding the Township. Protect environmentally sensitive areas. Maintain the quality of greenways, waterways, and open space. Promote healthy freshwater ecosystems and reduce harmful runoff.

Policies

1. Amend the Landscape section of the Zoning Ordinance to include measurable, quantitative standards for greenbelt development.
2. Provide education for residents and business owners, especially those who own farmland or land with natural features. Access relevant information from the Huron River Water Council and/or the statewide departments such as MDARD, or MEGLE.

3. Faithfully execute the "Highland Township Stormwater Management Plan" adopted as a requirement of the Phase II NPDES Stormwater Permit. Maintain restrictions to the area of impervious surfaces in all districts, as the majority of the Township land is in one of three creek sheds.
4. Maintain the existing Wellhead Protection Program, as recommended by EGLE's drinking water and environmental health division.
5. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to minimize erosion and nutrient runoff by requiring a 25-foot wide non-mowed, vegetative strip along bodies of water, especially where land is used for agricultural production. Establish the percentage of waterfront property that should utilize such a buffer, per parcel.
6. Encourage Farmers to plant cover crops or perennial species to prevent periods of bare ground on farm fields when the soil (and the soil and nutrients it contains) are most susceptible to erosion and loss into waterways.
7. Protect the Township's air quality.
 - a. Limit high intensity industrial uses.
 - b. Review building filtration standards. Amend the standards as needed to promote consistent and quality air filtration in all living/workspaces.
 - c. In an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, allow the planning commission to request an air quality protection plan for proposed developments.
 - d. Prohibit the burning of plastics and other hazardous materials, unless done so in a regulated manner, for some reasonable purpose.
8. Additional considerations for natural features.
 - a. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to regulate the intensity of LED lighting to help maintain dark skies.

- b. Collaborate with the Friends of the Shiawassee Rive and the Huron River Watershed Council to preserve the watersheds at the Township’s borders.

Goal 3:

Maintain the integrity of housing by promoting accessibility to people of different ages, physical abilities, and socio-economic status, while maintaining the Township’s rural and historic character.

Policies

1. Explore allowing detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), especially considering the improved quality and supply of prefabricated ADUs for sale.
2. Explore allowing mixed residential/commercial uses, to a limited scale, in select districts such as local commercial and Highland Station.
 - a. Residential areas should be separated from high density commercial and industrial areas by functional elements such as open space, parkland, landscaped streets, or other buffer elements. This strategy is not meant to preclude thoughtfully executed mixed-use projects wherein residential and commercial elements are combined.
 - b. Promote accessible, affordable housing opportunities for Highland’s senior citizens at appropriate locations in the Township. Maintain proximity to parks, walking paths, and public facilities when determining appropriate locations. Promoting affordable senior housing should include the following strategies:
 - i. Offer incentives for the development of senior housing in the Township, such as density bonuses in PUD developments where units for seniors are proposed.
 - ii. Encourage public/private partnerships for senior housing in the

Township, to increase its affordability.

- iii. Consider expanding municipal sewer lines to locations planned for senior housing.
- c. Establish architectural standards and style guidelines that support Township character, for future multi-family developments, including senior housing and attached single-family, within reason.
- d. Require thoughtful placement of open space in future developments where density is also greater, to maintain Township character by maintaining green spaces along major thoroughfares and between developments.
- e. Consider attached single-family residential, where appropriate.

Goal 4:

Remain distinct from neighboring communities by maintaining identity as a reprieve from suburban sprawl and a regional destination for parks.

Policies

1. Limit new commercial development to that of a local, neighborhood scale and intensity, except for those areas designated General Commercial on the Future Land Use map.
2. Provide appropriate landscape buffers when more intensive uses, such as general commercial, are allowed.
3. Honor the Township's historic horseback riding tradition as central to the Township character.
4. Consider establishing a Park District or Resource Conservation District in the Zoning Ordinance.

Goal 5:

Provide the high-quality public facilities and services while maintaining an affordable rate for residents and business owners throughout Highland Charter Township.

Policies

1. Provide high-quality public facilities and services while maintaining an affordable rate for residents and business owners throughout Highland Charter Township.
2. Continue to cluster Township and other public facilities and maintain a vibrant presence in the Highland Station District.
3. Continue to partner with Huron Valley School District and the Highland DDA to utilize existing green spaces and parking lots to facilitate public events such as festivals, Farmer's Markets, and other opportunities for residents to gather.
4. Maintain the quality, efficiency, and safety of existing infrastructure.
5. Consult this Master Plan when drafting the yearly Capital Improvements Plan.
6. Support partner organizations such as the FOHRA (Friends of Highland Recreation Area), Six Rivers Land Conservancy, Community Sharing, and the Highland/White Lake Business Association in their ongoing endeavor to recruit and celebrate volunteers.
7. Consult with the Township's planning consultant and the Parks & Recreation Plan to identify public grants for enhancements to parks and other public facilities.
8. Participate in regional and statewide efforts to expand broadband availability.
9. Assist neighborhoods in exploring options to maintain and improve their streets and drainage systems.

Goal 6:

Expand the pedestrian, non-motorized pathway system in a manner consistent with the Township's desired character.

Policies

1. Prioritize mobility and transportation as a capital improvement and public service during the life span of this plan.
2. Develop and enhance pedestrian and other non-motorized circulation between parks, public facilities, and along select corridors. Refer to the *Highland Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2021-2025*, adopted in January 2021, and the *Charter Township of Highland Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan*, adopted July 11, 2012.
3. Establish standards that provide adequate pathway width, shade from the sun or other elements, and pathway maintenance to keep pathway users healthy and safe.
4. Refer to the Township survey and Visioning Session when implementing pathway development, as a reminder of public support. Continue to involve residents and other stakeholders in the planning stages of pathway enhancements or expansions.
5. Provide sidewalks on both sides of the street in all new developments.
6. Partner with Milford Charter Township to establish a non-motorized bike path between downtown Milford and Downtown Highland.
7. Give special attention to creating an accessible, barrier-free environment using crosswalks and ramps, and other universal design standards.

Goal 7:

Promote limited commercial development by aggregating commercial uses to the Township's central corridors, supporting agricultural commercial development, and/or supporting small-scale enterprises.

Policies

1. Create an environment appealing to businesses that service residents and attract visitors, with an emphasis on the service industries, such as barbers/salons, dining, and hospitality.
2. Review existing sub-area plans and determine which elements still support the community vision. Create an actionable timeline for actions consistent with that vision.
3. Coordinate with the DDA to implement the 2003 DDA Plan, to cooperate with future plans, and to activate the Highland Station area.
4. Explore agricultural uses such as outdoor markets.
5. Review ordinances for opportunities to accommodate home based industry while maintaining safety, wellbeing, and peace of neighboring residents.

Goal 8:

Promote the limited development of industrial uses in appropriate areas of the Township that generate little or no environmental impact.

Policies

1. Consider requiring environmental impact studies when new industrial uses and/or industrial improvements are proposed.

2. Encourage Low Development Impact standards and alternative designs for stormwater retention that work also to preserve green space and provide visually pleasing buffers to surrounding areas.

Summary of Policies that Propose Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

1. *Amendments to Agricultural Residential Zoning District:*

- a. Consider parsing the map to re-establish zones specifically aligned with agricultural commerce and home-based industry as distinct from large lot residential and hobby farming.
- b. Establish an agricultural commercial and tourism category in the Zoning Ordinance for future uses such as outdoor markets, wedding venues, seasonal events, etc.
- c. Amend regulations relative to large scale solar utilities to address issues regarding soil quality, groundcover, and decommissioning.
- d. Add 'Agricultural processing and food storage' as special land use.
- e. Address tasting rooms for vineyards, distilleries, or micro-breweries on farm operations.
- f. Develop regulations to permit agricultural commercial kitchens as a special land use.

2. *Amendments to Corridor Areas*

- a. Promote a small-town image at the Township's core intersections by considering additional standards for landscaping, sidewalk furniture, lighting, and/or signage, expressed special districts or through a zoning overlay district (i.e.: regional corridor or neighborhood corridor district).

- b. Require more beautification standards in office and low intensity commercial districts.
 - c. Allow mixed residential/commercial use in the local business district.
 - d. Allow mobile food vendors to operate at HOA, Civic and Municipal Events. Further allow mobile food vendors to establish temporary or permanent presence at developed commercial properties.
 - e. Specifically allow craft production, clothing production, or food production (less than 2,500 square feet).
 - f. Specifically allow microbrewer/small distiller/small wine maker (less than 2,500 square feet) in local business area/ industrial area (currently allows “processing and packaging of beverages.”
 - g. Implement design guidelines that incorporate natural, historic, or community- oriented features in non-residential districts.
3. ***Amendments to Industrial Manufacturing and Research & Technology & Research***
- a. Review setback requirements where land abuts a non-similar use or a public right of way, increasing where appropriate.
 - b. Encourage Low Impact Development methods in design of stormwater controls.
4. ***Changes to Zoning Map***
- a. Establish an institutional or public facility district.
 - b. Evaluate whether a PUD ordinance will benefit the Township’s goals.

- c.** Consider establishing a Park District or Resource Conservation District in the Zoning Ordinance.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan defines the framework for the future growth of Highland Township. It begins with a general description of the desired pattern of development for the community and follows with a description of the future land use categories as illustrated on the future land use map at the end of this chapter.

The future land use map is not a zoning map, but rather a generalized guide to the desired future land use patterns within the Township. Generally, the future land use categories follow established boundaries such as roads, rivers, etc.

In the course of preparing the plan, several factors were considered: Existing development patterns, demographic trends, regional influences, natural resource conditions, and road patterns. In addition to these factors, the plan considered the comments and opinions gathered during the community-wide survey and public input as well as numerous meetings with the Township Planning Commission. To this extent, it reflects general policy toward development and redevelopment within the Township.

Land Use Plan Categories

Agricultural

Description: This land classification category prioritizes the preservation of agricultural activities such as crop farming and animal husbandry as well as providing opportunities for agri-tourism business. agricultural food processing and home-based businesses. Residential use and hobby farms are permitted and encouraged, although recognizing that neighboring properties may generate noise, odors or other externalities that are protected from nuisance complaints by the Right to Farm Act

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Agricultural & Rural Residential (ARR)

Rural Residential

Description: This land classification category places a strong emphasis on preserving natural features and maintaining a balance between urbanization and environmental sensitivity. This classification allows for spacious living while safeguarding wetland, woodland, slopes, and other environmentally and visually sensitive areas. These residential areas have been strategically located to facilitate the preservation of these features with an aim to utilize common open space area to preserve the environment. Small-scale agriculture, such as hobby farms, are encouraged in these areas.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Agricultural & Rural Residential (ARR)

Medium Lot Single Family Residential (1.5 to 3 acre minimum lot size)

Description: This land classification category is located strategically in the central core of the township. This core is purposefully surrounded by lower-density land use categories, including the Agricultural and Large Lot Residential category. This concentration of Medium Lot Residential areas in the central core of the Township is a deliberate planning approach meant to accommodate anticipated future households.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Single-Family Residential - 1.5 acres (R-1.5) and Single-Family Residential - 3 acres (R-3)

Small Lot Single Family Residential

Description: This land classification category is comprised of historical small lot settlements around the lakes and other developments within the Township. The associated zoning regulations are designed to preserve the long-established development patterns in the Township. The boundaries of this land use category will not be expanded beyond current limits, and no additional parcels will be created in this category except

through combination or division of parcels within the existing bounds. The Township is committed to maintaining the character of historical settlements and promoting controlled growth within this residential area.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Lake and Village Residential (LV)

Multiple Family Residential

Description: This land classification category is intended to provide for multiple dwelling units, single-family attached dwellings (townhouses and row houses) and duplexes at a density consistent with available infrastructure and land capacities, while providing a variety of housing options other than a detached single-family home. This district is located primarily in areas with optimal amenities and accessibility, ensuring they become valuable assets to the community. By strategically planning these developments adjacent to major thoroughfares, residents have convenient access to the Highland Recreation Area and are in close proximity to major commercial centers.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Multiple-Family Residential (RM)

Manufactured Housing Community

Description: This land classification category is thoughtfully located within the township in a manner that promotes harmonious integration of housing types that differ from the predominant single-family homes. This category allows more options to meet the housing needs of the community while positively contributing to the overall character.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Manufactured Home Park (MH)

Office and Low Intensity Commercial

Description: This land classification category is to provide suitable locations for businesses

that primarily serve neighboring residential areas while protecting them from negative impacts. Low intensity office commercial and office uses are intended to serve local residents and not draw comparison shoppers/consumers from beyond the area. Duplexes and single-family attached residential uses would also be appropriate for this land classification. The goal is to create suitable environments for uses that align with the community's vision. The community's goal is to locate these zones in areas that promote access to essential services while also minimizing the impact on surrounding areas. Integrating a balance of professional and commercial spaces with residential uses that contributes positively to the Township's economic landscape without compromising the low-intensity character is the primary goal.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Office Service (OS), Local Commercial (C-1), and Multiple-Family Residential (RM) for attached single-family residential.

