# COOPER CHARTER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

**20-Year Plan: 2026—2046**




**Adopted: May 11, 2026**

Cooper Charter Township
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a result of the collaboration between Township officials, Planning Commission, and input garnered from the Cooper Charter Township public.

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*Disclosure: The Cooper Charter Township Master Plan was based on the most up-to-date information available. The statistical, natural, and cultural resources outlined within the Plan provided a snapshot of the community at the time of plan development, which assisted with future planning decisions.*



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Value of a Master Plan

The Township derives its authority to plan from the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, which indicates master plans may project 20 years or more into the future but are required to be reviewed every five years. The last Cooper Charter Township Master Plan was adopted in 2018. The development of this new plan will build on the Township's historical vision, consider recent changes which have occurred in the Township, and set a course for the future.

The value of a master plan is that is serves a variety of functions, such as:

- Outlining the Township's goals and policies.
- Providing a single, comprehensive view of the community's future land use plans.
- Aiding in the decision-making associated with zoning, subdivisions, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development.
- Creating the statutory basis upon which zoning decisions are made. The Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended) requires that the zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote public health, safety, and general welfare. The master plan is the collective vision for the community; the zoning ordinance helps translate that vision into regulation.
- Assisting outside agencies, such as the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, Michigan Department of Transportation, and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, to understand and implement the goals of Cooper Township.
- Providing an informative tool that gives residents, property owners, developers, and adjacent communities a clear indication of the Township's future land use plan.

Finally, a master plan provides continuity across time, giving successive Planning Commissions and Township Boards a common framework for addressing land use issues. The policy choices made as part of the master planning process will help guide Cooper Charter Township's development over the next 20 years.

# Cooper Charter Township Overview

Cooper Township was organized as a general law township in 1836, governed by an elected board of trustees which included a supervisor, treasurer, and clerk. In 1990, Cooper became a charter township, with the same organizational structure, but with boundary protection against annexation and enhanced general tax authority. The original unincorporated center of Cooper (intersection of Douglas and West D Avenue) serves as the location of the Township Hall and primary fire station.

The Township is located in the north section of Kalamazoo County, at the county's northern border immediately adjacent to Allegan County. The surrounding communities include:

Allegan County:
Gun Plain Charter Township
Prairieville Township

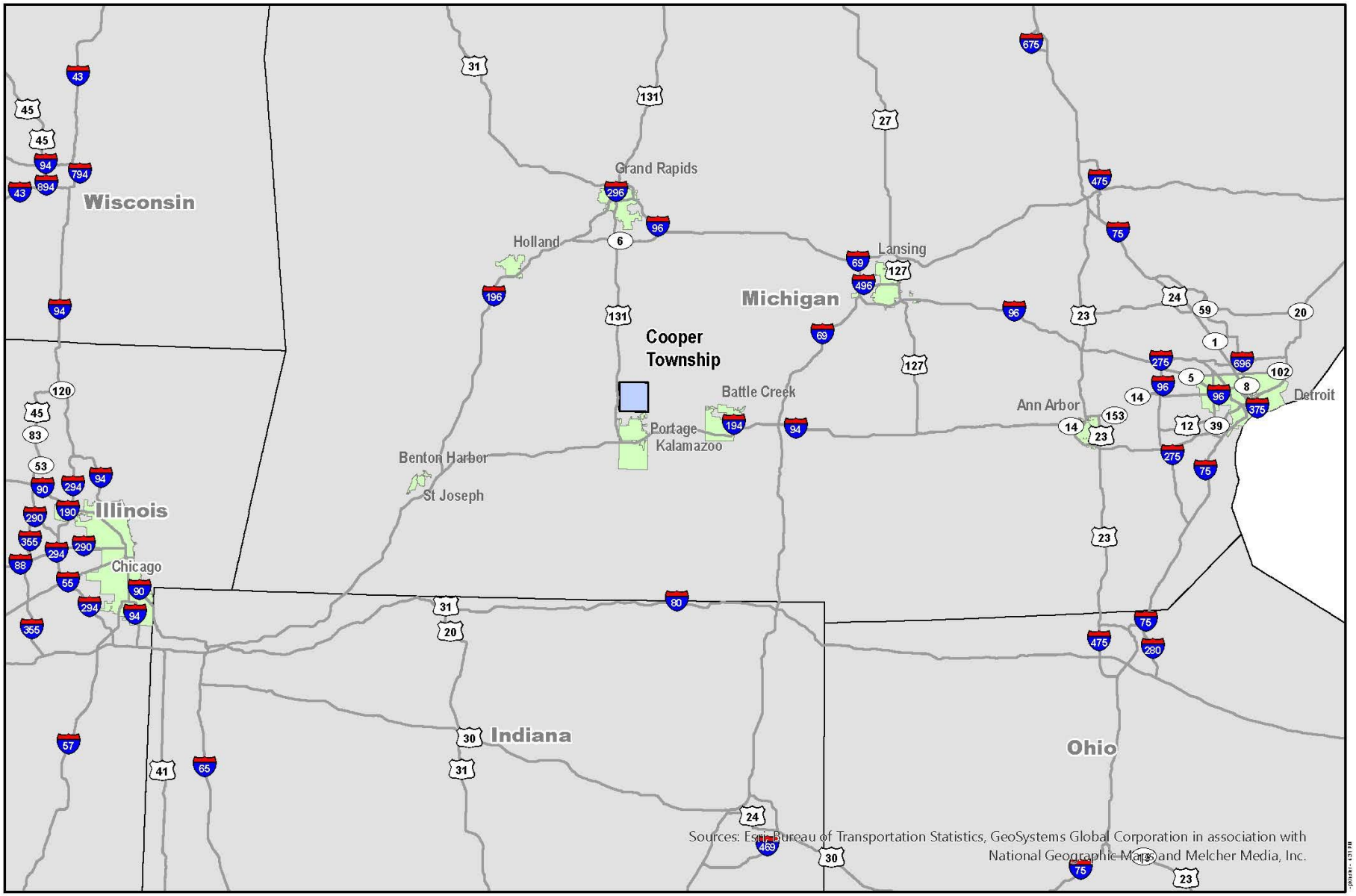
Kalamazoo County:
Alamo Township
Comstock Charter Township
Kalamazoo Charter Township
Oshtemo Charter Township
Richland Township
City of Parchment
City of Kalamazoo

In addition, the Township is positioned within close traveling distance to four major employment centers; approximately 5 to 25 minutes from the Kalamazoo/Portage metro area, around 40 to 50 minutes to either Grand Rapids or Battle Creek, and just less than an hour to the St. Joseph/Benton Harbor metropolitan area. From the employment characteristics of the Township residents, many likely find occupations within these communities and gain easy access from US 131 and Interstate 94.

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA), has grouped most rural communities into five categories, as follows:

- Gateway communities – adjacent to high-amenity recreational areas such as national parks, forests, and coastlines.

- Resource-dependent communities – often home to a single industry, such as farming or mining, so their fortunes rise and fall with the market value of that resource.




SCALE: 1:1,680,000

LEGEND

Cooper Charter Township

Regional City

**Cooper Charter Township**
Kalamazoo County, MI
**Location Map**
Prein&Newhof

- Edge communities – located at the fringe of a metropolitan area and are typically connected to them by a highway.

- Traditional main street communities – the traditional small-town village with compact street patterns and often historically significant architecture.

- Second home and retirement communities – often overlap with traditional main street and edge communities and generally have amenities for a 65+ population.

Cooper Charter Township most closely conforms to an edge-dependent community. As the demographic and economic analysis will show, residents of the Township are primarily employed in four main industries located no more than 21 minutes from their homes. These industries include:

1. Educational services, health care, and social assistance,
2. Manufacturing,
3. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services, and
4. Retail trade.

The Township is 36.6 square miles of predominately residential land uses, with larger parcel rural residential in the western and northern sections of the Township and more dense residential development in the sections of the Township along the southern border. Other commercial and industrial land uses are found predominately in the southeast quadrant of the Township and at the center of the Township on Douglas and West D Avenues.

There are several important recreational or natural land uses in the Township, which include the Kalamazoo River, Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, Markin Glen Park, and the Kalamazoo Nature Center. The Kalamazoo River is a significant natural resource and recreational asset for all of Southwest Michigan. The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, which runs adjacent to the River, currently provides access to 24 miles of a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail throughout Kalamazoo County. In Cooper Township, the trail runs from West G Avenue north adjacent to Markin Glen Park and the Nature Center, where it ends at West D Avenue. Markin Glen Park is a Kalamazoo County Park totaling 160 acres with camping sites, fishing and swimming lakes, multi-use trails, picnic areas, playgrounds, tennis and volleyball courts, and softball fields. A unique feature of Markin Glen is that it is one of the highest points in the county, allowing hikers excellent views of the surrounding landscape and downtown Kalamazoo. Finally, the Kalamazoo Nature Center has its main location in Cooper Charter Township, which includes of 1,100 acres of forest, wetlands, and prairies. The Visitor Center holds award-winning nature exhibits and provides a variety of programs, including the Kalamazoo Nature Center Camp for kids of all ages.

Overall, the Township's natural features, residential choices, transportation options, and close proximity to larger employment centers is what has drawn residents to the area.

## Plan Organization

The Cooper Charter Township Master Plan begins with a set of goals and strategies to help reach the intended vision for the Township. This is followed by the Future Land Use Plan, which sets out the development pattern for the community. Then, the Zoning Plan outlines potential ordinance amendments for consideration which can be used to further this development pattern. Finally, the background information gathered to help craft the overall vision is detailed. Supporting information on the Township's demographics, environment, services, and public outreach is provided.



# CHAPTER 2: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of the Cooper Charter Township Master Plan is to set a vision for the next 20 years. Through the development of this Plan, the Township is actively involved in guiding and shaping their future. Planning goals are statements of community values that express the long-range aspirations of the Township, as well as providing the foundation for any subsequent policy decisions related to important planning matters. Each goal is accompanied by a set of general objectives to help attain the specified goal.

## Vision Statement

Cooper Charter Township seeks to create a vibrant community that provides opportunities for sustainable growth and prosperity for all residents while protecting the significant natural features of the Township that enhance quality of life.

## Goals and Objectives

**<u>GOAL #1</u>: Protect and preserve those areas of the Township which are most sensitive to development, such as the Kalamazoo River and other important natural resources that contribute to the health of natural systems, wildlife habitats, community character, and quality of life.**




a. Work with important partners such as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and Kalamazoo County to protect the Kalamazoo River and the adjacent riparian zone from negative impacts of development.

b. Partner with these same government agencies and other nonprofit conservation organizations to bring key riverbank, riparian, and floodplain areas that are important to protection of water quality into either public ownership or conservatorship.



**Cluster Development, also known as conservation development, is a site planning approach that practices Low Impact Development. By grouping residential properties together, the remaining land can preserve natural features, provide recreation areas, or opportunities for agriculture.**

**This design type can also help retain rural character by providing large undisturbed setbacks. It may also reduce costs to the developer as infrastructure construction is less when compared to traditional subdivisions.**

c. Develop zoning regulations, such as an overlay zone, that will protect environmentally sensitive areas surrounding the Kalamazoo River.

d. Consider a tree protection ordinance that would be included in the development review process to limit clear cutting and removal of mature trees.

e. Encourage innovative residential development that minimizes the loss of natural features and incorporates native species and pollinators as part of preservation and replanting when new residential development occurs.

**<u>GOAL #2</u>: Preserve and strengthen a diverse parks, recreation, and trail system within the Township**

a. Support Kalamazoo County and other nonprofit partners with existing public facilities and/or recreational areas within the Township that provide recreational or educational pursuits.

b. Work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Kalamazoo County Parks Department on access to the Kalamazoo River for recreational purposes, including expanded trail connections (Kalamazoo River Valley Trail) and potential canoe/kayak launch sites.



**Markin Glen Park**

c. Coordinate with the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and other regional partners on developing trails or expanded shoulder (bike lane) improvements for connections to all open space/recreation destinations internal to the Township as well as to regional facilities beyond its borders.

d. Consider the creation of a parks master plan and non-motorized plan to be eligible for state, local, and regional grant opportunities for the creation and maintenance of potential facilities.

e. Explore opportunities, such as updating Township ordinances, to require developers to provide private recreation facilities within new residential developments.

f. Work with West Michigan Trails to investigate a potential connection through Cooper Charter Township for the River to River Trail system planned between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.



Cottage court style is a form of "missing middle" housing, a new movement of housing choice which began in 2010. Missing middle housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units that are compatible in scale and design with detached single-family homes.

Cottage court housing is a group of small (1 to 1.5-story), detached structures arranged around a shared court visible from the street. The shared court is an important community-enhancing element and unit entrances should be from the shared court.

**GOAL #3: Maintain desirable and attractive residential neighborhoods and promote new housing construction that recognizes existing development patterns.**

a. Promote diverse types of housing within the areas served by public infrastructure and envisioned for greater density to support the needs of all ages, incomes, household sizes, and housing preferences This would include multi-family complexes, missing middle housing such as fourplexes, cottage courts, attached townhouses, or higher density single-family housing.

b. Investigate opportunities for accessory dwelling units on properties large enough to accommodate this type of residential use.

c. Ensure new residential development will be compatible in density and character with neighboring uses and prevent inconsistent land use from encroaching into residential areas.

d. Minimize erosion and the intrusion of roads, houses, and driveways into wetlands, floodplains, and woodlands in residential developments.



**Accessory Dwelling Unit**

e. Require the of native species planting of trees along rights-of-way in new residential developments to enhance the public realm, and the replacement of native trees when they are damaged, destroyed, or diseased.

f. In all new residential developments, encourage layouts which maintain maximum green space and/or common open space.

g. Review the subdivision and site condominium ordinances to ensure consistency with zoning regulations, lot sizes that are compatible with available public infrastructure, and regulations that create desirable development outcomes.

h. Evaluate the residential zoning districts for potential amendments that would reduce complexity and add flexibility of housing types.



**<u>GOAL #4</u>: Retain rural attributes through a well-organized use of land that recognizes those areas of the Township with existing low-density residential and agricultural character.**

a. Recognize and protect areas of rural living through appropriate land use and zoning ordinances so natural features can be safeguarded and enjoyed, privacy maintained, and larger lots preserved.

b. Consider a buffer setback ordinance along rural roadway edges that limits the removal of natural landscapes.

c. Safeguard natural features such as woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, streams, existing roadway vegetation, open views, and the dark night sky as essential elements of rural character through land use and zoning requirements.

**<u>GOAL #5</u>: Expand economic development opportunities within the Township.**

a. Provide opportunities for family-run service and unique cultural home-based businesses in low-density residential areas that offer economic opportunities without significantly altering the rural appearance of the property or impeding on the quality of life experienced by surrounding neighbors.

b. Allow agricultural operations to diversify their sources of income through farm-based agricultural tourism, at an appropriate scale and intensity that limits impacts to adjacent properties, public services, and the natural environment.




**Farm-based opportunities**

c. Require utilization of existing planned locations for commercial and industrial development before permitting new areas to be rezoned.

d. Ensure the zoning ordinance requires new commercial and industrial uses are designed for compatibility with adjacent land uses in terms of scale, building size, height, setbacks, buffering, and open space to reduce adverse impacts, particularly to residential living.

e. Encourage viable small businesses, including retail establishments and personal and professional services, in the Cooper Business District located at the center of the Township.



Viable small business in CBD

f. Consider the development of a sub-area plan for the Cooper Business District to outline the overall vision for the District and any potential improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, signage, landscaping, open space, etc.

**g.** Investigate grant-based funding opportunities to make public improvements to the Cooper Business District per the potential sub-area plan.

**<u>GOAL #6</u>: Continue to support local and regional public services and facilities to protect and enhance the quality of life of Cooper residents.**

**a.** Promote health and social services available in Kalamazoo County to increase awareness and accessibility for the well-being of Township residents.




b. Provide fire protection, emergency medical services, and police service to the community through a cost-effective and efficient delivery system to maintain a safe environment.

c. Evaluate policing levels with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff on an annual basis to determine if public safety needs are being met.

d. Ensure code enforcement efforts are fully supported by Township staff and officials to protect public health and safety, and property values.

e. Continue to prioritize good governance and leadership by operating in an open and financially stable manner that focuses on resident participation.





# CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE

## Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan is the vision for the land development pattern in Cooper Charter Township. This desired future is based on sound planning principles, as well as input from the community and Township leaders. It builds on the historic development patterns of the Township, while preserving the unique environmental features and rural character of the community. At the same time, the Plan provides for anticipated development within carefully considered areas for growth.

The Future Land Use Map is a long-range planning representation of the Township and does not imply that all the changes should occur in the near term. Development and redevelopment should proceed in a manner that is appropriate to the goals of this Plan and is compatible with adjacent land uses.

The Future Land Use Plan is also a guide to assist Township officials in decisions relating to planning, zoning, land subdivision, and potential public improvements. Zoning decisions should gradually result in greater conformity between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map.

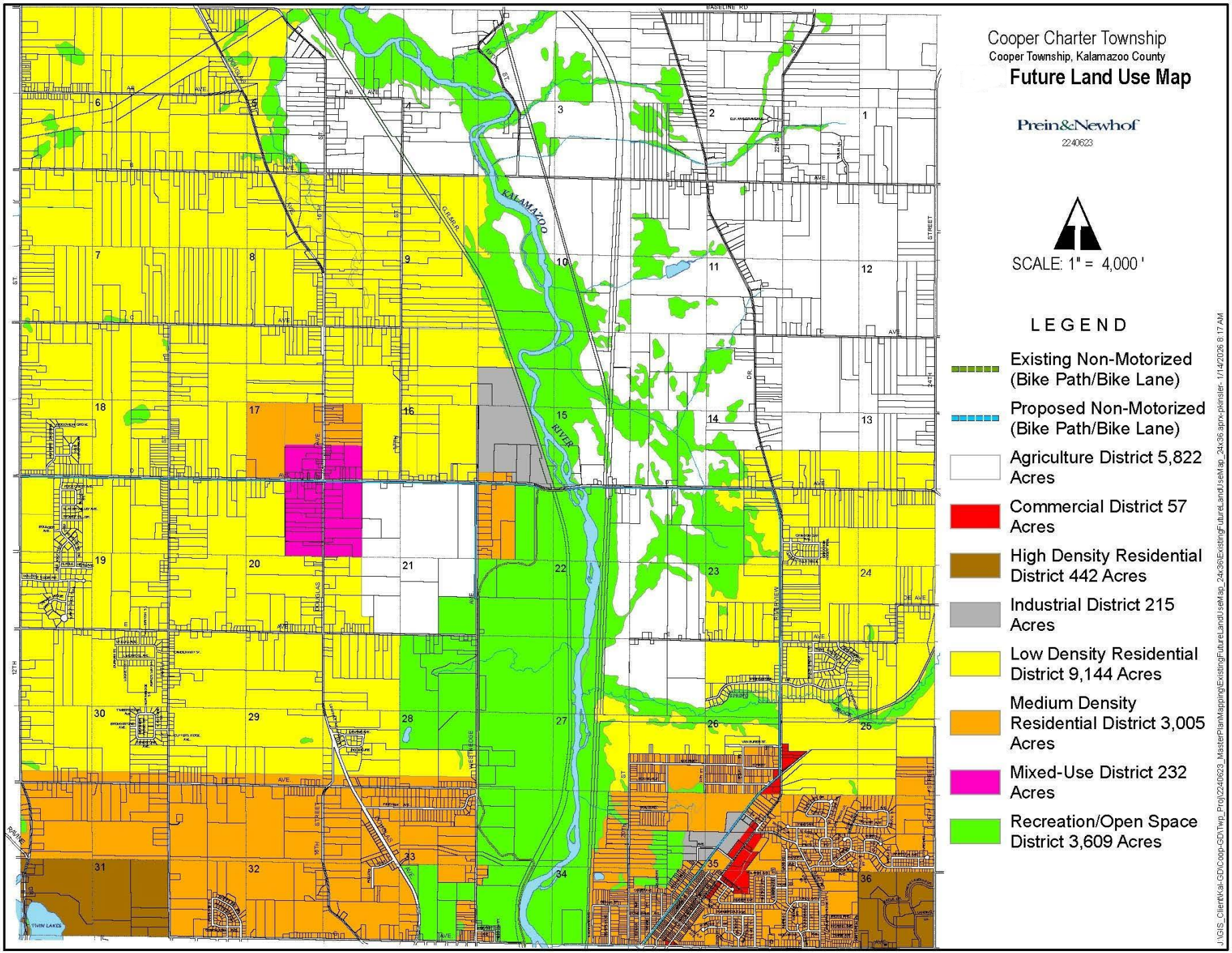
When developing the Future Land Use Plan, the following principles were employed:

- Continue to sustain the overall rural character that is found in the majority of the Township and promote development that is sensitive to this character.
- Protect the natural environment within the Township and allow the type of land use most compatible with those features.
- Encourage the systematic development of residential and nonresidential uses in specific areas and corridors of the Township where these uses currently exist.

The Future Land Use Plan should not be a static document. It will be important for the Township to review and revise the Plan as conditions change within the community over time.

## Future Land Use Designations

Eight future land use districts have been created to designate the desired land use pattern for the Township. The description of each district begins on page 14. The geographic distribution of the land uses is found on the Future Land Use Map on the following page.


Cooper Charter Township
Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County
Future Land Use Map
Prein&Newhof
2240623
SCALE: 1" = 4,000 '
LEGEND
Existing Non-Motorized (Bike Path/Bike Lane)
Proposed Non-Motorized (Bike Path/Bike Lane)
Agriculture District 5,822 Acres
Commercial District 57 Acres
High Density Residential District 442 Acres
Industrial District 215 Acres
Low Density Residential District 9,144 Acres
Medium Density Residential District 3,005 Acres
Mixed-Use District 232 Acres
Recreation/Open Space District 3,609 Acres
KALAMAZOO RIVER
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## Agriculture District

Agricultural land is the second largest land use category of the Future Land Use Map, representing 5,822 acres or approximately 26 percent of the Township. Most of the properties designated Agriculture are located in the northeast sections of the Township. This future land use designation is based on a desire to protect agricultural lands in areas where it currently exists, as well as preserving the rural character of the community.

The Agriculture future land use category will support the production of farm products including but not limited to vegetables, fruit, livestock, plants and specialty crops. Accessory uses may be permitted in conjunction with an agricultural operation. Examples of traditional uses may include processing of agricultural products, nurseries and greenhouses, farm employee housing, and other similar uses.

In addition, many property owners in rural areas are looking for ways to generate some additional economic value from their property. Agritourism can not only provide economic opportunities to the property owner, but it can also be an avenue for local resident employment. Agritourism generally falls within the following three categories:

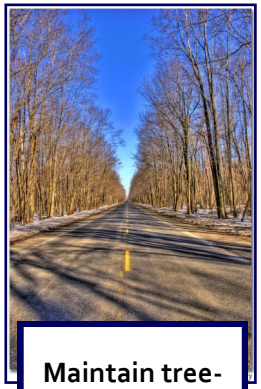
- Direct-market – Roadside stands, farm markets, or other direct sales of product to consumers.
- Education and experience – Farm tours and classes, “u-pick” operations, wineries, or other activities that give a hands-on education of farm life.
- Recreation and events – Corn mazes, haunted hayrides, horseback riding lessons, or other low-intensity or seasonal marketable uses of the farm.

These uses should be permitted within the Agriculture future land use district, but only if done in a careful and measured way. While many of these uses would have little impact on neighboring properties, some could have issues of compatibility with rural character. Additional scrutiny through zoning requirements will be needed by the Township. This future land use category may also include low intensity family run businesses and home-based art and cultural activities. For example, service businesses like small lawn care companies, woodworking shops, and small-scale arts and crafts studios, all located in appropriately rural buildings.

Finally, single-family residential uses are included in the Agriculture District. The preference is for residential uses to be associated with an agricultural operation, but single-family homes on large parcels of multiple acres are also permitted. If not utilized for some agricultural purpose, these parcels should retain their natural features with minimal disruption of rural character. Currently, parcels zoned Agricultural have an average parcel size of 18 acres in the Township. Farms and farm related activities should occur on parcels no smaller than 20 acres. However, the density for single-family homes not related to agricultural uses should be no greater than 0.2 dwelling units per acre or one home for every five acres.

## Low Density Residential District

Low Density Residential is the largest future land use category totaling 41 percent of the Township. These areas are typically comprised of very low-density single-family dwellings on large parcels along primary County roads. Building site selection should be based on minimal disturbance to natural and existing features such as fencerows, wetlands, woodlands, and stream corridors, which should be preserved. Road frontage tree lines should only be selectively cleared to maintain natural beauty corridors. These features are essential components of the rural character of the Township and should be as minimally modified as necessary to accommodate the single-family home. Properties zoned Rural Residential, which is the predominate zoning for this future land use designation, currently have an average parcel size of approximately 6.5 acres. Public water and sanitary sewer are not planned in these areas and therefore parcels should be at least two acres in size, creating a density of 0.5 dwelling units per acre.



Maintain tree-lined roads

## Medium Density Residential District

The Medium Residential District is in areas where smaller parcelization or residential subdivisions have already occurred. This future land use designation is intended to support single-family, two-family, and low density multiple-family developments. The goal is to provide an area of the Township for residential expansion and opportunities for alternative housing choices beyond large parcel single-family homes.

The density for this future land use district should allow two to four dwelling units per acre if water wells and septic systems can be managed. If subdivisions, site condominiums, or attached residential developments are constructed, they should be designed in cluster patterns to preserve important natural features on the property.

A total of 3,005 acres or 13 percent of the Township has been designated under this category.

## High Density Residential District

This future land use designation is intended to provide areas within the Township where more intensive residential development has occurred or is likely to occur due to existing public infrastructure. The High Density Residential category permits apartment and manufactured home developments. This district could also support townhouses, duplexes, and residential care and senior living facilities. New neighborhoods are encouraged to contain a variety of housing types, to allow housing options and price points for existing and future residents.



Cooper's Landing

A total of 442 acres or two percent of the Township is planned for this future land use.

## Recreation/Open Space District

This future land use designation is initially based upon a process of compiling data on the natural features within Cooper Charter Township. This information is critical to determine which areas of the Township are most beneficial to land development and those that require environmental protection. This data mainly includes wetland, floodplain, and waterbodies, primarily the Kalamazoo River Basin.

A secondary intent of this land use designation is to protect areas of the Township where passive or active recreational benefit can be achieved from these same open space areas, where feasible. Recreational opportunities such public parks (Markin Glen), non-motorized trails (Kalamazoo River Valley Trail system), potential access for water sports along the Kalamazoo River, and other private or non-profit facilities such as golf courses and nature preserves (Nature Center) are found in this designation. Achieving balance between public benefit and private property rights is the basis for long term protection of these areas.




**Kalamazoo Nature Center located in Recreation/Open Space District**

This is the 3rd largest future land use category for the Township totaling 3,609 acres or 16 percent.

## Commercial District

The Commercial future land use district is the smallest category, encompassing only 57 acres or 0.2 percent of the Township. This district is located on Riverview Drive south of East E Avenue where existing retail and commercial service uses are found. In addition, public water and sewer can be found on Riverview in this area, allowing for new development to occur. Uses could include drive-through and sit-down restaurants, gas stations and automotive services, grocery and convenience stores, office spaces, and other shopping/convenience center developments.

## Industrial District

This designation is also found along Riverview Drive, south of East E Avenue. But it is also located north of West D Avenue, along the Kalamazoo River. Appropriate land uses would include industrial businesses of a service nature. Due to the limitations on supporting infrastructure, larger or more intense manufacturing operations are more feasible within industrial park settings where public water and sewer are readily available. This type of development may be achievable along Riverview Drive where these public facilities exist. Industrial properties should have significant buffers and setbacks to minimize any impact to adjoining residential properties. One of the smaller land use districts, this category covers approximately 215 acres or 0.9 percent of the total property found in the Township.

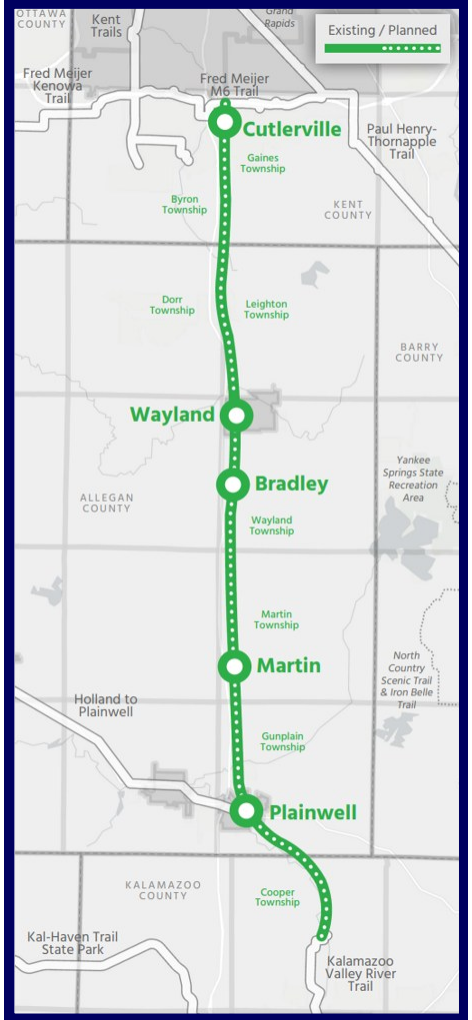
## Mixed Use District

The Mixed-Use District is located at the heart of the Township in an area zoned Cooper Business District. It is intended to encourage a mix of commercial, service, government, and residential uses around the intersection of Douglas and West D Avenues. The desire is to create an area of the Township that will attract new business development and will encourage private sector improvements. The current land use pattern is a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Continuing this mixed-use development will offer more variety to Township residents, providing for their commercial and service needs.

