

AGENDA

**SPARTA TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 10, 2026
7 P.M.**

**Sparta Township Hall
160 East Division Street
Sparta, MI 49345**

This meeting can be viewed live or recorded at
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu9bOagfR6m02k7rdmX3TLA>

- I.** Call to Order
- II.** Pledge of Allegiance
- III.** Additions or Corrections to Agenda
- IV.** Minutes of January 13, 2026, Regular Meeting
- V.** Public Comment (for items on the agenda)
- VI.** Business Items
 - A. Master Plan Review and Adoption
 - B. Preliminary Review: Rezoning Request – 9440 Sparta Ave
 - C. Data Center Regulations Review
 - D. Home Occupation Regulations Review
- VII.** Public Comment (for items on or not on the agenda)
- VIII.** Staff and Commissioner Comments
- IX.** Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE SPARTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting of Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 7 PM
Sparta Township Hall, 160 E. Division St., Sparta MI

This meeting could be viewed live or recorded at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu9bOagfR6m02k7rdmX3TLA>.

Present: Chairperson Terry Hartman (9/28); Vice Chairperson Tim Driscoll (9/28);
Secretary Linda Anderson (9/28); Township Board Trustee Barb Johnson (12/28);
Commissioners Don Doyle (9/27), Dale Flanery (9/27), and Ken Humphreys (9/27)
Also Present: Zoning Administrator/Planner Kevin Yeomans of Fresh Coast Planning
and Recording Secretary Toni Potes

I. / II. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance: Chairperson Hartman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Additions or Corrections to Agenda: Motion by Anderson, second by Doyle, to approve the Agenda. Motion carried unanimously. The date of the Minutes to be approved was corrected, from January 13 to February 10.

IV. Minutes of February 10, 2026, Regular Meeting: Motion by Johnson, second by Driscoll, to approve the Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Comment (for items on the Agenda): No public comment.

VI. Business Items

A. Master Plan Review and Adoption: The Memorandum of March 4, 2026, explained that Zoning Administrator/Planner Yeomans is working to finalize removing the Commercial/Industrial Classification from the Master Plan map and text. These updates and resolution of adoption will be available for review at the next meeting.

B. Data Center Regulations Review: Zoning Administrator/Planner Yeomans provided some updates, much information for review, and concerns. The Commissioners would like more time for review and education. A decommissioning plan is necessary. Hyperscale data centers are new (vs. former data centers). There are about 44 data centers in Michigan. Zoning Administrator/Planner Yeomans will look into how other counties and townships are addressing concerns. Two of the three attendees at the meeting stated they are glad the Planning Commission is working for the people; this is a tough spot.

C. Home Occupation Regulations Review: Zoning Administrator/Planner Yeomans reviewed his March 2, 2026, Memorandum, seeking the Commissioners' feedback. Some discussion points included how this will be monitored, criteria needed for outdoor storage (completely restrict, or screened, or buffered), maximum square footage may

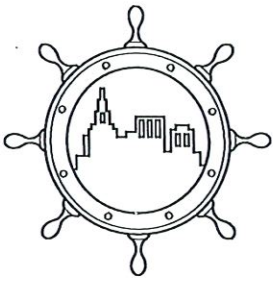
need to be determined (possibly based on a percentage), include the Township's authority to investigate a complaint onsite, private road acknowledgment by neighbors of the business authorization to operate, HOA may need to include a disclosure of the home occupation, what to do if the property changes hands, should "family members only residing on the property" be kept (flexibility is needed) and non-family members need home-base occupation. The consensus was that a sketch site plan, in lieu of a full site plan, be allowed. Zoning Administrator/Planner Yeomans provided samples from other communities for consideration. Another draft will come to the Planning Commission.

VII. Public Comment (for items on or not on the Agenda): A county officer was present, to stay in tune with public safety. Kristi Cain shared that data centers are being addressed at the federal level.

VIII. Staff and Commissioner Comments: Johnson will soon be working again in the cemeteries and is seeking volunteers.

IX. Adjournment: Motion by Johnson, second by Humphreys, to adjourn at 8:08 PM. Motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Sparta Township Planning Commission will be Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
—Toni Potes
Recording Secretary



Fresh Coast Planning

119 1/2 Washington Avenue, Studio B
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240

Kevin Yeomans
616-349-0223

Alexis Gulker
616-773-4638

Aaron Bigelow
616-919-2370

Andrea Goodell
616-313-9333
www.freshcoastplanning.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Sparta Township Planning Commission
From: Kevin Yeomans
Date: 3/4/2026
Re: Master Plan Update

Attached are three documents:

1. Text of the Master Plan: This document shows the edits that have been made to the text of the Master Plan regarding the changes to the land use classification along Sparta Avenue from Commercial/Industrial to Mixed Use Residential Commercial
2. 2026 Master Plan: A complete copy of the Master Plan with all edits accepted and an updated Master Plan Map.
3. Resolution of Adoption: If the proposed changes are accepted by the Planning Commission the resolution of adoption must be passed by the Commission. This is the final step for the Planning Commission. Once adopted we will send out the necessary notices.

Draft Motion: Move to approve the resolution to adopt master plan.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Kevin Yeomans
Kevin Yeomans

Planner

CC: Dale Bergman, Township Supervisor

Sparta Township

2026 MASTER PLAN

Planning Commission:

Terry Hartman – Chairperson

Tim Driscoll – Vice-Chairperson

Linda Anderson – Secretary

Don Doyle – Member

Dale Flanery – Member

Ken Humphreys – Member

Barb Johnson – Member

Board of Trustees:

Dale Bergman – Supervisor

Marcy Savage – Clerk

Ashley Johnson – Treasurer

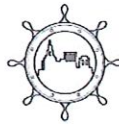
Jason Bradford – Trustee

Bill Goodfellow – Trustee

Barb Johnson – Trustee

Rob Steffens – Trustee

With Assistance By:



Fresh Coast Planning

Sparta Township – 160 E. Division Street

Sparta – Michigan – 49345

Kent County

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EDITS SHOWN

INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY PROFILE

Preface

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, this Master Plan was created to serve as a guide for growth and development within Sparta Township (the "Township"). The Master Plan is a policy tool used by Township officials to coordinate growth and to serve as the basis for zoning. It guides the location and future arrangement of agricultural, industrial, residential, commercial, and recreational areas. These locations must consider a multitude of factors such as utilities and infrastructure, existing land use, physical characteristics of the land, traffic volumes and traffic routes, as well as environmental limitations.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act specifically provides townships with the authority to prepare and officially adopt a master plan. The Township's Master Plan functions as an official advisory policy statement for the orderly and efficient use of land. The Master Plan provides the coordination of land uses with other land uses, with streets, and with other necessary public infrastructure. The Master Plan also provides the legal and logical basis for local zoning, subdivision design, and public improvement plans, and for facilitating and guiding the work of the Sparta Township Planning Commission (the "Planning Commission") and the Sparta Township Board (the "Township Board"). It is also a means of communicating to surrounding communities, private organizations, and individuals about how they need to relate their future development plans and building projects to the official plans of the Township.

Despite its purpose as a policy document, it is important to recognize that the Master Plan is general in scope. It is not always intended to establish the precise boundaries of land use areas or exact locations of future uses. Rather, the Master Plan is an organized approach to analyzing development issues and proposing strategies to address these issues. Its function is to guide growth, providing a framework to ensure that future detailed decisions for development can be made based on a community-wide perspective. Given that the needs and desires of the community change over time, the Master Plan must be regularly reviewed and periodically updated. The Master Plan projects more than twenty years into the future and must be revisited at least every five years to ensure its legitimacy.

Community

Physical and environmental conditions establish limitations on how some areas of the Township will develop. The physical and environmental makeup of the Township influences the population, housing, economic, and labor force composition of the community. Given likely continued efforts to convert farmland to residential or commercial properties, demands will continue for additional infrastructure, yet also for the preservation of the natural environment. The Master Plan must therefore establish future residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational areas within the Township in order to adequately address the needs of the community as a whole and prevent incompatible uses.

Sparta Township is located in northwest Kent County and is approximately 33.5 square miles in size. The Township is bounded on the north by 16-Mile Road, on the east by Division Avenue, on the south by Ten Mile Road, and on the west by Kenowa Avenue.

Sparta Township is a part of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. According to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, as of July 1, 2024, the City of Grand Rapids is the fastest growing economy in the United States of America. This growth ripples through the region, creating demand for residential housing and

commercial development. Sparta Township is located approximately 16.5 miles or a 25-minute drive from the City of Grand Rapids. Primary access to and from Grand Rapids is via M-37, which traverses the Township in primarily a north-south direction.

Two natural characteristics that have played a major role in the development of the Township, both historically and today, are the Rogue River which lies in the eastern portion of the Township and the concentration of prime farmland soils in areas west of M-37 (the "Ridge") and areas north of the Village of Sparta. The Rogue River and prime farmland soils have helped create a community with a rich agricultural and rural character. In order to protect the community's agricultural and rural character, the Township has historically encouraged commercial and industrial development to be focused in the Village of Sparta; with residential development and some commercial development encouraged east of M-37, west of the Rogue River, and south of the Village of Sparta.

Other characteristics that play a significant role in the development of Sparta Township are M-37, the active rail line, and the Sparta Municipal Airport which lies in the southeast portion of the Township.

How to Use this Plan

For each land use or related chapter, the Master Plan provides a purpose statement, general description of appropriate uses, and recommendations which form the basis for future development. The purpose statement, general description, and recommendations are designed as follows:

- Purpose Statement – Identifies the purpose and intent of the land use classification or community attribute.
- General Description of Appropriate Uses – Provides examples of uses that may be appropriate within each land use classification.
- Goals – Identifies the goals in list format for ease of use when reviewing land use and zoning ordinance amendment proposals.
- Recommendations – Provides recommendations on how the Township may help promote and create the desired future state of the land use as identified in the Purpose Statement.

General Goals and Objectives of Land Use Policy in Sparta Township

The listed items below are the overarching goals and objectives of future land use development within the Township. They are intended as a way to tie the individual land use classifications and community attributes together and are used as part of the foundation for the creation of other content within this plan.

- Develop policies and regulations designed to protect and preserve the rural, agricultural, and natural assets of the community.
- Develop policies and regulations designed to encourage the concentration of development near the Village of Sparta.
- Develop policies that will increase residents' access to commercial services and goods within Sparta Township or the Village of Sparta.
- Ensure that the above listed policies are balanced to allow for continued residential growth while protecting the rural, agricultural, and natural assets of the community.
- Develop policies designed to preserve the agricultural look and feel of the community.
- Develop policies that will require new developments to be designed in such a way that they preserve or enhance the agricultural and rural character of the community.
- Develop policies that will preserve or enhance natural areas within the Township.

Definition of Terms

Given the value of preserving agricultural and natural areas for the Sparta Township community, the following terms are recognized as defined below, in order to streamline the content of the Master Plan.

- *Rural Character* – is recognized as the natural features of the earth that minimize the visual exposure of buildings, structures, or other man-made features and which create scenic character. It is also recognized as the natural features of the earth that provide environmental buffers and/or habitat that is characteristic of the Township. Such features include:
 - Woods, woodlots, forest areas, and trees
 - Wetlands
 - Natural vegetation
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Natural field areas
 - Scenic vistas

Rural Character also includes farmland, which is recognized as part of the natural features that are organized and managed by people.

- *Open Space* – is recognized as areas of land unoccupied by buildings, structures, or other man-made features, that are preserved to be unoccupied by buildings, structures, or other man-made features within a project. Open Space is not intended to include displays of art or other cultural features; bridges, signage, utilities, and other essential service structures; or grade level features such as ponds.

CHAPTER ONE: AGRICULTURAL USES

Purpose Statement

Based on feedback received as part of the Master Plan community input survey conducted in early 2024, the preservation of natural areas and farmland is a top priority for the community. Given this, the primary intent and purpose of the Agricultural Land Use Classification is to protect prime agricultural areas based on farming best practices and farming operations.

The secondary intent and purpose of the Agricultural Land Use Classification is to protect and preserve Open Space and the Rural Character of the community.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

The primary or principal uses intended for Agricultural lands are cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, and other similar uses. Any other uses within agricultural lands should be designed to promote and facilitate the primary intended uses.

Any non-farm use should be located and designed so as to protect farmland and natural areas and the rural character of these lands. Further, non-farm uses should be directed to occur in areas that are classified as Rural Agriculture.

Goals

- Preserve lands suitable for agricultural use in the Township and manage growth to minimize the encroachment of residential, commercial, and industrial uses into areas valued for agricultural purposes.
- Plan for and guide new development in a manner which preserves the most significant natural features in the Township, as well as the rural views and character.
- Preserve woodland and wetlands associated with farms which are valuable as water retention and groundwater recharge areas, and as a habitat for plant and animal life.
- Prevent dense residential or commercial developments west of M-37 to protect premature development and loss of farmland.
- Encourage accessory agritourism uses that support local farmers and growers by promoting individuals to visit the area and buy from local farmers and businesses.

Recommendations

- Continue to support zoning regulations which restrict non-farm development in areas consisting primarily of prime farmland; in general, these areas consist mainly of those lands west of M-37.
- Develop zoning regulations which make lands which are less suitable for agriculture use more attractive to develop than prime agricultural land.
- Promote agriculture as a strong component of the local economic base.
- Periodically review zoning ordinance regulations to ensure they are not negatively impacting the safe, efficient, and financial feasibility of farming operations.
- Periodically review the Prime Agricultural Preservation, Agricultural, and other zoning districts to ensure the regulations complement each other and provide for the protection of farming, Open Space, and the orderly development of the community.

