

Oceola Township Master Plan

Oceola Township, Livingston County, Michigan

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Introduction

THE OCEOLA TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN IS THE CULMINATION OF EFFORTS OF THE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION, TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND RESIDENTS OF OCEOLA TOWNSHIP. THEY JOINED TOGETHER IN ORDER TO UPDATE THE PREVIOUS MASTER PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY'S GROWTH.

In accord with this objective, the Master Plan defines issues that are most important to the community. Resident and community input was encouraged through a visioning meeting, Planning Commission meetings, and a public hearing. An analysis of the existing features of the Township was conducted to illustrate some of its defining characteristics. The analysis includes a survey of the existing land uses in the Township; population, economic and housing statistics; and a description of the physical constraints, natural resources, and circulation patterns within the community.

Based on all gathered information and with input from citizens, goals and objectives were developed which outline the growth and development patterns for the community over the next ten to fifteen years. This plan and the goals and objectives contained within it should be the guide for all significant land use decisions made by the Township for the next ten to fifteen years. As conditions change over time, the Township may find that the Master Plan needs to change as well. Amendments are likely as it is impossible to perfectly predict exactly what will happen in the near future. Keeping the Master Plan up-to-date will ensure that it stays relevant and useful and will keep it from simply collecting dust on a shelf.

Purpose and Intent

This document is intended to fulfill the requirements and provide the functions of a Master Plan. The Township Master Plan is a crucial planning document for a community as it not only provides important information about the current conditions and trends in the community, but also presents a vision for the future of the Township with a plan for accomplishing that vision.

A Master Plan is used for a variety of purposes. At the most basic level, a Master Plan is the basis for a community's zoning ordinance. One of the legal tests of validity for a zoning ordinance is that the ordinance must be based on a comprehensive plan for the development of the jurisdiction. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended) requires that zoning ordinances are based on a plan.

A fundamental part of the master planning process is the public involvement that identifies the community's desires for its future and its long-term vision for growth and development. The goals and objectives are the heart of the Master Plan and present the vision and the manner in which it will be achieved.

Goals and Objectives

An important element in the Master Plan preparation process is the creation of goals and objectives to communicate the Planning Commission's vision for growth and development of the Township for the next ten to twenty years. The goals and objectives noted below address many land use related issues in the Township under the topics of general planning and development, residential development, commercial development, industrial development, environmental, transportation, recreational facilities, and community facilities. The Plan that follows concentrates on the goals, objectives and implementation strategies that will further the community vision.

General Planning and Development

Balance of Land Uses. Provide for a balance and variety of land uses in an efficient and well ordered land use pattern to meet residents' needs in locations that will not negatively impact existing and future residential areas or the overall rural character of the Township.

Regionalism. Form and support cooperative and collaborative relationships with surrounding communities to promote regional compatibility and a mutually beneficial arrangement for area development.

Physical Master Planning. Maintain complimentary land use relationships that promote a harmonious, attractive community; preserve natural resources and the rural character; promote a sound tax base; support existing infrastructure; and provide for manageable traffic conditions.

Preservation of Natural Features. Preservation of the abundant natural features in the Township should be a prevailing objective in all future development. Oceola Township is fortunate in that it is well-endowed with natural features, such as wetlands, woodlands, rolling topography, open spaces, and farmland.

Preservation of Cultural and Historic Resources. Preserve significant cultural and historic resources, such as historic buildings, sites, roads, and natural features when feasible. New development should be designed with consideration for these cultural and historic resources.

Roads and Transportation. Develop an orderly program for improvement, maintenance and expansion of the road system in order to meet increasing traffic demands, provide safe movement of traffic, and provide proper access to all parcels in the Township – especially in light of anticipated residential growth. Plan road system improvements with the goal of protecting the scenic, rural character of the community. Coordinate road improvements with surrounding townships and the City of Howell. Recognize the need for alternative forms of circulation, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and encourage non-motorized trail development.

Property Maintenance. Encourage owners to maintain and improve their properties, and work toward the removal of blighted structures.

Fiscal Stability. Promote the development of a financially secure community that can continue to provide necessary services (municipal, educational, etc.) to its residents and businesses in an efficient and economically secure manner.

Planning Innovation. Permit innovation in land use planning where innovation would accomplish the following:

- Implement the goals set forth in the Master Plan more effectively.
- Achieve a higher quality of development or design than would be possible under conventional regulations.
- Result in better use of the land in accordance with its intrinsic character (for example, preservation of rural open space).
- Result in development that is compatible with surrounding uses.
- Produce recognizable and substantial benefits for the community that would not otherwise be achieved.

Innovation should not be encouraged as a means to increase the intensity of development or to simply develop land in a manner that otherwise would not be permitted.

Implementation. Adopt or amend policies and regulations necessary to implement the Master Plan. Toward this end, adopt appropriate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to guide the development of the Township. Pursue grant opportunities, as appropriate, to provide and improve facilities in the Township.

Residential and Agricultural

Density. The Township's development pattern should consist of a "transect" of density, with the highest residential densities near the intersection of M-59 and Latson Road, and medium residential densities surrounding the intersection of M-59 and Eager Road. Surrounding those two nodes should be low density single family neighborhoods, in the areas specifically designated by the Future Land Use Map. Specific areas are also designated for preservation or low density due to insufficient infrastructure, particularly congested roadways, like M-59 and Latson Road, that are in need of upgrades before they can support additional development. In areas not specifically designated for housing development on the Future Land Use Map, housing densities should be limited to preserve rural character.

Availability of Public Services. Permit residential development only in accordance with the availability of necessary public services, including sewer and water, road construction and maintenance, police and fire services, governmental administrative services and educational services. Base the density and location of residential development in part on the adequacy of the potable water supply and wastewater treatment systems, with higher densities located only where public water and sanitary sewer are available. Consider the costs of both construction and maintenance of capital improvements necessary to serve the proposed developments.

Land Use Compatibility. Strive to achieve a land use pattern that separates residential areas from incompatible land uses or requires ample buffer zones to alleviate incompatibility.

Preservation of Natural Features. Design new residential developments to be compatible with the underlying natural features of the site. Preserve significant topographic features, tree stands, wetlands and watercourses, aquifer recharge areas, and other natural features intact wherever possible. Encourage residential planned unit developments that would retain the rural character of the land.

Capital Improvements in Residential Neighborhoods. Work with residents, adjacent townships, the City of Howell, city and county agencies to identify and implement needed capital improvements in residential areas, such as drainage and road improvements.

Housing Alternatives. Work toward providing a sufficient supply of attainably priced housing alternatives in the Township or nearby communities to meet the needs of all population segments, including the elderly and young families. Continue to consider Traditional Neighborhood Development and Planned Unit Development as design options.

Farmland Preservation. Encourage continued agricultural activity. When reviewing development plans, explore alternative layouts to minimize conflict with nearby farming operations.

Residential Open Space. Promote the inclusion of preserved open space in new residential developments.

Coordinate Road Patterns. Require logical road connections between adjoining residential developments and coordinate road patterns. Specifically, require the Neighborhood Connections recommended by this plan. Full road connections are recommended. If they are not possible, non-motorized trail connections should be required.

High Quality Design. Encourage new residential development with high standards of housing design and construction.

Commercial (Retail and Office) Development

Future Allocation of Commercial Land. Base the future allocation of commercial land in Oceola Township on residents' actual needs for shopping and office facilities. It is not intended that Oceola Township's commercial sector serve a regional market. Most of the Township's shopping needs should be satisfied by commercial districts in adjacent communities.

Commercial/Governmental District Development. Continue the M-59/Latson area as the primary location for new commercial development and mixed use development including residential, commercial, office and institutional uses, so as to prevent undesirable strip development. As the commercial/ governmental center of the Township, the M-59/Latson area should reflect very high architectural, landscaping and site design standards.

Design. Encourage the design of commercial uses to reflect thorough and careful analysis of the site and to improve the aesthetics of the community.

- Encourage architecture that is clean and uncluttered; provide buildings that have traditional character. Implementation of traditional design concepts is encouraged.
- Prohibit large signs.
- Encourage attractive, functional landscaping.
- Discourage excessive or spill-over lighting.
- Require loading, parking, and storage areas to be located behind buildings or on the sides with screening, preferably with landscaping or a combination of landscaping and walls.
- Require the interior of parking areas to be landscaped to provide visual relief to large paved areas.
- Emphasize pedestrian access between and within sites.
- Encourage sustainable design.

Linkages between Commercial Developments. Encourage construction of service drives or access easements and pedestrian/bicycle linkages between adjoining developments for the purposes of traffic safety and the reduction in conflict between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Transitions and Screening. Plan for transitional uses between commercial uses and adjoining residential uses. Contain the impacts from commercial uses within the commercial district itself. Require commercial developments to be screened from adjoining residential areas.

Maintenance. Encourage improvement or redevelopment of neglected commercial properties.

Industrial Development

Balanced Industrial Development Strategy. Strive for balance between the economic benefits of industrial development and the amount of industry that is compatible with the Township's environmental objectives and overall future development pattern. Do not sacrifice the goal of preservation of the rural residential character of the Township to build an industrial base.

Allocation of Industrial Land. Confine industrial development generally to the Argentine and M-59 intersection, in locations where there is adequate road access.

Environmental Capability. Monitor industrial development to be certain it is in keeping with the Township's goals for preservation of the natural environment and resources, and protection of its residential areas. Light industrial and research uses would be best suited to Oceola Township, because such uses generally are environmentally clean, producing low levels of waste, noise, air and water pollution, and other undesirable impacts.

Availability of Public Services. Permit future industrial uses only in accordance with the ability to provide required utilities and public services, including adequate road construction and maintenance, police and fire protection, and general municipal administrative and regulatory services. Consider the ongoing cost of providing such services, as well as the cost related to initial construction.

Industrial Design Standards. Review the design and layout of industrial development proposals to encourage high quality, attractive design that will make a positive contribution to the aesthetics of the community.

Aesthetics. Promote industrial development in Oceola Township that is aesthetically attractive. Sites should be well-landscaped and storage areas, loading areas, and trash disposal areas should be screened from view.

Industrial Regulatory Enforcement. Strictly enforce codes and regulations applicable to industrial areas, particularly for industries that use or store hazardous or toxic chemicals.

Transitions and Screening. Implement policies and ordinances that require industrial uses located near less intensive uses to provide open space, landscaping and other elements to minimize any potential conflict between the uses.

Environmental

Protection of Natural Features. Promote the wise use of natural resources such as wetlands, wooded areas, scenic views, rolling terrain, farmlands, and unique wildlife habitats, and the preservation of groundwater recharge areas including the Huron River and Shiawassee River watersheds. The Township wishes to protect the features that give the community its appealing scenic, rural character and to establish natural resource protection as a planning priority that serves as a basis for other planning and development goals and policies.

Pollution Control. Take reasonable steps to prevent surface and ground water pollution, contamination of the soils, air pollution, light pollution and noise pollution. Toward this end, consider adopting up-to-date performance, environmental, stormwater and waste management standards and implement them throughout the Township. Educate the citizenry about pollution control and the protection of the environment.

Intergovernmental Cooperation. Continue to cooperate with federal, state, and county agencies for the purposes of enforcing environmental regulations that are under the jurisdiction of outside agencies, such as wetland and soil erosion control regulations.

Energy Conservation. Promote energy-conserving subdivision and building development, reduce reliance upon automobile transportation to the greatest extent feasible.

Zoning Techniques. Utilize zoning techniques such as Residential Planned Unit Development, Commercial Planned Unit Development and open space community development to encourage development that is sensitive to the environment and promotes a quality of life for residents.

Transportation

Road and Street Classifications. Preservation of a rural road network, consisting of an interconnected system of local and collector roads, thoroughfares, and arterial roads, is a primary objective of transportation planning in Oceola Township.

Coordination with Other Units of Government. Coordinate with surrounding townships, the City of Howell, the Livingston County Road Commission, and the Michigan Department of Transportation on development of the road system.

Upgrade the Existing Road System. Upgrade the existing roads as a precedent over new road construction as a means of increasing capacity and improving traffic safety. Specifically, this plan envisions:

- M-59 being widened into a four lane divided boulevard, with “Michigan”-style left turns, throughout the entire Township, but especially west of Argentine Road.
- Upgrades to the intersection of M-59 and Latson Road, which may include a roundabout incorporating Bigelow Road. While a roundabout would improve the efficiency of left turns and through traffic at the intersection itself, it could also cause “downstream” issues with turns and pedestrian crossings that would require other upgrades along the M-59 and Latson corridors.
- Paving of several currently unpaved roads, including Eager Road between Bigelow Road and Brophy Road, and Golf Club Road east of Latson Road

Ensure Private Road Maintenance. Continue to require and enforce private road maintenance agreements in the Township. Discourage private roads in situations where long term maintenance cannot be reasonably assured.

Need for New Roads. Work toward construction of new roads only where there is a documented need for the purposes of traffic safety or to alleviate traffic congestion. Locate and design new roads to minimize impact on significant natural features and to reduce the loss of rural open space. Establish the Neighborhood Connections envisioned by this plan as new development gets constructed.

Land Use/Transportation Relationships. Strive toward a balanced relationship between the Township's transportation system and the overall land use pattern. Analyze new development proposals to determine the amount of traffic that will be generated and how the increased traffic will affect the transportation system. The Future Land Use map has also been crafted specifically with transportation concerns in mind.

Land Use/Transportation Friction. Alleviate the friction between land use and traffic through careful planning and scrutiny of development proposals. Encourage the use of service drives or access easements to provide access to adjoining properties, and to limit the number of driveways onto main roads. Continue to implement access management techniques for commercial development, particularly along M-59.

Road Aesthetics. Preservation of rural character should be a primary consideration in any road construction project. Roads should be visually pleasing to motorists, pedestrians, and persons who view the roads from adjoining land. Require ample landscaping along the frontage of all roads. Encourage commercial uses to maintain their driveway approaches.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Transportation. Develop pedestrian/bicycle safety paths that link residential areas with schools, recreation areas, commercial districts, and other attractions.

Recreation

Community Center. Position the Township's recently constructed Community Center as a regional recreational asset and a driver of fitness, wellness, and high quality of life in the Township and surrounding region.

Coordination with Other Agencies. Continue to cooperate with other public and private organizations, such as the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority and the school districts, in providing recreation services and facilities.

New Park Development. The Township owns land on Argentine Road for a future park. As the Township develops, the community may acquire and develop additional land for future recreation development and provide for facility development in cooperation with the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority.

Trail Development. Cooperate with the adjoining communities to develop multi-jurisdictional trail systems.

Environmental Compatibility. Preserve distinctive natural features on park sites wherever possible, and design parks so they contribute to the aesthetic quality and rural character of the Township.

Funding for Parks and Recreation. Base the development of recreation facilities and programs on sound fiscal policy. Consider and implement various methods of funding and/or cost-reduction, including the use of volunteers, state and federal grant programs, user fees, fund-raising committees, and other methods.

Maintain Chemung Hills. The Township operates the Chemung Hills Golf Course, which is a regional gem and should be maintained as a high-quality golf destination.

Recreation Areas within Residential Developments. Encourage the preservation of common open land areas and recreational areas as an integral part of new residential development through the use of Planned Unit Developments or other means.

Community Facilities

Municipal Services. Provide quality municipal services to satisfy the needs of the Township's residents and businesses, commensurate with the Township's financial and administrative resources. Define areas for future utility extensions within identified boundaries or define the conditions under which the utility boundaries will be modified, recognizing that growth will follow infrastructure investment.

Public Safety. Provide the facilities necessary for high quality police and fire protection. Work with the Howell Area Fire Authority to reevaluate fire facilities on a regular basis as new development occurs to determine if modifications or additions to facilities are needed to serve the new development.

Historic and Cultural Resources. Be aware of buildings and sites that have historic or cultural significance, and encourage the preservation of these resources when practical.

Wind and Solar Energy

In order to preserve the natural, rural beauty of the Township, the viability of the Township's farmland, the precious ecosystems contained within the Township, and the health, safety, and welfare of the Township's residents, Oceola Township adopts the following policies with regard to the development of solar and wind energy facilities within its borders.

- **Renewable energy** is important for the sustainability of ecosystems, food systems, economies, and communities. However, the large-scale positive impacts must be weighed against local negative impacts, including the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Oceola Township.
- **On-site solar and wind energy systems** provide ecological and economic benefits, at a scale that is desirable in a rural community and with fewer impacts on the immediate surroundings than utility-scale solar and wind energy systems. However, the impacts that they do have must be managed through zoning regulations.
- **Utility-scale solar energy systems ("solar farms")** should be developed with careful consideration of the impacts on local ecosystems, farmland, rural beauty, and the health, safety, and welfare of the Township's residents.
- **Utility-scale wind energy systems** have been shown to negatively impact the health, safety, and welfare of nearby residents, can spoil rural character, and can harm local ecosystems. Therefore, they shall be treated as industrial uses, and, if large-scale wind turbines are proposed in the Township, they must be considered carefully, and meet the Township's goals in order to be approved:

Specifically, in determining whether to approve a new solar farm or utility scale wind energy system, the Township will take the following into account:

- The Township's natural beauty must be preserved, especially wetlands and woodlands. Existing wetlands and woodlands should not be removed for solar or wind energy development. The Township will also require the provision of pollinator habitat within solar farms, in order to promote a healthy ecosystem.

- The Township’s agricultural systems must be protected. The Township will prioritize agricultural land uses to retain the vibrant food production economy that already exists in the community.
- Nearby residents must be protected from noise, shadow flicker, glare, and aesthetic degradation, through appropriate setbacks and landscaping for solar and wind installations.
- Solar farms and utility scale wind energy should be located in appropriate locations with regard to transmission infrastructure, to prevent the need for large-scale transmission lines to be built across the community.
- The Township may, at some point, hit its “solar and/or wind limit.” Oceola Township acknowledges the importance of renewable energy, but, as described in this section, other priorities, such as local ecosystems, agricultural production, transmission infrastructure capacity, and rural aesthetics, are also important. Therefore, if utility scale solar or wind facilities are approved and operational in the Township, the Township may restrict the size of new proposals, or not approve them at all, in order keep balance between the community’s priorities.

Population and Economic Analysis

General Demographic Trends

From a regional perspective, Oceola Township is one of several developing townships in Livingston County, at the fringe of the Southeast Michigan urbanized area. The County has no particular population center, though the townships along US-23 and I-96 tend to be more populous.

Even though much of Oceola Township maintains a “rural” feel, the Township has experienced double-digit growth rates in the decades following 1980, nearly doubling between 1990 and 2000 alone. This growth has been largely a result of in-migration of households from surrounding communities. Older growth is concentrated in platted subdivisions in the southwest corner of the Township, between M-59 and Grand River Avenue. More recently, a significant share of growth has been accommodated on acreage lots spread throughout the Township, and larger subdivisions and single family or multiple family condominium developments located around M-59, Eager Road and Latson Road.

In order to accurately assess Oceola Township’s place in the region, demographic data was compiled for Oceola Township, the communities surrounding it (Deerfield Township, Genoa Township, Hartland Township, Howell Township, and the City of Howell) and for Livingston County as a whole.

Population

Oceola Township has seen continued growth in population, with significant change taking place between 1990 and 2000. The township has continued to see positive growth from 1950 onward.

Table 1: Population Growth, 1950–2020

Year	Population	Numerical Change	Percent Change: Growth
1950	1,030	NA	NA
1960	1,453	423	41%
1970	2,496	1,043	72%
1980	4,175	1,679	67%
1990	4,825	650	16%
2000	8,326	3,501	73%
2010	11,459	3,133	38%
2020	14,623	3,164	28%

Source: US Census

Oceola Township experienced a higher rate of population growth during this period (1950-2020) than did any of its neighbors and grew more than twice as fast as Livingston County as a whole.

Based on the 2020 population count, Oceola Township accounts for 7.5% of the total population of Livingston County, which stands at 193,866.

Table 2: Population Comparison

Municipality	2000	2010	2020
Oceola Township	8,326	11,936	14,623
Deerfield Township	4,087	5,695	5,764
Genoa Township	15,901	19,821	20,692
Hartland Township	10,996	14,663	15,256
Howell Township	5,679	6,702	7,893
City of Howell	9,232	9,489	10,068

Source: US Census

From a historical perspective, the table above indicates that population growth in the Township has maintained a rapid pace for most of the last half-century, except for a slow-down caused by the economic downturn and high interest rates in the 1980s. The 1990s were the fastest growth decade for the Township. During the past twenty years, Oceola has outpaced all of its neighbors in total population growth. While Oceola Township can still be considered a low-density rural or semi-rural Township, continued population growth will eventually alter that character.

Housing Units and Household Size

Consistent with statewide and national trends, Oceola Township has seen changes in household composition. One of these changes is a reduction in the average Township household size, falling from 3.15 people per household in 1990, 3.02 people in 2000 and to an estimated average of 2.87 in 2019, according to the American Community Survey (ACS) data. Deerfield Township and Howell Township both saw household size decreases in the years between 2010 and 2019.

Oceola Township experienced a total growth of 860 households between 2010 and 2019. As a whole, Livingston County saw positive growth of 1,390 households. As such, Oceola Township accounted for an estimated 62% of the county growth.

Table 3: Number of Households

Municipality	1990	2000	2010	2019 (ACS)
Oceola Township	1,523	2,759	4,166	5,026
Deerfield Township	961	1,386	1,481	1,450
Genoa Township	3,709	5,839	7,807	8,191
Hartland Township	2,211	3,696	5,154	5,326
Howell Township	1,338	1,902	2,531	2,570
City of Howell	3,266	3,857	4,028	4,307

Source: US Census

Table 4: Household Size

Municipality	Number of Persons per Household			
	1990	2000	2010	2019
Oceola Twp	3.15	3.02	2.89	2.87
Deerfield Twp	3.11	2.95	2.81	2.98
Genoa Twp	2.91	2.72	2.58	2.57
Hartland Twp	3.09	2.96	2.73	2.7
Howell Twp	3.13	2.91	2.49	2.74
City of Howell	2.43	2.29	2.49	2.74
Livingston County	2.94	2.8	2.64	2.7

Source: US Census

It is anticipated that growth will continue in Oceola Township, even as the average household size diminishes. In fact, declining household size can lead to housing growth that happens faster than population growth would indicate, as fewer people generate a need for more housing than they would with larger household sizes.

