

DRAFT - October 15, 2021

Master Plan

Shelby Township | Oceana County, Michigan



SHELBY TOWNSHIP
OCEANA COUNTY
est 1855

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Acknowledgments

The process to update the Shelby Township Master Plan benefited from significant collaboration with Township staff, the Planning Commission, and citizens of the community. Without this support and input, completion of this Plan would not have been possible.



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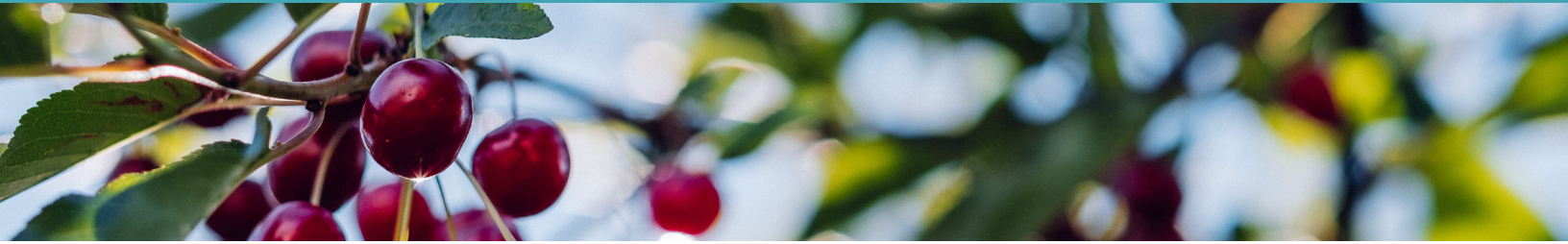


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Part 1. Introduction & Plan Purpose



Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview

Introduction

The Shelby Township Master Plan is intended to provide a vision for future land use and development based on an evaluation of past trends, existing conditions, and desired goals. Shelby Township offers a picturesque rural setting with exceptional agriculture, scenic natural features, and friendly people. To protect the natural features and pastoral setting enjoyed by residents, while still allowing areas for growth and development, community development and preservation efforts must be carefully planned. This document was created to provide planning guidance to the Township for land use development and preservation through an analysis of natural features, demographic conditions, land use trends, and public desires. Therefore, this Plan is intended to provide a guide to ensure the Township remains a highly desirable place to live, work, play, and learn.

MASTER PLAN VS. ZONING ORDINANCE

While the Master Plan is a guide for future land use, the zoning ordinance regulates the present use of land. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the zoning ordinance is a law that must be followed by the community and its residents. Yet, state statute requires that a local zoning ordinance be based on the foundation of a Master Plan. The legal defensibility of a zoning ordinance will be greatly strengthened by the adoption and consistent use of a well-conceived Master Plan. Adopting or changing a Master Plan does not directly affect the zoning for any property, but future changes to the zoning map are intended to be reflective of the planned uses outlined in the Master Plan.

Using this Plan

This Master Plan provides a vision for land use in Shelby Township. It is a policy document and includes goals, objectives, and implementation strategies to achieve a vision for the community as identified by its leaders and the public.

The following practices are important to achieving the vision of this Plan:

1. **Refer to the Master Plan in all zoning decisions**
A principal benefit of having an adopted Master Plan is the foundation it provides for sound zoning decisions. Just as this Plan is the policy guide for land use, zoning is the principal legal enforcement tool. The two documents should work together to provide adequate justification for land use decisions.
2. **Encourage other decision-making bodies to use the Master Plan**
The Master Plan should help guide everyday decisions, from the capacity of improved roads to new schools. Oceana County, area school districts, adjacent communities, as well as private parties can impact land use patterns within Shelby Township. Implementation of this Plan should involve communication between different agencies and organizations.
3. **Keep the plan current and flexible**
Achieving the vision outlined in this Plan will require time and concerted effort on behalf of the community leaders and residents. While the recommendations in this Plan should not be taken lightly, this Plan is also intended to be a flexible instrument. Community planning is a dynamic process and subject to various social and economic influences. Therefore, this document must be actively maintained through frequent review, and modification as necessary, to reflect changing circumstances in the Township. At a minimum, this Plan should be updated every five years in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. However, an annual review is also recommended to ensure that it is kept current.

Planning Framework

The Master Plan is based upon several community characteristics, each of which must be considered by the Planning Commission and Township Board as the plan is implemented and updated. These characteristics include:

- **Community Character:** These features characterize the identity of the Township and are important to protect. The goals and objectives of this Plan are intended to protect and enhance the character of the Township in accordance with the desires of the public.
- **Capability of Land:** The ability of the land to support certain uses, services, and amenities must be considered in planning efforts. This requires consideration of environmental constraints, land use patterns, and the carrying capacity of the land.

- **Community Needs:** The land uses needed by the community are important considerations when planning for future land development. For example, business activity may be enhanced by suitable zoning and a streamlined permitting process, which could be included as a goal in this Master Plan.
- **Available Services:** Certain land uses require specific community services, such as public water, sanitary sewer, and road improvements. Development should be promoted in areas where the necessary community services are available and limited in areas that are not equipped or would strain the available services.
- **Existing Development:** Planned uses should be evaluated for their impacts on existing uses and development patterns. Consideration should also be given to areas where the community may want to transition from one use to another, such as residential to a community commercial. The existing land use pattern is important, as it provides context for planned uses.
- **Regional Planning:** Shelby Township maintains a relationship with neighboring townships and the Village of Shelby, and is located within the broader context of Oceana County and western Michigan. Land use decisions naturally impact neighboring areas as geography is not bounded by jurisdictional boundaries. Larger regional issues, such as transportation, environmental protection, alternative energy, and utility plans influence decisions in the Township. Communication with neighboring communities, the county, and other appropriate entities will help facilitate regional planning and coordination efforts.

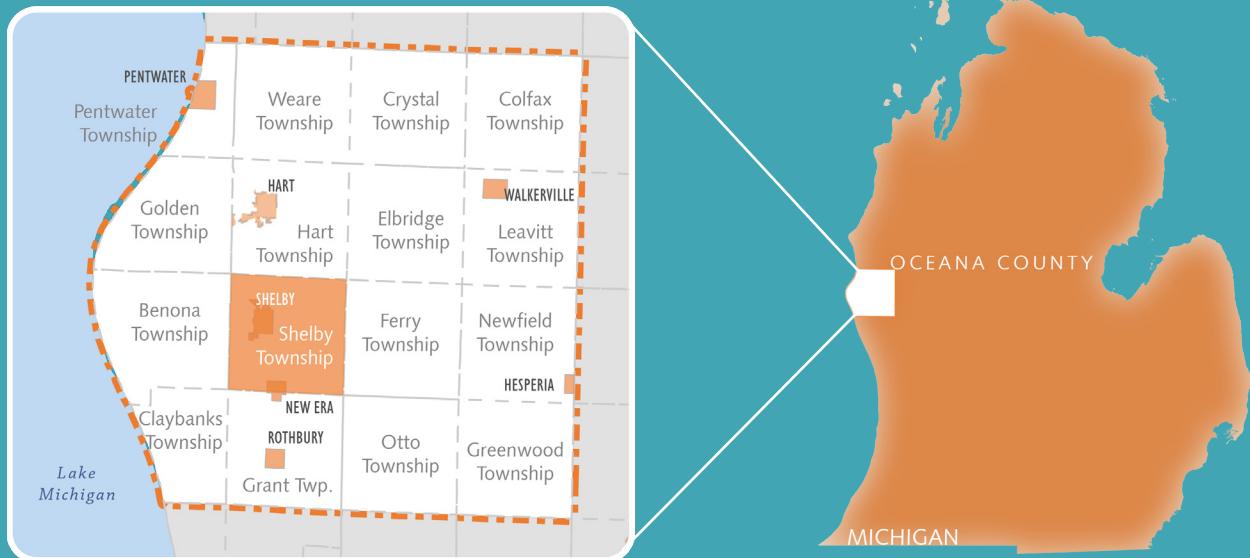
This Master Plan is intended to be a tool for public and private entities evaluating future land use decisions. The goals, objectives, future land use plan, and implementation strategies of this Plan are intended to serve as a principal guide in directing land use policy. Therefore, this Plan should be referenced by decision-makers who are considering changes in the Township's land use, including the Township administration, boards, and commissions, as well as businesses, community groups, developers, non-profit organizations, and individuals.

Statutory Basis

This Master Plan was developed by the Shelby Township Planning Commission, with assistance from a professional planning consultant, in accordance with the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended.

This Plan was approved by the Shelby Township Planning Commission on _____ and adopted by the Shelby Township Board of Trustees on _____.

Chapter 2. Community Overview



Regional Context

Shelby Township is located in central Oceana County in the western part of Michigan. Its location offers a prime opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy Lake Michigan and Silver Lake State Park. Its fertile agricultural land has also contributed to its reputation as the fruit capital of west Michigan, as its farms have become leaders in tart cherries, asparagus, and apples. While agriculture has remained a strong industry in the Township, the area also has convenient access to Whitehall and Muskegon, which are major employment areas in the region. Grand Rapids is the largest metropolitan area nearby, with a reasonable commute via U.S. 31 and I-96.

U.S. 31 is located near the western boundary of Shelby Township, serving as the primary north-south transportation corridor. Two highway exits at Shelby Road and M-20 provide quick access to employment, tourism, and entertainment destinations. Before the construction of U.S. 31, Oceana Drive was the primary access route through Shelby Township and Oceana County. While its role has become less prominent after the construction of the interstate, it remains an important corridor for traffic between the Village of New Era, the Village of Shelby, and the City of Hart.

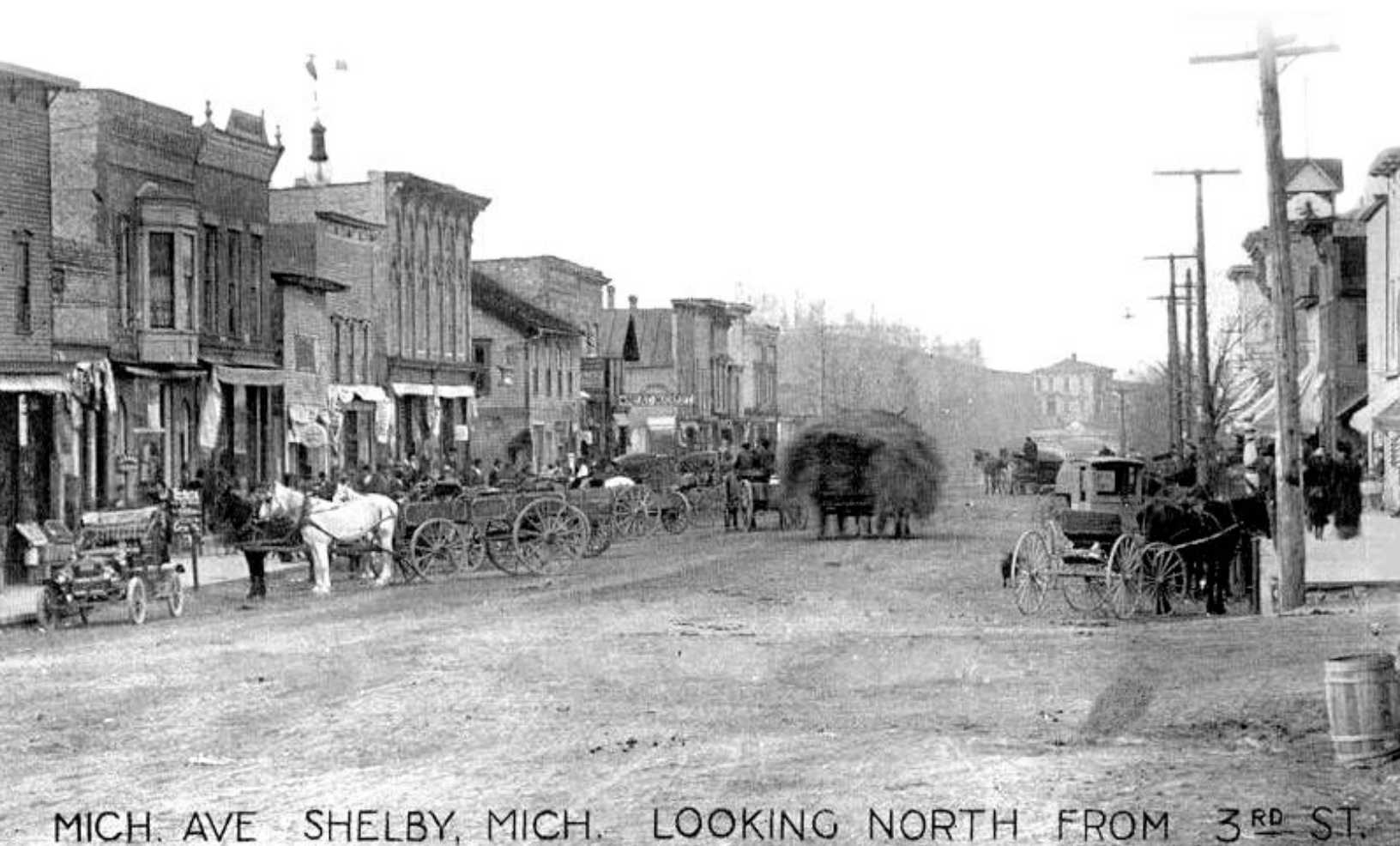
Shelby Township's boundaries are arranged in a six-mile by six-mile square, typical of Michigan townships. However, a portion of the Village of New Era and the entirety of the Village of Shelby are located in the Township. Because the Village of Shelby is surrounded by Shelby Township, the village often serves as the focal point of the Shelby Community and contains the Township Hall, a library, post office, and hospital. Together, they are often referred to as the Shelby Community.

History

Churchill Corners was the first settlement established in 1866 as a small nucleus of development in Section 18 of Shelby Township. This settlement was later moved to the modern-day Village of Shelby. The Shelby community, like much of West Michigan, had roots in lumbering, agriculture, and tourism—all of which were tied to Lake Michigan. During the lumbering era, civilization came rapidly to Shelby. The first school appeared in 1862, the first sawmill was built in 1871, and by 1872 a north/south railroad came through town. The fertile soil for agriculture and extensive forests created favorable conditions for trade. By 1874, Passenger Pigeons (now extinct) were actively hunted and brought wealth that helped stimulate local businesses.

Churches, hotels, banks, a fire department, and a library appeared by 1907. The hospital was organized in 1925. During World War II, a prisoner of war camp was located at present-day Getty Park in the Village of Shelby.

In more recent years, Shelby Township has become renowned for its agricultural production of tart cherries, asparagus, and apples. In 1984, Peterson Farms was established in the township and has since become one of the leaders of frozen fruits in the United States. Rich soil, scenic beauty, and proximity to many natural features continue to attract residents and visitors to the area.



