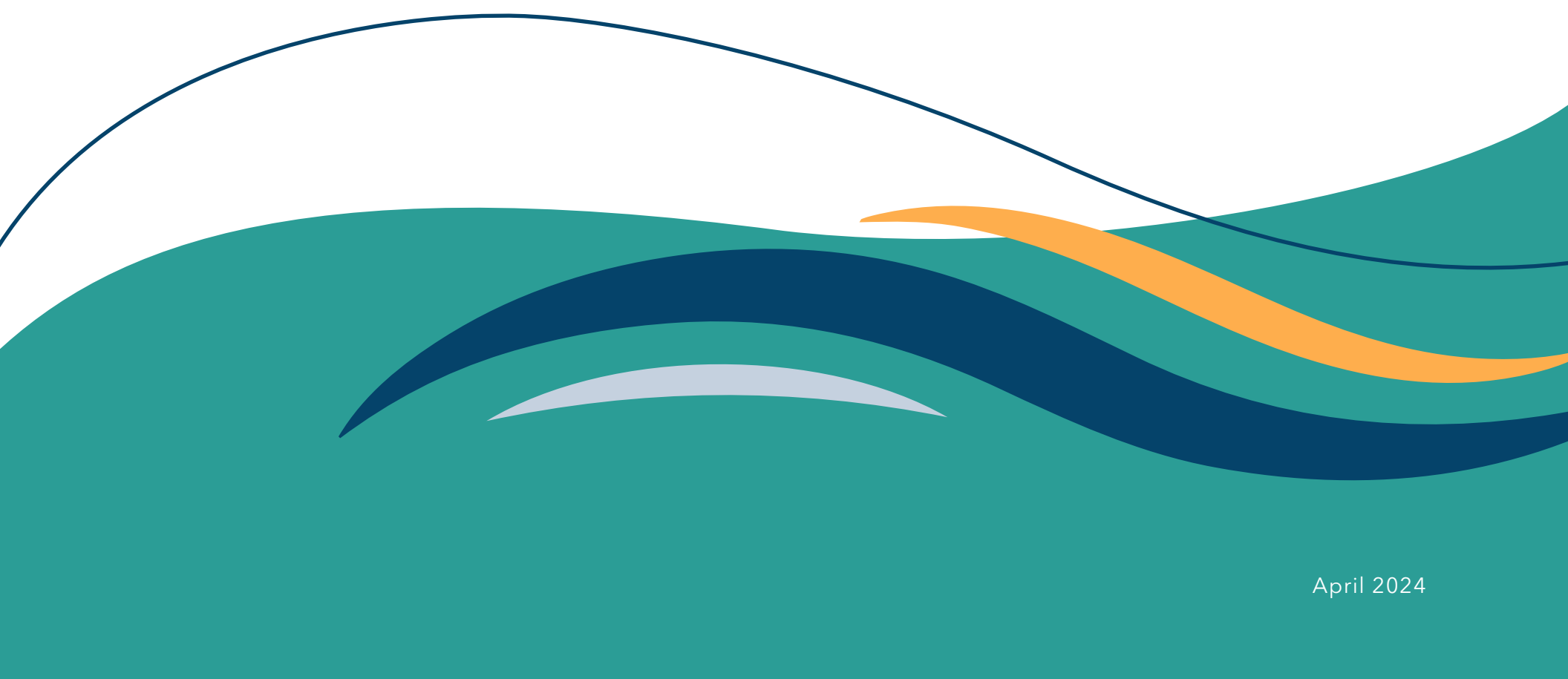


# MASTER PLAN

## SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

Van Buren County, Michigan



April 2024

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The South Haven Charter Township Master Plan benefited from significant collaboration with the Planning Commission, Board of Trustees, Township staff, and active members of the community who participated in this planning process.

### Planning Commission

- Mark Odland, Chairperson
- Phil Poole, Planning Commissioner
- Paul Kiry, Board Representative
- Greg Meyer, Planning Commissioner
- Lowell Tippman, Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison
- Kristin Dibble, Planning Commissioner
- Grant Nicol, Planning Commissioner

### A Special Thanks To

- Tasha Smalley, Zoning Administrator

### Township Board of Trustees

- Ross Stein, Township Supervisor
- Lamanda Riston, Supervisor's Deputy
- Hillary Fisher, Treasurer
- Sabine Callaghan, Deputy Treasurer
- Brenda Bertorelli, Clerk
- Elizabeth Bertorelli, Deputy Clerk
- Maureen Lewandowski, Trustee
- Paul Kiry, Trustee
- Michael DeGrandchamp, Trustee
- David Wiatrowski, Trustee

THANK  
YOU!

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

Located in the northwestern corner of Van Buren County, South Haven Charter Township has long been considered one of Van Buren County's most desirable areas to live. Nestled along the shores of Lake Michigan, South Haven Charter Township is a close-knit community with plentiful parks, natural features, proximity to superb beaches, and agricultural importance; all within a short distance of downtown South Haven.

South Haven Charter Township citizens enjoy abundant recreational opportunities, including the Kal-Haven Trail, the Van Buren Trail, the Black River, Lake Michigan, and numerous high-quality parks. Local and regional growth both large and small are occurring in the Township because of its accessibility to the greater region.

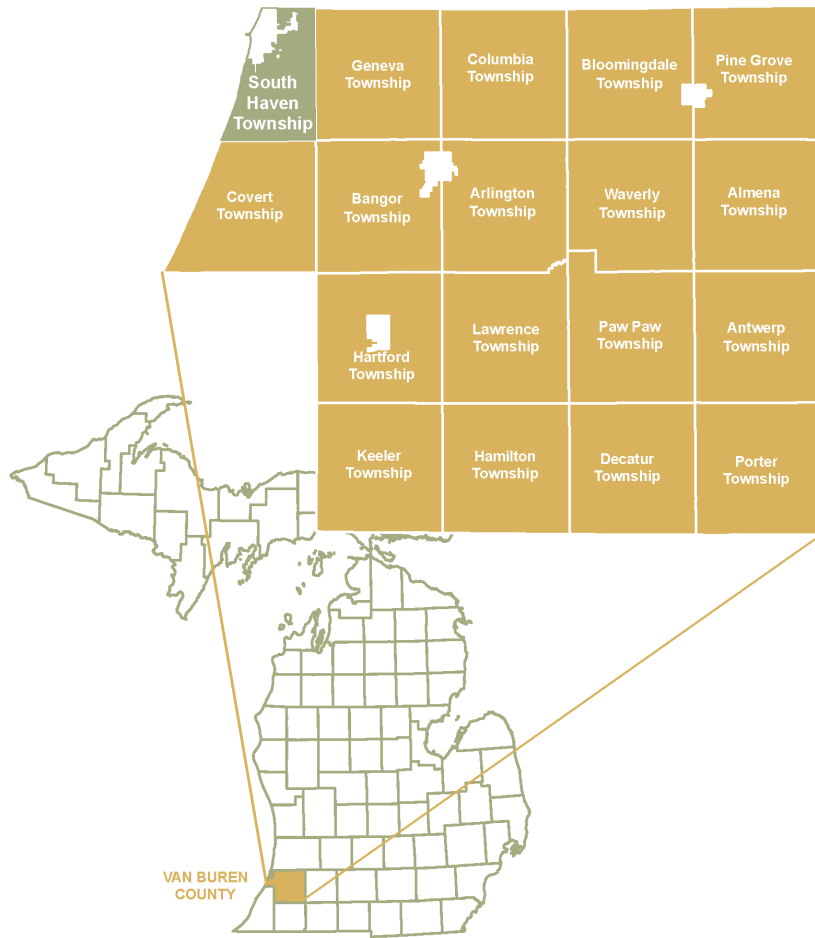
## WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan represents a statement about what a community is, what its residents value, and what those residents and businesses hope the community will become in the future. This Master Plan is the product of more than a year of work by the Township staff, Planning Commission, citizens, and local leaders. It reflects the community's commitment to caring for South Haven Charter Township's people and its natural and built environment. This plan provides a strong commitment to retaining and strengthening the local quality of life for everyone in South Haven Charter Township.

The Master Plan is comprised of several different sections, including a description of the Township's history and the existing conditions and trends related to its people, the land, and Township or regional authority services. It also contains policy statements outlining the future direction for the Township through a common vision statement and a detailed set of goals and objectives that are intended to achieve that vision.

In addition, the Master Plan provides the Township with a guide for land use, the character of new development, and opportunities for new development, redevelopment, and conservation. The Master Plan serves as the basis for land use decisions and regulation under zoning and other regulatory means. This Master Plan has been developed pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008, as amended), which enables municipalities in Michigan to undertake planning efforts.

The 2023 South Haven Charter Township Master Plan is an update of the previous Master Plan, adopted in 2009. Some of the policies from the 2009 Plan have been retained, while others have been strengthened, revised, or removed.



## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The effort to develop the 2023 South Haven Charter Township Master Plan began in October 2022 and consisted of the following phases:

- **Step 1 - Public Engagement.** A well-rounded Master Plan must be founded on the interests and desires of the public, and this Plan is no exception. The policies of this Master Plan were developed following a public outreach campaign, which included a community survey, visioning meetings with the Township Planning Commission, and a public open house. These are described in additional detail in this Chapter, and a complete Public Engagement Report is included in Appendix A.
- **Step 2 - Community Profile.** The Community Profile, which is located in Chapter 2, contains snapshots of the demographic conditions, existing land use, natural features, housing, and infrastructure in the Township. This is crucial to the planning process as it provides a data-driven, factual background upon which the plan's recommendations and policies can be based.
- **Step 3 - Visioning.** Goals and Objectives were developed over a series of meetings with the Planning Commission. The Goals and Objectives from the 2009 Plan were used as a starting point, but many new goals and objectives were written to address contemporary challenges and priorities. The public input received in Step 2 informed the policies and overall direction found in Chapter 3.

A Master Plan represents a statement about what a community is, what its residents value, and what those residents and businesses hope the community will become in the future.

### WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

- **Step 4 - Future Land Use.** The Future Use Plan and Map found in Chapter 4 provide a guide for land use and zoning decisions in the Township. Each future land use designation is related to one of the Township's zoning districts to aid the Planning Commission in determining how the future land map relates to the zoning map.
- **Step 5 - Implementation Strategies.** The Master Plan concludes with a series of steps that, if implemented, will fulfill the Plan's Goals and Objectives, and should allow South Haven Charter Township to achieve the overarching vision articulated by this Plan. These can be found in Chapter 3 with the Goals and Objectives.

Communities have a responsibility to look beyond the day-to-day zoning issues and provide a blueprint for land use and development in the community, and the long-range, community-based perspective of a Master Plan provides that blueprint. A properly formulated, thoughtful Master Plan can be of great value to the citizens of South Haven Charter Township. When implemented, this Plan will help to preserve the small-town, rural charm that citizens value, encourage thoughtful and sustainable development, and protect the environment of the Township that gives South Haven Charter Township its unique character.

The adoption of this Master Plan is not the end of the process, but the beginning. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Master Plan will depend on the willingness of the Township to follow the Plan and achieve its vision through cooperative, methodical, and positive actions. Doing so will be hard work, but the rewards and the benefits to future generations be well worth the effort.



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A vital piece of any Master Plan is engagement with the community and its people. People are the most important aspect of planning, and it is to them which master plans conform. Public engagement for the Master Plan update was conducted in a variety of ways, including an online community survey that was available from November of 2022 to May of 2023. A public open house was held on April 29, 2023 at the Township Hall. Both the survey and the open house were advertised and promoted on the Township's website, via flyers distributed around the community, and through local talk radio.

Three meetings were also held with the Planning Commission to discuss opportunities, threats, and top Master Plan priorities. All visioning sessions were open to the public for feedback and engagement.







## Public Open House

During the open house, the public expressed what things they loved about South Haven Charter Township, as well as where they believed investment and improvements were needed. Common themes that appeared from feedback revolved around the appreciation of rural character of the Township, access to recreation and beaches, and enjoyment of local shops and eateries.

Residents also provided suggestions for enhanced walkability and connections around the Township via trails and sidewalks. Residents also stated their desire for denser housing options that could result in more affordable options in well planned areas of the Township.

## Community Survey

The community survey was distributed to Township residents over a period of six months between 2022 and 2023. A total of 263 responses were completed, providing key data for the Master Plan that was broken down into four categories: Background, Community Feedback, Housing, and Economic Development.

The completion rate for the survey was around 64%. The remaining 36% of respondents skipped at least one question. Best efforts were given to make the online survey concise and engaging, survey fatigue happens frequently and respondents typically begin to skim through the survey or close out before completion altogether. The full survey and specific response data can be found in Appendix A.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Michigan's archaeological record of history generally starts after the glaciers receded about 12,000 years ago. That is also thought to be shortly after human habitation started to move east on the North American continent. Mound Builders were probably the first humans in Southwestern Lower Michigan until the Ottawa, Miami and Potawatomi arrived either permanently or seasonally by the 1600's.

Father Marquette, a French Missionary and explorer, may have visited somewhere on the Van Buren County shoreline in 1675, but the first permanent settlers cleared the forest and established modern agriculture in about 1830. Logging, followed by farming, removed most of the deciduous and conifer forests for lumber products by 1900.

Fruit production started in the 1880's and then increased in importance after the forests were harvested. Fruit production remains, but has shifted from pears to apples, blueberries, and cranberries.

At the turn of the 20th century, the Lake Michigan shoreline began to witness development of seasonal homes, many of them for residents of Chicago. Seasonal housing development and agricultural production remained the mainstay of South Haven Charter Township between World War II and the turn of the 21st century. Many Township residents have been employed in industries within the City of South Haven or the former Palisades Nuclear Plant in Covert Township nearby. (*West to Far Michigan, 2002*)



Source: Michigan State University

## Boundaries

The Township contains fifteen full-inland sections and eight fractional sections along the lakeshore and around the City of South Haven. The Township is located within the northwest corner of Van Buren County, and is bounded on the north by Allegan County (Casco Township); on the east by Geneva Township; on the south by Covert Township; and on the west by Lake Michigan.

## Settlement and Settlers

The territory to the south, around St. Joseph, had been occupied by settlers years before the colonial settlers had occupied any part of this or adjoining townships. The first American to explore the region was Jay R. Monroe, in 1833 he built the first house where the City of South Haven is now. In 1838, Daniel Pierce came in from Schoolcraft with the first horse-team. He purchased, from Mr. Monroe, 160 acres of land in the northwest quarter of section 14, where he built a cabin, in which he lived at times, though he made his permanent home in Kalamazoo.

## Early Roads

In 1835, Mr. Monroe, laid out a road from South Haven to Paw Paw, and previously had laid out a road from South Haven to Prairie Ronde, near Schoolcraft. The first road, of which mention is made in record, was laid out September 9, 1843, known as Wood's Road, ran to the northeast corner of section 5. On May 23, 1846 Young's Road, the Township's second road to be recorded, ran at the west line of section 35, and running north to the intersection of the Waterford Road on the east line of section 15. The South Haven and Hartford Road was recorded October 18, 1845, with each township agreeing to keep the road in repair within its own territory. (*History of Berrien and Van Buren Counties, 1880*).



## History of Planning in South Haven Township

A brief timeline of important planning and zoning events follows:

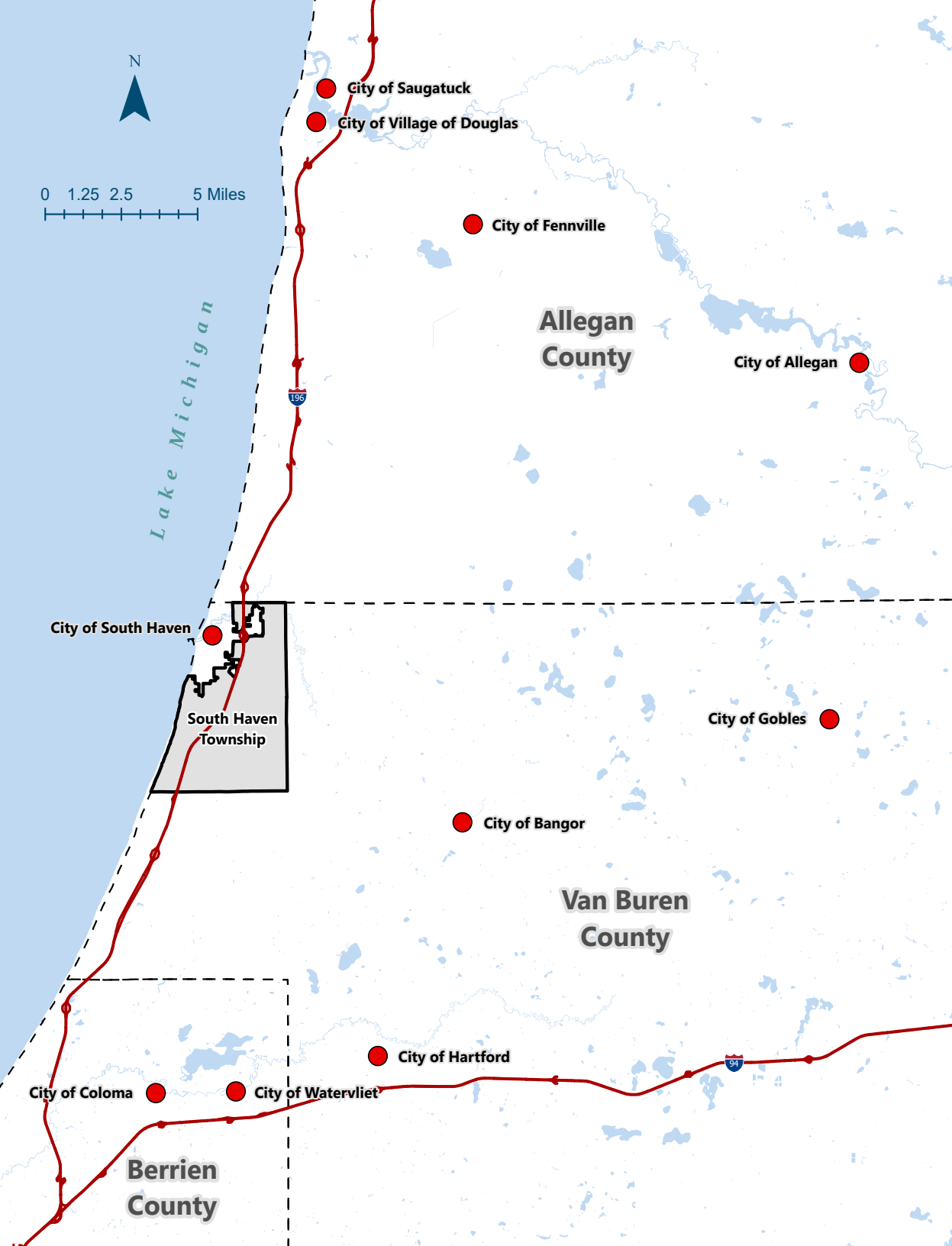
- **1986** - The South Haven Township Planning Commission was formed.
- **1988** - The first South Haven Township Master Plan was adopted.
- **January 1989** - A proposed Zoning Ordinance was defeated.
- **August 1990** - A Zoning Ordinance was re-proposed and adopted by referendum in November of 1990.
- **January 1991** - A Building Code Ordinance establishing minimum regulations governing the design, construction, alteration, enlargement, repair, demolition, removal, maintenance and use of all buildings and structures took effect.
- **July 1993** - A Public and Private Road Ordinance was adopted.
- **March 2009** - South Haven Township adopts its second Master Plan.



# CHAPTER 2

## OUR TOWNSHIP TODAY





## OUR TOWNSHIP TODAY

Van Buren County Borders Lake Michigan in southwestern Michigan and consists of an area of 607 square miles composed mainly of cultivated fields, orchards, woodlands, and pastures. The topography ranges from flat to rolling hills.

### Climate

The climate, light, and well-drained soils make the Township a very productive fruit and vegetable growing area. The prevailing westerly winds are warmed in the winter and cooled in the summer while crossing Lake Michigan, moderating the Township's climate considerably. The slow spring warming slows the fruit trees from budding until the danger of frost is over and the opposite is true in the fall, allowing fruit to ripen before the first frosts occur. On average, monthly precipitation is well distributed throughout the year with somewhat heavier amounts during the crop season. Temperatures warm slowly in the spring and remain warmer in the fall because of the moderating effect of Lake Michigan.

MAP 2.1. SOUTH HAVEN REGION

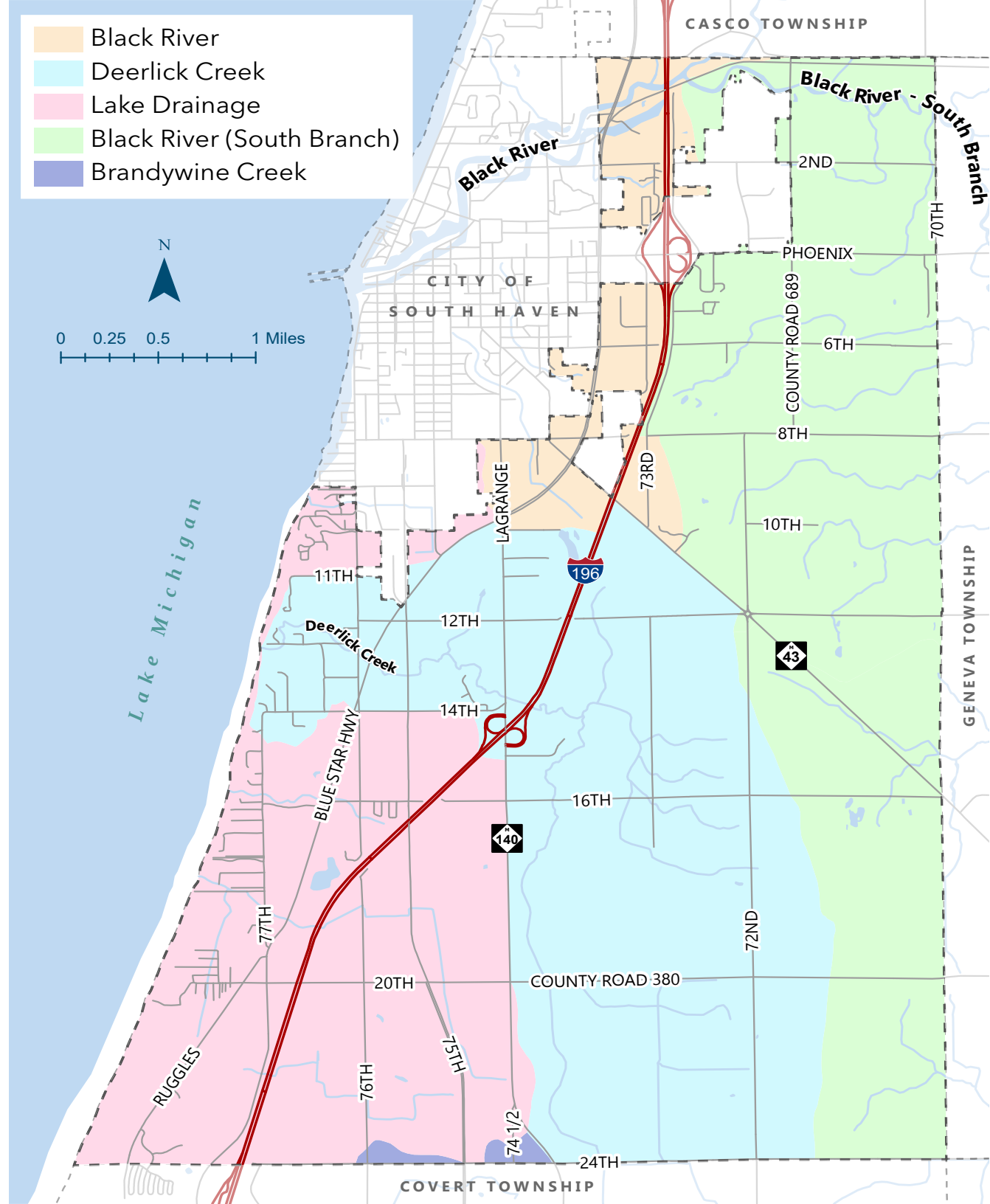


Weather is a major element in both seasonal attractions, housing along the lake, and agricultural productivity. During the winter although the weather is moderated by the lake, it also brings lake-effect snowfall; up to 77.7 inches per year according to the National Weather Service.

## Water Resources

Glacial drift is the only known source of fresh groundwater. Large reservoirs of groundwater, especially within outwash plains, provide most of the Township's freshwater supply. Large areas of the Township are underlain by clay deposits. Clay is a poor source of well water because of the low production rate. Most private wells in the Township tap into sand seams in the clay. Well failures are fairly common in the Township however, proximity to the lake's shoreline also provides an ample supply of fresh water. This source is used by the City of South Haven and is the basis for the South Haven Area Water and Sewer Authority (SHAWSA).

MAP 2.2. HYDROLOGY



The Township had four significant inland watersheds:

- The south branch of the Black River, which flows east to west across the north quarter mile of the Township.
- Deerlick Creek and the Randall Drain parallels M-140 to the east and flows from near 24th Avenue north to just east of the I-196 interchange where it joins with Deerlick Creek. The main branch of Deerlick begins near the northwest corner of 16th Avenue and 73rd Street, which flows north a half mile then turns west to join the Randall Drain and continues meandering between 12th and 14th Avenues to Lake Michigan.
- The unnamed 7th Avenue tributary to the Black River meanders either side of the east Township line (70th Street) from about 8th Avenue north to the Black River, and
- The Dyckman & Sheffer county drains empty the area between 76th Street, 16th Avenue, 24th Avenue, and Lake Michigan.

## Soils

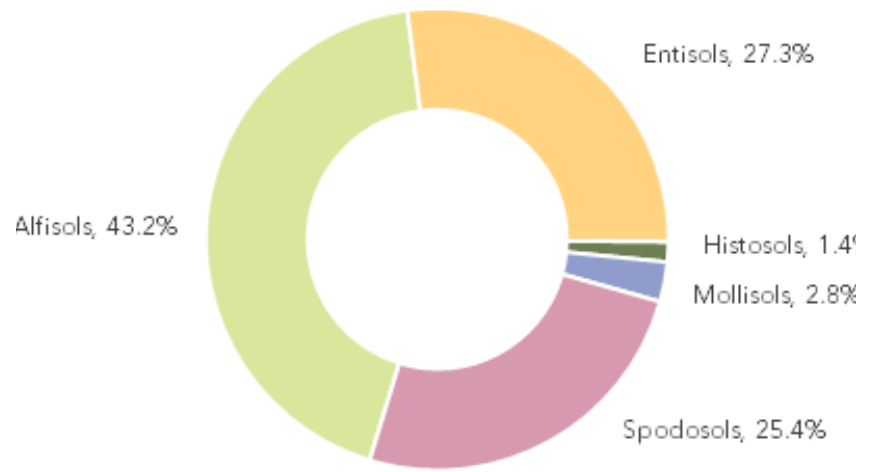
Relatively few soil types dominate the land of South Haven Charter Township. First is the agricultural soil to the east over gently rolling to level ground surfaces. These soils provide fertile locations, particularly for blueberry orchards as well as other cash crops. The predominant soils in the area are Alfisols, Entisols, and Spodosols. As shown in the chart below, alfisols make up about 43.2% of the Township soil followed by Entisols at 27.3%.

Alfisols are moderately leached soils that have relatively high native fertility. Alfisols with a dominant suborder Udalf, are most commonly found in Michigan. Udalfs form a belt extending through Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. The combination of a generally favorable climate and high fertility allows alfisols to be very productive soils for agricultural purposes. These types of soils can largely be seen in the central part of the Township.

Entisols are characterized by great diversity, in environmental settings and land use. These types of soils include soils in unstable environments, such as floodplains, dunes, or those found on steep slopes. The productivity level of entisols varies largely from high productivity in floodplains, and low productivity when found on steep slopes or sandy areas. Entisols can be seen in the southwestern and southeastern corners of the Township along with areas west of County Road 689 (71st 1/2 Street) and east of I-196.

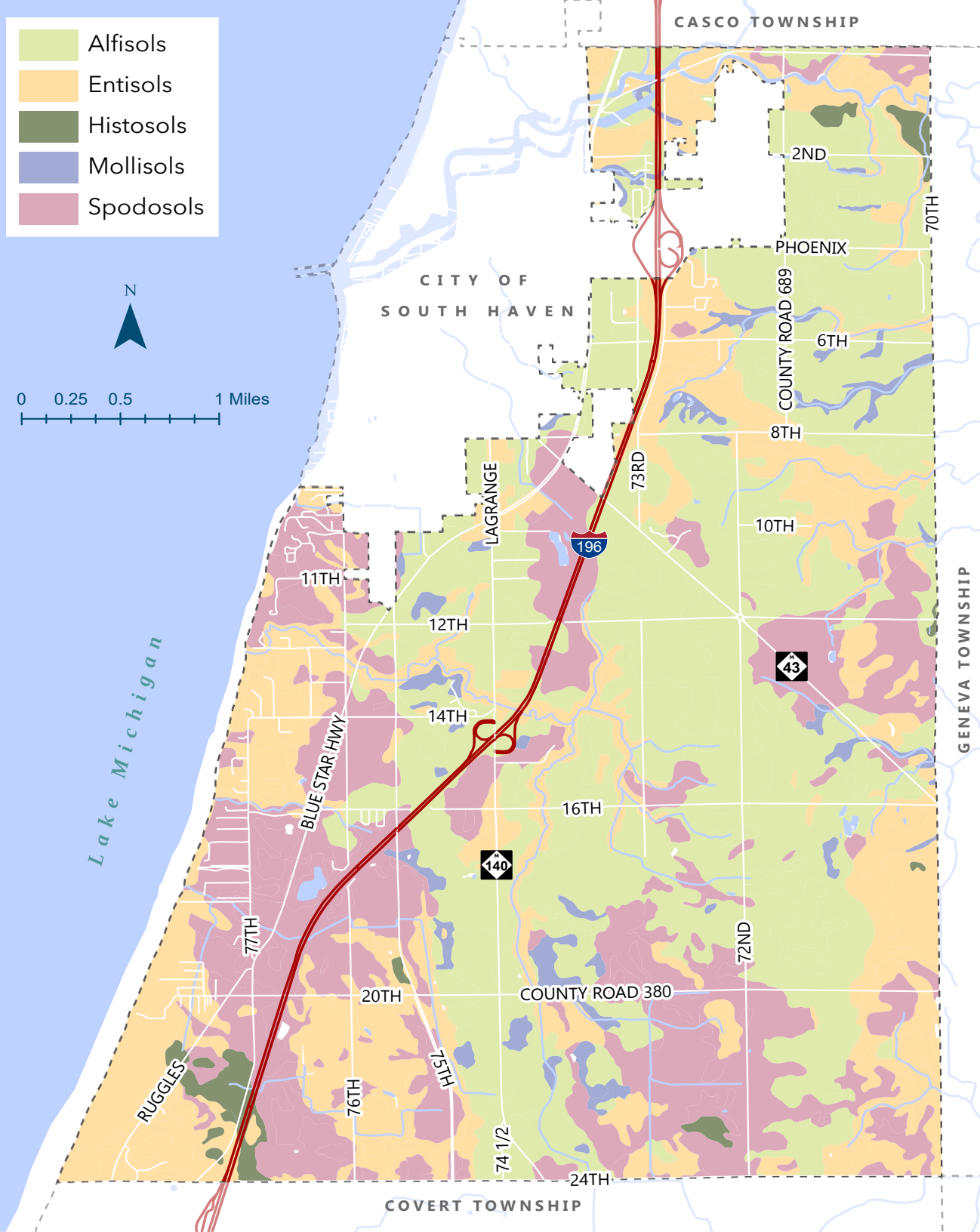
Histosols form in settings such as wetlands where restricted drainage inhibits the decomposition of plant and animal remains. They are often referred to as peats and mucks and have physical properties that restrict their use for engineering purposes. Histosols are soils that are composed mainly of organic materials. Histosols can largely be seen in the southwestern portion of the Township west of I-196 and scattered in small clusters in the northern portion of the Township.