Population Characteristics

AGE STRUCTURE

With the increase in growth within the Township, the population of its residents regarding age has diversified as compared to previous years. The table below shows the age range for the 2010 ACS and 2019 ACS data sets. While some age groups expanded in 2019 in terms of total population, others saw a decrease in the population composed of that age range. Overall, the age structure of the Township continues to be predominately focused on younger residents, that is, residents who are 54 years old or younger.

Table 5: Age Structure

	2010 (ACS)	Percent (2010)	2019 (ACS)	Percent (2019)
Under 5 years	508	4.3%	919	6.3%
5-9 years	1,262	10.6%	1,013	6.9%
10-14 years	1,085	9.1%	1,061	7.3%
15-19 years	730	6.1%	1,054	7.2%
20-24 years	414	3.5%	657	4.5%
25-34 years	1,105	9.3%	1,304	8.9%
35-44 years	2,190	18.3%	2,102	14.4%
45-54 years	1,921	16.1%	2,315	15.8%
55-59 years	734	6.1%	931	6.4%
60-64 years	607	5.1%	774	5.3%

	2010 (ACS)	Percent (2010)	2019 (ACS)	Percent (2019)
65-74 years	694	5.8%	1,311	9.0%
75-84 years	225	1.9%	699	4.8%
85 years older	90	0.8%	218	1.5%

Source: US Census

Based upon the above age structure, the following statistics are significant:

- A higher proportion of Oceola Township residents are under 40 years of age when compared to Livingston County, which is at an average of 43 years old.
- The number of residents who are aged 55 and older has increased in population size.

RACIAL COMPOSITION

The population of Oceola Township is fairly homogenous with respect to racial composition. The 2020 Census indicated that 92.9 percent of the population composition is Caucasian (white) with the next largest composition being of Asian descent. Livingston County's population was also identified as 92.0 percent Caucasian (white) by the 2020 Census. The table below further details the composition of Oceola Township and Livingston County.

Table 6: Racial Composition

	Livingston County	Oceola Township
Total:	193,866	14,623
Population of One Race:	183,379	13,888
White alone	178,408	13,586
Black or African American alone	1,144	45
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	620	54
Asian alone	1,658	103
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	114	8
Some Other Race alone	1,435	92
Population of two or more races:	10,487	735

Source: US Census, 2020

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Oceola Township's residents are generally well-educated, based on the American Community Survey Census statistics of 2019. The table below breaks down the percentage of educational attainment, starting with a high school or equivalent degree and capping at graduate or professional degree. At least 39% of residents with the Township have a Bachelor's degree. This is over the county (Livingston) average of 35.7%.

Table 7: Educational Attainment

Education Type (2019 ACS)	Percent of Population (25 years old or older)
High School or Equivalent Degree	24.1%
Some College, No Degree	22.9%
Associate's Degree	10.5%
Bachelor's Degree	27.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	11.4%

Source: US Census

The occupational distribution of the workforce within Oceola Township is outlined in the tables below. Management, business, science and arts occupations account for 44% of the Township.

Table 8: Employment by Occupation

Occupation	Worker Count	Percent
Total civilian employed population 16 years and over	7,282	
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	3,228	44%
Service occupations	1,090	34%
Sales and office occupations	1,677	23%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	607	8%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	680	9%

Source: US Census

The below table further details the type of industry Oceola Township residents are employed in, which has been provided by the 2019 ACS.

Table 9: Employment by Industry

Industry	Worker Count	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	7,282	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	26	0.4%
Construction	620	8.5%
Manufacturing	1,172	16.1%
Wholesale trade	270	3.7%
Retail trade	863	11.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	241	3.3%

Industry	Worker Count	Percent
Information	109	1.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	348	4.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	856	11.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1,695	23.3%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	577	7.9%
Other services, except public administration	274	3.8%
Public administration	231	3.2%

Source: US Census

INCOME

As might be expected based on the education and employment data cited above, households in Oceola Township generally enjoy a relatively high standard of living. The table below summarizes median household income data from the 2019 American Community Survey.

Table 10: Employment by Occupation

Median Income	Dollar Amount
Oceola Township Overall	\$95,778
Families	\$101,142
Married - Couple families	\$105,071
Nonfamily households	\$57,644
Livingston County	\$86,512
Michigan	\$59,584

Source: US Census

Oceola Township's median household income of \$95,778 in 2019 was higher than the Livingston County median, and more than \$30,000 higher than the statewide median income. Oceola's median income has also increased over the past decade. Because of the rapid growth of population and households during the past decade as mentioned above, it is not feasible to know whether existing households' incomes grew at the same rate of population, or whether the median was pulled up by an influx of higher-income households. However, the median income is still noticeably higher than the state average and as such, future services could be tailored to meet the potential higher disposable income of area residents.

Population Growth

Future population growth will be determined chiefly by four sets of variables:

Physical Parameters. Several physical variables will affect future population growth in Oceola Township, including the amount of vacant land available for residential development, land use restrictions placed on such land, the capacity of the soils to accommodate septic systems or the use of engineered septic systems, and the type of housing that is constructed in the future.

Regional Economic Factors. The economic health of the Southeast Michigan region, the price of oil and the impact from the COVID-19 Virus are the most significant external variables that will affect population growth. The COVID-19 virus has forced brick and mortar businesses to close, causing family members and workforces alike to reprioritize their spending habits. This has also caused a shift in the need for in-person service-oriented businesses compared to online shopping habits.

Characteristics of the Existing Population. Characteristics of the population, such as age structure, propensity to move, and propensity for families to have children will affect population growth in Oceola Township.

Preferences of Residents. Existing and prospective residents' preferences in terms of a living environment will have an impact on population growth. The type and affordability of housing, characteristics of the environment, and availability of public facilities and services affect people's desire to live in a community.

Each of these sets of variables is discussed in greater detail below:

PHYSICAL PARAMETERS

Vacant land on which new housing units can be constructed is a key variable that determines the absolute maximum population of the Township, along with the regulations placed on development of that land. The existing land use survey, presented in this Plan, revealed potentially developable land that existed in the Township. In addition, there were regions of land used for active agricultural purposes that would not be conducive to residential development. Some of the currently vacant land is in platted subdivision or site condominium lots, some is extra land on acreage lots, and some is in large agricultural or wooded parcels.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC FACTORS

The regional economy is largely beyond the control of the Township and its individual residents, but it has a tremendous impact on population growth. It was noted previously that most Township residents commute to job centers such as Lansing, Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Oakland County. Without the presence of these employment centers and the easy access of the Township to the interstate highways that serve them, it is unlikely that Oceola Township would have experienced such a rapid rate of growth over the past decades.

Studies have shown that cycles in the economy are one of the key determinants of population change in Michigan, because of the effect of the economy on migration patterns. A lackluster economy results in a reduction in the number of families that purchase new homes or relocate. Thus, the economic vitality of the auto industry, the state government, the University of Michigan, and other large regional employers has a direct impact on population growth in Oceola Township and other communities in the region. While 2020 saw the shuttering of businesses due to the COVID-19 virus and state closure mandates, the full extent of the impact from the virus and state action may not be known for some time.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

The earlier review of population data revealed that, even though Oceola Township has maintained a younger population even with an increase in aging populations, household size continues to decrease. As growth in housing units outpaces population growth, more land is being consumed by housing for the same number of residents, even before population growth is considered.

PREFERENCES OF RESIDENTS

Variables related to people's preferences in terms of housing and the environment in which they live will affect population growth. Residents have been drawn to Oceola Township by a variety of features, including the access to major highways and regional employment centers, the low-density character of the community, and the unspoiled natural environment.

The ability of the Township to maintain these qualities will affect growth in population. Unfortunately, as more people move into the Township to enjoy the rural character of the community, open space and farmland is developed to accommodate these new residents. A point could eventually be reached where almost no large areas of agriculture or open space exist, altering the perceived desirability of the environment and community in general.

This Master Plan provides higher density housing at Latson Road and M-59. However, much of the land planned for higher density has already been developed or has a development currently moving through the Planned Unit Development process.

Public facility improvements will also affect the desirability of the community. Research in other semi-rural communities in Michigan revealed that newcomers often are accustomed to the amenities of urban living, such as paved roads, water and sewer services, parks and playgrounds, garbage pick-up, and other services. Typically, the demand for these services increases as the proportion of new residents increases. The ability of the Township to meet these demands may affect the stability of the population, since residents who find their demands for public services unmet are more likely to move out of the community.

Housing Analysis

Introduction/Summary

The purpose of this market study is to determine the types of housing that are in demand for Oceola Township and the surrounding County in order to inform the ongoing Master Plan process. The demand and supply for housing within Livingston County is analyzed, and the differences between demand and supply are analyzed to establish conclusions about the type, tenure, and price of housing that will be needed in Oceola in the coming decades. These conclusions will then be used to determine the best course of action in each of the targeted areas.

TRADE AREA

Markets do not stop at municipal borders. When households seek housing in the Howell area, they do not look solely within Oceola Township, or any other specific community. Thus, the geographic extent of the housing market is more realistically the area where someone can live and comfortably commute without changing jobs. For ease of data collection and in the interest of drawing a clear boundary around the trade area, the whole of Livingston County is designated as the “Trade Area” for this study.

DEMAND

Demand is calculated by determining the number of households in the study area that are pre-disposed to own or rent, then calculating the affordable price of housing for households based on income. The first step is to take the population in the study area broken down into age cohorts¹ (available from the US Census Bureau), and then determine the number of households headed by a member of each age cohort using national headship rates.² Once the number of households in each age group is determined, they are further broken down into “owners” and “renters”, based once again on national patterns of housing tenure by age. This breakdown provides the total number of rental and homestead properties demanded in the study area.

SUPPLY

Supply is calculated by determining the number of housing units rented/for rent and owned/for sale in each of the price categories determined by the demand analysis. The analysis uses the overall number of units in the study area and their tenure³, as found in the US Census.

-
- 1 Age Cohorts: The number of people living in a geographic area that fall within a given age range. Data Source: US Census Bureau
 - 2 Headship Rates: The percentage of people in a given age cohort that are considered the heads of their households. Data Source: US Census Bureau
 - 3 Housing Tenure: Tenure is a description of whether housing is owned or rented. Data Source: US Census Bureau

SUPPLY-DEMAND “GAP”

Having determined the supply and demand in the study area, the two are compared in order to show whether there is a market “gap”⁴. First, the overall numbers of units supplied and demanded are analyzed, and then the number in each price point is compared (for both ownership and rental). The gap analysis points to the areas of the market that are saturated and the areas with latent demand.

What Influences Housing Demand?

A number of demographic and preference factors influence housing demand. Population growth is a key factor in driving demand, but the number of households being formed is a more direct determinant of housing demand.

Four key factors that influence the overall level of demand for housing are:

- **Longevity.** As life expectancy increases, people remain in their homes longer. This reduces the supply of housing units that are available to new households. In 1960, the average life expectancy was 69.8 years; today it is 78.5 years.
- **Single-Person Households.** The number of single-person households increased from 10% of all households in 1950 to 28% of all households today. This trend is linked to longevity, as the majority of single person households are older women who have outlived their partner. However, later marriage age and increased rates of divorce also accounts for some of this increase. Single person households are less likely to own their housing units than multi-person households.
- **Hidden Demand.** High unemployment rates and a shortage of available housing or unaffordable housing (either as a result of a high housing value to income ratio or a high cost of borrowing) can result in people continuing to live with parents or relatives, moving back in with parents or relatives, or sharing houses with others. With the advent of improved remote-work technology, some workers have chosen to work from home or only commute part-time. This trend has increased housing demand in rural and exurban communities like Ocala, where the appeal of large lots and rural character outweighs long commute times.
- **Migration.** Higher net rates of inward migration result in greater demand for housing. On the other hand, outward migration reduces demand for housing.

Note: Because of delays in the reporting of the 2020 Census, some data used in this analysis is from 2019 and may not reflect the most recent market trends. However, this is a long-term (20 year) analysis, so the impact on the conclusions should not be significant.

⁴ Market “Gap”: The difference between demand and supply for a given product in a given market area. A gap could indicate excess demand or excess supply.

What Influences Tenure Choice?

Projecting the overall volume of demand is only part of the story. To properly consider how future demand might be met requires analysis of how overall demand might translate into demand for owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing. A different range of factors influence tenure choice:

- **Affordability.** This refers to how affordable owner-occupation is, and it is a factor that has particularly significant implications for first-time buyers. There is strong evidence to suggest that a high price-to-income ratio creates barriers to home ownership, and that an economic slowdown reduces demand for new housing.
- **Mortgage Market.** Closely linked to housing affordability is the cost of borrowing and access to financing for owner occupation through the mortgage market. Without access to obtainable mortgages, owner-occupancy is not possible. When housing prices are growing strongly, lenders are more willing to lend – including offering higher loan-to-value ratios and reduced down payment requirements. During the housing bubble of the 2000s, these practices tilted to excess, and ultimately resulted in the economic crash of 2008 as households with untenable mortgages began defaulting in high numbers. Since then interest rates have remained low by historical standards, but as of the early 2020s, they are poised to rise.
- **Confidence.** When confidence is high and there is an expectation of rising incomes and housing equity growth, demand can remain high even when housing is unaffordable and the cost of borrowing is high. Under these conditions, unaffordable housing prices can result in reduced savings rates rather than reduced demand for owner occupation as households choose to funnel money into homeownership rather than saving. The relationship also works in reverse, and during times of economic uncertainty households are less likely to commit to homeownership.

What Influences Housing Type Choice?

Beyond tenure preference, there are also preference considerations in how people choose to live – for instance, large lot, small lot, attached, or multi-family housing. Several factors influence housing choice.

- **Age.** People have different preferences for housing throughout their lives. Young, single people tend to prefer smaller units in high densities, families prefer larger lots, and retirees congregate in areas where their needs can be met.
- **Household Size.** Household size makes a big difference in housing type choice. Larger households, especially families, choose large units, often on large lots. Single people tend to prefer smaller units. Household size has been steadily dropping nationally over the past few decades, but housing type supply has not followed this trend, leading to a demand for more, smaller units.
- **Neighborhood Preferences.** People have preferences for certain amenities and characteristics in their neighborhoods. Some prefer to be near retail, while others prefer more natural space. These preferences play out in housing type preference, as people pick housing types that fit their preferred neighborhood identity.

CURRENT STUDY AREA HOUSING DEMAND

The headship rate is the number of households in each age group divided by the population in that age group. By definition, a household resides in a dwelling unit under its control. Using the data in Table 17 we can calculate the propensity of the population in each age cohort to 1) form a household based on the headship rate, and 2) own or rent a dwelling unit. Notably, roommates or a romantic couple living together are considered “co-heads” of a household, and only one person is counted as the “head” for the purposes of the headship rate.

Headship rate data is provided by the National Association of Home Builders, based on their analysis of US Census estimates from the American Community Survey. National data is used for headship and homeownership, because it is more readily available, and more reliable, than Census estimates for Livingston County. The assumption, for the purposes of this analysis, is that Livingston County’s headship and homeownership rates are roughly similar to the nation at large.

Table 11: Homeownership and Headship Rates, 2019

	Proportion of Population (Livingston County)	Headship Rate (United States)	Homeownership Rate (United States)
20-29	11.1%	39.2%	37.3%
30-39	10.9%	54.3%	61.5%
40-49	13.3%	56.7%	70.3%
50-59	16.4%	58.5%	76.3%
60-69	13.5%	63.6%	78.7%
70-79	7.3%	64.4%	70.4%
80+	3.3%	54.1%	60.3%

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

ESTIMATED STUDY AREA HOUSING DEMAND

The table below shows the number of households headed by each age group, and then breaks down those households into owners and renters. The table shows that the **total housing demand** for Livingston County is **54,483 ownership units and 25,222 rental units**.

Note: The total number of households does not exactly match the Census estimate for total households in the County due to rounding of the headship rates.

Table 12: Estimated Housing Demand, 2020

Age Group	Population	Households	Homeowners	Renters
20-29	21,023	8,241	3,074	5,167
30-39	20,666	11,222	6,901	4,320
40-49	25,274	14,330	10,074	4,256
50-59	31,142	18,218	13,900	4,318
60-69	25,641	16,308	12,834	3,474
70-79	12,807	8,248	5,806	2,441
80+	5,803	3,139	1,893	1,246
Total	142,356	79,706	54,483	25,222

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

COHORT-COMPONENT ANALYSIS

In order to project the population in the future, McKenna used a Cohort-Component Population Projection. Cohort-Component Population Projections are developed using the following methodology:

The population is divided into ten-year age cohorts, using US Census data. At each ten-year interval, individual age cohorts are moved up the ladder. For instance, the group that was 30-40 years old in 2010 became the 40-50-year olds in 2020, minus those who die during that time frame based on the mortality rate for their age group. For the 81+ age cohort, the number not projected to die during the ten-year period in question was carried over to the next decade. In order to calculate the number of people aged 0-10, the population of women of childbearing age was calculated and a 10-year birthrate per thousand (from the Michigan Department of Community Health) applied to give the number of births, also taking into account an inward migration rate assumption that adds households to the population during each ten year period to account for people moving to Oceola Township.

Table 13: Population Projection

	2020	2030 (Projected)	2040 (Projected)
Oceola Township	14,623	16,689	17,630
Rest of Livingston County	179,243	196,527	210,054
Total Livingston County	193,866	211,781	227,755

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

The cohort-component analysis suggests that population increase will continue in both Oceola Township and the surrounding communities in Livingston County. This will lead to increased development pressure in Oceola, making the land use policies of this plan crucial in maintaining the Township's character and quality of life.

PROJECTED HOUSING DEMAND

Using the cohort-component analysis population projection described above, the number of housing units demanded has been projected out to 2030 and 2040.

Table 14: Estimated Housing Demand, 2030

Age Group	Population	Households	Homeowners	Renters
20-29	26,511	10,737	4,005	6,732
30-39	21,845	11,862	7,295	4,567
40-49	21,354	12,108	8,512	3,596
50-59	25,848	15,121	11,537	3,584
60-69	30,728	19,543	15,380	4,163
70-79	23,434	15,092	10,624	4,467
80+	13,072	7,216	4,351	2,865
Total	162,792	91,678	61,705	29,973

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

Table 15: Estimated Housing Demand, 2040

Age Group	Population	Households	Homeowners	Renters
20-29	22,295	9,030	3,368	5,662
30-39	27,548	14,959	9,200	5,759
40-49	22,573	12,799	8,998	3,801
50-59	21,839	12,776	9,748	3,028
60-69	25,504	16,221	12,766	3,455
70-79	28,083	18,085	12,732	5,353
80+	23,760	13,115	7,909	5,207
Total	171,602	96,984	64,719	32,265

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

The projection anticipates growth in the number of households in Livingston County between 2020 and 2030, with accompanying growth in demand for housing units. Much of the increased demand will come from owner-occupied units as Millennials (born approximately 1982-1995) and “Generation Z” (born approximately 1996-2008) age into higher headship and homeownership age ranges.

However, between 2030 and 2040, the model projects the housing demand growth will slow. The reasons are demographic – the Baby Boomer generation (born approximately 1945-1964) will age into lower headship and homeownership (in addition to the estimated number of deaths), while smaller generations such as Generation X (approximately 1965-1981) will age into prime headship and homeownership years. The Millennial generation is large nationally, but not as big in Livingston County due to the popularity of nearby communities outside the County (Lansing, Ann Arbor, Royal Oak, Detroit, etc.) for that generation. Combined, these demographic shifts will result in a loss of nearly 10,000 people from the 50-59 year age range, which are prime homeowning years.

Additionally, the yet-unnamed generation born after 2008 will be aging into headship and homeownership. This generation is small compared to previous generations, especially for the years 2008-2012 (the Great Recession). The relatively small number of births in those years will contribute to a drop of over 4,000 people from the 20-29 age group between 2030 and 2040, reducing demand for new housing units.

Table 16: Change in Housing Demand, 2019-2040

Year	Homeowners	Change from Previous 10 Years	Renters	Change from Previous 10 Years	Total Housing Units Demanded	Change from Previous 10 Years
2019	54,483	-	25,222	-	79,706	-
2030	61,705	+7,221	29,973	+4,751	91,678	+11,972
2040	64,719	+3,015	32,265	+2,292	96,984	+5,306

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

SUPPLY-DEMAND GAP

Overall, there are 76,321 housing units in Livingston County, according to Census estimates. The demand estimate shows a demand for over 79,000 housing units in the County. Within Oceola Township, there are 5,241 housing units, while the demand calculation illustrated in detail for Livingston County on previous pages generates a demand for 5,796 units when run for Oceola. **Therefore, additional housing is needed in Oceola and surrounding communities, even before population growth is taken into account.**

Table 17: Housing Supply-Demand Gap – Livingston County

Year	Estimated Housing Unit Demand	2019 Housing Units	New Housing Units Needed
2019	79,706	76,321	+3,385
2030	91,678	76,321	+15,357
2040	96,984	76,321	+20,663

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

Table 18: Housing Supply-Demand Gap – Oceola Township

Year	Estimated Housing Unit Demand	2019 Housing Units	New Housing Units Needed
2019	5,796	5,241	+555
2030	5,817	5,241	+576
2040	7,331	5,241	+2,090

Source: US Census, McKenna Calculation

Oceola Township shows a substantial bump in housing demand in the 2030s, even as County-wide demand slows. The reason for this is increasing population in 20-40 year old range under the Cohort-Component model. That increase will only come to fruition if Oceola is successful in keeping young people who grew up in the Township living in the community as they age into adulthood.

Summary of Residential Development Considerations

A number of factors are important when considering the Township's potential for future population and housing stock growth.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Population Analysis revealed that most of Oceola Township's labor force works outside of the community, with more than half commuting outside of Livingston County. Most commercial services are also located outside of the Township. Additionally, virtually no transit exists in the area. As a result, Oceola Township is a highly automobile-oriented community. Consequently, development of the residential sector should be closely tied to the capacity and development of the road system. Under ideal circumstances, residential areas should be in proximity to major roads with easy connections to freeways or State highways to serve commuters. Because accessing jobs and services requires automobiles, continued residential growth will also contribute to increased congestion on major roads.

In recent years, as development pressure has increased in the Township, road infrastructure has not been upgraded to meet the growing traffic demand. The problem is particularly acute on M-59, but also exists along other corridors. The transportation upgrade recommendations in this plan should be taken in conjunction with the land use recommendations, and major developments should not be approved if they cannot be supported by the necessary transportation infrastructure.