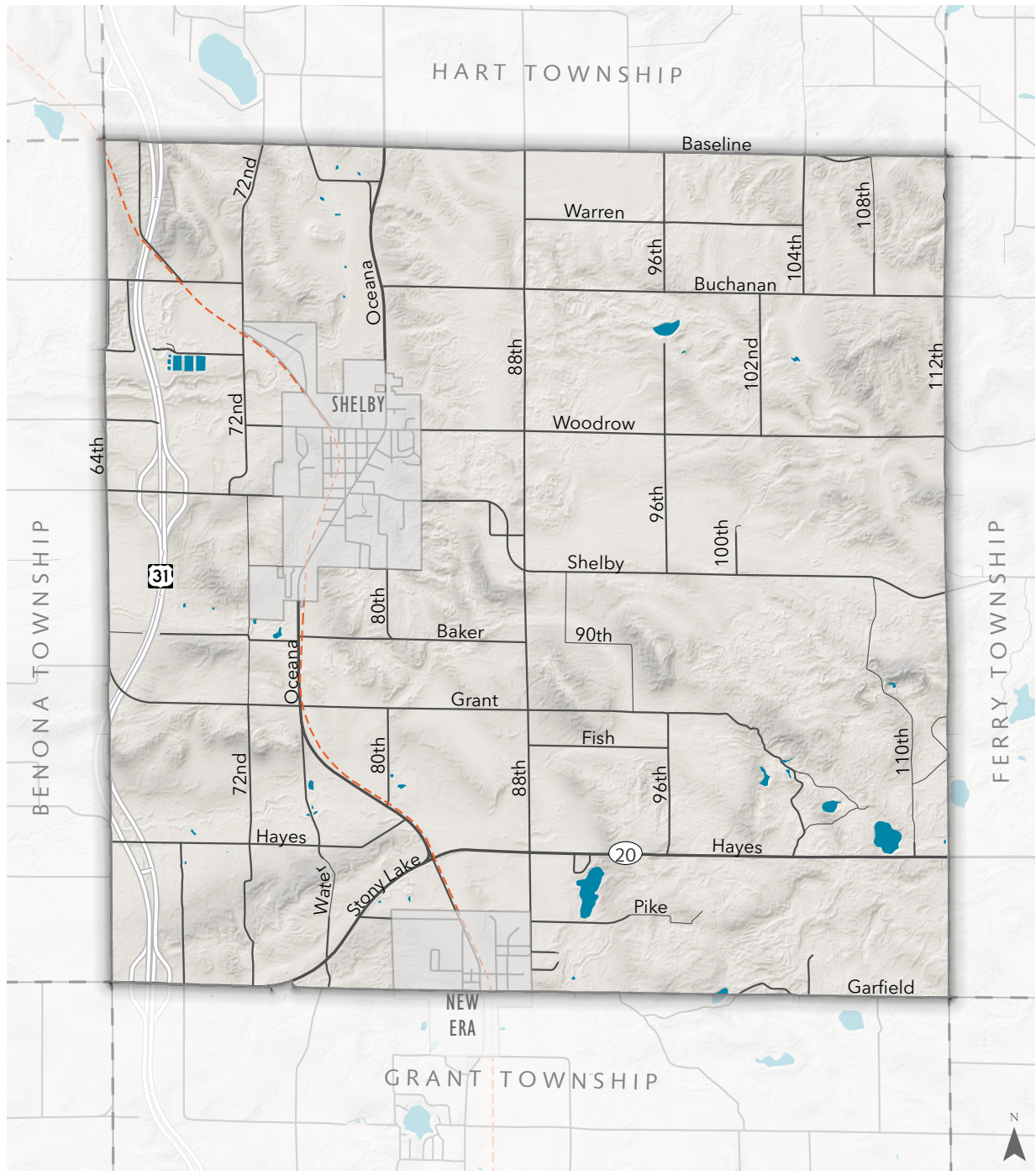
Part 2. Community Description



Chapter 3. Natural Setting

Topography

The rolling countryside of Shelby reveals impressive views across numerous orchards, fence rows, and woodlots. Elevations range from between 660 to over 1,000 feet above sea level. The area is part of West Michigan's fruit belt and within 12 miles of Lake Michigan. This topography and rich agricultural soil are largely reminiscent of Michigan's past glacial activity. As great ice sheets advanced and retreated across this area, they left behind ridges of unsorted rock material known as moraines. Today these are often visible as rolling ridges that contain various sizes and types of rock material. As the glaciers retreated, their meltwaters also left behind sorted materials and often contributed to considerable deposits of sand. The combination of materials left behind by glaciers provided a fertile land now used for agriculture. The township's remaining glacial topography now provides a place for the countryside scenes and a quiet, historic village that make Shelby a special place.



1 Topography

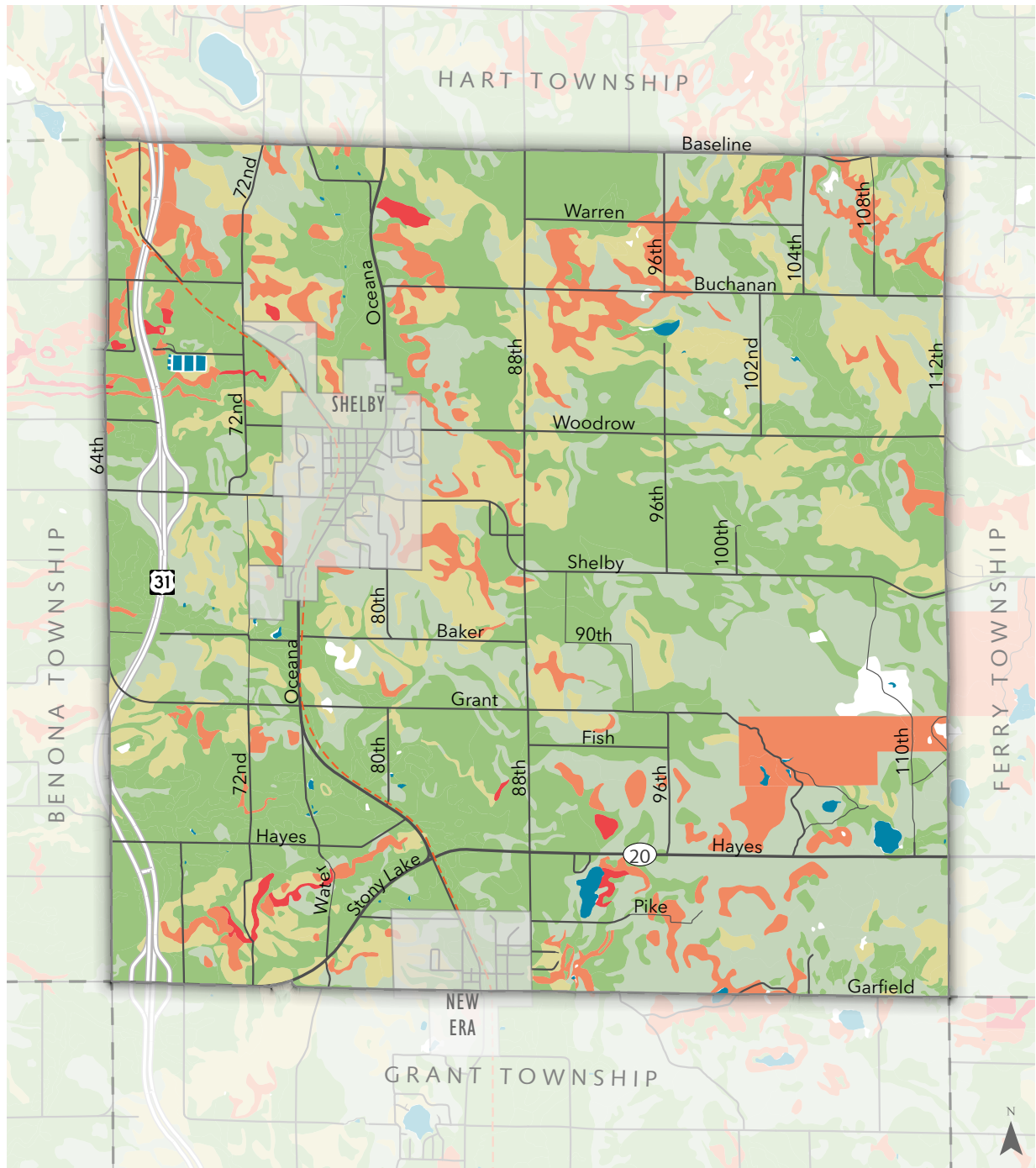
Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE, USGS

Legend

- Lakes
- Arterial Roads
- Interstate
- Local Roads
- State Highway
- - - Hart-Montague Trail



2 Slope

Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 ¼ ½ 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE

Legend

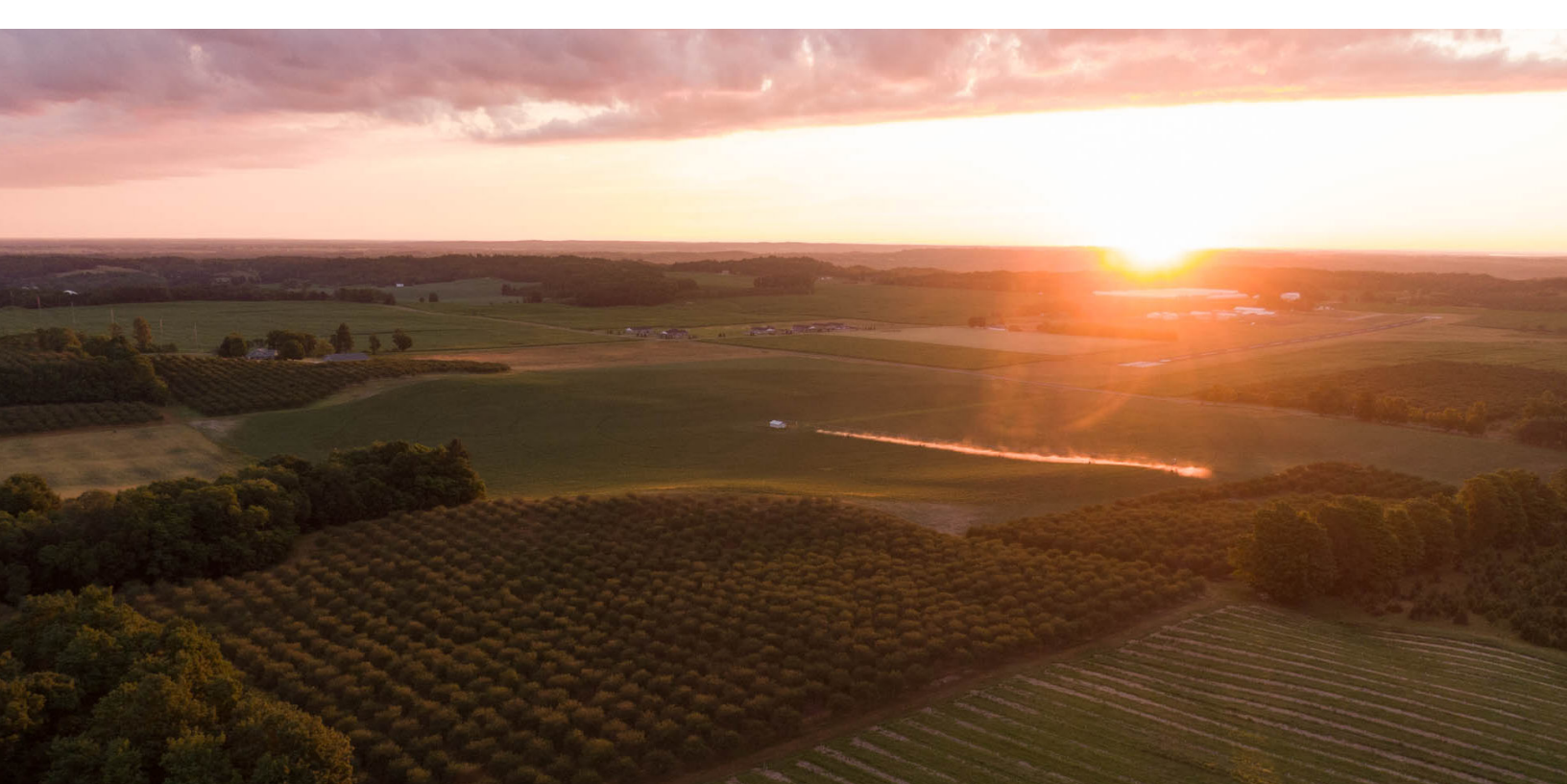
 <5 percent slope	 20-29 percent slope
 5-9 percent slope	 >30 percent slope
 10-19 percent slope	 No data

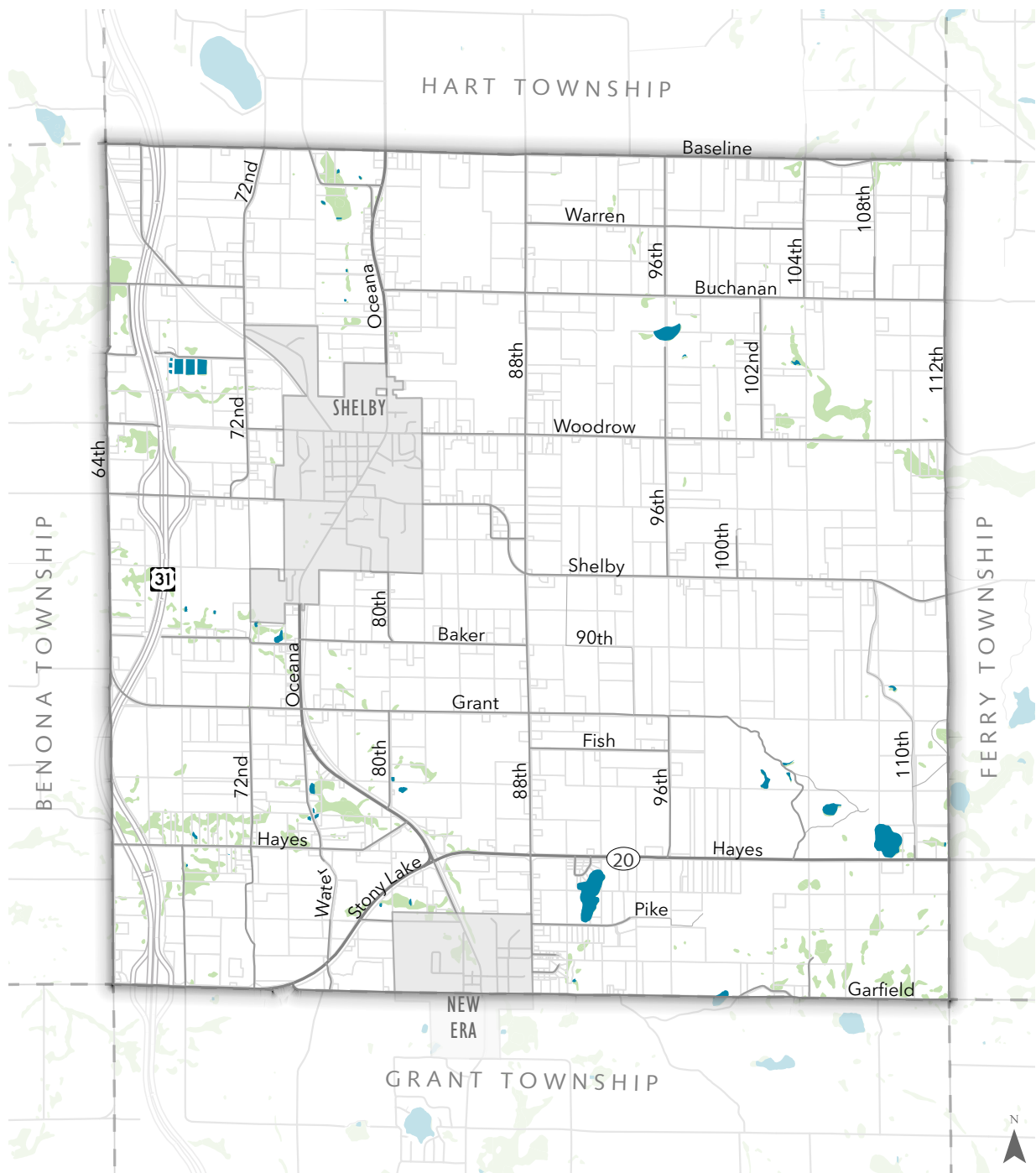
Water Features

Although located near Lake Michigan, Shelby Township has limited surface water. Dorrance Creek, in the southwest quadrant of the Township, is the most prominent natural system. The headwaters of Piper (Stony), Mason, and Robinson Creeks are also found in the township. Despite the presence of many farms in the area, large expanses of creek beds have not been altered to enhance drainage, probably because much of the area is light, well-drained, sandy soil. Stream floodplains and wooded wetlands of the area remain in an essentially natural state, which adds to the beauty of the Township. Browns Pond, Zeek, Pigeon, and Helldiver Lakes are small water bodies within or near federal land in the southeast quadrant of the township.

