



St. Joseph Charter Township, MI  
**2024 MASTER PLAN**

Approved by the Planning Commission \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted by the Township Board \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT**  
February 22, 2024



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# Transmittal Letter

3000 Washington Avenue / P.O. Box 147 / St. Joseph, MI 49085 / Phone: (269) 429-7703 / Web: [www.sjct.org](http://www.sjct.org)

To the Citizens of St. Joseph Charter Township,

Our Township has been working on the latest update of our Master Plan. The 2017 Master Plan took a deep dive into our community. That process of updating the Master Plan began with listening to you, the citizens of the Township. During the community engagement effort, several themes emerged. We heard what many believe: St. Joseph Charter Township is “a community of great beauty, service, and convenience”. We are justifiably proud of our community as a great place to live.

The engagement process also revealed that we believe our Township has some shortcomings. The physical features of the community, both natural and man-made, create barriers which separate the Township into sections. By addressing those barriers, the identity of the Township can be strengthened, and greater social connections established, which will allow a community that is already a great place to live to become even better.

Michigan law requires every municipality that provides zoning have a comprehensive land use plan, referred to as a Master Plan. That plan should be updated every five years to address changes and needs in the municipality. When it is finalized, this document will become the new St. Joseph Charter Township Master Plan.

Many of the items that were identified in the previous plan have been completed, some are still in the process of being completed, and with some of the items our community priorities have changed. The Implementation Matrix in the Master Plan contains steps which, when achieved, will lead to continued improvements in the outstanding quality of life already afforded to our residents.

Our sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed to this effort. This document will serve as a guide for future development. The Master Plan contains reasonable and attainable goals. While some goals will require more time and more effort than others, once they are achieved the Township will be on the path to more fully realizing, “a community of healthy living opportunity connected to nature”.

Sincerely,

Roger Seely, Supervisor  
St. Joseph Charter Township

Patrice Rose, Clerk  
St. Joseph Charter Township

Ben Baker, Chair Planning Commission  
St. Joseph Charter Township

Denise Cook, Manager  
St. Joseph Charter Township

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A common question is, what is a Master Plan? And even more specifically, what is the role of the Township's Master Plan?

In general, the Master Plan sets a course for future development, reinvestment, and growth within St. Joseph Charter Township. It represents a shared vision about what the community is, what its residents value, and what the community desires it to become.

The Master Plan is an “umbrella document,” and brings together plans and studies from other agencies, highlights goals and objectives based on the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, presents a coordinated long-range approach, and provides the framework and basis for sound decision making.

Overall, the St. Joseph Charter Township Master Plan intends to establish clear direction and expectations for the Township and meet the requirements established by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008.

## *Purposes of the Master Plan*

This Plan serves many functions and can be used in a variety of ways, but its usefulness is determined by the willingness of the Township and others to actively support and implement its vision and goals.

- The Master Plan is a general statement of the Township's vision, goals, and policies. It provides a comprehensive view of the community's desires for the future.
- The Plan aids in daily land use decision making. The vision and goals outlined in the Plan are intended to guide the Planning Commission and the Township Board in their deliberations on zoning, capital improvements, and other related matters.
- This Master Plan establishes the basis for the zoning ordinance, parks and recreation, capital improvements, land use policies, and other implementation tools.
- The Plan provides continuity across time and provides successive leadership a common framework for addressing land-use issues. In turn, the community and others will have advance knowledge of its intentions.
- The Master Plan provides a framework to coordinate public improvements and private developments by creating development patterns that are orderly, rational, and provide the greatest benefit for all while avoiding conflicts between land uses.



### ***Relationship to Zoning***

The Master Plan is the long-range planning document upon which planning and zoning decisions are based, including creating and amending the Township Zoning Ordinance. Although the Master Plan is a policy document and does not have the force of law, it is the basis of the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map.

The Master Plan is the document that lays out the Township's future, while the Zoning Ordinance provides the day-to-day regulations for land use. Therefore, the land use designations on the Future Land Use Map may not directly correlate with the zoning districts or existing uses. However, the Master Plan reflects the community's long-range desires for land development, so as land uses and market demands change it is expected future re-zonings will be made to conform to the Master Plan.

The areas delineated on the Future Land Use Map are called "land use designations" and are different from zoning districts on the Zoning Map. It is important to note their differences. The land use designation is the desired long range land use, whereas the zoning district dictates what can happen now. Chapter 4 includes descriptions of the proposed future land uses and how they correlate with current zoning districts. This can be used to determine how the Zoning Ordinance can be amended to implement the recommendations of this Master Plan.

### ***Keeping the Plan Current***

Fulfilling the vision outlined in the Plan will not occur overnight. The Master Plan provides a sense of direction for the present and is a guide for the future. Understanding this, the Plan should not be rigidly administered; changing conditions that can affect its original intentions should be acknowledged and addressed.

A plan that is not referenced on a continual basis, or one that is outdated, can weaken decisions. Over time, goals may be achieved and new ones needed, or individual zoning decisions may change the direction of development in a certain part of the Township. Where decisions lead to land use approvals contrary to the Plan, the Master Plan should be amended to reflect these changes.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires the Planning Commission to prepare an annual report to the Township Board concerning its operations and the status of planning activities. As a part of this report, a meeting should be held to review the Master Plan ensuring changes are taken into consideration and amendments are made to keep it current and consistent with Township philosophies. Furthermore, the Planning Commission should periodically solicit public opinion about the Master Plan using surveys, public meetings, or other means to engage the community.

The Planning Act also requires review of the Master Plan at least every five years to determine whether amendments are needed, or if the process for a new Master Plan should be started. An annual review will not only fulfill this requirement but also ensure the Master Plan remains a relevant and useful document.

### **PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS**

#### ***Community Planning History***

St. Joseph Charter Township has engaged in land use planning and policy making for over 50 years. The first Comprehensive Plan was completed in cooperation with the Village of Shoreham in 1973. It was revised and updated in 1982, 1993, 2007, and 2017. The Comprehensive Plan was updated as changes occurred in the demographics, economy, and as the Township entered different phases of growth and evolution. Historically, the Township has sought to preserve its rural and residential character. Previous Master Plan policies focused on promoting open space, single-family residences, expanding thoroughfare capacity, and insulating residential land uses from conflicting commercial developments.

Today, the community is experiencing pressure from social and economic changes including limited population growth, an aging population, and rising costs to provide existing or new services. Few developable parcels remain with many constrained by their size, shape, and location. Changing preferences include the demand from both young and old for more compact, connected, and amenity-focused environments. The desire for these types of environments is driving the relocation of people, jobs, and ultimately prosperity.

## **Local and Regional Plans**

In addition to the previous Comprehensive Plan, this planning effort reviews and builds upon several other documents such as:

### **Berrien County Master Plan [\(2022\)](#)**

This plan provides overall guidance in managing the growth, preservation, and development of the County, much of which is carried out by local governments.

### **St. Joseph Charter Township Parks and Recreation Plan [\(2023-2027\)](#)**

This plan provides a guide for future park and recreation planning in the Township through 2027. It includes an inventory of all recreational assets along with goals, objectives, and actions for the future.

### **Berrien County Trails Master Plan [\(2022\)](#)**

This plan provides a county-wide vision for trails (multi-use, hiking, equestrian, water trails) and focuses on connecting communities.

### **Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan [\(2020\)](#)**

This plan provides a non-motorized transportation vision for southwest Michigan advocating collaboration, coordinated funding, and connectivity between communities.

### **Others Plans Include:**

- [Principles in Motion 2050](#), the TwinCATS 2050 Long Range Plan
- Moving Forward: A Plan for Public Transit in Berrien County [\(2014\)](#)

- Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan [\(2008\)](#)
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy [\(2022\)](#)
- City of St. Joseph Comprehensive Plan [\(2022\)](#)
- City of Benton Harbor Master Plan [\(2023\)](#)
- Village of Shoreham Master Plan [\(2021\)](#)

## **CREATING THE MASTER PLAN**

As a collaborative effort, the Master Plan process began in 2022 and was developed with the input and support of many citizens as well as members of the Township Board, Planning Commission, staff, and advisors. The planning process included the following general steps:

### **Phase 1 – Project Start-Up and Community Engagement**

- *Initiate Master Planning process and develop a scheduled work plan*
- *Discuss issues, opportunities, trends, and community values at Planning Commission meetings*

### **Phase 2 – Study and Analysis**

- *Conduct data gathering and research*
- *Continue to meet with the Planning Commission to refine the community's vision and goals*

- *Gather input and feedback from the community via a survey*

### **Phase 3 – Master Plan Documentation and Adoption**

- *Work with the Planning Commission to refine goals, objectives, data gathering, and implementation strategies*
- *Prepare and distribute a draft of the Plan*
- *Hold a Public Hearing leading to formal adoption and endorsement of the Master Plan*

## COMMON THEMES

Throughout the planning process several overriding themes emerged:

1. **Predominantly a bedroom community, the Township is an established, stable, and attractive place to live.**  
The neighborhood character will be preserved and enhanced; and the natural environment protected and better integrated into the community.
2. **Township land is nearly 100% occupied.** Future growth will be within infill and redevelopment opportunities and in certain areas with increased density where appropriate.
3. **Projected population within the Township and County predict minimal growth.**  
An aging population will desire to age in place with appropriate housing options, convenient access to goods, services, and entertainment. Places with a mix of uses that are distinctive and contribute to the community's overall vitality are preferred.
4. **A wider range of housing options, both existing and new construction, will be encouraged.** Places will be better connected, streets will create an attractive public realm, and more opportunities will be created to walk and bike.
5. **Future population growth is needed for sustainability.**  
New household growth will bring additional consumer spending and improve economic sustainability for local government services and private businesses.

6. **Cooperation with other communities, agencies, and regional job growth will aid in future economic sustainability.**

Job growth within easy commuting distances will provide opportunities for increased household incomes for existing and future residents.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Plan is organized by subject area. Each chapter, or "plan element," contains relevant data (gathered from the census, other agencies, plans and documents), public input results, discussion of future trends, analysis, and recommendations.

The Township's vision and guiding statement is included along with goals, objectives, and actions to achieve and support the Future Land Use Plan. An implementation matrix provides project priority, timing, potential funding sources, and entities capable or responsible for implementation.

With this understanding, Township officials seek the help and cooperation of its citizens and those interested in participating in realizing the vision set forth in this Plan.

# CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

## SETTING AND HISTORY

St. Joseph Charter Township is a community of approximately 10,000 people located on the east shore of Lake Michigan, almost directly across the lake, some sixty miles from Chicago. Situated in the northwest portion of Berrien County, it enjoys a high level of regional and national access due to the area's airport, rail, highway network, and Lake Michigan Harbor.

Besides Lake Michigan, its most significant natural features include Lake Michigan, St. Joseph River, and Hickory Creek which trisects the Township. The Township is neighbored to the north by the cities of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, to the east by Benton Charter Township, to the southeast by Royalton Township, and to the south by Lincoln Charter Township.

The area serves as a hub for the rural districts and smaller adjacent communities. Nearby cities include: Michigan City, Indiana; South Bend, Indiana; Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Holland, Michigan.

## *Settlement and Early Days*

In 1675, Jacques Marquette, the first pioneer to set foot in Berrien County, discovered the St. Joseph River during his expeditions to map the northern Mississippi River. As settlers located further inland, the river became their link to the outside world. The strategic importance of Southwestern Michigan to the early pioneers is emphasized by the struggle for its control. The old Fort St. Joseph at Niles was owned at various times by France, Spain, and England before it finally became a territory of the United States after the Revolutionary War.

The Township's first permanent settler arrived in 1780, but it was another 50 years before true settlement began and the Township incorporated in 1832. In 1836, opening of the Territorial Road and improvements to the harbor increased travel between Detroit and Chicago. Beginning in 1885, the area began to develop its industrial potential which included primarily foundry, machinery, and food processing industries.





### ***Mid-Century Growth***

Organized in 1832, land in the Township was predominantly agricultural until the middle to late 20th century brought more growth as the automobile spurred construction of suburban and highway commercial development. Fairplain, located in the northeast portion of the Township, followed a more “traditional” pattern of development with a grid street network and identifiable center at the intersections of Napier and Colfax Avenues. Across the St. Joseph River, several natural and man-made corridors resulted in a more fragmented street network and predominantly residential land use. Commercial and industrial uses were located and spread out along Niles Road, Hilltop Road, and Lakeshore Drive (currently within the Village of Shoreham).

### ***Recent History***

Recent decades have continued to bring new development to the Township with many businesses and services locating closer to highways and the interstate. And while Township land is nearly built out, there are some remaining developable areas. Several industries are located in its Palladium Drive Business Park, and it seeks to attract more to increase the community’s tax base. Property is still available for residential growth, but it is anticipated that redevelopment in certain areas aimed at providing a growing need for a variety of housing types will occur. Meanwhile, maintaining the Township’s reputation as a quality bedroom community is important.

## **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

### ***Land Use***

St. Joseph Charter Township has an area of nearly 7 square miles with a mix of land use and development types. Existing land use within the Township includes residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and open space, waterfront, community facilities (public/semi-public), and some agricultural. The community enjoys several parks and natural spaces that provide residents with access to local amenities and a quiet, attractive quality of life. The existing land use pattern and future land use plan are to a great extent defined by major transportation and natural corridors. The St. Joseph River bisects the community into two halves - each predominantly residential but with the western half host to much of the Township’s industry and businesses. Interstate 94, Hickory Creek, and the railroad further separate areas in the western half of the Township.

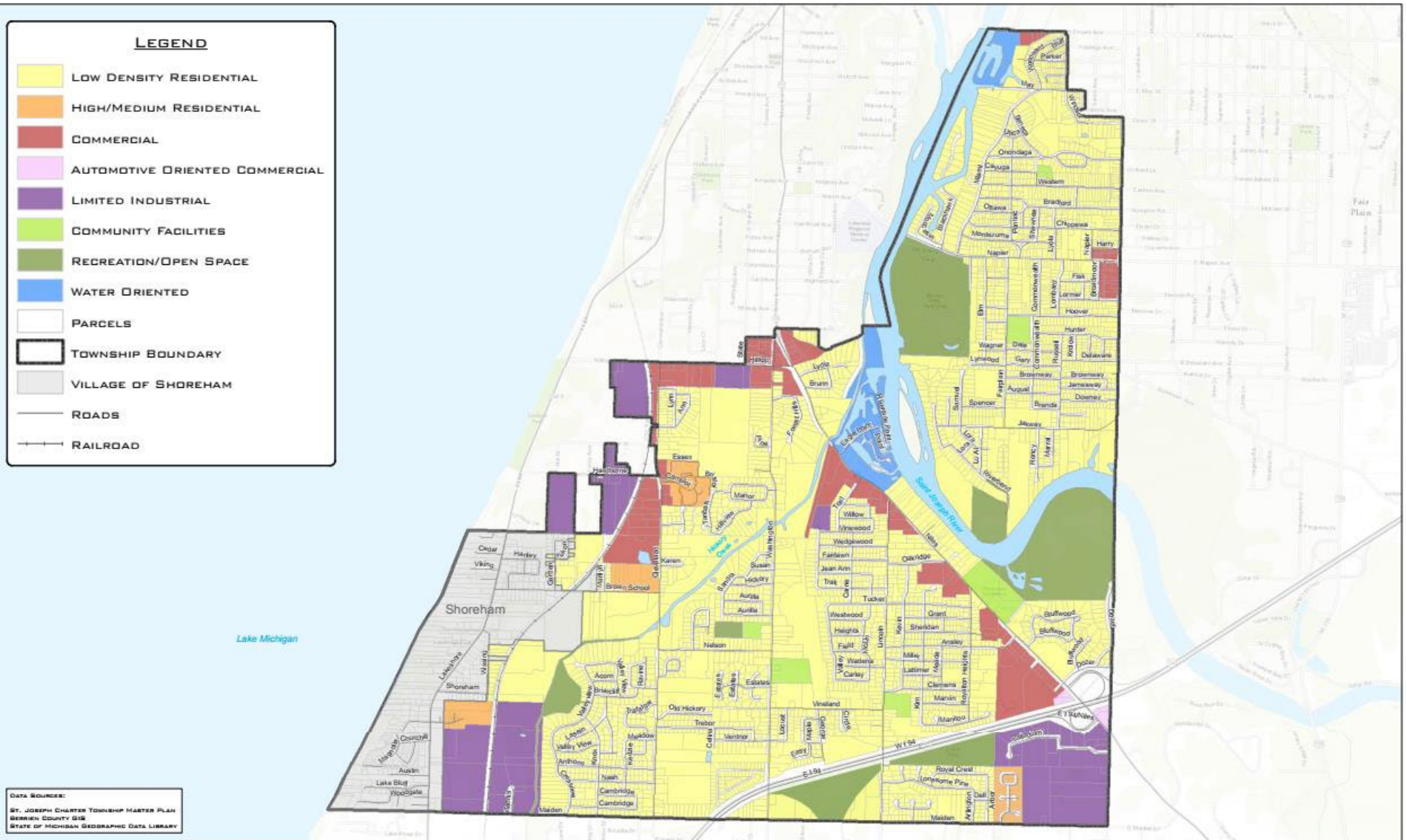
### ***Natural Environment***

The area owes its existence, evolution, and present physical structure to the geological forces which shaped Michigan during the Ice Age. As the glaciers advanced and retreated, they left rolling topography and deposited an assortment of soils. Melting ice drenched the land with water which eroded the hills, filled depressions with silt, and cut new ravines as it ran off. The St. Joseph River became the main draining channel in the area emptying into Lake Michigan and establishing the site of the community.

Most of Berrien County is in the St. Joseph River drainage basin. One of the larger drainage basins in Michigan, major tributaries to the St. Joseph River includes: Coldwater River, Prairie River, Pigeon River, Little Elkhart River, Elkhart River, Dowagiac River, and the Paw Paw River.

The Township is near the 42nd parallel north, which is the circle of latitude 42 degrees north of the equatorial plane. At this latitude, the sun is visible for 15 hours, 15 minutes during the summer solstice and 9 hours, 7 minutes during the winter solstice. The climate of the area is influenced by the prevailing winds from the west which are cooled in summer and warmed in winter as they pass over Lake Michigan. The mean annual temperature for the county is fifty (50) degrees and the mean annual rainfall is thirty-nine (39) inches. This moderate climate contributes to its agricultural diversity and is ideal for fruit cultivation. It is also well known for attracting visitors to the extent that it has been a tourism destination since the late 1800s.

The primary soil types identified in the Township can be found on the Soils Map in the appendix. Soils within the Township are predominantly well-drained with moderately well-drained soils in the northwest and southwest corners. The poorly-drained soils are mostly located in the flood plain areas of various creeks and the St. Joseph River. These areas are illustrated in the Flood Potential Map located in this chapter and the Wetlands Map in the appendix.



**LEGEND**

- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH/MEDIUM RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- AUTOMOTIVE ORIENTED COMMERCIAL
- LIMITED INDUSTRIAL
- COMMUNITY FACILITIES
- RECREATION/OPEN SPACE
- WATER ORIENTED
- PARCELS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE OF SHOREHAM
- ROADS
- RAILROAD

**DATA SOURCES:**  
 ST. JOSEPH CHARTER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN  
 BERRIEN COUNTY GIS  
 STATE OF MICHIGAN GEOGRAPHIC DATA LIBRARY



## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

A balanced, efficient, and well-connected transportation system provides access to goods, services, community resources, and supports land use development through a variety of modes. The primary mode of transportation within the Township is the automobile, but residents, visitors, and businesses are also served by a network of developing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, waterways, air, rail, and bus service.

### ***Transportation Planning and TwinCATS***

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making organization made up of representatives from local government and transportation authorities. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is the designated MPO for the Benton Harbor/St. Joseph urbanized area, also known as the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS). TwinCATS develops and maintains the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the area and develops a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) based on the goals of the LRTP. ***Principles in Motion 2050 - The TwinCATS Long Range Transportation Plan for 2023-2050***, provides inventories of existing transportation systems, goals for improvement of these systems, and specific project recommendations. For more information about transportation-related issues, please refer to the aforementioned TwinCATS 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan.

## ***Street and Highway Network***

### ***Road Classification***

Roads within Michigan and across the country are categorized by the National Function Classification (NFC) System. The functional classification determines the type of traffic a street will carry and the level of access it requires to serve adjacent land uses. This hierarchy is related to the number (traffic volume) and type of vehicles a street is designed to accommodate. The NFC System classifies roads into the following categories:

### ***Principal Arterials***

These roads generally carry long distance, through-travel trips. They also provide access to important traffic generators, such as major airports or regional shopping centers. Examples include interstates, freeways, and state routes between and within large cities. Examples within the Township are Interstate 94, M-63/ Niles Road, Red Arrow Highway/ Lakeshore Drive (Business Loop 94), and Napier Avenue.

### ***Minor Arterials***

These roads are similar in function to principal arterials, but shorter in length and serve lesser traffic generators. Minor arterials focus on regional connectivity and place more emphasis on land access. Examples within the Township include Colfax Avenue, Hilltop Road, and Cleveland Avenue.

