

# **Sharon Township**

## **Master Plan**

Adopted on October 1, 2020



**SHARON TOWNSHIP  
RESOLUTION  
ADOPTION OF UPDATED MASTER PLAN**

**Whereas**, Sharon Township has in the past adopted a Master Plan containing standards, objectives, priorities, recommendations for future growth and development within Sharon Township; and

**Whereas**, the Master Plan has been periodically reviewed and updated to ensure that it reflects the current vision for growth and development within Sharon Township; and

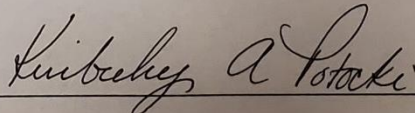
**Whereas**, the Sharon Township Planning Commission with the assistance of the Township's planning consultants, Carlisle and Wortman, has revised the Township's Master Plan focusing on the long term human, environmental and economic health of the Township; and

**Whereas**, the Sharon Planning Commission, on September 29, 2020, voted to recommend the Township Board, approve the proposed 2020 Sharon Township Master Plan; and

**Whereas**, the Sharon Township Board of Trustees has reviewed the proposed 2020 Sharon Township Master Plan;

**Now therefore, be it resolved**, that the 2020 Sharon Township Master Plan, the official copy of which is on file with the Sharon Township Clerk, is hereby adopted. The adoption of the 2020 Sharon Township Master Plan supersedes previous master plans adopted by the Township Board.

I, Kimberly A. Potocki, Clerk of Sharon Township, County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan hereby certify the above resolution was approved by the Sharon Township Board of Trustees at a Regular Meeting held on October 1, 2020.



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Kimberly A. Potocki, Clerk  
Sharon Township

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Township Board**

Peter Psarouthakis, Supervisor

Kimberley Potocki, Clerk

Brian Simons, Treasurer

Trudi Cooper, Trustee

Bob Guysky, Trustee

### **Planning Commission**

Kathy Spiegel, Chairperson

Trudi Cooper, Liaison to Board

Denise Riethmiller, Secretary

Bill Lewis

Justin Smith

*Source for image on cover: Moses Hubing-Cooper*

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## Chapter 1 - Overview

### Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Sharon Township and the role, importance, and preparation process of the Plan. It presents the framework of what the Plan is and what it is intended to accomplish.

### What is the Plan?

#### **Purpose**

Just as individuals and families plan for their future, so must municipalities. Like individuals open savings accounts to accumulate money to purchase new farm equipment five years in the future or develop plans for a larger home for a growing family, municipalities must look to the future and take specific actions to address the current and future needs of its residents. Such actions may involve improvements to the roadway network, improvements to the level of emergency services, and the pursuit of new local employment opportunities.

The Plan is a policy document that identifies how growth and associated land development is to be guided to best ensure the future welfare of Sharon Township. The following key words and phrases describe the Plan:

**FUTURE ORIENTED:** The Plan concerns itself with long range planning to guide and manage future growth and land use. The Plan is not only a picture of the community today, but also a guide to how the community should evolve over the next ten to twenty years in response to growth and community aspirations.

**GENERAL:** The Plan establishes broad principles and policies to address future land use.

**COMPREHENSIVE:** The Plan is comprehensive in that it addresses all principal types of land use and the geographic boundaries of each.

**A PLAN:** The Plan is a specific tangible document that consists of both text and maps that present and illustrate the Township's policies regarding its planned future land-use patterns.

**DYNAMIC:** The Plan is intended to evolve in response to the aspirations of residents, changing conditions in the Township, and new strategies to manage growth.

The Sharon Township Planning Commission, under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, (P.A. 23 of 2008) and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, (P.A. 110 of 2006) prepared this Master Plan. These Acts provide for the development of plans by a Planning Commission for the purposes of, in part:

‘...to promote public health, safety, and general welfare; to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; to avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people; to lessen congestion on public roads and streets...and to consider the character of each Township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and population development.’

This Plan is not a regulatory document. It is a "*policy plan*" to be implemented through regulatory tools. For example, although the Plan is not a zoning ordinance, the Plan's recommendations and policies will serve as a basis for updating the current Sharon Township Zoning Ordinance. In fact, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, which gives the Township the statutory authority to adopt zoning regulations, stipulates that a municipality's zoning ordinance "*shall be based upon a plan...*" The Plan addresses this statutory requirement and maintains a strong legal foundation for the Township's zoning regulations.

### ***Elements of the Plan***

In addition to this introductory chapter, the Plan has four important components:

- 1) A discussion of important planning issues facing the Township today, and associated goals and objectives that address these issues (Chapter Two).
- 2) The planned future land use pattern for the Township (Chapter Three).
- 3) Coordinated Public Services (Chapter Four).
- 4) Background studies that provide a review of existing conditions and trends in the Township (Appendix).

## **Importance and Application of The Plan**

The importance and application of the Plan are reflected in both the long-term interests of the Township and the day-to-day administration of the Township's planning and zoning program.

### ***Long Term Interests***

Several interests are shared by residents and officials of Sharon Township today that can be expected to continue for years to come and may be similarly shared by future residents and township officials. (See 2019 Citizen Survey Results, Appendix D). Some of these important interests are:

- maintain a sense of community identity and civic appearance
- protect property values
- minimize tax burdens
- protect open spaces, natural resources, and rural character
- ensure appropriate land use and adequate services

- provide opportunities for economic development within an environmentally sound context
- expand broadband access
- protect small farms
- encourage small businesses that are compatible with the Township's character

Managed growth and development can ensure the public's health, safety, welfare, and quality of life and the protection of property values. The Plan supports these long-term interests by providing a future-oriented strategy. Chapter Three establishes specific future land use strategies to secure these and other long-term interests.

### ***Day-to-Day Administration***

The Plan plays an equally important role in the day-to-day planning and zoning efforts of the Township:

- Advisory Policies: The Plan is an official advisory policy statement that should be readily shared with existing and prospective landowners and developers to inform them of the long-term intentions of the Township regarding land use and thus more closely integrate development proposals with the policies of the Plan.
- Ordinances: The Plan establishes a practical basis for the Township to revise, update, or prepare ordinances or ordinance amendments to ensure that the policies of the Plan are implemented, including zoning and land division regulations.
- Review of Rezoning Requests: Chapter Two includes a list of Township Goals and Objectives that should be used as a basis for review of future proposed rezoning requests. Equally important, Chapter Three provides policies regarding the planned future land use pattern in the Township. It also provides valuable reference points upon which such rezoning requests should be evaluated.
- Public Services Improvements: The effective use of Sharon Township's tax dollars requires the identification of a planned land use pattern to pinpoint future population centers and areas for commercial and/or industrial growth and areas for preservation. With new development, some Township areas may need improvements to public services and infrastructure, such as fire protection and roads. Population centers and commercial/industrial areas typically require higher levels of public services. This Plan provides the Township with the ability to identify areas of future need, rather than always playing "catch-up" while the Township's health, safety, and welfare may be at risk.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: The Plan provides the basis for Sharon Township to communicate and cooperate effectively with its neighbors about neighboring and regional planning and zoning issues. Opportunities for mutual gain by coordinated efforts will be multiplied.
- Trends and Conditions: The Plan includes relevant trends and conditions in Sharon Township. These facts can educate local officials and residents and aid in the review of



development proposals, encourage constructive discussion of planning issues and policies, and serve as a base line for future studies.

### **How The Plan Was Prepared**

Planning is an on-going, cyclical process that strives to answer a series of important questions:

- What Do We Have? The answer requires research and analysis of existing conditions, such as roads, land use, and environmental resources, and the identification of critical issues.
- What Do We Want? The answer is a function of local aspirations, and the "future vision" residents have for their community.
- How Do We Get There? The exploration of alternative strategies lets the Township reach the future vision, and the implementation of the preferred strategies.
- Is the Plan Working? Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of the strategies and implementation measures must be undertaken.

Sharon Township has been actively involved in long-range planning for several decades. The first Land Use Policy Plan was proposed in the mid-1970's and updated in 1992. In 1996, the policy plan was updated with the assistance of Dr. Robert Ward, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Eastern Michigan University, and his students. Shortly thereafter, the Township grew increasingly concerned about the strength and clarity of the Plan, in light of issues that arose in the community in the late 1990's. In 2001, the Township prepared a new Plan, incorporating many of the basic tenets of the 1996 Plan, assisted by the expertise and experience of a professional planner. In 2009, the Sharon Township Planning Commission updated the Plan due changing conditions and new statutory requirements. This was accomplished with the assistance of the Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning.

In 2019, the Planning Commission began this update of the Master Plan and contracted a planning consulting firm to assist in the completion and adoption of the document. The 2020 update includes data and recommendations of a 2017 Green Infrastructure Planning Exercise undertaken by the Planning Commission with the Huron River Watershed Council, results of a 2019 citizen survey, updated maps, and up-to-date demographic and economic statistics.

A citizen survey in 1996, 2008 and 2019 has been as part of 1996, 2009 and this Master Plan update (see Appendix D). The surveys were not scientific and therefore are not a representative sample of the Township. However, the results do show what interested residents felt at each moment in time. The surveys used some of the same questions, showing the following trends:

- When asked why they continued to live in Sharon Township, the choice most often selected by respondents in all three surveys was "rural atmosphere/open character".
- "Keep the 10 acre lot size requirement" was identified by the most respondents consistently as how to alleviate threats to the quality of life in Sharon Township.

- One house on 10 acres was most often seen as the most appropriate density for future single family residential, but support as a percentage of the sample grew over time from 46% to 49% to 65%.
- The clear majority in all three surveys felt the number of commercial businesses was about right for the community.
- When respondents were asked if they would support millages for a variety of items, in all three surveys, the majority responded “no”.

New issues that surfaced in the 2019 survey were:

- The top threat to quality of life in Sharon Township identified in 2019 was “increase in housing density/smaller lot sizes”, not “new development/growth” as in previous surveys.
- When asked what needed more protection, “woodlands and wetlands” leapt from 4% in 2008 to 37% in 2019.
- Lack of broadband access was identified in multiple questions as a challenge or threat to the quality of life in the Township.
- Increasing concern about road conditions

The revised Plan was assembled by the Planning Commission, with the help of a planning consultant, and reviewed by local officials. Revisions to the draft plan were undertaken and a revised plan was assembled for presentation to the residents of the community. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft Plan on <date>. At that meeting, the Planning Commission referred the Plan to the Board for final approval. A resolution to adopt the Plan was passed by the Sharon Township Board on <date>.

## **Sharon Township Overview**

The following is a brief overview of Sharon Township today. A more detailed review of trends and conditions can be found in Appendix A, B, and C.

Sharon Township is a rural community located in the western region of Washtenaw County in the southeast area of Michigan within an agriculturally dominated region. There are many small towns and settlement areas nearby. The closest, the Village of Manchester, abuts the south-central border of the Township; the City of Chelsea is three miles to the north. Larger urban centers, such as Jackson to the west and Ann Arbor to the east, are less than half an hour away. Access to these and other regional centers, including Detroit, is by M-52 in the Township and the Township's proximity to Interstate 94. Sharon Township is an attractive place to live due to its rural character and abundant open spaces and ease of access to regional urban centers. The Township's estimated 2019 population of 1,712 reflects 4% growth since 2000. Much like the surrounding townships and Washtenaw County, Sharon Township's population is anticipated to continue to age, leading to a reduction in household size and households with children through 2045.

Aside from M-52 and several other paved primary roads, most of the local road network is unpaved.

The Township's overall land use pattern shows a comparatively low level of development and expansive areas of open spaces and natural resources (See Land Use Map and Natural Features Map). Farming operations dominate the landscape along with abundant wetlands and woodlands. The wetlands and woodlands are most prominent along a corridor extending through the center of the community in a southwest-northeast configuration. The Sharon Short Hills area is also one of the primary groundwater recharge areas for the Township. The Township relies on its groundwater resources for potable water. The coarse sand and gravel soils that prevail throughout the Township make this resource particularly vulnerable to contamination from surface pollutants as documented by studies by the Southeast Regional Groundwater Education Center at Eastern Michigan University and by Huron River Watershed Council (June 2017 Report).

The topography of the Township can be described as level to very steep, with the northwest portion comparatively flat and the southern regions more rolling. The central area of the Township exhibits very steep grades and these special topographic conditions, along with the associated woodlands and wetlands, comprise the unique Sharon Short Hills area.

Approximately 5% of the Township area is developed for residential, commercial, industrial, and/or related urban uses. As of 2018, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) estimates that there are 730 housing units in Sharon Township; most of the housing units are single family detached dwellings on comparatively large parcels along the frontage of section line roads. Nearly 70% of all parcels are ten (10) acres or more; parcels of 40 acres and more account for nearly half of the acreage in the Township. There are several small neighborhood developments.

Sharon Township has a handful of commercial and industrial establishments, most situated along the south half of M-52. These include, but are not limited to, a convenience store and service station, livestock auction yard, restaurant, hardware store, electronic assembly factory: mini-storage, tooling shop, and sand/gravel extraction operations.

Public services in Sharon Township are limited. There are no public sewer or water facilities. Residents rely on private on-site septic drain fields for sewage disposal and private wells for potable water. This is of concern as most of the Township exhibits comparatively high vulnerability to groundwater contamination due to dominant coarse-textured soils. The nearest public sewer and water system is in the Village of Manchester. The Michigan State Police and Washtenaw County Sheriff provide protection services to Sharon Township. The Township maintains a contract agreement with the Manchester Township Fire Department for fire protection, paid for by a dedicated fire service millage.

Sharon Township is bordered by five townships, the Village of Manchester, and Jackson County. While the surrounding townships generally share similar goals regarding maintaining rural character and preserving farmland, the development activities and planning policies in these adjacent communities can influence Sharon Township's future character and development.

The areas surrounding Sharon Township are planned as follows:

**Sylvan Township:** Sylvan Township borders Sharon Township to the north. The area in Sylvan Township along the north boundary line with Sharon Township is planned for agricultural use west of Sylvan Road and east of M-52. The areas adjacent to Sylvan Road are planned for

Low Density Residential. The remaining area between Sylvan Road and M-52 is planned for industrial land uses.

**Freedom Township:** Freedom Township is located immediately east of Sharon Township. The entire border shared with Sharon Township is planned as Agricultural Preservation.

**Manchester Township / Village of Manchester:** Manchester Township and the Village of Manchester border Sharon Township to the south. The western portion of the boundary consists primarily of Agricultural Residential and Recreation Conservation areas. The eastern portion encompassing the area within and adjacent to the Village of Manchester is a mixture of residential densities, public/semi-public and commercial uses.

**Grass Lake Township (Jackson County):** Grass Lake Township borders Sharon Township to the northwest in Jackson County. The Sharon Township border shared with Grass Lake Township is planned for agricultural use with a small public area planned at the southernmost point.











**Norvell Township (Jackson County):** Norvell Township is located southwest of Sharon Township in Jackson County. The border shared with Norvell Township is also planned for agricultural/open space use.





## Future Land Use

### Future Land Uses

 Agriculture/Rural Residential	 Manufactured Home Park
 Commercial	 Medium-Density Residential
 Industrial	 Planned Unit Development
 High-Density Residential	 Public/Semi-Public
 Low-Density Residential	 Recreation-Conservation

### Sharon Township and Surrounding Communities Jackson and Washtenaw County



0 1 2 Miles

Source: Jackson and Washtenaw County GIS  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates  
May 22, 2020



## Chapter 2 – Planning Issues

### Introduction

The planning issues presented in the following pages are not intended to be all-inclusive. They are the primary issues that Sharon Township must address as it establishes a Master Plan. These issues will evolve over time, should be reexamined periodically, and modified as needed.

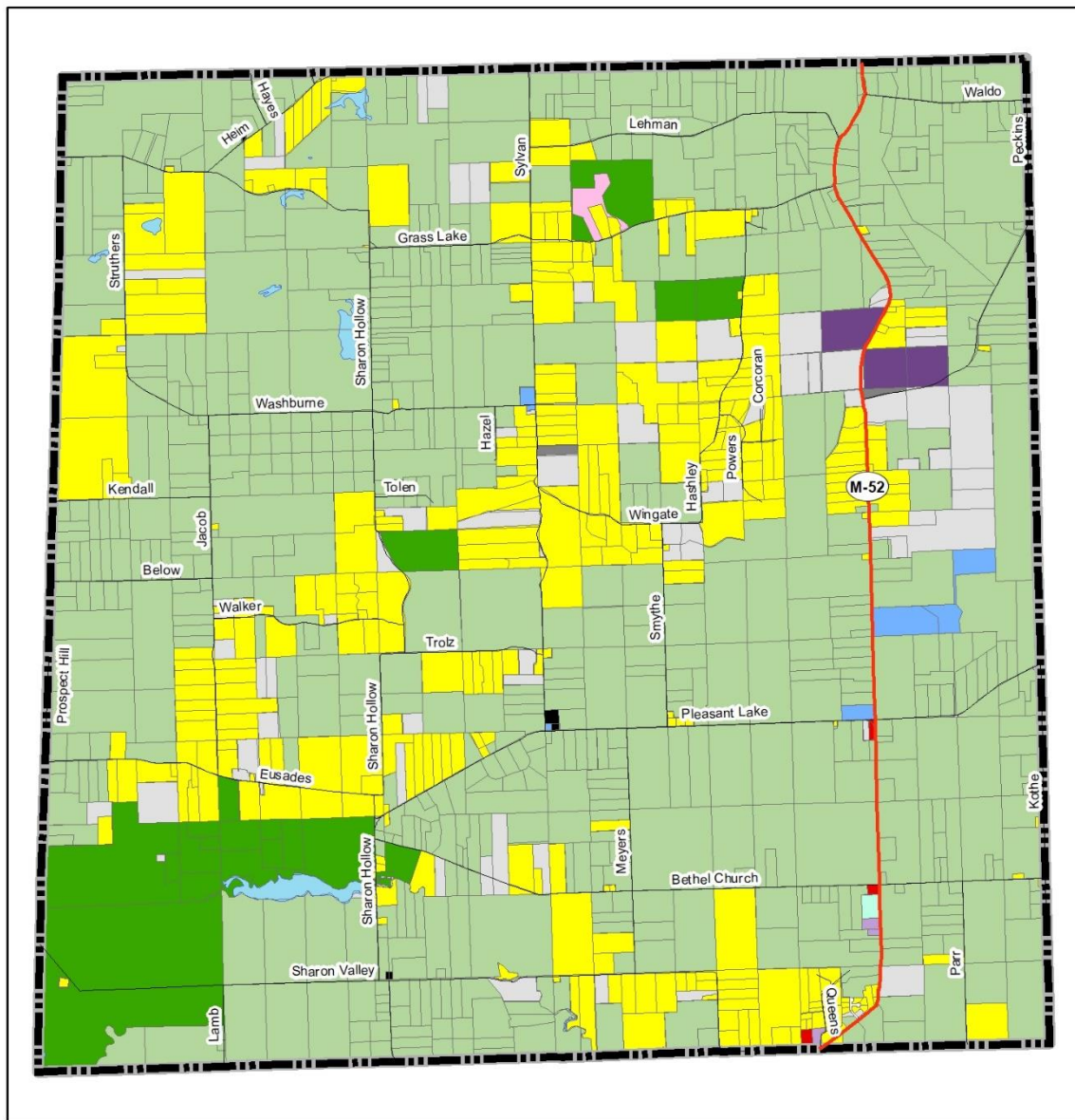
#### ***Growth Management***

The past 50 years have witnessed significant population growth in Sharon Township, with a curb in growth in since 2000. The Township's population grew by 102% between 1970 and 2000, and another 4% between 2000 and 2010. Based on 2019 population estimates by SEMCOG, Sharon Township's population has not grown since 2010, with a population change of -1%. Even though 21 new houses were built in Sharon Township between 2010 and 2019, those households did not compensate for the population lost in terms of household size, approximately 145 people with the average household size falling from 2.64 persons in 2010 to 2.42 persons in 2019.

Sharon Township's flattening population numbers, likely caused in part by the plunging housing and construction markets in the late 2000's, has not rebounded like Washtenaw County as a whole. The average ten-year growth rates of the County have continued to increase (7% between 2000 and 2010 and another 8% estimated between 2010 and 2019). Anecdotally, Sharon Township leadership has been told that the lack of broadband in Sharon is a drawback for the marketability of existing and new housing in the Township.

