

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

2019 Edition

The 2019 edition of the *Liberty Township Master Plan* was adopted by the Liberty Township Planning Commission on XXXXXXXX XX, 2019

Liberty Township Planning Commission Chair

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Liberty Township Clerk

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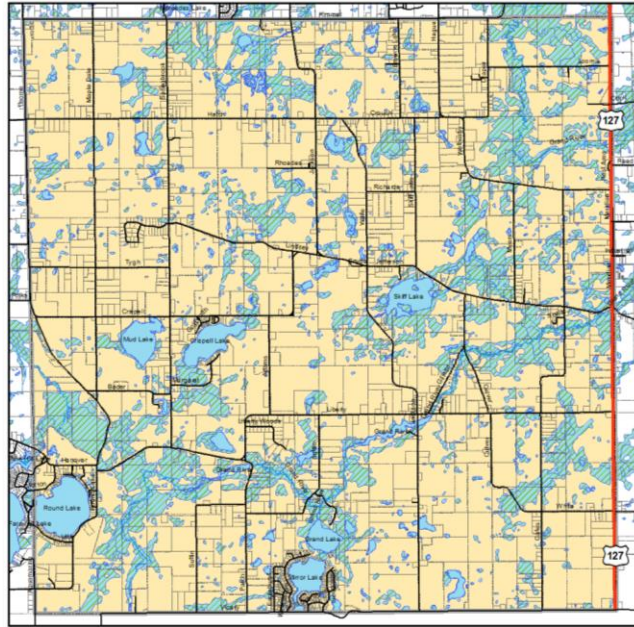
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Why Plan?

Municipalities have a vested interest in developing master plans. The master planning process provides an opportunity for municipalities to develop an overall vision for the next 20 years and to conduct a comprehensive review of their facilities and services. A successful Plan also contributes to the public understanding of the planning process and describes how its goals are to be achieved.

Section 31 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3831) requires each planning commission to prepare and adopt a “master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction.” The MPEA authorizes a planning commission to “do all of the following, as applicable:

- 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;
- Consult with representatives of adjacent local governments in respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided;
- Cooperate with all departments of the state and federal governments 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 within these agencies.”

What is a Master Plan?

A master plan provides a framework within which Liberty Township can evaluate its present condition and develop a vision for the future. The master plan also serves as the guiding document for land use, development, and zoning decisions. A well-designed and implemented plan which is kept up-to-date will help Liberty Township to continue to be a highly desirable community in which to live, work, and visit.

Master Plan Principles

Before using the master plan to guide future development, it is important to understand some of the basic principles upon which it is based:

- **The Plan is flexible** — The document is not meant as a monument cast in stone, never to be adjusted or changed given that it plans for the next 20 years. The plan is a general guide to be used by the government to give direction for the future of Liberty Township. It should be reviewed periodically and altered as general conditions in the community change.

- **The Plan allows for orderly development** — The land use allocations reflected in the plan are based upon the best available projections of future population levels for Liberty Township. The plan must realistically provide sufficient land area to meet the anticipated needs and demands of our residents and businesses, while at the same time protecting the overall quality of life and the physical environment. While the document does not require a use which might provide the greatest amount of return on investment in land, it does require that property owners receive a reasonable return on their investments.
- **The Plan must encourage public understanding and participation** — The plan should be written in a way that aids public understanding of the planning process and describes how goals for Liberty Township are to be achieved.
- **The Plan must be the result of a general consensus of the community** — Plan elements must be clearly understood by all and followed consistently to minimize the possibility of arbitrary decision making. A clear consensus is needed during the planning process to ensure that the Plan will be followed.
- **The Plan must balance property rights** — The law requires that all property owners be granted a reasonable use of their property. This includes the rights of adjoining property owners to enjoy their property.
- **The Plan is not a zoning map** — The document reflects the planned use of land, taking into consideration existing development, but does not depict a "new" zoning district map. Since the plan and zoning map are intended to be in reasonable harmony, it is likely that future zoning districts will take the shape of the plan as rezoning requests are received and reviewed.
- **Zoning is not a substitute for a Master Plan** — The plan is a long range guide for community development. Zoning approvals are specific to a piece of property and are always attached to the land. They may not be restricted to an individual. Zoning approvals are always permanent, unless the use itself is temporary in nature.
- **Deviation from the Plan puts zoning decisions at risk of invalidation** — Zoning decisions that are not based upon the plan risk invalidation if faced with a legal challenge. Decisions made on the basis of the document may be afforded additional validity, since the decision was not made in an arbitrary fashion, but follows a rational plan for the Liberty area.

Future Land Use and Zoning

The heart of the master plan is its depiction and descriptions for future land use. Determining the future use of land should be based on several factors, including:

- Community character
- Adaptability of land
- Community needs
- Available services
- Existing development
- Existing zoning

The connection between the master plan and the zoning ordinance of Liberty Township is often misunderstood. Accordingly, the relationship between the plan's future land use map and the zoning maps is a critical one. That link is established through the zoning plan element of the master plan.

Use of the Master Plan

Completion of the Master Plan is not the end of the planning process. Continuous and effective use of a Plan is necessary to ensure its validity. Failure to follow a Plan may discredit any attempt to use it as a defense for actions which may be challenged by property owners or developers.

Likewise, consistent and vigorous use of the Plan will lend credibility to the community's implementation of controversial decisions on zoning actions. While state courts do not normally recognize the absolute authority of a master plan, they do lend more credibility to actions supported by careful planning than those which appear to be made arbitrarily. The more common uses of the master plan include:

- **Zoning Decisions** — Since the master plan determines the future use of land, rezoning decisions should be consistent with its provisions. This is not to say that all rezonings that are consistent with the future land use map should automatically be approved. However, if all of the preconditions of the Master Plan are met, approval of the request may logically be forthcoming.

On the other hand, a rezoning request different from that shown in the Plan should not automatically be rejected, particularly if the Plan has not been reviewed in some time. Instead, each request should be evaluated to see if the conditions originally considered when the plan was adopted have changed. If so, the Plan may deserve reconsideration (but need not necessarily be changed).
- **Utility Extensions/Capital Improvements** — A useful function of the Master Plan is its designation of land use intensity when evaluating the need for improved utilities, new roadways and public buildings, and other improvements. This information may be included in a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is a six-year plan, updated annually, for capital expenditures necessary for plan implementation.

Development of the CIP is the responsibility of the township board, with considerable input from the municipal staff (e.g., engineers, planners, administrators, etc.) and the planning commission. Its principal elements include project names, descriptions, costs, priorities, years to be completed or begun, and potential or planned funding sources. This information provides property owners with some assurance that improvements necessary to implement the Plan are forthcoming, and shows a general schedule of those improvements.

- **Environmental Impact** — The master plan (as a reflection of the intensity of land use) should reflect the degree to which Liberty Township desires to protect its environment and natural features. The plan should establish that value to the community and propose steps to implement the appropriate regulations.
- **Recreation Planning** — The master plan (through the provision of future residential lands) will create a need for recreation/open space land. The master plan can assist in the setting of priorities for park development. For example, parks and recreation plans pay special attention to the goals and objectives of the master plan. If additional recreation services are called for in the plan, these services may be noted in the parks and recreation plan.

A review of Future Land Use is also important. If a Master Plan indicates that substantial new residential development will be forthcoming in a particular area, some indication should be made for the need to acquire and develop additional park land. However, the Future Land Use Map cannot indicate specific properties as park land, unless the land is in public ownership, or steps are already well underway to acquire that property.

In order to qualify for grant programs at the state level, or federal grants administered at the state level, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requires that Liberty Township have a current (no more than 5 years old) parks and recreation plan. The Township does not have a current recreation plan on file with the MDNR.

- **Approval of a public way, space, building or structure** — An often overlooked provision in state law is a requirement that the Township planning commission review any new street, park acquisition, public building, or other similar easement, street, or use, shown in the master plan, prior to any positive actions taken to implement such improvement. This ensures that the proposed improvement is in compliance with the provisions of the master plan. Although a denial may be overruled by the controlling authority, the review is still required.

- **Transportation Improvements** — There is a clear relationship between transportation and land use. As development proceeds, the need for new or improved roadways becomes obvious. By measuring the intensity of future development shown in the Master Plan, transportation planners can estimate needed rights-of-way widths, number of lanes, and the level of necessary access management.

Keeping the Plan Current

An outdated Plan that is not frequently reviewed can weaken decisions based upon the document. The planning commission should conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure that it is kept current. Township officials and employees can assist by bringing issues not addressed in the document to the attention of the planning commission. Any amendments to the Plan can be done at that time to keep it up to date and consistent with community philosophies. For example, some goals may have been achieved and new ones need to be established. Where uses have been approved contrary to the plan, the document should be amended to reflect these changes. By routinely following this procedure, the Master Plan will continue to be an up-to-date and reliable planning tool. Even though the plan has a 20 year horizon, a comprehensive update should occur at least every 5 years according to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA).

How Did the Plan Develop?

This document is the third update to the Liberty Township Master Plan. The Township adopted its first master plan in 1975 and an update to the document was completed in 1996.

Citizen participation is extremely important to the success of almost any planning effort. Citizen participation helps guarantee that the vision outlined for the future of the Liberty area accurately reflects the true goals of its residents. Direct and indirect public input opportunities included:

- Meetings of the planning commission where the Plan was included on the agenda (open to the public);
- A community planning survey;
- A public hearing on the Master Plan.

Who Will Implement the Plan?

Three distinct bodies in the Township are charged with planning and zoning: the planning commission, the zoning board of appeals, and the township board. All of their decisions and recommendations should be based upon the Master Plan. Decisions not based upon the Plan should trigger the review and possible amendment of the document.

Planning Commission

Development and approval of the Master Plan is an important responsibility of the planning commission. The commission is charged with the development of zoning and other ordinances (over which the township board has final authority). In this capacity, a subcommittee of the commission met to develop the Master Plan. The planning commission also recommends approval or rejection of requests to the township board for rezonings and various other zoning proposals.

Zoning Board of Appeals

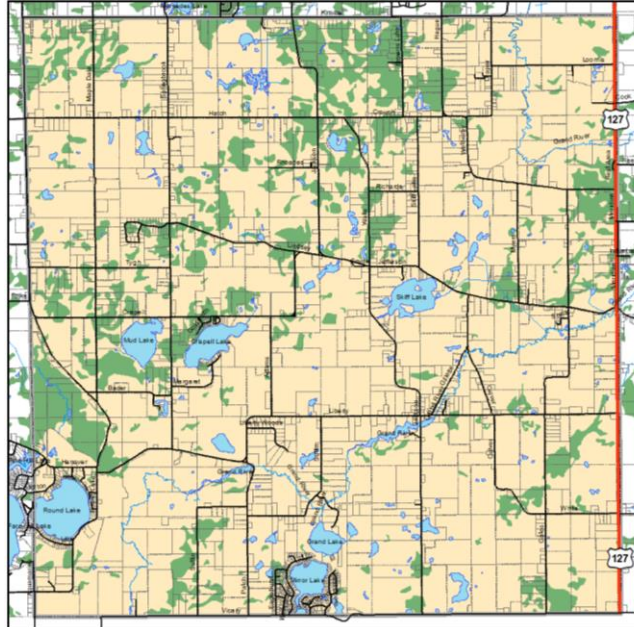
The zoning board of appeals (ZBA) decides dimensional variance requests (e.g., setback requirements). The ZBA also makes official interpretations of the zoning ordinance when the meaning or intent of the legislation is not clear. ZBA decisions are final. Appeals are made to the circuit court.

Township Board

As the legislative body for the Township, the township board is responsible for the passage of all ordinances, including the zoning ordinance and other planning-related legislation. It also appoints members to the planning commission and the ZBA.

Other Planning Efforts

Township staff and other township committees may also undertake planning efforts on their own or in conjunction with the planning commission. These planning efforts may include housing, key transportation corridors, historical districts, and the other plans. Future updates to those plans should complement the goals of the Master Plan. In turn, those documents should be consulted whenever the Plan is amended or a new plan is adopted. This consultation should also extend to regional planning efforts.



CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION & ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Location

Liberty Township is part of Jackson County which is located in south-central Lower Michigan (see the Vicinity Map, Appendix C). The Township is situated in south-central Jackson County and is adjacent to Hillsdale County to the south and Lenawee County to the southeast. Liberty Township is bordered in Jackson County by Summit Township to the north, Napoleon Township to the northeast, Columbia Township to the east, Hanover Township to the west, and Spring Arbor Township to the northwest. The Township is bordered in Lenawee County by Woodstock Township to the southeast and in Hillsdale County by Somerset Township to the south and Moscow Township to the southwest. US-127 traverses the eastern boundary of Liberty Township which extends north to the City of Jackson and southeast—via US-223—to various other cities and villages including Adrian and Toledo, Ohio.

Demographic Summary

See Appendix A for detailed population trend information. However, the data contained in that appendix is summarized below:

- **General Population** — The population of Liberty Township grew between 1930 and 2010 according to the U.S. Census. The greatest decades of growth were the 1950, 1960s and 1970s. The Township is projected to grow 4.8% by 2040. The 2035 population is projected to be 3,080 people.
- **Age & gender** — The median age of Liberty Township residents was estimated to be 47.6 years during the 2010-2014 time period, according to the American Community Survey. People between 45 and 54 years of age were estimated to be the largest age group, comprising an estimated 20% of residents. People between 65 and 74 years of age were estimated to be the second largest age group with 12% of the population. Males comprised 50% of the Township's population during the 2010-2014 time period.
- **Race & Ethnicity** — The racial and ethnic makeup of Liberty Township is homogeneous. The majority of the population of the Township (99%) was estimated to be white (Caucasian) during the 2010-2014 time period. In contrast, it is estimated that only a small minority of the population of the Township (>1%) considered themselves to be Hispanic or Latino/Latina.
- **Disabilities** — An estimated 13.3% of Liberty Township residents were estimated to be disabled in some way during the 2010-2014 time period. The estimated proportion of people with an ambulatory disability increased with age. For example, an estimated 17% of the population at least 65 years of age had an ambulatory disability while only an estimated 1% of residents 5-17 years of age had an ambulatory disability.

- **Households & Families** — It is estimated that Liberty Township was comprised of 1,159 households during the 2010-2014 time period. The average household size was estimated to be 2.55 people. Families were estimated to comprise 68% of all households with an estimated family size of 3.06 people. Single-person households were estimated to comprise 23% of all households.
- **Household Income** — The median income of Liberty Township households was estimated to be \$60,662 during the 2010-2014 time period (\$45,452, countywide). The median income of Township family households was estimated to be \$72,917 during that time period (\$57,627, countywide). The median income of Township non-family households was estimated to be \$31,544 (\$26,168, countywide). The estimated per capita income was estimated to be \$31,528 (\$22,879, countywide).
- **Housing** — Liberty Township had an estimated 1,385 housing units during the 2010-2014 time period. An estimated 16% of those units were vacant. However, an estimated 8% of housing units were used seasonally/occasionally; reducing the estimated vacancy rate to 7.9%. Detached single-family homes comprised an estimated 91% of the Township's housing stock. Multiple-family buildings, including duplexes, were estimated to comprise 4% of the Township's housing units. Mobile Homes comprised an estimated 4% of housing units.

Natural Resources

Most of Michigan's land forms were created by glaciers. Glaciers scratched the surface of the Earth and carried sediments. When the glaciers melted, they deposited the sediments that they carried. It is estimated that the most recent glacial period, the Wisconsin, began about 14,000 years ago and ended about 8,000 years ago. During the Wisconsin period, glaciers shaped the landscape of Liberty Township. This section discusses the results of glaciation including topography (slope), soils, rivers, streams, and lakes.

Topography

The topography of Liberty Township ranges between 948 feet above sea level and 1,174 feet above sea level, a difference of 226 feet (see the Topography Map, Appendix C). The lowest points in the Township are found along the northeastern border of the Township in the vicinity of the Grand River while the highest point is located south of Tygh Road, between Springbrook Road and Maple Dale Road, in the western portion of the Township. Some of the topography is steeply sloping. For instance, Hatt Hill (1,168 feet above sea level) is less than a mile from the Township's lowest points mentioned above.

Soils

Soils that are agriculturally productive and those that drain poorly are important to identify:

- **Productive Agricultural Soils—** There are no large concentrations of productive agricultural soils in the Township (see the Most Productive Agricultural Soils Map, Appendix C). However, there is one area in the Township's western half that contain several small clusters of prime farmland. This area runs northeasterly from Round Lake to Kimmel Road, east of South Jackson Road. Unfortunately, a significant portion of this area is already developed with residential uses and cannot be used for agricultural purposes. Another area that contains small clusters of prime agricultural land lies along US-127 north of Jefferson Road. The Liberty Landfill is located in this area as well as a few other industrial uses. Therefore, the land is not available for agricultural use. The Township contains several other smaller areas of prime agricultural soils but, for the most part, these areas are not concentrated.
- **Hydric Soils—** Hydric soils are poorly drained and subject to occasional flooding. Along with other sources such as the National Wetlands Inventory and aerial photographs, they can be used to identify wetlands and other sensitive lands. Hydric soils are also associated with lakes and streams. Hydric soils are located along the Grand River, in the vicinity of the various lakes and ponds in the Township, and various other low-lying areas (see the Hydric Soils Map, Appendix C).

Rivers, Streams and Lakes

Liberty Township is dominated by the Upper Grand River Watershed (see the Watersheds Map, Appendix C). However, the western border of the Township is located in the Kalamazoo River Watershed. The River Raisin Watershed also extends slightly into the southeast corner of the Township.

The headwaters of the Grand River are found in Lake LeAnn in Somerset Township which borders Liberty Township to the south. From Lake LeAnn, the Grand River flows into Mirror Lake and then into Grand Lake. From Grand Lake, the river meanders toward the northeast and feeds into the mill pond located in the unincorporated village of Liberty (i.e., the intersection of South Jackson Road and Liberty Road).

East of the mill pond the Grand River winds northeast until it meets Culver Road where it turns due east (see the Hydrology Map, Appendix C). The river leaves Liberty Township temporarily when it crosses under US-127, just south of Jefferson Road, and reenters the Township north of Wetherby Road. It then heads west for about one mile when it turns due north and leaves the Township just east of Draper Road. There are also several small streams that drain into the Township's lakes.

The headwaters of the north branch of the Kalamazoo River are located in the far western portion of Liberty Township near Pine Hill Lake. The river flows north and west (along Thorne Road) where it leaves the Township. No tributaries of the River Raisin extend into the Township.

Liberty Township contains six sizeable lakes, all in the southern half of the Township (see the Hydrology Map, Appendix C). Three of these lakes - Round Lake, Crispell Lake and Mirror Lake - have seen significant amounts of residential development. While Round Lake and Crispell Lake have already been developed, there is room for further residential growth on Mirror Lake. The other three lakes - Grand Lake, Skiff Lake and Mud Lake - have seen little development. The wetlands and muck soils in the areas near these lakes have limited the growth of residential development in these areas.

Public Services and Facilities

The purpose of this section is to present information on public services and facilities provided by various government agencies to the residents of Liberty Township.

Township Hall

The Liberty Township Hall is located at the southwest corner of South Jackson Road and Liberty Road, in the unincorporated village of Liberty (see the Institutions Map, Appendix C). The Township's administrative offices are located in the Hall. The Liberty Township Board, the Planning Commission, and other Township commissions, committees, and boards also hold their meetings in the Hall. The Township also maintains an online presence: www.libertytp.us.

Liberty Township Hall
101 W. Liberty Road
Clarklake, MI 49234
(517) 529-4374

Police, Fire, and Rescue

Liberty Township has no police department. Police services are provided by the Jackson County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police. The Township maintains an all-volunteer fire department with approximately 23 firefighters, including a Chief, Assistant Chief, two Captains, and a Lieutenant. Those officers are also either a paramedic, an emergency medical technician (EMT), or a medical first responder (MFR). The fire department has two fire stations. The first station is located in the unincorporated village of Liberty (201 E. Liberty Road). The second station is located at the intersection of Lindsay Road and South Jackson Road (see the Institutions Map, Appendix C). The department has two fire engines, a tanker truck, two other trucks utilized for wildland fires, a rescue vehicle, and a zodiac boat used for ice and water rescue. Ambulance services are provided by Jackson Community Ambulance (JCA). Emergency patients may be transported to Henry Ford Allegiance Health in Jackson by ambulance or helicopter.

Healthcare Facilities

There are no healthcare facilities in Liberty Township. However, medical facilities are available in the City of Jackson. Henry Ford Allegiance Health is capable of providing long-term care. There is also a Medplus After Hours Clinic located in Brooklyn. Additional specialized care is available at hospitals in Hillsdale, Chelsea, and Adrian.

Schools and Libraries

There are portions of five school districts in the Township (see the School Districts Map, Appendix C). Although the majority of students attend Hanover-Horton Schools and the Columbia School District, Jackson Public Schools, Addison Community Schools, and North Adams-Jerome Schools also serve students living in Liberty Township. Several colleges are potentially within commuting range, including Jackson College, Baker College, and Spring Arbor University. The Jackson District Library (JDL) serves Township residents. However, none of the Library's thirteen branches are located in Liberty Township.

