



Grass Lake Township

Master Plan 2026

Draft Report, June 8, 2026





Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This Master Plan serves as a vision and guide for the future of Grass Lake Township. It examines historic and existing conditions within the community, including demographics, natural features, land use, infrastructure, and services. Engaging with community members was a vital part of the master planning process, as a means to identify community needs and define a shared vision for the future. The Master Plan outlines numerous recommendations and action steps to achieve the community's desired future vision over time.

Authority to Plan

The Grass Lake Township Planning Commission has prepared this Grass Lake Township Master Plan under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. Article 3, Section 125.3831 of the Act states:

A planning commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction:

- a) In the preparation of a master plan, a planning commission shall do all of the following, as applicable:*
- 1. Make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the planning jurisdiction with due regard to its relation to neighboring jurisdictions.*
 - 2. Consult with representatives of adjacent local units of government in respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided.*
 - 3. Cooperate with all departments of the state and federal governments, public transportation agencies, and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social, and physical development within the planning jurisdiction and seek maximum coordination of the local unit of government's programs with these agencies.*



Purpose of the Plan

A master plan is a comprehensive policy guide which provides a framework for growth, development, and the community vision. Simply stated, a master plan describes:

- Where the community has been,
- Where the community wants to go, and
- How the community plans to get there.

Article I, Section 125.3807 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008 gives a summary of the purpose of a master plan:

The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that...is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical; considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development; and will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.

Additionally, the master plan should provide a general statement of the community's goals and a comprehensive vision of the future. It should also serve as the statutory basis for the Zoning Ordinance, and as the primary policy guide for local officials considering development proposals, land divisions, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development, pursuant to section 203(1) of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006.

The master plan is not a zoning map, though it does reflect the planned land use and existing developments. It does not introduce new zoning districts but serves as a broader, long-term guide for community development. While zoning and the master plan are distinctly different, they are interconnected. The master plan provides

overarching guidance for zoning decisions, ensuring that these decisions align with community goals and long-term strategies.

Master plans are long-range policy guides. With an approximately 20 year planning horizon, the Grass Lake Township 2025 Master Plan considers the future of Grass Lake Township through the year 2045. Flexibility is a key feature of the master plan, allowing it to adapt in unforeseen future conditions.

Every community's master plan is unique, tailored to address the specific issues and challenges of the community. By combining data and local knowledge, the master plan's purpose is to develop unique and informed decisions for positive development of the community.

Plan Organization

This Master Plan is organized into nine chapters that progress from background information and existing conditions to future policy direction and implementation.

Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the Master Plan, outlines the Township's authority to plan, and provides regional context to frame Grass Lake Township within the larger area. Chapter 2 documents the key planning influences and drivers shaping the Plan, including public engagement, regional and state planning initiatives, and coordination with adjacent communities.

Chapters 3 through 5 present a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions. These chapters examine social and economic characteristics, housing needs and trends, and the Township's physical environment, including natural features, land use patterns, transportation, infrastructure, and community facilities. Together, these chapters establish the factual foundation for future planning decisions.

Chapter 6 articulates the community’s vision and establishes goals and policies to guide future growth, development, preservation, and public investment. Chapter 7 presents the Future Land Use Plan and Circulation Plan, translating the community vision and policy direction into a long-range framework for land use and transportation.

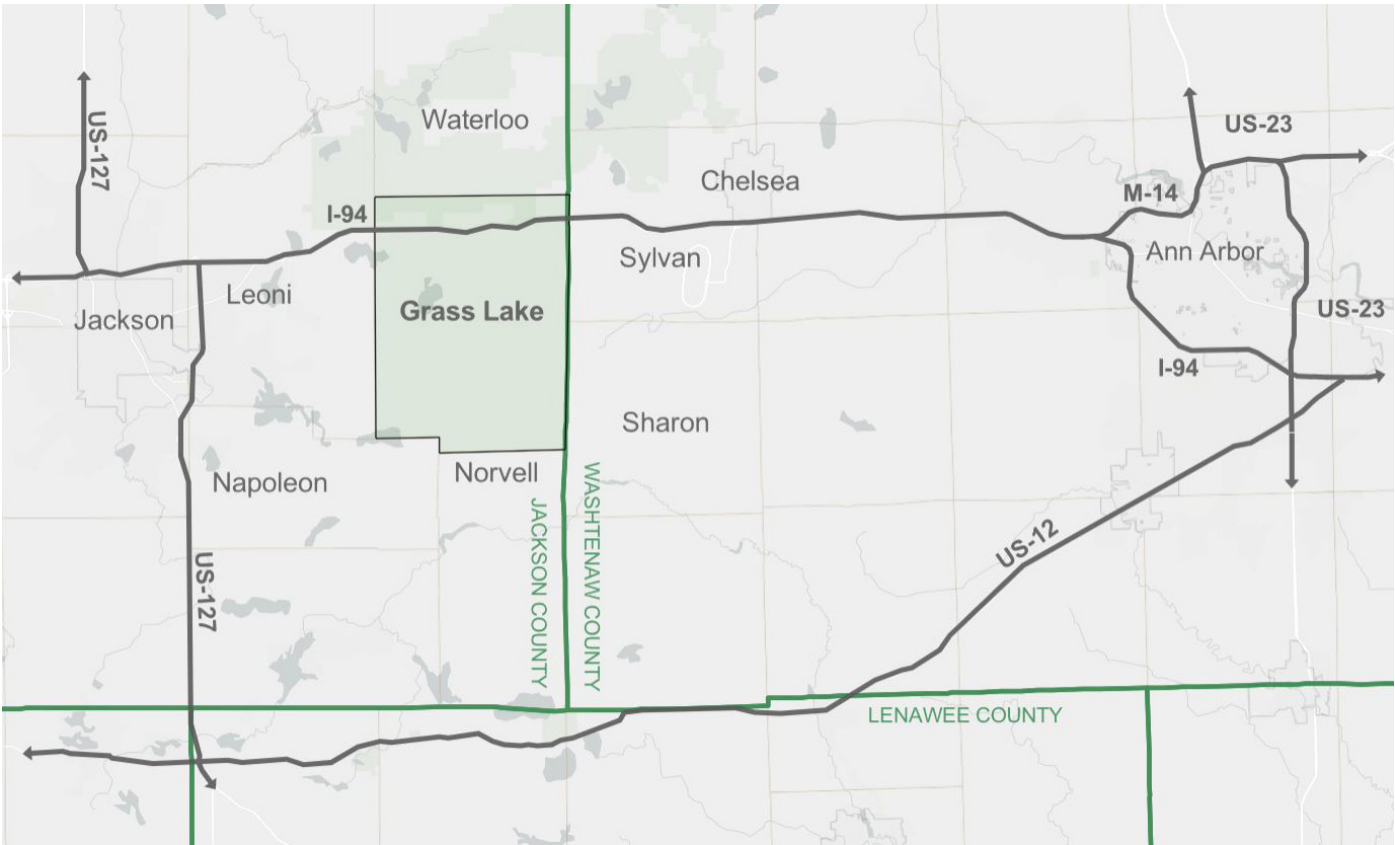
Chapter 8 builds upon the housing analysis to identify local housing strategies, development opportunities, and actions intended to expand housing choice and affordability. Chapter 9 outlines an implementation strategy to carry out the recommendations of the Master Plan over time, inclusive of a Zoning Plan that outlines recommended zoning ordinance amendments.

Regional Context

Grass Lake Charter Township is located in eastern Jackson County, in south-central Lower Michigan, adjacent to Washtenaw County. Various roadways provide easy automobile access to the community, connected through Interstate 94 and Michigan Avenue. To the east, is the Ann Arbor urban area, with influential proximity to Ann Arbor’s University of Michigan campus, shopping, and employment opportunities. The Jackson urban area is also located nearby to the west, with additional higher education, employment, and retail opportunities.

The Village of Grass Lake is located within Grass Lake Township. Though the Village of Grass Lake is legally part of the Grass Lake Township, as an incorporated village it conducts its own planning and zoning.

Map 1. Regional Location



Wade Trim, 2025. Data Source: Esri Michigan County Boundaries, Esri Basemap

Grass Lake Township borders Leoni Township, Napoleon Township, Norwell Township, and Waterloo Township within Jackson County. Grass Lake also borders Sharon Township and Sylvan Township within Washtenaw County. The larger area contains many bodies of water, including Grass Lake and Goose Lake.



Planning Influences and Drivers

This Master Plan has been developed by and for the citizens of Grass Lake Township. As such, the most important “driver” of the policies and recommendations outlined in this Master Plan is the needs and desires of the residents of Grass Lake Township. However, the Township exists within the context of the greater Jackson and Ann Arbor region and its success is directly tied to the success of the larger region. Therefore, this Master Plan also considers the planning efforts and initiatives that have been undertaken by Grass Lake Township’s neighbors and local and regional entities who are partnered with Grass Lake Township to strengthen the Township and region. The key influences and drivers of this Master Plan are documented in this section.

Citizen Input

This Master Plan was developed with significant input received from members of the community, achieved through a variety of engagement methods. Dozens of community leaders including members of the elected and appointed bodies of the Township contributed toward the development of the plan. Many residents and stakeholders provided input during the course of the planning process.

Notably, a Steering Committee was formed and met on a regular basis to oversee the development of the Master Plan. They helped formulate the public engagement process and methods, worked to spread the word about the project, reviewed project drafts, and provided valuable feedback to the technical consultant team.

Public engagement methods included an online survey, community study session, public open house, and a public hearing. The following is a summary of the primary engagement methods employed during the development of this Master Plan.

Survey Results

Community engagement is a valuable part of the planning process in soliciting public input. An online survey was made available to the public between August 1, 2025, and September 12, 2025. The survey was advertised on the Township’s website and social media outlets. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at the Township offices during business hours. A total of 108 surveys were completed. The results of the survey are summarized below.



Filters were applied to the survey results to evaluate differences in opinion between various segments of respondents. For the purposes of this analysis, the following respondent segments were considered

- Township Residents: (Grass Lake Township residents only – 87 total
- Older Respondents (65 years and older – 31 respondents)
- Work or own a business in the in Township – 16 respondents)

The survey summary narrative, below, identifies instances where differences in the responses across the respondent segments were especially notable.

Respondent Demographics

Most respondents were residents of Grass Lake Township (81%), while 18% were residents of the Village of Grass Lake. Respondents reported a range of community ties: 9% owned or cultivated agricultural land, 9% owned or operated a business, 5% worked locally, and 1% were students. The sample skewed older, with 43% aged 50-64, 29% over 65, 23% aged 30-49, and just 6% under 30. Most households had higher incomes, with 51% earning \$100,000+ and 37% between \$50,000-\$99,999. Employment was common (69%), while 29% were retired; among workers, 18% worked from home, 18% in Washtenaw County, and 15% within the Township. Households sizes were mixed, with half reporting two members, 20% three members, 18% four, 10% five or more, and 4% living alone.

Community Improvements

Respondents were asked on their level of agreement to statements regarding community improvements. Respondents showed the strongest agreement on protecting natural resources (70% strongly agree, 25% agree). High support was also given to maintaining rural character (53% strongly

agree, 30% agree) and improving the Michigan Avenue Corridor (51% strongly agree). Developing non-motorized trails received moderate support (32% strongly agree, 30% agree). Recreation amenities were more mixed, with 29% agreeing they meet needs and 34% disagreeing. Attracting more industry was divisive, with 47% agreeing/strongly agreeing and 34% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. The strongest disagreement was with satisfaction in current business types, where 51% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Indicating respondents were not satisfied with the current business types in the Township.

Positive Aspects

When asked what Grass Lake Township's most positive aspects are, the 6 most common answers were:

1. Rural and small-town atmosphere (76%)
2. Safe neighborhoods and community (60%)
3. Quality of the school district (46%)
4. Limited or no congestion (39%)
5. Access or proximity to natural resources (rivers, lakes, woodlands, etc) (39%)
6. Friendly people or atmosphere (32%)

Rural and small-town atmosphere and safe neighborhoods and community were the top two choices for all respondent segments.

- Township Business Owners and Workers indicated that the limited congestion (#3), proximity to friends or family (#5), and high-speed internet (#6) were particularly positive for them.
- Older respondents noted that historic character (#4) as a positive aspect more often than the entire group or other respondent segments.

Negative Aspects

When asked what Grass Township's least favorable aspects are, the 5 most common answers were:

1. Lack of dining options (46%)
2. Blighted or deteriorating businesses (45%)
3. Lack of shopping, retail, and service options (44%)
4. Blighted or deteriorating homes or neighborhoods (25%)
5. Housing costs (23%)
6. Lack of access to non-motorized transportation (trails, sidewalks) (21%)

The various respondent segments were generally consistent in their responses, with “lack of dining options”, as the top choice for each segment. In reviewing the top 5 responses, some distinctions across the respondent segments were noted:

- Township residents indicated “lack of entertainment options” was higher as their #4 answer. Additionally, the “lack of high speed internet” was higher but tied with “housing costs” as their #5 answer.
- Business Owners and Workers noted the “lack of entertainment options” as their #2 answer, while “housing costs” was increased to their #4 answer as well as “limited housing choice” to their #5.
- Older respondents indicated the same top three choices as all responses. However, “housing costs” were higher at their #4 answer.

Perceptions of Housing Affordability and Appeal

Respondents were divided on whether service workers, such as teachers or police officers, could find quality and affordable housing in Grass Lake Township: 43% said yes, 27% said no, and 29% were neutral. Many who answered no cited high housing prices, limited affordable options, and taxes. Opinions were similarly split on whether housing was appealing and affordable for young adults, with 38% saying yes, 33% no, and 29% neutral; written comments often pointed to challenges for single-income households and a lack of variety in available housing. When asked if the Township offered sufficient housing, services, and amenities for lifelong residents, responses leaned slightly more positive (43% yes, 32% no, 25% neutral), though many noted the absence of senior housing and medical options. Older respondents showed comparable divisions, with 47% agreeing the Township supported lifelong residency and 37% disagreeing, citing limited smaller or lower-priced homes, high costs of living, and inadequate infrastructure.

Housing Types

The vast majority of respondents said they lived in large single family homes (larger than 1,500 square feet) (70%) or in small single family homes (smaller than 1,500 square feet) (24%). A small percentage of respondents indicated other housing types such as mobile homes (2%), accessory dwelling units (2%), and a multifamily housing larger than two units (2%).

Respondents were also asked, if they could afford or it were available, what type of housing they would prefer to live in. Again, there was high preference for large single family homes (67%) and small single family homes (23%). Other than single family homes, accessory dwelling units (9%), townhomes (8%), and tiny homes (5%) were preferred.

- Of all the respondent groups, the most common desired housing type was a large single family home. However, the

respondent segments provided different answers as desirable alternative housing types.

- The Township Resident respondents, indicated 23% small single family home, 8% accessory dwelling units, and 6% townhomes.
- Of the Older Respondents there was relatively lower support for large single family homes (50%) and more for small single family homes (33%). As well as a higher diversity of responses for townhomes; duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes; multifamily apartments or condos; and accessory dwelling units.

The primary barriers to living in the respondent's preferred housing types were either no barriers (58%), the housing type did not widely exist in the Township (18%), or the housing type existed but it was not affordable (18%).

Public Utility and Service Improvements

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement regarding the need for public infrastructure improvements for the existing community and future growth.

Road: Nearly half of respondents strongly agreed (49%) and 32% agreed that road improvements are needed to support the existing community.

Views on future development were similar, with 48% strongly agreeing and 22% agreeing. A modest portion expressed neutrality (14%) or strong disagreement (7%).

Sewer: For current needs, 39% strongly agreed and 33% agreed that sewer services require upgrades.

When comparing future development, support remained strong (45% strongly agreed and 19% agreed), though opposition was slightly more (7% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed).

Internet: Broadband improvements for the current community was strongly supported with 39% strongly agreeing and 34% agreeing.

For future development, sentiment remained consistent (40% strongly agreed and 28% agreed), though 16% were neutral and 6% disagreed, indicating less urgency compared to other services.

Water: Water infrastructure drew more mixed responses. For current needs 31% strongly agreed and 31% agreed for the need for improved water services. While a larger share expressed neutrality (19%) or no opinion (14%).

Regarding future development, 43% strongly agreed and 20% agreed on the need for improvements, but 14% remained neutral and 12% expressed disagreement (6% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed).

Final Comments

As the survey concluded, respondents were invited to share final comments on land use and development. Many emphasized preserving the area's rural and small-town character, alongside improving existing infrastructure—particularly roads, sewer, water, and internet services. There was also interest in expanding walking and biking paths for active lifestyles and connectivity to destinations. Economic development drew strong opinions, with support for growing smaller businesses such as restaurants, retail shops, and local services. While some land uses like industrial solar installations and extractive industries (e.g., gravel pits) were frequently mentioned in opposition, as they were undesirable to live near, unattractive, or did not want to see agricultural land transformed for this purpose.



Community Study Session

As planned by the Master Plan Steering Committee, the community study session included an educational presentation of the existing conditions within Grass Lake Township, future housing and values discussion, and a visual preference survey for land use developments. The event took place on August 26, 2025 at the Grass Lake Town Hall and Senior Center and was promoted through flyer handouts and online posting.

Attendees expressed concern over the high cost and competitiveness of the local housing market, noting that properties are often purchased quickly and at surprisingly high prices. One attendee shared about their multigenerational living arrangement, in which their single family house was adequate by utilizing basements, ground floors, and upper levels for bedrooms. However, participants emphasized the need to public understanding of the existing sewer and water infrastructure's limitations, especially in light of potential new or denser development, acknowledging that improvements to these systems would be slow-moving.

Core community values that were identified included “safety”, “clean water, air and soil”, “support for local businesses”, and “maintaining a peaceful, quiet atmosphere”. These values helped frame the visual preference survey, which explored land use and design priorities. The results of the visual preference survey are described below, in addition to the top four ranked images of each category of development.

For residential development, the visual preference survey revealed a strong preference for single-family homes on large lots. The top two ranked images for housing were by far the most positive responses from the attendees. These images are also consistent with most of Grass Lake Township's current housing stock. The third ranked image included a historic home with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) above the garage, and the fourth ranked was a single story duplex with nearby agricultural land. Overall alternative housing types like accessory dwelling units (ADUs), cottage courts, and duplexes received some positive feedback, larger townhome developments with (around 20 units) were broadly disliked.

Top 4 Visual Preference Images Housing



Commercial



Office and Industrial



For commercial development, attendees prioritized design elements that resembled “Main Street” or neighborhood commercial feel to look compatible with residential surroundings. The top four commercial development images included a mixed use building with road/sidewalk facing entrance, a small strip plaza, single office commercial building, and a two-story commercial building with off-street parking. Overall the respondents viewed big box stores unfavorably or with indifference, and opinions on strip plazas compared to individual commercial buildings varied. Attendees prioritized attractive facades, full occupancy, and architectural harmony with surrounding areas over categories of commercial development types.

Industrial land uses had less consensus. The top four images for industrial uses included well maintained landscaping and screen more intensive land uses with office fronts and fences. Respondents preferred developments featuring traditional and clean modern designs. Overall, participants sought a balance between preserving community character and supporting local employment and tax revenue.

State and Regional Planning Initiatives

The following is a summary of local and regional planning initiatives with particular relevance to Grass Lake Township. These initiatives have been considered and evaluated by Grass Lake Township and inform many of the recommendations outlined in this Master Plan.

Jackson County Strategic Plan (2014-2020, 2025-2030)

The Jackson County Strategic Plan of 2020 was adopted in 2014. It created the five strands that the County develops its goals from. These strands included economic development, safe community, healthy community, arts, recreational and cultural opportunities, education, government efficiency and effectiveness, and community and social supports.

The 2025 Strategic Plan update is in progress. The vision for the strategic plan is to be a “responsible, innovative, transparent, and caring County government, that equitably serves a safe, diverse welcome, and prosperous community.” The key performance areas were created to promote the vision and provide specific goals to achieve the vision. The key performance areas are listed below.

- **Healthy Communities:** Strives to achieve equitable access to quality health and social services.
- **Transportation and Community Connectedness:** Promotes modern, multi-modal, and well maintained transportation network.
- **Thriving Regional Economy:** Expands its skilled and educated workforce while also attracting diverse industries and supporting businesses to prosper
- **Safe and Desirable:** Prioritizes safety through respectful partnerships of public safety professionals and community members

- **Trusted Government:** Strives to be a fiscally responsible and high-performing County government by valuing personal liberties, transparency, efficient provision of services, and collaborative government processes.
- **Quality of Life Essentials:** Provides accessible parks, waterways, recreation, and cultural opportunities for all, including residents, visitors, and businesses.

Jackson County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022-2027)

The Jackson County Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared and adopted by Jackson County in 2022. The primary purpose of the plan is to prepare for natural and human-caused hazards, including storm events and public health emergencies. The plan also provides coordination with local mitigation planning efforts to provide assistance on hazard mitigation actions, data sharing, and funding.

The plan establishes both County-wide and local action strategies to address hazards. Some townships and villages, including Grass Lake Township and Grass Lake Village, opted to address hazard mitigation in their next master plans.

Moving Towards Zero Deaths on Region 2 Local Roads (2017)

The Moving Towards Zero Deaths plan was created by the Region 2 Planning Commission, which is made up of Jackson County, Hillsdale County, and Leenawee County. As the plan title suggests, the goal of the plan is to reduce road injuries and fatalities by improving safety, collaboration, and education within the jurisdictions. The plan focuses on traffic engineering for safety, law enforcement, public education around traffic safety and operations, and improving emergency response services.

Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan (2020)

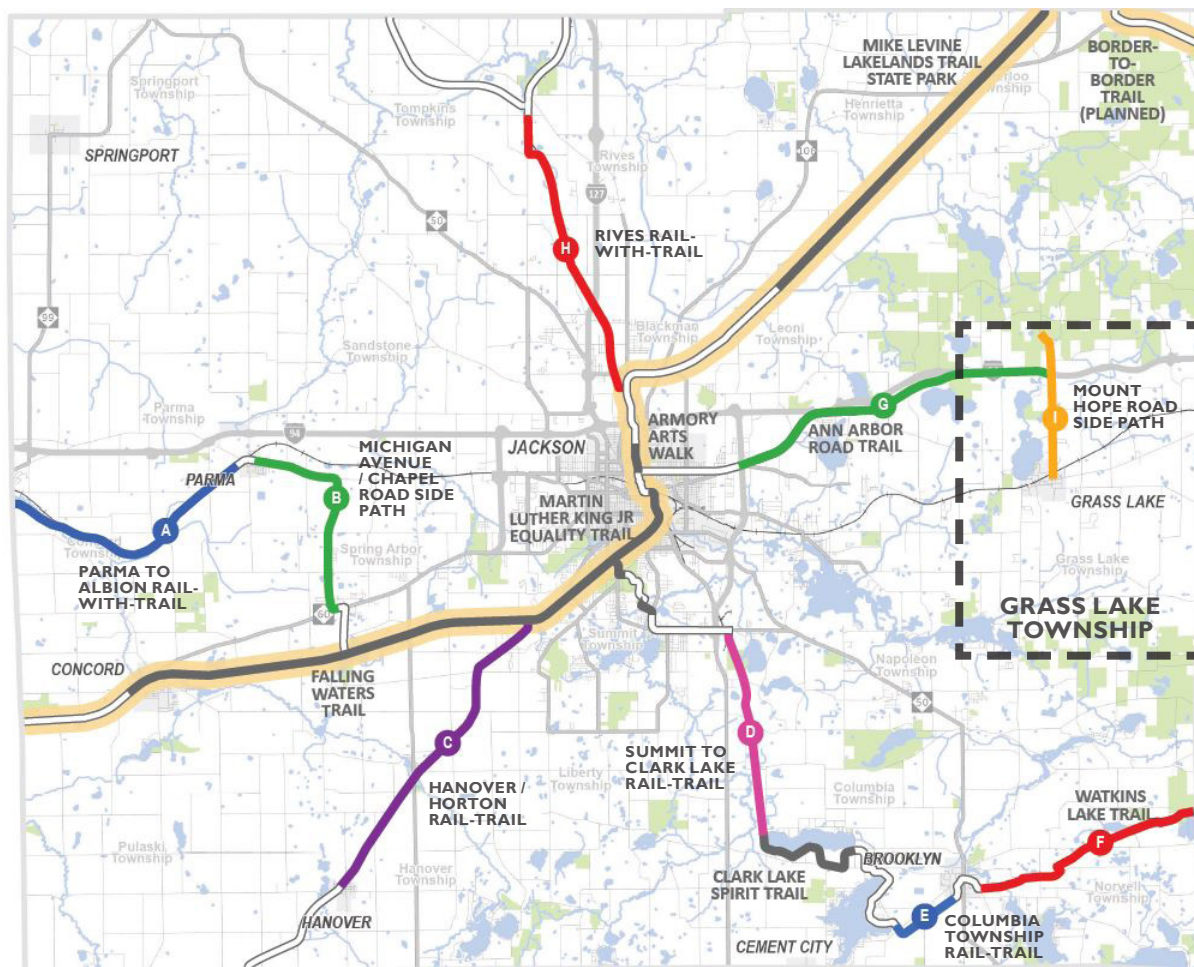
The Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan was prepared by the Region 2 Planning Commission, Jackson County, and the City of Jackson and was adopted in 2020. This plan's main objectives are to make travel more accessible and safe for everyone, improve health and quality of life, coordinate with agencies and municipalities within Jackson County, and attract residents and visitors for economic development. Ultimately, the plan envisions an connected network to serve those wanting to walk, bike, ride, and drive. **Figure I**, from the Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan, indicates the proposed regional trail system, including nine priority trails.