### ***Collectors***

These roads provide more access to property than arterials and funnel traffic from residential and rural areas to arterial roads. Collectors in the Township include, among others, Brown School Road, Washington Avenue, and Maiden Lane from Cleveland Avenue to I-94BL.

### ***Local***

These roads provide access to property and homes and are not designed to accommodate high volumes of traffic. Examples include residential streets and lightly traveled county roads. Local streets in the Township include, among others, parts of Fairplain Avenue, and Vineland Road.

Among the roads in St. Joseph Charter Township, state routes such as Interstate 94 and M-63 are under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation. Primary and local roads are maintained by the Berrien County Road Department with the State Motor Vehicle Highway Fund and Michigan Transportation Fund matched by Township funds.

### ***Access Management***

An effective way to improve the character and function of thoroughfares is through access management. Many of the existing driveways and parking areas serving commercial and office developments are not interconnected and serve only one parcel. By consolidating driveways and connecting destinations with shared access, the Township could improve safety, traffic flow, and aesthetics. The greatest benefit would come from implementing access management along major routes such as Niles Road, near major intersections, and as new construction or redevelopment site plans are reviewed.

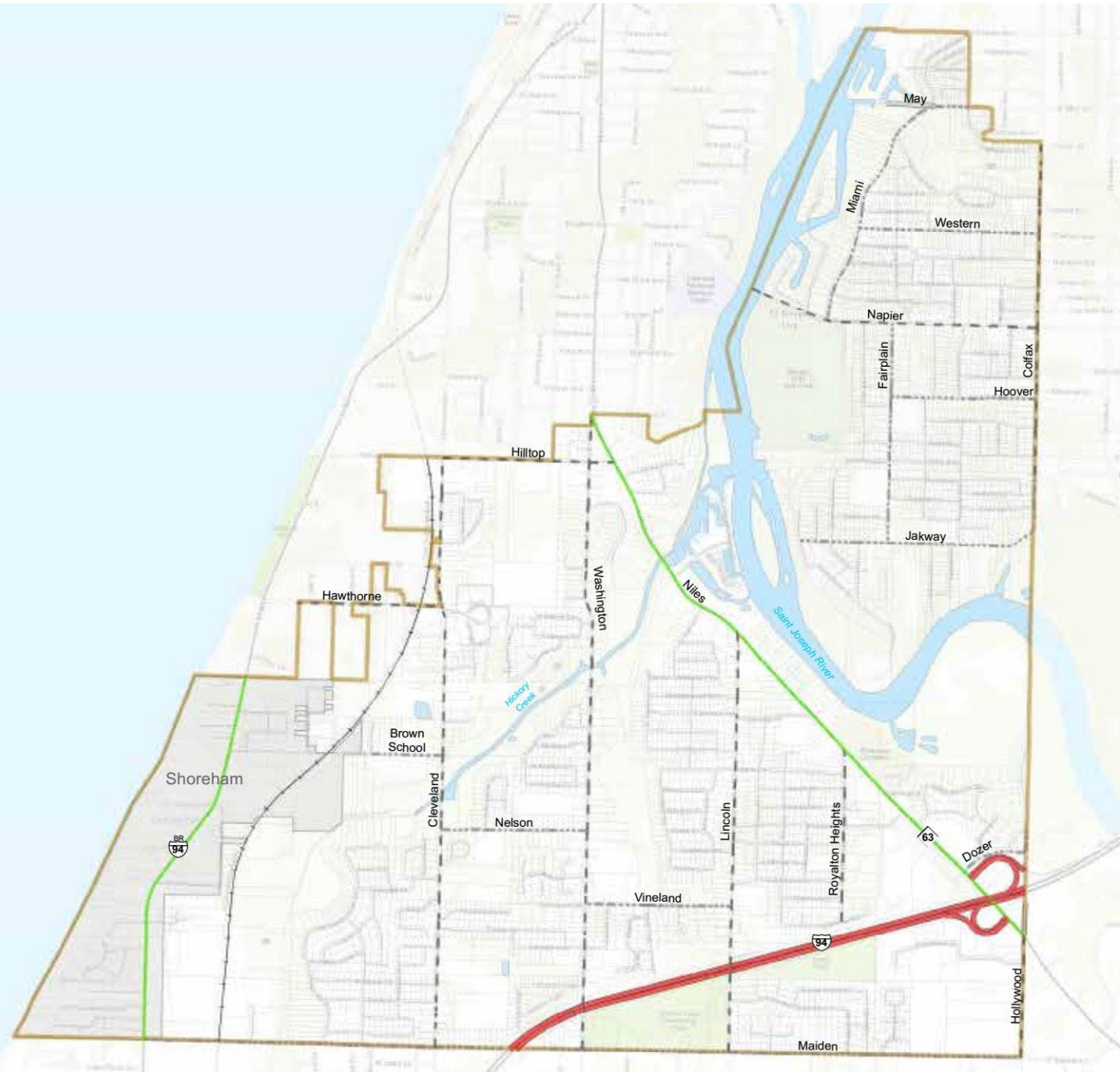
**LEGEND**

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- COUNTY ROAD - PRIMARY
- COUNTY ROAD - LOCAL PAVED
- COUNTY ROAD - LOCAL UNPAVED
- PARCELS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE OF SHOREHAM
- LOCAL ROADS
- RAILROAD

## Thoroughfare Classification Map

Lake Michigan



DATA SOURCES:  
 BERRIEN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION  
 BERRIEN COUNTY GIS  
 STATE OF MICHIGAN GEOGRAPHIC DATA LIBRARY

### Pavement Conditions (PASER)

Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating, or PASER, is a visual test of the surface condition of the road focused on pavement conditions prepared each year by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, Berrien County Representatives, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). PASER uses 10 separate ratings to evaluate the distress of pavement and groups the 10 ratings into three categories based upon the type of work that is required for each rating: Routine Maintenance (Good), Capital Preventative Maintenance (Fair), and Structural Improvement (Poor). The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) utilizes the most current data available as of 2022. Where data was not available, the previous year's data was used. As such, some improvements have been made and accuracy of the map is not guaranteed.

### Other Transportation Types

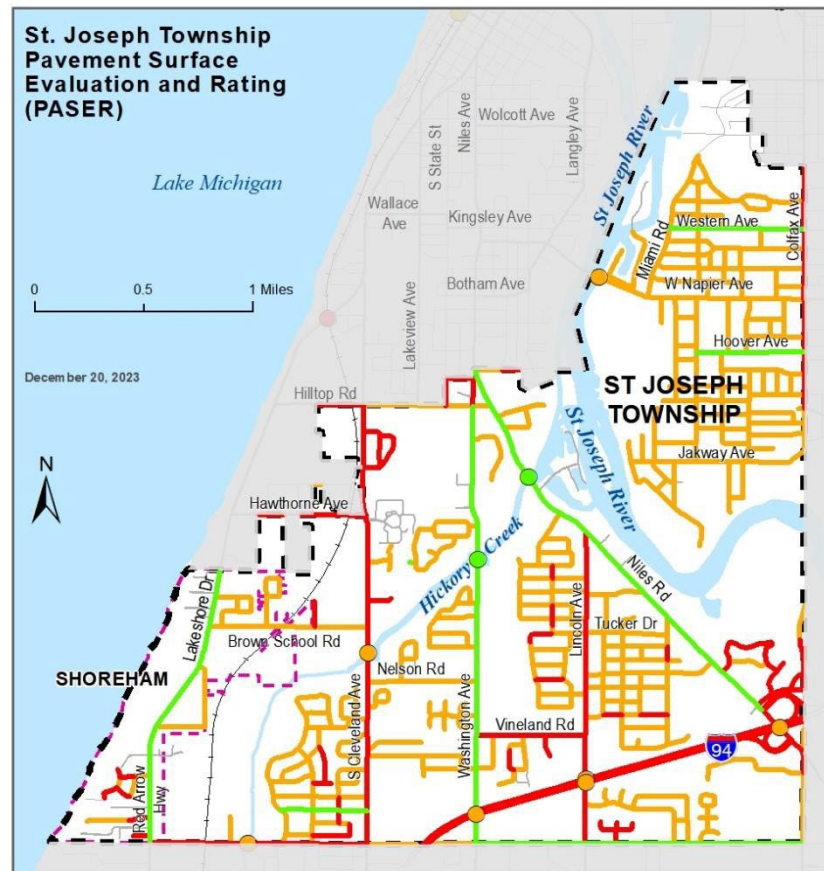
Rail freight service, provided by CSX, runs north and south through the Township with Amtrak offering passenger service in the cities of St. Joseph, New Buffalo, and Niles, Michigan. The nearest commercial airports are located in South Bend, Indiana and Kalamazoo, Michigan with smaller general aviation airports in Benton Harbor, Watervliet, Berrien Springs, and Niles, Michigan. The Twin Cities area is also served by both commercial and recreational harbor facilities.

Bus service is available through three separate public transit agencies within the County. Several transit-focused studies have called for improved coordination and service. The Township should support these efforts and others as public transportation becomes increasingly important.

### Non-Motorized Infrastructure

The Township is committed to providing a variety of non-motorized transportation options to residents and visitors. It is well positioned to benefit from and support regional efforts to enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Regional initiatives aimed at expanding and connecting non-motorized pathways include efforts by the Strategic Leadership Council Taxpayer Group, SWMPC, Friends of Berrien County Trails, TwinCATS, and MDOT.

The Non-Motorized Infrastructure Map includes existing and proposed routes within the Township. Locations for potential trailhead and pedestrian crossings are illustrated to ensure improvements are coordinated. Within the Township, better pedestrian and bicycle facilities for recreation are very desirable and should be pursued in future planning efforts.



**LEGEND**

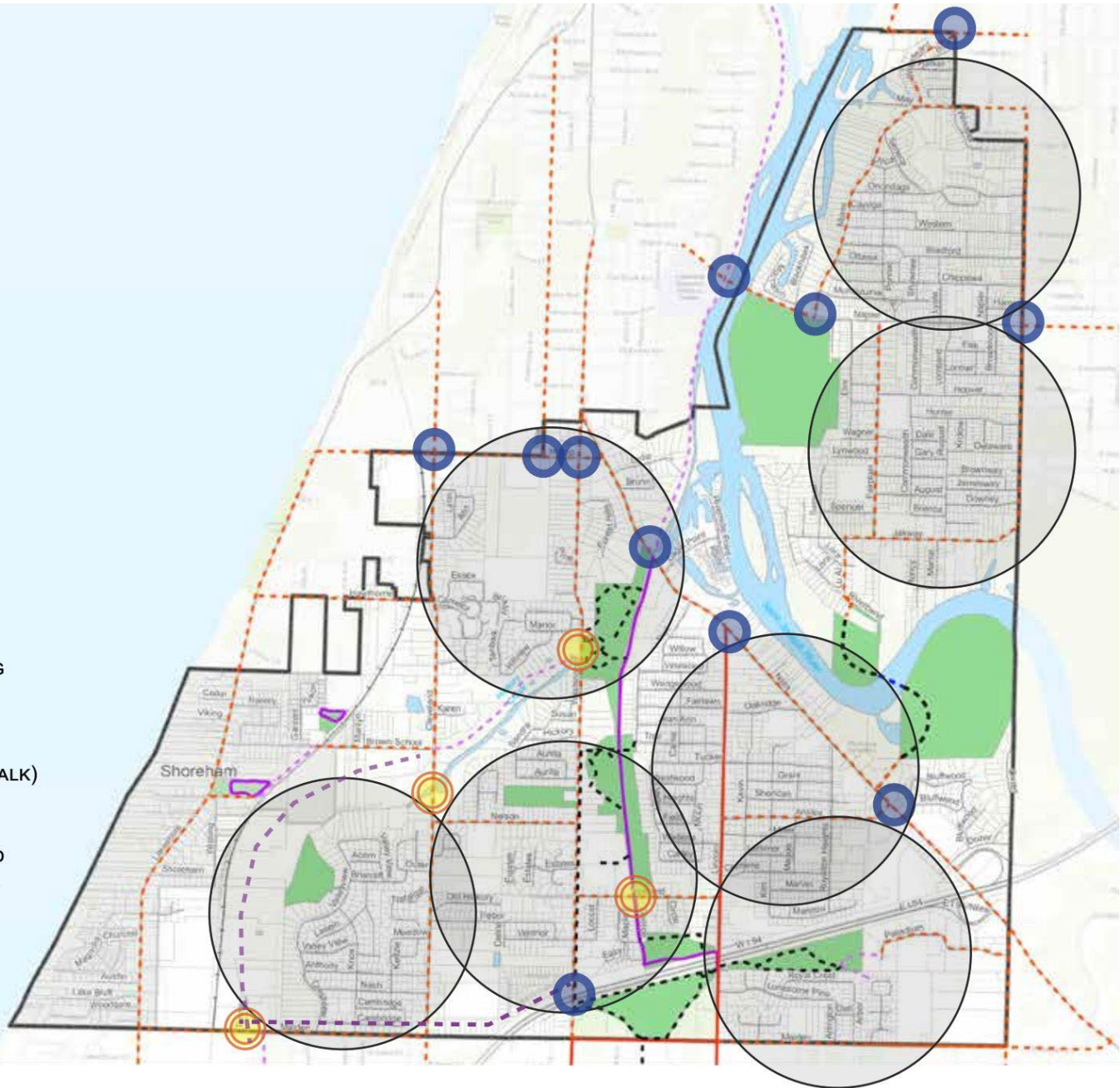
- EXISTING BIKE LANE
- FUTURE BIKE LANE
- EXISTING NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL
- FUTURE NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL
- PROPOSED TRAIL
- PARKS
- PARCELS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE OF SHOREHAM
- ROADS
- RAILROAD

## Non-Motorized Infrastructure Map

- PRIORITY PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
- PRIORITY TRAIL HEAD
- ~1 MILE DISTANCE (20 MINUTE WALK)

NOTE: MAP INCLUDES INFORMATION AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS PROPOSED BY ST. JOSEPH CHARTER TOWNSHIP.

DATA SOURCES:  
 ST. JOSEPH CHARTER TOWNSHIP NATURE TRAIL MAP 2003  
 SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
 BENRIEN COUNTY GIS  
 STATE OF MICHIGAN GEOGRAPHIC DATA LIBRARY



## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

St. Joseph Charter Township offers a wide variety of services and facilities to its residents and businesses. Additionally, community facilities provided by entities other than the Township, such as schools, utilities, and healthcare facilities, play an important role in the lives of citizens. The quality, availability, and cost of these services impact growth and redevelopment in the Township as well as quality of life. A map showing the locations of community services and critical facilities in the Township can be found in this chapter.

### ***Township Hall***

All Township governmental and business functions take place at the six thousand (6,000) square foot facility located on approximately ten (10) acres at 3000 Washington Avenue. This building includes a meeting room complex. The building presently meets all requirements and is anticipated to do so for the foreseeable future.

### ***Schools***

The educational facilities and school systems which serve the residents are vital factors in the growth and development of the Township. The community is served by the St. Joseph Public Schools, Benton Harbor Area Schools, Berrien County Intermediate School District, Lakeshore Public Schools, and various Parochial Schools.

### ***Recreational Facilities***

In 2023, the St. Joseph Charter Township Parks and Recreation Committee updated the Park and Recreation Master Plan for the Township. An inventory of these existing facilities can be found within the document available at the Township Hall; their locations are illustrated on the Community Facilities Map. The parks map shows access to parks. In the township, 47% of the population is within a ½ mile walking distance from a park.

### ***Fire Protection***

The Township has two fire stations with one located on each side of the river. Built in 1989, Fire Station No. 1 was constructed on the premises of the Township Hall. In 2009, Fire Station No. 2 was constructed in Fairplain near the Napier and Colfax Avenue intersection. At the time this document was prepared, the St. Joseph Charter Township Fire Department consists of 34 volunteer firemen and two chiefs. The high quality of their training, equipment, a municipal water supply, and five fire trucks allows the Township to maintain a good fire insurance rating.

### ***Police Protection***

The Township Police Department is located on the premises of the Township Hall. At the time this document was prepared, it was staffed by eleven (11) full-time officers with six (6) squad cars being used on a regular basis. These officers and support staff provide around the clock service and protection for the Township.

### ***Public Works Department***

The Township's public works department is located at Eaton Park. This department's primary areas of responsibility consist of sewer maintenance, park maintenance and construction, and upkeep on the Township's buildings and grounds. Road maintenance is provided by the Berrien County Road Department, except for the state highways, which are maintained by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

### ***Solid Waste***

Curb side refuse service is provided for residences by the Township through a contractual arrangement with a private hauler. Commercial and industrial customers also contract individually for waste collection. St. Joseph Charter Township is a member of the Northwest Berrien County Sanitary Authority.



# St. Joseph Township Community Facilities

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



September 12, 2023



## Community Facilities

- St Joseph Township Hall
- Fire Station
- Senior Center
- Parks/Recreational Areas
- Department of Public Works
- Cemetery
- Schools

Map Sources  
Base Layers: MGF v17  
Facilities: SWMPC, 2023  
2305\_Community

## Base Layers

- St Joseph Township
- Shoreham Village
- Water
- Railroad
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads



	Access Area 1/2 mile	St Joseph Township	Percent with Park Access 1/2 Mile
Population	4,658	9,946	47%
Households	1,804	4,180	43%

Source: ESRI 2020

	St Joseph Township		Recreational Area
	Shoreham Village		Access Site**
	Water		
	Non-motorized Trail		
	Wide Shoulder		
	1/2 Mile Walking Distance* from Access Site**		

\*Distance does not factor in roads that are not pedestrian friendly, as roads with no sidewalks.  
\*\*Access Sites were approximated where the park entrance is near a road.

	Access Area 1/2 mile	St Joseph Township	Percent with Park Access 1/2 Mile
Population	4,658	9,946	47%
Households	1,804	4,180	43%

Source: ESRI 2020

Map Sources  
Base Layers: MGF v17  
Trails and Parks: SWMPC, 2023  
2305\_Parks

## ***Sanitary Sewers***

The Township collection system began service in 1975 and consists of approximately fifty-two (52) miles of 8"-12" internal diameter clay, steel, or PVC pipe and twelve (12) lift stations. The lift stations are all factory-built, steel dry-well, concrete well-type with capacities ranging from 100 GPM to 1000 GPM. Maintenance on the system is provided by the Township. The collection system is owned by the Township.

In 2012, the Hickory Creek Interceptor Sewer repair project lined approximately six miles of deteriorating corrugated metal sewer. The interceptor includes 16 metering stations and was completed in conjunction with Royalton and Lincoln Townships. The Township is one of three member communities of the Southwest Michigan Regional Sanitary Sewer and Water Authority, which owns and manages the Interceptor and lift station that pumps to the treatment plant.

The service area includes the entire Township, with the area north and east of the St. Joseph River designated as District 1, and the area south and west of the river designated as District 2. This wastewater is treated and disposed of by the Benton Harbor/St. Joseph Joint Sewage Treatment Plant.

The Benton Harbor/St. Joseph Joint Sewage Treatment Plant is owned by the two cities, with St. Joseph Charter Township and other area municipalities contracted for treatment services. The plant is an activated sludge type with separate anaerobic sludge digestion, chemical treatment for phosphorous removal, and sludge dewatering by vacuum filtration.

## ***Municipal Water***

Municipal water service for the Township is contracted from the City of St. Joseph for District 1 and 2, and Benton Charter Township. The majority of the distribution system was constructed in 1971 and is the property of the Township, with operation, maintenance and water treatment/supply provided by the City of St. Joseph.

Municipal water is available throughout the entire Township, with adequate pressure being supplied by pumping station and two elevated storage tanks. It is anticipated that some maintenance to the distribution system will be necessary given its age.

The distribution system is owned by the Township and the pumping stations/elevated tanks owned by the Authority.

## ***Stormwater Infrastructure***

Stormwater infrastructure within Michigan Townships is not commonly owned or operated by the Township but rather under the jurisdiction of the County Drain Commissioner, County Road Department, or private entity with regulatory oversight at the State or Federal level. The Township's need or desire to alter this common arrangement will depend on its growth strategies or desire to accommodate development as it would likely result in assuming responsibility for the stormwater infrastructure. Instead, the Township should continue to actively dialogue and engage within the existing framework as much as possible to realize its goals and objectives.

## ***Electrical and Natural Gas Services***

Indiana Michigan Power provides electricity services to the Township and its residents. With Cook Nuclear Plant in Lake Charter Township, electrical energy continues to be in good supply in the foreseeable future. Michigan Gas Utilities provides natural gas services essentially throughout the Township and the supply is considered adequate to meet demands.

## ***Asset Management***

Commonly known as the SAW grant, the Stormwater, Asset Management, Wastewater Grant is a program for the Township to inventory and assess their sanitary and stormwater sewer systems. Asset management plans evaluate the system, analyze funding and costs and establish a framework for the Township to regularly maintain and repair infrastructure. A Geographic Information System (GIS) was established, using the inventory and assessment data, for the Township. This provides a tool to sustain, reference, and manage utility information in the future.

