



Preserving Our Past.
Planning for
Our Future.

Plainfield TOWNSHIP



MASTER PLAN

2026-2031



Plainfield Township,
Iosco County, Michigan

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Housing Readiness Incentive Grant

Master Plan Assistance Provided By:

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)

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Socio-Economic Data Sources:

2024 American Community Survey

US Census

Montmorency County Equalization



Map Sources:

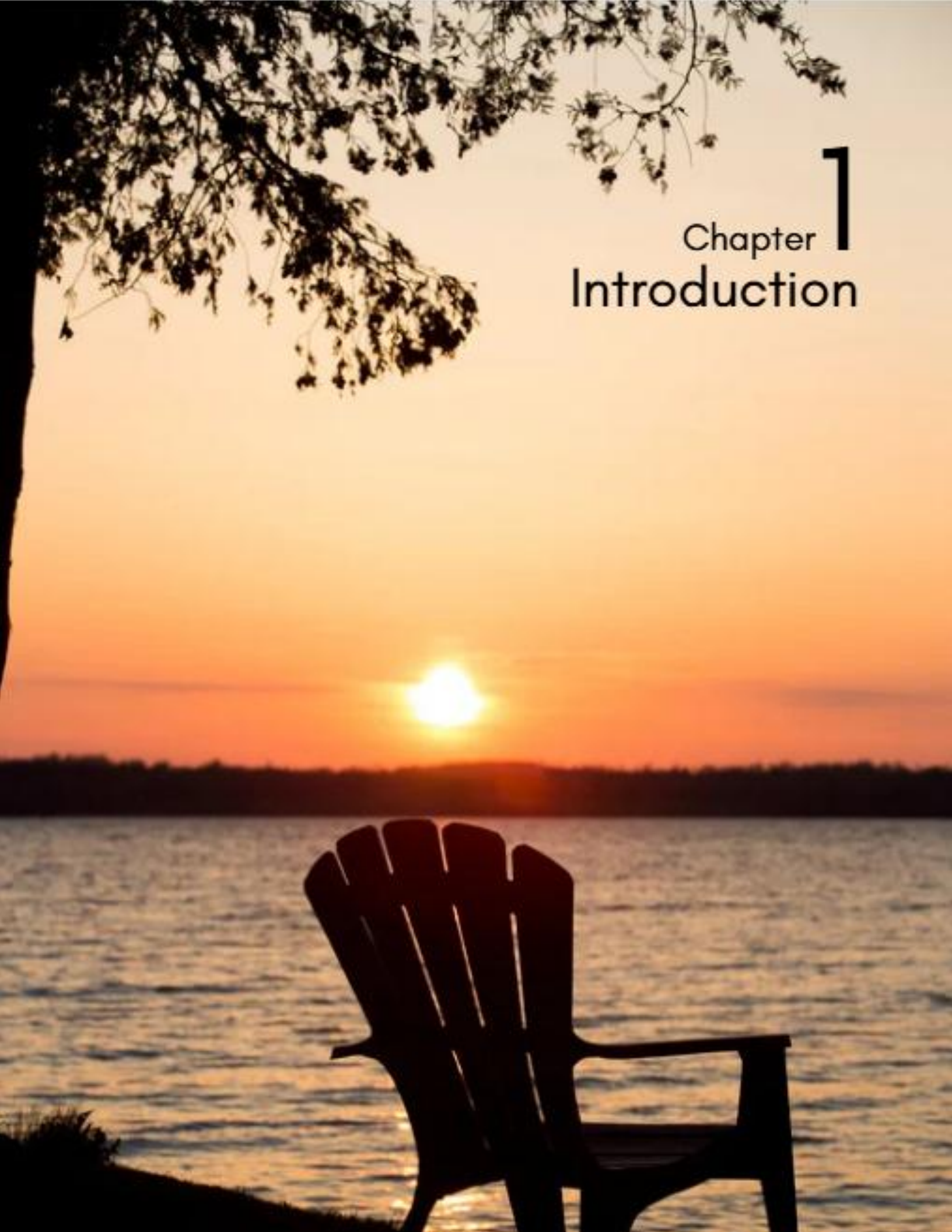
Agricultural Soils and Slopes & Hydric Soils: Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA

Oil & Gas Wells: Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy

Land Cover: USGS National Land Cover Database

Wetlands: National Wetland Inventory, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Roads: State of Michigan

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sunset. The sun is a bright, glowing orb positioned slightly left of the center, just above the horizon. The sky is a gradient of warm colors, from a pale yellow near the sun to a deeper orange and then a dark, silhouetted horizon line. In the foreground, the water of a lake or river is visible, with gentle ripples reflecting the light from the sun. In the lower foreground, the silhouette of a classic Adirondack lawn chair is visible, facing away from the viewer towards the water. In the upper left corner, the dark, intricate silhouette of a tree's branches hangs down into the frame.

Chapter 1

Introduction

History of Planning in the Township

Plainfield Township has engaged in long-range planning for many years to guide future growth, protect community character, and preserve its rural atmosphere and natural resources. The Township adopted its first Master Plan in 2006, establishing a framework for land use, development, public services, recreation, and environmental protection. In 2016, the Plan was updated to reflect changing conditions, community priorities, and development trends. The update reaffirmed the Township's commitment to protecting agricultural lands, open spaces, waterways, and other natural features while directing future residential, commercial, and industrial development to appropriate locations.

In 2023, Plainfield Township completed a five-year amendment to the 2016 Master Plan. The amendment updated demographic information using the 2020 Census, incorporated new public input, revised goals and objectives, and updated the Future Land Use Map to reflect changes that had occurred since adoption of the 2016 Plan. The 2023 amendment continued the Township's emphasis on serving both full-time and seasonal residents, preserving rural character, supporting recreation, and planning for housing and commercial growth while maintaining the Township's identity.

The 2023 amendment also included several revisions to the Future Land Use Map, including establishment of a Township Facilities land use category, redesignation of a high-density residential parcel along Long Lake Road to commercial, and a change from agricultural to low-density residential along M-65. The amended Plan was adopted on October 11, 2023.

Following adoption of the 2023 amendment, Plainfield Township determined that preparation of an entirely new Master Plan would better address current conditions, new development trends, updated housing and economic conditions, and the Township's long-term vision. In 2026, Plainfield Township contracted with Northeast Michigan Council of Governments to prepare a new Master Plan.

The 2026 Master Plan builds upon the foundation established by the 2016 Plan and 2023 amendment while providing a more comprehensive reevaluation of Township conditions, goals, and future land use. The new Plan incorporates updated demographic, housing, economic, and land use information; evaluates changes that have occurred within the Township and surrounding region; and reflects additional public input gathered during the planning process. The 2026 Plan is intended to guide future decision-making related to land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resources, recreation, infrastructure, and community character over the next twenty years.

Michigan Law

The authority for Plainfield Township to prepare and adopt this Master Plan is provided by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, as amended. The Act authorizes local governments to prepare a long-range plan to guide future growth, development, redevelopment, and preservation within the community.

Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, a Master Plan must be comprehensive and future-oriented. The Plan is intended to provide general goals, policies, and recommendations regarding land use, housing, transportation, public facilities, natural resources, recreation, economic development, and other matters affecting the Township's future. The Plan serves as a guide for future decisions and actions over the next several years.

The Act also establishes specific procedures that Plainfield Township must follow when preparing or updating its Master Plan. Prior to adoption, the Planning Commission is required to prepare a draft plan and distribute it to adjacent communities, public utilities, counties, and other entities entitled to review the document. These agencies and communities are provided an opportunity to review the Plan and submit comments.

In addition, the Planning Commission must hold at least one public hearing before adopting or amending the Master Plan. Notice of the hearing must be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Act to ensure that Township residents and property owners have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Plan.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act also requires that local zoning regulations be based on an adopted Master Plan. As a result, Plainfield Township's Zoning Ordinance and zoning map should be consistent with the goals, policies, and Future Land Use Map contained in this Plan. Future zoning amendments, rezoning requests, and land use decisions should therefore be evaluated in relation to the recommendations of the Master Plan.

The Future Land Use Map is one of the principal elements required by the Act. The map identifies the general location and character of future land uses within Plainfield Township and provides the basis for future zoning and development decisions. The map is intended to serve as a planning guide and should not be interpreted as establishing exact parcel boundaries or zoning district lines.

Location

Plainfield Township is located in the northwestern portion of Iosco County in northeastern Michigan. The Township is bordered to the east by Oscoda Township and Wilber Township, and to the south by Reno Township and Grant Township. Plainfield Township encompasses an unusually large geographic area and is generally L-shaped in form, covering approximately three times the area of a traditional 36-square-mile Michigan township.

The unincorporated community of Hale is located near the center of the Township and serves as the primary population and activity center. The nearest regional shopping, employment, and health care services are located in Tawas City to the southeast and West Branch to the southwest.

Plainfield Township is characterized by its extensive natural resources and recreational opportunities. Large portions of the Huron National Forest are located within the Township, along with numerous lakes, streams, and forested areas. These natural features have contributed to the Township's longstanding appeal as both a year-round residential community and a destination for seasonal residents and visitors seeking outdoor recreation and northern Michigan vacation properties.



History of the Township

Plainfield Township was organized in 1868, with its first meeting held at the home of B.M. Earl and Samuel W. Chilson, serving as the first Supervisor. At the time, the Township included Township 23 North, Ranges 5, 6, and 7 East, encompassing three adjacent 36-square-mile townships.

The Township's boundaries changed over time. In the early 1870s, Range 7 East was separated and combined with Range 8 East to form Wilber Township. In 1905, Township 24 North, Range 5 East, was transferred from Oscoda Township to Plainfield Township, creating the Township's present-day L-shaped configuration.

Early settlement was driven by farming and the lumber industry. Two villages developed within the Township: Hale, established in 1889 with the construction of its first store, and Long Lake, a lumbering settlement founded in the 1880s. The arrival of the Detroit and Mackinaw Railway in 1893 supported the local economy, including the shipment of ice harvested from area lakes. Today, the Long Lake area is characterized by seasonal and recreational residences.

As Michigan's pine forests declined due to extensive logging, the Huron National Forest was established in 1909 to preserve remaining forest resources. Much of the eastern portion of Plainfield Township is now located within the National Forest.

The Township's first hall was built in the early 1890s, followed by a second hall in 1941 with assistance from the Works Progress Administration. After that building was destroyed by fire in 1958, the current Township Hall was constructed in 1961. Since 2013, Township offices have been located in the former Hale Area High School building, now known as Eagle Pointe Plaza, which also houses the Eagle Pointe Community Center.

Source: Plainfield Township Centennial Booklet, published by the Tawas Herald, 1968.

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Chapter 2

Socio-Economic



Population

An important step in understanding the future needs of a community is an analysis of population, housing, income, education, and employment characteristics. The following chapter contains socio-economic data for Plainfield Township. The data was derived from the US Census and the 2024 American Community Survey.

Table 2-1 Population Plainfield Township			
Year	Population	Number Change	Percent Change
2000	4,292	---	---
2010	3,799	-493	-11.5%
2020	3,350	-449	-11.8%
2024	3,353	3	0.1%

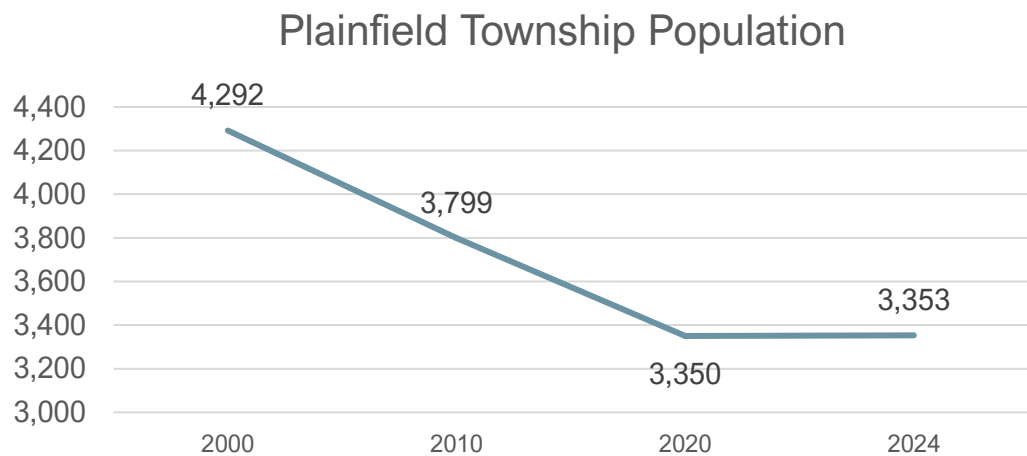


Table 2-2 Population

Municipality	2014	2019	2024	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Plainfield Township	3,742	3,711	3,353	-389	-10.4%
Charter Township of Oscoda	6,886	6,803	7,176	290	4.2%
Tawas Township	1,820	1,752	1,536	-284	-15.6%
Wilber Township	629	663	732	103	16.4%
Grant Township	1,681	1,403	1,617	-64	-3.8%
Reno Township	659	579	636	-23	-3.5%
Curtis Township	1,281	1,241	1,130	-151	-11.8%
Goodar Township	419	312	385	-34	-8.1%
Hill Township	1,475	1,367	1,346	-129	-8.7%
Iosco County	25,504	25,197	25,347	-157	-0.6%
State of Michigan	9,889,024	9,965,265	10,077,761	188,737	1.9%

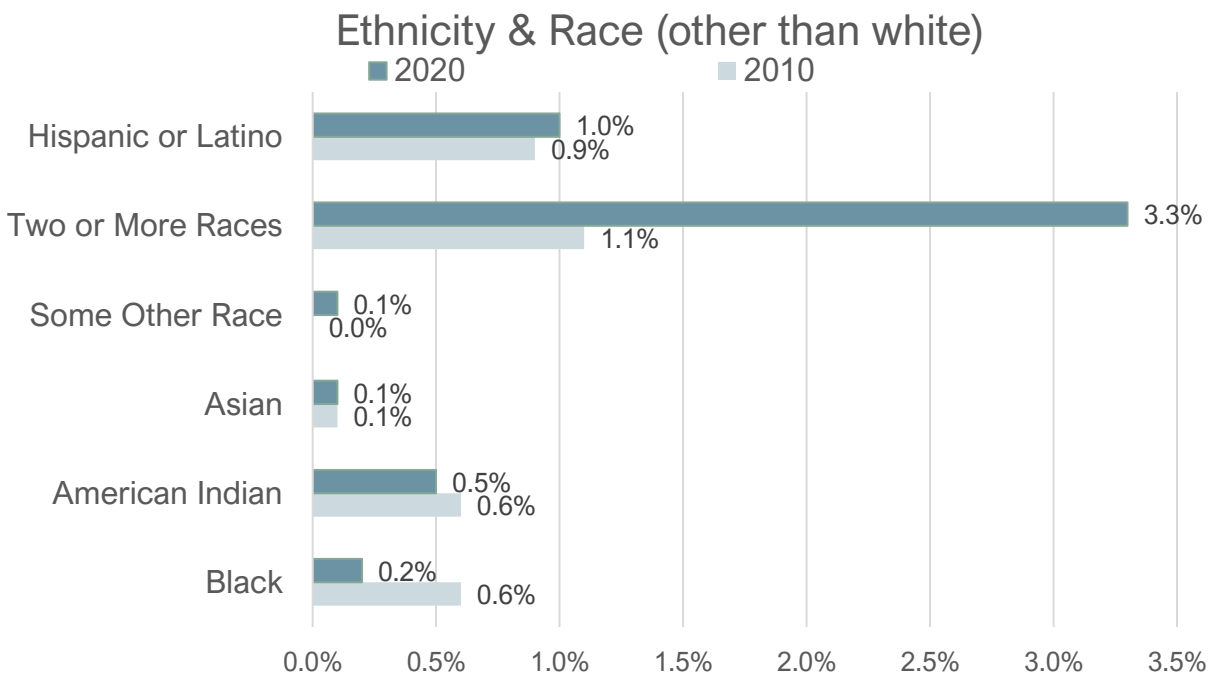
Plainfield Township had a population of 4,292 in 2000. The population declined by 493 residents (11.5%) to 3,799 in 2010 and by 449 residents (11.8%) to 3,350 in 2020. Between 2020 and 2024, the population increased by 3 residents (0.1%). From 2014 to 2024, the population declined from 3,742 to 3,353, a loss of 389 residents (10.4%).

From 2014 to 2024 in Iosco County, Tawas Township declined by 284 residents (15.6%). Grant Township declined by 3.8%, Reno Township declined by 3.5%, Curtis Township declined by 11.8%, Goodar Township declined by 8.1%, and Hill Township declined by 8.7%. Wilber Township increased by 103 residents (16.4%), and Oscoda Charter Township increased by 290 residents (4.2%). Iosco County declined by 157 residents (0.6%), while the Michigan population increased by 188,737 residents (1.9%).



Ethnicity & Race

The ethnic and racial composition has changed between 2010 and 2020. The most significant change was in the "Two or More Races" category, which grew from about 37 people (1.1%) to roughly 111 people (3.3%). The Hispanic or Latino population saw a small increase from around 30 people (0.9%) to approximately 34 people (1.0%). These shifts suggest a growing multiracial presence in Plainfield Township over the decade. The Black population decreased from approximately 20 people (0.6%) to about 7 people (0.2%). The American Indian population declined slightly from around 20 people (0.6%) to 17 people (0.5%). The Asian population remained steady at about 3 to 4 people (0.1%). The "Some Other Race" category increased from 0 people to around 3 to 4 people (0.1%).

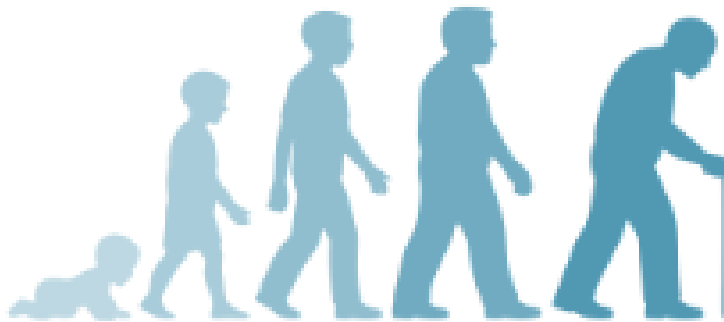


Age Distribution

Plainfield Township has a relatively older population than both Iosco County and Michigan overall. The Township has lower proportions of residents in most age groups under 45, particularly among children ages 5 to 9 and children ages 15 to 19. In contrast, residents aged 55 and older account for a substantially larger share of the population. Nearly 57% of Township residents are age 55 or older, including 22.0% age 65 to 74 and 16.6% age 75 and older, both of which exceed county and state averages.

Table 2-3 Age Distribution

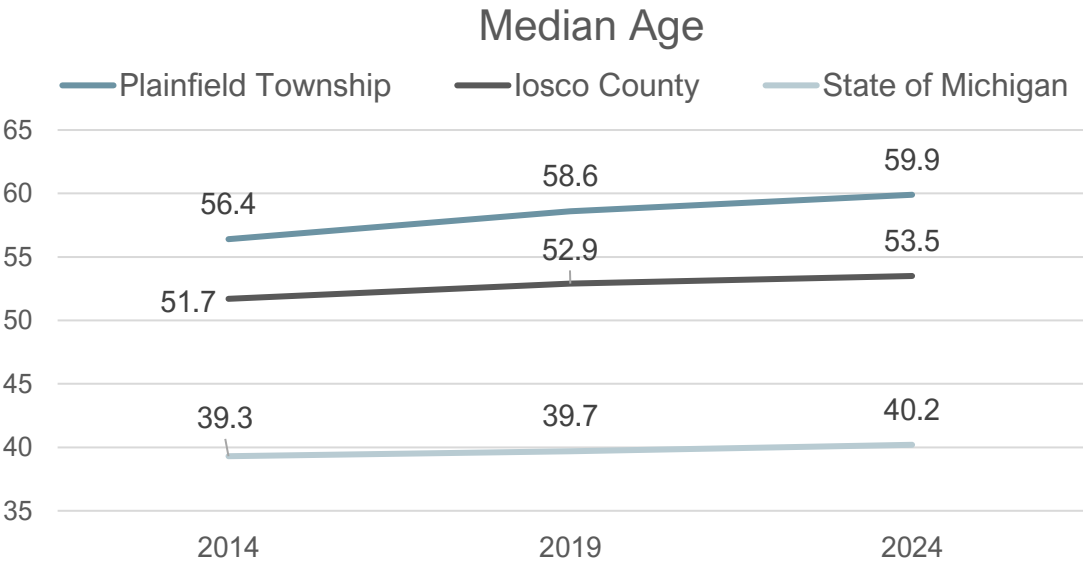
	Plainfield Township	Iosco County	State of Michigan
Under 5	4.8%	4.7%	5.4%
5 to 9	1.5%	4.3%	5.8%
10 to 14	7.0%	5.0%	6.2%
15 to 19	1.3%	4.3%	6.5%
20 to 24	4.1%	4.5%	6.6%
25 to 34	5.8%	9.4%	13.2%
35 to 44	7.2%	9.2%	12.1%
45 to 54	10.9%	10.5%	12.0%
55 to 64	18.7%	17.1%	13.6%
65 to 74	22.0%	18.6%	11.2%
75 and up	16.6%	12.4%	7.4%



Median Age

Plainfield Township had a median age of 56.4 years in 2014, 58.6 years in 2019, and 59.9 years in 2024. Iosco County had a median age of 51.7 years in 2014 and 53.5 years in 2024. The Michigan median age increased from 39.3 years in 2014 to 40.2 years in 2024. Plainfield Township’s median age ranks among the highest in the state.

Table 2-4 Median Age								
Plainfield Township			Iosco County			State of Michigan		
2014	2019	2024	2014	2019	2024	2014	2019	2024
56.4	58.6	59.9	51.7	52.9	53.5	39.3	39.7	40.2



School Enrollment

Residents of Plainfield Township attend Hale Area Schools for their education. For the 2025-26 school year, total enrollment was 352 students, with a significant 67.9% (239 students) classified as economically disadvantaged. This designation typically indicates that these students come from low-income households, often qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch programs and other financial assistance. A high percentage of economically disadvantaged students can present challenges for both educators and families, including limited access to educational resources, extracurricular opportunities, and technology at home. Schools serving such populations often rely on additional funding, community support, and state or federal assistance to bridge the gap and provide necessary academic and social support.

Educational Attainment

Plainfield Township has 85.1% of residents with a high school diploma or higher and 18.4% with a bachelor's degree or higher. Iosco County reports 90.2% with a high school diploma or higher and 19.3% with a bachelor's degree or higher. The State of Michigan reports 92.1% with a high school diploma or higher and 32.4% with a bachelor's degree or higher. Residents without a high school diploma account for 15.0% in Plainfield Township, 9.7% in Iosco County, and 7.9% statewide.

