

# HARTFORD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

20-Year Plan: 2020—2040



Adopted: December 10, 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a result of the collaboration between Township officials, Planning Commission, and the public.

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

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Why Plan?

One of the most important steps Hartford Township can take to anticipate and shape their future is the development of a master plan. The planning process to create a master plan involves the deliberate selection of policy choices to guide land use, growth, and development in the community. The master plan, which provides a vision for the future, is the only official Township document which sets forth these policies for the next 20 years.

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 Hartford Township Master Plan was adopted in 1999. The development of this plan will build on this historical vision, while considering the changes which have occurred in the Township.

A master plan serves a variety of functions, such as:

- 1) Outlining a general statement of the Township's goals and policies.
- 2) Providing a single, comprehensive view of the community's future land use plans.
- 3) Aiding in the decision-making associated with zoning, subdivisions, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development.
- 4) 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 the 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.

- 5) Assisting outside agencies, such as the Van Buren County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, and others to understand the desires of Hartford Township and support implementation of this vision.
- 6) Providing an informative tool that gives residents, property owners, developers, and adjacent communities a clear indication of the Township's direction for the future.

Finally, a master plan provides continuity across time, giving successive Planning Commissions and Township Boards a common framework for addressing land use issues. The responsibility to look beyond the day-to-day zoning concerns and provide guidance for the Township's vision can be accomplished through a master plan.

## Hartford Township Overview

Hartford Township is a general law township governed by an elected board of trustees consisting of a supervisor, treasurer, clerk, and two trustees. It is located in the southwest quadrant of Van Buren County and immediately adjacent to Berrien County to the west. The surrounding communities include:

### Van Buren County:

- Bangor Township to the north
- Lawrence Township to the east
- Keeler Township to the south

### Berrien County:

- Watervliet Township to the west

Hartford Township can recognizably be characterized as a rural community. What most Americans would consider a typical rural area is one with low population, small settlements, agricultural fields, and natural features. The International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) Smart Growth Network indicates that most rural communities can be grouped 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.
- 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.

Hartford Township most closely conforms to a resource-dependent community, but employment characteristics also suggest it may correspond to an edge community. As the demographic and economic analysis will show, residents of the Township are primarily employed in four main industries, one of which includes agriculture. So, even though the dominate land use and industry in the Township is agriculture, data shows that the majority of the residents are not economically dependent on agriculturally oriented ventures.

While a rural community, Hartford Township is generally located within close traveling distance between four major employment centers; approximately 30 to 40 minutes from the City of Kalamazoo and the St. Joseph/Benton Harbor metropolitan area within southwest Michigan and just under an hour to

Holland, MI and South Bend, IN. From the employment characteristics of the Township residents, many likely find occupations within these communities and gain easy access from Interstate 94 or Red Arrow Highway running east/west through the heart of the Township; US-31 or M-51 moving south; and, Interstate 96 traveling to the north.

Typically, townships are 36 square miles in size. Hartford Township, however, is 33.85 square miles due to the City of Hartford, which can be found at the center of the Township. The City is an important economic focal point for the Township, providing retail establishments, gas stations, restaurants, banking, service-oriented businesses, entertainment, churches, and government services like a post office. In addition, the City of Hartford provides water and sewage treatment facilities, some of which are utilized by the Township. Continued partnership and support of the City of Hartford will be key to the Township's future growth.

In addition to the City of Hartford, the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi have sovereign trust lands within Hartford Township. The Band has a strong connection to their homelands, which are located in northern Indiana and southwest Michigan. They have been working to restore their lands and currently have 658 acres within Hartford Township. While these lands are included within the Township boundaries, the Township has no jurisdiction over their development.

In August of 2011, the Tribe opened a branch of the Four Winds Casino on trust lands off Red Arrow Highway, near the western boundary of the Township. Four Winds Hartford is a 52,000 square foot casino, the design of which was inspired by the traditions of the Potawatomi people.

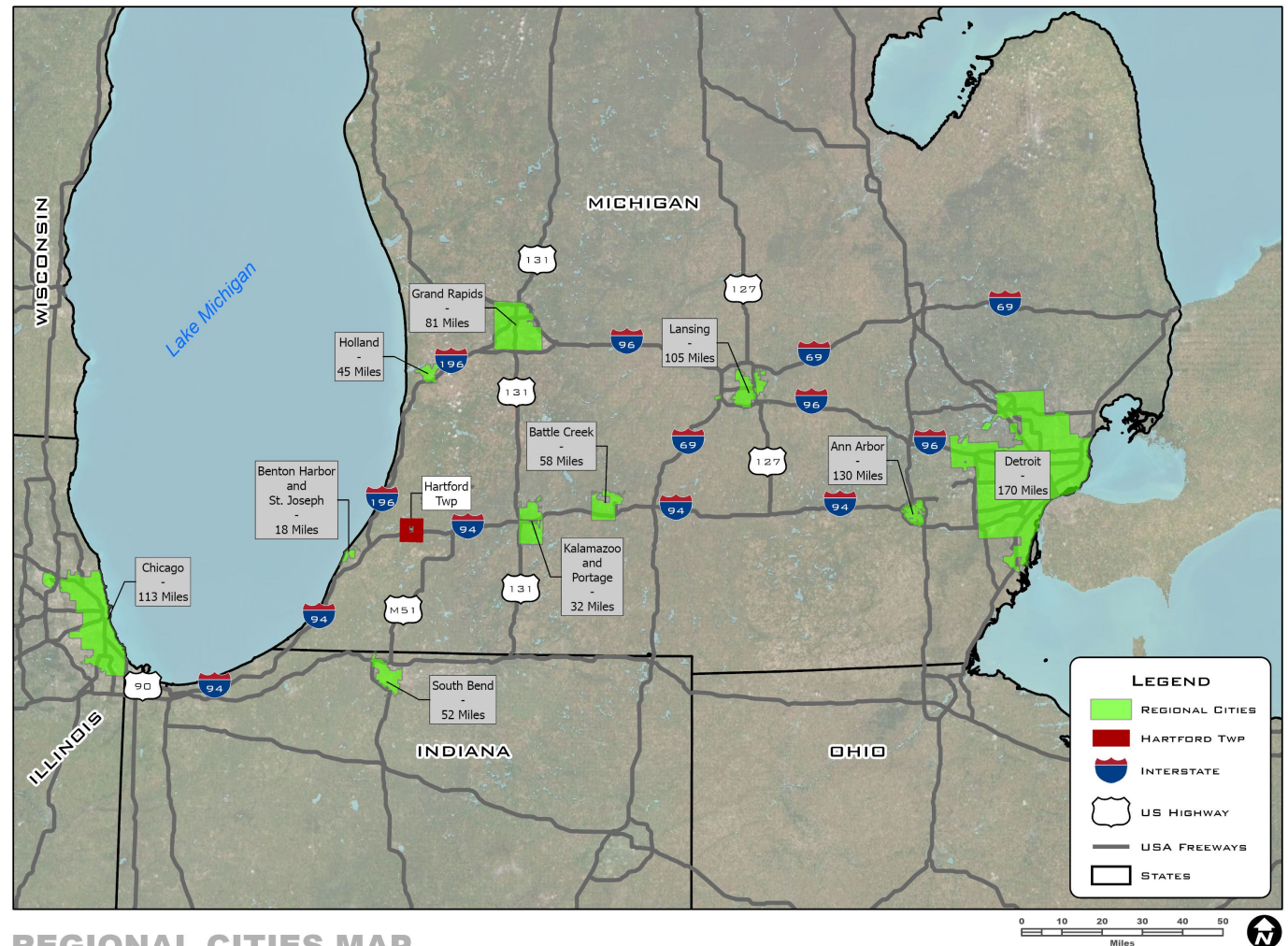
Hartford Township contains or is located near significant natural resources. The Paw Paw River meanders through the Township, flowing from east to west just north of the City of Hartford. The Nature Conservancy has identified the Paw Paw River and certain tributaries as high-quality aquatic systems important for conserving freshwater biodiversity in the Great Lakes Basin. Hartford Township is also in close proximity to Lake Michigan, a short 25-

minute drive to the west. In addition, the Lake Michigan fruit belt, which is an area where the microclimate and soils makes fruit production optimal, is a part of Hartford Township

Overall, the Township's rural setting, natural features, open lands, transportation options, and close proximity to larger employment centers provides opportunities for future growth and development.

## Plan Organization

The Hartford 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 the development pattern for the community. Then, the Zoning Plan outlines ordinance actions which can be taken 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.



## REGIONAL CITIES MAP

# HARTFORD TOWNSHIP

## MASTER PLAN

**W+ WIGHTMAN**  
10/20/2020

## CHAPTER 2: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The fundamental purpose of the Hartford 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. The important planning issues facing the Township are identified through a set of goals and objectives, which are designed to ensure the present and future quality of life and character of the Township. Planning goals are statements that express the long-range aspirations of the Township. Each goal is accompanied by a set of general objectives to help attain the specified goal.

**Hartford Township Vision Statement:** *A rural community that is committed to advancing the wellbeing of all residents while maintaining its agricultural roots and friendly way of life.*

### **GOAL #1: Maintain a well-organized and efficient use of land in the Township that recognizes existing character and availability of public services.**

1. Encourage a transition between land uses that provides a logical progression towards more intense uses closer to the City of Hartford.
2. Utilize existing public infrastructure efficiently, particularly where water and sanitary sewer systems are available, to maximize development in these locations.
3. Encourage sensible and diverse nonresidential development in designated corridors to provide opportunities for employment and to help fulfill resident commercial and retail needs.

4. Protect the rural character of the Township through the establishment of buffer setbacks along roadway edges that limits the removal of natural landscapes.

### **GOAL #2: Support local agricultural production and ensure the viability of a resource base economy by recognizing the importance of valued farmlands in the Township.**

1. Ensure land use policies and development codes encourage the ongoing use of land for farming.
2. Continue to support direct market agritourism such as farm markets, food stands, and food cooperative facilities.
3. Allow farmers 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.
4. Consider becoming a supporting Township in the Van Buren County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program to promote purchase of the development rights for active farmland.
5. Support the agricultural community in the use of existing legislative tools and techniques such as the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act and farmland conservation easements.



Onsite farm market stand.





Solar panels for  
alternate incomes.

6. Provide for the allowance of alternative energy facilities (solar/wind) within the Agricultural Conservation future land use district to support environmental sustainability and provide supplementary income to property owners.

**GOAL #3: Accommodate new residential development that recognizes the rural and agricultural character of the Township, preserves natural features, and accommodates a range of lifestyles.**

1. Encourage the continued pattern of low-density housing as the principal housing choice in the Township, which recognizes the natural environment, agricultural land uses, and limited availability of public infrastructure.
2. Ensure new residential development will be compatible in density and character with neighboring uses.
3. Identify limited areas of the Township where higher density residential developments may offer alternative housing choices beyond single-family residential and can be adequately accommodated by either public or private water and sanitary sewer systems.
4. Encourage innovative residential development that incorporates preservation of natural features and the Township's rural character, such as cluster housing, open space preservation, or conservation design.
5. Prohibit residential densities in areas where conditions like potable water, soil conditions, and road infrastructure are inadequate to support the proposed density.



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.

**GOAL #4: Provide for rural economic development opportunities as well as limited expansion of commercial and industrial uses that are compatible with adjacent land uses and can be supported by appropriate public or private infrastructure.**

1. Ensure that more intensive nonresidential development is directed to the designated corridors of Red Arrow Highway and County Road 687.
2. Allow for the growth of businesses that provide agricultural support services, such as bulk feed and seed, large animal veterinary care, and related services at appropriate locations within the agricultural area of the Township.
3. Ensure the development of new commercial and industrial uses are designed to be compatible with adjacent land uses in terms of scale, building size, height, setbacks, and open space.
4. Require buffering and landscape screening of nonresidential uses adjacent to residential uses to reduce adverse impacts on typical residential living.
5. Provide opportunities for family-run service and unique cultural home-based businesses that offer residents economic opportunities without significantly altering the appearance and quality of life experienced by surrounding residential properties.



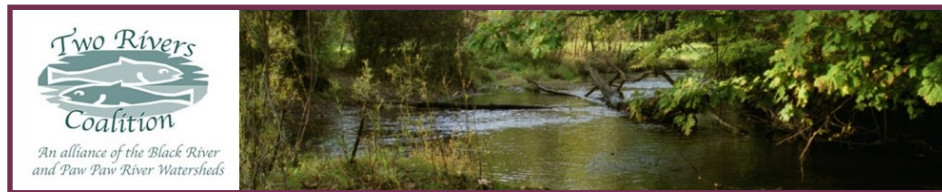
**GOAL #5: Continue to support and improve public infrastructure and services to Hartford Township residents, in coordination with the planned future land use pattern.**

1. Work with private providers to inventory broadband and internet systems in the Township and to close gaps in coverage.
2. Collaborate with the Van Buren County Road Commission to implement an asset management plan for local roads to improve Pavement Surface Evaluation and Ratings (PASER) for Township roadways.
3. Continue to work with the City of Hartford and the joint Fire Board to provide fire safety services to Hartford Township. Update the Interlocal Fire Department Agreement as needed to maintain operations and level of service.
4. Work with the City of Hartford and private developers to carefully consider expansion of public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure into the Township for new development. In addition, provide opportunities for residents impacted by environmental concerns the opportunity to connect to public water.
5. Evaluate policing levels with the Van Buren County Sheriff on an annual basis to determine if public safety needs are being met.

**GOAL #6: Strive to protect important natural resources and open spaces that contribute to the health of natural systems, wildlife habitats, community character, and quality of life.**

1. Recognize the Paw Paw River as an important natural amenity in the community, ensuring land uses protect water quality and wildlife habitats.
2. Aid the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and the Two Rivers Coalition in protecting the Paw Paw River watershed, specifically supporting the Paw Paw River Watershed Management Plan.

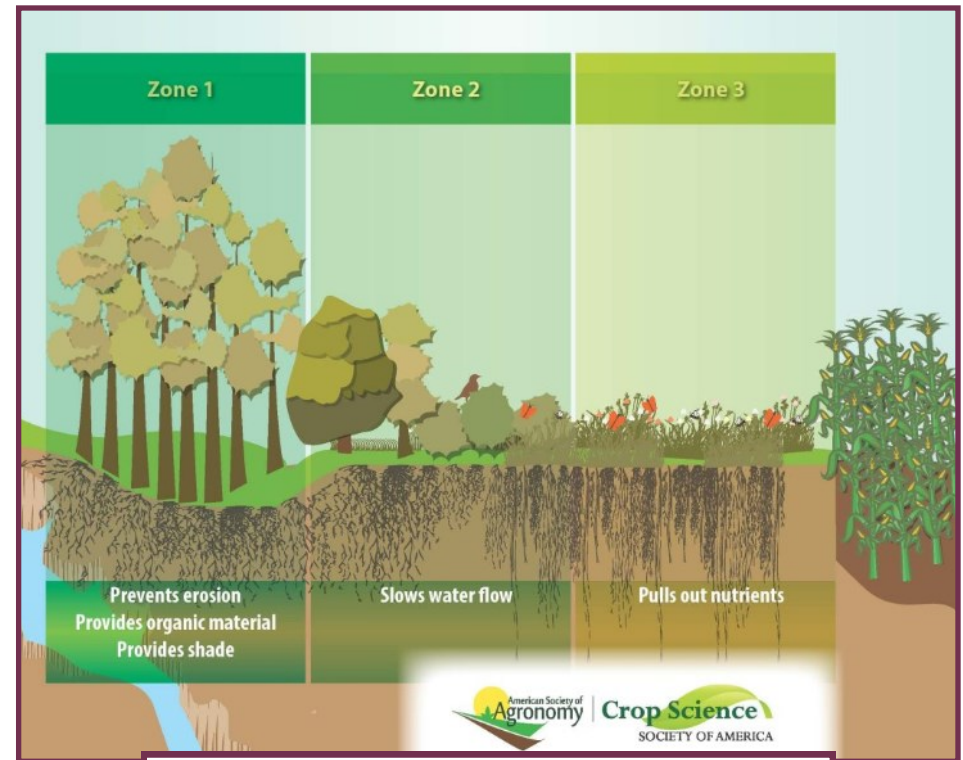




3. Develop riparian protection ordinances such as setbacks from the Paw Paw River and its watershed. In addition, create flexible development standards for properties along Rush Lake.
4. Encourage new residential development to actively preserve natural features such as onsite woodlands, wetlands, slopes, etc. through tools such as conservation easements, land trusts, and zoning tools like clustered development options.
5. Work with local land trusts, like the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, to help secure conservation easements, helping potential donors understand the benefits they might realize from placing lands in trust.

