

COURTLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN 2024

DRAFT 1.8.24



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Travis Miedema

PREPARED BY

williams&works

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION





OVERVIEW

The Courtland Township Master Plan presents a vision for land use and development for the next 20 years. The Master Plan is a visionary and strategic document, outlining goals and objectives for the future that guides land use policy. The master planning process brings together Township officials, local champions, and community members to create an idea of what Courtland Township could be in a future time.

Producing a Master Plan requires a foundation of data from a variety of resources. Analysis of this data can reveal trends and conditions that can be useful to the residents, officials, and stakeholders of Courtland Township, and is vital to support the future goals for the community. Planning for the long term should be carried out at a general level that recognizes the potential for change and provides flexibility. This results in a Master Plan that can be useful well into the future instead of becoming obsolete if or when demographic and economic trends change.

COURTLAND TOWNSHIP MASTER PLANNING CONTEXT

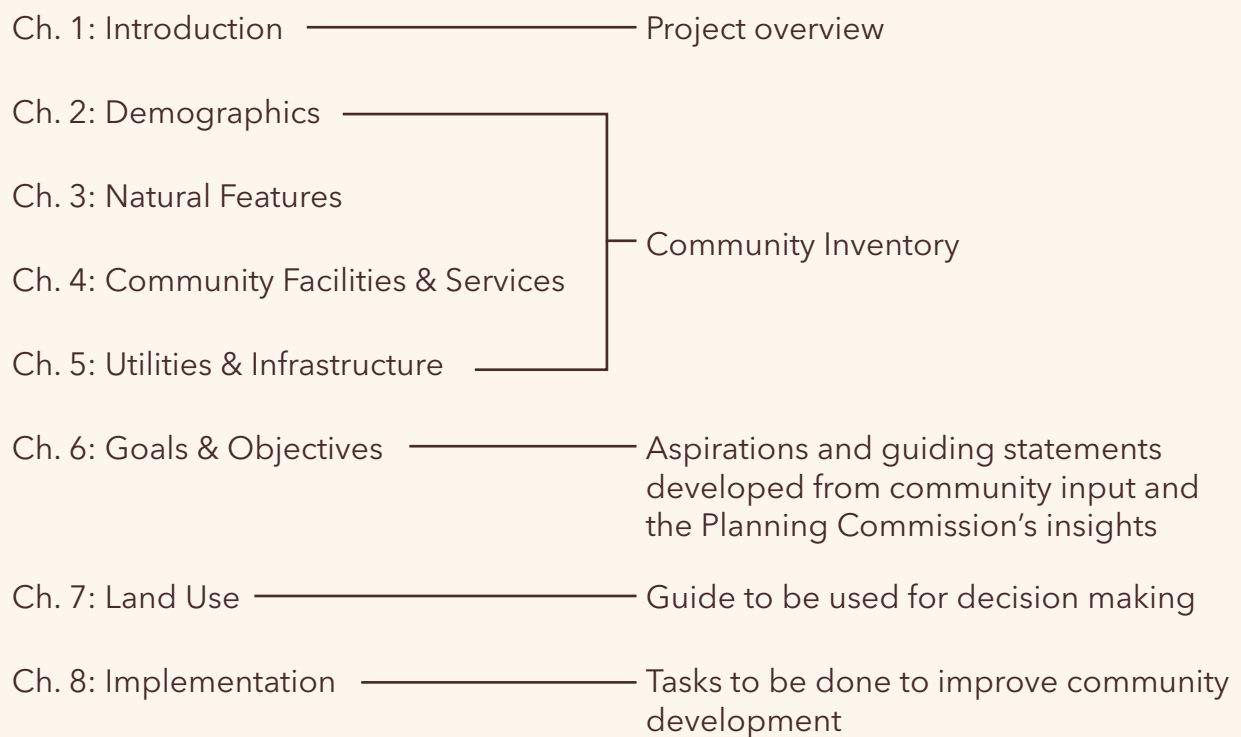
State law requires that a community's Master Plan should be reviewed every five years. In 2000, Courtland Township completed an update of the Township's Master Plan, and the document reflected the community's current conditions and trends. The 2007 update was less burdensome because the information and trends had not changed much, and the planning effort was able to be more focused on addressing the identified issues which included:

- With residential growth having been strong for decades, the growth pressures from the urban portions of West Michigan are impacting the community's natural features and agrarian heritage.
- The rate and patterns of growth imply that the Township could be home to upwards of 30,000 people in the late 2020's. These projections have broad implications on housing, traffic, community facilities and land use.
- Since residential land uses typically demand more in services than they provide in revenues, the Township was considering the impact of future service demands and the revenue implications those demands will generate.
- The North Kent wastewater treatment facility was expected to control patterns and densities of growth.

2024 MASTER PLANNING SUMMARY

With this update, the Master Plan was informed with data from the 2020 US Census, the Courtland Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2023 - 2027, Waste Water Pump Station report from 2022, transportation data from the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, and other data sources. The Master Plan is focused on continuing to help Township officials make incremental, educated development-related decisions, as growth continues in Courtland Township and across many communities in the prosperous West Michigan region.

The Master Plan is divided into chapters that provide an inventory of the current conditions and state of the Township with respect to key aspects of land use planning. The Plan is broken down in the following way:



Each section includes relevant information on the subject matter along with a brief discussion of the planning trends that are relevant along with implications for the future.

KEY FINDINGS

The following statements outline some of the initial impressions that have emerged through the community master planning process:

- Courtland Township remains a desirable place to live, and the population continues to increase, as it has since the 1970s.
- Growth pressures that come with more residential land uses and an increase in population are impacting the community. Township officials will need to decide how to use the recommendations for Commercial and Residential land uses in the Future Land Use Map and accompanying narrative in Chapter 7 to help guide the developing landscape.
- Home to notable natural resources, habitats, and waterways as well as the Rogue River which is a major tributary of the Grand River and is a high-quality waterway, the Township should continue to protect its green and blue spaces using development strategies like Low Impact Design (LID).
- A majority of residents rely on private wells for their water supply and septic systems for wastewater. To help with growth management and support the protection of natural resources, the Township may want to consider increasing the number of properties that are on public water and sewer systems.
- With increased growth comes an increase in transportation traffic. Growing safety concerns, the increased number of crashes, and a vocalized desire for nonmotorized infrastructure should encourage Township officials to work with the Kent County Road Commission to make a more inclusive transportation system in Courtland Township that provides a variety of destination-driven transportation choices. Officials should work with MDOT to address matters on M-57/14 Mile Road. Individual site developments should closely follow the recommendations for transportation improvements outlined in the zoning ordinance.
- Continue to support the public services provided to Township residents to maintain a high standard of living that includes good schools and desirable, local parks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement phase of the master planning process invited people to share their ideas about and values to help shape the future of Courtland Township. Both the open house and the community survey asked participants their opinions about a variety of transportation, environmental, housing, recreation, infrastructure, and economic development topics. Survey respondents shared that the top five Township priorities should be:

1. Protecting groundwater
2. Protecting private property rights
3. Preserving rural character
4. Preserving open space
5. Preserving farmland

The top five amenities that should be invested in according to the community open house results should be:

1. Protect farmland and support agriculture
2. Protect green spaces and natural habitats
3. Invest in trails and paths
4. Protect rivers, lakes, and streams
5. Invest in road maintenance

Retaining the beauty of the natural environment while maintaining the Township's infrastructure was valued by community engagement participants.

COURTLAND TOWNSHIP'S MASTER PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are based on the community's outspoken values.

- **Sensible Growth** - Practicing pragmatic incremental changes that respect historic character while celebrating an evolving landscape.
- **Resilience** - Anticipate and adapt to future challenges driven by social, environmental, climate, economic, technological, and other factors.
- **Sustainability** - Promote integrated planning to achieve Courtland Township's social, environmental, and economic development objectives for the community.

The Guiding Principles should be used to tie land use decisions that local leaders and officials make to the Master Plan's goals. They are to be used as a decision-making framework. They can also be used to inform the pace at which the tasks that are outlined in Chapter 8 Implementation are addressed. Guiding Principles are the overarching ideas that enrich and inform the development and character of Courtland Township.

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

As the landscape in a community becomes more developed, a direction for future development is needed to ensure that the community's desires regarding growth are translated into action. The intent of this Master Plan is to provide the direction needed by Courtland Township. The Courtland Township Planning Commission was responsible for the completion and implementation of the Master Plan, with the extensive involvement of the Township Board.

The Master Plan is a guide to be used by the Township to help determine the land uses and development policies that will affect its physical development. As a guide, it is not meant to be rigidly administered. Changing conditions may affect the assumptions and directions determined when the Plan was last updated.

Changing conditions do not necessarily mean that the Plan must change. Rather, the Planning Commission must evaluate those changes to determine if the Master Plan remains valid. If it determines that the Plan has retained its validity, the principles, goals, and objectives should be followed.

The preparation and adoption of a master plan for Courtland Township is authorized by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. The Act describes the general purpose of a master plan as guiding and accomplishing development in the Township and its environs that:

- Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- Considers the character of the Township and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
- Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for one or more of the following:
 - A system of transportation to lessen congestion on roads and provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users.
 - Safety from fire and other dangers.
 - Light and air.
 - Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
 - Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
 - Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
 - Recreation.
 - The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.



HOW DO THE MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE DIFFER?

The relationship of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance is often misunderstood. Stated concisely, the Master Plan is a guide for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the township and its residents.

HOW DOES THE MASTER PLAN AFFECT YOU AS A LANDOWNER?

How the Master Plan affects you depends on your particular situation. If you are a property owner you may have several interests, including not only your property but neighboring properties as well as any properties that are in a similar land use category. As a homeowner, you will be interested in the properties in your immediate neighborhood. You may wish to know what uses are proposed for vacant land in your area. As an owner of vacant property, you will want to know what land uses are proposed for your property.

As a Township resident, you will be interested in the overall concepts of the Plan, as expressed in the Goals and Objectives. These statements will give you an indication of the Planning Commission's view of the Township now and in the future.

HOW SHOULD YOU USE THIS PLAN?

Consider the following steps in helping you understand how to use this Plan.

STEP 1. Consider how future Land Use is proposed for your property and/or the area surrounding your property.

This information is on the Future Land Use map in Chapter 7. The map is divided into separate land use categories. Find the location you want on the map, and then use the legend to identify the land use category for the parcel(s) or land area.

STEP 2. Determine how the Planning Commission views development in your area.

The Future Land Use map will indicate the general direction of development within your area. It may be fairly specific, or it may be somewhat general. The Future Land Use map is meant to be a development guide for the Planning Commission.

STEP 3: Determine the meaning of the land use designation for your property.

After determining the land use designation for your property, read the text in the Future Land Use section of Chapter 7 Land Use. This text will indicate the general direction of development within the area. Some areas of the Township are slated to remain more agricultural, while others are planned for more Residential development. Few areas are planned for Commercial or Industrial development. If you have a specific proposal that does not fit the Future Land Use Map, you may want to investigate the Plan in more detail, beginning with the goals and objective statements.

STEP 4. Determine how the Plan affects your property.

The Future Land Use designation will indicate to you how your property is planned for use in the future. This does not mean that you cannot continue the use that you currently have. Land use within Courtland Township is also affected by the zoning for your property. See the Zoning Ordinance or call the township offices for more information.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOGRAPHICS

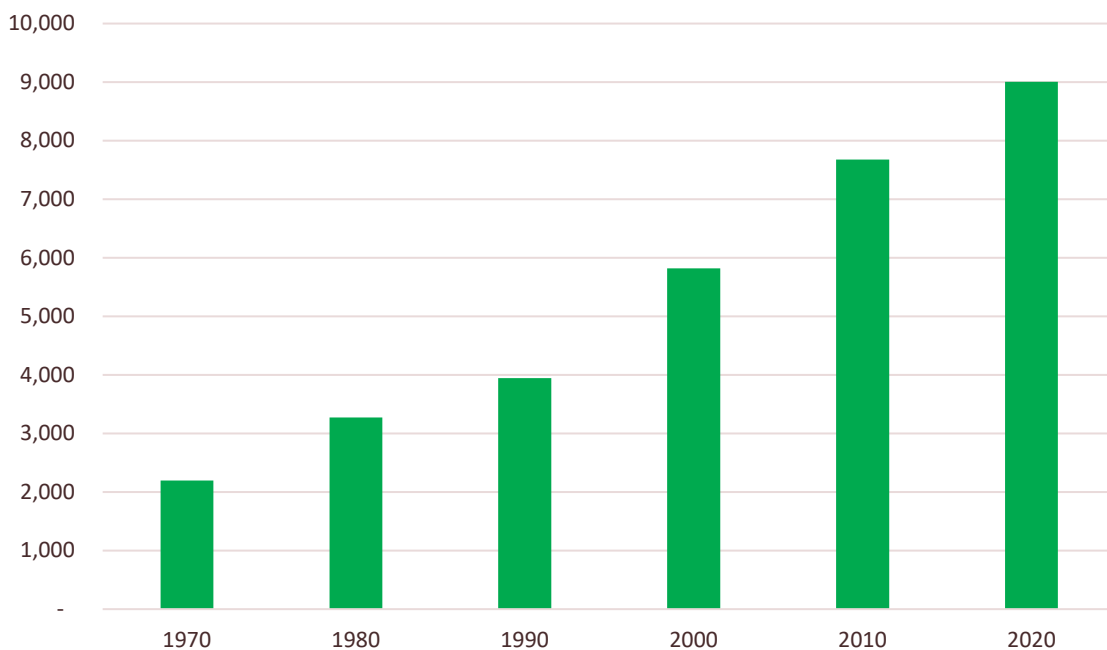


When developing a master plan, the population is among the most important data to analyze to determine growth trends and the potential for impact on land use in a community. To prepare a meaningful master plan this information must be reviewed and explained. In this section, various aspects of Courtland Township’s demographic trends are outlined and the current and likely future growth trends are discussed.

HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

The population growth that the Township has experienced over the last 30 years is explained by people desiring to live in a rural community near the cities of Rockford, Cedar Springs, Greenville, and Grand Rapids. The general population has increased steadily, averaging nearly 33% growth per decade since 1970. As a result, the 1970 population of 2,200 has since increased to 9,005 in the year 2020, which is a remarkable increase of 309%.

Figure 2.1: Population Increase



Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

West Michigan is growing more rapidly than the remainder of Michigan and since 1970, Courtland Township has been among the fastest-growing communities in the area. Courtland Township experienced a growth rate of 17% from 2010-2020.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Statistical averaging techniques were used to project the Township’s likely population growth through the year 2050. These approaches are intended to provide a general sense of growth in the future. In communities such as Courtland Township that are experiencing increasing rates of development, current and future growth trends may not parallel historical trends. The following generalizations are limited in scope and are based on past trends documented by the United States Census Bureau data.

These projections have implications regarding future land use necessities, the demand for various public services, and can be used help to understand the future position of the Township in terms of growth and total population. The three different projection techniques are explored in this section.

The **Growth Rate Method** projects future population growth or decline based on the rate of growth in the Township in the past. Using the growth rate method, the following assumes that growth in the future will occur at the same average rate as has occurred annually since 1970, with an average annual increase of 0.83% over this period.

AVG. ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (1970-2020)	CURRENT POP. 2020	PROJECTED POPULATION		
		2030	2040	2050
0.83%	9,005	9,781	10,624	11,539

The **Arithmetic Method** is similar to the growth rate method in that population projections are based on growth that occurred in preceding decades. This method bases population growth on the overall average increase in the number of persons per year, rather than on growth rates. The following projections are based on the average net increase of 6,805 persons between 1970 and 2020 in Courtland Township based on U.S. Census figures.

AVG. ANNUAL CHANGE (1970-2010)	CURRENT POP. 2020	PROJECTED POPULATION		
		2030	2040	2050
34	9,005	9,345	9,685	10,025

The **Building Permit Method** may be the most reliable projection technique since it depicts present growth trends based on the actual number of residential building permits issued by the Township. Courtland Township has issued 57 residential building permits on average per year from 2010 to 2021. The Township’s average household size is 2.93 persons. Extrapolating these figures into the future may project likely population growth if current trends remain the same.

AVG. # OF PERMITS (2010-2021)	AVG. HOUSEHOLD SIZE	CURRENT POP.				PROJECTED POPULATION	
		2020	2030	2040	2050		
57	2.93	9,005	10,675	12,345	14,015		

Table 1.1 summarizes the population projection information. By averaging the results of these methods, it is reasonable to predict that the population of Courtland Township could grow to approximately 10,675 persons by the year 2030; roughly 12,345 by the year 2040; and 14,015 by the year 2050. The projections summarized here assume that past trends will continue and are therefore limited in scope. Projections are based on population counts documented by the United States Census Bureau and building permit data provided by the Township.

Table 2.1: Population Increase

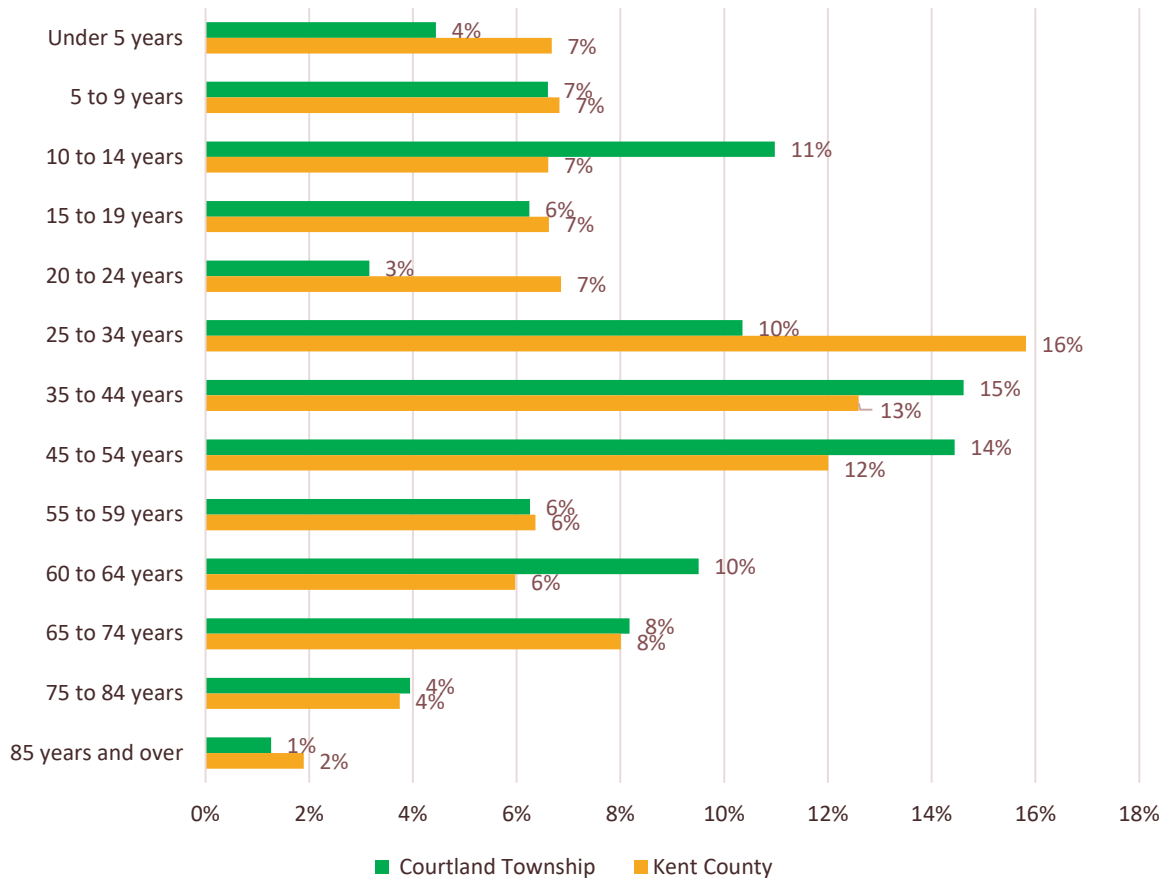
Method	2020	2030	2040	2050
Arithmetic	9,005	9,345	9,685	10,025
Growth Rate	9,005	9,781	10,624	11,539
Building Permit	9,005	10,675	12,345	14,015
Average	9,005	9,934	10,885	11,860

While the population projection summary is limited in its ability to precisely predict the future, it does give a sense of where current growth trends may carry the Courtland Township community in the future. If the economic and social characteristics of Kent County generally remain stable, Courtland Township should plan for a steady influx of new residents and development.

Building permits are a good indication of population growth in the community. Nearly 40% of the housing units in Courland Township were built in or after 2000. During the ten years from 2010 to 2020, 606 new housing units were constructed with an average of 55 units per year.

AGE, SEX, AND ETHNICITY CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 2.2: Age Distribution



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

A comparison of the age distribution of a community’s population can provide another opportunity to measure change. This also helps to determine the type of housing demands and recreational facilities that may be needed.

The demographic characteristics of Courtland Township show a large number of people between the ages of 25 and 54, which is similar to the Kent County average. The Township has slightly more people between the ages of 35 to 54 than Kent County, as well as more 10- to 14-year-olds. This may show that there are more families with children living in the Township. Interestingly, the median age of the Courtland Township population in 2020 was estimated by American Community Survey to be 40.5 years compared to 35.4 years for Kent County. This is likely reflective of the transitional nature of the community’s population and higher property values suggesting that the population may be slightly older overall as young families may find housing more affordable in other portions of the County.

A majority of the Township population (92%) was reported to be white according to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau and about 6% of the population was reported to be of two or more races. The Census also reports the male-to-female ratio (males per 100 females) to be 84.5.

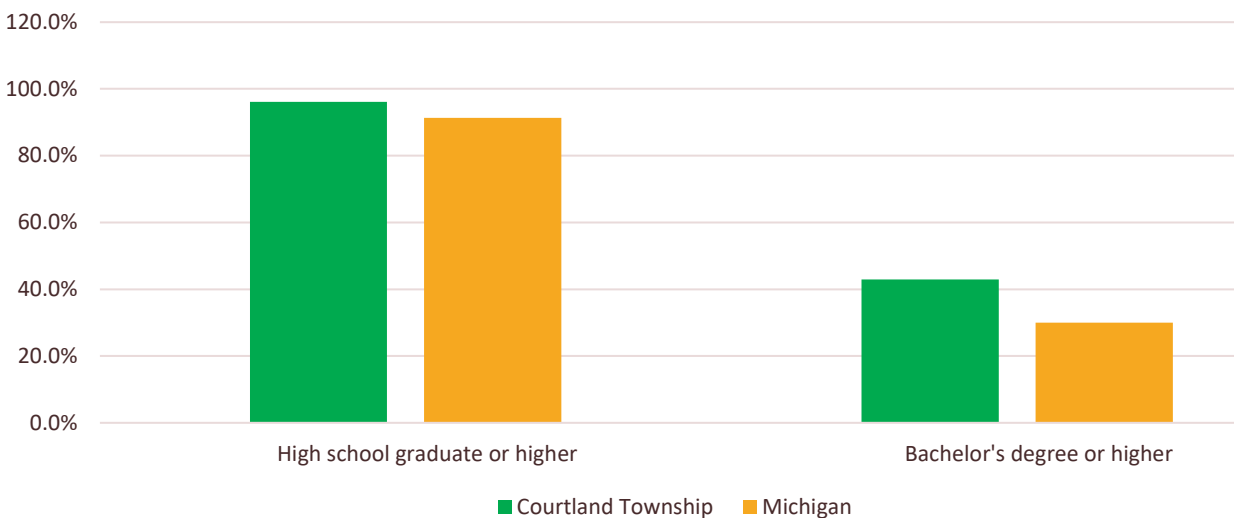
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

According to the 2020 ACS 5-Year estimates, about 24% of Courtland Township’s total population is of school age (3 years or older) and enrolled, and 84.7% of those children enrolled in public schools. This amounts to approximately 1,406 students enrolled in K-12 public school systems, 161 in private schools, 52 children attending preschool/nursery school, and 204 children possibly attending homeschool or on-line academies. After excluding college and nursery school students, as well as those students attending private schools, we have projected these figures into the future, signaling a need to accommodate about 2,598 students in public schools by 2050.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Of the nearly 5,570 adults over the age of 25 years in Courtland Township, 96% have earned the equivalent of a high school diploma or greater, and nearly 43% of this population has earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. Educational attainment in Courtland Township has outpaced the state average by as much as 5%.

Figure 2.3: Educational Attainment

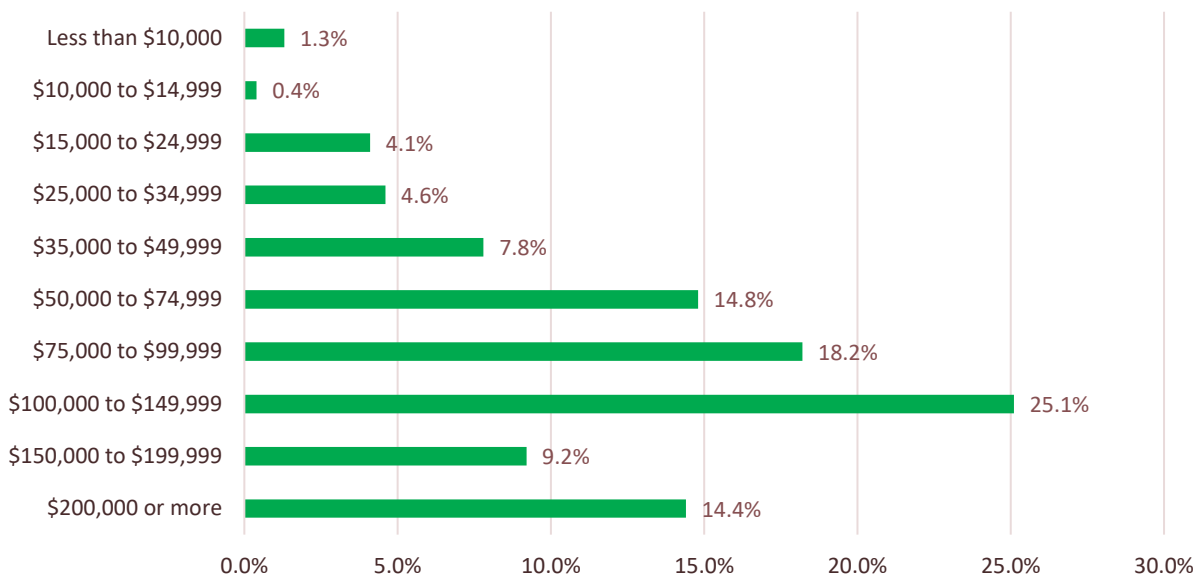


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

INCOME

The median income in Courtland Township was estimated to be \$99,291 which is significantly more than the state average of \$54,938. About 3.1% of the Township population was reported to be below the poverty level compared to the state average of 13.7%. As shown in Figure 2.4, nearly a quarter of the Township population falls in the \$100,000 to \$149,000 income cohort. Courtland Township residents enjoy a significantly higher standard of living than their neighbors in other areas of Kent County or the State. Higher incomes indicate a potentially higher tax base that suggests higher spending power for the community on services required by the residents.

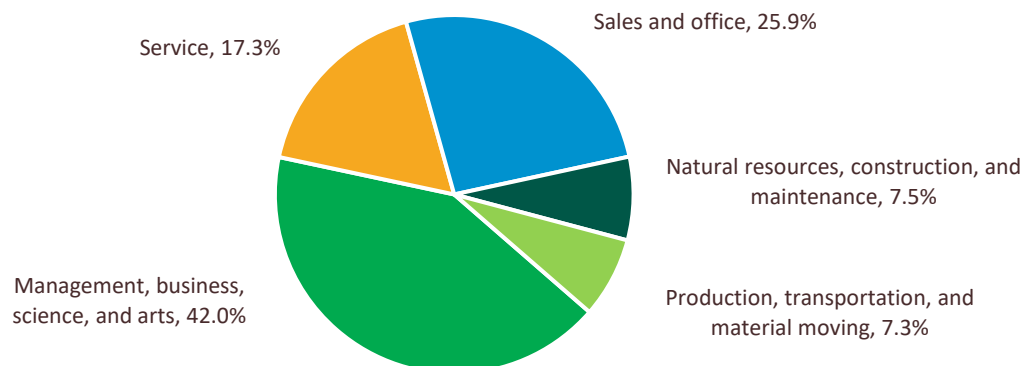
Figure 2.4: Income Distribution



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

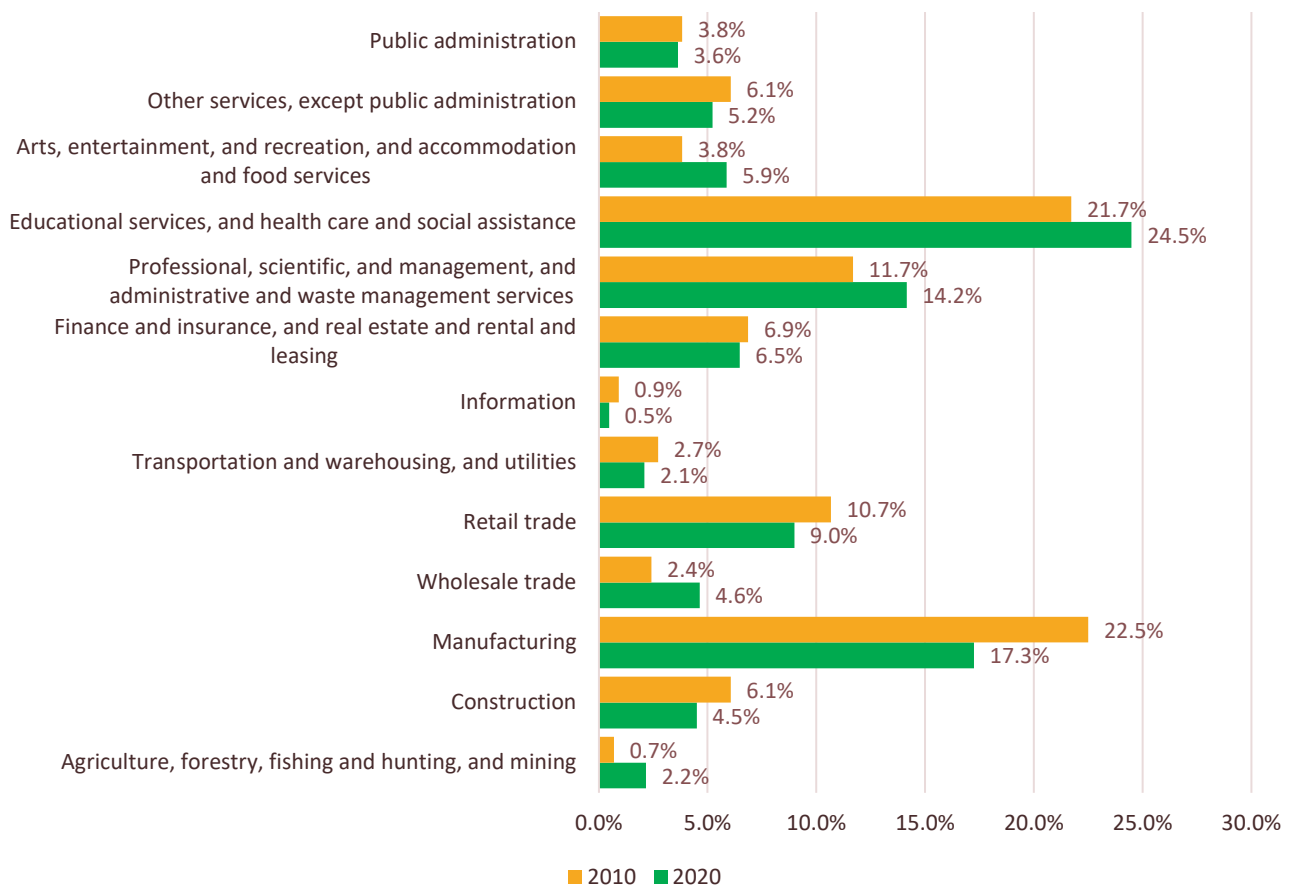
EMPLOYMENT

Figure 2.5: Employment by Occupation



There has been a shift in employment patterns over the past few decades. As shown in Figure 2.5, nearly 42% of the Township work force works in management, business, science, and arts occupations followed by sales and office (25.9%). Employment in Courtland Township is following national trends by continuing to move away from manufacturing and construction land toward professional or management careers. This is similar to many communities across Kent County and Michigan. Educational services and the health care and social assistance industry employed the greatest number of people in Courtland Township (24.5%), followed by manufacturing (17.3%) and professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (14.2%). Agriculture, information, and transportation and warehousing, and utilities employed the least number of people from Courtland Township. The share of agricultural careers among the total workforce has not been significant for decades. This may be an indicator of the possibility of increased development as agricultural lands continue to decrease across West Michigan while simultaneously there is increased pressure to be converted to residential and commercial uses.

Figure 2.6: Employment by Industry



Source: 2010-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, there were a total of 3,185 housing units in Courtland Township. Of these housing units, about 96% were reported to be occupied and 4% were reported to be vacant. A majority of the housing units in the Township are single family detached houses (98%) while the rest of the housing units are either 2-unit dwellings or mobile homes.

Figure 2.7: Housing Units by Occupancy



Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

Housing affordability is a measure of the percentage of disposable income for rent or mortgage payments for residential properties that fall below 25% to 28% of gross income. In 2020, the median household income in Courtland Township was estimated to be \$99,291. Using the metric of 25% of the gross income, an average of \$24,823 would be needed annually to pay housing costs at the affordable market threshold. The U.S. Census estimates that monthly median mortgage payments were \$1,678, or \$20,136 annually in Courtland Township. Median monthly rents were \$1,076 or \$12,912 annually. Comparing median household incomes with median rents and median mortgage payments information indicates that much of the housing in the Township would meet this standard, making the housing stock affordable for people in Courtland Township.

Figure 2.8: Median Listing Price for Housing Units, Kent County



Housing affordability is an important aspect for any community, and Courtland Township, as much of Kent County and Michigan, needs more affordable housing. As shown in Figure 2.8, the median listing prices for housing units in Kent County have been on the rise since 2017. According to Federal Reserve Economic Data, the highest median price in Kent County was recorded in June 2022 at \$369,996 which has since dropped down to \$349,900 in November 2022. However, the total number of listings have gone down since 2020, leading to a shortage and a relatively competitive housing market. The tight housing market and increasing prices are some obstacles that are faced by people living in Kent County which may also potentially affect Courtland Township.

EQUALIZED VALUE GROWTH

Property values are a key measure of economic growth and the financial strength of a community. Property values reflect the investment in new development and the degree of growth in the value of those investments. Annually the assessors of each jurisdiction report the total valuation with their respective jurisdictions. These are broken down by property classification and these reports can provide an illuminating impression of the character of a community.

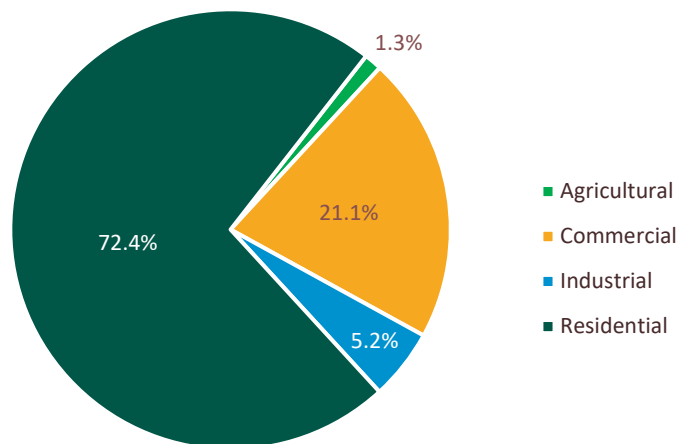
As shown in the Table below, the assessed value for real property in Courtland Township has been increasing over the past two decades. The total SEV for Courtland Township in 2000 was \$166.6 million. Five years later it had increased by over 60% to \$265.8 million. By 2021, the SEV had increased 50% since 2015 to \$466.5 million.

Table 2.2: Real Property Assessments, Courtland Township

Year	Assessed Value (SEV)	% Value Increase
2000	\$166,612,700	76%
2005	\$265,814,600	60%
2010	\$273,170,000	3%
2015	\$311,144,450	14%
2021	\$466,595,800	50%

It is also important to further examine property values to consider the breakdown among land use categories (property classifications) and the varying rates of growth in each classification.

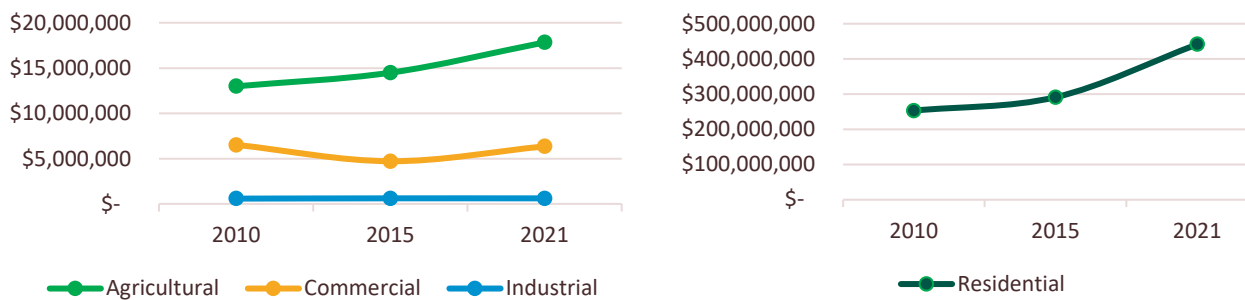
Figure 2.9: SEV by Property Class, 2021



Source: Kent County Equalization Department Annual Reports

As shown in Figure 9, residential properties make up the majority (72%) of the total SEV for Courtland Township which may be due to the rate of growth in the residences since 1990. Commercial property values make up about 21% of the total SEV in the Township followed by industrial property at 5% and agricultural property at 1%. Commercial property values have slowly increased over the past few decades while industrial property values have remained stable. The scale of residential real property values dominates all properties in Courtland Township, and the tax base is heavily weighted toward residential development.

