

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

SANILAC COUNTY, ADOPTED 2024



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A public hearing on the Watertown Township Master Plan was held on May 16, 2024. The Watertown Township Master Plan was adopted by the Watertown Township Planning Commission on May 16, 2024 by authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008.

Watertown Township Planning Commission

James Hacker, Planning Commission Chair

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CH 1

THE PLANNING PROCESS

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Introduction to a Master Plan
- Watertown Township's Master Plan
- Using the Master Plan
- Understanding Watertown Township
- Watertown Township's Vision
- Master Plan Highlights

INTRODUCTION TO A MASTER PLAN

The main purpose of a Master Plan is to guide and enable a community to establish the direction of development. The Planning Enabling Act gives communities the authority to adopt an official Master Plan to serve as a guide for local officials when considering land development matters. The Master Plan considers all the information listed herein and, as such, aims to do the following:

- Guide the use of limited land and resources in an efficient manner,
- Promote public health, safety, and welfare,
- Preserve the quality of the environment, and,
- Guide future zoning decisions.

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP'S MASTER PLAN

Watertown Township's Master Plan (Plan) is a policy document that reviews the current conditions in the Township, to create a handbook for future land use planning for the next 5 - 20 years. The Plan, used in conjunction with the Township Zoning Ordinance, will lead the Township when making future land use decisions. The legal basis and rationale for the Master Plan are outlined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act PA 33 of 2008, as amended (MPEA).

This document is a culmination of the efforts made by the Watertown Township Planning Commission and the Township Board to create a vision for the future. This process valued input from the community, which was sought through a public input survey and a public hearing. In the end, this document is reflective of Watertown Township community members' wishes and concerns regarding their community's future and strives to retain and strengthen the quality of life in the Township while anticipating and planning for the future.

The 2023 Master Plan is an update from the 2016 Township Master Plan. The Township's development pattern is established, making it time to plan for the most economical use of space and work to improve the areas that have existing facilities and infrastructure, while protecting the nature of the community. This Master Plan is intended to identify what is working and which areas need improvement so that the qualities that make Watertown Township special are not lost or compromised.

At the end of this chapter are highlights of the Plan. Each chapter has a unique purpose, the inventories, community profile, and existing land use serve as analytical tools when reviewing current conditions in the Township. Whereas the goals, in conjunction with the future land use and implementation plan, strive to address areas of improvement with a list of items for the Township to accomplish over the life of the Plan.

A draft of this document was prepared in February 2024 and delivered to the Planning Commission for review. On March 12, 2024, the Township Board submitted the draft plan to neighboring jurisdictions and registered entities for review, as required by the Planning Enabling Act PA 33 of 2008. On May 16, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Master Plan as required by the Planning Enabling Act. This provided an additional opportunity for public input on the Master Plan. The final Plan was adopted on May 16, 2024 by the Planning Commission.

To ensure the master plan is current and adheres to the flux of social and economic trends, the plan must be periodically reviewed. The MPEA requires that a master plan be reviewed by the Township once every five years.

The Township contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw to assist the Planning Commission with this process. The Planning Commission met with the Planning Consultants throughout 2021-2023 to prepare the Plan.

USING THE MASTER PLAN

The Plan will be used primarily by the Planning Commission, the Township Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and Township staff as a guide in making land use decisions. Applicants seeking approval from any of these entities will also find the Plan to be a valuable tool for understanding the long-term goals of the Township. Likewise, the Plan can be used by citizen committees to assist them in their review of land use-related issues. Understanding the Master Plan and how to use it will be crucial for the implementation of the Plan. Township Officials should continually use the document as a guide and resource. The

HOW TO USE THE MASTER PLAN – A QUICK GUIDE

Review new development proposals – To confirm any given proposal meets the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.

Review rezoning requests – To confirm that the request is consistent with the goals and policies of the Master Plan and review any potential impact of the Township.

Provide a basis for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and zoning map – To help realize and enforce plan goals.

Understand expectations for the future land use patterns and desired land use types in the community – To inform potential residents and businesses about Watertown Township and its future.

Identify and recommend physical improvements – To provide direction for the provision of roadways, entryways, non-motorized paths, parks, and community facilities.

Provide specific design standards related to building, landscaping, and other site improvements – To guide development and redevelopment throughout the community.

Plan also acts as the starting point for all Zoning Ordinance updates and amendments as Michigan state law requires that the Zoning Ordinance and zoning amendments be based upon a Master Plan.

The Plan gives a legal basis for zoning and identifies how the community protects the health, safety, and welfare of its population. In the event that either the Zoning Ordinance or a decision of the Planning Commission is challenged in court, the Plan will help provide the planning rationale to support the land use regulation under question. Chapter 6 of the Master Plan provides an explanation of the differences between a Master Plan and a Zoning Ordinance. Later in Chapter 6 is an analysis of how the future land uses relate to the Zoning Ordinance. At the end of the chapter are recommendations for future zoning amendments, these amendments were developed in the process of updating this Master Plan.

UNDERSTANDING WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP

Watertown Township is unique in that the Township is made up of three large distinct land use areas: agricultural/natural area, commercial/developed area, and residential. This creates an environment in the Township that is primarily rural, however, due to its proximity to Sandusky the Township has options. They can stay primarily rural and visit Sandusky for their services and entertainment or they can expand and start to develop their own services along M-19.

“Great people making a difference. Small and rural area to raise family. Love the agricultural aspects of our area.”

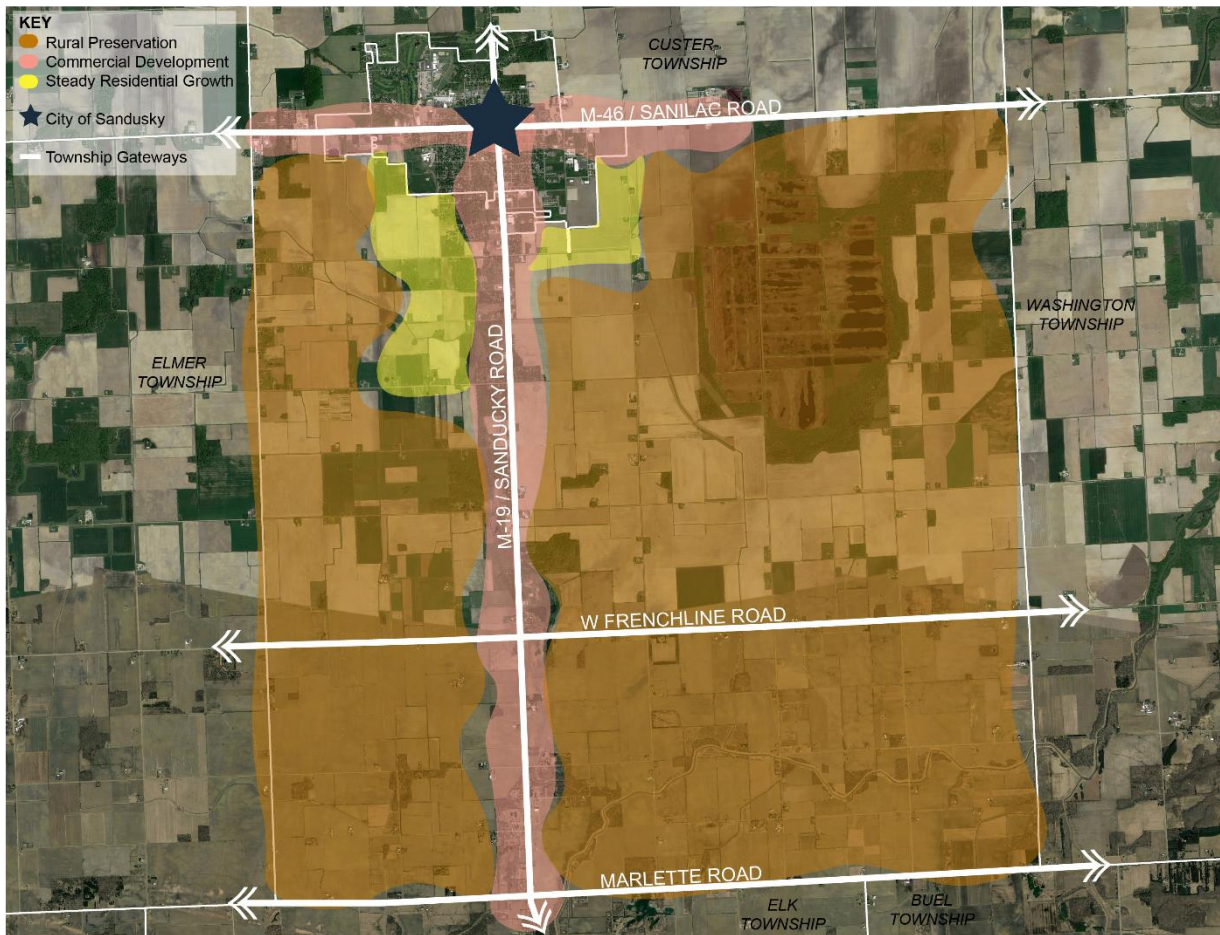
This master planning effort focused on strategic commercial and residential growth in specific areas of the Township while preserving the important agricultural/natural character. Often these areas have conflicting needs, however, this Plan intends to purposefully plan for each unique area and create a sustainable and realistic vision for Watertown Township’s future.

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP’S VISION

As Watertown Township developed this Master Plan, it was important for the Township to have a vision for the Plan that would be the guiding principle for development. This vision was a key element to focus on when working through the goals, objectives, future land use plan, and map. The vision is based on the idea of controlled growth that fits the existing and future character of the Township.

1. Rural Preservation
2. Commercial Development
3. Steady Residential Growth

Categorizing the areas together is intended to ensure there is a distinct area of intentional open space and rural character preservation while allowing some commercial growth along M-46 and M-19, and residential growth as needed.



RURAL PRESERVATION

Rural preservation is based on the idea of protecting the land, agricultural and natural resources to be exact. The rural nature is why many of the residents choose to live in the Township. They enjoy the quiet, country living that comes with low-density housing and open space. Agriculture is their way of life, it's the environment they enjoy, and want to keep for many years to come. The intention of this Master Plan is to protect this area by prioritizing agricultural uses while allowing for commercial development along the state highways, residential growth as needed, and open and recreational spaces.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Township has designated two areas for commercial development, the first along M-46 at the northern boundary and M-19. M-46 is parallel to the City of Sandusky, versus M-19 which runs through the City, both development areas would be an extension of the City. The intention is to allow growth in areas with existing infrastructure or areas where planned

infrastructure expansion is feasible. However, areas with existing infrastructure would be prioritized. The development would be carefully planned but allow for a wide variety of uses.

STEADY RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

There is an area in the northwestern portion of the Township that is already designated as a residential area. The intention behind steady residential growth is to expand as needed. If the Township were to need more single-family housing or other housing types, new housing should be located near the existing housing areas. Ultimately it could serve as a buffer zone between the agricultural and commercial areas.

MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The 2023 Watertown Master Plan analyzed data, listened to the community, and developed goals that will assist the Township in accomplishing its vision over the course of the next 20 years. The 2023 Plan highlights are listed below.

- Created a vision for the Township.
- Listened to Township residents' voices.
- Analyzed Township issues and crafted solutions.
- Developed concepts to guide the Township.
- Outlined actions that the Township should strive to accomplish.
- Sketched a new future land use map using the Township's vision.
- Identified key elements of the zoning ordinance to review and update.
- Understood where the Township has been and where they are going through a series of inventories.
- Determined areas that need protection or enhancements.
- Broke down how the Master Plan could be used and how each individual can use it.

SUMMARY

The Watertown Township Master Plan 2023 serves as a broad vision and guiding document for the Township. The goals and objectives outlined in the Plan represent the values and aspirations of the community. Achieving the goals and specific action items outlined in the Plan will require a coordinated effort and deliberate action between the staff, management, boards, commissions, residents, and businesses. As action items are completed, the Master Plan can be reviewed every five years to ensure it remains relevant to current trends and needs of the community.

CH 2

TOWNSHIP VOICES

IN THIS CHAPTER

Introduction

Public Input Process

Survey Results



INTRODUCTION



Watertown Township staff and officials understand and value the opinions of Township residents. Throughout the Master Plan process, a concerted effort was made to incorporate the community's input into this Master Plan.

An effective Master Plan not only incorporates the input and ideas from the community but uses it as the foundation for the future goals, action items, and future land use decisions outlined in this Plan. The responses from the public input survey helped guide the Planning Commission in creating its goals and objectives. In the end, the Master Plan will be a reflection of the community's vision and will also provide direction for the future and help create a successful, politically feasible, and implementable

Master Plan.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Watertown Township created a combined community-wide survey for the Master Plan and Recreation Plan. The survey was available from February 2023 to May 2023 and asked a total of 23 questions. The questions were selected to provide the Planning Commission and Township Board with additional insight into how the Township should plan for the future, where residents would like to see improvements and to help Township officials understand the wants and needs of residents for the foreseeable future. A community-wide survey establishes an easy means of communication whereby residents and stakeholders of Watertown Township can provide input about existing community conditions and the need for future improvements.

During the public input period, the Township collected many insightful ideas and suggestions for the future of agricultural land, housing stock, economic development, commercial and industrial base, infrastructure issues, and the overall quality of life. This chapter highlights some of the significant results from the survey. A complete tabulation of the results is available for review in Appendix A.

SURVEY RESULTS

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

- There was a total of 350 responses. Of those responses, 78% are Township residents, 9% live within the County (outside of the Township’s boundary), 4% live in the City of Sandusky, and the remaining respondents have another relationship with the Township.
- Of those respondents, 43% have lived in the Township for 21-50 years, 22% have lived in the Township for less than 10 years, 19% have lived in the Township for 51 plus years, and 16% have lived in the Township for 11-20 years.
- Every age cohort participated in the survey except for the ages 18 and under. The responses below are listed from highest to lowest percentage of participation.
 - Age 60 – 69: 28%
 - Age 50 – 59: 21%
 - Age 70 – 79: 18%
 - Age 40 – 49: 15%
 - Age 30 – 39: 10%
 - Age 18 – 29: 4%
 - 80 plus: 4%

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

It is important for Township officials to understand why residents live in the Township and how their residents feel about the quality of life there. One way to guarantee existing residents continue to live in the Township is by making sure they are satisfied with their quality of life. The survey asked residents how they would rate the quality of life and why they live in the Township.

In terms of the overall quality of life, approximately 80% of the residents would rate the quality of life as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Whereas 20% would say it needs improvement.

The top five reasons why residents live in the Township are listed below.

1. Like the rural living
2. Close to family and friends
3. Like the community
4. The jobs
5. Affordable housing

To improve the areas that residents find are lacking, the survey asked respondents what the Township’s greatest needs are. The top response was road improvements. A sound transportation network is important for the functionality and moveability within a Township.

The remainder of top the responses are listed below.

1. Road improvements
2. Recreational opportunities
3. Jobs
4. Walking path
5. Other such as rural preservation, housing options, commercial businesses, clean-up

Finding a balance between what each resident wants can be a challenge. However, it is the Township’s responsibility to find a balance between the differing needs and desires of the residents. The two previous questions indicated that residents live in the Township for rural living, and they also showed that the Township’s greatest needs involve some type of development i.e. economic development, job creation, and/or housing opportunities. To further understand how Township residents feel about the Township, respondents were asked when they envision the character of the Township and how they see it. The responses are listed below.

- 51% said they would like to see it unchanged.
- 26% would like it more rural.
- 23% would like to see more development.

Evaluating different aspects of life helps Township officials understand what has changed, and if it’s changed for the better or for the worse. It also identifies if recent changes have worked or if there are areas that need improvements and/or are getting worse. Survey respondents were asked out of the following categories how they feel the Township has changed over the past five years. In each category ‘the same’ was the top response.

Road Conditions

- Much better/better: 34.4%
- Same: 50.6%
- Worse/much worse: 10.6%

Traffic

- Much better/better: 6.8%
- Same: 64.2%
- Worse/much worse: 24.4%

Natural Environment

- Much better/better: 7.7%
- Same: 69.3%
- Worse/much worse: 17.6%

Overall Quality of life

- Much better/better: 35.8%
- Same: 69.9%
- Worse/much worse: 9.8%

Parks and Recreation

- Much better/better: 12.5%
- Same: 65%
- Worse/much worse: 5.5%

Schools

- Much better/better: 8.2%
- Same: 53.1%
- Worse/much worse: 28%

Fire Protection

- Much better/better: 20%
- Same: 70.6%
- Worse/much worse: 3.1%

EMS

- Much better/better: 20.2%
- Same: 70.2%
- Worse/much worse: 3.4%

Police Protection

- Much better/better: 12.2%
- Same: 66.2%
- Worse/much worse: 8%

Zoning and Enforcement Regulations

- Much better/better: 10.9%
- Same: 52.3%
- Worse/much worse: 17.8%

The survey asks a variety of questions to gather thoughts from Township residents. The last question in the survey asked residents to list what three priorities they believe the Township should focus on; this question provides the Township with an exact action list of what residents would like to see accomplished. The most common responses are listed below.

- Reduce blight
- Establish solar and wind guidelines
- Develop parks and trails
- Expand land preservation
- Lower taxes
- Improve roads conditions

Aside from the general questions about the current state of the Township. The survey asked pitted questions about specific topics in the Township. The following section provides a summary of the survey questions as they relate to a particular topic.

Township Services

The survey asked multiple questions about Township services, specifically if the respondent currently pays for garbage removal services and if they would support a Township provided trash service. 68% of the respondents currently pay for a garage removal service and 55% would support a Township provided service.

Housing

The Township has a median age of 45.2, and 24.7% are 65 and older, as the population starts to age their housing need may change. To determine if the Township's current housing options are adequate the survey asked respondents if they would like to see more housing choices. Approximately 50% of respondents said the Township does not need any more residential growth, 44% said they would like more single-family homes, and 15.9% would like a retirement home.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT THE COMMUNITY?

“I like the sense of community. My neighbors are great! We all get along and are willing to help each other out when needed.”

“I like that it's simple and is a nice representation of what I see as nice looking highly productive farmland with producers taking pride in what we do.”

“Rural living, enjoying the farming community, small town living.”

“This is a safe and Beautiful place to live, I live near corn and soybean fields and it's so nice to have neighbors like I do.”

“It is close to Sandusky so we can use it's amenities without paying higher taxes.”

“Great people making a difference. small and rural area to raise family. love the agricultural aspects of our area.”

“The Township boards desire to follow communities' best interests.”

Agricultural Land

Preserving agricultural land is very important to Township residents. The survey provided respondents with six statements and asked respondents how they felt about them. The statements are listed below with their top response percentage.

- [Agriculture is an important aspect of the Watertown Township economy:](#) 89% agree with this statement.
- [Agriculture is an important aspect of the Watertown Township landscape:](#) 84.7% agree with this statement.
- [Agricultural land should be preserved:](#) 78.4% agree with this statement.
- [Using agricultural land for new development is appropriate for accommodating growth and development:](#) 50% disagree with this statement.
- [Agriculture land should not be used for large-scale solar:](#) 66.8% agree with this statement.
- [Agriculture land should not be used for wind turbines:](#) 64% agree with this statement.

Commercial

The survey asked two questions concerning commercial development in the Township. The first question asked respondents if the Township should promote more commercial development in upcoming years. The responses were mixed with 31.9% believing there should be more commercial development, 23.9% were neutral, and 41.1% believe there should not be more commercial development. If the respondents believed there should be more development the survey asked them where they would like to development located. The top responses were along M-19 (58.4%) and adjacent to the City of Sandusky (46.5%).

Recreation

The Township does not currently have any Township-owned parks or recreation spaces within the Township's boundary. However, the Township is open to exploring recreational development near the Township Hall. The survey asked respondents three questions about parks and recreation. The first was to see where residents travel for parks, most visit the City or County parks. The second question was to see what amenities they use at these parks, the top five amenities/facilities they use are the fairgrounds, trails, beach access, school facilities, and playgrounds. The final question asks if the Township were to develop a park what facilities they would like, respondents said: a trail linking the Township to the City, bike path/walkways, a campground, and a park.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WOULD DO TO IMPROVE THE TOWNSHIP?

“Little more enforcement of ordinances already on the books. Every time a farmer rips out a woodlot or fence row they complain about soil erosion or ditches being cleaned out. Maybe they should have some kind of penalty for that because the rest of us have to deal with their problems.”

“Just keep solar away from main residential areas.”

“Get training for the boards so they are more effective.”

“More community events and parks to keep us a close-knit community.”

“Have people get all the junk out of their yards.”

“The only thing that I would love to see is a trail from Watertown to Sandusky.”

“Create a township Facebook page where meetings could be live streamed and keep up to date on township news.”

Administration

The Township’s website can be a great tool for Township residents and visitors. The website not only lists the Township services but also informs residents of upcoming meetings, plans that are out for review, Township official contact information, and important documents. To gauge how many residents use the website the survey asked respondents who have visited the site, 63% of the respondents have not visited the website.

SURVEY SUMMARY

The purpose of a public input survey is to gather a variety of information that would be helpful for Township officials to guide future desires and policies. The survey allowed respondents to answer questions regarding specific topics but also had the opportunity to answer open-ended questions and provide additional feedback that they were not able to provide earlier in the survey. In the end, all of the information and data gathered will help the Township plan for the future. The remaining chapters will outline ways that the Township can address the issues that were stated in the survey and provide the Township with a checklist on how and when to accomplish those issues.



CH 3

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



IN THIS CHAPTER

Introduction

Watertown Township Framework

Watertown Township Goals

INTRODUCTION

A significant component of this Master Plan is the goals and objectives. They are the guiding principles for future land use decisions, rezoning decisions, and are used to evaluate other land use questions that arise. Goals and objectives are only successful if they are supported by broad-based public inclusion and outline achievable actions.

The intention of the goals is to be general and address broad categories that relate directly to the heart of community planning. Goals are kept broad so that they can stay as general statements. Whereas the objectives are action statements and are an avenue to achieve the goals of the Master Plan and help identify a pathway to successfully implement the vision of the Township. Both are detailed enough to be achievable, yet flexible enough to address evolving conditions.

Together, the goals and objectives provide the foundation of the Master Plan and a framework for future improvements. Large goal topics or planning themes include land use, transportation, natural resources and the environment, parks and recreation, public services, and planning and administration.

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP FRAMEWORK

The overarching policies and direction of this master plan are guided by the following nine frameworks. Each of the nine topics outlined below is based on input received from the public and further informed by Watertown's Planning Commission, Township Board, and staff.

- Growth Management
- Community Character
- Planning and Administrative
- Agricultural
- Residential Development
- Commercial and Industrial Development
- Transportation
- Parks and Recreation
- Natural Resources and Environment

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP GOALS

The planning issues presented in the following pages are not intended to be all-inclusive. They are presented as the primary issues that the community must address as it establishes a future for itself. These issues can be expected to evolve over time and, accordingly, should be reexamined periodically and modified as needed.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF UTILITIES AND SERVICES.

Objectives

1. Preserve the Township's natural resources through a coordinated future land use strategy with the intention to discourage unnecessary destruction or loss of natural resources.
2. Encourage the introduction or expansion of public sewers or water in areas designated for such growth especially where the intensity of existing development requires such services, or where the public health, safety, or welfare is at risk.
3. Encourage growth and development at a rate whereby the Township can assure adequate public health, safety, and welfare.
4. Guide development into areas where public facilities and services have adequate capacity to accommodate growth and increased development, and where the provision or expansion of public facilities is cost-effective.
5. Explore the feasibility of requiring new developments to pay for the direct and indirect public service costs associated with that development. These costs should not be imposed on existing residents. Exceptions should be made where public interests and benefits may be at stake.
6. Develop a meaningful communication program with neighboring municipalities and county agencies to discuss contemporary planning issues, local and area-wide public facilities and service needs, alternative strategies for mutually improving local public services, and land use conditions, trends, and planning strategies.
7. Provide regular opportunities for substantive public input on growth and development issues facing the Township.
8. Review and revise zoning regulations, as applicable, to ensure that permitted growth and development are coordinated with the future vision for the community.
9. Establish effective land development review procedures to ensure new land uses are designed to minimize negative impacts upon existing uses, protect important natural resources, and assure public health, safety, and welfare.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

GOAL 2: WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP WILL PRESERVE THE RURAL CHARACTER AND NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE TOWNSHIP.

Objectives

1. Encourage owners to maintain their properties to current standards and codes (zoning, property maintenance, etc.), and work towards the removal of blighted structures.
2. Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural features, and/or manmade landscape buffers that screen or mitigate adverse impacts.
3. Encourage greater public awareness about waste management and the Township's fundamental reliance upon private wells and septic systems and the detrimental effects of irresponsible land use and development practices.
4. Maintain agriculture as the dominant land use and landscape in Watertown Township.
5. Identify and protect areas of prime farmland.

GOAL 3: MANAGE DEVELOPMENT IN A MANNER THAT RETAINS THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE TOWNSHIP.

Objectives

1. Assure that future land development is designed in scale with existing developed areas, and respect the existing surroundings, through reasonable standards addressing density, building size, height, and other development features.
2. Encourage land development that actively strives to preserve open spaces as part of a development project by incorporating on-site woodlands, wetlands, lakes, and fields and by the use of such tools as conservation easements, land trusts, and density bonuses.
3. Assure that new development does not unreasonably create increases in air, noise, land, and water pollution, or the degradation of land and water resource environments including groundwater.
4. Increase density and development intensity in environmentally sensitive areas should be limited and all development should be in compliance with applicable local, county, state, and federal regulations.
5. Review the proposed development in light of its potential impact on wetlands, woodlands, and other natural resource areas.

GOAL 4: GUIDE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES IN A MANNER THAT RECOGNIZES THE POSITION OF WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP WITHIN THE LARGER REGION AND THE EFFECTS OF WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP'S PLANNING EFFORTS AND THOSE OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES.

Objectives

1. Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that seeks to assure compatibility among land uses along municipal borders.
2. Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that does not risk the loss of important commercial and industrial property tax dollars through annexation.
3. Maintain communication with all neighboring municipalities to discuss land use and public service needs in a mutually beneficial manner.



PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE

GOAL 5: WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP WILL FOSTER AN ORGANIZED AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNING ATMOSPHERE THAT PRIORITIZES CITIZENS' NEEDS.

Objectives

1. Explore the feasibility of adding high-speed internet and mobile communication that is available to all residents and businesses in the Township. Work with local internet and telecommunications providers to determine what needs to be done to provide access/coverage.
2. Develop Township procedures to establish internal development review roles, responsibilities, and timelines.
3. Amend the zoning ordinance to simplify and streamline the permitting process and make it user-friendly.
4. Provide regular training of Township staff and appointed officials to foster knowledge and expertise.
5. Follow Michigan statutes for meetings, e.g., the Open Meetings Act.
6. Annually evaluate the Township Zoning Ordinance to determine its effectiveness and update as needed.
7. Draft a development guidebook that includes flowcharts of the development process, including timelines, fee schedules, and explanations of Township policies, procedures, and steps to obtain approvals.
8. Annually review the Master Plan for updates and conduct a more thorough review every five years to address changing conditions, redevelopment opportunities, and the needs of the community.

GOAL 6: PROVIDE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES, AS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS IN THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER.

Objectives

1. Explore the feasibility of extending adequate utilities and infrastructure so that Watertown Township may ensure managed and responsible growth in areas of the Township where the growth is most appropriate.
2. Work closely with applicable police, fire, and rescue organizations to analyze the best approaches to meeting Watertown Township's future safety needs.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

GOAL 7: ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUATION OF LOCAL FARMING OPERATIONS AND THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF FARMLAND RESOURCES.

Objectives

1. Designate areas that support long-term farming and encourage the continuation of agricultural operations through complimentary zoning provisions.
2. Limit the encroachment of incompatible land uses through buffers.
3. Encourage development to be placed on less productive farmland.
4. Assure that new development minimizes disturbances too, and the premature destruction of farmland areas through responsible and innovative development and site planning.
5. Support rural activities and limited-density residential development in the Township's Primary Agriculture district.
6. Encourage long-term agricultural use and preservation of prime agricultural lands.
7. Adopt zoning regulations and development policies that protect farmland such as conservation easements, purchase of development rights, and transfer of development rights.
8. The Planning Commission shall review the PA 116 applications to maintain agriculture as an environmental asset, as well as an economic resource of the Township to align with the future land use map.



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 8: ACCOMMODATE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN A MANNER THAT RECOGNIZES THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE TOWNSHIP'S PUBLIC SERVICES.

Objectives

1. Establish suburban residential development areas that could provide varied housing opportunities for current and future residents.
2. Limit the extent of residential encroachment into agricultural areas.
3. Encourage the continued dominance of low-density housing as the principal housing option in the Township and identify land areas, through planning and zoning, most appropriate for such housing.
4. While maintaining low-density housing as the primary housing option, provide opportunities for other alternative housing options in appropriate areas to meet the varying housing preferences of current and future residents, including small lot single-family dwellings, and multiple-family housing.
5. Identify limited areas in the Township where higher-density residential development, including multiple-family development, can be adequately accommodated. Priority should be given to locations that have greater access to improved thoroughfares and necessary public services.
6. Land capacity should be an important consideration when determining the appropriate development densities, and development densities should not undermine important environmental features. Limit strip residential development along the frontage of existing state and county roads, to minimize traffic safety hazards and the landlocking of interior acreage.
7. Encourage innovative residential development which incorporates the preservation of natural resource systems and open spaces, and the preservation of the Township's rural character within the site planning process. One such initiative, where multiple lots or dwelling units are created, should include the development of only a portion of the original parcel and placing the balance of the parcel in a permanent open space status.
8. New residential developments in rural sections of the Township should be designed in a manner to enhance the natural environment.
9. Require new residential developments to be logical extensions of existing residential areas to enable necessary services and facilities, including sewer, water, and streets to be extended in an efficient manner.