**GOAL #7: Foster relationships between Hartford Township, the City of Hartford, Van Buren County, and neighboring communities to support cooperation in local government services.**

1. Work with neighboring communities to coordinate land use and zoning across municipal boundaries.
2. Investigate opportunities for shared governmental services, which may result in budgetary advantages and the possibility for grant assistance through the State of Michigan.
3. Continue discussions with the City of Hartford related to possible extensions of water and sanitary sewer public systems into the Township in appropriate areas designed for higher-intensity development.



Riparian buffer strip illustration to protect rivers and watersheds.

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

~~Helen Keller

## CHAPTER 3: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

### Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan is the vision for the land development pattern in Hartford 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 agricultural 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:

1. Continue to sustain the overall rural agricultural character of the Township and promote opportunities for agricultural economic growth.
2. Protect the natural environment within the Township and allow the type of land use most compatible with those features.

3. Encourage the systematic development of residential and nonresidential uses in specific areas and corridors to take advantage of existing and future infrastructure improvements.
4. Promote compatibility of existing and future uses between the Township and adjacent municipal boundaries.

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

Six future land use categories have been created to designate the desired land use pattern for the Township. The geographic distribution of the land uses is found on the Future Land Use Map.

#### Agricultural Conservation

Agricultural land is the largest land use category in Hartford Township and represents an important part of the Township's economy and culture. Agricultural uses represent approximately 71 percent of land in the Township. There is a strong connection in



Agriculture is the largest future land use in Hartford Township.

Hartford Township to agricultural activities, specifically fruit crop production. The Township is located in the Lake Michigan fruit belt, where microclimate and soils make fruit production optimal. As much of the land in the Township is Prime Farmland or Farmland of Local Importance, preserving opportunities for productive agricultural uses is vital to Hartford's future. Residents continue to recognize this as an important part of the cultural character of the Township.

The Agricultural Conservation 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, like fruit packing; 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, it can also be an avenue for local resident employment. Finally, agritourism can educate the public about agriculture and help to preserve agricultural heritage. 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.



Farm stands for direct market agritourism.

- Recreation and events – Corn mazes, haunted hayrides, horse back riding lessons, or other low-intensity or seasonal marketable uses of the farm.

These uses should be permitted within the Agricultural Conservation future land use district, however 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.

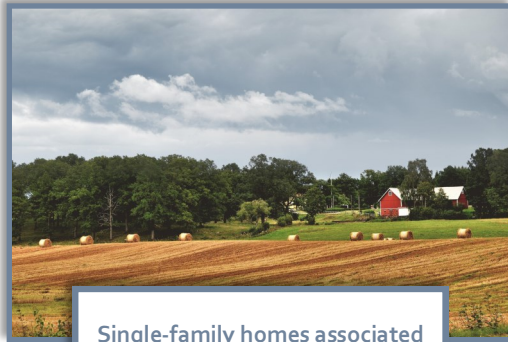


Hartford Township is located in the Michigan Fruitbelt.

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 outbuildings. In addition, uses that provide energy production such as wind or solar farming and small-scale biofuel production would also be appropriate.

Finally, single-family residential uses are included in the Agricultural Conservation 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. 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.





Single-family homes associated with agricultural operations.

### Rural Residential

Rural residential areas are typically comprised of very low-density single-family dwellings on large parcels along primary roads. Building sites 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 be selectively cleared, if at all, 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. 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. The Rural Residential future land use district comprises approximately 18.5 percent of the Township.

### Urban Fringe Residential

The Urban Fringe Residential District is planned for primarily single-family residential uses located on the fringe of the more urbanized area of the City of Hartford. In addition, the district is found around Interstate 94 to provide opportunities for higher densities adjacent to this major transportation corridor. While water and sanitary sewer are not planned, these areas may have opportunities in the future if extensions of these services are provided by the City of Hartford. Approximately, 3.5 percent of Township acreage is found within this future land use district.



Traditional single-family subdivision.

The Urban Fringe Residential District may provide opportunities for alternative housing choices beyond large parcel single-family development. Subdivisions and site condominiums are possible in this district if water wells and septic systems can be managed. In addition, public sanitary sewer or community-based sewer facilities may allow small attached products to be developed, such as two-unit condominiums, cottage-style developments, and residential care facilities.

The density for this future land use district should allow up to three dwelling units per acre. 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.

### Waterfront Residential

This category is primarily designed to preserve the existing residential development along or near Rush Lake. Lot sizes in this district are the smallest permitted within the Township, allowing lots at a minimum of 10,000 square feet or a little over four dwelling units per acre. This district would also allow some opportunities for new development such as attached residential housing types and manufactured home communities if water and sanitary sewer needs can be managed. This is the smallest residential future land use category, at just over one percent of the Township.

In addition, as these are small lots generally located along Rush Lake, some management of the riparian area and flexibility in zoning requirements may be needed. Setbacks from the lake should be managed to ensure protection of the waterfront. In addition, the size of primary and accessory structure setbacks may need to be reduced.



Cottage court style development.

### Mixed-Use Corridor

Red Arrow Highway is the major local transportation corridor in Hartford Township. The current land use pattern is a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. Continuing this mixed-use development will offer ongoing economic opportunities within the Township, as well as providing for the commercial needs of the community. In addition, there are existing and possibly potential opportunities for water and sanitary sewer infrastructure along this roadway.

In addition, the Mixed-Use Corridor district is located at the Interstate 94 intersection with County Road 687. Some nonresidential uses exist in this area and the advantage of the interstate highway provides opportunities for commercial uses.

The types of development that would be allowed in this district range from office, restaurant, and retail to light industrial uses like small warehousing, vehicle repair, and landscape supply yards. The development of nonresidential uses along these corridors should be carefully considered, including appropriate buffer zones, screening, and managing any outdoor uses. Residential developments are likely to occur immediately adjacent to this future land use district and ensuring compatibility will be important as new construction occurs. This district comprises just over 4.5 percent of the Township acreage.

As Red Arrow Highway is part of the rural fabric of the Township, agricultural and residential uses would also be permitted as part of this Mixed-Use Corridor future land use. Creating an appropriate zoning district to support the broad variety of uses will be an important part of managing compatibility along this corridor.

### Government

There are a handful of government uses located within Hartford Township, which include both Township and Van Buren County buildings and services. These uses are not intended to change during the life of this plan.

#### MIXED-USE CORRIDOR

##### Uses:

Small scale uses such as offices, financial institutions, or specialty destination stores.

Additional commercial uses serving local residents and commuter traffic like restaurants and gas stations.

Low intensity employment centers including research and development, life science, corporate centers, light industrial uses with limited impact outside the building, public and quasi-public institutions, and health care facilities.

##### Site Design:

Adequate screening and buffers to protect adjacent residential properties from development impacts.

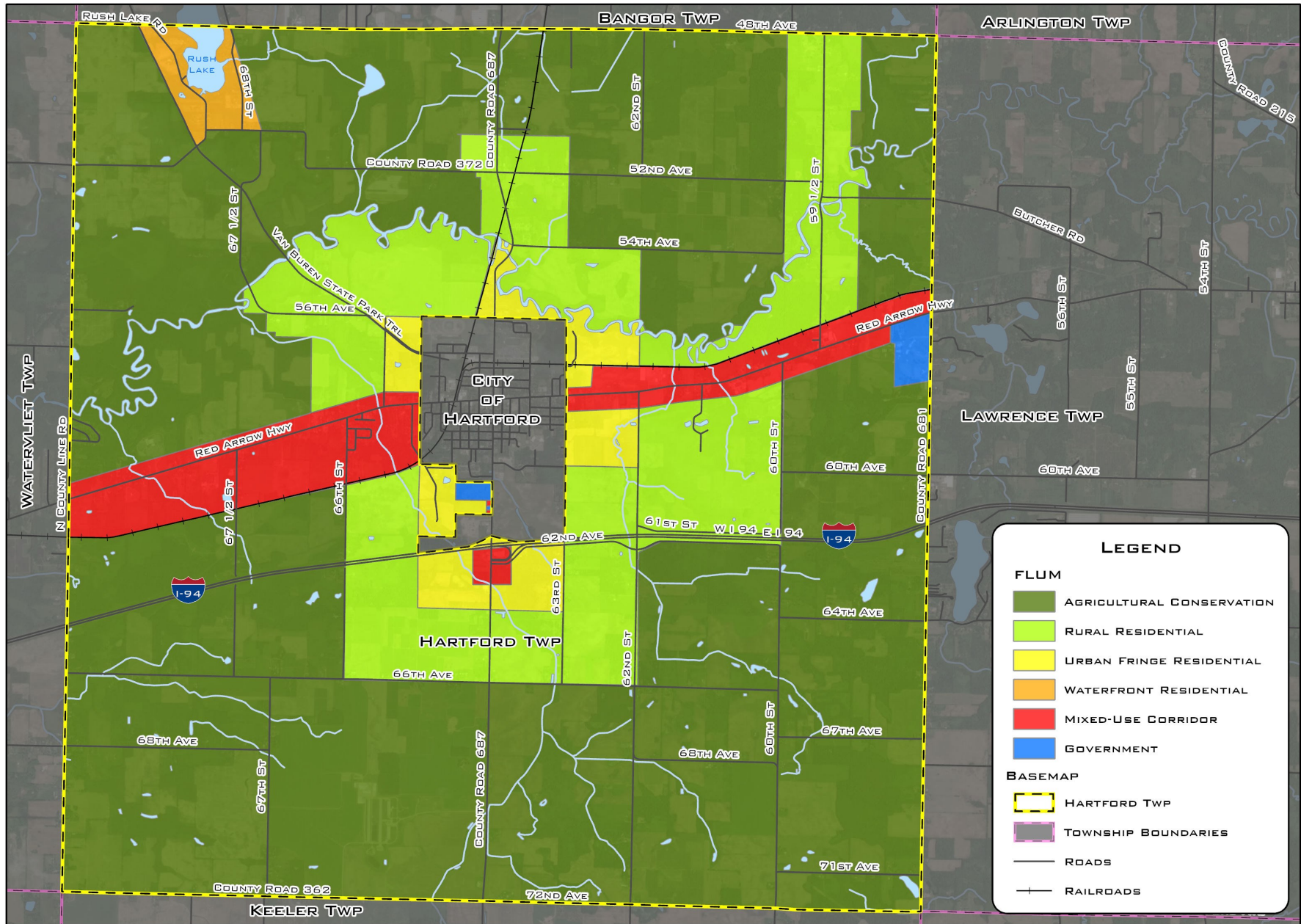
Provide for shared driveway access, when feasible, to limit curb cuts along Red Arrow Highway.

Provide appropriate setbacks and landscaping along Red Arrow Highway and County Road 687 to enhance these corridors.



Hartford Township Hall





# **FUTURE LAND USE MAP** VAN BUREN COUNTY (2019)

## **HARTFORD TOWNSHIP** MASTER PLAN

**W+ WIGHTMAN**  
12/15/2020

194324





## CHAPTER 4: ZONING PLAN

Zoning is a key regulatory mechanism for achieving the future land use pattern advocated in this plan. The Future Land Use Plan is the long-range vision of how land uses should evolve. It is not the Township's zoning map, which is the current mechanism for regulating 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 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 and strategies 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.

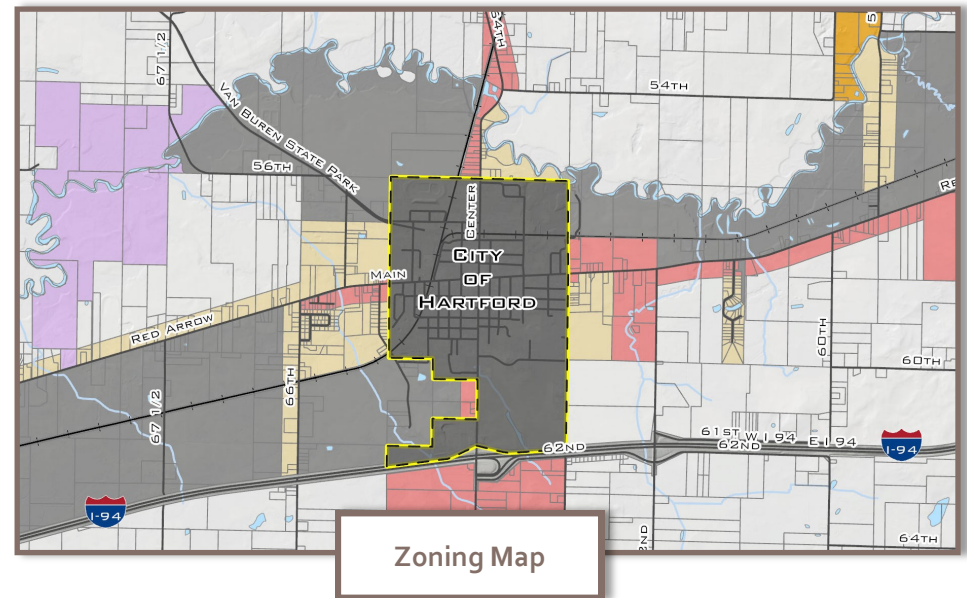
Future Land Use	Existing or Recommended Zoning Districts
Agricultural Conservation	District A: Agricultural
Rural Residential	District R1: Residential
Urban Fringe Residential	<i>New Suburban Residential district needed</i>
Waterfront Residential	District R2: Residential-Resort
Mixed-Use Corridor	<i>New Suburban Residential</i> District C: Commercial District I: Industrial
Government	Any zoning district

Recommendations have also been made related to new districts or changes to the Zoning Ordinance to help ensure the effectiveness and success of this plan, as follows:

- Consider renaming and/or developing the following residential zoning districts:
  - District R1: Residential becomes the R1: Rural Residential District.
  - A new district called R2: Suburban Residential is developed for the Urban Fringe Residential future land use category.
  - The current R2: Residential-Resort becomes R3: Residential-Resort.
- Develop a new Schedule of Regulations section of the Zoning Ordinance that provides specific parcel/lot sizes for each individual zoning district, as follows:
  - A: Agricultural – 20-acre minimum, with an exception for five-acre parcels if approved by the Planning Commission. This review by the Planning Commission would consider adjacent uses, parcel sizes, and the rural character of the area.
  - R1: Rural Residential District - minimum two acres per dwelling unit.
  - R2: Suburban Residential – 21,780 square feet per dwelling unit. If public water or sanitary sewer is available, lot sizes may reduce 14,520 square feet. If public water and sanitary sewer is available lot sizes may reduce to 10,890 square feet.
  - R3: Residential-Resort – 10,000 square feet per dwelling unit.
  - Nonresidential uses – 21,780 square feet per parcel.