**FIGURE 2.1. SOIL CLASSIFICATION BY PERCENTAGE**

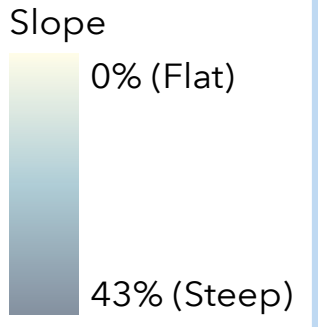


Mollisols are largely distributed in the northwestern part of the Township. They are characterized by a thick, fertile horizon. Aquolls are a type of Mollisols with a water table at or near the surface for much of the year. This soil type is among the most important and productive agricultural soils in the world. Mollisols can be seen on the map in various clusters in the southern portions of the Township and along streams in the northern half of the Township.

Spodosols are acid soils characterized by a subsurface accumulation of humus that is complexed with Aluminum and Iron. These soils typically form in the coarse-textured parent material and are naturally infertile. These soils require additions of lime to be productive agriculturally. Spodosols can be seen in the southwestern corner of the Township along I-196 and areas near County Road 380 (20th Avenue) and 72nd Street.



MAP 2.3. SOILS



## Topography

The topography is relatively modest in much of South Haven Charter Township, as virtually all of the Township has elevations between the 600-foot to 675-foot elevation marks, which is above the prevailing elevation of about 590 feet for Lake Michigan. However, the Lake Michigan frontage is lined with bluffs and dunes that sharply rise to about 650 feet within several hundred feet of the lake. Away from the Lake Michigan frontage, there is a gentle roll to the farmland and woodland east of the freeway (I-196). Then the land falls east of the bluffs to about 620 feet of elevation in the western portion of the Township.

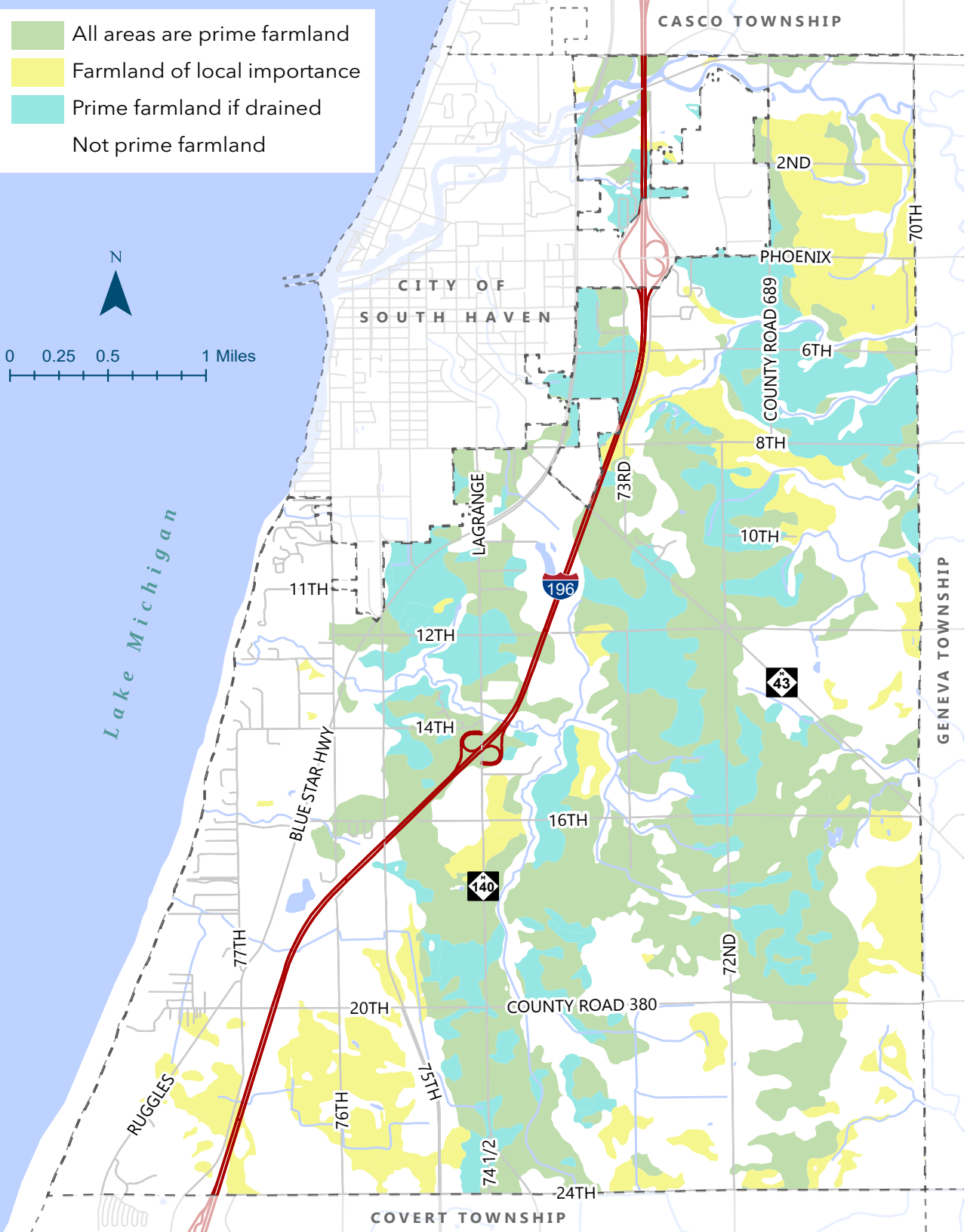
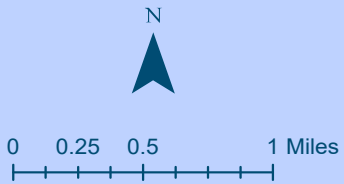
MAP 2.4. TOPOGRAPHY







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



## Prime Farmland

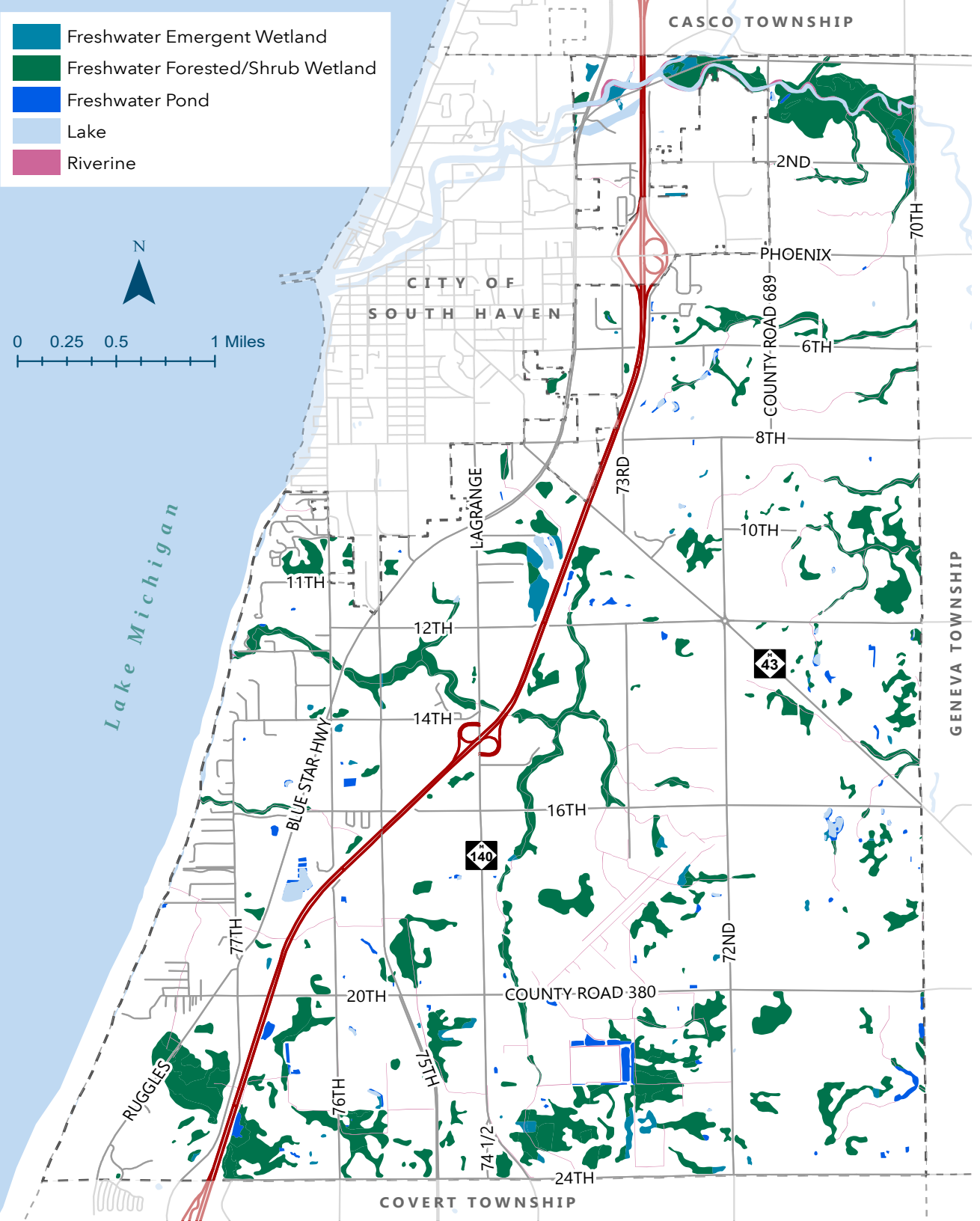
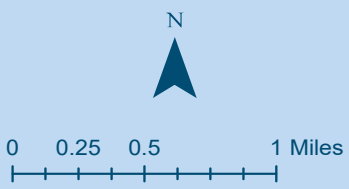
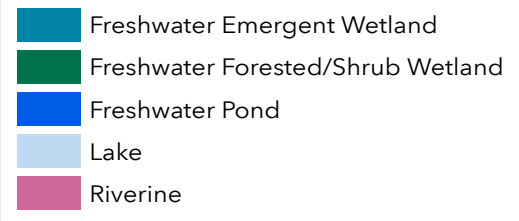
While agricultural uses account for slightly less than 27% of the total land area of the Township, agriculture is widely scattered throughout the Township. The southeastern quarter of the Township contains some farmland, but the majority of the South Haven Charter Township’s agriculture is focused on fruit and blueberry orchards or cranberry bogs. As shown in Map 2.5, a majority of the Township does not contain prime farmland, however, about a quarter of the Township is classified as prime farmland and another 13% is considered as prime farmland of local importance as defined by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Prime farmland areas can mostly be seen east from I-196 and farmland of local importance can be seen in large clusters in the northeastern corner of the Township and west of I-196 in the southern half of the Township.

MAP 2.5. PRIME FARMLAND









## Wetlands

Wetlands have many significant functions. Wetlands act as stormwater and floodplain safety valves. They also support unique habitats for rare species, and they are groundwater recharge areas. In southwest Michigan, areas with wet soils can provide a unique condition suitable for blueberries and/or cranberry production.

Wetlands are prevalent throughout the Township with large clusters around standing bodies of water and the Black River. Wetlands serve a variety of functions for a community.

Wetlands can:

- Mitigate flooding by detaining surface water runoff; and
- Control soil erosion and sedimentation loading in rivers and streams; and
- Provide links with groundwater; and
- Improve water quality which is degraded by nutrients and chemicals resulting from urban activities; and
- Control erosion and sedimentation resulting from agricultural and construction activities; and
- Function as highly productive ecosystems in terms of wildlife habitat and vegetation; and

MAP 2.6. WETLANDS

- Serve a variety of aesthetic and recreational functions.

Wetland areas are valuable as natural buffers between residential and other land uses. As such, they can make a significant contribution to the aesthetic character of the community. By incorporating wetlands as part of new development, they can help maintain open and green space as well as contribute to retaining a rural setting. There are a variety of wetland classes found within the estuarine intertidal wetland habitats of South Haven Charter Township. Using the data from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, which cites data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the following is a list of wetland classes that are found in the Township:

- Emergent - wetlands that contain emergent plants that are erect, rooted, herbaceous, and/or hydrophytes that are the tallest life form, that cover at least 30% of the area.
- Scrub/Shrub - wetlands that contain woody plants less than 20 feet tall that are the dominant life form, and cover at least 30% of the area.
- Forested - wetlands where trees are the dominant life form, that cover at least 30% of the area.

## Existing Land Use

South Haven Charter Township has 10,638.7 acres classified in the property tax system. In 2022, the tax classifications were allocated into the use categories shown in Figure 2.2 below using the state assessor's guidelines.

The land uses above are defined as:

- Agricultural - Vacant: Land that is undeveloped, whether forested or cleared, or was once in the past and/or intended in the future to be used for farms and general farming, including fruit, crop, plant, nurseries, horticulture, floriculture, dairying, livestock and poultry raising, farm forestry, and other similar enterprises or uses conducted on open land or under structures, including animals that have been raised on the premises for the use and consumption of persons residing on the premises.
- Agricultural - Developed: Land that is developed and utilized specifically for farms and general farming, including fruit, crop, plant, nurseries, horticulture, floriculture, dairying, livestock and poultry raising, farm forestry, and other similar enterprises or uses conducted on open land or under structures, including animals that have been raised on the premises for the use and consumption of persons residing on the premises.
- Commercial - Vacant: Land intended for future use by a retail trade and professional, personal, technical and mechanical business service operated primarily for profit.
- Commercial - Developed: Land presently used for retail trade and professional, personal, technical and mechanical business services operated primarily for profit
- Industrial - Vacant: Land intended for future use by product manufacturing or conversion through assembly of new or used products or through the disposal or reclamation of salvaged material, businesses, business and service activities that are a normal integral part of an industrial enterprise or area operated primarily for profit.

**FIGURE 2.2. LAND USE BY TAX CLASSIFICATION**

Tax Class	2007 (ac.)	2022 (ac.)	Change (ac.)	Percent Change (%)
Agriculture - Vacant	1,265.7	1,537.4	271.7	21%
Agriculture - Developed	1,383.1	1,323.4	-59.7	-4%
Commercial - Vacant	550.3	265.1	-285.2	-52%
Commercial - Developed	18.6	696.6	678.0	3,645%
Industrial - Vacant	145.2	55.5	-89.7	-62%
Industrial - Developed	2.9	82.3	79.4	2,738%
Residential - Vacant	4,886.9	1,751.9	-3,135.0	-64%
Residential Developed	1,478.6	4,832.0	3,353.4	227%
Tax Exempt	722.3	0.0	-722.3	-100%
New Parcels - Classed	248.7	53.4	-195.3	-79%
Unclassified	23.5	41.0	17.5	75%

- Industrial - Developed: Land presently used for product manufacturing or conversion through assembly of new or used products or through the disposal or reclamation of salvaged material, businesses, business and service activities that are a normal integral part of an industrial enterprise or area operated primarily for profit.
- Residential - Vacant: Land intended for future use predominantly for housing.
- Residential: Developed: Land presently used predominantly for housing.

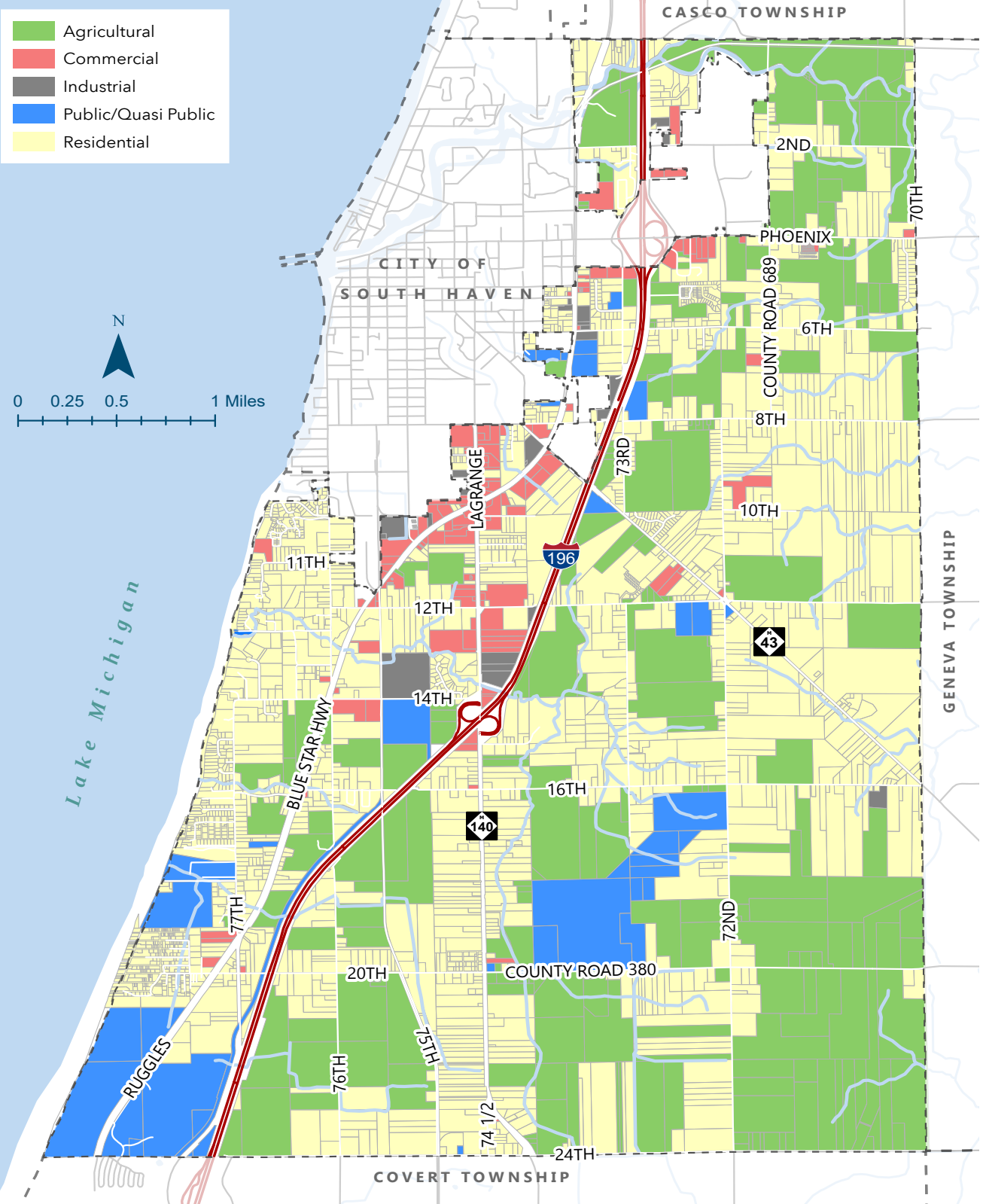
- Tax Exempt: Land that is exempt from property taxes such as nonprofit, religious, or government owned lands.

As shown in the figure above, a significant decrease was seen in the residential vacant, commercial vacant, and industrial vacant land uses. A significant increase orchards was seen in commercial, residential, and industrial developed.









# POPULATION

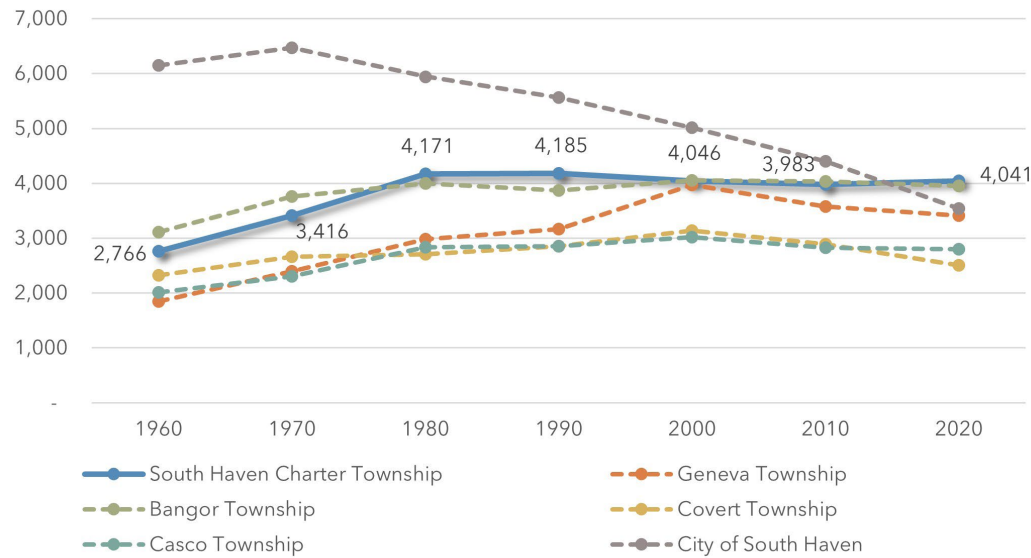
Achieving an understanding of the Township’s population and growth trends in the surrounding communities is important when preparing a meaningful and realistic master plan.

The population of South Haven Charter Township in 2020 was 4,041. The Township experienced an increase of 1.5% (58 people) over the past decade. As shown in the figure below, South Haven Charter Township experienced growth over the last few decades. However, the population has remained relatively stable since 1980 except for minor declines in 2000 and 2010. The Township has the largest population compared to the surrounding communities. Each neighboring community has between 2,500 to 4,000 people living year-round.

Neighboring communities in Van Buren and Allegan counties all experienced a decline in population, whereas South Haven Charter Township experienced a small increase in population. Of the townships and cities in the immediate area surrounding South Haven Charter Township, the City of South Haven experienced the largest decline of 19.5% since 2010. This may be the result of seasonal homeownership, with an estimated 50% or greater of the homes in the City owned by second-home residents.

**MAP 2.7. EXISTING LAND USE**

**FIGURE 2.3: POPULATION CHANGE 1960 - 2020**



Source: U.S. Census

**FIGURE 2.4. SIXTY YEAR POPULATION CHANGE 1960 - 2020**

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change (2010-2020)
South Haven Charter Township	2,766	3,416	4,171	4,185	4,046	3,983	4,041	1.4 %
Geneva Township	1,850	2,392	2,984	3,162	3,975	3,573	3,416	- 4.6 %
Bangor Township	3,110	3,758	3,994	3,870	4,054	4,032	3,955	- 1.9 %
Covert Township	2,323	2,659	2,706	2,855	3,141	2,888	2,510	- 15.1 %
Casco Township	2,009	2,308	2,839	2,856	3,019	2,823	2,796	- 1.0 %
City of South Haven	6,149	6,471	5,943	5,563	5,013	4,400	3,544	- 24.2 %



## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

South Haven Charter Township, with its access to Lake Michigan beaches, fishing, and other recreational opportunities are enjoyable to live amongst, make the Township a very attractive place to live. For these reasons, the Township will continue to attract new construction and development.

Population projections provide a general sense of growth that the Township might experience in the coming years. The following generalizations are limited in scope and are based on past trends documented by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Growth Rate Method

The Growth Rate Method projects future population growth or decline based on the rate of growth of the Township in the past. Using the growth rate method, the following assumes that the growth in the future will occur at the same average rate that has occurred annually since 1980. The Township experienced an average annual growth of 0.10% over this period and the projections are estimated in Figure 2.5.

**FIGURE 2.5. STANDARD GROWTH RATE POPULATION ESTIMATE**

Average Annual Growth Rate (1980 - 2020)	Current Population	2030	2040	2050
0.1%	4,041	4,082	4,123	4,164

### Arithmetic Method

The Arithmetic Method is similar to the growth rate method in that population projections are based on growth that occurred in the preceding decades. This method, however, bases population growth on the overall average increase/decrease in the number of persons per year, rather than the growth rate as shown in Figure 2.5. The following projections are established on the average net increase of 3.1 people per year between 1980 and 2020 in South Haven Charter Township, based on U.S. Census data, shown in Figure 2.6.

**FIGURE 2.6. ARITHMETIC GROWTH POPULATION ESTIMATE**

Average Annual Growth Rate (1980 - 2020)	Current Population	2030	2040	2050
3.1	4,041	4,072	4,104	4,135

### Building Permit Method

The Building Permit Method projects the Township's population from the average number of residential building permits issued annually assuming the Township's population will continue to correspond to the number of building permits issued between 2010-2020 and that the average household size will be similar to it was during the 2020 U.S. Census. Because this method is based on the actual number of building permits issued in the Township, it provides a more realistic projection compared to the other methods. The average number of persons per household in South Haven Charter Township was reported to be 2.27 people according to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates by the U.S. Census. Between 2010-2020 the Township issued an average of 8.1 building permits for new residential dwellings annually. Based on this average, Figure 2.7 estimates the future population by 2050.

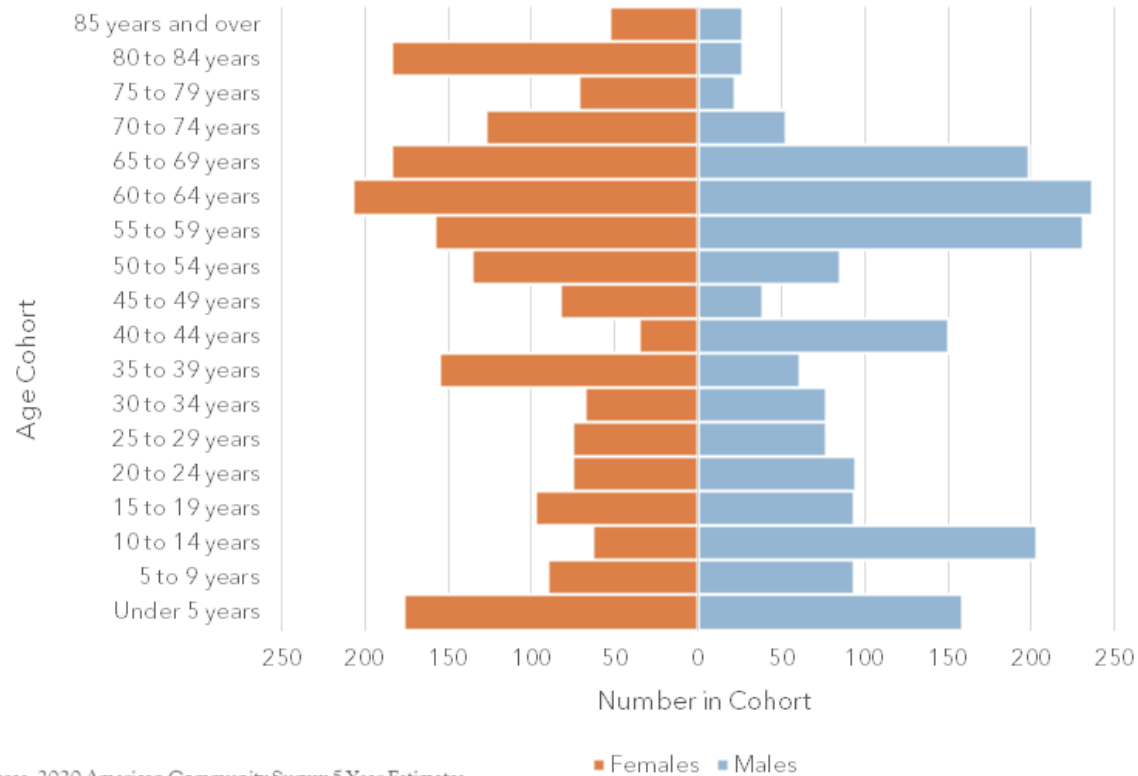
**FIGURE 2.7. BUILDING PERMIT POPULATION ESTIMATE**

Average Annual Growth Rate (2010 - 2020)	Current Population	2030	2040	2050
8.1	4,041	4,059	4,078	4,096

## AGE COMPOSITION

Distribution of population by age provides information about school-aged children, the elderly, and long-term potential growth. The Township’s population has aged from a median age of 41.9 in 2010 to 50.5 in 2020 according to the ACS 5-year estimates, compared to the State median age of 39.8 and national median age of 38.2 in 2020.

**FIGURE 2.8. POPULATION PYRAMID 2020**

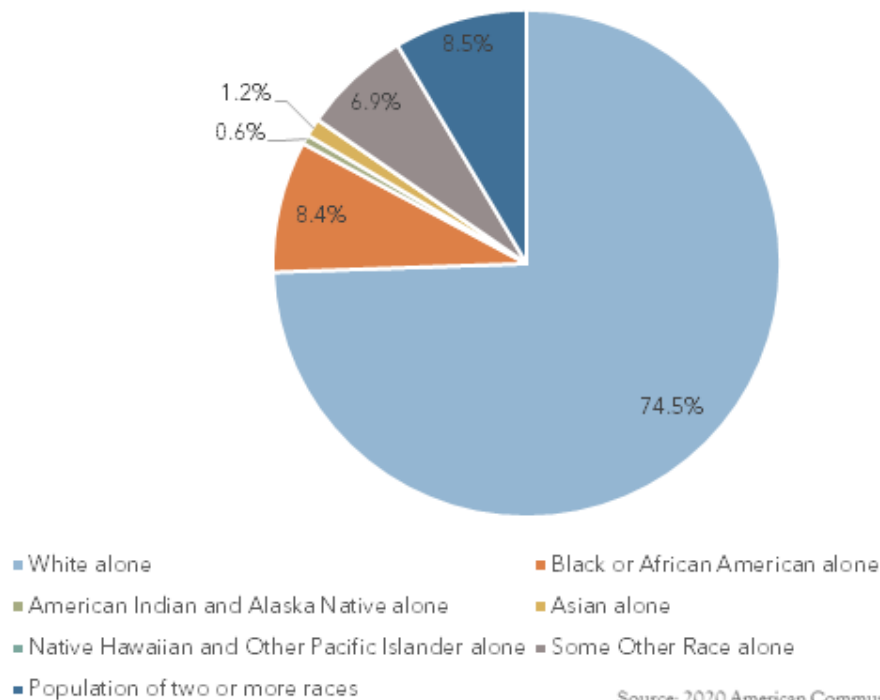


Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The age profile estimates for South Haven Charter Township are shown in the figure 2.8. People in the age group 60-64 make up the largest cohort followed by people in the age groups 55 to 59 and 65 to 69. Children under 5 years make up 8% of the Township population, up from 6.5% in 2010. There has been a steady increase (6%) in the number of persons over 65 years of age in the Township since 2010.

Non-working members of the South Haven Charter Township population are made up of students and the elderly. These comprise approximately 48.5% of the population. The employed and homemakers make up the remaining 51.5%.

**FIGURE 2.9. POPULATION BY RACIAL COMPOSITION**



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## RACE

The racial composition of South Haven Charter Township is primarily white residents, making up nearly 75% of the population. The second largest racial group in the Township (8.5%) is those identifying as two or more races. Black or African American residents made up 8.4% of the total population and around 7% of the population identified as some other race. 1.2% of the Township identifies as Asian, and 0.6% of the Township identifies as American Indian or Alaskan Native alone.

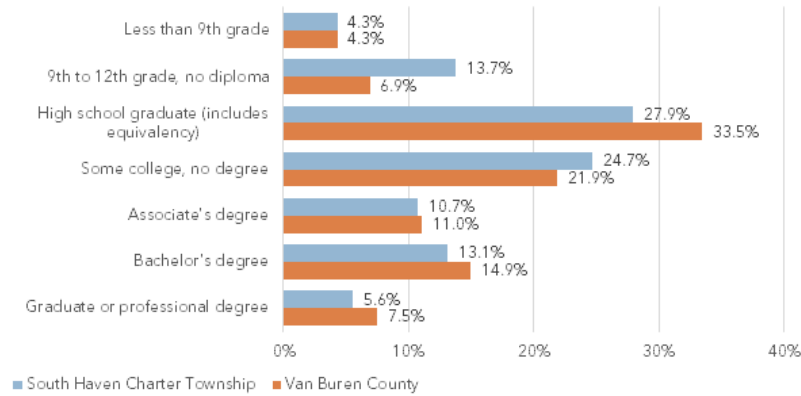
It is worth noting that the US Census classifies Hispanic/Latino populations separately from race. Approximately 12% of the population of South Haven Charter Township identified their ethnicity as of Hispanic or Latino origin in the 2020 Census.