GOAL 9: MAINTAIN A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP THAT MOVES VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IN AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE FASHION THAT IS COORDINATED WITH THE PLANNED FUTURE LAND USE PATTERN.

Objectives

1. The Township is interested in assuring that roads are adequately maintained, and improvements are coordinated with the planned future land use pattern and the designated growth and development areas.
2. M-19, M-46, and/or other important thoroughfares should be considered in an effort to identify a practical and beneficial future land use pattern for the community.
3. Create zoning regulations that encourage the development pattern of the Township's roadway network.
4. Limit excessive egress and ingress points along primary roads to eliminate congestion and traffic hazards.
5. Identify priority road segments for maintenance and improvement, based upon the planned future land use pattern and existing and projected traffic patterns, and systematically undertake these projects.
6. High traffic generating land uses and development should be limited to primary roads that have been improved to accommodate such development.
7. Adopt land use and/or other regulations that minimize the potential for traffic congestion and safety hazards along adjacent roadways.
8. Maintain gravel roads in designated agricultural and low-density residential areas.
9. Road improvements should be targeted in areas of the Township that will have new growth and development.
10. Work with the Sanilac County Road Commission to maintain local roads.
11. Work with the Sanilac County Road Commission to provide safe and efficient non-motorized transportation routes in the Township.
12. Cooperate with the Sanilac County Road Commission and/or Michigan Department of Transportation to ensure that a proper relationship exists between planned road improvements and the Township's desired future land use pattern.
13. Continue to improve pedestrian safety by providing opportunities for pedestrian circulation along existing and planned road systems, particularly in areas of more dense development.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 10: ENCOURAGE SOUND COMMERCIAL AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE TOWNSHIP'S CHARACTER.

Objectives

1. Accommodate future commercial and industrial development in close proximity to the City of Sandusky, to take advantage of the existing retail and local shopping activity patterns and necessary services.
2. M-19 and M-46 must be recognized as suitable areas for future commercial and industrial growth.
3. New growth should be compatible with available public services and facilities, including police protection and road infrastructure.
4. The Township should encourage minimize negative impacts on the enjoyment and use of nearby lands.
5. Identify locations in the Township, through planning and zoning, considered as appropriate for commercial and industrial land uses, taking into account the constraints and opportunities presented by the Township's natural features, such as topography and soils, and the availability of public facilities and services, including road infrastructure.
6. Assure future commercial and industrial uses are in scale with surrounding land uses, including such features as building size and height, setbacks, and open space areas.
7. Encourage consolidated commercial centers rather than strip commercial development patterns which undermine highway safety and the Township's rural character.
8. Provide opportunities for a mix of commercial uses that target both local day-to-day consumer needs and the consumer needs of more regional populations.
9. Require landscaping and screening measures to ensure commercial and industrial uses do not adversely impact the normal use and enjoyment of adjoining land uses.
10. Limit industrial uses to those that are predominately characterized by assembly activities and similar light operations that do not require heightened levels of public services or otherwise negatively impact surrounding land uses or the community as a whole.
11. Provide opportunities for home-based occupations within residential areas under conditions that will support the residential character, appearance, and quality of life experienced by surrounding residential properties and neighborhoods.
12. Encourage beautification efforts in commercial areas through amenities such as lighting, signage, and landscaping.
13. Encourage the development of new types of industries, especially those that are economically associated with the existing industrial base and compatible with the environment and existing land use pattern.

PARKS AND RECREATION

GOAL 11: CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING NATURAL SPACES AND CONNECTIONS TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS.

Objectives

1. Determine how land around the Township Hall should be used to develop a Township Park.
2. Explore options for developing multi-use paths and trails in Watertown Township.
3. Work with MDOT to designate M-19 as a bicycle route.
4. Provide safe and attractive recreation facilities that improve the overall quality of life for residents.
5. Develop parks that provide opportunities for social interaction, community gatherings, and public events.
6. Retain public lands for future generations and manage them on a sustainable basis.
7. Work with MDNR to cooperatively develop recreation opportunities around the former peat bog.
8. Support the goals and objectives of the Watertown Township Parks and Recreation Plan.



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 12: PROTECT, MAINTAIN, AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES OF WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP.

Objectives

1. Preserve the quality and natural state of environmentally sensitive areas, including surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, forested land, and wildlife habitat.
2. Protect the Township's residents from development that would degrade environmental quality.
3. Protect the Township's residents from development that would degrade the aesthetics, natural appearance, or character of the community.
4. Explore future opportunities for the Township's parks and recreation facilities.
5. When sensitive natural areas are identified, work with conservation organizations to protect these areas from negative aspects associated with development.
6. Keep up to date on important environmental issues which may affect the Township.



CH 4

ACTION PLAN

IN THIS CHAPTER

Introduction

Action Plan

Implementation Tools and Checklist



INTRODUCTION

The key to a well-planned community is the day-to-day use of planning documents, like the Master Plan and the zoning ordinance. This Plan is to be the basis for future zoning and planning decisions. It is imperative that the Plan is available to Watertown Township staff, elected and appointed officials, as well as the general public.

The implementation of this Master Plan depends on its continual use by the Planning Commission and the Township Board. In its best form, the implementation of this Plan will result in the achievement of the goals and objectives outlined in the previous chapter. The act of implementation is often the most difficult part of the planning process. While the intentions of the Township, residents, and stakeholders are clear, it can be unclear who should initiate such actions and which tools are available. At the end of this chapter additional tools and checklists are provided to assist in this effort. These include grant funding and private partnerships which are available to the Township as well as ways in which these tools can be used to ensure that the goals of this Plan are met.

ACTION PLAN

The following section identifies actions along with the timeframe, responsible party, funding, and tools that are available to implement the goals and objectives of this Plan. Tables 1 and 2 below outline codes that will be used throughout this section. Many of the items throughout this section the Township has designated as ongoing.

TABLE 1 – RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND FUNDING SOURCE

Code	Responsible Party
PC	Planning Commission
BOARD	Township Board
TAM	Township Staff, Administration, & Management
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals
SANDUSKY	City of Sandusky
DRAIN	Sanilac County Drain Commission
ROAD	Sanilac County Road Commission
SC	Sanilac County
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
PP	Private
UT	Utility
LC	Local Communities
Code	Funding Source
P	Public
PP	Private
GRANTS	DNR, TAP

TABLE 2 – KEY

Timeframe	
A	1 – 5 Years
B	6 – 10 Years
C	Ongoing

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

TABLE 3 - GOAL 1

Encourage future growth and development that is consistent with the natural environment and availability of utilities and services.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Preserve the Township's natural resources through a coordinated future land use strategy with the intention to discourage unnecessary destruction or loss of natural resources.	C	PC BOARD	P		
2	Encourage the introduction or expansion of public sewer or water in areas designated for such growth especially where the intensity of existing development requires such services, or where the public health, safety, or welfare is at risk.	B/C	PC BOARD DRAIN	P PP		
3	Encourage growth and development at a rate whereby the Township can assure adequate public health, safety, and welfare.	C	PC BOARD	P PP		
4	Guide development into areas where public facilities and services have adequate capacity to accommodate growth and increased development, and where the provision or expansion of public facilities is cost-effective.	C	PC BOARD PP	P PP		
5	Explore the feasibility of requiring new developments to pay for the direct and indirect public service costs associated with that development. These costs should not be imposed on existing residents. Exceptions should be made where public interests and benefits may be at stake.	C	BOARD PP	PP		



Cont. - Encourage future growth and development that is consistent with the natural environment and availability of utilities and services.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
6	Develop a meaningful communication program with neighboring municipalities and county agencies to discuss contemporary planning issues, local and area-wide public facilities and service's needs, alternative strategies for mutually improving local public services, and land use conditions, trends, and planning strategies.	C	PC BOARD SC LC	P		
7	Provide regular opportunities for substantive public input on growth and development issues facing the Township.	C	PC BOARD	P PP		
8	Review and revise zoning regulations, as applicable, to ensure that permitted growth and development are coordinated with the future vision for the community.	A/C	PC BOARD	P		
9	Establish effective land development review procedures to ensure new land uses are designed to minimize negative impacts upon existing uses, protect important natural resources, and assure public health, safety, and welfare.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

TABLE 4 – GOAL 2

Watertown Township will preserve the rural character and natural beauty of the Township.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Encourage owners to maintain their properties to current standards and codes (zoning, property maintenance, etc.), and work towards the removal of blighted structures.	C	PC BOARD TAM	P		
2	Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural features, and/or manmade landscape buffers that screen or mitigate adverse impacts.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P PP		
3	Encourage greater public awareness about waste management and the Township's fundamental reliance upon private wells and septic systems and the detrimental effects of irresponsible land use and development practices.	C	PC BOARD DRAIN	P		
4	Maintain agriculture as the dominant land use and landscape in Watertown Township.	C	PC BOARD	P		
5	Identify and protect areas of prime farmland.	C	PC BOARD	P		



TABLE 4.1 – GOAL 3

Manage development in a manner that retains the rural character of the Township.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Assure that future land development is designed in scale with existing developed areas, and respect the existing surroundings, through reasonable standards addressing density, building size, height, and other development features.	C	PC BOARD PP ZBA	PP		
2	Encourage land development that actively strives to preserve open spaces as part of a development project by incorporating on-site woodlands, wetlands, lakes, and fields and by the use of such tools as conservation easements, land trusts, and density bonuses.	C	PC BOARD PP ZBA	PP		
3	Assure that new development does not unreasonably create increases in air, noise, land, and water pollution, or the degradation of land and water resource environments including groundwater.	C	PC BOARD PP	PP		
4	Increase density and development intensity in environmentally sensitive areas should be limited and all development should be in compliance with applicable local, county, state, and federal regulations.	C	PC BOARD PP ZBA	PP		
5	Review the proposed development in light of its potential impact on wetlands, woodlands, and other natural resource areas.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	PP		



TABLE 4.2 – GOAL 4

Guide future development and public services in a manner that recognizes the position of Watertown Township within the larger region and the effects of Watertown Township’s planning efforts and those of neighboring communities.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that seeks to assure compatibility among land uses along municipal borders.	C	PC BOARD	P		
2	Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that do not risk the loss of important commercial and industrial property tax dollars through annexation.	C	PC BOARD	P		
3	Maintain communication with all neighboring municipalities to discuss land use and public service needs in a mutually beneficial manner.	A/C	PC BOARD SC LC TAM	P		

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE

TABLE 5 – GOAL 5

Watertown Township will foster an organized and transparent governing atmosphere that prioritizes citizen's needs.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Explore the feasibility of adding high-speed internet and mobile communication that is available to all residents and businesses in the Township. Work with local internet and telecommunications providers to determine what needs to be done to provide access/coverage.	C	PC BOARD PP TAM	P GRANT S	✓	
2	Develop Township procedures to establish internal development review roles, responsibilities, and timelines.	A	PC BOARD TAM	P		
3	Amend the zoning ordinance to simplify and streamline the permitting process and make it user-friendly	A	PC BOARD TAM	P		
4	Provide regular training of Township staff and appointed officials to foster knowledge and expertise.	A	BOARD TAM	P		
5	Follow Michigan statutes for meetings, e.g., the Open Meetings Act.	C	PC BOARD ZBA TAM	P		
6	Annually evaluate the Zoning Ordinance to determine its effectiveness and update as needed.	C	PC BOARD	P		
7	Draft a development guidebook that includes flowcharts of the development process, including timelines, fee schedules, and explanations of Township policies, procedures, and steps to obtain approvals.	A	PC BOARD TAM	P GRANT S		

Cont. – Watertown Township will foster an organized and transparent governing atmosphere that prioritizes citizen’s needs.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
8	Annually review the Master Plan for updates and conduct a more thorough review every five years to address changing conditions, redevelopment opportunities, and the needs of the community.	A/C	PC BOARD	P	✓	

TABLE 5.1 – GOAL 6

Provide community facilities and services, as necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Watertown Township residents in the most cost-effective manner.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Explore the feasibility of extending adequate utilities and infrastructure so that Watertown Township may ensure managed and responsible growth in areas of the Township where the growth is most appropriate.	C	PC BOARD	P		
2	Work closely with applicable police, fire, and rescue organizations to analyze the best approaches to meeting Watertown Township's future safety needs.	C	PC BOARD TAM SANDUSKY	P		



AGRICULTURAL LAND

TABLE 6 – GOAL 7

Actively encourage the continuation of local farming operations and the long-term protection of farmland resources.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Completed
1	Designate areas that support long-term farming and encourage the continuation of agricultural operations through complimentary zoning provisions.	C	PC BOARD	P		
2	Limit the encroachment of incompatible land uses through buffers	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		
3	Encourage development to be placed on less productive farmland.	C	PC BOARD	P		
4	Assure that new development minimizes disturbances to, and the premature destruction of farmland areas through responsible and innovative development and site planning.	C	PC BOARD	P		
5	Support rural activities and limited-density residential development in the Township's Primary Agriculture district.	C	PC BOARD	P		
6	Encourage long-term agricultural use and preservation of prime agricultural lands.	C	PC BOARD	P		
7	Adopt zoning regulations and development policies that protect farmland such as conservation easements, purchase of development rights, and transfer of development rights.	C	PC BOARD	P		
8	The Planning Commission shall review the PA 116 application to maintain agriculture as an environmental asset, as well as an economic resource of the Township to align with the future land use map.	C	PC BOARD	P		



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

TABLE 7 – GOAL 8

Accommodate new residential development in a manner that recognizes the opportunities and constraints of the Township’s public services.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Establish suburban residential development areas that could provide varied housing opportunities for current and future residents.	C	PC BOARD PP	P		
2	Limit the extent of residential encroachment into agricultural areas.	C	PC BOARD	P		
3	Encourage the continued dominance of low-density housing as the principal housing option in the Township and identify land areas, through planning and zoning, most appropriate for such housing.	C	PC BOARD	P		
4	While maintaining low-density housing as the primary housing option, provide opportunities for other alternative housing options in appropriate areas to meet the varying housing preferences of current and future residents, including small lot single-family dwellings, and multiple-family housing.	C	PC BOARD PP	P		
5	Identify limited areas in the Township where higher-density residential development, including multiple-family development, can be adequately accommodated. Priority should be given to locations that have greater access to improved thoroughfares and necessary public services.	C	PC BOARD SC	P		



Cont. - Accommodate new residential development in a manner that recognizes the opportunities and constraints of the Township's public services.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
6	Land capacity should be an important consideration when determining the appropriate development densities, and development densities should not undermine important environmental features. Limit strip residential development along the frontage of existing state and county roads, to minimize traffic safety hazards and the landlocking of interior acreage.	C	PC BOARD	P		
7	Encourage innovative residential development which incorporates the preservation of natural resource systems and open spaces, and the preservation of the Township's rural character within the site planning process. One such initiative, where multiple lots or dwelling units are created, should include the development of only a portion of the original parcel and placing the balance of the parcel in a permanent open space status.	C	PC BOARD PP	P PP		
8	New residential developments in rural sections of the Township should be designed in a manner to enhance the natural environment.	C	PC BOARD	P		
9	Require new residential developments to be logical extensions of existing residential areas to enable necessary services and facilities, including sewer, water, and streets to be extended in an efficient manner.	C	PC BOARD PP	P PP		

TABLE 7.1 – GOAL 9

Maintain a transportation network throughout the Township that moves vehicular traffic in an efficient and safe fashion, that is coordinated with the planned future land use pattern.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	The Township is interested in assuring that roads are adequately maintained, and improvements are coordinated with the planned future land use pattern and the designated growth and development areas.	C	PC BOARD ROAD	P		
2	M-19, M-46, and/or other important thoroughfares should be considered in an effort to identify a practical and beneficial future land use pattern for the community.	C	PC BOARD ROAD	P		
3	Create zoning regulations that encourage the development pattern of the Township's roadway network.	C	PC BOARD	P		
4	Limit excessive egress and ingress points along primary roads to eliminate congestion and traffic hazards.	C	PC BOARD	P		
5	Identify priority road segments for maintenance and improvement, based upon the planned future land use pattern and existing and projected traffic patterns, and systematically undertake these projects.	C	PC BOARD	P		
6	High-traffic generating land uses and development should be limited to primary roads that have been improved to accommodate such development.	C	PC BOARD	P		
7	Adopt land use and/or other regulations that minimize the potential for traffic congestion and safety hazards along adjacent roadways.	C	PC BOARD	P		

Cont. - Maintain a transportation network throughout the Township that moves vehicular traffic in an efficient and safe fashion, that is coordinated with the planned future land use pattern.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
8	Maintain gravel roads in designated agricultural and low-density residential areas.	C	PC BOARD ROAD	P		
9	Road improvements should be targeted in areas of the Township that will have new growth and development.	C	PC BOARD ROAD	P		
10	Work with the Sanilac County Road Commission to maintain local roads.	C	PC BOARD ROAD	P		
11	Work with the Sanilac County Road Commission to provide safe and efficient non-motorized transportation routes in the Township.	C	PC BOARD ROAD MDOT	P		
12	Cooperate with the Sanilac County Road Commission and/or Michigan Department of Transportation to ensure that a proper relationship exists between planned road improvements and the Township's desired future land use pattern.	C	PC BOARD RAOD MDOT	P		
13	Continue to improve pedestrian safety by providing opportunities for pedestrian circulation along existing and planned road systems, particularly in those areas where development is denser.	A/C	PC BOARD PRIVATE	P PP GRANT		



COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

TABLE 8 – GOAL 10

Encourage sound commercial and light industrial development that is compatible with the Township's character.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Accommodate future commercial and industrial development in close proximity to the City of Sandusky, to take advantage of the existing retail and local shopping activity patterns and necessary services.	C	PC BOARD PP	P		
2	M-19 and M-46 must be recognized as suitable areas for future commercial and industrial growth.	C	PC BOARD	P		
3	New growth should be compatible with available public services and facilities, including police protection and road infrastructure.	C	PC BOARD	P		
4	The Township should encourage minimize negative impacts on the enjoyment and use of nearby lands.	C	PC BOARD	P		
5	Identify locations in the Township, through planning and zoning, considered as appropriate for commercial and industrial land uses, taking into account the constraints and opportunities presented by the Township's natural features, such as topography and soils, and the availability of public facilities and services, including road infrastructure.	C	PC BOARD DRAIN ROAD	P		
6	Assure future commercial and industrial uses are in scale with surrounding land uses, including features such as building size, height, setbacks, and open space areas.	C	PC BOARD	P		



Cont. - Encourage sound commercial and light industrial development that is compatible with the Township's character.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
7	Encourage consolidated commercial centers rather than strip commercial development patterns which undermine highway safety and the Township's rural character.	C	PC BOARD	P		
8	Provide opportunities for a mix of commercial uses that target both local day-to-day consumer needs and the consumer needs of more regional populations.	C	PC BOARD	P		
9	Require landscaping and screening measures to ensure commercial and industrial uses do not adversely impact the normal use and enjoyment of adjoining land uses.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		
10	Limit industrial uses to those that are predominately characterized by assembly activities and similar light operations that do not require heightened levels of public services or otherwise negatively impact surrounding land uses or the community as a whole.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		
11	Provide opportunities for home-based occupations within residential areas under conditions that will support the residential character, appearance, and quality of life experienced by surrounding residential properties and neighborhoods.	C	PC BOARD	P		
12	Encourage beautification efforts in commercial areas through amenities such as lighting, signage, and landscaping.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		

#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
13	Encourage the development of new types of industries, especially those that are economically associated with the existing industrial base and compatible with the environment and existing land use pattern.	C	PC BOARD TAM	P		

PARKS AND RECREATION

TABLE 9 – GOAL 11

Capitalize on existing natural spaces and connections to provide high-quality parks and recreation opportunities for Township residents.						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Determine how land around the Township Hall should be used to develop a Township Park.	A	PC BOARD PP	P PP GRANTS		
2	Explore options for developing multi-use paths and trails in Watertown Township.	A	PC BOARD PP	P PP GRANTS		
3	Work with MDOT to designate M-19 as a bicycle route.	B	PC BOARD MDOT	P GRANTS		
4	Provide safe and attractive recreation facilities that improve the overall quality of life for residents.	A	PC BOARD TAM	P		
5	Develop parks that provide opportunities for social interaction, community gatherings, and public events.	A	PC BOARD	P GRANTS		
6	Retain public lands for future generations and manage them on a sustainable basis.	C	PC BOARD TAM	P		
7	Work with MDNR to cooperatively develop recreation opportunities around the former peat bog.	C	PC BOARD	P GRANTS		
8	Support the goals and objectives of the Watertown Township Parks and Recreation Plan.	C	PC BOARD	P		



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

TABLE 10 – GOAL 12

Protect, maintain, and enhance the natural resources and environmental features of Watertown Township						
#	Action Item	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Progress	
					Started	Complete
1	Preserve the quality and natural state of environmentally sensitive areas, including surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, forested land, and wildlife habitat.	C	PC BOARD	P		
2	Protect the Township's residents from development that would degrade environmental quality.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		
3	Protect the Township's residents from development that would degrade the aesthetics, natural appearance, or character of the community.	C	PC BOARD ZBA	P		
4	Explore future opportunities for the Township's parks and recreation facilities.	A/C	PC BOARD	P GRANTS		
5	When sensitive natural areas are identified, work with conservation organizations to protect these areas from negative aspects associated with development.	C	PC BOARD	P		
6	Keep up-to-date on important environmental issues which may affect the Township.	A/C	PC BOARD	P		



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND CHECKLIST

The following section outlines additional implementation tools and checklist items that Township officials can use to accomplish their goals and objectives. An in-depth description of each toll can be found in Appendix B.

TABLE 11 - IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND CHECKLIST

POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS	
Progress	Public Information and Education
	The Planning Commission and the Township Board must educate the citizens of the community on the goals and action items.
	The Township should create informational brochures on various topics important to the Township.
	The Township Board and Planning Commission should at a minimum have an annual joint meeting to discuss how to implement the master plan and outline priorities for the short-term and long-term.
	The Planning Commission and Township Board should consistently refer to the document when making zoning decisions and even referencing the Plan, when appropriate, during site plan reviews and variance decisions
	The Township should keep a copy of the Future Land Use map on display and provide a copy of the Plan for review at the Township Hall at all times.
	Citizen participation should be strongly encouraged in a continuing planning process.
Progress	Plan Maintenance
	The Planning Commission and Township Board should continuously work to implement the strategies included in the Master Plan.
	The Planning Commission should review the Master Plan every five years and update it if necessary.
Progress	Zoning Changes, Ordinance Updates, and Code Enforcement
	The Planning Commission should update its current zoning ordinances to reflect the goals adopted in this Plan.
	The Planning Commission and Township Board should take a look at how the zoning ordinance is used and find ways to make the ordinance a more user-friendly document, i.e. through the use of graphics and images.
	The Planning Commission should review any cases that have come before them and determine if there are trends that may need to be addressed in the zoning ordinance itself.
	Procedures such as site plan reviews and other ordinance administration should be described in the zoning ordinance with enough detail to be consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and to meet Township requirements.
Progress	Regional Cooperation
	The Township should take advantage of the opportunity to pursue cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with all the surrounding communities and Sanilac County.
	The Township should actively participate in reviewing and evaluating their neighboring communities' Master Plans.

	The Township should invite comments and suggestions from neighboring communities on major developments within the Township.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS	
Progress	Capital Improvement Planning
	The Township should prioritize specific projects and create schedules for their initiation and completion.
	The Township should evaluate community conditions and development factors. Continually review the proposed improvements and related expenditures.
	The Planning Commission should ultimately review project proposals to ensure conformity with the Master Plan and make recommendations regarding prioritizing projects and methods of financing.
LOCAL FINANCING AND CO-DEVELOPMENT	
Progress	Financing Tools
	The Township should consider using their general fund to assist with important improvements.
	The Township should seek ways to encourage joint public and private investments for a common purpose, such as site location selection, service agreements, and local tax incentives and abatements
	The Township may also reach out to local foundations and area individuals for support for various civic projects.
Progress	Grant Opportunities
	Identify potential funding sources to support proposed capital improvement projects, such as grant and loan programs to help fund priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) ▪ Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) ▪ Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) ▪ Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ▪ Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) State Revolving Loan Fund ▪ Michigan Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Housing Program ▪ Broadband Equity, Access, and Development (BEAD) ▪ Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) Grant Program
Progress	Other Financing Tools
	Explore the following sources of revenue that are available to the Township. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special Assessments ▪ Shares Credit Rating Program – Michigan Municipal Bond Authority (MMBA) ▪ Dedicated Millage ▪ HUD Section 202/8

CH 5

FUTURE LAND USE



IN THIS CHAPTER

Overview

Future Land Use Analysis

Future Land Use Map

OVERVIEW

This section is considered by many to be the heart of the Master Plan. It encompasses, in text and graphic form, the recommendations of each of the chapters in the Plan. From a practical point of view, the Future Land Use Chapter is fundamentally a guide for any future development of the community. It translates the vision and Township values, describing how and where to build, or what land features to preserve. As the community moves forward the future land use map may be modified as circumstances dictate.

The future land use map is considered a guide, expressing the Township's vision for the future, and should be used to help make future land use decisions, not regulate the activities in specific zones. While the future land use map attempts to translate future land use categories to specific zoning districts, it is mostly intended to provide a framework for future site-specific land use or zoning decisions that are brought before the Planning Commission. For example, the future land use map may indicate a residential area, and yet it may not be zoned for residential until a property owner requests that zoning change and the Township adopts the rezoning request. Ultimately, the recommendations shown on the future land use map are intended to help Watertown Township officials, property owners, and residents make zoning and development decisions that are in the best interest of the Watertown Township community. The future land use map seeks to guide the development of residential and commercial districts, as well as allocate land for future parks and conservation areas while maintaining the overall character and appearance of Watertown Township.

THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP DOES NOT SHARE THE SAME LEGAL STATUS AS A ZONING MAP.

Watertown Township does not expect to see a great deal of change happening in terms of the majority of land use in the next 10-20 years, as the community would like to primarily stay rural. The Township made minor adjustments to the commercial districts from the future land use map that was developed in 2016. One main change includes extending the commercial future land use area all the way down M-19 to the southern border. The Township also reduced the residential area in sections 6, 9, 32, and 33, while adding two new categories; "Recreation" to represent the Sandusky State Game area, and "Public/Semi-Public" to represent the Township Hall and Township cemeteries.

Descriptions of the future land use categories and the corresponding zoning districts are on the following pages. The Future Land Use Map is shown at the end of this section.



FUTURE LAND USE ANALYSIS

TABLE 12 – FUTURE LAND USE

Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Agriculture	18,174.8	79.79%
Commercial	1,949.97	8.56%
Recreation	1,478.72	6.49%
Residential	834.56	3.66%
Intensive Commercial	279.19	1.23%
Public/Semi-Public	61.89	0.27%
Total	22,779.13	100%

Agriculture

Agriculture is the largest land use category in Watertown Township. Township residents tend to support policies that favor agricultural practices and believe in preserving the majority of their farmland for the future. The public input survey indicated that residents believe this land should remain undeveloped and preserved. This land use category accounts for large open spaces, viewsheds of agricultural crops, and residential behaviors of a semi-rural character. The Township roads are developed and maintained to handle large farm equipment. Agriculture land in the Township makes up 18,174.8 acres or 79.79% of the land.

TABLE 12.1 – AGRICULTURAL ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
Agriculture	Agriculture-Residential (AR)	Farms, farm buildings, and farm use
		Single-family dwellings
		Roadside stands limited to selling of farm produce
		Family day care homes
		State licensed residential facilities for six or fewer residents
		Buildings, structures, and uses which are accessory to any of the above-permitted uses



Commercial

The commercial land use category is intended to meet the daily retail, services, shopping, and office needs of the residents who live nearby. This district has the ability to provide more opportunities for Township residents, such as job growth through commercial growth. This district shall not create a hazard to the health, safety, or welfare of surrounding residents. This category concentrates these uses in one area, near primary intersections within the Township. The commercial area extends the entire length of M-19 with a small area in the northwestern corner of the Township, adjacent to the Sandusky commercial area. The Commercial land makes up 1,949 acres or 8.56% of the land.

TABLE 12.2 – COMMERCIAL ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
<p>Commercial</p>	<p>Commercial (C)</p>	<p>Any retail business which sells or rents merchandise within a completely enclosed building.</p>
		<p>Personal service establishments such as restaurants, taverns, laundromats, barber shops, beauty shops, and dry-cleaning establishments.</p>
		<p>Repair shops for consumer items such as watches, shoes, furniture, and appliances.</p>
		<p>Professional and business offices.</p>
		<p>Financial institutions.</p>
		<p>Funeral homes and mortuaries.</p>
		<p>Mini-storage facilities which provide storage space for personal use.</p>
		<p>Hotels, motels, lodge halls, private clubs, auditoriums, and indoor recreational establishments.</p>
		<p>Schools, churches, and publicly owned buildings or facilities.</p>
<p>Buildings, structures and uses which are accessory to any of the above permitted uses.</p>		



Recreation

The Recreation future land use category represents one recreational area in the Township, Sandusky State Game area. If the Township were to develop its own park, those parks would fall into this category. This category allows for a variety of recreational uses like golf courses, campgrounds, outdoor and indoor recreation, resort areas, and riding trails. Recreation land in the Township makes up 1,478 acres or 6.49% of the land.

TABLE 12.3 – RECREATION ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
Recreation	Agriculture- Residential (AR)	Use permitted after special approval – private parks, recreation facilities, campgrounds, golf courses
	Single Family Residential (R)	Use permitted after special approval – golf courses
	Multiple Family Residential (MP)	Use permitted after special approval – golf courses
	Manufactured Housing Park (MPH)	Use permitted after special approval – golf courses





Residential

The Residential land category accounts for land that is more densely developed and is intended primarily for residential use, characterized by single-family homes on smaller lots. This category intends to provide an environment for family life, such as being located near neighborhood facilities like schools, churches, and parks while still preserving the openness of living space and not overcrowding. This category creates a community feel with close neighbors and a sidewalk network. If in the future this district grows it should be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Most of the area indicated for single-family residential in Watertown Township is near Sandusky where there is a more suburban nature due to the smaller lot sizes, typically half an acre. The Residential category accounts for 834 acres or 3.66% of the land in the Township.