CAPACITY OF THE SOILS TO SUPPORT SEPTIC SYSTEMS

The appropriate density of development is generally closely related to sewage disposal and water quality concerns. Public sanitary sewers serve less than a quarter of the Township, and conventional individual on-site septic systems require a larger parcel of land for an adequate disposal field, compared to a subdivision lot served by sewers. The type of soil and subsoil affects the amount of area needed and the possibility of polluting nearby surface water or wells. According to the Livingston County Soil Survey, soils over much of the Township have few limitations regarding use of septic systems, though areas near lakes and streams tend to have high seasonal water tables and easily permeable soils that limit septic system use.

Private engineered septic systems (such as mound systems), however, located on a parcel and designed to serve one residence are gaining acceptance at the State and County level. These engineered individual on-site septic systems permit development on parcels which previously would not have been buildable due to unsuitable soil conditions. Engineered septic systems are still relatively new, so their long-term reliability is unclear. Nonetheless, the use of engineered septic systems means that soil suitability should be less of a factor in determining the potential future density of development in the Township than in the past.

Community septic or sewage disposal systems (privately owned public sewerage systems) are another option to serve potential residential development. These systems are privately owned and designed to serve the residents of a subdivision or other limited grouping of parcels, outside of the reach of municipal systems. These systems may also permit the development of previously undevelopable land, as the treatment facility can be in the most appropriate location on the parcel or grouping of parcels. Areas of the Township previously restricted to very low-density development because of technical limitations of wastewater systems are now more easily developable.

WATER QUALITY

Another consideration related to soils and water quality is the presence of groundwater recharge areas and wetlands. Development that increases stormwater runoff – decreasing the recharge rate of underground aquifers – or that increases the risk of groundwater contamination can damage existing residents’ wells. In the interest of protecting the supply of high-quality groundwater for all residents, development should be restricted in sensitive groundwater recharge and wetlands areas.

EFFICIENCY OF DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The efficiency of development patterns has two facets:

1. Public services can be delivered much more efficiently and cost effectively where development is compact. Large lot development on conventional lots is the most costly type of development to provide with public services, such as public sewer and water service, roads, and fire coverage, as more infrastructure must be provided for each housing unit.
2. Large lot development takes land out of the open space and agricultural base at a faster rate than any other type of development. On a typical large single family lot only a portion of the lot is actually put to use. From one perspective, this is an inefficient way to house a given population. Individual homeowners may choose to preserve most of their own land in its natural condition, but contiguous areas of open space large enough to maintain agriculture or high-quality habitat are difficult to preserve.

In recognition of the above concerns, the Township has encouraged larger housing developments to use cluster housing or residential planned unit developments (RPUD) in order to reduce development impacts. These strategies allow a developer to preserve a portion of the site as open space and arrange homes more compactly on the remaining land, rather than requiring strict minimums on individual lots.

NATURAL FEATURES

Just as natural features like wetlands can limit the development potential of a site, development can also have negative consequences on these features.

- Development that replaces fields, forests, and other open space with less permeable surface, like buildings, driveways, and manicured lawns, can increase runoff after heavy rainfall or snow melt, contributing to flooding of streams and lakes and degradation of surface water quality.
- Development that fragments farmland can limit the productivity of the remaining fields, relative to large areas of contiguous farmland. By increasing the need to transport equipment between fields while also adding to the congestion on adjacent roadways, fragmenting farmland can remove fields from productive use even without developing them.
- Similarly, development that fragments wooded areas and other open spaces can degrade the remaining habitat, reducing the Township’s ability to host diverse wildlife and also increasing the chance of wildlife conflicts with people – such as automobile crashes involving deer.

Aside from the state and federal regulatory protection afforded to certain natural features, some communities make special efforts to prevent unusual or valuable natural features from being developed, recognizing that they serve both an aesthetic and functional purpose. For example, floodplains, wetlands, and woodlands are often reserved for recreational amenities and common open space rather than for residential development. Efforts to preserve and emphasize existing natural features, when made a goal of the Master Plan and subsequent ordinances, can help maintain the character of the Township in the face of continued development.

Access is another important consideration with respect to natural features. Conventional single family development segments resources, such as lakefront and open space, into individual lots, both minimizing access to the broader public and limiting the utility to the individual owner. Other types of development, such as open space or cluster development, can facilitate protection of and access to natural resources. These forms of development can also provide areas of open space sufficient to support larger-scale recreation than a private lawn, such as playgrounds, playing fields, or nature trails.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Experience has shown that as a rural or semi-rural community develops, demand for public services and facilities increases. This demand is created in part because newcomers from more urban areas are simply used to a more complete range of public services. The demand for public services is sometimes also created out of a need to address requirements imposed by state or federal law, such as demands on the local school system. Finally, public service needs change as the community makes the transition from a self-reliant rural community to a more suburban community. Even in the case where services are provided to new residents privately – such as household trash pickups or private sewage treatment – the additional service activity will have an impact on the character of the Township.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

There are regional development pressures that will affect development in Oceola Township. Economic growth has drawn new households into the region and fostered new housing construction. Oceola is not only feeling the pressure of outward growth from the Detroit suburbs, but from the Lansing and Flint areas as well. If these regional patterns continue, the strong development pressure in Oceola Township, and in other communities located near the leading edge of development, should not be expected to decrease in the near future.

CONCLUSIONS

In the last 30 years, Oceola has experienced a fast pace of residential development. This development has been split between large-lot single family homes on individual land divisions and large-scale single-family condominiums, both attached and detached. This rate of development has converted large areas of the Township from rural farmland and open space to residential use, though the distance between developments allows Oceola to retain some of its rural feel.

Existing trends accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that the Township could potentially see much more development pressure in coming years. Oceola will have to carefully manage growth, restricting it to areas where it can be supported by infrastructure, and protecting as much natural and rural landscape as possible.

Existing Land Uses

General Overview

The general pattern of land use in Oceola Township is molded by several key parameters, including the large percentage of agricultural and vacant land, the proximity to major transportation corridors such as M-59, I-96 and US-23, the patterns of land division, the proximity to the City of Howell and the commercial corridors in Howell Township, Genoa Township and Hartland Township, and the location of certain natural features, such as lakes, wetlands, woodlands, rolling terrain, soils, and drainage courses.

From the time of its organization as a Township, agriculture has been the predominant land use in Oceola Township. However, because of the rural residential growth, agriculture is gradually being replaced as the dominant land use in the Township. Currently, the greatest percentage of land area is classified as agricultural/large lot residential. Single family residential is the second largest land use within the Township.

The most intensive growth, consisting of residential subdivisions and site condominiums, has been concentrated generally in the southwest corner of the Township. Aside from this development, the Township has the character of a rural agricultural community that is slowly being converted into a semi-rural residential community.

DEVELOPMENT IN PROXIMITY TO OTHER URBAN CENTERS

Development of the southwestern part of the Township has been influenced by proximity to the City of Howell and the availability of water and sewer utilities. Residential growth in this part of the Township has been intensive with easy access to public utilities and to the amenities of Howell.

Residents of the subdivisions in the southwestern part of the Township have a more suburban lifestyle with the convenience of being located a short distance from shopping and services and other desired amenities. Similarly, residents in this area benefit from proximity to the employment opportunities and Howell schools.

The balance of Oceola Township has maintained a rural country lifestyle with scenic vistas, larger parcels over an acre in size and very few commercial establishments nearby. As the City of Howell, Howell Township, Hartland Township and Genoa Township continue to develop their respective portions of the Grand River and M-59 commercial corridors, Oceola residents are able to travel a short distance to a plethora of commercial businesses, retail, service and office establishments.

TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS & NETWORKS

The land use pattern is also shaped by the location of major transportation corridors and connecting networks. Most commercial and industrial growth in the Township has occurred along the M-59 corridor. Accessibility to the regional transportation network of I-96, M-59 and US-23 has and will continue to be an important development consideration, as most residents of Oceola Township leave the Township for employment, shopping, medical services, restaurants and other needs.

Transportation corridors and networks have also affected the scattered single-family development patterns that have been prevalent in recent years, not only within the Township but throughout the region. Most of the subdivision-style developments have occurred along improved roadways, such as M-59, Golf Club Road, Eager Road and Latson Road. The remainder of the Township has large, single family lots of over an acre scattered along the secondary public roads and private roads that contain between three and a dozen or so homes.

LAND DIVISION PATTERNS

Lot splits have had a greater impact on the character of development than any other factor. As a consequence, three distinct single-family development patterns/lifestyles have become predominant in the Township:

- Single-family farm households, which are gradually being replaced by other types of development.
- Conventional single-family subdivision-style development, which has occurred on a limited scale, primarily in the southern part of the Township.
- Large-lot single-family parcels which are most often split off larger agricultural parcels.

Land Use Categories

1. **Agricultural/Large Lot Residential.** Agricultural lands are parcels of land actively used for commercial agricultural purposes. Large lot (>1 acre) residential parcels are also included in this category. In recent years, the pace of residential development has heightened awareness of the need to maintain an appropriate balance between further development and retaining the rural/agricultural character of the Township.
2. **Single Family Residential.** Single Family Residential land uses are improved single land parcels or portions of parcels having one family detached dwelling units. The residential land use category includes acreage parcels and subdivision - style lots.
3. **Multiple Family Residential.** Multiple Family Residential land uses are improved land parcels occupied in whole or in part by structures containing dwelling units for two (2) or more households including duplexes, flats, apartments, row houses, terrace dwellings and nursing homes but excluding commercial dwellings such as hotels, motels and campgrounds. These more intensive residential uses are located in the southern portion of the Township.
4. **Manufactured Housing.** The Manufactured Housing Future Land Use category is defined as land developed with two (2) or more manufactured housing units. There is one Mobile Home Park in the southwestern corner of the Township.
5. **Commercial.** Commercial land uses are improved parcels where products, goods or services are sold at retail, or are used for professional services, such as medical and dental centers, financial institutions, professional offices and business offices. These uses are scattered with no readily discernable patterns through the Township with concentrations along M-59 and Grand River Avenue.
6. **Industrial.** Industrial land uses are parcels devoted to the assembling, fabricating, manufacturing, packaging, warehousing or treatment of products, wholesaling, storage and/or servicing of heavy equipment. There are only three industrial land uses within the Township, all in the general M-59 corridor area. None of these areas are serviced by public water or sanitary sewer.
7. **Recreational.** “Recreational” is defined as land areas used for outdoor leisure activities, including golf courses, parks, and private recreation facilities.

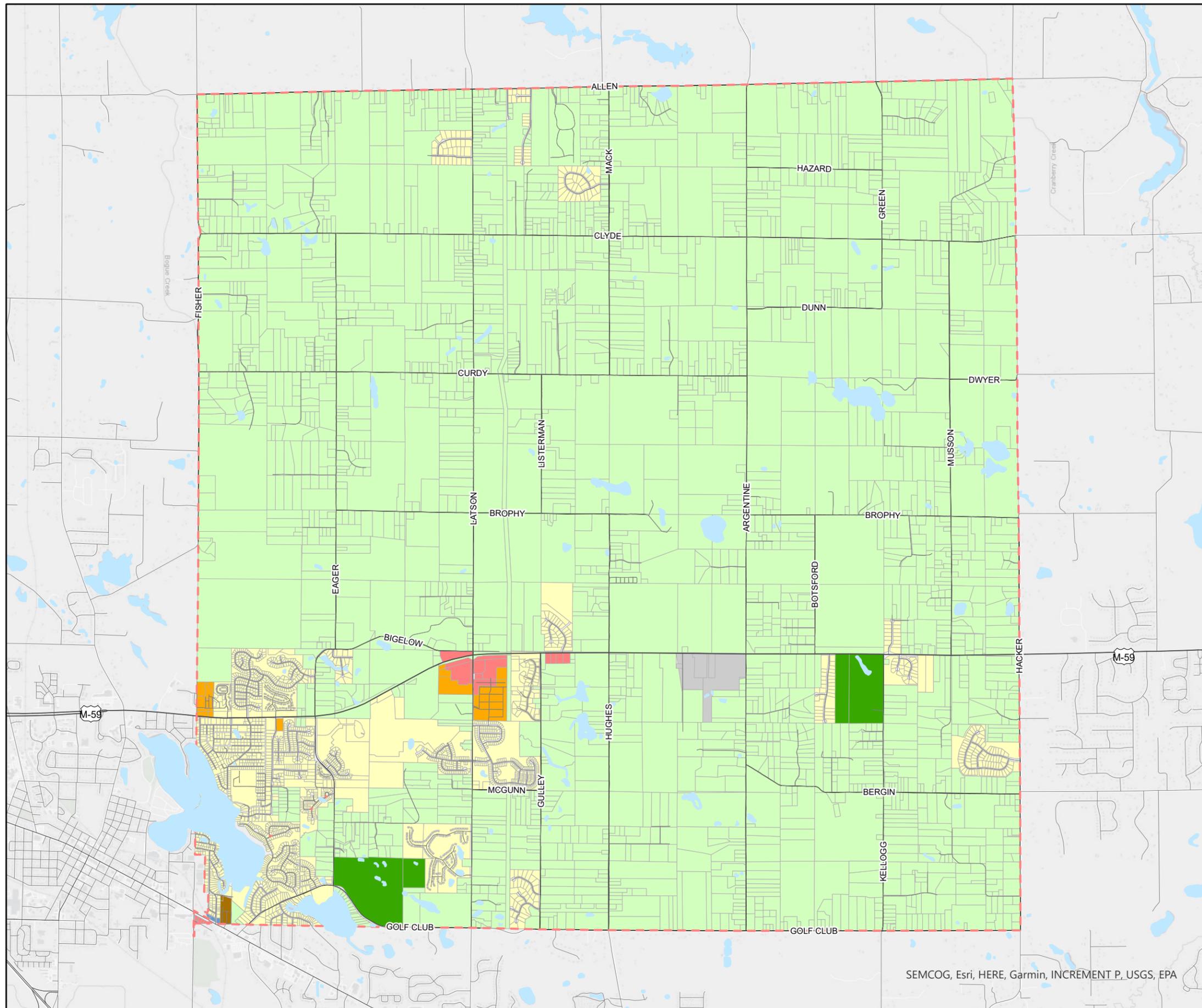
Existing Land Use

Oceola Township, Livingston County, MI

December 17, 2021

LEGEND

-  Agricultural/Large Lot Residential
-  Residential - Single Family
-  Residential - Multiple Family
-  Manufactured Housing
-  Commercial
-  Recreational
-  Industrial
-  Office



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola Township, 2021. McKenna 2021.

SEMCOG, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA



Land Use Issues

This analysis has uncovered several land use issues which affect the quality of life, function and attractiveness of the community.

Random Single Family Residential Growth and Land Use. While much of the residential development in recent years has been in subdivision-type developments in the southern portion of the Township, a significant amount of new, high quality residential development is occurring on large acreage parcels scattered throughout the Township rather than within planned subdivisions. This pattern of growth allows residents to experience a comfortable rural lifestyle, unencumbered by the urban characteristics of a subdivision. However, over the long term, this pattern of residential land use could lead to large scale loss of agricultural land, inefficient use of land located to the rear of the frontage parcels, and difficulty in providing public services in a cost-effective manner.

Protection of Natural Features and the Rural Character. People move to Oceola Township because of its natural features and rural character. As more and more people move into the Township, though, the natural features are altered, and rural character is slowly diminished. The Township currently has general zoning ordinance verbiage indicating the desire to protect natural resources. The challenge is to enforce general guidelines in order to achieve proper balance between new development and preservation of the existing rural character. Oceola Township has a considerable amount of open land worthy of being preserved. The Township is fortunate to have several large parcels of land preserved by the Livingston Land Conservancy, including the Clare and Harold Salmon property (40 acres on M-59) and another parcel on Hughes Road.

Protection of Agricultural Lands. One important decision that a rural community must make is whether to pursue the preservation of rural character and open space, or the preservation of agriculture. The retention of rural character, if it involves non-farm residential development and fragmentation of agricultural lands, may not preserve agriculture. Rural open space does, however, provide a good buffer between areas of good agriculture and more developed areas.

If agricultural preservation is the goal, other land uses (residential or otherwise) should not be allowed to infiltrate large contiguous blocks of agricultural land. The fragmented development makes the land less attractive to future agriculture, particularly as farms consolidate. Fragmented lots of farmland are more difficult to farm, because of loss of efficiency and other concerns, such as complaints from residential neighbors regarding noise, dust and odors.

Transportation Relationships and Land Use. Most Township residents work and shop in other communities. As population growth continues, there will be an increase in the demand for services. Consequently, it is essential that there be a balanced relationship between the transportation system and overall land use pattern. Special attention must be focused on linkages to the broader regional network. Most of the roads within the Township are gravel roads, and even the paved roads lack turn lanes and passing lanes. Congestion could occur if residential development is permitted without adequate collector roads to carry traffic to and from the major road corridors into Howell and to the I-96 and US-23 highways.

Relationship to Howell and Adjacent Townships. In some respects, the Township, the City of Howell, Howell Township on the western edge, Genoa Township to the south and Hartland Township to the east have formed a symbiotic relationship. For example:

- With the limited amount of commercial development in Oceola, Township residents shop in the City, Genoa Township and, to a lesser extent, in Hartland Township. Consequently, City retailers and those in the two townships have continued to expand to accommodate the growing market.

- The development and economic well-being of Oceola Township, the City of Howell and the surrounding townships depend, in part, on important policy decisions that lie ahead related to the mutually beneficial relationships.

Transportation

Overview

The road system is of vital importance for the overall well-being of Oceola Township and its residents. At its most basic level, the road system provides the means of moving people and goods within and through the Township. Automobile transportation is the predominant mode of transportation for Oceola's residents. The road system serves many additional functions as well.

Roads and road rights-of-way provide locations for public utilities, such as gas, electric, telephone lines and water and sewer lines. Roads provide the means by which emergency and public services are delivered to residents. Roads provide access to parcels of land, thereby enabling development and perhaps reducing the possibility of preserving large, undisturbed tracts of open lands. Finally, the road system establishes the basic form of the Township.

Because of the many functions of the road system, transportation has a significant impact on the economy, environmental quality, energy consumption, land development, and the general character of the Township. Accordingly, it is prudent to understand the transportation system and identify its deficiencies and to prepare alternatives to address those deficiencies.

Existing Circulation Network

The roads in Oceola Township are under the jurisdiction of two agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Livingston County Road Commission (LCRC). MDOT has jurisdiction over M-59, also known as Highland Road, and Grand River Avenue, both of which are part of the state trunk-line system running through the Township. All other public roads are under the jurisdiction of the Livingston County Road Commission.

The existing public road system is an incomplete grid of major roads that generally are located on section and half section lines. The most significant exceptions are M-59, which angles southwest toward the City of Howell between Latson and Eager Roads, and Golf Club Road, wrapping around Earl Lake in the southwest corner of the Township.

M-59 carries the greatest number of cars through the center of the Township to the east to the US-23 expressway and to the west eventually to I-96 through the City of Howell. Golf Club Drive carries traffic west to Grand River Avenue and eventually to I-96. Clyde Road carries traffic east to US-23. Latson Road and Argentine Road are the major north/south routes, with Latson connecting to I-96 at an interchange built in the late 2010s.

Overall, the existing road system has become insufficient in many places given the Township's rapid growth. Specifically, M-59 and Latson Road – including the intersection between those two roads (and Bigelow Road) – have rated poorly in recent traffic studies, and are poised for more congestion as ongoing housing developments come on line.

The majority of the roads are gravel surfaced with a few exceptions. M-59, Grand River and Latson Roads are paved throughout the Township. Other paved major road segments are illustrated on the map on the next page. Additionally, there are paved subdivision roads scattered throughout the Township. Gravel roads provide far less efficient travel than paved roads, and the lack of paved roads is one factor contributing to congestion on the Township's major corridors.

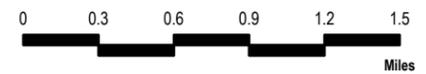
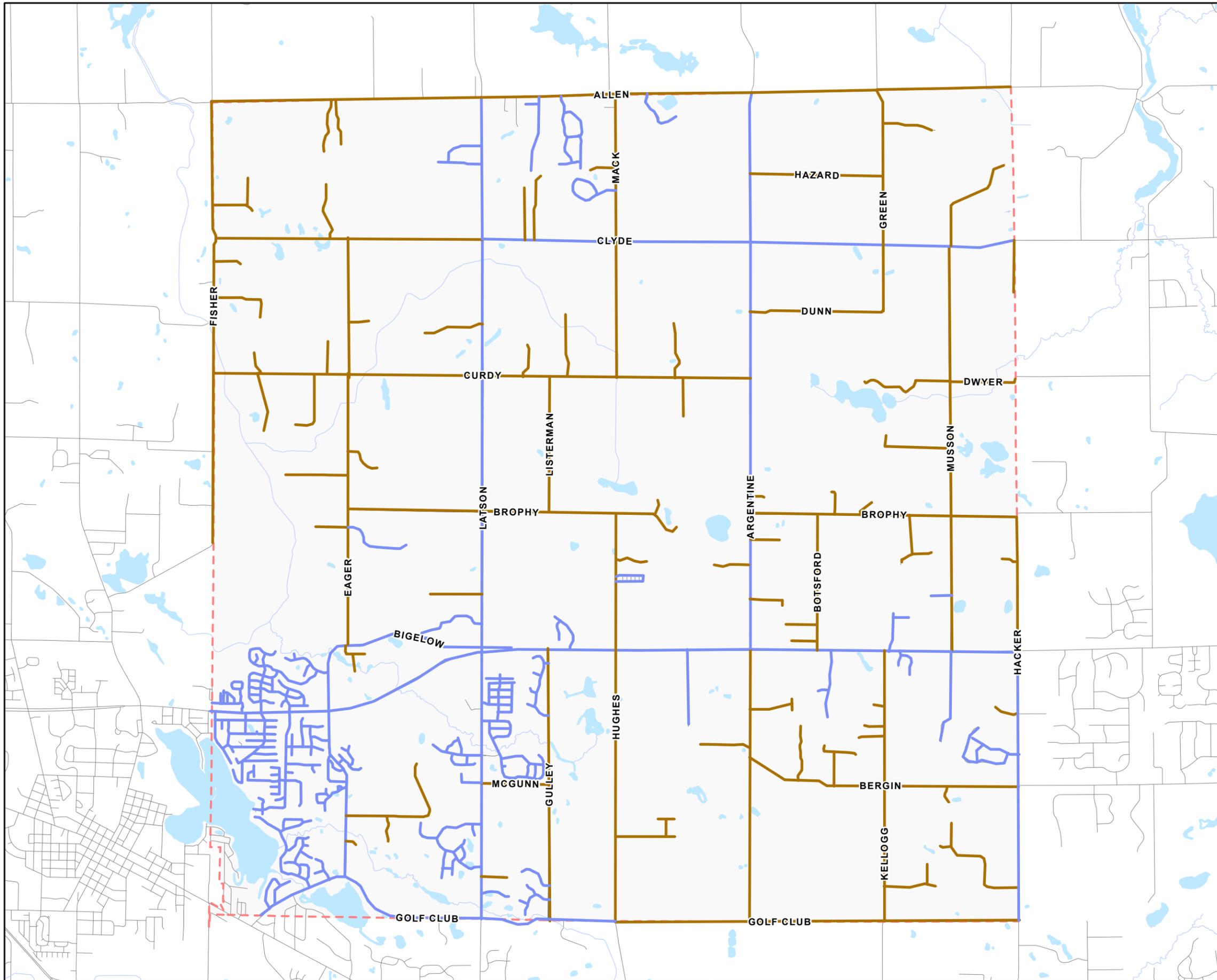
MAP 4

Road Pavement Status

Oceola Township, Livingston County, Michigan

LEGEND

-  Township Boundary
-  Roadways
-  Paved Road
-  Unpaved Road



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola Township 2020. McKenna, 2021.

