Laketown Township

2020 MASTER PLAN

Draft

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Preface

Introduction

Legal Requirement

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, this Master Plan was created to serve as a guide for development within Laketown Township.

Intent and Purpose

The Laketown Township Master Plan addresses and directs proposed land use and development in a compatible fashion with existing and future uses, the natural environment, the availability of public utilities, the capacities of transportation networks, the design and distribution of recreational opportunities and other public places, the linear relationship of the landscape including compatibility of structures, uses, and natural features, as well as numerous other planning and community attributes.

The Laketown Township Master Plan guides and accomplishes development that is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient and economical. In addition, the Master Plan promotes the sustainability of uses for current and future needs that best protect and enhance the public health, safety, community values, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare.

The Master Plan projects more than twenty years into the future and must be revisited at least every five years to ensure its legitimacy.

Content

Cornerstone Components

A Master Plan shall include:

- Maps, plats, charts and descriptive content showing the recommendations of the Planning Commission for the physical development of the unincorporated areas of the Township.

A Master Plan should minimally address the classification and allocation of land for the following, as can be reasonably considered:

- Agriculture, residences, industrial and commercial uses, public buildings and spaces, schools, environment, recreation and transportation, areas for redevelopment and various other characteristics of the Township.

A Master Plan should generally address and accommodate the location and extent of the following:

- Transportation networks (i.e. streets, bicycle facilities, railway, waterways, airports and pedestrian improvements).
- Waterways and waterfront developments
- Sanitary sewer and water supply systems
- Pollution prevention efforts
- Drainage
- Flood prevention and the maintaining of water levels
- Public utilities and structures

A Master Plan shall provide recommendations regarding the above cornerstone components, as applicable, as well as provide strategies to implement its proposals. Further, a Master Plan shall provide recommendations regarding the redevelopment or rehabilitation of blighted areas and the management of streets, grounds, open spaces, buildings, utilities or other facilities, as applicable.

Composition

The Laketown Township Master Plan is designed based on two simplistic, yet imperative principles;

1. Constant public input

   It is through public participation and contributions that we established the foundation and direction of this Master Plan, as they are the core of the community. Derived from three public workshops as well as various planning meetings, this Master Plan benefited from and was shaped by public involvement. The focus of public workshops included Northern Laketown held on June 25, 2018, Blue Star Highway held on July 12, 2018, and Agricultural lands held on July 23, 2018.

   and;

2. Professional support

   Accompanied by the expertise and direction of professional municipal planners as well as other consultants, the desires of the public have been incorporated within the Master Plan and balanced with the socioeconomic attributes of the community by the direction of the Planning Commission.

Boards and Staff Involvement

The creation of a Master Plan includes contributions and direction from the Township Planning Commission, Board of Trustees, and Township Planning Consultant, as well as additional staff. The role of each Township Board and staff person is unique and imperative to the process, which is summarized below.

- Planning Commission

    - Organizes public involvement, public meetings, and provides direction to staff to draft Master Plan language, maps and other related components. Recommends the Master Plan to the Board of Trustees, holds the public hearing, and approves the Master Plan.
- Board of Trustees
    - Reviews, requests modification, if necessary, and approves the Master Plan for distribution to neighboring municipalities and other entities as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, and ratifies the Planning Commission approval of the Master Plan.
- Planning Consultant
    - Provides professional support, drafts language, compiles maps, and other Master Plan components for review by the Planning Commission.

Final Document

This design is intended to create the most comprehensive and effective Master Plan for Laketown Township. Its ultimate pursuit is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, property and business owners, as well as visitors to this Township.

How to Use this Plan

For each land use or attribute chapter, the Plan identifies goals, recommendations, and strategies, which are the basis for future development. The goals, recommendations, and strategies are designed as follows:

- Goals – These are community ideals derived from significant public input and Planning Commission oversight
    - These are applied most frequently during land use review to ensure a proposed development meets and is consistent with the core values of the Master Plan
- Recommendations – These each provide specific direction to achieve the goals
    - These are applied the strongest during land use review to ensure proposed development is consistent with the intent of the Master Plan
- Strategies – The strategies are the legislative methods to accomplish the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan, through the zoning ordinance or police power ordinances.

Chapter One
Community Preferences

Introduction

Important to the residents and property owners of Laketown Township are the preferences by which they envision or define the appearance, character, and values of their community.

As provided in its entirety within the appendix, Laketown Township completed three community workshops with the public to gauge the pulse of its property owners. While the workshop areas generally encompassed the entirety of the Township, with the exception of the lakeshore directly, the discussions were focused on Northern Laketown (which is generally 145th Avenue north), agricultural lands, and the Blue Star Highway. Among other interests of the community, the workshops provided the following values, preferences, attributes, and design mechanisms, which are used to develop the foundation on which some of the goals, recommendations, and strategies within this Master Plan are based.

Definition of Terms

In order to streamline the content of the workshop results, the following terms are recognized as defined below.

- *Rural Character* – is recognized as the natural features of the earth that minimize the visual exposure of buildings, structures, or other man-made features and which create scenic character. It is also recognized as the natural features of the earth that provide environmental buffers and/or habitat that is characteristic of the Township. Features are found to include:
    - Woods, woodlots, forest areas, and trees
    - Wetlands
    - Natural vegetation
    - Wildlife habitat
    - Natural field areas
    - Scenic vistas

  Rural Character also includes farmland, which is recognized as part of the natural features that are organized and managed by people.

- *Open Space* – is recognized as areas of land unoccupied by buildings, structures, or other man-made features, that are preserved to be unoccupied by buildings, structures, or other man-made features within a project. Open Space is not intended to include displays of art or other cultural features; bridges, signage, utilities, and other essential service structures; or grade level features such as ponds.

Findings

Below is a summary of findings derived from the workshop results.

- *Core Values* – the following attributes have been identified as core values for the Township:
    - Preserve and maintain rural character, open space, and sand dunes from development
    - Protect farmland from development
    - Provide pedestrian connectivity throughout the Township
    - Provide for a high quality of commercial and industrial building and site design to improve aesthetics and compatibility with adjacent land uses

- *Agricultural Characteristics* – the following have been identified as the top strength, opportunity, weakness, and threat to agricultural land:
    - Strength – Rural Character
    - Opportunity – Farmland preservation programs
    - Weakness – Encroachment of residential development
    - Threat – Encroachment of residential development

  Additionally, agricultural preferences include:
    - A mixture of large lots and a clustering of residential development to preserve rural character, farmland, and open spaces
    - Higher quality building materials to improve aesthetics
    - Installation and connectivity of pedestrian pathways

- *Residential Characteristics* – the following have been identified as the top strength, opportunity, weakness, and threat to Northern Laketown (145th Avenue north):
    - Strength – Rural Character
    - Opportunity – Preserve rural character and greenspace
    - Weakness – Inappropriate residential development density
    - Threat – Loss of rural character to development

  Additionally, residential preferences include:
    - Clustering of residential development to preserve rural character, farmland, and open spaces

- *Blue Star Highway Commercial and Industrial Characteristics* – the following have been identified as the top strength, opportunity, weakness, and threat to Blue Star Highway properties:
    - Strength – Rural Character
    - Opportunity – High quality building and site design through landscaping and facade materials
    - Weakness – Lack of public utility expansion
    - Threat – Loss of rural character

Additionally, Blue Star Highway preferences include:

- Smaller scale development of buildings and related signage
- Preservation of trees along the right-of-way corridor
- A mixture of higher quality (not only metal) building material
- Use of building accents and other physical elements
- Consider an ordinance requiring pedestrian pathways as a part of development proposals

Chapter Two
Agricultural Classification

Introduction

The amount of land which is vacant or used for agriculture has played a significant role in the development of the character of the Township. The large, open areas create a feeling of spaciousness and provide a tranquil surrounding. Agriculture is one of the major reasons that many of the current residents moved to the Township and continues to be a factor in attracting new residents.