TABLE 12.4 – RESIDENTIAL ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
Residential	Single Family Residential (R)	Single-family dwellings
		Crop production
		Family day care homes
		State licensed residential facilities for six or fewer residents
		Buildings, structures, and uses which accessory to any of the above permitted uses
	Multiple Family Residential (MP)	Single-family dwellings
		Two-family dwellings
		Multiple family dwelling
		Crop production
		Family day care homes
		State licensed residential facilities for six or fewer residents
		Buildings, structures, and uses which accessory to any of the above permitted uses
	Manufactured Housing Park (MPH)	Manufactured housing parks
		Single family dwellings
		Crop production
		Family day care homes
		State licensed residential facilities for six or fewer residents
		Buildings, structures, and uses which accessory to any of the above permitted uses



Intensive Commercial

The Intensive Commercial category is intended for businesses larger in size than in the Commercial category. These business types may include retail, wholesale, and/or repair and are located in areas that allow for more vehicular movement and for more intensive business types that serve the greater region. This category is located along M-46 in the northern portion of the Township, near the southern border of the City. Due to its location on M-46 and proximity to Sandusky, the Township feels this area could be either commercial or industrial uses in the future. Intensive Commercial land accounts for 279 acres or 1.23% of the land in the Township.

TABLE 12.5 – INTENSIVE COMMERCIAL ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
Intensive Commercial	Commercial (C)	See page 53
	Industrial (I)	Factories engaged in manufacturing, assembling, machining, or other industrial production.
		Truck terminals, railroad yards, and airports.
		Laboratories.
		Warehousing, storage, or wholesale facilities.
		Fuel storage facilities and fuel transfer facilities, including propane, petroleum, ethanol, and similar fuels.
Buildings, structures, and uses which are accessory to any of the above permitted uses.		



Public/Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public category is intended to represent Township-owned properties, i.e. the Township Hall, Township Cemeteries, and could include schools and/or other Township services such as a police station and fire station if the Township were to ever attain their own. The Public/Semi-Public category includes four parcels, all of which are located along M-19. This land use category accounts for 61 acres or 0.27% of the land.

TABLE 12.6 – PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC ANALYSIS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
Public/Semi-Public	Agriculture- Residential (AR)	Use permitted after special approval
	Commercial (C)	Permitted use
	Single Family Residential (R)	Use permitted after special approval
	Multiple Family Residential (MP)	Use permitted after special approval
	Manufactured Home Park (MHP)	Use permitted after special approval

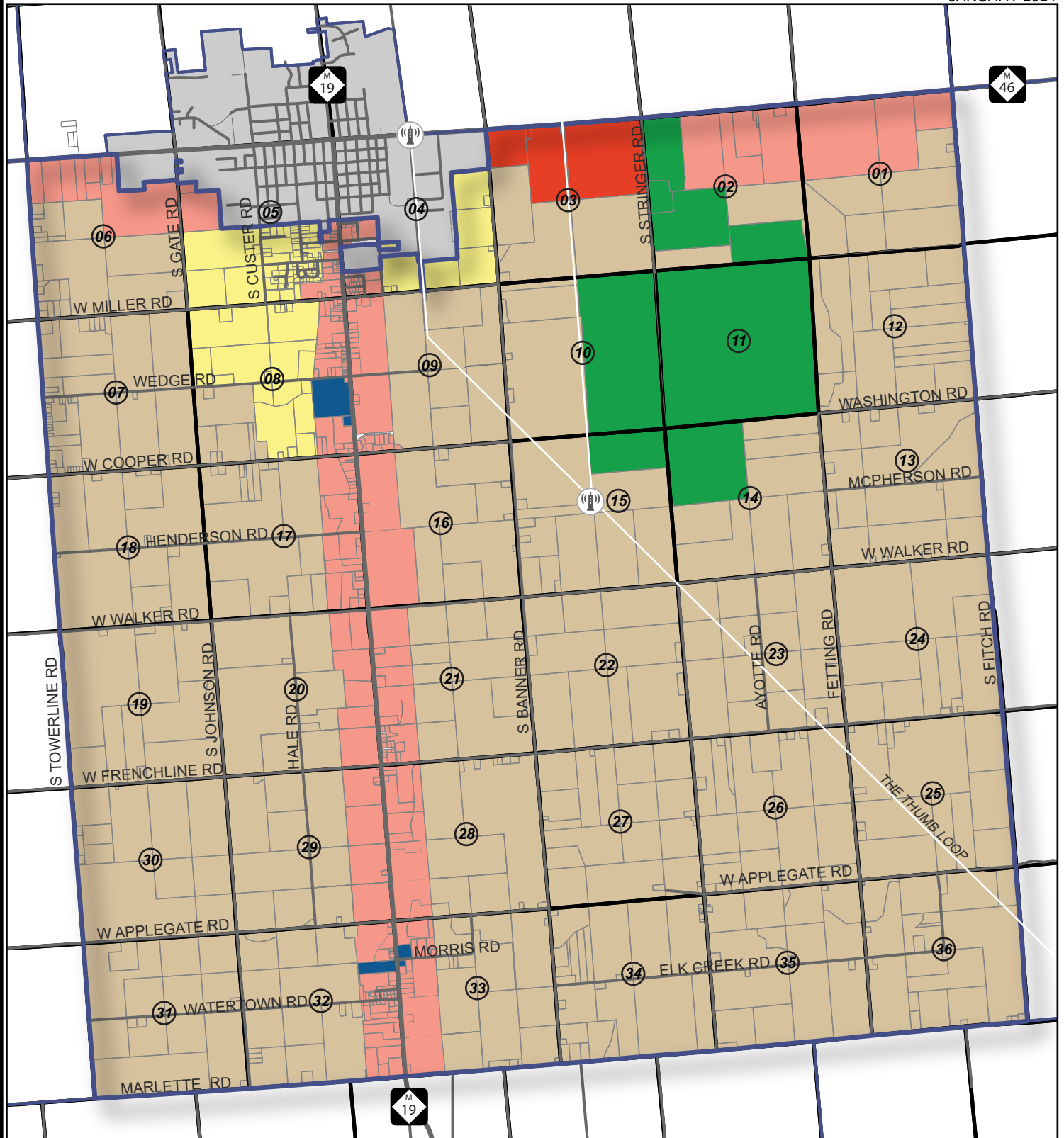
Utility

In 2023, the State of Michigan recently revised its “MI Healthy Climate” plan which establishes a carbon-free electricity generation goal for all public utilities by 2040. Similarly, the State of Michigan passed a series of bills that fast-track the implementation of utility-scale solar and wind projects across the state. These bills fundamentally alter the authority that local governments maintain surrounding the approval or denial of such projects, allowing solar and wind developers to submit applications for utility-scale renewable energy developments directly to the Michigan Public Service Commission if local regulations are more restrictive than state standards identified within the new legislation.










Watertown Township has deep roots in the agricultural economy which has defined the rural landscape and the way of life for its residents. The Township understands the need to accommodate the goals identified by the State but also recognizes the need to balance statewide initiatives with the agricultural character of Watertown. The placement of utility-scale wind and solar installations, if developed within the Township, should be concentrated near the existing utility lines to minimize the adverse impacts of additional and unnecessary energy infrastructure installation which would unnecessarily take prime agricultural land out of production and alter the rural landscape that Township residents value and seek to maintain for future generations.

MAP 1 - FUTURE LAND USE WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024



Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
|  AGRICULTURE |  RESIDENTIAL |  SECTIONS |
|  COMMERCIAL |  INTENSIVE COMMERCIAL |  PARCELS |
|  RECREATION |  PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC |  SUBSTATION |

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CH 6

ZONING PLAN

IN THIS CHAPTER

Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Plan



MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE

Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances are often thought of as similar documents. However, they are two different sets of tools that, when used in conjunction with one another, work towards the same purpose and goals. Even though both documents work towards the same goals, they are distinctly different.

The Zoning Ordinance is the law; it regulates the use and development of land as it exists in the present. The Master Plan is a policy document and should be used as a guide for future use of land and overall development in the Township. While the Master Plan outlines a community’s vision for the future, and the Zoning Ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision.

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) requires that a Zoning Ordinance be based on an adopted Master Plan. Often, once a community updates its Master Plan, it will also review its Zoning Ordinance to ensure it aligns with the goals of the Master Plan.

TABLE 13 – MASTER PLAN VS ZONING ORDINANCE

Master Plan	Zoning Ordinance
Provides general policies, a guide.	Provides specific regulations, the law.
Describes what should happen in the future - recommended land use for the next 20 years, not necessarily the recommended use for the present.	Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions.
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups.	Deals only with development-related issues under Township control.
Flexible to respond to evolving conditions.	Rigid, requires formal amendments to change.



THE ZONING PLAN

A zoning plan is required by the Michigan Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) requires that a Master Plan serves as the basis for the zoning plan, and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEAA) requires a zoning plan to be the basis of the zoning ordinance. According to the act, the zoning plan must be based on an inventory of current conditions and identify zoning districts and their purposes.

The zoning plan is a key implementation tool to achieve the vision of the Master Plan. In order to achieve the goals of the Master Plan, the Township must ensure that the zoning ordinance and regulations permitting the type and style of development align with the recommendations of the Master Plan.

TABLE 14 – FUTURE LAND USE VS ZONING DISTRICTS

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District
Agriculture	Agriculture- Residential (AR)
Commercial	Commercial (C)
Recreation	Agriculture- Residential (AR) Single Family Residential (R) Multiple Family Residential (MR) Manufactured Housing Park (MHP)
Residential	Single Family Residential (R) Multiple Family Residential (MR) Manufactured Housing Park (MHP)
Intensive Commercial	Commercial (C) Industrial (I)
Public/Semi-Public	Agriculture- Residential (AR) Commercial (C) Single Family Residential (R) Multiple Family Residential (MR) Manufactured Home Park (MHP)

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

General Ordinance Amendments

Throughout the Master Plan process, the Planning Commission considered possible future changes to make to the existing zoning ordinance. These changes are due to consistent problems the Planning Commission sees in the day-to-day implementation of the ordinance, updates for best practices, or changes to match emerging land use trends. The following list represents possible changes the Planning Commission may consider in the upcoming years.

- Review use permits after special approval application requirements.
- Consider adopting a property maintenance code.
- Ensure that the Township has staff dedicated for enforcement purposes.
- Review and update landscaping guidelines as needed.
- Review permitted uses and zoning districts to ensure compatibility with the built environment.
- Consider additional application requirements for noxious uses (transportation study, environmental study, etc.).
- Add a two-track review process for site plan reviews (administrative vs planning commission).
- Ensure that site plan reviews are not approved during public hearings i.e. uses permitted by right are not administered at public hearings.
- Draft and develop a guidebook that explains the processes for variances, site plan reviews, rezonings, and uses permitted after special approval permits.
- Review recent variance approvals and consider additional zoning ordinance amendments.
- Prohibit residential development on small lots in the agricultural district.
- Provide flexible housing types in the residential district (duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes).
- Require public utility connections for all small lot development.
- Review lighting standards.
- Evaluate the signage standards for electronic signs and compliance with case law.
- Assess the current renewable energy regulations and determine if they comply with the State's regulations.

Site/Building Design

The Planning Commission would like to see an increased emphasis on site design for future development and redevelopment of properties in the Township. In the future, they can consider some or all of the following amendments to the zoning ordinance.

- Review streetscape and landscaping requirements for commercial districts.
- Increase zoning regulations that emphasize aesthetics, improvements to ingress/egress entrances, lighting, sidewalks, setbacks, landscaping, and discourage strip frontage.
- Require amiable street frontage for new land divisions.
- Consider adopting a land division ordinance to ensure consistency between zoning ordinance and other Township policies.
- Review zoning ordinance development requirements to support the preservation of rural character.



CH 7

COMMUNITY PROFILE



IN THIS CHAPTER

- How the Township Looks Today
- Demographic Analysis
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Existing Land Use

HOW THE TOWNSHIP LOOKS TODAY

REGIONAL LOCATION

Watertown Township is located in the center of Sanilac County in the thumb of Michigan. The Township encompasses 35.25 square miles. Located 80 miles north of Detroit, 70 miles northeast of Flint, and 60 miles east of Saginaw. There are two state highways within the Township, M-19, located on the western portion of the Township that traverses north and south, and M-46 at the north border of the Townships which flows east to west. The City of Sandusky is at the northern border of the Township which abuts to Custer Township. To the east of the Township is Washington Township, with Elk and Buel Townships to the south, and Elmer Township to the west. The Township is primarily rural with large tracts of agricultural land and a large tract of recreational land used for the Sandusky State Game Area.

HISTORY

Watertown is an unincorporated community in the southern part of Watertown Township which is split by M-19. The first settler in the Watertown Township area was Edward Cash, who settled in the area in 1851. The first meeting to organize Watertown Township was held in his home in 1868 where James McClure was elected as the first Township Supervisor. The

MAP 2 – WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP LOCATION



Township saw its first school built in 1867, following that a sawmill was built in 1882 by John Gimmel. The first store was built a year later by William Tomelson. A decade later, in 1895 a post office opened which was soon closed in February 1905.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The following section provides an overall demographic analysis of Watertown Township’s current demographic conditions in the Township. This section will cover overall population trends, housing characteristics, and economic statistics. The data presented in this chapter uses the most recent 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), 2020, and 2010 Decennial Census. In this section, the Township is compared to Sanilac County and Michigan.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 15 – POPULATION

	2020
Watertown Township	1,262
Sanilac County	40,829
Michigan	10,077,331

Table 15 – According to the 2020 census data Watertown Township has a population of 1,262. Since 2010, there has been a loss of 58 residents (4.39%).

The County has a population of 40,829 and the State has just over ten million residents.

Figure 1 – There are more males than females (8.6%) in Watertown Township and the County whereas in the State there are more females than males.

FIGURE 1 – MALE TO FEMALE RATIO

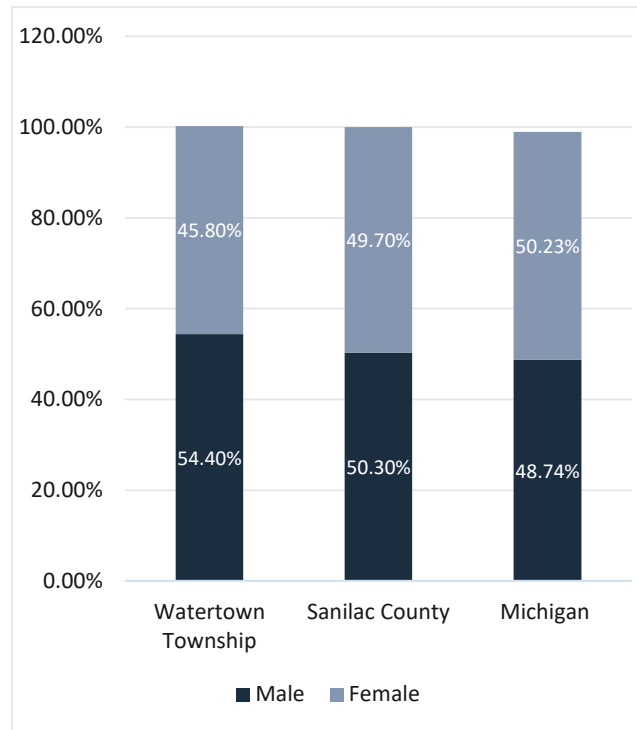


TABLE 16 – HISTORIC POPULATION

Watertown Township Historic Population	
1960	1,067
1970	1,192
1980	1,346
1990	1,235
2000	1,389
2010	1,320
2020	1,262

FIGURE 2 – MEDIAN AGE

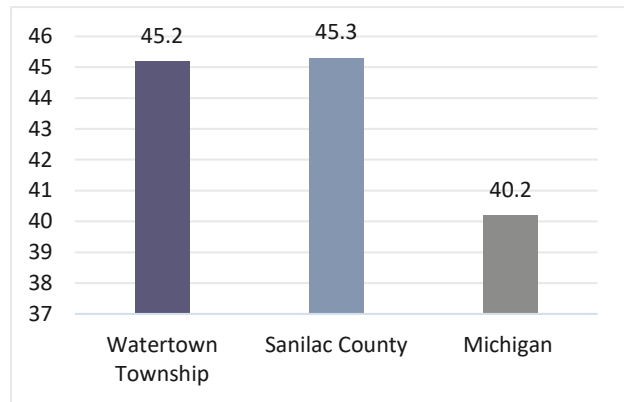


FIGURE 3 – AGE DISTRIBUTION

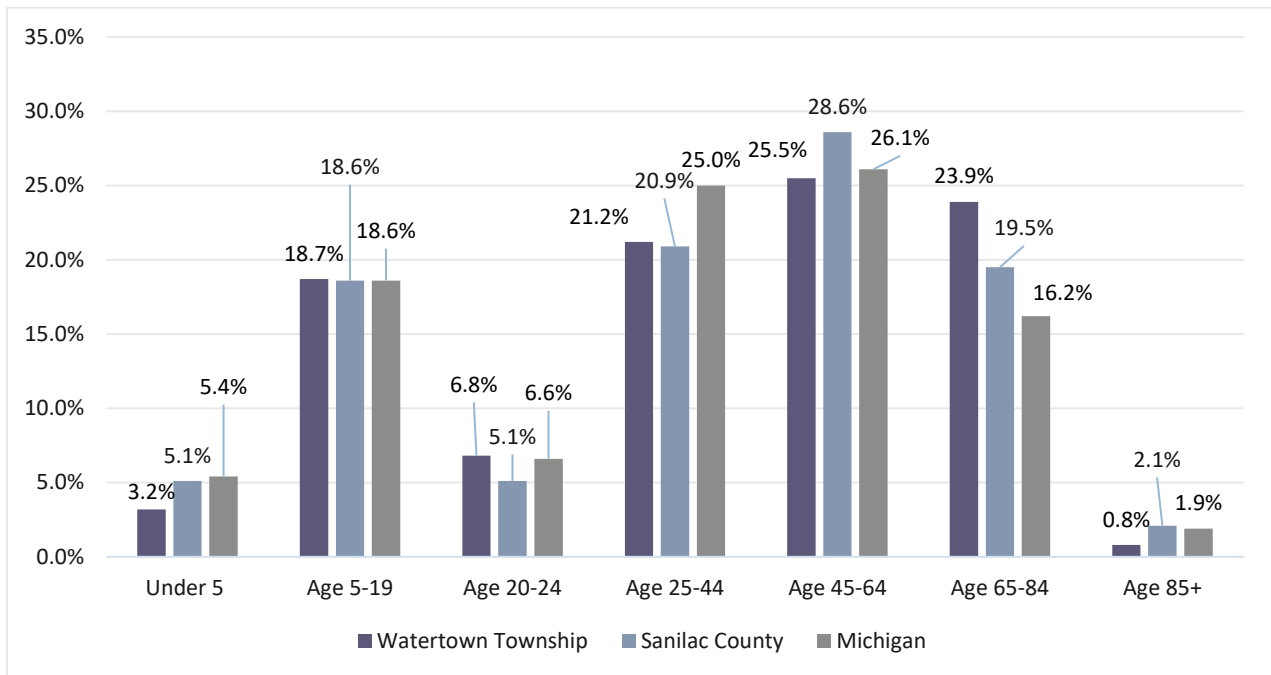


Table 16 –A decade after the Township was founded the population had grown to 1,067 residents. The population continued to increase until 1990’s when it took its first population decline. The population peaked in the 2000’s with 1,389 residents. Since the 2000s, the population has been continued to slowly decrease.

Figure 2 – Of the three geographies, the State has the lowest median age at 40.2. The County’s has the highest at 45.3 years old and the Township slightly lower at 45.2. As time goes on the Townships population is expected to grow older on average.

Figure 3– Of the three geographies, the Township has the largest percentage of residents in the following age cohorts: age 5-19, age 20-24, and age 65-84. The Township has the smallest percentage of residents in the following cohort: under 5, age 45-64, and age 85+.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 17 – AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

	2010	2020
Watertown Township	2.70	2.30
Sanilac County	2.53	2.40
Michigan	2.49	2.54

TABLE 18 – HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

	Watertown Township	Sanilac County	Michigan
Total Housing Units	578	21,833	4,566,504
Occupied Units	92.2%	78.3%	87.1%
<i>Owner Occupied</i>	85.9%	79.5%	72.2%
<i>Renter Occupied</i>	14.1%	20.5%	27.8%
Vacant Units	7.8%	21.7%	12.9%

TABLE 19 – HOUSING UNITS

	Watertown Township	Sanilac County	Michigan
1-Unit Detached	91.2%	81.7%	72.2%
1-Unit Attached	0	1%	4.6%
2 Units	0	1.4%	2.3%
3 or 4 Units	0	1.1%	2.6%
5 to 9 Units	0	1.9%	4.2%
10 or 19 Units	0	1.3%	3.5%
20 or More Units	0	1.3%	5.4%
Mobile Home	8.8%	10.2%	5.1%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0	0

History has shown that the average family size is shrinking, which is also causing household sizes to decrease.

Table 17 – The average household size in Watertown Township in 2010 was 2.7. Since then, the size has decreased to 2.3. Watertown household size is the smallest in comparison to the County (2.40), and the State (2.54)**Table 18** - Of the 578 housing units in the Township, 92.2% are occupied and 7.8% are vacant. The Township has a higher occupancy rate than the County (78.3%) and State (87.1%).

Of those occupied units, 85.9% are owner-occupied and 14.1% are renter-occupied. The State has the highest renter-occupied rate at 27.8%, and the County has the highest vacancy rate at 21.7%.

Table 19 – In Watertown Township, there are only two types of housing, 1-unit detached (single family) or mobile homes. Majority are 1-unit detached (91.2%), with 8.8% being mobile homes. The County mirrors the Townships whereas in the State the majority of the units are 1-unit detached followed by 20 or more units.

FIGURE 4 – YEAR UNITS WERE BUILT

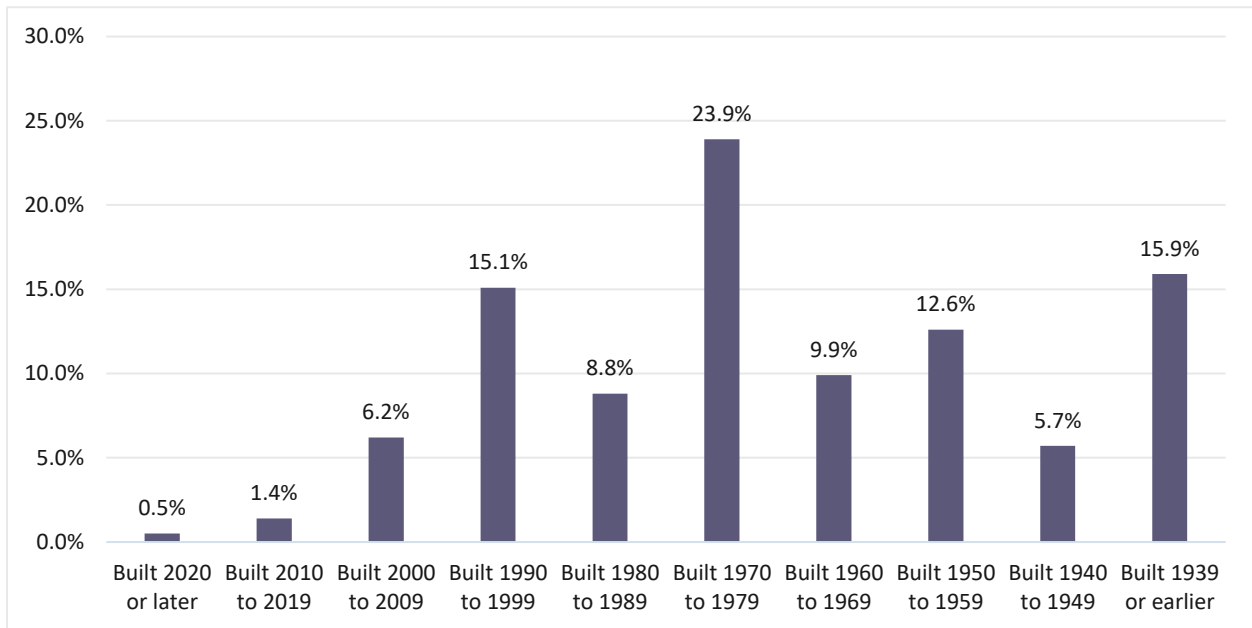


FIGURE 5 – HOUSING VALUE

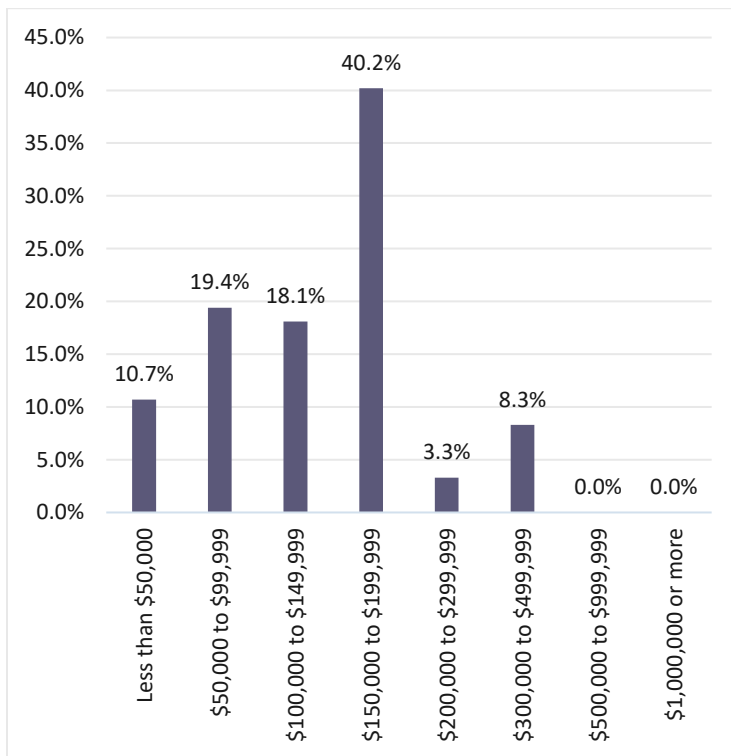


Figure 4 – Houses built before 1980 make up 68% of the housing stock in the Township, meaning most of the houses are 50 years or older. Since the peak in the 70's there has been a significant decrease in home building.

Figure 5 - The median housing cost in the Township is \$151,600. The largest percent (40.2%) of homes in the Township are valued between \$150,000 to \$199,000. The second largest group (19.4%) are valued between \$50,000 to \$99,999.

FIGURE 6 – MONTHLY HOMEOWNERSHIP COST

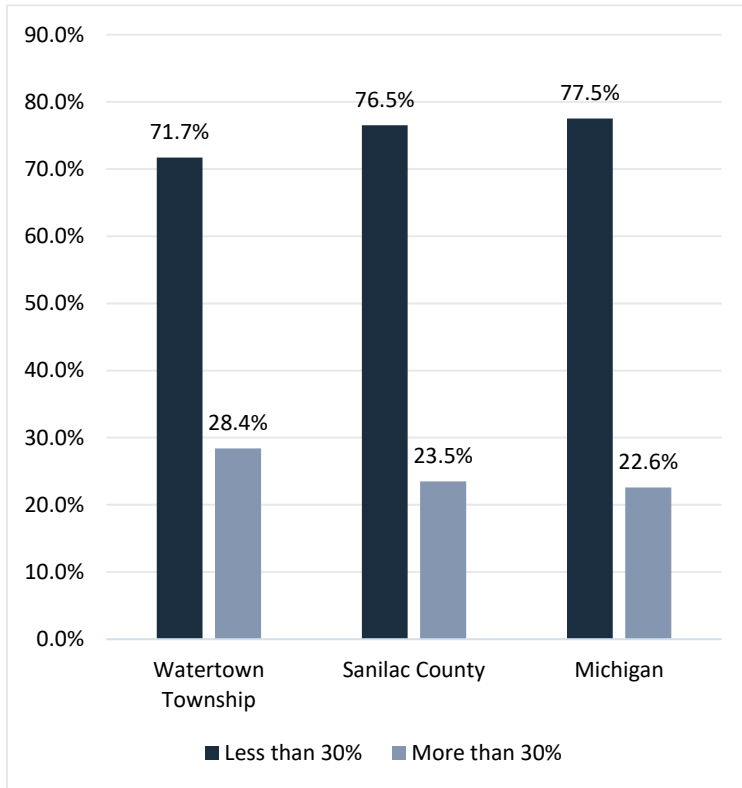


Figure 5 - The median housing cost in the Township is \$151,600. The largest percent (40.2%) of homes in the Township are valued between \$150,000 to \$199,000. The second largest group (19.4%) are valued between \$50,000 to \$99,999.

Figure 6 – A rule of thumb is to spend no more than 30% of your income on housing. Housing that exceeds 30% of a household's income may indicate that there is a housing affordability problem.