Over the next 25 years, SEMCOG is forecasting no net growth in the Township (see Appendix C). The average household size of 2.64 persons reported in the 2010 Census is forecasted by SEMCOG to continue to decrease through 2045 to 2.2 person per household, causing a slow decrease in overall population, even if a small number new homes are built.

Sharon Township is a desirable place to live, abundant with natural resources and open spaces, easy access to highways and employment centers, an overall rural character, and nearby retail and other urban amenities. The character and quality of life has and will continue to be affected by the way the Township manages future growth and development. Managed growth minimizes unnecessary loss of natural resources including farmland; preserves the Township's existing character and environmental integrity; encourages orderly land development; assures adequate public services and wise expenditures of Township funds; and limits traffic hazards and nuisances. Managed growth has been the foundation of Sharon Township's planning and land use policies since 1996. This Plan continues goals and policies to effectively shape and guide future growth and development in an orderly manner, consistent with the aspirations of the residents of the Township and the opportunities and constraints presented by its natural and cultural characteristics. The Existing Land Use Map on the following page shows how growth has been managed to concentrate denser and more intensive land uses closer to Manchester.



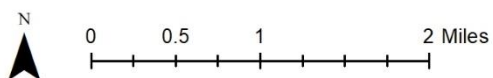
### Land Use

	Agricultural		Institutional		Single Family Housing
	Cemetery		Medical		Utility
	Extractive		Office		Vacant
	Hospitality		Open Space / Rec		Water
	Industrial		Retail		

### Existing Land Use

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Parcel, Land Use, and Road Data  
from Washtenaw County GIS



May 22, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Tax revenues dictate, in part, the extent and quality of public services. Although development will increase the Township's tax base, that same development will place additional demands upon public services. Research has shown that development does not necessarily "*pay its way*," particularly as it applies to traditional single-family residential development. *Development patterns that minimize new public costs should be sought where practical.*

Smart Growth principles, one of the leading schools of growth management, recommend maintaining a compact form of growth and development and, to the extent it is practical, locate higher density and concentrated development near or adjacent to areas currently being served or anticipated to be served with higher levels of public services. Current police and fire protection services, and the road network appear to be meeting the present needs of area residents. Higher growth rates, brought on by changing market conditions and zoning provisions, will necessitate greater expenditures of Township funds.

The plan recognizes that Sharon Township exists within a regional network of communities, none of which are islands unto themselves. The Township abuts the Washtenaw County townships of Sylvan, Freedom, Manchester, and the Jackson County townships of Norvell and Grass Lake, is close to the Village of Manchester, and lies about 3 miles south of the City of Chelsea. By cooperatively pursuing common land use and public services goals, Sharon Township and its neighbors manage growth. Similarly, the regional planning initiatives, such as the Chelsea Area Planning Team and the Manchester Community Joint Planning Commission, affect the Township. Sharon Township and other local planning efforts support a common regional vision as embodied in the Chelsea Area Planning Team to further strengthen the stability of the local and regional area.

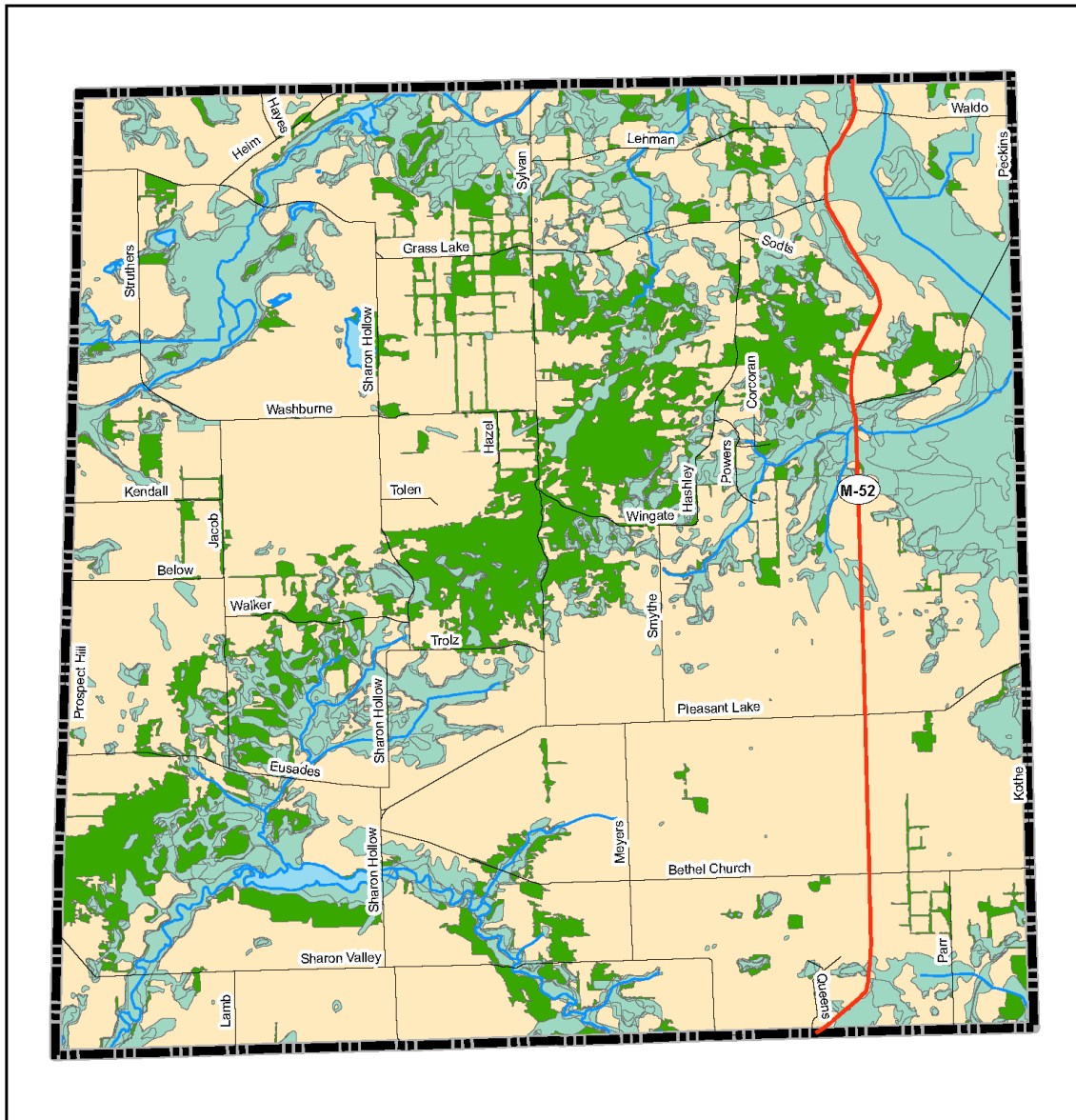
Individual properties and land uses exist within a network of adjoining and nearby properties and land uses. This tapestry of land uses establishes, in part, the character of the Township. A township-wide land use pattern should strive to assure compatibility between land uses, by appropriately locating new land uses, managing development densities and the rate of growth, utilizing buffer areas between uses, and reviewing site development proposals to minimize land use and vehicular conflicts.

### ***Community Character and Green Infrastructure***

Protection of the rural character of Sharon Township continues to be extremely important to its residents. "Rural character," while subjective, is typically associated with open spaces comprised of farmland and/or woodlands, wetlands, and fields, as well as a perception of limited urban development. Not only are these elements important in shaping the character of the Township, they provide vital green infrastructure for watersheds, wildlife habitats, flood control, water purification, groundwater recharge, and improved air quality. The Natural Features Map on the following pages shows the rich and layered natural features in Sharon Township.

Sharon Township is a major headwaters area for Mill Creek and the Huron River watershed and provides groundwater recharge to the River Raisin watershed. The safe recharge of groundwater resources, preservation of prime soils, and conservation of habitat for flora and fauna are all benefits of strong watershed. By protecting natural features in Sharon Township, specifically wetlands and stream corridors, the integrity of watersheds as a system are protected. In addition, steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands are essential to maintaining stream flow, restricting stormwater runoff, and preserving surface water quality.





### Legend

— Rivers    Lakes    Wetlands    Woodlands



0 0.5 1 Miles

### Natural Features Map

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Natural Features Data from  
Washtenaw County GIS

February 25, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Stream flow, runoff prevention, and overall surface water quality have a direct correlation to the long term health of the local and regional community.

In 2017, the Huron River Watershed Council conducted a planning exercise with the Planning Commission. The exercise identified the Township's important natural areas and how they are connected, as shown on the Green Infrastructure Map on the following page. Large natural areas, called hubs, and smaller natural areas, identified as sites, are linked by linear features, such as tree rows or rivers and streams. Effective protection of Sharon Township's rural character and green infrastructure can be managed and does not require the prohibition development. Managed growth and development encourage the continuation of the overall rural character of the Township and the integrity of its environment and natural resources. The preservation of rural character and natural resources in the face of growth and development depends on managing development densities and encouraging site development practices that purposely protect these assets.

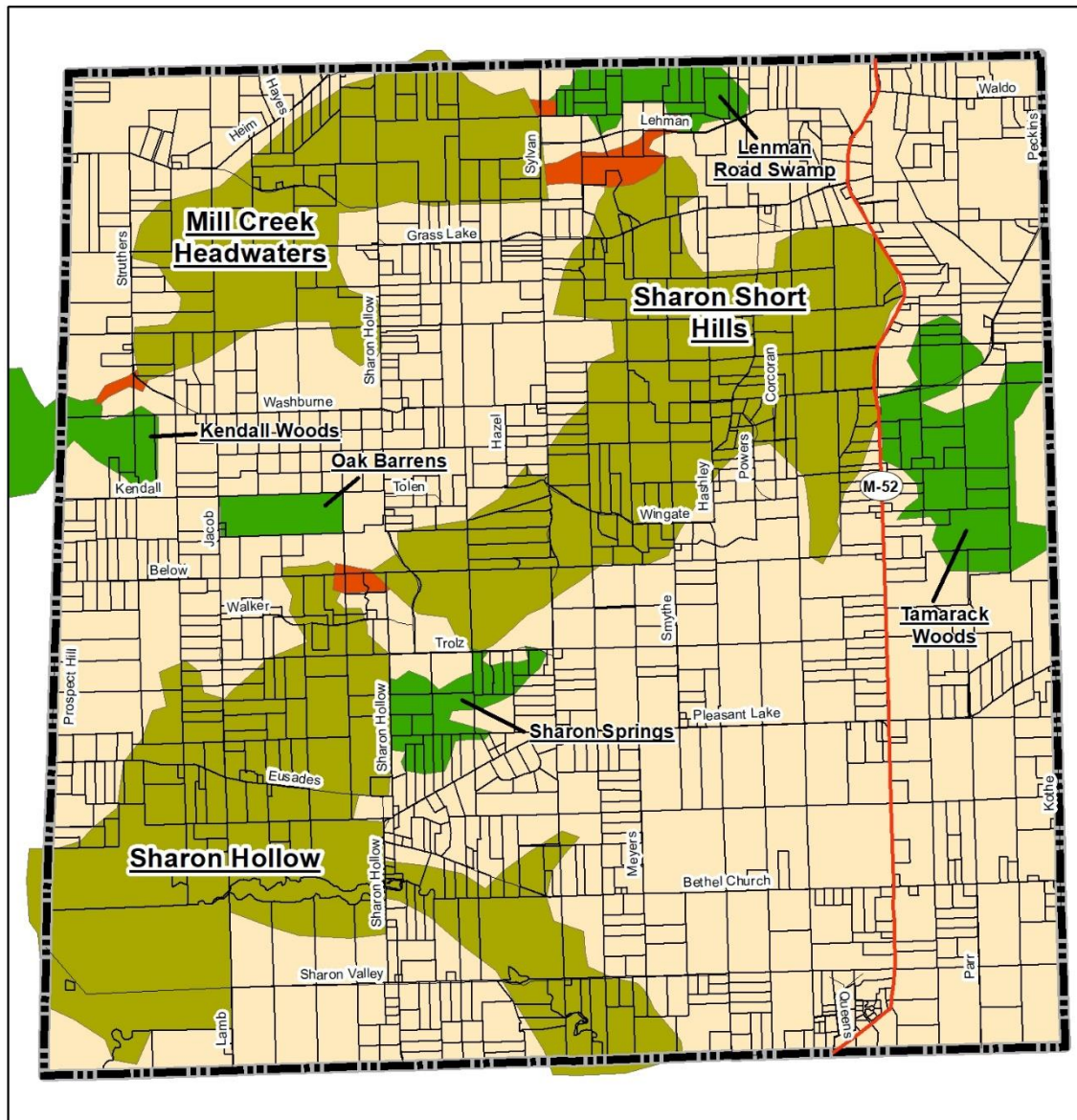
The protection of the environmental resources in the green infrastructure hubs of the Mill Creek Headwaters, Sharon Hollow, and the Sharon Short Hills are essential to the preservation of natural features, rural character, and watershed quality. Some of these areas, particularly the Sharon Short Hills area, are vulnerable to extractive uses but this area's unique mix of woodlands, wetlands, rolling topography and steep grades is unlike the balance of the Township. Green infrastructure preservation as a system is equally important to ground water safety, the source of potable water for all of Sharon Township. The Township's ground water resources are vulnerable to surface contaminants.

Establishment and protection of interconnected green infrastructure systems, including wetlands, woodlands, stream corridors, and open fields, provides a diverse and viable habitat for wildlife, native plants, and healthy watersheds. Where large-scale residential development is permitted, zoning regulations should require tangible, long-term protection of the Township's natural resources and rural character. Residential developments without open spaces and natural resources protection undermine the community's commitment to environmental integrity and rural character.

### ***Farmland***

Sharon Township was settled by European immigrants, starting in the 1830's. Many of them were attracted to the area because the environment and the landscape reminded them of the Black Forest region in Germany. A typical family homesteaded 160 acres and was self-sufficient, raising small grains, corn, hay, vegetables, and various livestock. The alluvial soils and terrain created by several moraines proved well adapted to pasturing sheep. Sharon Township became a leading producer of lambs and wool in the state. This agricultural pattern persisted into the 1940's.

In the 1950's and early 1960's some farmers were enticed by feed companies to erect large hen houses to mass-produce eggs, and the first glimpse of "factory farming" appeared. Beginning in the 1970's worldwide competition in agribusiness intensified, forcing producers to continuously cut costs and search for more efficient and intense production methods. Less than 20% of the agricultural land in Sharon Township is classified as prime, while the balance is highly susceptible to drought due its coarse textured sandy loams. These factors combined to force more producer consolidations and increased pressure to convert marginal, less efficient lands to other uses such as tree farms and large residential lots.



## Green Infrastructure

### Green Infrastructure Designations

Hub
  Connector / Link
  Site



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Parcel and Road Data  
from Washtenaw County GIS  
Green Infrastructure from  
Huron River Watershed Council

May 11, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Active livestock operations dramatically dwindled between the mid 1970's and the present. United producers moved from Detroit's Eastern Market to Sharon Township in the late 1960's to be closer to its producer members. Once prosperous, it has since declined. While approximately two-thirds of Sharon Township's land mass remains in active cultivation, the work is performed by fewer and fewer independent producers.

Agriculture continues to be the dominant land use in the Township. Moreover, as shown in the Agricultural Soils Map on the next page, Sharon Township has significant prime soils. Permitting comparatively high levels of residential development in a community's agricultural areas encourages encroachment into farmland areas, increases conflicts between farm and non-farm residents, and increases demands for more public services leading to higher property assessments. These factors impinge on the long-term economic viability of the farm operations.

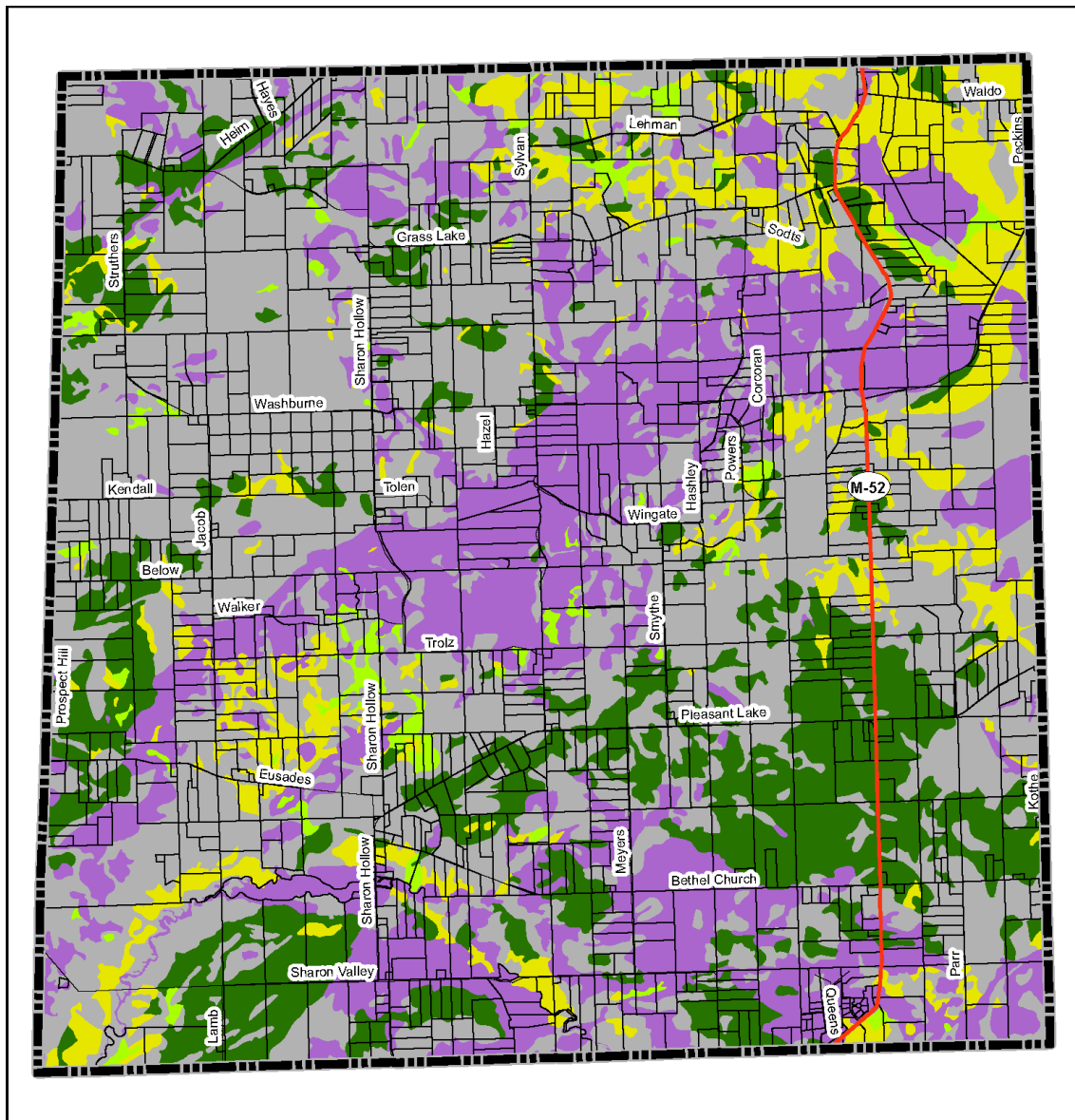
Agriculture preserves much of the open space in Sharon Township. The agricultural landscapes are associated with historic buildings, sites, objects, and structures that make up the character of the Township. The Washtenaw County historic resources database, known as HistWeb, lists dozens of individual historic sites in Sharon Township. Michigan Historic Sites Online (maintained by the State of Michigan) listed two Sharon Township properties on the State Register of Historic Places, including Sharon Mills and Salem Church. The Township is also home to at least nine designated Centennial Farms, sites that have been owned by the same family for at least one hundred years. Historic preservation of agricultural lands along with historic building and sites has economic, environmental, and social benefits that should be incorporated in policies and partnerships.