Highland Station

Description: This land classification category highlights the quaint hamlet that boasts historic charm including residential dwellings that date back over a century. Highland Station's character is intricately woven into its landscape, architecture, walkability, and close-knit neighborhoods, creating a cherished community with a timeless appeal. Influenced by its railroad origins, newer commercial developments align with major thoroughfares, yet the area maintains a distinctive character defined by natural surroundings and a commitment to simplicity and environmental stewardship. Future designs should preserve and build upon these defining features to uphold the essence of Highland Station.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Highland Station (HS)

General Commercial

Description: This land use category serves several primary objectives including stimulating

the Township's commercial sector and enhancing its tax base while simultaneously offering convenient access to a variety of commercial services in close proximity to population concentrations within the township. In order to promote an organized and cohesive commercial landscape, the zoning in this area intends to curb the spread of scattered strip commercial development. In doing this, the goal is to enhance traffic safety and to elevate the overall visual appeal of existing commercial development. As General Commercial areas cover 255 acres in the Township, they are a large contributor to the overall economic vitality and visual aesthetics of the community.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: General Commercial (C-2)

Transition From Commercial

Description: This land classification category is designated to properties that would lie at the edge of existing and planned residential areas but might be burdened with site design constraints that render the properties as less desirable for single family residential development. Due to the inaccessibility of municipal sewer and water services, these areas should be developed with minimal investments in infrastructure and hardscape such as paved parking areas and would be limited to uses that are by nature limited in intensity through seasonal constraints or that generate significantly less traffic than comparison retail. Suitable uses for this category include outdoor storage or inventory, provided appropriate landscape buffers and screening techniques are used in areas adjacent to residential or planned residential areas.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Low-Impact Commercial District (C-3)

Industrial

Description: This land use classification is planned to bolster the existing centralized industrial development pattern, fostering economic diversification, and expanding both the tax and employment base. The district is able to accommodate a wide spectrum of

industrial activities, from light to heavy manufacturing, utilizing the requirements of a special land use approval for operations with external effects that are felt by surrounding areas. To successfully meet the future economic needs of the Township, a balanced and forward-looking approach to industrial development is essential.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: Technology and Research (TR) and Industrial Manufacturing (IM)

Institutional

Description: This land use classification includes public institutions and other related facilities that are located adjacent to major thoroughfares. To ensure compatibility with the bordering residential properties, these uses are subject to specific regulations, such as screening guidelines. The establishment of Institutional uses requires a Traffic Management Plan, and all activities should predominantly take place within fully enclosed buildings to minimize external impacts. For large-scale institutions, stringent conditions are imposed to mitigate potential negative effects on single-family residential areas, including specific frontage and setback requirements, traffic control measures, and limitations on outside noise. These regulations collectively aim to strike a balance between accommodating Institutional uses and preserving the residential character of the community in accordance with the Township's Master Plan.

Appropriate Zoning Districts: All districts

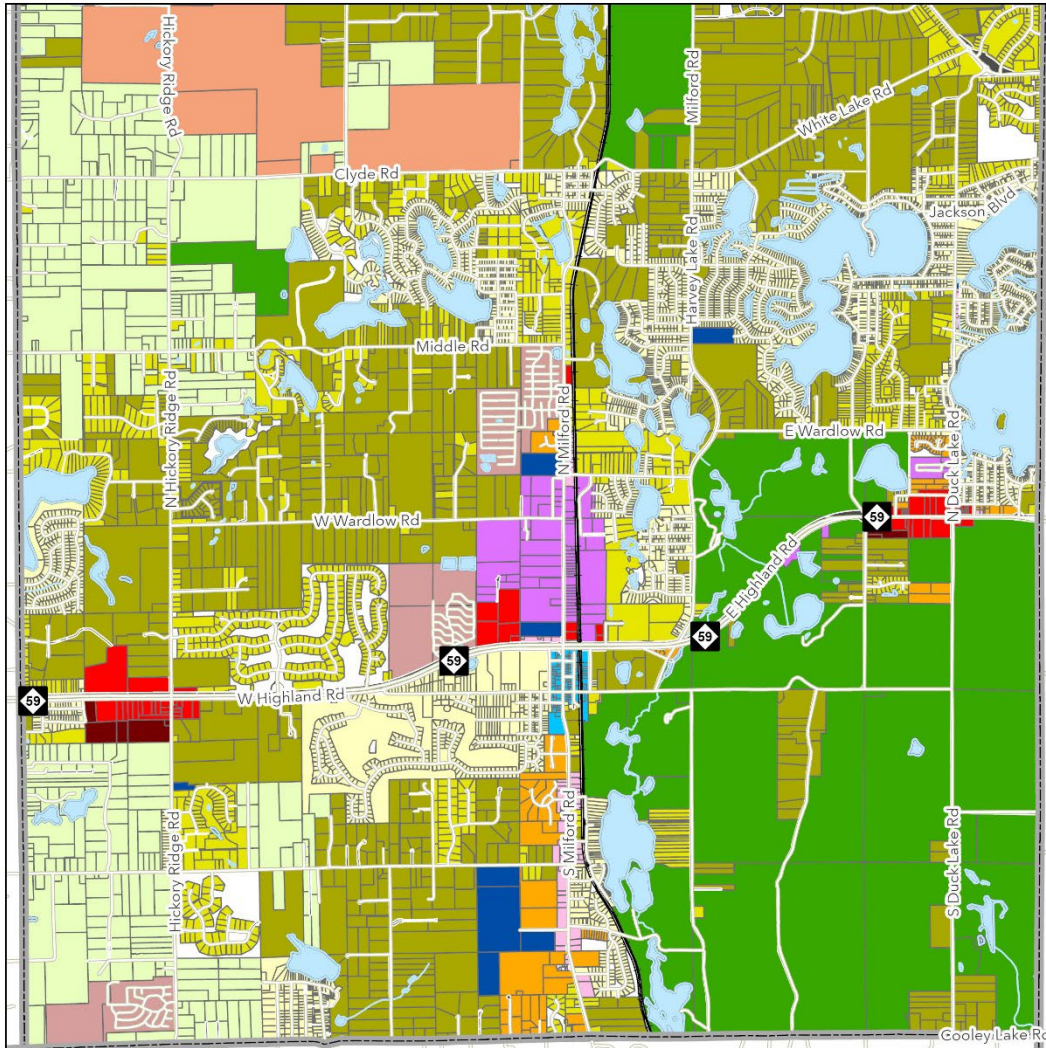
Parks and Recreation

Description: This land use category prioritizes significant open space and recreation areas, which include 17.1% of the township. Nearly 16% of this dedicated space is part of the expansive Highland Recreation Area. Notable additions, including the expansion of the Hickory Ridge Pines Park and acquisition of new park land in the southeast quadrant of the Township, underscore the township's commitment to providing ample green spaces

and recreational assets for the community's enjoyment and well-being.

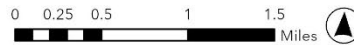
Appropriate Zoning Districts: Agricultural & Rural Residential (ARR)

Map 2: Future Land Use



- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Small Lot Single Family Residential | Industrial |
| Medium Lot Single Family Residential | Institutional |
| Rural Residential | Parks and Recreation |
| Multiple Family Residential | Consent Judgement |
| Manufactured Housing Community | Railroad |
| Agricultural | Rivers and Streams |
| Office and Low Intensity Commercial | Lakes and Creeks |
| General Commercial | Township Boundaries |
| Transition from Commercial | Parcel Boundaries |
| Highland Station | All Roads |

Future Land Use
 Highland Township
 Oakland County, Michigan



Prepared by: Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
 Date: September 2024



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BACKGROUND STUDIES

Background Studies

Previous Plans and Studies

Highland Township adopted the previous Master Plan, *Highland Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2000-2020*, on July 6, 2000. Since the adoption, as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, the document received periodic reviews, and amendments to maps and content.

The Township conducted analyses of the M-59 (Highland Road) and Hickory Ridge Road corridor in 2001 and again in 2018, both focusing on commercial land use:

- The 2001 West Highland Micro-Area Analysis involved parcels located within one-half (1/2) mile on the north and south side of M-59, beginning at the western Township boundary at Tipsico Lake Road and running east to a point approximately one-half (1/2) mile east of Hickory Ridge Road. Additionally, consideration of the parcels east of Hickory Ridge Road were included in the analysis to demonstrate development trends along M-59.
- The 2018 West Highland Micro-Area Analysis involved an area more concentrated than the 2001 study area: all parcels with frontage on the south side of M-59, within one-half (1/2) mile east and west of intersection of M-59 and Hickory Ridge Road. Additionally, parcels with frontage on the east and west side of Hickory Ridge Road within one-quarter (1/4) south from the intersection of M-59 and Hickory Ridge Road were included.

In 2006, the Township conducted a similar review of the area immediately north of M-59 along North Hickory Road; however, this plan -- Hickory Ridge Micro - Area Analysis -- focused on residential land uses.

Each of the previous planning efforts, among others mentioned below, were evaluated, and referenced, where appropriate, in this Master Plan update.

Other studies included are:

1. Historic Highland Station Design Guidelines (2008)
2. Highland Station Master Plan (2008)
3. Charter Township of Highland Recreation Plan (2021-2025)
4. East Highland Corridor Micro-Area Analysis (2002)
5. South Milford Road Micro-Area Analysis (2005)

Population and Housing

To compare both population and housing figures from 1990 through 2020, information was collected from the U.S. Census and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). As a means of comparison, population and housing data was also collected for nine (9) adjacent communities and Oakland County as a whole. According to U.S. Census data, the population increases of Highland Township are one of the lowest when compared to the surrounding communities, and nearly 5% lower than Oakland County. Similarly, Highland's housing unit increase was lower than those of the surrounding communities and Oakland County.

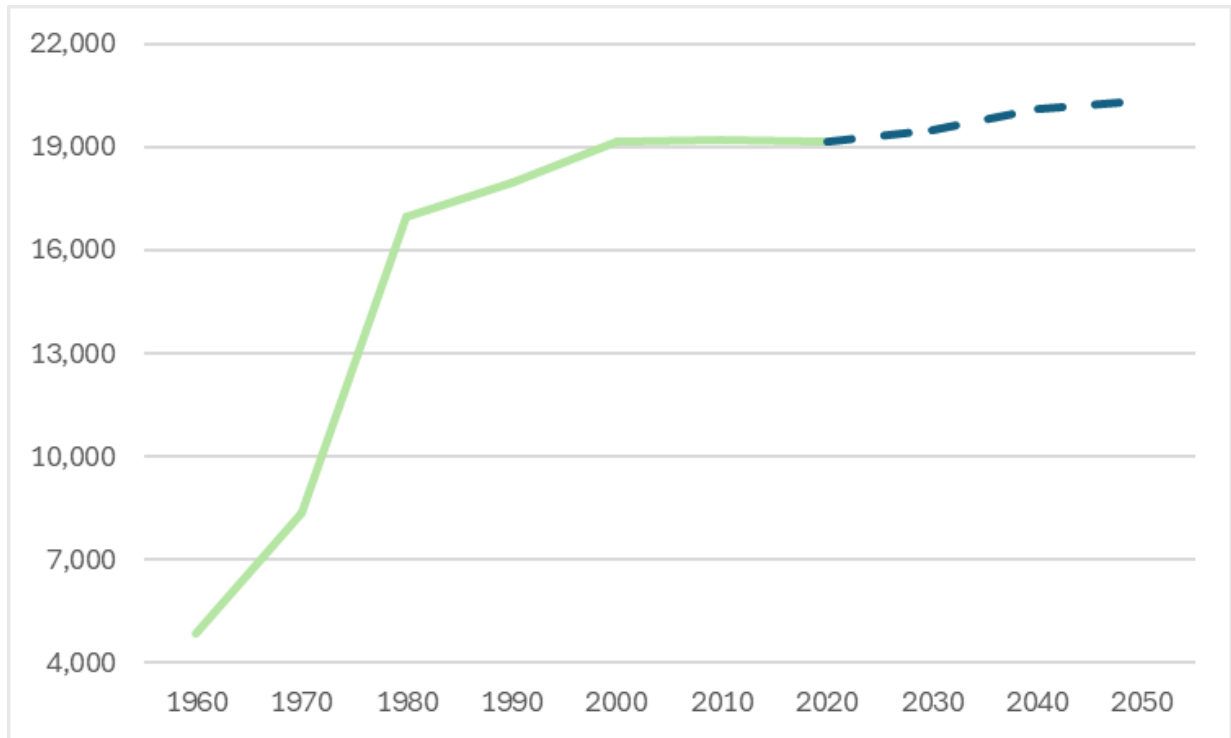
Trends

Population and housing growth in Highland Township, and surrounding communities, was moderate over the past few decades. This gradual increase reflects the continuing trend of suburbanization among Oakland County's population.