In addition to parcel/lot size, this section would also provide minimum road frontages, minimum building sizes, required setbacks, maximum

- heights, and regulations related to accessory structures for each district. This section would also offer some flexibility for the Residential-Resort District. Waterfront ordinances often allow development to mimic what is around them, as many of the homes may have been built prior to zoning. For example, if principal buildings are required to have a 15-foot side yard setback, but most homes within 300 feet of the subject property only have seven-foot setbacks, this setback would be permitted.
3. Develop a Riparian Protection Ordinance to provide specific requirements for construction along the Paw Paw River and Rush Lake.
  4. Consider a Mixed-Use Overlay Zone for Red Arrow Highway and County Road 687. This Overlay would help to manage the myriad of uses that would be permitted along these corridors. Everything from residential to industrial uses currently exist and would be allowed to continue through the Mixed-Use Corridor future land use district. Having an overlay zone that will help with impacts and managing compatibility of these uses will be important to these corridors.
  5. Develop use standards for home-based businesses and agritourism to allow for more economic opportunities within the Agricultural District. These standards would provide specific site requirements reducing impacts to neighboring properties.
  6. Create an Open Space Development ordinance for residential developments. This ordinance would allow residential lots of a smaller size and possibly additional density in exchange for the preservation of 50 percent of the lands. Attached residential products would also be permitted if water and sanitary sewer needs can be managed.
  7. Allow attached housing in the Suburban Residential and Residential-Resort Districts, depending on the availability of public water and sanitary sewer, or other private management of these needs.
  8. Rework the Agricultural special use permit list to include additional uses that are supportive to farming and farm operations. In addition, consider eliminating the retail uses that are not directly related to supporting agricultural operations.
  9. Develop a subdivision and site condominium ordinance that emphasizes the preservation of natural features on site, requires natural buffers along roadways to protect rural character, and ensures compatibility with adjacent properties.
  10. Consider rezoning, when requested by the property owner, Industrial zoned property found along the Paw Paw River, and west of the City between 1-94 and Red Arrow Highway. According to the Future Land Use Map, much of this property could be rezoned to Rural Residential or Suburban Residential. Specific areas immediately adjacent to Red Arrow Highway could remain zoned Industrial if adjacent uses or future desires for industrial seem appropriate. Or these parcels could be rezoned to Commercial.



## CHAPTER 5: PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT

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

### 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.

#### Soils and Topography

Hartford Township is located in the physiographic region called hilly moraines. Hilly moraines are characterized as gently rolling to hilly with a considerable amount of relatively level topography and contain lakes and poorly drained lands. This can be clearly seen in the Township, which is characterized by gentle slopes and flat bottomlands near the Paw Paw River watershed. The highest elevation within the Township is 820 feet and is located just south and west of the Interstate 94 and County Road 687 intersection. Predictably, the lowest elevation location is at 633 feet near the Paw Paw River.

Soils in the Township are generally classified into two types, as follows:

- **Capac-Riddles-Selfridge** – This soil classification is associated with nearly level to hilly lands that are well to somewhat poorly drained. The soil tends to be sandy and loamy. This soil is good for agriculture and ranges from suited to somewhat unsuited for development, including septic systems. Approximately 72 percent of the Township is covered with Capac-Riddles-Selfridge soils.

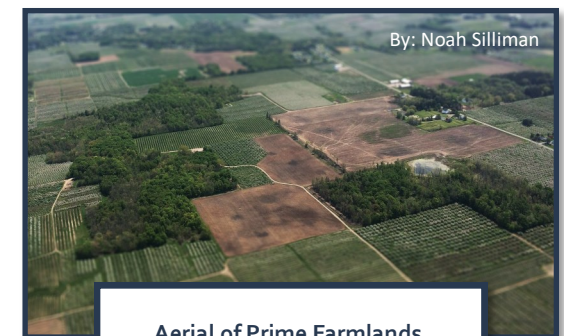
- **Coloma-Spinks-Oshtemo** – This soil type is also associated with nearly level to hilly lands that are well drained. The soil is also sandy and loamy and is mostly used for agriculture, including specialty crops. Similar to the other major soil type in the Township, development possibilities range from well suited to generally unsuited. Coloma-Spinks-Oshtemo soils encompass approximately 26 percent of the Township.

The remaining two percent is classified as Gilford soils, which are poorly drained and are best used for woodlands and croplands. This soil is generally unsuited for development.

Those soils that are considered unsuitable for development are typically hydric soils, which are poorly or somewhat poorly drained and are often indicators of wetlands. In particular, septic systems are prone to failure, which can lead to pollution of ground and surface waters.

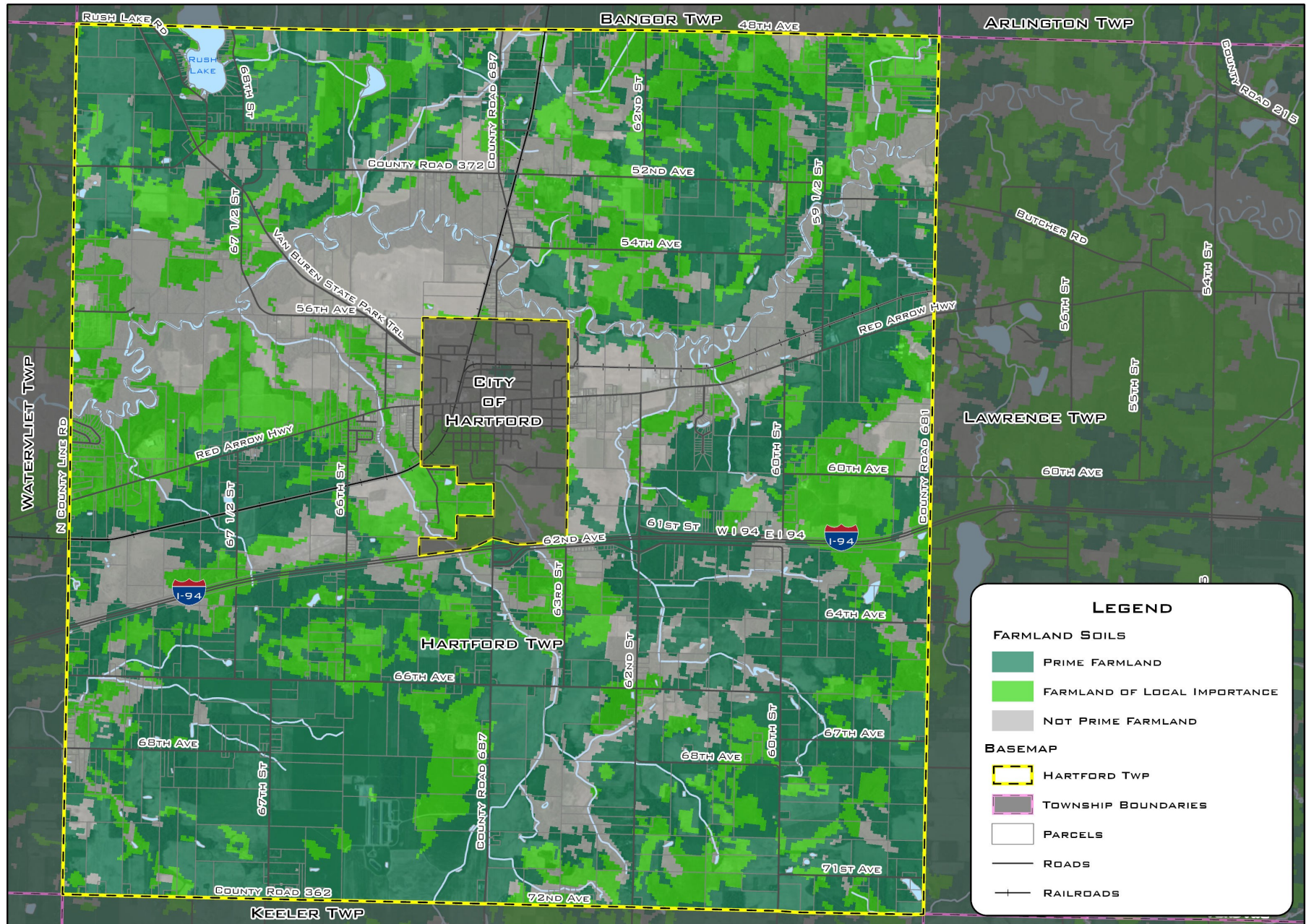
#### Prime Farmlands

Southwest Michigan, including Hartford 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.



Aerial of Prime Farmlands.





## PRIME FARMLANDS

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
gSSURGO (2019)

194324

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**W+ WIGHTMAN**

9/1/2020

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, **prime farmland** is described as:

*Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding. [SSM, USDA Handbook No. 18, October 1993]*

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. Van Buren County is specifically identified as an important area for grapes, apples, peaches, plums, blueberries, and sweet and sour cherries.

This type of farmland is designated by the federal government and is considered important to meet the nation's food and fiber needs. Hartford Township has 5,453 acres of prime farmland, which are located throughout the Township. However, the highest concentration of prime farmland can be found between the east and west boundaries of the Township, south of Interstate 94.

Additional categories of farmlands includes unique, which produces specific high-value food; farmland of statewide importance, which would be desig-

nated 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 5,863 acres of lands designated as farmland of local importance, which are scattered throughout the Township.

The following tables provides the total acreages for each classification of farmland property:

#### Farmland Designations

Land Classification	Acres*
Prime farmland	5,453
Farmland of local importance	5,863
Not prime farmland	5,433
Prime farmland if drained	4,916

Source: Van Buren County Department of Land Management

\*Rounded to the nearest one acre

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."*

Understanding the importance of prime agricultural lands is essential to future land use planning. Mr. John Piotti, President of American Farmland Trust, spoke at the 2019 Trust in Food Symposium in January of 2019 stating the following:



*“Over the last 20 years, we’ve lost 31 million acres of farmland—that’s equivalent to all the farmland in Iowa. That’s over 1.5 million acres a year, or three acres every minute.”*

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.

### Waterways, Watersheds, and Wetlands

According to the Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Hartford Township has 28.7 miles of river, 151 acres of surface water, and 21,545 acres of watershed. The main waterway which traverses Hartford Township from east to west is the Paw Paw River. In addition, many of its tributaries and designated drains are found to the north and south of the River.

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission developed the Paw Paw River Watershed Management Plan in 2008. The Plan is intended as a guide to organizations and local governments working cooperatively to protect and improve this important natural resource. It is also meant to compliment the management plans developed for the St. Joseph River and Lake Michigan. The Two Rivers Coalition is a nonprofit organization that supports the Paw Paw management plan and could be an important partner with Hartford Township in protecting this valuable feature in the community.



Paw Paw River.

The Paw Paw River Watershed includes acreages to the north and south of the river. The term wa-

tershed describes an area of land that drains down slope and any drop of water falling within it, will leave in the same river or stream. The Paw Paw River flows westward through Hartford Township before joining the St. Joseph River and emptying into Lake Michigan near the City of Benton Harbor. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, other significant subwatersheds in Hartford Township include:

#### **Paw Paw River Subwatersheds**

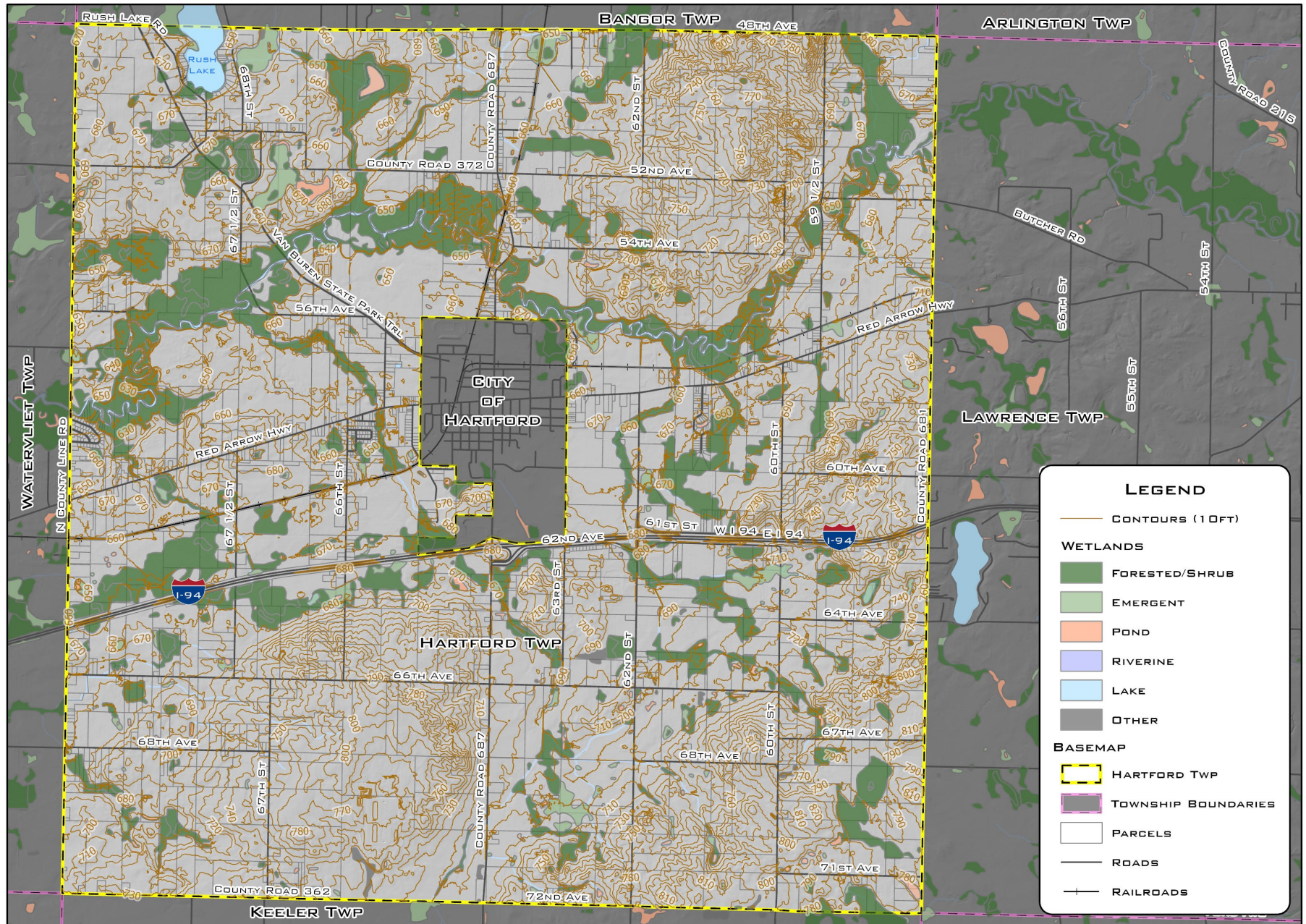
Subwatersheds	Total Acres	Percent in Hartford Township
Brush Creek	26,322	1.92%
Hog Creek	17,908	44.52%
Mud Lake Drain	10,044	24.79%
Paw Paw Lake	10,280	1.25%
Mill Creek	18,499	10.83%
Pine Creek	11,958	64.13%

Source: United States Geological Survey

Not surprisingly, some wetlands can also be found along the Paw Paw 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.





# WETLANDS MAP

NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY

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- 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 rainfalls. Floodplains are lands that are temporarily inundated by an overflow of water from the river, stream, or lake, generally resulting from a 100-year rainfall event. The elevations surrounding the Paw Paw River range between 630 and 660 feet, with an average through the Township of around 640 feet. Flooding within the wetland areas will likely occur below an elevation of 660 feet.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Centers for Environmental Information states that Michigan has experienced an increase in the frequency of extreme precipitation events over the past decade. In addition, the eastern shore of Lake Michigan has experienced upward trends in annual snowfall totals. Precipitation is projected to continue to rise, particularly in the spring, potentially increasing the frequency and intensity of flooding. Even with increasing participation, the rise of temperatures (2 degrees since the beginning of the 20th century) will amplify evaporation rates and the rate of soil moisture loss. These two factors will impact the agricultural industry in Michigan by delaying planting in the spring and making droughts in the summer more prevalent.

Current threats to the waterways, watersheds, and wetlands in Hartford Township are pollutants and invasive species. Conversion of property for development and the runoff from the agricultural industry and developed lands contribute to pollution. Invasive species such as zebra mussels, which can colonize in rivers downstream from lakes, threaten the Paw Paw River. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service treats the lower Paw Paw River for round gobies and lampreys.