The Township recognizes both the benefits of local farming and the challenges it faces. Increasing agricultural competition will likely intensify the pressure to convert less productive lands to other uses. While not experiencing pressure now, development pressure may intensify as demand for rural residential lots increases and large landowners seek to convert lands to other more profitable uses. Since 2010, the Township has allowed medical marijuana uses, agritourism, small-scale value-added processing and accessory solar and wind energy uses on farms to diversify income streams for growers. The Township should continue to actively support farming operations, including allowing accessory uses on farms to improve economic vitality. At the same time, the Township needs to provide options to convert farm acreage into alternative uses, in coordination with the Township's planned future land use pattern and density guidelines.

### ***Residential Development***

In the early 2000's, increased residential development was predicted to be the major land use change in Sharon Township. As seen by the population plateau of the Township, that prediction did not come true. A variety of national trends likely contributed, such as the negative effects on the housing and construction markets of the Great Recession, changes in housing preferences to urban living, the aging of the Baby Boom generation and the debt load of Millennials, limiting their ability as a generation to buy homes and/or property. The lack of broadband has likely affected the housing market in Sharon, as well. However, the continued land use policies in Sharon Township were likely a contributing factor since other Washtenaw County communities have seen a rise in population in the past decade and are predicted to grow.





### Legend

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Prime Farmland	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Not Prime Farmland
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Farmland of Local Importance	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:grey; border:1px solid black;"></span> Not Agricultural Soils
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> Prime farmland if drained	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px solid black;"></span> Parcels



0 0.5 1 Miles

### Agricultural Soils Map

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Soils and Roads Data from  
Washtenaw County GIS

February 21, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Residential development should continue to be limited by balancing growth with conservation of farmland and other natural resources, limitations of environmentally sensitive areas, the inability of some area soils to accommodate septic drain fields, the limited public services and the inability of the Township to meet the demands of the increased residential development while preserving the very amenities that make Sharon Township unique.

Subdivisions without any semblance of the previous open spaces and natural resources that characterized the undeveloped parcel detract from the community's environmental integrity and character. In addition, incremental land divisions along existing road frontages can have the same effect. Appropriate setback, lot width and density standards, and incentives to preserve the existing character of road corridors, have been enacted to assure rural-friendly development. In fact, advantages and disadvantages can be associated with nearly any form of residential development.

The Township wants to provide reasonable opportunities for the varied housing needs of its present and future residents. Opportunities for low-density single-family development are plentiful and are the preferred development pattern in the face of limited public services (including the lack of public sewer and water) limited road infrastructure, and sensitive environmental resources (including high ground water vulnerability). These same conditions severely limit opportunities for medium and high development densities and emphasize the benefit of coordinating more intensive development with more appropriate opportunities that may be available in nearby communities.

### ***Commercial and Industrial Development***

Sharon Township has limited commercial and industrial development. Constraints for these uses include lack of public water and sewer, a comparatively small population base, and the competition from nearby urban centers such as Manchester, Chelsea, Jackson, and Ann Arbor. These and other nearby cities satisfy many of the day-to-day consumer needs of area residents as well as providing opportunities for comparison shopping and professional services. Residents have expressed strong satisfaction with the current status of commercial and industrial development in the Township and do not generally support expansion. New commercial development should be located on M-52, to capitalize on the infrastructure and visibility of the major road in the Township.

Sharon Township wants to provide a reasonable mix of land uses due to the needs of present and future residents. Commercial and industrial uses strengthen the Township's economic stability and improve employment opportunities, including close-to-home employment, and access to retail and other services. To minimize land use conflicts and increased public costs, key guidelines for future commercial and industrial development are:

- 1) Discourage random encroachment by such development in residential and agricultural areas;
- 2) Coordinate development with available public services;
- 3) Coordinate development with existing development of similar character, both within the Township and along its periphery; and
- 4) Assure such development is sensitive to the desired character of the community.

### **Mineral Extraction**

Sharon Township's topography is primarily the result of glacial activity. The resulting hilly, scenic topography is a significant contributor to the township's rural character. When the glaciers melted, the southern, southeastern, and northwestern portions of the township were covered with deposited rock, sand and clay known as ground moraines, kames (rounded hills), outwash plains and wetlands. The central portion of the Township extending northeast to southwest received sand, rock, and gravel piled high into ridges known as terminal or recessional moraines, now known as the Sharon Short Hills. As shown on the 10 Foot Contour Map on the next page, the Hills range in elevation above sea level from 900 feet in the southwest portion of the township to 1,117 feet in the middle of the Township. In 2017, as the result of increasing citizen concern about oil and natural gas extraction in nearby townships, the Township passed an ordinance restricting ancillary activities surrounding oil and gas wells. Sharon Township should continue to monitor and restrict where possible such activities that could result in groundwater and aquifer pollution.

Sand and gravel are important construction materials especially for new developments and roadways. Some of these deposits in Sharon Township are commercially recoverable. Numerous sand and gravel extraction businesses are operating in Washtenaw County, including one active pit in Sharon Township. As these resources elsewhere are consumed, Sharon Township may be faced with additional gravel extraction pressures. Several hundred vacant acres are owned by extractive businesses in the northeast portion of the Township. Extraction of sand and gravel from the Sharon Short Hills has the potential to cause irreparable damage to the environment, including adverse effects on recreational and scenic land, water quality, agricultural soils, woodlands, wildlife habitat, and roadways.

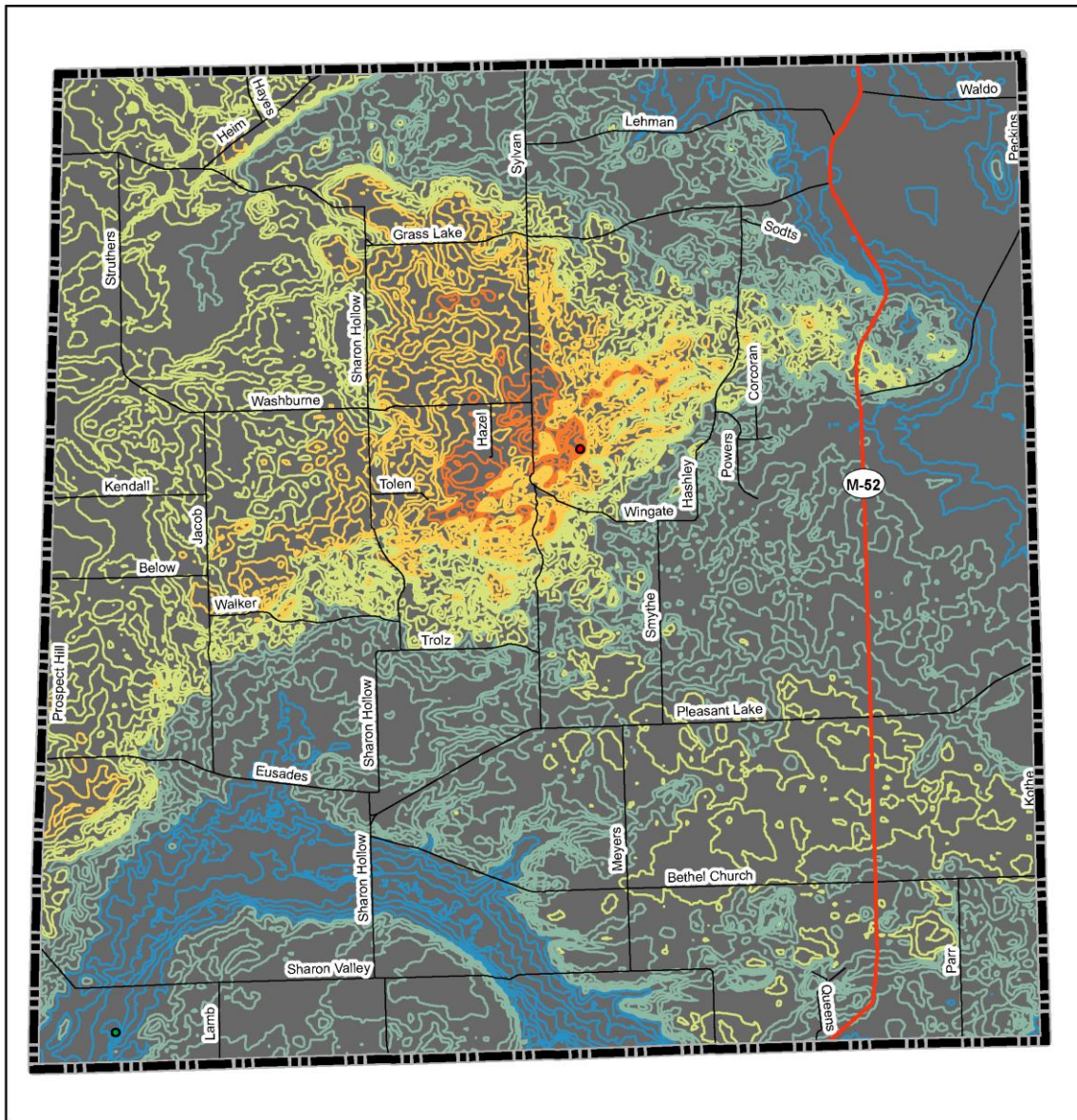
Despite their negative effects, mineral extraction operations can be revenue producing entities for the Township. Although mineral extraction is often considered a property right and is not prohibited, it is subject to regulation that can mitigate the negative effects. Currently, Sharon Township allows mineral extraction as a Special Use in both the resource conservation and agricultural districts subject to the Township's Mineral Extraction Ordinance.

### **Roads**

The closer higher density and intensity land uses (such as commercial and industrial uses) are to key thoroughfares, the greater will be the savings in future maintenance costs on other roads, as well as reduced traffic levels and congestion.

The M-52 corridor and/or other important roads serve a practical and beneficial future land use pattern for the community. However, the principal function of these important corridors — the movement of vehicles over comparatively long distances — should not be undermined by development patterns along their frontage that unnecessarily heighten congestion and traffic hazards through excessive driveways, conflicting turning patterns, and related site development considerations.

The M-52 corridor is heavily used by Township citizens, visitors, and commuters. This roadway is particularly vulnerable to strip development for residential and commercial uses. This development pattern will undermine the function of these state highways, encourage congestion and traffic hazards, and alter the essential perception of the rural character of the Township.



### Contours

900-949	1050-1099
950-999	1100-1049
1000-1049	1150

### Elevation Points

- Lowest Point
- Highest Point

### Contour 10ft Map

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Contours and Roads Data  
from Washtenaw County GIS

February 25, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



0 0.5 1 Miles

Much of the residential development today is a strip pattern — residences are "stripped" along the existing county road frontages. This pattern of lot splits can be debilitating to Sharon Township because:

- 1) The increased number of driveways directly accessing the state and county roads increases the level of congestion and safety hazards along these corridors;
- 2) Travel times are increased; and
- 3) The Township's rich rural panoramic open space views, as seen from the roadway, are reduced to images of driveways, cars, garages, and front yards.

### **Community Services**

Tax revenues dictate, in part, the extent and quality of public services. Though development can be expected to increase the Township's tax base, the development will place additional demands upon the need for public services. Development patterns that minimize new public costs should be sought where practical.

To this end, the Township should maintain a compact form of growth and development and, to the extent it is practical, locate higher density and intensity development near or adjacent to areas currently being served with higher levels of public services or anticipated to be served by such services in the future. Current police and fire protection services, and the roadway network, appear to be meeting the needs of area residents, due in large part to the limited population of the Township. High growth rates, which may be brought on by market conditions, will necessitate the expenditure of increased levels of Township funds much sooner just to maintain the current quality of public services, let alone pursue improvements.

### **Broadband**

Sharon Township lacks broadband service to most of its residents. Broadband, provided by either wire or cellular towers, is an internet speed faster than dial-up. The access and speed needed by Township residents and businesses continues to grow as the interrelation between modern life, devices and access to the internet grows.

Some areas of the Township do have broadband via cellular towers. However, the woodlands and hilly topography that are essential building blocks of the Township's character make the creation of a system of towers unlikely. Township leadership has talked with multiple broadband providers about delivering service to Sharon Township but the cost of the infrastructure is not offset by the limited population. A millage to fund broadband failed in 2018 but the lack of broadband was identified as a threat to the quality of life in Sharon Township in the 2019 citizen survey. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 demonstrated that broadband is a needed utility in all communities, particularly in Sharon Township. Sharon Township is a prime candidate for rural broadband initiatives and grants offered by the federal, state and county government.

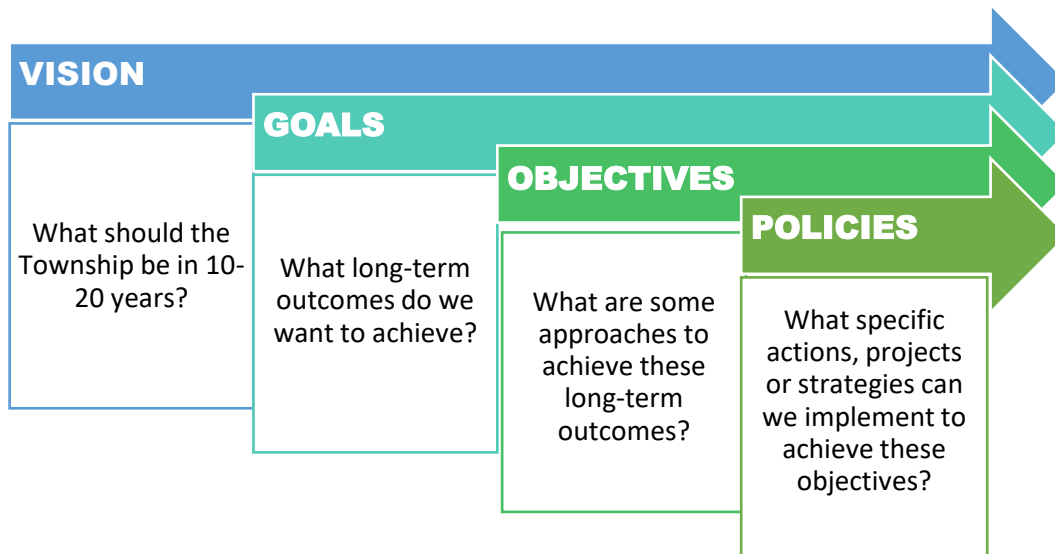


## Chapter 3 – Vision, Goals & Objectives

### Introduction

A fundamental purpose of this Plan is to establish a basis for future land use in the Township. Sharon Township government is actively involved in guiding and shaping future growth and development in the community and does not want the community to evolve by chance. To effectively plan for the Township's wellbeing, the Township has developed a vision statement in addition to the long-term goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan.

The **Vision** is the intended reality for Sharon Township in ten to twenty years. **Goals** are broad statements that provide a focus for future discussions. Whereas, **Objectives** are more specific planning statements used to qualify the goals and provide more detailed direction for planning efforts. **Policies** are very specific, action-oriented statements that would help achieve the goals and objectives. Policy statements may provide justification to revise or draft new ordinances, regulations, or programs.



### Vision

Growth and development in Sharon Township are consistent with the natural limitations of the land, the availability and provision of public services, the protection of the Township's natural resources, green infrastructure and rural character, as well as the protection of the natural resources and character of neighboring townships and villages and the green infrastructure of the watersheds in the Township.

## Goals, Objectives & Policies

The goals and objectives presented in this chapter are divided into these categories:

- Sustainability
- Green Infrastructure
- Farmland Preservation

**SUSTAINABILITY GOAL:** *Land use, preservation, and development meets the environmental, economic, and social needs of the present residents, businesses, and property owners without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*

### Sustainability Objectives:

1. Preserve the Township's natural resources and features through a coordinated future land use strategy and related regulations that permit reasonable use of land while prohibiting unnecessary destruction or loss of natural resources or features.
2. Prohibit public service improvements that will encourage excessive growth and development or encourage growth and development at a rate such that the Township cannot assure adequate public health, safety, and welfare. Planned residential densities must be maintained and not exceeded.
3. Prohibit the introduction or expansion of public sewer or water in areas not designated for growth except where the intensity of existing development requires such services, or where the public health, safety, or welfare is at risk.
4. Guide development into areas where public facilities and services can accommodate growth and increased development, and where the provision or expansion of public facilities is cost-effective.
5. Maintain a transportation network throughout the Township that moves vehicular and nonmotorized traffic in a safe and efficient fashion, coordinated with the planned future land use pattern.
6. Discourage high traffic generating land uses and development patterns along road segments until such roads are improved to accommodate the development.
7. Maintain and improve public facilities and services in coordination with the Township's planned future land use pattern and to assure public health, safety, and welfare, in a cost-effective manner.
8. Encourage innovative land development that incorporates the preservation of green infrastructure, open spaces, and the Township's rural character.
9. Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural features, and/or man-made landscape buffers to screen or mitigate adverse impacts.



10. Encourage the maintenance of a structurally sound housing stock, and the rehabilitation or removal of blighted structures and yard areas.
11. Accommodate new residential development in a manner that recognizes the Township's natural and cultural constraints; preserves its overall rural character and natural resources; and accommodates a range of densities and lifestyles. Residential densities should be based, in part, on land capacity including such factors as potable water, soil conditions, and road infrastructure and should not exceed the capacity of public services and/or the limitations of natural conditions.
12. Continue to provide opportunities for home-based occupations within residential dwellings but under conditions that support the residential character, appearance, and quality of life experienced by surrounding residential properties and neighborhoods.
13. Provide opportunities for limited expansion of commercial and industrial uses that minimize negative effects upon adjacent land uses, respond to the predominant rural and agricultural character of the community, and are compatible with available public services and infrastructure.
14. Cluster commercial and industrial land uses to appropriate locations, considering the constraints and opportunities of the Township's natural features, such as topography and soils, and the availability of public facilities and services. Do not permit those uses to indiscriminately encroach into residential and agricultural areas, recognizing M-52 as a potential location of limited, new commercial and industrial development.
15. Limit commercial uses to those that primarily address the day-to-day service needs of the local population.
16. Promote the limited development of light industrial uses in appropriate areas of the Township that generate little to no impact on the environment or adjacent land uses. Limit industrial uses to predominately assembly activities and similar "light" operations that do not require higher levels of public services, large truck traffic, or otherwise negatively affect nearby uses or the community as a whole.
17. Maintain and protect the historic and architectural resources in the Township.
18. Encourage adequate broadband access for Sharon Township residents, property owners and business owners.
19. Ensure long-term financial viability of the Township tax base while preserving farmland, natural features, and green infrastructure.
20. Maintain meaningful communication with area municipalities and county agencies to discuss contemporary planning issues, need of local and area-wide public facilities and services, and alternative strategies for mutually improving local public services and land use conditions.
21. Provide regular and numerous opportunities for public input and education on growth and development issues facing the Township, including community-wide forums on agricultural and other land use issues.

22. Provide residents and prospective developers with information about the Township's planning goals, objectives, and policies, and encourage communication between local officials and prospective developers, to facilitate the type and character of development that is appropriate for Sharon Township.

Sustainability Policies:

- I. Review zoning regulations by the Planning Commission at a dedicated meeting at least every two years, and revise accordingly, to assure that permitted growth and development areas are coordinated with the planned land use pattern; authorized uses within each zoning district support the intent of the district and this Plan and the Township's natural resources, rural character and green infrastructure are protected.
- II. Maintain low-density housing (minimum 10-acre lots) as the principal housing option in recognition of natural and cultural constraints including ground water vulnerability, wetlands, topography, and limited road infrastructure.
- III. Limit higher density residential development to areas that have adequate access to improved road and improved public services, such as those near the Village of Manchester.
- IV. Discourage strip residential development along the frontage of existing state and county roads to minimize traffic safety hazards, the "land-locking" of interior acreage, and the loss of rural character.
- V. Update zoning to assure that new commercial and industrial land uses are in scale and character with surrounding land uses and the Township as a whole, including such features as building size and height, setbacks, and open space areas.
- VI. Minimize the potential for traffic congestion, traffic hazards, and loss of rural character along road corridors, by limitations on the number, size and shape of new land divisions and road access, and the discouragement of "strip" development.
- VII. Maintain communication, and work in conjunction with the Washtenaw County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation to address road and bridge issues including long-range planning, maintenance, curb cuts, and safe access, such as service drives and shared driveways.
- VIII. Maintain current police, fire and rescue contracts with public agencies and adjacent communities as long as they adequately serve Township residents and businesses.
- IX. Discourage development that will threaten the Township's ability to deliver emergency services in a cost-effective manner. The introduction of public sewer and water , and the expansion of future services areas should only occur in coordination with existing or planned development areas.