Wetlands are often found along lakes and streams. Because the Township has limited surface water and sandy soil, it also has few wetlands present. Wetlands are characterized by acidic soil, specific vegetation, and a prolonged presence of water. A few small areas of wetland exist primarily in the southwest quadrant of the Township.

Although there are few visible water features in the Township, precipitation travels both across the surface and underground towards Lake Michigan. The direction of water flow is determined by watersheds. A watershed is an area of land where all water flows to the same stream, river, or lake. Stony Creek and the White River are the main features that drain water from Shelby Township, eventually emptying into Lake Michigan.





3 Water Features

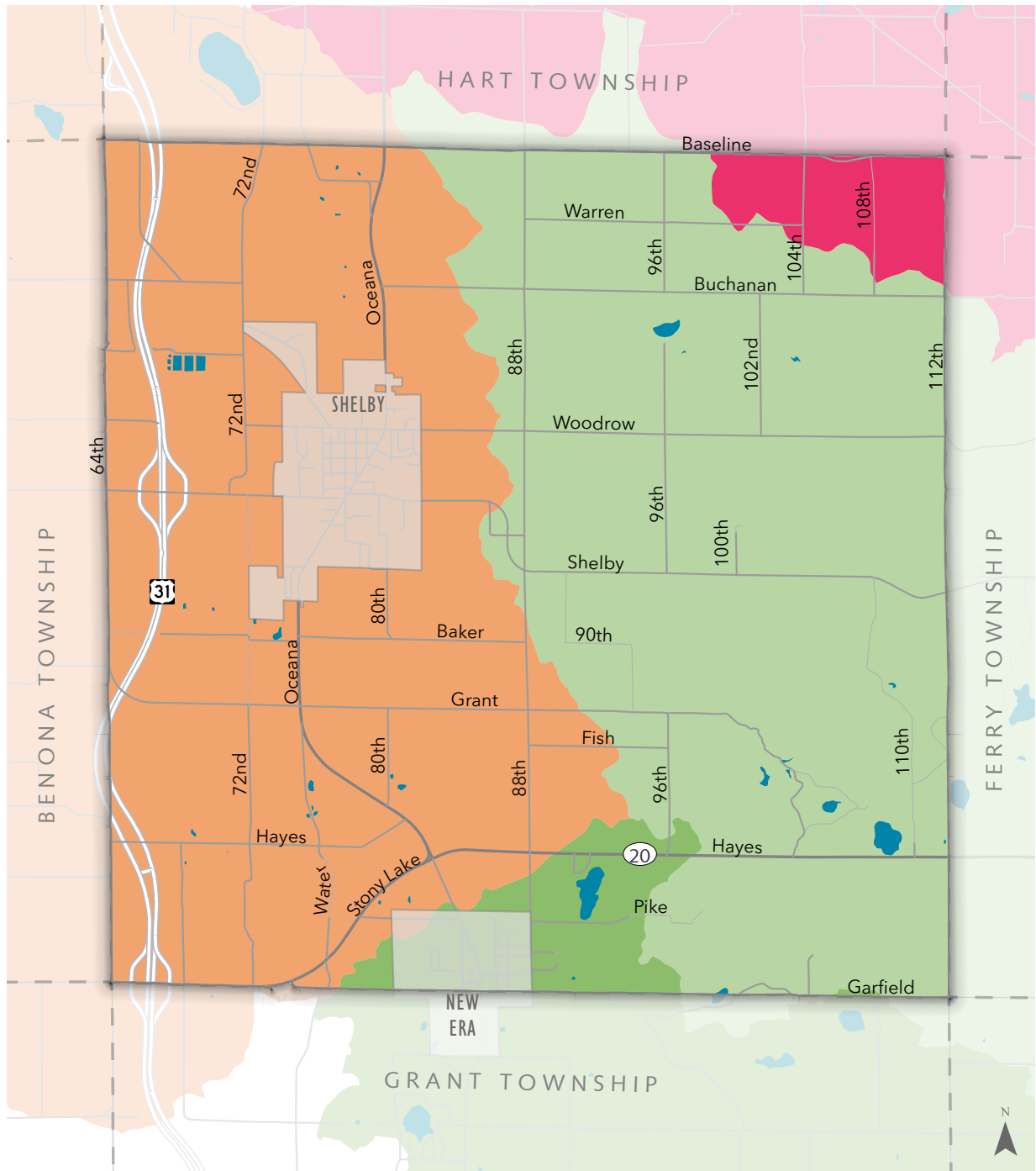
Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

Legend

- Lakes
- Wetlands

0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE



4 Watersheds

Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 ¼ ½ 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE

Legend

- Stony Creek
- N. Branch White River
- White River
- Huftile Creek

Climate

Lake Michigan greatly influences the climate experienced in Shelby Township. During the winter, lake effect snow is generated from cold air passing over the relatively warm water in the lake, generating clouds and moisture that eventually precipitate as snow in the township. The lake also moderates the year-round climate so that there is a smaller temperature range and fewer extreme temperatures than places further inland. The closest NOAA climatological data for Shelby Township is available from a station in Muskegon. The total annual snowfall in 2020 was 28.5 inches, while the annual average snowfall is about 74 inches. The average temperatures in 2020 were recorded as follows for each season:

- Spring (March-May): 46.3° F
- Summer (June-August): 72.4° F
- Autumn (September-November): 52.9° F
- Winter (December-February): 31.3° F

Soil

Shelby Township contains a variety of soil types, many of which contribute to its strength as an agricultural community. Map 5 contains soils based on taxonomic order. Following is a summary of each taxonomic order:

Alfisols: these soils contain clay minerals that have good water retention and supply moisture and nutrients to plants. These soils are often productive for crops.

Entisols: these soils contain material that was recently deposited or in areas where the rate of deposition/erosion is faster than the soil can develop. These are common in dunes, floodplains, or on steep slopes.

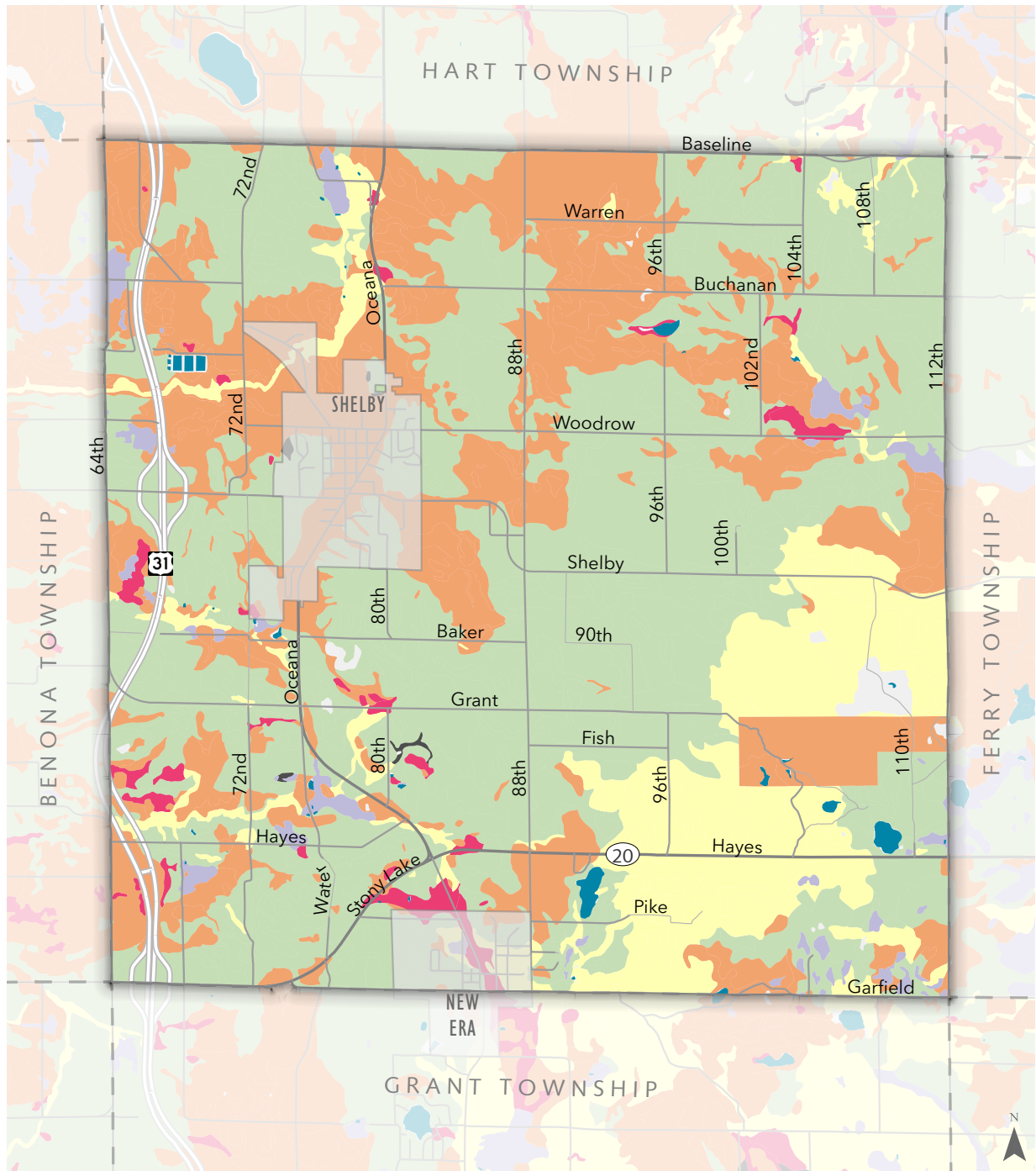
Histosols: these are soils with high organic content and are often saturated year-round. They are often found in bogs, peats, or mucks.

Inceptisols: these are soils typically found in many different climates and with a wide variety of characteristics. They have a moderate rate of development.

Mollisols: these are dark-colored soils that have high organic content and are generally rich and fertile.

Spodosols: these soils form when organic matter is stripped away from weathering processes. They are typically acidic and infertile.

The Alfisol taxonomic order has the largest presence in Shelby Township, largely contributing to the Township's productive agriculture. This is often comprised of a Spinks-Benona Complex. Entisols and spodosols are also common orders, which are often associated with the quick deposition or removal of soils and are less productive for agricultural operations. Entisols are primarily Coloma Sand and spodosols are primarily Benona Sand in the Township.



5 Soil Taxonomy

Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE, NRCS

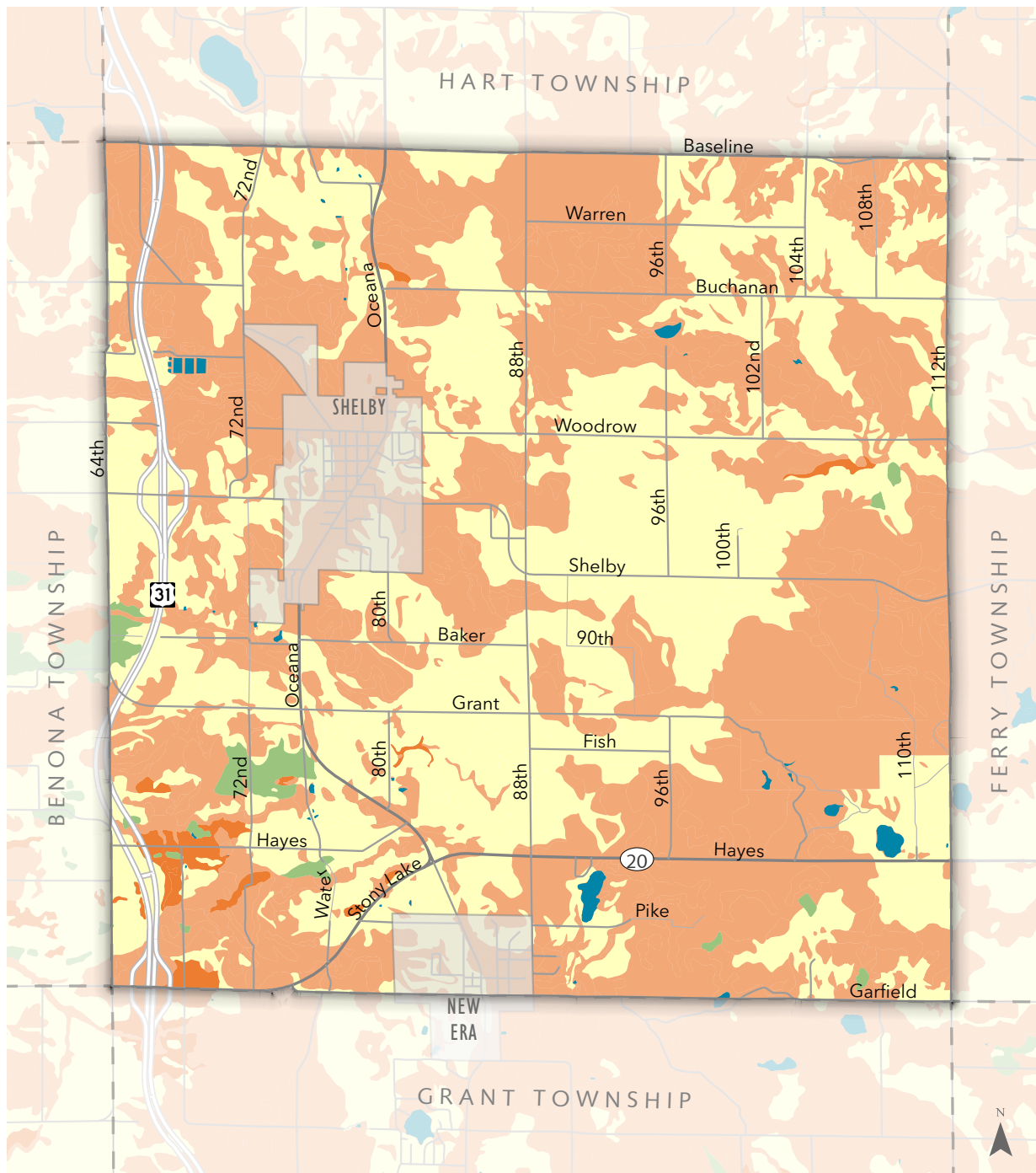
Legend

Alfisols	Mollisols
Entisols	Spodosols
Histosols	No Data
Inceptisols	



Agriculture

Shelby Township still contains relatively large tracts of land in agricultural production. The preservation of these large, contiguous tracts of land is important to maintaining agricultural viability. The Township's history is founded in agriculture and the Township remains a leader in the cultivation of tart cherries, sweet cherries, peaches, asparagus, and apples. Referred to as "the fruit capital of west Michigan," Shelby Township's agricultural production has served as a major local industry. The presence of Peterson Farms strengthens the Township's agricultural identity, as they are one of the largest frozen fruit processors and sliced apple producers in the United States.