### Surface and Groundwater

Groundwater and surface water are fundamentally interconnected. Understandably, surface water is the water that collects on the ground. Groundwa-

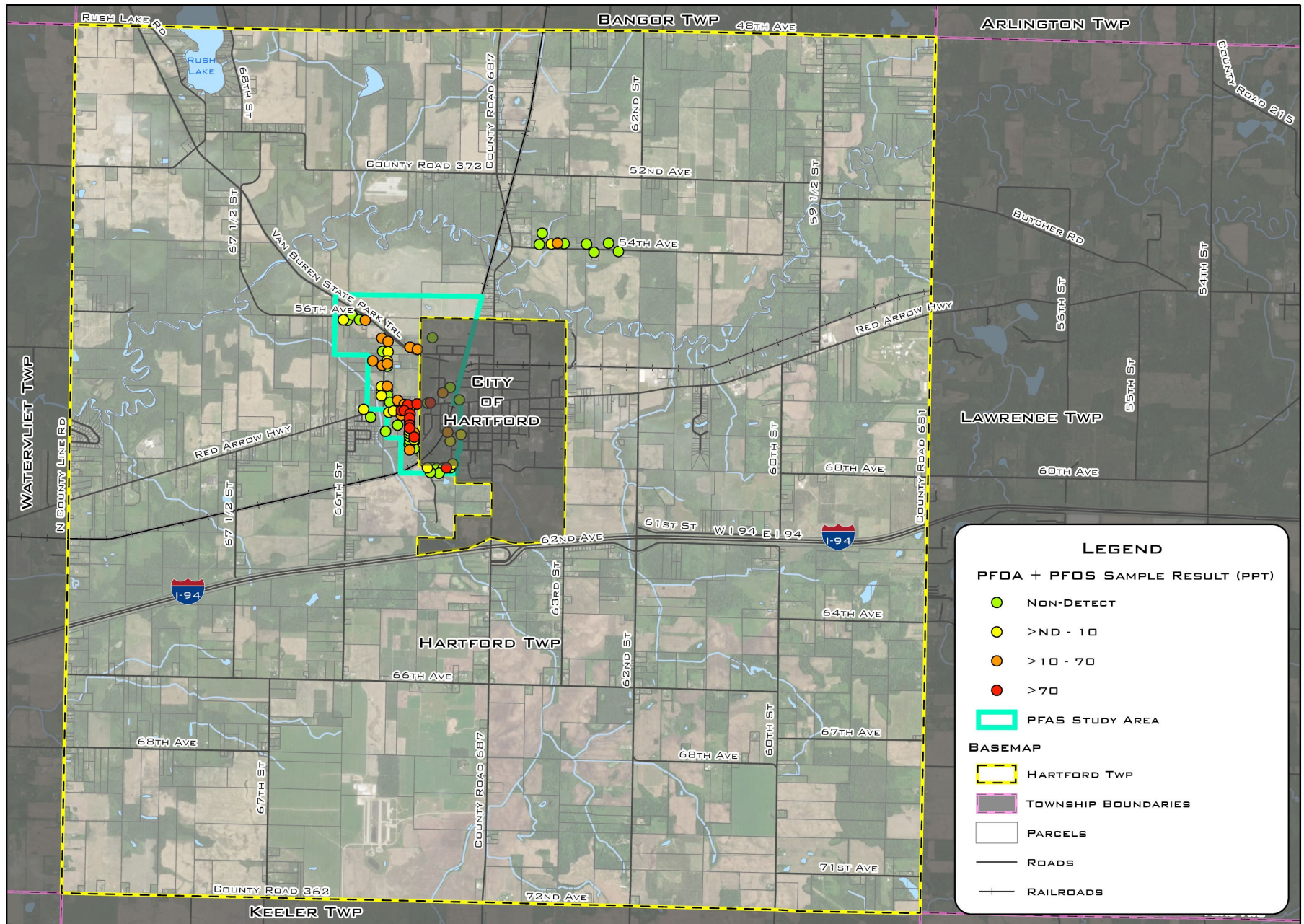
ter is the surface water that saturates the tiny spaces between soil and rock to eventually infiltrate to underground aquifers. Most groundwater is found in aquifers, which are layers of porous rock that are saturated from above.

A clean and abundant supply of groundwater is one of the most valuable natural resources in Hartford Township and throughout Van Buren County. Glacial deposits are the primary source of groundwater and Van Buren County has some of the best aquifers in terms of recharge rate and quantity of water. The U.S. Geological Survey states that the groundwater found from the glacial drift can provide several times the amount of water needed in the County, but large withdrawals may lower the level of lakes or diminish the flow of the Paw Paw River and its tributaries. In addition, permeable soils in the Hartford Township region allows for relatively high groundwater infiltration.

Similar to the other water features in the Township, groundwater is endangered by pollutants, in particular the recent PFAS threat. PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a grouping of manmade chemicals that have been used in a variety of industries since the 1940's. Both substances are very harmful to the environment and the human body.

The State of Michigan began actively investigating PFAS in 2018, generating some of the best data nationally about contamination of this chemical. During this investigation, one PFAS contaminated site was found in the City of Hartford, which impacts Hartford Township. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) states the following:

*"The former Du-Wel Metals Products (Du-Wel) site, located at 520 Heywood Street, operated a manufacturing facility on a 7.9-acre property from 1957 until 2002. Operations included electroplating, buffing and polishing of aluminum and zinc die casts, and then limited machining and warehousing before it closed in 2002. The building was then demolished and removed. From 1987 to 2002, Du-Wel conducted soil and groundwater investigations and soil corrective actions with the oversight of EGLE. From 2002*



# PFAS MAP

MICHIGAN DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT,  
GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

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9/1/2020



*to present, EGLE has been conducting investigation and remediation activities for contaminants other than PFAS compounds, such as chlorinated solvents, at the site.”*

EGLE held a public meeting at the Hartford High School Auditorium in August of 2019 to provide information to the Hartford community. They intend to focus investigation activities at the former Du-Wel property as well as the installation of off-site monitoring wells, which will test for both previously identified containments and the newly discovered PFAS. These monitoring wells are intended to help determine if expanded residential drinking water well testing is needed. The municipal water supply was absent of PFAS contaminants but drinking water wells located in the study area should be tested.

There are two options to assist with managing PFAS in drinking water. The first is to extend the municipal water system to those who are or may be affected in the Township. This option will require cooperation from the City of Hartford who manages the public system. The second option is to utilize household filters which are certified to reduce the amount of PFAS in the water. According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department will provide a system at no cost if PFAS contaminants have been found.

## Land Use

An evaluation of the existing land uses within Hartford Township is critical to the formulation of its future land use plan. The type and location of existing land uses provides 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.

Two maps have been developed to convey the land uses in Hartford Township. The first is the Land Use and Land Cover Map, which is intended to show the surface physical characteristics of the land. It is a general overview

of the Township, not following parcels lines but instead convey land usage. From this analysis, we can see that approximately 809 acres of Township land has been developed. The following classifications were utilized for Hartford Township:

### Existing Land Cover

Land Use Classification	Acres*
Developed	809
Cultivated Crops	11,806
Park and Open Space	784
Forest	3,825
Wetlands	4,358
Open Water	83

Source: US Department of Agriculture

\*Rounded to the nearest one acre

As expected, most of the acreage in Hartford Township is utilized for agricultural purposes. Pockets of developed property are mostly found along major County roads and Red Arrow Highway.

For the Land Use Map, information was gathered from the Van Buren County Department of Land Management, who maintains a database of information for the entire County. According to their dataset, Hartford Township has the following land uses:

**Existing Land Use**

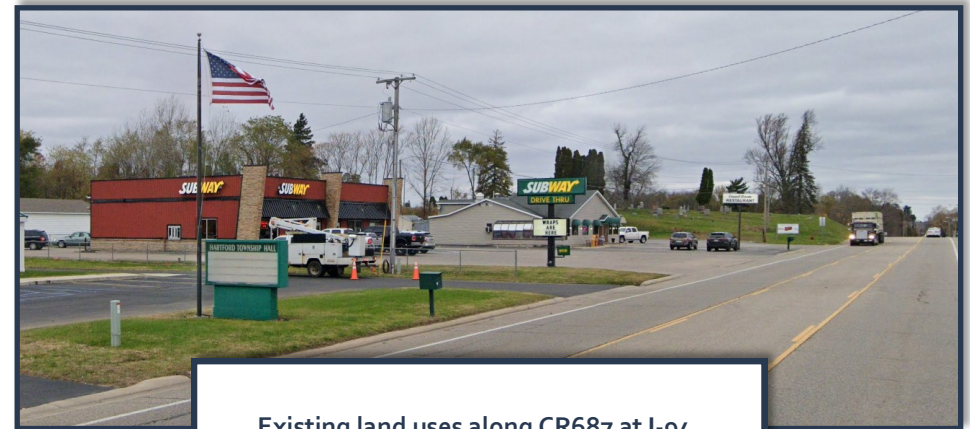
Land Use Designation	Acres*
Agriculture	7,525
Agriculture Vacant	5,535
Residential	6,229
Commercial	493
Industrial	274
Government/Non-Profit	1,145

Source: Van Buren County Department of Land Management

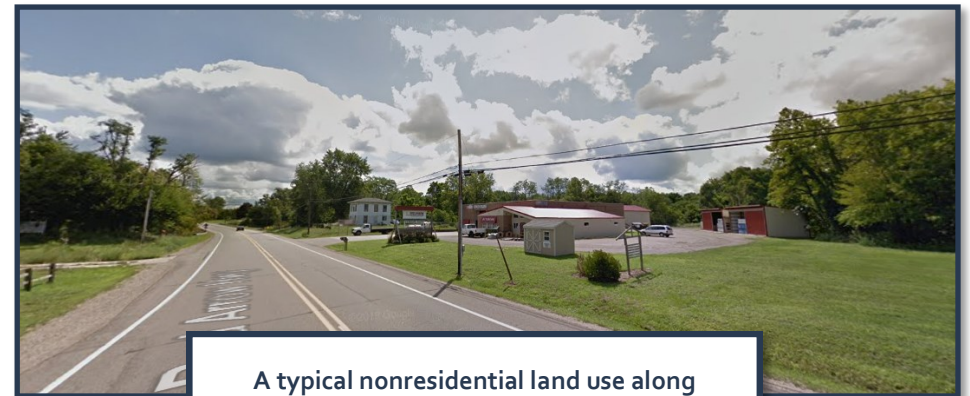
\*Rounded to the nearest one acre

The information provided for this map does follow parcel boundaries. Improved properties are those that contain a functioning use, while vacant is associated with properties that no longer have an active use. This map provides a clearer picture of the existing land uses on individual parcels. Based on the data provided, agriculturally used parcels equate to 61.5 percent of the Township, while residential uses total 29.4 percent. As expected, commercial and industrial properties are the lowest percentage of land use, at 2.3 percent and 1.3 percent respectively.

According to the 1999 Township Master Plan, the percentages of land uses have not changed that significantly in the last 20 years. Agricultural land uses decreased by 1.5 percent from 63 percent of the Township in 1999 to 61.5 percent today. Residential uses increased somewhat from 24 percent in 1999 to 29.4 percent today. This could be attributed to lands converting from an agricultural use and the construction of new housing units.

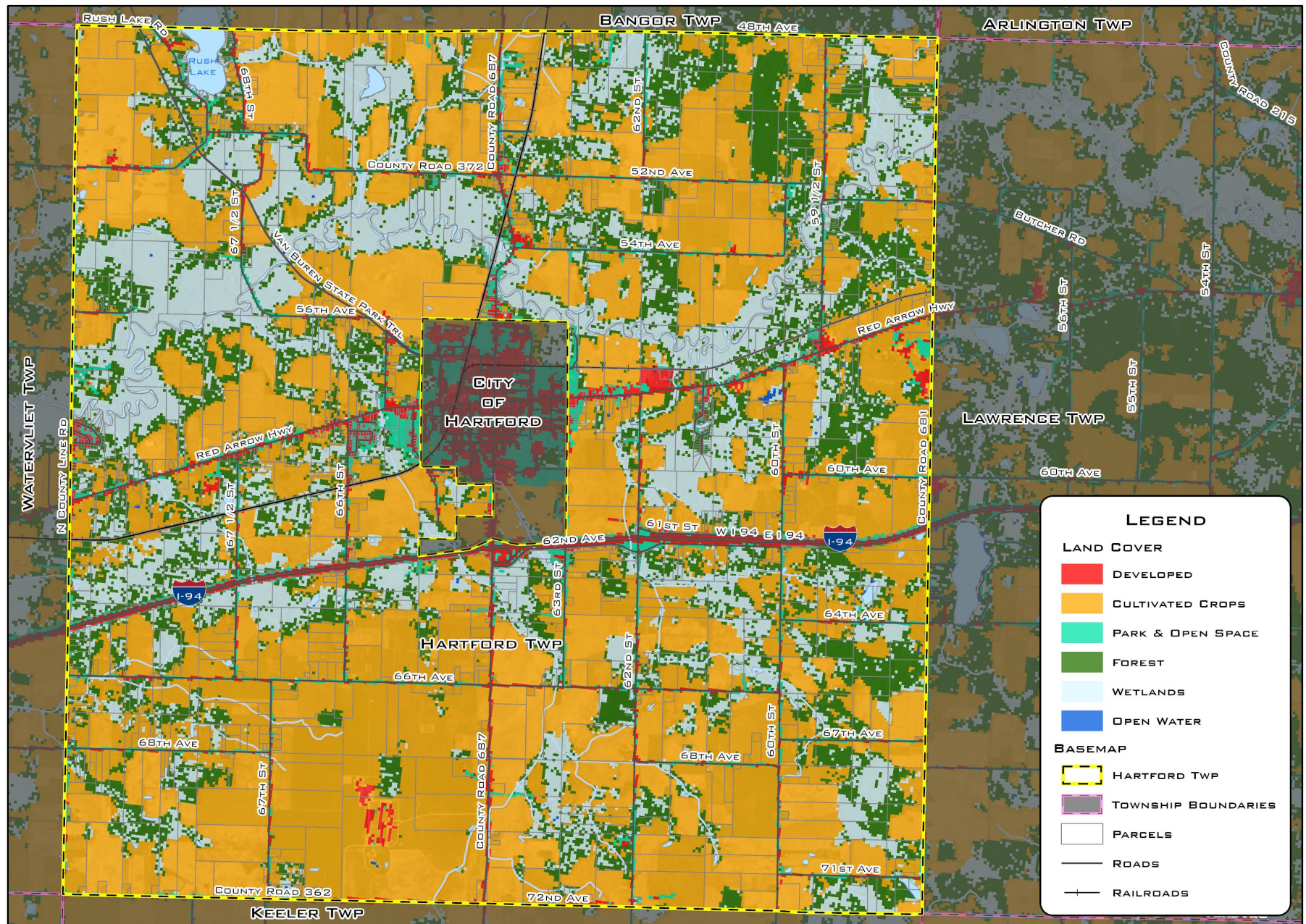


Existing land uses along CR687 at I-94.



A typical nonresidential land use along Red Arrow Highway.