## EDUCATION

There are a total of 709 children over the age of 3 who are currently enrolled in school in South Haven Charter Township. Of these students, 535 (75.5%) are enrolled in kindergarten to 12th grade and 87 (12.3%) of the students are enrolled in college/undergraduate programs.

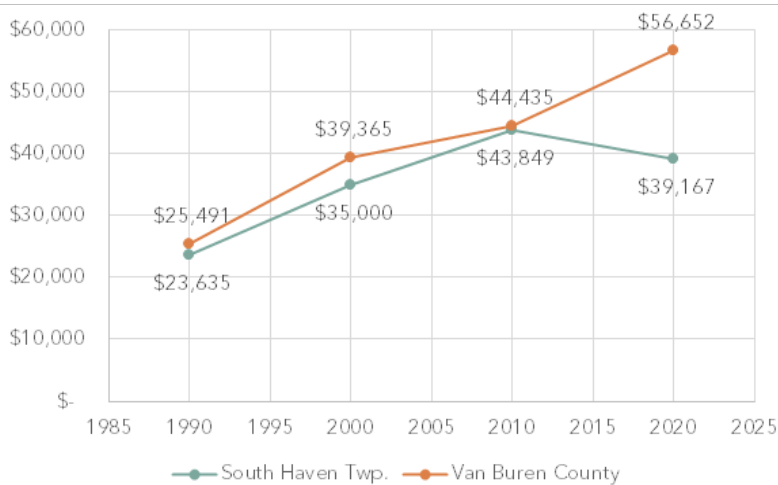
About 81.9% of the population 25 years or older have an education equivalent to a high school diploma or higher in South Haven Charter Township, which is 6.9% lower than the County average. The Township has a higher number of people who obtained either a Bachelor’s degree or a Graduate/Professional degree.

**FIGURE 2.10. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**



Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**FIGURE 2.11. INCOME 1990 - 2020**



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

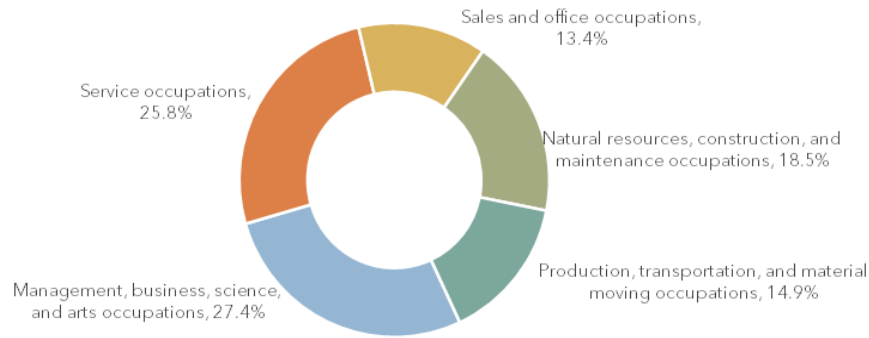
## INCOME

In 2020, the median income of South Haven Charter Township was estimated to be \$39,167 according to the American Community Survey. As shown in the figure below, the median income for the Township is significantly lower than the average for Van Buren County which can be attributed to a high number of retirees and children in the community. Population below the poverty level was estimated to be 23.8% in the Township, which is 9% more than that of the county average and 10% more than that of the state average.

**FIGURE 2.12. INCOME BY COHORT**

Income Cohort	Households	Percentage (%)
Less than \$10,000	247	14.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	166	9.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	167	9.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	145	8.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	336	19.3%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	265	15.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	150	8.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	159	9.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	83	4.8%
\$200,000 or greater	26	1.5%

**FIGURE 2.13. EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION 2020**



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## EMPLOYMENT

2020 American Community survey estimates that there is a total of 1,537 people in the labor force in South Haven Charter Township, and about 98% are estimated to be employed. About 70% of the working population works in Van Buren County while 30% of the population works outside the County. The average travel time to work in the Township is estimated to be 20.4 minutes. A majority (88%) of the people reported driving to work in the Township while 10% of the people reported working from home.

As shown in the figure 2.14, management, business, science, and the arts occupations employ about 27.4% of the working population in the Township followed by service occupations (25.8%). Manufacturing and educational services, and health care and social assistance industries were among the largest employers for residents of South Haven Charter Township.

**FIGURE 2.14. EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (2010 - 2020)**

Industry	People 2020	Percentage (%)	People 2010	Percent Change (2010-2020)
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting/Fishing, Mining	155	10%	27	-474%
Construction	92	6%	30	207%
Manufacturing	289	19%	448	-35%
Wholesale Trade	-	0%	24	-100%
Retail Trade	145	10%	318	-54%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	58	4%	232	-75%
Information	-	0%	33	-100%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	59	4%	58	2%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	99	7%	68	46%
Education, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	272	18%	294	-7%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Service	138	9%	239	-42%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	114	8%	89	28%
Public Administration	80	5%	48	67%

In the greater South Haven area, there are several major employers, in both the manufacturing and service industries. Many of these employers are located within the city limits, in one of the two industrial/business parks, and include such agencies as Noble International, Trelleborg, Wal-Mart, Menards, and Lake Michigan College. The public schools, as well as Bronson South Haven Hospital are two major area employers located outside of industrial/business parks.

As shown in the figure above agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industries experienced the largest growth in the past decade followed by construction-related industries. The largest decline was seen in the wholesale trade and information industries.

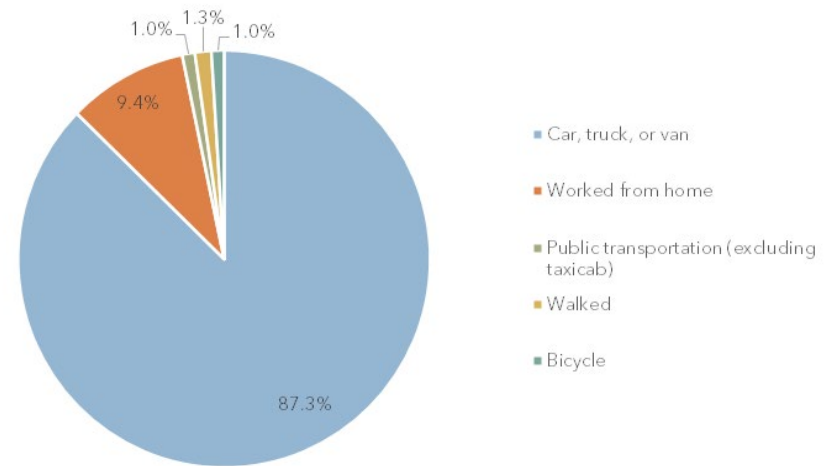
## COMMUTING

Commuting choices in the Township are mainly auto-oriented. 87.3% of Township residents reported driving to work in 2020. Of these, 71.8% of respondents drove alone, while 16.3% of people carpooled to work. Around 1% of the population reported using public transportation (STAR) as their commuting option.

Less than 3% of the population chose an active commuting option, such as walking to work (1.3%) or biking to work (1%). Although, limited options and infrastructure may inhibit resident’s ability to commute actively.

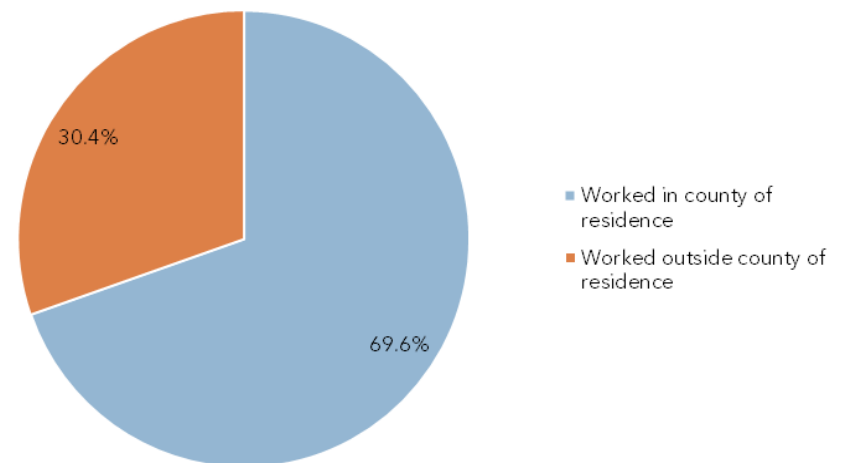
Remote work, a growing trend since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, comprised approximately 9.5% of Township residents working from home. This is a noteworthy change to people’s transportation habits, as there are fewer commuters on the roads and potentially less physical work space in the Township.

FIGURE 2.15. COMMUTING CHOICES 2020



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 2.16. RESIDENTS LOCATION OF WORK



Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# HOUSING

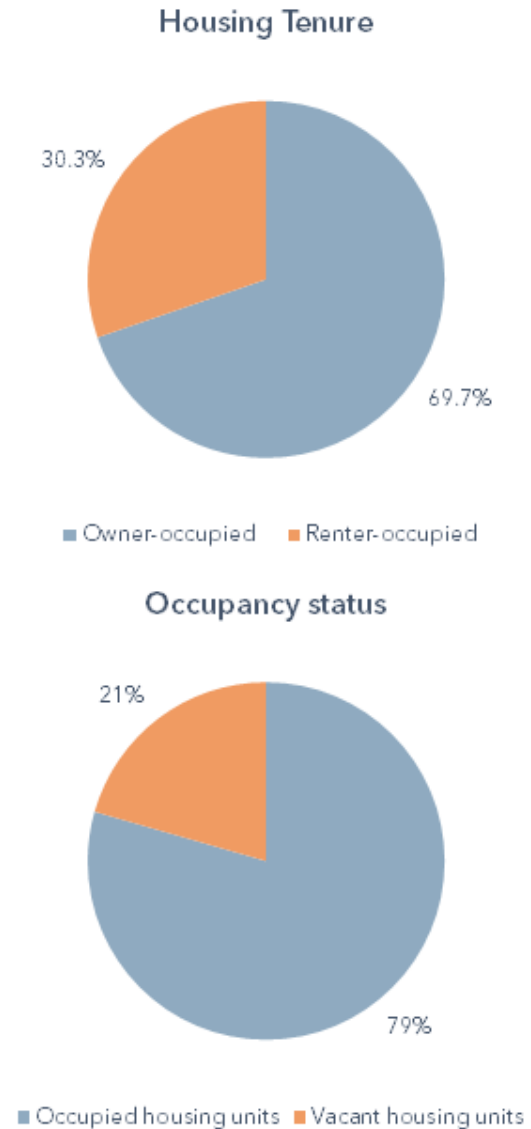
## Housing Tenure and Occupancy

South Haven Charter Township is a rural community consisting mainly of rural single-family homes and small scattered commercial areas surrounding the City of South Haven. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, there were a total of 2,083 dwelling units in the Township. Of those, 86.9% were occupied and 13.1% were vacant. Generally, a vacancy rate over 10% may indicate some concern for neighborhood housing stability. Vacancy rates of between 4 - 10% indicate a stable, healthy housing market allowing for sufficient filtering. However, South Haven Charter Township's housing stock is a bit unique, and contains a significant amount of migratory housing and seasonal homes.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, around a third (34.1%, n=147) of vacant housing units in South Haven Charter Township are seasonal in nature. The remainder are categorized as "other vacant" (49.7%, n=214), and are most likely used as short-term rentals or for other purposes, and another 16.2% (n= 70) are categorized as migratory worker housing. Many communities do have concern for the growing numbers of homes that are purchased to be used solely as short-term rental properties for out-of-town property owners that likely never visit the community to use the homes themselves. This is especially concerning given the current rising state of housing costs across the region.

The overall health of a community may also be measured by analyzing the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing. Roughly 70% of housing units in the Township are owner-occupied, indicating a healthy distribution of owner-occupied to rental housing.

FIGURE 2.17. HOUSING TENURE AND OCCUPANCY



Source: 2021 American Community Survey

## Age of Housing Stock

As an indicator of growth over time within the Township, the year in which housing units were constructed provides a gauge of which periods throughout the Township's history experienced the most growth. The Figure 2.18 breaks down the number of housing units built by decade in the Township. Nearly 68% of all housing units in South Haven Charter Township were constructed after 1960. Only 3% of the homes in the Township were built after 2010. This is likely a major indicator of the housing market crash at the beginning of this period and the lag for coming out of the housing crisis. However, we also know that these census estimates are slightly inaccurate, as the building permit data provided from the Township conflicts with some of the data below.

This information also indicates that nearly half the housing stock in South Haven Charter Township is less than 50 years old, which is a good indicator of strong housing stock. However, this likely has to do with the fact the Township nearly doubled its population since between 1960 and 1980. That population had to construct homes to live in because housing was not available upon arrival. The population of the Township has remained stable and has not had large increases since 1980. The newer housing stock appears to have been constructed by more owners that were not intending to live in the Township.

## New Housing

The figure below highlights the number of new housing construction permits that were issued between January of 2010 and Mid-September of 2023. It is clear that the rate of new home construction picked up in speed as the effects of the Great Recession trailed off. However, the pace of new construction is not keeping pace with the

FIGURE 2.18. AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Year Built	Number	Percent
Built 1939 or earlier	51	2.8%
Built 1940 to 1959	514	30.0%
Built 1960 to 1979	419	22.8%
Built 1980 to 1999	350	19.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	358	19.5%
Built 2010 or later	144	7.8%

Source: 2021 American Community Survey and Michigan Township Services 2023

decades prior to the recession. For reference, an average of 23.8 homes were constructed per year between 1940 and 2009, while an average of 8.1 homes per year were constructed between January of 2010 and Mid-September of 2023.

## Housing Value

The value of homes in South Haven Charter Township can range from \$50,000 to \$500,000 or higher, providing housing for a wide range of income levels. There was an increase (37%) in the median value of a home between 2010 and 2020, from \$115,900 to \$184,800. This is significant because owner occupied housing values have not grown at the same pace since 2010 across Van Buren County (12%) and the Township is even outpacing the City of South Haven (31%). There is a positive outlook for South Haven Charter Township overall, and the Township can look forward to steadily increasing home values over the next few decades.



As a measure of affordability, it is worthwhile to compare the rate of increase of home values to the local increase in income. In 2010, the median family income in South Haven Charter Township was \$48,946 according to US Census figures, and the median value of homes in the Township was \$137,700. (Note: It is important to realize that the value of a new home being built does not include the value of the property it sits on, only the value of the home itself.) In 2020, the median family income was \$56,979, and the median value of homes in the Township was \$184,800. This represents a 14% increase in income and a 37% increase in housing values. This illustrates that the median family income increase has lagged far behind the pace of increase for median value of homes in South Haven Charter Township. Most areas outside of large urban centers have not recovered housing value at the same rate resulting in a moderate increase, only in the last several years, when considering Van Buren County as a whole. However, the County's 12% housing value increase lags far behind the shoreline communities of South Haven Charter Township (37%) and the City of South Haven (31%).

## Household Size

The number and type of households within the Township have an influence on the social and economic character of the Township, and consequently the pattern of land development. Households are the standard unit of measurement for evaluating and projecting the number of housing units, retail sales, and community facilities and services.

Figure 2.19 shows the average size of households and size of family units within the Township compared to neighboring communities. Family and household size are an important indicator of the type of housing types most needed and desired within a community.

Higher family and household sizes indicate a higher prevalence of more traditional, "nuclear" family households which demand quality schools, quality recreational facilities, and larger, detached housing types. South Haven Charter Township's average family size slightly increased between 2010 (2.70 persons per family) and 2020 (3.23 persons per family). Opposite trends have been observed across the state, county, and surrounding communities. However, all of the areas indicated below saw a decrease in average household size. This implies there is a rise in "non-traditional" households and an increase of empty nesters. This trend is consistent with the aging nature of the Township's residents. Because the average family size has increased, households may be looking for more community amenities to accommodate children, in addition to those that target singles and retirees.

**FIGURE 2.19. AVERAGE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD SIZES 2010-2020**

Community	Avg. Family Size		Avg. Household Size	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
South Haven Twp.	2.70	3.23	2.17	1.94
Casco Twp.	3.11	2.91	2.49	2.39
City of South Haven	2.68	2.45	2.45	2.27
Van Buren County	3.19	3.05	2.61	2.47
State of Michigan	3.13	3.05	2.49	2.45

Source: American Community Survey 2010-2020



## Housing Type

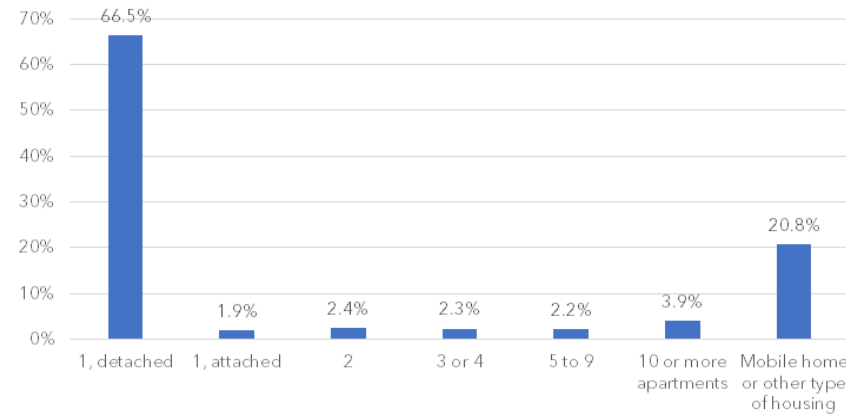
Most of the homes in South Haven Charter Township are site-built detached single-family dwellings, as seen in Figure 2.20. Nearly two-thirds (64.7%) of all housing units in the Township are single-family detached homes. There is a sizable share of manufactured or mobile homes in the Township, comprising approximately 22% of the share of housing units. Further, there is very low share of attached or multifamily housing options (13.3%). The current zoning map for the Township provides space for multifamily residential opportunities where adequate public facilities such as public water and sanitary sewer are available. In many cases, it is neither practical nor best practice to develop dense multi-family housing in areas without adequate public water or sewer.

## TRANSPORTATION

Based upon the long-range land use plan and the zoning map, the following are the functional classification of roads and highways in the Township:

- Regional Arterials: I-196.
- Local Arterials: Blue Star Memorial Highway, M-43, M-140, and County Road 388.
- Connecting Arterials: Baseline, 8th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 20th, 24th, 76th, and 77th roads.
- Collector Roads: 2nd, 6th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 18th, 70th, 73rd, 74th, Service Road.
- Minor Roads, all other roads not listed above, designated on the Master Plan for Roads and Highways and other new minor roads.

FIGURE 2.20. HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



Source: 2021 American Community Survey

The South Haven Charter Township road and highway system provides access to all parts of the Township. As such, every parcel of land is accessible by motor vehicle, and therefore the Township can be directly subjected to some kind of urban/suburban development use and related activities.

Twenty-four-hour average daily traffic (ADT) automotive trips via M-43 and M-140 from the east and south showed substantial gains due to local development and regional economic improvement in the manufacturing and tourist-vacation industries in the Van Buren, Allegan, and Kalamazoo County Region.

## Rail

South Haven Charter Township's rail system has been abandoned and is currently being used as a non-motorized trail network, specifically the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trail. A regional rail system would benefit the South Haven Area, not only for industrial purposes but also because of the potential transport of commuters and tourists.

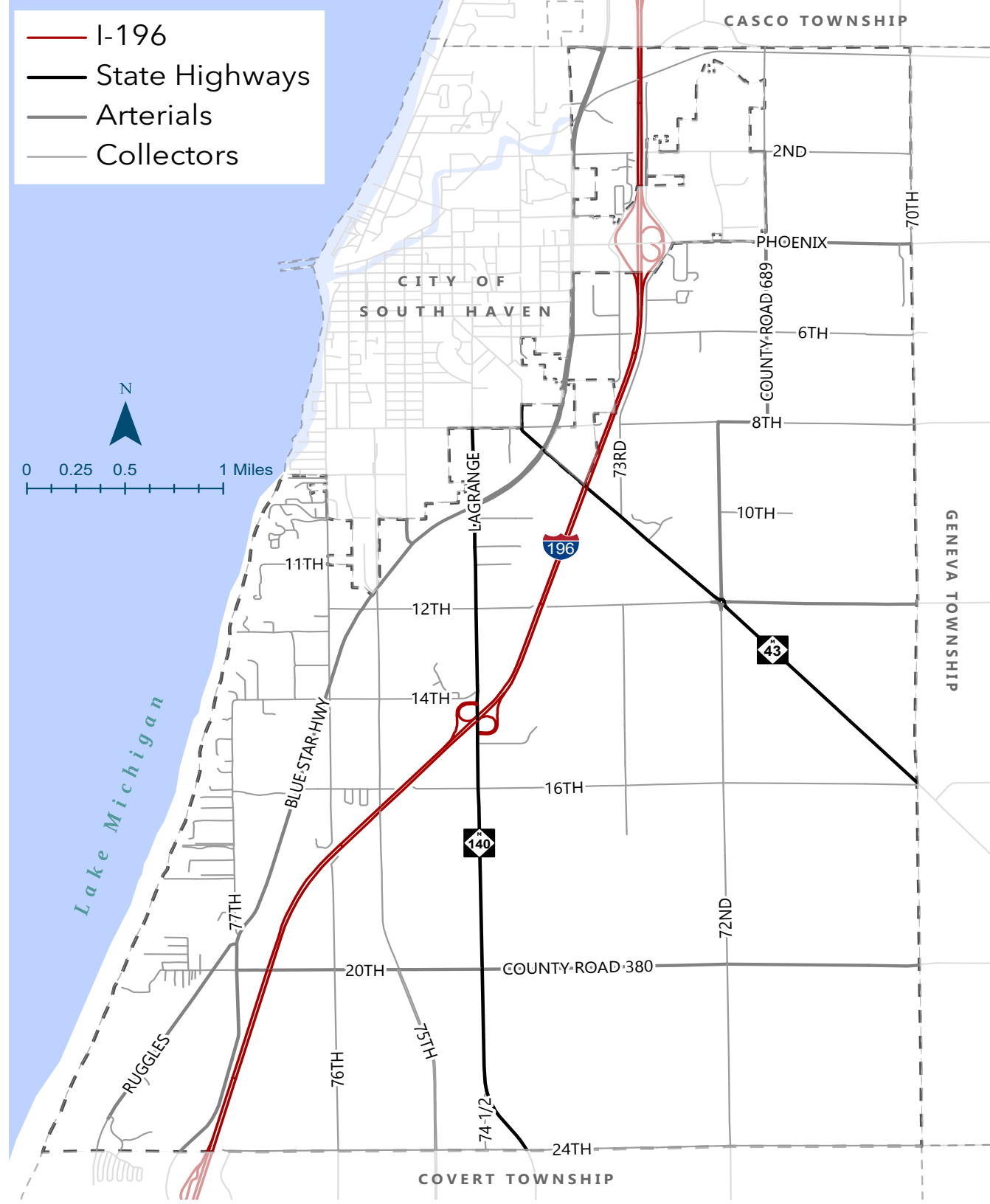
## Air

The South Haven Area Municipal Airport, operated by the South Haven Regional Airport Authority (SHARAA), is located approximately three miles south of the City of South Haven and nearly two miles from Lake Michigan. It's airport master plan is on file at the office.

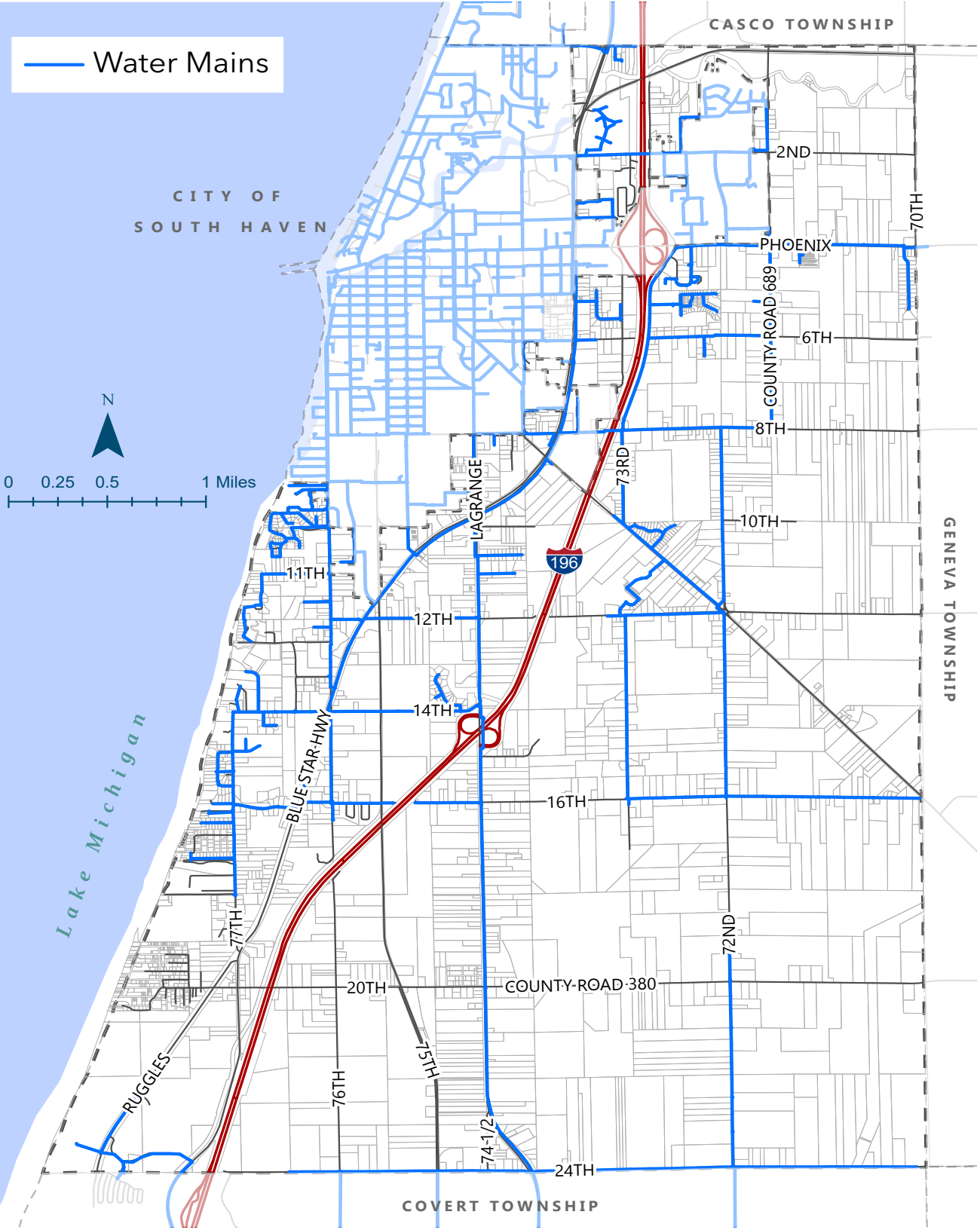
## Non-Motorized

The two abandoned rail lines mentioned above are currently used for non-motorized transportation. Both the Kal-Haven and the Van Buren Trails are currently owned by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) but are operated by Van Buren County. No on-street facilities or other off-street facilities exist in the Township.

MAP 2.8. ROADS CLASSIFICATIONS



— Water Mains



## UTILITIES

South Haven Charter Township is a member of the South Haven Area Water and Sewer Authority (SHAWSA) an authority covering South Haven Township, the city, and surrounding townships. The SHAWSA Water Filtration Plant, located at 60 Water Street, provides safe drinking water to nearly 11,650 customers located in the South Haven area and the wastewater plant is located at 625 Dunkley Avenue. The water is sourced from Lake Michigan and is filtered through the treatment plant. SHAWSA Water and Sewer Department are responsible for maintaining 109 miles of water main and 101 miles of sewer lines. The SHAWSA service area covers more than 60 square miles.

## Electricity and Gas

Electric utilities in the Township are provided by Indiana-Michigan Power Company, through the City of South Haven Electric Department. The City's system extends through a majority of the Township, with minor exceptions along the north and south borders of the Township that are served directly by Indiana-Michigan Power.

MAP 2.9. SHAWSA WATER SYSTEM



Natural gas is provided through Michigan Gas Utilities, which serves approximately 183,000 customers throughout southern and western Michigan.

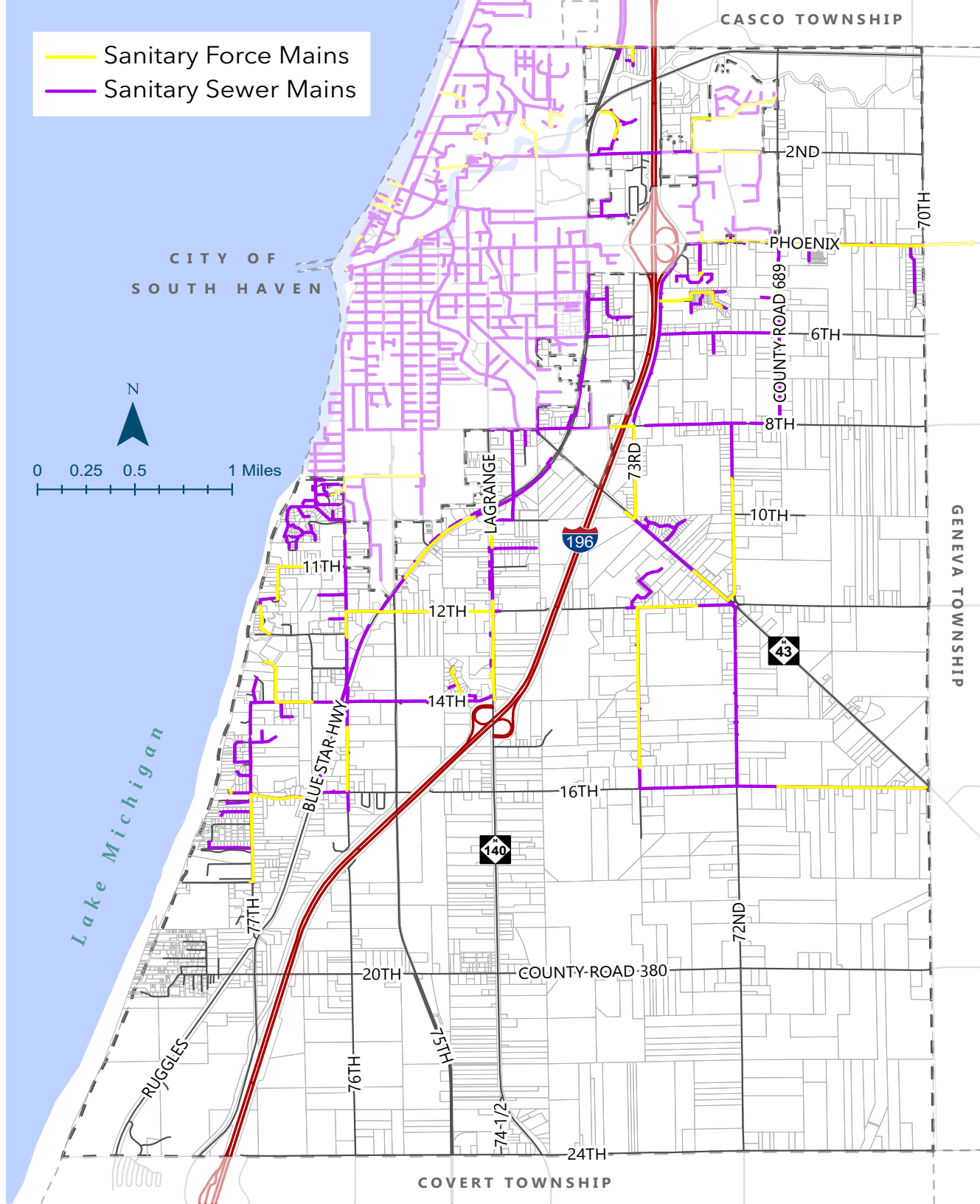
## SCHOOLS

South Haven Township is split into two different school districts. The majority of the Township is served by South Haven Public Schools, while a small portion of the Township is served by Covert Public Schools. Enrollment for the districts in the 2022-2023 school year was 1,798 and 308, respectively.