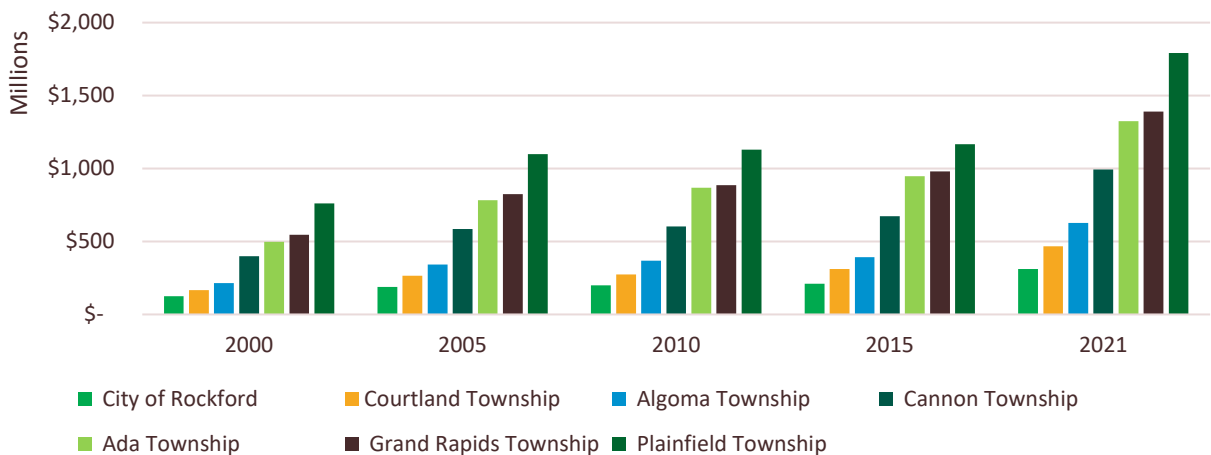
Figure 2.10: Growth in SEV by Property Class 2010-2021



Source: Kent County Equalization Department Annual Reports

The increase in SEV in the growing Grand Rapids area has positively impacted Courtland Township. Figure 9 compares the total SEV for Courtland Township and the surrounding communities. As shown in the chart, all of the surrounding communities, including Courtland Township, experienced an overall increase in SEV over the past two decades. Plainfield Township and Grand Rapids Township are among the top two communities in the area in terms of SEV with values of \$1.7 billion and \$1.3 billion respectively.

Figure 2.11: Regional Growth in SEV 2000-2021



Source: Kent County Equalization Department Annual Reports

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Courtland Township's population is expected to continue to increase over time. Located within the growing west Michigan Grand Rapids metropolitan area, near employment centers and multiple large health care facilities, containing great school districts, and in a rural setting, the community should prepare for more people to be attracted to its desirable amenities.

The mix of amenities available to residents and visitors may impact the future demographic composition of the Township. If the Township wants to accommodate the population growth that is projected based on the three growth rates outlined in this chapter, officials will want to think and act strategically to prepare the community for these changes. That may mean having provisions for and investing in Senior Centers, schools, and employment training centers. Making sure that infrastructure like roads, public water systems, and utilities are managed and maintained appropriately over time. Building sound drinking water and storm water treatment facilities are also important.

The Township is also heavily reliant on the residential tax base. Typically, residential development requires more in services than it provides in revenue. A more diverse tax base tends to spread the cost and requirements of local services on a broader range of land use and population. However, a large-scale change undertaken in a short period may meet resistance from members of the community that are concerned about the character of their community. These things need to be taken into consideration and balanced carefully.

The rate of population growth will also likely be affected by some outside factors that are beyond the scope of the Township's control like the economy, housing affordability, and major weather events. All of these changes will have impacts on how land in Courtland Township is used.

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CHAPTER 3

NATURAL FEATURES



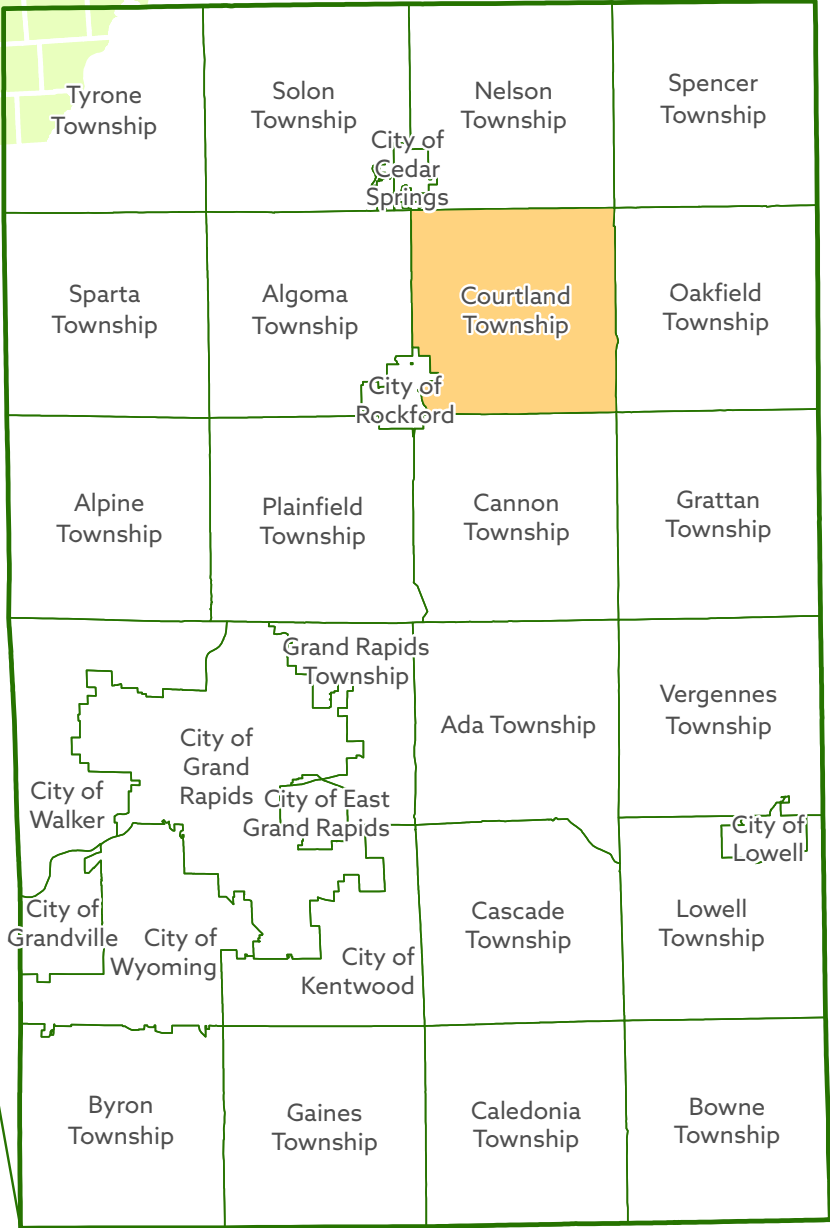
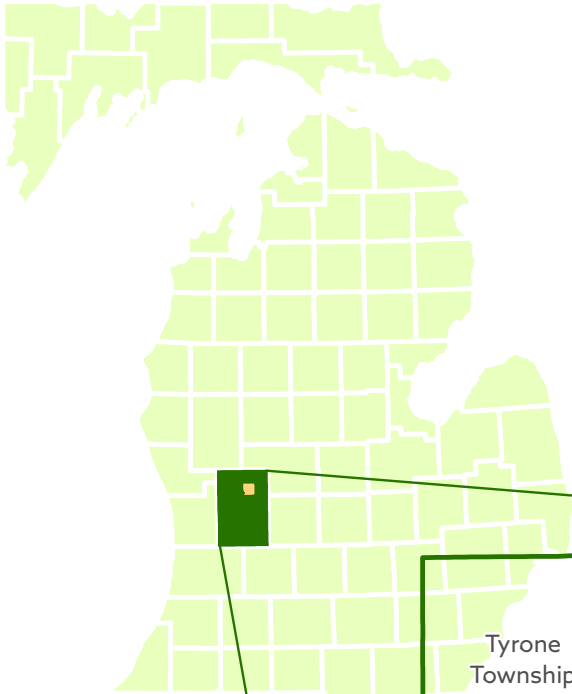


Courtland Township is situated in Northern Kent County, with the City of Rockford to the Southwest. Cannon Township lies to the south, Oakfield Township to the East, Nelson Township to the North, and Algoma Township to the West. Via M-57 there is quick access to US-131 to the West and the City of Greenville to the East.

Although the southern border of Courtland Township has been increasing in residential development, much of the Township remains natural and agricultural land. The largest contiguous portion of agricultural land is centered at the intersection of 13 Mile Road and Myers Lake Road, as well as the central and northeastern borders with Oakfield Township.

Courtland Township is characterized by large swaths of natural areas that include woodlands, wetlands, and agricultural fields. A significant portion of wooded wetlands can be found in the northeastern quarter of the Township. The largest portion of herbaceous wetland abuts 13 Mile and Stout Roads.

MAP 1: LOCATION



LAKES AND RIVERS

Six lakes in the southern portion of Courtland Township draw summer and year-round residents. Big and Little Myers Lakes, Big and Little Brower Lakes, Stoner's Lake, and Tamarack Lake contribute to the recreational appeal of the area.

Brower Lakes. Development has occurred around the entirety of the 85-acre Big Brower Lake. It has a maximum depth of 27 feet near the center, and most of the shoreline is sandy. Many lots have remained wooded to the point abutting the lake in the front, or pastures to the rear. Little Brower Lake is relatively small at 23.8 acres, with a depth of 12 feet at the center.

Myers Lakes. Big Myers Lake has an area of 85 acres and a depth of over 40 feet in some areas. Big Myers Lake is almost surrounded by residential development with homes being set back between 100 - 300 feet. Little Myers Lake also has many single-family homes with some undeveloped shorelines due to the proximity of the roads. Myers Lake Park is situated between the two lakes, sharing shorelines with each water body, and is dedicated parkland.

Stoner Lake. Located just northeast of the Myers Lakes, there are 77 acres of surface water. The land around the lake is mostly undeveloped.

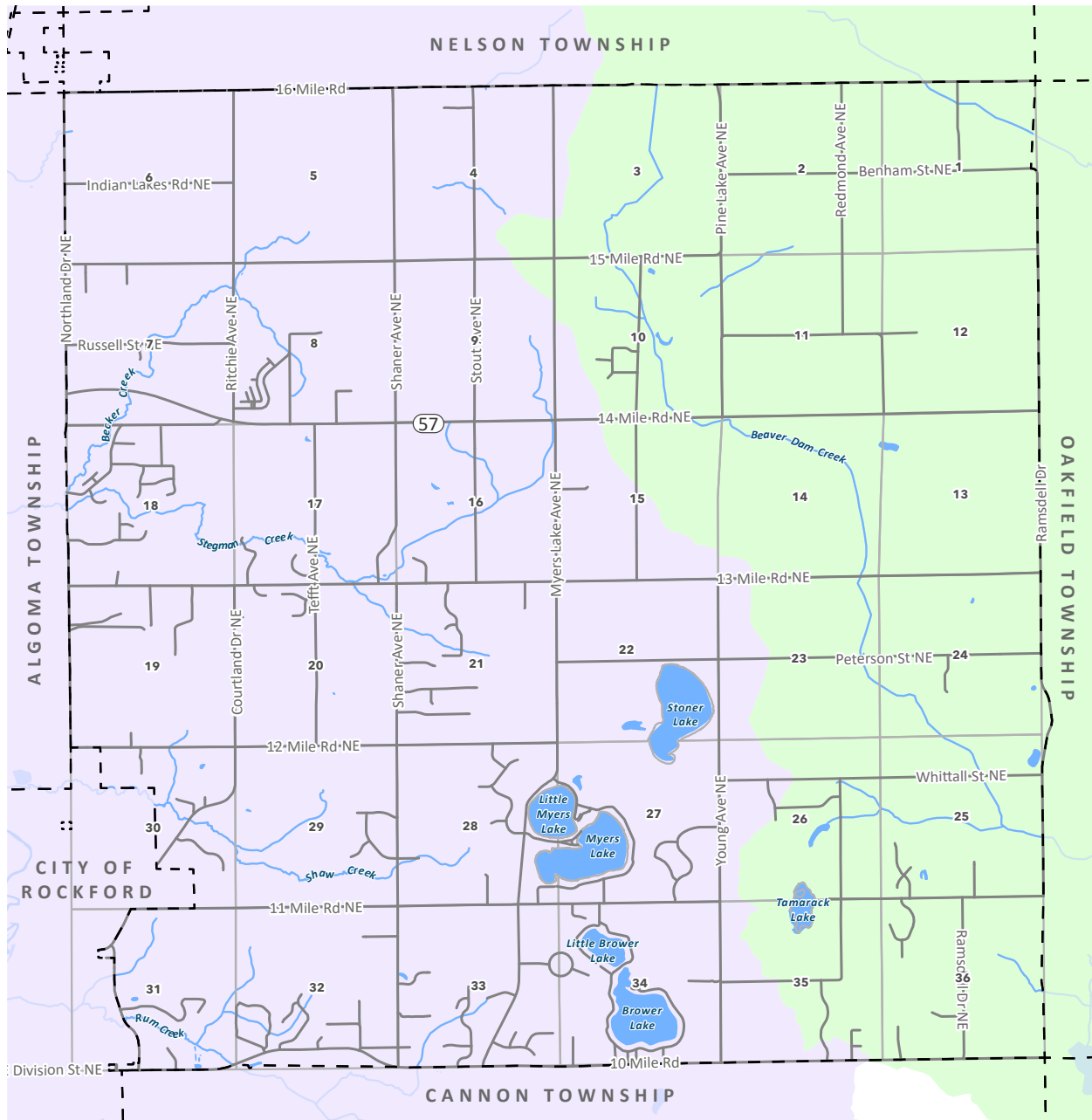
Other Lakes. Along many of the smaller lakes like Tamarack, Davis, Cordes, and Carlson there is a notable amount of undeveloped shoreline. This can keep the water quality in good condition.

No major river runs through the community however, creeks and streams are prevalent throughout the Township. Beaver Dam, Shaw, Becker, Stegman, and Rum Creeks flow in the Township boundary.

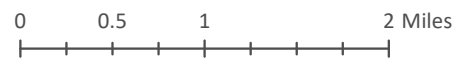
WATERSHEDS

A watershed is a region of land that is drained by a particular river or river system. Typically, these systems include many smaller tributaries such as creeks and streams that feed into a larger river and are influenced by elevation or the lay of the land. Flat River and Rogue River watersheds divide the Township in half and eventually wind their way to the Grand River, as shown in Map 2.

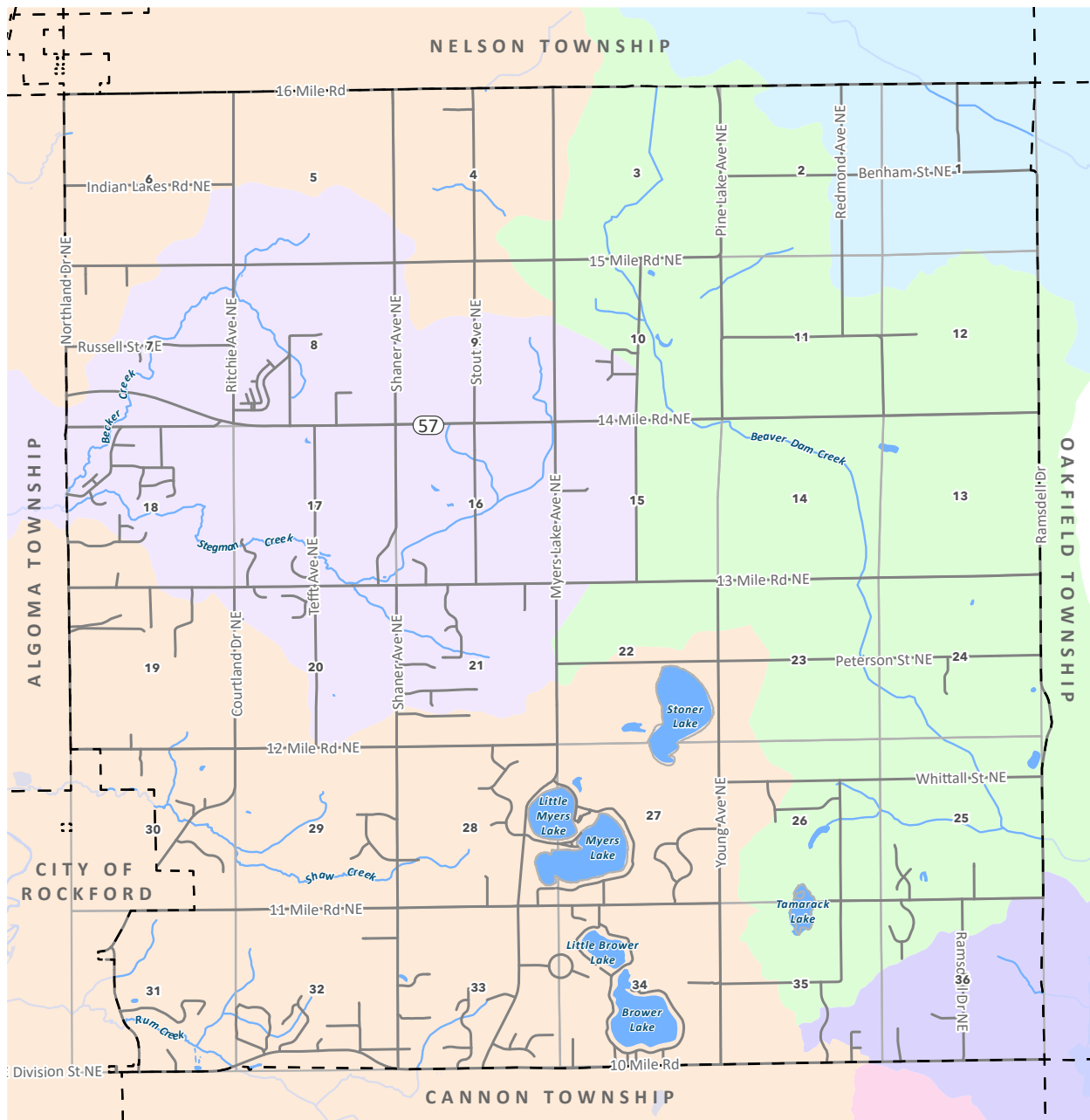
MAP 2: WATERSHEDS



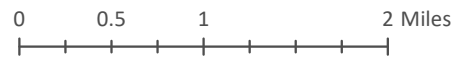
- Flat River Watershed
- Rogue River Watershed
- Streams
- Lakes



MAP 3: WATERSHED SUBBASINS



- | Watershed Subbasin | |
|--|---|
| Bear Creek | Seely Creek |
| Beaver Dam Creek | Stegman Creek |
| Coopers Creek | Streams |
| Rogue River | Lakes |



The Rogue River watershed subbasin covers the western half of Courtland Township, pulling water from Becker, Stegman, Shaw, and Rum Creeks, and eventually flowing to the Rouge River. The Rogue River is a major tributary of the Grand River. The Flat River Watershed incorporates 150 miles of stream channels. Flat River and its tributaries are incredibly scenic and are known for their recreational possibilities.

There are five watershed subbasins in the Courtland Township boundary as shown in Map 3: Beaver Dam Creek, Coopers Creek, Rogue River, Seely Creek, and Stegman Creek. A sub-watershed is the area of land that water flows over or through to drain into a larger body of water. A majority of the Township falls in the Rogue River sub watershed followed by Beaver Dam Creek and Stegman Creek. The southeast corner of the Township is drained by the Seely Creek sub watershed.

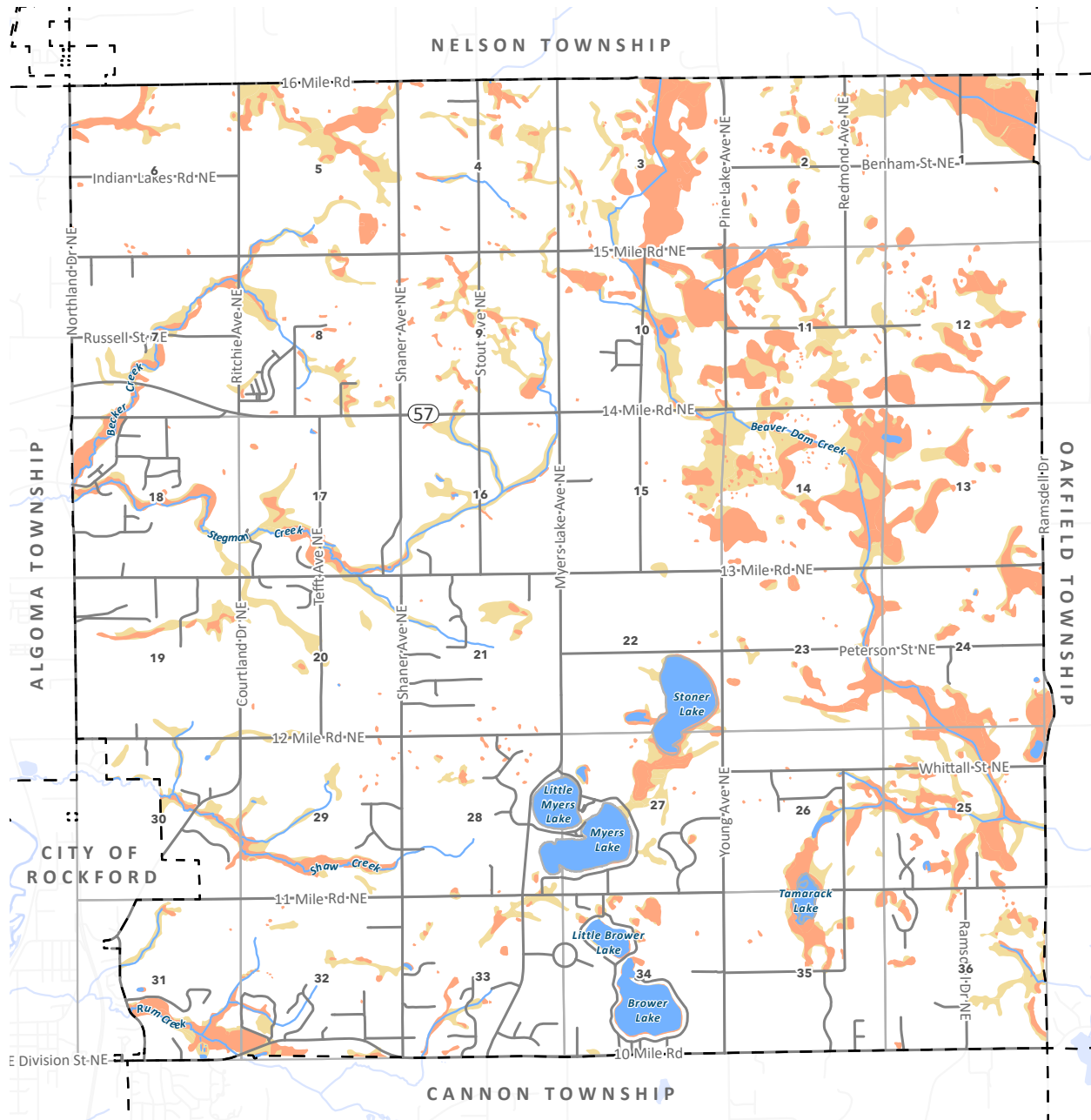
WETLANDS

Michigan's wetlands law recognizes the important benefits provided by wetlands and their vital role in recreation, tourism, and the economy. Wetlands are an important hydrological feature in Courtland Township. Wetlands are complex ecological systems that provide valuable drainage, flood control, and water purification functions. Wetlands that overlay groundwater recharge areas improve groundwater quality by filtering the water as it percolates through the soil. Wetlands located along a watercourse protect surface water quality by filtering surface run-off. Finally, wetlands are highly productive ecosystems, which provide essential habitat to much of Michigan's fish and wildlife.

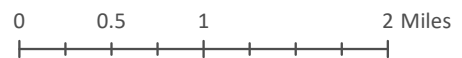
A majority of the wetlands found in Courtland Township are freshwater forested/shrub wetlands with a small percentage of freshwater emergent wetlands. Large clusters of wetlands can be found around Beaver Dam Creek in the eastern half of the Township as shown on Map 4.

Areas with hydric soils can also be seen on the map along with wetlands. Hydric soils are soils that are saturated with water permanently or seasonally, resulting in anaerobic conditions as found in wetlands. If the soil is continually saturated throughout the growing season, the lack of oxygen may slow the rate of decay of plant matter and result in the accumulation of thick layers of peat or muck.

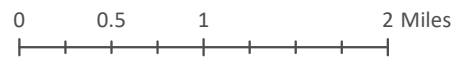
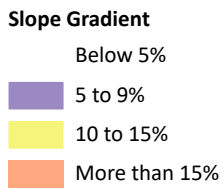
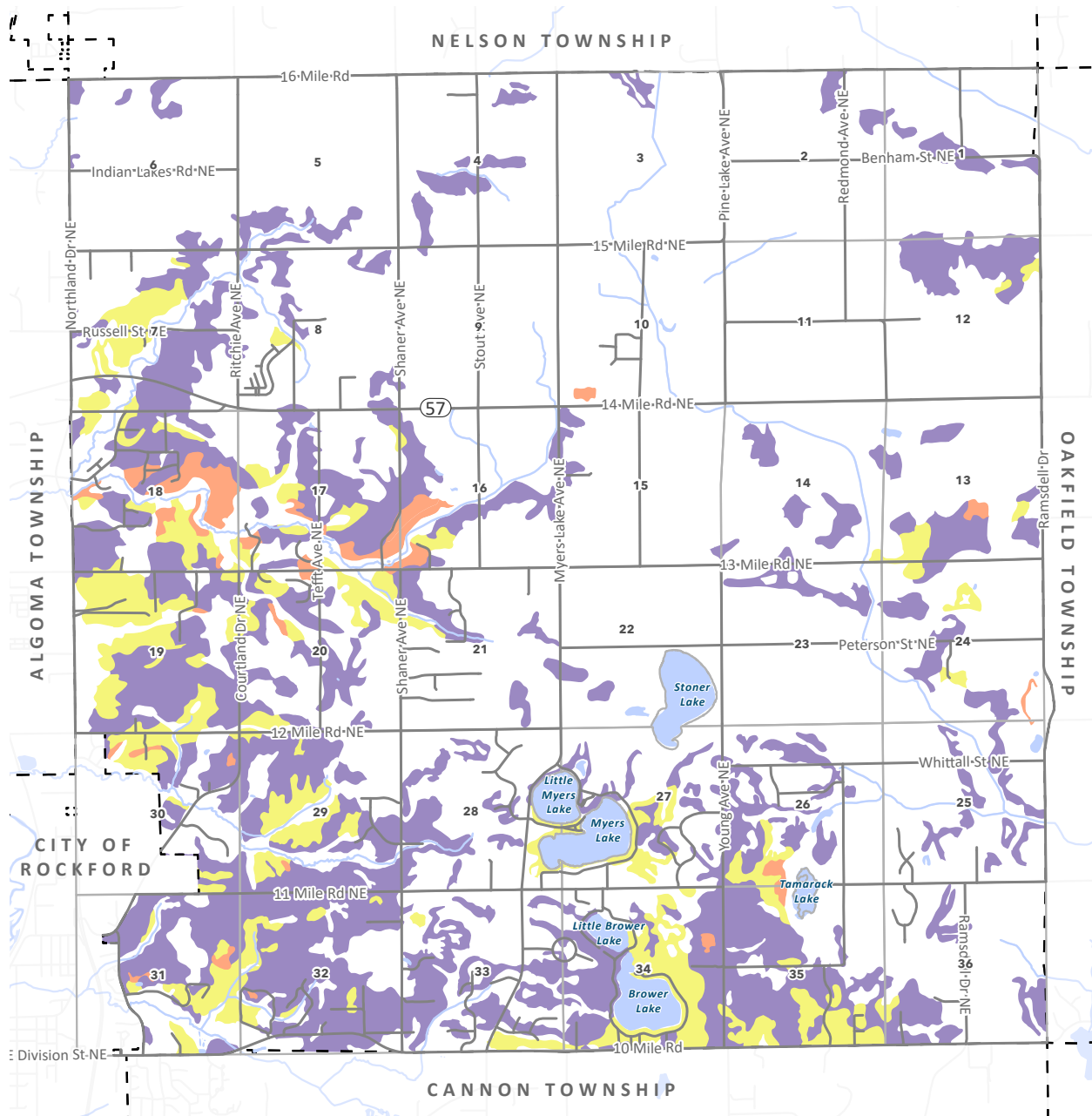
MAP 4: WETLANDS



- Wetlands
- Hydric Soil
- Lakes
- Streams
- Cities & Townships



MAP 5: SLOPE



CLIMATE

The climate conditions vary throughout the year. There are an average of 160 sunny days annually. Average annual low temperatures are 40.3° F and typically in January. Average high temperatures are 82.8°F and typically in July. Yearly rainfall is 37 inches per year and 66 inches of snow in Courtland Township, whereas the average in the United States is 38 inches of rainfall and 27 inches of snow. These climatic factors are typical of seasonal change in a mid-latitude climate and produce fertile grounds for agriculture, woodlands, and wetlands.

TOPOGRAPHY

The topography within the Township is flat along the northern and most of the eastern portion of the Township. Hilly areas are more commonly found in the western and southern areas. Map 5 highlights the areas that have slopes with more than a 5% grade. This is important to highlight when it comes to understanding the areas that may be more suitable for development. Topographic relief can provide visual interest to an otherwise ordinary development project and can affect storm water drainage. Small hills and ravines can be used to separate different, incompatible land uses and can provide appealing views.

SOILS

Soil composition is an important feature to review in a master plan. Some soils are not well suited for individual septic systems and may threaten ground water or surface water quality due to a lack of proper filtration. Soils can also produce dramatically different results when used for agricultural purposes. The size of soil particles is also important as the amount of open space between the particles influence water movement through a soil.

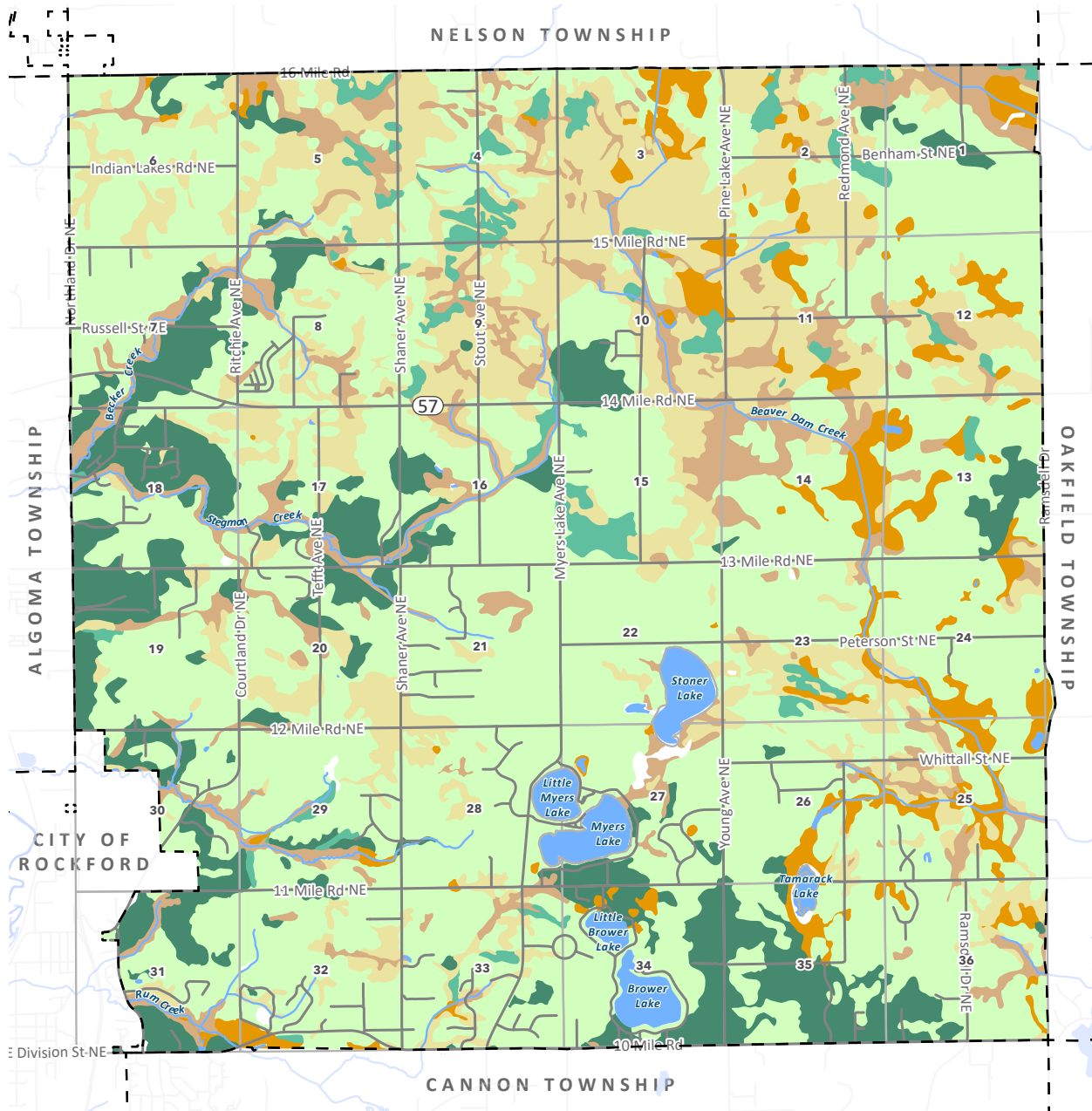
Excessively drained soils are characterized by a rapid rate of water drainage. They typically have a sandy or gravelly texture that allows water to quickly percolate through the soil profile. While this can be beneficial in preventing waterlogging and providing aeration to plant roots, excessively drained soils may also pose challenges as they can lead to quicker nutrient leaching. Drought stress is another potential concern in these soils as water drains rapidly, making it challenging for plants to retain adequate moisture.

Conversely, poorly drained soils retain water for extended periods due to slower drainage. These soils often have a higher clay content or are situated in areas with a high-water table. Poor drainage can lead to waterlogging, reducing the availability of oxygen to plant roots and potentially causing root rot. While some plant species may be adapted to such conditions, poorly drained soils can limit agricultural productivity and may require specific management practices to improve drainage.

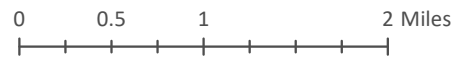
Well drained soils allow water to percolate through it reasonably quickly and not pool approximately at a rate of 1 inch every hour. Deep, loamy soil and sloping sites tend to be well drained. They help reduce the risk of flooding, protecting properties, and enhancing overall resilience to extreme weather events.

Soil particles vary greatly in size, and the Soil Survey Manual from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) classify soil particles into sand, silt, and clay. Starting with the finest, clay particles are smaller than 0.002 mm in diameter. Some clay particles are so small that ordinary microscopes do not show them. Silt particles are from 0.002 to 0.05 mm in diameter. Sand ranges from 0.05 to 2.0 mm. Particles larger than 2.0 mm are called gravel or stones. Most soils contain a mixture of sand, silt, and clay in different proportions. As shown in Map 7, coarse-loamy and loamy soils can be found throughout Courtland Township. Areas of mixed soil can also be found along the Stegman Creek and around Brower Lake and Myers Lake. Mixed soils include clay, silt, and salt contents.

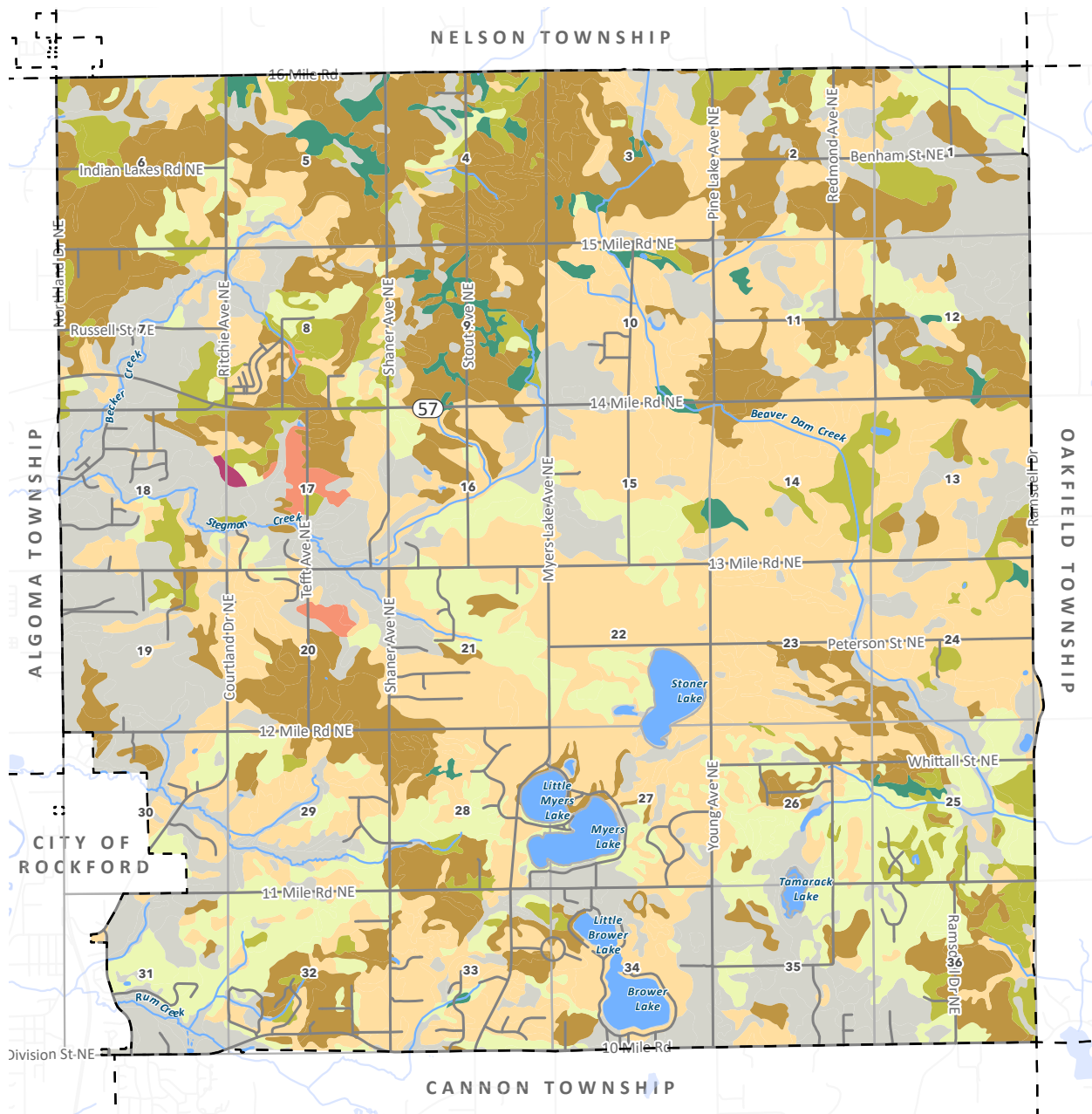
MAP 6: SOILS



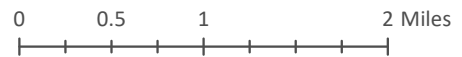
- Excessively drained
- Moderately well drained
- Well drained
- Somewhat poorly drained
- Poorly drained
- Very poorly drained



MAP 7: SOIL PARTICLES



- | | | | |
|--|--------------|--|-------------|
| | Clayey | | Loamy |
| | Coarse-Loamy | | Sandy |
| | Fine | | Sandy-Loamy |
| | Fine-Loamy | | Mixed |



WOODLANDS

While regulations have been developed to protect certain critical environmental areas, woodlands have been relatively ignored, even though their benefits to the public as buffers and moderators of flooding, erosion, and noise, and air pollution are important to the Township's quality of life. Woodlands are buffered to the sights and sounds of civilization. Woodlands mute the noise from highways and other land uses. Along major roadways, such as Fourteen Mile Road, woodlands can provide visual relief from the monotony of the landscape. Woodlands should be preserved, including wooded areas on private lands. A review of the change in woodland land cover is included later in this chapter under the subsection Land Cover.