# LAND COVER MAP

NATIONAL LAND COVER DATASET (2015)

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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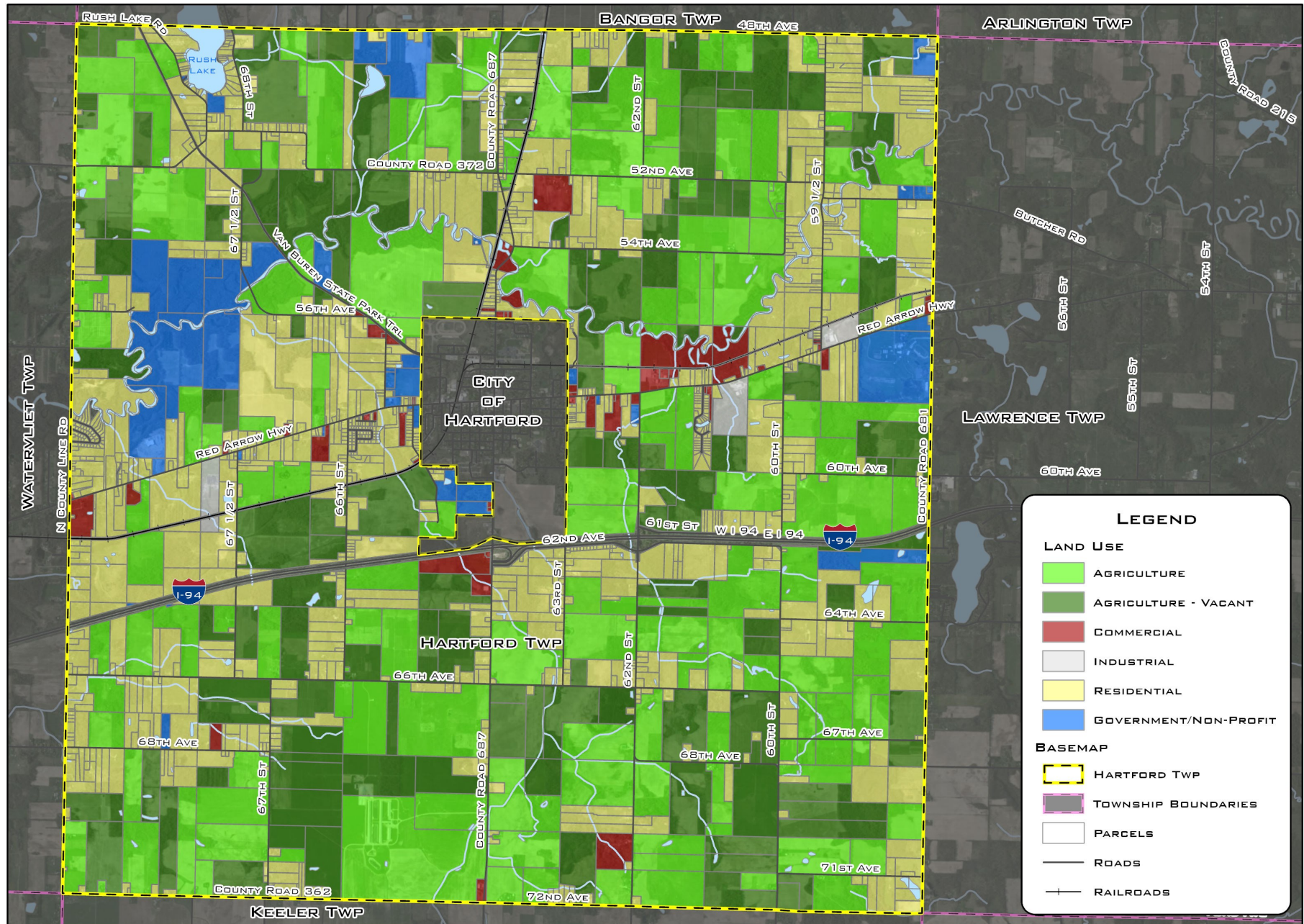
## HARTFORD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



**W+ WIGHTMAN**

9/1/2020





# **LAND USE MAP** VAN BUREN COUNTY (2019)

## **HARTFORD TOWNSHIP** MASTER PLAN

**W+ WIGHTMAN**  
9/1/2020

194324

## Community Facilities and Services

### Transportation

One of the most important transportation facilities that services Hartford Township is Interstate 94. The route of the Interstate runs east/west through almost the center of the Township and provides opportunities for commercial and industrial trade. In fact, the I-94 route between the cities of Detroit and Chicago is one of the most heavily traveled commercial truck corridors in the Midwest. This is mostly due to the trade relationship between the United States and Canada.

The Township is also served by a vital State highway, which also runs east/west within the community, essentially paralleling Interstate 94, but farther north in the Township. Prior to the construction of the interstate highway, this was the main transportation route within the Township. Much of the commercial and industrial development within the Township can be found along this highway.

Roads within Hartford Township are maintained by the Van Buren County Road Commission, excluding Interstate 94, which is managed by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). 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 Southwest Michigan Planning Commission and MDOT. According to the 2019 Pavement Condition Report, there are 84 miles of road in Hartford Township. Of these 84 miles, MDOT is responsible for 12.9 miles and the Road Commission manages 71.1 miles.

Pavement 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 thru 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

Of the roads managed by the Road Commission, 26.3 percent of the miles are in good condition, 0.5 percent are in fair condition, and 72.3 percent are in poor condition. Unfortunately, a large percentage of the roads would be classified as needing extensive slab or joint rehabilitation or complete reconstruction. Hartford Township is not alone in this regard in Van Buren County. According to the 2019 Pavement Condition Report, at least 13 other communities have similar or more miles of road classified as poor.

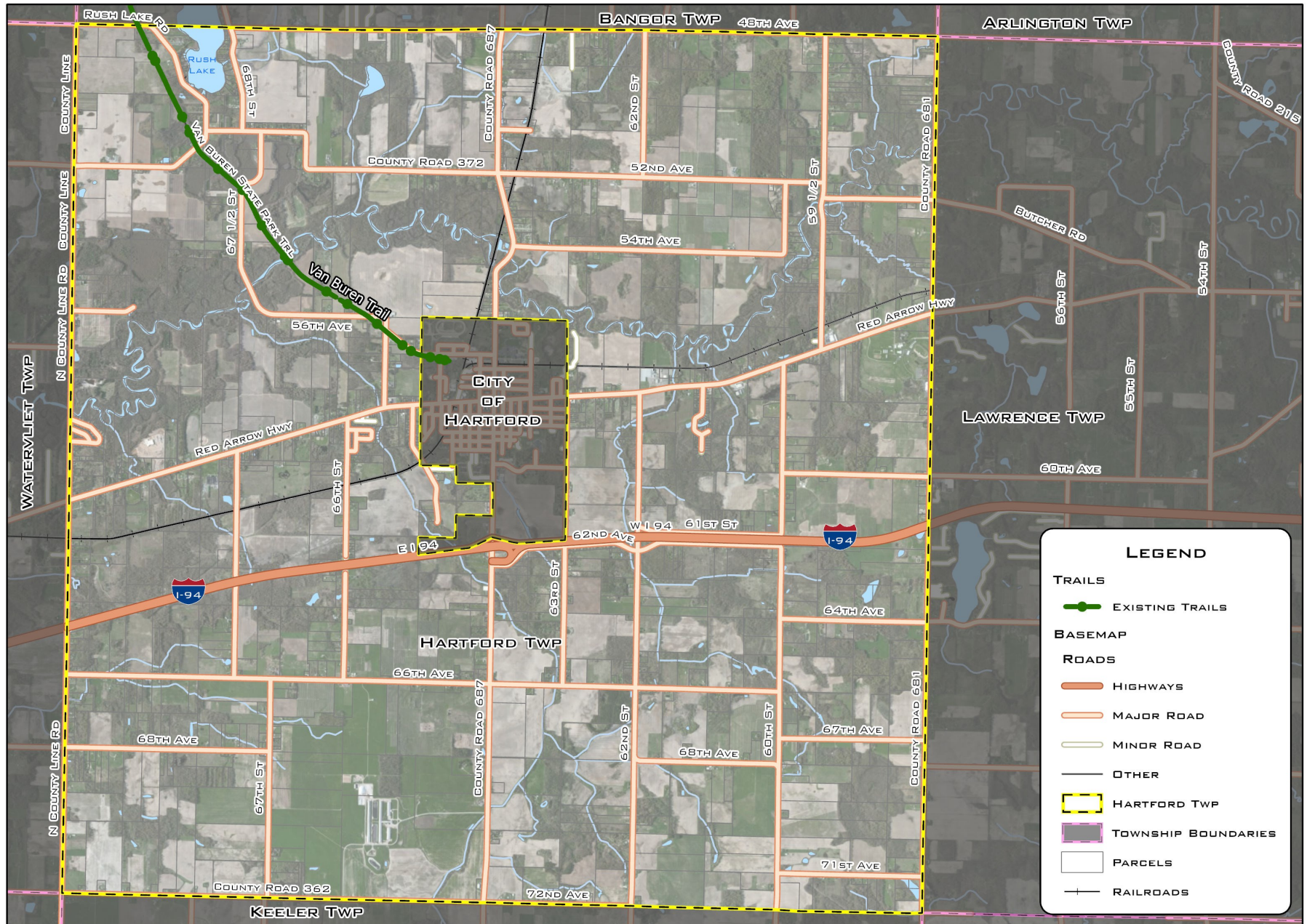
Other transportation systems within Hartford Township include rail and trail facilities. A CSX Transportation freight route runs through both the Township and the City of Hartford from Holland southwest to Chicago. The West Michigan spur connects with the CSX route in the City of Hartford, crosses Hartford Township and runs due east to the Township boundary, which is County Road 681.

The Van Buren Trail State Park is an unimproved trail running along a former railroad line between the City of Hartford to the City of South Haven. It is 14 miles long, 3.25 of which is in Hartford Township. Trail activities include horseback riding, mountain biking, snowmobiling, hiking, and cross-country skiing. The trail head and parking are located within the City of Hartford.

### Public Water and Sanitary Sewer

The City of Hartford provides water and sanitary sewer services within the Hartford community. The sanitary sewer treatment facility is located at 66460 56th Avenue, within Hartford Township. A sanitary sewer force main moves from this location south to Red Arrow Highway, just outside of the City of Hartford limits. A force main is a pressurized sewer pipe that conveys wastewater in situations where gravity sewers are not possible. In 2011, an additional force main was constructed at this intersection point on Red Arrow Highway to move west to the Hartford Four Winds Casino at 68600 Red









Arrow Highway. Finally, a gravity main also exists within the Township from the treatment plant moving east along County Road 372 (52nd Avenue), and then south down County Road 687/Center Street into the City of Hartford.

Public water was also extended down Red Arrow Highway to the Four Winds Casino. In addition, water extends slightly into the Township on the east side of the City between Red Arrow Highway and the CSX Railroad. Depending on the continued investigations into the PFAS contamination, additional public water facilities may need to be considered.

### **Township Facilities and Services**

Hartford Township Hall can be found at 61310 County Road 687. Access to local officials can be gained at the Township Hall through posted office hours or at Township Board meetings. Fire service is provided to the Hartford community through a joint agreement between the City and the Township. Public safety is handled through the Van Buren County Sheriff Department. One full-time and one part-time deputy has been assigned to patrol Hartford Township.

There are two public cemeteries within the Township. Pioneer Cemetery, founded in 1841, is located at the City/Township boundary on Red Arrow Highway. Unfortunately, there are no longer any lots available at this location. Maple Hill Cemetery, founded in 1898, is located along County Road 687 near the Township Hall. Plots are still available at this location and can be secured through the Township Clerk's office.

### **District Facilities**

The Hartford area has had a library since 1895 when the Hartford Ladies Library was created. In 1925, the library moved to its previous location on Franklin Street, where it remained for 95 years. In 1903, the library became associated with the Michigan State Library and in 1940 it received its first aid from the City and Township of Hartford and from the State Library Board,

allowing it to become a free library. Finally, in 1965 the library became a District Library with a six-member board of directors under the name of Hartford Public Library.

In 2019, construction began on the new Arthur & Bonna Vanderlyn Community Center/Hartford Public Library. The new library facility opened its doors on September 8, 2020 offering Wi-Fi throughout the building, a new children's center with literacy computers, a teen library, a computer lab, a Makerspace room which contains a 3D printer, computer, Lego building, crafts and STEAM related materials, a special room available for tutoring, and quiet reading areas around the fireplace. In addition, the Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society is in the new building, providing their collection of family and local history in southwest Michigan.



Hartford Public Library - New Building  
Grand Opening September 2020



## County and State Facilities

The Van Buren County Fair Board, a 501(c)3 corporation, leases approximately 85 acres from Van Buren County on County Road 681, just south of Red Arrow Highway in Hartford Township. The Fair Board has leased this land for over 50 years, operating the Van Buren County Youth Fair on these grounds. The fairgrounds include multiple buildings for exhibits, a campground, and a “natural amphitheater” with hillside seating. The fair often includes rides, hot air balloons, a rodeo, derby, as well as 4-H events, livestock exhibits and auctions, and talent shows.

Immediately adjacent to the fairgrounds is the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department, who provides education and services on a variety of medical and dental concerns, as well as emergency preparedness and environmental health for Hartford Township. Specifically, the Health Department:

- Prevents and contains disease outbreaks through education, vaccination, surveillance, and follow-up on reportable illnesses.
- Ensures food, water, and the environment are safe and clean through restaurant inspections, water testing, and well testing.
- Builds infrastructure of health/social care providers through initiatives like the Community Health Advisory Council and the new public health education campus adjacent to the Van Buren Technology Center.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services also has an office in this area. This department provides public assistance, child and family welfare services, and oversees health policy and management for the state.

## School Districts and Higher Education

The Hartford Public School District covers the majority of Hartford Township. This school district contains an elementary, middle, high school and an alternative education program all located within the City of Hartford. There were



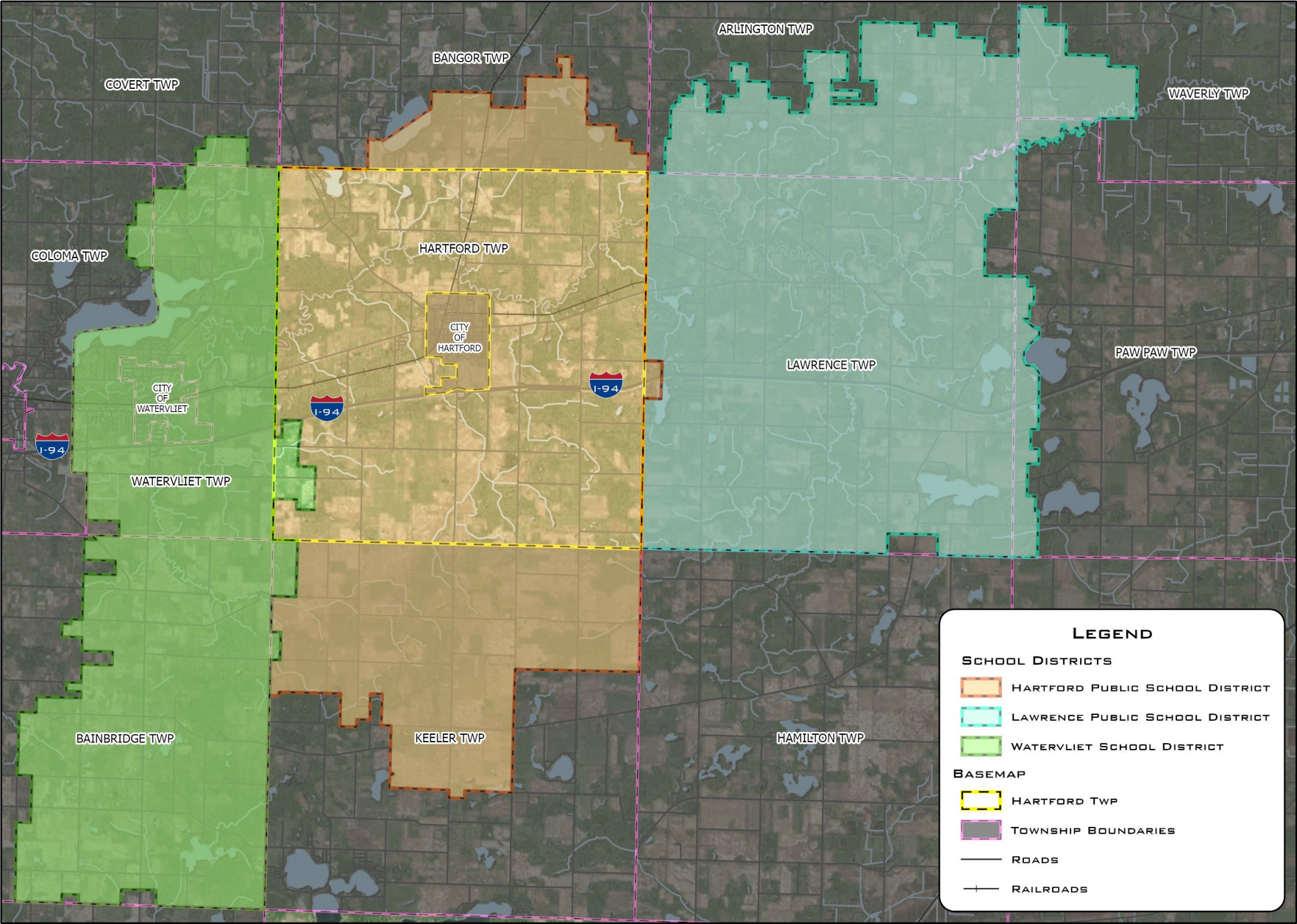
Hartford High School

1,356 students enrolled in the Hartford Public Schools in 2019 and the district employs approximately 80 full time teachers.