Parks and Recreation

The Township maintains a small park behind the Township Hall in the unincorporated village of Liberty (see the Institutions Map, Appendix C). The park is located along the shoreline of the Liberty Millpond and contains a picnic pavilion, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, and a boat landing. Round Lake County Park contains water access and a boat launch as well as green space, a picnic area (including grills), playground equipment, a flowing well, and portable toilets. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides a boat launch and public access on the east side of Crispell Lake. The Deer Run Golf Course is located north of Round Lake. The Shady Acres Campground is located on the north shore of Crispell Lake.

Other Institutions

The MacCready Reserve is an approximately 408-acre nature reserve owned by Michigan State University (MSU). It is open to the public and accessed from Skiff Lake Road (see the Institutions Map, Appendix C). The Rogers Reserve (MSU) is an approximately 118-acre chestnut production and research center also owned by MSU, and accessed from South Jackson Road. Camp McGregor is an approximately 101-acre camp operated by the Jackson County Intermediate School District (ISD) on the east shore of Crispell Lake. It is the home of the ISD's math and science center/observatory and camp programs but is also available for private rentals. The Grand River Fen Preserve is comprised of various properties located in the southwest quarter of the Township with a collective area of approximately 343 acres. The adjacent Burns Property, maintained by

the Jackson County Parks Department, has an area of approximately 132 acres with access to the Grand River. Approximately 40 acres of the Jackson College campus extends into the Township on the south side of Kimmel Road.

The South Jackson Community Church campus also extends into the Township on the south side of Kimmel Road. The East Liberty Universalist Unitarian Church campus is located on the south side of Jefferson Road and the East Liberty Cemetery is adjacent to the church. The Laurel Hill Cemetery is located on the east side of South Jackson Road, south of East Liberty Road. The Sutfin Cemetery is located on the west side of Patch Road, north of Vicary Road. The Sanford Cemetery is located on the east side of Thorne Road, south of Hatch Road. All of the cemeteries are maintained by Liberty Township.

Solid Waste Disposal

The Liberty Environmentalist Landfill is an approximately 375-acre Type III landfill located in the northeast quarter of Liberty Township (see the Institutions Map, Appendix C). It accepts commercial, industrial, construction and demolition, and other special wastes, including contaminated soils, but does not accept residential waste. The landfill does provide a Type B Transfer Facility which residents can utilize to properly dispose of solid waste (i.e., trash). However, most households and businesses contract directly with the trash hauler of their choice.

Public Sewer and Other Utilities

Public sewer service areas are located in the vicinity of Round Lake and the US-127 corridor, between Jefferson Road and Cook Road (see the Public Sewer Map, Appendix C). A force sewer main also traverses the Township along Liberty Road (between Thorne Road and Patch Road), Patch Road (between Liberty Road and Vicary Road), Vicary Road (between Patch Road and Meridian Road (US-127)), and Meridian Road (US-127 between Vicary Road and Loomis Road). No public water system is located within Liberty Township.

Consumers Energy provides electricity and natural gas throughout the Township. Telephone service is provided by Frontier Communications, Comcast (i.e., xfinity), and AT&T. Those utilities are also the primary cable television and internet providers in the Township.

Transportation

Highways and roads and an airport are the two modes of transportation that directly affect Liberty Township (see the Transportation Map, Appendix C).

- **Highways and Roads**— US-127, the sole state highway traversing Liberty Township, serves as the eastern border for the Township (see the Transportation Map, Appendix C). Although US-127 becomes a divided highway (i.e., expressway or freeway) to the north, it is an

undivided surface road (also known as Meridian Road) as it traverses the Township. A public rest area is located on US-127, approximately a quarter mile north of Wetherby Road. All of the other public roads traversing the Township are maintained by the Jackson County Department of Transportation (JCDOT). County primary roads include: South Jackson Road; Springbrook Road; Round Lake Road; the Hague Avenue and Wetherby Road corridor; the Hatch Road and Crouch Road corridor; Jefferson Road; the Thorne Road (between Hatch Road and Crispell Road), Crispell Road, and Lindsey Road (between Crispell Road and South Jackson Road) corridor; and the Hanover Road, Liberty Road, and Gillette Road corridor. All of the other public roads traversing the Township are county local roads. Several of those roads are gravel: Maple Dale Road (between Thorne Road and Hatch Road); Sutfin Road; Waite Road; Richards Road; Snyder Road, portions of Gates Road (between White Road and Liberty Road and between Jefferson Road and Wetherby Road); and Loomis Road. There are no roads traversing the Township built to Class A standards other than US-127.

- **Airport**— Most of the northern half of Liberty Township falls within the airport zoning area developed for the Jackson County Airport-Reynolds Field (see the Transportation Map, Appendix C). Accordingly, buildings and other structures 200 feet tall or more within Zone D must be reviewed for compliance with Jackson County Airport zoning regulations and may require permits from the Michigan Department of Aeronautics and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Existing Land Use

An inventory of existing land use is an important factor in the development of a future land use map for Liberty Township. Assessing data compiled by the Township was utilized to determine existing land use in June of 2017. The Township assessor assigns a numeric code to each property as part of the assessment process which was then translated into a broad land use category (please see the Property Assessment Map, Appendix C). “Residential” is the predominant land use in the Township, encompassing approximately 57% of its acreage; however, 31% of those acres are assessed as “residential vacant” “Agricultural” is the other predominant land use, encompassing approximately 34% of the acreage in Liberty Township; however, 36% of those acres are assessed as “agricultural vacant”. “Exempt” property accounts for approximately 6% of the Township’s acreage. Properties assessed “exempt” are owned by a unit of government or a tax exempt organization or are exempt for some other reason; they are usually akin to a “public” designation on a future land use map. “Commercial” property accounts for less than 2% of the Township’s acreage. Together, the “industrial” and “other” categories account for less than 1% of Liberty Township acreage. Properties assessed “other” cannot be assigned to a land use category.

	% of Twp.
Agricultural	34.44%
Residential	57.32%
Commercial	1.77%
Industrial	0.33%
Exempt	5.86%
Other	0.29%
	100.00%

Township Survey Summary

A survey was conducted in 2017 to gauge the opinions of residents, property owners, and business owners in Liberty Township. A brief summary of some of the questions are provided on the next page. The full results of the survey are contained in Appendix B.

Quality of Life and Community Services

Respondents were asked to rate the following:

- The Township as a place to live — 87% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.
- The administration of the Township — 71% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.
- The Fire/Rescue Department — 74% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.
- Round Lake County Park — 44% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.
- Township Hall Park — 36% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.
- Township cemeteries — 34% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.
- Highways, roads, and streets — 11% of responses were ‘good’ or excellent’.

Future Land Use and Related Planning Issues

Respondents were asked the following questions:

- Should the Township strive to preserve farmland? — 92% of responses were ‘yes’.
- Should the Township strive to protect unique natural features? — 97% of responses were ‘yes’.
- Should additional residential development be encouraged within the Township? — 51% of responses were ‘yes’.
- What form should that residential development take? — 79% of responses were ‘large lots’.
- Should the Township encourage additional commercial/light industrial development? — 72% of responses were ‘yes’.
- Should that development be limited to the US-127 corridor? — 80% of responses were ‘yes’.
- Should the Township pursue the development of a kayak/canoe launch site along the proposed Grand River Water Trail? — 77% of responses were ‘yes’.

- Would you support a millage to maintain local township roads? — 56% of responses were ‘yes’.
- Would you support a millage to maintain Fire Department operations? — 73% of responses were ‘yes’.
- Do you want to allow medical marihuana dispensaries/grow operations? — 20% of responses were ‘allow’.

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

This part of the plan contains Liberty Township's policies on land use. The section is broken into categories of natural features, agriculture, residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.

Natural Features

Goal: To protect and preserve the Township's natural features in order to maintain the quality of the local environment.

Policy: Encourage quality development in areas with sensitive natural features.

Strategies:

- Require development plans to conform to topography, instead of the topography conforming to development plans.
- Encourage cluster residential development.
- Encourage low-density development along drainage ways within the Township.
- Use the site plan review process to encourage proper design and minimize negative environmental impacts.

Agriculture

Goal: To promote the preservation of Liberty Township's agricultural land.

Policy: Support the continuation of the agricultural base of the Township.

Strategies:

- Identify areas of agricultural lands and designate these areas for agricultural (and rural residential) use(s).
- Explore agricultural preservation techniques for future implementation.

Policy: Discourage non-agricultural uses in the prime agricultural lands.

Strategies:

- Encourage new residential development only in areas that do not interfere with agricultural uses.
- Consider zoning techniques that preserve agricultural land and protect private property rights.

Residential

Goal: Expand residential areas in order to meet the demands of a growing population, while also preserving the Township's agricultural base and rural character.

Policy: Encourage residential development which will expand existing areas.

Strategy:

- Use the future land use plan to specifically identify residential land uses and their preferred location.

Policy: Promote the development of various housing types which will be an efficient use of space and preserve the integrity of the Township's rural character.

Strategies:

- Encourage compatibility between residential areas and other types of land use.
- Expand existing residential developments rather than create new developments.

Commercial

Goal: To provide a variety of commercial uses to serve the needs of Township residents.

Policy: Maintain and develop commercial uses located with easy access to residents.

Strategy:

- Use the land use plan to designate areas for future commercial growth.

Policy: Encourage larger commercial uses to locate only in areas where the infrastructure is suitable. Ensure that commercial uses will not interfere with neighboring uses.

Strategies:

- Encourage new commercial development on sites which have access to US-127.
- In the zoning ordinance, provide sufficient buffering between commercial projects and new residential areas.

Policy: Where appropriate, allow the continuation of existing commercial developments.

Strategy:

- Allow for the continuation and improvement of existing commercial uses near Round Lake, the unincorporated village of Liberty, and along Kimmel Road.

Industrial

Goal: To encourage industrial developments in suitable locations in order to increase the employment base of Liberty Township.

Policy: Encourage new industrial development to locate in areas of existing industrial facilities.

Strategies:

- Locate new industrial uses on sites which have access to US-127. US-127 is a state highway which provides access from Liberty Township to other areas of the region and state.
- Encourage the redevelopment of existing industrial areas before creating new ones.

Policy: Reduce the possibility of land use conflicts between industrial and less intensive uses.

Strategies:

- Ensure that the zoning ordinance contains proper landscaping provisions between industrial and other types of uses.
- Minimize industrial truck traffic on local county roads.

Future Land Use Plan

The Master Plan represents a vision of how Liberty Township might look in the future. The horizon is 2040. 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 Liberty Township over the life of the Plan. However, the Plan itself has no regulatory authority and must rely upon other tools for implementation, most notably the Zoning Ordinance. The 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.

The Future Land Use Plan presented here is not static (please see the Future Land Use map). 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 Liberty 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 with 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 (i.e., 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 in most cases or the Plan should be amended to reflect changing trends. This is not to suggest that every rezoning needs to be consistent with the Plan. However, in areas where several 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 seven land use categories within Liberty Township (see the Future Land Use Map, Appendix C). A description of each land use category is presented below.

Agricultural

Agriculture continues to be the predominant land use within the Township. The Agricultural Preservation Area map contained in the *Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan* places the majority of Liberty Township in an Agricultural Preservation Area (see the Countywide Future Land Use map, Appendix C). Accordingly, most of the properties located outside of the unincorporated village of Liberty, the various lakes in the Township, and the US-127 corridor are located in this land use category.

Residential

- **Low Density Residential.** This land use category is intended primarily for low density (i.e., single-family) residential development located at the periphery of the Township's various lakes, the unincorporated village of Liberty, and a couple of other residential neighborhoods located along county primary roads.

- **Medium Density Residential.** This land use category is intended primarily to accommodate single-family homes at the edges of the Township's lakes, which were developed at a greater density than other single family residential development.
- **High Density Residential.** There are a couple of existing apartment developments in the Township and this land use category simply recognizes their presence.

Commercial

This land use category is intended for all retail commercial and service businesses. Those uses located along the US-127 corridor may be designed to attract customers from outside of the Township. The commercial areas located in the vicinity of Round Lake, the unincorporated village of Liberty, and along Kimmel Road are intended to serve local customers.

Light Industrial

Light industry continues to be a small use within the Township. The Liberty Environmentalists Landfill is the largest light industrial use. Another light industrial area is set aside along the US-127 corridor.

Institutional

The Future Land Use map also identifies where various institutions are located within the Township. Primary among them are properties owned and managed by Michigan State University (i.e., MacCready and Rogers Reserves), the Jackson Intermediate School District (i.e. Camp McGregor), and Jackson County Parks. A variety of other public and private institutions (i.e., the township hall, cemeteries, churches, etc.) are important components of the Township which contribute to its quality of life. The overlay category also identifies the proposed underlying land use category if that institution ever ceases to exist.

Zoning Plan

The Master Plan provides the basis for zoning in Liberty Township. Accordingly, the Plan is required to contain a special plan element, known commonly as the Zoning Plan, by Michigan's planning and zoning enabling acts. As noted in the Michigan Planning Guidebook (May 2008), "special plan elements are often prepared to establish a basis for a local regulation, such as a zoning plan to serve as the basis for zoning regulations."

The MPEA — the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008), as amended — requires “a zoning plan for the various zoning districts controlling area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises” because Liberty Township has an adopted zoning ordinance. The MZEA —the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006), as amended— requires the planning commission to adopt and file with the township board “a zoning plan for the areas subject to zoning” in Liberty Township. Finally, the MPEA also requires the Zoning Plan to “include an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map”.

Zoning Districts

Article IV of the Liberty Township Zoning Ordinance established the following zoning districts (please see the Zoning Map):

- **Open Districts.** *Open districts are established to protect land best used for open use from the encroachment of incompatible land uses, to preserve valuable agricultural land for agricultural uses, and to retain land suited for open space and recreation use for the future.*
 - **Agricultural District (AG).** *The intent of this district is to set aside land suitable for agricultural development and agricultural related uses.*
- **Residential Districts.** *The Rural Non-Farm Residential District, Lake Residential District, Suburban Residential District, and the Multiple Family Residential District are designed principally for residential use and are limited to dwellings and uses normally associated with residential neighborhoods in order to encourage a suitable and healthy environment for family life. The residential districts are designed to regulate the location of residential uses and dwellings according to a well-considered plan which reflects the different types of residential uses and dwellings, the different densities of population and the intensity of land use desired; potential nuisances and hazards which may cause unhealthy conditions; and the relationship of residential uses and dwellings to other areas devoted to agricultural, commercial, or industrial uses and to streets. The purpose of each residential district is further stated below:*
 - **Rural Non-Farm Residential District (RNF-1).** *This district is established to provide suitable areas for single-family dwellings at low densities to preserve a predominantly rural character in these areas fit for concentrated residential use because of the ability of the soil to absorb sewage wastes from individual septic tanks.*
 - **Lake Residential District (RL-1).** *This district is designed to preserve and enhance areas which are suitable for lake front residential development, principally single-family dwellings at moderate densities, with consideration to protecting the lake waters from potential pollutants.*

- **Suburban Residential District (RS-1).** *This district is designed to provide residential areas principally for moderate suburban densities where necessary urban services and facilities, including central sewerage and water supply systems, can be feasibly provided.*
- **High Residential District (RM-1).** *This district is designed to permit a high density of population and a high intensity and use in those areas which are served by a central water supply system and a central sanitary sewerage system, and which abut or are adjacent to other uses or amenities which support complement, or serve such a density and intensity.*
- **Commercial District (C).** *The Commercial District is designed to allow limited commercial enterprises at appropriate locations to encourage efficient traffic movement, parking, and utility service; advance public safety; and protect surrounding property. The commercial district is intended to regulate the location of commercial uses according to well-considered zoning plan which determined the appropriate location and intensity of commercial uses with consideration given to the capability of public infrastructure; potential nuisances and hazards which may cause unsafe conditions; and the relationship of commercial uses to each other and to other areas devoted to agricultural, residential, or industrial use and to streets and highways.*

The Commercial District is intended to allow local commercial uses as permitted uses and general commercial uses as conditional uses. Local commercial uses provide convenient goods and personal services that meet the regular and recurring needs of the neighborhood resident population. General commercial uses provide convenience and comparison goods and personal and professional services for the entire area.

- **Industrial District.** *It is recognized by this Ordinance that the value to the public designating certain areas for certain types of industrial uses represented in the employment opportunities afforded to citizens the resultant economic benefits conferred upon the Township of Liberty. In order that this value may be maintained and [sic] encouraged, this Ordinance has established one zoning district designed to regulate the location of industrial uses according to a well-considered plan which reflects the types of such uses and the intensity of land, street, and highway use in each such district; potential uses and hazards which may cause unsafe and unhealthy conditions; and the relationship of industrial uses to each other and to other areas devoted to agricultural, residential, or commercial uses and to streets, highways, and other means of transportation. To these ends, certain uses which would function more effectively in other districts and would interfere with the operation of these industrial activities and the purpose of these districts have been excluded. The purpose of each industrial district is stated further below:*
 - **Light Industrial District (I-1).** *This district is designed to provide suitable space for industrial uses which operate in a safe, non-objectionable and efficient manner, and which are compatible in appearance with and require a minimum of buffering measures from*

adjoining non-industrial zoning district. These uses generate a minimum of noise, glare, odor, dust, vibration, air and water pollutants, fire, explosive and radioactive hazards, and other harmful or obnoxious matter.

Dimensional Standards

The following bulk, height, and setback restrictions for each district are included in Section 4.5 of the Liberty Township Zoning Ordinance:

Zoning District	Zoning Symbol	Lot Requirements			Minimum Yard Requirements			Max. Building Height Requirements		Comment
		Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width	Max. Lot Coverage	Front	Side	Rear	Principal	Accessory	
Agricultural District	AG-1	3 acres	200 ft.	10%	60 ft.	30 ft. 60 ft.*	50 ft.	2 1/2 story or 35 ft.	80 ft.	Single-family detached dwelling units.
										All other uses.
Rural Non-Farm Residential District	RNF-1	3/4 acre	150 ft.	20%	35 ft.	20 ft. 35 ft.*	35 ft.	2 1/2 story or 35'	25 ft.	Single-family detached dwelling units.
		1 acre								All other uses.
Lake Residential District	RL-1	10,000 sq. ft.	80 ft.	30%	35 ft.	10 ft. 25 ft. total 35 ft. *	25 ft. 50 ft.**	2 1/2 story or 35'	25 ft.	Single-family detached dwelling units with sewerage and water systems.
		15,000 sq. ft.	120 ft.							Single-family detached dwelling units without central sewerage and water systems.
		1 acre	120 ft.							All other uses.
Suburban Residential District	RS-1	10,000 sq. ft.	100 ft.	30%	35 ft.	10 ft. 25 ft. total 35 ft. *	20 ft.	2 1/2 stories or 35 ft.	25 ft.	Single-family detached dwelling units with sewerage and water systems.
		15,000 sq. ft.	120 ft.							Single-family detached dwelling units without central sewerage and water systems.
		1 acre	120 ft.							All other uses.

(continued)

Zoning District	Zoning Symbol	Lot Requirements			Minimum Yard Requirements			Max. Building Height Requirements		Comment
		Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width	Max. Lot Coverage	Front	Side	Rear	Principal	Accessory	
Multi-Family Residential District	RM-1	10,000 sq. ft.	80 ft.	25%	25 ft.	10 ft. or 35 ft. *	25 ft.	2 1/2 stories or 35 ft.	25 ft.	Two-family dwelling units w/central sewerage and water systems.
		15,000 sq. ft.	120 ft.							Two-family dwelling units without central sewerage and water systems.
		15,000 sq. ft.	120 ft.							15,000 sq. ft. for first 3 dwelling units plus 2,000 sq. ft. for each additional dwelling unit.
		1/2 acre	120 ft.							All other uses.
Commercial District^	C-1	15,000 sq. ft.	100 ft.	25%	35 ft.	20 ft.	35 ft.	35 ft.	35'	n/a
Light Industrial District^	I-1	20,000 sq. ft.	80 ft.	25%	35 ft.	20 ft. 35 ft. *	35 ft.	35 ft.	n/a	n/a

* corner lot **abutting a water body ^transition strip required

Rezoning Criteria

The most common zoning application of the Master Plan is during the rezoning process. Accordingly, a rezoning should be required to meet set criteria in order to be considered consistent with the Master Plan:

- Is the proposed rezoning consistent with the policies and uses proposed for that area in the Township's master plan?
- Will all of the uses allowed under the proposed rezoning be compatible with other zones and uses in the surrounding area?
- Will any public services and facilities be significantly adversely impacted by a development or use allowed under the requested rezoning?

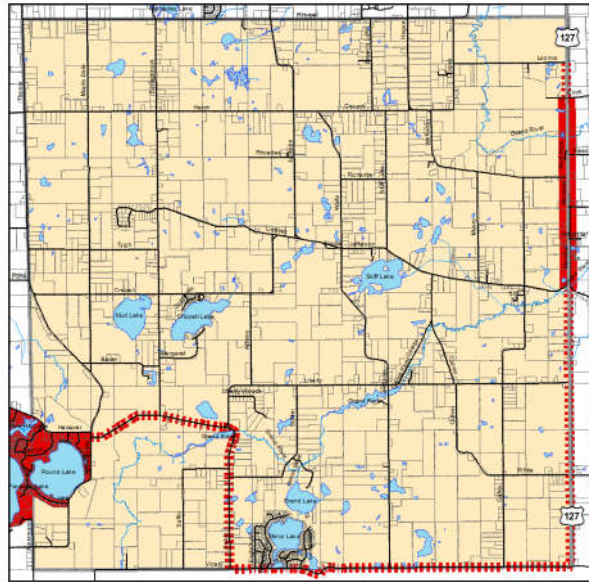
- Will the uses allowed under the proposed rezoning be equally or better suited to the area than uses allowed under the current zoning of the land?