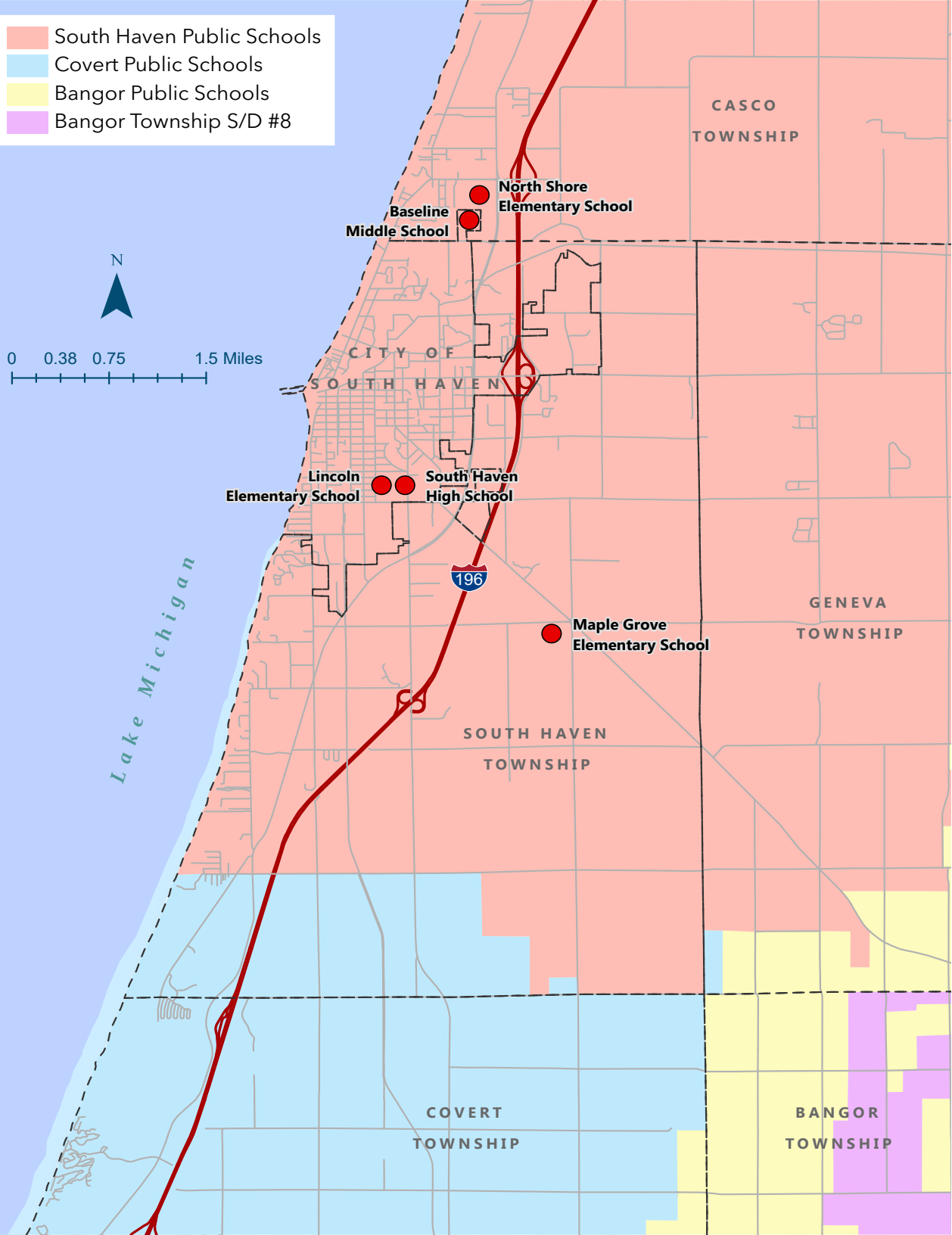
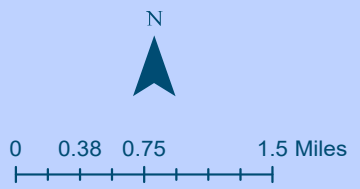
Covert Public Schools is comprised of one school building that houses the District's elementary, middle, and high schools. Over half of all students at Covert Public Schools are considered economically disadvantaged, though that number has decreased over the last 10 years, along with district enrollment (Figure 2.21).

South Haven Public Schools has also seen a decrease in enrollment over the last 10 years, while the number of students who are considered economically disadvantaged has increased.

MAP 2.10. SHAWSA SEWER SYSTEM



- South Haven Public Schools
- Covert Public Schools
- Bangor Public Schools
- Bangor Township S/D #8



Graduation rates were higher at South Haven Public Schools in 2022 when compared to Covert Schools. The District is comprised of five school buildings, including a high school, middle school, and three elementary schools.

Maple Grove Elementary is located within the Township on 12th Avenue near M-43 while the remainder of the District's schools are located either within the City of South Haven or to the north in Casco Township.



**MAP 2.11. SCHOOLS**

**FIGURE 2.21. SCHOOLS**

	South Haven Public Schools			Covert Public Schools		
	2012-13	2022-23	Percent Change (%)	2012-13	2022-23	Percent Change (%)
Enrollment (K-12)	2,149	1,798	-16.3%	485	308	-36.5%
Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged	61.9%	69.4%	12.1%	95.5%	87.7%	-8.2%
Graduation Rate (2022)		72.9%			42.9%	

Source: Michigan School Data, 2023



## PUBLIC SAFETY

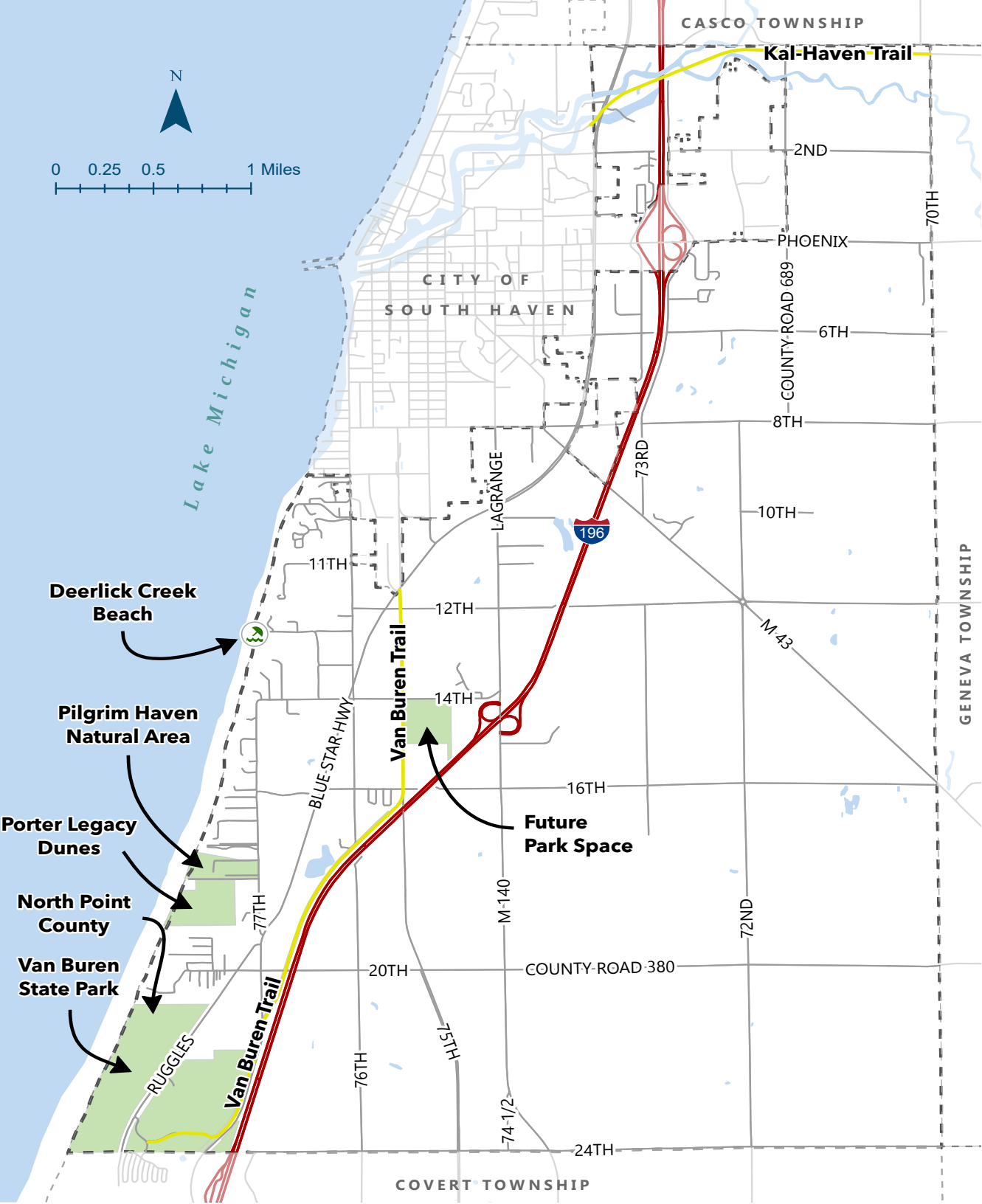
South Haven Area Emergency Services Authority (SHAES) provides the Township and the surrounding area with fire, EMS, and water rescue services. The Township is one of four entities that make up SHAES, in addition to the City of South Haven, Casco Township, and Geneva Township.

In 2022, the department recorded 2,659 alarms, of which 485 EMS alarms and 173 Fire alarms came from South Haven Township.

24-hour police services are provided to Township residents and visitors by the City of South Haven Police Department.







## PARKS AND RECREATION

Residents of the Township and of the region have access to pristine beaches, parks, and trails, which have long attracted residents and visitors alike.

Passing through the Township from east to west, the 33.5-mile Kal-Haven Trail connects the City of Kalamazoo with the lakeshore, and provides residents of communities from one end to the other with recreation options and connections to regional destinations.

The 14-mile Van Buren Trail connects the City of South Haven with Van Buren State Park, allowing residents and visitors to the Township easy access to both the State Park and the City. The trail, though largely unimproved and unpaved, continues on past the Township and State Park and terminates in the City of Hartford.

Park options for Township residents are provided through the South Haven Area Recreation Authority (SHARA), the Township, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, the County, and the State Park System.

MAP 2.12. PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

An inventory of parks and beaches can be found below:

- Deerlick Creek Park: 1.8 acres with access to Lake Michigan and Deerlick Creek. Public restrooms and parking are available.
- North Point County Park: Approximately 17 acres of forested dune lands, wetlands, trails, and 330 feet of frontage on Lake Michigan. A parking area is located off of Ruggles Road.
- Pilgrim Haven Natural Area: 27 acres of forested lands surrounding Dyckman Creek along Lake Michigan. The Park has trails leading to the lake and an accessible parking lot off of 18th Avenue and containing 330 feet of Lake frontage.
- Porter Legacy Dunes: This 48-acre park is adjacent to Pilgrim Haven Natural Area and features back dune forests, Dyckman Creek, sand dunes, and over 1,000 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline.
- Van Buren State Park: The largest of the parks in the Township, Van Buren State Park is approximately 400 acres in size with one mile of usable beach along Lake Michigan. The park contains high dune formations, a campground, woodland trails, and an accessible parking lot off of Ruggles Road.
- In 2018, SHARA acquired nearly 40 acres of land along 14th Avenue between the Van Buren Trail and I-196 for future park space. Currently, the land contains 3 soccer fields and disc golf.



South Haven Township contains a significant amount of land dedicated for parks, recreation areas, and natural preserves. This is in addition to the natural beauty of the Lake Michigan shoreline and dunes.

**AN ABUNDANCE  
OF NATURAL  
RECREATION AREAS**



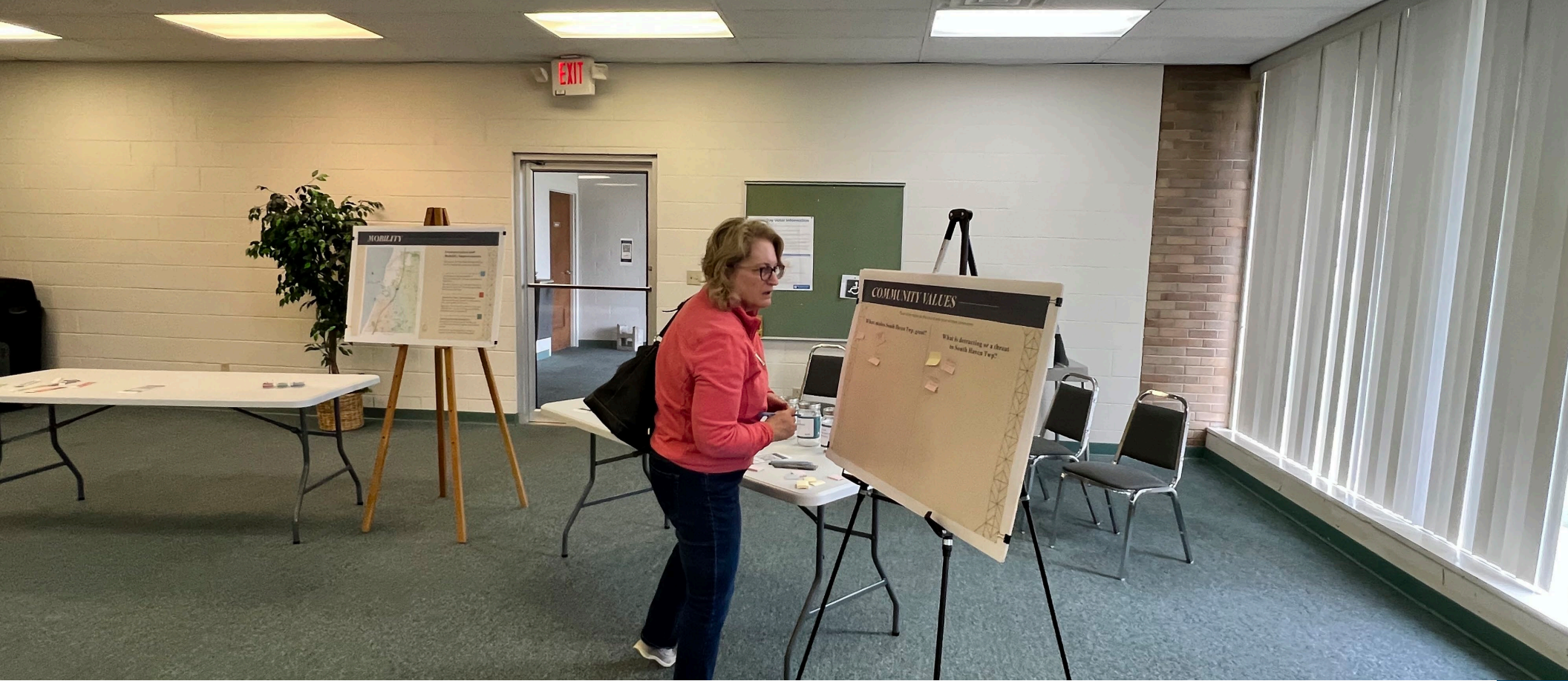


# CHAPTER 3

## OUR VISION







course.

## A VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Our vision for South Haven Charter Township is to create a vibrant, thriving community that serves as a leader of public safety, health, and general welfare. We are committed to preserving and enhancing the most desirable characteristics of our Township while continually identifying and planning for social and economic needs. Our goal is to promote cohesive and well-designed overall development, and to maintain a robust growth management program for the Township to preserve its charm and character.

To do this we will create a township where essential services, amenities, and employment opportunities are easily accessible within a short distance from residents' homes. Our focus is on fostering a vibrant community that offers a seamless blend of convenience, social engagement, and local business support. By prioritizing pedestrian-friendly pathways, parks, and public spaces, we seek to promote a sustainable and inclusive environment that reduces reliance on cars and encourages a healthier, more connected way of living. Our commitment to this model underscores our dedication to creating a thriving community that caters to the diverse needs of our residents.



## Commercial and Business

In our quest for economic prosperity and environmental responsibility, we aim to enhance our tax base and protect our natural surroundings. Harnessing existing resources like renewable energy will not only spur industrial growth but also pave the way for local energy independence. Additionally, we're keen on supporting home-based businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation within our community.

## Neighborhoods and Housing

Our residents have voiced their desire to preserve the unique character of the Township while supporting new housing opportunities. We've heard their call for more mid-sized lots and small lot single-family homes, and we also recognize the growing demand for senior housing. To address this, we aim to support senior housing options, expand affordability, and encourage development in denser areas while preserving the Township's charm. Flexibility in zoning districts, micro-dwelling neighborhoods, and various senior oriented housing options are among the avenues the Township should pursue.

## Recreation

South Haven Township's abundant recreation options are a source of pride and attraction for residents and visitors alike. The Township will continue to collaborate with SHARA to promote our parks and recreation spaces. A notable project includes the recreational development of SHARA-owned land along 14th Avenue, enhancing centralized recreation options. Moreover, we are committed to working with stakeholders to protect lakeshore areas for public use, safeguarding these natural treasures for generations to come.

## Sustainability

The natural beauty of South Haven Township is cherished by our residents, and we are dedicated to protecting our natural and rural character. Measures to ensure the preservation of natural lands, particularly along the lakeshore, Black River and other environmentally sensitive areas, are paramount. Farmland protection is also a priority, recognizing its importance in our community. Shoreline preservation measures, such as the High-Risk Erosion Area and Critical Dune initiatives, are imperative to safeguard our unique shoreline ecosystems and we will continue to support.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### **Goal 1. Preserve and promote the Township's unique identity by safeguarding its desirable characteristics, while actively mitigating any adverse elements.**

Objective 1: Identify and document the distinctive cultural, and historical features that contribute to the Township's unique identity, creating a comprehensive inventory that outlines the safeguarding and promotion of these elements for future generations.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Collaborate with local historical societies, heritage organizations, and academic institutions to conduct in-depth research, archival investigations, and oral history interviews that delve into the Township's past, uncovering hidden narratives, lesser-known facts, and untold stories that contribute to a more holistic understanding of the area's cultural evolution, historical development, and architectural legacy.

- Foster partnerships with relevant governmental agencies, conservation groups, and funding organizations attempting to secure financial support, seek grants opportunities, and resources for the implementation of preservation projects, restoration initiatives, and public awareness campaigns that prioritize the protection, enhancement, and public access to the Township’s cultural, historical, and architectural treasures, demonstrating a collective dedication to preserving the community’s unique identity and enriching the cultural fabric of the Township for years to come.

Objective 2: Develop and enforce zoning regulations that prioritize the preservation of the Township’s unique character, encouraging responsible development practices, heritage conservation, and adaptive reuse of historic structures to maintain the aesthetic and cultural integrity of the community.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Engage in extensive community outreach initiatives, public consultations, and stakeholder engagements to solicit public feedback, insights, and recommendations on the proposed zoning regulations encouraging active participation, input, and support from residents, property owners, businesses, and other key stakeholders to ensure that the development policies reflect the diverse perspectives and values of the local community while promoting the preservation of the Township’s distinctive heritage and character.
- Establish a comprehensive set of zoning regulations that integrate specific provisions, restrictions, and incentives aimed at incentivizing responsible development practices, preserving historic landmarks, promoting heritage conservation, and encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing structures, fostering a regulatory framework that prioritizes the Township’s unique identity and cultural heritage through sustainable development strategies.

- Consider the creation of a monitoring system to ensure strict adherence to the established zoning regulations instituting regular inspections, compliance reviews, and performance evaluations to assess the impact, effectiveness, and overall compliance of the development projects, construction activities, and renovation initiatives within the Township, emphasizing the importance of upholding the prescribed preservation measures to safeguard the community’s aesthetic and cultural integrity in the face of evolving development pressures and growth demands.

Objective 3: Allow for opportunities of community engagement and participation in cultural heritage programs, local history initiatives, and public art projects that celebrate the Township’s unique identity, encouraging residents, businesses, and organizations to actively contribute to the preservation, promotion, and revitalization of traditional crafts, customs, and artistic expressions that define the local cultural heritage and sense of place.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Consider cultural events and heritage festivals that showcase the Township’s traditional crafts, customs, and artistic expressions, providing opportunities for residents, businesses, and organizations to actively participate in hands-on demonstrations, cultural performances, art exhibitions, and educational activities that highlight the diverse cultural heritage and local history of the Township, fostering a sense of community pride, cultural diversity, and intergenerational knowledge transfer through meaningful and immersive experiences that celebrate the Township’s unique identity and cultural legacy.





Objective 4: Implement sustainable land management practices, environmental conservation strategies, and green infrastructure initiatives that prioritize the protection of the Township’s natural resources, scenic vistas, and ecological diversity, promoting responsible stewardship, habitat restoration, and biodiversity conservation to mitigate any adverse impacts on the local environment and safeguard the Township’s distinct ecological balance.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- Consider developing sustainable land management practices, nature-based solutions, and regenerative land-use techniques to promote responsible stewardship and enhance ecological resilience by partnering with regional authorities to protect the Township’s natural resources, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity corridors.

Objective 5: Promote tourism and economic development opportunities that align with the Township's unique identity, cultural heritage, and natural assets, encouraging the establishment of heritage trails, interpretive centers, and eco-tourism ventures that showcase the area's historical significance, natural beauty, and cultural richness, thereby fostering a vibrant, sustainable economy that respects and enhances the Township's distinctive character and community spirit.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider collaboration and partnerships with local businesses, tourism agencies, and cultural institutions to facilitate the development of tourism packages, heritage tours, and interpretive programs that emphasize the Township's unique identity, cultural heritage, and natural assets, and encourage the creation of experiential tourism offerings, cultural events, and interactive workshops that engage tourists, visitors, and community members in authentic, memorable, and educational experiences, promoting the Township's historical landmarks, natural landmarks, and cultural treasures as key attractions that contribute to the local economy, foster community pride, and enhance the overall visitor satisfaction and enjoyment of the Township's diverse cultural heritage, natural beauty, and community spirit.

## **Goal 2: Implement effective strategies for the preservation and sustainable use of agricultural, forest, and natural resource areas within the Township.**

Objective 1: Establish a comprehensive land conservation map that delineates priority areas for the protection and sustainable management of agricultural, forest, and natural resource lands, and the Township's natural landscapes, biodiversity hotspots, and ecological corridors.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Work with a consultant to assess the Township's agricultural, forest, and natural resource areas to identify priority zones, critical habitats, and ecological corridors that require immediate conservation measures, and consider collaboration with environmental experts, conservationists, and land use planners to gather data, conduct field surveys, and analyze geographic information systems (GIS) data.
- Asking local stakeholders, community organizations, and landowners to participate in a planning process will help to solicit input, feedback, and suggestions for land conservation gathering insights, concerns, and recommendations from residents, farmers, businesses, on the preservation of agricultural lands, protection of forested areas, and sustainable management of natural resources within the Township.



### **Goal 3: Promote cohesive and well-designed overall development, with a specific emphasis on infill development projects that optimize land use and community resources.**

Objective 1: Implement policies and guidelines that encourage sustainable infill development practices for residential, commercial, and industrial areas near the city border promoting compact, mixed-use development models in appropriate areas, and prioritize the efficient use of land, resources, and infrastructure to minimize urban sprawl.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- Amend the existing zoning regulations and land use ordinances to encourage the establishment of compact, mixed-use development zones and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that facilitate the integration of residential, commercial, and industrial uses within close proximity to recreational amenities, and community facilities, and establish flexible zoning standards, density bonuses, and design incentives that promote the creation of walkable, bikeable neighborhoods, and encourage the adaptive reuse, infill redevelopment, and revitalization of underutilized properties, vacant lots, and abandoned sites

Objective 2: Enhance connectivity, accessibility, and walkability in infill development projects, urban renewal areas, and neighborhood revitalization efforts by integrating pedestrian-friendly pathways, multi-modal transportation options, and smart growth principles into the planning, design, and implementation of new housing developments, commercial districts, and mixed-use zones that promote active transportation, and non-motorized mobility options for residents, workers, and visitors, and collaborate with transportation agencies, planners, and community stakeholders to create safe, inclusive, and well-connected streetscapes along vital corridors, public spaces, and community facilities that foster social interaction, promote physical activity, and enhance the overall quality of life for all individuals living, working, and commuting within the Township.

- Amend the existing zoning regulations to ensure developer supported infrastructure development to improve and connect non-motorized transportation options as part of the site plan review requirements.

### **Goal 4: Foster the creation of affordable housing options across a diverse range of incomes and family sizes, by enabling various housing development types and densities.**

Objective 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing units across diverse income brackets and family sizes through the development of mixed-income housing projects, multi-family dwellings, and workforce housing initiatives that cater to the needs of low-income, middle-income, and moderate-income households within the Township.

### Implementation Strategies:

- Consider density bonuses to developers and builders who incorporate affordable housing units within mixed-income housing projects, multi-family developments, encouraging the integration of affordable housing options, workforce housing units, and market-rate dwellings in new residential construction projects and infill developments that cater to residents across diverse income brackets and family sizes within the Township.
- Consider collaborating with housing authorities, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to establish public-private partnerships, joint ventures, and development agreements that facilitate the construction of mixed-income housing developments, inclusive neighborhoods, and collaborative housing projects that promote socioeconomic diversity, foster community integration, and support inclusive growth and equitable development initiatives in the Township's residential districts and commercial corridors.
- Streamline Zoning Regulations and Land Use Policies by reviewing and revise existing zoning ordinances, land use regulations, and development codes to accommodate higher-density housing types, mixed-use building designs, and flexible housing configurations that allow for the construction of multi-family dwellings, and townhouse complexes, thereby facilitating the creation of a diverse mix of housing options and affordable living arrangements for low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income households seeking affordable housing solutions within the Township's housing market and real estate landscape.
- Foster the creation of a diverse mix of housing options, including

rental properties, cooperative housing developments, and homeownership opportunities, that provide affordable, safe, and accessible living environments for individuals, families, and vulnerable populations facing housing insecurity, financial constraints, or socioeconomic challenges within the community.

## Goal 5: Preserve the Township's Character in Housing Development

Objective 1: Ensure the integration of mid-sized lots (1-5 acres) for single-family homes, catering to the preferences expressed by Township residents in the survey.

### Implementation Steps:

- Review the existing zoning and land use regulations to identify suitable areas within the Township that can accommodate the development of mid-sized lots for single-family homes, taking into consideration factors such as land availability, infrastructure, and environmental impact.
- Develop comprehensive design and planning guidelines that specify the layout, size, and specifications for mid-sized lots.

Objective 2: Accommodate the demand for small lot (<1 acre) single-family homes, providing housing options that align with the desires of the majority of respondents.

Implementation Steps:

- Review the existing zoning and land use regulations to identify suitable areas within the Township that can accommodate the development of small lot single-family homes, considering factors such as land availability, infrastructure, and environmental impact.
- Conduct community outreach initiatives and educational programs to raise awareness among Township residents about the benefits and implications of small lot single-family homes, encouraging active participation and fostering a sense of community engagement and responsibility.
- Establish a regulatory compliance framework to ensure that the development of small lot single-family homes adheres to the established guidelines and regulations, while also regularly assessing the progress and impact of the development to address any potential issues and maintain quality standards.

Objective 3: Address the increasing demand for senior housing by supporting the development of senior-friendly housing options, taking into account the needs of the aging population.

Implementation Steps:

- Consider fostering collaborations with senior living communities, retirement homes, and senior-focused organizations to understand the unique needs and challenges of the aging population, and incorporate their input into the development of senior-friendly housing options.

- Review existing housing policies and regulations to ensure they are conducive to the development of senior-friendly housing options, considering factors such as accessibility, safety, and proximity to essential services and amenities.
- Implement measures to promote the affordability and accessibility of senior-friendly housing options, such as offering financial incentives, subsidies, or specialized financing programs that cater to the senior demographic's unique financial circumstances.
- Consider working with local healthcare providers, community centers, and senior support organizations to integrate essential services, such as healthcare facilities, recreational activities, and social support programs, within or in close proximity to senior-friendly housing developments.

Objective 4: Encourage the construction of affordable housing options in slightly more densely populated areas, while preserving the Township's unique character and ensuring sustainable development practices.

Implementation Steps:

- Consider engaging with local residents, community leaders, and stakeholders to gather input and feedback regarding the construction of affordable housing options, ensuring that the proposed developments align with the community's preferences and needs.
- Review the existing zoning and land use policies to identify opportunities for adjusting regulations that facilitate the construction of affordable housing in slightly more densely populated areas, while ensuring that the Township's unique character is preserved.

- Develop and implement measures to encourage the construction of affordable housing options that are accessible to a diverse range of income groups within the community.
- Plan for necessary infrastructure development and improvement initiatives, including transportation, utilities, and public services, to support the construction of affordable housing options in slightly more densely populated areas, enhancing the overall livability and sustainability of the community.
- Consider fostering partnerships and collaborations with local developers and builders to encourage the incorporation of affordable housing options in their development projects, promoting the creation of housing that meets the community's affordability needs.
- Integrate community amenities and support services, such as educational facilities, healthcare services, and recreational areas, within or in close proximity to the affordable housing developments, fostering a sense of community and providing essential resources for the residents.

Objective 5: Facilitate the development of single-family home clusters in rural areas, allowing for a balanced approach that caters to different housing needs within the Township.

#### Implementation Steps:

- Review and modify zoning regulations and land use policies to accommodate the development of single-family home clusters in designated rural areas, while ensuring compliance with environmental and sustainability standards.

## Goal 6: Implementation of Flexible Zoning and Housing Policies

Objective 1: Permit diverse housing options, including small lots and high-density housing developments, to provide affordable housing opportunities for families across various income brackets.

#### Implementation Steps:

- By observing housing needs and demands across different income brackets within the Township this will help identify specific requirements and preferences for affordable housing options.
- Review and modify zoning and regulatory frameworks to permit diverse housing options, including the allowance of small lots and high-density housing developments, ensuring that the regulations align with the Township's long-term vision and growth objectives.
- Consider using sustainability and environmental best practices to ensure that the diverse housing options minimize the environmental footprint and contributing to the overall well-being of the community.
- Require that the diverse housing options are inclusive and accessible, providing features and amenities that cater to the needs of all residents, including those with disabilities and special requirements.



Objective 2: Offer increased flexibility in zoning districts to accommodate various housing types, such as micro-dwellings and specialized senior housing, enhancing the diversity and inclusivity of the housing market.

#### Implementation Steps:

- Consider engaging with residents, local community groups, and stakeholders to gather input and feedback on the proposed changes to zoning districts, ensuring that the modifications reflect the needs and preferences of the diverse population within the Township.
- Develop and adapt zoning policies to accommodate various housing types, including micro-dwellings and specialized senior housing, integrating guidelines that facilitate the construction and development of these housing options within designated zoning districts.
- Establish incentives and support programs to encourage developers and builders to invest in the construction of micro-dwellings and specialized senior housing creating a streamlined approval processes to promote the development of these housing types.
- Work with consultants to create comprehensive site design guidelines and standards for micro-dwellings and specialized senior housing, ensuring that the housing options meet safety, accessibility, and sustainability requirements while contributing to the overall aesthetic and functionality of the community.
- Evaluate the existing infrastructure and utilities within the designated zoning districts to determine the necessary improvements and enhancements required to support the development of micro-dwellings and specialized senior housing, ensuring that essential services are readily available and accessible to residents.

By prioritizing these goals and objectives, the Township can create a well-rounded housing development strategy that meets the needs and preferences of its residents, while preserving the unique character and identity of the community.