A small portion of the Township is also located within the Watervliet Public Schools District, which is located to the west and south of Hartford Township. This district has two elementary schools, a middle and high school. In 2019, a total of 1,488 students were enrolled with approximately 78 full time teachers.

Both school districts, as well as the Lawrence Public School District located to the east of Hartford Township, participate in the Schools of Choice program. This program provides students with additional enrollment opportunities, allowing them to choose a school within their own district or non-resident students to enroll in the district. The Schools of Choice program provides Hartford Township children a wider range of opportunities, allowing them to attend school outside of the Hartford Public School District.

Higher education is in close proximity to Hartford Township providing many opportunities to local residents. Lake Michigan Community College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and Southwestern Michigan Community College are all within 30 minutes. The following additional universities and colleges can be found within approximately one hour of Hartford Township:



**SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP**  
STATE OF MICHIGAN (2019)

194324

**HARTFORD TOWNSHIP**  
MASTER PLAN

**W+ WIGHTMAN**  
4/13/2020

Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, MI)  
 Notre Dame University (South Bend, IN)  
 Indiana University (South Bend Campus, IN)  
 Michigan State University Extension (Paw Paw, MI)  
 Andrews University (Berrien Springs, MI)  
 Sienna Heights University (Benton Harbor, MI)  
 Spring Arbor University (Portage, MI)  
 Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, MI)  
 Hope College (Holland, MI)  
 Saint Mary's College (South Bend, IN)  
 Holy Cross College (South Bend, IN)  
 Bethel College (South Bend, IN)

In addition, there are other community colleges and universities in the Grand Rapids area, which are less than two hours from the Township. The wide variety of colleges and universities near the Township offer myriad opportunities for area high school graduates in determining the direction of their higher education aspirations.

## Conclusions/Considerations

Hartford Township has many important and promising natural and physical features that are an asset to the community. As the goals for the Township and the future land use plan are developed, the following conclusions/considerations should be evaluated:

- Prime farmlands are a limited resource, which should be assessed during future land use planning. The micro-climate and soils of Hartford Township are superior for fruit production and have been designated as an important resource for Michigan. However, the impacts of the stated climate changes in Michigan make expanded economic development opportunities for farmers an important consideration.

- Soil types should also be considered when developing a future land use plan. As much of the Township relies on septic systems, ensuring soils can support development will be critical to groundwater protection.
- The Paw Paw River and watershed is an important natural resource, which should be protected. Future land use planning around this area may want to consider how new development will impact the river, watershed, and floodplain.
- In addition, some deliberation could be given to enhancing the Paw Paw River area as a recreational amenity for the Township that would support the watershed and its habitat.
- Groundwater recharge areas will also be an important natural feature to consider when future land use planning. As most of the Township utilizes well water, ensuring water quality will be key.
- The extension of public water may need to be considered depending on the proliferation of PFAS contamination.
- Additional contributions to road improvements may be asked of the Township due to the percentage of roads that have a PASER rating of poor.



## CHAPTER 6: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE 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 community's population and emerging issues which may influence the development of goals and future land use will be investigated.

### 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 from 2013-2017. In addition, information was pulled from Esri Community Analyst, which is a web-based system that provides demographic data. Esri utilizes professional demographers, statisticians, and economist who access a wide variety of public and private data sources to develop forecasts for local communities. Community Analyst has become an important master planning tool to understand future trends.

### Population Trends

The population within Hartford Township has remained relatively steady since the 2000 Census. While Van Buren County and the State of Michigan lost a minor amount of population between 2000 and 2010, Hartford Township increased its population by 3.4 percent. This is significant when considering the Great Recession, which began in 2008 and caused a loss of population in Michigan.

However, the American Community Survey (ACS) completed by the U.S. Census estimates that Hartford Township lost 2.2 percent of its population between 2010 and 2017. Overall, the Township saw just over one percent increase in population during this 17-year period.

### Population Change

Community	2000	2010	% Change	2017	% Change
Hartford Twp	3,165	3,274	3.4%	3,200	-2.2%
Van Buren Cty	76,263	76,258	-0.006%	75,190	-1.4%
State of MI	9,938,444	9,883,640	-0.55%	9,925,568	0.42%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

When comparing Hartford Township to neighboring communities, it falls at about the median value of population gains and losses. Watervliet Township saw the highest population growth over this 17-year period showing a nine percent increase. Population growth can also be seen in the City of Hartford at a total of six percent, then Bangor Township at 1.8 percent, and finally Hartford Township at 1.2 percent. Keeler Township experienced the highest population decline during this 17-year period at 15.3 percent.

### Population Comparisons

Community	2000	2010	% Change	2017	% Change
Hartford Twp	3,165	3,274	3.40%	3,200	-2.20%
Bangor Twp	2,121	2,147	1.23%	2,160	0.61%
Hartford City	2,476	2,688	8.56%	2,619	-2.57%
Keeler Twp	2,601	2,169	-16.61%	2,196	1.24%
Lawrence Twp	3,341	3,259	-2.45%	3,235	-0.74%
Watervliet Twp	3,113	3,102	-0.35%	3,392	9.35%

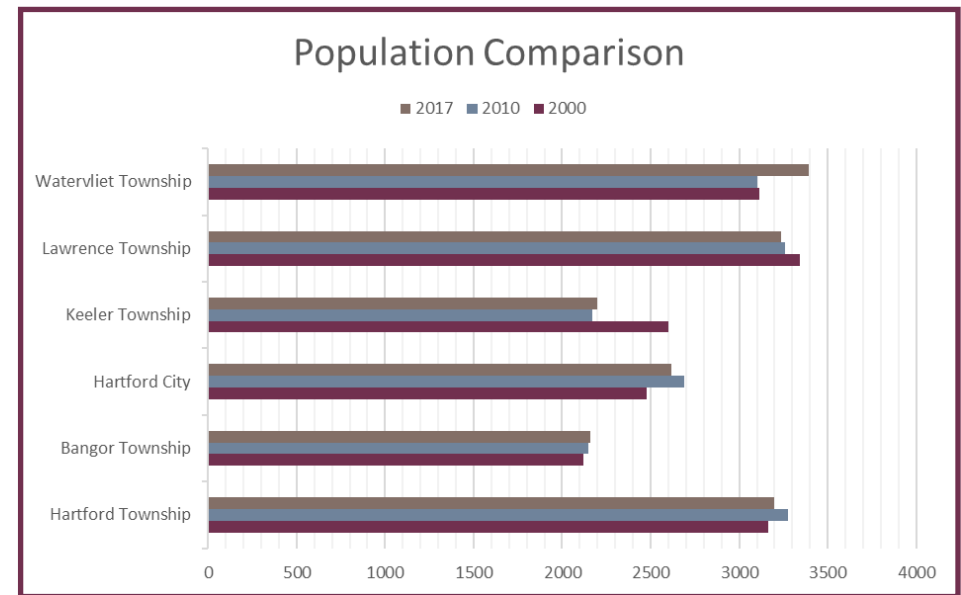
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

When looking to the future, Hartford Township's population will continue to remain relatively constant. Esri Community Analyst offers forecasts on the Township's population for 2019 and 2024. In addition, two projection methods were utilized to determine future populations with the final estimate an average of the future projections.

The first method is an arithmetic, or linear projection, which extends the historical population increase into the future by a constant increase in persons. Two growth rate periods were used; the first from the 2000 – 2017 Census data and the second from the 2000 Census through the Esri 2019 forecast. The projection utilizing the Census data only is conservative and may adequately convey the recovery from the Great Recession. The second projection applying the Esri data assumes an increase in population between 2017 and 2019 not yet verified by the Census.

The second method is a geometric projection, which reflects the percent of population change for the Township and extends this rate of change into the future. Like the arithmetic projection, the percentage of population change was based off the two growth periods. Finally, an average of the four projection methods was calculated to provide a moderate population increase and percent change.

Small incremental population increases are not unexpected for a rural community that has very low-density development and limited public infrastructure. However, the Township's easy commute distance to larger employment centers and the draw of rural living could herald additional population increases in the future.



#### Hartford Township Estimated Population Trends

Year	2019	2024	2029	2034	2039	Increase	% Change
ESRI Forecasts	3,284	3,300					
Arithmetic 2000 - 2017	3,204	3,214	3,225	3,235	3,245	41	1.28%
Arithmetic 2000 – 2019	3,284	3,315	3,347	3,378	3,409	125	3.81%
Geometric 2000 – 2017	3,204	3,214	3,225	3,235	3,246	42	1.31%
Geometric 2000 – 2019	3,284	3,316	3,349	3,382	3,416	132	4.02%
Average of Methods	3,244	3,265	3,286	3,307	3,329	85	2.62%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Esri 2019 and 2024 Forecasts

## Age

The age of Township residents can serve as an indicator of future economic, transportation, housing, and other community needs. The median age for Hartford Township according to the 2017 American Community Survey was 35.3 years old in 2017. This is quite a bit younger than the median age for Van Buren County (41.6 years) and the State of Michigan (39.6 years).

Throughout the United States, the median age of the population is increasing as the Baby Boomer generation ages. In addition, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has indicated that the rural population is older than the American population as a whole and, as younger people leave rural areas to pursue different economic opportunities, it is aging faster. Interestingly, this does not seem to be occurring in Hartford Township. The 35.3 median age for the Township in 2017 is almost a year younger than the median age reported in 2010, which was 36.1 years old.

The Census has outlined the following groupings to examine age by life cycle and the percentages in Hartford Township are provided:

Under 5 (Pre School) – 8.8 percent  
 5 to 19 (School Aged) – 19.7 percent  
 20 to 44 (Family-Forming) – 30.3 percent  
 45 to 64 (Mature Families) – 27.5 percent  
 Over 65 (Retirement) – 13.7 percent

While Family-Forming and Mature Families have the highest percentages, the table outlines a population that is almost evenly distributed amongst all age groups.

## Age

Age Group	Total Persons	Percent of Total
Total Population	3,200	100%
Under 5 years	276	8.6%
5 to 9 years	235	7.3%
10 to 14 years	280	8.8%
15 to 19 years	120	3.8%
20 to 24 years	281	8.8%
25 to 29 years	180	5.6%
30 to 34 years	211	6.6%
35 to 39 years	128	4.0%
40 to 44 years	171	5.3%
45 to 49 years	194	6.1%
50 to 54 years	275	8.6%
55 to 59 years	230	7.2%
60 to 64 years	178	5.6%
65 to 69 years	132	4.1%
70 to 74 years	134	4.2%
75 to 79 years	94	2.9%
80 to 84 years	35	1.1%
85 years and over	46	1.4%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates



While the retirement age group in Hartford Township is one of the lowest of the age categories, the “greying of America” will play a 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 Hartford 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.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

The terms race and ethnicity are often misunderstood and used interchangeably, but their meanings are distinct. Race is usually seen as biological, referring to the physical characteristics of a person. Ethnicity is generally described as a person’s cultural identity. For example, a person who considers themselves white by race can also be Latino by ethnicity.

In Hartford Township, there is a strong population presence who identify as “some other race,” which is a growing trend according to the U.S. Census. Many people are either trying to acknowledge their Hispanic or Latino background or do not believe they fit into a single race category. The significant Hispanic or Latino population within Hartford Township could be impacting this category.

### **Race**

Race Category	Total Number	Percent of Total
Total population	3,200	100%
White alone	2,640	82.50%
Black or African American alone	9	0.28%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	117	3.66%
Asian alone	15	0.47%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.00%
Some other race alone	344	10.75%
Two or more races	75	2.34%
Hispanic or Latino	859	26.84%
Not Hispanic or Latino	2,341	73.16%

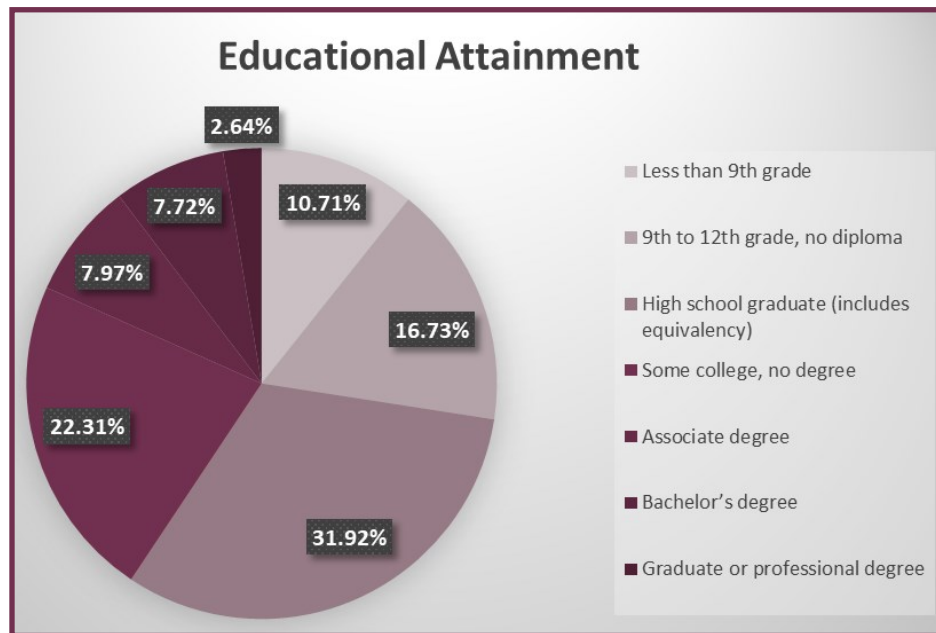
Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### **Education**

The educational attainment for Hartford Township mirrors that of Michigan and Van Buren County for high school graduates. For Michigan, 29.3 percent of the population graduate from high school while 32.6 percent have a high school diploma in Van Buren County. Hartford Township dips somewhat when comparing attainment of a Bachelor’s degree. The percentage of graduates throughout the state is 9.3 percent, in Van Buren County it is 9.2 percent, and within Hartford Township it is close to eight percent of the population.

### Educational Attainment

Education Category	Total Persons
Population 25 years and over	2,008
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	215
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	336
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	641
Some college, no degree	448
Associate degree	160
Bachelor's degree	155
Graduate or professional degree	53



Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Households

Similar to population, the number of households has remained relatively constant in Hartford Township since the 2000 Census. Between 2000 and 2017, the number is comparatively the same. The Esri 2019 forecast indicates an increase of about four percent.

What is truly interesting is the average household size in Hartford Township. While the demographic trend throughout all of the United States is a reduction in household size, the Township is seeing an increase. The United States (2.6 persons), State of Michigan (2.55 persons), and Van Buren County (2.61 persons) all have lower household size than Hartford Township.

One possibility for this difference could be an influx of Amish population within Van Buren County, which include settlements in Hartford Township. According to a January 2019 article in the Herald-Palladium newspaper, the Amish population has gone from virtually zero to an estimated couple hundred families within Van Buren County. In addition, the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College indicates that the Michigan Amish population has grown by 36 percent since 2010. One demographic of the Amish population is larger nuclear families that average five or more children.

In addition to the Amish families, Hispanic and Latino households tend to have more children, contributing to household size. Over 26 percent of the residents in the Township identify as Hispanic or Latino and according to the Population Research Institute the average Hispanic family in the United States is 3.87 persons.

**Households**

	2000	2010	% Change	2017	% Change	2019	% Change
Households	1,125	1,164	3.40%	1,120	-3.70%	1,165	4.02%
Average Household Size	2.74	2.79	1.82%	2.84	1.79%	2.79	-1.76%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Esri 2019 Forecasts

The households in Hartford Township are generally categorized as family units, with the majority being in married-couple families. Nonfamily households, which includes people living alone or sharing a home with unrelated persons, only makes up approximately 27 percent of the total households in the Township. This is also typical in rural environments where families living in single-family homes is dominate.