A majority of the forest land in the Township is classified as Deciduous Forest. Temperate deciduous forests are located in the mid-latitude areas and are exposed to warm and cold air masses, which cause this area to have four seasons. During the fall, trees change color and then lose their leaves. They also have thick bark to protect them from the cold weather. Trees flower and grow during the spring and summer growing seasons. Many different kinds of trees, shrubs, and herbs grow in deciduous forests. Most of the trees are broadleaf trees such as oak, maple, beech, hickory, and chestnut.

LAND COVER

Land Cover describes the vegetation or land use that occupies the land in a given community. The land cover data that was analyzed includes data from National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD) as prepared by the United States Geological Services (USGS) in 2019. The information was derived from Landsat™ (Thematic Mapper) satellite imagery and was interpreted using an automated computer-based process. This was followed by an accuracy assessment of the satellite data that involved the usage of aerial photographs to judge the quality of the computer-based interpretation.

The 2019 data was released in May 2021 to provide "explicit and reliable information on the Nation's land cover and land cover change." The information is useful in determining the distribution of vegetation and development patterns and their change over time throughout the Township. The 2019 NLCD includes 16 classes of land cover type based on a modified Anderson level II classification system.

As shown in Table 1, the predominant land cover type found in Courtland Township is agricultural (48.2%), which is a composite of two NLCD classes found in the Township: pasture/hay and crops. Forest land cover class is the second largest class in the Township which is an aggregate grouping of three forest cover types: deciduous, evergreen, and mixed forests, representing 21.8% of the township land. The third largest class in the Township is wetlands which account for about 12.3% of the land. The smallest percentage of land cover is barren land and grasslands, which are comprised of herbaceous and shrub/shrubland NLCD classes. This is likely due to the large presence of agricultural land in the Township which often converts flat grassland properties into agricultural fields.

Table 3.1: Land Cover Classification

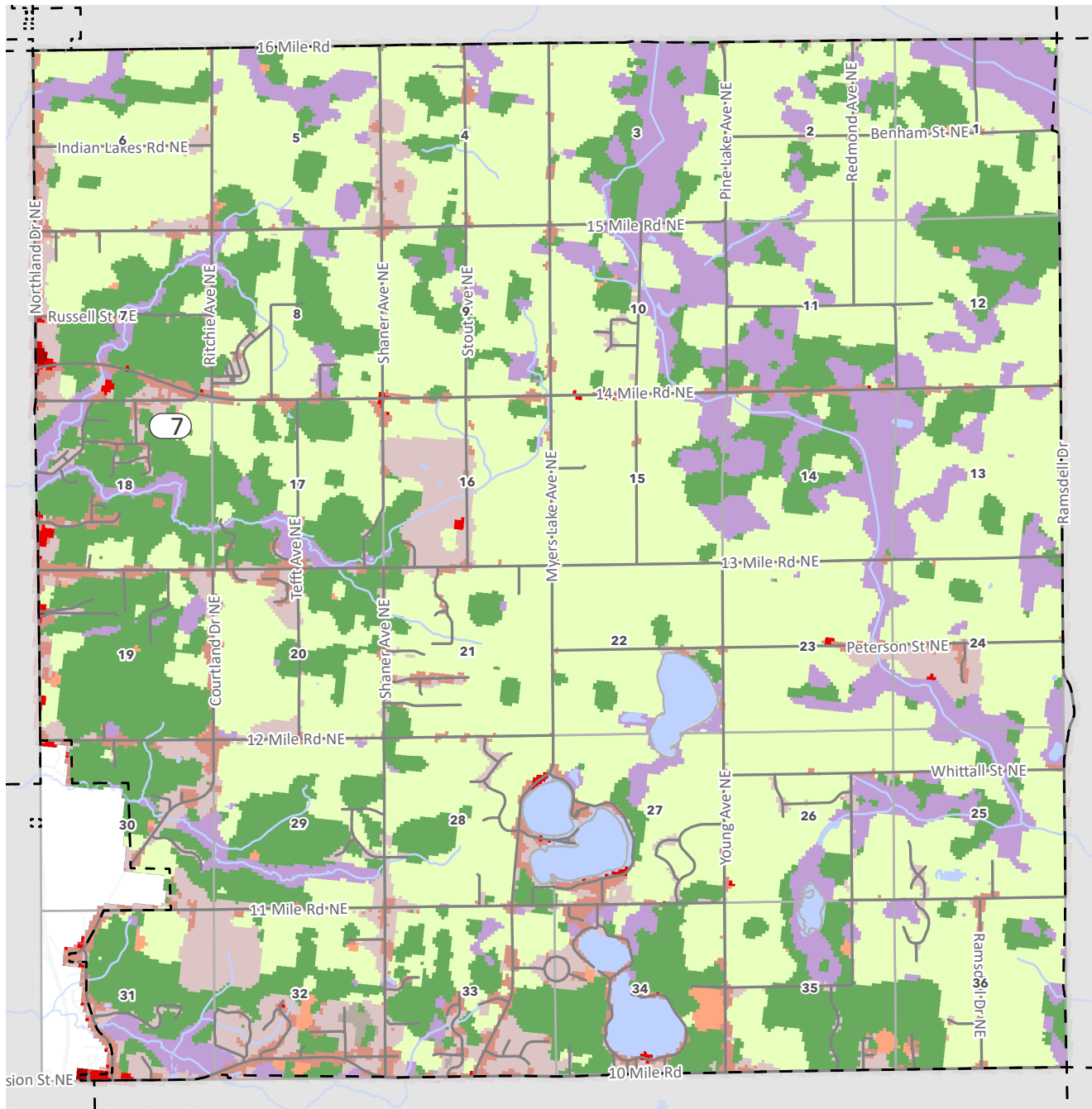
Land Cover Classification	Acres (2019)	Percent (2019)	Acres (2001)	Percent (2001)	Change (Acres)	Change (Percent)
Open Water	315	1.4%	347	1.5%	-32	-9%
Developed, Open Space	1,897	8.2%	2,023	8.8%	-126	-6%
Developed, Low Intensity	1,363	5.9%	1,314	5.7%	49	4%
Developed, Medium Intensity	316	1.4%	187	0.8%	129	69%
Developed, High Intensity	22	0.1%	11	0.05%	11	96%
Barren Land	10	0.05%	48	0.2%	-38	-78%
Forest	5,009	21.8%	4,983	21.6%	26	1%
Grassland	161	0.7%	131	0.6%	30	23%
Wetlands	2,826	12.3%	2,787	12.1%	38	1%
Agricultural	11,100	48.2%	11,186	48.6%	-86	-1%











Source: USGS National Land Cover Dataset 2019

LAND COVER CHANGE

Map 8 provides a visual representation of the change in land cover from 2001 to 2019. Comparing the total acreage of land cover classes between 2001 and 2019 also provides insight into which classes are increasing or decreasing in acreage (Figure 1). The land cover in Courtland Township has changed very little in nearly 20 years. The “Developed Medium-Density” category has had the largest increase in the total number of acres, with 129 acres that include areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. According to the technical definition of that category, impervious surfaces account for anywhere from 50% to 79% of the total cover in this classification and commonly include single-family housing units.

MAP 8a: LAND COVER - 2001

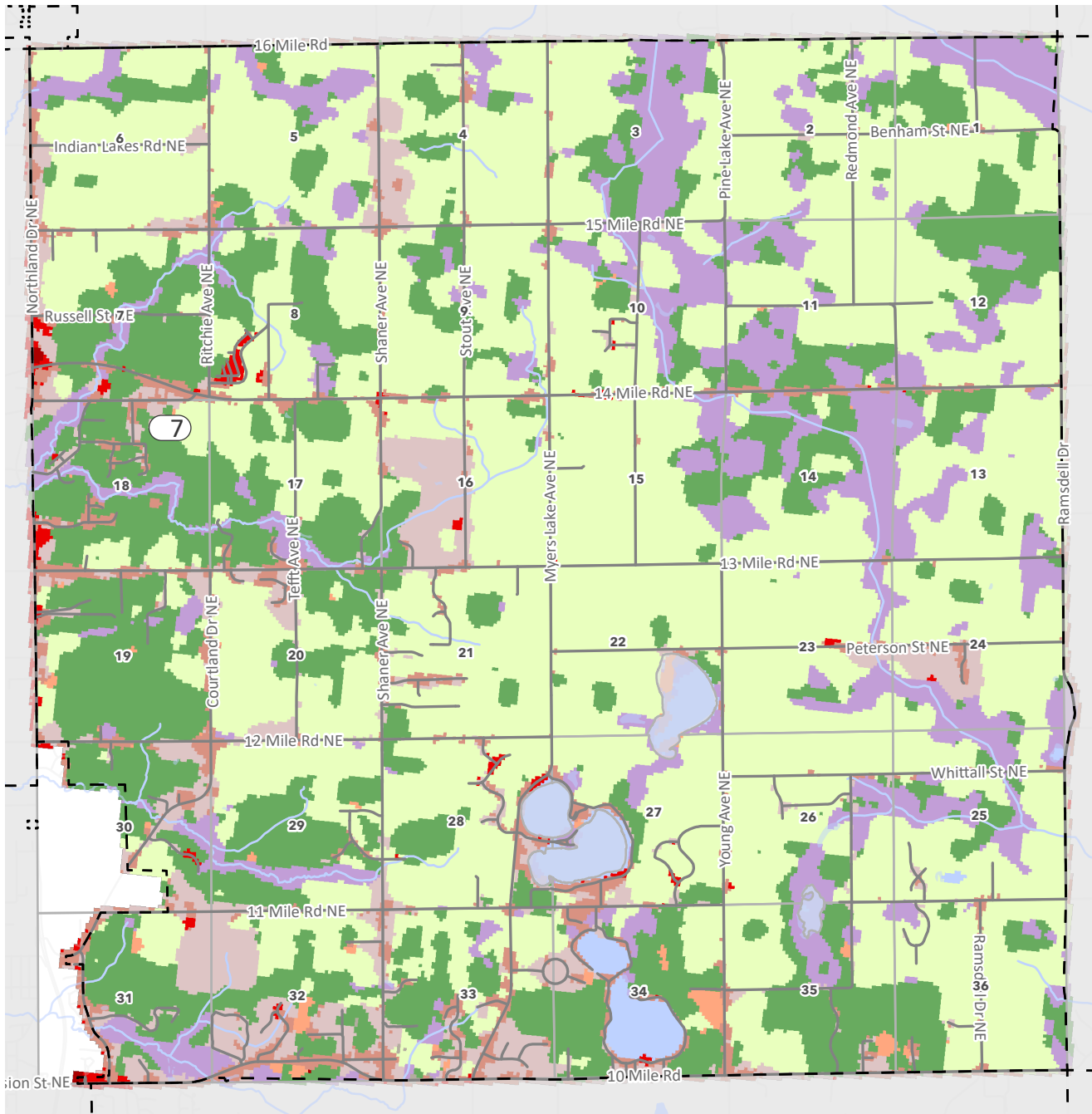












- | | |
|---|--|
|  Open Water |  Barren Land |
|  Developed, Open Space |  Forest |
|  Developed, Low Intensity |  Grasslands |
|  Developed, Medium Intensity |  Agricultural |
|  Developed, High Intensity |  Wetlands |

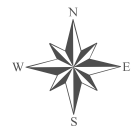
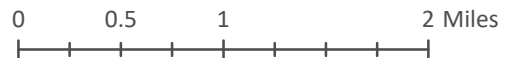
0 0.5 1 2 Miles



MAP 8b: LAND COVER - 2019



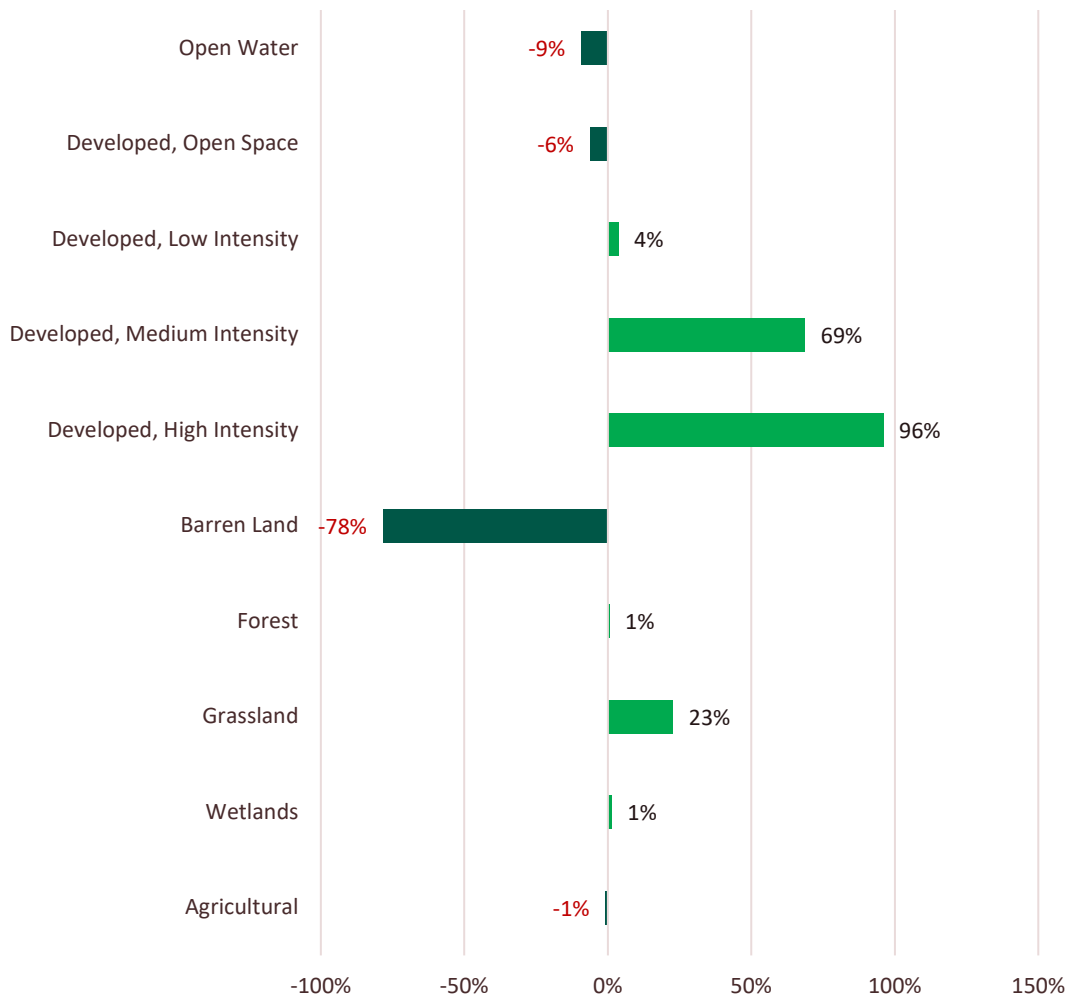
- | | |
|---|--|
|  Open Water |  Barren Land |
|  Developed, Open Space |  Forest |
|  Developed, Low Intensity |  Grasslands |
|  Developed, Medium Intensity |  Agricultural |
|  Developed, High Intensity |  Wetlands |



The “Developed, Open Space” category experienced the largest decrease in the total number of acres (-126) from 2001 to 2019. According to the technical definition for this category, areas have a mixture of some constructed materials but contain mostly vegetation in the form of lawn grasses. These areas most commonly include large lot single-family housing units, parks, golf courses, and vegetation planted in developed settings for recreation, erosion control, or aesthetic purposes.

Agricultural land experienced a minor decline since 2001 with a loss of 86 acres while there was an increase of 38 acres in the wetland category. The Forest class also gained an additional 26 acres of land in the Township. With the categories that have very minor changes over time, this could be due to the growth of a given area/ category or due to the improvement in data gathered as technology improves over time. There was a 78% decrease in barren land which may have led to an increase in both high and medium density development.

Figure 3.1: Land Cover Change (2001-2019)



Source: USGS National Land Cover Dataset 2001-2019

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS: HOW DEVELOPMENT AFFECTS NATURAL RESOURCES

The landscape is a complex and fragile resource. Landforms, water, and vegetation are all important interrelated elements in the natural ecology of the Township. There are two development approaches to consider when addressing the natural features of Courtland Township: preservation and integration. Preservation measures should be applied to the features that are sensitive and/or valued so that any alteration would negatively impact the aesthetics and/or environmental qualities. In these areas, development should be either prohibited or limited to projects which have a negligible effect on the environment. Wetlands and flood-prone areas are examples of areas that are recommended to have preservation techniques or specific guidelines on how to include developments that would be minimally impacted. Areas of woodlands should also be preserved, and clear-cutting should continue to be prohibited, including on private land.

In areas where the natural features are an essential part of the community's character and changes would have a minor impact, integration may be an adequate management technique. Integration would allow development to occur as long as it was compatible with the surrounding area following the recommended growth strategies, policies, and laws. Integration can provide a minimal opportunity for disturbance in an area where natural features are valued.

Courtland Township has been able to minimize the impact of the increase of the built environment on natural resources. However, for that balance to continue, Township officials should think strategically about areas or types of places that it wants to preserve. Community leaders should also think about implementing specific kinds of development techniques and tools. These kinds of recommendations will be further outlined in Chapter 8 Implementation.

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CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES





Community facilities play a significant role in preserving the quality of life, augmenting civic engagement, sponsoring cultural events, and promoting community pride. In tandem with important networks of recreational areas, public schools, and civic buildings provide local spaces for interaction, learning, and community building. The planning implications for planned growth are that it remains geographically aggregated in desirable community locations. One key component to creating desirable communities is to provide well planned easy access to appropriate levels of such facilities

This chapter begins with a brief look at higher education opportunities within the region and describes school enrollment. Parks and recreation areas are subsequently discussed. Finally, the chapter touches on public safety services and facilities.

EDUCATION

Higher Education

Regional opportunities for extended education are helpful tools in fostering economic sustainability and regional growth. Institutions of higher education are located in and near Grand Rapids include Grand Valley State University, Aquinas College, Calvin College, Cornerstone University, and Grand Rapids Community College. Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College are located in Kalamazoo. Institutions in the Lansing area include Michigan State University, Eastern Michigan University, and Davenport University. Ferris State University also collaborates with Rockford Public Schools.

Courtland Township is serviced by two public school systems. Both districts also serve communities in neighboring townships and are a part of the Kent Intermediate School District (KISD).

K-12 Schools

The Rockford Public Schools District serves families in the southern area of the Township. The district primarily covers portions of Courtland Township South of 13 Mile Rd and Shaner. Total enrollment within the entire District is 7,862 (2021-22 school year). The graduation rate for Rockford was reported to be 91.3%.

The Cedar Springs School District serves families mainly to the north of 14 Mile Rd. The total enrollment for the district is 3,348 with just over 1,000 students enrolled at the high school level. All of the public school facilities are outside of the borders of Courtland Township. The graduation rate for Cedar Springs was reported to be at 80.3%.

Table 4.1: Student Count, Cedar Springs Public School District (2021-2022)

School	Grade Span	Student Count
Beach Elementary School	K-5	516
Cedar Trails Elementary School	K-5	546
Cedar View Elementary School	K -5, 6-8	516
Cedar Springs Middle School	6-8	533
Red Hawk Elementary	6-8	280
Cedar Springs High School	9-12	1,102

Source: Michigan School Data

Table 4.2: Student Count, Rockford Public School District (2021-2022)

School	Grade Span	Student Count
Belmont Elementary School	K-5	385
Cannonsburg Elementary School	K-5	218
Crestwood Elementary School	K-5	493
Lakes Elementary School	K-5	511
Meadow Ridge Elementary School	K-5	433
Parkside Elementary School	K-5	277
Roguewood Elementary School	K-5	644
Valley View Elementary School	K-5	651
North Rockford Middle School	6-8	951
East Rockford Middle School	6-8	816
River Valley Academy	9-12	64
Rockford H.S. Freshman Center	9	624
Rockford High School	10-12	1,795

Source: Michigan School Data

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Police, fire, and emergency medical services are necessary for any community, as they protect the general welfare, help alleviate crime, and give medical treatment when needed. Due to the relatively small population in the Township, many public services are shared with the surrounding communities.

Police

Courtland Township is a beneficiary of the Township Patrol Program run by the Kent County Sherriff's Department. There are 33 county deputies, each of whom is assigned to one of the nine participating Townships. Services by the State of Michigan Police Department and Kent County Sherriff's Office are provided through an on-call basis. Algoma Township and Courtland Township agreed to support a part-time position in the Spring of 2023.

Fire

Fire protection services were initially provided to Courtland Township by the Harvard Fire Department. In 1991, the Courtland Township Board of Trustees voted to start their own fire department.

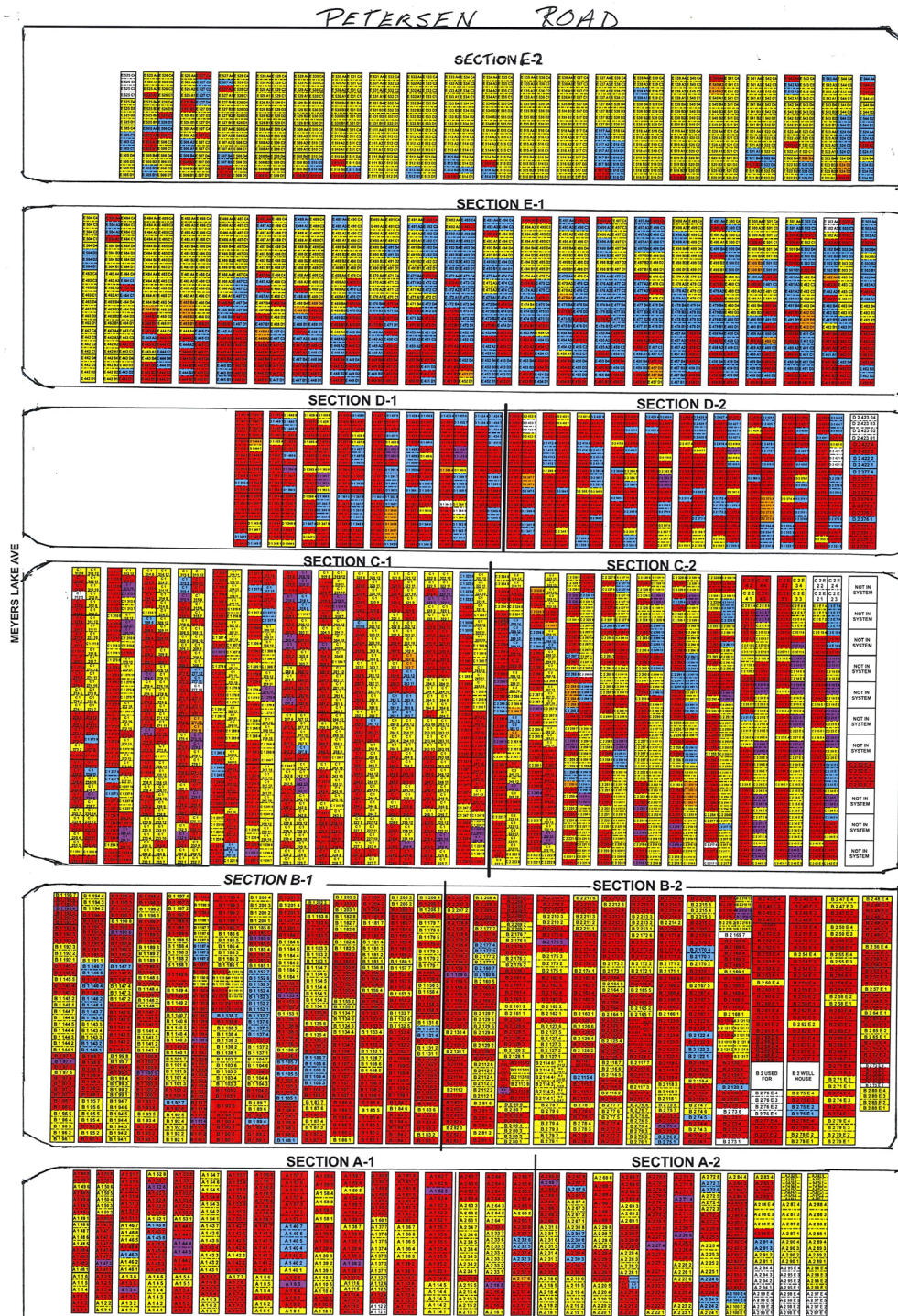
There are two fire stations within Courtland Township. Station 1 is located adjacent to the Township Hall east of the intersection of Myers Lake Avenue and 14 Mile Road. Station 1 serves as the primary fire station and contains multiple fire apparatus including a fire engine capable of delivering 1,250 gallons/minute, a 3,800-gallon water tanker, a rescue vehicle, a grass truck, and a utility truck. Station 2 was built in 2008 and is located at the intersection of Myers Lake Avenue and Peninsula Drive just west of Myers Lake. This station houses a pumper, a rescue vehicle, and a grass truck. Firefighters run out of both stations. Both fire stations are equipped with emergency response generators. In case of a prolonged power outage, water and emergency shelter can be made available to the residents at either fire station.

In addition to expecting a wider range of services from the fire department, residents have grown to rely more heavily on the fire department for non-traditional requests. Call volume at Courtland Township has increased from 150 to 400 calls per year. The majority of the emergency calls are for residents requiring medical attention as well as being first responders to crashes on M-57.

Hospital

The City of Grand Rapids is home to major medical hospitals and dozens of specialized clinics. There are six acute-care hospitals in the City of Grand Rapids that service the area and are supported by a network of urgent-care providers and satellite locations. Hospitals in Grand Rapids include Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, Mercy Health Saint Mary's, Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Spectrum Health Blodgett Hospital, etc. A majority of medical situations taking place in Courtland Township are directed to facilities in Grand Rapids, ten miles to the southwest. Spectrum Health United Hospital in the City of Greenville located ten miles to the east also provides personalized medical care from doctors, clinics, lab services, cancer care, and advanced medical services to the residents of Courtland Township.

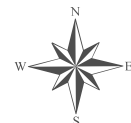
MAP 9: CEMETERY MAP



CEMETERY LOT STATUS

NOTE: LOT STATUS BASED ON DATA PROVIDED BY TOWNSHIP MAY 2019.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Occupied | Hold |
| Sold | Available |
| Monument | Unavailable |



CEMETERIES

The Township owns and maintains a public cemetery located at 10350 Myers Lake Avenue, NE, as shown on Map 9. Cemetery lots are available to residents and non-residents. Resolution 2010-11 outline the rules and regulations for the Cemetery regarding title and applicability, definitions, sale of graves or burial rights, monuments, markers, grave adornments, ground maintenance, interment, hours, forfeiture of vacant graves, repurchase of graves, cemetery records, the sexton, and the effective date. As of March 2022, there was a fee schedule for the cost of cemetery lots, burials, and additional fees related to burials.

PARKS & RECREATION

Courtland Township owns and maintains two local parks: Township Hall Park and Annis Fish Hatchery Preserve. Kent County maintains the Myers Lake Park located at Myers Lake and the Brower Lake Nature preserve is maintained by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. Parks and other recreation facilities can be seen on Map 10. Courtland Township acquired a 37.67-acre land donation from Daniel Davis on March 1, 2023, and the Township Park Committee will be reviewing this property for use in 2024.

Courtland Township Hall Park

The 17.89-acre Township Park is located west of the Township Hall and Fire Hall on 14 Mile Road. The property amenities include playground equipment, a pavilion, a picnic area, walking paths, a volleyball court, parking, a softball diamond, pickleball courts, regulation horseshoe pits, an 18-hole disc golf course, and public restrooms. Part of the park is undeveloped with open space consisting of scrub vegetation and open grasslands.

The Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2023 - 2027 calls for new amenities including restroom, picnic facilities, additional play equipment, an additional softball diamond, basketball court, tennis courts, and a dog park.

Annis Fish Hatchery Preserve

This newly acquired park property currently consists of open land along with five ponds. The park is 16.36 acres in size. The Courtland Township Parks and Recreation Plan has developed this site for public enjoyment by adding a boardwalk, parking area, an entrance drive, and picnic tables. Two of the existing ponds will be improved for wildlife

habitat and nature viewing. Approximately 1,275 feet of a path has been installed, along with a short boardwalk, parking area, and entrance drive. Significant eradication of non-native species, and planting of native species, are also in process. Grants from Ducks Unlimited assisted in the purchase of the property.

Brower Lake Nature Preserve

Located at 8748 Je-Ne-Be Drive, Brower Lake Nature Preserve is a Category 2 preserve that permanently protects wetlands and forests in an area increasingly pressured by development. The preserve includes 1.4 miles of trails that wind across the hills and lead hikers through several forest types and a variety of wetlands (rare bog and oak barren ecosystems), providing excellent opportunities for birding, wildlife viewing, and enjoying quiet encounters with nature. The preserve is maintained by the West Michigan Land Conservancy and is open to the public for recreational use.

Migratory birds like the Baltimore oriole and Blackburnian warbler can be spotted in the forest overstory in the spring and fall. The land conservancy is working to restore the oak barrens and oak-hickory forests on the preserve by carefully using prescribed fire and selectively thinning the dense forest canopy.

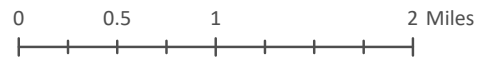
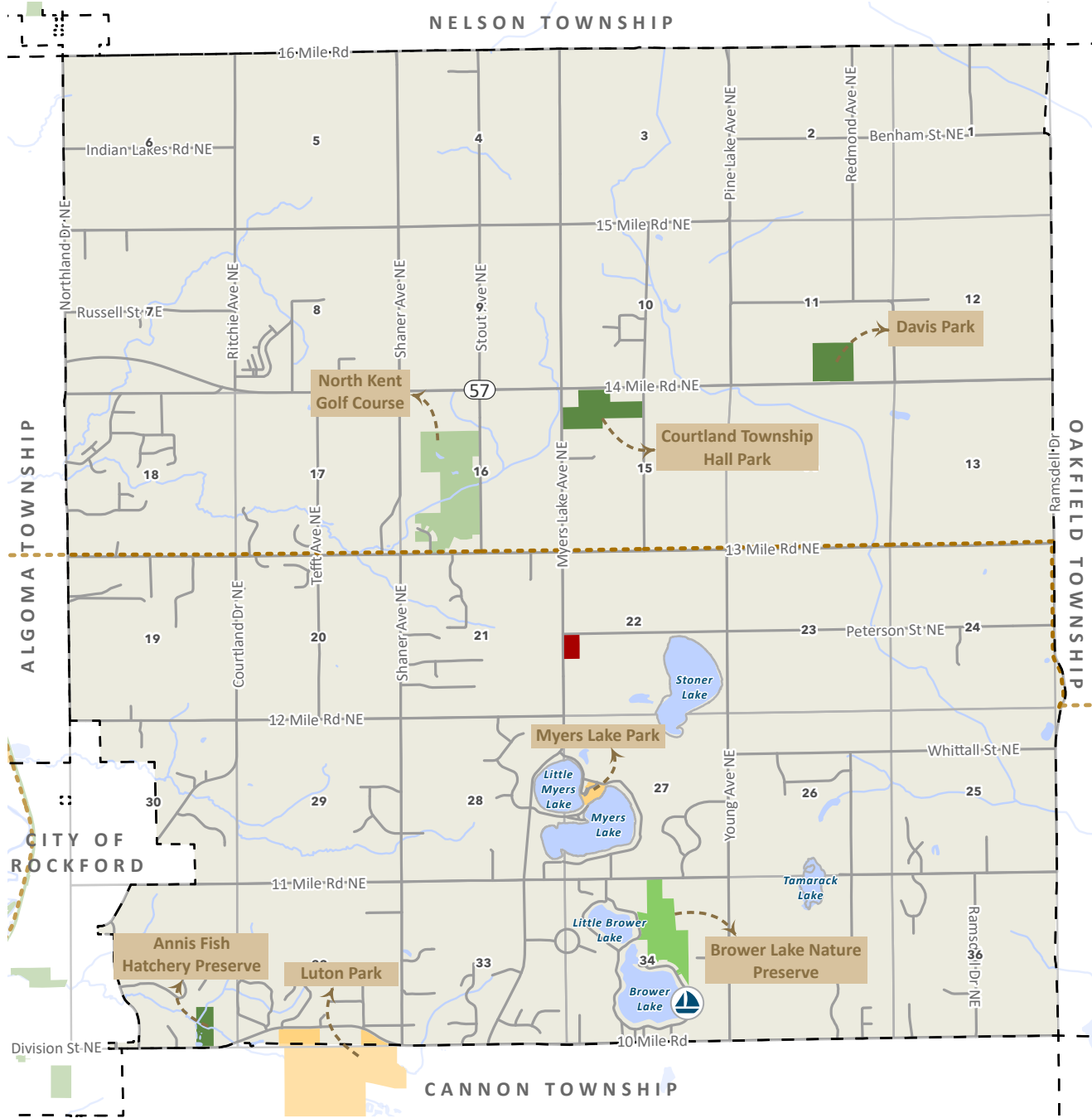
Myers Lake Park

Located between Myers Lake and Little Myers Lake, the 8.99 acre park provides recreational spaces like a fun playground, picnic spaces, and a public beach. The playground includes two play structures near the open picnic shelter and the public beach. The swim beach has grassy banks with a sandy area at the water's edge and a good sand base in the water. The shoreline at Myers Lake Park also offers a great spot for fishing. This park is owned by Kent County.

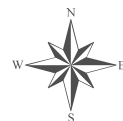
Luton Park

Luton Park is mostly situated in Cannon Township however a portion of the northern park boundary is in Courtland Township. This is a family friendly multi-use park with 9.7 miles of interconnected trails. The park features native prairie, pines, hardwood, marshes, and three bridge crossings over Rum Creek. The trails can be used for mountain biking, running, birdwatching, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

MAP 10: PARKS AND RECREATION



- Township Parks
- Nature Preserve
- County Parks
- Private Recreation
- Boat Launch
- Trails
- Courtland Township Cemetery



PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

Located at 11029 Stout Ave, North Kent Golf Course is an 18-hole golf course that is designed to advantage of the natural beauty of the area.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Courtland Township has a variety of services and facilities that contribute to a desirable quality of life for its residents. Growing access to health care services may be a need if the senior population increases by people aging in place or senior citizens moving into the community. There may also be increased pressure on parks and recreation places and spaces as residents and visitors seek out these locations. The Courtland Township Parks Committee encourages farmers that are leaving the farm industry to donate land to the Township for parks and recreation. The Township may also consider increasing police, fire, and emergency medical services to ensure that there are appropriate response times. If local firefighters are busy responding to a non-traditional call, and there is a fire, an avoidable tragedy may occur. The Township should consider continuing to invest in these resources to maintain the standard of living that draws people to live in the community.

CHAPTER 5

UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE





Public utilities are an important element in a growth management plan. Through the delivery of reliable and plentiful water and the safe and efficient disposal of wastewater, communities can achieve an improved quality of life for residents. Public utility systems give the community the ability to provide effective stewardship over such important natural features as groundwater and surface water features. The transportation system also affects the rate and location of community growth. The easier it is for people to move to and through an area, the more desirable a location can become. Renewable energy may also make an impact on a community, and whether the infrastructure is built for personal use or utility-grade developments, Township officials will need to determine how these land uses are regulated.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

A majority of the Township residents rely on private wells for their water supply. Groundwater quality is an important factor for the Courtland Township area since there is a lack of municipal water supply. The dependence on individual wells makes groundwater quality a priority. There are no regulations that mandate regular testing of private wells after their initial construction, unlike public wells. The lack of regular testing of well water can increase the risk of exposure to several possible contaminants. Individuals can pursue testing services offered through the Kent County Health Department for a fee.

This is especially important to note as toxic chemicals have been found in water supplies in the larger community. Filtering water with a granular activated carbon filter can help make contaminated water drinkable. This is important to note in treating water with polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS.

The City of Rockford is a neighboring community and is home to the former Wolverine World Wide (Wolverine) tannery site on the Rogue River at the confluence of Rum Creek. The tannery was demolished in 2010 and 2011 after being in operation for over one hundred years. The site was under investigation by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for tannery pollution found in the Rockford area.

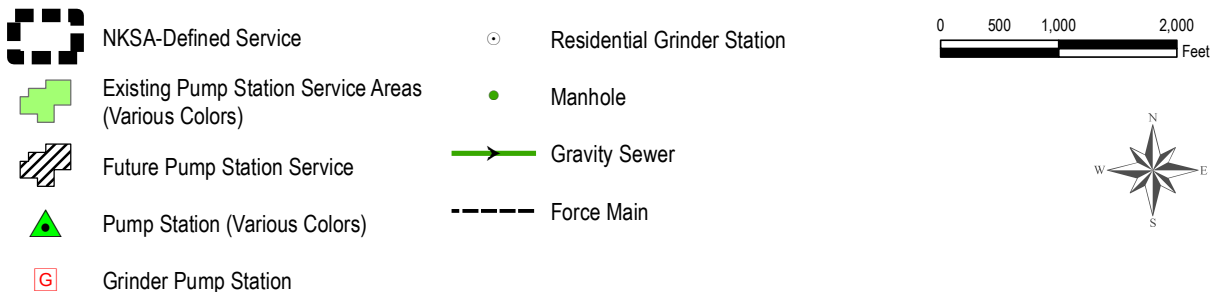
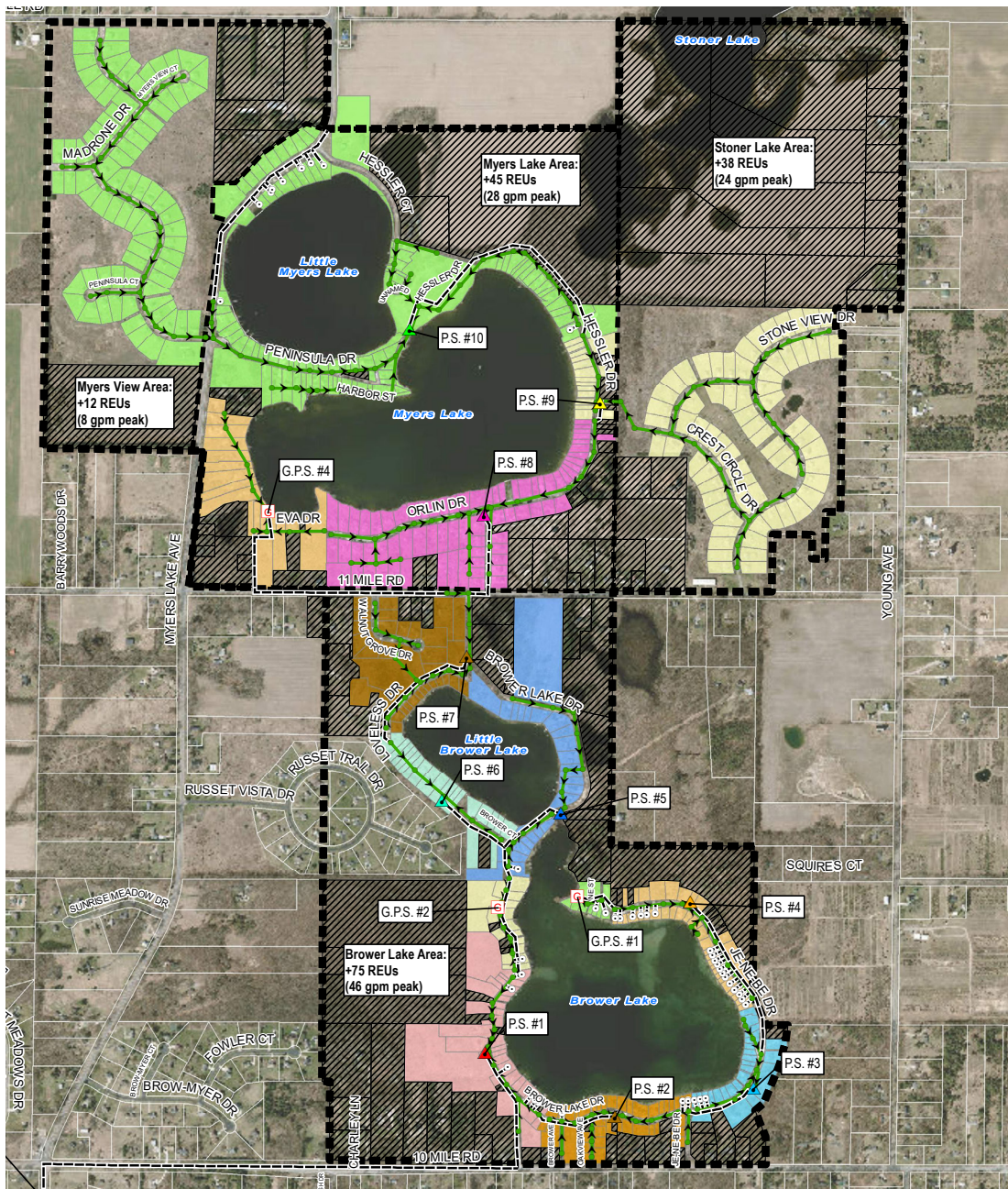
Soil, groundwater, and sediment samples were collected and analyzed from the tannery site by Wolverine and by EGLE's Superfund Section. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), metals, ammonia, and cyanide were detected above criteria and/or sediment screening levels. Wolverine sampled groundwater and surface water for PFAS in the Summer and Fall of 2017. PFAS, or polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a group of man-made chemicals used in fire-fighting foam, stain repellants, and non-stick cookware. PFAS can break down easily in the environment and if highly exposed, it can have harmful health effects on humans and animals.