6 Farmland

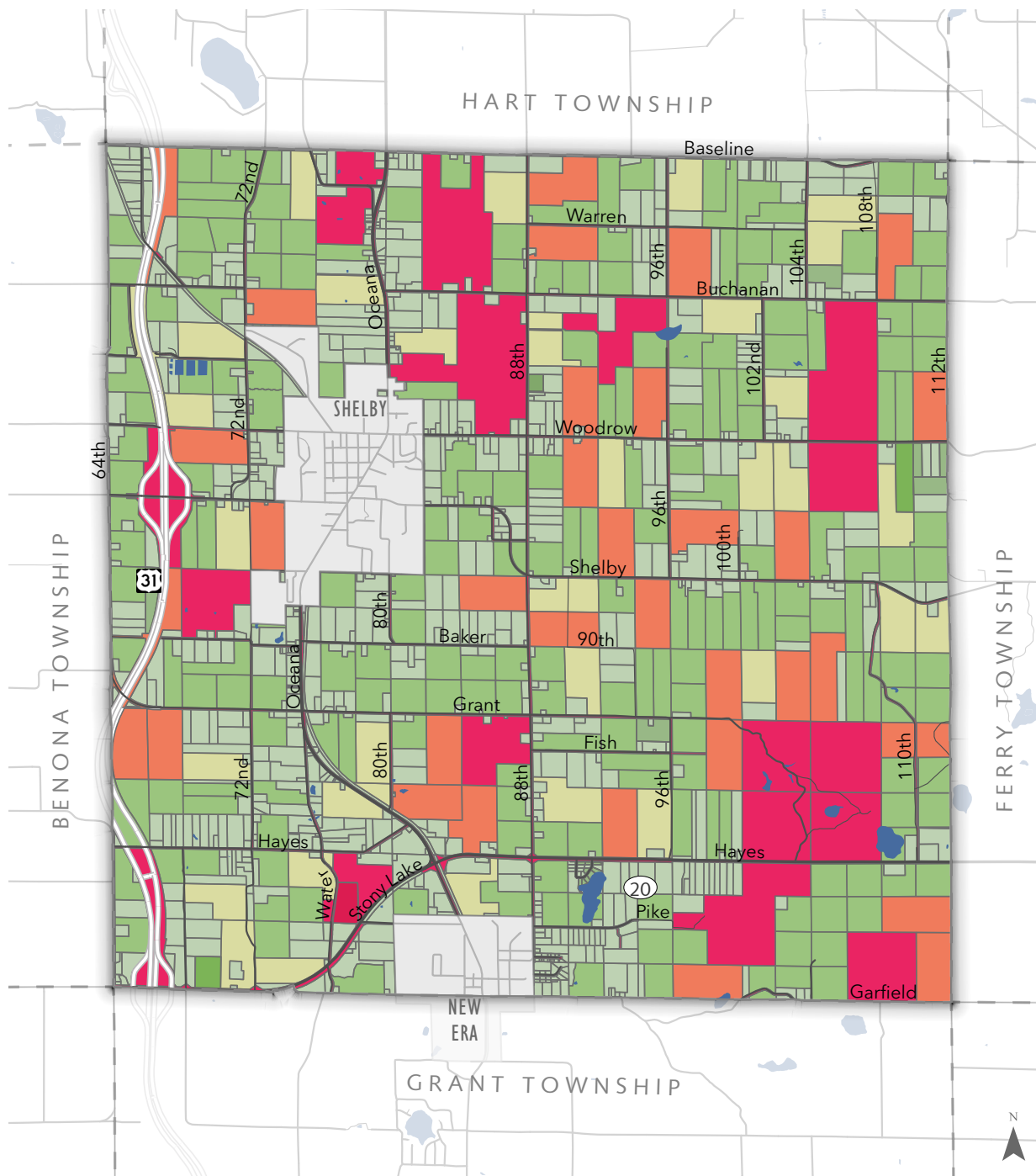
Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 ¼ ½ 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE

Legend

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



7 Contiguous Parcels

Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE, Shelby Township

Legend

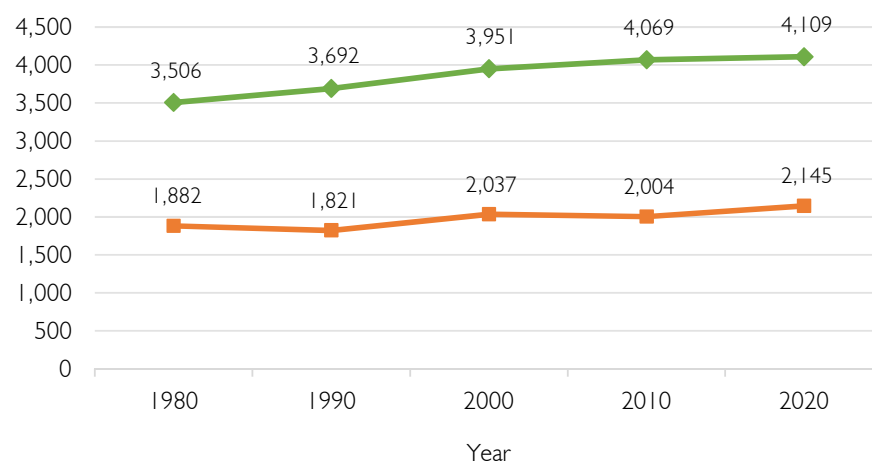
Less than 25 acres	75 to 99.99 acres
25 to 49.99 acres	Over 100 acres
50 to 74.99 acres	

Chapter 4. Demographics

Population

Shelby Township and the Village of Shelby are closely integrated as a community since the Village is surrounded by the Township. The Census Bureau considers villages in Michigan to be dependent upon the townships in which they are located. Therefore, the population count for a village is included in the township total. In Shelby Township, this means the entire population of the Village of Shelby and the appropriate portion of the Village of New Era are included in Township values. Therefore, trends in the villages also impact trends in the Township. For this Master Plan, village totals can be assumed to be incorporated in the Shelby Township totals unless specifically stated otherwise.

The Shelby Community experienced population growth from 1980 until 2010, at which time 4,069 people resided in the Township and Village. The largest growth occurred between 1990 and 2000, with a 7% increase over these 10 years. The 2020 U.S. Census found that 4,109 people lived in Shelby in 2020, a slight increase from 2010. While the overall population of both the Township and Village has remained relatively steady in recent years, the Township's population appears to have increased by approximately 7% between 2010 and 2020, an increase of 141 residents.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Census



Between 2000 and 2020, Shelby’s population remained higher than neighboring townships. In general, the percent change in population also remained similar to surrounding areas, except that Hart Township grew by nearly 10% from 2010-2020. During this time, Shelby Township’s population increased slightly while the Village population decreased. When combined, these changes resulted in a 1% overall increase. Decreases in population were estimated in Ferry and Benona Townships, while Grant, Shelby, and Hart Townships all grew slightly in population. For comparison, Oceana County as a whole grew by 0.3%, or approximately 90 people.

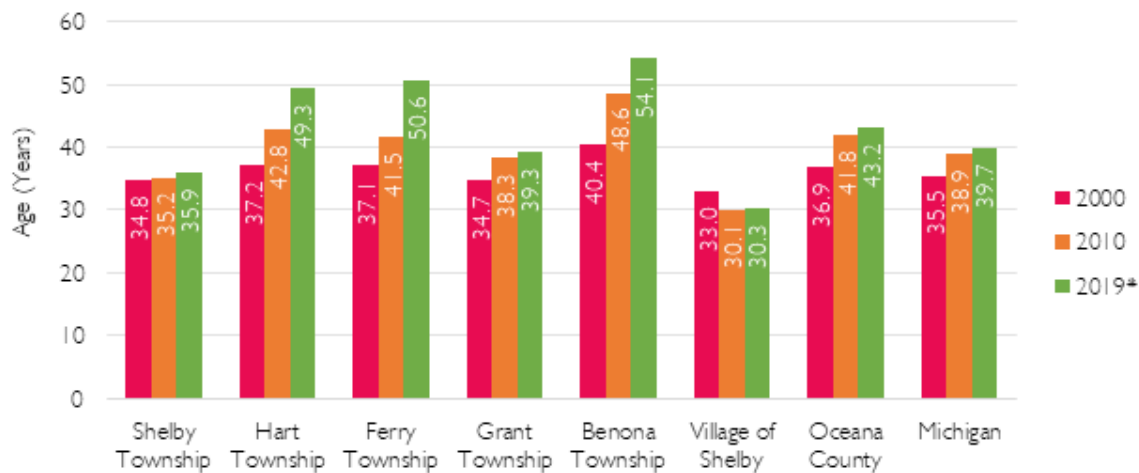
Community	2000	2010	2020	2000-2010 % Change	2010-2019 % Change
Shelby Township	3,951	4,069	4,109	3.0%	1%
Hart Township	2,026	1,853	2,028	-8.5%	9.4%
Ferry Township	1,296	1,292	1,271	-0.3%	-1.6%
Grant Township	2,932	2,976	3,002	1.5%	1.5%
Benona Township	1,532	1,437	1,425	-6.2%	-0.8%
Village of Shelby	1,914	2,065	1,964	7.9%	-4.9%

Source: 2000, 2010, and 2020 U.S. Census

Age & Ethnicity

Shelby Township's age is relatively young compared to neighboring townships and Oceana County. This is likely influenced by the Village of Shelby, which has a young median age. It is typical for cities and villages to have younger populations than townships overall. While the Village of Shelby has been maintaining a young median age, the Township's overall age has been slowly increasing. Given these trends, it is likely that the median age of residents residing only in the Township is similar to neighboring townships. An increasing median age is also reflected in state and national trends as the "baby boomer" generation continues to age.

The diverse ages in the Township and Village should be considered in future planning efforts. This may involve efforts to retain young talent and provide opportunities for families, while also providing services for an aging population. Coordination with the Village will be paramount in meeting the needs of various age groups.



Source: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census Bureau

*Estimate from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Persons of Hispanic descent have a strong presence in the community and have played an important role in the local economy and agriculture. The Census Bureau provides information related to those of Hispanic or Latino origin. In 2019, 31.3% percent of the population (1,259 residents) was estimated to have Hispanic or Latino origin. Similarly, 25.8% of the population greater than five years of age was estimated to speak Spanish as the primary language at home. This is much higher than Michigan as a whole, which is estimated to have only 3.0% of its population speak Spanish as a primary language at home.

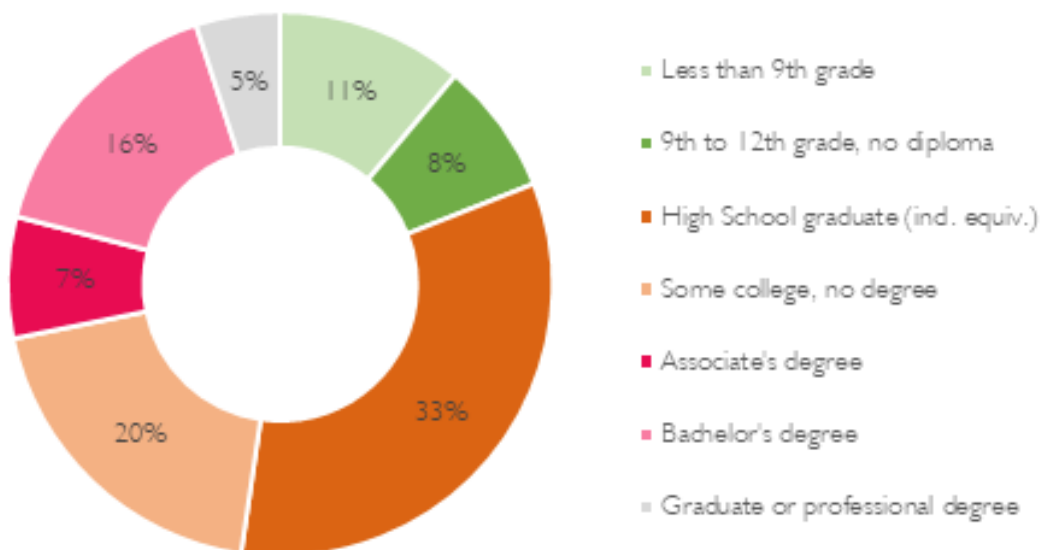
Education

The plurality of Shelby residents over 25 years in age are high school graduates or an equivalent (33.3%). This is followed by those that have received some college without a degree (19.5%) and those with a Bachelor's degree (16.0%). Overall, Shelby Township's residents have received more education than the Village of Shelby. This

is especially apparent in the percentage of residents that have received a Bachelor's degree or higher, with 21.0% of Township residents having these advanced degrees compared to 12.1% in the Village. The Township's educational attainment is similar to that of Oceana County but still lower than Michigan's.