Most relevant to Grass Lake Township, the plan proposes a side path connection to connect

Jackson and Grass Lake. It is proposed to run along Ann Arbor Road, connecting to the existing side paths along N Sutton Road and Gilletts Lake Road. **Figure 1A** shows a detailed view of the proposed Ann Arbor Road Trail with detailed information from the plan. The proposed trail would be 5.8 miles long, some of which is already paved. It will continue connecting Jackson and Grass Lake.

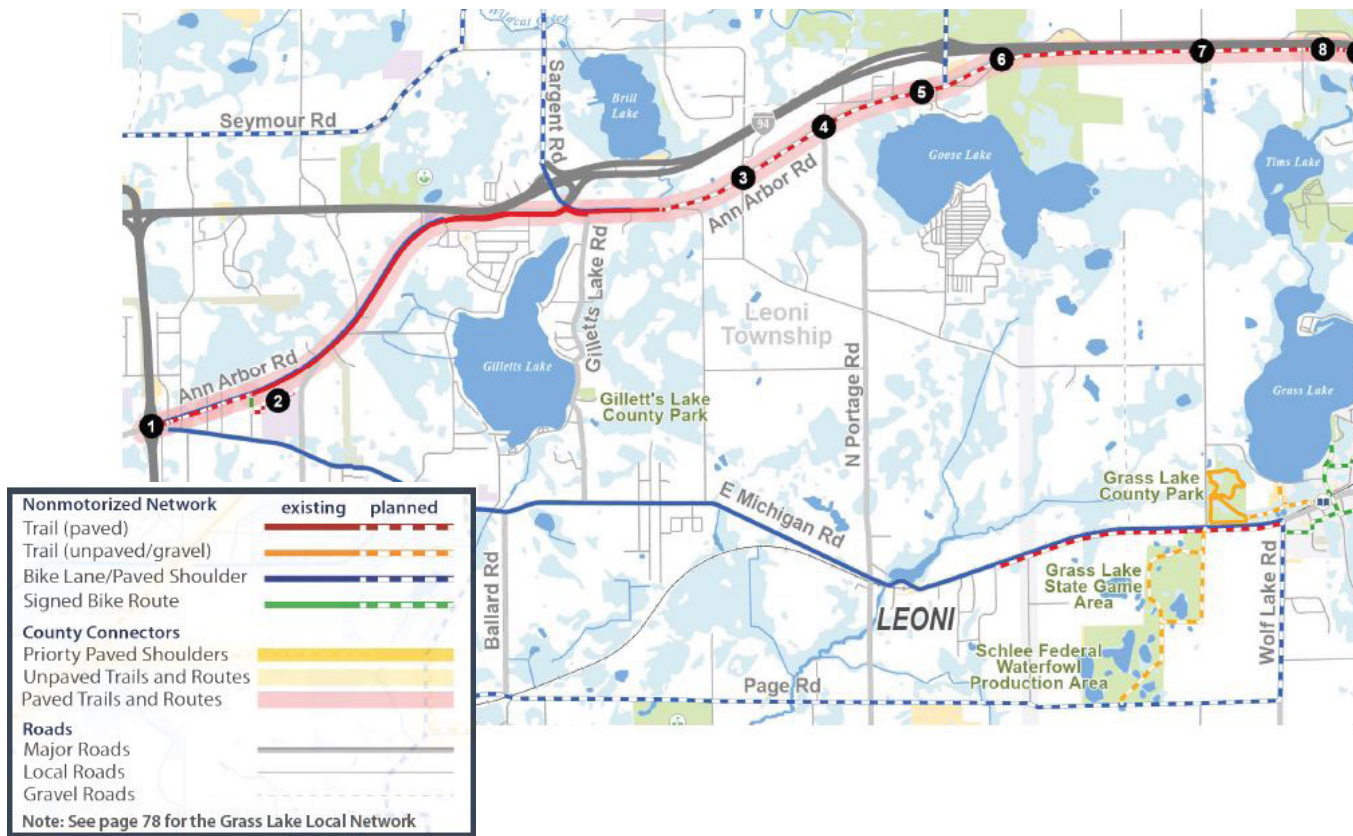
The proposed Mount Hope Road Side Path is also planned to connected Grass Lake to Waterloo State Recreation Area. A path is also planned along Knight Road to intersect with Mount Hope Road. **Figure 1B** shows a detailed view of the proposed Mount Hope Road Side Path with detailed information from the plan. The proposed side path would be 3.7 miles long, and connecting the Village of Grass Lake and Waterloo State Recreation Area.

Figure 1. Jackson County Proposed Priority Trails



Source: Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan (2020).

Figure 1A. Proposed Ann Arbor Road Trail



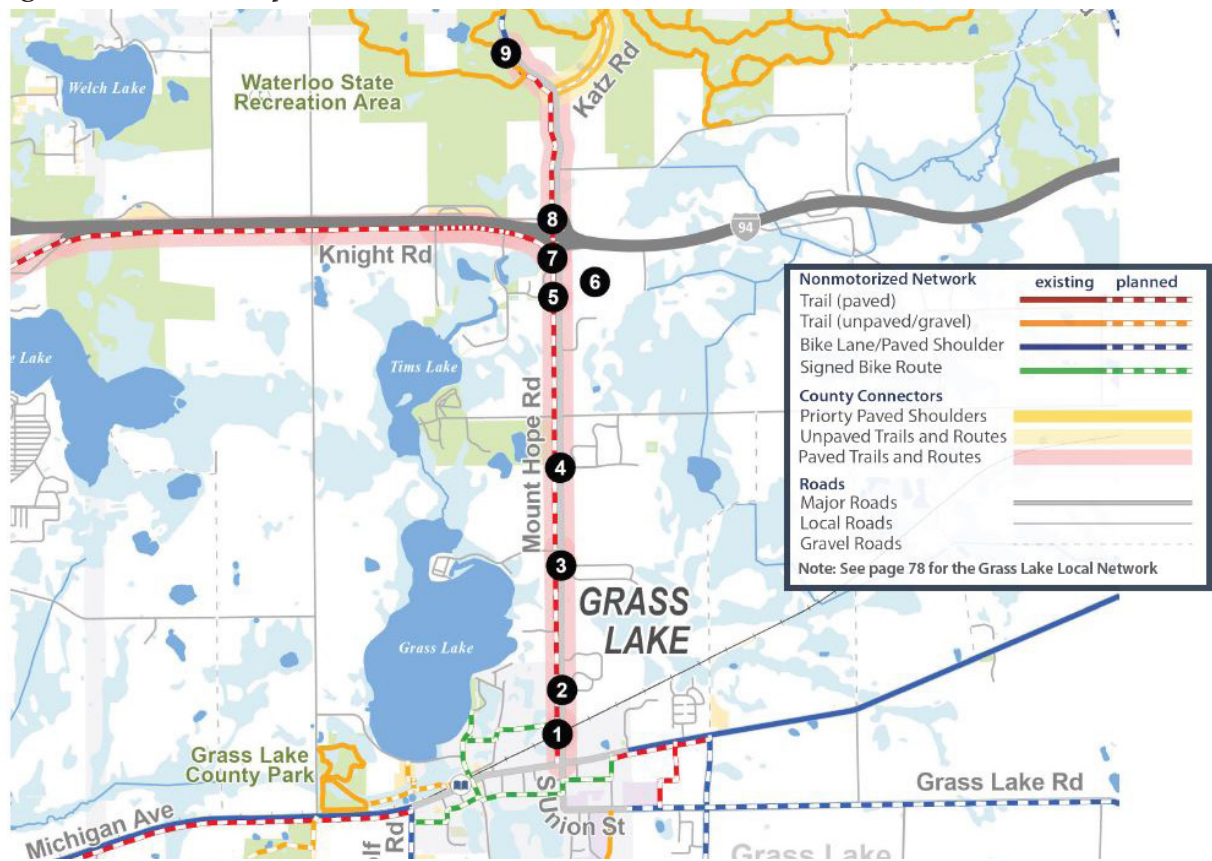
Ann Arbor Road Trail Considerations

- 1 Widen sidewalk under US-127
- 2 Provide connection to East Jackson High School
- 3 Marked crosswalk at Whipple Road
- 4 Marked crosswalk at Portage Road
- 5 Right-of-way narrows. May need easements from adjacent property owners
- 6 Marked crosswalk at Stull Road
- 7 Marked crosswalk at Willis Road
- 8 Right-of-way narrows. May need easements from adjacent property owners
- 9 Marked crosswalk at Tims Lake Blvd

Length	5.8 miles
Surface	Paved Sidepath
Right-of-Way	Parallels Ann Arbor Road
Public Input	Priority. Discussion about using Page Road and Michigan as connections to Grass Lake. Recommendation to pave shoulder on Page and continue sidepath along Ann Arbor Road.
Ownership	Mostly right-of-way. May require easement with up to 10 adjacent property owners.
Topography	Swales, utilities and vegetation
Bridges + Boardwalks	Minor
Road Crossings	Major crossing of US-127 in Jackson
Existing Structures	Nothing significant
Magnitude of Cost	<u>\$6.3 Million (Further evaluation needed. Price could vary considerably due to easements.)</u>

Source: Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan (2020).

Figure 1B. Mount Hope Road Side Path



Length	3.7 miles
Surface	Paved Sidepath
Right-of-Way	Parallels Mount Hope Road
Public Input	Priority. The desire to connect to subdivision off Mount Hope Road and to new Henry Ford Allegiance Health care facility planned near I-94.
Ownership	Mostly right-of-way with a some private property owners. May require easements with adjacent property owners.
Topography	Swales, utilities and vegetation
Bridges + Boardwalks	Bridge crossing I-94
Road Crossings	Railroad crossing and minor road crossings
Existing Structures	Nothing significant
Magnitude of Cost	<u>\$4.86 Million (Further evaluation needed. Price could vary considerably due to easements.)</u>

Mount Hope Road Side Path Considerations

- 1 Sidepath will require extensive grading, retaining walls and gates at railroad crossing
- 2 Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon at Willow and Mount Hope Road
- 3 Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon at Pinnacle and Mount Hope Road
- 4 Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon at Sand Hill and Mount Hope Road
- 5 Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon at Deer Run Road and Mount Hope Road
- 6 Provide connection to future health care center
- 7 Marked crosswalk at Knight Road
- 8 Coordinate with MDOT to provide pedestrian bridge over I-94
- 9 Connect to Pinckney-Waterloo trailhead

Source: Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan (2020).

Michigan Statewide Housing Plan (2023)

The Michigan Statewide Housing Plan addresses the complex barriers to attaining safe, healthy, affordable, and accessible housing. The plan creates five statewide housing targets and eight priority areas. There are eight priority areas that guide the statewide goals and strategies listed below.

- **Equity and Racial Justice:** Addresses long term disparities in housing access and generational wealth building by striving for equitable access to housing.
- **Housing Ecosystem:** Striving for a housing ecosystem that is diverse and interconnected with other priorities of the Statewide Housing Plan. This includes the construction of housing, data and research on housing, and internet accessibility for housing.
- **Preventing and Ending Homelessness:** Prioritizes stability for people that have experienced homelessness and need additional support, as well as those that experience chronic housing instability.
- **Housing Stock:** Increases the supply of affordable, accessible, and attainable housing. This is driven by a need to develop, rehabilitate, and preserve housing for all levels of incomes.
- **Older Adult Housing:** Expands supply of affordable, accessible housing units specifically for older adults (65 years or older). This is important because Michigan has a growing aging population.
- **Rental Housing:** Prioritizes rental housing and rental affordability as a housing option for those who cannot afford or do not want to own a home.
- **Homeownership:** Increases the homeownership, for low- and moderate-income households, and helping vulnerable homeowners keep their homes. Important for financial benefits, generational wealth building, and community stability.

- **Communication and Education:** Focuses on inclusive communication and education to support affordable and attainable housing, understanding of housing programs and services, and enhancing awareness of fair housing rights.

Regional Housing Partnership: Southeast Housing Partnership Action Plan

The eight priorities of the Michigan Statewide Housing Plan is accomplished through the action planning of the regional housing partnerships. Jackson County is located within the Southeast Housing Partnership, which also includes the counties of Livingston, Washtenaw, Hillsdale, Lenawee, and Monroe. The Southeast Housing Partnership is located within the Community Action Agency in Jackson, MI.

The Action Plan is focused on six strategies to address the housing ecosystem, rental housing, preventing and ending homelessness, housing stock, and communication and education priorities. These strategies emphasize fostering regional networks to address housing challenges, promote equity, and streamline development while encouraging early eviction-diversion programs and referral programs for at-risk populations. It also promotes incentivizing of affordable housing development as well as collaborating with community partners to identify local special housing needs. Additionally, it plans to expand engagement with community members and stakeholders, with a focus on ensuring inclusive, culturally appropriate communication.

Accelerate Jackson County

Established in 1997, Accelerate Jackson County is the economic development agency to support businesses with growth and retention within the county. It is a public-private partnership which provides resources to problem solve, connect businesses with manufacturing, and stimulate local job creation.

Planning in Adjacent Communities

In addition to the broader regional planning initiatives identified in this report, Grass Lake Township is also influenced by land use activities occurring in neighboring communities.

Frequently, the planning policies of neighboring communities can have a significant influence on the future development of property on the opposite side of the municipal boundary. The master plans of those communities sharing a common boundary with Grass Lake Township were examined to identify their potential impact on the community.

5 Healthy Towns

Grass Lake Township and Village is a part of the 5 Healthy Towns Project (5H), which was formerly known as Chelsea-Area Wellness Foundation. 5H is a collaborative initiative that supports planning and funding community wellness plans. The Grass Lake Community Wellness Initiative is specifically focused on substance abuse prevention and projects to encourage residents to be more active and eat healthier.

The Grass Lake Community Wellness Initiative (GLCWI) functions with the 5 Healthy Towns Project. GLCWI has been creating a comprehensive wellness plan since 2011. Additionally, Grass Lake was awarded funding for infrastructure and programming including the Grass Lake Farmers Market, the Grass Lake Road Runners race series, and the Grass Lake Senior Center.

Grass Lake Village Master Plan (2020)

Grass Lake Village is located within Grass Lake Township along the southeastern shore of Grass Lake. The Grass Lake Village Master Plan was adopted in 2020. The goals of the master plan include an emphasis on quality of life and wellbeing,

preserving natural features, revitalizing downtown Grass Lake Village, and providing safe and reliable transportation.

The future land use map shows a range of different land uses planned along the boundary of the Village and the Township. Low density residential is planned north, east, and most of the southern borders of the Village, with parcels at the northern corner designated as a high density residential. The western borders show the most diverse of land uses including moderate density residential, open space/conservation, mixed use-residential/office, and low density residential.

Along with the master plans goals and future land uses, Grass Lake Village has started a Housing Action Plan, which is currently underway. This plan will contribute additional goals and strategies for achieving the desired future of housing development.

Leoni Township Master Plan (2012)

The Leoni Township Master Plan was adopted in 2012 and was written as a 2030 plan. This plan emphasizes preserving small town character and assets while balancing needed development for housing, elderly needs, and downtown beautification.

Leoni Township is located west of Grass Lake Township, sharing the entire western border of Grass Lake. The future land use map displays that the desired land use along the Grass Lake Township border is mostly preserved agricultural land, parks and recreation, and open space. There are smaller portions of low-density residential as well. Among these land uses, there are significant amounts of land devoted to the Phyllis Haehnle Wildlife Sanctuary and the Waterloo State Recreation Area.

Napoleon Township Master Plan (2019)

The Napoleon Township Master Plan was adopted in 2019. The plan includes development goals to address trending issues within the community. These goals include balancing residential development with land conservation, protecting water quality through wetland preservation, promoting economic development, and farmland preservation.

Only the northeastern corner of Napoleon Township borders Grass Lake Township, including much of Wolf Lake. The future land use map of Napoleon Township designates the area along Wolf Lake for high-density residential with the northeastern corner of the Township designated for open space/residential and parks.

Norvell Township Master Plan (2024)

The Norvell Township Master Plan, created in 2024, emphasizes sustainable development, diversity, and smart growth to enhance quality of life, and support revitalization of the Township.

Norvell Township's entire north boundary borders Grass Lake Township's southern border. The Norvell Township's future land use map indicates that the northern border is desired to be mostly conservation preservation district, agricultural, and small amounts of land of rural residential.

Waterloo Township Master Plan (2024)

The Waterloo Township Master Plan was amended in 2024 to become the most recent master plan. The plan addresses local planning issues such as maintaining rural character and environment, the Waterloo State Recreation Area management, conserving farmland resources, responsible residential and roadway development, and conservative commercial and industrial expansion.

The southern border of Waterloo Township borders Grass Lake Township. This area is largely composed of rural residential and agricultural land, with much of the land adjacent to the Waterloo State Recreation Area.

Sylvan Township Master Plan (2017, 2025)

Sylvan Township is located to the southeast of Grass Lake Township in Washtenaw County. Sylvan Township adopted its master plan in 2017, with an update scheduled in 2025. This plan emphasizes preserving rural character, protecting the integrity of residential areas, gradual development of commercial and industrial land uses, preserving natural resources, and providing adequate infrastructure and transportation systems.

The future land use map for the 2025 Master Plan has been completed. This map designates the area bordering Grass Lake Township as open space and agricultural land.

Sharon Township Master Plan (2020)

Sharon Township is located east of Grass Lake in Washtenaw County. Sharon Township's master plan was adopted in 2020. The community's vision statement is focused on growth and development that respects the natural limitations of the land and provision of public services, while prioritizing the community's rural character. The community defines goals to achieve this vision; they include elements of sustainability, natural land conservation, and farmland preservation.

The west border of Sharon Township is shared with Grass Lake Township. The future land use map designates this area as agricultural and single family residential uses.

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An analysis of social and economic characteristics is an important component in the development of any master plan and a successful planning process. While an evaluation of the community's current situation provides insight into immediate needs and deficiencies, forecasts and projections provide a basis for determining future land use requirements, public facility needs, and essential services.

By examining community demographics such as population, income, and employment, a community can identify trends and opportunities that will influence future land use decisions and policy choices. Since certain socioeconomic analyses have an identifiable impact upon the future of a community, appropriate sections have been detailed to relate social trends to future economic considerations. Secondly, the socio-economy of a place does not function in a vacuum. Consequently, this analysis is contextualized, when appropriate, within larger socioeconomic environments and trends.

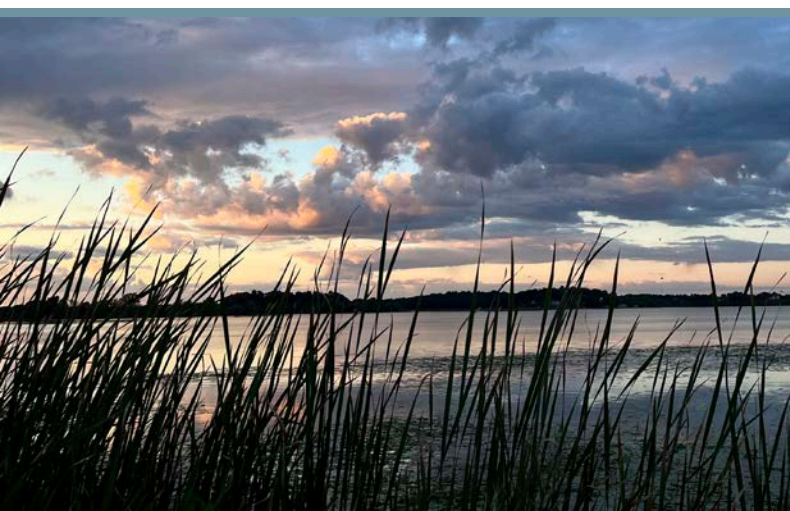
Methodology

This demographic analysis relies on several key data sources. Figures from the decennial U.S. Census reports, including the most recent 2020 Census are utilized, where available. Another key data source is Esri (a leader in GIS software, location intelligence and mapping), who produces independent demographic and socioeconomic estimates and forecasts for the United States using a variety of data sources, beginning with the latest Census base and adding a mixture of administrative records and private sources to capture change. Esri data is available for 2024, with 5-year forecasts for the year 2029. Data on certain detailed demographic topics is only available through the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, made available by the U.S. Census Bureau. Finally, certain data for Grass Lake Township and Jackson County, including future forecasts, is made available by the Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (JACTS).

Population

Population growth is a key factor influencing land use decision in any community. If the population is growing, there will be an increased need for housing, commerce, industry, parks and recreation, public services and facilities, and roads.

Table I shows the population trends from 1970 through the most current 2020 Census for Grass Lake Township, Jackson County, the State of Michigan, and surrounding communities within Jackson County. Since 1970, Grass Lake Township's population has grown more than 2.5 times in size,



increasing from 1,909 people in 1970 to 4,964 in 2020, a growth rate of 160%. Overall positive historical population growth trends have also occurred within Grass Lake Village, Napoleon Township, Norvell Township, and Jackson County as a whole, but not to the extent that growth has occurred within Grass Lake Township. Leoni Township is the only neighboring community in Jackson County that had an overall declining population between 1970 and 2020.

Table 2 shows estimated population statistics for 2024 and 2029 provided by Esri. The data estimates a modest growth of 61 people for Grass Lake Township (1.2%). Esri estimates that Jackson County's population will decline by 607 people within the five year period. Michigan is also estimated to have slight population loss.

Table 1. Population Trends, 1970-2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Grass Lake Township	1,909	2,723	2,871	3,649	4,511	4,964
Grass Lake Village	1,061	962	903	1,012	1,173	1,105
Leoni Township	13,953	14,259	13,435	13,414	13,807	13,847
Napoleon Township	5,500	6,141	6,273	6,962	6,776	6,789
Norvell Township	1,788	2,418	2,657	2,924	2,963	2,800
Waterloo Township	1,788	2,444	2,830	3,069	2,856	2,931
Sharon Township (Washtenaw County)	831	1,363	1,366	1,678	1,737	1,817
Sylvan Township (Washtenaw County)	1,642	2,128	2,508	2,734	2,833	3,311
Jackson County	143,274	151,495	149,756	158,422	160,248	160,366
Michigan	8,881,826	9,262,078	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1970 to 2020 Census Reports.

Table 2. Population Estimates, 2024-2029

	2024	2029
Grass Lake Township	5,008	5,069
Grass Lake Village	1,120	1,130
Leoni Township	13,698	13,643
Napoleon Township	6,723	6,712
Norvell Township	2,905	2,951
Waterloo Township	2,870	2,842
Sharon Township (Washtenaw County)	1,775	1,718
Sylvan Township (Washtenaw County)	3,320	3,363
Jackson County	159,775	159,168
Michigan	10,070,141	10,025,714

Source: Esri Demographic Profile, 2024.

Table 3. Population Projections through 2050

	2018	2020	2050	% Change (2018-2050)
Grass Lake Township*	5,740	6,069	6,762	17.8%
Leoni Township	13,700	13,847	14,217	3.8%
Napoleon Township	6,731	6,788	7,066	5.0%
Norvell Township	2,933	2,800	2,794	-4.7%
Waterloo Township	2,943	2,931	2,916	-0.9%
Jackson County	159,313	160,366	163,802	2.8%

*Grass Lake Township's population includes the Village of Grass Lake population.