- X. Prioritize public service improvements that are coordinated with designated growth and development areas.
- XI. Continually monitor local attitudes toward the acquisition of public land for recreational facilities or other public facilities and take appropriate planning and capital improvement actions to acquire and development such land should a demonstrated need arise.
- XII. Maintain regular meaningful communication with adjoining municipalities and regional agencies to discuss and investigate needs of public facilities and services, opportunities for new or additional shared facilities and services, and alternative strategies for improving local public services, including contracted services, shared services, and Township-operated services.
- XIII. Coordinate inventory activities with the Washtenaw County Historical Commission, Michigan Bureau of History, and the historical societies of Manchester and Chelsea.
- XIV. Support and promote Washtenaw County Historic Preservation programs such as the Heritage Foodways Story Map and the Washtenaw County Historic Barns Tour Story Map.
- XV. Encourage owners of eligible historic structures and sites apply for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL:** *preserve, protect, and enhance the green infrastructure of the Township and the watersheds within its borders including the integrity of the interconnected network of natural areas, wildlife habitats, riparian corridors, and places of biological diversity.*

**Green Infrastructure Objectives:**

- 1. Promote an interconnected green infrastructure system of natural environmental corridors, including streams, wetlands, woodlands, and open fields.
- 2. Encourage development that actively preserves open spaces.
- 3. Assure that development does not increase air, noise, land, and water pollution, or degrade land and water resource environments, including groundwater.
- 4. Limit development intensity in environmentally sensitive areas, particularly the hubs, sites, links, and special features shown on the Green Infrastructure Map.
- 5. Recognize the special environmental resources and ecosystems and associated development constraints of the green infrastructure hubs of the Mill Creek Headwaters, Sharon Hollow, and the Sharon Short Hills and manage land use intensity, development density and site development practices to protect the environmental integrity of these area.

6. Recognize the high infiltration rates of local soils and the groundwater's vulnerability to contamination and minimize negative effects upon this resource by appropriate development densities and site development practices.
7. Limit commercial and industrial uses to those places with public services and do not cause degradation of green infrastructure of natural features.
8. Maintain and preserve land identified as suitable for mineral extraction of the production of mineral deposits, including but not limited to sand and gravel. Allow development of these resources only in a manner compatible with the Township's environment, green infrastructure, and character.

Green Infrastructure Policies:

- I. Incorporate preservation of on-site woodlands, wetlands, and fields with policies such as conservation easements, land trusts and clustered development into Township land use regulations.
- II. Update proposed development review standards to assess potential impact upon wetlands, woodlands, other natural resource areas and green infrastructure.
- III. Partner with public and private land trusts' efforts to permanently protect open spaces and natural resources of the Township that are part of the green infrastructure network.
- IV. Develop driveway standards to assure emergency vehicle access and which minimize environmental degradation in environmentally sensitive areas.
- V. Encourage and promote connections for environmentally friendly agricultural practices in green infrastructure areas, such as Farmer Led Conservation Group, Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) and the Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS).
- VI. Limit mineral extraction to areas that meets, at a minimum, the following criteria:
  - a. Are a source for sand and/or gravel;
  - b. Are in an area(s) of large land parcels, such as 40 acres or larger;
  - c. Are in close proximity to an all-season road that may be used as a haul route or, alternatively, located in close proximity to a hard surface road that may be upgraded and used as a haul route;
  - d. Are located to maximize distance from large concentrations of residences; and
  - e. Do not contain environmentally sensitive and/or endangered species of plants and/or animals, irreplaceable natural features and are not wetlands.

- VII. Maintain provisions for mineral extraction including sand and gravel within the Zoning Ordinance and Mineral Extraction Ordinance.

**FARMLAND PRESERVATION GOAL:** *Encourage The continuation of local farming operations and the long-term protection of farmland resources.*

**Farmland Preservation Objectives:**

1. Protect areas considered appropriate for farming and implement zoning provisions that complement and sustain local farming interests.
2. Minimize conflicts and nuisance problems (destruction of crops, complaints about legitimate day-to-day farming operations, etc.) in designated agricultural areas by limiting the encroachment of incompatible land uses.
3. Discourage agriculturally designated areas from evolving into residential growth zones by continuing limitations on development densities and encouraging cluster development.
4. To the extent that low-density residential development occurs in agricultural areas, continue opportunities for the development to be compact, or clustered on just a small portion of the undeveloped parcel, and discourage the wasteful consumption of farmland acreage for each dwelling site.
5. Support Part 861, Farmland and Open Space Preservation, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994, as amended, (formerly known as the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, PA 116 of 1974, as amended).
6. Support regional and state efforts to establish purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR) programs as a means of allowing a farmer to continue farming operations while receiving a reasonable financial return on the development potential of farmland property.
7. Partner with public and private land trusts' efforts to permanently protect the open spaces and natural resources of the Township.

**Farmland Preservation Policies:**

- I. In addition to providing clustering opportunities, consider other innovation zoning techniques to retain and preserve farmland resources and agricultural activities.
- II. Regularly update zoning provisions to allow accessory, on-farm activities to supplement farm operations incomes.
- III. Pursue zoning and other measures designed to facilitate agricultural support services including outlets for feed, seed, farm equipment sales and repair, and similar services where not environmentally threatening.

## **Chapter 4 – Future Land Use Strategy**

### **Introduction**

Sharon Township's principal planning components are embodied in the Plan's Future Land Use Strategy, as discussed in this Chapter. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies the desired pattern of land use and development throughout the Township.

The Future Land Use Strategy consists of policies regarding future land and development in the Township. Implementation of these policies rests with the regulatory tools of the Township — most importantly the Sharon Township Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is the primary implementation tool of the Plan. It generally regulates the type, location, bulk, and intensity of land development throughout the Township.

The Township may also adopt other supporting regulatory tools to further the implementation of the policies of the Plan. Land division and private road regulations are important tools to implement the Plan and Future Land Use Strategy. Land division regulations are intended to assure efficient land division patterns, the avoidance of non-buildable lots, and adequate public access to public roads. Private road regulations are intended to provide opportunities for road circulation networks restricted from general public use, in response to the local housing market. At the same time, these regulations assure such roads are built and maintained to minimum public health, safety, and welfare standards. Related ordinances, such as the Mineral Extraction Ordinance, and a capital improvement program, may, from time to time, be adopted or amended to carry out this Plan.

### **Overview of the Future Land Use Strategy**

The Future Land Use Strategy establishes the planned future land use pattern for the next 10 to 20 years. It calls for a land use pattern characterized predominantly by agricultural and low-density residential development, and natural open spaces. Opportunities for new higher density residential development are limited to areas near Manchester. Future commercial and industrial development is primarily limited to segments of the southern half of M-52. However, no new land uses should be established, or land rezoned, unless adequate public facilities and services are available to meet the needs of the proposed uses and such development does not outpace the Township's ability to effectively manage the rate of development and insure public health, safety, and welfare.

The foundation of the Future Land Use Strategy is based on the vision, goals and objectives presented in Chapter 3. It is based upon an analysis of the Township's natural and cultural characteristics including community attitudes, existing roadway network, soil conditions, existing and nearby public infrastructure, and environmentally sensitive areas. The opportunities and constraints presented by these characteristics were evaluated within the context of the vision, goals, and objectives in Chapter 3 to arrive at a planned future land use pattern.

## Land Use Areas

The Future Land Use Strategy divides the Township into “areas” and identifies the predominant land use pattern planned for each. These land use areas collectively form the planned future land use pattern in the Township. These areas are divided as follows:

- ❖ Agricultural
- ❖ Resource Conservation
  - Agricultural Preservation Overlay
- ❖ Floodplains
- ❖ Residential
- ❖ Mobile Home Park
- ❖ Commercial
- ❖ Industrial
- ❖ Mineral extraction

The Plan is not intended to identify each individual land use that should be permitted in each of these areas. Instead, it makes broad recommendations regarding the dominant land use(s) to be accommodated in each area. Specific permitted land uses will be determined by the zoning provisions of the Township, based upon considerations of compatibility. There may be certain existing land uses that do not fit in with the planned future land use pattern for the area in which they are located. These discrepancies are not be necessarily a lack of Township support for the continuation of such uses. Updates to the Township's Zoning Ordinance will specify the full scope of uses permitted within in each area of the Township.

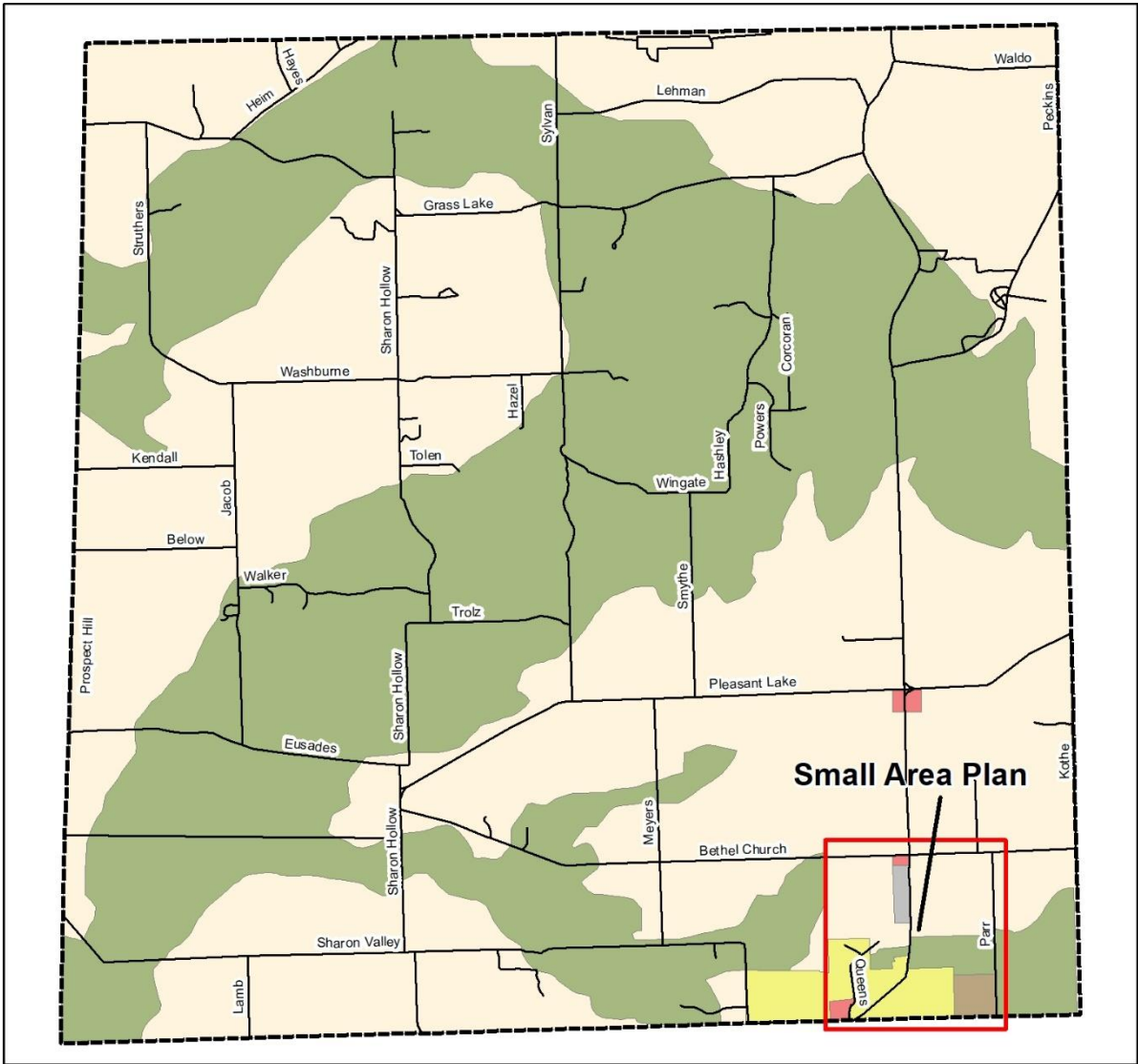
The approximate limits of these areas are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map on the following page.

### ***Agricultural***

Areas designated as Agriculture account for most of the Township and nearly all lands currently farmed. This designation is intended to encourage the long-term protection of the farmland resources and provide opportunities for low-density residential development that preserves the community's overall rural character, natural resources, and open spaces.

This Plan recognizes that farming plays an important role in the history and character of Sharon Township, contributes important food and fiber to local and regional populations, and is an important source of income. The Strategy encourages the continuation of all current farming activities as well as the introduction of new farming activities. All typical farming activities, including the raising of crops, the use of stables, silos, and barns are encouraged provided that they meet the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development requirements for Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices.





## Future Land Use

### Future Land Use

 Agriculture	 Mobile Home Park
 Commercial	 Residential
 Industrial	 Resource Conservation

### Sharon Township Washtenaw County



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Source: Jackson and Washtenaw County GIS  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates  
May 2020



Lands designated as Agriculture are largely characterized by one or more conditions that support their long-term agricultural economic viability including: 1) classification by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "prime farmland"; 2) minimum parcel sizes of 40 acres; 3) limited encroachment by non-agricultural land uses; 4) enrollment in the P.A. 116<sup>1</sup> Farmland and Open Space Protection Program; 5) enrollment or participation in state or federal agriculture preservation programs; and 6) adjacency to other farmland parcels.

Agricultural operations are intended to be the primary use of Agriculture properties. Lands designated as Agriculture are not intended to serve as significant residential growth zones. At the same time, this Plan recognizes that farming, as an industry, is facing challenges due to several factors, including economic conditions. The Plan also recognizes that the ability of a farm owner to split off residential lots has certain merits and a place within the Township. It is the intent of the Strategy to provide opportunities for residential development on Agriculture designated lands, but that such development be low density in support of the preservation of farmland resources, management of growth and development, and the preservation of important natural resources, open spaces, rural character, and road safety.

Maximum development densities of one dwelling per ten or more acres are recommended. This policy should not be interpreted as a proposal for only large lot zoning (such as 10-acre parcels) across the Township. In fact, this form of development can increase the rate at which farmland is converted to alternative uses, and thus undermine the environmental and rural character protection efforts. To provide landowners with increased flexibility and minimize the consumption of farmland acreage for individual dwellings, opportunities for the creation of divisions less than ten acres in size are possible through "Open Space Community Developments" ("*clustering*").

The Strategy strongly supports special development measures to protect the integrity of the Township's roadway network, rural character, and farmland and/or other natural resources as part of the development process. Key measures include "clustering" and the use of interior roads.

- ❖ "Clustering" is the creation of new building lots limited to one or several portions of the project parcel, and designation of the balance and the remaining portion of the parcel as open space by way of conservation easements, deed restrictions, or similar tools.
- ❖ Interior roads allow for the creation of new building lots that gain access by way of a new road into the interior of the development project, rather than each lot having direct access to the existing county road network in a strip development manner.

More traditional strip residential development along the Township's major roads is illustrated in Example A. This is the easiest form of development, but it negatively affects public safety because of the many driveways directly accessing the roads and can affect the rural character of the Township. Example B illustrates the use of "clustering" with one internal road that

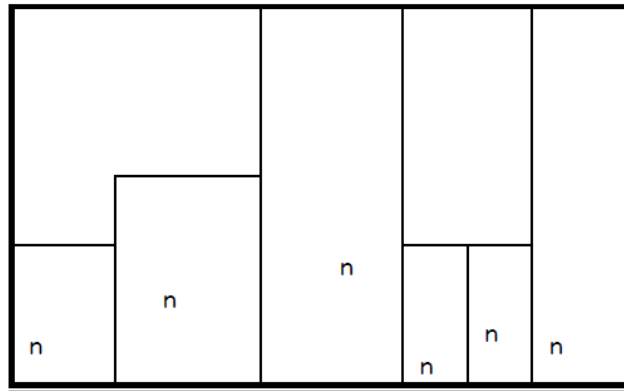
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<sup>1</sup> "P.A. 116" is a conventional reference. It is replaced by Part 361, Farmland and Open Space Preservation, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994, as amended.

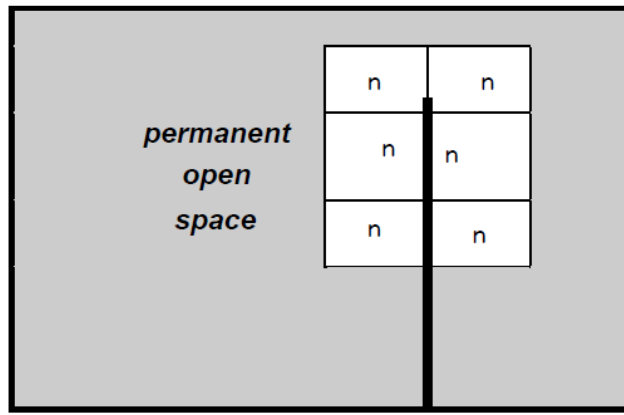
improves public safety along the road and more effectively preserves the existing character of the community, farmland resources, and other natural resource areas.

The Sharon Township Zoning Ordinance offers a Cluster Development option, which has not been used as of 2020. The process is more cumbersome and the fees more expensive than a typical strip development or subdivision of 10-acre lots. The Planning Commission, before 2025, plans to examine ways to change the cluster development option to make it more appealing. As part of that process, the Planning Commission will consult with Sharon Township farmers about what their needs and expectations are for selling or developing their property.

***Example A (Strip Development)***



***Example B (Clustering and Interior Roads)***



Potential new residents in the Agriculture area should expect that the traditional smells, noises, pesticide applications, and generally recognized agricultural activities associated with responsible farming will continue long-term. The Township does not consider such activities and operations as nuisances. Local developers and real estate agents should disclose this information to prospective buyers of land in Agriculture areas.

### ***Agricultural Preservation Overlay***

Sharon Township has four large areas of actively farmed land contained within the township that are suitable for Agricultural Preservation, as shown on the Agriculture Preservation Map on the following page. However, the township's farmland is under pressure for residential development. Intrusion of residences on scattered lots would quickly destroy the sustainability of these areas for farming operations. Within these areas, agricultural preservation will be a priority.

These regions were selected because of suitable soils and farmland characteristics.