Community	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
Shelby Township	81.0%	21.0%
Village of Shelby	76.3%	12.1%
Oceana County	87.2%	19.5%
Michigan	90.8%	29.1%
United States	88.6%	33.1%

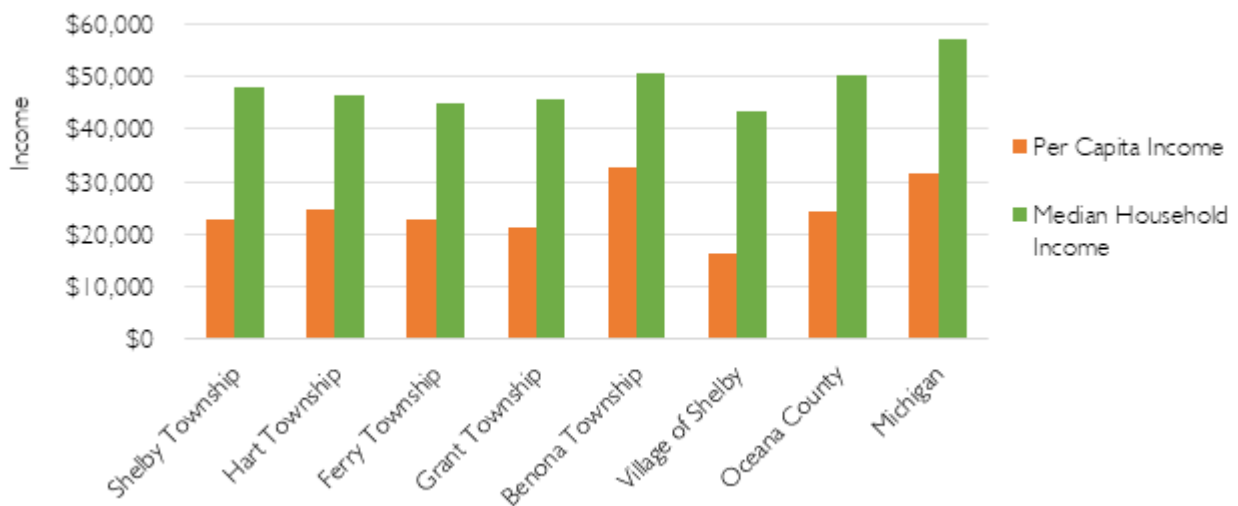
Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

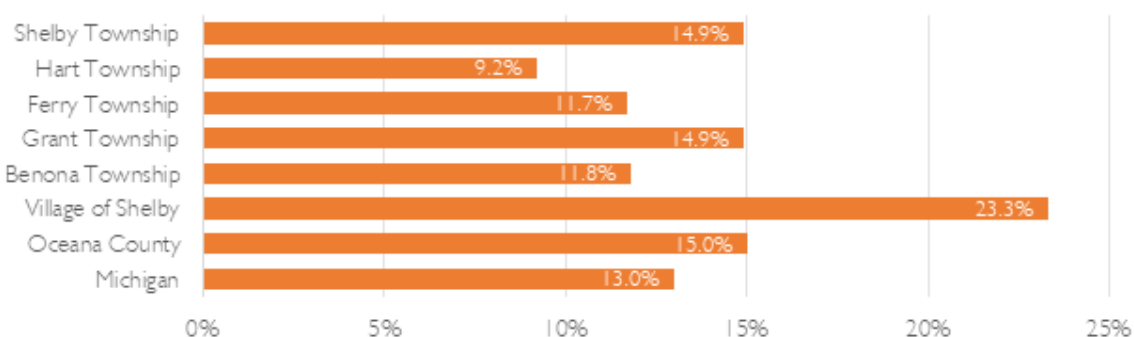
Income and Poverty

Shelby Township's median household income was estimated at \$47,941 and per capita income was \$22,666 in 2019. These were both comparable to all surrounding townships and Oceana County. The Village of Shelby had a much lower per capita income (\$16,316) compared to the Township; however, it is not uncommon for the median incomes of village or city residents to be lower than outlying areas. Cities and villages often need more affordable housing options and community services that are readily available without the need for an automobile. Although the Township household and per capita incomes are similar to the region and Oceana County, they are both more modest than the state averages.



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2019, the percentage of residents below the poverty level in Shelby Township (14.9%) was similar to that of Oceana County (15.0%). It was similar to or slightly higher than surrounding townships and Michigan (13.0%). Yet, the Village of Shelby had a much higher percentage of those below the poverty level (23.3%). Given this fact, it is particularly important to maintain the housing stock and monitor rental activity in the Township to ensure the quality of life is maintained for residents of modest means. Those in poverty are likely in need of services such as low-cost recreational programs, housing programs, and similar services.



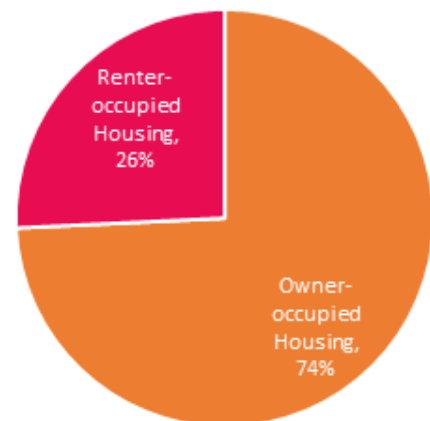
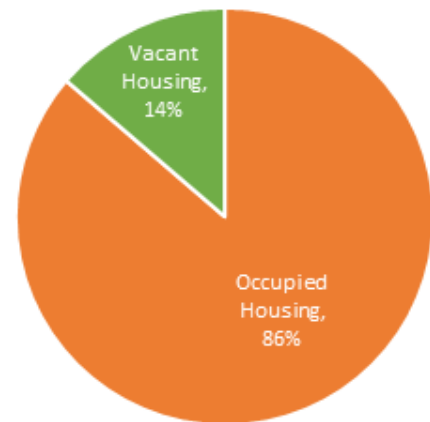
Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Chapter 5. Housing & Economic Development

Home Ownership

In 2020, the U.S Census found that there were 1,623 total housing units in Shelby Township, a 2.4% increase from the 2010 Census report of 1,584 housing units. Housing vacancy remained relatively steady, with a rate of 10.3% in 2020. While vacancy rates above 10% may indicate instability in the housing market and blight, many of the Township's vacancies are related to seasonal homes. In 2019, seasonal occupancy accounted for about 44% of all vacancies, which is likely related to the Township's proximity to Lake Michigan and its scenic landscape. Without these seasonal homes, the Township's vacancy rate would be much lower.

Of those homes that are occupied, approximately three-quarters are owner-occupied and one-quarter are renter-occupied. Most of the rentals are in the Village of Shelby, while owner-occupied housing is predominant in the Township. In 2019, the average household size was larger in renter-occupied units than owner-occupied units (3.1 and 2.6 persons per household respectively). This trend is also present in Oceana County. This indicates that many families occupy rental homes. Because most rentals are in the Village of Shelby, more families likely live in the Village while singles, empty-nesters, and retirees reside in the Township.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year

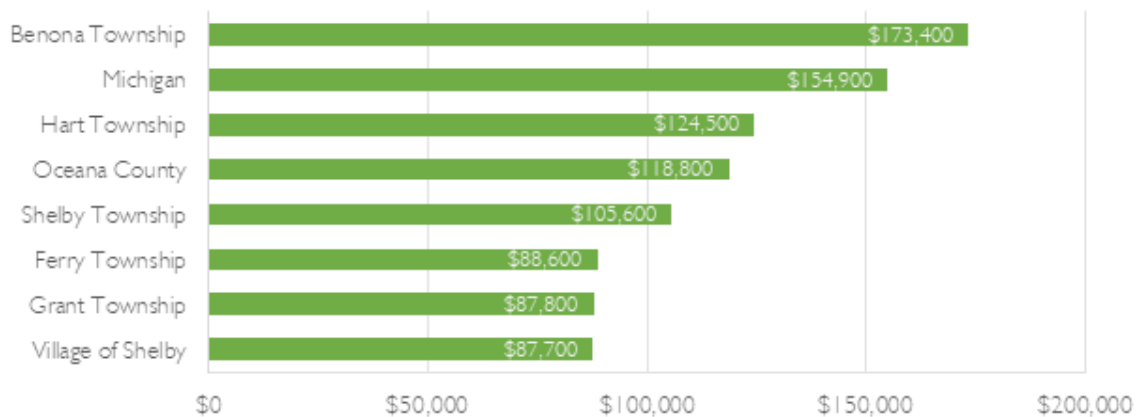
Estimates

Vacancy	Township	Oceana County	Michigan
Percent of total housing	13.7%	37.1%	14.4%
Vacancies from seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	43.5%	79.5%	43.7%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Home Value

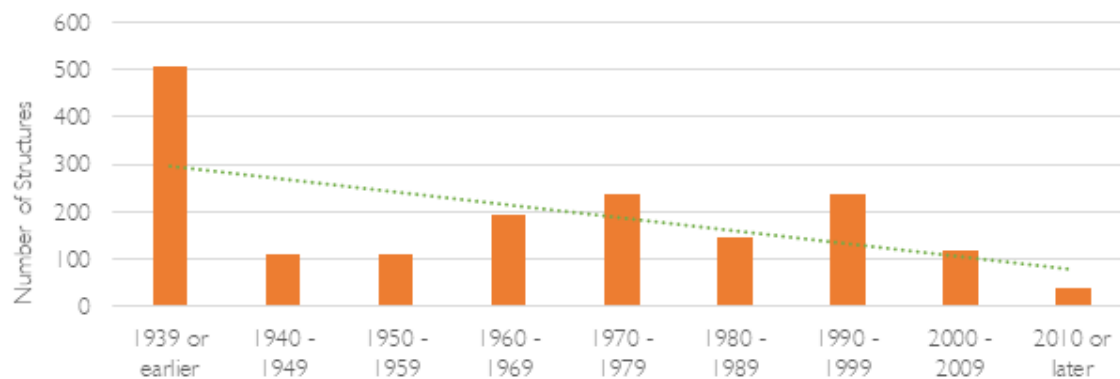
Housing in Shelby is relatively attainable. According to the American Community Survey Estimates, Shelby Township's median home value was \$105,600 in 2019, which is comparable to neighboring communities. Overall, Shelby Township, surrounding townships, and Oceana County had lower median home values than Michigan overall. Only Benona Township had a higher home value likely resulting from its location on Lake Michigan and the numerous homes located along the lakeshore. The Township has been proactive in recent years exploring opportunities to add quality workforce housing, maintain a quality housing stock, and provide for the needs of residents of limited income.



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

New Development

According to the 2019 ACS Estimates, the plurality of homes in Shelby Township were built before 1940 (30.1%). About a quarter of houses in the Township were also built between 1960 and 1979. Few houses have been built since 2010. This indicates that the Township maintains an older housing stock. An older housing stock may require updates and maintenance to ensure safety and reduce the likelihood of blight.

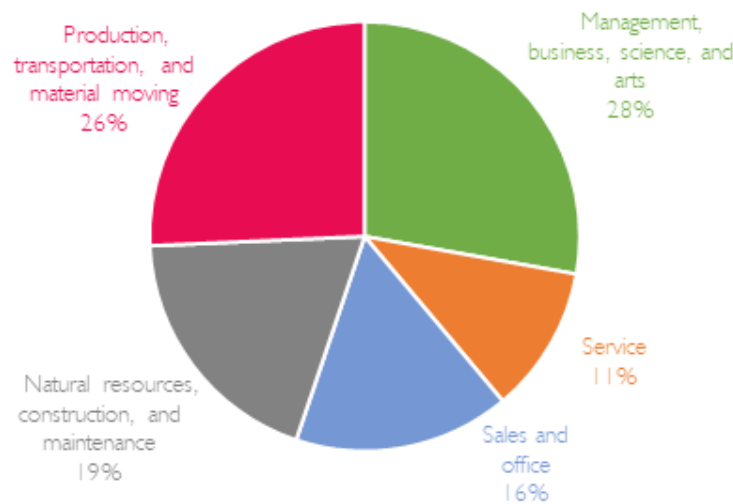


Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Employment & Unemployment

In 2019, the majority of Township residents worked in Oceana County (67%). The majority drove to work (92.6%) with a mean travel time of 19.7 minutes. This is lower than Oceana County (22.4 min.), Michigan (24.6 min.), and the nation (26.9 min.). This indicates that Township residents generally work close to home. This is likely due to the proximity of the Village of Shelby, Whitehall, Pentwater, and Hart, all of which are within 20 minutes of the Township.



Source 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Management, business, science, and arts are the most popular occupations for residents in Shelby Township, according to the 2019 ACS estimates. This category contains jobs such as management, engineering, and education. Although the largest percentage of residents work in this type of occupation, there are still fewer residents employed in these jobs than the Michigan average (36.6%). Production, transportation, and material moving are also popular occupations held by Shelby residents. This is followed by natural resources, construction, and maintenance. Shelby Township has considerably more residents in both of these categories than the Michigan average. In general, the Township percentages are fairly representative of those in Oceana County.

Occupation	Township	Oceana County	Michigan
Management, business, science, and arts	27.8%	27.2%	36.6%
Service	11.1%	16.5%	17.6%
Sales and office	16.3%	16.5%	20.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	19.1%	16.2%	7.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving	25.7%	23.6%	16.9%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The top employer in Oceana County is Peterson Farms in Shelby Township. Many other large businesses also exist near Shelby Township. The table below contains a list of major employers in Oceana County.

500-999 Employees	250-499 Employees	100-249 Employees
Peterson Farms Inc	Arbre Farms Inc	Burnette Foods Inc Country Dairy
	Double JJ Ranch & Golf Resort	GHSP
	Oceana County Medical Care Facility	Great Lakes Packing
	American Apple	Hart Public Schools
		Mercy Health Lakeshore Campus
		Michigan Freeze Pack Co
		Shelby Public Schools
		Media Technology

Source: Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information



Unemployment rates in Shelby Township were estimated to be 4.0% in 2019. This value is lower than Oceana County (5.9%), but comparative to the unemployment rate in Michigan's (4.1%) and the nation (3.7%). Unemployment rates have decreased in recent years throughout the County, Michigan, and United States. Oceana County's unemployment rate has historically been higher than Michigan and the nation and reached a higher rate during the economic decline of the late 2000s. However, unemployment rates had largely recovered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and are now similar to rates of the early 2000s.