Population – **Table 1** depicts population trends between 1990 and 2020 and a forecasted population for 2030 and 2050. Per the U.S. Census Bureau, Highland Township grew 0.17% between 2000 and 2010 and decreased - 0.16% between 2010 and 2020. Comparatively, White Lake Township experienced a 6.38% population increase between

2000 and 2010 and 3.1% between 2010 and 2020. Over the past two decades, the Township grew 2.86%, or 2,090 persons, whereas Oakland County saw a 6.7% increase in population, during this same period.

Figure 2. – Highland Township Population Trends and Projections, 1960-2020



Source: SEMCOG Community Profiles and U.S. Census Bureau

Forecasts for Highland’s population growth predict that the population will decrease 1% in the next decade.

The small increase of Highland Township’s growth from 2000-2010 and slight projected population increase by 2030 is due to the increasing number of young residents migrating away from the Township (which also results in lower births), and deaths in the Baby Boomer generation. As demonstrated in **Table 1**, the projected population in 2045 is estimated to be 19,782 persons.

Table 1. – Population Trends, 1990-2020 and 2050 Forecast

COMMUNITY	US Census			Projections		Percent Change		
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2050	'00 – '10	'10 – '20	'20 – '50
Highland Township	19,169	19,202	19,172	19,782	20,333	0.17%	-0.16%	6.1%
Rose Township	6,210	6,250	6,188	5,667	6,399	0.64%	-1.00%	3.4%
Springfield Township	13,338	13,940	14,703	14,183	16,593	4.51%	5.50%	12.9%
White Lake Township	28,219	30,019	30,950	31,578	35,002	6.38%	3.10%	13.1%
Commerce Township	30,349	35,874	38,514	40,690	43,454	18.20%	7.40%	12.8%
Village of Milford	6,272	6,175	6,520	6,864	7,247	-1.55%	5.60%	11.2%
Milford Township	8,999	9,561	10,570	11,050	15,462	6.25%	10.60%	46.3%
Brighton Township	17,673	17,791	19,144	21,405	22,953	0.67%	7.60%	19.9%
Hartland Township	10,996	14,663	15,256	18,470	20,180	33.35%	4.00%	32.3%
Tyrone Township	8,459	10,020	11,986	11,400	12,910	18.45%	19.60%	7.7%
Oakland County	1,194,156	1,202,362	1,274,395	1,253,185	1,387,838	0.69%	6.00%	8.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SEMCOG 2050 Forecast

Housing – Per the 2020 U.S. Census, the number of housing units in Highland Township rose 4.49% from 2010 (see Table 2). This increase is less than the 8.24% increase for all of Oakland County.

Table 2. – Housing Unit Trends, 2000-2020

COMMUNITY	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
Highland Township	7,179	7,688	7.09%	7,897	2.72%
Rose Township	2,277	2,485	9.13%	2,521	1.45%
Springfield Township	4,794	5,363	11.87%	5,645	5.26%
White Lake Township	10,616	12,214	15.05%	12,776	4.60%
Commerce Township	12,924	13,967	8.07%	15,235	9.08%
Village of Milford	2,491	2,777	11.48%	2,985	7.49%
Milford Township	5,650	3,708	-34.37%	4,057	9.41%
Brighton Township	6,177	6,765	9.52%	7,210	6.58%
Hartland Township	3,908	5,442	39.25%	5,813	6.82%
Tyrone Township	3,020	3,770	24.83%	4,450	18.04%
Oakland County	492,006	527,255	7.16%	554,403	5.15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Per the U.S. Census, the average Highland Township household contained 2.70 persons per occupied housing unit (not per total housing units) in 2010; this number fell slightly to 2.57 in 2020 (see **Table 3**). All surrounding communities also experienced a decline in household size; however, like Highland Township, they remained higher than Oakland County as a whole.

Table 3. – Household Size and Occupied Housing Units, 2000-2020

COMMUNITY	2000		2010		2020	
	Persons Per Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units
Highland Township	2.82	6,786	2.70	7,125	2.57	7,455
Rose Township	2.90	2,144	2.75	2,272	2.63	2,342
Springfield Township	2.89	4,619	2.79	5,005	2.70	5,420
White Lake Township	2.80	10,092	2.67	11,262	2.55	12,089
Commerce Township	2.45	12,379	2.71	13,967	2.63	14,616
Village of Milford	2.58	2,427	2.39	2,589	2.26	2,834
Milford Township	1.65	5,470	2.76	3,422	2.67	3,914
Brighton Township	2.97	5,950	2.77	6,415	2.74	6,966
Hartland Township	2.98	3,696	2.84	5,154	2.77	5,496
Tyrone Township	2.94	2,882	2.84	3,528	2.84	4,206
Oakland County	2.53	471,115	2.46	483,698	2.40	524,047

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Characteristics

Population – Population characteristics play an important role in determining both the Township's development potential and future needs. **Figure 2** depicts the 2020 population of Highland Township compared to the surrounding Townships. Age composition is an important characteristic, as noted in its comparison to Oakland County in **Table 4**.

Table 4. – Age Group Comparison, 2020

Highland Township			Oakland County	
Age Group	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	1,005	5.02%	68,056	5.43%
5 to 9	946	4.72%	69,881	5.58%
10 to 14	1,343	6.70%	78,350	6.25%
15 to 19	1,458	7.28%	77,732	6.20%
20 to 24	853	4.26%	74,902	5.98%
25 to 29	855	4.27%	83,314	6.65%
30 to 34	876	4.37%	79,697	6.36%
35 to 39	1,118	5.58%	80,204	6.40%
40 to 44	1,116	5.57%	76,695	6.12%
45 to 49	1,610	8.04%	88,385	7.05%
50 to 54	1,914	9.56%	91,845	7.33%
55 to 59	1,934	9.66%	93,850	7.49%
60 to 64	1,466	7.32%	85,222	6.80%
65 to 69	1,484	7.41%	69,057	5.51%
70 to 74	851	4.25%	52,039	4.15%
75 to 79	497	2.48%	34,643	2.76%
80 to 84	377	1.88%	22,478	1.79%
85+	328	1.64%	26,835	2.14%
TOTAL	20,031	100%	1,253,185	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Age Composition – The Township’s age composition is described below and shown in Figure 2:

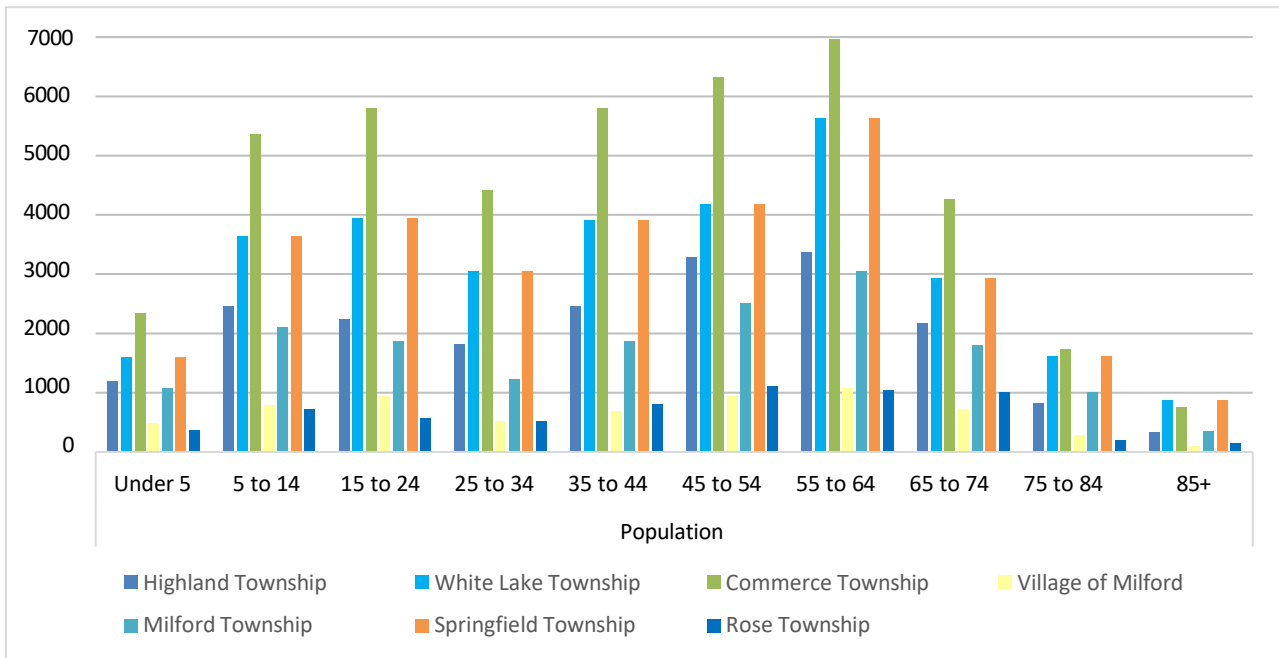
Preschool: A total of 5.02% of the Township’s population is below the age of five (5) years; this is a lower percentage than Oakland County (5.4%) as a whole.

School-Age Children: In 2020, nearly 19% of Highland Township’s population was between five (5) and nineteen (19) years old, representing the second-largest cohort. This number is expected to increase within the near future in response to the aging of the children of "baby boom" parents.

Family-Forming: Persons between the ages of twenty (20) and thirty-four (34) constitute the group known as the family-formers. Family-formers represent 12.9% of the population (2,584 persons) in Highland Township. This group is expected to fuel the increase in preschoolers in the upcoming years. This is also the group that

can be expected to spend the largest amount of money in the community for household items, food, clothing, etc.

Figure 2. – Percent of Population by Age, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Mature Families: The second largest proportion of the Township's population is between the ages of thirty-five (35) and fifty-four (54). This group will tend to have children within the Highland Township educational system and will be concerned with the quality of education available. Currently, this group represents approximately 28.75% of the population.

Mature Adults: Today, the population of Oakland County (and the nation as a whole) is typically characterized as aging, but Highland Township has comparatively fewer people aged fifty-five (55) or older. The group between fifty-five (55) and sixty-nine (69) years of age is commonly referred to as the "empty nesters;" they are parents whose children have left the household. Approximately 31.71% of the Township's population is within the fifty-five (55) to sixty-nine (69) year-old age cohort and is the largest proportion in Highland Township. Combined with the

aging of the mature family’s group, the mature adult’s group has become an overwhelming majority. To ensure that this population is enticed to remain within the community, the placement of dependent housing near recreation and shopping areas is encouraged.

Seniors: Just over 10% (2,053 persons) of Township residents are over sixty-nine (69) years old. This is just below the County proportion of 10.84%. However, this percentage can be expected to increase.

Housing – Housing characteristics indicate that growth in the Township’s housing stock has exceeded general population growth (see **Table 5**). While population decreased by 0.16% from 2010 to 2020, the number of housing units increased by 2.72%. Housing unit characteristics are described below.

Age of Housing: As of 2020, approximately 43.1% of residential structures within the Township were less than thirty (30) years old, whereas the remaining 56.9% were more than thirty (30) years old.

Owner-Occupancy: The Highland Township has a high percentage of owner-occupied housing. Per Census data, 84.73% of the Township's housing stock was owner- occupied and 7.8% renter-occupied in 2020. This compares with Oakland County at 66.4% owner-occupancy and 27.1% renter-occupancy.