Table 2-5 Educational Attainment

	Plainfield Township	Iosco County	State of Michigan
Population 25 and over	2,725	19,566	7,008,507
Less than 9 th grade education	4.3%	1.8%	2.6%
9 th -12 th grade without diploma	10.7%	7.9%	5.3%
High school diploma or equivalency	34.5%	36.3%	28.0%
Some college; no degree	19.7%	24.8%	21.9%
Associate degree	12.4%	9.8%	9.8%
Bachelor's degree	12.1%	11.7%	19.7%
Graduate or professional degree	6.3%	7.7%	12.7%
High school graduate or higher	85.1%	90.2%	92.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	18.4%	19.3%	32.4%

Financials

Plainfield Township has a median household income of \$52,035, compared to \$50,066 in Iosco County and \$72,875 in Michigan. Median family income in Plainfield Township is \$76,773, compared to \$66,171 in Iosco County and \$93,357 statewide.

Table 2-6 Income			
	Plainfield Township	Iosco County	State of Michigan
Median Household	\$52,035	\$50,066	\$72,875
Median Family	\$76,773	\$66,171	\$93,357
Median Married Couple	\$77,409	\$74,029	\$110,391
Median Non-Family	\$27,730	\$27,024	\$43,188
Per Capita Income	\$34,110	\$32,108	\$40,735

Median income for married couples in Plainfield Township is \$77,409, compared to \$74,029 in Iosco County and \$110,391 in Michigan. Non-family household income in the Township is \$27,730, compared to \$27,024 in the county and \$43,188 in the state. Per capita income in Plainfield Township is \$34,110, compared to \$32,108 in Iosco County and \$40,735 statewide.

In Plainfield Township, 50.3% of households have employment income, with mean earnings of \$72,932, compared to \$72,521 in Iosco County and \$101,365 in the State of Michigan. Social Security income is received by 62.4% of Township residents, with a mean of \$24,811, compared to \$23,389 in the county and \$25,306 statewide. Retirement income is received by 53.2% of residents, with a mean of \$23,425, compared to \$26,423 in Iosco County and \$28,787 in Michigan. Supplemental Security Income is received by 9.9% of residents, and 2.7% receive cash public assistance.

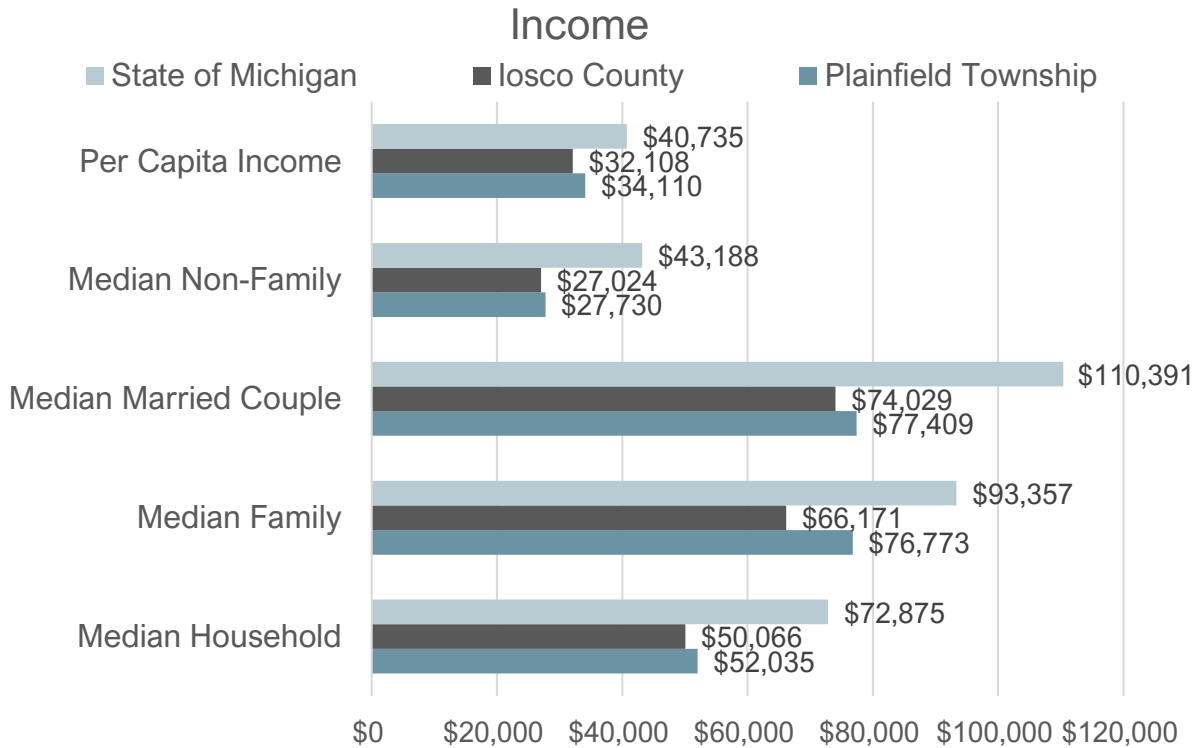
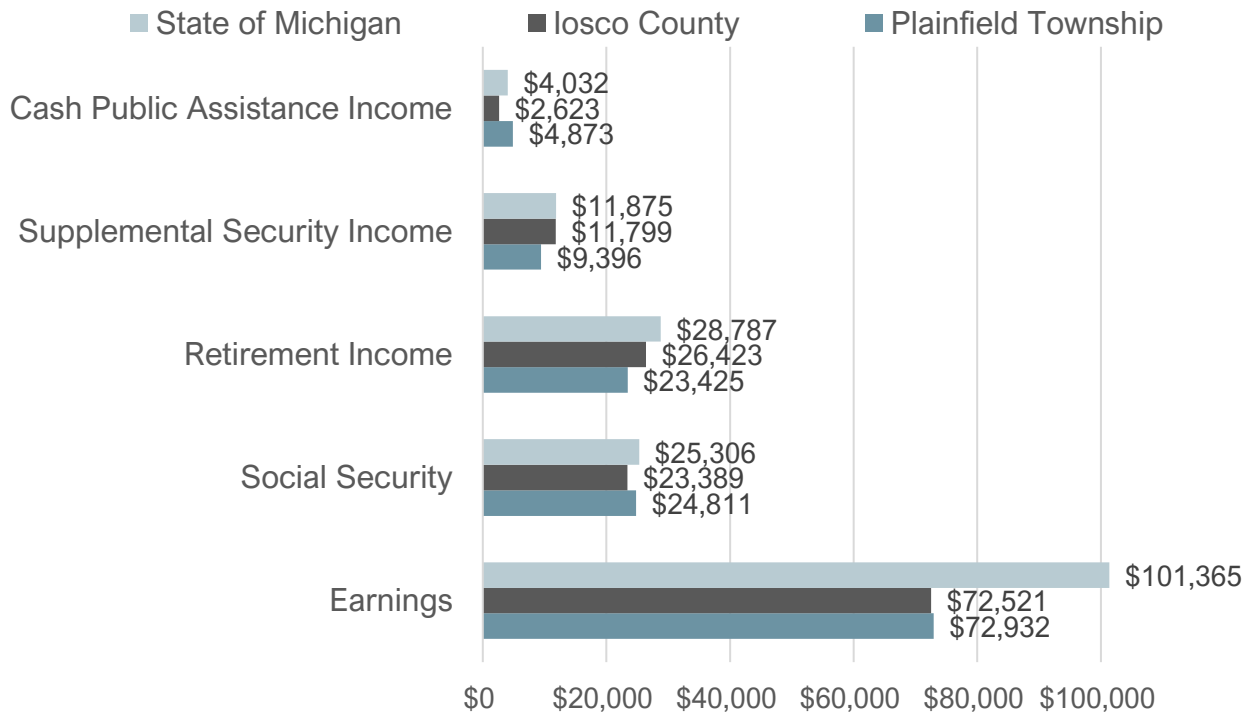


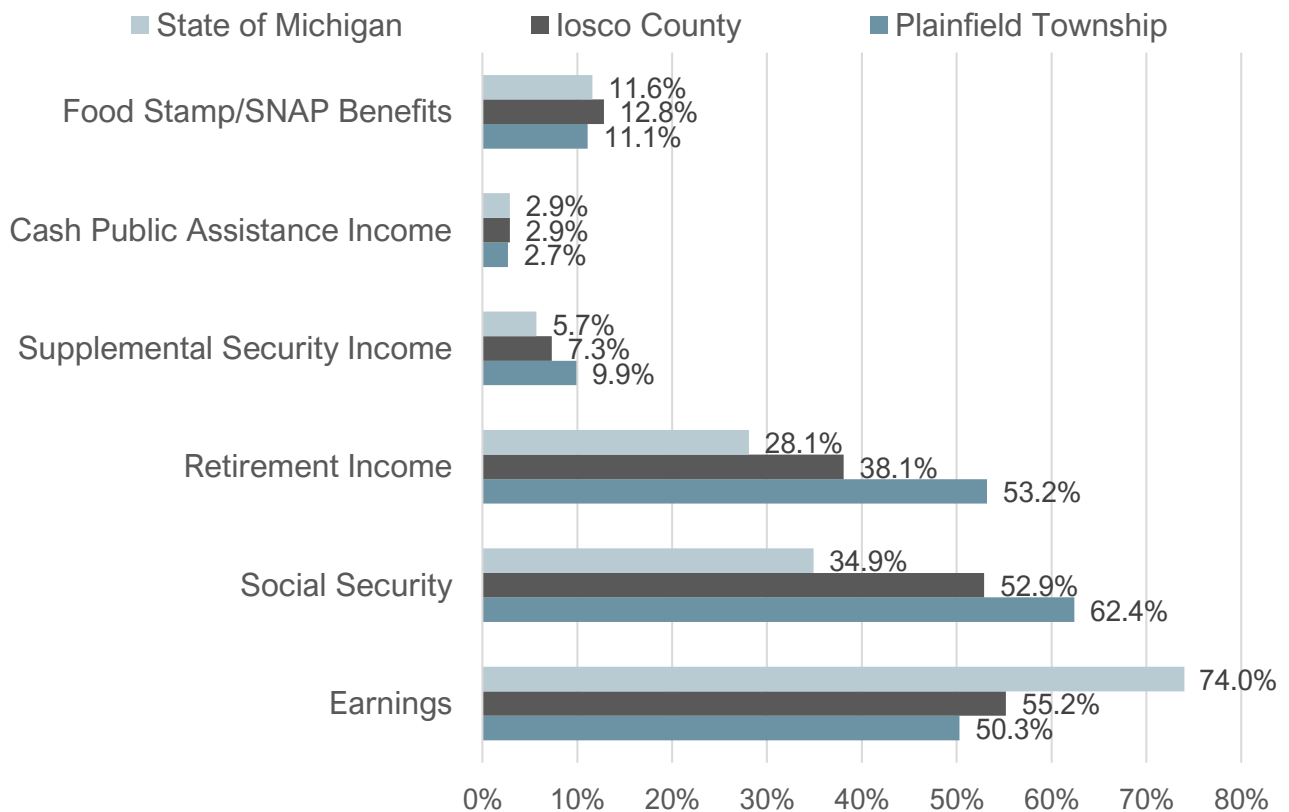
Table 2-7 Income Sources

Source	Plainfield Township		Iosco County		State of Michigan	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
With earnings	822	50.3%	6,465	55.2%	3,017,942	74.0%
<i>Mean earnings</i>	\$72,932	---	\$72,521	---	\$101,365	---
With Social Security	1,020	62.4%	6,201	52.9%	1,421,376	34.9%
<i>Mean Social Security Income</i>	\$24,811	---	\$23,389	---	\$25,306	---
With retirement income	870	53.2%	4,467	38.1%	1,145,735	28.1%
<i>Mean retirement income</i>	\$23,425	---	\$26,423	---	\$28,787	---
With Supplemental Security Income	161	9.9%	856	7.3%	231,820	5.7%
<i>Mean Supplemental Security Income</i>	\$9,396	---	\$11,799	---	\$11,875	---
With cash public assistance income	44	2.7%	337	2.9%	119,122	2.9%
<i>Mean cash public assistance income</i>	\$4,873	---	\$2,623	---	\$4,032	---
With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	181	11.1%	1,504	12.8%	473,967	11.6%

Income Sources by Mean Earnings



Income Sources by Percent

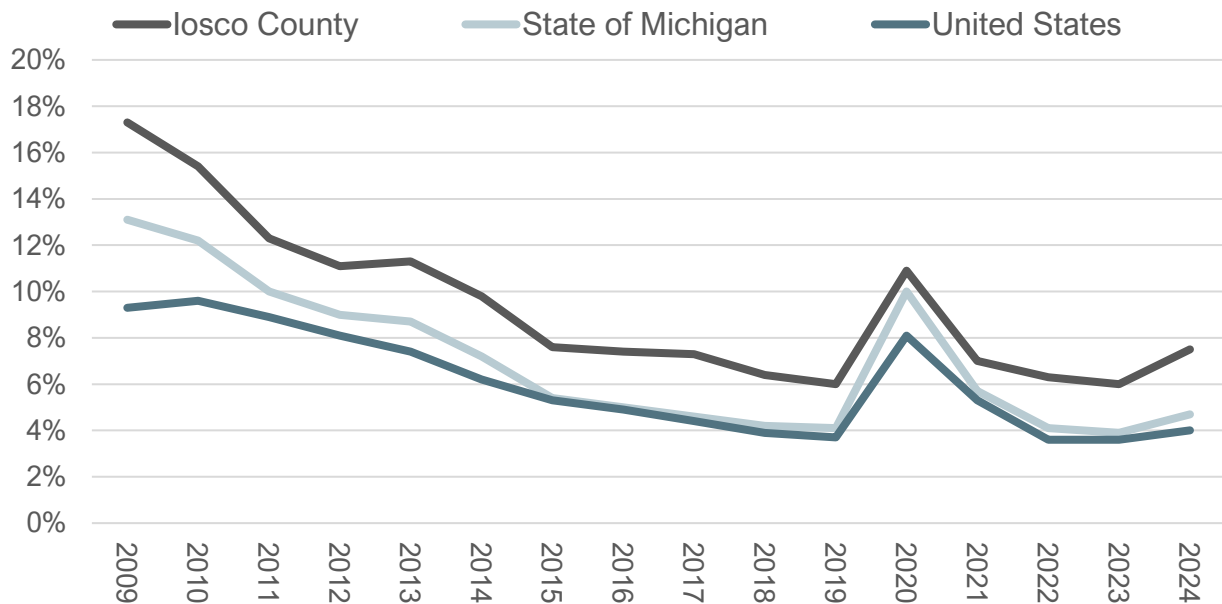


Employment & Unemployment

In Iosco County, the 2024 civilian labor force was 10,013, with 9,259 employed and 754 unemployed, resulting in a 7.5% unemployment rate. The unemployment rate was 6.0% in 2023. In 2020, the labor force was 10,153, with 1,105 unemployed and an unemployment rate of 10.9%. The unemployment rate was 6.0% in 2019 and 6.4% in 2018. The data reflects county-level employment trends.

2-8 Employment Information Iosco County				
Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2024	10,013	9,259	754	7.5%
2023	10,485	9,860	625	6.0%
2022	10,261	9,619	642	6.3%
2021	9,836	9,147	689	7.0%
2020	10,153	9,048	1,105	10.9%
2019	10,222	9,606	616	6.0%
2018	10,088	9,446	642	6.4%

Iosco County Unemployment Rate

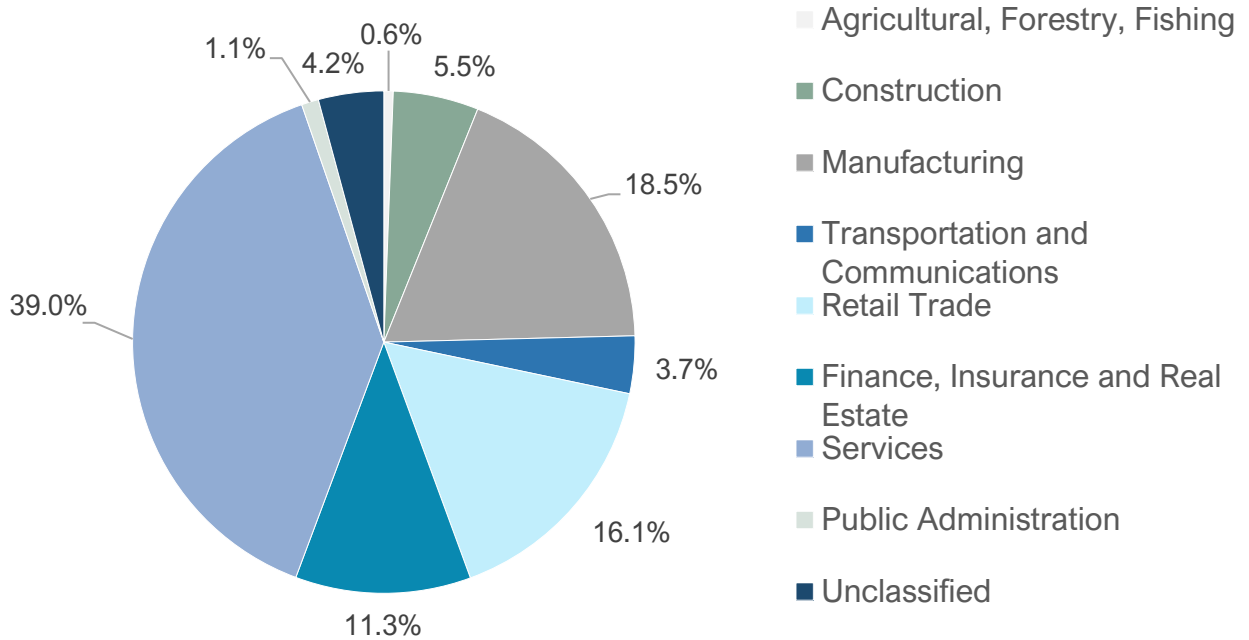


In Plainfield Township, services employ 39.0% of the workforce (283 workers). Manufacturing employs 134 workers (18.5%), and retail trade employs 117 workers (16.1%). Finance, insurance, and real estate account for 11.3%, construction 5.5%, transportation and communications 3.7%, and unclassified jobs 4.2%. Agricultural, forestry, and fishing represent 0.6%, and public administration 1.1%. There is no employment in mining or wholesale trade.

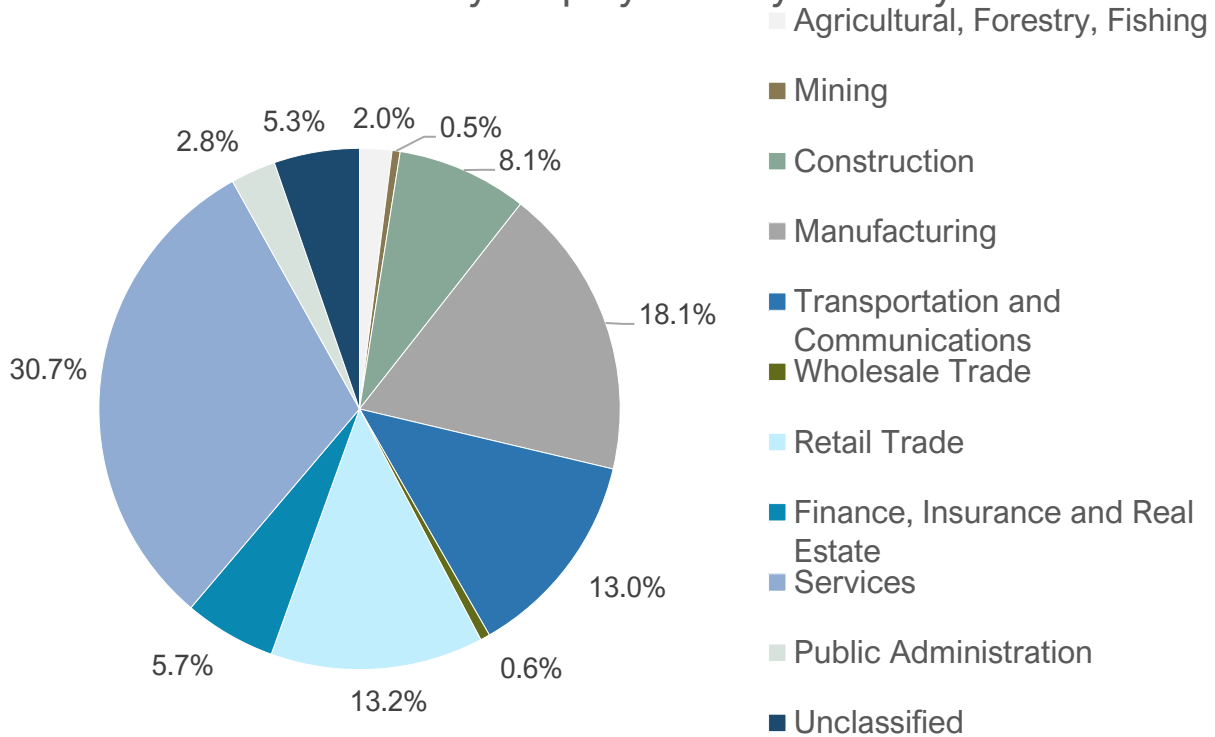
In Iosco County, services employ 30.7% of the workforce (1,923 workers). Manufacturing employs 1,136 workers (18.1%), retail trade 13.2%, and transportation and communications 13.0%. Construction accounts for 8.1% (507 workers). Finance, insurance, and real estate represent 5.7%, public administration 2.8%, and agricultural, forestry, and fishing 2.0%. Mining and wholesale trade account for 0.5% and 0.6%, respectively.

2-9 Major Employment Type				
Category	Plainfield Township		Iosco County	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing	4	0.6%	127	2.0%
Mining	0	0.0%	29	0.5%
Construction	40	5.5%	507	8.1%
Manufacturing	134	18.5%	1,136	18.1%
Transportation and Communications	27	3.7%	814	13.0%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	38	0.6%
Retail Trade	117	16.1%	827	13.2%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	82	11.3%	354	5.7%
Services	283	39.0%	1,923	30.7%
Public Administration	8	1.1%	175	2.8%
Unclassified	30	4.2%	334	5.3%

Plainfield Township Employment by Industry



Iosco County Employment by Industry



State Equalized Value (SEV)

State Equalized Value (SEV) is used in Michigan to assess property for taxation and represents 50% of a property's market value. SEV determines the taxable value within a jurisdiction and affects local tax revenue.