Relationship to the Future Land Use Map

The remainder of this element equates the various Zoning Districts included on the Zoning Map with the various land use categories included on the Future Land Use Map.

- **Agricultural** — Agricultural areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map. The following zoning district equates to those areas:
 - Agricultural District (AG).
 - Rural Non-Farm Residential District (RNF-1).
- **Residential** — The following residential areas are included on the Future Land Use Map:
 - **Low Density Residential** — Low-density residential areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map. The following zoning district currently equates to those areas:
 - Suburban Residential District (RS-1)
 - **Medium Density Residential** — Medium density residential areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map. The following zoning districts currently equate to those areas:
 - Lake Residential District (RL-1)
 - **High Density Residential** — High density residential areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map. The following zoning districts currently equate to those areas:
 - Multi-Family Residential District (RM-1)
- **Commercial** — Commercial areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map. The following zoning district equates to those areas:

- Commercial District (C-1)
- **Light Industrial** — Light industrial areas are addressed generally on the Future Land Use Map. The following zoning district equates to those areas:
 - Light Industrial District (I-1)
- **Institutional** — Institutions are also included on the Future Land Use map as an overlay land use category:
 - No zoning district equates to institutions

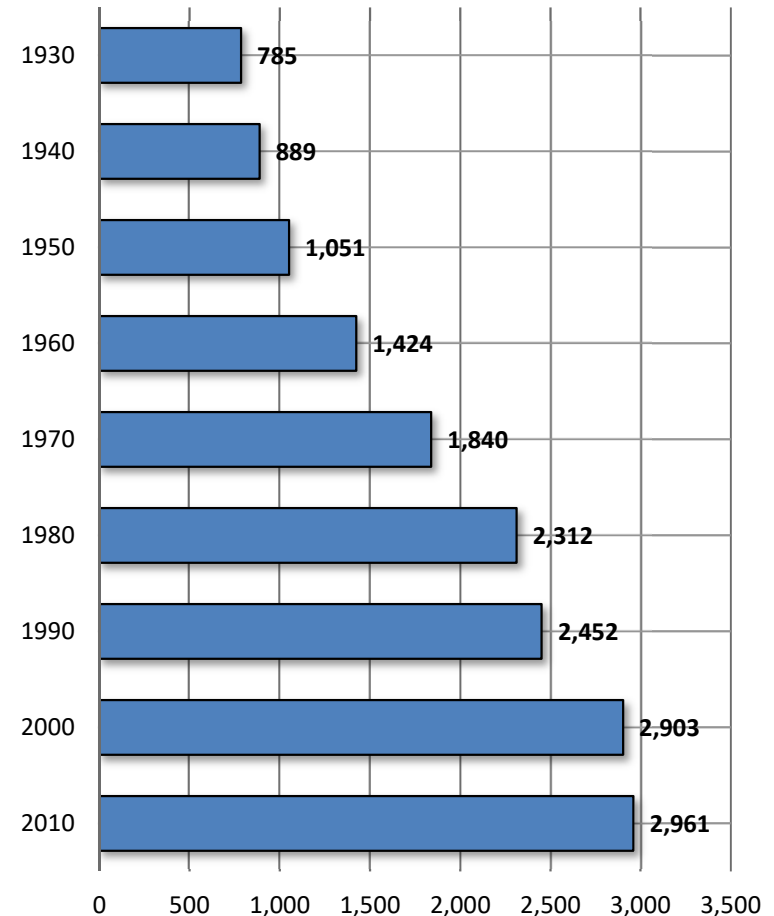


APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS

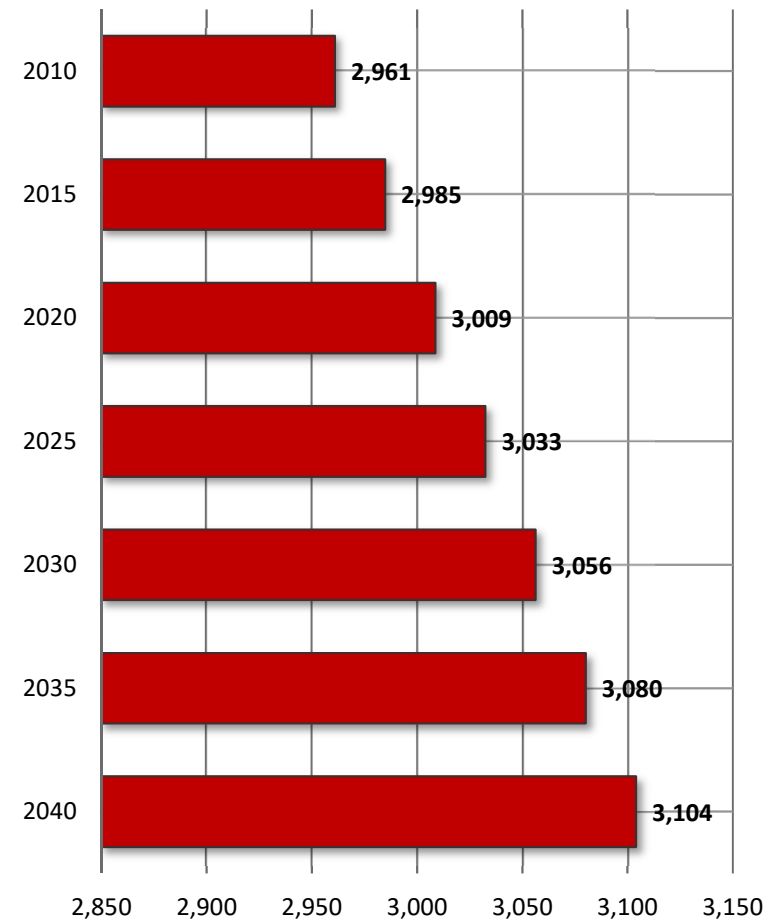
Population History

- The Township was home to 2,961 people in 2010, according to the U.S. Census
- The adjacent figure shows that the population:
 - Increased 13.2% between 1930 and 1940
 - Increased 18.2% between 1940 and 1950
 - Increased 35.5% between 1950 and 1960
 - Increased 29.2% between 1960 and 1970
 - Increased 25.7% between 1970 and 1980
 - Increased 6.1% between 1980 and 1990
 - Increased 18.4% between 1990 and 2000
 - Increased 2.0% between 2000 and 2010



Population Projections

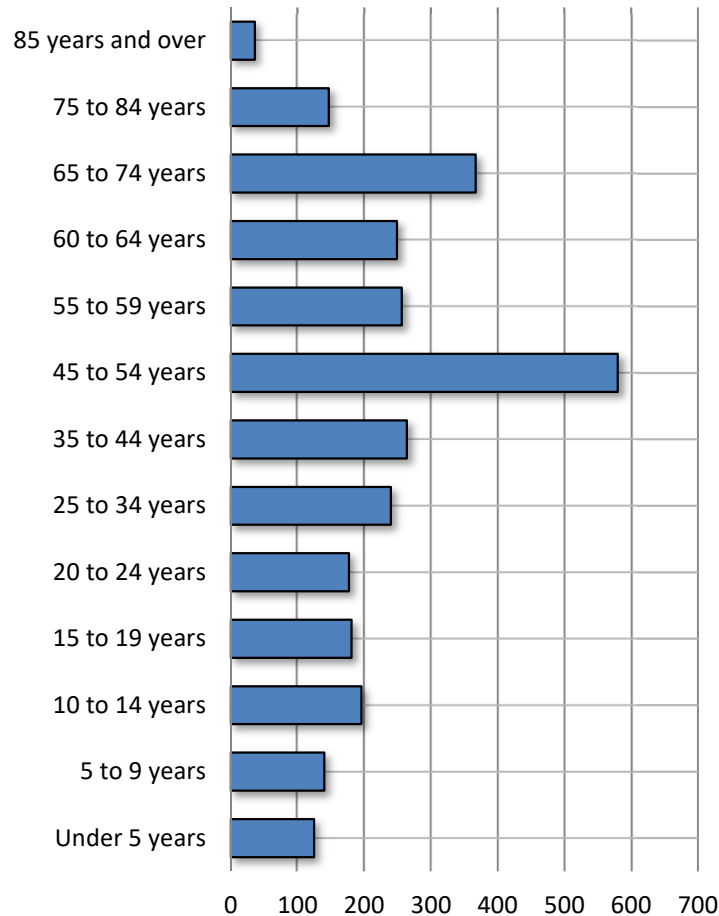
- The population projections utilized in this plan were developed for the Jackson Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (JACTS)
 - The 2040 projections are grounded on historic census trends and Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI) forecasts
 - REMI data is based upon Cohort Survival methodology and local factors and input
 - The projections are then “straight-lined” in 5-year increments between 2010 and 2040
- Utilizing that information, it is reasonable to expect that:
 - The population will increase 4.8% by 2040
 - The 2015 population for the Township is projected to be 2,985 residents
 - The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that the population was 2,958 people between 2010 and 2014*
 - The 2035 population is projected to be 3,080



American Community Survey (ACS)

- The use of estimates provided by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) provides more up-to-date demographics than the decennial census
- Reporting jurisdictions the size of Liberty Township are provided five-year average estimates on a regular basis
- The reporting period available and utilized for this plan is 2010-2014

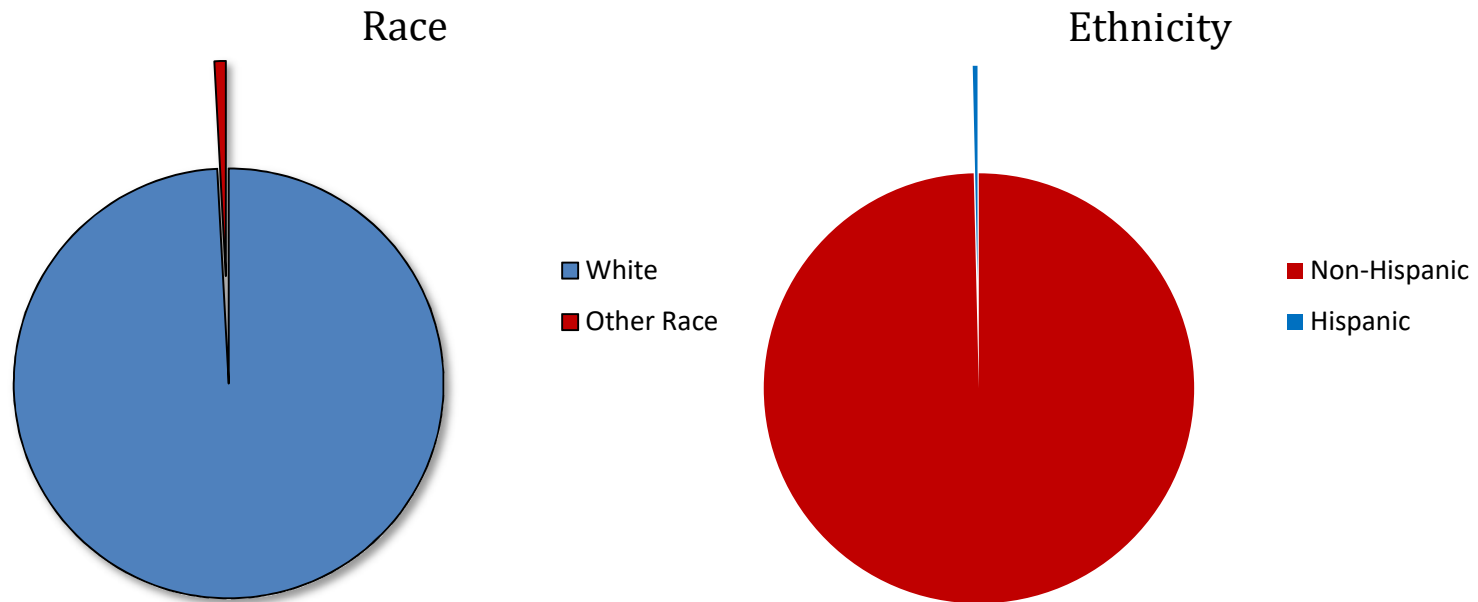
Age & Gender: 2010-2014



Liberty Township Master Plan, 2019 edition

- The estimated median age of Liberty Township residents was 47.6 years
- The adjacent figure illustrates Liberty Township's age cohorts:
 - 1.2% — 85 years and over
 - 5.0% — 75 to 84 years
 - 12.4% — 65 to 74 years
 - 8.4% — 60 to 64 years
 - 8.7% — 55 to 59 years
 - 19.6% — 45 to 54 years
 - 8.9% — 35 to 44 years
 - 8.1% — 25 to 34 years
 - 6.0% — 20 to 24 years
 - 6.1% — 15 to 19 years
 - 6.6% — 10 to 14 years
 - 4.7% — 5 to 9 years
 - 4.2% — Under 5 years
- Finally, it is estimated that males comprised 50.7% of the Township's population

Race & Ethnicity: 2010-2014



The population of Liberty Township is homogenous with few racial and ethnic minorities

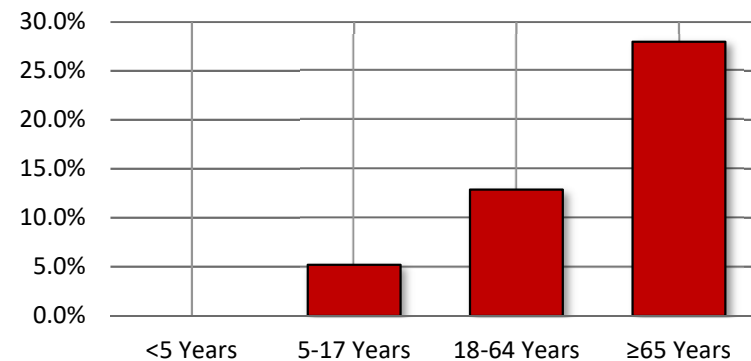
- An estimated 99.2% of the Township's population was white
- An estimated 0.4% of the Township's residents considered themselves Hispanic

Disabilities: 2010-2014

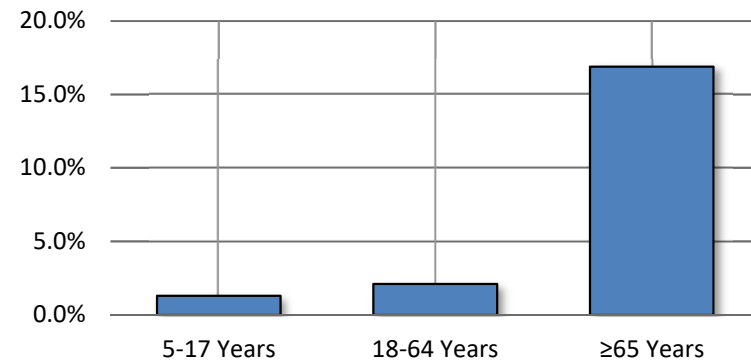
Disabled residents are a significant component of Liberty Township's population

- An estimated 13.3% of Township residents were disabled
- <5 years
 - An estimated 0.0% were disabled
- 5-17 years
 - An estimated 5.2% were disabled
 - An estimated 1.3% had an ambulatory disability
- 18-64 years
 - An estimated 12.9% were disabled
 - An estimated 2.1% had an ambulatory disability
- ≥65 years
 - An estimated 28.0% were disabled
 - An estimated 16.9% had an ambulatory disability

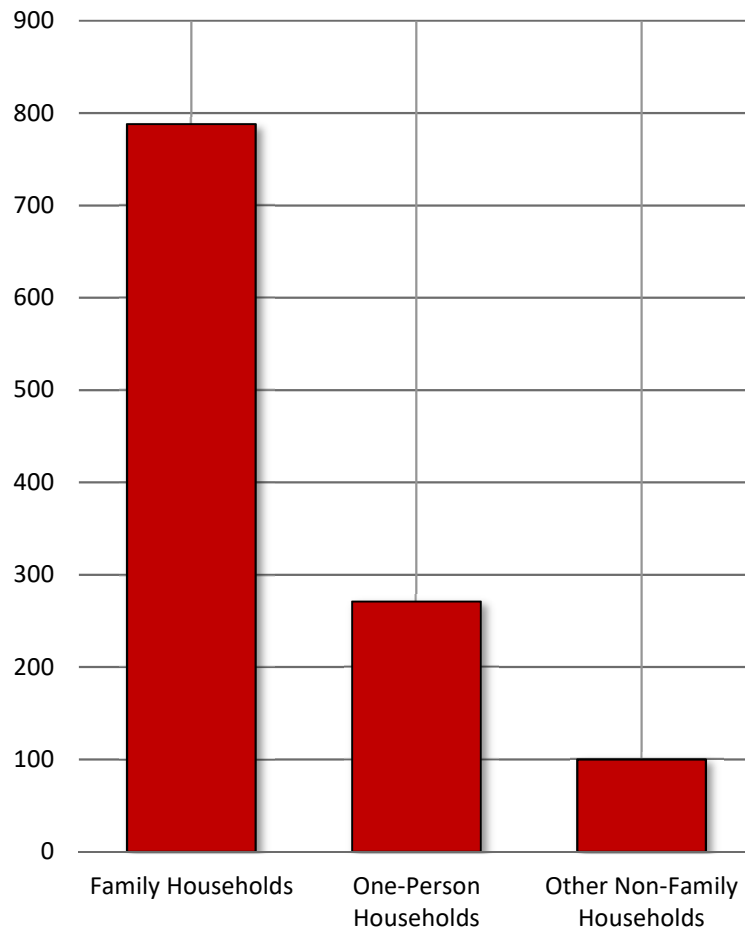
Some Type of Disability



Ambulatory Disability

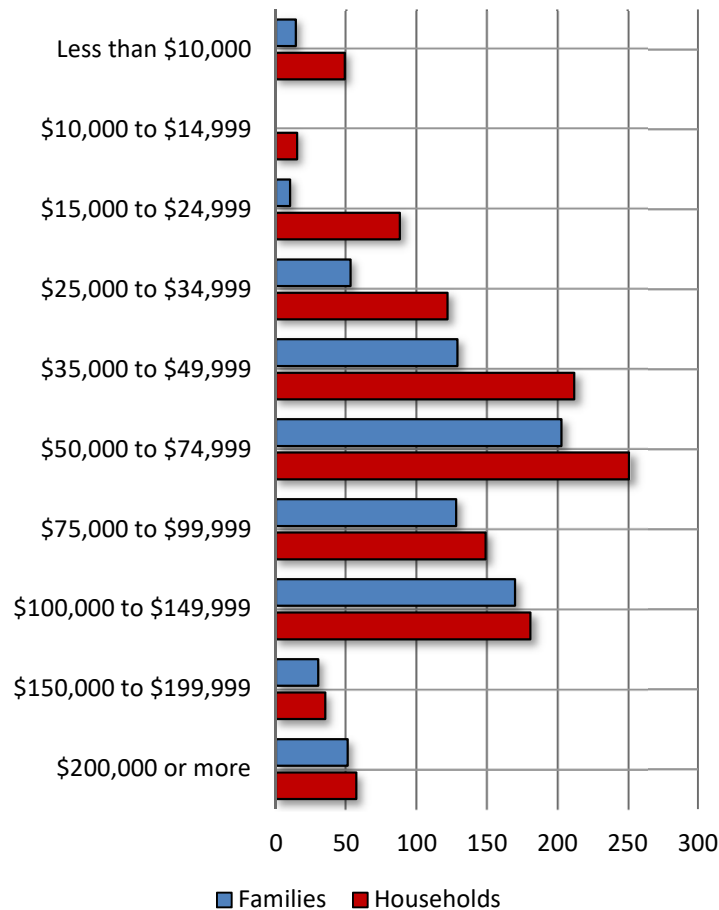


Households & Families: 2010-2014



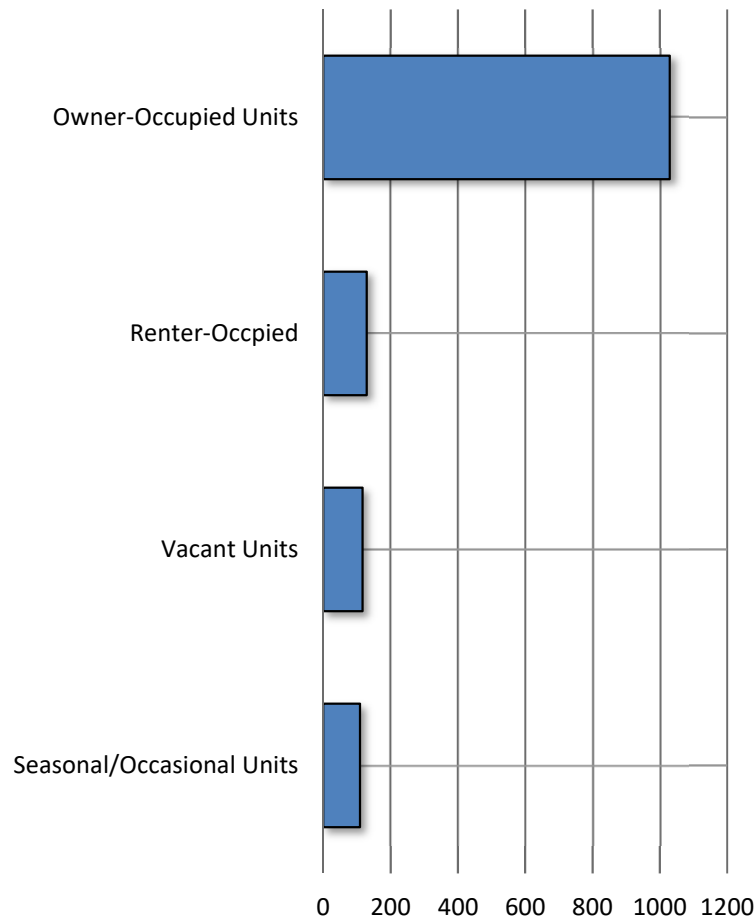
- Most people live in the estimated 1,159 Liberty Township households
- Families comprised an estimated 68.0% of households
- An estimated 23.4% of households were comprised of a single person
- Other non-family households comprised the remaining estimated 8.6% of households
- Estimated average household and family size was 2.55 people and 3.06 people, respectively (please see the ACS note)
- *There were an estimated 117 seasonal or occasional homes (i.e., households)*
- *Group quarters (e.g., nursing homes, etc.) were home to an estimated 5 people*