Source: Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study 2023

Region 2 Planning Commission developed the Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (JACTS) of 2023. This study includes a population forecast for 2050 for the communities within Jackson County (**Table 3**). JACTS projects that the combined population of Grass Lake Township and the Village of Grass Lake will grow from 6,069 citizens in 2020 to 6,762 citizens by 2050, a growth rate of 11.4%. Although the JACTS study does not separate the Township and Village, if the 11.4% growth rate is applied to the Township's 2020 population, it can be estimated that Grass Lake Township would increase from 4,964 citizens in 2020 to approximately 5,530 citizens by 2050.

Many of the surrounding communities are also projected to increase in population. Jackson County's population as a whole is projected to grow by 2.8% between 2020 and 2050.

Age Distribution

An age distribution analysis is used by demographers and policy makers to anticipate future changes in age groups which may have an influence on health care, education, and recreation. In this analysis, five life cycle groups are defined:

- Preschool (0-4 years)
- School (5-19 years)
- Family Formation (20-44 years)
- Empty Nest (45-64 year)

- Older Adults (65 years or older)

Table 4 shows population by age groups for the Township, County, and State. 2010 values are from the U.S. Census while 2024 and 2029 values are Esri estimates. Each geographic area highlighted in the table shows evidence of an aging population through the year 2029.

In 2010, there was a proportionally higher number in the family formation group (20-44) and empty nesters group (45-64). By 2024, these groups aged, resulting in a greater proportion of empty nesters (45-64) and school-age children (5-19). Additionally, the older adult population saw significant growth between 2010 to 2024. By 2029, this trend is projected to continue, with the older adult population increasing further. However, the number of school age children and those in the family formation stage are also anticipated to grow slightly.

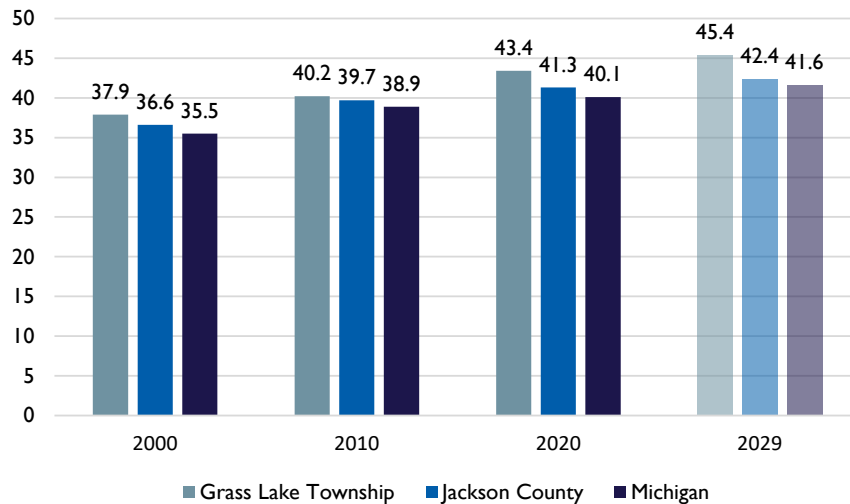
Figure 2 shows the median age for the Township, County, and State from 2000 to 2020 based on U.S. Census Bureau data, and an estimated 2029 median age from Esri. All three geographic areas show a steady increase of approximately 2.5 years in median age in each decade. Grass Lake Township has increased from a median age of 37.9 years in 2000 to a median age of 43.4 years in 2020, and is estimated to continue to increase to 45.4 years by 2029.

Table 4. Population Estimates by Age Groups, 2010-2029

	Grass Lake Township			Jackson County			Michigan		
	2010	2024	2029	2010	2024	2029	2010	2024	2029
0 to 4	276	232	251	9,442	8,467	8,341	596,286	540,800	532,063
4 to 9	312	299	256	10,165	9,181	8,321	637,784	585,003	532,985
10 to 14	337	332	313	10,907	9,303	8,986	675,216	593,013	576,871
15 to 19	284	299	293	11,556	9,994	9,332	739,599	627,016	589,282
20 to 24	191	231	238	10,013	9,996	9,560	669,072	678,713	628,963
25 to 29	199	202	273	9,236	9,384	10,152	589,583	630,729	661,461
30 to 34	250	259	235	9,372	10,471	9,663	574,566	678,887	627,668
35 to 39	325	330	294	10,166	10,123	10,385	612,493	634,680	666,454
40 to 44	389	348	359	11,054	9,656	10,172	665,481	617,001	632,331
45 to 49	379	301	359	12,465	9,202	9,718	744,581	571,891	614,809
50 to 54	381	350	310	12,547	10,010	9,093	765,452	623,864	565,658
55 to 59	351	356	326	11,325	10,382	9,599	683,186	633,361	596,890
60 to 64	272	392	364	9,321	11,194	9,775	568,811	686,174	605,693
65 to 69	222	361	380	6,943	10,548	10,499	418,625	638,584	638,383
70 to 74	142	296	315	4,979	8,327	9,348	306,084	509,028	572,114
75 to 79	87	205	250	4,120	6,063	7,080	244,085	377,125	437,991
80 to 84	54	133	146	3,333	3,738	4,841	200,855	228,260	297,615
85 and older	60	82	107	3,304	3,736	4,303	191,881	216,012	248,483

Source: 2010 U.S. Decennial Census and 2024 Esri Demographic Profile

Figure 2. Median Age Trends and Estimates, 2000-2029



Source: 2000-2020 U.S. Decennial Census Reports and 2024 Esri Demographic Profile

These figures indicate an aging population and inform the potential future and changing needs of the community, such as ADA improvements, smaller single-story homes, senior and assisted living facilities, infrastructure to promote aging in place, senior programming, and medical care facilities. The demand for education, recreation, and consumer goods from the younger age groups (0-19 years old) may not be as high as the need for aging-related amenities, though this need may evolve as the population grows.

Race and Ethnicity

Another important characteristic of a community is its racial make-up. Knowing the racial make-up of a community helps to identify the diverse needs of its population. Even though the population of Grass Lake Township has become slightly more diverse since 2010, residents of the Township are predominantly white (**Table 5**). The Township has a less diverse population compared to the County and the State. This may indicate that factors such as housing affordability, amenities, or other community characteristics are not equally accessible or appealing to people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Households

The number of persons per household constitutes household size. Since the 1970’s, the national household sizes have trended downward in size. This trend has occurred due to fewer children per family, higher divorce rates, and an increasing number of elderly people living alone.

Knowing whether the household size is increasing or decreasing helps to identify the community’s housing needs. A declining average household size may mean that a community will need more housing units to accommodate the fewer people living within each unit. In some municipalities, new housing units are being built to accommodate the demand for housing created by lower household sizes despite an overall decline in population.

Table 6 shows forecasts for households in 2050 for Grass Lake Township (combined with the Village) and Jackson County, based on U.S. Census statistics and JACTS forecasts. Grass Lake Township’s households are projected to increase from 2,355 in 2020 to 2,744 in 2050. This is a growth rate of 16.5%. The projected increase in total households may be driven, in part, by a forecasted decline in average household size, from 2.58 in 2020 to 2.46 by 2050. Similar increases in households and decreases in average household size are forecasted for Jackson County as a whole.

Table 5. Race and Ethnicity, 2010-2020

	Grass Lake Township		Jackson County		Michigan	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
White	4,300	4,571	127,588	131,097	7,569,939	7,295,651
Black or African American	49	39	12,560	12,385	1,383,756	1,358,458
American Indian and Alaska Native	12	13	521	515	54,665	47,406
Asian	6	17	1,122	1,475	236,490	332,288
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	2	2	27	30	2,170	2,603
Some Other Race	1	12	145	473	9,866	37,183
Two or More Races	52	194	3,448	8,207	17,6993	439,320
Hispanic or Latino	89	116	4,837	6,184	436,358	564,422

Source: 2010 and 2020, U.S. Decennial Census

Table 6. Household Size Forecasts, 2020-2050

	Grass Lake Township*		Jackson County	
	2020	2050	2020	2050
Households	2,355	2,744	62,565	65,994
Average Household Size	2.58	2.46	2.56	2.48

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau; JACTS 2050 Regional Development Forecasts

*Grass Lake Township's figures include the Village of Grass Lake

Table 7. Household Characteristics, 2023

	Total Occupied Households	% of Total Households					
		Family Households	Married-Couple Households	Male Householder, No Spouse/ Partner	Female Householder, No Spouse/ Partner	Households with One or More Children Under 18	Households with One or More People Over 65
Grass Lake Township	1,998	76%	67.2%	0.8%	8.1%	28%	23.3%
Jackson County	62,034	62.7%	45.6	5.2%	11.9%	25.4%	16.5%
Michigan	4,040,168	62.7%	46.3%	4.9%	11.6%	27%	15.2%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Household Characteristics

This section examines households in terms of the relationships among the persons who share a housing unit. **Table 7** examines six different household types based on relationship:

- Family households
- Married-couple families
- Male householder, no female present
- Female householder, no male present
- Households with one or more people under 18
- Households with one or more people over 65

In 2023, more than three quarters (76%) of Grass Lake Township households were families. The second largest household type was married-couple

families (67.2%). In comparison to Jackson County and Michigan, Grass Lake Township's household characteristics have much higher proportions of family households and lower proportions households without a partner. Additionally, Grass Lake Township has more households with one or more people over the age of 65.

Income and Poverty

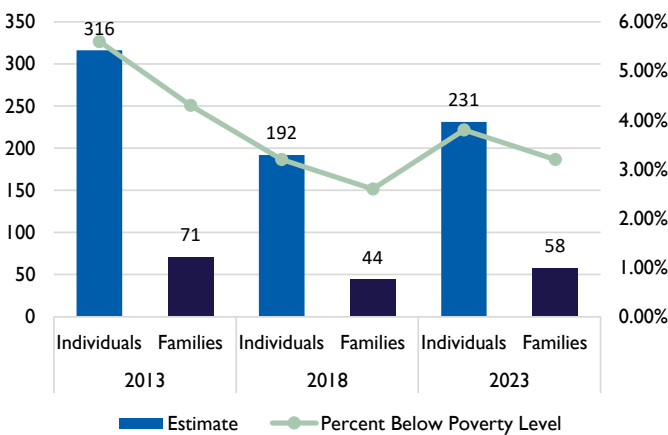
Income and poverty level data are a good way to measure the relative economic health of a community. **Table 8** shows median household incomes for Grass Lake Township, Jackson County, and Michigan. Median household income is a measure of the average of the total incomes of the persons living in a single household. The average annual median household income in Grass Lake Township is \$88,490 in 2024, which was higher than the County and State. Grass Lake Township's

Table 8. Income Estimates, 2024-2029

	2024			2029		
	Median Household Income	Average Household Income	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Average Household Income	Per Capita Income
Grass Lake Township	\$88,490	\$103,867	\$41,004	\$98,723	\$118,651	\$118,651
Jackson County	\$61,882	\$83,851	\$33,387	\$72,369	\$96,465	\$39,036
Michigan	\$71,476	\$99,903	40,752	\$82,229	\$114,987	\$47,744

Source: 2024 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

Figure 3. Poverty Trends, 2013-2023



Source: 2013, 2018, and 2023 5-Year American Community Survey

median household income is expected to increase to \$98,723 by 2029, an increase of 11.6% from 2024.

Figure 3 shows the number of individuals and families living below the poverty line in Grass Lake Township in 2013, 2018, and 2023. In 2013, 5.6% of the Township’s population lived below the federal poverty level, decreasing to 3.2% by 2023. The lowest poverty rate occurred in 2018, with only 2.6% of residents below the poverty line. These figures were significantly lower than the poverty rates for Michigan (13.1%) and the County (12.2%).

Among those living in poverty within Grass Lake Township, 1.8% were under 18 years old, 3.4% were between 18 and 64, and 6.5% were 65 years and older.

Educational Attainment

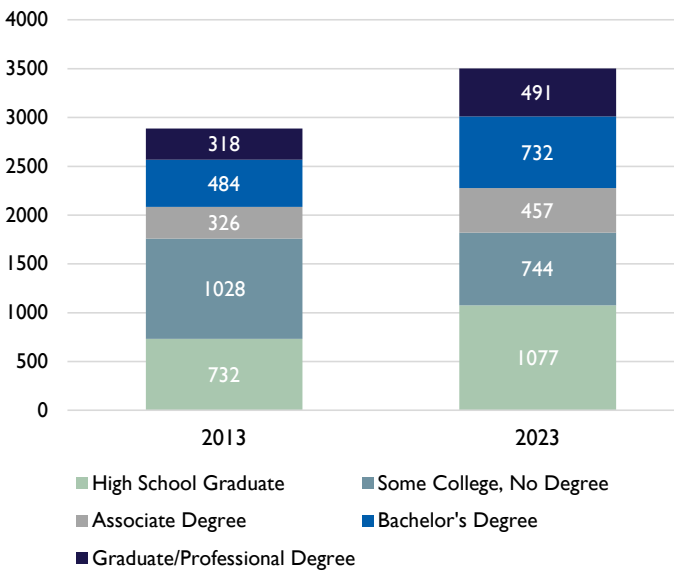
Educational attainment is an important factor in analyzing the capabilities of the local work force and the economic vitality of the community. The educational attainment of a community strongly influences what types of industries are suitable or necessary. **Figure 4** illustrates the educational attainment levels for Grass Lake Township in 2013 and 2023 based on ACS estimates.

As of 2023, of the population 25 years and over in Grass Lake Township, over 96% had graduated high school or a higher degree. 26.7% of Grass Lake Township residents (25 years and over) had obtained a Bachelor’s Degree or a higher degree. The largest difference between 2013 and 2023 is the increase in the number of population 25 and over with a Bachelor’s degree or higher, changing from 26.7% to 34.3%. This shows residents in the Township are increasingly highly educated.

Employment

Analyzing employment by industry provides insight into the types of occupations that employ the Township’s citizens. Employment data for Grass Lake Township’s community members is made available from American Community Survey. **Table 9** shows that 70.8% of the total population in Grass Lake Township in 2023 was in the workforce, a value higher than both Jackson County (56.2%) and Michigan (61.7%). Of the workforce population,

Figure 4. Educational Attainment, 2013-2023



Source: 2013 and 2023 5-Year American Community Survey

a total of 21 were unemployed while 3,531 were employed. Grass Lake Township’s unemployment rate of 0.9% is much lower than both Jackson County (5.8%) and Michigan (5.8%).

As shown in **Figure 5**, in 2024, the largest employing industries in the Township are health care/social assistance (788 employed or 22%), manufacturing (488 employed or 14%), education services (458 employed or 13%), wholesale and retail trade (397 employed or 11%), and entertainment and hospitality (378 employed or 11%).

Table 9. Labor Force, 2023

	Population	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Participation Rate
Grass Lake Township	4,965	3,147	28	0.9%	64.2%
Jackson County	130,009	69,430	4,282	5.8%	56.8%
Michigan	8,155,338	4,712,135	290,715	5.8%	61.4%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Data refers to employed population 16 years and over.

The JACTs study additionally provides information on employment estimates of retail and non-retail (manufacturing, service, government-related, and others) jobs in Grass Lake Township and Jackson County between 2018 and 2050. Most of the jobs are non-retail within the Township (89.5%) and the County (85.3%). In Grass Lake Township, it is projected that in 2050 there will be no change in the retail jobs, and there would be an 8.8% increase of non-retail jobs.

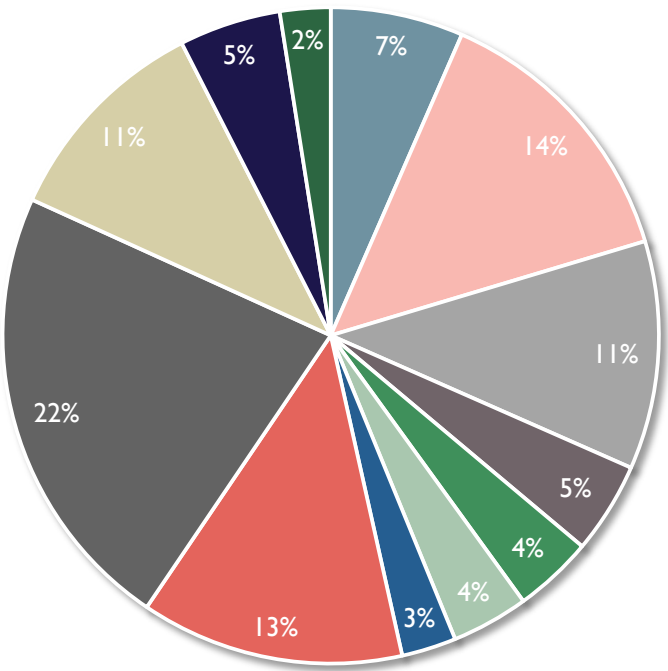
Work Commutes

Presently approximately 5% of Grass Lake Township residents (who are 16 years or older and employed) work within Grass Lake Township, and 52.4% work within Jackson County. The remainder commute outside of the County (47%) or outside of the State (0.6%).

An estimated 76.6% of worker 16 and older drove alone to work, and 6.9% of workers carpooled. 1% of workers walked to work. 14.4% of workers worked from home. The average length of a commute is 26.2 minutes. These types of commutes and commuting times are reflective of the Michigan and Jackson County data.

Figure 5. Employment by Industry, 2024

- Natural Resources & Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale & Retail Trade
- Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities
- Information & Financial
- Professional & Technical Services
- Admin, Support, and Waste Management
- Education Services
- Healthcare & Social Assistance
- Entertainment and Hospitality
- Other Services
- Public Administration



Source: 2024 Civilian Labor Force Profile for Grass Lake Charter Township

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Housing Needs Assessment

Housing, or more generally, dwellings, refers to the construction and assigned usage of houses or buildings individually or collectively, for the purpose of shelter. Housing is a basic human need, and it plays a critical role in shaping the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. It is of great importance that communities maintain a stock of quality housing to serve the varied needs of its diverse residents.

Assessing a community's housing stock is an important aspect in seeing how a community is currently structured to provide for their residents, in addition to analyzing where they may need to provide more variation to accommodate diverse housing preferences. An evaluation of housing affordability helps to reveal whether certain residents are prevented from securing housing, even where there is a surplus in available housing.

Total Housing Units

According to Esri data, Grass Lake Township is estimated to see a growth of 95 total housing units between 2020 and 2029, from 2,065 units to 2,160 units. This represents a growth rate of 4.6% between 2020 and 2029 (**Table 10**). Between 2024 and 2029, the Township is anticipated to see a growth of 52 total units. Grass Lake Township's anticipated growth rate in housing units of 4.6% is much higher than the 1.4% growth for Jackson County as a whole and 2.1% for the State of Michigan.

The Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (JACTS) provides occupied housing unit forecasts. According to JACTS, Grass Lake Township's occupied housing units (households) are projected to increase by 21.7%, from 2,254 in 2018 to 2,744 by 2050 (**Table 11**). These figures for Grass Lake Township also include the Village



of Grass Lake. Jackson County is projected to increase by 7.0% from 61,511 in 2018 to 65,994 in 2050. It is important to note that these figures represent occupied housing units, and do not account for vacant (or seasonally vacant) housing units.

The housing unit estimates and projections for Grass Lake Township from Esri and JACTS highlight a notable potential for future housing growth at rates higher than both County and State projections.

Table 11. Total Households Forecast, 2018-2050

	Households (Occupied Units)			% Change Households (2018-2050)
	2018	2020	2050	
Grass Lake Township*	2,254	2,355	2,744	21.70%
Jackson County	61,511	62,567	65,994	7.00%

Source: U.S Census Bureau, Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study

* Grass Lake Township figures include the Village of Grass Lake.

Housing Occupancy and Tenure

Housing occupancy measures the number of occupied housing units and vacant housing units. Tenure identifies whether those occupied units are inhabited by renters or homeowners. Occupancy and tenure data is shown in **Table 10**. According to Esri, 174 or 8.3% of Grass Lake Township’s total housing units were vacant in 2024. Generally, a healthy housing market will feature a vacancy rate of approximately 5% to ensure there is sufficient available housing stock. Grass Lake Township’s occupancy percentage falls close to this standard, and is likely influenced by a fair number of seasonal housing units within the Township’s lakefront areas. Both Jackson County and Michigan have higher vacancy rates of 9.1% and 11.3% respectively.

Home ownership in the United States tends to remain around 60% to 65%, and as of 2023, the United States home ownership rate was 65.9%. In 2024, Grass Lake Township had 1,934 total occupied housing units, of which 1,756 or 90.1% were owner occupied. Only 178 or 9.2% of the units were renter occupied. In comparison, Jackson County’s owner occupied housing rate is 75.8%. According to Esri, Grass Lake Township’s owner occupied housing rate is anticipated to increase higher to 92.8% by 2029 (**Table 10**).

Table 10. Total Housing and Occupancy Estimates, 2020-2029

	Year	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units	Total Housing Units	% Change Total Units (20-29)
Grass Lake Township	2020	1,751	132	182	2,065	4.6%
	2024	1,756	178	174	2,108	
	2029	1,848	143	169	2,160	
Jackson County	2020	46,331	16,236	6,458	69,025	1.4%
	2024	47,752	15,262	6,283	69,297	
	2029	49,769	14,115	6,112	69,996	
Michigan	2020	2,865,305	1,176,455	528,413	4,570,173	2.1%
	2024	2,979,418	1,115,725	523,820	4,618,963	
	2029	3,083,723	1,067,966	516,678	4,668,367	

Source: 2020 U.S. Census and 2024 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

Housing Types

Future planning for housing begins with an understanding of the current distribution of housing types within a community. **Table 12** separates housing units into three different categories: single unit (i.e., single-family detached

homes), multi-unit (i.e., townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and apartment buildings), and mobile homes or other (i.e. boat, RV, van, etc.).

The distribution of housing units for Grass Lake Township are based on the 2019-2023 American Community Survey estimates. As shown in the table, 92.0% of Grass Lake Township's housing

Table 12. Housing Units by Types, 2023

	Single Family (detached)		Multifamily		Mobile Homes	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Grass Lake Township	1,839	92.0%	51	2.6%	108	5.4%
Leoni Township	4,967	89.3%	593	10.7%	263	4.7%
Napoleon Township	2,285	83.7%	141	5.2%	304	11.1%
Norvell Township	1,181	93.9%	0	0%	77	6.1%
Waterloo Township	979	78%	29	2.3%	255	20.19%
Sharon Township (Washtenaw County)	675	97%	15	2.2%	2	0.29%
Sylvan Township (Washtenaw County)	1108	85%	53	4.0%	149	11.37%
Jackson County	47,687	76.9%	10,944	17.6%	3,403	5.5%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 13. Financial Characteristics of Occupied Housing Units, 2023

	Grass Lake Township		Jackson County		Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	2,310	100%	46,556	100%	2,946,157	100%
Under \$100,000	210	9%	10,395	22%	536,066	18%
\$100,000-\$199,999	451	20%	15,579	33%	796,290	27%
\$200,000-\$299,999	749	32%	12,054	26%	716,676	24%
\$300,000-\$499,999	660	29%	6,146	13%	617,976	21%
Over \$500,000	240	10%	2,382	5%	279,149	9%
Median value	\$268,000		\$182,900		\$217,149	
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	195	100%	14,670	100%	1,036,181	100%
Under \$500	0	0%	1,521	10%	90,676	9%
\$500-\$999	83	43%	6,554	45%	346,671	33%
\$1,000-\$1,499	109	56%	5,409	37%	394,193	38%
Over \$1,500	3	2%	1,186	8%	204,641	20%
No cash rent	22	11%	808	6%	57,830	6%
Median Rent	\$1,110		\$958		\$1,084	

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

stock is single unit dwellings (1,839 total), while 5.4% of the Township's housing stock is mobile homes or other units (108 total). Only 2.6% of the housing stock is multi-unit dwellings (51 total).

As a benchmark, **Table 12** compares the Township's housing type distribution with the surrounding municipalities and Jackson County. Grass Lake Township's percentage of single unit dwellings (92.0%) is the second highest of the units of government compared. Only Norvell Township has a higher percentage (93.9%). Conversely, Grass Lake Township's multi-unit dwelling percentage of 2.6% is the second lowest of the compared jurisdictions; Norvell Township is the lowest at 0.0%. At 5.4%, Grass Lake Township has a similar proportion of mobile home or other units to Jackson County and the rest of the jurisdictions. These estimates show that the housing type diversity is very limited in Grass Lake Township and the surrounding communities.

Housing Values

Analyzing housing values helps to gain an understanding of the overall quality and affordability of housing within a community. It is very important that a community maintains quality and affordable housing for its existing and potential future residents.

As shown in **Table 13**, in 2023, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Grass Lake Township was \$268,000, which was higher than both Jackson County (\$182,900) and the State (\$217,149). This is a positive indicator of the quality of Grass Lake Township's owner-occupied housing stock. Most of Grass Lake Township's houses are valued between \$100,000 and \$499,999, whereas most houses for Michigan are valued between \$100,000 and \$299,999.