- Review and develop lot area, width, depth, and other regulations to ensure parcels are developed and oriented to protect the rural image and blend development with the natural landscape.
- Encourage soil conservation practices, the prudent use of fertilizers and pesticides and other means of conserving wildlife habitats, wetlands, and woodlands.
- Consider adopting regulations which require the preservation of a natural vegetation filtration strip along lakes, rivers, and streams.
- Review and develop regulations to accommodate and protect wildlife corridors.
- Periodically review the zoning ordinance to ensure that the number and location of new dwellings permitted to be built within Agricultural lands reflects the community's priorities.
- Periodically review zoning ordinance provisions pertaining to "value-added" opportunities in the Agricultural District, to ensure that regulations are current, consistent across uses, and support activities such as farm markets, processing of products for food or beverage, recreation and tourism, and other agricultural enterprises.

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CHAPTER TWO: RESIDENTIAL USES

Purpose Statement

The primary intent and purpose of residential land uses is to provide people with a range of residential living styles that provide individuals and families with the opportunity to live in a way that meets their needs and desires in a manner that is safe, affordable, and enhances a sense of community.

Further, in recognizing the high demand for housing in Western Michigan and the importance of residential growth in supporting the local economy, the Township encourages limited residential growth in appropriate areas of the Township.

Where the preservation of prime agricultural lands conflicts with the development of new housing developments, the goal of preserving prime agricultural land should generally prevail.

General Description of Appropriate Land Use

Residential land uses vary in terms of densities and intensity of land use. The denser a residential land use is, the more intense its use of the land and the land's resources. As such, denser residential uses such as apartments, multi-family housing, and residential developments with densities greater than one unit per acre should be located where public utilities and infrastructure are available, with less dense residential uses being located in areas that are not near public utilities and private well and septic systems are able to be safely installed, used and maintained.

Goals

- To create attractive, safe, and convenient residential environments.
- Provide for a variety of housing opportunities near schools, parks, utilities, and other facilities determined desirable or necessary for community involvement.
- Provide housing for a variety of income levels and needs.
- Limit mobile homes located within mobile home parks to 20% of the total number of dwelling units within the Township, to ensure a balance in housing types.
- Direct residential development to occur east of M-37 and west of the Rogue River in areas that are able to connect to public utilities and services.
- Discourage residential development in areas with Prime Farmland Soils.
- Ensure that new housing developments are constructed and designed in such a way that preserves and enhances the rural and agricultural character of the community.
- Ensure that residential land uses are organized in such a way that they are harmonious with agricultural areas, natural areas, and the existing character of the surrounding area.
- Ensure the preservation of open space, wildlife habitats, and recreation opportunities.

Recommendations

- Develop standards to encourage that the highest concentrations of residential development be located where the greatest potential exists for public utilities and services.
- Establish density limits with ranges or variations that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems, and which promote the preservation of the Township's natural resources and rural and suburban qualities.

- Establish development design standards that utilize small lot, cluster development where appropriate and which require that open space and existing roadside views be preserved.
- Develop incentives that require creative design of residential developments to set aside suitable portions of land for the preservation of natural features, open space accessible to all people, neighborhood parks, and road easements for non-motorized paths.
- Establish landscaping guidelines for existing and future residential development.
- Develop a mixed use residential/commercial zoning district that will apply to lands located south of the Village as identified on the Master Plan Map.
- Develop standards to encourage interconnectivity with existing sidewalks, non-motorized paths, open space, and parks.
- Encourage development layouts that blend with the natural features and existing physical attributes.
- Review and develop standards to encourage, where appropriate, light pollution regulations to preserve the night sky.
- Review and develop regulations to accommodate and protect wildlife corridors.
- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta to encourage new residential developments with densities greater than one unit per acre to connect to public water, sanitary sewer, stormwater services, and existing motorized and non-motorized transportation infrastructure.
- Periodically review standards for residential development in agricultural areas to ensure residential uses are compatible with existing and future agricultural uses.
- Review minimum dwelling requirements to ensure that the Township allows for a variety of housing styles and methods of construction where appropriate.
- In coordination with the Commercial goals of this plan, create a Mixed-Use Residential Commercial District.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMERCIAL USES

Purpose Statement

The intent and purpose of commercial uses is to provide residents and visitors with the goods and services they need or want. The purpose of commercial areas within the Township is to encourage diversified businesses that offer people a variety of goods and services in convenient locations.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Ranging from grocery stores and gas stations to restaurants and automotive repair facilities, there are a variety of appropriate local commercial uses that can provide goods and services to individuals. Recognizing that different commercial uses place varying levels of demand on public infrastructure (roads and utilities), more intense commercial land uses should be designed and located in areas where the appropriate public infrastructure exists.

Goals

- Identify and provide for the service and shopping needs of the Township's residents and visitors in suitable locations which will provide a safe and efficient traffic circulation pattern.
- Work with the Village of Sparta to ensure a unified commercial district that reflects a high quality of development along Sparta Avenue.
- Encourage the development of a variety of commercial uses.

Recommendations

- Develop a Commercial/Industrial zoning district that will apply to lands adjacent to portions of Sparta Avenue south of the Village of Sparta.
- Develop a mixed use residential/commercial zoning district that will apply to lands south of the Village as identified on the Master Plan Map.
- In order to minimize traffic congestion and hazards, develop regulations which require the shared use of commercial driveways and access roads, limit the number and spacing of driveways, and encourage the use of frontage roads or service drives.
- Review and develop regulations for setbacks, landscaping, architectural features and designs, and performance standards into the Township Zoning Ordinance that will achieve a high standard for commercial development which is aesthetically appealing, and which operates in a safe and efficient manner.
- Review regulations for pedestrian access in order to ensure safe and orderly pedestrian access to commercial sites.
- Review allowed uses, setbacks, and other regulations between commercial districts to ensure a clear distinction between districts.
- Review existing provisions and investigate the development of zoning provisions that would allow for the development of mixed uses.
- Require that development layouts blend with natural features and existing physical attributes.
- Encourage the preservation of trees and other existing natural features.
- Encourage wildlife corridors within developments.
- Nuisances such as air pollution, water pollution, vibration, noise, and outdoor storage of materials should be controlled by adequate site improvements.

- Encourage architectural features that enhance and preserve the rural and agricultural character of the community.
- In coordination with the Residential goals of this plan, create a Mixed-Use Residential Commercial District.

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CHAPTER FOUR: INDUSTRIAL USES

Purpose Statement

Industrial uses may produce odors, smoke, noise, traffic, and other similar byproducts that can be disruptive to the health, welfare, and safety of individuals. As such, the primary intent and purpose of the industrial land use classification is to identify uses that may negatively impact nearby properties and provide appropriate locations for industrial uses.

Additionally, industrial uses can play a vital role in a community's economy by providing jobs, offering opportunities to diversify the local economy, and creating a ripple effect that can extend to existing local, regional, and state businesses. As such, the secondary intent of the industrial land use classification is to capitalize on the positive impacts that industrial uses can have.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Industrial uses provide for the manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging, storage and distribution of products and materials.

Goals

- Provide for a variety of industrial development in areas served by adequate transportation systems and which are or will potentially be served by public utilities and services.
- Achieve high quality industrial development through appropriate zoning and performance requirements, while expanding economic opportunities to industrial developers.
- Separate industrial uses from less intense land uses such as residential through appropriate use of buffer strips, landscaping, open space, or transitional land uses.
- Protect and preserve, to the extent practicable, those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, wildlife habitats, farms, pastures, fields, open spaces and other natural areas, particularly those that are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Preserve the natural resources and groundwater quality of the Township.

Recommendations

- Encourage the extension of public utilities and services to those areas identified as desirable for industrial development.
- Work with local and regional economic development agencies to attract and retain desirable manufacturing, processing, or technological operations to the Sparta area.
- Develop a Commercial/Industrial zoning district that will apply to lands adjacent to portions of Sparta Avenue south of the Village of Sparta.
- Review and develop landscaping guidelines for existing and industrial development.
- Differentiate between light and heavy industrial uses, what utilities are necessary for each, what transportation infrastructure is necessary for each, and develop standards to ensure they are properly located.
- Engage with local farmers and business owners to determine what, if any, industrial uses would be beneficial to their existing operations.
- Review and evaluate the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that existing regulations are encouraging industrial uses to develop in a way that is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.

- Require that development layouts blend with natural features and existing physical attributes.
- Encourage the preservation of trees and other existing natural features.
- Encourage wildlife corridors within developments.
- Develop standards to ensure that industrial nuisances such as air pollution, water pollution, vibration, noise, and outdoor storage of materials are controlled by adequate site improvements.
- Encourage architectural features that enhance and preserve the rural and agricultural character of the community.

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CHAPTER FIVE: RECREATIONAL FACILITIES & THE ENVIRONMENT

Purpose Statement

Recreational facilities, both public and private, are vital components of a community. Recreational facilities create shared spaces which allow space to be used economically and provide opportunities for individuals to connect with their neighbors and the outdoors.

Further, based on the feedback received from the 2024 Master Plan Survey, the preservation of natural areas is a top priority for the community. These natural areas provide an essential element which both enhances and protects the quality of life in Sparta Township. Availability and access to recreational facilities and natural areas can increase an individual's overall health and welfare, among other benefits.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Recreational facilities can take many forms. They can be natural areas (such as lakes and woodlands) or developed spaces (such as playgrounds), or a mix of natural areas and developed spaces. The following list identifies some types of developed spaces and natural areas, but is by no means exhaustive: trails, buffers, playgrounds, sports fields, pools, lakes and other bodies of water, beaches, picnic areas, forested areas and many more.

Goals

- Plan for and develop active and passive outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the Township.
- Encourage the development of recreational facilities and areas to ensure that all residents have convenient access to recreational opportunities.
- Encourage interconnection between recreational facilities.
- Create and preserve public access to bodies of water and other natural areas in the Township.
- Preserve and enhance access to safe drinking water from groundwater sources.
- Preserve the aesthetics (views, serenity, rural nature, etc.) available in the Township.

Recommendations

- Work with developers to set aside suitable portions of land for neighborhood parks, and road easements for pedestrian/bicycle paths.
- Review and develop regulations that require developments (residential, commercial, and industrial) to include new pathways and other recreational amenities.
- Review and strengthen ordinance provisions to reduce flooding, control runoff, and improve water quality of all bodies of water in the Township.
- Develop a Recreation Plan for the Township.
- Maximize the utilization of public buildings and grounds for multi-functional services.
- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta, Kent County, and other nearby communities to ensure that a variety of recreational activities are developed and accessible to area residents.
- Coordinate with local, regional, and state agencies and officials to identify environmentally sensitive areas.
- Review and (as necessary) amend policies and overlay districts related to decision making and development in environmentally sensitive areas.

CHAPTER SIX: UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

Purpose Statement

Utilities provide essential services such as heat, power, potable water, waste disposal, and communications to individuals and organizations. Many utilities such as electricity, natural gas, internet, television, telephone and trash disposal are often provided by quasi-public or private companies. However, other utilities such as water, storm sewer, and sanitary sewer are often provided by municipalities or other public organizations.

In order for individuals to have the opportunity to live the highest quality of life, a township must work with both private and public organizations to build, maintain, and strengthen the facilities and infrastructures that provide these essential services to its community members.

Lastly, when utilities are expanded and strengthened, they can provide economic development opportunities for the community by providing the services necessary to support a more diverse range of commercial and industrial uses.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Sparta Township currently does not provide any public utilities. As the necessary infrastructure can be prohibitively expensive to construct, the Township will need to coordinate with nearby municipalities to extend and strengthen their existing facilities and infrastructures to serve appropriate areas of the community.

Further, more intensive land uses such as residential developments greater than one unit per acre, restaurants, food processing plants and other uses that have a high demand for water and sanitary sewer should be located in areas where they are able to connect to existing utility systems. This allows for the orderly development of utilities and aids in their long-term sustainability.

The development of utilities should be done in conjunction with the development of roads and other transportation methods.

Goals

- Provide for adequate infrastructure that will ensure balanced, orderly growth and ensure the safety and well-being of Township residents.
- Maintain an adequate level of community facilities and services that will ensure the safety, quality of life, and education of present and future Township residents.
- Develop adequate utilities that will ensure balanced, orderly growth and protect the safety and well-being of Township residents.
- Protect existing wells and access to potable water.

Recommendations

- Create a sub-area plan for Sparta Avenue, south of the Village of Sparta, and create a Zoning Overlay District to ensure that future development occurs in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.
- Limit higher densities of development to areas where future public utilities and services can be most economically and efficiently provided.

- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta to establish a Growth Management Plan that reflects a mutually agreed upon phasing for growth and development of residential, commercial, and industrial services and the public water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater services necessary to support the growth.
- Require residential development proposals denser than one unit per acre to construct public utilities where feasible.
- For all types of development, work with County and State officials to enforce acceptable standards and best practices regarding the construction of private water and sanitary sewer systems.
- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta and Sparta Fire and Rescue to ensure that all types of development occur in a manner that is safe and efficient.
- Encourage funding practices for improvements to public utilities that, to the extent possible, appropriately place the cost of utilities on users.
- Design incentives to encourage private investment in public water and/or sewer expansion.
- Encourage the extension of natural gas lines into the Township to provide more cost-effective sources of energy.
- Encourage the extension of services to provide one hundred percent accessibility to the internet.
- Prepare capital improvement plans for things such as roads, parks and recreation, utilities, and other improvements.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TRANSPORTATION

Purpose Statement

The road system within the Township serves as one of the backbones for growth and development. By providing a means for internal and external traffic circulation, the road system within the Township influences the shape and intensity of land use.