Wolverine is expected to complete the USEPA time-critical actions at the tannery which includes the removal of impacted soils and buried leather scraps on the site and along the Rogue River, and continued site restoration activities in 2024. Courtland Township officials and staff should continue to monitor the situation and remain in contact with EGLE to stay abreast of any information changes.

PUBLIC WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Wastewater services are provided by the North-Kent Sewer System which was extended to provide services to the Myers Lake and Brower Lake communities at the south end of the Township. However, Courtland Township owns the wastewater system that surrounds Myers Lake, Little Myers Lake, Brower Lake, and Little Brower Lake, and extends into adjacent subdivisions, and is maintained by Main-Tech services, an operator that is also a part of Fleis and VanderBrink, Inc. The network is outlined on Map 11.

MAP 11: WASTEWATER COLLECTION SYSTEM



The Township had a Pump Station Evaluation study completed in 2022. An evaluation of each station is outlined specifically regarding the condition asset, a Residential Equivalent Unit (REU) analysis, capacity analysis, and capital improvement recommendations. Generally, the stations appear to have the capacity to accept additional flow. It is recommended that each of the 10 stations be completely retrofitted utilizing the existing structures due to the age and condition of the equipment, NEC/NFPA 79 violations, and safety concerns. However, making a schedule and following a capital improvement plan (CIP), will allow the Township to address these issues over time and before they become an emergency. More specific recommendations for each pump station are identified in the report.

Septic systems provide wastewater treatment for many rural households and they are fairly common for residents in Courtland Township. Septic systems can potentially impact local drinking water wells or surface water bodies depending on the design, installation, maintenance, and proper use. All household septic systems should be cleaned at least every three years by a service professional to prevent drain field failures.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation facilities are an important feature within a community. Facilities such as sidewalks, paths, and transit are also important to the transportation network and need to be considered a real part of community services. This section provides an overview of the transportation network in Courtland Township.

ROAD CONDITIONS & PASER

The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system is a visual survey method used to evaluate pavement conditions, and a mechanism for previously-identified federal-aid eligible roads to qualify for federal funding. Since 2003, Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) has required road agencies to collect and submit roadway condition information based on PASER. Staff members at the Kent County Road Commission and the Grand Valley Metro Council, the local Metropolitan Planning Commission, are trained and certified annually to use the PASER system. The rating scale ranges from 10 (excellent) to 1 (failed) where 8-10 is classified as "good," 5-7 is "fair," and 1-4 is "poor." The Courtland Township data was compiled into two categories by the Kent County Road Commission where 5-10 is classified as good/fair, and ratings of 1-4 are considered to be in poor condition.

Five different types of roads are part of the federal-aid road network: State Trunkline Roads, County Primary Roads, Local County Roads, Major Streets, and Minor Streets. Not every road is allowed to be identified as part of the federal-aid system nor is every road’s pavement condition rated. However, in Courtland Township, the nearly 24 miles identified as County Primary Roads that are a part of the federal-aid eligible system were rated in 2022.

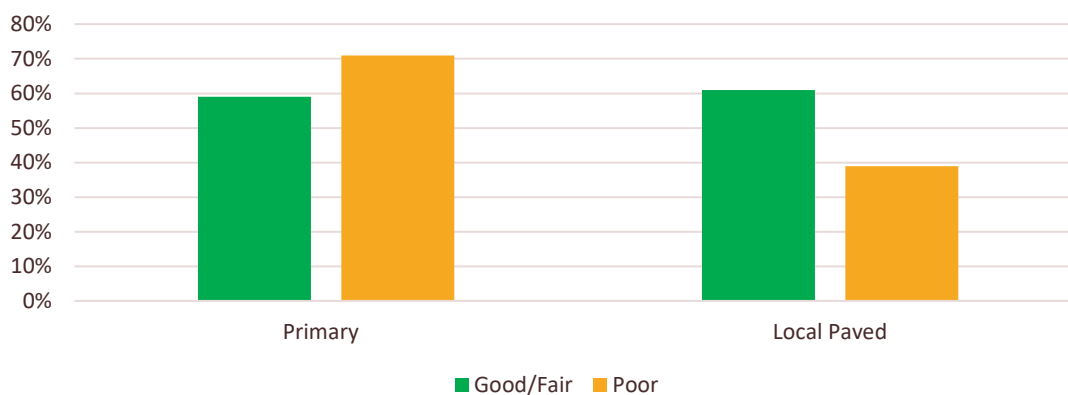
Table 5.1: Courtland Township Road Classification

Road Classification	Miles
Total Primary	24.0
Total Local Road Miles	61.9
Local Paved	57.4
Local Unpaved	4.5

The 57 miles of Local County Roads were also rated. These pieces of the federal-aid road network were evaluated to build a data-driven, cost-effective pavement maintenance strategy for the Kent County Road Commission. The Road Commission uses this data in making road project recommendations and communicating this to the Township. The Township has historically contributed funds towards some road resurfacing projects, and officials believe that this will continue into the future, helping to keep the road system well-maintained. Township officials can ask the Road Commission for this information annually to provide a perspective on the changing pavement conditions over time. The percentages of the pavement condition type for the Primary County Roads and Local Paved Roads in Courtland Township in 2022 are shown in Figure 5.1.

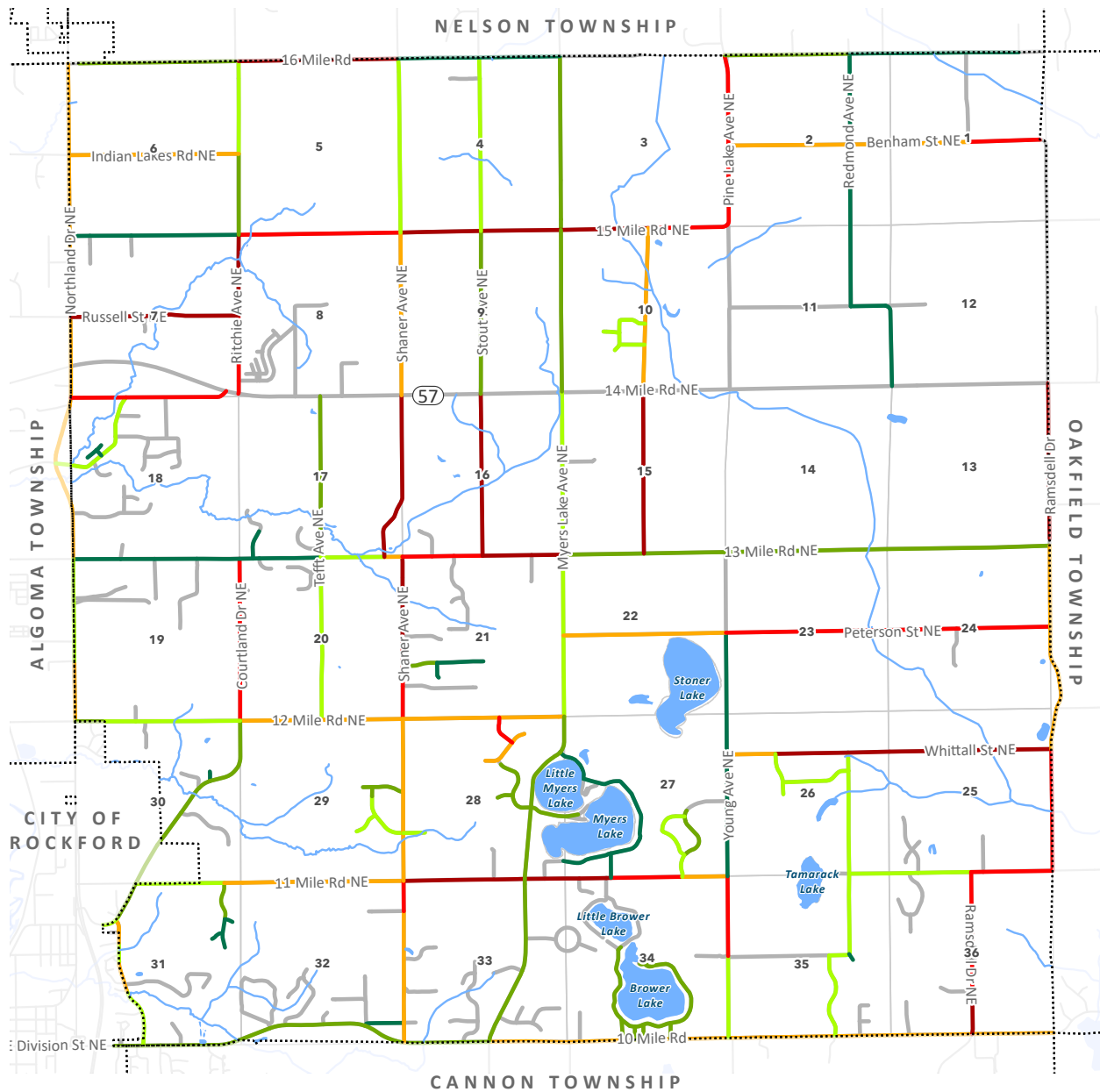
Map 12 shows the location of the roads that were rated and their condition that was recorded in 2022. The map shows the road condition ratings labeled and categorized according to the TAMC guidelines.

Figure 5.1: Road Conditions 2022

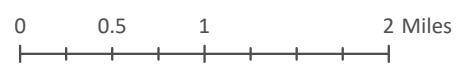


Source: Courtland Township Multi-Year Condition Summary by NFC, Kent County Road Commission.

MAP 12: PASER



- PASER**
- Not Rated
 - Very Poor
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Good
 - Very Good
 - Excellent



TRAFFIC COUNTS

Another important way to track the changes in the transportation system is to conduct a traffic count. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts presented in Table 2 were collected from the Traffic Count Database System developed by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) area, since Courtland Township is located within their boundaries. Due to the process of how traffic counts are collected, counts are varied by year however the most recent counts were collected in 2018-2022. Table 5.2 shows the traffic counts in detail for further clarification on when the data was collected. Most recent traffic counts can be seen on Map 13 for geographic reference that also shows latest traffic counts for other locations throughout the township. Traffic counts shown in the map area are from 2022, unless otherwise noted.

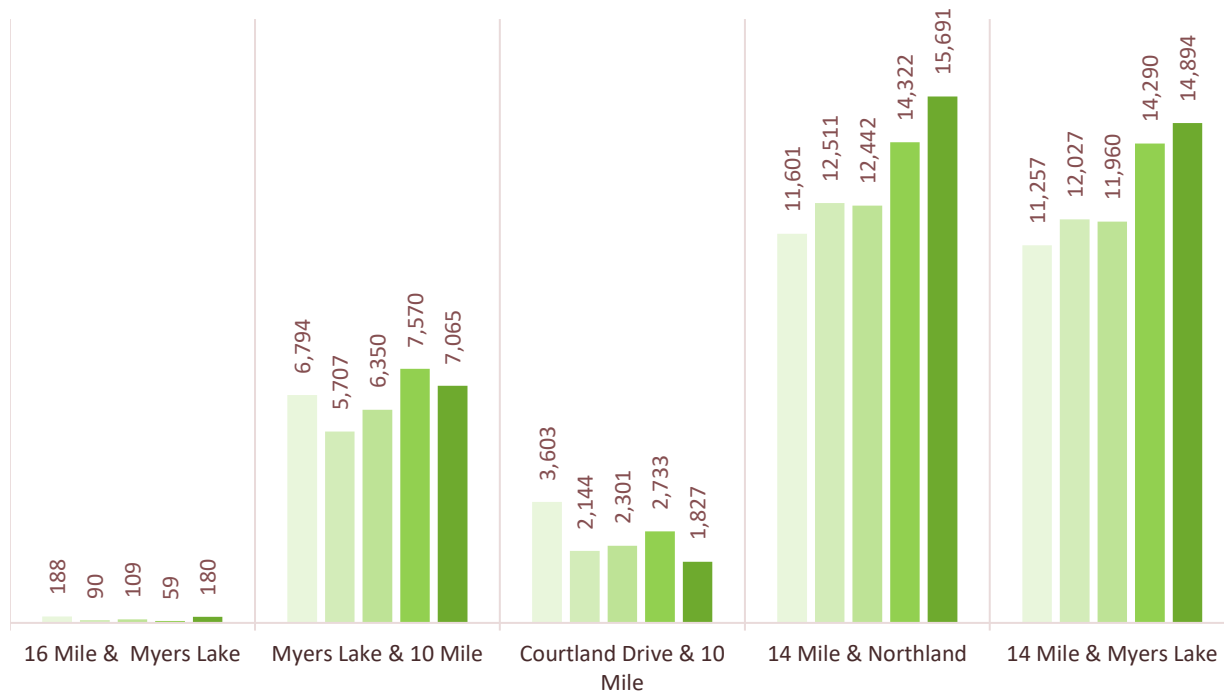
Table 5.2: Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts, Courtland Township

16 Mile & Myers Lake		Myers Lake & 10 Mile		Courtland Drive & 10 Mile		14 Mile (M-57) & Northland		14 Mile (M-57) & Myers Lake	
Year	AADT	Year	AADT	Year	AADT	Year	AADT	Year	AADT
2006	188	2009	6,794	2006	3,603	2009	11,601	2009	11,257
2009	90	2012	5,707	2009	2,144	2010	12,511	2010	12,027
2016	109	2015	6,350	2013	2,301	2012	12,442	2012	11,960
2019	59	2018	7,570	2016	2,733	2016	14,322	2016	14,290
2022	180	2021	7,065	2020	1,827	2018	15,691	2018	14,894

Source: Traffic County Database System, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council.

As shown in Figure 5.2, the traffic counts for major intersections have seen overall growth over the years. 16 Mile Road at Myers Lake Ave has had a generally stable rate of traffic counts from 2006 to 2022. Myers Lake Ave at 10 Mile Road experienced a continued increasing amount of traffic since 2012. Unlike other intersections, the traffic count for Courtland Drive at 10 Mile Road has had a fluctuation in traffic counts. (With data collected in 2020, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic may result in a data anomaly. Future traffic counts at this location will help show if this decrease was long-lasting or not.) Counts for 14 Mile Road (M-57) at Northland Drive and Myers Lake Ave continued to grow over the past decade and reported in 2018 to be 15,691 and 14,894 AADT counts respectively. Traffic counts on 14 Mile Road or M-57 were likely higher than the other roads in the Township since it is a state trunkline highway that connects US 131 near Rockford.

Figure 5.2: Change in AADT Traffic Counts for Major Intersections

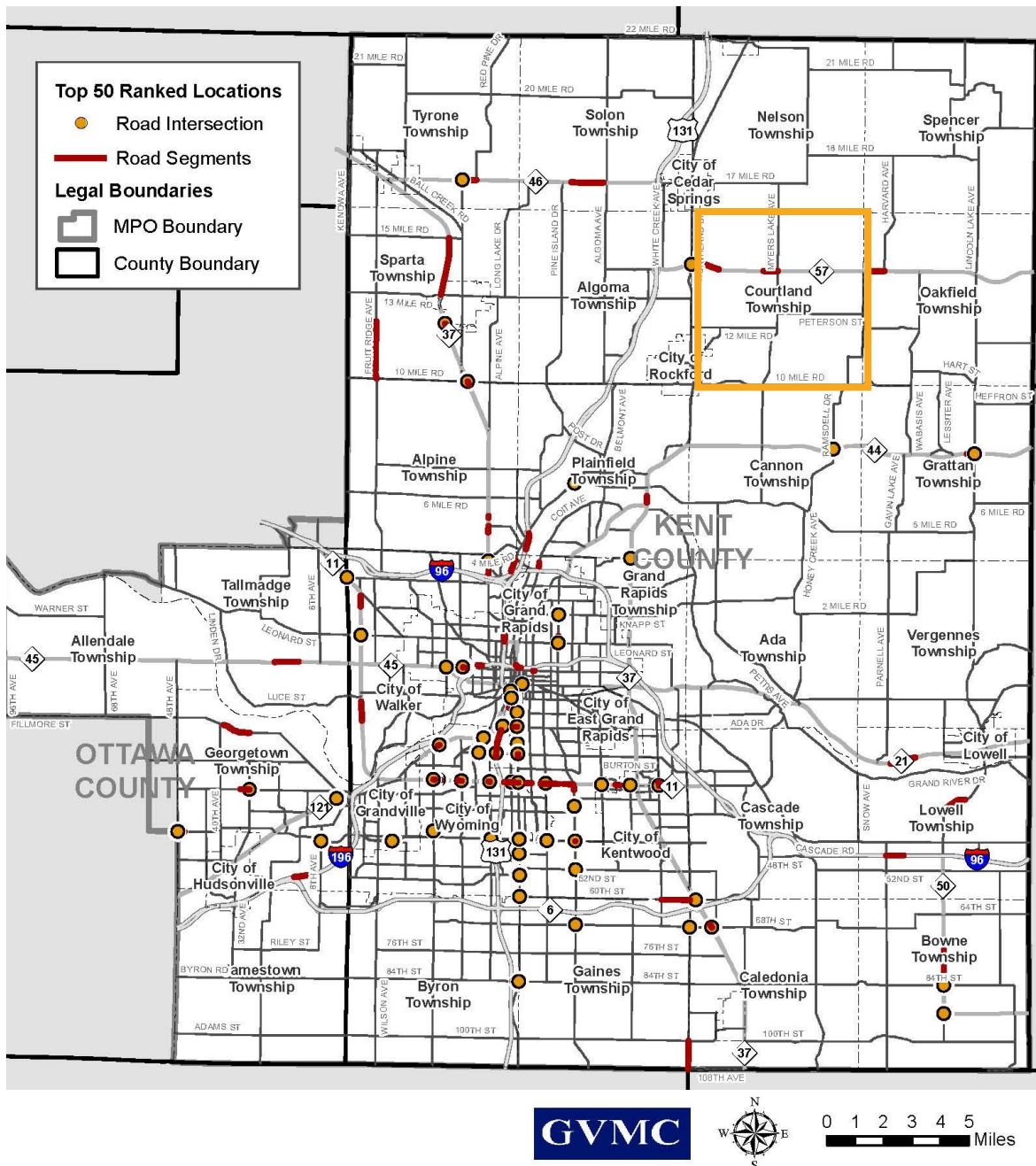


Source: Traffic County Database System, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council.

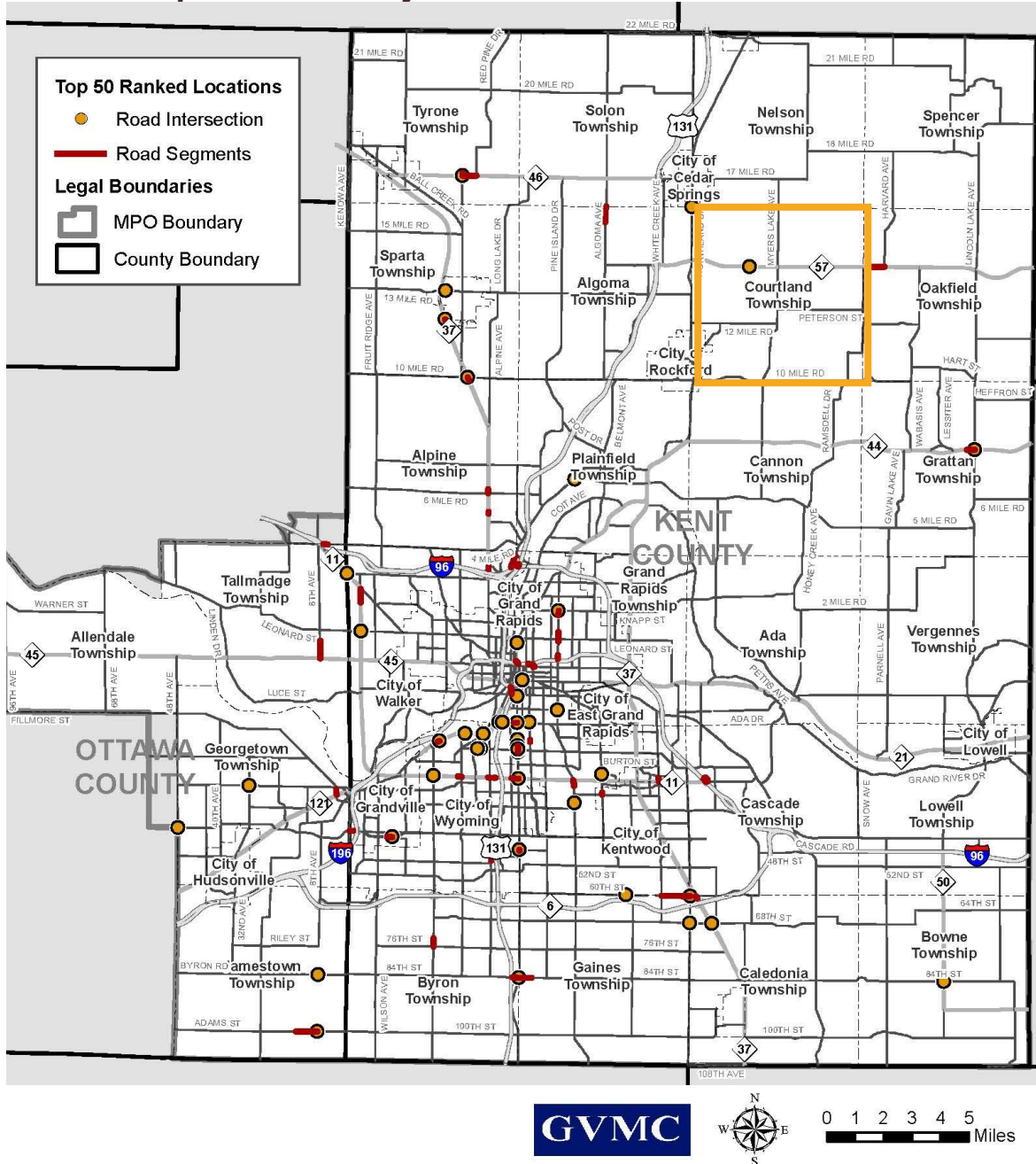
CRASHES

Data from the Grand Valley Metro Council show that there is a high number of crashes occurring along parts of and at intersections along M-57/14 Mile Road in Courtland Township for 2021, especially when considering the greater Grand Rapids. The map identifies the Grand Valley Metro Council geographical and Metropolitan Planning Organization boundaries. The data on the map identifies the Top 50 locations where vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian crashes that have had serious injury (A) and fatalities (K) in 2021 using data from Michigan Crash Facts.

MAP 13a: Top 50 Locations by Total K/A Crashes



MAP 13b: Top 50 Locations by K/A Rates Per MVM



NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Nonmotorized transportation facilities enhance the quality of life for seasonal and full-time residents. Nonmotorized facilities in the township can be found mainly in the area parks. The paved trail at the Township Park is much beloved by residents for walking, running, and rolling.

The Fred Meijer White Pine Trail State Park is a 92-mile-long nonmotorized trail that connects directly or indirectly to many communities. Though it does not run through or connect immediately to Courtland Township, the trail runs through the City of Rockford. The trail runs from Comstock Park to the City of Cadillac. The route was a railroad and was constructed to service communities and commerce to the north of Grand Rapids. The trail surface varies from paved to a type of crushed limestone.

TRANSIT

Courtland Township does not have its own transit provider; however, residents can take advantage of services and programs offered to Kent County residents. RideLink offers transportation to persons aged 60 or older to any destination, including doctor visits, recreational visits, and shopping trips within Kent County. Providers include Hope Network Transportation, Senior Neighbors, Kent County Community Action, United Methodist Community House, and The Rapid. RideLink is funded by the Kent County Senior Millage and the Kent County Community Action Way 2 Go program. The Way 2 Go program is provided through funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Interurban Transit Partnership. The requested cost to cover the expense of each trip is \$2, which goes directly back into the programs to help support continued transportation services for the community.

For the Kent County Senior Millage RideLink program eligible riders include those who are 60 years of age or older and are Kent County residents. The Kent County Community Action Way 2 Go program eligibility includes all Kent County residents 65 years of age or older and persons of any age with a disability. The service area is limited to locations not currently served by The Rapid's fixed route and ADA paratransit services like GO!Bus. Trips may be scheduled to any address within Kent County as long as either the beginning location or the final destination falls within the program's service area. Proof of eligibility due to age or disability is required at the time of registration.



RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS

The way communities and residents obtain energy may be changing in the coming years. Renewable energy infrastructure is becoming more affordable and may drive the occurrence of more small- and large-scale developments in communities across the state, including Courtland Township. The Township should consider how it may prepare for and manage these changes, especially since there is great potential for the infrastructure to impact the visual landscape and affect land use patterns. Courtland Township officials should also stay informed to changes state law. In 2023, Governor Whitmer signed two bills to amend the Clean and Renewable Energy and Energy Waste Reduction Act, Public Acts 233 and 234 of 2023. The law will take effect November 29, 2024. These laws preempt local control over large scale solar and wind energy generation and energy storage facilities. Since this law is new, Planning Commission members and Township officials and staff should continue to stay informed to sources like the Michigan Township Association and the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) and seek the guidance of the Township's attorney when considering projects or changes that may be impacted by this legislation.

Solar Energy Systems

Major energy companies expect to grow their energy systems exponentially in the coming decades. Local communities will not have local control for large utility-scale facilities generating or storing power for any off-site use for:

1. Solar energy facilities with a capacity of 50 megawatts or more
2. Energy storage facilities with a capacity of 50 megawatts or more and an energy discharge capability of 200 megawatt hours or more

At the time of the writing of this master plan document, local government officials will continue to have regulatory authority over solar facilities that have less capacity than those previously noted above. This would include facilities for generating on-site power for residences and farms. For those sites and properties that local officials will continue to have authority over, they should consider the range of sizes, scales, configurations, and related components of solar energy infrastructure projects. A solar facility is deemed not to create an unreasonable threat to public health or safety, and therefore would be allowed to be built if they obtain a certificate from the MPSC. The certificate that is obtained through the MPSC must adhere to the following standards:

- Consideration of feasible alternative locations, including vacant industrial property and brownfields.
- Impact on local land use, including consideration of the percentage of land within the local unit dedicated to energy generation.
- Whether the public benefits of the facility justify its construction.
- Impairment of air, water, and other natural resources.
- Impact on sensitive habitats, waterways, wetlands and floodplains, wildlife corridors, parks, historic and cultural sites, and threatened or endangered species.
- Compliance with requirements for a "host community agreement" requiring payments to local units of government or "community benefits agreement".
- Compliance with labor standards, including payment of prevailing wages for construction and maintenance of the facility.
- Whether the facility will "unreasonably diminish farmland" including farmland with prime soils and farmland dedicated to the cultivation of specialty crops.
- Whether the facility presents an "unreasonable threat to the public health or safety."

These provide some documentation that local governments can review and can also take a proactive approach to having their own information and documentation of. Some of this information will be found in the master plan document.

The solar facility must also comply with the following setback and other specific requirements of the law, including:

- 50-foot setback from property lines or rights of way, and 300 feet from community buildings (schools, churches, and similar buildings) or dwellings on non-participating property.
- Fencing complying with the National Electrical Code.
- Maximum height of 25 feet at full extension.
- 55 decibels maximum noise limitation measured at the nearest non-participating dwelling.
- Dark sky friendly lighting.
- Other requirements adopted by the Commission as necessary for compliance with state or federal environmental regulations.

A facility which does not obtain a certificate from the MPSC is subject to local ordinance. Small-scale solar projects should be clearly defined as a separate land use within the Township's Zoning Ordinance. Communities retain local zoning authority over smaller solar facilities and facilities which generate electricity for onsite use. Having a community master plan that includes relevant goal and policy statements and a zoning ordinance that includes guidance for on-site regulation of solar energy infrastructure for residences and farms is an important step in enabling and legitimizing regulating solar energy infrastructure. Because the certification standards include consideration of farmland impact, it would be worthwhile for communities to begin reviewing their master plans now to be sure they identify areas of prime farmland or those devoted to the cultivation of specialty crops, such as orchards or vineyards.

State law provides that the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) may require that an applicant for issuance of a certificate by the MPSC make a grant, in an amount determined by the MPSC up to \$75,000, to each affected local unit to be used to fund costs associated with that local unit participating in the MPSC proceeding on the application. This could provide a source of funds for a local community to cover attorney fees, engineering fees and other expert consultant fees to challenge or provide input into the consideration of an application for a certificate by the MPSC.

One of the requirements for issuance of a certificate by the Commission is that the applicant enter into a "Host Community Agreement" with each affected local unit of government. The agreement must require that the facility owner pay the affected local unit \$2,000 per megawatt of capacity, to be used as agreed upon for police, fire, public safety, or other infrastructure or projects. If the parties are not able to agree, the applicant may instead enter into a "community benefits agreement" with a community-based organization.

Wind Energy Systems

Wind energy is another type of renewable energy that can be captured. Wind energy projects can also bring controversy, and local officials should be prepared by studying and developing a regulatory framework pre-emptively. Following state law is paramount. Like solar energy systems, a community master plan and zoning ordinance strengthen a community's ability to regulate projects. Wind energy facilities with a capacity of 100 megawatts or more is preempted from local zoning and ordinances. Wind energy facilities must also seek a certificate from the MSPC following the same standard above. The project would also need to follow setbacks and other requirements under the state law that are noted below, including:

- Setbacks of 1.1 times the maximum blade tip height from a non-participating property line and road rights of way, and 2.1 times the maximum blade tip height to the nearest community building or dwellings on non-participating property.
- Limitation of not more than 30 hours per year of shadow flicker on any community building or non-participating residence.
- Maximum height not to exceed that of a determination of no hazard to air navigation by the FAA.
- 55 decibel maximum noise limitation measured at the nearest non-participating dwelling.
- Functioning light-mitigation technology.
- Other requirements adopted by the Commission for compliance with state or federal environmental regulations.



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Transportation

As development increases in Courtland Township, it will be necessary to improve the quality of some State, County, and local roads. However, careful planning requires acknowledging the cycle often perpetuated by road improvements. In most communities, when roads are widened to allow for greater traffic flow, east of travel becomes an incentive for further development. As development increases, it can have potential effects on road capacity, as well as negative impacts to storm water runoff and mitigation, requiring further improvements. This cycle can seem to continue in perpetuity without careful planning.

Furthermore, with the creation of larger roads carrying more traffic, often at higher speeds, there can be serious consequences on noise levels, pedestrian safety, and neighborhood layouts or designs. County and state agencies responsible for the road networks should continue to provide important highway connections for Courtland Township, but they have also become increasingly mindful of their impacts on local land use development and the desirability by the local community. They will need significant local input and ongoing guidance to ensure sufficient capacity without promoting premature development or seriously impacting the desirability of local villages and planned communities. This will necessitate continuing relationships between all transportation agencies and Township officials.



Improved safety for transportation system users will also be paramount. There are several areas along M-57/14 Mile Road that are dangerous in terms of serious injury and fatal crashes.

Utilities

Utilities can be an effective tool for growth management if coordinated with other land use procedures and policies within a community. As discussed previously, if water and sewer services are available to a particular site or an area, a variety of development options can be contemplated. Water and sewer facilities are also an important part of the equation when determining future land uses. For example, if a community decides that an area should be preserved for agriculture, it would be counterproductive to encourage the extension of water and/or sewer into the designated area. Decisions to extend water and sewer services need to be carefully coordinated with the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance to be most effective.

The use and regulation of renewable energy systems should also be considered. The increased need for energy and the growth expected to occur in Courtland Township should drive local officials to plan ahead and to consider how the role of renewable energy will be managed.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES





Goals should be thought of as the overarching policy, written as a desirable state of the Township that may be reached during the Plan's 20-year planning horizon. Objectives can be thought of as milestones that will help the Township reach the stated goals.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Events

The goals and objectives were developed based on the results of the community engagement that occurred through the community survey, the community open house, and in discussion with the Planning Commission. The Courtland Township Master Plan Community Open House was held on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 from 6:00-8:00 PM at the Courtland Township Hall. Community members, Township Planning Commission members, Township Staff, and the Township Supervisor attended the event, along with the members of the consulting firm. Attendees ranged from 1 year of age to over 70 years of age. Most of the attendees were Township residents. From December 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, the Courtland Township Master Plan survey was open to gather public input on land use planning and related topics in the Township.



Community Priorities & Desires

From the input received, residents overwhelmingly indicated that they desire to preserve the rural character of the Township, and that they appreciate the Township staff, parks, and natural resources. The most common improvements sought were largely related to traffic, including safety, mitigating crashes, slowing traffic speeds, and improved traffic controls at various intersections.

At the open house, participants were asked to consider four different groups of photographs that could represent the future of Courtland Township based on the intensity of the built environment and the physical and social character they evoke. Overwhelmingly the images with more green spaces, natural features, and fewer buildings, lower density, and less pavement were preferred. Discussions with individuals revealed that people responded to the desire to maintain the agrarian landscape and the ability to view and access natural spaces. Written feedback from the survey was largely focused on the lack of desire toward wanting more development and concern regarding the expansion of residential development that

may negatively impact farmland and the community's rural character. The conversion of farms to commercial uses was the number one land use concern identified by survey respondents.



The top three reasons that community survey respondents identified for why they have chosen to live in Courtland Township were the natural setting, rural lifestyle, and safe area. Nearly 50% of survey respondents felt that the Township is growing “about right,” followed by 34% felt that the Township was growing “too quickly.”

Both the open house and the community survey asked participants their opinions about a variety of transportation, environmental, housing, recreation, infrastructure, and economic development topics. Survey respondents shared that the top five Township priorities should be:

1. Protecting groundwater
2. Protecting private property rights
3. Preserving rural character
4. Preserving open space
5. Preserving farmland



The top five amenities that should be invested in according to the community open house results should be:

1. Protect farmland and support agriculture
2. Protect green spaces and natural habitats
3. Invest in trails and paths
4. Protect rivers, lakes, and streams
5. Invest in road maintenance



The results of the community engagement indicate that there is strong support for protecting natural resources, including surface and ground water, and the agrarian viewshed within the Township. Local leaders should continue to strive to take reasonable actions that align with the community feedback while balancing the rights of farmers. Courtland Township has a long-standing rural, agriculturally-focused heritage. However, growth pressures are impacting the community, especially in the southwest corner near the City of Rockford and along Northland Drive. Local leaders should act to guide the future character and landscape of the Township.

A comprehensive report on the community engagement activities can be found in the Engagement Report in the Plan's appendix. Keeping these results in mind, the Township Master Plan will help Township leaders to support the development of the community using the following guiding statements.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

NATURAL FEATURES



Courtland Township will protect, preserve, and enhance large tracts of natural and agricultural areas deemed to be environmentally and aesthetically important to the community. These natural areas will include mature and emerging woodlands and wetlands, active agriculture, as well as open meadows and stream corridors, amounting to at least 2,500 acres of mostly interconnected land.

Objective

1. Build and foster a constituency in support of land preservation within Courtland Township by talking with large landowners regarding preservation options.
2. Adhere to the utility plan (Goal 8) by concentrating development where access to utilities currently exists or is planned for in the future.
3. Consider the potential environmental impacts of new development, which include but are not limited to factors such as noise, traffic, light, odors, drainage, and surface water and groundwater pollution.



Agriculture, both commercially viable farming and leisure/hobby activities, will be an important element of the Township’s character. Sustainable, environmentally healthy operations based on traditional and progressive agricultural techniques will characterize Courtland Township.

Objectives

1. Review and adjust the zoning ordinance to enhance flexibility and adaptation to traditional and modern agriculture-related activities as permitted.
2. Explore the possibilities of Transfer Development Rights (TDR), and implement this process where viable.

3. Consult with local farmers to best meet the needs of those currently invested in agricultural property.
4. Participate in State and County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs.

RESIDENTIAL



Courtland Township will include a diverse range of housing densities and styles, and encourage greater density in those areas of the Township with the infrastructure to support it.

Objectives

1. Include design standards for high-quality housing in the zoning ordinance.
2. Develop and adopt a utility policy to support the zoning ordinance and Master Plan (Goals 1 and 8).
3. Modify standards for lot sizes in varying residential districts to reflect desired densities where public water and sewer are available.



Neighborhoods and open spaces or natural areas in the Township will be interconnected. Pedestrian pathways, traffic calming measures, and recreational trails will be incorporated to promote walkability and community within a neighborhood setting. Specific focus will be placed on connecting residential uses with open space and natural areas.

Objectives

1. Develop a trails plan.
2. Continue to keep the Parks and Recreation Plan updated and current.

3. Revise standards for Open Space Developments to require connectivity from one development to the next where possible.
4. Write standards to require the connection of new trails with pre-existing trails.
5. Write zoning regulations for the R-1 district to require the inclusion of sidewalks in all development projects.