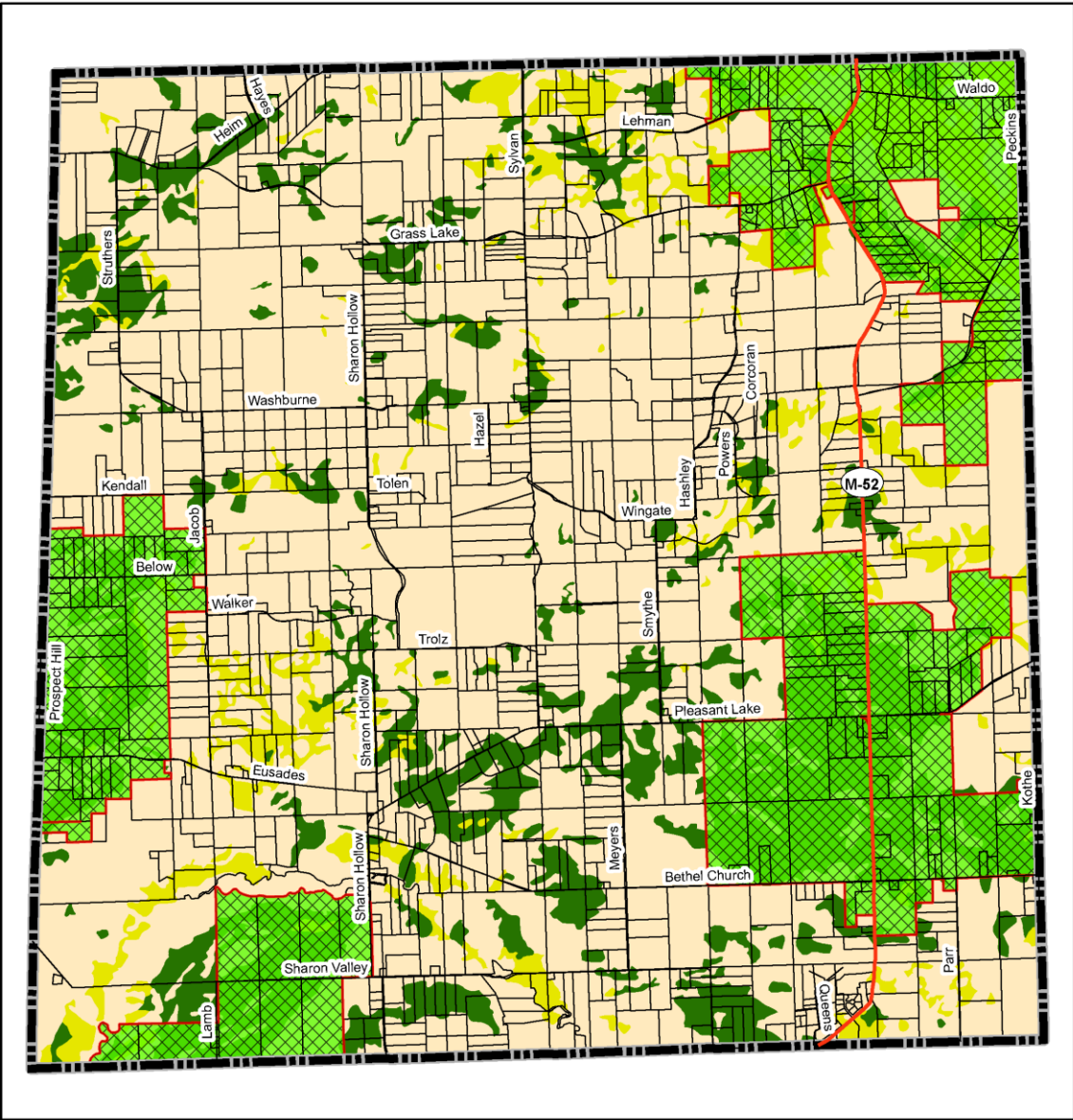
- A. The lands in the Agricultural Preservation Areas have all the characteristics deemed necessary for long term agricultural use, namely:
  - 1. The parcels of land within each of the 4 areas are contiguous.
  - 2. Nearly all the parcels in the areas are zoned A-1, Agriculture; the remainder are zoned R-C, Resource Conservation.
  - 3. Most of the tillable land is currently farmed.
  - 4. Most of the designated areas do not have significant areas of natural features.
  - 5. These four (4) areas contain the township's prime agricultural soils.

### ***Resource Conservation and Floodplains***

The Future Land Use Strategy designates a significant portion of the Township as Resource Conservation, and a significantly lesser amount as Floodplains. The Resource Conservation area is characterized by an array of conditions that require a strong conservation theme. These lands include abundant and sensitive natural resources including woodlands, wetlands, and steep slopes. The Floodplains area includes certain lands along the River Raisin that are subject to flooding and consist nearly entirely of wetlands. In addition to presenting severe limitations to development, these resources provide important environmental benefits including habitats for wildlife, flood control, groundwater recharge and discharge, and surface water purification. In addition, they provide special opportunities for passive recreation and contribute to the Township's overall rural character.

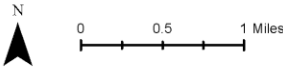
Further, these lands pose special environmental risks. Most of the land designated Resource Conservation or Floodplains is characterized by soils that present severe limitations to on-site sewage disposal. Areas that are most susceptible to groundwater contamination are also identified as Resource Conservation.

Because of the critical roles these resources play and the severe limitations they present to development, the Resource Conservation and Floodplains designation provides for their protection and long-term viability by limiting the introduction and intensity of new land uses that are not of a similar character. Development in close proximity to these sensitive resources will threaten their quantity and quality. Future use and development of land designated Resource Conservation and Floodplains should be limited to open space and natural resource-based land uses such as farming and wildlife management, and low-density residential development (excluding in the Floodplains area). Considering the sensitive environmental character of these lands, large concentrated livestock operations are strongly discouraged.



**Agricultural Preservation Area**


- Legend**
-  Agriculture Preservation Area
  -  Prime Farmland
  -  Prime Farmland if drained



Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

*Soil and Parcel  
from Washtenaw County GIS*

May 8, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Maximum residential development densities in areas designated Resource Conservation or Floodplain should not exceed one dwelling per ten acres. Land uses requiring state and/or federal permits (especially for wetland or floodplain alterations) should not receive final Township approval until satisfactory evidence has been submitted verifying the acquisition of all necessary permits. Where only a portion of a single parcel falls within a Resource Conservation designated area, future development should occur on only those portions that are not characterized by such environmental limitations.

While the geographic limits of lands designated as Resource Conservation or Floodplains on the Future Land Use Map include primarily wetland areas of a large nature, it is a basic tenant of the Future Land Use Strategy that wetland areas of all sizes be preserved and protected from the negative effects of land development.

### ***Residential***

Areas designated as Residential are intended to provide opportunities for residential development of a more suburban character. These lands include both existing residential development of a suburban character as well as vacant land where new development of similar character is considered appropriate.

The Residential area is located along the Township's southern periphery, just north of the Village of Manchester. This location is based on several supporting factors including its proximity to M-52, fire protection services, Manchester retail areas, and local schools. Future extension of public sewer or water is likely to come from the Village of Manchester, and the Residential area is strategically positioned to benefit from such an extension.

Development density of approximately one dwelling unit per one acre is considered appropriate in the Residential area provided adequate potable water and on-site sewage disposal exists. Higher density is considered reasonable only where public sewer is provided. Development density approaching four or more dwellings per acre, including multiple family dwellings, may be reasonable uses in the Residential area but only with the presence of public sewer and after special review proceedings to determine if such a project is appropriate on the proposed property. Factors such as available infrastructure, public services, the surrounding land use pattern, and the specific characteristics of the site should be considered.

### ***Mobile Home Park***

Manufactured housing complexes, or mobile home parks, provides certain benefits to a community and future residents. Most particularly, they allow growth to be accommodated in a compact area rather than encroaching into more agricultural and rural areas. Manufactured housing complexes can provide attractive residential environments at more affordable prices, and permit ownership of a home without the need to maintain large yard areas. These benefits can be particularly attractive for individuals who are less mobile or possibly frail, do not have the time or interest in maintaining a conventional residence, and/or do not have or care to spend the financial resources necessary today to own a more traditional home and lot. Yet Sharon Township presents unique challenges in the identification of future locations for mobile home park development. There is no existing higher density node in the Township to direct such developments; the road network is largely unpaved except for several key thoroughfares; there is no public sewer or water; and the Township relies on other governmental units to provide police and fire protection.

Still, the Township is interested in providing varied housing opportunities for its current and future residents. For these reasons, the Future Land Use Strategy identifies 40 acres as a Mobile Home Park area at the northwest corner of Parr Road and the Township's southern border. This location benefits from a number of factors including its proximity to: 1) the urban character of the Village of Manchester; 2) the Village's retail area; 3) police and fire protection services; 4) existing mobile home development; 5) public school and associated recreation facilities; and 6) potential public sewer and/or water extension. This location is within the River Raisin watershed. As compared with the Huron River, the River Raisin is less prone to flooding and exhibits considerably lower phosphorous levels.

However, any future manufactured housing development should be based upon a demonstrated need for such housing in this regional area. Further, such development should be of such scale so as to be compatible with the limited population base and public services of the Township, and the Township's rural and environmentally sensitive character.

### **Commercial**

Commercial development typically requires a higher level of road infrastructure, access, visibility, and, in many cases, public services. These factors directly affect the identification of future commercial areas in the Township along with other concerns including minimizing conflicts between existing and proposed land uses and encouraging compact development. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies three particular locations where commercial development is considered appropriate — the southwest and southeast corners of Pleasant Lake Road and M-52, the southwest area of the Bethel Church Road and M-52 intersection, and the northwest area of M-52's crossing of the Township's southern border. The Township projects this area to be more than adequate to meet the commercial needs of the Township over the planning horizon,

These locations are characterized by excellent access, visibility, and existing commercial uses. M-52 is the most heavily traveled road in the Township, and Pleasant Lake Road is the primary thoroughfare providing east-west movement. These areas are conveniently located to address some of the day-to-day consumer needs of area residents.

Future commercial development should fit harmoniously in the Sharon Township fabric. Recognition of its limited public services and population base, and its extensive and vulnerable natural resources is necessary. Accordingly, commercial uses should cater to the consumer needs of the local population and travelers along M-52. Commercial uses that draw from a regional market and are typically characterized by comparatively large buildings, large parking areas, and high traffic volume are not considered appropriate in the Township at this time. Limitations on signage, building heights, size, bulk, and related architectural qualities should be established to insure compatibility of new commercial uses with the desired character of the surrounding areas.

However, no development should occur unless public sewer and water are available, or adequate measures are provided for on-site sewage disposal and potable water. New commercial uses that are adjacent to residential property should be permitted only if adequate buffer yards and screening are provided to minimize negative impacts.



### **Industrial**

Like commercial development, industrial uses frequently require higher levels of road infrastructure, access, and public services, these factors directly affect appropriate locations. Other factors include minimizing conflicts between existing and proposed land uses and encouraging compact development. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies a single industrial node — west of M-52 immediately south of the Bethel Church Road commercial area. The Township projects this area to be more than adequate to meet the industrial needs of the Township over the planning horizon.

The limited public services available in the Township and its sensitive environmental resources, including the increased susceptibility of groundwater contamination, dictate that future industrial uses be of comparatively limited intensity. Uses characterized by the manufacture of products from raw materials, the generation of heightened levels of wastes, reliance on heavy freight transport, and similar operational characteristics are strongly discouraged. The light industrial development that does evolve in the Township should complement the existing character of the community with adequate provisions for environmental protection, open spaces, screening, and related site development features.

### **Mineral Extraction**

The Township recognizes that one of its special resources is its mineral deposits, including sand and gravel. These deposits are useful and necessary in many construction and manufacturing industries. However, the extraction of these deposits can result in considerable environmental damage if not properly managed during operations, and properly reclaimed following the termination of extractive operations. In recognition of these mineral deposits, the Mineral Extraction Ordinance establishes a basis for permitting and regulating the orderly extraction, processing, and utilization of such mineral deposits. All extraction operations must incorporate reclamation and restoration of extraction and processing sites to a useful, environmentally stable condition. Reclamation after the useful life of the resource deposit will provide for the ultimate conversion of extraction areas to appropriate land uses and zoning categories consistent with Sharon Township's long range planning objectives.

## **Phased Zoning**

This Plan recommends the rezoning of vacant land to a more intensive zoning district in a phased or incremental manner. For example, while the Plan may identify township areas that may be appropriate to accommodate higher density residential development, the Plan does not recommend “across the board” or immediate rezoning of such vacant land. The Plan recommends that rezoning to more intensive use districts occur on a case-by-case basis to ensure the Township can meet any increased public service demands, to manage township-wide growth and development, to assure that each rezoning is in response to a demonstrated need, and to minimize unnecessary hardships upon the landowner as a result of property assessments and/or resulting nonconforming uses and structures.

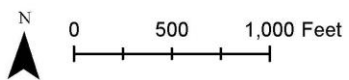
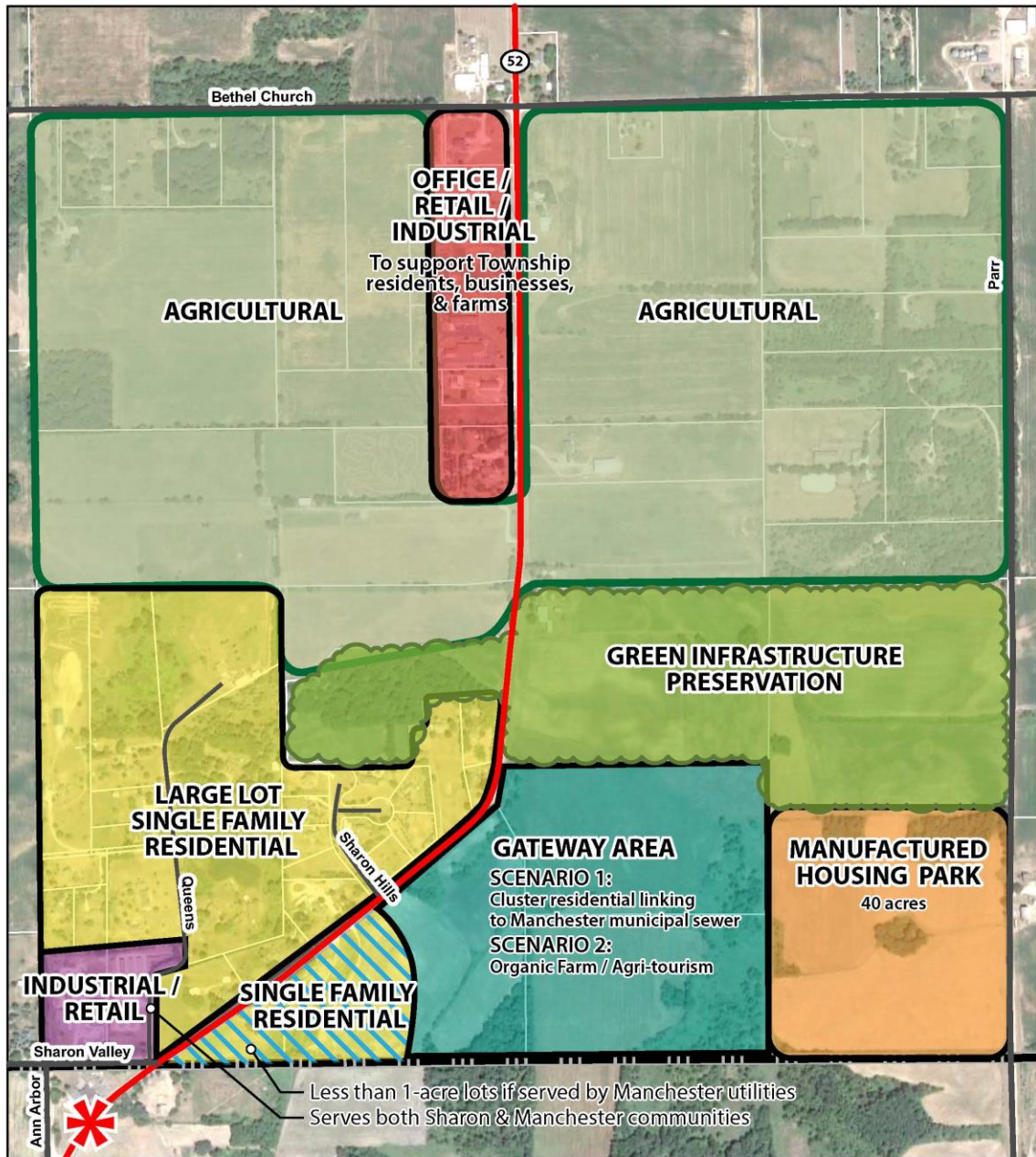
## **Small Area Plan**

For the 2020 update, the Township leadership requested special attention be paid to an area in the southeast corner of Sharon Township. This area is unique for the following reasons: it

borders the Village of Manchester, M-52 cuts through the middle of the area, a concentration of natural features bisects the area and the Township owns a large, land-locked parcel. The Township ownership of a key property in the area created a unique opportunity to create a gateway to the Township, showcasing its rural character, while capitalizing on the available utilities from the Village of Manchester.

The Small Area Plan on the next page has eight land use categories, each based on the existing conditions and opportunities unique to those properties within the small area:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Agriculture:                       | Like the Agriculture Future Land Use, these areas on current farm operations adjacent to one another. A good portion of these properties are in the Agricultural Preservation area.   |
| Green Infrastructure Preservation: | These areas, while mostly agricultural in use, have wetlands and woodlands that are part of the green infrastructure of the area, as well as the ground water recharge area for the River Raisin watershed. These areas are planned for Resource Conservation. Clustering to preserve natural features should be encouraged for any development of these areas. |
| Large Lot Single-Family:           | These areas are like the Residential future land use designation, with a 1-acre minimum lot size, keeping in context with the existing homes in the area. These properties have suitable soils for septic systems.  |
| Office/Retail/Industrial:          | This area is home to a cluster of existing businesses on the west side of M-52, south of Bethel Church. Future development in this area should be limited to businesses that provide good, services or jobs to primarily Township residents. Depending on the scope of the business, either Business or Industrial future land use designations could apply.    |
| Industrial/Retail:                 | This area has businesses that serve both Sharon Township and the Manchester community. Both Business and Industrial future land use designations are appropriate but the intensity of new uses should match the character and capacity of the utilities in the area. A shared agreement on extending Manchester utilities to this area could be considered.     |
| Single-family residential:         | This area has poor soils for septic systems and abut the Village of Manchester. Designated as residential, this area could be developed at a higher density than one house per acre, if per mutual agreement with Sharon Township, utilities could be extended from Manchester.   |



\* = Gateway to Manchester

## Small Area Plan

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Source: Washtenaw County GIS  
Google Aerials

May 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



**Gateway Area :**

In this area, Sharon Township owns 25-acre landlocked parcel adjacent to the border with the Village of Manchester. Wetlands and ground water recharge areas on these properties should be preserved and protected. Two scenarios are envisioned for this area. One, a clustered single-family residential development that preserves the rural view as a gateway into Sharon Township. Municipal utilities from Manchester could be extended under a mutual agreement with the Township. Second, this area could become an organic farm or agritourism site, with limited processing such as vineyard.

### Zoning Plan

Per the requirements section 33 (2) (d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), this section describes the relationship between land use categories on the Future Land Use Map and the zoning districts in the Township. The table below shows future land use categories and the corresponding zoning districts for which they are intended.

Future Land Use Category	Zoning District (s)	Notes
Agricultural	A-1 Agriculture PUD Planned Unit Development	
Commercial	C-1 Retail Commercial C-2 Office Commercial PUD Planned Unit Development	
Floodplains	RC Resource Conservation PUD Planned Unit Development	Little to no development should take place in these areas, although floodplains may be included in cluster developments or developments with appropriate setbacks.
Industrial	I-1 Light Industrial PUD Planned Unit Development	
Mobile Home Park	R-MHC Manufactured Housing Community	
Residential	R-1 Low Density Residential R-2 Medium Density Residential R-3 High Density Residential R-MF Multi-Family Residential PUD Planned Unit Development	R-3 and R-MF Districts not to be established except upon evidence of public sewer availability.
Resource Conservation	RC Resource Conservation PUD Planned Unit Development	Development should be clustered to preserve sensitive natural features in this district.

Development in any of the above future land use districts shall take place in accordance with the phased zoning principles outlined above and in the presence of adequate infrastructure (including roads, water, and sewer service where applicable).

## **Chapter 5 – Coordinated Public Services**

### **Introduction**

Chapter Four described the planned pattern of land use throughout the Township. Since the character and feasibility of land use and development is directly influenced by the extent to which public services are available, special attention should be directed to how public service improvements occur in the Township. An important principle of the Future Land Use Strategy is that no new development should occur in the Township unless public services are adequate to meet the needs of that new development. Similarly, public service improvements, and the increased development that may result from such improvements, should not jeopardize the Township's interest in managing growth and development. Thus, it is very important that future public service improvements be coordinated with the planned pattern of future land use.

### **Guidelines**

As new residential and nonresidential land uses are introduced in the Township, demands upon the road network will increase. The additional residential development anticipated in this Plan, despite its overall low density, will result in higher traffic levels. This increased traffic may lessen the level of service along some of the roads, particularly the Township's unpaved road segments. Conversely, road improvements may well attract new development which will place additional demands on the road network.

Excepting emergency conditions, such as an impassable road, the functional classification of roads should dictate the priority of improvements when all other conditions are generally equal. Priority improvements should be assigned to county primary roads, particularly those segments serving the Residential area on the Future Land Use Map, followed by county local roads serving the Agricultural areas. Paving of existing gravel roads should be discouraged except where there is broad support by residents along the road segment and adequate financial resources.

There is no public sewer or water in Sharon Township. Township residents rely upon septic systems for sewage disposal. Improperly operating septic systems can contaminate potable groundwater resources, ponds, and streams. This poses a public health threat. As land development densities increase, so does the need for public sewer and water. Industrial, commercial, and higher density residential land uses generally have greater sewage disposal and potable water needs. Failure to provide adequate sewer and water facilities to these land uses can lead to severe health and environmental problems, while the premature provision of these services can lead to accelerated and unmanaged growth and development. Many of the Township soils present severe limitations to on-site sewage disposal and facilitate groundwater contamination. This condition highlights the critical relationship between land use, development intensities, and on-site sewage disposal and potable water.