Table 5. – Characteristics of Occupied Housing Units

2020		Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
COMMUNITY	Total Occupied Housing Units	Total	Percent of Total	Total	Percent of Total
Highland Township	8,141	6,898	84.73%	635	7.80%
Rose Township	2,618	2,340	89.38%	110	4.20%
Springfield Township	5,554	4,766	85.81%	534	9.61%
White Lake Township	12,349	10,386	84.10%	1,283	10.39%

2020		Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
COMMUNITY	Total Occupied Housing Units	Total	Percent of Total	Total	Percent of Total
Commerce Township	14,929	12,842	86.02%	1,407	9.42%
Village of Milford	2,853	1,946	68.21%	727	25.48%
Milford Township	4,087	3,338	81.67%	524	12.82%
Brighton Township	6,874	6,394	93.02%	311	4.52%
Hartland Township	5,542	4,414	79.65%	912	16.46%
Tyrone Township	3,964	3,252	82.04%	485	12.24%
Oakland Co.	539,742	358,384	66.40%	146,201	27.09%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Projections

Township leaders can reference population projections to estimate the community’s future housing needs. These projections can extend up to thirty (30) years in the future; beyond that timeframe, however, projections may be of little value due to possible changes in the economy, trends in household size and the character of the community in general.

Migration and employment are the most important factors in determining population growth. While local government has little control over births and deaths, migration to or from the Township can be influenced by employment opportunities and community desirability. Development policies have the greatest effect on the level and location of future growth.

The Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) has prepared detailed population projections for southeastern Michigan communities. The results of the most recent SEMCOG Regional Development Forecast (2012) provide a basis for projecting future populations and are illustrated in **Table 6**. Utilizing the projected growth rate provided by the SEMCOG population forecast, the Township’s population is projected to reach approximately 20,333 by the year 2050, a 2.9% increase from 2000. The total number of households is projected to increase from 7,125 in 2010 to 8,051 by 2050 (an increase of 9%). As a result of these projections, persons per household equates to

approximately 2.52 in 2050, decreasing at a rate like that of the surrounding communities.

Table 6. – Population Projections, 2000 – 2050

COMMUNITY	Census			Projection	Percent Change		
	2000	2010	2020	2050	'00 - '10	'10 - '20	'00 - '50
Highland Township	19,169	19,202	19,172	20,333	0.17%	-0.16%	6.07%
Rose Township	6,210	6,250	6,188	6,399	0.64%	-1.0%	3.04%
Springfield Township	13,338	13,940	14,703	16,593	4.51%	5.5%	24.4%
White Lake Township	28,219	30,019	30,950	35,002	6.38%	3.1%	24%
Commerce Township	30,349	35,874	38,514	43,454	18.2%	7.4%	43.2%
Village of Milford	6,272	6,175	6,520	7,247	-1.55%	5.6%	15.5%
Milford Township	8,999	9,561	10,570	15,462	6.25%	10.6%	71.8%
Brighton Township	17,673	17,791	19,144	22,953	0.67%	7.60%	29.9%
Hartland Township	10,996	14,663	15,256	20,180	33.35%	4.0%	83.5%
Tyrone Township	8,459	10,020	11,986	12,910	18.45%	19.60%	52.6%
Oakland County	1,194,156	1,202,362	1,274,395	1,387,838	0.69%	6.0%	8.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast

Economic Characteristics

An analysis of the local economy includes an evaluation of the existing tax base and employment sectors. An understanding of the local economy is important to develop a long- range plan for commercial and industrial use of land compatible with other land uses. Township economic policies should also foster and encourage sound employment opportunities for the local population, improve the Township tax base, and coordinate the overall physical development of the Township. To arrive at a viable and desirable plan, the economic base analysis must combine the existing situation with sound planning concepts,

projections of the business market, and the aspirations and goals of the community.

Tax Base

Per the 2021 Oakland County Equalization Report, the Township’s tax base is predominately residential, with 91.24% of the 2021 real property valuations stemming from residential properties. This represents a 0.38% increase from 2015, where 90.86% of real property valuations came from residential properties and a 4.85% increase from 2010, where 86.39% of real property valuations came from residential properties. The continuing increase in the strength of residential property valuations is significant considering the low percentages reported during the housing market collapse between 2008 and 2010.

Since 2010, real property valuations stemming from commercial and industrial properties experienced a decrease; however, in 2015 both the commercial and industrial valuation slowed significantly. In 2021, the Township experienced a 53.68% increase in total property taxes since 2010. SEV trends are denoted in **Table 7**, below.

Table 7. - Comparative Real SEV for Highland Township, 2010-2021

Classification	Total Real SEV			% Of Total		
	2010	2015	2021	2010	2015	2021
Agriculture	\$3,059,770	\$3,550,690	\$4,524,380	0.42%	0.45%	0.41%
Commercial	\$76,162,700	\$58,955,040	\$78,884,500	10.55%	7.55%	7.11%
Industrial	\$19,088,580	\$8,836,380	\$13,837,120	2.64%	1.13%	1.25%
Residential	\$623,865,280	\$709,220,910	\$1,012,587,930	86.39%	90.86%	91.24%
TOTAL	\$722,176,330	\$780,563,020	\$1,109,833,930	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Oakland County Equalization Reports, 2010-2021

Table 8, below, shows additional SEV related data. The table depicts a comparison of SEV data to neighboring communities.

Table 8. – Real SEV Comparison, 2021

Community	Total Real SEV	% OF COUNTY
Highland Township	\$1,109,833,930	1.37%
Rose Township	\$367,510,620	0.45%
Springfield Township	\$863,939,740	1.07%
White Lake Township	\$1,696,539,220	2.09%
Commerce Township	\$2,906,861,410	3.59%
Village of Milford	\$402,309,610	0.50%
Milford Township	\$1,216,424,940	1.50%
Oakland County	\$81,062,991,752	-

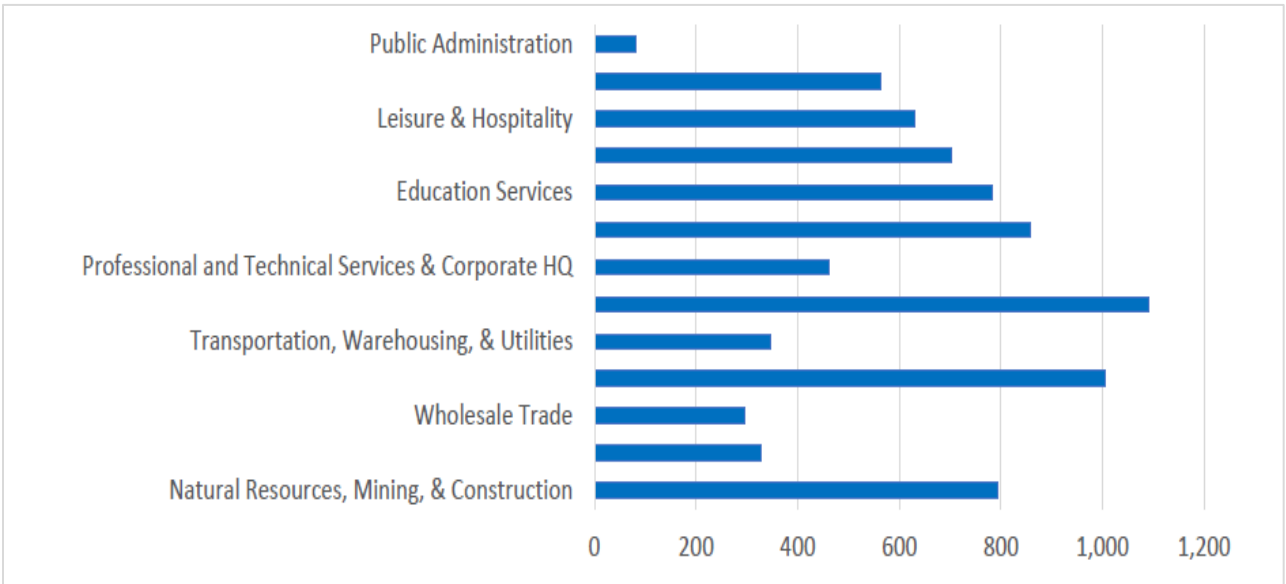
Source: Oakland County Equalization Report, 2021

Employment

The labor force in Highland Township is a mix of “blue collar” and “white collar” workers, with a majority in information and financial activities, retail trade, or administrative, support, & waste services.

Although the Township is predominantly a bedroom community whose residents work elsewhere, it is not without a significant local employment base. [Figure 3](#), on the following page, shows Employment by Industry Sector in Highland Township.

Figure 3. – Employment by Industry Sector, 2020



Source: SEMCOG Community Profile

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources

The natural features discussed below are illustrated on the Natural Resources Map ([Map 3](#)).

Geology, Groundwater, Topography and Soils

The Highland area is characterized by glacial geology typical of much of southeastern Michigan, with glacial outwash sand and gravel occurring along glacial end moraines. Given the permeability of these geological circumstances, the numerous waterbodies, and the wetland areas, much of the Township provides valuable groundwater recharge functions. The township also has major watersheds from the Huron and Shiawassee River that penetrate the Township's borders.

The glacial geology of the area has resulted in topography that ranges from nearly level to gently rolling. The rolling topography of the Township allows for beautiful backdrops and scenic vistas. Areas with significant topographical relief are often prone to destabilization and soil erosion when developed.

Lakes

Highland Township has nearly two dozen lakes within its boundaries. These lakes have attracted residents to the area for both desirable residential settings and water-based active and passive recreation. The lakes cover approximately 1,682 acres, or 7.2% of the Township's land area. The two (2) largest lakes, in the northeast quadrant of the township, are White Land and Duck Lake. A large percentage of the waterfront property is platted and developed with relatively dense single-family developments (two (2) units per acre or greater).

Wetlands

Wetlands are lowland areas characterized by constant or intermittent inundation, hydric soils, and specific vegetation types. They are often found in association with other water features, such as lakes, ponds, or streams, but can also exist on their own in

depressions. Wetlands serve a wide variety of purposes, such as wildlife habitat, flood control, water filtration, groundwater recharge, and scenic and recreation uses. These natural features are scattered throughout the Township; however, the largest wetland area is throughout the Highland State Recreation Area.

Woodlands and Tree Rows

Woodlands and densely vegetated areas provide wildlife habitat areas, recreational value, and substantial contributions to the scenery of the Township. Significant woodlands exist in the southernmost portions of the Township, as well as the east-central and north-central areas.

Much of this wooded area exists in combination with wetlands and remains intact today because they are of little agricultural or extractive use. Like the wetland areas, these natural features are concentrated in the southeast corner of the township in Highland State Recreation Area.

Michigan Natural Features Inventory

The Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) maintains a continuously updated information base, the only comprehensive, single source of data on Michigan's endangered, threatened, or special concern plant and animal species, natural communities, and other natural features. MNFI has responsibility for inventorying and tracking the State's rarest species and exceptional examples of the whole array of natural communities. MNFI also provides information to resource managers for many types of permit applications regarding these elements of diversity.

In 2017, the Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services Department worked with MNFI to update potential conservation/natural areas within the County. The