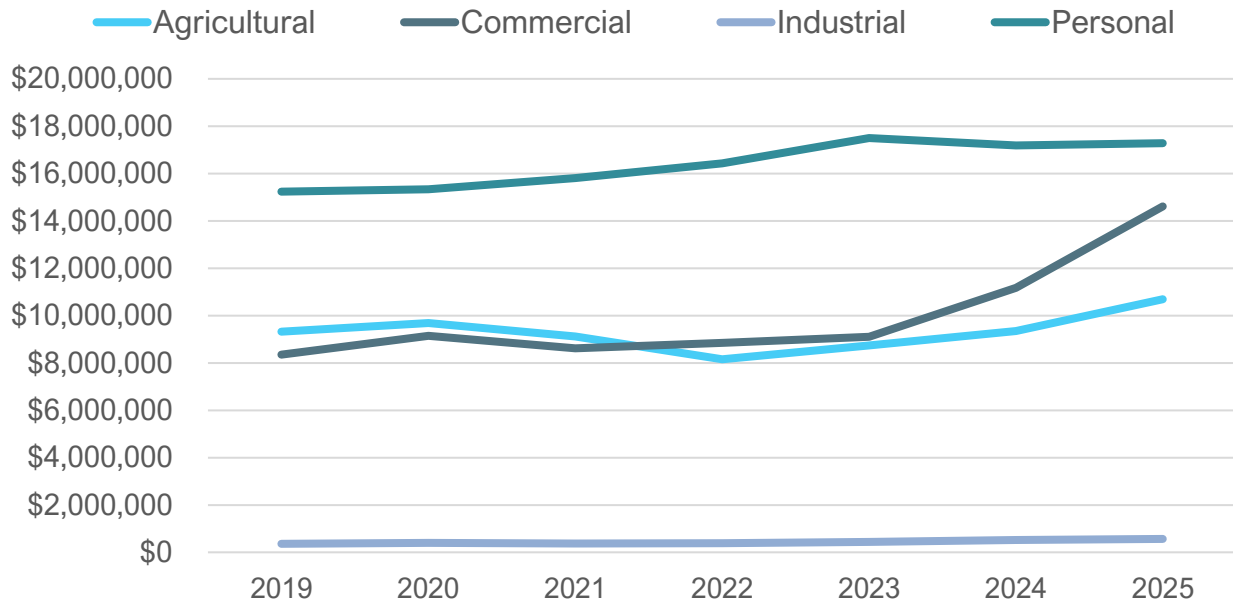
In Plainfield Township, agricultural SEV increased from \$9,322,800 in 2019 to \$10,689,700 in 2025. Commercial SEV increased from \$8,349,900 to \$14,611,500, and industrial SEV increased from \$358,600 to \$564,900. Residential SEV increased from \$214,414,700 in 2019 to \$407,320,700 in 2025. Personal property SEV increased from \$15,234,600 to \$17,275,500. Total SEV increased from \$247,680,600 in 2019 to \$450,462,300 in 2025.

Table 2-10 Plainfield Township SEV

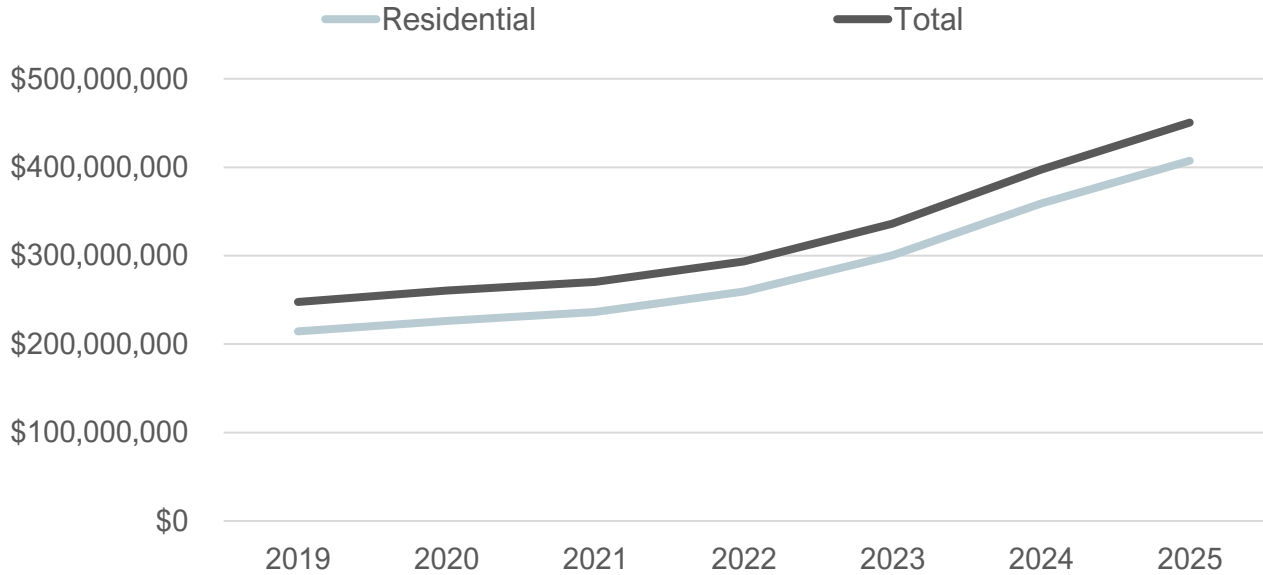
	Agricultural	Commercial	Industrial	Residential	Personal	Total
2019	\$9,322,800	\$8,349,900	\$358,600	\$214,414,700	\$15,234,600	\$247,680,600
2020	\$9,678,900	\$9,147,300	\$393,000	\$226,126,600	\$15,333,100	\$260,678,900
2021	\$9,121,500	\$8,622,700	\$369,400	\$236,307,100	\$15,814,700	\$270,235,400
2022	\$8,154,300	\$8,844,000	\$383,500	\$259,506,144	\$16,436,100	\$293,324,044
2023	\$8,740,000	\$9,108,700	\$441,200	\$300,345,700	\$17,499,000	\$336,134,600
2024	\$9,349,800	\$11,166,700	\$513,300	\$359,143,500	\$17,184,500	\$397,357,800
2025	\$10,689,700	\$14,611,500	\$564,900	\$407,320,700	\$17,275,500	\$450,462,300



Plainfield Township SEV



Plainfield Township SEV



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3

Chapter
Community Services



Transportation

Transportation within Plainfield Township is shaped by the Township's large geographic size, extensive forested lands, lakes, and rivers. Unlike many Michigan townships, the road network does not follow a traditional square-mile grid pattern. Instead, roads generally developed around natural features, settlement patterns, and access to lakes, forests, and the community of Hale.

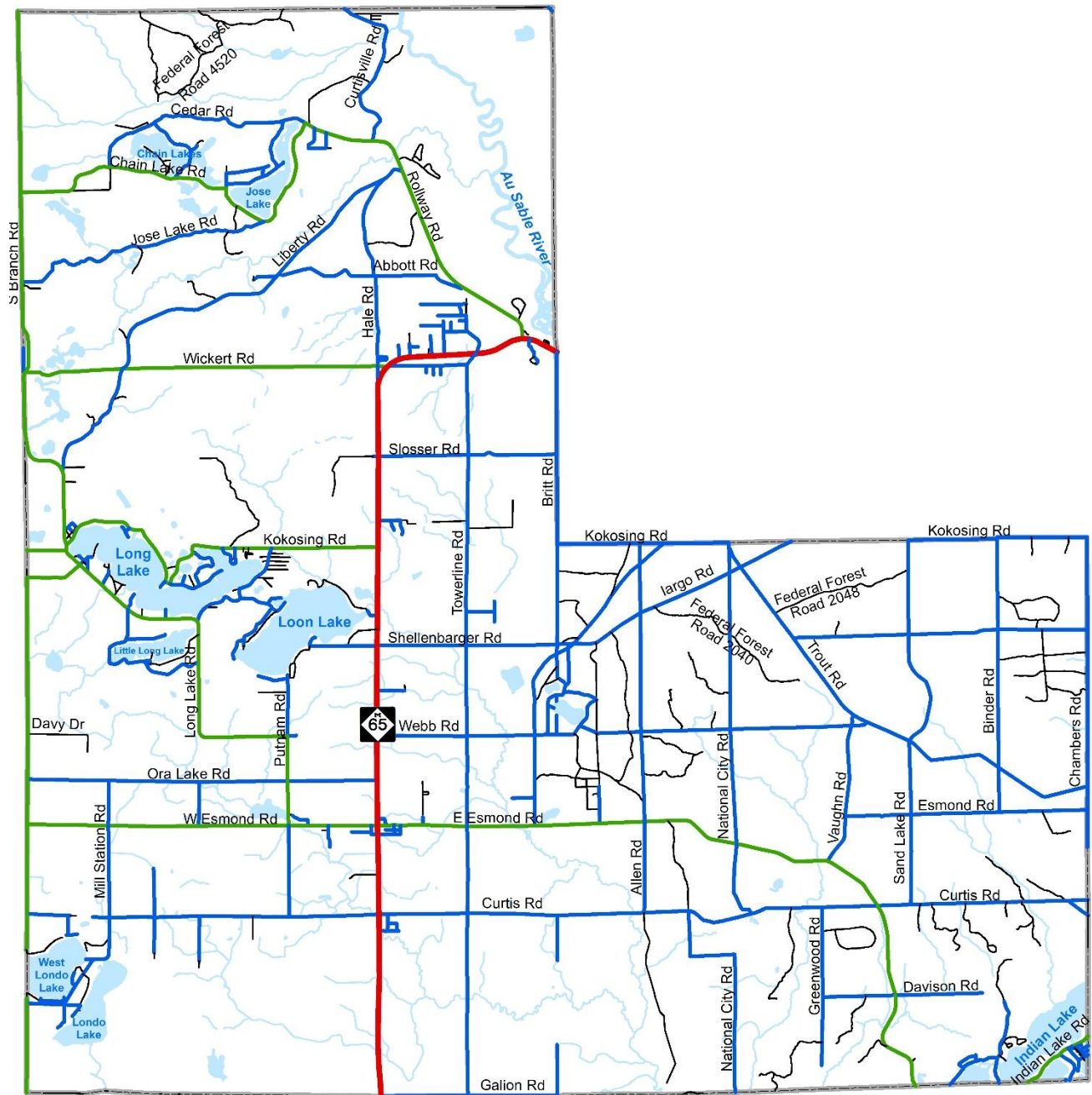
The Township is served primarily by M-65, which travels north and south through the center of the Township and through Hale. M-65 is the principal transportation corridor within Plainfield Township and provides access to more populated areas of southern Michigan. M-55, located immediately south of the Township, provides the primary east-west regional connection.

Other important roads within the Township include Esmond Road and Wickert Road, which provide east-west travel across the southern and northern portions of the Township. Additional roads, including Long Lake Road, Kokosing Road, Chain Lakes Road, Curtis Road, and Jose Lake Road, provide access to the Township's residential areas, lakes, and recreational resources.

Many of the neighborhoods surrounding the Township's lakes and the Hale area are served by smaller local roads. Because of the Township's rural and heavily wooded character, many local roads remain unpaved, and some roads through the Huron National Forest and remote portions of the Township are primitive or not maintained as certified public roads.

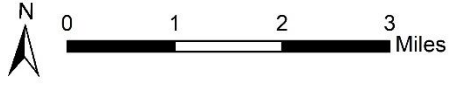
Traffic volumes within Plainfield Township are generally low. The only roadway monitored by the Michigan Department of Transportation is M-65, which carries approximately 1,200 vehicles per day through the north-south portion of the Township and approximately 1,000 vehicles per day east of its directional change.

Plainfield Township is also served by several aviation facilities. The Township contains the small local Field of Dreams Airport, located approximately three miles southeast of Hale. Additional nearby general aviation airports include Lost Creek Airport, St. Helen Airport, and West Branch Community Airport. Larger regional air service is available at Iosco County Airport and Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport. The nearest commercial airports are MBS International Airport, located approximately 70 miles south of the Township, and Alpena Regional Airport, located approximately 70 miles North of the Township.



Plainfield Township Roads

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— State Trunkline — County Primary — County Local — Unclassified

River Road National Scenic Byway

Plainfield Township serves as the western gateway to the River Road National Scenic Byway, one of Michigan's premier scenic driving routes. Beginning near the intersection of M-65 and Rollways Road, the byway follows the Au Sable River east through the Huron National Forest to Oscoda, connecting visitors to nationally recognized scenic, recreational, and historic destinations.

Many of the recreational attractions associated with the byway are located within or accessed through Plainfield Township. These include Loud Dam, Five Channels Dam, Rollways Campground and Day Use Area, the Au Sable River, the Corsair Trail System, and numerous hiking trails, campgrounds, canoe and kayak launches, fishing access sites, and scenic overlooks located throughout the Huron National Forest. Together, these resources provide year-round opportunities for boating, paddling, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, ORV riding, snowmobiling, camping, and fall color touring.

The River Road National Scenic Byway serves as an important recreational and tourism corridor that contributes to the Township's economy while showcasing its abundant natural resources and public lands. Continued coordination with the Michigan Department of Transportation, the U.S. Forest Service, the Iosco County Road Commission, and regional partners can help maintain safe access to these recreational destinations while preserving the scenic character that makes the corridor a valued regional asset.

Goal 1

Maintain and improve transportation access to the recreational facilities and public lands associated with the River Road National Scenic Byway.

Objectives

- Coordinate with MDOT, the Iosco County Road Commission, and the U.S. Forest Service to maintain safe and efficient access to recreational destinations.
- Support roadway, bridge, and access improvements that enhance travel to parks, campgrounds, trailheads, and river access sites.
- Encourage wayfinding signage directing residents and visitors to recreational facilities throughout the Township.

Goal 2

Support the continued enhancement and maintenance of recreational facilities within Plainfield Township that contribute to the River Road National Scenic Byway experience.

Objectives

- Encourage investment in recreational facilities, including campgrounds, trail systems, boat launches, scenic overlooks, and day-use areas.
- Pursue grant funding and partnerships to improve recreational infrastructure and visitor amenities.
- Support maintenance and improvements that provide safe, accessible, and enjoyable recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Goal 3

Preserve the natural, scenic, and historic character of the corridor while providing safe and convenient access for residents and visitors.

Objectives

- Encourage transportation improvements that are compatible with the scenic and environmental character of the corridor.
- Protect scenic views, forested landscapes, and natural resources associated with the byway.
- Support context-sensitive design for future roadway and recreational improvements.

Goal 4

Coordinate with regional partners to promote and improve recreational opportunities that support tourism and enhance quality of life.

Objectives

- Continue working with MDOT, the U.S. Forest Service, Iosco County, and regional organizations to enhance the River Road National Scenic Byway.
- Promote the Township's recreational assets as part of the regional outdoor recreation network.
- Support collaborative planning efforts that improve visitor experiences while benefiting Township residents.
- Maintain the Westgate Overlook.
- Complete the Iosco Exploration Trail.
- Achieve historic designation for the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Pavilion at Rollways Campground and Picnic Area.



Services

In order to meet the daily needs of residents and support public health, safety, and welfare, Plainfield Township provides a range of public utility and emergency services.

The community of Hale and surrounding developed areas are served by a lagoon-based sanitary sewer system. The system was originally constructed during the 1980s and expanded in 1992 and 1996. Today, the system serves approximately 175 residential and commercial customers in and around Hale.

Natural gas service within the Township is provided by DTE Energy. Service is generally available along M-65 from the Township's southern boundary to approximately 1.5 miles north of Hale. Natural gas is also available in portions of the Hale area, including approximately one mile east and west of the community, along Curtis Road west of M-65, north on Putnam Road to Long Lake and Little Long Lake, and on the west side of Loon Lake.

Police protection in Plainfield Township is provided by the Iosco County Sheriff's Office and the Michigan State Police.

Fire protection and emergency response are provided by the Plainfield Township Fire Department, which is staffed by approximately 24 volunteer firefighters and operates from a fire station located in Hale. In addition to serving Plainfield Township, the department also provides coverage to portions of neighboring communities through mutual aid agreements, including the eastern portion of Hill Township and other nearby jurisdictions in Ogemaw County, Oscoda County, Roscommon County, and Iosco County.



The Township's large size, extensive public lands, and significant areas of the Huron National Forest create unique demands for emergency services. The Fire Department responds not only to structure fires, but also to wildland fires, water rescues, and search-and-rescue operations in remote forests, swamps, and lake areas. The department averages approximately 125 emergency calls per year.

Solid waste disposal services are available through the Township's solid waste facility located east of Hale on Towerline Road. Residential and commercial properties within the Township support the facility through an annual assessment.

Medical Facilities

Health care services within Plainfield Township are limited but provide residents with access to basic medical care and outpatient services. Medical facilities located within the Township include MyMichigan Family Medicine, Sterling Area Health Center, North Ridge Family Practice, Adapt Physical Therapy, and laboratory services.

Although the Township does not contain a hospital or emergency room, residents have access to more comprehensive medical services in nearby communities. Hospital and emergency care are available approximately 22 miles east in Tawas City at MyMichigan Medical Center Tawas and approximately 30 miles west in West Branch at MyMichigan Medical Center West Branch.

Schools

Educational services within Plainfield Township are provided by Hale Area Schools, which serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The school district has an enrollment of approximately 352 students.

High school students have access to dual enrollment opportunities, allowing them to earn college credit while completing their secondary education. Additional career and technical education programs are available through the Iosco Regional Educational Service Agency Career and Technical Education Center. Programs offered include automotive technology, building trades, aeronautics, business management, culinary arts, health sciences, teacher preparation, and welding and fabrication.

Cemetery

Plainfield Township contains one public cemetery, Evergreen Cemetery, which is also commonly known as the Hale Cemetery or Esmond Evergreen Cemetery. The cemetery is located east of Hale along Smith Creek and has served the Township since it was established in 1888.

Recreational Facilities

Recreation is one of Plainfield Township's defining features. The Township contains numerous lakes, rivers, forests, beaches, and trail systems that provide year-round recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. More than one-third of the Township is federally owned land within the Huron National Forest, which offers extensive snowmobile and off-road vehicle trails, campgrounds, and access to outdoor recreation.

Plainfield Township maintains seven public parks. The primary community park is Plainfield Township Park in Hale, which includes a senior center, sports courts and fields, a playground, pavilion, picnic areas, and restroom facilities. The park is adjacent to recreational facilities associated with Hale Area Schools and the Iosco County Fairgrounds.

Several parks provide public access to the Township's lakes. Long Lake Park offers a boat launch, swimming beach, picnic area, and restrooms, while Londo Lake West Park serves residents of West Londo Lake with similar amenities. Smaller parks, including Chain Lake Beach, Jose Lake Beach, and Loon Lake Park, provide swimming access and neighborhood recreation opportunities.

The Township's largest park, Loon Lake Nature Park, encompasses approximately 114 acres of natural woodland along Loon Lake. Amenities include walking trails, a boat launch and dock, scenic overlook, picnic facilities, and connections to the Iron Belle Trail system.

Additional recreational opportunities are available through private facilities such as Green Valley RV Campground and Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat Center, as well as nearby public facilities including Round Lake Campground and Boat Launch, Rollways Park, South Branch Trail Camp, the Corsair Trail, and trails along the Au Sable River.

Library

Residents of Plainfield Township have access to library services through the Iosco-Arenac District Library system, which operates five branches throughout the two-county region. Nearby branches are located in East Tawas, Hale, Oscoda, Tawas City, and Whittemore.

The Iosco-Arenac District Library system maintains a collection of more than 136,000 volumes and circulates over 115,000 items annually. In addition to traditional library materials, the system provides inter-branch lending, digital resources, and a variety of educational and recreational programming for children, teens, and adults. Together, these services provide Plainfield Township residents with access to information, lifelong learning opportunities, and community gathering spaces throughout the region.

Township Offices

Township government offices for Plainfield Township are located within Eagle Pointe Plaza, the former Hale Area High School building acquired by the Township in 2013. In addition to housing Township administrative offices and a post for the Michigan State Police, Eagle Pointe Plaza serves as a community gathering place and multi-use facility.

The building contains the Eagle Pointe Community Center and provides space for public meetings, special events, private rentals, and business meetings. Recreational amenities at the site include pickleball courts and space for community programs such as line dancing, cardio-drumming, a fitness center, and fitness classes. Eagle Pointe Plaza also houses several local businesses, making it an important civic and community center within Hale and Plainfield Township.





Chapter 4

Natural Resources

The natural environment has played a significant role in shaping development patterns within Plainfield Township. Natural features such as lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, and topography influence where development can occur and what types of land use are appropriate. Careful consideration of these resources is necessary because development can affect the natural environment, and environmental conditions can in turn affect the suitability of land for development.

Improperly planned development may result in adverse impacts such as flooding, erosion, loss of wildlife habitat, and degradation of water quality. For example, disturbance or filling of wetlands can reduce the land's ability to absorb and store stormwater, potentially increasing runoff and flooding in surrounding areas. Likewise, development in areas with steep slopes, poorly drained soils, or sensitive natural features may create long-term environmental and infrastructure concerns.

Plainfield Township contains an abundance of natural resources, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, woodlands, and large areas of public forest land within the Huron National Forest. These resources are central to the Township's rural character, recreational opportunities, and quality of life. The Township has expressed a desire to preserve these natural features while allowing appropriate development and continued recreational use.

The following section evaluates the major natural features located within Plainfield Township and identifies how those resources may influence future development patterns and land use decisions. These findings provide the basis for the Future Land Use Plan and the policies intended to protect the Township's natural environment.

The Huron National Forest covers substantial portions of Plainfield Township and is one of the Township's most significant natural and recreational resources. The Forest occupies approximately 75% of the southeastern portion of the Township, primarily within Township 23 North, Range 6 East, and approximately 50% of the northern portion of the Township within Township 24 North, Range 5 East.

The Huron National Forest provides a wide range of benefits to Plainfield Township and the surrounding region. The Forest supports outdoor recreation, provides habitat for fish and wildlife, protects large areas of woodland and natural resources, and contributes to the local economy through tourism and forest-related industries. Recreational opportunities within the Forest include camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and off-road vehicle use. Numerous snowmobile and ORV trails extend through the Forest and connect to the Township's broader recreation network.

The Huron National Forest also supports a diverse variety of wildlife and bird species. Notable species found within the Forest include Bald Eagle, Ruffed Grouse, and the federally protected Kirtland's Warbler. In addition to federal forest land, the Township also contains lands owned by the State of Michigan that contribute to the overall network of public open space and recreation areas.

Climate

The climate of Plainfield Township is typical of northeastern Michigan and is classified as a cold mid-latitude climate. This climate is characterized by cold winters, moderate summers, and significant seasonal variation. Average monthly temperatures during the winter regularly fall below 27 degrees Fahrenheit, resulting in a prolonged period of cold weather and consistent winter snow cover.