The road system is limited by the natural features, which pose a significant impediment to convenient traffic movement throughout the community. In many cases, hilly terrain, lakes, wetlands, ravines, and rivers have dictated the locations of roads and in some cases have resulted in the disruption of roads that would have otherwise been constructed in a complete grid pattern. Nevertheless, the Township is generally well served by a primary system of roadways that operate at varying levels of service.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

For planning purposes, it is useful to recognize that the various roads within the Township can have distinct functions. An understanding of these functions can lead to decisions as to the desirable use of each road segment, road right-of-way widths, building setbacks, and adjoining land use. In its 2021 Strategic Plan, the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) categorizes roads as follows:

- Primary Roads: Primary roads are generally the County's longer-distance, higher-volume roadways that connect centers of population and employment and provide access to Michigan's highway network.
 - All-season Roads: KCRC has identified a portion of the primary road network that provides vital connections between population centers, areas of economic activity, and the state trunkline network. Consequently, this portion of KCRC's primary road network carries higher volumes of traffic and commercial activity.
- Local Roads: Local roads comprise 65 percent of KCRC's network, which includes over 1,000 paved road miles and nearly 311 unpaved (gravel) road miles. Kent County's 21 townships share costs with KCRC to fund local road improvements, so strategies are tailored to use available resources and meet specific township needs.

Goals

- Provide for the orderly development and interconnection of motorized and non-motorized pathways.
- Maximize the efficiency, safety, and ease of maintenance of the vehicular transportation system and non-motorized pathway (i.e. bike path and sidewalk) system.
- Ensure road improvements promote growth in a way that improves public and private transit and is consistent with adopted goals and policies relating to land use and transportation.
- Ensure that existing roadways can handle future projected traffic volumes resulting from new development.

Recommendations

- Encourage design and construction standards for private roads to ensure the possibility of converting private roads to public roads; where possible, coordinate private road development so that these roads may connect logically and efficiently with public road systems and adjacent private road systems.

- Encourage the construction of non-motorized pathways on major arterial streets.
- Coordinate with the Kent County Road Commission and adjacent municipalities regarding the funding, maintenance, and development of roads.
- Encourage property owners to improve existing driveway and private road designs.
- Review and ensure that setbacks for signs, parking, and buildings are adequate to avoid conflicts with roads or pathways.
- Establish zoning and subdivision regulations that institute access controls intended to reduce traffic conflicts along County Primary and Local Roads and thereby preserving their volume and function.
- Create access management provisions in the Zoning Ordinance for commercial and industrial development.
- Limit the number of access points along County Primary Roads by encouraging shared access for commercial establishments through site plan review and other means.
- Strengthen ordinance provisions to require developers to provide road easements for non-motorized pathways.
- Review and develop regulations to ensure that new roads (public and private) conform to County road standards.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide for the continued development of Sparta Township, it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the plan rests with the Township Board, the Planning Commission, and the Township staff. This is done with a number of methods. These include ordinances, programs, policies, and administrative procedures.

This implementation must come from the decisions of the Township Board and Planning Commission to provide needed public improvements and to administer and establish regulatory measures related to the use of land.

The private sector, which includes individual landowners as well as developers, is also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan by the actual physical development of land and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the Township. Cooperation and coordination among individuals, private developers, and public agencies is, therefore, important in successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Zoning and Land Use Regulations

Zoning represents a legal means for the Township to regulate private property to achieve orderly land use relationships. Zoning is the process most commonly used to implement community plans. The zoning process consists of an official Zoning Map and accompanying Zoning Ordinance text. The official Zoning Map divides the community into different districts within which certain uses are allowed. The Zoning Ordinance text establishes permitted uses and regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setbacks, lot sizes and accessory uses, among other physical and linear attributes. The Zoning Ordinance also sets forth procedures for special approval provisions and regulates accessory structures such as signs. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as type of development.

The Planning Commission and Township Board should periodically review and make any necessary revisions to the zoning regulations based on the Strategies of this plan to ensure that the Goals and Recommendations of the Master Plan are instituted. Further, the Zoning Ordinance requires systematic and frequent updates to address needs resulting from changing trends, case law and state statutes.

Relationship of Master Plan Classifications to Zoning Districts (Zoning Plan)

Complementing the text of the Master Plan is its map, which identifies land use classifications by which the Township organizes and intends future improvements and uses. These classification terms are intentionally general in nature so as to not necessarily be specific to one use or type of uses permitted by the Zoning Ordinance and its map. In other words, while the land use classifications are related to the Zoning Districts identified on the Zoning Ordinance map, as shown in the table below, specific future uses are determined by numerous natural and man-made features of the landscape such as public utilities, topography, soils, road improvements, surrounding uses, existing densities, and etcetera, as well as other planning considerations such as compatibility, public safety, access, and etcetera. Consequently, while the land use classifications of the Master Plan Map are designed to serve as a guide for future uses, they are not considered to be a mandate for immediate improvements, public, private, or otherwise.

Ultimately, while the Master Plan Map identifies areas for future uses, the feasibility of a proposed use is determined by the aforementioned, and the Zoning Ordinance with its regulations regarding height, area, bulk, location, etc. for each of its Zoning Districts.

Table of Master Plan Classification Terms & Zoning Ordinance Map District Terms

Master Plan Map Classification Terms	Zoning Ordinance Map Districts
Agricultural Preservation (AP)	Prime Agricultural Preservation (AG-1)
Rural Agriculture (RA)	Agricultural (AG-2)
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Low Density – Single Family (R-1), Medium Density – Single Family (R-2)
Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	Medium-High Density – Multiple Family (R-3)
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	Medium-High Density – Mobile Home Park (R-4)
Mixed Use Residential Commercial	To be created.
Commercial (C)	General Commercial (C-1), Highway Commercial (C-2)
Commercial/Light Industrial (C/I)	Neighborhood Business District (C-1)
Industrial (I)	Light Industrial (I-1), Heavy Industrial (I-2)
Natural River Area (NR)	Rogue River Natural River Zone (RR)

Relationship of Master Plan Map Classification Terms to Master Plan Chapters

Several Chapters of this Master Plan identify the goals, recommendations, and strategies regarding future land uses within the Township. While the goals, recommendations, and strategies will likely always evolve, the intended uses related to the chapter titles will remain the same. Those chapter titles can generally be related to the Master Plan Map terms as provided in the table below.

Master Plan Map Classification Terms	Master Plan Chapters
Agricultural Preservation (AP)	Agricultural Uses
Rural Agriculture (RA)	Agricultural Uses/Residential Uses
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Residential Uses
Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	Residential Uses/ Commercial Uses
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	Residential Uses
Mixed Use Residential Commercial	Residential Uses/Commercial Uses/Industrial Uses
Commercial (C)	Commercial Uses
Commercial/Light Industrial (C/I)	Commercial Uses/Industrial Uses
Industrial (I)	Industrial Uses
Natural River Area (NR)	Recreational Facilities and the Environment

Master Plan Classification Terms

The following is a description of land use Classifications identified within this Master Plan.

Agricultural Preservation

The Agricultural Preservation Classification is intended to preserve a vital component of the Sparta Township economy, and to preserve an irreplaceable resource in soils that are unique for fruit and other crops production.

This classification recognizes lands which are best suited for farming based on location, current utility served areas, soil type, parcel size, and active farm operations. This classification consists of agricultural land but provides opportunities for limited land divisions for the creation of non-farm dwellings, to preserve natural features, preserve rural character, and minimize encroachment of non-agricultural uses. Public water and sanitary sewer are not envisioned within this Classification.

Rural Agriculture

The Rural Agriculture classified lands are intended to provide for residential development in a rural setting along with active agricultural uses. General farming activities will continue but are envisioned to be of less frequent occurrence than in the Agricultural Preservation classification. Farming activities may decline with the scope of the planning period.

Areas planned for Rural Agricultural already have an established pattern of residential land use. Rural Agricultural areas are designed to function as a transition from Agricultural Preservation areas to more intense land uses.

It may be appropriate to allow lands within the Rural Agriculture classification to be developed as open space neighborhoods. Open space neighborhoods are characterized by the clustering of residential dwelling units to a few select areas on a parcel while the remainder of the land would be set aside as permanent open space for use by residents. To appropriately act as a transition from Agricultural Preservation areas to more intense land uses, any residential development within the Rural Agricultural classification should be designed to buffer the residential land uses from nearby agricultural uses.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

The Low Density Residential classification is intended primarily for single family houses in a subdivision or clustered housing setting. These lands are intended to be served by public water and sanitary sewer. Lot sizes will vary depending on the type of utility service provided.

Open space neighborhoods should be encouraged in Low Density Residential areas to help preserve rural views, wildlife habitat, and natural areas for recreation.

Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)

The Medium High Density Residential Classification is intended to accommodate more dwelling units per acre than areas classified as Low Density Residential. These lands are intended to be served by public water

and sewer. Additionally, two-family, and multi-family dwelling units are envisioned as being a use by right in MHDR areas.

Planned Unit Developments and other similar residential or mixed residential/commercial developments should be encouraged in MHDR areas.

Mobile Home Park

Lands classified as Mobile Home Park are lands that are currently being used as mobile home parks. In order to provide for a balance in housing types, the Township has elected to establish a goal of maintaining a future housing mix of no more than 20% mobile homes located with mobile home parks as the maximum percentage of all dwellings in the Township.

In the event the Township grows at a faster rate than expected and the percentage of dwellings in mobile home parks falls to less than 20% of the total number of dwellings located with the Township, the Township will then look to amending the Master Plan to designate an additional site for mobile home park development.

Mixed-Use Residential Commercial

The Mixed-Use Residential Commercial (MURC) classification may require the development of a new zoning district. Mixed-Use Residential Commercial classified lands are intended to provide flexibility in development of the land south of the Village of Sparta, allowing for a variety of uses (single family dwellings, apartments, office, and commercial) within a single area.

Commercial uses allowed within this area should not compete directly with uses in downtown Sparta or commercial uses elsewhere within the Village. Additionally, industrial uses that are not likely to generate a large amount of traffic but still need good year-round access to Class A roads may be appropriate in this area. Any commercial or industrial use that requires connection to public water or sanitary sewer should be located adjacent to the Village of Sparta.

Emphasis should be placed on open space, village greens, sidewalks, and other design standards to help create a neighborhood. While these lands are identified to be just south of the Village of Sparta, other locations may be appropriate.

Along Sparta Avenue the MURC area may be extended to a depth of 500 feet.

Commercial

Commercial classified lands are intended to serve the convenience shopping needs of Township residents and the traveling public, as well as provide an area for contractor services and office spaces. These uses typically generate large volumes of traffic and benefit from increased visibility and accessibility. Outdoor display and storage of goods are also common characteristics of uses in this land use classification, although design standards should be developed to manage the intensity, aesthetic, location, and environmental impact of such outdoor displays. Commercial planned areas should be designed to be automobile oriented and be served by adequately developed roads.

Commercial/Industrial

~~The Commercial/Industrial classification requires the development of a new zoning district. Commercial uses allowed within this area should not compete directly with uses in downtown Sparta or commercial uses elsewhere within the Village. Additionally, industrial uses that are not likely to generate a large amount of traffic but still need good year-round access to Class A roads would be appropriate in this area. Any commercial or industrial use that requires connection to public water or sanitary sewer should be located adjacent to the Village of Sparta.~~

~~The Commercial/Industrial area may be extended to a depth of 500 feet.~~

Industrial

It is recognized that industrial development is important to the economy and tax base of the region. The areas designated for Industrial classification are located for easy access and where utilities are either available or are in the process of being established. It is intended that a request to rezone to the light industrial or heavy industrial zoning district will be evaluated on the basis of the availability of adequate infrastructure, compatibility with adjacent land uses, and the potential for danger of offense to nearby residents.

Natural River Area

This land use classification recognizes the importance of protecting the Rogue River as well as the woodlands and wetlands in immediate association with the river. This area encompasses a strip of land 400 feet wide on each side of the river as measured from the river's edge or ordinary high-water mark. The Natural River area as it exists in Sparta Township is a result of the State of Michigan naming the Rogue River as a natural river under the 1970 Natural River Act and other factors.

Master Plan Map

On the following page is the Master Plan Map, which depicts the future desired land uses with the Township.