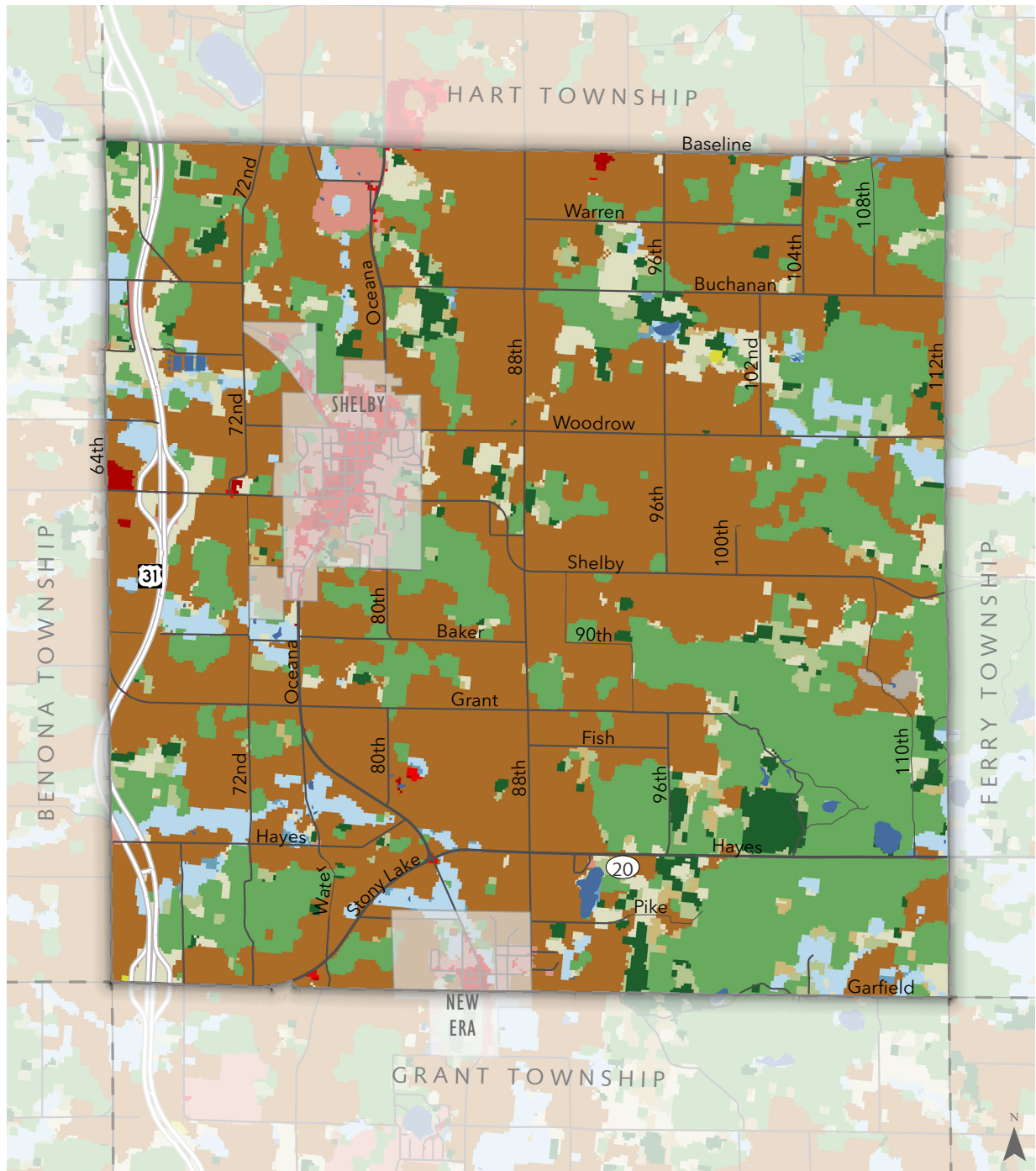


Land Cover and Land Use

The National Land Cover Database provides land cover for the entire United States at a 30-meter resolution and is the leading source of land cover data. The most recent data was compiled in 2016. In Shelby Township, the primary land cover was cultivated cropland (45.0%) in 2016, followed by deciduous forest (28.9%). The primary development areas are within the Village of Shelby and the Village of New Era, primarily consisting of low-intensity development.

These land cover patterns are indicative of the types of land uses which can be supported. Land dedicated to crop cultivation supports the expansive agricultural and farming community in the Township. Further, the forested area generally aligns with areas designated as “not prime farmland” by the Natural Resource Conservation Service in Map 6. Development is mostly limited to areas in the villages.

Land Cover	Acreage	Percent of Total
Water	52	0.2%
Developed, Open Space	965	4.2%
Developed, Low Intensity	1,104	4.8%
Developed, Medium Intensity	308	1.3%
Developed, High Intensity	83	0.4%
Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)	31	0.1%
Deciduous Forest	6,677	28.9%
Evergreen Forest	804	3.5%
Mixed Forest	620	2.7%
Shrub/Scrub	230	1.0%
Grassland/Herbaceous	1,030	4.5%
Pasture/Hay	8	0.03%
Cultivated Crops	10,389	45.0%
Woody Wetlands	747	3.2%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	49	0.2%
Total	23,097	100%



8 Land Cover

Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE, NLCD

Legend

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

Chapter 6. Public Facilities & Services

The majority of community services are offered in Village boundaries, while the Township maintains a more rural landscape. The Shelby Township Hall is located within the Village of Shelby, as well as other community services such as a library, post office, public schools, and the Mercy Health Lakeshore Campus Hospital. The Village contains the Thomas Read Elementary School, Middle School, and Shelby High School, which serve the majority of Shelby Township, Benona Township, and large portions of Ferry and Otto Townships. The Village's development allows Township residents to maintain a rural lifestyle while also being close to essential services and facilities.

Public Safety

The Village of Shelby provides police service for the Shelby community. This department contains four police officers and a Chief of Police. The Village also contains a fire station for the Shelby-Benona Fire Department. This Fire Department services Shelby and Benona Townships. The station is active in the local community and employs a fire safety educator who visits third-grade classrooms each month to deliver a fire safety message.



Utilities

Public water and sanitary sewer are generally limited to the Village of Shelby, while the Township residents are almost entirely on private wells and septic systems. These are of various ages and conditions. Any substantial development requiring public utilities in the Township should be closely coordinated with the Village of Shelby to ensure an adequate and efficient provision of services.



Transportation

Oceana Drive traverses the Township and supports local traffic from New Era up to the cities of Hart and Ludington. This road was the major north/south route until U.S. 31 was constructed; although less prominent since the interstate construction, this road remains an important corridor for local residents. The interstate access ramp on Shelby Road also provides convenient access for employment, entertainment, and tourism throughout the broader community.

The William Field Memorial Hart-Montague trail also meanders through Shelby and is a highlight of the community, providing regional recreation opportunities and attracting outsiders to the community. This trail provides access from the Township north to the City of Hart and south through the Village of Rothbury and eventually the City of Whitehall. It also provides an opportunity for transportation between the Village and Township of Shelby. This trail has the opportunity to provide economic stimulus to the Shelby community through its regional connections. The Township should consider ways in which coordination with the Village can promote the Village as a regional trail destination through signs, trail markings, and other efforts to guide trail users to points of interest and local businesses.

The Oceana County Airport is also present in the Township, serving corporate clients and numerous private craft as a CO4 airport. This airport contains two runways, one with an asphalt surface and the other a turf surface, both of which are in good condition. In 2020, there were 22 aircraft based on the field, 21 of which were single-engine airplanes. Generally, half of the aviation traffic is transient and the other half is local general aviation.



Recreation

Shelby Township maintains a park committee, which oversees aspects of park and recreation development such as maintenance, acquisition, and funding. With guidance from the parks committee, the Township created a 5-Year Park and Recreation plan to help instruct future parks and recreation efforts in the Township. This plan also makes the Township eligible for grants and funding from the Michigan DNR.

The Village of Shelby also maintains a park committee, which prepares recommendations for funding to the Village Council. The Village Council is responsible for the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation in the Village through its annual budget process. Shelby Township reimburses the Village for any cost-sharing that may occur. Because the Village contains elementary, middle, and high schools, improvements to these facilities are often funded by the school district. Other community parks are often funded through general funds or donations of time, materials, labor, or in-kind services.

Shelby Township's natural beauty offers opportunities to enjoy nature, open space, and different types of recreation. The Township owns all the cemeteries in the Shelby community and has plans for a new park in the Township. The proposed park is located on Buchanan Road, near 72nd Avenue, and designed to provide opportunities for exercise and to enjoy nature in a well-maintained area. The concept includes trail connections, play structures, and several new sports fields. The Township also contains the Oceana Golf Club, which offers a public golf course in the community. This course was established as the first 18-hole golf course in Oceana County, offering scenic views in the Township's rolling countryside. A PGA professional is also on staff and the facility offers a five-hole putting green, cart rentals, and pro shop.

The Village contains all other parks in the Shelby community. Aside from school facilities, the most popular are Monument Park, Getty Park, and the grounds of the Department of Public Works.

Just beyond the Township boundaries are many recreational options. Several Oceana County parks are located in surrounding townships, including Gales Pond, Mill Pond, Marshville Dam, and Doolittle County Parks, along with the Flip City Disc Golf Park. The Township is also a short drive away from Lake Michigan and Silver Lake State Park, the Pentwater River State Game Area, and the Huron-Manistee National Forest. These surrounding parks and natural areas offer abundant options for recreation in the broader region.





Chapter 7. Land Use and Planning Implications

Natural Environment

Shelby Township contains abundant natural features and picturesque scenery for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors. The presence of the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail and the Township's proximity to Lake Michigan also offer plentiful opportunities for recreation within the region. The Township may consider opportunities to further acknowledge these strengths in establishing the Township's identity in the region and cultivate a strong sense of place. This could involve supporting cluster housing developments that preserve open space, coordinating development with the capacity of utilities and services, promoting the Hart-Montague trail as a regional connector, or fostering residential responsibility for groundwater protection.

Population

Shelby Township has steadily, but slowly, grown in population over last 40 years with the 2020 U.S. Census showing an additional 1% growth since 2010. This suggests that conditions in the Township are relatively stable and it continues to be a desirable community in which to live. Thus, the Township may consider potential areas for development or growth to accommodate new residents without compromising its rural character. The Township must take care, however, to limit the size of these areas since the rate of growth historically amounted to a few hundred residents every ten years.

Diversity

The Township is diverse in terms of age and ethnicity. There are a broad range of ages in both the Township and Village, along with a strong presence of both Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations. While coordination with the Village will be essential to meeting the needs of all residents, the Township should ensure policies and services are welcoming and inclusive to all people.

Income

Median household income in Shelby Township is lower than the State of Michigan and Oceana County. The Village and Township also contain a relatively high percentage of individuals below the poverty level. This presents an opportunity for the Township to adopt policies that will enable residents to build long-term wealth. It will also remain important for the community to provide services and enact policies that will maintain a high quality of life for residents. Services may include affordable housing programs, rental options, low-cost recreational opportunities, and other similar services, while policies many address topics including public health, education and child care, employment opportunity, economic development, and others.

Housing

Homes in the Township are attainable for many, but fewer houses have been constructed in recent years. Older homes in the community may need updates and maintenance to maintain quality and safety. The Township should also take care to ensure that it is enabling the development of new attainable and workforce housing to accommodate new residents.

Coordination

Coordination of planning efforts between Shelby Township and the Village of Shelby will be essential in meeting the needs of all residents. Both the Village and Township are interdependent, as they each contribute to different needs of residents. A coordinated approach to planning will help both municipalities provide necessary services while maintaining the area's picturesque and quaint character.



Part 3. Public Participation



Chapter 8. Community Opinion Survey

Introduction

March through April of 2021, the Shelby Township Planning Commission published an opinion survey to gather public input on land use planning in the Township. This survey resulted in 87 responses, which provide a considerable amount of quantifiable data to help set policy related to growth and development in the Master Plan. An electronic survey was selected by the Planning Commission as the primary tool to gather public input due its relative cost efficiency and public health considerations surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was distributed via email to respondents, and the Township also reached out to community groups such as churches, schools, and local businesses to help spread the word. Planning Commission members also posted a flyer with a QR code throughout the community.

This chapter contains a summary of trends and planning implications based on the results of the survey. A complete copy of the community survey results can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Summary of Results

Residency and Age

- Survey responses largely represent residents who have lived in the township or village a long time (20+ years) and grew up in the area. Growing up in the area was the top reason people indicated for living there, following by the area's rural lifestyle.
- The majority of respondents live in single-family homes on at least 1 acre, but more commonly 5+ acres. This aligns with the rural setting of the Township. Single-family homes were also chosen as the most desired type of housing in the township, reflective of their current housing choices. While single-family homes are expected to be predominant in the rural Township setting, the Planning Commission should be aware that the perspectives of those in two-family and multi-family homes may be lacking.
- Survey responses were most indicative of those aged 35 to 64 years, with the largest group of respondents from 55 to 64 years. This represents a slightly older demographic compared to the Township's estimated median age of 35.9 years in the 2019 American Community Survey.

Growth and Development

- Following residents, employees and business owners were the next most popular groups to provide survey responses. The majority of respondents indicated they work in the Township or Village (58.6%), with an additional 11.5% working at home. Therefore, there is a considerable percentage of those working and invested in the local community.
- The majority of respondents believe the Township is growing too slowly. A variety of businesses were desired, with restaurants being most popular. The top three desired types of businesses were related to food and farming.
- Respondents were generally accepting of restaurants located near both the M-20 and Shelby Road exits. This aligns with the idea that additional businesses are strongly desired, and location appears to be less of a concern.
- The majority of respondents indicated that attractions and activities like Lewis Farms are "very important," to the community. This aligns with the desire for additional economic activity and the promotion of the area.
- Road maintenance was identified as the greatest Township priority and the area in which there was lowest satisfaction. Most respondents indicated they would not use public transportation, stressing the important of roads for personal travel.
- When asked to rate agreement with various statements, respondents were most in agreement that farmland should be preserved. Yet, clustered housing developments received the most overall disagreement. While clustered housing developments are often promoted as an option to preserve open space, the

Planning Commission may explore additional options for farmland preservation. Further discussion regarding cluster housing developments may also be beneficial to educate the public on this idea and better discern whether this developmental design would be appropriate.

- In relation to the park survey, people were most interested in natural forms of recreation (hiking, wildlife, etc.) and organized sports (fields, courts, etc). This provides a broad range of recreational opportunities in which the community may be interested. The parks survey may be designed to provide greater insight into these types of recreation, such as whether certain age groups desire specific types of recreation, appropriate locations for activities, winter opportunities, and specific trail surfaces or types of sports that would be most used.
- Other comments provided by respondents were often related to cleanliness and maintenance of the area. Some noted that clean-up days would be helpful or how reduced blight would help with community image and creating a downtown “feel.” This aligns with the majority response that a beautiful and attractive entry from the Shelby exit was “very important.” Placemaking may be explored in coordination with the Village of Shelby to enhance the quaint and rural character of the area.

Housing

- While single-family housing was the most desired type of housing, a considerable percentage also desired multi-family housing (44.6%). Opportunities for multi-family housing may be explored in coordination with available services and facilities to accommodate greater density.
- Housing quality was a major concern among respondents. The majority thought housing was of low quality and that enforcing the housing blight ordinance was important. Additional comments addressed blight concerns. Some did not desire additional subsidized housing developments, since providing jobs for more people was a concern. However, others believed there needed to be greater housing variety and ways to understand zoning options. The Planning Commission may consider options for encouraging high-quality, affordable housing through planning and zoning.

Part 4. Future Land Use Plan



Chapter 9. Goals & Objectives

The intent of this chapter is to provide a vision for the future of Shelby Township, which is supported by several goals and objectives. Together, the vision, goals, and objectives outline a desired future for Shelby Township that is founded in community input. The pursuit of policies, regulations, and projects in furtherance of these goals and objectives enhances quality of life for current and future residents. The vision statement is intentionally broad in order to highlight important community characteristics.

Vision

Shelby Township is a thriving community that supports and preserves its rural character, fosters hospitality among residents and visitors, and embraces opportunities for a multi-generational community through quality housing, educational programs, business promotion, and outdoor recreation.

This vision is supported by several goals and objectives. Goal statements describe a desirable end state of the Township 20-30 years in the future and reflect important community values. Objectives are intended to be more specific milestones to achieving the broader goal. The vision, goals, and objectives are founded on community input efforts conducted in support of this Plan, along with the knowledge of local officials and staff. The following themes were expressed in the results of the community survey and provide a foundation for the Plan's goals:

1. **Economic Development.** The majority of survey respondents believed the Township was growing too slowly (56%). A variety of businesses were desired, with popular choices related to food and farming. Beautiful and clean places were also desired for creating an attractive place to live and work.
2. **Housing.** While single-family housing was considered most desirable, there was also considerable support for multi-family housing in the community survey. Quality attainable housing and understanding zoning options were important to the public.
3. **Natural Features.** Farmland preservation was considered very important by the community and protecting the groundwater quality is a top priority. These are essential to maintaining the rural environment enjoyed by residents.
4. **Regional Coordination.** Coordinated planning between the Township and Village of Shelby will be important for meeting the needs of residents across municipal boundaries, as each offers different but complementary goods and services. Communication from the Township was also noted as an area for improvement in the survey.

