



Township IX. North, Range IX East.  
Scale 2 Inches 1 Mile.

# MARATHON TOWNSHIP Master Plan

2026-2046

Adopted (insert date)





# Marathon Township

## Master Plan 2026-2046

Adopted: **Fill IN**

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# CHAPTER 01

## INTRODUCTION

### *Chapter 1: Introduction*

The Marathon Township Master Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended), which empowers local governments to develop and adopt comprehensive plans that guide land use, infrastructure, and community development over a 20-year horizon. Serving as a blueprint for the Township's physical, economic, and social growth, this plan incorporates maps, data, and policy recommendations that reflect the community's long-term vision and goals.

In alignment with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended), the Township's zoning ordinance must be based on a plan that promotes public health, safety, and general welfare. Accordingly, this Master Plan provides the foundational framework for future zoning decisions, ensuring consistency between land use policies and regulatory tools. Together, these statutes ensure that planning and zoning efforts are coordinated, transparent, and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

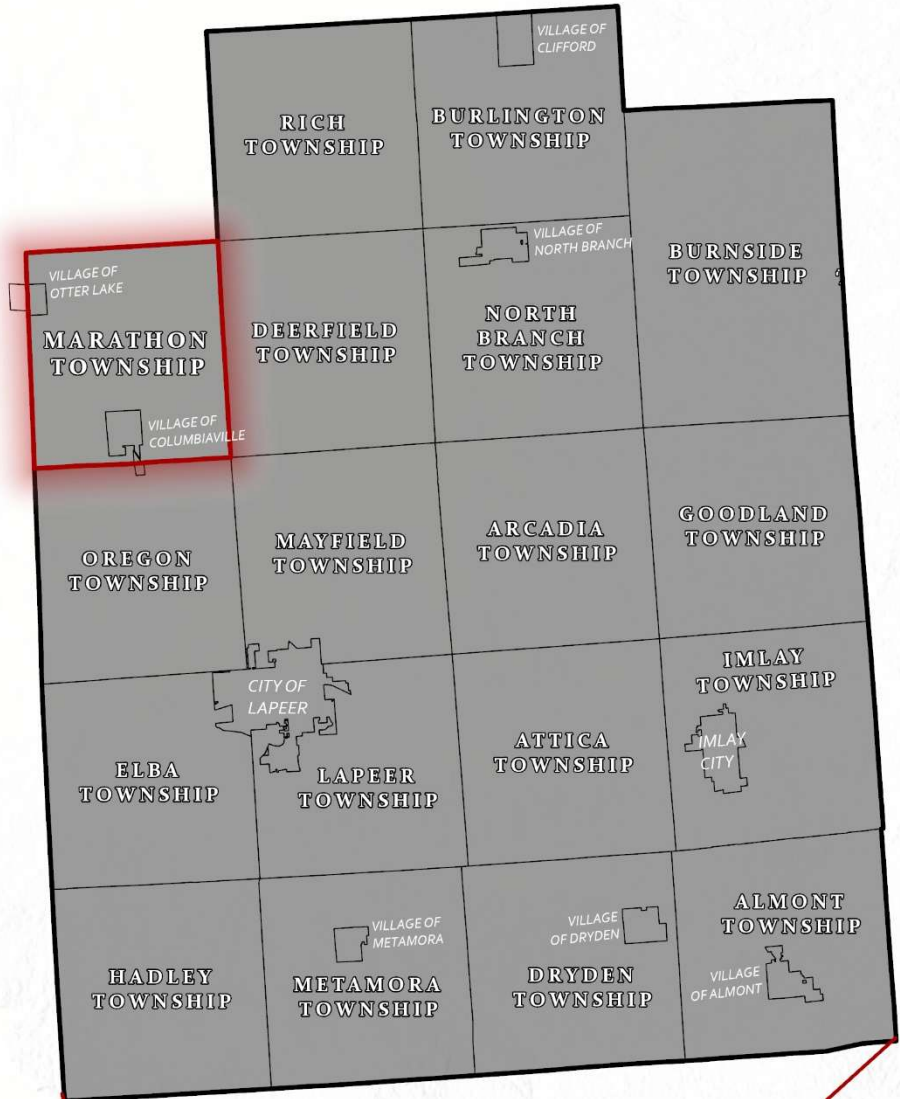
As a policy document developed by the Planning Commission, the Master Plan is intended to guide long-range decision-making related to land use and development. It is important to note that the Master Plan is not a zoning ordinance and does not change the zoning classification of individual properties. However, when rezoning requests are brought forward, the goals, objectives, and land use recommendations outlined in the Master Plan will inform the Planning Commission's recommendations and the Township Board of Trustees' decisions.

Finally, it is essential to recognize that the Master Plan is long-range in scope. While some recommendations may be implemented in the near term, others will take years to realize, and some may not be achieved due to factors beyond the Township's control. Nevertheless, the Township will continue to rely on the Master Plan as a guiding document for future decision-making, ensuring that growth and development align with the community's shared vision.

## Regional Setting

Marathon Township is a rural community of approximately 4,400 persons, located in the northwest corner of Lapeer County in the central “thumb” region of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. The township is nearly square in shape and covers approximately 32.6 square miles, being approximately 5.5 miles wide and 6.2 miles in length. Its size is somewhat less than the more common six-mile by six mile congressional township boundary (based on the U.S. Public Land Survey System) that characterizes the majority of townships in Lower Michigan. Marathon Township’s lesser area is due in part to the curvature of the earth the manner in which townships were originally surveyed. Also contributing to the township’s lesser municipal area is that two incorporated villages occupy portions of its congressional boundaries. The township fully surrounds the Village of Columbiaville (approximately one square mile) in its south central region, and the Village of Otter Lake extends east from Genesee County to occupy approximately one-half square mile of the township’s congressional area in its northwest region. Marathon Township is located 13 miles northwest of the county seat of Lapeer and 27 miles east of Flint. Principal surrounding townships are Watertown to the north (Tuscola County), Deerfield to the east, Oregon to the south, and Forest to the west (Genesee County).

# Location Map



Data Sources: Lapeer County GIS, Michigan Open Data Portal

0 55 110 Miles

A scale bar showing distances of 0, 55, and 110 miles. To the right of the scale bar is a north arrow pointing upwards, labeled with the letter 'N'.

## History

Marathon Township is a rural community of approximately 4,400 persons located in the northwest corner of Lapeer County in the central “thumb” region of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. The township is nearly square and covers approximately 32.6 square miles. The township fully surrounds the Village of Columbiaville in its south-central region and surrounds portions of the Village of Otter Lake in its northwest corner.

Marathon Township benefits from regional connectivity via several major transportation corridors, including I-69, I-75, M-15, and M-24. M-15 and M-24 run within approximately three miles of the township’s western and eastern boundaries, respectively, and both intersect with I-69 approximately nine miles to the south. Additionally, I-75 intersects with I-69 in the City of Flint, enhancing access to broader regional destinations.

Like the predominant character of the regional area, Marathon Township is characterized by abundant open spaces including farmland, woodlands, wetlands, several small lakes and portions of the 5,500-acre Holloway Reservoir, and the Lapeer State Game Area. The township is home to the convergence of the North and South Branches of the Flint River to form the Flint River, which feeds the Holloway Reservoir.

Marathon Township is governed by a five-member Township Board and funded through millage. Fire protection is provided by the Marathon Township Fire Authority, with stations in Columbiaville and Otter Lake, while Lapeer EMS handles emergency medical services. Law enforcement is managed by the Lapeer County Sheriff’s Department. The township owns and maintains a single cemetery and Marathon Township Park. Within the township are portions of the Southern Links Trailway and the Holloway Reservoir Regional Park, which is operated by Genesee County Parks. There are no public-school facilities within the township; the nearest are located in Columbiaville and Otter Lake. Additionally, the township lacks public sewer and water services.

# CHAPTER 02

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### *Chapter 2: Demographics*

As an essential component of developing a Land Use Plan, analyzing a community's population characteristics is crucial. Demographic trends and attributes serve as key indicators of potential future conditions and their associated implications. Factors such as age distribution, gender demographics, racial composition, household structures, average household size, and commuting patterns provide valuable insights that inform strategic planning decisions. A thorough examination of these elements establishes a strong foundation for shaping future land use policies and development initiatives.

This chapter provides an overview of the socio-economic characteristics and trends of Marathon Township, with comparative data for Lapeer County and the State of Michigan. A strong understanding of demographics, economic conditions, and housing data—along with their changes over time—enables the township to identify trends and develop informed goals and objectives based on the data.

### **Population Growth Overtime**

The population growth of a township influences the demand for residential land and can impact the overall character of the community. Table 2-1 shows a population comparison from 1970 to 2020 for Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan, along with the population percent changes from 2010 to 2020 and 1970 to 2020.

Figure 2-1 details the region's population trends over the past 50 years, providing insight into how these areas have evolved.

Figure 2-1 provides a visual representation of the percent change from 1970 to 2020 from Table 2-1.

Marathon Township's growth since 1970 reflects the national trend of increasing growth in rural areas. From 1970 to 2020, Marathon Township's population experienced growth to the tune of 27.2%. Lapeer County and the State of Michigan also experienced large growth in this period. Marathon Township hit its peak population in 2000, with 4,701 (Table 2-1,

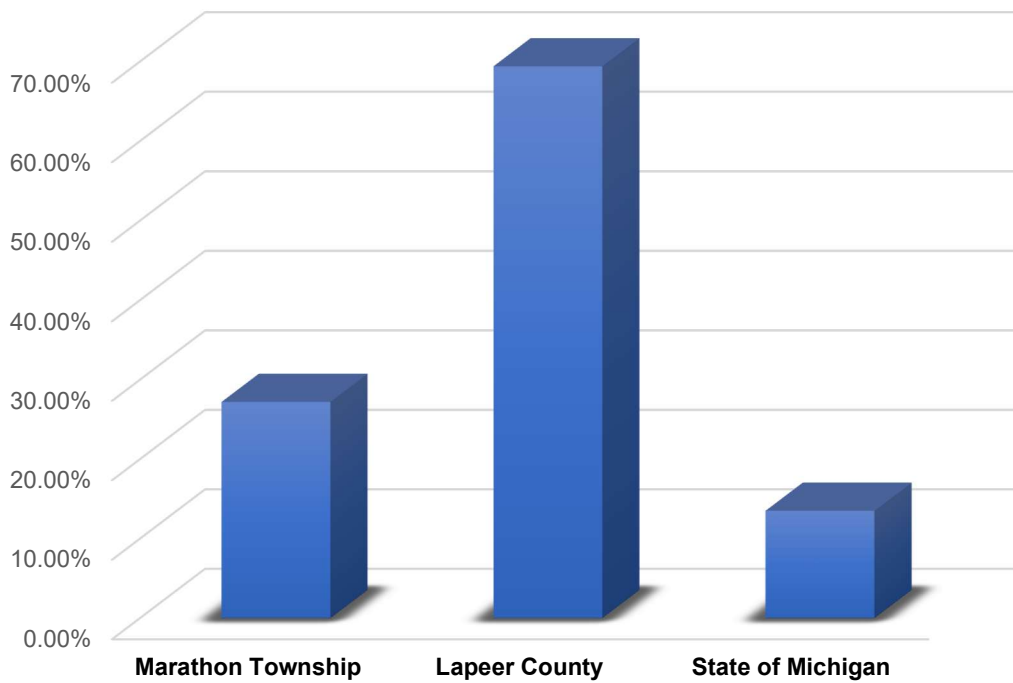
Figure 2-1). After hitting its peak population in 2000, the township experienced two decades of decline and, between 2010 and 2020, saw a 2.2% decrease. In Contrast, the State of Michigan experienced nearly 2% population growth over the decade.

**Table 2-1: Population Comparison, 1970 – 2020**

	1970 Population	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	2020 Population	% Change 2010-2020	% Change 1970-2020
<b>Marathon Township</b>	3,513	4,336	4,286	4,701	4,568	4,467	-2.2%	+27.2%
<b>Lapeer County</b>	52,317	70,038	74,768	87,904	88,319	88,619	+0.34%	+69.4%
<b>State of Michigan</b>	8,875,083	9,262,078	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331	+1.9%	+13.5%

(Source: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, [2010](#), [2020](#) Decennial Census)

**Figure 2-1: Percent Change in Population 1970 – 2020**



## Age

Table 2-2 compares age groups for Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan. In 2020, the median age of residents in Marathon Township was 43.7, closely aligning with the county and state averages.

**Table 2-2: Regional Age Comparison, 2020**

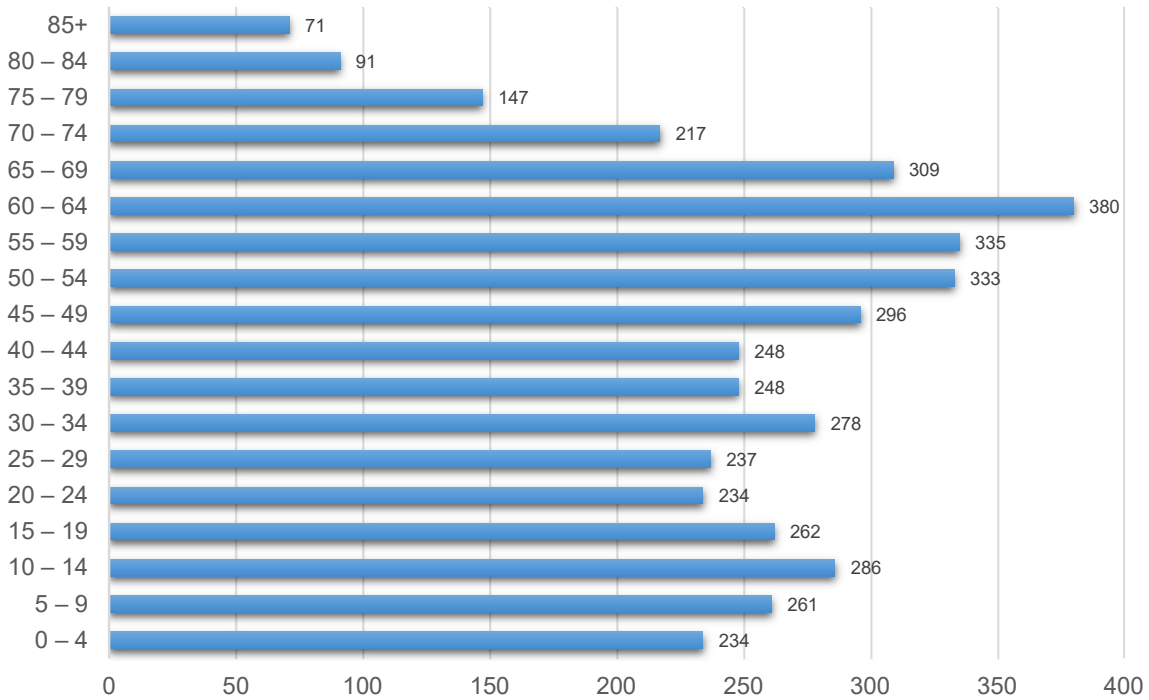
Age	Marathon Township		Lapeer County		State of Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Under 5</b>	234	5.2%	4,372	4.9%	548,875	5.4%
<b>5 – 14</b>	547	12.2%	10,399	11.7%	1,223,163	12.1%
<b>15 – 24</b>	496	11.1%	10,773	12.2%	1,341,656	13.3%
<b>25 – 44</b>	1,011	22.7%	19,295	21.8%	2,488,419	24.7%
<b>45 – 59</b>	964	21.6%	19,512	22.0%	1,961,399	19.5%
<b>60 – 74</b>	906	20.3%	17,771	20.0%	1,784,620	17.7%
<b>75 &amp; Older</b>	309	6.9%	6,497	7.3%	729,199	7.3%
<b>Median</b>	43.7		44.4		40.1	
<b>Total</b>	4,467		88,619		10,077,331	

(Source: [2020 Decennial Census](#))

In 2020, the greatest concentration of population in the township was within the ranges of 25 to 44 years, with 22.7%, 45 to 59 years, with 21.6%, and 60 to 74 years, with 20.3% (Table 2-2). This was consistent with the county and state and indicates that many of the citizens of Marathon Township are parents with school-aged children or retirees. Figure 2-2 uses data from the 2020 Decennial Census to show the population of Marathon Township, further broken down by age groups in five-year intervals.

Figure 2-2 provides a more in-depth explanation of age distribution for Marathon Township by breaking down age groups into five-year increments. Specifically, Figure 2-2 further clarifies the large number of individuals in the age groups represented in Table 2-2. Figure 2-2 demonstrates that the largest cohort of residents in Marathon Township are between the ages of 60 and 64, a fact not apparent by the broader age groupings in Table 2-2. Another important visual this figure provides is how minuscule the number of individuals of some of the other age groups are in comparison. Specifically, those individuals aged 80 to 84 and those 85 and older—collectively, the two age groups are still less than half the size of those aged 60 to 64.

**Figure 2-2: Age Distribution by 5-Year Increments, Marathon Township Only**



### Gender Distribution

Table 2-3 compares the ratio of males to females for the total population of Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan in 2020. Males hold the majority in both Marathon Township and Lapeer County, comprising 50.3% and 50.8% of their respective populations. In contrast, the State of Michigan aligns more closely with the 2020 national trend for gender distribution, where females hold a slight majority over males, with 50.7% of the state’s population being female.

**Table 2-3: Gender Distribution, 2020**

	Marathon Township	Lapeer County	State of Michigan
<b>Males</b>	50.3%	50.8%	49.3%
<b>Females</b>	49.7%	49.2%	50.7%

*(Source: 2020 Decennial Census)*

### Race

Table 2-4 compares the different race and ethnicity groupings that comprise the populations of Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan. Marathon Township and Lapeer County exhibit similar ethnic distribution patterns within their respective populations. White residents comprise the overwhelming majority of both populations. Compared to the State of Michigan, Marathon Township and Lapeer County are much less diverse. In 2020, Michigan’s population consisted of 73.9% white individuals and 26.1% nonwhite individuals. Meanwhile, in

2020, Marathon Township was home to 92.6% white individuals and 7.4% nonwhite individuals. The rural location of the township may be the cause of a less diverse racial distribution.

**Table 2-4: Race Distribution, 2020**

	Marathon Township		Lapeer County		State of Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>White alone</b>	4,138	92.6%	80,249	90.6%	7,444,974	73.9%
<b>Black alone</b>	12	0.3%	984	1.1%	1,376,579	13.7%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	157	3.5%	4,244	4.8%	564,422	5.6%
<b>American Indian, &amp; Alaska Native alone</b>	22	0.5%	361	0.4%	61,261	0.6%
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander alone</b>	11	0.2%	416	0.5%	337,351	3.3%
<b>Other</b>	16	0.4%	1,484	1.7%	221,851	2.2%
<b>Two or more races</b>	268	6.0%	5,125	5.8%	635,315	6.3%
<b>Total Population</b>	4,467		88,619		10,077,331	

(Source: *2020 Decennial Census*)

## Economic

Table 2-5 shows the median household income for Marathon Township in 2020, adjusted for inflation, was \$53,892. Marathon Township's median household income was \$11,305 lower than the median household income for Lapeer County and \$5,342 lower than the State of Michigan.

**Table 2-5: Median Household Income (In 2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)**

Marathon Township	Lapeer County	State of Michigan
<b>\$53,892</b>	\$65,197	\$59,234

(Source: *2020 American Community Survey*)

## Income Distribution

Table 2-6 shows the income levels for households in Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan, according to the 2020 Census Data. 55.5% of households in Marathon Township earn more than \$50,000 per year. This is lower than the percentage of households in Lapeer County, at 62.7%, and the state, at 57.3%, that earn more than \$50,000 per year. Overall, Marathon Township has more low-income households than the county and state.

**Table 2-6: Household Income Distribution, 2020**

	Marathon Township		Lapeer County		State of Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	109	6.1%	1,709	5.0%	254,424	6.4%
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	30	1.7%	994	2.9%	164,841	4.1%
<b>\$15,000 - \$24,999</b>	194	10.8%	2,595	7.6%	364,976	9.2%
<b>\$25,000 - \$34,999</b>	239	13.3%	2,822	8.3%	383,601	9.6%
<b>\$35,000 - \$49,999</b>	231	12.8%	4,612	13.5%	527,421	13.3%
<b>\$50,000 - \$74,999</b>	488	27.1%	7,166	21.1%	723,559	18.2%
<b>\$75,000 - \$99,999</b>	248	13.8%	5,201	15.3%	515,271	12.9%
<b>\$100,000 - \$149,999</b>	205	11.4%	5,555	16.3%	582,349	14.6%
<b>\$150,000 - \$199,999</b>	32	1.8%	2,066	6.1%	236,748	5.9%
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	25	1.4%	1,321	3.9%	227,218	5.7%
<b>Total Households</b>	1,801		34,041		3,980,408	
<b>Mean income (average)</b>	\$60,052		\$81,658		\$80,803	

(Source: [2020 American Community Survey](#))

### ***Income Types***

Table 2-7 provides further information regarding the different sources of income for Marathon Township households. These categories are not exclusive, so a household may have earnings from multiple sources, including dividends, social security, and a retirement income such as a pension or 401K. A significant number of households in Marathon Township have earnings from sources other than jobs shown in Table 2-7.

**Table 2-7: Income Types, 2020**

<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1,801</b>
<b>With Earnings</b>	1,233
<b>With Interests, Dividends, Rental Income</b>	262
<b>With Social Security Income</b>	837
<b>With Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</b>	90
<b>With Public Assistance</b>	322
<b>With Retirement Income</b>	653
<b>With Other Types of Income</b>	200

(Source: [2020 American Community Survey](#))

## Occupations

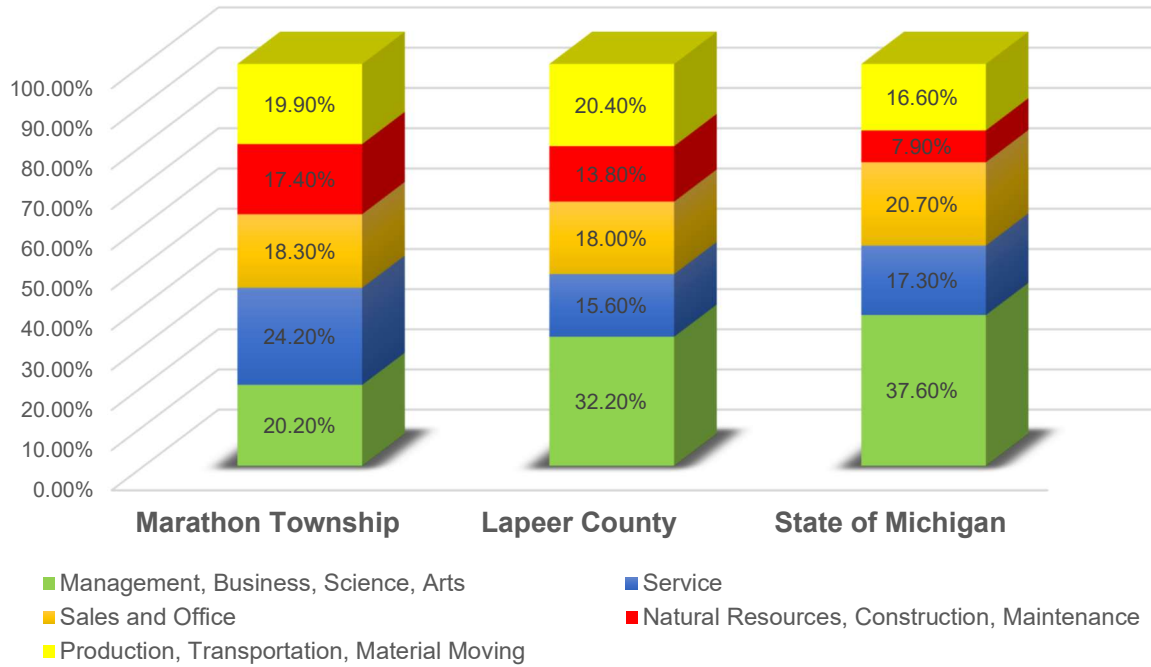
Table 2-8 details the occupations of workers aged 16 years and older who live in Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan. The most common source of employment in Marathon Township is the service occupation, and over 24.2% of employed residents fall into this category. This differs from the county and state, where the most common type of occupation is the management, business, science, and arts category. This can be seen more clearly in Figure 2-3.

**Table 2-8: Occupations, 2020**

Occupations	Marathon Township		Lapeer County		State of Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Management, Business, Science, &amp; Arts</b>	366	20.2%	12,904	32.2%	1,752,147	37.6%
<b>Service</b>	438	24.2%	6,250	15.6%	805,030	17.3%
<b>Sales and Office</b>	330	18.3%	7,195	18.0%	962,900	20.7%
<b>Natural Resources, Construction, &amp; Maintenance</b>	314	17.4%	5,532	13.8%	366,692	7.9%
<b>Production, Transportation, &amp; Material Moving</b>	360	19.9%	8,194	20.4%	771,588	16.6%
<b>Total</b>	1,808		40,075		4,658,357	

(Source: [2020 American Community Survey](#))

**Figure 2-3: Occupations, Regional**



**Commuting Characteristics**

Place of work is an important characteristic to study as it reflects the labor market upon which residents depend for employment. If most residents work within the community where they live, the community can influence its own growth by actively promoting economic development and job creation. Rural bedroom communities typically have limited employment opportunities which results in further commute times to employment locations.

**Worker Inflow and Outflow**

The large majority of actively working individuals who live in Marathon Township do not work in the township. According to the 2021 U.S. Census Bureau, there was a total of 138 individuals employed within Marathon Township. Of that group, 87 individuals commuted from outside Marathon Township to the township for work. Of the residents who live within Marathon Township, 51 individuals both live and work within the township, while 1,770 workers commuted to a job location outside of the township.

Figure 2-4: Marathon Township Inflow vs Outflow

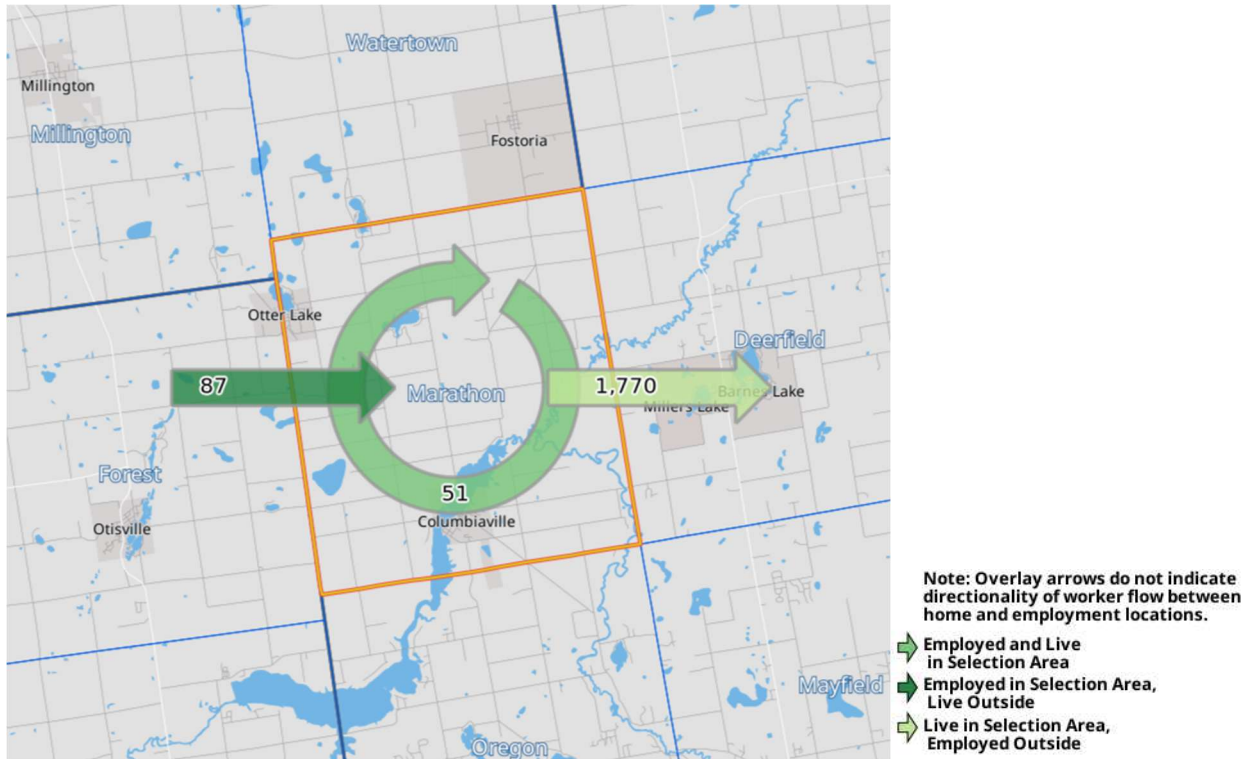
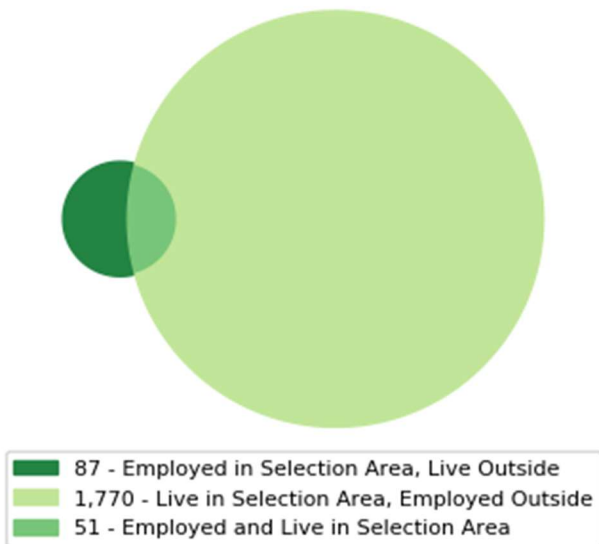


Figure 2-5: Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2021

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2021  
All Workers



Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	2021 Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	138	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	87	63.0%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	51	37.0%
Living in the Selection Area	1,821	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	1,770	97.2%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	51	2.8%

Table 2-9 shows that the largest proportion of Marathon Township residents work in Lapeer County, with 22.5% of workers employed there. Oakland County is the next employment destination, with 22.1% of Marathon Township residents employed, followed by Genesee (18.3%) and Macomb (10.5%) counties. Lapeer County is also the most common source of workers in Marathon Township, with 51.4% of workers in the township coming from the county, followed by Genesee County (23.2%) and Wayne County (5.1%).