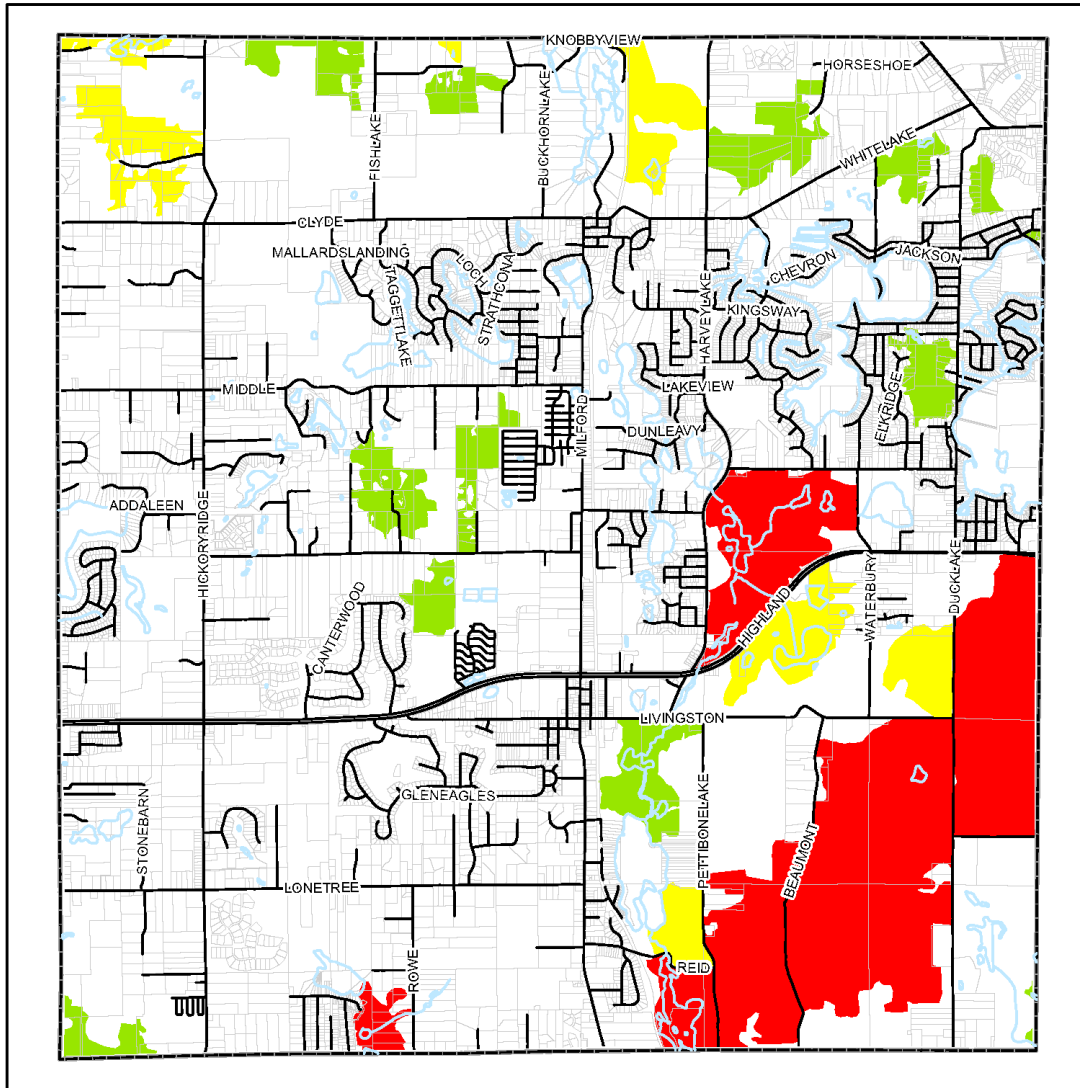
conclusions of the study were the identification of high, medium, and low-ranking areas within each municipality. These rankings are based upon a set of criteria that include size, core area, stream corridor, landscape connectivity, restorability, and element occurrence.

Based upon the study, Highland Township has two (2) large areas identified as priority one conservation areas (highest ranking), with numerous smaller areas ranked as priority two (2) and priority three (3). The priority one ranked areas are located mostly in the southeast quadrant of the Township, comprising of the Highland State Recreational Area. These and other natural resources and their linkages should be considered for preservation through land use controls and conservation development alternatives.

Invasive Species

The Oakland County Cooperative Species Management Areas (CISMA) is a collaboration to support functioning ecosystems and enhance quality of life through invasive species management. CISMA educates people about invasive species and works to prevent their spread. Invasive species can include Garlic Mustard, Bittersweet, Phragmites, oak wilt, and more.

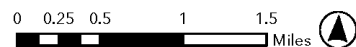
Map 3: Natural Features Inventory



- PRIORITY**
- Priority One
 - Priority Two
 - Priority Three

Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)

Highland Township
 Oakland County, Michigan



This map is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may not be accurate. The information is provided with the understanding that the conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.

Data: Oakland County 2017
 Prepared by: Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
 Date: January 2025



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TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Transportation and Traffic

As recognized in the Micro-Area Analysis of Land Use: M-59 Corridor centered at Hickory Ridge Road (2018), the relationship between land use and transportation is a critical element of land use planning. Roads provide the access necessary to land use and are an important determinant of community character. Residential streets need to provide safety and interest, and slow down through-traffic movements. Major thoroughfares, however, must be able to transport vehicles through an area with as little interference as possible.

From a planning perspective, this Master Plan must take into consideration the impacts that the transportation network has on land uses and development patterns, and vice versa. Therefore, future planning must include:

- Improving the connectivity of the road network;
- Improving safety for all modes of travel, including non-motorized transportation;
- Providing mobility and access through transportation choices; and
- Incorporating environmental considerations into decision making.

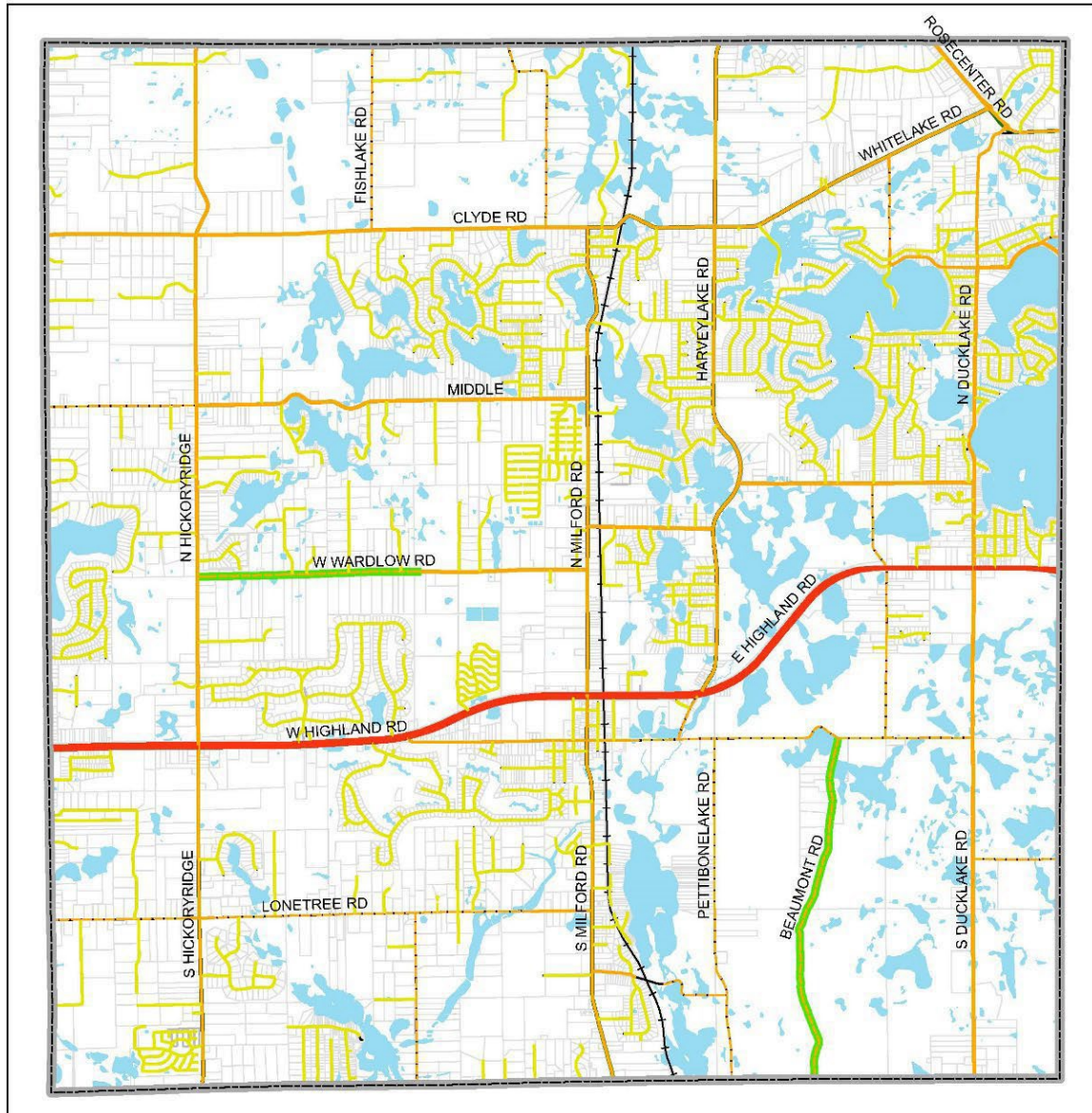
While jurisdiction for public roads within the Township falls under the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), the transportation element of this Master Plan is still useful in a variety of ways. This section promotes a better understanding of the strong relationship between transportation and land development patterns.

Roadway Classification and Responsibility

Roadway classifications are used to group streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the character of traffic service they are intended to provide. Administrative

jurisdictions identify roads in terms of governmental responsibility for

Map 4 – County Road Classification Map



Legend

- State, Paved
- Major, Paved
- Major, Gravel
- Minor, Paved
- Minor, Gravel
- Natural Beauty Road

County Road Classification

Highland Township
 Oakland County

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Carlisle/Wortman Associates
 May, 2022
 Source: Oakland County GIS



construction and maintenance. Roadway classifications are also used to determine eligibility for state funding and federal aid. The RCOC utilizes a distinct classification system, while MDOT utilizes the federally used National Functional Classification (NFC) system.

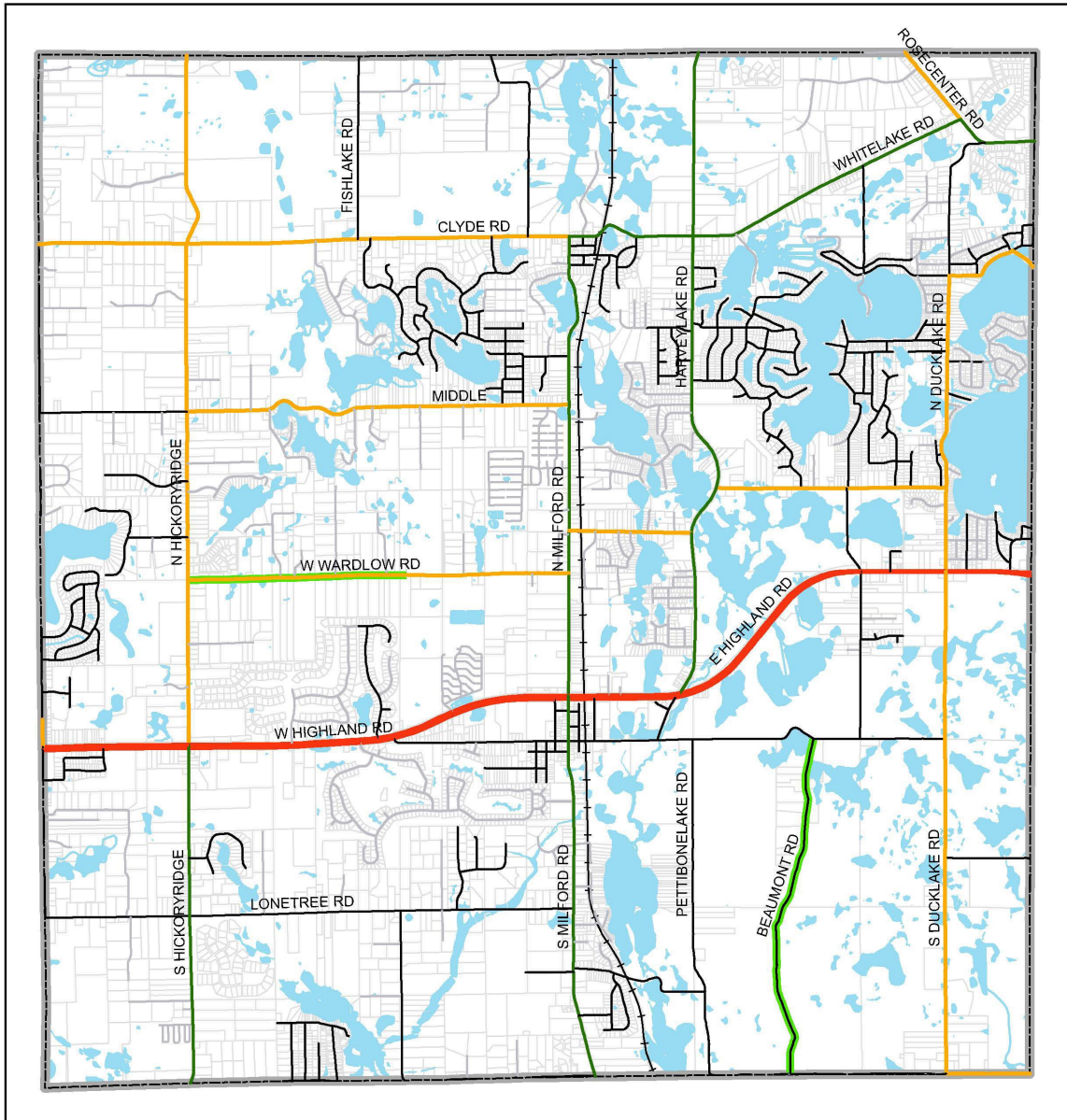
County Classifications

Act 51 of the Public Acts of 1951, as amended, tasks county road commissions with classifying county primary and local roads. The classifications developed by the county road commissions are subject to Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) approval. Roads designated as primary roads must be of the greatest importance, while local roads provide for intra-community travel. The determination of a primary or local road is based on traffic volumes, primary generators of traffic served, and other factors. **Map 2** illustrates the county classification system. Currently, two (2) roads within the Township are classified as “natural beauty” roads; 1.20 miles Wardlow, designated July 16, 1992, and 2.0 miles of Beaumont Road, designated July 24, 2003. These roads are designated as part of the Natural Beauty Roads Act, Act 150 of 1970. The goal of the Natural Beauty Roads Act is to identify and preserve designated roads in a natural, essentially undisturbed condition. Widening, mowing, spraying, and other maintenance or improvement activities may be restricted on these roads.