Although agriculture is not the dominant use of land within the Township, there are significant areas where soils and drainage characteristics make agricultural preservation appropriate. Some communities and property owners tend to view farming as a temporary use until the land is converted to residential, commercial, or industrial uses. This may be appropriate in some areas where public utilities, land prices, property divisions, and growth pressures have made farming difficult, or impractical, or where marginal conditions exist for productive agriculture. However, it must be recognized that farming is as much of an industry as manufacturing. Farming provides jobs and a product for sale in the marketplace and creates a significant portion of income for Michigan residents. Viewing farming as an essential industry can have a profound effect on the programs developed for its preservation and continuation. The agricultural resources of Allegan and Ottawa Counties are particularly significant in Michigan.

As a result of the Agricultural Lands public workshop and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for agricultural uses in Laketown Township. In addition to the goals, and through the use of modern planning principles where applicable, recommendations and strategies to achieve success are provided below. Where applicable, illustrations are also provided as examples.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Preserve rural character
- Protect natural features
- Preserve woodlands and wetlands which are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Support agricultural operations

Recommendations

- Encourage crop production and livestock use to minimally impact existing open spaces
- Encourage all farm building construction to be designed in a central or same location within an agricultural property to preserve the most farmland as possible and minimally impact existing open spaces

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Encourage the use of the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, Public Act 116 of 1974, to protect farmland and significant or important open space
- Investigate opportunity for Purchase of Development Rights and Transfer of Development Rights programs
- Reduce or eliminate the minimum setback for all farm buildings, so as to protect the greatest amount of open space and or farmland as possible, while avoiding conflict with adjacent uses
- Prohibit Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) in the Agricultural Zoning District
- Investigate a millage or alternative Township program for land acquisition to provide for the preservation of rural character and or open space in perpetuity
- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to encourage agri-tourism activities within agricultural lands

Chapter Three
Residential Uses

Introduction

Housing within the Township is in sound condition, with only occasional homes found in disrepair. Homes of high quality can be found throughout the Township, though the most expensive and elaborate home sites are built along or near the Lake Michigan shoreline. Development of homes in this area is being affected by the critical dunes and high risk erosion designations established by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE).

Given that the dune areas possess some of the most sought-after properties for residential development, the Township will likely continue to feel pressure for development in these sensitive areas. Much of the development that has already occurred does not conform to the current regulations. The Township must continue to work with property owners and developers to preserve these valuable natural resources.

Coupled with these shoreline area properties, the northern portion of the Township faces increasing residential development pressure as a result of available public utilities, proximity to neighboring Park Township, and the City of Holland. Given this, and while Laketown Township is generally a rural community and residential uses comprise a relatively large percentage of the total land area, the Township recognizes the need to accommodate residential development concurrently with the preservation and protection of its rural and lake shore heritage. In an effort to modify the trending density of residential development and encourage larger minimum lot sizes in some areas of the Township, a new residential zoning district in the northwest portion of the Township should be explored.

As a result of the Northern Laketown public workshop, various planning meetings, and considering modern planning principles, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for residential uses. In addition to the goals, and through the use of modern planning principles where applicable, recommendations and strategies to achieve success are provided below. Where applicable, illustrations are also provided as examples.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect environmental resources, such as sand dunes and other natural features, from the negative impacts of new development
- Land use shall preserve rural and coastal character
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection, where practicable
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character and open spaces
- Provide more pedestrian pathway connections between residential uses

- Preserve woodlands and wetlands which are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Realize strong neighborhoods with a predominantly single-family residential and rural open space character while conscientiously integrating developments into the landscape of existing neighborhoods

Recommendations

- Utilize the incorporation of existing vegetation, topography, and other natural features into the design of new residential developments
- Consider an ordinance that requires new residential developments to be sited in a manner that protects the rural character and scenic views by maintaining proper setbacks and providing landscaping screening as appropriate
- Consider an ordinance that requires new residential developments to incorporate a pedestrian pathway system that ultimately connects with abutting developments to produce a walkable and connected community
- Encourage the preservation of trees between the public street and dwellings
- A compatible balance of protection of natural assets and reasonable residential land use should be achieved between low density residential development and the preservation of the Township's unique critical dune areas.
- Developments containing LDR or MDR density should not be permitted until public water and sanitary sewer is provided
- Consideration should be given to delaying LDR or MDR density rezonings unless such proposed changes are contiguous to or nearly contiguous to developments of similar density to reduce the potential conflict of uses
- Provide shielded street lighting to be installed at levels and heights that do not overpower or over-illuminate

Strategies

- Develop and adopt a residential zoning district to accommodate a density between the R-1 Rural Estate Zoning District and the R-2 Low Density Residential Zoning District
- Consider establishing a zoning overlay district for a variety of residential and limited small-scale commercial operations that support the rural and lake shore heritage of the Township along Lake Macatawa. Allowable commercial uses shall be related to and for the benefit of residential uses, and shall maintain the architectural vernacular of the surrounding area.
- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Improve ordinance controls for hazardous material storage and outdoor uses that could negatively impact groundwater
- Conduct a groundwater aquifer quality study, if existing evidence reveals water quality concerns

- Maintain density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems and which promote the preservation of the rural character of the Township
- Encourage new residential developments to be designed utilizing strategies to preserve rural character and protect the environment
- Consider an ordinance that requires the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should minimally apply to lot layout, road extensions, and open space plans

Chapter Four
Blue Star Highway

Introduction

While the Blue Star Highway is the only area of the Township planned to allow high-intensity commercial uses, the Planning Commission concluded in 2008 and again during this 2020 Master Plan process that additional analyses and a detailed planning assessment of the corridor were necessary to address future development requests. While planned for future commercial development, little change has occurred at this time and therefore, the corridor can best be characterized as a blend of low intensity uses.

Blue Star is an important transportation corridor that provides access for local through-traffic and is served by an I-196 interchange to the popular tourist destinations of Saugatuck and Douglas. Several unique businesses are located to the east of the expressway in Laketown Township and help give the corridor a unique character. The planning process and land use recommendations for Blue Star Highway provide a sound foundation on which to base future decisions, while at the same time providing effective implementation measures that accurately reflect community desires.

The Blue Star Corridor provides a progressive mix of commercial, light industrial/service commercial, and residential land uses along the highway with service to local residents and recreational travelers. Recommended land use concepts carefully consider relationships to existing development and related densities, the architectural and design character found in many well-known establishments, and existing natural features, such as area wetlands. The Blue Star Corridor also proposes a number of capital improvements necessary to support, in measure, the proposed intensity of development and land uses, in order to enhance the Blue Star Corridor, provide needed services and promote Township-wide goals.

Vision Statement

Discussions in 2008 with the Planning Commission triggered a “fresh look” that enhanced Laketown Township’s overall character. Throughout that process the Planning Commission discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Blue Star Highway that must be acknowledged when considering future land uses. Many of the corridor’s positive attributes include the low intensity of current land uses, specifically the existing residences, as well as unique business establishments and their architectural character. Development constraints include the lack of utilities, a poorly configured highway interchange, and drainage issues.