Appendix

The following information can be found within the attached appendix:

- Selected Demographic Information
- Master Plan Survey Summary
- Informative Community Maps

EDITS SHOWN

Sparta Township

2026 MASTER PLAN

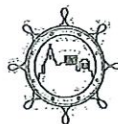
Planning Commission:

Terry Hartman – Chairperson
Tim Driscoll – Vice-Chairperson
Linda Anderson – Secretary
Don Doyle – Member
Dale Flanery – Member
Ken Humphreys – Member
Barb Johnson – Member

Board of Trustees:

Dale Bergman – Supervisor
Marcy Savage – Clerk
Ashley Johnson – Treasurer
Jason Bradford – Trustee
Bill Goodfellow – Trustee
Barb Johnson – Trustee
Rob Steffens – Trustee

With Assistance By:



Fresh Coast Planning

Sparta Township – 160 E. Division Street

Sparta – Michigan – 49345

Kent County

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INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY PROFILE

Preface

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, this Master Plan was created to serve as a guide for growth and development within Sparta Township (the "Township"). The Master Plan is a policy tool used by Township officials to coordinate growth and to serve as the basis for zoning. It guides the location and future arrangement of agricultural, industrial, residential, commercial, and recreational areas. These locations must consider a multitude of factors such as utilities and infrastructure, existing land use, physical characteristics of the land, traffic volumes and traffic routes, as well as environmental limitations.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act specifically provides townships with the authority to prepare and officially adopt a master plan. The Township's Master Plan functions as an official advisory policy statement for the orderly and efficient use of land. The Master Plan provides the coordination of land uses with other land uses, with streets, and with other necessary public infrastructure. The Master Plan also provides the legal and logical basis for local zoning, subdivision design, and public improvement plans, and for facilitating and guiding the work of the Sparta Township Planning Commission (the "Planning Commission") and the Sparta Township Board (the "Township Board"). It is also a means of communicating to surrounding communities, private organizations, and individuals about how they need to relate their future development plans and building projects to the official plans of the Township.

Despite its purpose as a policy document, it is important to recognize that the Master Plan is general in scope. It is not always intended to establish the precise boundaries of land use areas or exact locations of future uses. Rather, the Master Plan is an organized approach to analyzing development issues and proposing strategies to address these issues. Its function is to guide growth, providing a framework to ensure that future detailed decisions for development can be made based on a community-wide perspective. Given that the needs and desires of the community change over time, the Master Plan must be regularly reviewed and periodically updated. The Master Plan projects more than twenty years into the future and must be revisited at least every five years to ensure its legitimacy.

Community

Physical and environmental conditions establish limitations on how some areas of the Township will develop. The physical and environmental makeup of the Township influences the population, housing, economic, and labor force composition of the community. Given likely continued efforts to convert farmland to residential or commercial properties, demands will continue for additional infrastructure, yet also for the preservation of the natural environment. The Master Plan must therefore establish future residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational areas within the Township in order to adequately address the needs of the community as a whole and prevent incompatible uses.

Sparta Township is located in northwest Kent County and is approximately 33.5 square miles in size. The Township is bounded on the north by 16-Mile Road, on the east by Division Avenue, on the south by Ten Mile Road, and on the west by Kenowa Avenue.

Sparta Township is a part of the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. According to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, as of July 1, 2024, the City of Grand Rapids is the fastest growing economy in the United States of America. This growth ripples through the region, creating demand for residential housing and

commercial development. Sparta Township is located approximately 16.5 miles or a 25-minute drive from the City of Grand Rapids. Primary access to and from Grand Rapids is via M-37, which traverses the Township in primarily a north-south direction.

Two natural characteristics that have played a major role in the development of the Township, both historically and today, are the Rogue River which lies in the eastern portion of the Township and the concentration of prime farmland soils in areas west of M-37 (the "Ridge") and areas north of the Village of Sparta. The Rogue River and prime farmland soils have helped create a community with a rich agricultural and rural character. In order to protect the community's agricultural and rural character, the Township has historically encouraged commercial and industrial development to be focused in the Village of Sparta; with residential development and some commercial development encouraged east of M-37, west of the Rogue River, and south of the Village of Sparta.

Other characteristics that play a significant role in the development of Sparta Township are M-37, the active rail line, and the Sparta Municipal Airport which lies in the southeast portion of the Township.

How to Use this Plan

For each land use or related chapter, the Master Plan provides a purpose statement, general description of appropriate uses, and recommendations which form the basis for future development. The purpose statement, general description, and recommendations are designed as follows:

- Purpose Statement – Identifies the purpose and intent of the land use classification or community attribute.
- General Description of Appropriate Uses – Provides examples of uses that may be appropriate within each land use classification.
- Goals – Identifies the goals in list format for ease of use when reviewing land use and zoning ordinance amendment proposals.
- Recommendations – Provides recommendations on how the Township may help promote and create the desired future state of the land use as identified in the Purpose Statement.

General Goals and Objectives of Land Use Policy in Sparta Township

The listed items below are the overarching goals and objectives of future land use development within the Township. They are intended as a way to tie the individual land use classifications and community attributes together and are used as part of the foundation for the creation of other content within this plan.

- Develop policies and regulations designed to protect and preserve the rural, agricultural, and natural assets of the community.
- Develop policies and regulations designed to encourage the concentration of development near the Village of Sparta.
- Develop policies that will increase residents' access to commercial services and goods within Sparta Township or the Village of Sparta.
- Ensure that the above listed policies are balanced to allow for continued residential growth while protecting the rural, agricultural, and natural assets of the community.
- Develop policies designed to preserve the agricultural look and feel of the community.
- Develop policies that will require new developments to be designed in such a way that they preserve or enhance the agricultural and rural character of the community.
- Develop policies that will preserve or enhance natural areas within the Township.

Definition of Terms

Given the value of preserving agricultural and natural areas for the Sparta Township community, the following terms are recognized as defined below, in order to streamline the content of the Master Plan.

- *Rural Character* – is recognized as the natural features of the earth that minimize the visual exposure of buildings, structures, or other man-made features and which create scenic character. It is also recognized as the natural features of the earth that provide environmental buffers and/or habitat that is characteristic of the Township. Such features include:
 - Woods, woodlots, forest areas, and trees
 - Wetlands
 - Natural vegetation
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Natural field areas
 - Scenic vistas

Rural Character also includes farmland, which is recognized as part of the natural features that are organized and managed by people.

- *Open Space* – is recognized as areas of land unoccupied by buildings, structures, or other man-made features, that are preserved to be unoccupied by buildings, structures, or other man-made features within a project. Open Space is not intended to include displays of art or other cultural features; bridges, signage, utilities, and other essential service structures; or grade level features such as ponds.

CHAPTER ONE: AGRICULTURAL USES

Purpose Statement

Based on feedback received as part of the Master Plan community input survey conducted in early 2024, the preservation of natural areas and farmland is a top priority for the community. Given this, the primary intent and purpose of the Agricultural Land Use Classification is to protect prime agricultural areas based on farming best practices and farming operations.

The secondary intent and purpose of the Agricultural Land Use Classification is to protect and preserve Open Space and the Rural Character of the community.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

The primary or principal uses intended for Agricultural lands are cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, and other similar uses. Any other uses within agricultural lands should be designed to promote and facilitate the primary intended uses.

Any non-farm use should be located and designed so as to protect farmland and natural areas and the rural character of these lands. Further, non-farm uses should be directed to occur in areas that are classified as Rural Agriculture.

Goals

- Preserve lands suitable for agricultural use in the Township and manage growth to minimize the encroachment of residential, commercial, and industrial uses into areas valued for agricultural purposes.
- Plan for and guide new development in a manner which preserves the most significant natural features in the Township, as well as the rural views and character.
- Preserve woodland and wetlands associated with farms which are valuable as water retention and groundwater recharge areas, and as a habitat for plant and animal life.
- Prevent dense residential or commercial developments west of M-37 to protect premature development and loss of farmland.
- Encourage accessory agritourism uses that support local farmers and growers by promoting individuals to visit the area and buy from local farmers and businesses.

Recommendations

- Continue to support zoning regulations which restrict non-farm development in areas consisting primarily of prime farmland; in general, these areas consist mainly of those lands west of M-37.
- Develop zoning regulations which make lands which are less suitable for agriculture use more attractive to develop than prime agricultural land.
- Promote agriculture as a strong component of the local economic base.
- Periodically review zoning ordinance regulations to ensure they are not negatively impacting the safe, efficient, and financial feasibility of farming operations.
- Periodically review the Prime Agricultural Preservation, Agricultural, and other zoning districts to ensure the regulations complement each other and provide for the protection of farming, Open Space, and the orderly development of the community.

- Review and develop lot area, width, depth, and other regulations to ensure parcels are developed and oriented to protect the rural image and blend development with the natural landscape.
- Encourage soil conservation practices, the prudent use of fertilizers and pesticides and other means of conserving wildlife habitats, wetlands, and woodlands.
- Consider adopting regulations which require the preservation of a natural vegetation filtration strip along lakes, rivers, and streams.
- Review and develop regulations to accommodate and protect wildlife corridors.
- Periodically review the zoning ordinance to ensure that the number and location of new dwellings permitted to be built within Agricultural lands reflects the community's priorities.
- Periodically review zoning ordinance provisions pertaining to "value-added" opportunities in the Agricultural District, to ensure that regulations are current, consistent across uses, and support activities such as farm markets, processing of products for food or beverage, recreation and tourism, and other agricultural enterprises.

CHAPTER TWO: RESIDENTIAL USES

Purpose Statement

The primary intent and purpose of residential land uses is to provide people with a range of residential living styles that provide individuals and families with the opportunity to live in a way that meets their needs and desires in a manner that is safe, affordable, and enhances a sense of community.

Further, in recognizing the high demand for housing in Western Michigan and the importance of residential growth in supporting the local economy, the Township encourages limited residential growth in appropriate areas of the Township.

Where the preservation of prime agricultural lands conflicts with the development of new housing developments, the goal of preserving prime agricultural land should generally prevail.

General Description of Appropriate Land Use

Residential land uses vary in terms of densities and intensity of land use. The denser a residential land use is, the more intense its use of the land and the land's resources. As such, denser residential uses such as apartments, multi-family housing, and residential developments with densities greater than one unit per acre should be located where public utilities and infrastructure are available, with less dense residential uses being located in areas that are not near public utilities and private well and septic systems are able to be safely installed, used and maintained.

Goals

- To create attractive, safe, and convenient residential environments.
- Provide for a variety of housing opportunities near schools, parks, utilities, and other facilities determined desirable or necessary for community involvement.
- Provide housing for a variety of income levels and needs.
- Limit mobile homes located within mobile home parks to 20% of the total number of dwelling units within the Township, to ensure a balance in housing types.
- Direct residential development to occur east of M-37 and west of the Rogue River in areas that are able to connect to public utilities and services.
- Discourage residential development in areas with Prime Farmland Soils.
- Ensure that new housing developments are constructed and designed in such a way that preserves and enhances the rural and agricultural character of the community.
- Ensure that residential land uses are organized in such a way that they are harmonious with agricultural areas, natural areas, and the existing character of the surrounding area.
- Ensure the preservation of open space, wildlife habitats, and recreation opportunities.

Recommendations

- Develop standards to encourage that the highest concentrations of residential development be located where the greatest potential exists for public utilities and services.
- Establish density limits with ranges or variations that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems, and which promote the preservation of the Township's natural resources and rural and suburban qualities.

- Establish development design standards that utilize small lot, cluster development where appropriate and which require that open space and existing roadside views be preserved.
- Develop incentives that require creative design of residential developments to set aside suitable portions of land for the preservation of natural features, open space accessible to all people, neighborhood parks, and road easements for non-motorized paths.
- Establish landscaping guidelines for existing and future residential development.
- Develop a mixed use residential/commercial zoning district that will apply to lands located south of the Village as identified on the Master Plan Map.
- Develop standards to encourage interconnectivity with existing sidewalks, non-motorized paths, open space, and parks.
- Encourage development layouts that blend with the natural features and existing physical attributes.
- Review and develop standards to encourage, where appropriate, light pollution regulations to preserve the night sky.
- Review and develop regulations to accommodate and protect wildlife corridors.
- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta to encourage new residential developments with densities greater than one unit per acre to connect to public water, sanitary sewer, stormwater services, and existing motorized and non-motorized transportation infrastructure.
- Periodically review standards for residential development in agricultural areas to ensure residential uses are compatible with existing and future agricultural uses.
- Review minimum dwelling requirements to ensure that the Township allows for a variety of housing styles and methods of construction where appropriate.
- In coordination with the Commercial goals of this plan, create a Mixed-Use Residential Commercial District.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMERCIAL USES

Purpose Statement

The intent and purpose of commercial uses is to provide residents and visitors with the goods and services they need or want. The purpose of commercial areas within the Township is to encourage diversified businesses that offer people a variety of goods and services in convenient locations.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Ranging from grocery stores and gas stations to restaurants and automotive repair facilities, there are a variety of appropriate local commercial uses that can provide goods and services to individuals. Recognizing that different commercial uses place varying levels of demand on public infrastructure (roads and utilities), more intense commercial land uses should be designed and located in areas where the appropriate public infrastructure exists.

Goals

- Identify and provide for the service and shopping needs of the Township's residents and visitors in suitable locations which will provide a safe and efficient traffic circulation pattern.
- Work with the Village of Sparta to ensure a unified commercial district that reflects a high quality of development along Sparta Avenue.
- Encourage the development of a variety of commercial uses.