**Table 2-9: Resident and Worker Origin/Destination, 2021**

Where Residents Work			Where Workers Live		
County	Workers	% of Total	County	Workers	% of Total
Lapeer County	409	22.5%	Lapeer County	71	51.4%
Oakland County	403	22.1%	Genesee County	32	23.2%
Genesee County	333	18.3%	Wayne County	7	5.1%
Macomb County	192	10.5%	Oakland County	6	4.3%
Wayne County	161	8.8%	Tuscola County	5	3.6%
Tuscola County	56	3.1%	Monroe County	3	2.2%
St. Clair County	36	2.0%	Arenac County	2	1.4%
Kent County	35	1.9%	Gladwin County	2	1.4%
Sanilac County	26	1.4%	Saginaw County	2	1.4%
Ingham County	23	1.3%	Branch County	1	0.7%
Other Locations	147	8.1%	Other Locations	7	5.1%
<b>All Counties</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>All Counties</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

(Source: U.S Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application & LEHD Destination Employment Statistics, 2021)

### Commute Times

As shown in Table 2-10, most Marathon Township and Lapeer County residents drive further to work on average compared to the State of Michigan residents. Overall, under half (45.9%) of the employed residents of Marathon Township drive less than 30 minutes to work, similar to the 45.7% of Lapeer County residents. In the state, 66.6% of residents commute less than 30 minutes to work. Meanwhile, 19.4% of the residents in Marathon Township and 20.6% of Lapeer County residents drive more than 60 minutes to work each day, compared to only 6.4% of residents in the state. This data aligns with the large number of Marathon Township residents who exit the township for work each day, as shown in Figure 2-4.

**Table 2-10: Travel Time to Work**

<b>Travel Time</b>	<b>Marathon Township</b>	<b>Lapeer County</b>	<b>State of Michigan</b>
<i>Less than 10 minutes</i>	6.7%	10.8%	13.6%
<i>10 to 14 minutes</i>	4.4%	9.5%	14.4%
<i>15 to 19 minutes</i>	13.0%	10.1%	16.1%
<i>20 to 24 minutes</i>	15.1%	9.1%	15.1%
<i>25 to 29 minutes</i>	6.7%	6.2%	7.4%
<i>30 to 34 minutes</i>	13.2%	10.0%	12.5%
<i>35 to 44 minutes</i>	8.6%	9.1%	7.2%
<i>45 to 59 minutes</i>	12.8%	14.7%	7.3%
<i>60 or more minutes</i>	19.4%	20.6%	6.4%
<i>Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)</i>	35.8	35.9	24.6

(Source: [2020 American Community Survey](#))

## Housing

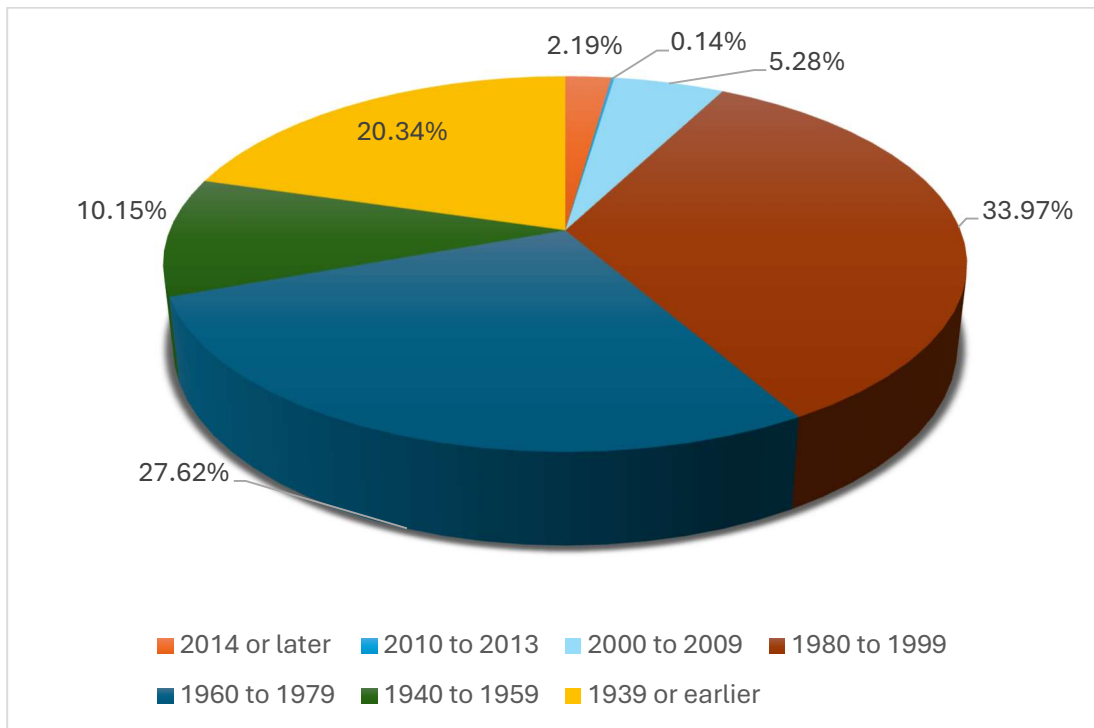
### Housing Age

The age of Marathon Township's housing stock is older, with most of the homes built before the year 2000. Table 2-11 compares the years of total housing units built in Marathon Township to Lapeer County and the State of Michigan. Figure 2-6 demonstrates that over 61.58% of the housing units in the township were built between 1960 and 1999, while only 7.92% of the homes were built after 2000. Lapeer County and the state's percentages follow a similar trend.

**Table 2-11: Year Structure Built, Total Housing Units**

	<b>Marathon Township</b>		<b>Lapeer County</b>		<b>State of Michigan</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2014 or later</b>	47	2.19%	452	1.2%	82,985	1.8%
<b>2010 to 2013</b>	3	0.14%	268	0.7%	56,872	1.23%
<b>2000 to 2009</b>	114	5.28%	4,553	12.4%	454,659	9.86%
<b>1980 to 1999</b>	733	33.97%	11,799	32.0%	1,066,396	23.12%
<b>1960 to 1979</b>	596	27.62%	11,125	30.2%	1,252,782	27.16%
<b>1940 to 1959</b>	219	10.15%	3,890	10.6%	1,024,323	22.21%
<b>1939 or earlier</b>	439	20.34%	4,730	12.8%	673,896	14.61%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2,151		36,817		4,611,913	

(Source: [2020 American Community Survey](#); Marathon Township, 2026)  
(\*Source Marathon Township, March 19, 2026)

**Figure 2-6: Year Structure Built, Marathon Township Only**

### ***Housing Unit Types***

Nearly all of the housing units in Marathon Township, and most of the housing units in Lapeer County and the State of Michigan, are 1-unit detached structures, also referred to as single-family, detached homes. Only 13.5% of the housing stock in Marathon Township is multi-unit dwellings (Figure 2-7). Lapeer County has a slightly higher proportion, with 16.6% of its housing stock attributed to multi-unit dwellings. Conversely, the housing stock in the State of Michigan is more diverse than the data in Marathon Township and Lapeer County. 27.9% of homes in the state are non-single-family detached homes. Generally, multi-unit dwellings tend to be developed in more urbanized areas where utilities and a range of jobs are available. Also, urban areas tend to have larger units more readily convertible to multifamily dwellings. This trend has remained consistent over the past 20 years.

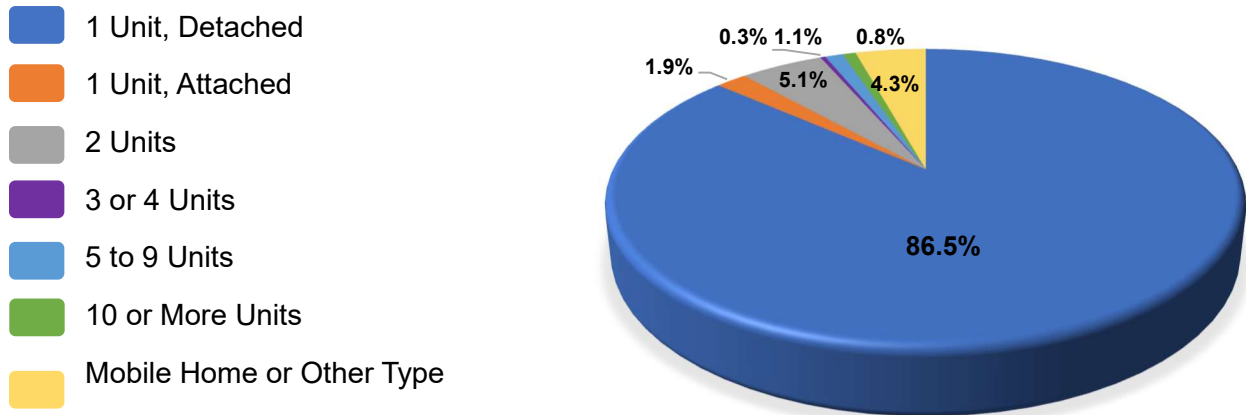
It is important to note that due to the number of young adults (20-29 years) and the aging population (55-85+ years), as discussed in Figure 2-2, the township should consider increasing the number of other housing unit types, such as additional multi-family units or senior housing facilities, to accommodate the needs of young families and the aging population.

**Table 2-12: Housing Unit Type**

Units in Structure	Marathon Township		Lapeer County		State of Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>1, Detached</b>	1,820	86.5%	30,680	83.3%	3,326,057	72.1%
<b>1, Attached</b>	39	1.9%	453	1.2%	212,338	4.6%
<b>2 Units</b>	108	5.1%	637	1.7%	106,323	2.3%
<b>3 or 4 Units</b>	7	0.3%	605	1.6%	121,546	2.6%
<b>5 to 9 Units</b>	23	1.1%	732	2.0%	191,014	4.1%
<b>10 or more Units</b>	16	0.8%	966	2.7%	405,110	8.8%
<b>Mobile home or other type of housing</b>	91	4.3%	2,744	7.4%	248,336	5.4%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2,104		36,817		4,611,913	

*(Source: 2020 American Community Survey)*

**Figure 2-7: Housing Unit Type, Marathon Township Only**



**Housing Value**

Housing value is influenced by various factors, including the age and type of housing, neighborhood quality, and external determinants such as employment opportunities, the quality of the education system, crime rates, and broader national trends. Additionally, housing values have a direct impact on property taxes, which, in turn, affect the revenue generated by Marathon Township.

As seen in Table 2-13, over a fourth of Marathon Township’s housing is valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Additionally, 26% of the houses in the township are valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999. Resulting in the township’s median housing value in 2020 being \$127,300. This is \$52,600 less than the median home value of Lapeer County and \$35,300 less than the median home value of the State of Michigan.

**Table 2-13: Housing Value, 2020**

	Marathon Township		Lapeer County		State of Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Less than \$50,000</b>	87	5.4%	2,041	7.0%	311,344	10.9%
<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	440	27.4%	3,062	10.6%	469,443	16.4%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	417	26.0%	5,332	18.4%	499,308	17.5%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	300	18.7%	6,156	21.2%	488,633	17.1%
<b>\$200,000 to \$299,999</b>	244	15.2%	6,872	23.7%	560,506	19.6%
<b>\$300,000 to \$499,999</b>	110	6.8%	4,290	14.8%	384,080	13.5%
<b>\$500,000 to \$999,999</b>	8	0.5%	1,062	3.7%	117,813	4.1%
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	0	0.0%	165	0.6%	24,358	0.9%
<b>Owner-occupied units with a mortgage</b>	1,077		18,316		1,702,529	
<b>Median (Dollars)</b>	\$127,300		\$179,900		\$162,600	

(Source: 2020 American Community Survey)

### **Housing Affordability**

Housing affordability is a function of the cost of housing and the household income level in a community. Housing affordability can become a planning issue when land use patterns do not provide for a wide enough range of housing choices for the residents of a community.

Housing affordability can be roughly measured by comparing income and housing cost information available in the census. The average gross monthly housing costs (including utilities and taxes) for a person paying rent or paying a mortgage in the township in 2020 was \$974. If it is assumed that a person should not pay more than 30% of their gross income for housing (a standard used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for many of their housing programs), it would take an annual income of \$38,960 to make the above average monthly housing payment. Approximately 68.3% of the households in the township have an income over \$35,000 and could afford the average housing costs in the township. If you accept the idea that the township should be planning for the population that might move into the township and not just that segment living there now, the current housing costs can be compared to the income of all of the households in the county. That analysis shows that 76.2% of the households in the county could afford the average housing costs in Marathon Township.

To get an idea of trends, in 2010 80.7% of the county could afford monthly rental costs and 54.7% of the county could afford monthly mortgage costs in Marathon Township. As stated above, the 2020 data shows that 76.2% of the households in the county could afford the average housing costs in Marathon Township. This change could be in part due to an increase in rental rates and a decrease in mortgage rates.

### **Household Size**

The average household size has steadily declined in Marathon Township, Lapeer County, and the State of Michigan. Marathon Township household size remains higher than the State of Michigan average. However, as of 2020, the township's average household size is no longer higher than Lapeer County. Table 2-14 demonstrates the decline in average household size between 1990

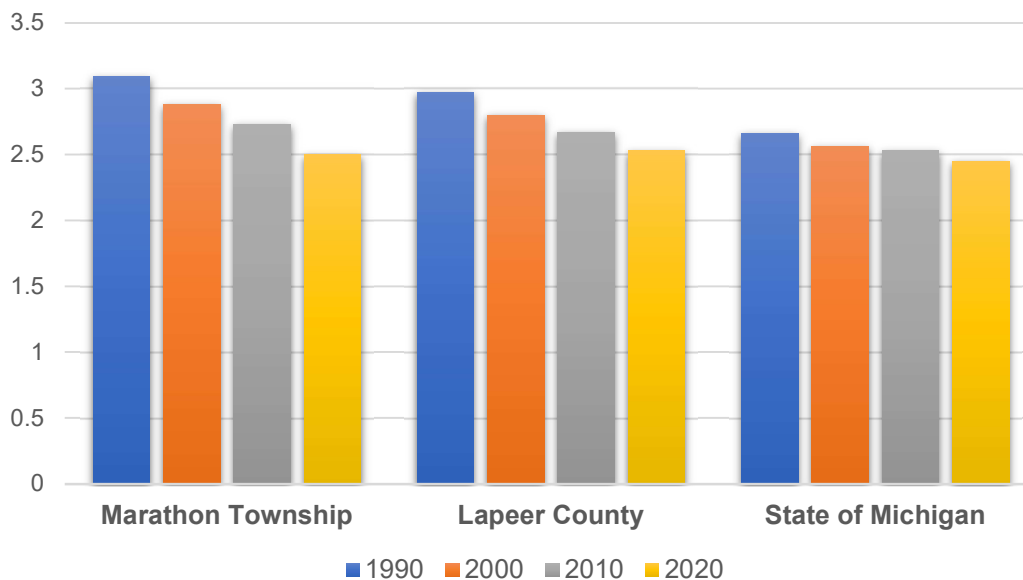
and 2020. Figure 2-8 visually represents the numbers reported in the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census and the 2010 and 2020 American Community Survey.

**Table 2-14: Average Persons Per Household**

	1990	2000	2010	2020
<b>Marathon Township</b>	3.09	2.88	2.73	2.50
<b>Lapeer County</b>	2.97	2.80	2.67	2.53
<b>State of Michigan</b>	2.66	2.56	2.53	2.45

*(Source: 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census, 2010 & 2020 American Community Survey)*

**Figure 2-8: Average Persons Per Household**



Several socio-economic factors influence household size. The societal shift from agriculture to technology, along with the increased economic pressures of raising and educating children, has contributed to a decline in the average number of children families choose to have. Another factor affecting household composition is the breakup of nuclear families. Contributing to this trend are higher divorce rates and an increase in births outside of marriage, leading to a rise in single-parent households.

In general, another factor in the declining household size is the aging of our society as a whole. As a family of two parents and two children grows older, each of the children leave home to establish new households. This leaves one household of two people and two new households of one person each. The result is a decrease in the number of people per household, a stable population, and a growing demand for various dwelling types, particularly those different from traditional single-family detached homes. This appears to be a trend experienced by Marathon Township, as its household size has decreased over the past four decades (Table 2-14, Figure 2-8). The implications for the future include that, even with little or no population growth, the township could experience a demand for additional dwelling units. If population growth is substantial, the impact on housing demand could be significant. However, the lack of public water and sewer systems may have a slowing effect in terms of demand for housing units.

**Housing Tenure**

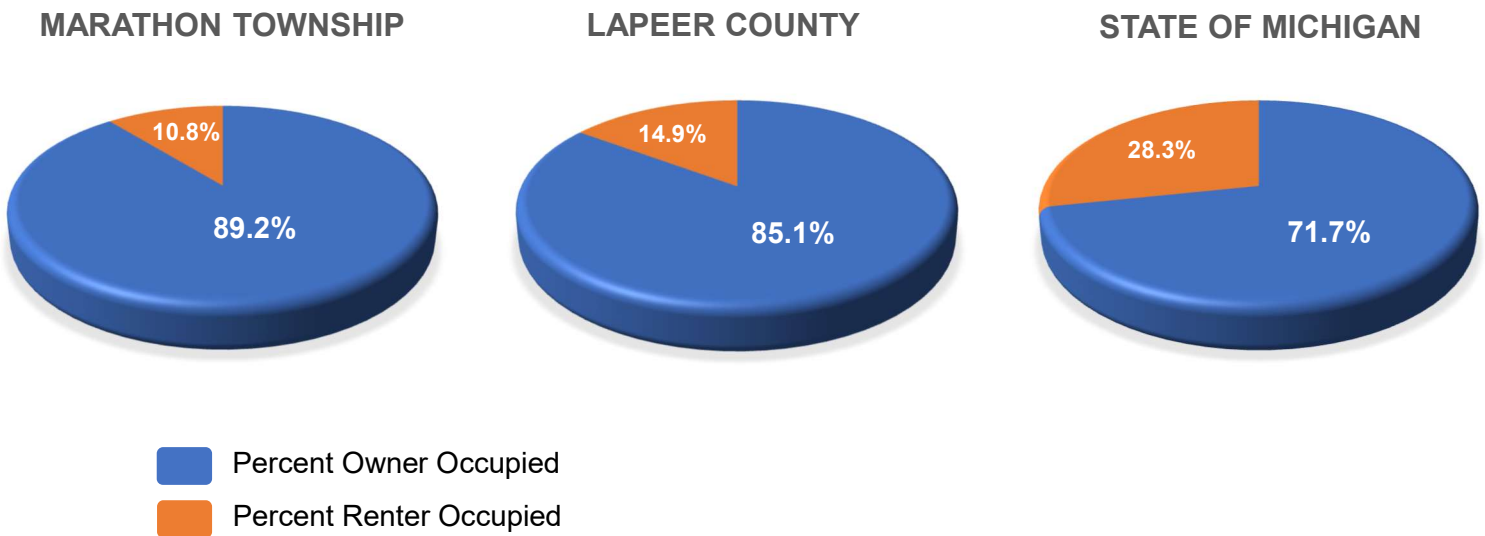
Homeownership is generally considered a reliable indicator of community stability. Purchasing a home often represents the most significant single investment a family will make and, as such, usually signifies a long-term commitment to the community. Table 2-15 and Figure 2-9 show that owner-occupied homes account for 89.2% of the total occupied housing units in Marathon Township, compared to 85.1% in Lapeer County. These numbers far exceed the state average of 71.7%, according to the 2020 American Community Survey.

**Table 2-15: Housing Tenure, 2020**

	Total Occupied Units	Owner Occupied	Percent Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Percent Renter Occupied
Marathon Township	1,801	1,606	89.2%	195	10.8%
Lapeer County	34,041	28,980	85.1%	5,061	14.9%
State of Michigan	3,980,408	2,855,485	71.7%	1,124,923	28.3%

*(Source: 2020 American Community Survey)*

**Figure 2-9: Housing Tenure, Regional**



**Housing Vacancy**

In 2020, housing vacancy rates in Marathon Township were slightly higher, with 14.4% of units vacant, compared to 13.7% in the State of Michigan. In contrast, Lapeer County had a lower vacancy rate of just 7.5%, as shown in Table 2-16 and Figure 2-10. Vacancy rates between 3 and 5 percent generally offer evidence of a stable housing market. When vacancy rates drop below three percent, housing choices become restricted. It should be noted that the number of vacancies does not necessarily mean that there are available rental homes for tenants. The state of vacant homes can vary based on current conditions or personal reasons, such as the owner being temporarily absent due to travel or work assignments.

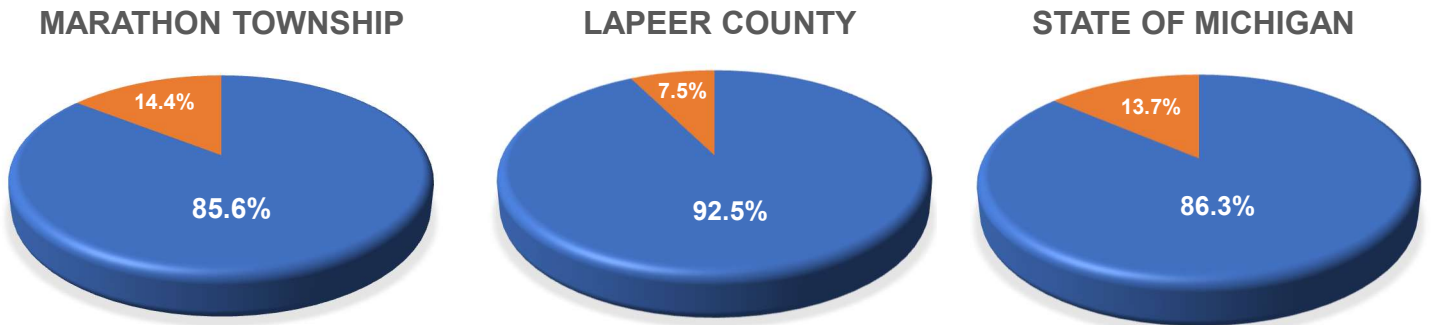
**Table 2-16: Housing Vacancy, 2020**

	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Percent Occupied	Vacant Housing Units	Percent Vacant
Marathon Township	2,104	1,801	85.6%	303	14.4%
Lapeer County	36,817	34,041	92.5%	2,776	7.5%
State of Michigan	4,611,913	3,980,408	86.3%	631,505	13.7%

*(Source: 2020 American Community Survey)*

**Figure 2-10: Housing Vacancy, Regional**

- Percent Occupied
- Percent Vacant



# CHAPTER 03

## NATURAL FEATURES

### *Chapter 3: Natural Features*

The natural characteristics present within Marathon Township include natural water courses, wetlands, soils suitable for agriculture, forests, and septic suitability. These elements play a crucial role in land use planning, which evaluates how different land uses may affect the environment's capacity to sustain them. These different features impact development, but at the same time, some must also be preserved to maintain a productive and healthy environment within the township.

#### **Surface Water<sup>1</sup>**

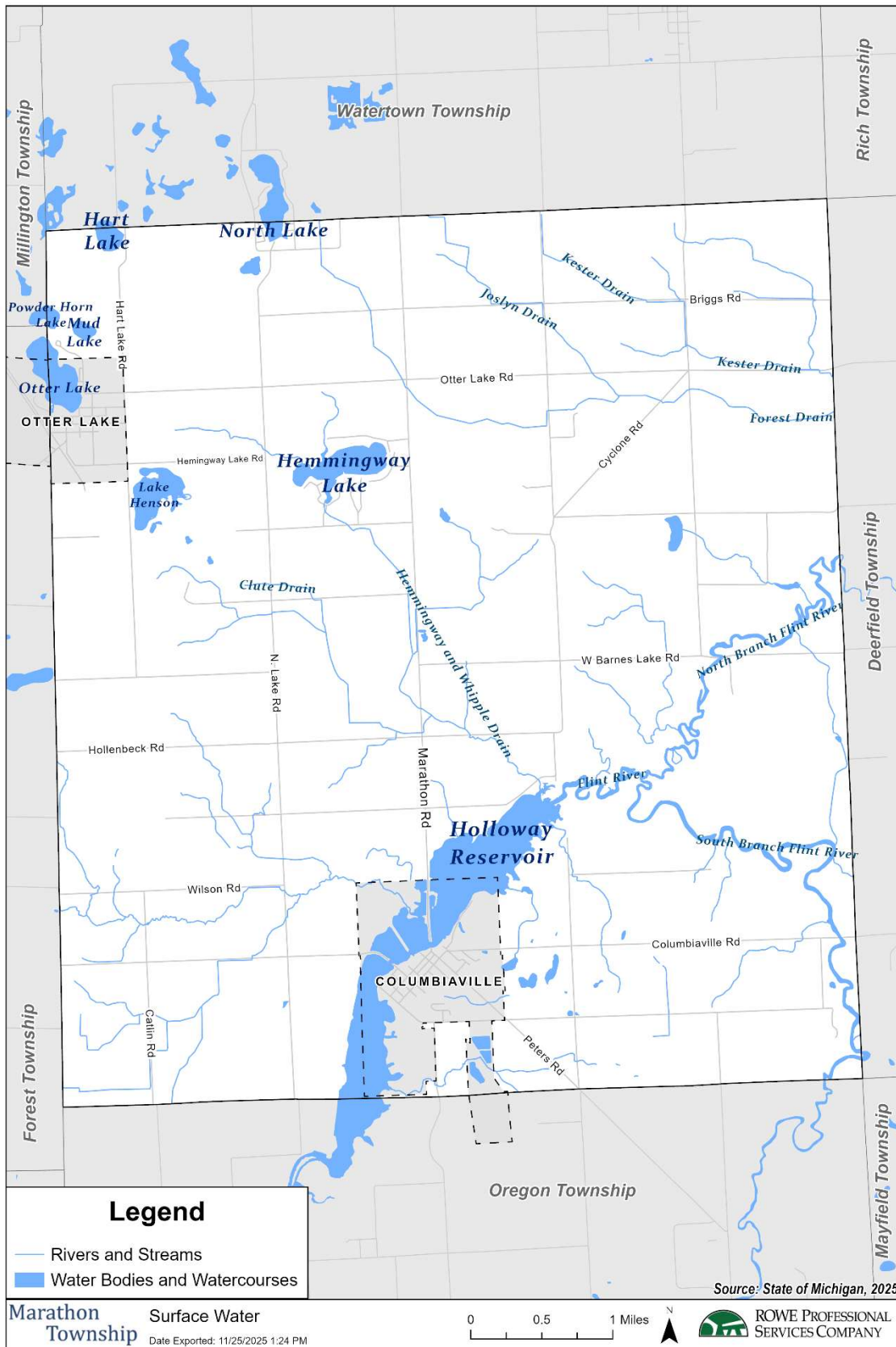
Marathon Township features 450 acres of open surface waters including lakes, rivers, and streams that work together to establish somewhat extensive wetland areas. Most of the smaller lakes within the township are located in the northwest corner, including Hart Lake, Mud Lake, Otter Lake, and North Lake, and occupy approximately 50 township acres. Marathon Township's largest body of water is the Holloway Reservoir; the reservoir covers a total of 2,000 acres, which occupies roughly 250 acres of the township's southern portion and another 140 acres in the Village of Columbiaville. Hemingway Lake, created by Hemingway Lake Dam, is a 65-acre all-sports lake. Henson Lake, created by Henson Dam, is a 66-acre lake, also located in the township.