While existing conditions and development constraints have played a major role in helping to guide future corridor land uses, an important consideration has been the definition of “highway commercial” and what it means for the Township. The term “highway commercial” evolved during the 2008 planning process to mean those land uses that cater to the recreational traveler and area residents living along the southern boundary of Laketown Township. As a result, the following Vision Statement for the Blue Star Highway was created.

Vision Statement

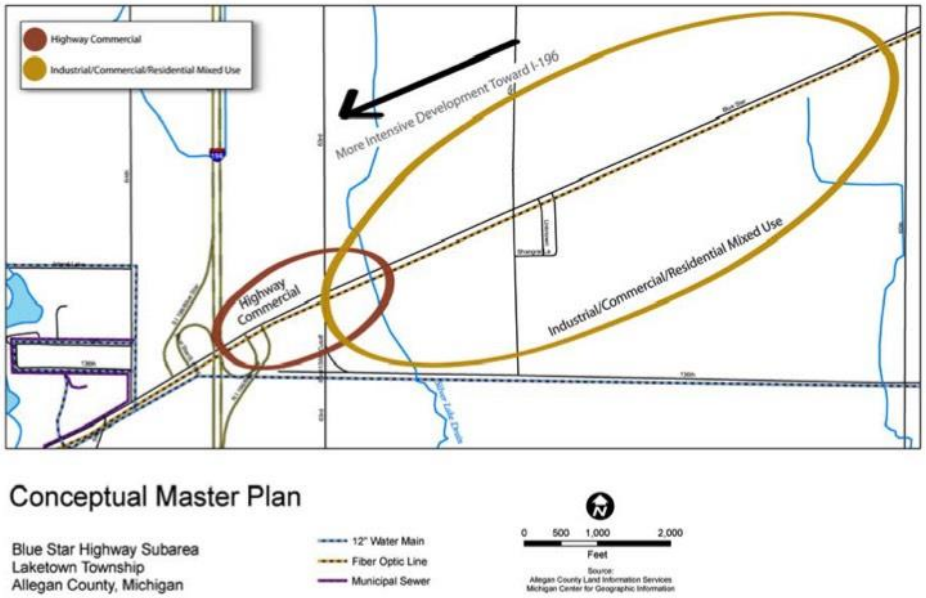
The Blue Star Highway is characterized by a pattern of commercial development adjacent to I-196 and mixed-use development along the length of the corridor that is characterized with woods and open space. New development emphasizes a high-quality design standard that enriches the eclectic mix of architecture that exists along the corridor. Interconnected by shared-use paths with the rest of the community and the lakeshore, it also provides services to recreational travelers seeking a convenient, safe, tree-lined, and walkable temporary escape from the nearby interstate.

As a result of the 2018 Blue Star Highway public workshop, the 2008 findings of the Planning Commission, the Vision Statement, and various planning meetings, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for Blue Star Highway uses. In addition to the goals, and through the use of modern planning principles where applicable, recommendations and strategies to achieve success are provided below. Where applicable, illustrations are also provided as examples. Further, a number of the goals, recommendations, and strategies are based on the following concepts.

Conceptual Basis

Property near the immediate interchange has great commercial potential because of its visibility and access; however, area infrastructure and traffic flow must also be considered. In order to guide future growth in this area, three important factors were used to help formulate the concepts:

1. To recognize the importance of the corridor
2. To establish future land uses that are compatible with the character of the area, its aesthetics and the intensity of existing land uses
3. To evaluate the appropriate scale of development based in part on the type and level of the traffic it generates, the length of stay by business patrons, and the hours of business operation



The land use concept for Blue Star Highway promotes a high quality development pattern that will provide a consistent streetscape through site design and landscaping. The broad 'Olympic ring' areas proposed for the Blue Star Highway Corridor have been planned to capture general territories of use, which are further described below. These areas are designed as "zones of influence" for future land uses based on land capability and area character. While the type of use is important, the overall design and scale of the development has been emphasized. For example, site plan review should carefully consider the "fit" of new development with the surrounding landscape judging whether it meets landscaping and building character requirements described for that planned area. Other considerations should be site design, infrastructure capacity, stormwater management, street design, lighting, public spaces and signs.

Highway Commercial

The area immediately east of the I-196 interchange along Blue Star Highway to the Silver Lake drain is proposed for Highway Commercial uses. It is critical that this commercial area be well designed since it serves as the gateway for the commercial establishments on Blue Star and provides the first impression of Laketown Township and nearby communities for area travelers. Its development

potential is also influenced by the current design and capacity of the highway bridge crossing and access ramps. The development capacity of this corridor is clearly affected by a safe and adequate interface with I-196.

Industrial/Commercial/Residential Mixed Use Area

Land use intensity should decline moving away from the I-196 interchange into this area. This planning area begins east of 63rd and is envisioned as a transition area between relatively high intensity uses on the west to lower intensity uses to the east. Given the current configuration of long and narrow parcels along the highway, commercial and industrial uses should locate nearer the roadway and residential uses should locate towards the rear of any parcel. Actual property dimensions should allow sufficient room to accommodate a well-designed setting for development and also provide adequate separation from existing and future residential neighborhoods.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect environmental resources, such as wetlands, tree-lined streets, and other natural features, from the negative impacts of new development
- New commercial and industrial development should be directed to selected areas which have utility services or are planned to receive them. In particular, new industrial development should be primarily located east of 62nd Street.
- Locate more intense commercial land uses that generate higher traffic volumes near the I-196 interchange and transition to less intense land uses with lower traffic volumes away from the interchange
- Land use proposals should reflect the eclectic character of existing commercial development located adjacent to the corridor
- Commercial uses within this area should be well integrated with surrounding development through appropriate landscaping, greenbelts, façade design, adequate access, parking, and pedestrian pathways
- Discourage strip commercial development that is typically characterized by utilitarian buildings with no architectural character or relationship to surrounding buildings. These frequently have minimally sized windows, large expanses of blank walls, flat roofs, and their facades have no articulation, such as offsets or shadow lines.
- Residential mixed uses, in the form of single-family dwellings, as well as within mixed-use buildings or as part of a multi-use development are encouraged, however commercial land uses should emphasize low intensity
- An emphasis on interconnected drives and streets should be promoted so that internal trips can be made without compelling drivers to exit and enter multiple times onto the Blue Star Highway
- A system of integrated shared use paths should be promoted for all new developments to provide safe walking routes to surrounding stores and uses
- Emphasize a more maintained landscape and onsite tree preservation

- Land use shall preserve rural character
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection, where practicable
- Preserve woodlands and wetlands which are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value