Recommendations

- Develop a Commercial/Industrial zoning district that will apply to lands adjacent to portions of Sparta Avenue south of the Village of Sparta.
- Develop a mixed use residential/commercial zoning district that will apply to lands south of the Village as identified on the Master Plan Map.
- In order to minimize traffic congestion and hazards, develop regulations which require the shared use of commercial driveways and access roads, limit the number and spacing of driveways, and encourage the use of frontage roads or service drives.
- Review and develop regulations for setbacks, landscaping, architectural features and designs, and performance standards into the Township Zoning Ordinance that will achieve a high standard for commercial development which is aesthetically appealing, and which operates in a safe and efficient manner.
- Review regulations for pedestrian access in order to ensure safe and orderly pedestrian access to commercial sites.
- Review allowed uses, setbacks, and other regulations between commercial districts to ensure a clear distinction between districts.
- Review existing provisions and investigate the development of zoning provisions that would allow for the development of mixed uses.
- Require that development layouts blend with natural features and existing physical attributes.
- Encourage the preservation of trees and other existing natural features.
- Encourage wildlife corridors within developments.
- Nuisances such as air pollution, water pollution, vibration, noise, and outdoor storage of materials should be controlled by adequate site improvements.

- Encourage architectural features that enhance and preserve the rural and agricultural character of the community.
- In coordination with the Residential goals of this plan, create a Mixed-Use Residential Commercial District.

CHAPTER FOUR: INDUSTRIAL USES

Purpose Statement

Industrial uses may produce odors, smoke, noise, traffic, and other similar byproducts that can be disruptive to the health, welfare, and safety of individuals. As such, the primary intent and purpose of the industrial land use classification is to identify uses that may negatively impact nearby properties and provide appropriate locations for industrial uses.

Additionally, industrial uses can play a vital role in a community's economy by providing jobs, offering opportunities to diversify the local economy, and creating a ripple effect that can extend to existing local, regional, and state businesses. As such, the secondary intent of the industrial land use classification is to capitalize on the positive impacts that industrial uses can have.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Industrial uses provide for the manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging, storage and distribution of products and materials.

Goals

- Provide for a variety of industrial development in areas served by adequate transportation systems and which are or will potentially be served by public utilities and services.
- Achieve high quality industrial development through appropriate zoning and performance requirements, while expanding economic opportunities to industrial developers.
- Separate industrial uses from less intense land uses such as residential through appropriate use of buffer strips, landscaping, open space, or transitional land uses.
- Protect and preserve, to the extent practicable, those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, wildlife habitats, farms, pastures, fields, open spaces and other natural areas, particularly those that are useful as water retention and ground water discharge areas and have important aesthetic and scenic value
- Preserve the natural resources and groundwater quality of the Township.

Recommendations

- Encourage the extension of public utilities and services to those areas identified as desirable for industrial development.
- Work with local and regional economic development agencies to attract and retain desirable manufacturing, processing, or technological operations to the Sparta area.
- Develop a Commercial/Industrial zoning district that will apply to lands adjacent to portions of Sparta Avenue south of the Village of Sparta.
- Review and develop landscaping guidelines for existing and industrial development.
- Differentiate between light and heavy industrial uses, what utilities are necessary for each, what transportation infrastructure is necessary for each, and develop standards to ensure they are properly located.
- Engage with local farmers and business owners to determine what, if any, industrial uses would be beneficial to their existing operations.
- Review and evaluate the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that existing regulations are encouraging industrial uses to develop in a way that is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.

- Require that development layouts blend with natural features and existing physical attributes.
- Encourage the preservation of trees and other existing natural features.
- Encourage wildlife corridors within developments.
- Develop standards to ensure that industrial nuisances such as air pollution, water pollution, vibration, noise, and outdoor storage of materials are controlled by adequate site improvements.
- Encourage architectural features that enhance and preserve the rural and agricultural character of the community.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECREATIONAL FACILITIES & THE ENVIRONMENT

Purpose Statement

Recreational facilities, both public and private, are vital components of a community. Recreational facilities create shared spaces which allow space to be used economically and provide opportunities for individuals to connect with their neighbors and the outdoors.

Further, based on the feedback received from the 2024 Master Plan Survey, the preservation of natural areas is a top priority for the community. These natural areas provide an essential element which both enhances and protects the quality of life in Sparta Township. Availability and access to recreational facilities and natural areas can increase an individual's overall health and welfare, among other benefits.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Recreational facilities can take many forms. They can be natural areas (such as lakes and woodlands) or developed spaces (such as playgrounds), or a mix of natural areas and developed spaces. The following list identifies some types of developed spaces and natural areas, but is by no means exhaustive: trails, buffers, playgrounds, sports fields, pools, lakes and other bodies of water, beaches, picnic areas, forested areas and many more.

Goals

- Plan for and develop active and passive outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the Township.
- Encourage the development of recreational facilities and areas to ensure that all residents have convenient access to recreational opportunities.
- Encourage interconnection between recreational facilities.
- Create and preserve public access to bodies of water and other natural areas in the Township.
- Preserve and enhance access to safe drinking water from groundwater sources.
- Preserve the aesthetics (views, serenity, rural nature, etc.) available in the Township.

Recommendations

- Work with developers to set aside suitable portions of land for neighborhood parks, and road easements for pedestrian/bicycle paths.
- Review and develop regulations that require developments (residential, commercial, and industrial) to include new pathways and other recreational amenities.
- Review and strengthen ordinance provisions to reduce flooding, control runoff, and improve water quality of all bodies of water in the Township.
- Develop a Recreation Plan for the Township.
- Maximize the utilization of public buildings and grounds for multi-functional services.
- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta, Kent County, and other nearby communities to ensure that a variety of recreational activities are developed and accessible to area residents.
- Coordinate with local, regional, and state agencies and officials to identify environmentally sensitive areas.
- Review and (as necessary) amend policies and overlay districts related to decision making and development in environmentally sensitive areas.

CHAPTER SIX: UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

Purpose Statement

Utilities provide essential services such as heat, power, potable water, waste disposal, and communications to individuals and organizations. Many utilities such as electricity, natural gas, internet, television, telephone and trash disposal are often provided by quasi-public or private companies. However, other utilities such as water, storm sewer, and sanitary sewer are often provided by municipalities or other public organizations.

In order for individuals to have the opportunity to live the highest quality of life, a township must work with both private and public organizations to build, maintain, and strengthen the facilities and infrastructures that provide these essential services to its community members.

Lastly, when utilities are expanded and strengthened, they can provide economic development opportunities for the community by providing the services necessary to support a more diverse range of commercial and industrial uses.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

Sparta Township currently does not provide any public utilities. As the necessary infrastructure can be prohibitively expensive to construct, the Township will need to coordinate with nearby municipalities to extend and strengthen their existing facilities and infrastructures to serve appropriate areas of the community.

Further, more intensive land uses such as residential developments greater than one unit per acre, restaurants, food processing plants and other uses that have a high demand for water and sanitary sewer should be located in areas where they are able to connect to existing utility systems. This allows for the orderly development of utilities and aids in their long-term sustainability.

The development of utilities should be done in conjunction with the development of roads and other transportation methods.

Goals

- Provide for adequate infrastructure that will ensure balanced, orderly growth and ensure the safety and well-being of Township residents.
- Maintain an adequate level of community facilities and services that will ensure the safety, quality of life, and education of present and future Township residents.
- Develop adequate utilities that will ensure balanced, orderly growth and protect the safety and well-being of Township residents.
- Protect existing wells and access to potable water.

Recommendations

- Create a sub-area plan for Sparta Avenue, south of the Village of Sparta, and create a Zoning Overlay District to ensure that future development occurs in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.
- Limit higher densities of development to areas where future public utilities and services can be most economically and efficiently provided.

- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta to establish a Growth Management Plan that reflects a mutually agreed upon phasing for growth and development of residential, commercial, and industrial services and the public water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater services necessary to support the growth.
- Require residential development proposals denser than one unit per acre to construct public utilities where feasible.
- For all types of development, work with County and State officials to enforce acceptable standards and best practices regarding the construction of private water and sanitary sewer systems.
- Coordinate with the Village of Sparta and Sparta Fire and Rescue to ensure that all types of development occur in a manner that is safe and efficient.
- Encourage funding practices for improvements to public utilities that, to the extent possible, appropriately place the cost of utilities on users.
- Design incentives to encourage private investment in public water and/or sewer expansion.
- Encourage the extension of natural gas lines into the Township to provide more cost-effective sources of energy.
- Encourage the extension of services to provide one hundred percent accessibility to the internet.
- Prepare capital improvement plans for things such as roads, parks and recreation, utilities, and other improvements.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TRANSPORTATION

Purpose Statement

The road system within the Township serves as one of the backbones for growth and development. By providing a means for internal and external traffic circulation, the road system within the Township influences the shape and intensity of land use.

The road system is limited by the natural features, which pose a significant impediment to convenient traffic movement throughout the community. In many cases, hilly terrain, lakes, wetlands, ravines, and rivers have dictated the locations of roads and in some cases have resulted in the disruption of roads that would have otherwise been constructed in a complete grid pattern. Nevertheless, the Township is generally well served by a primary system of roadways that operate at varying levels of service.

General Description of Appropriate Land Uses

For planning purposes, it is useful to recognize that the various roads within the Township can have distinct functions. An understanding of these functions can lead to decisions as to the desirable use of each road segment, road right-of-way widths, building setbacks, and adjoining land use. In its 2021 Strategic Plan, the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) categorizes roads as follows:

- Primary Roads: Primary roads are generally the County's longer-distance, higher-volume roadways that connect centers of population and employment and provide access to Michigan's highway network.
 - All-season Roads: KCRC has identified a portion of the primary road network that provides vital connections between population centers, areas of economic activity, and the state trunkline network. Consequently, this portion of KCRC's primary road network carries higher volumes of traffic and commercial activity.
- Local Roads: Local roads comprise 65 percent of KCRC's network, which includes over 1,000 paved road miles and nearly 311 unpaved (gravel) road miles. Kent County's 21 townships share costs with KCRC to fund local road improvements, so strategies are tailored to use available resources and meet specific township needs.

Goals

- Provide for the orderly development and interconnection of motorized and non-motorized pathways.
- Maximize the efficiency, safety, and ease of maintenance of the vehicular transportation system and non-motorized pathway (i.e. bike path and sidewalk) system.
- Ensure road improvements promote growth in a way that improves public and private transit and is consistent with adopted goals and policies relating to land use and transportation.
- Ensure that existing roadways can handle future projected traffic volumes resulting from new development.

Recommendations

- Encourage design and construction standards for private roads to ensure the possibility of converting private roads to public roads; where possible, coordinate private road development so that these roads may connect logically and efficiently with public road systems and adjacent private road systems.

- Encourage the construction of non-motorized pathways on major arterial streets.
- Coordinate with the Kent County Road Commission and adjacent municipalities regarding the funding, maintenance, and development of roads.
- Encourage property owners to improve existing driveway and private road designs.
- Review and ensure that setbacks for signs, parking, and buildings are adequate to avoid conflicts with roads or pathways.
- Establish zoning and subdivision regulations that institute access controls intended to reduce traffic conflicts along County Primary and Local Roads and thereby preserving their volume and function.
- Create access management provisions in the Zoning Ordinance for commercial and industrial development.
- Limit the number of access points along County Primary Roads by encouraging shared access for commercial establishments through site plan review and other means.
- Strengthen ordinance provisions to require developers to provide road easements for non-motorized pathways.
- Review and develop regulations to ensure that new roads (public and private) conform to County road standards.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide for the continued development of Sparta Township, it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the plan rests with the Township Board, the Planning Commission, and the Township staff. This is done with a number of methods. These include ordinances, programs, policies, and administrative procedures.

This implementation must come from the decisions of the Township Board and Planning Commission to provide needed public improvements and to administer and establish regulatory measures related to the use of land.

The private sector, which includes individual landowners as well as developers, is also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan by the actual physical development of land and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the Township. Cooperation and coordination among individuals, private developers, and public agencies is, therefore, important in successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Zoning and Land Use Regulations

Zoning represents a legal means for the Township to regulate private property to achieve orderly land use relationships. Zoning is the process most commonly used to implement community plans. The zoning process consists of an official Zoning Map and accompanying Zoning Ordinance text. The official Zoning Map divides the community into different districts within which certain uses are allowed. The Zoning Ordinance text establishes permitted uses and regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setbacks, lot sizes and accessory uses, among other physical and linear attributes. The Zoning Ordinance also sets forth procedures for special approval provisions and regulates accessory structures such as signs. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as type of development.

The Planning Commission and Township Board should periodically review and make any necessary revisions to the zoning regulations based on the Strategies of this plan to ensure that the Goals and Recommendations of the Master Plan are instituted. Further, the Zoning Ordinance requires systematic and frequent updates to address needs resulting from changing trends, case law and state statutes.

Relationship of Master Plan Classifications to Zoning Districts (Zoning Plan)

Complementing the text of the Master Plan is its map, which identifies land use classifications by which the Township organizes and intends future improvements and uses. These classification terms are intentionally general in nature so as to not necessarily be specific to one use or type of uses permitted by the Zoning Ordinance and its map. In other words, while the land use classifications are related to the Zoning Districts identified on the Zoning Ordinance map, as shown in the table below, specific future uses are determined by numerous natural and man-made features of the landscape such as public utilities, topography, soils, road improvements, surrounding uses, existing densities, and etcetera, as well as other planning considerations such as compatibility, public safety, access, and etcetera. Consequently, while the land use classifications of the Master Plan Map are designed to serve as a guide for future uses, they are not considered to be a mandate for immediate improvements, public, private, or otherwise.

Ultimately, while the Master Plan Map identifies areas for future uses, the feasibility of a proposed use is determined by the aforementioned, and the Zoning Ordinance with its regulations regarding height, area, bulk, location, etc. for each of its Zoning Districts.