The types of development that would be allowed in this district range from offices, sit-down restaurants, retail, medical uses, salons and spas, and other small scale commercial and service providers. The development of these uses in this area should be carefully managed, including appropriate buffer zones and screening from adjacent single-family residential. The Low and Medium Density Residential future land use districts are planned to occur immediately contiguous to the Mixed Use District and ensuring compatibility will be important as new construction occurs. This district comprises 232 acres and is on one percent of the Township Future Land Use Map.



**Development styles desired in the Cooper Business District.**



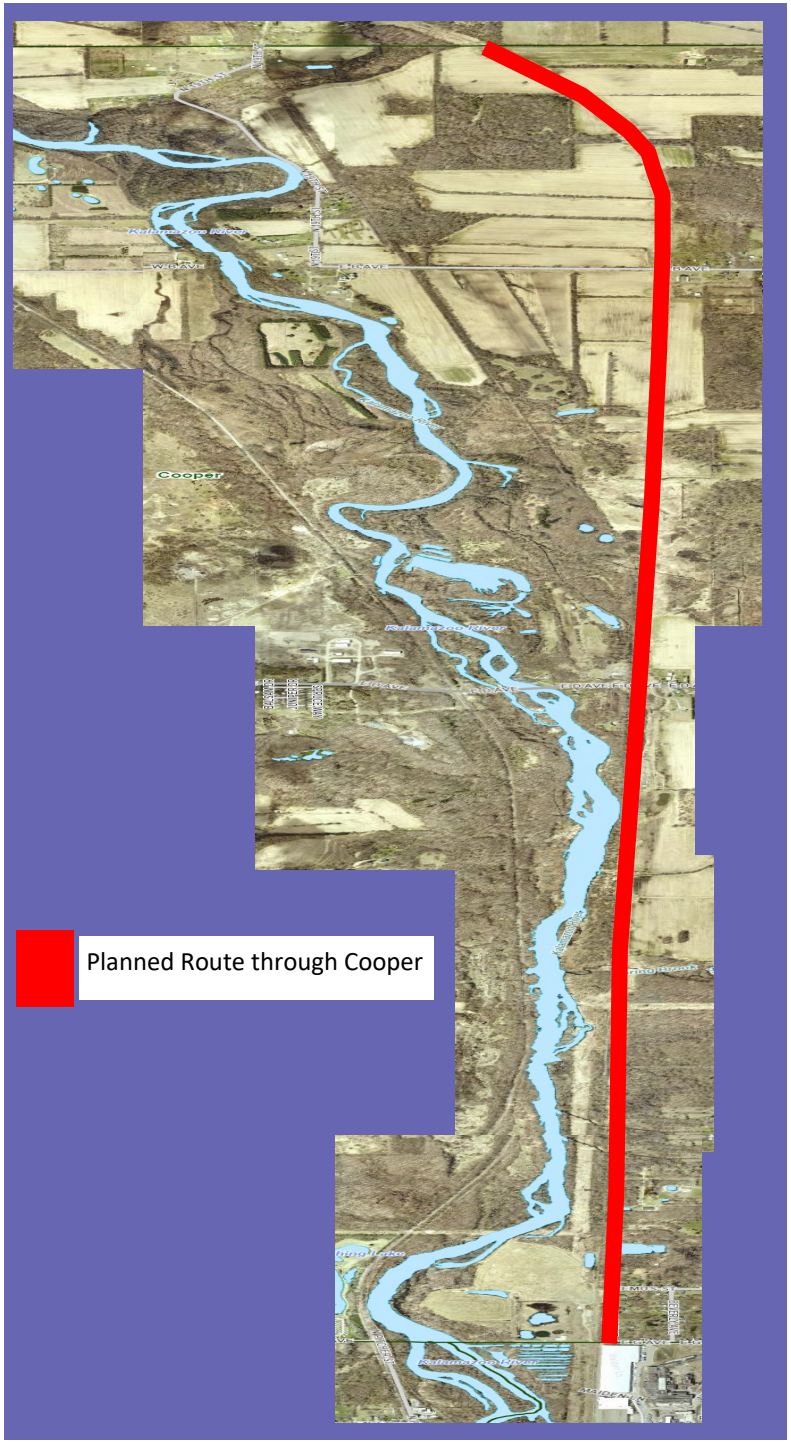

## Additional Future Land Use Plans

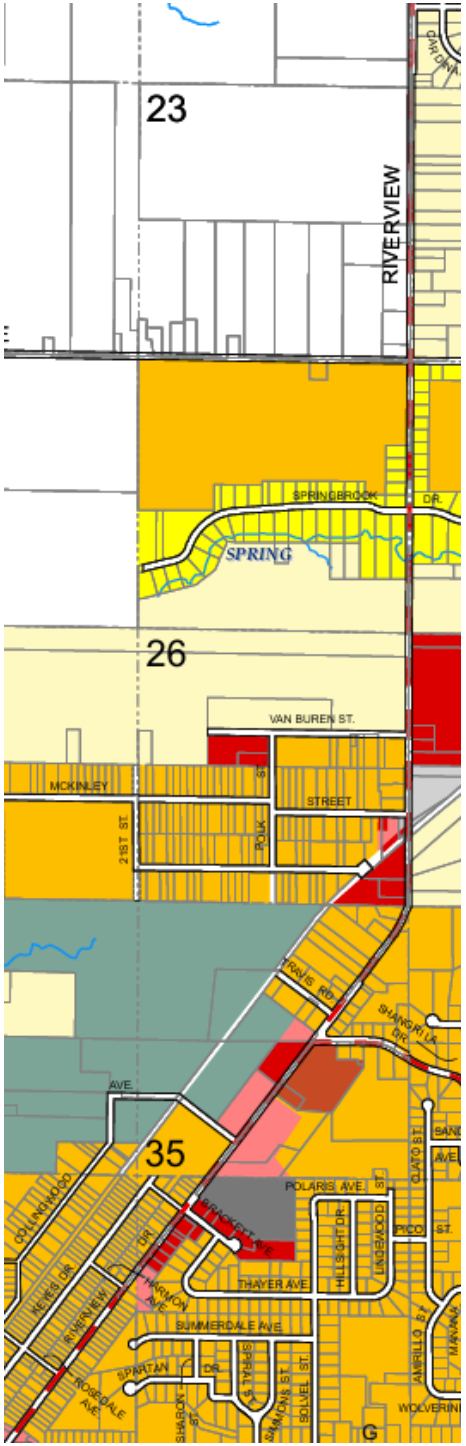
West Michigan Trails conducted a River to River Trail Planning Study in 2017 that analyzed potential non-motorized trail routes from Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids that would connect communities as well as improve mobility options and recreation. The study examined trail route opportunities and challenges on the ground, held public meetings, and meetings with stakeholders and regulatory agencies to determine design and use features desired by the public.

The River-to-River/Interurban Trail is intended to connect 10 communities between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. This planned trail will be 35+ miles for bicyclist, walkers, and hikers. According to West Michigan Trails, this connection between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids is in its "infancy" stage of development.

For Cooper Charter Township, the planned route runs from the current end of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail at West D Avenue east of the Kalamazoo River within an existing Consumers Energy right-of-way where it enters into Allegan County The total distance in Cooper is approximately 3.35 miles.

West Michigan Trails has been in initial discussions with Cooper Charter Township regarding the trail extension. However, at the time of the development of this Master Plan, no firm design plans have been developed.






# CHAPTER 4: ZONING PLAN

Zoning is a key regulatory mechanism for achieving the future land use pattern advocated in this Master Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is the long-range vision of the Township's preferred land use pattern. It is not the Township's zoning map, which is the current regulatory document for controlling development. Therefore, the Future Land Use Map provides a guide for land use decisions and how properties should be zoned over time.

In addition, it should be noted that the Future Land Use Map is generalized. Any zoning amendments in accordance with the plan should be made gradually so that change can be managed. This is particularly true for the suggested alterations to existing land uses, especially where established homes and businesses are located. The Future Land Use Map as well as the plan's goals should be consulted to judge the merits of a rezoning request.

The following table indicates how the future land use categories relate to the zoning districts in the Zoning Ordinance. In certain instances, more than one zoning district may be applicable to a future land use category.

| Future Land Use Category | Existing Zoning Districts |
|---|---|
| Agricultural District | A: Agricultural District |
| Low Density Residential District | R-1: Rural Residential District |
| Medium Density Residential District | R-2: Residence District Single-Family, R-3: Residence District Single- and Two -Family |
| High Density Residential District | R-4: Residential District Medium Density Multi-Family, R-5: Residence District High Density Multi-Family, and R-6: Mobile Home Park District |
| Recreation/Open Space | RD: Recreation District |
| Commercial District | C-1: Commercial District Local, C-2: Commercial District General, and C-3: Commercial District Shopping Center |
| Mixed-Use District | Cooper Business District |
| Industrial District | I-1: Industrial District Restricted, I-2: Industrial District Manufacturing and Services, and I-3: Industrial District Heavy |



Protecting rural character is and continues to be a major concern for Township residents.

The following items are recommendations related to potential changes to the Zoning Ordinance to help ensure the effectiveness and success of this plan. These potential amendments are intended to provide options for the Township in developing the Master Plan vision. Priorities related to the Zoning Plan should be reviewed by the Planning Commission over the length of this Plan.

1. Consider changes to Section 120.600: Schedule of Lot, Parcel, Building Site, Yard and Area Requirements:

   - Parcel Size - The Agricultural, R-1, R-2, and R-3 Districts all have the same minimum parcel size requirement which is 22,275 square feet. This is 495 square feet more than half an acre in size. Having the same parcel size requirement does not support the intent of the lower density future land use districts or the goal of the Agricultural or R-1: Rural Residential zoning districts which is to protect rural character. This parcel size is also problematic where public water and sewer are not available and there is no intention for future infrastructure development.

     The Future Land Use Plan indicates single-family homes not associated with farming operations within the Agricultural District should be on approximately five acres and the Low Density Residential category recommends two acres per single-family home. Based on current mapping data of the Township, the average parcel size in the Agricultural zoning district is 18 acres and 6.5 acres in the R-1: Rural Residential District. Making the change to the Zoning Ordinance to increase required parcel size may create some parcel nonconformities, but it would help to protect the rural character of those areas of the Township where this has been future planned.

   - Frontage Requirements – If parcel sizes are altered, frontage requirements should also be examined. Once again, the Agricultural, R-1, R-2, and R-3 Districts all have the same frontage requirements, which is 132 linear feet. If an increase to five acres in the Agricultural District and two acres in the R-1: Rural Residential District occur, frontage requirements would need to increase at a minimum to 234 feet and 148 feet respectively. This is to meet the required four to one depth to width ratio regulations of the Michigan Lan Division Act.

| Recommended Parcel Size and Frontage Updates | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Zoning District** | **Parcel Size (sq ft)** | **Frontage (ft)** | **Depth (ft)** |
| Agricultural | 217,800 (5 acres) | 234 | 930.77 |
| R-1: Rural Residential | 87,120 (2 acres) | 148 | 588.65 |



Lot size plays an important role in the look and feel of a subdivision. Consideration of adjacent residential lot size is important to compatible design

2. Update lot size requirements in the Subdivision and Site Condominium Ordinances:

Both the Subdivision and Site Condominium General Ordinances have lot size and frontages that are different than the residential districts in the Zoning Ordinance. Regardless of the Zoning District in which the development is to take place, the Subdivision and Site Condominium regulations prevail.

While an interesting approach as each general ordinance considers whether public water or sanitary sewer are available, they do not consider the location of the new development or the underlying intent of each zoning district. For example, a new subdivision in the R-1: Rural Residential District has the same lot size requirements as a new subdivision in the R-3: Residential District. As the intensity and density of these two districts have been designed to be compatible with surrounding land uses, allowing a subdivision of the same size and scale in both districts seem counterintuitive.

The current Subdivision and Site Condominium Ordinance allow the following:

a. Lots served by public sewer and public water:
   - Single-family residential lots: 80-foot minimum width at the building setback line; 10,560-square-foot minimum area.
   - Two-family residential lots: 100-foot minimum width at the building setback line; 13,200-square-foot minimum area.

b. Lots served by public water or public sewer:
   - Single-family residential lots: 100-foot minimum width at the building setback line; 15,000-square-foot minimum area.
   - Two-family residential lots: 120-foot minimum width at the building setback line; 18,000-square-foot minimum area.

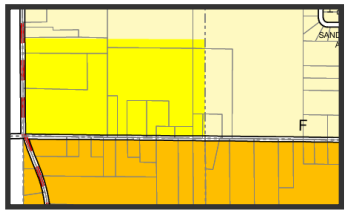
c. Lots not served by either public water or public sewers:
   - Single-family residential lots: 100-foot minimum width at the building setback line; 22,000-square-foot minimum area.
   - Two-family residential lots; 120-foot minimum width at the building setback line; 30,000-square-foot minimum area.

Most of the developments that would occur within the Agricultural or R-1: Rural Residential District would not be served with public water or sanitary sewer. The current Subdivision and Site Condominium Ordinances would allow a lot size of 22,000 square feet, which is just over half an acre. This lot size would not likely accommodate a home, the current Kalamazoo County Health Department standards for a septic system, and a water well. This also does not consider typical rural living accessory structures that most property owners wish to enjoy.

At a minimum, the Planning Commission may wish to consider larger lot sizes for areas where public water and sanitary sewer are not available. However, considering the intent of the Future Land Use Plan, developing lot sizes that are more compatible with the desire to preserve rural character in the Agricultural and Rural Residential District seems appropriate. These lots could be smaller than what would occur under a typical unplatted land division as described in the recommended changes to Section 120.600 previously noted. For example, the unplatted parcel in the R-1: Rural Residential District would be a minimum of two acres whereas the subdivision lot could be a minimum of one acre if water or sewer were available and one and a half acres if neither public service was available.

3. Consider the following changes to the zoning districts:

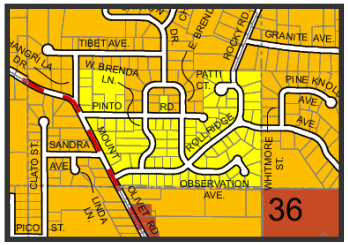
- Combine the R-2 and R-3 Residence Districts: Since there is no difference in parcel/lot size, frontage, setbacks, etc. between the R-2 and R-3: Residence Zoning Districts, a recommendation would be to eliminate one of these districts. There are very few parcels/lots zoned R-2: Residence District in the Township, as follows:



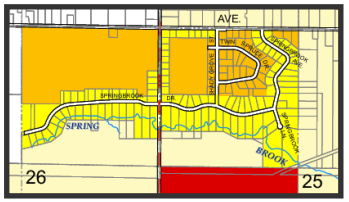

* Unplatted parcels of land at the northeast corner of 12th Street and West F Avenue,




* Mulder's Annex subdivision at the southwest corner of West F Avenue and Westnedge,



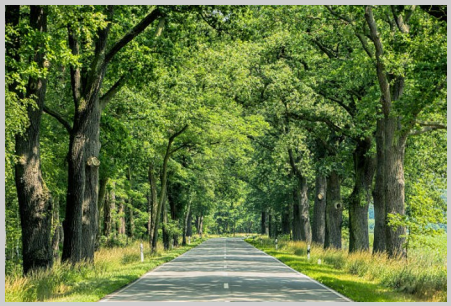

* Pine Knoll subdivision east of Mount Olivet Road, and




* Spring Brook plat both east and west of Riverview Drive south of East E Avenue.

Uses within the R-2 and R-3 Districts are relatively the same except for the allowance of two-family residential developments in the R-3 District as a special exception use. Since this is a use that requires Planning Commission approval, its presence should not be a detriment to the combination of these two districts.

- Eliminate the C-3: Commercial District, Shopping Center: Currently, the C-3: Commercial District is not found on the Township's Zoning Map. It is a district within the Zoning Ordinance, but no properties are zoned for this purpose. With the limited amount of property zoned commercial in the Township, and the limited amount of land currently future land use planned for commercial, the removal of this district would not be impactful. The Planning Commission would need to carefully consider the uses outlined in the C-3 District to



Maintaining the tree line along the major County roads helps protect rural character.

Subdivision examples with and without tree projection during development.





see if they would be better served in the C-2: Commercial District or the I-1: Industrial District if the C-3 District were eliminated.

The updated Zoning Districts would be as follows:

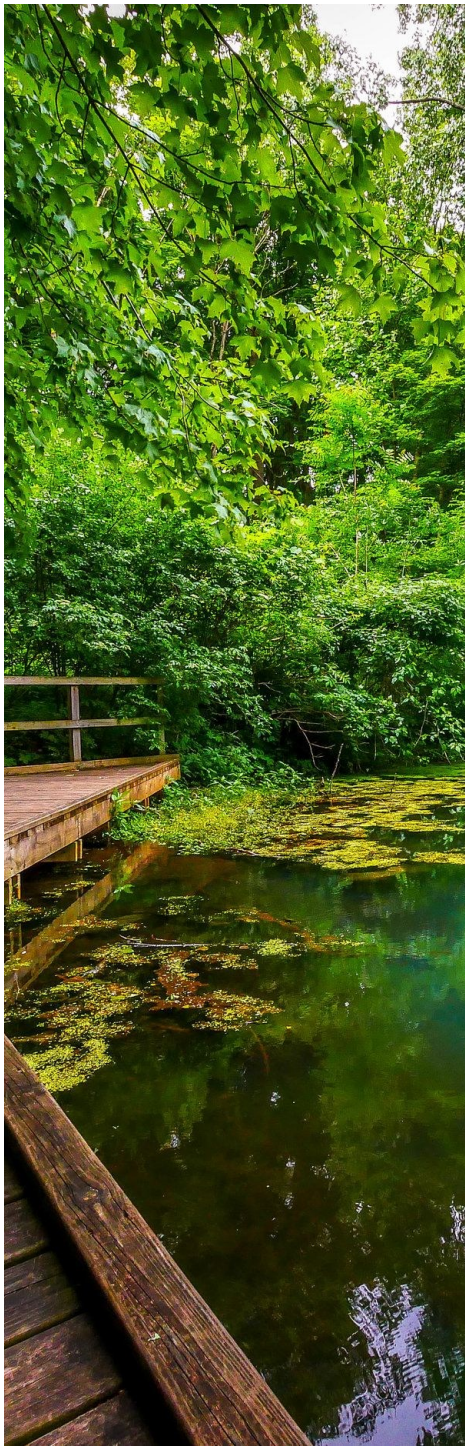
| Update Zoning Districts | Future Land Use Categories |
|---|---|
| A: Agricultural District | Agricultural District |
| R-1: Rural Residential District | Low Density Residential District |
| R-2: Residence District, Single- and Two-Family | Medium Density Residential District |
| R-4: Residential District Medium Density Multi-Family, R-5: Residence District High Density Multi-Family, and R-6: Mobile Home Park District | High Density Residential District |
| RD: Recreation District | Recreation/Open Space |
| C-1: Commercial District Local and C-2: Commercial District General | Commercial District |
| Cooper Business District | Mixed-Use District |
| I-1: Industrial District Restricted, I-2: Industrial District Manufacturing and Services, and I-3: Industrial District Heavy | Industrial District |

4. Consider the creation of a residential and/or mixed-use planned unit development (PUD) option for the R-1 through R-5 Districts. This would be a separate allowance from the OSPD: Open Space Preservation District ordinance that currently exists in the Township's Zoning Ordinance. A PUD could permit a combination of residential densities, housing types, and/or a mix of residential and commercial land uses that would allow variety within the development. Typically, a PUD requires the developer to provide amenities and/or preserved open space within the project in exchange for allowances like greater design flexibility, increase density, etc.

5. Allow the development of accessory dwelling units of limited square footage and under specific regulatory requirements for residential parcel/lots of a certain size if water and sanitary sewer needs can be managed.

6. Include an emphasis on natural features preservation with the subdivision and site condominium ordinances. For example, requiring conservation of natural buffers along roadways to keep rural character, protect tree growth at the development borders to screen adjacent properties, and reduce tree removal internal to the project.

7. Consider working with property owners to eliminate any spot zoning found in the Township.



# CHAPTER 5: PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT

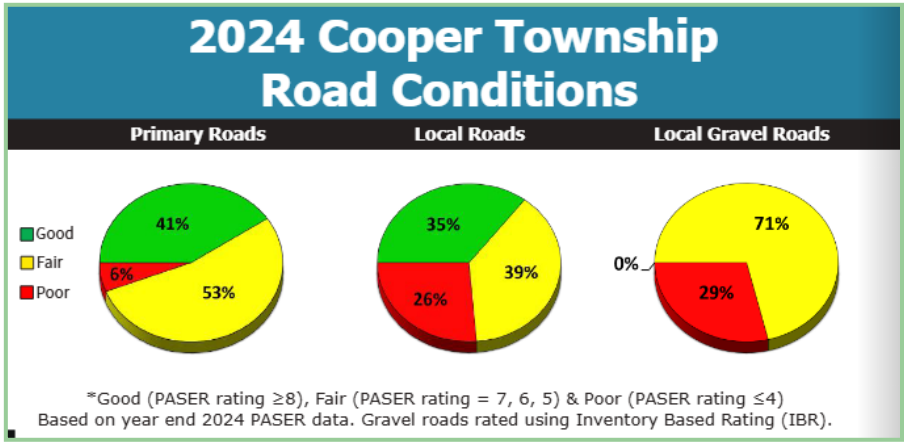
The information offered within this section of the Master Plan will provide an overview of the community facilities and services in the Township, outline existing land uses, and provide information on natural features.

## Community Facilities and Services

### Transportation

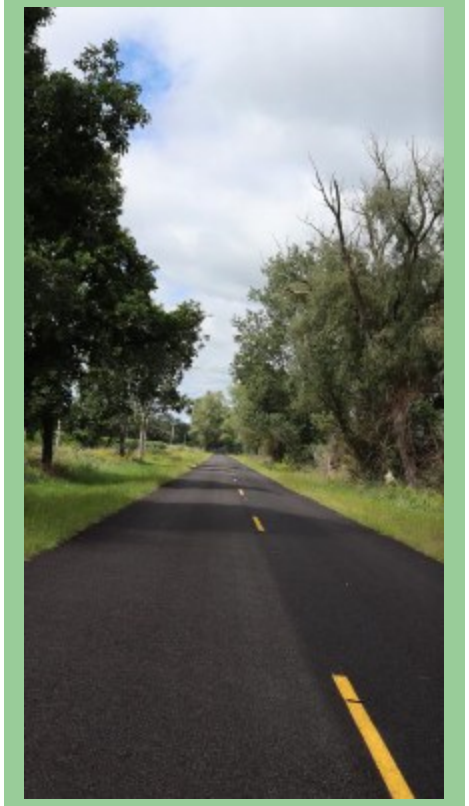
#### Primary and Secondary Roads

Roads within Cooper Charter Township are maintained by the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County. Each year, the Road Commission provides an update on the road conditions within their region. For the conditions on federal aid roads, the Road Commission collaborates with both the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). According to the 2024 Annual Report, the latest report available from the Road Commission, there are 95 miles of road in Cooper Charter Township managed by the Road Commission. Of these, there are 31 miles of county primary roads, 63 miles of local paved roads, and one mile of local gravel roads.




The pavement of roads is evaluated using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating system (PASER) developed by the Transportation Asset Management Council. PASER is a system designed to visually assess pavement condition while driving (known as a windshield survey) and assign a value of 1 to 10 based on the observed defects. PASER scores are as follows:

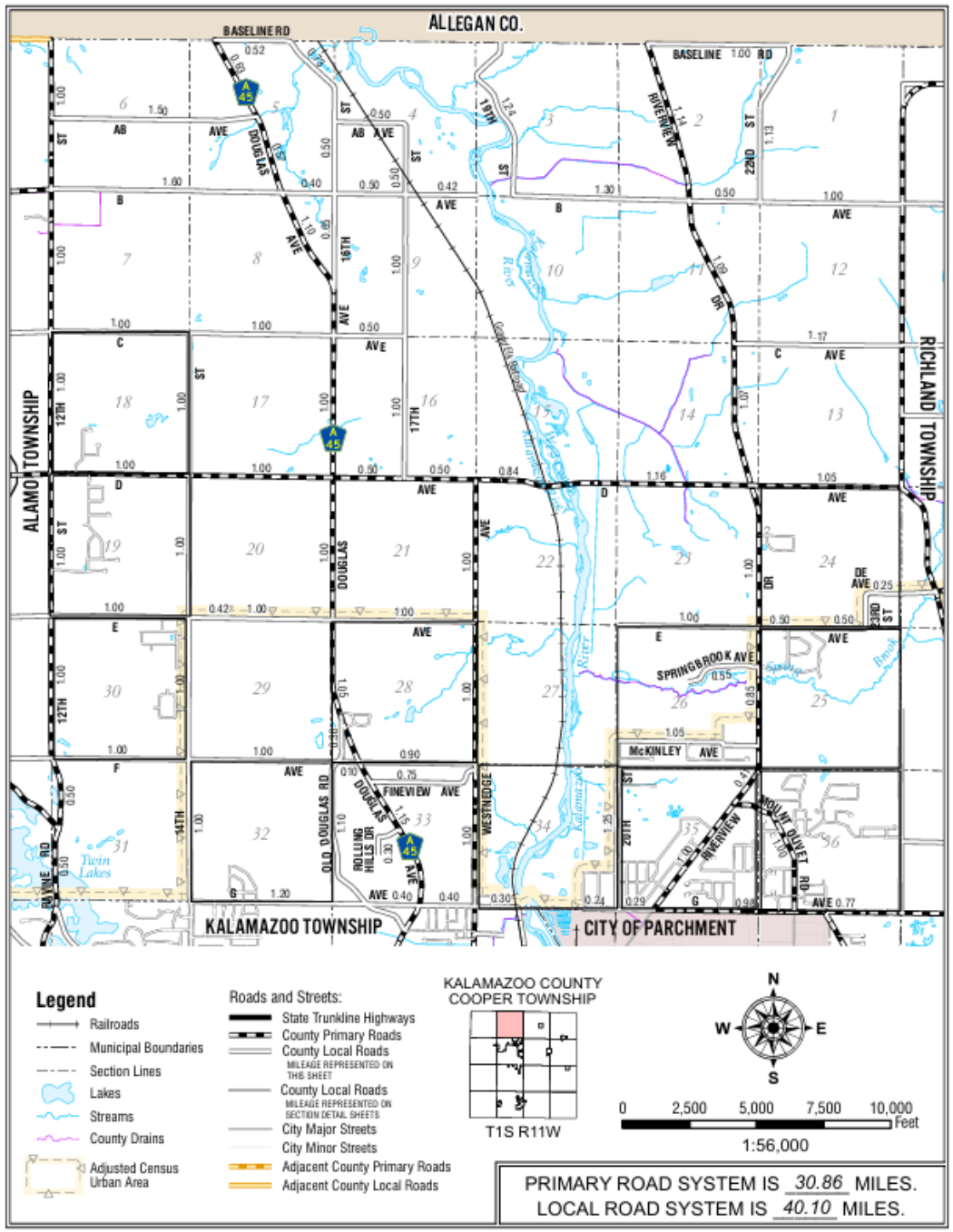
- Rating 8-10 (good): requires routine maintenance
- Rating 5-7 (fair): requires capital preventative maintenance
- Rating 1-4 (poor): requires structural improvements or reconstruction



**Chip seal on B Avenue.**

Of the roads managed by the Road Commission, 41 percent of the county primary roads are in fair condition, 53 percent are in good condition, and six percent are in poor condition. Of the local roads, the percentage is almost equal between poor condition (26 percent), fair condition (39 percent, and good condition (35 percent). Cooper's roads appear to be, on average, in the same condition as other more developed townships in the county.

While US 131 is not located in the Township, it is immediately adjacent and is an important transportation route for the community. It connects with Interstate 94 located just south of the City of Kalamazoo, which links the cities of Detroit and Chicago. These major transportation corridors offer easy commutes to many of the local employment centers in Allegan, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph counties.