COMMERCIAL



In order to promote the character and identity of “place” in a rural atmosphere, commercial development will be attractively signed and well-landscaped, enabling viable businesses to flourish in unique and inviting settings.

Objectives

1. Add Site design standards to the existing ordinance that are compatible with the desired character of commercial areas.
2. Update the existing ordinances to Include building placement and architectural standards, landscaping standards, lighting standards, sign standards, and language to promote safe pedestrian access to and within the site. Lighting standards should address reducing light pollution through fixture placement and type so as not to interfere with neighbors or reflect into the night sky.
3. Strengthen the existing landscape standards for commercial districts to require landscape buffers between parking lots and the road right of way, as well as between parking lots and buildings.



Commercial development will be established in nodes to encourage the clustering of development by the use of access management and to intentionally preserve scenic corridors and natural resources.

Objectives

1. Evaluate access management standards and strengthen where necessary.
2. Encourage large planned development forms wherever possible.
3. Evaluate appropriate uses to be incorporated into a commercial node without detracting from the rural character or small-town feel.

INDUSTRIAL



Courtland Township can have planned industrial developments of modest size where appropriate, and utilities will institute measures to screen from the road with natural and designed landscapes.

Objectives

1. Consider standards for a commerce park in the zoning ordinance as the need arises.
2. Modify landscape and design standards to ensure new development is in character with the community (Goal 6).

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Goal

8



Extensions of sewer and water will be planned to support and be in conjunction with local communities.

Objectives

1. Develop a utility policy and phasing plan for sewer and water utility extensions.
2. Develop financing alternatives to implement the phasing plan
3. Develop a policy to regulate community waste water systems.

Goal

9



Support reasonable, efficient investments in renewable energy infrastructure that match and align with the character envisioned for the future of the Township.

Objectives

1. Encourage Township officials, staff, and residents to learn more about renewable energy systems through information resources and technical guidance.
2. Develop a model ordinance that defines and guides the parameters of solar and wind energy systems development for a range of sizes, scales, and configurations.

MOBILITY



Develop an integrated, well-maintained transportation system.

Objectives

1. Continue to work with the Kent County Road Commission to improve the conditions of the roads in the Township.
2. Support transit agencies in Kent County like The Rapid, and programs like RideLink and Way 2 Go, that provide an accessible mode of transportation for Township residents.
3. Explore developing a relationship with the Greater Greenville Transportation Committee, especially as it relates to the M-57 corridor.
4. Engage the Michigan Department of Transportation to address traffic issues, reduce crashes, and develop a transportation network that is inviting to all along state-owned corridors.



Develop a nonmotorized network that accommodates all ages and abilities.

Objectives

1. Work with the Kent County Road Commission to identify routes and use Act 51 funds to support the development of nonmotorized infrastructure.
2. Support efforts to develop nonmotorized facilities that will serve the transportation and recreation needs and desires of the Township.



Promote opportunities to improve safety and reduce crashes within the transportation network.

Objectives

1. Work with local and state officials to reduce speed limits by changing the streetscape and/ or other aspects of the built environment.
2. Study the need for more traffic control devices to promote safety at intersections and other in areas that are important to the Township.
3. Develop safer places for nonmotorized users, especially in the higher-density areas of the Township.

PARKS AND RECREATION



Acquire, develop, maintain, and preserve sufficient open space and to develop recreational facilities to serve the needs of the Township's present and anticipated population.

Objectives

1. Encourage, support, and develop a linear trail system to connect various park facilities with particular emphasis on connecting recreational resources through the planning and construction of a network of non-motorized trails. The Township should actively pursue acquisition of property and/or use easements on privately owned property in the Township wherever practical.
2. Explore railway linkages from area points of interest such as but not limited to the Brower Lake Nature Preserve, the City of Rockford, Luton Park, Myers Lake Park, Courtland Township Hall Park, Cannon Township non-motorized trail system and the White Pine Trail through the development of a railway master plan.

3. Acquire property adjacent to existing park properties whenever possible to allow for the greatest flexibility and offer economy of sharing infrastructure when expanding or adding recreation activities to existing dedicated parklands.
4. Acquire additional property to preserve open space.
5. Acquire additional park property as opportunities present themselves in high-growth areas of the Township, which may be distant from existing park facilities.



Develop a system of non-motorized paths which will link the Township to adjacent communities as well as linking the Township's residential areas with schools, parks, commercial centers, and waterways.

Objective

1. Provide residents with a non-vehicular path system that provides opportunities for recreation as well as convenient and safe access to major destinations in the Township and connections to adjacent communities.



Continue the improvement and development of the infrastructure and facilities within the Township Parks to satisfy the recreational needs and desires of the community.

Objectives

1. Improve and/or develop new and expanded facilities and infrastructure within the Township Parks to include but not limit to, buildings, restroom facilities, picnic facilities, parking, sidewalks, waste receptacles, benches, signage, fences/barriers, and an enhanced trail system that serves the residents of the Township.

2. Provide multi-generational, universally accessible, and safe recreational facilities that are responsive to the needs of all residents and effectively utilize available resources.
3. Develop recreational facilities as identified by the recent and/or future surveys and needs assessments and establish priorities for their development.
4. Utilize design, construction, and maintenance practices that maximize the benefits provided for the resources expended.



To enhance the quality of life in the Township by providing multi-generational, universally accessible, and safe recreational programs that are responsive to the needs of all residents that effectively utilize available resources.

Objectives

1. Develop a variety of recreational programs that reflect the changing and diverse needs of the Township residents while promoting the health and welfare of the overall community.
2. Improve existing recreational programs to fulfill the needs of Township residents more effectively and to encourage regular use of these programs.
3. Develop recreational programs as identified by the recent and/or future surveys and needs assessments and establish priorities for their development.
4. Whenever feasible, take advantage of other resources for the development and maintenance of recreational programs, such as non-local funding sources.
5. Utilize design, construction, and maintenance practices that maximize the benefits provided for the resources expended.
6. Plan improvements that offer both active and passive recreation opportunities.
7. Every recreational opportunity should be universally accessible to all individuals whenever possible.
8. Provide play areas that are safe and welcoming.



To promote the coordination, cooperation, and expansion of recreational programs with other public agencies, private enterprise, citizen groups, and other interested organizations with the common goal of improvement of recreational opportunities for Township residents.

Objectives

1. Encourage the participation of volunteers in the development of recreational facilities.
2. Utilize public and private sector cooperation in the promotion of recreation and the improvement of recreational opportunities.
3. Coordinate existing recreational projects with the school systems and community.
4. Encourage the cooperation and participation of adjacent Townships such as Cannon, Algoma, Solon Townships, the City of Cedar Springs, and the City of Rockford in the formation of a regional recreational advisory board in an effort to combine resources and avoid duplication of facilities and services.



To continually improve the quality of and the opportunities for recreation in the Township by reassessing community recreation needs, trends, and characteristics.

Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for the involvement of Township residents in the identification, selection, and development of recreational facilities.
2. Monitor the effectiveness of the Township's efforts in fulfilling identified goals and objectives by providing opportunities for Township residents to evaluate the progress of recreational development.

3. Monitor the effectiveness of the Township's efforts in providing universally accessible opportunities for Township residents



Provide consistent stewardship, operation, control, and management of the Township cemetery.

Objectives

1. Provide the resources necessary to ensure that the grounds are maintained in a respectable manner year-round.
2. Ensure that the cemetery is accessible and inviting as a place for family and friends to visit and honor their loved ones.

CHAPTER 7
LAND USE



This chapter provides an overview of the existing and future land use of Courtland Township, helping Township officials, landowners, and residents identify a vision for the future of the community. Courtland Township is characterized by a variety of natural features, including stream corridors, inland lakes, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and forestlands. Being able to see the stars and planets in the dark, night-time sky is another important community quality. The resource-rich landscape contributes to the desired quality of life that residents treasure. The preservation of this rural identity is an over-arching focus of this plan. A majority of the Township's existing land use has remained either in the Agricultural or Residential category. The number of residential parcels has gradually increased over the last several decades, with the most common dwelling being built as single-family homes, causing a slow, consistent change to the rural agrarian landscape.

EXISTING LAND USE

Identifying the uses of the parcels in the Township is helpful to understand the state of the existing land uses within the community, and to influence future land use-related decisions by the Planning Commission. The following information provides an overview of the existing land use categories, with the corresponding information on Map 15.

Agriculture

Courtland Township has an established tradition of agricultural productivity. Much of the land in the central and northeastern portions of the Township has remained high-quality agricultural soil as designated by the USDA. Maintaining the tradition of agriculture is of high priority, and preserving large and contiguous tracts of productive land is essential to that goal. The largest areas of agricultural land are in the central and eastern portions of the Township.

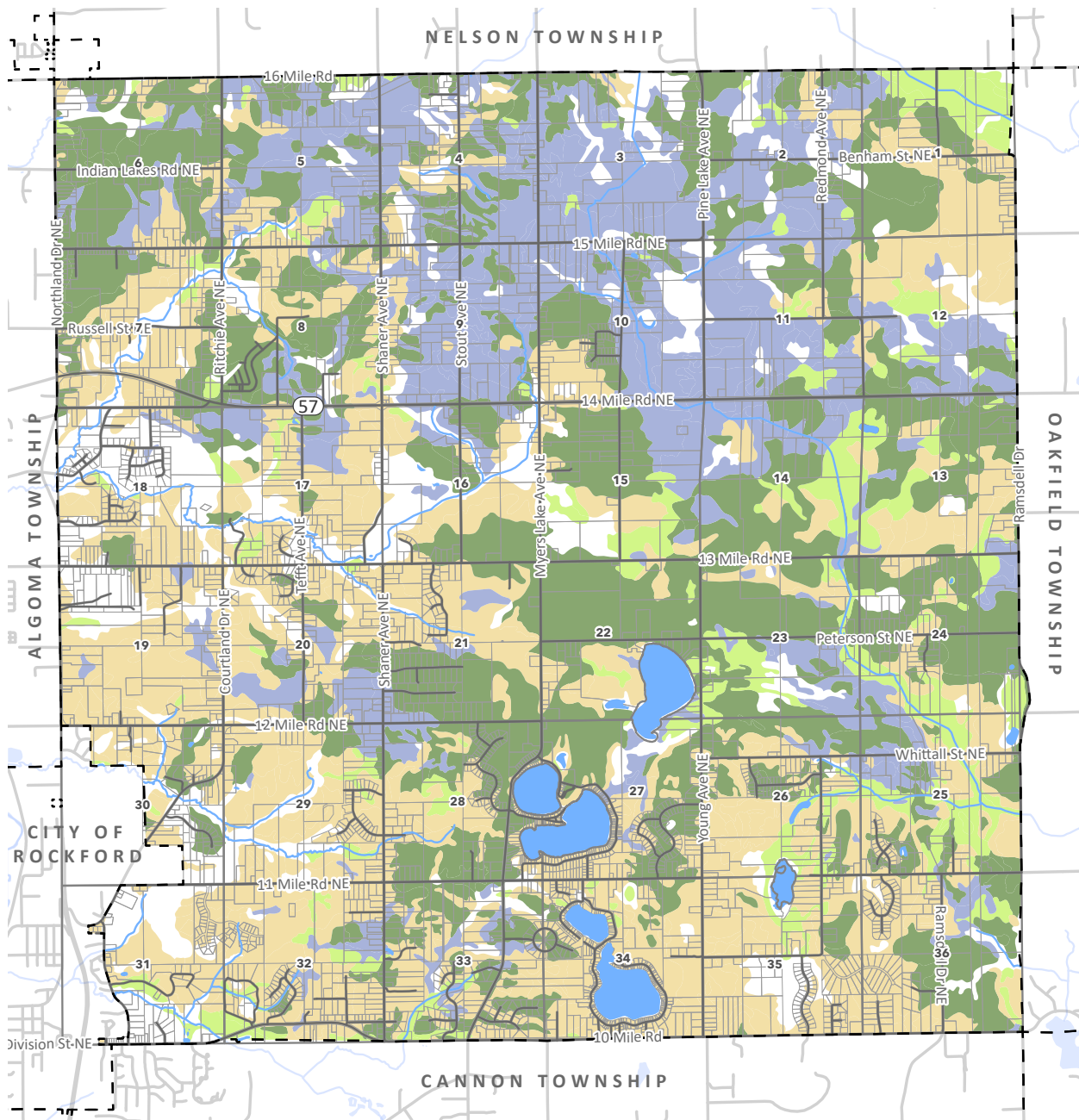
Residential

This land use classification identifies where residential development is the primary use. A majority of the land in the southern and western portions of the Township is covered in residential land use, most of which are single-family homes.

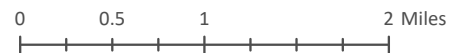
Industrial

The industrial land use category in Courtland Township includes properties with Consumers Energy easement in the north and eastern parts of the community.

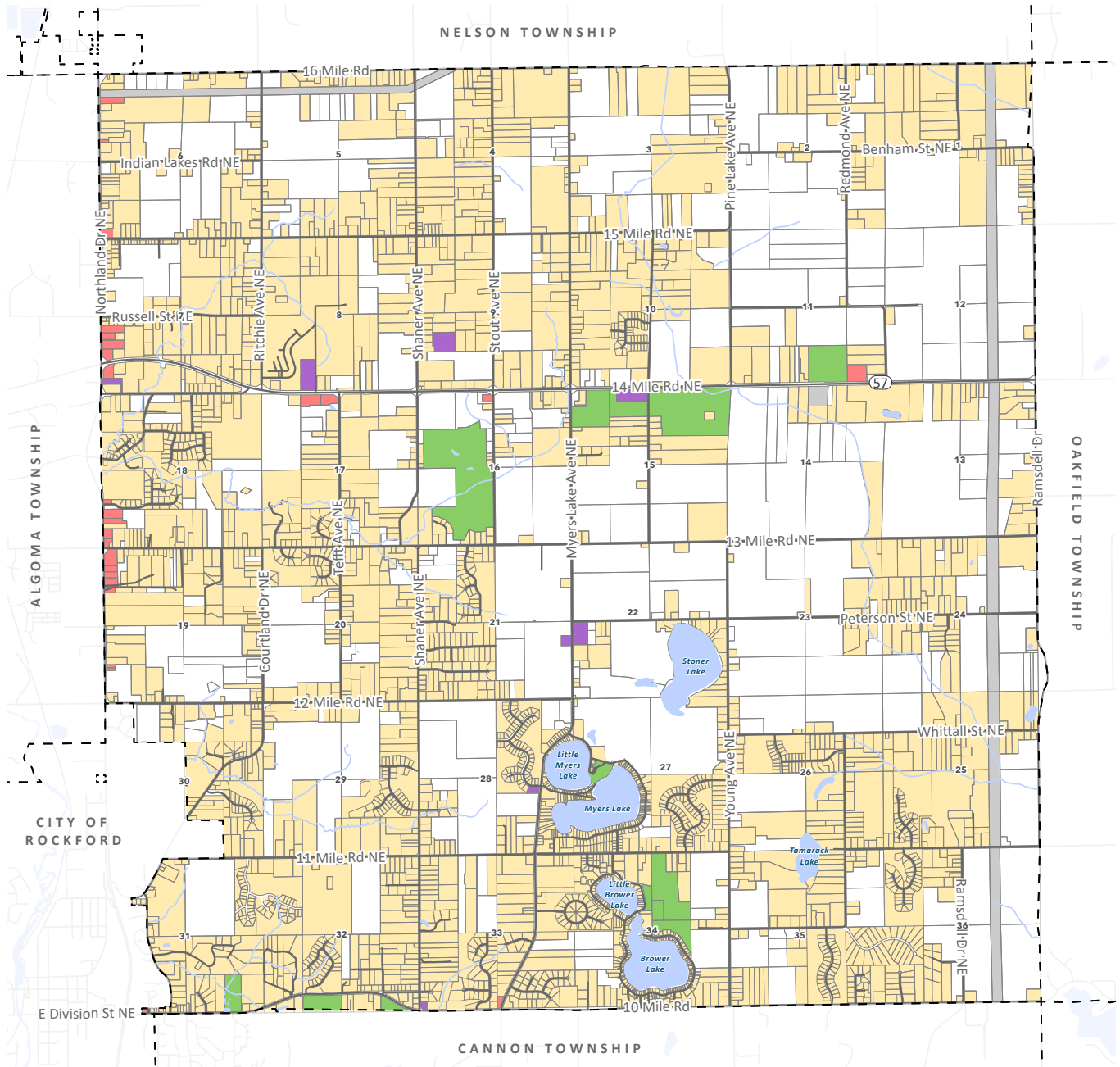
MAP 14: FARMLAND



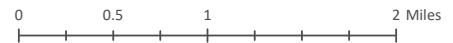
- All areas are prime farmland
- Farmland of local importance
- Farmland of unique importance
- Prime farmland if drained
- Not prime farmland



MAP 15: EXISTING LAND USE



- Agricultural
- Residential
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Recreation



Commercial

The commercial land use category is used to include land uses for professional services, retail goods, offices, restaurants, and other similar businesses in Courtland Township.

Institutional

This land use classification includes uses that are religious in nature, educational-related facilities, and government uses. In Courtland Township, this category identifies parcels where area churches, the Courtland Township cemetery, the Township Hall, and the Township's fire stations are located.

Recreation

This land use classification is used to identify parcels where public or private recreational activities occur. This includes the Kent County parks, the Courtland Township parks, the Brower Lake Nature Preserve, the North Kent Golf Course, and other recreational areas.

FUTURE LAND USE

The following section describes the future land use designations as illustrated on Map 16. Each Future Land Use category is intended to foster a character distinctive of that area. Furthermore, it is intended that as the community develops over the next twenty to twenty-five years, a significant share of the natural features existing today will have been preserved. Note that the future land use designations are to be viewed as general, with indistinct edges. Along the margins, where two or more designations adjoin, either land use class may be appropriate.

Agriculture

The Agriculture future land use category is critical to the identity of Courtland Township, as specified by the public. This land use is intended to preserve agricultural productivity and viability within the Township by allowing for enough land to support the agriculture industry and related services. The United States Department of Agriculture's soils classification can be an important factor in identifying agricultural land use parcels that should remain over time. Prime agricultural soils are considered to produce the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources, and farming results in the least damage to the environment. Map 14 shows where these prime agricultural soils are located in Courtland Township. In addition to

knowing where the Township has approved supporting the continued use of agriculture in the Future Land Use Map, understanding where the best soils for active farming are located can be used to inform land use decisions.

Using the Township's zoning district to continue to support agricultural land use, industries, and related businesses is another way to protect farmland from excess development. Farming activities and rural residences can co-exist, yet development is discouraged by regulations that strictly limit the number of lots and building permits that can be created from a parent parcel of land. Residential parcels should be between 1-2 acres with the primary structure located in the front part of a parcel. Many of the parcels in the Agriculture future land use category also overlap with some areas in the Township that contain large areas of "prime agricultural" soils as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture. The primary intent of this future land use category is outlined by the following ideas:

- Promote farming activities as the primary land use in the areas of the Township best suited for such use and to conserve as long as practical the Township's most productive agricultural land.
- Preserve woodlands and wetlands often associated with farm-size parcels. Such features are useful as water retention, surface water and groundwater recharge areas, and as habitats for plant and animal life. These have an important aesthetic value that contributes to the unique character of the farm areas.
- Encourage long-term investment in improvements needed to maintain and expand agricultural production by creating a stable environment for these businesses.

If the County has the means to support a Purchase of Development of Rights program, the Township can encourage agricultural property owners to participate in the program. Landowners will have the option to sell their development rights (calculated as the difference between the agricultural value of the land and the fair market value) to a public entity. Under PA 570, this ensures that the land will be preserved for Agriculture use and open space, while, in exchange, landowners may continue to farm their land, rent the land to another farmer, or sell the land for the remaining agricultural value.

Country Residential

This land use designation is intended primarily to address the desire for single-family development in rural and low-density patterns. Some of the parcels consist of former farm fields that have been fragmented into parcels ranging from two to forty acres. These areas are characterized generally by rolling meadowlands, fallow fields, and wooded hillsides with larger lots and residential land uses at densities of one unit per two to five acres in more low-density style developments. The primary land use in the Country Residential land use classification will include single-family detached residential development in large lot patterns or cluster developments. In addition, hobby farms and some field crop production may be expected in this area. The Master Plan anticipates a continuation of this pattern accompanied by some cluster developments occurring over time and may preserve key natural features and views while providing low-density residential development opportunities consistent with the character of the area.

Farming is a permitted use by right in this classification.

Low Density Residential

The Low Density Residential future land use classification recognizes a growing trend across the Township favoring suburban style development, creating housing amidst the rolling hills and natural features of Courtland Township. This kind of land development pattern should facilitate an orderly and sequential transition from rural areas to attractive and functional, connected neighborhoods through a network of roads and trails.

The neighborhoods in this region should be developed at densities and with amenities to encourage family living, including walkable streets, convenient access to schools, services, and shopping, and with a range of housing that encourages a balanced mix of housing types and housing prices, as the market allows. Some developments may be formed in traditional subdivisions and/or in conservation design patterns or clusters intended to protect key natural features or to provide open space or habitats for local flora and fauna.

Within the Low-Density Residential designation, overall densities will vary based on existing patterns and will range from one to four units per acre, although it is likely that pockets of higher and lower densities will emerge to accommodate the landscape, meet identified housing needs, and to fulfill the other objectives of the Plan. Developments occurring on lands classified as Low-Density Residential should have direct access to public paved roads and should accommodate public utilities. Innovative, environmentally-sensitive stormwater runoff detention and treatment will be encouraged to protect water quality and other natural features.

Playgrounds, parks, pedestrian walkways, and street layouts should be designed to connect with future developments as they occur. Nonmotorized facilities should be incorporated into new developments and should be positioned to connect to future developments.

Waterfront development and redevelopment along Myers and Brower Lakes should be scaled and designed to have a positive impact on the health of the natural ecosystem as well as the character of the neighborhood. Efforts should be made to blend new housing developments into the current fabric of residential development.

Lake Residential

This land use designation is intended for residential uses with frontage on a lake or within the North Kent Sewer Authority (NKSA) Defined Service Area. The purpose is to permit residential development while protecting the integrity and uniqueness of Little Myers Lake, Myers Lake, Little Brower Lake, and other waterbodies that the Planning Commission deem relevant. Development in the Lake Residential designation should consist of traditional single-family homes. Efforts should be made to blend new housing into the current fabric of residential development.

All new housing should be designed to preserve wetlands around the lakes, promoting sustainable development. In addition, development within the Lake Residential designation should prohibit “keyhole” development, which is the use of a shared waterfront lot to provide lake access to non-riparian landowners. Viewsheds should be protected.

Moderate Density Residential

The Moderate Density Residential designation is intended to accommodate residential options for people of varying ages, abilities, life phases, households, and income levels formed in inviting communities where there is existing sewer capacity. This designation is expected to serve affordable single-family homes on smaller lots or townhomes, duplexes, and multiplexes. The future land use map designates two key areas that are dedicated to moderate density residential along Northland Drive, located near the City of Rockford and along the border of Algoma Township.

Overall residential densities within the moderate density residential area will range from two to six units per acre unless public water and sewer services are available. Development types may include senior living facilities, single-family detached homes, or multi-unit buildings developed in clusters, depending on the availability of utilities. Within this relatively intense development form, flexible conservation design

mechanisms will be encouraged, as appropriate, to establish open space preserves and neighborhood recreational facilities. Light fixtures will be encouraged to follow best practices to reduce light pollution. Stormwater should be dealt with on-site, and environmentally friendly best management practices should be used.

Playgrounds and sitting areas to provide recreational opportunities should be incorporated into new developments. Nonmotorized infrastructure like sidewalks and trails and street layouts should be designed to connect with future developments as they occur.

Manufactured Housing

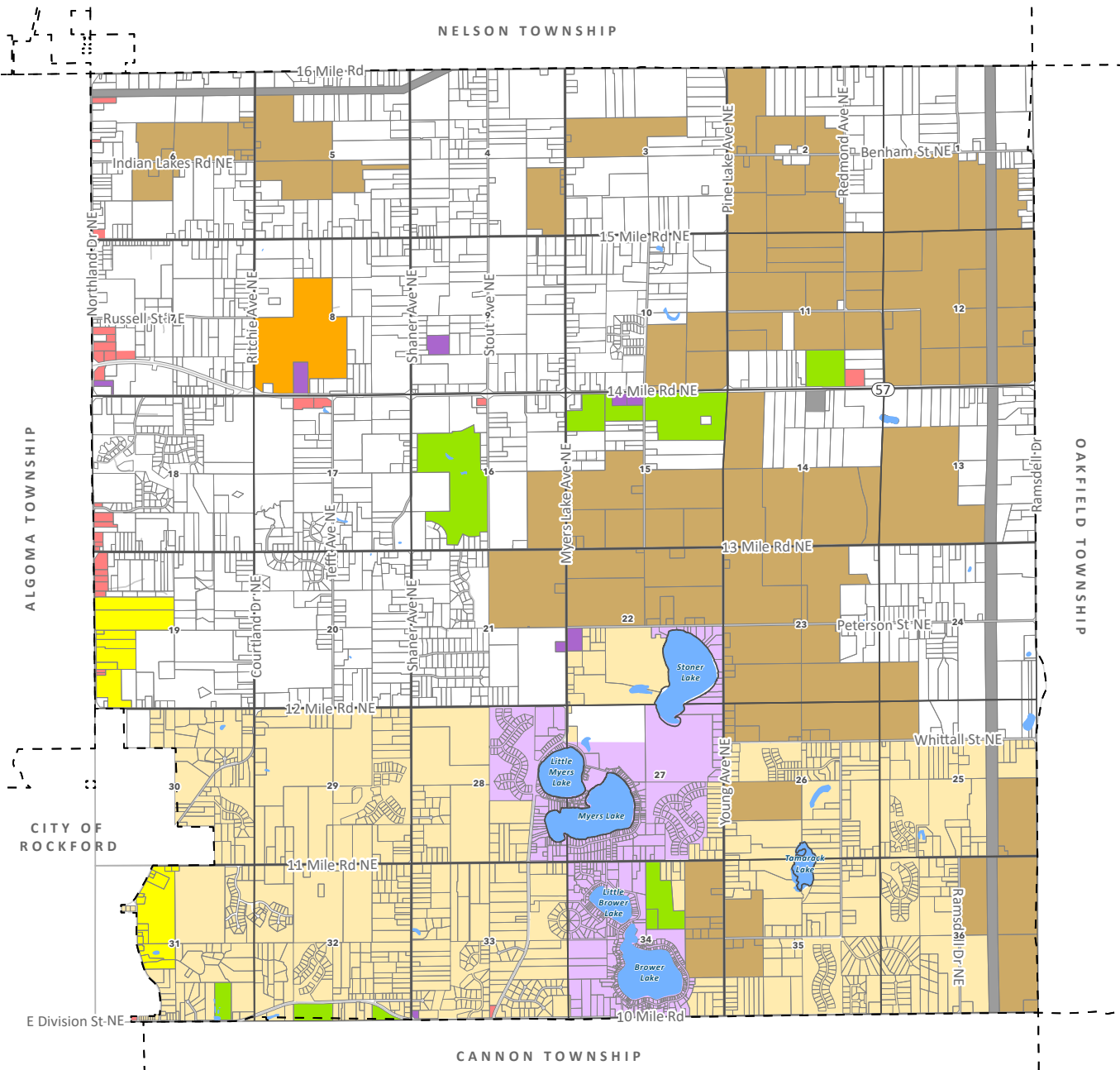
As a result of a court-ordered settlement in 2000, this land use designation is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 14 Mile Road (M-57) and Richie Avenue comprising a total of 196 acres. The desired use in this designation will be quality, affordable, manufactured housing that will offer approximately four to six units per acre depending upon the environmental conditions.

The judgment provides for up to 691 manufactured housing units, served by on-site private community sewer and water systems. This will satisfy the Township's obligation to provide manufactured housing for the planning horizon, and no additional lands have been set aside for the manufactured home community designation. Natural vegetative buffers around the manufactured home park will protect less intense land uses and will be designed to retain significant natural features, including rolling topography and tributaries. Greater road frontage setbacks will be encouraged to keep country roads scenic.

Commercial

The Commercial future land use designation is intended to provide a place for retail goods, restaurants, office buildings, and related businesses. As the Township seeks to retain its bucolic, rural identity, there will likely be gradual increases in this land use over time. Large-scale, abrupt changes should be avoided, or at least thoroughly reviewed before they are considered. Scattered, or "hop-scotch," patterns of development without an intention of creating a consistent land use pattern in the nearby area are to be avoided. The parcels of existing commercial land uses shall be used as guides for siting future commercial land uses. New development should emanate from areas of existing commercial activity so corridors or neighborhoods transition slowly, being woven into the fabric of Courtland Township.

MAP 16: FUTURE LAND USE



- | | |
|--|--|
|  Agriculture |  Manufactured Housing |
|  Country Residential |  Commercial |
|  Low Density Residential |  Industrial |
|  Moderate Density Residential |  Institutional |
|  Lake Residential |  Recreational |



The existing commercial land uses and parcels along the M57 and Northland Drive corridors are where future commercial and office development should be considered first. The community made a deliberate decision not to designate future commercial development areas on those roads based on public input gathered during the master planning process, a history of low demand for these kinds of uses, traffic safety concerns, potential incompatibility with existing uses, and other factors considered elsewhere in this plan. The areas designated on the future land use map are guidelines, however, and the Township will be open to considering additional commercial type zoning on areas of M57 and Northland Drive which are adjacent to or near existing commercial land uses or areas identified for commercial use in the future land use map. Considerations for reviewing new commercial development include:

- Proximity to existing commercial development.
- Avoidance of commercial uses separated from other uses or isolate existing residential uses.
- Compatibility with existing nearby uses.
- Assembly of enough area to allow for sufficient setbacks, landscaping, driveway separation, nonmotorized infrastructure, and parking (on an as-needed basis)
- Traffic and safe access, favoring locations with alternate access to secondary streets (particularly in the case of lands in the M57 corridor) and potential for cross-access with existing or future uses to reduce the number of driveway access points.
- The Township will look more favorably on requests made in the form of a commercial PUD, or with offers of conditional rezoning limiting the types of uses or addressing access or other issues.

All parcels within the Commercial land use designation will primarily serve as retail and professional centers for Township residents and surrounding neighbors, positioned to capitalize on traffic flow while preserving the rural aesthetic of these corridors.

The Township will elevate the need for nonmotorized infrastructure development, efficient access controls, and attractive landscaping to soften the streetscape and compatibility with adjacent uses, community character, and natural setting. This may be accomplished with landscape and lighting standards, building placement requirements, and site and building design requirements that work to balance

vehicular and nonmotorized circulation patterns with aesthetic considerations and the realities of the marketplace. The Township will strive to achieve a higher standard in commercial and office design to help foster attractive, community-based developments that will remain functional and vibrant.

Industrial

Industrial parcels provide locations for utilities that are necessary to support the services for Township residents. The expansion of this land use category should be limited, and only done incrementally in a way that will complement adjacent and nearby land uses. Parcels that contain light industrial uses should also be in this category.

Institutional

The Institutional future land use category protects the existence of facilities that are vital to the Township's daily operations and services that are provided to residents. These facilities include the Township Hall, Park, and Fire Department.

Recreation

The Recreation future land use classification identifies areas that are to be used for recreational purposes. That includes active park areas, athletic facilities, wildlife viewing, informal or passive recreational fields, and other related activities. Identifying and maintaining this kind of land use helps to facilitate a high quality of life for Township residents. The Township seeks land donations for future parks and recreation development opportunities.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Courtland Township has retained its rural character over the last several decades. Though historically more agrarian, the character of the Township has incrementally changed to more residential uses, with few commercial or industrial land uses. Township officials should consider directing growth to small pockets of density, especially in areas where commercial development already exists, to balance residents' demand for services, business, and more housing with the desire to continue to live in a community rich in natural resources. Rural preservation will remain a challenge as the demand for growth continues or increases unless intentional measures are taken to take an environmentally-sensitive approach to design, site plan review, and development. Congregating many needs in one area will leave the remainder of the Township with the freedom to preserve its agricultural spaces, heritage, and natural features.

Related to this is the impact that additional growth can have on local active farmlands. Agriculture is a difficult and economically challenging activity in the best of circumstances. However, as more development - residential or commercial - encroaches on active agriculture areas, conflicts are inevitable. The Right to Farm Act protects farmers from being treated as nuisances for the routine activities associated with farming (dust, noise, spray, odor, etc.). However, the logistical challenges of farming become even more difficult when farmers must move field equipment along country roads that are increasingly used by commuters. In addition, as the number of active farming operations diminishes, the various support services they need dwindle, too.

If trends in population growth and land consumption continue, Courtland Township is at risk for excessive rates of sprawl. This pattern of development is known to significantly contribute to local traffic congestion, increased CO2 emissions, and declining air, water, and environmental quality.

ZONING PLAN

Section 33, (2), (d), of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires that Master Plans adopted after September 1, 2008, include a Zoning Plan to explain how the future land use categories in this Plan relate to the zoning districts incorporated in the Township's Zoning Ordinance. The following table relates the more general future land use categories with the zoning districts and key elements that are to be considered in reviewing requests to rezone lands in the Township consistent with the plan. In considering a request to rezone property in Courtland Township, the Planning Commission must consider the future land use map and the future land use descriptive narrative of this plan.

The table should be used to evaluate the degree to which the proposed rezoning is, or may be, consistent with the plan along with an evaluation of the specific request. The proposed rezoning decision should also consider whether the proposed site may be reasonably used as it is currently zoned, whether the proposed site is an appropriate location for any and all of the land uses that might be permitted within the requested zoning district, whether there may be other locations in the community that are better suited to accommodate such uses and any potential detrimental impact on the surrounding property that could result from the proposed rezoning.

The Zoning Plan should be applied as a guideline for the Planning Commission subject to the appropriate application of the discretionary authority permitted to the Planning Commission and Township Board by statute, case law, and good planning practice. Nothing in the Zoning Plan will preclude the Planning Commission and the Township Board from considering amendments to the Master Plan to better serve the public interests of the community.

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Agriculture	R-R	
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture and agriculture-related businesses will be supported, as this is a primary use. • Residential development should be minimal in areas where the soil is best for farming, and encouraged to locate in areas where the soil is less productive (see Map 14). • High-intensity development should not be permitted. • Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on neighboring properties and upward glare projected into the sky. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Country Residential	R-R	R-1
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large lots with generous yards create a feeling of ruralness and ample separation between homes. • Natural resources should be preserved when possible, retaining the rural identity of the community. • Residential uses in this area should also contain soils that accommodate private septic systems. • Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on neighboring properties and upward glare projected into the sky. • Hobby farm and field crops may be expected in this area. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Low Density Residential	R-1	R-R
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote pedestrian movement throughout the neighborhoods and connections nearby amenities, including other neighborhoods. Maximize connections to schools, parks, natural features, and other nearby amenities. Key intersections should be developed for all modes and designed or reconfigured to address safety issues. Natural resources should be preserved when possible, retaining the rural identity of the community. Residential uses in this area should also contain soils that accommodate private septic systems. Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on neighboring properties and upward glare projected into the sky. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Lake Residential	R-1	
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended for use on properties adjacent to lakes in Courtland Township or are within the North Kent Sewer Authority (NKSA) -Defined Service Area). Preservation of the lake and waterbodies' water quality and surrounding natural resources will take precedence when considering design, development, redevelopment, and construction on an individual site. Residential developments should connect to the NKSAD-Defined Service Area when probable and as capacity allows. Stormwater will be addressed and retained on site, using best management practices and low impact design to mitigate runoff that directly impacts waterbodies. Lake views should be preserved when possible. When possible, promote pedestrian movement throughout the neighborhoods and connect nearby amenities, including other neighborhoods. Key intersections should be developed for all modes and designed or reconfigured to address safety issues. Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on neighboring properties, the lake, and upward glare projected into the sky. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Moderate Density Residential	R-2	R-1
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive, durable building materials and architecture should complement the surrounding neighborhood to form high-quality developments. • Promote pedestrian movement throughout the development by including crosswalks, connections to existing infrastructure, and extensions to future planned routes. • Development should include access to and/or designated green spaces and recreational areas, including nearby parks. • On-site stormwater retention should occur, preferably using green, low-impact design, and best management methodologies. • Encourage nonmotorized connections to nearby neighborhoods and amenities to provide a safer environment for people not using an automobile. • Cluster developments may be located here. • Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on neighboring properties and upward glare projected into the sky. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Manufactured Housing	MH	R-2
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote pedestrian movement throughout the development by including crosswalks, connections to existing infrastructure, and extensions to future planned routes. • Development should include access to and/or designated green spaces and recreational areas, including near-by parks. • Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on neighboring properties and upward glare projected into the sky. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Commercial	GC	LC
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should be built with high-quality, durable materials. • The site should be well-landscaped and should use drought-resistant plants when possible. • The total installed initial luminaire lumens of all outdoor lighting should not exceed the total site lumen limit. Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on sites nearby. • Provide appropriate buffers to sensitive natural features, such as steep slopes, high-quality woodlands, floodplains, water bodies, etc. when considering developments. • Promote pedestrian movement to and throughout the site by including crosswalks, connections to existing infrastructure, and extensions to future planned routes. • Maintain naturalized areas for habitat preservation and mitigate water quality concerns. • On-site stormwater retention should occur, preferably using environmentally friendly, low-impact design, and best management methodologies. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Industrial	LI	GC
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neary-by uses should be compatible. Buffers for noise and unsightly uses should be included when necessary to accommodate the existing adjacent uses. • Development should be built with high-quality, durable materials. • The site should be well-landscaped and should use drought-resistant plants when possible. • The total installed initial luminaire lumens of all outdoor lighting should not exceed the total site lumen limit. Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on sites nearby. • Provide appropriate buffers to sensitive natural features, such as steep slopes, high-quality woodlands, floodplains, water bodies, etc. when considering developments. • Maintain naturalized areas to mitigate water quality concerns. • On-site stormwater retention should occur, preferably using environmentally friendly, low-impact design, and best management methodologies. • Site should accommodate areas for safe vehicular and nonmotorized modes and interactions. Connections to the existing and planned nonmotorized network should be developed. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Institutional	Any Residential District	Any Commercial District
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site should be well-landscaped, and should use drought-resistant plants when possible. • The total installed initial luminaire lumens of all outdoor lighting should not exceed the total site lumen limit. Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on sites nearby. • Provide appropriate buffers to sensitive natural features, such as steep slopes, high-quality woodlands, floodplains, water bodies, etc. when considering developments. • Maintain naturalized areas for habitat preservation and water quality improvement. • On-site stormwater retention should occur, preferably using green, low impact design, and best management methodologies. 		

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT	POTENTIAL COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICT
Recreational	Any Residential District	
KEY ELEMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses can include active or passive recreation activities, as well as informal and formal recreation areas. • The total installed initial luminaire lumens of all outdoor lighting should not exceed the total site lumen limit. Light fixtures should be pointed downward to promote the reduction of light pollution. Limit the impact of light pollution on sites nearby. 		