Table of Master Plan Classification Terms & Zoning Ordinance Map District Terms

Master Plan Map Classification Terms	Zoning Ordinance Map Districts
Agricultural Preservation (AP)	Prime Agricultural Preservation (AG-1)
Rural Agriculture (RA)	Agricultural (AG-2)
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Low Density – Single Family (R-1), Medium Density – Single Family (R-2)
Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	Medium-High Density – Multiple Family (R-3)
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	Medium-High Density – Mobile Home Park (R-4)
Mixed Use Residential Commercial	To be created.
Commercial (C)	General Commercial (C-1), Highway Commercial (C-2)
Commercial/Light Industrial (C/I)	Neighborhood Business District (C-1)
Industrial (I)	Light Industrial (I-1), Heavy Industrial (I-2)
Natural River Area (NR)	Rogue River Natural River Zone (RR)

Relationship of Master Plan Map Classification Terms to Master Plan Chapters

Several Chapters of this Master Plan identify the goals, recommendations, and strategies regarding future land uses within the Township. While the goals, recommendations, and strategies will likely always evolve, the intended uses related to the chapter titles will remain the same. Those chapter titles can generally be related to the Master Plan Map terms as provided in the table below.

Master Plan Map Classification Terms	Master Plan Chapters
Agricultural Preservation (AP)	Agricultural Uses
Rural Agriculture (RA)	Agricultural Uses/Residential Uses
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Residential Uses
Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	Residential Uses/ Commercial Uses
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	Residential Uses
Mixed Use Residential Commercial	Residential Uses/Commercial Uses/Industrial Uses
Commercial (C)	Commercial Uses
Industrial (I)	Industrial Uses
Natural River Area (NR)	Recreational Facilities and the Environment

Master Plan Classification Terms

The following is a description of land use Classifications identified within this Master Plan.

Agricultural Preservation

The Agricultural Preservation Classification is intended to preserve a vital component of the Sparta Township economy, and to preserve an irreplaceable resource in soils that are unique for fruit and other crops production.

This classification recognizes lands which are best suited for farming based on location, current utility served areas, soil type, parcel size, and active farm operations. This classification consists of agricultural land but provides opportunities for limited land divisions for the creation of non-farm dwellings, to preserve natural features, preserve rural character, and minimize encroachment of non-agricultural uses. Public water and sanitary sewer are not envisioned within this Classification.

Rural Agriculture

The Rural Agriculture classified lands are intended to provide for residential development in a rural setting along with active agricultural uses. General farming activities will continue but are envisioned to be of less frequent occurrence than in the Agricultural Preservation classification. Farming activities may decline with the scope of the planning period.

Areas planned for Rural Agricultural already have an established pattern of residential land use. Rural Agricultural areas are designed to function as a transition from Agricultural Preservation areas to more intense land uses.

It may be appropriate to allow lands within the Rural Agriculture classification to be developed as open space neighborhoods. Open space neighborhoods are characterized by the clustering of residential dwelling units to a few select areas on a parcel while the remainder of the land would be set aside as permanent open space for use by residents. To appropriately act as a transition from Agricultural Preservation areas to more intense land uses, any residential development within the Rural Agricultural classification should be designed to buffer the residential land uses from nearby agricultural uses.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

The Low Density Residential classification is intended primarily for single family houses in a subdivision or clustered housing setting. These lands are intended to be served by public water and sanitary sewer. Lot sizes will vary depending on the type of utility service provided.

Open space neighborhoods should be encouraged in Low Density Residential areas to help preserve rural views, wildlife habitat, and natural areas for recreation.

Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)

The Medium High Density Residential Classification is intended to accommodate more dwelling units per acre than areas classified as Low Density Residential. These lands are intended to be served by public water

and sewer. Additionally, two-family, and multi-family dwelling units are envisioned as being a use by right in MHDR areas.

Planned Unit Developments and other similar residential or mixed residential/commercial developments should be encouraged in MHDR areas.

Mobile Home Park

Lands classified as Mobile Home Park are lands that are currently being used as mobile home parks. In order to provide for a balance in housing types, the Township has elected to establish a goal of maintaining a future housing mix of no more than 20% mobile homes located with mobile home parks as the maximum percentage of all dwellings in the Township.

In the event the Township grows at a faster rate than expected and the percentage of dwellings in mobile home parks falls to less than 20% of the total number of dwellings located with the Township, the Township will then look to amending the Master Plan to designate an additional site for mobile home park development.

Mixed-Use Residential Commercial

The Mixed-Use Residential Commercial (MURC) classification may require the development of a new zoning district. Mixed-Use Residential Commercial classified lands are intended to provide flexibility in development of the land south of the Village of Sparta, allowing for a variety of uses (single family dwellings, apartments, office, and commercial) within a single area.

Commercial uses allowed within this area should not compete directly with uses in downtown Sparta or commercial uses elsewhere within the Village. Additionally, industrial uses that are not likely to generate a large amount of traffic but still need good year-round access to Class A roads may be appropriate in this area. Any commercial or industrial use that requires connection to public water or sanitary sewer should be located adjacent to the Village of Sparta.

Emphasis should be placed on open space, village greens, sidewalks, and other design standards to help create a neighborhood. While these lands are identified to be just south of the Village of Sparta, other locations may be appropriate.

Along Sparta Avenue the MURC area may be extended to a depth of 500 feet.

Commercial

Commercial classified lands are intended to serve the convenience shopping needs of Township residents and the traveling public, as well as provide an area for contractor services and office spaces. These uses typically generate large volumes of traffic and benefit from increased visibility and accessibility. Outdoor display and storage of goods are also common characteristics of uses in this land use classification, although design standards should be developed to manage the intensity, aesthetic, location, and environmental impact of such outdoor displays. Commercial planned areas should be designed to be automobile oriented and be served by adequately developed roads.

Industrial

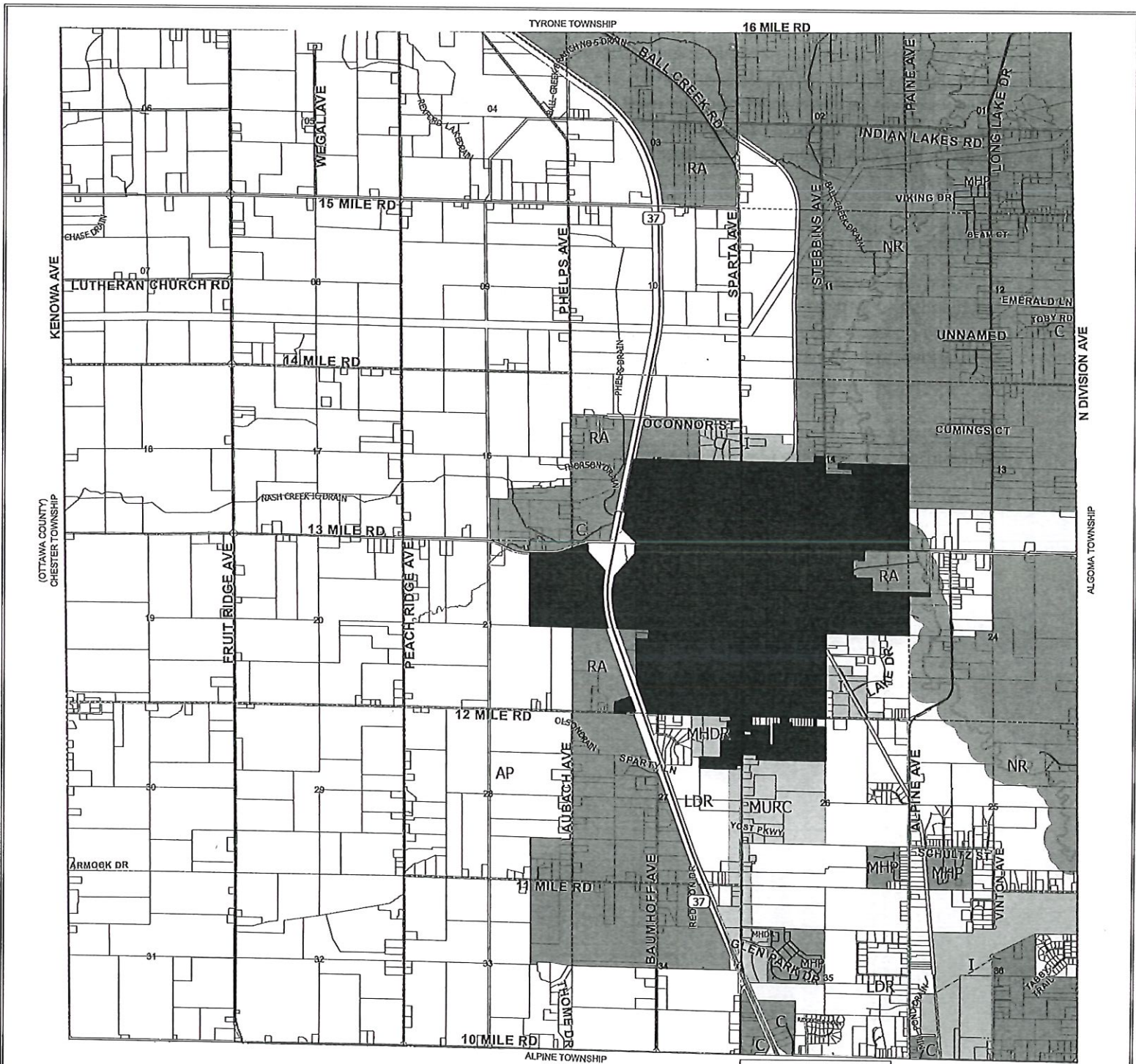
It is recognized that industrial development is important to the economy and tax base of the region. The areas designated for Industrial classification are located for easy access and where utilities are either available or are in the process of being established. It is intended that a request to rezone to the light industrial or heavy industrial zoning district will be evaluated on the basis of the availability of adequate infrastructure, compatibility with adjacent land uses, and the potential for danger of offense to nearby residents.

Natural River Area

This land use classification recognizes the importance of protecting the Rogue River as well as the woodlands and wetlands in immediate association with the river. This area encompasses a strip of land 400 feet wide on each side of the river as measured from the river's edge or ordinary high-water mark. The Natural River area as it exists in Sparta Township is a result of the State of Michigan naming the Rogue River as a natural river under the 1970 Natural River Act and other factors.

Master Plan Map

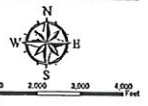
On the following page is the Master Plan Map, which depicts the future desired land uses with the Township.



Master Plan

Sparta Township, MI
As of March 4, 2026

Symbol	Legend
[Symbol]	RA
[Symbol]	AP
[Symbol]	LDR
[Symbol]	MURC
[Symbol]	MHP
[Symbol]	NR
[Symbol]	G
[Symbol]	C
[Symbol]	Other Zoning Districts



Appendix

The following information can be found within the appendix:

- Selected Demographic Information
- Master Plan Survey Summary
- Informative Community Maps

Sparta Township, MI

Selected Demographic Information

Fresh Coast Planning
1-23-2025

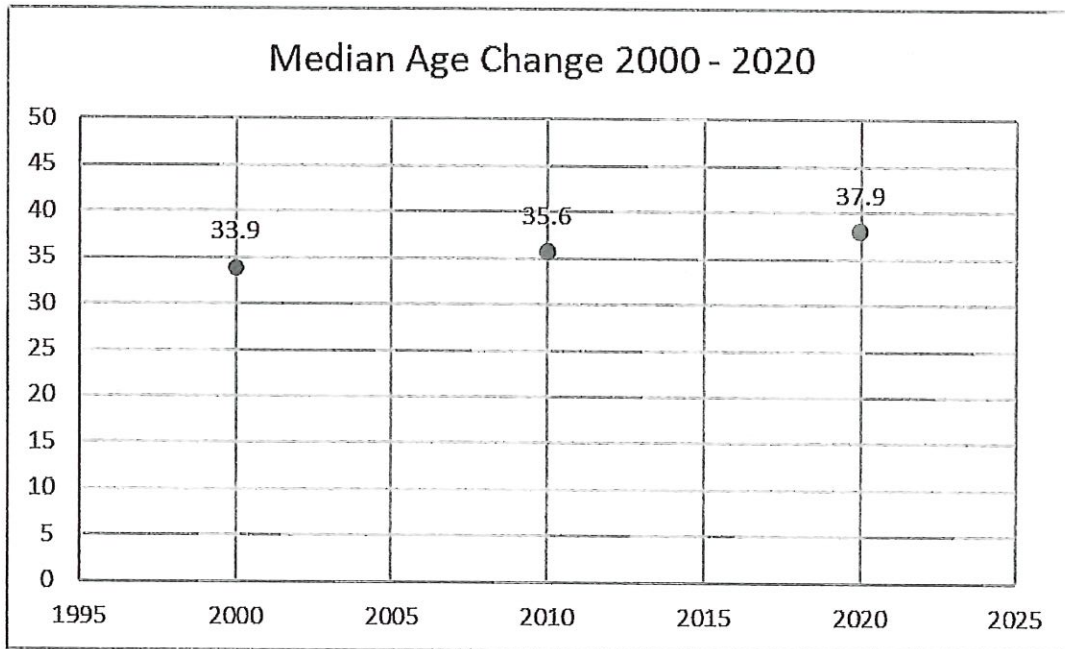
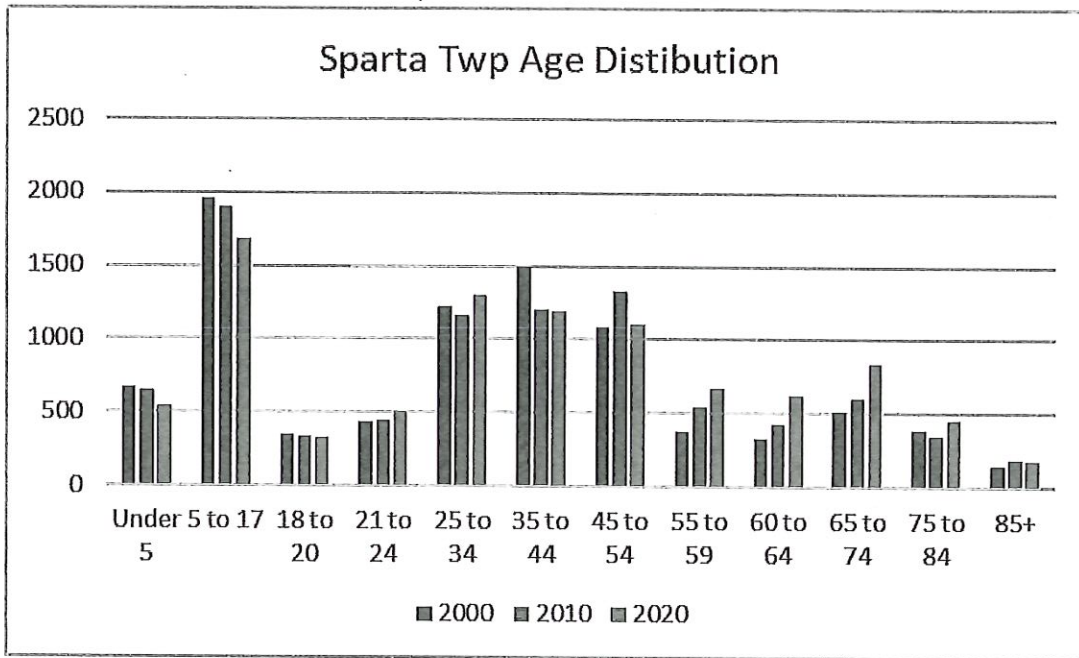
Summary