**Households by Type**

Household Category	Total Persons	Percent of Total
Total Households	1,120	100%
Family households	814	72.68%
Married-couple family	640	78.62%
Male householder, no wife present	101	12.41%
Female householder, no husband present	73	8.97%
Nonfamily households	306	27.32%
Households with population under 18 years	407	36.34%
Households with no population under 18 years	713	63.66%
Households with population 65+	343	30.63%
Households with no population 65+	777	69.38%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Economic Indicators

As previously indicated, Hartford Township fits the ICMA Smart Growth Network’s descriptions for a resource-dependent and possibly an edge community. Resource-dependent communities, which generally rely on one source of industry, face a key challenge of diversifying the economy while maintaining their rural character.

The main economic generator for Hartford Township is agriculture and agricultural support businesses, like fruit and vegetable packing and storage. Outside of farming, there are some retail or service establishments within the Township. Industrial uses can be found just outside the Township, located in the City of Hartford. Township residents who are not engaged in the agricultural industry would likely need to leave the Township to seek employment.

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

Income

The table below provides the median and average household incomes for Hartford Township.

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 average income is the total incomes divided by the number of incomes reported.

The American Community Survey 5-year Estimates show the median household income for Hartford Township (\$46,563) was less than both the State of Michigan (\$52,668) and Van Buren County (\$49,119).

Per capita income is how much an individual person made within Hartford Township. This dollar amount (\$19,761) was also less than Michigan (\$29,938) and Van Buren County (\$25,433) based on the 2017 American Community Survey.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index, today’s prices in 2019 are 17.17 percent higher than prices in 2010. The U.S. dollar experienced an average inflation rate of 1.66 percent per year during this period, meaning the real value of a dollar decreased. In other words, the per capita income of \$16,987 in 2010 would have to be \$19,904 to have the same purchasing power in 2019, a difference of \$2,917 over nine years.

The table on the following page provides the income statistics for Hartford Township in 2019 dollars for 2010 and 2017. Based on this comparison, household and per capita incomes in Hartford Township are not keeping pace with inflation and the purchasing power of the dollar has decreased.

Household and Per Capita Income

Income Category	2010	2017	Percent Change	2019	Percent Change	2024	Percent Change
Median Household Income	\$32,692	\$46,563	42.43%	\$50,305	8.04%	\$55,732	10.79%
Average Household Income	\$43,091	\$55,960	29.86%	\$64,214	14.75%	\$73,175	13.95%
Per Capita Income	\$16,987	\$19,761	16.33%	\$22,877	15.77%	\$26,050	13.87%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Esri 2019 and 2024 Forecasts

**Household and Per Capita Income based on 2019 Dollars**

Income Category	2010	2017	Percent Change	2019	Percent Change	2024	Percent Change
Median Household Income	\$38,305	\$54,558	42.43%	\$50,305	-7.80%	\$55,732	10.79%
Average Household Income	\$50,490	\$65,568	29.86%	\$64,214	-2.07%	\$73,175	13.95%
Per Capita Income	\$19,904	\$23,154	16.33%	\$22,877	-1.20%	\$26,050	13.87%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Esri 2019 and 2024 Forecasts

Based on these revised incomes, the Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024 will also not match the 1.66 percent inflation rate, if that is maintained over this 10-year period. A person will need to make at least \$25,075 in 2019 and \$27,156 in 2024 to have the same buying power.

**Labor Force**

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, the unemployment rate in Hartford Township was 8.1 percent. This rate was double the unemployment found in Van Buren County at the same time, which was four percent. The State of Michigan's unemployment rate was slightly higher at 4.5 percent in 2017.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank, the unemployment rate in Van Buren County in November of 2019 was 3.5 percent. BestPlaces.net, utilizing their own research and vetted data sources, indicates that in September 2019 Hartford Township's unemployment rate reduced to 5.1 percent, a significant improvement from 2017.

**Labor Force**

Labor Category	Total Persons	Percent of Total
Population 16 years and over	2,378	100.00%
Civilian labor force	1,398	58.8%
Employed	1,206	50.70%
Unemployed	192	8.1%
Armed Forces	0	0.00%
Not in labor force	980	41.20%
Unemployment Rate		8.1%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

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

**Type of Employment**

Class of Worker	Percent of Workforce
Private wage and salary workers	85.5%
Government workers	8.8%
Self-employed	4.9%
Unpaid family workers	0.4%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The table below outlines the industries where Hartford Township residents work.

**Industry by Type**

Industry	Total Persons	Percent of Workforce
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	122	10.10%
Construction	68	5.60%
Manufacturing	213	17.70%
Wholesale trade	58	4.80%
Retail trade	122	10.10%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	32	2.70%
Information	17	1.40%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	27	2.20%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	113	9.40%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	214	17.70%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	94	7.80%
Other services, except public administration	64	5.30%
Public administration	62	5.10%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

As can be seen, the four most prevalent industries are:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining
- Manufacturing
- Retail trade
- Educational services, health care, and social assistance

These industries are very similar to those most prevalent in the State of Michigan and Van Buren County, except for the agriculture category. This industry employs 1.2 percent of the total Michigan population and 4.4 percent of Van Buren County residents.



With the high percentage of Township residents employed in the agriculture industry, cultivating economic development strategies that rely on traditional rural landscapes, such as agritourism, may need to be considered. Creating this economic climate will enhance the viability of working farmlands, providing opportunities for increased incomes.

### Travel Time to Work

To access the employment industries previously noted, most Hartford Township residents must travel to work. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 44.5 percent work within Van Buren County and 54.9 percent work in a different county. A very small percentage, less than one percent, work outside of the State of Michigan. This coincides with travel times, as the largest majority of workers can make it to their places of employment within 25 minutes.

#### Travel Time to Work

Travel Time	Percent of Workforce
Less than 10 minutes	16.4%
10 to 14 minutes	18.3%
15 to 19 minutes	11.5%
20 to 24 minutes	14.3%
25 to 29 minutes	5.4%
30 to 34 minutes	9.8%
35 to 44 minutes	14.4%
45 to 59 minutes	4.8%
60 or more minutes	5.0%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Housing

The following section will provide an overview of the types of housing units found in Hartford 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 2017 American Community Survey, there are 1,188 housing units in Hartford Township. Of these units, the largest majority are owner occupied, which is expected in a more rural environment that primarily contains single-family residential homes.

#### Housing Units by Tenure

Occupancy Category	Total Units	Percent of Total
Total Housing Units	1,188	100%
Owner Occupied	876	73.74%
Renter Occupied	244	20.54%
Vacant	68	5.72%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Between 2000 and 2010, the total number of housing units increased by just over nine percent. However, it is very likely the Great Recession of 2008 affected Hartford Township like many other communities in Michigan, and housing units were lost. This percent loss between 2010 and 2017 was greater than the increase achieved between the two previous decennial Census.

### Housing Unit Trends

Occupancy Category	2000	2010	% Change	2017	% Change	2019	% Change
Housing units	1,221	1,335	9.30%	1,188	-11.00%	1,371	15.40%
Owner Occupied	893	887	-0.67%	876	-1.24%	805	-8.11%
Renter Occupied	232	277	19.40%	244	-11.91%	360	47.54%
Vacant	96	171	78.13%	68	-60.23%	206	202.94%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, ESRI 2019 Forecasts

A shortage of both market rate and affordable housing is being experienced throughout Michigan. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority indicates that there will be a deficit of more than 150,000 housing units by 2045. The existing tight housing market has already increased single-family home prices by more than 70 percent since 2012 statewide. The president of the Home Builders Association of Michigan was quoted in the Detroit News, stating “Michigan is known for its housing affordability. That’s going to change if something doesn’t happen, and local communities are going to have to start working to find the housing investment they need.”

### Housing Types

The largest majority of housing in Hartford Township is single-family homes at almost 70 percent. Mobile homes are the second most prevalent housing type, which includes three mobile home parks within the Township as well as single units located on individual parcels.

### Type of Housing Units

Housing Type	Total Number of Units	Percent of Total
Total	1,188	100.0%
1, detached	826	69.5%
1, attached	13	1.1%
2	20	1.7%
3 or 4	0	0.0%
5 to 9	0	0.0%
10 to 19	10	0.8%
20 to 49	38	3.2%
50 or more	5	0.4%
Mobile home	276	23.2%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

With the limited public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure within the Township, it is not surprising that single-family homes are the dominate housing type. Typically, single-family homes have acreages attached that can support private septic systems.

However, with the housing shortage in Michigan, the Township may want to consider encouraging additional 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.

Fostering this kind of housing will require continued partnerships with the City of Hartford to expand available public sanitary sewer. Or alternative solutions, like small private community sanitary sewer systems, will need to be contemplated for future development.

### **Age of Housing**

The median year for the housing stock in Hartford Township is 1978, making the majority of the homes at least 42 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 over time. However, the aging stock in Hartford Township suggests, at minimum, a need for continual maintenance to sustain the housing and possibly the need for replacement housing.

### **Housing Age**

Year Built	Number of Units	Percent of Total
Total housing units	1,188	100%
Built 2014 or later	0	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2013	0	0.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	140	11.8%
Built 1990 to 1999	192	16.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	220	18.5%
Built 1970 to 1979	172	14.5%
Built 1960 to 1969	122	10.3%
Built 1950 to 1959	87	7.3%
Built 1940 to 1949	36	3.0%
Built 1939 or earlier	219	18.4%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Aging housing stock also provides some significant challenges for seniors in rural areas. 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.

As can be seen, the 2017 American Community Survey does not show any new housing units being developed in Hartford Township since 2009. However, a review of the Township building permit records shows a total of 31 new housing units were established between 2010 and 2019.



**Housing Values**

The median housing value in Hartford Township is quite reasonable from a purchasing standpoint when compared to the State of Michigan and Van Buren County. According to financial experts, mortgage costs should not be more than 30 percent of a person’s annual income. Based on the 2017 American Community Survey, the median household income in Hartford Township was \$46,563. This would allow approximately \$14,000 of annual income to go towards mortgage payments. A monthly payment on a \$85,800 house at four percent interest with three percent down is approximately \$750 a month (including taxes and insurance). This equates to approximately \$9,000 a year, which is well within 30 percent of the median household income in the Township. It would appear that the housing values are aligned with the median incomes generated by Hartford Township residents.

**Housing Value**

Community	Median Housing Value
Hartford Township	\$85,800
Van Buren County	\$123,100
Michigan	\$136,400

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The Esri 2019 and 2024 forecast for housing values in the Township shows an increase to \$120,792 and \$160,811 respectively. The increase in housing value is likely due to the housing shortages previously mentioned. All housing with the State of Michigan is increasing in value causing concerns related to housing choice and affordability.

**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 Hartford Township and assigned them a profile based on their lifestyle choices. Several lifestyle segments can be found in the Township , which provides a broad understanding of the socioeconomic profile of the community. The top four of these lifestyle segments include:

**LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living**

Heartland Communities: Well settled and close-knit, Heartland Communities are semirural and semiretired. These older householders are primarily homeowners, and many have paid off their mortgages. Their children have moved away, but they have no plans to leave their homes. Their hearts are with the country; they embrace the slower pace of life here but actively participate in outdoor activities and community events. Traditional and patriotic, these residents support their local businesses, always buy American, and favor domestic driving vacations over foreign plane trips.



LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

## Heartland Communities


Average Household Size: 2.39

Median Age: 42.3

Median Household Income: \$42,400

### LifeMode Group: Ethnic Enclaves

**Barrios Urbanos:** Family is central within these diverse communities. Hispanics make up more than 70 percent of the residents. More than one in four are foreign born, bringing rich cultural traditions to these neighborhoods in the urban outskirts. Dominating this market are younger families with children or single-parent households with multiple generations living under the same roof. These households balance their budgets carefully but also indulge in the latest trends and purchase with an eye to brands. Most workers are employed in skilled positions across the manufacturing, construction, or retail trade sectors.




LifeMode Group: Ethnic Enclaves  
**Barrios Urbanos**

Average Household Size: 3.62  
Median Age: 28.9  
Median Household Income: \$38,000

### LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

**Southern Satellites:** Southern Satellites is the second largest market found in rural settlements but within metropolitan areas located primarily in the South. This market is typically nondiverse, slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Two-thirds of the homes are single-family structures; almost a third are mobile homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.



LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts  
**Southern Satellites**

Average Household Size: 2.67  
Median Age: 40.3  
Median Household Income: \$47,800

### LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

**Down the Road:** Down the Road is a mix of low-density, semirural neighborhoods in large metropolitan areas; half are located in the South, with the rest chiefly in the West and Midwest. Almost half of householders live in mobile homes; more than two-fifths live in single-family homes. These are younger, diverse communities, with the highest proportion of American Indians of any segment. These family-oriented consumers value their traditions. Workers are in service, retail trade, manufacturing, and construction industries, with higher proportions in agriculture and mining, compared to the US. This market has higher unemployment, much lower median household income and home value, and more than a fifth of households with income below poverty level.



LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts  
**Down the Road**

Average Household Size: 2.76  
Median Age: 35.0  
Median Household Income: \$38,700

## 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 analysis should be assessed:

- Easy commutes to employment centers and the draw of rural living will continue to attract a certain demographic to Hartford Township. Ensuring housing choices for this population will be important.
- As the “greying of America” continues, demands for housing choices and senior services will increase. Hartford Township may want to consider additional housing options, including assisted living facilities, to allow seniors to remain in their community.
- A large percentage of the Township’s population must leave the Township for employment. Approximately 16 percent of the population can get to work within 10 minutes of their home. Goals that relate to economic development strategies to increase industry within the Township could be important to future population retention.
- In addition, economic development strategies may also lead to diversification of employment options within the Township.
- With the housing crises being experienced in Michigan, Hartford Township may wish to position itself to capture a certain segment of this pent-up need.
- If a variety of housing styles are examined, managing utility needs will also need to be investigated.
- The reasonable housing values/costs within Hartford Township could contribute to new development opportunities.





## CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC INPUT

The information gathered from the public during the development of the Hartford Township Master Plan helped to create the goals and future land use decisions that will direct the community for years to come. The Township held an open house for residents to weigh in on their vision for the community. 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.

### Visioning Open House

The first open house was held on March 2, 2020 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm and again from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. The style of meeting allowed residents and interested citizens to attend the open house when it was convenient for them. There were three opportunities to provide input at the open house.

The first was a chance to outline what words best describe the Township. The intent was for participants to help craft a vision statement for the community. The main words provided by the participants were:

- Business friendly
- Compassionate
- Rural
- Friendly
- Cohesive
- Quiet
- Farm friendly
- Great access (I-94 and Red Arrow Highway)

The next opportunity for input was through a survey, which was intended to garner views on the types of growth which should occur in the Township. Below are the main results for each question.

#### General growth questions:

When asked between no growth, planned and limited growth, market driven growth, or for growth to be encouraged, 56 percent of respondents indicated growth should be encouraged, while 34 percent preferred planned and limited growth.

The following three land uses were the most preferred for the Township to encourage over the next 10 years: commercial and retail development, single-family subdivisions, and industrial uses. Rural residential homes, agricultural uses, and recreation uses all tied for fourth most desired.

#### Housing questions:

When asked if the existing housing styles/market available in the Township met current needs, 56 percent of survey takers disagreed. When asked if existing housing styles/market would meet future needs, 67 percent disagreed.

The final housing question asked respondents what type of housing should be encouraged in the Township. Single-family subdivisions and single-family homes on large rural parcels were the top two choices. Rental apartments and cluster housing in rural areas (which requires much of the land to be preserved as open space) tied for third place.

Economy questions:

Respondents were asked if agritourism should be allowed in the Township and 100 percent agreed that this use type should be permitted. The survey continued with asking what types of agritourism should be permitted. Respondents overwhelmingly felt u-pick operations and farm tours should be allowed. Corn mazes and hayrides, as well as rural wedding barns/chapels were the next two most approved uses. Finally, bed and breakfast establishments should be encouraged. One respondent indicated that agricultural education should be supported.