National Functional Classification

Map 3 on the following page depicts the hierarchy of transportation routes within the Township based upon the National Functional Classification (NFC) system. NFC is a transportation planning tool which has been used by federal, state, and local transportation agencies since the late 1960’s. The NFC designation determines whether a road is eligible for federal funds, either as part of the National Highway System, or through the Surface Transportation Program.

Map 5 – National Functional Classification MAP

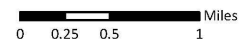


Legend

- State Route
- Major Collector
- Minor Arterial
- Local Road
- Non-Certified
- Natural Beauty Road

National Functional Classification (NFC)

Highland Township
 Oakland County



Carlisle/Wortman Associates
 May, 2022

Source: Oakland County GIS/MDOT



NFC classifications include:

Major Collectors: Major collectors provide access to and mobility within residential, commercial, and industrial areas and connect local roads to arterials. Major collectors generally carry more traffic than minor collectors.

Minor Collectors: Minor collectors also provide access to and between varying land uses but generally have less traffic than major collectors.

Principal Arterials (State Roads): Principal arterials are number three in the hierarchy, behind “Interstate” and “Other Freeway.” The primary function of these roadways is to carry relatively long distance, through- travel movements. Examples include interstates and other freeways, as well as state routes between larger cities.

Minor Arterials: Minor arterials tend to accommodate slightly shorter trips than principal arterials. There is some emphasis on land access common to providing for intra- community travel via local bus routes but generally do not penetrate neighborhoods.

Local Roads: Local roads provide access to individual properties within the Township and typically have moderate to low speeds. Most roads within the Township are classified as local roads.

Traffic and Crash Counts

SEMCOG periodically conducts traffic studies to monitor and evaluate traffic volumes throughout Southeast Michigan. Counts taken within Highland Township are provided in [Table 9](#). Traffic counts are measured in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), which is the total volume of vehicle traffic of a road for a year divided by 365 days. Table 9 lists the Township’s most heavily traveled roads in 2020.

Table 9. – Traffic Counts – 2020

Road	Direction	Limits/Location	AADT
Highland (M-59)	Two-Way	Duck Lake to Ormond	29,900
Highland (M-59)	Eastbound	Tipsico Lake to Hickory Ridge	15,000
Milford	Two-Way	Reid to Lone Tree	14,250
Milford	Two-Way	Rowe to Reid	14,140
Highland (M-59)	Westbound	Tipsico Lake to Hickory Ridge	14,090*
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Highland to Wardlow	13,530
Milford	Two-Way	Livingston to Highland	12,810
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Lone Tree to Highland	12,700
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Honeywell Lake to Lone Tree	12,620
Milford	Two-Way	Highland to Wardlow	10,910
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Livingston to Highland	10,340
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Cooley Lake to Teeple Lake	10,160
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Teeple Lake to Livingston	10,080
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Highland to Wardlow	7,900
Milford	Northbound	South of Lone Tree	7,410
Milford	Southbound	North of Lone Tree	7,390
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Wardlow to Middle	7,020
Wardlow	Two-Way	Waterbury to Duck Lake	6,660
Duck Lake	Two-Way	Wardlow to Jackson Blvd	6,440
Hickory Ridge	Southbound	North of Lone Tree	6,430
Hickory Ridge	Two-Way	Middle to Clyde	6,190
Milford	Two-Way	Wardlow to Middle	6,190
Hickory Ridge	Northbound	South of Lone Tree	6,180
Wardlow	Two-Way	Harvey Lake to Waterbury	6,040
Harvey Lake	Two-Way	Wardlow to White Lake	5,980
Milford	Northbound	South of Wardlow E Leg	5,620
Duck Lake - North Leg	Southbound	North of Cooley Lk	5,140
Milford	Southbound	North of Wardlow E Leg	4,420

Source: SEMCOG

High-Crash Intersections

Table 10 indicates the intersections with the greatest number of recorded crashes within the Township. The top crash locations all involve Highland and Milford Road.

Table 10. - High-Crash Intersections, 2019-2023

Local Rank	County Rank	Intersection	Annual Average 2016 - 2020
1	105	Highland Rd E @ Milford Rd N	22.8
2	136	Highland Rd E @ Duck Lake Rd N	20.4
3	171	Highland Rd W @ Hickory Ridge Rd N	18.2
4	529	Highland Rd E @ Harvey Lake Rd	9.2
5	945	Milford Rd S @ Watkins BLVD	5.6
6	1109	Milford Rd S @ Loan Tree Rd	4.8

Source: SEMCOG

Public Transportation

Highland Township has been provided with public transportation services through the Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA) since January 2020. WOTA is currently funded by the 2022 Oakland Transit Millage.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community Facilities and Services

Library

The Highland Public Library, administered by a six (6) member Board elected by Township residents, is located at 444 Beach Farm Circle. In addition to the vast selection of available books, films, videos, and computer programs offered onsite, the Highland Public Library participates in the statewide MLibraryCard program. This program provides a wider selection of available material through ninety-nine (99) reciprocal member libraries of The Library Network, and other MLibraryCard libraries. Furthermore, community meetings rooms and study rooms are also available for residents of Highland Township.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

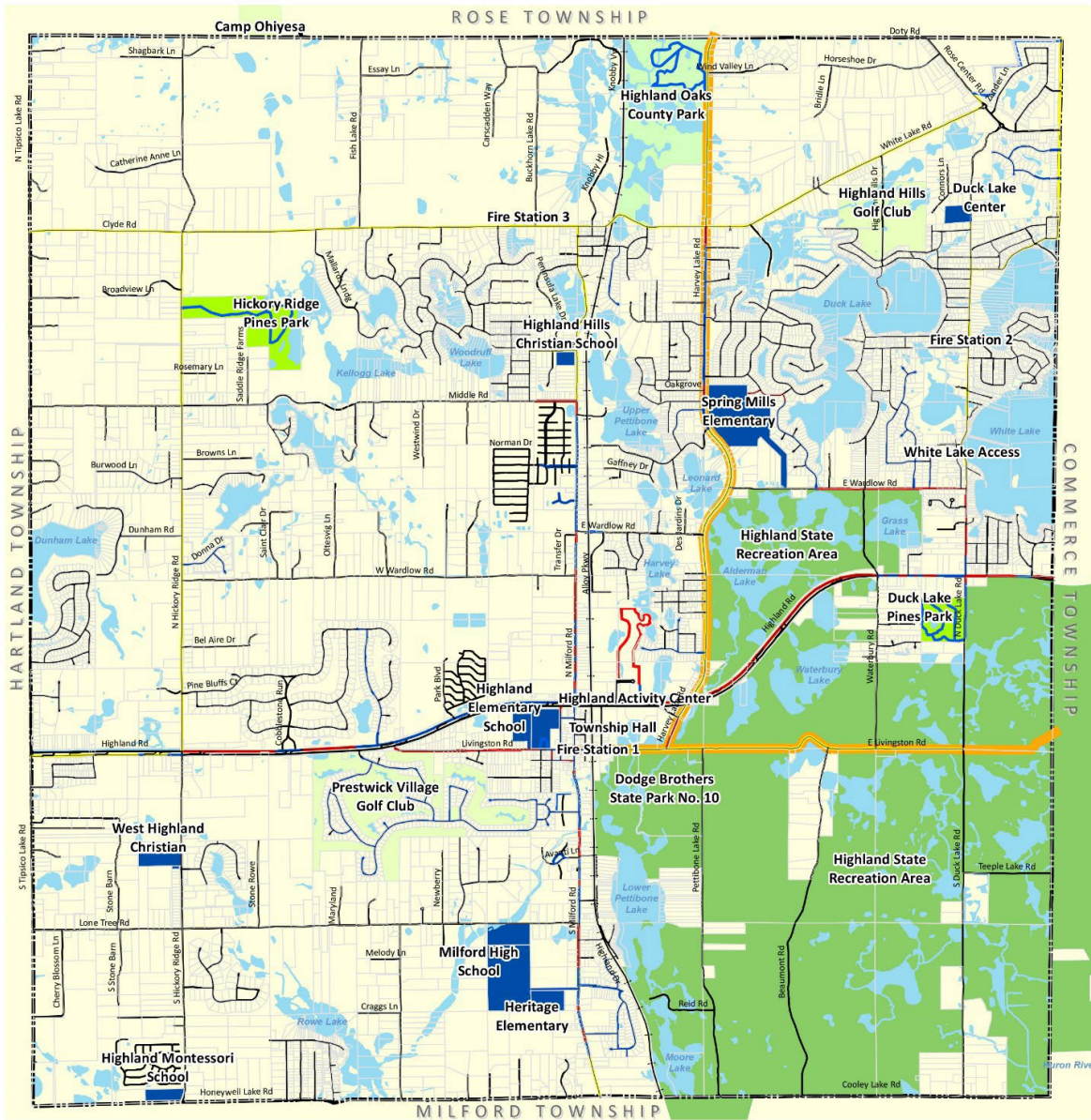
Recreation is an integral part of the Master Plan for a community. Existing parks and recreational facilities for Highland Township are inventoried on the following pages in **Table 11; Map 6**, Community Facilities, depicting their locations within the Township.

Table 11. - Recreation Facilities Inventory

Facility	Acres	Amenities/Attractions
Hickory Ridge Pines Park	105	Sports fields, picnic shelters, concession building, fitness and paved trails, and access to Murry Lake.
Duck Lane Pines Park	40	Sports fields and courts, picnic shelters, in-line, and ice skating, play structures, and concession building.
Veterans Park	1	Soldiers' monument, U.S., State, and MIA/POW flags, sidewalk, historical marker, kiosk, and movable stage.
Downey Lake Pines Park	36	Wetlands, natural areas and trails, and lake frontage.

Source: Charter Township of Highland Recreation Master Plan, 2016 -2020

Map 6 – Community Facilities Map

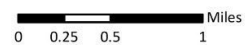


COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Township Park
- County Park
- State Park
- Privately-owned Park
- Educational Facility
- Natural Beauty Road

- Oakland County Pathway Concept**
- Under Consideration
- Township Non-Motorized Pathways**
- Existing
- Planned (1-5 years Priority)
- Planned (5-10 years Priority)

Highland Township
 Oakland County



Carlisle/Wortman Associates
 December 20, 2019
 Source: Oakland County GIS



The Charter Township of Highland Recreation Master Plan (2021-2025) guides future parks and recreation planning and management efforts within the Township. The Recreation Master Plan is the official document used by the Township Parks and Recreation Committee and the Township Board to guide decisions regarding the community's recreation facilities and programs. The Plan considers existing facilities within the Village and Township and documents the demand for additional improved park facilities and recreation program. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan culminates with the formulation of goals and objectives as well as a specific action and implementation plan.

Other Recreational Facilities

In addition to the municipal facilities noted above, there are numerous private recreational facilities within the Township. These private facilities include golf courses, a garden club, camps, and equestrian facilities. There are also recreational amenities located within the public-school campuses and within the residential developments of the community. These facilities comprise a large portion of the Township and complement the public facilities provided by the Township. The uses and opportunities available within these facilities will be evaluated as part of the land use plan for the Township.

Regional Trails

Highland Township continues to coordinate with Oakland County on county-wide projects. Highland Township has accepted Oakland County's Pathway Concept from the Oakland County Trails Master Plan. The County pathway concept highlights Harvey Lake Road, from E. Livingston Road north to Highland Oaks County Park and E. Livingston Road from Milford Road east to the White Lake Township line, Highland Township has included both concepts into Highland's Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan. The E. Livingston Road pathway, identified as a second phase project by the MNDP that would also connect to the newly proposed MDNR north-south, regional multi-use trail, in White Lake Township.

Highland Township is also in line with the Regional Trails and Greenways Vision produced by the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan's Green Ways Initiative.

Water System

Aside from private wells, the Highland Township water system is supplied through eight (8) wells drawing groundwater from glacial material. These eight (8) wells, one 6-inch, one 8-inch, five 12-inch and one 16-inch, provide the pumping capacity for this well water supply system. White Eagle subdivision is provided this natural resource by its own two (2) well water supplied system.

