



VAN BUREN

CHARTER TOWNSHIP

2020 MASTER PLAN

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Adopted - November 17, 2020



VAN BUREN
CHARTER TOWNSHIP

2020 MASTER PLAN

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Adopted - November 17, 2020

Prepared with the assistance of:



235 E. Main Street, Suite 105
Northville, MI 48167
T: 248.596.0920
F: 248.596.0930
www.mcka.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 2017 - 2020:

Supervisor Kevin McNamara

Treasurer Sharry Budd

Clerk Leon Wright

Trustee Paul White

Trustee Reggie Miller

Trustee Sherry Frazier

Trustee Kevin Martin

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION, 2017 - 2020:

Carol Thompson

Donald Boynton, Jr.

Bryon Kelley*

Jeffrey S. Jahr

Joan Franzoi

Medina Atchinson*

Sharry Budd*

Ronald Jackson

Planning Commission Recording Secretary: Tina Harman

* Member of Master Plan Subcommittee

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP STAFF:

Director of Public Services: Matthew Best

Department of Public Services Executive Assistant: Elizabeth Renaud

Director of Planning & Economic Development (2015 - 2019): Ron Akers, AICP

Director of Planning & Economic Development (2020 - present): Dan Power, AICP

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| How to Use This Plan | 3 |
| What This Plan Contains | 4 |
| Past Planning Efforts | 5 |
| Missing Middle Housing Types | 8 |
| Transect Zones | 12 |
| 2. Regional Context | 15 |
| Regional Setting | 17 |
| Historical Development of Van Buren Township | 20 |
| 3. Existing Land Use and Community Plans | 29 |
| A Snapshot of Van Buren Township | 30 |
| Existing Land Use | 32 |
| 4. Community Goals and Objectives | 35 |
| Public Participation | 36 |
| Master Plan Survey | 37 |
| Vision Statement | 38 |
| Van Buren Charter Township Goals | 39 |
| 5. Future Land Use Plan | 47 |
| Residential | 53 |
| Commercial | 56 |
| Mixed Use | 58 |
| Industrial | 60 |
| Other Uses | 62 |
| Zoning Plan | 66 |
| 6. Mobility Plan | 71 |
| Roadway Network | 72 |
| Corridor Beautification | 79 |
| Non-Motorized Transportation | 80 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 7. Implementation | 87 |
| Implementation Plan | 88 |
| 8. Background Summary | 97 |
| Community Profile | 98 |
| Households and Families | 106 |
| Demographics: Summary and Conclusions | 114 |
| 2019 Master Plan Survey Summary | 116 |
| Open House Public Input Summary | 123 |

List of Maps

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Map 1: Regional Context | 16 |
| Map 2: Regional Setting | 18 |
| Map 3: Existing Land Use | 33 |
| Map 4: Future Land Use | 51 |
| Map 5: Roadway Network | 73 |
| Map 6: Circulation Plan | 75 |
| Map 7: Non-Motorized Facilities | 81 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1: Total Population of Van Buren Township (1940–2018) | 100 |
| Figure 2: Van Buren Charter Township Population Age Structure, 2010 and 2018 | 102 |
| Figure 3: Population by Race: Change in Van Buren Township Diversity 1990-2018 | 105 |
| Figure 4: Census Tracts and Block Groups | 110 |

List of Tables

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Table 1: | Past Planning Documents | 5 |
| Table 2: | Land Use/Land Cover | 32 |
| Table 3: | Future Land Use | 65 |
| Table 4: | Future Land Use and Zoning Map Correlation | 67 |
| Table 5: | Total Population of Van Buren Township (1940–2018) | 100 |
| Table 6: | Population Growth Trends of Van Buren Township and Surrounding Communities (1980–2018) | 101 |
| Table 7: | Population by Age and Sex of Van Buren Township (2000-2018) | 102 |
| Table 8: | Projected Population Age Structure of Van Buren Township (2018-2045) | 103 |
| Table 9: | Racial Composition of Van Buren Township (1990-2018) | 104 |
| Table 10: | Households, Occupancy and Housing Value (2018) | 106 |
| Table 11: | Year Householder Moved In | 106 |
| Table 12: | Housing Value and Contract Rent | 106 |
| Table 13: | Median Household Income of Van Buren Township and Surrounding Communities (2010-2018) | 107 |
| Table 14: | Occupied Housing Units by Type in Van Buren Township and Surrounding Communities (2018) | 108 |
| Table 15: | Change in Housing Units by Type in Van Buren Township (1980-2017) | 108 |
| Table 16: | Housing Vacancy in Van Buren Township (2010-2018) | 109 |
| Table 17: | Average Household Size in Van Buren Township (1970-2018) | 109 |
| Table 18: | Distribution of Children and Seniors in Van Buren Township (2018) | 110 |
| Table 19: | Concentration of Renters, Non-White Racial / Ethnic Groups, and Poverty by Census Tract, 2018 | 112 |

This page left intentionally blank.

01.

INTRODUCTION

The Van Buren Charter Township Master Plan articulates an overall vision for the future of the Township in the coming years. It states the community's ideals regarding future growth; development of land, and preservation of character, farmland, open space and natural features. Development of this Master Plan has taken into consideration input from a variety of sources including, but not limited to: two comprehensive public surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019; workshops for community members, and elected and appointed officials, in October 2019; and many working sessions involving Township staff and the Master Plan Steering Committee during 2018 and 2019.

Once adopted, the Master Plan becomes the official policy document for the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission to guide land use decisions. This Master Plan is not only a vision statement toward the future development of growth-focused areas and the preservation of farmland, open space and natural features in agricultural areas, but also a document that allows continuity in development policies as individual Planning Commissioners and Township Board Trustees change over the years.



Families enjoy ice cream before the 2019 Fireworks Show at Beck Fields.

The last overall Master Plan, with a scope encompassing the entire Township, was written in 1989. The 1989 Master Plan was also amended twice, to take into account changes to single family residential land use categories (February 1999), and to plan for development of the Grace Lake area (December 2001). These Plan amendments were published as separate, stand-alone documents.

Over the course of the ensuing decades—faced with many changes in the regional economy and in land development trends—Van Buren Township’s residents and officials responded by developing a number of companion planning documents, covering smaller areas of the Township in greater detail. These companion documents include the Ecorse and Haggerty Road Corridor Plan (March 2000), the Greenways & Trails Master Plan (November 2004), the South Side Master Plan (October 2007), and the Belleville Road District Plan (September 2010).

This effort at creating an updated Township-wide Master Plan is not intended to replace those Plans; rather, it is to create an up-to-date coordinating document that contains the spirit and ideals of those combined efforts, updated as necessary to communicate an overall vision for the Township as a whole.

It is therefore envisioned that this Township-wide Master Plan will ultimately serve as the first book in a series: the previous companion planning documents will be revised in the coming years, and brought into a format consistent with that of this Township-wide Plan. Those revised documents will then serve as future books in this series. Upon adoption of this Township-wide Master Plan, it is intended that the policies, goals, and objectives in these existing plans shall remain valid; however, in the instance of any contradictions between this Plan and its companions, the guidance in this Plan shall take precedence.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN



Belleville Lake viewed from the East Boat Access Site.

The Van Buren Charter Township Master Plan, and its companion Plans, are the only officially adopted documents that set forth an agenda for the achievement of land use goals and policies. The Master Plan is a long-range statement of general goals and policies aimed to unify land preservation and development within the Township. More specifically, the Master Plan is to be used in the following ways:

1. This Master Plan is a **general statement of the Township's goals and policies**. It provides an overall, comprehensive view of the community's desire for the future.
2. This Plan serves as an **aid in daily decision-making** regarding land development. The goals and policies outlined in this Plan exist to guide Planning Commissioners and the Township Board of Trustees in their deliberations on matters including zoning, subdivisions, capital improvements, and others relating to land use and development.
3. State law requires that communities have a Master Plan as the **foundation for a Zoning Ordinance**, and for other regulations that shape the physical and social development of the community. It cannot be understated, however, that the Master Land Use Plan and the Zoning Ordinance and Map are two separate documents. The Zoning Ordinance is but one of the many legal tools used to implement the Master Land Use Plan.
4. The Master Plan attempts to **synchronize public improvements and private development**, by coordinating development areas that best utilize existing infrastructure within the Township, aligning future land uses and future infrastructure investments, and establishing a template for collaborative relationships with external funding sources.
5. Finally, this Master Plan serves as an **educational and inspirational tool**. It gives Township residents, property owners, developers, and stakeholders in adjacent communities and the overall region a clear indication of the Township's direction for the future. It should inspire readers to work toward achieving a **standard of excellence** in creating a quality built environment, and in preserving valuable natural resources. For any vision to be implemented successfully, its inspiration must be communicated across **succeeding generations of residents and officials**. *To paraphrase Philadelphia's urban planner Edmund Bacon, it is the future generations who will determine whether what we create will ultimately be carried forward or destroyed.*

WHAT THIS PLAN CONTAINS

The Van Buren Charter Township Master Plan outlines the planning priorities for the Township and covers:

- **Regional Context** – Chapter Two provides information related to the general location of the Township and the historical events that shaped its growth and current form.
- **Community Goals** – Chapters Three, Four, and Five present the policy basis for this Master Plan. The goals and objectives therein were developed from the existing companion Plans, and from input and comments received from Township officials, staff, and residents.
- **Future Land Use Plan** – Chapter Six defines and maps ideal future land uses throughout the Township.
- **Transportation Plan** – Chapter Seven inventories the Township’s network of roadways and non-motorized infrastructure. It outlines future priorities relating to development of trails, and the enhancement of public roadways to make them accessible and comfortable for all users.
- **Implementation** – Chapter Eight provides ways in which the goals and objectives of this Master Plan can be achieved.
- **Community Description** – Chapter Nine provides information on the social, economic, and physical characteristics of the community, and gives a detailed accounting of the public stakeholder input which is the foundation of the entire Plan.



Van Buren Charter Township Hall.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Van Buren Charter Township’s last comprehensive Master Plan was adopted in 1989.

In addition to defining standards to improve quality of life in the Township, this 2020 Master Plan unifies relevant points of history, data, and goals from past planning efforts to create a comprehensive representation of the community’s past, present, and future.

Table 1: Past Planning Documents

| Year of Adoption | Planning Document |
|------------------|--|
| 1989 | Van Buren Charter Township Master Plan |
| 1999 | Township Master Plan Update—Single Family Residential Areas |
| 2000 | Ecorse and Haggerty Road Corridor Plan |
| 2001 | Amendment to the Master Plan for the Grace Lake Area |
| 2004 | Greenways & Trails Master Plan |
| 2007 | South Side Master Plan |
| 2009 | 2nd Amended and Restated Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan |
| 2010 | Belleville Road District Plan & Market Analysis |

1989 Master Plan

In March 1988, the Van Buren Township Planning Commission initiated an update to the Township’s Master Plan in order to proactively address growth and development in the Township. Between 1978 and 1988, the Township had seen more than two square miles of its natural areas and open space converted into housing, business/commercial, industrial, and public uses; this amounted to a 9% decrease in the Township’s open space over the decade. It was recognized that, with the exception of Willow Run Airport, nearly every area of the Township consisted of vacant land suitable for development: without a new plan in place, what would ultimately be preserved?

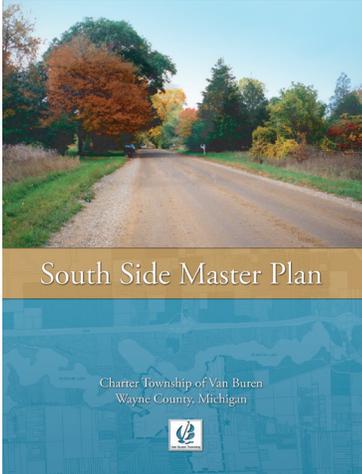
Van Buren Township had also gained nearly 6,000 residents between 1970 and 1986—an increase of 45%. Historical accounts indicate that new residents were attracted by the availability of new housing, growing economic opportunities, the proximity of both the Detroit and Ann Arbor urbanized areas, the convenience of economic, cultural and other opportunities in the region, and the desirability of the natural environment. A 2018-2019 survey of Van Buren Township residents maintains that much of the community’s desirability is still a result of these combined amenities and characteristics.

The Future Land Use portion of the 1989 Plan defined eleven land use categories, which promoted the strict separation of land uses that was considered a best practice at that time. Much of the southern portion of the Township was projected to be built out with low density (2–3 dwelling units/acre) residential subdivisions.

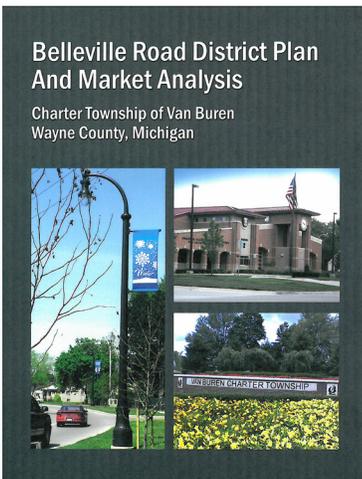


Between 1978 and 1988, the Township had seen more than two square miles of its natural areas and open space converted into housing, business/commercial, industrial, and public uses; this amounted to a 9% decrease in the Township’s open space over the decade.





2007 South Side Master Plan



2010 Belleville Road District Plan and Market Analysis

1999 Master Plan

The 1999 Master Plan Update amended the 1989 Master Plan to refresh goals and objectives, and future land uses, related to single family housing. The 1999 update provided an analysis of infrastructure conditions, residential district comparisons, planned and zoning build-out analysis, development economics and housing affordability, preservation of rural character, residential goals and objectives, and single family residential future land use changes.

Notably, this Plan developed additional single family land use categories with smaller (8,400 sf) minimum lot sizes. It directly addressed rural preservation issues, and established a precedent of allowing higher density residential developments north of Interstate 94 in exchange for preserving large lot (“estate”) residential and agricultural uses south of Interstate 94.

2000 Ecorse and Haggerty Road Corridor Plan

The Ecorse and Haggerty Road Corridor Plan was adopted in May 2000, to provide guidelines for future development along Ecorse and Haggerty Roads, identified as the prime non-residential growth corridors in the Township. Notably, the Plan recommended reconstruction of the entirety of Ecorse Road into a four-lane boulevard with significant landscape enhancements and access management. In addition to establishing new standards for industrial and office development in these corridors, measures to protect and screen adjacent residential areas from higher-intensity uses were addressed.

2001 Amendment to the Master Plan for the Grace Lake Area

The Grace Lake area is located south of Ecorse Road, bordered by I-275 on the west and Hannan Road on the east. It had been assumed in the 1989 Master Plan that this area would eventually absorb future demand for commercial and light industrial uses; however, the area’s future land use classification was modified in the 1990s to meet the then-high demand for single family residential subdivisions. A large proposal to develop the entire area with such subdivisions was ultimately abandoned, due to environmental and cost issues.

The Plan Amendment again modified the future land use of the Grace Lake area to absorb the documented demand for a large office/technology campus development in the area. It developed sequencing standards for future development of the area to avoid adverse impacts on neighboring property owners. This area is today the site of the Grace Lake Corporate Center.

2007 South Side Master Plan

A new, self-contained Master Plan specifically for the portion of Van Buren Township south of Belleville Lake, was developed in 2006–2007. It was predicated on a comprehensive public process consisting of three visioning workshops and multiple public meetings.

The South Side Plan aims to preserve the area’s best characteristics, by permitting only contextual and controlled growth. The Plan greatly reduced the amount of land planned for commercial uses, and designated the majority of the area for large lot residential land uses. Notably, the Plan acknowledged the fact that the futures of the southern portion of the Township and the City of Belleville are inextricably intertwined—the Plan established that downtown Belleville should serve as the most intense node for southern Township residents. Land uses immediately adjacent to the southern and eastern Belleville city limits were planned for mixed use, and for a new Village Residential category that would allow the traditional development patterns found in Belleville to seamlessly transition into the Township.

2010 Belleville Road District Plan & Market Analysis

A new plan, addressing the Belleville Road corridor and areas one mile to the east and west, was developed in 2009–2010. Based on a detailed market study and public input session, the Belleville Road District Plan established several new future land use categories for the study area. Notably, the Plan established a vision for a mixed use, urban character Town Center district to develop, centered on the intersection of Tyler and Belleville Roads. This district would be supplemented by additional mixed use districts extending north along Belleville Road, and west to Beck Road along the Tyler Road and Ecorse Road corridors.

Detailed design standards for these areas were subsequently developed and adopted as amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinance, codified as the Belleville Road Overlay District (BROD) and the Mixed Use (M-U) zoning district.

Three Decades of Planning

As stated previously, the intent of this Township-wide Master Plan is to provide a new, coordinating document that incorporates the hard work and relevant conclusions contained in several of the past sub-area plans. It is intended that the Ecorse and Haggerty Road Corridor Plan, the South Side Master Plan, and the Belleville Road District Plan will continue to remain in force as adjuncts to this Township-wide Master Plan.

In the coming years, it is intended that these three planning documents will be revised and incorporated into a similar graphic and organizational format as this Plan; they will become the future books that will ultimately constitute a coherent series. These three planning documents may also change in geographic scope to ensure that new development challenges and opportunities are studied, addressed in the detail they deserve. For example, this planning process elicited a desire from stakeholders and officials to develop specific plans for the Van Buren Township Town Center parcels, acquired by the Township from Ford Land Development in 2019. Desire to re-envision the Lakewood Shopping Center area at Interstate 94 and Rawsonville Road was also expressed, as the commercial land uses in this gateway area are becoming obsolete due to their physical design and recent changes to the retail economy. Finally, desire to address the Sumpter Road corridor immediately south of the City of Belleville in greater detail as an updated component of the South Side Master Plan was expressed.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING TYPES



“Missing Middle housing” is a range of medium-density housing types that fill a void in many Midwestern communities. According to leading national experts in the design and implementation of neighborhoods containing such housing choices, there are at least seven characteristics associated with the missing middle that are crucial for successful development (economically, socially, and contextually):

- Walkable context;
- Small footprint buildings;
- Lower perceived density;
- Well-designed units;
- Fewer off-street parking spaces;
- Simple construction;
- Creates community.

Van Buren Charter Township and its corridors and neighborhoods are appropriate for missing middle housing development. Following are examples of such housing types: (data and images source: Opticos Design at missingmiddlehousing.com).

DUPLEX: SIDE-BY-SIDE

Side-by-side duplexes require lot sizes that are typical in Van Buren Township (55–75 ft. wide by 100–150 ft. deep). Typical unit sizes range from 600 sq. ft. to upwards of 2,000 sq. ft., depending on the context and the market. These housing units can be served by on-street parking spaces. These duplexes can be designed to match the appearance of existing single-family houses (see lower photo) to create a consistent and predictable transition between housing types.



DUPLEX: STACKED

Stacked duplexes require the same lot sizes as side-by-side duplexes (55–75 ft. wide by 100–150 ft. deep). Typical unit sizes range from 600 sq. ft. to upwards of 2,000 sq. ft., depending on the context and the market. These housing units can be served by on-street parking spaces.

Similar to the side-by-side duplex, the stacked duplex can be designed to incorporate the architectural characteristics of a single-family house (see lower photo). By doing so, these buildings can be integrated into existing single-family neighborhoods without disrupting existing character; alternatively, they can be used at the edges of existing single-family neighborhoods to provide a transition to adjacent areas that will be developed with a mixture of uses and densities.



BUNGALOW COURT

Bungalow courts require larger lots than duplexes, with minimum requirements of 100 ft. by 100 ft. (ranging from between .25 and .5 acres per site) and are a more dense development type, usually containing between five and 10 units in one court. Typical unit sizes have a smaller range than duplexes, usually between 500 and 800 sq. ft. These housing units can be served by on-street parking spaces; between five and seven on-street spaces should be provided per development, dependent on the number of units.



FOURPLEX

Fourplexes require slightly wider lots, though they are developed within footprints very similar to duplexes, with minimum lot requirements of 60 ft. by 100 ft. Typical unit sizes range from 500 to 1,200 sq. ft. These housing units can be served by on-street parking spaces.



SMALL MULTIPLEX

Small multiplexes are medium-sized structures consisting of five to ten side-by-side or stacked dwelling units; entryways are typically provided through a single shared entry, or have individual entries along the front. Lot requirements are at minimum a width of 60 ft. by a depth of 100 ft., though larger lots are able to contain more units. Typically, there are between six and 10 units per multiplex, with each unit between 500 and 1,200 sq. ft. in size. Small multiplexes can be served by on-street parking spaces.



TOWNHOMES

Townhomes are a more urban-style housing format that is appropriate for inclusion in areas of the Township planned for mixed use, and as a transition between major corridors and neighborhood blocks. These are small- to medium-sized structures consisting of between two and eight attached single-family units oriented side-by-side. Townhomes can be served by on-street parking spaces.



LIVE/WORK

Live/work spaces are small- to medium-sized attached or detached structures consisting of one dwelling unit above or behind a flexible ground floor space for residential, service, or retail uses. The separate portions of the structure used for dwelling and work purposes are owned by the same entity. Live/work units can be served by on-street parking spaces; where they are clustered, an additional shared parking arrangement to serve the patrons of those containing offices and retail should, if deemed absolutely necessary, be located at the rear of the structures.



TRANSECT ZONES

The rural to urban transect, often simply called “the transect,” is a tool used to analyze and categorize the form and character of cities and neighborhoods. The transect was originally thought up by Prussian naturalist Alexander Von Humboldt in the 1790s, who used it to analyze natural ecologies while exploring South America; it showed the characteristics of different zones such as wetlands, shorelines and uplands, and the transitions between zones.

In the later 20th Century, New Urbanist Andrés Duany adopted Humboldt’s transect for the study of the built environment. The rural to urban transect is divided into six zones, based on the intensity of the built environment and its physical and social character. One of the underlying principles of the transect is that certain forms and elements belong in certain environments: for example, an apartment building belongs in an urban setting and a farm belongs in a more rural setting. As transect zones become more urban, they also increase in complexity, density and intensity. The elements that change as an area becomes more urban include things like lighting, plantings, setbacks, thoroughfare design and building heights. Today, urbanists divide the transect into six zones:

The natural zone, which is denoted **T-1**, is an area with little or no human impact consisting of lands approximating or reverting to a wilderness condition. This includes lands unsuitable for development due to hydrology, topography, vegetation, or the conferring of special status as a protected area such as a national park or wildlife preserve.

The rural zone, which is denoted **T-2**, is comprised of sparsely settled lands in a cultivated or open state. Often considered “working lands,” they are made up of woodlands, agricultural lands and grasslands. The typical building located in this zone would be a farmhouse, agricultural building, cabin, or other isolated housing type.

T-3, the sub-urban zone, consists of low-density residential areas. Setbacks are relatively deep and plantings are natural in character. There may be some mixed use in areas adjacent to higher transect zones. Home occupations and outbuildings are common. Blocks are large and road patterns can be irregular to accommodate natural features.

T-4, the general urban zone, consists of mixed use—but primarily residential—urban fabric. A wide variety of housing types, attached and detached, is found in this zone. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets with curbs and sidewalks define the small- to medium-sized blocks, and street connectivity is high. Residential areas in Michigan’s older cities, and in suburbs developed before World War II, are typically located in T-4 zones.



T-5, the urban center zone, is comprised of higher density mixed use development that provides for retail stores, offices, rowhouses and apartments. Setbacks are minimal or nonexistent, and buildings are close to the sidewalks, which are wider. There is a tightly knit, connected street network that forms small blocks. Many of Michigan’s traditional downtown districts are located in T-5 zones.

T-6, the urban core zone, consists of the highest densities and heights, with the highest intensity and diversity of uses. Buildings are built directly to the sidewalk, with no setback. Sidewalks are wide, usually containing amenities such as benches, street trees, and public art. The street network is tightly knit and well connected. Only the largest cities contain T-6 zones; examples include downtown Detroit (Campus Martius and vicinity), downtown Grand Rapids (Monroe Center and vicinity), and downtown Lansing (Washington Square).

These transect zones are based on an analysis of functioning community habitats and historical development patterns. Each of the zones represents a basic urban pattern, and each of them can change over time. Areas can intensify to a more urban zone as new growth and development occurs. Areas can also de-intensify, either through major planned redevelopment such as that which occurred during the Urban Renewal projects of the mid-20th Century, or through a change in economic circumstances leading to the depopulation of neighborhoods.

Lastly, the transect provides an idealized schema of the “center to edge” concept, where density and intensity of uses transition from higher at the center (T-5, T-6) to lower (T-2, T-3) at the edge of a district or neighborhood. As new development is planned, if it is consistently calibrated to the transect, meaningful progressions through the built environment can be achieved, lending an overall character and sense of place to Van Buren Township.

References:

Steuterville, Robert. “Great Idea: The Rural-to-Urban Transect.” *Public Square, Congress for the New Urbanism*, 13 Apr. 2017, www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2017/04/13/great-idea-rural-urban-transect.

Pape, Glenn. “Understanding the Urban Transect.” *Michigan State University Extension*, 20 Apr. 2015, www.canr.msu.edu/news/understanding_the_urban_transect.

“The Transect.” *Center for Applied Transect Studies*, transect.org/transect.html.

This page left intentionally blank.

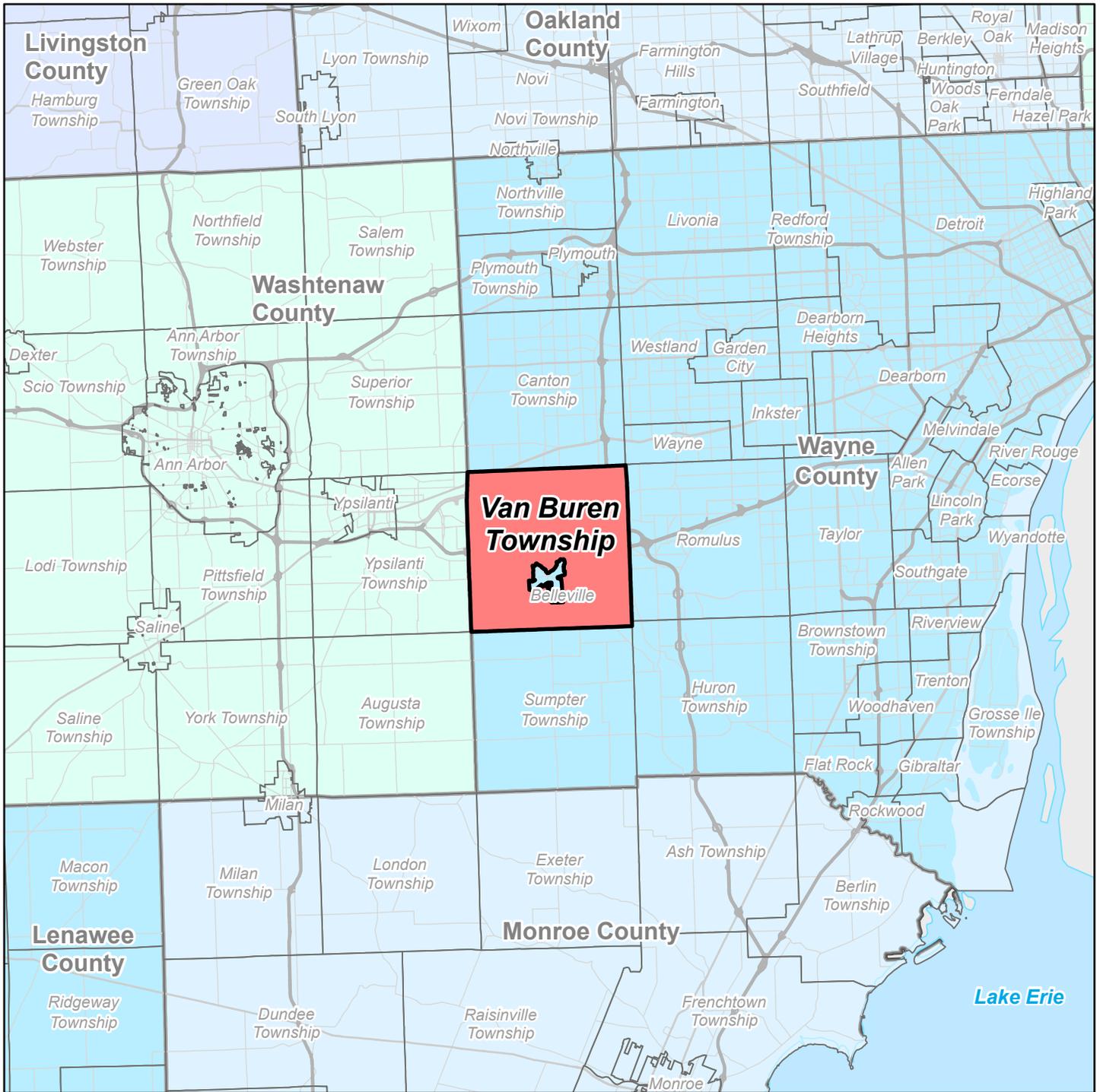
02.



REGIONAL CONTEXT

In planning for the future of any community, it is essential to understand both the community of people who live there and the physical resources that the community has to offer.

Identifying the needs of Van Buren Township residents, property owners, and businesses will help define an appropriate Action Plan. Existing resources will help shape where and how the Plan is implemented. The purpose of the following section of the Master Plan is to provide an overview of the human and physical resources within Van Buren Charter Township with the goal of understanding the unique features and opportunities the community has to offer. An overview of the Township's historical development provides the reader a clearer understanding of present-day development patterns in context.

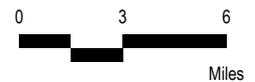


Map 1:

Regional Context

Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan

March 2, 2020



SOURCES
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
 Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020.
 McKenna 2020.



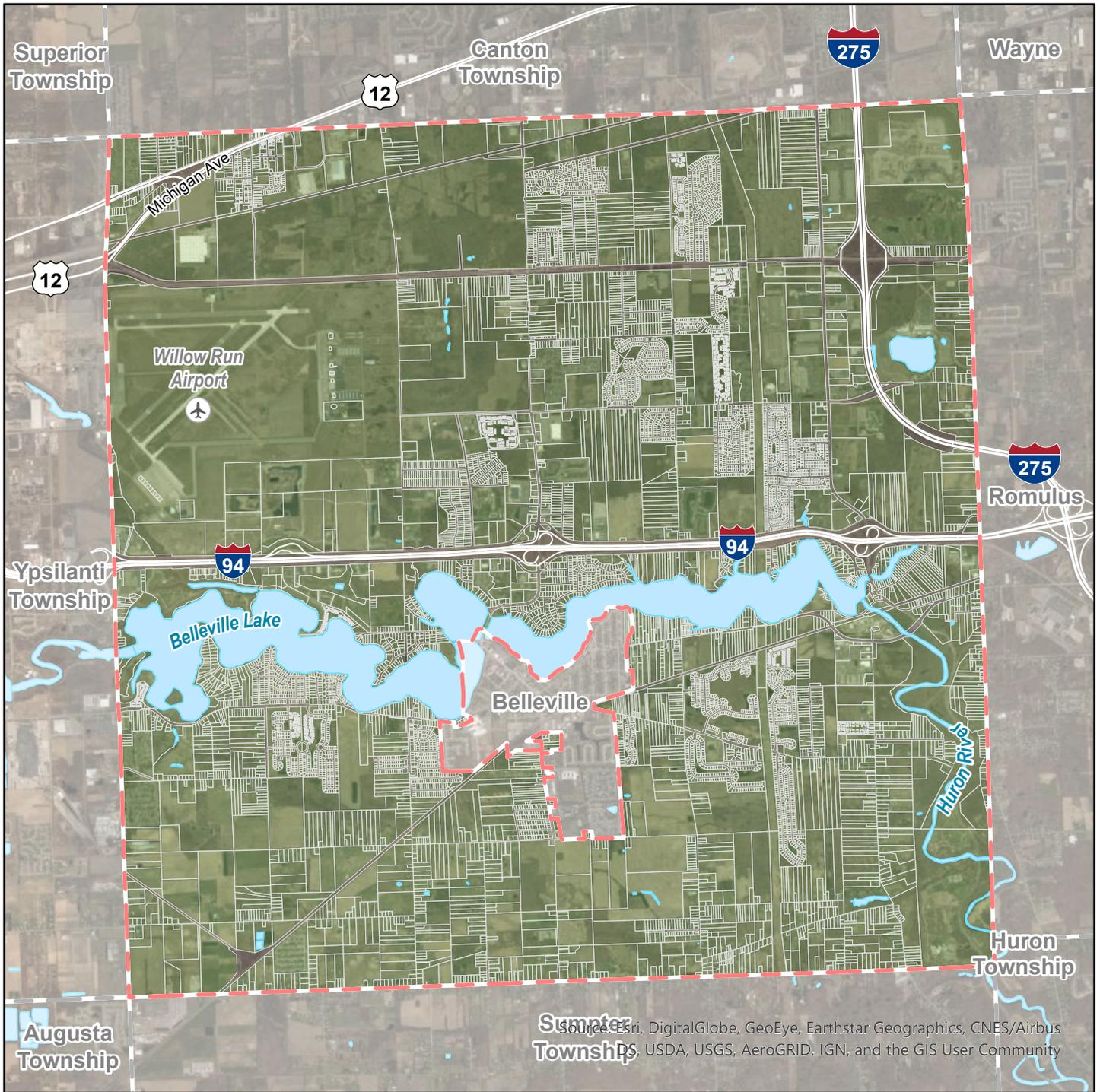
REGIONAL SETTING



Belleville and Tyler Road intersection, view to the northwest.