Weather patterns within the Township are strongly influenced by prevailing westerly winds, which contribute to frequent changes in weather conditions throughout the year. Average annual precipitation ranges from approximately 26 to 30 inches, while average annual snowfall ranges from approximately 45 to 55 inches.

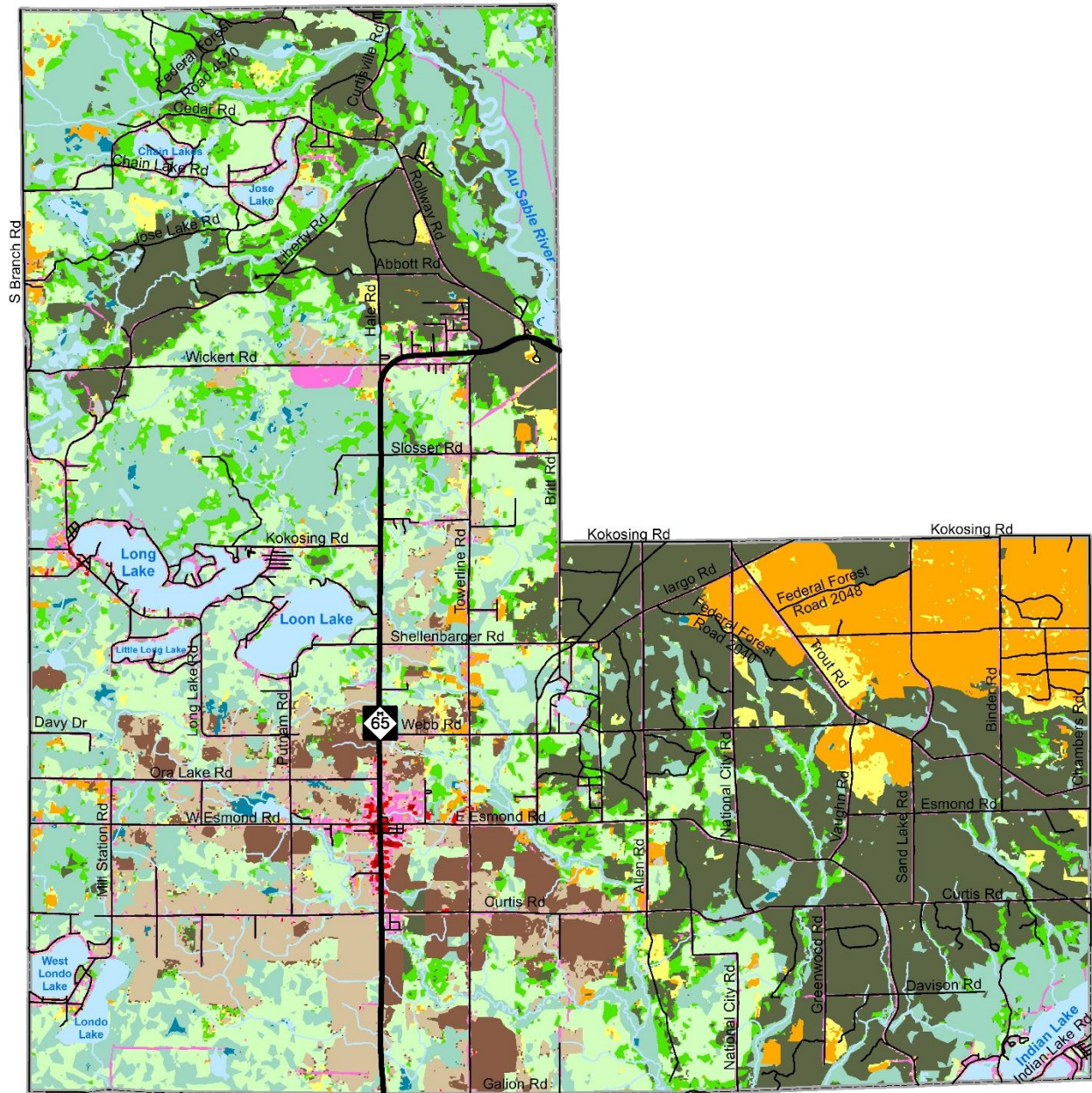
Summer temperatures are generally moderate, with average daytime highs near 80 degrees Fahrenheit and cooler nighttime temperatures typically falling into the 50s. Winter temperatures are considerably colder, with average daytime highs in the 20s and 30s and overnight lows commonly ranging from the teens to low 20s.

Land Cover

The predominant land cover types within Plainfield Township include woody wetlands, evergreen forest, grassland and herbaceous areas, deciduous forest, mixed forest, cultivated cropland, and pasture or hay fields. These land cover types reflect the Township's heavily forested and rural character and contribute significantly to its environmental quality, wildlife habitat, agricultural activity, and recreational opportunities.

- **Cultivated Crops:** Areas used for the production of annual crops, such as corn, soybeans, grains, or vegetables. These lands are actively tilled or planted and are generally associated with agricultural operations.

- **Pasture/Hay:** Agricultural land used for grazing livestock or for the production of hay. These areas are typically covered by grasses or legumes and are generally more open and less intensively cultivated than cropland.
- **Grassland/Herbaceous:** Open areas dominated by grasses, wildflowers, and other low-growing herbaceous vegetation. These lands may occur naturally or result from abandoned agricultural land or utility corridors.
- **Evergreen Forest:** Forested areas dominated by coniferous trees that retain their needles year-round, such as pine, spruce, or fir. These forests are common in northern Michigan and are often associated with sandy soils and upland areas.
- **Deciduous Forest:** Forested areas dominated by trees that lose their leaves each fall, such as maple, oak, birch, or aspen. These forests often occur in areas with richer soils and greater moisture.
- **Mixed Forest:** Forested areas containing a combination of evergreen and deciduous tree species. Mixed forests often occur where soil and moisture conditions support a variety of tree types.
- **Shrub/Scrub:** Areas dominated by shrubs and small woody vegetation generally less than 20 feet in height. These lands may represent transitional areas between open land and forest or may occur in recently disturbed areas.
- **Woody Wetlands:** Wetland areas dominated by trees or shrubs, where the soil is saturated or flooded during at least part of the year. Examples include forested swamps and cedar wetlands.
- **Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands:** Wetlands dominated by grasses, sedges, reeds, cattails, and other non-woody plants. These wetlands are often marshes or wet meadows with standing water or saturated soils.
- **Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay):** Areas with little or no vegetation where exposed rock, sand, or clay is the dominant surface material. These areas may include sand dunes, gravel pits, exposed shorelines, or disturbed sites.
- **Open Water:** Areas permanently covered by water, including lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. Open water areas are important for recreation, wildlife habitat, and groundwater recharge.



Plainfield Township Land Cover

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Developed, Low Intensity	Pasture/Hay	Shrub/Scrub
Developed, Medium Intensity	Grassland/Herbaceous	Woody Wetlands
Developed, High Intensity	Evergreen Forest	Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands
Developed, Open Space	Deciduous Forest	Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
Cultivated Crops	Mixed Forest	Open Water

Agricultural Soils

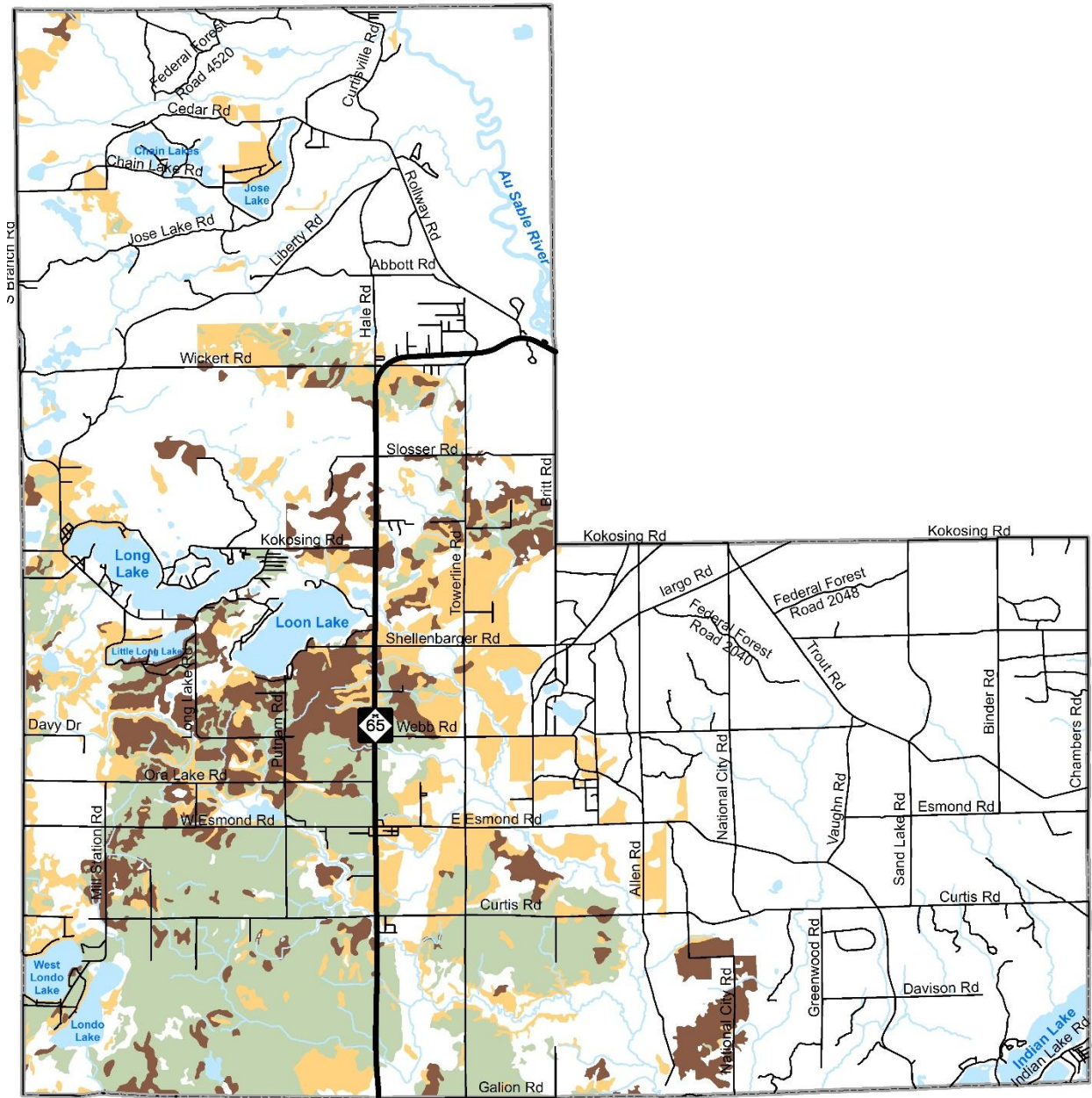
The predominant agricultural soil classification within Plainfield Township is Prime Farmland if Drained. These soils can support productive agricultural use if adequate drainage improvements are provided. Areas classified as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Local Importance are more limited and are found primarily in scattered locations within the southwestern portion of the Township.

- Prime Farmland: Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Prime farmland has suitable soil quality, growing season, and moisture conditions and is capable of producing sustained high yields with minimal inputs.
- Prime Farmland if Drained: Land that would meet the criteria for prime farmland if artificial drainage improvements were installed. These soils are generally productive but are limited by excessive wetness or poor drainage.
- Farmland of Local Importance: Land that is not considered prime farmland but is still important to local agricultural production. These soils may support crops or pasture and are identified by local agencies as valuable agricultural resources within the community or region.

Slopes & Hydric Soils

Topography within Plainfield Township is generally flat to gently rolling, with very little sloping land present throughout most of the Township. Elevations are lowest in the southeastern portion of the Township, ranging from approximately 750 to 775 feet above sea level, and gradually increasing toward the northwestern portion of the Township, where elevations reach approximately 975 feet above sea level.

Areas of Moderately Sloping land are scattered throughout the Township but do not occur in large concentrations. Sloping terrain is limited primarily to the area surrounding Loon Lake, portions of the northern Township along the banks of the Au Sable River and South Branch River, and a few other isolated locations. Only one area of Steeply Sloping land is present within the Township, located south of East Esmond Road.



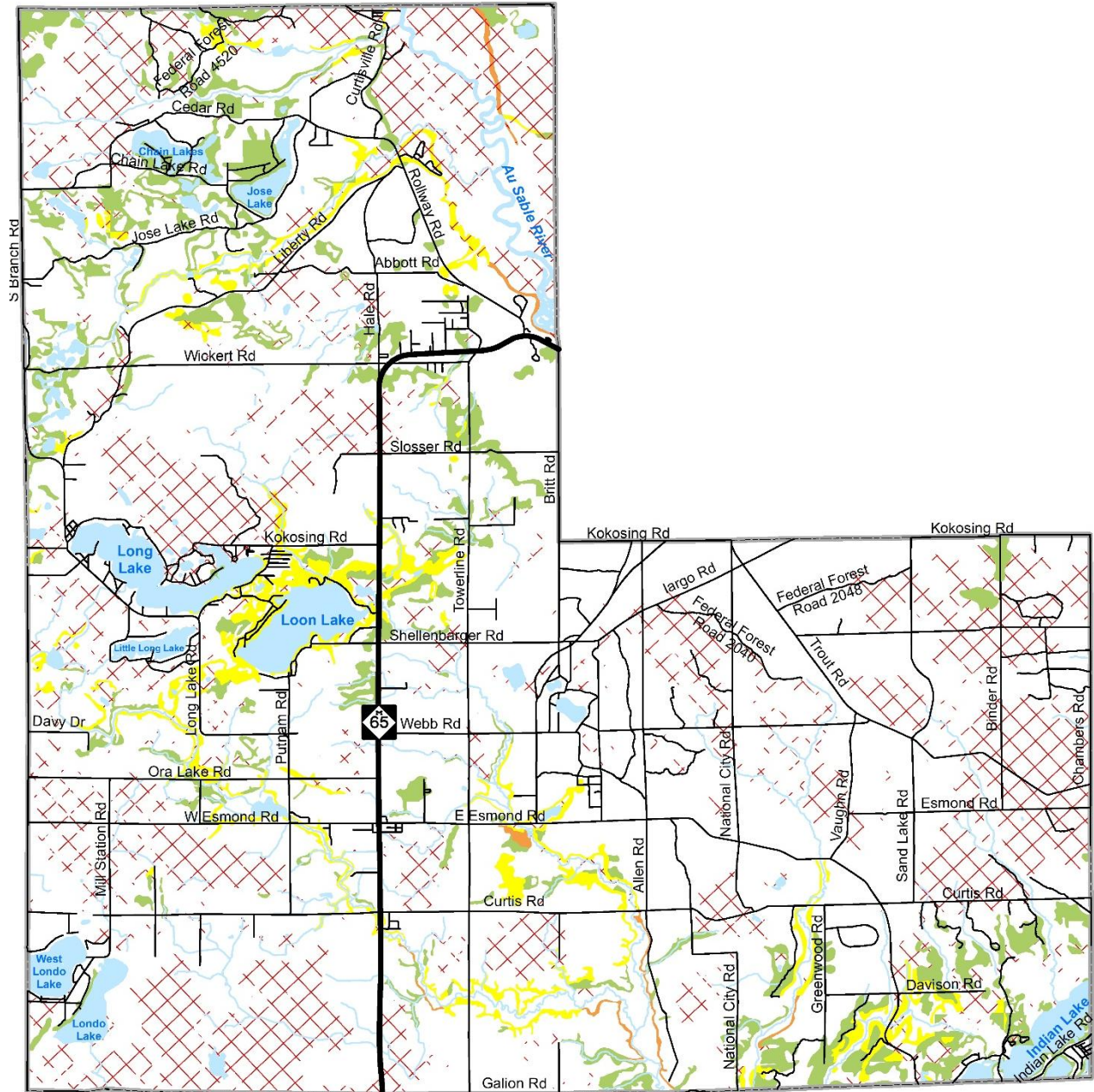
Plainfield Township Agricultural Soils DRAFT

Prime farmland
 Farmland of local importance
 Prime farmland if drained

The majority of soils within Plainfield Township are part of the Grayling soil association, consisting primarily of sandy soils commonly found in woodland areas. Other portions of the Township contain sandy-loam soil combinations that are used for woodland, agriculture, and building sites. These soil conditions generally support rural and forested land uses, although the suitability of individual sites for development varies and should be evaluated on a site-specific basis.

Hydric Soils are widespread throughout the Township and are particularly concentrated in the northern portion of Plainfield Township along the Au Sable River. These soils are commonly associated with wetlands and areas of seasonal or permanent saturation. As a result, they may present limitations for development due to poor drainage, high groundwater levels, and the potential presence of regulated wetland resources.

- **Moderately Sloping:** Land with a gentle to moderate incline, generally ranging from approximately 6 to 12% slope. These areas can usually accommodate development, although additional grading, erosion control, or drainage measures may be necessary.
- **Strongly Sloping:** Land with a more noticeable incline, typically ranging from approximately 12 to 18% slope. Development in these areas may be more difficult and can require additional site preparation, stormwater management, and erosion control.
- **Steeply Sloping:** Land with a significant incline, generally greater than 18% slope. These areas are often less suitable for development because of increased risks of erosion, drainage problems, and higher construction costs.
- **Hydric Soils:** Soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop conditions associated with wetlands. Hydric soils typically indicate areas with poor drainage and may be subject to wetland regulations or limitations on development.



Plainfield Township Slopes & Hydric Soils DRAFT

- Steeply Sloping (30 - 45%)
- Moderately Sloping (9 - 15%)
- Strongly Sloping (15 - 30%)
- Hydric Soils

Wetlands

According to the National Wetlands Inventory, wetlands are located throughout Plainfield Township, typically in low-lying areas associated with lakes, streams, and hydric soils. Wetlands provide important benefits including wildlife habitat, stormwater storage, water quality protection, and groundwater recharge. However, they can also limit development due to poor drainage, high water tables, and regulatory requirements.

Wetlands in Plainfield Township are regulated under Part 303, Wetland Protection, administered by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The law requires permits for activities that may alter or fill regulated wetlands and seeks to avoid or minimize impacts wherever possible.

Under Part 303, wetlands connected to inland lakes, rivers, streams, and similar water features are protected. Many wetlands in Plainfield Township fall within this category due to the Township's extensive network of lakes, rivers, drains, and streams. While state law also protects certain isolated wetlands in more populous counties, that provision does not apply in Iosco County. The Township may choose to adopt additional local wetland protections if desired.

Water resources are abundant throughout Plainfield Township and contribute significantly to its environmental quality, recreation, and seasonal economy. The most prominent water feature is the Au Sable River, which crosses the northern portion of the Township and is well known for its scenic character and opportunities for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

The area north of Wickert Road lies within the Au Sable River watershed and drains eastward, while most of the Township lies within the Au Gres-Rifle watershed and drains generally to the south and east.

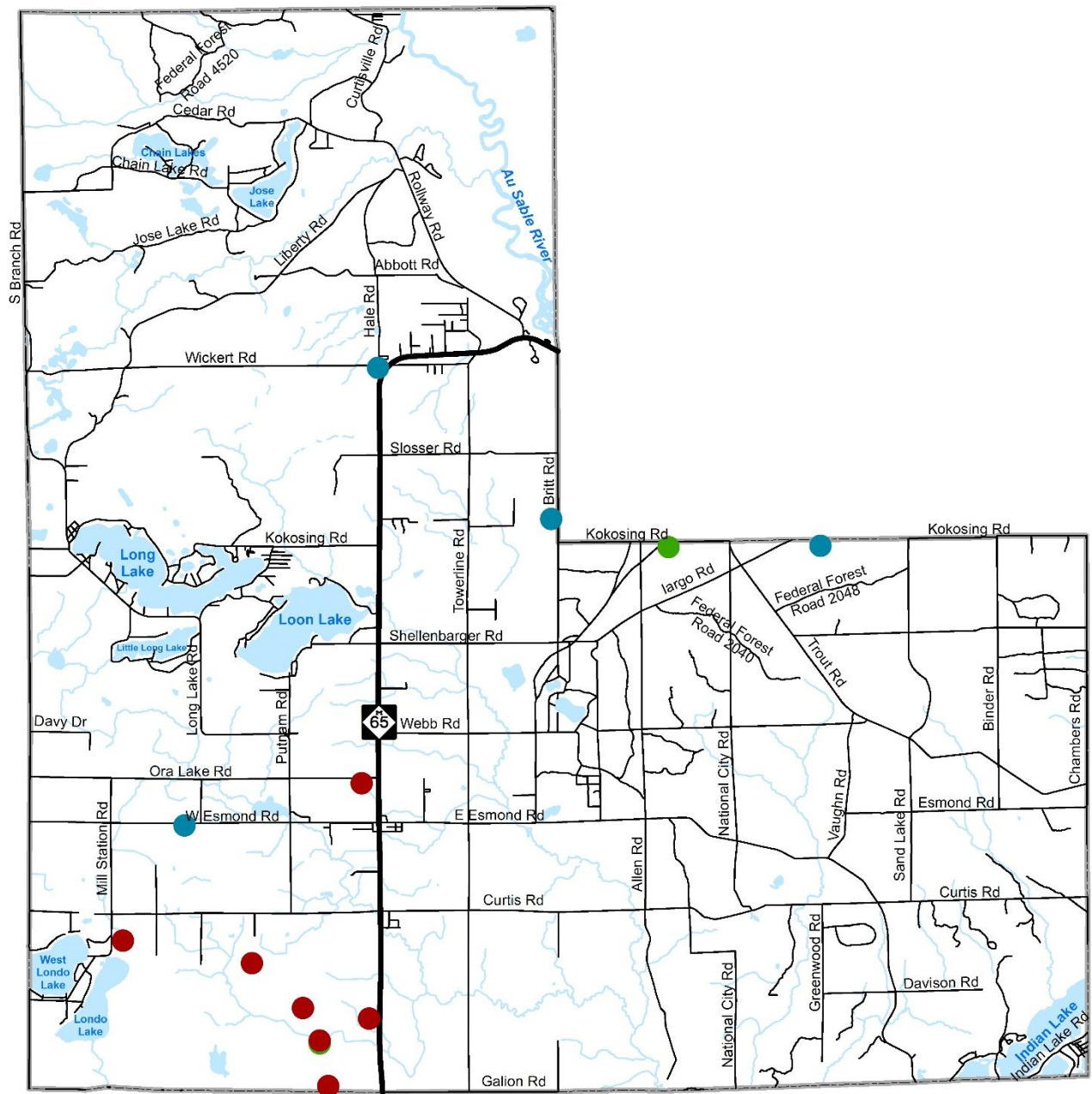
Plainfield Township also contains numerous inland lakes, including Long Lake and Loon Lake, which are important recreational and economic assets. Residential development, including many seasonal homes and cottages, is concentrated around these lakes and along the Au Sable River, with additional cabins and hunting lodges located throughout the Township's forested areas.