Grass Lake Township's median rent (\$1,110) is closer to the State (\$1,084) and higher than Jackson County (\$958). Most rental units in the Township carry a median rent between \$500 and

\$1,499. This may be an indication of the somewhat higher quality of rental units in the Township in comparison to Jackson County as a whole.

Housing Affordability

The housing stock in a community should be affordable to its residents. Even with a sufficient housing supply, prohibitive costs can leave a community's housing needs unmet and lead to further economic and social challenges.

One method to measure housing affordability is to determine monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income. Generally, if a household is paying more than 30% of household income for housing (mortgage or rent, plus utilities), they are considered "cost burdened" and those paying more than 50% are considered "severely cost burdened".

For Grass Lake Township, **Figures 6 and 7** provide renter- and owner-occupied housing affordability with data from the American Community Survey sample counts of 2019-2023. Based on a sample of 3,302 housing units (with and without a mortgage), 12% of owners in Grass Lake Township paid more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. This percentage for Grass Lake Township was lower than the national average of 27.5% for the same period. Based on a sample of 217 units paying rent, 14% of renters in Grass Lake Township paid more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. This percentage for Grass Lake Township was much lower than the national average of 50.4% for the same period.

Although the percentage of housing cost burdened households "on average" in Grass Lake Township may not be as high as the national average, housing affordability may still be a local concern for certain households, particularly lower-income households. This is especially true as home values and rents have risen in recent years due to a competitive housing market. According to recent data, the median home price in the U.S. rose roughly 30%

Figure 6. Owner-Occupied Housing Affordability, 2023

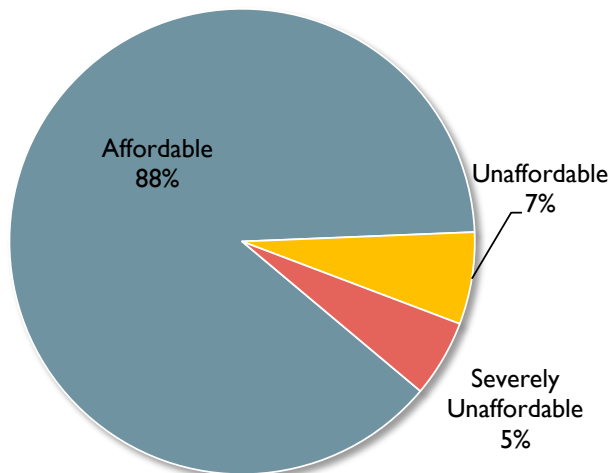
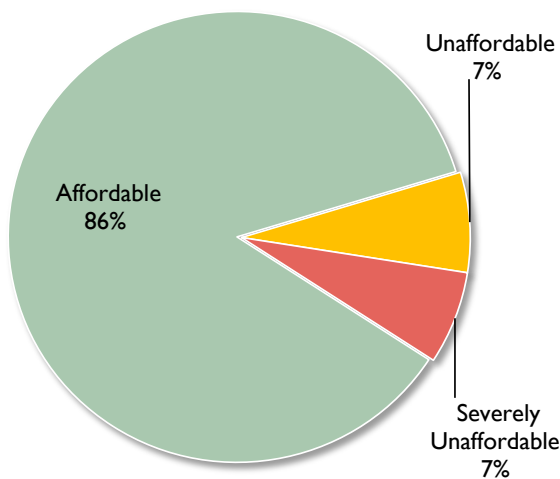


Figure 7. Renter-Occupied Housing Affordability, 2023



Figures 6 & 7 Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

over the last decade, yet incomes increased by only 11% over the same period. This trend is expected to continue within Grass Lake Township over the next 5 years. According to Esri projections, Grass Lake Township's median value of owner-occupied housing is expected to increase by 15.9% between 2024 and 2029, while its median household income is only expected to increase by 11.6% over the same period.

National and Emerging Housing Demand Trends

The Great Recession that hit in late 2007 brought a housing market crash whose impacts are still felt today. Recovery from the recession has occurred, and in recent years has even flourished. However, the characteristics of today's housing market is substantially different from a decade ago, driven by various demographic changes occurring within the United States. These changes include racial and ethnic diversification, a growing immigrant population, and an increasing percentage of non-traditional households. However, the growth and evolving housing preferences and needs of the various age generations within the United States has also had a major impact on housing supply and demand.

Baby Boomers

Once preferring large-lot detached homes, the aging Baby Boomer Generation (born 1946 to 1964) is expanding the nation's senior population and driving demand for housing that caters to the needs of seniors. Key features include single-level layouts, step-free entrances, and wider doorways. Other key priorities include safety, proximity to healthcare, and opportunities for social engagement.

While many Baby Boomers prefer to age in place, a significant proportion will seek new housing. According to housing market researcher Arthur C. Nelson, when individuals aged 65 and older move, 80% will vacate single-family houses, but only 41% will move back into single-family units. The remaining 59% will likely transition to multifamily units, often within active senior living communities or care facilities.

Gen X

Currently, Generation X (those who are generally between 43 and 60 as of 2024) is the highest-earning homebuyer group, with a median household income of \$114,300 in 2021, according to statistics provided by U.S. Bank. A source from the National Association of Realtors states, roughly 75% of Gen Xers prefer detached single-family homes, the highest among any generation at present.

Millennials

A major player in today's housing market, the Millennial Generation (generally between 29 and 44 years old) will account for 75% to 80% of the owner-occupied housing absorbed by people under 65. However, their housing preferences differ from those of previous generations. Many Millennials are delaying or forgoing marriage and having children later, contributing to a higher likelihood of living with their parents, and for longer, compared to past generations.

At the same time, their housing choices vary widely. Many prefer mixed-use urban environments and increasingly see renting as a practical option. However, the rise of remote work has given Millennials greater flexibility in where they live, prompting many to relocate to more affordable and less crowded areas, such as small towns and suburbs. This shift reflects their desire for both economic stability and lifestyle balance in an evolving housing market.

Gen Z

Generation Z or Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2013) is the next generation entering the housing market. Recent research has shown that Gen Z's have a similar housing preference to Millennials in that they prefer to live in walkable communities with easy access to shopping, schools, recreational areas, and entertainment destinations. The growing ability to work remotely also offers

Gen Z flexibility in where they want to live, with affordability as an important factor. Single-family homes (including rentals), townhouses, and garden-style apartment communities tend to be in-demand housing types for this generation.

Opportunity to Capitalize on Emerging Housing Trends

Grass Lake Township should work to ensure housing choice for individuals of all lifestyles and ages through the provision of a diversified and affordable housing stock. This strategy could result in the community's ability to retain its existing population and attract a greater percentage of younger residents (Millennials and Gen Z). Additionally, it will be important to offer more options for older populations to age in place.

Housing Analysis based on Community Tapestry Data

Tapestry segmentation data is made available through Esri. Esri tapestry segmentation provides detailed summaries of communities across the United States. Residential areas are grouped together into smaller, more manageable segments based on shared demographic, socioeconomic, and lifestyle characteristics. Neighborhoods with the most similar characteristics are grouped together, and neighborhoods showing divergent characteristics are separated. Esri tapestry segmentation data can be used to understand a community's complexity. Each segment provides insight into patterns at the neighborhood and community level. For the purposes of this housing needs assessment, tapestry segmentation data provides insights into housing type and residential living preferences.

Grass Lake Township Existing Tapestry Segments and Housing Preferences

According to Esri as of 2024, 98.3% of the Township's population is considered part of the "Green Acres" tapestry segment. This tapestry segment represents a population of older, married couples without children. Housing in this segment consists mainly of single-family owner-occupied homes with a median value of \$235,500. These homes are typically older and located on lots with large acreage.

The only other tapestry segment within Grass Lake Township is "Rooted Rural", which only comprises 1.7% of the Township's population. This group represents a population of married couples, with a small proportion of households with children at home. The "Rooted Rural" group is characterized by primarily owner-occupied single-family or mobile homes. Many of these properties are seasonally vacant, and homes within this segment are generally below \$100,000.



Representative Image of the Green Acres Tapestry Segment, Source: Esri

Housing Preferences of Targeted Tapestry Segments

Esri tapestry segmentation data can be a helpful tool to provide insights on what a local municipality could work toward to create an environment that is attractive to certain "targeted" tapestry segments. For example, if a township would like to attract young entrepreneurs, it could examine the lifestyle, housing, and community life characteristics that are desired by young entrepreneurs. With that

information in hand, the township can establish plans and policies that work toward providing or improving the desired community amenities.

To identify potential tapestry segments that Grass Lake Township would want to target, we have identified existing tapestry segments within Jackson and Washtenaw Counties that match certain population segments that may not be presently found in Grass Lake Township. Described below, these segments are either candidates for Grass Lake Township to target or they are segments that the Township's existing population is likely to transition toward.

Bright Young Professionals

Found within Washtenaw County, "Bright Young Professionals" is a tapestry segment consisting of young, educated, working professionals. The household type is primary couples, with above-average concentrations of both single-parent and single-person households. More than one out of three householders are under the age of 35. The average household size is 2.41, median age is 33.0 years, and median household income is \$54,000. Labor force participation is high, generally white-collar workers, with a mix of food service and part-time jobs. They find leisure going to bars/clubs, attending concerts, and going to the beach, and also enjoy a variety of sports, and eating out at fast-food and family restaurants. In terms of housing, multiunit buildings or row housing make up 56% of the housing stock, while the remainder is single-family units. There are slightly more renters than homeowners in this segment.



Representative Image of the Bright Young Professional Tapestry Segment, Source: Esri

Midlife Constants

Found within Jackson County, “Midlife Constants” residents are seniors, at or approaching retirement. Although located in predominantly metropolitan areas, they live outside the central cities, in smaller communities. Their lifestyle is more country than urban. They are primarily married couples, with a growing share of singles. The average household size is 2.31, median age is 47.0 years, and median household income is \$53,200. They are sociable, church-going residents belonging to fraternal orders, veterans’ clubs, and charitable organizations and do volunteer work and fundraising. They also contribute to arts/ cultural, educational, health, and social services organizations. Leisure activities include movies at home, reading, fishing, and golf. In terms of housing, they prefer single-family homes with a median value of \$154,100 in settled neighborhoods with slow rates of change. About 70% of this tapestry segment are owners, while 30% are renters.



Representative Image of the Midlife Constants Tapestry Segment, Source: Esri

Retirement Communities

Found within Jackson County, the “Retirement Communities” segment is an older population segment consisting largely of retirees with a median age of 53.9 years. The average household size is 1.88 and the median household income is \$40,800. Featuring a small household size, many residents have outlived their partners and live alone. Although income and net worth are below national averages, residents enjoy going to the movies, fishing, and traveling. They are active in political

and civic organizations. In terms of housing, they live in a combination of single-family homes, independent living with apartments, assisted living, or continuous care nursing facilities. About 55% of this segment are renters, while 45% are owners.



Representative Image of the Retirement Communities Tapestry Segment, Source: Esri

Housing and Community Amenity Strategies to Attract and Serve Targeted Segments

The three tapestry segments described above represent a broad spectrum of ages, employment status, and household characteristics. Based on an analysis of lifestyle, housing, and community life characteristics desired by the targeted tapestry segments, Grass Lake Township should consider policies and strategies that provide and/or enhance the following amenities:

1. Accommodate a greater variety of housing types, including duplex, triplex, townhouses, and apartments
2. Promote and embrace rental housing as an important option
3. Stabilize and enhance single-family neighborhoods with quality housing stock
4. Protect and celebrate small town character
5. Invest in social and community welfare, such as cultural programs, community events, and social organizations
6. Improve and expand recreational facilities and programs



Existing Conditions Analysis

The establishment of a future vision for a community, including the development of a Future Land Use Plan, must consider the existing physical characteristics of a community. This includes an evaluation of natural features, existing land uses, transportation networks, infrastructure networks, and existing public services and facilities. This analysis of existing conditions serves as a starting point for discussions about future growth and development. This section summarizes the most important existing conditions within Grass Lake Township and its relevance to future land use planning.

Natural Features

The natural environment plays a major role in land use. It significantly impacts development; for example, a wetland may prohibit the construction of any structure. Conversely, the natural environment is affected by land development. An example of this is the increased erosion caused by clearing vegetation. Thus, when preparing a Future Land Use Plan, it is important to examine the natural environment to determine where development is best suited, and where it should be discouraged.

Development should be prevented in any environmentally sensitive area within a community. The destruction or disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas will affect the life of a community by either:

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

Each of these effects is detrimental to the general welfare of a community, resulting in high economic costs or public health and safety concerns.



Topography

The overall topography of Grass Lake Township can be characterized as rolling hills with many flat areas. As shown on the **Topography Map**, within Grass Lake Township, elevations vary about 189 feet from its highest to lowest point. The overall flat topography of Grass Lake Township presents few constraints to development. However, in some instances flat topography can complicate infrastructure services, such as the challenge of ensuring proper pressure in public water systems and flow rates in sanitary sewer and storm water drainage systems.

Woodlands

Woodlands are common throughout Grass Lake Township. As shown on the **Natural Features Map**, the largest wooded areas in the Township are found along the many lakes and waterways, as well as the northern border along the Waterloo State Recreation Area. Other scattered woodlands are found throughout the Township. The woodlands along the lakes and Waterloo State Recreation Area offer many opportunities for scenic and recreation attraction.

Wetlands

Often overlooked, wetlands are a vital natural resource that provide essential benefits including flood control, water filtration, habitat, and carbon storage. They also enhance the landscape's beauty and support recreational activities.

Through the years, over 50% of Michigan's original wetlands have been destroyed by development and agricultural activities. Therefore, the State of Michigan enacted Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994 to protect the remaining wetlands. The wetland act authorizes the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), to preserve certain

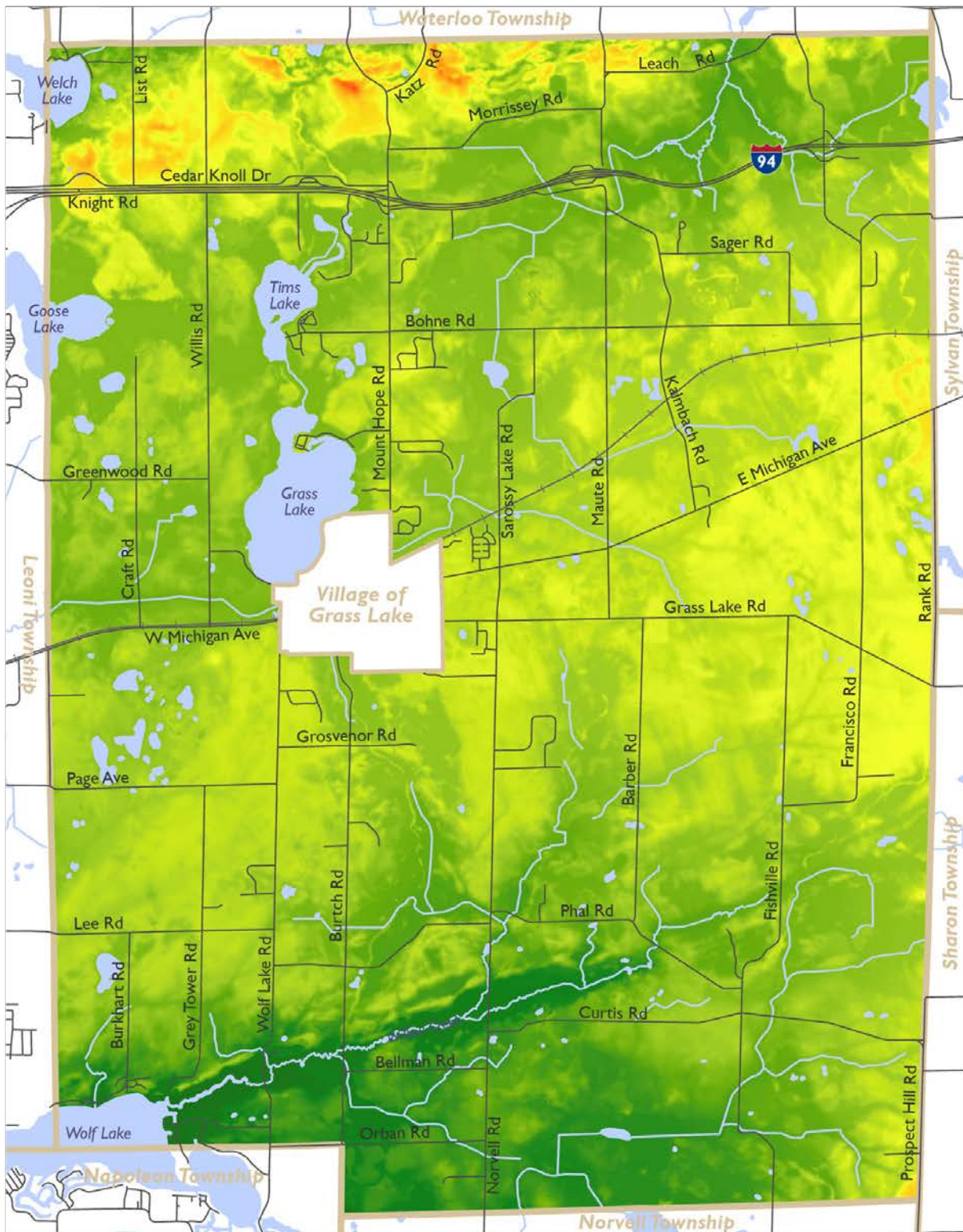
wetland areas. EGLE may require permits before altering regulated wetlands and may prohibit development in some locations.

EGLE defines and regulates wetlands as "land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life, and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh." EGLE reserves the right to regulate wetlands if they are any of the following:

- Connected to or is within 1,000 feet of one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair
- Connected to or is within 500 feet of an inland lake, pond, river, or stream
- Not connected to one of the Great Lakes, or an inland lake, pond, stream, or river, but are more than 5 acres in size
- A wetland not meeting the above criteria, but EGLE has determined that the wetland is essential to the preservation of the state's natural resources and has notified the property owner.

Any wetlands in the Township not meeting the criteria for wetlands as defined by EGLE can be protected by local control techniques. Such techniques include a local wetland ordinance, policies in this Master Plan directing incompatible land uses away from wetlands, and specific wetlands provisions in the Zoning Ordinance.

The **Natural Features Map** highlights major areas of wetlands within the Township. Generally, these are concentrated in the same areas at the Township's woodlands. Particularly along the connection of Willow Creek to Wolf Lake, as well as the areas surrounding I-94.

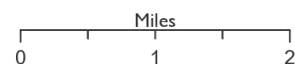


Map 2: Topography

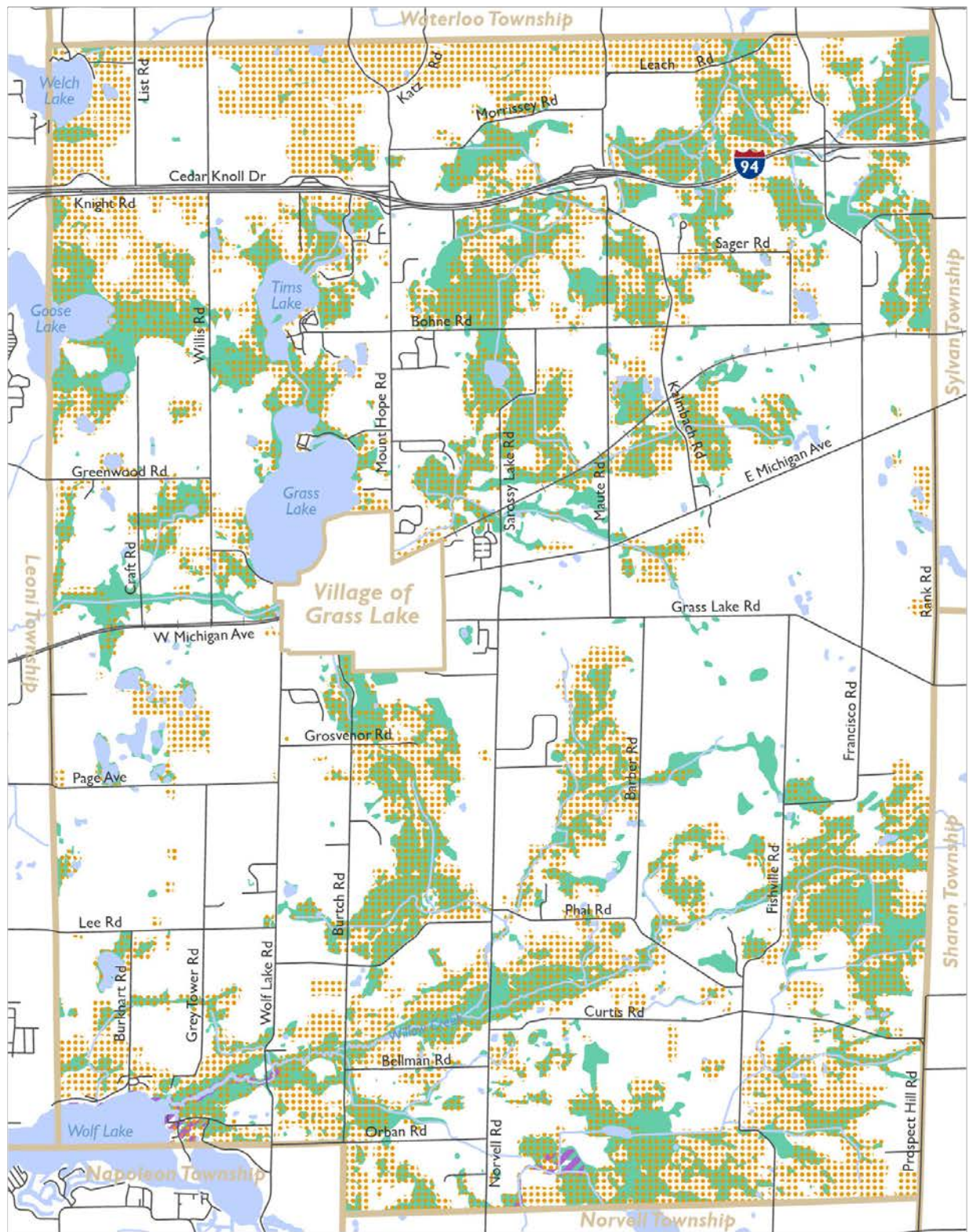
Base Features:

- Roads
- Railroads
- ~ Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries

Elevation:



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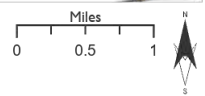
Map 3: Natural Features

Base Features:

- Roads
- Railroads
- ~ Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries

Environmental Features:

- Woodlands
- 100-year Floodplains
- Wetlands



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Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library; U.S. Geological Survey, 2024;
 Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2018;
 National Wetlands Inventory, 2015

Water Bodies

As its name suggests, Grass Lake Township is near Grass Lake among many other lakes and natural bodies of water. Grass Lake is connected to Tims Lake. To the northwest, Grass Lake Township touches Welch Lake and Goose Lake. Smaller lakes within the central and northeast of the Township include Notten Lake and Riley Lake. Willow Creek runs transverse across the southern part of the Township toward Wolf Lake. These water bodies are part of the upper Grand River watershed system and serve as a focal point for the Township and for recreation opportunities.

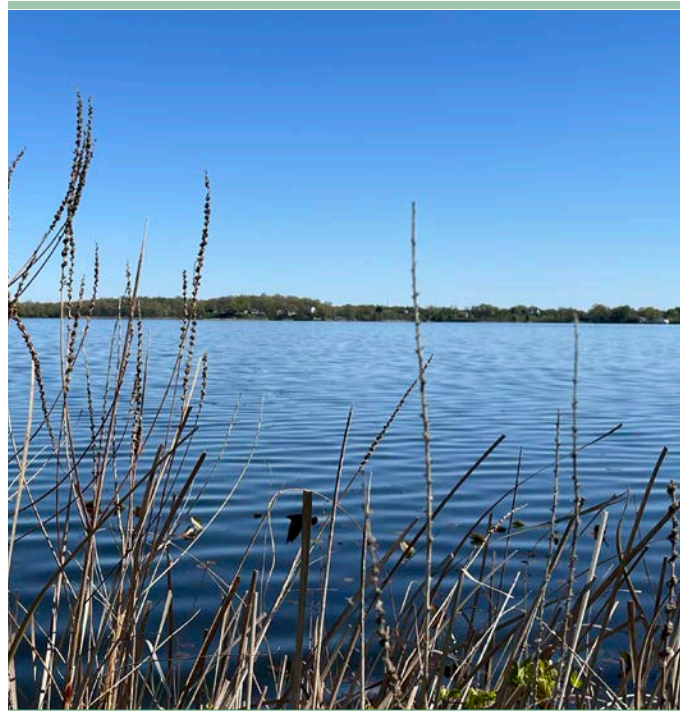
Residents and visitors enjoy the Township's water features for water sports, fishing, swimming, and more; the water bodies are accompanied by hiking trails and pathways to restaurants, entertainment, and other local amenities.