Economic Development Goals

1. Shelby Township will support existing businesses, encourage the adaptive reuse of underutilized properties, and promote new development that is attractive and compatible with surrounding land uses.

Objectives:

- a. Coordinate the intensity of commercial development with available infrastructure, public facilities, and services (public water and sewer, roads, emergency services, etc.).
 - b. Encourage opportunities to enhance higher education in the Township, such as through a trade school, technical college, or satellite campus.
 - c. Explore opportunities to support agri-businesses and assist with grant programs, such as those from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD), and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).
 - d. Review and revise the Township's blight ordinance as necessary so it is clearly defined and enforceable for all properties.
 - e. Review and revise the Township's zoning ordinance as necessary to allow for appropriate development, redevelopment, and sustainable business facilities.
2. The Township's development potential will be evident through an attractive local setting, its proximity to Lake Michigan, and its exceptional agricultural production.

Objectives:

- a. Invest in attractive signage at the Shelby Road exit on US-31 that welcomes residents and visitors into the community and implement a design theme that is used throughout the Township to create a sense of unity and identity.
- b. Increase communication with developers and the public to highlight and market local business opportunities, development projects, and natural assets, such as through the Township website, emails, newsletters, or other methods of communication.
- c. Look for ways to support connections to the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail and other recreational opportunities, such as through bike racks, signage, and additional trail connections where appropriate.
- d. Work with area attractions (e.g. Lewis Farms, Double JJ Resort, Silver Lake State Park, and others) to promote Shelby Township as an agricultural destination, such as through maps, business flyers, and local business identification.

Housing Goals

3. Shelby Township will offer attractive and attainable housing options that serve residents of all ages and abilities while preserving the Township's natural setting.

Objectives:

- a. Review and revise the Township's blight ordinance as necessary so it clearly defines residential blight and is enforceable for all properties. (duplicates 1,d)
- b. Foster a housing infill program that promotes new development on vacant or underutilized properties, stabilizes neighborhoods, and aligns with the rural character of the community.
- c. Coordinate residential density with the availability of public utilities and potential for utility expansion, while protecting the rural and agricultural character of the Township.
- d. Encourage development patterns that use open space development to help preserve unique natural features.
- e. Encourage cooperative efforts between Township officials and property owners for property maintenance, blight enforcement, and community clean-up efforts.
- f. Advance public education on zoning requirements and make the zoning ordinance and related information easily accessible on the Township's website.



Natural Features Goals

4. Shelby Township will be a responsible steward of the natural environment by identifying and preserving environmentally sensitive natural areas and valuable open space.

Objectives:

- a. Promote community education on common groundwater contaminants and provide resources for responsible waste disposal, recycling, composting, and other water protection actions.
 - b. Establish an inventory of important natural resources in the Township that are most deserving of protection and incorporate strategies for their protection in the zoning ordinance and other regulations as appropriate.
 - c. Encourage development that limits impervious surfaces and increases land availability for groundwater aquifer recharge.
-
5. Shelby Township will encourage sustainable use of agricultural areas to ensure active farmland remains a valuable community resource.

Objectives:

- a. Encourage low-intensity development in areas planned for long-term agricultural use.
- b. Educate agricultural landowners on farmland and open space preservation opportunities available through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and actively assist landowners who wish to participate in these programs.
- c. Regularly consult with local farmers to identify issues and opportunities to meet the needs of those most invested in agricultural production.



Regional Coordination Goals

6. Future planning and development efforts in Shelby Township will foster positive relationships and promote unity with neighboring communities, recognizing the surrounding regional context and interdependence of these communities.

Objectives:

- a. Shelby Township and the Village of Shelby will pursue coordinated planning efforts, recognizing the role the Village plays in the region as an area for urban development and services.
- b. Where practical, identify a future land use plan that is compatible with surrounding land uses in the Villages of Shelby, New Era, and surrounding townships.
- c. Work with the Village of Shelby to establish a marketing campaign targeting seasonal residents and tourists in the region, advertising Shelby as a regional recreation and agricultural destination.
- d. Highlight the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail as a regional connector, uniting communities along the route such as New Era, Rothbury, Stony Lake, Hesperia, and Hart.
- e. Promote unity of Village and Township populations through attractive public spaces and local events that are inviting to all ages, cultures, and abilities.
- f. Establish and maintain a communication program with neighboring municipalities to address public service and facility needs, planning issues, land use conditions and trends, and other mutually beneficial strategies to address pertinent needs.



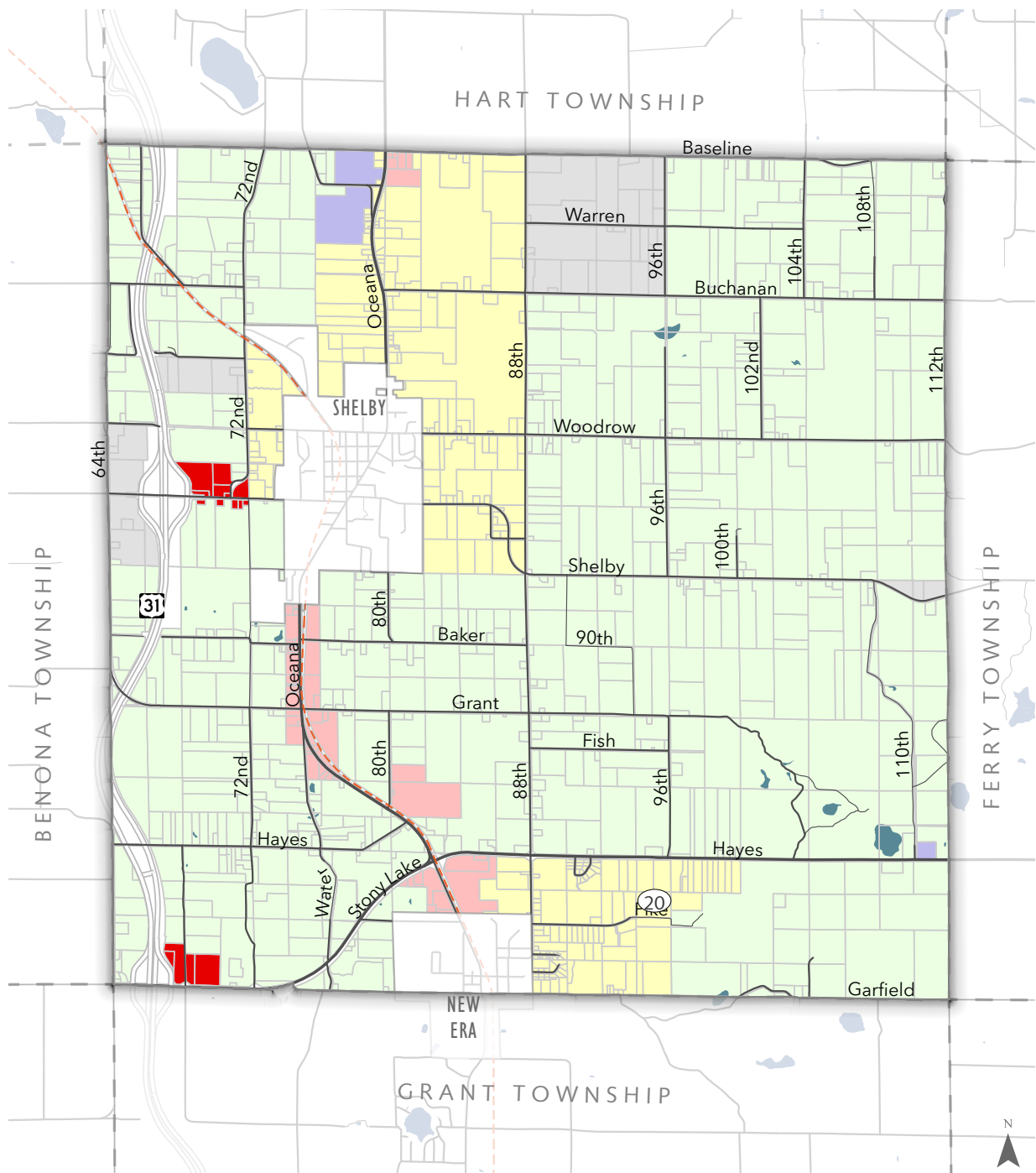
Chapter 10. Future Land Use Plan

This future land use plan for Shelby Township establishes a general blueprint for land use to guide growth, preservation, development, and redevelopment over the next 20 to 30 years. This future land use plan is intended to preserve the rural community character while supporting business and residential growth in appropriate areas. In creating this Plan, consideration was given to influential factors such as existing land uses, available facilities and services, public infrastructure, and environmentally sensitive areas. This future land use plan is also designed to reinforce the goals, objectives, and vision in Chapter 9.

Implementation of the future land use plan is most notably accomplished through the Shelby Township Zoning Ordinance. While the Zoning Ordinance regulates specific land uses by zoning district, the future land use plan provides a broader pattern for preferred land usage in the Township. The future land use plan seeks to balance desired future development with existing land uses. As such, the future land use designations are broad and intended to be somewhat flexible.

Map 10 illustrates boundaries for future land use designations, while the text of this chapter provides an explanation and narrative supporting each designation. The boundaries are approximate; where two or more land use designations are adjacent, either may be considered an appropriate designation. However, the approximate boundaries have been carefully considered and significant departures are generally discouraged except in unique circumstances and only when the public health, safety, and welfare would not be compromised.





10 Future Land Use

Shelby Township, Oceana County, MI

0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Data Sources: MI Open Data, EGLE, NLCD, Shelby Township

Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
| Agriculture & Rural Residential | Suburban Residential |
| General Business | Highway Service |
| Industrial | Civic |



Agricultural & Rural Residential

The Agricultural and Rural Residential future land use category represents the largest portion of land in Shelby Township. This includes most farmed lands, areas with low-density residential uses, and natural areas. The Township contains several agricultural operations that produce high-quality products. This category is intended to support agriculture and low-density residential development, recognizing the importance of farming activities and natural areas to the Township's identity and economic stability. Local farming and important farmland resources are strongly supported in this category. Low-density residential uses are also supported where they preserve the community's overall rural character.

This future land use category envisions agricultural uses, open space preservation, and low-density single-family homes as primary land uses. Land uses in this category lack public water and sewer. Residents should recognize that farming and rural activities are the primary land uses that are accommodated in this designation, and the associated effects of such activities category, such as odors, noises, and fertilizer application are to be expected. Yet, farming operations should comply with generally accepted agricultural management practices (GAAMPs) as defined by the State of Michigan. Agricultural attractions and activities such as farm markets and agri-tourism facilities are supported where they enhance the Township's rural character and are compatible with surrounding land uses. Open space or cluster housing developments may also be permitted on a limited basis where they preserve open space, farmland, the rural atmosphere.



Suburban Residential

The suburban residential future land use category accounts for the Township's primary residential areas. These areas are more suburban in character than elsewhere in the Township, providing a general extension of residential development from existing neighborhoods in the Village of Shelby. While this category is primarily intended for single-family homes, two-family or multi-family dwellings may be appropriate in certain limited situations where neighborhood quality and character can be maintained or improved. Public water and sanitary sewer are constraining factors and most of this land is not likely to be served by these systems; permitted densities should correspond to the availability and capacity of water and sewer services. The Township should carefully consider emerging patterns of suburban development to ensure consistent and logical patterns of growth from higher- to lower-density areas. This will likely correspond to the availability of public facilities and services, extending outward from the Village of Shelby.

New development should emphasize housing quality, connectivity, and natural resource preservation. Development patterns in neighborhoods should be reviewed in association with existing patterns of growth and provide a logical continuation of existing residential developments. Opportunities for outdoor recreation, leisure, and natural feature preservation are encouraged in coordination with residential and other low-intensity uses. Most residential development is expected to remain relatively low-density. While many existing neighborhoods do not contain sidewalks, increased connectivity is encouraged in future development and redevelopment which strengthens non-motorized transportation to the Village of Shelby. Neighborhoods should remain attractive and well maintained, promoting high-quality housing in the Township.



General Commercial

The General Commercial future land use category is intended to provide for employment, goods, and professional services that serve Shelby Township, the Village of Shelby, and neighboring municipalities. These areas are primarily located along major transportation corridors, which facilitate traffic through the Township and Village. Serving a broader population, this area is intended to be primarily automobile-oriented. However, developments should remain attractive through the use of quality building materials, landscaping, and unique architecture.

Several natural areas and residences remain along major transportation corridors; however, strip development is emerging in some areas. This mixture of uses and emerging strip development should be carefully considered and scrutinized by the Township. Strip development should be limited where possible and may be ameliorated by concentrating commercial uses as nodes along these corridors. Limiting strip development will help promote smooth traffic flow and safe travel by minimizing curb cuts and conflict points. While commercial uses are primarily envisioned for this area, a mix of uses will likely be present for some time. Screening and landscaping should be used to mitigate the impacts of more intense uses.

Highway Service

US-31 offers regional access to other communities in West Michigan and facilitates a high volume of daily traffic. The Highway Commercial future land use category is intended to capitalize on the Township's access to this corridor at two locations. These areas are intended to provide goods and services that accommodate both local and regional populations along the highway. These locations allow for more intense commercial uses that serve highway travelers through an automobile-oriented environment. Businesses in this area should be designed with curb cuts and circulation that promote safe and efficient traffic flow.



Light Industrial

The Light Industrial future land use category provides employment opportunities for residents; however, substantial expansion of industrial uses is not anticipated due to the lack of public water and sanitary sewer in the Township. Rather, this Plan supports the continuation and strengthening of existing industrial uses. This category primarily contains the Hart-Shelby Airport and a variety of other manufacturing, vehicle repair, and natural resource operations along major road corridors. Future industrial operations should be coordinated with the availability of public infrastructure, such as water and sanitary sewer.

Should industrial operations be expanded or redeveloped, special attention should be given to landscaping, vehicle circulation, safety for workers and the public, and building design to promote attractive developments. Because some industrial operations are mixed among residential areas, landscape buffers are especially important to minimize industrial impacts on surrounding uses.



Civic

The Civic future land use category contains land that is publicly owned and land that is used for public recreation. Currently, this includes the Oceana County Road Commission, Oceana Golf Club, public property associated with the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail, and the new community park proposed on Buchanan Road near 72nd Avenue. This Plan anticipates a continuation of these uses and also recognizes the potential for additional recreation areas as land or funding becomes available. Additional development should meet recreation or public needs.

Zoning Plan

A zoning plan is required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008), which explains how each category on the future land use map relates to districts in the zoning ordinance. The following zoning plan provides a comparison of future land use categories to the Township's zoning districts. A rezoning request should consider this zoning plan, along with supporting narrative in this Chapter, the Future Land Use Map, desired use, and other applicable features of the application.