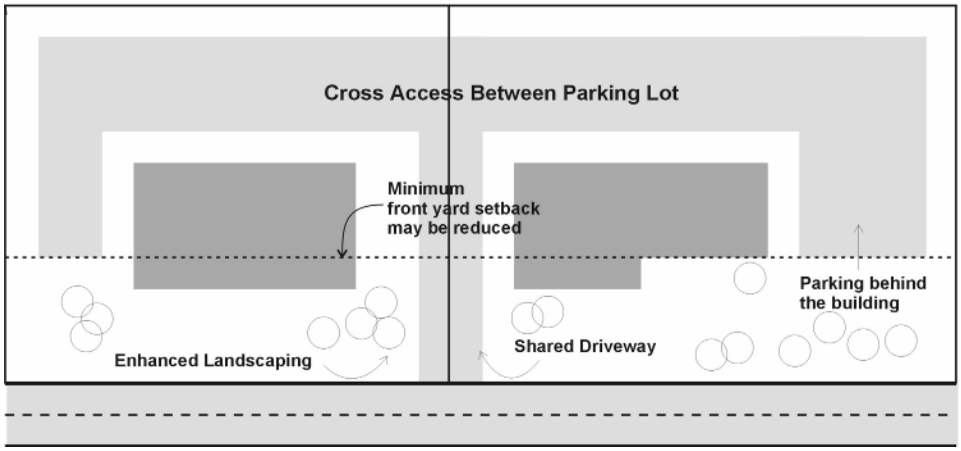
Recommendations

- Architectural design shall include varying roof lines, building materials, ample windows and their placement, limit large expanses of parking and emphasize landscaping treatments, reduce the size of signs, especially free standing (rather, promoting signs that are attached to buildings), and reduce light levels and mounting heights for light fixtures

- Parking should be set back from the highway and buffered by landscaping. While uses may change along the highway, the consistent application of parking and landscaping will provide a theme of 'rural roadside' character.

- Provide pedestrian access within a site and between sites
- Provide shielded lighting that does not overpower or over-illuminate
- Uses should include innovative storm water management techniques (such as green roofs and permeable pavement)
- Promote and expand tree planting along Blue Star Highway.

- Interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote access management along Blue Star Highway
    - Interconnected service drives and properly spaced driveways are crucial to safe and efficient development along Blue Star Highway given its status as a county primary highway. Any new access has the potential to create traffic safety problems if not properly planned and sited given the close proximity of the interchange. Current access management standards for this area recommend very limited primary access on Blue Star Highway with secondary access from side streets. Within the Highway Commercial area, this is especially important. New internal streets and drives should line up with existing intersections, such as along 63rd Street.



- Highway commercial development should cater to the recreational traveler and local residents and provide convenient commercial facilities in a safe and walkable environment
- A shared use path should be established along the entire corridor to provide safe routes to surrounding stores, the broader community, and regional destinations

- Site development shall be screened from roadway views and hide parking lots, through a combination of trees, shrubs, and berms or other rural character or open space elements

- Prior to considering major development an extended public utility system or individual private systems must be evaluated based on their ability to adequately service the existing and future needs along the corridor in a cost efficient and coordinated manner
- Innovative storm water management techniques, such as rain gardens and porous pavement should be utilized to mitigate parking lot runoff into area wetlands and drains
- Adjacent residential neighborhoods and uses must be protected from the potential negative impacts of employment areas such as the scale of development and buildings, noise, odors, air quality, traffic, and objectionable views
- Integrate commercial development with access to adjacent residential neighborhoods, where conflicts do not exist
- Maintain a natural screen along the corridor for new development
- Signs, architecture, and site features such as fences, should reflect a rural character
- Mixed-use buildings should be constructed with an emphasis on architectural character; for example, rooflines, window details, high quality building materials and buildings that orient to the street
- Residential development should cluster homes on smaller lots leaving open space to serve as neighborhood parks. Parks should be clearly visible, front on residential streets and be well integrated with surrounding homes.
- New utility lines should be buried and existing poles should be removed, where practicable

Strategies

- Consider adopting or enhancing appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection, where practicable.
- Permit possible development bonuses and allow increases in the amount of commercial land area if significant amounts of residential uses have been accommodated within a development
- Consider ordinances that require creative architectural design solutions (such as vertically integrated mixed uses and two to three story commercial buildings); and use of quality building materials, design details and finishes (such as brick, stone and metal)

- Operations and activities such as loading and unloading should be limited after dark
- Promote the development of mixed land uses, including residential, office, commercial, and possible light industrial by employing a PUD ordinance that permits flexibility
- Consider developing requirements for building and site design to address such things as: minimum parcel depth; building materials; window openings as a percentage of a building facade; articulation of facades to avoid large expanses of blank walls; location and design of refuse storage areas; location and screening of service and delivery areas; storm water management; parking lot design; lighting; landscaping; grading and screening; signs; and site access

Chapter Five
Commercial Uses

Introduction

While the majority of commercial land use area within the Township is located along the Blue Star Highway, minimal commercial area exists within the northern area of the Township. These areas are recognized as neighborhood commercial areas and are established for the purpose of allowing small convenience commercial businesses designed for the use of neighborhood residents. As population and residential development increase the demand for such services over time, some areas of limited neighborhood commercial services may be added, particularly in the northwest portion of the Township along Lake Macatawa, to preserve the lake shore heritage of the Township and support the residential uses. Currently, commercial land use in Laketown Township is intended to be limited to the Blue Star Highway.

As a result of various planning meetings, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for commercial uses outside of the Blue Star Highway. In addition to the goals, and through the use of modern planning principles where applicable, recommendations and strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Discourage strip commercial development to minimize traffic problems and unsightly development
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection
- Protect environmental resources, such as wetlands, tree-lined streets, and other natural features, from the negative impacts of new development and to protect their aesthetic and scenic value
- New commercial development should be directed to selected areas which have utility services or are planned to receive them
- Land use shall preserve rural character
- Commercial uses should be well integrated with surrounding development through appropriate landscaping, greenbelts, façade design, adequate access, parking, and pedestrian pathways

Recommendations

- Potential environmental and economic impacts of commercial development should be considered to reduce or eliminate conflict from noise, traffic, odors, drainage, delivery of services, and prevent groundwater pollution

- New utility lines should be buried
- Parking should be set back and buffered by landscaping. While uses may change the consistent application of parking and landscaping standards will provide a theme of 'rural roadside' character
- Provide pedestrian access within a site and between sites
- Provide shielded lighting that does not overpower or over-illuminate
- Interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote access management along Blue Star Highway
- A shared pedestrian use path should be established along the development frontage to provide safe routes to surrounding stores, the broader community, and regional destinations
- Site development shall be screened from roadway views and hide parking lots, through a combination of trees, shrubs, and berms or other rural character or open space elements
- Signs, architecture, and site features such as fences, should reflect a rural character

Strategies

- A new zoning overlay district is to be considered for a variety of residential and limited small-scale commercial operations that support the rural and lake shore heritage of the Township along Lake Macatawa. Allowable commercial uses shall be related to and for the benefit of residential uses, and shall maintain the architectural vernacular of the surrounding area.
- Consider developing requirements for building and site design to address such things as: minimum parcel depth; building materials; window openings as a percentage of a building facade; articulation of facades to avoid large expanses of blank walls; location and design of refuse storage areas; location and screening of service and delivery areas; storm water management; parking lot design; lighting; landscaping; grading and screening; signs; and site access
- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection, where practicable

Chapter Six
Industrial Uses

Introduction

The lack of utility services in appropriate locations limits the designation of industrial land uses with the Township to the area between the Michigan Department of Transportation rights-of-way in Section 13 and along the Blue Star Highway ½ mile east of 62nd Street. The properties designated along the Blue Star Highway are intended for low intensity industrial uses, which would not require extensive utilities, large volumes of well water services, or create excessive traffic, noise, or other negative effects. Given this, industrial uses outside of the Blue Star Highway are not intended to be extended beyond existing locations shown on the Master Plan map and the zoning map.