Oil & Gas Exploration

Oil and gas exploration within Plainfield Township has been limited. While a small number of exploration wells have been drilled within the Township, most have been dry holes, and no significant oil or gas production has occurred. Existing activity consists primarily of several Part 625 Test Wells and a single location well. These wells are generally associated with exploration efforts rather than active production. As a result, oil and gas development has not been a major influence on land use or the local economy within Plainfield Township.

- **Dry Hole:** A drilled oil or gas well that does not produce oil or natural gas in commercially viable quantities. Dry holes are typically abandoned after exploration determines that production is not feasible.
- **Location Well:** A permitted or proposed drilling site where a well may be constructed in the future. A location well designation indicates that the site has been identified for potential drilling activity, even if a well has not yet been completed or placed into production.
- **Part 625 Test Well:** An exploratory oil or gas well drilled under Part 625 of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. These wells are intended to test subsurface geologic conditions and determine whether commercially recoverable oil or gas resources may be present.





Plainfield Township Oil & Gas Wells

DRAFT

- Dry Hole
- Location
- Part 625 Test Well



0 1 2 3 Miles

Chapter 5

Housing



Housing affordability has become a growing concern in communities across Michigan, affecting both young adults entering the housing market and older adults living on fixed incomes. Rising housing costs, limited housing supply, and income levels that have not kept pace with housing expenses have made it increasingly difficult for many households to find housing that meets their needs and budgets. In rural communities such as Plainfield Township, these challenges may be compounded by limited housing choices, infrastructure constraints, and workforce shortages that can affect the construction of new housing.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers housing affordable when a household spends no more than 30% of its income on housing costs. Households that spend a greater share of their income on housing may have fewer resources available for other necessities such as transportation, healthcare, food, and utilities.

As housing costs continue to rise, many communities are evaluating ways to provide a broader range of housing options that can accommodate residents at different stages of life while supporting long-term community stability and economic vitality.

Thriving communities provide a wide spectrum of housing options to support all residents. The availability of “attainable” housing helps accommodate everyone from young adults who are just beginning to live on their own, to older residents looking to downsize while staying in the community.

While there is no universal definition of “attainable housing,” the term was recently defined by the Urban Land Institute as “non-subsidized, for sale housing that is affordable for households with incomes between 80 and 120 percent of the Area Median Income, (AMI).”

Household Characteristics

Plainfield Township has a total of 1,634 households with an average household size of 2.04 people. A significant portion, 36.7%, of households consist of individuals living alone, and 22.4% of all households are individuals aged 65 or older living alone.

Only 13.9% of households include at least one person under the age of 18, which is relatively low, especially when compared to the state average. In contrast, a notably high 57.1% of households include at least one person who is 65 years or older, reflecting an aging population in the Township.

Household Characteristics						
Municipality	Total Households	Average Size	Living Alone	Living alone over 65	With 1 or + under 18	With 1 or + over 65
Plainfield Township	1,634	2.04	36.7%	22.4%	13.9%	57.1%
Iosco County	11,713	2.14	38.5%	21.3%	17.9%	47.4%
State of Michigan	4,076,369	2.42	30.7%	13.2%	27.1%	32.9%

Household Income

In Plainfield Township, the median family income is \$76,773, while the median household income is \$52,035. This indicates a gap between family and overall household earnings, which may reflect a higher number of single-person or non-family households with lower incomes.

Household Income		
Municipality	Median Family Income	Median Household Income
Plainfield Township	\$76,773	\$52,035
Iosco County	\$66,171	\$50,066
State of Michigan	\$93,357	\$72,875

Housing Inventory

Plainfield Township has a total of 3,920 housing units, with the majority built between 1950 and 1979. Specifically, 759 units were built in the 1950s, 662 in the 1960s, and 961 in the 1970s, highlighting a peak in housing development during that period. Fewer homes were built in more recent decades, with 399 units added in the 1990s, 280 between 2000 and 2009, and just 175 from 2010 to 2019. Since 2020, only 6 new housing units have been built, suggesting a significant slowdown in new residential construction. The 132 units built before 1940 and 217 more built in the 1940s indicate a long-standing and aging housing stock in parts of the Township.

Housing Age	
1939 or before	132
1940 – 1949	217
1950 – 1959	759
1960 – 1969	662
1970 – 1979	961
1980 – 1989	329
1990 – 1999	399
2000 – 2009	280
2010 – 2019	175
2020 and after	6
Total Units	3,920

Occupied Units

Out of a total of 3,920 housing units in Plainfield Township, only 1,634 are occupied, highlighting a substantial number of vacant homes. Most of the housing units, 3,452, are single-family detached homes, but only 1,428 of these are currently occupied.

Housing Type		
	All Units	Occupied Units
Single, detached	3,452	1,428
Single, attached	33	13
5 to 9 units	30	9
50 or more units	13	13
Mobile Home	392	171
Total Units	3,920	1,634

There are 33 single-family attached units, 13 of which are occupied. For multi-unit buildings, there are 30 units in buildings with 5 to 9 units, but only 9 are occupied, while all 13 units in buildings with 50 or more units are occupied. Mobile homes make up a noticeable portion of the housing stock with 392 units, but only 171 of them are currently occupied.

This distribution shows that Plainfield Township's housing is predominantly single-family detached homes, with a relatively high vacancy rate across housing types, especially in mobile homes and smaller multi-unit buildings.

Plainfield Township has a housing vacancy rate of 58.3%. The vast majority of vacant units, 2,095 homes, or 91.6% of all vacant housing, are classified as seasonal residences. The remaining vacant units include homes that are for sale, properties being held for estate or other personal reasons, and older cabins or structures that are not used as either a primary residence or a seasonal home.

Occupied Units						
	Total	Occupied	Vacant	Percent Vacant	Seasonal	Percent Seasonal of Vacant
Plainfield Township	3,920	1,634	2,286	58.3%	2,095	91.6%
Iosco County	20,061	11,713	8,348	46.1%	7,370	88.3%
State of Michigan	4,622,236	4,076,369	545,867	11.8%	253,668	46.5%

In Plainfield Township, married couples make up the largest group of householders, with 861 total units, 810 of which are owner-occupied, and renters occupy 51. Male householders with no spouse present account for 87 households, all of which are owner-occupied. Female householders without a spouse total 38 units, with 17 being owner-occupied and 21 renter-occupied. Among individuals living alone, 176 householders are under the age of 65, including 127 homeowners and 49 renters. Additionally, there are 346 householders living alone who are aged 65 or older, with 292 owning their homes and 54 renting.

Householder Ownership			
	Overall Units	Own	Rent
Married Couples	892	819	73
Male Householder – no spouse	45	45	0
Female Householder – no spouse	31	14	17
Householders alone under 65	234	183	51
Householder alone over 65	366	319	47

In Plainfield Township, there are 557 owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage, compared to 4,313 in Iosco County and 1,717,026 across the State of Michigan. The median value of these mortgaged homes in the Township is \$195,900, which is higher than the County median of \$156,300 but lower than the State median of \$250,500. Additionally, the Township has 851 owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage. This figure includes 29 cases where data was not computed, while Iosco County reports 5,182 such units (with 106 not computed) and the state shows 1,241,446 units (with 17,879 not computed). The median value of homes without a mortgage in Plainfield Township is \$138,800, which is slightly above the county's median of \$123,100 but falls below the statewide median of \$200,000.

Ownership			
	Plainfield Township	Iosco County	State of Michigan
Owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage	557	4,313 (12 not computed)	1,717,026 (7,839 not computed)
Median value of housing units with a mortgage	\$195,900	\$156,300	\$250,500
Owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage	851 (29 not computed)	5,182 (106 not computed)	1,241,446 (17,879 not computed)
Median value of housing units without a mortgage	\$138,800	\$123,100	\$200,000

Household Expenses

In Plainfield Township, vehicle availability varies across households and can have a noticeable impact on household income and economic opportunity. Out of all housing units, 177 households do not have access to a vehicle, which can limit employment options, especially in rural areas where public transportation is limited or nonexistent. The largest share of households, 663, own 2 vehicles, suggesting a level of financial stability and a need for multiple means of transportation, possibly for commuting or family use. Another 521 households have one vehicle, while 273 households have access to 3 or more vehicles, which often correlates with higher household incomes and larger families.

Vehicle Ownership	
Vehicles	Units
None	177
1	521
2	663
3 or more	273

Households rely on a mix of heating fuel sources, reflecting both infrastructure availability and individual economic choices. Natural gas is the most common source, used in 589 units, likely due to its cost-effectiveness and availability in more developed areas. Propane or bottled fuel is the second most used source, heating 519 homes, common in rural settings where natural gas lines may not reach. Electric heating is used in 117 units, which can be more expensive, particularly in colder months, and may affect utility costs for those households. Wood is used in 199 homes, pointing to a continued reliance on traditional, often more affordable or locally sourced heating methods. A small number of households use fuel oil or kerosene (17 units) or other alternative sources (80 units), while 13 homes report using no heating fuel at all, possibly seasonal or vacant properties.

Heat Source	
Source	Units
Natural Gas	689
Propane/Bottled Fuel	519
Electric	117
Fuel Oil/Kerosene	17
Wood	199
Other Sources	80
No Fuel Used	13

Current Cost of Home Ownership

Purchase Price

Using the previously stated median income and the 30% AMI, a maximum purchase price for housing can be determined. For the average household in Plainfield Township, the maximum affordable price would be a home of \$152,000. The average family can afford a \$252,000 home. (These maximum prices include a 5% down payment, principal, taxes, and insurance.)

At the time this plan was written, there were 39 homes listed for sale. These homes start at \$85,000 and go as high as \$640,000. The average cost of these homes is \$278,000, which is above the affordability of both the household and family in the Township. However, 7 homes are listed within an affordable housing range for the average household, and 20 are listed within range for the average family.

Construction Costs

Housing construction has faced several challenges over the past two decades. The Great Recession of 2007–2009 significantly reduced construction activity and employment opportunities, slowing housing development across many communities. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic altered housing demand as remote work increased interest in seasonal and rural homes as permanent residences. At the same time, rising construction material costs and labor shortages have made new housing increasingly expensive.

In Michigan, the estimated cost to construct a 1,500-square-foot home with builder-grade finishes is approximately \$315,000, excluding land. Additional development costs can substantially increase the overall price of a new home.

Typical costs include:

- Land (state average one-acre parcel): \$13,000
- Well installation: \$12,500
- Septic system: \$11,000
- Municipal sewer connection: \$1,300–\$5,000
- Municipal water connection: \$1,000–\$5,000
- Electrical service connection: \$1,000–\$30,000
- Natural gas connection: \$500–\$2,000

Depending on site conditions and available infrastructure, utility and service installation costs can range from approximately \$22,900 for properties served by municipal utilities to \$40,250 for properties requiring a well, septic system, and utility extensions. As a result, the total cost of constructing a new home is estimated to range from approximately \$337,900 to \$355,250, excluding the cost of land.

At the time this plan was prepared, seven buildable parcels were listed for sale in Plainfield Township, with prices ranging from \$10,000 to \$48,000 and averaging approximately \$26,000. Because municipal water and sewer services are not available in the Township, the cost of a well, septic system, and utility connections must be included in the overall cost of construction.

Based on these factors, the estimated average cost to build a new home in Plainfield Township is approximately \$381,250. Financing such a project would require a 20% down payment, about \$76,250, with estimated monthly mortgage payments of approximately \$2,199. (Mortgage payment includes principal, taxes, and insurance.) Under the commonly accepted standard that housing costs should not exceed 30% of household income, a household would need an annual income of approximately \$88,000 for this home to be considered affordable.

Final Costs

A frequently overlooked aspect of housing affordability is the cost of monthly utilities. While earlier estimates focused on core expenses, such as mortgage payments, property taxes, and homeowners' insurance, they did not account for basic utility services like electricity, gas, internet, and phone. Even when using a modest estimate of \$100 per month per service, these utilities add approximately \$400 to a household's monthly expenses. Once this ongoing cost is included, the picture of affordability changes significantly. For a family, the maximum home price decreases from \$252,000 to roughly \$188,000. For the average household in Plainfield Township, it drops even further, from \$152,000 to about \$86,500. When it comes to new home construction, these additional costs push the required household income from an estimated amount of \$88,000 to \$104,000 per year.

Conclusion

These findings demonstrate the importance of evaluating housing affordability using a comprehensive approach that considers not only home purchase prices, but also ongoing expenses such as utilities, taxes, insurance, and transportation. Without accounting for these recurring costs, housing affordability may be overstated.

The housing data for Plainfield Township indicates a notable gap between local income levels and the cost of housing. While some existing homes may be attainable for households earning at or above the median family income, options are more limited for households earning the Township's median household income. The cost of constructing a new home is substantially higher, with estimated development costs exceeding \$380,000 and requiring an annual household income well above the Township median to meet commonly accepted affordability standards. When utility costs are included, the income needed to support homeownership increases further.

This analysis indicates that housing costs have increased at a faster rate than local incomes, reducing the number of housing options that are affordable to many Township residents. The relationship between household income and housing costs is an important factor to consider when evaluating current housing conditions, future housing needs, and opportunities for residential development within Plainfield Township.



Chapter 6

Existing Land Use



Existing land use provides a snapshot of how land within Plainfield Township is currently being used and helps identify development patterns, growth trends, and areas where future land use changes may occur. Understanding these patterns also helps explain why residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and public uses have developed in particular locations while other areas remain largely undeveloped.

It is important to distinguish between land use and zoning. Existing land use describes current conditions, while zoning regulates future development and establishes the types and intensity of uses permitted within a given area.

The Existing Land Use Map was prepared by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG), using property tax classification data from the Iosco County Equalization Department, aerial imagery, GIS mapping, and field surveys. Because the Township contains extensive forested and undeveloped land, aerial photography and land cover data were used to evaluate larger tracts and verify the location of roads, lakes, rivers, and other natural features.

Existing Land Use		
	Acres	Percentage
Agriculture Improved	4288.77	6.24%
Agriculture Vacant	3433.4	4.99%
Commercial Improved	689.65	1.00%
Commercial Vacant	234.63	0.34%
Industrial Improved	38.45	0.06%
Industrial Vacant	72.96	0.11%
Residential Improved	17855.24	25.96%
Residential Vacant	9559.16	13.90%
Federal	29362.19	42.69%
State	251.74	0.37%
Local	346.35	0.50%
Water	2459.6	3.58%
Other	183.12	0.27%
Total	68775.26	100%

Agricultural

Agricultural land, including both improved and vacant agricultural properties, accounts for approximately 11.23% of Plainfield Township. Improved agricultural land makes up approximately 4,288.7 acres, or 6.24% of the Township, and generally includes active farms with homes, barns, storage buildings, or other agricultural structures. These areas are concentrated where soils and access are favorable for farming and often support a mix of crop production, livestock, and related agricultural activities. In addition, approximately 3,433.4 acres, or 4.99% of the Township, are classified as vacant agricultural land.

Although these parcels do not contain structures, they may still be actively farmed and used for cropland, hay fields, pasture, or other agricultural purposes. Together, these lands contribute to the Township's open landscape, support the local agricultural economy, and provide opportunities for continued agricultural use in the future.

Commercial

Commercial land accounts for approximately 1.34% of Plainfield Township. Improved commercial land includes approximately 689.65 acres, or 1% of the Township, and consists of developed properties containing businesses, offices, retail establishments, service uses, restaurants, lodging, and other commercial activities. These areas are generally located along major road corridors and near established population centers where access and visibility support business activity. In addition, approximately 234.63 acres, or 0.34% of the Township, are classified as vacant commercial land. These parcels are generally intended or zoned for future commercial development but currently do not contain structures or active businesses. The presence of vacant commercial land provides opportunities for future economic development and expansion of commercial services within the Township.

Industrial

Industrial land accounts for approximately 0.17% of Plainfield Township. Improved industrial land includes approximately 38.45 acres, or 0.06% of the Township, and consists of developed properties used for manufacturing, warehousing, processing, storage, or other industrial-related activities. These sites typically contain buildings, equipment, and supporting infrastructure associated with industrial operations. In addition, approximately 72.96 acres, or 0.11% of the Township, are classified as vacant industrial land. These parcels are generally intended or zoned for future industrial use but currently do not contain structures or active industrial operations. The availability of vacant industrial land provides opportunities for future business expansion, employment growth, and additional industrial development within the Township.

Residential

Residential land accounts for approximately 39.86% of Plainfield Township, making it the largest developed land use category in the Township. Improved residential land includes approximately 17,855.24 acres, or 25.96% of the Township, and consists of developed properties containing homes, accessory buildings, and associated residential uses. These areas include a range of housing types and densities, generally concentrated near lakes, along major roads, and in established neighborhoods throughout the Township. In addition, approximately 9,559.16 acres, or 13.90% of the Township, are classified as vacant residential land. These parcels are generally intended or zoned for residential development but currently do not contain homes or other structures.

Federal

Federal forest land accounts for approximately 29,362.19 acres, or 42.69% of Plainfield Township, making it the largest single land ownership and land cover category within the Township. These lands are primarily associated with publicly owned forested areas and are generally managed for timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation, watershed protection, and conservation. Large areas of federal forest contribute significantly to the Township's rural and natural character, providing extensive opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, trail use, and other outdoor recreation. Because these lands are publicly owned and largely undeveloped, they also help preserve open space, protect environmentally sensitive areas, and limit the amount of land available for future private development.

State

State-owned land accounts for approximately 251.74 acres, or 0.37% of Plainfield Township. These lands are generally publicly owned and may include small parcels managed by the State for transportation, natural resource management, recreation, public facilities, or other governmental purposes. Although limited in extent compared to the Township's federal forest lands, state-owned properties still contribute to the preservation of open space and may support public access, environmental protection, or other public uses within the Township.

Local

Local land accounts for approximately 346.35 acres, or 0.50% of Plainfield Township. This category includes land owned or used by local entities such as the Township, and generally includes Township offices, public buildings, churches, cemeteries, and other community or institutional uses. These properties provide important public, civic, and community services to Township residents and are generally dispersed throughout the Township near established settlement areas. Although they occupy a relatively small portion of the Township, these lands play an important role in supporting local government functions, community gathering spaces, and public services.