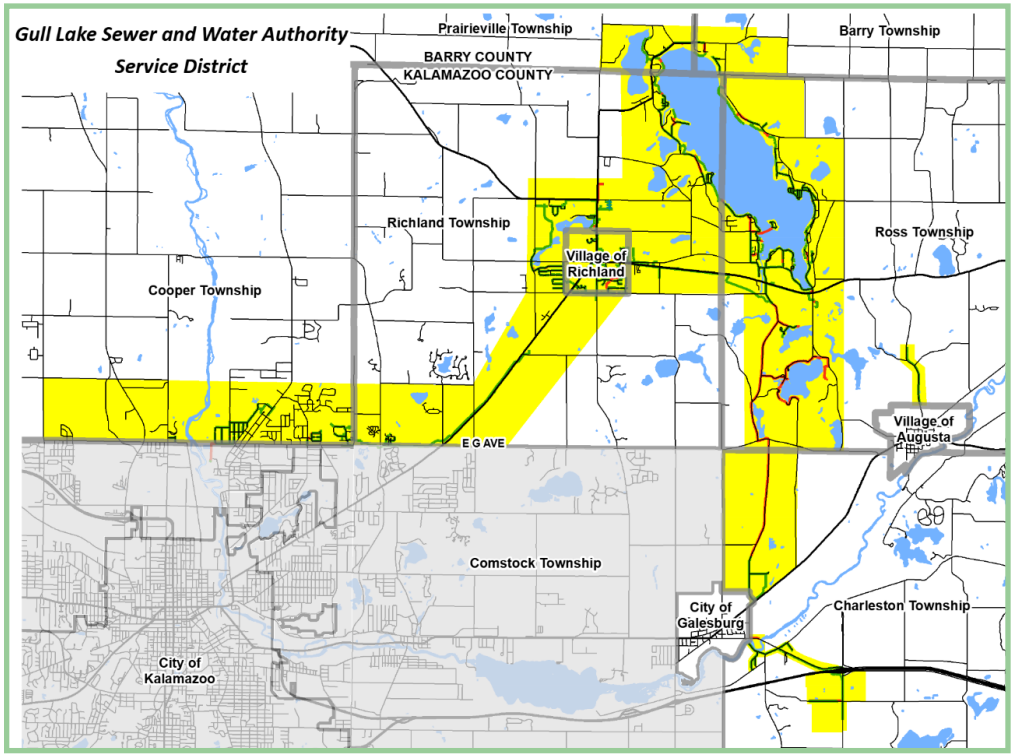
### Metro Connect

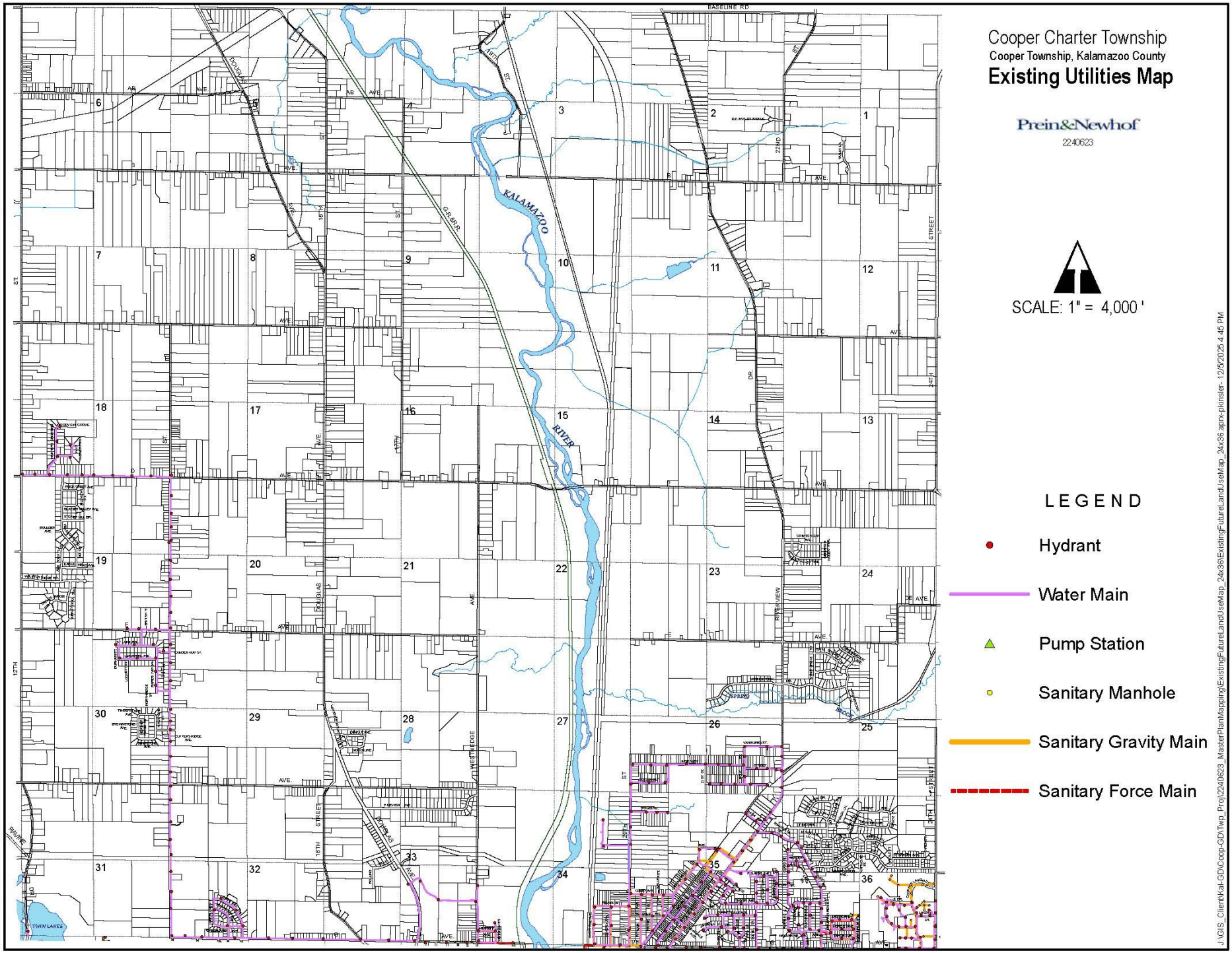
Metro Connect is a round trip program that will take Cooper Township residents to a specified location. It is a county-wide program, as well as the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Battle Creek. All Kalamazoo County residents are eligible for Metro Connect, however there are discounted fares for individuals who are certified with a disability and seniors 62 years of age and up.

## Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

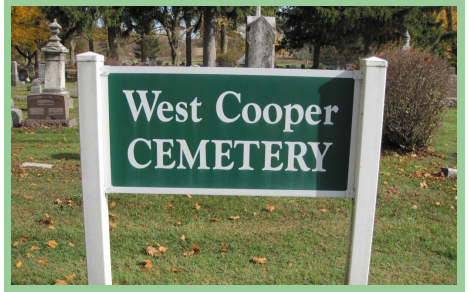
The Gull Lake Water and Sewer Authority provide services to a small portion of the southeastern section of the Township. The Authority is a public body that is funded through user fees and intergovernmental agreements. The Board of Commissioners for the Authority are representatives from Barry Township, Cooper Charter Township, Prairieville Township, Richland Township, and Ross Township.

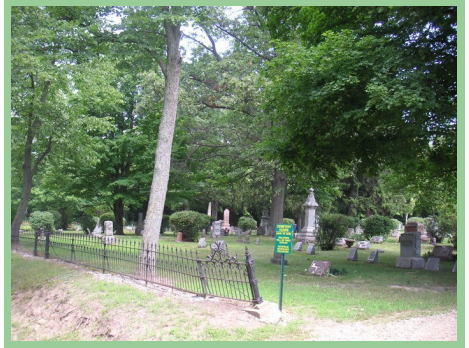
The Cooper Charter Township Utility Map is found on the following page. Public water and sanitary sewer are found in the southeast section of the Township along Riverview Drive and into some of the adjacent subdivisions. The water main continues west down G Avenue to 14th Street and then turns north until it reaches West D Avenue. At this point the utility turns west and stops at the Township line on 12th Street. Some subdivisions are supported by this water main on West G Avenue, 14th Street, and West D Avenue. According to the Township Engineer, there is a total of 28.8 miles of public watermains and 7.2 miles of public sanitary sewer lines within main roadways and subdivisions/site condominiums in Cooper Charter Township.




Cooper Charter Township
Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County
Existing Utilities Map
Prein&Newhof
2240623
SCALE: 1" = 4,000 '
LEGEND
Hydrant
Water Main
Pump Station
Sanitary Manhole
Sanitary Gravity Main
Sanitary Force Main
KALAMAZOO RIVER
BASELINE RD
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# Township Facilities and Services

## Cooper Charter Township Government

Cooper Charter Township Hall can be found at 1590 West D Avenue, with access off of Douglas Avenue just north of the West D and Douglas Avenue intersection. The Township recently completed a substantial improvement to the facility, adding office space and creating a new parking lot and entry point to the Hall. Access to local officials can be gained at the Township Hall through posted office hours or at Township Board meetings. Residents, property owners, or business owners may rent the Township Hall meeting room for events.



**New entrance to the Township Hall.**

## Fire Stations and Equipment

The Township has two fire stations to service residents. The first is attached to the Township Hall (Fire Station 1) and the second, Station 2, is located at 3160 McKinley Street. The Fire Department has two engines that each hold 1,000 gallons of water, one tanker truck that holds 3,000 gallons of water, two rescue trucks, one grass fire truck, and two boats for water rescue.

The Fire Department currently has 21 highly trained paid-on-call staff providing fire suppression, fire prevention, and emergency medical services. Besides the 36.6 square miles of the Township, the Department also has reciprocal agreements with several jurisdictions. If additional assistance is needed in the Township, Richland and Alamo Townships will provide support.

## Cemeteries

There are two public cemeteries within the Township: East Cooper and West Cooper Cemeteries. Per Ordinance No. 177, a burial space shall only be issued to a resident taxpayer whose name appears on the deed of property. However, the Township Clerk may authorize burial plots under the following circumstances:

- Upon the death and for burial of a current firefighter of the Township.
- Upon the death and for burial of a minor child or a single adult child of a resident taxpayer.
- Resident taxpayers that lived in the Township for 20 years or more and have moved may purchase burial permits under the same terms and conditions as current resident taxpayers.







**Markin Glen Park**

The East Cooper Cemetery is located at 7942 North Riverview Drive, which is the southeast corner of East D Avenue and Riverview Drive. This cemetery is just under seven acres and has available plots. The West Cooper Cemetery is located at 7530 Douglas Avenue and is about halfway between West D and West E Avenues. It is just over 10 acres in size and also has plots available for burials.

### Parks and Recreation

Cooper Charter Township does not have any recreation facilities that they own and manage. However, there are other significant public and private recreational facilities within the Township that will be discussed later in this Chapter.

Cooper Charter Township does own 35 acres along the Kalamazoo River south of East D Avenue where the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail ends. There is currently a parking lot for residents to access the trail. Cooper is working with the Kalamazoo County Parks Department and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to develop a kayak/canoe launch. The plans may also include expanding the parking lot and adding a pavilion. Most of the 35 acres will remain undeveloped as it is the site of an old landfill. However, the acreage near West D Avenue is available for these improvements.

## Kalamazoo County Park Facilities

### Markin Glen Park

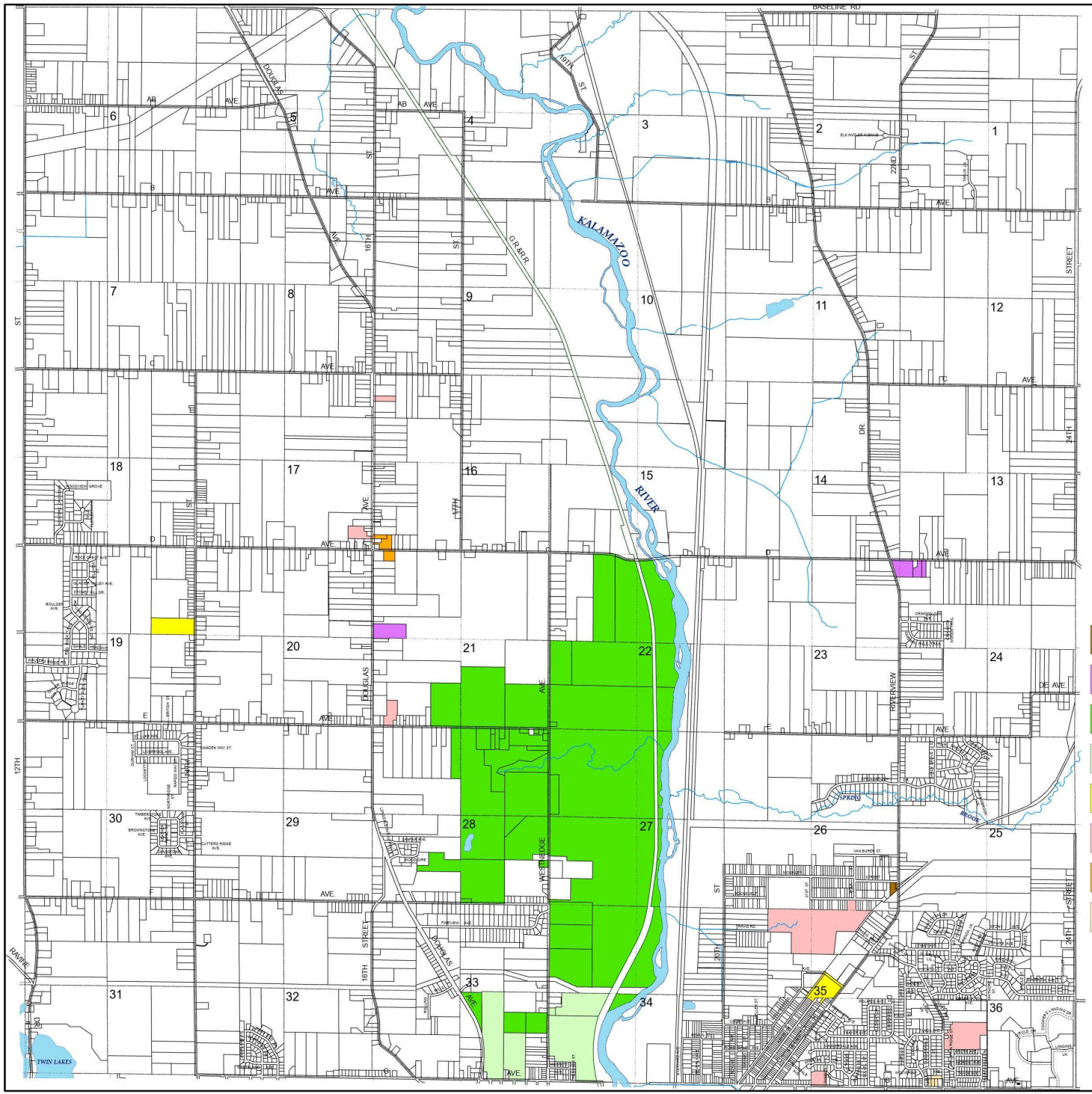
Markin Glen County Park, which opened in 1994, was originally the estate of Morris Markin, the founder of Checker Motors corporation of Kalamazoo. The park has many unique and beautiful natural features. Hikers can experience one of the best scenic views in the County from the top of one of the highest points in Kalamazoo. The park is also home to a mature beech-maple forest, which was the common forest type in the northeastern United States when it was settled by Europeans.

The park totals 160 acres and includes fishing, swimming, picnic areas and shelters, hiking and multi-use trails, playgrounds, softball fields, tennis courts, and volleyball. A unique feature of Markin Glen Park is a five-mile dedicated mountain bike trail that is mostly a machine built singletrack. The trail is well signed and includes a changing station, drinking water, pavilion, bike parking, and restroom at the trailhead.



### Markin Glen Campground

The state-of-the-art campground was opened in 2004 and offers 38 full hook-up sites, and each campsite includes a fire ring and picnic table. The campground also provides modern restrooms and showers, fire-




# Cooper Charter Township

Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County

## Facilities Map

Prein&Newhof

2240623

SCALE: 1" = 4,000 '

**LEGEND**

- Cooper Fire Station
- Cemetery
- Nature Preserve
- Park
- School
- Church
- Township Hall
- Vacant Land Owned By Township

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wood sales, and a dump station. Advanced reservations are required for Markin Glen, and the campground generally opens sometime in April and closes at the end of October each year.

### Kalamazoo River Valley Trail

The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVT), which began in 1991, is a 10-foot wide, paved asphalt trail designed for non-motorized transportation and recreation. Currently, there are 24 miles complete of this fully paved-asphalt trail. However, the intent is to eventually extend 35 miles across the County, connecting with a larger regional network of trails. When complete, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail will connect with the Battle Creek Linear Park, Kal-Haven Trail, and the Portage Bicentennial Park Trail, joining more than 140 miles of trails across Southwest Michigan.

In Cooper Charter Township, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail enters at East G Avenue within Markin Glen Park and travels north through the Nature Center to end at East D Avenue near the farthest north parking area to access the trail. The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail is operated as a Kalamazoo County Park and is free for anyone to use.




Kalamazoo River Valley Trail

## School Districts and Higher Education



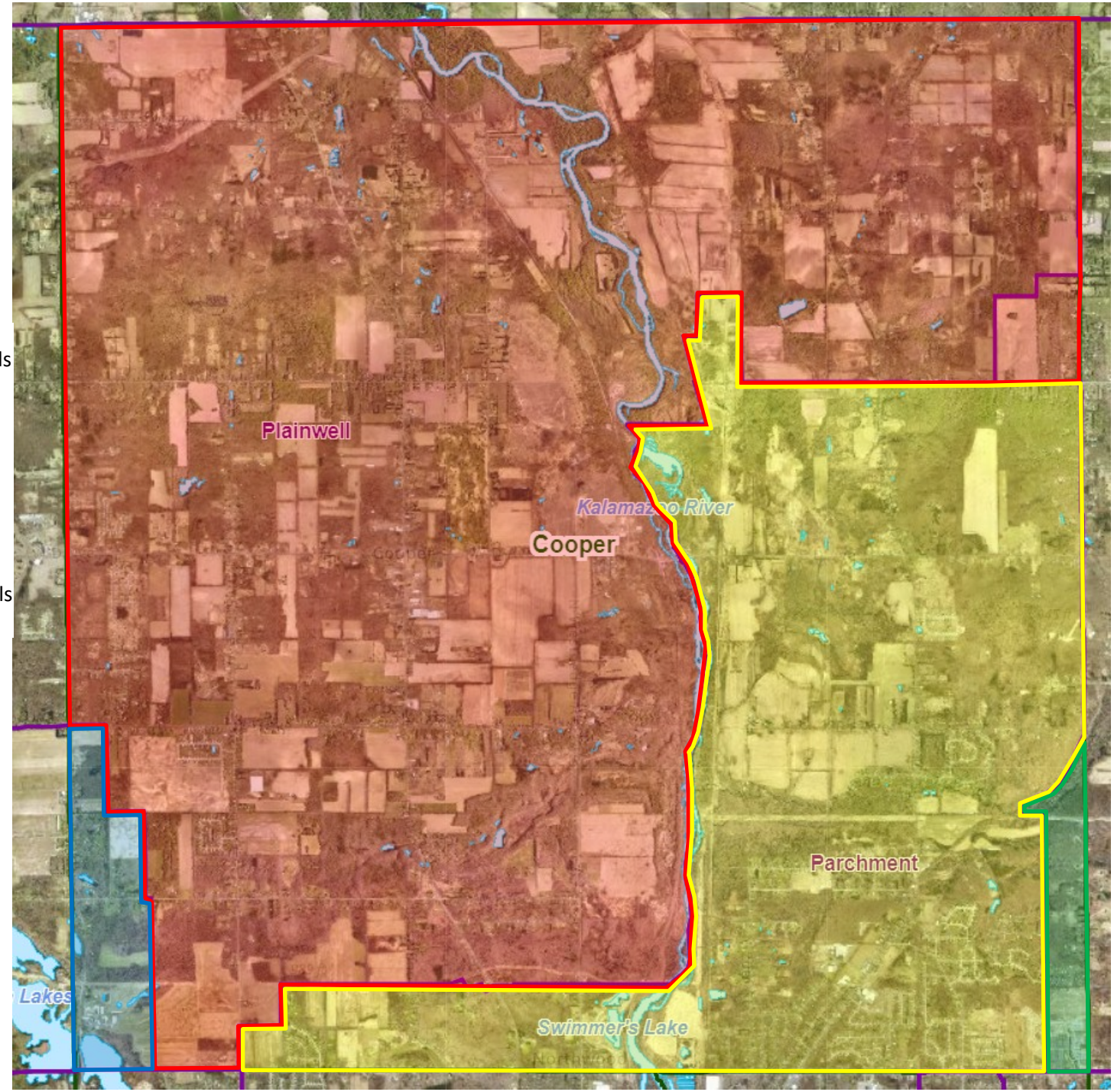



Cooper Charter Township is supported by four school districts: Plainwell Community Schools, Parchment School District, Otsego Public Schools, and Gull Lake Community Schools.

Plainwell Community Schools is the largest school district in the Township covering approximately 25 square miles. This school district also has three elementary schools and a middle and high school. The elementary school that services Cooper Charter Township is Cooper Elementary located on 14th Street. The middle schools and high school are located in the City of Plainwell in Allegan County. Plainwell also has an alternative education program called Renaissance High School and Adult Education that provides career and technical training courses. In 2024/2025, there were 2,769 students enrolled in the Plainwell Community Schools and the district employed approximately 336 teachers and staff.

The Parchment School District is the second largest district in Cooper Charter Township at just over 10 square miles. For the 2024/2025 school year, there were six public schools serving 1,575 students, including one high school, one

# Cooper Charter Township School Districts Map















North Elementary School

middle school, and three elementary schools. The North Elementary School is located in Cooper Charter Township on Keyes Drive. Also, the District includes the Parchment Innovation Center and the Parchment Early Learning Center, which is a state licensed childcare and preschool program. The Parchment Innovation Center is a new program designed to provide individualized learning based on a student's post-secondary interests. Students collaborate with staff to develop a learning plan based on career interests, goals, and skills. The program not only prepares students for post-secondary opportunities but also provides job training throughout their high school experience in their field of interest. There are approximately 1,586 students in the District and 265 teachers and staff.

The Otsego Public School District covers the smallest area of Cooper Charter Township from just east of 12th between the Townships' southern boundary to East E Avenue. In total, approximately 495 acres or 0.77 square miles is in the Otsego Public School District. This District has an early childhood center, three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. One of the elementary schools is located within Alamo Township, immediately to the west of Cooper Charter Township, on North 6th Street, north of West D Avenue. The remaining schools are located in the City of Otsego in Allegan County. In 2024/2025, there were 2,364 students enrolled in the Otsego Public Schools and the district employs 322 teachers and staff.

Finally, the Gull Lake Community Schools have a very small portion (439 acres or 0.68 square miles) of their district along the eastern boundary of Cooper Charter Township. For the 2025 school year, there are seven public schools serving 3,322 students in Gull Lake Community Schools School District, with approximately 488 teachers and staff. The district includes one high school, one middle school, one intermediate school (grades 3 to 5), two elementary schools, and the Gateway Academy. The district also offers the Gull Lake Virtual Program, which is personalized learning in an online setting. The Gateway Academy is an alternative school serving students who have difficulty completing their education in a traditional setting.

The Early Middle College program is available to all high schoolers in Kalamazoo County. It is a five-year high school program that partners with Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kellogg Community College, and Western Michigan University. Students who graduate under this program have two years of college courses allowing them to either enter the workforce or move on to a bachelor's degree in a shorter timeframe.

Higher education is in close proximity to Cooper Charter Township providing many opportunities to local residents. The following schools can be found within approximately one hour of the Township:

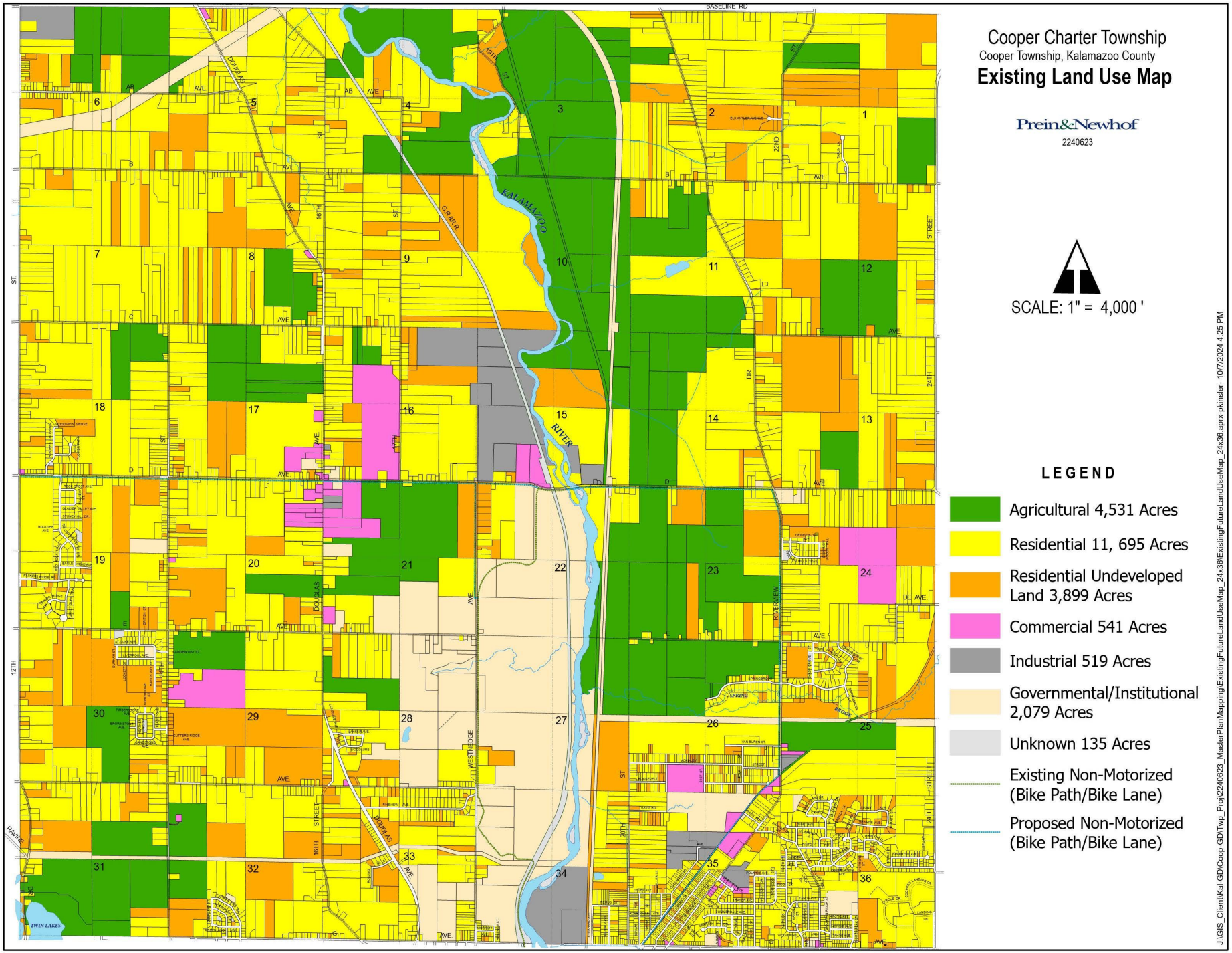
- Kellogg Community College (Battle Creek, MI)
- Sienna Heights University (Benton Harbor, MI)
- Andrews University (Berrien Springs, MI)
- Grand Rapids Community College (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Calvin University (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Aquinas College (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Grand Valley State University (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Hope College (Holland, MI)
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (Kalamazoo, MI)
- Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, MI)
- Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, MI)
- Michigan State University Extension (Paw Paw, MI)
- Michigan Career and Technical Institute (Plainwell, MI)
- Spring Arbor University (Portage, MI)
- Lake Michigan College (South Haven, MI)

In addition, there are other community colleges and universities in South Bend, Indiana, including University of Notre Dame, that are less than two hours from the Township. The wide variety of colleges and universities near Cooper Charter Township offer myriad opportunities for area high school graduates in determining the direction of their higher education aspirations.

## Existing Land Use

An evaluation of the existing land uses within Cooper Charter Township is critical to the formulation of its future land use plan. The type and location of existing land uses provide the starting point for that vision and any possible impacts to existing uses. It will also assist with the development of a zoning plan to help mitigate these impacts.

The Existing Land Use Map was developed utilizing the assessing codes for property, as well as a thorough review by the Township Planning Commission to ensure accuracy. The land use designations are intended to be broad to convey general land coverage. For example, the residential code does not differentiate between residential types – single-family, multi-family, mobile home, etc. Based on the data provided, properties assessed and coded residential is the largest category in the Township at 64 percent of the land. Agriculturally coded parcels are second highest at approximately 30 percent.