Household Income: 2010-2014



- Estimated median and mean household income, respectively:
 - Median — \$60,662 (please see the ACS note)
 - Mean — \$79,134
- Estimated median and mean family income:
 - Median — \$72,917 (please see the ACS note)
 - Mean — \$91,218
- Estimated per capita income:
 - Township — \$31,528 (please see the ACS note)
- Estimated median and mean non-family income:
 - Median — \$31,544 (please see the ACS note)
 - Mean — \$52,099

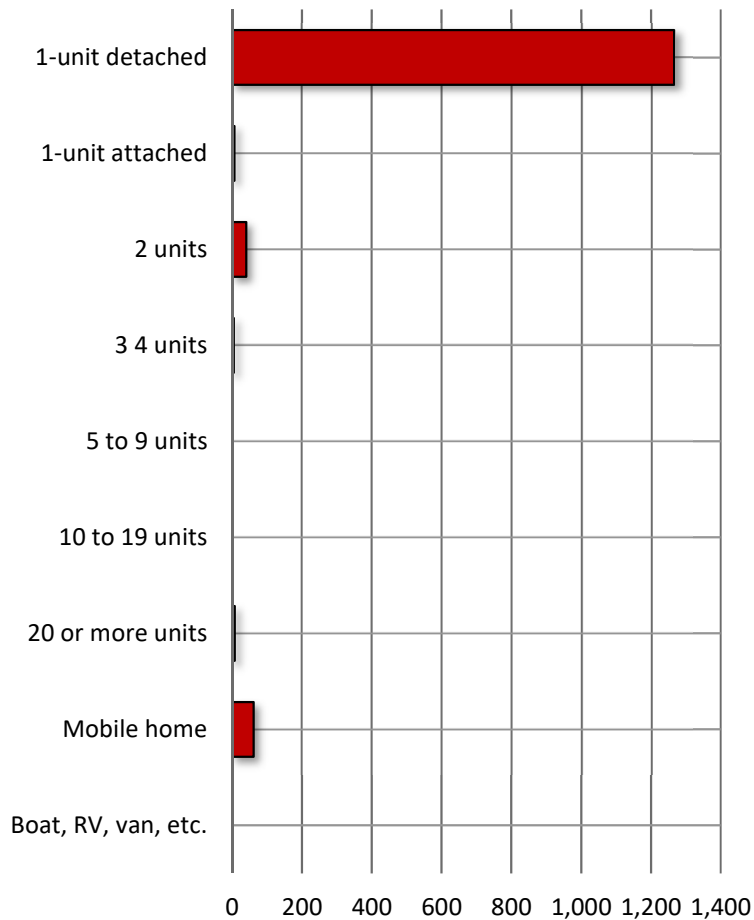
Dwellings & Vacancy Rates: 2010-2014



Liberty Township had an estimated 1,385 dwelling units

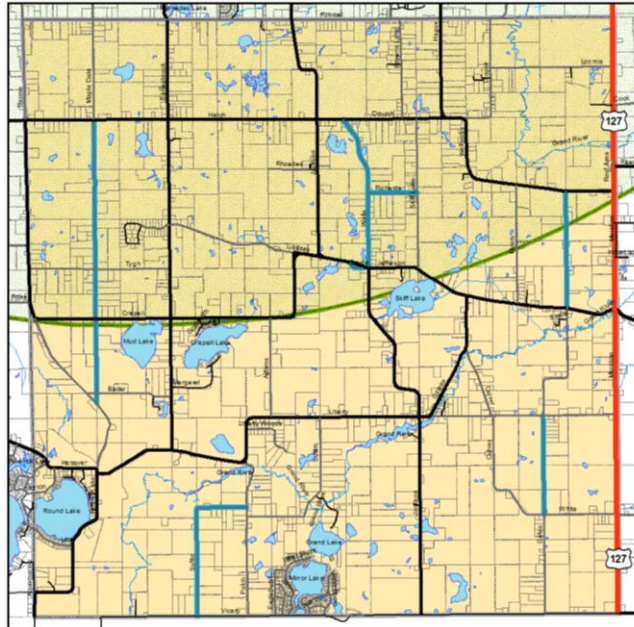
- An estimated 83.7% of those dwellings were occupied
 - An estimated 74.4% of those dwellings were owner-occupied
 - An estimated 9.3% were renter-occupied
- An estimated 16.3% of those dwellings were vacant
 - An estimated 8.4% of those dwellings were only used seasonally or occasionally
 - An estimated 7.9% of dwellings were vacant

Housing Types: 2010-2014



Liberty Township had an estimated 1,385 dwelling units

- An estimated 91.8% of dwellings were single units
 - An estimated 91.4% of dwellings were detached single units
- An estimated 3.8% of dwellings were in multi-unit buildings
 - An estimated 2.9% of dwellings were in duplexes
 - An estimated 0.4% of dwellings were in 3-4 unit buildings
 - An estimated 0.5% of dwellings were in 20 or more unit buildings
- An estimated 4.4% of dwellings were mobile homes



APPENDIX B

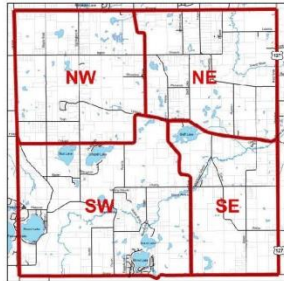
2017 LIBERTY TOWNSHIP SURVEY

**Liberty Township Master Plan
Community Planning Survey
Winter 2017**

The planning commission of Liberty Township is in the initial stages of creating the second edition of a master plan and seeks your input into the process. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and return it to the Township Office by March 30, 2017. Once compiled, the information will help the planning commission to develop a set of goals and policies which will influence the character of future development in Liberty Township.

Relationship and Location

1. Please indicate your relationship to the Township (*circle all that apply*).
 - a. resident
 - b. property owner
 - c. business owner
 - d. student
2. Using the adjacent map, please indicate the areas of the Township where your property is located (*circle all that apply*).
 - a. Northwest ¼ of the Township (NW)
 - b. Northeast ¼ of the Township (NE)
 - c. Southwest ¼ of the Township (SW)
 - d. Southeast ¼ of the Township (SE)



Quality of Life and Community Services

- | | Excellent | Good | Average | Fair | Poor | No opinion |
|--|-----------|------|---------|------|------|------------|
| 3. How do you rate the following (<i>place an [x] or a [✓] under the most appropriate response</i>): | | | | | | |
| a. The Township as a place to live? | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| b. The administration of the Township? | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| c. Liberty Fire/Rescue Department? | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| d. Round Lake County Park? | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| e. Township Hall Park? | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| f. Township Cemeteries | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| g. Highways, roads, and streets? | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |

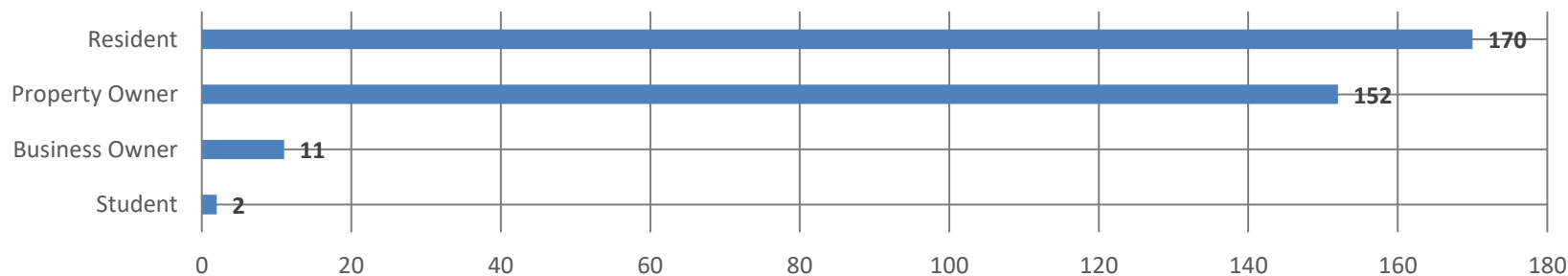
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Future land use and related planning issues

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------|-----|
| 4. Should the Township strive to preserve farmland? | [] | [] |
| 5. Should the Township strive to protect unique natural features, including topography, soils, lakes, and streams? | [] | [] |
| 6. Should additional residential development be encouraged within the Township? | [] | [] |
| If <u>Yes</u> , what form should that development take (<i>circle all that apply</i>)? | | |
| (a) Subdivisions? | | |
| (b) Medium-density housing like apartments, townhouses, or condominiums? | | |
| (c) Large lots (<i>circle only one lot size</i>)? | | |
| (1) At least ¼ acre in area? | | |
| (2) At least 1 acre in area? | | |
| (3) At least 2 acres in area? | | |
| (4) At least 5 acres in area? | | |
| 7. Should the Township encourage additional commercial/light industrial development? | [] | [] |
| If <u>Yes</u> , should that development be limited to the US-127 corridor? | | |
| 8. Should the Township pursue the development of a kayak/canoe launch site along the proposed Grand River Water Trail? | [] | [] |
| 9. Would you support a millage to maintain local roads in the Township? | [] | [] |
| 10. Would you support a millage to maintain Fire Department operations? | [] | [] |
| 11. With the recently passed laws in the State Legislature concerning medical marijuana dispensaries and growing operations, would you like to see the Liberty Township Board approve the appropriate zoning ordinances to allow such activity or to opt out and disallow these operations in the Township? | | |
| Allow () | Disallow () | |

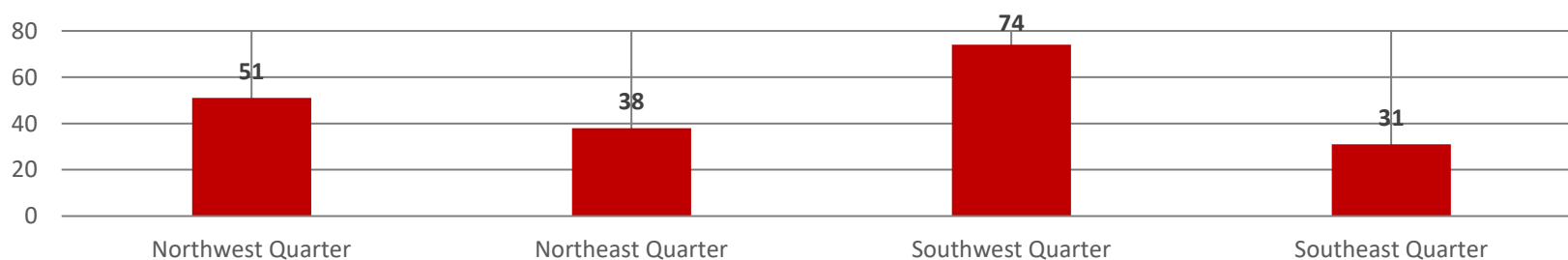
Relationship and Location

1. Please indicate your relationship to the Township.



Respondents were asked to indicate their relationship to the Township and were encouraged to circle all options that applied to them. Of the responses, residents accounted for 50.7% property owners 45.4%, business owners 3.3%, and students 0.6%. (n=335). Since respondents were asked to indicate multiple options if applicable, some overlap between responses occurred.

2. Please indicate the areas of the Township where your property is located.

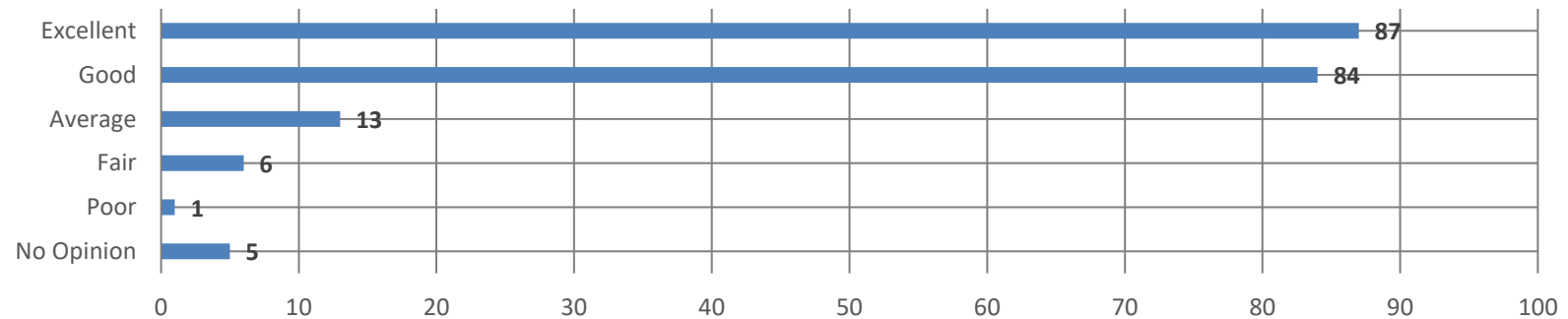


Respondents were asked to indicate the location of their properties in the Township and were encouraged to circle all applicable options. Accordingly, 38.1% of responses indicated the 'SW quarter', 26.3% the 'NW quarter', 19.6% the 'NE quarter', and 16.0% the 'SE quarter' (n=194). Since respondents were asked to indicate multiple options, if applicable, some overlap between responses occurred.

Quality of Life and Community Services

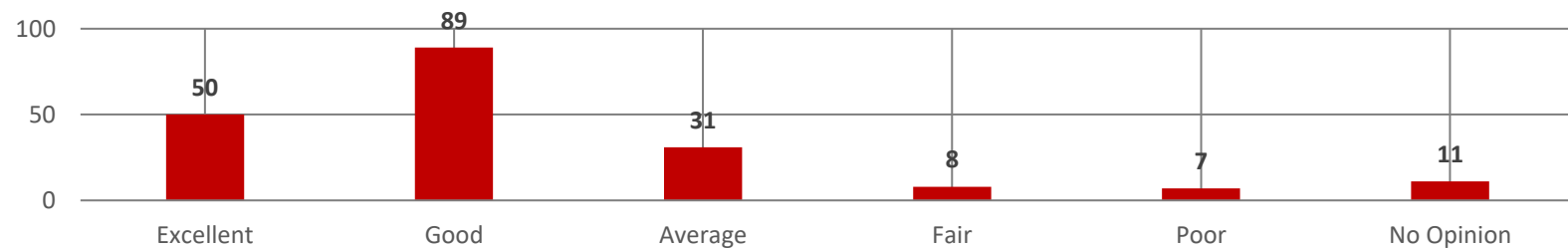
3. How do you rate the following?

a. The Township as a place to live.

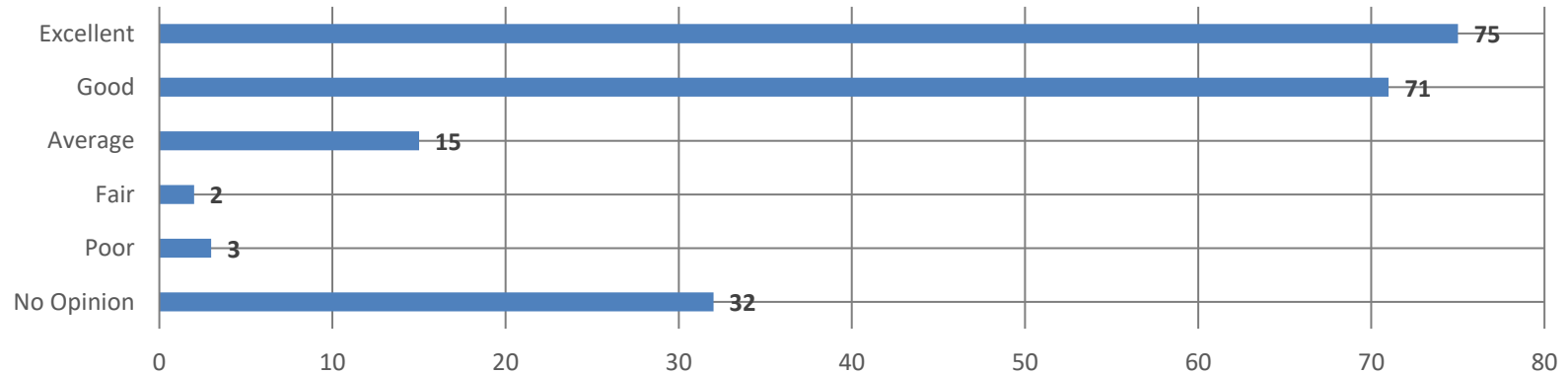


When asked to rate the Township as a place to live, 44.4% of respondents selected 'excellent'. 42.9% 'good', 6.6% 'average', 3.1% 'fair,' and' 0.5% 'poor' (n=196). 'No opinion' was selected by 2.6% of respondents.

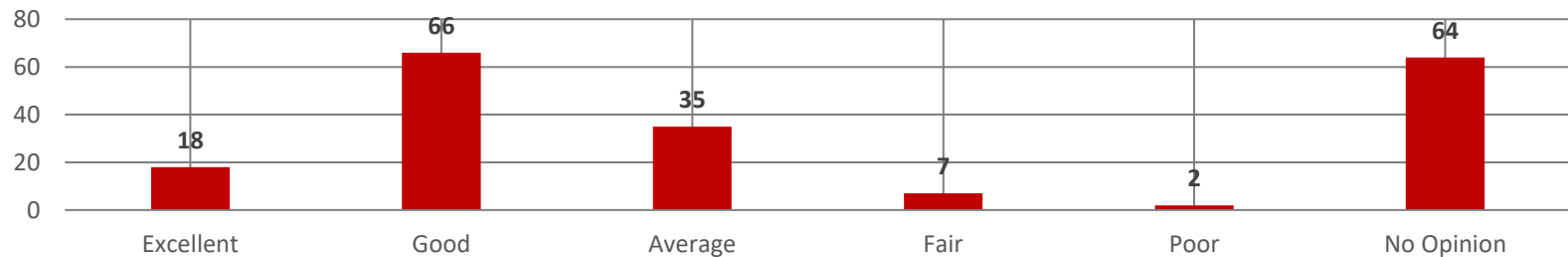
b. The administration of the Township.



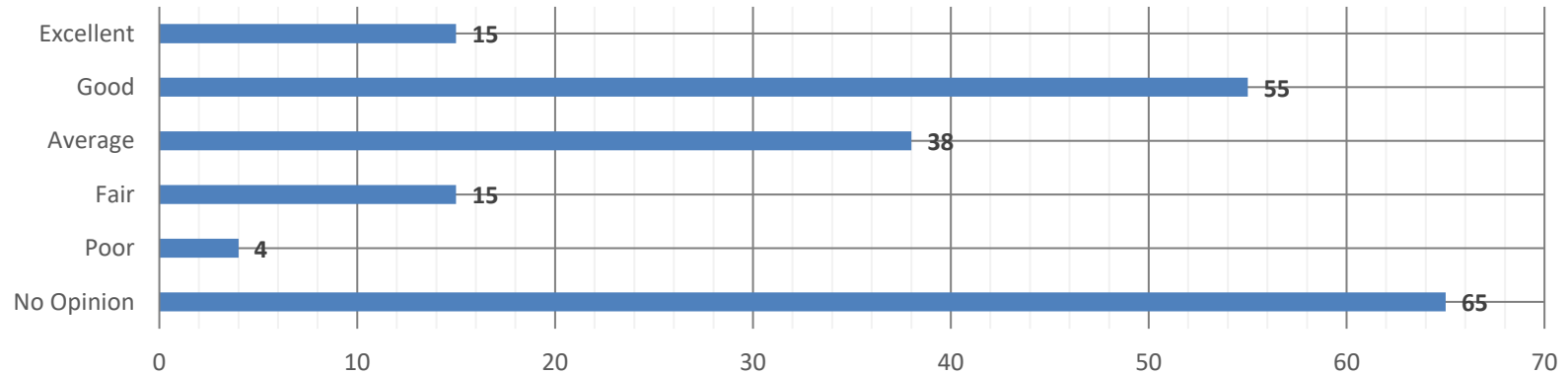
When asked to rate the Township as a place to live, 25.5% of respondents selected 'excellent', 45.4% 'good', 15.8% 'average', 4.1% 'fair,' and 3.6% 'poor' (n=196). 'No opinion' was selected by 5.6% of respondents.

c. Liberty Fire/Rescue Department.