Although the township has various rivers, streams, and drainage tributaries, the North Branch and South Branch of the Flint River are considered the most significant surface waters in Marathon Township. Flowing southwest from neighboring Deerfield Township, the North Branch of the Flint River enters the township from the east, where it continues to flow southwesterly, eventually emptying into the north tip of Holloway Reservoir. The South Branch flows north from neighboring Oregon Township into Marathon Township's southeast corner and converges with the North Branch approximately one mile east of the Reservoir. The Flint River forms at the confluence of the North and South Branches and flows into the Holloway Reservoir about one-mile further west. These surface water features are shown in Map 3-1.

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<sup>1</sup> All data in this section related to the number of acres of water came from the Marathon Township 2014 Master Plan.

Map 3-1: Marathon Township Surface Water



## Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The program identifies communities with flooding potential and encourages these communities to participate in the program. As part of the program, FEMA, in cooperation with the Surface Water Division of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), identifies the “100-year floodplain”. The “100-year floodplain” represents the areas along a river, stream, drain, or lake that are expected to have a 1 in 100 chance or 1 percent probability of flooding in any given year and are determined as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA)<sup>2</sup> on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). In Marathon Township, these Special Flood Hazard Areas are denoted by the dark blue marking shown on Map 3-2.

In Hazardous Flood Areas, per FEMA and the Michigan State Building Code, buildings must be constructed above the designated Base Flood Elevation (BFE). FEMA defines BFE as the elevation of surface water resulting from a flood that has a 1% chance of equaling or exceeding that level in any given year<sup>3</sup>. Existing homes and businesses below the 100-year flood elevation are limited in their ability to expand. Property owners with buildings within the Hazardous Flood Areas are required to have flood insurance if they have federally insured mortgages.

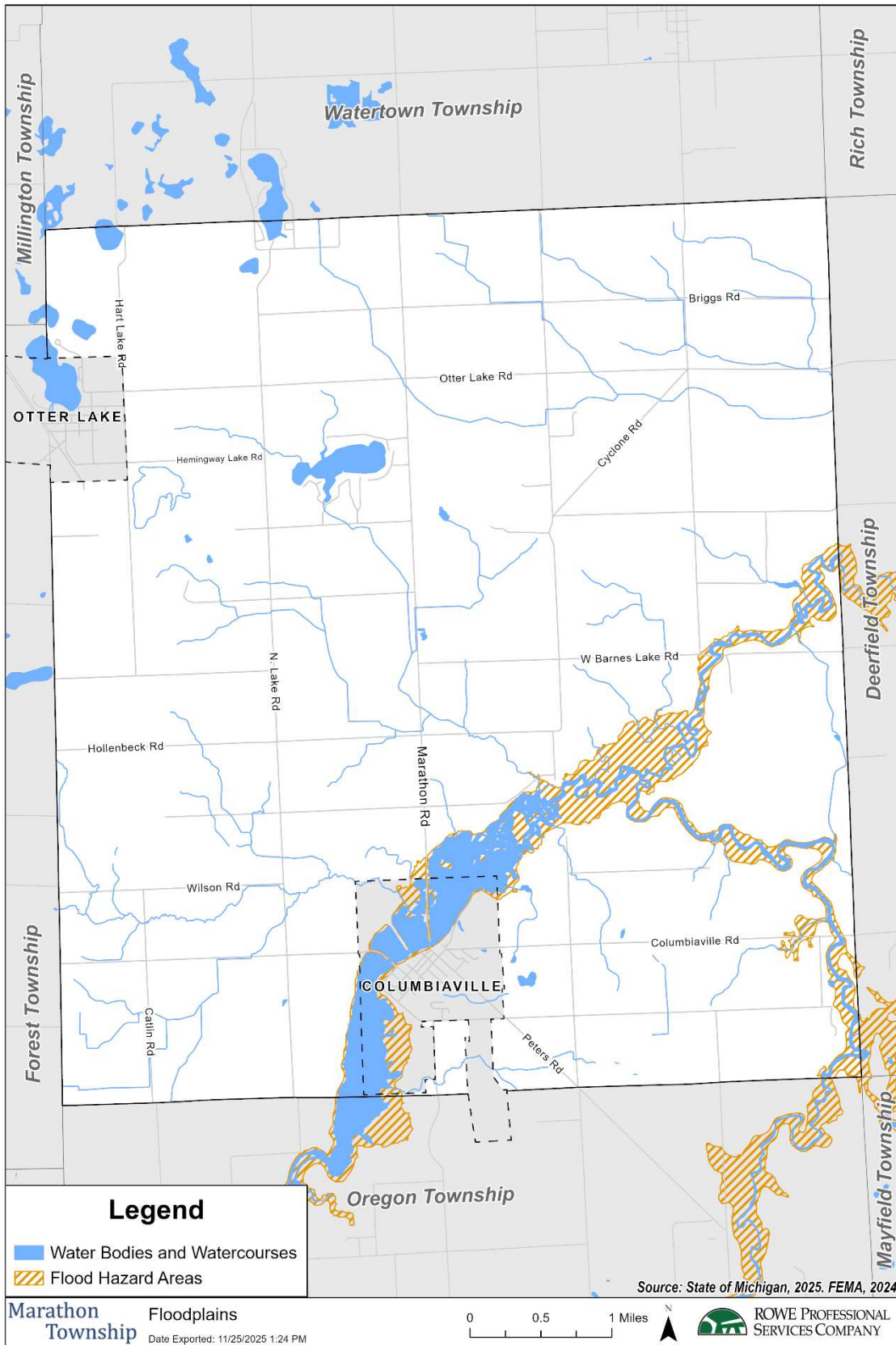
The hazardous flood areas identified within Marathon Township are primarily found in the southeast quadrant, surrounding the Flint River, both its North and South branches, and the Holloway Reservoir.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary/flood-zones>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary/base-flood-elevation-bfe#:~:text=The%20elevation%20of%20surface%20water,%2C%20V1%E2%80%93V30%20and%20VE>

Map 3-2: Marathon Township Floodplains



## Wetlands

In 1979, the State of Michigan enacted the Geomare-Anderson Wetland Protection Act. The legislation was enacted to protect wetlands by limiting their use to specific activities, such as fishing, boating, and farming, while still permitting other uses, such as dredging soil or minerals from a wetland<sup>4</sup>, with approval through the State of Michigan's permit process. Permits are approved only upon a review of an environmental assessment filed by the petitioner and upon a finding that the proposed activity is in the public interest. In 1994, the act was incorporated into the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Under the provisions of the act, a wetland is defined as "land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh." The State of Michigan's regulations, enforced by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), determine state jurisdiction wetlands based on three factors: the predominance of wetland vegetation, hydric (wetland) soils, and indicators of hydrologic features.

To assist in identifying potential wetlands, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) produced a wetland inventory, shown on Map 3-3. While this map is not definitive—since areas marked as wetlands may not be wetlands, and other undocumented wetlands may exist—it provides the township with an indication of where wetlands are located. Map 3-3 identifies three types of wetlands: freshwater emergent, freshwater forested/shrub, and potential restoration areas.

Potential Wetland Restoration<sup>5</sup> areas are areas of potentially lost wetland that would be suitable for restoration efforts. These areas in the State of Michigan were identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) with assistance from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy – Wetlands, Lakes and Streams Unit (EGLE-WLSU). Typically, the areas of 'Potential Wetland Restoration' are ranked in one of three categories: high potential, moderate potential, or low potential. For clarity purposes, Map 3-3 shows all 'Potential Wetland Restoration' areas in Marathon Township as one map item rather than each area's ranked category.

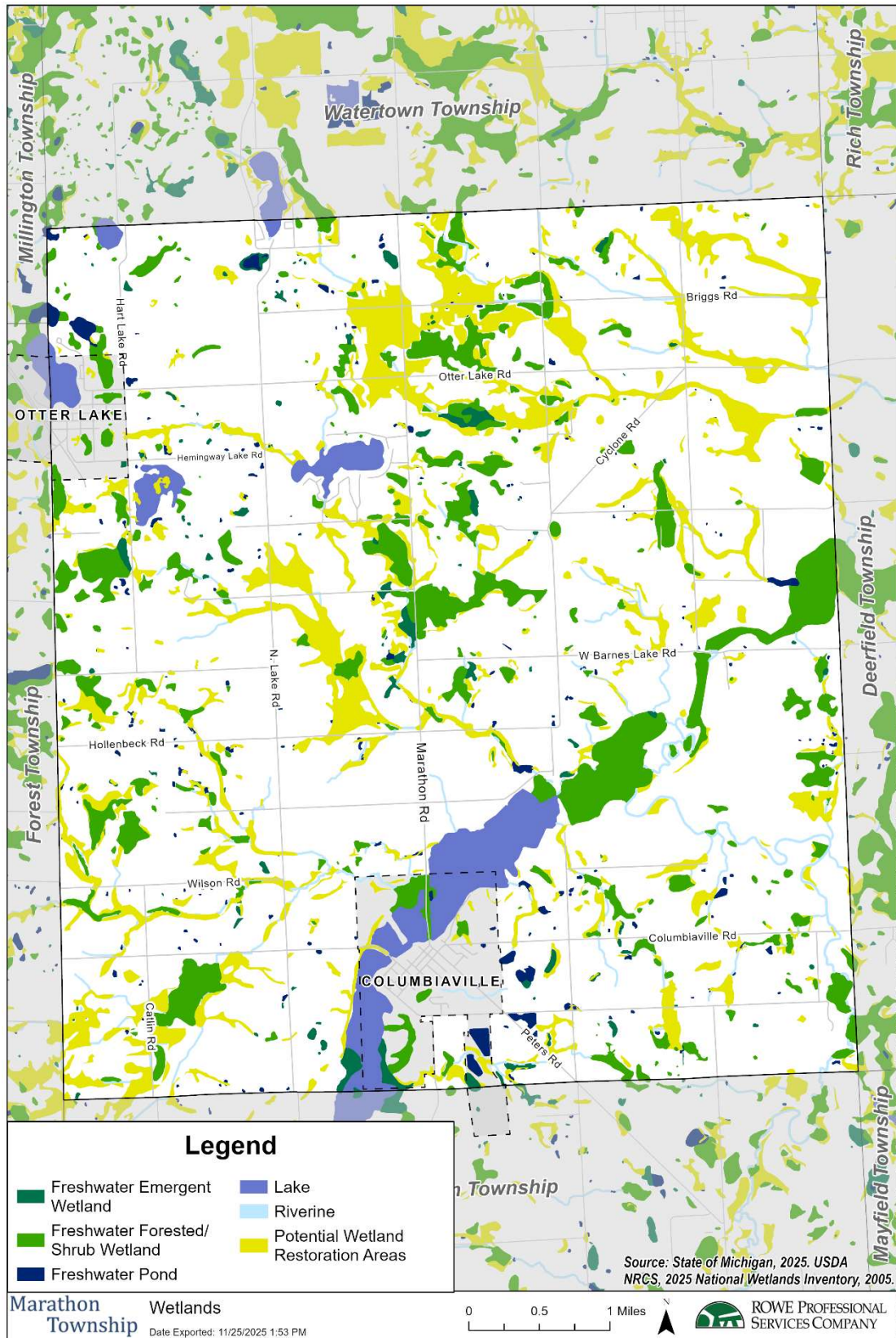
The largest type of wetland in the township is the Freshwater Forested/ Shrub Wetland, covering roughly 2,334 acres of land. This wetland type can be found in most of the township, as seen on Map 3-3. The second largest wetland type is the Potential Restoration Areas, which cover approximately 2,327 acres of land in Marathon Township and surround nearly all of the minor water courses. The Freshwater Emergent Wetland makes up only 220.5 of the 4,881.4 acres of Wetland found in Marathon Township.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/wetlands/state-and-federal-wetland-regulations>

<sup>5</sup> <https://gis-michigan.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/egle::potential-wetland-restoration-areas/about>

Map 3-3: Marathon Township Wetlands Inventory Map

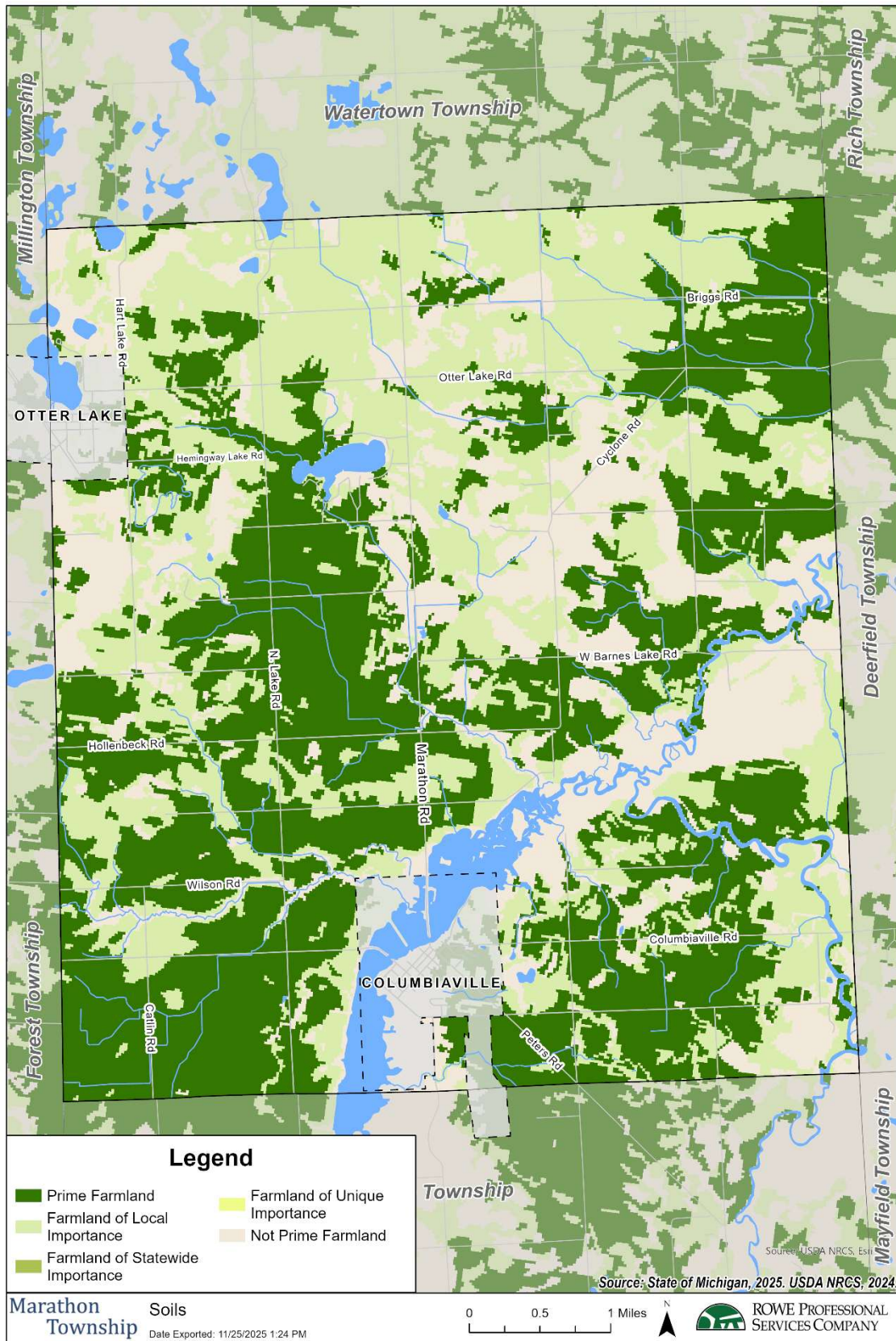


## Suitable Soils for Agriculture

The State of Michigan defines Prime Farmland as “land that is determined to have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, and fiber crops and is also available for these uses, including cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forestland, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water. Prime Farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland generally has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. Prime Farmland is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and it either does not flood frequently or is protected from flooding.”

As Map 3-4 demonstrates, Marathon Township is an agricultural community. Most of the township is classified as either potential Prime Farmland or Farmland of Local Importance. Of the 22,041 acres in Marathon Township, approximately 9,120 acres, or 41.4% of the township, is Prime Farmland, and another 7,389 acres (33.5%) is Farmland of Local Importance. When comparing the Suitable Soils for Agriculture Map (Map 3-4) and the Land Coverage Map (Map 3-6), a large majority of the “Prime Farmland” and “Farmland of Local Importance” space is occupied by areas of “Cultivated Crops” and “Pasture/Hay.”

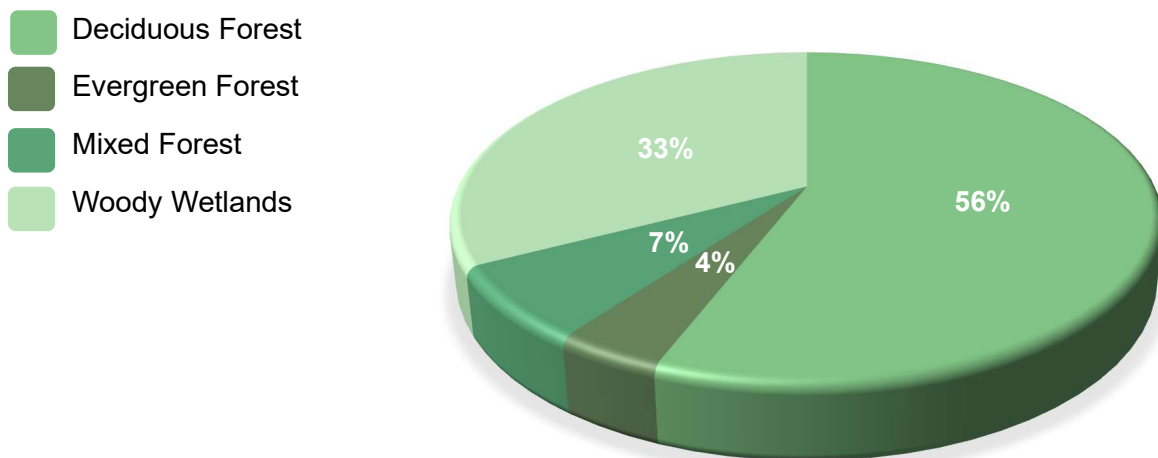
Map 3-4: Marathon Township Suitable Soils for Agriculture



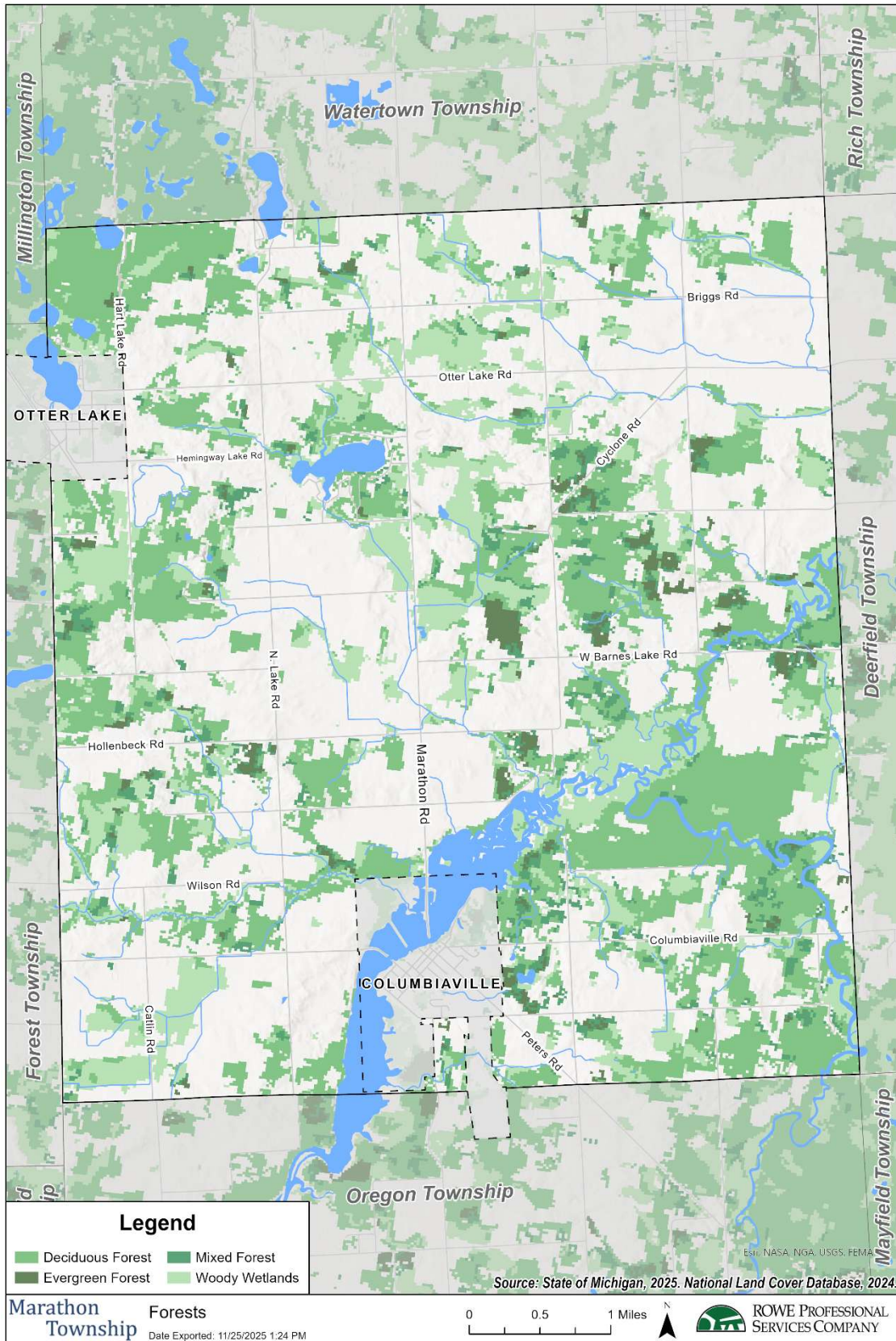
## Forests

Forests are a prevailing natural feature, especially true in the State of Michigan. Map 3-5 shows the forest coverage in Marathon Township, consisting of deciduous, evergreen, mixed forest, and woody wetland types delineated by its National Land Cover Database (NLCD) land cover designation. Figure 3-1 below shows the percentage of each land cover category that comprises the 9,175 acres of forest coverage in Marathon Township. Approximately 41.7% of Marathon Township is forested, spread throughout, but occupying large areas of land in the northwest and southeast corners of the township. Correlating with several of the township's outdoor/recreational opportunities. One of the most significant areas of forested land is the Lapeer State Game Area along the Flint River. Other large areas of forested land include the Murphy Lake Trail, Hilton and Marjorie Tibbits Nature Sanctuary, Marathon Township Park, and many more.

**Figure 3-1: Forestry Types by Percentage**



Map 3-5: Forests

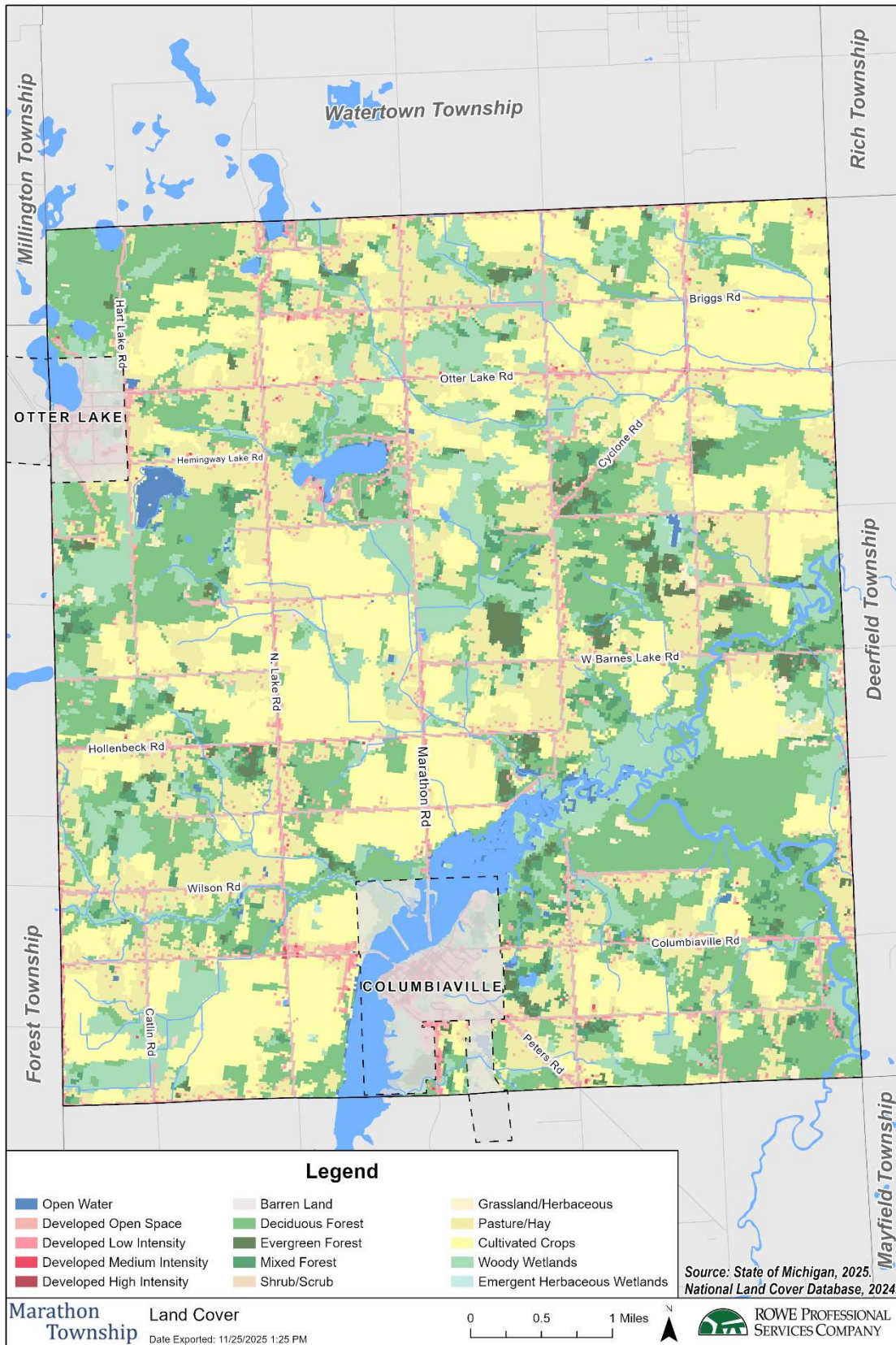


## Land Cover

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) maintains a National Land Cover Data Base, which categorizes all land areas into specific classifications. Classifications include Open Water, Developed Areas ranging in intensity, Forests, and Farmlands. This information can be valuable for a community to identify existing land use practices and plan for future land use practices, allowing a community to quantify the amount of land within each type of land coverage category.

Map 3-6 illustrates the land uses within Marathon Township. In Marathon Township, just under half of the land is categorized as Cultivated Crops and Pasture/Hay. This aligns closely with the Suitable Soils for Agriculture Map. After farmland, the next largest land coverage category is forests. Deciduous, Evergreen, Mixed Forests, and Woody Wetlands can be found in large clusters throughout the township. Marathon Township has very little developed land. However, two notable areas can be found in the township: one area is the Village of Otter Lake in the northwest corner, just south of Otter Lake, and the other area is the Village of Columbiaville in the southern half of the township, just south of the Holloway Reservoir.