Van Buren Charter Township is located in southwestern Wayne County, completely surrounding the City of Belleville. The total area of the Township is approximately 34.8 square miles including Belle Lake; with Belle Lake subtracted, total usable land area is approximately 32.8 square miles. Van Buren Township is bordered by Ypsilanti Charter Township to the west, Sumpter Township to the south, the City of Romulus to the east and Canton Charter Township to the north.

Wayne County is the most populous county in the State of Michigan. It is located in the area of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region. SEMCOG is the regional planning agency that conducts planning studies and maintains a comprehensive database of information about the following seven counties: St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, Wayne, and Monroe.



Map 2:

Regional Setting

Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan

March 2, 2020



SOURCES
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
 Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020.
 McKenna 2020.





Ypsilanti Charter Township



Sumpter Township

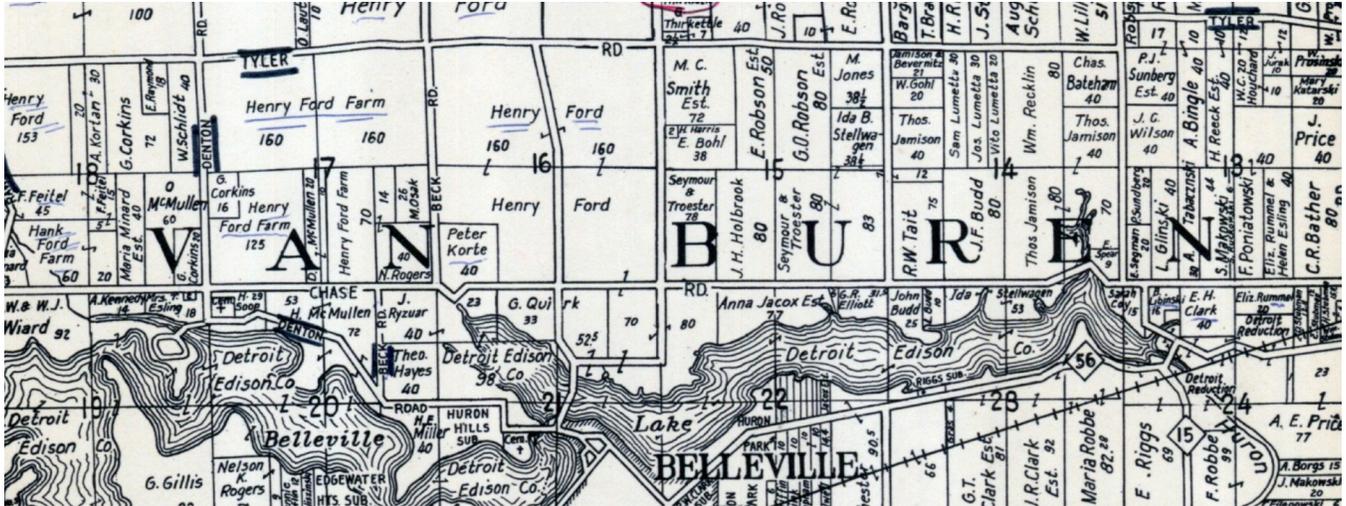


Romulus



Canton Charter Township

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP



1936 Plat Map of Van Buren Township.

Van Buren Township existed as a quiet, rural community from the early years of the 19th Century until the 1920s. Through the remainder of the 20th Century, however, the Township's development was intertwined with consequential events in major industry and indeed world history, innovations in transportation infrastructure, and explosive economic growth that brought many people a new, higher standard of living—allowing them to seek new homes in a suburban context. To have a clear vision of how Van Buren Township will grow and change in the coming years—as well as an appreciation of how certain characteristics might be best preserved—it is important to have a basic understanding of why the Township exists in its present form today.

The major form-shaping elements that directed the Township's land use patterns from the 1950s onward are Bellevalle Lake and Lower Huron Metropark, Interstates 94 and 275, and Willow Run Airport. These massive accomplishments of 20th Century technology and design, all constructed within a 50-year span of time, give Van Buren Township its unique character. These features were overlaid on the pre-20th Century settlement pattern of the area, which was an agricultural community containing three settlements: Rawsonville, Denton, and Bellevalle.

Early History and Settlement Patterns

Formal settlement of the 36-square mile area we know today as Van Buren Charter Township dates to the year 1800, when Henry Snow is recorded as locating in the area where Rawsonville Road crosses the Huron River. This area became known informally as Snow's Landing.

What is today the State of Michigan was then still part of the Northwest Territory, and Wayne County occupied the entire eastern half of the Lower Peninsula. Situated approximately 25 miles from the existing settlements along the Detroit River, early settlers in the area were true pioneers. While the Detroit River was at least one day's hard journey away, settlers were connected to the east by two nearby transportation routes

which have served Van Buren Township to the present day: the Huron River, and the Great Sauk Trail—which evolved into the modern highway we call Michigan Avenue (US-12).

It was not until 1815 that brothers Alexander and Samuel Holmes, and Benjamin Hough, were to begin surveying lower Michigan for division into townships under the auspices of the Public Land Survey System. Surveyor Alexander Holmes and his assistants first reached the area on October 18, 1815, crossing the Great Sauk Trail while charting the 2nd Township Line (the point where Michigan Avenue crosses the Van Buren Township/Canton Township border).

By 1825, Amblin Rawson had joined a growing number of homesteaders in the vicinity of Snow's Landing. Two years later, the area was formally organized as Huron Township, occupying the 144 square miles presently divided into Van Buren Charter Township, Huron Charter Township, Sumpter Township and the City of Romulus. Van Buren Township was split from Huron Township on April 6, 1835, taking its name from then-Vice President Martin Van Buren. The new township contained nearly 500 residents by this time.



Van Buren's first Township Hall in the City of Belleville.

In 1836, a year prior to Michigan being granted statehood, Amblin's descendant Amasah Rawson filed a plat for a community named Michigan City in the Snow's Landing area. When a post office located there in 1838, the village was renamed Rawsonville. As Van Buren Township continued to attract settlers, two other villages were formed: Belleville was platted in 1847 near the geographic center of the Township, and remained legally a part of Van Buren Township until 1905 when it incorporated as a Village (Belleville re-incorporated as a City in 1946).

Denton was established in the far northwest corner of the Township by 1838, and grew as a stop on the Michigan Central Railroad connecting the Township to Detroit (and by the 1850s, to Chicago as well). The Wabash Railroad was completed through the middle of the Township in 1881, connecting Belleville to Detroit, Fort Wayne, and points west. The arrival of the railroad allowed Belleville to grow into the role of the original commercial and cultural center of Van Buren Township; the first Township Hall was established on Main Street in 1875, and today is home to the Belleville Area Museum. Belleville remains the Township's historic downtown center, and their shared geographic, historic and social ties have resulted in the sentiment that the communities are "married to one another." A close relationship between the two communities will be crucial for the success of both over the coming decades.

Natural Amenities: Belleville Lake and Lower Huron Metropark

Connected to the state and region by major transportation corridors, Van Buren Township continued to be an agricultural center serving southeastern Michigan through the late-19th and early 20th Centuries. As demand for electricity grew in the early years of the 20th Century, the Huron River was identified as a source of hydroelectric power. The Detroit Edison Company began purchasing lowlands along the river in the Belleville area beginning in 1910, and construction of the French Landing Dam and Powerhouse was completed in 1925.



Rawsonville Village was Van Buren Township's first settlement.

and the Township. Lakefront cottages and homes were developed on the south shore of the lake from the 1930s onward, giving the area a resort-like character, and attracting residents with higher incomes. Detroit Edison ceased operating the French Landing dam in the 1960s. The Township was able to purchase Belleville Lake, French Landing Dam, and remaining undeveloped land on the north side of the lake in 1973 from Detroit Edison; the latter area is now Van Buren Township Park. Since 1988, The French Landing Dam has again been used by the Township to generate electricity, which is sold back to the regional power grid.

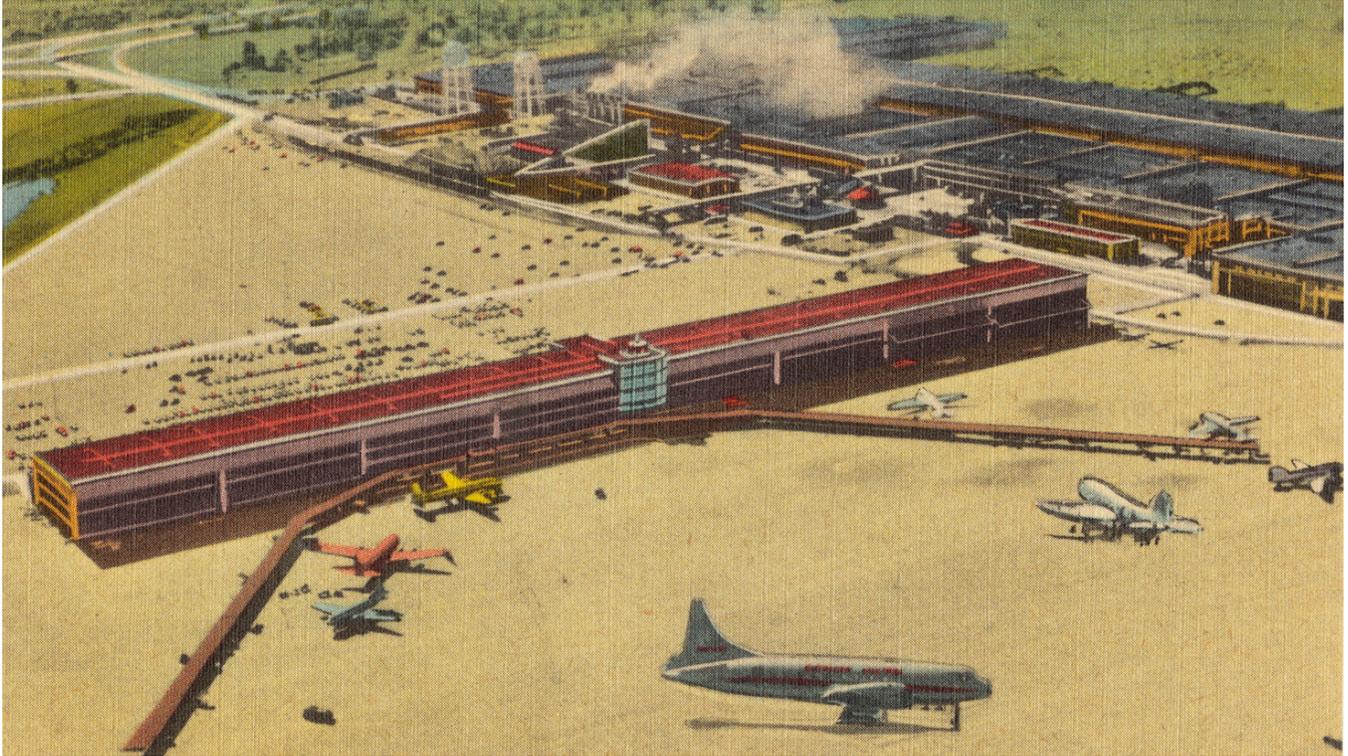
Another major recreational amenity in the southeastern corner of the Township is Lower Huron Metropark, which surrounds the north-south portion of the Huron River in a nearly mile-wide corridor. The Huron-Clinton Metropark system was the outgrowth of a vision for a regional system of parks and parkways conceived in the 1930s, and the first parks began to develop immediately following World War II. In Van Buren Township, the Metropark authority first purchased the 400-acre Kiskadden farm, located along the Huron roughly between Savage and Riggs Roads, and opened it to the public in 1946 before making improvements. Between 1947 and 1953, over 1,100 acres of neighboring property were acquired to the north and south, and the first parking areas and restroom facilities were completed, located in the far southeast corner of the Township. Construction of South Metro Parkway was complete by the late 1950s, providing a scenic route along the Township's eastern border.

Importantly, the creation of Lower Huron Metropark gave Van Buren Township a "greenbelt" of sorts, buffering the southeastern part of the community from future commercial and industrial development that would be associated with the growth of Detroit Metropolitan Airport, two miles further east.

The inundation of the Huron River created Belleville Lake, which removed about two square miles of land from active use. The lake, with its east-west orientation, created a large seam through the middle of the Township, effectively separating its northern and southern portions with a large body of water. Though the three preexisting road crossings of the Huron River (at Rawsonville, Belleville, and Haggerty Roads) were retained, a greater cultural separation between north and south began to take hold. As the area's population would boom in the ensuing years, the lack of north-south road connections in Van Buren Township would become ever more apparent.

Belleville Lake also permanently flooded the Township's original settlement of Rawsonville. Whereas Denton and Belleville had been connected to the railroads, Rawsonville missed out on such an opportunity, and had begun to decline after 1880. The remaining portions of the village were flooded, and a Michigan Historical Marker on the northeast corner of Rawsonville Road and South Grove Street commemorates the site.

Belleville Lake's presence in the Township came with many positive aspects as well. The lake immediately began drawing visitors and part-time residents from the region to Belleville



Willow Run Airport and Bomber Plant, 1942 postcard

Willow Run Airport

The United States was faced with the prospect of global war in the early 1940s, and the consequential events that followed permanently impacted Van Buren Township’s physical layout. Automaker Henry Ford had amassed large parcels of agricultural land in the western portion of the Township beginning in 1931, as part of a social experiment wherein youth from Detroit were given exposure to nature, and taught agricultural skills and business practices. When put under contract in 1941 to produce the B-24 Liberator Bomber aircraft for the United States Army, Ford consolidated remaining parcels of land in the area with additional holdings to the west, in Ypsilanti Township. This area became the site of the famed Willow Run Complex, a factory and airport that produced over 8,000 of the B-24 between 1942 and 1945, cementing Michigan as the “Arsenal of Democracy,” and undoubtedly ensuring victory in World War II.

The Willow Run Bomber Plant was entirely located on the western portion of Ford’s property (designed by Albert Kahn in an “L” configuration, some said, to avoid higher property taxes in adjoining Wayne County), and the airport was located on the eastern portion, almost entirely within Van Buren Township. Willow Run Airport consumed nearly four additional square miles of Township land, and created another major physical constraint on north-south movement for local residents. Later in the 1940s, the airport and some remaining Ford-owned land to the east were sold to the University of Michigan; Wayne County purchased the airport in 1977, though the University continues to own lands on the east side of Beck Road, between Tyler and Ecorse Roads. Other lands on the north side of Tyler Road between Beck Road and Belleville Road continued to be owned by Ford Land Holdings until 2019, when these were purchased by the Township.

The Bomber Plant, on the Washtenaw County portion of the complex, was used by General Motors until 2010. It has since been redeveloped as the American Center for Mobility (ACM), one of the first autonomous vehicle proving grounds in the United States. Willow Run Airport is today southeast Michigan’s major cargo airport; Detroit Metropolitan Airport, located eight miles to the east of Willow Run in the City of Romulus, is the region’s major commercial passenger airport.



The Willow Run Expressway was built to serve the Willow Run Complex. A portion of the road traversed Van Buren Township, and would eventually be incorporated into the route of Interstate 94.



The Ecorse Road portion of the Willow Run Expressway system in Van Buren Township retains the original design characteristics dating to the highway's opening in 1942.

Willow Run Expressway

The construction of the Willow Run Complex also gave Van Buren Township early exposure to another innovation which would revolutionize 20th Century life, and shape our settlement patterns to the present day: limited access highways. A new system of roads was needed to facilitate the movement of thousands of plant employees to and from Detroit; a second need was the transportation of materiel between Ford's Rouge Plant in Dearborn and the Willow Run Facility. Construction of the Willow Run Expressway commenced in October 1941, and in a mere 11 months, nearly 20 miles of new highway was opened to traffic. Though several urban freeways and expressways already existed in the United States, and the nation's first long-distance freeway (the Pennsylvania Turnpike) had opened in 1940, the Willow Run Expressway can be considered the nation's first regional limited-access highway.

Van Buren Township's portion of the Willow Run Expressway was built along the former Chase Road in a straight line from the western to the eastern border, and along Ecorse Road to a point east of Belleville Road, opening to traffic in September 1942. While the portion of the expressway that directly accessed the plant and airport was built as a freeway, with its first-of-a-kind "tri-level" interchanges, the portions traversing the Township were 4-lane divided highways with no shoulders and at-grade crossroads. Though not a modern freeway by 21st Century standards, this was nevertheless a revolutionary addition to a community that previously had only a few paved roads. The Ecorse Road portion of the original Willow Run Expressway in Van Buren Township retains this original, modest design, and is a living reminder of the nation's transportation history (see photo at left).

The Chase Road portion of the Willow Run Expressway was haphazardly converted to a freeway in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which included construction of parallel service roads to provide property access, and new interchanges at Rawsonville, Belleville, and Haggerty Roads. The main roadways, however, remained in their original four-lane configuration on a narrow 100-foot right-of-way. The interchanges were designed with short ramps that presented dangerous weaving movements with traffic on the service roads. This segment of freeway was incorporated into the



These aerial photographs depict the central portion of Van Buren Township in 1961 (left) and 2017 (right). They are aligned to show the change in character along the Interstate 94 corridor over the past 60 years, from predominantly rural to suburban. Interstate 94 is shown in the center of the composite image; note that the footprint of the freeway has greatly expanded to meet modern safety and design standards.

route of Interstate 94, which was being constructed to connect Detroit to Chicago. Automotive service businesses, including gas stations, motels, and restaurants, began to cluster at interchanges. The most notable of these was the Howard Johnson's restaurant and motel complex at the southwest corner of the Belleville Road interchange, whose iconic restaurant building is still used by a Chinese restaurant.

Due to increasing traffic, and several fatal accidents along the corridor, Interstate 94 was completely reconstructed into its current form during 1972–1974. This required the taking of a 250–300 foot wide strip of land along the north side of the existing road, creating a further barrier between the northern and southern portions of the Township. The Haggerty, Belleville, and Rawsonville Road interchanges were enlarged and designed to modern standards, and new service roads were constructed to maintain access to the mix of residential and commercial properties that had been built along the corridor over the previous 20 years. Where the original Willow Run Expressway was a modest facility, the rebuilt Interstate 94 now consumed a right-of-way of between 400 and 450 feet to accommodate its modern design features. To demonstrate the size of the gulf created by the highway's footprint, a user of the pedestrian overcrossing at Quirk Road must traverse a distance of 1,000 feet (including ramps) to access the opposite side of the road.

The community received another link in the Interstate system in 1977, when Interstate 275 was completed along the northeastern edge of the Township. The route of Interstate 275 traversed areas of the Township that were then agricultural, and did not disrupt daily life to the same extent as its predecessor.

Recent Development Patterns

RESIDENTIAL

Now fully connected via the region's and nation's growing freeway system, the Township became an ever more attractive place to pursue a suburban lifestyle. Single-family residential subdivisions were constructed in areas with large parcels of easily developable land, and either convenient freeway or lake access. These predominated in the area bounded by Interstate 94, Belleville Road, Van Born Road, and Haggerty Road, and were added mainly between 1970 and 2005. Additional planned residential developments were added to the Huron River Drive corridor, south of Belleville Lake, during the 2000s and 2010s. The abrupt change to the character of this area caused by these developments prompted the development in 2006–2007 of the South Side Master Plan, discussed elsewhere herein.

The convenience of the newly-rebuilt Interstate 94 corridor induced demand for several large multiple-family garden apartment developments to be constructed with direct access to the North and South Service Drives in the 1970s and 1980s. These developments included the Trilogy, Lighthouse Pointe, and Southport developments on the north side of the freeway, and the Belleville Pointe and Harbour Club developments on the south side. The preponderance of these developments has driven Van Buren Township's relatively high share of renting families in its population.



Van Buren Charter Township contains many single-family residential developments, such as Country Walk, located near Savage and Martinsville Roads.



Commercial uses cluster along the Belleville Road Corridor.

Commercial

Clusters of auto-oriented commercial uses began developing in the Township during the 1970s. The first major node for this style of development grew around the interchange of Interstate 94 and Rawsonville Road, on the western border with Ypsilanti Township. The Lakewood Shopping Center was opened in the mid-1970s, anchored by a Kmart store, which closed in 2019. This area is a gateway to the Township from the west, and there is great potential to redevelop the Lakewood area as a mixed-use district with views of adjacent Belleville Lake, and incorporating a link in the Iron Belle Trail. Similar strategies for retrofitting similarly positioned large-format shopping centers in the Township should be studied in the near future, in preparation for the event that a major anchor tenant closes, due to the retail industry shifting away from large floorplate (“big box”) models for stores.

Retail commercial uses later developed along the Belleville Road corridor, the first major development being the Belleville Square shopping plaza in 1985, adjacent to Interstate 94. The Meijer superstore was built at the southeast corner of Tyler Road and Belleville Road in 1991. Smaller auto-oriented commercial uses filled in outparcels along the corridor during the 1990s, and were complemented by the development of the Walmart Supercenter by 2002, and the Menard’s superstore which opened in 2018. This business district benefits from the Gateway Commercial land use classification and associated design standards along the Belleville Road corridor, which requires higher quality materials and landscaping compared to similar districts elsewhere.

Other smaller, auto-oriented retail developments, serving adjacent residents were added in conjunction with residential developments. Examples include the smaller shopping plazas on the southeast corner of Rawsonville Road and West Huron River Drive; the southwest corner of South Haggerty Road and East Huron River Drive; and on the southwest corner of Ecorse Road and Belleville Road.

Industrial

Industrial development occurred in earnest along the Haggerty Road and Michigan Central Railroad corridors during the period between 1980 and 2008, capitalizing on the logistical advantages provided by easy access to Willow Run Airport (the region's cargo freight airport), the railroad, and the Interstate system. Several large logistics centers were constructed, including the Crossroads South Distribution Center, on the southwest corner of Haggerty and Ecorse Roads in 1999, and the Costco Distribution Center on Belleville Road in 2016. Industrial facilities with a corporate office component clustered along Haggerty Road between Ecorse Road and Tyler Road.

The wealth of undeveloped land with suitable conditions, combined with ease of access, made Van Buren Township attractive for waste disposal facilities. Waste Management opened the Woodland Meadows landfill in the extreme northeast corner of the Township in the early 1990s. It presently occupies 269 acres, and will expand to fill an additional 189 acres on its southern edge, which is the site of the former Woodland Meadows Golf Course. The landfill has brought many financial benefits to the Township and its residents, and the expanded facility is projected to have open capacity until the 2050s.

In addition, the US Ecology Wayne Disposal facility is located on approximately 400 acres situated north of Interstate 94 and south of Willow Run Airport. This facility is Michigan's only commercial hazardous waste landfill, and employs a variety of advanced technologies to treat volatile materials that cannot be accepted elsewhere in the Midwest.

The proximity of Willow Run and Detroit Metropolitan Airports, and the transportation linkages that exist between them, have given rise to the Detroit Aerotropolis Development Corporation, which promotes the area as uniquely suited for large-scale investments. For example, automaker Subaru began construction of a 60,000 square foot Technical Center complex in 2019, located on the south side of Michigan Avenue, west of Denton. It is anticipated that the Van Buren Township will continue to attract automotive-related research, development, and manufacturing facilities in the coming years.

The Township's transportation linkages are also attractive to the logistics industry. The Crossroads South Distribution Center, southwest of the corner of Haggerty and Ecorse Roads, was built in the 1990s and contains over 700,000 square feet. Construction will begin on the companion Crossroads North Distribution Center, north of Ecorse Road, in 2020. This new facility will incorporate 1.5 million square feet. Once complete, the amount of land devoted to transportation and logistics-oriented businesses in the Township will be sufficient to sustain this portion of its diverse economy for the foreseeable future. These uses produce a strain on the Township's roadway infrastructure which is not likely to be alleviated as the future availability of funds for maintenance, let alone expansion, of the roadway system will be limited.

There is, however, sufficient land and justification to continue the established pattern of industrial development—either for manufacturing facilities or newer-style research and development facilities—along the Michigan Central Railroad corridor, the Ecorse Road corridor to east of Beck Road, and along the Haggerty Road corridor from Tyler Road north to Van Born Road.

There are additionally two smaller clusters of industrial uses on the south side of the Township, on the east side of Rawsonville Road at Martz Road, and in the vicinity of East Huron River Drive and Haggerty Road. These areas developed earlier in the 20th Century due to their proximity to the Norfolk Southern rail line extending to the southwest. These areas should remain industrial in their character, with only limited expansion in the coming years if necessary.

03.



EXISTING LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANS

The pattern of development in Van Buren Charter Township has been influenced by the form-shaping elements that have developed during the previous two centuries. These have gifted the Township with a variety of contexts, which occur roughly in three layers from north to south:

North of Ecorse Road, the Township is predominantly industrial in nature, with residential areas clustered in the historic Denton village area, and between Belleville and Morton Taylor Roads.

The middle of the Township is occupied by Willow Run Airport to the west, and a mixture of retail commercial, single- and multiple-family residential developments centered on Belleville and Tyler Roads. There are still many undeveloped properties in this area.

South of Interstate 94, development patterns transition to predominantly residential surrounding Belleville Lake and the City of Belleville. South of Hull Road, the Township is predominantly rural in character, with large-lot single family homes and active agriculture.

A SNAPSHOT OF VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP



Lower Huron Metropark.



Harris Park.



Beck Fields.



Maranatha Baptist Church in Denton Village.



Harold Smith Farm.



Streetscaping on the Belleville Road corridor.

EXISTING LAND USE

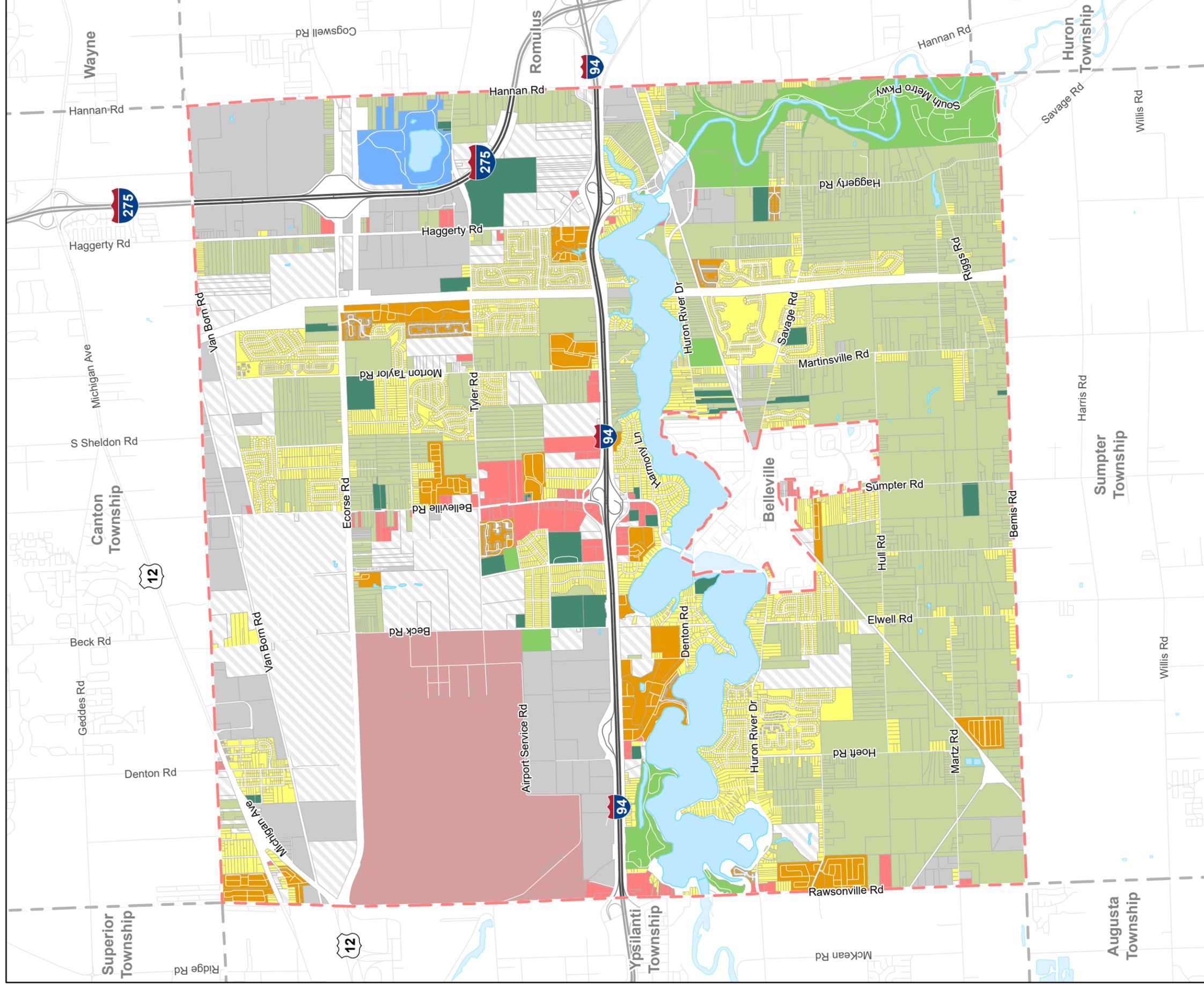
The following Table 2 and the Existing Land Use Map illustrate the existing land uses or land cover in the Township.

Table 2: Land Use/Land Cover

| 2019 Land Use | 2019 (acres) | Percent of Total Area |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|
| Agriculture/Rural Settlement* | 6793 | 32% |
| Vacant and/or Undeveloped | 2934 | 14% |
| Low-Medium Density Single-Family Residential | 2885 | 14% |
| Industrial | 2288 | 11% |
| Airport | 1880 | 9% |
| Public Right-of-Way, Transportation | 1684 | 8% |
| Park, recreation, and open space | 909 | 4% |
| Multiple-Family Residential | 869 | 4% |
| Civic and Institutional | 437 | 2% |
| Commercial | 432 | 2% |
| Office/Research | 239 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 21349 | 100% |

Source: Field and Aerial Photo surveys by McKenna Associates, 2019.