To protect this system, Highland Township follows a Wellhead Protection (WHP) program by planning and managing the system to prevent contamination of public water supply wells by controlling or managing all potential sources of contamination within a designated area surrounding the well or well field. The dark green on **Map 7** represents wellhead protection areas.

Sewer System

Currently, the Township has no sanitary sewer system. Projects must rely on on-site sewage disposal, placing more importance on existing on-site soils.

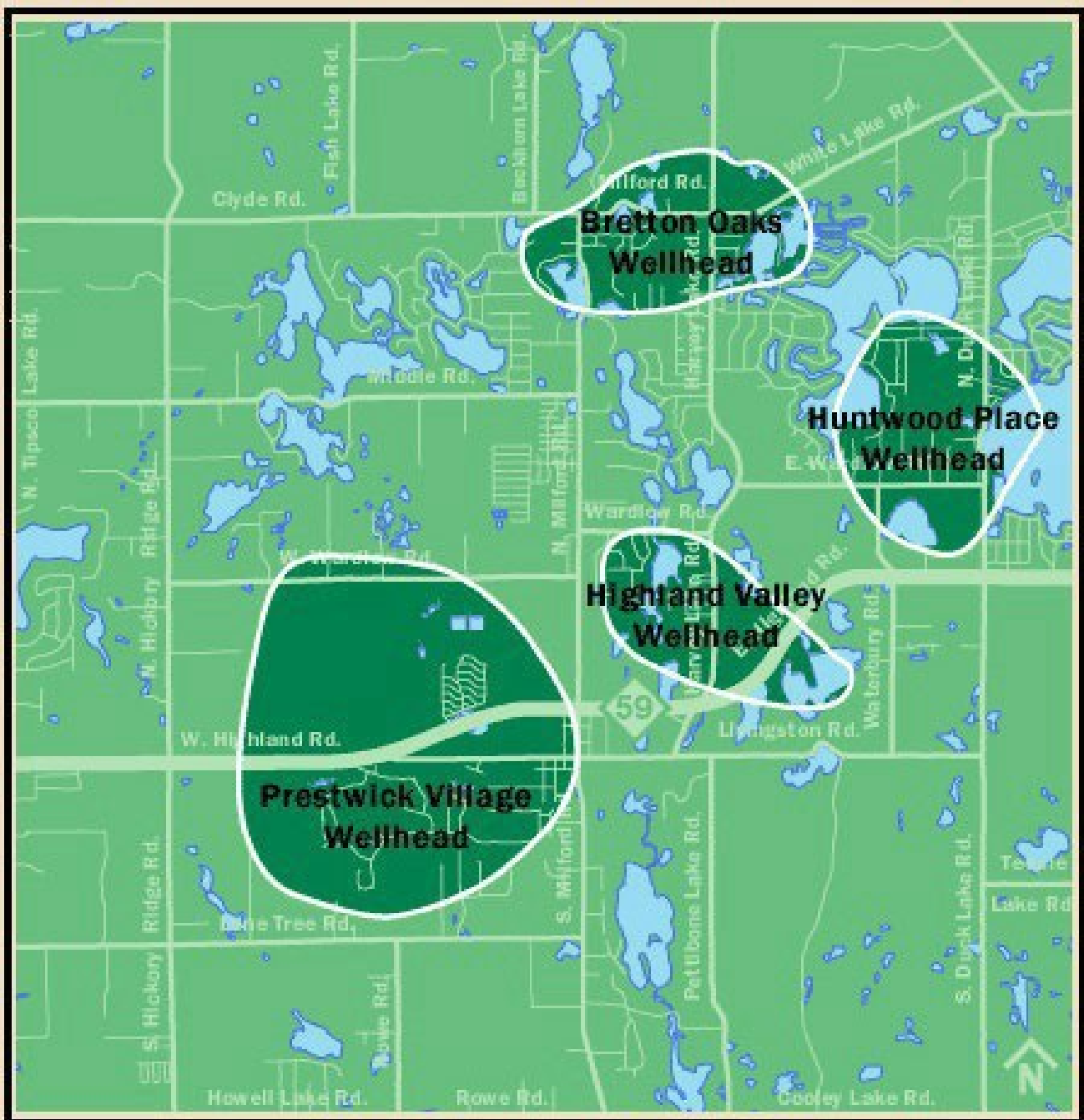
Household Waste Disposal

The Township has waste disposal opportunities through Oakland County. The Township has offered a semi-annual household waste collection program in the past and currently directs residents to use ERG Environmental Services in Livonia for household waste and recycling. Oakland County offers household waste events through the No Haz Collection Program. The program allows residents to participate and properly dispose of household hazardous waste.

Hazard Mitigation

Oakland County approved a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2023. The purpose of the plan is to identify strategies to minimize the impacts of hazards to be eligible for pre-or post-disaster mitigation funding.

Map 7 – Wellhead Protection Areas Map



Source: Highland Township

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use

A basic element in master planning is the consideration of existing land use types and patterns. Land use data from the Township, County, and SEMCOG were inventoried. The result of this inventory is presented on **Map 8** while the classifications used in compiling the inventory data are below.

Classifications

The Existing Land Use Map (**Map 8**) inventories the following land use categories.

Agriculture: This classification applies to all land use areas used for crops and permanent pastureland. In addition, this group includes such agricultural activities as horse breeding farms, green houses, and similar types of specialized activities.

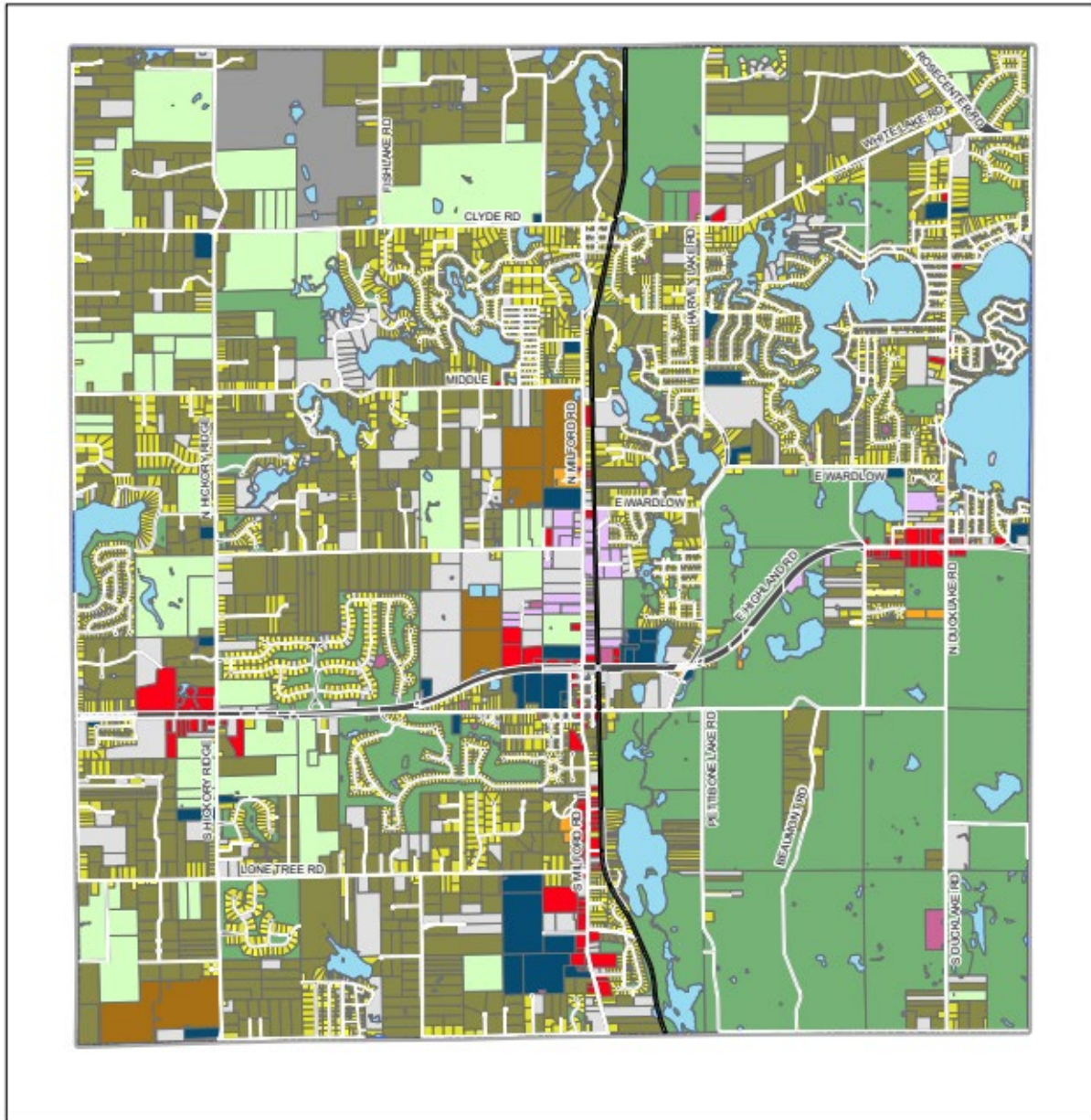
Single-Family Residential: This classification includes areas containing single-family dwelling units and accessory structures.

Multiple-Family Residential: This category includes two-family (duplex), apartments and multi-plex type of units where two or more separate residential units occupy a single building on a lot.

Mobile Homes: This category identifies planned mobile home parks and any concentration of two or more individual mobile home units, including related accessory buildings.

Commercial/Office: This category includes areas where professional and business offices are found. Retail sales and service businesses are also placed in the commercial/office category.

Map 8 – Existing Land Use Map



Single Family Residential - Small Lot	Commercial/Office	Railroad Right-of-Way
Single Family Residential - Medium Lot	Industrial	WaterArea
Single Family Residential - Large Lot	Extractive	Township Boundaries
Multiple Family	Public/Institutional	County Road Classification
Mobile Home Park	Recreation/Conservation	Parcel Boundaries
Agricultural	Vacant	Railroad
	Utility/Communication	
	Road Right-of-Way	

Existing Land Use
 Highland Township
 Oakland County

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Carlisle/Wortman Associates
 September 04, 2024
 Source: Oakland County GIS

Industrial: This category includes uses with or without buildings where materials are processed, fabricated, assembled, or manufactured, or where equipment, materials, or waste are stored out-of-doors.

Governmental/Institutional: This category includes areas and facilities such as public schools, libraries, and government buildings that are considered public uses. Institutional uses include churches, private schools, hospitals, private cemeteries, utility sites, etc.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: This category includes lands for which the primary purpose is outdoor recreation or natural area conservation. This classification is split into public and private recreation, and includes public or private-owned parks, golf courses, or areas of which the primary purpose is preservation and conservation of undeveloped natural areas.

Transportation, Utility and Communications: This category includes improved land containing above or below-ground utility or communication facilities, including transmission lines, booster and transformer stations, county drains, detention/retention basins, and railroad yards.

Patterns

The acreage contained within each of the existing land use classifications is noted in the following table along with the resulting changes since 2001. Oakland County completes a county-wide existing land use inventory every year based on several factors, including recorded deeds, plats, tax maps, surveys, assessing records, and other public records. The table is intended to generalize the types of land uses found within the Township, along with the approximate breakdown by use category.

Table 12. - Generalized Land Uses, 2001, 2010, 2015, and 2021

Use Category	Acreage				Percent Change
	2001	2010	2015	2021	2010 - 2021
Agricultural	2,219	2,030	2,089	2,045	0.73%
Single Family	8,708	8,850	8,762	9,194	3.74%
Mobile Home/Multiple Family	423	425	362	421	-8.33%
Commercial/Office	229	270	272	313	13.74%
Public/Institutional	381	386	384	387	0.26%
Industrial	144	133	136	145	
Recreation/Conservation	4,632	5,218	5,216	5,216	-0.04%
Water	1,679	1,685	1,685	1,687	0.12%
Transportation, Utility, and Communication	53	52	52	53	1.89%
Vacant	3,240	2,234	2,309	1,803	-23.90%
Extractive	518	397	396	396	-0.25%
Right-of-Way	928	1,473	1,488	1,490	-1.52%
Total	23,152	23,153	23,154	23,156	-

Source: 2001-2021 Oakland County Land Use

Trends

The following land use trends have been observed since 2001. These trends have been adapted from those made within the previously adopted 2000-2020 Master Plan:

Vacant: Forty-four percent (44%) of the vacant land in 2001 has been consumed, primarily for recreation/conservation and road right-of-way uses. The remaining vacant land is scattered throughout the Township; however, the majority can be found west of Milford Road.