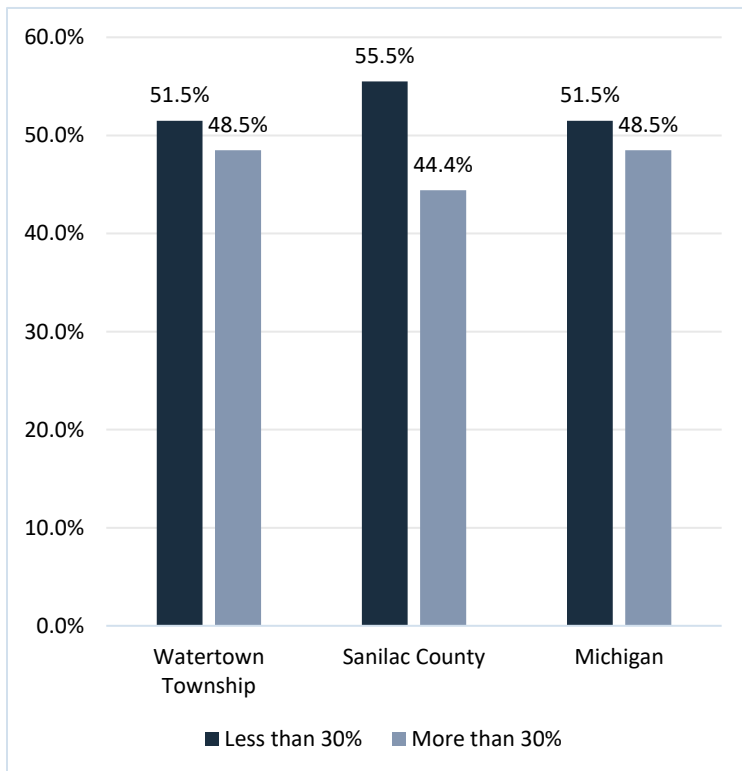
In Watertown, 71.7% of homeowners spend less than 30% of their income on housing costs. Meaning only 28.4% pay more than 30%. The Township has the highest number of homeowners who pay more than 30% on housing, compared to the County and State.

Across the board all the jurisdictions are fairly similar in numbers for homeowners' payment.

Figure 7 - The same rule of thumb applies for renters. If there is a large percentage of renters who are paying more than 30% of their income on housing it may indicate an affordability issue.

Watertown Township has approximately 50% of renters who pay less than 30% of their income on housing cost. Leaving a significant amount 48.5% who pay more than 30%. These number can indicate two things; one, renter's income may be lower or two, rent options are not suitable for all

FIGURE 7 – GROSS RENT



ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 20 – EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	No High School Diploma	High School Diploma	Some Collage, No Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Watertown Township	6.6%	51.8%	21.7%	6.1%	9.4%	4.3%
Sanilac County	10.1%	42.9%	22.5%	9.6%	10%	5%
Michigan	8%	28.7%	21.8%	9.8%	19.2%	12.5%

TABLE 21 – EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

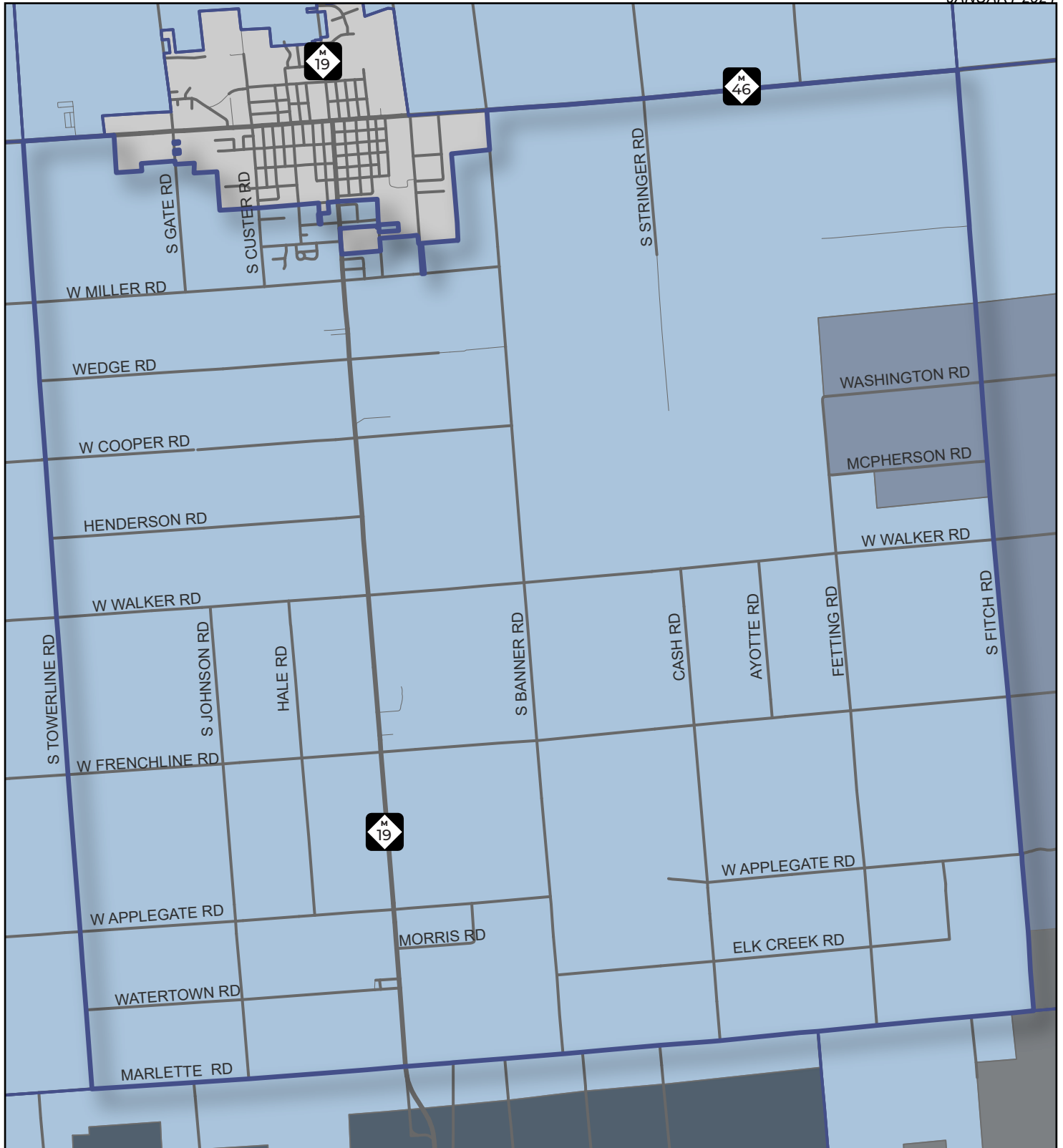
	2010	2021
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	10.1%	8.7%
Construction	2.8%	9.9%
Manufacturing	28.3%	23.5%
Wholesale trade	3.5%	0.9%
Retail trade	8.3%	9.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.7%	1.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.2%	6.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	0.9%	5.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.4%	18.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	1.4%	5.1%
Other services, except public administration	5.4%	6.8%
Public administration	5.9%	4.0%

Table 20 – Of the three jurisdictions, the Township has the largest number of residents who have earned their high school diploma (51.8%). Even though the Township isn't the highest in many of the categories, their percentages are comparable with the County and State. Michigan has the largest number of residents that have earned an associate degree (9.8%), bachelor's degree (19.2%) or higher (12.5%) compared to the Township and County.

Table 21 – The top three industries in the Township in 2010 were manufacturing; education services; healthcare, and social assistance, and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining. In the past ten years the industries have shifted; the top three in 2021 were manufacturing; education services; healthcare, and social assistance, and construction.

MAP 3 - SCHOOL DISTRICTS WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024



Legend

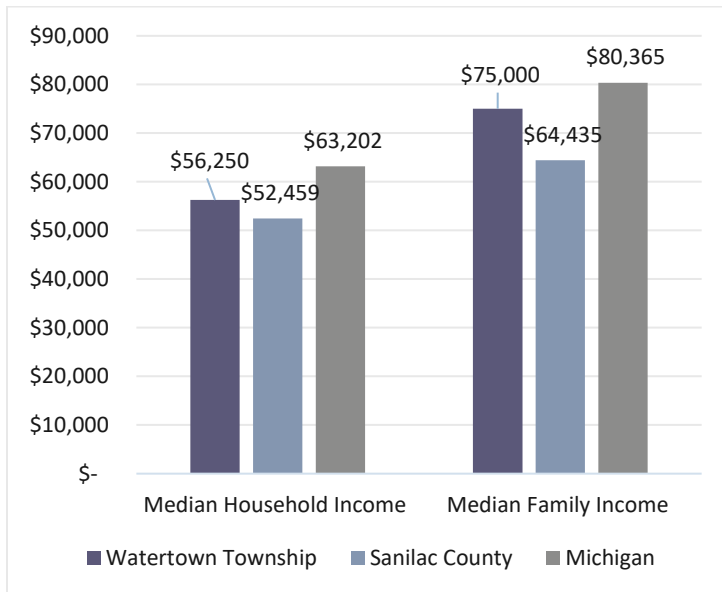
- SANDUSKY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
- PECK COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
- CARSONVILLE-PORT SANILAC SCHOOL DISTRICT
- CROSWELL-LEXINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

N Miles

0 0.5 1

Spicer
group

FIGURE 8 – INCOME



Median household income is a count of all incomes within a household in a 12-month span. For householders or families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of householders and families including those with no income.

FIGURE 9 – PERCENT OF THE POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE

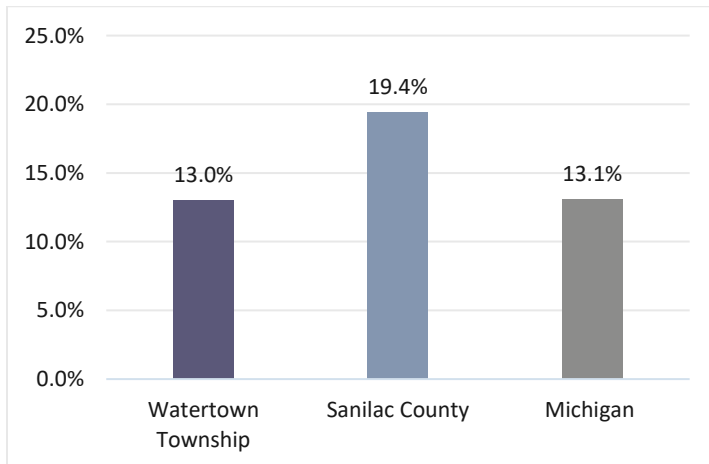


TABLE 22 – DTMB UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT, & BUDGET)

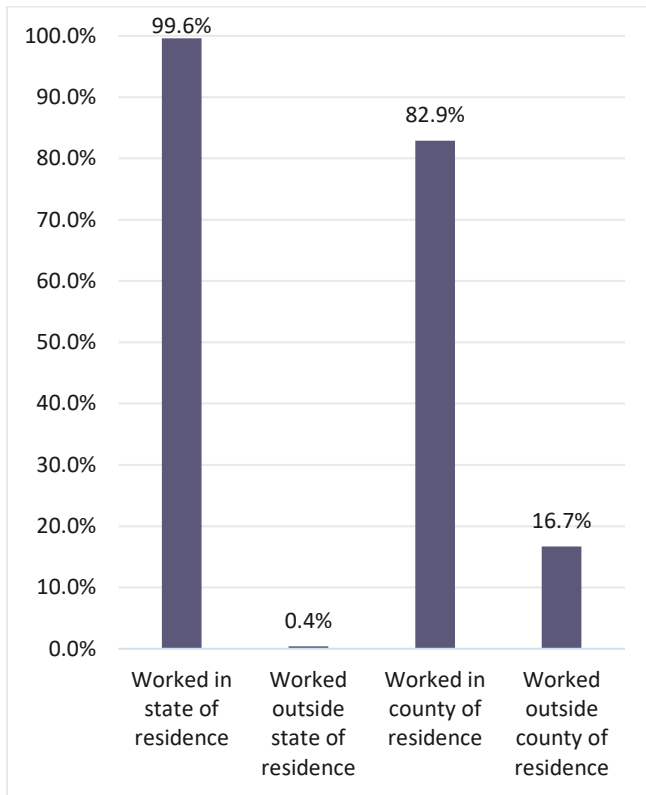
	2010	2019	2020	2022
Sanilac County	15%	4.8%	10.1%	6.2%
Michigan	12.2%	4.1%	9.9%	5.9%
United States	9.6%	3.7%	8.1%	5.3%

Figure 8 – The Townships median household income is \$56,250; this is slightly higher than the County’s but lower than the States at \$63,202. The Townships median family income is \$75,000, \$5,000 lower than the States at \$80,365.

Figure 9 – The Census uses income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family’s total income is less than the family’s threshold, then that family and every individual is considered in poverty. Watertown Township has the lowest percentage of the population below the poverty line at 13%. The County has the highest percentage at 19.4%.

Table 22 –There was a significant decrease in unemployment in the Township, from 2010 to 2019, approximately 10%. However, from 2019 to 2020, there was an increase in unemployment. In 2020, we saw employers lay off employees due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time there was approximately a 5% increase in unemployment. In 2022, the unemployment numbers started to drop and are almost back to pre-pandemic numbers.

FIGURE 10 – PLACE OF WORK



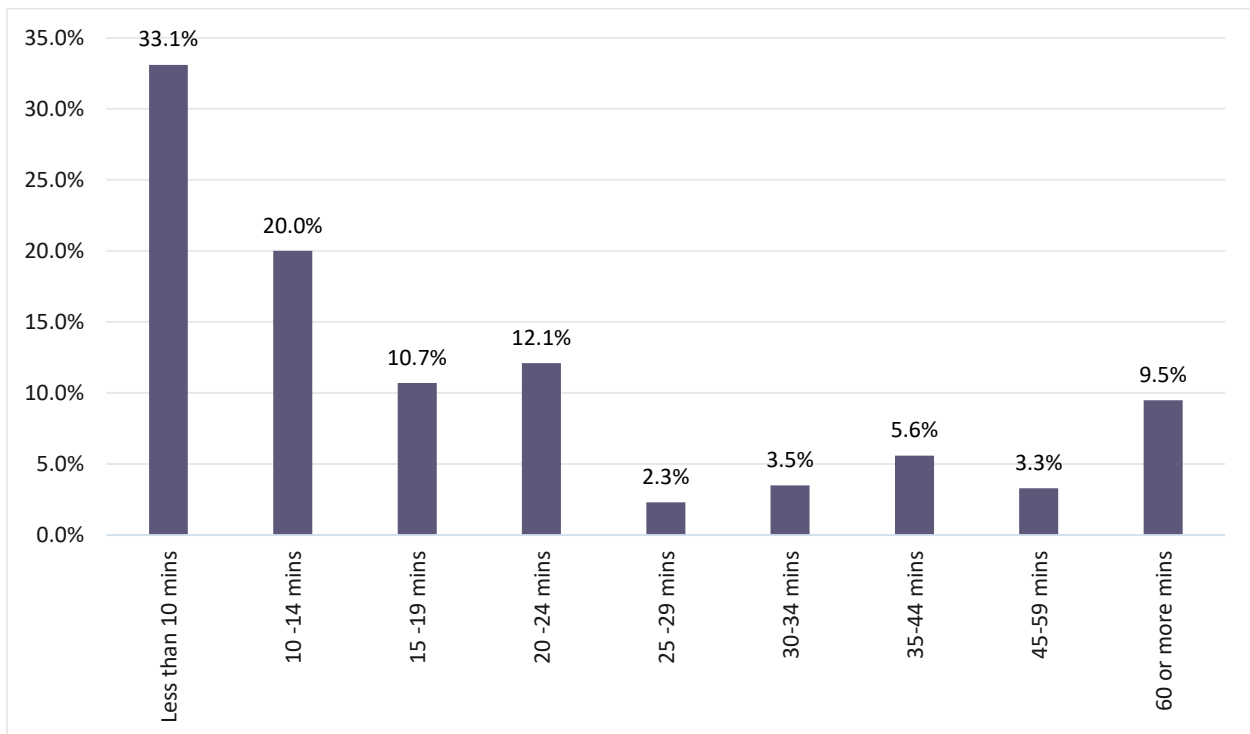
Place of work and travel time to work can indicate a couple of things. One it can demonstrate whether there are jobs close by, and two, it can show how frequently roads are being traveled.

Figure 10 – Approximately 80% of the residents work in the County and 16.7% work outside the County. There is a small percentage of residents that work outside of the State, 0.4%.

Figure 11 - Almost 80% of the Township can get to their place of work in 30 minutes or less. Over 30% of residents can get to work in less than 10 minutes, and 9.5% travel more than an hour to work. The mean travel time for the Township residents is 21 minutes.

Overall, the figured indicate that there is job available and in a close approximation.

FIGURE 11 – TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Demographics tell a story about an area. They can show patterns and help communities understand where they are now and where they may be heading. They have the ability to show who is living in the Township, and what their needs may be today, whether that's different housing options or more employment opportunities.

The Township's median age is 45, however, over 50% of the population is over 45. As the population ages, their housing needs may also change, i.e. older residents may be looking to downsize or rent. The demographics show that the Township should explore alternative housing options to retain their current population, or to help attract new residents. Currently, most homeowners own their homes and it's indicated that they are affordable. There is a small population who rent their home, and these homes may not be the most affordable for those who rent them. As stated previously, 48.5% of owners pay more than 30% of their income on housing. The majority of the homes in the Township were built in the 70s, and only 8% of the homes have been built in the last 20 years.

Many of these demographic tables and charts can help the Township plan for its future and as time goes on this data can be further analyzed to see more trends.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The following section will cover a variety of Township and regional facilities. Due to the Township's location and proximity to the City of Sandusky, Township residents use many of the facilities in the City. The Township envisions future use and cooperation between the two; the local Fire Association is an excellent example. In the future sewer, water, and recreation could jointly be planned and administered together. This equal cooperation could “enhance” community opportunities, such as grant funding which would benefit both mutually.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Water and Sewer System

Watertown was once a part of the City of Sandusky sewer system. The system was acquired by a grant through the State and was known as the Sandusky/Watertown Sewer Authority. In 2005 the City severed this relationship making Watertown a “customer”. The cost of being a customer is more expensive than being a resident. The Township would be interested in exploring the possibility of developing a new agreement with the City.. This would account for the cost of serving Township residents and for potential system expansions into the Township that ultimately could lead to additional commercial and industrial growth.

The vast majority of Township residents rely upon on-site potable water and sewage disposal. The sewer service area in the Township extends from the City of Sandusky south along M-19 to Wedge Road, east from M-19 along Miller Road to Davis Road, and along Gleason Street in the Thomas Subdivision. Of the 552 dwelling units in the Township, approximately 90 of the households are connected to the public sewer system. There are no plans at this time for an expansion of the sewer service area in the Township.

There are no public water services currently in the Township nor are there any plans at this time to introduce such a service. However, the availability of water service from the City of Sandusky has been discussed.

Transportation

Road Network

Located between the City of Sandusky and the Village of Peck, the Township is served by a developed street network owned and operated by the County and State. The National Functional Classification (NFC) is a hierarchical system that categorizes types of public roads. The highest classifications (freeway or arterial) emphasize mobility, while the lowest classifications (local) emphasize neighborhood roads or property access. Primary roads are considered the most critical in providing regional circulation throughout the County. The majority of the roads in the Township are under the jurisdiction of the Sanilac County Road

Commission (SCRC) and are classified by the SCRC as local roads except for French Line Road and Marlette Road (located along the Township's southern border) which are classified as County Primary Roads. However, there are a few roads that are under private ownership and recorded as private easements.

As many of Michigan's Townships are, Watertown Township is set up on a grid system allowing for efficiency in accessing Township and regional streets. The principal exception to this pattern is the lack of road segments in the northeastern portions of the Township where the Sandusky State Game Area is located. Thirteen north/south roads in the Township extend from M-46 to Marlette Road and fourteen east/west streets extend from S Townline Road to S Fitch Road. French Line Road is the principal east-west thoroughfare that intersects with M-19 two miles north of the Township's southern border. M-46, Walker Road, Marlette Road, French Line Road, M-19, Townline Road, and Banner Road provide continuous movement across the entire Township. In the Township M-19, M-46, French Line Road, Marlette Road, and several neighborhood roads are paved. Nearly all other road segments in the Township have a gravel or limestone surface. The Township is in the process of updating all gravel roads to limestone or blacktop.

Regionally speaking, the Township is accessible by state highways M-46 and M-19. M-46 traverses through the City of Sandusky along the northern border of the Township, connecting the Saginaw area and Interstate 75 to the west (approximately 60 miles) with Port Sanilac on Lake Huron to the east (approximately 15 miles). M-19 is the backbone of the Township's local road network, it traverses north and south through Sandusky and the central region of Watertown Township, connecting Bad Axe to the north with Interstate 69, approximately 30 miles to the south. These highways provide comparatively good accessibility to and from Watertown Township.

Map 4 on the following page provides a graphical representation of the road networks. The map displays the Township's road network from state highways, to local roads, road materials, and AADT traffic counts.

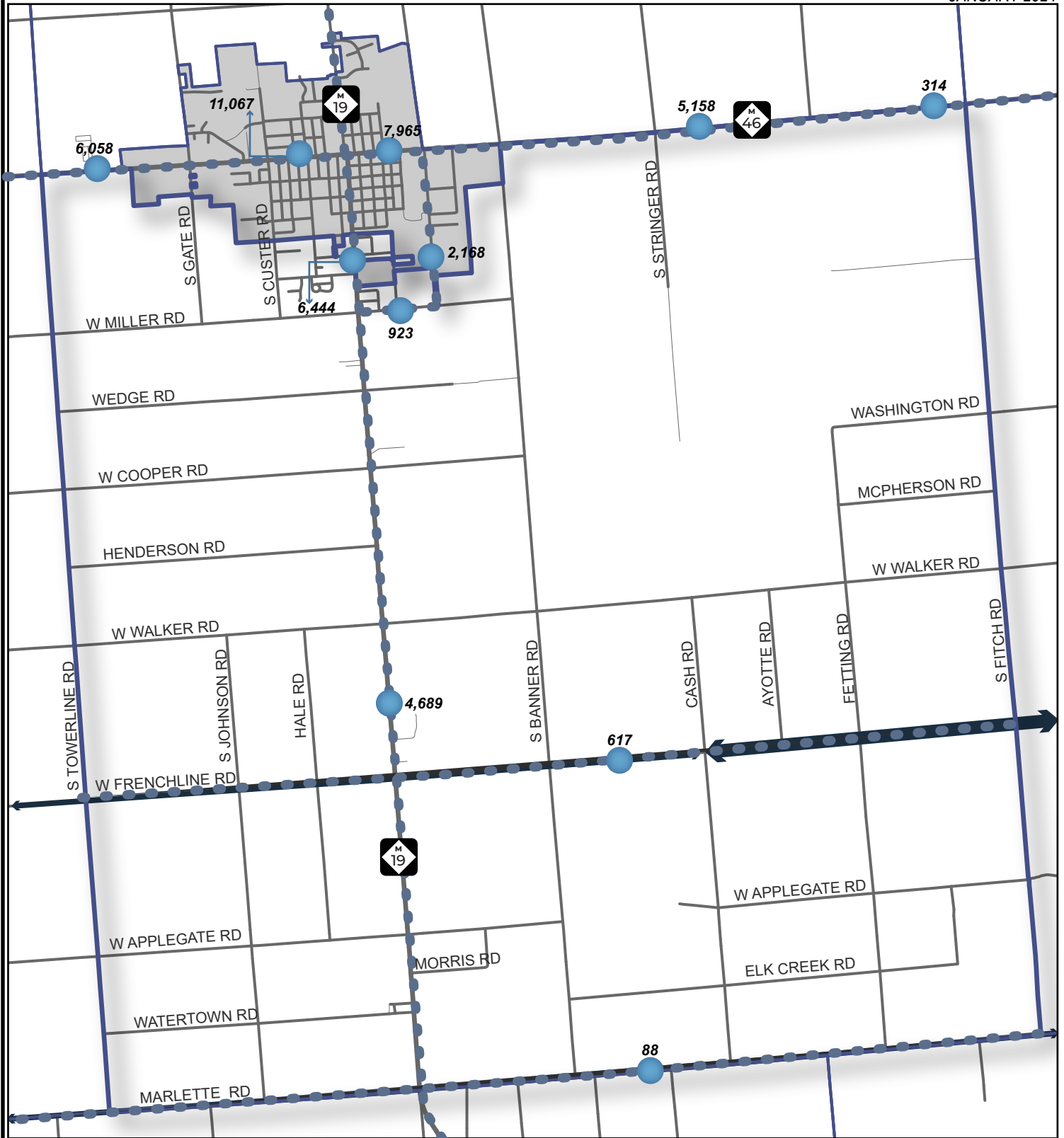
Transportation networks and moveability are key to the functionality of a person's everyday life. However, not all residents can move on their own. The Sanilac Transportation Services provides curb-to-curb shared ride services in Sanilac County. Their buses are 100% handicapped-accessible with wheelchair lifts for the mobility impaired.

Airfields

Flying is another form of transportation, either for pleasure (traveling) or as a hobby. Three miles north of the Township, off of M-19, is a private airfield, Sandusky City Airport Y83. The Y83 is open 24 hours a day, offering flight simulation and mechanical assistance. The airport is noted on Map 5. The closest regional airports to the Township are the Bishop International Airport in Flint and MBS International Airport in Freeland, each airport is approximately a little over an hour from the Township,

MAP 4 - TRANSPORTATION WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024



Legend

- STATE ROAD ↔ COUNTY ALL SEASON ROADS ● Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)
- COUNTY ROAD ← COUNTY PRIMARY ROAD [AADT is used to measure the total volume of vehicle traffic on a highway or road for a year]
- PRIVATE ROAD ●●● MDOT AADT

N Miles
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Spicer
group

Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation offer many benefits such as physical activity, health benefits, fresh air, wildlife sightings, and much more. There are no current recreational facilities located in the Township. However, in the winter of 2023, the Township Board adopted its first Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan will allow the Township to be eligible for Department of Natural Resources grants (DNR). The DNR grants are administered by the department to help make communities healthier, safer, and more vibrant. There are three different grant programs administered by the DNR, each of which has specific criteria for eligible projects.

The Township's recreation plan covers the parks and recreational facilities they would like to develop in the Township over the course of the next five years.

Community Facilities

Watertown Township is primarily rural in nature. Therefore, they have very few community facilities within the Township boundary and rely on adjacent communities and the region for their services. Listed below are a few of the public services and facilities offered to Township residents.

Police and Fire

- **Police** – Police and Fire protection are crucial in providing residents with a safe living environment. The Township is protected by the Sanilac County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police. Both the local Sheriff's Department and the State Police offices are located in Sandusky. The Township does not contribute to either the local or the state's funding, as this is a provided service.
- **Fire** – The Township annually contracts with the Sandusky Community Fire Department for fire protection services. The department is located in Sandusky and is composed of volunteer firefighters.
- **Ambulance service** – Ambulance services are provided by the McKenzie Health System. Costs are borne by the individual receiving the service. All emergency services utilize a 911 emergency communication system.
- **Healthcare** – A full range of healthcare services are provided nearby in Sandusky. This includes McKenzie Health System, which also provides physical therapy and rehabilitation services. A full range of physicians, assisted living, and nursing home care are also available in the community.
- **Township Hall** – The Township Hall is located on the west side of M-19 just north of the southern boundary. The Hall was originally located at Banner and Walker Roads before the Township purchased an existing church building in the mid-1980s. The Hall consists primarily of a meeting room, restrooms, and a basement. The Hall has since undergone renovations. The majority of the day-to-day government administrative

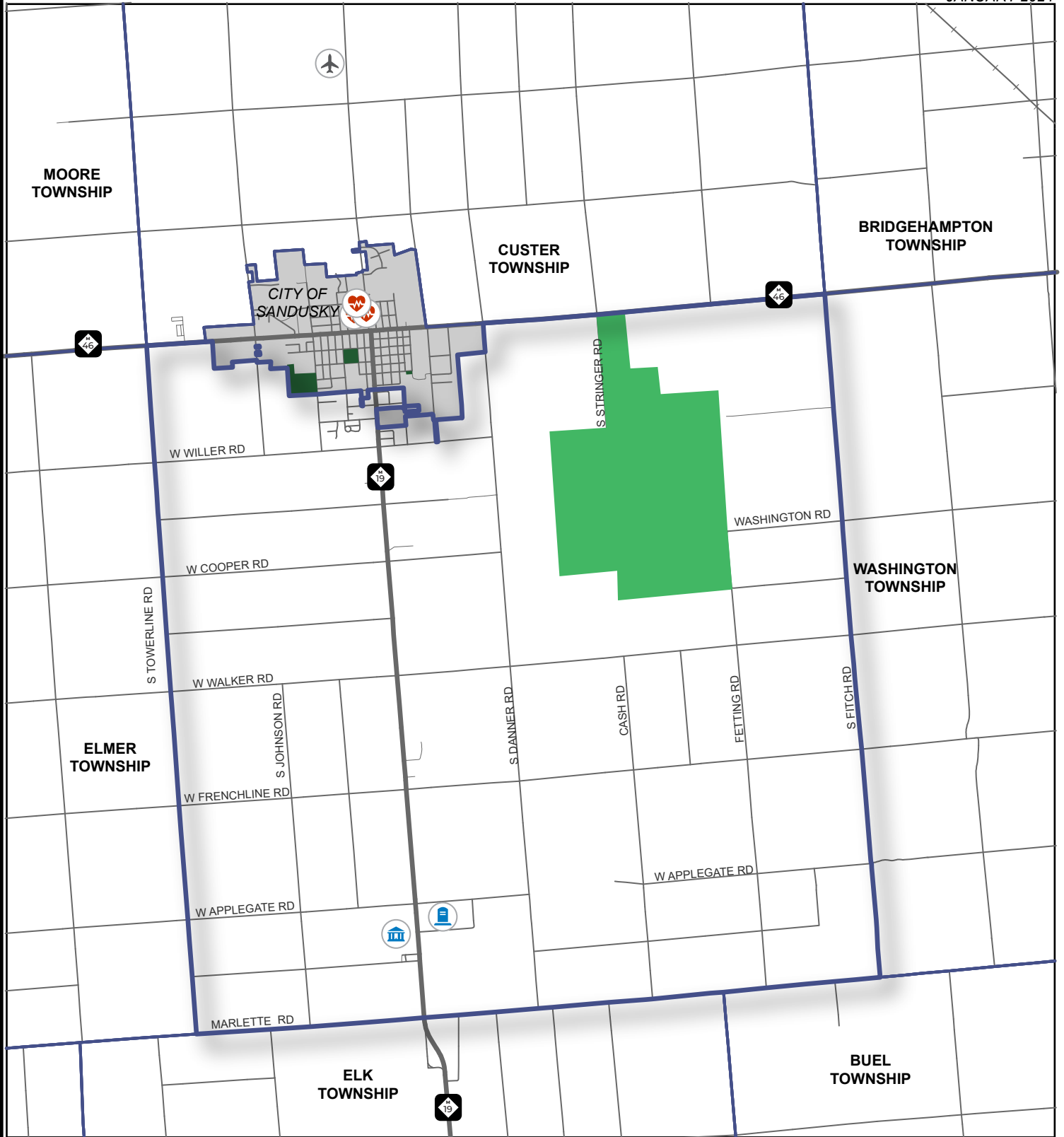
activities take place in the homes of the elected officials, although Township files are stored in the Hall. The Townships website (www.watertowntownship.net) is a reliable source and provides a wide range of information for Township residents.