All on-site sewage disposal and potable water facilities should be constructed and maintained in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Department and other applicable local, county, state, or federal agencies. Any future decision by the Township to provide or expand public sewer and/or water services should be

based on an in-depth analysis of all available options, including services provided by cooperative agreements with neighboring municipalities. Such services should be closely coordinated with the Future Land Use Strategy and should occur in a phased and incremental manner. An overly large geographic area should not be intensely developed at a rate beyond the Township's ability to effectively manage growth and development. Introducing public sewer service into Agricultural areas for reasons other than a serious health risk is not prudent and will undermine efforts to preserve farmland resources and responsibly guide development.

As buildings, parking lots and other impermeable surfaces associated with new development cover more of the Township's land surface, the quantity of stormwater runoff increases. The vegetated landscape that previously absorbed and slowed much of the water associated with storms is replaced by urban surfaces. Unless specific preventive measures are taken, this condition encourages flooding, soil erosion, sedimentation, and pollution of area water resources. Although these conditions originate from site-specific circumstances, their impact can extend to adjacent properties and to more regional areas including other communities within the same watershed.

Increased quantities of runoff, as a result of property development, should be detained on site, if necessary, to avoid placing excess demand on the capacity of the stormwater system. Proposed land uses should not be permitted if the level of service currently provided by existing stormwater management infrastructure and/or existing drainage patterns will be decreased unless necessary improvements to such infrastructure or natural drainage courses are first made. New and existing land uses should comply with all county, state, and federal regulations regarding stormwater management and soil erosion, including the regulations of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission.

As community growth and land development increases, so does the demand for emergency services. The Township must ensure adequate fire and police protection services are available to existing and future residents and property. To prevent emergency services deficiencies, the Township should continually monitor police and fire protection needs and service and explore the improvement of service levels. Considerations for improved services should include the expansion of joint services with neighboring municipalities, and the establishment of additional fire and police stations as service levels dictate.



## Appendix A – Cultural Features

### Geography

Sharon Township is in the west central region of Washtenaw County in the southeast area of Michigan. Located along the western county line, the Township abuts Jackson County to the west and is within seven miles of Lenawee County to the south. The Township has the traditional six-mile by six-mile congressional area typical of townships throughout the lower half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Surrounding townships are Sylvan to the north, Freedom to the east, Manchester to the south, and Norvell and Grass Lake (Jackson Co.) to the west.

Sharon Township is an agricultural community within an agriculturally dominated region. However, there are numerous small towns and settlement areas within ten miles. The closest, the Village of Manchester, is one-quarter mile south of the Township, covers approximately 1.5 square miles, and includes almost 2,000 persons. The City of Chelsea is three miles to the north along M-52, covers approximately 1.6 square miles, and includes approximately 5,300 persons. The nearest incorporated municipality approaching 100,000 persons or more is the city of Ann Arbor (population of approximately 120,000), 20 miles east. Approximate distances between Sharon Township and other major regional urban centers are:

- 1) Detroit, 55 miles east;
- 2) Toledo, 50 miles southeast;
- 3) Jackson, 15 miles west;
- 4) Battle Creek, 55 miles west; and
- 5) Lansing, 55 miles northwest.

Though the Township's activity patterns are meshed with those of the Village of Manchester and City of Chelsea, the Township is approximately midway between the cities of Jackson and Ann Arbor, and, with easy access to I-94, is less than an hour's drive to the Greater Detroit Area. The Township's location within the region makes the Township a desirable location for those seeking "town and country" living.

### Road Network

Interstate 94 and M-52 facilitate regional access to Sharon Township. I-94 travels in an east-west direction across Michigan and within three miles of the northern border of the Township. M-52 travels in a north-south direction through the eastern half of the Township. The M-52 interchange at I-94 facilitates easy access.

Sharon Township's roadway network contrasts with the typical grid pattern that characterizes most townships in most parts of Michigan, as shown on the Roads Map on the next page. The less than regular road pattern is, however, like that of neighboring communities and is a result of a number of factors including topographic and wetland limitations. These constraints



**Roads Map**

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

*Roads and Highway Data  
from Washtenaw County GIS*

February 21, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



have resulted in nearly one-half the amount of road construction compared with the typical rural township in southern Michigan. Except for several private roads and M-52, under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation, the roadway network is under the jurisdiction of the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC). M-52 is a State Trunkline.

In compliance with the requirements of Michigan Act 51 of 1951, the WCRC classifies all roads under its jurisdiction as either “primary” roads or “local” roads. Primary roads are considered the most critical in providing regional circulation throughout the County.

Public roads classified by the WCRC as “primary” are:

- ❖ Below Road
- ❖ Easudes Road, between Jacob and Sharon Hollow Roads
- ❖ Grass Lake Road
- ❖ Jacob Road, between Washburne and Easudes Road
- ❖ Pleasant Lake Road
- ❖ Sharon Hollow Road, south of Pleasant Lake Road
- ❖ Sharon Valley Road, west of Sharon Hollow Road
- ❖ Struthers Road, between Grass Lake and Washburne Roads
- ❖ Sylvan Road, north of Grass Lake Road

The classification of roads in the Township by the WCRC has important financial implications regarding maintenance and improvements. Under Michigan law, townships have no responsibility for funding public road improvements and maintenance. On the other hand, while County Road Commissions must maintain and improve primary roads at their expense, state law limits the participation of County Road Commissions to no more than 50% for improvements to local roads. In Michigan, local townships in most counties are actively involved in funding road improvements.

The WCRC periodically records traffic counts along heavier traveled road segments. The table below shows traffic counts at key intersections from 1995, 2005 and 2015.

Road Segment	Trips Per Day		
	1995	2005	2015
M-52, northbound from Pleasant Lake	5,192	N.A.	4,096
M-52, southbound from Pleasant Lake	5,849	N.A.	4,106
Pleasant Lake Road, west of M-52	2,569	3,148	1,391
Pleasant Lake Road, east of M-52	2,970	2,717	1,641
Bethel Church Road, west of Meyers	127	N.A.	N.A.
Grass Lake Road, west of M-52	1,019	1,137	N.A.

Most of the local road network is unpaved. The paved roads are limited to the Township’s principal circulation routes – M-52, Pleasant Lake Road, and parts of Grass Lake, Sharon Hollow, and Sharon Valley Roads. The Washtenaw County Road Commission has no plans currently to pave additional road segments in the Township.

## **Land Use & Development**

Sharon Township's overall land use pattern shows a comparatively low level of development and expansive areas of open spaces (see Land Use Map). The majority of the Township is farmland and, to a lesser degree, woodlands and wetlands. Less than 5% of the Township area is developed for residential, commercial, industrial, and/or related urban uses. A review of some of the more significant characteristics of land use and development in the Township follow. See the Sharon Township Zoning Map for existing zoning districts and their respective boundaries.

### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture accounts for approximately two-thirds of the acreage in Sharon Township. Of this acreage, the vast majority is used for crop production. Agricultural lands are located in nearly all areas of the Township except where precluded by woodland, wetland, and/or excessively sloped areas. Farming is most prevalent in the Township's southeast quarter and least visible in its central regions.

### ***Residential Development and Land Division***

The 2010 U.S. Census recorded 705 housing units in Sharon Township. The 705 housing units represents a 15.8% increase over the 609 units recorded by the 2000 Census. Nearly all housing units in the Township are single family detached dwellings and approximately 85% are owner-occupied. See "Housing Information" in Appendix C for data on building permits since 2010.

Residential development in Sharon Township is dominated by single-family dwellings on comparatively large parcels along the frontage of section-line roads. This reflects a combination of factors including the agricultural history of the community, local market conditions, and local zoning. Nearly 70% of parcels are ten acres or more and parcels of 40 to 160 acres or more account for approximately 57% of the acreage of the Township. There are several neighborhood developments.

### ***Commercial/Industrial Development***

Sharon Township has a handful of commercial and industrial establishments. The majority of such activities are located along the M-52 corridor in the southern half of the Township. Commercial and industrial businesses include a convenience store and service station, livestock auction yard, restaurant, hardware store, and a mini-storage facility. Most of the commercial sites in the Township cater to the day-to-day consumer needs of the local population and the M-52 traffic. Industrial uses are limited to a tooling shop, electronic assembly, a roofing contractor, and mineral extraction operations.

## **Community Services and Facilities**

### ***Local Government Administration***

A five-member Township Board governs Sharon Township. The Township Hall is located on Pleasant Lake Road and consists primarily of a large meeting room, office, and restroom. As with many rural communities, most of the day-to-day government administrative activities take place in the homes of the elected officials.

### ***Sewage Disposal and Potable Water***

There are no public sewer or water facilities in Sharon Township. Residents rely on private on-site septic drain fields for sewage disposal and private wells for potable water. The nearest public sewer and water system is in the Village of Manchester.

### ***Emergency Services***

The Michigan State Police and Washtenaw County Sheriff provide police protection services to Sharon Township on a per call basis. Response time for each call is based upon the availability of officers within the area.

Sharon Township currently contracts with the Manchester Township Fire Department for fire protection. The department is a paid, on-call fire department, operating from a single fire station located on S. Macomb Street. The majority of the calls to the Manchester Township Fire Department from Sharon Township residents are for medical reasons. Sharon Township pays for fire service with a dedicated fire millage.

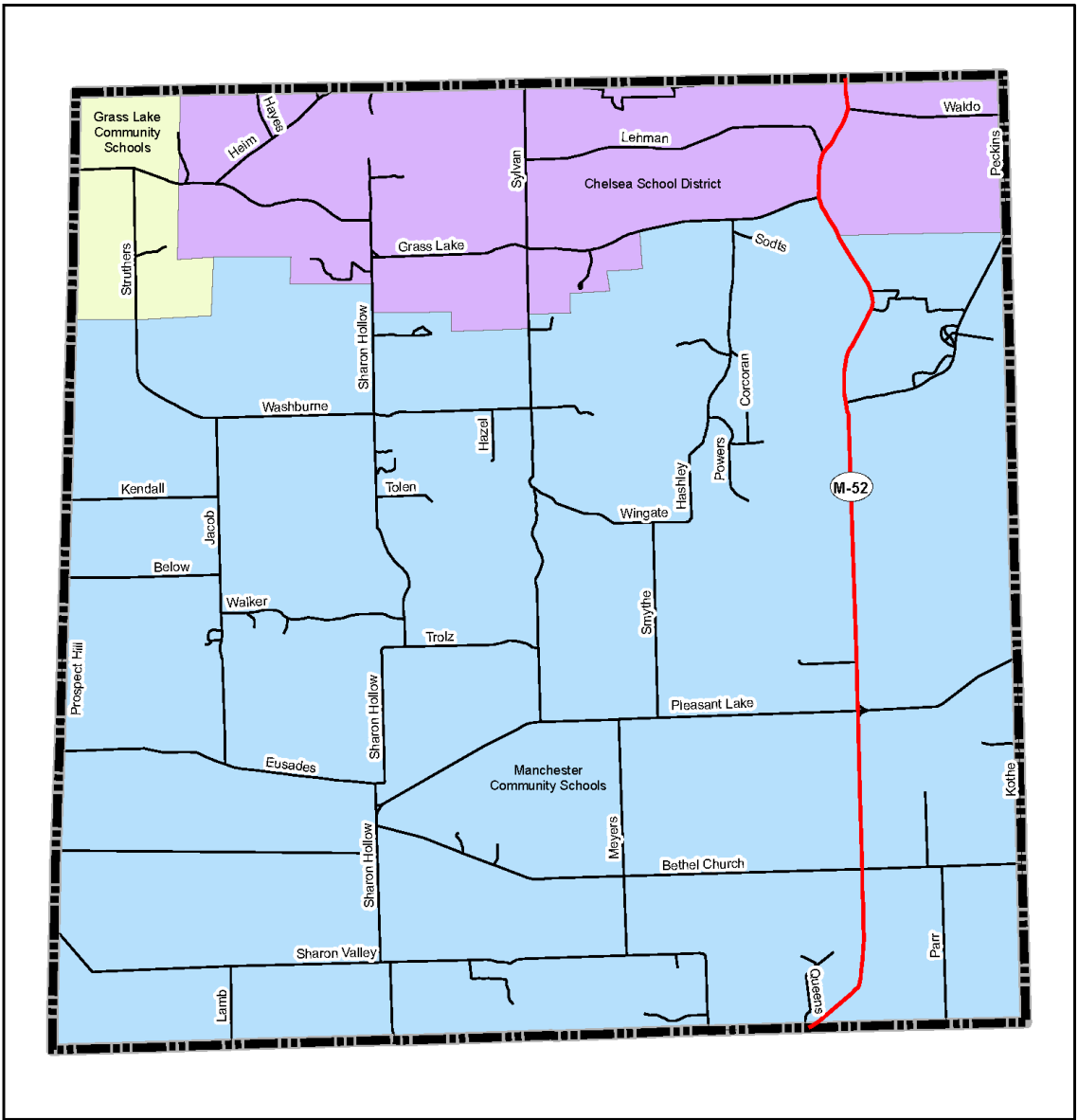
### ***Education***

Four public school districts serve Sharon Township (see School District Map on the following page). Nearly the entire township is served by Manchester Public Schools. Chelsea Public Schools serves most of the northern periphery of the Township. Grass Lake Community Schools and Napoleon Public Schools serve limited areas along the western periphery of the Township.

As of the 2019-20 school year, enrollment in the K-12 grades in the Manchester Public Schools was approximately 867 students. The district has one high/middle school (grades 7-12), one intermediate school (grades 5-6), one elementary school (K-4) and an early childhood learning center.

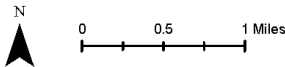
Chelsea Public Schools has one high school, one middle school, two elementary schools and an early childhood learning center. District enrollment in the 2019-2020 school year was 2,438 students.

In the 2019-2020 school year, Napoleon Community Schools had an enrollment of 1,326 students. The district has two high schools, one middle school, an elementary school, and a pre-school and child care center.



### School Districts

-  Chelsea School District
-  Grass Lake Community Schools
-  Manchester Community Schools



### School Districts Map

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

*School Districts and Roads Data  
from Washtenaw County GIS*

February 25, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



## Appendix B – Environmental Features

### Geology and Topography

During the Paleozoic era of geological history, Washtenaw County and the entire state were inundated by successive warm, shallow seas during which large amounts of sediment were deposited. These deposits were subsequently liquefied to form bedrock. Sharon Township sits upon bedrock composed of Marshall Sandstone and Coldwater Shale. The Marshall Sandstone formation predominantly underlies glacial deposits in Sections 1 through 11 and Section 18, while the Coldwater Shale formation underlies the glacial deposits in the remaining sections of the township.

The Ice Age brought four successive continental glaciers across the Great Lakes area. As these ice sheets moved southward from Canada, they scoured and abraded the surface of the land leaving behind deeper valleys and more rounded hilltops. The advancing glaciers carried large quantities of rock materials scraped and gouged from the surface of the land. As the glacier melted, these materials were deposited to form drift materials covering the bedrock below. The bedrock geology of Michigan can be generally described as bowl shaped in that the depth to the bedrock generally increases as one moves toward the center of the state. Depths to bedrock in portions of Michigan exceed 700 feet. The depth in Sharon Township generally ranges between 75 to 200 feet. The drift generally deepens in the southeast and central areas of the Township. The drift is characterized predominantly by coarse-textured material, including sand and gravel.

The topography of the Township can be described as level to very steep (see Natural Features Map). The northwest portion of the Township is comparatively flat while the southern regions are of a more rolling character. The central area of the Township, extending northeast to southeast exhibits grades as high as 40%. Referred to as Sharon Short Hills, this area resulted from glacial deposits in ridge formations.

Elevations across the Township range from approximately 900 feet to 1,117 feet above sea level. The lower elevations are evident in Section 34 and 36, while the higher elevations are in Section 9 and part of the Sharon Short Hills area.

The character of an area's geology and topography has bearing on development and land use planning. While hilly areas are frequently sought as housing sites because of their unique character, vistas, and frequently wooded nature, they also present obstacles to development including increased construction costs, slope failure, erosion and sedimentation, and decreased water quality and flood control. Land use planning guidelines recommend that development be generally discouraged in areas dominated by 12% - 18% slopes, and severely limited in steeper areas.

### Soils

According to the Soil Survey of Washtenaw County, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washtenaw County exhibits 12 general soil associations. Four of these associations are found in Sharon Township and these associations comprise primarily loam, sandy loam, and loamy sand soils. "Soil associations" refer to the classification of broad patterns of soils,



topography, and drainage. A soil association generally consists of one or more major soils and other minor soils. It is the pattern of the major and minor soils (including topography and drainage) that differentiates one association from another. An association often includes individual soils of varying character.

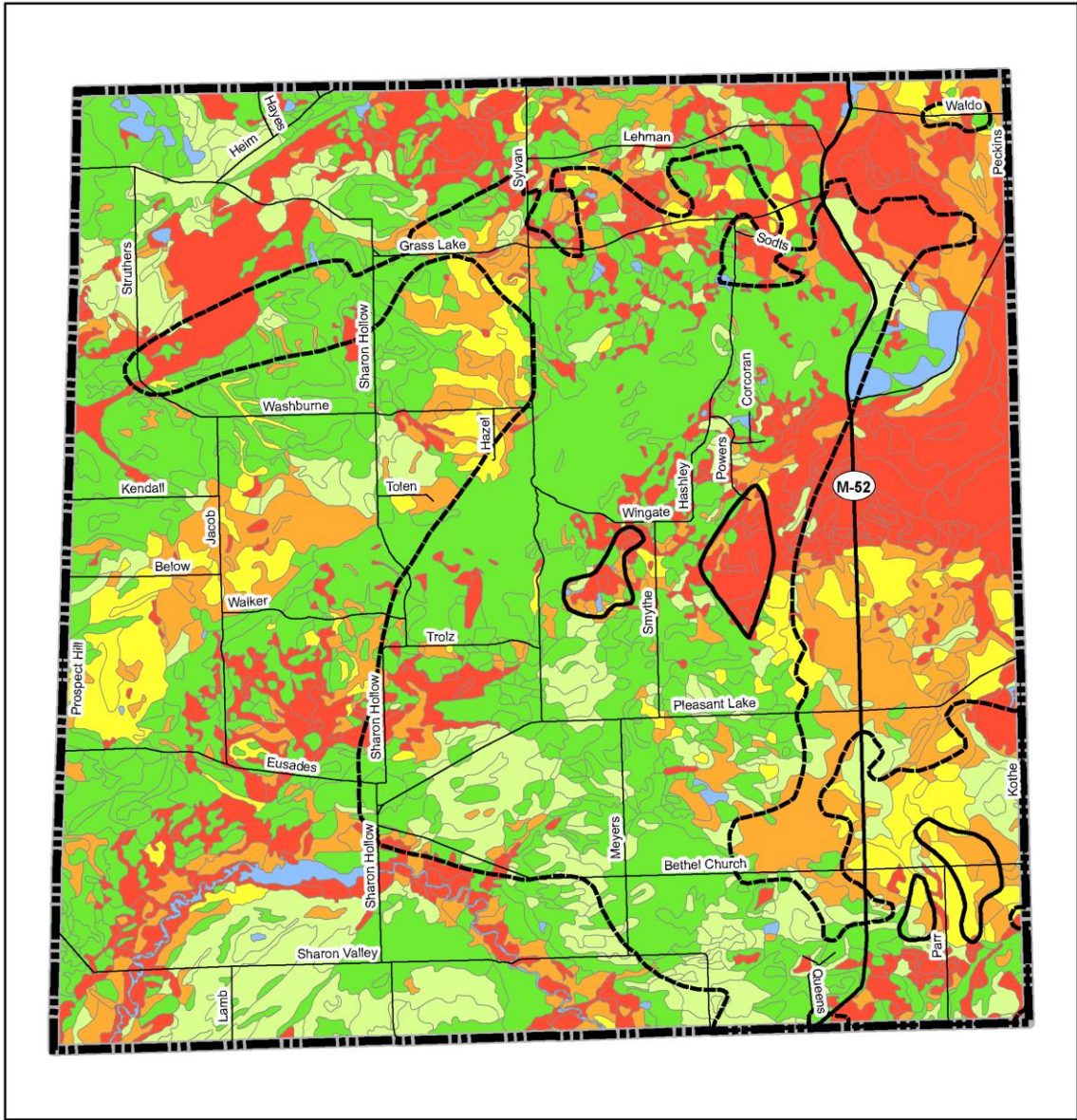
Soil conditions can dramatically influence land development practices. Soil conditions affect the suitability of septic drain fields, the cost and stability of roads and buildings, potential for groundwater contamination, and farm productivity. The soil associations identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are very general in character. It is of benefit to establish a more detailed understanding of the opportunities, and constraints presented by the individual soil units.