In 2017, a state grant was awarded in conjunction with the Southwest Michigan Regional Sanitary Sewer & Water Authority. Members include St. Joseph Charter Township, Lincoln Charter Township, and Royalton Township. The grant tasks included a full inventory of the sanitary sewer assets and assessment of those assets including manhole structures, sewer pipes, and lift stations.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section describes the population and socioeconomic statistics, housing, and travel trends of St. Joseph Charter Township.

### Population

Based on data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 9,993 people living in the Township in 2020; a decrease of 35 people from the population recording in 2010. **Table 1** presents the population trends from 1970 to 2020, and includes projections through 2050 for St. Joseph Charter Township, Berrien County, and the State of Michigan.

<b>Table 1 - Population Trends and Projections</b>			
	St. Joseph Charter Township	Berrien County	State of Michigan
1970	9,613	164,191	8,881,826
1980	9,961	171,276	9,262,078
1990	9,613	161,415	9,295,297
2000	10,042	162,453	9,938,444
2010	10,028	156,813	9,883,640
2020	9,993	154,316	10,077,331
2030	10,216	158,922	10,694,172
2040	10,307	160,184	11,077,809
2050	10,398	161,238	11,395,423

Berrien County's population declined sharply by almost 10,000 people between 1980 and 1990. While the population rose slightly in the 1990's, the number of people dipped again by 2020. A very slight increase is projected moving forward.

Although there is no way to predict the population growth with certainty, it is important to consider these forecasts while developing public policy and land use regulations. Because St. Joseph Charter Township is nearly built-out, its best hope is a slight increase in population if current land use and development patterns continue.

Much will depend on other factors such as the economy, enhancements that build on the community's character and its assets, and the demand for infill and redevelopment.

### Age Distribution

The age distribution of a community can be an important factor in identifying the social and economic trends as well as public service needs. In St. Joseph Charter Township, the median age was 45.3 in 2020; a decrease in 0.9 years from the recording in 2010. As shown in **Table 2**, the Township's median age is higher than both the State of Michigan and Berrien County.

<b>Table 2 - Median Age</b>			
	St. Joseph Charter Township	Berrien County	State of Michigan
Median Age - 2000	42.1	37.4	35.5
Median Age - 2010	46.2	41	38.9
Median Age - 2020	45.3	42.9	40.2
Change in Median Age	-0.9	1.9	1.3
Source: 2020 American Community Survey			

While St. Joseph Charter Township is aging, between 2010 and 2020 the group with the highest growth rate was 4 years and younger, followed closely by those 60-74. **Table 3** describes the change in the percentage of the total population for each age group during that period.

Age Range in years	2000	2010	2020	Percent Change 2010- 2020
0-4	534	510	701	37.45%
5-9	638	540	491	-9.07%
10-14	804	691	392	-43.27%
15-19	618	639	628	-1.72%
20-24	279	358	324	-9.49%
25-34	983	939	962	2.44%
35-44	1,645	1,158	1,316	13.64%
45-54	1,601	1,681	1,093	-34.97%
55-59	588	819	748	-8.66%
60-64	518	699	816	16.73%
65-74	953	987	1,281	29.78%
75-84	705	697	643	-7.74%
85+	176	310	340	9.67%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000, 2010, 2020

In addition to the Township, population trends for Berrien County and the US indicate an increasing senior population. Access to appropriate housing, goods and services, particularly health care, and transportation will be a growing concern.

Another concern facing the Township is the loss of residents aged 10-24. This age group is typically comprised of youth, students, educated professionals, and the young workforce. While all age groups are important to a community, the 45-59 age group can be seen as an indicator for vitality and overall health. Its loss is significant because it represents the workforce population and working families.

### Household Characteristics

Between 2010 and 2020, the total number of households in St. Joseph Charter Township increased by about 1% while the average household size decreased (**Table 4**). This is consistent with trends as more people are remaining single and families tend to have fewer children.

The median household income in St. Joseph Charter Township is more than that of the State and Berrien County (**Table 5**). Educational attainment is greater in the Township while the percentage of the population that falls below the poverty level is lower when compared to the County and State.

	2000	2010	2020	Percent Change 2010-2020
Family households	2,949	2,913	2849	-2.19%
Households with individuals under 18	1,284	1,162	1,046	-9.5%
Total number of households	4,094	4,140	4,090	-1.2%
Average Household Size	2.45	2.42	2.38	-1.2%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000, 2010, 2020, 2020 American Community Survey

	St. Joseph Charter Township	Berrien County	State of Michigan
Median Household Income (In Dollars)	\$74,044	\$57,535	\$63,498
% of Families in Poverty	5.6%	16.6%	13.1%
% with High School diploma or higher	94.6%	92.3%	92%
% with Bachelor's degree or higher	37.5%	33.2%	31.7%

Source: 2020, 2021 American Community Survey

## Household Characteristics

Housing in the Township is generally well maintained and the predominant housing type is detached single-family structures. As shown in **Table 6**, 3,575 units, or 85.2%, are owner-occupied housing with only 621, or 14.8%, being renter-occupied. The median value of an owner-occupied home according to the 2020 American Community Survey estimates was \$180,800. This is higher when compared to the median values for the County at \$157,500 and State at \$162,600. Approximately two thirds of the housing was built prior to 1969 (**Table 7**).

**Table 6 - Housing Unit Summary**

	St. Joseph Charter Township		Berrien County		State of Michigan	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	4,490		76,821		4,570,173	
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	4,196	93.5%	63,955	83.3%	4,041,760	88.4%
Owner-Occupied	3,575	85.2%	45,536	71.2%	2,897,942	71.7%
Renter-Occupied	621	14.8%	18,419	28.8%	1,143,818	28.3%
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	294	6.5%	12,866	16.7%	528,413	11.6%

Source: 2020 Census, 2020 American Community Survey

**Table 7 - Age of Housing Stock**

Year Built	St. Joseph Charter Township		Berrien County		State of Michigan	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1939 or earlier	380	8.7%	12,734	16.4%	673,896	14.6%
1940 to 1949	168	3.8%	6,328	8.1%	344,608	7.5%
1950 to 1959	1,030	23.5%	12,374	15.9%	679,715	14.7%
1960 to 1969	1,248	28.5%	12,007	15.5%	544,231	11.8%
1970 to 1979	652	14.9%	10,361	13.3%	708,551	15.4%
1980 to 1989	227	5.2%	6,543	8.4%	454,857	9.9%
1990 to 1999	479	10.9%	8,125	10.5%	611,539	13.3%
2000 to 2013	177	4%	8,290	10.7%	511,831	11.0%
2014 or later	21	0.5%	883	1.1%	82,985	1.8%

Source: 2020 American Community Survey

## **Employment**

A key driver affecting demographics is employment. People move to quality places. Improvements like expanding broadband access, enhancing internet speeds and reliability are important for a resilient economy for employees and employers. The Township, like most parts of the country, felt the economic impact of the pandemic.

Within St. Joseph Charter Township, according to the 2020 American Community Survey Estimates, there were 4,908 people in the labor force with 4,565 employed and 343 unemployed. That gives the Township approximately a 4.2% unemployment rate. The number one occupation in the Township falls in the management, business and science occupations at 46.7%. The second is followed by the sales and office occupations at 22.6%. The third is production and transportation occupations at 12.6%. The fourth is service occupations at 11.5%. The fifth is natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations at 6.7%.

Within the Township, private wage and salary workers make up the majority of the work force at 83.7%. That is followed by government workers at 12.5% and self-employed workers make up at 3.8% of the workforce.

## **Conclusion**

The demographics of St. Joseph Charter Township follow the cyclical pattern of all communities. As a community develops, younger people and their families move in to take advantage of housing and employment opportunities. Eventually, growth slows and the population ages. Older people then begin to “downsize” and relocate to alternative housing and younger people move into the homes being sold by empty nesters and seniors and the cycle begins again.

There is nothing in the demographics to suggest that the cyclical pattern will change. The Township is currently in a “transition” period.

After growing during the post-World War II period, the population “peaked” in 1980 and declined until 2020. The next several decades will see modest growth as younger residents move in.

Overall, during the coming years the Township will experience the following:

- Very modest increase in population
- More households with slightly fewer persons per household reflecting a nationwide trend
- A population that is wealthier than average with fewer families in poverty
- A better educated population with a greater percentage having completed a Bachelor’s degree or higher

These trends will be driven by a continued growth of employment opportunities in the region and the achievement of the goals outlined in the Master Plan. As those goals are reached the overall quality of life in the Township will be maintained and improved resulting in a community that continues to be a great place to live.

Table 8 - Berrien County Business Patterns	Pre-Recession		Recession		Recovery		Recent		Change	
	2003	2003	2010	2010	2014	2014	2021	2021	2003 to 2021	2003 to 2021
Employment Sectors	Companies	Employees	Companies	Employees	Companies	Employees	Companies	Employees	Companies	Employees
<b>Total for all sectors</b>	<b>4,018</b>	<b>59,155</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>49,517</b>	<b>3,543</b>	<b>53,366</b>	<b>3,513</b>	<b>50,548</b>	<b>-505</b>	<b>-8,607</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	7		2		3		4	5	-3	5
Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	9	75	7	86	6		5	77	-4	2
Utilities	13		13		11		18	1,155	5	1,155
Construction	406	2,079	355	1,254	311	1,413	303	1,607	-103	-472
Manufacturing	351	13,529	296	7,493	280	8,773	274	8,908	-77	-4,621
Wholesale trade	177	2,034	147	1,579	151	1,828	149	1,703	-28	-331
Retail trade	621	7,358	572	6,687	560	6,966	551	6,868	-70	-490
Transportation and warehousing	87	1,354	92	1,291	76	1,240	75	1,191	-12	-163
Information	47	894	47	578	46	526	50	463	3	-431
Finance and insurance	226	1,465	210	1,248	218	1,262	192	1,338	-34	-127
Real estate and rental and leasing	165	652	145	627	140	641	163	643	-2	-9
Professional, scientific, and technical services	313	2,759	282	2,163	272	1,932	257	2,345	-56	-414
Management of companies and enterprises	24		21		35		22	2,025	-2	2,025
Administrative/Waste management/ Remediation	173	2,880	165	2,660	185	3,009	168	1,940	-5	-940
Educational services	28	2,227	31	2,379	27	2,720	30	2,627	2	400
Health care and social assistance	393	8,409	391	8,816	389	9,144	426	9,167	33	758
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	73	919	70	852	66	853	74	791	1	-128
Accommodation and food services	392	5,384	391	5,470	370	5,348	375	5,336	-17	-48
Other services (except public administration)	482	2,770	430	2,386	393	2,390	374	2,344	-108	-426
Industries not classified	31		8		4		3	5	-28	5

Source: US Census Berrien County Business Patterns



## Socioeconomic Data

### 2010-2020 Annual Growth Rate



**-0.10%**  
Population

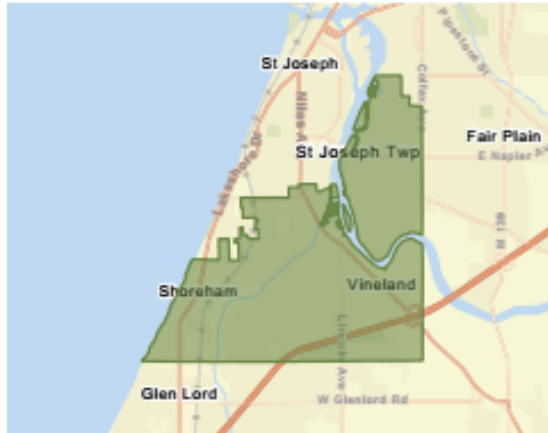


**0.11%**  
Households

Average Household Size  
for this area

**2.37** which is less than the average for Michigan

Area	Value	0.00	4.00
Michigan	2.43		
This area	2.37		
Berrien County	2.36		



**9,870**

2022 Total Population (Esri)

**4,474**

2022 Total Housing Units (Esri)

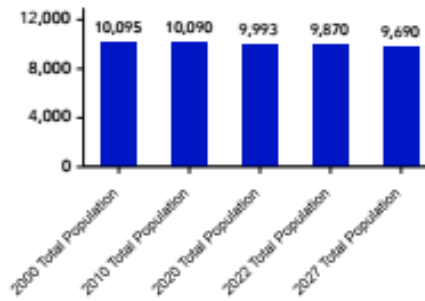
**1,483.7**

2022 Population Density (Pop per Square Mile) (Esri)

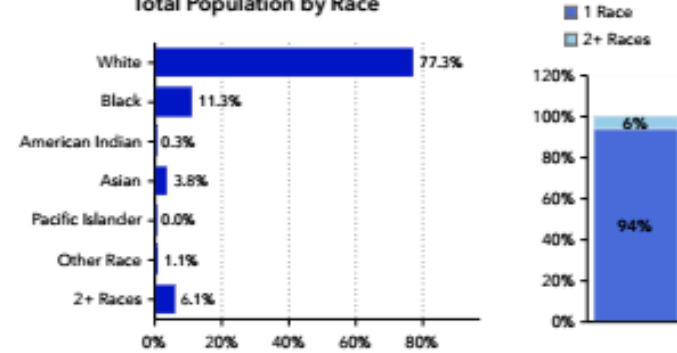
**43.7/100**

2022 Diversity Index (Esri)

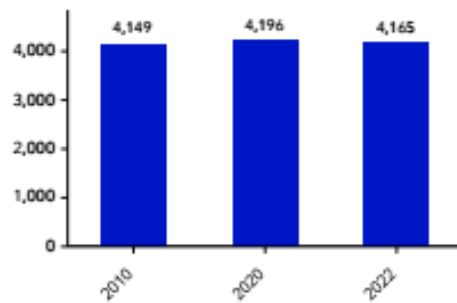
### Population



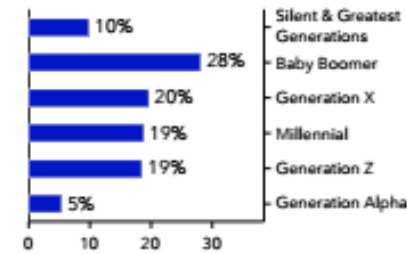
### Total Population by Race



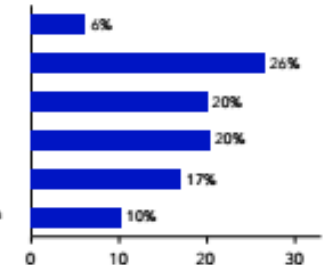
### Total Households



### Population by Generation 2022



### Population by Generation 2027 (forecast)



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census, Esri, ACS, Esri-U.S. BLS, Esri-Data Axle. The vintage of the data is 2020, 2022, 2000, 2010, 2027, 2016-2020.

### Households By Income

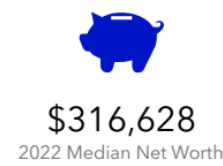
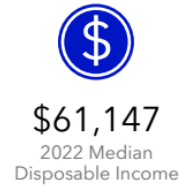
The largest group: \$100,000 - \$149,999 (18.6%)

The smallest group: <\$15,000 (2.9%)

Indicator ▲	Value	Diff
<\$15,000	2.9%	-6.0%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	7.3%	-3.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	7.0%	-2.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	16.8%	+0.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	14.3%	-1.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	13.9%	+3.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	18.6%	+2.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	12.5%	+5.6%
\$200,000+	6.7%	+1.1%

Dark bars represent St. Joseph Township

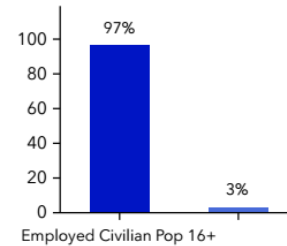
Bars show deviation from Berrien County



### Employment (2022)



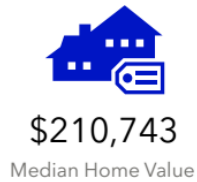
### Labor Force (2022)



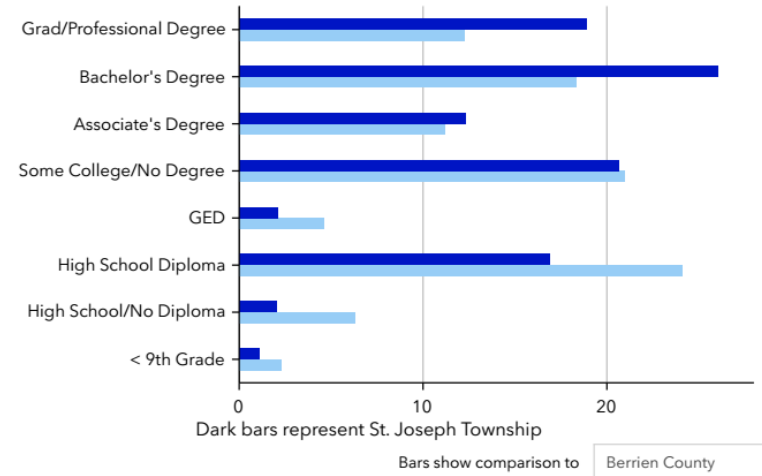
### Business (2022)



### Housing Characteristics



### 2022 Educational Attainment (age 25+)



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census, Esri, ACS, Esri-U.S. BLS, Esri-Data Axle. The vintage of the data is 2020, 2022, 2000, 2010, 2027, 2016-2020.

# CHAPTER 3. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

The goals, objectives, and actions in this chapter were created with citizen and stakeholder input collected throughout the Master Plan process.

The **St. Joseph Charter Township Community Vision** document, completed in December 2015 and included in the appendix of this Master Plan, articulates a future vision for the Township. The emerging guiding statement is as follows:

***“A community of healthy living opportunity connected to nature.”***

*- Guiding Statement of the St. Joseph Charter Township Master Plan*

This statement represents the overarching goal to be realized throughout implementation of the Master Plan.

What does “A community of healthy living opportunity connected to nature” mean? To the participants in the Township visioning effort, it means taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming obstacles. The opportunities and obstacles that currently exist are summarized as:

- ***St. Joseph Charter Township is a community of great beauty, service and convenience.***

Predominantly a bedroom community, the Township is an attractive, stable, and desirable place to live offering a range of services and amenities, and with a location relative to Lake Michigan and featuring two natural waterways in Hickory Creek and the

St. Joseph River, there is a natural beauty to be nurtured and cherished.

However, while some commercial or retail services and amenities are within convenient proximity to residential areas, not all have the same level of access nor is that the intent. It was identified in the community engagement process that not all desire the same level of access or lifestyle.

Opportunities include identifying areas within the Township for increased choices regarding access or connectivity along with appropriate corresponding housing solutions.

- ***It is a community with physical barriers that lacks a strong identity.***

Although defined by its connection to nature, healthy living, and relaxed and family-friendly lifestyle, the Township still lacks a consistent and identifiable environment. I-94, the St. Joseph River, and Hickory Creek represent both physical barriers and assets that, if breached and/or enhanced, will help unify the community and establish a more cohesive identity and environment.

Opportunities include creating or enhancing edges, gateways, and destinations, which celebrate the Township’s unique character and spirit with signage, landscaping, lighting, and architectural features.

- ***The Township is a great place to live that could thrive with stronger social connections.***

Recreational opportunities within the Township are key amenities for residents and visitors. They help overcome barriers that exist within the Township, strengthen social connections, and reinforce the Township’s commitment to “a community of healthy living opportunity connected to nature.”

Effectively, recreational opportunities become identifiers and destinations within different areas and neighborhoods of the Township. Opportunity exists to further enhance and link these recreational assets to residential, commercial, and retail environments. As much as possible, pedestrian-friendly environments should be encouraged.

Considering each proceeding point yields goals which when achieved, will result in taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming obstacles. The goals are in four categories:

- 1. Community and Place***
- 2. Transportation and Connectivity***
- 3. Natural Areas***
- 4. Economic Development***

Each goal has associated with it an objective(s) detailing what is to be accomplished and the action(s) needed to be completed in order to achieve the stated objective.

## COMMUNITY AND PLACE

A key category is to promote and develop the sense of Community and Place in the Township. This would focus on the experience of the Township rather than its structure. This is sometimes dismissed as being solely esoteric. However, there are substantive positive impacts associated with the concept of Community and Place.

Younger people, while not fully rejecting the traditional American dream of a home in the suburbs with good schools and space for their children to play, do want “more”. Essentially, they want increased access to cultural, athletic, dining, and educational venues. Those are factors that directly influence their locational decisions in addition to more traditional factors. This is particularly true for those persons referred to as “Generation X,” especially those at end of the cohort who are in their mid-thirties or early- forties, and some “Millennials” who are in their early thirties or late twenties.

As the Township population ages, the natural migration is for older residents to seek alternative housing with the bulk of the existing housing stock being purchased by younger individuals. This is a population cycle that has repeated itself countless times.

By promoting and developing the sense of Community and Place, St. Joseph Charter Township will maintain and enhance its attractiveness to the next generation of home buyers. This will ensure property values are supported resulting in tax revenues that allow the Township to continue to provide services that current and future residents expect.

The following goals, associated objectives and actions are designed to encourage a sense of Community and Place in St. Joseph Charter Township.