* Rural Settlement refers to areas of single-family homes generally on one-acre or larger lots.



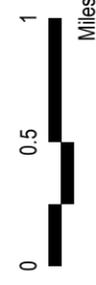
Map 3:
Existing Land Use

Charter Township of
 Van Buren, Michigan

March 2, 2020

LEGEND

- Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers
- Existing Land Use**
- Vacant/Undeveloped
- Agriculture/Rural Settlement
- Low/Medium Density Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Commercial
- Office/Research
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Parks/Open Space
- Airport



SOURCES
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
 Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020, McKenna 2020



MCKENNA

This page left intentionally blank.

04.



COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Van Buren Charter Township is a community that faces the difficult challenge of balancing sustainable development with the preservation of its natural resources and - in certain portions of the Township - its rural character. A key component of this Master Plan is articulating a vision for the Township's future, and the formulation of goals that reflect the community's desires regarding how to respond to future development.

The goals of the community attempt to balance various interests and ensure that each development decision is consistent with the overall vision for the Township. They help articulate preferred development patterns and outline development strategies for the Township.

The community goals have been developed with input from residents, property and business owners, the Planning Commission, Master Plan Steering Committee, Township Board of Trustees, and other Township officials. Public Participation efforts are described in greater detail in the following sections.

The goal statements in the existing sub-area plans, including the South Side Master Plan and Belleville Road District Plan, have been generalized and incorporated into this Township-wide Plan where appropriate. This Plan reaffirms and compiles these goals for the benefit of all Township stakeholders.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



Community members complete Visual Preference Surveys.

Public participation for the Van Buren Township Master Plan included a two-day workshop on October 2 and 3, 2019. The first day of the workshop was open and advertised to the general public, whereas the second day was held in conjunction with an annual dinner and presentation to inform and engage elected and appointed officials of the Master Plan process, Township history, demographics, and key findings generated from the electronic and in-person survey.

Project consultants and Township staff kicked off the Open House by interacting with participants in a variety of engaging exercises. Project boards, maps, and other materials were used to display survey exercises. With these materials, participants were asked to write their answers, comments, or suggestions using a sticky note or a dot depending on the exercise.

Results gathered from the open house workshops supplemented the information received from the electronic and in-person survey process. The key goal of the Master Plan public engagement process was to generate discussion on the community's vision for the future of Van Buren Township.

Based on the feedback received during these events, as well as through discussions with elected officials, common themes and direction for the goals of the Master Plan were identified.

Results from robust public participation and survey analysis were formulated into key topics:

- Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Commercial / Office / Industrial
- Rural Character
- Open Space / Natural Resources / Environmental
- Mobility
- Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

MASTER PLAN SURVEY

As part of the multi-part public engagement process for the Master Plan Update, an initial survey was conducted from July 5, 2018 to August 31, 2018 that generated 769 responses. Upon examining these results, we found that there was a significant underrepresentation of responses from renters in the survey data. Initial survey data revealed that just 7.29% of respondents were renters, despite 2017 ACS Estimates which revealed that approximately 35.32% of Van Buren Township's housing units are occupied by renters.

Given this initial analysis, additional efforts were made to encourage participation from renters during the Master Plan public participation process. Between July 22, 2019 and August 12, 2019, a second survey, featuring the same questions, was conducted targeting areas where renters are likely to live. This round of the survey yielded nearly 300 additional responses.

Both the 2018 survey and 2019 survey included the following sub-topics of questions:

- Residency and Housing
- Demographics
- Existing Conditions
- Retail / Downtown
- Development Priorities / Future
- Business Growth
- Employment
- Parks and Recreation

Results of the public engagement process guided the creation of the Master Plan. Goals and objectives have been formulated to implement the above sub-topic areas in this Plan.

A compilation of survey and public participation results can be found in the appendices of this Plan.



Township stakeholders provided robust feedback throughout the engagement process.

VISION STATEMENT

Van Buren Charter Township will continue to be a premier community in Southeastern Michigan, for those who live, work, play, learn, and visit here.

- We will respect the unique history that has graced our Township with a wealth of natural and human-made features, and preserve them for generations to come.*
- We will cultivate a strong and diverse local economy, with the resiliency to adapt to changing conditions.*
- We will provide an exceptional quality of life for community members by adhering to standards of excellence for a vibrant and pleasing natural and built environment.*

By holding to this Vision, we will strengthen the civic bonds of community in our Township, inspiring the generations to come to keep close watch over our special place.

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP GOALS

The following statements represent the primary Goals of Van Buren Charter Township:

- To provide an adequate supply of housing that meets the needs of new and existing Township residents, is responsive to changing generational preferences, allows residents to age in place, adds value to the community, and achieves a high standard of excellence in aesthetics and design.
- To cultivate vibrant neighborhoods and districts that will develop with a mix of residential, retail, entertainment, cultural, professional, and civic uses, that inspire both residents and visitors, cement community bonds, and achieve a high standard of excellence in their design.
- To ensure a strong and diverse local economy by supporting the growth and development of new and existing commercial, office-based, and industrial employers, in those areas of the Township where such uses have historically occurred.
- To ensure the preservation of the Township's rural character, particularly in the southern portion of the Township, and the preservation of the semi-rural character in the eastern portion of the Township.
- To provide for the protection and maintenance of the Township's environmental resources for the purposes of natural beauty, Township character, and ecological preservation.
- To improve and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system that provides accessible motorized and non-motorized transportation options within the Township.
- To provide all segments of the Township with access to well-maintained community and recreational facilities.



Township Fire Station No. 1, at the intersection of Sumpter and Hull Roads.

GOAL:

Residential

To provide an adequate supply of housing that meets the needs of new and existing Township residents of varying income levels, is responsive to changing generational preferences, allows residents to age in place, adds value to the community, and achieves a high standard of excellence in aesthetics and design.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Encourage the ongoing maintenance and improvement of existing residential neighborhoods and developments, by observing where reinvestments should occur on a continuing basis, and by keeping apprised of current programs and techniques to quickly achieve identified reinvestments.
2. Encourage the development of new housing in “missing middle” formats and/or layouts that are currently absent or in short supply, by creating zoning districts and design standards as necessary in the appropriate areas of the Township.
3. Density of housing, regardless of housing format, should be compatible with the context of the immediate area and the intent of its future land use category. Generally, densities will be higher and lots will be smaller in the northern portion of the Township; densities will be lower and lots will be larger in the southern and extreme eastern portions of the Township, in the interest of preserving that area’s rural character.
4. Development of new multiple-family housing should occur only within mixed-use districts. Existing multiple family developments should be maintained through firm controls and design standards to ensure their continued viability. Redevelopment of existing multiple family developments can occur if design standards are in place that allow “missing middle” housing types to be developed, where appropriate.
5. Street patterns in new and existing residential developments should be designed or retrofitted as necessary to achieve a high level of internal and external connectivity.
6. Neighborhood residents should be able to safely and conveniently access basic goods and services, civic institutions, and recreation facilities, on foot or by means of non-motorized forms of transportation.
7. The design of residential areas should preserve natural environmental features, and incorporate recreational amenities. Conservation areas and open lands should be used to define and connect isolated neighborhoods and districts.

GOAL:

Mixed-Use

To cultivate vibrant neighborhoods and districts that will develop with a mix of residential, retail, entertainment, cultural, and professional, and civic uses, that inspire both residents and visitors, cement community bonds, and achieve a high standard of excellence in their design.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Mixed-use neighborhoods and districts should be compact and pedestrian friendly, and should conform to traditional neighborhood design principles.
2. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy.
3. A broad range of housing types and price levels should be included in mixed-use districts, to bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.
4. Concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in mixed-use neighborhoods and districts. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.
5. The economic health and harmonious evolution of mixed-use neighborhoods, districts, and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change.
6. A range of parks, from tot-lots and village greens to ballfields and community gardens, should be distributed within mixed-use neighborhoods and districts.

GOAL:

Commercial/Office/Industrial

To ensure a strong and diverse local economy by supporting the growth and development of new and existing commercial, office-based, and industrial employers in those areas of the Township where concentrations of such uses have historically occurred. Of equal import is recognition of evolving development preferences, and a readiness to support the evolution of single-use clusters into formats that respond to those evolving preferences when necessary.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Through strict land use and zoning policies, avoid the further proliferation of strip commercial development, as this results in hazardous traffic conditions, an unattractive streetscape and long-term re-use issues associated with obsolete strip commercial buildings.
2. The Belleville Road corridor Gateway Commercial and Town Center areas will constitute the major commercial center for the Township.
3. In the interest of preserving the rural character of the southern and extreme eastern sides of the Township, future commercial uses will be limited to small clusters that are contextually appropriate in their design, contain a mix of uses, and are pedestrian-friendly.
4. Downtown Belleville plays a crucial role as the Township's historic commercial center. It provides a historic context that even the most well-intentioned new development cannot replicate. A close future relationship between the Township and City of Belleville is necessary to ensure that downtown Belleville can serve as the commercial center for residents of the Township's south side.
5. Office uses should be welcomed in the Township, as an important component of Mixed Use districts. However, new large concentrations of office uses, absent a research or light industrial component, should be avoided.
6. Encourage industry to remain and expand in areas of the Township designated for such on the Future Land Use Map; these areas are best suited for industrial development.
7. Provisions should be made for small-scale industry with minimal externalities and a public-facing component, otherwise known as artisanal or craft industry, to develop in the Township in Mixed Use areas. Examples include small breweries that serve the public, bakeries with a retail component, and small-scale apparel production.
8. Develop and/or strictly maintain existing design standards for commercial, office, and industrial areas, to ensure a standard of excellence in aesthetics and design. Elements of concern include road design, landscaping, parking, architecture, and other design elements.
9. Develop criteria for retrofitting existing single-use commercial, office, and industrial areas with new uses and building formats, so that they may continue to economically function in the event that demand shifts away from these areas.

GOAL:

Rural Character

To ensure the preservation of the Township's rural character, particularly in the southern portion of the Township, and the preservation of the semi-rural character of the eastern portion of the Township.



OBJECTIVES:

1. The established Urban Services Boundary for public water and sanitary sewer shall remain in place.
2. Encourage the preservation of large and significant open spaces through voluntary dedications, development approval extractions, and establishing special funding sources for acquisition, and seeking grants for acquisition.
3. Consider developing innovative programs, including Purchase of Development Rights and Transfer of Development Rights, to retain active agriculture and open spaces in the Township.
4. Create linear open spaces and open space linkages where natural or agricultural open spaces cannot be preserved in their entirety to preserve a portion of the feature and maximize its function and value.
5. Apply the relevant land use objectives previously stated with respect to Residential, Commercial, Office, and Industrial uses on the southern and extreme eastern sides of the Township.

GOAL:

Open Space / Natural Resources / Environmental

Provide for the protection and maintenance of the Township's environmental resources for the purpose of natural beauty, Township character, and ecological preservation.

OBJECTIVES:

1. In coordination with the phasing of the Iron Belle Trail System, maintain and enhance the scenic value of the Township's lakefront, specifically along the trail route.
2. Involve stakeholders, including environmental groups from the state, Township, and adjacent communities, in environmental protection implementation working sessions, focused primarily on the Iron Belle Trail System and Belleville Lake.
3. Apply for federal, state, and local grants to maintain and connect existing trails.
4. Require site plan applications to adhere to the Greenways and Trails Master Plan.
5. Implement a Trailways Ordinance that protects trail systems within the Townships, and requires specific setbacks from the trail for new developments.
6. Promote the protection, preservation and proper maintenance of woodlands (including trees and other forms of vegetation) for economic support of local property values, natural beauty, and geological, ecological and historical significance.
7. Consider developing a Township-wide pollinator habitat maintenance plan, to ensure continued ecological stability in the Township and region.



GOAL:

Mobility

Improve and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system to provide accessible motorized and non-motorized transportation within the Township.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain close partnerships with the Wayne County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation, the two agencies responsible for maintaining the Township's highways, roads and streets. Take initiative to collaborate on new and innovative funding opportunities wherever possible to ensure the Township's road network is adequately maintained.
2. Develop a strategy to enhance local road connectivity, to reduce traffic congestion and duplicate trips in key areas of the Township.
3. Create local trail connections to Phases 1 and 2 of the Iron Belle Trail system.
4. Regulate the location and design of bicycle facilities and bicycle parking through creation of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment.
5. Create connections between current trails and sidewalks based on a prioritization system.
6. Connect the Township greenway network with regional greenway networks.
7. Develop design and location guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian ways.

GOAL:

Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

Provide all segments of the Township with access to well-maintained community recreational facilities that equally serve residents of all ages and abilities.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Improve and maintain existing facilities on a regular and continuing basis. Design of new and existing facilities should be based on the multiple-use concept, providing both active and passive opportunities as appropriate.
2. Continue to provide the necessary recreation services to the expanding population of the Township. Maintain existing partnerships, and foster new partnerships, with community organizations to develop, improve, and offer a comprehensive range of recreation programs.
3. Maximize use of existing park sites by expanding facilities and amenities available to residents to further increase quality of life for residents, and further encourage others to visit and reside in the Township.
4. Preserve and protect natural and cultural resources and features, including wooded areas, wetlands, wildlife habitats, natural drainage ways, and historic structures and facilities.
5. Update the Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan on a regular basis per MDNR standards to continue to be eligible for grant funding. Develop stable sources of funding and practice sound fiscal management of the parks and recreation system.
6. Improve access and transportation to parks and recreation facilities, through utilizing natural features, and the motorized and non-motorized transportation networks.
7. Continue the processes for development of the Van Buren Township Community Center, development of parklands in the Town Center Mixed Use district, and enhancement of Van Buren Township Park and Beach.

An aerial photograph of a community in Van Buren Charter Township. The image shows a mix of residential and commercial buildings, large parking lots, and green spaces. In the background, there are fields and a line of trees with autumn foliage. The sky is clear and blue. The text 'FUTURE LAND USE PLAN' is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan defines the framework for the future land preservation and development of Van Buren Charter Township. It begins with a general description of the existing and desired patterns of development in the community, and follows with a description of the future land use categories as illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

The future land use categories herein are a simplified and consolidated version of categories developed in previous sub-area plans including the Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan, South Side Master Plan, and Belleville Road District Plan.

Consistency with these sub-area plans is intended in this updated framework; where applicable, it is advised that the reader refer to the sub-area plan referenced in the following category descriptions for area-specific details.



In general, this Plan includes a gradation of development densities across the rural-urban transect, which considers the agricultural, rural residential areas, and sensitive natural resource areas of the Township. The Master Land Use Plan for Van Buren Township identifies five general categories of development: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Mixed Use, and Other. Each specific future land use category corresponds to an existing zoning district.

The Residential categories comprise the bulk of overall land use in Van Buren Township. These span four transect zones, from T-2 (Rural Settlement) through T-4 (Village Residential). The majority of the Residential categories, however, exist in transect zone T-3, and are applicable to land intended for single-use residential subdivisions with specified densities and lot sizes. The categories are intended to transition between lower and higher densities to ensure compatibility where individual developments border one another.



The three Commercial categories are applied to those few areas in the Township where a predominantly single-use commercial district currently exists, and where it is unlikely that significant redevelopment into a mixed-use area will occur in the next 20 years. They are also applied in several areas that are currently undeveloped, but where previous sub-area plans and studies have determined the market may exist for development of small commercial nodes, with low impacts, serving residents immediately adjacent.

The Office Research category has been expanded along the east side of Haggerty Road between Tyler Road and Interstate 94. This area has potential to absorb future demand for office and research uses adjacent to the Wayne County Community College Ted Scott Campus, with direct freeway access. Surrounding land, presently with a semi-rural character, would be allowed to remain so. Such a development pattern would extend the informal eastern “green belt” formed by Lower Huron Metropark north to Ecorse Road.



The three Industrial categories remain unchanged in their descriptions and scope from previous planning efforts in the Township, and the Future Land Use Map has been updated to recognize the permanence of several existing facilities classified as Heavy Industrial.



Belleville Lake, viewed from Van Buren Park.

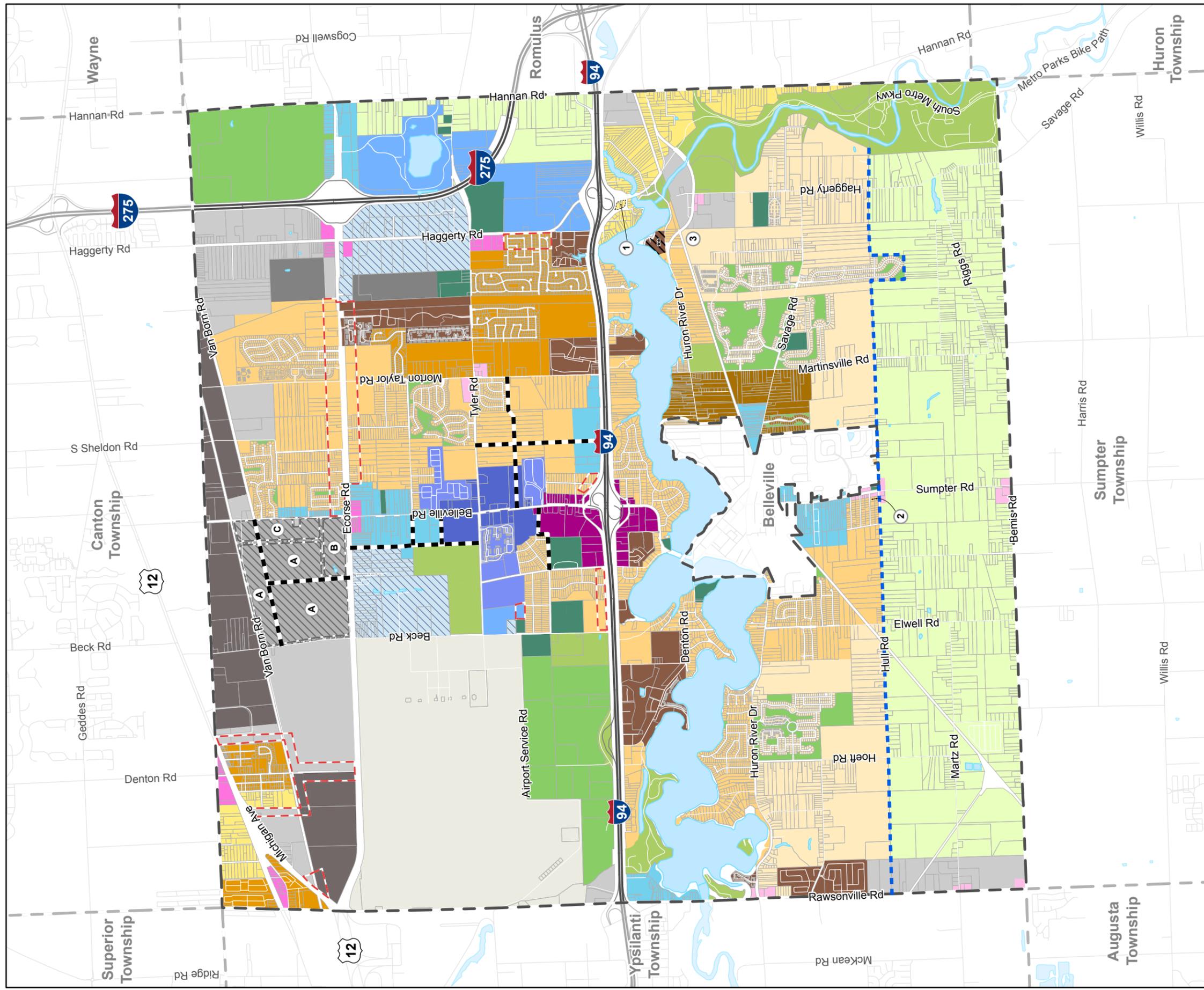
The Mixed Use categories have been developed in detail in previous planning efforts, and have been applied to several areas previously intended for a single use, in accordance with the Goals and Objectives in this Plan. The area immediately adjacent to the interchange of Interstate 94 at Rawsonville Road is now intended for a mix of uses: this area has high potential for redevelopment as a gateway district with direct access to Belleville Lake and the Iron Belle Trail. The northern frontage of the Interstate 94 North Service Drive, east of Belleville Road, is also now intended for the Mixed Use category. It is anticipated that this area would be the most appropriate for a regional medical campus due to its central location in the Township and level of transportation access.

Previously defined Mixed Use areas include the Belleville Road corridor in the vicinity of Ecorse and Tyler Roads, the south side of Ecorse Road adjacent to the Grace Lake Corporate Center, and portions of Sumpter and Savage Roads adjacent to the City of Belleville. These areas have previously been planned at an area-specific level. It is anticipated that these area plans will be updated and incorporated into this Plan as additional books in the coming years; at that time, the other areas newly-designated Mixed Use will be addressed at a similar level of detail.

Mixed Use categories exist in transect zones T-3 (those categories for which office development is intended as a key component), T-4 (general Mixed Use areas developed in previous sub-area plans), and T-5 (Town Center Core). The Town Center Core category is intended to be the most “urban,” intense, and vibrant context for future development in the Township. It is applied to the areas surrounding the intersection of Tyler and Belleville Roads, and associated development standards have been created for this area in the Belleville Road District Plan. The future development of the land on the northwest corner of this intersection, formerly owned by Ford Land Development, will be master planned in detail in a future process.

The remaining categories pertain to special land uses within the Township, including Willow Run Airport, public and semi-public facilities, and parks and open space.

This page left intentionally blank.



Map 4: Future Land Use

Charter Township of
Van Buren, Michigan

December 23, 2020

CERTIFICATION
I, Leon Wright, Township Clerk, Van Buren Township, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Future Land Use Map adopted by the Township Board for Van Buren Township, Wayne County, Michigan on December 23, 2020.

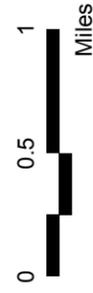
Leon Wright, Clerk
Van Buren Township, Michigan
Wayne County, Michigan

*See pp. 76-78 of the Van Buren Charter Township 2020 Master Plan for additional details.

**Land uses should be limited for parcel 83-089-99-0010-702 to single family detached dwellings at a maximum density of 6.7 units per acre. Due to the adjacent land uses, multiple family housing is not suitable for this area.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Residential | Mixed Use | Commercial |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Settlement Low Density Single Family A - 20,000 Sq. ft. Low Density Single Family B - 15,000 Sq. ft. Medium Density Single Family A - 10,000 Sq. ft. Medium Density Single Family B - 8,400 Sq. ft. Village Residential - 8,400 Sq. Ft. Multiple Family Residential - 10 du/acre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use Office / Light Industrial Office Research Town Center Core Town Center Edge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Commercial General Commercial Gateway Commercial |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport Public / Semi-Public Parks / Open Space Private Open Space Consent Judgement Lakes and Rivers Urban Services Boundary Residential Protection Future Roads* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light Industrial Industrial Trucking Heavy Industrial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) (B) (C) (1) (2) (3) |

*See pp. 130-131 of the Belleville Road District Plan and Market Analysis.
 **See p. 6.15 of the South Side Master Plan.



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a, Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020, McKenna 2020



This page left intentionally blank.

RESIDENTIAL

Rural Settlement

DESCRIPTION

Intended to accommodate larger lot “country estate” residential land uses, continued agricultural land uses, and other uses that are consistent with a rural atmosphere.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Majority of Township south of Hull Road; Portions of the area bounded by Interstates 94 and 275, Haggerty Road, and Tyler Road; Portions of the north frontage of Tyler Road between Lakeshore Drive and Hannan Road; The west frontage of Hannan Road, bordering the Grace Lake Corporate Center property.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-2, T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

● AG

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 1

Min Lot Area (sf): 43,560

Min Lot Are (acres): 1

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan



Future Land Use Plan

Low Density Single Family A

DESCRIPTION

Intended to permit single family residential development consistent with recent development patterns, constrained by the maximum densities and minimum lot areas indicated.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Generally concentrated in the segment of the Township between Huron River Drive to the north and Hull Road to the south.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

● R-1A

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 1.75–2

Min Lot Area (sf): 20,000

Min Lot Are (acres): 0.46

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan



Low Density Single Family B

DESCRIPTION

Intended to permit single family residential development consistent with recent development patterns, constrained by the maximum densities and minimum lot areas indicated.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Generally concentrated in the northwest and southeast portions of the Township: In the former, the area focused on Michigan Avenue, immediately west of Denton Village; in the latter, the area between Haggerty Road/South Metro Parkway to the west and Hannan Road to the east.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

● R-2A

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 2.5–2.9

Min Lot Area (sf): 15,000

Min Lot Are (acres): 0.34

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan



Medium Density Single Family A

DESCRIPTION

Intended to permit single family residential development consistent with recent development patterns, constrained by the maximum densities and minimum lot areas indicated.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The bulk of single family future land use in the Township, generally existing around the perimeter of Belleville Lake, as well as in the general area east of Belleville Road, west of Morton Taylor Road, north of Interstate 94, and south of Van Born Road.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

● R-1B

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 3.5–4

Min Lot Area (sf): 10,000

Min Lot Are (acres): 0.23

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan



Medium Density Single Family B

DESCRIPTION

Intended to permit single family residential development consistent with recent development patterns, constrained by the maximum densities and minimum lot areas indicated.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Concentrated to the north and south of Tyler Road, between Morton Taylor Road to the west, and Haggerty Road to the east; Denton Village; Existing residential areas in the extreme northwest corner of the Township.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-1C

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 3.5–4.5

Min Lot Area (sf): 8,400

Min Lot Are (acres): 0.19



Future Land Use Plan

Village Residential

DESCRIPTION

Intended to continue the small town neighborhood residential development pattern found in the City of Belleville. Density should be concentrated closer to the Belleville city limits to support businesses and civic institutions in downtown Belleville. Land use should be primarily single family residential, with attached single family dwelling units where appropriate. Specific design standards should be adopted to ensure development is compatible with the historic character of residential neighborhoods in Belleville.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Buffers the City of Belleville along its eastern border with the Township, extending from Belleville Lake to south of Savage Road, east to Martinsville Road.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-4

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 4.1–5

Min Lot Area (sf): 8,400

Min Lot Are (acres): 0.19

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan



COMMERCIAL

Multiple Family Residential

DESCRIPTION

Intended to serve as a transition between more intense land uses and single family uses. Areas intended for multiple family residential developments should have access to readily available utilities and transportation facilities, such as freeways and major thoroughfares.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

These areas are distributed throughout the Township, though they concentrate along the Interstate 94 and Rawsonville Road corridors.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- RM
- RMH

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Max Density (du/acre): 6–10

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan
Belleville Road District Plan



Local Commercial

DESCRIPTION

Intended for limited convenience commercial uses, excluding drive-through and auto-oriented uses, and serving the daily needs of residents that live within a 1–3 mile radius. Several of these areas were previously classified as South Side Commercial, and those areas are not intended to change in their projected uses, or in the intensity of those uses, under the Local Commercial classification.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The intersection of Tyler Road and Morton Taylor Road;

The intersections of Huron River Drive, Martz Road, and Bemis Road with Rawsonville Road;

The intersection of Hull Road and Sumpter Road;

The intersection of East Huron River Drive and South Haggerty Road.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- C

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan;
Belleville Road District Plan

General Commercial

DESCRIPTION

Intended for a wider array of commercial uses, including retail, automotive, and service uses. Drive-through and auto-oriented uses are permitted, serving both the daily needs of Township residents and those traveling through the area.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The southern frontage of Ecorse Road on either side of Belleville Road;

The intersection of Ecorse and Haggerty Roads;

The southwest corner of Tyler Road and Haggerty Road.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- C-1

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan;

Belleville Road District Plan



Future Land Use Plan

Gateway Commercial

DESCRIPTION

Intended to target the distinctive characteristics of the Belleville Road interchange area. This area is envisioned to incorporate a variety of retail and office uses, from big box retailers to locally-owned specialty shops and restaurants. Cross-access between sites, and non-motorized connections are strongly encouraged. Architecture and façade materials should complement the established Belleville Road streetscape pattern. Generous high-quality landscaping should be incorporated.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The Belleville Road corridor, and portions of the Interstate 94 Service Drives, in the immediate vicinity of the freeway interchange between the two roads.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- C-2

SEE ALSO

Belleville Road District Plan



MIXED USE

Mixed Use

DESCRIPTION

Intended to prevent typical strip commercial development, and to encourage the redevelopment of shallow frontage lots, either individually, or through combining with deeper parcels to create “layers” of uses. Residential and nonresidential uses should be combined, located in mixed-use buildings or in separate buildings on the same site designed as an integrated development. Development should generally be limited to three or fewer stories, should be pedestrian-oriented, and strictly automobile-oriented uses should not be permitted.

Areas designated as Mixed Use, Town Center Core, and Town Center Edge on the Future Land Use Map should be rezoned to M-U (Mixed Use) once an area-specific vision plan has been developed in detail. The M-U District Regulations should be modified to include additional Mixed Use Subareas and Building Type Standards as required to fulfill the intent of each vision plan.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Portions of the Belleville Road corridor, generally from Brookview Drive south to Robson Road; Parcels to the south and east of Interstate 94 and Rawsonville Road, extending to Belleville Lake; The area north of Interstate 94, east of Belleville Road; The area generally surrounding the Sumpter Road corridor, south of the City of Belleville; The area on the north side of Savage Road, immediately east of the City of Belleville; The north and south side of Ecorse Road, between Interstate 275 and Hannan Road.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-4

CORRESPONDING ZONING

● M-U

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan;
South Side Master Plan;
Belleville Road District Plan

Town Center Core

DESCRIPTION

Intended to facilitate development of a special place that combines the governmental center, parks and civic spaces, retail and service uses, and a concentration of residential uses, all in a walkable relationship. The Town Center Core intensity level allows buildings up to 3 stories with vertical mixing of uses.

Areas designated as Mixed Use, Town Center Core, and Town Center Edge on the Future Land Use Map should be rezoned to M-U (Mixed Use) once an area-specific vision plan has been developed in detail. The M-U District Regulations should be modified to include additional Mixed Use Subareas and Building Type Standards as required to fulfill the intent of each vision plan.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The area centered on the intersection of Tyler and Belleville Roads.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-5

CORRESPONDING ZONING

● M-U

SEE ALSO

Belleville Road District Plan



Town Center Edge

DESCRIPTION

Intended to facilitate development of a special place that combines the governmental center, parks and civic spaces, retail and service uses, and a concentration of residential uses, all in a walkable relationship. The Town Center Edge intensity level generally surrounds the Town Center Core area and contains lower-intensity uses, and includes the governmental center, multiple family residential developments, and open space/natural area parks and facilities.