- **Zion Cemetery** – The Zion Cemetery is owned by the Township and is located on M-19 across from the Township Hall.



MAP 5 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024



Legend

- CITY PARKS
- SANDUSKY STATE GAME AREA
- WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP HALL
- TOWNSHIP CEMETERY
- HEALTH CARE FACILITIES
- SANDUSKY CITY AIRPORT Y83

N

Miles

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Spicer
group

NATURAL FEATURES INVENTORY

Watertown Township is a rural area, approximately 80% of the land is used strictly for agricultural purposes.

The Township provides unique features such as wetlands, woodlands, and wide-open agricultural spaces. The combination of these natural resources provides highly desirable land characteristics for Township residents. Knowing a community's characteristics and natural features is important when new development plans occur in the Township. The natural environment can significantly impact development and conversely be significantly impacted by new development. Understanding the natural features and existing land uses establishes a better idea of how to protect certain areas from development. In some cases, land development can have a negative effect on the natural environment. For example, if a potential project proposes to fill in a wetland, the current water standing in that area, which usually filters through the natural process and recharges an underground aquifer, will suddenly be displaced. As a result, the water will be forced to spread to a new area which may cause flooding. Therefore, knowing the location of wetlands is an excellent way to prevent these situations.

As noted in Chapter 5, future land use can guide the Township in determining areas that will be preserved and areas that are appropriate for more intense development. An important part of the Future Land Use Map is to examine the natural environment and determine where future development should be encouraged and where natural resources should be protected.

Environmentally sensitive areas within a community should be carefully reviewed and considered when exploring new developments. Environmentally sensitive areas are where destruction or disturbance will affect the habitat of the natural ecosystem and the life of a community by either:

- Wasting productive lands and non-renewable resources, such as prime farmland,
- Destroying important public resources, such as groundwater supplies and surface water bodies, or
- Creating hazards, such as flooding or slope erosion.

Each of these effects is detrimental to the general welfare of a community. The Township contains a variety of natural resources, which provide residents with a clean water supply and a strong base for recreational opportunities. The purpose of this section is twofold: The first is to identify areas in the Township that are most suitable for development without adversely impacting the existing natural system, and the second identifies land that should be preserved in a natural state and is most suitable for open space or recreation purposes. Woodland and water resources are among the most important natural features impacting land in Watertown Township. An analysis of each natural system is on the following pages.

Wooded Land

Woodland's information for Watertown Township was derived from the Michigan Geographic Data Library (MiGDL). The dataset includes three categories of forested areas in the Township: Deciduous Forest, Evergreen Forest, and Mixed Forest which are primarily privately owned. Deciduous Forests are characterized by trees that shed foliage according to the season such as maples, ash, elms, oaks, and others. Evergreen Forests consist of conifers or evergreen trees. Mixed Forests include both deciduous species and evergreen species of forest.

Watertown Township's woodlands are spread throughout the whole Township but are primarily focused around the wetlands and water bodies. The majority of the woodlands in the Township are Deciduous Forests with other mixes of grasslands, Evergreen Forests, and Mixed Forests. This land is great for wildlife, is a good source of recreation opportunities, and creates a secluded and private residential space for many homeowners in the Township. Map 6 illustrates the wooded land in Watertown Township.

Wetlands and Waterways

According to the National Wetland Inventory, Watertown Township contains several small tracts of wetlands in addition to the large peat bog. Wetlands serve an important purpose in an ecosystem by providing wildlife habitat, erosion control, floodwater storage, groundwater recharger, and water purification. They are also used for recreational purposes such as hiking, bird watching, photography, and hunting. Wetlands that are five acres in size or larger and wetlands that are contiguous to a water body are protected in Michigan by the Goemaere-Anderson Wetland Protection Act.

The largest wetland pocket in the Township is the Sandusky State Game Area, which is located in the northeastern corner. There are many smaller pockets of wetlands spread throughout the Township. These are primarily along the water courses.

The Township's drainage system is extensive, the drainage in the Township is facilitated through a network of streams and creeks fed by many smaller drains. Each of the drains, Eggert, Beals and Frizzle, and Smalldon flow generally north-south. Drains in the western and central region of the Township carry runoff southward where it is subsequently picked up by the Elk Creek near the Township's southern border. These four principal drains, and the secondary drains that support them collect the vast majority of runoff in the Township. Elk Creek flows northeasterly through Washington Township where it empties into the Black River.

Runoff from the remainder of the Township, located largely in the northern and northeastern periphery of the Township, is collected by drains flowing northeasterly into Washington and Custer Townships where they subsequently empty into the Black River as well. The Black River flows in a southerly direction to Port Huron where it drains into Lake Huron.

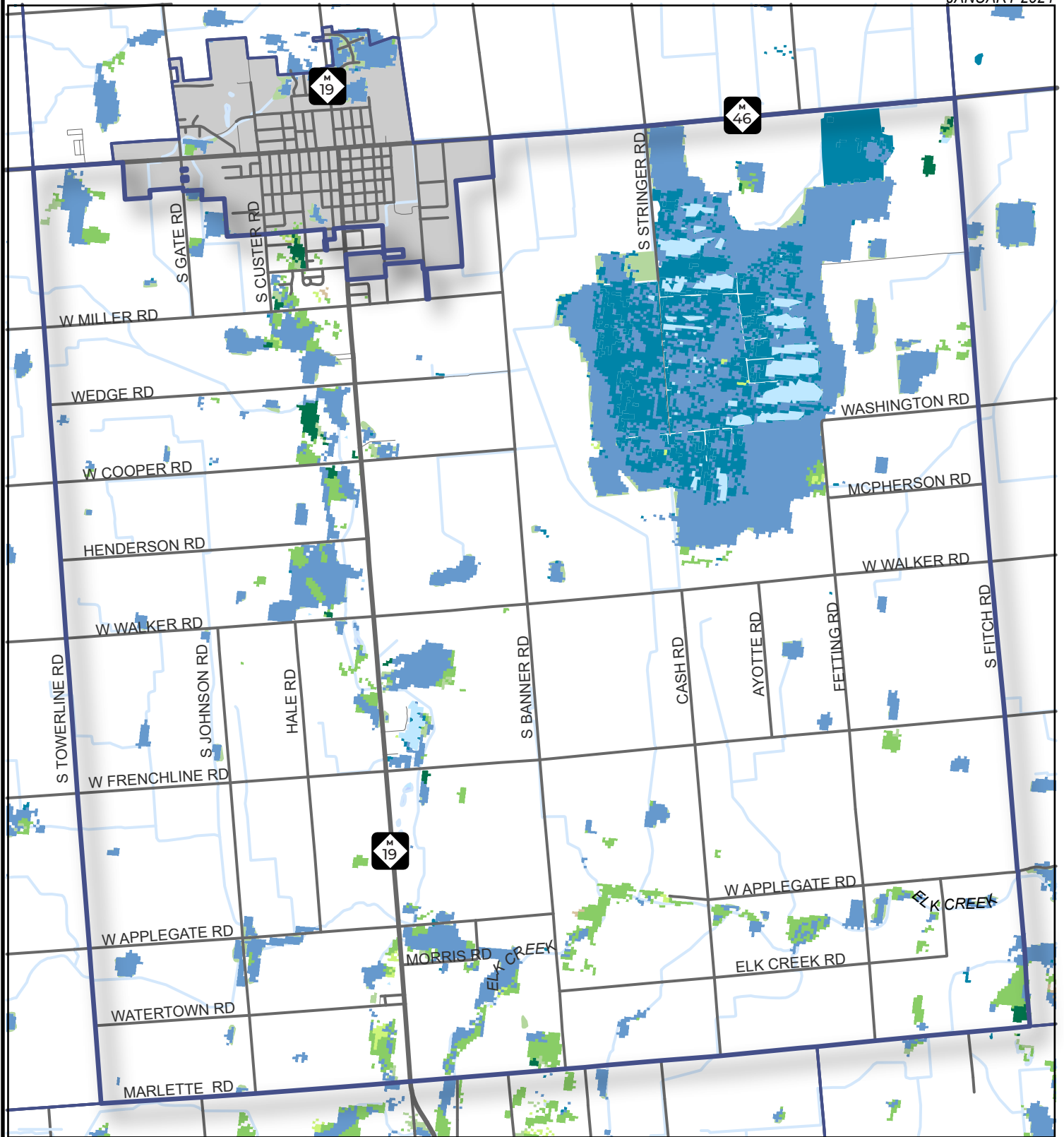
Lands abutting or in close proximity to drainage courses, including streams, ponds, and lakes, may be subject to flood conditions where the drainage courses do not have the capacity to accommodate the rate of runoff from a single rainfall or numerous rainfalls over a relatively short period. Historically, no flooding of any significance has occurred in Watertown Township. This is due in large part to the comparatively limited development within the Township and the existence of a Township-wide network of drainage courses and wetlands to carry and store runoff. It is important to preserve this network of wetlands and buffers surrounding the drainage course to prevent impactful flooding events in the future.

Wetlands and waterways can be viewed on Map 6












MAP 6 - NATURAL FEATURES WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

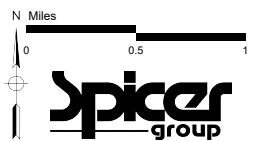
JANUARY 2024



Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
|  EMERGENT HERBACEOUS WETLANDS |  DECIDUOUS FOREST |  GRASSLANDS |
|  WOODY WETLANDS |  EVERGREEN FOREST |  SHRUB/SCRUB |
|  WATER BODIES |  MIXED FOREST |  HYDRO (CREEKS/DRAINS) |

N Miles
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Spicer
group

Topography

Watertown Township is very flat, varying in elevation less than 50 feet across the Township. The average elevation is approximately 760 feet above sea level. There are no steep slopes in the Township that would be a hindrance to development. The vast majority of the Township reflects grades of 1% or less. Those select areas with grades in excess of 1% are generally restricted to the banks of drainage courses. The Township generally falls in elevation as one travels in an easterly and southerly direction. The lowest elevation in the Township is approximately 740 feet and is found along the Elk Creek and Rickett Drain in Section 36. The highest elevation, approximately 794 feet, is located around the Townline and Miller Roads intersection in section six in the northwest corner of the Township. See Map 7.

Prime Farmland

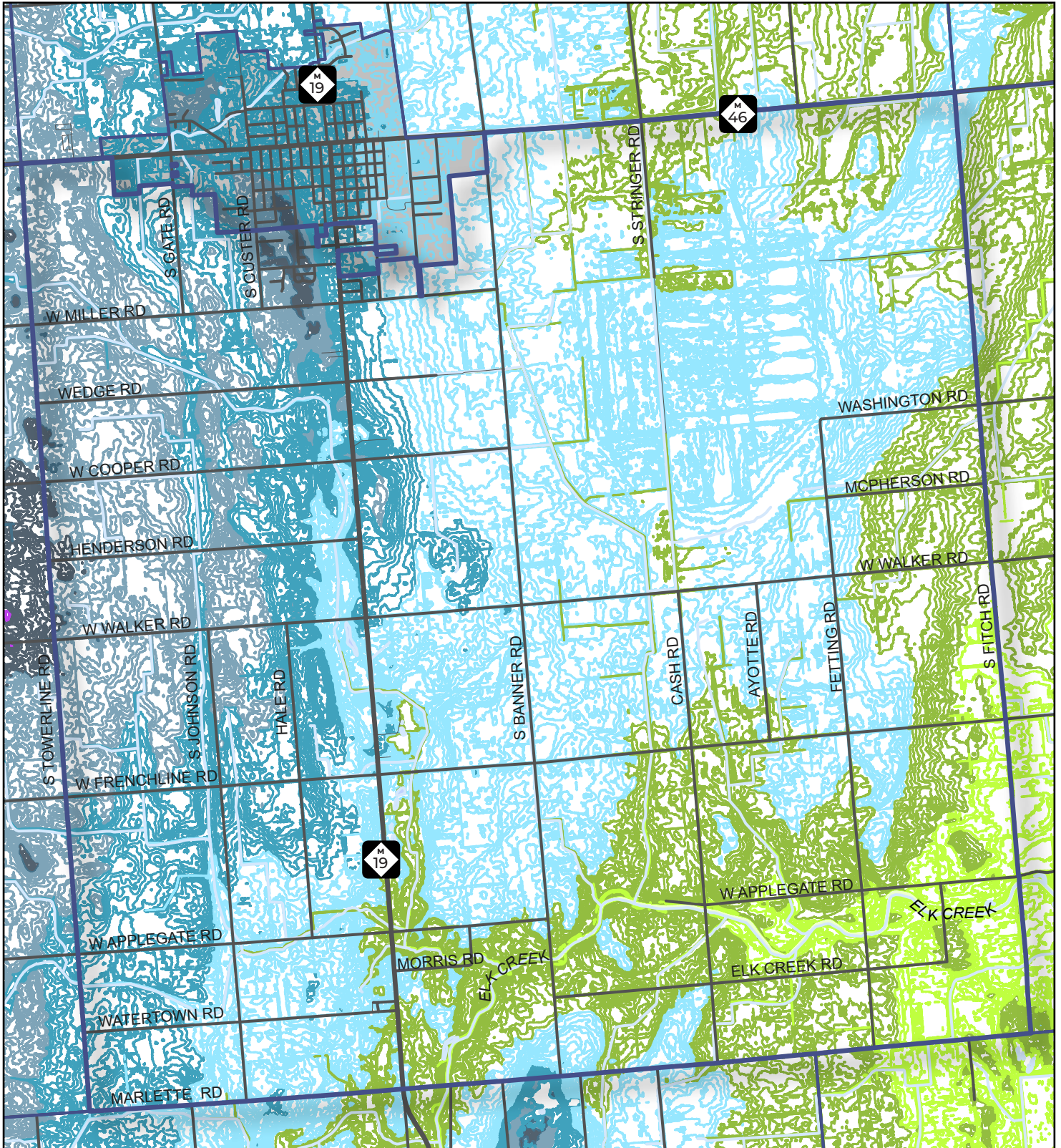
Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics and is available for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing ability, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.

The vast majority of the Township's soil is considered to be Prime Farmland if Drained. Prime Farmland, if Drained does not meet all the criteria to be categorized as Prime Farmland, however, if the land was cultivated using modern agricultural practices it could be. In addition to Prime Farmland, if Drained, are small pockets of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Local Importance. Prime Farmland as mentioned above is the best combination of soil, whereas Farmland of Local Importance meets the requirements of Prime Farmland and economically produces high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Farmland of Local Importance could also include areas that have been designated for agricultural practices by state law or local ordinance. Map 8 indicates where these small pockets are located throughout the Township.



MAP 7 - TOPOGRAPHY WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024



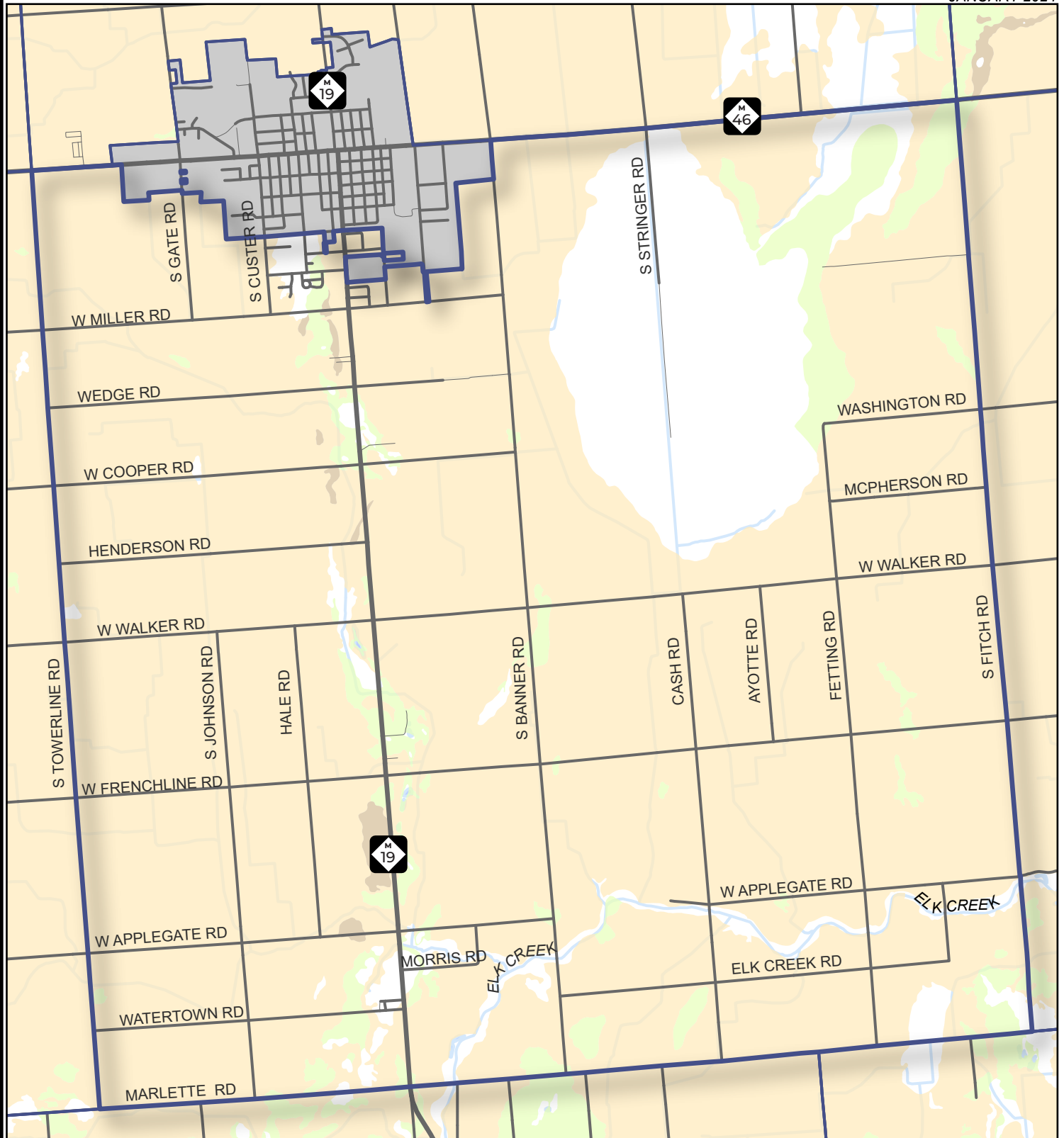
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	733' - 739'		760' - 769'		790' - 799'
	740' - 749'		770' - 779'		800'
	750' - 759'		780' - 789'		



MAP 8 - PRIME FARMLAND WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024

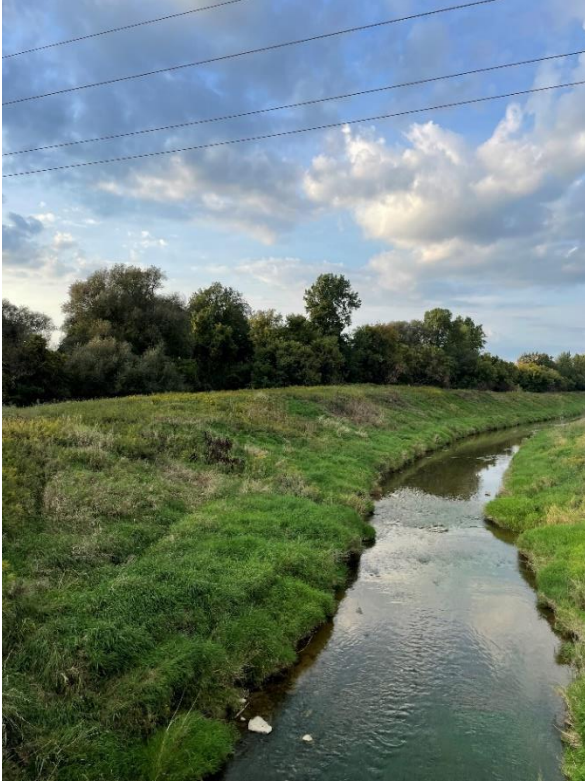


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- PRIME FARMLAND
- FARMLAND OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE
- PRIME FARMLAND IF DRAINED
- HYDRO (CREEKS/DRAINS)

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Spicer
group



Floodplain

Understanding an area's 100-year floodplain category is important to envision how it could affect local residents or developers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines floodplain areas based on hydrological surveys, topographical surveys, soil studies, and land cover characteristics. The result of this research categorizes flood zones into many different groups, two important ones to note are areas vulnerable to the “100-year flood” and the “500-year flood”. A 100-year-flood area is an elevation that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded each year meaning this area has a 1% annual chance of flooding. The 100-year flood, which is the standard used by most federal and state agencies, is also used by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as

the standard for floodplain management and determination of the need for flood insurance. The area that encompasses the 500-year flood is an area with a 0.2% (or 1 in 500 chance) annual chance of flooding. The 500-year floodplain is a zone used to designate base floodplains of lesser hazards, such as areas protected by levees from the 100-year flood, or shallow flooding areas.

The flooding of land adjoining the normal course of a stream or river is a natural occurrence. Flooding events are often swift and very damaging. Floods can damage or destroy public and private property, disable utilities, make roads and bridges impassable, destroy crops and agricultural lands, cause disruption to emergency services, and result in fatalities.

Development around natural water courses has increased the potential for serious flooding. Rainfall that would naturally soak into the ground or take several days to reach a river or stream, now quickly runs off streets, parking lots, rooftops, and through man-made channels or pipes. Development that encroaches on the floodplain impedes the carrying capacity of the water drainage basin and exacerbates flooding. If floodplain areas are left in their natural state, damage to persons or property could be more easily avoided.

The entire Township is located in “Area of Minimum flood hazard”, this means that the entire Township is above the 500-year flood level. This could mean that the Township is a Zone C, Zone C areas either have a ponding or local drainage problem that does not require a detailed study or is Zone X, Zone X areas are protected by a level from a 100-year flood.

EXISTING LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

This section is a review of the existing land uses in Watertown Township. Existing land use is a study of how a particular property is being used, regardless of how it is zoned. It is important to understand the distinction between existing land use and zoning.

In Watertown Township, there are six zoning districts. Each district allows different uses by right or by Special Use Permit. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, zoning regulations are law, and they define minimum development standards in each district. By comparison, an existing land use map, Map 9, aims to be more specific than a zoning map. An existing land use map illustrates the land use of each parcel at a certain period in time and lets residents, Township Officials, and other stakeholders see patterns in growth and development. There are many more land use categories than there are zoning districts because there are many different types of homes, businesses, and industries. The purpose of the existing land use map is to clarify the types of uses currently in Watertown Township, irrespective of zoning.

It should be noted that future land use categories on the Future Land Use Map are slightly different from the existing land use categories. This difference is attributed to the fact that the future land use categories are based around zoning classification, however, they are categorized in a way that will help aid the implementation of this Plan.

The Watertown Township's existing land use map was developed using data from the 2022 National Land Cover Database (NLCD). The Existing Land Use Map is located at the end of this chapter.

One of the most important outcomes of a community's Master Plan is the creation of future land use. Before the Future Land Use chapter can be created, the existing conditions and relationships between current land uses must be examined and understood. This knowledge aids in the decision-making process concerning future residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and public land use activities. A breakdown of existing land uses in Watertown Township, is located on the following pages. Table 16 breaks down the existing land use categories and displays a comparison between each category by its acreage and percentage.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

TABLE 16 – EXISTING LAND USE

Existing Land Use	Acreage	Percentage
Agriculture	17,791.86	79.42%
Wetlands	2,548.69	11.38%
Developed Open Space	786.75	3.51%
Developed Low Intensity	567.18	2.53%
Wooded	440.44	1.96%
Open Water	174.47	0.78%
Developed Medium Intensity	58.59	0.26%
Grasslands	19.50	0.09%
Developed High Intensity	15.79	0.07%
TOTAL	22,403.246	100%

Agriculture

Agriculture is the most prominent landscape feature in the Township. The NLCD categories agriculture land into two categories Pasture/Hay and Cultivated Crops, this land includes parcels utilized for the production of crops, raising livestock, land that is activity tilled, and other related activities and accessory buildings such as barns. Agricultural land in the Township uses 17,791.89 acres or 79.42% of the land. Agricultural land can be found all across the Township. These properties are essential to the Township's landscape and character and should be protected and utilized for continuous agricultural production.

Wetlands

Within the Township the wetlands are made up of two categories, Woody Wetlands and Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands, which are periodically saturated or covered with water. This category accounts for 2,548.69 acres or 11.38% of the land in the Township. A large portion of the wetlands are concentrated in the northeast corner of the Township, where the Sandusky State Game Area is located. There are many other small pockets of wetlands throughout the Township, many along the Township's watercourses.

Developed Open Space

NLCD categories Developed Open Space as large single-family homes, parks, golf courses, or planted vegetation used for recreational, erosion control, or aesthetic purposes. In regard to the Township, the land is primarily large single-family homes or green spaces used for erosion control/aesthetic purposes. Developed Open Space land in the Township accounts for 789.75 acres or 3.51% of the land and can be found throughout.

Developed Low Intensity

Developed Low Intensity is similar to Developed Open Space; however, it is most commonly known for single-family housing units. Developed Low Intensity land accounts for 567.18 acres or 2.53% of the land in the Township. This land is spread throughout the Township and is located off primary roads with a more concentrated area near the City of Sandusky.

Wooded

Wooded areas in the Township are forests or mostly covered with trees. This category includes Deciduous Forest, Evergreen Forest, Mixed Forest, and shrubland. The land in the category accounts for 440 acres or 1.96% of the land in the Township and as mentioned previously in this chapter, these areas are spread throughout the Township in small pockets. These parcels provide access to natural features for Township residents and provide additional pockets for wildlife habitat.

Open Water

Open Water is one of the smaller landscape features in the Township. This land includes areas that generally have less than 25% of vegetation or soil. Within the Township 174.47 acres or 0.78% of the land is categorized as Open Water. This land is primarily located within the Sandusky State Game Area and off M-19 where a detention pond is located.

Developed Medium Intensity

Developed Medium Intensity is most commonly known to include single-family housing units. The land in this category accounts for 58 acres or 0.26% of the land in the Township. Medium Intensity residential land is spread throughout the Township in the same areas as Low



Intensity, however, a more concentrated area is located in the northern portion of the Township along M-19 heading into the City and in the northwestern corner of the Township off M-46.

Grasslands

Grasslands are areas dominated by graminoid or herbaceous vegetation. Typically, these areas include low maintenance and can be used for grazing. Within the Township this category makes up 19 acres or 0.09% of the land in the Township. The Grasslands are located in three small pockets throughout the Township, typically mixed with the Wetlands or Wooded land.



Developed High Intensity

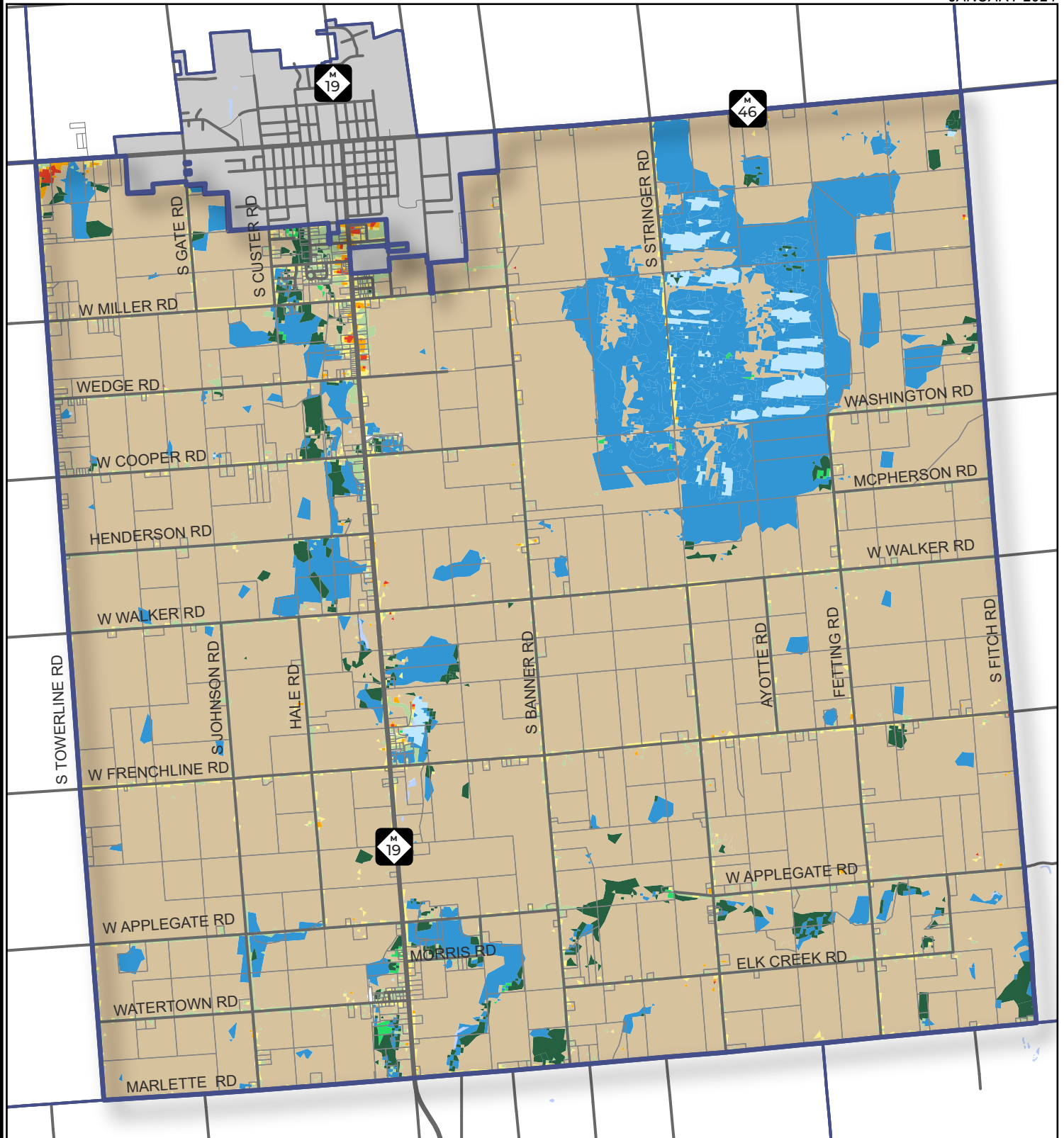
The last developed category is Developed High Intensity, this is the smallest land use in the Township. This category is areas where people reside or work in high numbers. For example, apartment complexes, row houses, or commercial/industrial areas. Within the Township 15.79 acres or 0.07% of the land is Developed High Intensity. This land includes residential properties with agricultural operations or commercial/industrial properties and is located in the northern portion of the Township along M-19 and M-46. These properties are located near arterial roads and allow for ease of automobile access. The commercial land in the Township is occupied by retail sales or service establishments.