Map 3-6: Land Coverage



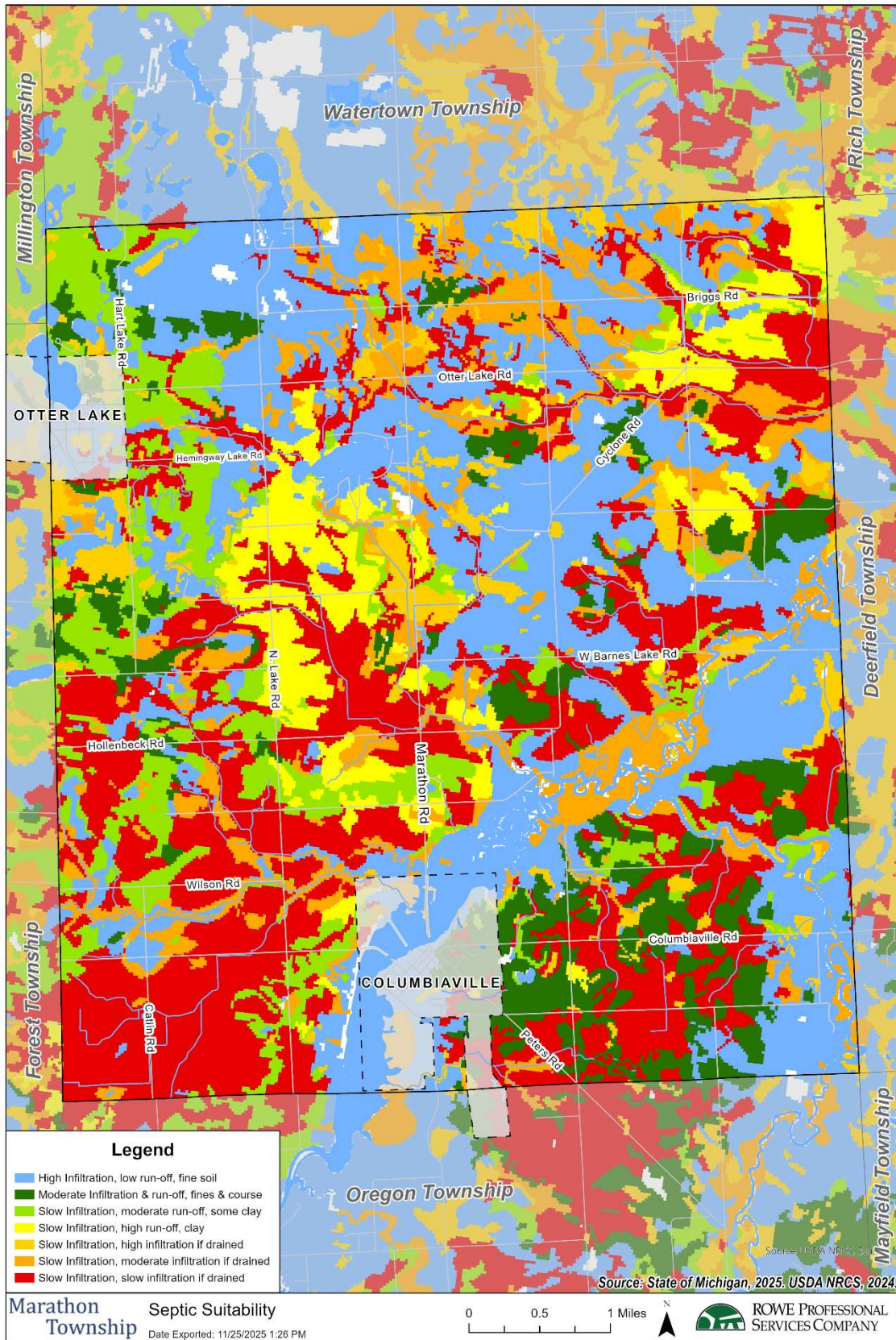
## Septic Suitability

Septic systems are a necessary component of any residential lot without access to public sewers. In Marathon Township and other rural areas, residential structures rely on private septic systems. However, the material below ground is very important to consider when constructing a private septic system.

Ideally, material surrounding private septic systems will allow for adequate drainage to prevent pools of water on the surface. Additionally, the material surrounding septic systems will have adequate lower soils that will help filter waste before it can enter the nearby groundwater supply. Applying this knowledge to Map 3-7 below, areas of high (light blue) and moderate infiltration (dark green) can be viewed as viable areas for residential development. Areas of slow infiltration but moderate (orange) or high infiltration (yellow-orange), if drained properly, are also viable for residential development but at a higher monetary cost. Areas of slow infiltration and moderate (light green) or high amounts of run-off (yellow) are not as viable for residential development.

In Marathon Township, nearly half of the township, primarily in the southwest corner and the eastern half, have a very low level of septic suitability. The northern half of the township has a higher level of septic suitability, with much of that area being categorized as high infiltration (light blue) and the southeast corner of the township being categorized as moderate infiltration and run-off (dark green), as illustrated on Map 3-7.

Map 3-7: Septic Suitability



## C H A P T E R

## 04

**COMMUNITY SERVICES*****Chapter 4: Community Services*****Government**

Marathon Township is governed by a five-member Township board and operates its offices at 4575 Pint Street, Columbiaville, MI 48421.

***Police***

Law enforcement services are provided by the Lapeer County Sheriff's Office. The Township also supports a community-based Neighborhood Watch program that encourages resident engagement and proactive crime prevention.

***Fire***

Fire protection is managed through the Marathon Area Fire Authority (MAFA). The Authority includes the Columbiaville Fire Department (4434 Gilbert Street, Columbiaville, MI 48421) and the Otter Lake Fire Department (6373 Detroit Street, Otter Lake, MI 48464). EMS coverage is provided by Lapeer County EMS (3565 Genesee Road, Lapeer, MI 48446).

***Parks and Recreation***

The Marathon Township Parks & Recreation Board oversee the Township Park adjacent to the Southern Links Trailway. The park features wooded walking paths, picnic areas, and a pavilion. The Board develops and updates a five-year recreation plan to enhance facilities and outdoor amenities.

***Libraries***

Residents are served by the Lapeer District Library - Columbiaville Branch (4718 First Street, Columbiaville, MI 48421) and the Otter Lake Branch (6361 Detroit Street, Otter Lake, MI 48464).

## Economic Development

Marathon Township collaborates with the Lapeer Development Corporation to support business and industrial development. The Village of Columbiaville and Village of Otter Lake, within the Township, operate their own Downtown Development Authorities / Tax Increment Finance Authorities (DDA & TIFA) responsible for infrastructure upgrades, downtown beautification, and public space improvements that enhance local commerce.

These coordinated services demonstrate Marathon Township's dedication to fostering public safety, community engagement, recreation, and sustainable economic growth.

## School District

Marathon Township is within two Intermediate School Districts (ISD): Genesee ISD and Lapeer ISD. The Township is unique in that it, along with Columbiaville and Otter Lake, is the only community in Lapeer County that is primarily incorporated within Genesee ISD. A small portion along the eastern Township boundary, at the southwest corner of Barnes Lake Road and Lonsberry Road, is covered under Lapeer ISD. Tuscola ISD borders Marathon Township to the north, but does not include the Township or Otter Lake within its jurisdiction.

Most of Marathon Township is served by Lakeville Community Schools (LCS), with facilities in Columbiaville and Otter Lake. A small section of the township's eastern boundary is covered by North Branch Area Schools. Both districts provide K–12 education, extracurricular programs, and community engagement activities. Other districts adjacent to the Township include Lapeer Community Schools, Mayville Community School District, and Millington Community Schools.

## Utilities

### *Water and Sewer*

Marathon Township does not operate public utilities. All properties rely on private wells and septic systems. The Lapeer County Health Department issues permits for both well drilling and septic installation to ensure compliance with state health codes and protection of groundwater resources. The Township's Master Plan highlights that the absence of centralized utilities underscores the importance of proper on-site system maintenance and land use planning.

### *Stormwater*

Marathon Township does not have a municipal storm sewer system; runoff is handled primarily through roadside open ditches and driveway/road culverts along township roads under the jurisdiction of the Lapeer County Road Commission (LCRC), and through designated county drains administered by the Lapeer County Drain Commissioner. Township roads use a rural cross-section with ditches and culverts (LCRC standards call for "adequate ditches, approximately 2.5 feet deep"), and residents are advised not to obstruct ditch or culvert flow. Drainage facilities that are part of the county drain system are mapped and maintained by the Drain Commissioner, with township-specific drain maps available. Any work near regulated drains or surface waters must coordinate with the Drain Commissioner and (where applicable) EGLE.

## **Transportation**

### ***Streets***

The Township's Road network follows a rural grid system maintained by the Lapeer County Road Commission. Primary access routes include I-69, I-75, M-24, and M-15, which connect Marathon Township to regional destinations. Local primary roads include Columbiaville Road, Otter Lake Road, North Lake Road, and Washburn Road.

## **Public Transportation**

### ***Non-Motorized Transportation***

The Southern Links Trailway provides a 10-mile paved trail extending from Columbiaville through Marathon Township to Otter Lake and Millington. An adjacent equestrian path offers additional recreational opportunities and supports regional tourism.

### ***Waterways***

The Flint River system and Holloway Reservoir define much of Marathon Township's landscape. The North and South Branches of the Flint River converge east of the Reservoir, which covers approximately 2,000 acres (250 within the Township). The Township also contains Hart, Hemingway, Mud, North, and Otter Lakes, as well as Lake Henson. The Holloway Reservoir Regional Park (5,500 acres total; 160 within the Township) and Lapeer State Game Area (8,500 acres total; 1,100 within the Township) provide abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental conservation.

## C H A P T E R

## 05

## SURVEY

***Chapter 5: Survey*****Introduction**

During the Marathon Township Master Plan update, the Planning Commission developed an independent survey to engage residents, property owners, business owners, and those who visit the township. The survey was available online as well as in hard copy forms. Providing an opportunity to share input and preferences for the future development of the township. By incorporating the survey results, the community can develop a vision for land use policy and management, as seen in 0

Goals, Objectives. At the end of the Master Plan process, citizens will be afforded an opportunity to review the draft of the Master Plan and speak at a public hearing held prior to the adoption of the Master Plan.

Survey

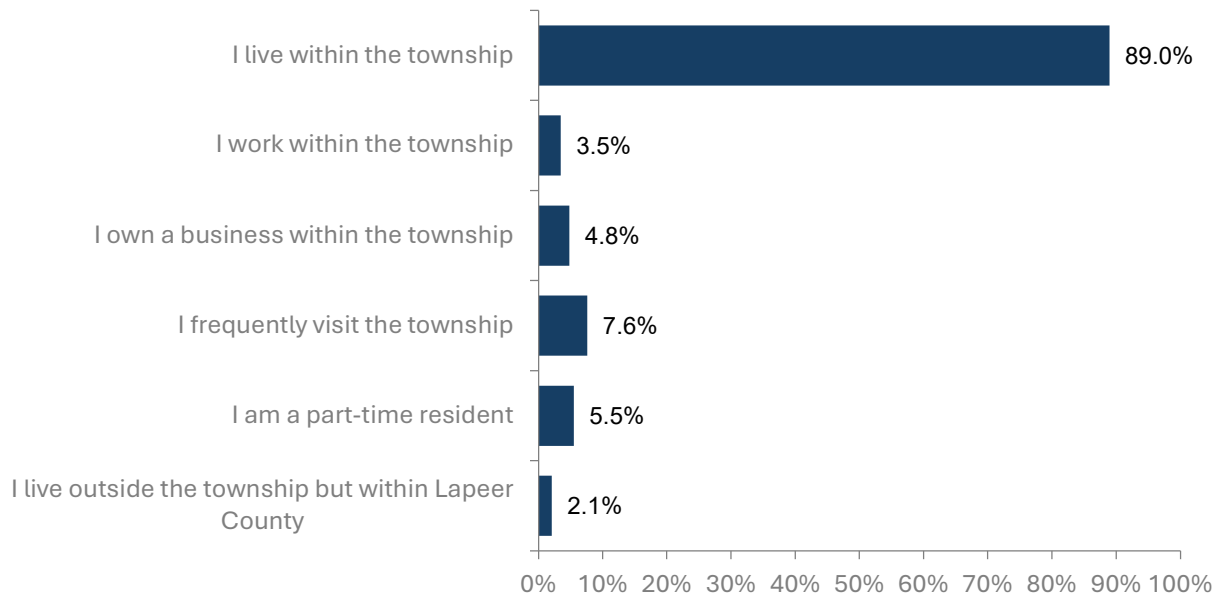
**Survey Results**

The Planning Commission conducted a survey to gather public input on topics such as quality of life, business development, and related issues. A total of one hundred forty-seven (147) survey responses were received and the results are presented in this document. A copy of the survey and the responses are attached in Appendix A.

**Figure 5-1: Connection**

What is your connection to the Township of Marathon? (Select all that apply)

145 responses



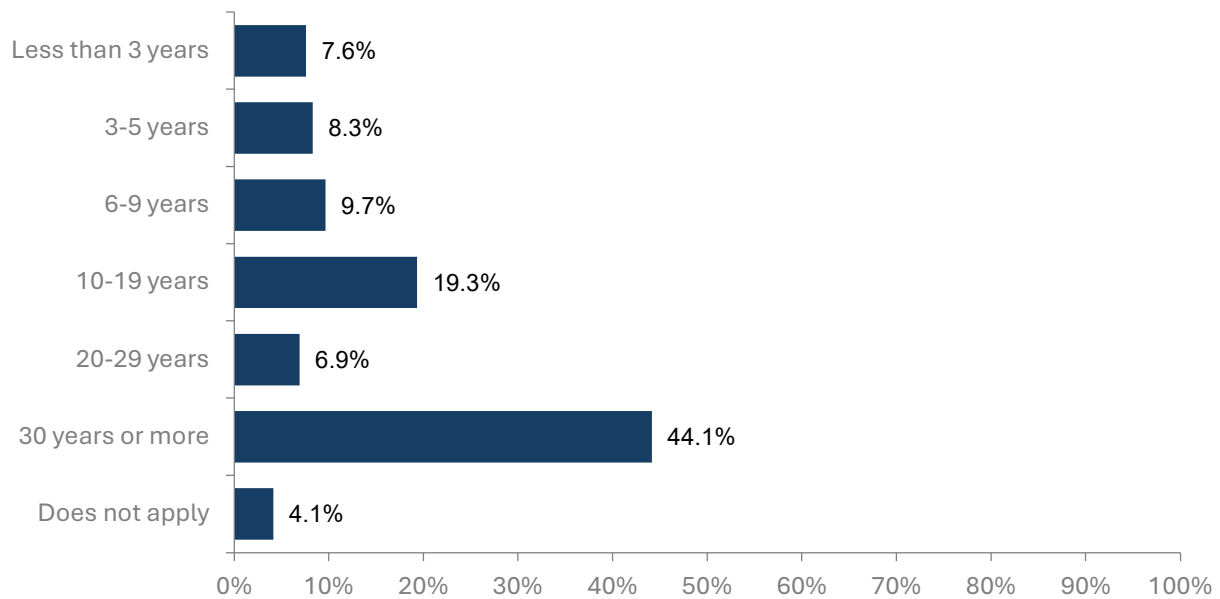
Survey

**Question 1** asked respondents what their connection to Marathon Township was, and 129 (89.0%) responses showed that they live in the township. Eleven (7.6%) out of the 145 respondents frequently visit the township, and eight (5.5%) respondents are part-time residents. While seven (4.8%) respondents own a business within the township, five (3.5%) respondents also answered that they work within the township, and three (2.1% live outside of Marathon Township, but within Lapeer County.

**Figure 5-2: Length of Residency**

How long have you lived in the Township of Marathon?

145 responses



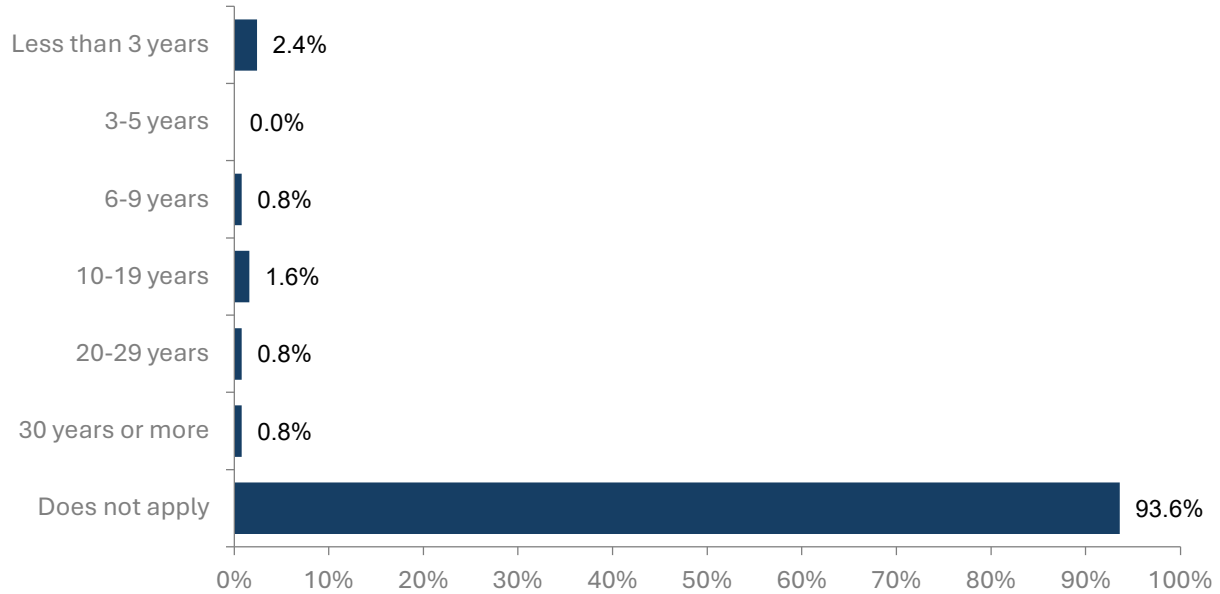
The results of **Question 2** demonstrate that of the 145 responses, most have lived in Marathon Township for 30 years or more, selected by 64 respondents (44.1%). This was followed by 28 (19.3%) respondents selecting the answer between 10 and 19 years. The subsequent frequently chosen range responses were 6-9 Years with 14 responses (9.7%), 3-5 Years (8.3%), and “Less than 3 Years” (7.6%). Lastly, 10 respondents (6.9%) selected the response 20-29 Years. Together, these responses reflect a broad range of residency lengths, from long-term residents to new residents.

Survey

**Figure 5-3: Length of Business**

If you have a business in the Township of Marathon, how long have you been here?

125 responses



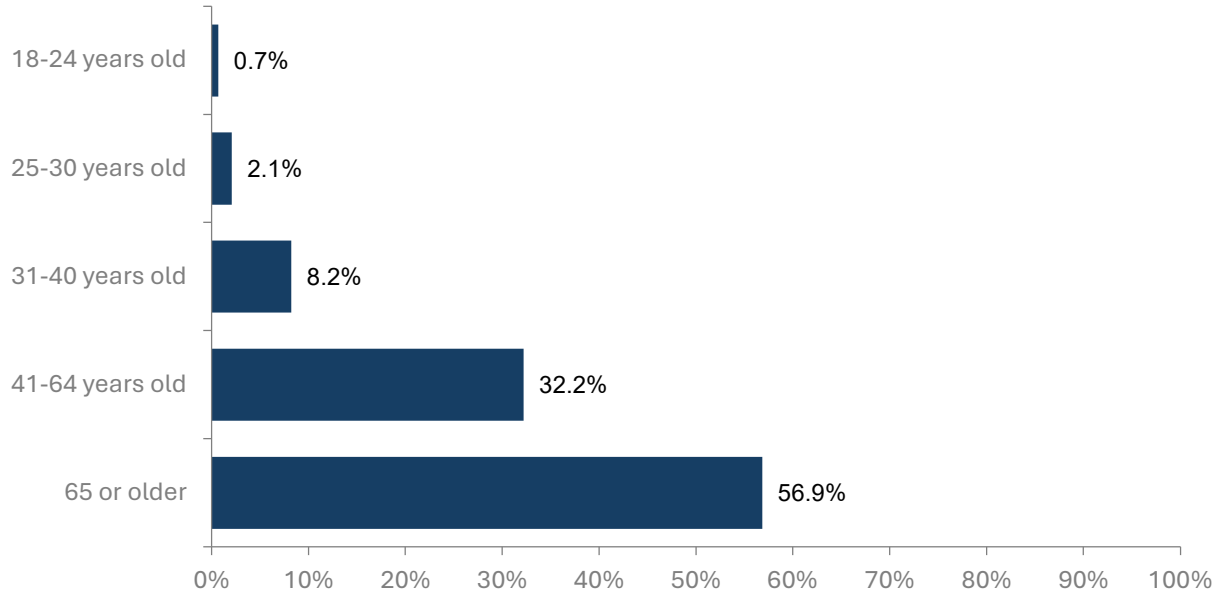
**Question 3** gathered information regarding the length of business ownership by respondents who own a business in Marathon Township. The survey data concludes that for business owners of “Less than 3 years”, three (2.4%) responses were received, followed by “10-19 years”, with two (1.6%) responses. One (.8%) response each was received for the following three choices: “6-9 years”, “20-29 years”, and “30 years or more”. Of the 125 responses, 117 (93.6%) responded that it does not apply to them because they do not own a business.

Survey

Figure 5-4: Age

What is your age?

146 responses



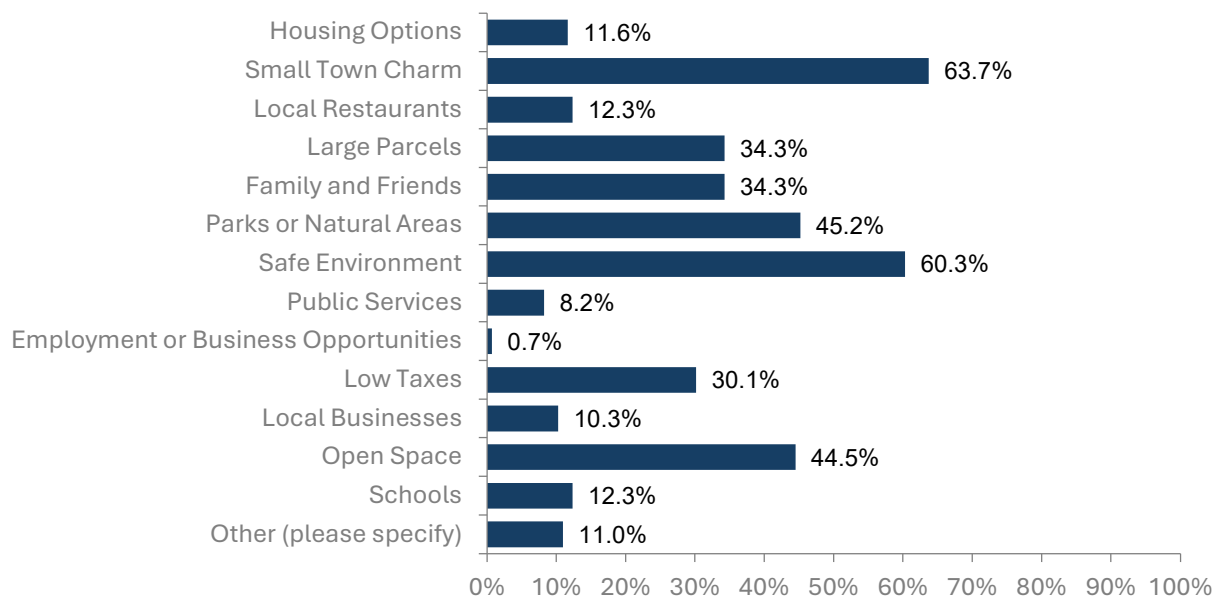
**Question 4** collected survey data in which the general age range of survey respondents was indicated. Of the 146 responses, 83 (56.9%) indicated they were 65 and older, while 47 (32.2%) respondents stated they were between the ages of 41 and 64. The third most common age group represented by survey respondents was those 31 to 40, with 12 (8.2%). The following was the age group of 25-30 years, with 3 responses (2.1%), and 18-24 years, with one response (0.7%).

**Figure 5-5: Most Valued**

What do you value the most about living, working, or visiting the Township of Marathon?

(Select all that apply)

146 responses



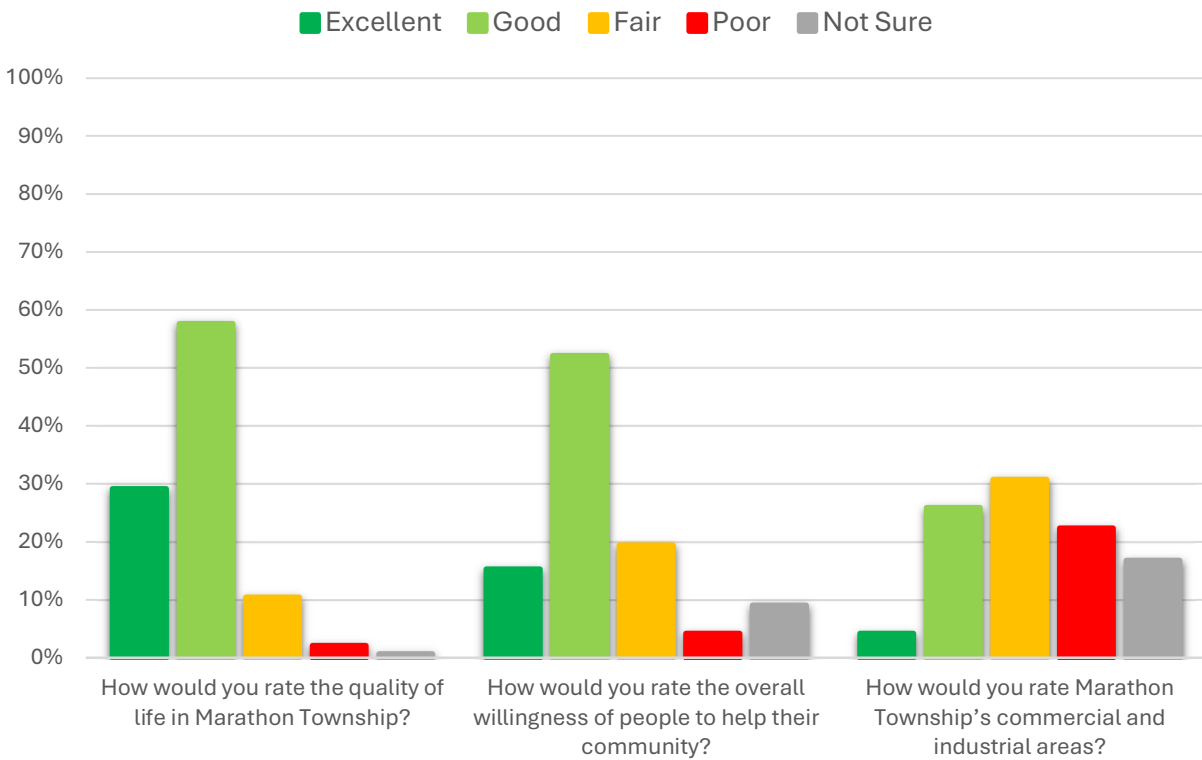
**Question 5** gathered information surrounding what items the survey respondents value most about living, working, or visiting Marathon Township. Of the 146 responses, small town charm, with 93 (63.7%) votes, and safe environment, with 88 (60.3%) votes, were selected as being valued the most by Marathon residents. The following five highest-rated options include 66 (45.2%) responses for parks or natural areas, 65 (44.5%) responses for open space, 50 (34.3%) responses for large parcels, 50 (34.3%) responses for family and friends, and 44 (30.1%) responses for low taxes.

Respondents who offered additional comments under the other option included the following: Residents and visitors value Marathon Township for its natural beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and peaceful environment. Highlighting items such as the township’s access to lakes, streams, the Rail Trail, minimal light pollution, and a strong sense of tranquility. Community resources such as Veterans’ Services, the local library, and a vibrant farming presence further enhance the Township’s appeal. Many appreciate the freedom from urban congestion and limited government interference, though there are concerns about the proposed solar farm development. Overall, respondents feel that Marathon Township offers an exceptional balance of nature, community, and quality of life.

Survey

Figure 5-6: Community Ratings

Perception



In **Question 6**, the survey asked respondents to rate several topics related to the perception of Marathon Township as either Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Not Sure. The respondents were asked to rate the quality of life in Marathon Township, the overall willingness of people to help their community, and Marathon Township's commercial and industrial areas. The results show that most of the respondents ranked the quality of life in Marathon Township as good. The survey results also ranked the helpfulness of residents as good. Most respondents were either unsure or rated it as "neutral" when it came to commercial and industrial activity within the township.

Survey

**Question 7** asked survey respondents to provide further details regarding their rating of their community perception from Question 6. If survey respondents answered “Fair” or “Poor” for any of the above options in Question 6, they were asked to briefly describe why. The five common themes of reasons provided by respondents were:

**1. Lack of Commercial & Industrial Development**

- A significant number of respondents mentioned that there is very little to no commercial or industrial presence in Marathon Township.
- Many noted the absence of basic businesses like grocery stores, restaurants, barber shops, or pharmacies.
- Several respondents pointed out that there are too many empty or outdated buildings, and a few suggested redeveloping areas like North Lake and Columbiaville Road.
- Some feel the lack of business options results in having to travel 30 minutes or more for basic shopping.

**2. Mixed Feelings on Growth**

- A portion of residents value the quiet, rural nature of the township and are content with minimal development, especially in relation to preserving agriculture, private lakes, and open spaces.
- Others expressed frustration with the lack of amenities, entertainment, and job opportunities, especially for the younger population.

**3. Infrastructure Concerns**

- Poor road conditions, lack of streetlights, no fire hydrants, and no water service were common concerns.
- Some expressed dissatisfaction with how taxes have increased, without seeing improvements in infrastructure.