According to the Soil Survey, approximately half of the Township is characterized by soils that present severe limitations to septic fields (see Soil Perk/Groundwater Map on the following page). Protection of the groundwater for drinking purposes requires that the septic drain field's leachate be fully broken down in the underlying soils prior to reaching potable water sources. The soils presenting "severe" limitations are located throughout the Township but are somewhat more prevalent in its northeast quadrant. The limitations can be due to a number of factors including soil wetness, slow or excessive percolation, and/or excessive slope. Much of Michigan is characterized by soils that present "severe" limitations to septic systems. Soils that present septic system limitations can often be accommodated with specially engineered systems at additional costs. The Washtenaw County Department of Environmental Health is responsible for issuing permits for on-site sewage disposal. It will not issue a permit unless all county requirements for the septic system have been met. Typically, lots must approach one acre or more to comply with the Department's standards. Development at higher densities typically requires some form of public sewer.

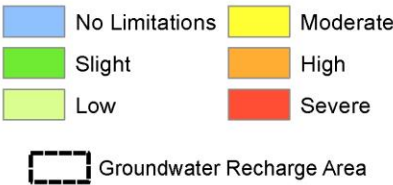
It should be noted that while a site may be classified by the Department of Agriculture as presenting a certain level of limitation to septic systems, on-site investigation may show the classification to be less than fully accurate and/or show that the deeper soils (more than five feet deep) present different characteristics than the upper layer soils and thus, varying limitations. On-site investigations should be carried out before specific development projects are initiated.

The Soil Survey also identifies the vast majority of the Township as presenting "moderate" or "slight" limitations to residential development. Such limitations are typically a result of slope conditions.

The Department of Agriculture has classified approximately one-fifth of the Township as being "prime farmland" in that, under proper management, the land is particularly well suited to food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is capable of producing sustained high yields. The majority of those areas classified as prime farmland are situated in the eastern third of the Township. These prime farmland soils generally overlap those soils identified as producing improved corn yields.



**Soil Perk Limitations**



**Soil Perk / Groundwater Map**

Sharon Township  
Washtenaw County

Soil and Groundwater Data  
from Washtenaw County GIS

February 25, 2020  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



## Groundwater

Generally, precipitation that does not evaporate or run off into surface water bodies infiltrates the land surface and is pulled by gravitational forces into subsurface soil and bedrock formations and eventually becomes groundwater. *Groundwater* is a term that is usually reserved for the subsurface water that occurs below the water table in soils and geological formations that are fully saturated. The process by which water is added to the groundwater system, whether natural or artificial, is called *recharge*.

Aquifers are geological formations that are capable of yielding a significant amount of water to a well or spring. There are typically two types of aquifers, which are called *unconfined* or *confined* aquifers. An unconfined aquifer is an aquifer in which there are no confining (e.g. clay or shale) geological formations between the ground surface and the zone of saturation. A confined aquifer is an aquifer that is overlain by a confining geological formation. In Sharon Township aquifers exist in both the unconsolidated soils deposited by glaciers and the underlying bedrock formations.

Generally, groundwater flow within an aquifer is typically from an area where groundwater is being recharged, *recharge area*, (e.g. upland area) toward an area where groundwater is being discharged (e.g. stream, river, or lake). Many factors influence the rate at which water will infiltrate the ground surface and flow through an aquifer. Of these, the permeability of the soil or bedrock is an important factor. Water recharge into or through an aquifer is generally greater when the soil or bedrock formations are highly permeable. Sands and gravels, and fractured bedrock are materials that are generally considered to have a high permeability. As a whole, much of Sharon Township, and particularly the Sharon Short Hills region, is considered a significant recharge area. Those areas where the potential for groundwater recharge is the greatest are also the most susceptible to groundwater contamination attributable to improper agricultural, commercial, industrial, and household practices, including poorly designed and/or malfunctioning septic systems.

Groundwater for residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial use is derived from the aquifers within the unconsolidated glacial deposits and bedrock formations. The thickness of the glacial deposits in Sharon Township ranges from approximately 50 feet to slightly more than 200 feet. These glacial deposits generally consist of interbedded layers of coarse permeable materials (e.g. sand and gravel) that form aquifers and finer more impermeable materials (e.g. silt and clay) forming confining layers or aquitards. In much of Sharon Township, the uppermost confining layers are below the land surface. Water availability in glacial deposits within Sharon Township is generally favorable to adequate for domestic wells and most large diameter high-capacity wells. Water quality from wells in these glacial deposits is generally acceptable for potable use.

## Appendix C – Demographic Information

### Demographic Information

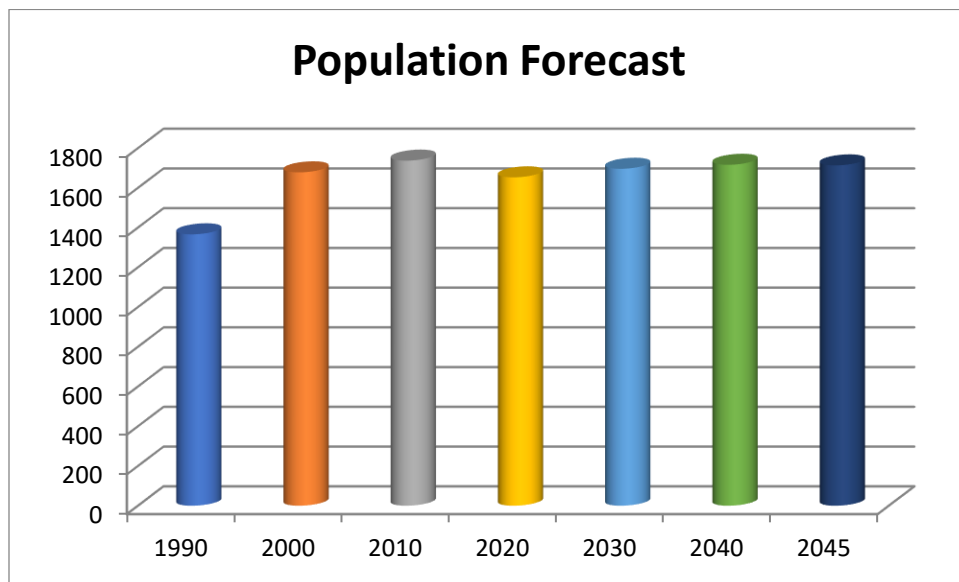
Sharon Township saw a population increase between 1990 and 2010 but a small decrease between 2010 and 2019. The Township includes less than 0.5% of the population living in Washtenaw County. Most recent reports and forecasts indicate the population will remain steady throughout the next 25 years with no net growth anticipated.

Other Township's in the vicinity have seen similar slowing of growth over the last 10 years.

### Population Comparison

	1990	2000	Change		2010	Change		2019	Change	
			#	%		#	%		#	%
<b>Sharon Township</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>1,678</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1,712</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>-1%</b>
Sylvan Township	2,508	2,734	226	9%	2,883	99	34%	3,156	273	9%
Manchester Twp.	1,739	1,942	203	12%	2,478	536	28%	2,663	185	7%
Bridgewater Twp.	1,304	1,646	342	26%	1,674	28	2%	1,682	8	<1%
Freedom Township	1,486	1,562	76	5%	1,428	-134	-9%	1,499	71	5%
Manchester Village	1,753	2,160	407	23%	2,091	-69	-3%	1,982	-109	-5%
Washtenaw County	282,937	322,770	39,833	14%	344,791	22,021	7%	372,713	27,922	8%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile, April 2020



Source: SEMCOG Community Profile, April 2020

## Households

The 2010 Census documented 659 households in Sharon Township. SEMCOG projects that the number of households in Sharon Township will increase over the next 25 years, but only by approximately 10% over that period of time. The number of households with children have continued to decrease since 2010 and are forecasted to continue to decline through 2045. However, households with seniors have steadily increased since 2010 and are projected to more than double by 2045.

### Households, 2010-2045

	2010	2019	2045
Households	659	702	770
Household Size	2.64	2.42	2.2

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile, April 2020

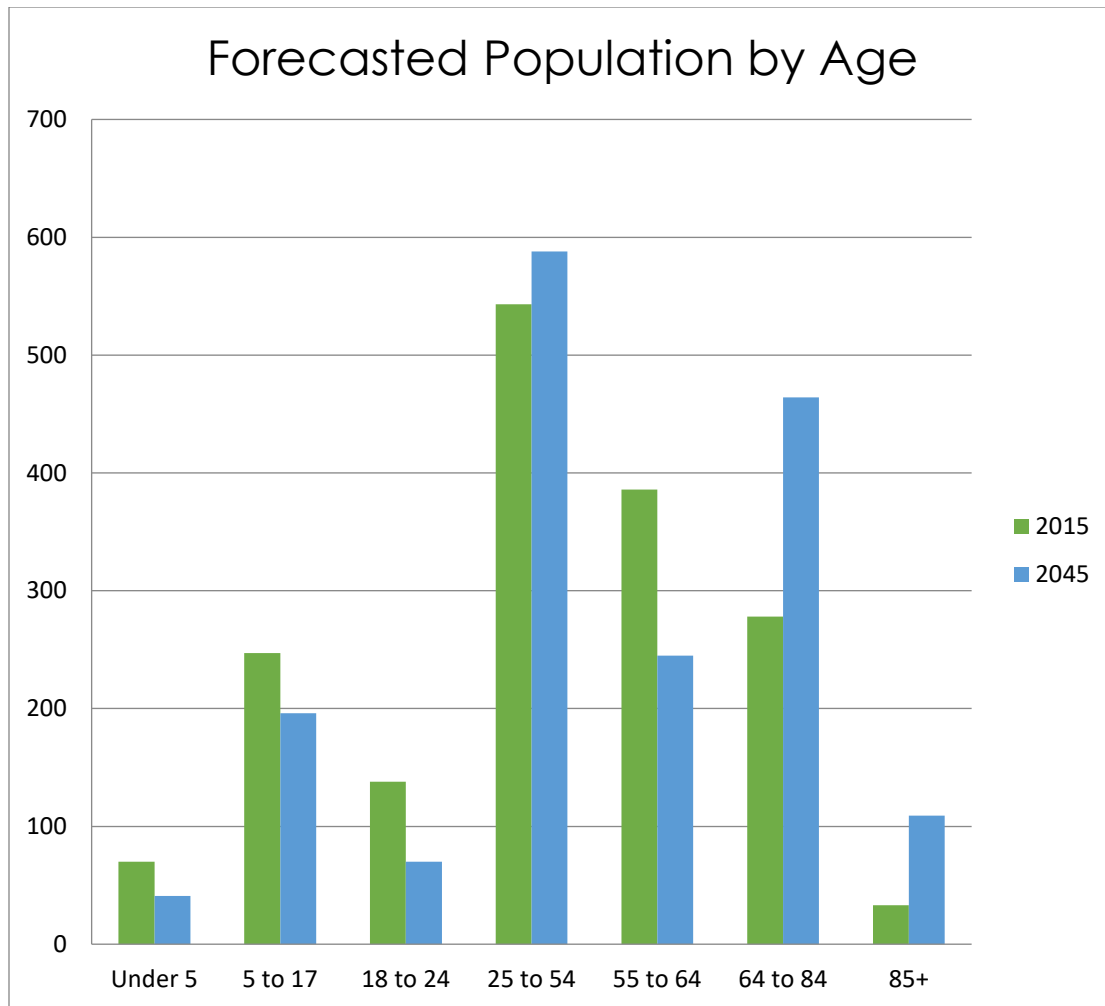
### Households with Children/Seniors, 2010-2045

	2010	2018	2010-2018 % Change	2045	2010-2018 % Change
Households with Children	196	143	-27%	770	>1%
Households with Seniors	181	257	42%	2.2	57%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile, April 2020

## Age

With the growth of households containing seniors and the decrease of households containing children, the Township's median age will increase. In 2010, the median age of residents in Sharon Township was 46.4 years of age. SEMCOG estimated the median age in 2018 decreased to 45.1. However, the continued decrease of school aged population and growth of the senior population will result in increases in the median age over the next 25 years.



### Education

Sharon Township is well-educated. In 2018, 45% of the population 25 years and older held a bachelor's degree or higher. This exceeds the education attained in the SEMCOG area (32%) but is slightly lower than the Washtenaw County average (55%).

### Income

The median household income reported in 2010 was \$91,444. SEMCOG has estimated the 2018 median household income in 2018 decreased 13.7% to \$78,958. Over the same time period, the per capita income increased from \$35,232 to \$38,040; an increase of 8%. The number of persons living in poverty in the Township increased from 2% of the population in 2010 to 4.3% in 2018. Households in poverty remained the same between 2010 and 2018, representing 3.6% of the total households in the Township.

## Employment

The largest employment sectors in the Township are and will continue to be Natural Resources, Mining and Construction; Information and Financial Services; and Professional and Technical Services and Corporate Headquarters. The sectors showing the greatest gains in the future are Healthcare Services and Administration, Support and Waste Services.

### Employment by Industry, 2010-2045

	2010	2045	2010-2045 % Change
Natural Resources, Mining & Construction	72	76	5.6%
Manufacturing	15	14	-6.7%
Wholesale Trade	4	6	50%
Retail Trade	20	20	0%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	9	9	0%
Information & Financial Services	50	50	0%
Professional & Technical Services & Corporate Headquarters	91	105	15.4%
Administrative, Support & Waste Services	45	105	133.3%
Education Services	6	7	16.7%
Healthcare Services	4	17	325%
Leisure & Hospitality	1	2	100%
Other Services	8	9	12.5%
Public Administrators	0	0	0%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile, April 2020

## Housing Characteristics

Since 2010, 21 single-family residential home building permits have been obtained. A total of 125 single-family homes have been constructed in the Township since 2000. Of the 730 total housing units reported in 2018 the vast majority are single-family homes with only 6 multi-unit and 5 mobile home structures reported.

Of the total housing units in the Township, 85% are owner occupied with 7% reported as renter occupied and 8% vacant in 2018.

Median housing value was reported as \$297,017 in 2010 and decreased to \$284,900 (-4.1%) in 2018. Over the same period, median gross rent increased 31.3% from \$857 to \$1,125.



## **Appendix D – Citizen Survey**

Citizen surveys were conducted in 1996, 2008 and 2019. The results are attached.

Fall 2019

## SHARON TOWNSHIP SURVEY RESULTS INCLUDING WRITTEN COMMENTS

### 1. DO YOU OWN PROPERTY IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

Yes: 163

No: 3

Average number of years: 23.95

Average acreage: 23.88

### 2. DO YOU RESIDE IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

Yes: 162

No: 7

Average number of years residing in Sharon: 24.44

### 3. OCCUPATION

Retired (67), Parks maintenance, Accounts receivable, Accounting, Corrections officer, Automotive Engineer, Data analyst, Truck driver, Salesman, Office manager, Farmer, Disabled- not working, Painter, Lowes, Medical doctor, Podiatric physician, U of M Executive officer, FOIA, Company owner, Sales, Faculty, Physician's assistant, Farmer, EMS office coordinator, Production manager, Designer, Office manager, Education, Business rep, Higher ed admin, U of M administrator, IT project manager, Data analyst, Graphic & web designer, UAW auto mechanic, Carpentry, System admin (IT manager), Publishing services, Construction, Office clerk, Professor (3), Purchasing/supply chain, Occupational therapy assistant, Tree trimmer, Social worker, Engineer, Trustee, Self-employed, Manufacturing, Account manager, Builder-remodeler, Designer, Radiographer, Construction, Owner, portable welding, Shipping automotive, Architect, U of M business school admin, Builder, Writer, Engineer, Optometrist, Database manager, Shipping automotive, Carpenter/painter, Regulatory writer, Pharmaceutical industry, Home business, Registered nurse, Flight attendant, Police, School principal, Manager of production, chemistry department, Scientist III supervisor bioorganic chemistry, Electronics tech, Occupational therapist, Rural mail carrier, Registered nurse, Medical doctor, Educators, Physical therapist, Engineer, Doctor of operations, Registered nurse, Truck driver, Sales, Business owner, Barber, Child passenger seat technician-Mott hospital, Family physician, IT consultant, Electronic tech, Business operations, Certified water operator, Owner-freshwater testing service, Master photographer, Merchant, Interior designer, Engineer, Wholesale nursery, Dynamometer tech, Nurse assistant, Electrician, CPA, Sales, Warehouse manager, Educator, Academic, Sustainable farmer, Veterinarian, X-Ray technician, Sales, Business analyst, Minister, Clinical somatic educator, Tradesman, Quality inspector, Project admin, State civil service, Customer service rep, Dishwasher, Artist, Nurse, Farrier

### 2. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE REASONS YOU CONTINUE TO LIVE IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

Rural atmosphere/open character: 137

Peacefulness/privacy: 128

Affordable housing/taxes: 41

Large home sites: 38

Close to family/friends: 29

Parkland: 15

Close to work: 14

Life-long resident: 12

Quality of schools: 9

*To be on the beautiful homestead we have created. Much blood, sweat and money ha  
My home and land are here-until I am taxed out  
Stay small, not trying to bring problems to Township  
Married into resident family  
Our lack of services keeps Sharon beautiful  
Keep it simple to dissuade sprawl and growth  
10 acre parcels  
Quiet, mostly nature sounds  
Dark skies, close to hospitals/shopping/banking  
I camp on my property  
"The sprawl stops here!"  
McAtee organic farms  
Care for aging parent*

*10 acre rule*  
*Continue farming during retirement*  
*Small town living with big city within easy drive*  
*Convenient central location*  
*3<sup>rd</sup> generation farm*

3. WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE GREATEST THREAT TO SHARON TOWNSHIP'S QUALITY OF LIFE?

Increase in housing density/smaller lot sizes: 76  
Road conditions: 61  
Loss of rural character: 54  
New development/growth: 39  
Gas/oil drilling: 33  
Gravel mining: 32  
Loss of farming: 26  
Farm chemicals: 24  
Increase in township regulations: 23  
Traffic: 22  
Poor use of development (10 acre lot sizes) :20  
Public bureaucracy: 18  
Dirt bikes/racing quads: 18  
Wildlife threatened: 14  
Land splits: 10  
Purchase of development rights (PDR): 10  
Crime: 9  
Gunfire: 9  
No threats: 3

*Continued resistance by residents to any type of progress/development/improvement*  
*Barking dogs*  
*Lack of internet*  
*Depletion of aquifer by farm irrigation*  
*Marihuana*  
*Township Supervisor ignores wishes of residents*  
*People moving here and expecting city rules*  
*Marijuana grow labs*  
*People coming here and bringing problems with them*  
*Global warming*  
*Lack of public transit*  
*Poor internet*  
*Too far from dental, library*  
*Manchester post office problems*  
*Internal politics,*  
*Loss of 10 acre rule*  
*Rodent threats*  
*Drug cultivation*  
*Allowing marihuana grow operations outside of commercial zoning*  
*No high speed internet*  
*Water*  
*M-52 road noise*  
*Tar & chip dirt roads?*  
*No high speed internet*  
*Natural gas/marihuana*  
*Can't walk dogs in parks*  
*Fireworks (2)*  
*No broadband*  
*No 10 acre lot*  
*Marihuana barns*  
*Sewage from Detroit sprayed on farmland*

6. WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD ALLEVIATE THESE THREATS?

Retain 10 acre minimum: 93  
Increase road maintenance: 62  
Leave land owners alone: 35  
Better law enforcement: 31  
Restrict changes in zoning: 29  
Increase regulations to limit growth: 25  
Keep everything the way it is: 24  
Better communication: 23  
Clustering of home sites (see question 8): 21  
Minimize growth: 17  
New development on paved roads only: 11  
Conduct study/research: 8  
Purchase of development rights (PDR): 8

*Keep your people (us!) informed when marihuana (drug) dealers & whiskey peddlers want to do business in our community*

*Favor a Township road millage  
Prohibition of crop dusting  
Regulation of farm chemicals  
Get rid of marihuana grows  
Enforce 35 mph speed limits on dirt roads  
Allow 5 ac. Minimum  
Monitor gravel mining activities  
Adopt master plan similar to Grass Lake township  
Develop Township plan to address increased risk of drought/flooding/extreme temps  
Water loss and contamination due to global warming/climate disruption  
More subdivisions  
Yard maintenance standards  
Keep commercial along M-52  
Common sense and courtesy  
Encourage PDR by reducing taxable value on land preserved  
10 acre minimum is a gross misuse of land  
Voter referendum on land use for drilling/fracking  
Traffic enforcement to minimize unsafe and aggressive driving  
Broadband  
Pay for Washtenaw police  
Outlaw fracking  
Fix Lehman bridge  
Keep pot growing only in zoned areas  
Broadband  
Fireworks limit  
Restrict racing and mining  
Don't allow build it then ask for zoning changes  
Education  
Elect honest board members who do not deceive township residents and are open to resident's feedback  
Expand I-94*



b. close to family / friends	(31)	9%	(23)	7%
c. quality of schools		(25) 7%	(11)	3%
d. close to work	(13)	4%	(17)	5%
e. life long resident	(30)	8%	(26)	8%
f. large home sites		(42) 11%	(26)	8%
g. affordable housing / taxes		(22) 6%	(26)	8%
h. peacefulness / privacy		(84) 23%	(86)	26%
i. other		(13) 4%	(6)	2%

5. What do you perceive as the biggest threat to Sharon Township's Quality of Life?  
 \*In 2008 residents were allowed to select more than one response.