CHAPTER 8

IMPLEMENTATION





A focused effort towards the implementation of this plan will strongly contribute to the preservation of the Township’s rural setting while allowing growth in appropriate areas. Local officials will follow and implement the Master Plan to effectively guide growth. By following the strategies that have been outlined, the community is equipped to make informed land use and development decisions based on good data and community input. The implementation strategies that are outlined in this chapter are intentionally general to provide the community with the flexibility to prepare specific work assignments and prioritize each strategy as it makes sense based on a compelling need or identified timeline.

To actualize the vision that is outlined in this plan, a set of work assignments by the Township Board, Planning Commission, and staff should be developed. This is accomplished through various tasks that may include updating ordinances, special studies or assignments, and administrative procedures which are described in this chapter.

ZONING UPDATES

The Courtland Township Zoning Ordinance is the primary implementation mechanism for this plan, as it regulates land use in the Township. Local control of land use, as provided for by zoning, is an accepted legal practice. The principles on which zoning is based include the need to:

- Balance the interests of all landowners and residents with individual landowners.
- Help provide a long-term vision for the Township.
- Protect the environment.
- Ensure development is adequately served by transportation infrastructure and utilities.
- Achieve the quality of life desired by residents.
- Provide fair and consistent review of development needs.
- Protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

An update of the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map in light of the adoption of the Master Plan should be considered so that current regulations will better conform to the future land use designations and map as described in this plan. The Ordinance may also be evaluated for its flexibility to address innovative development techniques and control of inefficient development patterns. The Ordinance should be updated and reformatted for modern use which will allow for consistency in provisions and the ability to enforce the imposed standards. Specific examples of Zoning Ordinance updates include:

- Specific land use regulations to regulate small-scale solar and wind energy systems
- A new zoning district to address some of the unique land use challenges for lakefront properties
- Zoning map or text amendments to further implement the future land use recommendations of this plan

The Planning Commission is primarily responsible for the tasks involved in implementing this strategy. The Township Board will have final approving authority over any changes made to the Zoning Ordinance.



KEEP SITE PLAN CRITERIA UPDATED TO REFLECT BEST PRACTICES

Continue to keep the site plan review criteria in the zoning ordinance current to reflect best practices to keep new developments in line with the Township's desired character. In master plan discussions, there was talk about doing more to manage light pollution. Previous master planning efforts emphasized the need for green infrastructure, low impact design (LID) framework, and other best management techniques to manage stormwater.

As the Township continues to increase impervious surface area as residential land uses increase, stormwater management will continue to be an important issue. Making sure that the site plan review language provides direction on how new developments should be designed and built at the parcel level will contribute to the creation of a community that reflects the community's values. As new planning frameworks and topics emerge, the Planning Commission should periodically review the site plan review language and guidelines to ensure that these standards will develop the kind of places and neighborhoods that evoke the Township's desired identity.

UTILITY PLAN

During the development of this plan, there was some discussion on the potential future growth of utilities that serve the Township. With a likely increase in residential development projected to occur over time, Township officials may want to begin planning where future expansions may be needed and how those may develop. With the identification of PFAS found in groundwater in nearby communities, evaluating the resources needed to develop a public water system may also prove fruitful. Taking time to develop a utility policy and phasing plan for sewer and water utility extensions ahead of periods of growth or in urgent situations can prove useful.

COMPLETE STREETS

This master plan supports a complete streets policy for Courtland Township. A complete streets policy encourages a design approach that enables safe travel for multiple modes of transportation including vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transportation. Through this approach, thoroughfares are planned, designed, and constructed to allow access for all legal users safely and efficiently, without any one user taking priority over another. The goal is to provide safe access for all types of users and modes of transportation within a right-of-way.

In Courtland Township, primary modes of transportation include vehicles, bicycles, and people moving around on foot or wheel. The Township's primary objective will be to work with surrounding communities to promote healthy lifestyles for people of all ages, abilities, and life circumstances. Paths on both sides of a road or street, bike infrastructure, and other features will be promoted when appropriate. Complete streets can result in increased safety for all road users, improved public health, a cleaner environment, mobility equity, and enhanced quality of life through more inviting streets.

Another key motivation to enact complete streets policies is that Michigan law encourages MDOT to give additional consideration to grant applicants with these policies. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act has also been amended to stipulate that transportation improvements be respectful of the surrounding context, further ensuring that more equitable and attractive streets become a reality.



Although much of Courtland Township is a rural community, having this policy will strengthen the community's position when opportunities arise to improve the transportation system to consider improvements for all users. There may be areas of the community where this kind of development may make sense to start to develop like Northland Drive, near the City of Rockford, near the Township Hall, and other areas. Some features may be accomplished through simple road restriping and the addition of signage. Other projects may be more involved and may only be practicable when coordinated with major roadway reconstruction. Because most of the Township's roadways are under the jurisdiction of Kent County, much of the Township's work in implementing a complete streets policy will involve working with neighboring communities, the Road Commission, and other pertinent agencies.



NONMOTORIZED PLAN

If any neighboring jurisdictions, Kent County, the Grand Valley Metro Council, or another regional entity embark on a nonmotorized plan, trail, or mobility plan, Township officials should seek the opportunity to join in their efforts. There has been some discussion and support for building more nonmotorized infrastructure in the Township to support a variety of transportation options and increase recreational opportunities. A nonmotorized plan can help with these efforts.

COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBORING AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Coordinating and cooperating with neighboring municipalities can provide a number of opportunities for the Township. The Township should work to form alliances with the counties and other regional organizations to actively plan for the future of the community and to achieve the goals of this Plan. The Kent County Road Commission should continue to be in discussions pertaining to road improvements. The County can be a valuable asset in developing policies to preserve farmland, groundwater, and natural resources, and educating the public about important resources in the community.

Courtland Township can also use their relationship with the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council to help facilitate research and conversation related to the prevention of crashes, increasing safety along important corridors, and improvements with the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The Greater Greenville Transportation Committee meets quarterly to discuss transportation issues with local communities, especially related to concerns along M-57. Courtland Township is a part of this committee, and should continue to participate.

SOLAR AND WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS ON-GOING EDUCATION

The Planning Commission and other Township officials and staff should continue to seek educational opportunities to grow their knowledge of solar and wind energy systems issues and strategies that impact local land use decisions. The Township can seek opportunities from agencies like Michigan State University Extension (MSU-Extension), the Michigan Township Association (MTA), the Michigan Planning Association (MAP), and the Michigan Municipal League.

PLAN UPDATES

The Plan should be reviewed periodically by the Planning Commission. At a minimum, the land use portion should be reviewed annually and, following the state law, updated at least every five years. An annual review allows the Township to stay on track to implement the Plan's recommendations as well as note any changes that may need to be made when the time comes for a significant update. A periodic review of the Plan also ensures that it stays current and relevant. The Township Planning Commission will make it their best practice to review the Master Plan every February.

APPENDIX

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT REPORT**





ENGAGEMENT REPORT

**COURTLAND TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

FEBRUARY 2023

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Community Open House Station 1 & Comment Cards Raw Data

PROCESS: ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

A hybrid of virtual and in-person events was conducted to solicit community feedback. Community engagement included an online survey, with print copies available at the Township Hall, and a two-hour open house. This hybrid approach allowed participants to choose events and activities that they were interested in, suited their availability, or that they were comfortable completing.

The events were advertised in multiple locations including the Township website, the Township Newsletter, a flyer that went out with the Township's Winter Tax Bill, and in the local newspaper called The Squire. Township officials also promoted the event using their personal social media accounts and invited residents by word of mouth.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The Courtland Township Master Plan Community Open House was held on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the Courtland Township Hall located at 7450 14 Mile Rd NE, Rockford, MI 4934.

More than 40 people attended the event including Township Planning Commission members, Township Staff, and the Township Supervisor. Attendees ranged from 1 year of age to over 70 years of age. Most of the attendees were Township residents.

WELCOME BOARD

The welcome board featured informational text that explained the process of the Master Plan and the importance of long-range planning. The board encouraged participants to take part in available activities and provide their feedback regarding planning topics for the Township.



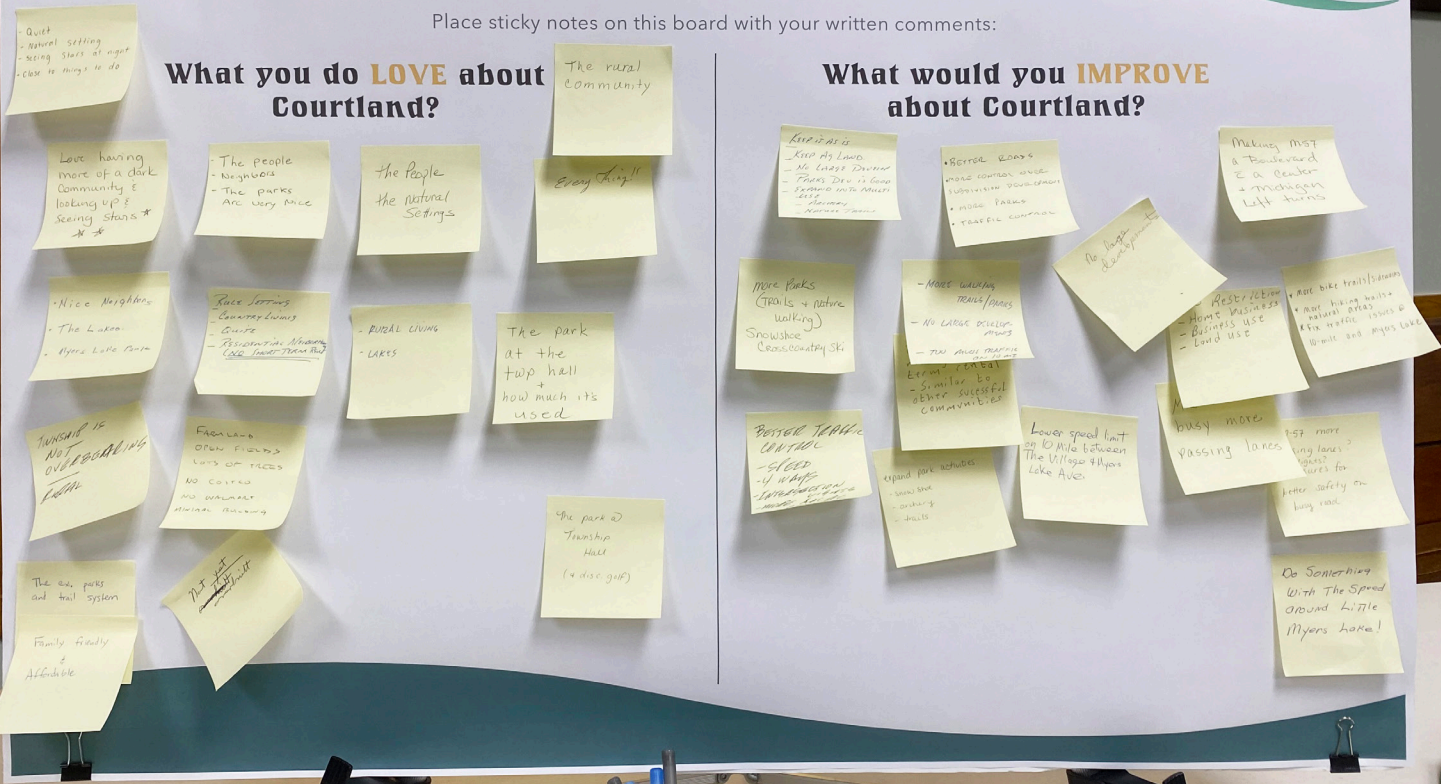
COMMUNITY VALUES



Place sticky notes on this board with your written comments:

What you do LOVE about Courtland?

What would you IMPROVE about Courtland?



STATION I: COMMUNITY VALUES BOARD RESULTS

Participants were asked to write about what they love and what could be improved in Courtland Township. Responses were written on sticky notes and posted on the activity board. There were two questions posed to participants. They could leave comments regarding "What do you LOVE about Courtland?" and "What would you IMPROVE about Courtland?" Common responses for things people love include: the people, neighbors, Township staff, the Parks, and the rural setting/farmland/nature. Being able to see the stars, the lack of development, and how quiet the community is were also reoccurring comments.

The most common improvement identified by participants for Courtland Township was largely related to traffic. Participants were concerned about safety, mitigating crashes, slowing the speed of traffic, and improved traffic controls at various intersections. A number of other notes had statements regarding the desire for more recreational activities, no large developments and retaining farmlands, and more trails. All of the responses are provided as written comments in the Appendix.

STATION 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER VISION BOARD

Participants were asked to consider four different groups of photographs that could represent the future of Courtland Township. The images were grouped together based on the intensity of the built environment and the physical and social character they evoke. Participants were asked to use two dots and place them on the image groups they would like to see more of or preserve in Courtland Township. They were allowed to place two dots in the same category or place one dot in two different categories. The breakdown of these results and a scanned image of the activity board are illustrated on the following page.



STATION 2: COMMUNITY CHARACTER VISION BOARD RESULTS

Group 1 contained photographs that have areas with little or no human impact consisting of unbuildable or protected lands or properties reverting to a wilderness condition.

Number of Dots: 22

Group 2 contained images of sparsely settled lands in cultivated or open state that include working lands, agriculture, woodlands, fields, and limited single-family houses.

Number of Dots: 25

Group 3 contained photographs of low density residential areas typically comprised of single-family homes. Large building setbacks and plantings are natural in character.

Number of Dots: 15

Group 4 contained photographs of mixed-use and residential urban fabric that include a wide variety of housing types with small blocks and good walkability.

Number of Dots: 5

Participants overwhelmingly preferred images with more green spaces, natural features, and fewer buildings, density, and pavement. Discussions with individuals revealed that people responded to the desire to maintain the agrarian landscape and the ability to view and access natural spaces.



COMMUNITY CHARACTER



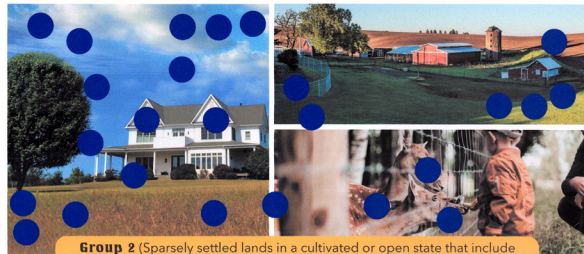
Vision Board

The images below are meant to help you think about the future character and environment of the community. The following groups of pictures are divided based on the intensity of the built environment, and the physical and social character they evoke.

Please take two dots and place them on the image groups you would like to see more of in Courtland Township.



Group 1 (Area with little or no human impact consisting of unbuildable or protected lands or properties reverting to a wilderness condition.)



Group 2 (Sparsely settled lands in a cultivated or open state that include working lands, agriculture, woodlands, fields, & limited single-family houses.)



Group 3 (Low density residential areas typically comprised of single family homes. Large building setbacks & plantings are natural in character.)



Group 4 (Mixed-use & residential urban fabric that include a wide variety of housing types with small blocks and good walkability.)

STATION 3: FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING ACTIVITY RESULTS

To glean insight into future land use and development for the community, Station 3 featured an activity for participants to give their opinion about future land uses in Courtland Township. The participants were asked to use stickers with coordinating colors to mark where the different uses of land should occur within the Township. The respondent's feedback is shown below on the scanned activity board from the open house.



FUTURE LAND USE

Land Use Activity

Use the matching stickers to mark where the following uses of land should be encouraged.



AGRICULTURE & OPEN SPACE
use the **GREEN** stickers



MIXED USE AND DOWNTOWN
use the **BLUE** stickers



SINGLE FAMILY HOMES
use the **YELLOW** stickers



OFFICE/INDUSTRY
use the **BLACK** stickers



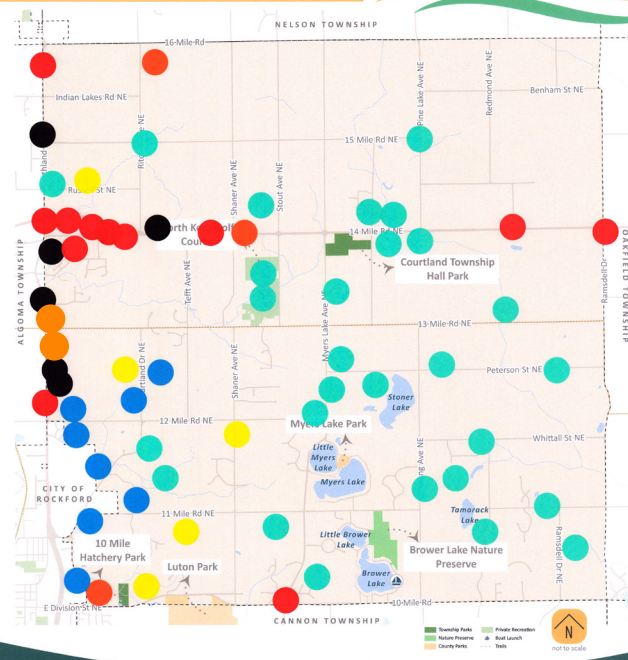
ATTACHED HOUSING (DUPLEXES, TOWNHOMES, APARTMENTS, & SENIOR HOUSING)
use the **ORANGE** stickers



RETAIL/COMMERCIAL BUSINESS
use the **RED** stickers



I'M NOT SURE WHERE BUT I WANT TO SEE MORE OF _____ USE.
Place the corresponding colored dot below if you know what land uses you'd like to see but are unsure as to where it belongs on the map.



STATION 3: FUTURE LAND USE MAPPING ACTIVITY RESULTS



There is an agglomeration of **green dots** representing agriculture and open space placed in the eastern portion of the Township, especially in the center and southeast corner of the community.



A number of **red dots** representing retail and commercial businesses were placed along 14 Mile Road, especially near the intersection of Northland Drive. There was one dot at the intersection of Myler Lake Avenue and 10 Mile Road.



Several **black dots** representing office and industry were placed along Northland Drive. Two **orange dots** representing attached housing styles like senior housing, townhouses, and apartments were also placed along Northland Drive at the intersection of 13 Mile Road.



A number of **blue dots** representing mixed use and downtown style of development were located near and along the eastern Township border near the City of Rockford.



Several **yellow dots** representing single family homes were placed intermittently along the western side of the Township.

The preferences of various types of land use locations were pretty clear and consistent. The results of the activity show that many of the participants were in agreement with where various land uses should be located in Courtland Township.

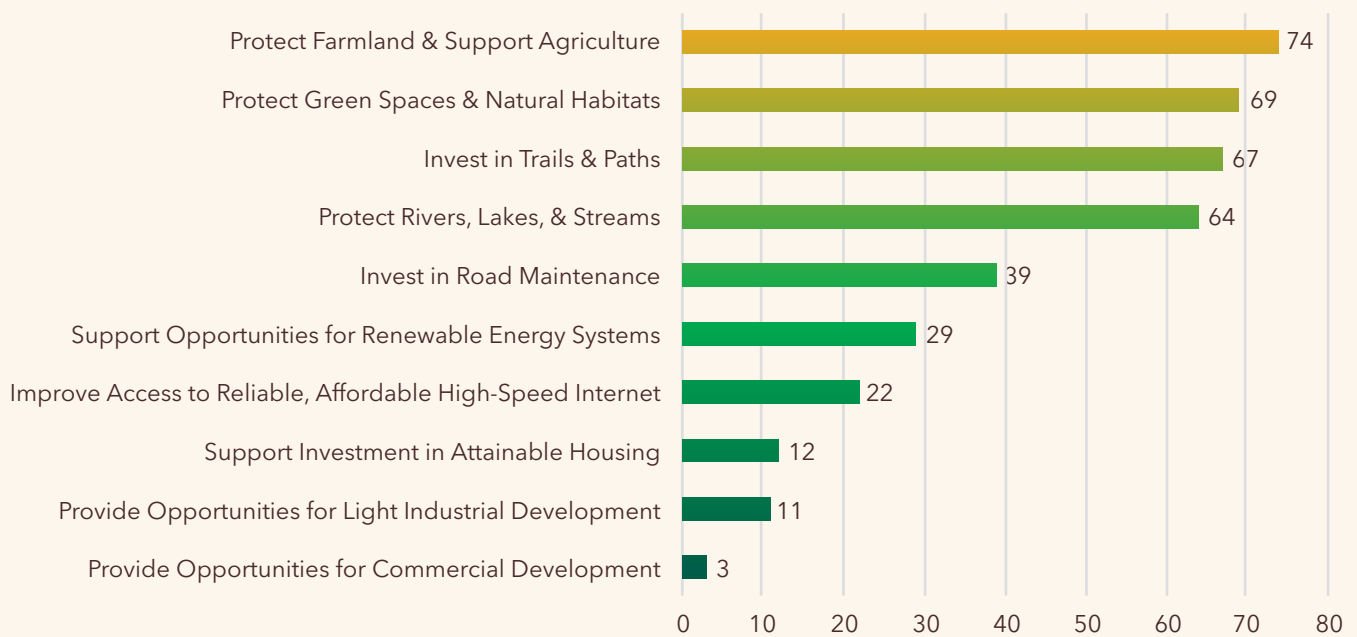


STATION 4: PENNY JAR VOTING RESULTS

Participants were given 10 pennies and were instructed to distribute all of their pennies into labeled jars. Each jar contained a few words that describe a land use and growth-related topic pertaining to Courtland Township services, infrastructure, and/or amenities. The 10 pennies given to participants represented their tax dollars and the distribution of their pennies illustrated their desired investments. The top five amenities that were selected by participants were:

1. Protect Farmland & Support Agriculture (19%)
2. Protect Green Spaces and Natural Habitats (18%)
3. Invest in Trails & Paths (17%)
4. Protect Rivers, Lakes, and Streams (16%)
5. Invest in Road Maintenance (10%)

Penny Jar Voting: Number of Pennies Collected





COMMENT CARDS SUMMARY

Participants were encouraged to provide additional thoughts anonymously via comment card that were located on a table in the center of the room. The card contained two opportunities for feedback. The top of the card contained a space for individuals to “Use three words to describe Courtland Township, now or in the future.” The second half of the card was reserved for any additional comments that participants wanted to share. A total of 11 cards were received. All of the comments that were received are listed in the Appendix. A brief summary of the comment cards can be found below.

The **two** most **common themes** that emerged from the “**three words**” exercise was that Courtland Township is rural and that the people who live and work in the community are friendly. The phrase “family-friendly” was used several times.

There were 18 individual statements recorded on the comment cards. The ideas were diverse, however many of them coalesced around the **two themes** of 1) stopping or slowing different kinds of development and 2) managing or mitigating traffic concerns. A few statements were written about retaining green spaces and recreational/community events. There were also a few mixed comments on renewable energy.



ONLINE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

From December 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, the Courtland Township Master Plan Steering Committee had an opinion survey open to gather public input on land use planning and related topics in the Township. The survey respondents provided a considerable amount of quantifiable data to help set policy related to growth and development in the Master Plan. The results are listed below followed by a summary of trends and planning implications.

PROCESS: METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The survey questions were developed by the Courtland Township Master Plan Steering Committee with the assistance of the consultant team from Williams & Works. The online survey contained 20 questions using the online survey software tool Survey Monkey. A total of 302 responses were received by the deadline with a 91% completion rate. The typical time spent on the survey was 14 minutes.

The results of the survey provide valuable feedback from the community and provide a perspective of the community's opinion regarding relevant land use and planning issues. The survey was successful as it resulted in objective quantifiable information from a large number of people compared to typical participation in other forms of public input like community open houses or visioning meetings. The survey enabled respondents to provide anonymous replies using a "check-the-box" format to expedite the completion of the online form and maximize the rate of response. Some questions allowed the respondents to leave other comments that may not have been covered with the multiple-choice options. Spelling and grammar mistakes were corrected in the open-ended responses, but all other aspects of the responses were kept as written by the respondent.

DATA ENTRY & MANAGEMENT

The survey used a variety of answers to obtain responses. Some questions only permitted one answer while others permitted multiple-choice answers along with space for individual comments. This method restricted acceptable entries to those provided by the survey, standardizing the method of answering for each question.

Three scoring scales were used to report the data received: **Nominal**, **Ordinal**, and **Ratio**. A nominal scale merely counts responses by particular classification (e.g., permanent residents or seasonal residents). This scale is useful to separate responses into working groups or to evaluate the overall sample to determine whether it represents the larger population. Questions 1-3, 5, 7-10, and 16-17 were designed on a nominal scale.

An ordinal scale is more useful in gaining insight into respondent beliefs because it includes the characteristic of rank order. One item is greater or lesser than another item or it has more or less of a particular quality based on a commonly understood standard. An ordinal scale enables some greater judgment about the relative strength or weakness of a particular response (e.g., "Somewhat concerned", "too quickly", etc.). However, it does not include a quantifiable or consistent interval between the various points in the scale. Questions 11-15, 18, and 19 use an ordinal scale to measure responses.

A ratio scale was used for questions 4 and 6 as respondents were asked to indicate a range of items that applied to them such as age. Question 20 featured an open-ended, write-in response for participants to list their answers and add any additional thoughts about planning and zoning not covered in the survey.

To report the results of the survey, the ordinal scales used were converted to interval scales. A numeric value was assigned to each response with an interval of "1" between each point on the scale. For example, in Question 14 "Very Concerned" responses were assigned a value of 4, "Somewhat Concerned" responses were assigned a value of 3, and so forth. This was done to enable the measurement of the central tendency of all responses. However, it must be recognized that the assignment of value to the intervals of the scale does not automatically result in a true interval scale because each respondent will have his/her interpretation of the interval.

SUMMARY & TRENDS

The following section contains a summary of survey trends and findings. Data results are provided following the Summary & Trends section of this document and illustrate responses for each individual question.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

- Nearly 85% of participants reported living in sections D, C, and A of Courtland Township. These sections include the southern half of the Township with the lakes and the northwest portion of the Township west of Myers Lake Ave and north of 13 Mile Rd.
- All survey participants reported owning their Courtland Township home. No respondents indicated that they rented their homes. A majority of the respondents listed having a single-family home, especially on parcels less than 5 acres. A small percentage of respondents (6.5%) listed owning a manufactured home.
- Nearly 62% of the respondents reported living in the Township for more than 10 years. Of these respondents, 32% reported being residents of the Township for more than 25 years. This shows that the Township has a good population retention rate. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents (80%) expressed no interest when asked if they expect to move out of Courtland Township in the next five years.
- The age of respondents leaned more towards people over the age of 45 with nearly half of the survey respondents reporting being in the 55 to 74 age group. This correlates with the results from Question 8 which concludes that nearly 40% of the participants are retired.
- The 5 top places respondents listed working in were: At home (in Courtland Township), Grand Rapids, Rockford, elsewhere in Kent County, and Cedar Springs.

SHOPPING PATTERNS

The respondents listed the following as their top 3 destinations for

groceries:

- Rockford
- Greenville
- Cedar Springs



The respondents listed the following as their top 3 destinations for

entertainment:

- Grand Rapids
- Internet
- Elsewhere in Kent County



The respondents listed the following as their top 3 destinations for

parks and recreation:

- Courtland Township
- Elsewhere in Kent County
- Sparta



COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

- The participants listed the following as their top 3 reasons for why they've chosen to call Courtland Township home:

Natural setting

Rural lifestyle

Safe area

- Nearly 40% of the respondents listed that the Township's effort to guide growth and development is good, and 23% listed that it is fair. Nearly half of the participants listed that the Township is growing about right and about 34% listed that the Township is growing too quickly.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION CONTINUED

- The following were the top five issues that the participants were most concerned about in the Township:
 - Conversion of farms to commercial uses
 - Accessibility/quality of high-speed or wireless internet
 - Conversion of farms to residential living
 - Unplanned and sporadic commercial development
 - Quality of groundwater
- The participants listed being the most satisfied with the following aspects of Courtland Township:
 - As a place to live
 - Quality of life
 - As a place to raise a family
 - Fire protection
 - Schools
- The respondents listed neutral perception and a lower level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the Township:
 - Shopping and services access
 - Zoning and code enforcement
 - Communication with residents from the Township

The participants were also given the opportunity to provide written feedback about any concerns that were not mentioned in the multiple-choice questions. The comments largely focused on the lack of desire toward wanting more development, short-term rentals, wind energy, and marijuana businesses. Specifically regarding growth, respondents expressed concern regarding the expansion of residential living and the negative impact on farmland and the rural character of the Township. The cost of sewer service and high property taxes were also among the top comments.





COMMUNITY DESIRES

- A large majority of the respondents expressed interest in having more single-family homes on 1-5 acre lots and homes on lots 5 or more acres in size. More than a quarter of the participants expressed an interest in a retirement community/ senior living, corresponding to a high senior population as mentioned earlier in the survey report. Another 21% showed interest in Barndominium (pole barn-style buildings typically made from metal, steel, or wood that are used for residential purposes) as a choice of housing in Courtland Township.
- In terms of businesses, the survey results show that the participants are most interested in seeing sit-down restaurants, agriculture and agriculture-related businesses, and retail stores. However, 14% of the participants opposed seeing any new businesses in the Township. Comments regarding this question focused on desiring no businesses and keeping the area rural, with no short-term rentals or wind energy infrastructure.
- The respondents listed the following as the top three priorities for Courtland Township:
 - Protecting groundwater
 - Protecting private property rights
 - Preserving rural character

The least important priorities were the expansion of industrial development, tourist-related businesses, and expansion of commercial development.



COMMUNITY DESIRES CONTINUED

Participants were also asked to identify if they agree or disagree with the following statements:

Farmland in the Township should be preserved and protected.

A large majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

I would support increased controls on development to protect water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams.

A majority of the participants also agreed with this statement. As reported earlier protecting groundwater is one of the top three priorities for the Township residents.

Rural residential developments should remain at larger lot sizes to preserve farmland.

Nearly 70% of the survey participants agreed with this statement.

The Township should acquire more land for parks, natural areas, and trails.

About 67% of the participants agreed with this statement.

Housing development with smaller lots should be clustered together to preserve open space and farmland.

More than half the participants agreed with the statement while a quarter of the participants disagreed with the statement. Nearly 17% of the participants also answered “don’t know” when asked if they agree or disagree with the above statement.

Courtland Township needs to attract more commercial businesses.

More than half of the participants disagreed with the statement.

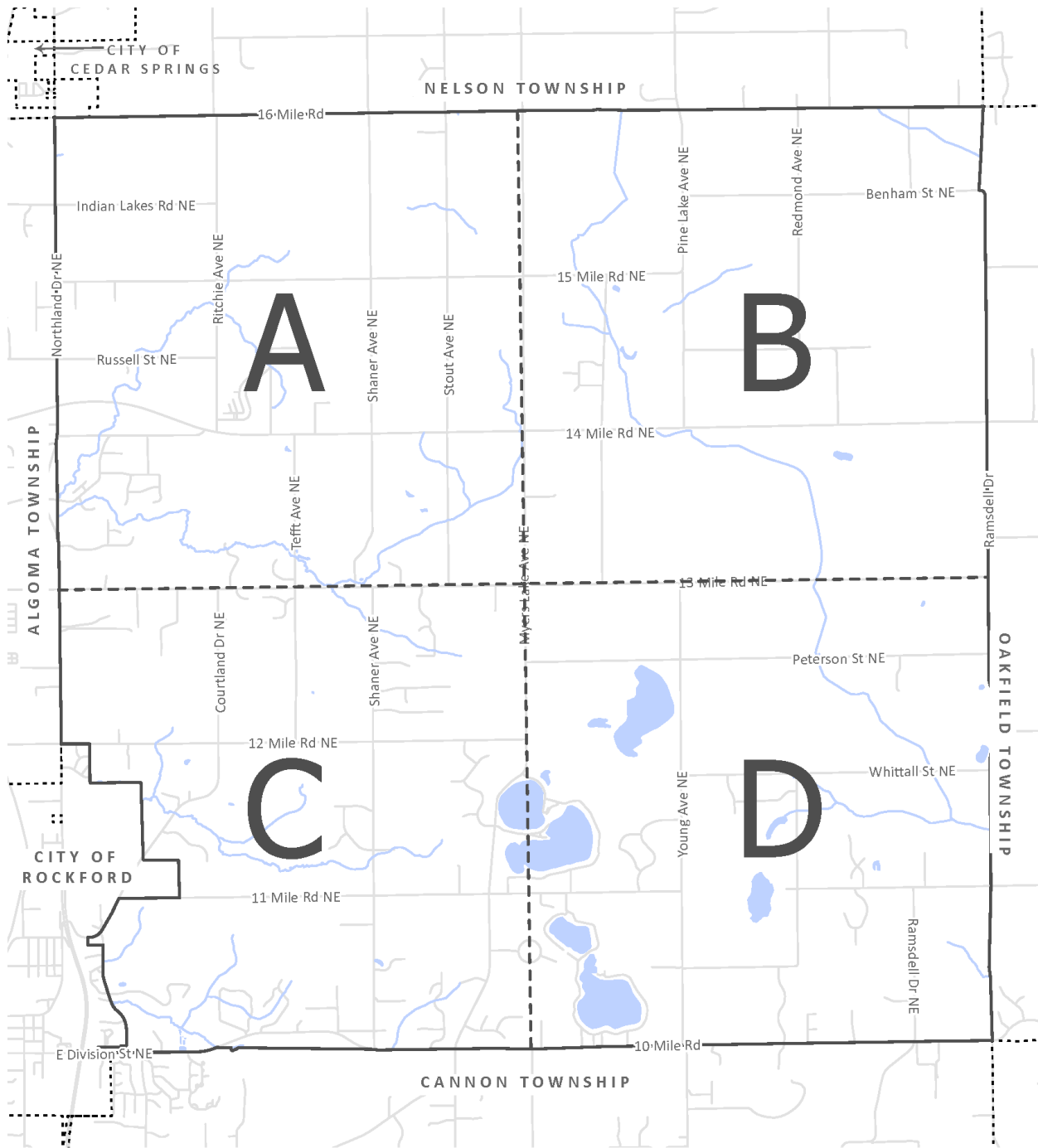
The Township should be open to recreational/medical marijuana businesses.

Nearly 61% of the participants reported not being in favor of the above statement whereas a quarter of the participants agreed with the statement.

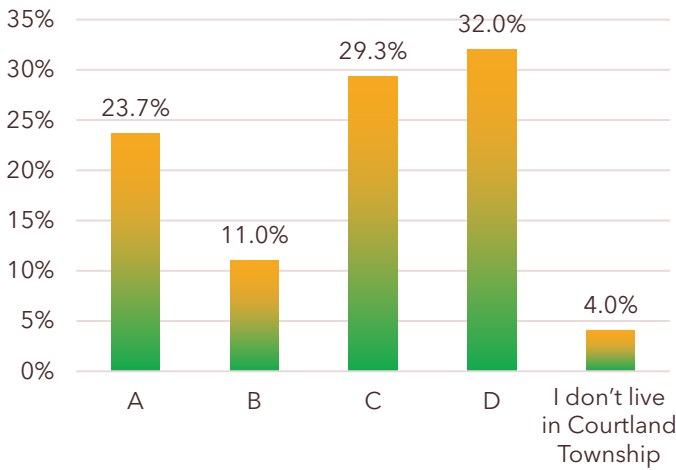
DATA RESULTS

Responses for all survey questions are illustrated on the following pages in the form of maps, charts, and graphs.

Question 1 Reference Map



**1. In which part of Courtland Township do you reside?
(Please refer to the map on the preceding page)**

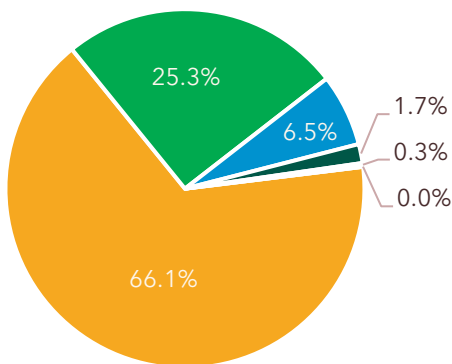


Answer Choices	Responses	
A	23.7%	71
B	11.0%	33
C	29.3%	88
D	32.0%	96
I don't live in Courtland Township.	4.0%	12
	Answered	300
	Skipped	2

Other (Please specify):

- Grand Rapids
- B
- C
- A
- Solon Township
- Work for Courtland Township
- Plainfield
- Cannon Township (3)
- Algoma Township
- The map is wrong. Myers Lk Rd does not go through Myers Lk so technically I should live in D but it's not plotted that way. I live on Myers Lk Rd.