Areas designated as Mixed Use, Town Center Core, and Town Center Edge on the Future Land Use Map should be rezoned to M-U (Mixed Use) once an area-specific vision plan has been developed in detail. The M-U District Regulations should be modified to include additional Mixed Use Subareas and Building Type Standards as required to fulfill the intent of each vision plan.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Areas bordering Town Center Core areas, immediately to the north, south, and west.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-4

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- M-U

SEE ALSO

Belleville Road District Plan



Future Land Use Plan

Office Research (Office Technology)

DESCRIPTION

Intended to be a master planned area containing office technology uses that utilize the natural features of the land and work around its limitations to develop campus-like settings. The classification is designed to attract developments with high-quality architecture, generous landscaping, open space areas, sidewalks and pathways, entry features, site interconnections, and other site design characteristics of a campus setting.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The Grace Lake Corporate Center area;

The area to the east and west of Haggerty Road, north of the North Interstate 94 Service Drive.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- O-T

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan



INDUSTRIAL

Office / Light Industrial

DESCRIPTION

Intended to encourage industrial and office development consistent with the higher quality character of the area. The classification encompasses typical “flex” industrial uses and development. Light industrial in this area should include a front office space in addition to a rear light manufacturing or warehouse space. Airport-serving and Aerotropolis-related land uses in planned office and light industrial park settings or as individual users on large, well-landscaped sites would be appropriate in this classification. Warehousing classified as a distribution or transportation use according to the M-T zoning district is not intended for this area.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Generally, areas to the south and east of Ecorse Road and Beck Road; Areas to the east and west of Haggerty Road, between Ecorse Road and Tyler Road.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- O-T
- M-1

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan
Belleville Road District Plan



Light Industrial

DESCRIPTION

Intended for industrial uses which do not impact neighboring properties, and do not produce large amounts of noise, smoke, glare, waste, or other adverse off-site environmental effects. These areas should serve as a transition between non-industrial and heavy industrial areas. The uses most appropriate in this district include warehousing, research and development, industrial flex space, associated office uses, and quasi-retail sales.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Generally, several areas in the northern portion of the Township, located north of Ecorse Road, south of Michigan Avenue and Van Born Road, and west of Interstate 275.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- M-1

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan
Belleville Road District Plan



Industrial Trucking (Industrial Transportation)

DESCRIPTION

Intended for large-scale industrial development which has a significant transportation and/or logistics component, though otherwise generates similar impacts to uses in Light Industrial areas. Areas designated Industrial Transportation begin at a depth of 400 feet from the road frontage; Light Industrial uses are intended for this 400-foot buffer area. The reservation of the frontage is intended to achieve the objective of locating larger buildings away from the road frontage, and to encourage smaller, higher quality buildings on the frontage.

The amount of land reserved for this designation on the Future Land Use Map is adequate to serve the Township's needs in the coming decades. As this category is intended for uses which have major impacts on the roadway system, and whose large building footprints create impediments to transitioning to neighboring uses, further development of transportation and/or logistics-based facilities should not occur in the Township.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Applied to the rear portions of parcels fronting Ecorse Road, Haggerty Road, and Van Born Road, near Interstate 275.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- M-T

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan

Heavy Industrial

DESCRIPTION

Intended for industrial uses of a higher intensity, for areas that take advantage of railroad and major thoroughfare access, and are generally buffered by light industrial uses. The uses most appropriate in this district are sites where raw and semi-finished materials are fabricated, manufactured, and warehoused.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Areas bordering the railroad corridor in the northern portion of the Township;

The two landfill areas: US Ecology, north of Interstate 94 and south of Willow Run Airport; and Woodland Meadows, in the extreme northeast corner of the Township.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- M-2

SEE ALSO

Belleville Road District Plan

OTHER USES

Airport

DESCRIPTION

Intended for the lands owned by the Wayne County Airport Authority for the purpose of operating Willow Run Airport.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Willow Run Airport

CORRESPONDING ZONING

- AP



Public / Semi-Public

DESCRIPTION

Intended for publicly and privately-owned facilities that are open to the public and are operated on a not-for-profit basis. Public and semi-public uses in the Township include the Township Hall, fire stations, schools, the Wayne County Fairgrounds, and the MDNR property located along Belleville Lake.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Areas are scattered throughout the Township.

SEE ALSO

- South Side Master Plan
- Belleville Road District Plan



Parks / Open Space

DESCRIPTION

Intended for public recreation lands, facilities, and open space. The Lower Huron Metropark includes most of the land in this category.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Lower Huron Metropark;

Parklands along Belleville Lake in the western portion of the Township;

The future parkland deeded to the Township on the north side of Tyler Road, opposite Township Hall.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-1

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan



Private Open Space

DESCRIPTION

Intended for land that has been conserved as part of a Planned Residential Development (PRD) or Planned Unit Development (PUD), for stormwater management, or as other open space in a residential condominium or subdivision. These areas are set aside as privately owned open space, and no further development is permitted on these lands. Only passive and active recreation uses, as designated on the relevant approved site plan, are permitted activities in these areas.

This category is additionally intended for those areas currently devoted to waste disposal, as they will revert to open space for perpetuity once storage space is exhausted.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Areas are scattered throughout the Township, within existing PRD and PUDs.

TRANSECT ZONES

T-3

CORRESPONDING ZONING

PRD

PUD

AG

M-2

SEE ALSO

South Side Master Plan

Belleville Road District Plan

Consent Judgment

DESCRIPTION

Land located in the northwest corner of Ecorse and Belleville Roads that is subject to a consent judgment. This currently vacant site consists of 447.38 acres, and the consent judgment separates it into three parcels with specific uses permitted on each. Please refer to the Belleville Road District Plan for details on the specific uses permitted on Parcels A, B, and C, as footnoted on the Future Land Use Map.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

The northwest corner of Ecorse and Belleville Roads.

CORRESPONDING ZONING

 M-2 (CJ)

SEE ALSO

Belleville Road District Plan

Residential Protection

DESCRIPTION

The Residential Protection designation is intended to require expanded setbacks, special screening measures, and higher appearance standards to protect existing residences, to be determined during site plan review. The designation shown on the Future Land Use Map is generalized and not intended to imply a specific setback dimension. The means used to accomplish the screening may vary; the objective is to mitigate potential impacts of more intense uses on less intense uses.

APPLICABLE PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP

Generally, the north and south frontages of Ecorse Road between Belleville Road and Kirkridge Street;

The western frontage of Haggerty Road where single family residential development exists between Tyler Road and the North Interstate 94 Service Drive;

The south, east, and west sides of the Denton Village area;

The east and west sides of Denton Road, between Van Born and Ecorse Roads.

SEE ALSO

Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan

Belleville Road District Plan

Table 3: Future Land Use

| FLU Category | | Acres | Percent of Total |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Single Family | Low Density S.F. A | 2,108 | 10% |
| | Low Density S.F. B | 438 | 2% |
| | Medium Density S.F. A | 2,796 | 13% |
| | Medium Density S.F. B | 723 | 3% |
| | Village Residential | 258 | 1% |
| Single Family Sub-Total | | 6,323 | 29% |
| Agriculture/Rural Settlement | | 3,672 | 17% |
| Industrial | Light Industrial | 1,327 | 6% |
| | Industrial / Trucking | 166 | 1% |
| | Heavy Industrial | 718 | 3% |
| Industrial Sub-Total | | 2,211 | 10% |
| Mixed Use | Town Center Core | 177 | 1% |
| | Town Center Edge | 212 | 1% |
| | Mixed Use | 506 | 2% |
| | Office / Research | 505 | 2% |
| | Office / Light Industrial | 618 | 3% |
| Mixed Use Sub-Total | | 2,017 | 9% |
| Airport | | 1,880 | 9% |
| Private Open Space | | 1,254 | 6% |
| Public Right-of-Way | | 1,307 | 6% |
| Parks / Open Space | | 1,095 | 5% |
| Multiple Family Residential | | 688 | 3% |
| Consent Judgment | | 447 | 2% |
| Commercial | Local Commercial | 62 | <1% |
| | General Commercial | 81 | <1% |
| | Gateway Commercial | 154 | 1% |
| Commercial Sub-Total | | 297 | 1%* |
| Public / Semi-Public | | 259 | 1% |
| Grand Total | | 21,450 | 100%* |

* Numbers may not add up due to rounding.



Van Buren Charter Township hosts a variety of community-serving businesses.

ZONING PLAN

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory tool for Van Buren Township to implement the land use elements of this Plan. The Future Land Use Map indicates conservation areas, growth areas of different densities, and provides locations for mixed use areas, parks and community uses, commercial, and industrial uses.

The land use classifications on the Future Land Use Map, and their corresponding descriptions, set land use policy to guide future development in the Township. The Future Land Use Plan provides general land use development principles that are consistent with the Township's Goals and Objectives for growth. The official Zoning Map displays precise boundaries, correlated with standards and permitted uses that are adopted as law.

A Zoning Plan is required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) and Zoning Enabling Acts (MZEA). Section 33(d) of the MPEA (PA 33 of 2008, as amended) requires that the Master Plan shall serve as the basis for the community's Zoning Plan. Additionally, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006, as amended) requires a Zoning Plan to be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance. The Zoning Plan must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the municipality and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted (as described in Section 201 of the MZEA).

Table 4 on the following page presents the zoning districts that apply to each of this Plan's Future Land Use designations. Where new regulations are recommended to implement the conceptual elements of this Plan, the "new district" or "district revisions" descriptions is included along with the applicable zoning districts.

This Future Land Use Plan sets a future vision for Van Buren Township by creating opportunities for a vibrant mixed-use Town Center district, new mixed-use nodes throughout the community at a variety of scales and densities, and conservation of existing neighborhoods and semi-rural areas. This Master Plan constitutes an effort to articulate these opportunities under the umbrella of a single vision.

Though great effort has been made to create one-to-one correspondences wherever possible, not all of the future land use categories herein will directly align with the current location(s) or regulations of the zoning districts to which they most closely correspond. In some instances, the underlying regulations of a particular zoning district are sound, but the district's geographic boundaries are recommended for alteration to align with its corresponding future land use category; in other instances, underlying regulations may require alteration, while the district boundaries remain unchanged. In some instances, a combination of adjusting regulations and boundaries of a particular zoning district may be required to achieve correspondence with the Future Land Use Plan. In one case, creation of a new zoning district is proposed to correspond with the Village Residential future land use category.

The key recommended revisions the Zoning Ordinance are discussed in the next section, and the following Table 4 details the Zoning Plan.

Table 4: Future Land Use and Zoning Map Correlation

| Future Land Use Designation | Corresponding Zoning District(s) | Zoning District Revisions (see notes on page 68) |
|---|---|---|
|  Rural Settlement |  AG | <i>District Revisions – See Note 1</i> |
|  Low Density Single Family A |  R-1A | <i>District Revisions – See Note 2</i> |
|  Low Density Single Family B |  R-2A | <i>District Revisions or Elimination – See Notes 2 and 4</i> |
|  Medium Density Single Family A |  R-1B | <i>District Revisions – See Note 2</i> |
|  Medium Density Single Family B |  R-1C | <i>District Revisions – See Note 2</i> |
|  Village Residential | N/A | <i>New District – See Note 5</i> |
|  Multiple Family Residential |  RM  RMH | <i>District Revisions – See Note 6</i> |
|  Local Commercial |  C | N/A |
|  General Commercial |  C-1 | <i>District Revisions – See Note 7</i> |
|  Gateway Commercial |  C-2  BROD | <i>District Revisions or Elimination – See Note 8</i> |
|  Mixed Use |  M-U  BROD | <i>District Revisions – See Note 9</i> |
|  Town Center Core |  M-U  BROD | <i>District Revisions – See Note 9</i> |
|  Town Center Edge |  M-U  BROD | <i>District Revisions – See Note 9</i> |
|  Office Research (Office Technology) |  O-T | N/A |
|  Office/Light Industrial |  O-T  M-1 | <i>New District – See Note 10</i> |
|  Light Industrial |  M-1 | N/A |
|  Industrial Trucking (Industrial Transportation) |  M-T | N/A |
|  Heavy Industrial |  M-2 | N/A |
|  Airport |  AP | N/A |

RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND ZONING MAP

In order to meet the Goals and Objectives of this Plan, the following revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and Map are recommended:

1. Planned Residential Developments should be removed from the Special Land Uses permitted in the **AG (Agricultural and Estates)** District.
2. Consider inclusion of duplex, triplex, and fourplex housing types as Special Land Uses in one or more of the **R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, and R2-A (Single Family Residential)** Districts, as long as these building types satisfy dimensional requirements consistent with those currently in place.
3. New incentives and standards for infill housing and neighborhood investment should be developed for single-family residential districts corresponding to their respective densities. Strategies for affordable housing, accessory dwelling units, and adaptive reuse should be considered.
4. A study should be undertaken to examine the feasibility of **eliminating** the **R2-A (Single Family Residential)** District, which is currently not shown on the Zoning Map. This study should examine, on a parcel-by-parcel basis, the number of nonconformities created in hypothetical scenarios where the R2-A District is applied to those areas currently designated as the corresponding Low Density Single Family B category on the Future Land Use Map, versus the existing number of nonconformities under current zoning in those areas. If it is determined that application of the R2-A District would reduce nonconformities in those areas, it should be applied. If it is, however, determined that application of the R2-A District would increase nonconformities in those areas, it should be eliminated, in which case, the Future Land Use Map should be updated accordingly by merging the Low Density Single Family A and B categories into a single Low Density Single Family category.
5. A **new zoning district** should be developed to correspond to the **Village Residential** Future Land Use Category. This new district should be form-based in nature, and employ specific building type design standards, similar to those used in the M-U District. These design standards should be developed with the intent of ensuring residential development in the area designated as Village Residential is compatible with the historic character of adjacent residential neighborhoods in Belleville.
6. Design standards should be applied to the **C (Local Commercial)** District to ensure that new development is compatible with the human-scaled and pedestrian-oriented character desired for these areas.
7. The **C-1 (General Business) District** should be modified to include Truck Stop as a Special Land Use, and the **FS (Freeway Service) District** should be **eliminated**.
8. Consider **elimination** of the **C-2 (Extensive Highway Business) District**, through rezoning those C-2 areas currently intended for Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map to the **M-U (Mixed Use) Zoning District**. Remaining areas intended for Gateway Commercial use that are currently zoned C-2 should be rezoned as a **new Gateway Commercial Zoning District** that meets the design standards and requirements of the **Belleville Road Overlay District (BROD)**.
9. Areas designated as Mixed Use, Town Center Core, and Town Center Edge on the Future Land Use Map should be rezoned to **M-U (Mixed Use)** once an area-specific vision plan has been developed in detail. The M-U District Regulations should be modified to include additional Mixed Use Subareas and Building Type Standards as required to fulfill the intent of each vision plan.
10. A **new zoning district** should be developed to correspond to the Office/Light Industrial Future Land Use Category. The new district should combine select elements of the **O-T (Office Technology)** and **M-1 (Light Industrial)** Districts to create a set of predictable regulations and associated design standards, so as to achieve the stated intent of this category.

11. The **M-T (Industrial Transportation)** District should **not** be further applied in the Township.
12. The Zoning Ordinance should be thoroughly reviewed and edited according to lean zoning principles. Regulations that do not contribute to the implementation of the Future Land Use Plan should be eliminated or reduced in scope. As part of this process, consider adding form-based elements to all districts, similar in nature to those in the **Belleville Road Overlay (BROD)** and **Mixed Use (M-U)** Districts.
13. Alternatively, the Zoning Ordinance could be replaced with a Township-wide Form Based Code (discussed further on the following page) that would be lean in nature, and place building form and context as its organizing principle. Form-Based Codes are user-friendly, and provide predictable and consistent standards for development, giving developers and local property owners a clear understanding of local regulations.
14. Additional incentives to encourage sustainable use of land, materials, energy, and resources should be developed for all districts.

Conventional Zoning Procedures

REZONING TO IMPLEMENT THE MASTER PLAN

The land use classifications on the Future Land Use Map provide the basis for evaluating future rezoning requests. Zoning actions that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map usually receive deferential and favorable judicial review if challenged. The Master Plan should be the principal source of information in the investigation of all rezoning requests. The Township may initiate rezoning necessary to place land in conformance with the Future Land Use Map, or they may wait for property owners to come forward.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

Planned development involves the use of special zoning requirements and review procedures that provide design and regulatory flexibility, so as to encourage innovation in land use planning and design. Planned developments should achieve a higher quality of development than might otherwise be possible. Continued use of planned development is recommended to achieve development in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Plan. Planned development can be used as the regulatory tool to permit open space zoning or cluster development in new residential areas.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Rather than simply regulate development on the basis of dimensional standards, many communities are establishing performance standards to regulate development based on the permissible effects or impacts of a proposed use. Performance standards should be used to supplement conventional zoning standards. Performance standards can be developed to regulate noise, dust, vibration, odor, glare and heat, safety hazards, and environmental impacts such as air and water pollution. The complexity of the performance standards should be based in part on the capacity of Township staff to administer the standards.

Performance standards can be particularly useful in achieving environmental and resource protection goals. If based on a strong body of research, standards can be developed that relate to critical environmental areas (such as floodplains, wetlands, lakes, woodlands, groundwater recharge areas, and unique wildlife habitats), and natural resource areas.

INCENTIVE ZONING

Incentive zoning allows a developer to exceed the dimensional limitations in the Zoning Ordinance if the developer agrees to fulfill conditions specified in the Ordinance. Incentive zoning could be considered to promote innovative land planning techniques identified in the Plan. For example, a possible increase in density can be used as an incentive for developments that implement open space zoning standards.

SETBACKS AND OTHER STANDARDS

It is important to review the required setbacks and other dimensional standards to be certain that they promote the desired type of development and respect historical setbacks and architectural scale. For example, if side or rear parking is preferred, then it may be necessary to mandate a build-to line that is close to the front lot line.

Innovative Zoning Techniques

FORM-BASED CODES

Form Based Codes (FBCs), unlike traditional (sometimes called Euclidean) use-based zoning, place the physical design and form of buildings and public spaces as their primary organizing factor. FBCs yield predictable development processes and clearly show community expectations. A FBC is developed from a community vision for elements including building types, development densities, and material standards. This vision is best articulated through a process of direct and sustained community engagement, such as that which occurs at a design charrette. A FBC would be ideal for the Township's planned mixed use and Town Center areas, where the relationship between buildings, public spaces and streets will be key to creating the desired sense of place.

DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Although there is no explicit legislative authority for such agreements, many Michigan communities have used development agreements to achieve a mutual understanding between the developer and Township concerning the conditions under which development can occur. Development agreements are often negotiated as part of a planned development approval, allowing the community and developer to address complex issues that cannot be adequately addressed on a typical site plan. Development agreements might prove useful to achieve desired developments, especially if or when a mixed-use development is proposed.

INCLUSIONARY ZONING

Inclusionary zoning is the practice of providing a percentage of affordable housing to be included during the development of new residential projects. Developments that propose a certain percentage of affordable housing are typically allowed incentives such as higher density or reduction of dimensional requirements. Inclusionary zoning programs can help transition residents from living in rental units to homeownership.

LEAN ZONING

The Township could benefit from applying lean zoning principles to a Zoning Ordinance update. Lean zoning is the simplification of zoning codes and the removal of redundant text. Typically, lean zoning revisions are made through a series of small incremental changes to zoning ordinances but can be incorporated into comprehensive revisions.

06.



MOBILITY PLAN

Monitoring the efficiency of a municipality’s circulatory system is important in order to plan for its adaptability and sustainability capabilities. An efficiently built road system will allow for adaptability to changing city and township structures. Van Buren Township’s proximity to major freeway systems allows for efficient vehicular transportation. I-94, I-275, and US-12 cross through the Township. I-94 bisects the Township east to west, I-275 runs north-south through the eastern portion of the community, and US-12 connects I-275 and I-94.

ROADWAY NETWORK

Existing Roads – Ownership

The roadway network in Van Buren Township provides functions that have impacts on the economic, land use, and character of the Township. The roads within the Township are under the jurisdiction of either MDOT (state trunklines) or the Roads Division of the Wayne County Department of Public Services (WCDPS) (all other roads).

MDOT’s philosophy toward the state trunkline system has generally been to maintain the fewest lane-miles of roadway possible, while designing those facilities to accommodate the greatest amount of through traffic. During the 2010s, for example, MDOT maintained fewer than 8% of all roadway lane-miles in the state, albeit which carried over 50% of all statewide passenger traffic. County-owned roadways, by contrast, comprise about 75% of the state’s roadways by ownership. Townships are not held responsible for roadway ownership in Michigan; cities (such as Belleville) are the other class of jurisdiction with responsibility for road ownership and maintenance.

Therefore, the MDOT roadways in Van Buren Township are only the highest-capacity roads, with the highest amount of through traffic. These are Interstates 94 and 275, US-12, and US-12 BUSINESS (Michigan Avenue). All other roadways in the Township are the responsibility of Wayne County.

While WCDPS maintains local residential streets in the Township, it does not fund major improvements to them. Wayne County uses gas tax revenues, and revenue from the Michigan Transportation Fund distributed to it through Act 51 (discussed in the following section) for the maintenance of County roads.

While WCDPS generally does not make major improvements to roads other than primary County roads, it has historically contributed up to 80 percent of the costs for paving residential streets in townships. This has occurred as there is a reduced long-term cost savings to the County in maintaining paved roads relative to the repeated annual maintenance required for unpaved roads used frequently by abutting property owners.

Several recent residential developments in Van Buren Township include private roads. Such roads are not maintained by WCDPS; they are maintained by a homeowners’ association, or by those owners who have access rights to the road(s).

Existing Roads – Classification and Mileage

For purposes of state transportation planning, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) categorizes roadway segments using the National Functional Classification (NFC) system. A roadway segment’s functional classification is an important element in formulae that determine the amount of funding the road will receive, indicates the level of regional connectivity, and indicates the relative amount of traffic a segment carries.

The existing roads in Van Buren Charter Township are categorized as follows:

1. **Principal Arterial - Interstate** – Principal Arterials on the Interstate Highway System, carry the majority of traffic on trips that originate or end outside of the Township, as well as those that transit the Township.

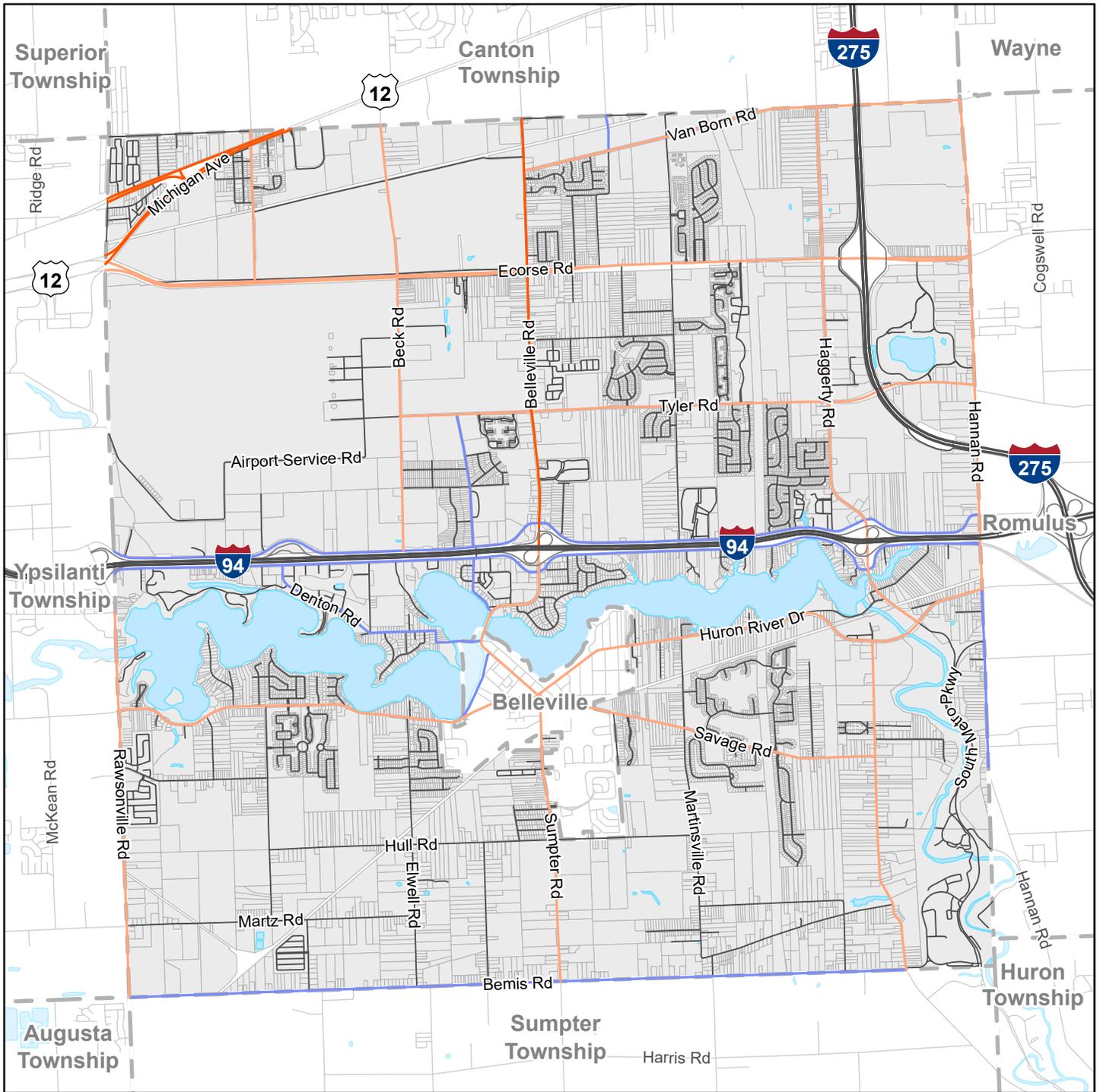
The roads classified as Principal Arterial Interstate in Van Buren Township are:

- a. Interstate 94
- b. Interstate 275

2. **Principal Arterial - Other** – Surface roads classified as Principal Arterial provide the connection to other regional Principal Arterials, such as Interstates. Interstate and Principal Arterials offer the highest levels of mobility in exchange for the lowest levels of access to individual properties. These roads are therefore generally designed to carry larger volumes of through traffic.

The roads classified as Principal Arterial Other in Van Buren Township are:

- a. Michigan Avenue (US-12 and US-12 BUSINESS)
- b. US-12 Willow Run Bypass
- c. Belleville Road (north of I-94)



Map 5:

Roadway Network

Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan

March 2, 2020

LEGEND

-  Urban Interstate (Principal Arterial)
-  Urban Other Principal Arterial
-  Urban Minor Arterial
-  Urban Collector
-  Urban Local
-  Van Buren Township Parcels
-  Lakes and Rivers



SOURCES
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
 Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020.
 McKenna 2020.



3. **Minor Arterial** – Minor Arterials primarily serve as a link between roads classified as Local and Collector (discussed below) to other Principal Arterials, and generally do not connect directly to the regional road system. These roads are designed to carry a lower volume of traffic than other Principal Arterials.

The roads classified as Minor Arterial in Van Buren Township include:

- a. Beck Road
- b. Belleville Road (south of I-94)
- c. Ecorse Road
- d. Tyler Road
- e. Van Born Road (east of Belleville Road)
- f. Huron River Drive
- g. Savage Road
- h. Sumpter Road

4. **Collector** – Collectors provide access to and from Local roads, channeling it to Minor and Principal Arterials.

The roads classified as Collector in Van Buren Township include:

- a. Interstate 94 North and South Service Drives
- b. Quirk Road
- c. Sheldon Road (north of Van Born Road)
- d. Bemis Road

5. **Local** – Local roads provide direct access to abutting land, and to Collector and Arterial roads. These roads offer the lowest level of mobility in exchange for the highest level of access to individual properties, and they are usually designed to discourage through traffic. Many Local roads in the southern portion of Van Buren Township, and several in the northern portion, are unpaved.

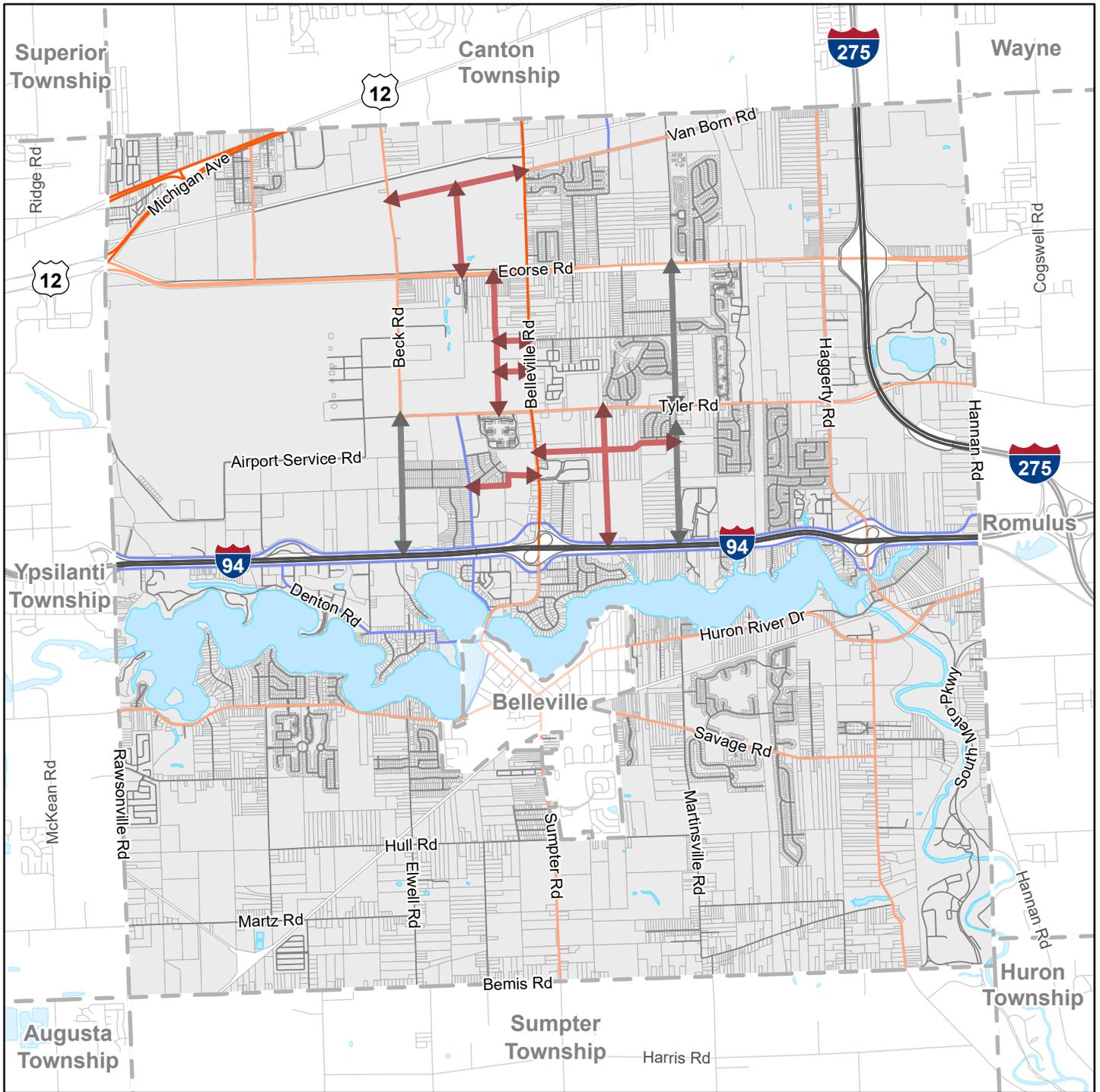
The roads classified as Local in Van Buren Township include:

- a. All residential roads
- b. Morton Taylor Road
- c. Robson Road
- d. Sheldon (south of Van Born Road)
- e. Van Born (west of Belleville Road)

In addition, Public Act 51 of 1951 (“Act 51”) is a complex formula that determines the distribution of state funds to county and city road agencies. Act 51 requires that road segments be categorized as either Primary or Local as part of this distribution formula. In Van Buren Township, the set of Act 51 Primary roads is the same as the set containing Arterials (Interstate, Principal, and Minor) and Collectors. The set of Act 51 Local roads is equivalent to the set of roads classified as Local under the NFC.

As of 2019, Van Buren Township contains 123.52 miles of roadway, 55.68 miles of which are classified as Act 51 Primary (NFC Arterial and Collector), and 67.84 miles of which are classified as Act 51/NFC Local. 112.12 miles of roadway fall under the jurisdiction of WCDPS, and approximately 11.4 miles fall under the jurisdiction of MDOT.