### ***Goal 1: Encourage a variety of housing choices.***

**Objective:** Maintain the core of single-family detached homes which forms the basis of the Township housing stock while encouraging the development other housing types. Referred to as the Missing Middle, these represent a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with existing single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable living. This will broaden the mix of housing stock and enhance the attractiveness of the Township to future home buyers.

**Action 1.1:** Review Zoning Ordinance and Map to ensure Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Missing Middle housing accomplish the goals of the Master Plan for mixed use and expanding housing options.

**Action 1.2:** Continue to review the Zoning Ordinance to determine if any existing regulations inhibit implementation of the Master Plan and amend as necessary.

**Action 1.3:** Promote housing types often referred to as Missing Middle Housing in advantageous locations within the Township and in particular to improve transitions between residential, commercial, and other development areas.

**Action 1.4:** Maintain and rehabilitate the existing housing stock. Increase coordination with zoning, code enforcement, township board, etc. Review and amend ordinances, enhance code enforcement efforts, adopt design guidelines for additions and renovations, and provide educational opportunities.

### ***Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the identity of the Township.***

**Objective:** Promote the character of the Township in a consistent and coherent manner. When entering or within the Township, a person should know they are in St. Joseph Charter Township.

**Action 2.1:** Continue to enhance gateways to the Township at I-94, Niles Road, Napier Avenue, Hilltop Road, and Cleveland Avenue which may include unique signage, landscape, and architectural features.

**Action 2.2:** Provide parks, trails, activities and destinations unique to the Township for residents and visitors.

**Action 2.3:** Inventory and document the unique elements of each neighborhood and ensure Zoning Ordinance requirements are appropriate to the desired characteristics.

**Action 2.4:** Coordinate transportation and land use planning to ensure road improvements are done in a strategic way benefiting both users of the thoroughfare and adjacent development.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Transportation should provide both internal and external connections and should not be limited solely to motorized transportation.

**Goal 1: Provide safe, efficient, and connected transportation that serves multiple modes.**

**Objective:** Improve the network of trails, sidewalks, and streets that link Township neighborhoods, parks, and commercial areas.

**Objective:** Improve east and west internal mobility within the Township.

**Action 1.1:** Develop an annual Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize projects and funding.

**Action 1.2:** Improve intersections to promote walkability, bike ability, and aesthetics.

**Action 1.3:** Coordinate with Berrien County Public Transportation and develop a bus rapid transit link along the Hollywood Road Corridor and the Niles Road Corridor.

**Action 1.4:** Establish a Park-and-Ride at I-94.

Right: Walgreens Pharmacy located near the corner of Hilltop Road and Niles Road.

Far Right: Knauf Park Entry Sign along Vineland Road.

**Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the identity of the Township.**

**Objective:** Provide increased opportunities to extend the walkability between the Township and other areas.

**Action 2.1:** Prioritize and implement projects identified in the Non-Motorized Infrastructure Map and continue to work with other agencies and local units of government to link non-motorized infrastructure.

**Action 2.2:** Complete, fund, and implement a wayfinding and signage plan.

**Action 2.3:** Establish and/or improve trail heads throughout the Township.

**Action 2.4:** Implement the Sidewalk Asset Management Plan - prioritize and implement targeted sidewalk improvements, i.e., Maiden Lane, Hilltop Road, etc.

**Action 2.5:** Construct a pedestrian and/or multi-modal bridge over the St. Joseph River.



**Action 2.6:** Incorporate requirements for pedestrian, bicycle, and other low-speed vehicle pathways in neighborhoods and developments.

## NATURAL AREAS

Key features in the Township such as Hickory Creek and the St. Joseph River represent an opportunity to achieve “a community of healthy living opportunity connected to nature.”

**Goal 1: Maintain, expand, and protect public access and connectivity to the natural features of the Township.**

**Objective:** Increase awareness, appreciation, and protection of natural features by improving access and providing additional activities that encourage use and where appropriate a healthy lifestyle through physical activities.

**Action 1.1:** Continue to develop a Hickory Creek land and water trail with corresponding trail heads, kayak launches, and crossings that inter-connect with others such as the Village of Stevensville, City of St. Joseph, and Lincoln Township.



**Action 1.2:** Consider conducting a Trail Feasibility Study to determine existing conditions, access and connections, type of trails, property acquisition and/or easement, community engagement and education, cost estimation, and inter-agency coordination.

**Action 1.3:** Continue to improve wayfinding and access to existing park and recreational areas.

**Action 1.4:** Launch an initiative to ensure that residents live within the desired 20-minute walk to recreation and open space areas.

**Action 1.5:** Consider amending the Zoning Map to avoid ambiguity of public versus private property regarding recreation, open space, and conservation areas.

**Action 1.6:** Promote green infrastructure and storm water management in conjunction with the Berrien County Master Plan and Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While the Township is nearing build-out, there are some limited sites available for development. In addition, there is the potential to in-fill in existing areas.

**Goal 1:** *Provide additional access to goods and services at key locations within the Township.*

**Objective:** Make opportunities available for residents to have access within a 20-minute walkable distance.

**Action 1.1:** Identify locations for additional commercial/retail, office, and mixed-use development. Ensure alignment with the Township Zoning Ordinance.

**Action 1.2:** Explore opportunities to provide wireless internet at public and semi-public locations and community-wide expanded internet capabilities or services.

**Goal 2:** *Enhance the development of the Niles Road corridor.*

**Objective:** Build upon the trend of a variety of land uses along the Niles Road corridor.

**Action 2.1:** Identify locations for additional commercial/retail, office, and Mixed-Use development.

**Action 2.2:** Examine the efficacy of establishing a Niles Road Corridor Improvement Association.

**Action 2.3:** Acquire further education and understanding of place-based design and the advantages of form-based codes or similar design guidelines.

**Goal 3:** *Continue to attract additional users to the industrial sites in the Township.*

**Objective:** Provide additional employment opportunities and enhance the overall tax base of the community.

**Action 3.1:** Collaborate with others to develop a strategic marketing plan to promote the existing industrial sites.

**Goal 4:** *Strengthen intergovernmental and interagency ties to enhance development.*

**Objective:** Work cooperatively with surrounding communities to improve success at retaining and attracting new investment opportunities.

**Action 4.1:** Explore opportunities and develop procedures to further influence community-wide planning and development. Examples may include current efforts such as the Twin City Harbor Study, TwinCATS Long Range Plan, Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and yet to be identified future efforts.

# CHAPTER 4. FUTURE LAND USE

*The characteristics of the land in St. Joseph Charter Township and the ways people use the land change over time. Vacant or underutilized land develops and uses on specific properties shift as economic, social, environmental, and cultural trends change. Changes in zoning regulation, infrastructure, and transportation can also lead to changes in land use patterns over time. In order to make sound decisions regarding future land use, it is important to have an understanding of existing land uses and the relationships between them.*

*The Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map describe a generalized framework intended to guide land use and policy decisions within the Township over the next 20 years. The Future Land Use Map in this chapter shows general locations for the primary land uses described in this chapter. It is important to note that it is not intended to be used as a tool for identifying land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis, but rather to identify appropriate areas or districts that can accommodate certain land uses within the Township.*

## **Future Land Use Areas:**

- *Low/Medium Density Residential*
- *High Density Residential*
- *Commercial*
- *Mixed Use*
- *Industrial/ Business Park*
- *Community Facilities*
- *Park/Recreation*

## **Low/Medium Density Residential**

Single-family dwellings comprise the majority of the Township’s residential areas and should continue to do so. Low/Medium Density Residential areas provide for freestanding dwellings or homes on a single residential lot, organized into neighborhoods or subdivisions. Detached single-family homes in St. Joseph Charter Township include a variety of housing styles, sizes, and price points, and should be largely owner-occupied. Low/Medium Density Residential neighborhoods should be well- served by parks, schools, and Township infrastructure and services.

- Corresponding Zoning District: R-1, R-2



Right: View of the Hilltop Road and Cleveland Road intersection.

### **High Density Residential**

High Density Residential consists of single, two-family, and multi-family dwellings on smaller lots. Two-family or attached residential units are single-family homes that share a common wall such as duplexes, townhomes, and rowhomes. Single-family attached uses assist in diversifying the Township's housing stock, providing opportunities for first time homebuyers and empty nesters. High Density Residential areas identified in the Future Land Use Map consist primarily of existing areas scattered throughout the community. However, the Township should remain flexible in considering High Density Residential development in appropriate transition areas near commercial uses or main corridors.

- Corresponding Zoning District: R-3, R-4

### **Commercial**

Commercial uses provide for the general retail and service needs of St. Joseph Charter Township residents as well as the needs of visitors and those passing through the community. Commercial areas include a range of uses such as restaurants, retail shops, entertainment venues, offices, grocery stores, service uses, and more. Many of the commercial areas within the Township are along main corridors adjacent to residential properties and should be developed accordingly by accommodating auto-oriented yet pedestrian-friendly development with some opportunities for residential above ground floor retail.

- Corresponding Zoning District: B-1, B-2

### **Mixed-Use**

Mixed-Use areas provide a blend of residential, commercial and institutional uses and public spaces/amenities within a single area. There should be an emphasis on providing Missing-Middle housing including multi-family units along with some low traffic generating commercial uses. For waterfront properties, this would include marinas, boat slips and other compatible uses in a waterfront setting. This category promotes a compact, pedestrian and public transit friendly urban form that enables people to live, work, and play within close proximity. Mixed-Use areas are located along busier corridors, or large tracts of land, and along the St. Joseph River.

- Corresponding Zoning District: There is no corresponding zoning district. See Appendix C for examples of Mixed-Use developments.

Right: View of the Interstate 94 off-ramp and Niles Avenue





# Zoning Map

St. Joseph Charter Township, Berrien County, MI

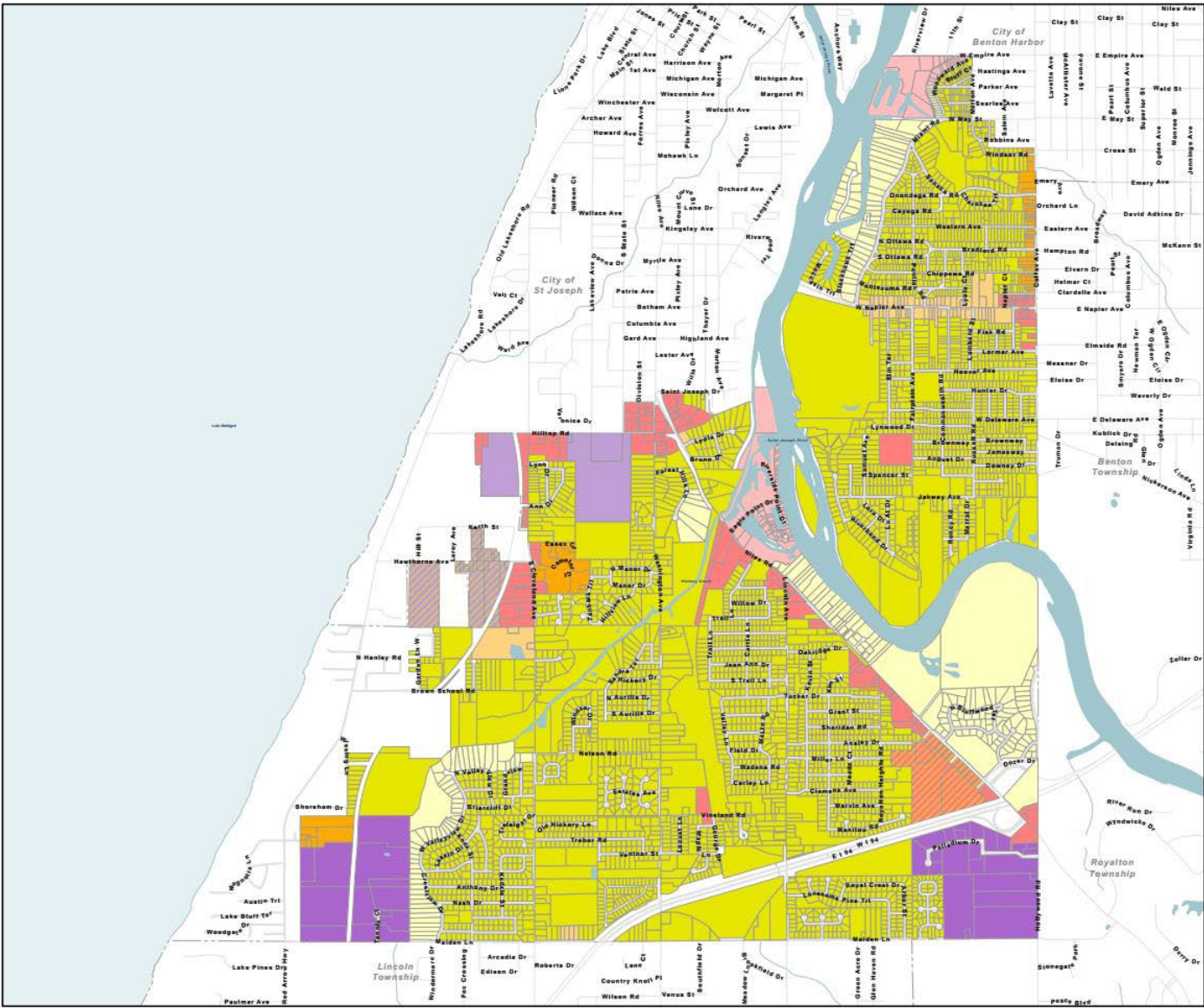
October 22, 2020

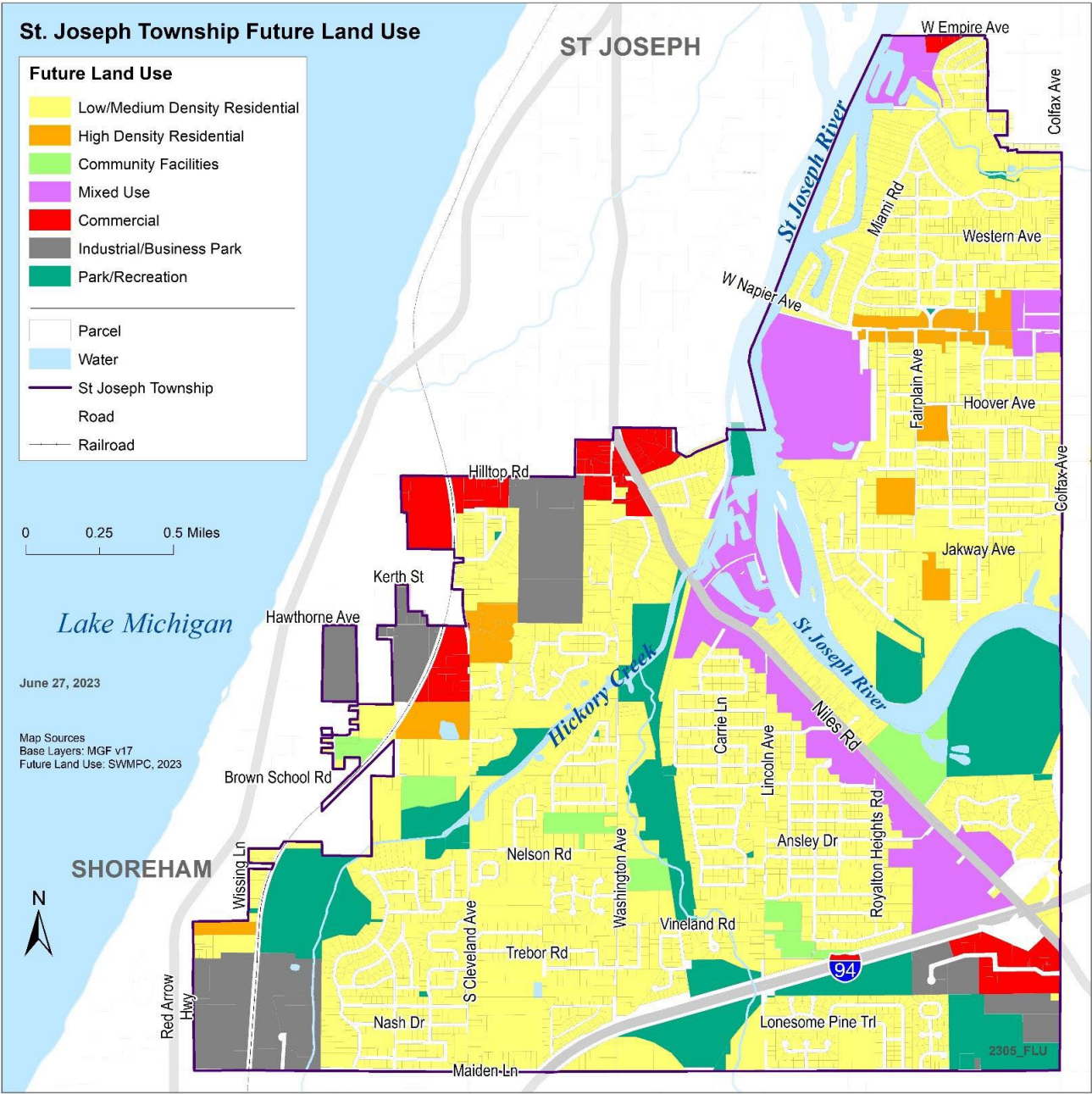
**LEGEND**

- R-1 Single Family - Low Density Residential
- R-2 Single Family - Medium Density Residential
- R-3 Mixed Density Residential
- R-4 Multiple Family Residential
- B-1 Limited Business
- B-2 General Business
- I-1 Limited Industrial
- I-2 General Industrial
- I-1 - R-2 Residential Industrial Overlay
- R-2 - B-2 Residential Business Overlay
- Bodies of Water



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Berrien County 2020, McKenna 2020.





### **Industrial/Business Park**

Industrial and Business Park areas should consist of a range of business uses, including service and consumer-oriented business and light manufacturing. The uses in these areas provide many employment opportunities and generally require large lots, buildings, parking lots, loading areas, and transportation to and from the site. These areas are concentrated in the northwest, southwest, and southeast portions of the Township currently zoned Limited and General Industrial.

- Corresponding Zoning District: I-1, I-2

### **Community Facilities**

This category includes public and semi-public uses such as institutions and community facilities that contribute to the Township’s overall quality of life. This includes both a number of public facilities such as schools, fire stations, and the Township Hall, as well as private facilities such as religious institutions. Throughout the Township, these uses provide necessary community services and amenities for residents and visitors.

- Corresponding Zoning District: None, however, they are permitted land uses.

### **Park/Recreation**

This category includes parks, open spaces, conservation areas, and important natural features such as the river, creek area, wooded areas, and wetlands. Recreation and open space are a valued asset in the community and can be either public or private. It is recommended that the Township continue to work with appropriate agencies and property owners to ensure the community remains well served by these areas. Over time, it is envisioned these recreation and open space areas allow for a series of connected spaces throughout the community, linking key recreational amenities to residences and services.

- Corresponding Zoning District: None, however, they are permitted land uses.

### **Next Steps**

Once these areas or districts have been established by the community, the next step is to begin implementing the changes to land use described in this chapter. As such, the Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map should serve as the basis for development review as well as revisions and amendments to the Township’s Zoning Regulations.



Left: View of Nil Avenue and Hilltop Road Intersection

# CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION

*The St. Joseph Charter Township Master Plan provides guidance and recommendations for actions the Township should undertake in the coming years. A master plan is only useful as long as it is implemented and consulted when making decisions. For the vision to be realized, the Township must be proactive and garner the support and participation of local leaders, other public agencies, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents alike.*

*The Implementation Matrix builds on Chapter 3 Goals, Objectives, and Actions with a more detailed description of strategies the Township can use to initiate and undertake key recommendations included in the Master Plan. The actions and strategies identified in this chapter represent the “next steps” to be taken in continuing the process of community planning and investment.*

## ***Use The Plan on a Regular Basis***

The Master Plan should become the Township’s official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement. Once adopted, it is essential the Plan be used on a regular and day-to-day basis by Township staff, boards, commissions, and departments to review and evaluate proposals for improvement and development.

To provide further education about the Plan, the Township should:

- Make copies of the Plan available online and provide hard copies at the Township Hall for review or purchase.
- Provide a Master Plan orientation for newly elected or appointed officials and Township staff.
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals.
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from and as a result of the Master Plan.

## ***Implementation Matrix***

Because resources are limited, it is helpful to identify the relative priority of each project with the understanding that the Master Plan includes some ambitious projects and initiatives. Actions are listed with a “priority number” as follows:

- **Priority 1** actions are those that should be given immediate and concentrated effort. Any preliminary steps that must be taken to implement the action (such as seeking funding, changes in local ordinances, etc.) should also occur as required. Projects having a longer time frame should be revisited on an as-needed basis and be incorporated into other applicable long-term planning programs, such as a capital improvements plan or recreation plan.
- **Priority 2** actions are those that are important to implement the Plan, but either depend on commencement and completion of Priority 1 actions, or do not have the same immediacy.
- **Priority 3** actions are not as urgent and can be delayed for a longer period of time. These projects are more susceptible to budgetary constraints.