**4. Community & Involvement**

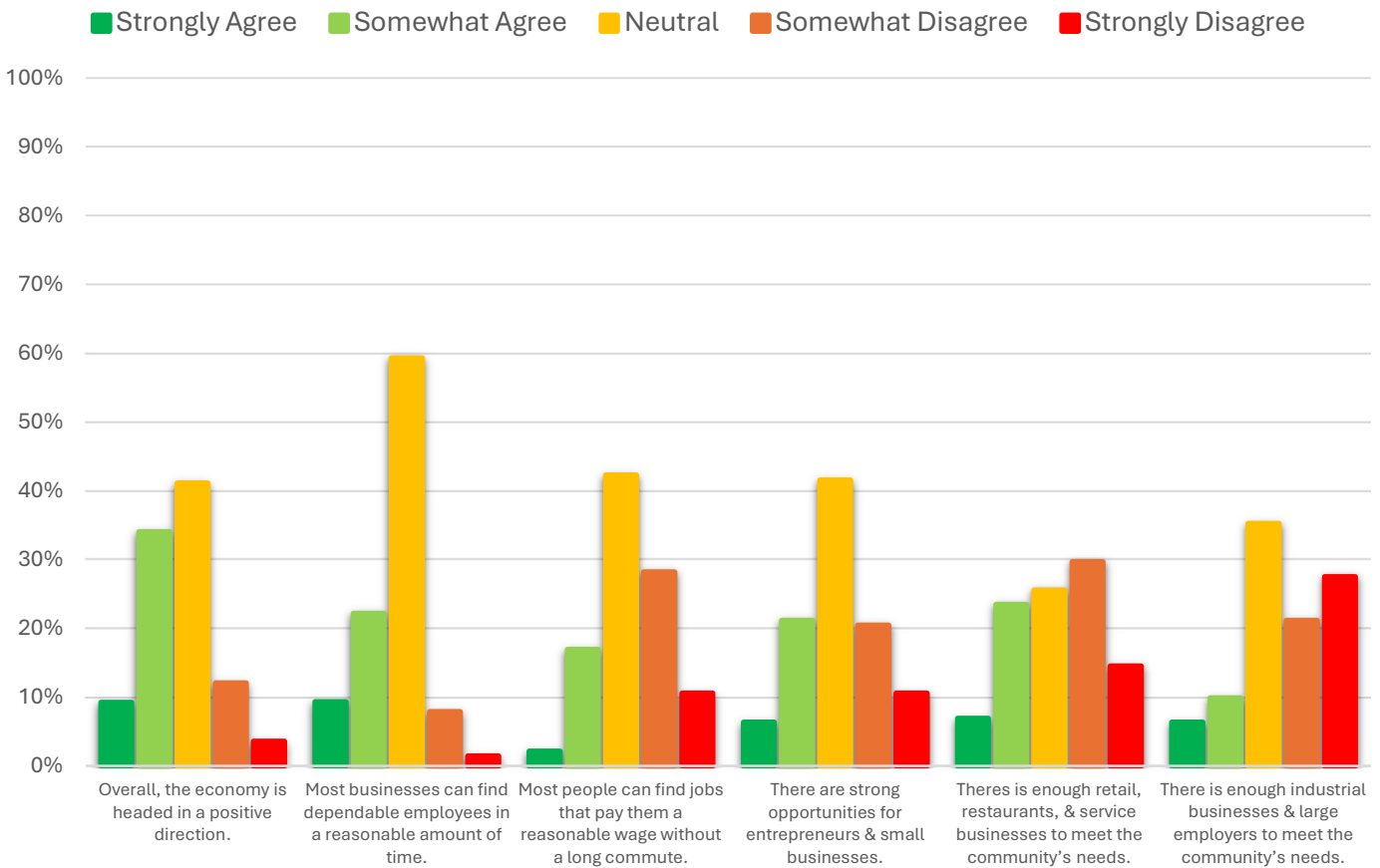
- Respondents commented on a lack of community engagement, especially among the younger generation.
- Several mentioned that people are often self-focused and unwilling to volunteer or support others.
- A few voiced appreciation for the library and post office, but still noted the overall lack of services.

**5. Suggestions & Wishes**

- Residents suggested the addition of:
  - Restaurants and coffee shops
  - Cooking or BBQ classes
  - Internet improvements
  - Incentives to attract businesses and revitalize commercial properties
- Others noted the need for more awareness and promotion of existing businesses.

Survey

**Figure 5-7: Economy**



In **Question 8**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statements related to the economy in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Overall, the economy in Marathon Township is headed in a positive direction.
2. Businesses in Marathon Township can find dependable employees in a reasonable amount of time.
3. Most respondents disagree that residents in Marathon Township can find jobs that pay them a reasonable wage without a long commute.
4. There may be strong opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to start in Marathon Township.
5. There is a general sense of dissatisfaction or inadequacy among respondents when it comes to the existing retail, restaurants, and service businesses meeting the community's needs.
6. Marathon Township should have more industrial businesses and large employers to meet the community's needs.

## Survey

**Question 9** collected written responses from survey respondents on whether there were any desired future businesses or economic activities they wished to see more of in Marathon Township. Based on the responses received, here are the seven most desired businesses or services for Marathon Township:

**1. Medical Services:**

- There is a strong demand for more local medical options, including family doctors, dentists, and general healthcare services. Many residents would like to see local pharmacies and urgent care facilities.

**2. Grocery and Retail Needs:**

- Several respondents request a grocery store with healthier food options, as current choices (like Dollar General) are considered insufficient.
- Hardware stores are also mentioned frequently, with residents desiring more local stores to avoid having to drive out of town for basic supplies.
- Other retail desires include a bakery, a coffee shop, gift shops, and clothing stores.

**3. Restaurants and Food Services:**

- There is a recurring call for more restaurants and fast-food options, with many suggesting a variety of dining choices, including cafes, bars, or family-friendly eateries.
- Some also propose a local brewery or dining establishments by the lake, offering outdoor seating and scenic views.

**4. Recreation and Community Spaces:**

- Respondents express interest in more recreational spaces, such as mini golf, a golf course, or kayak/canoe rentals at the local reservoir.
- There are also suggestions for a community center offering activities like yoga, craft classes, or fitness programs.
- A splash pad for children or other family-oriented recreation options was also mentioned.

**5. Local Infrastructure and Services:**

- Some respondents suggest improving the local infrastructure, including better roads, public transportation (bus services), and internet access.
- Banks, laundry services, and public service facilities such as ambulance services to VA hospitals were also desired.

**6. Specialty and Tourism-Oriented Businesses:**

- Suggestions for unique or tourist-focused businesses include art galleries, local butcher shops, cannabis shops, or event spaces.
- There is also interest in local tourism activities, such as boating, camping, or other outdoor-based businesses, to cater to tourists and residents alike.

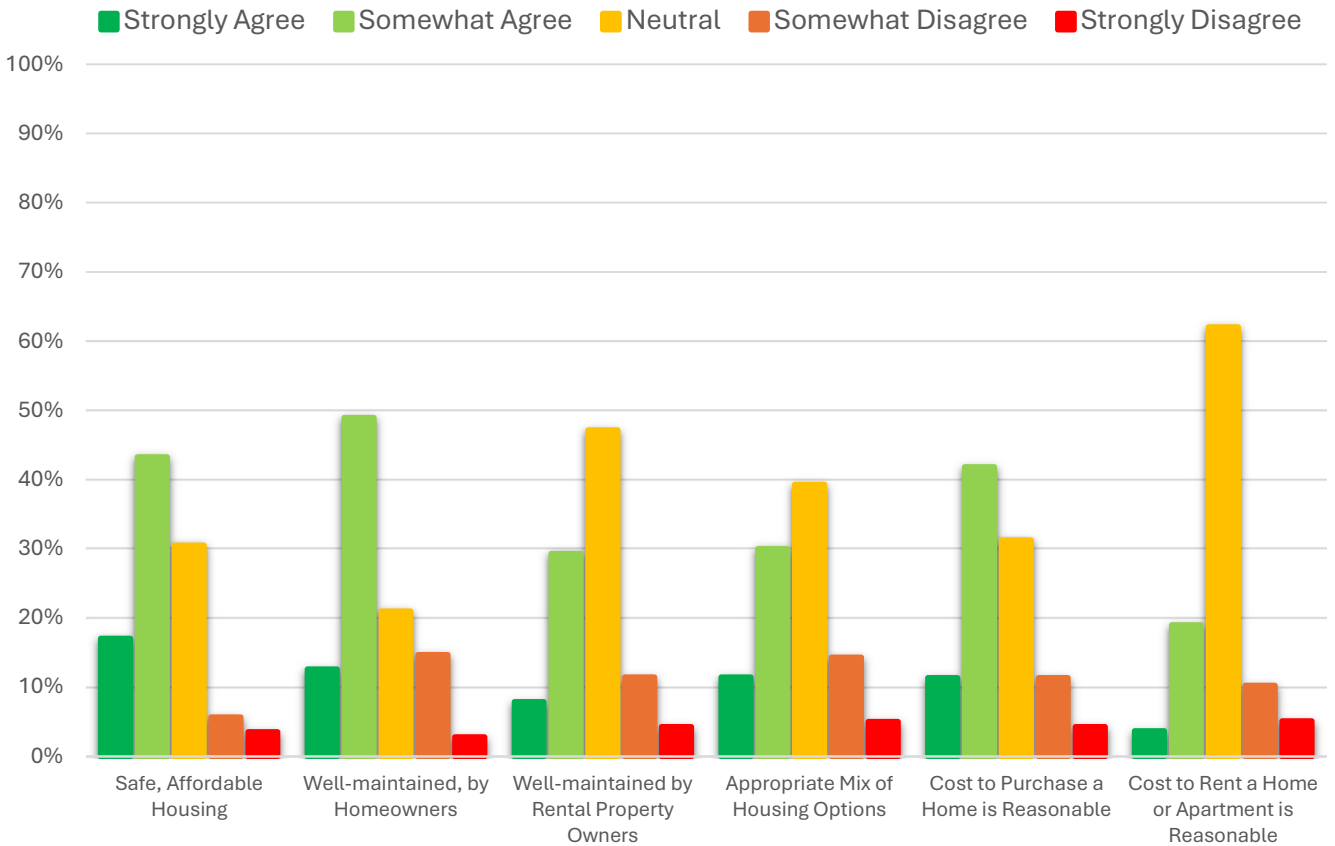
**7. Community Engagement and Activities:**

- Ideas for community-based activities include game nights, family-friendly events, or local festivals to help build a stronger sense of community.

Residents of Marathon Township are calling for more **local services**, including **healthcare**, **grocery stores**, and **recreational options**. However, they are wary of large-scale development and want to preserve the area's rural character. **Community spaces**, **family-friendly entertainment**, and **small local businesses** are seen as key additions that could improve life in the township.

Survey

**Figure 5-8: Housing**



**Question 10** asked the survey respondents to rate the following statements related to housing in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Most people and families can find safe, affordable housing that meets their needs in Marathon Township.
2. Houses in Marathon Township are well-maintained, and homeowners are reinvesting in their homes.
3. Houses in Marathon Township are well-maintained, and rental property owners are reinvesting in their homes.
4. Marathon Township has an appropriate mix of housing options (single-family, apartments, senior housing, etc.).
5. The cost to purchase a home in Marathon Township is reasonable.
6. The cost to rent a home or apartment in Marathon Township is somewhat reasonable.

Survey

**Question 11** provides further information regarding housing and property conditions in Marathon Township. If survey respondents answered “Somewhat Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for any of the above options in Question 10, they were asked to briefly describe why. The five most common reasons given are listed below:

**1. Property Maintenance and Blight:**

- Blight and property neglect are significant concerns, with many respondents noting junk in yards, overgrown vegetation, old cars, and poorly maintained properties. This is seen as detracting from the overall appearance of the township and lowering property values.
- Some homes are well-maintained, but there is a need for enforcement of blight ordinances to address neglected properties.
- There is frustration with the lack of pride in some areas and a belief that action needs to be taken to clean up the township.

**2. Housing Affordability and Availability:**

- Rent prices are generally viewed as too high, making it difficult for many families, particularly those on fixed incomes, to afford housing. Some respondents mention that rent in the area is comparable to larger cities, but the housing quality does not reflect the price.
- There are concerns that the cost of housing is unreasonable for people on limited incomes. Rental properties are often described as poorly maintained or overpriced.
- The lack of affordable rental housing and senior housing options is noted as a problem in the township.

**3. Community Pride and Involvement:**

- Community pride is seen as insufficient, with many calling for greater participation in maintaining properties and enforcing local ordinances to reduce blight.
- Suggestions include using local resources like a deputy to help enforce blight laws and address properties with excessive junk or disrepair.
- Some respondents suggest cleaning up trash on the roads, improving signage, and making necessary repairs to infrastructure like guardrails and fire hydrants.

**4. Concerns About Government Housing and Taxes:**

- There is resistance to government-subsidized housing and the high taxes in the area, especially considering the lack of urban amenities like streetlights, city water, and fire hydrants.

**5. Desire for Better Housing Options:**

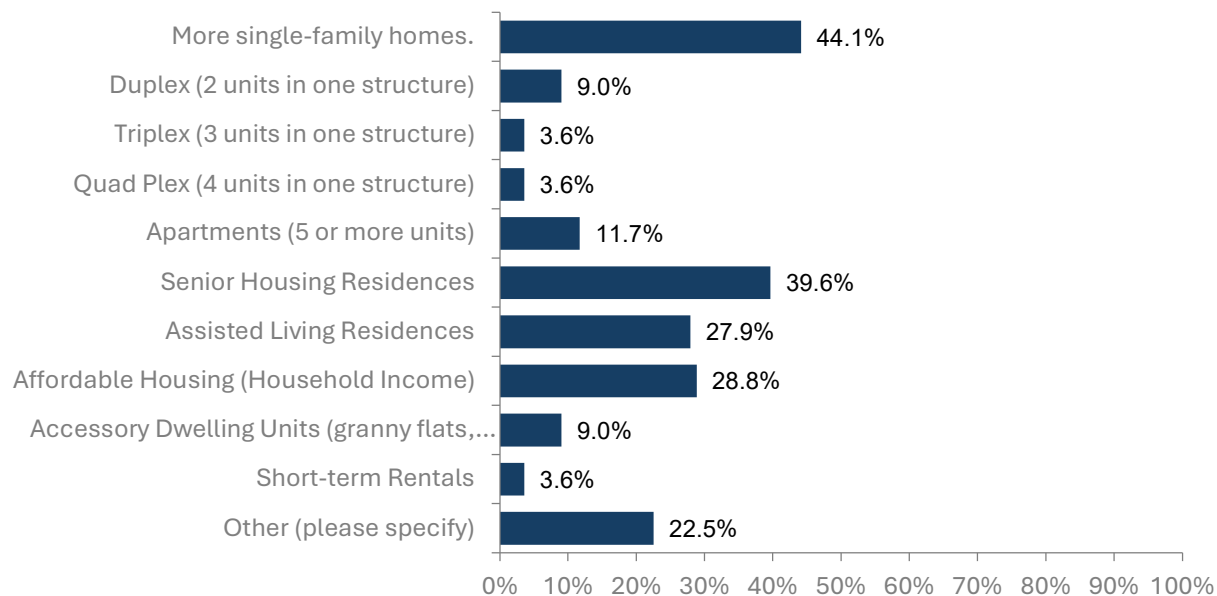
- Some respondents believe there is a need for more housing options beyond single-family homes, including affordable rentals and senior care facilities.
- Lack of apartments in the township is a notable concern, and there is interest in seeing more well-maintained rental properties.

The responses suggest that Marathon Township faces challenges with **property maintenance**, **housing affordability**, and **community pride**. There is a need for stronger enforcement of blight ordinances and action to improve housing options, particularly affordable rentals and senior housing. The high cost of rent and property maintenance, combined with a lack of urban amenities, is a significant concern for residents. Additionally, there is resistance to government-subsidized housing and high local taxes.

**Figure 5-9: Housing Needs**

Is there a specific type of housing that is needed in Marathon Township? (Select all that apply)

111 responses



In **Question 12**, the survey asked respondents to select from the options provided to them if any specific housing types were needed in Marathon Township. Of the 111 responses, more single-family homes received 49 (44.1%) votes. The four most frequently selected housing priorities were Senior Housing with 44 responses (39.6%), Affordable Housing based on household income with 32 responses (28.8%), Assisted Living Residences with 31 responses (27.9%), and "Other" with 25 responses (22.5%). The prevalent themes and responses gathered from the "Other" option are detailed below:

### 1. General Sentiment on Housing:

- Many respondents feel that there is enough housing already in the township, with a strong desire to preserve the rural character and avoid overcrowding (6 mentions). Some people specifically mention that the township should stay rural and maintain its country feel (3 mentions).
- A few people believe the area has too many people already, and adding more housing would be detrimental (2 mentions).
- Government-subsidized housing is generally opposed, with some people indicating that it is unnecessary for the area (3 mentions).
- There is also a desire for no more housing to be developed in the area (2 mentions).

### 2. Suggestions for Housing Types:

- Senior housing and assisted living facilities are seen as beneficial due to the aging population in the township (3 mentions).
- Some respondents suggest the idea of converting vacant buildings, like the old rehab facility, into assisted living spaces (1 mention).

Survey

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- A few are open to the idea of adding condos or well-maintained properties (2 mentions).

**3. Short-Term Rentals and Other Ideas:**

- Short-term rentals (like Airbnb's) are mentioned as a potential way to bring in income and attract tourists to the area (2 mentions).
- There is a suggestion for rehabbing properties and developing new businesses to help the area (2 mentions).
- Some are also in favor of accessory dwelling units, like granny flats or apartments above garages (1 mention).

**4. Internet Access:**

- A lack of high-speed internet is noted as a major barrier to attracting new residents and businesses, suggesting it is a necessity for future development (1 mention).

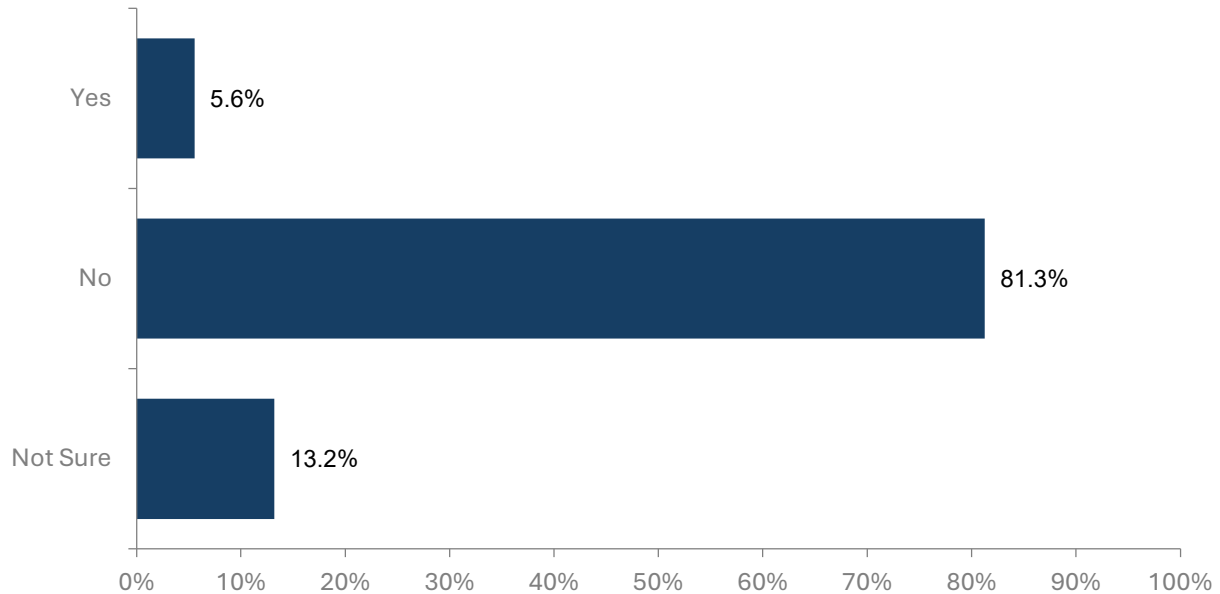
The responses indicate a strong preference for maintaining the **rural charm** of Marathon Township and **limiting additional housing** development. There is support for **senior housing** and **assisted living** options to cater to the aging population, but resistance to **more government-subsidized or large-scale housing projects**. There are also calls for improving **internet access** and possibly utilizing **vacant buildings** for housing purposes. Additionally, **short-term rentals** are seen as a way to boost the local economy by attracting tourists.

Survey

**Figure 5-10: Leaving the Township**

Do you intend to move out of Marathon Township in the next two (2) years?

144 responses

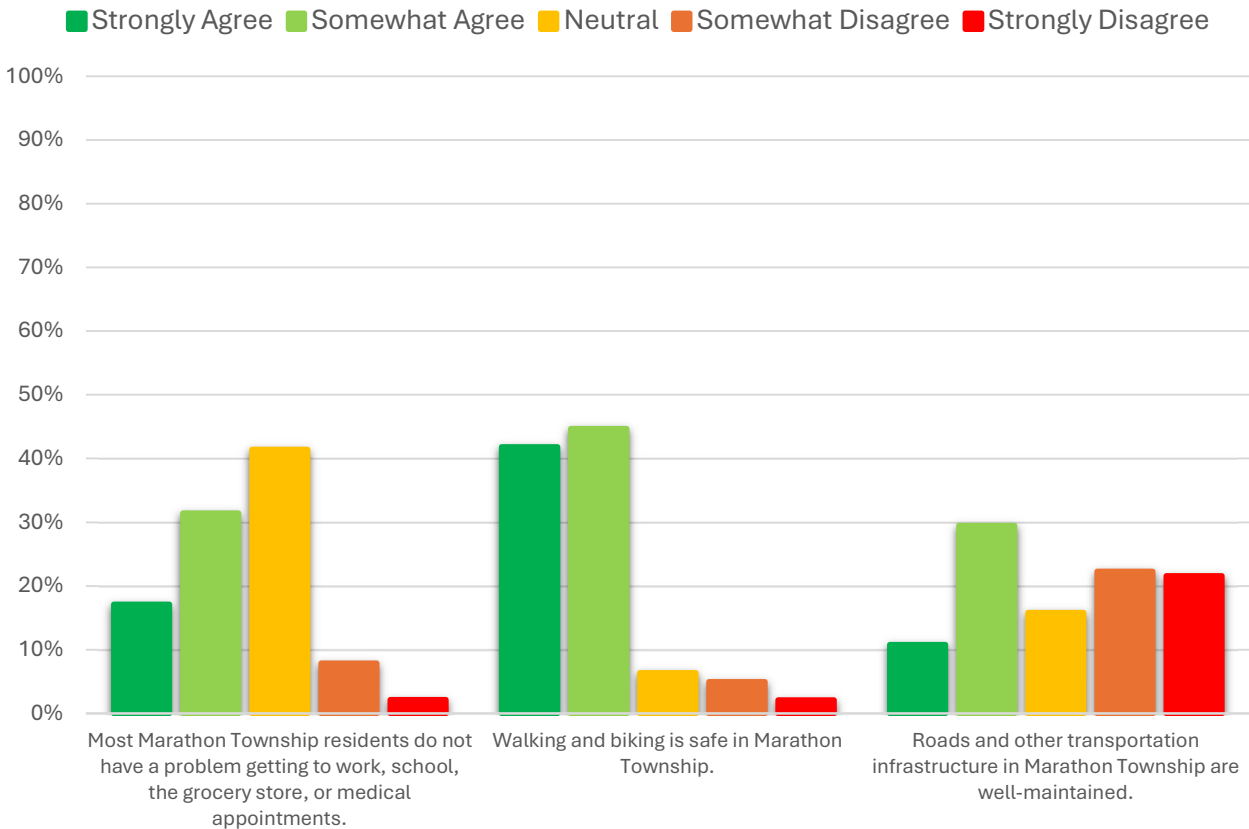


**Question 13** asked survey respondents if they intend to move out of Marathon Township in the next two years. Of the 144 responses, 117 (81.3%) respondents selected the answer “No,” 19 (13.2%) selected “Not Sure,” and only 8 (5.6%) selected “Yes.” The data demonstrates that most respondents intend to stay within the township over the next two years. Furthermore, this question asked respondents who indicated intentions of moving out of Marathon Township to provide their reasoning. The responses collected regarding resident sentiment on relocation are listed below:

1. High or rising taxes were frequently mentioned as a primary concern.
2. Some feel their homes are too large or unmanageable as they age.
3. A few noted poor property maintenance in the area as a frustration (e.g., neighbors’ trash or yard conditions).
4. Others expressed dissatisfaction with lack of local amenities such as grocery stores, doctors, or businesses, making daily life inconvenient.
5. A handful mentioned potential developments (like solar farms or cannabis facilities) as possible reasons to leave.
6. Aging or health concerns were also mentioned, particularly by older residents, unsure of how long they’ll remain in their current homes.

Survey

Figure 5-11: Transportation



In **Question 14**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statements related to transportation in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Most Marathon Township residents do not have a problem getting to work, school, the grocery store, or medical appointments.
2. Walking and biking is safe in Marathon Township.
3. Roads and other transportation infrastructure in Marathon Township are NOT well-maintained.

## Survey

**Question 15** asked survey respondents to provide further information based on their rating of road conditions and transportation concerns in Marathon Township from Question 14. If survey respondents answered “Somewhat Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for any of the above options in Question 14, they were asked to briefly describe why. The three most common reasons are listed below:

### 1. Road Conditions:

- Potholes are frequently mentioned as a major issue, with many respondents pointing out the terrible state of local roads, particularly Columbiaville Road, Marathon Road, and various gravel roads. Potholes are described as damaging vehicles and creating dangerous driving conditions (13 mentions).
- Specific roads like Columbiaville Road, Marathon Road, Peters Road, and LeValley Road are frequently cited as being in desperate need of repair (9 mentions).
- Dirt roads are highlighted as poorly maintained, with complaints about dust and lack of grading, especially on roads like Barnes Lake Road (5 mentions).
- Poor winter maintenance is noted, with concerns about roads not being plowed or salted in a timely manner, particularly for gravel roads (3 mentions).
- Safety hazards are mentioned due to poorly maintained roads, with one specific comment about Klam Road and Columbiaville Road being dangerous to drive on (3 mentions).

### 2. Transportation Issues:

- There are no public transportation options, making it difficult for homebound individuals or those without vehicles to get around (3 mentions).
- Bus services are mentioned as inadequate, with calls for cross-county services for medical appointments (2 mentions).
- Loose dogs are also a recurring issue, with some respondents expressing concern about being approached or attacked by stray dogs (2 mentions).

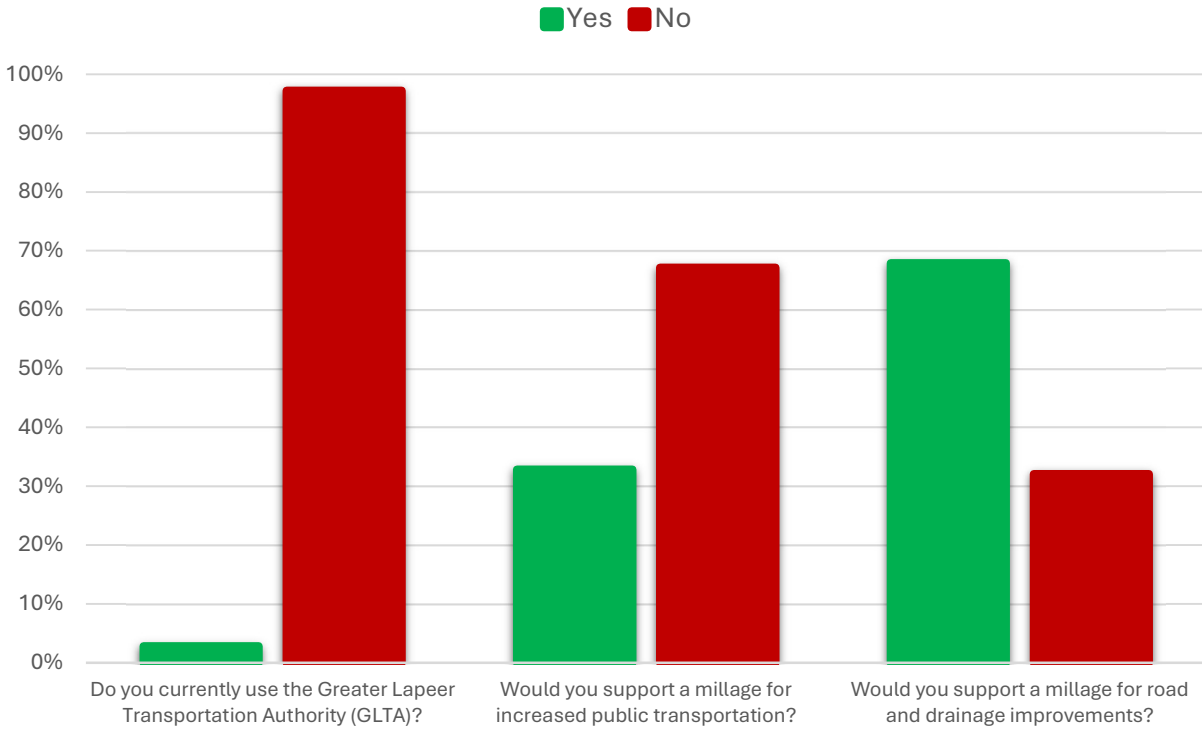
### 3. Additional Concerns:

- Some residents are concerned about speeding on certain roads, such as Barnes Lake Road, and the need for lower speed limits (1 mention).
- Requests for more regular maintenance of dirt roads and better grading to improve road conditions (1 mention).
- Calls for improving the aesthetics of the area, such as painting safety bollards and improving signage around the township (1 mention).

The primary concern in the responses is the **poor state of the roads**, especially the **lack of maintenance, potholes**, and the absence of **public transportation** options for those in need. Many people also voiced concerns about **speeding** on certain roads and **loose dogs** causing safety issues. There is a strong call for **more consistent maintenance** and **public transportation options** to improve accessibility and safety in the area.