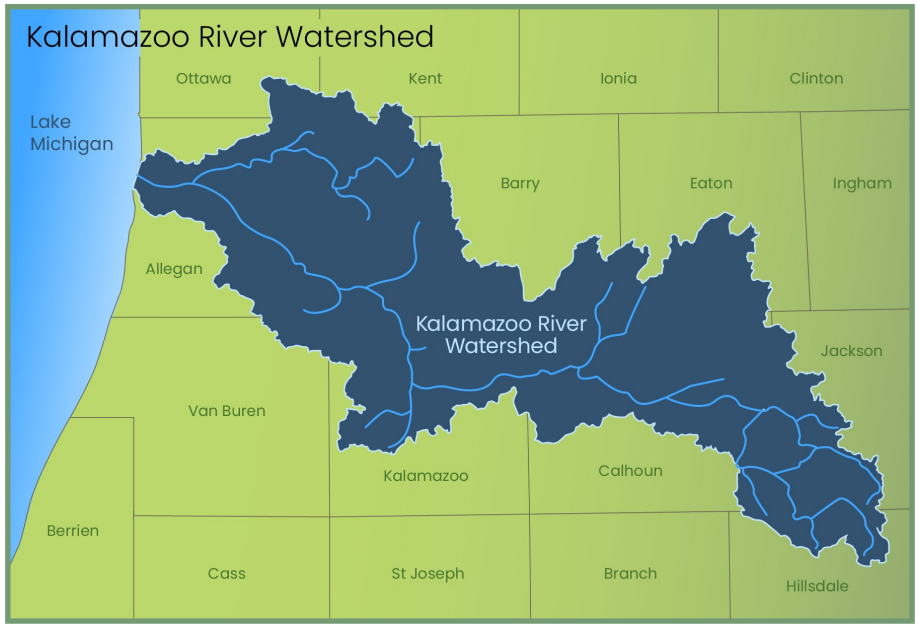

Cooper Charter Township
Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County
Existing Land Use Map
Prein&Newhof
2240623
SCALE: 1" = 4,000 '
LEGEND
Agricultural 4,531 Acres
Residential 11, 695 Acres
Residential Undeveloped Land 3,899 Acres
Commercial 541 Acres
Industrial 519 Acres
Governmental/Institutional 2,079 Acres
Unknown 135 Acres
Existing Non-Motorized (Bike Path/Bike Lane)
Proposed Non-Motorized (Bike Path/Bike Lane)
KALAMAZOO RIVER
BASELINE RD
DOUGLAS AVE
12TH ST
RAVINE
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## Natural Features

Along with the relevant demographic data, understanding the natural features of the Township is important to future land use planning and goal development. Information related to soils, watersheds, topography, and wetlands will be examined.

### Waterways, Watersheds, and Wetlands

According to the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner, Cooper Charter Township is completely within the Kalamazoo River watershed area. This watershed encompasses 10 counties from Hillsdale and Jackson to the east and Allegan adjacent to Lake Michigan to the west. Of course, the main water body in Cooper is the Kalamazoo River running north/south and which essentially bisects the Township. From the Kalamazoo River, running east and west, there are some minor streams and County drains. One of particular note is the Spring Brook, which moves from the Kalamazoo River east to the Township line where it enters Richland Township. The Kalamazoo County Drain Map for Cooper Charter Township is on the following page.



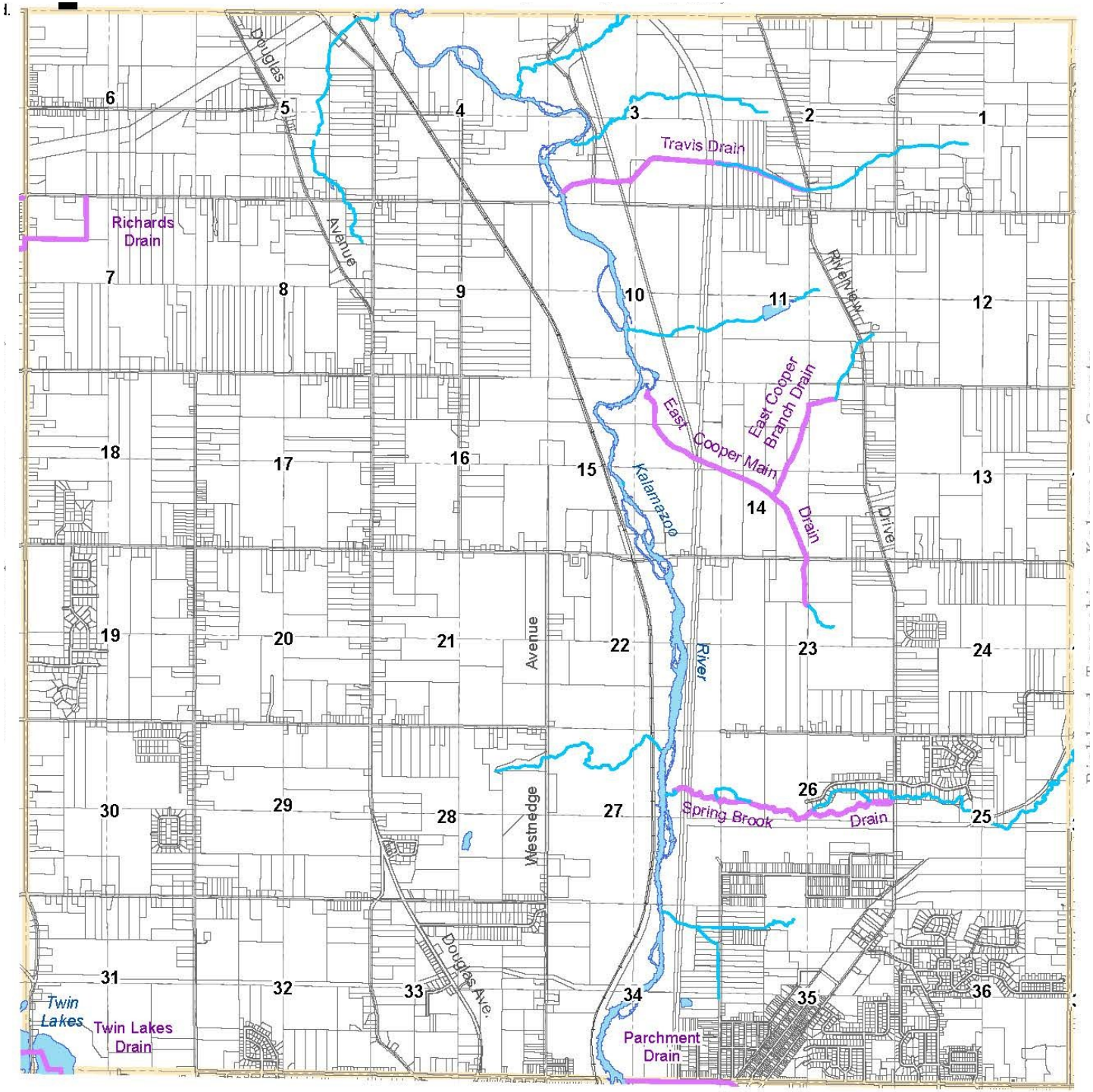

A watershed is an area of land that drains rainwater and snow melt into one location such as a stream, lake, or wetland. Groundwater is connected to the surface water network within a watershed. Both the surface water and groundwater of the watershed supply our drinking water, making the quality of the watershed extremely important.

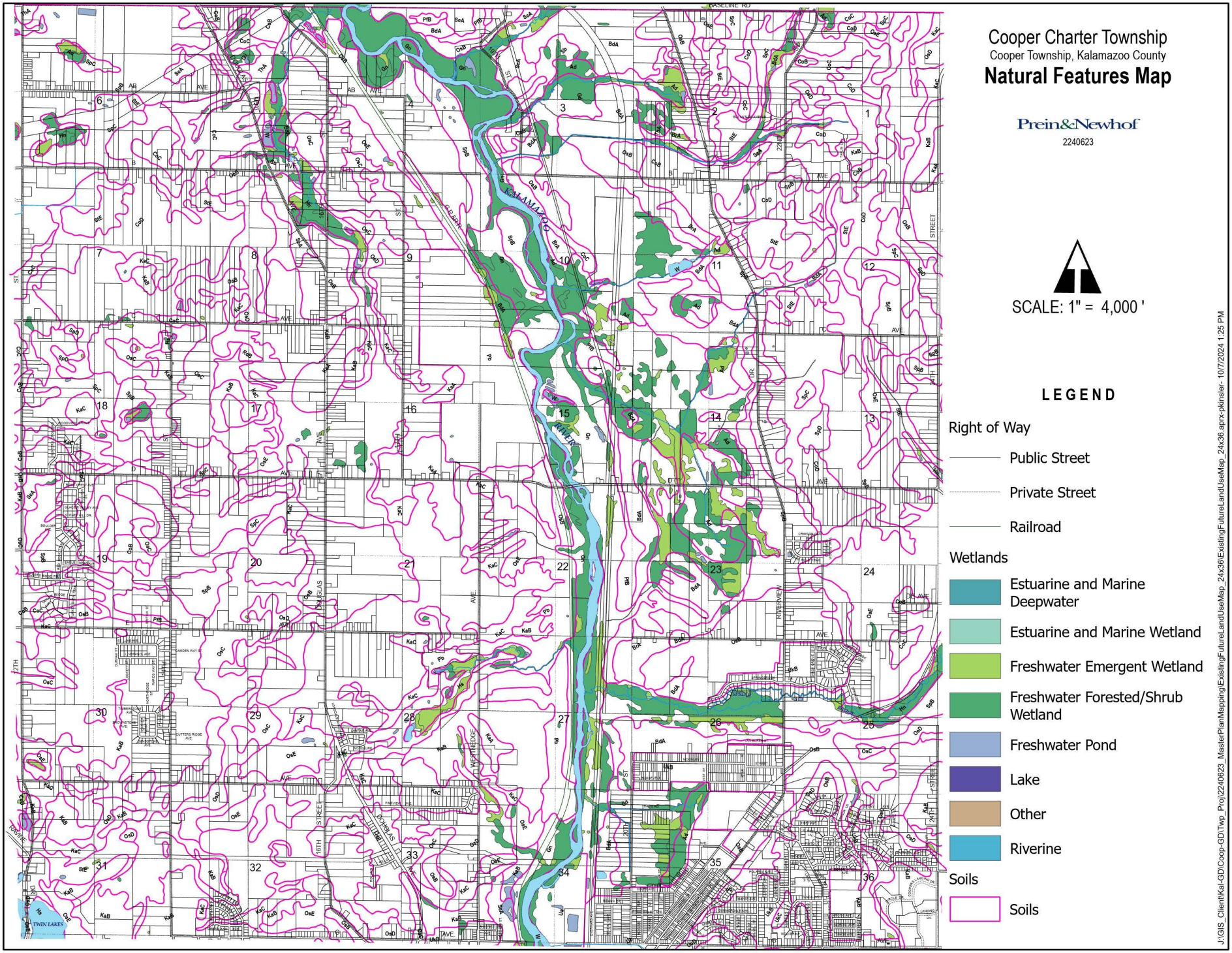
The Kalamazoo River Watershed Public Advisory Council (KRWC) is a group of local citizens representing a variety of stakeholders throughout the Kalamazoo River Area of Concern (AOC), which include business and agricultural interests, landowners, hunting and fishing groups, local governmental units, public health agencies, educators, conservationists, and environmental activists. The KRWC plays an important role in many watershed-wide initiatives, all with the long-term protection, restoration, enjoyment and stewardship of the Kalamazoo River and its tributaries.

# Kalamazoo County Office of the Drain Commissioner

## Drain Map

## Cooper Charter Township




Cooper Charter Township
Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County
Natural Features Map
Prein&Newhof
2240623
SCALE: 1" = 4,000 '
LEGEND
Right of Way
Public Street
Private Street
Railroad
Wetlands
Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
Estuarine and Marine Wetland
Freshwater Emergent Wetland
Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
Freshwater Pond
Lake
Other
Riverine
Soils
Soils
J:\GIS_Client\Kal-GD\Coop-GD\Twp_Proj\2240623_MasterPlanMapping\ExistingFutureLandUseMap_24x36\ExistingFutureLandUseMap_24x36.aprx-pkinsler- 10/7/2024 1:25 PM

Not surprisingly, some wetlands can also be found within Cooper Charter Township and the Kalamazoo River Watershed and its tributaries. Wetlands are defined as areas that are covered, often intermittently, with shallow water or have soil saturated with moisture, regularly called marshes or swamps. Wetlands can serve a variety of important functions, which provide value to both the natural and built environments, as follows:

- Mitigate flooding by detaining surface runoff.
- Control soil erosion and sedimentation in rivers and lakes.
- Improve water quality which can be degraded by chemicals from fertilizers and pesticides used in agriculture and lawncare, as well as stormwater runoff from roads and developed lands.
- Function as ecosystems for wildlife habitats.
- Provide aesthetic viewsheds and may function as recreational areas.

Wetlands are often the areas that experience flooding during heavy rainfall. Floodplains are lands that are temporarily inundated by an overflow of water from the river, creek, or lake, generally resulting from a 100-year rainfall event. The Natural Features Map shows that most of the wetlands in the Township are Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands. This type of wetland is found where moisture is relatively abundant, particularly along rivers. They normally have an overstory of trees, with an understory of young trees or shrubs, and an herbaceous layer.



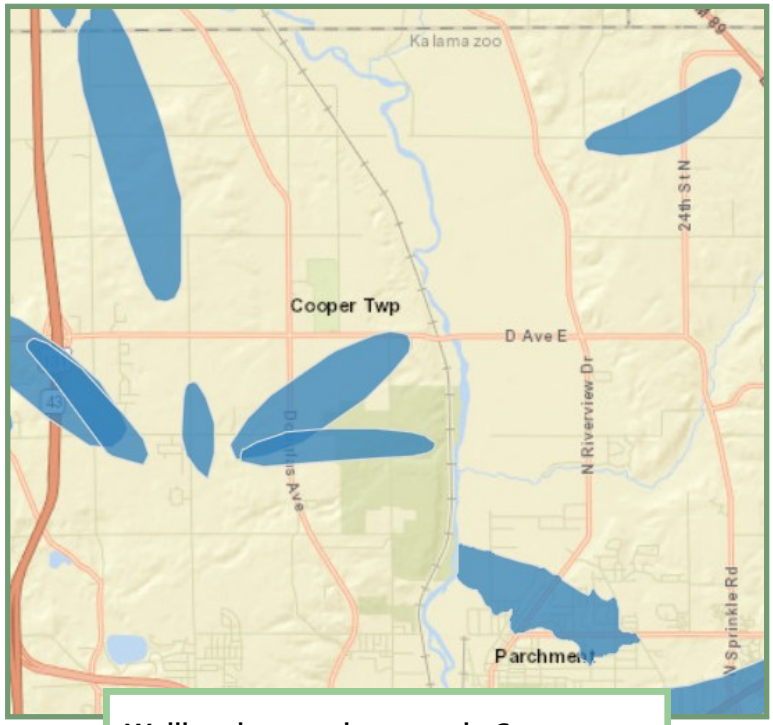
**Wetlands found at the Nature Center**

## Surface and Groundwater

As previously stated, groundwater and surface water are fundamentally interconnected. Understandably, surface water is the water that collects on the ground. Groundwater is the surface water that saturates the tiny spaces between soil and rock to eventually infiltrate underground aquifers. Most groundwater is found in aquifers, which are layers of porous rock that are saturated from above.

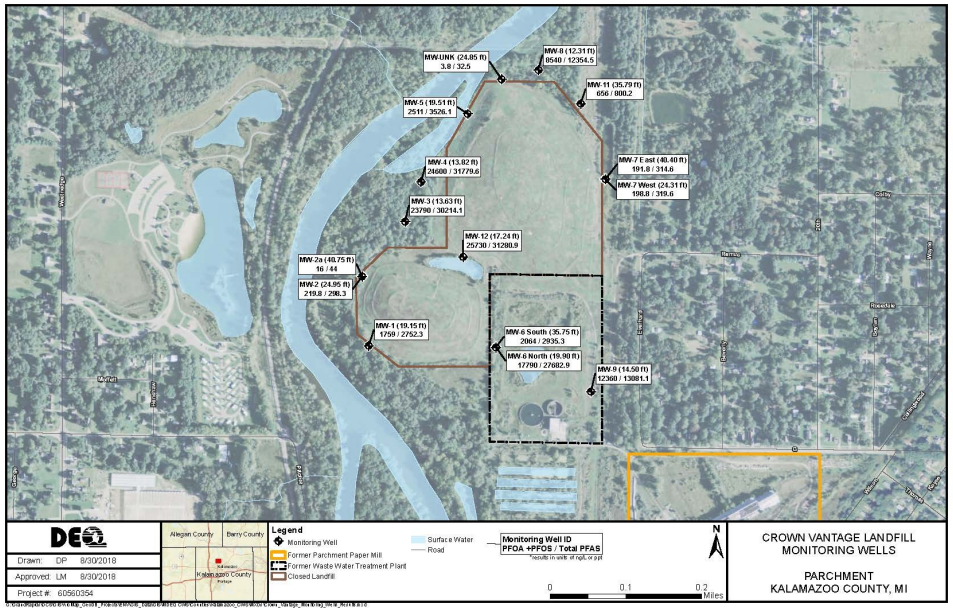
A clean and abundant supply of groundwater is very important in Cooper Charter Township because all drinking water in Kalamazoo County comes from ground water. Due to this, there are large wellhead protection areas throughout the county, eight of which are found in or touch Cooper Charter Township. The Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy have a source water protection program, which includes identification of areas where groundwater is used to supply drinking water to communities. A Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) is the surface and subsurface

surrounding a water well or well field through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move toward and reach such water well or well field. It is that area which contributes groundwater to a public water supply well. The Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy maintains a mapping system of wellhead protection areas for the state. The adjacent map is a snippet from their system for Cooper Charter Township.




**Wellhead protection areas in Cooper.**

Similar to the other water features in the Township, groundwater is endangered by pollutants. A significant polluter to the Township's groundwater is a defunct landfill at the southern border of the Township near the Kalamazoo River. The Crown Vantage property encompasses a former Type II (nonhazardous waste) and Type III (hazardous waste) landfill historically utilized for disposal of papermaking waste, a wastewater treatment plant, settling lagoons, and the former mill property. The property is suspected of being a source for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances known as PFAS that was detected in the City of Parchment's municipal water system and nearby Cooper Township residential water wells. Ground water monitoring continues for the foreseeable future in and around the landfill site. Ground water reports and continued monitoring plans can be found at the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. The landfill property is now owned by Cooper Township.



The most numerous identified sources of groundwater contamination in Kalamazoo County are leaking underground storage tanks and other industrial or commercial sites of point source contamination. According to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, there are approximately 15 underground storage tanks in Cooper Charter Township. These tanks are predominately found on Riverview Drive, West D Avenue, and 14th Street. Of these tanks, there are eight listed by the Department (facility names and addresses provided by the State) as Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST), as follows:

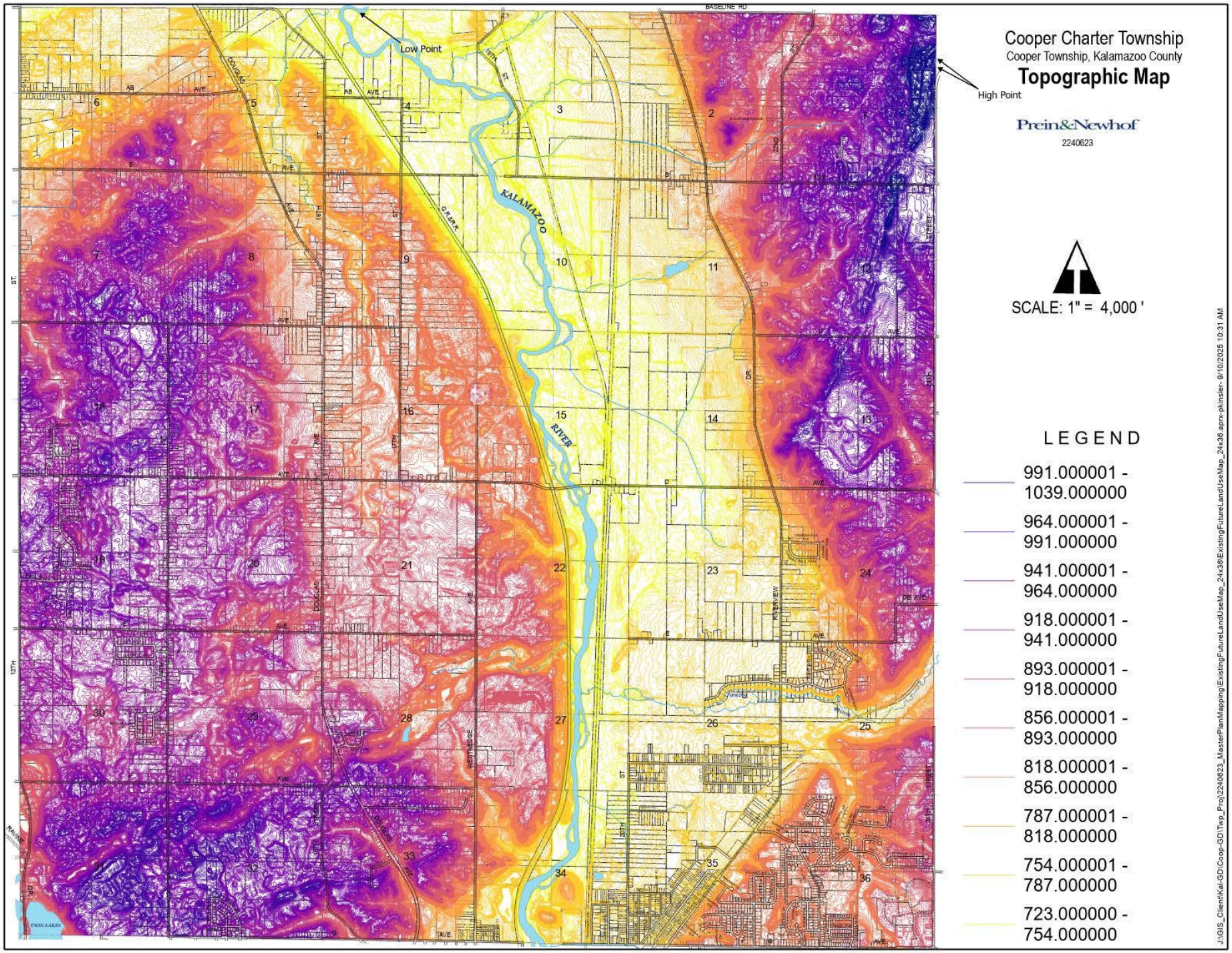
| Facility ID | LUST Name | Risk Condition |
|---|---|---|
| Parchment Water Response | No Address, MI, 49004 | Risks Present and Immediate |
| Sleemans Service | 8004 Douglas Ave, Kalamazoo | Risks Present and Immediate |
| Right-of-Way | Right-of-Way, MI, 49004 | Risks Controlled-Interim |
| West G Avenue, Parchment | West G Avenue, MI, 49004 | Risks Present and Require Action in Short-term |
| Hydro Extrusion USA | 5575 North Riverview Drive | Risks Present and Require Action in Short-term |
| E G Avenue Parchment | E G Avenue, Parchment | Risks Present and Require Action in Short-term |
| 5575 Collingwood Avenue | 5575 Collingwood Avenue | Risks Controlled-Interim |
| 5496 North Riverview Drive | 5496 North Riverview Drive | Risks Present and Require Action in Short-term |

Point source contamination refers to a known source or location of the contamination, such as a spill or leak. Additionally, non-point source contamination can be caused by numerous small sources of onsite sewage systems, agricultural run-off, road maintenance, and incorrect yard maintenance. The most common chemicals tested are nitrates, fluoride, chloride, sodium, iron, sulfates, and arsenic.

## Soils and Topography

Cooper Charter Township is located in the physiographic region called hilly moraines, which encompasses the lower half of the lower peninsula. Hilly moraines are characterized as gently rolling to hilly with a considerable amount of relatively level topography and contain lakes and poorly drained lands. Per Michigan State University's Geography of Michigan and the Great Lakes Region, this is one of the best developed parts of the state for agriculture and industry.

The elevation of the Township is lowest along the Kalamazoo River and gently increases moving both east and west. The highest elevation is at the northeast corner of the Township at 1,039 feet. The lowest point is along the Kalamazoo River at 723 feet.

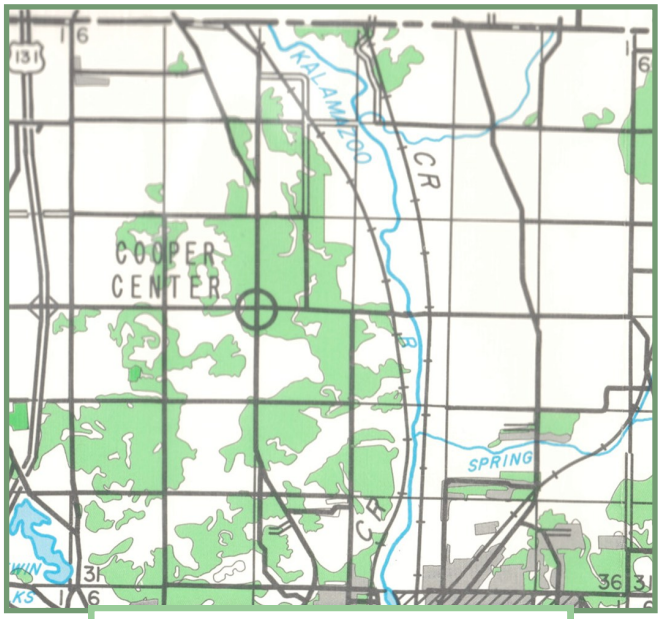

Low Point
High Point
KALAMAZOO
RIVER
BASELINE RD
Cooper Charter Township
Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County
Topographic Map
Prein&Newhof
2240623
SCALE: 1" = 4,000 '
LEGEND
991.000001 - 1039.000000
964.000001 - 991.000000
941.000001 - 964.000000
918.000001 - 941.000000
893.000001 - 918.000000
856.000001 - 893.000000
818.000001 - 856.000000
787.000001 - 818.000000
754.000001 - 787.000000
723.000000 - 754.000000
J:\GIS_Client\Kal-GD\Coop-GD\Twp_Proj\2240623_MasterPlanMapping\ExistingFutureLandUseMap_24x36\ExistingFutureLandUseMap_24x36.aprx-pkinsler- 9/10/2025 10:31 AM

| Soil Classifications |
|---|
| Ad \| Adrian |
| BdA \| Brady sandy loam |
| BrA \| Bronson sandy loam |
| CoB \| Coloma loamy sand |
| DoA \| Dowagiac loam |
| Ed \| Edwards muck |
| Gd \| Gilford sandy loam |
| Gn \| Glendora sandy loam |
| Gy \| Granby loamy sand |
| Hn \| Houghton muck |
| KaA \| Kalamazoo loam |
| OsE \| Oshtemo sandy loam |
| Pb \| Pits, gravel |
| PfB \| Plainfield loamy sand |
| RdC \| Riddles loam |
| SaA \| Schoolcraft loam |
| Sb \| Sebewa loam |
| SeA \| Sleeth loam |
| SpB \| Spinks loamy sand |
| ThA \| Thetford loamy sand |
| Ua \| Udipsamments, level to steep |
| Ub \| Urban land |

Soils in the Township are generally classified into three types: wet sandy and loamy soils underlain by sand and gravel; loamy soils with underlain by sand and gravel; and wet organic and loamy soils. Sandy soils are known to allow water to move rapidly through, and loamy soils hold water. The combination of these two soil types tends to be very nutritious and fertile for plant growth.

## Prime Farmlands

Southwest Michigan, including Cooper Charter Township, has both the soils and climate favorable to agricultural production. According to Southwest Michigan First, over 200 agricultural commodities are generated on a commercial bases in southwest Michigan, making the state the second most agriculturally diverse in the nation. In addition, southwest Michigan produces almost one-third of Michigan's total agricultural sales. The micro lake-effect climate found along Lake Michigan is what makes the state one of the major fruit-growers in the nation. In addition, the sandy and fertile soils help fruit bearing trees grow deep roots allowing their production to be successful.




Prime Farm Lands In Cooper

Cooper Charter Township has acres of prime farmland, which are located primarily west of the Kalamazoo River.

Additional categories of farmlands include unique, which produces specific high-value food; farmland of statewide importance, which would be designated by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; and farmland of local importance, which are important local agricultural areas but have not been designated as such by the federal or state government. There are two small areas of unique farmlands designated in Cooper Charter Township. One is located in the southwest corner of the Township between 12th and 14th Streets north of West G Avenue and the second is west of the Kalamazoo River north of West B Avenue.

According to American Farmland Trust:

*"Fertile soils take thousands of years to develop. Creating them takes a combination of climate, geology, biology, and good luck. So far, no one has found a way to manufacture them. Thus, productive agricultural land is a finite and irreplaceable natural resource."*

Agricultural lands support more than a market value product; they also provide important cultural and ecological values. For the local community, they provide open space, scenic views, and community character. Long-range environmental benefits include wildlife habitat, clean air and water, flood control, and groundwater recharge areas. They may also have social heritage importance to local generational families.



## Conclusions/Considerations

In developing the goals and future land use plan for the Township, the following conclusions/considerations were evaluated:

- There are significant public and private parks, recreation, and conservation lands in the Township, which must be protected.

- The Township is completely within the Kalamazoo River watershed, which is important to the surface and ground water within the Township. Protection of the watershed should be considered whenever development occurs to protect Township drinking water.

- Soil types should also be reviewed whenever development is considered. The future land use map should consider that most of the Township relies on septic systems. Ensuring soils can support development will be critical to groundwater protection.

- The soil types in Cooper Charter Township are also ideal for agricultural uses. Supporting existing farmlands should be important to the future land use map.

- The extension of public water and sewer will only occur through investment of private developers.