In addition to a time frame, each action includes potential funding source(s) along with the entities with capacity or responsibility for implementation.

<b>COMMUNITY AND PLACE</b>	<b>Priority/ Status</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
<b>Goal 1: Encourage a variety of housing choices</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Maintain the core of single-family detached homes which form the basis of the Township housing stock while encouraging the development of some other housing types.				
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Review Zoning Ordinance and Map to ensure PUDs and missing middle housing accomplish the goals of the master plan for mixed use and expanding housing options.	1	0-2 Years	Planning Commission, Township Board, Ordinance Dept.	Township
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Continue to review the Zoning Ordinance to determine if any existing regulations inhibit implementation of the Master Plan and amend as necessary.	1	0-2 Years	Planning Commission, Township Board, Ordinance Dept.	Township
<i>Action 1.3:</i> Continue to promote housing types often referred to as Missing Middle Housing in advantageous locations within the Township and in particular to improve transitions between residential, commercial, and other development areas.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township Private
<i>Action 1.4:</i> Maintain and rehabilitate the existing housing stock. Increase coordination with zoning, code enforcement, township board, etc. Review and amend ordinances, enhance code enforcement efforts, adopt design guidelines for additions and renovations, and provide educational opportunities.	1	Ongoing	Planning Commission, Ordinance Dept., Property Owners	Township Private
<b>Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the identity of the Township</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Promote the character of the Township in a consistent, coherent manner. When entering or within the Township, a person should know that they are in St. Joseph Charter Township.				
<i>Action 2.1:</i> Continue to enhance gateways to the Township at I-94, Niles Road, Napier Avenue, Hilltop Road, and Cleveland Avenue which may include unique signage, landscaping, and architectural features.	1	Ongoing	Township	Township
<i>Action 2.2:</i> Provide parks, trails, activities and destinations unique to the Township for residents and visitors.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township Private Grants
<i>Action 2.3:</i> Inventory and document the unique elements of each neighborhood and ensure Zoning Ordinance requirements are appropriate to the desired characteristics.	3	3-5 Years	Township, Others	Public
<i>Action 2.4:</i> Coordinate transportation and land use planning to ensure road improvements are done in a strategic way benefiting both users of the thoroughfare and adjacent development.	1	Ongoing	Township, County, State	Township Grants

<b>TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY</b>	<b>Priority/ Status</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
<b>Goal 1: Provide safe, efficient, and connected transportation that serves multiple modes.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Improve the network of trails, sidewalks, and streets that link Township neighborhoods, parks, and commercial areas.				
<i>Objective:</i> Improve east and west internal mobility with the Township.				
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Develop annual Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize projects and funding.	1	Ongoing	Township	Township
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Improve intersections to promote walkability, bikeability, and aesthetics.	2	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township Private, Grants
<i>Action 1.3:</i> Coordinate with Berrien County Public Transportation and develop a bus rapid transit link along the Hollywood Road Corridor and the Niles Road Corridor.	2	2-3 years	Township Others	Township Grants
<i>Action 1.4:</i> Establish a Park-and-Ride at I-94 and Niles Road.	3	+5 Years	Township, Others	County, State & Grants
<b>Goal 2: Preserve and enhance the identity of the Township.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Provide increased opportunities to extend the walkability and connectivity between the Township and other areas.				
<i>Action 2.1:</i> Prioritize and implement projects identified in the non-motorized Infrastructure Map and continue to work with other agencies and local units of government to link non-motorized infrastructure.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.2:</i> Complete, fund, and implement a wayfinding and signage plan.	2	3-5 Years	Township	Township, Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.3:</i> Establish and/or improve trail heads throughout the Township.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township Grants
<i>Action 2.4:</i> Implement the Sidewalk Asset Management Plan - prioritize and implement targeted sidewalk improvements, i.e. Maiden Lane, Napier Avenue, Hilltop Road, etc.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.5:</i> Construct a pedestrian and/ or multi-modal bridge over the St. Joseph River.	3	+5 Years	Township, Others	Township Grants
<i>Action 2.6:</i> Incorporate requirements for pedestrian, bicycle, and other low-speed vehicle pathways in neighborhoods and developments.	1	2-3 Years	Township	Township

<b>NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION</b>	<b>Priority /Status</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
<b>Goal 1: Maintain, expand, and protect public access and connectivity to the natural features of the Township.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Increase awareness, appreciation, and protection of natural features.				
<i>Objective:</i> Encourage a healthy lifestyle through greater access, use, and associated amenities.				
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Continue to develop a Hickory Creek land and water Trail with corresponding trail heads/kayak launches and crossings that inter-connect with others such as the Village of Stevensville, City of St. Joseph, and Lincoln Township.	1	3-5 Years	Township, Others	Township Grants
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Consider conducting a Trail Feasibility Study to determine existing conditions, access and connections, type of trails, property acquisition and or easements, community engagement and education, cost estimation, and inter-agency coordination.	1	0-2 Years	Township, Parks	Township, Grants
<i>Action 1.3:</i> Continue to improve wayfinding and access to existing park and recreational areas.	1	3-5 Years	Township, Others	Township
<i>Action 1.4:</i> Launch an initiative to ensure that residents live within the desired 20-minute walk to recreation and open space areas.	3	3-5 Years	Township	Township Private, Grants
<i>Action 1.5:</i> Consider amending the Zoning Map to avoid ambiguity of public versus private property regarding recreation, open space, and conservation areas.	1	0-2 Years	Township	Township
<i>Action 1.6:</i> Update the Zoning Ordinance to encourage best practices in green infrastructure and storm water management (reference the Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan).	1	Ongoing	Township, County, Others	Township Private, Grants

<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>Priority/ Status</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
<b>Goal 1: Provide additional access to goods and services at key locations within the Township.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Make opportunities available for residents to have access within a 20-minute walkable distance.				
<i>Action 1.1:</i> Identify locations for additional commercial, retail, office, and mixed-use development. Ensure alignment with the Zoning Ordinance.	1	Ongoing	Township	Township
<i>Action 1.2:</i> Explore opportunities to provide wireless internet at public and semi-public locations and community-wide expanded internet capabilities or services.	2	3-5 Years	Township, Others	Township Private, Grants
<b>Goal 2: Enhance the development and character of the Niles Road Corridor and other significant transportation corridors.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Build upon the trend of a variety of land uses along main thoroughfares				
<i>Action 2.1:</i> Identify locations for additional residential, commercial, office, and mixed-use development.	1	Ongoing	Township	Township Private, Grants
<i>Action 2.2:</i> Examine the efficacy of establishing a Corridor Improvement Authority for Niles Road, Napier Avenue and Hollywood Road.	2	3-5 Years	Township, County	Township
<i>Action 2.3:</i> Acquire further education and understanding of place-based design and the advantages of form-based codes or similar design guidelines.	2	3-5 Years	Planning Commission	Township
<b>Goal 3: Continue to attract additional users to the industrial and business park sites.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Provide additional employment opportunities and enhance the overall tax base of the community.				
<i>Action 3.1:</i> Update allowed uses in industrial areas to ensure flexibility.	1	0-2 Years	Township, Others	Township Private
<i>Action 3.2:</i> Follow best practices of the Michigan Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) program.	1	Ongoing	Township, County, State	Township
<b>Goal 4: Strengthen intergovernmental and interagency ties to enhance economic development.</b>				
<i>Objective:</i> Work cooperatively with surrounding communities to improve success at retaining and attracting residents and investment opportunities.				
<i>Action 4.1:</i> Explore opportunities and develop procedures to further influence community-wide planning and development. Examples may include current efforts such as the Twin Cities Harbor Study, TwinCATS Long Range Plan, Strategic Leadership Council, Southwest Michigan Non- Motorized Transportation Plan, Berrien County Trails Plan, and yet to be identified future efforts.	1	Ongoing	Township, Others	Township



## **Review of Development Regulations**

A zoning ordinance establishes the types of uses allowed on specific properties and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted. Zoning is one of the most powerful tools in implementing planning policy. Adoption of the new Master Plan should be followed by a review and update to the Zoning Ordinance, subdivision regulations, and various related codes, ordinances, and other development controls. Specific recommendations of the Master Plan that development regulations can address include:

- Managed growth in specific areas of the Township.
- The appropriate scale, character, and configuration of development.
- Enhancements to sidewalks, landscaping, and screening as redevelopment and reinvestment occurs in commercial areas.
- Protect and enhance recreation areas and natural features.
- Improving the Township's image as a development-friendly community through a simple and predictable review and permitting process.

## **Potential Funding Sources**

The following is a list of possible funding sources the Township could pursue to fund implementation of the Master Plan. It is not a complete list and while information was deemed accurate at the time, the long-term availability of these funding sources cannot be guaranteed. As needed, the Township should revise, update, and expand this list of potential funding sources. And while it is likely that many projects and improvements could be implemented through typical administrative or policy decisions and funded through conventional municipal programs, others may require special technical and/or financial assistance.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** TIF funds utilize future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for improvements and incentivize further reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is reinvested in the area. Funds can typically be used for infrastructure, public improvements, land acquisition, and in offsetting the costs of development. The typical life of a TIF district in the State of Michigan is 10 Years and it can be extended if approved by the county and state.

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) on behalf of the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF), administers the CDBG program. CDBG is a federal grant program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Funds can be used by municipalities to help private businesses locate or expand in their community. They can also be used for infrastructure and enhance sense of place in low- and moderate-income communities. CDBG requires matching funds by the municipality or benefiting business.

**Brownfield Tax Incentive:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers the Brownfield Tax Incentive to assist clean-up of former industrial or commercial areas that were abandoned due to environmental contamination concerns.

## **Recreation and Open Space Funding**

**Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF):** Grants are available for both acquisition and development projects. \$15,000 - \$300,000 can be available for development projects such as playgrounds, nature interpretive areas, park roads and paths, and waterfront improvements. The required local match varies, and grants are scored competitively across the State. There is an April application deadline, and grants are issued spring of the following year.

### **Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF):**

\$30,000 - \$100,000 available for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50% local match. There is an April application deadline and award recommendations are submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in November.

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Recreation Passport Grant:** \$30,000 - \$100,000 available for development projects only. 25% local match required. April application deadline, grants issued at the beginning of the year. (This type of grant is a reimbursement for project expenses.)

## **Transportation Related Funding**

**MDOT - Michigan Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program:** 40% local match recommended, 20% required projects such as multi-use paths, streetscapes, historic preservation, and other safe alternative transportation options. Applications accepted year-round.

**MDOT - Transportation Economic Development Fund:** 20% local match required. Funds available to state, county, and city road agencies for highway needs relating to a variety of economic development issues. Applications accepted year-round.

**MDOT – Urban Funds:** 20% match required. Must get on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

**MDOT- CMAQ Funds:** 20% match required. Provides funding to state departments of transportation (DOTs), local governments, and transit agencies for projects and programs that help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act by reducing mobile source emissions and regional congestion on transportation networks.

## **Loan Infrastructure Opportunities**

**USDA - United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development**

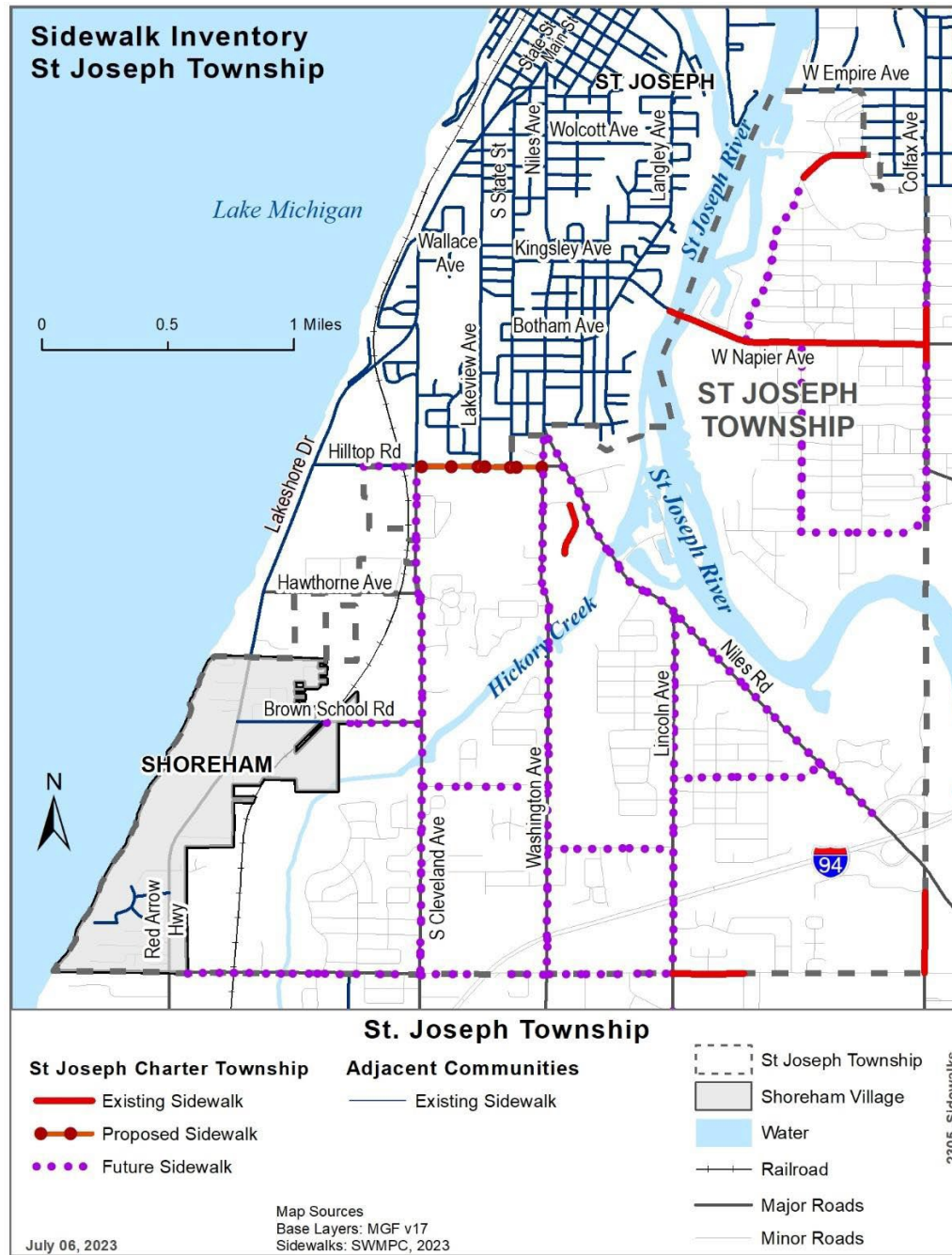
**SRF/ DWR/ USDA: (State Revolving Fund/ Drinking Water Revolving Fund/ United States Department of Agriculture)** Funding available for water and sewer projects. (State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, and US Department of Agriculture respectively)

# APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

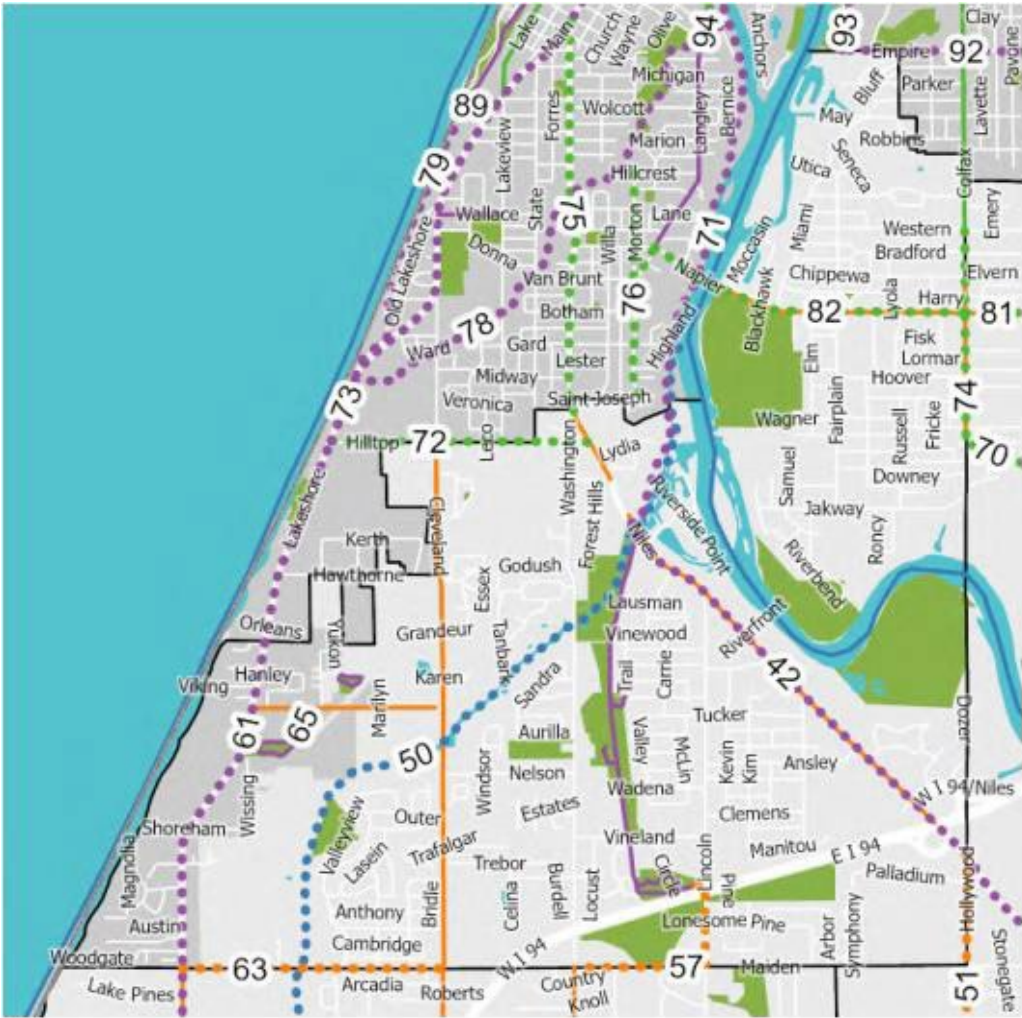
- Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, An ITE Recommended Practice by Institute of Transportation Engineers ITE, 2010
- Form-Based Codes in 7 Steps: The Michigan Guide to Livability by Leslie Kettren et al CNU Michigan, 2010
- New Urbanism: Best Practices Guide, Fourth Edition by Robert Steuteville, Philip Langdon and Special Contributors, New Urban News Publications, 2009
- Sprawl Repair Manual by Galina Tachieva et al Island Press, 2010
- Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool A Placemaking Guidebook by Mark A. Wyckoff et al. Land Institute and the Planning & Zoning Center, Michigan State University, 2015
- Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan: A Design Guide for Implementors and Reviewers by Southeast Michigan Council of Governments SEMCOG, 2008

# APPENDIX B: MAPS

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**Berrien County Trails Master Plan  
Map for St. Joseph Township**



Segment #	Name	Status	Type	Miles in Jurisdiction	Priority	Average PASER in Jurisdiction
42	Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail Extension	Desired	Shared Use Path	1.82	Very High	5.00
50	Hickory Creek Water Trail	Planned	Water Trail	2.28	High	N/A
51	Hollywood Wide Shoulder A	In Progress	Wide Shoulder	0.42	Very High	5.00
57	Washington Wide Shoulder	Desired	Wide Shoulder	0.84	Very High	4.00
63	Lakeshore Alternative Connection	Desired	Wide Shoulder	1.00	High	4.83
71	Riverfront Trail	Planned	Shared Use Path	0.48	Very High	N/A
72	Hilltop Bike Lane	Planned	Bike Lane	0.21	Very High	6.00
74	Colfax Bike Lane B	Desired	Bike Lane	0.79	Very High	3.00
82	Napier Bike Lane B	Desired	Bike Lane	1.21	Very High	7.00