An additional classification reserved for the most strategically important roads in the United States is the National Highway System (NHS). The NHS consists of the Interstate System and the Principal Arterials that directly connect to it. In Van Buren Township, all MDOT-owned roads (Interstates 94 and 275, US-12, and US-12 BUSINESS) are on the NHS. Additionally, the 3.2 miles of Belleville Road between Interstate 94 and the northern Township border are on the NHS. NHS routes generally receive priority for receipt of federal transportation funds toward upgrades and improvements.



Map 6:

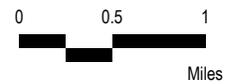
Circulation Plan

Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan

March 2, 2020

LEGEND

- Municipal Boundaries
- Urban Interstate (Principal Arterial)
- Urban Other Principal Arterial
- Urban Minor Arterial
- Urban Collector
- Urban Local
- Future Connection (Approx. Location)
- Candidate for Paving
- Lakes and Rivers



SOURCES
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
 Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020.
 McKenna 2020.





Denton Road west of the City of Belleville has a rural character.

Circulation Plan

At its most basic level, a transportation system provides a means of moving people and goods within a given geographic area. This system may be composed of multiple transportation modes, including roads, railroads, non-motorized trails, and airports. Public transportation services, if available, use buses or trains that traverse existing roads, or shared or dedicated rail lines. Similar to other communities in Southeastern Michigan, Van Buren Township's transportation system consists of roads almost exclusively dedicated to automobile travel.

Major improvements to Township Arterial and Collector roads are programmed in the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' (SEMCOG) 2020-2023 Transportation Improvements Program (TIP), 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the WCDPS annual Capital Improvements Plan, and MDOT transportation plans.

When projects become identified in these transportation plans, the Township should work collaboratively with landowners, developers, MDOT, and Wayne and Washtenaw Counties to implement them. Nevertheless, the following points address general strategic needs that should be considered by all stakeholders in the earliest stages of any proposed project, so that improvements can be made in a way that does not detract from the community's ability to achieve the overall Goals addressed in this Plan:

1. All segments of Van Buren Township have excellent **east-west access** via Interstate 94, Ecorse Road, Michigan Avenue (US-12), Huron River Drive, and Bemis Road. For historic reasons discussed in Chapter 2, **north-south access** through the Township is heavily constrained by the presence of Belleville Lake and Willow Run Airport. Only two corridors provide continuous access from the southern to the northern Township border: Sumpter Road/Belleville Road (which accesses downtown Belleville), and Haggerty Road.
2. **Nearly all residents of the south side** of the Township must cross Belleville Lake and the Huron River to connect to the regional road network. This is accomplished via Rawsonville, Belleville, and Haggerty Roads. Ameliorating this constraint would require new roads and capacity improvements that are both unlikely to receive funding, and would have major impacts to the character and environment of the south side. The inherent capacity limitations of the existing roadway network both justify the restraint called for in future development of the south side, and effectively contribute to the area's rural character, the preservation of which is desired by the community.

3. **Paved roads** on the south side classified as Arterials and Collectors on the far south side of the Township (Bemis, Sumpter, Rawsonville, and Haggerty) should be programmed to have widened shoulders that would accommodate a Class II bicycle lane.
4. **Unpaved roads** on the far south side of the Township should remain as such, excepting when property owners thereon express a desire for improvements. If this occurs, the Township and WCDPS should make all efforts to partner with property owners to share paving costs.
5. The *South Side Master Plan* in 2007 identified an **extension of Hull Road**, from its terminus at Hoeft Road west to Rawsonville Road as a potential future improvement. While such an improvement would increase connectivity on the local road network, stakeholders on the Township’s south side have asserted that this *project is unnecessary* in light of other, more urgently needed maintenance projects in the Township.
6. The *Belleville Road District Plan* in 2009 identified several opportunities for **future east-west collector roads** in the central area of the Township. These include extensions of Robson Road west from Belleville Road, of Van Born Road from Belleville Road west to Beck Road, and of Beverly Road from Belleville Road east to Sheldon Road.
7. An **extension of McBride Avenue** from its present terminus east to Morton Taylor Road was identified in the *Belleville Road District Plan*. Provision for a future east-west collector road, connecting Belleville Road to Morton Taylor Road, was made in conjunction with development of the Aldi and AutoZone sites on the east side of Belleville Road (see photo at upper-right). This road, when completed, would facilitate the connection between Belleville and Morton Taylor Roads; however, it would not directly align with a future connection to McBride Road due to site constraints generated by recent development on the west side of Belleville Road.



The street currently serving as access to the ALDI store on Belleville Road was built with the provision to extend eastward, ultimately connecting Belleville Road to Morton Taylor Road.

8. The *Belleville Road District Plan* in 2009 likewise identified several opportunities for **future north-south collector roads** in the central area of the Township. These include a new road roughly 1,000 feet west of Belleville Road, connecting Tyler Road and Ecorse Road; and a new road midway between Belleville Road and Beck Road, connecting Ecorse Road to the proposed westward extension of Van Born Road.
9. An **additional new connection**, not identified previously, could exist midway between Belleville and Morton Taylor Roads, connecting the North Interstate 94 Service Drive to Tyler Road. This connection would not likely be feasible until this portion of the Town Center Core district is developed, likely in conjunction with retrofitting the Meijer and Westlake Apartments areas to a mixed-use context.

10. As new development in the Belleville Road District is planned, development of these new roads should be **included in planning and design studies**, and rights-of-way should be acquired for them when available. Without sufficient connectivity throughout the larger area, future development would inevitably occur in isolated “pods”—even if such developments are mixed use in nature and designed to a high standard internally.
11. **Street design and access management principles** for the Belleville Road District area and future mixed use areas are codified in the Township Zoning Ordinance, and have benefited new development that has occurred in the years since their inclusion. *These principles should be further developed* for the Township more generally, and take into account the need to retrofit access, internal circulation, and parking arrangements relative to existing properties where driveway clustering and lack of cross-access currently exist.
12. The current development pattern in the Belleville Road District area has been single-use in nature, which also creates groupings of “pods” isolated one from another. This pattern funnels all vehicle trips in the area onto a limited number of routes comprised of Belleville Road, Tyler Road, Quirk Road, and the Interstate 94 Service Drives. **Creating additional connections** is the best way to alleviate traffic congestion, which is unavoidable with limited connectivity. Capacity expansion projects on existing roads, by contrast, ultimately induce future congestion and create increasingly unfriendly environments for non-motorized road users.
13. Additionally, **providing “critical connections”** between minor residential streets and local, collector, and arterial roads will increase public safety and the efficiency of public services, will reduce overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the Township, and will reduce driver confusion. These improvements can be achieved at a relatively low cost when paired with other infrastructure maintenance and upgrade projects.
14. Street patterns in new and existing residential developments should be designed or retrofitted as necessary to achieve a **high level of internal and external connectivity**. New dead end streets should be avoided, except where carefully designed as culs-de-sac in the context of a broader overall development plan for the district. Existing dead end streets should be connected where feasible to the broader network of local, collector, and arterial roads (see Note 5 on page 40).
15. An additional strategy to alleviate congestion in the central area of the Township involves partnering with WCDPS to **pave several segments of roadway** that are presently being avoided due to the difficult driving conditions they impose. These segments include Beck Road from Tyler Road south to Interstate 94; Morton Taylor Road from Ecorse Road south to Tyler Road, and from Ross Drive south to Interstate 94.
16. The *Haggerty/Ecorse Corridor Plan*, produced in 2000, identified a **series of operational improvements** to those corridors to facilitate the mixture of heavy truck and automobile traffic attracted by the land uses thereon. Several of these improvements, including reconfiguration of the Ecorse Road and Belleville Road intersection, and expansion of Ecorse Road to a boulevard configuration east of Interstate 275, have been accomplished in the two decades since this Plan was written. In conjunction with development of the second phase of the Ashley Capital facility, Ecorse Road will be rebuilt to a 3-lane configuration during the 2020 construction season. WCDPS has programmed funding to expand Haggerty Road north of Ecorse Road to a 3- or 5-lane configuration by 2025.
17. **It is recommended that further study** of needed road improvement projects on the Ecorse and Haggerty Road corridors and the surrounding area be undertaken in detail as part of a comprehensive update of that Corridor Plan. The recent expansion of industrial uses in this area, and reduced demand for other potential uses in the area (such as for big box-style retail and single family condominiums) on which those traffic studies were predicated, require a more focused approach to identifying improvements in this area.

CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION

In visual preference surveys conducted with Township residents (see Chapter 8), community members suggested that they prefer tree covered streets, sidewalks protected with natural berms, and roads with well-kept bike lanes.

Landscaping standards for the Belleville Road streetscape have been integrated into the Township's Belleville Road Overlay District. Consistent application of these standards have produced positive results along this corridor. The existing standards should nevertheless be reviewed against the performance of various planting installations, and be made applicable to other similarly important corridors in the Township.

Principles that could benefit the success of a standalone Corridor Beautification Ordinance, or an amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance of similar intent, include:

- Ordinance components should be developed with the assistance of a professional landscape architect, and the input of an arborist, in addition to Township and WCDPS staff, and interested community stakeholders.
- For on-site landscaping, lots should contain shade trees, evergreens, shrubs, and flowers to beautify sites and connect them to larger green networks. Local or native species should be used to strengthen the local ecology and the sense of heritage.
- Areas situated between the sidewalk and the back of the curb, wherever possible, should be landscaped with shade trees, evergreens, shrubs, and turf. Shade trees should be planted at equal intervals to create a consistent streetwall and provide a human scale to the corridors.
- Efforts should be made to preserve existing mature tree canopy cover in the Township. Preservation initiatives should include tree removal and relocation, pruning, and protection from construction. Mature trees enhance a corridor's attractiveness, increase development quality, prevent soil erosion, and absorb carbon emissions.
- Landscaping materials should be chosen such that visual impact is maximized while minimizing the maintenance burden on local units of government.



NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Van Buren Township's trail system provides a framework for connections and greater non-motorized access to nearby natural destinations such as parks, shopping areas, Belleville Lake, schools, community facilities, cultural amenities and natural areas.

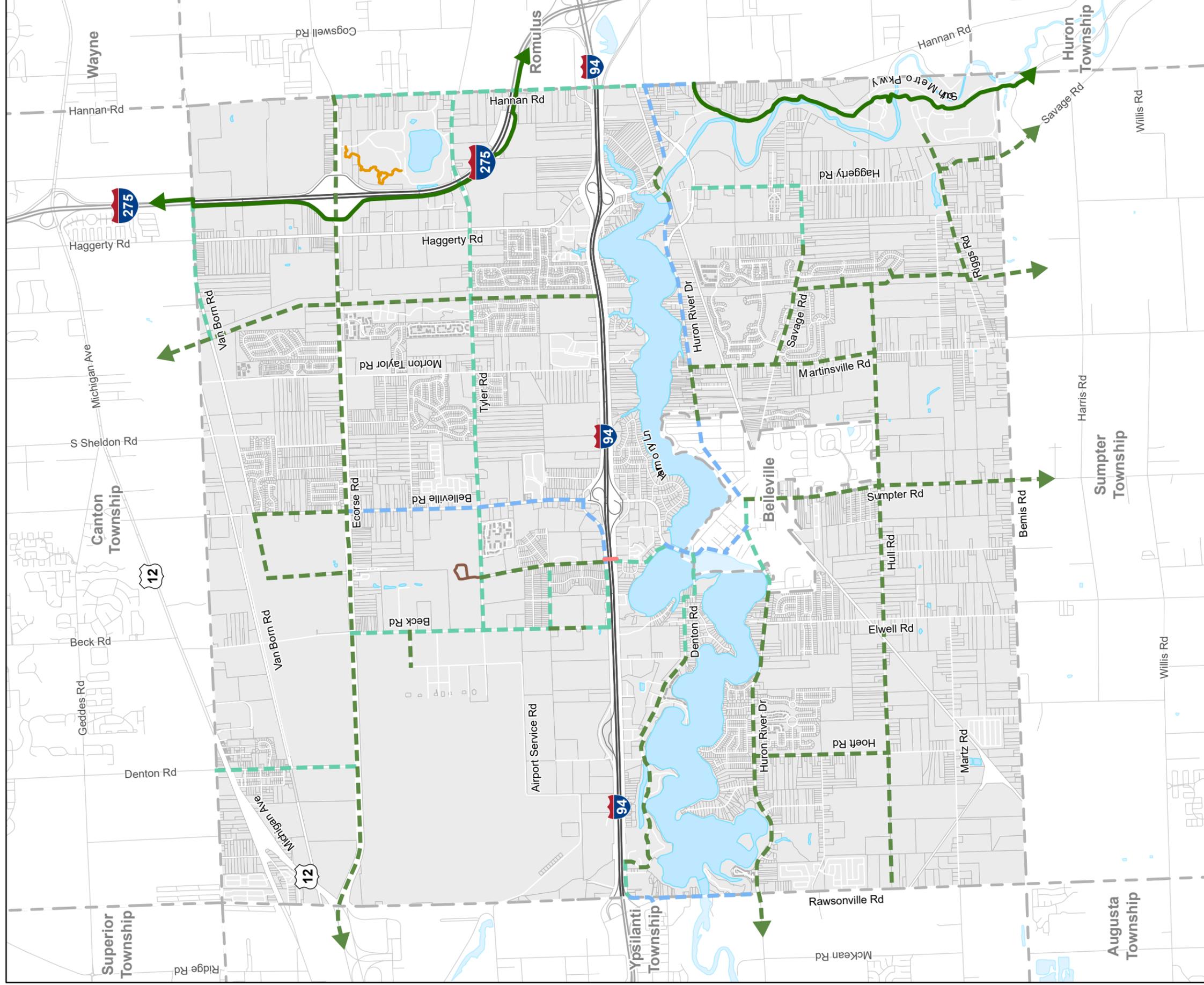
Preservation of open space contributes to the quality of life within the Township in the following ways:

- Creates recreation opportunities for community members
- Strengthens local economy through tourism and increased property values
- Promotes connectivity between regional parks
- Protects the environment through preservation of natural resources
- Encourages physical activity within the community

Currently, the non-motorized transportation system is being expanded in Van Buren Township. A partnership with the City of Belleville, Ypsilanti Township, Wayne County, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and other stakeholders, aims to bridge the gap in the Iron Belle Trail within Washtenaw and Wayne County. Much of the trail runs through Van Buren Township, and provides further connectivity of trails within the surrounding region.

Providing greenway connections around the Township's natural resources, and prioritizing Belleville Lake is essential for better quality of life among residents. The new non-motorized routes will provide Van Buren Township with connections to destinations including: Hydro Park, Van Buren Township Park, Horizon Park, Downtown Belleville, Victory Park, Riggs Heritage Park, Lower Huron Metropark, and Belleville Lake.





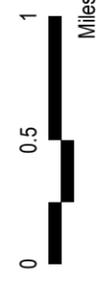
Map 7:
**Non-Motorized
 Facilities**

Charter Township of
 Van Buren, Michigan

March 2, 2020

LEGEND

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Van Buren Parcels
-  Lakes and Rivers
-  Roads
- Non-Motorized Facilities**
-  Class I Pedestrian Lane
-  Class I Bike Lane
-  Class II Bike Lane
-  Class III Bike Route
-  Pedestrian Bridge
-  Crushed Stone & Boardwalk Path
-  Visteon Woods Trail

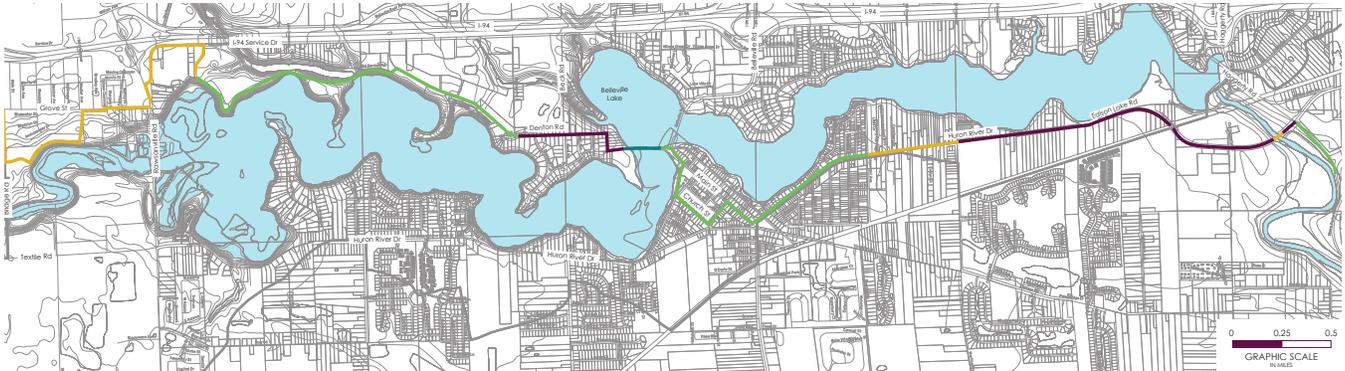


SOURCES
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
 Data Source: Van Buren Township 2020, McKenna 2020



MCKENNA

This page left intentionally blank.



This map, taken from the 2019 Iron Belle Trail Plan, illustrates the new connections of the Iron Belle Trail.

Phase Color Key

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| | Phase I 2020 |
| | Phase II 2021 |
| | Phase III 2021-2022 |
| | Phase IV Beyond 2021 |

Non-Motorized Transportation Routes

1. **Class I Bicycle/Pedestrian** – The bike or pedestrian way is physically separated from vehicle traffic by an open space barrier. Class I routes are proposed in the following areas:
 - a. Beck Road (along the North Middle School property)
 - b. Belleville Road (north of Ecorse Road) and through the vacant property at the corner of Belleville and Ecorse Roads
 - c. Ecorse Road
 - d. Quirk Road (N. I-94 Service Drive to Tyler Road)
 - e. Visteon Woods Trail
2. **Class II Bicycle Lanes** – A portion of the roadway is designated by striping, signing, and pavement markings and is dedicated as a bicycle lane.
 - a. Beck Road (N. I-94 Service Drive to North Middle School property; north of North Middle School property to Tyler Road)
 - b. McBride Road
 - c. Tyler Road
 - d. Quirk Road (S. I-94 Service Drive to Belleville Road)
3. **Class III Bicycle Routes** – Signed, shared roadway bicycle routes with no special treatment except signs.
 - a. Belleville Road (Ecorse Road to N. I-94 Service Drive; Quirk Road to City of Belleville)
 - b. N. I-94 Service Drive (Quirk Road to Belleville Road)



Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) buses connect the western reach of Van Buren Charter Township to Washtenaw County.

Public Transportation and New Mobility

Though situated between the service areas of the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), Van Buren Township has limited or nonexistent connections to these systems. The Township is one of several SMART “opt-out” communities, meaning it is not connected to the major public transportation system serving Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties. Public Transportation services accessible to Township residents are limited to:

- **AAATA Route 45** – AAATA Route 45 terminates on the Township border, stopping at Lakeview Shopping Center on Rawsonville Road and Interstate 94. Route 45 provides a direct connection to downtown Ypsilanti, where riders can access connections to the rest of the AAATA service area, which includes the City of Ann Arbor and portions of its neighboring townships.
- **Van Buren Township September Days Senior Center** – The Township’s Senior Center, located at Township Hall, provides once-weekly transportation to local shopping destinations, as well as by request to destinations within a 20-mile radius, such as medical/dental appointments. Eligible riders are Township residents who are at least 50 years of age or are disabled adults.
- **Veterans Transportation Service** – The US Department of Veteran’s Affairs provides a shuttle service, by appointment, to veterans in the Township traveling to the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System Campus.

Van Buren Township is transited by the D2A2 pilot commuter bus service operated by Michigan Flyer coaches. This service is operated in partnership between the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) and AAATA, and connects downtown Ann Arbor directly with downtown

Detroit. The coaches transit the Township using Interstate 94, but make no stops. The AAATA AirRide service also transits the Township, providing direct service from downtown Ann Arbor to the Detroit Metropolitan Airport McNamara Terminal; again, this service utilizes Interstate 94 through the Township but does not stop.

The RTA 2045 Regional Transit Plan, which was released in 2016 and updated in 2018, is a vision for coordination of regional transportation services. The Plan's proposed service expansions that would directly impact the Township are the addition of commuter rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit, using the existing Michigan Central Rail corridor. The current proposal for this service includes stops in Wayne and Ypsilanti; a new station facility would need to be constructed in the Township for an additional stop to be considered feasible. A regional bus service using Michigan Avenue through the Township, connecting the communities along the corridor, is also proposed.

Funding for implementation of the Plan has been contingent on ballot initiatives which narrowly failed to pass in 2016, and failed to qualify for inclusion on the ballot in 2018. A future referendum to establish funding for implementation is uncertain as of this writing. Strategies to increase access to alternative means of transportation for Township residents, that originate locally and include local partners, include:

- **Local Transit** – Support and encourage the expansion of a community transit service operating peak-hour local circulator routes to connect to AAATA and SMART routes, as well as an expansion of the existing senior paratransit program to provide on-demand service. In the future, demand response mini-transit, including driverless shuttles, could be utilized to connect to multimodal transit hubs during peak hours and circulator service could be expanded.
- **Regional Transit** – Consider supporting connectivity to regional transit service, including opting-in to the SMART system, as well as participating in the AAATA long-range planning process to encourage more direct connections to the Township.
- **Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs)** – This Plan supports advancing the Township transportation network with a robust and sustainable vision for future development. The vision realizes the full potential of CAVs and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) and changing mobility preferences and employment patterns. This technology offers the potential for shorter travel distances, slower traffic speeds, and more transportation options, and pick-up and drop-off zones.

The early adoption of CAV and TNC technology offers many benefits, including potential reductions in parking requirements, the re-purposing of excess parking lots, shared/flexible vehicle lane usage, the inclusion of other modes on the street, reduction of vehicle lane dimensions, the setting of safe target speeds, the design of safe intersections and crosswalks, and pedestrian-priority streets. Excess right-of-way capacity resulting from CAV capacity improvements should be given to bicycles and transit.

To realize the benefits of CAV and TNC technologies, strategies must be deployed in conjunction with transit and nonmotorized systems, particularly to service the first and last miles transit trips, or to integrate these technologies into one or more legs of an otherwise nonmotorized trip.

The Future Land Use Plan for Van Buren Township anticipates new development occurring in mixed-use clusters, creating a series of "nodes" spaced throughout the Township. Within these nodes, the concentration of population near mixed development centers will allow individuals the opportunity to walk or bike to destinations rather than rely upon CAVs and TNCs for short trips. Connecting these nodes to the areas of the Township in between that are less dense and predominantly single-use is an ideal application of CAV and TNC technologies. Use of CAV and TNC technology to create direct connections to SMART and AAATA transit services that terminate on or near the eastern and western borders of the Township, respectively, is an alternative to funding expansion of these services to the Township directly.



IMPLEMENTATION

This section presents tools and techniques that residents, community leaders, and Township administrators can use to implement the Master Plan. The tools and techniques identified herein are available for use under current state legislation. Specific recommendations for implementing certain goals and objectives established herein are also provided.

The Master Plan recommends a future vision for the community, building upon the Township's existing assets and opportunities to attract new development and new residents. The goals and objectives herein should be reviewed often and be considered in decision making by the Township. Successful implementation of this Plan will be the result of actions taken by Township Council, Township Administration and staff, the Planning Commission, and all other Township stakeholders in partnership with entities spanning regional and state government, and the private and non-profit sectors. This Plan will be implemented incrementally by working towards the goals identified in the following Implementation Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Key

| Priority | |
|----------|----------------|
| A | Most Important |
| B | Very Important |
| C | Important |

| Timeframe – Years of Focus | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Ongoing | Ongoing |
| 1–3 years | 2020–2022 |
| 3–5 years | 2023–2025 |
| 5+ years | 2025+ |

| Funding Sources | |
|-----------------|--|
| Public | |
| Private | |
| DDA/TIF | |

Partnerships

| Van Buren Township Local Government | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| TB | Van Buren Township (VBT) Board |
| CM | Other Commission and Community Members |
| TS | Township Staff |
| DDA | VBT Downtown Development Authority |
| PC | VBT Planning Commission |
| PRC | VBT Parks and Recreation Commission |
| Van Buren Township Stakeholder Groups | |
| BO | Business Owners |
| DEV | Local Property Developers |
| HO | Homeowners |
| RC | Religious and Cultural Institutions |
| County, Regional, and State Partners | |
| BV | City of Belleville |
| HC | Healthcare Providers |
| MDOT | Michigan Department of Transportation |
| SEMCOG | Southeast Michigan Council of Governments |
| SM | State of Michigan Government |
| WC | Wayne County Government |
| WCDPS | Wayne County Department of Public Services |

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Residential

To provide an adequate supply of housing that meets the needs of new and existing Township residents of varying income levels, is responsive to changing generational preferences, allows residents to age in place, adds value to the community, and achieves a high standard of excellence in aesthetics and design.

| Objectives | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|--|----------|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Encourage the ongoing maintenance and improvement of existing residential neighborhoods and developments, by observing where reinvestments should occur on a continuing basis, and by keeping apprised of current programs and techniques to quickly achieve identified reinvestments. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | Public |
| 2 Encourage the development of new housing in “missing middle” formats and/or layouts that are currently absent or in short supply, by creating zoning districts and design standards as necessary in the appropriate areas of the Township. | A | 1–3 years | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | Public |
| 3 Density of housing, regardless of housing format, should be compatible with the context of the immediate area and the intent of its future land use category. Generally, densities will be higher and lots will be smaller in the northern portion of the Township; densities will be lower and lots will be larger in the southern and extreme eastern portions of the Township, in the interest of preserving that area’s rural character. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | N/A |
| 4 Development of new multiple-family housing should occur only within mixed-use districts. Existing multiple family developments should be maintained through firm controls and design standards to ensure their continued viability. Redevelopment of existing multiple family developments can occur if design standards are in place that allow “missing middle” housing types to be developed, where appropriate. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | Public Private |
| 5 Street patterns in new and existing residential developments should be designed or retrofitted as necessary to achieve a high level of internal and external connectivity. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | Public Private |
| 6 Neighborhood residents should be able to safely and conveniently access basic goods and services, civic institutions, and recreation facilities, on foot or by means of non-motorized forms of transportation. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | N/A |
| 7 The design of residential areas should preserve natural environmental features, and incorporate recreational amenities. Conservation areas and open lands should be used to define and connect isolated neighborhoods and districts. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, DDA, PC, DEV, HO | Public Private |

Goal: Mixed-Use

To cultivate vibrant neighborhoods and districts that will develop with a mix of residential, retail, entertainment, cultural, and professional, and civic uses, that inspire both residents and visitors, cement community bonds, and achieve a high standard of excellence in their design.

| Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|---|----------|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Mixed-use neighborhoods and districts should be compact and pedestrian friendly, and should conform to traditional neighborhood design principles. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, DDA, PC, BO, DEV | Public Private |
| 2 Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, DDA, PC, BO, DEV | Public Private |
| 3 A broad range of housing types and price levels should be included in mixed-use districts, to bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, DDA, PC, BO, DEV | Public Private |
| 4 Concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in mixed-use neighborhoods and districts. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, DDA, PC, BO, DEV | Public Private |
| 5 The economic health and harmonious evolution of mixed-use neighborhoods, districts, and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, DDA, PC, BO, DEV | Public Private |
| 6 A range of parks, from tot-lots and village greens to ballfields and community gardens, should be distributed within mixed-use neighborhoods and districts. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, DDA, PC, BO, DEV | Public Private |

Goal: Commercial / Office / Industrial

To ensure a strong and diverse local economy by supporting the growth and development of new and existing commercial, office-based, and industrial employers in those areas of the Township where concentrations of such uses have historically occurred. Of equal import is recognition of evolving development preferences, and a readiness to support the evolution of single-use clusters into formats that respond to those evolving preferences when necessary.

| Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|---|----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Through strict land use and zoning policies, avoid the further proliferation of strip commercial development, as this results in hazardous traffic conditions, an unattractive streetscape and long-term re-use issues associated with obsolete strip commercial buildings. | A | Ongoing | TB, CM, DDA, PC | N/A |
| 2 The Belleville Road corridor Gateway Commercial and Town Center areas will constitute the major commercial center for the Township. | B | Ongoing | TS, DDA, PC, BO | Public DDA/TIF |
| 3 In the interest of preserving the rural character of the southern and extreme eastern sides of the Township, future commercial uses will be limited to small clusters that are contextually appropriate in their design, contain a mix of uses, and are pedestrian-friendly. | A | Ongoing | TS, PC, BO, DEV | N/A |
| 4 Downtown Belleville plays a crucial role as the Township's historic commercial center. It provides an historic context that even the most well-intentioned new development cannot replicate. A close future relationship between the Township and City of Belleville is necessary to ensure that downtown Belleville can serve as the commercial center for residents of the Township's south side. | A | Ongoing | TS, PC, BO, DEV, BV | N/A |
| 5 New large concentrations of office uses, absent a research or light industrial component, should be avoided. Such uses should nevertheless be welcomed in the Township, as an important component of Mixed Use districts. | B | Ongoing | TS, PC, DEV | N/A |
| 6 Encourage industry to remain and expand in areas of the Township designated for such on the Future Land Use Map; these areas are best suited for industrial development. | C | Ongoing | TS, PC, BO, DEV | Public DDA/TIF |

| Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|---|----------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| <p>7 Provisions should be made for small-scale industry with minimal externalities and a public-facing component, otherwise known as artisanal or craft industry, to develop in the Township in Mixed Use areas. Examples include small breweries that serve the public, bakeries with a retail component, and small-scale apparel production.</p> | B | 1–3 years | TS, PC, BO, DEV | Public |
| <p>8 Develop and/or strictly maintain existing design standards for commercial, office, and industrial areas, to ensure a standard of excellence in aesthetics and design. Elements of concern include road design, landscaping, parking, architecture, and other design elements.</p> | A | 1–3 years | TS, DDA, PC | Public |
| <p>9 Develop criteria for retrofitting existing single-use commercial, office, and industrial areas with new uses and building formats, so that they may continue to economically function in the event that demand shifts away from these areas.</p> | A | 1–3 years | TB, CM, PC, BO, DEV | Public |

Goal: Rural Character

To ensure the preservation of the Township’s rural character, particularly in the southern portion of the Township, and the preservation of the semi-rural character of the eastern portion of the Township.

| | Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|---|--|----------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | The established Urban Services Boundary for public water and sanitary sewer shall remain in place. | A | Ongoing | TB, TS, PC | N/A |
| 2 | Encourage the preservation of large and significant open spaces through voluntary dedications, development approval extractions, and establishing special funding sources for acquisition, and seeking grants for acquisition. | C | 5+ years | TB, TS, PC, HO | Public |
| 3 | Consider developing innovative programs, including Purchase of Development Rights and Transfer of Development Rights, to retain active agriculture and open spaces in the Township. | B | 3–5 years | TB, TS, PC | Public |
| 4 | Create linear open spaces and open space linkages where natural or agricultural open spaces cannot be preserved in their entirety to preserve a portion of the feature and maximize its function and value. | B | 3–5 years | TB, TS, PC, DEV, HO | Public Private |
| 5 | Apply the relevant land use objectives previously stated with respect to Residential, Commercial, Office, and Industrial uses on the southern and extreme eastern sides of the Township. | A | 1–3 years | TS, PC | N/A |

Goal: Open Space / Natural Resources / Environmental

Provide for the protection and maintenance of the Township’s environmental resources for the purpose of natural beauty, Township character, and ecological preservation.

| Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|--|----------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 In coordination with the phasing of the Iron Belle Trail System, maintain and enhance the scenic value of the Township’s lakefront, specifically along the trail route. | A | 1–3 years | TB, CM, TS, PC, PRC, HO | Public Private |
| 2 Involve stakeholders such as: community environmental groups, adjacent community environmental groups, and state environmental groups in environmental protection implementation working sessions, focused primarily on the Iron Belle Trail System and Belleville Lake. | B | 1–3 years | CM, TS, PC, PRC, SM | Public |
| 3 Apply for federal, state, and local grants to maintain and connect existing trails. | B | 3–5 years | CM, TS, PC, PRC | N/A |
| 4 Require site plan applications to adhere to the Greenways and Trails Master Plan. | A | Ongoing | TS, PC | N/A |
| 5 Implement a Trailways Ordinance that protects trail systems within the Townships, and requires specific setbacks from the trail for new developments. | B | 3–5 years | TB, CM, TS, PC, PRC | Public |
| 6 Promote the protection, preservation and proper maintenance of woodlands (including trees and other forms of vegetation) for economic support of local property values, natural beauty, and geological, ecological and historical significance. | B | 5+ years | CM, TS, PC, PRC | Public Private |
| 7 Consider developing a Township-wide pollinator habitat maintenance plan, to ensure continued ecological stability in the Township and region. | C | 5+ years | CM, TS, PC, PRC | Public Private |

Goal: Mobility

Improve and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system to provide accessible motorized and non-motorized transportation within the Township.