Utility










Utility is not a national land cover data category; however, it is important to note. The Utility category accounts for the transmission line in the Township. The transmission lines run through the eastern portion of the Township from north to south and are primarily placed on agricultural land. The utility line and substation can be found on Map 1.

MAP 9 - EXISTING LAND USE WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

JANUARY 2024



Legend

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  AGRICULTURE |  DEVELOPED LOW INTENSITY |  DEVELOPED MEDIUM INTENSITY |
|  WETLANDS |  WOODED |  GRASSLANDS |
|  DEVELOPED OPEN SPACE |  OPEN WATER |  DEVELOPED HIGH INTENSITY |



CH 8

SUMMARY

IN THIS CHAPTER

The Future of Watertown

THE FUTURE OF WATERTOWN

The master plan process can be very long and tedious for smaller communities that are not used to meeting monthly, reviewing site plans, and planning for the future. There are many elements that make a successful master plan, one of those elements is having an involved Planning Commission. The Planning Commission's involvement throughout the master planning process has helped craft a vision for the future of Watertown Township community. The master plan highlights the important aspects of the Township and addresses how the Township can plan for its desired future.

Now that the Township has adopted its 2024 Master Plan it is time to plan how as a Township, you will accomplish the goals you have set to achieve over the next 5 to 20 years. Determining where to start can be one of the biggest challenges. A good place to start is to look at your implementation plan. The implementation plan lays out a timeline for each task of when the Township would like to achieve each task. There is no rush, slowly work your way through the plan. As a Commission you have laid out a number of items to address, do not be intimidated by the number of items, they are there to be a guide, not a rule.

As you work your way through the implementation plan, also start to think about your zoning ordinance. Using the Zoning Plan as a tool, begin to identify the areas or sections of the zoning ordinance that may need to be amended, this list may continue to change as situations arise over time.

Lastly, remember your vision, remember why you set it, and the importance behind it. Your vision is the future for the Township, it should always be your guiding principle when making land use and development decisions.

The previous pages have provided a well-rounded picture of the Township through an analysis of demographic data, natural features, and community infrastructure. Understanding the foundation of your Township helps determine where the Township has been and where it's going. The Planning Commission should continuously reference, review, and update this Master Plan. Good practice and State law require Townships to review their plan every five years and update it, if necessary. At the end of each year, the Township should consider reviewing the Master Plan internally, establish goals and tasks they might want to consider completing in the next year, and analyze the Township as a whole to see how it may have changed over the course of the year.

CH 9

APPENDIX



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Appendix A - Community Input Results
- Appendix B - Implementation Tools
- Appendix C - Adoption Documentation

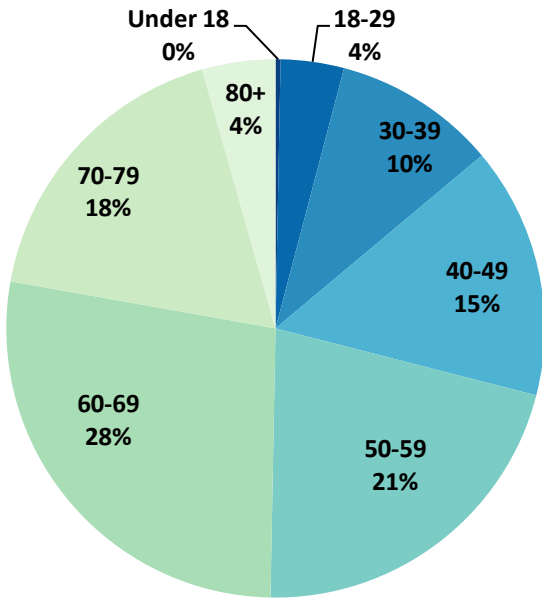
Appendix A

COMMUNITY INPUT RESULTS

WATERTOWN TOWNSHIP 2023 SURVEY RESULTS

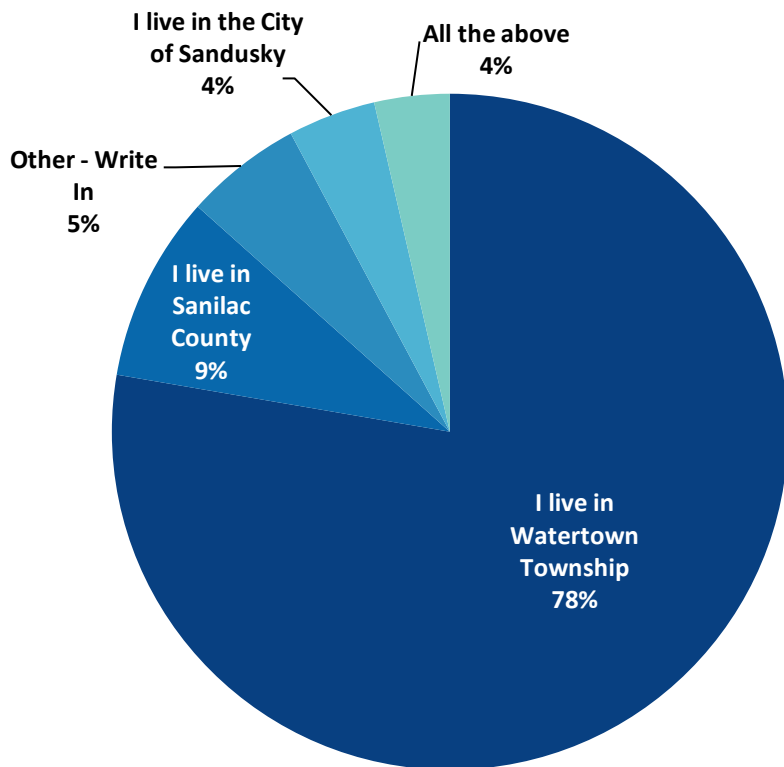
Complete 350, Partial 2 | 202 paper copies mailed in

1. What is your age range?



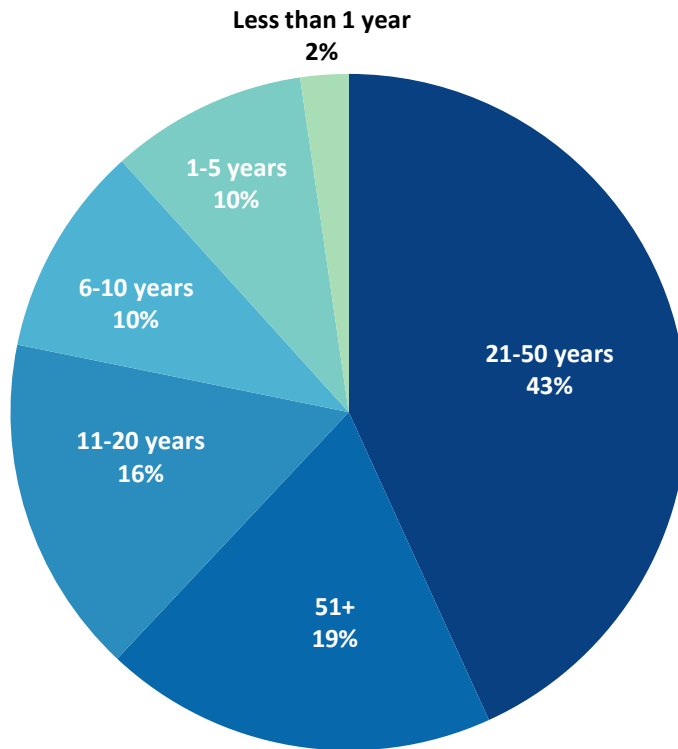
Value	Percent	Count
Under 18	0.3%	1
18-29	3.8%	13
30-39	9.8%	33
40-49	15.1%	51
50-59	21.3%	72
60-69	27.5%	93
70-79	17.8%	60
80+	4.4%	15
Totals		338

2. What is your relationship to Watertown Township?

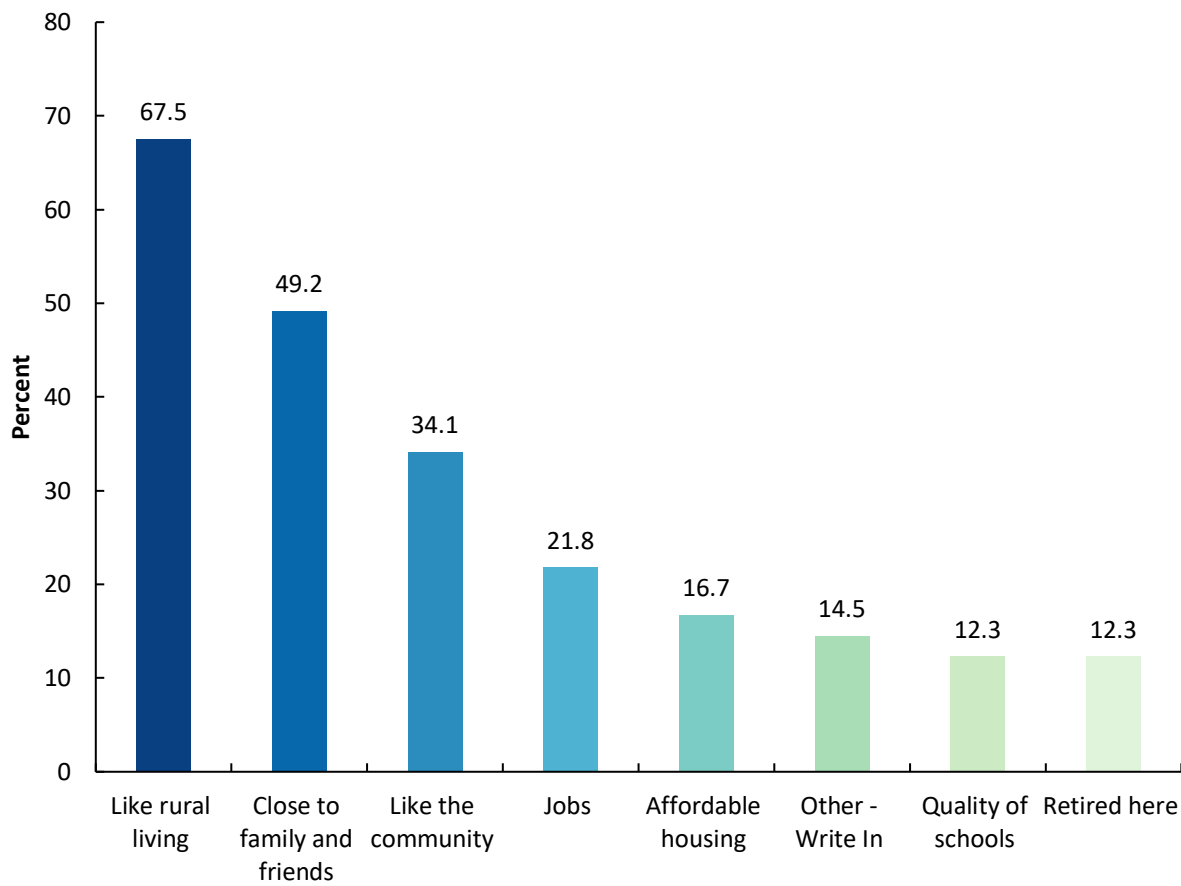


- Other write in -**
- Property Owner
 - I attend a church in Watertown Twp
 - I farm ground in Watertown township.
 - I own land in the township.
 - I own land in the County
 - Own vacant land

3. How long have you lived in Watertown Township?



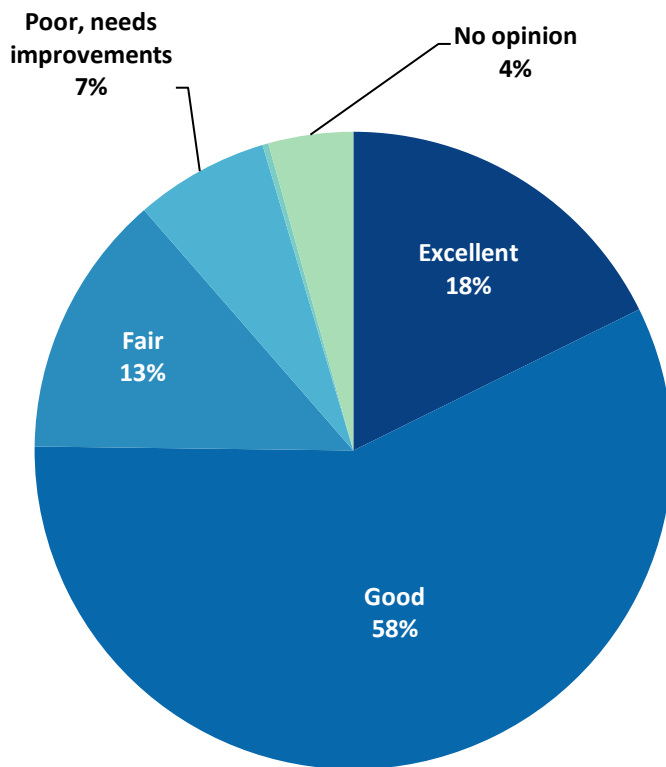
4. Why do you live in Watertown Township? Please check all that apply.



Other write in -

- Born Here / lived here my whole life (11)
- Farm (8)
- Business (2)
- Own a home (7)
- Do not live in township
- My family has owned my land for over 100 years
- The land has been in my family for over 100 years.
- We bought a house when we got married thinking my wife would find work in Sandusky while I worked in Lexington.
- all over lives
- don't know any better
- landowner
- not enough money to leave
- trying to put a trailer for me and daughter

5.How would you rate the quality of life in the Township?

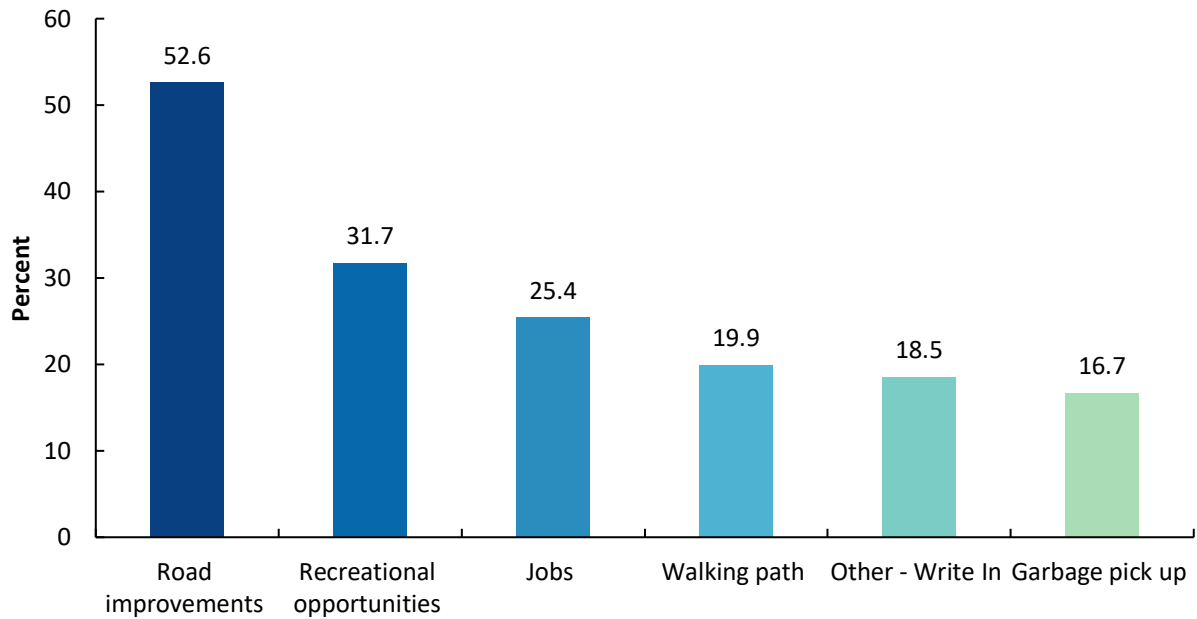


Value	Percent	Count
Excellent	17.7%	57
Good	57.5%	185
Fair	13.4%	43
Poor, needs improvements	6.8%	22
Very poor, needs lot of improvements	0.3%	1
No opinion	4.3%	14
<i>Totals</i>		322

6.If you selected poor or very poor on the previous question please explain why.

- For the people that own farmland they should be able to do with it they want,they paid for it and they pay the taxes on it,it's there's not someone who owns 1 or 2 acres,they should not be able to tell you what you can and cannot do with it.
- Wind farms will destroy property values and country living
- Do not like the greed involved in the solar energy decisions. They absolutely should not be allowed near any residential homes or on main roads. They are an eyesore and will lower property values. That is not fair to the homeowners.
- roads, when I take out the garbage or get the mail, I have to put on muck boots. Put some stone on the roads.
- government officials are completely unresponsive to the taxpayers (will not return calls) vindictive attitude of several board members
- lack of opportunity
- poorly kept roads, no consideration for people that are not a part of farming. Farmers lack of consideration, blocking roads, destroying of roads. area blight is increasing
- if solar farms is built across from my house
- roads are bad
- there really isnt much to do or see here in watertown
- Home and property owners are stuck with paying what ever the board thinks would better our lives. Renters don't pay nothing and make all the mess
- need decent restants for family dinners (no fries, baked potato mashed) decient grocery Foodland (did not lik taking tress down it cemainty in watertown
- average household income is below the median household income
- person in charge of assessing the property taxes keeps raising the taxes w/out even looking first. Does not live even in /sanilac County
- people don't take care of their property
- no jobs, no opportunity
- planning co. is biased on alternative energy needs, gravel roads poorly maintained
- too many dead deers
- Difficult for businesses to make money

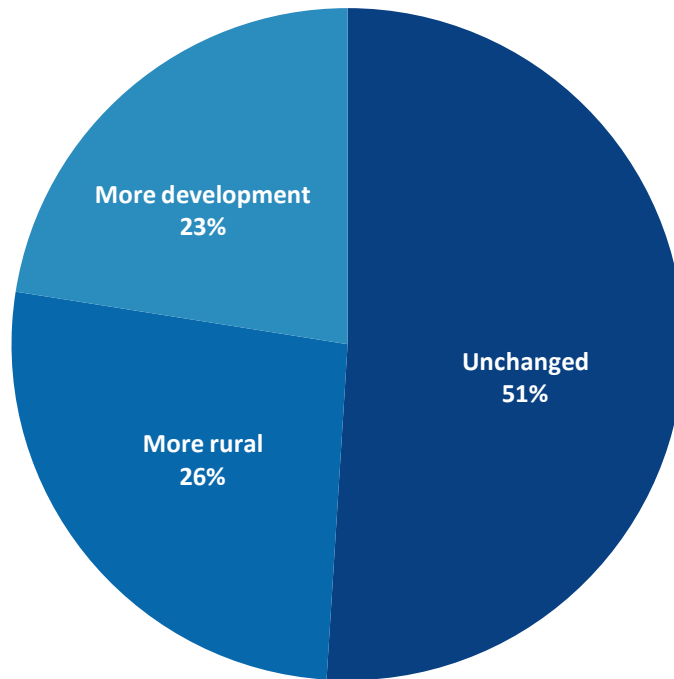
7. What are our Township's greatest needs? Please check all that apply.



Other write in -

- Solar Farm for (2) / against (2)
- Preserve rural land (6)
- Bike Trail (2)
- WiFi availability (2)
- More Housing Options- all types (4)
- Better government / change in (3)
- Grocery store (4)
- Businesses (2)
 - another department store, large chain restaurant, olive garden, etc.
 - weed / pot shops (2)
- Clean up / improvements (7)
 - Blight
 - Trash pick up
 - New roads
- Better education opportunities/reasons for educated young people to stay or return
- Discgolf course
- Ditch drainage
- Gleason Street and Dell Street always ruddy dirt roads. Asphalt would be nice.
- Great rural space to live. Keep it rural. We do not need garbage pickup. Taxes are high enough. Town is close. They have a park and walking trail.
- Learn how to recycle everything.
- Rail-bed walking path
- dog park
- mental health facility
- public for kids
- school security
- thin some deer out of the township
- township hall that has area for small showers or family gatherings

8.How do you envision the character of the Township in the future?



Value	Percent	Count
Unchanged	51.0%	156
More rural	26.5%	81
More development	22.5%	69
Totals		306

9. In the following categories, how do you feel Watertown Township has changed in the past five years?

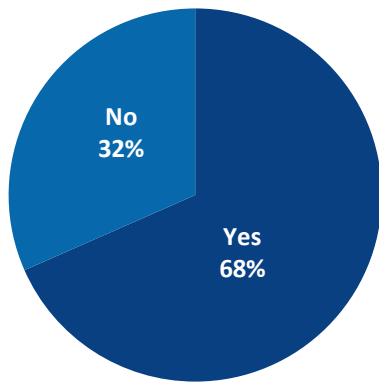
	Much Better	Better	Same	Worse	Much Worse	No Opinion	Responses
Road conditions							
Count	21	92	166	29	6	14	328
Row %	6.4%	28.0%	50.6%	8.8%	1.8%	4.3%	
Traffic							
Count	2	20	208	70	9	15	324
Row %	0.6%	6.2%	64.2%	21.6%	2.8%	4.6%	
Natural environment							
Count	4	21	224	42	15	17	323
Row %	1.2%	6.5%	69.3%	13.0%	4.6%	5.3%	
Overall quality of life							
Count	3	46	228	28	4	17	326
Row %	0.9%	14.1%	69.9%	8.6%	1.2%	5.2%	
Parks and recreation							
Count	3	36	204	14	3	54	314
Row %	1.0%	11.5%	65.0%	4.5%	1.0%	17.2%	
Schools							
Count		26	169	56	33	34	318
Row %	0	8.2%	53.1%	17.6%	10.4%	10.7%	
Fire protection							
Count	8	56	226	7	3	20	320
Row %	2.5%	17.5%	70.6%	2.2%	0.9%	6.3%	
EMS							
Count	10	57	226	9	2	18	322
Row %	3.1%	17.7%	70.2%	2.8%	0.6%	5.6%	
Police protection							
Count	10	55	208	19	6	16	314
Row %	3.2%	9.0%	66.2%	6.1%	1.9%	5.1%	
Zoning and enforcement regulations							
Count	6	29	168	61	17	40	321
Row %	1.9%	9.0%	52.3%	19.0%	5.3%	12.5%	

10.If you selected worse or much worse on the previous question please explain why.

- Not previously known to the area, can't compare
- Schools have gone woke & political! Educate. Blight unenforced.
- Watertown is not progressive and seems satisfied continuing living in the 1960's
- To much of!
- Taxes too high on Nolan's Dome and the bonehead bus driver ramming a vehicle
- Critical race theory being taught along with the nepotism
- Please protect us from poisonous industrial solar complex
- See a lot of blight conditions within twp. Doesn't appear there is any monitoring or enforcement. Is there any ordinances to maintain property?
- You should' have cut down all the trees at Watertown Cemetery
- The school need attention – need to stop accommodating the minority. Need to get the bible back into the schools
- Blight
- More vehicles on the road. More careless drivers
- To much government control
- Schools to involved in politics
- Traffic increasing everywhere – need paving of W Miller to S Gates for Truck bypass. Sandusky schools losing ground
- Building being built where they shouldn't be built
- The school is now woke, I am happy my kids are graduated and out of them
- Hold teachers accountable, no more unions. Zoning and enforcement is based on Board Members personal benefit
- Roads need some repair. Zoning blight areas
- I think things were a lot better in the 70's then they are now. Teachers worked with students one on one. You have to go home to get help with your homework from parents now a days
- Increasing taxes, increasing traffic. Petty crime. Grow houses
- Some things are not enforced
- Zoning admin refuses to enforce ordinances even though he is paid to do so. Afraid of paybacks
- More people = More traffic
- 20 years ago roads were A+, today they are mud 3rd world
- Disappointed to see removal of all trees in the cemetery. I thought they gave the area a more rural & environmentally healthy appeal.
- More traffic, too many regulations
- Roads – more traffic has had an affect on local road. Traffic – since COVID people have moved to rural areas affecting several ways of life that we're losing in the thumb area. Environment – to many fence rows/woods ripped off then farms complain about vision issues, also puts stress on drainage ways. Zoning – seems like people are getting away with more since COVID. Probably because others are afraid of repercussions from neighbors or others in this new post COVID world
- Road conditions need no explanation
- More traffic – more stops signs running on side roads. More trees being destroyed to increase acreage – schools that are too liberal & not enough focus on studies. Bullying is allowed even when reported. Lack of respect.
- Traffic just uses the road as an expressway going 70 all hours
- Big AG is a traffic issue. Natural environment is being stripped away. Zoning is run by a group with their hands in each others pockets
- Schools have gone to hell. Don't know why roads and environment have gotten worse. Management I suppose
- Traffic is heavier (trucks)

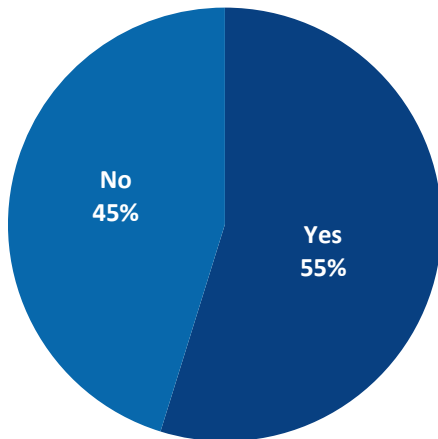
- We have nothing to offer here, no parks, no pool, no fishing, no sidewalks, no bike path or walk path
- Traffic has increased greatly. Schools are not teaching basic education and they are incorporating a woke agenda which is unacceptable
- Not allowing the sale of marijuana is single handley crippling the twp
- Sandusky school mascot – change school board problems
- Need to do better on blight
- Road is always full of potholes. Sometimes impossible to drive on with a car
- Certain times of the day are really hard to pull out onto the highway
- Enforcement of zoning & regulations are not there unless you are making improvements to your property, the dumpy places get left alone
- Becoming more liberal
- Natural environmental continue to decline with loss of woodlots, fence rows, big farm equipment using roads like farm lanes
- No progress by planning commission
- Cut down too many trees, now all the deers are getting hit
- Zoning administrators don't seem to enforce blight ordinance
- Gravel roads need serious updates, school administration
- We do not like the amount of farm houses with buildings that have been sold to promote pot growing operations & the lack of upkeep of those homes & property
- Traffic is worse everywhere.
- We teach kids stuff – not to think (basics before technology)
- To much land clearing
- There should more enforcement on people to maintain their property
- The roads are rough and bumpy. Schools are less intrusive on needs on how to live
- Why is some one that doesn't live here growing pot in the house down the road? Young people can't take root here if all the affordable housing is bought up by pot growers.
- If your ambulance people have to call for extra help they shouldn't be on the ambulance. Police if I call twice with a complaint I expect someone to come out and check it out.
- School board, bad teachers to woke
- There's more traffic and no speed limits enforced. Farmers have removed fence rows and woods
- The teacher & leaders have went downhill and quality of education
- Bad admin & leader, school board
- Township makes decisions on issues without resident voting. For example, cutting down trees in cemetery.
- Who authorized the cutting of the trees in the cemetery????? Great job keeping the “natural environment”
- Parents have no say in what children are taught.
- Schools are becoming to woke. Didn't like Sandusky superintendent. Glad he is gone
- Our road is terrible most of the time, dust to poor gravel quality and lack of traffic is worse because of Walmart. The wooded areas of years past are gone. Self explanatory on schools, police are stretched to thin, zoning enforcement is up to the county group
- My side road gets worse. The water from rain just exists on the side of the Rd. No where for it to drain. And the bumps are horrible
- Way too many properties that are falling down and or trashed like E Miller Rd
- The only thing worse for zoning enforcement is I didn't appreciate grow houses in my area with out us getting notified of that business. I had to notify neighbors about my business and put it in the new paper to allow them the chance to deny me.
- Zoning regulations seem to be political tools rather than best interest