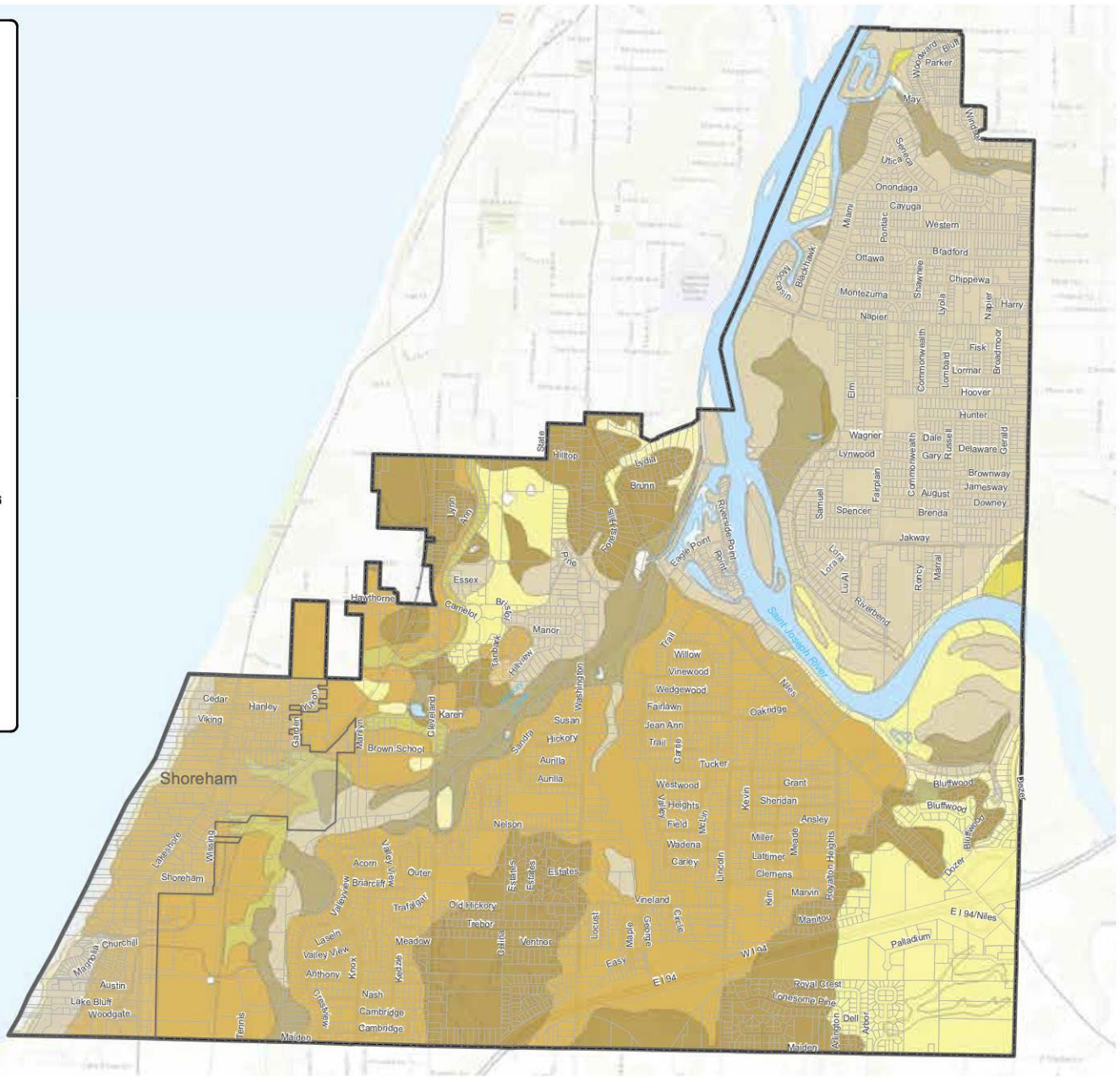
**LEGEND**

**SOIL TYPES**

- SANDY GRAVEL LOAM
- AQUENTS AND HISTOSOLS
- SANDY SILTY LOAM
- SILTY LOAM SOILS
- MUCKS
- LOAM
- FINE SAND
- SAND, PRIMARILY SANDY SOILS
- SANDY CLAYEY LOAM
- UDIPSAMMERTS AND UDORTHTENTS
- PARCELS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE OF SHOREHAM
- ROADS
- RAILROAD

## Soils Map

Lake Michigan



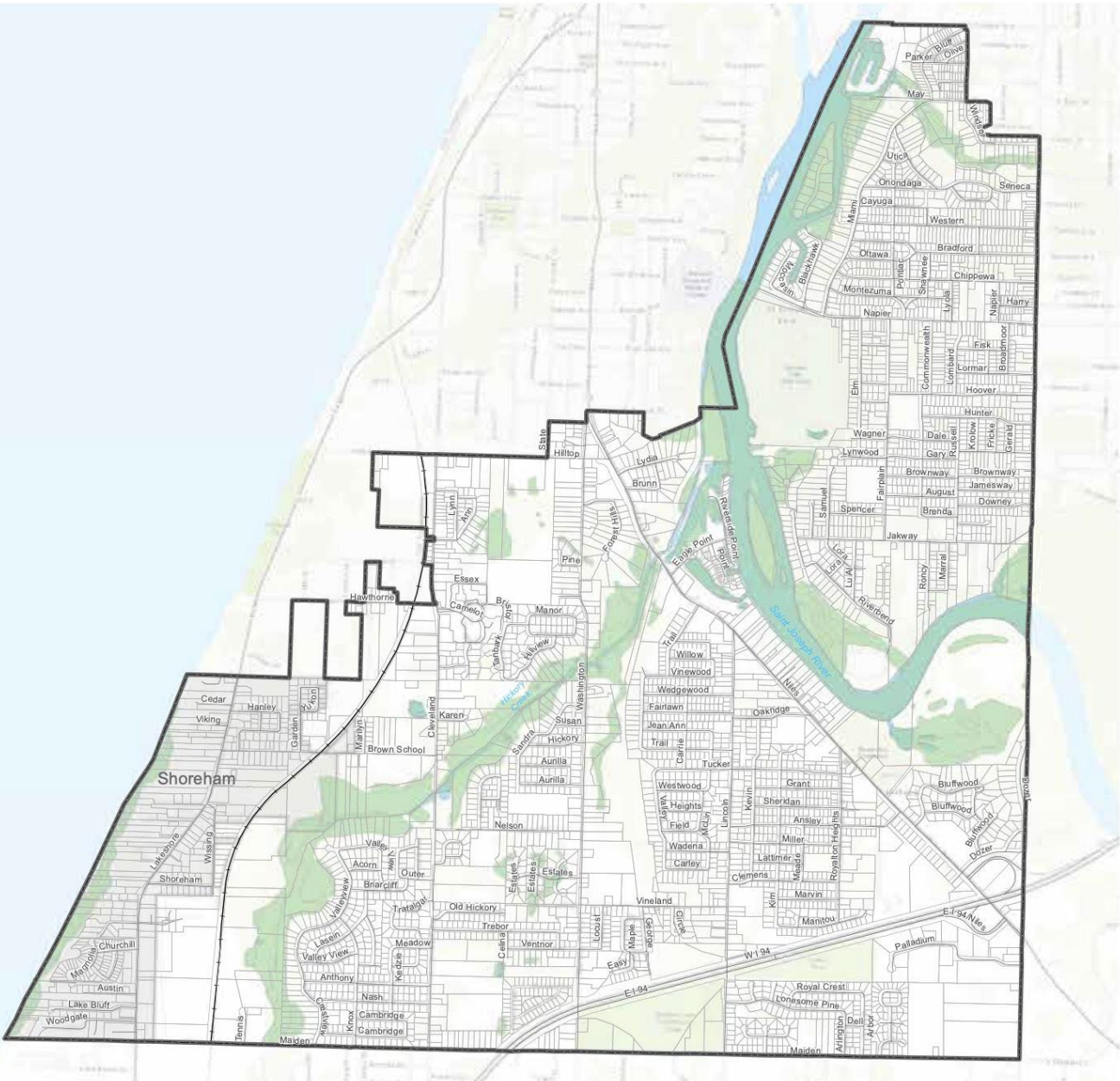
**DATA SOURCES:**  
 USA SOIL TYPES- ESRI  
 BERRIEN COUNTY GIS  
 STATE OF MICHIGAN GEOGRAPHIC DATA LIBRARY

**LEGEND**

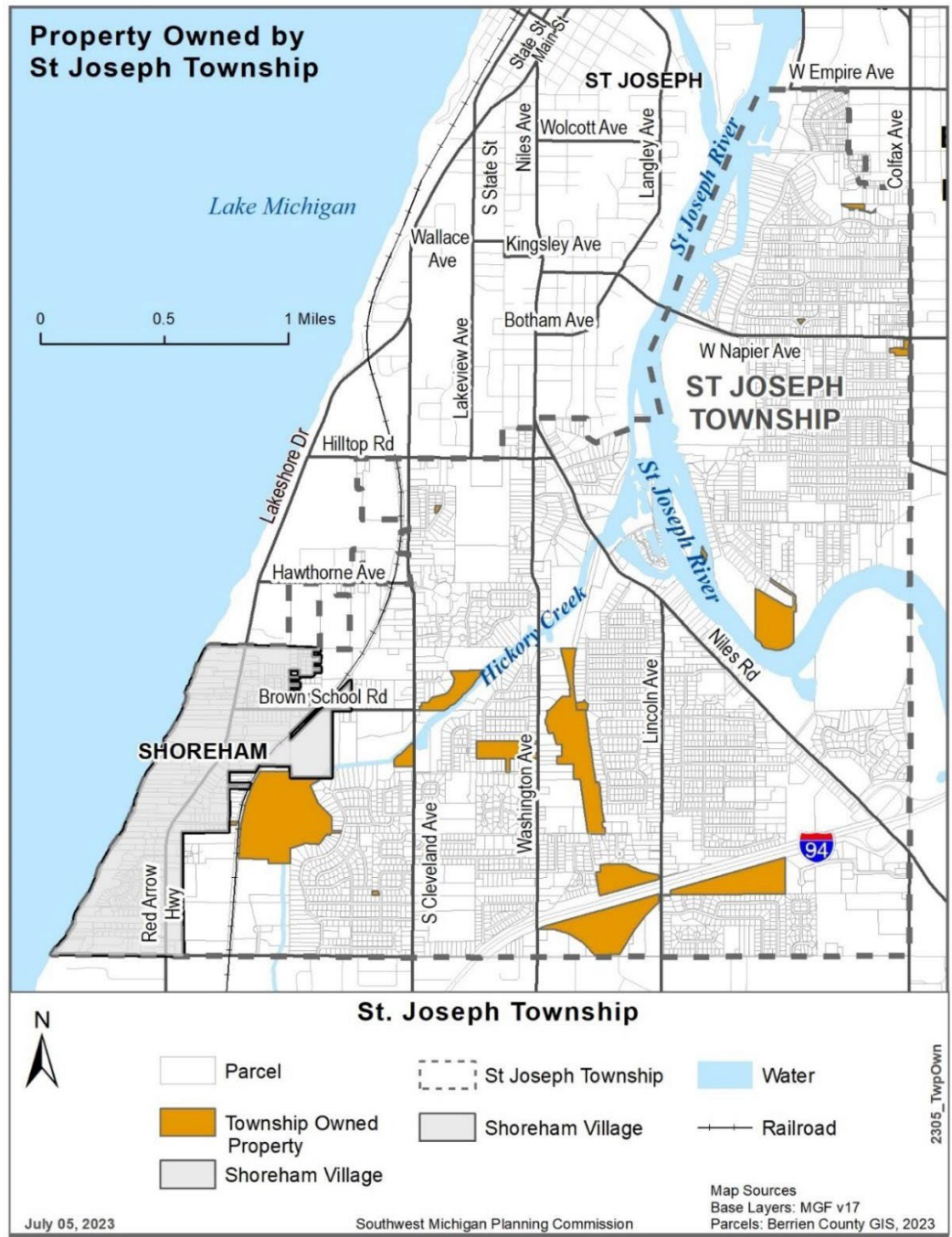
- WETLANDS
- PARCELS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE OF SHOREHAM
- ROADS
- RAILROAD

# Wetlands Map

Lake Michigan



**DATA SOURCES:**  
 BERRIEN COUNTY GIS  
 STATE OF MICHIGAN GEOGRAPHIC DATA LIBRARY

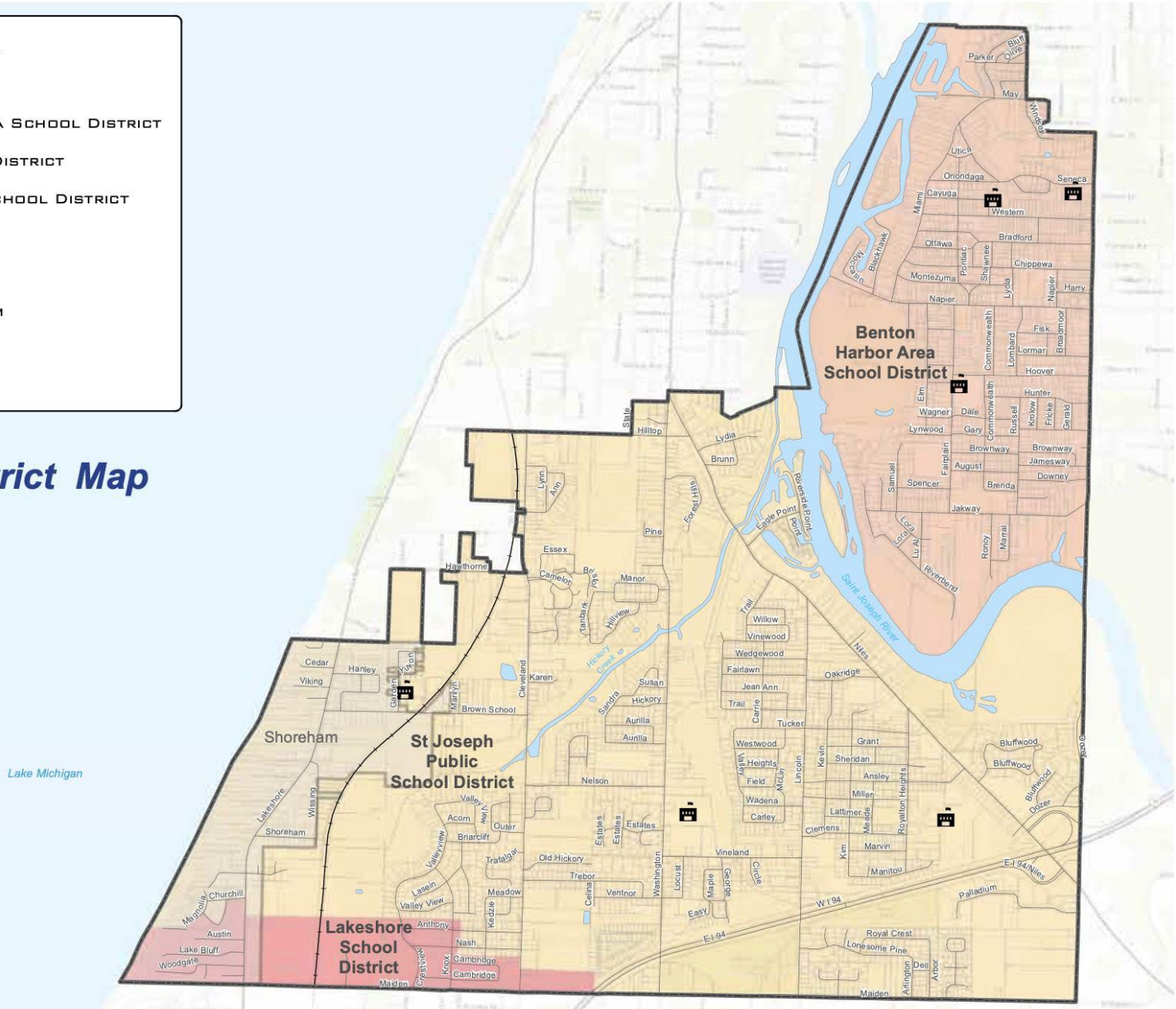




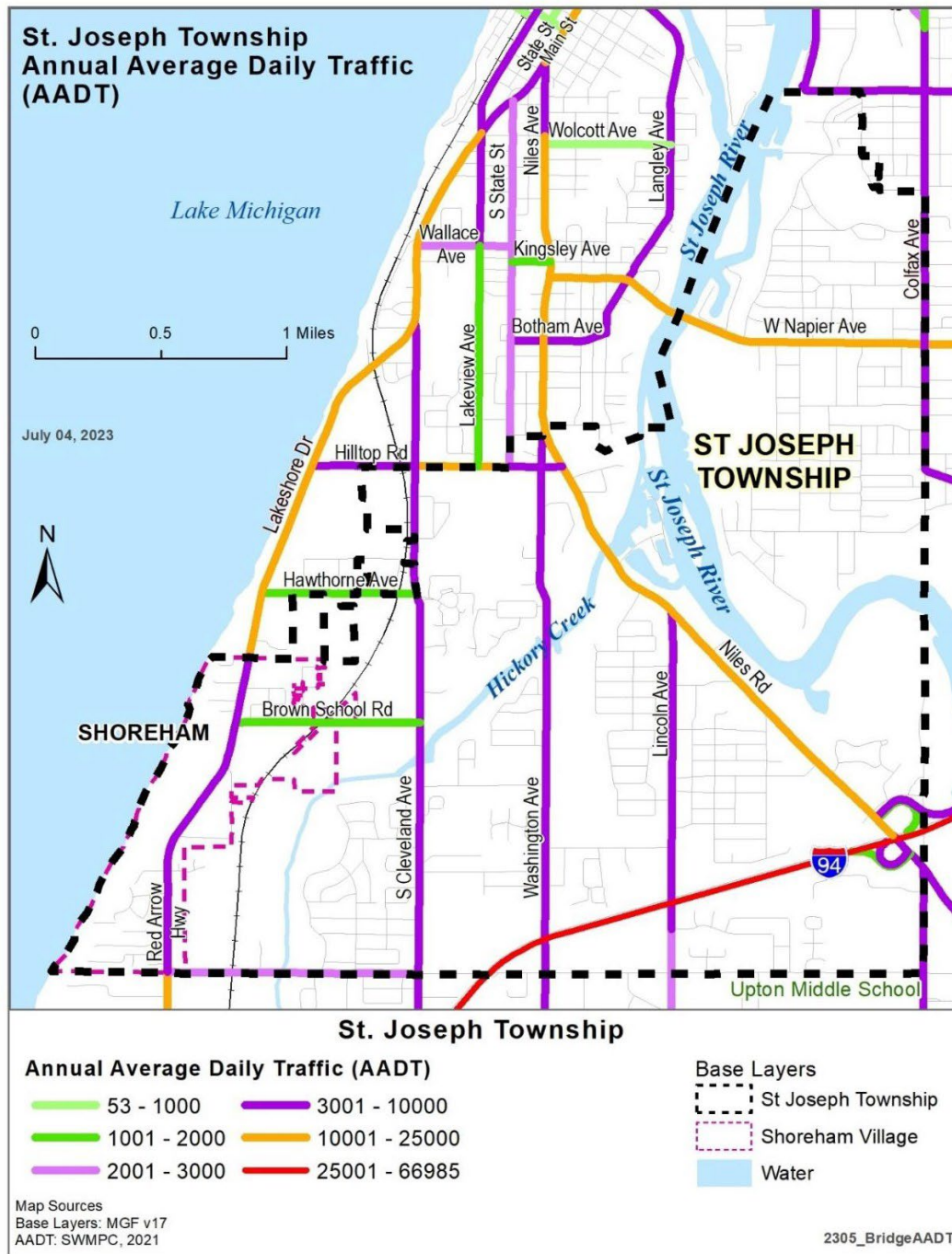
**LEGEND**

-  SCHOOL
-  BENTON HARBOR AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
-  LAKESHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT
-  ST JOSEPH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
-  PARCELS
-  TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
-  VILLAGE OF SHOREHAM
-  ROADS
-  RAILROAD

**School District Map**

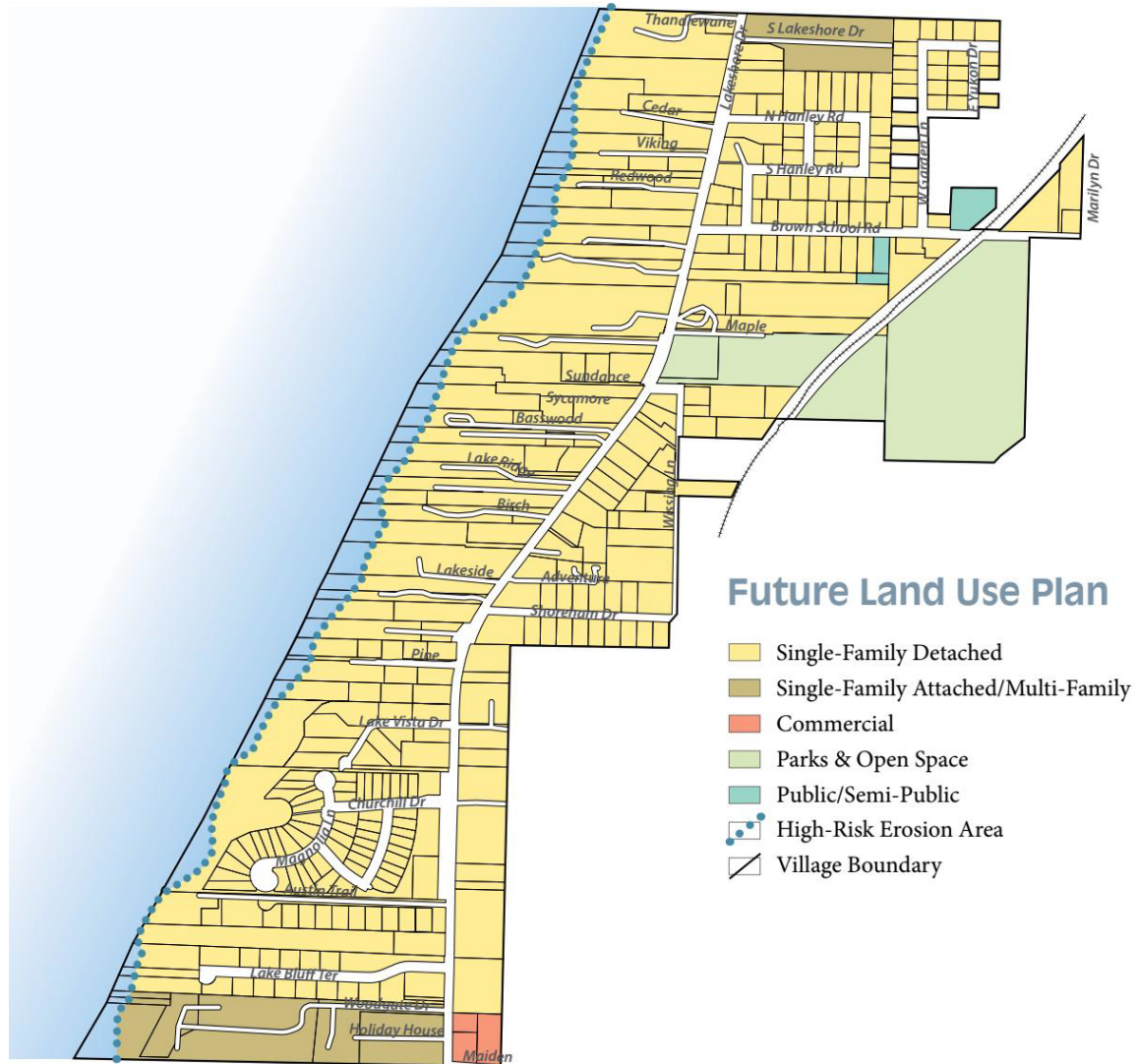


DATA SOURCES:  
 BERRIEN COUNTY GIS  
 STATE OF MICHIGAN GEOGRAPHIC DATA LIBRARY  
 GOOGLE MAPS





Village of Shoreham  
**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**



# APPENDIX C: ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN EXAMPLE

## APPENDIX D. ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN EXAMPLE

The Illustrative Plan is a conceptual example to support Chapter 3. Goals, Objectives, and Actions, Chapter 4. Future Land Use, and more specifically, the types of land use development and character proposed in the areas designated as Neighborhood Mixed-Use (page 32).