2. If you live in Courtland Township, in what type of residence do you live?

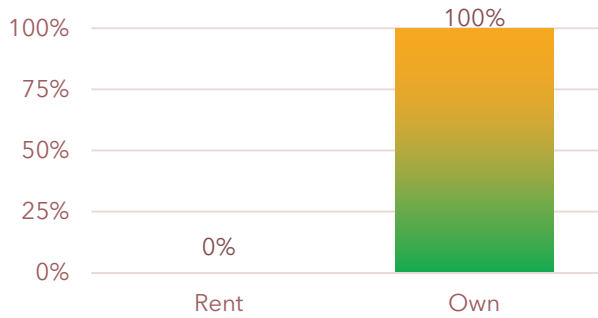


Answer Choices	Responses	
Single-family home (less than 5 acres)	66.1%	193
Single-family home (5+ acres)	25.3%	74
Manufactured home	6.5%	19
Other (please specify)	1.7%	5
Duplex	0.3%	1
Multi-family (3+ unit apartment or condominium)	0.0%	0
	Answered	292
	Skipped	10

Other (Please specify):

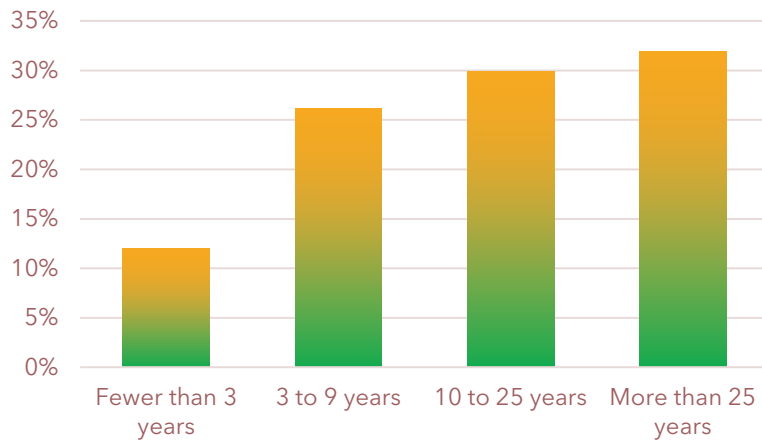
- Single family 10 acres Courtland Township.
- Own 20 acres on Redmond Ave.
- oakes rockford
- Full #_+3 bedroom-- on Lake
- Single Family Home in association

3. Do you rent or own your Courtland Township home?



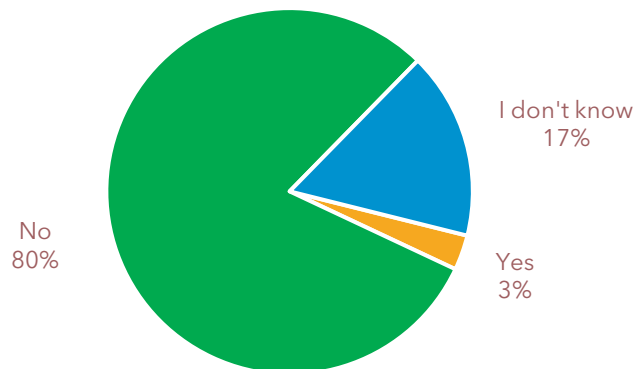
Answer Choices	Responses	
Rent	0.0%	0
Own	100.0%	290
Answered		290
Skipped		12

4. How long have you lived in Courtland Township?



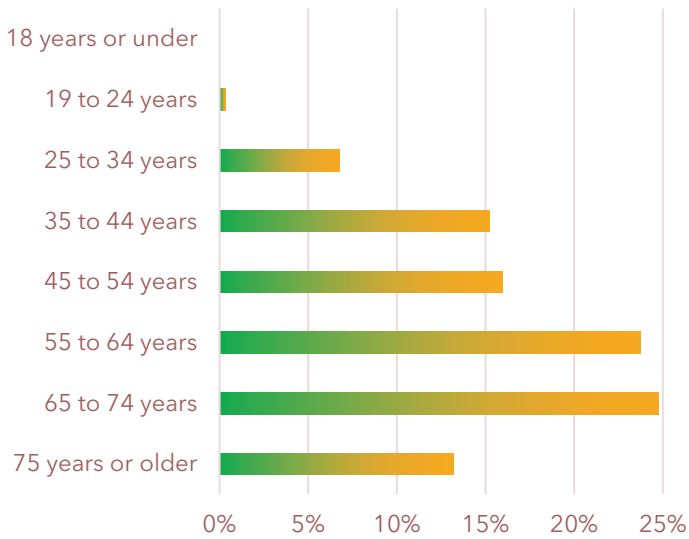
Answer Choices	Responses	
Fewer than 3 years	12.0%	35
3 to 9 years	26.1%	76
10 to 25 years	29.9%	87
More than 25 years	32.0%	93
Answered		291
Skipped		11

5. In the next five years, do you expect to move out of Courtland Township?



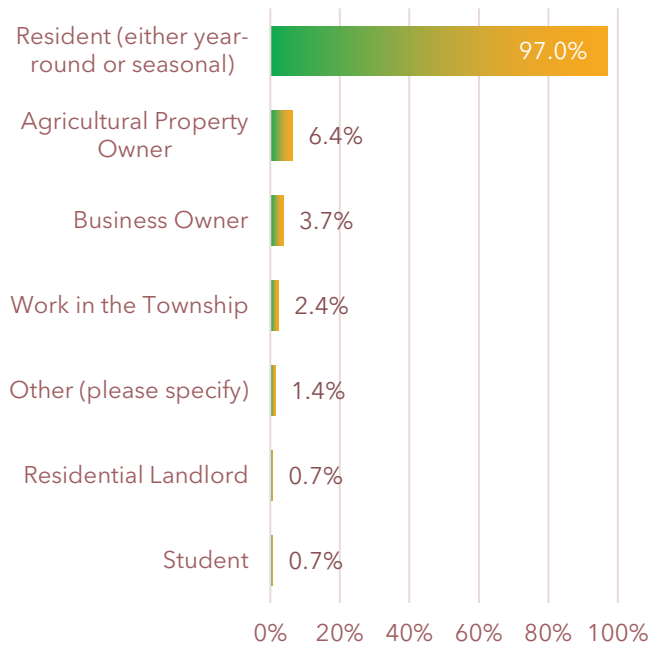
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	3.1%	9
No	80.3%	233
I don't know	16.6%	48
Answered		290
Skipped		12

6. What is your age?



Answer Choices	Responses	
18 years or under	0.0%	0
19 to 24 years	0.3%	1
25 to 34 years	6.8%	20
35 to 44 years	15.3%	45
45 to 54 years	15.9%	47
55 to 64 years	23.7%	70
65 to 74 years	24.8%	73
75 years or older	13.2%	39
Answered		295
Skipped		7

7. Which of the following characterizes your connection to Courtland Township? Please check all that apply.

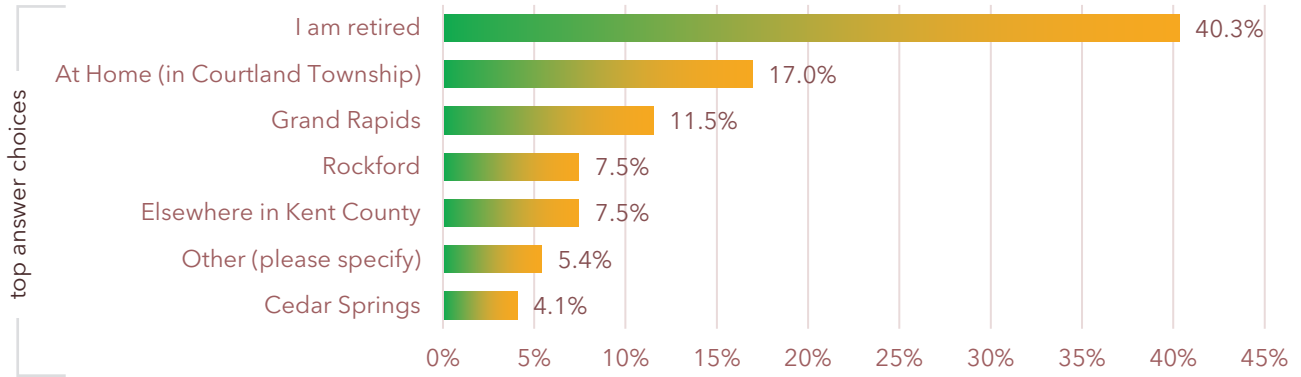


Answer Choices	Responses	
Resident (either year-round or seasonal)	97.0%	287
Agricultural Property Owner	6.4%	19
Business Owner	3.7%	11
Work in the Township	2.4%	7
Other (please specify)	1.4%	4
Residential Landlord	0.7%	2
Student	0.7%	2
Commercial Property Owner	0.0%	0
Answered		296
Skipped		6

Other (Please specify):

- Family
- Prior resident
- Visit Township
- I have a land conservation agreement

8. Where do you primarily work?

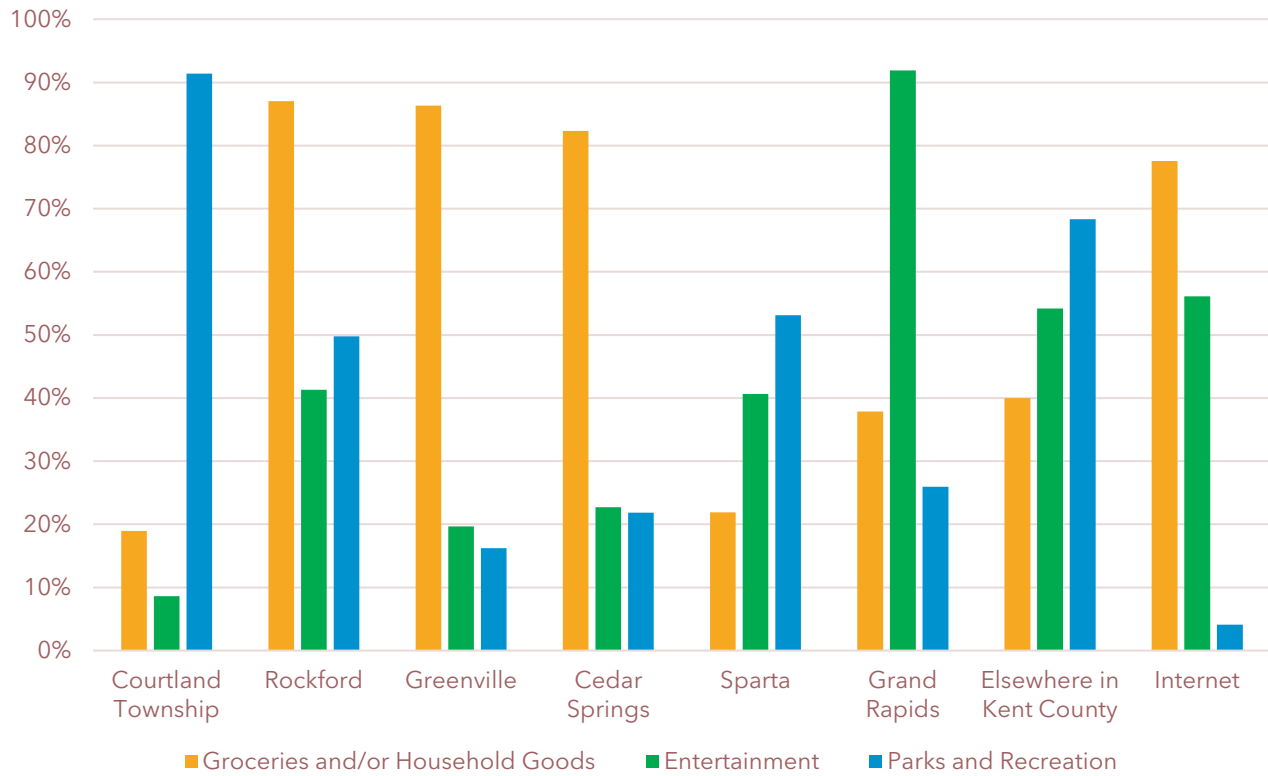


Answer Choices	Responses	
I am retired	40.3%	119
At Home (in Courtland Township)	17.0%	50
Grand Rapids	11.5%	34
Rockford	7.5%	22
Elsewhere in Kent County	7.5%	22
Other (please specify)	5.4%	16
Cedar Springs	4.1%	12
Greenville	1.7%	5
Courtland Township (does not include at home)	1.4%	4
Newaygo County	1.4%	4
Ionia County	0.7%	2
I am a stay-at-home parent	0.7%	2
Unemployed	0.7%	2
Montcalm County	0.3%	1
	Answered	295
	Skipped	7

Other (Please specify):

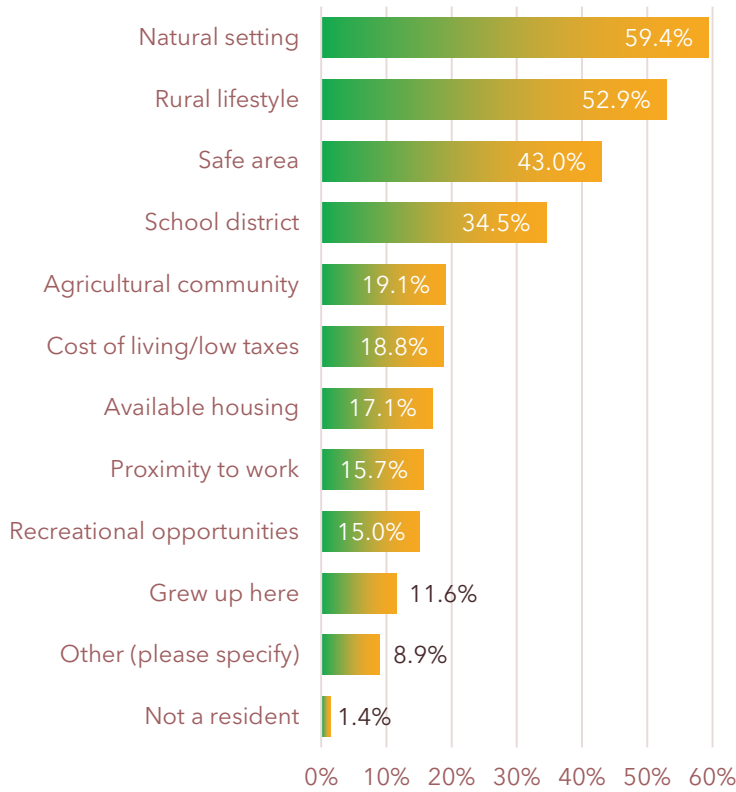
- Retired (2)
- Muskegon County (3)
- Ottawa county
- Zeeland and Muskegon
- Hudsonville
- Illinois
- Interstate Motor Carrier
- West Michigan
- Homemaker
- East Lansing
- Travel
- Retired but working part time
- At home with 40% of time traveling the Northeast for business

9. Where are you most likely to go for the following goods and services?



Answer Choices	Groceries and/or Household Goods		Entertainment		Parks and Recreation		Total
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
Courtland	19.0%	33	8.6%	15	91.4%	159	174
Rockford	87.0%	215	41.3%	102	49.8%	123	247
Greenville	86.3%	101	19.7%	23	16.2%	19	117
Cedar Springs	82.4%	98	22.7%	27	21.9%	26	119
Sparta	21.9%	7	40.6%	13	53.1%	17	32
Grand Rapids	37.8%	70	91.9%	170	26.0%	48	185
Elsewhere in Kent County	40.0%	48	54.2%	65	68.3%	82	120
Internet	77.6%	76	56.1%	55	4.1%	4	98
Answered							296
Skipped							6

10. From the following list, please select the most important reason(s) you have chosen to live in Courtland Township (check all that apply):



Answer Choices	Responses	
Natural setting	59.4%	174
Rural lifestyle	52.9%	155
Safe area	43.0%	126
School district	34.5%	101
Agricultural community	19.1%	56
Cost of living/low taxes	18.8%	55
Available housing	17.1%	50
Proximity to work	15.7%	46
Recreational opportunities	15.0%	44
Grew up here	11.6%	34
Other (please specify)	8.9%	26
Not a resident	1.4%	4
Answered		293
Skipped		9

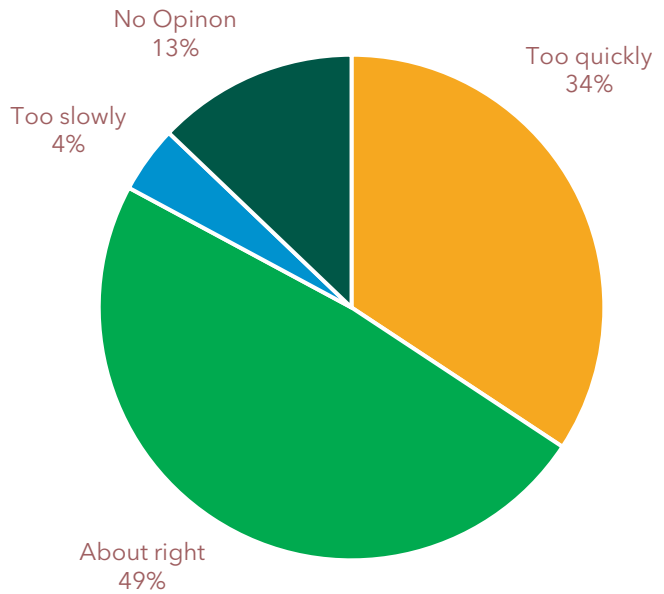
Other (Please specify):

- Rifle Territory
- Excellent 55+ community housing
- close to Grand Rapids
- Lake
- Suburban setting
- Oaks of Rockford Community
- Proximity to grandkids
- Bought the home as a cottage years ago
- Close to family
- My spouse wanted

- to live in our specific neighborhood.
- Rifle territory, acreage
- 55+ community
- The lakes
- landowner
- Lake
- Transferred here 23 years ago for work
- Lake
- Used to be rural
- at the time, it was 1/2 way between work

- (Greenville), and my girlfriend (:))
- We live on Myers Lake and love it
- Fabulous 55+ Community
- Live next door to our grandkids.
- Proximity to family
- Affordable housing 40 years ago
- Lake
- Family

11. Regarding the growth of the Township, do you think Courtland Township is growing:



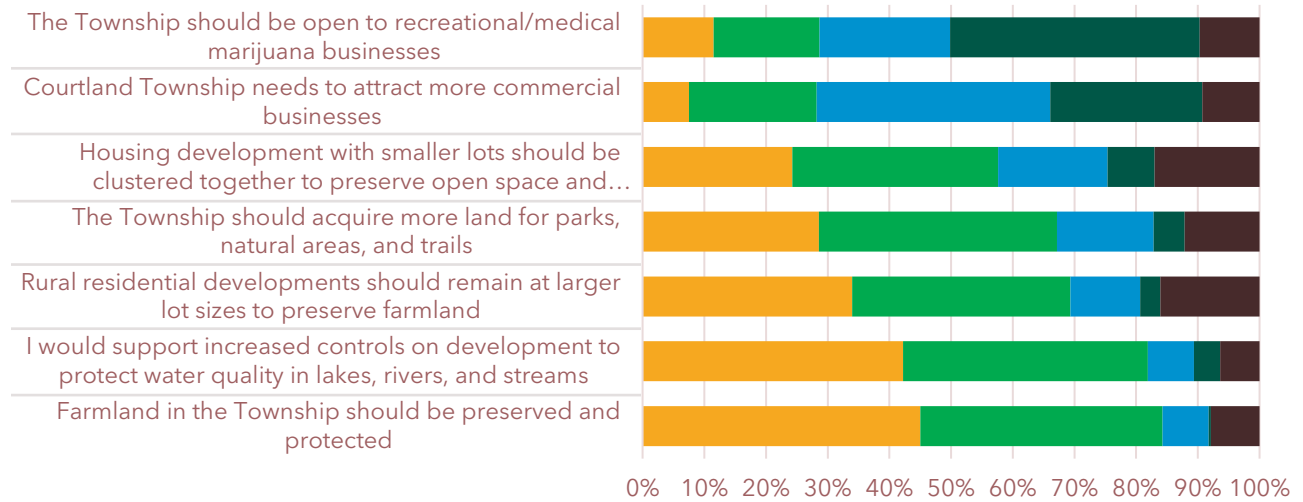
Answer Choices	Responses	
Too quickly	34.3%	96
About right	48.6%	136
Too slowly	4.3%	12
No Opinion	12.9%	36
Answered		280
Skipped		22

12. Please rate Courtland Township’s effort to guide and direct growth and development:



Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	7.5%	21
Good	40.9%	114
Fair	23.3%	65
Poor	7.9%	22
No Opinion	20.4%	57
Answered		279
Skipped		23

13. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements for Courtland Township.

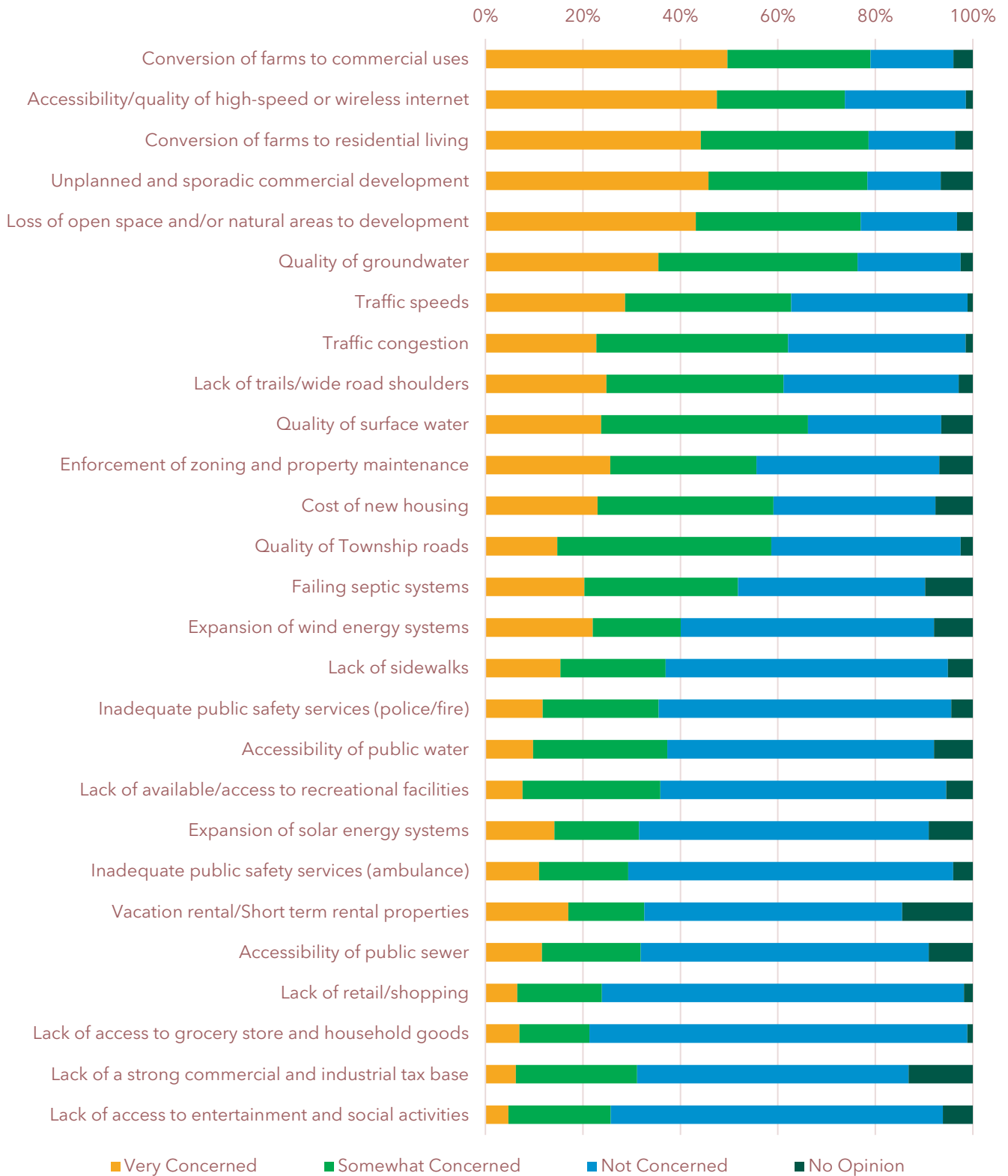


Answer Choices	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Farmland in the Township should be preserved and protected.	45.0% 126	39.3% 110	7.5% 21	0.4% 1	7.9% 22
I would support increased controls on development to protect water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams.	42.2% 119	39.7% 112	7.5% 21	4.3% 12	6.4% 18
Rural residential developments should remain at larger lot sizes to preserve farmland	33.9% 93	35.4% 97	11.3% 31	3.3% 9	16.1% 44
The Township should acquire more land for parks, natural areas, and trails.	28.6% 80	38.6% 108	15.7% 44	5.0% 14	12.1% 34
Housing development with smaller lots should be clustered together to preserve open space and farmland.	24.3% 67	33.3% 92	17.8% 49	7.6% 21	17.0% 47
Courtland Township needs to attract more commercial businesses.	7.5% 21	20.7% 58	37.9% 106	24.6% 69	9.3% 26
The Township should be open to recreational/medical marijuana businesses.	11.5% 32	17.2% 48	21.2% 59	40.5% 113	9.7% 27

Answered 284

Skipped 18

14. Please rate your level of concern regarding the following issues:



14. (CONTINUED) Please rate your level of concern regarding the following issues:

Answer Choices	Very Concerned		Somewhat Concerned		Not Concerned		No Opinion	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Conversion of farms to commercial uses	49.6%	137	29.4%	81	17.0%	47	4.0%	11
Accessibility/quality of high-speed or wireless internet	47.5%	132	26.3%	73	24.8%	69	1.4%	4
Conversion of farms to residential living	44.2%	122	34.4%	95	17.8%	49	3.6%	10
Unplanned and sporadic commercial development	45.8%	125	32.6%	89	15.0%	41	6.6%	18
Loss of open space and/or natural areas to development	43.2%	120	33.8%	94	19.8%	55	3.2%	9
Quality of groundwater	35.5%	99	40.9%	114	21.2%	59	2.5%	7
Traffic speeds	28.7%	80	34.1%	95	36.2%	101	1.1%	3
Traffic congestion	22.7%	63	39.4%	109	36.5%	101	1.4%	4
Lack of trails/wide road shoulders	24.8%	69	36.3%	101	36.0%	100	2.9%	8
Quality of surface water	23.7%	66	42.5%	118	27.3%	76	6.5%	18
Enforcement of zoning and property maintenance	25.6%	71	30.0%	83	37.6%	104	6.9%	19
Cost of new housing	23.0%	63	36.1%	99	33.2%	91	7.7%	21
Quality of Township roads	14.8%	41	43.9%	122	38.9%	108	2.5%	7
Failing septic systems	20.3%	56	31.5%	87	38.4%	106	9.8%	27
Expansion of wind energy systems	22.0%	61	18.1%	50	52.0%	144	7.9%	22
Lack of sidewalks	15.4%	42	21.6%	59	57.9%	158	5.1%	14
Inadequate public safety services (police/fire)	11.7%	32	23.8%	65	60.1%	164	4.4%	12
Accessibility of public water	9.8%	27	27.5%	76	54.7%	151	8.0%	22
Lack of available/access to recreational facilities	7.6%	21	28.3%	78	58.7%	162	5.4%	15
Expansion of solar energy systems	14.1%	39	17.4%	48	59.4%	164	9.1%	25
Inadequate public safety services (ambulance)	11.0%	30	18.3%	50	66.7%	182	4.0%	11
Vacation rental/Short term rental properties	17.0%	47	15.6%	43	52.9%	146	14.5%	40
Accessibility of public sewer	11.6%	32	20.3%	56	59.1%	163	9.1%	25
Lack of retail/shopping	6.5%	18	17.4%	48	74.3%	205	1.8%	5
Lack of access to grocery store and household goods	7.0%	19	14.3%	39	77.6%	211	1.1%	3
Lack of a strong commercial and industrial tax base	6.2%	17	24.9%	68	55.7%	152	13.2%	36
Lack of access to entertainment and social activities	4.7%	13	21.0%	58	68.1%	188	6.2%	17
							Answered	282
							Skipped	20

14. (CONTINUED) Please rate your level of concern regarding the following issues:

Other (Please specify):

- I do not want any further short-term rentals, no windmills, no solar, and no commercialization!
- Don't want short-term or vacation rentals.
- No "windmill farms"
- No thank you
- Not in favor of wind or solar.
- NO short-term rentals and no wind energy
- Dollar generals and storage units should be avoided. These types of commercial properties do not add value or resources for residents. I would also consider contracting with an EMS service that is not the Rockford ambulance service. I've worked in EMS for 20 years, and Rockford ambulance service is not a quality service. Their medical treatment is unfortunately constantly poor.
- If windmills go up, we will move on.
- Spend less, encourage more business
- Please do not enrich cottage/landlords with the option of renting for less than a one-year contract. Why? because for each rental, you have 20 households that have to put up with the noise, lack of accountability, and who knows who rents (child molesters?) no one to vent the rentals... would that become the Townships' responsibility for each person? and no wind...
- No wind farms, please!
- The Township spends money just to spend money. Stop!!!! We don't need more fire department personnel and equipment; we don't need to pay the sheriff department to patrol THEY ALREADY DO!!! And we already pay for them. Please stop spending and spending more money.
- I don't want to see the ugly windmills in our community!
- High-Speed Internet should be a priority.
- Wind energy systems, done poorly, could be very detrimental to the quality of life in our Township.
- Please do not litter our beautiful countryside with ugly windmills.
- The lack of care and maintenance of properties surrounding me is a concern. Many cars online are junk, laying all over them, and this affects the value of my property.
- No wind turbines in Township. Keep them out.
- Stop the growth. Keep the farms. Leave Costco and Walmart to 28th Street.
- I am not in favor of wind energy systems and do not want them near my home.
- Why can't I vote against expansion? Reduce taxes, save money
- Please do not bring the scourge of marijuana growth and retail into the Township. Example is murders in Oklahoma at a marijuana farm.
- I don't want to see any housing developments.
- High-density housing should be connected to the North Kent Sewer system.
- If no ordinance, one should be enacted to prevent windmills.

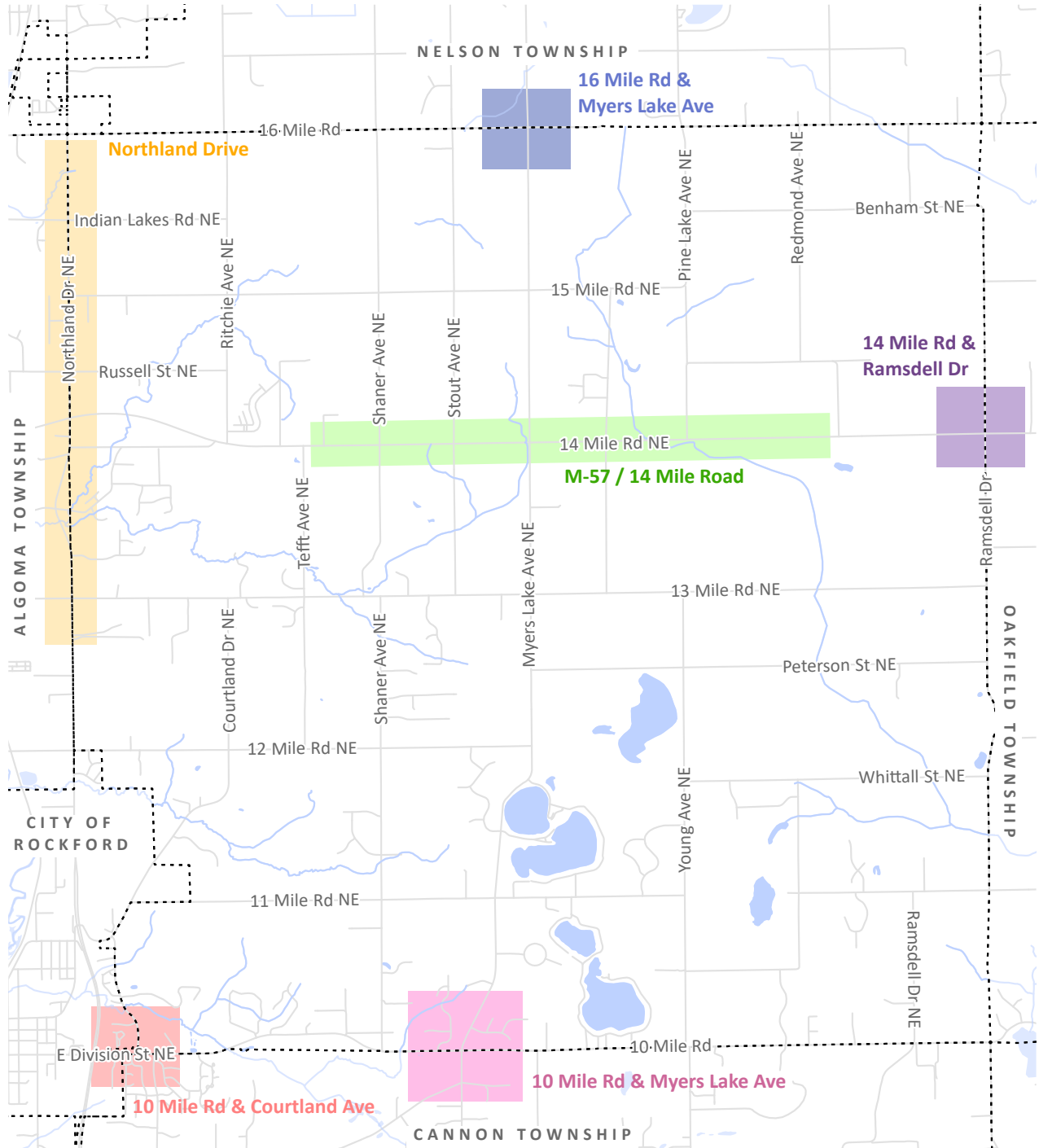
14. (CONTINUED) Please rate your level of concern regarding the following issues:

Other (Please specify):

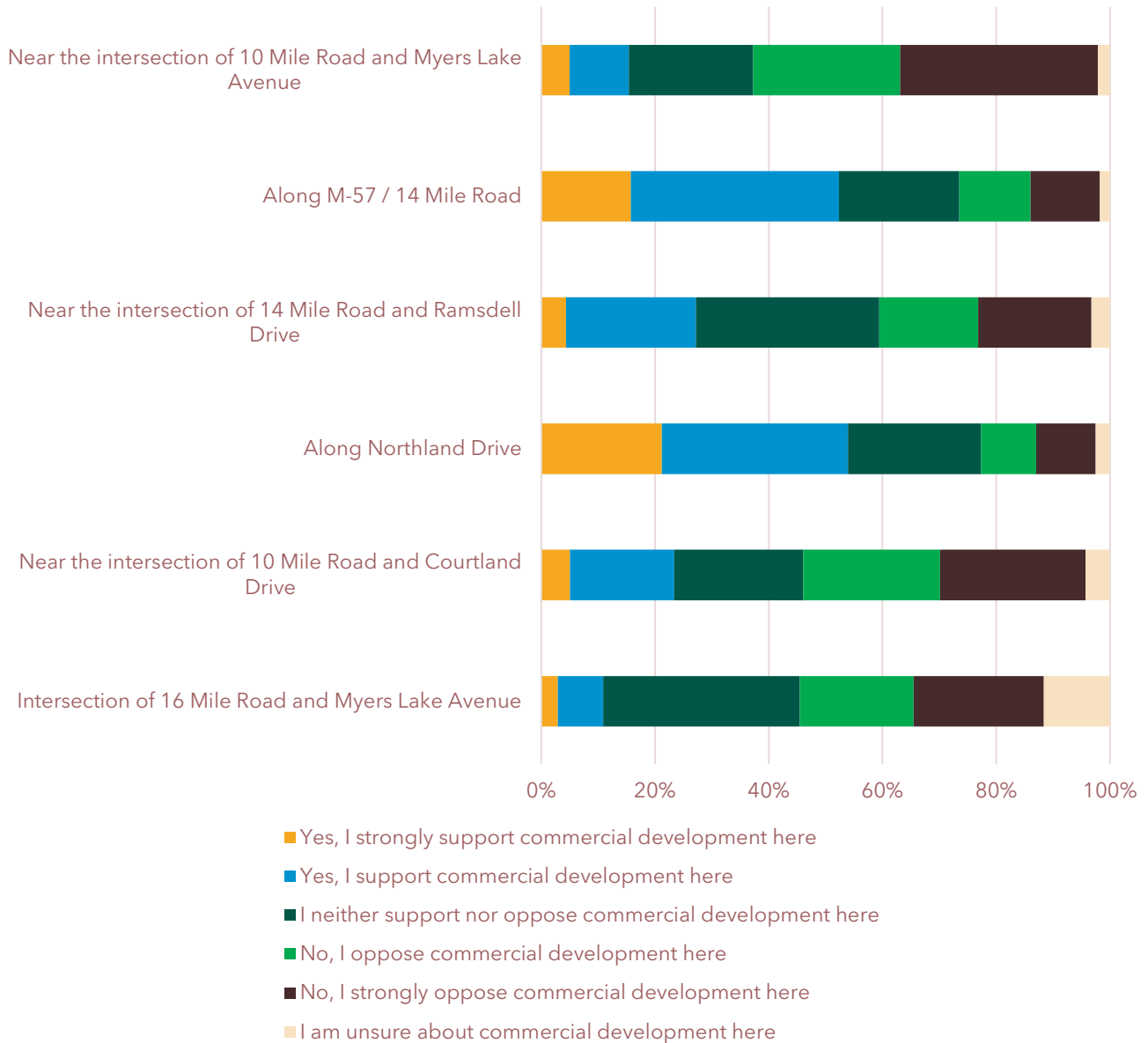
- I don't know enough about the potential for "green energy" expansion in our area, but I would appreciate being informed.
- Courtland is a gem mostly in that it requires large lots to build on, surrounded by farmland and natural settings. People in the Township move here for peace, quiet, and space to live freely. We like liberty and take care of our own. We protect ourselves and our neighbors. We own guns and enjoy all liberties we are gifted from our Heavenly Father. We disdain large developments and lots. Keep the Township this way, and it will continue to be a rare gem of a Township in the greater West Michigan area. Growth does not always mean a good or progress. Once the farmland and woods have been destroyed by development, they will never be rebuilt. Yes, I am NIMBY and rightfully so. I bought a home in Courtland for these unique attributes to the Township and want it to stay this way.
- Vacation rental/Short term rental properties should not be allowed in our Township... they cause hardship to the neighbors... why should we the people need to feel like we need to enrich a few greedy landlords.
- Lack of stores like Home Depot and Lowes
- No wind or solar here please. Ugly
- No wind mills. Ugly
- Very concerned about residential use of lawn chemicals getting into the water shed. Also, the use of sprinkling lawns and the level of aquifers in the area. Have been without water.
- This line of questioning is very confusing; please consider revising since I am not sure if my "concerns" are truly aligning to the survey questions
- Concerned with high volume of traffic on 10, 12 and 14 Mile Roads and people travelling 65+. I feel municipalities should work with MDOT or KCRC to consider adding on and/or off ramps to 131 between 10 and 14 Mile exits.
- Rockford Ambulance needs a competitor in our area.
- Get in front of short-term rentals before it grows. Zoning exists so you know what to expect and when I purchase in residential zoning, I don't think basically a motel should be able to operate next door.
- The sewage rate increases are indicative of gross neglect and mismanagement. The entire board should be replaced. If you can screw that up this badly, how can we expect the Township to manage these other issues? Oh, the pickleball courts are lovely though spend money on that but not to fix decrepit infrastructure. Hope you can detect my sarcasm because I am laying it on pretty thick.
- Only reason I'm considering leaving is the insanely high sewer rates for which we have no guarantee they will reduce after the five-year plan.
- There is no need for large wind energy systems in Courtland Twp.