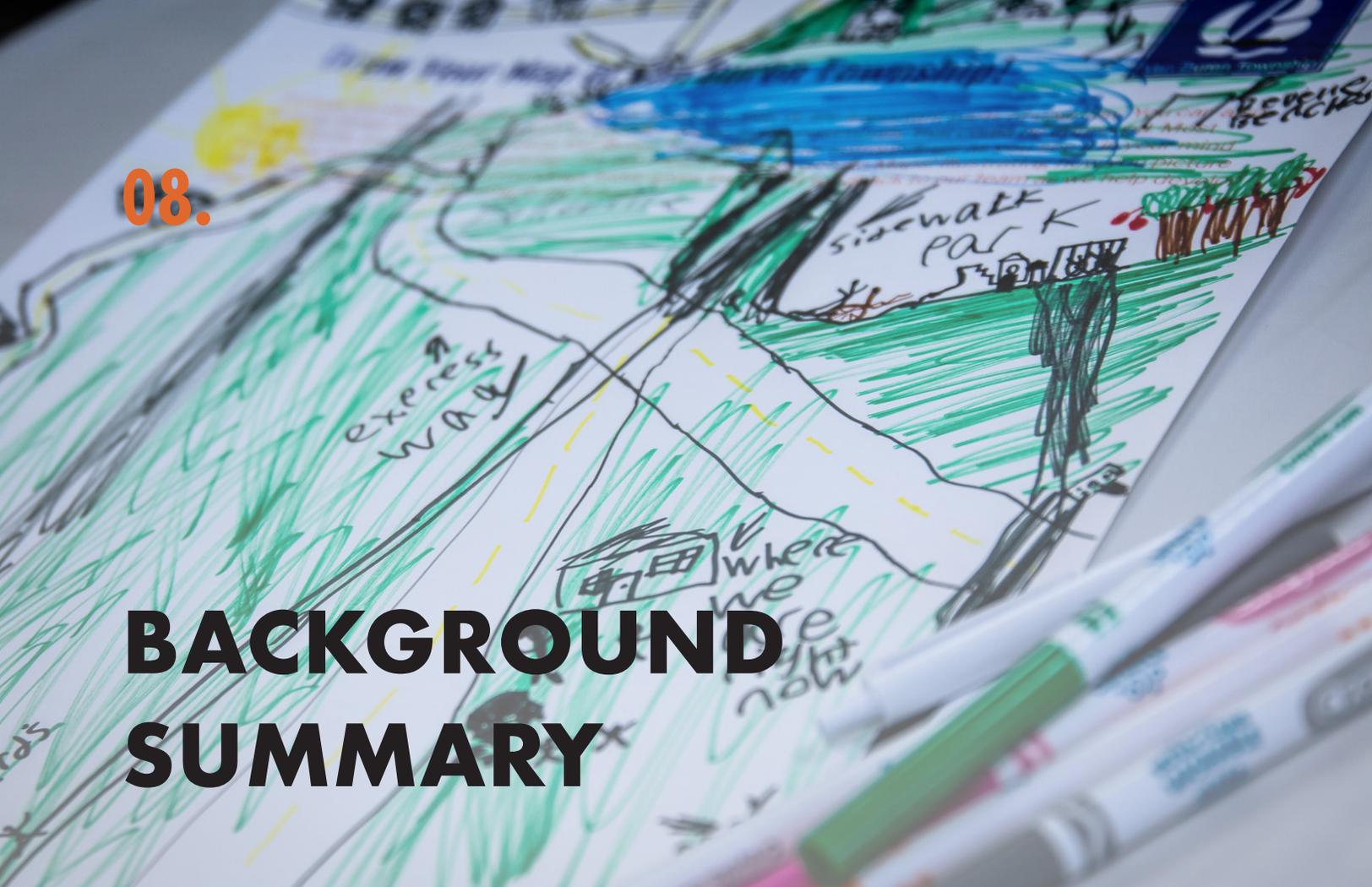
| Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|---|----------|------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1 Maintain close partnerships with the Wayne County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation, the two agencies responsible for maintaining the Township’s highways, roads and streets. Take initiative to collaborate on new and innovative funding opportunities wherever possible to ensure the Township’s road network is adequately maintained. | A | Ongoing | TS, PC, MDOT, SEMCOG, WCDPS | Public Private |
| 2 Develop a strategy to enhance local road connectivity, and complete critical road improvements and connections consistent with the Circulation Plan, to reduce traffic congestion and duplicate trips in key areas of the Township. | A | 1–3 years | CM, TS, DDA, PC, BO, MDOT, SEMCOG, WCDPS | Public |
| 3 Create local trail connections to Phases 1 and 2 of the Iron Belle Trail system. | B | 3–5 years | CM, TS, PC, PRC | Public Private |
| 4 Regulate the location and design of bicycle facilities and bicycle parking through creation of a Zoning Ordinance Amendment. | B | 1–3 years | TS, PC, PRC | Public |
| 5 Create connections between current trails and sidewalks based on a prioritization system. | B | 3–5 years | TS, PC, PRC | Public |
| 6 Connect the Township greenway network with regional greenway networks. | C | 5+ years | TS, PC, PRC | Public Private |
| 7 Develop design and location guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian ways. | A | 1–3 years | TS, PC, PRC | Public |

Goal: Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

Provide all segments of the Township with access to well-maintained community recreational facilities that equally serve residents of all ages and abilities.

| Objectives and Strategies | Priority | Timeframe | Partnerships | Funding Sources |
|--|----------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Improve and maintain existing facilities on a regular and continuing basis. Design of new and existing facilities should be based on the multiple-use concept, providing both active and passive opportunities as appropriate. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, PC, PRC, HO, HC | Public |
| 2 Continue to provide the necessary recreation services to the expanding population of the Township. Maintain existing partnerships, and foster new partnerships, with community organizations to develop, improve, and offer a comprehensive range of recreation programs. | B | 1–3 years | TSPC, PRC, HO, RC, HC | Public Private |
| 3 Maximize use of existing park sites by expanding facilities and amenities available to residents to further increase quality of life for residents, and further encourage others to visit and reside in the Township. | A | 1–3 years | CM, TS, PC, PRC | Public |
| 4 Preserve and protect natural and cultural resources and features, including wooded areas, wetlands, wildlife habitats, natural drainage ways, and historic structures and facilities. | A | Ongoing | CM, TS, PC, PRC, HO | Public Private |
| 5 Update the Township’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan on a regular basis per MDNR standards to continue to be eligible for grant funding. Develop stable sources of funding and practice sound fiscal management of the parks and recreation system. | B | Ongoing | TS, PRC | Public |
| 6 Improve access and transportation to parks and recreation facilities, through utilizing natural features, and the motorized and non-motorized transportation networks. | B | Ongoing | TS, PC, PRC | Public Private |
| 7 Continue the processes for development of the Van Buren Township Community Center, development of parklands in the Town Center Mixed Use district, and enhancement of Van Buren Township Park and Beach. | A | 1–3 years | CM, TS, DDA, PC, PRC | Public Private |

08.



BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Community Profile chapter presents an overview of Van Buren Township’s current conditions—its demographic profile, population, and analysis of housing and economic trends. The inventory in this chapter answers the question, “Where are we today?” As such, the following chapter provides a snapshot of Van Buren Township’s current conditions—population, housing, employment, etc. A critical understanding of where Van Buren Township stands in the region today is necessary as the social and economic capacities of the Township strongly inform the realm of future planning possibilities.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Van Buren Township has a rich history as a residential, commercial, and industrial destination within Metropolitan Detroit. As the halfway point between Detroit and Ann Arbor, the Township maintains a strategic location in the greater Southwest Detroit metropolitan area. Van Buren Township residents have many ties to the central City of Detroit, Ann Arbor and their surrounding communities for work, recreation and entertainment, and shopping, making the community an especially ideal location for potential homeowners with professional and personal relationships within the region.

Data Sources

Van Buren Township’s current demographic situation and trends provide understanding to critical areas of planning, including neighborhoods, parks and open space, walkability, connectivity, and economic development.

The data used in this Plan comes from the 2010 Census, 2014/2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data. The ACS uses statistical sampling over a 5-year period to describe the average characteristics over the period of collection. Additional comparisons were made with the 2000 US Census and other earlier data sources for greater insight on historic trends, along with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) projections. Comparisons were made with neighboring suburban communities (Belleville, Canton Charter Township, Romulus, Sumpter Township, Ypsilanti Charter Township), Wayne and Washtenaw counties, and the State of Michigan.



Van Buren Township’s population was estimated to be 28,328 in 2018.



POPULATION

Since the early 1900s, the population in Van Buren Township has been steadily increasing. From 2000 to 2010, the Township experienced its most dramatic increase in population since the 1970s—adding 5,262 people, an increase of 18%, over that time. Growth in Van Buren Township continued through the recession and the Township’s growth remains stable. This is consistent with many other areas in the region. The Township’s neighboring communities of Belleville, Romulus, and Canton Township, have experienced growth or insignificant negative change in the last 8 years. This is a strong indicator of regional stability. According to 2018 ACS estimates, the population in Van Buren Township was approximately 28,328 in 2018. SEMCOG has projected an approximate 12.6% increase in the Township’s population by 2025, with the figures expected to grow to 31,898 people by that time. Population growth is expected to continue in Van Buren Township well into 2045 with an estimated projection of 35,966 total people.

Van Buren Township today is more racially diverse than at any point in its history. While the Township remains majority white, racial minorities now comprise 35.76% of the population, compared to less than 10% of the Township’s population in 1990. Van Buren Township has also become increasingly attractive for renters who now comprise more than 40% of the Township’s households.

HOUSING

Van Buren Township has historically been built out as a suburban Township, where a large portion of the Township’s housing stock is devoted to detached, single-family residences. This is still true today as 2017 ACS estimates reported that 54.1% of the housing units are detached single family homes. The number of single-family homes reflects a 4.98% increase in single-family homes from 2010 to 2017. During this same time period, the number of multi-unit apartment buildings and townhomes remained relatively unchanged and mobile homes decreased by 4.22%.

At the same time, the number of Townhomes in the Township experienced a slight increase of 4.4%. The relatively young median age of the housing stock (1982) reflects the consistent housing development throughout the last three decades. The age of the Township’s housing, coupled with its vacancy rate (8.4%), indicates that specific housing types may be over represented in the existing housing stock.

EMPLOYMENT

Van Buren Township today offers a balanced mix of both white- and blue-collar occupations. According to ACS data, the unemployment rate in the Township was 5.8% in 2018, a low since 2000 when the rate was 4.38%. While employment figures have improved since the Great Recession, this appears to be attributed to the loss of individuals counted as workers rather than an increase of available jobs locally. There were 460 more workers reported in the civilian labor force in 2018 than in 2010—an increase of roughly 3% over the last 8 years. At the same time, the number of jobs in the Township increased by roughly 387 and the number of unemployed persons decreased by more than three times that amount—approximately 1,369 people. Over this same time, the civilian labor force increased, with the majority of new jobs coming from the manufacturing (+17.22%), retail trade (+29.71%), and transportation/warehousing (+28.71%) industries. The greatest job losses were from the education/health/social assistance (-6.39%), arts/entertainment/recreation/accommodation (-21.40%), and finance/insurance/real estate/rental and leasing (-23.90%) industries.



The age of the Township’s housing, coupled with its vacancy rate, indicates that specific housing types may be over represented in the existing housing stock.



Historic Overview

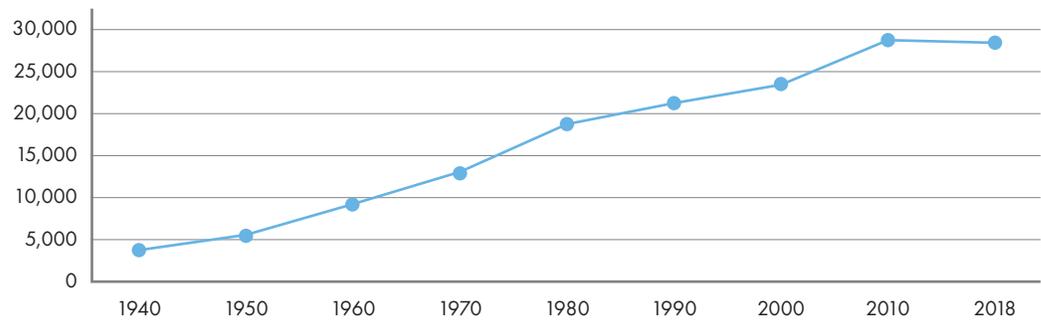
The population in Van Buren Township has been increasing consistently since at least 1940. The Township’s ability to attract new residents over the years can be largely attributed to its prime location near multiple urban cores (i.e. Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Canton), in addition to the beautiful natural features contained within its boundaries. The Belleville Lake area for example, has been recognized as an ideal residential location in the Township for nearly a century. In fact, areas immediately surrounding Belleville Lake contain approximately 40% of the Townships’ population and housing.

Table 5: Total Population of Van Buren Township (1940–2018)

| Year | Population | Numerical Change | Percent Change |
|-------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1940 | 4,525 | -- | -- |
| 1950 | 5,105 | 580 | ▲ 12.82% |
| 1960 | 9,509 | 4,404 | ▲ 86.27% |
| 1970 | 13,162 | 3,653 | ▲ 38.42% |
| 1980 | 18,940 | 5,778 | ▲ 43.90 % |
| 1990 | 21,003 | 2,063 | ▲ 10.89% |
| 2000 | 23,559 | 2,556 | ▲ 12.17% |
| 2010 | 28,821 | 5,085 | ▲ 21.58% |
| 2018* | 28,328 | -493 | ▼ -1.7% |

Source: US Census; *2014-2018 ACS Estimates

**Figure 1:
Total Population of
Van Buren Township
(1940–2018)**



From 1940-2000, in-migration produced a Township population primarily consisting of families with children. The presence of modern single-family homes and well-earning employment opportunities in and around Van Buren Township have helped the community to remain a highly attractive place for individuals and families seeking homeownership. While the Township remains an attractive place for prospective homebuyers—evidenced by a 77% decrease in the number of vacant single-family homes for sale between 2010 and 2018—it appears that the number of new renters has begun to outpace figures for incoming homeowners. According to 2018 ACS data, Van Buren Township has experienced a major shift among incoming populations since 2010 with renters comprising 61% of new residents over the past 8 years—up from 21% in the previous decade.

According to 2018 ACS Estimates, 63% of all Township households were families. This figure represents significant changes in population growth patterns over the last several decades. The number of family households in the Township has decreased by approximately 5% every decade since at least 1970. The number of married-couple families has also decreased accordingly over that same time period, from a high of 92% in 1970. Of the total 7,204 families recorded in the Township in 2018, 40% were married couple families and 39% of all family households had children under 18 years of age.

Table 6: Population Growth Trends of Van Buren Township and Surrounding Communities (1980–2018)

| Municipality | 1980 | | 1990 | | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2018 | |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | Population | Percent Change |
| Van Buren Township | 18,940 | -- | 21,003 | ▲ 10.89% | 23,559 | ▲ 12.17% | 28,644 | ▲ 21.58% | 28,328 | ▼ -1.10% |
| Belleville | 3,366 | -- | 3,270 | ▼ -2.85% | 3,997 | ▲ 22.23% | 3,991 | ▼ -0.15% | 3,898 | ▼ -0.02% |
| Canton Township | 37,590 | -- | 57,047 | ▲ 51.76% | 76,366 | ▲ 33.87% | 90,173 | ▲ 18.08% | 91,223 | ▲ 0.01% |
| Romulus | 1,978 | -- | 22,897 | ▲ 1,057.58% | 22,979 | ▲ 0.36% | 23,989 | ▲ 4.40% | 23,515 | ▼ -0.02% |
| Sumpter Township | 3,021 | -- | 10,891 | ▲ 260.51% | 7,242 | ▼ -33.50% | 9,549 | ▲ 31.86% | 9,393 | ▼ -0.02% |
| Ypsilanti Township | 11,317 | -- | 24,846 | ▲ 119.55% | 49,182 | ▲ 97.95% | 53,362 | ▲ 8.50% | 55,115 | ▲ 3.29% |
| Washtenaw County | 264,740 | -- | 282,937 | ▲ 6.87% | 322,895 | ▲ 14.12% | 344,791 | ▲ 6.78% | 365,961 | ▲ 6.14% |
| Wayne County | 2,337,843 | -- | 2,111,687 | ▼ -9.67% | 2,061,506 | ▼ -2.38% | 1,820,564 | ▼ -11.69% | 1,761,382 | ▼ -3.25% |
| State of Michigan | 9,262,044 | -- | 9,295,297 | ▲ 0.36% | 9,938,444 | ▲ 6.92% | 9,883,640 | ▼ -0.55% | 9,957,488 | ▲ 0.75% |

Source: 1980-2010 US Census; 2013-2018 ACS

Since the early 1900s, the population in Van Buren Township has steadily been increasing. From 2000 to 2010, the Township experienced its most dramatic increase in population since the 1970s, growing by 21.58% to 28,644 people. This trend was mirrored in all adjacent communities with the exception of Sumpter Township, Belleville, and Wayne County as a whole. Attractive factors such as new housing construction, recreational amenities, employment opportunities, and the Township’s location within the greater Detroit/Ann Arbor region have historically contributed to the desirable quality of living in Van Buren Township.

Between 2000 and 2018, Van Buren Township tied Ypsilanti Township for second highest number of building permits issued during that time. Much like trends around the country in the early 2000s, the Township experienced a boom in the housing industry with 1,378 new housing units constructed between 2000 and 2006 alone. These housing units account for 96% of building permits issued between 2000 and 2010. During and in the years immediately following the Great Recession, housing development slowed significantly with the Township having only approved 59 building permits between 2007 and 2012. While housing development has started to rebound past figures seen in the post-recession years, figures have not yet returned to pre-recession levels. Since 2013, the Township has permitted 190 additional housing units. According to 2018 ACS Housing Vacancy data, the Township’s abundance of larger single-family homes may be contributing to the relatively high vacancy rates.

Demographic Analysis and Projections

AN AGING POPULATION

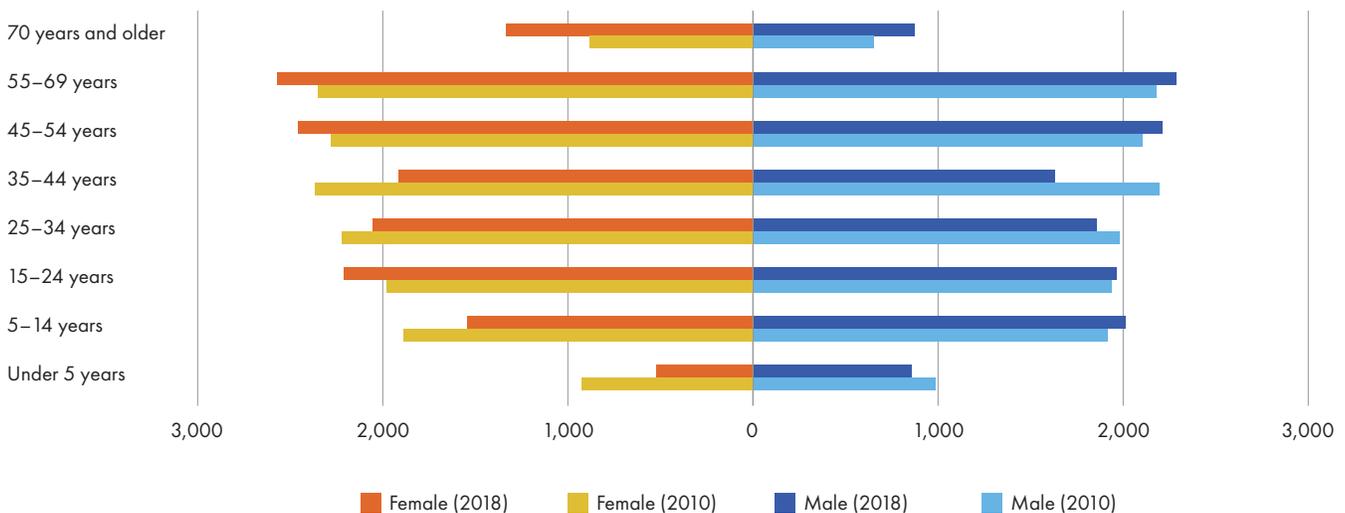
The age of a community’s population has very real implications for planning and development, whether it be schools for population under the age of 18, or housing alternatives for empty nesters and elderly residents.

Table 7: Population by Age and Sex of Van Buren Township (2000-2018)

| Age Category | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2018 | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Under 5 years | 883 | 800 | 990 | 923 | 862 | 534 |
| 5 to 14 years | 1,611 | 1,526 | 1,921 | 1,891 | 2,012 | 1,548 |
| 15 to 24 years | 1,643 | 1,766 | 1,936 | 1,982 | 1,960 | 2,207 |
| 25-34 years | 2,433 | 2,267 | 1,979 | 2,213 | 1,858 | 2,068 |
| 35 to 44 years | 1,960 | 1,876 | 2,190 | 2,361 | 1,629 | 1,909 |
| 45-54 years | 1,718 | 1,689 | 2,098 | 2,280 | 2,212 | 2,460 |
| 55-69 years | 1,187 | 1,154 | 2,180 | 2,350 | 2,292 | 2,573 |
| 70 and older | 438 | 603 | 647 | 880 | 873 | 1,331 |
| Total Population | 11,873 | 11,681 | 13,941 | 14,880 | 13,698 | 14,630 |

Source: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2018 American Community Survey 2025-245 SEMCOG Projections

Figure 2: Van Buren Charter Township Population Age Structure, 2010 and 2018



According to ACS estimates, the Township experienced a median age increase from 36.5 in 2010 to 38.4 in 2018, indicating that half of the population living in Van Buren Township is under the age of 38. This is consistent with projected changes as the median age rises throughout the state and the country. Van Buren Township’s age is typical of the region, with communities like Ypsilanti Township (34.2) on the younger end of the spectrum and communities like Sumpter Township (42.5) on the older end of the spectrum.

Furthermore, in comparison to surrounding communities, Van Buren Township has slightly more individuals in the under 5 age group and has an average size over 65 age group. Van Buren Township has the second largest percentage of individuals in the family forming age group (18-44 years), nearly 40% of its total population. The age structure of the Township has several implications for planning and land use. First, the large number of family forming individuals suggest that there may be an uptick in preschool age children as young individuals begin to form families, increasing demand for larger housing, schools, and recreation facilities.

Table 8: Projected Population Age Structure of Van Buren Township (2018-2045)

| Age Category | 2018 | | 2025 | | 2035 | | 2045 | |
|------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Under 5 years | 1,396 | 4.92% | 1,847 | 5.79% | 1,971 | 5.79% | 2,131 | 5.93% |
| 5 to 17 years | 4,496 | 15.87% | 4,799 | 15.04% | 5,034 | 14.78% | 5,061 | 14.07% |
| 18 to 44 years | 10,695 | 37.75% | 11,383 | 0.00% | 11,694 | 34.33% | 12,190 | 5.93% |
| 45 to 64 years | 8,329 | 29.40% | 8,442 | 15.78% | 8,680 | 25.48% | 9,570 | 26.61% |
| 65+ years | 3,412 | 12.04% | 5,427 | 0.00% | 6,685 | 19.62% | 7,014 | 19.50% |
| Median Age | 38.4 | | 39 | | 41 | | 42 | |
| Total Population | 28,328 | | 31,898 | | 34,064 | | 35,966 | |

Source: 2010 2018 American Community Survey 2025-245 SEMCOG Projections, 2018 ACS Population totals sum to 28,328

To compare the age structure of the community, the population is divided into the following basic age groupings:

| Age | Age Group |
|--------------|------------------|
| Under 5 | Pre-School |
| 5 to 17 | School Age |
| 18-44 | Family Forming |
| 45-64 | Mature Families |
| 65 and older | Retirement |

Second, as individuals in the mature families age group move towards retirement, they may demand new types of housing. Finally, as the retirement age group increases in size, which SEMCOG projects to grow by 106% by 2045, demand for services for senior citizens and elderly residents is likely to grow.

GROWING DIVERSITY

Van Buren Township is more diverse today than it's ever been in the past. The last 30 years in particular were marked by significant changes to the Township's racial makeup. The most significant change to the Township's composition has been an exponential increase in the African-American population as this number of individuals in this demographic group rose by roughly 453% between 1990 and 2010. The number of African-Americans living in the Township continued to rise between 2010 and 2018 but by a less significant margin. Other notable increases between 1990-2010 include that of American Indians (+132%), Asians (+96%), Other racial groups (+287%), Multi-Racial (+50%), and Hispanics (+171%).

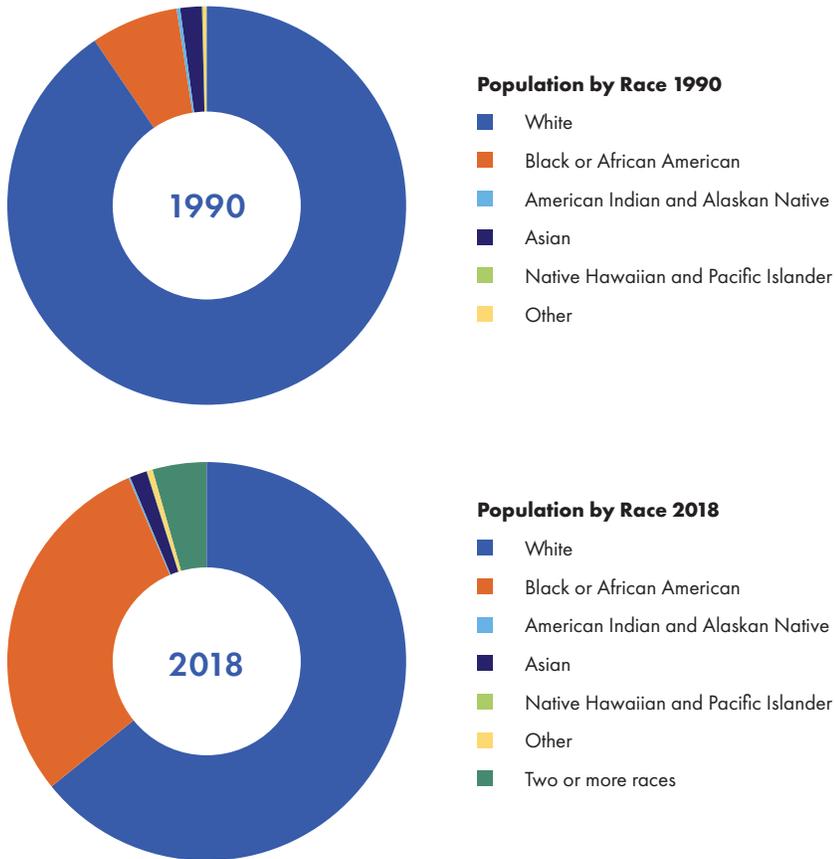
Table 9: Racial Composition of Van Buren Township (1990-2018)

| | 1990 | % Change | 2000 | % Change | 2010 | % Change | 2018 |
|--|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Total | 21,003 (100%) | ▲ 12.15% | 23,554 (100%) | ▲ 22.36% | 28,821 (100%) | ▼ -1.71% | 28,328 (100%) |
| White alone | 19,019 (90.55%) | ▲ 2.33% | 19,463 (82.63%) | ▼ -4.37% | 18,612 (64.58%) | ▼ -2.23% | 18,198 (64.24%) |
| Black or African American alone | 1,494 (7.11%) | ▲ 89.76% | 2,835 (12.04%) | ▲ 191.39% | 8,261 (28.66%) | ▲ 0.63% | 8,313 (29.34%) |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone | 63 (0.30%) | ▲ 103.17% | 128 (0.54%) | ▲ 14.06% | 146 (0.51%) | ▼ -71.23% | 42 (0.15%) |
| Asian alone | 367 (1.75%) | ▲ 19.89% | 440 (1.87%) | ▲ 63.18% | 718 (2.49%) | ▼ -43.18% | 408 (1.44%) |
| Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone | 25 (0.12%) | ▼ -60.00% | 10 (0.04%) | ▲ 40.00% | 14 (0.05%) | 0% | 14 (0.05%) |
| Some other race alone | 60 (0.29%) | ▲ 101.67% | 121 (0.51%) | ▲ 91.74% | 232 (0.80%) | ▼ -51.29% | 113 (0.39%) |
| Two or more races | N/A | N/A | 557 (2.36%) | ▲ 50.45% | 838 (2.91%) | ▲ 47.97% | 1,240 (4.37%) |
| Hispanic or Latino | 290 (1.38%) | ▲ 82.41% | 529 (2.25%) | ▲ 48.58% | 786 (2.73%) | ▲ 33.59% | 1,050 (3.70%) |
| Not Hispanic or Latino | 20,713 (98.62%) | ▲ 11.16% | 23,025 (97.75%) | ▲ 21.76% | 28,035 (97.27%) | ▼ -2.70% | 27,278 (96.29%) |

Source: US Census; American Community Survey 2018

While the Township remains majority white, racial minorities now comprise 35.76% of the population. Racial minorities made up only 9.5% of Van Buren Township's residents in 1990—constituting an increase of more than 410% over the past 30 years. Whites are the only racial group with reported decreases in both the previous (2000-2010) and current (2010-2018) decades.

Figure 3: Population by Race: Change in Van Buren Township Diversity 1990-2018



Racial minorities made up only 9.5% of Van Buren Township’s residents in 1990, compared to 35.8% in 2018.

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

Housing Tenure, Value, & Age

Housing tenure consists of three main categories: owner-occupied, renter-occupied, and vacant. The Township maintains a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing units, 64.6% which is similar to Wayne County, Ypsilanti Township and Belleville and less than Canton Township, Sumpter Township, and Romulus.

Table 10: Households, Occupancy and Housing Value (2018)

| | Total Households | % Owner Occupied | % Renter Occupied |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Van Buren Township | 11,382 | 64.60% | 35.40% |
| Belleville | 1,769 | 67.33% | 32.67% |
| Wayne County | 676,587 | 62.01% | 37.99% |
| State of Michigan | 3,909,509 | 71.03% | 28.97% |

Source: American Community Survey 2018

Over the past eight years, the Township has become increasingly attractive for renters. According to 2018 ACS data, between 2010 and 2018, the Township attracted roughly 49% more renters than homeowners.