11. Do you currently pay for garbage removal services?



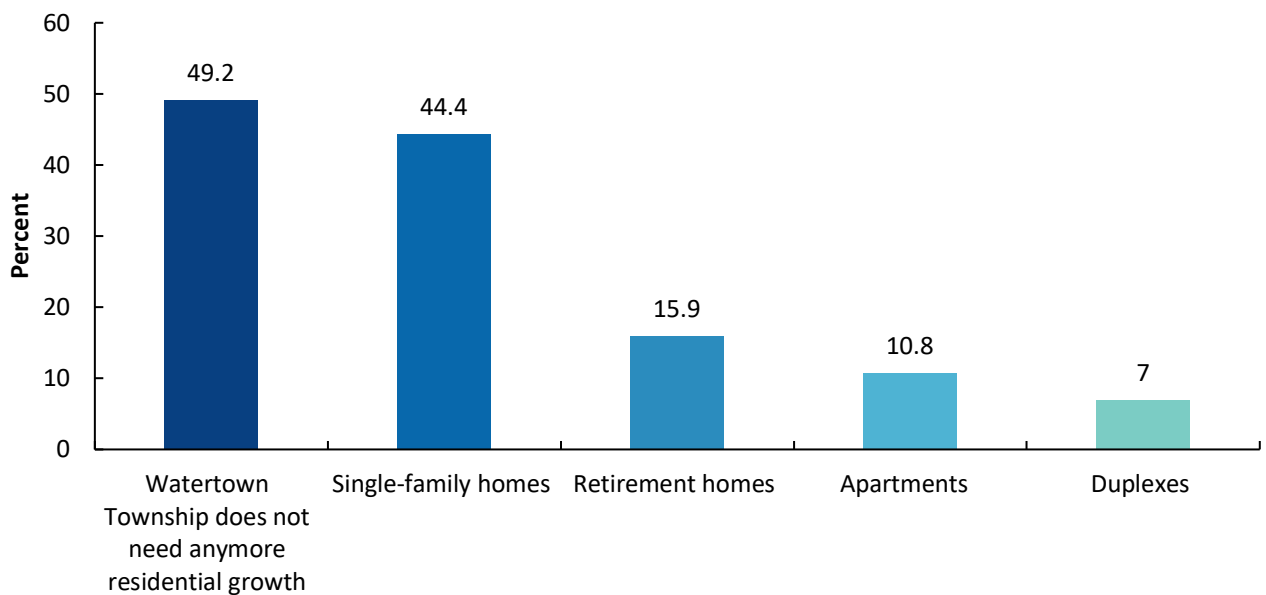
Value	Percent	Count
Yes	68.4%	225
No	31.6%	104
Totals		329

12. Would you support a Township provided trash service?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	54.8%	172
No	45.2%	142
Totals		314

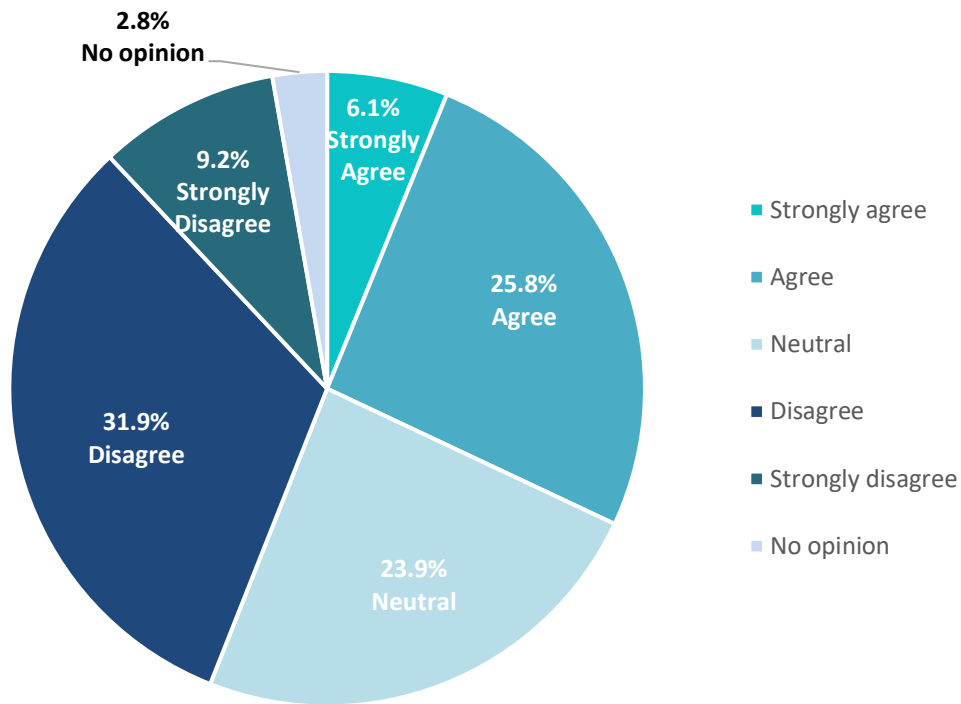
13. Which housing choices would you like to see more of in the Township? Please check all that apply.



14. What is your opinion regarding the following agricultural land use statements?

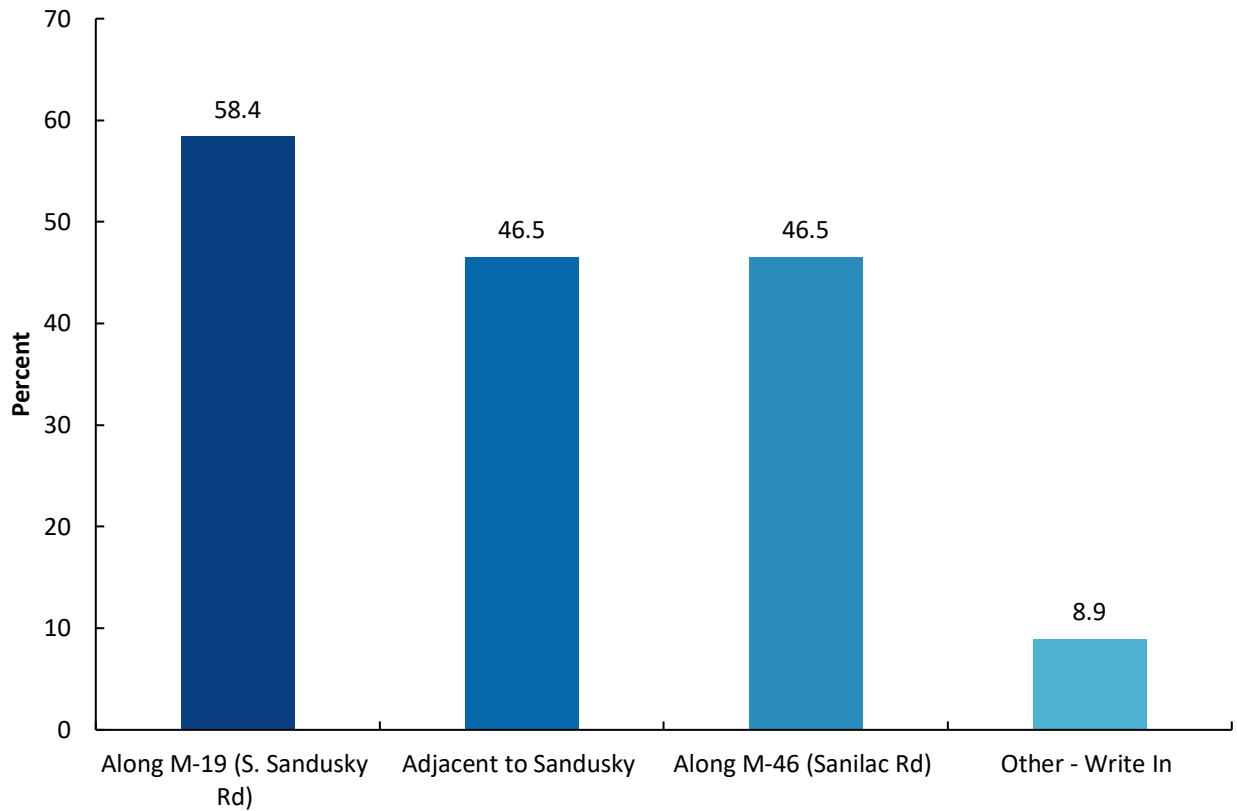
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion	Responses
Agriculture is an important aspect of the Watertown Township economy Count Row %	211 64.1%	82 24.9%	22 6.7%	5 1.5%	1 0.3%	8 2.4%	329
Agriculture is an important aspect of the Watertown Township landscape Count Row %	193 59.0%	84 25.7%	31 9.5%	11 3.4%	2 0.6%	6 1.8%	327
Agriculture land should be preserved Count Row %	200 60.8%	58 17.6%	42 12.8%	18 5.5%	4 1.2%	7 2.1%	329
Using agriculture land for new development is appropriate for accommodating growth and development Count Row %	21 6.4%	61 18.7%	75 23.0%	62 19.0%	101 31.0%	6 1.8%	326
Agriculture land should not be used for large scale solar Count Row %	181 54.5%	41 12.3%	40 12.0%	19 5.7%	44 13.3%	7 2.1%	332
Agriculture land should not be used for wind turbines Count Row %	163 49.5%	48 14.6%	57 17.3%	15 4.6%	39 11.9%	7 2.1%	329

15. Watertown Township should promote more commercial development in the coming years.



Value	Percent	Count
Strongly agree	6.1%	20
Agree	25.8%	84
Neutral	23.9%	78
Disagree	31.9%	104
Strongly disagree	9.2%	30
No opinion	2.8%	9
Totals		326

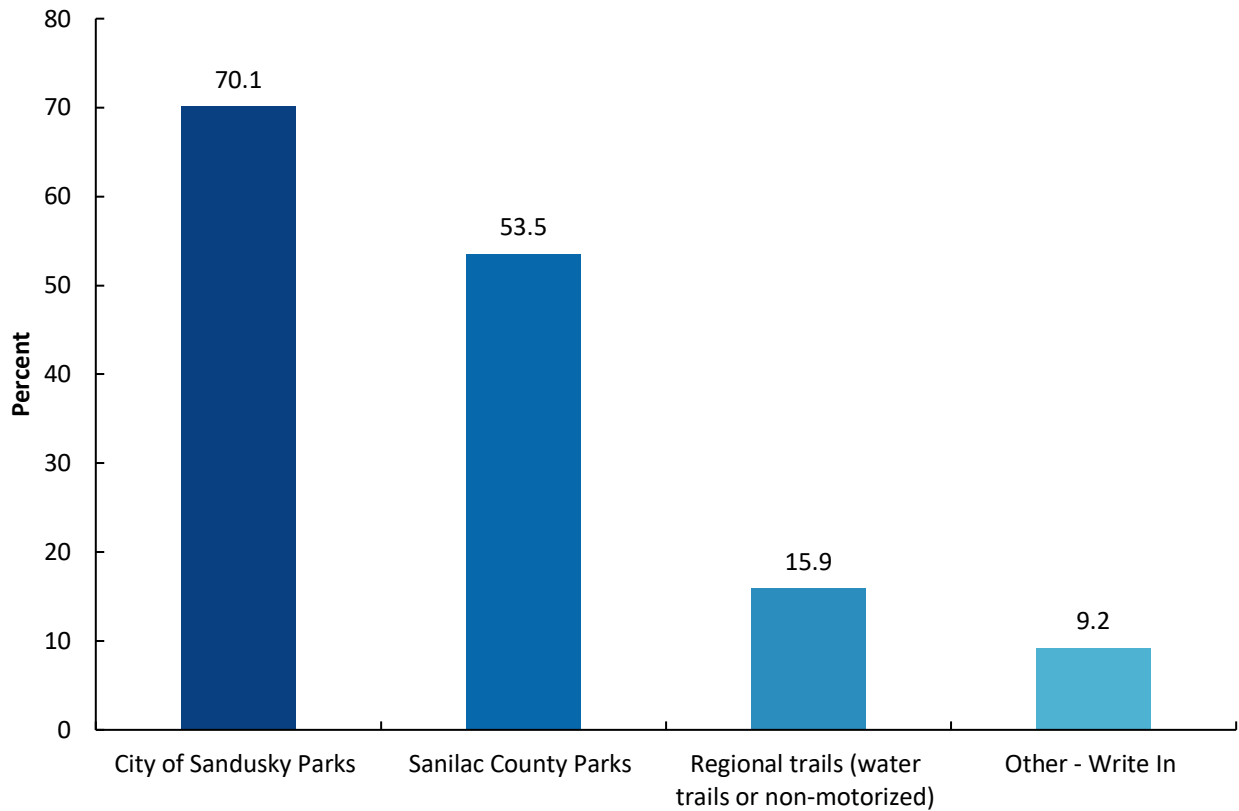
16.If you selected agree or strongly agree where would you like to see future commercial development?



Other write in -

- Any type to grow tax base
- East side
- Fill the empty buildings on M-46
- In commercial zoned areas
- Industrial Park
- Peck and Sandusky we need more grocery stores because Walmart is horrible. They have the highest prices in Sanilac county and talent county is one of the poorest counties when I ask why their prices are so high I was told by the manager they have no competition. Let's bring in some competition with better choices to shop.
- in watertown proper
- industrial park

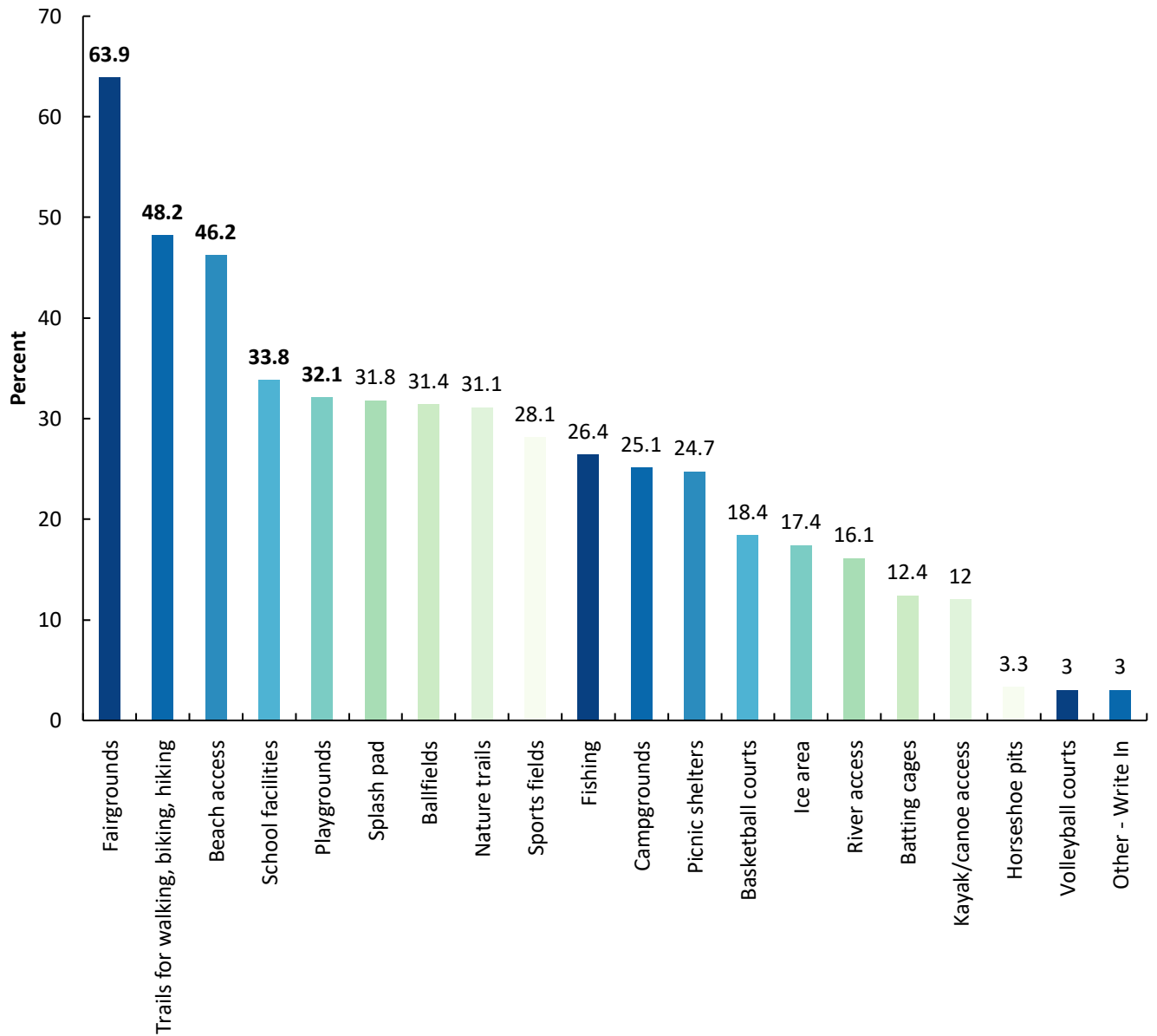
17. Which of the following parks/trails did you use last year?



Other write in -

- Diamond trail
- I don't use them at all
- I personally don't use the parks or trails.
- My own
- Private owned local trails
- Walking path in Sandusky
- Cass City pool, beach in Cassvillee
- Driving on the roads are trails
- Just walked in the yard
- Metro parks
- Snowmobile
- State turn offs on M-25
- Walking trail

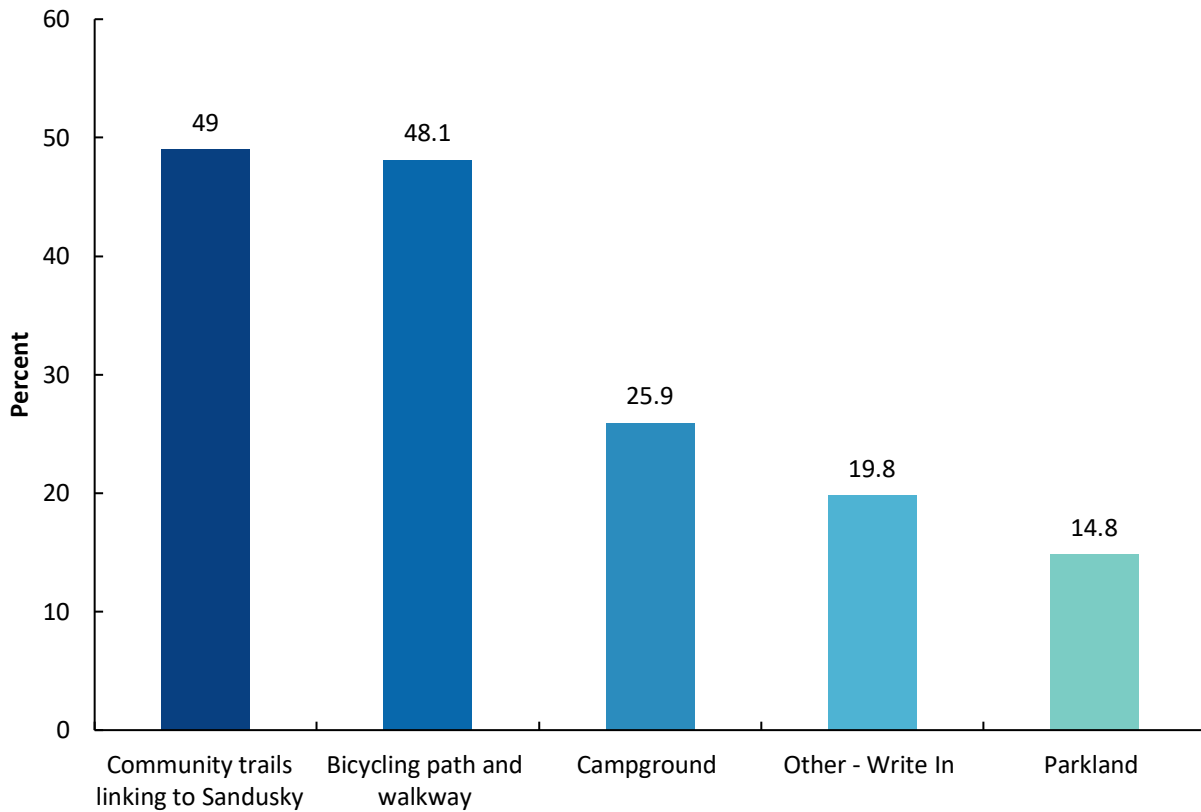
18. What amenities do you or your family use in the area? Please select all that apply.



Other write in -

- Any additional that can be made available
- Football fields
- We want a dog park
- hunting should have been added to this list
- more avents for everyone to get involved with besides cort house lawn
- pickleball courts
- there is nothing to do here except the movies if you like to spend midnight out

19. What additional recreational amenities would you like to see added to the Township? Please check all that apply.

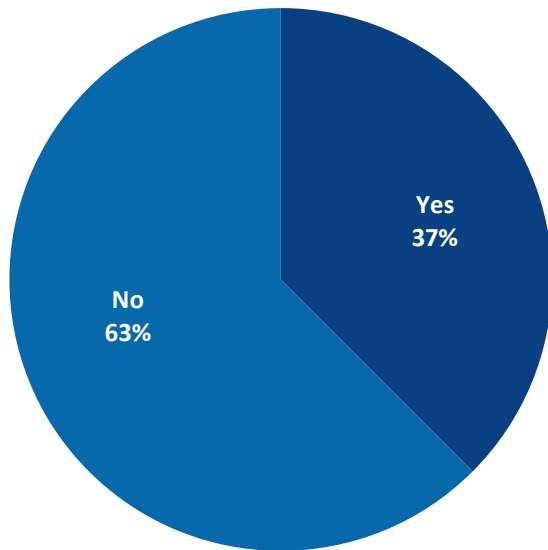


Other write in -

- ATV trails (2)
- small park pavilion by twp hall (2)
- Nature Trails (3)
- None of the above (3)
- Pool (2)
- We have enough (3)
- Discgolf course (2)
- Dog park (2)
- Other trails - Horse trails, Dirt bike orv snowmobile trails (2)
- Non if you want to live in the city, then stay there, this is a FARMING area
- In door walking area
- Kayak canoe access
- Lake front camp improvments
- Picnic style parks with a pavilion and ball field
- Shooting Range
- We have everything in the City of Sandusky
- any large enough property opened for hunting on a permit basis that has small fee. opens more opportunities and twp gets little more income

- replace trees in zion cemetery
- roads I can drive down
- skateboard park
- what a joke, we have no such facilities

20. Have you visited www.watertowntownship.net for information about the Township meetings, ordinances, or our Master Plan?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	37.5%	119
No	62.5%	198
Totals		317

21. What do you like best about the Township?

Most Common Responses –

- Agricultural land
 - County Living
 - Quietness/Peaceful
 - People
 - Cost of Living
-
- The agriculture style community
 - Quiet, Comfort
 - Agricultural
 - Supervisor and the board are more fair to all people
 - It's not that great
 - Used to be quiet before drug dealers and city people moved in
 - Country living
 - living here on a FARMING , if people want live like they do in the City, then they need to stay living there, NOT here
 - People
 - Being close to town but still in the country.
 - Wesch gas station
 - The peace & quite

- Quiet affordable living.
- Quiet, nice people,
- The people and the quiet.
- Quite place to live
- Just living in the country.
- Rural look, rural feel, NO SOLAR!!!
- Rural living
- Rural living
- The landscape
- Safe community
- Country living and it's peaceful.
- The view of fields. The nice people.
- Peaceful, wildlife, be nicer if streets in town were smoother for rideing scooters, streets are pitted and no ways to get from one side to other without being on main streets.
- The peace and quiet
- It is peaceful in the area we live in
- It is quiet
- Quiet country living yet close to town.
- The location
- Quiet rural living
- That it's a rural setting without turbines or solar
- The senery
- Everything
- The rural living
- Like it the way it is. Quite living.
- Low cost of living
- It's rural aspect
- So far people are for preserving farm land and not wanting to look at solar panels. Solar panels do not belong on main roads like M-19. They are an eyesore. Solar panels do not need to be any residential area. It's not fair to the people in the township that pay taxes and have lived in their homes for years. I strongly disagree with the one on M-19 as I would have to look at that from my front yard. It's just not fair.
- Rural, peace and quiet, friendly
- The quietness of a small town.
- Quietness
- Rural peace and quiet.
- The people
- I like the sense of community. My neighbors are great! We all get along and are willing to help each other out when needed.
- It has good farmland and the people.
- There's no wind mills or solar panels in the fields
- It's rural character and agriculture
- The people
- Just far enough from town to be rural.
- Relatively peaceful
- I like that agricultural land will continue too stay ag for conservation purposes

- I like that it's simple and is a nice representation of what I see as nice looking highly productive farm land with producers taking pride in what we do.
- The community.
- The parts Stoutenburg's don't own.
- Not a lot of people
- It's small community atmosphere.
- Rural
- The cemetery
- Public security, lac of crime
- Everything but it's less every time you dingle nuts start building or tearing stuff apart.
- Rural area, no outsiders. NO CRIME!!!
- Rural
- I loved it before Scott Franzel was in office
- Did love beautiful trees in cemetery whose stupid boneheaded idea was that to debeautify down town
- Small town feel and knowing our neighbors
- It's small, people stay in contact with others, some people speak to others on a first name basis.
- Keeping it rural, keep the small farms productive. Big is 'not' always better... Help the long time local rural people's needs that love this areas and don't appease to city/urban needs. Don't cut all the trees or woods either. Sorry, lot of mumbling from me but you get the drift.
- Keeping it rural, keep the small farms productive. Big is 'not' always better... Help the long time local rural people's needs that love this areas and don't appease to city/urban needs. Don't cut all the trees or woods either. Sorry, lot of mumbling from me but you get the drift.
- Why did you cut down the trees in my ancestors cemetery and where did the money go and who's big idea was that
- Quiet Close to town Good school district
- Rural living, enjoying the farming community, small town living
- Good location
- Quiet...low crime
- The landscape and space.
- Rural area, watching wildlife, close proximity to Sandusky.
- Community minded. Leadership
- Quiet family community
- Better road than other townships
- pleasant place to live, a long way from shopping, cultural events, etc. I often say it takes an hour to get to civilization. Jobs are still low paying and difficult to find without travel.
- Country living. Good place to raise kids
- Quietness, not commercialized
- Quiet/rural setting
- friendly
- Quiet rural community
- Not having people living next door
- nice area good neighbors
- Quiet, safe and friendly
- 20 years ago it was the roads
- Quiet Rural setting
- country living

- rural living
- born and raised here
- It's very laid back...
- The farming community.
- Rural safe secure living when we lived here 50yr ago, now so much. Now opportunist and drugs being allowed
- I like the people within our community.
- The natural beauty
- This is a safe and Beautiful place to live, I live near corn and soybean fields and it's so nice to have neighbors like I do.
- Being surrounded by farm fields and agriculture. Rural living, corn fields, tractors. Seclusion, peacefulness
- The rural nature
- Nothing to note
- We have loved having the dumpsters available for clean up days. We don't have a truck, so haven't used the free dump uses on Ruth Rd.
- The quiet atmosphere and friendly people
- Good mix of agriculture and residential
- People
- Very quiet area. Rural living but close enough to town for shopping
- It's rural
- Small
- it's outside the city limits
- the people
- friendly, everyone knows everybody. Helpful when needed
- the peace & quiet & the few people that i have met are really nice
- rural setting
- the people, friendships community closeness
- it's a quiet place to live
- the roads are aging. looks good all around
- the rural country setting, yet close to home
- farm ground
- rural conservative
- it's a peaceful space to live
- It is close to Sandusky so we can use it's amenities without payig higher taxes
- rural atmosphere
- quiet rural, no traffic & stop lights everywhere. love the rural area that's why i moved here to get away from the city life, but yet close to town. Don't like the hussle and bussle & it keeps the crime out of here
- county living
- the people
- rural living yet close to town for kids activities
- the people and no solar and windmills. they hurt the land and animals.
- most of the people are very friendly
- people
- welshe's old gas station

- quiet rural
- i feel safe
- it used to be the rural nature of the township. neighbors look out for neighbors. now its just where we live
- quiet
- rural area
- near town but outside limits, rural location
- I can live in the country and be 1/4 mile from a beer store
- Rural Living
- quiet
- small nice community
- rural community quiet
- no solar panels
- I like the country living
- rural area
- rural ag community
- no solar panels
- nice area
- great people making a difference. small and rural area to raise family. love the agricultural aspects of our area
- no solar
- Rural character and preservation of agricultural
- keep solar out of here
- no solar in township will do awful things here - bring down community standards
- like country living
- it's a friendly place to visit
- neighbors, twp board, farmland
- farmland
- the people
- it's rural but close to town. we have good neighbors
- country side w/ enough commercial
- natural area - streams & wooded areas (the few that are left)
- small town friendly
- the setting and being rural. I think it's very important it stays. I do appreciate the lights that have been placed @ major crossways
- The people
- small town rural living
- it's small so things like voting are quick and easy
- small community and friendly
- adjacent to sandusky, stores restaurants gas stations
- it is close to town but still have country feel
- rural small community atmosphere. close enough to sandusky or larger cities. Definitely notice attitude change of city dweller's moving into neighborhood. Less friendly & overly protective of their land. Not step on my property attitude
- living in the country
- country living

- affordability
- mom home and my farming way of life. do not want any solar or wind turbines
- quiet and peaceful
- quiet not a lot of traffic. not to many neighbors for country living
- quiet
- rural land
- the township boards desire to follow communities best interests
- The family environment
- It's Quiet
- Peace and quiet
- it is my home
- Good people, quiet place to live, nomcrime
- roads are getting much better
- private land
- close to town but country living
- Friendly neighbors. I use to use many of the amenities before when we raised 2 adopted children and then had 2 foster kids for 3 years, but now we are to elderly to do to much
- It's rural. Keep it that way
- It's rural and want it kept that way
- privacy
- rural atmosphere
- small town feeling but still a lot of growth potential
- peace ad quiet
- nice quiet farming community
- nothing
- see question #4
- I like the rural life
- rural area great place to live
- the country
- rural, farming woodlands
- rural and quiet
- quiet, rural, watching natures floor show
- good people
- rural living, quiet, watching nature
- rural aspects, affordable housing
- rural atmosphere
- that we grow weed in the area
- no opinion
- country living
- keep rural
- the way it is
- retain rural atmosphere
- Rural living

22. What is one thing you would do to improve the Township?

Most Common Responses –

- Change in leadership
 - Communication
 - Roads
 - No solar or wind
 - Blight
 - Add trees in the Cemetery
 - Keep out growing facilities
 - Add recreational amenities and a path
-
- Banning all future attempts on development of solar and wind parks
 - Parks, Change of command
 - More shopping, especially a grocery store
 - Fine the way it is
 - Improve walking/bike paths
 - Let solar come in
 - Not allow drug house and cannabis grow farms.
 - Relationship with city
 - A board where all the members listen to the people's opinion and not their own agendas
 - Public water
 - Pave Townline rd. .
 - A bike/walking trail to Sandusky
 - A garbage service would be nice, and a party store.
 - Get a new township supervisor that is transparent, honest, and follows the law over his own personal preferences and biases. Make the township budget viewable to the public,
 - Taxes and our assessor.
 - Township infighting. Crime is increasing. Upsetting to see so many houses and outbuildings used for drug production. How do you improve a community with that kind of activity going on? Would be nice to have a small store back, with food and basic necessities.
 - More press time , a better way of letting the public know what is being planned.
 - Start listening to the residents, end onean rule.
 - Less chemicals on fields
 - Less chemicals used by farming
 - Keep the woods and fencerows
 - Put the trees back in the cemetery
 - Better roads
 - No commercials solar industry parks
 - Really need 2nd grocery store or better conveniences to shop for household foods. South East side of town.
 - Nothing
 - Road improvements
 - A store.
 - I'm happy with the current status of the township.
 - More new tree growth
 - Keep out solar and wind turbines
 - Get a new township board

- Fix the side roads
- Little more enforcement of ordinances already on the books. Every time a farmer rips out a woodlot or fence row they complain about soil erosion or ditches being cleaned out. Maybe they should have some kind of penalty for that because the rest of us have to deal with their problems
- No solar or wind technology out of the area.
- Clean up the dangerous, horrible-looking property next to the elementary school.
- Keep it simple
- Just keep solar away from main residential areas.
- Get training for the boards so they are more effective, especially the treasurer. Our sewer bills and tax checks are paid on time but she doesn't tell the county.
- Roads
- No more pot growers
- Look into the future of advanced technology
- Keep out solar and wind turbines
- More recreational opportunities. Sports dome like Pigeon has.
- Less housing honestly. I live in the populated part of Watertown that's close to 19. Although I like my neighbors, I have too many of them. Haha.
- I don't like that they cut all trees down in the cemetery it was beautiful now looks depressing
- More limestone on the roads
- Build bike path
- Better living. Community for housing
- Get rid of any Karens.
- More farmers on the board
- We need no renewable energy projects dividing us as a community. We also need no mandatory trash pickup. We also need some trees or plants of some kind put back into our cemetery.
- Roads
- More paved roads
- Plant more trees. Bring back tree lined roads.
- Crime
- Not a goddamn thing
- SPEED LIMIT SIGN IN CASH VILLAGE AND NO CHANGES WITH BUILDINGS. IT BRINGS CRIME
- Fire whoever ordered to cut down trees
- More community events and parks to keep us a close knit community
- Everything should be listened to and treated the same, no matter who is speaking about or on whatever subject. One person's opinion should not have more clout compared to another's opinion dealing with Township issues.
- I want to know why you cut down the trees in the cemetery and who thought they were authorized to do so and where did the money go?
- You haven't answered me why did you cut the trees down in my ancestors cemetery where did the money go and who's idea was it
- Enforce blight laws
- We need to take care of the issues at hand first, prior to spending money elsewhere. Next, we need more living facilities to bring more people in. The taxes for someone to develop this type of property is astounding and therefore we will get no one to come in and put up these dwellings with the taxes that are being thrown at them. We need to be proactive and build a better township rather than reactive.
- We need ditch work and road work done in the sub division.