Floodplains and Floodways

Floodplain information for this Master Plan is based on data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) for the National Flood Insurance Program. From a planning standpoint, this information is intended to promote floodplain management through implementation of "sound land use" with floodplain areas. As illustrated on the **Natural Features Map**, only the areas near the Sharonville State Wildlife Management Area are identified as 100-year floodplains.

A 100-year floodplain is defined as the land adjacent to a river, lake or stream that will be inundated by water during a flood which has a 1% chance of occurring of being exceeded in any given year. Every river, lake or stream has a floodplain associated with it.

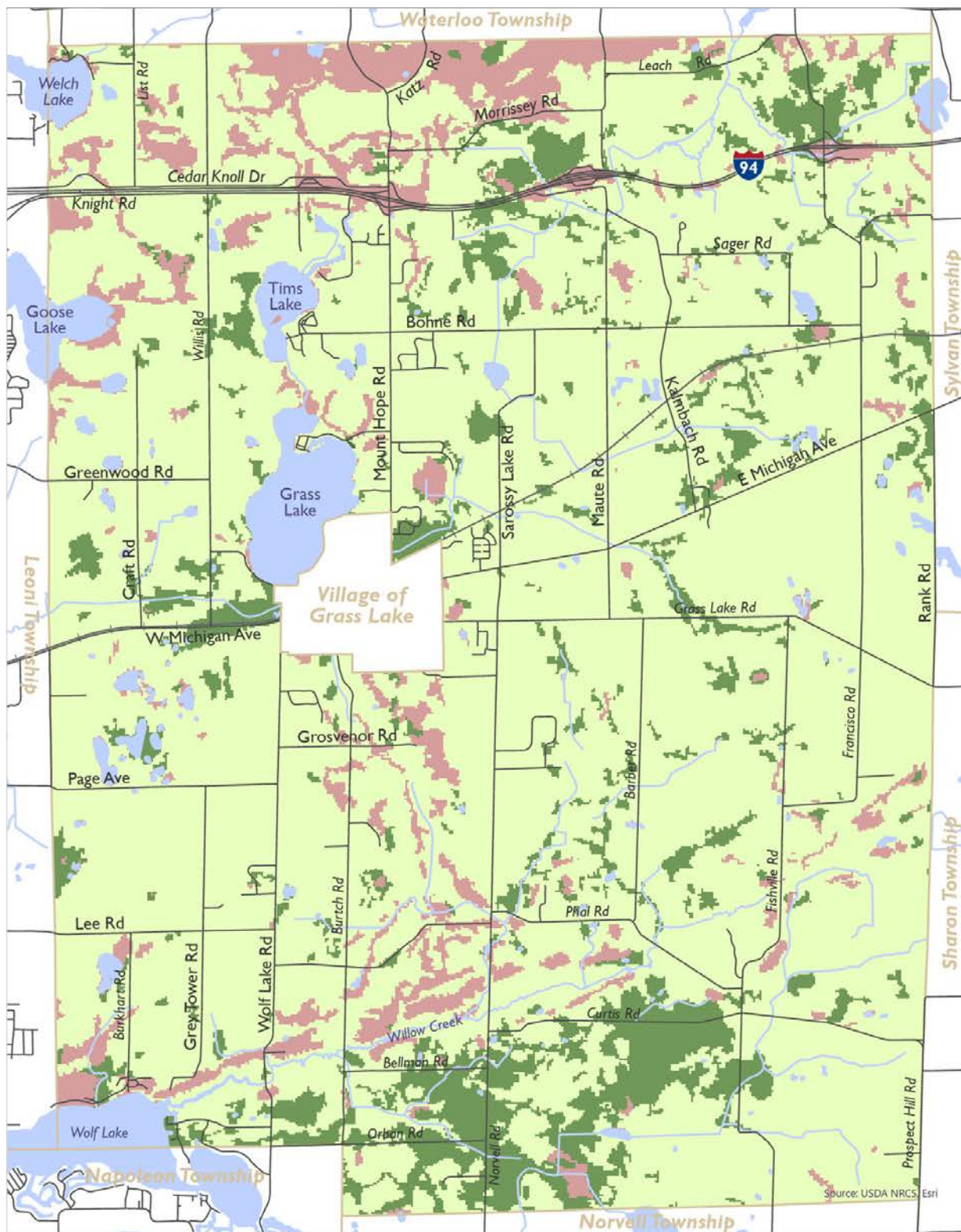
Efforts should be made to maintain floodplains in their natural state to assure preservation of natural features and to limit damage to personal property. Certain activities or development within a floodplain may be subject to permitting by EGLE.



Grass Lake

Floodways are defined differently from floodplains. Floodways are the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channel which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the 100 year flood; these are areas of moving water during times of flood. New residential construction is specifically prohibited in the floodway. In general, construction and fill may be permitted in the portions of the floodplain that are not floodways, provided local ordinance and building standards are met. In addition, compensating excavation must be provided that is equal to the volume of fill placed in the floodplain.

As a baseline, the current building codes in Michigan require that new construction or substantially improved buildings within the 100-year floodplain have the lowest floor, elevated at least one-foot above the 100-year flood elevation. Basements that are below grade on all four sides must be 1 foot above the 100-year floodplain elevation.



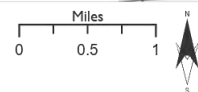
Map 4: Quality of Farmland

Base Features:

- Roads
- Railroads
- Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries

Farmland Class:

- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Local Importance
- Not Prime Farmland



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Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service, 2024;
 Michigan Geographic Data Library;
 Wade Trim Analysis, 2025

Agricultural Lands

A significant proportion of Township land is devoted to agricultural land use. As shown in the **Quality of Farmland Map**, the Township boundaries encompass a moderate quantity of soils defined as agriculturally prime farmland by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. These soils are scattered throughout the Township, though the greatest concentrations are found in the southern region.

Many of the remaining soil types, though not prime, are highly productive farmland of local importance which demand appropriate soil management techniques.

Existing Land Use

Knowledge of existing land development furnishes the basic information by which decisions can be made concerning proposals for future residential, commercial, industrial, and public land use activities. The **Existing Land Use Map** and **Table 14**, included in this section of the report will serve as a reference for the Township in its consideration for land use management and public improvement proposals.

Methodology

A computer-generated base map for the Township was first created using digital information from the Michigan GIS Open Data portal and other online data sources. The base features include the Township boundary line, streets, and water bodies. Property boundary line data was acquired from Jackson County. In 2025, Wade Trim staff conducted a parcel-by-parcel analysis of the Township using satellite imagery.

Land Use Analysis

The following are descriptions of each existing land use category found within the Township.

Table 14. Existing Land Use, 2025

Type	Acreage	Percentage
Agricultural	12,820	44.0%
Single-Family Residential	4,629	15.9%
Multi-Family Residential	50	0.2%
Commercial	31	0.1%
Industrial	273	0.9%
Public/Quasi-Public	267	0.9%
Recreational	508	1.7%
State-Owned Land	2,654	9.1%
Vacant/Fallow	7,406	25.4%
Total	29,120	100%

Source: Wade Trim Analysis, 2025

Agricultural

The primary existing land use within Grass Lake Township is agricultural land. Agriculture is important for the Township’s economy and rural lifestyle, with 12,820 acres or 44% of the land used for farming.

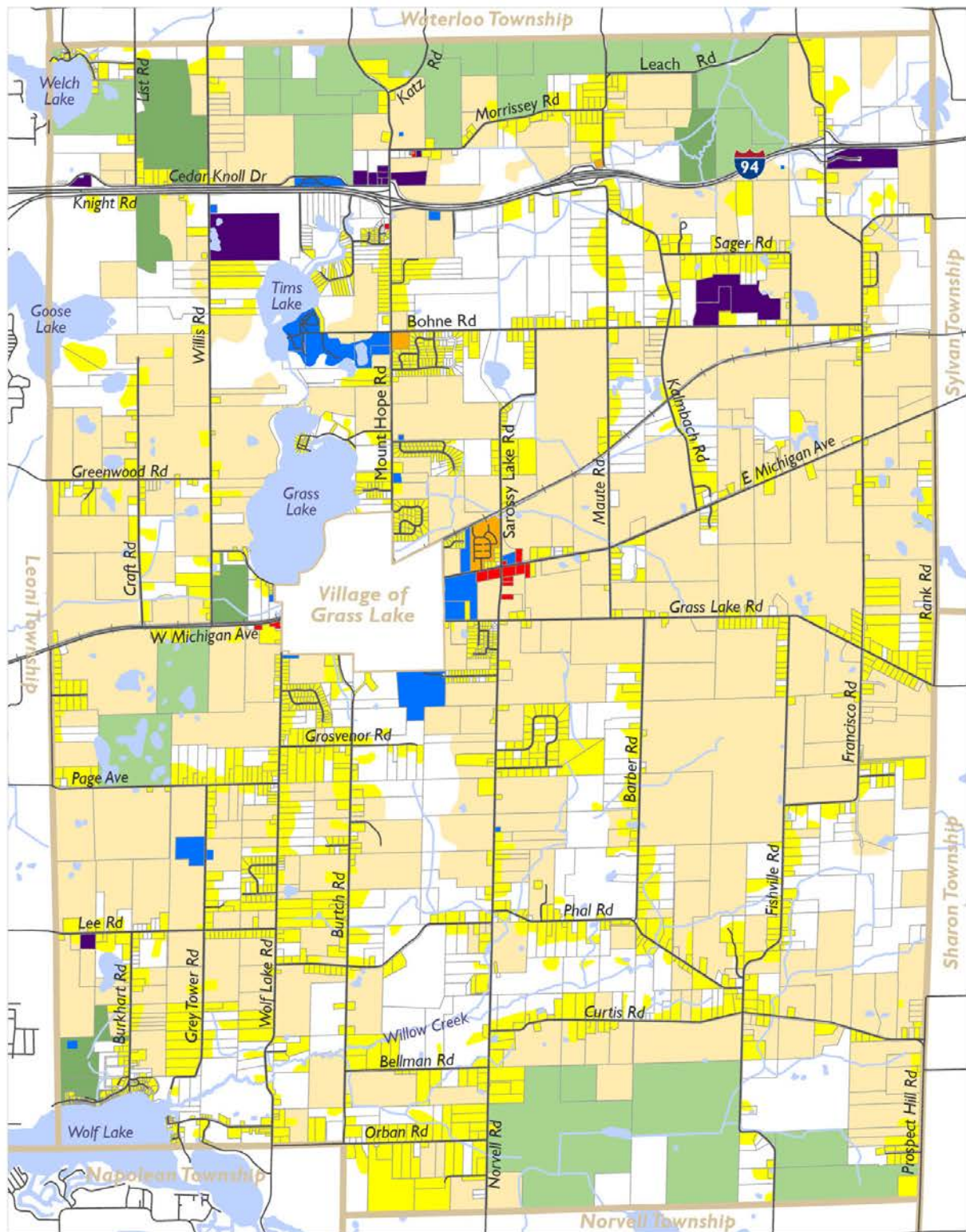
Single-Family Residential

This land use category includes land occupied by single family dwelling units, including both detached and attached units, seasonal dwellings, and their related accessory buildings such as garages and sheds.

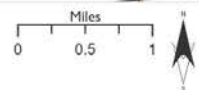
In total, single-family residential lands comprise 4,629 acres or 15.9% of the Township. Most existing single-family development consists of rural single family homes along farm roads as well as scattered condominium developments.

Multi-Family Residential

Multiple family residential use includes any residential properties that have two or more units. These include duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes and traditional apartments, along with their related



Map 5: Existing Land Use



Base Features:

- Roads
- Railroads
- ~ Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundaries

Land Uses:

- Agricultural
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public

- Recreational
- State-Owned Land
- Vacant/Fallow

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Source: Jackson County GIS, 2025;
 Michigan Geographic Data Library;
 Wade Trim Analysis, 2025



Restaurant in Grass Lake Township

accessory buildings such as garages. Mobile/manufactured home parks are also included within this category.

In Grass Lake Township, multiple family residential use occupies 50 acres or 0.2% of the Township. There are only two locations with multiple family residential which are located centrally within the Township. One is a manufactured home park near the railroad outside the east border of the Village of Grass Lake. The other location of multiple-family land use is a quadplex located on Bohne Rd.

Commercial

This land use category includes land that is predominantly of a commercial character, including restaurants, retail sales establishments, grocery/convenience stores, service establishments (including personal, business and automotive services).

There are several primary pockets of commercial activity in Grass Lake Township, comprising 31 acres or 0.1% of land within the Township. East Michigan Ave has the greatest density of commercial activity within the Township.

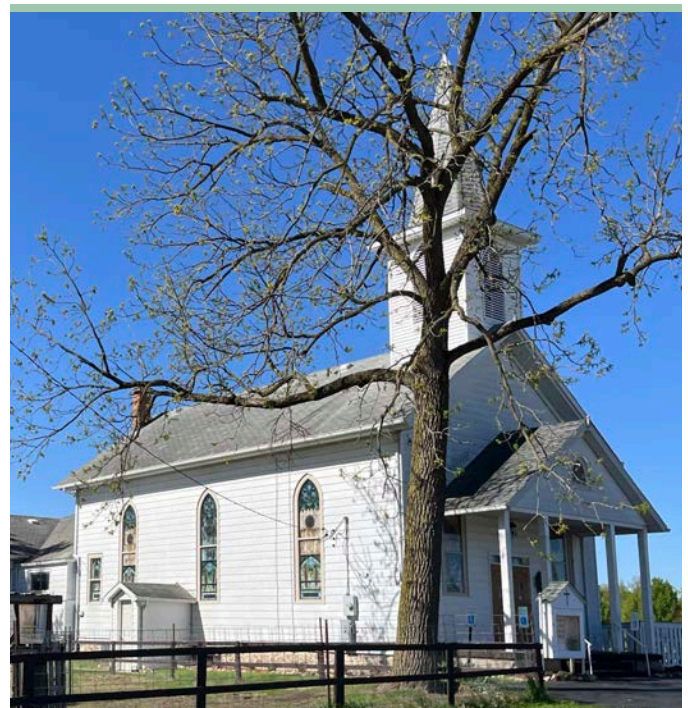
Industrial

This land use category is comprised of land occupied by manufacturing industries, laboratories, warehouses, suppliers, and non-manufacturing uses which are primarily industrial in nature. Most of the industrial uses within the Township are located along or in close proximity to I-94. In total, industrial lands occupy 273 acres or 0.9% of the Township.

Public/Quasi-Public

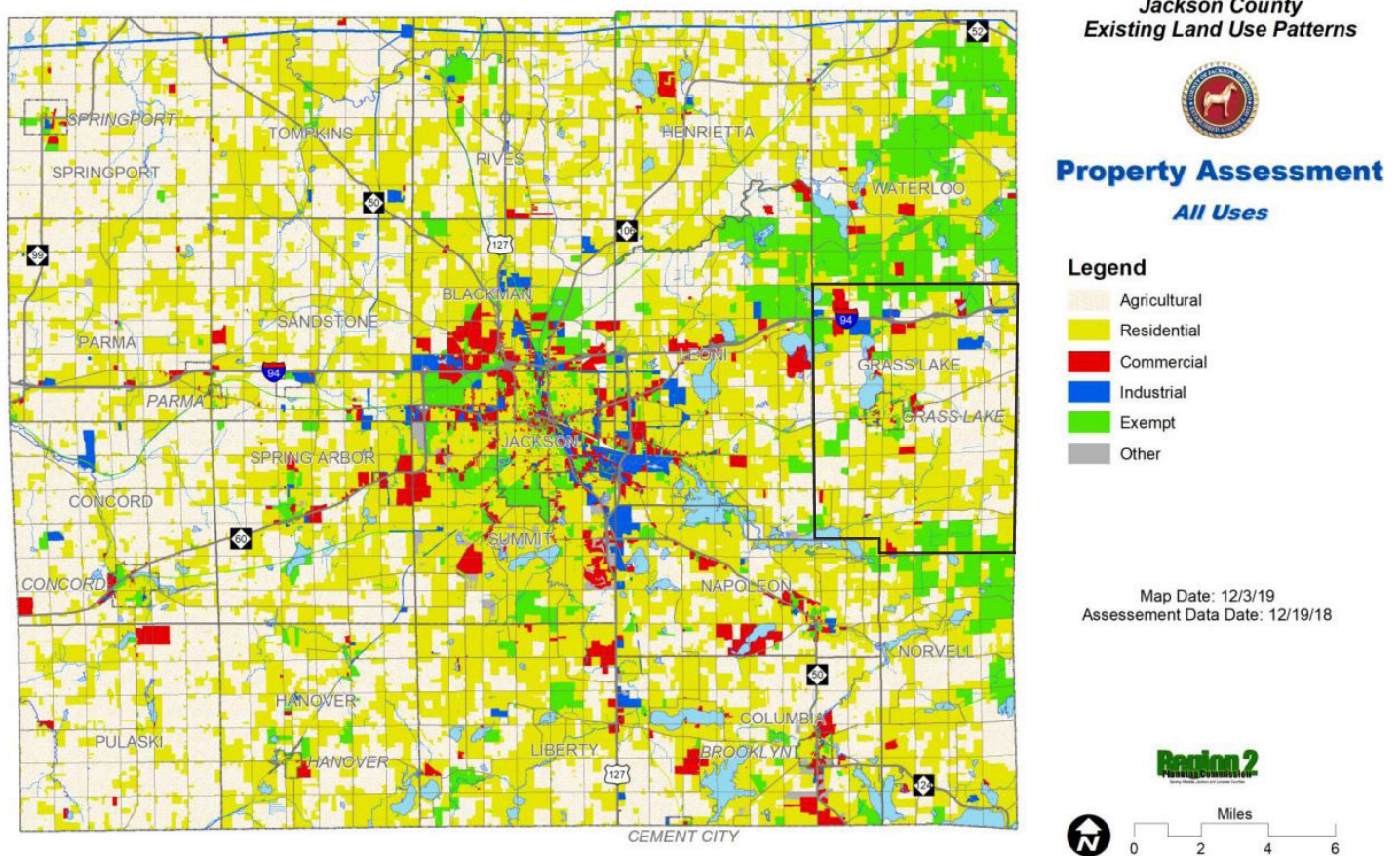
Public uses are land and facilities that are publicly operated and available for use by the public. Examples include schools, public parks, government facilities, and water and sewer utilities. Semi-public uses are land and facilities which may be privately owned or operated but used by the community or the general public. Examples include churches, cemeteries, and fraternal organizations.

There are numerous public and semi-public uses throughout the Township, comprising 267 acres or 0.9% of the Township.



St John's United Church of Christ

Figure 9. Jackson County Property Assessment Map



Source: 2020 Region 2 Planning Commission Jackson County Existing Land Use Patterns and Major Community Facilities.

Recreational

This category includes fields and forested areas for recreational uses. Within the Township, this includes a golf course, baseball fields, basketball courts, RV parks, and camping centers. These recreational land uses are scattered throughout the Township. In total, the recreational land use category comprises of 507 acres of 1.7% of the Township.

State-Owned Land

This land category is similar to the recreational land use category, but it includes all land owned by State entities that are typically natural land conservation focused. This include state parks and wildlife refuge areas. In total, the state-owned land

makes up 2,654 acres or 9.1% of the Township. These parcels of land are concentrated to the northern and southern borders and near the lakes.

Vacant/Fallow

This category includes undeveloped lands in the Township such as woodlots, wetlands, open fields, and vacant buildings/sites. In total, the vacant/fallow category comprises 7,406 acres or 25.4% of the Township. It is important to note that much of the vacant land is located on the undeveloped portions of large lot residential or rural residential parcels.

Table 15. Existing Land Use (Property Tax Classification) Comparison with Jackson County

Property Assessment	Jackson County	Grass Lake Township 2014
Agricultural	46.2%	43.1%
Residential	40%	40.1%
Commercial	3.3%	2.7%
Industrial	1.7%	1.8%
Exempt	8.4%	12.3%

Source: 2020 Region 2 Planning Commission Jackson County Existing Land Use Patterns and Major Community Facilities.

Existing Land Use (Property Tax Classification) Comparison with Jackson County

Comparing the existing land use distribution of Grass Lake Township with the larger Jackson County can serve as a benchmark for future land use planning and may provide insights into whether more or less acreage of each land use type should be planned for the future. **Table 15** compares the distribution of taxable classification by property land categories within Grass Lake Township with Jackson County. The tax classification data for Jackson County is from 2020 and was developed by the Region 2 Planning Commission.

At 43.1%, the combined percentage of residentially taxed properties within Grass Lake Township is slightly lower than the total Jackson County (46.2%).

At 2.7%, the percentage of properties with a commercial tax classification in Grass Lake Township is slightly lower than the rest of Jackson County which had 3.3% commercial land use classification. Grass Lake Township is naturally more rural and comprises of less concentrated commercial uses.

At 1.8%, the percentage of industrially taxed properties in Grass Lake Township is reflective of the total Jackson County proportions.

The properties that are exempt from taxes includes public, quasi-public, and recreational land uses. This includes churches, educational campuses, parks and recreation facilities, among other similar uses. Grass Lake Township has a higher proportion of exempt land with 12.3% in comparison to the rest of Jackson County which is made up of 8.4% exempt land use. This is largely because there is a higher concentration of major community facilities located within Grass Lake Township. These include: Sharonville State Game Area, Waterloo State Recreation Area, Calerone Golf Club, and Greenwood Acres Family Campground.

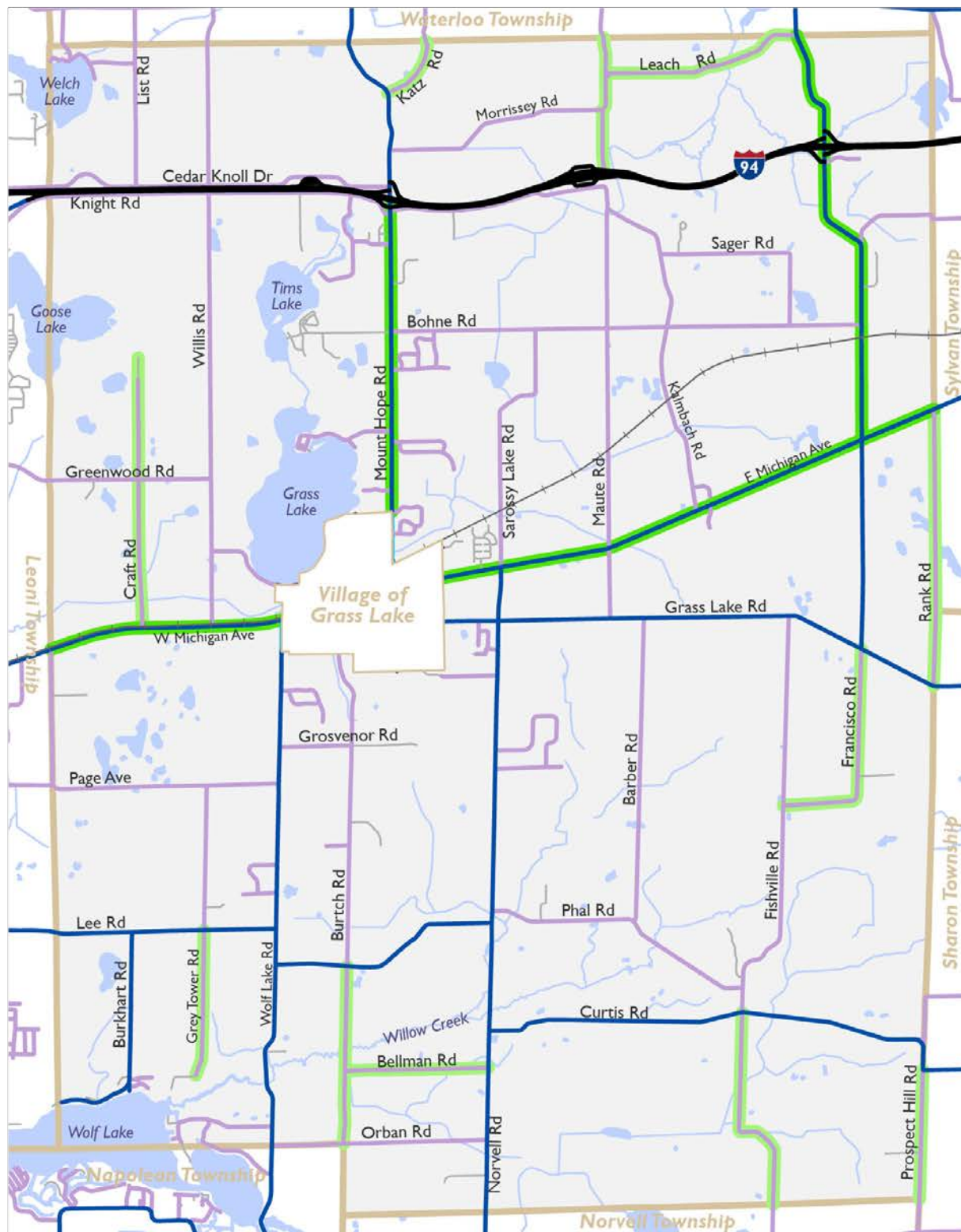
Transportation

Mobility and accessibility are vital components of the social and economic wellbeing of a community. The traffic circulation system is, in a large sense, the framework upon which a community is built. This system must support the collective mobility of citizens and visitors of Grass Lake Township. The system must also be fully coordinated with the other elements of the Master Plan, particularly future land use, so as to complement the collective goals, objectives, and policies of the plan, and to ensure that residents can access needed services and employment opportunities.