As a result of various planning meetings, we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for industrial uses outside of the Blue Star Highway. In addition to the goals, and through the use of modern planning principles where applicable, recommendations and strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Discourage strip commercial/industrial development to minimize traffic problems and unsightly development
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection
- Protect environmental resources, such as wetlands, tree-lined streets, and other natural features, from the negative impacts of new development and to protect their aesthetic and scenic value
- New industrial development should be directed to selected areas which have utility services or are planned to receive them
- Land use shall preserve rural character
- Industrial uses should be well integrated with surrounding development through appropriate landscaping, greenbelts, façade design, adequate access, and parking

Recommendations

- Potential environmental and economic impacts of industrial development should be considered to reduce or eliminate conflict from noise, traffic, odors, drainage, delivery of services, and prevent groundwater pollution
- New utility lines should be buried
- Parking and outdoor storage should be set back and buffered by landscaping. While uses may change, the consistent application of parking and landscaping standards will provide a theme of 'rural roadside' character.

- Provide shielded lighting that does not overpower or over-illuminate
- Interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote access management along Blue Star Highway
- Site development shall be screened from roadway views and hide parking lots, through a combination of trees, shrubs, and berms or other rural character or open space elements
- Signs, architecture, and site features such as fences, should reflect a rural character

Strategies

- Consider developing requirements for building and site design to address such things as: minimum parcel depth; building materials; window openings as a percentage of a building facade; articulation of facades to avoid large expanses of blank walls; location and design of refuse storage areas; location and screening of service and delivery areas; storm water management; parking lot design; lighting; landscaping; grading and screening; signs; and site access
- Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features
- Coordinate with appropriate regulatory agencies to develop or strengthen regulations applicable to groundwater protection, where practicable

Chapter Seven
Recreational & Facilities

Introduction

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

Parks and Recreation

The Huyser Farm

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

Laketown Township Beach Park

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

Sanctuary Woods Preserve

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

Saugatuck Dunes State Park

Saugatuck Dunes State Park offers 1,000 acres of land with two and a half miles of shoreline, located within Sections 28, 33, and 34 along the west side of the Township. In 2010, the Phase I General Management Plan for Saugatuck Dunes State Park was approved, which designates management zones that reflect the land preservation goals and recreation programming for different areas within the park. Currently, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is in the process of developing a Phase 2 General Management Plan to establish long-range action goals for the park as a whole.

Pathways

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

Lakes

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

Community Facilities

Historic Town Hall

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

Township Hall Recreation Complex

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

Felt Mansion

Laketown Township Five-Year Community Parks and Recreation Plan

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

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

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

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

Recommendations

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

Strategies

- Implement the Action Program and Capital Improvement Plan outlined in the 2018 Community Parks & Recreation Plan, as amended
- Acquire additional property suitable for development of active and passive recreation, funding through the general fund, donor funds, and grant funds
- Consider developing and implementing ordinance language that requires new land developments to expand non-motorized opportunities throughout the Township using a combination of shared use paths and bike lanes
- Apply for grant funds from a variety of sources, such as Allegan County, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund through DNR, as well as private foundations and sources
- The Township Board should continue to support the implementation of the 2018 Community Parks & Recreation Plan, as amended

Chapter Eight
Municipal Utilities

Introduction

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

Privately-owned Systems

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

City of Holland

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

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority

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

Public water and sewer may be further extended north as capacity allows and as governed by existing agreements with KLSWA member communities that jointly own the Waste Water Treatment Plant (Saugatuck Township, City of Saugatuck, City of Douglas). Laketown Township is not currently a member of the KLSWA, but proposed utility extensions within the Township are reviewed with the Authority to evaluate overall system impacts.

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

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

Goals, Recommendations and Strategies

Goals

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

Recommendations

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

Strategies

- Coordinate with regulatory agencies to ensure adequate protection of groundwater sources, where practicable

- Improve ordinance controls for hazardous material storage and outdoor uses that could negatively impact groundwater
- Establish or maintain density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems, unless public sewer is present

Chapter Nine
Transportation

Introduction

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

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

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

Existing Roadways

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

Expressways

This category includes major highways, often under county or state jurisdiction, which serves trips between communities and other major activity centers throughout a region. Roadways of this type are designed to provide the highest level of traffic mobility, usually traveling at speeds ranging from

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

County Primary Roads (Paved)

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

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

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

County Local Roads (Paved)

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

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

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

County Local Roads (Unpaved)

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

Unpaved County Local roads within the Township include:

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

Other Roads

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

Multi-modal Transportation

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

Another aspect of transportation planning that has impacts on Laketown Township is air travel, due to the proximity to the West Michigan Regional Airport. Section 125.3203 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that the Airport Approach Plan and Airport Layout Plan be included in a community's Zoning Ordinance. While the Airport itself is located in the City of Holland, there are approach paths over Laketown Township. As such, there is a strategy listed below that addresses the potential impacts of the airport approach paths. Additionally, the 2018 West Michigan Regional Airport Approach and Layout Plans are included in the Appendix.

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

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

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

Recommendations

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

Strategies

- Consider ordinances that require the layout of new residential developments to be extensions of existing neighborhoods, where possible. This should apply to roadway extensions, to ensure inter-connected neighborhoods.
- Consider adopting Access Management Regulations to the Zoning Ordinance, in particular along the Blue Star Highway
- Establish site plan review procedures to consider shared driveways in heavily traveled corridors
- Consider modifying the Zoning Ordinance to require pedestrian pathways in new developments
- Consider the West Michigan Regional Airport approach paths when planning for new development

Complete Streets Plan

In 2010, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act was amended to require that Master Plans account for "all legal users" of the transportation system within the municipality. The amended Act, in part, states that the Master Plan must include, "among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following: (i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets and

provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and other legal users." MCL 125.3807(2)(d).

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

Chapter Ten
Environment

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Sand Dunes

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

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

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

Floodplains

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

Wetlands

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

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

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

Waterways

Waterways include the lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and in some cases, wetlands of Laketown Township. The land surrounding the Township’s waterways is often the most sought-after property due to the environmental, aesthetic and recreational benefits that are associated with local waterways. Lake Michigan property that lies vacant is more often viewed as a financial residential investment than either for conservation easements or low impact development, such as parks or

public access points. These areas, if not currently developed, will need continued attention as ownership or land development intentions change.

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

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect environmental resources, such as wetlands, tree-lined streets, and other natural features, from the negative impacts of new development[1]
- Land use shall preserve rural character
- Incorporate natural features into site development, to allow new uses of land that do not irreversibly damage natural site features and attributes
- Preserve woodlands and wetlands which are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and which have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Concentrate the density of residential land uses to protect rural character and open spaces
- Provide and maintain a park, trail, and open space system including access to Lake Michigan that is responsive to the needs and priorities of the Township residents
- Ensure that future park sites (local and centralized) are identified and preserved

Recommendations

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

[1] There are various mapping tools available, such as www.itreetools.org that quantify wooded areas, including their value in communities such as Laketown Township.