Traffic Volume

Traffic volume data from SEMCOG is shown in the following chart.

Table 19: Traffic Volume Changes (2005-2021)

Road	Traffic Volume (Average)		Change
	2005	2021	2005-2021
Highland Road / M-59			
West of Oak Crest	19,700	19,500	-200
Oak Crest to Latson	19,000	19,900	+900
Latson to Hacker	17,100	21,400	+4,300
Golf Club Road			
West of Eager Road	6,100	5,000	-1,100
Eager to Latson	6,600	7,100	+500
Latson to Hughes	4,900	3,700	-1,200
Clyde Road			
Eager to Latson	500	500	+0
Latson to Argentine	900	3,200	+2,300
Latson Road			
Golf Club to M-59	13,700	11,600	-2,100
M-59 to Brophy	8,000	10,000	+2,000
Brophy to Clyde	8,000	11,000	+3,000
Eager Road			
Golf Club to M-59	6,500	No Count Taken	6,500

Source: SEMCOG

A review of the traffic volume data generates the following observations:

- The primary connectors through Oceola Township are M-59 and Latson Road. M-59 serves as a connection to US-23 to the east, Grand River Avenue to the west and, further west, I-96. Latson Road offers a direct connection to I-96. Considering the regional importance of these two roadways, M-59 and Latson Road will continue to carry heavy traffic. Traffic count data indicates that traffic has decreased on the two corridors west and south of their intersection, while increasing to the east and north. This is not necessarily consistent with the lived experience of Oceola residents, who have seen increases on all parts of the corridors. The SEMCOG data is also not consistent with recent traffic studies conducted by private engineers in support of

development applications, which suggested that the M-59/Latson interchange performs at Levels of Service E and F at peak periods and is in urgent need of upgrades and redesign.

- There are few alternate route options for automobile movement to US-23, I-96 or Grand River Avenue in the Township. Clyde Road provides access to US-23 to the east, but provides only indirect access to major roadways or population centers to the west. Improving these roads to divert some east-west traffic from M-59, may be necessary as population grows. Hughes and Hacker Roads provide access to Grand River Avenue to the south, and might prove viable alternate routes to Latson Road, but would require significant road improvements.
- Much of the traffic using the major roads within Oceola originates outside of the Township. High traffic volumes on the northern portions of Latson and Argentine Roads are produced by through travelers from other communities seeking access to M-59 and Grand River Avenue, and Oceola has little ability to affect this behavior.
- Eager and Bigelow Roads may become useful alternatives to M-59 and Latson Roads, for local residents. But design upgrades are required. The intersection of M-59 and Eager Road sports a recently-installed traffic light, and Eager also has a new bridge over Bogue Creek. There is some indication (including the SEMCOG traffic counts) that these upgrades have already reduced traffic on Latson. But Eager is not paved north of Bigelow – which is an impediment to new development locating on the Eager corridor instead of the overburdened Latson corridor. Meanwhile, Bigelow Road is not an efficient alternative because of the dangerous and difficult movements required to turn onto Latson at Bigelow’s eastern end. Installing a roundabout at M-59/Latson (that incorporates Bigelow) could make Bigelow a more serious alternative (though there are downsides to the roundabout option as well). MDOT has proposed that improvement, but has not yet begun construction, as of the drafting of this plan.

Levels of Service

Transportation engineers use the following “Levels of Service” ratings as a shorthand for describing traffic flow conditions at peak usage:

A: Traffic flows at or above the posted speed limit and motorists have complete mobility between lanes.

B: Traffic flows at or above the posted speed limit, but motorists have some restricted mobility between lanes.

C: Traffic flows at the posted speed limit, but changing lanes is noticeable restricted and requires more driver awareness.

D: Traffic flows, but below posted speed limits. Changing lanes is difficult and sometimes impossible.

E: Traffic moves irregularly, frequently stopping and rarely reaching the posted speed limit. Changing lanes disrupts the traffic flow by requiring traffic to slow or stop to accommodate the incoming merge.

F: Traffic moves in stops and starts, with motorists forced to wait until the car in front of them moves before proceeding forward. Lane changes require cooperation from the traffic already in the desired lane.

Road Classifications

The purpose served by each road or highway in the circulation system is often described through a road classification system. Road classifications may identify the type and volume of traffic that are appropriate for each segment of the road network (functional classification) or based on the entity that owns and/or maintains the road (jurisdictional classification). The classification establishes expectations among residents, Township officials, and transportation engineers concerning the characteristics of each road.

For the purposes of transportation planning, the Michigan's "Act 51" road funding system includes the following road categories, shown on the map on the following page.

Unlimited Access US and State Highway. These are regional thoroughfares that carry traffic long distances, in addition to local traffic. M-59 fits under this category. The "Unlimited" designation differentiates roads that allow local and private access, such as M-59, from roads that do not allow local or private access, such as I-96.

Principal Arterials. Principal arterial roads generally carry long distance, through-travel movements. They serve to carry traffic to the major centers of activity such as large shopping centers and are the highest traffic volume corridors. Oceola Township has several Principal Arterials – Latson Road, Clyde Road, Argentine road (north of M-59), and Hacker Road (south of M-59).

Minor Arterials. Minor arterial roads interconnect with the principal arterial system and provide trips of moderate length with a lower level of traffic volume. Minor arterial roads place more emphasis on access to lesser traffic generators than do principal arterials. Most public thoroughfares in Oceola Township are Minor Arterials.

Local Roads. Local roads primarily provide direct access to abutting properties and to collector and arterial streets. Movement of through traffic on local roads is usually discouraged. All of Oceola's public roads that do not fall into another category are local roads.

There is one remaining type of roadway indicated on the Road Classifications and Traffic Counts map that is not part of the National Road Classification system. That is the private roads that are typically intended to serve a small number of residential homes or are part of condominium developments. Most of Oceola's neighborhoods contain private roads.

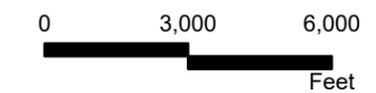
Act 51 Road Classification

Oceola Township, Livingston County, MI

December 17, 2021

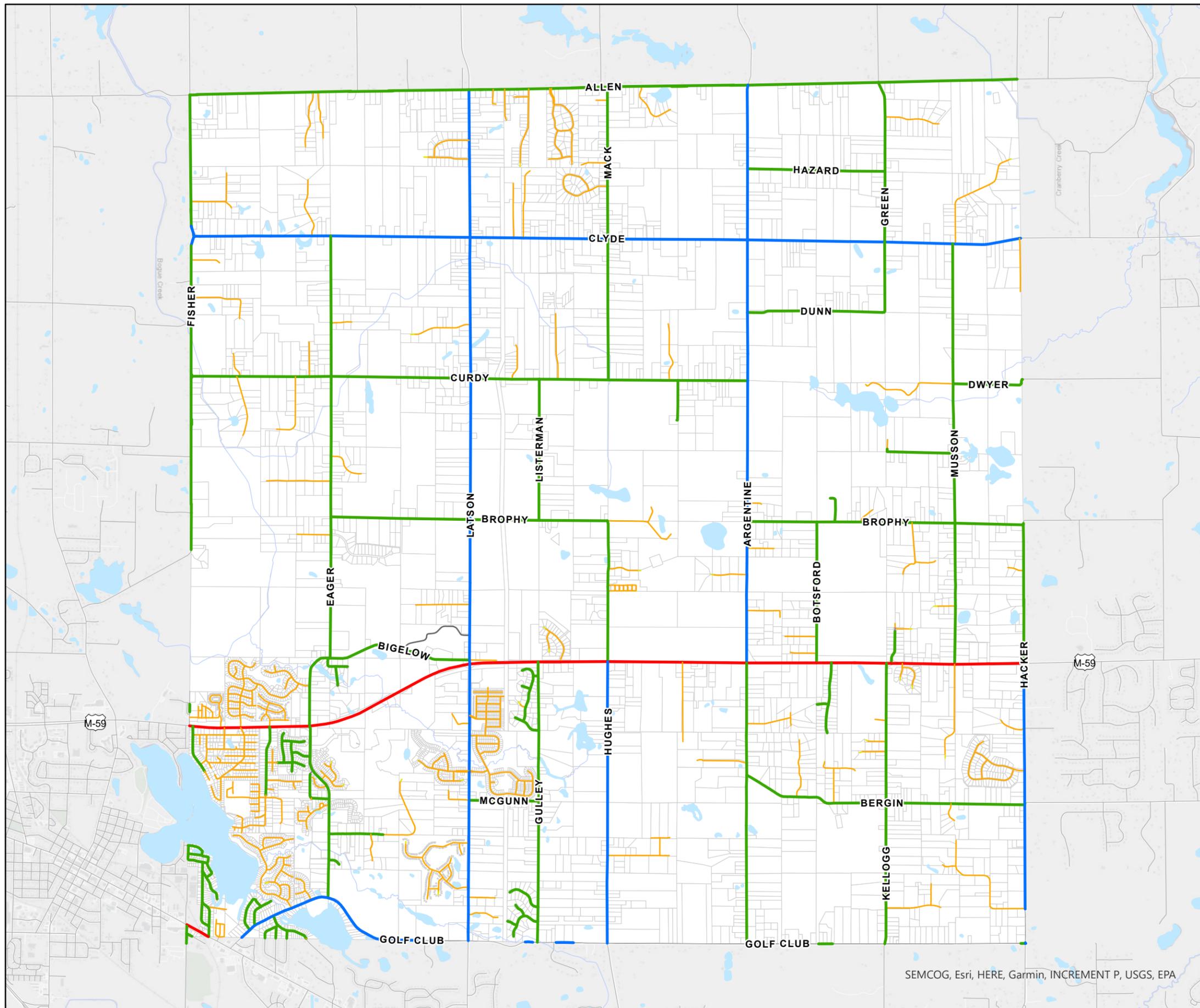
LEGEND

-  A21 - Unlimited Access US Highways & State Highways
-  A31 - Principal Arterial Roads
-  A32 - Minor Arterial Roads
-  A33 - Residential Court or Cul-de-sac
-  A41 - General Non-Certified
-  A43 - Non-Certified Residential Court or Cul-de-sac
-  A62 - Unnamed
-  Bodies of Water



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola Township 2020. McKenna 2020.

SEMCOG, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA



Circulation System Deficiencies

The capacity of roads in Oceola Township has become inadequate to handle the existing volumes of traffic, especially in the more heavily developed parts of the Township. Continued population increase and development pressure will make the situation worse unless action is taken. Unfortunately, as a Township, Oceola is not positioned to act alone, and will need to partner with MDOT and the Livingston County Road Commission to make the needed upgrades.

Further, it is the intent of this plan that the Township stick closely to the envisioned density on the Future Land Use map, and refrain from approving rezoning and Planned Unit Developments that would create further congestion on the road network, at least until suitable upgrades are made.

KEY TOWNSHIP PRIORITIES

As shown on the map on the following page, the Township has the following major priorities regarding the road network:

- **M-59 Expansion and Boulevard.** The Township's preferred design for M-59 is a four-lane divided boulevard, with "Michigan" style left turns, all the way across the Township. This is consistent with the design of M-59 for much of its length between Pontiac and Howell. Population growth dictates that the time has come for the corridor to be upgraded through Oceola Township.
- **Latson Road Capacity Improvements.** Latson Road is also congested, especially south of M-59. The opening of the Latson Road exit from I-96 increased traffic on the corridor, and new development has increased turning movements. Improvements could include a continuous center turn lane or a traffic light in the area of the Township Hall. A full widening to four or five lanes is not necessarily envisioned unless it becomes necessary due to traffic volumes.
- **M-59/Latson/Bigelow Roundabout.** MDOT has proposed a roundabout at the M-59/Latson/Bigelow intersection. Traffic studies suggest that this design would decrease congestion and improved efficiency, especially for turning movements. But it would also create continuously moving traffic on both corridors, making turning out of neighborhoods, businesses, and housing developments more difficult. It would also create a dangerous situation for pedestrians crossing any of the corridors, which must be remedied through other improvements.
- **Eager Road Paving.** One of the land use priorities of this updated Master Plan is the allocation of additional housing density to the Eager Road corridor north of Brophy, to offset reductions in planned density along the M-59 and Latson corridors. Eager Road, which has recently been upgraded with a traffic light on M-59 and a new bridge over Bogue Creek, could serve as an alternative to Latson Road and ease congestion on that corridor. Eager connects to Golf Club Road, which connects to Grand River Avenue, allowing access to Downtown Howell and I-96 without using the congested M-59/Latson/Bigelow intersection. However, Eager Road is not paved north of Bigelow Road, and therefore cannot sustain the planned housing density. Paving Eager Road north to Clyde Road should be a priority of the County Road Commission.
- **Fisher Road Paving.** For similar reasons to Eager Road, Fisher Road should also be a priority for paving, at least south of Curdy Road.
- **Brophy Road Extension.** Another way to ease the pressure on the M-59 and Latson corridors, and open up the Eager Road corridor for development, is to extend Brophy Road from Eager Road to Fisher Road. This paved 1-mile extension would provide an east-west alternative to M-59. It would

require a bridge over Bogue Creek, but not the demolition of any homes. East of Eager, Brophy may or may not need to be paved, depending on future development patterns.

- **M-59/Argentine Road Improvements.** The Future Land Use Map envisions the expansion of the business and industry district near M-59 and Argentine. That expansion could require improvements to the intersection, including a traffic light and/or paving a short stretch of Argentine Road south of M-59.

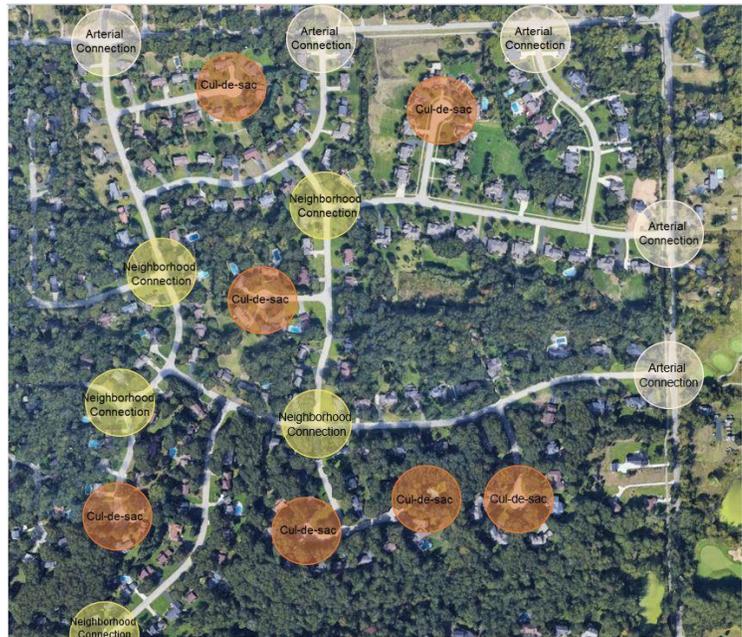
NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

One of the factors leading to the congestion problem on the Township's major corridors is the lack of connections between newly built neighborhoods. While cul-de-sacs are highly valued by developers and homebuyers, disconnected neighborhoods lead to inefficient travel patterns, and frustrated residents sitting in traffic just to visit friends who may only live a few hundred yards away. Therefore, the Township must strike a balance between the desire for privacy and seclusion and the need for a connected road system.

To that end, this plan includes several designated Priority Neighborhood Connections, to be implemented as development occurs. Ideally, Priority Neighborhood Connections will be roadways, but, if roadways are not possible, then the Connections should be implemented as non-motorized pathways. The roadways or pathways should not be gated, should have a clear long-term maintenance plan, and should allow the general public to traverse the paths for transportation, exercise and recreation.

Neighborhood Connections are shown on the plans in this document as straight lines, but that is not the intention. The intention is to make the connections shown through stub streets integrated naturally into the street pattern of a newly designed neighborhood.

The diagram to the right shows the ideal design for new single-family neighborhoods in Ocoola, featuring a density that fits Ocoola's character, the retention of natural features, a curving street pattern for privacy, and connections to adjacent neighborhoods for efficiency.



The Priority Neighborhood Connections, which are shown on both the Road Improvements Map and the Non-Motorized Transportation Map, are as follows:

- **Eager Corridor.** New developments along Eager Road north of Bigelow should be designed to connect together, with a string of connections forming a continuous linkage from Bigelow to Brophy, from Eager to Fisher, and from Eager to Latson. Straight lines and new thoroughfares are not envisioned (except for the planned Brophy Road extension), but connected neighborhood street patterns (or at least trails) should achieve the desired network.
- **M-59 East of Argentine.** New neighborhoods along M-59 in the eastern part of the Township should connect to each other. This will reduce the burden on M-59, at least from local traffic.

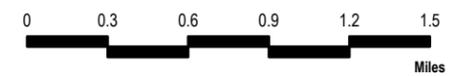
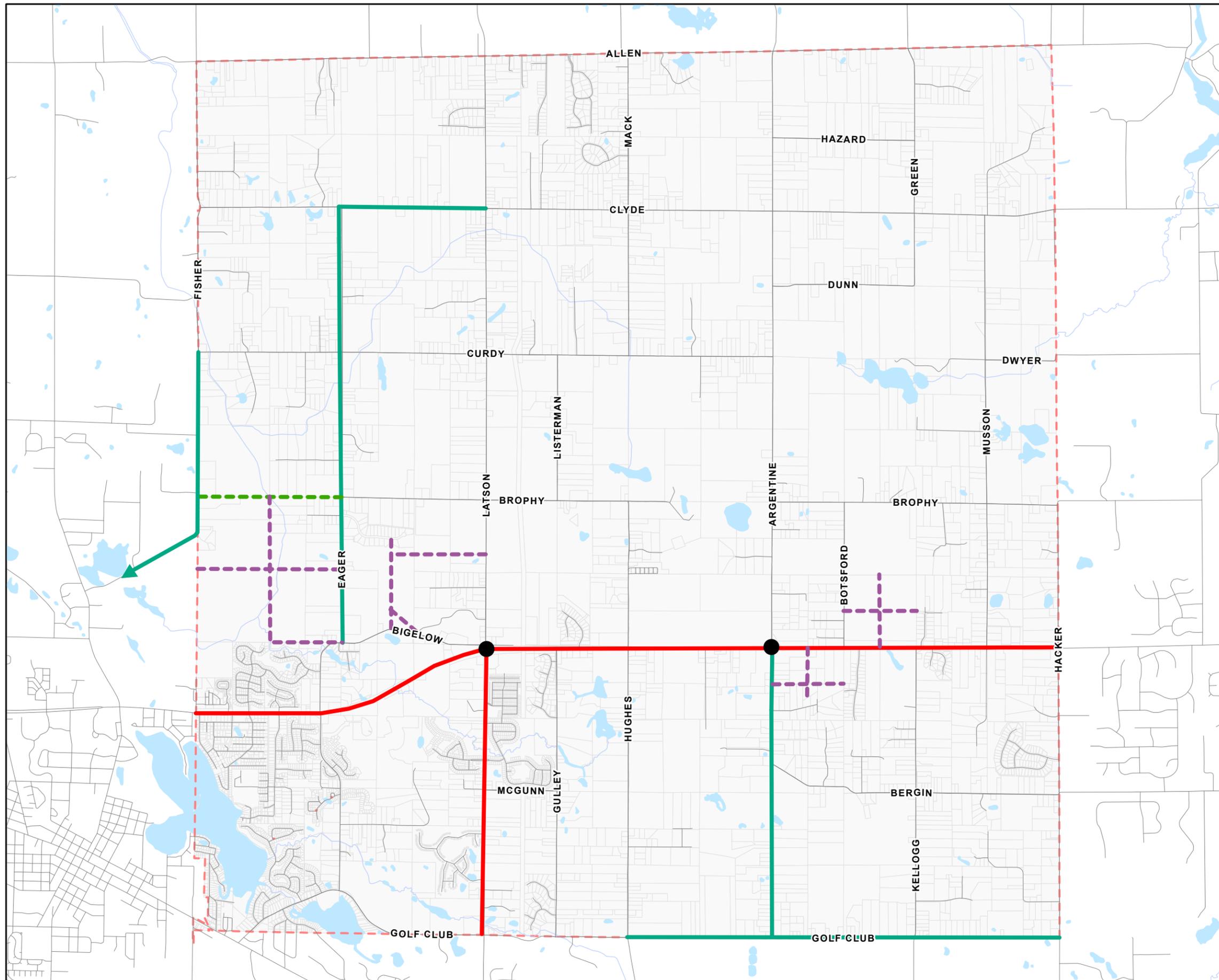
MAP 3

Proposed Road Improvements

Oceola Township, Livingston County, Michigan

LEGEND

-  Township Boundary
-  Oceola Township Roadways
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Capacity Improvements
-  New Pavement
-  New Road Connection
-  Priority Neighborhood Connections