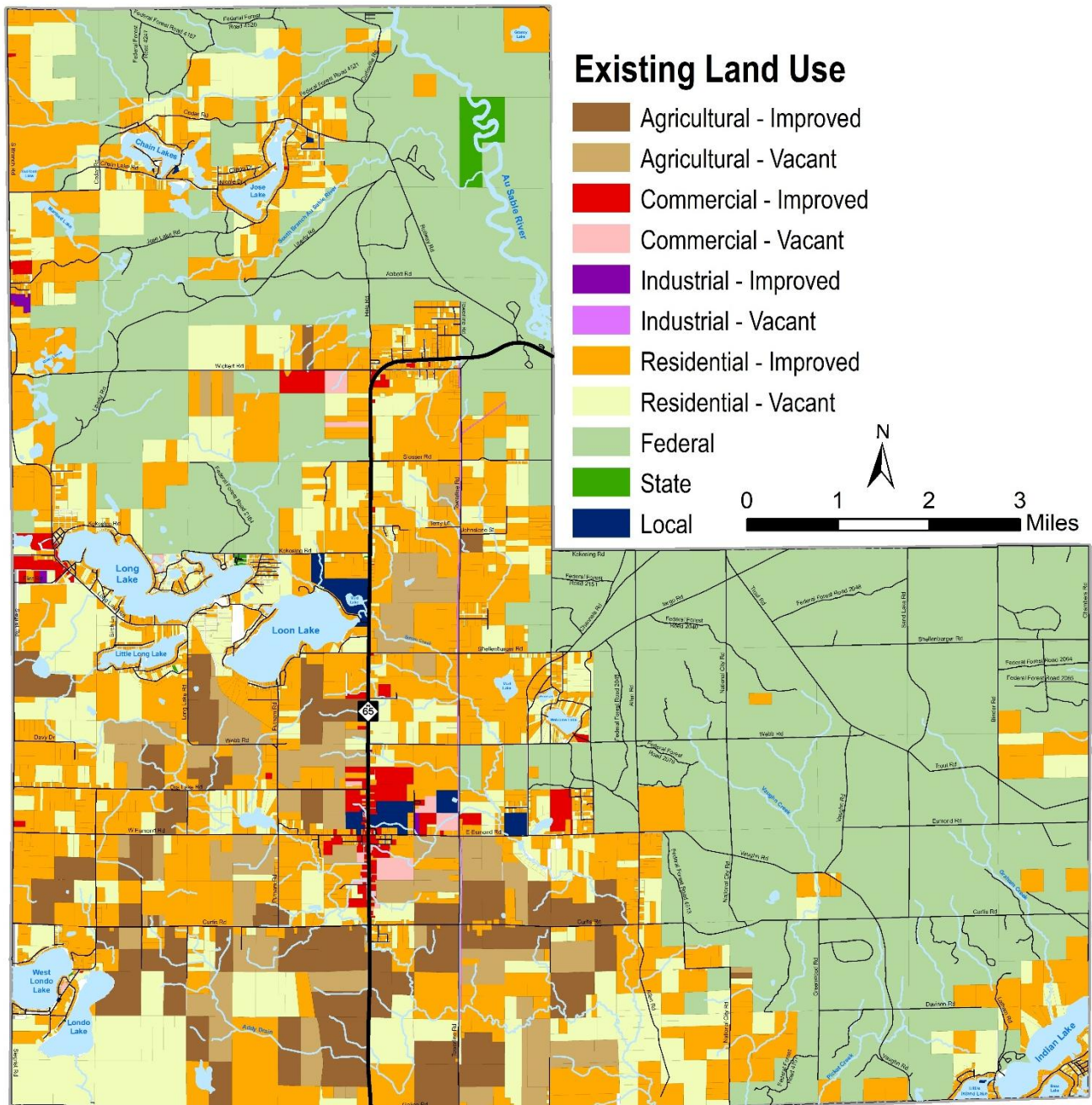
Water

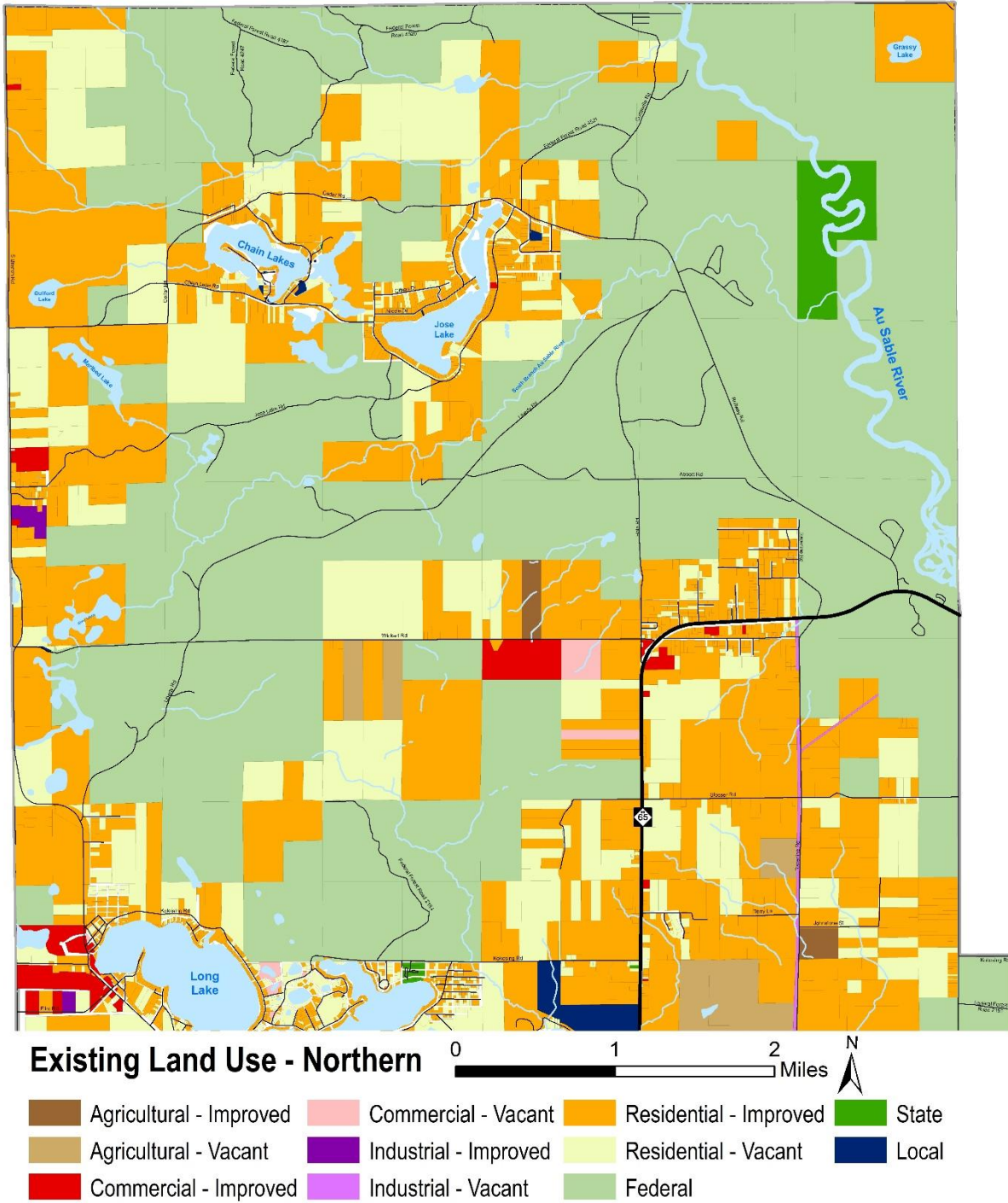
Open water accounts for approximately 2,459.6 acres, or 3.58% of Plainfield Township. This category includes lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, and other surface water features throughout the Township. Water resources are an important part of the Township's natural environment and contribute significantly to its scenic character, recreational opportunities, and ecological value. These areas support activities such as fishing, boating, and wildlife habitat, while also influencing surrounding development patterns. Properties located near water features are often desirable for residential and recreational uses, making these resources an important component of the Township's identity and future land use planning.

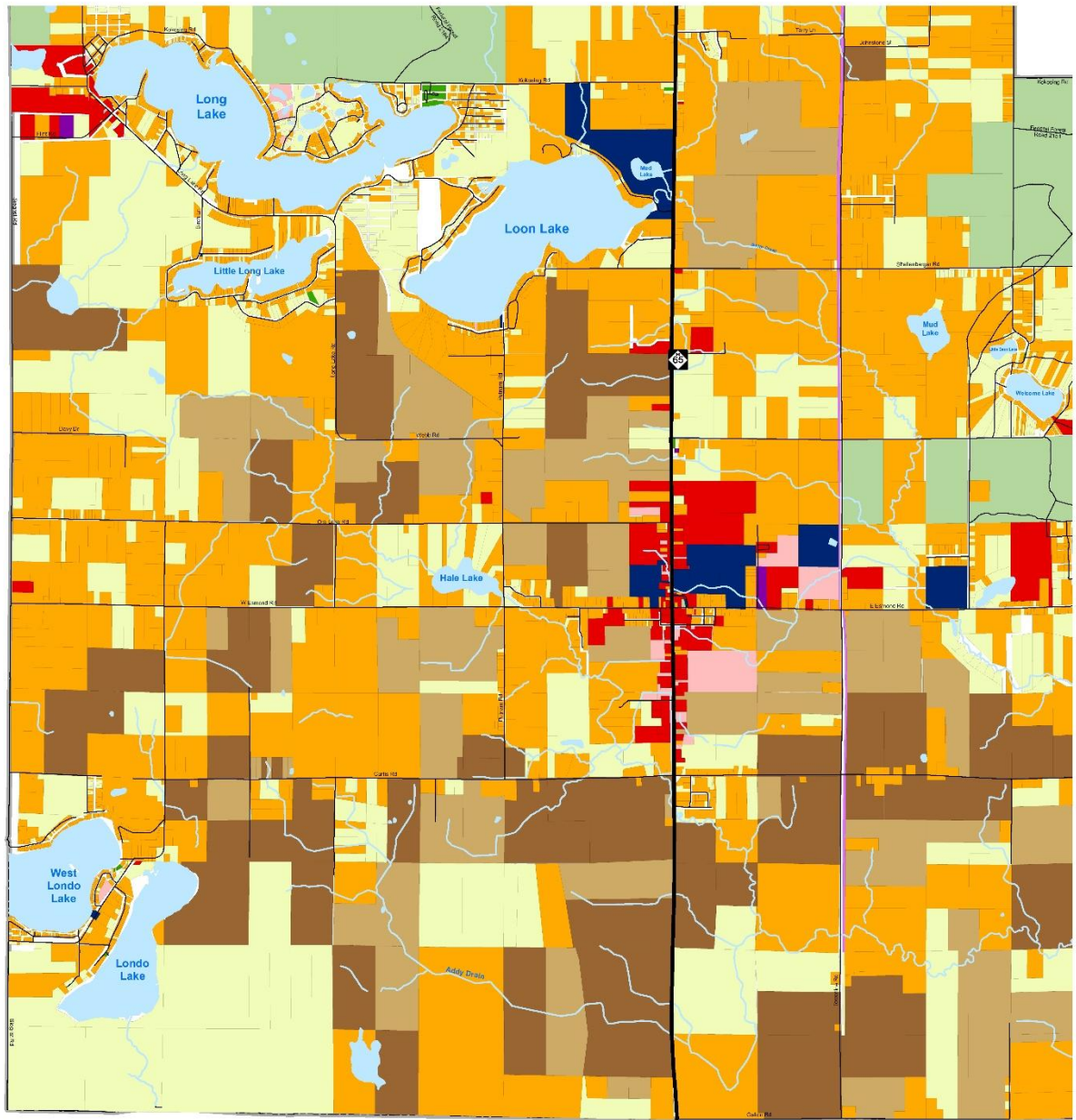
Other

Other land uses account for approximately 183.12 acres, or 0.27% of Plainfield Township. This category includes land used for road rights-of-way, utility corridors, rail lines, and other miscellaneous uses that do not fit within the Township's primary land use categories. Although these lands represent a small portion of the Township, they provide important infrastructure and services that support transportation, utilities, and the overall function of the community.







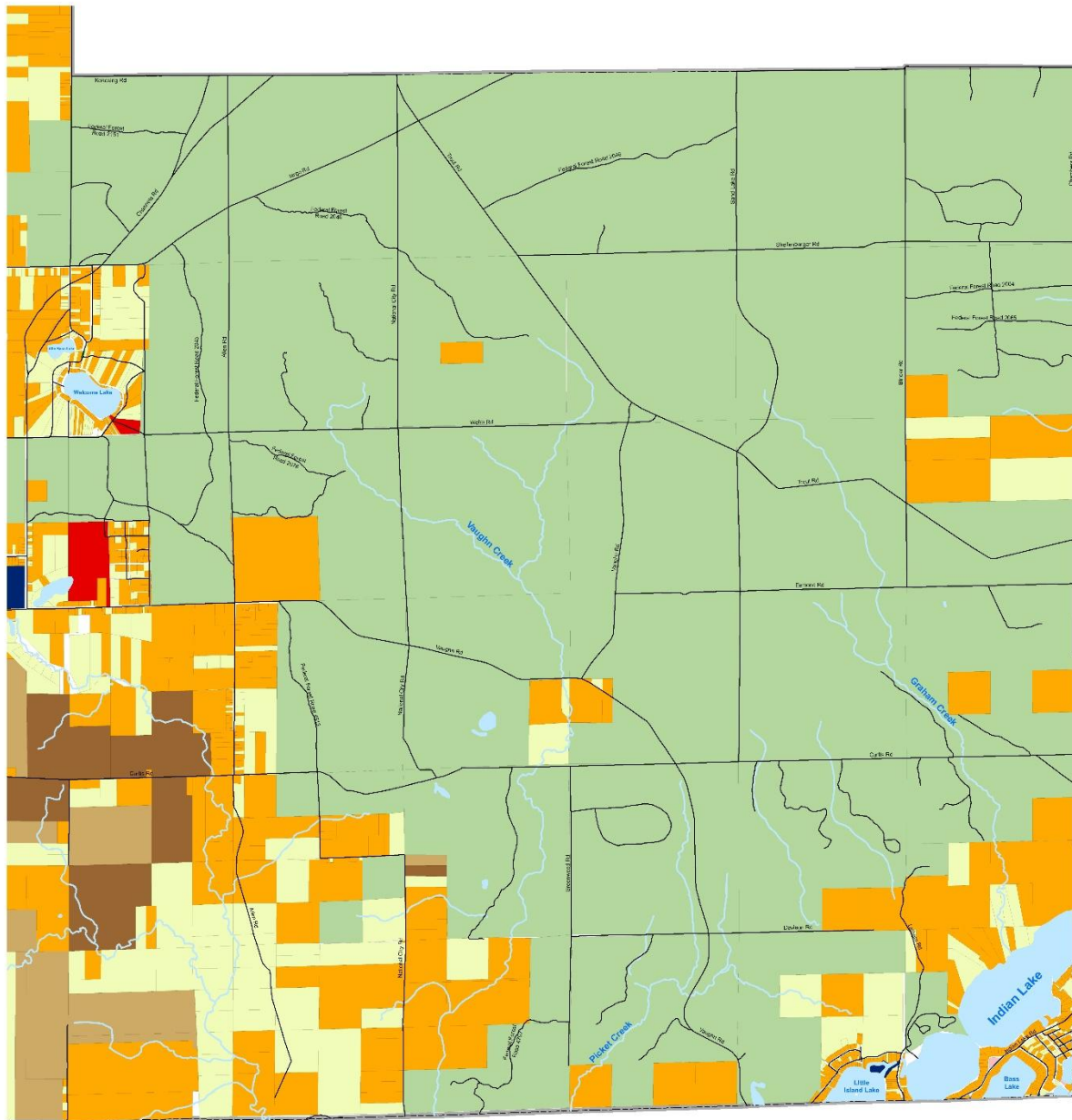


Existing Land Use - Central

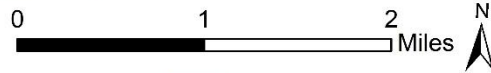
0 1 2 Miles



- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Agricultural - Improved | Commercial - Vacant | Residential - Improved | State |
| Agricultural - Vacant | Industrial - Improved | Residential - Vacant | Local |
| Commercial - Improved | Industrial - Vacant | Federal | |



Existing Land Use - Eastern



 Agricultural - Improved	 Commercial - Vacant	 Federal
 Agricultural - Vacant	 Residential - Improved	 State
 Commercial - Improved	 Residential - Vacant	 Local

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Chapter 7

Goals & Action Items



The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish a vision and direction for Plainfield Township over the next five to twenty years. The goals and action items presented in this chapter are based on the analysis contained in previous chapters, public input, relevant planning documents, and the efforts of the Planning Commission throughout the planning process. Successful planning depends on broad community participation and support, ensuring that these goals and action items reflect the values and priorities of Township residents.

Goals and action items are a key component of the Master Plan. Goals represent the community's long-term vision and serve as guiding principles for future land use decisions, rezonings, and other planning-related actions. They describe the desired conditions the Township seeks to achieve over time. Action items identify specific steps, strategies, or initiatives that can be undertaken to help accomplish each goal. Together, they provide a framework for guiding future decision-making and measuring progress toward implementation of the Master Plan.



Community Character

Plainfield Township residents value the community's natural resources, recreational opportunities, and rural character. The Township is recognized for its lakes, rivers, forests, farmland, and open spaces, which contribute to a high quality of life for both year-round and seasonal residents. Maintaining these features while accommodating appropriate growth is a central theme of this Master Plan.

Goal: Preserve and protect the Township's natural resources, scenic landscapes, wildlife habitat, and recreational assets.

Action Items

1. Maintain and improve Township parks and recreation facilities and support implementation of the Township's current DNR-approved Five-Year Recreation Plan.
2. Identify significant natural features, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, and woodlands, and develop strategies to protect and preserve them.
3. Encourage development patterns that conserve open space, protect natural resources, and maintain wildlife habitat.
4. Promote site design that preserves natural landforms, significant vegetation, scenic views, and native landscaping.
5. Work with the U.S. Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to preserve and enhance recreational opportunities and natural resources.

Goal: Maintain the rural character, community appearance, and small-town atmosphere that define Plainfield Township.

Action Items

1. Investigate blight issues and methods of measurement and control to reduce the proliferation of blighted structures, unused or inoperable vehicles, and outdoor storage that may negatively affect community appearance, safety, and property values.

Goal: Encourage development patterns that are compatible with the Township's natural setting, future land use vision, and quality of life expectations.

Action Items

1. Encourage residential and commercial development patterns that preserve natural resources and minimize impacts on sensitive environmental features.

2. Periodically review the zoning map and future land use map to ensure development occurs in appropriate locations and remains consistent with Township planning goals.
3. Support Iosco County Hazard Mitigation Planning efforts and incorporate hazard mitigation strategies into local planning and development decisions where appropriate.



Planning & Community Development

Effective planning helps ensure that future growth and development enhance the quality of life, character, and natural resources that make Plainfield Township unique. The following goals and action items are intended to guide future development, strengthen planning tools, and promote responsible stewardship of the Township's environmental and community assets.

Goal: Guide future development in a manner that protects existing neighborhoods, preserves community character, conserves natural resources, and meets the long-term needs of the Township.

Action Items

1. Proactively update the Zoning Ordinance to address emerging issues and implement the goals of the Master Plan.
2. Maintain a current, user-friendly online version of the Zoning Ordinance to ensure it remains accessible to residents, property owners, and developers.
3. Revise and strengthen the site plan review process to encourage high-quality development, protect community character, promote visual harmony, and minimize impacts on natural resources.
4. Ensure that zoning regulations, administrative procedures, and the zoning appeals process are clear, consistent, and easy to understand.

5. Maintain effective administration and enforcement of zoning regulations through staff training and consistent application of Township ordinances.
6. Utilize the Capital Improvement Program to coordinate future land use with public facilities, infrastructure, and service improvements.
7. Encourage commercial development that incorporates landscaping, buffering, shared access and parking, and coordinated site design to enhance community appearance and traffic safety.
8. Maintain and periodically update sign regulations to promote compatibility with community character, enhance public safety, reduce visual clutter, and comply with applicable legal requirements.
9. Facilitate ongoing coordination with community organizations, economic development partners, neighboring communities, and governmental agencies to advance Master Plan goals and address issues of local and regional importance.

Goal: Protect and enhance the Township's natural resources through responsible land use and development practices that preserve environmental quality and support long-term sustainability.

Action Items

1. Coordinate growth and development through appropriate land use controls and development standards.
2. Evaluate the environmental impacts of new development through the site plan review process.
3. Protect water quality by encouraging the preservation of natural vegetation along lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands and by minimizing development impacts on sensitive environmental features.

Residential Development

Residential growth is a priority for Plainfield Township, with an emphasis on providing a variety of housing options that meet the needs of residents at different income levels and stages of life. Future development should be designed to maintain the Township's rural character while expanding opportunities for homeownership, aging in place, and workforce housing. Areas that are not prime farmland, heavily wooded, or environmentally sensitive are generally the most suitable locations for future residential growth.

Goal: Promote and maintain a safe, high-quality housing stock that supports long-term community stability.

Action Items

1. Protect and enhance existing residential neighborhoods by preventing incompatible land uses, encouraging reinvestment, and supporting housing rehabilitation efforts.
2. Work with property owners and the county land bank to return vacant or tax-reverted properties to productive residential use.
3. Align local policies with state and federal housing programs and pursue housing and infrastructure grant opportunities.
4. Encourage well-designed neighborhoods that incorporate connectivity, open space, recreation opportunities, and compatibility with surrounding development.
5. Promote energy-efficient building materials, construction practices, and housing designs.
6. Work with the Health Department to ensure wells and septic systems are properly maintained and that all developed lots have adequate sanitary facilities.

Goal: Expand housing opportunities by supporting a variety of housing types, densities, and price points that meet the needs of residents throughout all stages of life.

Action Items

1. Support programs and resources that assist first-time homebuyers and improve access to affordable homeownership opportunities.
2. Encourage the development of a diverse housing stock, including smaller homes, duplexes, townhomes, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.
3. Promote housing options that allow older adults to remain in the community as their housing needs change.
4. Streamline permitting and zoning processes where appropriate and consider allowing housing types such as duplexes and accessory dwelling units by right.
5. Evaluate lot size, setback, and other development standards to ensure they support housing opportunities while protecting public health, safety, and natural resources.
6. Allow alternative and off-grid systems, such as solar energy and other sustainable technologies, where safe and permitted by law.

Goal: Preserve the character of residential neighborhoods while protecting natural resources and environmental quality.

Action Items

1. Maintain development standards for setbacks, accessory structures, landscaping, lighting, stormwater management, and buffering that protect neighborhood character, privacy, safety, and natural resources.

2. Require appropriate screening and transitions between residential and non-residential land uses.
3. Protect lakes, rivers, wetlands, and shoreline areas through conservation practices, greenbelts, easements, and public education efforts.
4. Encourage the use of native vegetation and natural landscaping techniques in residential developments.
5. Ensure residential development standards allow reasonable use of private property while minimizing impacts on neighboring properties and sensitive environmental features.



Economic Development

Plainfield Township supports economic growth that strengthens the local economy, expands employment opportunities, and enhances services available to residents and visitors. Future commercial development should be concentrated in appropriate locations, including the Hale area, South Branch area, and established lake communities, while remaining compatible with surrounding land uses and the Township's rural character.

Goal: Promote a diverse and resilient economy that provides employment opportunities, supports local businesses, and serves the needs of residents and visitors.

Action Items

1. Promote a diverse business environment that serves both seasonal and year-round populations through economic development initiatives and collaboration with regional partners.
2. Encourage entrepreneurship, small business development, and home-based businesses by providing information, resources, and promotional opportunities.

3. Foster cooperation among local businesses and organizations to strengthen the Township's economic base while preserving its natural resources and small-town character.
4. Support and collaborate with regional economic development organizations, including Develop losco, to advance economic development opportunities within the Township.
5. Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industries while supporting the establishment of new businesses that diversify the local economy.

Goal B: Strengthen commercial and industrial areas through coordinated planning, investment, and attractive development.

Action Items

1. Maintain and enhance the Hale business district through downtown planning, beautification efforts, façade improvements, and streetscape projects.
2. Explore the feasibility of establishing a Downtown Development Authority or other economic development tools to support commercial revitalization.

Industrial Development

Plainfield Township recognizes the potential role of a diversified industrial base in supporting economic growth, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening the local tax base. Future industrial development should be directed to appropriate locations and designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses while protecting the Township's rural character, natural resources, and environmental quality.

Goal: Support the retention and expansion of existing industries while attracting new industrial investment that strengthens and diversifies the local economy.

Action Items

1. Encourage light manufacturing, technology-based industries, research and development businesses, and other low-impact industrial uses to locate within designated industrial areas.
2. Support industrial development that minimizes impacts related to noise, odor, traffic, lighting, and environmental quality.
3. Ensure that adequate transportation infrastructure, utilities, and public services are available to support future industrial development.
4. Promote and market available industrial lands and development opportunities to attract new businesses and investment.

5. Encourage industries that utilize the region's natural resources and workforce in a sustainable manner to produce value-added goods and services.
6. Explore opportunities to develop and expand industrial park facilities where market demand and infrastructure capacity support such development.

Agricultural Preservation

Agriculture is an important part of Plainfield Township's economy, rural character, and landscape. Active farms, open fields, and agricultural support businesses contribute to the community's identity and quality of life. The Township supports the long-term viability of agriculture by encouraging farming activities, preserving productive farmland, and minimizing conflicts between agricultural operations and more intensive forms of development.

Goal: Preserve and support agricultural land and farming activities as a vital component of the Township's economy, character, and rural landscape.

Action Items

1. Encourage the continued use of active farmland by supporting agricultural practices and preserving lands containing prime and locally important agricultural soils.
2. Protect agricultural areas through appropriate zoning regulations, conservation easements, and farmland preservation programs, including participation in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (Public Act 116), which provides tax incentives to landowners who voluntarily commit to keeping land in agricultural production.
3. Promote the use of land preservation tools where appropriate, including Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs), which allow development rights to be transferred from farmland preservation areas to designated growth areas, and Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs), which compensate landowners for permanently restricting future development while retaining ownership of the land.
4. Promote public awareness of agriculture's economic, cultural, and environmental contributions to the Township.
5. Provide information on farmland preservation programs, conservation strategies, and development approaches that help retain agricultural land and open space, including the use of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), which allow development to be clustered on a portion of a site while preserving larger areas of farmland, open space, or natural resources.

6. Encourage ongoing dialogue among residents, farmers, landowners, and local officials regarding agricultural preservation and future land use decisions.
7. Allow for reasonable land divisions and development opportunities that support agricultural operations while maintaining the rural character and long-term productivity of agricultural lands.



Community Services & Infrastructure

As Plainfield Township continues to evolve, maintaining and improving community services and infrastructure will be important to supporting residents, businesses, and visitors. Public input identified roads, utilities, broadband access, recreation facilities, non-motorized transportation, and other community services as priorities for future investment.

Goal: Maintain and enhance public infrastructure and community services to support the needs of residents, businesses, and future development.