Regional Highway Network

The residents of Grass Lake Township have good access to the region and the state through US Highways, major county roads, and local roads. Running along the northern border is Interstate I-94. Michigan Avenue connects the east and west borders of the Township to Grass Lake Village.

These roads and highways provide easy access to other communities in the region such as Chelsea, Leoni, Jackson, and Ann Arbor. These highways also provide access to the major metropolitan



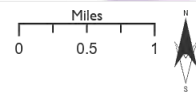
Map 6: Transportation Network

Base Features:

- Railroads
- Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries

Road Classification:

- State Trunkline
- County Primary
- County Local
- Other Local Road
- All Season Roadway
- Gravel Roadway



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Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library;
 Grass Lake Township, 2021

areas of the state as well as the larger region. Major cities located within easy driving distance from the Township include:

- Ann Arbor – 26 miles
- Lansing – 51 miles
- Detroit – 66 miles
- Flint – 76 miles
- Grand Rapids – 117 miles
- Chicago – 219 miles

Responsible regionalism and coordination with other local and county-wide transportation plans are extremely important in order to ensure and enhance inter-regional connections. Additionally, regional planning for transportation may be beneficial for future regional transportation investments.

Local Transportation Network

The **Transportation Network Map** shows the current transportation network of Grass Lake Township. All roads in the Township are divided into four categories:

- State Trunkline
- County Primary
- County Local
- Other Local (roads not certified to receive revenues from Michigan Public Act 51)

Using this classification, the **Transportation Network Map** shows the transportation routes within the Township and the primary links to outside the Township. The primary east/west through route is I-94; it connects Chicago to Detroit and beyond. The primary east/west through route is Michigan Avenue; it stretches from Leoni Township to Chelsea. Other key roads that include Mount Hope Road which extends from Grass Lake Village north toward Stockbridge Township and ultimately M-52.



County road in Grass Lake Township

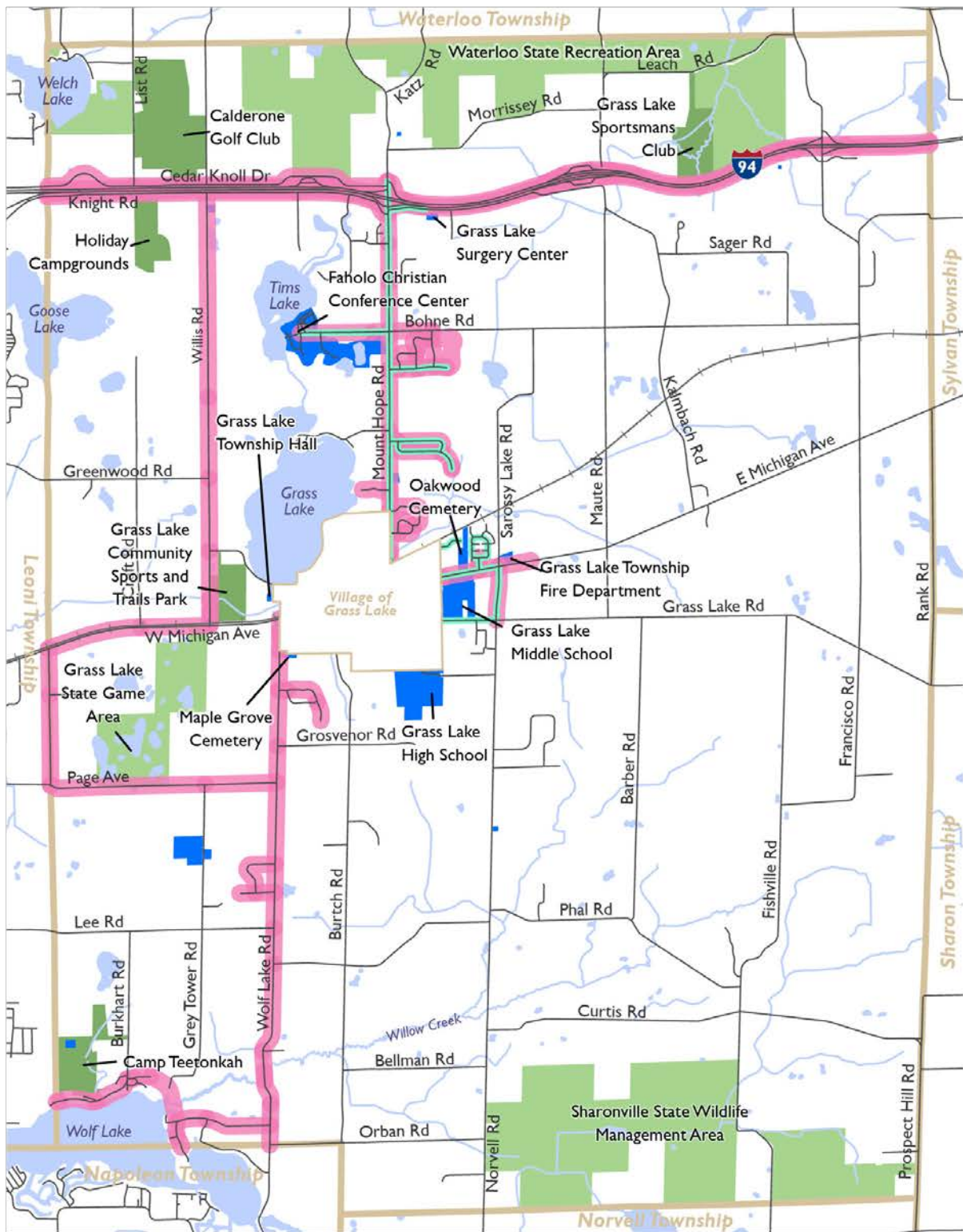
Non-Motorized Transportation

The majority of the roads in Grass Lake Township are local, narrow roads with little to no shoulder. There are no connective sidewalks or bike paths within the Township, but Grass Lake Village has connective neighborhood and downtown sidewalks.

Where the Township lacks in road sidepaths, it makes up for in gravel, hiking and mountain biking trails. The Grass Lake Community Sports and Trails Park, Schlee Waterfowl Production Area, and Waterloo State Recreation Area have extensive trails in scenic areas.

Other Transportation Modes

Washtenaw County and parts of Jackson County is served by the Western Washtenaw Area Value Express (WAVE). The WAVE provides door to door services by contacting WAVE or using the app. The rides are available Monday through Friday 6 am to 9:30 pm. The WAVE provides subsidized rides to older adults, people with disabilities, low income, and youth.



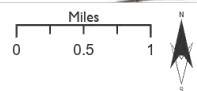
Map 7: Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Base Features:

- Roads
- Railroads
- ~ Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundaries

Community Facilities:

- Water Service Area
- Sewer Service Area
- Public/Quasi-Public Land Use
- Recreational Land Use
- State-Owned Land



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 Source: Jackson County GIS, 2025;
 Michigan Geographic Data Library;
 Grass Lake Township, 2021

Air transportation for Grass Lake residents is provided through nearby local, regional, and international airports including Detroit Metro Airport, located approximately 50 minutes east of Grass Lake Township, and the Jackson County Airport.

Community Services and Facilities

The **Community Services and Infrastructure Map** highlights the location of key community service facilities and properties within the Township. The Waterloo Pinckney State Park is one of the main attractions in Grass Lake Township with 20,500 acres of recreational area that offers numerous facilities and activities for visitors.

Grass Lake Township Hall is located on Lakeside Drive, along with the Township Senior Center. The Grass Lake Community Sports and Trails park is located just west of the Township Hall on Willis Road. Other Grass Lake Township facilities located on the east side of the Village including the Fire Department, Grass Lake Township Middle School,

and High School. The Township and the Village support one another with community amenities such as the Jackson District Grass Lake Library.

Other public and quasi-public buildings and facilities within Grass Lake Township include the Faholo Christian Conference Center, Grass Lake Surgery Center, and several cemeteries.

Emergency Services

The Police services are contracted with Jackson County Sheriff's Deputies, located at 212 Wesley Road in Jackson. The Grass Lake Township Fire Department is located at 12222 East Michigan Avenue. Emergency Medical Service is available, but the nearest hospitals are located in Chelsea and Jackson. Both fire and police services can be reached via 911 emergency service.

Educational Facilities

Township residents and beyond are served by the Grass Lake Community School System, a part of the Jackson County Intermediate School District. The system's enrolled student population is 1,333 children spread across the George Long Elementary School, Grass Lake Middle School, and Grass Lake High School (see **Community Services and Infrastructure Map**).

Napoleon Community School District extends in Grass Lake Township on the southern boundary along Wolf Lake and Norvell Roads (north and south of Curtis Road). The Chelsea School District also extends into the Township from the east. Though these school districts overlap the Township, they do not operate any schools within the Township.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Grass Lake Township includes a number of lakes, natural areas, and public and private recreational facilities. The Township and Village collectively operate four municipal parks. These parks provide



Grass Lake Township Fire Station

access and enjoyment of the Grass Lake, sports facilities, museums, and trail systems.

Area residents and visitors enjoy Grass Lake County Park for fishing, swimming, hydroplane racing, and outdoor recreation. It is surrounded predominantly by residential dwellings, near Grass Lake. The park features a pavilion, picnic facilities, two tennis courts, a playground, swimming area, and boat launch.

Grass Lake Community Sports and Trails Recreation Park is located near the Township Hall on the corner of Willis Road and West Michigan Avenue. The park includes four baseball fields, two basketball courts, and two soccer fields. It also includes trails and a pump track for cyclists. The park serves the surrounding residential neighborhoods and the broader Township.

The Grass Lake Depot and Whistle Stop Park is an exhibition hall and community activity center located in a historical depot. The outdoor facilities include a gazebo and garden space. The Whistle Stop Park is located within the Village limits on East Michigan Avenue. It is located centrally within the downtown Grass Lake Village area. This site is commonly rented out for weddings, family events, and other community events.

The Grass Lake Township Office/Park is the location of the Township Hall and Senior Center. The outdoor recreation facilities include three baseball fields, disc golf course, and walking trails.

Public Water and Sewer

The Township does not provide central sanitary sewer or water facilities that is required for more intensive development. The Township has limited water and sewer service lines; therefore, most of the Township relies on well water and septic tanks. The Village and Township have sanitary sewer provided by Leoni Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Rural residential development density depends on public utilities. Extending sewer and water services requires sufficient density to be cost-effective, as costs decrease with more lots. However, not all rural areas need public utilities. Instead, areas with specific service potential should be prioritized for development. In areas without existing public utilities, soil conditions must be monitored to prevent groundwater contamination from septic systems.

5 Healthy Towns

Grass Lake Township and Village are a part of the 5 Healthy Towns Project (5H). The Grass Lake Community Wellness Initiative (GLCWI) is focused on substance abuse prevention and projects to encourage residents to be more active and eat healthier. Grass Lake was awarded funding for infrastructure and programming including the Grass Lake Farmers Market, the Grass Lake Road Runners race series, and the Grass Lake Senior Center.



Chapter 6

Community Vision, Goals, and Policies

The Goals of the Master Plan provide the underlying basis for future land use decisions by capturing the overall vision for Grass Lake Charter Township. Goals help express the character and level of growth that will be acceptable, as well as the quality of life the Township will be able to offer its residents. The Grass Lake area contains a mixture of developed and rural characteristics. The “built” areas face the challenge of ensuring that existing and future neighborhoods and businesses remain attractive to residents and investors. The direction for the undeveloped areas will be the preservation of rural qualities that have made Grass Lake Charter Township a desirable place to live.

Community Vision

The Community Vision may be expressed as:

The character of Grass Lake Charter Township will be defined by its rural agricultural and residential surroundings, with limited areas of higher density residential, mixed-use, commercial, and industrial development appropriately designed and integrated into the Township’s rural character and adequately served by public infrastructure.



Goals and Policies

Community Character Goal:

Foster an attractive, healthy, and engaged community that is rooted in Grass Lake Township's distinctive natural features, rural character, and civic spirit, where new development is reflective of and appropriately integrated into the Township's existing rural character.

Community Character Policies:

1. The principal land uses in the Township will be agricultural and residential, with varying densities situated in appropriate locations. Infrastructure will play a key role in determining suitable types and densities of development. Generally, more intensive development will be directed to strategically planned areas as identified on the Future Land Use Map, in close proximity to the Village, along Michigan Avenue, and/or near I-94, while other areas will remain as agricultural and low density residential development accompanied by related uses.
2. The encroachment of commercial and industrial uses into residential areas will be discouraged by using appropriate land use patterns and zoning practices, such as landscape and open space buffers.
3. Develop rural character design standards as a guide for the design and layout of rural residential and non-residential development within the Township.
4. Closely monitor and promote enforcement of building and property maintenance codes within the Township.

Residential Development Goal:

Promote attractive, sustainable, and safe residential living environments, compatible with the rural character of Grass Lake Township, which offers a range of housing opportunities and choices that meet the needs of people at all life stages.

Residential Development Policies:

1. A variety of housing densities and choices will be encouraged in locations appropriate for the type and density of housing required to satisfy the varying preferences, needs, and incomes of the residents of the area.
2. Residential developments are encouraged to provide adequate open space, agricultural land, and/or woodland buffers from adjacent roadways to preserve rural views.
3. Residential densities will be appropriate to the level of public services available. Moderate and higher densities will generally be located in areas where public water and sewer services can ensure a healthy living environment. Where public utilities are not available, low density development will be permitted, with a strong emphasis on the preservation of groundwater quality, support for existing agricultural operations, and rural character.
4. Where appropriate, planned development will be encouraged, with open space or cluster development, to recognize the importance of preserving natural features, agricultural lands, with the intent to maintain our rural character.
5. Where development is permitted along major roadways, emphasis should be placed on providing internal roadways, rather than allowing direct access to the roadway for individual lots.

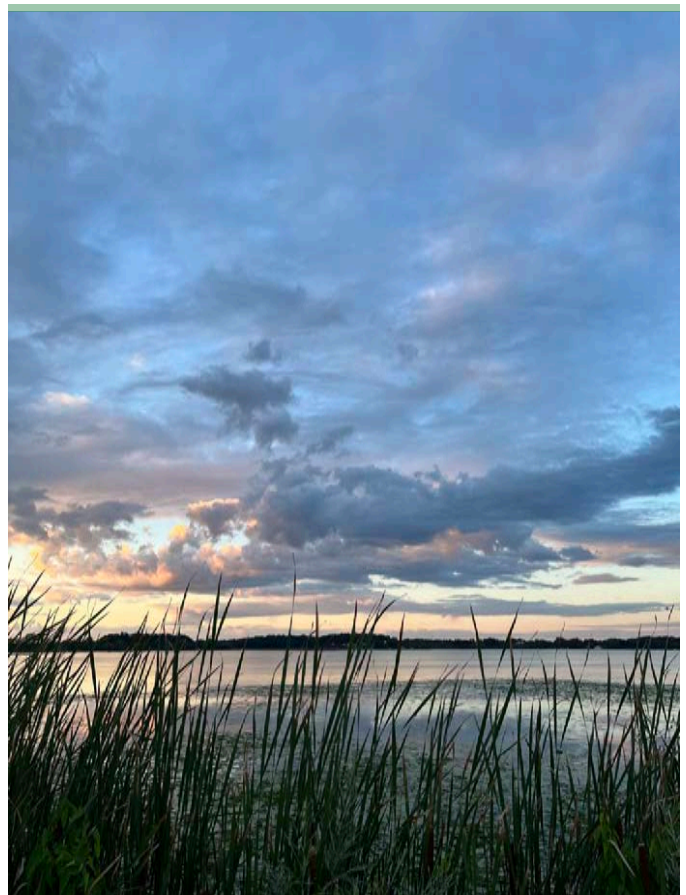
6. The separation of dissimilar land uses through adequate landscaping, the provision of open space or buffer areas, and other means to limit conflicts between uses will be encouraged. Residential areas will be protected from the encroachment of industrial and commercial uses.

Farmland Protection Goal:

The Township will encourage the protection of active farmland as a valuable resource for the community.

Farmland Protection Policies:

1. Land use decisions will support the desire of individual property owners who wish to keep their land in active agricultural production.
2. Promote the Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) to help provide protection from nuisance complaints and to support farmers and farm operations that use best farming practices.
3. Concentrate new development in strategic areas as identified on the Future Land Use Plan as a means to minimize the loss of farmland across the Township.
4. Ensure that zoning codes allow for activities that might reduce costs or provide supplementary income for local farmers, such as farm stands, agritourism and agribusiness, consistent with community character.



Natural Features Goal:

Grass Lake Township's natural features, which contribute to its desirability and rural character, will be preserved and enhanced by promoting access to these assets and thoughtfully balancing development with conservation.

Natural Features Policies:

1. Site plan review standards and zoning regulations will be enforced to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the Township.
2. The Township will consider the preservation (through acquisition, donation, easements, or other similar means) of areas that merit permanent protection from development, such as sensitive natural features, desired park lands, or public open spaces.
3. Development within the Township must be carefully evaluated through zoning, site plan review and other available means to encourage site and building design that takes into account natural features, such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation.
4. Where appropriate, planned development will be encouraged, with open space or cluster development, to recognize the importance of preserving natural features and incorporating natural features as an integral part of new development.
5. Establish policies and standards that allow, encourage or require low impact development and other techniques to manage the quantity and quality of storm water in new and redevelopment projects.

Business and Industry Goal:

Provide a limited range of commercial, office, and industrial areas that meet local needs, create jobs, and strengthen the tax base, while protecting nearby land uses, natural resources, and community character.

Business and Industry Policies:

1. New businesses located within the community are encouraged to be of a scale appropriate to the small town and rural character desired by residents.
2. The Township, in conjunction with surrounding communities and countywide organizations, will encourage new businesses in appropriate locations that will promote employment opportunities, support community-oriented businesses, and maintain a stable tax base for the Township.
3. New commercial and industrial uses should be located along major roadways and should utilize access management techniques to minimize traffic congestion and hazards.
4. Ensure that proposed commercial development is justified in terms of neighborhood, community, and market area needs, as applicable.
5. Encourage commercial development to locate in existing buildings and commercially-zoned locations, whenever possible. Where this is not feasible, new construction will must be consistent with the character of the area and will not encroach upon residential uses.

Community Facilities and Services Goal:

Maintain efficient and cost-effective services, facilities, infrastructure systems, circulation systems, and recreational areas to ensure a high quality of life for residents and businesses.

Community Facilities and Services Policies:

1. Update and manage facilities and services in an economically efficient manner that closely associates types and densities of development with infrastructure capacity and capability.
2. Identify public infrastructure needs and undertake necessary improvements to water, sewer, cellular, internet, broadband, and similar infrastructure networks coordinating with local and regional partners and supported by outside funding.
3. Land use patterns should be principally guided by public services. Minimize utility extensions where the Township plans to preserve agricultural, natural, and open space lands.
4. Transportation considerations will be of primary importance during site plan review, particularly the use of access management techniques to limit the number and placement of drives along major roadways.
5. Ensure that proposed development is designed to facilitate safe and effective pedestrian circulation, with proper connections to existing and planned sidewalk and pathway networks.
6. Maintain a community recreation plan to be used as a short and long term guide for parks, recreation, and land conservation activities and improvements and to ensure eligibility for certain State recreation grant opportunities.

Community Cooperation Goal:

Continue community cooperation to provide an adequate level of services that do not duplicate efforts that conserve Village and Township funds, act to improve the quality of life of both communities and ensure that growth follows the direction established by the Master Plan.

Community Cooperation Policies:

1. Consider establishing a formal coordinating committee whose primary objective is to ensure coordinated planning and development across the Township and Village. Membership should represent both elected officials and planning commissioners from each community. Specific duties should include:
 - Advocating implementation of the Master Plan and other coordinated planning efforts
 - Continuation of dialogue regarding issues of broader community concern
 - Review of requests for alterations to infrastructure service area boundaries
 - Coordinated review of projects of significance to both communities
2. Site plan and development approvals should be coordinated with MDOT and the Jackson County Department of Transportation to ensure that access management techniques are employed along Michigan Avenue (old US-12) and other major transportation routes within the area.
3. Promote active and healthy living by supporting the Jackson City and County Non-Motorized Plan and partnering to implement the planned shared-use pathway system within the Grass Lake community.
4. Partner with local, regional, and State partners to identify and undertake infrastructure improvements.

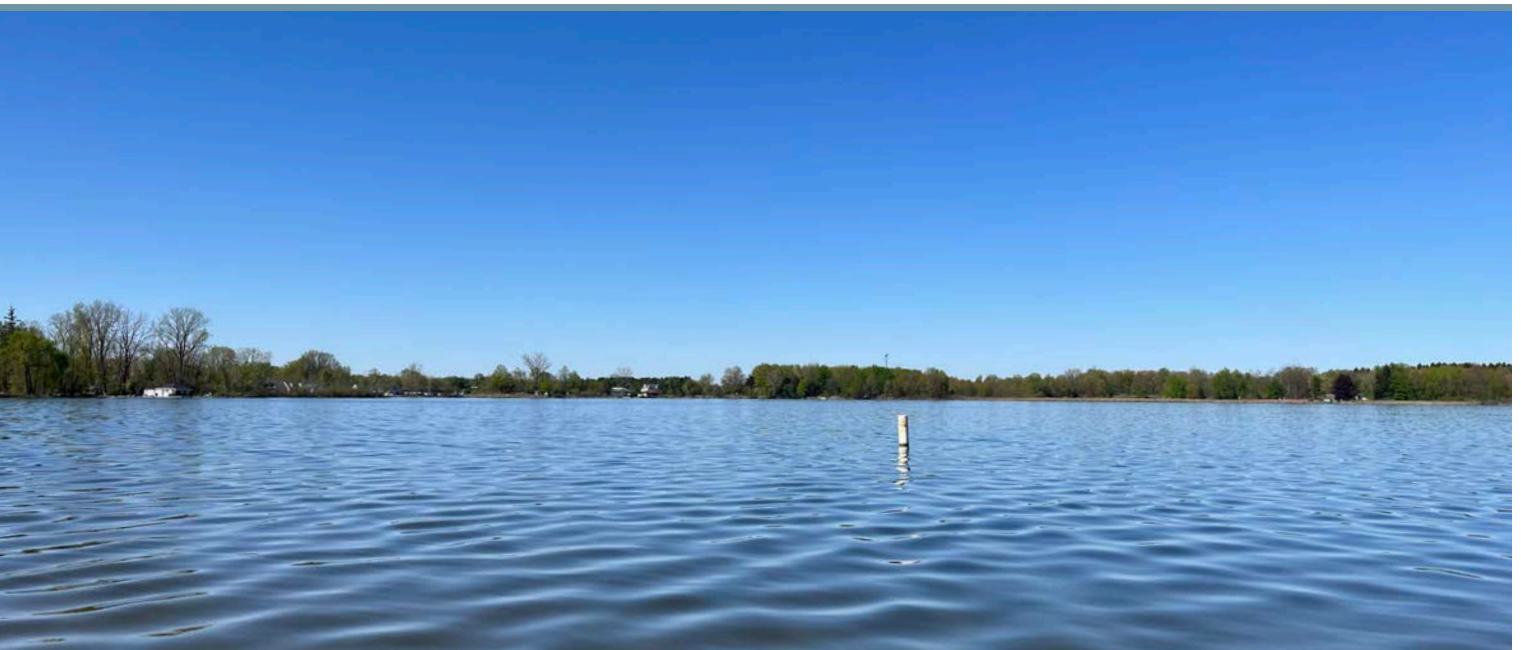
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Future Land Use Plan

The Master Plan represents a vision of how Grass Lake Charter Township might look 20 or more years in the future. The Plan does not suggest that the Township will develop to the limits identified on the future land use map. Rather, the Plan is intended to guide the community through its daily decision-making processes so that future development will be consistent with the goals adopted in this Plan.