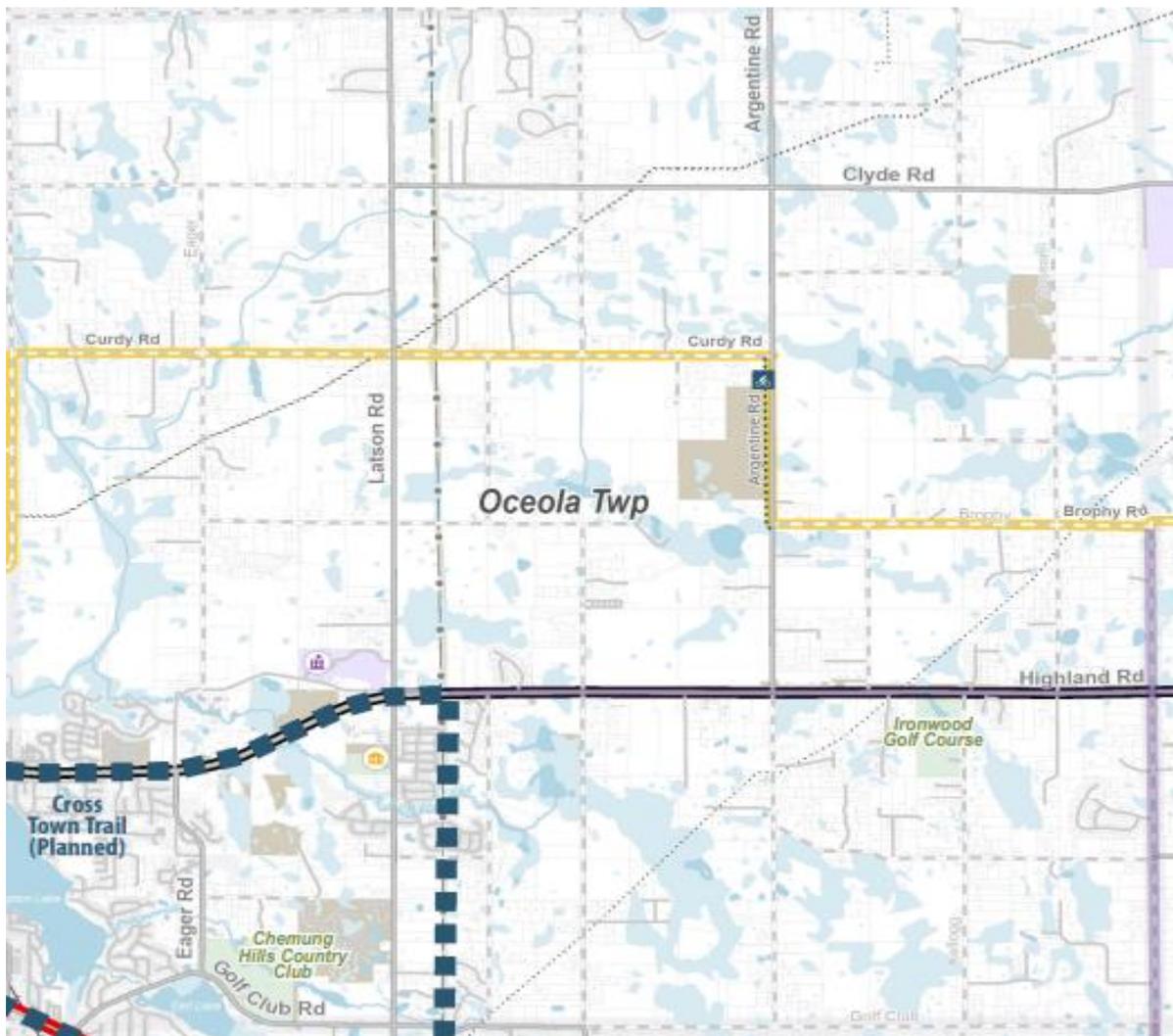


Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola Township 2020. McKenna, 2021.

NON-MOTORIZED INFRASTRUCTURE

Bicycling and walking remain important modes of transportation, both recreationally and as a way for children and other residents to exercise and reach Township destinations. As the number of cars increases on Township roads, however, the potential for conflicts between cars, bicycles, and pedestrians increases. This is especially the case when local roads are used for through traffic, and by drivers who are interested in mobility and who may overrun the sight distances and surface conditions on local roads. For the purposes of allowing safe bicycle and pedestrian access to recreation and other amenities, it has become desirable to construct pathways along certain roads to accommodate non-motorized transportation.

Like the road improvements described previously, implementation of the non-motorized plan will take coordination with other entities. Livingston County has completed a non-motorized plan and is in the early stages of implementation. The portion of the plan map including Oceola is included below.



The Non-Motorized Plan for the Township included in this Master Plan is consistent with the County plan and builds off it to create a local network as well. Also, it is the Township's policy that non-motorized infrastructure should be **separated bike paths**, and not paved shoulders or bike lanes. Separated bike paths are safer and more likely to drive usage by residents, as well as being more appropriate for a suburban/rural community.

The Township's key non-motorized priorities are:

- **ITC Corridor Bike Path.** The high tension power line corridor that runs north-south just east of Latson Road is a key opportunity to create a safe and efficient bike path, connecting neighborhoods throughout the corridor. While the County envisions the pathway stopping at M-59, the Township Plan would keep the pathway going all the way to Allen Road and beyond – though the portion from Golf Club Road to Brophy Road is the highest priority.
- **Separated Bike Paths.** On the following corridors, the Township envisions bike paths that are separated from the road, for optimal safety and efficiency.
 - M-59
 - Golf Club Road
 - Latson Road South of Brophy Road
 - Eager Road South of Bigelow Road
 - Eager Road North of Bigelow Road (once the road is paved)
 - Bigelow Road
 - Argentine Road North of M-59
 - Curdy Road West of Argentine Road
 - Fisher Road South of Curdy Road
 - Hacker Road south of M-59
- **Pedestrian Crossing Improvements.** In order to have a truly navigable non-motorized system, improvements are needed to major corridors to assist with pedestrian and bicycle crossings. The highest priority locations are:
 - M-59/Latson/Bigelow, especially in light of the proposed roundabout.
 - M-59/ITC Corridor, which could be a bridge for the bike path.
 - Latson Road near the Community Center and Township Park, to connect to the neighborhoods to the east.
 - Latson Road north of M-59, to help Hutchings Elementary Students get to school.
 - M-59 at the new “Highland Knolls” intersection, which has been recently proposed as the entrance to two new housing developments, one north of M-59 and one south. Pedestrian improvements will be needed to help walkers and cyclists navigate between the new neighborhoods.
 - M-59/Eager Road

Priority Neighborhood Connections, as described above, are also included on the Trails and Walking Paths Map on the following page, because they could be non-motorized trails, rather than roads, if road connections are not practical.

MAINTENANCE

Funding for ongoing maintenance is a key part of developing a sustainable non-motorized system that is safe and efficient over the long term. It is the Township's policy that the ongoing maintenance responsibility (and accompanying liability) should be in the hands of the entity that operates the adjacent roadway (MDOT or Livingston County). However, the Township would be willing to contribute financially to the maintenance of pathways within its boundary, through a partnership with MDOT, Livingston County, or both, provided that the ultimate responsibility for maintenance lies with one of those entities.

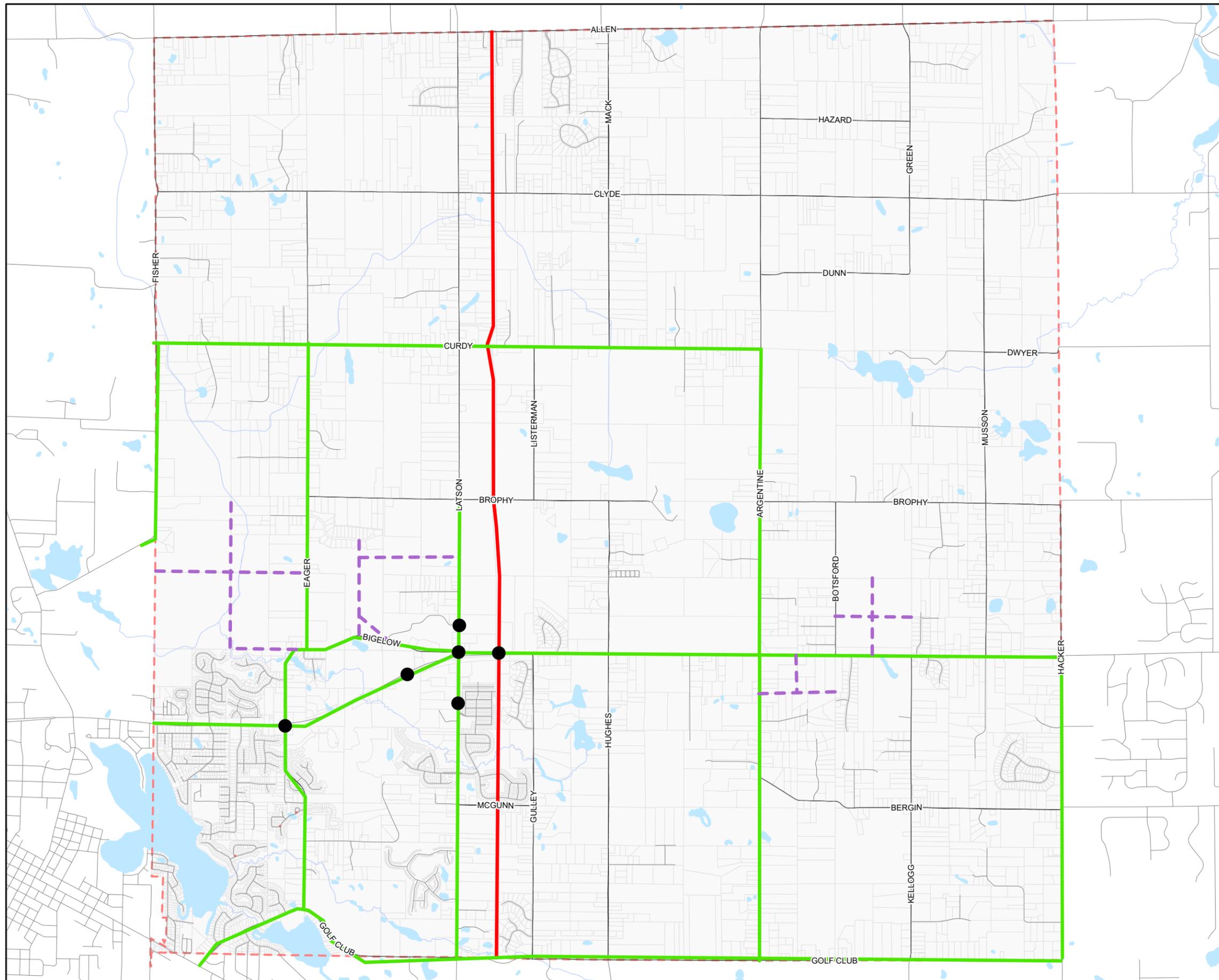
MAP 2

Trails & Walking Paths

Oceola Township, Livingston County, Michigan

LEGEND

-  Township Boundary
-  Oceola Township Roadways
-  Off Road Trails
-  Separated Bike Paths
-  Priority Neighborhood Connections



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola Township 2020. McKenna, 2021.

Community & Recreational Facilities

Overview

One of the primary purposes of municipal government is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community through the delivery of services. Oceola Township has established partnerships with surrounding communities to serve its residents, including the City of Howell, Howell Township, Cohoctah Township, Genoa Township, and Marion Township.

Over the years, the public service base in the Township has expanded in response to continued growth. The Township's needs have also changed because of the gradual transition from a predominately agrarian community to a semi-rural residential community. Anticipated future growth and residents' desires for improved quality of life are likely to create a demand for additional public facilities in the future.

Government Facilities

TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION

The existing Township Hall is located at 1577 Latson Road on a 21-acre site in the southwest portion of the Township. The administrative offices housed at the Township Hall include the Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, Zoning Administrator and Assessor.

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Oceola Township is a member of the multi-jurisdictional Howell Area Fire Authority. The Howell Area Fire Department provides fire protection services to the Township, as well as the City of Howell, Howell Township, Marion Township, and Cohoctah Township. The primary service area of the department is approximately 152 square miles. The fire station serving Oceola Township is located on Latson Road, immediately north of the Township Hall. In addition, in 2018, the Howell Area Fire Authority added a new training center and administrative offices onto the main fire station.

POLICE SERVICES

Police services are provided to the Township by the Livingston County Sheriff Department, located on Highlander Way in Howell and by the Michigan State Police. The Township does not have a police substation within its boundaries. As the Township continues to experience population growth, additional police protection services may be required.

POST OFFICE

Oceola Township does not have its own post office; thus the Howell, Hartland, and Fenton postal stations provide services and facilities for residents' postal needs.

Township Utilities

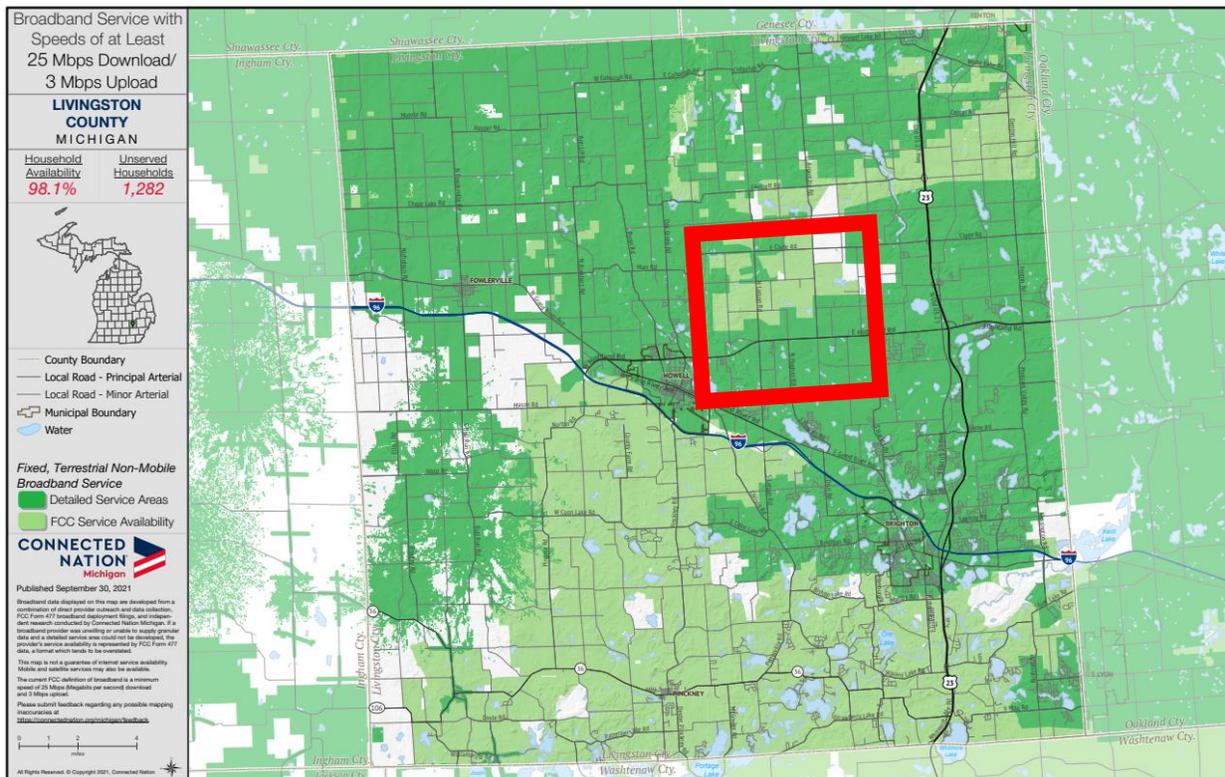
ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS

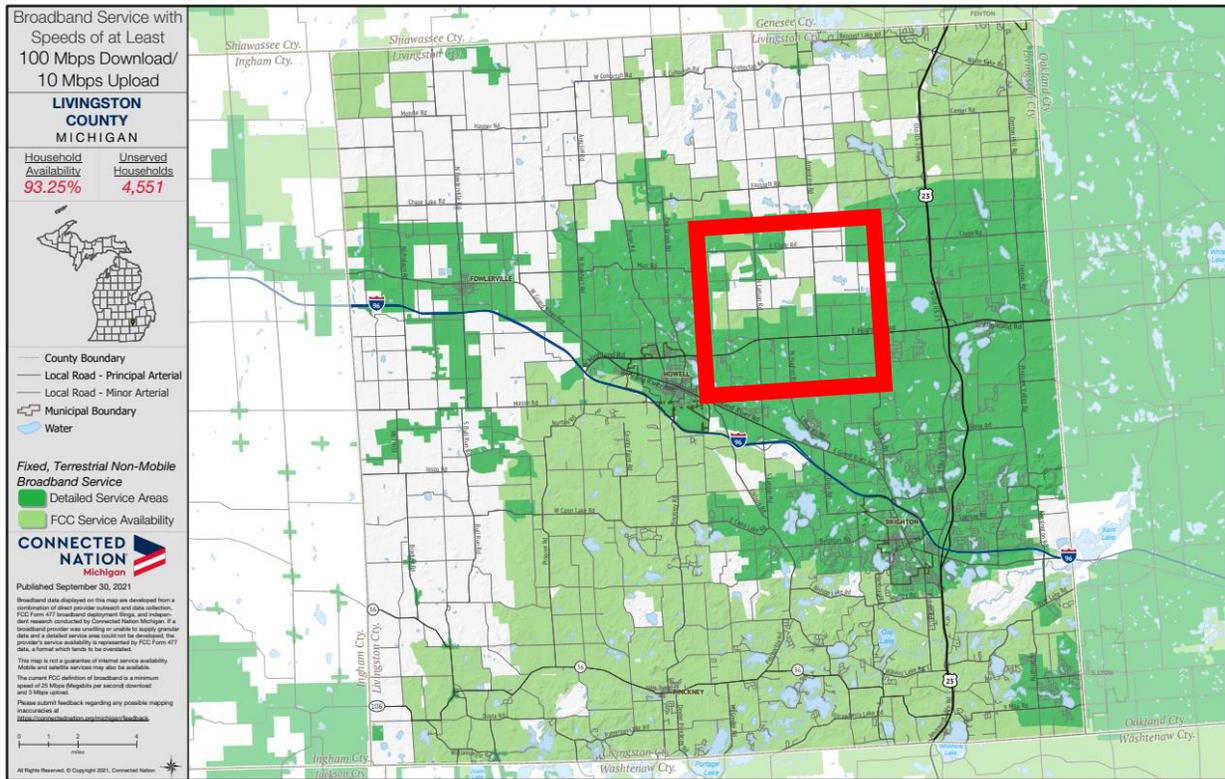
All residents in the Township have access to electricity through DTE. Natural gas is provided by Consumers Energy but generally is only available south of M-59 and along Latson Road.

BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS

Broadband internet, with its fast download speeds and consistent connectivity, helps connect residents and businesses to the online world. As more and more economic and social activity moves online, communities without connectivity are placed at a disadvantage.

As shown on the maps below from Connected Nation, **Oceola Township (shown in the square) has some areas underserved by broadband internet.** The first map shows areas served with 25 Mbps Download/3Mbps Upload speeds, which is considered the minimum speed to be “served” by the Federal Communications Commission. The second map shows 100 Mbps Download/10 Mbps Upload, a speed more in line with the expectations of modern internet users.





Source: Connected Nation

A combination of geography and economics are likely responsible for poor broadband coverage in the northern and northeastern parts of the Township. That portion of the community is a low-density, rural community, making private broadband providers unlikely to invest in infrastructure. But it is also not a low-income community and is located near suburban areas that have good connectivity. Livingston County has 25/3 service available at over 98% of households and 100/10 service at available in over 93% of households. These factors combined make the township a less likely candidate for grant programs.

Fortunately, at the time of the drafting of this plan, Livingston County was developing a plan to use Federal funds administered under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to build out broadband in underserved portions of the County, including in Oceola Township. Additional Federal funding for the project may also become available under the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS

Wireless voice and data service is also an important part of the modern economy and lifestyle. Service is generally adequate in the Township, though there are pockets of poor service. While wireless providers consider detailed coverage data proprietary, the communications research company AntennaSearch reports wireless communications transmitters throughout the Township – though they are more concentrated in the southwestern portion, where the population is more dense.

Improved wireless service may come to the township in the form of “small cell” technology. Small cells, which are generally located on poles of 40 feet or lower, are less expensive to install and less of an aesthetic blight on the landscape than traditional cell towers (which are usually 150-200 feet tall). The State of Michigan has already enacted legislation (including an amendment to the Zoning Enabling Act) to speed the roll out of small cells, which may hasten their installation in Oceola Township and similar communities.

PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER SERVICE

Public sanitary sewer service is provided to portions of the Township, serving less than a quarter of the total Township land area. Sewer service is limited to the southwest corner of the Township generally, just east of Latson Road and south of M-59, with a few additional areas serviced up to one-half mile to the north of M-59. Sewer service is provided by the Genoa-Oceola Sewer and Water Authority (GO). The sewer system in the Township was designed based on the Oceola Township 1998 Master Utility Plan, which designated the intended service areas. Although currently the sewer system is not at capacity, the total system capacity is spoken for due to the density of development the system is designed to serve. In the future, the system is planned to expand and extend to the east along M-59 to Argentine Road, with plans to service large acreage parcels along Argentine Road as development increases.

PUBLIC WATER SERVICE

Public water is provided within the same service area as the sanitary sewer. Water is provided by the Marion, Howell, Oceola, and Genoa Sewer and Water Authority (MHOG). The water system’s source is from a designated well protection area in the northwest corner of Marion Township. The water system was also designed based on the 1998 Master Utility Plan, mirroring the intended sewer service areas. The water system is at greater capacity currently than the sewer system. The expansion of the water system will proceed in the same manner as the sewer system to the east along M-59 to Argentine Road.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Oceola residents in areas not served by the public sanitary sewer system must utilize septic systems. The soil in the Township, based upon the Soil Survey of Livingston County, is primarily medium textured glacial till, with some pockets of end moraines of medium textured till in the northwest and northeast corners and along the south-central border of the Township. The soils found in Oceola range from slight to severe limitations for septic development. The private septic systems rely on the natural processes of permeation through the soil to treat the wastewater, and many Oceola soil areas do not have sufficient permeability for water to move through the ground easily. Livingston County Health Department approval is required, along with an individual soil evaluation for each proposed septic system.