# CHAPTER 4

## FUTURE LAND USE



## FUTURE LAND USE

Planning in a rural setting while maintaining a connection to a neighboring city involves a delicate balance between preserving the natural landscape and accommodating urban needs. Key considerations should include:

- **Preservation of Rural Character:** Prioritize the conservation of natural landscapes, farmlands, and open spaces to retain the rural charm and unique identity of the area. Implement zoning regulations that protect against over-development and maintain the rural aesthetic.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Strategically plan for essential infrastructure development, including roads, utilities, and public services, to support the needs of both rural residents and those commuting to the neighboring city. Focus on sustainable and efficient infrastructure solutions that minimize environmental impact.
- **Promotion of Sustainable Growth:** Encourage sustainable growth through the development of mixed-use areas, combining commercial and residential spaces to foster local businesses and provide necessary amenities to rural residents. Emphasize the importance of eco-friendly practices and green infrastructure to maintain environmental balance.
- **Transportation Connectivity:** Establish efficient transportation networks that link the rural setting to the neighboring city, ensuring accessibility for commuters while minimizing environmental disruption. Consider options such as public transit, carpooling initiatives, and shared mobility services to encourage sustainable commuting practices.



- **Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Foster active community participation in the planning process to ensure that the needs and preferences of both rural and urban residents are considered. Encourage collaboration between local stakeholders, businesses, and government agencies to facilitate comprehensive and inclusive development initiatives.
- **Preservation of Agricultural Land:** Protect the viability of agricultural land by implementing policies that support local farming communities and promote sustainable agricultural practices. Encourage the preservation of farmlands and the expansion of agricultural activities to maintain the rural economy and foster local food production.

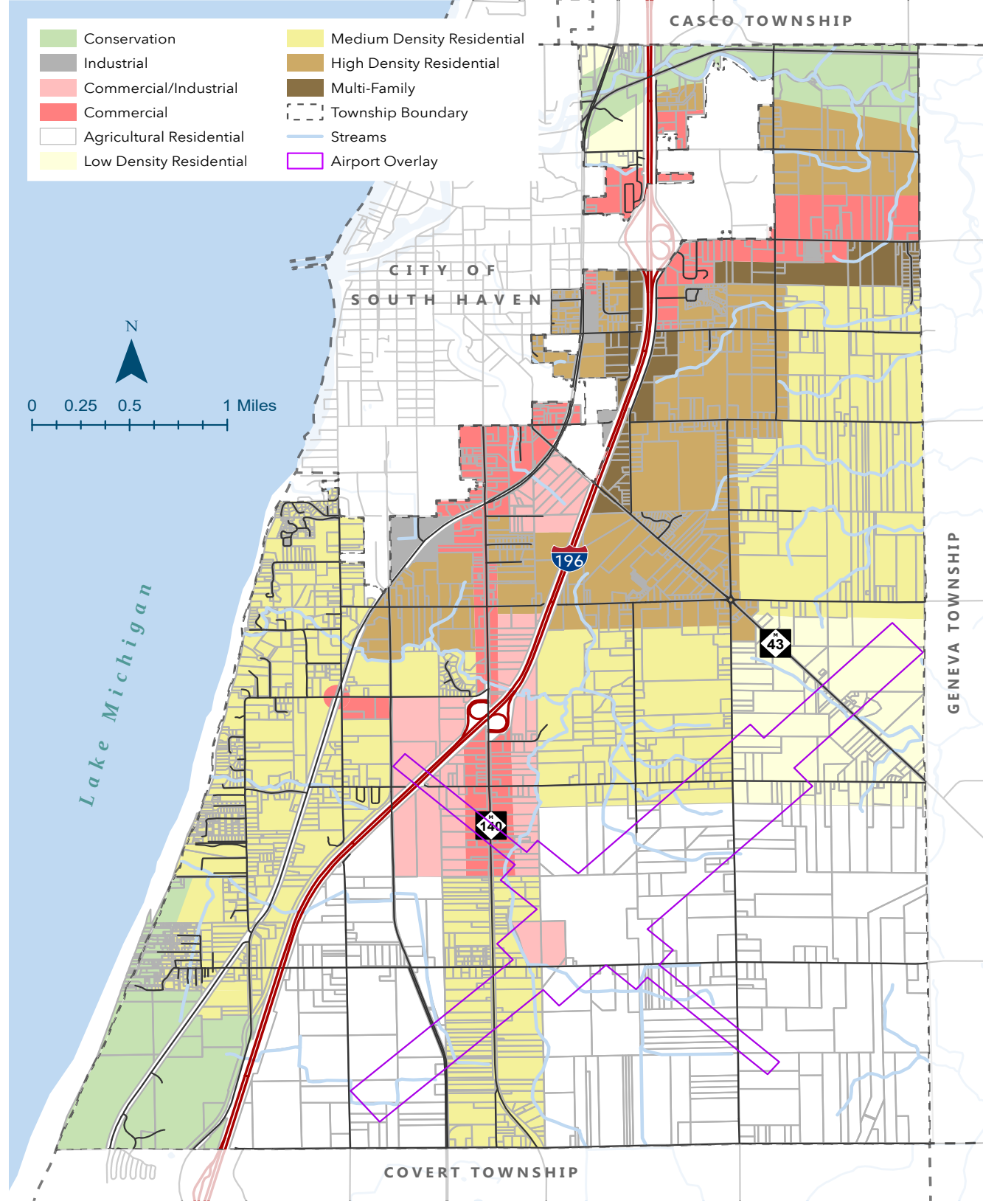


By addressing these intricacies, rural communities can effectively balance the preservation of their unique character with the necessary connections and resources offered by neighboring urban centers, fostering a sustainable and harmonious relationship between the two environments.

The future land use categories in South Haven Township are underpinned by a comprehensive understanding of various factors that contribute to the area’s developmental potential and growth. The Land Use Plan plays a critical role in the Township’s planning and zoning efforts, serving as the fundamental blueprint for the creation of the Zoning District Map and establishing specific regulations, performance standards, and criteria for development. By taking into account the existing land uses and potential future developments, the plan endeavors to guide the overall pattern of development and land use arrangements, ensuring a cohesive and well-coordinated approach to future growth.

South Haven Township’s land use potential is significantly influenced by a range of regional factors that underscore its strategic location and connectivity. Being situated along the National Interstate Highway

**MAP 4.1. FUTURE LAND USE**



System (I-196), the township serves as a crucial node for the tourist and transportation industry, facilitating the movement of industrial, commercial, and recreational traffic between major economic centers such as Detroit, Chicago, and Canada. Its proximity to the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo Metropolitan Areas further enhances its role as an employment and commercial hub, while its access to Lake Michigan fosters a vibrant tourism industry and recreational activities. Additionally, the township's active engagement in the fruit industry, along with its connection to regional and national markets, influences its agricultural development and land use strategies. The presence of an airport also supports regional and national air transportation, contributing to the township's overall connectivity and economic activities.

On a local scale, South Haven Township's land use potential is shaped by various factors intrinsic to its immediate surroundings and infrastructure. The intensive development within the neighboring City of South Haven exerts a significant influence on the township's future development plans, necessitating careful coordination and planning to ensure sustainable growth and harmonious expansion. Additionally, the existing development patterns and available land space within the township form the cornerstone for future land use potential and expansion strategies. The presence of critical infrastructure, including regional water supply, wastewater disposal systems, public utilities, and transportation interchanges, also plays a pivotal role in determining the township's developmental trajectory. Furthermore, the township's diverse economic sectors, such as industrial manufacturing, agriculture, hospitality, and emergency services, along with the presence of educational and cultural facilities, contribute to the formulation of land use plans that accommodate and support these sectors. The township's recreational

and tourist facilities, including bicycle trail systems, the M-140 interchange, and Phoenix Road (C.R. 388), further contribute to the local land use planning and zoning initiatives, promoting a well-rounded and inclusive approach to community development.

## Conservation Areas

The purpose of this area is to preserve large stretches of land with a rich natural environment, including wildlife habitats, native plants, and water features like wetlands and high water-table soils. These areas encompass flood plains, critical dunes, erosion-prone zones, wetlands, and ravines. While single-family homes on sizable lots might be allowed, they should be well-spaced to accommodate septic tanks and wells, as this area will not be connected to public sewer and water systems. The main goal is to minimize any disturbance to the natural character of these conservation areas, except for essential preservation efforts.

## Agricultural

The purpose of this area is to allow for the development of land while still protecting and preserving areas that are well-suited for farming, forests, and other natural uses now and in the future. People can build homes in this area, but it's mostly for those who prefer a countryside, farming, or natural setting. However, this area is too far from places with enough people to need things like public water and sewage systems anytime soon. These areas are good for larger homes with their own water and waste systems. They can also be used for programs that protect farmland, like the Van Buren County agricultural preservation program.

# Potential Conservation Areas

South Haven Charter Township  
Van Buren County, MI

## Low-Density Residential

This area is designated for creating neighborhoods with single-family housing (two dwelling units or less per acre), with minimal intrusion from other types of development, except for those that are considered normal add-ons and are compatible and supportive for the residents. The lots and parcels in this area should be planned in a way that ensures they are large enough to support a clean on-site water supply and efficient liquid waste disposal.

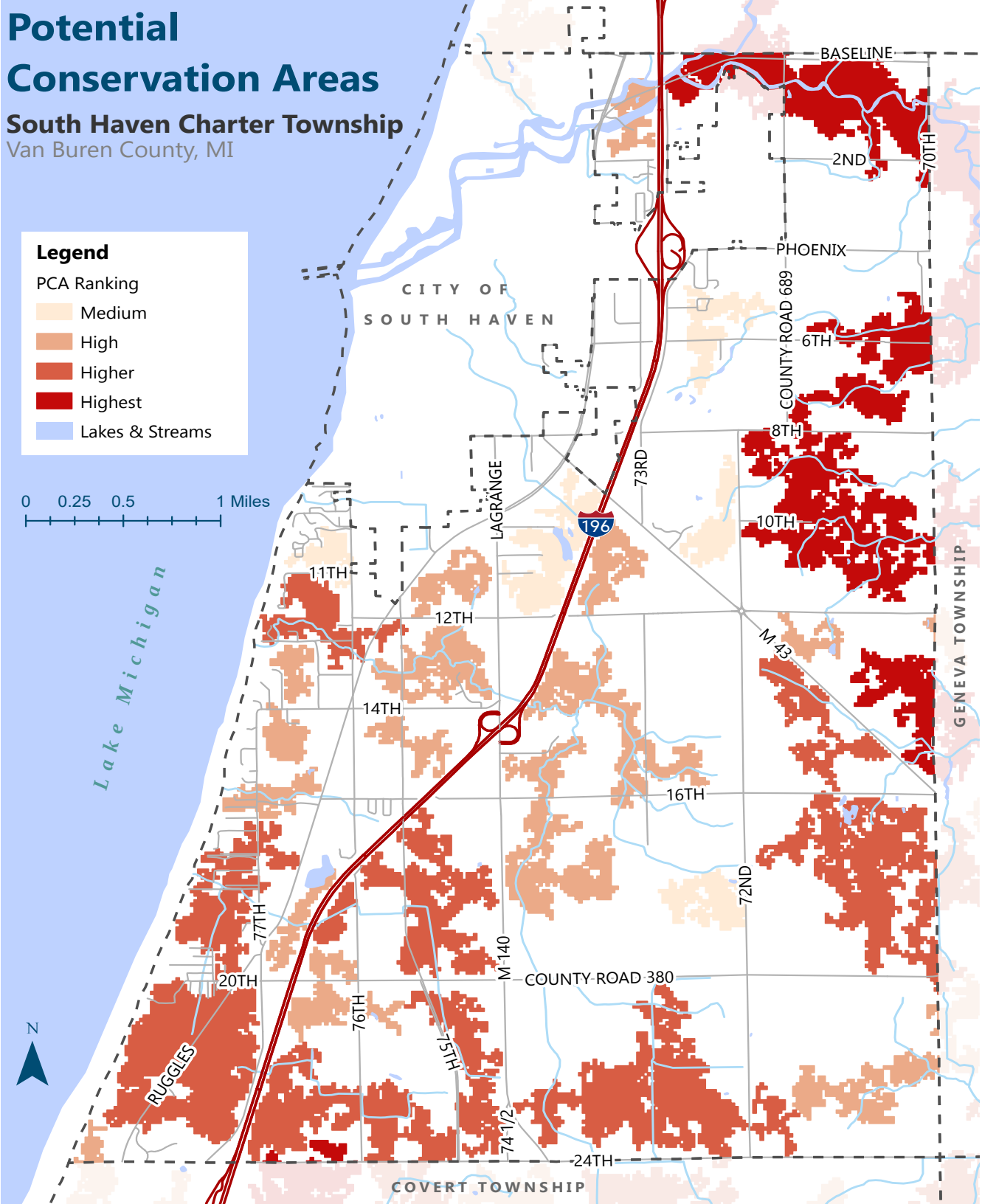
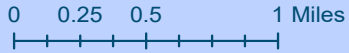
## Medium-Density Residential

The aim of medium density residential areas (2-4 dwelling units per acre) is to offer space for single-family homes at moderate, non-urban densities. Additionally, these areas are planned to have lot sizes that can support the use of municipal sanitary sewer and water utilities without incurring high costs.

**Legend**

PCA Ranking

- Medium
- High
- Higher
- Highest
- Lakes & Streams



MAP 4.2. PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS

Source: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (2020)

## High-Density Residential

The purpose of this area is to offer affordable housing options and a variety of housing types for those interested in residing in the Township, including condominiums and rental units. The aim is to provide amenities that are compatible and convenient for the residents. The expected housing density ranges from 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre. These housing units may be standalone or grouped buildings, with shared facilities accessible to all residents and jointly maintained. However, developments will only be allowed if they can connect to a public or common water supply and sanitary sewer system, when available. These high-density residential areas are targeted to promote affordable housing options within the Township.

## Multi-Family Residential

This designated area is intended for high-density residential development, accommodating between 8 to 10 dwelling units per acre. It is specifically chosen to be located in regions that have access to essential facilities, including municipal sanitary sewer and water services, as well as convenient proximity to county primary roads. These areas are strategically positioned near commercial shopping corridors or in close adjacency to the I-196, ensuring residents have easy access to commercial amenities and efficient transportation networks.

## Office/Service Commercial

These designated small office areas serve as vital transitional zones between residential and commercial spaces, forming a seamless link between the two. They cater to a range of professional, administrative, personal, technical, and scientific office setups

and associated services as their primary functions. Any retail sales activities within these areas are envisioned to be purely supplementary or accessory to the primary office functions, promoting a well-balanced environment that encourages both work and convenience.

## Mixed-Use

The primary aim of this category is to establish a balanced integration of commercial and residential land uses in select areas of the Township. Many of these areas adjoin the City limits, prompting the Planning Commission to collaborate with the City to facilitate compatible and harmonious development in these regions. Typically, commercial establishments in the Mixed-Use Areas are positioned along the main roads or near I-196, while residential properties are situated further back. This layout ensures accessibility for both passing motorists and residents, making it particularly suitable for high-density or multi-family residential units.

With a vision to foster a vibrant, accessible community, the South Haven Township encourages the development of mixed-use areas within both residential and commercial zones, provided they have access to municipal sanitary sewer and water facilities. These areas, while not specifically mapped, are strategically planned to facilitate the creation of 'walkable' neighborhoods, where residents can conveniently access a blend of residential and commercial amenities without relying on cars. Our vision for South Haven Township aligns with the concept of a 'complete' or 'liveable' neighborhood, emphasizing the importance of establishing well-connected pedestrian pathways, parks, and public spaces that enable seamless short walks or bike rides to essential services, amenities, and employment opportunities. By ensuring that commercial uses in



these developments do not exceed 10% of the total area, we aim to cultivate a sustainable and inclusive environment that fosters social interaction, supports local businesses, and reduces the community's reliance on cars.

To realize this vision, the Township plans to utilize the PUD zoning option, ensuring a comprehensive and well-coordinated design theme that fosters a cohesive neighborhood. Emphasis will be placed on aspects such as circulation, access points, and signage to create an integrated and pedestrian-friendly environment. Notably, the traffic along M-140 and Phoenix contributes to the distinct character of potential developments in these areas. Although the aim is to create pedestrian-friendly developments with seamless connections to other destinations, the current absence of non-motorized facilities along these roadways presents a challenge for connectivity to other services. As a solution, the integration of road networks adjacent to each other will be prioritized to preserve highway capacity, minimize conflicts, and optimize access points. Recognizing the potential larger population served, commercial developments in these mixed-use areas may be designed with a larger scale to meet the needs of the community.

## Neighborhood Commercial

The intention behind the concept of Neighborhood Commercial is to facilitate the presence of retail and service outlets within residential districts, catering to the everyday needs of the immediate local residents. These commercial areas are deliberately confined within the residential districts and are not formally designated as a distinct future land use category.

## Commercial/Industrial

The aim of the Commercial/Industrial Areas is to offer adequately spacious locations suitable for accommodating either commercial or industrial activities. This provision allows the community the flexibility to attract significant large-scale developments to these expansive tracts. These designated areas must have convenient access to M-140, Blue Star Highway, or Phoenix Road, while also being within a two-mile radius of I-196. Additionally, these areas should be served by municipal sanitary sewer and water utilities to ensure the necessary infrastructure support for such large-scale ventures.

## Commercial

The combined Commercial category encompasses areas catering to a variety of commercial needs, including the servicing of highway traffic at key interchange points and the provision of goods and services on a large scale. It is strategically positioned to ensure smooth traffic flow, prevent congestion, and shield adjacent properties from the adverse impacts of high traffic volume. Additionally, this category facilitates the storage, distribution, and transportation of bulk goods and services, catering to both major purchasers and individual consumers through various retail outlets.

## Industrial

The Industrial Area is designated to facilitate the establishment of sites for industrial plants engaged in the production of finished or semi-finished goods, as well as the assembly, compounding, or processing of product components for the creation of marketable products for industrial manufacturers or wholesale commercial buyers. Moreover, this zone aims to promote industrial

manufacturing activities that minimize the generation of noticeable noise, vibration, smoke, dust, dirt, glare, toxic materials, offensive odors, gases, electromagnetic radiation, or any other adverse physical effects that extend beyond the boundaries of the industrial site.

## Airport Overlay Zone

The Airport Runway Protection Zones (RPZ) Overlay Area, identified by the State of Michigan Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics & Freight Services, encompasses five designated zones as delineated on the Township's Future Land Use Map. Within these zones, the state's land use guidelines take precedence over the Township's zoning ordinance, with state law strictly prohibiting any rezoning to higher density land use. Specific restrictions and guidelines are established for each zone, ensuring the safety and protection of the surrounding areas.

Zones 1 and 2 are subject to restrictions that discourage the concentration of individuals both indoors and outdoors, thereby prohibiting any residential land uses. Non-residential land uses must adhere to the state's Population Density and Special Function Land Use guidelines, which outline prohibited structures and uses.

Zones 3 and 4 are similarly governed by guidelines that limit residential development to Low Density housing standards while also emphasizing the avoidance of high population concentrations. Non-residential land uses must comply with the state's Population Density and Special Function Land Use guidelines.

Zone 5 follows the same pattern as Zones 1 and 2, prohibiting residential land uses and stipulating adherence to the state's Population Density and Special Function Land Use guidelines for non-residential land uses.

Across all Zones 1 through 5, the Special Function Land Uses guidelines dictate the prohibition of specific structures and uses, including overhead utilities and noise-sensitive land uses, schools, play fields, hospitals, nursing homes, day-care facilities, churches, the storage of large quantities of hazardous or flammable materials, large areas of standing water, or activities generating significant emissions such as smoke or steam. Additionally, the establishment of mobile home parks within these zones is strictly prohibited.

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION

South Haven Township's engagement in the Van Buren County Agricultural Easement Conservation Program is motivated not only by the protection of agricultural land but also by the constraints posed by certain development limitations. The township identifies three specific areas where property owners face constraints that hinder their ability to realize the full development potential of their land. These areas include those within regulated floodplains, airport protection zones, and regions where challenging soil and geologic conditions present significant barriers to development. Additionally, the township is cautious not to exceed its maximum bonding capacity and acknowledges that some areas may remain not viable economically for the installation of municipal utilities in the foreseeable future.

As a result, the preservation efforts encompass zones that are beyond the financially viable reach of municipal sewer and water systems and are restricted due to soil and geologic limitations. The Township also recognizes the importance of preserving natural areas for their distinct ecological value, which includes regulated floodplains, wetlands, high-risk erosion areas, and critical dunes.

Notably, the policy emphasizes the importance of sustaining the thriving blueberry and cranberry industry within the township, highlighting the utilization of unregulated wetlands for agricultural purposes. Specific areas earmarked for preservation include the floodplain of the Black River and a substantial wetland in Section 33 zoned for conservation, large sections designated for Agricultural Residential (AR) purposes, and parts of sections 27, 28, 33, and 34 planned for AR or conservation. The airport protection area, although not formally reflected in the zoning ordinance, is held under the policy not to be rezoned for more intensive land use, as outlined in the Master Plan.



## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure represents a comprehensive approach to sustainable land use and environmental management that emphasizes the interconnectedness between natural systems and human communities. It encompasses various nature-based solutions such as green roofs, permeable pavements, rain gardens, and urban forests, all of which contribute to the overall health and resilience of the Township. By integrating these practices into the township's planning and development processes, South Haven can effectively manage stormwater, reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and promote biodiversity.

Implementing a robust green infrastructure policy framework is essential for ensuring the long-term success of environmental conservation efforts. This policy should encompass guidelines for the incorporation of green spaces, wetlands preservation, and the establishment of wildlife corridors to maintain ecological connectivity. Additionally, it should outline measures for promoting sustainable land use practices, encouraging the protection of natural areas, and minimizing the impact of development on critical ecosystems.

Furthermore, the Township can actively support the establishment of green infrastructure networks that prioritize the use of native plant species, foster natural habitat restoration, and facilitate the creation of community green spaces. By fostering partnerships with local conservation organizations and engaging in collaborative initiatives, South Haven can leverage resources and expertise to implement effective green infrastructure projects that benefit both the environment and the community at large.



Incorporating green infrastructure practices and policies into the Township's overall development strategy demonstrates a commitment to sustainability and the preservation of the natural environment. By prioritizing the integration of green infrastructure into future planning endeavors, South Haven can position itself as a forward-thinking and environmentally conscious community dedicated to fostering a harmonious relationship between its residents, local ecosystems, and the surrounding natural landscape.

Green infrastructure is an interconnected system of natural areas and open spaces strategically planned and managed to protect and sustain natural ecosystems and their associated benefits. These areas offer a multitude of advantages for both human communities and wildlife, including the purification of air and water, opportunities for outdoor recreation, and the preservation of extensive wildlife habitats. Implementing green infrastructure practices is essential for safeguarding the health, safety, and overall well-being of a community's residents.

Integrating the built environment with the natural landscape is imperative for fostering a community's long-term environmental and economic vitality. By incorporating these elements into the community's vision and future land use plan, the Township can ensure the protection of vital natural functions, recreational spaces, and wildlife habitats, ensuring the preservation of beloved community features for generations to come. A community that prioritizes a clean environment, water conservation, green spaces, and accessible trails is positioned for long-term stability, sustainability, and a high quality of life for its residents and visitors. Such communities are better equipped to attract new businesses and retain skilled workers.

The Conservation Priority map highlights the remaining areas of the Township's ecosystems and natural plant communities that are of utmost importance for conservation efforts. These areas are ranked based on their potential to harbor high-quality natural spaces and unique ecological features. They play a critical role in providing essential ecological services, such as water quality and quantity regulation, soil development and stabilization, pollinator habitats, wildlife migration corridors, stopover sites for migratory birds, genetic diversity preservation, and floodwater retention. Balancing development with the conservation and preservation of natural resources is crucial for preserving South Haven Township's distinctive natural heritage. By incorporating green infrastructure best practices into future planning, the Township can protect its natural legacy while fostering responsible and sustainable growth.









## Non-motorized Plan

The Township aims to promote the expansion of pedestrian walkways and bicycle pathways along both existing paved public roads and new private roads. To ensure safer travel for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, the following preferences are recommended:

### For public roadways:

Priority is given to the planning and construction of separate walkways or pathways that are similar to sidewalks, constructed on at least one side of each public roadway. Alternatively, the preference is for a six-foot (6') wide impervious surface (asphalt or concrete) walkway/pathway, preferably constructed on both sides of the roadway. These pathways would have permanent striping, incorporating reflective material at the boundary of the roadway. The Township will support the County Road Commission in seeking state and federal grants for separated non-motorized pathways along major recreation routes, varying in width and design based on the funding source.

### For private roadways:

The primary preference is for the construction of separate walkways or pathways similar to sidewalks on at least one side of each roadway. Alternatively, the preference is for a six-foot (6') wide impervious surface walkway/pathway, constructed in continuation with the existing or proposed asphalt road surface. These pathways would include permanent striping, preferably with reflective material embedded in the surface, along the roadway's edge.

### Policies:

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathway Expansion: Prioritize the development and expansion of pedestrian walkways and bicycle pathways along both existing paved public roads and new private roads to enhance non-motorized transportation options.
2. Safety Measures for Public Roadways: Encourage the construction of separate walkways or pathways similar to sidewalks along public roadways, ensuring they are constructed on at least one side of each road. Additionally, consider the development of six-foot (6') wide impervious surface walkways with reflective striping to improve visibility and safety for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles.
3. Advocacy for Grants and Funding: Support the County Road Commission in seeking state and federal grants for the establishment of non-motorized pathways along major recreational routes, advocating for the development of separated walkways with varying width and design based on the funding source.
4. Safety Measures for Private Roadways: Encourage the construction of separate walkways or pathways similar to sidewalks on at least one side of each private roadway. Additionally, consider the development of six-foot (6') wide impervious surface walkways with reflective striping to ensure the safety of non-motorized travelers along private roads.

By implementing these policies, the Township can prioritize the development of a comprehensive non-motorized transportation network, promoting pedestrian and cyclist safety and encouraging sustainable and accessible travel options for all residents.

## ZONING PLAN

The land use categories described and shown on Map 4.1: Future Land Use relate closely to South Haven Township’s zoning districts. The following figure describes the relationship between future land use and zoning districts.

Future Land Use Plan Designation	Key Components		Corresponding Zoning Districts
Conservation	Lots	Large Acreage	The Resource Development (RD) and Agriculture Residential (AR) districts. The Resource Development District specifically zones areas of the Township that are particularly sensitive and therefore is intended to remain undeveloped and preserve natural habitat, wildlife, and native flora. The Agriculture Residential district also is designated to zone land which is prime for agricultural production and contains large tracts as present woodlands or scrublands.
	Residential Density	Few (preferably zero)	
	Utilities	Well/Septic Only	
Agriculture	Lots	5 acres (septic)	The Agriculture Residential (AR) district serves to provide, preserve, and protect areas that are conducive for agricultural production. It is ideal for providing large tracts of land that contain a very low residential density ideally less than 1 dwelling unit per 5-10 acres of land.
	Residential Density	1 dwelling unit per 5 acres	
	Utilities	Well/Septic Only	
Low-Density Residential	Lots	21,780 sq. ft. (public) 1 acre (septic)	This designation is compatible with the Low-Density Residential (LDR) district. It provides for single-family detached and duplex housing options with no more than 2 dwelling units per acre.
	Residential Density	1-2 dwelling units per acre	
	Utilities	Public or Private	



Medium-Density Residential	Lots	10,000 sq. ft. (public utilities) 1 acre (septic)	The Medium-Density Residential district fits this land designation which permits single or duplex housing options in neighborhoods that have typically larger subdivided lots of at least 15,000 square feet in area. This district permits at least 2 dwelling units per acre.
	Residential Density	2-4 dwelling units per acre	
	Utilities	Public or Private	
High-Density Residential	Lots	7,260 sq. ft. (per dwelling unit)	This land use designation matches the district minimums for the High-Density Residential (HDR) district. If supplied by utilities, the HDR zoning district will permit lots of 10,000 square feet in area, which will support approximately 4 dwelling units per acre.
	Residential Density	4-6 dwelling units per acre	
	Utilities	Public Only	
Multi-Family Residential	Lots	4,400 sq. ft. (per dwelling unit)	The Multi-Family Residential (MFR) district is compatible with the Multi-Family Residential designation. The requires at least 1/2 acre (21,780 sq. ft.) to begin a development and contains a schedule of the additional lot area needed for the number of additional units. Lots are required to maintain at least 330 feet of road frontage to be in the MFR district.
	Residential Density	8-10 dwelling units per acre	
	Utilities	Public Only	
Office/Service Commercial	Lots	10,000 sq. ft. (public) 1 acre (septic)	This land use designation aligns with the Community Service Commercial (CSC) zoning district. It is intended to serve as the transition between residential and less dense areas along major Township corridors.
	Utilities	Public or Private	







Mixed-Use	Lots	No Minimum	There is no specific district for this designation, however, the Residential Commercial Overlay (RCO) does permit mixed use development with upper floor residential. The intentions of this land use is to have flexibility to develop land creatively next to the City boundaries, and achieve this goal through utilization of the planned development process.
	Utilities	Public Only	
Neighborhood Commercial	Lots	10,000 sq. ft. (public) 1 acre (septic)	This designation aligns with the purpose of the Neighborhood Service Commercial (NSC) district, which is intended to be located near residential areas to provide locations for convenient shopping destinations.
	Utilities	Public or Private	
Commercial/Industrial	Lots	40,000 sq. ft. (public) 80,000 sq. ft. (septic)	This designation most accurately fits the Heavy Commercial (HC) zoning district. The Heavy Commercial district permits large scale commercial and light industrial activities such as warehousing and contractor storage yards and facilities. The Industrial (I) zoning district could also apply to this designation, however, it would be only for the least intensive industrial uses.
	Utilities	Public or Private	
Industrial	Lots	40,000 sq. ft.	The Industrial (I) district fits this designation the best. It provides spaces for greater types of industrial uses than what should be found in the Heavy Commercial (HC) district. As a more intense industrial district, it should be located on public water and sewer systems due to the volume of services needed for industrial land uses.
	Utilities	Public Only	
Airport Overlay Zone			There is no designated zoning district for this overlay. The South Haven Regional Airport maintains an airport master plan which outlines its future planning and development and how development should take place in the Township in the vicinity.





# **APPENDIX A**

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**



# SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

MASTER PLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Prepared by Williams & Works

05.30.2023



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**INTRODUCTION**

The South Haven Township’s Master Plan is a broad policy document that provides a community vision and acts as a guide for land use and development, capital investment, and growth management. It is a vision that articulates what the community desires to become, and it establishes a framework for achieving that vision through a series of specific strategies and tasks.

In 2022, the South Haven Township Planning Commission began the process for the development of a new Master Plan to guide the community over the next two to three decades. The Township undertook a two-part engagement campaign to inform the goals and objectives of the new Master Plan. This report presents the findings of this outreach effort. It includes a summary of these findings in terms of the input and quantified data received an analysis of the significance of the conclusions, and a discussion of the methods used to solicit feedback.



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The public engagement for the Township's Master Plan update encompassed a variety of outreach techniques and methods to solicit community feedback from numerous sources. The first method was a widely publicly accessible online community survey that was carried out from November 2022 to May 2023, as well as a Public Open House held on Saturday, April 29, 2023. A detailed analysis of these events and activities is presented in the following section.

### Events and Timeline



#### Community Survey

Nov 2022-May 2023

An online survey was created for members of the community to provide detailed feedback about the Master Plan.



#### Visioning Sessions with Planning Commission

Feb-Apr 2023

Three meetings were held with the Planning Commission to discuss opportunities, threats, and top Master Plan priorities.



#### Public Open House

Apr 2023

A Public Open House was held at Township Hall for members of the community. It was advertised in local media requesting participation to garner feedback about the Master Plan.