- Improve Townline Rd (pavement)...very high traffic
- Lower taxes.
- Better road maintenance.
- Once or twice a year paper shredding day offered for free for residents
- Stop solar farms on or near residential areas. It's not fair to homeowners. Definately lowers value of their homes and that's just not fair at all
- Plant more trees in the cemetary. Someone cut all the trees down, now the cemetary is ugly. We never had a say, no vote, nothing.
-
- When 70% of residents are satisfied and resistant to change improving the township is difficult, when we already are perfect. Most residence of waterotwn township think gravel roads were good enough in the 1800's and are good enough forever!!
- Get the marijuana growers out. This should be a wholesome area. Some moved in the place next to mine. I don't like smelling the odor when I go outside to enjoy my property. The township knew what the people wanted the property with the big sheds with when they were sold and still let the sales happen. Should have been shut down immediatley.
- Internet access for all
- Better and more transparent information by the board. Examples, cutting downs trees in cemetary without consulting family members first was unforgivable. taxes being sent out on time is an ongoing issue.
- more limestone on gravel roads. more attention to blight enforcement
- No grow/pot houses in township
- trying to get more commercial restaurants and store and advertise them
- Improve roads
- Lower taxes
- in my subdivision (Gleason M-19) even with occasional grading and adding dirt. Dell St & Gleason are always full of ruts and holes due to school buses and garbage trucks. Asphalt on cement would be nice without constant upkeep.
- roads, roads, roads
- plant trees back in cemetary
- forbid pot/grow houses in the township. improve on enforcing blight
- Twp board be more open (special meetings are almost secret meetings. Have lighted sign to post meetings or special meetings. Are on door sometimes not even able to read them. Supervisor should be removed. His vindictive nature disqualifies him from a leadership position.
- employment
- Dispensarie would benefit it's citizens...
- Keeping the roads up.
- Keep out development that destroys rural communities. Why allow marijuana grow houses into township - why try to install solar/wind mills into residential areas that we have to suffer the consequences if f greed for money to a few - you can't eat solar or wind and survive without precious land to grow
- Jobs
- Keep large scale solar out! We need the jobs that the farm store, farmers, and agriculture businesses provide to all of us!
- To not be overtaken by big companies and industrialization.
- Leave it how it is

- Will they be planting new trees at the cemetery?
- Put in pickelball courts
- higher standards for blight
- getting rid of the extreme blight in twp
- Nothing at this time
- Would like at least one party store near the township hall
- Reduce weight limits on all roads
- Have people get all the junk out of their yards. Lean it up
- Make it buses stores cheaper for people to rent
- More paved roads
- keep out wind and solar farms
- In my world everything is great. Great place to raise children
- Things to do as a family, camping, swimming, water park, rollerskating park
- Quit selling property to people for use to grow marijuana
- improve roads
- the only thing that i would love to see is a trail from watertown to sandusky
- internet at a affordable price
- taxes seem high for what we have
- township website, being able to view and pay taxes online
- senior center
- have spending more thought out. there are some things that tax money does not need to buy
- ban the use of farmland for commercial development, including wind or solar farms
- dog park
- more forestry woods
- tax rate is too high
- Create a township facebook page where meetings could be live streamed and keep up to date on township news
- Have more stores, grocery, dollar general, family dollar, aldi's. olies, big lots. few more restaurants - culvers, country buffet, golden coral, pizza express
- quarterly billing to monthly
- School Security. At the courthouse we gave a doorway type metal detector and a cop inside with a gun. we need both of these things at our schools. Money would be better spent on this instead of a parking lot or changing the school mascot
- some how provide ways to help residents with alternative energy on individual scale rather than large solar or wind farms
- Farming more of the land
- have owners need to clean up their junk in their yard.
- more parks
- remove pot sheds, houses. all facilities
- board decisions that focus on improving lives of residents without increasing taxes
- the board removed all the stately trees from the zion cemetery. Hired a logger to excavate. Should have hired an arborist to evaluate each tree. The trees need to be replaced. Pehaps the township needs a cemetery advisory board. Use the new sign to post special meetings. Not a small sign on the door.
- paved streets, lighting
- leave rural area & maintain roads & ditches

- keep status quo
- pave miller road to gates road and gates rd to m-46. pave jean st to maple valley and maple valley down to miller
- roads
- Plant new trees in the cemetery. Not sure who made the choice to cut down all the trees, but whoever did made a terrible mistake. The cemetery looks terrible. shame on any and all who was involved in that decision.
- Better communication for Board Members watertown township clear-cut of the tree in cemetery
- do not ruin with commercial solar or wind projects
- blight in township
- no solar panels
- no solar in the township
- no solar panels
- no solar panels
- I don't want to look at solar panels - go some where else
- Do not bring solar to our community
- no solar
- keep solar out the people in our community are here for agricultural settings people don't know how much the farmers for for the local economic
- no solar panels
- improve by keeping solar out
- leave as is
- put a stop light down by Burger King. when you come out of Mcdonalds it hard to get out of there at certain times of the day
- I'm fine with the status quo
- Encourage farmers to keep tree lines and tress along road way would like to keep county charm
- bit cut down all the trees in the watertown cementery. Everyone is shocked and angry
- Housing
- remove school board & superintendent educate done indoctrinate
- adding trails/bike path/walking path to surrounding towns. Abolish any marijuana growing area. Continue to promote agriculture and areas for retired people. a pavilion would be nice also
- growth of commercial and residential
- garbage pick up to be included in taxes. I think this would help to eliminate many blight/blemishes in our township
- I don't think we have been here long enough to offer an opinion
- communication with the voters of the township needs to be improved
- make or have some type of ordinance for junk/garbage on land/lawns
- Possible more housing for retirement income or a few duplexes. Nothing huge as we are rural and live here because we like country living
- leave it as it is
- leave as is
- have a township place for reunions w/ kids park and gazebo w/ picnic tables. more watertown activities to pull comm together
- have people clean up there yards
- allow more single family homes and mobile trailers. with cost of living some families can only afford mobile trailer/homes
- coordinate development goals with city of sandusky.
- Grocery Store
- make sure the side rd are in good shape. bad side rd are very hard on vehicles

- keep the marijuana growing facilities out of this township, stop selling every farm or place that has a big shed on it. Stop the real estate sales person/township supervisor from being involved in this.
- rec park fir gatherings of family-friends
- Get rid of all the pot growers
- get rid of self-serving board members. planning board members working for themselves
- decrease in property taxes for seniors
- no solar or wind. Blight control
- More trees & woodlots for windbreaks especially along ditches. I know farmers disagree but I prefer to protect the land & waterways. I would like to see much more CRP for improved wildlife & beautify landscape
- Don't waste money on walking trail, for example. Manage money in a smart way. Have intelligent people on the board making decisions. NO NEED for commercial development of any kind!!! Parks, recreational opportunities, cutting down trees are not necessary
- Keep commercial projects out of Watertown Township
- lower taxes
- continue to improve roads
- young officials/members of board
- senior recreation
- stop the sale of our houses for drug growing
- get rid of the pot houses. if you want the next generation to live out here, we need affordable housing and jobs for them
- Bring phesants back
- walking path, garbage pick up
- plant new trees in the Zion Watertown Cemetery to replace the more than necessary amount of the trees the board allowed to be removed
- repair roads and encourage more businesses such as groceries or shopping area's
- put the hammer down on people that don't keep up their homes. need more recycle options
- roads and drainage
- limestone, more sideroads, more recreation
- we are very upset about the loss of all pine trees in Zion Cemetery. We understand one fell down during winter storm. Did it cause grave stone damage? why cut down every pine tree and at what cost? was this done by a vote?
- bring in low cost high speed internet to all (rural) better cell phone service to all (rural)
- pave town line rd between marlette rd & m-46
- need affordable broadband internet & better cell phone service for everyone in rural areas
- fix miller road, pave to townline td
- better internet
- prohibit wind and solar development that kind of development belongs on the michigan peat fields on stringes roads
- wee shop
- no opinion
- road Maintenace on local level, main & primary are good. Who ever made the decision to remove all of the trees from the cemetery needs to step down from the board
- add sidewalks
- keep it rural - no solar
- prevent solar
- more road maintenance pavilion & small play area for kids
- don't destroy more trees - such as zion cemetery - bad decision
- Too many zoning rules for lifestyle of those in the township. Especially rural areas

23. What three priorities should the Township focus on?

Most Common Responses –

- Blight
 - Solar/Wind
 - Parks and Trails
 - Land Preservation
 - Low Taxes
 - Roads
-
- No solar. No windmills. Single family dwellings
 - Blight, zoning enforcement and taxes
 - protecting our farmland
 - Support solar walking/ bike trails
 - Listen to the public,
 - Blight Trash Roads
 - Solar, can't put a new home up unless you own at least 40 acres
 - Side road grading using lime stone not gravel only roads get special attention is county officials live on or road bosses
 - Parks and trails Solar Relationship with city
 - Not letting solar or wind turbines in
 - Utilities, walking trail linked to Sandusky
 - Keep land taxes low and reasonable.
 - Recreation, medical services for veterans, trails.
 - Garbage service, more federal dollars dedicated to programs available for wildlife and habitat conservation and less focus on windmills and solar. Our county is TOO SMALL for these "solutions" and will turn Michigan into a DESERT.
 - 1. Get all township officials training so they know how to do their jobs efficiently. 2. New Recreational opportunities like motorized trails and a park. 3. Maintenance of sewer system.
 - Cutting the budget and saving taxpayer dollars. permanent roll off dumpster at the township hall. Getting tough on crime. Please do not add garbage pickup costs to our taxes. People are facing hard times and the township representatives should be focusing on improving the life of residents. If taxes can't be paid, people lose their property. So how can the township impose a utility bill on people who may be struggling with hard times? That's a land grab.
 - No solar No wind turbines Preserve agriculture
 - More paved roads
 - Lower taxes Sustain property values Respect sight lines
 - Stay an agricultural community
 - Land preservation,
 - Keeping the land farming. Protect our water ways. No industrial solar parks
 - Smoother streets, shopping, lower income housing!!
 - Keeping feilds safe keeping it peaceful and the keeping it the same housing
 - A store, a park, and getting RID of the Marijuana houses.
 - Keeping solar out. Keeping wind turbines out. Keeping taxes reasonable.
 - Sustainable energy, water source protection, preventing deforestation
 - No solar No turbines Advertise items coming before the board better.
 - Fixing side roads Keeping solar away Keeping property taxes low
 - Solar should be a priority for the individual home owner rather than a big solar park. How to balance the rural life with development. (I travel the state and country for work and notice that most rural areas get dumped on big cities and companies, including our own. Just because we're "simple people"). Work with the county to improve recycling opportunities for county/township residents

- Keeping us a rural community. Keeping land owners in check about new technologies. Keeping blighted areas in check
- Stop the solar Stop the wind turbines Get honest board members who care about the people NOT lining their pockets or their family
- Roads, blight.. we need to adapt a blight ordinance.
- Training, put in a park or ORV trail, being fair to all residents not just favorites.
- No windmills.
- Lower taxes No solar No marijuana growing farms
- Solar farms, roads, taxes
- No solar No turbines Keep it rural
- Growth. New business safety
- Dog park/walking trail. There are sooooo many dogs in this community. Blight. A lot of houses are run down and have messy yards. Property taxes. My property taxes are quite high for the lack of amenities offered in my area.
- Fiscal responsibility, efficiency of services and preserving farmland.
- Getting houses cleaned up, more limestone on the roads, and maybe a walking trail
- Preserve rural character Work on bike path
- Water and sewer, encourage farmers to sell land for commercial use, subdivision
- Doing what the citizens want. Always be transparent in your dealings and decisions.
- Don't fix what isn't broken
- Preserving our township Focus on blight individually instead of punishing everyone by making everyone pay Continue to keep the roads in as nice of condition as they can be
- Roads, drainage, bridges
- Allowing people to use their land as they want More commercial along M19 A funeral chapel at the cemetery. Make it nice.
- Growth Walking path Park
- Crime, More trees, visuals
- Public safety, roads, and commercial industry.
- Ag, no solar, no wind
- Pave roads, build solar, deversivy
- Leaving farm land and all land the hell alone
- Better police presence and not changing anything else. Go tear into a different township. We all enjoy how it is
- Housing, job growth and recreational activities/facilities
- The Township should not get involved in other people's business. Everyone should be treated equal, no favoritism should be accepted or witnessed. Working towards capitalizing on green living. Wether we like it or not that is the way things are being changed over to.
- Keep big outside land developers. Meetings where everyone can participate easily, most people work long and at various hours. Keep druggie and solar out of this township...
- Get the solar permit approved. Dragging this out for years is not benefitting the township. Beware of positioning the township to be drug into a costly lawsuit. Marijuana farms and increase in crime related to them. I worry far more about the safety of my family living next to a commercial pot growing business than next to a solar panel. Also, what is the future regarding them as they are already being abandoned.
- Housing, lower taxes for new dwellings for rental complexes (not rental houses), making sure that all board members are completing their jobs and are available as they should be and as stated for citizens of the township.
- Ditch drainage,roads,
- Keeping agricultural land safe Keeping the road maintained No solar or windmills

- Road maintenance, garbage/recycling pick-up, and small park or convenience store where kids can go for ice cream.
- Dispensarie Keeping farmers happy Environment
- Keeping farm ground in agriculture. Keep blight down. Keeping the roads in good shape.
- Seeking companies that need a place to build their businesses, small or large companies.
- Protection of the key element that put us on the map, farmers! Keep up our roadsides Safety in the community
- Preserving our roots, agriculture, and rural living. Change is not always a good thing.
- Maintaining an agricultural based township, keeping the scenic nature of our area,
- Nothing

Appendix B

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Public Information and Education

To effectively implement the Master Plan, the Planning Commission, and the Township Board must educate the citizens of the community on the goals and action items. The spirit of the Master Plan must be communicated, especially regarding how and why development/projects will occur and are necessary. A well-informed and involved citizenry can then offer support and assistance in working toward the community they desire to have in the future. The following information outlines examples of programs that can be undertaken to help inform the public about important land use goals and implementation techniques:

- A condensed version of the future land use plan, highlighting the goals of the Plan.
- Informational brochures on various topics important to the Township.
- Joint meetings with the Township Board and Planning Commission to discuss how to implement the plan and outline priorities for the short-term and long-term.

Plan Maintenance

In order to ensure this master planning effort stays relevant and the plan continues to be a document that is utilized for improving life in Watertown Township, it is imperative that the Planning Commission and Township Board work to implement the strategies. The planning process and action items outlined in the Plan can only be realized if the appointed and elected officials and Township staff place a priority on implementing the objectives. Good planning practice and State law require the Township to review its Plan every five years and update it if necessary. One way to help this process would be to host an annual joint meeting between the Planning Commission and Township Board, where both bodies review progress over the past year. This provides an opportunity to consider the goals and intent of the Plan against pending capital improvements, budget requests, and other developments that may impact the community. Then, when it is time to decide what type of update will be required after five years, both bodies will have a clear understanding of the progress. When change confronts the community, it will be necessary to review the time and effort expended to address development proposals. Adjustments in fees and changes in the application processes may be necessary in order to cover the costs associated with new or expanding development.

Zoning Changes and Ordinance Updates

Zoning is integral to implementing the goals and actions of this Master Plan. Zoning provides the legal and spatial framework which promotes the orderly development of a community. With a new Master Plan in place, the Township has an opportunity to update its current zoning ordinance to reflect the goals adopted in this Plan. Many of the changes may be minor but provide a substantial benefit. For example, the Planning Commission may redefine permitted land uses in the commercial zoning district to allow a larger variety of uses in the Township.

Another change to the zoning ordinance may be larger in scope, taking a look at how the zoning ordinance is used and finding ways to make it a more user-friendly document through the use of graphics and images. Another step may be to review any cases that have come before the Planning Commission and determine if there are trends that may need to be addressed in the zoning ordinance itself. This Plan has identified several zoning ordinance changes that the Planning Commission should consider over the short term.

Code Enforcement

The administration and enforcement of the zoning ordinance by Township officials are integral to its effectiveness. Enforcement must be thorough, consistent, and fair. Procedures such as site plan reviews and other ordinance administration should be described in the zoning ordinance with enough detail to be consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and to meet Township requirements. All zoning ordinance enforcement activities should be resourced with appropriate personnel to fulfill zoning ordinance requirements.

Regional Cooperation

Development, growth, and changes within Sanilac County will affect the quality of life and growth within Watertown Township. The Township and its neighboring communities are interrelated in that trends in overall population loss and declining housing value affect the entire area. The Township has the opportunity to pursue cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with all the surrounding communities and Sanilac County. Cooperative relationships between and among Watertown Township and neighboring communities can provide an opportunity for the full impact of new or expanding developments to be considered, as well as provide an opportunity for communities to pool resources and skills to tackle similar challenges. At the least, Watertown Township should actively participate in reviewing and evaluating their neighboring communities' Master Plans. Further, the Township should invite comments and suggestions from neighboring communities on major developments within the Township.

PLANNING CONCEPT

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a transportation planning concept where transportation corridors are designed and operated to include several different types of transportation modes. They prioritize safety, comfort, and access for all user types including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motor vehicle drivers. Complete streets create transportation environments that are healthier, safer, more recreationally friendly, more connected, and equitable for all users.

In 2010, the Michigan Legislature adopted two new acts, PA 134 and 135 that require the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to incorporate various user types in transportation-related projects. The State must work with local levels of government to include non-motorized transportation, public transportation, and traditional automobile-oriented transportation in future projects. In addition to this, the federal government has required that local agencies spend a specific percentage of their budget on transportation alternatives which can include non-motorized transportation options and pedestrian improvements. The State has federal funding available through the MDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) which local communities can use to enhance intermodal transportation options and provide safe alternatives.

Complete streets will look different for each community depending on need, financial constraints, and use; however, it is possible for all communities to develop some level of complete street planning. For example, in Montrose Charter Township on the more rural County roads, complete streets could be as simple as wide shoulders to allow for safe and easy bike and pedestrian traffic. In order to achieve this, the Township will have to partner with the Road Commission and work to identify roads where these improvements make sense and plan for them when roads are scheduled for improvements.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The following is a summary of bodies that can use tax increment financing and other funding resources to generate funds for economic development activities.

Capital Improvement Planning

Given the reality of limited funding at any given time, the Township should prioritize specific projects and create schedules for their initiation and completion. A Capital Improvements Program, which serves as a schedule for implementing public capital improvements, acknowledges current and anticipated demands, and recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the community, should be regularly implemented by the Township. Long-range programming of public improvements should prioritize projects on the basis of community need, be developed within the Township's financial constraints, be based upon a sound financial plan, and allow for program flexibility. In order to guide the Planning

Commission in this process, they should evaluate community conditions and development factors and should continually review proposed improvements and related expenditures. The Planning Commission should ultimately review project proposals to assure conformity with the Master Plan and make recommendations regarding prioritizing projects and methods of financing.

LOCAL FINANCING AND CO-DEVELOPMENT

Watertown Township has access to a number of possible local financing tools. The Township should prioritize and schedule its improvements through a capital improvements program. The Township may be able to use its general funds for some of the most important improvements. Revenue bonds and general obligation bonds may also be employed by the Township. A special assessment can also be used for infrastructure projects. The Township should seek ways to encourage joint public and private investments for a common purpose. This includes mechanisms where the Township can involve itself in the process of private development such as site location selection, service agreements, and local tax incentives and abatements. The Township may also reach out to local foundations and area individuals for support for various civic projects. Additionally, the Township may seek to access a variety of government loan and grant programs available to local governments, as described below.

Grant Opportunities to Support Proposed Capital Improvements

This Master Plan can also be used to identify potential funding sources to support proposed capital improvement projects, such as grant and loan programs to help fund priorities. At the Federal level, there is the Housing and Community Facilities Programs, the Public Works and Economic Development Program, and the Water and Wastewater Disposal and Grant Program, to name a few. At the State level, a potential funding source may be the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which offers grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The Michigan Department of Transportation also administers Federal funds appropriated under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (Public Law 112–141, MAP-21). Additionally, local funding programs, as initiated by Watertown Township, such as a special assessment, can also be used for infrastructure projects.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant program is an annual allocation of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to local governments for a wide range of community development activities. These activities include housing rehabilitation, public and neighborhood improvements, and economic development activities that primarily benefit low and moderate-income individuals.

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)

Safe Routes to School is a Federal program administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation. Funding is available for sidewalk construction and other pedestrian improvements.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

TAP is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as non-motorized paths, streetscapes, and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance a community's intermodal transportation system and provides safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability, and improving the quality of life. The program is available through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and uses Federal Transportation Funds designated by Congress for these types of activities.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources administers three grant programs for parks and recreation improvements. The programs are the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Recreation Passport. This money is available on an annual basis for parks and recreation improvements. To be eligible for the three programs, a community must have an approved Parks and Recreation Plan. The recently approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan fulfills that requirement.

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) State Revolving Loan Fund

EGLE revolving loan funds are low-interest loans to communities for projects to improve drinking water quality, water quality, and protect public health. The three programs are the following: The Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRF) which assists water suppliers in satisfying the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The State Revolving Fund (SRF) can be used for the design and construction of sewage treatment facilities, collection systems, non-point source pollution, and stormwater treatment. And finally, the Strategic Water Quality Initiatives Fund (SWQIF) can be used to remove excess infiltration from private sources and replace failing septic systems that are affecting public health.

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Housing Program

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority has a wide range of programs designed to assist households in finding and affording quality housing. By partnering with MSHDA, Watertown can use these programs to incentivize the development of new housing.

Broadband Equity, Access, and Development (BEAD)

BEAD is a Broadband Equity, Access, and development Program that has the largest investment in high-speed internet infrastructure. The program is a national program; however, each state will implement the program in its own way. The State will be allocated \$1.559 billion to help communities. The BEAD Program will enable the universal availability of high-speed internet to every home, business, and institution across the state. The Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) will be implementing the BEAD State Challenge Process to determine the unserved and underserved locations that are eligible to be connected with BEAD funding. The State will be administering and allocating funds. For more information on the program visit www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mihi/funding-opportunities/bead

Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) Grant Program

The ROBIN plan is a program that included \$250.6 million to expand high-speed internet services to underserved communities in the State. Unserved communities are homes, businesses, and institutions without internet service available at a speed of at least 100/20 Mbps from at least one internet service provider. Eligible applicants for ROBIN include internet service providers, those licensed under the MI Telecommunications Act, franchise holders under the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act, or any entity currently providing broadband service in the state. The program will be administrated by the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MHI). Program funds come from the Capital Project Fund (CPF) which is managed by the States Treasury. \$238.7M will be available through ROBIN for internet expansion to unserved locations. The remaining balance of funds (5% of the total award) will be used for program administration. For more detail on the program visit www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mihi/funding-opportunities/robin-grant.

OTHER FINANCING TOOLS

Listed below are additional sources of revenue are available to the Township:

Special Assessments

Special assessments are compulsory contributions collected from the owners of property benefited by specific public improvements, such as paving and drainage improvements, to defray the costs of such improvements. Special assessments are given according to the benefits afforded to the property affected.

Shared Credit Rating Program - Michigan Municipal Bond Authority (MMBA)

This program, created under Act 227 of 1985, offers municipalities the opportunity to take advantage of the State's improved credit rating. Because the MMBA is authorized to issue bonds to make loans to Michigan municipalities through the purchase of municipal obligations, the Authority allows municipalities to borrow funds for their capital and operating needs without going to the expense or trouble of entering the bond market on their own. Many small communities are at a disadvantage when issuing debt in the bond market because they frequently have no bond ratings and potential investors know little about their finances or economy. In addition, some communities tend to borrow infrequently, in small amounts. Because such debt issues are not particularly attractive to the financial markets, borrowing costs for such communities can be high.

The Authority sells tax-exempt bonds in the national municipal bond market. Proceeds from the sale are used to make loans to eligible Michigan communities by purchasing their bonds. In essence, the MMBA "bundles" smaller local debt issues into a larger, more attractive bond issue and then offers it to the national market. By consolidating numerous local bond issues, local units will save on printing costs, rating agency fees, and credit enhancements. As participating communities make principal and interest payments to the Authority to repay their debt, the Authority uses these payments to repay the Authority's bond.

Dedicated Millage

Special millages can be used to generate revenue for a specific purpose.

Hud Section 202/8

This is a Federally sponsored program that provides mortgage financing and rent subsidies for the construction and maintenance of elderly housing. Only non-profit, private organizations (such as churches, unions, fraternal, and other non-profit organizations) are eligible sponsors. However, local governments usually cooperate in the assembly of land, applications, public improvements, and supportive actions. Such projects are tax-exempt, but the State rebates an equivalent amount to local tax jurisdictions.

Appendix C

ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

Resolution of Adoption
Watertown Township Master Plan
By the Watertown Township Planning Commission

Resolution: # 2024 - 01

Whereas, the Watertown Township Planning Commission has elected to draft and adopt a Master Plan, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3801, et seq; and

Whereas, a community input survey was made available to Township residents from March of 2023 to May 2023 for the purposes of gathering input from the public, and

Whereas, the draft Master Plan was made available for review from March 12, 2024, to May 16, 2024, and

Whereas, the Watertown Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Master Plan, inclusive of the charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals for Watertown Township on May 16, 2024, at the Watertown Township Hall, 2630 S Sandusky Rd., Sandusky, MI 48471.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Watertown Township Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2024 Watertown Township Master Plan.

Motion by: Rebecca Cambridge.

Supported by: James Franzel

Ayes: Rebecca Cambridge, Nathan Campbell, Mark Batkie, James Franzel, Al Stoutenburg, James Hacker

Nays: None

Absent: Jason Radloff

Resolution declared adopted May 16, 2024



James Hacker
Planning Commission Chair