It does not represent an exact plan to be implemented nor is it site specific. Rather, its purpose is to promote conversation, understanding, and identification of opportunities that may be appropriate or exist elsewhere in the Township.

- ① A pedestrian-oriented streetscape and high quality mixed-use environment can be desirable both for existing neighborhoods and new development. Streetscape may include bike lanes, on-street parking, street trees, landscaping, sidewalks, seating, etc.
- ② Mixed-use building(s) with active storefront frontages can include commercial or office space below and residential above.
- ③ Attractive Mansion Apartments, Rowhouses and similar Missing Middle Housing types can respect and better transition into existing residential neighborhoods.
- ④ Cottage Courts, Duplexes, and smaller Single Family Homes in a connected, amenity-rich environment are desired by young and old alike.
- ⑤

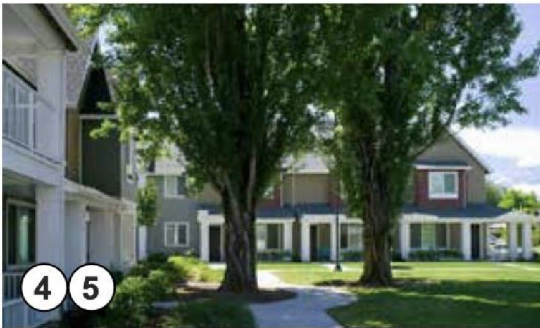




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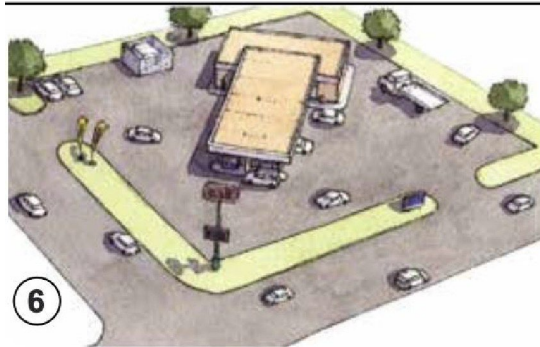
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4 5

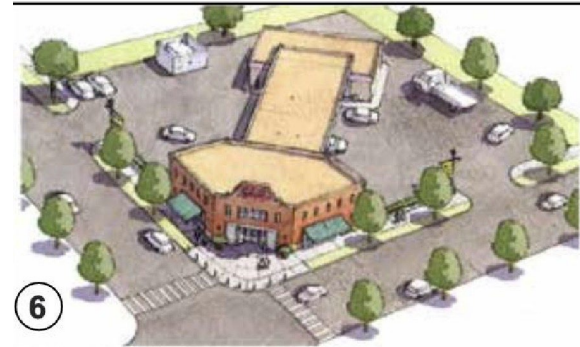


4 5



6

The existing is provided an additional building to hold the corner, sidewalks, landscape improvements, and crosswalks.



6



7

The existing frontage includes a large setback dominated by a driveway and a parking garage.



7

The existing garage is converted into additional living space as a two-story structure built over the existing driveway.



7

A new wing is added, creating an entry courtyard and preventing the garage and driveway from dominating the street view.



7

A detached outbuilding is built in the front yard, creating a private interior courtyard.



7

The garage is removed altogether, in its place sits a one-story addition delineating the street. A garden is in the backyard.



Source: Sprawl Repair Manual, Galina Tachieva et al, Island Press, 2010

# APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Planning Commission developed an online survey that was promoted to the community in November 2022 with a post card sent to each home. The survey was open through January 2023. There were 527 responses to the survey. There were 10 questions and it took respondents an average of 7 minutes to complete the survey.

## We Want Your Input!



### Master Plan Survey

The Planning Commission is updating the Township's Master Plan and would like those that live, work or own property in St. Joseph Charter Township to take this survey.

*The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.*

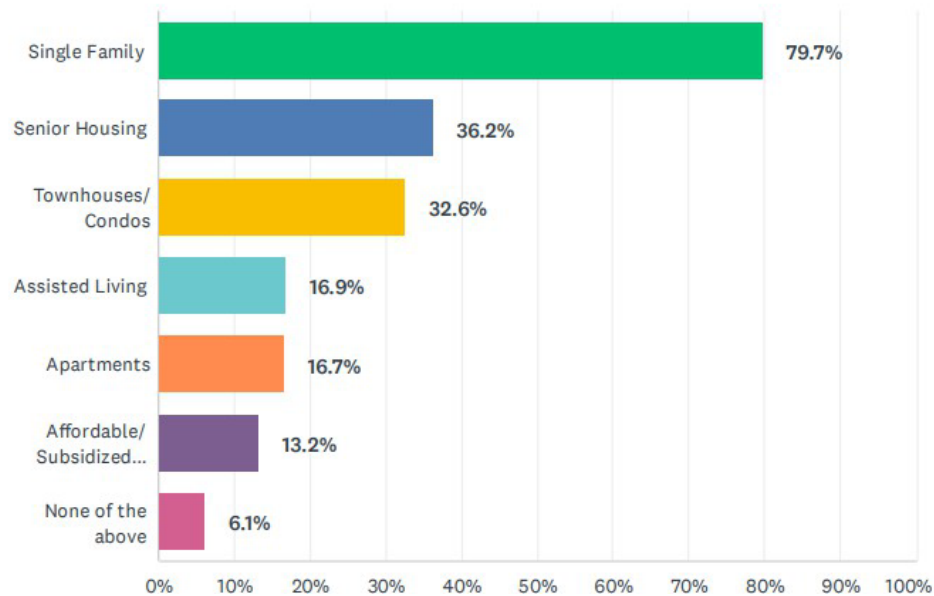


<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StJoeTwpMP>

If you prefer a hard copy of the survey, please pick one up at the Township Hall and return the completed survey to the Township Hall.

# Q1 What types of new housing would you like to see in the Township in the future? (Check all that apply.)

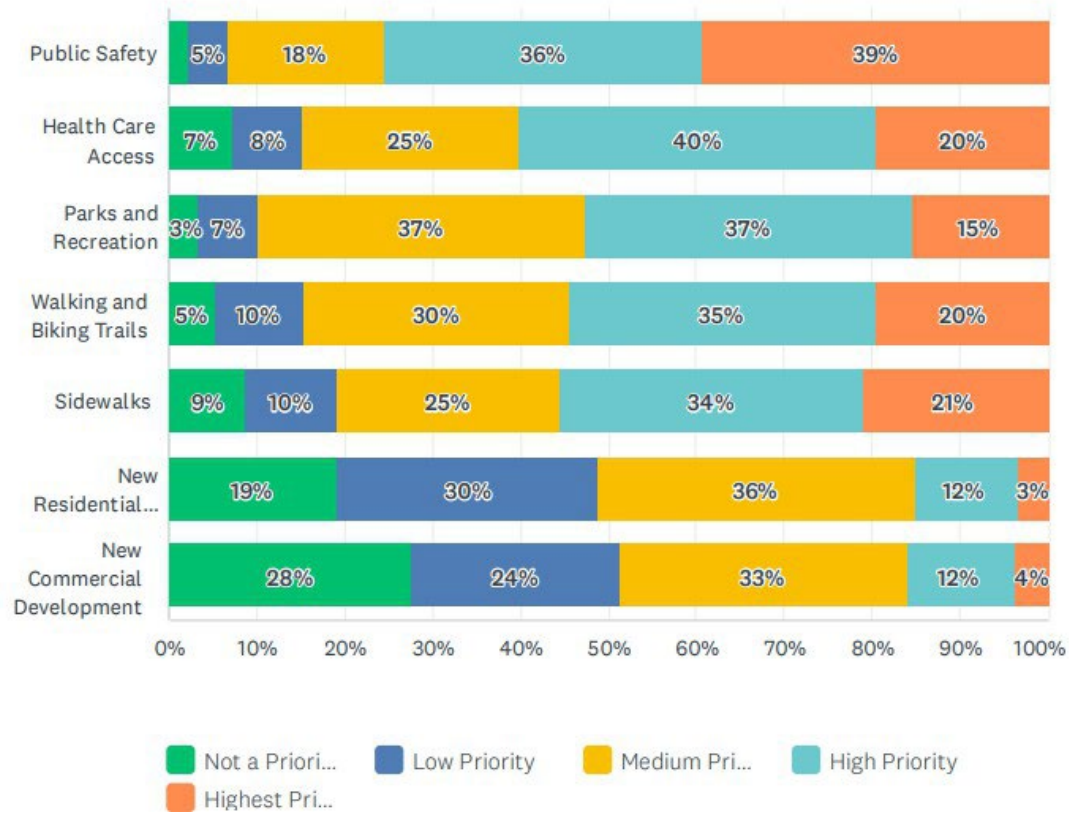
Answered: 522 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single Family	79.7%	416
Senior Housing	36.2%	189
Townhouses/ Condos	32.6%	170
Assisted Living	16.9%	88
Apartments	16.7%	87
Affordable/ Subsidized Housing	13.2%	69
None of the above	6.1%	32
Total Respondents: 522		

## Q2 How high of a priority are the following issues for the Master Plan update?

Answered: 527 Skipped: 0

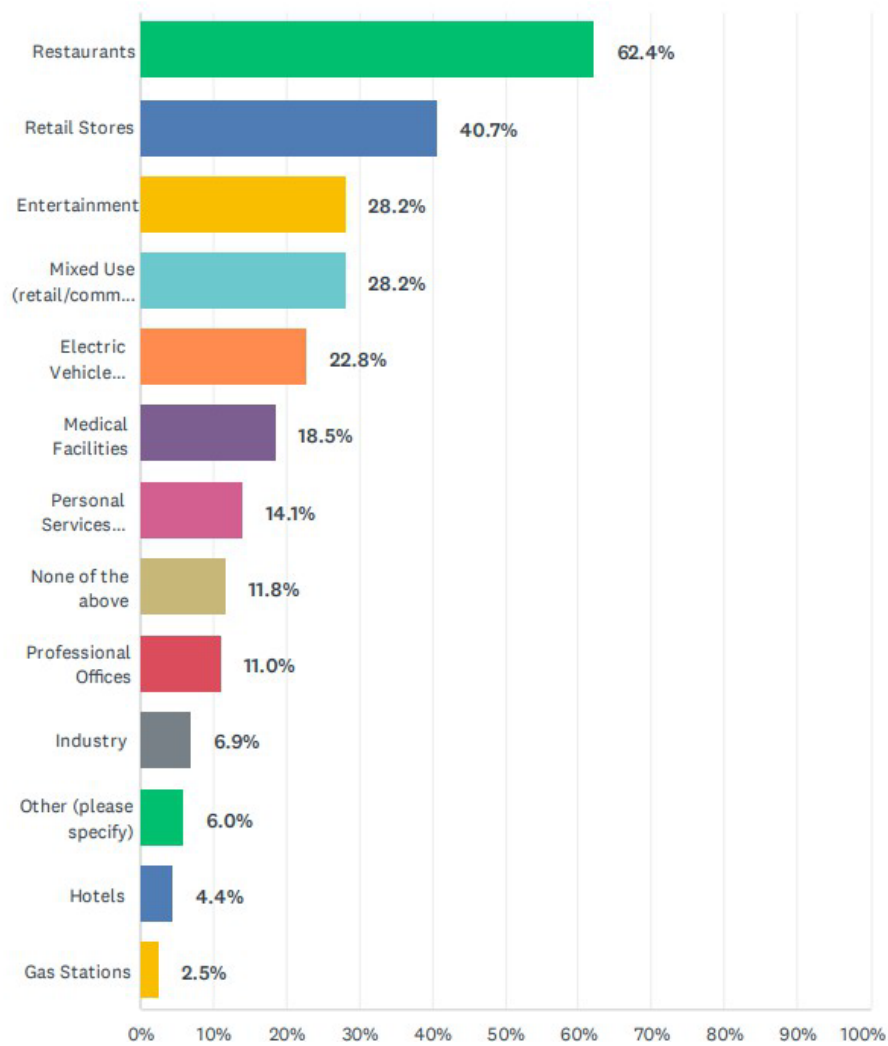




	NOT A PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	HIGHEST PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Public Safety	2% 11	5% 23	18% 91	36% 185	39% 201	511	4.06
Health Care Access	7% 37	8% 39	25% 124	40% 203	20% 99	502	3.57
Parks and Recreation	3% 17	7% 35	37% 190	37% 189	15% 78	509	3.54
Walking and Biking Trails	5% 27	10% 52	30% 155	35% 178	20% 100	512	3.53
Sidewalks	9% 45	10% 53	25% 128	34% 175	21% 107	508	3.48
New Residential Development	19% 96	30% 149	36% 181	12% 60	3% 16	502	2.50
New Commercial Development	28% 139	24% 119	33% 164	12% 62	4% 18	502	2.40

### Q3 What kind of non-residential development would you like to see in St. Joseph Township in the future? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 9



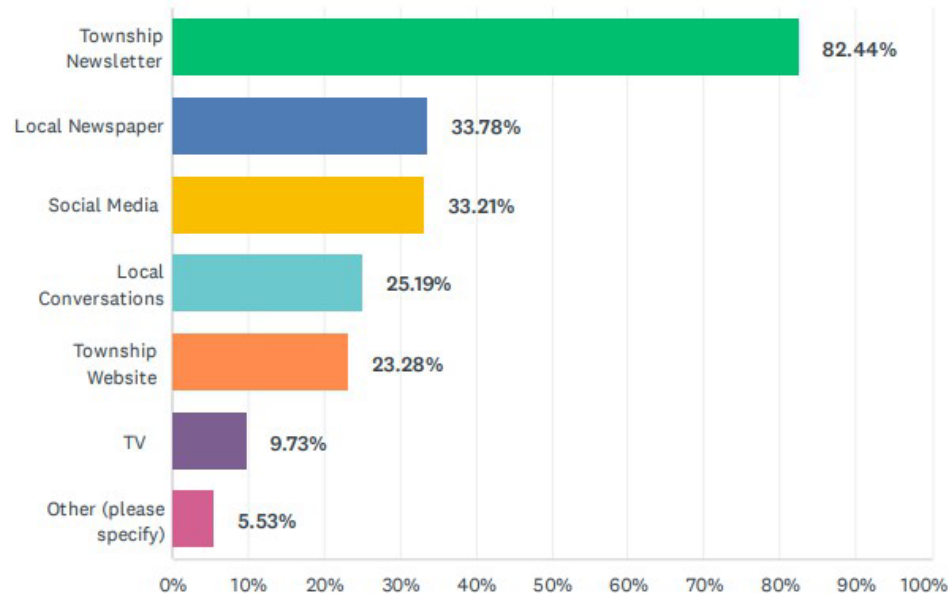
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Restaurants	62.4%	323
Retail Stores	40.7%	211
Entertainment	28.2%	146
Mixed Use (retail/commercial with residential)	28.2%	146
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	22.8%	118
Medical Facilities	18.5%	96
Personal Services (laundry, salon, accounting, etc)	14.1%	73
None of the above	11.8%	61
Professional Offices	11.0%	57
Industry	6.9%	36
Other (please specify)	6.0%	31
Hotels	4.4%	23
Gas Stations	2.5%	13
Total Respondents: 518		

**Comments from the Other (please specify) category:**

The desired non-residential development in St. Joseph Township includes multi-family housing such as townhouses and triplexes, recreational facilities, waterfront restaurants and retail accessible by boat, a walking/biking trail connecting Shoreham to downtown, a grocery store, a library, safe biking lanes on township roads, tennis courts, public transportation, summer fairs, agricultural cooperatives, a disc golf course, non-noisy and non-smelly industries, an outdoor music stage venue, a coffee shop, disc golf course, and clean-up of derelict properties. There is a preference for more/better retail catering to the local community, improved roads with proper drainage, and a desire for Menards. Some respondents expressed concerns about unnecessary additions and undesirable businesses like Dollar stores and emphasized the importance of revitalizing existing properties and focusing on services rather than part-time housing.

### Q4 Where do you typically get your information about St. Joseph Township and community affairs and programs? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 524 Skipped: 3



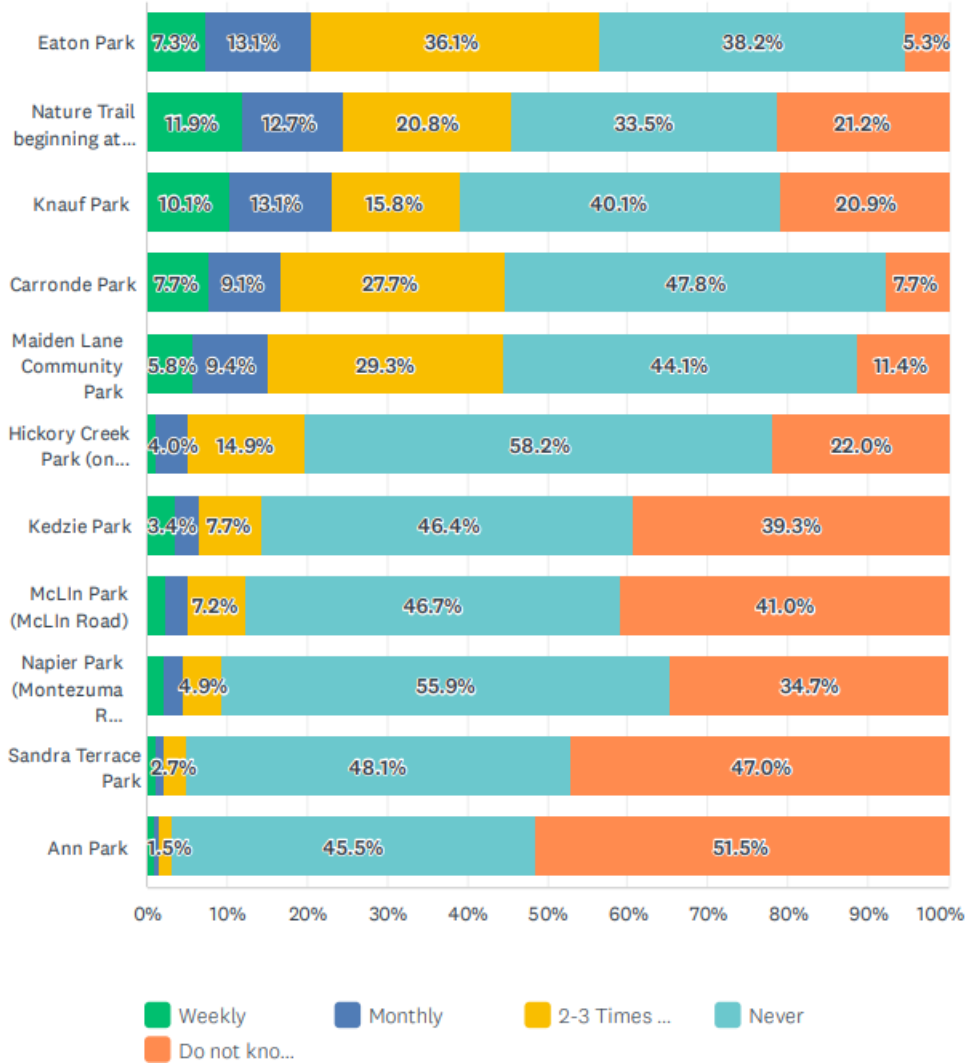
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township Newsletter	82.44%	432
Local Newspaper	33.78%	177
Social Media	33.21%	174
Local Conversations	25.19%	132
Township Website	23.28%	122
TV	9.73%	51
Other (please specify)	5.53%	29
Total Respondents: 524		

**Comments from the Other (please specify) category:**

The primary sources of information about St. Joseph Township and community affairs and programs include radio, St. Joseph Today, walking and driving around the area, MailMax, neighbors, text messages, Facebook, Moody (online), township Facebook page (though non-Facebook sources are desired), SJCT text messages, friends and co-workers, attending church and social outings, Town Crier Wire, WNDU.com, Nextdoor Fairplain, and postcards. Some individuals mentioned not receiving information or relying on sources such as world news and neighbors.