The next question asked if the Township should encourage renewable energy development and 89 percent of the respondents agreed this should be supported. Of the types of renewable energies which should be permitted, respondents indicated solar farms, individual solar panels on parcels, and individual wind turbines on parcels as the top choices.

The final question under Economy asked survey takers if the Township should expand the commercial districts to promote commercial and retail growth. 56 percent of respondents agreed this should occur while 34 percent were neutral to this question. If a respondent agreed that commercial areas should be expanded, they were asked to provide some examples of uses they would like to see. Agricultural support businesses, a distillery, manufacturing facilities, and culinary/event hall were some examples provided.

Farmland preservation questions:

Survey takers were asked to indicate which of the following statements most represents their belief about farmland:

- Farmland is important and should be protected through land use regulations.
- The conversion of farmland to residential uses should be allowed, but carefully managed through strict land use regulations.

- Additional land use regulations should not occur, even if it means development of farmland.

The largest majority of respondents (56 percent) indicated farmland is important and should be protected, while 34 percent believe the conversion of farmland should be allowed, but carefully managed.

When asked the two most important reasons to preserve farmland, the top two included:

- to preserve family farms and the Township's farming economy
- to protect prime farmland for future food production

Hartford Township residency:

The final question asked respondents the importance of the following factors for living in the Township:

- Proximity to work
- Proximity to school
- Proximity to commercial uses
- Surrounding open spaces/environment
- Rural character of the Township
- Surrounding farmlands
- Distance from neighbors
- Sense of community within Hartford Township

Proximity to work, proximity to school, and sense of community within Hartford Township were tied as the top choices for living in Hartford Township. Rural character of the Township came in second and surrounding open spaces/environment came in third.

The final opportunity for input was a form for comments/concerns/positive statements to be sent to the Planning Commission. The following comments were provided:



- No more dollar stores
- No more gas stations
- It would be nice to have a nature preserve/trailway
- Something for the kids to do, except drive around the Township
- Provide high speed internet for all of the Township

## Notifications

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 Hartford 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 on November 26, 2019.
- Distribution and Request for Comment, which provided notification of the required 63-day public comment period and asked for input on the draft Master Plan. This letter was mailed on Thursday, September 24, 2020, after the Township Board approved distribution of the draft Plan on Monday, September 21, 2020. The Township received comments from the Van Buren County Road Commission and the Van Buren County Planning Commission.
- Adoption Notification, which informed the required agencies that the Master Plan was adopted on Thursday, December 10, 2020 after the Planning Commission public hearing described herein.

Please see the Appendix of the Plan for a list of the agencies notified.

## Public Hearing

At the November 24, 2020 Planning Commission meeting, after the close of the 63-day public comment period, the required public hearing was conducted. The Planning Commission reviewed public comment received by the Van Buren County Road Commission and the Van Buren County Planning Commission. Based on this input, two minor updates were completed to the Transportation section of the Plan.

At the close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission made a motion to recommend approval of the draft Master Plan to the Township Board. The motion was approved unanimously.

## Township Board Adoption

The Township Board held their adoption meeting on Thursday, December 10, 2020. The Board heard comment from three property owners and read into the record additional public comments. Their concerns centered around the Mixed-Use District and the desire to have more emphasis on industrial uses and more properties future land use planned as industrial. In addition, there was a concern related to the Zoning Plan, which suggested the Township consider rezoning some of the property currently zoned Industrial to more closely match the Future Land Use Map.

After discussion, the Township Board added some additional acreage to the Mixed-Use Future Land Use District west of the City of Hartford between Red Arrow Highway and the railroad tracks. Also, language within the Zoning Plan was changed to support property owner instigated rezoning applications as opposed to any potential Township initiated zoning changes.

With these amendments, the Township Board approved the Master Plan unanimously.



# APPENDIX

## RESOLUTION NO. 20-15

### HARTFORD TOWNSHIP

#### RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

At a meeting of the Township Board ("Township Board") of Hartford Township, Van Buren County, Michigan ("Township"), held by electronic means pursuant to Public Act 228 of 2020 on the 10th day of December 2020, at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: McLellan, Phillips, Sefcik, Starner, Sweet

ABSENT: N/A

The following resolution was offered by **Sweet** and supported by **Sefcik**.

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has prepared a proposed amended Master Plan for the future use, development, and preservation of lands within the Township, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Act 33 of the Public Acts of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act ("Act 33");

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission, after first notifying neighboring entities and other entities as required by Section 39 of Act 33, thereafter prepared a draft Master Plan, which draft was thereafter approved by the Township Board for distribution at the Township Board's September 21, 2020 meeting;

WHEREAS, thereafter the Master Plan was distributed on September 22, 2020 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 November 24, 2020;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission upon completion of the public hearing approved the Master Plan at their November 24, 2020 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, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Township Board hereby approves and adopts the Township Master Plan presented at this regular meeting on December 10, 2020, as amended.
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 entities 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 well for many years to come.

YEAS: McLellan, Phillips, Starner, Sefcik, Sweet

NAYS: N/A

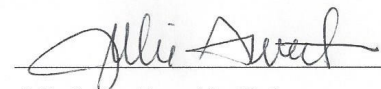
THE RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED ADOPTED.

STATE OF MICHIGAN )

)

COUNTY OF VAN BUREN )

I, the undersigned duly qualified Township Clerk of Hartford Township, do certify the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Board of Hartford Township at a meeting held on the 10th day of December, 2020.



Julie Sweet, Township Clerk



**HARTFORD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN  
MARCH 3<sup>rd</sup> OPEN HOUSE  
COMMUNITY SURVEY**

The Hartford Township Planning Commission is in the processes of updating the Township Master Plan which establishes the vision, goals, and strategies for the future. This survey is being conducted to better understand current views of Township residents regarding a variety of growth and development issues. Your opinions are vital to the Master Plan update and to the Planning Commission. Thank you for participating and providing your anonymous answers to this very important survey.

General Growth

Please check the statement that most closely matches your views about growth in the Township (please choose only 1).

- ☐ I like to see a goal of no growth in the Township.
- ☐ I would prefer a planned and limited growth strategy in the Township.
- ☐ I would like to see growth take its own course (market driven).
- ☐ I would like to see growth encouraged.

In 10 years, I would like the following land uses to increase in Hartford Township (please organize from most important to least important, with number 1 as most important):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Agriculture
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rural residential (large parcel development)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Single-family subdivisions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attached residential developments (condos, townhomes, duplexes)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial / retail
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel / entertainment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Industrial
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open space
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation uses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing

Does the existing housing styles/market meet the current needs of the Township?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral

Do you believe the existing housing styles/market will meet the future needs of the Township?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral

Should the Township encourage (please mark as many as you believe should be encouraged):

- ☐ Single-family subdivisions
- ☐ Attached condominium style housing (duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, etc.)
- ☐ Rental apartments
- ☐ Rural housing cluster development (small lot sizes with required open space)
- ☐ Single-family on large parcels (unplatted lands)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Economy

Should Agritourism uses be allowed in the Township?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral

If you agree, what types of Agritourism do you believe should be permitted (please mark as many as you believe should be permitted):

- ☐ Commercial riding stables
- ☐ Petting farms
- ☐ Corn mazes, hayrides
- ☐ Wedding barns/chapels
- ☐ Bed and breakfast establishments
- ☐ Farm tours
- ☐ U-pick
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Should the Township encourage renewable energy development?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral

If you agree, what types of renewable energy should be permitted (please mark as many as you believe should be permitted):

- ☐ Solar farms
- ☐ Individual solar panels on parcels/lots
- ☐ Wind farms
- ☐ Individual wind turbines on parcels/lots
- ☐ Compost farming
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Should the Township expand the commercial districts to promote commercial/retail growth?

- ☐ Agree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral

If agree, what types of new businesses would you like to see: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Farmland Preservation

Please indicate which statement most represents your beliefs about farmland:

- ☐ Farmland is important and should be protected through land use regulations.  
☐ The conversion of farmland to residential uses should be allowed, but carefully managed through strict land use regulations.  
☐ Additional land use regulations should not occur, even if it means development of farmland.

Please indicate the two most important reasons to preserve farmland:

- ☐ To preserve the scenic beauty and rural character of the Township.  
☐ To preserve family farms and the Township's farming economy.  
☐ To protect prime farmland for future food production.  
☐ To help keep property taxes from increasing (farmlands generally keep property taxes lower).  
☐ To provide areas for wildlife habitats/corridors.

#### Residency in Hartford Township

How important were each of the following factors in contributing to your decision to live in your current location within the Township?

Proximity to work:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Proximity to school:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Proximity to commercial uses:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Surrounding open spaces/environment:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Rural character of the Township:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Surrounding farmlands:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Distance from neighbors:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion
Sense of community within Hartford Twp:	___ Important	___ Unimportant	___ No Opinion

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Completed surveys may be returned to the Township by **Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**. They can be mailed, scanned and emailed to [jjohnston@gowightman.com](mailto:jjohnston@gowightman.com), or dropped off at the Township Hall.

## Hartford Township Master Plan Plan Contact List

### Utilities/Railroads

Consumers Energy Company  
 Attention: Patricia Poppe, President & CEO  
 One Energy Plaza  
 Jackson, MI 49201-2276

Midwest Energy Cooperative  
 901 East State Street  
 P.O. Box 127  
 Cassopolis, MI 49031

Indiana Michigan Power Company  
 Attention: Mike O'Brien, Manager of Governmental and Environmental Affairs  
 110 West Michigan, Suite 350  
 Lansing, MI 48933-1603

CSX Railroad  
 Corporate Headquarters  
 500 Water Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Jacksonville, FL 32202

West Michigan Railroad  
 Attention: Linus Starring  
 P.O. Box 885  
 Saugatuck, MI 49453

### Regional Planning Commission

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
 376 W. Main Street, Suite 130  
 Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022-3651

County Contacts

Berrien County Planning Commission  
701 Main Street  
St. Joseph, MI 49085

Van Buren County Planning Commission  
219 Paw Paw Street, Suite 302  
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Van Buren County Road Commission  
325 West James Street  
P.O. Box 156  
Lawrence, MI 49064

Adjacent Municipalities

City of Hartford  
Planning Commission  
19 West Main Street  
Hartford, MI 49057

Lawrence Township  
Planning Commission  
205 North Paw Paw Street  
P.O. Box 445  
Lawrence, MI 49064

Arlington Township  
Planning Commission  
48030 C.R. 673  
Lawrence, MI 49064

Keeler Township  
Planning Commission  
64121 Territorial Rd. West  
Hartford, MI 49057

Hamilton Township  
Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 35  
Decatur, MI 49045

Bangor Township  
Planning Commission  
32550 C.R. 687  
Bangor, MI 49013

Covert Township  
Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 35  
Covert, MI 49043-0035

Watervliet Charter Township  
Planning Commission  
4959 M-140  
Watervliet, MI 49098

Bainbridge Township  
Planning Commission  
7315 Territorial Road  
Watervliet, MI 49098



## INDEX

TERM	DESCRIPTION	PAGE #s
American Community Survey	A demographic survey program conducted by the U.S. Census. Estimates are generated yearly for areas with large populations and every five years for all others. Estimates are utilized between the 10-year census counts.	34, 36, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46
American Farmland Trust	A nonprofit organization that works to save farmland, promote sound farming practices, and keep farmers on the land.	18
ESRI	An international supplier of geographic information system software, web GIS and geodatabase management applications.	34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 46
Federal Reserve Bank	The central bank of the United States. It was created by Congress to provide the nation with a safer, more flexible, and more stable monetary and financial system.	41
Home Builders Association of Michigan	A nonprofit advocate for the home building industry in Michigan.	44
International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Smart Growth Network	ICMA serves as the organizational "home" of the Smart Growth Network (SGN), a partnership of more than 35 organizations dedicated to the principles of smart growth and to fostering development policies that better serve the economy, community, and the environment.	2, 40
Michigan Center for Geographic Information	Provides access to GIS data, and information across the GIS community in Michigan with an easy to use single point of entry for all State of Michigan open geospatial data.	19
Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	A department of the Michigan state government created in 1921 to enforce laws regarding agriculture production and distribution.	18
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy	A department of the Michigan state government who's mission is to protect Michigan's environment and public health by managing air, water, land, and energy resources.	21, 23
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services	A department of the Michigan state government that provides a myriad of services related to public health and human services and empowers recipients to fully exercise these rights.	23, 31

TERM	DESCRIPTION	PAGE #s
Michigan Department of Transportation	A department of the Michigan state government that maintains the Michigan State Trunkline Highway System which includes all Interstate, US and state highways in Michigan with the exception of the Mackinac Bridge.	1, 27
Michigan State Housing Development Authority	Provides financial and technical assistance through public and private partnerships to create and preserve safe and decent affordable housing, engage in community economic development activities, develop vibrant cities, towns and villages, and address homeless issues.	44
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Center for Environmental Information	Responsible for preserving, monitoring, assessing, and providing public access to the Nation's geophysical data and information.	21
Nature Conservancy	A charitable environmental organization, protecting land and rivers worldwide.	2
Paw Paw River Watershed Management Plan	A guide for the protection and improvement of the Paw Paw River watershed.	6, 19
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi	A federally recognized Potawatomi-speaking tribe based in southwestern Michigan and northeastern Indiana.	2
Southwest Michigan First	A privately funded economic development organization who act as the catalyst for economic growth in Southwest Michigan.	16
Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy	A nonprofit land conservancy created in 1991 that works in nine counties of southwest Michigan to preserve wild and scenic places.	7
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission	One of fourteen regional planning and development organizations in the State of Michigan. Serves Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties to promote a sustainable, high quality of life through the facilitation of sound planning and decision-making.	1, 6, 19, 27
Transportation Asset Management Council	Comprised of professionals representing road commissions, cities, counties, townships, regional and metropolitan planning organizations, and state transportation department personnel who develop and support excellence in managing Michigan's transportation assets by: • Advising the Legislature, the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC), State Transportation Commission, and transportation committees. • Promoting Asset Management principles. • Providing tools and practices for road agencies. • Collaborate and coordinate with the Water Asset Management Council (WAMC).	27
Two Rivers Coalition	A nonprofit organization working to protect and improve water quality in southwest Michigan - specifically the Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds.	6, 19

TERM	DESCRIPTION	PAGE #s
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	A unit of the United States Department of Labor that is the principal fact-finding agency in the broad field of labor economics and statistics and serves as a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System.	40
U.S. Census Bureau	Principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System, responsible for producing data about the American people and economy. The Census Bureau is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.	36-44
U.S. Department of Agriculture	The U.S. federal executive department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food.	18
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	A Cabinet department in the executive branch of the United States federal government to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all.	36
U.S. Fish and Wildlife	An agency of the US federal government within the US Department of the Interior dedicated to the management of fish, wildlife, and natural habitats.	21
U.S. Geological Survey	A scientific agency of the United States government that study the landscape of the United States, its natural resources, and the natural hazards that threaten it. The organization's work spans the disciplines of biology, geography, geology, and hydrology.	19, 21
Van Buren County Road Commission	Provides maintenance operations on all public primary and township local roads to include snow plowing and ice control, drainage, grading, patching, signage, tree removal, roadside mowing and brush control, and structural maintenance.	1, 6, 27
Van Buren Department of Land Management	County department that houses the GIS mapping program, provides house numbering/addressing, remonumentation of township section lines, a registered passport agency, and houses the County Planning Commission.	18, 23, 24
Van Buren/Cass District Health Department	A joint department that promotes and contributes to the highest level of health possible for the people of Van Buren and Cass County by identifying & reducing health risks in the community, detecting, investigating & preventing the spread of disease, promoting healthy lifestyles, promoting a safe & healthful environment, promoting the availability of accessible quality health care services through the private sector, and providing quality health care services to those with limited resources and access.	23, 31
Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies	Located at Elizabethtown College, the Center fosters and promotes the study of Anabaptist and Pietist groups by conducting scholarly and interpretive investigations of the life, culture and beliefs of Anabaptists and Pietists, primarily in their North American context. The Center interprets the cultural and religious heritage of Anabaptist and Pietist communities to the general public via lectures, seminars, exhibits, and conferences.	38