# CHAPTER 6: DEMOGRAPHICS AND EMERGING TRENDS

This chapter of the Master Plan will inventory past demographic trends, outline current conditions, and analyze future projections and their impacts on the Township. Information related to the Township's population and emerging issues which may influence the development of goals and the future land use map, will be examined.

## Demographics

The demographic information reviewed as part of this planning effort was collected from the decennial U.S. Census, as well as the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. In addition, information was pulled from Esri Segmentation Area Profile, which is a web-based system that provides demographic data. Esri utilizes professional demographers, statisticians, and economists who access a wide variety of public and private data sources to develop information for local communities to understand demographic trends.

### Population Trends

The population within Cooper Charter Township experienced a 19.4 percent increase during the 23-year period between 2000 and 2023. This equates to an additional 1,698 people. This percentage increase, however, includes the loss of 568 persons between the 2020 and 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This is higher than the loss experienced by Kalamazoo County as a whole. Unfortunately, this decrease could be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State of Michigan overall has seen some minor increases in population during this 22-year period of 1.2 percent. These increases are encouraging when considering the loss of population in Michigan from both the Great Recession of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Population growth occurred in all eight jurisdictions adjacent to Cooper Township between 2010 and 2023, except Prairieville Township in Barry County. Cooper, Oshtemo, and Richland Townships saw the greatest increases in population during this 23-year timeframe.

See Tables 1 and 2 on the following page.

| Table 1: Population Change | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community** | **2000** | **2010** | **% Change** | **2020** | **% Change** | **2023** | **% Change** |
| Cooper Twp | 8,754 | 9,836 | 12.36% | 11,020 | 12.04% | 10,452 | -5.15% |
| Kalamazoo County | 238,603 | 250,738 | 5.09% | 264,322 | 5.42% | 261,437 | -1.09% |
| State of MI | 9,938,444 | 9,952,687 | 0.14% | 9,973,907 | 0.21% | 10,051,595 | 0.78% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000, 2010, and 2020 Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | | | | | | |

| Table 2: Population Comparisons | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community** | **2010** | **2020** | **10-Yr % Change** | **2023** | **3-Yr % Change** | **13-Yr % Change** |
| *Cooper Twp* | *9,836* | *11,020* | *12.04%* | *10,452* | *5.15%* | *6.26%* |
| Alamo Twp | 3,766 | 3,805 | 1.04% | 3,812 | 0.18% | 1.22% |
| Comstock Twp | 14,633 | 15,231 | 4.09% | 15,187 | -0.29% | 3.79% |
| Gun Plain Twp | 5,903 | 6,148 | 4.15% | 6,157 | 0.15% | 4.30% |
| Kalamazoo Twp | 21,791 | 22,777 | 4.52% | 22,619 | -0.69% | 3.80% |
| Oshtemo Twp | 20,789 | 23,747 | 14.23% | 23,743 | -0.02% | 14.21% |
| Prairieville Twp | 3,415 | 3,334 | -2.37% | 3,367 | 0.99% | -1.41% |
| Richland Twp | 7,368 | 8,693 | 17.98% | 8,768 | 0.86% | 19.00% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2020 Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

In looking to the future, four separate growth calculation methods were utilized to determine the potential population change for Cooper, which include:

- Linear Projection - extends historical population increases into the future at the same constant historical rate of change between 2010 and 2023.
- Constant Annual Rate of Change - takes the average annual growth rate (0.88 percent) in the Township and extends it out for 20 years.

- Doubling Population Time Growth - projects out the amount of time it will take the population to double based on an annual growth rate and then provides the population total for the amount of time requested, which is 20 years for this review.
- Exponential Projection - applies the growth rate in proportion to the annual increase in population, which is why this number is significantly higher than the other calculations. Essentially, the percentage rate of change is applied to the new population number each year resulting in a larger increase over the same time period.

**Table 3: Cooper Township Estimated Population Growth Trends**

Base Year 2023: Population 10,452

| Growth Method | Projection Year: 2043 |
|---|---|
| Linear Growth Rate | 12,477 |
| Compound Annual Growth Rate | 12,673 |
| Doubling Time Growth Rate | 20,902 |
| Exponential Growth Rate | 36,140 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, www.mymathtables.com

Based on recent declines in population for Cooper and Kalamazoo County, as well as the small incremental increases in Michigan's population, it is probable that the linear or compound rate of growth methods are more likely to occur over the next 20 years, all things remaining equal. Smaller incremental population increases are expected for more rural communities that generally have very low-density development. In addition, those areas of Cooper where public infrastructure is available are predominately built out. However, the Township's easy commute distance to larger employment centers and the draw of more rural living could indicate additional population increases in the future.

## Age of Residents

The age of Township residents can serve as an indicator of future economic, transportation, housing, and other community needs. The median age for Cooper Township according to the 2023 American Community Survey was 36.9 years old. This is just a bit older than the median age for Kalamazoo County (34.9 years), which is likely due to the predominately single-family housing nature of Cooper Township and the number of colleges and universities located within the county. However, the median age in Cooper is lower than the State of Michigan as a whole, which is 40.1 years.

The Census has outlined the following groupings to examine age by life cycle. The percentages of each for Cooper Township are provided:

| Table 4: Age of Residents | |
|---|---|
| **Age** | **Total** |
| Under 5 years | 722 |
| 5 to 9 years | 669 |
| 10 to 14 years | 694 |
| 15 to 19 years | 430 |
| 20 to 24 years | 820 |
| 25 to 34 years | 1,501 |
| 35 to 44 years | 1,532 |
| 45 to 54 years | 1,171 |
| 55 to 59 years | 622 |
| 60 to 64 years | 688 |
| 65 to 74 years | 988 |
| 75 to 84 years | 478 |
| 85 years and over | 137 |
| Median Age | 36.9 |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | |

Under 5 (Pre School) – 6.9 percent
5 to 19 (School Aged) – 17.2 percent
20 to 44 (Family-Forming) – 36.9 percent
45 to 64 (Mature Families) – 23.7 percent
Over 65 (Retirement) – 15.3 percent

Throughout the United States, the median age of the population is increasing as the Baby Boomer generation grows older. In addition, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has indicated that rural populations tend to be older than the American population as a whole and, as younger people leave rural areas to pursue different economic opportunities, it is aging faster. However, this trend is not as prevalent in Cooper Township likely due to its proximity and ease of access to employment centers in the larger Kalamazoo area. Households in the family formation life cycle are the largest majority in Cooper at almost 37 percent. The remaining life cycles besides pre-school are relatively evenly distributed in the Township.

While Cooper does not currently contain a large number of retirees (65+), the "greying of America" will likely play a future role in the Township's population. According to the US Census:

- In less than two decades, older adults are projected to outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history.
- The number of Americans ages 65 and older is projected to nearly double from 52 million in 2018 to 95 million by 2060, and the 65-and-older age group's share of the total population will rise from 16 percent to 23 percent.
- Those needing nursing home care will increase to about 1.9 million in 2030 from 1.2 million in 2017.

As the population in Cooper Township ages, housing options will become a principal concern. Aging in place may be an option, but to allow seniors to remain within their community, other housing opportunities like attached units, senior living, and assisted living facilities may need to be encouraged.

## Education

The educational attainment for Cooper Township residents 25 years and older compared with the State of Michigan and Kalamazoo County is varied. Cooper has less high school graduates (26.18 percent) than the State (27.7 percent) but more than the County (19.9 percent). For those with a bachelor's degree, Cooper (25.3 percent) is below both the State of Michigan who report 32.1 percent but almost even with Kalamazoo County who reported 25.4 percent.

**Table 5: Educational Attainment**

| Education Category | Total Persons | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Population 25 years and over | 7,117 | |
| Less than 9th grade | 15 | 0.21% |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma | 269 | 3.78% |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 1,863 | 26.18% |
| Some college, no degree | 1,664 | 23.38% |
| Associate's degree | 653 | 9.18% |
| Bachelor's degree | 1,801 | 25.31% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 852 | 11.97% |

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Households

The total number of households has increased by approximately four percent since the 2010 Census. At approximately 2.6 persons per household, this increase corresponds to the small increase in population during this same time period. In 2023, the average household size in Cooper Township was higher than Kalamazoo County, which was 2.39 persons per household. This could be due to the higher percentage of households within the "family formation" life cycle and the predominance of single-family homes in the Township. Cooper's household size is a little larger than both the United States at 2.43 persons and the State of Michigan at 2.54 persons per household.

**Table 6: Household Change**

| | 2010 | 2020 | Percent Change | 2023 | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total households | 3,852 | 4,156 | 7.9% | 3,992 | -3.9% |
| Average household size | 2.54 | 2.62 | 3.1% | 2.59 | -1.1% |

Source: 2010, 2020 Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

According to the Pew Research Center, there has been a long-running decline of average household size in the United States. This is due to two main factors: families having fewer children and the rise of the nuclear family through societal changes such as industrialization, urbanization, and improved living standards. In 1850, almost 70 percent of those 65 years and older lived with their adult children. By 2000, this decreased to fewer than 15 percent.

However, this trend is slowly changing as more Americans are living in multigenerational family households. The Pew Research Center equates this to several factors. There are more racially and ethnically diverse households in the United States. Asian, Black, and Hispanic families are more likely to live in households with grandparents. In addition, the Great Recession of 2008 required many families to double-up due to economic reasons. The recent increases in housing and other living costs from the COVID-19 pandemic are also liable to see this trend continue.

**Table 7: Household Types**

| Household Category | Total Persons | Percent of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Total Households | 3,992 | 100.0% |
| Married-couple households | 2,144 | 53.7% |
| Cohabitating couple households | 231 | 5.8% |
| Male householder, no spouse/partner | 740 | 18.5% |
| Living alone | 423 | 10.6% |
| Female householder, no spouse/partner | 877 | 22.0% |
| Living alone | 533 | 13.4% |
| Households with population under 18 years | 1,229 | 30.8% |
| Households with population 65+ | 1,102 | 27.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Not surprisingly, the largest household type in Cooper Township is married couples, at over half the households. Based on the information already provided related to "family formation" life cycle, household size, and the predominate housing style as single-family, this is not unexpected. There are approximately 1,102 senior (65+) households in the Township and 1,603 total seniors, which calculates to 1.45 persons per household. This leads to the deduction that more seniors are living alone, contributing to the 23.9 percent of householders living alone in the Township.

# Economic Indicators

As previously indicated, Cooper Charter Township fits the ICMA Smart Growth Network's description of an edge-dependent community. Economic stability is tied very closely with the financial viability and diversity of the Kalamazoo region. While the Kalamazoo/Portage area provides the most opportunities for employment, there are several possibilities within the Township in the industrial and service industries. Options include custom metal fabricators, concrete contractors, trucking, excavating, aluminum and brass casting, and service industries like automotive repair shops, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, mini-storage, and medical offices. Retail opportunities also exist with restaurants, gas stations, personal service establishments, and other small convenience shops.

The following information will provide an overview of the economic conditions of Cooper residents, including their incomes, labor force characteristics, and types of employment.

## Income

The table below provides the median, mean, and per capita household incomes for Cooper Township with adjacent dollar amounts shown in 2023 dollars based on cumulative inflation rates. The median income is the income that falls in the middle of those reported, half of the incomes are lower, and half are higher. The mean income is the total income divided by the number of incomes reported, or average of the total. Per capita income is the amount of money an individual person earns.

**Table 8: Household and Per Capita Income**

| Income Category | 2010 | 2010 in 2023 Dollars (35.7% Inflation) | 2020 | 2020 in 2023 Dollars (18.0% Inflation) | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Median Household | $56,188 | $76,247 | $75,619 | $89,230 | $94,257 |
| Mean Household | $67,637 | $91,783 | $85,867 | $101,323 | $112,457 |
| Per Capita | $26,059 | $35,362 | $35,384 | $41,753 | $43,537 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, 2020, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.calculator.net

As can be seen by comparing incomes utilizing 2023 dollars, many households in Cooper Township are just keeping ahead of inflation according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The inflation rate between 2020 and 2023 was 18 percent. In 2023, the mean or average household in Cooper was making $112,457 at that time, which is $11,134 more than what was needed to address the 18 percent inflation rate. Unfortunately, the Census does not have current 2025 incomes for Cooper Township. However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that inflation rate for 2024 was 2.9 percent and 2025 was 2.7 percent which means the average household would need to make $118,755 or an additional $6,298 to stay even with inflation.

The income information provided is based on averages for the Township, which does not consider the differences between income levels. While the mean or average household in Cooper is keeping pace with inflation, those at the lower income levels continue to struggle with reduced buying power. In May of 2024, the Congressional Budget Office completed a report on how inflation has affected households at different income levels since 2019. Unsurprisingly, the report details that households at lower income levels had reduced buying power. Price increases were greater for those items purchased by lower-income households than they were for higher-income households, and the income of households in the highest income levels grew more in percentage terms than lower income households.

When comparing Cooper Township to Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan, all income levels are higher with per capita income being the most similar. Both the mean and median incomes for Cooper households is notably higher at a difference of more than $20,000 for the median income and 11,000 for the mean income.

**Table 9: Household and Per Capita Income Comparison**

| Income Category | Cooper Twp | Kalamazoo County | State of Michigan |
|---|---|---|---|
| Median Household | $94,257 | $71,069 | $72,389 |
| Mean Household | $112,457 | $100,993 | $98,697 |
| Per Capita | $43,537 | $40,645 | $39,538 |

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Labor Force

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, the unemployment rate in Cooper Township was 5.0 percent. Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan had much lower unemployment rates at 3.7 and 3.6 percent respectively.

For the population 16 years and over, 29.9 percent are not in the labor force. This is a little less than the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate for Kalamazoo County, which was 33.7 percent. The Census determines someone is not in the labor force if they did not work in the last week of answering the Census survey and did not actively look for work in the previous four weeks. This person is not considered employed or unemployed by the Census, but outside of the workforce.

**Table 10: Labor Force**

| Labor Category | Total Persons | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Population 16 years and over | 8,309 | 100.00% |
| Civilian labor force | 5,825 | 70.01% |
| Employed (in labor force) | 5,409 | 92.85% |
| Unemployed | 416 | 5.0% |
| Armed Forces | 0 | 0.00% |
| Not in labor force | 2,484 | 29.90% |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | |

As with most communities, the largest majority of the working residents in Cooper Township are employed by an industry that provides a private wage or salary, as can be seen in the table below.

**Table 11: Class of Worker**

| | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Civilian Employed Population | 5,825 | 100.0% |
| Private wage and salary workers | 4,591 | 84.9% |
| Government workers | 592 | 10.9% |
| Self-employed | 202 | 3.7% |
| Unpaid family workers | 24 | 0.4% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | |

The industries where Cooper Township residents work are noted in Table 12.

**Table 12: Workforce per Industry by Type**

| Industry | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Civilian employed population 16 years and over | 5,409 | |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 23 | 0.4% |
| Construction | 338 | 6.2% |
| Manufacturing | 958 | 17.7% |
| Wholesale trade | 247 | 4.6% |
| Retail trade | 610 | 11.3% |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 149 | 2.8% |
| Information | 26 | 0.5% |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 246 | 4.5% |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 698 | 12.9% |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 1,519 | 28.1% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services | 237 | 4.4% |
| Other services, except public administration | 249 | 4.6% |
| Public administration | 109 | 2.0% |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | |

Not surprisingly, the largest industry that employs Cooper Township residents is educational services, health care, and social assistance. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, as well as Bronson and Borgess hospitals are all within easy driving distance from Cooper Township. The four most prevalent industries in percentage order are:

1. Educational services, health care, and social assistance
2. Manufacturing
3. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services
4. Retail trade

These industries are very similar to those most prevalent in the State of Michigan and Kalamazoo County. The County also includes arts, entertainment, and recreation in their highest percentage industries.

**Table 13: Workforce by Occupation**

| Occupation | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Civilian employed population 16 years and over | 5,409 | 100.0% |
| Management, business, science, and arts occupations | 2,601 | 49.8% |
| Service occupations | 485 | 8.4% |
| Sales and office occupations | 951 | 16.7% |
| Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations | 498 | 11.3% |
| Production, transportation, and material moving occupations | 874 | 13.8% |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | |

In addition to the industries in which the residents work, the type of occupation is provided by the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates in Table 13.

Almost half of the Cooper Township residents who are employed have an occupation in the management, business, science, and arts sector. This occupation makes sense based on salaries per household that are higher than both the State of Michigan and Kalamazoo County.

**Table 14: Travel Time to Work**

| Time by Minutes | Percent |
|---|---|
| Less than 10 minutes | 11.5% |
| 10 to 14 minutes | 15.4% |
| 15 to 19 minutes | 16.7% |
| 20 to 24 minutes | 20.6% |
| 25 to 29 minutes | 6.0% |
| 30 to 34 minutes | 16.3% |
| 35 to 44 minutes | 6.7% |
| 45 to 59 minutes | 3.1% |
| 60 or more minutes | 3.7% |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | |

## Travel Time to Work

To access the employment industries previously noted, most Cooper Township residents must travel to work. According to the 2023 American Community Survey, the mean travel time to place of employment is 21.7 minutes.

Of these workers, the Census indicates 82.4 percent work within Kalamazoo County and 17.6 percent work in a different county. With Allegan County immediately adjacent to Cooper Township to the north, and Van Buren County not far to the west, it is expected that some workers would be employed outside Kalamazoo County. In addition, travel times to work shows that most workers (70.2 percent) can make it to their places of employment within 29 minutes.

# Housing

The following section will provide an overview of the types of housing units found in Cooper Township, as well as their age and values. The availability and quality of housing will play an important role in land use development and goal setting for the Township if there is a desire for future growth.

## Number and Tenure of Units

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, there are 4,191 housing units in Cooper Township. Of these units, the largest majority are owner occupied, which is expected in a more rural environment that contains primarily single-family residential homes. However, with Coopers Landing apartment complex located within the jurisdictional boundaries, the Township has more rental units than would normally be predicted.

**Table 15: Housing Units by Occupancy**

| Occupancy Category | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Total Housing Units | 4,191 | 100.0% |
| Occupied Housing Units | 3,992 | 95.3% |
| Owner Occupied | 3,219 | 76.8% |
| Renter Occupied | 972 | 23.2% |
| Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Units | 2.72 | |
| Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Units | 2.14 | |
| Vacant Housing Units | 199 | 4.8% |
| Owner Vacancy Rate | | 0.0% |
| Renter Vacancy Rate | | 4.5% |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | |

The Housing Occupancy Trends table on the following page shows that between 2010 and 2020 the total number of housing units increased by 317 or just under eight percent. This is a significant increase for a rural community in just 10 years. However, the Census does indicate a decline in the total number of units between 2020 and 2023 by 151 units. This number likely includes estimate error by the Census. According to the Township records, only 20 demolition permits were pulled during this time period, and some were for accessory structures.

The development of new rental units experienced an increase of 26 percent between 2010 and 2020 and an additional five percent increase between 2020 and 2023. This is primarily due to the addition of units at Coopers Landing. Owner occupied units have only increased by 3.3 percent during this  same 13-year period.

| Table 16: Housing Occupancy Trends | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Occupancy Category** | **2010** | **2020** | **% Change** | **2023** | **% Change** |
| Housing units | 4,025 | 4,342 | 7.9% | 4,191 | -3.48% |
| Owner Occupied | 3,116 | 3,229 | 3.6% | 3,219 | -0.31% |
| Renter Occupied | 736 | 927 | 26.0% | 972 | 4.85% |
| Vacant | 173 | 186 | 7.5% | 199 | 6.99% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2020 Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | | | | | |

A shortage of both market rate and affordable housing is being experienced throughout Michigan and Kalamazoo County. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority indicates that there will be a deficit of more than 150,000 housing units by 2045. Kalamazoo County completed a new housing plan in 2022 which indicated 7,750 new units will be needed to meet the expected demand by 2030. Based on the conservative population projections for Cooper Township and current household size (2.59), an additional 626 housing units may be needed over the next 20 years.

## Housing Types

The largest majority of housing in Cooper Township is single-family homes at almost 80 percent. The next largest category is found in the “10 or more units” type, which is expected due to the Cooper’s Landing apartment complex. All other unit types, except for mobile homes, are relatively evenly distributed. The least number of units is listed as mobile homes or other types (which includes recreational vehicles, boat, etc.). Currently, there is only one mobile home park in the Township, which has approximately 70 units. This means the Census data is significantly off in their estimate. These units have not been included in the tables as only Census data has been outlined.

| Table 17: Type of Housing Units | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Occupied Housing** | **Total Number of Units** | **Percent of Total** |
| Total | 3,992 | 100.0% |
| 1, detached | 3,177 | 79.6% |
| 1, attached | 71 | 1.8% |
| 2 units | 30 | 0.8% |
| 3 or 4 units | 76 | 1.9% |
| 5 to 9 units | 163 | 4.1% |
| 10 or more units | 463 | 11.6% |
| Mobile home or other | 12 | 0.3% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates | | |

With limited access to public water and/or sanitary sewer infrastructure within the Township, it is not surprising that single-family homes are the dominant housing type. Typically, single-family homes have enough land within the parcel or lot to support private wells and septic systems.

The housing shortage in Michigan is motivating the development community and local jurisdictions to think creatively in providing new housing styles. The missing middle housing movement, which highlights the need for diverse housing opportunities, encourages a range of multi-unit or clustered housing. The important component of these styles is that they are compatible in scale to single-family homes and include forms such as duplexes, fourplexes, and bungalow courts.

Development of the missing middle unit types is a possible solution to meeting an ever-growing demand from the aging Baby Boomer generation for low-maintenance housing. To allow this type of development, the Township may want to investigate the possibility of extending public infrastructure into areas with undeveloped land or allowing small private community sanitary sewer systems that would support additional housing styles.

## Age of Housing

As can be seen from Table 18, the Cooper Township housing stock has a broad age range, with the greatest percentage (43 percent) between 1950 and 1979. Interestingly, Cooper did not see a significant decrease in housing construction during the Great Recession of 2008. The total number of units constructed between 2010 and 2019 was very similar to the number developed during the early 2000's. Most communities saw a significant decline in housing construction for a decade after the Great Recession. As an example, Oshtemo Township experienced a 64 percent drop during this time period.

The median year for the housing stock in Cooper Township is 1975, making the majority of homes at least 50 years old, which indicates a need for consistent maintenance. The lifespan of a home depends largely on the initial construction and the investment in maintenance

**Table 18: Age of Housing**

| Year Built | Number of Units | Percent of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Total housing units | 4,191 | 100.0% |
| Built 2020 or later | 26 | 0.6% |
| Built 2010 to 2019 | 508 | 12.1% |
| Built 2000 to 2009 | 612 | 14.6% |
| Built 1990 to 1999 | 320 | 7.6% |
| Built 1980 to 1989 | 245 | 5.8% |
| Built 1970 to 1979 | 671 | 16.0% |
| Built 1960 to 1969 | 584 | 13.9% |
| Built 1950 to 1959 | 565 | 13.5% |
| Built 1940 to 1949 | 169 | 4.0% |
| Built 1939 or earlier | 491 | 11.7% |

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

over time. However, the aging stock in Cooper Township suggests, at minimum, a need for continual maintenance to keep the units in good condition.

Aging housing stock also provides some significant challenges for seniors. They often have fewer residential options than their own homes, which due to age and design, are not as easily converted to allow aging in place. In addition, the added cost burden of ongoing single-family home maintenance for seniors on fixed incomes can make the economics of staying in their home very difficult.

## Housing Values

The median housing value for Cooper Township in 2023 was slightly higher than the State of Michigan and just under Kalamazoo County's median value. According to the 2023 American Community Survey 5 -Year Estimates, Cooper's median housing value was $226,600, while the State of Michigan was $217,600 and Kalamazoo County was $227,500. The adjacent table provides an overview of the housing values in the Township, which shows a large range of the values. According to the Census, there are no homes in Cooper that valued above $999,999 in 2023.

Michigan's statewide housing plan, published in 2022 by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority indicates that home prices have increased by 84 percent between 2013 and 2021. Nationally, prices increased by 48 percent during the same time period. It is likely that the 2023 estimate did not capture the true value and cost of housing. When reviewing more recent data, Zillow indicates the average home sale price in Cooper Township in 2025 was between$285,609 and $363,300.

**Table 19: Owner Occupied Housing Values**

| Housing Values | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Owner-occupied units | 3,064 | 100.0% |
| Less than $50,000 | 86 | 2.8% |
| $50,000 to $99,999 | 195 | 6.4% |
| $100,000 to $149,999 | 345 | 11.3% |
| $150,000 to $199,999 | 618 | 20.2% |
| $200,000 to $299,999 | 1,067 | 34.8% |
| $300,000 to $499,999 | 545 | 17.8% |
| $500,000 to $999,999 | 208 | 6.8% |
| $1,000,000 or more | 0 | 0.0% |
| Median (dollars) | $226,600 | |

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

## Housing Affordability

According to most financial experts, housing costs should not be more than 30 percent of a person's annual income to ensure housing stability. Based on the 2023 American Community Survey, the median household income in Cooper Township was $94,257. This would allow approximately $28,277 of annual income or $2,356 a month to go towards mortgage, taxes, and insurance payments.

In today's market, the average home in Cooper Charter Township will cost approximately $324,454. If a household was able to place 20 percent down and could secure the average interest rate of six percent, their monthly mortgage, taxes, and insurance cost will be approximately $2,100 a month. This equates to approximately $25,200 a year, which is approximately 27 percent of the average income in Cooper Township. Under this scenario, the current median income should be able to handle the cost burden of the average priced home in the Township. However, if housing prices continue to increase, interest rates rise, or the potential buyer is not able to place 20 percent down on the home, the average income earner may have difficulty affording the typical home price in the community.

Tables 20 and 21 outline the monthly costs for housing for both owner and renters. Interestingly, both occupancy types have the highest percentage of units paying between $1,000 and $1,499 monthly. As expected, there are more

**Table 20: Monthly Owner Costs**

| Costs | Units | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Housing units with a mortgage | 1,984 | |
| Pay less than $500 | 60 | 3.0% |
| $500 to $999 | 343 | 17.3% |
| $1,000 to $1,499 | 628 | 31.7% |
| $1,500 to $1,999 | 516 | 26.0% |
| $2,000 to $2,499 | 267 | 13.5% |
| $2,500 to $2,999 | 54 | 2.7% |
| $3,000 or more | 116 | 5.8% |
| Median (dollars) | 1,469 | |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate | | |

**Table 21: Monthly Rent Costs**

| Gross Rents | Units | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Occupied units paying rent | 917 | |
| Less than $500 | 43 | 4.7% |
| $500 to $999 | 211 | 23.0% |
| $1,000 to $1,499 | 620 | 67.6% |
| $1,500 to $1,999 | 43 | 4.7% |
| $2,000 to $2,499 | 0 | 0.0% |
| $2,500 to $2,999 | 0 | 0.0% |
| $3,000 or more | 0 | 0.0% |
| Median (dollars) | 1,147 | |
| Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate | | |

owners paying higher mortgage costs above $1,499 than renters. Approximately 48 percent of owners in the Township pay more than $1,499 a month for housing, but only 4.7 percent of renters pay these higher costs. Another notable point from this table is that homeowners only pay $322 more per month for their housing costs than renters. However, this does not take into account that homeowners are likely to have higher heating/cooling and other homeownership costs not experienced by renters.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development receives custom tabulations from the U.S. Census through the American Community Survey that demonstrate the extent of housing problems and housing needs for a community. This data, known as Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, indicates that 15 percent of households in Cooper Township have a housing cost burden greater than 30 percent of their income. This is significantly less than Kalamazoo County as a whole which shows that 26 percent of residents have a housing cost burden over 30 percent of their income.

**Table 22: Housing Cost Burden**

| Cost Burden | Cooper Twp | Percent of Total | Kalamazoo County | Percent of Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 30% | 3,495 | 84.1% | 76,765 | 73.6% |
| 31 - 50% | 275 | 6.6% | 14,450 | 13.9% |
| Greater than 50% | 355 | 8.5% | 12,215 | 11.7% |
| Cost burden not available | 30 | 0.7% | 850 | 0.8% |
| Total households calculated | 4,155 | | 104,280 | |

Source: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development 2016-2020 CHAS Data

## Tapestry Segments

Esri's Tapestry Market Segmentation is a geo-demographic system that identifies 68 distinctive markets in the United States based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics to provide a comprehensive profile of US consumers. They have evaluated the demographic information of the people and households in Cooper Township and assigned them a profile based on their lifestyle choices. According to ESRI, there are three main lifestyle segments

found in the Township, providing a broader understanding of the socioeconomic profile of the community. The three main lifestyle segments include:

1. Salt of the Earth (30.9 percent of households)
2. Bright Young Professionals (28.6 percent of households)
3. Green Acres (22.8 percent of households)

### LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

Salt of the Earth

The first socioeconomic group is Salt of the Earth, which are residents rooted in a traditional rural lifestyle. Households in this segment tend to be older with children that are grown and have moved away. Residents embrace the outdoors, tending to their gardens, fishing, boating, and camping. Many have high-school diplomas and some college education. They tend to expand their skills during their years of employment to become experts in "do-it-yourself" projects. Homeownership rates are high in this segment, and most are married couples. Household income is typically average with the nation, but they tend to have more assets than the national median. Spending time with family is their top priority.

### LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

Bright Young Professionals

Bright Young Professionals are primarily found in the outskirts of urban areas, like the City of Kalamazoo. These are young, educated, working professionals with most households under the age of 35. Slightly more diverse couples dominate this market, with more renters than homeowners. Labor force participation is high, generally white-collar work, with a mix of food service and part-time jobs (among the college students). Median household income, median home value, and average rent are close to the US values. Residents of this segment are physically active and up on the latest technology. These households get most of their information from the internet and the concern for the environment  impacts their purchasing decisions.

### LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

Green Acres

The final major segment at 22.8 percent is Green Acres, which is another segment rooted in country living and a self-reliant lifestyle. This is a group that are avid "do-it-yourselfers" and typically have all the tools to accomplish the job. Gardening is a priority and outdoor living features a variety of sports and recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing, motorcycling, hiking, and camping. These are also older adults, often married couples without children. They are educated with high participation in the labor force. They tend to be single-family homeowners with a somewhat pessimistic economic outlook but are comfortable with debt.

There are two additional lifestyle segments for households in Cooper Township – Rustbelt Traditions (9.4 percent) and Traditional Living (8.3 percent). The full descriptions of these and the other three main lifestyle segments can be found in the Appendix of this Plan.

## Conclusions/Considerations

The emerging trends related to the demographics and economic potential of the Township will be an important consideration when developing goals for the future. Based on the data provided, the following should be considered:

- Population growth of the Township is expected to be around two percent per year over the next twenty years. Easy commutes to employment centers and the draw of rural living will continue to attract a certain demographic. Ensuring housing choices for this population will be important.

- The national and state housing crisis has also been felt in Kalamazoo County. New housing development has not kept pace with population increases. In addition, the current rate of housing development in Cooper Township is not likely to support the increase in population that is anticipated to occur. Additional housing units will be needed if the Township wants to accommodate this growth.

- As the “greying of America” continues, demands for housing choices and senior services will increase. Cooper Charter Township should consider additional housing options in those areas of the Township that would support greater densities, including assisted living facilities, to allow seniors to remain in their community.

- With the desire to keep Cooper Charter Township rural, particularly in the northern and western portions of the Township, economic development can be limited. Goals that relate to creative economic strategies, particularly home-based or other industries that support rural lifestyles could be important to future population retention.



# CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC INPUT

The Township provided various opportunities for community input to allow residents and property owners the opportunity to influence the development of the Plan. They also followed the State of Michigan required public hearing process for the adoption of a master plan. A 63-day public comment period was held, as well as a public hearing before both the Planning Commission and Township Board. The following information outlines the public input received.

## Community Input

An open house was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The style of meeting allowed residents and interested citizens the opportunity to attend the open house during this time when it was convenient for them. There were three opportunities to provide input at the open house, which included input on the draft goals, future land use map, and a "parking lot" where any other comments could be provided to the Planning Commission. This was provided to allow residents who may have other concerns not noted in the Master Plan goals or future land use map an opportunity to reach the Planning Commission.

The goals presented in the plan were shown on a large board for residents to note their top three priorities. Dot stickers were provided and attendees placed the dots next to their preferred goals. Based on the open house responses, the following goals were indicated as the most important and are shown in priority order:

GOAL #1: Protect and preserve those areas of the Township which are most sensitive to development, such as the Kalamazoo River and other important natural resources that contribute to the health of natural systems, wildlife habitats, community character, and quality of life.

GOAL #6: Continue to support local and regional public services and facilities to protect and enhance the quality of life of Cooper residents.

GOAL #4: Retain rural attributes through a well-organized use of land that recognizes those areas of the Township with existing low-density residential and agricultural character.

In addition to the goals, the current Zoning Map, and draft Existing Land Use Map and Future Land Use Maps were available for resident review and comment. Two potential changes to the Future Land Use Map were requested, with one resident also requesting the Planning Commission consider a change to the existing Zoning Map. These requests were presented to the Planning Commission at their next regularly scheduled meeting for discussion.

# Michigan Planning Enabling Act Requirements

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33) of 2008, the Township completed the required notifications to neighboring jurisdictions, public utilities, transportation agencies, and other governmental agencies with vested interest in Cooper Charter Township. The following letters were sent:

Intent to Plan, which provided notification that the Township was beginning the process of developing a new Master Plan. This letter was mailed November of 2024.

Distribution, Request for Comment, and Public Hearing letter provided notification of the required 63-day public comment period and asked for input on the draft Master Plan. In addition the anticipated date of the public hearing was provided. This letter was sent on January 13, 2026.

A second Public Hearing distribution letter was mailed on March 23, 2026 and notified of the scheduled public hearing on April 15, 2026.

The final Adoption Notification, which informed the required agencies that the Master Plan was adopted on May 11, 2026 by the Township Board after the Planning Commission public hearing described herein.

# Public Hearings and Adoption

## Planning Commission Hearing

The Planning Commission held their required public hearing on April 15, 2026. This hearing was properly noticed in the Kalamazoo Gazette. Several residents and other interested parties were in attendance at the public hearing. Two members of the public spoke, including a resident who provided written requests for changes to the draft Plan and the Planning Director for Kalamazoo County. All comments were accepted.

## Township Board Public Hearing and Adoption

The Township Board held the final hearing on the draft Master Plan on May 11, 2026. No members of the public spoke at the meeting. The Plan was adopted with the full support of the Township Board.

# APPENDIX

Resolution of Approval

Esri Tapestry Segments

Notification Letters

Public Notice

Planning Commission minutes

Township Board minutes

**RESOLUTION NO. 26-332**

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COOPER**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE 2026 COOPER CHARTER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

At a meeting of the Township Board ("Township Board") of Cooper Charter Township, Kalamazoo County, Michigan ("Township"), held pursuant to Act 33 of the Public Acts of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("Act 33"), on the 11th day of May 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Tuinstra, Rowlson, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson

ABSENT: DeHaan

The following resolution was offered by Tuinstra and supported by Wilson.

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has prepared a proposed Master Plan for the future use, development, and preservation of lands within the Township, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Act 33;

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission, after first notifying neighboring entities and other entities as required by Section 39 of Act 33, subsequently prepared a draft Master Plan, which draft was thereafter approved by the Township Board for distribution at the January 12, 2026 meeting;

WHEREAS, afterward the Master Plan was distributed on January 13, 2026 as required by Act 33, and after expiration of the 63-day comment period, a duly noticed public hearing was scheduled and conducted before the Township Planning Commission on April 15, 2026;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission upon completion of the public hearing approved

the Master Plan at their April 15, 2026 meeting and submitted it to Township Board for final approval; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board, having reserved the right to approve or reject the Master Plan, now wishes to approve the proposed Master Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Township Board of the Charter Township of Cooper resolves:

1. The Township Board hereby approves and adopts the Township Master Plan presented at this regular meeting on May 11, 2026.

2. Pursuant to Section 43 of Act 33, the Township Board hereby directs the following;

a. A copy of this resolution approving the Master Plan, signed by the Clerk of the Township, shall be included in the Appendix of the Master Plan.

b. The Future Land Use Map shall be included as part of the Master Plan document and not created as a separate document.

c. The Township shall submit a letter to neighboring jurisdictions and other entities as required by Section 39 of Act 33, indicating the Master Plan has been adopted and may be viewed on the Township's website.

3. The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of this resolution.

4. The Township Board thanks the members of the Planning Commission for their work in the preparation of the Master Plan. The Township Board expects that the Master Plan will be a valuable tool for addressing future needs of the Township. The Township Board believes that the Master Plan, with revisions from time to time, will serve the Township for years to come.

YEAS: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson

NAYS: none

THE RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED ADOPTED.

STATE OF MICHIGAN )
:
COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO )

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Clerk of the Charter Township of Cooper, Kalamazoo County, Michigan, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of certain proceedings taken by the Township Board at a regular meeting held pursuant to the Open Meetings Act on the 11th day of May, 2026.

DeAnna Janssen
Clerk, Cooper Charter Township





LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Salt of the Earth

6B

**Households:** 3,545,800

**Average Household Size:** 2.59

**Median Age:** 44.1

**Median Household Income:** $56,300

## WHO ARE WE?

*Salt of the Earth* residents are entrenched in their traditional, rural lifestyles. Citizens here are older, and many have grown children that have moved away. They still cherish family time and also tending to their vegetable gardens and preparing homemade meals. Residents embrace the outdoors; they spend most of their free time preparing for their next fishing, boating, or camping trip. The majority has at least a high school diploma or some college education; many have expanded their skill set during their years of employment in the manufacturing and related industries. They may be experts with DIY projects, but the latest technology is not their forte. They use it when absolutely necessary, but seek face-to-face contact in their routine activities.

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- This large segment is concentrated in the Midwest, particularly in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana.
- Due to their rural setting, households own two vehicles to cover their long commutes, often across county boundaries.
- Homeownership rates are very high (Index 133). Single-family homes are affordable, valued at 25% less than the national market.
- Nearly two in three households are composed of married couples; less than half have children at home.

## SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Steady employment in construction, manufacturing, and related service industries.
- Completed education: 40% with a high school diploma only.
- Household income just over the national median, while net worth is nearly double the national median.
- Spending time with family is their top priority.
- Cost-conscious consumers, loyal to brands they like, with a focus on buying American.
- Last to buy the latest and greatest products.
- Try to eat healthy, tracking the nutrition and ingredients in the food they purchase.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100.
Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

6B

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Salt of the Earth

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

**Median Age: 44.1** US: 38.2

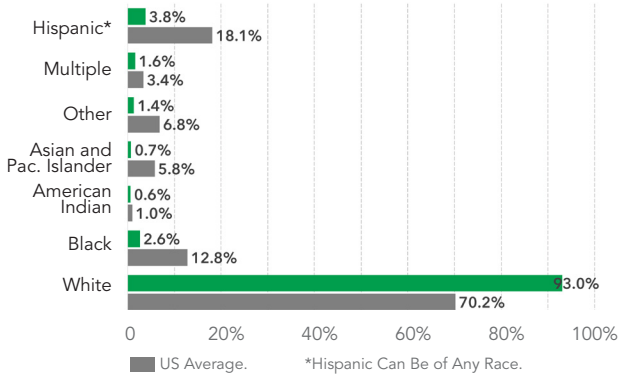
Indicates US




## RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

**Diversity Index: 19.8** US: 64.0



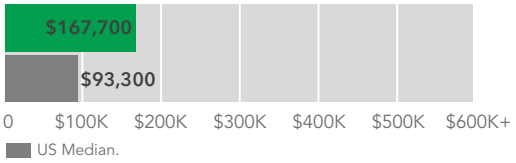

## INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

### Median Household Income

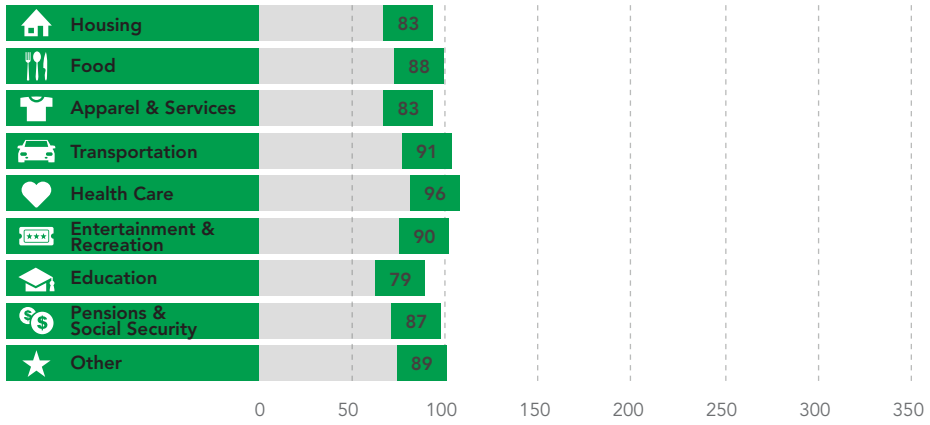



### Median Net Worth



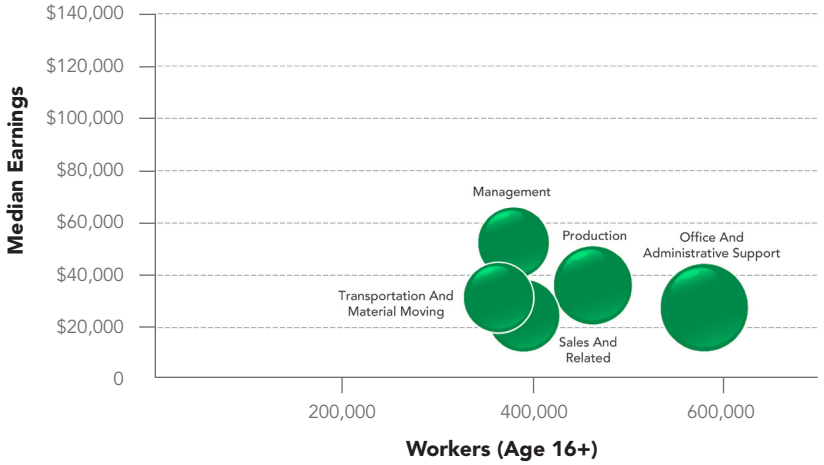

## AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.




## OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



6B

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Salt of the Earth

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
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## MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Outdoor sports and activities, such as fishing, boating, hunting, and overnight camping trips, are popular.
- To support their pastimes, truck ownership is high; many also own an ATV.
- They own the equipment to maintain their lawns and tend to their vegetable gardens.
- Residents often tackle home remodeling and improvement jobs themselves.
- Due to their locale, they own satellite dishes and have access to high-speed internet connections like DSL.
- These conservative consumers prefer to conduct their business in person rather than online. They use an agent to purchase insurance.

## HOUSING

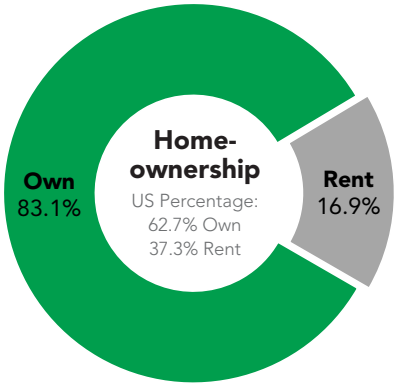
Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



**Typical Housing:**
Single Family

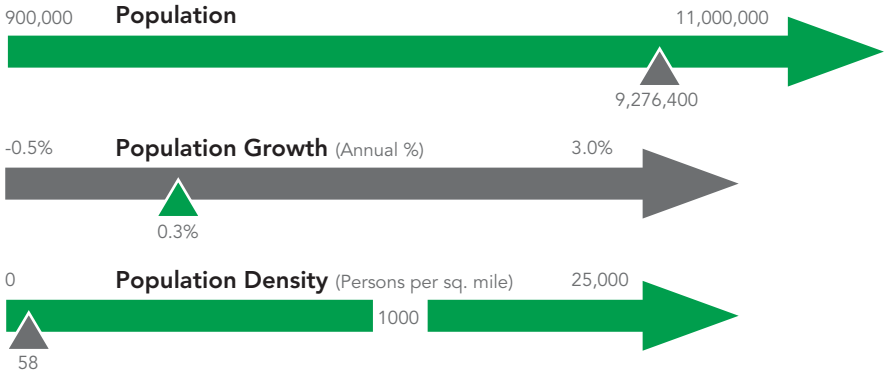
**Median Value:**
$154,300

US Median: $207,300




## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total population, average annual population change since Census 2010, and average density (population per square mile) are displayed for the market relative to the size and change among all Tapestry markets. Data estimated by Esri.




## ESRI INDEXES

Esri developed three indexes to display average household wealth, socioeconomic status, and housing affordability for the market relative to US standards.



6B

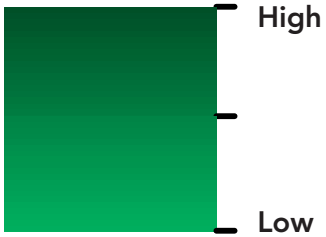
LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

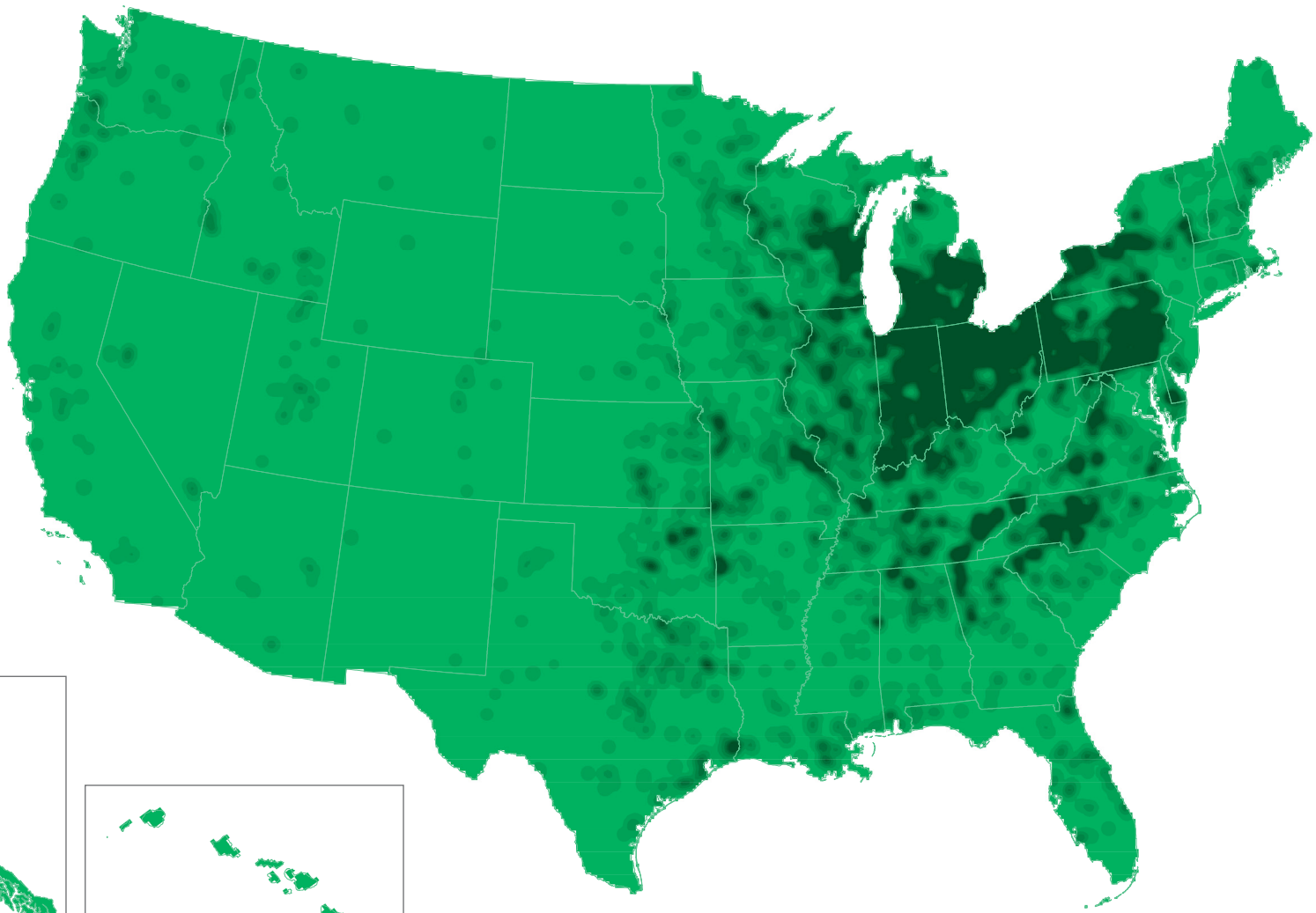
# Salt of the Earth

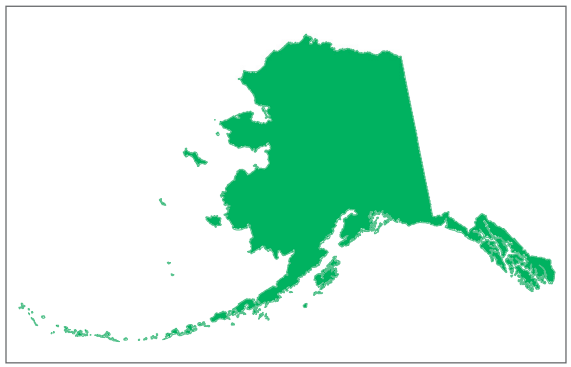
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
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## SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Salt of the Earth* Tapestry Segment by households.







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LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

# Bright Young Professionals

8C

**Households:** 2,750,200

**Average Household Size:** 2.41

**Median Age:** 33.0

**Median Household Income:** $54,000

## WHO ARE WE?

*Bright Young Professionals* is a large market, primarily located in urban outskirts of large metropolitan areas. These communities are home to young, educated, working professionals. More than one out of three householders are under the age of 35. Slightly more diverse couples dominate this market, with more renters than homeowners. More than two-fifths of the households live in single-family homes; over a third live in 5+ unit buildings. Labor force participation is high, generally white-collar work, with a mix of food service and part-time jobs (among the college students). Median household income, median home value, and average rent are close to the US values. Residents of this segment are physically active and up on the latest technology.

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Approximately 57% of the households rent; 43% own their homes.
- Household type is primarily couples, married (or unmarried), with above-average concentrations of both single-parent (Index 125) and single-person (Index 115) households.
- Multiunit buildings or row housing make up 56% of the housing stock (row housing [Index 178], buildings with 5–19 units [Index 275]); 43% built 1980–99.
- Average rent mirrors the US (Index 100).
- Lower vacancy rate is at 8.2%.

## SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education completed: 35% with some college or an associate's degree, 33% with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Labor force participation rate of 72% is higher than the US rate.
- These consumers are up on the latest technology.
- They get most of their information from the internet.
- Concern about the environment impacts their purchasing decisions.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
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Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100.
Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

8C

LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

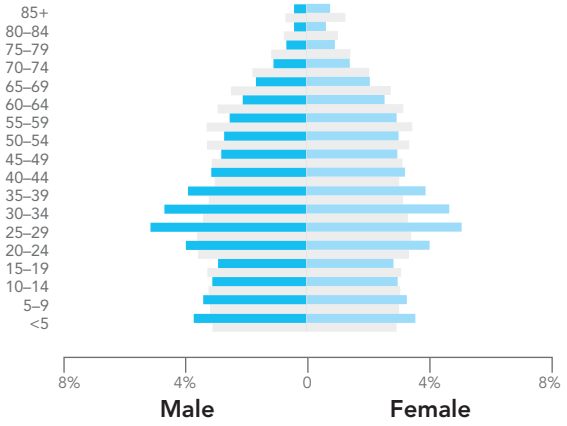
# Bright Young Professionals

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## AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

**Median Age: 33.0** US: 38.2

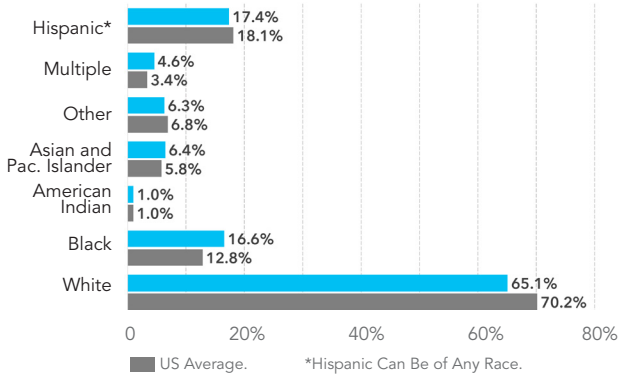
Indicates US




## RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

**Diversity Index: 67.5** US: 64.0



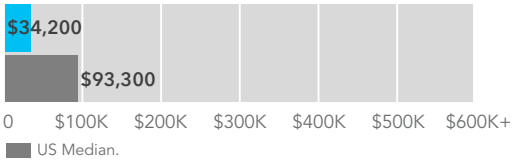

## INCOME AND NET WORTH

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### Median Household Income

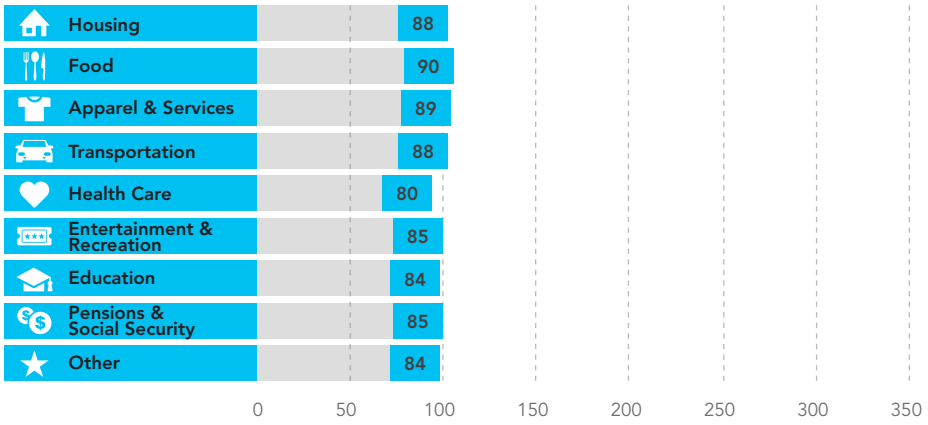



### Median Net Worth



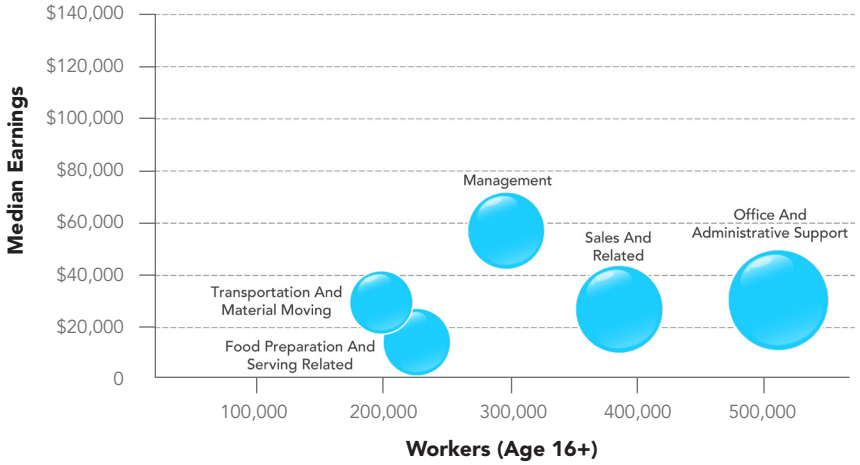

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## OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



8C

LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

# Bright Young Professionals

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## MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Own retirement savings and student loans.
- Own newer computers (desktop, laptop, or both), iPods, and 2+ TVs.
- Go online and use mobile devices for banking, access YouTube or Facebook, visit blogs, download movies, and play games.
- Use cell phones to text, redeem mobile coupons, listen to music, and check for news and financial information.
- Find leisure going to bars/clubs, attending concerts, going to the beach.
- Enjoy a variety of sports, including backpacking, rock climbing, football, Pilates, running, and yoga.
- Eat out often at fast-food and family restaurants.