The Master Plan consists of policies that address future land use and development of Grass Lake Charter Township over the life of the Plan. However, the Plan itself is not a legally enforceable policy, but rather guides development policies for the future of the community. The Master Plan must rely upon other tools for implementation, most notably the Zoning Ordinance. The Future Land Use Plan simply suggests where various land uses should be located. The Zoning Ordinance carries out the policies of the Plan by regulating the type of use that a parcel may have, the location of uses, and the bulk and density of development throughout the Township.



Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan presented here is not static. It is designed to be a flexible document that can and should change as the community changes. Even Though the Plan is long range in nature (i.e., 20+ years), it should be periodically reviewed and updated as Grass Lake Township grows and changes. There will be times when it will be necessary to deviate from the Plan. Changing land use patterns may cause certain areas on the Future Land Use map to become obsolete for a suggested use. When this happens, the Planning Commission may be required to interpret the most appropriate type of use for an area. Interpretation of a specific site should be made in regard to the impact on the surrounding area.

The Future Land Use map was not designed, nor was it intended, to mirror the Zoning Map. Zoning is the tool used to carry out and implement the Plan. Therefore, the Zoning Map will not look exactly like the Future Land Use Map. As the community grows and rezoning requests become necessary to accommodate development, future rezonings should be consistent with the Plan or the Plan should be amended to reflect changing trends. This does not suggest that every rezoning must be consistent with the Plan. However, in areas where requests are made for rezoning, it may be necessary to consider amending the Plan, if changing land use patterns warrant a change in the Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is comprised of eight future land use categories within Grass Lake Township (see the **Future Land Use Map**). A description of each future land use category follows.

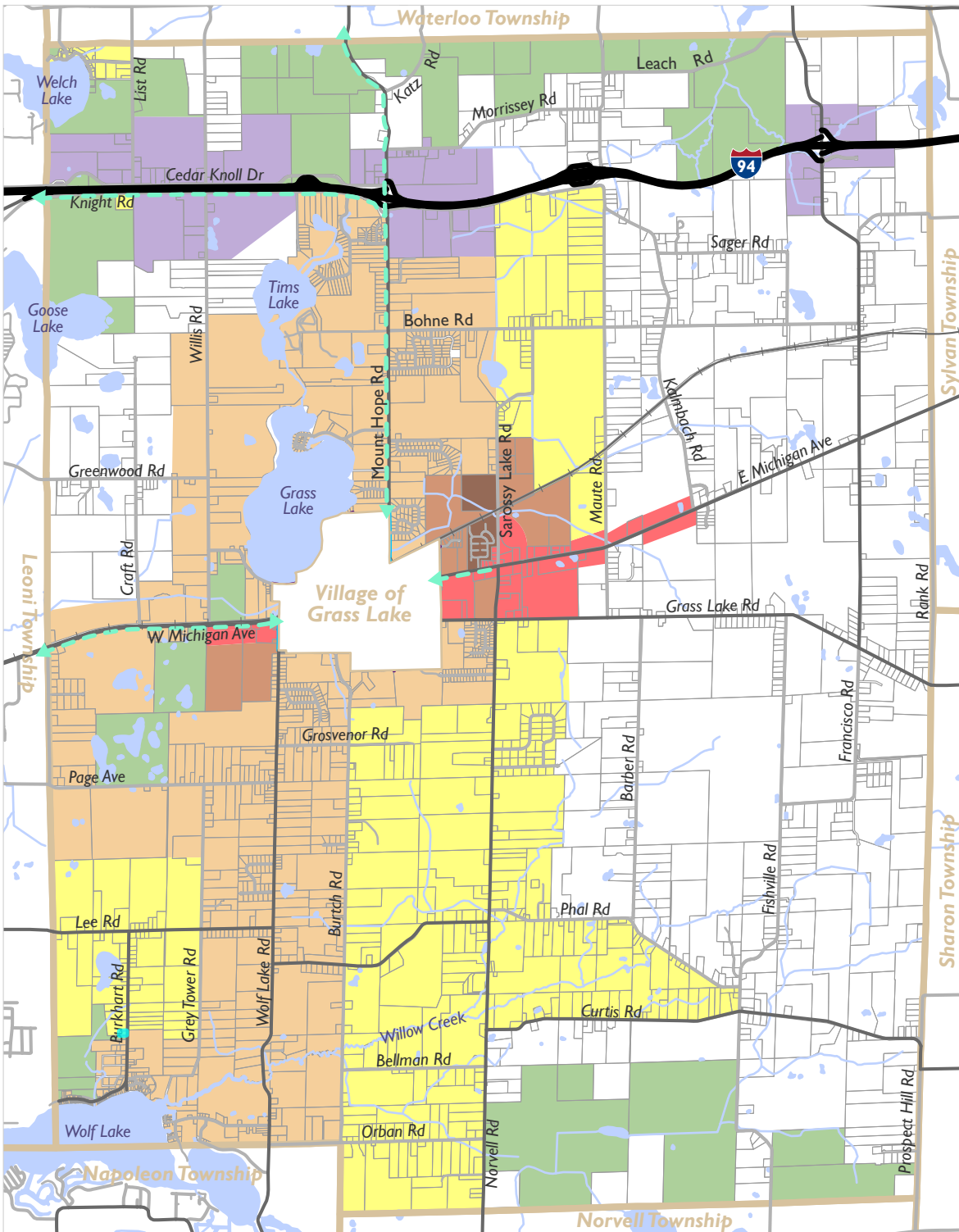
Agricultural/Rural Residential

The purpose of the Agricultural/Rural Residential classification is to maintain functional farmland, farming activities, agricultural lifestyles, and the Township’s overall rural character. The future land use category accounts for approximately 48% of the Township. Most of the Agricultural/Rural Residential properties are located on the east side of the Township as well as along its northern border. Another Agricultural/Rural Residential area is in the western portion of the Township.

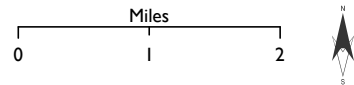
This designation supports farming and related activities such as roadside stands, farmers markets, livestock, equestrian uses, and agritourism, while also allowing for very low-density single-family housing and homesteading. Limited public and semi-public uses may also be allowed, provided they are designed to be consistent with the intended agricultural character of the classification. The recommended minimum lot size for this classification is 2 acres. Incorporating open space into the design of rural residential development, through development options such as open space preservation, is encouraged to preserve agricultural areas as well as natural features such as topography, wetlands, woodlands, and other natural assets. Public water and sewer are not planned for these areas. Larger lots are encouraged to support active economic use of farming.

Agricultural/Rural Residential Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	AG, Agricultural
Recommended min. lot size:	2 acres
Recommended min. lot width:	200 feet



Map 8: Future Land Use



Base Features:

- Railroads
- Creeks and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundaries

Road Classification:

- State Trunkline
- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Proposed Non-Motorized Trails

Future Land Uses:

- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- R-3 High Density Residential
- R-4 Manufactured Housing Community
- General Commercial
- Highway Commercial/Light Industrial
- Public Recreation

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Source: Jackson County GIS, 2025;
 Michigan Geographic Data Library;
 Wade Trim Analysis, 2025

R-1 Low-Density Residential

The purpose of the R-1 Low-Density Residential classification is to allow for low-density single-family detached dwellings of a character, density, and scale that is consistent with the predominantly rural and agricultural character of the Township. This land use classification encourages continued residential land use interspersed with agricultural use. Limited public and semi-public uses may also be allowed, provided they are designed to be consistent with the intended residential character of the classification.

As public water and sewer services do not presently exist and are not anticipated to be provided in areas planned for R-1 Low-Density Residential, the recommended minimum lot size for this classification is one (1) acre. Incorporating open space into the design of residential development, through development options such as open space preservation, is encouraged to preserve agricultural areas as well as natural features such as topography, wetlands, woodlands, and other natural assets. Additionally, residential developments within this classification are encouraged to provide landscape buffers along the county road frontages to maintain the character of rural roadways.

This future land use category accounts for approximately 15% of the Township. Most of the designated R-1 Low-Density Residential areas are located in the central spine of the Township along the Norvell Road and Sarossy Lake Road corridors. Low-Density Residential areas are not reliant on

R-1 Low-Density Residential

Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	R-1, Single Family Residential
Recommended min. lot size:	1 acre
Recommended min. lot width:	150 feet

public water and sewer services for their existence; the lands in this classification will be served by septic systems and drinking water wells. Much of the land within the Low-Density Residential land use classification is open and undeveloped, with large tracts of land containing natural features and/or dedicated to agricultural uses.

R-2 Medium-Density Residential

The purpose of the R-2 Medium-Density Residential classification is to allow for a limited amount of single-family residential development within the Township. While these areas are predominantly rural and agricultural in character, modest single-family residential growth is expected at a somewhat higher density than the Low-Density Residential areas. Incorporating open space into the design of residential development, through development options such as open space preservation, is encouraged to preserve agricultural areas as well as natural features such as topography, wetlands, woodlands, and other natural assets. Additionally, residential developments within this classification are encouraged to provide landscape buffers along the county road frontages to maintain the character of rural roadways.

R-2 Medium-Density Residential

Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	R-2, Single Family Residential
Recommended min. lot size (without public sewer):	1 acre
Recommended min. lot width (without public sewer):	150 feet
Recommended min. lot size (with public sewer):	1/2 acre
Recommended min. lot width (with public sewer):	100 feet

Where served by public sewer, the recommended minimum lot size is one-half (1/2) acre. Where not served by public sewer, the recommended minimum lot size is one (1) acre. Lot size reductions may be appropriate within a cluster development where significant open space is preserved and excellence in neighborhood design is achieved.

This future land use classification accounts for approximately 18% of the land area of the Township. Medium-Density Residential areas are planned within the west-central portion of the Township, generally along the Wolfe Lake Road and Mt. Hope Road corridors, where public sewer service is presently found. Public water service also extends into portions of this area.

R-3 High-Density Residential

The purpose of the R-3 High-Density Residential classification is to accommodate a mixture of residential types, primarily composed of small-lot detached single-family homes and attached single-family dwellings such as townhomes and duplexes. These are examples of “missing middle housing types,” which can be appropriately integrated amongst single-family detached neighborhoods given their comparable design and scale. Where directly adjacent to commercial areas and/or directly along major roads, somewhat higher intensity residential uses such as garden apartments and assisted living facilities may be accommodated through a special land use review process. Limited public and semi-public uses may also be allowed, provided they are designed to be consistent with the intended residential character of the classification. This category is not intended to accommodate manufactured home park development.

Lands planned for R-3 High-Density Residential account for less than 2% of the Township and are strategically concentrated along the Michigan Avenue corridor, near the Village of Grass Lake, where public water and sewer services are currently provided or planned to be provided.

These areas would serve as transitional use between commercial properties fronting Michigan Avenue and the adjoining lower density residential areas. Any new development within this classification must be connected to public water and sewer systems.

R-3 High-Density Residential Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	R-3, Multiple Family Residential
Recommended maximum density (public sewer required):	12 dwelling units per acre

Development within this classification should be carefully designed to protect natural features at the site, support high-quality architectural standards, and provide site amenities that benefit both residents and the broader community. Internal pedestrian circulation systems and connections to adjacent non-residential properties should be provided to support walkability. When located adjacent to lower-density neighborhoods, high-density residential developments should be appropriately screened to ensure compatibility.

R-4 Manufactured Housing Community

The purpose of the R-4 Manufactured Housing Community classification is to provide an additional means of affordable housing in Grass Lake Township. Currently, the only location in the Township planned for this classification is the Andover manufactured home community, located at the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Sarossy Lake Road, with a future phase planned along the west side of Sarossy Lake Road, just north of the railroad. This Master Plan does not anticipate nor plan for additional manufactured home park development beyond this existing manufactured home park location.

R-4 Manufactured Housing Community Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	R-4, Manufactured Housing Residential
Recommended min. lot size for the manufactured housing community (public sewer required):	1/2 acre
Recommended min. lot width for the manufactured housing community (public sewer required):	100 feet

General Commercial

The purpose of the General Commercial classification is to allow for existing and new commercial development primarily within the Michigan Avenue corridor, immediately east and west of the Village. This future land use category accounts for approximately 1% of the Township. Intended land uses include offices, financial institutions, personal service uses, retail businesses, restaurants, commercial recreation, and similar business and commercial activities generally conducted within enclosed buildings. Automobile-oriented commercial uses may also be accommodated in this classification through the special land use review process. Public and semi-public uses would also be appropriate within this classification.

New development should occur on sites that are proportional (not too narrow and deep or too wide and shallow) and provide adequate space for parking, setbacks, and loading/unloading operations. General Commercial sites should also contain sufficient open space areas to not only provide opportunities for landscaping which improves site aesthetics, but also to accommodate infrastructure needs (ground water recharge areas, on-site storage of storm water, etc.). Similarly, sites must contain sufficient frontage to address sound access

General Commercial Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	GC, General Commercial
Recommended min. lot size:	15,000 square feet
Recommended min. lot width:	100 feet

management principles, such as driveway spacing standards. New development within this category should be adequately served by public water and sewer infrastructure.

The character of commercial development is also created through building scale and the use of construction materials. Commercial development should be compatible with neighboring structures in terms of these design characteristics, including the continuation of any design theme that may exist and the use of harmonious building materials defined by their type and color.

Highway Commercial/Light Industrial

The purpose of the Commercial/Light Industrial classification is to allow for existing and new commercial/light industrial along the I-94 corridor including professional offices, wholesale operations, warehouses, logistics/transportation facilities, light manufacturing, research and development uses, and similar commercial and industrial businesses that would benefit from its location near the interstate freeway. The future land use category accounts for approximately 4% of the land area of the Township. The Commercial/Light Industrial properties are located in the vicinity of the Mt. Hope Road and Clear Lake Road interchanges with I-94.

New development within the Highway Commercial/Light Industrial classification must be sensitive to the natural characteristics of the land, including the preservation of significant

Highway Commercial/Light Industrial Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning districts:	HC, General Commercial LI, Light Industrial LI/HC, Light Industrial/Highway Commercial
Recommended min. lot size:	1 acre
Recommended min. lot width:	200 feet

environmental features such as ponds, wetlands, and woodlands. It is intended for these establishments to be situated in industrial park or campus settings characterized by generously landscaped front yards, ample side yards, attractive buildings, full screening of outdoor activities and other operations, and an overall neat, clean, and unobtrusive appearance.

When new development is proposed adjacent to residential land uses, enhanced buffers and screening must be provided to mitigate impacts from the commercial and industrial uses. Sites must contain sufficient frontage to address sound access management principles, such as driveway spacing standards. Finally, such uses must be adequately served by public utilities and designed to minimize impact to public services.

Public/Recreation

The purpose of the Public/Recreation future land use classification is to recognize the existence of publicly owned properties and various parks and recreational properties within the Township. This category accounts for approximately 12% of the Township. Major publicly owned and/or recreational properties in the Township include the Waterloo Recreation Area along the northern border of the Township and the Sharonville State Game Area along the southern border. These lands are intended to remain as conservation and recreation lands.

Public/Recreation Future Land Use Classification Summary

Corresponding zoning district:	Public/Recreation areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map, but do not equate to any specific Zoning District
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Circulation Plan

Grass Lake Township strives to provide an equitable and sustainable transportation system that will serve its current and future residents into the middle of the 21st century and beyond. To that end, the Township's leadership understands that a strategy is necessary to accomplish a balanced circulation system of vehicle and nonmotorized transportation that serves the needs of all users equally.

Major Roads

Major roads are identified on the **Future Land Use Map**. These are roads that handle longer trips and operate at higher and more uniform speeds. Major roads connect points of high traffic generation and collect vehicles from local streets, distributing them to both local and regional

destinations. Within Grass Lake Township, major roads include Michigan Avenue, Mount Hope Road, Grass Lake Road, Wolf Lake Road, Curtis Road, Norvell Road, Lee Road, Burkhart Road, and portions of Francisco Road.

Michigan Avenue carries the highest volume of traffic (outside of I-94) through the Township and connects the Township with Jackson and Ann Arbor. Given its function as a regional artery, Michigan Avenue has the capacity to support higher intensive commercial and institutional uses. Mount Hope Road is significant in that it connects Village and Township residents with I-94. The other major roads in the Township carry lower volumes of traffic but support the majority of through travel within the township and to the adjacent communities. These roads have the capacity to support somewhat higher intensity residential and institutional uses. For all major roads, close coordination with the Jackson County Road Commission is needed to ensure that future improvements and road designs enhance safety while accommodating both motorized and non-motorized travel needs.

Local Roads

Local roads consist largely of county local roads and public and private residential streets. They are to be used by people traveling to and from destinations within the local area and to connect to major roads. Aside from private roads serving residential developments, most of these local roads, including all section and quarter section line roads, are under the jurisdiction of the Jackson County Road Commission. These roads are generally not able to support any uses more intensive than agricultural and single-family residential development.

Proposed Non-Motorized Trails

At present, no regional pathways connect to Grass Lake Township. There are also no existing local trails or shared use pathways within Grass Lake Township. The proposed non-motorized trails shown on the **Future Land Use Map** build upon the recommendations of the Jackson City and Jackson County Non-Motorized Plan. These proposed pathways generally connect the Township's neighborhoods with key destinations within the Village and Township such as business districts, schools and recreational facilities. Grass Lake Township can support non-motorized trail planning and development efforts by working with Jackson County in implementing the proposed non-motorized trail segments with the support of outside funding.



Maintaining an adequate supply of quality and affordable housing is a cornerstone for any successful and healthy community. Based on the analyzed local housing needs, goals of the Michigan Statewide Housing Plan and Southeast Housing Partnership Plan, and community input, this section of the Master Plan outlines strategies that are intended to lead to greater housing choice, access, and opportunities for the citizens of Grass Lake Township.



Local Housing Strategies

Building upon state and regional housing strategies (refer to the State and Regional Planning Initiatives section of Chapter 2), a series of local housing strategies have been established for Grass Lake Township. These strategies are categorized and listed below.

New Housing Development

- Encourage higher-density housing in areas on the Future Land Use Map with sufficient public utilities to limit urban sprawl and unplanned development.
- Proactively promote potential locations for new housing development, with a focus on addressing gaps in the market by supporting missing middle housing options (including small-lot single-family homes, duplexes, and townhomes) as well as senior housing solutions (such as active lifestyle communities and residential care facilities).
- Work with regional and state agencies to support initiatives that make housing more affordable and accessible for those in need.

Sustainable Housing Development

- Achieve a balance between housing development, community requirements, and environmental preservation by promoting compact and integrated growth strategies that minimise urban sprawl.
- Minimize fragmentation of habitat corridors, including those associated with watercourses, hedgerows, and fencerows.

- Encourage a healthy lifestyle by planning developments that include or link to natural and recreational spaces.
- New residential developments should effectively control both the amount and quality of storm water.

Housing Rehabilitation and Preservation

- Rehabilitate and maintain the current housing inventory, while implementing appropriate housing, rental, and maintenance codes to ensure the continued resilience and high standards of the housing stock.
- Establish and implement modern design standards and review processes that motivate developers to incorporate innovative design methodologies into their construction projects.
- Emphasize energy efficiency and weatherization as key considerations in construction projects and housing rehabilitation initiatives.

Housing Development in Grass Lake Township

Communities must approach development and redevelopment of housing strategically. This may involve various new housing projects, property redevelopments, housing renovation, and housing preservation efforts. Investments should be focused on areas with the potential for long term positive benefits while minimizing risks of negative impacts.

Trends Influencing Future Housing Development

The following is a summary of housing trends and projections within Grass Lake Township that have a significant influence on future housing development (for further detail, refer to Chapter 3: Social and Economic Characteristics and Chapter 4: Housing Needs Assessment):

- The population of Grass Lake Township has grown significantly between 1970 and 2020 (160% growth)
- The population of the Township is projected to continue to grow between 2020 and 2050 (11.4% growth).
- Residents of the Township are getting older with an overall increasing median age (increase from 37.9 years in 2000 to 45.4 years by 2029)
- The number of households in the Township is projected to increase from 2,355 in 2020 to 2,744 in 2050
- The average number of persons living within each household is projected to decrease, from 2.58 in 2020 to 2.46 by 2050
- About 92% of housing units in the Township are single-family detached dwellings, and 5% are mobile homes, while only 3% multifamily units. This indicates limited housing type diversity.
- There are no senior residential care facilities within Grass Lake Township.

Considering this information, the Township can reasonably expect a greater need for housing in the future. With a current housing stock consisting nearly exclusively of single-family detached homes, the Township should also consider encouraging a somewhat greater diversity of housing types to satisfy the needs of a broader spectrum of population segments including young persons, singles, families, and seniors.

Residential Development Opportunities: Site Identification

As shown on the **Residential Development Opportunities Map**, four sites within the Township have been identified as residential development opportunity sites. These sites are located in close proximity to the Village where existing higher intensity development already exists, have the ability to be connected to existing or planned public infrastructure systems, and are largely undeveloped. Thus, they have significant potential to accommodate new housing development in-line with the goals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

Conditions may change and new opportunities may arise that will result in the Township focusing on different or new residential development opportunity sites. Over time, the Township should continually identify residential development opportunity sites (in addition to those highlighted in this section) and package them for marketing and solicitation of developers.

Below is a summary of the recommended character of future residential development that could be accommodated at each site:

1. Sarossy Lake Road Site

The Sarossy Lake Road Site is located east of the northeastern border of the Village and north of the railroad. The site's western borders are near the existing Tamarack Glen and Sandy Ridge residential developments. The site's southern border is the railroad, with the Andover manufactured home community on the south side of the railroad. The east side of the site borders Sarossy Lake Road, which provides opportunities for multiple access points. The adjacent residential developments are served by public water and sewer lines; these utilities could be extended to serve the site. The site currently consists of a mix of agricultural land and wooded areas, including wetlands and creek systems.