### Promotion

Several methods of coordination were used to promote available public participation opportunities and including:

- The creation of a dedicated Master Plan Update highlighted on the City's website for educational and promotional purposes;
- Distribution of printed survey flyers at both planning events and to area businesses and organizations for display;
- Advertising on local talk radio to promote the Plan survey and Open House event;
- Attendance at regular with the Planning Commission for all visioning sessions, all of which were open to the public;

## OPEN HOUSE

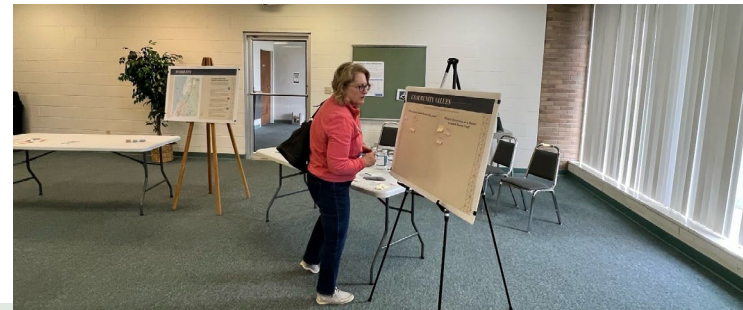
Community Open House events provided a casual, drop-in format for participants to engage with activities at their own pace and learn about the Master Plan. By providing a variety of quick, fun, and eye-catching activities, the consultants were able to solicit feedback from attendees and hold in-depth conversations about local Planning with interested community members.

One open house planning event was conducted as part of the planning process:

- **Township Hall**  
Saturday, April 29, 2021, from 1 pm - 4 pm

### Welcome Board

An informational welcome board was present at each pop-up planning event that provided context about the Plan and encouraged participants to take part in the available activities. This board included educational text regarding three questions: (1) What is a Master Plan, (2) Why is planning important, and (3) Why are we here today?



### What do you love about South Haven Township?

Participants were asked to write down three reasons why they love the South Haven Township on sticky notes and place their responses on a designated board. This activity was important because it highlights what is working in the community and what could be built upon in the future.

Figure 1 below is a word cloud of common terminology used in the responses to this question. The larger the word, the more commonly it was used in responses. This word cloud was generated through freewordcloudgenerator.com and removes numbers, special characters, and stop words (e.g., the, is, are, etc.) from the transcribed comments.

Although attendance for the Open House event was small, due to poor weather, the feelings of those residents that did attend are still valid. The words or combination of words that were used are "space," "openness," "proximity to the City of South Haven," "beaches," "rural," "atmosphere," "lake," etc. Additional topics commonly expressed in the activity included a love of nature and the openness of the Township, an appreciation for the rural atmosphere, and enjoyment of the local shops and eateries nearby.

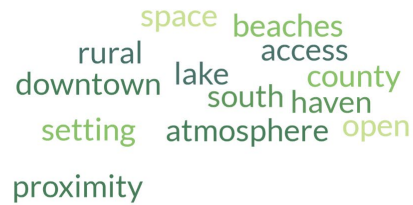


Figure 1. What do you love about South Haven Township? Word Cloud

#### Areas for Mobility Investment

A map of the Township was provided to give provide an overall aspect of the mobility in the Township.

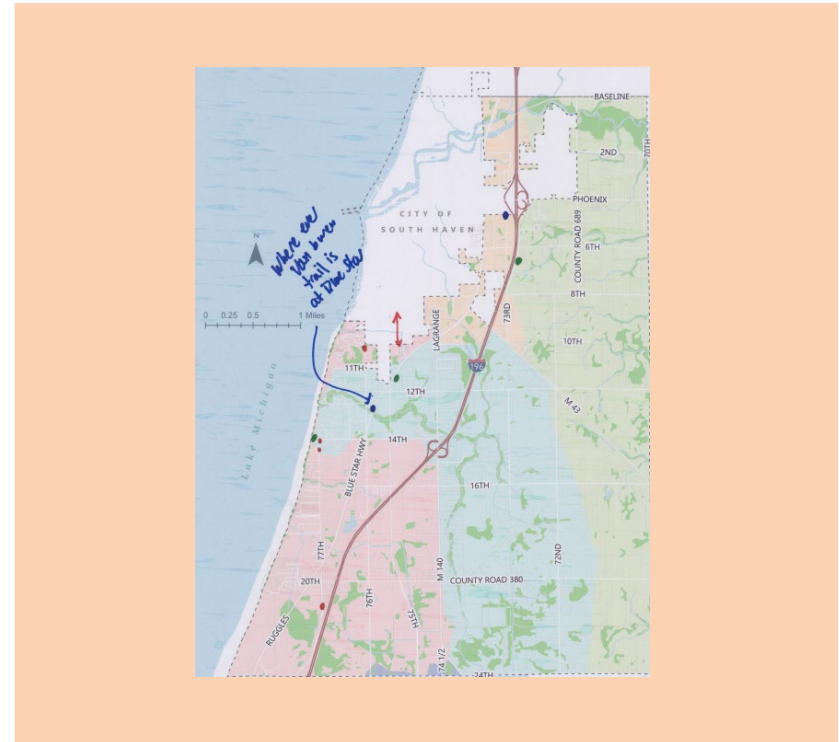


Figure 2. Areas for Investment Reference Map

Participants were asked to place red pins on the map in areas where they believe the most public investment is needed for sidewalks or trail improvements and blue pins in areas where public investment is needed for areas that need safer crosswalks and green pins for locations where wayfinding signage would improve the Township. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the pin voting based on the most need of investment. Participants were also encouraged to write additional comments on the board to elaborate on their pins. Common themes expressed in the comments included additional crosswalks for safer bike/pedestrian travel, maintenance of trail connections or locations for repair, requests for specific types of wayfinding signage (primarily landmark points and beaches), and street improvements.

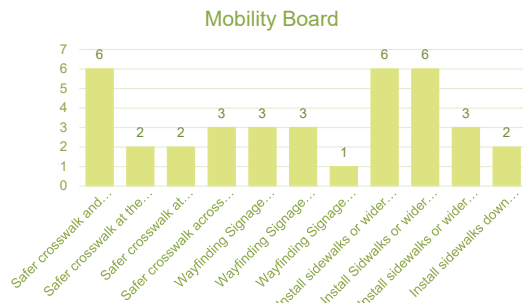


Figure 3. Areas for Mobility Investment - Combined Totals

#### Comment Cards

Comment cards were available during the events. A total of one comment card was completed and its content has been transcribed below. The comment was made in reference to the sub-area focus around M-140 between Blue Star Highway and Interstate 196.

- Please consider adding more opportunities for new housing development in this study area. This could become a prime location for more dense communities that provide more affordable housing options because of smaller home sizes. Cottage-style development or Cottage-Courtyard develops offer affordable options for those that can't afford to purchase a larger square-footage single-family home on a larger lot typical in the Township.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

#### Methodology and General Information

Survey questions were developed by the Township's Planning Commission and the planning consultant. The survey was organized into four sections: Background, Community Feedback, Housing, and Economic Development. The survey was conducted through the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, allowing respondents to submit confidential replies using a "check-the-box" format. This format was designed to expedite the completion rate of the survey, maximize response rates, and facilitate a consistent scoring of results. A total of 259 responses were completed from the launch of the survey in November 2022, through the close of the survey in May 2023. This results in a margin of error of 5% (based on the Township's 2020 population of 4,041).

**A total of 263 responses were completed from the launch of the survey on November 2022 to the May 2023, deadline.**

Some respondents completed the survey, but left various items blank; however, all surveys had at least some responses that could be scored. The rate of completion for the full survey was approximately 64%. Survey fatigue is recognized in items 14,18,19 and 29 as 17% or more of respondents skipped these questions, whereas the rate of completion for items 1-13 was 84% or higher. Some questions provided space for respondents to fill in the blank and leave comments. When spelling and grammar mistakes were obvious, corrections were made, and if profanity or other offensive language was used, it was edited. Due to the sample size, sample population, and other limitations generally present in online surveys, these results should not be interpreted with a purely scientific mindset. However, these survey results provide valuable perspectives of the community's opinions regarding the Master Plan updates. The survey was successful in that it resulted in objective, quantifiable information from a large number of people compared to typical participation in other forms of public input (e.g., community open houses, etc.). This survey will help the Township craft community-supported policy and promote uses that are aligned with the desires of the public for short- and long-range municipal planning.

The online survey tool presented respondents with a standardized set of questions from which they could choose responses. Some questions only permitted one answer, some permitted multiple answers, and others allowed space for individual comments. This method restricted acceptable entries to those required by the survey form, providing a standardized method by which analysis could be conducted and trends observed.



Two scoring scales were used to report the data received: nominal and ordinal scales. A nominal scale merely counts responses by particular classification (e.g., place of residence). This scale is useful to separate responses into working groups or to evaluate the overall sample to determine whether it represents the larger population. Items 1, 2, 4-12, and 21-27 were scored on a nominal scale.

An ordinal scale is more useful in gaining insight into respondent beliefs because it includes the characteristic of rank order. That is, one item is greater or lesser than another item, or it has more or less of a particular quality, based on a commonly understood standard. An ordinal scale enables some greater judgment about the relative strength or weakness of particular responses (e.g., “most ideal,” “how often,” etc.). It does not, however, include a quantifiable or consistent interval between the various points in the scale. Items 13-20 and 28 were scored on an ordinal scale.

For the purposes of reporting survey results, the ordinal scales used were converted to interval scales. This merely means that a numeric value was assigned to each response with an interval of “1” between each point on the scale. For example, in Question 15, “Very Important” responses were assigned the number 3, “Important” responses were assigned the number 2, and so forth. This was done to enable the measurement of central tendency of all responses, which is accomplished by determining the arithmetic mean (or average) response for the item. However, it must be recognized that the assignment of value to the intervals of the scale does not automatically result in a true interval scale because each respondent will have his/her own interpretation of the interval. Nevertheless, in the aggregate, this procedure does enable a comparison of the items from one to the next.

Open-ended questions were used for items 2 and 29 which prompted participants to leave a written response. Additionally, open-ended answer choices were provided for items 4, 9, 12, 16-17, 21-26, and 19 if a respondent’s desired answer choice was not available or additional information was requested based on their initial response. While summaries of survey responses are provided in this report, all survey responses are located in [Appendix A](#).

### Background

The first section of the survey provided context for its purpose in relation to the Township’s Master Plan update and inquired about the participant’s background.

1. The first question asked respondents to identify which area of the Township they lived in and was required to continue with the survey. The majority of the respondents were from Area B (31%, n=81) (Figure 5). The surrounding City of South Haven (D) (25%, n=63) and I don’t live in South Haven Township (7%), made up the largest percentage of respondents outside of the Township limits with few participants indicating their residence outside of the local area.

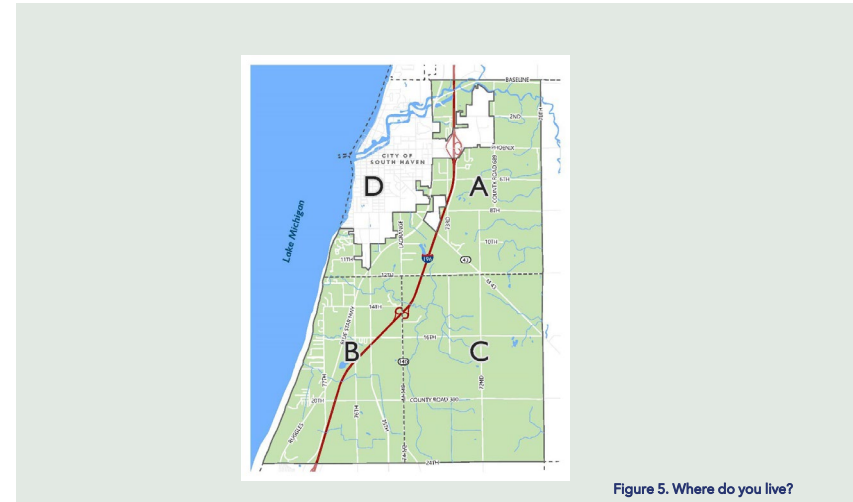


Figure 5. Where do you live?

2. Respondents were asked to indicate what type of resident they are. The largest percentage of participants indicated they are full-time residents (77%), nearly 3.5x higher than the next most frequently chosen answer (Figure 6). Overall, this indicates a strong presence of full-time or permanent residents.

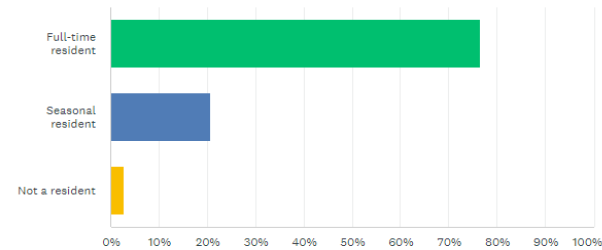


Figure 6. What type of South Haven Resident are You?

3. Question three requested information about where the respondent's primary ZIP code was located. Only 79 responses were made to answer this question and the majority of responses that were made were local, residing in the 49090 South Haven ZIP code area. However, a few trends can be seen in where the valid responses did come from. They primarily came from Chicagoland metropolitan area, Detroit metropolitan area, and a few from the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

Location of Respondent	Percent	Number of Responses
South Haven	46.8%	37
Chicago Metro Area	17.7%	14
Detroit Metro Area	5.1%	4
Grand Rapids Metro Area	5.1%	4
Indianapolis Metro Area	3.7%	3
Other Michigan Location	8.9%	7
Other Out-of-State Locations	10.1%	8
No ZIP Code Indication	2.5%	2
Invalid Out-of-State ZIP Code	1.2%	1
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>79</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>184</b>

Table 1. Which ZIP code do you live in if you are a seasonal resident?

4. This question asked what type of residence you live in South Haven Township. Thirteen respondents skipped these questions out of 263 responses. The rate of response was 95% (n=250). Figure 7 highlights these responses.

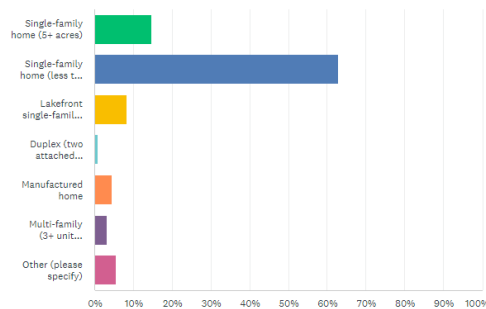


Figure 7. If you live in South Haven Township, what type of residence do you live in?

5. Question 5 asked respondents if they rent or own their residence. The majority of participants own their households (Figure 8).

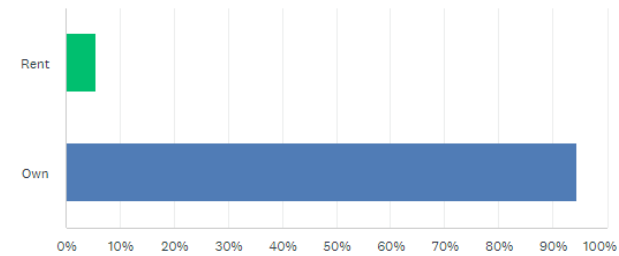


Figure 8. Do you Rent or Own your South Haven Township Home?

6. Over 32% of all respondents to question 6 reported living in South Haven Township for more than 25 years, followed by 28% living in the Township between 10 and 25 years. This indicates that residents of the Township have been living and working in the community for a long period and Township residents have a trend to live in the Township for a long time.

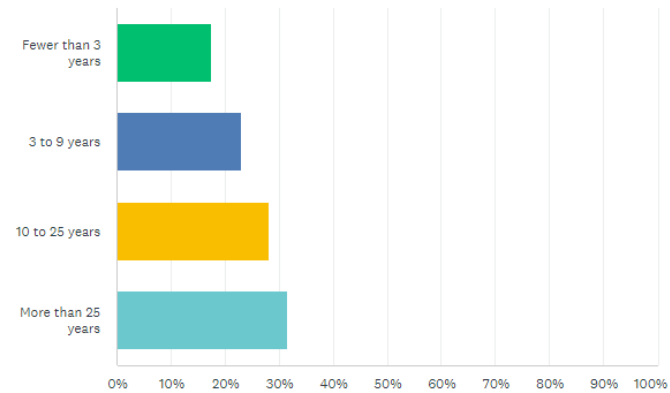


Figure 9. How long have you lived in South Haven Township?

7. Question 7 asked respondents if they anticipate leaving the Township within the next five years. The overwhelming response was that members do not anticipate leaving soon or at all.

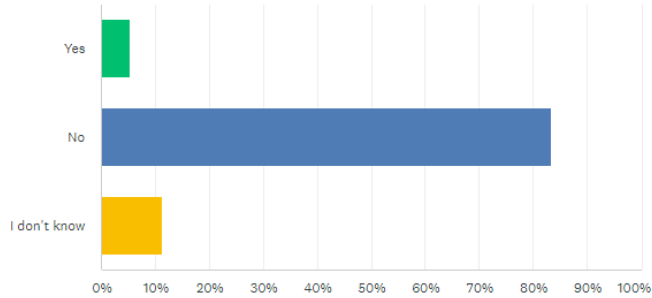


Figure 10. Do you expect to move out of the Township in the next five years?

8. Question 8 asked the age of the respondent.

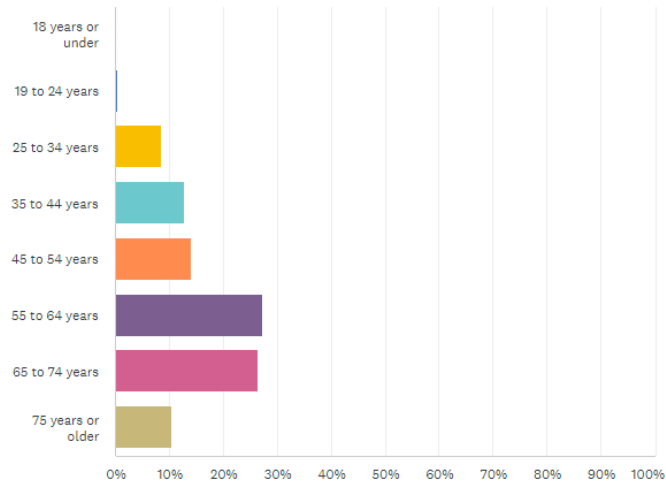


Figure 10. What is your age?

9. Respondents were prompted to select how they are connected to the Township in several different aspects. The majority of the respondents live or work in the Township.

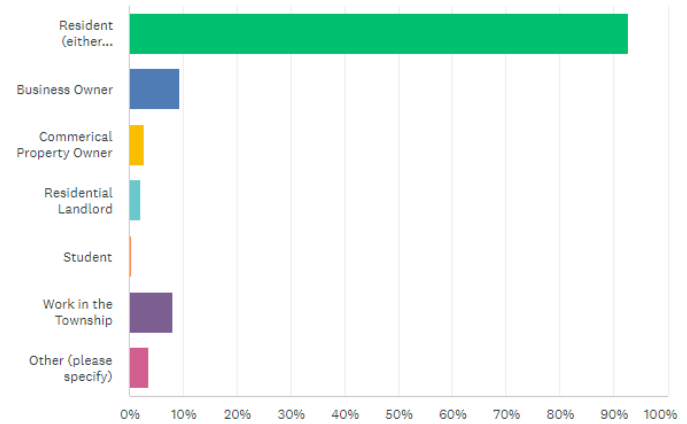


Figure 11. What best characterizes your connection to South Haven Township?

10. Question 10 asked where respondents primarily work and provided several options. Approximately one-third of the respondents indicated they are retired and the greatest majority of working respondents (17%, n=38) indicated that they work in the City of South Haven. South Haven Township followed this with approximately 12.5% of the respondents and the remainder was spread in various other areas in the region or if they worked at home.



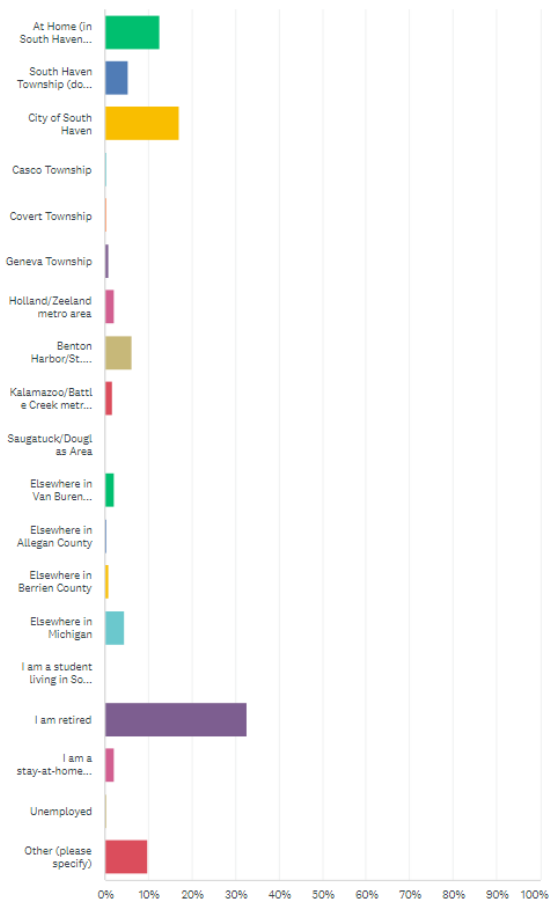


Figure 10. If you live in the City, do you own or rent your residence?

11. Question 11 asked respondents where they primarily visit for certain goods and services. These were groceries and household goods, entertainment, and parks and recreation. The majority of respondents shop for groceries or household goods purchased locally in the City of South Haven or online through an internet retailer and have these items delivered to their homes. Entertainment was fairly evenly distributed between the City of South Haven, Benton Harbor/St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, Holland/Zeeland. Or elsewhere.

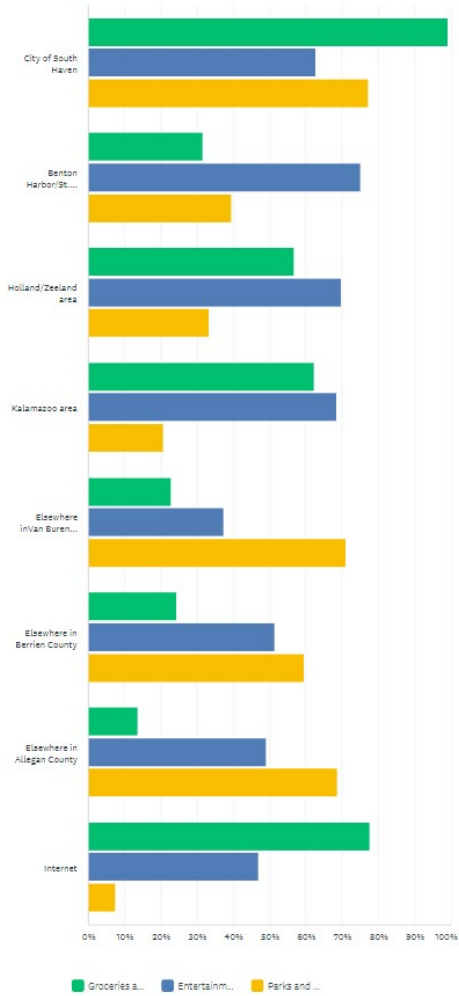


Figure 11. Where do you primarily see groceries, entertainment, and recreation?

12. 57.7% of respondents indicated the natural setting of the Township is the reason they live in the Township today (Table 2). 58.2% of respondents provided further insight they love living in a lakeshore community.

Answer Choices	Percent	Number of Responses
Natural Setting	57.7%	138
Cost of Living/Lower Taxes	20.1%	48
Agricultural Community	9.21%	22
Rural Lifestyle	31.0%	74
I was raised here	26.4%	63
Available Housing Options	9.6%	23
Safe Place to Live	35.6%	85
Lakeshore Community	58.2%	139
Recreational Opportunities	34.7%	83
Proximity to Work	21.3%	51
Not a Resident	4.2%	10
Other (see responses in Appendix A)	8.8%	21
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>239</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 2. What is the reason you live in South Haven Township?

### Community Feedback

13. Question 13 was an Ordinal Scale question that asked the respondents how they feel about the rate of current growth and development in the Township. Options varied between too quickly, about right, too slowly, and no opinion. 223 survey takers answered these questions and 40 survey takers skipped this question.

Answer Choices	Percent	Number of Responses
Too Quickly	16.59%	37
About Right	52.02%	116
Too Slowly	20.18%	45
No Opinion	11.21%	25
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>223</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>40</b>

Table 3. How do you feel about the growth of the Township?

14. Question 14 asked respondents how they would rank the Township's effort to guide and direct growth and development. 223 respondents answered this question and indicated how they felt, 40 skipped the question. The majority of respondents answered that they felt the Township was doing a good job (29.2%, n=65) or a fair job (35.9%, n=80). Table

Answer Choices	Percent	Number of Responses
Excellent	2.69%	6
Good	29.15%	65
Fair	35.87%	80
Poor	16.14%	36
No Opinion	16.14%	36
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>223</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>40</b>

Table 4. How do you feel the Township is guiding growth and development?

15. Question 15 was a very large question asking the opinion on 26 individual items ranging from traffic congestion, quality of groundwater, conservation of agriculture and open space, code enforcement, short-term rentals, and renewable energies. The results can be found in Appendix A.

### Housing

16. This question asked respondents what type of housing they prefer to see developed in the Township. The majority wanted to see more mid-sized lots (1-5 acres) of single-family development to be constructed (59%, n=131), next small lot (less than 1 acre) of single-family development (53%, n=117), followed by retirement communities (39%, n=86). Figure 12 shows the percentages broken down by housing typology.

Housing Types Desired

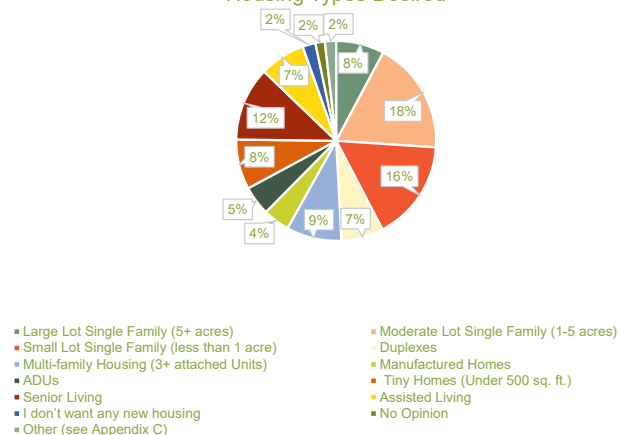


Figure 12. What type of housing would you like to see developed in the Township?

### Economic Development

The next section of the online survey included questions regarding community input for the type of commercial or industrial development they would like to see in the Township.

17. Question 17 of the survey provided asked the respondents what type of commercial or industrial development they would prefer to develop in the Township over the next couple of decades. The four largest selection categories were causal dining restaurants (62.6%, n=137), retail (44.3%, n=97), manufacturing and large industry (42.1%, n=92), and utility-scale solar energy systems (32.0%, n=70). These are all fairly typical responses to township residents in any community. However, the utility-scale solar development preferences are surprising. While many members of a community support increasing reliance on renewable energy sources, large-scale utility solar systems tend to take up hundreds to thousands of acres of prime farmland. As a shoreline community, South Haven Township does not have the luxury of being a true 6-mile x 6-mile township containing 36 square miles of space. South Haven Township only contains 17.5 square miles of space and thousands of these acres being dedicated to solar energy fields may have a more significant impact on space than the larger nearby Township. However, renewable energy should be explored and planned for.

Answer Choices	Percent	Number of Responses
Fast Food Restaurants	11.42%	25
Sit-Down Restaurants (casual dining)	62.56%	137
Retail Stores	44.29%	97
Personal Services	30.14%	66
Assembly, Manufacturing, and other Industry	42.01%	92
Finance, Business, and Professional Services	23.74%	52
Hotels, and Accommodation Businesses	17.35%	38
Short-Term Rental (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.)	13.70%	30
Utility-Grade Solar Energy Systems	31.96%	70
Utility-Grade Wind Energy Systems	27.40%	60
No Opinion	5.94%	13
I don't want any new business in the Township	5.48%	12
Other (see Appendix A)	8.68%	19
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>219</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>44</b>

**Table 5. What type of business would you like to see more of in the Township?**

18. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of Township aspects on a 5-point Likert scale. The weights assigned to the applied scale are as follows: 0=Not Important, 1=Somewhat Unimportant, 2=Neutral, 3=Important, and 4=Very Important. These scales were then used to calculate the weighted average for each provided Township aspect. A great place to live (3.11) had the highest weighted average, with 83% of respondents classifying this priority as satisfactory or better. Other priorities with a weighted average categorized as important include quality of life (3.09), encouraging fire service protection (3.00), and ambulance services and police protection (2.88). Housing choices (1.94), Communications by the Township to Residents (1.95), code enforcement (1.84), and employment opportunities (1.80) had the lowest weighted averages. These low-ranking location aspects are consistent with other responses and input received during the open house.

19. Similar to question 18 residents were asked to rank Township planning priorities for the Master Plan. It was also structured on a 5-point Likert scale. The weights assigned to the applied scale are as follows: 0=Very Dissatisfied, 1= Dissatisfied, 2=Neutral, 3=Satisfied, and 4=Very Satisfied. These scales were then used to calculate the weighted average for each provided Township aspect. Preserving open space was the top priority for Township residents (3.40), protecting private property rights (3.48), and improving internet and broadband availability (3.27). Expanding commercial development (2.39), expanding industrial development (2.45), increasing support for an expanded tourist-based economy (2.33), and promoting wind/solar energy (2.46) has the lowest weighted

averages. Those found highest in favor are complimentary to question 18, however, those in the least favor are contrary to many of the higher interests in question 17.

20. Question 20 asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with several statements regarding land use development. More than 64% agreed that the Township needs to acquire more land for parks, and natural areas, and construct nonmotorized trails. Greater than 85% agree that the Township needs to ensure the protection of its water resources. More than 64% agree that it would be a good policy to try and attract more commercial business to the Township. Nearly 80% agreed that the farmland that the Township contains needs to be preserved and maintained. 63% agree that the Township needs to concentrate its new housing development in certain areas to help conserve open space and farmland. Lastly, more than 56% agree that if residential development were to be constructed throughout the Township, they would prefer to see large lot single-family which preserves the feel of open spaces and farming, instead of allowing large subdivisions or residential PUD to be scattered throughout the Township.

21. Question 21 specifically addressed the increase in short-term rental homes and how they should be administered or controlled. The majority (59.6%) felt that a specific short-term rental ordinance to both the Zoning Ordinance and Township regulatory code needs to be created to control these land uses. Only 30% of the respondents felt that short-term rentals should even be allowed in the Township. One-third of the respondents felt that only specific zoning districts should be allowed to contain short-term rentals and approved only as a special land use. Nearly 60% felt that all short-term rentals should be inspected on an annual basis, in addition to this observation 51% that all short-term rentals should be mandated to have annual compliance inspections, especially for safety purposes.

22. Questions 22 through 26 referenced specific areas of the Township in which the Planning Commission wished to receive more feedback, specifically regarding the development of certain land uses. Question 22 identified an area of M-43 from Blue Star Highway to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the respondents selected that the best use for this area would be to use this corridor as a region of mixed residential, commercial, and office development (60%). Question 23 inquired about the Blue Star Highway corridor from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the majority of respondents answered that they would like to see mixed residential, commercial, and office development along this corridor as well (55%). Question 24 queried what M-140 between Blue Star Highway and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue should contain, similarly to the previous corridors, respondents stated that they would like to see more residential, commercial, and office development here. Question 25 asked about the corridor along 73 ½ Street from Phoenix Road to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue was about 38% in favor of residential, commercial, or office development, while approximately 17% were in favor of just keeping it the way it is now. The final question (Q26) inquired about the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor between Phoenix Road and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Over half of the respondents to this question also would like to see a mix of development similar to previous questions promoting more residential, commercial, and office uses.



23. Question 27 addressed parks and recreation in the Township with the majority (68%) favoring more land to be used for parks and recreation. While Question 28 asked about other transportation options available in the Township such as bike/ped and public transit (demand response). It was structured on a 5-point Likert scale. The weights assigned to the applied scale are as follows: 4=Least Important and 1=Most Important. These scales were then used to calculate the weighted average for each provided Township aspect. Table 6 ranks these from most important to least important.