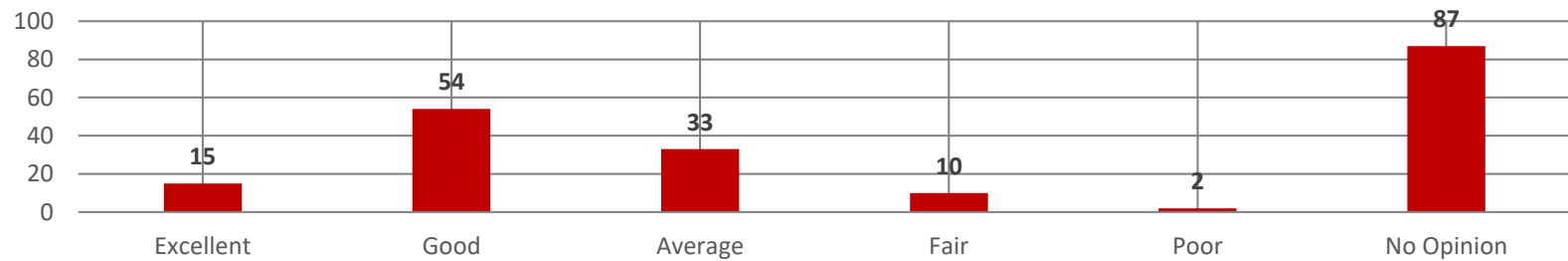
When asked to rate the Liberty Fire/Rescue Department, 37.9% of respondents selected 'excellent', 35.9% 'good', 7.6% 'average', 1.0% 'fair', and 1.5% 'poor' (n=198). 'No opinion' was selected by 16.2% of respondents.

d. Round Lake County Park.

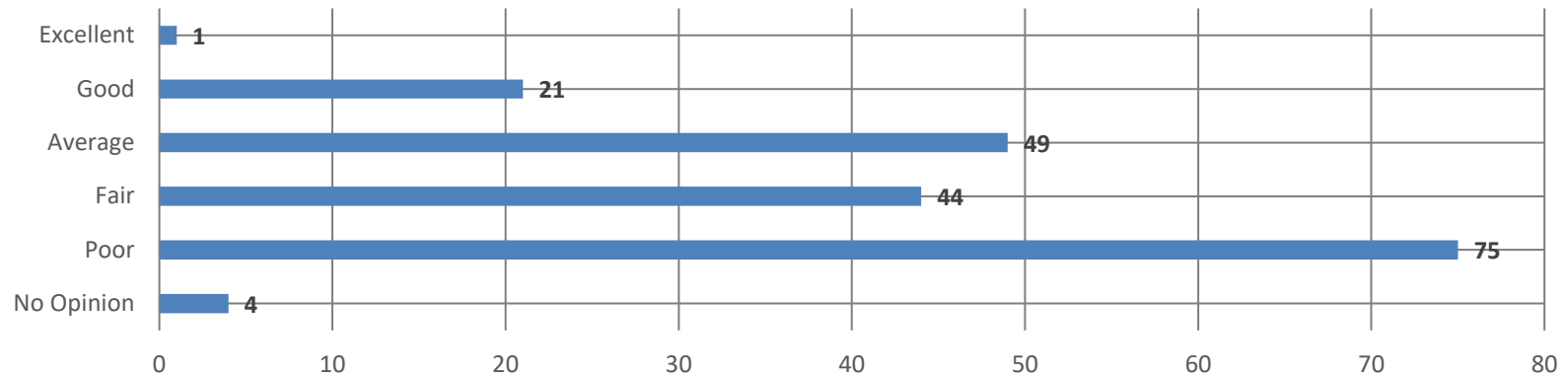
When asked to rate Round Lake County Park, 9.4% of respondents selected 'excellent', 34.4% 'good', 22.9% 'average', 3.6% 'fair', and 1.0% 'poor' (n=192). 'No opinion' was selected by 33.3% of respondents.

e. **Township Hall Park.**

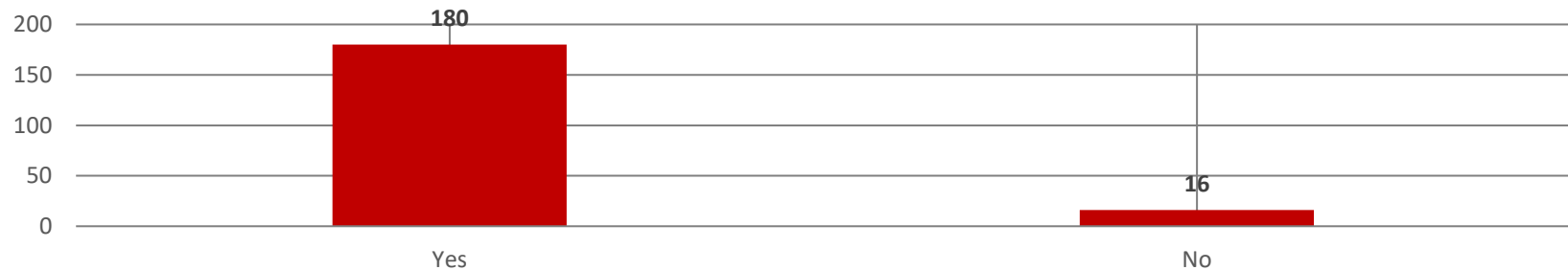
When asked to rate the Township Hall Park, 7.8% of respondents selected 'excellent', 28.6% 'good', 19.8% 'average', (7.8%) 'fair', and 2.1% 'poor' (n=192). 'No opinion' was selected by 33.9% of respondents.

f. **Township Cemeteries.**

When asked to rate the Township's cemeteries, 7.5% of respondents selected 'excellent', 26.9% 'good', 16.4% 'average', 5.0% 'fair', and 1.0% 'poor' (n=201). 'No opinion' was selected by 43.3% of respondents.

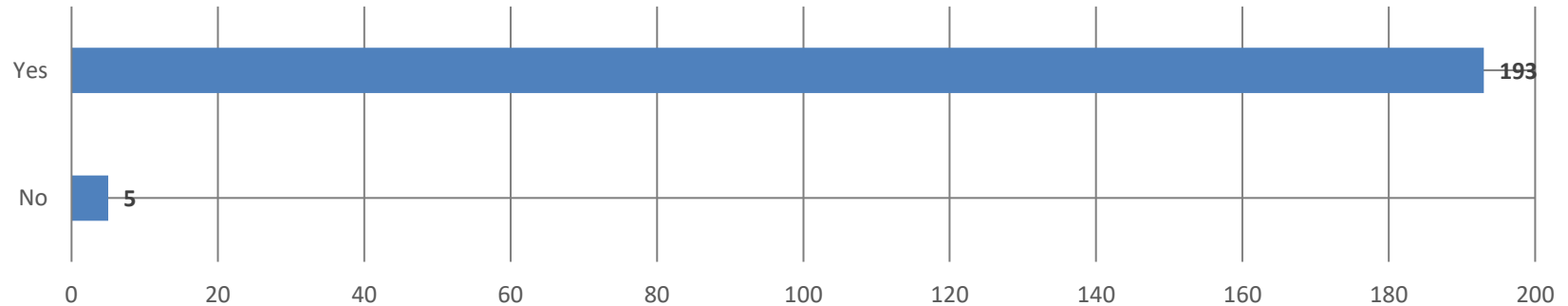
g. **Highways, road, and streets.**

When asked to rate highways, road, and streets, only 0.5% of respondents selected 'excellent', 10.8% 'good', 25.3% 'average' 22.7% 'fair', and 38.7% 'poor' (n=194). 'No opinion' was selected by 2.1% of respondents.

Future land use and related planning issues4. **Should the Township strive to preserve farmland?**

When asked if the Township should strive to preserve farmland, 91.8% of respondents said 'yes' and 8.2% said 'no' (n=196).

5. **Should the Township strive to protect unique natural features, including topography, soils, lakes, and streams?**

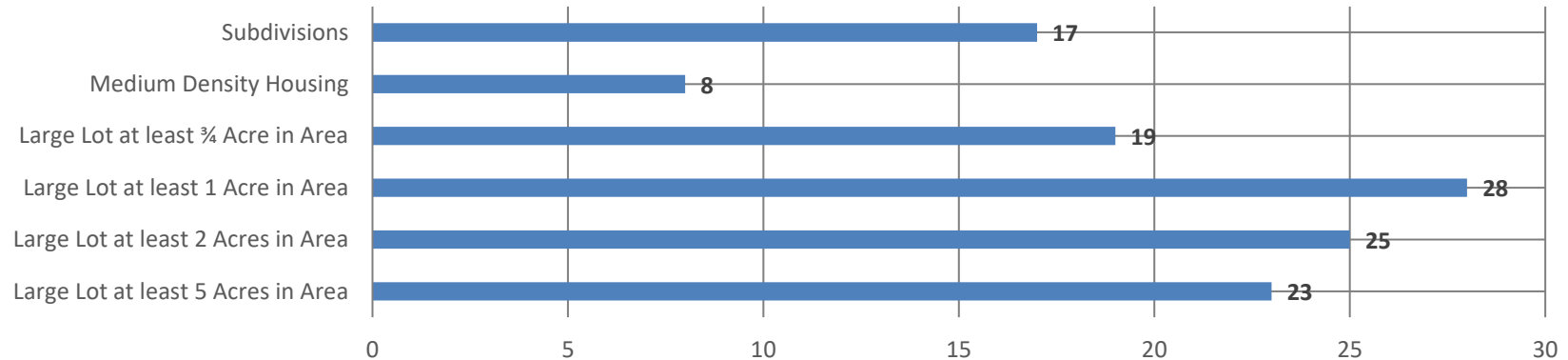


When asked if the Township should strive to protect unique natural features, including topography, soils, lakes, and streams, 97.5% of respondents said 'yes' and 2.5% said 'no' (n=198).

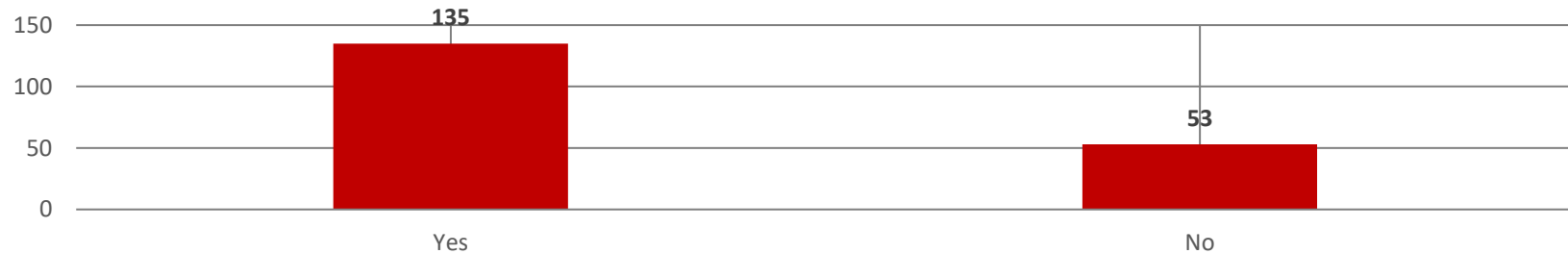
6. **Should additional residential development be encouraged within the Township?**



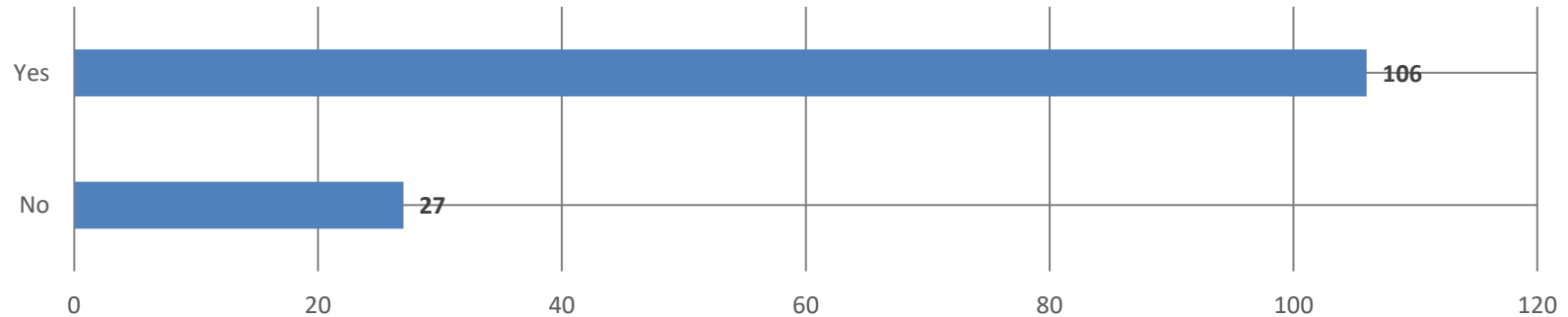
When asked if the Township should encourage additional residential development within the Township, 51.1% of respondents said 'yes' and 48.9% said 'no' (n=120).

If Yes, what form should that development take?

When asked what form residential development should take, 14.2% of respondents selected 'subdivisions', 6.7% 'medium density housing', and 79.2% of respondents 'large lots': at least 15.8% selected '¼ of an acre in area', 23.3% 'at least 1 acre in area', 20.8% 'at least 2 acres in area', and 19.2% 'at least 5 acres in area' (n=120).

7. Should the Township encourage additional commercial/light industrial development?

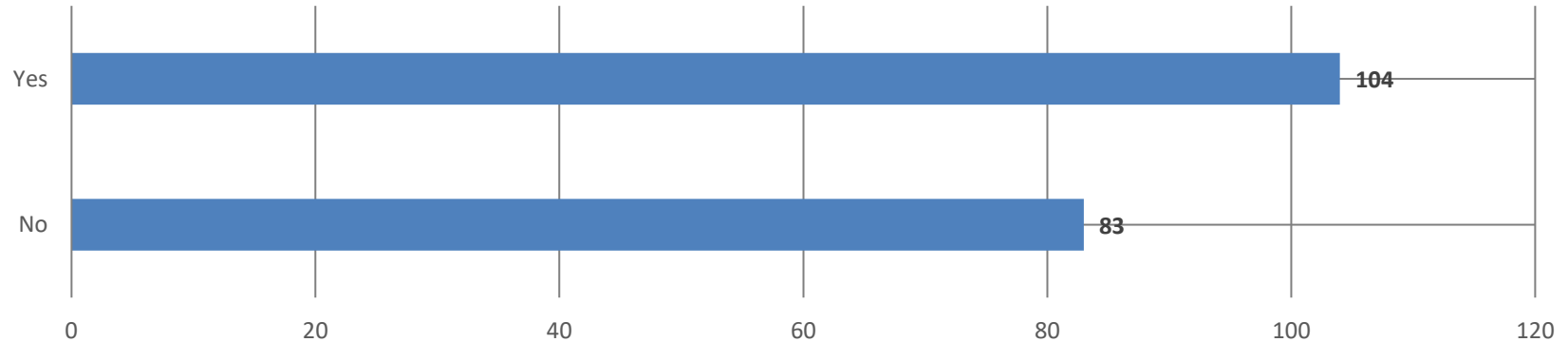
When asked if the Township should encourage additional commercial/light industrial development within the Township, 71.8% of respondents said 'yes' and 28.2% said 'no' (n=188).

If Yes, should that development be limited to the US-127 corridor?

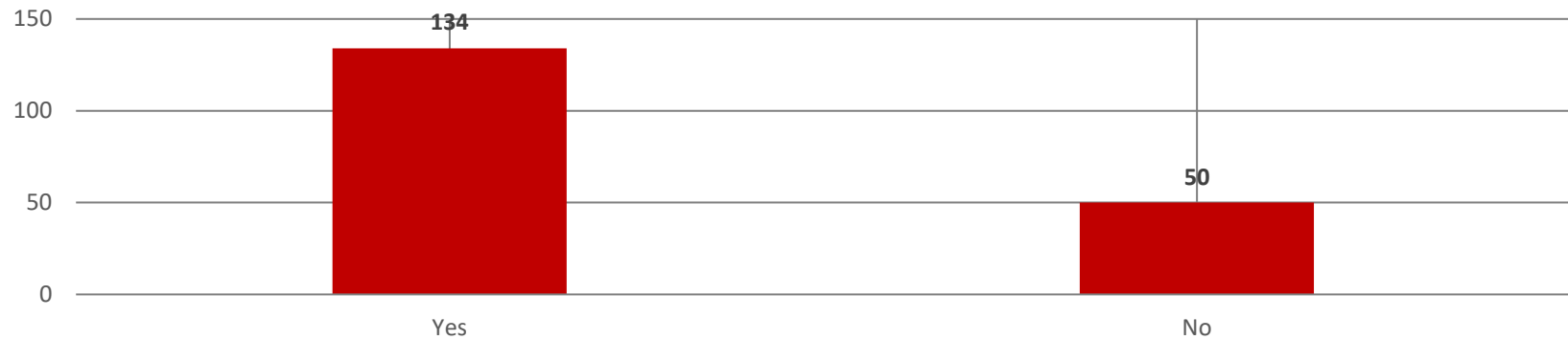
When asked if that additional commercial/light industrial development should be limited to the US-127 corridor, 79.7% of respondents said 'yes' and 20.3% said 'no' (n=133).

8. Should the Township pursue the development of a kayak/canoe launch site along the proposed Grand River Water Trail?

When asked if the Township should pursue the development of a kayak/canoe launch site along the proposed Grand River Water Trail, 76.6% of respondents said 'yes' and 23.4% said 'no' (n=188).

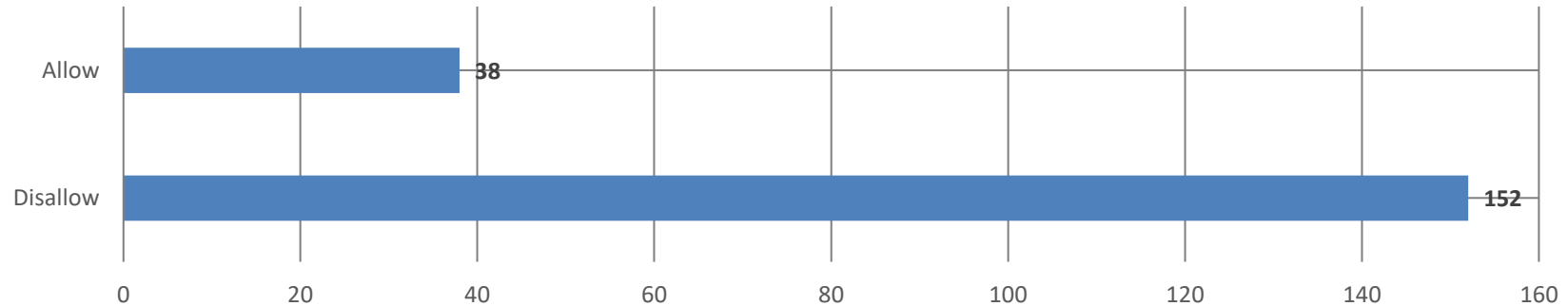
9. Would you support a millage to maintain local roads in the Township?

When asked if they would support a millage to maintain local Township roads, 55.6% of respondents said 'yes' and 44.4% said 'no' (n=187).

10. Would you support a millage to maintain Fire Department operations?

When asked if they would support a millage to maintain fire department operations, 72.8% of respondents said 'yes' and 27.2% said 'no' (n=187).

11. Do you want to allow medical marijuana dispensaries/grow operations?



When asked if medical marijuana dispensaries/grow operations should be allowed, only 20.0% of responses selected 'allow' and 80.0% selected 'disallow' (n=190).