Between 2010 and 2018, the Township attracted roughly 49% more renters than homeowners.



Table 11: Year Householder Moved In

| Year Moved In | Owner-Occupied | | Renter-Occupied | |
|---|----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Number | Percent of Total | Number | Percent of Total |
| 2010-2018 | 5,728 | 29.38% | 6,862 | 78.51% |
| 2000-2009 | 8,186 | 41.99% | 1,535 | 17.56% |
| 1990-1999 | 2,298 | 11.79% | 246 | 2.81% |
| 1989 or earlier | 3,285 | 16.85% | 97 | 1.11% |
| Total population in occupied units | 19,497 | 100.00% | 8,740 | 100.00% |

Source: American Community Survey 2018

Over that same time, rental costs increased by 18.54% while the median value of owner-occupied units decreased slightly by 3.76%.

Table 12: Housing Value and Contract Rent

| | Owner-Occupied Units, Median Housing Value | | | Renter-Occupied Units, Median Contract Rent | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------|-----------|---|----------|-------|
| | 2010 | % Change | 2018 | 2010 | % Change | 2018 |
| Van Buren Township | \$162,300 | ↓ -3.76% | \$156,200 | \$685 | ↑ 18.54% | \$812 |
| Belleville | \$141,100 | ↓ -7.65% | \$130,300 | \$610 | ↑ 9.51% | \$668 |
| Wayne County | \$121,100 | ↓ -15.19% | \$102,700 | \$599 | ↑ 10.85% | \$664 |
| State of Michigan | \$144,200 | ↑ 1.39% | \$146,200 | \$595 | ↑ 16.13% | \$691 |

Source: American Community Survey 2018

In addition to meeting the basic need for shelter, housing can also be a component of equitable life outcomes for low- and moderate-income families. Research shows that affordable housing can help improve residents’ health, access to education, and employment prospects. Conversely, high housing cost burdens are associated with negative life outcomes such as declines in mental health, reduced parental enrichment spending and cognitive achievement for low- and moderate-income children, and reduced educational attainment among children. Ensuring housing affordability is important to helping families thrive as it allows them to obtain quality housing and comfortably pay other nondiscretionary costs.

Affordable housing is defined as housing units that cost no more than 30% of income for the section of households in a community whose income is below the median.

Income

Median household income in Van Buren Township is \$57,195. This is due to income stabilization and growth among family households which earn \$10,921 more than the Township median. Median income among non-family households on the other hand are roughly \$20,000 lower than the median, having decreased by nearly 10% between 2010 and 2018.

Based on the income data presented in Table 13, housing affordability for non-family households would mean that annual housing shelter costs shall not exceed more than \$12,455. While rental costs in Van Buren Township have increased by \$127 over the last 8 years, housing costs have remained affordable for non-family households at a median cost of \$9,744 per year—\$2,711 lower than the affordability threshold. The low prevalence of housing cost burden for low-to-moderate income households contributes to the overall attractiveness of Van Buren Township.



Affordable housing can help improve residents’ health, access to education, and employment prospects...

The low prevalence of housing cost burden for low-to-moderate income households contributes to the overall attractiveness of Van Buren Township.



Table 13: Median Household Income of Van Buren Township and Surrounding Communities (2010-2018)

| | Estimated Median Household Income (All Households) | | | Estimated Median Household Income (Family Households) | | | Estimated Median Household Income (Non-Family Households) | | |
|--------------------|--|----------|----------|---|----------|----------|---|-----------|----------|
| | 2010 | % | 2018 | 2010 | % | 2018 | 2010 | % | 2018 |
| Van Buren Township | \$54,077 | ▲ 5.77% | \$57,195 | \$66,405 | ▲ 2.58% | \$68,116 | \$41,347 | ▼ -9.63% | \$37,367 |
| Belleville | \$45,735 | ▲ 9.47% | \$50,068 | \$67,955 | ▼ -0.03% | \$67,935 | \$33,045 | ▼ -17.28% | \$27,335 |
| Wayne County | \$42,241 | ▲ 7.29% | \$45,321 | \$52,946 | ▲ 9.66% | \$58,061 | \$26,770 | ▲ 6.74% | \$28,574 |
| State of Michigan | \$48,432 | ▲ 13.43% | \$54,938 | \$60,341 | ▲ 15.50% | \$69,691 | \$28,344 | ▲ 14.10% | \$32,341 |

Source: 2010 US Census; 2018 ACS

Housing Stock

HOUSING TYPE, SIZE, & DENSITY

Despite being largely suburban, when compared to the County and adjacent communities, the Township generally provides more diversity in housing options (apartments, condos, mobile homes) than the immediate region. As shown in the following Table 14, the number of Townhomes in Van Buren Township is comparable to that of Wayne County and the State of Michigan while the amount of Multi-Family Housing and Mobile Homes is higher than county and state averages.

Table 14: Occupied Housing Units by Type in Van Buren Township and Surrounding Communities (2018)

| Housing Type | Van Buren Township | | Belleville | | Wayne County | | State of Michigan | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Single Family Detached | 6,157 | 54.09% | 924 | 52.23% | 482,992 | 71.39% | 2,837,744 | 72.59% |
| Townhomes/ Attached Condos | 665 | 5.84% | 62 | 3.50% | 37,357 | 5.52% | 184,958 | 4.73% |
| Multi-Family Housing | 3,385 | 29.74% | 478 | 27.02% | 144,821 | 21.40% | 699,410 | 17.89% |
| Mobile Homes/Other | 1,175 | 10.32% | 305 | 17.24% | 11,417 | 1.69% | 187,397 | 4.79% |
| Total | 11,382 | 100.0% | 1,769 | 100.0% | 676,587 | 100.0% | 3,909,509 | 100.0% |
| Median Year Structure Built | 1982 | | 1976 | | 1955 | | 1970 | |

Source: 2018 ACS

Van Buren Township has historically been built out as suburban Township, where a large portion of the Township's housing stock is devoted to detached, single-family residences. As shown in the following Table 15, this is still true today as single-family housing comprise more than 50% of the Township's housing stock.

Table 15: Change in Housing Units by Type in Van Buren Township (1980-2017)

| Year | Total Housing Units | Single-Family Detached Dwelling Units | | Townhomes/ Attached Condos | | Multi-Family Housing | | Mobile Homes/Other | |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1980 | 7,041 | 3,943 | 56.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 2,324 | 33.00% | 774 | 11.00% |
| 1990 | 8,432 | 3,961 | 46.98% | 403 | 4.78% | 2,791 | 33.10% | 1,277 | 15.14% |
| 2000 | 10,414 | 4,628 | 44.44% | 385 | 3.70% | 3,890 | 37.35% | 1,511 | 14.51% |
| 2010 | 12,298 | 6,128 | 49.83% | 637 | 5.18% | 3,899 | 31.70% | 1,634 | 13.29% |
| 2017 | 12,571 | 6,890 | 54.81% | 603 | 4.80% | 3,938 | 31.33% | 1,140 | 9.07% |

Source: 1980-2020 Census; 2017 ACS

The number of single-family homes reflects a 4.98% increase in single-family homes from 2010 to 2017. During this same time period, the number of multi-unit apartment buildings and townhomes remained relatively unchanged and mobile homes decreased by 4.22%.

Table 16: Housing Vacancy in Van Buren Township (2010-2018)

| | 2010 | | 2018 | | % Change |
|----------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|----------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | |
| Owner Vacancy | 283 | 2.13% | 137 | 1.1% | ↓ -1.03% |
| Renter Vacancy | 857 | 6.44% | 982 | 7.9% | ↑ 1.46% |

Source: US Census; 2018 ACS

While the Township’s supply of multi-family housing is above the statewide average, recent growth in this housing type appears insufficient to meet the demands of the new and burgeoning population of renters. This is evidenced by the high (7.9%) and increasing vacancy rates for rental properties, compared to the very low (1.1%) and decreasing vacancy rates for owner properties.

Existing multi-family housing in the Township is primarily composed of large garden apartment-style complexes. This type of housing product was the predominant type of multiple-family development built in the United States during the 1970s through 1990s, when the Township was rapidly growing. In recent years, housing preferences among those who rent have diversified to include a variety of housing types that were commonly built before World War II, otherwise termed “Missing Middle” housing (see page 8). Another consequence of shifting preferences includes new renters choosing to rent single-family houses in the Township, advertised privately by their owners.

It can be assumed that the shift in vacancy rates by housing type is due to shifting preferences: renters either not finding their preferred housing format(s) in Van Buren Township and seeking accommodation elsewhere, or renters finding accommodation in privately-owned single-family houses in the Township. Future zoning standards for new residential development should be developed to ensure a diverse range of housing formats are developed in the Township.



While the Township’s supply of multi-family housing is above the statewide average, recent growth in this housing type appears insufficient to meet the demands of the new and burgeoning population of renters.



Table 17: Average Household Size in Van Buren Township (1970-2018)

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2018 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Household Size | 3.59 | 2.83 | 2.63 | 2.38 | 2.42 | 2.52 |

Source: U.S. Census, 2018 SEMCOG

Nearly 60% of all Van Buren Township’s housing stock features three or more bedrooms. Larger homes are ideal for growing families but presents challenges for Van Buren Township’s aging population, incoming young professionals, and small low-to-moderate income families.

Geographic Distribution of Residents

Figure 4: Census Tracts and Block Groups



CHILDREN AND SENIORS

Children are a significant indicator of the presence of families as most individuals under 18 reside with parents. By locating children, we can better understand the characteristics, living conditions, and choices made by families. The most significant proportion of children in the Township reside in Census Tract 587900, which covers the northeastern portion of the Township.

In terms of area spread throughout the Township, the number of children and families appears to be more evenly distributed. Approximately 32% of children live in the northeastern portion of the Township. 34% of children live in the southwestern portion of the Township and 25% of children live in the southeastern portion of the Township.

Table 18: Distribution of Children and Seniors in Van Buren Township (2018)

| Census Tract | Residents under 18 years of age | % of Township Children | Residents 60 years of age and older | % of Township Seniors |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Van Buren Township North of I-94 | | | | |
| 587900 | 1,911 | 32.43% | 846 | 16.72% |
| 588000 | 1,134 | 19.25% | 860 | 16.99% |
| 588100 | 427 | 7.25% | 416 | 8.22% |
| Van Buren Township South of I-94 | | | | |
| 588200 | 506 | 8.59% | 459 | 9.07% |
| 588300 | 950 | 16.12% | 1,195 | 23.61% |
| 588400 | 964 | 16.36% | 1,285 | 25.39% |

Source: 2018 ACS

While the north side of the Township holds approximately 40% of seniors, the south side of the Township is home to 60% of the local senior population. Aside from the low population figures reported in the Willow Run Airport area, Census Tract 588100, the entire northwest section of the Township—which accounts for roughly 9% of seniors—seniors are spread pretty evenly throughout the entire Township.

The majority of seniors—approximately 60%—live on the Township’s south side.

RACE & ETHNICITY

Most areas of the Township are very diverse, with racial/ethnic minority concentrations of approximately 20% or higher. Racial/Ethnic minority groups comprise more than 50% of the population in block groups located in the northeast corner of the Township, 587900-1 (52.14%); and westernmost areas of Belleville Lake, directly south of I-94, 588200-1 (53.32%), and 588200-2 (57.80%). There are some block groups on the other hand with racial/ethnic concentrations well below the Township average including areas directly west of Belleville City 588300-1 (2.09%); south-westernmost area of the Township 588300-2 (15.28%); and the Willow Run Airport area 588100-1 (17.93%).

RENTERS

The greatest concentrations of renters in the Township can be found in the westernmost area of Belleville Lake, directly south of I-94 588200-1 (82.65%), 588200-2 (78.20%); generally, throughout block groups in the Grace Lake Area 587900-3 (47.94%), 588000-1 (48.53%), 588000-2 (49.6%), and 588000-3 (47.7%).

POVERTY

According to 2018 ACS estimates roughly 11.2% of the Township's population lives below the poverty level. Most areas of the Township have low concentrations of poverty. Areas of the Township with poverty levels which exceed the Township average include block groups in the Grace Lake Area, 587900-3 (31.89%), 5880-3 (14.14%); northwesternmost area of the Township 588100-2 (23.6%); westernmost areas of Belleville Lake directly south of I-94 588200-1 (15.72%), and 588200-2 (15.22%).

When we overlap figures of renter concentrations with figures representing concentrations of racial/ethnic minority groups, the following areas stand out most:

- Block Group 587900-3 with 47.94% renters and 38.23% minority group populations.
- Block Group 588000-1 with 48.53% renters and 43.08% minority group populations.
- Block Group 588000-2 with 49.60% renters and 41.30% minority group populations.
- Block Group 588000-3 with 47.70% renters and 33.79% minority group populations.
- Block Group 588200-1 with 82.65% renters and 53.32% minority group populations.
- Block Group 588200-2 with 78.20% renters and 57.80% minority group populations.

In these six block groups, both renter concentrations exceed the Township average of 35.40% and racial/ethnic group concentrations exceed one third of the population in a given area.

When we overlap concentrations of renters, racial/ethnic minorities, and poverty, the following block groups stand out most having higher than average concentrations of all three indicators:

- Block Group 587900-3
- Block Group 588000-3
- Block Group 588200-1
- Block Group 588200-2

Table 19: Concentration of Renters, Non-White Racial / Ethnic Groups, and Poverty by Census Tract, 2018

| | | Renter Concentrations | Non-White Racial/Ethnic Concentrations | Poverty Concentrations |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Van Buren Township Average | | 35.40% | 35.76% | 11.2% |
| Census Tract 587900 | | | | |
| Block Group | 587900-1 | 16.05% | 52.14% | 6.93% |
| | 587900-2 | 26.67% | 43.60% | 2.75% |
| | 587900-3 | 47.94% | 38.23% | 31.89% |
| Census Tract 588000 | | | | |
| Block Group | 588000-1 | 48.53% | 43.08% | 0.05% |
| | 588000-2 | 49.60% | 41.30% | 4.44% |
| | 588000-3 | 47.70% | 33.79% | 14.14% |
| Census Tract 588100 | | | | |
| Block Group | 588100-1 | 23.03% | 17.93% | 2.12% |
| | 588100-2 | 2.11% | 24.63% | 23.60% |
| Census Tract 588200 | | | | |
| Block Group | 588200-1 | 82.65% | 53.32% | 15.72% |
| | 588200-2 | 78.20% | 57.80% | 15.22% |
| Census Tract 588300 | | | | |
| Block Group | 588300-1 | 16.17% | 2.09% | 0.05% |
| | 588300-2 | 16.82% | 15.28% | 2.79% |
| | 588300-3 | 1.04% | 19.89% | 0.05% |
| Census Tract 588400 | | | | |
| Block Group | 588400-1 | 11.26% | 44.15% | 5.31% |
| | 588400-2 | 11.72% | 30.07% | 0.12% |
| | 588400-3 | 12.05% | 19.89% | 2.42% |

Source: 2018 ACS

*Bolted figures are higher than the Township average.

It is imperative that the Township further examine areas where renters, racial/ethnic minorities, and poverty are concentrated at rates that appear high or higher than the Township average. The Township should consider the specific needs of these groups with regard to housing, employment, recreation, etc. in future plans.

EMPLOYMENT & LABOR FORCE

The economy of Van Buren Township employs 14,657 people. The largest industries in Van Buren Township are Manufacturing (3,138 people), Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance (3,135 people), and Retail Trade (1,589 people), and the highest paying industries are Manufacturing (\$60,217), Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing (\$56,563), and Information (\$56,014).

While some industries in Van Buren Township have lost some jobs since 2010, SEMCOG projections show Van Buren Township consistently adding new jobs through 2045, specifically in the Professional, Technical Services, Corporate HQ (+108.7%), and Healthcare Services (37.6%) industries

The 2018 ACS estimates an unemployment rate for the Township of around 5.8% which is less than Wayne County, Romulus, and Ypsilanti Township.

COMMUTING PATTERNS

The SEMCOG 2016 commuter data shows that 10,446 workers commute to Van Buren Township with approximately 50% of that population commuting from Ypsilanti Township, Canton Township, Westland, Romulus, Dearborn Heights, Sumpter Township, Livonia, Dearborn, Taylor, and outside of the region. Out of the 12,241 workers commuting out of Van Buren Township in 2016, 13.1% of the population commutes to Ann Arbor. The next two most popular working destinations are Detroit (8.4%) and Dearborn (7.0%). Additionally, approximately 15.3% of the total work force in 2010 lived and worked in Van Buren Township—a 3.8% increase since this information was last reported by SEMCOG in 2010.

While 2018 ACS data shows that less than 0.1% of workers use Public Transportation, 75.5% of all housing units have two or more vehicles available.

DEMOGRAPHICS: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



The 2019 Fireworks Show at Beck Fields.

Summary

The foregoing analysis identifies demographic characteristics of Van Buren Township. The primary findings of the demographic analysis are:

1. Van Buren Township's population has effectively remained stable over the past eight years. The population loss measured between 2010-2018 is insignificant, and consistent with trends in surrounding communities. The 2020 Census, when released in 2021, will provide a more definitive picture of the Township's population.
2. Van Buren Township today is much more diverse than it has ever been in the past with racial minorities comprising roughly 36% of the population.
3. The Township's median age is typical of the region.
4. Relative to surrounding communities, Van Buren Township has slightly more individuals in the under 5 age group and has an average size over 65 age group. Both of these cohorts are projected to increase over the next two decades with SEMCOG projecting a 53% increase in school age children and a 106% increase in individuals 65 years and older.
5. While the Township has a strong core of longtime residents, it remains an attractive place for prospective residents given that nearly 50% of the Townships families have moved in over the last decade.
6. Renters have comprised 61% of new residents over the past 8 years—up from 21% in the previous decade.
7. The number of family households in the Township has decreased by approximately 5% every decade since at least 1970. Non-family households now comprise 37% of the Township.
8. According to 2018 ACS Housing Vacancy data, the Township's abundance of larger single-family homes may be contributing to relatively high vacancy rates.

Conclusions

The primary findings of the demographic analysis have several implications for Van Buren Township's land use and development policies:

1. Previous land use and development planning and policies were adopted and implemented in the context of preserving agricultural land and supporting large-lot development. This has significant implications for renters in Van Buren Township today, as the vacancy rate for rental housing is more than seven times that of owner-occupied housing. It can be assumed that the shift in vacancy rates by housing type is due to shifting preferences: renters either not finding their preferred housing format(s) in Van Buren Township and seeking accommodation elsewhere, or renters finding accommodation in privately-owned, single-family houses in the Township. Future zoning standards for new residential development should be developed to ensure a diverse range of housing formats are developed in the Township.
2. As the mature families age group moves towards retirement, their housing choices may have implications for the demand for new and different housing types.
3. The large number of family forming individuals suggest that there may be an uptick in preschool age children as young individuals begin to form families, increasing demand for larger housing, schools, and recreation facilities.
4. As the retirement age group increases in size, demand for services for senior citizens and elderly residents are likely to grow.



Outdoor entertainment at the 2018 Health and Wellness Expo

2019 MASTER PLAN SURVEY SUMMARY

As part of the multi-part public engagement process for the Master Plan Update, an initial survey was conducted from July 5, 2018 to August 31, 2018 that generated 769 responses. Upon examining these results, we found that there was a significant underrepresentation of responses from renters in the survey data. Initial survey data revealed that just 7.29% of respondents were renters despite 2017 ACS Estimates which revealed that approximately 35.32% of Van Buren Townships housing units are occupied by renters. Given this initial analysis, additional efforts were made to encourage participation from renters during the Master Plan public participation process. Between July 22, 2019 and August 12, 2019, a second survey was conducted targeting areas where renters are likely to live. The results of both the 2018 survey and 2019 survey are summarized below and the unedited results will be provided in this package.

Key Survey Results

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------|---|---|
| Age | The majority of survey respondents, 82.87%, were between the ages of 25–64 years old. Individuals over the age of 65 made up 11.76% of respondents and those under the age of 24 comprised 3.59% of respondents. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 8.8% of Van Buren Township residents are ages 65 years and older, and 33.5% of residents are ages 24 years and younger. | The majority of survey respondents, 80.26%, were between the ages of 25–64 years old. Individuals over the age of 65 made up 8.35% of respondents and those under the age of 24 comprised 10.06% of respondents. According to the 2017 ACS Estimates, 7.3% of Van Buren Township residents are ages 65 years and older, and 36.4% of residents are ages 24 years and younger. |
| Gender | There were almost twice as many female respondents as there were male respondents. | Females comprised over 2/3 of respondents while males comprised just 31.24% of respondents. |
| Income | The majority of survey respondents reported being middle class income earners. Over 25% of respondents reported having household incomes of \$60,000–\$99,999, and almost 38% reported household incomes over \$100,000. | A good deal of income diversity was reported among respondents. Roughly 29.03% of respondents reported having household incomes of \$30,000–\$59,999, 26.76% reported earning incomes of \$60,000–\$99,000, and 24.29% reported household incomes over \$100,000. |

RESIDENCY AND HOUSING

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Occupancy Characteristic | Almost 80% of respondents reported owning a home and residing in Van Buren Township. Less than 8% of respondents (7.29%) rent their residence in Van Buren Township. According to 2017 ACS Estimates, 35.32% of the residences in Van Buren Township are renter-occupied—an estimated 3.52% increase since 2010—so additional efforts will be made to encourage participation from renters during the Master Plan public participation process. | There was a near-even split between homeowners and renters in the Township with 49.34% of respondents reporting owning a home and residing in Van Buren Township and 43.26% of respondents reporting renting a home and residing in Van Buren Township. According to 2017 ACS estimates, renters have generally comprised more than half (52%) of the Township’s incoming residents since 2010. |
| Residency | Roughly 32.61% of survey respondents indicated that they were very long-time residents of Van Buren Township, having lived in the Township for 21 years or longer. Nearly 20% of respondents reported being relatively new residents of Van Buren Township, having lived there for 5 years or less. There was a pretty even—approximately 13%—split between residents who have lived in the Township for 6–10 years, 11–15 years, and 16–20 years. Among respondents who do not live in Van Buren Township, 40.23% reported living in Belleville, and 21.84% reported living in Sumpter Township. | Roughly 39.77% of respondents reported being new residents, having lived in the Township 5 years or less and 25.95% of respondents reported being very long-time residents of the Township, having lived there 21 years or longer. Among respondents who do not live in Van Buren Township, 32.43% reported living in Belleville, and 29.73% reported living in Sumpter Township. |

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Housing Type | More than 88% of respondents live in a single-family dwelling, and the other respondents live in an apartment, townhouse, or duplex. Almost 93% of respondents who are Van Buren Township residents do not intend on moving in the near future. | Approximately 54.27% of respondents live in single-family dwellings and 40.23% live in apartments. Roughly 86.36% of respondents who live in Van Buren Township expect to continue doing so in the near future. |
| Household Size | Responses trended slightly more towards larger household sizes. Roughly 42.20% of respondents reported a household size of 3–4 persons and 12.40% of respondents reported household sizes of 5 or more. Roughly 36.45% of respondents reported a household size of 2. Less than a tenth of respondents (8.95%) reported living alone. | Responses trended slightly more towards smaller household sizes and respondents were more likely to live alone. Roughly 37.38% of respondents recorded a household size of 2 and 33.40% of respondents recorded a household size of 3–4. Approximately 21.63% of respondents reported living alone (or a household size of 1). |

EXISTING CONDITIONS

| 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|
| Almost 80% of respondents reported owning a home and residing in Van Buren Township. Less than 8% of respondents (7.29%) rent their residence in Van Buren Township. According to 2017 ACS Estimates, 35.32% of the residences in Van Buren Township are renter-occupied—an estimated 3.52% increase since 2010—so additional efforts will be made to encourage participation from renters during the Master Plan public participation process. | There was a near even split between homeowners and renters in the Township with 49.34% of respondents reporting owning a home and residing in Van Buren Township and 43.26% of respondents reporting renting a home and residing in Van Buren Township. According to 2017 ACS estimates, renters have generally comprised more than half (52%) of the Townships’ incoming residents since 2010. |
| When asked about positive aspects of Van Buren Township, the most common answers included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location in the greater Detroit region 57.22% • Accessibility to Belleville Lake 53.70% • Quality of public safety 44.81% • Housing affordability 43.33% • Rural character 40.93% • Parks and recreation 39.07% | When asked about positive aspects of Van Buren Township, the most common answers included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location in the greater Detroit region 56.03% • Accessibility to Belleville Lake 49.25% • Proximity to employment 42.21% • Housing affordability 41.46% • Quality of public safety 39.95% • Parks and recreation 35.93% |

Analysis: While both sets of respondents generally appear to value the same things about Van Buren Township, rural character appears to be of great value to the group comprised mostly of homeowners (2018), while the group where renters were more prevalent (2019) appears to place a high value on the proximity to employment offered by the Township’s location.

| | |
|---|---|
| When asked about negative aspects of Van Buren Township, the most common answers included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road maintenance. 69.32% • Lack of non-motorized transportation*. 44.55% • Vacant businesses and storefronts 44.55% • Traffic volume 44.36% • Lack of cultural events/entertainment options 33.83% • Area schools. 29.02% • Truck traffic 28.10% | When asked about negative aspects of Van Buren Township, the most common answers included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road maintenance. 58.54% • Vacant businesses and storefronts 44.22% • Traffic volume 41.71% • Lack of non-motorized transportation*. 34.67% • Lack of cultural events/entertainment options 29.40% • Truck traffic 24.12% • Area schools. 20.60% |
|---|---|

Analysis: There is little variation between the negative aspects identified between respondents in 2018 and 2019.

* Non-Motorized Transportation includes bike paths, sidewalks, etc.

Building off of the most common negative aspect within the responses, road maintenance, 72.46% of respondents in 2018 and 66.50% of respondents in 2019 shared that the important aspect to be improved in the Township is better maintenance of county roads. Other important improvements identified in 2018 and 2019 include:

| | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|--------|--------|
| More entertainment, dining, and/or nightlife options | 56.19% | 59.00% |
| Greater transportation options (bike paths, sidewalks, etc.) | 44.73% | 40.00% |
| More interesting public places | 32.35% | 31.25% |

RETAIL/DOWNTOWN

Respondents were asked what factors impacted their spending decisions on shopping, dining and entertainment. The most important factors among respondents in 2018 and 2019 were:

- Access to sit down restaurants
- Choice, price, and variety are the most important factors for my everyday shopping purchases
- Convenience is the most important factor for my everyday shopping purchases

Canton Township is the most popular place to shop for Van Buren Township Residents (86.09%, 2018; 83.93%, 2019). Other common places to shop for Township residents include: Ann Arbor Area (71.80%, 2018; 70.15%, 2019), Belleville (44.92%, 2018; 41.07%, 2019), and Ypsilanti Area (40.41%, 2018; 44.13%, 2019).

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES/FUTURE

When asked about future housing development needs, respondents leaned more towards low density options with minor exception.

When asked about whether or not Van Buren Township needs more, less, or has the right amount of various housing types, respondents in 2018 and 2019 were generally not in favor of more multi-family development. Quadraplexes, Attached Townhouses, Triplexes, and Duplexes were the most disliked housing styles among respondents in both 2018 and 2019.

On the other hand, more than 40% of respondents in 2018 and more than 50% of respondents in 2019 were in favor of more single-family housing, approximately 40% of respondents in both years were in favor of more active senior housing, and roughly 38% of respondents in 2018 and 2019 were in favor of more assisted living facilities.

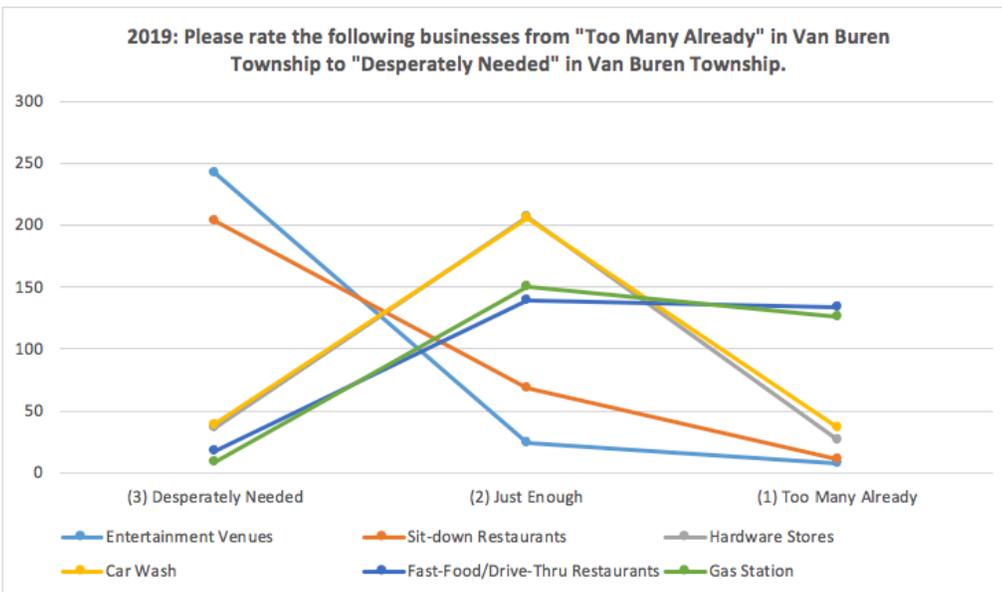
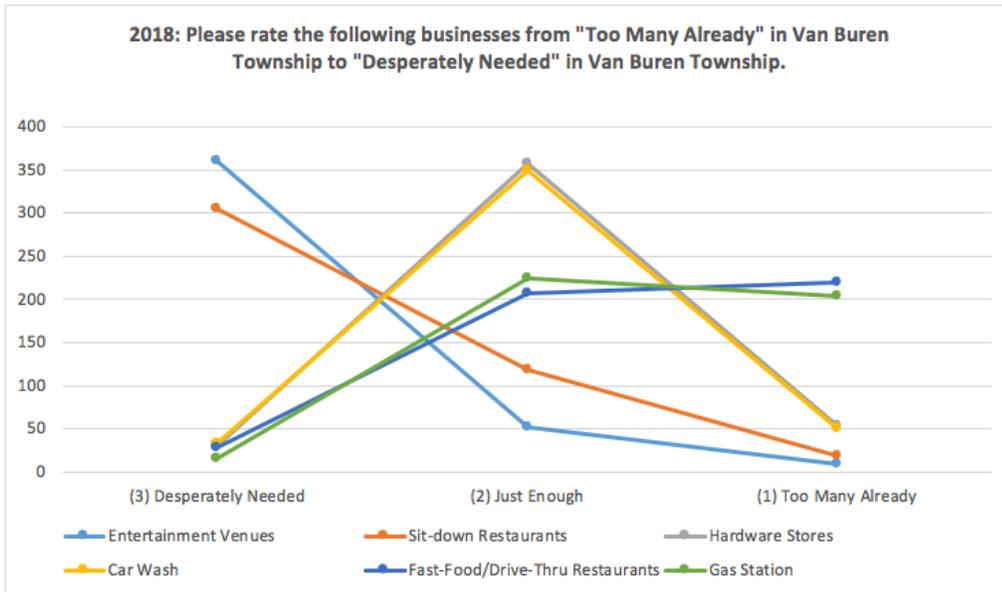
The respondents were also asked to choose the importance level of general development priorities in the community. The extremely important priorities of those who responded included maintaining existing County roadways (nearly 70% of respondents in 2018 and roughly 63% of respondents in 2019), eliminating blighted structures (roughly 50% in 2018 and 2019), and assuring that new development/redevelopment is well-designed and attractive (more than 45% of respondents in 2018 and roughly 42% of respondents in 2019)

When considering economic development goals of extreme importance, respondents further indicated that they would like to see more encouragement of:

- Food service businesses (36.45%, 2018; 32.00%, 2019)
- Start-up businesses and entrepreneurship (34.26%, 2018; 28.57%, 2019)
- Additional retail businesses (33.69%, 2018; 25.33%, 2019)

Those who responded indicated that items with no importance at all included attracting additional distribution centers and warehousing uses (roughly 47% of respondents in 2018 and 2019) and attracting additional industrial and production uses (roughly 35% of respondents in 2018 and 37% of respondents in 2019).