Given the limiting condition of the soils for septic development, some areas of the Township have utilized community systems and/or community drain fields in place of individual septic systems. The Moorlands subdivision, located north of M-59 and east of Latson Road is designed to utilize two separate community septic tanks. A community drain field on Allen Road exists in the Diamond Glen community. Another alternative to public sewer or septic is a small community wastewater system, which has been used in the Diamond Glen subdivision near Hardy Church. This is an independent system intended for the use of a limited number of residential users for collecting, transporting, treating, and disposing of sanitary wastewater.

WELLS

Areas not served by the public water systems must utilize a well. The overall quality of the ground water in the Township is suitable for drinking, but the water is hard and contains high amounts of iron. One area of concern, however, is the Thompson Lake area where methane has been found in some of the local water wells. Most residents in this area are served by the public water system, but some have chosen to continue using their private wells, risking methane presence.

A potential solution to groundwater contamination is the establishment of wellhead protection areas. Wellhead protection areas protect underground based sources of water to ensure safe conditions. The Marion, Howell, Oceola and Genoa (MHOG) Water Authority and the Genoa-Oceola Sewer and Water Authority, which services the southwest corner of Oceola Township, has provided comprehensive wellhead protection around the MHOG water wells in the greater Howell area.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Social and cultural resources are those places and institutions that are created by and reflect upon the people who live in the Township. These resources, particularly those historical in nature, have tremendous value to the community as they connect today's Township residents with their past, and serve as timeless landmarks that help provide a common identity for the community. Therefore, their continuing preservation is an important goal of this Plan.

LIBRARY

Oceola Township is served by the Howell Carnegie District Library located in downtown Howell and the Cromaine District Library in Hartland. There are no libraries in the Township itself. The library system has been expanded over time to meet the demands of the growing population in the area. The library offers an extensive collection, including significant historical documents.

CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Churches located within the Township serve the Township and surrounding communities. Some of the churches include the historic Saint John Catholic Church (discussed in greater detail below) and its companion newer church across M-59, Bible Baptist Church, Stampers Church, Hardy United Methodist Church, Seventh Day Adventist, Life Christian Church, and Hidden Springs Retreat Centre. These facilities provide religious, social and recreational opportunities. In the case of Hidden Springs, a Christian educational facility is available to parishioners as well.

HISTORIC SAINT JOHN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY

Saint John Catholic Church is located on Hacker Road at the southwest corner of M-59. When the church was founded in 1843, services took place in a log structure that was eventually torn down and replaced. The church's present-day brick gothic revival structure was completed in 1873, serving as a parish for Irish American farming families who had founded the mission. The brick structure includes a center tower and spire, stained glass windows, and an inscription panel with the name of the builder, William Pipp of Brighton. The adjacent cemetery is the resting place of many early Irish families that settled in the area. The historic St. John Catholic Church was placed on the State Register of Historic Sites in 1978. The parish has since constructed a new building on the north side of M-59 for its parishioners.

CEMETERIES

Oceola Township contains four cemeteries including the Saint John Catholic Cemetery on Hacker Road discussed above. Others include Township-owned Van Kueren Cemetery on the corner of Eager and Curdy Roads, the privately-owned Kellogg Cemetery on Kellogg Road, and the Township-owned Riddle Cemetery on Argentine Road. Riddle Cemetery is located adjacent to Township-owned property slated for park development. In the development of the park, the conceptual master plan includes potential expansion of the cemetery.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Community and recreation facilities for Oceola Township are provided by the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority. The Authority is comprised of the City of Howell, Marion Township, and portions of Genoa Township and Oceola Township. The boundaries of the Authority follow the Howell Public School District boundaries, leaving eastern portions of Oceola Township out of the Authority. Given the current and projected growth of the Township and the entire Howell area, the Authority intends to acquire, construct, operate, maintain, and improve current and future facilities in Howell and the adjacent Townships to meet the resident's demands.

The involvement of Oceola Township with surrounding entities for the purpose of providing community and recreation facilities dates back to the 1950's when financial resources were pooled to construct the Paul Bennett Recreation Center in Howell. In 1965, Oceola Township agreed to contribute to the City of Howell Parks and Recreation Department based on the number of residents using City facilities.

In 2004, the four communities adopted the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority Strategic Plan and began to write Articles of Incorporation in order to apply for a *Partnerships for Change* grant. A grant was awarded in 2005 to assist in the development of educational materials and mapping resources to support the development and funding of the multi-jurisdictional authority. Since receiving the grant, the Authority has formally adopted its Articles of Incorporation, appointed an Authority Board, and implemented the Howell Area Recreation Authority Strategic Plan.

In June 2017, the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority adopted the fourth amended Articles of Incorporation. Based on information provided by the Authority via their website, over 1.2 million dollars is estimated for revenue in the 2021 budget cycle.

EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

Township Park. The Township operates a 10-acre park behind Township Hall, featuring soccer fields, a walking track, and a playground. The Township Hall/Park campus also includes the new Oceola Community Center, which was completed in 2020.

Community Center. The Community Center offers services such as a gymnasium (with three basketball courts), walking track, fitness room and other multi-purpose rooms. The multi-purpose rooms allow for educational and exercise classes and programs.

The Park and Community Center are near higher density residential neighborhoods and have the potential to be an important regional recreational amenity (especially the indoor facilities).

Chemung Hills. The Chemung Hills Golf Course is operated by the Township and provides a high-quality regional golf facility.

Future Argentine Road Park. The Township also owns a 160-acre parcel on the west side of Argentine Road that is currently undeveloped. This is one of two dedicated future parks in the Township. Plans for the property include multi-purpose and designated fields for sports such as softball, football, baseball, and soccer. Other park amenities such as pavilions and picnic areas, playgrounds, and wooded areas with nature trails have been proposed.

Other Opportunities. Other recreational opportunities in Oceola Township are provided by schools including the Hutchings Elementary School and a private Christian school. There are two golf courses in the Township. These facilities serve specific populations in the community and should be supplemented by public-owned parks.

COMPARISON WITH ACCEPTED STANDARDS

For planning and management purposes, recreation professionals classify parks and recreation facilities based on the type of facility and expected usage. Frequently, a five-tier classification system is used. It can be described as follows:

1. **Mini-Parks** – small, specialized parks, usually less than one acre in size that serve the surrounding neighborhood.
2. **Neighborhood Parks** – multi-purpose facilities, usually 15 acres or more in size, which typically contain ballfields and playlots, as well as areas for quiet recreation activity.
3. **Community Parks** – contain a wide variety of recreation facilities to meet the diverse needs of residents from several neighborhoods, typically 25 acres or more in size.
4. **Regional Parks** – typically located on sites with unique qualities that are particularly suited for outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, and trail use. These parks generally exceed 200 acres in size.
5. **Private and Special Use Facilities** – typically single-purpose recreation facilities, such as golf courses, nature areas, canoe launching facilities, and the like.

The above classifications typically require from 0.25 acres up to 10 acres per 1,000 residents, depending on the size of the recreation facility. The above classifications have little applicability in Oceola Township because there are few public parks and recreation facilities, and those that exist serve multiple functions. However, the above standards are only a guide and should be interpreted based on the specific local conditions. The presence of common open space in many of the subdivision-type developments and the prevalence of large, half acre or larger residential lots reduce the need for park facilities.

Also, to satisfy specific recreational needs, there are currently some private and special use facilities such as golf courses and private recreation facilities available to Township residents. All Residential Planned Unit Developments in the Township are required to include active and passive recreation facilities.

As the Township grows, the demand for parks and recreation facilities is sure to increase, and the above standard classifications should serve as a guide for future facility development. Given the Township's semi-rural residential character, parks and recreation facility development should concentrate on development of recreation facilities and acquisition of larger tracts of land for community-wide and regional-scale open space.

PARKS FACILITIES WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY

With plentiful lakes, open space, mature trees and wooded area, wildlife, and other aspects, Livingston County is home to some of Michigan’s premiere parks and recreation facilities. Residents of Oceola Township have the benefit of being located within close proximity to a plethora of public recreation areas in the County. The parks located within a 2-mile radius of the Township include:

Park Name	Location	Size (acres)	Amenities	Designation
Lakeside Park	City of Howell, on the north side of Thompson Lake	0.33	Neighborhood beach	Mini Park
Howell City Park	City of Howell, on Thompson Lake off Caledonia Drive	14.33	Public beach Playground Pavilion Baseball field Restrooms	Neighborhood Park
Howell City Boat Launch	City of Howell, off Lake Street	2.16	Boat launch	Mini Park
Barnard Community Park	City of Howell, just west of Thompson Lake off Barnard Street	10.14	Playground Track Restrooms Soccer field	Neighborhood Park
McPherson Park	City of Howell, between Michigan Avenue and State Street	0.30	Picnic table	Mini Park
Doctor Louis “Pat” May Park	City of Howell, between park Street & Clinton Street	0.16	Picnic facilities Playground	Mini Park
Paul Bennett Field	City of Howell, at the corner of Maple & Walnut	1.85	Baseball field	Mini Park
Baldwin Park	City of Howell, between Byron Road and Spring Street	0.80	Picnic facilities Playground Basketball courts	Mini Park
Argyle Park	City of Howell, between Michigan Ave & Argyle St	0.44	Picnicking facilities Playground	Mini Park
Rolling Oaks Park	City of Howell, between Wooded Valley Lane & Still Valley Drive	8.26	Playground	Neighborhood Park
Fillmore County Park	Genoa Charter Township, between McClements Rd, Genoa Township	200.72	Hiking/walking trails	Regional Park
Hartland Settlers Park	Hartland Township, 2835 Clark Rd, Hartland, MI 48353	117.71	Hiking/walking trails Playground	Community Park

Park Name	Location	Size (acres)	Amenities	Designation
Spranger Field	Hartland Township, 3223 Hartland Rd, Hartland, MI 48353	21.81	Picnic facilities Baseball fields Restrooms Playground	Community Park
Don Epley Park	Hartland Township, between Maple St, East of Washington St,	2.97	Playground	Mini Park
Winegarner Field	Hartland Township, 3911 Hartland Rd, Hartland, MI 48353	10.01	Baseball fields	Neighborhood Park
Cohoctah Township Park	Cohoctah Township, 1000 W Allen Rd, Howell, MI 48855	40.01	Hiking/walking trails Picnic facilities	Community Park

PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

The quality of a community's schools is a major determinant in families choosing an area in which to live. The majority of Oceola Township is served by the Howell Public School District, with a smaller area on the east side of the Township served by the Hartland Consolidated School District. The Howell Public Schools serve over 6,973 students, based on information provided by the National Center for Education Statistics for the 2019-2020 school year. Howell schools serving Oceola students include:

- **Hutchings Elementary School.** Located on Bigelow Road and the only building located in Oceola Township. The school enrolls 672 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- **Northwest Elementary School.** Located on Bower Street in Howell. The school enrolls 506 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- **Voyager Elementary School.** Located on Byron Street in Howell. The school enrolls 541 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- **Highlander Way Middle School.** Located on North Highlander Way in Howell. The school enrolls 1,116 students in sixth through eighth grade.
- **Howell High School and Freshman Campus.** Both located on West Grand River in Howell. The school enrolls a total of 2,630 at both campuses, serving ninth through twelfth grade.

The Hartland Consolidated School District serves over 5,200 students, including those in Oceola Township. Hartland schools serving Oceola students include:

- **Village Elementary School.** Located on Hibner Road in Hartland. The school enrolls 517 students in kindergarten through fourth grade.
- **Hartland Farms Intermediate School.** Located on Taylor Road in Brighton. The school enrolls 823 students in fifth and sixth grade.
- **Hartland Middle School at Ore Creek.** Located on Hartland Road in Hartland. The school enrolls 897 students in seventh and eighth grade.
- **Hartland High School.** Located on Dunham Road in Hartland. The school enrolls 1,547 students in ninth through twelfth grade.

In addition to the public schools, Hidden Spring Christian School is also located in the Township on North Latson Road.

CONCLUSIONS

As Oceola Township continues to grow, the need for community and recreation facilities is sure to increase. Population growth may begin to put a strain on the fire and police protection systems, thus creating a need for more Township-based services or increased personnel and facilities. Also, the decision whether or not to seek additional public sewer and water capacity will ultimately depend on the desired intensity of development in the Township. Intensive development in the absence of public utilities creates the potential for public safety and environmental problems. From a public safety perspective, a public water supply is desirable for fire protection whenever a high-hazard or intensive use is developed. For example, a public water system would be desirable in locations where larger scale development, such as a high density residential or commercial development is anticipated. As the Township continues to grow, decisions as to whether to provide additional sewer and water capacity will have to be made.

As communications technology improves, investments will have to be made to continuously upgrade infrastructure to provide top quality service to residents. This will require partnership with both private communications providers, as well as the County, State, and Federal Governments.

Parks and recreation facilities are currently in the planning stages with the establishment of the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority. The Authority will have the ability to provide financial and staff support to increase recreational development in the Township. Oceola should continue to seek more areas for active and passive recreation, as well as maintain high expectations for recreational opportunities within new developments throughout the Township. Parks and recreation development should also seek to maintain and preserve the unique historical and cultural resources valued in the Township.

Natural Features

Overview

Some of Ocoola's defining characteristics are its large areas of natural landscape, topography, scenic vistas and rural countryside. Natural features protection can provide many benefits to Ocoola Township residents including the following:

Environmental Benefits. The most obvious benefit of natural features is the aesthetic and psychological benefit of their beauty that is restful to the eye and rejuvenating to the spirit. The environmental benefits of natural resource protection are well documented. These benefits include plant and wildlife habitat protection, surface water storage (flood control), surface water quality protection and groundwater aquifer recharge, soil erosion prevention and air quality enhancement through particle filtration and oxygen creation. Additional advantages to natural resource protection include energy conservation through natural woodland evaporative cooling and winter wind buffering.

Recreational Benefits. There are also recreational benefits to preserving natural areas, such as providing opportunities to walk, run, hike, cross-country ski or observe nature. By protecting natural areas, the Township can contribute to the improvement of community health and social structure.

Economic Benefits. Permanently protected open space has been shown to increase the value of neighboring land. People will often pay higher prices for the benefit of living next to protected land.¹ Furthermore, while permanently protected lands have limited tax value, these open spaces demand fewer services like road maintenance and schools than highly developed lands. Similarly, development that respects existing topography, woodlands and wetlands tends to be more desirable and adds value to the homes or other uses within the development.

Educational Benefits. Natural areas can become outdoor classrooms to help children and adults alike become more knowledgeable about the world's natural systems and the interrelationship between different ecosystems.

LIVINGSTON LAND CONSERVANCY

The Livingston Land Conservancy is a 501 (c)(3) volunteer organization in Livingston County that works with landowners, local governments, and other partners to protect land in the greater Livingston County area. The group's mission is: *"To protect the natural heritage and rural character of the greater Livingston County area by preserving quality natural areas and productive farmland as well as to promote an appreciation and understanding of the environment for the long-term benefit of the public."*

1 Livingston County Department of Planning, 2003. Livingston County's High-Quality Natural Areas.

The Conservancy protects land by way of ownership, or through conservation easements. Properties and conservation easements are purchased with donor funding, gifts from corporations, foundations, and memberships. In all, the Livingston Land Conservancy owns 13 properties and conservation easements, 3 of which are located in Oceola Township.

Natural Features

Some of the important natural features that shape the Township's environmental character, land uses and quality of life are discussed below.

SOILS AND GEOLOGY

Oceola Township is generally characterized by medium textured glacial till throughout, with some pockets of end moraines of medium textured till in the northwest and northeast corners and along the south-central border. Till plains and moraines are soils that resulted from glacial deposits of various sized soil particles. This mixture in soil size increases the soil's ability to hold moisture and nutrients. Typically, the soil in Oceola is productive for agricultural use for this reason.

TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY

The Township has generally rolling terrain with numerous streams, small lakes and wetlands. Although the vast majority of the Township is within the Shiawassee River watershed, there is about one square mile in the southeast corner of the Township that drains to the Huron River. The multitude of small headwater creeks drain southeast into the Huron River to the south, or northwest into the Shiawassee River to the north, which eventually drains into the Howell River. One percent of the Township's land area is covered by larger lakes like Thompson Lake, Earl Lake, Logan Lakes and Neff Lake, but many smaller lakes and ponds dot the landscape as well.

An important aspect of the Township's water resources is the quality of its groundwater. Only residents in the southwest corner of the Township, adjacent to Howell, have public water available. Most Township residents rely upon groundwater wells for drinking water. Groundwater is important to residents regardless of whether they are utilizing a well for their water supply or water supplied from MHOG. Ground water is critical to the protection of surface water quality as it feeds the lakes and keeps water levels and temperatures stable. Contamination of groundwater affects the health of humans and wildlife. As land is developed, the amount of impervious surface increases and the recharge of the groundwater generally decreases. Storm water management, including the use of bioswales, rain gardens and other "green" methods for increasing ground water recharge, will become increasingly important as the Township grows.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are transitional environments between land and aquatic systems where water is at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water. They are an important link in the preservation of clean natural water systems. Wetlands function to store surface water to prevent flooding, filter the water and recharge the groundwater table.

Wetlands exhibit one or more of the following attributes:

1. The substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil
2. The substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered with shallow water at some time during the growing season, and/or
3. The land supports aquatic plants, at least periodically

In Michigan the primary protection for wetlands comes from the Michigan Wetlands Protection Act, P.A. 203 of 1979, (now Part 303, Wetlands Protection of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, P.A. 451 of 1994). The State law does not protect wetland areas that are less than 5 acres in area, unless those areas are part of a larger wetland or water system or are determined to be essential to the preservation of the State's natural resources by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (ELGE). More stringent wetland regulations may be adopted by the local government, which then must assume the responsibility for enforcement.

The Township also protects wetlands through its Planned Unit Development process, which is frequently used to require the preservation of wetlands that are not otherwise protected by the State. However, there are no specific wetland provisions in the Township Zoning Ordinance, because direct local wetlands regulation is pre-empted by the State, unless the Township wants to take on all wetlands regulation itself.

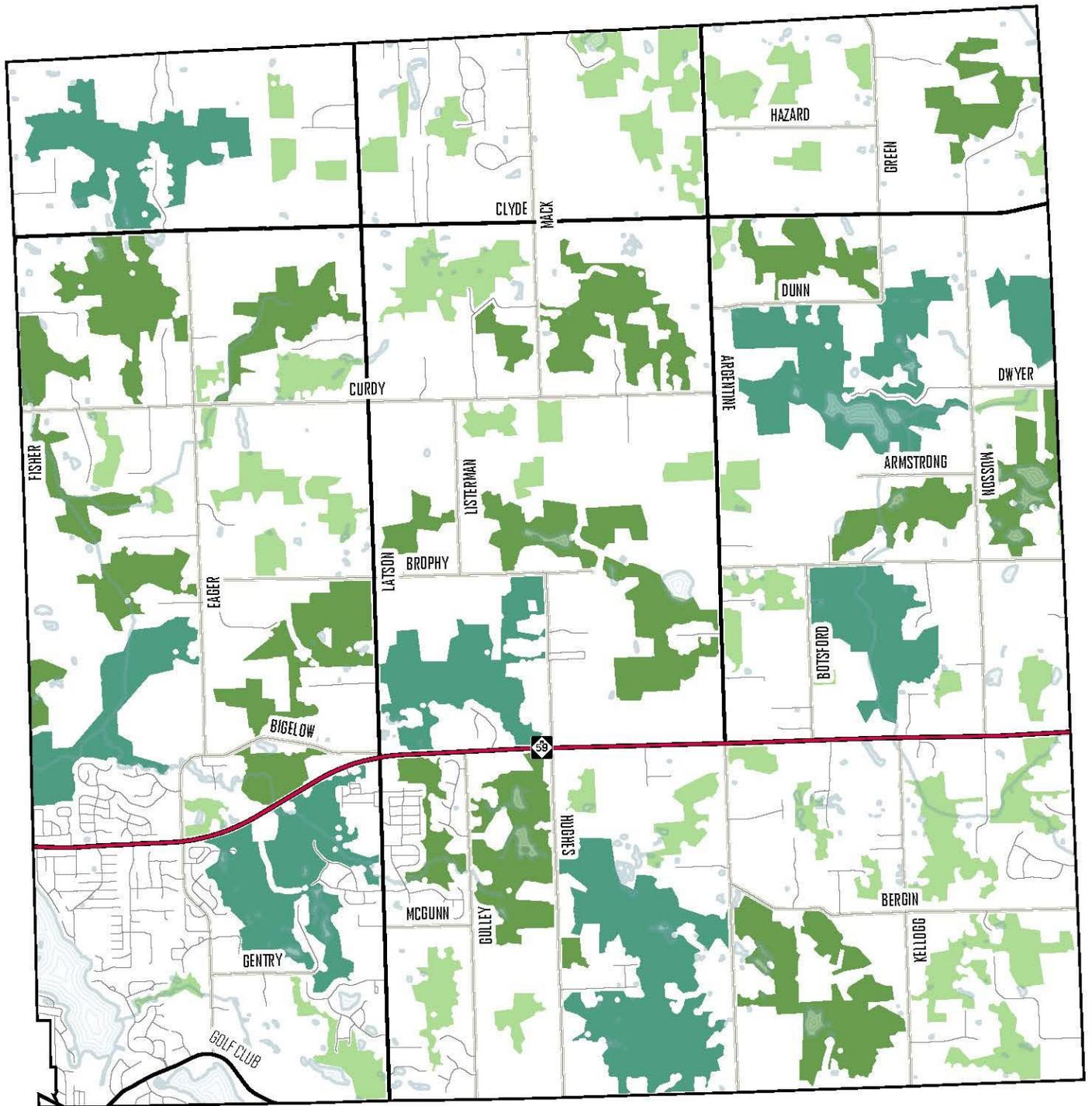
ENDANGERED SPECIES

Two (2) endangered species are potentially located in the Township. These are the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake and the Indiana bat (*Mysotis sodalists*). Habitat for the rattlesnake has been protected by the Land Conservancy in the vicinity of Hughes Road, south of M-59.

HIGH QUALITY NATURAL AREAS – LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Livingston County conducted an update of its High Quality Natural Areas report in 2022. That report designates a number of key habitats, watershed, and other natural areas that are important to preserve. The map on the following page shows where those areas are located within Oceola Township.

The County's updated High Quality Natural Areas report should be used as an input into Township land use decisions, especially where High Quality Natural Areas designated by the County are in proximity to potential development.