# Q5 How often do you use the Township's parks and recreation areas?

Answered: 522 Skipped: 5



	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	2-3 TIMES PER YEAR	NEVER	DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS PARK	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Eaton Park	7.3% 36	13.1% 64	36.1% 177	38.2% 187	5.3% 26	490	0.84
Nature Trail beginning at Knauf Park	11.9% 57	12.7% 61	20.8% 100	33.5% 161	21.2% 102	481	0.82
Knauf Park	10.1% 48	13.1% 62	15.8% 75	40.1% 190	20.9% 99	474	0.72
Carronde Park	7.7% 37	9.1% 44	27.7% 133	47.8% 230	7.7% 37	481	0.69
Maiden Lane Community Park	5.8% 28	9.4% 45	29.3% 141	44.1% 212	11.4% 55	481	0.65
Hickory Creek Park (on Cleveland Avenue)	1.0% 5	4.0% 19	14.9% 71	58.2% 278	22.0% 105	478	0.26
Kedzie Park	3.4% 16	3.2% 15	7.7% 36	46.4% 217	39.3% 184	468	0.24
McLin Park (McLin Road)	2.3% 11	2.8% 13	7.2% 34	46.7% 220	41.0% 193	471	0.20
Napier Park (Montezuma Rd. & Pontiac Rd.)	2.1% 10	2.3% 11	4.9% 23	55.9% 264	34.7% 164	472	0.16
Sandra Terrace Park	1.1% 5	1.1% 5	2.7% 13	48.1% 228	47.0% 223	474	0.08
Ann Park	0.9% 4	0.6% 3	1.5% 7	45.5% 213	51.5% 241	468	0.05

**Do you have any comments about the parks you would like to share?**

The frequency of using the Township's parks and recreation areas varies among respondents. Some individuals believe there is an overabundance of parks and emphasize the need to avoid draining resources by pushing for new or excessive development. Others mentioned specific parks they utilize, such as Carronde Park for jogging, but expressed the desire for more routine police patrol in the area. Some suggested improvements include installing sound and wind blocks along I-94 near Eaton Park and soccer fields, converting some tennis courts to pickleball courts, and addressing issues like invasive Oriental Bittersweet in the parks. Safety concerns, the need for well-maintained facilities, better lighting, and the desire for family-friendly activities and amenities like playground equipment were also mentioned. Connecting parks with bike trails but with preference for natural trails without gravel

or broken asphalt, providing accessible walking paths, hosting community events, and improving communication about parks were suggested as well. Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current conditions of certain parks and called for upgrades and maintenance. Overall, opinions varied, ranging from appreciation for the existing parks to suggestions for improvements and increased promotion of park facilities.

**Q6 Is there a certain location in the Township where you feel pedestrian safety needs to be improved? (Please describe location.)**

Based on the provided responses, there are several locations in the Township where pedestrians feel that safety needs to be improved. Here are some of the highlighted areas:

1. Carronde Park: More routine police patrol is desired when the park is open.
2. Niles Road: Along the entire stretch due to heavy traffic.
3. Hilltop Road towards Ace Hardware: Narrow traffic lanes are a concern.
4. Tucker Drive, Oakridge Drive, Ansley Drive, and Miller Lane: These streets in the neighborhood require "no thru traffic" signs, new stop signs at Kim Street intersections, and enforcement of the speed limit due to speeding cars and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and dog walkers.
5. Lincoln Avenue and Maiden Lane: Sidewalks are needed in these areas.
6. Washington Avenue: Particularly the section south of Niles Road, where traffic moves quickly and poses risks for pedestrians and cyclists.
7. Red Arrow Highway: Bike lanes or sidewalks are desired for safer biking.
8. Lakeshore Drive and Cleveland Avenue: Safety improvements are needed along these roads due to high traffic volume and speed.
9. Fairplain Avenue: Pedestrian safety is a concern, especially on Jakway Avenue and near Carronde Park.
10. Vineland Road: Sidewalks and guard rails are needed in certain areas, especially near the creek under the road.
11. Various roads with high traffic and speed: Niles Road, Napier Avenue, Cleveland Road, and Washington Avenue are mentioned as areas where pedestrian safety needs improvement.
12. Cleveland Avenue: Safety issues and inadequate shoulders for pedestrians are highlighted.
13. Miami Road: Speeding vehicles pose a safety risk, making it difficult for pedestrians to walk.
14. Benton Harbor area of the township: Safety improvements are desired for pedestrians.
15. Maiden Lane: Sidewalks are needed between Hollywood Road and Lincoln Avenue, particularly for students walking home from school.
16. Glenlord Road and Cleveland Avenue intersection: A traffic light and sidewalks are suggested for better pedestrian safety.

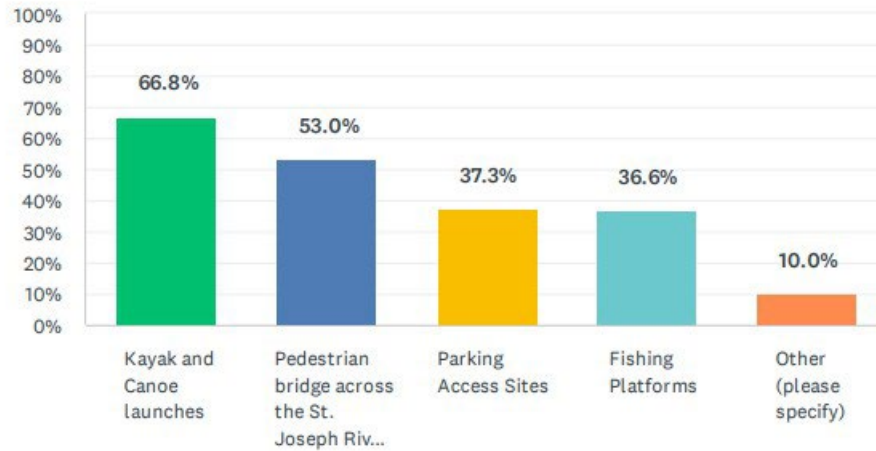


17. Overpasses and bridges: Pedestrian and cyclist safety is a concern on overpasses crossing I-94 and train tracks, including the Washington Avenue bridge.
18. Major roads: Sidewalks are needed on main roads like Washington Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Red Arrow Highway, Nelson Road, and Lincoln Avenue to enhance pedestrian safety.

These are just a few of the locations mentioned where pedestrians feel improvements should be made to enhance safety in the Township.

## Q7 Which amenities should the Township support and promote for more access to Hickory Creek and the St. Joseph River?

Answered: 440 Skipped: 87



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Kayak and Canoe launches	66.8%	294
Pedestrian bridge across the St. Joseph River between Carronde and Riverview Parks	53.0%	233
Parking Access Sites	37.3%	164
Fishing Platforms	36.6%	161
Other (please specify)	10.0%	44
Total Respondents: 440		

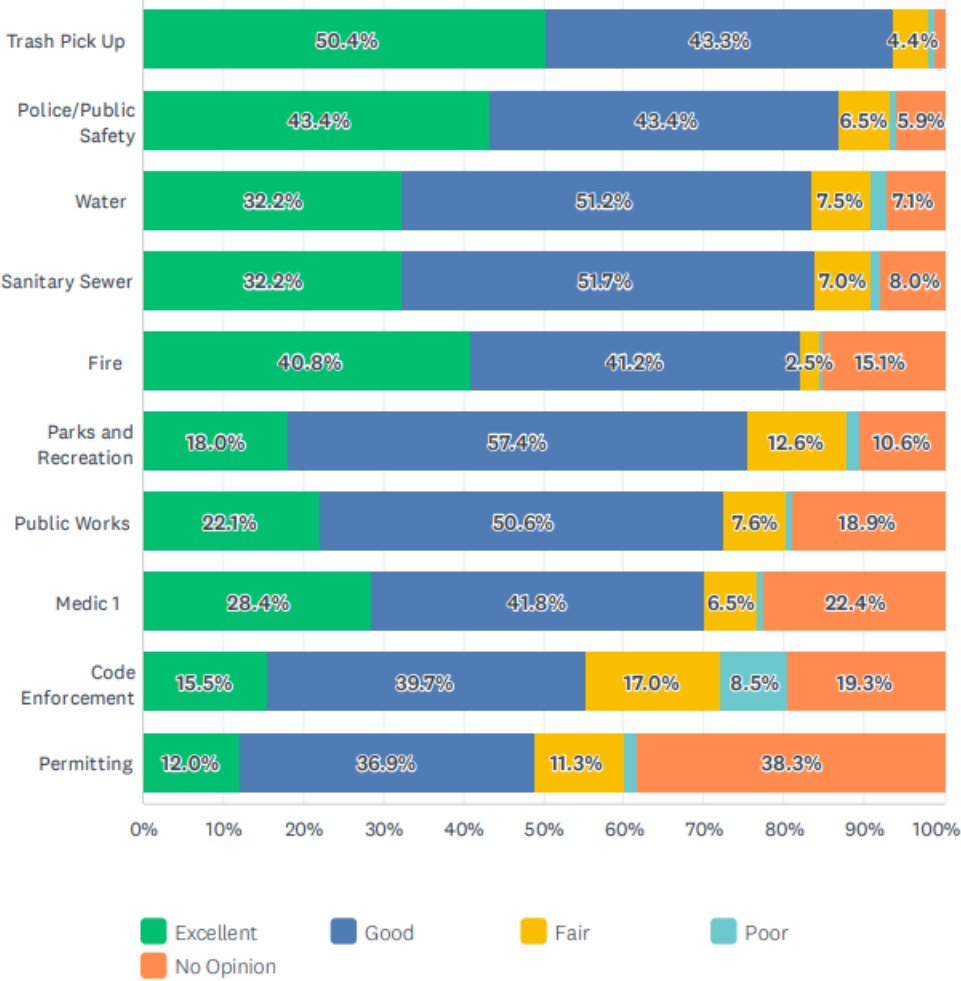
### Comments from the Other (please specify) category:

There are various suggestions provided, including the need for sidewalks throughout the Township, a kayak launch for the St. Joseph River, natural walk/jog trails with picnic/observation decks, mixed-use biking, walking, and running trails, public bathrooms,

a pedestrian bridge over the river, opening up the creek by removing blockages, a trail along the Hickory Creek sewer easement, fishing access, adequate lighting for safety, a camping facility, general clean-up and improvement of attractiveness, more places to ride bicycles and run safely, bluff areas, a bridge between Carronde and Riverview, a 600+ foot bridge over the St. Joseph River, canoeing down Hickory Creek, a water park for kids, and bike and walking trails.

### Q8 How do you rate the following public facilities and services within the St. Joseph Township area?

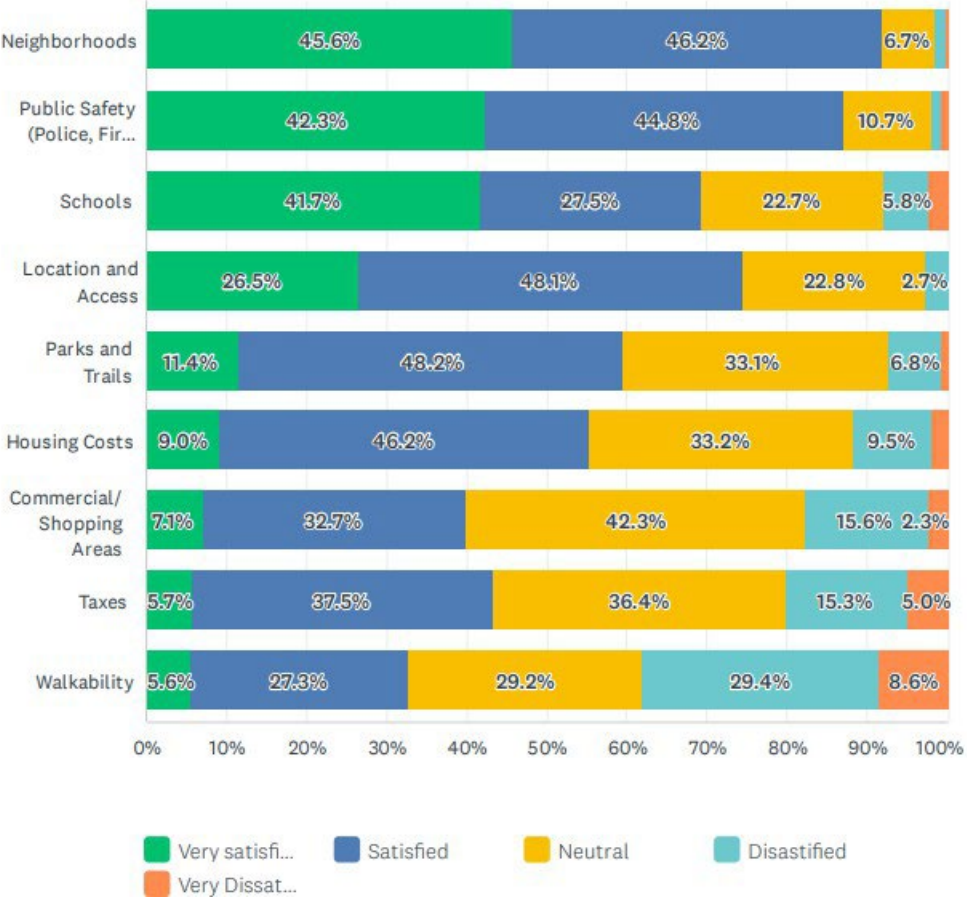
Answered: 525 Skipped: 2



	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Trash Pick Up	50.4% 264	43.3% 227	4.4% 23	0.8% 4	1.1% 6	524	3.41
Police/Public Safety	43.4% 228	43.4% 228	6.5% 34	0.8% 4	5.9% 31	525	3.18
Water	32.2% 167	51.2% 265	7.5% 39	1.9% 10	7.1% 37	518	2.99
Sanitary Sewer	32.2% 166	51.7% 266	7.0% 36	1.2% 6	8.0% 41	515	2.99
Fire	40.8% 214	41.2% 216	2.5% 13	0.4% 2	15.1% 79	524	2.92
Parks and Recreation	18.0% 93	57.4% 297	12.6% 65	1.4% 7	10.6% 55	517	2.71
Public Works	22.1% 113	50.6% 259	7.6% 39	0.8% 4	18.9% 97	512	2.56
Medic 1	28.4% 148	41.8% 218	6.5% 34	1.0% 5	22.4% 117	522	2.53
Code Enforcement	15.5% 80	39.7% 205	17.0% 88	8.5% 44	19.3% 100	517	2.23
Permitting	12.0% 62	36.9% 190	11.3% 58	1.6% 8	38.3% 197	515	1.83

# Q9 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of living in St. Joseph Township?

Answered: 526 Skipped: 1



	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	DISASTIFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Neighborhoods	45.6% 239	46.2% 242	6.7% 35	1.3% 7	0.2% 1	524	4.36
Public Safety (Police, Fire, Etc.)	42.3% 221	44.8% 234	10.7% 56	1.3% 7	0.8% 4	522	4.27
Schools	41.7% 217	27.5% 143	22.7% 118	5.8% 30	2.3% 12	520	4.01
Location and Access	26.5% 136	48.1% 247	22.8% 117	2.7% 14	0.0% 0	514	3.98
Parks and Trails	11.4% 59	48.2% 249	33.1% 171	6.8% 35	0.6% 3	517	3.63
Housing Costs	9.0% 47	46.2% 242	33.2% 174	9.5% 50	2.1% 11	524	3.50
Commercial/ Shopping Areas	7.1% 37	32.7% 170	42.3% 220	15.6% 81	2.3% 12	520	3.27
Taxes	5.7% 30	37.5% 196	36.4% 190	15.3% 80	5.0% 26	522	3.24
Walkability	5.6% 29	27.3% 142	29.2% 152	29.4% 153	8.6% 45	521	2.92

**Are there other factors that you like or dislike about living in St. Joseph Township? If yes, please explain.**

Residents of St. Joseph Township have a variety of likes and dislikes about living in the area. Some people enjoy the close proximity to Lake Michigan, the lower taxes than the City of St. Joseph, and the friendly neighborhood feel. Others dislike the lack of sidewalks, the poor storm sewer drain on Lincoln Ave, the high traffic levels on Niles Road, the poor snow and ice removal on the streets, and the lack of residential sidewalks and safe bike trails. Additionally, some people feel that the rules regarding property care and appearance maintenance are not routinely enforced, while others believe that the housing costs are above average for the area. Many people would like to see more recreational trails, bike paths, and public transportation, as well as more unique shops and restaurants. There are also concerns about school bus stops on major roads, lack of voting ballot security, cost and quality of public services, such as fire safety and public education.

**Please share with us any thoughts you have for the update of the St. Joseph Township Master Plan.**

The survey received 159 additional comments to this prompt. Residents of St. Joseph Township have various concerns about zoning, development, infrastructure, public transportation, and public safety. Some residents are skeptical about the effectiveness and cost of master plans, emphasizing the need for fiscal responsibility. Many elderly residents expressed difficulty in participating in the survey due to limited access to smartphones or the inability to download the questionnaire.

Residents highlighted the importance of creating a walkable and safe community with diverse and affordable housing options, including small apartments and duplexes. There are suggestions for the need for more condos and townhouses to attract potential homebuyers, particularly those interested in summer residences. There were hopes for noise reduction from the nearby highway, and suggestions for a new pedestrian bridge and improved access to amenities like shopping and restaurants.

Preserving natural spaces and green areas was a common concern among respondents. Some residents expressed the desire for more trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes, as well as the conversion of the old Berrien Hills Golf Course into a natural park. Suggestions included keeping light pollution low, increasing access to nature trails and parks, and making the area more bike-friendly with additional walking trails.

Other suggestions include the addition of a disc golf course, the enforcement of ordinances and codes, and the improvement of public transportation and bus stops. Some residents expressed concerns about high taxes, snowplow damage, winter road maintenance, communication of regulations, and code enforcement inconsistencies. There were also miscellaneous suggestions and comments, such as the need for improved lighting in parks and walkways, the request for a bike path to downtown and Silver Beach, the desire for senior housing, the enforcement of traffic laws, decrease of water costs, and community-based events.

Concerns were raised about the commercial development of the Nye's Apple Barn property, citing potential traffic increase, decreased safety, and need for infrastructure improvements. Another viewpoint favored preserving the Nye property as residential to maintain the character of the High Wood Estate neighborhood and prevent additional traffic on Niles Road. Sidewalks and traffic signaled crosswalks were requested to improve pedestrian safety and facilitate walking to retail areas.

Calls for fairness and equal standards for all residents were made, expressing concern about preferential treatment for well-known individuals. Unifying the township with one zip code, one name, and one school district was suggested, particularly to address issues with mailing addresses and tax allocation. Additional suggestions included prioritizing resident safety, improving broadband options and pricing, and establishing free township WIFI. Overall, the feedback highlights a range of concerns and ideas related to residential development, transportation, infrastructure, and community amenities in the St. Joseph Township area.



# APPENDIX E: ADOPTION DOCUMENTS



## Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

To: The Communities of Benton Charter Township, Royalton Township, Lincoln Charter Township, Shoreham Village, St. Joseph City, Benton Harbor City and the Berrien County Planning Commission

From: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (for St. Joseph Charter Township)

Date: June 7, 2023

Re: Master Plan Update Notice

St. Joseph Charter Township is in the process of updating its Master Plan. The master plan is a long range-planning tool used to define the township's vision, goals, and policies. An effective plan accurately communicates citizen needs and desires about their community and recommends specific strategies to achieve those values.

St. Joseph Charter Township will welcome your cooperation and comments. As required by law, you will receive a copy of the draft plan for review and comment. The draft plan will be provided in digital format, unless otherwise requested.

Sincerely,

*Marcy Hamilton*

Marcy Hamilton, Senior Planner  
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
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269-925-1137 x1525  
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