Question 15 Reference Map

15. Does the Township need more commercial development (businesses like health services, fitness centers, retail stores, restaurants, commercial greenhouses, etc.)? Please consider the areas listed below, and indicate your opinion:



15. Does the Township need more commercial development (businesses like health services, fitness centers, retail stores, restaurants, commercial greenhouses, etc.)? Please consider the areas shown on the reference map to indicate your opinion:



15. (CONTINUED) Does the Township need more commercial development (businesses like health services, fitness centers, retail stores, restaurants, commercial greenhouses, etc.)? Please consider the areas shown on the reference map to indicate your opinion:

Answer Choices	Yes, I strongly support		Yes, I support		I neither support nor oppose		No, I oppose		No, I strongly oppose		I am unsure	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Intersection of 16 Mile Road and Myers Lake Avenue	2.9%	8	8.0%	22	34.6%	95	20.0%	55	22.9%	63	11.6%	32
Near the intersection of 10 Mile Road and Courtland Drive	5.0%	14	18.4%	51	22.7%	63	24.1%	67	25.5%	71	4.3%	12
Along Northland Drive	21.2%	59	32.7%	91	23.4%	65	9.7%	27	10.4%	29	2.5%	7
Near the intersection of 14 Mile Road and Ramsdell Drive	4.4%	12	22.8%	63	32.3%	89	17.4%	48	19.9%	55	3.3%	9
Along M-57 / 14 Mile Road	15.8%	44	36.6%	102	21.2%	59	12.5%	35	12.2%	34	1.8%	5
Near the intersection of 10 Mile Road and Myers Lake Avenue	5.0%	14	10.4%	29	21.9%	61	25.8%	72	34.8%	97	2.2%	6
											Answered	280
											Skipped	22

Other (Please specify):

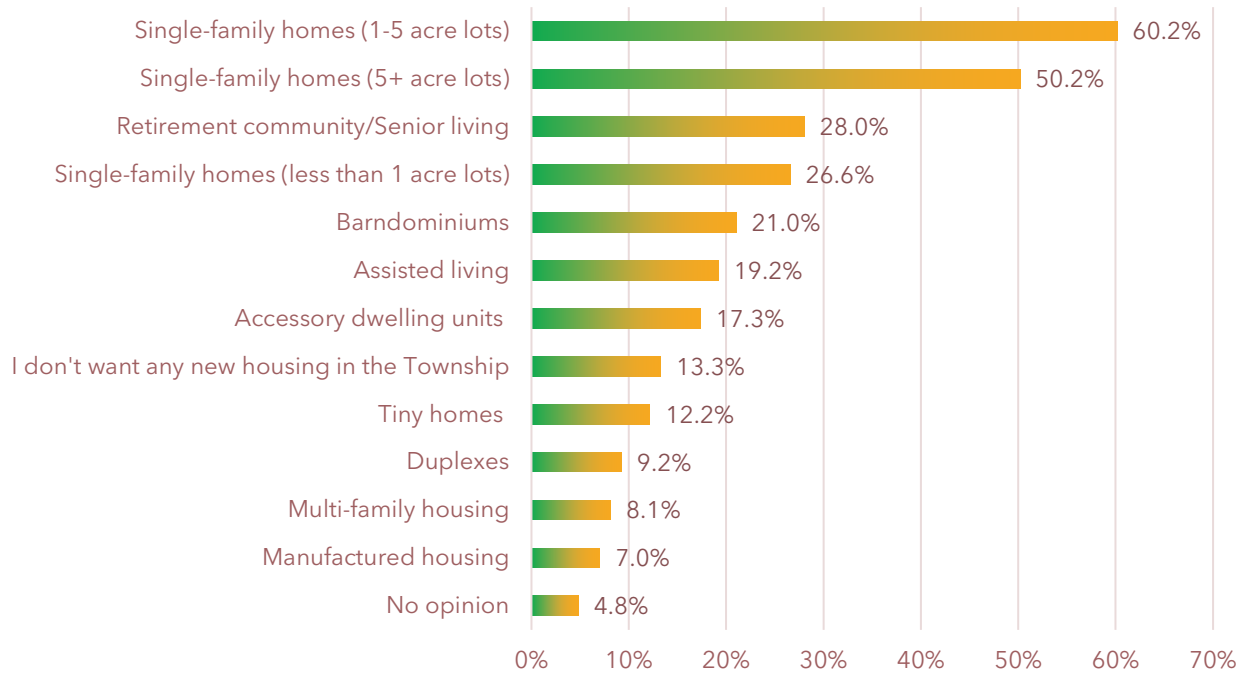
- I think the current master plan is fine as is.
- If there is to be commercial development at 10-mile and Myers Lake, the intersection needs updated as the stop sign causes issues.
- I live at 10 Mile and Courtland, and I don't see the need to put something here.
- 14 Mile Road Traffic is always an issue.
- The speed and amount of traffic on 14 mile is insane and dangerous.

15. (CONTINUED) Does the Township need more commercial development (businesses like health services, fitness centers, retail stores, restaurants, commercial greenhouses, etc.)? Please consider the areas shown on the reference map to indicate your opinion:

Other (Please specify):

- PLEASE don't turn Courtland Township into 28th street. Kentwood should be your example of what NOT to do.
- I don't want to see any commercial development.
- Sometimes when I reply I am not concerned it simply means I have not worried about it. It may still be important but the Township seems to have it under control.
- Commercial along the major corridors, 14 mile and Northland, make the most sense for development. Inside this just makes traffic much worse for the citizens within the Township.
- Myers Lake and 10 Mile is a mess at high traffic times. I am fine with commercial development if the roads are wider here and there are traffic lights to support the traffic. A trail from cannon two to Courtland would be great on Myers Lake Ave. The lakes need to remain private with no public access besides the beautiful park swimming area. We pay a lot of money to use our lakes.
- Traffic is already at a ridiculous level.
- Only if Ramsdell could be closed off and not a main road as it is now. Too much traffic on Ramsdell which comes down Whittall. And, they are not going slow.
- I strongly support commercial development from 14 mile from Northland to Shaner.
- I support commercial development more in areas where there are traffic lights at intersections, not 4-way or 2-way stop intersections. For example, 10 and Courtland Dr has a traffic light but too many driveways also onto 10 Mile where those driveways should be combined to make turns at that traffic light, too many accidents in that area by Rite Aid and McDonalds.
- The intersection at Myers Lake and 10 mile is horrible when there is any traffic. A round about or light is needed as it is, so I would not want to see commercial development there until it is fixed.

16. What type of housing would you like to see in Courtland Township?



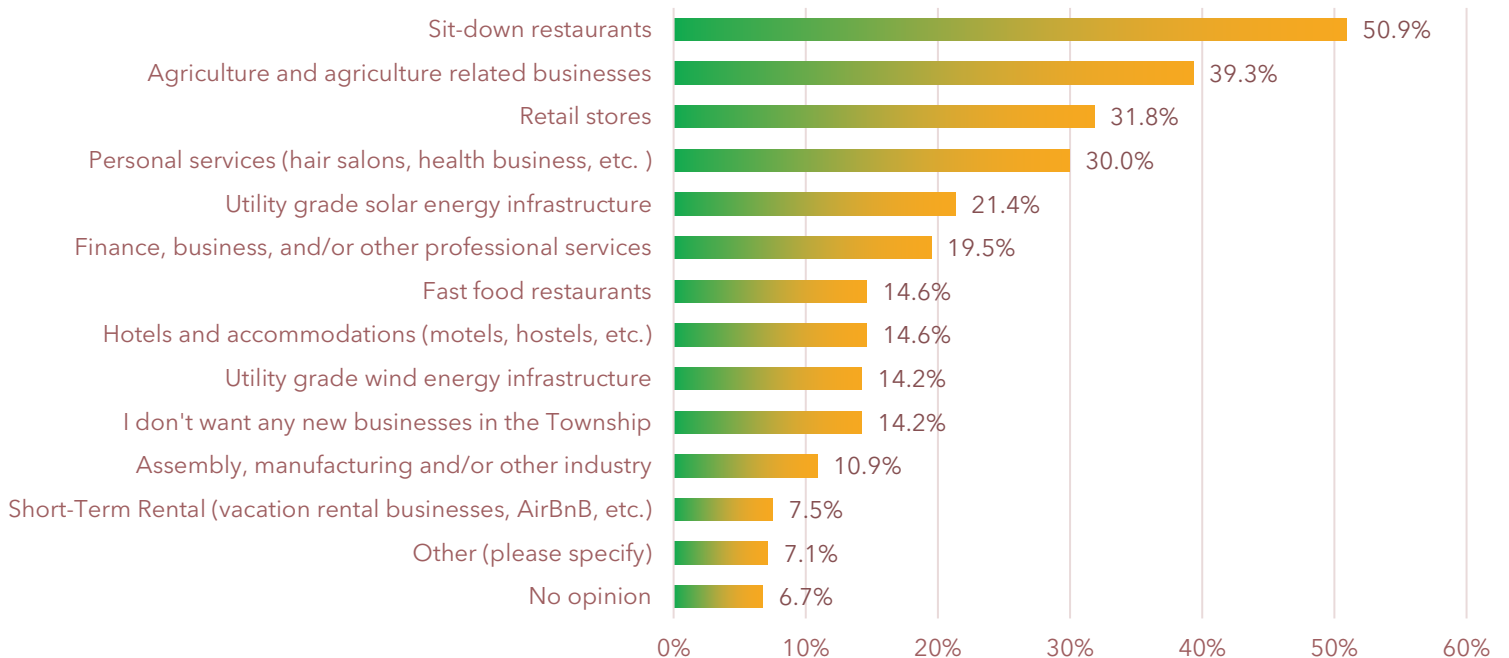
Answer Choices	Responses	
Single-family homes (1-5 acre lots)	60.2%	163
Single-family homes (5+ acre lots)	50.2%	136
Retirement Community/Senior living	28.0%	76
Single-family homes (less than 1 acre lots)	26.6%	72
"Barndominium" (Barn living quarters)	21.0%	57
Assisted living	19.2%	52
Accessory dwelling units ("granny flats") or guest housing (i.e. two or more living units on a single-family lot)	17.3%	47
I don't want any new housing in the Township	13.3%	36
Tiny homes (under 500 square feet per home)	12.2%	33
Duplexes	9.2%	25
Multi-family housing (i.e. apartments/condominium, 3+ units per building)	8.1%	22
Manufactured housing	7.0%	19
No opinion	4.8%	13
Other (please specify)	3.3%	9
	Answered	271
	Skipped	31

16. (CONTINUED) What type of housing would you like to see in Courtland Township?

Other (Please specify):

- Single family with over a half-acre lots
- Agree with current zoning requirements
- Container homes, Quonset hut homes.
- No more Manufactured Housing Parks Please!
- I'm generally of the opinion to allow the market to decide and keep the gov out of that equation. However, I do support keeping this in check and would hate to see more farmland leaving because of developments (any, but esp. multi-family units/large
- apt buildings)
- I
- No on barndominium, they are bound to fail in less than 30 years. Who is going to force a tear down in the future. It will be like old barns that are left to fall down.
- Well-planned housing areas. I'm against prime housing being taken up by short-term rentals when people are having difficulty finding full-time affordable housing in safe areas or lake areas.
- Farms

17. What type of businesses would you like to see in Courtland Township? (Check all that apply)



17. (CONTINUED) What type of businesses would you like to see in Courtland Township? (Check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Sit-down restaurants	50.9%	136
Agriculture and agriculture related businesses	39.3%	105
Retail stores	31.8%	85
Personal services (hair salons, health business, etc.)	30.0%	80
Utility grade solar energy infrastructure	21.4%	57
Finance, business, and/or other professional services	19.5%	52
Fast food restaurants	14.6%	39
Hotels and accommodations (motels, hostels, etc.)	14.6%	39
Utility grade wind energy infrastructure	14.2%	38
I don't want any new businesses in the Township	14.2%	38
Assembly, manufacturing and/or other industry	10.9%	29
Short-Term Rental (vacation rental businesses, Airbnb, etc.)	7.5%	20
Other (please specify)	7.1%	19
No opinion	6.7%	18
	Answered	267
	Skipped	35

Other (Please specify):

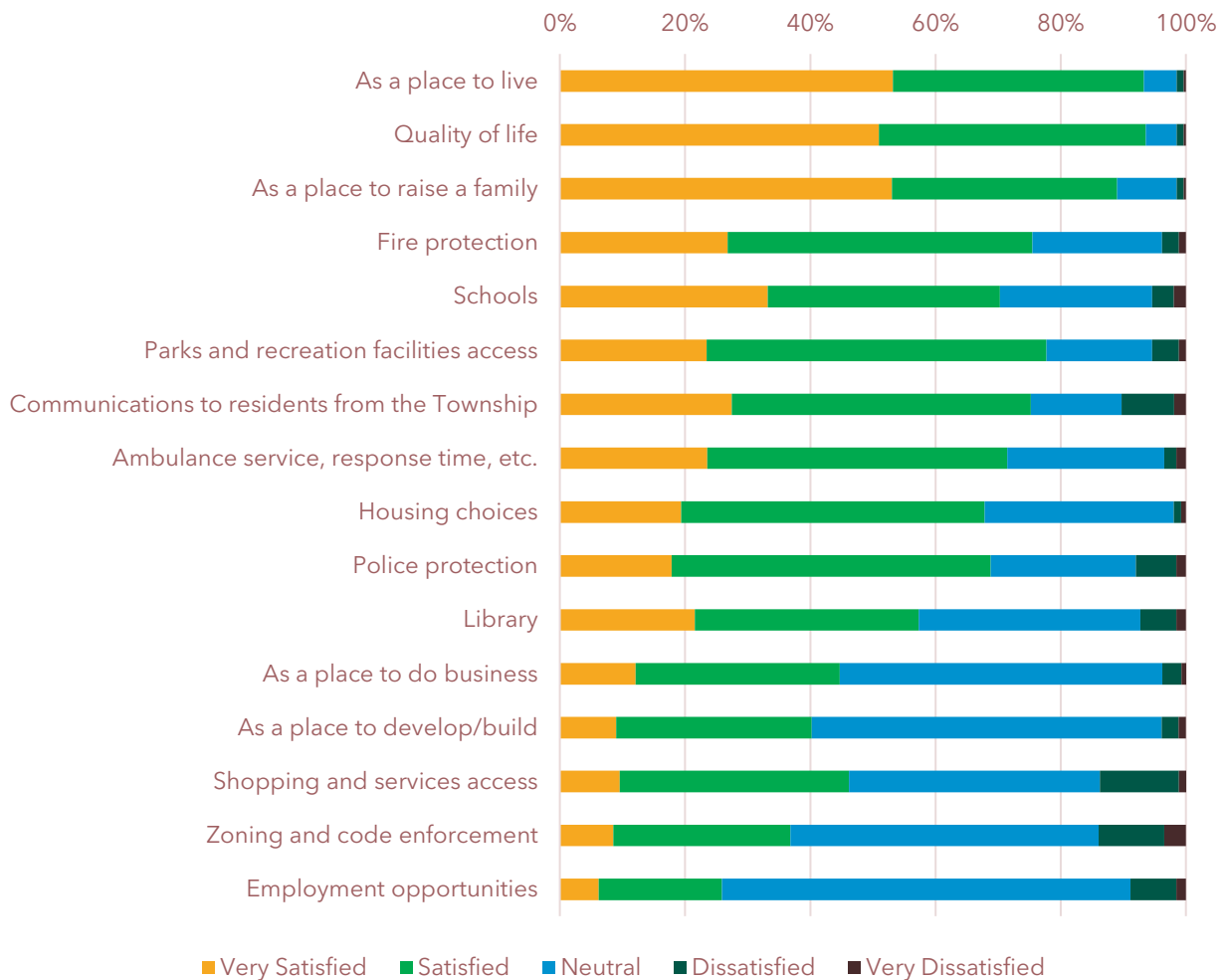
- Indoor recreation like pickleball, tennis,
- Agree with current zoning requirements.
- Grocery
- NO short-term rentals and no wind energy.
- We have more than enough fast food in the area, I can't see the need for anymore.
- Home Depot and Lowes
- Trader Joe's or Whole Foods
- No Tall Wind Turbines Please. Small businesses are fine.
- Leave all of this to Alpine. Look and see what happened to them over the last 30 years. OMG.
- I generally appreciate Courtland being a mostly residential area with little to no commercial development. It would be nice to have a more centralized "general store", but again, I trust market forces to aid in that and would prefer gov to be hands-off in this.
- home improvement retail
- none... we are a family community...
- We need another high school in Rockford
- I always liked going to Penny's in Greenville. Miss them.
- Home Depot, Lowes

17. (CONTINUED) What type of businesses would you like to see in Courtland Township? (Check all that apply)

Other (Please specify):

- Tax breaks for single-home solar energy units.
- Farmland, wind farms and solar farms can exist together
- We moved to Courtland Twp due to the rural setting close to areas with businesses like City of Rockford, Greenville, or Cedar Springs. We do not expect to have all the conveniences of the city and do not mind driving.
- A better question would be "what do you NOT want to see"

18. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of Courtland Township?



18. (CONTINUED) How satisfied are you with the following aspects of Courtland Township?

Answer Choices	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
As a place to live	53.2%	142	40.1%	107	5.2%	14	1.1%	3	0.4%	1
Quality of life	50.9%	135	42.6%	113	4.9%	13	1.1%	3	0.4%	1
As a place to raise a family	53.0%	140	36.0%	95	9.5%	25	1.1%	3	0.4%	1
Fire protection	26.8%	70	48.7%	127	20.7%	54	2.7%	7	1.2%	3
Schools	33.2%	86	37.1%	96	24.3%	63	3.5%	9	1.9%	5
Parks and recreation facilities access	23.5%	61	54.2%	141	16.9%	44	4.2%	11	1.2%	3
Communications to residents from the Township	27.5%	72	47.7%	125	14.5%	38	8.4%	22	1.9%	5
Ambulance service, response time, etc.	23.6%	61	47.9%	124	25.1%	65	1.9%	5	1.5%	4
Housing choices	19.4%	50	48.5%	125	30.2%	78	1.2%	3	0.8%	2
Police protection	17.9%	47	51.0%	134	23.2%	61	6.5%	17	1.5%	4
Library	21.5%	56	35.8%	93	35.4%	92	5.8%	15	1.5%	4
As a place to do business	12.1%	32	32.6%	86	51.5%	136	3.0%	8	0.8%	2
As a place to develop/build	9.0%	23	31.3%	80	55.9%	143	2.7%	7	1.2%	3
Shopping and services access	9.5%	25	36.6%	96	40.1%	105	12.6%	33	1.2%	3
Zoning and code enforcement	8.5%	22	28.3%	73	49.2%	127	10.5%	27	3.5%	9
Employment opportunities	6.2%	16	19.7%	51	65.3%	169	7.3%	19	1.5%	4
									Answered	284
									Skipped	18

Other (Please specify):

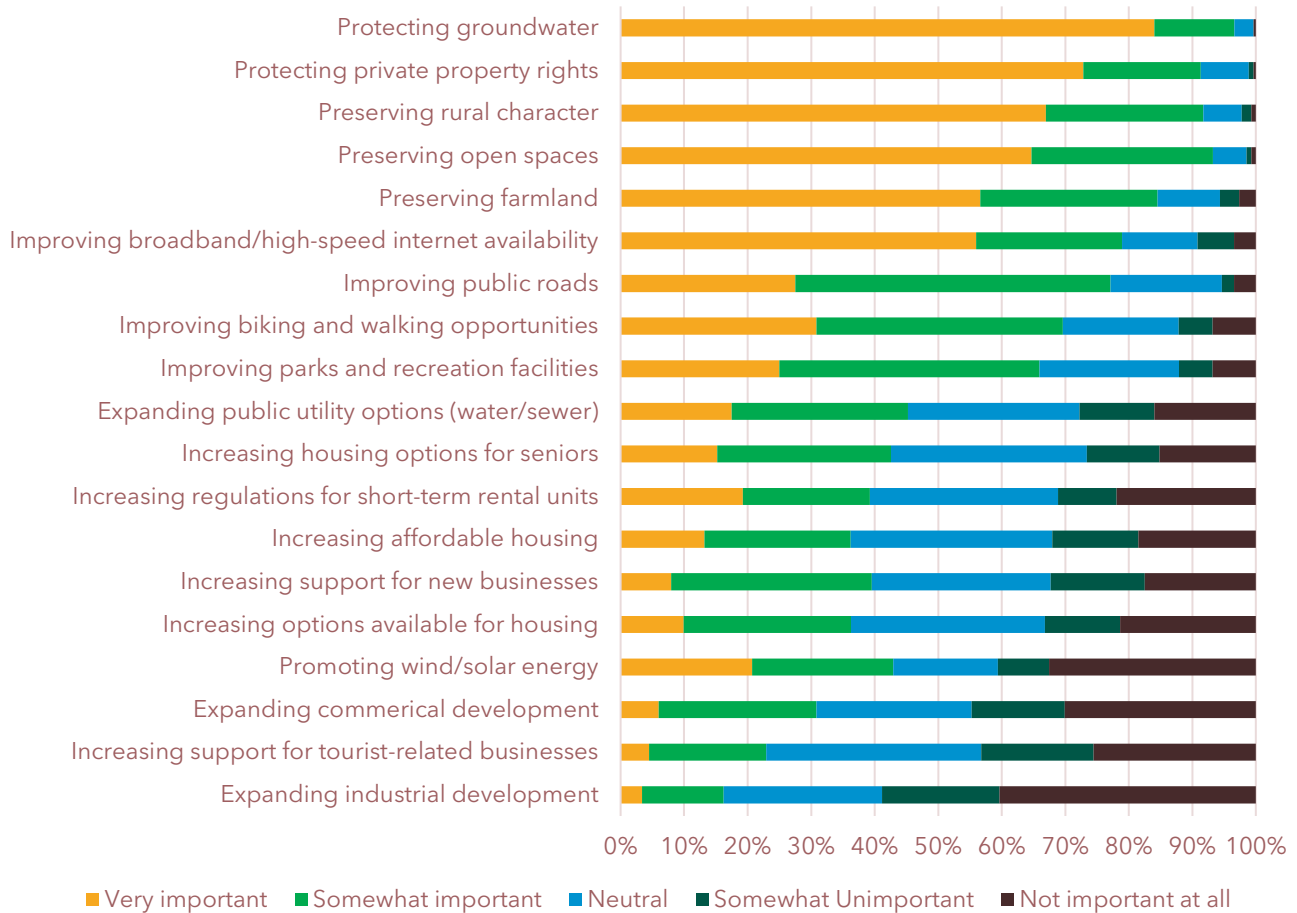
- All residents should have access to affordable internet
- Need recreational trails, not just a wide shoulder on the road.
- Would love to see farmers market at the Township offices, but we do not need more commercial box store type organizations.
- Again, please stop buying more and more fire equipment and hiring more and more people. We don't need it or them and it costs way too much money that doesn't need to be spent. Try not spending so taxes don't go up.

18. (CONTINUED) How satisfied are you with the following aspects of Courtland Township?

Other (Please specify):

- Best parks around. Love the park on 14 mile behind the Township hall. Nice playground and clean bathrooms. Also, I feel very safe there.
- Please bring Costco!!!
- Where is the question about residential taxation satisfaction??
- We need a new high school in Rockford so kids have a chance to play in sports, not just the top athletes.
- Rockford ambulance is useless
- Would love more natural areas and hiking, like Pickerel

19. In terms of potential Township priorities, how important are the following?



19. (CONTINUED) In terms of potential Township priorities, how important are the following?

Answer Choices	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Neutral		Somewhat Unimportant		Not Important At All	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Protecting groundwater	84.0%	221	12.6%	33	3.0%	8	0.0%	0	0.4%	1
Protecting private property rights	72.8%	193	18.5%	49	7.6%	20	0.8%	2	0.4%	1
Preserving rural character	66.9%	178	24.8%	66	6.0%	16	1.5%	4	0.8%	2
Preserving open spaces	64.7%	172	28.6%	76	5.3%	14	0.8%	2	0.8%	2
Preserving farmland	56.6%	150	27.9%	74	9.8%	26	3.0%	8	2.6%	7
Improving broadband/ high-speed internet availability	55.9%	146	23.0%	60	11.9%	31	5.8%	15	3.5%	9
Improving public roads	27.5%	72	49.6%	130	17.6%	46	1.9%	5	3.4%	9
Improving biking and walking opportunities	30.8%	81	38.8%	102	18.3%	48	5.3%	14	6.8%	18
Improving parks and recreation facilities	25.0%	66	40.9%	108	22.0%	58	5.3%	14	6.8%	18
Expanding public utility options (water/sewer)	17.5%	46	27.8%	73	27.0%	71	11.8%	31	16.0%	42
Increasing housing options for seniors	15.2%	40	27.4%	72	30.8%	81	11.4%	30	15.2%	40
Increasing regulations for short-term rental units	19.2%	50	20.0%	52	29.6%	77	9.2%	24	21.9%	57
Increasing affordable housing	13.2%	35	23.0%	61	31.7%	84	13.6%	36	18.5%	49
Increasing support for new businesses	8.0%	21	31.6%	83	28.1%	74	14.8%	39	17.5%	46
Increasing options available for housing	9.9%	26	26.3%	69	30.5%	80	11.8%	31	21.4%	56
Promoting wind/solar energy	20.7%	54	22.2%	58	16.5%	43	8.1%	21	32.6%	85
Expanding commercial development	6.0%	16	24.8%	66	24.4%	65	14.7%	39	30.1%	80
Increasing support for tourist-related businesses	4.5%	12	18.4%	49	33.8%	90	17.7%	47	25.6%	68
Expanding industrial development	3.4%	9	12.8%	34	24.9%	66	18.5%	49	40.4%	107
Answered									270	
Skipped									32	

19. (CONTINUED) In terms of potential Township priorities, how important are the following?

Other (Please specify):

- No short term, rental, wind, solar, or commercial development.
- Promoting PERSONAL home solar. Not industrial
- Improving high speed internet should be a high priority. Our next-door neighbor has cable internet but the company won't extend it to us without paying thousands of dollars. We have slow AT&T Wi-Fi after many years at our house but it is still slow at peak.
- NO short-term rentals and no wind energy
- Not a fan of windmills and their long-term maintenance. Solar and wind will not solve our energy needs. They help, but by far should we be dependent on them. They will do nothing for green energy when so many other countries will not comply.
- No wind/solar
- Policy should be enacted to prevent windmills.
- Promote solar energy only. No wind turbine farms.
- Solar for personal usage. Don't think we have space for a commercial solar distribution.
- Improving high speed internet should be a high priority. Our next-door neighbor has cable internet but the company won't extend it to us without paying thousands of dollars. We have slow AT&T Wi-Fi after many years at our house but it is still slow at peak times. Other areas in Courtland have only slow and unreliable satellite internet. Something must be done.



20. Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts about planning and zoning in Courtland Township you felt were not addressed in this survey.

Answered	56
Skipped	246

- A 2-acre minimum lot size should NOT have been approved. Burnt up all of the available land twice as fast as needed. Now they allow homes on much smaller lots by clustering and leaving open space. WHY? They approved the 2-acre minimum. NO DEALS Burn it up that was what was approved!!
- We are happy with Courtland Township as it is. Do NOT approve of increasing commercial development.
- Would love to see a master plan that brings mixed housing, retail, and community centers/parks into a concentrated area along northland drive.
- Since moving here 25 years ago, the area has lost its rural charm. For instance, we now have a literal zoo on our road that has greatly increased traffic, along with multiple housing developments within close proximity. Makes us sad. We will end up moving hopefully in the next 5+ years. We realize change happens but we never anticipated it would happen right in our backyard, especially since we own acreage.
- I would support any development that is permitted under the current master plan. I wouldn't support changes that increase the areas zoned industrial, commercial, and high-density housing.
- Would love an Aldi. But definitely not Walmart.
- The less wind generation here the better. I would like to see more home solar, not solar "gardens."
- Give tax breaks for residential home solar power
- NO short-term rentals and no wind energy
- The rules for single family's vs contractors should be the same. Not two different standards.
- Don't want big city...our small cute little town Don't need all the horrible things that come with a growing city or town
- NO short-term rentals = poor quality of life for the neighbors and no wind energy (unless you want to hear the sound 24/7 from your house at night)
- Please stop spending money on things like the sheriff department and more and more fire equipment and staff. Also, the sewer rates and issues are way out of control. Try spending money on that instead of adding new thing to the Township try paying for what there is.

20. (CONTINUED) Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts about planning and zoning in Courtland Township you felt were not addressed in this survey.

- Our biggest concern is access to high-speed internet. Corporation “own” internet rights to portions of the county and refuse to update infrastructure.
- Assess the need for reduced speed limits on selected roads--dangerous due to curves & topography. Consider changes too dangerous intersections. ie 14 mile/ Richie/14 mi court.
- Thanks for your time & effort on behalf of our community! :)
- No wind farms!!!!!!!!!!
- “If you are looking into Commercial Property usage along 14mile road between Northland Drive and Ritchie Ave. Please consider making a Center Turn Lane that whole length. The Hill and Curve there would be a Traffic Disaster without it.”
- Your summer and winter land taxes are why I’ll be moving out of the Township. Taxation is theft and I do not consent to the tyranny you have placed all of the people under. May God have mercy on your souls for the evil you promote.
- Your questions did not have all the answers. We were not given the opportunity to say strongly against. Just somewhat important or important.
- That government that governs best is one that governs least!
- Would love to see a skate park added to Courtland Township Park
- Don’t make Myers Lake or any road in the Township look like 28th street. The mess at the 10-mile Meijer’s should prove to you how terrible it can be. Total Madness which will get worse. Another Taco Bell and Culvers does not improve lifestyle.
- I think that pretty much covers everything
- I think short-term rentals (ADUs & granny flats) should be allowed for private residences so that homeowners can create income streams to help offset inflation, increases in property taxes, and costs of housing in general. ADUs would also be helpful for families to care for elderly relatives that would like their independence but still have family and caretakers nearby.
- Please don’t bring Marijuana farms or retail into the Township. We need a place in Michigan that doesn’t promote gateway drug use and an increase in crime.
- Not happy at all with the need to improve the sewer system in and around the lake / lakes that we are being forced to pay after only living here a short time and WILL be moving because of the force-fed tactics of the Township. Lawsuits looming. MANY residents are pissed.

20. (CONTINUED) Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts about planning and zoning in Courtland Township you felt were not addressed in this survey.

- Keep UPGRADING the existing sewer system with standby electrical systems. Let us know what the problems are with our existing sewers and why the quarterly rate is now \$300. If we see and know why that is helpful to our arguments for or against the improvements. (Something that SHOULD have been happening twenty years ago by the way!)
- I'm very concerned about drivers going too fast on our narrow roads. It is NOT safe to walk our dog or ride our bicycles because of speeding or distracted drivers.
- On 10-Mile by Luton Park and the new park you should be slowing traffic down for those accessing and leaving the parks
- I live very near the deer track junction, the amount of activity there is very concerning. It is starting to look like a mini circus & we now have at times a lot of noise from visitors there. They need a buffer zone & pine tree screening. Also, we are 1/2 mile from the pickle ball & we hear the racket & ball noise now. More pine tree & screening would help with that.
- I would like to see Township/county/state support for PERSONAL solar energy. Help the homeowner, not just another business.
- With over 300 new homes all having to access 14-mile road from Ritchie you need to work with MDOT for a traffic signal
- I worry young families may not be able to afford homes in the Township now or in future years.
- I am not a fan of housing developments. I believe minimum acreage per home should be 2 acres in order to preserve the rural aspect of our Township.
- I generally prefer market forces to control development, but I appreciate some gov intervention in keeping certain areas zoned appropriately based on the desires of the residents within the area. I appreciate this survey as a means of trying to gather that kind of info, and I'd hope it would play a major role in the decision-making process. I do not generally desire more commercial development into current residential areas, though I'd appreciate higher internet speeds. I'm wary of "green energy" solutions costing more money than it actually saves and would not prefer to be an "early adopter" community, but allow the technology to develop further so as to not overly burden our little corner of the world. I love calling Courtland Twp our home.

20. (CONTINUED) Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts about planning and zoning in Courtland Township you felt were not addressed in this survey.

- Zoning variances have completely altered the character of my neighborhood. Lovely small cottages are now dwarfed on both sides by gigantic houses that required significant zoning variances. Similarly, these giant houses, some with 3-4 bathrooms, pay the same exorbitant sewer fees as a seasonal home with a single bathroom. The overbuilding of the area (with zoning variances) has directly contributed to the overloading of the sewer system that sat mostly unmaintained for decades. I feel that these new mega-houses are quickly pricing me out of my summer house that has been in my family for over 100 years. What used to be “the country” is quickly becoming a suburb.
- Library = Obsolete, Broadband = Replaces Library, Short term rentals = Degradation of Community = people leaving and decreasing property values
- Don't fix what is not broken.
- I would like to see more regulations for HOAs requiring them to update bylaws more frequently (ours are over 20 years old) and ensuring appropriate professionals are appointed to oversee structural changes/additions to properties. I'm concerned the property value will decrease in our neighborhood due to a lack of competent and appropriate management.
- Wetlands are not being protected. It was our understanding (those of us that have been here since the 70's) that there was supposed to be no building on the wetlands, and yet we see it all the time now. Our ground water is being affected as taste/quality and quantity has been diminishing with too many homes tapping into the same source. Bottom line, no more new housing.
- We like living in this area. However, we are getting to the age where we will need more independent living options. This is not available in this area.
- Studies and other areas that preserved farm land, agricultural business and woodlands prove to be more valuable.... Examples are upstate New York and practices used throughout England.
- Please stay in the KDL library system. I'm extremely pleased with my access to the current library system & would be very skeptical of any changes to leave it.
- I love our community just as it is. Keep it just as it is.

20. (CONTINUED) Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts about planning and zoning in Courtland Township you felt were not addressed in this survey.

- I live on a road that is 1200 ft in length between two stop signs (Longacre NE between 10 Mile and Shaner). This is a country road and vehicles routinely drive as fast as possible (50+ mph) on this short section. I also find empty beer cans tossed on the side of the road quite often from people drinking and driving. There are many small children on this road. These safety issues are a great concern to me. I grew up and lived around this area my whole life. I do not accept that this is just the way things have to be in any rural area, and in our community in particular (speeding, drinking, reckless driving, etc.). I don't know if this is in the purview of the Township to address, but I'm hoping planning/zoning decisions can take these issues into consideration for future projects.
- Roads are too busy
- Please do not allow cookie cutter subdivisions where the homes are built cheap. These places will be eyesores and junk in 25 years. No one will want to live there.
- A Township map that highlights areas of farms, housing developments, recreation, energy farming etc. This would make the survey more relevant so residents would be able to see where proposals are targeted.
- Rockford needs a new high school. Students are not able to participate due to the size unless they are the best. Perhaps Courtland could have Rockford North. Pair with the county when roads need resurfacing to add larger shoulders for bikes and walkers. Also, would like to see 14 Mile as a boulevard with either MI left turn lanes or traffic circles. More emphasis on keeping Courtland Twp beautiful: No storage or pole buildings in front yards, need to be placed behind front edge of home. Campers not stored in front yards. There are definitely plenty of places to store campers in the Township. If commercial development does take place, signage on buildings only and buildings with motion lighting only. Housing developments without street lights. Create Courtland twp. as a dark sky community. Check out darksky.org.
- We live off Shaner Ave and so many people treat it like a sidewalk, with strollers, bikes, runners, but it is a 55-mph road that people drive 65mph+. I'd love to have trails connecting neighborhoods or connecting to the Township Park property, Meyers Lake Park, Luton Park, the White Pine Trail, etc. so people can more safely exercise outdoors without having to drive very far.

20. (CONTINUED) Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts about planning and zoning in Courtland Township you felt were not addressed in this survey.

- Stay with KDL.
- None
- Removing HOA restrictions from neighborhoods in Courtland Township for actions that would benefit the environment such as: the forced mowing of lawns instead of having a native open meadow, restrictions on roof solar, impacts to wetland areas during home construction, use of pesticides and fertilizer on lawns, etc.
- Too many restrictions, enforcement is haphazard and smacks of cronyism. It feels like if you know the right people you can do what you want. Stop soaking the residents because you mismanaged the sewer system so badly.
- I'm not happy about the sewer increases. It's too much money in too little time. I'd appreciate if financial planning looked further into the future than just being reactive when something starts to break.



APPENDIX: COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE
STATION 1 & COMMENT CARDS
Raw Data



STATION I: COMMUNITY VALUES BOARD RAW RESULTS

What do you love about Courtland Township?

- The People
- Neighbors
- The parks are very nice
- Love having more of a dark community and looking up and seeing stars
- The rural community
- The library
- Quiet
- Natural setting
- Seeing stars at night
- Close to things to do
- Rural setting
- County living
- Quiet
- Residential neighborhood and no short term rent
- Nice neighbors
- The Lakes
- Myers Lake Park
- Everything!!
- Quiet and can see the stars
- The People
- The Natural Settings
- Farmland
- Open field
- Lots of trees
- No Costco
- No Walmart
- Minimal Building
- Township is flexible and helpful
- (Workers are friendly)
- Township is not overbearing
- Rural
- Baby Deers and Owl
- The park at the Township Hall and how much it's used
- People are friendly

- Lots of cool activities
- Rural living
- Lakes
- The Park at the Township Hall and Disc Golf
- Parks and their development and use!
- Parks
- Open Land
- Neighbors
- Sense of ownership (stewardship) for our community
- The parks
- Improvements [in parks] for families to use is great
- Not yet overbuilt
- Family friendly
- Affordable
- The ex. parks and trail system

What would you IMPROVE about Courtland Township?

- Keep semis[-trucks] on main state roads
- Expand park activities: snow-shoe, archery, and trails
- Better traffic control
- Speed
- 4-ways
- Intersection lights
- More local control
- Long-term planning for walking/biking trails (non-motorized trails)
- Long term vision
- Lower speed limits
- More parks (trails and nature walking)
- Snowshoe
- Cross Country Ski
- Lower speed limit on 10 mile between The Village and Myers Lake Ave
- Vision/Plan/Strategy - as our community shifts from its traditional agricultural base to higher proportion of residential
- Reduce mortalities and accidents on state highway, M57 in our community
- Maybe a traffic light at 10 miles and Myers Lake Road
- License and manage short term rental - similar to other successful communities

- Bigger library
- Keep it as is
- Keep ag land
- No large develop
- Parks dev is good
- Expand into multi-use, archery, and natural trail
- M-57 more passing lanes?
- Light?
- Measures for better safety on busy road
- M57 - so busy more passing lanes
- Do something with the speed around Little Myers Lake!
- More walking trails/parks
- No large developments
- Too much traffic on 10 mi
- Making M-57 a boulevard with a center and Michigan left turns
- Keep thing natural and please don't develop
- More bike trails/sidewalks
- More hiking trails and natural areas
- Fix traffic issues at 10-mile and Myers Lake
- Less restriction: home business, business use, land use
- No large developments
- Better roads
- More control over subdivision development
- More parks
- Traffic control
- Slower traffic
- 14 mil is terrible now
- High speed internet
- Extend/expand sewer and water

COMMENT CARDS: RAW RESULTS

Use three words to describe Courtland Township, now or in the future:

Card 1

- Minimal commercial now - need more for tax base
- Need to respect land owner rights

Card 2

- Great
- Good
- Best

Card 3

- User-friendly twp. offices

Card 4

- Peaceful
- Sustainable
- Family Friendly

Card 5

- Rural with community
- Natural Spaces
- Undeveloped

Card 6

- Dark skies
- Wooded roadways. Beauty roads. Squires [designated natural beauty road]
- Parks

Card 7

- Inviting
- Forward thinking
- Controlled growth

Card 8

- Clean
- Slow
- Quiet

Card 9

- Community
- Neighborly
- Visionary

Card 10

- Peaceful
- friendly

Card 11

- Beautiful
- Rural
- Majestic

General Comments:

- Please do not change things!
- Provide language for wind farms and solar
- I'd love to continue seeing more green space, parks, and trail projects throughout the Township. Adoption of new LGROW Stormwater standards would be great as well!
- Please keep the green space we have and improve safety on 14 mile.
- I would put a small stage in back of the fire dept. in the open field. Annual celebration. We used to live in midtown [Grand Rapids] and they did Midtown on Tap. Farmers markets, maybe food trucks by the state area.
- Great place to grow - Don't like the Rockford School System - We need a new high school! Let's put it in Courtland Twp.
- Continue to protect the rural "feel" of the Township. Encourage more activities for gatherings i.e.: Farmer's Market. Turn M57 into a boulevard.
- Keep large buildings out! No multi-residents development.
- Sustain and reward farmers.
- Stop retail development. Do we want another 28th St.
- Stop the sprawl and protect our way of life.
- As we plan for the future phase give strong consideration of prospective growth, understanding that we can't predict accurately about what will happen, or rate of growth, and anticipated aspects that we want to both encourage and discourage, and include them in the Master Plan.
- No turbines! Please! They cause more harm than good to the communities.
- Restrict development to Northland Dr and M57 that's enough.
- No short term rentals. No viewing of who lives next door. Part-time. I lived next door to a STR [short term rental] for 20 years and it's terrible. Lies.
- Improve roads
- Internet of choice
- Libraries are a waste

COURTLAND TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN 2023