Answer Choices	Weighted Rank	Weighted Average
Install More Sidewalks	3	2.48
Planning and Designing a Safe Bike/Ped Network	2	2.40
Improvement to Transit Accessibility (STARS)	1	2.30
More Accessible Roads for All Users	4	2.93
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>188</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>75</b>

**Table 6. What is the most important transportation need?**

24. Question 29 asked the respondents about policy goals that the Township should focus on in this Master Plan and if agree or disagree on these goals. Availability of reliable high-speed internet received the most favorable response feedback (94% agreed), followed by attainable and affordable housing options (81% agreed), and more housing for the elderly and disabled (70% agreed). While the policy most disagreeable to the respondents was the addition of more multi-family housing options (43% agreed) and improving the law enforcement options (43% agreed).

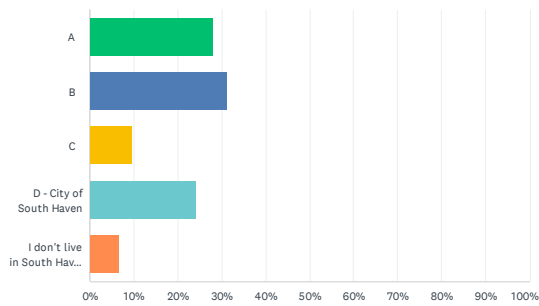
25. Lastly, the final question (Q30) was left as an open-ended question allowing the respondent to provide any additional thoughts or comments about the Township and how it should plan for its future. The comments are listed in Appendix A.

## APPENDIX A

Comments from the Community Survey

Q1 In which part of the Township do you reside? (Please refer to the map below)

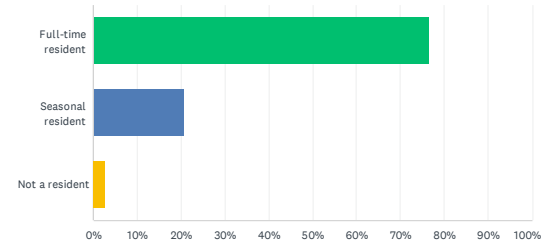
Answered: 259 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A	28.19%	73
B	31.27%	81
C	9.65%	25
D - City of South Haven	24.32%	63
I dont live in South Haven Township or the City of South Haven. Please write where you live.	6.56%	17
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>259</b>

Q2 What type of South Haven Resident Are You?

Answered: 261 Skipped: 2



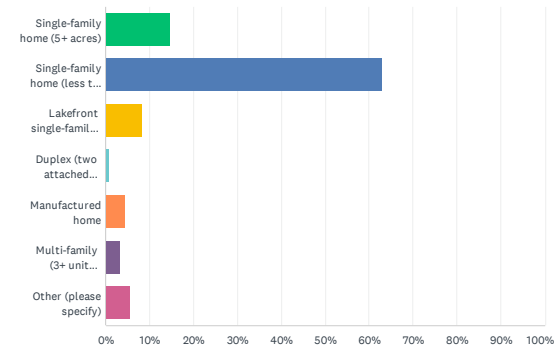
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full-time resident	76.63%	200
Seasonal resident	20.69%	54
Not a resident	2.68%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>261</b>

Q3 What is your zip code of residency if you are a seasonal resident?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 184

Q4 If you live in South Haven Township, in what type of residence do you live?

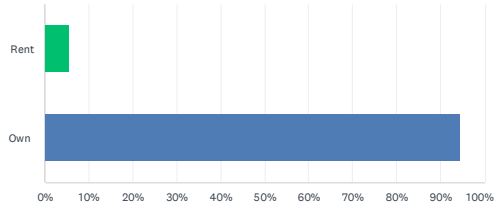
Answered: 250 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Single-family home (5+ acres)	14.80% 37
Single-family home (less than 5 acres)	62.80% 157
Lakefront single-family home	8.40% 21
Duplex (two attached dwelling units in one structure)	0.80% 2
Manufactured home	4.40% 11
Multi-family (3+ unit apartment or condominium)	3.20% 8
Other (please specify)	5.60% 14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>

Q5 Do you rent or own your South Haven Township home?

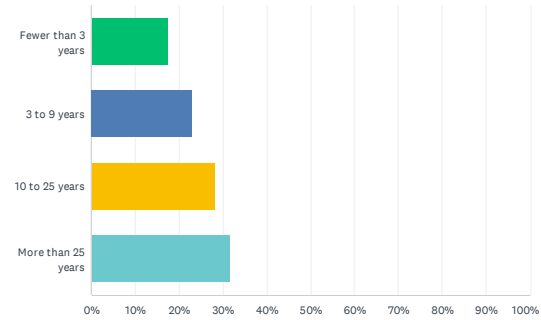
Answered: 253 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	5.53%	14
Own	94.47%	239
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>253</b>

Q6 How long have you lived in South Haven Township?

Answered: 253 Skipped: 10

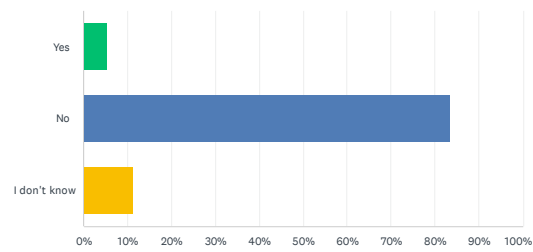


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fewer than 3 years	17.39%	44
3 to 9 years	22.92%	58
10 to 25 years	28.06%	71
More than 25 years	31.62%	80
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>253</b>



### Q7 Do you expect to move out of South Haven Township in the next five years?

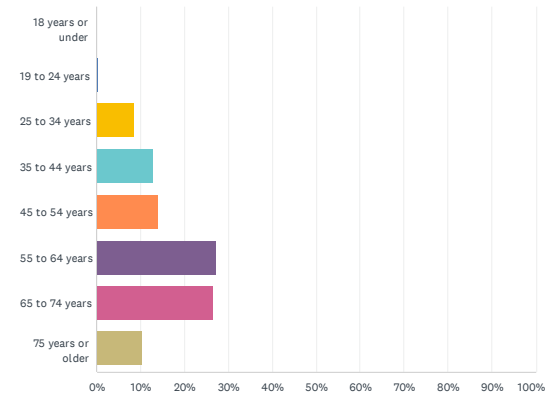
Answered: 246 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.28%	13
No	83.33%	205
I don't know	11.38%	28
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>

### Q8 What is your age?

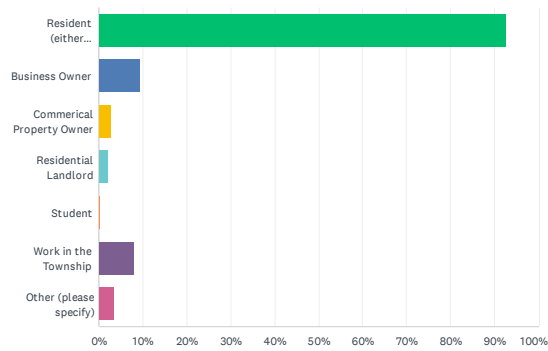
Answered: 249 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18 years or under	0.00%	0
19 to 24 years	0.40%	1
25 to 34 years	8.43%	21
35 to 44 years	12.85%	32
45 to 54 years	14.06%	35
55 to 64 years	27.31%	68
65 to 74 years	26.51%	66
75 years or older	10.44%	26
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>249</b>

**Q9 Which of the following best characterizes your connection to South Haven Township? Please check all that apply.**

Answered: 245 Skipped: 18



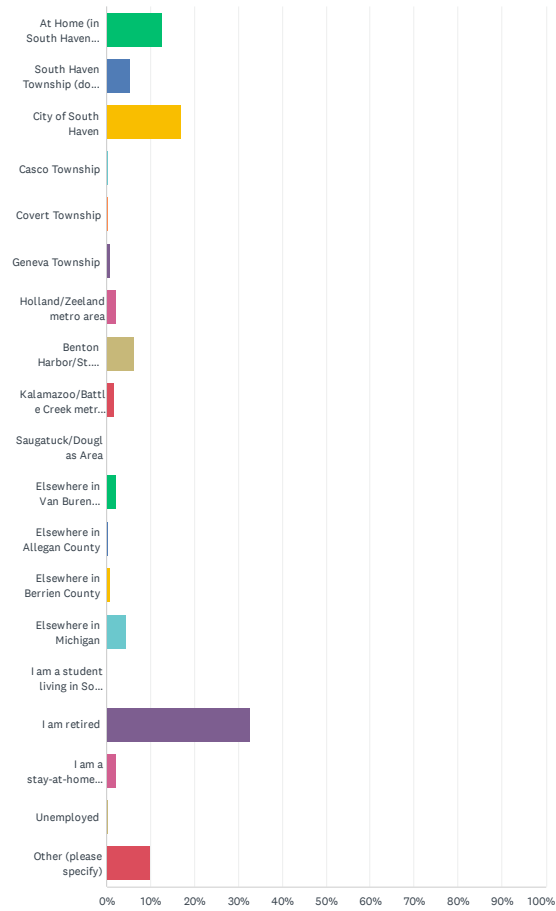
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Resident (either year-round or seasonal)	92.65% 227
Business Owner	9.39% 23
Commerical Property Owner	2.86% 7
Residential Landlord	2.04% 5
Student	0.41% 1
Work in the Township	8.16% 20
Other (please specify)	3.67% 9
<b>Total Respondents: 245</b>	

**Q10 Where do you primarily work?**

Answered: 224 Skipped: 39

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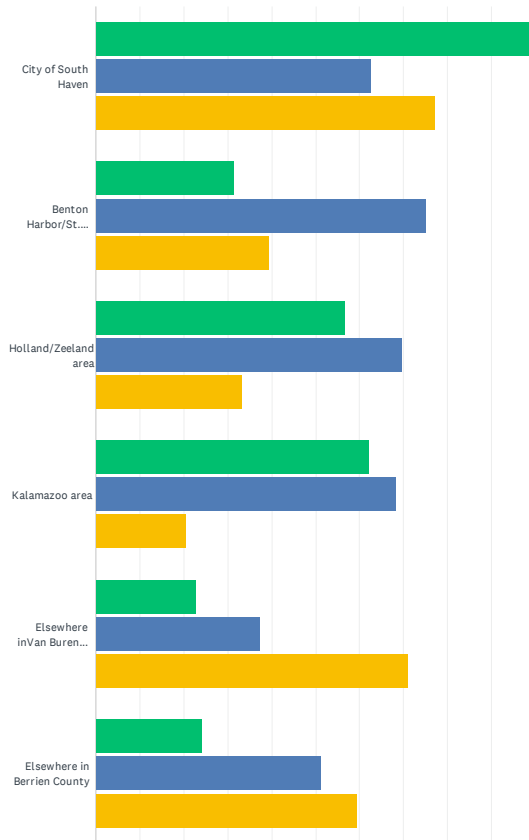
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
At Home (in South Haven Township)	12.50% 28
South Haven Township (does not include at home)	5.36% 12
City of South Haven	16.96% 38
Casco Township	0.45% 1
Covert Township	0.45% 1
Geneva Township	0.89% 2
Holland/Zeeland metro area	2.23% 5
Benton Harbor/St. Joseph metro area	6.25% 14
Kalamazoo/Battle Creek metro area	1.79% 4
Saugatuck/Douglas Area	0.00% 0
Elsewhere in Van Buren County	2.23% 5
Elsewhere in Allegan County	0.45% 1
Elsewhere in Berrien County	0.89% 2
Elsewhere in Michigan	4.46% 10
I am a student living in South Haven Township	0.00% 0
I am retired	32.59% 73
I am a stay-at-home parent	2.23% 5
Unemployed	0.45% 1
Other (please specify)	9.82% 22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>224</b>

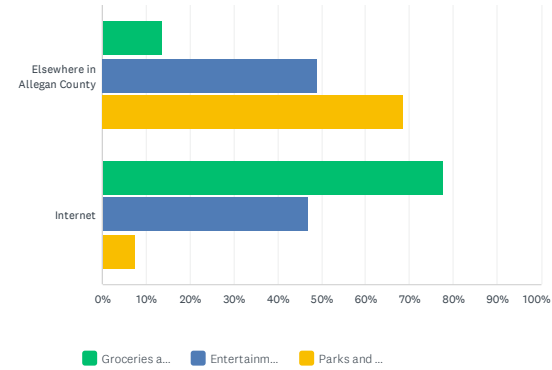
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Q11 Where are you most likely to go for the following goods and services?  
(Please select all that apply.)

Answered: 245 Skipped: 18



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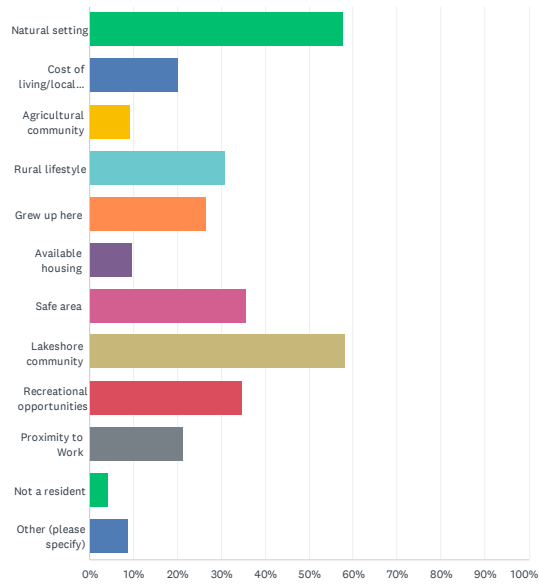
	GROCERIES AND/OR HOUSEHOLD GOODS	ENTERTAINMENT	PARKS AND RECREATION	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
City of South Haven	99.17% 239	62.66% 151	77.18% 186	241
Benton Harbor/St. Joseph area	31.58% 24	75.00% 57	39.47% 30	76
Holland/Zeeland area	56.82% 75	69.70% 92	33.33% 44	132
Kalamazoo area	62.16% 69	68.47% 76	20.72% 23	111
Elsewhere in Van Buren County	22.89% 19	37.35% 31	71.08% 59	83
Elsewhere in Berrien County	24.32% 9	51.35% 19	59.46% 22	37
Elsewhere in Allegan County	13.73% 7	49.02% 25	68.63% 35	51
Internet	77.66% 73	46.81% 44	7.45% 7	94

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Q12 From the following list, please select the most important reason(s) you have chosen to live in South Haven Township (check all that apply):

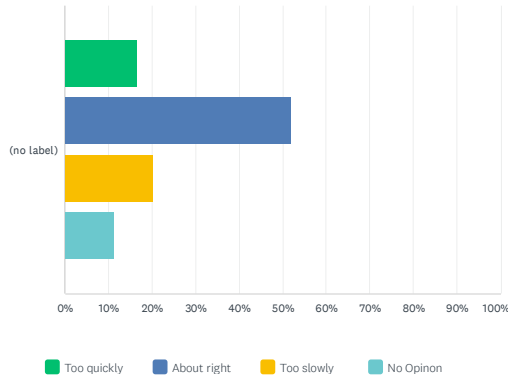
Answered: 239 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Natural setting	57.74% 138
Cost of living/local tax rates	20.08% 48
Agricultural community	9.21% 22
Rural lifestyle	30.96% 74
Grew up here	26.36% 63
Available housing	9.62% 23
Safe area	35.56% 85
Lakeshore community	58.16% 139
Recreational opportunities	34.73% 83
Proximity to Work	21.34% 51
Not a resident	4.18% 10
Other (please specify)	8.79% 21
Total Respondents: 239	

Q13 Regarding the growth of the Township, do you think South Haven Township is growing:

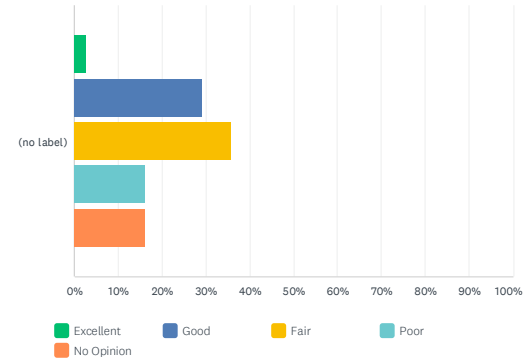
Answered: 223 Skipped: 40



	TOO QUICKLY	ABOUT RIGHT	TOO SLOWLY	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	16.59%	52.02%	20.18%	11.21%	223	0.00
	37	116	45	25		

Q14 Please rate South Haven Township's effort to guide and direct growth and development:

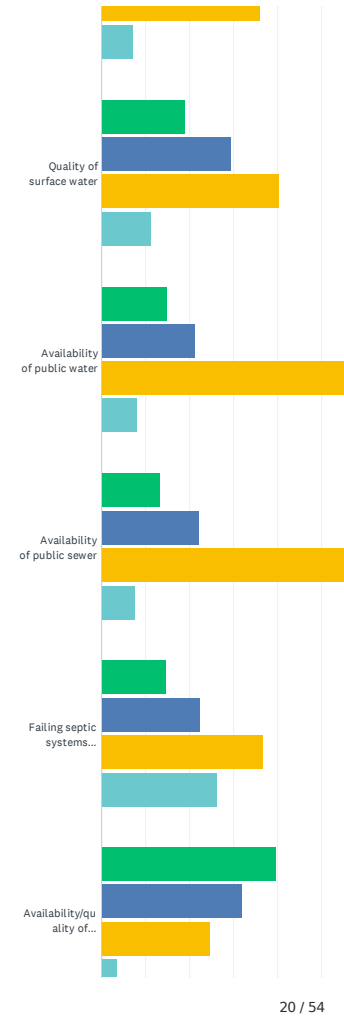
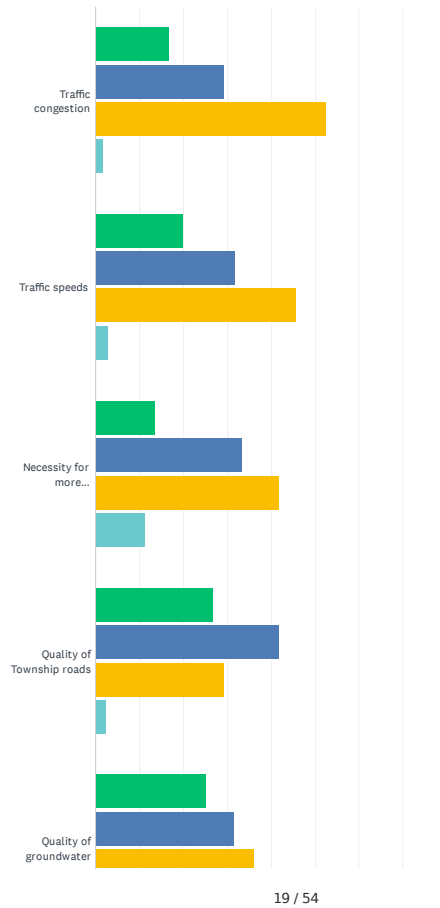
Answered: 223 Skipped: 40



	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.69%	29.15%	35.87%	16.14%	16.14%	223	0.00
	6	65	80	36	36		

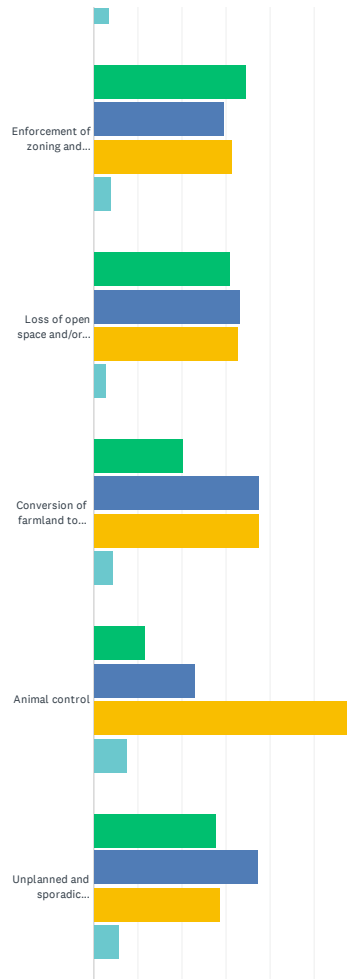
Q15 Please rate your level of concern regarding the following issues:

Answered: 224 Skipped: 39



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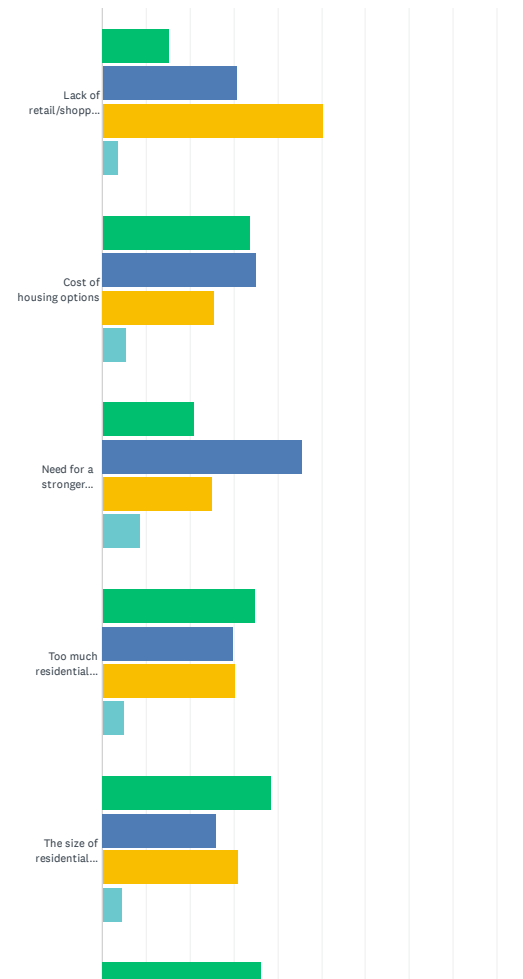
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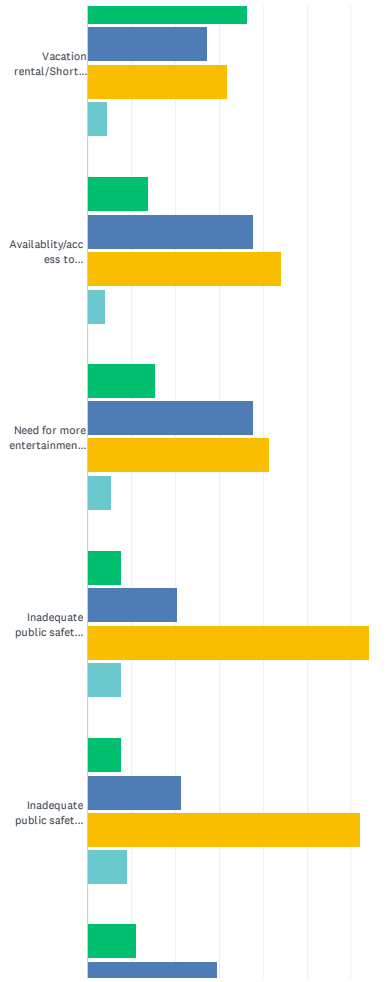
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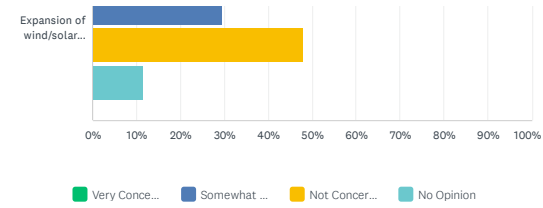
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	VERY CONCERNED	SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	NOT CONCERNED	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Traffic congestion	16.59% 37	29.15% 65	52.47% 117	1.79% 4	223	1.61
Traffic speeds	19.91% 44	31.67% 70	45.70% 101	2.71% 6	221	1.69
Necessity for more non-motorized recreation and transportation options around the Township	13.64% 30	33.18% 73	41.82% 92	11.36% 25	220	1.49
Quality of Township roads	26.58% 59	41.89% 93	29.28% 65	2.25% 5	222	1.93
Quality of groundwater	25.11% 55	31.51% 69	36.07% 79	7.31% 16	219	1.74
Quality of surface water	19.00% 42	29.41% 65	40.27% 89	11.31% 25	221	1.56
Availability of public water	14.93% 33	21.27% 47	55.66% 123	8.14% 18	221	1.43
Availability of public sewer	13.18% 29	22.27% 49	56.82% 125	7.73% 17	220	1.41
Failing septic systems (outside of SHAWSA service area)	14.68% 32	22.48% 49	36.70% 80	26.15% 57	218	1.26
Availability/quality of high-speed or wireless internet	39.64% 88	31.98% 71	24.77% 55	3.60% 8	222	2.08
Enforcement of zoning and property maintenance	34.68% 77	29.73% 66	31.53% 70	4.05% 9	222	1.95
Loss of open space and/or natural areas to development	31.08% 69	33.33% 74	32.88% 73	2.70% 6	222	1.93
Conversion of farmland to residential living	20.36% 45	37.56% 83	37.56% 83	4.52% 10	221	1.74
Animal control	11.76% 26	23.08% 51	57.47% 127	7.69% 17	221	1.39
Unplanned and sporadic commercial development	27.93% 62	37.39% 83	28.83% 64	5.86% 13	222	1.87
Lack of retail/shopping options	15.38% 34	30.77% 68	50.23% 111	3.62% 8	221	1.58
Cost of housing options	33.78% 75	35.14% 78	25.68% 57	5.41% 12	222	1.97
Need for a stronger commercial and industrial tax base	20.81% 46	45.70% 101	24.89% 55	8.60% 19	221	1.79
Too much residential development on the Lake Michigan shoreline	34.84% 77	29.86% 66	30.32% 67	4.98% 11	221	1.95
The size of residential developments on the Lake Michigan shoreline	38.57% 86	26.01% 58	30.94% 69	4.48% 10	223	1.99
Vacation rental/Short term rental properties	36.32% 81	27.35% 61	31.84% 71	4.48% 10	223	1.96
Availability/access to recreational facilities	13.96% 31	37.84% 84	44.14% 98	4.05% 9	222	1.62
Need for more entertainment and social	15.32%	37.84%	41.44%	5.41%		

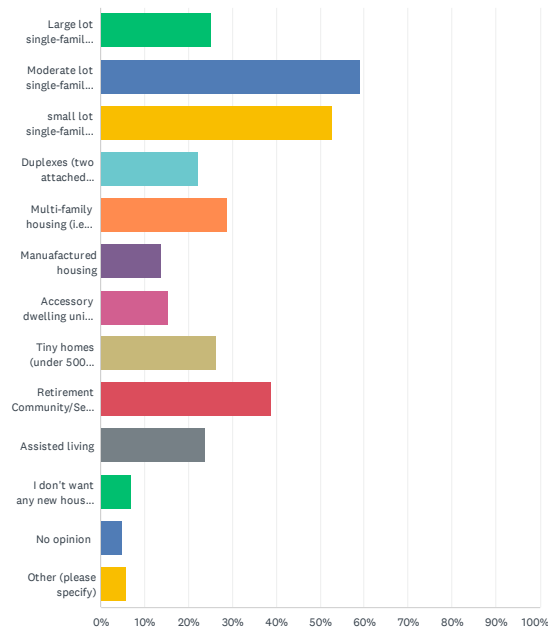
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activities	34	84	92	12	222	1.63
Inadequate public safety services (police/fire)	7.69% 17	20.36% 45	64.25% 142	7.69% 17	221	1.28
Inadequate public safety services (ambulance)	7.69% 17	21.27% 47	61.99% 137	9.05% 20	221	1.28
Expansion of wind/solar energy resources	11.06% 24	29.49% 64	47.93% 104	11.52% 25	217	1.40

**Q16 What type of housing would you like to see in South Haven Township? (Check all that apply)**

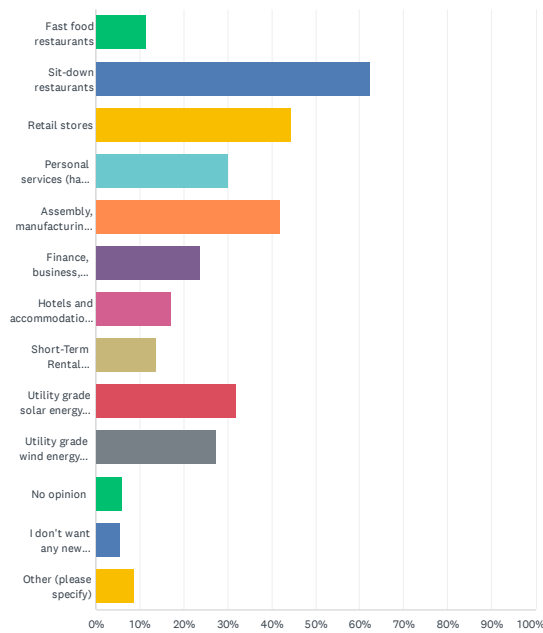
Answered: 222 Skipped: 41



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Large lot single-family homes (5+ acre lots)	25.23% 56
Moderate lot single-family homes (1-5 acre lots)	59.01% 131
small lot single-family homes (less than 1 acre lots)	52.70% 117
Duplexes (two attached dwelling units in one structure)	22.07% 49
Multi-family housing (i.e. apartments/condominium, 3+ units per building)	28.83% 64
Manufactured housing	13.96% 31
Accessory dwelling units or guest housing (i.e. two or more living units on a single-family lot)	15.32% 34
Tiny homes (under 500 square feet per home)	26.13% 58
Retirement Community/Senior living facilities	38.74% 86
Assisted living	23.87% 53
I don't want any new housing in the Township	6.76% 15
No opinion	4.95% 11
Other (please specify)	5.86% 13
<b>Total Respondents: 222</b>	

Q17 What types of businesses would you like to see in South Haven Township? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 219 Skipped: 44

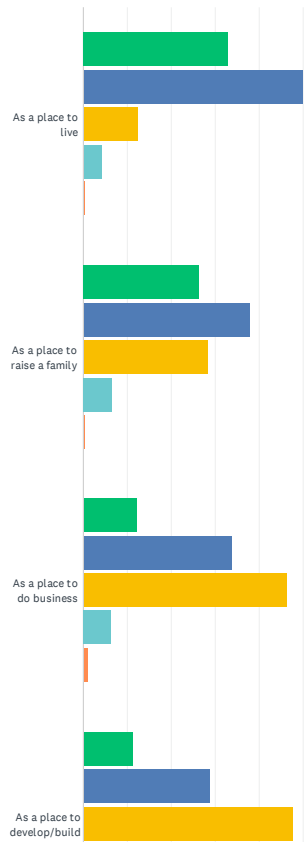


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Fast food restaurants	11.42% 25
Sit-down restaurants	62.56% 137
Retail stores	44.29% 97
Personal services (hair salons, health business, etc. )	30.14% 66
Assembly, manufacturing and/or other industry	42.01% 92
Finance, business, and/or other professional services	23.74% 52
Hotels and accommodations (motels, hostels, etc.)	17.35% 38
Short-Term Rental (vacation rental businesses, AirBnB, etc.)	13.70% 30
Utility grade solar energy infrastructure	31.96% 70
Utility grade wind energy infrastructure	27.40% 60
No opinion	5.94% 13
I don't want any new businesses in the Township	5.48% 12
Other (please specify)	8.68% 19
Total Respondents: 219	