Respondents were asked rate several business activities from "Too Many Already" in Van Buren Township to "Desperately Needed" in Van Buren Township (numbered for chart clarification purposes) including: (1), too many already (2), just enough and (3), desperately needed. The results are shown in the following chart, with respondents indicating that entertainment venues are most desperately needed and that there are far too many gas stations.



BUSINESS GROWTH

The majority of respondents (71.24%, 2018 and 35.29%, 2019) indicated that competition with commercial areas outside the community and attracting customers are the most significant obstacles for business growth in Van Buren Township.

In addition to the priorities provided in the survey, the respondents were asked to identify additional development priorities of importance to them. These responses were recorded as comments, and have been summarized into a word cloud. This tool is used to generate a visual summary that is easy to read; the larger words have been repeated most frequently within the source text that the word cloud is summarizing. For example, the word “road” is used 21 times in the 167 responses that were submitted. The larger the word, potentially the greater the importance or relevance. The survey question and summary word cloud is below:

Q24: What actions could Van Buren Township take to improve business attraction, retention, and expansion?

2018 Word Cloud



2019 Word Cloud



EMPLOYMENT

Survey results reflect a highly employed population, with 65.47% of respondents in 2018 and 67.09% of respondents in 2019 being employed with a full-time job. Retirees included more than 17% of respondents in 2018 and 16% of respondents in 2019, and approximately 10% are employed part-time in 2018 and 2019. The respondents were asked which jobs best summarize their occupations, and the most popular response (13.96% in 2018 and 14.83% in 2019) is management, business, and financial occupations. When asked about commute time, most respondents (52.80% in 2018 and 63.30% in 2019) indicated that they travel between 5–25 miles to work. Approximately 30% of respondents in 2018 and 20% of respondents in 2019 indicated that they travel 5 miles or less to work. For respondents who are currently employed, individuals spend approximately 27% (2018) and 23% (2019) of their working time working from home.

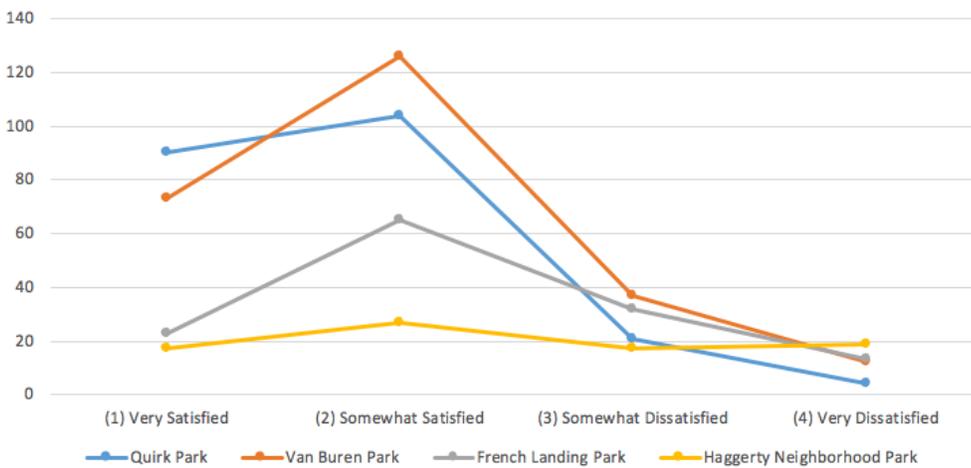
PARKS AND RECREATION

We asked respondents about their experience with Van Buren Township parks and recreation facilities. The most popular park destinations this past year included:

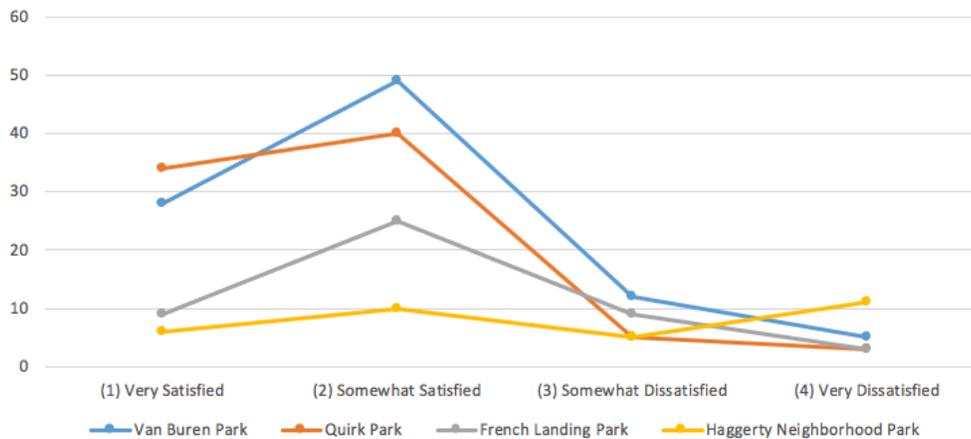
| | 2018 | 2019 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| Van Buren Township Park | 53.68% | 40.16% |
| Quirk Park | 49.17% | 33.06% |

Respondents were asked to rate their experiences at various parks and recreation facilities from “Very Satisfied” to “Very Dissatisfied” in Van Buren Township (numbered for chart clarification purposes) including: (1), very dissatisfied (2), somewhat dissatisfied, (3) somewhat satisfied, and (4), very satisfied. The results are shown in the following chart, with respondents indicating that Van Buren Township Park is the most satisfying facility and French Landing being the least dissatisfying.

2018: Please tell us about your experience with the following Van Buren Township parks and recreation facilities.



2019: Please tell us about your experience with the following Van Buren Township parks and recreation facilities.



Building off the most commonly visited and satisfying park, Van Buren Township Park, respondents also indicated that Van Buren Township Park should be the highest priority recreation space for investments over the next 5 years in Van Buren Township Township.

Respondents in 2018 and 2019 both almost equally (roughly 45%) prioritized canoeing and kayaking at the top of the list of desired programs. Respondents in 2018 and 2019 also answered very similarly regarding the top activities, programs, or facilities that they feel should be enhanced in Van Buren Township. This includes:

- Adult Fitness and Wellness
- Hiking/Walking Trails
- Public Access to Belleville Lake

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments for the Van Buren Township Master Plan. We again summarized the comment responses into a word cloud as seen below.

Q32: Thank you for participating in the Van Buren Township Master Plan survey! Please provide any additional comments that you have for the Van Buren Township Master Plan that are not addressed in the above statements.

2018 Word Cloud



A word cloud for the year 2018. The words are arranged in several lines. The largest words are 'Community', 'Road', 'Park', 'Township', and 'Businesses'. Other visible words include 'Stop', 'Schools', 'Look', 'Buren', 'Beck', 'Access', 'Movie', 'Public', 'Belleville', 'Issues', 'Neighborhood', 'Rural', 'Waste', and 'Service Drive'.

2019 Word Cloud



A word cloud for the year 2019. The words are arranged in two main lines. The largest words are 'roads', 'Van Buren', 'need', and 'lake'. Other visible words include 'people', 'drive', 'apartment complex', 'Please', 'Belleville', and 'clean'.

OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

The Van Buren Township Master Plan is intended to be a common vision developed through extensive analysis and input from community stakeholders and local elected and appointed officials. Created according to input received through public engagement, the Master Plan aims to articulate a long-term vision for the Township's future.

Public Engagement Workshop

The Public participated in a two-day workshop on October 2 and 3, 2019. The first day of the workshop was open and advertised to the general public, whereas the second day was held in conjunction with an annual dinner for elected and appointed officials.

Project consultants and Township staff kicked off the Open House on the first day by interacting with participants in a variety of engaging exercises. Project boards, maps, and other materials were used to display survey exercises. With these materials, participants were asked to write their answers, comments, or suggestions using a sticky note or a dot depending on the exercise.

On the second day of the workshop, project consultants opened the evening with a presentation aimed to inform and engage stakeholders in attendance of the Master Plan process, Township history, demographics, and key findings generated from the electronic and in-person survey. Attendees then broke out into the activity portion of the workshop where they participated in engagement exercises, and discussed and generated their visions for the Township.

Results gathered from the open house workshops supplemented the information received from the electronic and in-person survey process. The key goal of the Master Plan public engagement process was to generate discussion on the community's vision for the future of Van Buren Township. The estimated total number of participants was 120 people. Based on the feedback received during these events, as well as through discussions with elected officials, common themes were identified for the Master Plan.

Descriptions of individual activities and a compilation of their key results are illustrated on the following pages.





ACTIVITY #1

Vision Board

In this activity, participants were asked to imagine that they had just moved back to Van Buren Township after spending 20 years living elsewhere. Respondents answered with one sentence summarizing their vision .

Common vision themes, along with quotes from participants, are as follows:

- 1. Parks and Recreation**—Respondents mentioned that they would like to see more recreation facilities in the Township. A need for a thriving community center or public space was mentioned from multiple participants.
“Recreation center, community center, places throughout to encourage a community that cares about each other.”
- 2. Development**—Respondents shared several opinions on the topic of development, including the need for more locally-owned retail opportunities within the Township. A variety of responses given allow the Master Plan to provide a long term vision that addresses these opinions.
“Shopping outlet could really help to bring in outside money to the Township”
- 3. Infrastructure**—Flooding, maintenance, and need for updating parks were topics mentioned within the Vision Board exercise. Specifically, residents mentioned flooding concerns near Tyler Rd., and need for the improvement of the aesthetic appearance of a gateway into the Township.
“More maintenance on the gateway into the Township”
- 4. Housing**—Attainable housing and housing for an aging population were mentioned by participants during this exercise.
“Provide housing opportunities for our aging population.”

ACTIVITY #2

Visual Preference Exercise

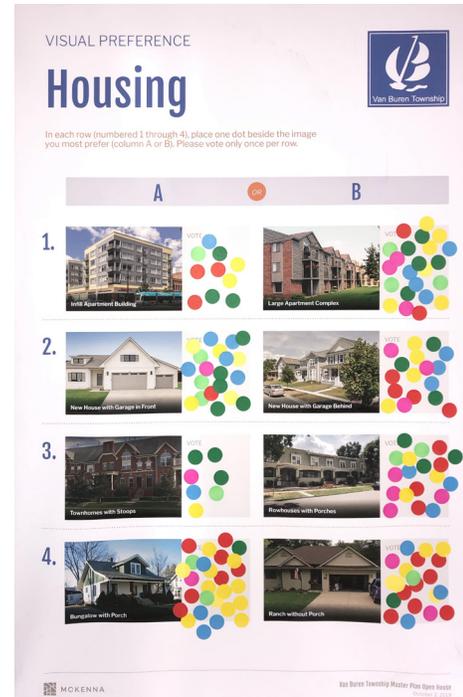
Participants were given a series of images and asked to place a dot on as their vote for the image they liked the best. Topic categories for the visual preference exercise are described as follows:

1. Visual Preference (Housing).

Participants were given four opportunities to vote for their preferred housing style. Aesthetically, the majority of participants preferred a more traditional architectural style versus modern designs. Examples of this preferred traditional style include rowhouses and bungalows with porches. The preference for this traditional style fits in well with existing structures within the Township.

2. Visual Preference (Commercial/Mixed Use).

Strip malls and single-use buildings scored low among participants. Preference among residents included quaint, mixed use buildings that would fit well within a small downtown. To go along with their preference on mixed-use buildings, residents voted for slip street parking over large asphalt parking lots.

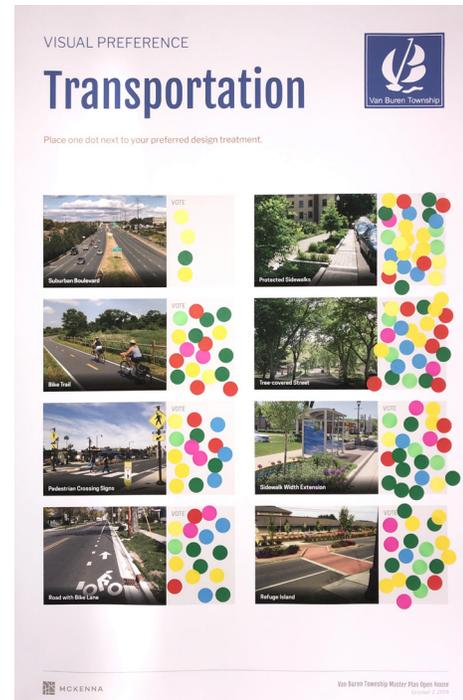


- Visual Preference (Transportation).**
 Corresponding with the Vision Board exercise mentioned above, residents seem to prefer walking areas with opportunity to create aesthetic improvement and a better sense of community. Protected sidewalks had a much higher vote than suburban boulevards, as well as a preference for tree covered streets and refuge islands with significant amount of street trees. The want for vibrant landscaping within public spaces was identified in this exercise.

ACTIVITY #3

SWOT Analysis Exercise

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis (SWOT) exercise was divided into four categories on four separate boards: housing, transportation, business, and parks and open space. Each category along with common themes identified is described as follows; a complete list of resident comments can be found as an attachment to this document.



BOARD #1: HOUSING

Strengths identified—Good diversity of housing stock, as well as good location to highway access.

Weaknesses identified—A definite need for affordable housing close to key corridors and expressway systems. Senior housing availability was also defined as a weakness and something to which residents expressed the need for greater access.

Opportunities identified—In correlation with the weaknesses generated in this exercise, affordable housing is seen by residents as an opportunity to combat an aging population. By creating more affordable housing stock, younger generations have more opportunity to afford to live in the Township. Senior housing was also mentioned as a way for the Township’s population to age in place.

Threats identified—Threats identified in this exercise included affordability issues with housing stock, especially for young families, and a lack of public transit.



BOARD #2 TRANSPORTATION

Strengths identified—Overwhelmingly, respondents found access to regional freeways to be excellent from the Township.

Weaknesses identified—Road infrastructure issues, limited parking, deficient public transportation, heavy traffic, non-motorized transportation routes, and signage were key issues identified within this exercise. Lack of non-motorized transportation routes resulted in safety concerns for those who may be walking or biking. Specifically, residents mentioned Ecorse Road as a key corridor in which a non-motorized transportation lane would be beneficial to the safety of pedestrians.

Opportunities identified—Preparing for the future of better non-motorized transportation routes and public transit was expressed as an opportunity for the Township. Public buses, and making sure roads are safe for pedestrians are some of the opportunities the Township has in order to do this.

Threats identified—Residents are limited to motorized vehicular travel methods within the Township. Lack of infrastructure for non-motorized transportation is seen as a threat to safety.



BOARD #3 BUSINESS

Strengths identified—Space to grow and variety of storefronts that allow the Township to take control of its own vision and destiny was a key topic detailed by participants.

Weaknesses identified—Too many big-box stores with large parking lots. Lack of a downtown area, along with diversity of businesses, and opportunities for entertainment within the Township.

Opportunities identified—Identification of Business Technology Research parks as an opportunity was mentioned. The Township's ability to implement zoning that allows these types of land uses may bring positive economic, career, and aesthetic changes to the community.

Threats identified—Residents of Van Buren Township expressed that many of them travel outside Township limits to do their shopping and entertainment activities. Leakage of funds to other communities was identified as a threat to businesses within the Township.



BOARD #4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Strengths identified—Number of parks, as well as the size of parks. The scenic environment that the topography of the Township provides, especially around the Lake.

Weaknesses identified—Lack of non-motorized transportation trails, specifically, around the lake. Lack of community events, as well as need for renovation to the existing parks.

Opportunities identified—Available land owned by the Township. Residents wish for a portion of this to be used as area to recreate. Specific types of recreation listed by participants within this exercise included: dog parks, hunting, trailways, and community sports.

Threats identified—Access to the lake is threatened by development. Erosion of park land, especially at Van Buren Township Park.

ACTIVITY #4

Coin Jar Exercise

Participants were each given 5 coins, they were then asked to place their five coins in the jars that they view as the top five priorities that should be addressed within the Master Plan. The choices given to participants, and how they were ranked, are listed as follows:

1. Road Maintenance (51 total coins)
2. Park Improvements and/or Expansion (36 coins)
3. Bike Paths (29 coins)
4. Road Redesign (25 coins)
5. Stormwater System Improvements (21 coins)
6. Pedestrian Safety (21 coins)
7. Water/Sewer System Improvements (18 coins)
8. Sidewalk Maintenance (14 coins)



ACTIVITY #5

Kitchen Table Map

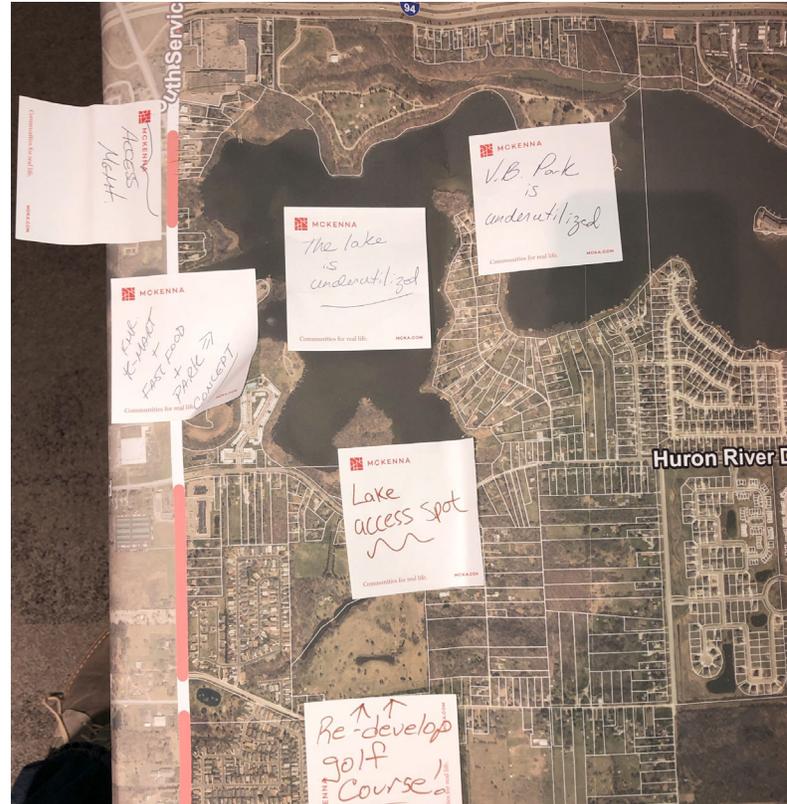
Township and McKenna Staff facilitated conversations with community residents while gathered around a large size aerial map of Van Buren Township. Conversations were open-ended, and based in stakeholders' concerns and desires about a range of issues in the Township. Summary remarks were recorded on Post-It notes by stakeholders and/or facilitators, and placed on the map in the location corresponding to the comment. Following is a summary of comments organized by geographic area:

AREA #1: SOUTHWESTERN VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP

Two major road corridors, Sumpter Road and Bemis Road, served as key areas of focus within the Southwestern portion of Van Buren Township in this exercise. Bike lanes were requested along the existing paved roads in this area. A re-evaluation of zoning in the far southwestern corner of the Township may be warranted to ensure optimal use of Manufacturing district allocation in this area.

Planning the corridor along Sumpter road by diversifying business types, and creating spaces for recreation, was mentioned. Additionally, stakeholders expressed a strong desire for expanded retail selection in the southern portion of the Township—but not in a traditional suburban format.

The area of Belleville Lake located in the southwestern portion of the Township was characterized by underutilization of natural resources such as the lake itself and Van Buren Township Park. Belleville Lake is the largest natural resource asset within the Township. Adequately and sustainably utilizing this resource was a key concern. Enhancement of the lake and non-motorized connectivity improvements could be coordinated with a concept for redevelopment of the Lakewood shopping plaza at I-94 and Rawsonville Road, combined with an access management strategy for the auto-oriented businesses along Rawsonville.



AREA #2 CENTER OF THE TOWNSHIP

Located within the center of the Township, is the City of Belleville. The gateways into the Township from the City proper were identified as areas where residents would like to see aesthetic improvements. These areas include the Belleville and Denton Road bridges, and the Sumpter Road corridor where parcels are intertwined between Belleville and the Township.

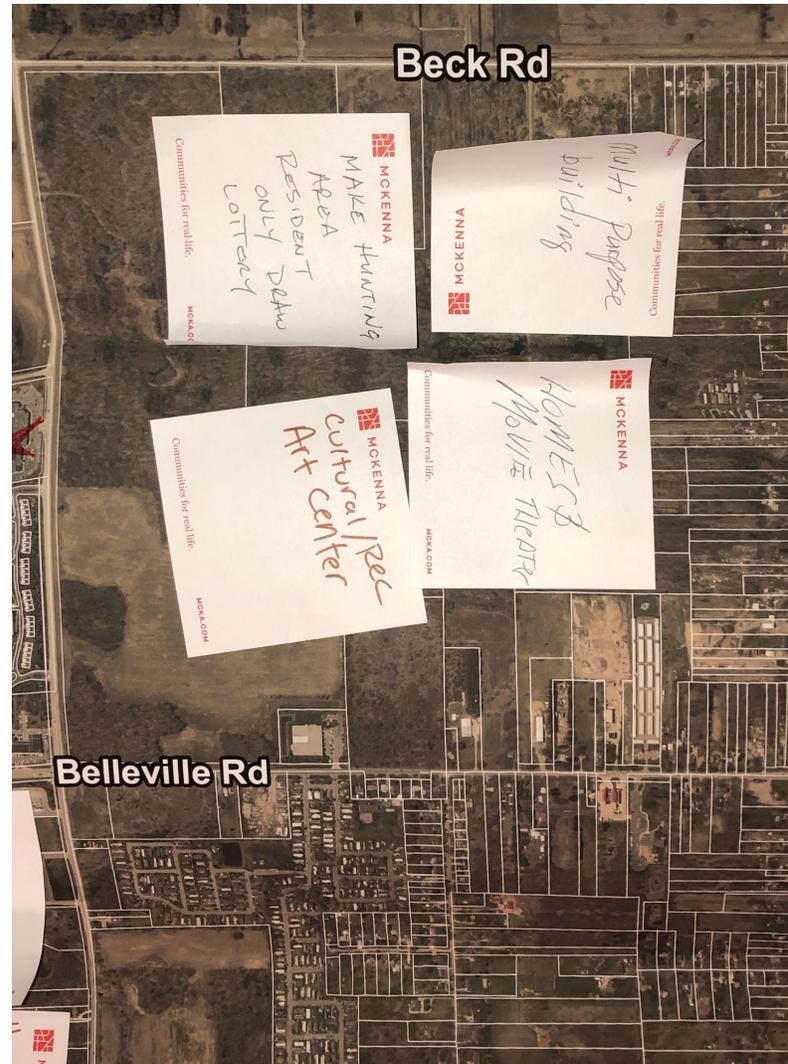
AREA #3: SOUTHEASTERN VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP

This area of the Township also encompasses Belleville Lake. Participants mentioned that additional development is not encouraged for this area, and they identified the need for a distinct gateway to be developed at the eastern entrance to Belleville.

AREA #4: NORTHERN VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP

The portion of the Township between Beck Road and Belleville Road between Ecorse and Tyler Roads was identified as being a preferred location for a community center, or other forms of entertainment and retail by participants. Participants desired that this area be developed in a traditional downtown character, opposed to the conventional suburban development existing to the south along Belleville Road.

Participants noted that they would like to see additional commercial uses developed south of Tyler Road, east of Belleville Road. Implementing access management along Belleville Road between Tyler Road and I-94 was also identified as a desire. Addressing the lack of connectivity in the area surrounding Belleville and Tyler Roads by paving Morton-Taylor Road, and building key street connections, was discussed as a strategy to mitigate traffic concentration and congestion in the area.



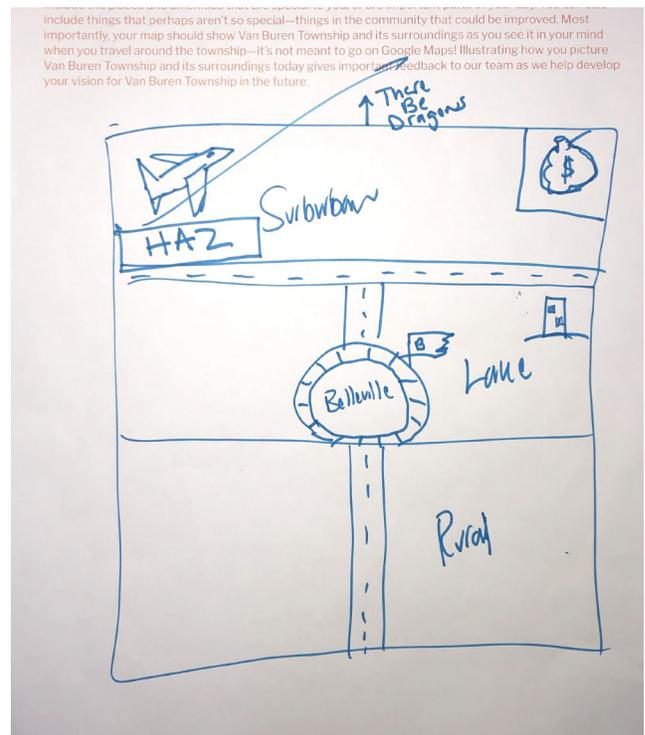
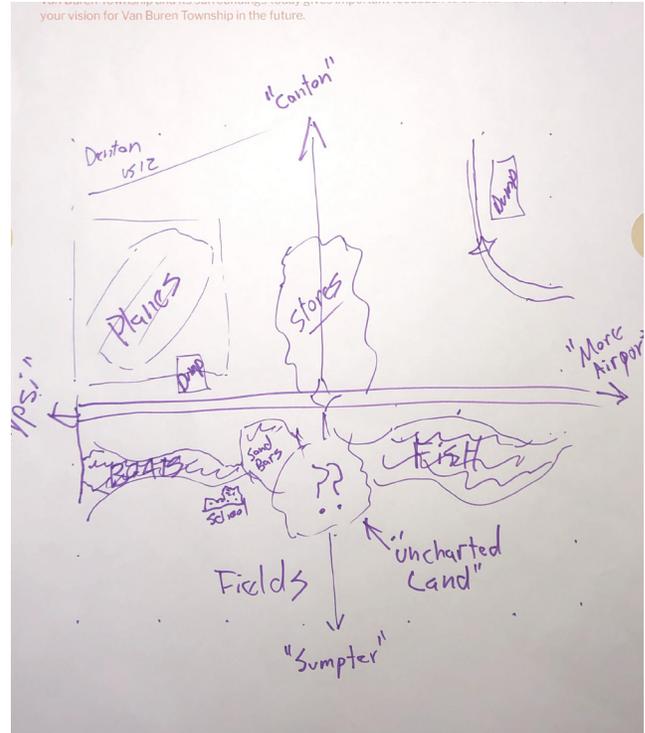
ACTIVITY #5

Mental Mapping Exercise

This exercise gave community members the opportunity to draw their own map of Van Buren Township. Completed mental maps give a picture of how a variety of stakeholders imagine the Township in their minds' eye, as they navigate between home, work, and elsewhere. Mental maps typically do not correspond exactly to how information would be organized on a geographic map, and bring out places and issues that are especially important to stakeholders, which may not otherwise be expressed verbally. Some themes deduced from the six stakeholders who graciously completed this exercise include:

- Van Buren Township is divided horizontally by Interstate 94, cleaving stakeholders' image of the Township into a distinct northern and southern half.
- The Township is further divided into an eastern and western half by Belleville Road—but only south of Interstate 94. Likely the presence of the City of Belleville, and the indirect path required to access the southern portion of the Township via downtown Belleville, contribute to this perception.
- Stakeholders are spatially aware of the nearness of Detroit Metro and Willow Run Airports, defining the eastern and western sides of the Township, respectively.
- Belleville Lake is seen as an integral part of the Township, and is the Township's defining natural feature.
- These themes were consistent across all age groups: an elementary school-aged child completed an exceptionally detailed map that displayed the same basic physical structure of the Township as older respondents (see photo, top of p. 97). This young respondent additionally illustrated Menard's, the splash pad at Quirk Park, Van Buren Township Park and Beach, and the Belleville Public Library as special and meaningful places. This respondent illustrated the need for greater accessibility for those with special needs at the Township's parks and playgrounds.

Photos of the completed exercises are attached to this report.





Belleville Lake viewed from the West Boating Access Site.



Historic Hope Chapel on Tyler Road.



Playground at Van Buren Park.



Residents enjoying the 2018 Strawberry Festival.



235 East Main Street, Suite 105

Northville, Michigan 48167

T: 248-596-0920

F: 248-596-0930

www.mcka.com

John Jackson, AICP President

Adam Cook, CNU-A Project Manager and Lead Author
Seamless Collaborative

Natalie Bond Project Planner

Wendy Caldwell Demographic Analyst

Brian Keesey, AICP GIS Manager

Cameron Carley GIS Mapping

Erin Raine Graphic Designer

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP 2020 MASTER
PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-22

DATED: NOVEMBER 17, 2020

WHEREAS, Act 33 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 2008, as amended, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (the "Act") provides for a Township Planning Commission to prepare a master plan or amendments to a master plan; and

WHEREAS, The Act notes that the legislative body, in this case the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees, can assert the right to approve or reject a master plan or amendments to a master plan; and

WHEREAS, the Van Buren Charter Township Planning Commission on July 8th, 2020 approved a draft document titled "Van Buren Charter Township 2020 Master Plan" and forwarded said document to the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees for consideration and potential distribution for advisory comments, following the direction noted in the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees on July 21st, 2020 approved the distribution of the Van Buren Charter Township 2020 Master Plan for advisory comments, following the direction noted in the Act; and

WHEREAS, following the review period for advisory comments, a public hearing was held by the Van Buren Charter Township Planning Commission on October 28th, 2020, following the direction noted in the Act, and public comments were received; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing held by the Van Buren Charter Township Planning Commission on October 28th, 2020, the Planning Commission voted by a majority vote to recommend forwarding the Van Buren Charter Township 2020 Master Plan for adoption by the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission also passed a resolution to adopt the Van Buren Charter Township 2020 Master Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees does hereby adopt the Van Buren Charter Township 2020 Master Plan including all maps and descriptive matter comprising the Plan, following the direction noted in the Act.

This RESOLUTION was offered by Board member Treasurer Budd supported by Board member Trustee Miller at a meeting on November 17, 2020 The members of the Township Board voted as follows:

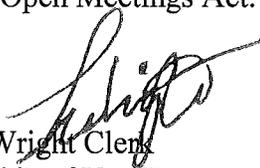
Yeas: McNamara, Budd, Wright, Frazier, Martin and Miller.
Absent: White.

The TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR declared the RESOLUTION duly adopted.

Leon Wright, Township Clerk

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Township Board held on November 17, 2020; that the meeting was conducted and public notice of the meeting was given pursuant to and in compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act; that a quorum of the Board was present and voted in favor of the resolution; and that the minutes of the meeting will be or have been made available as required by the Open Meetings Act.



Leon Wright Clerk
Township of Van Buren
Wayne County, Michigan