Survey

Figure 5-12: Public Transportation



In **Question 16**, the survey asked respondents to answer either “yes” or “no” to the following questions related to public transportation in Marathon Township. The following findings include:

1. No, the majority of respondents do not currently use the Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority (GLTA).
2. No, most respondents would not support a millage for increased public transportation.
3. Yes, most respondents would support a millage for road and drainage improvements.

## Survey

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**Question 17** asked survey respondents if either they or their family uses the GLTA and how frequently. Most of the respondents said that they do not use the GLTA, mainly because it does not extend its services to their location; however, they would if they had the option. Comments provided by survey respondents regarding their usage and awareness of the GLTA include:

**1. Low overall usage:**

- Many respondents said they do not use GLTA or have never used it.
- Some were unaware it was available in their area, such as on Otter Lake Road.
- A few mentioned it is not available or doesn't currently service their area.

**2. Comments from Users**

- A small number of residents use GLTA for:
  - Dialysis appointments (3–4 times/week).
  - Work commutes (e.g., one resident's son uses it regularly).
- Some noted difficulty in accessing the service or getting it to extend far enough into rural areas.
- Cost concerns were raised:
  - One resident cited \$35 one-way to Lapeer, making it unaffordable for most.

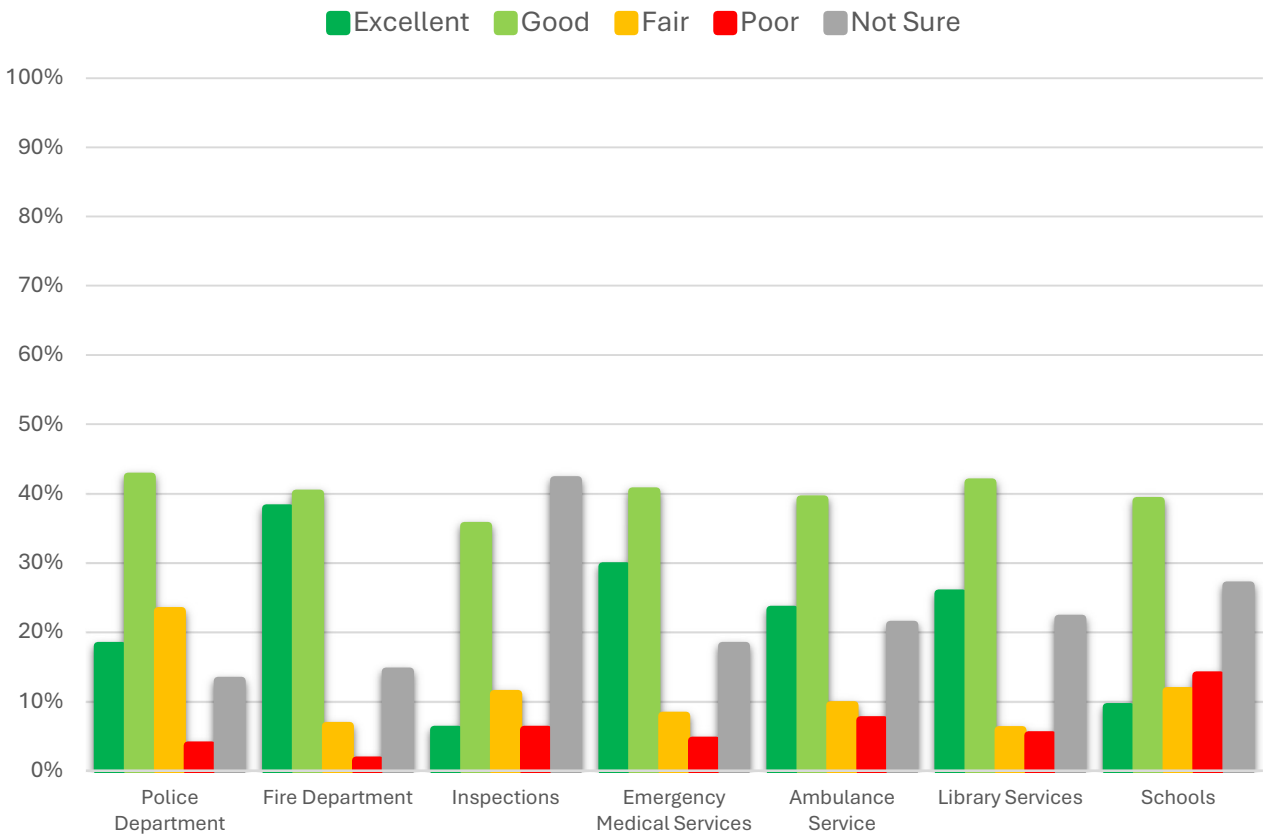
**3. Barriers to Use**

- Limited-service area and lack of awareness are major obstacles.
- Others refused service outright or said "no" to more taxes for transit expansion.

Survey

**Figure 5-13: Community Services**

How would you rate the following community services?



In **Question 18**, the survey asked respondents to rate a list of Marathon Township community services as either Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Not Sure. Many respondents believe the township's community services are good. However, the respondents were unsure how to rate some services, like Inspections and Schools which could be due to not using those services.

Additionally, because school districts and experiences vary within a community, the respondents were asked to include the school district pertinent to them. Among the responses, the three school districts mentioned include:

1. Lakeville Community Schools (44 responses 91.67%)
2. North Branch Area Schools (2 responses 4.17%)
3. Lapeer Community Schools (1 response 2.08%)

## Survey

**Question 19** asked survey respondents to provide further information based on their rating of community services in Question 18. If survey respondents answered “Fair” or “Poor” for any of the above options in Question 18, they were asked to briefly describe why. The most common sentiments provided by respondents were:

### 1. Police Services:

- Mixed opinions: Some respondents express frustration with slow police response times, particularly in rural areas where coverage is limited (5 mentions).
- Lack of police presence is a common complaint, with many stating they rarely see officers unless they specifically call (4 mentions).
- Police response time is generally considered slower due to location (5 mentions).
- Some respondents highlight harassment or incompetence in police interactions (3 mentions).

### 2. Ambulance & Medical Services:

- Ambulance delays are a recurring concern, with response times ranging from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours (5 mentions).
- Complaints about high costs of EMS services and poor experiences at local hospitals (4 mentions).

### 3. School System:

- Many are significantly dissatisfied with Lakeville School District, with several responses citing poor performance, issues with behavior, and low test scores (7 mentions).
- Complaints about the curriculum, lack of quality teachers, and bullying are frequent (4 mentions).
- Some respondents are dissatisfied with leadership in sports and funding allocation (1 mention).
- Some respondents opt to school of choice in nearby districts like Lapeer due to dissatisfaction with Lakeville (4 mentions).
- Declining enrollment is also noted as a trend (1 mention).

### 4. Fire Department & Emergency Services:

- Fire services are generally seen positively, with praise for local EMS staff but criticism of outdated equipment and the need for better funding (4 mentions).
- Lack of fire hydrants in some areas and general disrepair of public safety infrastructure (1 mention).

### 5. Community Concerns:

- Lack of community activities and poor communication about local events (1 mention).
- Calls for more community involvement and faster responses from emergency services.

### 6. Miscellaneous Complaints:

- Slow inspections and unprofessional behavior from inspectors (2 mentions).
- **Insufficient library services:** One respondent mentioned a lack of a library in Columbiaville and the absence of good services (3 mentions).

There are widespread concerns about **public services** in the area, especially **police response times**, **ambulance delays**, and **school performance**. The **Lakeville school district** is a primary target of dissatisfaction, with calls for improvement in educational quality and resources. Additionally, there's a need for greater **community involvement** and **faster response times** from local services like police and EMS.

Survey

**Question 20** asked Do you feel like streetlights at intersections would be an improvement? If so, which intersections?

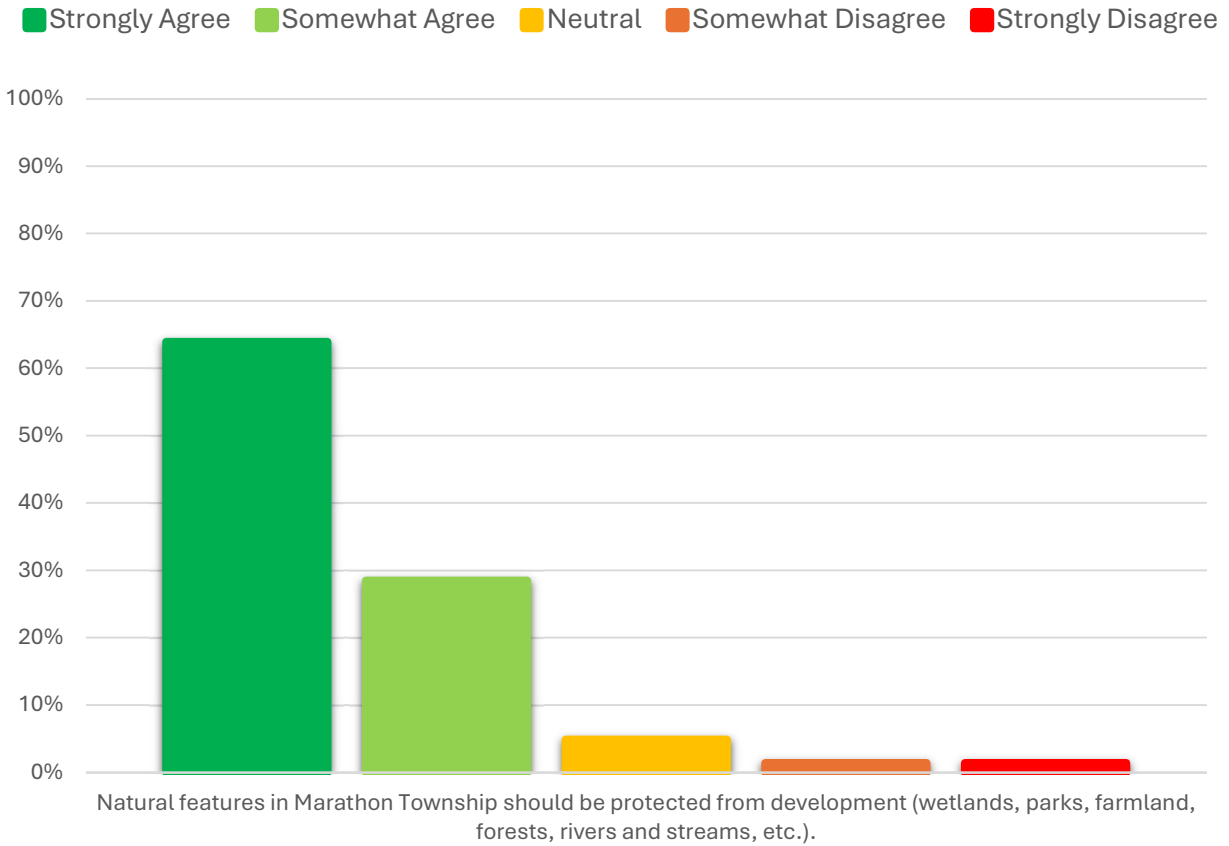
Based on the responses to the above **Question 20**, the overall general sentiment provided by survey respondents includes:

- **Mixed opinions on the need for streetlights and traffic signals:**
  - Yes: Several responses support adding streetlights or traffic signals for safety, particularly at major intersections or problem areas like Hollenbeck & North Lake, Columbiaville & North Lake, Otter Lake & Marathon Road, and Fostoria & Otter Lake Road (22 mentions).
  - No: A significant number of responses oppose adding more streetlights or signals, with reasons ranging from sufficiency of current infrastructure to concerns about wasteful spending (18 mentions).
- **Preferred Locations for Streetlights or Traffic Signals:**
  - Several intersections are mentioned where improvements are needed:
  - Hollenbeck & North Lake, Columbiaville & Washburn, Otter Lake & North Lake (8 mentions).
  - Columbiaville & County Line, Barnes Lake Rd & 24, Pyles & North Lake (4 mentions).
  - Other notable intersections: Washburn & Hollenbeck, North Lake & Columbiaville Road, Fostoria Road & Otter Lake Road (multiple mentions).
- **Key Points:**
  - Concerns about Brightness: If new streetlights are installed, some respondents suggest that lights should be amber and shielded to avoid disturbing neighboring properties (1 mention).
  - Streetlights at all Intersections: A few respondents propose having streetlights at all major intersections for added safety (3 mentions).
  - No Need for More: Many responses indicate that there are already enough streetlights and traffic signals in place and oppose adding more (7 mentions).

There is a split in the community regarding the need for more streetlights and traffic signals. While some feel certain intersections could benefit from improvements for safety reasons, others are satisfied with the current infrastructure and believe additional lights or signals would be unnecessary or a waste of resources.

Survey

**Figure 5-14: Environment**



In **Question 21**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statement related to the environment in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Natural Features in Marathon Township (wetlands, parks, farmland, forests, rivers and streams, etc.) should be protected from development.

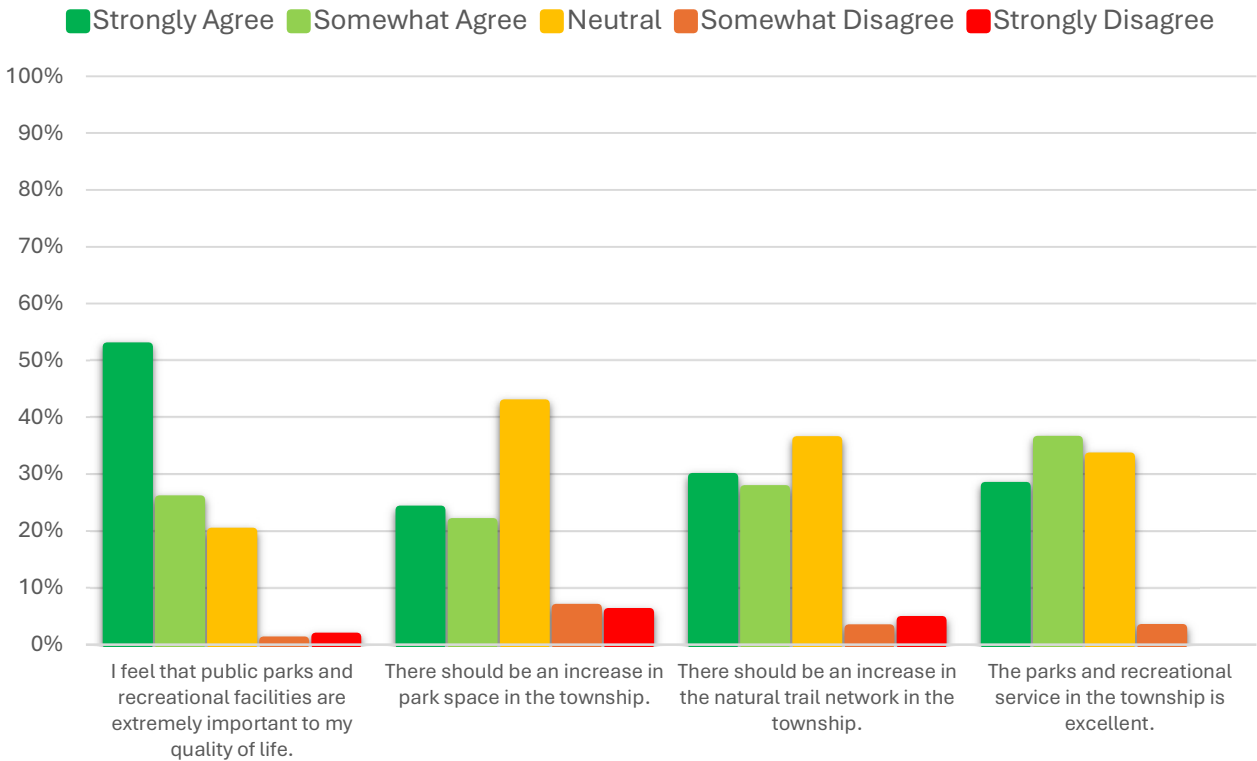
Survey

**Question 22** asked survey respondents to provide further information behind their rating of the environment in Marathon Township from Question 21. If survey respondents answered “Somewhat Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for any of the above options in Question 21, they were asked to briefly describe why. A summary of the three most common responses, along with additional key points provided by respondents, is listed below:

- 1. Supportive of protection/preservation: 8 responses (~57%)**
  - Emphasis on maintaining parks, forests, rivers, farmland, and rural character.
  - Strong concern about light pollution, overdevelopment, and clean natural spaces.
  - Preference for preservation over new development (e.g., solar/wind farms).
    - "I don't think any of our nature should be replaced with development except better preservation."
    - "We need all farmed land/forest/river/streams to stay and be maintained."
- 2. Skeptical or conditional support: 4 responses (~29%)**
  - Support only if maintenance is ensured or limited to municipal property.
  - Concerns over government overreach and ineffective or costly regulations.
    - "Telling residential private property owners what they can/can't do on their own land is an overreach."
    - "As long as they are being maintained."
- 3. Opposed to labeling farmland as “natural” or protection policies: 3 responses (~21%)**
  - Disagreement that farmland qualifies as a natural feature.
  - Critique of economic inefficiency of some protected land.
    - "Farmland is not a natural feature."
    - "Most of it produces little in terms of economic value."
- 4. Other Key Points**
  - Some desire **collaboration between communities** (Columbiaville & Marathon).
  - Concerns about light pollution and desire for dark-sky protections.
  - One respondent noted they hadn't visited recent park improvements.

Survey

**Figure 5-15: Parks**



In **Question 23**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statements related to the Parks in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Respondents feel that public parks and recreational facilities are extremely important to their quality of life.
2. While many are neutral, support for increasing park space significantly outweighs opposition.
3. There should be an increase in the nature trail network in the township.
4. Most respondents feel that the parks and recreational services in the township are excellent.

Survey

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**Question 24** asked what is your favorite park or recreational area in the township?

Based on the responses to the above **Question 24**, here are the top ten parks or recreational areas noted by survey respondents in Marathon Township:

1. Southern Links Trailway (Rail Trail)
2. Marathon Township Park
3. Zemmer Park
4. Holloway Reservoir
5. Otter Lake Village Campgrounds
6. Tibbits Nature Sanctuary
7. Veterans Park
8. Klam Road Fishing Site
9. Boat Launch
10. Lapeer State Game Area

**Question 25** asked what is your favorite amenity at the park or recreational area in the township?

Based on the responses to the above **Question 25**, here are the top twelve amenities featured at parks or recreational areas noted by respondents in Marathon Township:

1. Walking/Biking Trails: 32 mentions (~40%)
2. Peace and Quiet/Nature: 9 mentions (~11%)
3. Fishing: 7 mentions (~9%)
4. Picnic Areas (Tables): 6 mentions (~8%)
5. Trails with Scenic Views: 5 mentions (~6%)
6. Rest Areas and Pavilions: 5 mentions (~6%)
7. Boating (Boat Docks/Launch): 4 mentions (~5%)
8. Children's Playgrounds: 3 mentions (~4%)
9. Bathrooms/Restrooms: 3 mentions (~4%)
10. Water Access: 3 mentions (~4%)
11. Bike Facilities: 3 mentions (~4%)
12. Youth Opportunities/Facilities: 1 mention (~1%)

Survey

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**Questions 26** asked what additional park/recreational amenities would you like to see?

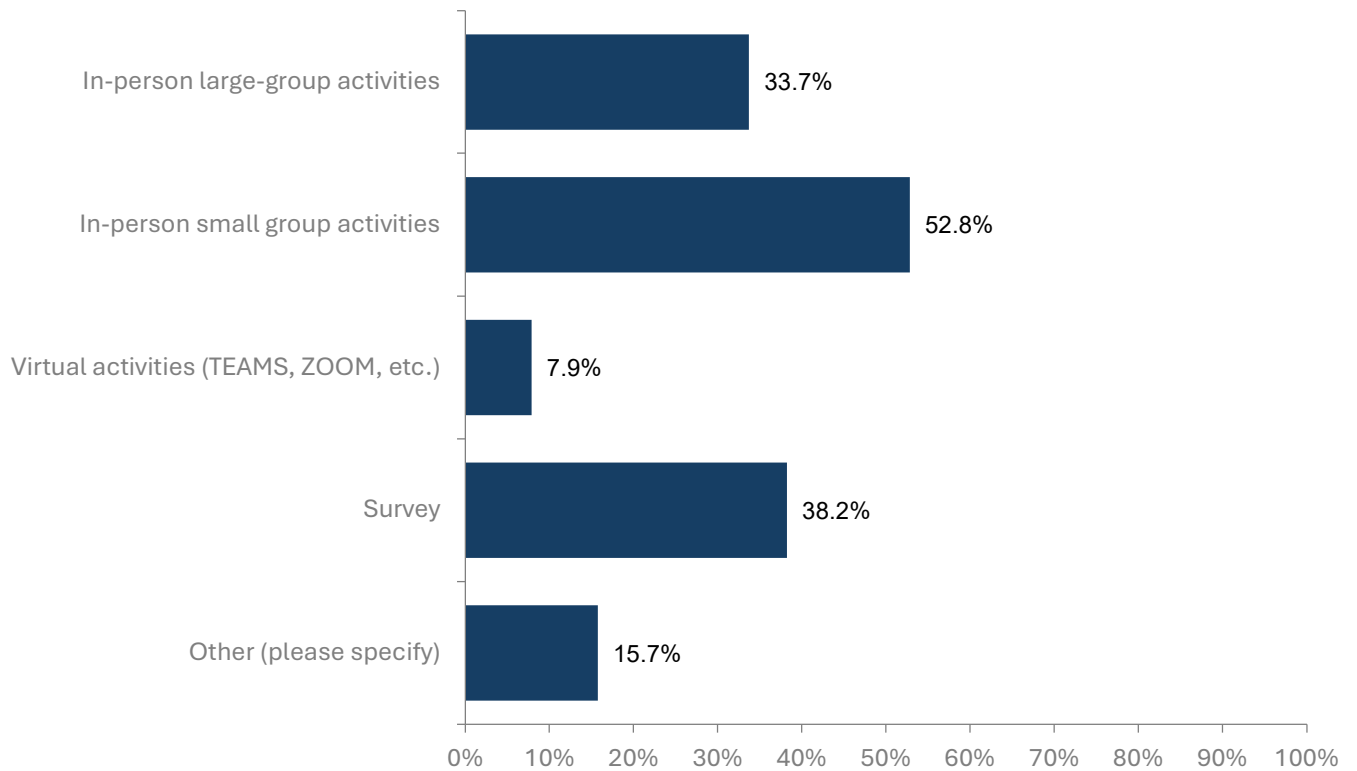
Based on the responses to the above **Question 26**, here are the top park/recreational amenities desired by respondents for Marathon Township:

1. Tennis/Pickleball/Basketball Courts: 2 mentions
2. Disc Golf Course: 2 mentions
3. **Mini Golf**: 1 mention
4. Children's Play Areas (Treehouse, Better Playground): 4 mentions
5. Concerts, Shows, and Events: 2 mentions
6. **More Trails/Pathways**: 7 mentions (including hiking and biking trails)
7. Improved/Additional Boat Launches (Canoe/Kayak): 6 mentions
8. More Picnic Areas, Tables, Shelters: 5 mentions
9. Better Bathroom Facilities: 2 mentions
10. **Beach and Waterfront Areas**: 5 mentions (including lifeguarded beach, more beaches on the reservoir)
11. Waste Management and Trash Pickup: 2 mentions
12. Dog-Friendly Areas (Dog Beach, Dog Park, Dog Trails): 2 mentions
13. Improved Accessibility and Facilities for Disabled Individuals: 1 mention (e.g., handicap-accessible kayak launch)
14. Community Events (e.g., Easter Egg Hunt, Farmers Market): 1 mention
15. Nature Sanctuaries and Rural, Wooded Areas: 2 mentions
16. Water Stations and Drinking Fountains: 2 mentions
17. Increased Safety/Lighting for Trails: 1 mention

Survey

**Figure 5-16: Public Engagement**

Public Engagement Activities



**Question 27** asked the survey respondents to select which types of public engagement activities they would be likely to participate in. Of the 89 responses, the top three responses include 47 (52.8%) votes for “In-person small-group activities”, 34 (38.2%) votes for “Surveys, and 30 (33.7%) votes for “In-person large-group activities”.

## Survey

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In **Question 28**, survey respondents were asked to provide any additional comments. Based on the survey responses, a summary of the comments and concerns is provided below:

### 1. Government and Services:

- Rude interactions with Village Office: A complaint regarding poor customer service (1 mention).
- Lack of Trash Pickup: Request for trash collection, highlighting its absence compared to other townships (1 mention).
- Unclear Taxation and Drainage Issues: Concerns over taxation and the ongoing assessments related to drainage and the Lapeer Drain Commission (2 mentions).
- Road Maintenance: Multiple complaints about roads, specifically poor conditions of Columbiaville Road, Fostoria, North Lake Road, and the general state of township roads (5 mentions).
- Water Quality Issues: Concern about non-drinkable water with high chemical content (1 mention).

### 2. Community and Local Identity:

- Support for Local Community Events: Desire for more holiday-related activities (Christmas, Halloween) and events like Columbiaville Days, food truck events, and the continuation of local traditions (6 mentions).
- Desire for Low Growth and Rural Preservation: Preference for maintaining the rural atmosphere with less development and avoiding large-scale projects like solar farms or windmills (3 mentions).
- Support for Local Libraries: Request for more support for the Lapeer District Library branches (1 mention).
- Community Safety: Positive sentiment about the low crime rate and peaceful nature of the town (2 mentions).

### 3. Business and Infrastructure:

- Need for More Businesses: Requests for more businesses and development, particularly around the waterway areas, like Columbiaville and Otter Lake (3 mentions).
- Support for Local Infrastructure: Concerns over the adequacy of internet access, road repair, and fire hydrant maintenance (3 mentions).

### 4. Other Concerns:

- Tax Increases and Small Business Impact: Complaints about tax increases potentially driving small businesses away from the area (2 mentions).
- Master Plan Terminology: A suggestion to reconsider using the term “Master Plan” due to negative associations (1 mention).

The feedback highlights frustration with poor road conditions, unresponsive government services, and high taxes, especially concerning drainage assessments and the lack of trash collection. There’s a desire for community engagement through local events and activities, but also a strong sentiment for maintaining the town’s rural and peaceful character. Residents generally feel safe but are concerned about the potential for overdevelopment and tax burdens on businesses. Water quality and lack of high-speed internet are also significant issues.

# CHAPTER 06

## EXISTING LAND USE

### *Chapter 6: Existing Land Use*

#### **Introduction**

Many factors influence the character of our physical environment. Central among these is the use of land, its dispersal within the community, and the relationship of such uses to one another. These elements strongly impact the overall character and image of the community. They also affect our quality of life and the relative fulfillment of our surroundings.

Land use characteristics and pertinent physical features are among the most perceivable aspects of the land use planning process. These features initiate the observable setting for the community's future and influence its development potential.

This chapter examines Marathon Township's land use characteristics on a classification basis. It discusses each of Marathon's individual land use categories, including the amount of land devoted to each category and the distribution of uses within the community.

#### **Methodology**

ROWE completed an analysis of township parcel data to evaluate existing land use within Marathon Township. Existing Land Use assigns a particular use to each of the parcels throughout the township, excluding of the Village of Columbiaville and the Village of Otter Lake parcels. Existing land use is primarily based on tax classification for each parcel, with some adjustments based on unique classifications or parcels where a tax classification was not the most appropriate description. Figure 6-1 displays existing land use across seven categories, combining multiple property classification codes based on land use correlation to provide a general land use description for the township.

#### **Land Use Categories**

Each existing land use was placed in one of seven general land use categories: Agricultural-Residential, Single-Family Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Recreation, Open Space/Vacant Land, and Institutional. The Existing Land Use Map depicts the geographic distribution of the land use classifications. The ensuing text describes each land use classification.

Existing Land Use

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***Agricultural - Residential***

The Agricultural–Residential land-use category in Marathon Township corresponds to the tax code classifications of Agricultural-Vacant and Agricultural-Improved properties. Agricultural-Vacant land is utilized exclusively for farming purposes and contains no structures. In contrast, Agricultural-Improved properties include one or more structures, such as barns, residences, or equipment storage facilities. Combined, these two classifications represent approximately 67.8 percent of the township’s total land area, making agricultural-residential the largest land use in Marathon Township. Of the 14,044.6 acres, 7,849.68 acres are being utilized for agricultural purposes.

***Single-Family Residential***

The Single-Family Residential land use category in Marathon township refers to single-family homes and occupies 3,005.7 acres of the community’s land. This represents 14.5 percent of the total area of the community, making it the second largest land use in the township.

***Commercial***

Commercial development in Marathon Township constitutes roughly 205.6 acres of land or 1 percent of the total land area in Marathon Township. General commercial land uses account for much of the township’s commercial acreage in the northern and eastern areas. Gasoline service stations, repair garages, private campgrounds, feed stores and offices are examples of this type of use.