Action Items

1. Utilize the Capital Improvement Program to plan, prioritize, and implement infrastructure improvements, including water, sewer, drainage, transportation, recreation, and public facility projects.
2. Pursue funding opportunities and strategic partnerships to expand and improve infrastructure, including utilities, telecommunications, and broadband services, in support of residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and home-based business activities.
3. Ensure that public facilities, parks, sidewalks, walkways, and recreational areas are accessible and usable for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Goal: Improve transportation, mobility, and connectivity throughout the Township.

Action Items

1. Continue to update and utilize the Township road assessment to identify and prioritize roadway improvement projects.
2. Coordinate with the Iosco County Road Commission, MDOT, and other transportation agencies to ensure road improvements support the Township's future land use pattern and development goals.
3. Maintain and monitor roadway conditions, traffic patterns, parking needs, and safety concerns to support efficient transportation planning.
4. Promote the development of safe and accessible pedestrian and non-motorized transportation facilities, including sidewalks, pathways, and trail connections where appropriate.
5. Support Complete Streets principles that provide safe and convenient transportation options for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and other legal users of the public right-of-way.

Alternative Energy & Technology

Plainfield Township recognizes the growing role of renewable energy systems and emerging technologies in the regional economy. The Township supports responsible development that balances economic opportunities with the protection of agricultural lands, natural resources, community character, and public safety.

Goal: Responsibly integrate renewable energy facilities into the Township while protecting property owners, natural resources, agricultural lands, and community character.

Action Items

1. Encourage developers to collaborate with the Township when evaluating locations for utility-scale solar energy systems, wind energy systems, and battery energy storage facilities.
2. Ensure zoning standards for renewable energy projects balance developer feasibility with protections for neighboring property owners, agricultural lands, natural resources, and public safety, including standards for setbacks, screening, noise, glare, emergency response, and decommissioning.
3. Encourage renewable energy development to be located in areas where impacts on prime farmland, environmentally sensitive areas, and established residential neighborhoods can be minimized.

Goal: Ensure that data center development is compatible with the Township's infrastructure capacity, natural resources, and long-term community goals.

Action Items

1. Ensure that data center development protects local water resources and does not adversely affect groundwater quality or availability.
2. Evaluate the electrical infrastructure demands of proposed data centers and coordinate with utility providers to ensure the reliability and capacity of the electrical grid are maintained.

Government Services

Effective local government depends on transparent decision-making, public engagement, responsible financial management, and coordination with community partners. The Township will continue to provide services and make decisions that reflect community priorities and support the long-term vision established in this Master Plan.

Goal: Promote transparent, accountable, and responsive local government that effectively serves Township residents.

Action Items

1. Maintain responsible fiscal policies and budgeting practices that support efficient Township operations and long-term financial stability.
2. Maintain and regularly update the Township website and other communication tools to provide timely information and improve public access to Township services, meetings, and planning activities.
3. Implement public participation and communication strategies that encourage resident involvement and meaningful input on community issues and Township decisions.
4. Periodically assess Township facilities, equipment, and service needs to ensure they continue to meet community needs.

Goal: Support public safety and emergency preparedness throughout the Township.

Action Items

1. Work with law enforcement, fire departments, emergency service providers, and other agencies to maintain and enhance public safety services.
2. Support efforts to address vandalism, nuisance properties, and other conditions that may negatively affect public health, safety, and quality of life.

3. Promote emergency preparedness, hazard mitigation, and coordination among local, county, regional, and state emergency management agencies.



Zoning

The Zoning Ordinance is one of the Township's primary tools for implementing the goals and recommendations of this Master Plan. As community needs, development trends, and state and federal regulations evolve, the Township should periodically review and update its zoning regulations to ensure they remain effective, flexible, and consistent with the community's vision.

Goal: Maintain a modern, flexible, and effective Zoning Ordinance that supports the Township's future land use vision while protecting community character, natural resources, and property rights.

Action Items

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance as needed to ensure continued compliance with changes in state and federal law.
2. Investigate updates to allow smaller lot developments and clustered development patterns that preserve open space through conservation easements or similar mechanisms.
3. Incorporate flexible zoning tools that encourage creative site design and address unique development situations.
4. Expand opportunities for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) in appropriate zoning districts.
5. Consider allowing mixed-use developments within commercial and industrial districts where compatible with surrounding land uses.

6. Ensure all buildable lots have legal access to a public or private road.
7. Maintain clear and appropriate regulations for accessory buildings and structures.
8. Provide standards for the use and storage of recreational vehicles that balance property owner flexibility with neighborhood compatibility.
9. Maintain clear and reasonable regulations for nonconforming uses, structures, and lots.
10. Ensure parking standards remain appropriate, flexible, and responsive to changing development needs.
11. Maintain standards and approval procedures for driveways, easements, and private roads.
12. Maintain zoning districts and permitted uses that allow reasonable use of private property while remaining consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

Chapter 8

Future Land Use



This chapter establishes a framework for guiding growth and development within Plainfield Township over the next five to twenty years. It is based on existing land use patterns, natural resource conditions, public input, infrastructure considerations, and the goals and action items outlined in this Master Plan.

The map and accompanying land use categories identify the general location, character, and intensity of development that is appropriate throughout the Township. These designations are intended to balance opportunities for residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural growth with the preservation of the Township's rural character, recreational assets, and natural resources.

The land use categories are not intended to establish precise boundaries or predetermine specific development outcomes. Rather, they provide guidance for future zoning decisions, public investments, infrastructure planning, and development proposals. Together, they help ensure that future growth occurs in a coordinated manner that reflects community priorities while protecting the qualities that make Plainfield Township a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Future Land Use Designation	Zoning District
Resource Development	RD Resource Development District
Agricultural	AG Agriculture District
Low Density Residential	R1 Low Single-Family Residential District
Medium Density Residential	R2 Medium Single-Family Residential District
High Density Residential	R3 High Single-Family Residential District
Neighborhood Service Commercial	NSC Neighborhood Service Commercial District
Community Service Commercial	CSC Community Service Commercial District
Industrial	Industrial District
Downtown Overlay	DTO Downtown Overlay District

Resource Development Designation

Purpose

The Resource Development Designation is intended to preserve large tracts of environmentally sensitive land, forests, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other significant natural features while allowing for limited, low-density development that is compatible with the area's natural character. The designation supports conservation, sustainable resource management, agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, and rural residential uses that can be accommodated without compromising the Township's natural resources.

Structure

The Resource Development Designation encompasses large, predominantly undeveloped areas characterized by extensive woodlands, wetlands, high water table soils, and other environmentally sensitive lands. These areas are generally not served by public water or sanitary sewer systems and are expected to remain dependent upon private wells and on-site septic systems. Development is intended to occur at low densities on large parcels, preserving open space and maintaining the Township's rural landscape.

Character & Intent

The Resource Development Designation is intended to preserve the Township's natural landscape while allowing limited development that is compatible with its environmental features. Agriculture, forestry, conservation, outdoor recreation, agritourism, and low-density residential uses are appropriate where they protect wetlands, forests, wildlife habitat, and water resources. More intensive development should be directed to areas with existing infrastructure.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Resource Development (RD) Zoning District. Large lots, low residential densities, and limited lot coverage should be maintained to protect groundwater, natural resources, and rural character. Site design should minimize impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, and public water and sewer service are generally not anticipated within this designation.

Agricultural Designation

Purpose

The Agricultural Designation is intended to preserve productive farmland, woodlands, and open space while supporting agriculture as a long-term land use. The designation accommodates farming, forestry, agricultural businesses, and low-density residential development that is compatible with the rural landscape and can be served by private wells and on-site septic systems.

Structure

The Agricultural Designation includes active farmland, woodlands, open fields, and rural residential areas where agriculture remains the predominant land use. These areas are generally not served by public water or sanitary sewer systems and are expected to continue relying on private wells and septic systems. Large parcels and low-density development help preserve agricultural operations and the Township's rural character.

Character & Intent

The Agricultural Designation is intended to maintain the Township's agricultural heritage by preserving farmland and encouraging agricultural production, forestry, agritourism, and other rural land uses. Low-density residential development should be designed to minimize conflicts with farming activities while protecting open space, natural resources, and the rural landscape.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Agricultural (AG) Zoning District. Agricultural operations should remain the primary land use, with low-density residential development occurring on large lots that support private wells and septic systems. New development should be designed to minimize conflicts with agricultural activities, preserve open space and natural features, and maintain the Township's rural character.

Low-Density Residential Designation

Purpose

The Low-Density Residential Designation provides areas for single-family neighborhoods at rural residential densities while protecting the Township's rural character and natural resources. Development is intended to occur on larger lots that can accommodate private wells and on-site septic systems where public utilities are unavailable.

Structure

The Low-Density Residential Designation consists primarily of single-family homes on large lots in areas served by private wells and septic systems or limited public utilities. These neighborhoods provide a transition between agricultural or natural resource areas and more developed portions of the Township.

Character & Intent

The Low-Density Residential Designation is intended to provide quiet residential neighborhoods while preserving open space and maintaining compatibility with adjacent agricultural and natural resource areas. Development should protect groundwater resources, minimize land use conflicts, and maintain the Township's rural residential character.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Low Density Residential (R-1) Zoning District. Large lots, low housing densities, and landscaping should maintain neighborhood character while protecting groundwater where public sewer service is unavailable.

Medium-Density Residential Designation

Purpose

The Medium-Density Residential Designation provides areas for a variety of residential housing types at moderate densities where existing or planned infrastructure can support additional development. The designation encourages efficient land use while maintaining attractive residential neighborhoods.

Structure

The Medium-Density Residential Designation consists primarily of single-family and compatible residential development on moderately sized lots. These areas are generally located near community services, public facilities, or transportation corridors and may be served by public sewer or other infrastructure.

Character & Intent

The Medium-Density Residential Designation is intended to provide well-designed neighborhoods that offer a range of housing opportunities while remaining compatible with surrounding residential development. Development should promote connected neighborhoods, attractive streetscapes, and appropriate transitions to adjacent land uses.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Medium-Density Residential (R-2) Zoning District. Moderate lot sizes, coordinated site design, and adequate infrastructure should support residential growth while maintaining neighborhood compatibility.

High-Density Residential Designation

Purpose

The High-Density Residential Designation provides locations for higher-density residential development where public infrastructure is available or planned. The designation encourages efficient use of land while expanding housing opportunities for residents of varying ages, incomes, and household sizes.

Structure

The High-Density Residential Designation includes areas suitable for compact residential development served by public sanitary sewer and other community services. These areas are generally located near commercial districts, employment centers, schools, parks, or other public amenities.

Character & Intent

The High-Density Residential Designation is intended to accommodate higher-density housing while maintaining attractive, safe, and compatible neighborhoods. Development should provide quality site design, landscaping, pedestrian connections, and appropriate transitions to adjacent lower-density residential areas.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the High-Density Residential (R-3) Zoning District. Residential development should be served by public sanitary sewer, incorporate quality site planning and landscaping, and provide buffering where adjacent to lower-density residential neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Commercial Designation

Purpose

The Neighborhood Commercial Designation provides locations for small-scale retail, service, office, dining, and other commercial uses that meet the day-to-day needs of nearby residents. These areas are intended to provide convenient access to goods and services while remaining compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Structure

The Neighborhood Commercial Designation is generally located at neighborhood intersections or along collector and local roadways where businesses can conveniently serve surrounding residential areas. Development typically consists of small commercial buildings, neighborhood shopping areas, offices, personal services, and mixed-use buildings that complement nearby residential uses.

Character & Intent

The Neighborhood Commercial Designation is intended to create attractive, pedestrian-friendly commercial areas that provide goods and services for nearby residents while minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Development should be appropriately scaled, incorporate quality architecture and landscaping, and provide safe access for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Neighborhood Service Commercial (NSC) Zoning District. Buildings should be designed to complement surrounding development through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, screening, signage, and access management. Shared driveways, coordinated parking, and pedestrian connections are encouraged to improve safety and neighborhood compatibility.

Community Service Commercial Designation

Purpose

The Community Service Commercial Designation provides locations for a broad range of retail, office, service, lodging, dining, institutional, and commercial uses that serve multiple neighborhoods, the Township, and surrounding communities. These areas support convenient access to goods, services, employment, and community facilities.

Structure

The Community Service Commercial Designation is generally located along major roadways and at commercial centers where infrastructure, visibility, and access support a wider variety of commercial activities. Development typically includes shopping areas, offices, restaurants, lodging, personal services, healthcare facilities, and other businesses that serve both residents and visitors.

Character & Intent

The Community Service Commercial Designation is intended to accommodate a diverse mix of commercial and service uses while promoting attractive, functional, and well-connected business districts. Development should provide safe access, quality building design, landscaping, and buffering where adjacent to residential uses, while supporting economic growth and community services.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Community Service Commercial (CSC) Zoning District. Commercial sites should incorporate coordinated access, adequate parking, landscaping, screening, and pedestrian connectivity where appropriate. Development should be designed to minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties while creating attractive commercial corridors and activity centers.

Downtown Overlay Designation

Purpose

The Downtown Overlay Designation is intended to strengthen and guide the continued development of the Township's downtown as a vibrant, walkable center for business, civic, residential, and community activities. The designation promotes convenient access to goods, services, employment, and public spaces while preserving the area's small-town character and rural identity.

Structure

The Downtown Overlay Designation encompasses the Township's traditional downtown core, centered around the primary commercial intersection and extending into surrounding blocks where a mix of commercial, civic, residential, and public uses create a compact activity center. The overlay encourages infill development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse that reinforces a connected, pedestrian-oriented downtown environment.

Character & Intent

The Downtown Overlay Designation is intended to create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly downtown that serves as the Township's commercial and community focal point. A mixture of retail, restaurants, offices, housing, civic uses, and public gathering spaces is encouraged to support year-round activity. Development should reinforce a traditional downtown character through quality architecture, streetscape improvements, walkability, and compatibility with surrounding development.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Downtown Overlay (DTO) District standards. Buildings should be oriented toward the street with reduced setbacks where appropriate to create a traditional downtown environment. Shared parking, pedestrian connections, landscaping, coordinated signage, and building design should contribute to a safe, attractive, and walkable downtown while supporting compatible mixed-use development and redevelopment.

Industrial Designation

Purpose

The Industrial Designation provides locations for manufacturing, processing, warehousing, distribution, research, data centers, transportation, and other industrial uses that contribute to the Township's economic base. These areas are intended to accommodate industrial development while minimizing impacts on surrounding properties through appropriate site design, buffering, and operational standards.

Structure

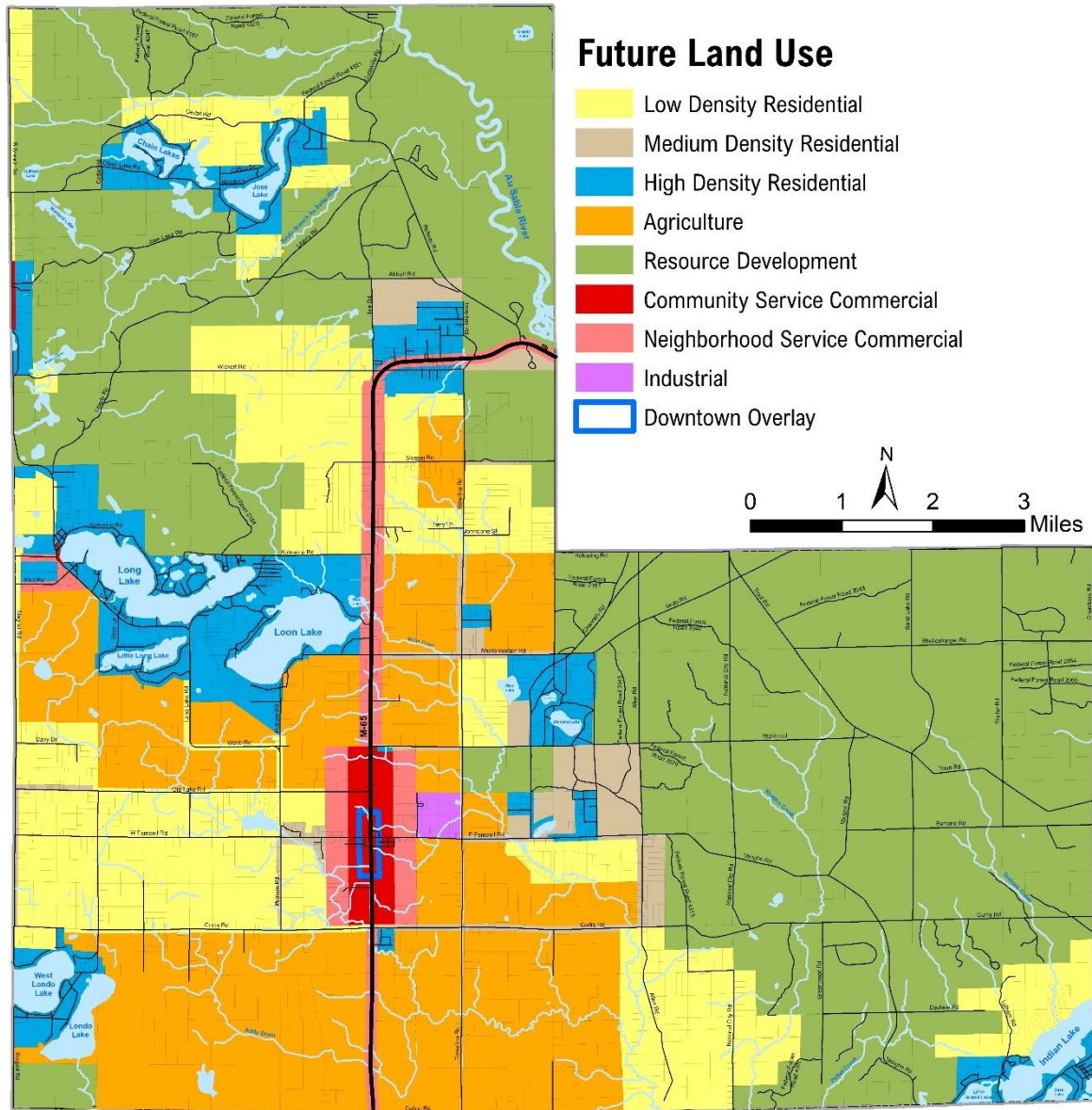
The Industrial Designation is generally located along major transportation corridors and in areas with adequate infrastructure to support industrial operations. Development typically consists of manufacturing facilities, warehouses, distribution centers, industrial parks, research facilities, data centers, and supporting commercial and transportation-related businesses.

Character & Intent

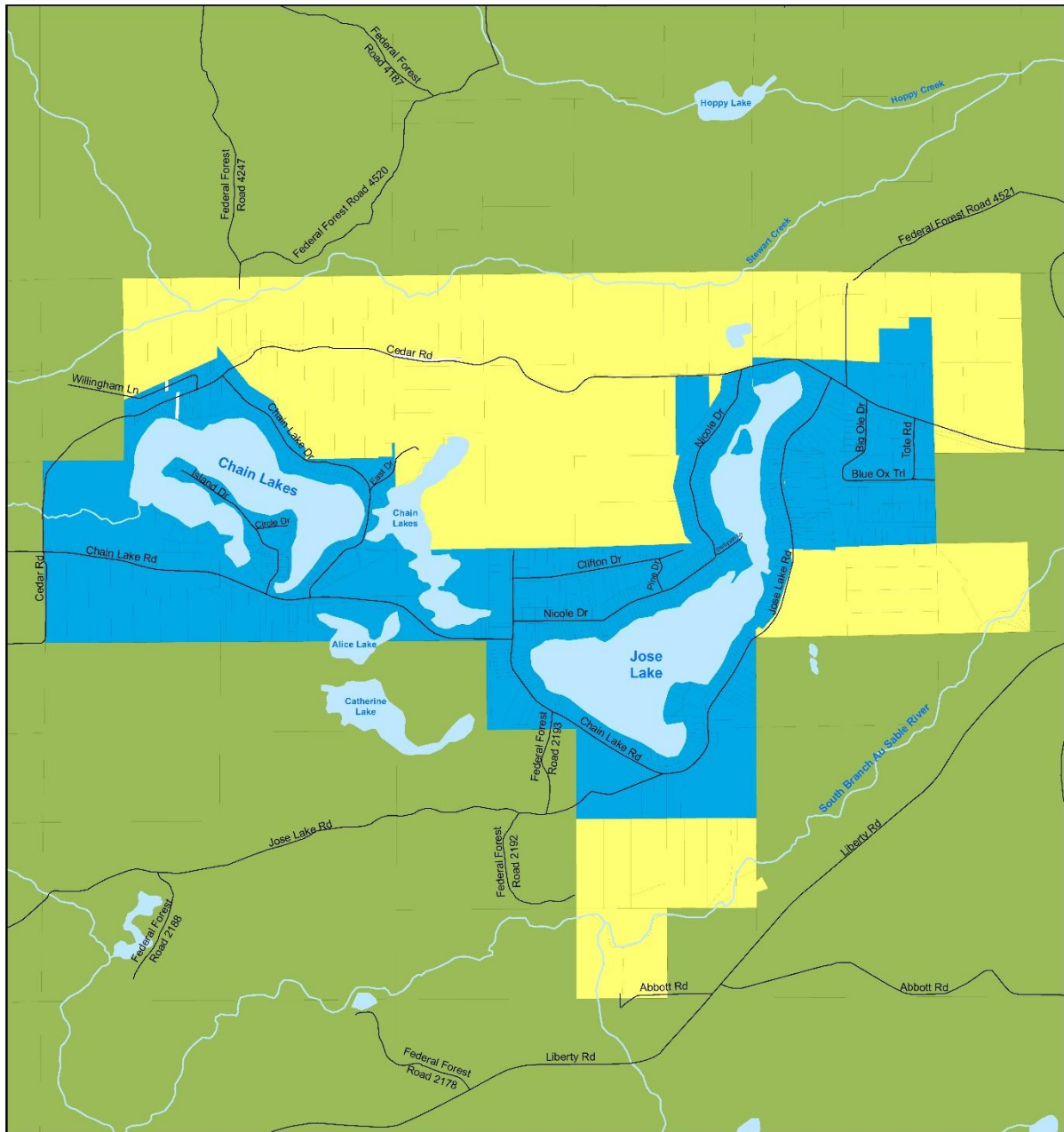
The Industrial Designation is intended to support employment, manufacturing, logistics, research, and industrial investment while protecting nearby residential, agricultural, and commercial areas. Development should minimize noise, lighting, odors, traffic, and other off-site impacts through quality site planning, landscaping, buffering, and operational controls.

Development Standards

Development should generally follow the Industrial (I) Zoning District. Industrial sites should provide adequate setbacks, landscaping, screening, stormwater management, and safe access for employees and freight traffic. Buildings and outdoor operations should be designed to minimize impacts on adjacent properties, and uses involving significant environmental or operational impacts should incorporate appropriate mitigation measures, including plans for long-term decommissioning or site remediation where applicable.