2. East Michigan Avenue Site

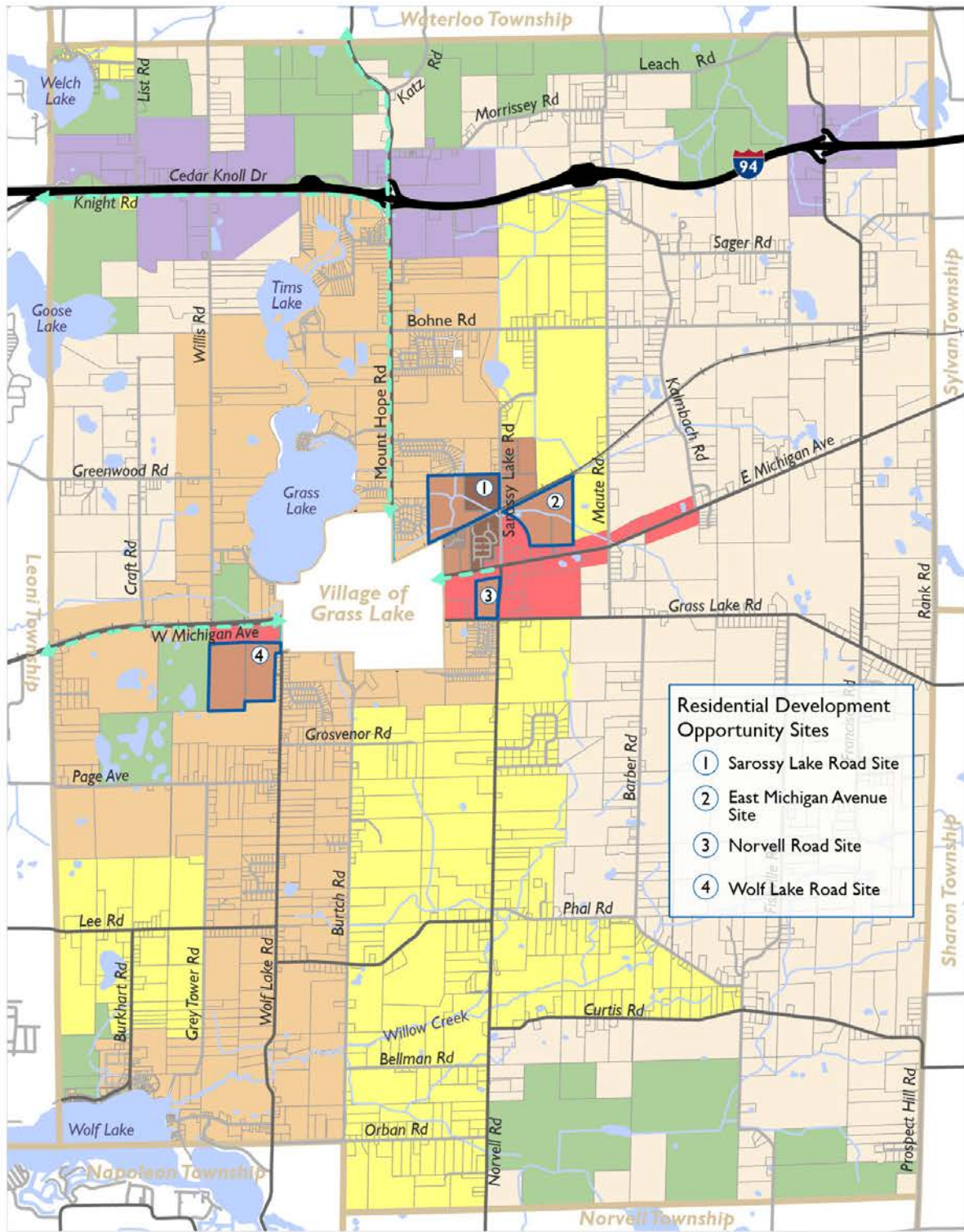
Located near the intersection of Sarossy Lake Road and East Michigan Avenue, this site is located behind the Grass Lake Township Fire Department and the nearby commercial uses. It is bordered to the north by railroad tracks and agricultural land. The site has road access points along Sarossy Lake Road and East Michigan Avenue. Public water and sewer utilities currently extend to the intersection of Sarossy Lake Road and East Michigan Avenue. The site is partially agricultural land, creek paths, and ponds.

3. Norvell Road Site

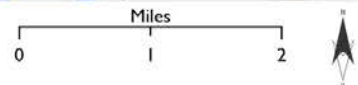
The Norvell Road Site is located west of Grass Lake Middle School along the cross roads of Norvell Road and Grass Lake Road, providing multiple locations for road access points. The site borders residential, commercial, semi-public, and light industrial land uses. Both Norvell Road and Grass Lake Road have public water services, and Norvell Road has sewer services. The site is currently agricultural land.

4. Wolf Lake Road Site

The Wolf Lake Road Site is located west of the Village near the intersection of West Michigan Avenue and Wolf Lake Road. It is located behind the planned commercial uses fronting West Michigan Avenue and behind the single family homes fronting Wolf Lake Road. Public sewer is currently located along Wolf Lake Road. The site is currently dedicated to agricultural use.



Map 9: Residential Development Opportunities



April 2026
WADE TRIM
 500 Griswold St #2500
 Detroit, MI 48226
 800.482.2864

Source: Jackson County GIS, 2025;
 Michigan Geographic Data Library;
 Wade Trim Analysis, 2025

Residential Development Opportunities: Potential Development Character

Each of the Residential Development Opportunity Sites could support a range of medium density residential uses that complement nearby development patterns and will be supported by available infrastructure. Appropriate housing types may include a combination of small-lot single family homes, attached residential such as duplexes or townhouses, senior lifestyle housing, and senior residential care facilities. Where immediately adjacent to existing or planned commercial land uses, low-rise multifamily housing may be appropriate as a transitional use between the commercial uses and lower density residential uses.

As opposed to a single type of housing across an entire site, a mixture of residential types are encouraged. It is specifically not envisioned for any of the sites to be entirely occupied by multifamily units. Additionally, mobile home parks are not envisioned for any of the Residential Development Opportunity Sites.

Any future development should be designed to support walkability, with ample internal pedestrian connections and connections to adjacent developments. Additionally, the site designs should encourage gradual transitions in residential intensity, with higher density or attached housing located along main road frontages or near commercial nodes, and lower density housing types situated further within the sites. Development should also include landscaped buffers or open space transitions where new residential areas abut existing lower-density neighborhoods. This would ensure compatibility and maintaining the community's rural and small town character.

Development Challenges

Future housing development at these opportunity sites may present a range of challenges. One major obstacle is the lack of control over land, as ownership is divided among multiple private

property owners across all four residential development opportunity sites. Additionally, existing zoning designations and requirements may create barriers to implementing innovative redevelopment concepts. Another significant challenge is the limited public infrastructure capacity, specifically public sewer, which affects potential development at all sites.

Despite these challenges, the Township, with support from both private and public partners, possesses the tools and resources necessary to address them. Recommended strategies include collaborating with local partners such as Jackson County and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to promote the vision outlined in this Plan. The Township may consider proactively rezoning residential development opportunity sites to districts that support proposed developments. Additionally, the Township should review and consider amendments to the zoning ordinance to incentivize new residential projects. Further, it is essential to catalogue available external funding resources and act as a conduit between property owners and funding agencies, including the MEDC and the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

Housing Assistance Programs

Grass Lake Township is encouraged to promote and increase awareness of multiple housing assistance programs by facilitating connections between community members and relevant resources. Below is an overview of available housing assistance programs:

- **Fair Housing Act.** Education around the Fair Housing Act promotes inclusivity and prevents housing discrimination. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's website provides a full overview of the Act.

- **Weatherization Assistance Program.** This program is administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. The program provides energy conservation and related health and safety services for eligible low-income households at no cost to the resident.
- **Home Energy Loan Program.** Operated by Michigan Saves, it provides loans for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Homeowners, including those with secondary homes or 1-4 unit properties with at least one owner-occupied unit, may qualify for a list of approved improvements. These improvements include new windows and doors, air conditioners or furnaces, and even some appliances.
- **Home Preservation Program.** Michigan Habitat for Humanity offers home repairs for low-income homeowners who need help with home maintenance as a result of either physical or financial hardship. In some cases, an affordable loan is made to the homeowner, and their payments are then placed in a revolving fund used to fund other Home Preservation repairs.
- **Single Family Home Ownership Loan.** This is a USDA program to provide safe, well-built affordable homes for rural Americans. Families and individuals in rural areas and communities of 20,000 or less population with qualifying incomes are able to use this program to buy, build, improve, repair or rehabilitate rural homes as a permanent residence.
- **Predevelopment Loan Program.** The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) sponsors the loan program to provide aid to projects rehabilitating historic buildings. It is meant to cover the third-party costs of starting a preservation project.
- **Intervention Loan Program.** The MHPN also provides financial support to historic building repairs. This is meant to provide to support comprehensive efforts to rehabilitate the building. This loan is eligible for non-profits, municipalities, downtown development authorities, land banks, community development corporations, and religious groups.
- **Michigan Lead Safe Home Program.** The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services helps renters and homeowners find, fix, and reduce exposure to lead in paint, dust, soil, and drinking water. Additionally, the Lead Prevention Fund helps qualifying homeowners cover 50% of the cost of lead abatement project.
- **Property Improvement Program.** This is a Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) program to assist qualified homeowners make repairs and improvements to their primary residences.
- **Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture sponsors the Section 504 Home Repair Program. This program provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair or improve their homes. Additionally, the program can provide grants to elderly very-low income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.
- **Ramps for Independence.** Administered by Michigan United Cerebral Palsy (MI-UCP), this program is designed to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans with low to moderate income by making their house more accessible.



Implementation Strategy

The Grass Lake Township Master Plan serves as a comprehensive statement of community policy. It combines both written and graphic policies designed to establish benchmarks and provide clear, practical guidance for making informed and realistic decisions about community growth and development. The Plan is intended to guide Township officials, inform private sector investment decisions, and engage residents who have an interest in the future of Grass Lake Township.

Completion of the Master Plan represents only one step in the ongoing community planning process. The goals and recommendations outlined in the Plan can be achieved only over time and through coordinated efforts between the public and private sectors.

Effective implementation depends upon actively:

- Building broad community awareness, understanding, support, and acceptance of the Plan;
- Managing the use and development of land through current, reasonable zoning regulations, subdivision standards, and building and housing codes;
- Providing capital improvements and efficient public services, using available government financing tools to encourage desired development and redevelopment; and
- Periodically reviewing and updating the Plan—at least every five years—to ensure it remains responsive to changing conditions, emerging trends, and community preferences.



Tenants of Successful Implementation

The feedback gathered during this planning process helped shape the community's vision for the future. To make that vision a reality, ongoing community involvement, support, and leadership are essential.

Commitment

Strong, committed leadership is the foundation of successful plan implementation. While elected and appointed officials will guide the process, support from Township staff, local organizations, and community leaders is also critical. But commitment extends beyond the Township Hall. Residents, business owners, developers, and property owners all play a role in working toward a shared vision for Grass Lake Township's future.

Using the Plan for Development Decisions

This Master Plan is meant to be a practical, everyday tool. It should be used consistently when making decisions that shape the Township's future, whether those decisions involve public investments or private development. Developers, businesses, and landowners should use the plan as a guide to ensure projects support the community's long-term goals and stability.

Role of the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission advises the Township Board and Township administration on planning and development matters. This role does not end once the Master Plan is adopted. Planning is ongoing as conditions change, new opportunities arise, and challenges evolve. Each year, the Planning Commission should create or update an annual work plan based on the recommendations in the Master Plan.

Public Understanding and Support

Community participation and public understanding are essential to any successful plan. Without broad support, long-range initiatives can stall, whether due to failed bond proposals, lack of political support, or public resistance to zoning or infrastructure decisions.

To build and maintain support, the Township should clearly communicate the purpose of the plan and invite residents to take part in the planning process. Public education can take many forms, such as presentations, community meetings, local news articles, or easy-to-understand plan summaries.

Active participation in civic groups and community discussions also helps strengthen involvement and ensures the planning process reflects the community's priorities.

Programs and Funding

Successfully putting this plan into action will depend on the Township's ability to secure the right funding at the right time. In addition to the general fund, millage proposals, and other traditional tools, the Township can also pursue



a variety of state, federal, and regional grant programs.

Many of these programs have supported Grass Lake Township in the past, and continuing to use them, along with exploring new opportunities, will help the Township move projects forward, reduce the burden on local taxpayers, and make the most of available resources.

Zoning Plan

The Grass Lake Township Zoning Ordinance has established five agricultural and residential zoning districts, four non-residential zoning districts, and one special purpose district. The currently adopted (February 2015) Zoning Map for Grass Lake Township is included as **Figure 7**. As required by Public Act 33 of 2008, the following is an explanation of the relationship between the future land use categories presented in the Future Land Use Plan chapter and the zoning districts established in the Grass Lake Township Zoning Ordinance.

Residential Development

Future Land Use Classifications

The Future Land Use Plan identifies five agricultural and residential future land use categories:

- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- R-3 High Density Residential
- R-4 Manufactured Housing Community

Zoning Districts

The following five agricultural and residential Zoning Districts have been established in the Grass Lake Township Zoning Ordinance:

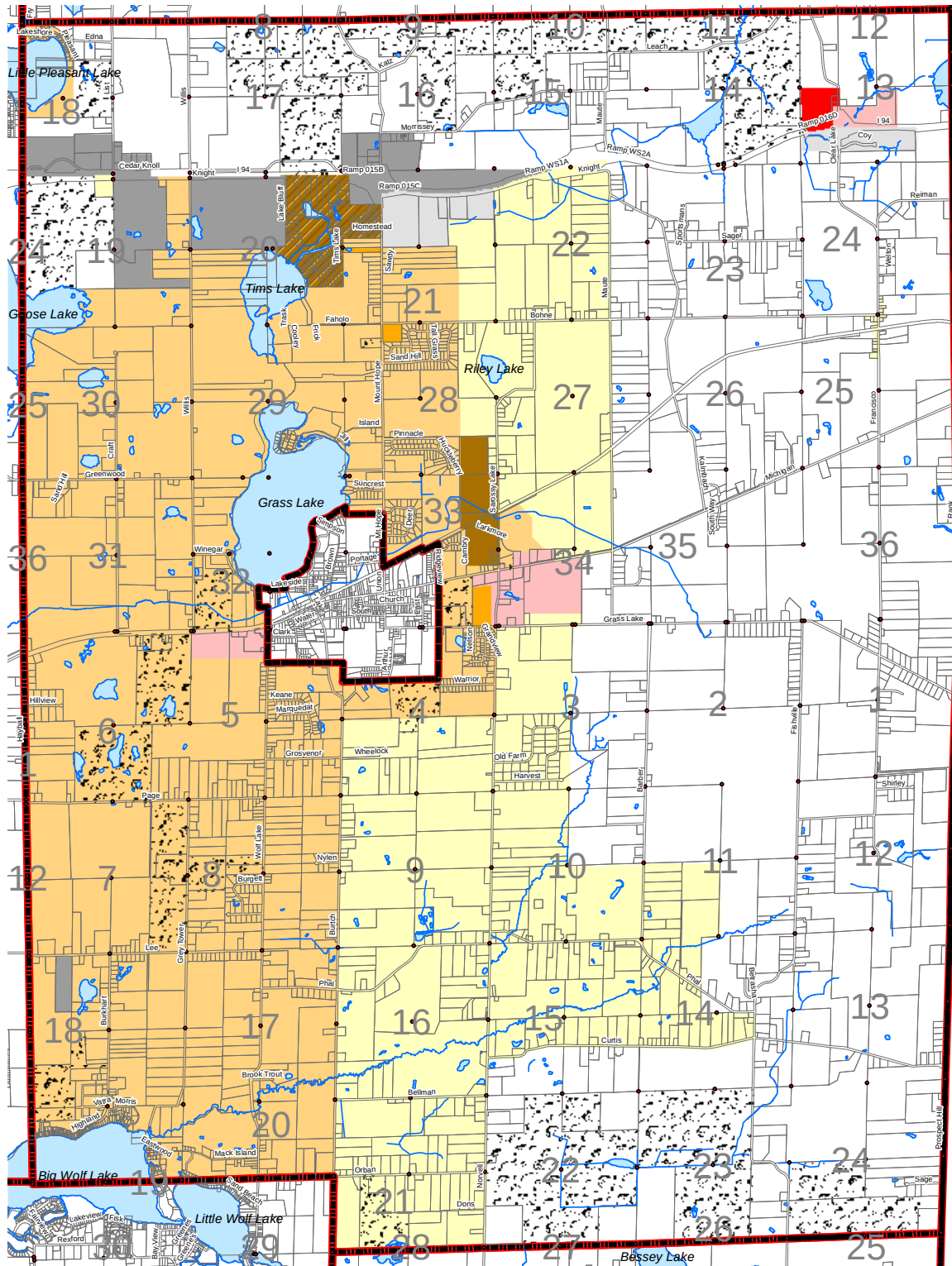
- AG Agricultural District
- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Single Family Residential
- R-3 Multiple Family Residential
- R-4 Manufactured Housing Community

As noted in Section 5.01 of the Zoning Ordinance, the overall intent of the AG District is to protect and preserve large agricultural lands while allowing limited, low-density single-family residential development that is compatible with farming and rural character. The minimum lot size for the AG District is 2 acres, while the minimum lot width is 200 feet.

Section 6.01 of the Zoning Ordinance notes that the R-1 District is intended to function primarily as a low-density residential area for single-family homes, while allowing compatible agricultural activities and limited supporting non-residential uses that maintain a rural or semi-rural character. The minimum lot size for the R-1 District is 1 acre, while the minimum lot width is 150 feet.

Section 7.01 of the Zoning Ordinance notes that the R-2 District is intended to accommodate moderately sized, higher-density single-family residential neighborhoods, while protecting and enhancing their character and allowing limited, compatible nonresidential uses that support residents without undermining the area's primary residential use. Where public sanitary sewer is provided, the minimum lot size for the R-2 District is 10,000 square feet, while the minimum lot width is 80 feet. Where public sanitary sewer is not provided, the minimum lot size for the R-2 District is one-half (1/2) acre, while the minimum lot width is 100 feet.

Figure 7. Currently Adopted Grass Lake Township Zoning Map



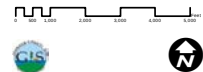
- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Single Family Residential
- R-3 Multiple Family Residential
- R-4 Manufactured Housing Residential
- C-1 General Commercial
- C-2 Highway Commercial
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Highway Commercial
- I-3 Light Industrial
- A-1 Agricultural
- O-1 Overlay Zones
- P-1 Public
- P-2 Planned Unit Development

Grass Lake Charter Township
Jackson County, Michigan

ZONING MAP

This is to certify that this is the Official Zoning Map referred to in the Zoning Ordinance of Grass Lake Charter Township. Adopted with amendments on November 11, 1994.

Signature _____ Supervisor date _____
Signature _____ Clerk date _____



Date of Last Zoning Revision: November 30, 2009
Date of Map Revision: February 12, 2015

As outlined in Section 8.01 of the Zoning Ordinance, the overall intent of the R-3 District is to accommodate a broader range of residential housing types, including low-rise multi-family development, in areas with adequate utilities, services, and transportation capacity, while ensuring development intensity aligns with available infrastructure and incorporates open space, natural feature preservation, and high-quality site and building design. The minimum lot size for new development within the R-3 District is one-half (1/2) acre, while the minimum lot width is 100 feet. The overall dwelling unit density of the R-3 District shall not exceed 12 units per acre.

Finally, Section 9.01 of the Zoning Ordinance indicates that the overall intent of the R-4 District is to direct manufactured home parks to locations with suitable natural conditions and adequate public services and infrastructure, ensuring that residential growth occurs where it can be appropriately supported. The minimum lot size for new manufactured housing community development in the R-4 District is 1 acre, while the minimum lot width is 100 feet.

Planning and Zoning Relationship

The long-term implementation of the residential future land use categories outlined in this Master Plan will be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in their corresponding residential Zoning Districts, as listed below.

- The Agricultural/Rural Residential future land use category is accomplished through the AG Agricultural zoning district.
- The R-1 Low Density Residential future land use category is accomplished through the R-1 Single Family Residential zoning district.
- The R-2 Medium Density Residential future land use category is accomplished through the R-2 Single Family Residential zoning district.

- The R-3 High Density Residential future land use category is accomplished through the R-3 Multiple Family Residential zoning district.
- The R-4 Manufactured Housing Community future land use category is accomplished through the R-4 Manufactured Housing Community zoning district.

It should be noted that flexibility in the design and density of residential developments may be accomplished through several available development options within the Grass Lake Township Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

- Flexibility may be achieved through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) District option. According to Section 13.01, the intent of the PUD District is to allow flexible, mixed-use development that is thoughtfully planned to reflect site conditions, promote innovative design, conserve natural resources, and achieve greater compatibility among land uses, while providing enhanced housing, employment, commercial, transportation, and recreational opportunities through a coordinated review and approval process
- Flexible development may be achieved through the Open Space Preservation Development option. As defined in Section 2.15, this development technique concentrates single-family lots in specific areas on a site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and/or preservation of natural resources and features.

Non-Residential Development

Future Land Use Classifications

The Future Land Use Plan identifies three non-residential future land use categories:

- General Commercial
- Highway Commercial/Light Industrial
- Public/Recreation

Zoning Districts

The Grass Lake Township Zoning Ordinance has established four non-residential Zoning Districts:

- GC General Commercial
- HC Highway Commercial
- LI Light Industrial
- LI/HC Light Industrial/Highway Commercial

Section 10.01 of the Zoning Ordinance notes that the GC District is intended to provide locations for general commercial development near areas where greater concentrations of residential development occur, accommodating businesses that require larger sites and primarily serve local residents, with an emphasis on less auto-dependent, service-oriented uses rather than highway-oriented commercial activities.

As outlined in Section 11.01 of the Zoning Ordinance, the overall intent of the HC District is to accommodate highway-oriented commercial uses that serve motorists, with a strong emphasis on access management, coordinated driveway design, and site planning standards that minimize traffic conflicts and reduce visual impacts from unattractive site features along major roadways.

The intent of the LI District is described in Section 12.01 as a district which accommodates industrial development in areas with access to public utilities, while allowing only limited, lower-intensity industrial uses in unserved areas, specifically those

with minimal water demand and waste disposal needs, to ensure compatibility with available infrastructure.

Section 12A.01 indicates that the intent of the LI/HC District is to accommodate a combination of highway-oriented commercial services and select industrial uses in areas with adequate or potential utility service, while emphasizing coordinated access management and site design to minimize traffic conflicts and reduce visual impacts from loading, storage, and other unattractive features along major roadways.

Planning and Zoning Relationship

The long-term implementation of the non-residential future land use categories outlined in this Master Plan will be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in their corresponding non-residential Zoning Districts, as described below.

- The General Commercial future land use category is accomplished through the GC General Commercial zoning district.
- The Highway Commercial/Light Industrial future land use category could be accomplished by multiple existing zoning districts:
 - HC Highway Commercial zoning district
 - LI Light Industrial zoning district
 - LI/HC Light Industrial/Highway Commercial zoning district

The Public/Recreation future land use category does not relate to any particular zoning district, as public and recreational uses are allowed and may be appropriately accommodated within in several different zoning districts. Similarly, semi-public and private institutional uses are allowed and may be appropriately accommodated within several different zoning districts.

Zoning Amendment Recommendations

In order to implement the recommendations of this Master Plan, amendments to the Grass Lake Township Zoning Ordinance are advisable. Soon after adoption of this Master Plan, it is recommended that the Township proceed with a detailed review (“audit”) of the zoning ordinance to outline detailed changes necessary. Below is a summary of major zoning ordinance amendments that the Township should consider:

- Conduct a general review of the zoning ordinance for organization, formatting, user-friendliness, outdated language, errors, inconsistencies, and to address contemporary land use issues.
- Review the permitted and special permitted uses within the residential zoning districts to ensure that the housing types defined as allowable in the Future Land Use Plan are also allowable in the aligned zoning districts.
- Review and consider amendments to the AG Agricultural District which may be needed to:
 - Explicitly support agritourism, roadside markets, and value-added agricultural uses
 - Strengthen protections against land fragmentation
 - Expand or clarify open space or cluster development options that preserve agricultural land and natural features
- Review and consider amendments to the R-1 Single Family Residential District which may be needed to:
 - Incorporate stronger landscape buffer requirements along rural road corridors
 - Provide optional open space or conservation design standards
- Review and consider amendments to the R-2 Single Family Residential District including:
 - A potential increase of the minimum lot size, where public sewer is provided, from 10,000 square feet to one-half (1/2) acre, as recommended by the R-2 Medium Density Residential future land use classification.
 - A potential increase of the minimum lot size, where public sewer is not provided, from one-half (1/2) acre to 1 acre, as recommended by the R-2 Medium Density Residential future land use classification.
 - Expand cluster or conservation development provisions to allow reduced lot sizes when substantial open space is preserved
 - Reinforce design standards that maintain rural roadway character despite increased density.
- Review and consider amendments to the R-3 Multiple Family Residential District which may be needed to:
 - More explicitly permit townhomes, duplexes, and similar attached housing types
 - Clarify standards for transitional development near commercial uses
 - Strengthen design, buffering, and pedestrian connectivity standards
- Establish new parameters and procedures for Open Space Preservation Developments. Presently, the zoning ordinance defines this type of development, and allows such development as a special land use within the AG, R-1, and R-2 Districts, but no requirements or procedures are included in the zoning ordinance.

- Review and amend the permitted and special permitted uses of each zoning district to ensure the zoning ordinance allows contemporary use types
- Review and update the zoning ordinance's design standards to ensure attractive and high-quality development throughout the Township. Specific attention should be paid to development and redevelopment within multiple family, commercial, and industrial districts.
- Review the off-street parking and loading requirements to consider reduction in off-street parking in order to gain community benefits of reduced development costs, increased greenspace, enhanced stormwater control, and improved water quality.
- Review the zoning ordinance and consider amendments that incentivize or require buffers around important natural features, including woodlands, wetlands, ponds, streams and drains.

Finally, after adoption of the Master Plan, it is recommended that the Planning Commission examine the currently adopted Zoning Map in light of the new Future Land Use Map. The Planning Commission may consider proactive changes to the Zoning Map upon adoption of this Master Plan. However, the Planning Commission is not obligated to amend the Zoning Map and may instead choose to allow private property owners, over time, to petition the Township for zoning district changes which the Planning Commission may approve if such changes are consistent with the Master Plan.