General Comments

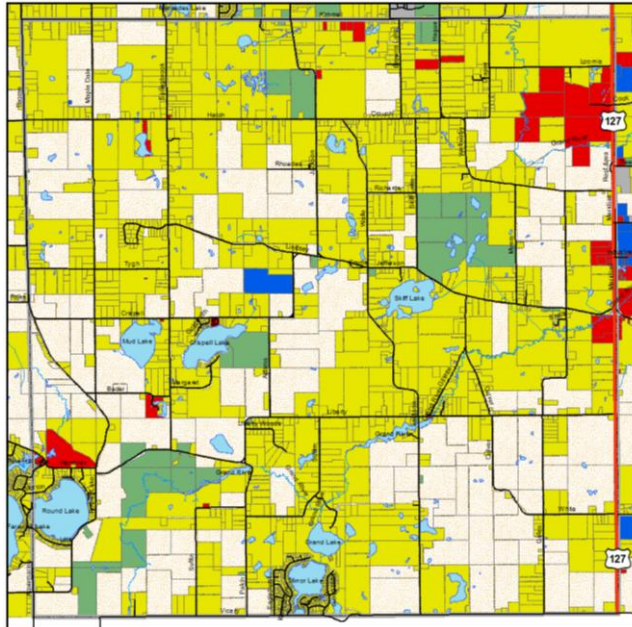
Although not specifically solicited, the following comments were provided by survey respondents:

1. Reynolds and Gillets [Lake Roads] are in miserable shape.
2. Some [canoers/kayakers] do not respect private property -- parking and launching on private land, leaving trash, blocking roads and drives.
3. There are places in the township that are a mess and need to be cleaned up! By the store, on [US] 127. Do we have an ordinance officer? [US] 127 and Jefferson -- entrance to our planned community is a mess. Weeds, [], trash -- should be cleaned up - maybe some shrubs etc.
4. [Medical marijuana] is opening a can of worms. More trouble for the township.
5. Wish dogs were allowed [at Round Lake County Park].
6. No [regarding medical marijuana], better registration enforcement. More discussion within the township population to come up with the answers required.
7. [Millage for Fire Department regulations] is a loaded question. If it is for an increase, no.
8. Please look into turning Crouch Rd. and South Jackson [Rd.] into a four way stop. Needs to be looked at before someone is killed. Lots of accidents and very high speeds down South Jackson Rd. with low visibility on Crouch Rd. I believe there is lots of concern for anyone who [travels] down those two roads. Thank you.

9.	But we want to preserve farmland. We don't want any governmental restrictions. No regulations.
10.	We want free market processes. Allow the free market to determine things. Less government intrusion is better. Also -- we want to keep this country and not the city. Thanks for all you do!
11.	[At least 2 acres in area] in ag. Area.
12.	Doesn't the county maintain roads[?] More information needed to support [a millage]. What roads and services would cover, main roads, back roads, maintenance, equipment, etc.?
13.	[Preservation of farmland and protection of unique natural features are] critical issues [and should include [groundwater].
14.	[Additional residential development should] not be discouraged either.
15.	No. Such large lots tend to break up farmland and open space into units that are very difficult to manage sustainably.
16.	[Additional commercial/light industrial development should be limited] primarily [to the US-127 corridor].
17.	We should really understand what [medical marijuana] could mean to the community. The prison was a disaster for this town. Demographics, schools, crime, all as a negative result. Would marijuana growing aid the economic improvement of the town or destroy it? Issue is more than just jobs. What kind of jobs? What level of taxes? What effect/improvement to the community?
18.	Do not live in the township, but it is a beautiful rural area.
19.	Jefferson Rd. [is] bad.
20.	Thanks for allowing [input] from [residents].
21.	Hell no [regarding medical marijuana]!
22.	[Highways, roads and streets are] worse than poor and why I answered poor to [the Township as a place to live].
23.	Isn't [road maintenance] a county responsibility?
24.	What is left besides the township hall regarding natural resource protection?
25.	We don't want drug smoking low lifes coming into our community inviting crime. We will need more [protection] which we would be paying more money out in an- other millage for police protection.
26.	Crouch Road needs to be repaved desperately. Crouch Road speed limit needs to be reduced to 45 MPH. Crouch Road is narrow, hilly, has lots of houses, and lots of blind spots. Heavy trucks driving high speed on Crouch Road have almost killed me several times.
27.	East Liberty [Cemetery] needs water and landscaping -- trees -- future. We will contribute to this.
28.	We admire the Township Board and Government. Dad was resident and Jackson rep in Lansing.

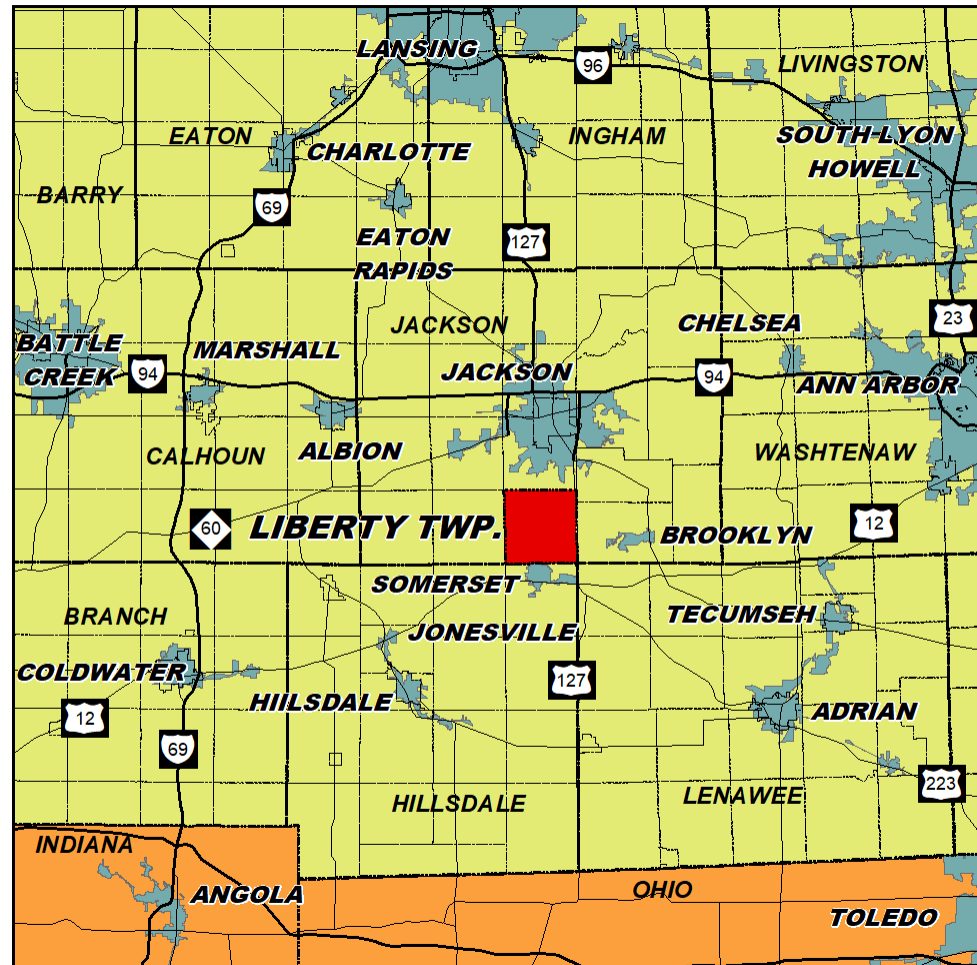
29.	We should preserve [farmland] but also check for health violations once in a while.
30.	No room [for additional residential development].
31.	We moved here for the beauty and the great history of Liberty Township. We do not want adults and teenagers wandering around hopped up on marijuana. If by chance they do where is our police dept. to protect us? (we have none)
32.	[Support for preservation of farmland] depends on method.
33.	Details [needed regarding millage questions].
34.	Not familiar with the [medical marijuana] law? Already have [a] growing operation don't we?
35.	Making the shoulders of the roads wider and creating and marketing destination areas would encourage bicyclists to bike this area. It is such a beautiful area.
36.	[Subdivisions should] only [be] close to Summit Township boundaries where the population is more dense.
37.	Maybe also recreate the Liberty Village Area [with commercial/light industrial] and around Deer Run Golf Course.
38.	Maybe [regarding a millage], but a regional fire department is needed.
39.	Thank you for doing this. I think it is an important process.
40.	With regard to quality of life, I would like to see ordinances strengthened and enforced. Residential classifications, to prohibit storage of unused and junk vehicles within public view from all roadways.
41.	[Support a road millage] only if monies are used expressly for this purpose and create a noticeable difference (e.g., Kimmel Rd. which has been horrible for a number of years now).
42.	No way [on road millage]. We are already paying [too] much!
43.	There are enough [marijuana dispensaries and growing operations] in Jackson and surrounding areas to meet the needs of those who wish/require it for pain control.
44.	Ban wood burning heat systems in dense residential area. Smoke pollution - health hazard to senior residents.
45.	Aren't we [maintaining roads/operating a fire department] already?
46.	[No on a road millage which is a] county and state responsibility.
47.	Fire department is [ineffective] and more money cannot solve the problem.
48.	I have resided [in the Township] for 33 years. I have harvested trees on said property. Someone pushed to have said parcel changed to residential (from ag.) 20 years ago, why!? I protested to no avail.
49.	[Additional commercial/light industrial should not be encouraged] without planning sewers etc. There is already a plumbing business a ¼ mile south in a residential zone.

50.	Absolutely no [on medical marijuana]!
51.	No on subdivisions and medium-density housing.
52.	Prior to approving new millages, would need to see a full accounting of what is now budgeted for these activities and how it is spent. If the millage is reasonable we would support it.
53.	For road repairs!
54.	Pass no ordinance [regarding medical marijuana].
55.	I would love to have Maple Dale black topped.



APPENDIX C







MAPPING



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Vicinity

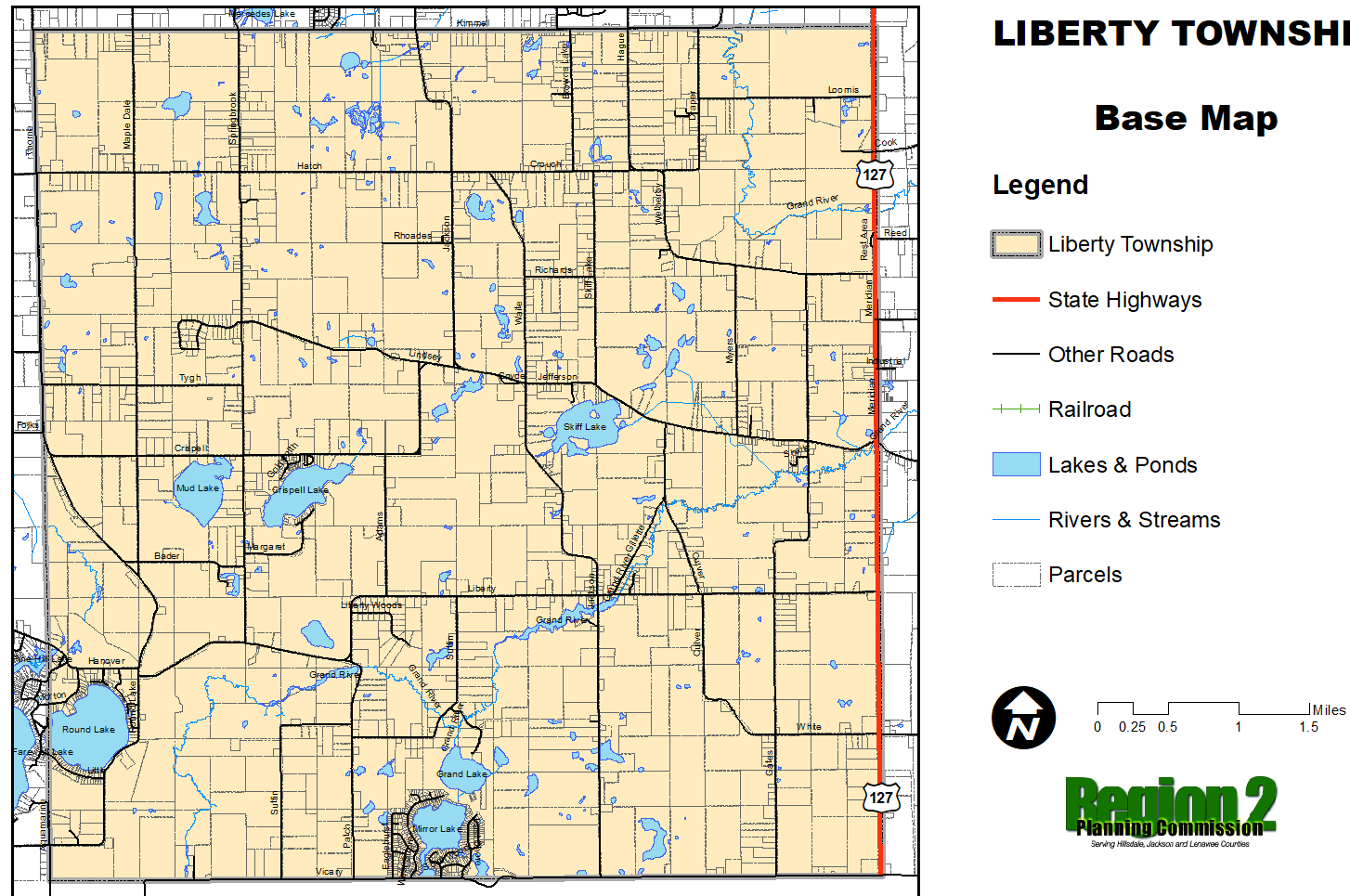
Legend

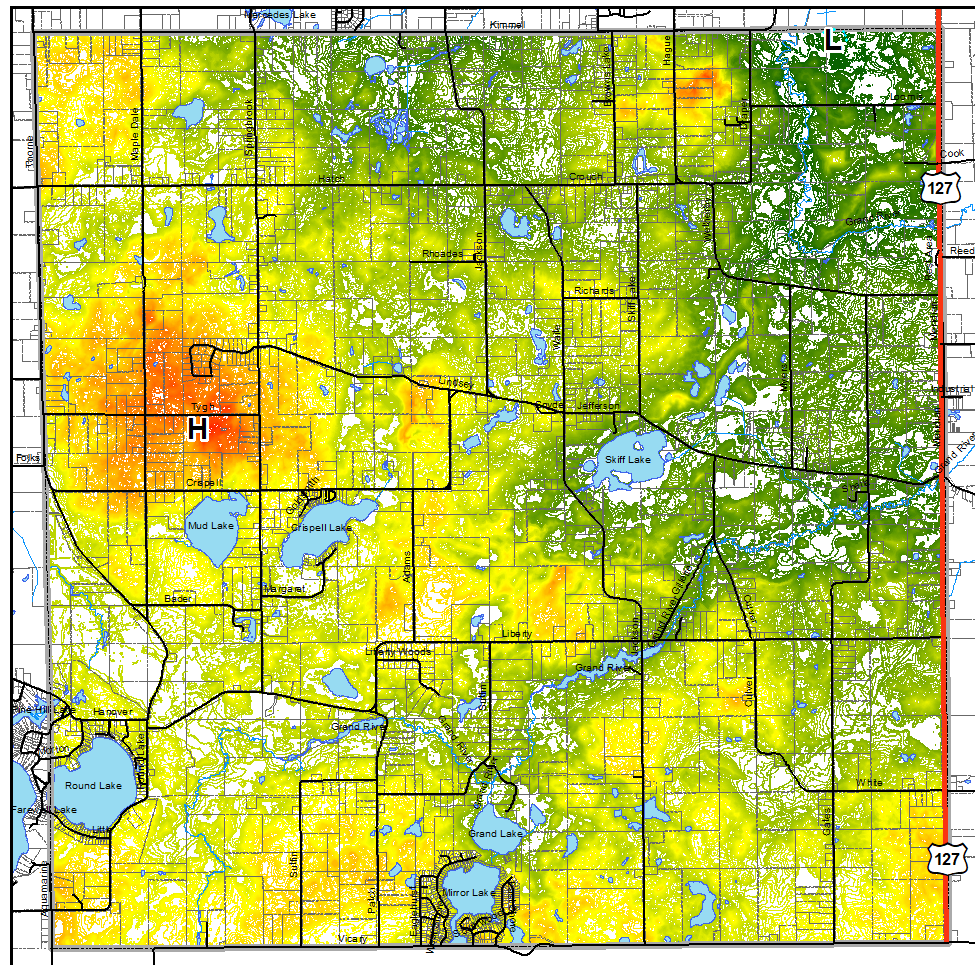
-  Liberty Township
-  Urban Areas
-  Michigan Counties
-  Other States
-  Freeways
-  Other Highways



0 3 6 12 18 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties

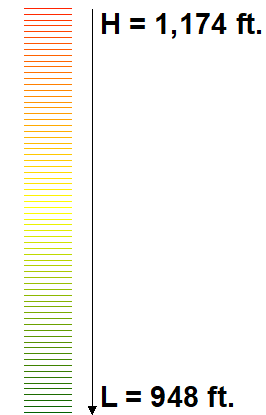




LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

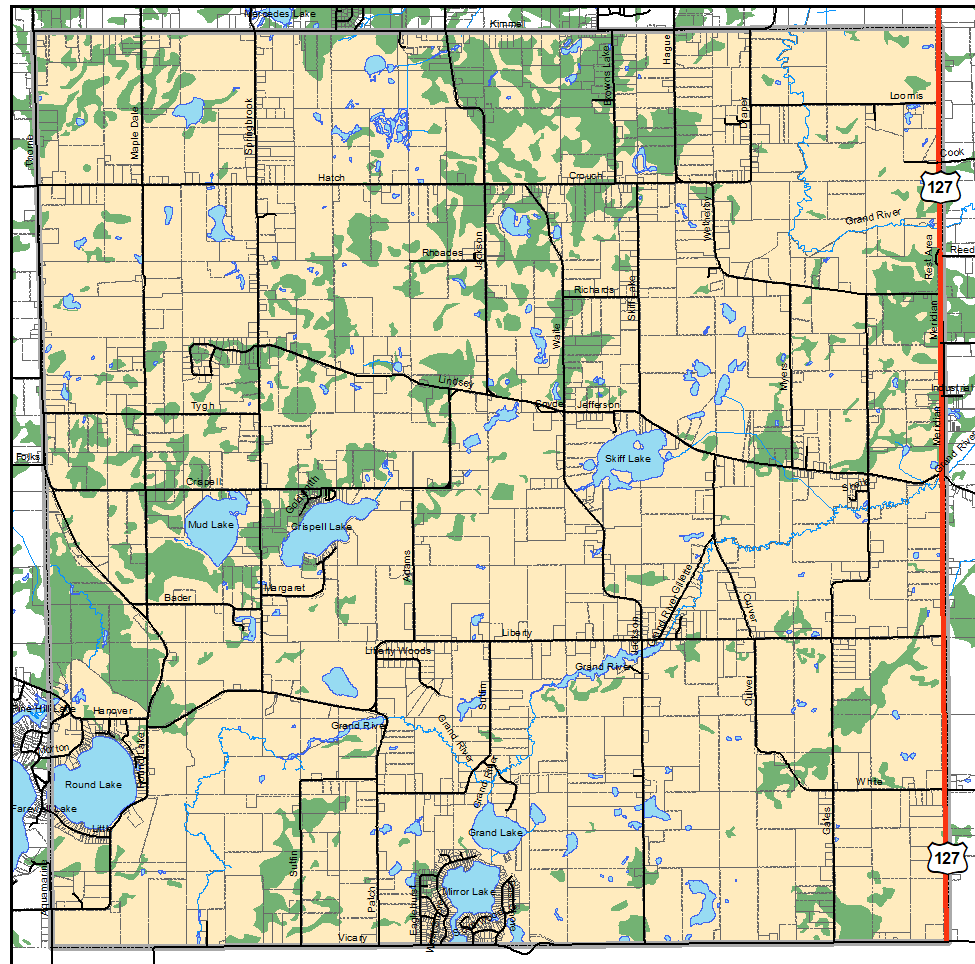
Topography

Legend



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Most Productive Agricultural Soils

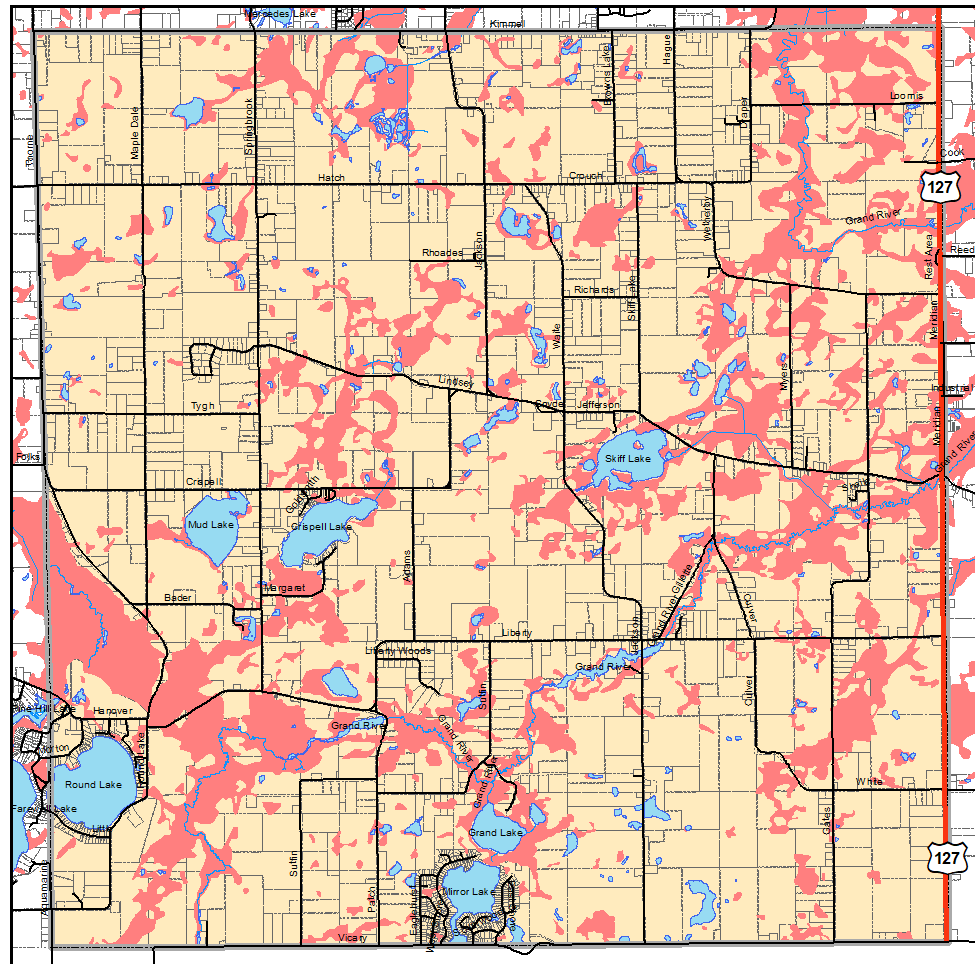
Legend

Most Productive Agricultural Soils



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hilldale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Hydric Soils