Strategies

- The Township should use appropriate ordinances to implement the goal of preserving natural features and determine other methods of maintaining and enhancing the unique natural features of the Township
- Coordinate with regulatory agencies to ensure adequate protection of groundwater sources, where practicable
- Establish density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems and which promote the preservation of the rural character of the Township
- Encourage development to utilize open space preservation techniques, clustered housing techniques, and other amenities and features to preserve rural character and protect the environment
- Investigate a millage or alternative Township program for land acquisition to provide for the preservation of rural character and/or open space in perpetuity
- Establish or strengthen educational programs for Laketown Township youth regarding the unique natural features in their community, and how to preserve them for future generations
- Update natural resource identifications on a specified interval, so as ownership and/or land development intentions change, valuable resources may remain protected
- Acquire and otherwise protect open space in developing areas to maintain the rural character of the Township

Chapter Eleven
Implementation

Introduction

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

Zoning and Land Use Regulations

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

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

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

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

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

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

Terminology

Table of Master Plan Terms & Zoning Ordinance Map District Terms

Classifications & Master Plan Terms	Zoning Ordinance Map Districts
Agriculture	Agricultural (AG)
Rural Estate	Rural Estate (R-1)
Residential, Very Low Density	*
Residential, Low Density	Low Density Residential (R-2)
Residential, Medium Density	Medium Density Residential (R-3)
Resort Commercial	**
Mixed Use	General Business District (C-2), Highway Commercial (C-3), Industrial District (I-1), Mixed Use (MU), & Mobile Home Park Residential (R-4)
Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial District (C-1), General Business District (C-2) & Highway Commercial (C-3)
Light Industrial	Industrial District (I-1)
Public/Semi-Public	-

*A new zoning district is to be established with a density between that of the R-1 and R-2 districts.
**A new zoning overlay district is to be considered for a variety of residential and limited commercial operations that support the rural and lake shore heritage of the Township. Allowable commercial uses shall be related to and for the benefit of residential uses, and shall maintain the architectural vernacular of the surrounding area.

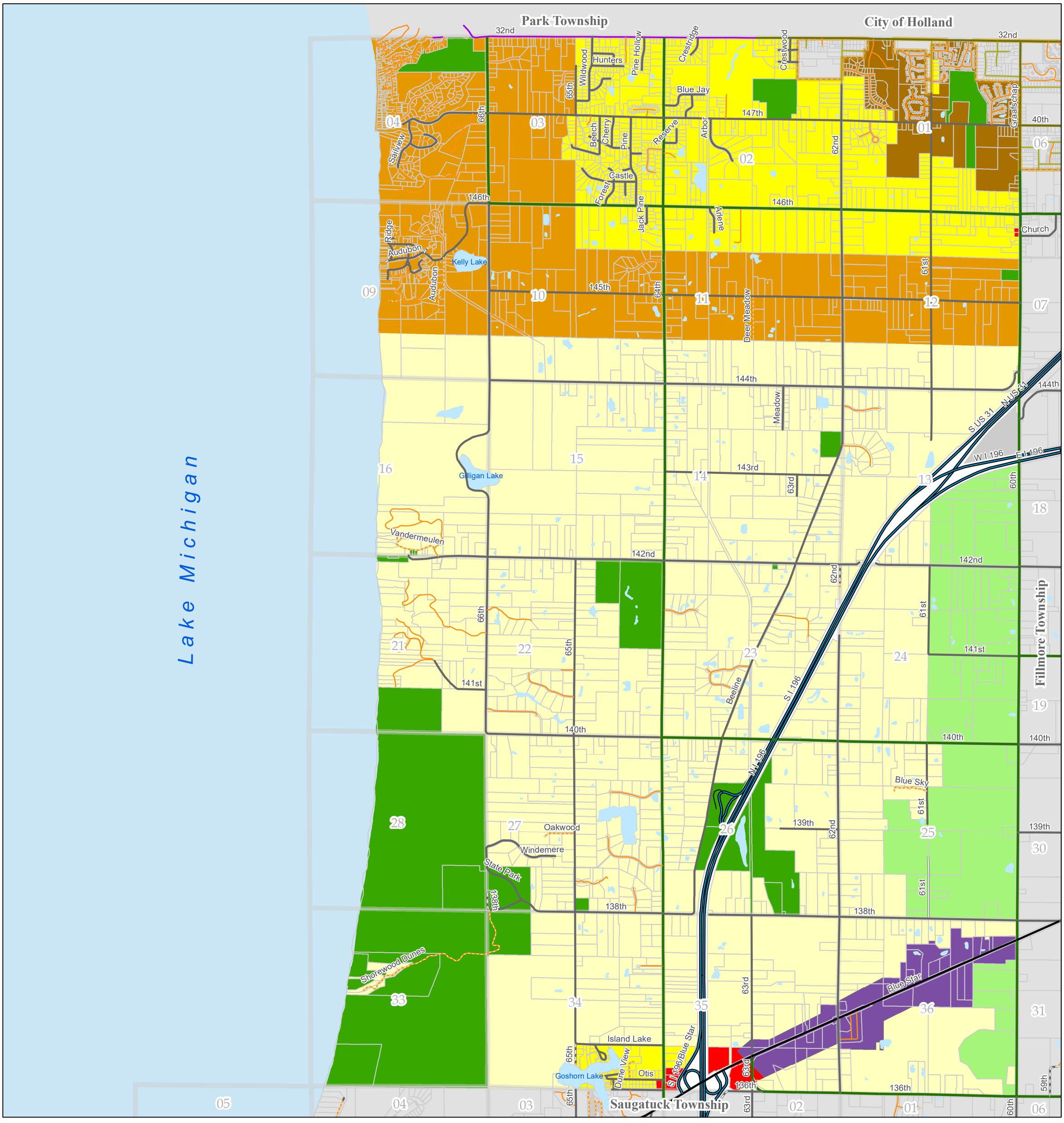
Relationship of Master Plan Map Terms to Master Plan Chapters

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

Master Plan Map Terms	Master Plan Chapters
Agriculture	Agricultural Uses
Rural Estate	Residential Uses
Residential, Very Low Density	Residential Uses
Residential, Low Density	Residential Uses
Residential, Medium Density	Residential Uses
Resort Commercial	Commercial & Residential Uses
Mixed Use	Blue Star Highway & Residential Uses
Commercial	Commercial Uses
Light Industrial	Industrial Uses
Public/Semi-Public	Recreational Facilities, Environment

Master Plan Map

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



Draft Master Plan Map

Laketown Township
Allegan County, Michigan

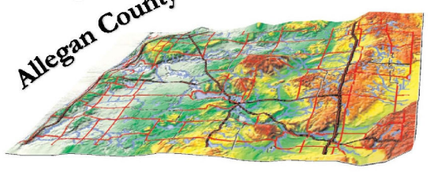
Date: 1/22/2020

- AG, AGRICULTURE
- RE, RURAL ESTATE
- VLDR, VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LDR, LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MDR, MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MU, MIXED USE
- C, COMMERCIAL
- I, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- P, PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC
- ROW, RIGHT OF WAY
- W, WATER

N W E S

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Allegan County GIS Services



Appendix

Available within this appendix is the following data:

- Appendix A - Community Mapping
- Appendix B – Community Profile, Laketown Township
- Appendix C – Master Plan Workshop Summary & Results
- Appendix D – West Michigan Regional Airport Approach Plan & Layout Plan (2018)