Oceola Township High Quality Natural Areas - 2021



High Quality Natural Areas are defined as places on the landscape dominated by native vegetation that have various levels of potential for harboring high quality natural areas and unique natural features. Scoring criteria used to prioritize sites included: total size, size of core area, length of stream corridor, landscape connectivity, restorability of surrounding land, parcel fragmentation, vegetation quality, and biological rarity score.

Data Sources: Livingston County GIS, Natural Features Inventory (MNF) Biotics Database, SEMCOG

- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Waterbody

- High Quality Natural Areas
Priority Class and Score
- Priority 1 (16 - 45)
 - Priority 2 (11 - 16)
 - Priority 3 (0-10)

Recommendations

Natural features are one of many considerations in the preparation of a future land use plan for Oceola Township. There are several management strategies that might be appropriate to protect priority areas or to consider when balancing development proposals with the natural environment. Some possible techniques are as follows:

Land Acquisition. Public purchase of undeveloped, priority parcels could ensure the protection of natural areas. Similarly, private landowners may donate land to a local land conservancy for permanent preservation in exchange for a tax write-off.

Purchase of Development Rights. Townships have the ability to regulate and permit the purchase of development rights on a parcel in order to encourage the owner to leave the parcel as open or agricultural land.

Environmental Protection Ordinances. Townships may adopt and implement specific regulations to protect natural resources, if determined appropriate. Some examples are as follows:

Wetland Ordinance. Some communities have established local wetland ordinances to supplement EGLE's regulations. Wetlands as small as two acres in area may be locally regulated. The ordinances typically require a professional wetland delineation and jurisdictional assessment on parcels identified on the municipality's wetland inventory map at the time a development is proposed.

Woodland Ordinance. Likewise, many townships have ordinances to protect woodlands and trees, typically requiring replacement for removed vegetation.

Fertilizer Ordinance. Regulations can be established to prohibit homeowners from over application of lawn fertilizers that may contaminate the water supply.

Open Space Development. The Township Zoning Ordinance currently provides for Planned Unit Developments and the Open Space option, consistent with PA 177 of 2001, the Open Space Preservation Act. These provisions offer a mechanism to protect natural features on land by clustering development in the less environmentally sensitive areas.

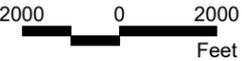
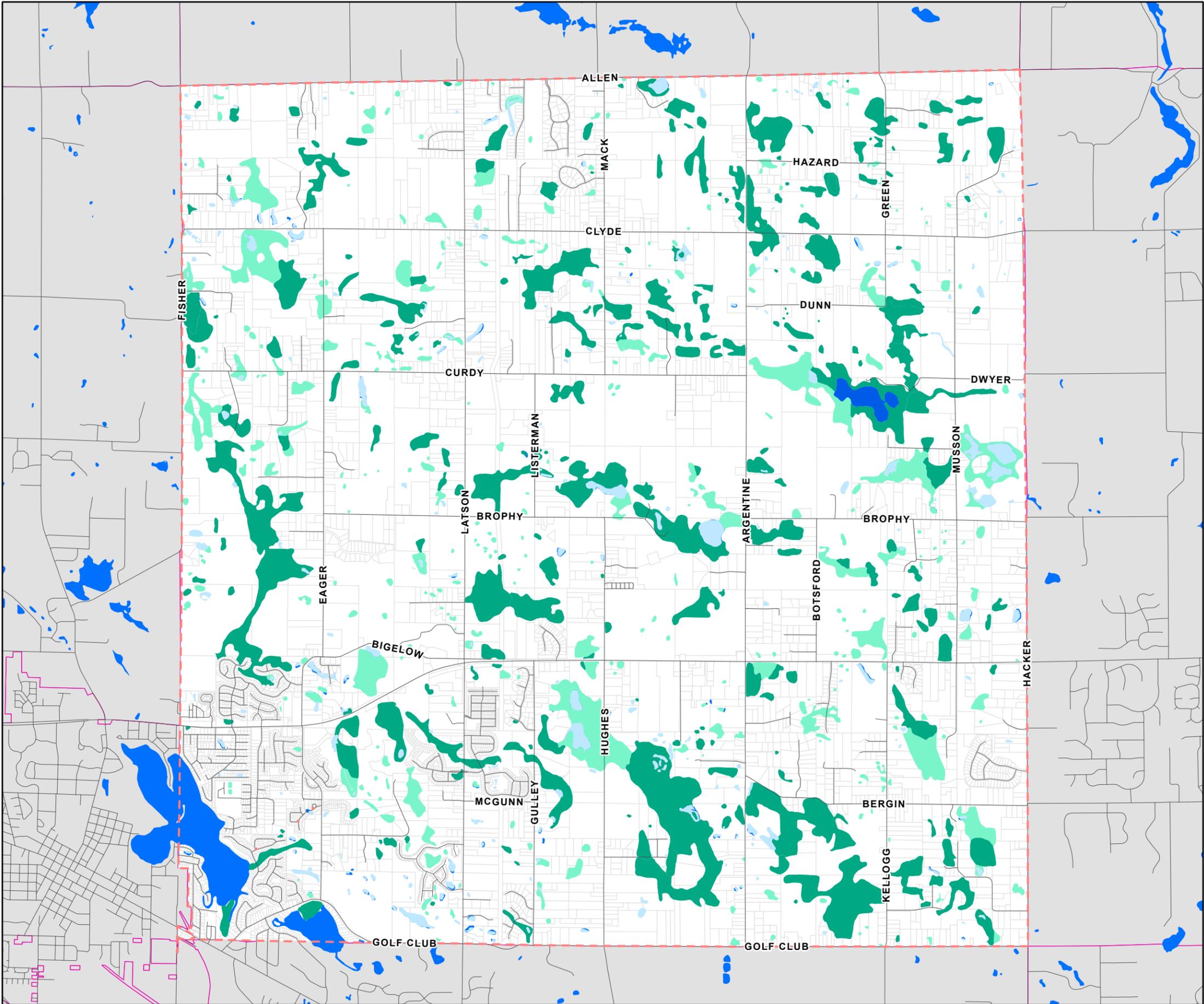
Natural Features

Oceola Township, Livingston County
Michigan

August 26, 2021
DRAFT

Wetlands

- Emergent Wetland
- Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Pond
- Lake
- Roadways - Regional
- Municipal Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola - Livingston County, McKenna 2021.

Future Land Use

Introduction

Oceola Township's land use plan represents the long-range (20 year) vision for growth, development, and redevelopment in the Township. As a representation of the preferred land use arrangement for the community, it identifies and defines the major future land use categories as well as the appropriate locations for various uses as envisioned by the Township. The Plan reflects the goals and priorities identified during the Master Plan process. The Master Plan is intended to manage and enhance the desirable components of the Township, while controlling adverse impacts that may accompany growth.

The key concepts of the Township's Master Plan are as follows:

- Promote an efficient and well ordered land use pattern.
- Economize community facilities with sustainable development.
- Preserve and enhance the natural scenic, rural character of the Township.
- Remain a predominantly residential community, relying on adjacent communities for most commercial goods and services.

In recent years, Oceola Township has experienced considerable residential development due to its location within easy reach of regional transportation via M-59, I-96 and US-23 and its proximity to the cities of Howell and Brighton. With its natural beauty and good quality of life, the Township has attracted quality residential development. People in many areas of Oceola Township continue to enjoy a rural lifestyle with agricultural uses around. However, this residential development has also put pressure on the preservation of the Township's rural character.

Future Land Use Considerations

Based on the analysis, goals, and objectives established in this Plan, following is a summary of considerations that have been identified and are pertinent to the recommended Future Land Use pattern in Oceola Township.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The population projections in this Plan estimate that the Township will have a population of 16,689 persons in 2030 and 17,630 persons in 2040 – and growth could be even faster than that. Based on these projections, which take into account regional growth potential, expected household composition changes, and other factors, land should be allocated to accommodate the projected residential growth.

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing development is subject to change over time, particularly when it involves only a few nonconforming parcels. Existing land use is more difficult to change when it involves numerous parcels of land under separate ownership. The Future Land Use Plan must recognize and adapt to the relative permanency of certain existing land uses. This fact is evident in a number of locations in the Township.

UTILITIES

Intensive development in the absence of public utilities creates the potential for public safety and environmental problems. Consequently, higher density residential, commercial, office and industrial uses shall be located only where connection to public utilities is reasonably feasible.

ROADS

The road system in Oceola Township is an incomplete grid, and revenues for new road construction are limited. Under such circumstances, a compact development pattern is preferred so that road funds can be efficiently used, and rural character can be retained where roads are not present. The great majority of paved roads are located in the southwest quadrant of the Township, and they typically carry the most traffic. The more intensive development shall be located where the traffic volumes and infrastructure capability are greatest.

There is significant concern, as of the drafting of this plan, about the ability of the Township's road network (particularly M-59) to carry the traffic generated by ongoing and projected growth.

SOILS

Many of the soils in Oceola are categorized as slight to severely limiting for septic development. In the areas where public water and sewer are not planned to be available in the future, the intensity of development must reflect the soil limitations to accommodate septic fields.

COMPATIBILITY WITH SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

One of the goals of the Future Land Use Plan is to organize the Township with compatible land uses adjacent to each other. The Plan must take into consideration adjacent land uses in other communities as well. Analysis of land uses in the adjacent communities reveals that Hartland and Deerfield Townships plan low density single family and agricultural uses along their borders with Oceola Township. Genoa Township's plan has a predominance of low density residential with the exception of the area where Grand River Avenue intersects Golf Club Road. This area contains office/service land uses, manufactured housing and some suburban-type residential. Howell Township and the City of Howell propose a concentration of higher intensity office service, neighborhood commercial and medium density residential just north and south of M-59. The properties along the northern border of Oceola Township and Howell Township are generally residential uses. The proposed Future Land Use Plan for Oceola Township is compatible with these adjacent land uses.

Compatibility with the City of Howell and the adjoining Townships has significance, beyond compatibility of adjacent land uses. Oceola Township leaders and residents have expressed a desire to utilize the commercial retail and office service development in adjacent communities along M-59 and Grand River Avenue and in the City of Howell to supplement those services not provided in Oceola Township. The Township is not interested in becoming a regional or community retail center. The land use pattern that would be most complimentary to Oceola Township would control intensive residential and commercial sprawl. The planned commercial land use concentration is primarily neighborhood-type commercial and office/service development.

NATURAL BORDERS BETWEEN LAND USES

A defensible plan demonstrates sound reasoning for boundaries between land uses. Accordingly, natural boundaries between land uses are an important consideration. In Oceola Township, such natural boundaries may include roads, streams, existing land use and lot patterns, soil capabilities, and others. These natural boundaries include planning for land use patterns that will accommodate landscape buffers, if necessary, to separate land uses.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The Township should strive to protect the features that give the community its appealing rural character, including woodlands and woodlots, wetlands, lakes, drainage courses, rolling topography and wildlife corridors.

Ground and surface water impacts are important considerations in determining the future land use pattern. Protection of the quality and quantity of the groundwater supply is important because the majority of the Township's land area is served by well water. Protection of ground and surface water resources must address both land use patterns and the functionality of land uses. In terms of land use patterns, the objective is to preserve the hydrologic cycle and the natural interrelationship of groundwater and surface waters.

Land use activities that typically pose a threat to groundwater quality are most frequently classified as "industrial" or "commercial." Thus, in the interest of preserving groundwater quality, industrial and commercial uses should be located away from places where groundwater vulnerability has been identified as a concern and toward areas that are served or planned to be served by sanitary sewers. The Future Land Use Plan proposes lower density development in areas not serviced by sewer.

Groundwater contamination can also result from leaking septic systems, improper floor drains, improper storage of hazardous substances, leaking underground storage tanks, above ground spills, overflowing of tanks, condensation from air emissions, and improper waste disposal. Many of these sources of contamination can be addressed in site plan review. Site plan applicants should be required to disclose locations of tanks, floor drains and connections, etc. and implement the best available technology to alleviate potential impact.

High Priority Natural Areas have been identified in Oceola Township which generally correspond to the water and drainage features in the Township. These areas should be given consideration in development reviews to avoid negative environmental impacts. In the long term, the development of more restrictive land use controls or prohibitions of certain land uses based on the preservation of the natural features and groundwater recharge areas may be necessary. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to work with the Township Engineers to obtain a good understanding of groundwater flows, use, and water vulnerability.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic and culturally significant community resources such as historic homes and structures or places of significance should be considered when making land use decisions. These historic and cultural features create a sense of continuity and place for the community and often cannot be replaced once lost.

Future Land Use Concept

BASIC CONCEPT

The basic concepts for the Future Land Use Plan are as follows:

- The Township shall limit the amount of non-residential development, recognizing the availability of such development in surrounding communities.
- The more intensive development shall generally be confined to the M-59 corridor, especially near Eager, Latson, and Argentine Roads.
- The intersection of M-59 and Latson Road should be a mixture of commercial, institutional, office, governmental, recreational, open space, and higher density residential uses. The development should be specifically patterned as “Suburban Civic Center”, with residential, commercial, recreational, and public uses connected by walking paths and roadways, with high quality architecture and landscaping, and preserved public features.
- The low density residential and agricultural use of land shall be located primarily in the north and southeast portions of the Township. This will facilitate the preservation of open space, rural character and wildlife habitat, and minimize the need to extend the existing public water and sewer system.
- The natural features and the high priority natural areas throughout the Township shall be protected where possible, even with the anticipated development of the M-59 corridor. This will preserve the scenic, natural character of the Township while protecting important surface and groundwater systems.
- The historically and culturally significant areas shall be given particular consideration toward protection in development proposals.

M-59 Capacity and Impact on Future Land Use

Recent traffic studies and the anecdotal experience of Oceola residents and other motorists confirm that M-59’s current two-lane design is insufficient for the anticipated growth of the Township and surrounding communities. Therefore, the following goals should be followed for development along the corridor:

- Non-residential developments shall include a concentrated configuration of buildings with significant architectural features and decorative details. In so doing, the Plan discourages any type of strip commercial development along M-59.
- Developments shall utilize the Planned Development options so that the buildings are clustered and large areas of natural features, recreation and open space are provided or preserved.
- The developments shall provide appropriate site amenities and landscape improvements to buffer the proposed development from the roadway. The viewshed along M-59 shall be maintained.
- Access points to M-59 shall be limited to minimize traffic conflicts. Cross access shall be encouraged between sites.
- The capacity of M-59 to absorb the anticipated traffic impacts from new development should be a key consideration in zoning approval processes.
- Above all, the land uses and densities on the Future Land Use Map should be strictly followed, for all new developments.

At the time of the adoption of this plan, the pace of development along M-59 was outpacing the capacity of the corridor, leading to significant concerns regarding quality of life, safety, and efficiency. As stated earlier in this plan, it is the Township's position that M-59 should be upgraded to a divided, multi-lane boulevard as soon as possible.

However, with upgrades to M-59 not planned until the mid-2020s or later, the Township must use its planning and zoning jurisdiction to ensure that the existing M-59 design is not overburdened.

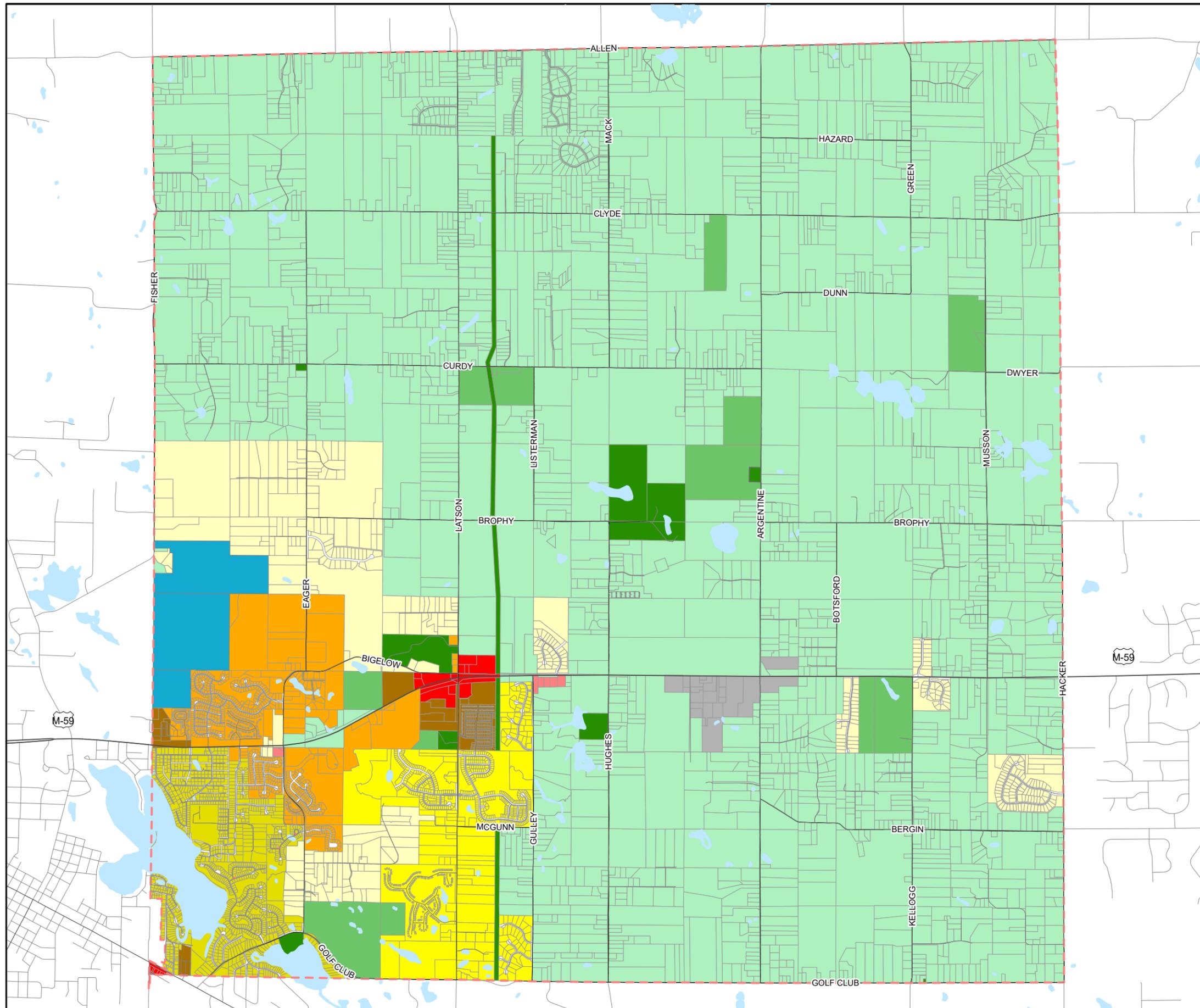
Future Land Use

Oceola Township, Livingston County, MI

September 22, 2022

LEGEND

- Agriculture/Large Lot Residential
- Low Density Residential A
- Low Density Residential B
- Low/Medium Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- General Industrial
- Recreation/Open Space
- Public/Semi Public
- Education and Technology



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Oceola Township, McKenna 2022.

Future Land Use Categories

The following land use categories are displayed on the Future Land Use Map and are described below:

AGRICULTURE/LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL

The Agriculture/Large Lot Residential category is intended to provide areas for agricultural uses such as hobby or commercial farming, and areas where residents can live in rural surroundings. Land uses included in this category are single family dwellings, farming, horticulture, and accessory uses associated with farming. Clustering of residential uses by employing the PUD provisions is encouraged in this category. This category dominates the north half and the southeast corner of the Township. The density of this category is **less than 1 unit per gross acre**.

Lands that are designated Agricultural/Large Lot Residential have value as open land, (whether for natural or agricultural use), and may reflect previous lot split and residential development activity. The Township lends itself to large areas of the Agricultural/Large Lot Residential future land use classification because of its significant natural features, its picturesque vistas and topography, its rural farmland, its wooded and wetland areas and its heavy soils.

The Plan encourages continued use of these lands for agriculture for as long as economically feasible or desired by the owners. At the same time, the Plan also acknowledges that previous land use decisions have resulted in land divisions for residential use, thus it is not likely that parcels will be reassembled for future agricultural use.

The areas planned for the Agriculture/Large Lot Residential category will not have public water and sewer during the life of this Plan. The limited capability of the soils in some areas to perc for septic use will be somewhat of a self-limiting factor by requiring larger lots to accommodate the septic fields.

Pursuant to the goal of maintaining rural open space and agricultural lands in conjunction with residential use, the recommended zoning classifications to implement the Agriculture/Large Lot Residential future land use designation are the AR- Agricultural Residential and the RR- Rural Residential zoning districts. The Residential Planned Unit Development (RPUD) or Open Space development options are discouraged, as density bonuses should not be contemplated within the Agriculture/Large Lot Future Land Use category.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL “A”

The Low Density Residential “A” designation plans single family dwellings at a density of **1 to 1.49 units per gross acre**. Typically, residential development in this category will be large lot subdivisions. Long term, agricultural uses are not expected to be maintained in this district.

Lands that are designated Low Density Residential “A” are in areas where the intent is to allow residential lots of no less than 30,000 square feet with public sewer and one acre without public sewer, unless approved as a PUD. The R-1 zoning district is the likely means of implementing this category. This category includes 3,244 acres or 13.8% of the Township land area. The intent of this designation is to encourage high quality residential development along the M-59 corridor and between Gulley Road and Hughes Road which preserves scenic view sheds and provides a transitional use to the lower density Agricultural/Large Lot Residential land use areas.

The Low Density Residential “A” category lends itself to a RPUD style development in order to promote innovative residential development, to preserve natural features and wildlife corridors and provide open recreation space for residents. Public water and sewer is available to serve some, but not all, of the Low Density Residential “A” areas.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL “B”

The Low Density Residential “B” designation is intended to address the need for a residential land use category with slightly higher density than the Low Density Residential “A” category.

Low Density Residential “B” areas are located generally along Latson Road, south of the Village Centre and M-59. The anticipated residential unit density for this Master Plan land use category ranges **from 1.5 to 1.99 dwelling units** per acre.

Several factors distinguish this category. One factor is the proximity of this land area to the high traffic volumes on Latson Road. The segment of Latson Road between M-59 and Grand River Avenue carries between 16,000 and 17,000 cars per day. It is a convenient vehicular route for residents of Oceola Township to access the I-96 expressway. A second factor is the desire to maintain consistency of the future development densities with the established density pattern. Recent residential developments in this area are approved and are being developed consistent with the 1.5 to 1.99 unit density range.