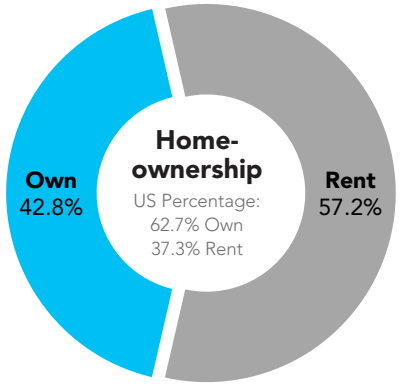
## HOUSING

Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

**Typical Housing:**
Single Family;
Multi-Units

**Average Rent:**
$1,042

US Average: $1,038



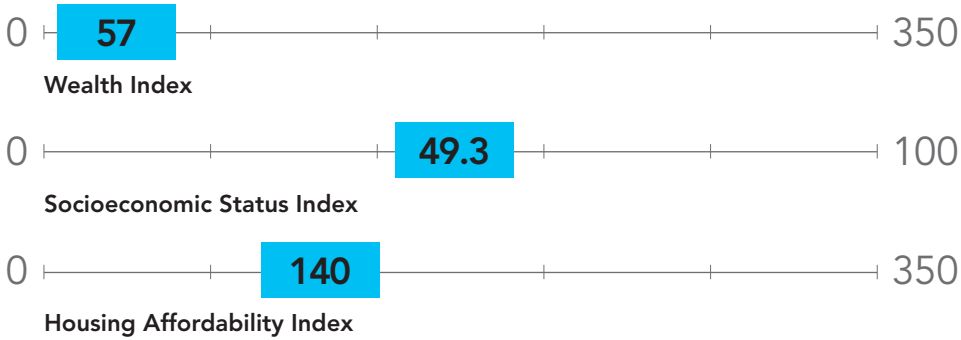

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8C

LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

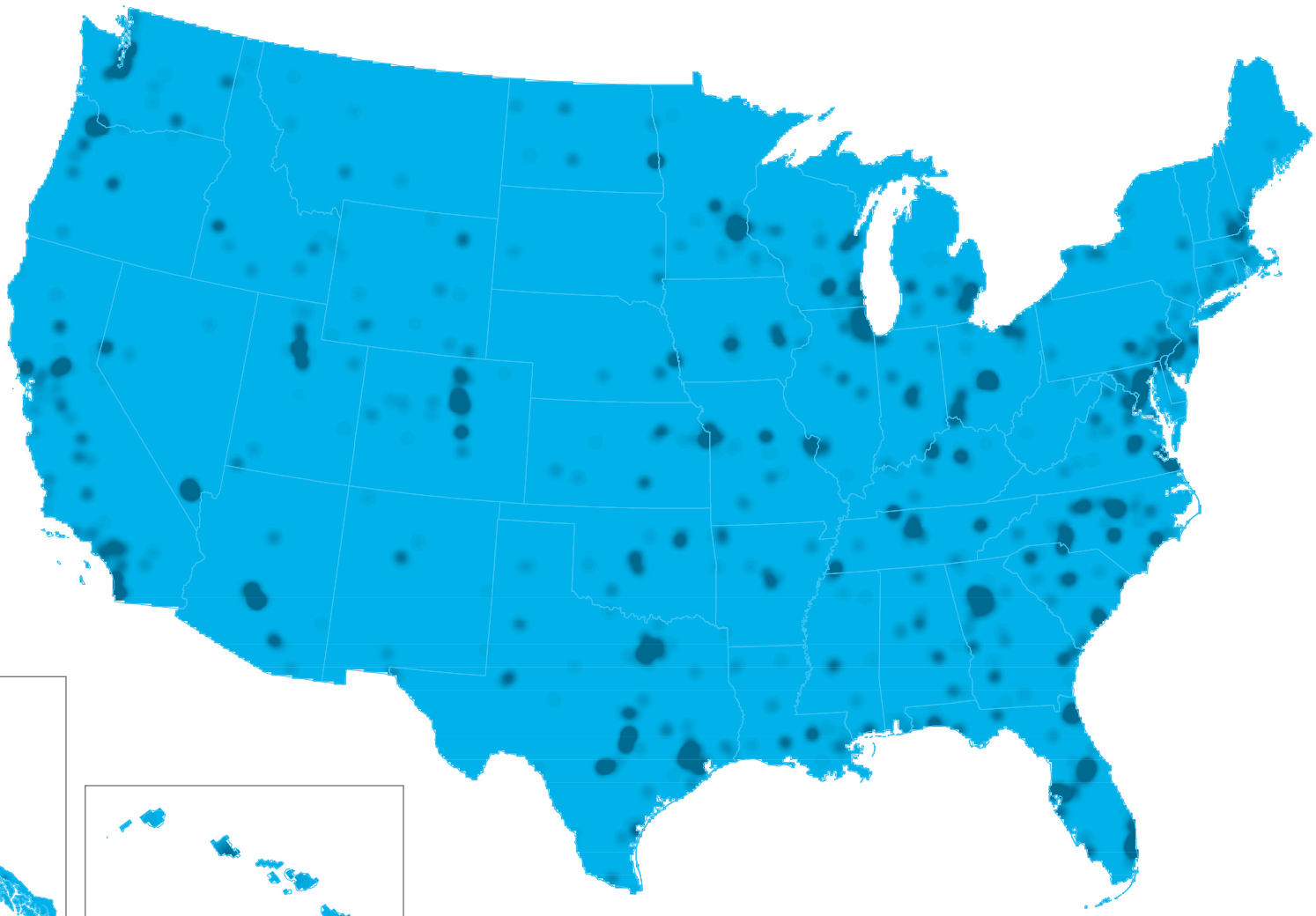
# Bright Young Professionals

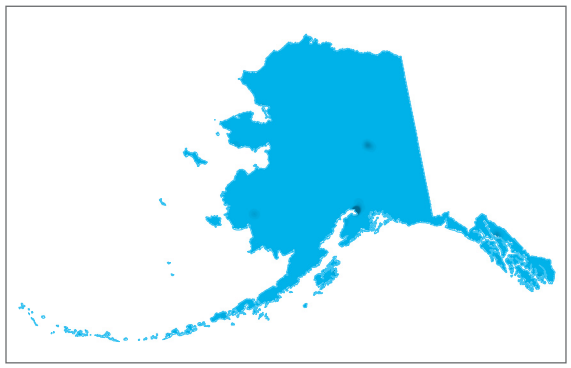
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
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## SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Bright Young Professionals* Tapestry Segment by households.







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LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Green Acres

6A

**Households:** 3,923,400

**Average Household Size:** 2.70

**Median Age:** 43.9

**Median Household Income:** $76,800

## WHO ARE WE?

The *Green Acres* lifestyle features country living and self-reliance. Avid do-it-yourselfers, they maintain and remodel their homes with all the necessary power tools to accomplish the jobs. Gardening, especially growing vegetables, is a priority, again with the right tools, tillers, tractors, and riding mowers. Outdoor living features a variety of sports: hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking and camping, and even golf.

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- This large segment is concentrated in rural enclaves in metropolitan areas.
- Primarily (not exclusively) older homes with acreage; new housing growth in the past 15 years.
- Single-family, owner-occupied housing, with a median value of $235,500.
- An older market, primarily married couples, most with no children.

## SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: More than 60% are college educated.
- Labor force participation rate is high at 66.8% (Index 107).
- Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and increasingly, from retirement.
- They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability.
- Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the internet is not viewed as entertainment.
- Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investments.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
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Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100.
Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

6A

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Green Acres

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## AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

**Median Age: 43.9** US: 38.2

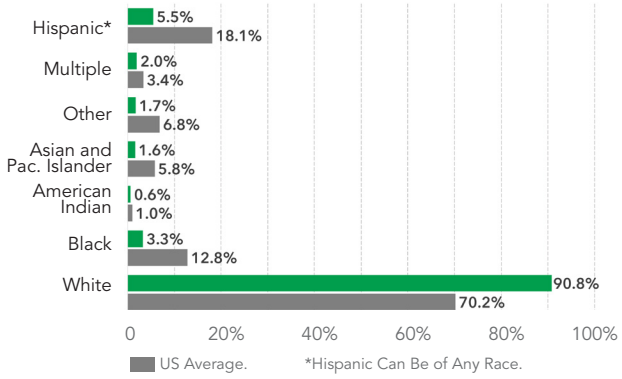
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**Diversity Index: 26.0** US: 64.0



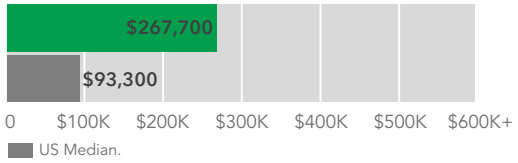

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### Median Household Income

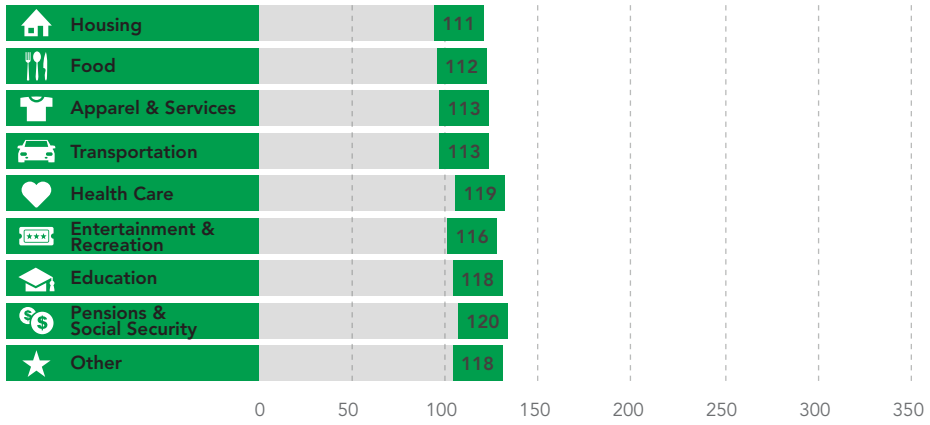



### Median Net Worth



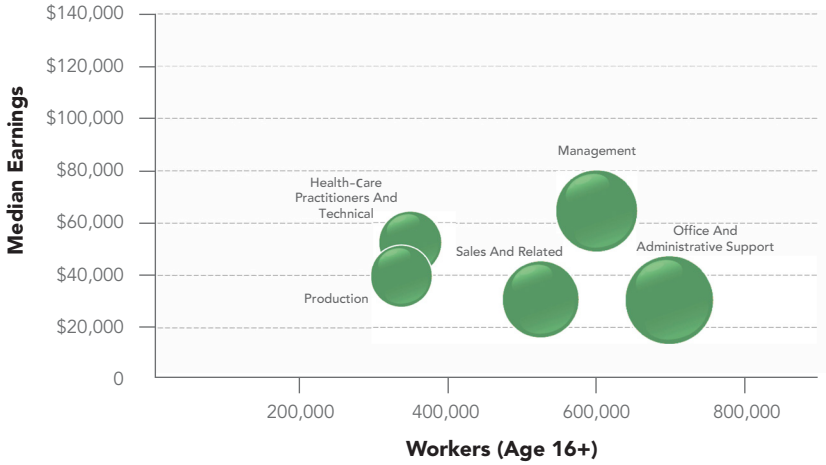

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6A

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Green Acres

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## MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Purchasing choices reflect *Green Acres* residents' country life, including a variety of vehicles, from trucks and SUVs to ATVs and motorcycles, preferably late model.
- Homeowners favor DIY home improvement projects and gardening.
- Media of choice are provided by satellite service, radio, and television, also with an emphasis on country and home and garden.
- *Green Acres* residents pursue physical fitness vigorously, from working out on home exercise equipment to playing a variety of sports.
- Residents are active in their communities and a variety of social organizations, from charitable to veterans' clubs.

## HOUSING

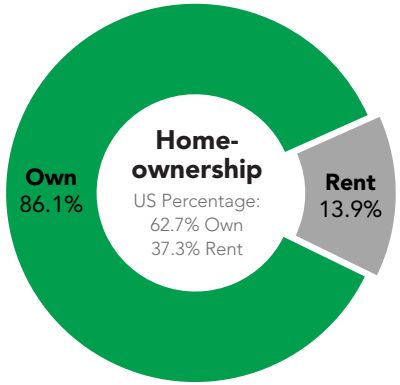
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**Typical Housing:**
Single Family

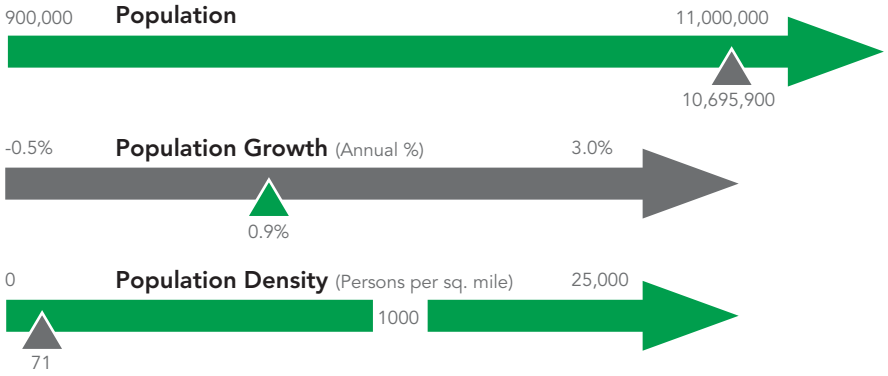
**Median Value:**
$235,500

US Median: $207,300



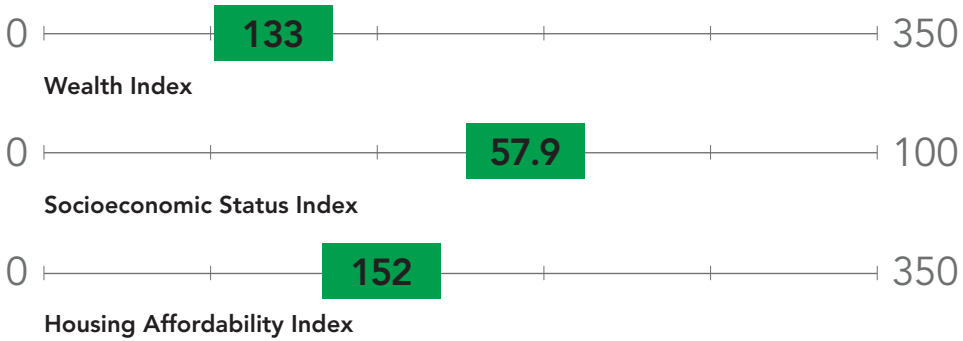

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6A

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

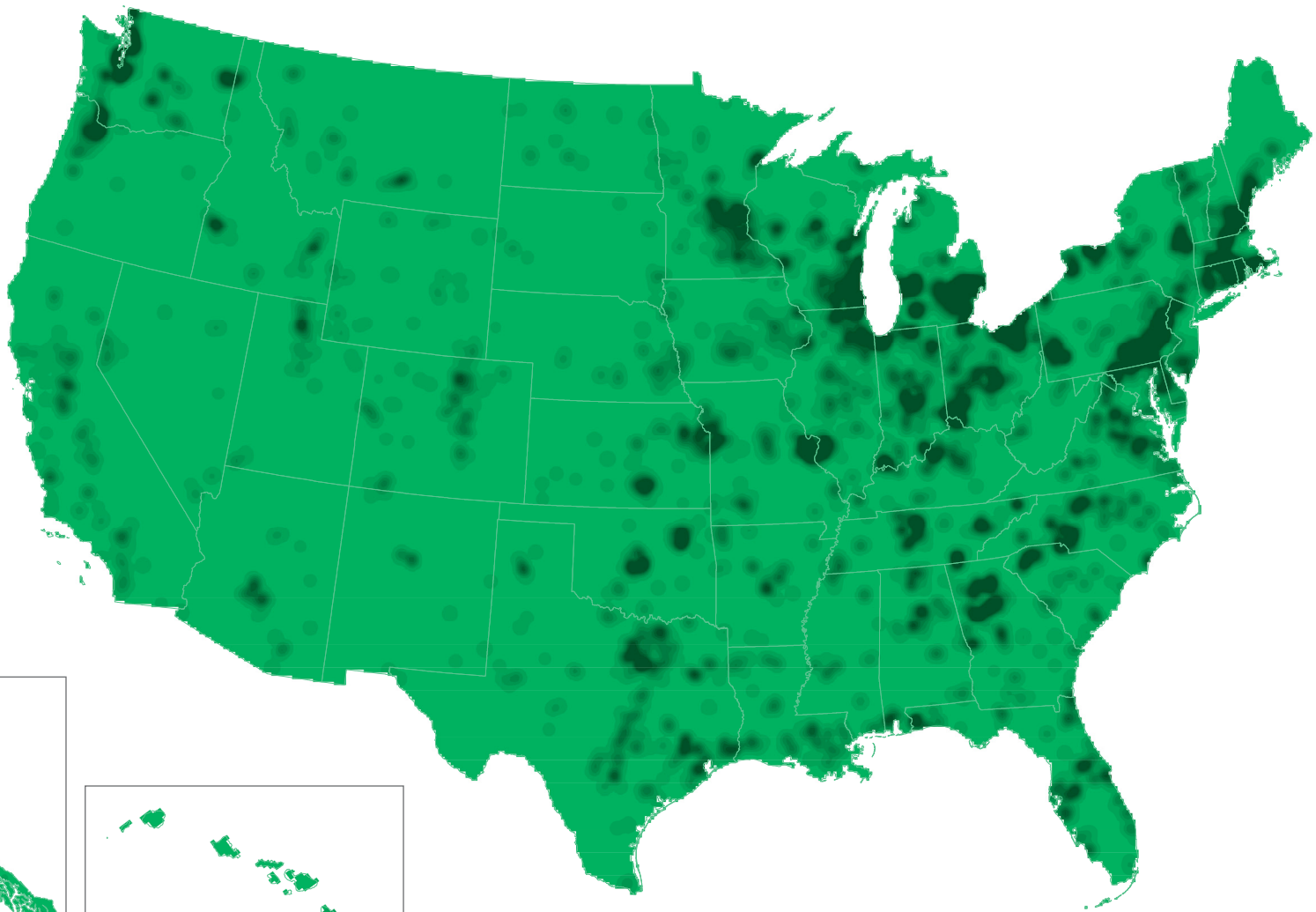
# Green Acres

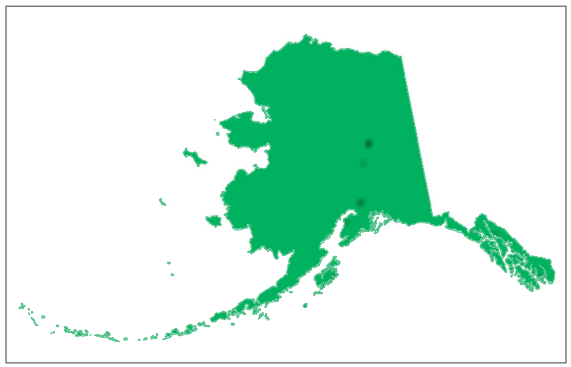
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## SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Green Acres* Tapestry Segment by households.







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LifeMode Group: GenXurban

# Rustbelt Traditions

5D

**Households:** 2,716,800

**Average Household Size:** 2.47

**Median Age:** 39.0

**Median Household Income:** $51,800

## WHO ARE WE?

The backbone of older industrial cities in states surrounding the Great Lakes, *Rustbelt Traditions* residents are a mix of married-couple families and singles living in older developments of single-family homes. While varied, the workforce is primarily white collar, with a higher concentration of skilled workers in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care. *Rustbelt Traditions* represents a large market of stable, hardworking consumers with modest incomes but an average net worth of nearly $400,000. Family oriented, they value time spent at home. Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Almost half (46%) of the households are married-couple families, similar to the US (48%), most without children (also similar to the US); the slightly higher proportion of singles (Index 105) reflects the aging of the population.
- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.47.
- They are movers, slightly more mobile than the US population (Index 109), but over 70% of householders moved into their current homes before 2010.
- Most residents live in modest, single-family homes in older neighborhoods built in the 1950s (Index 224).
- Nearly three quarters own their homes; nearly half of households have mortgages.
- A large and growing market, *Rustbelt Traditions* residents are located in the dense urban fringe of metropolitan areas throughout the Midwest and South.
- Most households have one to two vehicles available.

## SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Most have graduated from high school or spent some time at a college or university.
- Labor force participation slightly higher than the US at 67%.
- While most income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts.
- Family-oriented consumers who value time spent at home.
- Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years.
- Budget-aware shoppers that favor American-made products.
- Read newspapers, especially the Sunday editions.

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100.
Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

5D

LifeMode Group: GenXurban

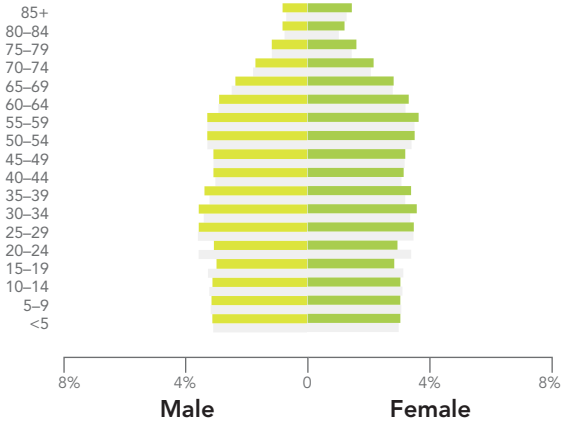
# Rustbelt Traditions

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

**Median Age: 39.0** US: 38.2

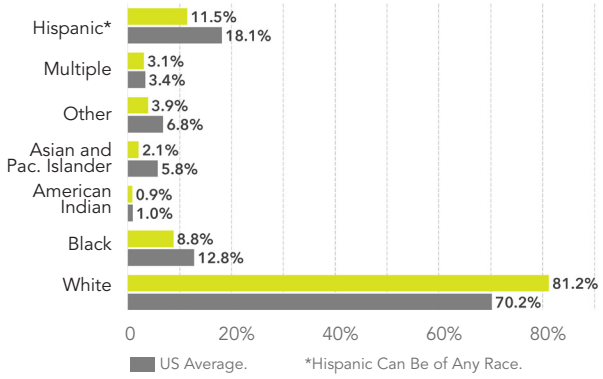
Indicates US




## RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

**Diversity Index: 46.8** US: 64.0



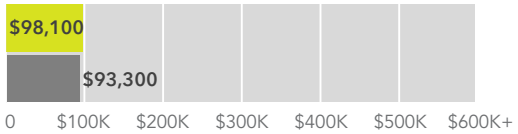

## INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

### Median Household Income

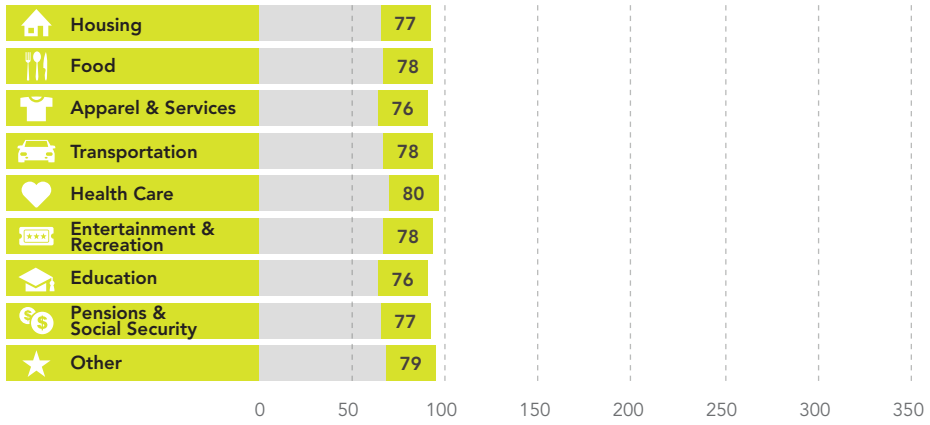



### Median Net Worth



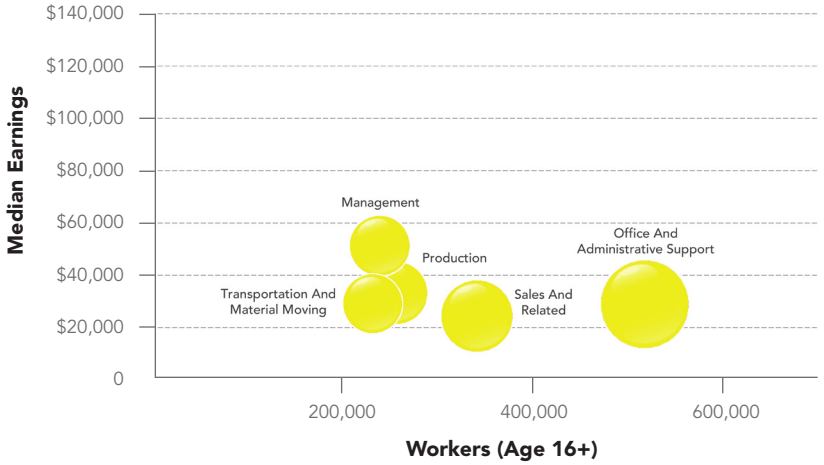

## AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.




## OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



5D

LifeMode Group: GenXurban

# Rustbelt Traditions

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Residents take advantage of convenience stores for fueling up and picking up incidentals.
- Watching television is a common pastime; many households have more than four TVs.
- Favorite programming ranges from Freeform, A&E, and TNT to children's shows on Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel.
- Residents are connected; entertainment activities like online gaming dominate their internet usage.
- Favorite family restaurants include Applebee's, Arby's, and Texas Roadhouse.
- Radio dials are typically tuned to classic rock stations.

## HOUSING

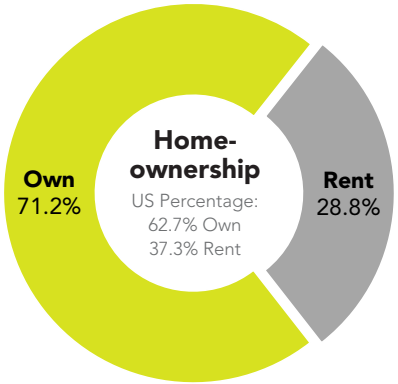
Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



**Typical Housing:**
Single Family

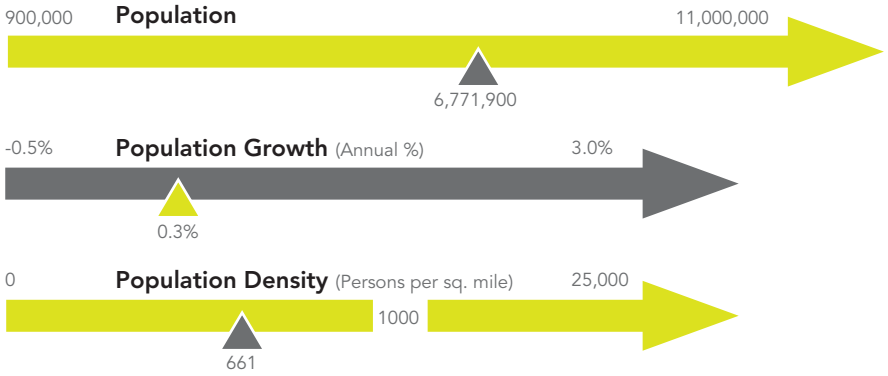
**Median Value:**
$123,400

US Median: $207,300




## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total population, average annual population change since Census 2010, and average density (population per square mile) are displayed for the market relative to the size and change among all Tapestry markets. Data estimated by Esri.




## ESRI INDEXES

Esri developed three indexes to display average household wealth, socioeconomic status, and housing affordability for the market relative to US standards.



5D

LifeMode Group: GenXurban

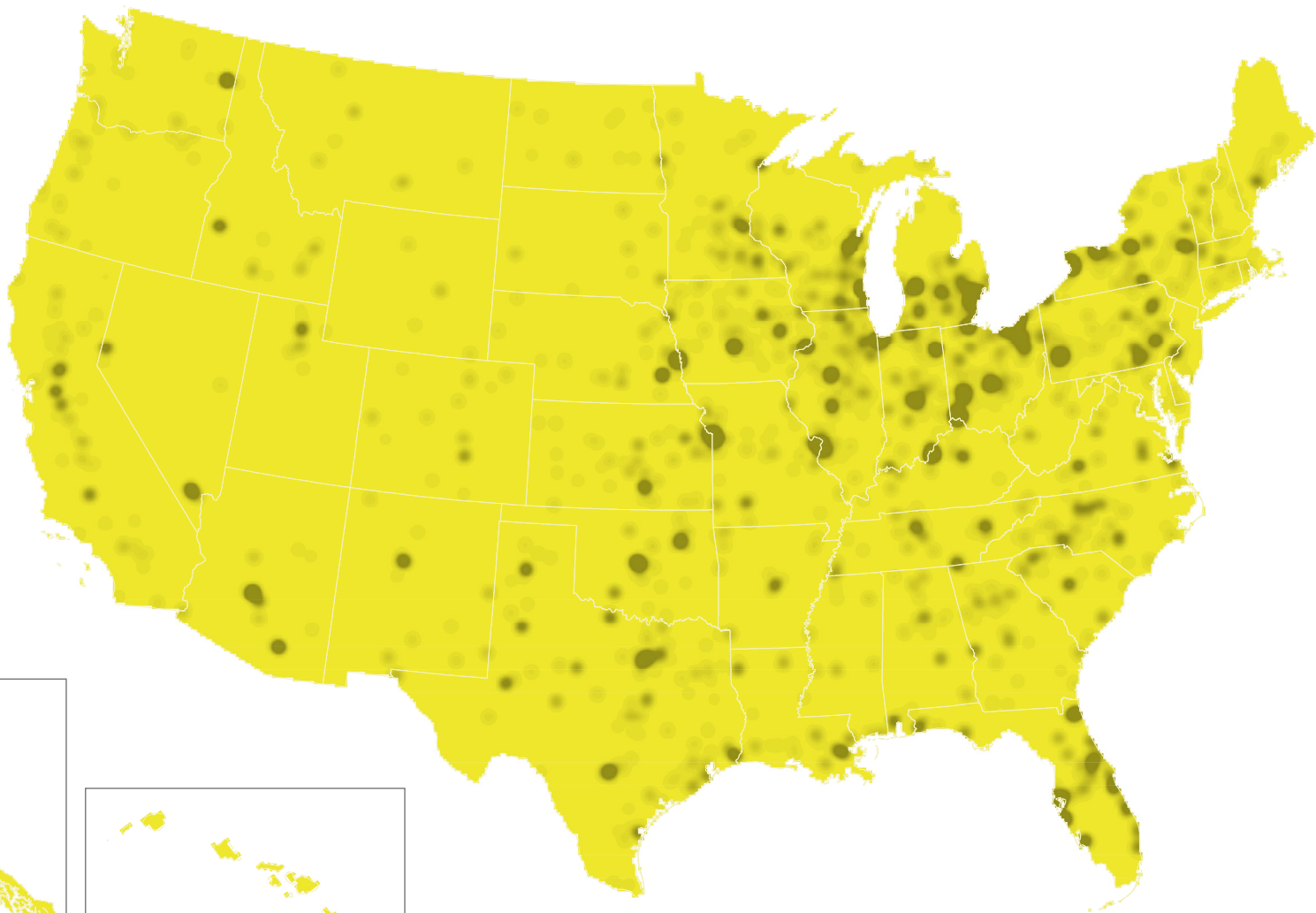
# Rustbelt Traditions

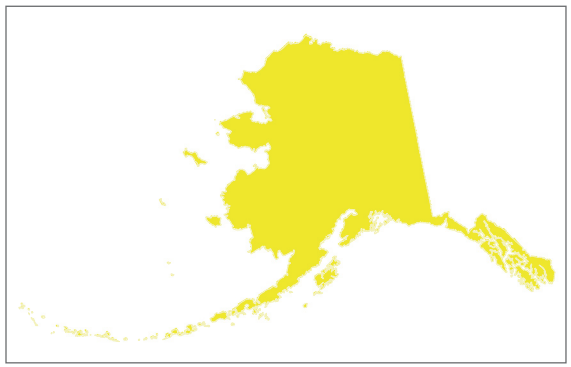
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Rustbelt Traditions* Tapestry Segment by households.