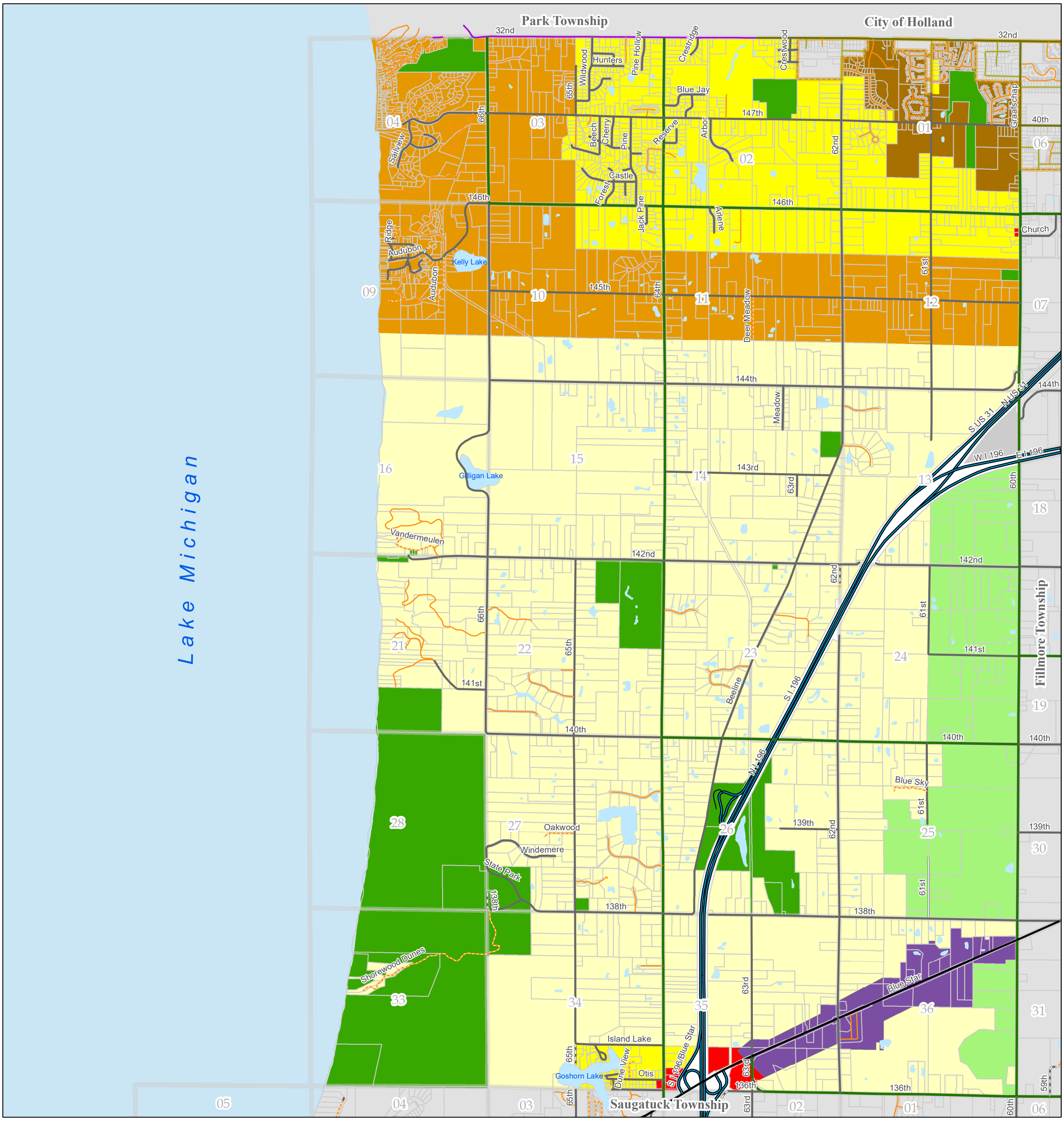
Appendix A

Community Mapping

Contents:

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

1. Master Plan – creates future land use classifications and delineates boundaries for certain uses of land
2. Location Map – shows Laketown Township within the context of Allegan County to illustrate connections to adjacent municipalities and the lakeshore
3. Street Map – documents existing network of transportation infrastructure to illustrate feasibility of supporting a proposed use
4. Community Facilities – establishes existing public water and sanitary sewer systems to illustrate feasibility of supporting proposed development
5. Aerial Imagery - illustrates areas of concentrated development within the Township
6. Soils – indicates the location of soils within the Township that may present limitations for both building and onsite septic systems
7. Inter-county Drains and Orphan Drains – illustrates drains within the Township, as well as inter-county drains
8. Non-Motorized Path Plan – illustrates existing and proposed bike lanes, as well as existing and proposed shared use paths



Draft Master Plan Map

Laketown Township
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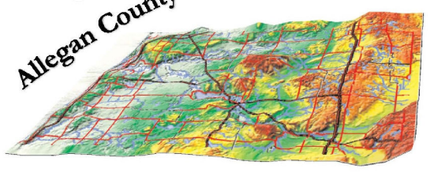
- W, WATER

N W E S

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Allegan County GIS Services



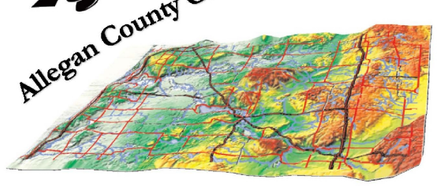
Laketown Township

Holland Twp
Zeeland City
Park Twp
Zeeland Twp
Jamestown Twp
Holland City
S US 31
48th
Washington
S US 31
M-40
W I 196
Blue Star
E I 196
Overisel Twp
Salem Twp
Fillmore Twp
Lincoln
Saugatuck City
Douglas City
Blue Star
Saugatuck Twp
Manlius Twp
Heath Twp
Monterey Twp
Lake Michigan
124th
Fennville City
124th
Allegan Twp
N I 196 S I 196
Ganges Twp
Clyde Twp
Valley Twp
Main
Grand
116th
Allegan City
Marshall
Lincoln
M 40
Casco Twp
Lee Twp
Cheshire Twp
Trowbridge Twp
South Haven City
South Haven Twp
Geneva Twp
Columbia Twp
Bloomingdale Twp
Pine Grove Twp