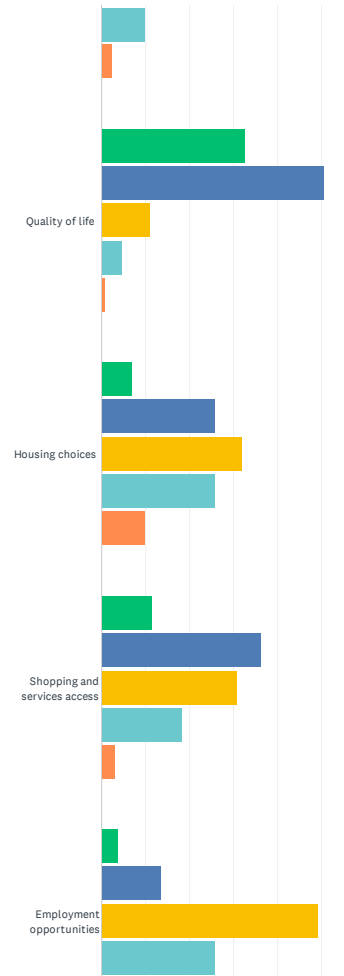


### Q18 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of South Haven Township?

Answered: 212 Skipped: 51



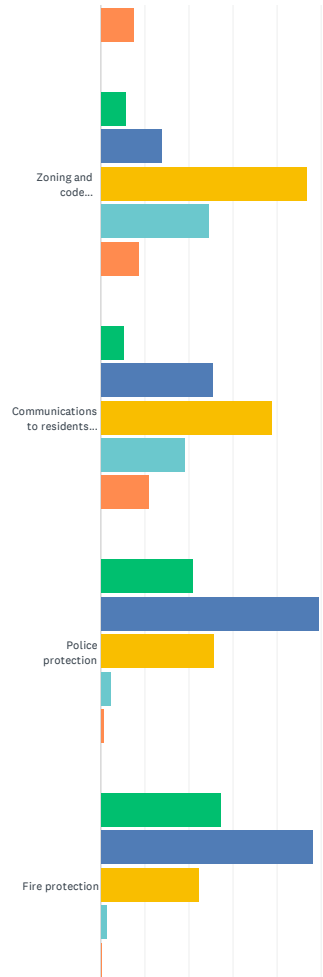
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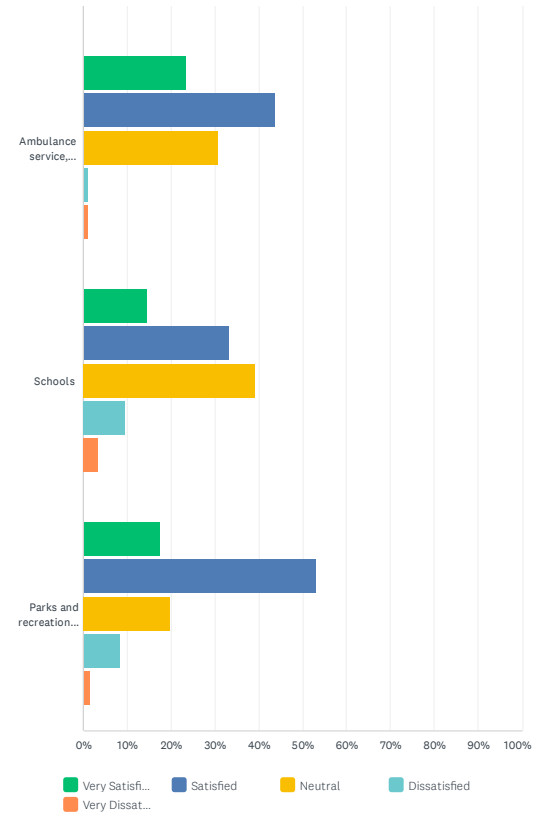
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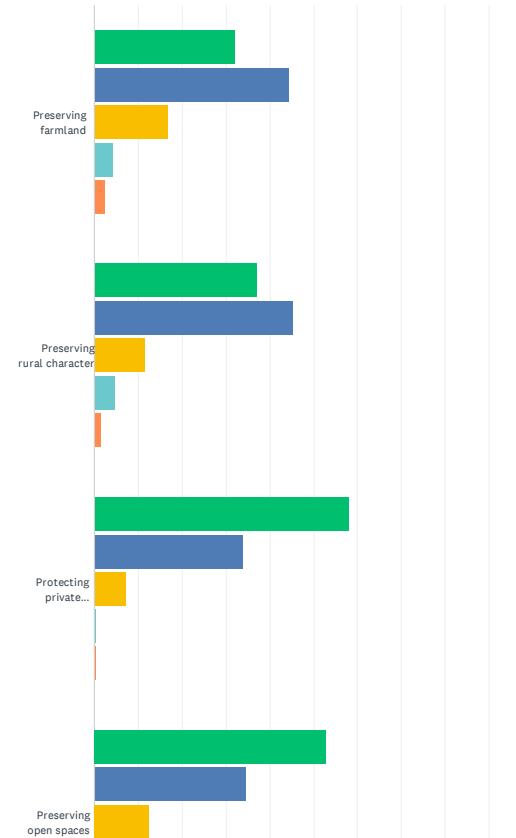


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	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
As a place to live	33.02% 70	50.00% 106	12.26% 26	4.25% 9	0.47% 1	212	3.11
As a place to raise a family	26.54% 56	37.91% 80	28.44% 60	6.64% 14	0.47% 1	211	2.83
As a place to do business	12.25% 25	33.82% 69	46.57% 95	6.37% 13	0.98% 2	204	2.50
As a place to develop/build	11.22% 23	28.78% 59	47.80% 98	9.76% 20	2.44% 5	205	2.37
Quality of life	32.54% 68	50.72% 106	11.00% 23	4.78% 10	0.96% 2	209	3.09
Housing choices	6.80% 14	25.73% 53	32.04% 66	25.73% 53	9.71% 20	206	1.94
Shopping and services access	11.59% 24	36.23% 75	30.92% 64	18.36% 38	2.90% 6	207	2.35
Employment opportunities	3.83% 8	13.40% 28	49.28% 103	25.84% 54	7.66% 16	209	1.80
Zoning and code enforcement	5.80% 12	14.01% 29	46.86% 97	24.64% 51	8.70% 18	207	1.84
Communications to residents from the Township	5.29% 11	25.48% 53	38.94% 81	19.23% 40	11.06% 23	208	1.95
Police protection	21.05% 44	49.76% 104	25.84% 54	2.39% 5	0.96% 2	209	2.88
Fire protection	27.27% 57	48.33% 101	22.49% 47	1.44% 3	0.48% 1	209	3.00
Ambulance service, response time, etc.	23.56% 49	43.75% 91	30.77% 64	0.96% 2	0.96% 2	208	2.88
Schools	14.49% 30	33.33% 69	39.13% 81	9.66% 20	3.38% 7	207	2.46
Parks and recreation facilities access	17.39% 36	53.14% 110	19.81% 41	8.21% 17	1.45% 3	207	2.77

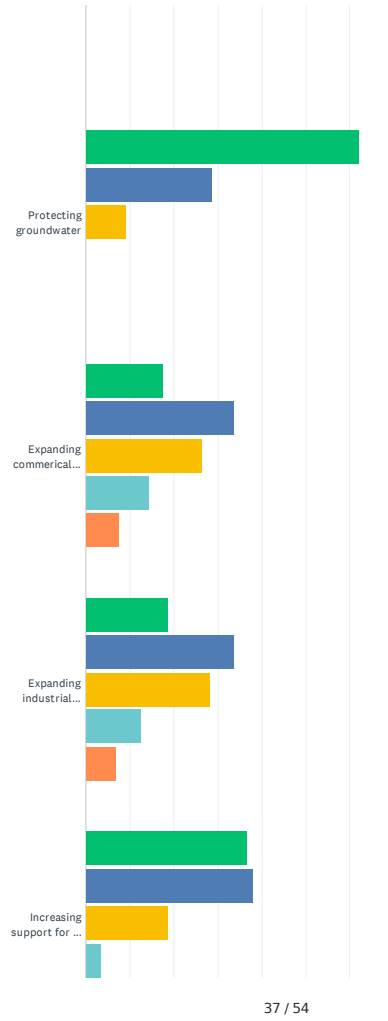
Q19 In terms of potential Township priorities, how important are the following?

Answered: 212 Skipped: 51



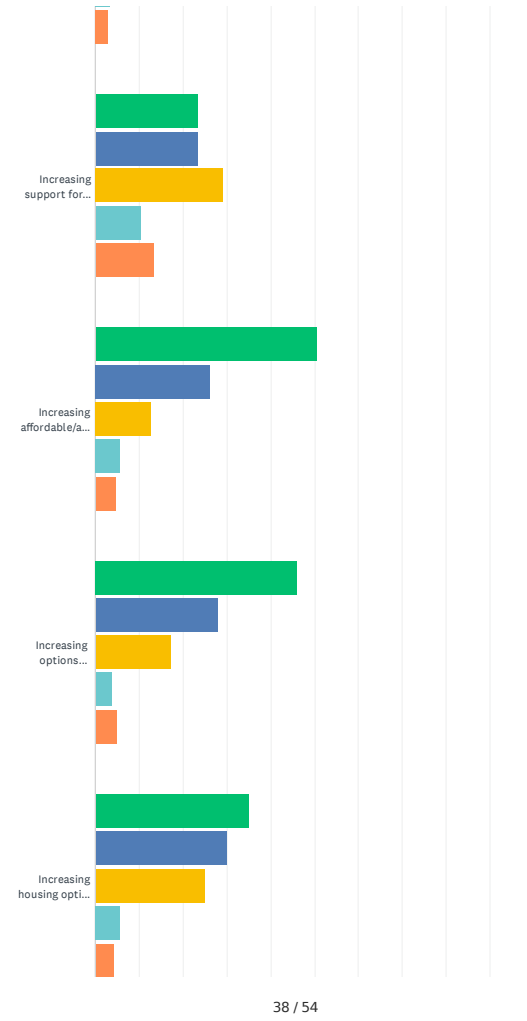
South Haven Township Master Plan Community Survey

SurveyMonkey



South Haven Township Master Plan Community Survey

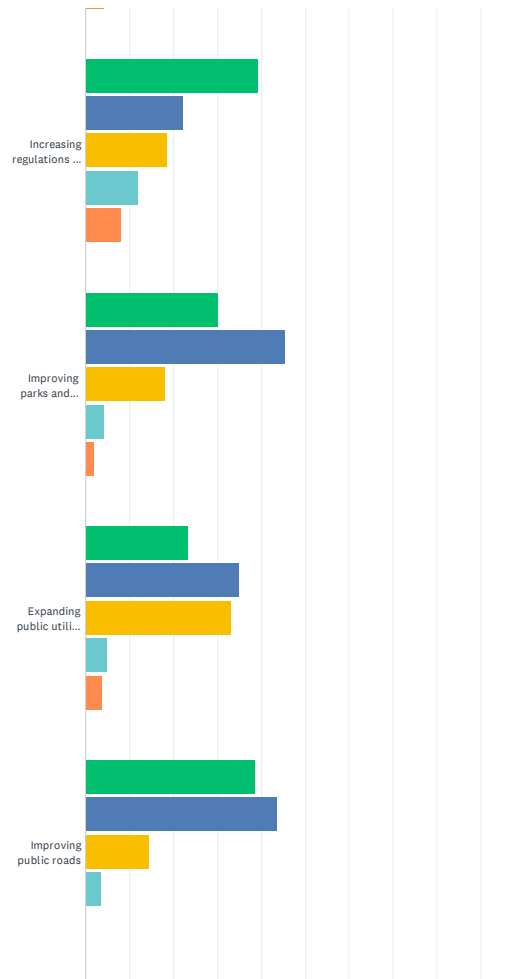
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South Haven Township Master Plan Community Survey

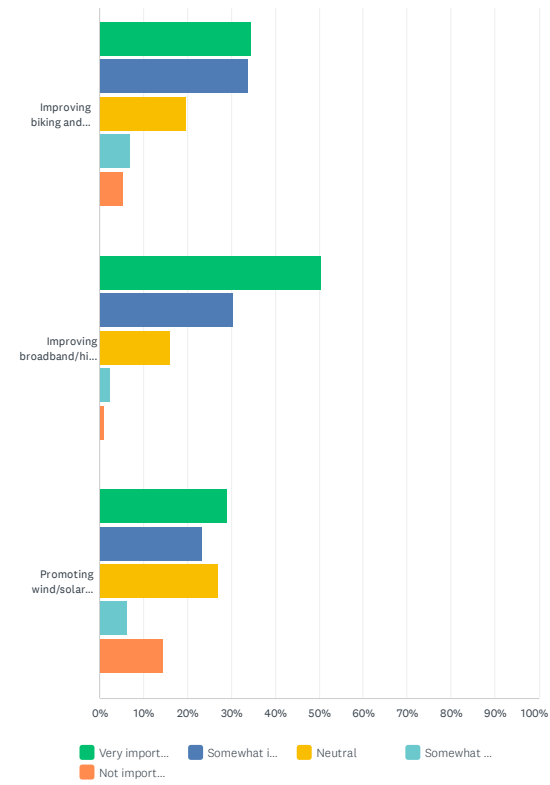
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South Haven Township Master Plan Community Survey

SurveyMonkey

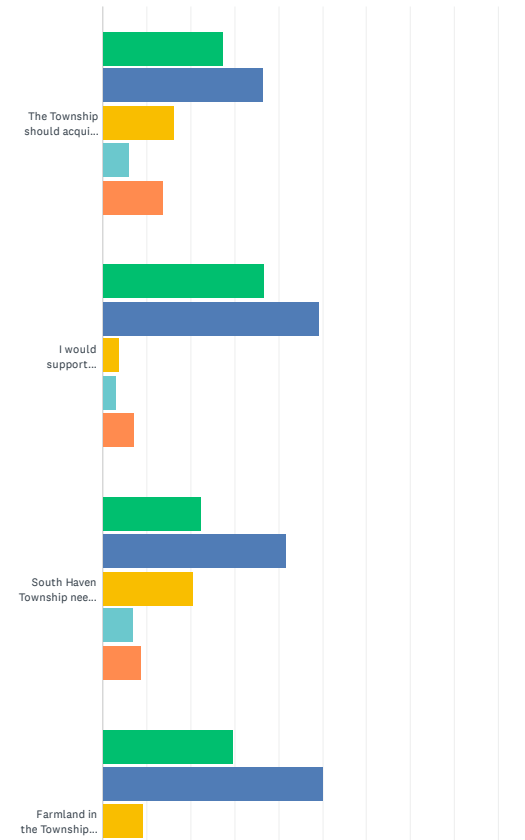


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	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Preserving farmland	31.88% 66	44.44% 92	16.91% 35	4.35% 9	2.42% 5	207	2.99
Preserving rural character	37.14% 78	45.24% 95	11.43% 24	4.76% 10	1.43% 3	210	3.12
Protecting private property rights	57.89% 121	33.97% 71	7.18% 15	0.48% 1	0.48% 1	209	3.48
Preserving open spaces	52.88% 110	34.62% 72	12.50% 26	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	208	3.40
Protecting groundwater	62.20% 130	28.71% 60	9.09% 19	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	209	3.53
Expanding commercial development	17.79% 37	33.05% 70	26.44% 55	14.42% 30	7.69% 16	208	2.39
Expanding industrial development	18.75% 39	33.65% 70	28.37% 59	12.50% 26	6.73% 14	208	2.45
Increasing support for new businesses	36.71% 76	38.16% 79	18.84% 39	3.38% 7	2.90% 6	207	3.02
Increasing support for tourist-related businesses	23.44% 49	23.44% 49	29.19% 61	10.53% 22	13.40% 28	209	2.33
Increasing affordable/attainable housing	50.48% 106	26.19% 55	12.86% 27	5.71% 12	4.76% 10	210	3.12
Increasing options available for housing	46.15% 96	27.88% 58	17.31% 36	3.85% 8	4.81% 10	208	3.07
Increasing housing options for seniors	34.93% 73	30.14% 63	24.88% 52	5.74% 12	4.31% 9	209	2.86
Increasing regulations for short-term rental units	39.34% 83	22.27% 47	18.48% 39	11.85% 25	8.06% 17	211	2.73
Improving parks and recreation facilities	30.14% 63	45.45% 95	18.18% 38	4.31% 9	1.91% 4	209	2.98
Expanding public utility options (water/sewer)	23.30% 48	34.95% 72	33.01% 68	4.85% 10	3.88% 8	206	2.69
Improving public roads	38.05% 80	43.48% 90	14.49% 30	3.38% 7	0.00% 0	207	3.17
Improving biking and walking opportunities	34.62% 72	33.65% 70	19.71% 41	6.73% 14	5.29% 11	208	2.86
Improving broadband/high-speed internet availability	50.24% 104	30.43% 63	15.94% 33	2.42% 5	0.97% 2	207	3.27
Promoting wind/solar energy	28.99% 60	23.19% 48	27.05% 56	6.28% 13	14.49% 30	207	2.46

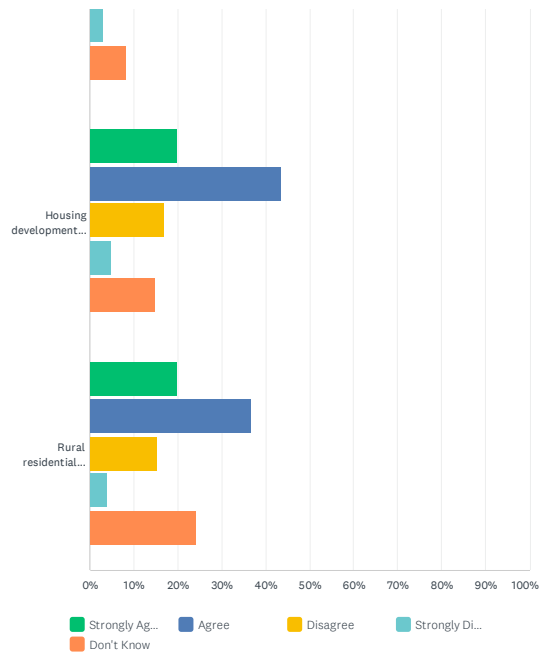
Q20 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements for South Haven Township.

Answered: 206 Skipped: 57



South Haven Township Master Plan Community Survey

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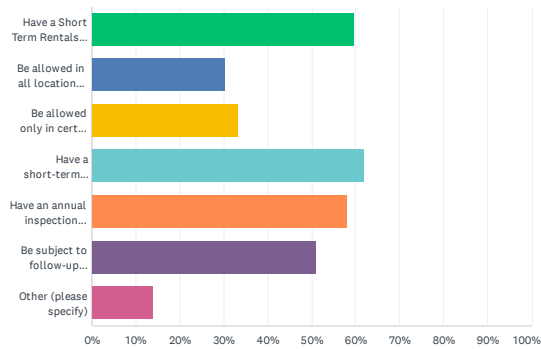
South Haven Township Master Plan Community Survey

SurveyMonkey

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DONT KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The Township should acquire more land for parks, natural areas, and trails.	27.59% 56	36.45% 74	16.26% 33	5.91% 12	13.79% 28	203	2.58
I would support increased controls on development to protect water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams.	36.59% 75	49.27% 101	3.90% 8	2.93% 6	7.32% 15	205	3.05
South Haven Township needs to attract more commercial businesses.	22.33% 46	41.75% 86	20.39% 42	6.80% 14	8.74% 18	206	2.62
Farmland in the Township should be preserved and protected.	29.61% 61	50.00% 103	9.22% 19	2.91% 6	8.25% 17	206	2.90
Housing development with smaller lots should be clustered together to preserve open space and farmland.	19.80% 40	43.56% 88	16.83% 34	4.95% 10	14.85% 30	202	2.49
Rural residential developments should remain at larger lot sizes to preserve farmland	19.80% 40	36.63% 74	15.35% 31	3.96% 8	24.26% 49	202	2.24

Q21 Currently, short-term rentals (AirBnB, VRBO, etc.) are unregulated in South Haven Township and are permitted in all residential zoning districts, should the Township (Check all that apply):

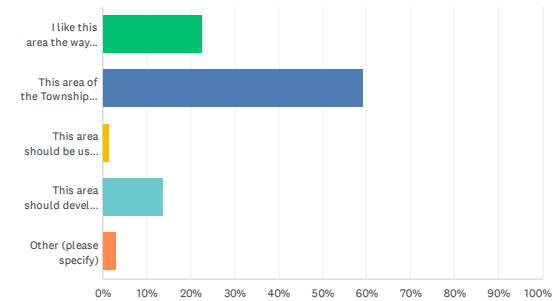
Answered: 198 Skipped: 65



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Have a Short Term Rentals Ordinance to regulate these land uses?	59.60% 118
Be allowed in all locations in the Township?	30.30% 60
Be allowed only in certain zoning districts as a special land use approval only?	33.33% 66
Have a short-term rental registration and certification program?	62.12% 123
Have an annual inspection performed by the Township as part of receiving a registration license?	58.06% 115
Be subject to follow-up inspections during the year to verify continued safety and ordinance compliance?	51.01% 101
Other (please specify)	14.14% 28
Total Respondents: 198	

Q22 The area that encompasses M-43 from Blue Star Highway to 16th Avenue is shown in the map below. What is the best future land use for this location in the Township?

Answered: 199 Skipped: 64

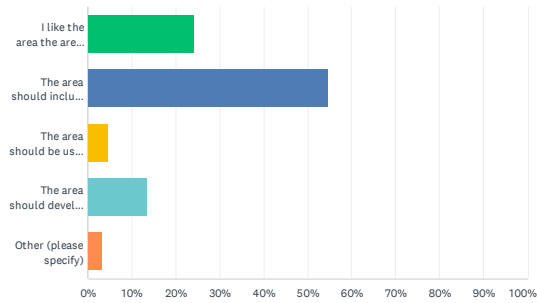


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I like this area the way it is now.	22.61% 45
This area of the Township should include a mix of uses such as residential, commercial, and office.	59.30% 118
This area should be used for commercial or office land uses only.	1.51% 3
This area should develop into residential land uses only.	13.57% 27
Other (please specify)	3.02% 6
TOTAL	199



Q23 The area that encompasses Blue Star Highway from 8th Avenue to 24th Avenue is shown on the map below. What is the best future land use for this location in the Township?

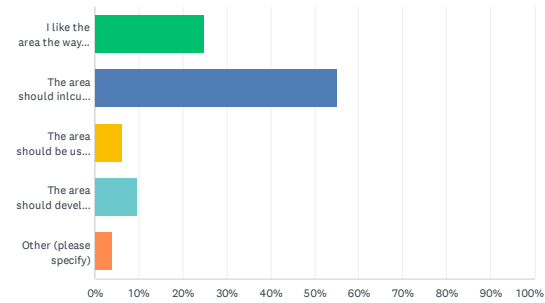
Answered: 194 Skipped: 69



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I like the area the way it is now.	24.23% 47
The area should include a mix of commercial, residential, and office	54.64% 106
The area should be used for commercial land uses only.	4.64% 9
The area should develop into residential land uses only.	13.40% 26
Other (please specify)	3.09% 6
TOTAL	194

Q24 The area that encompasses M-140 from Blue Star Highway to 24th Avenue is shown below. What is the best future land use for this location in the Township?

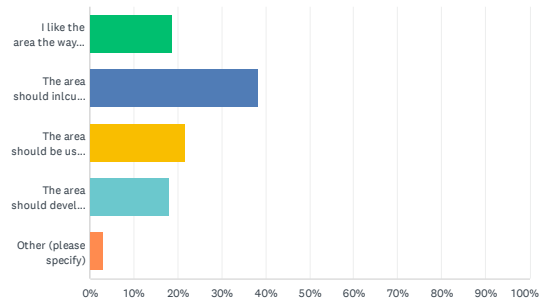
Answered: 197 Skipped: 66



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I like the area the way it is now.	24.87% 49
The area should include a mix of commercial, residential, and office.	55.33% 109
The area should be used for commercial land uses only.	6.09% 12
The area should develop into residential land uses only.	9.64% 19
Other (please specify)	4.06% 8
TOTAL	197

Q25 The area that encompasses 73 1/2 Street from Phoenix Road to 6th Avenue is shown on the map below. What is the best future land use for this location in the Township?

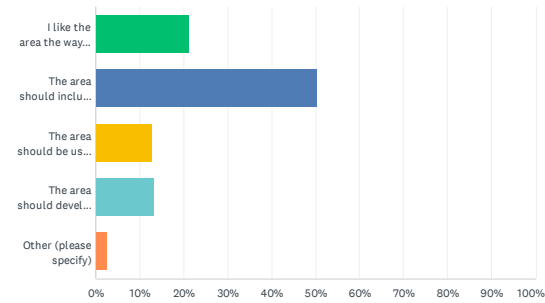
Answered: 198 Skipped: 65



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I like the area the way it is now.	18.69% 37
The area should include a mix of commercial, residential, and office.	38.38% 76
The area should be used for commercial land uses only.	21.72% 43
The area should develop into residential land uses only.	18.18% 36
Other (please specify)	3.03% 6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>198</b>

Q26 The area that encompasses 73rd Street from Phoenix Road to 8th Avenue is shown on the map below. What is the best future land use for this location in the Township?

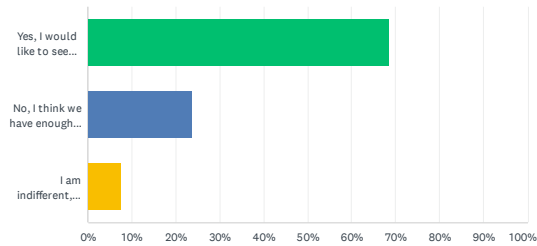
Answered: 197 Skipped: 66



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I like the area the way it is now.	21.32% 42
The area should include a mix of commercial, residential, and office.	50.25% 99
The area should be used for commercial land uses only.	12.69% 25
The area should develop into residential land uses only.	13.20% 26
Other (please specify)	2.54% 5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>197</b>

Q27 The map below shows South Haven Township's areas designated for recreational uses, such as parks, playgrounds, ballfields, and beaches. Would you like to see more land committed to recreation?

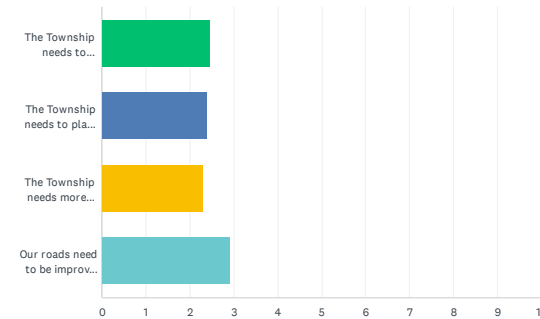
Answered: 195 Skipped: 68



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes, I would like to see more land used for recreational purposes.	68.72% 134
No, I think we have enough land used for recreation now.	23.59% 46
I am indifferent, recreational land uses don't really matter to me.	7.69% 15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195</b>

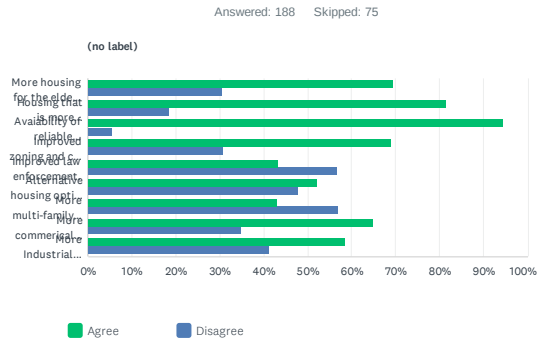
Q28 What is the most important transportation need that the Township must plan for? Please rank these items in order ( 1 = most important and 4 = least important):

Answered: 188 Skipped: 75



	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
The Township needs to install more sidewalks for pedestrian users.	19.64% 33	30.36% 51	28.57% 48	21.43% 36	168	2.48
The Township needs to plan and design a safe and effective bicycle route system.	18.71% 32	26.32% 45	30.99% 53	23.98% 41	171	2.40
The Township needs more access to mass transportation (STAR [Van Buren Public Transit])	23.43% 41	21.14% 37	17.71% 31	37.71% 66	175	2.30
Our roads need to be improved to make them more accessible to all users, not just motor vehicles.	42.86% 78	21.43% 39	21.43% 39	14.29% 26	182	2.93

Q29 Do you feel that South Haven Township needs more of the following:



(no label)	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
More housing for the elderly and disabled.	69.59% 119	30.41% 52	171
Housing that is more attainable and affordable.	81.36% 144	18.64% 33	177
Availability of reliable high-speed internet access at an affordable price.	94.38% 168	5.62% 10	178
Improved zoning and code enforcement throughout the Township.	69.10% 123	30.90% 55	178
Improved law enforcement.	43.29% 71	56.71% 93	164
Alternative housing options (tiny homes (< 500 sq. ft.), accessory dwelling units, etc.).	52.30% 91	47.70% 83	174
More multi-family housing (buildings with more than 3 units and containing a shared main entrance).	43.02% 74	56.98% 98	172
More commercial development.	65.12% 112	34.88% 60	172
More Industrial development.	58.72% 101	41.28% 71	172

Q30 Please use the space below to provide additional thoughts or feedback about planning for the future of South Haven Township that you felt were not addressed in this survey.

Answered: 62 Skipped: 201

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# **APPENDIX B**

## **ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS**

SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

**Resolution No. 24-06**

At a regular meeting of the South Haven Charter Township held on April 10, 2024, the following Resolution was offered for adoption by Board Member Lewandowski and was seconded by Board Member Wichrowski:

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PROPOSED  
2024 SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3801 *et seq.* ("MPEA") authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development, and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a Master Plan and submitted such plan to the South Haven Charter Township Board ("*Township Board*") for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday December 13, 2023, the South Haven Charter Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission, authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA, and asserted its right to give final approval or rejection of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on Monday March 18, 2024, to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed Plan; and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing was held, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the Master Plan on Monday March 18, 2024, and recommended adoption of the proposed Master Plan to the South Haven Charter Township Board; and

WHEREAS, the South Haven Charter Township Board finds that the proposed Master Plan is desirable, proper, reasonable, and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Adoption of 2024 Master Plan.** The Evart City Council hereby approves and adopts the proposed Master Plan, including all the chapters, figures, descriptive matters, maps and tables contained therein.

2. **Distribution to Notice Group.** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the South Haven Charter Township Board approves distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group.

3. **Findings of Fact.** The South Haven Charter Township Board has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, and input received from the Planning Commission and the public, as well as the assistance of a professional planning group. The Township Board also finds that the Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands within South Haven Charter Township, Van Buren County, Michigan.

4. **Effective Date.** The Master Plan shall become effective on the adoption date of this resolution.

YEAS: 5

NAYS: 0

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: 2 absent

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the South Haven Charter Township Board at the time, date, and place specified above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 10, 2024

By Ross Stein  
Ross Stein  
South Haven Charter Township Supervisor

Brenda Bertorelli  
Brenda Bertorelli  
South Haven Charter Township Clerk

**SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**Resolution No. 1**

At a regular meeting of the South Haven Charter Township Planning Commission held on Monday March 18, 2024, the following Resolution was offered for recommendation to the South Haven Charter Township Board for adoption by Planning Commission Member Pooler and was seconded by Planning Commission Member Dibble :

**A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN TO THE SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD AND CONSTITUTING PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVAL OF SUCH MASTER PLAN.**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3801 *et seq.* ("MPEA") authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development, and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a Master Plan and submitted such plan to the South Haven Charter Township Board for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday December 13, 2023 the South Haven Charter Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on Monday March 18, 2024, to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed Master Plan is desirable, proper, and reasonable and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

NOW, THEREFORE, HEREBY BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Approval of 2024 Master Plan.** The Planning Commission approves the proposed Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, descriptive matters, maps and tables contained therein.

2. **Distribution to the South Haven Charter Township Board.** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the South Haven Charter Township Board has asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and therefore, the approval granted herein is not the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843. In addition, the Planning Commission hereby approves distribution of the proposed Master Plan to the South Haven Charter Township Board. The Planning Commission respectfully recommends to the Township Board that the Township Board give final approval and adoption of the proposed Master Plan.

3. **Findings of Fact.** The Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, and input received from the Township Board and at the public hearing, as well as the assistance of a professional planning group. The Planning Commission also finds that the Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands within the Charter Township of South Haven, Van Buren County, Michigan.

4. **Effective Date.** The Master Plan will be effective upon the date that it is approved by the South Haven Charter Township Board.

YEAS: 6  
NAYS: 0  
ABSENT: 1

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 18, 2024

By Mark Odland

Mark Odland  
Planning Commission Chair