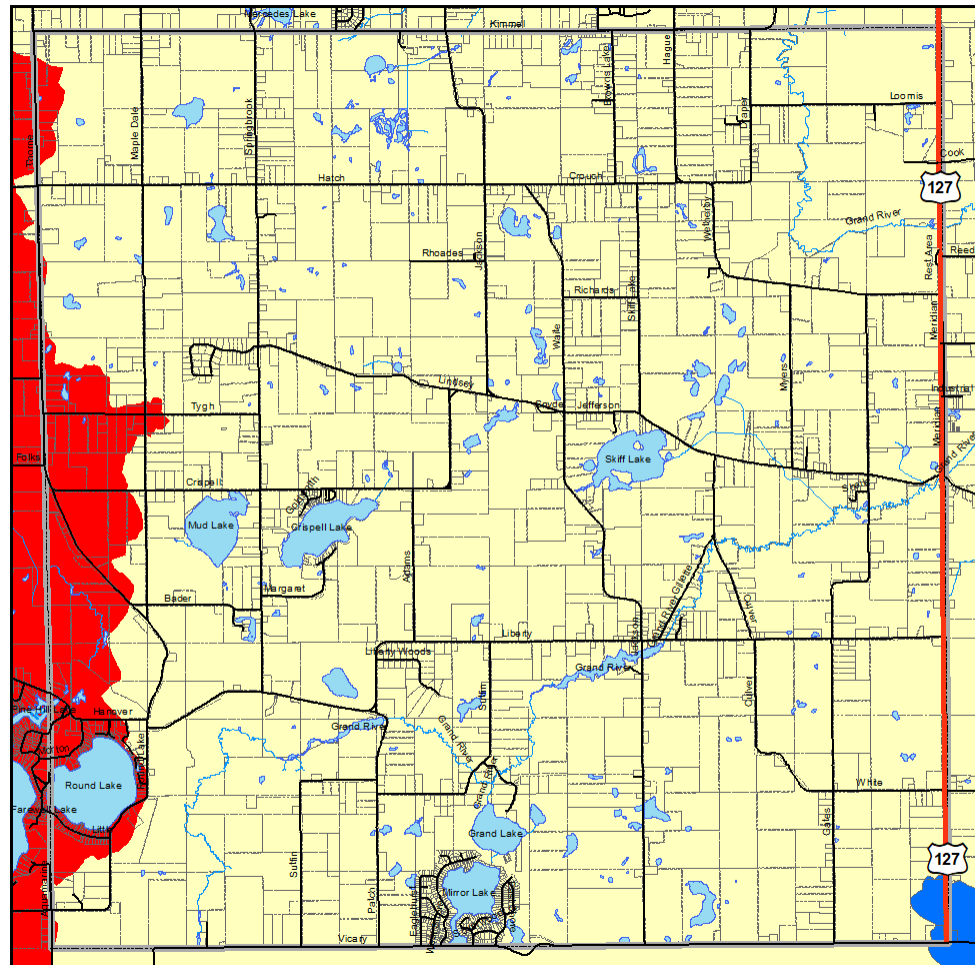
Legend

■ Hydric Soils



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

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Planning Commission
Serving Hilldale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Watersheds

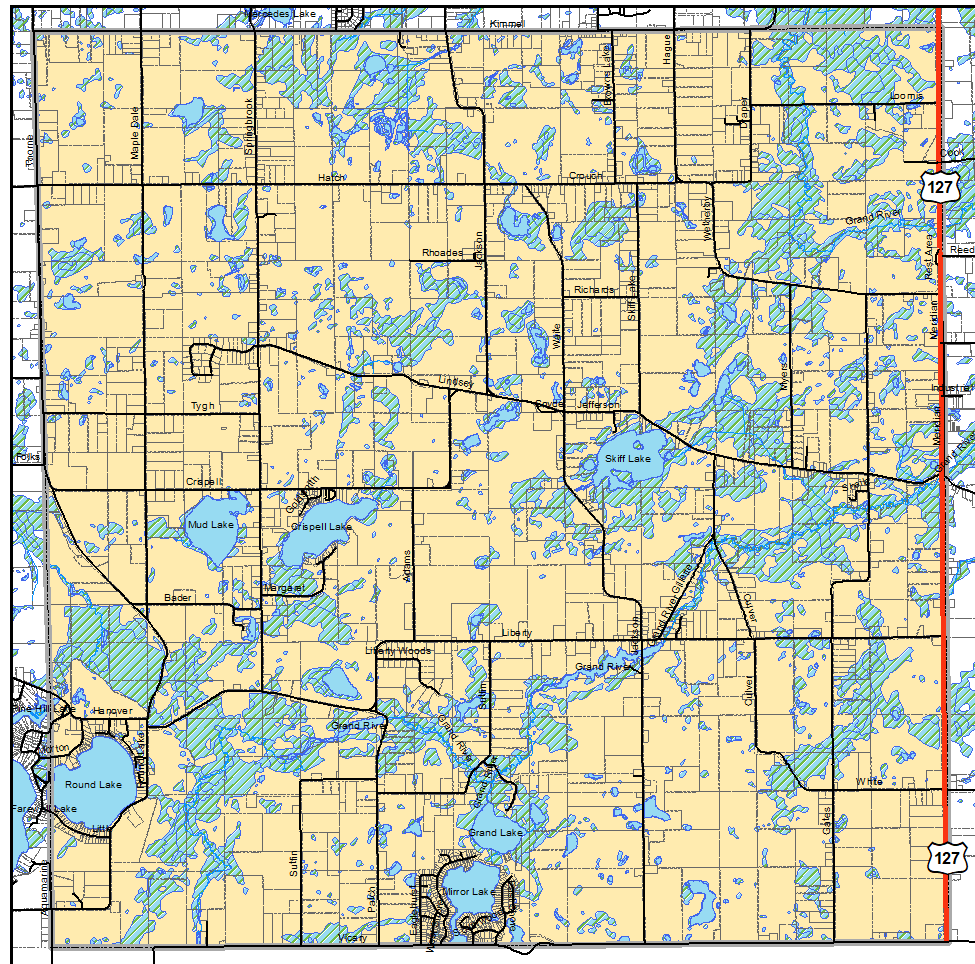
Legend

- Upper Grand River
- Kalamazoo River
- Raisin River



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Hydrology

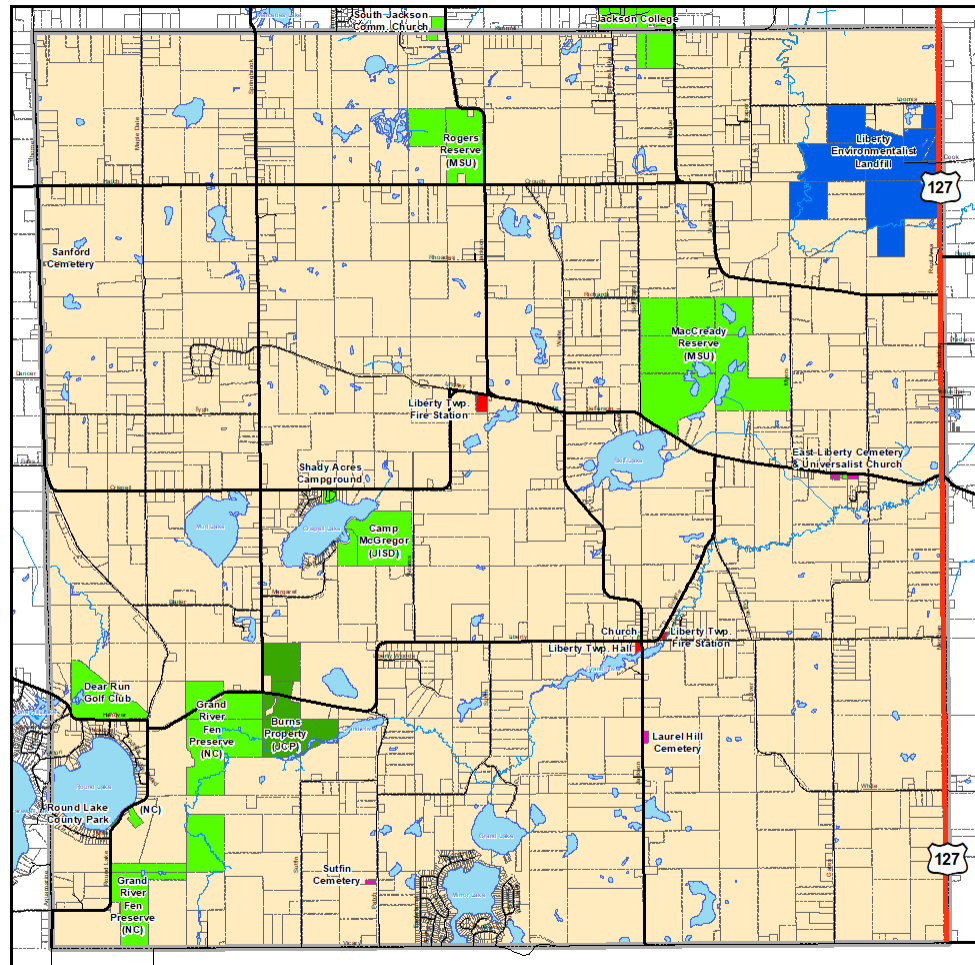
Legend

- Lakes & Ponds
- Rivers & Streams
- Wetlands



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hildale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Institutions

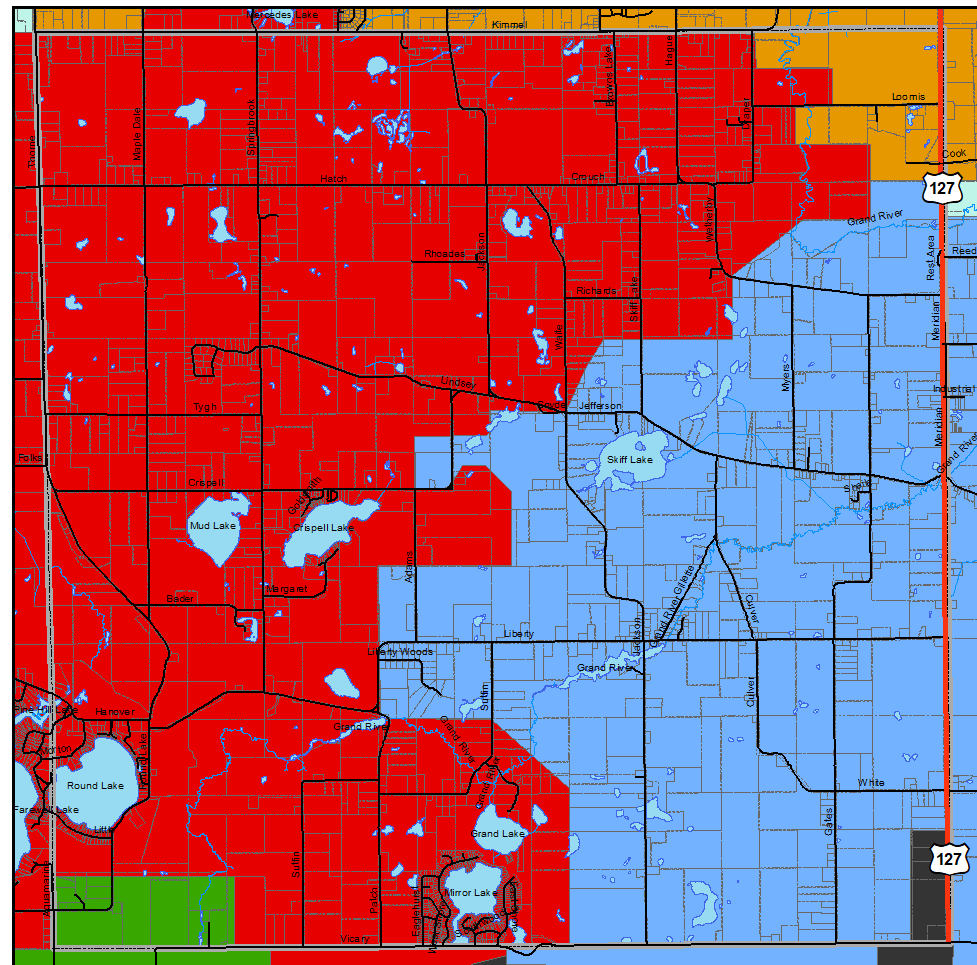
Legend

- Township Hall and Fire Stations
- Cemeteries
- County Parkland
- Other Institutions
- Liberty Environmentalist Landfill



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hilldale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties

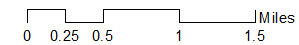


LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

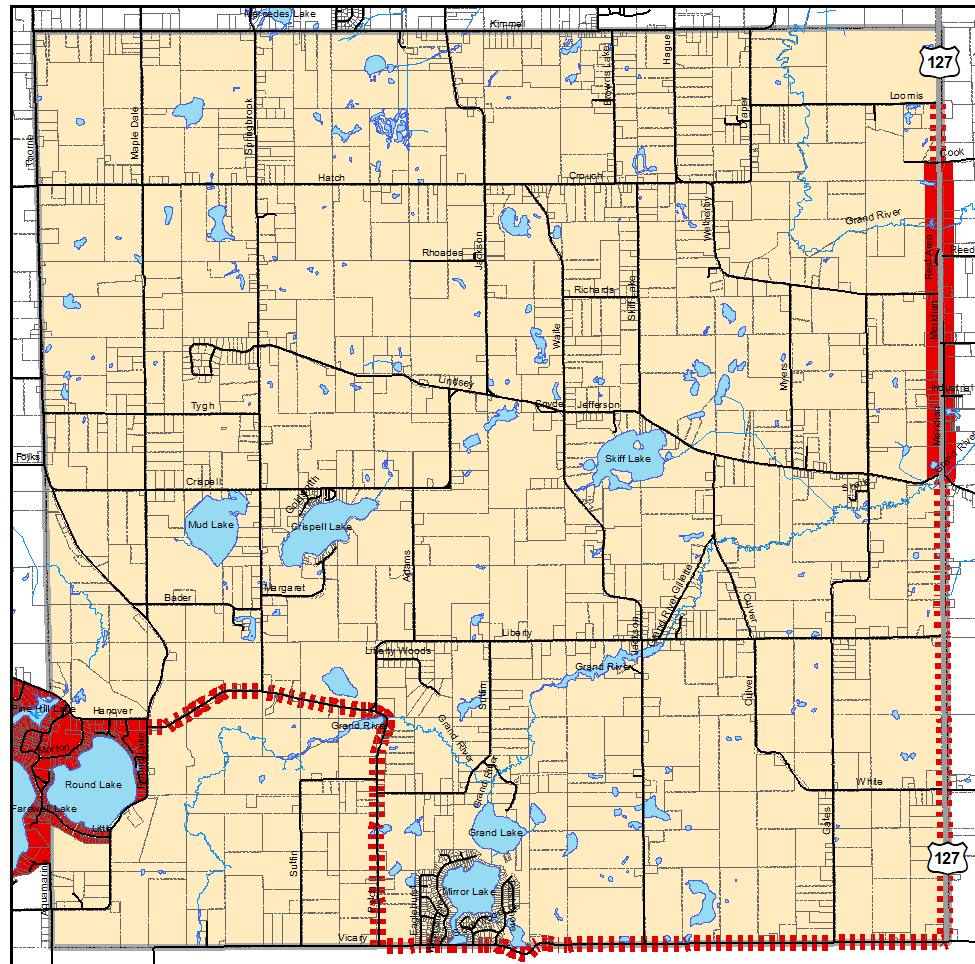
School Districts

Legend

-  Hanover-Horton Schools
 Columbia School District
 Jackson Public Schools
 North Adams-Jerome Schools
 Addison Community Schools



Region 2
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Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Public Sewer

Legend

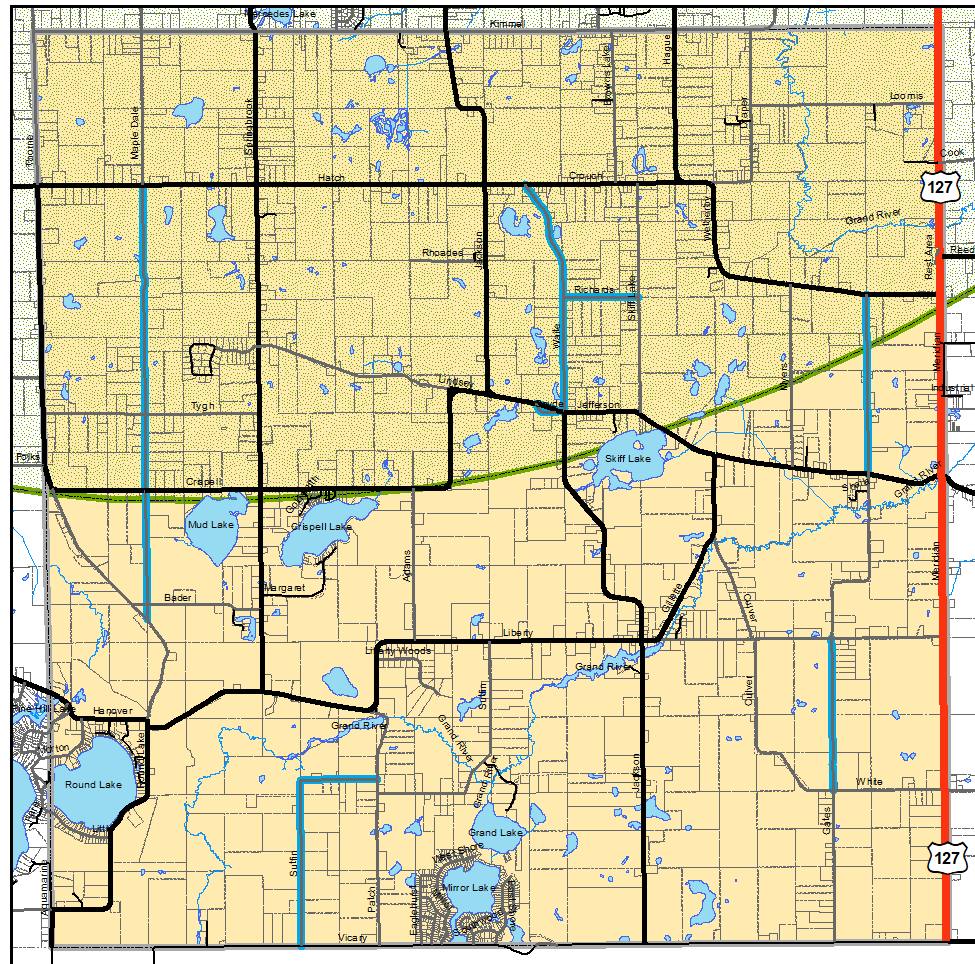
Sanitary Sewer Service Areas

Force Sewer Main



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Transportation

Roads

- State Highway
- County Primary Road
- County Local Road
- Local Gravel Road
- Private Road