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**For more information**
1-800-447-9778
info@esri.com
esri.com

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LifeMode Group: Hometown

# Traditional Living

12B

**Households:** 2,395,200

**Average Household Size:** 2.51

**Median Age:** 35.5

**Median Household Income:** $39,300

## WHO ARE WE?

Residents in this segment live primarily in low-density, settled neighborhoods in the Midwest. The households are a mix of married-couple families and singles. Many families encompass two generations who have lived and worked in the community; their children are likely to follow suit. The manufacturing, retail trade, and health-care sectors are the primary sources of employment for these residents. This is a younger market—beginning householders who are juggling the responsibilities of living on their own or a new marriage, while retaining their youthful interests in style and fun.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Married couples are the dominant household type, but fewer than expected from the younger age profile and fewer with children (Index 79); however, there are higher proportions of single-parent (Index 146) and single-person households (Index 112).
- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.51.
- Homes are primarily single family or duplexes in older neighborhoods, built before 1940 (Index 228).
- Most neighborhoods are located in lower-density urban clusters of metro areas throughout the Midwest and South.
- Average commuting time to work is very short (Index 22).
- Households have one or two vehicles.

## SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Over 70% have completed high school or some college.
- Labor force participation is a bit higher than the national rate at 63.4%.
- Almost three-quarters of households derive income from wages and salaries, augmented by Supplemental Security Income (Index 139) and public assistance (Index 152).
- Cost-conscious consumers that are comfortable with brand loyalty, unless the price is too high.
- Connected and comfortable with the internet, more likely to participate in online gaming or posting pics on social media.
- TV is seen as the most trusted media.

Note: The Index represents the ratio of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100.
Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.

12B

LifeMode Group: Hometown

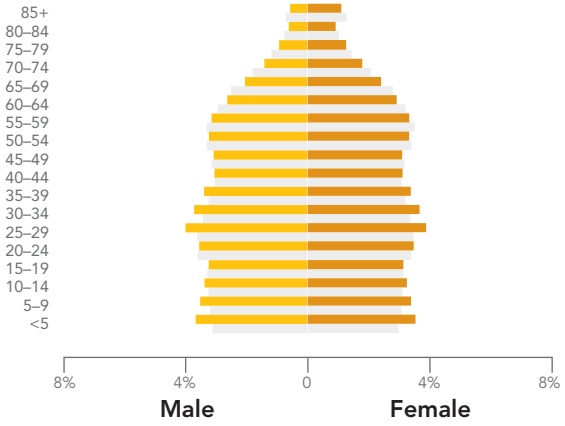
# Traditional Living

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

**Median Age: 35.5** US: 38.2

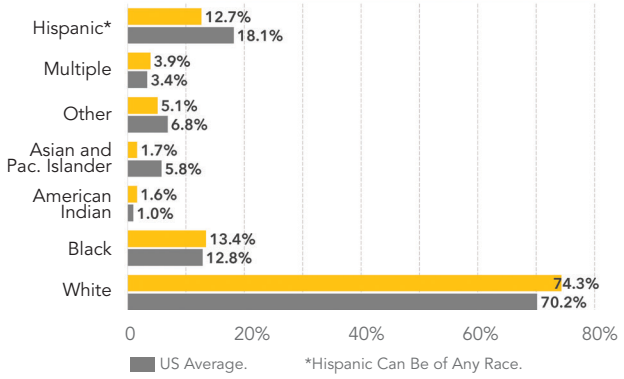
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**Diversity Index: 55.6** US: 64.0




## INCOME AND NET WORTH

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### Median Household Income

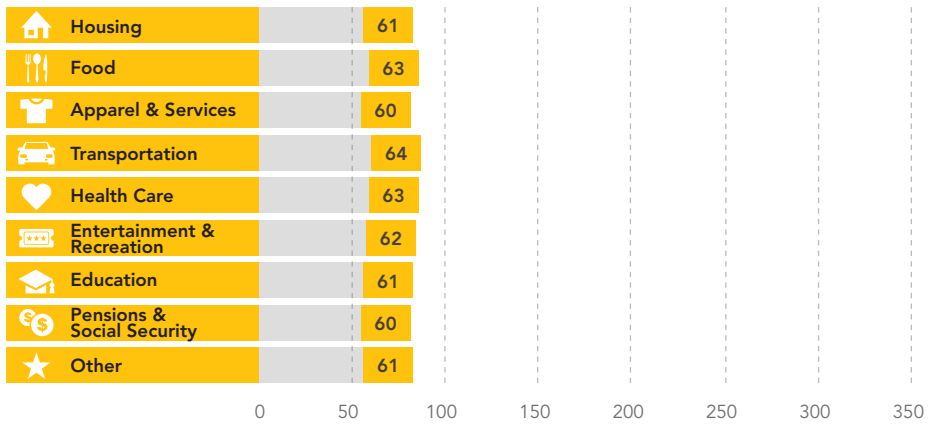



### Median Net Worth



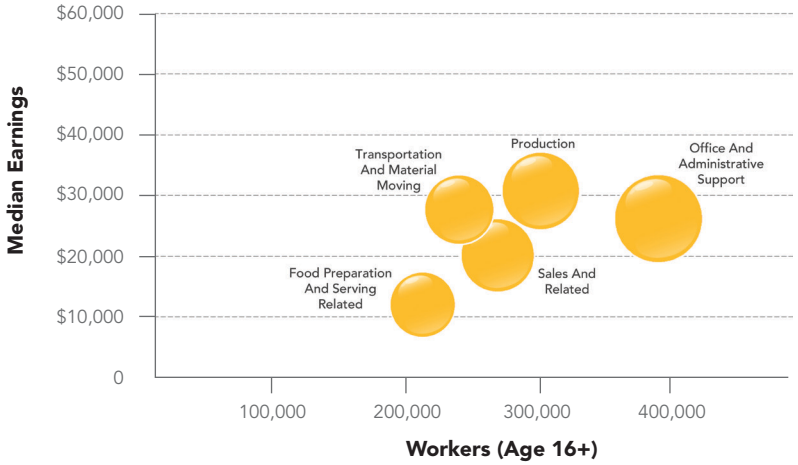

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12B

LifeMode Group: Hometown

# Traditional Living

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Shop for groceries at discount stores such as Walmart Supercenters.
- Convenience stores are commonly used for fuel or picking up incidentals.
- Tend to carry credit card balances, have personal loans, and pay bills in person.
- Half of households have abandoned landlines for cell phones only.
- Favorite TV channels include Freedom, CMT, and Game Show Network.
- Fast-food devotees.
- Enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing and taking trips to the zoo.

## HOUSING

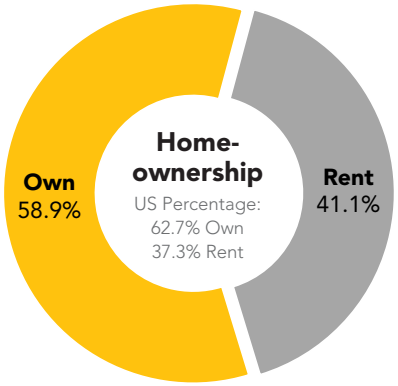
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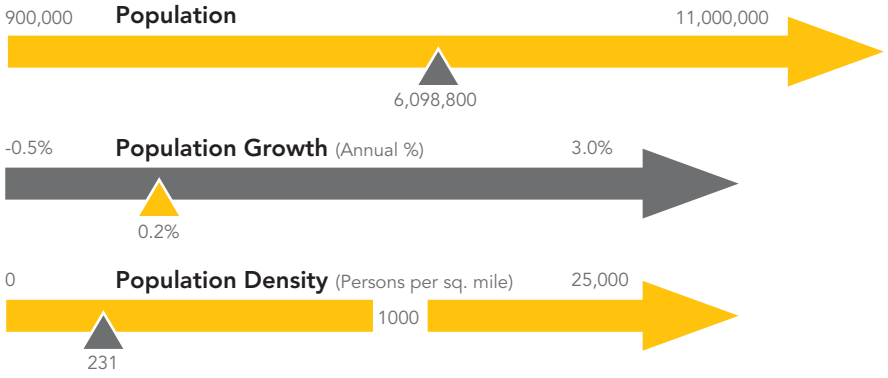
**Median Value:**
$83,200

US Median: $207,300



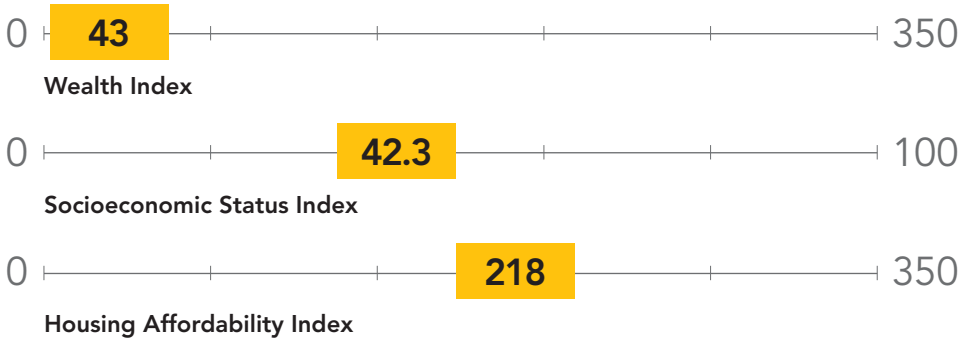

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12B

LifeMode Group: Hometown

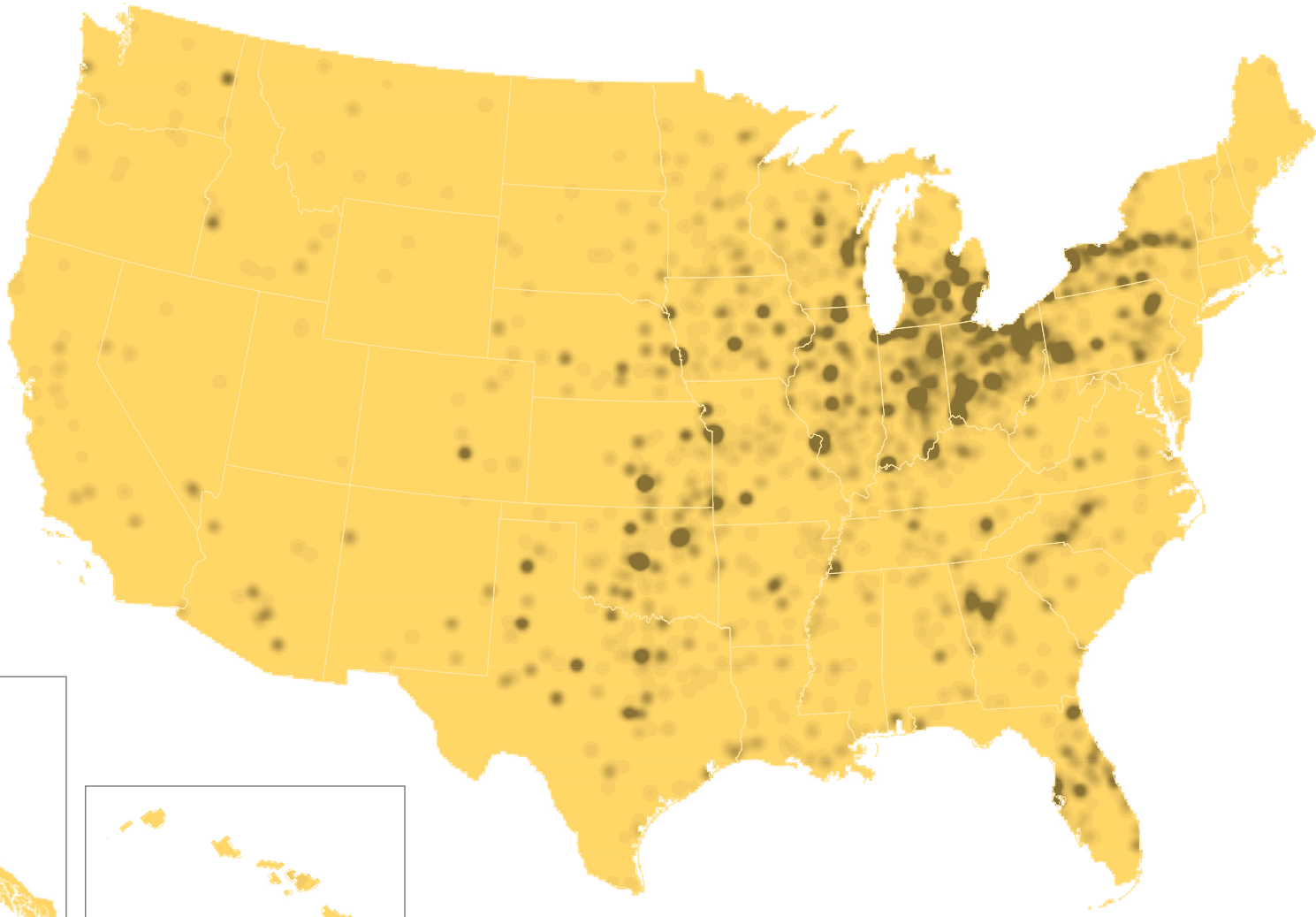
# Traditional Living

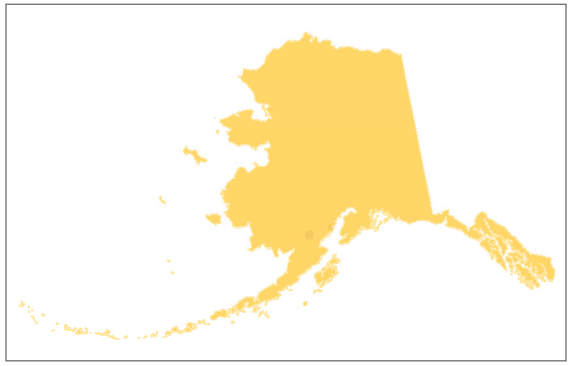
TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION
esri.com/tapestry

## SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Traditional Living* Tapestry Segment by households.







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**Cooper Charter Township**

**1590 West D Avenue**
**Kalamazoo, MI 49009-6321**
**(269) 382-0223**

November 25, 2024

To All Interested Parties:

On behalf of the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission and in accordance with Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008 and related amendments, this letter is to notify you that Cooper Charter Township is initiating the process to complete an update of their Master Plan.

When a Township is intending to prepare a master plan update, it must notify by first class mail or personal delivery the following parties: the planning commission or elected body of any city, village, or township located within or contiguous to the township; the county planning commission; regional planning commission; public utilities, railroad company, and/or public transportation agency; and any government entity that registers its name to be notified.

The Township requests any comments or suggestions that you believe should be addressed as part of this planning effort. Later in the process, the Township will send an additional notice related to the draft master plan update for public review and comment, as required by the Act. At that time, the Township would welcome any comments on the content in the plan.

PLEASE BE NOTIFIED that you are invited to send your opinions, comments, suggestions, or questions to Cooper Charter Township (Attn: Julie Johnston, Planning Consultant), 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009 or by email to jjohnstonzoning@gmail.com.

The Township Planning Commission looks forward to your participation in this process.

Sincerely,

Julie Johnston

Julie Johnston, AICP
On behalf of Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission

**Cooper Charter Township**

**1590 West D Avenue**
**Kalamazoo, MI 49009-6321**
**(269) 382-0223**

January 13, 2026

To All Interested Parties:

On behalf of the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission and Township Board, and in accordance with Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008 and related amendments, this letter is to notify you of the next steps in the development of the Cooper Charter Township Master Plan.

COMMENT PERIOD: At their January 12, 2026 regular meeting, the Township Board approved the distribution of the draft Master Plan. The Township welcomes any comments or suggestions on the plan's content. A link to the draft Master Plan can be found on the Township's website at Township Master Plan – Cooper Township.

Please be notified that you are invited to send your opinions, comments, suggestions, or questions to the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission (Attn: Julie Johnston, Planning Consultant), 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009 or by email to masterplan@coopertwp.org.

PUBLIC HEARING: In addition, the Planning Commission intends to hold the public hearing required by Public Act 33 of 2008 at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the Township Hall, 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

Sincerely,

Julie Johnston

Julie Johnston, AICP
On behalf of Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission

**Cooper Charter Township**

**1590 West D Avenue**
**Kalamazoo, MI 49009-6321**
**(269) 382-0223**

March 23, 2026

To All Interested Parties:

On behalf of the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission and Township Board, and in accordance with Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008 and related amendments, this letter is to notify you of the final steps in the development of the Cooper Charter Township Master Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Planning Commission intends to hold the required public hearing at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

FINAL APPROVAL: It is anticipated that the Township Board will hold the final public meeting on the draft Master Plan on May 11, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Both meetings will be held at the Township Hall, 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

Please be notified that you are invited to send your opinions, comments, suggestions, or questions to the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission (Attn: Julie Johnston, Planning Consultant), 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009 or by email to masterplan@coopertwp.org.

Sincerely,

Julie Johnston

Julie Johnston, AICP
On behalf of Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission

**Cooper Charter Township**

**1590 West D Avenue**
**Kalamazoo, MI 49009-6321**
**(269) 382-0223**

May 12, 2026

To All Interested Parties:

On behalf of the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission and Township Board, and in accordance with Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008 and related amendments, this letter is to inform you that the Township Master Plan has been adopted. At a regularly scheduled Township Board meeting on May 11, 2026, the Township Board unanimously approved the resolution of adoption.

The Cooper Charter Township Master Plan can be found on the Township's website at https://www.coopertwp.org/

Sincerely,

Julie Johnston

Julie Johnston, AICP
On behalf of Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission

# Cooper Charter Township Master Plan

### *What is a Master Plan?*

A master plan addresses future land use and establishes goals and priorities for the Township for the next 20-years. It includes maps, demographic information, and a future land use and zoning plan. The master plan is an official document authorized by Michigan law that can be viewed as a blueprint for the Township's future.

### *Your Input Matters!*

Community input is an important part of the planning process. The Master Plan Open House is a drop-in event, requiring a small amount of your time to give needed input on the goals and future land use of the draft Plan. Please stop by anytime between 4:00 and 7:00 pm!

## You're Invited!

**Draft Plan**

## OPEN HOUSE

**DATE: Wednesday, October 15th**

**TIME: 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm**

**PLACE: Cooper Township Hall,**
**1590 West D Avenue**










**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COOPER**
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**
**REVIEW OF DRAFT MASTER PLAN**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that at its meeting on April 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and receive public comment on the draft Cooper Township Master Plan. A master plan addresses future land use and establishes goals and priorities for the Township for the next 20-years. It includes maps, demographic information, future land use, and zoning plan. The master plan is an official document authorized by Michigan law that can be viewed as a blueprint for the Township's future.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that you are invited to attend this public hearing, which will be held at the Township Hall at 1590 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009. If you are unable to attend, written comments may be submitted in lieu of personal appearance by writing to the Township Planning Commission at the same address, up to the date of the hearing and may be received by the Planning Commission at the hearing.

The Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aid should contact the Township by phone, or in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

# MINUTES OF THE COOPER CHARTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026

A meeting of the Cooper Charter Township Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act.

Members Present: Asselmeier, Boekhoven, V. Johnson, Dahlquist, Wiles, Fooy

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Michael D. Homier of Foster, Swift, Collins and Smith, attorneys for Cooper Charter Township and Julie Johnston, Township Planner and Zoning Administrator

Chairman Asselmeier called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

## Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Comm. Wilson to approve the agenda, supported by Comm. V. Johnson. Motion carried 7-0.

## Review and Approval of Minutes

Members of the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the March 18, 2026 meeting.

A motion was made by Comm. Dahlquist, supported by Comm. Wiles, to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2026 meeting. Motion carried 7-0.

## Public Comments

Shannon Stutz briefly commented on the draft matter plan and will expand those comments during the public hearing.

## New Business

Public Hearing – Draft Master Plan

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Comm. Boekhoven, supported by Comm. V. Johnson. Motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Johnston begins the public hearing with an overview of the draft Master Plan, including a power point presentation:

- Purpose: guiding document for land use, policy consistency, and statutory basis for zoning; reviewed every 5 years over a 20-year horizon.
- Key community features: nature center, Markin Glen Park; entire township within the Kalamazoo River watershed; groundwater significance; public water/sewer primarily in the southeast; extensions typically tied to new development.
- Demographics/trends: ~2% average annual population growth projected; rural character with easy commutes; need for diverse housing options, especially for seniors; balance economic development in rural north/west without harming rural character.
- Goals (summary): protect sensitive areas and rural character; preserve parks/trails; maintain attractive residential areas; allow compatible new housing; retain rural attributes via organized land use; expand economic development; support public services/facilities.
- Future land use map: largely consistent with 2018 plan; updates include more rural residential north of D Avenue (reflecting diminishing agriculture), a smaller Cooper business district, and added medium-density residential north/west of the district.
- Zoning plan considerations: review parcel sizes/frontage in rural areas; update lot sizes and natural feature protections in subdivision/site condo ordinances; develop an accessory dwelling unit ordinance.

Shannon Stutz inquires about revisions to the Master Plan and comments she had submitted to the Township regarding the draft Master Plan. Ms. Johnston confirmed that Ms. Stutz's comments were considered and revisions to the draft plan were made.

Rachel Grover, Director of Kalamazoo County Planning and Development Department, commented on the draft master plan and stated that everything looks good.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Comm. V. Johnson, supported by Comm. Dahlquist. Motion passed 7-0.

The Planning Commission discussed the Master Plan expressing satisfaction with the revisions that were made and that it was ready to be sent to the Township Board.

Motion was made by Comm. Wiles to recommend approval of the Master Plan to the Township Board, supported by Comm. Boekhoven. Motion passed 7-0.

**Old Business**

a. Schedule of Regulations – Continued Discussions with particular attention to the Agricultural District. Julie Johnston leads the discussion on the schedule of regulations.

- Data presented:
  - Total AG parcels: 266.

- Of the 266 parcels, 93 or less than 5 acres; Out of those 93 parcels, 81 are less than one acre; and 69 are less than 2.5 acres.
- Average AG parcel size ~20 acres; median 8.83 acres.

- Discussion on establishing a 5-acre minimum lot size in AG:
  - Impact: 93 existing parcels would become legal nonconforming (still buildable and saleable with proper ordinances).
  - Nonconformity issues: lending concerns; rebuild allowances after disasters; ability to add structures without increasing nonconformity; no further splitting below minimum.
  - Frontage requirements: proposed 234 feet to align with a 4:1 maximum depth-to-width ratio; intended to discourage shallow small-lot splits.
  - Alternative considered: 2.5-acre minimum (reduces nonconforming count to 69) but less supportive of rural character.

## Commissioner Comments

None.

## Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Comm. Boekhoven, supported by Comm. Wilson. Motion passed 7-0.

**THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COOPER**
**Regular Township Board Meeting**
May 11, 2026

The regular meeting of the Cooper Charter Township Board was held on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 7pm.

**MEMBERS' PRESENT:**
Supervisor, Jeff Sorensen
Clerk, DeAnna Janssen
Trustee, Fred Vlietstra
Trustee, Ray Wilson
Trustee, Adam Tuinstra
Trustee, Marc Rowlson

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Treasurer DeHaan

Attended by Chief Klok, Assistant Chief Miles, Ordinance Enforcement Officer TJ Saucedo, Planning/Zoning Director Julie Johnston and 14 interested residents. Sorensen called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**
Items on the consent agenda:

a) Regular Board Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2026
b) April Receipts and Disbursements Report
c) Cash Reconciliation Report – March 2026
d) April Ordinance Enforcement Reports
e) Household Hazardous Waste Report – 1st Qtr of 2026

The board and citizens were asked if they wanted any items removed from the consent agenda. Motion by Janssen, supported by Wilson to approve the consent agenda as written. Motion carried 6-0.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:**
Motion by Wilson, supported by Vlietstra to approve agenda as written. Motion carried 6-0.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**
Opened citizen comments at 7:01pm.
1 comment was made.
Closed citizen comments at 7:02pm.

**CONSIDER FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT AND FIRE MILLAGE DISCUSSION:**
Motion by Vlietstra, supported by Tuinstra to accept the Chiefs Reports. Motion carried 6-0.

**KALAMAZOO VALLEY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY FOR A MSHDA MI NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT.**
Motion by Rowlson, supported by Vlietstra to table until June when Habitat can come again to give us direction about next steps.
Motion Carried 6-0.

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION 26-332 TO ADOPT 2026 MASTER LAND USE PLAN.**
Motion by Tuinstra, supported by Wilson to adopt Resolution 26-332.
Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson
Nays: none

Absent: DeHaan
Motion Carried 6-0.

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION 26-330 TO ADOPT ORD 281 – KEEPING DOMESTIC ANIMALS.**
Motion by Wilson, supported by Janssen to adopt Resolution 26-330.
Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson
Nays: none
Absent: DeHaan
Motion Carried 6-0

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION 26-331 TO ADOPT ORD 282- ACCESSORY USES OR BUILDINGS.**
Motion by Vlietstra, supported by Tuinstra to adopt Resolution 26-331.
Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson
Nays: none
Absent: DeHaan
Motion Carried 6-0

**PUBLIC HEARING ON SOLID WASTE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT.**
Motion by Tuinstra, supported by Vlietstra to OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING on the Township Solid Waste Special Assessment District. Motion carried 6-0.

Notice of public hearing, affidavit of mailing, and proof of publication were confirmed at the hearing. There were no written or oral comments received prior to the public hearing on the proposed Solid Waste Special Assessment District. The Supervisor then asked for any public comments.

Public comments: none

Motion by Fred supported by Adam to CLOSE THE PUBLI HEARING. Motion carried 6-0

Motion by Janssen, supported by Vlietstra to adopt the Solid Waste Special Assessment District Resolution assessing the sum of approximately $337,350.00 at a rate of $83.04 against each residential property specially benefited by this district.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson
Nays: none
Absent: DeHaan
Motion Carried 6-0.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON STREETLIGHT SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT.**
Motion by Tuinstra, supported by Rowlson to OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING on the Township Streetlight Special Assessment District. Motion carried 6-0.

Notice of public hearing, affidavit of mailing, and proof of publication were confirmed at the hearing. There were no written or oral comments received prior to the public hearing on the proposed Streetlight Special Assessment District. The Supervisor then asked for any public comments.

Public comments: none

Motion by Vlietstra, supported by Tuinstra to CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. Motion carried 6-0.

Motion by Wilson, supported by Vlietstra to adopt the Streetlight Special Assessment District Resolution assessing the sum of approximately $90,000.00 at a rate of .5800 mills against each property specially benefited by streetlights.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson
Nays: none
Absent: DeHaan
Motion Carried 6-0

**ELECTION STATS FROM MAY 5, 2026 ELECTION.**

**CONSIDER RE-APPOINTING TIM MOTT TO ZBA AS AN ALTERNATE FOR ANOTHER 3 YEAR TERM ENDING MAY 2029.**
Motion by Wilson, supported by Rowlson to approve.
Motion Carried 6-0.

**CONSIDER RESOLUTION 26-333 TO ALLOW CONSUMERS ENERGY TO CHANGE LIGHTS AT NO COST TO COOPER TOWNSHIP.**
Motion by Vlietstra, supported by Tuinstra to approve.
Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Rowlson, Tuinstra, Sorensen, Janssen, Vlietstra, Wilson
Nays: none
Absent: DeHaan
Motion Carried 6-0

**TRUSTEE COMMENTS:**
Trustee Rowlson – Road Commission did a nice job on the road in front of his house. All the markings that are taking place regarding tree trimming or removal....what about some pothole repairs?
Trustee Tuinstra – commented that he also has a tree with an X and has called the Road Commission 5 times with no response.
Trustee Vlietstra – Why the numbers on the trees...even with no X?
Trustee Wilson – The KRESA millage request barely passed in Cooper, so with our proposed millage for the Fire Department in November...advocates should really plan to get out there and get the word out.

**ADJOURN:**
There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

DeAnna Janssen, Clerk

Attested: Jeff Sorensen, Supervisor

I, the undersigned DeAnna Janssen, the duly qualified and elected Clerk for the Charter Township of Cooper, Kalamazoo County, Michigan, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of certain proceedings taken by the Township Board of said Township at a regular board meeting held on the 11th day of May 2026.

DeAnna Janssen, Clerk
Cooper Charter Township