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District(s)		Notes
	Compatible	Potentially Compatible	
Agricultural & Rural Residential	Agricultural, Rural Residential	R-1 Residential	Intended primarily for farming activities and large-lot residences. Smaller lots may be appropriate when open space is preserved.
Suburban Residential	R-1 Residential	Rural Residential, R-2 Residential	Neighborhoods are low-density and characterized by open community spaces, low-speed streets, and pathways. Higher-density areas may be appropriate where supporting utilities and services are available.
General Commercial	General Business	Highway Commercial, Industrial	Development is automobile-oriented, but designed to limit strip development. Site features include landscaping and quality building materials, with screening when adjacent to residential uses.
Highway Service	Highway Commercial	General Business, Industrial	Development is automobile-oriented and serves highway travelers. Uses are more intense in character, but maintain safe traffic circulation and attractive buildings.
Light Industrial	Industrial	Highway Commercial, General Business	Site features include landscaping and quality building materials, with screening between incompatible uses.
Civic	All districts		Places designed for public use or recreation.

Complete Streets

This Plan supports complete streets policy. Complete streets are thoroughfares that are planned, designed, and constructed to allow access to all legal users safely and efficiently, without any single user taking priority over another. Users in Shelby Township include pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, users of assistive devices, snowmobilers, and truck drivers. Complete streets can result in increased safety for non-motorized users, improved public health, a cleaner environment, mobility equity, and enhanced quality of life through increased modal choices and more inviting streets.

The Township's objective will be to work jointly with the Village and surrounding communities to promote healthy lifestyles for people of all abilities through the continued development of non-motorized transportation options. Suggested design elements may include sidewalks on both sides of a roadway or street; pedestrian signals and signage; bike lanes; local and regional multi-use trails, and other features. Even though Shelby Township is a rural community, these elements are feasible in many developed areas of the Township near the Village. Further, the presence of the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail State Park in Shelby Township brings numerous cyclists to the community, which underscores the need to expand the non-motorized network.

Some features may be accomplished through simple road restriping and the addition of signage. Other projects may be more involved and may only be practicable when coordinated with major roadway reconstruction in areas where additional accessibility is of particular concern. In recent years, the Township has paved numerous lane miles of roadways in an effort to improve the Township's transportation network. The Township should work with neighboring communities, the Oceana County Road Commission, MDOT, and other pertinent agencies in the implementation of complete streets policy.



Chapter 11.

Implementation

The effectiveness of this Master Plan is determined by how the goals and objectives are implemented. Steps for achieving the goals and objectives should be clearly defined to guide future planning actions. Therefore, the following implementation strategies are intended to help prioritize actions and incrementally achieve the goals and objectives envisioned by this Plan. It is recognized that the following implementation strategies may be long-term in nature and will involve the cooperation of several entities over many years. While a Master Plan is often viewed primarily as a tool for township leaders, its implementation requires commitment and involvement from the entire community.

The following strategies are in no particular order; each strategy is important and contributes to achieving the overall vision expressed by this Plan.

Implementation Strategies

- Zoning Ordinance
- Farmland Preservation Strategy
- West Shelby Road Corridor Plan
- Housing strategy
- Cooperation with Neighboring and Regional Governments
- Communication and Education



1. Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance is the primary implementation mechanism for this Master Plan, as it regulates land uses in Shelby Township. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that a zoning ordinance be based on a Master Plan and it is important that the zoning ordinance accurately reflect the Plan's policy. Therefore, an evaluation of the zoning ordinance in light of the updated goals, objectives, and future land use plan is recommended. This may include a revision of the zoning map, as appropriate, to support the future land use map.

The Shelby Township Zoning Ordinance was adopted in the 2000s - along with the Shelby Community Master Plan - to guide and regulate land use in the "Shelby Community" and therefore addresses land uses relevant to both the Township and Village. However, this joint ordinance was always administered and amended separately. Both the Township and Village now operate from separate (but similar) ordinances. While many sections remain relevant to the Township, some areas contain regulations and zoning districts from the original Shelby Community ordinance that are not relevant to the Township. The Village of Shelby adopted its own Master Plan in 2021 and is in the process of developing its own Zoning Ordinance as of this writing, and it is recommended that the Township do the same. The Township Zoning Ordinance should be streamlined by eliminating information that is not applicable or enforceable. Other considerations could include:

- Increased graphics for user-friendliness and interpretation
- Evaluation of the zoning map designations when compared to the future land use map
- Updated signage definitions and regulations that are content-neutral
- Review of definitions to ensure all permitted and special land uses are defined
- Site and building design standards in commercial and industrial districts



Key Responsibilities: Planning Commission and Township Board

2. Farmland Preservation Strategy

Farmland and agriculture are essential to Shelby Township's identity and economy. Farmland preservation was important to community survey respondents. The goals and objectives of this Master Plan support the continuation of agricultural activities, preservation of open space, and viability of farm-based businesses, as these are important to maintaining the Township's character and quality of life.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) offers several programs to help promote farmland and open space preservation. These programs should be endorsed and advertised by the Township. Note that these programs are voluntary and there are many ways to maintain open space and farmland, but the following list is intended as a starting point for the Township:

- **Farmland Development Rights Agreement (formerly P.A. 116).** A voluntary, temporary restriction on the land between the landowner and State that preserves the land for farming in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments.
- **Conservation Easement Donation.** A permanent restriction between the landowner and State, voluntarily entered into by the landowner, preserving the land for either agriculture or open space.
- **Agricultural Preservation Fund.** A fund created to assist local units of government in implementing a local purchase of development rights program.
- **Local Open Space Easement.** A voluntary, temporary restriction on the land between the local government and landowner, preserving land as open space in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments.
- **Designated Open Space Easement.** A voluntary, temporary restriction on the land between the landowner and State, preserving land as open space in exchange for certain tax benefits and exemptions for various special assessments.
- **Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).** A voluntary, permanent restriction on the land between the landowner and State, preserving their land for agriculture in exchange for a cash payment for those rights. This State program is currently not funded, but may be in the future. Some counties and townships offer a local PDR program; however, this is not available in Oceana County.

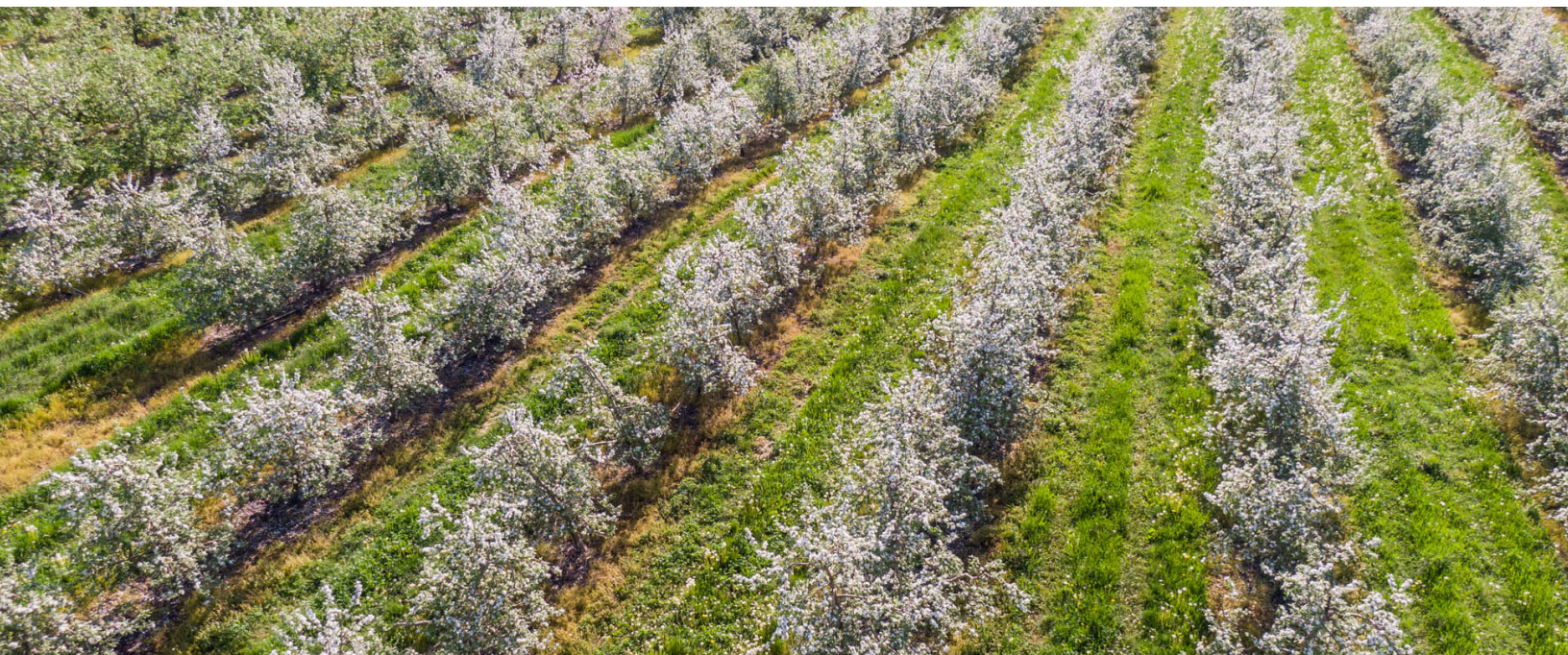
Other grants and programs to assist local agriculture and agri-businesses may be explored through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

The Oceana Conservation District office is located in Shelby Township and offers assistance to farmers, including the following programs:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).** This is a voluntary conservation program administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service that “supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers, ranchers, private forest land owners and Federally-recognized American Indian tribes may receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and land management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.”
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).** This program provides financial assistance for “farmers and ranchers to assist in maintaining the conservation practices already implemented and to challenge them to try new conservation techniques such as soil testing, scouting for pests, or using nutrient management.”
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).** This a proactive program that “helps farms of all sizes and all commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks.” As of October 2021, there were 5,842 verified farms in Michigan.

Aside from grants and programs, the Township can also support local agriculture through marketing efforts and consultations with local farmers. Agricultural marketing may include local business identification in Township resources, maps depicting local produce markets, and flyers identifying destinations. Consultations with farmers can help the Township better understand issues and opportunities for the Township’s agriculture.

Key Responsibilities: Township staff, Planning Commission, local farmers, and business owners





4. Housing strategy

The Township's housing stock primarily consists of single-family homes in rural settings. While much of the Township's housing is expected to remain rural and relatively low density, the community survey indicated an interest in housing options and improvements in quality. This housing strategy identifies three target areas for improvement:

1. **Variety.** Housing growth is anticipated to extend northward and eastward from the Village in the future land use plan. Two-family and multi-family homes may be appropriate in certain areas near Village boundaries where public water and sanitary sewer are available or could be extended. The Township should coordinate areas of growth with utility extensions from the Village of Shelby.
2. **Maintenance.** Housing quality can be promoted through an effective blight ordinance. The Township has been working on an ordinance to address blight in 2021. Once adopted, this ordinance will need to be evaluated and amended as necessary to ensure that it is working as intended and is enforceable for the Township. The elimination of housing blight will help encourage neighborhood stability.
3. **Communication.** Neighborhood stability can also be promoted through clear communication with landowners, residents, and developers. Identification of vacant and underutilized properties offers the potential for housing infill, which may be communicated to developers through the Township's website, proposals, flyers, or other marketing techniques. Zoning Ordinance requirements should also be clearly defined for the public to enhance their knowledge of available uses, development designs, and property requirements. This would be enhanced by adding the Zoning Ordinance to the Township website. Additionally, factsheets or a newsletter could be created to highlight zoning requirements in different districts and development designs, such as PUDs and cluster housing.



Key Responsibilities: Planning Commission, Township Board, and Township staff

5. Cooperation with Neighboring and Regional Governments

Some of the goals of this Master Plan will not be achievable without the cooperation of the Township's neighboring municipalities, most notably the Village of Shelby. Land uses should be planned to maintain reasonable consistency across municipal boundaries. Discussions about needs, planning issues, land use conditions, zoning trends, and other beneficial strategies are encouraged between municipalities. A collaborative approach will allow the Township and Village to address issues consistently and gain insight on opportunities for future development. This can be accomplished through regular joint meetings between the Village and Township Planning Commissions and/or legislative bodies.

Development in the Township will be largely influenced by the extent to which utilities are extended from the Village. While the Township is expected to remain a rural counterpart to the Village, denser developments should be coordinated with the availability of public facilities and services from the Village.

The Township may also pursue coordination with the Village in regional marketing of the Shelby Community. The Township may use attractive signage at the Shelby Exit as a springboard for further marketing of the area. A collaborative marketing approach between the Township and Village may bolster the area's image as a regional recreation and agricultural destination. This may include local events involving both municipalities and coordinated promotion of the William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail.

6. Communication and Education

Communication and education are important components of a vibrant community. Clear and consistent communication allows Township officials to stay informed on local opinions, while also allowing the public to express ideas and interests. The Township should consider ways to enhance communication with the public, such as through website updates, social media, newsletters, emails, public presentations, or other methods of communication. Such methods can allow the Township to update the public on policies, land use trends, local events, and other community interests. These may also be used to highlight local businesses and provide education on relevant topics in the Township, such as actions that protect groundwater quality.

The Township may also establish and integrate branding throughout marketing efforts to create a distinct identity. The design theme can be used for the Shelby Exit welcome sign, the website, public documents, and other public materials so the community is easily recognizable to both residents and visitors.

Lastly, the Township should continue to seek opportunities to enhance the education of both local leaders and the public. Township officials and leaders should seek continued education on planning and zoning trends, issues, and opportunities. This may include attendance at conferences or seminars on relevant planning and zoning topics. Findings should be conveyed to the public and all public meetings should be instructive for the public. Other opportunities to enhance public education, such as through the support of a local trade school or small college, are also



recommended.

Key Responsibilities: Township Board, Planning Commission, Township staff

Project Plan

The following table provides a list of proposed projects and programs that will help the Township implement this Master Plan, along with responsible parties and a general timeline for completion. This table is intended for use by the Planning

Action	Responsible Party	Timing
Zoning Ordinance audit and evaluation.	Planning Commission and Township Board	Year 1
Zoning Ordinance updates or rewrite based on the vision, goals, and objectives of this Master Plan.	Planning Commission and Township Board	Year 1
Review and revise the Township's blight ordinance	Planning Commission and Township Board	Year 2
Identify and advertise vacant properties to developers	Planning Commission, Township Board, and Township staff	Year 2, Ongoing
Compile and advertise a list of farmland and open space preservation programs and grants	Planning Commission, Township staff, local farmers, business owners	Years 3-5, Ongoing
Consult with farmers and support local agricultural through marketing of local farms and products.	Planning Commission, Township staff, local farmers, business owners	Years 3-5
Install an attractive entry sign near U.S. 31	Planning Commission and Township staff	Ongoing
Cooperation with neighboring and regional governments	Planning Commission, Township Board, and Township staff	Ongoing
Public communication efforts and branding	Planning Commission, Township Board, and Township staff	Ongoing
Education of local leaders and the public	Planning Commission, Township Board, and Township staff	Ongoing

Appendix A

Community Survey Results

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Master Plan

Shelby Township, Oceana County