Draft Location Map

Laketown Township
and Surrounding Units
Allegan County, Michigan

Allegan County GIS Services



Date: 6/28/2019

0 10,000 20,000 30,000 40,000
Feet

N
W E
S

Draft Street Map

Laketown Township

Allegan County, Michigan

Date: 6/28/2019

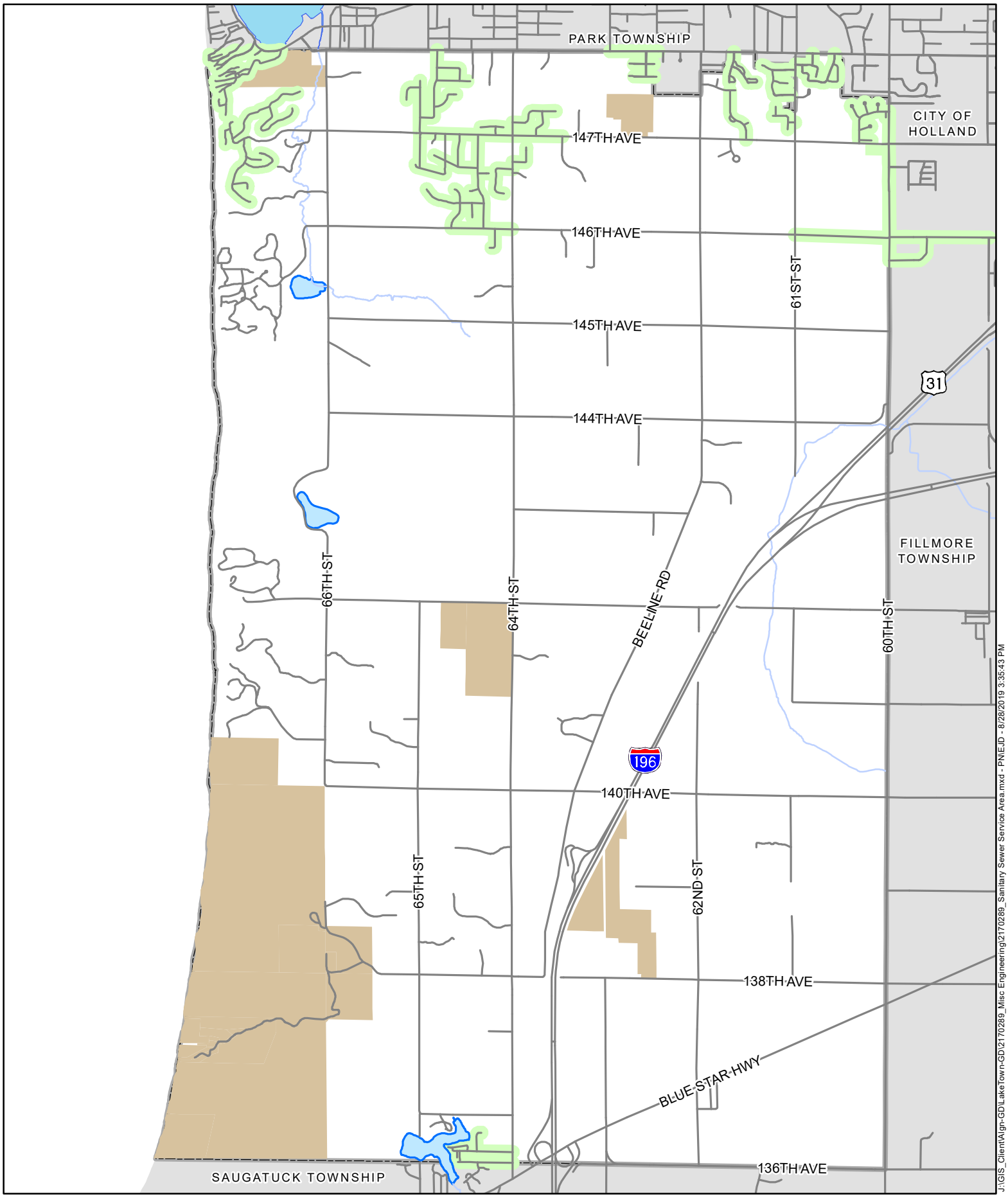
Legend

- County Local Road-Impassable/Seasonal
- County Local Road-Paved
- County Local Road-Unpaved
- County Local Road-Unpaved/Seasonal
- County Primary Road-Paved
- County Primary Road-Unpaved
- Freeway (Controlled-Access Highway)
- Intercounty Highway Route: City Major
- Intercounty Highway Route: County Primary
- Municipal Street: City Major
- Municipal Street: City Minor
- Paved Road Maintained by Adjacent County
- Private/Unclassified Road: Paved
- Private/Unclassified Road: Unpaved / Unknown / Impassable
- Ramp
- State Park Road
- State Trunkline Highway: Undivided
- Unpaved Road Maintained by Adjacent County

0 2,500 5,000 7,500 10,000 Feet

Allegan County GIS Services

N W E S



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SCALE: 1 " = 3,500 '

LEGEND

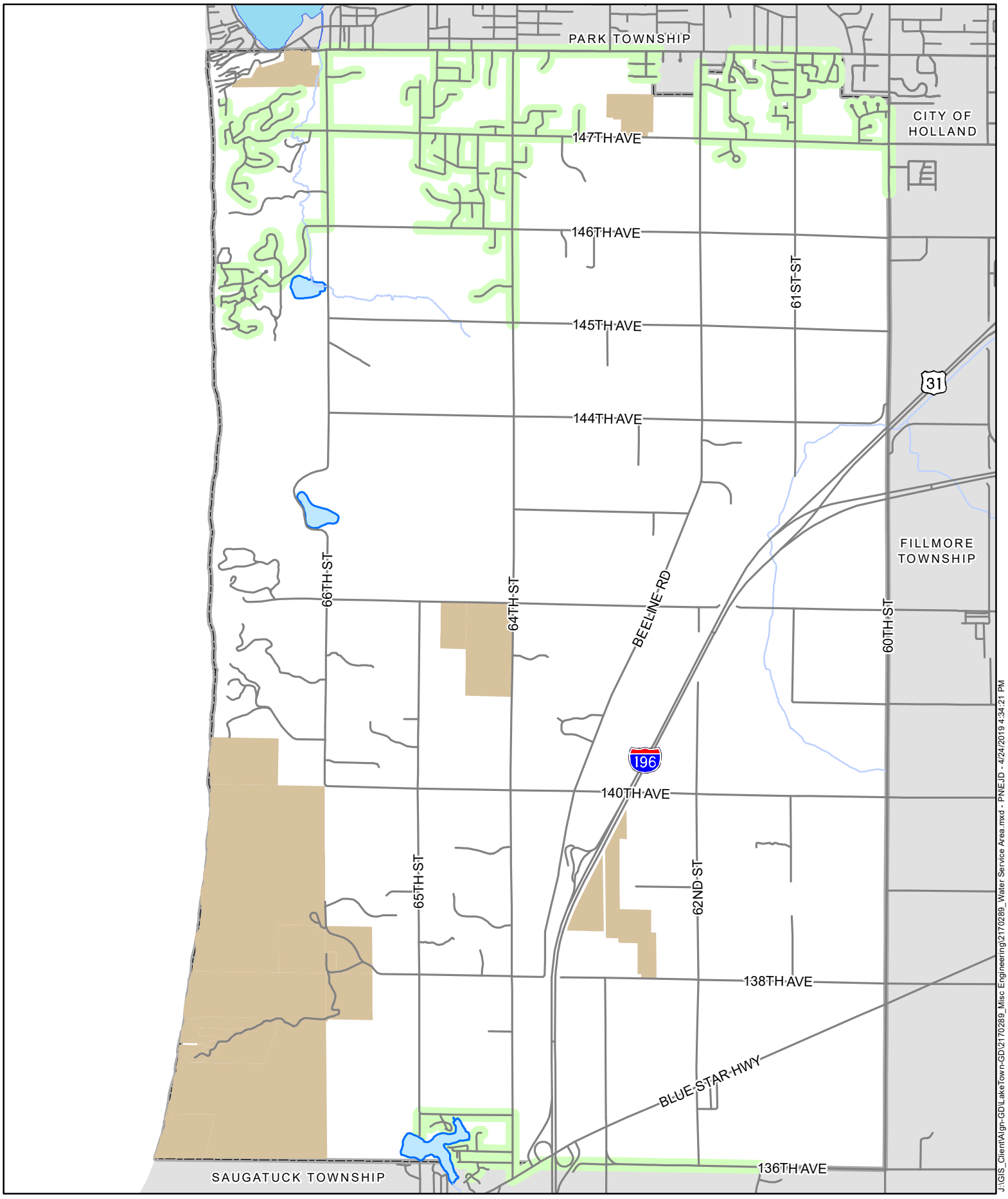
Sanitary Sewer Service Area

LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
Allegan County, MI

2019 SANITARY SEWER SERVICE AREA

APRIL 2019

Prein&Newhof
2170289



SCALE: 1 " = 3,500 '

LEGEND

Water Service Area

LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
Allegan County, MI

2019 WATER SERVICE AREA

APRIL 2019

Prein&Newhof
2170289

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