		<u>1996=73</u>		<u>2008=356</u>
a. new development / growth		(26) 36%		(48) 13%
b. increase in housing density / Smaller lot sizes		(8) 11%		(35) 10%
c. traffic	(7)	10%	(24)	7%
d. gravel pit	(3)	4%	(22)	6%
e. poor use of development re: 10 acre lots	(3)	4%	(28)	8%
f. public bureaucracy	(3)	4%	(9)	3%
g. loss of farming		(3) 4%	(32)	9%
h. crime	(2)	3%	(6)	2%
i. land splits	(2)	3%	(11)	3%
j. chemicals used on farms		(1) 1%	(6)	2%
k. gunfire	(1)	1%	(5)	1%
l. increase in township regulations		(1) 1%	(21)	6%
m. loss of rural character		(1) 1%	(42)	12%
n. purchase of development rights (PDR)		(1) 1%	(11)	3%
o. road conditions	(1)	1%	(19)	5%
p. Sandhill crane / wildlife threatened		(1) 1%	(11)	3%
q. dirt bikes / racing quads, etc.	not	on 1996	(20)	6%
q. no threats	(9)	12%	(6)	2%

6. What do you think could alleviate this threat? (see #5 above)  
 \*In 2008 residents were allowed to select more than one response.

		<u>1996=65</u>		<u>2008=258</u>
a. keep the 10 acre lot size requirement		(20) 31%		(68) 26%
b. increase regulations (to limit growth)	(11)	17%		(20) 8%
c. better law enforcement		(8) 12%		(10) 4%
d. clustering	(4)	6%	(28)	11%
e. better communication / attitude change		(2) 3%	(17)	7%
f. increase lot size requirement		(2) 3%	(3)	1%
g. conduct study / research		(1) 2%	(3)	1%
h. increase road maintenance		(1) 2%	(19)	7%
i. leave land owners alone		(1) 2%	(21)	8%
j. minimize growth		(1) 2%	(17)	7%
k. new development on paved roads only		(1) 2%	(4)	2%
l. purchase of development rights (PDR)		(1) 2%	(8)	3%
m. restrict changes in zoning		(1) 2%	(15)	6%
n. keep everything the way it has been		(2) 3%	(16)	6%
o. not sure / no idea		(9) 14%	(9)	3%

7. What best describes your feelings about residential growth?  
 1996=123 \_\_\_\_\_

2008=142

7. WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT LIVING IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

Lack of broadband access: 83  
Road conditions: 66  
Poor cellular access: 60  
Lack of services (water, sewer): 3  
Pace too slow: 1

*People from the city wanting to change things*  
*10 acre rule*  
*Democrats posing as Republicans in Gov't/Board and citizenry*  
*Gunfire*  
*Dirt bikes*  
*Lack of police protection*  
*Board members untruthful about marihuana*  
*Nothing (2)*  
*Lack of a diverse, vibrant, nearby downtown with many successful businesses*  
*The city people*  
*Encroaching development*  
*Drug (marihuana)*  
*Alcohol sales*  
*Mow road edges (2)*  
*Traffic on Pleasant Lake*  
*Traffic speed*  
*Gorley*  
*No public library access*  
*Better snow plowing on Wingate*  
*People's attitudes and unwillingness to move forward*  
*The people that have moved here and want all of these*  
*No good nearby restaurants*  
*Poor road maintenance*  
*Road traffic on M-52*  
*KKK literature in mailbox*  
*Confederate flags*  
*Love it here*  
*Natural gas*  
*No broadband*  
*Lack of speed limits on dirt roads*  
*Pot growing*  
*Lack of police patrols*  
*Don't need more services*  
*I like it*

8. WHAT LOT SIZE OR DENSITY (FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSES) DO YOU THINK IS APPROPRIATE FOR FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

1 house on 10 acres or more: 107  
1 house on 2 to 5 acres: 30  
Houses clustered on 1-acre parcels leaving agricultural and open-space land permanently undeveloped: 23  
1 house per acre: 4

9. WHICH DESCRIBES HOW YOU VIEW THE NUMBER OF RETAIL BUSINESSES IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

About right for the community: 94  
Not enough: 47  
Too many: 7

10. WHICH DESCRIBES HOW YOU VIEW THE NUMBER OF SERVICE BUSINESSES (BUSINESSES PROVIDING SERVICE RATHER THAN RETAIL) IN SHARON TOWNSHIP

About right for the community: 109  
Not enough: 37  
Too many: 3

11. IF YOU THINK THERE SHOULD BY MORE COMMERCIAL (RETAIL OR SERVICE) DEVELOPMENT, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IT DEVELOP?

M-52: 67  
Don't want any industrial development: 49  
Near village of Manchester: 45  
Near Corrigan Oil (formerly Wacker's): 27  
In an industrial park: 20  
On the main (paved) roads: 14  
Northern township (near Chrysler Proving Grounds): 12  
Don't care: 7  
South side of township: 3

12. WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IN SHARON TOWNSHIP?

Planned bike trails	YES: 73	NO: 50	DON'T CARE: 23
Event facility	YES: 25	NO: 72	DON'T CARE: 46
Cemetery expansion	YES: 25	NO: 32	DON'T CARE: 86
Air BnB (short-term)	YES: 26	NO: 68	DON'T CARE: 44
Small craft breweries	YES: 34	NO: 60	DON'T CARE: 39
Small craft distilleries	YES: 39	NO: 64	DON'T CARE: 38
Small craft wineries	YES: 51	NO: 58	DON'T CARE: 35
Tasting rooms	YES: 50	NO: 63	DON'T CARE: 34

13. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT NEEDS MORE PROTECTION IN THE TOWNSHIP?

Woodlands and wetlands: 85  
Both open and agricultural land: 80  
Agricultural land: 32  
Open space: 17  
None of these: 11

14. IF YOU HAVE BEEN A SHARON TOWNSHIP RESIDENT FOR MORE THAN 5 YEARS, PLEASE RATE HOW THE FOLLOWING HAVE CHANGED IN THE LAST 5 YEARS:

Road conditions:	Much better: 1	Better: 27	Same: 47	Worse: 30	Much worse: 23
Privacy	Much better: 0	Better: 1	Same: 112	Worse: 20	Much worse: 3
Crime	Much better: 0	Better: 4	Same: 108	Worse: 18	Much worse: 2
Traffic	Much better: 0	Better: 0	Same: 57	Worse: 66	Much worse: 17
Natural environment	Much better: 1	Better: 9	Same: 104	Worse: 18	Much worse: 2



15. DO YOU FEEL THE TOWNSHIP HAS ADEQUATE SERVICES FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Fire protection	YES: 119	NO: 23
Police protection	YES: 90	NO: 53
Broadband access	YES: 40	NO: 114
Emergency medical services	YES: 115	NO: 28
Cemetery space	YES: 75	NO: 38

16. WOULD YOU SUPPORT AN EXTRA MILLAGE TO SUPPORT

Road improvement	YES: 78	NO: 77
Police protection	YES: 56	NO: 90
Broadband access	YES: 65	NO: 85

17. DO YOU THINK THAT THE RIGHT OF THE TOWNSHIP TO REGULATE LAND USE SHOULD COME BEFORE THE RIGHTS OF PRIVATE LAND OWNERS? (SELECT ONLY 1)

Yes, but only when the general welfare of the township can be demonstrated to be at risk: 62  
No, not generally: 52  
Never: 31  
Yes, always: 16

18. THE TOWNSHIP'S CEMETERIES ARE TECHNICALLY CLOSED, BUT LAND IS AVAILABLE JUST NORTH OF THE TOWN HALL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW CEMETERY.

Would you be interested in purchasing a plot at some future time?  
YES: 28      NO: 132      MAYBE: 3

Would you be more likely to purchase a burial space or space for cremains?  
BURIAL SPACE: 20      SPACE FOR CREMAINS: 58

19. ARE YOU PROUD TO BE A SHARON TOWNSHIP RESIDENT?  
YES: 135      NO: 5      SOMETIMES: 1

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

*Our biggest frustrations are the Sharon Hollow Rd. & internet/cell phone services*

*Wants to get answers placed in minutes as part of public records*

*Wants green burials*

*Doesn't like farmers using bio-solids*

*I hope and pray our township board keeps our township a pleasant place to live*

*Reduce lot sizes*

*Generally, in favor of increasing millages for needed services like broadband*

*We would purchase 4-5 acres, sell smaller lot sizes for a new tax base*

*Get rid of 10 acre rule, more bike trails, more development*

*Everyone should have the same understanding of "rural character" in ideal world*

*Survey is biased, tabulators may skew results*

*I love where I live, except closed bridges and no broadband*

*Include map with survey questions*

*Wants more communication from township*

*Township should join with other townships to file a class action lawsuit against county to maintain rights-of-ways*

*Township should have central town area with balanced growth in education, medical, industrial, entertainment*

*Thanks for letting us restore our place to 1888 era*

*Not willing to pay for broadband*

*Don't care for conservative politics of the area*

*No broadband will limit growth*

*A handful of farmers and business owners swindled the community*

*County road commission has done a wonderful job on Sylvan & Grass Lake Roads*

*Senior citizens should get a tax break*

*Sylvan between Pleasant Lake and Grass Lake needs more maintenance*

*Plow roads better*

*Broadband*

*Township officials should own land*

*We would like to see slow limited growth that preserves the character of the township*

*We enjoy living here and enjoy the woodlands*

# SHARON TOWNSHIP 2008 CITIZEN SURVEY RECAP

1. How many years have you lived in Sharon Township?

1996=125			2008=153
a. less than 5	(38)	(34) 27%	(14) 9%
b. 5 to 14	(20)	30%	(35) 23%
c. 15 to 24		16%	(37) 24%
d. 25 or more		(33) 26%	(67) 44%

2. Which school district do you live in?

1996=125			2008=152
a. Chelsea	(22)	18%	(26) 17%
b. Grass Lake	(6)	5%	5%
c. Manchester	(97)	78%	(119) 78%
d. Napoleon	0		0

3. What is your occupation?

\*In 2008 residents were allowed to select more than one response.

1996=121			2008=206
a. retired	(25)	21%	(67) 33%
b. technical / mechanical		(16) 13%	(12) 6%
c. professional	(10)	8%	(27) 13%
d. medical / health services		(9) 7%	(13) 6%
e. farmer	(9)	7%	(13) 6%
f. engineer	(7)	6%	(10) 5%
g. managerial	(6)	5%	(9) 4%
h. customer service / sales		(6) 5%	(4) 2%
i. professor / teacher		(6) 5%	(6) 3%
j. truck driver / large machine operator		(6) 5%	(10) 5%
k. clerical	(4)	3%	(6) 3%
l. homemaker	(4)	3%	(8) 4%
m. artist	(3)	3%	(4) 2%
n. self-employed	(3)	3%	(17) 8%
o. research	(2)	2%	0
p. student	(2)	2%	(1) .5%
q. custodial	(1)	1%	0
r. equestrian	(1)	1%	0
s. pastor		(1) 1%	0
t. other	not	on 1996	(3) 1%

4. Which of the following are reasons that you continue to live in Sharon Township?  
\*Residents were allowed to select more than one response in both surveys.

	1996 = 364	2008 = 330
a. rural atmosphere / open character	(104) 28%	(107) 33%

a. much too fast		(41) 33%		(21) 15%
b. too fast	(35)	29%		(34) 24%
c. about right	(43)	35%		(87) 61%
d. too slow	(3)	2%	(2)	1%
e. much too slow		(1) 1%		0

8. What lot size or density (for single family houses) do you think is appropriate for future residential development in Sharon Township?

	<u>1996=124</u>	<u>2008=160</u>
a. one house per acre	(4) 3%	(3) 2%
b. one house on 2-5 acres	(39) 32%	(35) 22%
c. one house on ten acres or more	(57) 46%	(78) 49%
d. houses clustered on one acre parcels leaving agricultural and open space land permanently undeveloped	(24) 19%	(44) 28%

9. Which describes how you view the number of commercial (retail and service) businesses in Sharon Township?

	<u>1996=123</u>	<u>2008=147</u>
a. not enough	16%	(38) 26%
b. about right for the community	(98) 80%	(107) 73%
c. too many	4%	(2) 1%

10. If you think there should be more commercial, where would you like to see it develop?  
\*In 2008 residents were allowed to select more than one response.

	<u>1996=77</u>	<u>2008=191</u>
a. M-52	35%	(45) 24%
b. near Village of Manchester	(12) 16%	(37) 19%
c. near Villages	16%	(18) 9%
d. near Expressway / I-94	(2) 3%	(16) 8%
e. near Chelsea	(1) 1%	(14) 7%
f. near Wacker's	(1) 1%	(25) 13%
g. northern part of Township / hills	(1) 1%	0
h. don't want any commercial	(12) 16%	(36) 19%

11. In general, commercial development in the Township should be:  
\*In 2008 residents were allowed to select more than one response.

	<u>1996=125</u>	<u>2008=152</u>
a. highly promoted with few land use regulations	(4) 3%	(4) 3%
b. encouraged with appropriate land use regulations	(12) 10%	(37) 24%
c. allowed with appropriate land use regulations	(61) 49%	(76) 50%
d. discouraged with many land use regulations	(48) 38%	(35) 23%

12. If there was going to be light industrial development, where would you like it to be located?  
\*In 2008 residents were allowed to select more than one response.

	<u>1996=108</u>	<u>2008=232</u>
a. M-52	25%	(46) 20%
b. near Village of Manchester	(12) 11%	(31) 13%
c. near villages	(10) 9%	(10) 4%
d. in an industrial park	(3) 3%	(33) 14%
e. near (Chrysler) Proving Grounds	(2) 2%	(19) 8%
f. south side of Manchester	(2) 2%	(14) 6%
g. south side of Township	(2) 2%	(4) 2%
h. on the main roads	(2) 2%	(6) 3%
i. Austin Road area	(1) 1%	(3) 1%
j. away from residential area	(1) 1%	(21) 9%



k. near Wacker's	(1) 1%	(14) 6%
l. don't want any industrial	(40) 37%	(29) 13%
m. don't care (1)	1%	(2) 1%

13. In general, industrial development in the Township should be:

	1996=123		2008=151
a. highly promoted with few land use regulations	(4) 3%		(3) 2%
b. encouraged with appropriate land use regulations	(4) 3%		(35) 23%
c. allowed with appropriate land use regulations	(51) 42%		(69) 46%
d. discouraged with many land use regulations	(64) 52%		(44) 29%

14. Do you consider the Township's natural features (woodlots, wetlands, open space, water recharge areas, rivers and streams) to be an asset to the community.

	1996=125		2008=153
a. strongly agree	(98) 78%		(118) 77%
b. agree (27)	22%		(32) 21%
c. disagree 0		(2) 1%	
d. strongly disagree	0	(1) 1%	

15. Do you feel that the Township should enact special measures to protect the Township's natural resources?

	1996=126		2008=144
a. strongly in favor	(80) 64%		(86) 60%
b. somewhat in favor	(32) 25%		(43) 30%
c. somewhat opposed	(11) 9%		(11) 8%
d. strongly opposed	(3) 2%		(4) 2%

16. How many acres do you farm or lease during an average year?

In 1996 we received 54 responses. The lowest number of acres was 2 and the largest parcel was 1,200 acres. The average parcel size was 104 acres. The median was 35 acres. Total acreage is not available.

In 2008 we received 53 responses. The lowest number of acres was 2 and the largest parcel was 1,500 acres. The average parcel size was 88.7 acres. The median was 30 acres. The total acreage was 4,703.

17. In your opinion, what do you consider needs more protection in the Township?

	1996=125		2008=142
a. open space (8)	6%	(11) 8%	
b. agricultural land (27)	22%	(26) 18%	
c. both (78)	62%	(85) 60%	
d. neither a or b	(12) 10%	(15) 11%	
e. other (2008 only) woodlands & wetlands	0	(5) 4%	

18. If you have been a Township resident for more than five years, please rate how the following categories have changed in the last five years.

	much better	better	same	worse	much worse
a. road conditions					
1996=104	0	(21) 20%	(51) 49%	(24) 23%	(8) 8%
2008=139	(1) 1%	(19) 14%	(67) 48%	(33) 24%	(19) 14%
b. privacy					

1996=104	0	0	(54) 52%	(42) 40%	(8) 8%
2008=129	0	(2) 1%	(92) 71%	(34) 26%	(1) 1%
c. crime					
1996=104	0	(3) 3%	(71) 68%	(24) 23%	(6) 6%
2008=124	0	(2) 1%	(105) 85%	(16) 12%	(2) 1%
d. traffic					
1996=103	0	0	(24) 23%	(47) 46%	(32) 31%
2008=129	0	0	(43) 33%	(66) 51%	(20) 16%
e. natural environment					
1996=103	0	(3) 3%	(33) 32%	(64) 62%	(3) 4%
2008=127	0	(2) 2%	(99) 78%	(23) 18%	(3) 2%

19. Would you support an additional property millage for Township police protection?

		<u>1996=124</u>	<u>2008=148</u>
YES	(33)	27%	(47) 32%
NO	(91)	73%	(101) 68%

20. Would you support an additional property millage for Township fire protection?

		<u>1996=125</u>	<u>2008=146</u>
YES	(46)	37%	(59) 36%
NO	(79)	63%	(87) 64%

21. Would you support an additional property millage for road improvements?

		<u>1996=126</u>	<u>2008=146</u>
YES	(45)	36%	(50) 34%
NO	(81)	64%	(96) 66%

22. Would you support an additional property millage for participation with the Manchester Library?

\*This question was not on the 1996 Survey.

		<u>1996=0</u>	<u>2008=147</u>
YES	0		(37) 25%
NO	0		(110) 75%

23. In general, do you feel that the right of the Township to regulate land use should come before the rights of the private land owners?

		<u>1996=124</u>	<u>2008=160</u>
a. yes, always	(3)	2%	(12) 8%
b. yes, but only when the general welfare of the Township can be shown		(27) 22%	(35) 22%
c. each case must be considered individually		(53) 43%	(54) 34%
d. no, not generally	(26)	21%	(36) 22%
e. never	(15)	12%	(23) 14%

24. Are you currently residing in Sharon Township?

\*This question was not on the 1996 Survey

		<u>1996=0</u>	<u>2008=155</u>
YES	0		(132) 85%
NO		0	(23) 15%

**THANKS AGAIN YOU FOR YOUR INPUT!!!**