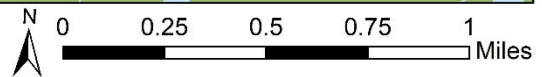


Plainfield Township Chain Lakes and Jose Lake Future Land Use

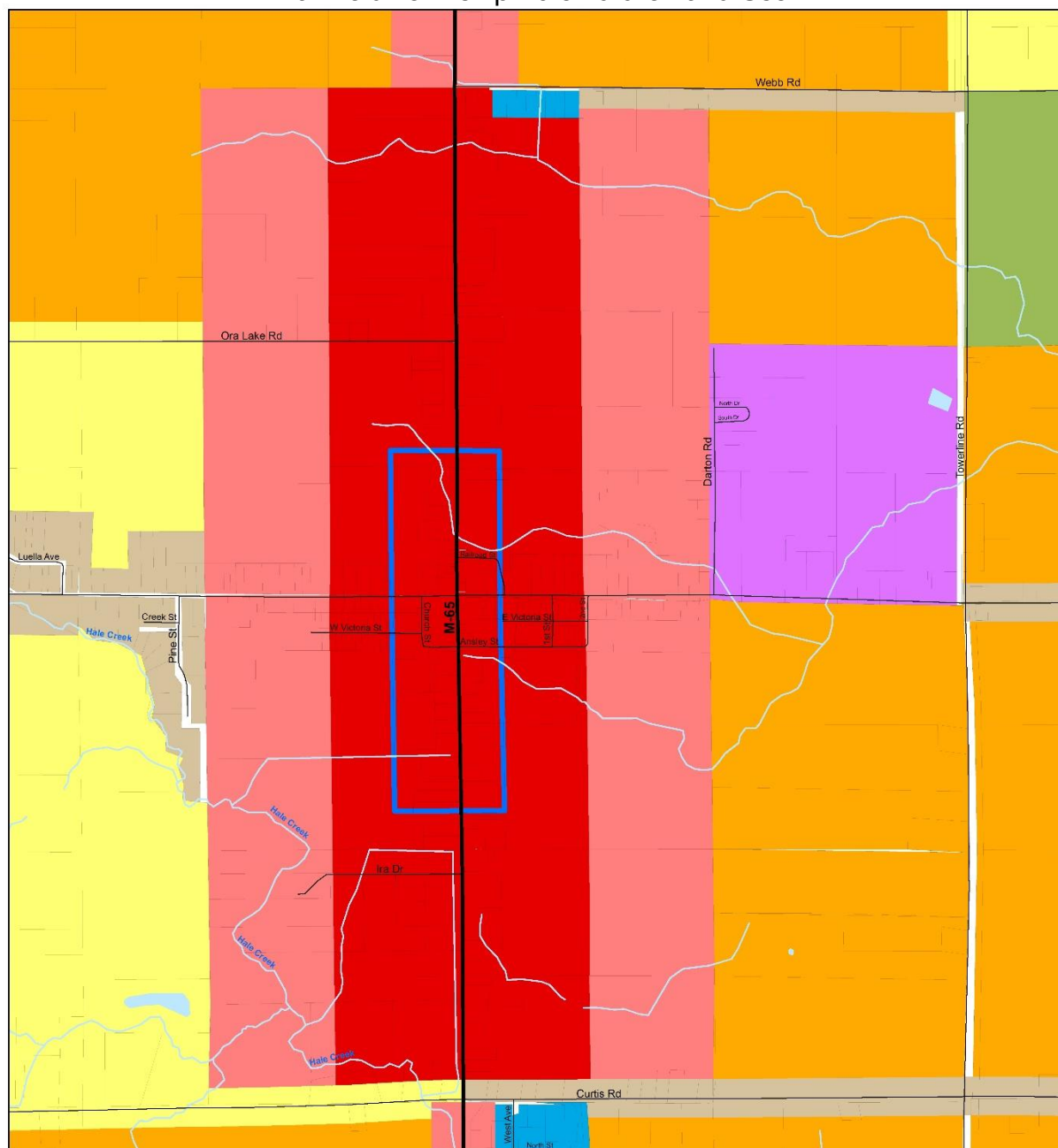


Future Land Use

- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Resource Development



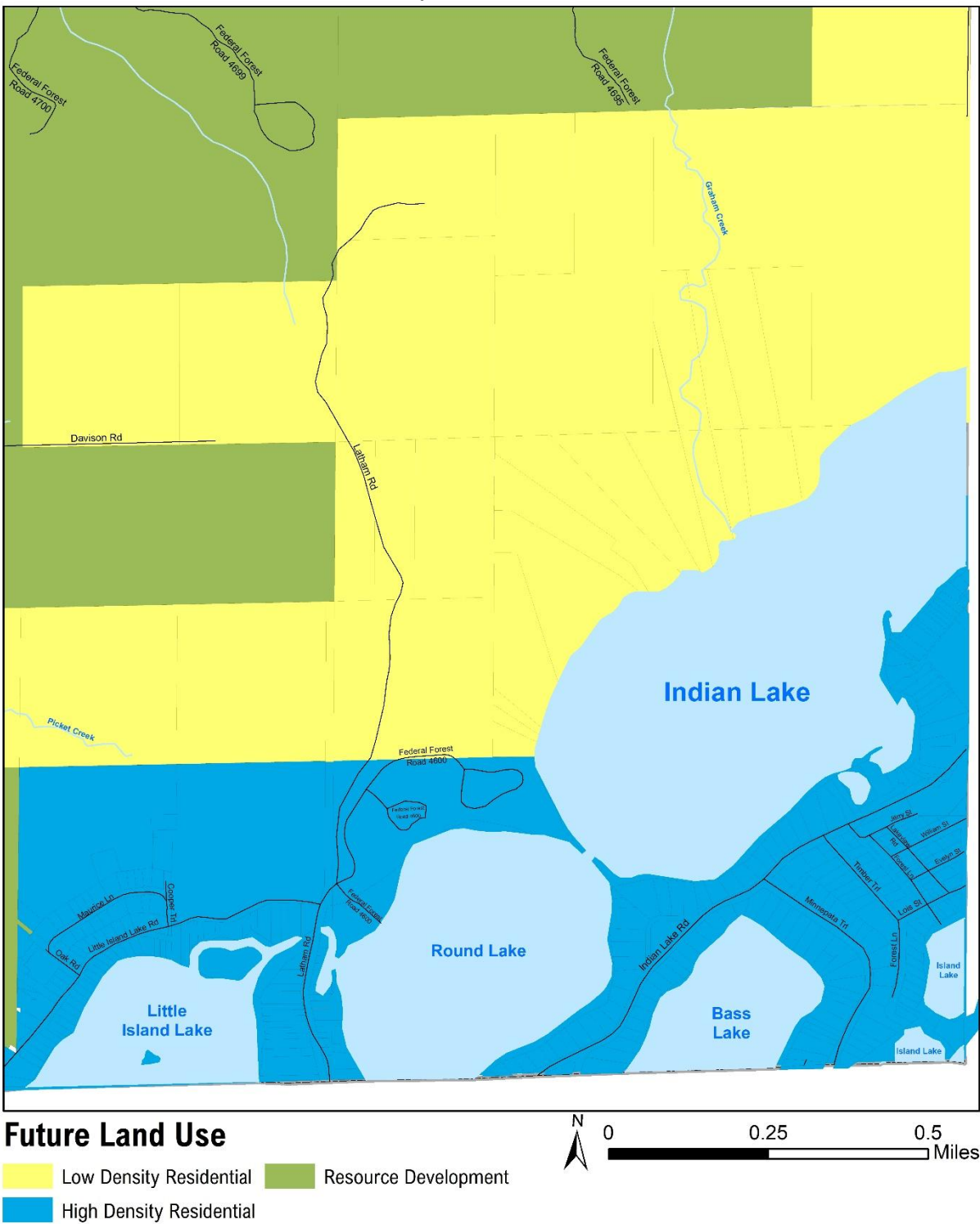
Plainfield Township Hale Future Land Use



Future Land Use



Plainfield Township Indian Lake Future Land Use

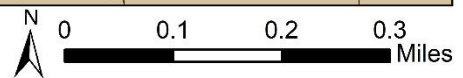


Plainfield Township Little Bass Lake and Welcome Lake Future Land Use

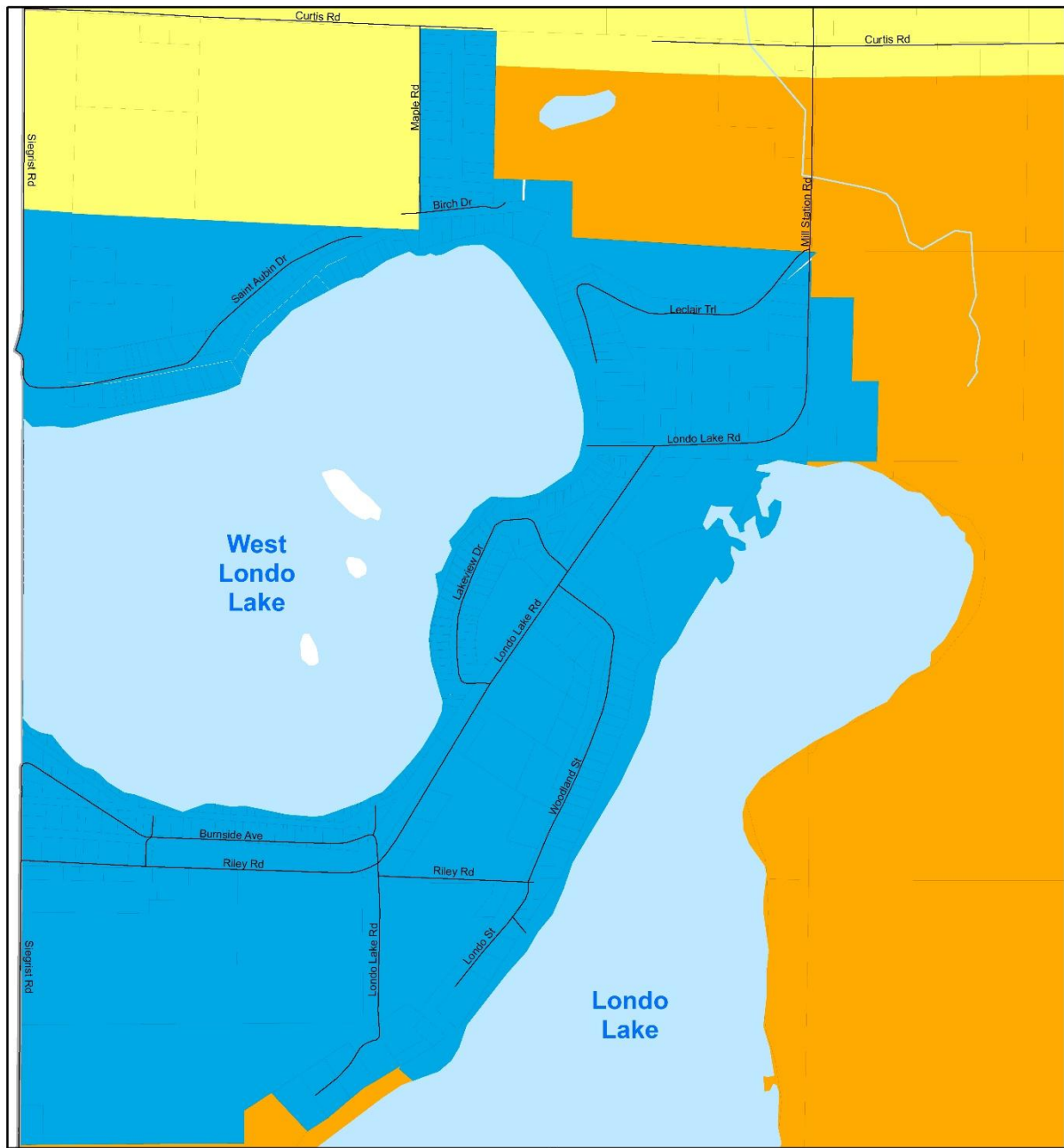


Future Land Use

- | | |
|--|--|
| Low Density Residential | Agriculture |
| Medium Density Residential | Resource Development |
| High Density Residential | |

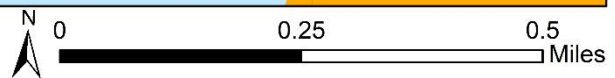


Plainfield Township Londo Lake and West Londo Lake Future Land Use

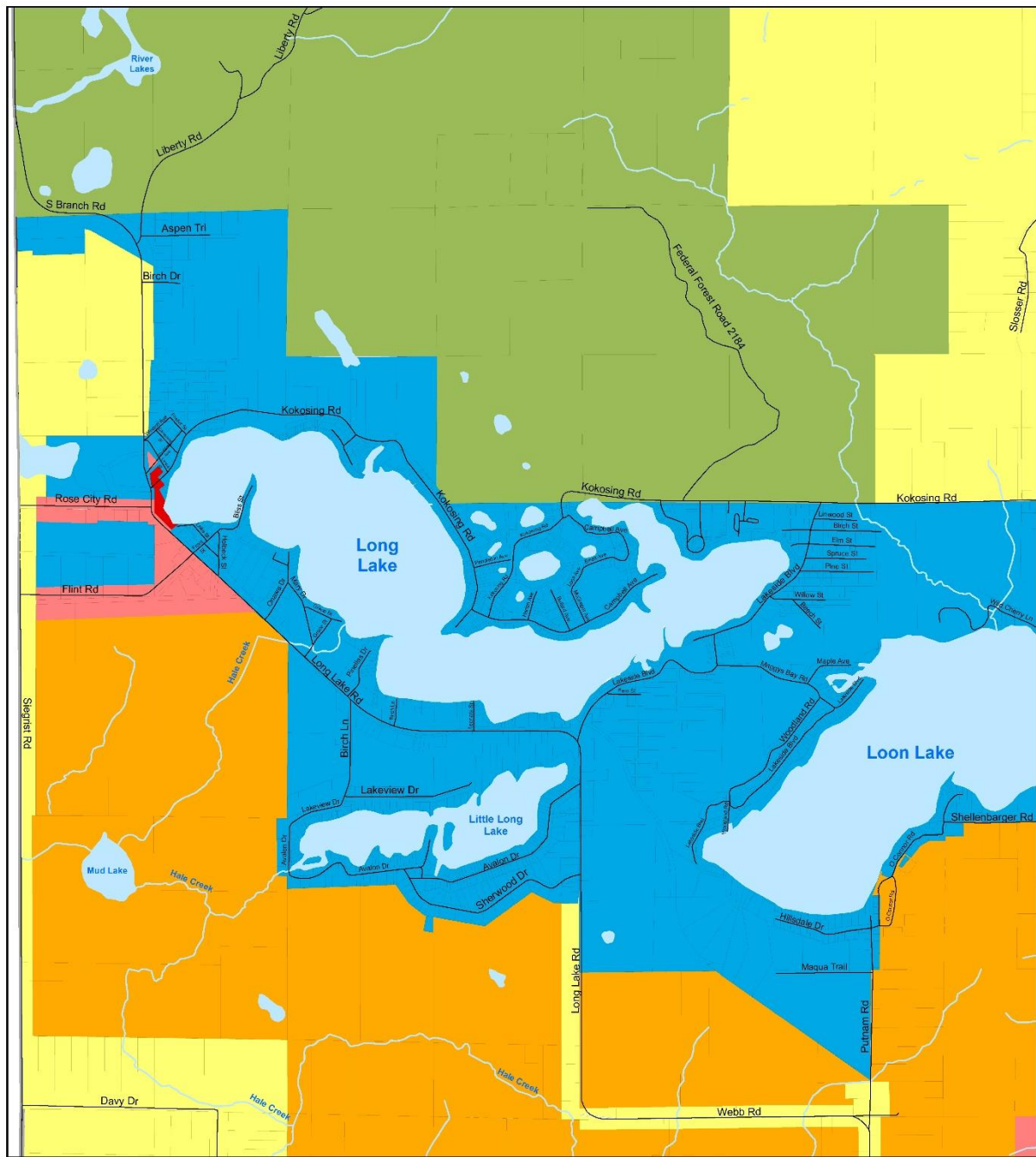


Future Land Use

- Low Density Residential
- Agriculture
- High Density Residential

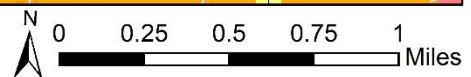


Plainfield Township Long Lake and Loon Lake Future Land Use



Future Land Use

- | | |
|--|--|
| Low Density Residential | Resource Development |
| High Density Residential | Community Service Commercial |
| Agriculture | Neighborhood Service Commercial |





9

Chapter

Adoption & Implementation

The Plainfield Township Master Plan is intended to serve as a long-range guide for future growth, development, and public investment within the Township. Developed through public participation, analysis of existing conditions, and coordination with neighboring communities and agencies, the Plan establishes a framework for future decision-making. This chapter summarizes the Plan adoption process and identifies the primary implementation tools available to the Township, including zoning, capital improvement planning, budgeting, grant funding, and other administrative actions that support the goals, objectives, and future land use recommendations of the Master Plan.

Master Plan Adoption

Plan Coordination & Review

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), Plainfield Township notified adjacent communities, regional agencies, and other relevant entities of its intent to prepare an updated Master Plan and requested their cooperation and comment. The draft Master Plan was subsequently transmitted to the Plainfield Township Board for authorization to release the document for the required review period on (insert date). Following approval, the plan was distributed to all required parties and made available for public review on the Plainfield Township and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) websites, as well as at the Township offices.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held by the Plainfield Township Planning Commission on (insert date) to receive additional input from residents, property owners, and stakeholders. Notice of the public hearing was published in accordance with statutory requirements in the (name) Newspaper on (date) and (Date). All comments received during the 63-day review period were reviewed during the public hearing.

Adoption

The Planning Commission adopted the Master Plan by resolution on (date). The Township Board formally adopted the Master Plan by resolution on (date). A notice of final adoption was transmitted to all required entities on (date).

Plan Implementation

Zoning Ordinance

Consistent with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, the Township's Zoning Ordinance is grounded in and guided by this Master Plan. The Act requires that zoning be based on a plan designed to promote public health, safety, and general welfare; encourage the appropriate use of land; prevent incompatible land uses; conserve natural resources; and ensure that development occurs in a coordinated and efficient manner.

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory tool used to implement the Master Plan. It establishes permitted uses, development standards, and review procedures that shape how land is used and developed within the Township. To remain effective, the Zoning Ordinance should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure consistency with the goals, objectives, and Future Land Use Map outlined in this Plan. Amendments to zoning regulations and decisions on rezonings and special land uses should be evaluated for alignment with the Master Plan to support orderly, balanced, and sustainable development.

Grants & Capital Improvement Plan

The Master Plan serves as a guide for future public investment and service decisions, including the preparation of the local budget, pursuit of grant funding, and administration of utilities and public services. To support implementation, the Township should prioritize and plan for capital improvement projects such as infrastructure upgrades, park improvements, and facility needs.

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is an important tool for this process, providing a prioritized schedule of anticipated projects over a defined timeframe. The CIP identifies project costs, potential funding sources, and implementation timing, allowing the Township to coordinate investments in a fiscally responsible and strategic manner. As both a budgetary and policy document, the CIP helps ensure that public expenditures align with the goals, objectives, and Future Land Use recommendations of this Master Plan.

Legal Documentation

Notice of Intent to Update the Master Plan



Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

80 Livingston Blvd Suite U-108 | PO Box 457 | Gaylord, MI 49734 | Voice: 989.705.3730 | Fax: 989.705.3729 | nemcog.org

Notice of Intent to Amend Master Plan: Plainfield Township

October 17, 2024

Plainfield Township has begun working with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) to amend their Master Plan. The Township is coordinating with NEMCOG to add additional chapter(s) addressing housing in the township.

As required by Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, notification is being sent to all geographically adjacent governmental entities, utilities, and transportation agencies to request cooperation and comments.

ADJACENT GOVERNMENTAL UNITS: Prior to and after adoption of the Amended Master Plan, draft and final copies of the amended plan will be sent to all adjacent governmental units, as defined in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, for review and comment. The plan will be transmitted via email unless the governmental unit requests a printed copy (please fill out and return the enclosed sheet to notify us of the preferred email address or to request a printed copy).

UTILITIES, RAILROADS & PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES: Utilities, railroads, and public transportation agencies must request copies and may be charged for copies, and postage (please fill out and return the enclosed sheet to request a copy of the Master Plan update). Note: there will be no charge to utilities and public transportation agencies that choose to receive the plan via email.

Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to your participation in this important project!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heather Runyan".

Heather Runyan, Regional Planner
Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)

Affidavit of Mailing – Notice of Intent

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

Notice of Intent to Amend Master Plan

I, Theresa Huff, certify that the communities and agencies on the attached list were notified of Plainfield Township's intent to Amend the Master Plan. The notification was sent on October 16, 2024, by first class mail and in accordance with Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Oscoda Township Planning Commission
110 State St.
Oscoda Township, MI 48750 | 10. Logan Township
4507 East M-55
Prescott, MI 48756 |
| 2. Wilber Township Planning Commission
3120 Sherman Road
East Tawas, MI 48730 | 11. Ogemaw County Planning Commission
205 S. 8 th St
West Branch, MI 48661 |
| 3. Grant Township Planning Commission
4049 Indian Lake Rd
National City, MI 48748 | 12. Alcona County Planning Commission
106 5 th St.
Harrisville, MI 48740 |
| 4. Tawas Township Planning Commission
27 McArdle Rd
Tawas City, MI 48763 | 13. Oscoda County Planning Commission
311 S. Morenci Ave.
Mio, MI 48647 |
| 5. Reno Township Planning Commission
6981 Miller Rd
Whittemore, MI 48770 | 14. MDOT- Heidi Phaneuf
1088 M-32 East
Gaylord, MI 49735 |
| 6. Curtis Township
PO Box 90
Glennie, MI 48737 | 15. Iosco Co Road Commission
3939 West M-55
Tawas City, MI 48763 |
| 7. Goodar Township
PO Box 100
South Branch, MI 48761 | 16. Iosco Co Transit Corporation
1036 Aulerich Drive
East Tawas, MI 48730 |
| 8. Hill Township
4985 Townhall Rd.
Hale, MI 48739 | 17. DTE Energy
1 Energy Plaza
Detroit, MI 48226 |
| 9. Mentor Township
PO Box 730
Mio, MI 48647 | 18. Consumers Energy
One Energy Plaza
Jackson, MI 49201-2276 |

Transmittal Letter of Draft Plan

Public Hearing Notice

Resolution of Adoption – Planning Commission

Resolution of Adoption – Township Board

Affidavit of Mailing – Final Plan