The Low Density Residential “B” category strongly encourages an innovative planned unit development type of configuration that will create recreation space and will preserve and provide open space. Similar to other categories, high quality natural features in this area should be protected, while encouraging attractive residential development in creative site plan configurations.

This land use is a transitional residential classification between the Low/Medium Density Residential, the Medium Density Residential and the Village Centre planned areas and the planned Low Density Residential “A” lands. Agricultural uses are not expected in this district. The R-2 zoning district is the likely means of implementing this category.

Public water and sewer may be necessary to serve developments of cluster type housing with smaller, or no, individual lots. All the Low Density Residential “B” category are within the proposed sewer district boundaries.

LOW/MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Low/Medium Density Residential category includes single family or two family dwelling units at a density of **2 to 2.99 units per gross acre**. This land use category is planned for areas adjacent to Thompson Lake and Earl Lake and areas in the southwest corner of the Township. The designation recognizes the unique living style of lake residential development, and it includes smaller established lots, many of which were platted before the Township had zoning.

Low/Medium Density Residential is an intermediate residential density classification. The emphasis in the Low/Medium Density Residential areas is to acknowledge the existence of previously developed lake lots and older subdivisions which often do not conform to the dimensional regulations indicated in the Zoning Ordinance, and to provide for compatible new development at comparable densities.

These land areas should generally have public water and sewer available. Most planned Low/Medium Residential areas are already developed. RPUD and open space provisions are encouraged in these areas if public water and sewer facilities are provided. The R-2 zoning district is the likely district to implement this category, although the Township may wish to consider Zoning Ordinance amendments to recognize and accommodate the special characteristics of the lake neighborhood. Smaller lot sizes than the R-2 standards of 30,000 square feet without sanitary sewer and 20,000 square feet with sanitary sewer may be approved under a Residential Planned Unit Development.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Medium Density Residential designation includes single family or two family dwelling units at a density of **3 to 4.99 units per gross acre**. This land use density is dependent upon the availability of public sewer and water. The concentration of this planned land use category is in the southwest quadrant of the Township, both north and south of M-59.

Like the previous lower density residential categories, this category emphasizes high quality, innovative residential development. The Medium Density Residential areas are concentrated within the existing public water and sewer service area. The use of the RPUD is encouraged for these areas, as many of the remaining undeveloped areas are also within the High Priority Natural Areas. The R-3 zoning district is the likely zoning district to implement this category.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The High Density Residential plan category includes dwelling unit types such as townhouses, attached single family dwellings, garden apartments, triplex and quadplex units or conventional apartment dwellings, housing for the elderly, nursing homes and manufactured housing. This land use designation is intended to permit **5 to 10 dwelling units per gross acre**.

The location and the land area of High Density Residential category reflects the Township's goals to maintain the rural, scenic character of the community throughout the Township and yet to provide a variety of housing opportunities for its present and future residents. These areas are located primarily along M-59 and west of the Village Centre, where there is convenient access to commercial uses, M-59 access, and public services including water and sanitary sewer service. The RM Multiple Family district is the zoning classification that corresponds to this future land use category.

Manufactured housing parks or mobile home parks are also consistent with the High Density Residential plan category. Manufactured housing parks are parcels that are occupied by two or more mobile homes or manufactured houses. They do not include mobile homes on individual lots. The Township currently has one mobile home park in the southwest corner of the Township adjacent to Grand River Avenue. Further, there is a large supply of manufactured housing park units within six miles of Oceola Township's boundaries. These other manufactured housing parks, containing approximately 2,261 units, account for over half the manufactured housing park sites in Livingston County, and are located within the adjacent townships and the City of Howell.

At this point, the need for additional mobile home park acreage is not apparent. Based upon the goals and objectives in this plan, manufactured housing park developments would be most appropriate on parcels of land where they will have minimal impact on adjacent or nearby uses, and where there is access to commercial and public services, including sanitary sewer service and paved roads. If a need is demonstrated in the future, the following criteria shall be used to identify appropriate manufactured housing park locations:

- Manufactured housing parks shall have a direct access to a paved or arterial collector road, or a state highway.
- Manufactured housing parks shall have access to public sanitary sewer and water systems with adequate capacity to serve the residents and to provide fire protection capability.
- Manufactured housing parks shall be located within approximately one mile of retail services in Oceola Township, adjacent Townships or the City of Howell.
- Manufactured housing developments shall be screened from adjacent uses and separated from conventional single family development. The screening may consist of abundant landscaping or a natural woodland buffer that is 50-foot thick minimum.
- Manufactured housing park development shall not be located where it would result in cut-through traffic in existing residential neighborhoods.

- Manufactured housing parks shall generally be adjacent to other high density residential uses, such as existing manufactured housing parks, parcels zoned MHP, or multiple family residential developments, and are intended to serve as a transitional use between high density residential and nonresidential districts.
- Manufactured housing parks shall not be placed on sites in a designated floodway.
- Manufactured housing parks shall not be placed on a parcel size less than 15 acres.

Any development of a manufactured/mobile home park shall be required to meet the highest standards approved by the Township and the Manufactured Housing Commission. Extensive open space, recreation areas, storm water retention areas and landscaping shall be required so that the park becomes an asset to the community.

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

The General Commercial plan category is intended to provide a mix of uses such as convenience goods, retail, restaurants, entertainment venues, institutional uses, government, offices, personal and business services, and live-work units. Medium to high density residential may be included as a component of mixed-use developments, on a case-by-case basis.

Traditional architectural features, quality building materials, decorative lighting and extensive landscaping are encouraged, especially near the M-59/Latson intersection, to convey a sense of permanence and importance for the businesses.

Under this plan, the M-59 and Latson intersection is the primary location for general commercial uses. Aside from the small portion of Grand River Avenue that is within the Township, other commercial nodes are designated as “Neighborhood Commercial” to reflect their less intense proposed nature. Strip commercial development, in any location, is contrary to this Plan.

The master planned General Commercial area is in close proximity to civic land uses (the Township Hall, the Fire Station and the large public school campus). The governmental element is important because the location of public and civic buildings supports community vitality by providing convenient locations for meetings and events, thereby bringing people into the heart of the Township. Public buildings and public spaces elevate and give value so that the area becomes a true town center.

Commercial development shall address the convenience needs of Oceola Township residents and complement existing larger scale commercial facilities in the adjacent Townships and in the City of Howell.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood Commercial areas are small nodes where low intensity, convenience businesses could locate to serve the surrounding community. Large scale regional businesses are discouraged. Examples of appropriate businesses include pharmacies, ice cream parlors, small restaurants, dry cleaners, and medical offices.

This plan designates the intersection of Eager Road and M-59 as a potential neighborhood commercial node and recognizes the existing businesses along M-59 between Gulley and Hughes Roads as important neighborhood assets. A potential node has also been identified at Latson and Golf Club Roads.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

In anticipation of future population growth and the resulting demand such growth will place upon Township services, some additional nonresidential areas will be required. These nonresidential uses help to provide a diverse tax base in order to permit the Township to continue to provide quality services to its residents. However, the Township is not depending on industrial development to provide the foundation of its tax base. Consequently, the Future Land Use Map acknowledges existing industrial uses and provides for limited expansion adjacent to existing industrial areas but does not provide for large scale industrial growth.

The Industrial plan classification is intended to permit industrial uses that do not produce negative effects such as excessive noise, glare, odor, fumes, dust or pollution. This category does not encourage any business that processes raw materials or needs a significant amount of outdoor storage. The area planned for the industrial land uses is located south of M-59, west of Argentine Road.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the Future Land Use Plan to encourage industrial uses that are environmentally friendly with no negative impacts. High technology and knowledge-based uses are desirable for their low environmental impact characteristics. High architectural standards shall apply to the design of both the site and the architecture with significant, attractive landscaping incorporated to buffer adjacent uses. A campus type setting for the industrial or technology uses is strongly encouraged.

Industrial land uses shall be located where there is adequate public access, sufficient separation from adjoining lower intensity uses, future availability of public water and sewer services, adequate utilities, and access to an adequate information technology infrastructure. Currently, the designated area along M-59 is included in the future infrastructure utility area but there is no public water or sewer available at this time.

PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

The Public/Semi Public category is comprised of public and semi-public land uses. Public/Semi-Public uses include the Township-owned cemeteries, a portion of the public elementary school campus, and the Township Hall and fire station complex. These civic and institutional uses are important as anchor features for the community and the adjacent Village Centre. The governmental elements should be landmarks that visually express the central importance and value of community and public life. The north-south ITC utility corridor is included, in recognition of its planned function as part of the regional open space (future trail) system.

The Operating Engineers training campus along Fisher Road near M-59 is also designated Public/Semi-Public, due to its educational function. This plan would support a CPUD approval for the campus to govern its long-term build-out.

RECREATION /OPEN SPACE

The Recreation/Open Space plan category is designated for active and passive recreation needs of the community, as well as for environmental preservation. Included are public and private recreation sites for community use and preserved open spaces. Land areas in this category include properties such as the Township-owned park sites on Argentine Road and behind the Township Hall, the MDOT wetland mitigation area at the intersection of Neff Lake Road and Musson Road, the Rattlesnake Reserve off Hughes Road, the Pasinski Preserve between Bigelow and M-59, the H. Clare and Harold Salmon Centennial Farm conservation easement. The golf course at M-59 and Kellogg Road and the golf course at Golf Club Road and Eager Road are also in this classification.

This Plan encourages the existing golf course uses to remain. If the golf course function ceases to be a viable land use for these sites, then the future land use should be a permitted use in the CR-1 zoning district. If none of those uses are viable, then the future land use should be low density, single family residential at no higher density than Low Density A. If any of these areas are developed, open space and cluster designs are strongly encouraged so that desired natural features such as woodlands, wetlands, topography and animal habitats can be preserved. Integrating the residential use with the golf course function is also encouraged, if at all feasible.

It should be noted that parks, recreation areas and open spaces are appropriate uses in any zoning district. The Plan encourages the Township to acquire the additional land for recreation as opportunities present themselves.

Future Land Use Relationship to Neighboring Communities

By ensuring consistent land uses across the broader Livingston County region, Oceola Township's Future Land Use Plan will work in unison with neighboring communities to develop a seamless and collaborative Future Land Use fabric across community lines.

GENOA TOWNSHIP

Genoa Township is located along the southern border of Oceola Township. In Genoa Township, the planned future land uses in the areas bordering Oceola include large lot and low-density residential land uses. On the northwest side of Grand River Avenue, general commercial land uses are planned. Both the planned residential and commercial future land uses align with the planned future land uses for Oceola Township.

DEERFIELD TOWNSHIP

Deerfield Township is located along the northern border of Oceola Township, on the north side of Allen Road. The Deerfield Township Future Land Use Plan notes agricultural and rural residential land uses along the border of Oceola Township. This planned land use is also consistent with Oceola Township's future land use plan for the northern portion of the Township, where agriculture and large lot residential land uses are planned to remain.

HARTLAND TOWNSHIP

Oceola Township's eastern border is Hartland Township. Hartland Township's planned land uses along its western border include rural residential, medium-density suburban residential, and low-density residential. Oceola Township's Future Land Use Plan notes agricultural and rural residential along its eastern border, with a small pocket of low density residential. This planned future land use is consistent with Hartland Township's future land use plan, in that largely low density residential, neighborhoods, or agricultural/large lot residential areas are planned for both communities.

HOWELL TOWNSHIP

Howell Township is located on the west side of Oceola Township, sharing a border at Fisher Road. Howell Township's planned land uses along the Oceola Township side largely consist of agricultural preservation and low-density residential. Similarly, to all other neighboring municipalities, Oceola Township's Future Land Use Plan is consistent with the planned land uses in Howell Township, in that Oceola Township's planned land uses along the Fisher Road corridor include agricultural and low-density residential along the northern side, gaining minimal density further south toward Thompson Lake and the City of Howell border.

CITY OF HOWELL

Additionally, Oceola Township shares a border with the City of Howell on the southwest side of the Township, near Thompson Lake. The City of Howell’s Future Land Use Plan notes residential land uses along Oceola’s border, with varying densities and housing types, largely within a traditional grid street network. The planned land uses in Oceola Township that border the City of Howell include low/medium density residential. Although the planned residential density may result in a slightly higher yield than those planned in Oceola, it is not likely that the difference would be significant enough to result in a loss of character or regional consistency.

Zoning Plan

This plan was updated concurrently with the Oceola Township Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, there are no recommended zoning amendments to implement the plan.

The following table represents the Oceola Township Zoning Districts that would appropriately implement the vision of the Future Land Use categories as described above. Rezoning requests should be reviewed against this table to determine whether the requested district is supported by this Plan.

Table 20: Zoning Plan

Future Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
Agriculture / Large Lot Residential	AR, Agricultural Residential RR, Rural Residential
Low Density Residential A	R-1, Residential District 1 RPUDs of Appropriate Density
Low Density Residential B	R-2, Residential District 2 RPUDs of Appropriate Density
Low/Medium Density Residential	R-3, Residential District 3 (featuring few or no two-unit buildings) RPUDs of Appropriate Density
Medium Density Residential	R-3, Residential District 3 (featuring two-unit buildings) RPUDs of Appropriate Density
High Density Residential	RM Multi-Family MHP Manufactured Housing Park (where criteria in this plan are met) RPUDs of Appropriate Density CPUDs featuring Residential Uses
General Commercial	C Commercial CR Commercial Recreation CPUD
Neighborhood Commercial	C Commercial OS Office Service CPUD
General Industrial	M-1 Industrial IPUD
Public/Semi-Public	AR Agricultural Residential RPUDs may be approved ONLY if they are consistent with the planned residential density of the surrounding area. CPUDs may be approved for educational or institutional campuses.

Implementation

Overview

Implementation is the key to the success of the Township's Master Plan. This Implementation chapter presents tools and techniques that citizens, community leaders, and Township staff can use to achieve the recommendations of the Master Plan. These implementation measures are possible if there are people in the community with vision and a willingness to invest the time and effort required. Community improvement requires a compelling vision; persistence; the flexibility needed to respond to changing needs, opportunities, and circumstances; and an ability to achieve consensus.

The following sections outline implementation tools and techniques in several categories:

- Planning, Development and Policy.
- Zoning Ordinance and Other Regulations.
- Open Space Preservation.
- Economic Development.

Planning, Development, and Policy

REVIEW THE MASTER PLAN EVERY 5 YEARS

The Master Plan is not intended to be static. Conditions change over time. It is important that the Planning Commission periodically review the Master Plan to ensure that it is still relevant and that it still reflects the vision of the community. Also, by State law, the Master Plan must be reviewed at least once every 5 years.

UPDATE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

In order to qualify for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) community recreation grants, the Howell Area Recreation Authority Strategic Plan will have to continue to be updated on a 5-year cycle. The Township should also complete an Oceola Township Master Recreation Plan that addresses the needs of the areas on the eastern half of the Township that are not within the boundaries of the Howell Area Recreation Authority.

The Township should continue to pursue the development of Township-owned property on Argentine Road to meet the Township's recreational needs. The acquisition of larger tracts of land for future community and regional recreation open space needs by the Township would be a prudent public policy, as land prices will be lower now than in the future.

COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

Adjacent Communities. The health and vitality of Oceola Township is affected by the surrounding communities of Howell, Howell Township, Deerfield Township, Hartland Township and Genoa Township. The Township has a tradition of cooperation with the adjacent communities in order to provide cost-effective, quality services and managed development. Review of this new Master Plan by these surrounding entities will further facilitate the implementation of the objectives set forth in the Plan by Oceola Township.

Transportation Entities. Oceola Township should continue to work closely with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Livingston County Road Commission (LCRC) on plans for major corridors such as M-59 and Latson Road. Clearly, these agencies must be aware of the Township's land use planning objectives in order to develop compatible transportation plans. The development of the Master Plan and specific corridor plans can facilitate interagency cooperation by communicating in detail the transportation objectives of the Township to MDOT and LCRC.

Facility-Related Organizations. The Township must also maintain its working relationship with entities such as the Howell Area Parks and Recreation Authority, the Genoa-Oceola Sewer and Water Authority (GO) and the Marion, Howell, Oceola and Genoa Sewer and Water Authority (MHOG) to coordinate the distribution of recreation, water and sewer facilities. These facilities directly impact the quality of life and successful development of a community.

Greenways and Trails Planning. The Township should continue to work with Livingston County and the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan to establish a master greenways trail system through the Township. The development of a Greenways Master Plan for the County will establish a vision for the location and development of a comprehensive multi-use pathway system that would provide pedestrian and non-motorized circulation throughout the Township. Such a Plan will help guide and inform on-going planning decisions and could provide the basis to seek out grants and other multi-use pathway funding. These coordinated efforts should continue in order to establish a network of functional and attractive green trails that provide alternative modes of transportation and recreation in the community.

Establish an Annual Work Plan. The Master Plan contains many recommendations. These recommendations should be prioritized in an annual work plan in order to begin to implement the recommendations of the Plan. Participants involved in setting priorities should include the Planning Commission, the Township Board, Township staff, and others who would participate in implementation of the Plan.

Inform and Educate. The success of the Master Plan depends to a great extent on efforts to inform and educate citizens about the Plan and the need for regulatory measures to implement the Plan. Successful implementation requires the support and participation of residents, property owners, and business owners.

Open Space Preservation

ACQUIRE LAND

The Township recognizes that land acquisition is an important supplement to land use regulations as a means to protect natural resources, create recreation opportunities, and achieve other goals. Land acquisition can be used to control the use of a specific acquired parcel, or it can be used to enhance the general character of the Township. The Township purchased land for recreational use along Argentine Road. Local land acquisition programs are generally funded either by local property taxes, (such as a dedicated millage or general fund revenues), or by grant programs.

There are several approaches to acquiring interest in land to advance the goals of the Master Plan. Generally, the Township can take direct action to acquire property interest, create regulations to require land protection or it can rely on private voluntary land protection efforts.

1. **Direct Action by the Township.** If the Township takes direct action, it can acquire property in fee simple or it can acquire a partial interest through acquisition of easements. Fee simple acquisition provides the greatest level of control over the use of a parcel, but it is also the most expensive method of acquisition. In addition to acquisition costs, fee simple acquisition removes property from the tax rolls, resulting in a decrease in property tax revenue.
2. **Easements.** Easements are distinct property rights that may be sold separately from other rights. Easements are effective for preserving sensitive lands, providing public access along lakes, waterways or greenways, preserving historic facades, and allowing property owners to obtain income, estate, and property tax benefits while they continue to live on their land.
3. **Private Voluntary Land Protection Efforts.** Instead of taking direct action, the Township can encourage and rely on private voluntary land protection efforts through one of the following means:
 - o Donation of land or bargain sale (acquisition at below market value).
 - o Option to buy (often used to secure a parcel of land while funding is being obtained).
 - o Right-of-first refusal (used to tie up a parcel without having to purchase it immediately).
 - o Leases (temporary control without the expense of acquisition).
 - o Pre-acquisition by a land trust (where the land trust serves as the intermediary for the public agency, such as the Township).
 - o Conservation investment (essentially real estate syndication for the purpose of resource protection).

State of Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (Formerly known as PA 116).

Public Act 116 of 1974 allows farmers to enroll in a limited contract, a farmland development rights agreement, with the State to keep their land in agricultural or open space use. In exchange for enrollment, farmers are allowed special tax breaks in the form of exemptions from special assessments and a tax credit through their state income tax to relieve some of the burden of their property tax payments. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program discusses 6 possible methods for preserving farmland and open space. Only Options 1 through 5 are currently available for Livingston County. The preservation methods are as follows:

1. **Farmland Development Rights Agreements.** A temporary restriction on the land between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land for agriculture in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments. (Commonly known as PA 116).
2. **Conservation Easement Donations.** A permanent restriction on the land between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, protecting their land for either open space or agriculture.

3. **Agricultural Preservation Fund.** A fund established to assist local units of government in implementing a local purchase of development rights program.
4. **Local Open Space Easement.** A temporary restriction on the land between the local government and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land as open space in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments.
5. **Designated Open Space Easement.** A temporary restriction on specially designated lands between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving their land as open space in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments.
6. **Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).** A permanent restriction on the land between the State and a landowner, voluntarily entered into by a landowner, preserving his/her land for agriculture in exchange for a cash payment for those rights. Currently PA 116 funding is not available for a PDR program in Livingston County, but a PDR could be initiated either on the County or the Township level.

CONSERVE OPEN SPACE

Oceola Township should continue to encourage the conservation of open space through easements, land donations, open space subdivisions, PUD's and flexible development options in the Zoning Ordinance.

Economic Development

While it has not been the policy of the Township to encourage significant non-residential development, the following tools may be used to implement certain recommendations of the plan, such as the creation of a research and technology park as part of the Mixed Use area at Argentine and M-59.

UTILIZE THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCING ACT

Michigan Public Act 281 of 1986 provides for the establishment of a Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) to undertake economic development activities that promote manufacturing of goods or materials, agricultural processing, or high technology activity. A typical LDFA project might involve construction of roads and utilities, (such as information technology infrastructure like the broadband network backbone), deemed necessary for a specific manufacturing or high technology development project. LDFA activities are most frequently financed through tax increment financing or through issuance of revenue bonds that are retired using tax increment revenues.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a funding method for certain economic development entities. When a TIF district is created, the total state equalized value for property in the district is recorded. Each year thereafter, the property tax revenue created by any increase in total state equalized value within the district is captured by the TIF. These funds are then available to be used for eligible projects, repayment of debt, or other authorized activities, depending upon the type of TIF district that has been established. The TIF is therefore funded only by increases in property values and would not have an adverse impact upon the Township's general fund.

UTILIZE THE TECHNOLOGY PARK DEVELOPMENT ACT

Michigan Public Act 385 of 1984 provides for the establishment of technology park districts and exemption from certain property taxes for qualified research and development, and high technology uses. High technology service activity is defined in the act as a use that "has as its principal function the providing of services including computer, information transfer, communication, distribution, processing, administrative, laboratory, experimental, developmental, technical, or testing services." This act could be an effective inducement for development of research and technology businesses near the intersection of M-59 and Argentine Roads.

PURSUE GRANTS

Public grants from various agencies are available for specific municipal type projects. For example, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grants are available for park development and land acquisition. Transportation Enhancement Act grants (formerly TEA-21, now called SAFETEA- LU) are available for improvements to the Township's transportation system, particularly M-59 and non-motorized transportation improvements such as the greenways and trails. Private sources for grants also exist. Utility companies and foundations such as the Home Depot Foundation or the Community Foundation are an alternate source for private grants for Township projects.

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