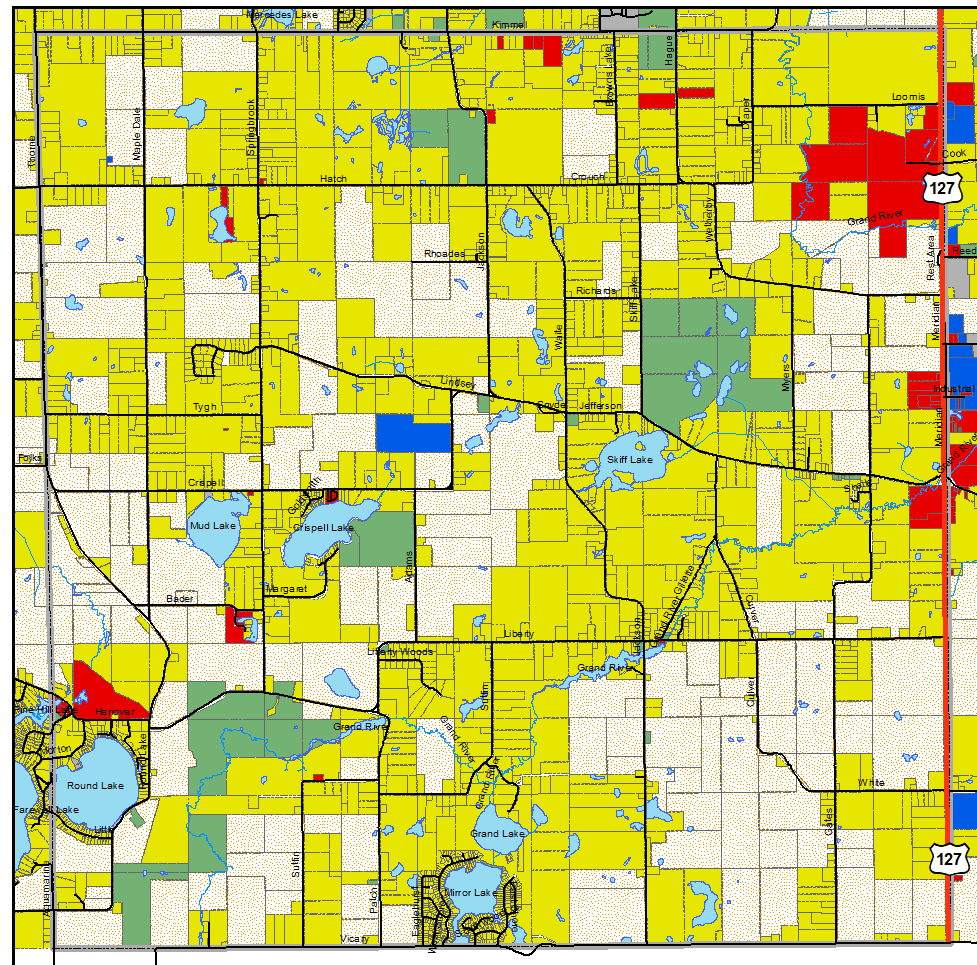
Airports

- Zone D - Any structure over 200 ft requires a permit from the Jackson County Airport



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

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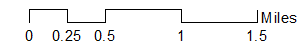


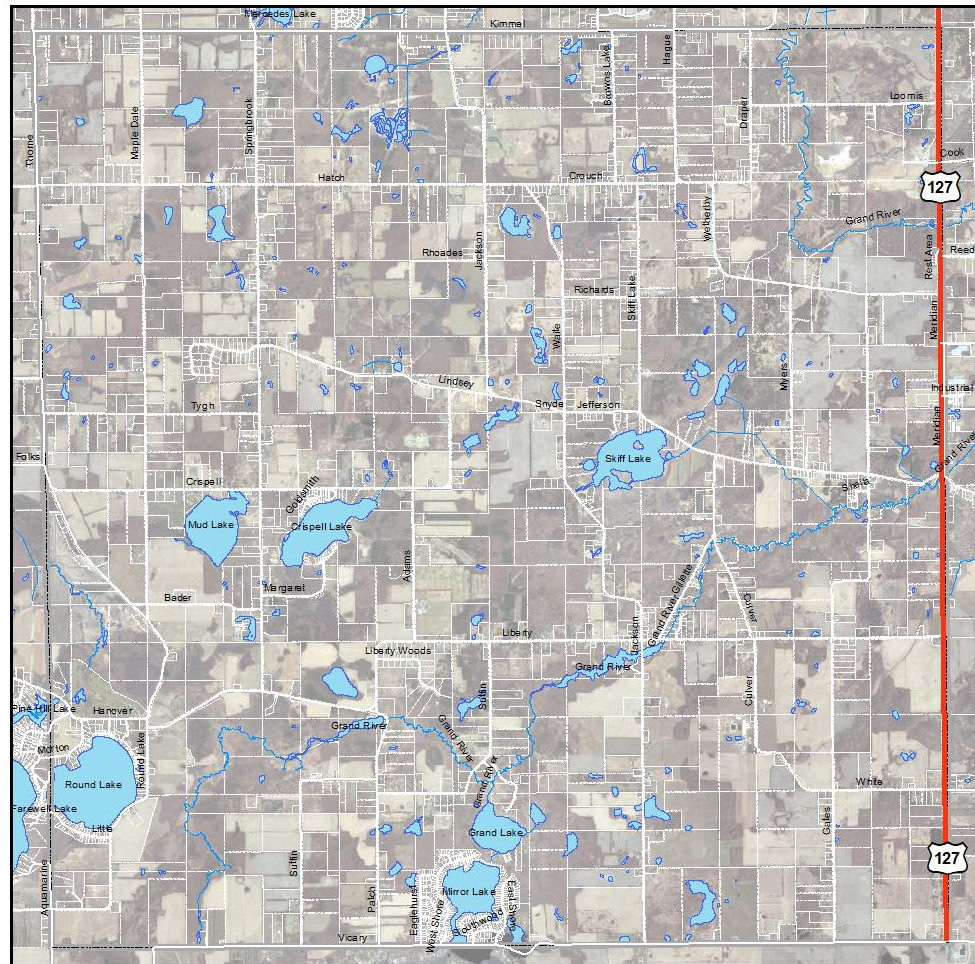
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Property Assessment (Existing Land Use)

Legend

-  Agricultural
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Exempt
-  Other












LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Aerial Map

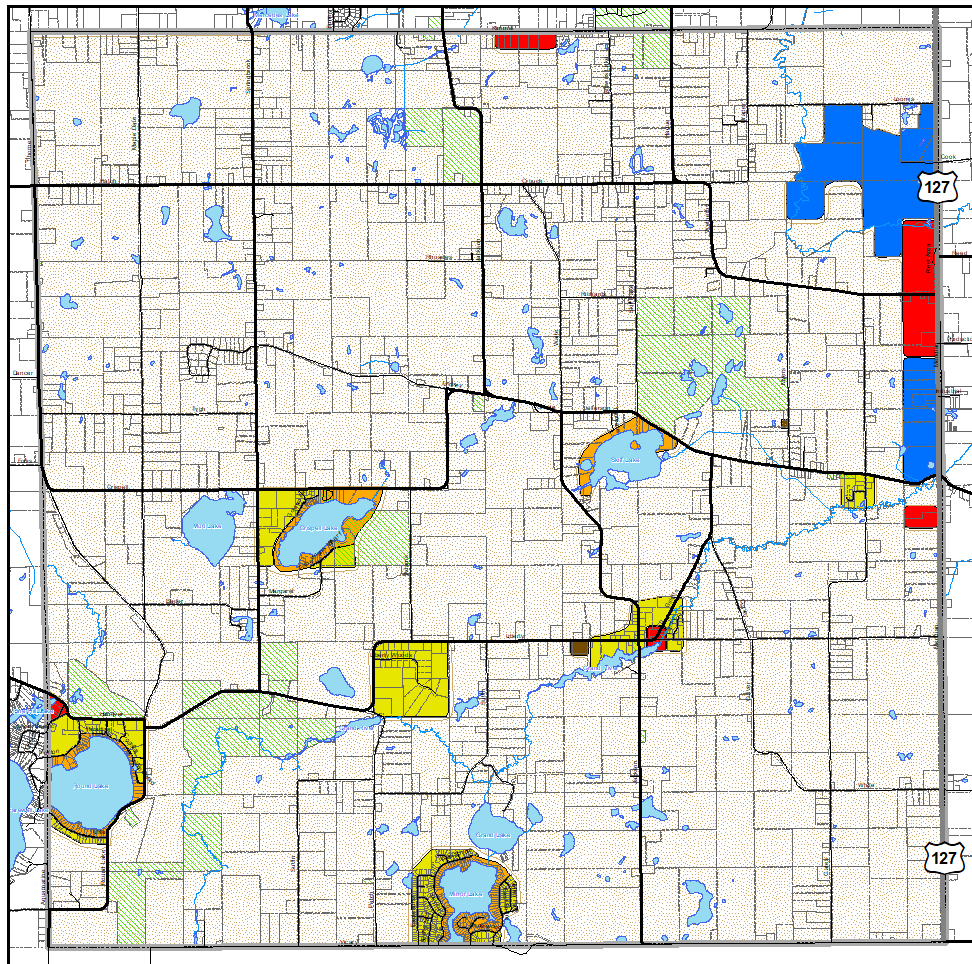
Legend

-  Liberty Township
-  State Highways
-  Other Roads
-  Railroad
-  Lakes & Ponds
-  Rivers & Streams
-  Parcels



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles








Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hilldale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Future Land Use

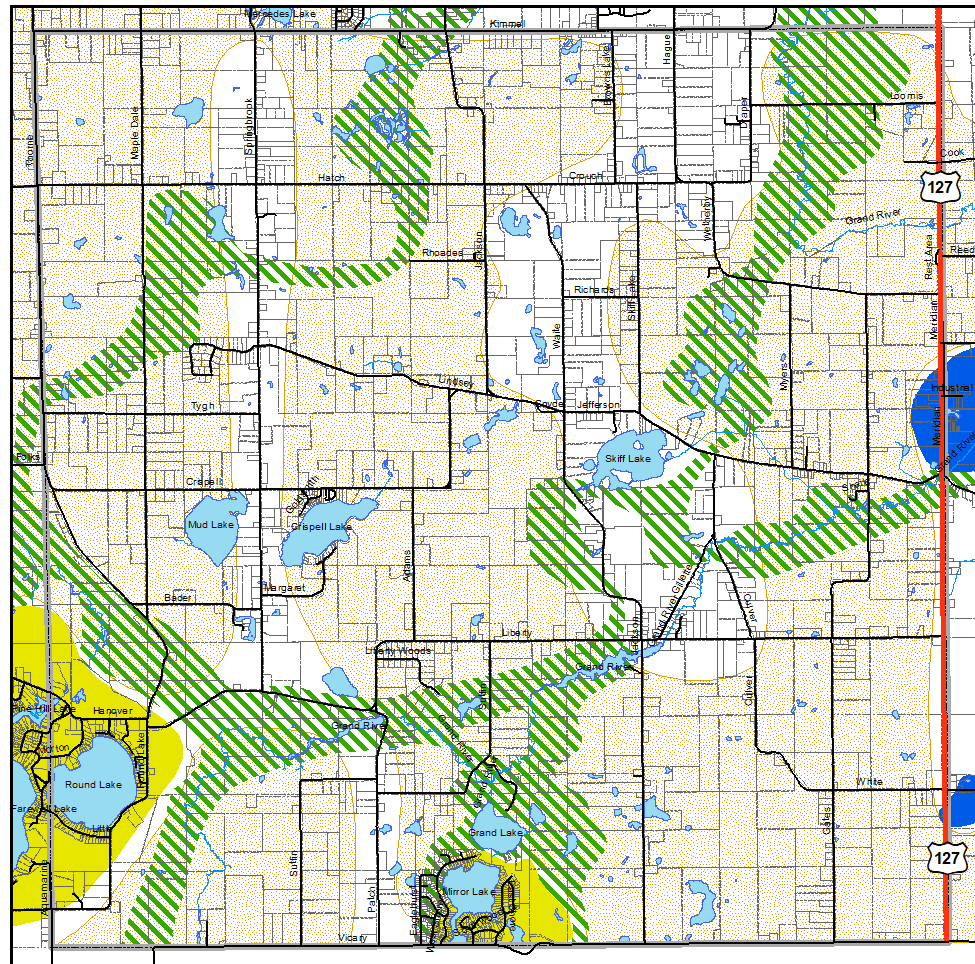
Legend

-  Agricultural
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Commercial
-  Light Industrial
-  Institutional



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
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LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

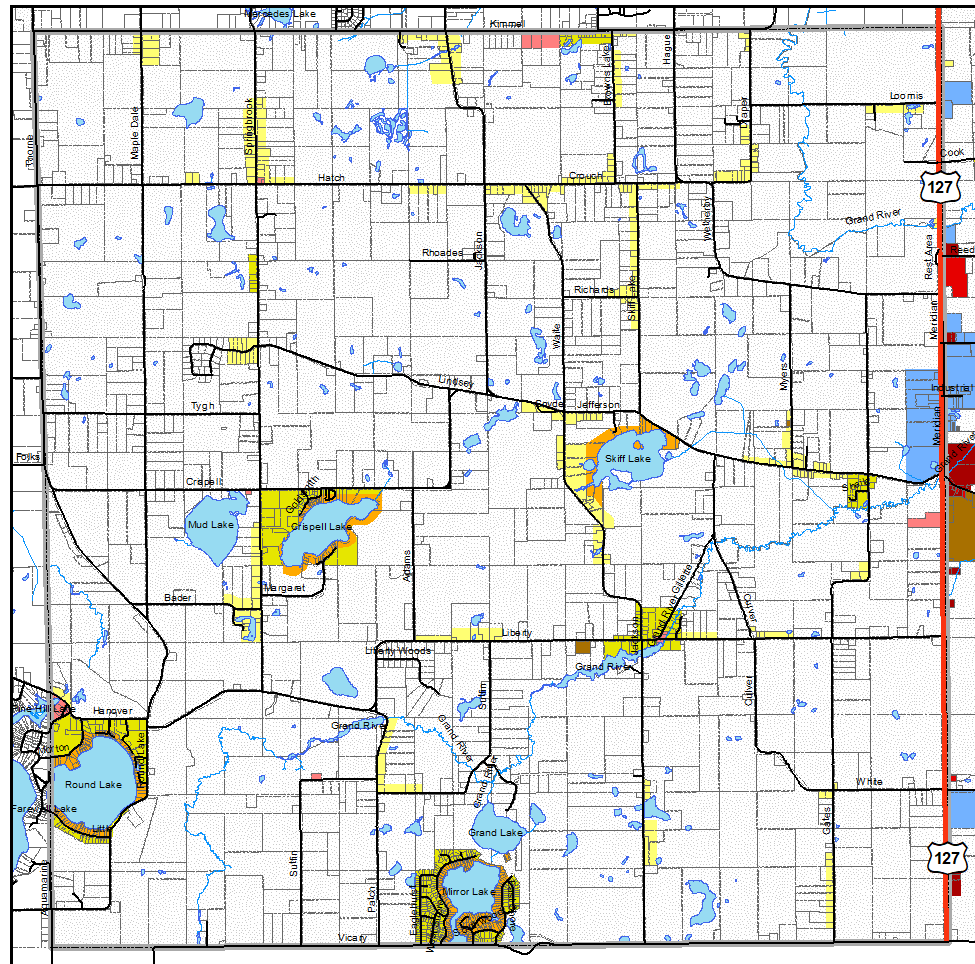
Countywide Future Land Use Map

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Greenway
- Agricultural Preservation Area



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties



LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

Zoning Map

Legend (Liberty Twp.)

- Agricultural (AG-1)
- Rural Non-Farm Residential (RNF-1)
- Suburban Residential (RS-1)
- Lake Residential (RL-1)
- Multiple-Family Residential (RM-1)
- Local Commercial (C-1)
- Light Industrial (I-1)

Legend (Other Twps.)

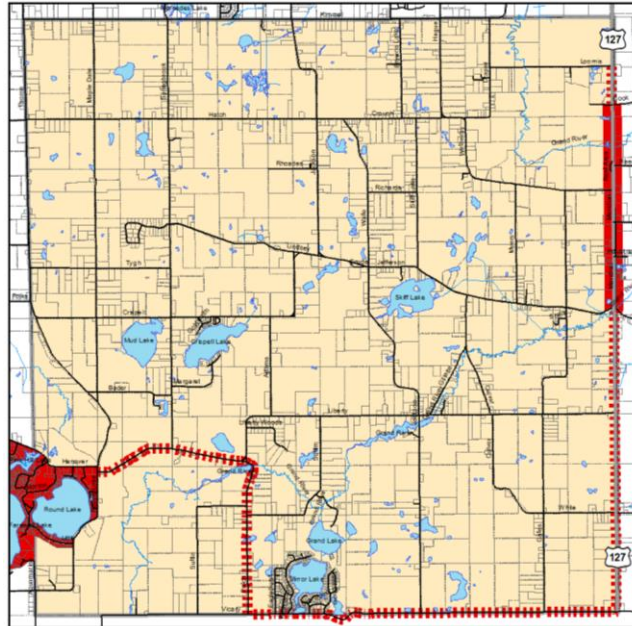
- Agricultural (AG-1)
- Multiple-Family Residential (RM-1)
- General Commercial (C-2)
- Highway Service Commercial (C-3)
- Light Industrial (I-1)



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

Region 2
Planning Commission
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties

Map Created: September 25, 2018



APPENDIX D

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMING

What is a Capital Improvements Program?

“Capital improvements are those physical facilities which involve a substantial investment and last a long time . . . as opposed to the operating expenses that occur during the same year they are budgeted.” Examples of capital improvements include: municipal buildings (e.g., Township Halls, fire stations, etc.), parks and recreation facilities, streets and alleys, and utilities (e.g., water and sewer lines). A capital improvements program (CIP) is a six-year prioritized listing of those projects along with the following information: location, date of construction, cost, means of financing, sponsor, and relationship to other facilities (if pertinent). The CIP “is updated annually with the first year being the current year capital budget” according to the Michigan Planning Guidebook (May 2008).

Why Prepare a Capital Improvements Program?

Section 65 of the MPEA —the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3865), as amended— requires that Liberty Township “annually prepare a capital improvements program of public structures and improvements,” upon the adoption of this Master Plan. The Township Board must “prepare and adopt a capital improvements program [(CIP)], separate from or as a part of the annual budget” with considerable input from municipal staff or consultants (e.g., engineers, planners, administrators, etc.) and the planning commission. Alternately, the task can be delegated [to] the Township Supervisor (or a designee), “subject to final approval by the” Township Board. The CIP shows “those public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, that in the commission’s judgment will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the ensuing 6-year period . . . [and] shall be based upon the requirements of the [Township] for all types of public structures and improvements. Consequently, each agency or department of the [Township] with authority for public structures or improvements shall upon request furnish the Planning Commission with lists, plans, and estimates of time and cost of those public structures and improvements.”

Of course, there are also benefits to developing and maintaining a CIP. Chief among those benefits is the coordination of seemingly disparate projects. For example, water and sewer projects can be coordinated with street paving projects eliminating the potential for streets to be repaved, only to be torn up for a water or sewer project two or three years later. It is also important to note that “plans for new public works that are identified in the [Master Plan can] actually come to fruition through the CIP” and to ensure that “new public facilities are built in locations and consistent with the public policy for development in particular areas or neighborhoods as spelled out in the” document, according to the Michigan Planning Guidebook.

Developing a Capital Improvements Program

The following information should be used to develop the capital improvements program (CIP) upon the completion of the comprehensive plan:

Establishing Objective Criteria

“Without objective criteria, the [capital improvements process (CIP)] can quickly break down into a strictly political process where those agencies or neighborhoods with more political or fiscal resources (or both) will run roughshod over smaller agencies or weaker neighborhoods,” according to the Michigan Planning Guidebook, and simply ranking proposed projects as ‘urgent,’ important,’ or ‘desirable’ “leave room for disagreement in determining priority. More robust criteria are often used first to examine each project:”

- Does the proposed facility address a risk to public safety or health?
- Is the current facility deteriorated or unsafe?
- Is the proposed facility part of a systematic replacement program?
- Will the proposed facility result in improvement of operating efficiency?
- Is the proposed facility necessary to:
 - Ensure the success of another capital improvement?
 - Meet a state or federal statutory or administrative requirement?
 - A court order?
 - A major public goal of the township board?
- Will the proposed facility result in the equitable provision of services or facilities to a part of the population with special needs?
- Will the proposed facility protect or conserve sensitive natural features or natural resources or the air or water quality of the Township?
- Will the proposed facility protect the investment in existing infrastructure from becoming over capacity?
- Will the proposed facility result in a new or substantially expanded facility to provide a new service or new level of service in Township?

Those answers can then be used to place proposed facilities into groups based upon the following criteria:

- The proposed facility is urgent and fills a high priority need that should be met.
- The proposed facility is a high priority that should be done as funding becomes available.
- The proposed facility is worthwhile if funding is available (but may be deferred).
- The proposed facility is a low priority that is desirable but not essential.

The criteria listed above are recommended for larger governments with the potential for many projects. The criteria used for “small communities with few projects may not be much more than ‘urgent,’ ‘important,’ or ‘desirable.’”

Establishing a Process

The Michigan Planning Guidebook recommends that a medium or large-sized community create a special committee to advise its planning commission on the capital improvements program (CIP). The committee should be comprised of the chief elected or appointed official and representatives from the planning commission, the legislative body, and pertinent departments (e.g., engineering; finance; fire; parks, recreation and grounds; public works; purchasing; and water). A total of eight steps are recommended for the development of a CIP:

- Prepare an inventory of all capital facilities.
- Rate the existing level of service for each infrastructure element.
- Identify the structure needs.
- Identify options to meet needs and cost estimates to all projects over the next six years.

Prepare a draft CIP that includes a review of each project against the master plan and CIP prioritization criteria:

- Establish financial capacity for financing public works proposals over the next six years.
- Develop a project schedule for the next six years based on the ranking of selected projects and the availability of funding.
- Select projects to be undertaken during the coming year which become the capital budget. The remaining projects become part of the capital improvements program for the subsequent five years.

- Develop a project schedule for the next six years based on the ranking of selected projects and the availability of funding.
- After public review and hearing, the CIP is adopted by the township board with any agreed upon amendments.
- Implement current year of the CIP.
- Monitor projects and update the CIP annually.

The Michigan Planning Guidebook notes that “in smaller communities with few capital improvements,” such as Liberty Township, the process can be simplified. “Each office, agency, or department responsible for public works is asked to submit proposed public works and the planning commission as a whole reviews and prioritizes them all —ensuring they are consistent with the master plan.”