Agriculture: In 2001, agricultural land accounted for 9.6% of all land in the Township. By 2021, farmed agricultural land has reduced to just under 9%. The remaining farmland, predominantly within the northwest quadrant, has the potential to remain undisturbed to preserve the rural character of the Township.

Single Family: While the numbers show a positive and negative fluctuation, single family residential has remained consistent by occupying approximately 39.7% of the land use between 2001 and 2021. During this timeframe, single family residential increased by 5.5%, or 486 acres.

Mobile Home/Multiple Family: Occupancy of some of the mobile home parks decreased throughout the period of 2000 through 2020 as the condition of the infrastructure declined. Since 2020, these parks have changed hands and experienced reinvestment. These parks have moved back towards full occupancy and even planned expansions. In 2015, mobile home use occupied 1.3% of the Township, this statistic remained relatively consistent and has increased to 1.6% in 2021. However, a significant reduction of 16.8% occurred between 2010 and 2015. The existing mobile homes in use are sited near the center of the Township. In addition, Multiple-family land area calculations experienced a 15.8% increase between 2001 and 2005 and remained static until a 7.6% decrease between 2015 and 2021.

Commercial/Office: These areas consist of a mix of general, medical, and business service offices, restaurants, food and drug stores, personal services, and a variety of general retail stores. The majority of commercial and office uses are scattered along the M-59 corridor with the greatest concentration located south on S. Milford Road. Between 2001 and 2005, the Township experienced a 15% increase in commercial/office land area coverage then leveled off until an additional 15% increase between 2015 and 2021. Since 2001, commercial and office land use has increased 36%.

Industrial: As illustrated in **Table 12**, the Township’s industrial land area increased by 6.6% between 2015 and 2021. The existing industrial uses are located on N. Milford Road, near the M-59 corridor. Despite the increase, industrial land use occupies only 0.6% of total Township land area.

Public/Institutional: This land use has remained constant and relatively unchanged since 2001. Comprising of schools, religious institutions, and civic facilities, 1.67% of total Township land area is dedicated to public and institutional use. Since 2001, a 1.67% increase in public/institutional land has occurred.

Recreation and Conservation: Since 2015, recreation and conservation land area has remained unchanged. This can be attributed to the existing facilities or single-family residential development. Many of the recreation and conservation areas are associated with, or near, the lakes within the eastern half of the Township. The largest recreation and conservation area is the Highland State Recreation Area. Since 2001, recreational/conservation has increased 12% and now accounts for 22% or 5,216 acres of Township land.

Vacant & Transitional Lands

An analysis of vacant and transitional lands – those lands which are either unused currently, or whose current use is unlikely to continue indefinitely – is valuable in determining where land use change is most likely to occur. The Vacant and Transitional Lands map represents an inventory of large properties that are either vacant or are likely to convert to other uses in the coming years (see Map 9 and Table 13). The Map also includes private recreation areas which have the potential to be sold and developed for non-recreational uses.

Highland Township contains 396 acres of land used for extractive purposes. Once this area is no longer used for mineral extraction, it is likely to transition to a new land use (i.e.: single- family residential). The Vacant and Transitional Land Use map is intended to focus attention on these parcels to ensure that an appropriate future land use designation is

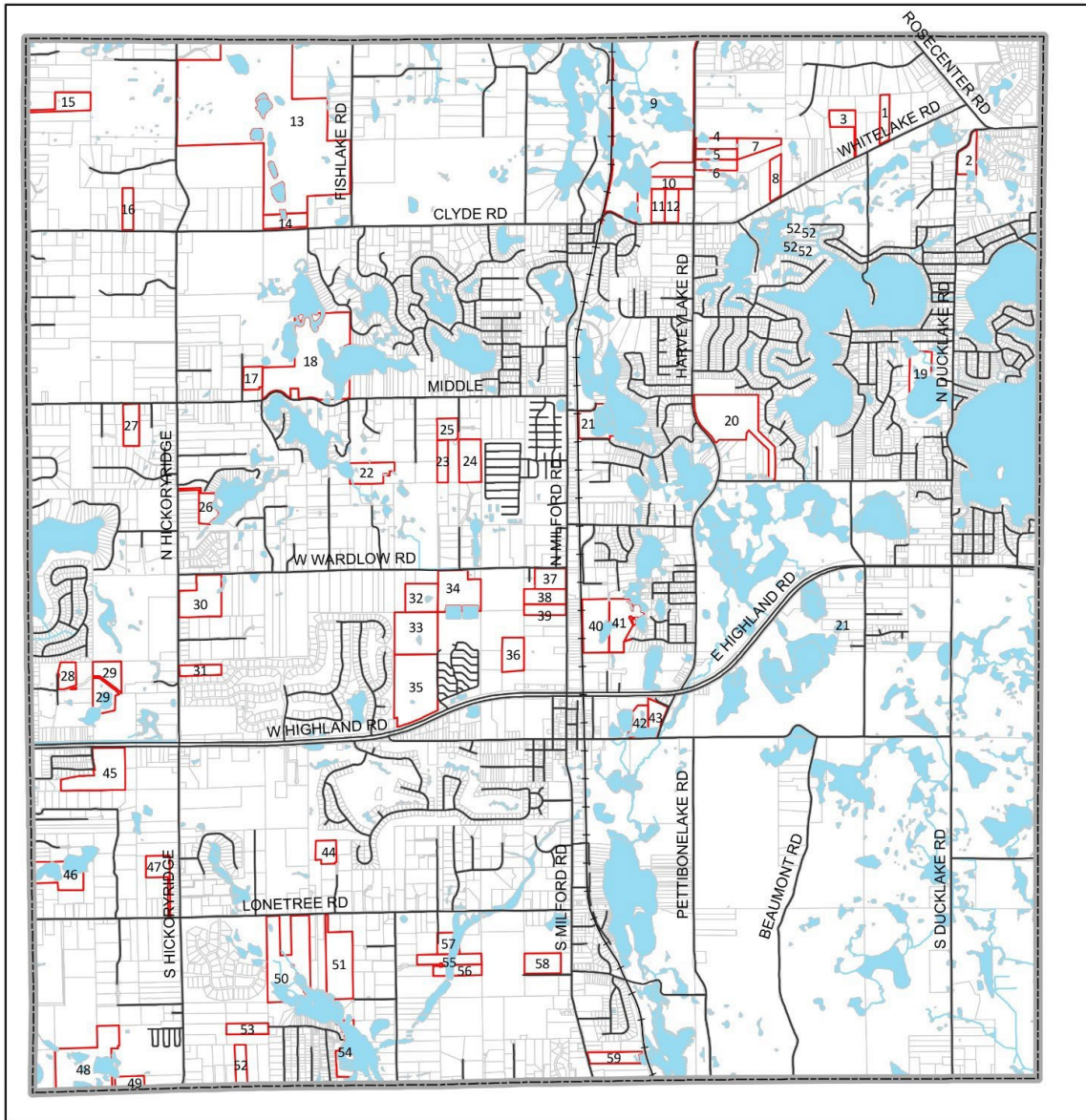
chosen (**Map 9**).

Table 13. - Vacant and Transitional Lands Index

Map ID	Use	Acres
1.	Vacant	18.4
2.	Vacant	26.4
3.	Vacant	18.8
4.	Vacant	18.5
5.	Vacant	18.5
6.	Vacant	18.5
7.	Vacant	24.2
8.	Vacant	18.8
9.	Vacant	488.8
10.	Vacant	24.8
11.	Vacant	18.7
12.	Vacant	18.7
13.	Extractive	739.8
14.	Vacant	28.8
15.	Vacant	29.6
16.	Vacant	18.5
17.	Vacant	18.5
18.	Vacant	223.4
19.	Recreation / Open Space	18.4
20.	Recreation / Open Space	118.5
21.	Vacant	65.1
22.	Vacant	33.4
23.	Vacant	19.0
24.	Vacant	38.3
25.	Vacant	18.9
26.	Vacant	21.8
27.	Vacant	27.7
28.	Vacant	18.7
29.	Vacant	54.3
30.	Recreation / Open Space	10.0
30.	Recreation / Open Space	10.1
30.	Vacant	61.7
31.	Vacant	18.6
32.	Vacant	37.4

Map ID	Use	Acres
33.	Vacant	74.1
34.	Vacant	68.5
35.	Vacant	9.3
35.	Vacant	104.9
36.	Vacant	30.0
37.	Vacant	27.8
38.	Vacant	26.6
39.	Vacant	18.5
40.	Vacant	56.9
41.	Vacant	48.8
42.	Vacant	24.2
43.	Vacant	21.9
44.	Vacant	19.0
45.	Vacant	73.6
46.	Vacant	52.2
47.	Vacant	24.1
48.	Vacant	116.9
49.	Vacant	18.6
50.	Vacant	132.2
51.	Vacant	74.8
52.	Vacant	19.0
53.	Vacant	17.9
54.	Vacant	33.5
55.	Vacant	28.3
56.	Vacant	21.4
57.	Vacant	9.7
57.	Vacant	9.7
58.	Vacant	11.1
58.	Vacant	17.0
58.	Vacant	1.8
59.	Vacant	26.3

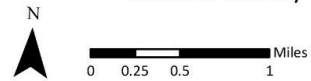
Map 9 – Vacant and Transitional Lands Map



Vacant & Transitional Land
Highland Township
Oakland County

Legend

 Vacant & Transitional Land > 9 Acres



Carlisle/Wortman Associates
December 20, 2019
Source: Oakland County GIS



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RESOURCES

Resources

Resources are central to the implementation of a Master Plan. The resources listed below are programs that the community has embraced to assist the Township and property owners in improving their properties. They vary from federal funding sources to tax increment funding (TIF) entities established by Oakland County or the Township.

Community Development Block Grants

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a federal formula-based grant program administered by Oakland County. The intent of the program is to keep communities sound, attractive, and economically viable. Highland Township has two neighborhoods defined by U.S. Census block group that are eligible for CDBG benefits. Highland Township has received CDBG funding for improvements to the Senior Center and transportation services for seniors and disabled adults.

Brownfield Authority

Highland Township has established a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) which evaluates and then, in some cases, funds the cleanup for redevelopment of properties that are contaminated, blighted, and/or functionally obsolete. The BRA is funded through tax increment financing (TIF), where the increase in tax increment after redevelopment is reinvested in the BRA to fund future evaluations and cleanup.

Industrial Development District

In 2018, Highland Township established an industrial development district of 61 parcels located on both sides of Milford Road from just north of M-59 to Wardlow Road. The industrial district makes it easier for manufacturing businesses, both new and expanding, to receive tax abatements. Applications are evaluated on an individual basis and inclusion in the district does not guarantee a tax abatement.

Highland Downtown Development Authority

The Highland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was established in 2004. The quasi-public organization is funded through TIF funding. The vision of the DDA is to return Highland Station to its place as the center of the Highland community and a destination within the region, where attractive historical homes, vibrant small businesses, and healthy lifestyle amenities appeal to people of all ages.

The DDA has financed improvements in its target area, including new lamp posts, sidewalks, road paving, signage and building facade improvements. The DDA sponsors multiple community events throughout the year, maintains a business directory, and markets available properties in the DDA district.

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APPENDIX

Appendix

The following resources are integral to the effective implementation and ongoing development of the Township's planning initiatives. These documents and analyses provide a foundation for informed decision-making, guiding growth and development in a manner that aligns with the community's vision. Each resource supports different aspects of the Township's planning efforts, from land use and zoning to recreational development.

2000-2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

This plan outlines the long-term vision for land use within the Township, offering a strategic framework for development, zoning decisions, and infrastructure investments. It serves as a guide for managing growth while preserving the community's character and resources.

Micro-area Analyses

These analyses focus on specific, localized sections of the Township, offering a granular view of land use trends, infrastructure conditions, and community needs within those areas. By examining these micro areas in detail, the Township can address local challenges and opportunities more effectively, ensuring that development and improvements are responsive to the specific characteristics and requirements of each neighborhood or district.

West Highland Road (2018)

Highland Station Master Plan (2008)

Historic Highland Station Design Guidelines (2008)

North Hickory Ridge Road (2006)

South Milford Road (2005)

West Highland Road (2001)

East Highland Road (2002)

2021-2025 Recreation Master Plan

This plan sets forth a vision for the development and enhancement of recreational facilities and programs within the Township. It identifies priorities for park improvements, trail expansions, and community programming to ensure residents have access to quality recreational opportunities.