The following demographic data was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau. The data presented in this report was gathered from Decennial Censuses (Census) and the American Community Survey (ACS). As described by the U.S. Census Bureau "The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people." If you have any questions about the Census or ACS, please let us know.

Based on our review of the data provided below, Sparta Township appears to be doing well in regards to many of the demographic metrics provided. However, it also appears that Sparta Township has a much higher level of unemployment than surrounding communities. The Township may want to work with regional partners to develop strategies to provide more job opportunities for Sparta residents.

Population Growth 2000 - 2020							
	2000	Δ %	Δ #	2010	Δ %	Δ #	2020
Kent County	574,335	4.93%	28,287	602,622	9.19%	55,352	657,974
Sparta Township	8,938	1.92%	172	9,110	3.13%	285	9,395
<i>Sparta Village</i>	4,159	-0.46%	(19)	4,140	2.51%	104	4,244
Tyrone Township	4,304	9.92%	427	4,731	6.13%	290	5,021
<i>Kent City Village</i>	1,061	-0.38%	(4)	1,057	19.39%	205	1,262
Solon Township	4,662	28.14%	1,312	5,974	8.74%	522	6,496
Algoma Township	7,596	30.75%	2,336	9,932	21.38%	2,123	12,055
Plainfield Township	30,195	2.51%	757	30,952	8.35%	2,583	33,535
Alpine Township	13,976	-4.58%	(640)	13,336	5.57%	743	14,079
Ottawa County	238,314	10.69%	25,487	263,801	12.28%	32,399	296,200
Wright Township	3,286	-4.23%	(139)	3,147	1.37%	43	3,190
Chester Township	2,315	-12.87%	(298)	2,017	3.92%	79	2,096
Mugegon County	170,200	1.17%	1,988	172,188	2.11%	3,636	175,824
Casnovia Township	2,652	5.77%	153	2,805	-0.43%	(12)	2,793
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	315	1.27%	4	319	-0.94%	(3)	316

Sparta Township Age Distribution and Median Age													
	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 20	21 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85+	Median Age
2000	669	1964	343	430	1224	1495	1082	371	326	512	379	143	33.9
2010	652	1899	335	442	1160	1202	1327	541	426	601	342	183	35.6
2020	546	1680	322	500	1303	1188	1100	673	619	838	449	177	37.9



Median Age Comparison			
	2000	2010	2020
Kent County	32.5	34.4	35.5
Sparta Township	33.9	35.6	37.9
<i>Sparta Village</i>	31.5	34	36.3
Tyrone Township	32.5	34.9	35.2
<i>Kent City Village</i>	28.1	30.6	29.8
Solon Township	35.4	37.5	40.1
Algoma Township	35.3	38.6	38.8
Plainfiled Township	35.1	39.7	41.4
Alpine Township	29	32.6	34.0
Ottawa County	32.3	34.5	36.1
Wright Township	35.6	39.8	40.2
Chester Township	34.6	41.3	40.9
Mukegon County	35.5	38.2	40.4
Casnovia Township	32.8	35.5	38.3
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	N/A	N/A	38.3

Total Housing Unit Comparison							
	2000	Δ %	Δ #	2010	Δ %	Δ #	2020
Kent County	224,000	10.22%	22,901	246,901	7.33%	18,101	265,002
Sparta Township	3,449	5.45%	188	3,637	3.41%	124	3,761
<i>Sparta Village</i>	1,704	4.58%	78	1,782	2.08%	37	1,819
Tyrone Township	1,503	13.84%	208	1,711	5.32%	91	1,802
<i>Kent City Village</i>	392	3.83%	15	407	12.04%	49	456
Solon Township	1,778	33.30%	592	2,370	7.13%	169	2,539
Algoma Township	2,692	32.28%	869	3,561	22.89%	815	4,376
Plainfiled Township	11,456	9.59%	1,099	12,555	8.71%	1,094	13,649
Alpine Township	5,830	1.37%	80	5,910	2.52%	149	6,059
Ottawa County	86,856	18.01%	15,639	102,495	11.54%	11,823	114,318
Wright Township	1,082	9.06%	98	1,180	2.97%	35	1,215
Chester Township	793	3.40%	27	820	0.37%	3	823
Mukegon County	68,556	7.30%	5,005	73,561	1.40%	1,030	74,591
Casnovia Township	955	7.02%	67	1,022	1.96%	20	1,042
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	126	3.97%	5	131	-0.76%	(1)	130

2020 Education Level Comparison			
	Less than High School	Highschool or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
<u>Kent County</u>	8.60%	91.40%	36.84%
Sparta Township	9.72%	90.28%	20.14%
<i>Sparta Village</i>	5.23%	94.77%	17.75%
Tyrone Township	13.75%	86.25%	14.12%
<i>Kent City Village</i>	15.89%	84.11%	8.28%
Solon Township	5.59%	94.41%	25.21%
Algoma Township	3.81%	96.19%	37.17%
Plainfiled Township	4.31%	95.69%	36.77%
Alpine Township	9.06%	90.94%	22.92%
Ottawa County	6.61%	93.39%	35.08%
Wright Township	4.43%	95.57%	18.52%
Chester Township	8.30%	91.70%	26.64%
<u>Mukegon County</u>	8.65%	91.35%	19.74%
Casnovia Township	7.78%	92.22%	19.52%
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	8.16%	91.84%	13.78%

2020 Employment Comparison				
	Civilian labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
<u>Kent County</u>	352,347	336,145	16,202	4.60%
Sparta Township	5,007	4,586	421	8.41%
<i>Sparta Village</i>	2,252	2,123	129	5.73%
Tyrone Township	2,385	2,033	352	14.76%
<i>Kent City Village</i>	620	582	38	6.13%
Solon Township	3,413	3,322	91	2.67%
Algoma Township	6,212	6,058	154	2.48%
Plainfiled Township	18,740	17,948	792	4.23%
Alpine Township	7,211	6,961	250	3.47%
Ottawa County	156,116	149,666	6,285	4.03%
Wright Township	1,740	1,707	33	1.90%
Chester Township	1,260	1,236	24	1.90%
<u>Mukegon County</u>	82,669	76,653	5,955	7.20%
Casnovia Township	1,537	1,518	19	1.24%
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	153	150	3	1.96%

2020 Household Income & Poverty Rate				
	Median household income (dollars)	Mean household income (dollars)	Population in poverty	
Kent County	\$ 65,722	\$ 87,911	11.10%	
Sparta Township	\$ 64,750	\$ 82,621	8.80%	
<i>Sparta Village</i>	\$ 47,958	\$ 62,598	10.60%	
Tyrone Township	\$ 63,933	\$ 71,357	8.30%	
<i>Kent City Village</i>	\$ 56,250	\$ 60,487	14.50%	
Solon Township	\$ 69,254	\$ 79,940	4.00%	
Algoma Township	\$ 96,217	\$ 107,368	2.50%	
Plainfield Township	\$ 73,961	\$ 94,542	6.40%	
Alpine Township	\$ 56,881	\$ 72,301	9.00%	
Ottawa County	\$ 72,418	\$ 91,035	7.9%	
Wright Township	\$ 76,708	\$ 91,531	6.1%	
Chester Township	\$ 67,821	\$ 89,170	2.5%	
Mukegon County	\$ 53,478	\$ 68,850	14.1%	
Casnovia Township	\$ 70,542	\$ 79,676	8.4%	
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	\$ 52,000	\$ 64,067	10.5%	

Sparta Township Affordable Housing Costs (Including Utilities)
Affordable Housing = 30% or less of Household Income

	Annual Income	Affordable Annual Housing Budget	Affordable Monthly Housing Budget
Median Household Income	\$ 64,750	\$ 19,425	\$ 1,619
Mean Household Income	\$ 82,621	\$ 24,786	\$ 2,066

Affordable Home Price

Assumptions	Monthly Housing Budget	Home Price
\$200 Monthly Utility Cost	\$ 1,619	\$ 158,162
No Down Payment	\$ 2,066	\$ 209,849
7% Interest Rate		
1.2% Property Taxes		
\$950/annual home insurance costs		

2020 Median House Values		
	Median House Value	
Kent County	\$	193,200
Sparta Township	\$	159,700
<i>Sparta Village</i>	\$	130,700
Tyrone Township	\$	176,900
<i>Kent City Village</i>	\$	134,400
Solon Township	\$	189,700
Algoma Township	\$	246,900
Plainfiled Township	\$	208,400
Alpine Township	\$	176,300
Ottawa County	\$	338,900
Wright Township	\$	249,000
Chester Township	\$	232,500
Mukegon County	\$	137,500
Casnovia Township	\$	176,600
<i>Casnovia Village</i>	\$	125,000

Sparta Township, MI

Master Plan Survey

Summary of Responses

Fresh Coast Planning
2-26-2024



Fresh Coast
Planning

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Section 1. Executive Summary

It is clear that respondents value the rural and agricultural character of Sparta Township, with the preservation of natural areas, farmlands, and roads being top priorities for the community. Respondents appear to be mostly satisfied with their access to jobs, services, and recreational opportunities. However, some of these needs are likely being met outside of the community, which could be why roads are such a high priority.

While respondents are willing to drive further for jobs, services, and recreational opportunities, that does not mean they are completely opposed to more development in the community. Most respondents appear to be satisfied with the rate of development in Sparta and may be supportive of more residential and commercial development so long as it happens in a way that protects the rural and agricultural character of the community. Along the same note, respondents appear to be supportive of regulations and beautification projects that would enhance the rural and agricultural visual character of the community.

In short, it appears that the community is supportive of the current rate of development and may be supportive of more residential and commercial growth so long as it happens in a way that protects and enhances the rural and agricultural character they value above all else.

KLY

Associate, Fresh Coast Planning

In addition to the summaries provided in this report we have attached the following reports from SurveyMonkey:

- Unfiltered Survey Results
- Results Filtered by Age
- Results Filtered by Location
- Results Filtered by Years Lived in Township
- Additional Comments Provided

Section 2. Representativeness and Reliability

When reviewing the survey results, we first want to test whether the responses are valid and can be relied on in order to provide a representative sample of your community. In order to test the representativeness and reliability of the survey results we'll look at three things.

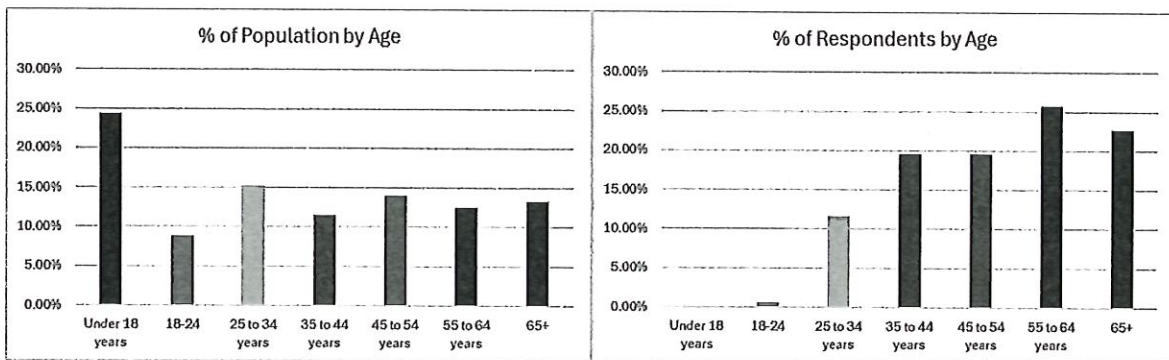
First, are the ages of those that responded reflective of the age groups identified by the latest American Community Survey. The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing annual survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau. The ACS uses a random sample of addresses to collect responses and provide estimates on information similar to what is included in the Decennial Census, such as age, education, and other population and housing metrics.