***Industrial***

Industrial uses support manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and other heavy or light industrial activities. Industrial properties account for 0.2 acres of Marathon Township’s total land area or 0.0 percent. Ultimately, there is no industrial activity going on within Marathon Township.

***Recreation***

This category includes all public land developed for the purpose of providing recreational activities and accounts for 1,832.4 acres of land. This is 8.8 percent of the township’s total land area, with the largest recreation area being the Lapeer State Game Area and Marathon Township Park.

***Open Space/ Vacant Land***

Open Space and Vacant Land account for 1,554.79 acres or 7.5 percent of the total land area in Marathon Township. Open Space properties generally refer to land that is undeveloped or lightly developed for uses other than agriculture. Open Space land can serve many purposes, whether it is publicly or privately owned. Many parcels within the township have been placed into a land conservation.

***Institutional***

Institutional accounts for 105.9 acres or 0.5 percent of the total land area in Marathon Township. Institutional means a facility or organization that serves a public or community function, such as education, healthcare, government, or religious services. Institutions are often considered essential components of a community’s infrastructure and are included in master plans to ensure

Existing Land Use

accessibility, proper land use, and integration with surrounding development. Examples of institutions in a master plan might include schools, government buildings, religious buildings, and libraries.

**Land Use Distribution**

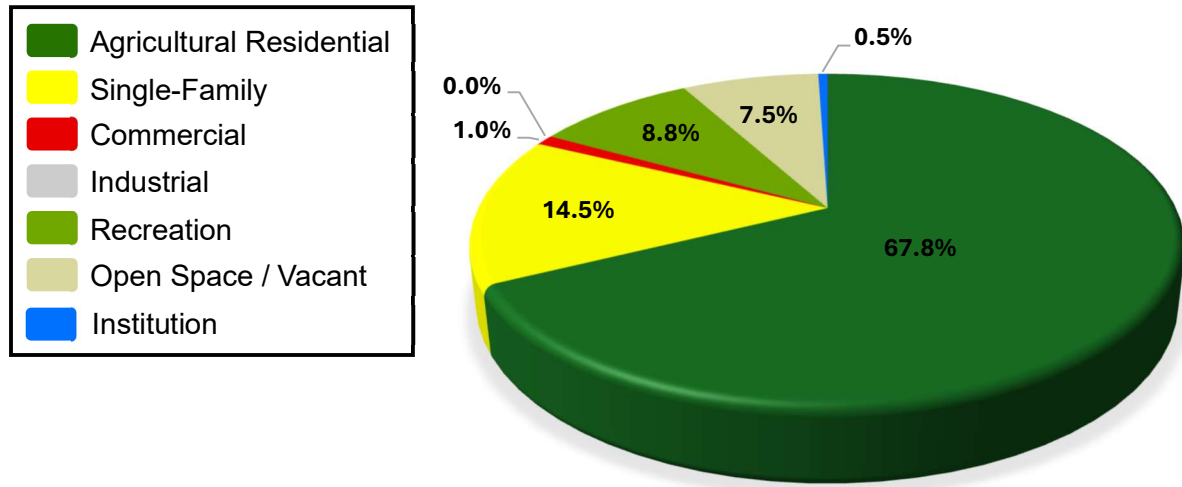
Table 6-1 shows the number of acres and corresponding percentage of total land for the present land use classifications located throughout Marathon Township. Figure 6-1 provides a visual of the numbers from Table 6-1. Table 6-1 and Figure 6-1 were calculated from the data represented in Map 6-1.

**Table 6-1: Land Use Acreage**

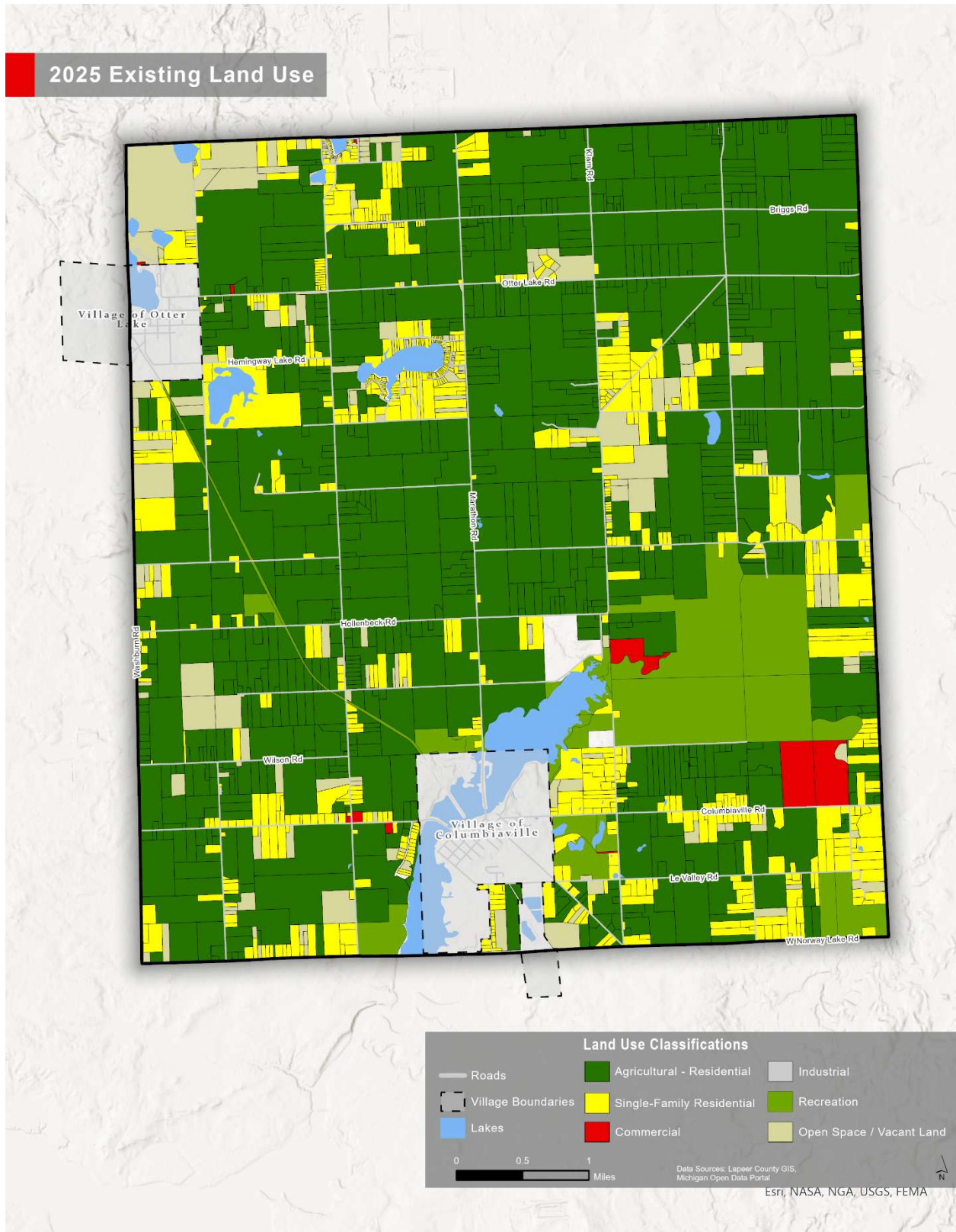
<b>Land Use Classification</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total Land</b>
<b>Agricultural – Residential</b>	14,044.6	67.7%
<b>Single-Family Residential</b>	3,005.7	14.5%
<b>Commercial</b>	205.6	1.0%
<b>Industrial</b>	0.2	0.0%
<b>Recreation</b>	1,832.4	8.8%
<b>Open Space/ Vacant Land</b>	1,554.9	7.5%
<b>Institution</b>	105.9	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	20,729.4	100%

Existing Land Use

Figure 6-1: Existing Land Use, 2025



Map 6-1: Existing Land Use Map



Existing Land Use

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**Summary**

The Existing Land Use Analysis chapter provides a comprehensive overview of how land is currently utilized across Marathon Township. Based on parcel-level data, the analysis categorizes land into seven general use classifications, offering insight into the township’s spatial development patterns and assists with future planning decisions. The most prevalent land use is Agricultural–Residential, accounting for well over half of the township’s total acreage. Residential uses, primarily single-family housing, also occupy a significant portion. Commercial and industrial uses are limited and geographically dispersed, reflecting a rural development character with minimal concentrated employment centers. The analysis also highlights recreational spaces, institutional land, and open space/vacant land. This land use inventory establishes a foundational understanding of existing conditions to guide future growth, development priorities, and zoning considerations in Marathon Township.

# CHAPTER 07

## FUTURE LAND USE

### Chapter 7: Future Land Use

The Planning Commission has compiled a thoughtfully prepared Master Plan that represents the data collected and the community spirit of Marathon Township envisioned by the residents. This plan is only the beginning of an action program for the next twenty years, which should be supplemented by annual reviews of the goals, policies, and future land use map. Because the future welfare of the township depends upon rational, coordinated action, the Planning Commission stands ready to meet any person or group interested in the future development of the area. The Planning Commission will be available to help and guide those needing advice or who wish to be part of the plan implementation process.

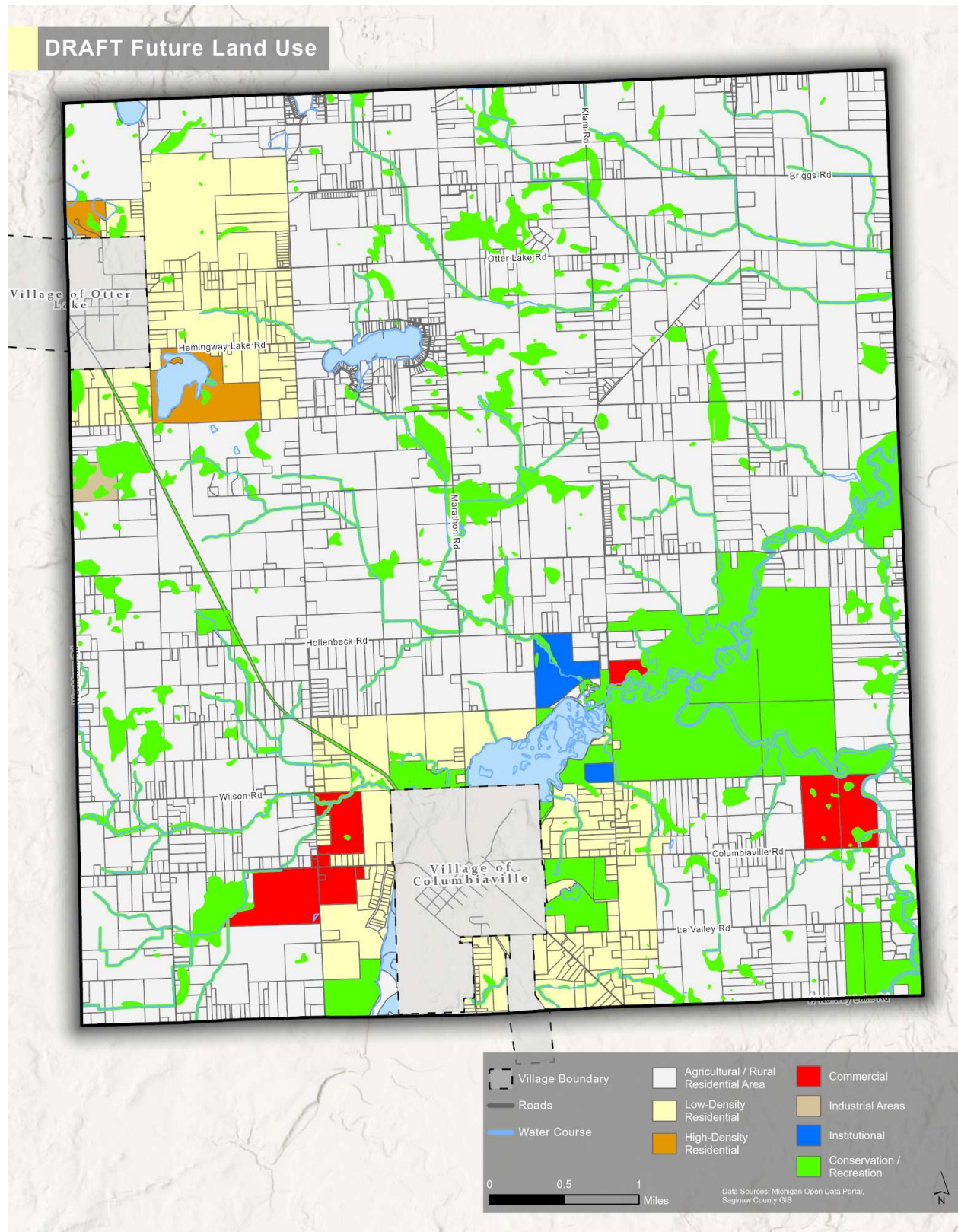
While this task is to be led by township officials, implementation also depends on every responsible citizen in Marathon Township. By working together, the township will continue to be a desirable, attractive, and convenient community in which to live, work, and play.

The Future Land Use Map represents the general arrangement of the proposed land uses; it is not intended to replace the zoning map.

**Table 7-1: Future Land Use**

Land Use	Existing Zoning District	Acres	% of Total
<b>Agricultural / Rural Residential</b>	AR, Agricultural Residential	15,700.2	75.7%
<b>Low-Density Residential</b>	R-1, Suburban Residential R-2, Urban Residential R-3, Urban Residential Medium Density R-5, Lake Residential	2,390.4	11.5%
<b>High-Density Residential</b>	R-4, Multiple Family Residential R-6, Manufactured Housing Community District	224.8	1.1%
<b>Commercial</b>	C-1, Local Commercial	443.9	2.1%
<b>Industrial</b>	I-1, Light Industrial	51.7	0.2%
<b>Institutional</b>	Multiple zoning districts	105.9	0.5%
<b>Conservation / Recreation</b>	Multiple zoning districts	1,832.4	8.8%
<b>Total</b>		20,749.3	100%

Map 7-1: Composite Future Land Use



## **Land Use Classifications**

This plan identifies seven land use classifications to direct development in Marathon Township. These classifications generally align with current zoning district classifications. The land use classifications listed below are presented from least intense use to most intense use.

### ***Agricultural / Rural Residential***

The Agricultural / Rural Residential classification aims to promote the protection and enhancement of agricultural and large-lot, rural residential land uses throughout Marathon Township. This classification encompasses 81.7 percent of the Township's land area and encompasses most of the land outside of the more developed suburban residential areas surrounding Columbiaville and Otter Lake. The most compatible zoning district is the AR, Agricultural-Residential District, with the primary permitted uses being agriculture activities, single-family residences, and similar uses such as outdoor recreation, stables, and renewable energy systems.

### ***Low-Density Residential***

The Low-Density Residential classification aims to provide for residential development such as single-family dwellings and related accessory structures. This classification should provide space for traditional neighborhood single-family growth, free from most other uses, except those compatible with the residents in these neighborhoods. The Low-Density Residential classification aligns with the R-1, Suburban Residential, R-2, Urban Residential, R-3, Urban Residential Medium Density, and R-5, Lake Residential. The Future Land Use map shows the largest groups of low-density residential parcels are adjacent to the village boundaries.

### ***High-Density Residential***

The High-Density Residential future land use classification is intended to provide higher density housing opportunities and serve as an alternative to traditional single-family homes. Included are apartments, duplexes, affordable housing, and senior housing. This future land use classification is consistent with the R-4, Multiple Family Residential and R-6, Manufactured Housing Community District. High-density residential excludes the R-5, Lake Residential district. The township envisions high-density residential locations where public utilities are present. Two large parcels near the Village of Otter Lake are noted as high-density residential on the future land use map near utilities.

### ***Institutional***

The Institutional future land use classification designation includes land used for government, civic, educational, and religious purposes. This may include municipal buildings, schools, libraries, places of worship, and other facilities that serve the public and support the community's social and administrative functions. These areas are essential for delivering public services and fostering civic engagement. This future land use category can fall into numerous zoning districts.

## Future Land Use

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### ***Commercial***

This general-purpose commercial category allows for various commercial uses; appropriate uses include offices, neighborhood businesses, or commercial ventures that require exposure along heavily traveled roads. In Marathon Township, the commercial uses are designated in three small nodes, one to the west of the Village of Columbiaville at the intersection of Columbiaville Road and North Lake Road. The other two commercial areas are where a campground and a gun club exist. This future land use corresponds to the C-1, Local Commercial District.

### ***Industrial***

This future land use designation is intended to provide for industrial and other low-intensity or slightly less land-intensive industrial uses. This use category recognizes the benefit of some industrial development for tax base growth but limits it to focus on protecting the Township's natural resources and rural character. The future land use map allocates roughly 51.7 acres of land within the township for industrial purposes. This future land use corresponds to the I-1, Light Industrial District.

### ***Conservation / Recreation***

The Conservation designation includes parks, natural areas, recreational lands, land placed in a conservation, and undeveloped green spaces that contribute to the township's environmental quality and community well-being. These areas are intended to preserve natural features, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, support stormwater management, and maintain Marathon's rural character. Recreation may include public parks, conservation lands, trail corridors, and other community-accessible green areas. This future land use category can fall into numerous zoning districts.

## **Summary**

The Future Land Use Map, which complements but does not replace the zoning map, categorizes land into seven classifications: Agricultural/Rural Residential, Low-Density Residential, High-Density Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and Conservation/Recreation. Agricultural/Rural Residential makes up most of the Township, with over 81 percent of the total land area, followed by Low-Density Residential at 12.4 percent, while Medium-Density Residential accounts for 1.2 percent. Conservation and Recreation Areas make up 9.5 percent of the Township. The other nonresidential uses make up the remaining 3.2 percent of the Township land area: Commercial at 2.3 percent, Institutional at 0.6 percent, and Industrial at 0.3 percent.

Each classification is aligned with existing zoning districts and reflects the township's goals for sustainable growth and land stewardship. Low-Density Residential areas are concentrated near village boundaries, while High-Density Residential zones are located near utilities in Otter Lake. Commercial and Industrial uses are limited to specific nodes and corridors, supporting local business and employment. Institutional and Conservation/Recreation areas serve vital public and environmental functions.

# CHAPTER 08

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

### *Chapter 8: Goals, Objectives and Strategies*

The Goals, Objectives and Strategies Chapter lays out the guiding framework for how the Township achieves the aims of the Future Land Use Plan, prioritizes infrastructure and public improvement projects, and improves transparency, communication, and service delivery with residents, businesses, and visitors to Marathon. The Goals set the overarching vision in each category area, such as residential development or public services. The Objectives are the milestones, components, and conditions that the Township should meet to accomplish the goals. Objectives are broken down into Strategies, tangible actions, policies, and developments that will achieve the objectives under each goal. The Implementation Plan organizes these goals, objectives, and strategies into a straightforward framework that identify the cost, timeframe, and necessary officials or departments to implement the strategies and achieve those goals.

#### **Section 1: Preserve and Promote Marathon Township's Rural Character, Heritage, and Visual Identity**

**Goal 1:** Preserve and celebrate Marathon Township's unique identity and rural character that enhances community image, livability, and long-term sustainability.

##### Objectives & Strategies

1.1 Promote Context-Sensitive Development - Encourage development at a scale consistent with the surrounding area and the township's dominant rural character.

##### Strategies:

- 1.1.1 Establish reasonable standards for units per acre, building sizes, and building heights.
- 1.1.2 Use design guidelines to ensure new development complements existing rural aesthetics.
- 1.1.3 Consider rural character preservation as a key factor in determining appropriate development densities.

1.2. Enhance Township Identity and Gateway Features - Introduce signage and visual elements that reinforce the township's identity and regional presence.

Strategies:

- 1.2.1 Design and install landscaped gateway signage at key entrances to the township.
- 1.3. Preserve and Celebrate Historical Resources - Protect and promote historical buildings, sites, and features that contribute to the township's heritage.

Strategies:

- 1.3.1 Encourage the use of historical markers and interpretive signage.
- 1.3.2 Support the maintenance and adaptive reuse of historically significant structures.
- 1.3.3 Partner with local historical societies to identify and promote key sites.

1.4. Protect Natural Open Spaces - Encourage development that integrates and preserves natural features such as woodlands, wetlands, and fields.

Strategies:

- 1.4.1. Promote conservation design and cluster development to preserve open space.
- 1.4.2. Require natural resource inventories as part of the development review process.
- 1.4.3. Incentivize developers to incorporate natural features into site plans.

1.5. Maintain and Improve Housing Quality - Ensure safe, attractive, and structurally sound housing stock throughout the township.

Strategies:

- 1.5.1 Support programs for housing rehabilitation and blight removal.
- 1.5.2 Encourage property maintenance through education and enforcement.
- 1.5.3 Partner with housing agencies to identify funding opportunities for repairs and upgrades.

1.6. Preserve Natural Resource Character and Value - Protect the visual, environmental, and recreational qualities of the township's natural resources.

Strategies:

- 1.6.1 Develop policies that safeguard scenic viewsheds and ecological integrity.
- 1.6.2 Promote public access to natural areas for recreation and education.
- 1.6.3 Integrate natural resource protection into zoning and land use regulations.

## **Section 2: Stewardship of Natural Resources and Recreation for a Sustainable, Healthy, and Connected Marathon Township**

**Goal 2:** Marathon Township will be recognized as supporting natural beauty, parks, and recreational opportunities by actively preserving, enhancing, and responsibly managing its natural

resources, including streams, lakes, wetlands, woodlands, prime farmland, and groundwater, while expanding access to outdoor amenities and sustainable practices.

#### Objectives & Strategies

2.1. Maintain and Update Natural Resource Inventories - Document and periodically update data on water bodies, wetlands, woodlands, and contamination sites for informed land use planning.

##### Strategies:

- 2.1.1 Conduct regular audits of natural resource data using GIS and field verification.
- 2.1.2 Integrate updated resource inventories into development review and planning processes.

2.2 Preserve Natural Open Spaces and Environmental Corridors - Encourage land development that protects natural features across individual properties and the broader community.

##### Strategies:

- 2.2.1 Promote conservation design and cluster development.
- 2.2.2 Require natural resource preservation plans for developments.
- 2.2.3 Incentivize developers to retain open space and environmental corridors.

2.3 Minimize Environmental Impacts of Development - Ensure new development mitigates pollution and degradation of land, air, and water resources.

##### Strategies:

- 2.3.1. Implement site design standards that reduce runoff, erosion, and pollution.
- 2.3.2. Require environmental impact assessments for projects, as needed.
- 2.3.3. Promote low-impact development (LID) techniques.

2.4. Regulate Mining and Extraction Activities - Implement scalable, futureproof regulations to protect public health and natural resources.

##### Strategies:

- 2.4.1 Develop and enforce extraction ordinances covering exploration, operation, and reclamation.
- 2.4.2 Review extraction applications for compliance with environmental and safety standards.

2.5. Protect Resource Conservation Areas from Utility Expansion - Discourage the extension of public utilities into areas designated for natural resource protection.

##### Strategies:

- 2.5.1 Map and designate conservation zones with limited infrastructure expansion.
- 2.5.2 Align utility planning with land use policies that prioritize resource protection.

2.6. Limit Intensive Land Uses Near Sensitive Natural Features - Discourage high-impact development near environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategies:

- 2.6.1 Establish buffer zones around wetlands, woodlands, and water bodies.
- 2.6.2 Review off-site impacts such as runoff and utility demand during site plan approval.

2.7. Collaborate on Regional Conservation Initiatives - Work with neighboring communities to enhance regional land, air, and water quality.

Strategies:

- 2.7.1 Actively participate in the Flint River Watershed Coalition and Lapeer County Materials Management Plan.
- 2.7.2 Share data and best practices with regional partners.
- 2.7.3 Pursue joint grant opportunities for conservation projects.

2.8. Evaluate Development Impacts on Natural Resources - Review proposed development for its potential effects on local and regional natural assets.

Strategies:

- 2.8.1. Include natural resource impact criteria in site plan and rezoning reviews.
- 2.8.2. Require mitigation plans for developments affecting sensitive areas.

2.9. Renewable Energy and Sustainability – Continue to support integrating principal and accessory renewable energy uses and sustainable practices in land use and development.

Strategies:

- 2.9.1 Promote energy-efficient site design and green building practices.
- 2.9.2 Explore community solar initiatives and energy-sharing models.

### **Section 3: Preserve and Promote Marathon Township's Agricultural Heritage, Economy, and Land Stewardship**

**Goal 3:** Marathon Township celebrates and sustains its agricultural heritage and economy by protecting farmland, supporting active farming, and encouraging compatible agricultural-based enterprises.

Objectives & Strategies

3.1. Designate and Protect Agricultural Areas - Identify areas supportive of long-term farming and designate them for agriculture as a primary use.

Strategies:

- 3.1.1. Use land capability and soil data to map priority agricultural zones.
- 3.1.2. Incorporate agricultural preservation areas into the Future Land Use Map.

3.1.3. Limit rezoning of prime farmland unless aligned with Master Plan goals.

3.2. Minimize Land Use Conflicts While Supporting Compatible Alternatives - Limit encroachment of non-farm uses while allowing flexibility for compatible alternatives like cluster housing, agritourism, and farm-based enterprises.

Strategies:

3.2.1. Develop zoning standards that buffer agricultural areas from incompatible uses.

3.2.2. Allow cluster residential development that preserves farmland and open space.

3.2.3. Permit agricultural-based businesses such as farm-to-table dining and seasonal markets with appropriate site standards.

3.3. Promote Farmland Preservation Programs - Provide education and guidance on the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (P.A. 116) to incentivize enrollments.

Strategies:

3.3.1. Host informational workshops and distribute educational materials on P.A. 116.

3.3.2. Partner with state and county agencies to assist landowners with enrollment.

3.3.3. Highlight success stories of local farms participating in preservation programs.

3.4. Encourage Agriculture-Adjacent Commercial Development - Promote agritourism and farm-related commercial uses that respect agricultural productivity and rural character.

Strategies:

3.4.1. Identify appropriate locations for agritourism uses such as corn mazes, farm markets, and U-pick operations.

3.4.2. Develop design guidelines to minimize impacts on surrounding properties.

3.4.3. Support marketing and promotion of local agricultural events and destinations.

3.5. Create an Agritourism Ordinance - Establish clear standards for agritourism uses to support economic development while preserving farmland.

Strategies:

3.5.1 Draft and adopt an agritourism ordinance that defines permitted uses, site requirements, and operational standards.

3.5.2 Include provisions for signage, parking, traffic management, and seasonal operations.

3.5.3 Engage farmers and stakeholders in ordinance development to ensure practicality and support.

## **Section 4: Support Diverse, High-Quality Housing While Preserving Rural Character and Natural Resources**

**Goal 4:** Marathon Township provides a healthy, inclusive residential environment where households of all types and sizes can grow and flourish, while preserving rural character, protecting natural features, and ensuring responsible use of public services.

### Objectives & Strategies

4.1. Maintain Low-Density Residential Character - Preserve the township's predominantly low-density, single-unit residential development pattern.

#### Strategies:

- 4.1.1 Reinforce low-density zoning standards in rural areas.
- 4.1.2 Limit subdivision sizes and lot splits that conflict with rural character.
- 4.1.3 Use design guidelines to maintain visual consistency with surrounding homes.

4.2. Diversify Housing Options - Provide opportunities for a variety of housing styles to meet the needs of current and future residents.

#### Strategies:

- 4.2.1. Allow cluster residential development to preserve open space.
- 4.2.2. Permit multi-unit condominiums and apartments in designated areas.
- 4.2.3. Encourage mixed housing types in planned developments.

4.3. Coordinate Higher-Density Housing with Infrastructure and Services - Locate higher-density housing near improved roads, public services, and walkable access to amenities.

#### Strategies:

- 4.3.1 Identify growth nodes near Columbiaville and Otter Lake for higher-density housing.
- 4.3.2 Align land use planning with transportation and utility capacity.
- 4.3.3 Promote walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods near service centers.

4.4. Minimize Safety Hazards from Road-Fronting Development - Discourage residential development directly fronting major county roads to reduce congestion and safety risks.

#### Strategies:

- 4.4.1 Discourage multi-driveway access on Columbiaville, Hollenbeck, Marathon, North Lake, Otter Lake, and Washburn Roads.
- 4.4.2 Encourage internal road networks and shared access points in new developments.
- 4.4.3 Coordinate with the county road commission on access management policies.

4.5. Preserve Natural Features in Residential Development - Incorporate natural resource protection into residential site design.

Strategies:

- 4.5.1 Require preservation of topography, drainage patterns, and open space in site plans.
- 4.5.2 Incentivize conservation subdivisions and green infrastructure.

4.6. Support Aging in Place - Facilitate housing options and services that allow older adults to remain in the community.

Strategies:

- 4.6.1 Encourage accessible design features in new and renovated homes.
- 4.6.2 Permit assisted living and senior housing in appropriate areas.
- 4.6.3 Support home-based care models through flexible zoning.

4.7. Ensure Housing Affordability and Quality Across Income Levels - Provide a range of housing options that are affordable, well-designed, and compatible with the community.

Strategies:

- 4.7.1 Promote starter homes and multi-family dwellings in designated areas.
- 4.7.2 Require design standards that ensure compatibility with surrounding development.

4.8. Ensure Smooth Transitions Between Residential and Nonresidential Uses - Reduce land use conflicts through thoughtful transitions and buffering.

Strategies:

- 4.8.1 Use landscaping, setbacks, and design standards to buffer residential from commercial and industrial uses.
- 4.8.2 Apply transitional zoning districts where appropriate.
- 4.8.3 Require compatibility reviews for adjacent land uses.

4.9. Promote Housing Rehabilitation and Blight Reduction - Encourage upkeep and revitalization of the existing housing stock.

Strategies:

- 4.9.1 Offer incentives for home repairs and renovations, such as home improvement grants, low-interest and emergency home repair loans, and energy efficiency improvement grants.
- 4.9.2 Support code enforcement and nuisance abatement programs.
- 4.9.3 Partner with housing agencies to address abandoned or blighted properties.

## **Section 5: Promote Rural-Compatible Economic Development and Small-Scale Industry While Preserving Community Character**

**Goal 5:** Marathon Township manages commercial and industrial growth to reflect its rural character and scale, while promoting economic development through specialized uses that leverage the township's natural assets, heritage, and tourism potential.

#### Objectives & Strategies

5.1. Promote Village-Oriented Commercial Development - Encourage traditional commercial development near Columbiaville and Otter Lake to foster a village downtown character.

##### Strategies:

- 5.1.1 Promote architectural styles that complement community character and aesthetics.
- 5.1.2 Concentrate growth to where utilities are present.

5.2. Regulate Rural-Scale Commercial and Industrial Development - Ensure development outside village centers reflects the township's rural character.

##### Strategies:

- 5.2.1 Implement standards for building size, height, setbacks, signage, and landscaping.
- 5.2.2 Require screening and open space buffers for nonresidential uses.
- 5.2.3 Use design review to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses.

5.3. Limit High-Intensity Uses and Public Service Demands - Restrict commercial and industrial uses that generate excessive traffic or infrastructure needs.

##### Strategies:

- 5.3.1 Define and permit only low-intensity commercial uses in rural zones.
- 5.3.2 Limit industrial uses to light assembly and non-polluting operations.
- 5.3.3 Require traffic impact studies for as needed developments.

5.4. Concentrate on Industrial Uses in Designated Areas - Locate industrial development within planned industrial parks.

##### Strategies:

- 5.4.1 Design industrial parks with landscaping, open space, and buffers.
- 5.4.2 Limit industrial zoning outside designated park areas.

5.5. Protect Residential Areas from Commercial and Industrial Encroachment - Ensure nonresidential development does not negatively impact residential neighborhoods.

##### Strategies:

- 5.5.1 Establish clear zoning boundaries and transition standards.
- 5.5.2 Require buffers and screening between residential and nonresidential uses.
- 5.5.3 Limit hours of operation and traffic impacts near homes.

5.6 Enforce Nuisance Standards for Nonresidential Uses - Implement measurable standards to minimize operational impacts.

Strategies:

- 5.6.1 Adopt regulations for noise, odor, glare, vibration, and other nuisances.
- 5.6.2 Require mitigation plans for new commercial and industrial developments.
- 5.6.3 Conduct regular compliance inspections and enforcement.

5.7 Revitalize Aging Commercial Properties - Encourage reinvestment in vacant or underutilized commercial sites.

Strategies:

- 5.7.1 Promote adaptive reuse of older buildings.

5.8 Support Entrepreneurship and Community Markets - Create opportunities for small businesses and local events.

Strategies:

- 5.8.1 Designate spaces for farmers markets, craft fairs, and pop-up shops.

## **Section 6: Maintain a Safe, Multi-Modal Transportation Network That Supports Rural Character and Future Growth**

**Goal 6:** Marathon Township maintains a transportation network that is efficient, safe, and accessible for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, while preserving the township's rural character and accommodating current and future demand.

Objectives & Strategies

6.1. Prioritize Road Maintenance and Improvements- Identify and maintain key road segments based on land use patterns and traffic needs.

Strategies:

- 6.1.1 Identify priority road segments for improvement and share with the Lapeer County Road Commission (LCRC).
- 6.1.2 Prioritize funding for improvements along Columbiaville and Marathon Roads and unpaved public roads.
- 6.1.3 Coordinate road projects to avoid increasing demand in low-growth areas.

6.2. Limit High-Traffic Uses on Rural Roads- Prevent congestion and safety issues on non-arterial roads.

Strategies:

- 6.2.1 Limit curb cuts and land divisions that increase traffic congestion.
- 6.2.2 Encourage lot split patterns that preserve rural road integrity.

6.3. Collaborate with LCRC on Funding and Planning- Work with the Road Commission to secure funding and align transportation plans.

Strategies:

6.3.1 Identify state grants and millage opportunities for road and drainage improvements.

6.3.2 Coordinate pedestrian infrastructure planning with LCRC's transportation projects.

6.4 Evaluate Lighting Needs While Preserving Rural Aesthetics- Assess the need for streetlights at key intersections without compromising natural character.

Strategies:

6.4.1 Analyze traffic incidents, land uses, and emergency response data.

6.4.2 Consider impacts on wildlife and migratory patterns before installation.

6.5 Expand Access to Public Transportation- Increase awareness and use of transit options for all residents.

Strategies:

6.5.1 Promote services offered by the Greater Lapeer Transit Authority.

6.5.2 Support paratransit and low-fare options for seniors and low-income residents.

6.6 Implement Access Management Standards- Reduce traffic hazards and preserve roadway function.

Strategies:

6.6.1 Limit the number, size, and shape of new land divisions.

6.6.2 Restrict excessive curb cuts and require shared access points.

6.7 Require Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure in New Development- Ensure new subdivisions and major developments support non-motorized travel.

Strategies:

6.7.1 Require paths, benches, and bike infrastructure in site plans.

6.7.2 Allow developers to contribute paving costs if infrastructure is infeasible on-site.

6.7.3 Coordinate with LCRC to identify priority areas for pedestrian improvements.

## **Section 7: Strengthen Regional Collaboration and Planning to Support Shared Growth, Infrastructure, and Community Well-Being**

**Goal 7:** Marathon Township fosters a collaborative, resilient, and inclusive regional community by coordinating future development and public services with neighboring municipalities and agencies, recognizing the mutual impacts of local planning efforts, and enhancing the quality of life through shared infrastructure, cultural exchange, and sustainable development.

Objectives & Strategies

7.1. Coordinate Development with Neighboring Communities- Ensure that local development decisions consider regional land use patterns and impacts.

Strategies:

- 7.1.1 Develop a review and communication framework to evaluate proposed developments against neighboring zoning and land uses.
- 7.1.2 Communicate potential impacts of development to affected communities.
- 7.1.3 Implement policies that promote cohesive character and intensity for commercial uses near Columbiaville and Otter Lake.

7.2. Strengthen Intergovernmental Relationships- Build strong partnerships with nearby municipalities and county agencies to address shared planning and service needs.

Strategies:

- 7.2.1 Implement a communications strategy with agencies in Columbiaville and Otter Lake, as well as Lapeer, Genesee, and Tuscola Counties.
- 7.2.2 Discuss land use trends, public facility needs, transportation, recreation, and preservation goals.
- 7.2.3 Coordinate road upgrades, bike paths, and walking trails that connect Marathon Township with Columbiaville and Otter Lake.

7.3. Collaborate on Regional Identity and Economic Vitality- Promote the unique character and assets of the region to attract residents, businesses, and visitors.

Strategies:

- 7.3.1 Work with Columbiaville and Otter Lake to highlight the region's appeal as a place to live and do business.
- 7.3.2 Partner on marketing efforts to fill vacant buildings with desired businesses.
- 7.3.3 Support tourism-oriented businesses and uses that leverage natural resources and recreation opportunities.

7.4. Engage in Regional and Statewide Planning Networks- Participate in broader planning efforts to share best practices and access resources.

Strategies:

- 7.4.1 Actively engage with the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) and Michigan Municipal League (MML).
- 7.4.2 Share and review requests for proposals for planning, engineering, and administrative projects for adjacent and nearby properties and communities impacted by such projects and activities.
- 7.4.3 Maintain relationships with state agencies such as MEDC, LEO Office of Rural Prosperity, MDARD, DNR, and EGLE.

7.5. Foster Community Engagement Across Municipal Boundaries- Encourage cross-community events and initiatives that build regional pride and cohesion.

Strategies:

- 7.5.1 Organize joint events such as farmers markets, seasonal festivals, and youth sports.
- 7.5.2 Support shared cultural and recreational programming.
- 7.5.3 Promote regional collaboration in community development efforts.
- 7.5.4 Launch regional volunteer drives and service projects that bring residents together to improve public spaces and community facilities.

## **Section 8: Sustainable and Coordinated Growth Through Infrastructure, Resource Stewardship, and Community Engagement**

**Goal 8:** Marathon Township will facilitate development that aligns with the capacity of public facilities and services, preserves natural resources and rural character, maximizes the efficient use of tax dollars, and minimizes land use conflicts through coordinated planning and community engagement.

Objectives & Strategies

8.1. Land Use Balance - Develop a land use strategy that reflects the township's natural features, public service capacities, and community needs.

Strategies:

- 8.1.1 Conduct a natural features inventory to guide land use decisions.
- 8.1.2 Use GIS mapping to identify service capacity and constraints.
- 8.1.3 Evaluate rezoning petitions, site plans, and other development decisions according to the policies, goals, and objectives of this Plan.
- 8.1.4 Update zoning and other tools to implement the Plan's policies, goals, and objectives.

8.2. Natural Resource Preservation - Protect farmland, woodlands, wetlands, and water resources while allowing reasonable land use.

Strategies:

- 8.2.1 Establish conservation guidelines for sensitive natural areas.
- 8.2.2 Promote cluster development and conservation easements to preserve open space.
- 8.2.3 Integrate natural resource protection into zoning and site plan review processes.

8.3. Intergovernmental Coordination - Collaborate with Columbiaville and Otter Lake to align planning policies and identify areas for more intensive land uses.

Strategies:

8.3.1 Create joint planning committees with neighboring municipalities.

8.3.2 Share infrastructure and service planning data to identify coordinated service areas.

8.3.3 Develop intergovernmental agreements for shared services and infrastructure investments.

8.4. Broadband Expansion - Ensure all homes and businesses have access to reliable, scalable broadband infrastructure.

Strategies:

8.4.1 Pursue grants and partnerships to expand broadband infrastructure.

8.4.2 Work with providers to map underserved areas and prioritize expansion.

8.4.3 Include broadband access in development review criteria.

8.5. Community Engagement - Regularly gather input from residents and businesses on public services and growth issues.

Strategies:

8.5.1 Establish a recurring community survey and feedback loop.

8.5.2 Increase opportunities for public input through frequent and consistent surveys, small-group meetings, and events.

8.5.3 Develop a formal communication strategy to share information about local services, events, and resources.

8.6 Development Review - Evaluate rezoning and site plans based on the Master Plan's policies and objectives.

Strategies:

8.6.1 Create a development review checklist aligned with Master Plan goals.

8.6.2 Train planning commission and staff on consistent application of review standards.

8.7 Implementation Tools - Update zoning and other regulatory tools to support the Master Plan.

Strategies:

8.7.1 Host zoning ordinance workshops for public and stakeholder input.

8.7.2 Conduct regular audits of zoning and land use regulations for consistency with the Plan.

8.8 Emergency Services Evaluation - Inventory and assess emergency response services to ensure adequate coverage and performance.

Strategies:

8.8.1 Analyze emergency service data to identify gaps and prioritize improvements.

8.8.2 Coordinate with service providers to improve response times and coverage.

### **Section 9: Enhance Parks, Natural Resources, and Recreation Opportunities**

**Goal 9:** Marathon Township seeks to protect natural assets while expanding and improving its park system, trail network, and recreational amenities to promote environmental stewardship, public health, and community well-being.

9.1 Expand Parks and Nature Trails- Identify opportunities to increase park space and enhance the trail network, public access to water bodies, and recreational infrastructure.

Strategies:

- 9.1.1 Implement the recommendations outlined in the Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- 9.1.2 Prioritize land acquisition for parks and greenways.
- 9.1.3 Connect trails to regional networks and natural features.
- 9.1.4 Seek funding through state and federal recreation grants.
- 9.1.5 Upgrade boat launches and shoreline access at Holloway Reservoir and other sites.
- 9.1.6 Improve signage, parking, and ADA accessibility at water-based recreation areas

9.2 Respond to Community Needs for Park Amenities - Monitor residential interest in recreational facilities and respond accordingly.

Strategies:

- 9.2.1 Conduct regular surveys on park usage and amenity preferences.
- 9.2.2 Plan for inclusive park amenities, such as accessible playgrounds.

9.3 Support Community Events and Programming - Encourage use of recreational spaces for community-building activities.

Strategies:

- 9.3.1 Partner with local organizations to host events in parks.
- 9.3.2 Provide logistical and promotional support for recreational programming.

# CHAPTER 09

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### *Chapter 9: Implementation Plan*

The key to a well-planned community is the actual day-to-day use of planning documents, like this Master Plan. Because this plan is to be the basis for future zoning and planning decisions, it is imperative that the plan be available to township staff, elected and appointed officials, as well as business owners, developers, stakeholders from Lapeer County and the region, and the public.

The implementation of this Master Plan depends on its continual use by the Planning Commission and the Township Board. In its best form, an implementation plan is to ensure that the goals, policies and plans of the township land use plan are implemented and that the plan is kept current and maintained. It does this with tools provided to the Township by State statutes through the development and implementation of other plans, as well as other miscellaneous implementation strategies. This plan will outline the appropriate tools that the township planning commission feels would be appropriate in implementing this plan.

### **Zoning Plan**

With a new plan in place, Marathon Township has an opportunity to update its current zoning ordinance to reflect the goals adopted in this plan.

The table below illustrates how the Township's Zoning Districts correspond with the Future Land Use categories outlined in this Plan. When evaluating rezoning applications, this table should serve as a key reference to determine whether the proposed zoning aligns with the Master Plan's vision.

**Table 9-1: Future Land Use**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Existing Zoning District</b>
Agricultural / Rural Residential	AR, Agricultural Residential
Low-Density Residential	R-1, Suburban Residential R-2, Urban Residential R-3, Urban Residential Medium Density R-5, Lake Residential
High-Density Residential	R-4, Multiple Family Residential R-6, Manufactured Housing Community District
Commercial	C-1, Local Commercial
Industrial	I-1, Light Industrial
Institutional	Any Zoning District
Conservation / Recreation	Any Zoning District

## Recommended Zoning Ordinance Amendments

The following Zoning Ordinance amendments are recommended based on this Master Plan. These strategies are generally broad in terms of applicability in order to provide flexibility during the drafting, review, and approval process. Successful implementation is measured by the adoption of one or more standards that meet the spirit of these recommended amendments. These amendments may be adopted in a number of manners, with three common avenues being a comprehensive update to the Zoning Ordinance, scheduling in the Planning Commission's Annual Planning Program (APP), and by request of either the Township or landowner(s).

### *Text Amendments*

Zoning Ordinance text amendments involve the modification of regulatory language, definitions, procedures, and all other elements of the Zoning Ordinance. These recommendations include the Zoning Ordinance's relationship with other relevant Township ordinances and codes, including land division and subdivision.

1. Amend the Schedule of Regulations for "Principal Permitted Uses" to establish reasonable standards for units per acre, building sizes, and building heights.
2. Develop and implement design guidelines and a clear design rubric to ensure new development complements existing rural aesthetics based on existing conditions and community interest.
3. Amend site plan and Special Land Use review standards to prioritize rural character and natural resource preservation as key factors in determining appropriate development densities. This includes metrics such as lot coverage, natural feature and habitat protection, location along low-traffic roads, farmland preservation, and integration of resource protection measures into zoning and land use regulations—such as floodplain and wetland preservation, mitigation strategies, and farmland protection reviews.
4. Implement conservation-minded regulations, including the establishment of buffer zones around wetlands, woodlands, and water bodies. In addition, this amendment will provide incentives for conservation design and cluster development that preserve open space and

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- natural features. Incentives may include reductions in minimum parking requirements, screening waivers, flexibility in lot coverage, and density bonuses for site plans that integrate natural features and prioritize sustainable development.
5. Require a full-spectrum natural resource inventory and a preservation plan as part of the development review process. The inventory should include wetland delineation, tree surveys, prime farmland identification, protected and endangered species and habitats, and migratory paths where applicable. The preservation plan must establish standards for setbacks from sensitive resources and outline maintenance measures to address both direct and indirect impacts.
  6. Implement site design standards that reduce runoff, erosion, and pollution, and require preservation of topography, drainage patterns, and open space in site plans where applicable. To support these regulations, this amendment will have provisions to promote and incentivize low-impact development (LID) techniques, such as natural drainage and retention features, green roofs and walls, and limited ground disturbances.
  7. Require Environmental Impact Assessments or Environmental Impact Statements as needed for projects. Implement standards to include the impacts on wildlife and migratory patterns by developments where an Environmental Impact Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is required.
  8. Require mitigation plans for developments affecting sensitive areas, with clear relationships and channels of communication with impact review authorities such as the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), as well as all other superseding agencies and offices.
  9. Update zoning regulations to support agritourism and agricultural-based businesses by permitting uses such as farm-to-table dining, seasonal markets, corn mazes, U-pick operations, and event venues. Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Map to designate appropriate districts for these uses, and develop design guidelines to minimize impacts on surrounding properties. Establish clear standards for site requirements, operational practices, signage, parking, traffic management, and seasonal operations, ensuring alignment with the Future Land Use Map and this Plan.
  10. Reinforce low-density zoning standards in rural areas through minimum lot width and area requirements, spacing standards for new driveways, and limited nonresidential and nonagricultural land uses. Establish design guidelines to maintain visual consistency with surrounding homes, both through consistency standards and a weighted design rubric for cluster and low-density subdivision or condominium developments.
  11. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to regulate access points and circulation, particularly to discourage multiple driveways on Columbiaville, Hollenbeck, Marathon, North Lake, Otter Lake, and Washburn Roads. In addition, incorporate incentives for internal road networks and shared access points in new developments where applicable. Require shared access points for developments over a specific number of trips generated, based on data available from authorities and organizations such as Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), MDOT, LCRC, and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), where applicable.

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12. Amend the zoning ordinance to include affordable and accessible housing types. In addition, permit assisted living and older adult housing in appropriate areas with standards to provide clearer accessibility and compatibility with nearby uses. Encourage accessible design features in new and renovated homes, with clear standards and design standards in alignment with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and all other local, state, and federal accessibility guidelines.
13. Require compatibility reviews for adjacent land uses based on land use, design, and overall character.
14. Review the current permitted industrial uses and limit them to light assembly and non-polluting operations such as research and development. Ensure that the latitude of use interpretation by the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals keep this standard at the forefront when considering emerging uses that differ from what is in the most recent version of the Zoning Ordinance.
15. Implement standards specific to industrial parks regarding landscaping, open space, and buffers.
16. Where applicable, adopt specific performance regulations for noise, odor, glare, vibration, and other nuisances, such as specific noise thresholds measured in A-weighted decibels (dBA). Implement standards for nonresidential uses to limit hours of operation and traffic impacts that may produce these nuisances when adjacent or nearby residential districts and uses.
17. In partnership with MDOT and the Lapeer County Road Commission (LCRC), implement standards to restrict excessive curb cuts, land divisions, and other features that risk increasing traffic congestion. Use these revised standards to refine the current relationship with the Land Division Ordinance (LDO) to provide standards for lot split patterns that preserve rural road integrity. Require traffic impact studies for larger developments as needed. The threshold for a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) will be set at 100 peak-hour directional trips, or the most recent guidance set forth in the Michigan Department of Transportation's Geometric Design Guidance policy.
18. Revise the site plan review standards to require paths, benches, and bike infrastructure in site plans, where applicable. Implement provisions to allow developers to contribute to public sidewalk and pathway paving costs if such infrastructure is infeasible on-site.
19. Implement amendments to provide standards that promote cohesive character and intensity for commercial uses near adjacent communities and the Villages of Columbiaville and Otter Lake. Amend the ordinance to incorporate a communication framework to evaluate proposed developments against neighboring communities master plans and zoning ordinances, including potential notice requirements.
20. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that the language for rezoning petitions, site plans, and other development decisions is in alignment with the policies, goals, and objectives of this Plan and amendments thereafter. In addition, create a development review checklist aligned with Master Plan goals, both based on meeting the goals and strategies, as well as specific alignments where required.

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**Map Amendments**

Zoning Ordinance map amendments, also known as rezonings, involve the modification of the Zoning Map and specific districts. Amending the Zoning Map requires public notice to the affected property owners and those within at least 300 feet of the affected properties per Section 103(2) of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA, Act 110 of 2006). Zoning Map amendments may be initiated by the Township or a landowner. The goal of Zoning Map amendments is to align with the Future Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Plan set forth in this Chapter.

1. Limit the rezoning of prime farmland unless aligned with Master Plan goals through a special rezoning criterion specifically for areas with enough prime farmland to be cultivatable. Review the relationship with the Land Division Ordinance to restrict the number, size, and shape of new land divisions for large agricultural parcels.
2. Permit multi-unit condominiums and apartments in designated areas, particularly in the denser areas surrounding Otter Lake.
3. Continuously evaluate the Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map to provide transitional zoning districts, where applicable.
4. Limit industrial zoning outside designated park areas.
5. Evaluate rezoning petitions, site plans, and other development decisions according to the policies, goals, and objectives of this Plan. Update zoning and other tools to implement the Plan’s policies, goals, and objectives.

**Strategic Implementation Plan**

The goals and objectives identified in this chapter were developed based on feedback from local stakeholders, public input through surveys and an open house, and evaluation of the data presented in this plan. This section provides guidance for the Planning Commission to prioritize objectives. When preparing its annual report to the Village Council, the Planning Commission should review this section of the Master Plan and provide a report on the status of each objective.

Marathon Township can succeed in implementing the Master Plan by using all the tools available.

The tools available for implementation include:

- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Zoning
- ❖ Code Enforcement
- ❖ Policy Development
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Regional Cooperation and Communication
- ❖ Committee involvement
- ❖ Grant solicitation
- ❖ Community Knowledge and support of the Plan
- ❖ Zoning and Building Code updating and enforcement. Zoning must follow the concepts expressed in the Future Land Use Map or both the Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinances lose their effectiveness and enforceability

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Strategy	Task Description	Responsible Party	Funding	Timeline
<b>Goal 1: Preserve and celebrate Marathon Township’s unique identity and rural character that enhances community image, livability, and long-term sustainability.</b>				
1.1.2	Use design guidelines to ensure new development complements existing rural aesthetics.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Year 2
1.4.3	Incentivize developers to incorporate natural features into site plans.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	
1.5.2	Encourage property maintenance through education and enforcement.	Township Board, Planning Commission, Township Staff	Public	
<b>Goal 2: Marathon Township will be recognized as supporting natural beauty, parks, and recreational opportunities by actively preserving, enhancing, and responsibly managing its natural resources, including streams, lakes, wetlands, woodlands, prime farmland, and groundwater, while expanding access to outdoor amenities and sustainable practices.</b>				
2.7.1	Actively participate in the Flint River Watershed Coalition and Lapeer County Materials Management Plan.	Township Board, Planning Commission, Township Staff	Public	Ongoing
2.7.2	Share data and best practices with regional partners.	Township Staff	Public	Annually
2.7.3	Pursue joint grant opportunities for conservation projects.	Township Board, Township Staff, Parks and Recreation	Public, DNR Grants, EGLE Grants, Private / Institutional Grants	Year 5
<b>Goal 3: Marathon Township celebrates and sustains its agricultural heritage and economy by protecting farmland, supporting active farming, and encouraging compatible agricultural-based enterprises.</b>				
3.3.1	Host informational workshops and distribute educational materials on P.A. 116.	Township Staff, Planning Commission, MSU Extension	Public, MEDC / RRC Grants, MDARD Grants	Annually
3.5.3	Draft and adopt an agritourism ordinance that defines permitted uses, site requirements, and operational standards.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Year 2
<b>Goal 4: Marathon Township provides a healthy, inclusive residential environment where households of all types and sizes can grow and flourish, while preserving rural character, protecting natural features, and ensuring responsible use of public services.</b>				
4.2.2	Permit multi-unit condominiums and apartments in designated areas.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Ongoing
4.6.2	Permit assisted living and senior housing in appropriate areas.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Ongoing
<b>Goal 5: Marathon Township manages commercial and industrial growth to reflect its rural character and scale, while promoting economic development through specialized uses that leverage the township’s natural assets, heritage, and tourism potential.</b>				
5.3.2	Limit industrial uses to light assembly and non-polluting operations.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Year 1

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Strategy	Task Description	Responsible Party	Funding	Timeline
<b>Goal 6: Marathon Township maintains a transportation network that is efficient, safe, and accessible for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, while preserving the township’s rural character and accommodating current and future demand.</b>				
6.1.2	Prioritize funding for improvements along Columbiaville, Marathon, and unpaved public roads.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public, LCRC, LCDC, MDOT, Grants	Year 5
6.3.2	Coordinate pedestrian infrastructure planning with LCRC’s transportation projects.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public, LCRC	Year 5
<b>Goal 7: Marathon Township fosters a collaborative, resilient, and inclusive regional community by coordinating future development and public services with neighboring municipalities and agencies, recognizing the mutual impacts of local planning efforts, and enhancing the quality of life through shared infrastructure, cultural exchange, and sustainable development.</b>				
7.1.1	Develop a communication framework to evaluate proposed developments against neighboring master plans and zoning ordinances.	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Year 1
7.4.1	Actively engage with the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) and Michigan Municipal League (MML)	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Ongoing
7.5.1	Organize joint events such as farmers markets, seasonal festivals, and youth sports	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Ongoing
<b>Goal 8: Marathon Township will facilitate development that aligns with the capacity of public facilities and services, preserves natural resources and rural character, maximizes the efficient use of tax dollars, and minimizes land use conflicts through coordinated planning and community engagement.</b>				
8.1.4	Update zoning and other tools to implement the Plan’s policies, goals, and objectives	Township Board, Planning Commission	Public	Ongoing
8.5.1	Establish a recurring community survey and feedback loop	Township Staff	Public	Annually or biannually
8.6.2	Train planning commission and staff on consistent application of review standards	Township Staff	Public	Year 1; Annually;
<b>Goal 9: Marathon Township seeks to protect natural assets while expanding and improving its park system, trail network, and recreational amenities to promote environmental stewardship, public health, and community well-being.</b>				
9.2.1	Conduct regular surveys on park usage and amenity preferences	Parks and Recreation	Public	Annually
9.3.1	Partner with local organizations to host events in parks	Parks and Recreation	Public, Private Grants, Organizational Contributions	Ongoing

## Annual Report

The Planning Commission annual report is a critical tool to tracking progress toward Master Plan goals and objectives. Each year, the Planning Commission should include a review of actions and

## Implementation Plan

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accomplishments related to the plan and identify priorities for the upcoming year to be considered by the Township Board of Trustees.

## Five-Year Review

Under the terms of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), the Township Planning Commission must review the Master Plan at least every five years to determine if an update is required. The findings and determination of the Planning Commission should be recorded in the meeting minutes and as part of a formal motion or resolution.

The review should be a formal process if the county intends it to serve as compliance with the requirements of Section 45 (2) of the MPEA. This means that a report outlining the standards for review and other basis upon which the Planning Commission determined whether an update is necessary should be created. The findings may be part of a resolution adopted by the Planning Commission or a separate report incorporated into the minutes of the meeting.

As noted above, it is intended that the Planning Commission conduct a less formal review annually as part of the annual report to the Township Board of Trustees.

## Standards for Review

In conducting the five-year review, the Planning Commission should evaluate the plan using the following criteria to determine if a plan update is necessary. If one or more of these conditions are met, a plan update may be appropriate.

1. **The conditions that the plan was based on have changed.** For example, if population growth suddenly surges or declines, a revision may be appropriate. The Township should track the rate of land splits, building permits, and regular census data updates to determine if the analysis in this plan is no longer accurate, and therefore the Master Plan and goals and objectives may need to be re-evaluated.
2. **There was a significant error in the plan that affects the plan policies, goals, or recommendations.** Sometimes a plan is based on an assumption that turns out to be incorrect, such as an area that was previously thought to lack in pressure for development suddenly sees a surge in demand. Any changes in the facts as a community knows them should be considered to see if it changes the appropriateness of proposals in the plan.
3. **There has been a change in resident sentiment** about some basic goal of the plan, or on a proposed approach to achieving the goal, that is reflected in the Planning Commission's recommendations or the Township Board of Trustees' decisions, but not in the plan.
4. **New issues that should be addressed by the plan have come up** and are not adequately addressed. Issues important to a community may present themselves after a Master Plan has been adopted. In those instances, it might be an issue that requires amendment of the Master Plan to ensure that the Township's policies regarding the use are clear.
5. **The plan is out of date.** Master Plans normally have a 10- to 20-year scope. If the plan has not been revised or significantly updated by the time the plan has reached the end of its "life," then it should be updated.

***Appendix A: Survey Reponses***