Second, we look at where respondents stated they live in order to ensure that the respondents are representative of the different geographical areas in the Township.

Lastly, we will look at the number of people who responded compared to the total population. By comparing these numbers we will be able to determine how confident we are that the survey results are accurate.

2.1. Representativeness by Age

As expected, all age groups were not represented in the survey results. Respondents were mostly over the age of twenty-five with residents thirty-five and older being best represented. That being said, the survey results appear to have been gathered fairly equally across multiple age groups and should be reflective of how people in various stages of life feel about the community.



2.2. Representativeness by Location

Identifying representativeness by geographic location is less definitive than representativeness by age. We do not have the information that identifies how many total dwellings are contained within each section identified within the survey. When creating the sections, we relied on the different zoning district designations and easily identifiable roads to split the sections. As such, we would expect a greater number of responses from the more densely populated sections of the Township (Sections 5, 6, 10 and 12). With less densely populated sections (Sections 1,2,3,4, 7, 8, 9 and 11) having a lower number of responses.

It appears that responses generally meet our expectations and the results of the survey appear to be representative of all locations within the Township.

Further, we recognize that M-37 represents a border within the Township; with land east of the highway predominantly being used for more dense and higher intensity land uses and lands west of the highway predominantly being used for less dense, agricultural uses. As such we have broken down responses based on whether they were from sections east or west of the highway. While there were a slightly greater number of responses from respondents east of the highway, it does not appear that the responses were so much greater that the results are overly skewed towards the desires of the eastern portion of the Community. Lastly, where people lived did appear to have some impact on how they answered some questions, but more broadly respondents living on both sides of the highway appear to have similar values and desires for land development in the community.

East of the Highway

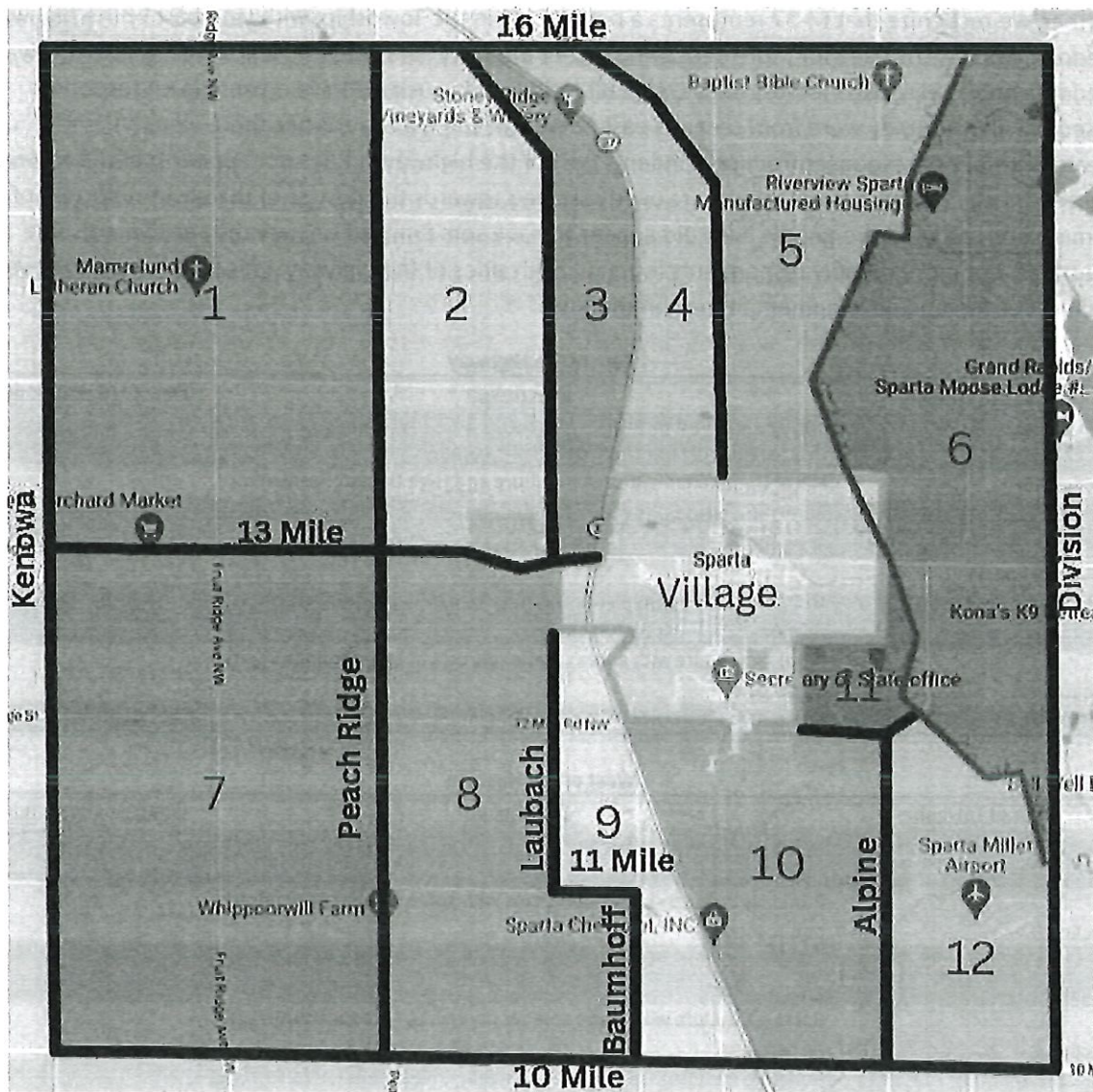
<u>Area of Township</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Section 6	Rural Agriculture with many smaller lots, includes some low density residential and some high density residential	16%
Section 10	Mix of Commercial, Rural Agriculture and High Density Residential	14%
Section 5	Rural Agriculture with many smaller lots also includes larger agricultural parcels	10%
Village of Sparta		8%
Section 12	Low Density Residential - Sparta Airport and Industrial District take up a large portion of the section.	8%
Section 4	Rural Agriculture with some smaller parcels but predominantly large Ag parcels	2%
Section 11	Industrial with some low density residential	2%
SUB-TOTAL		60%

West of the Highway

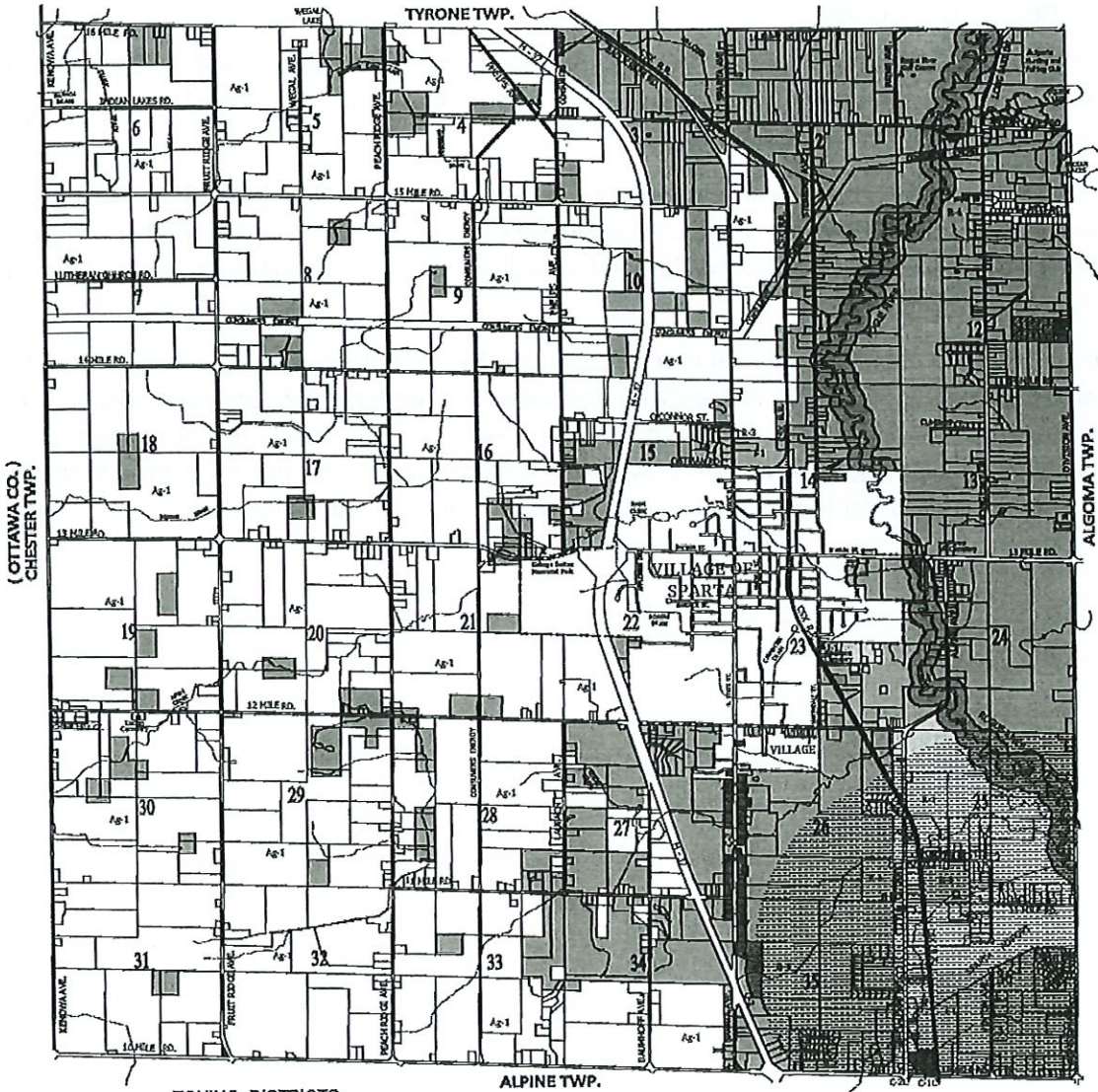
<u>Area of Township</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Section 7	Prime Agriculture - Large Ag Parcels with small parcels along public roads	9%
Section 8	Prime Agriculture - Large Ag Parcels with some small parcels along public roads	8%
Section 1	Prime Agriculture - Large Ag Parcels with limited small parcels along public roads	7%
Section 9	Rural Agriculture with some smaller parcels but predominantly large Ag parcels	6%
Section 2	Prime Agriculture - Large Ag Parcels with limited small parcels along public roads	4%
Section 3	Prime Agriculture - Large Ag Parcels with some small parcels along public roads	3%
SUB-TOTAL		37%

Other

I don't live in Sparta Township	Predominately People who work or own property in the Township	3%
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Where you live map from Master Plan Survey

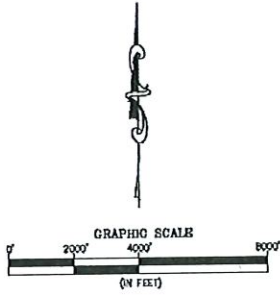


ZONING DISTRICTS

- Ag-1 PRIME AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
 - Ag-2 AGRICULTURAL
 - R-1 LOW DENSITY - SINGLE FAMILY
 - R-2 MEDIUM DENSITY - SINGLE FAMILY
 - R-3 MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY: MULTIPLE FAMILY
 - R-4 MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY: MOBILE HOME PARK
 - C-1 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
 - C-2 HWY COMMERCIAL
 - C-1C CONDITIONAL ZONING
 - C-2C CONDITIONAL ZONING
 - MPUD MIXED USED P.U.D.
 - I-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
 - I-2 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
 - Ap AIRPORT OVERLAY ZONE
THE AIRPORT OVERLAY ZONE IS DEFINED AS THAT AREA WITHIN ONE (1) MILE OF THE SPARTA AIRPORT MEASURED FROM THE AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE.
 - RR ROGUE RIVER NATURAL RIVER ZONE
300' FROM BOTH SIDES OF RIVER'S EDGE (NOT TO SCALE)
 - CJ CONSENT JUDGEMENT
DATED 12-1-1997, CASE NO. 97-062350E C-2 USES ALLOWED WITH BERMING AND GREENBELT AREA REQUIREMENTS
- 17 SECTION NUMBER

**ZONING MAP OF
SPARTA TOWNSHIP
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN
T 9 N, R 12 W**

Latest Revision: 2-2-23



2.3. Reliability of Survey

While the results of the 2024 Master Plan Survey appear to be a mostly representative sample based on age and where people live within the Township, we also want to make sure that enough responses were received to ensure the results are reliable.

When speaking to the reliability of a survey we are trying to determine how likely it is that if we repeated the survey with another group of residents, we would get the same or similar results. A general rule of thumb is if you have a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, your results are likely accurate and precise and can be relied on.

Based on the 2022 American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau Sparta Township has approximately 9,421 residents. Approximately 331 residents (369 total respondents – 27 Village Residents – 11 non-residents) responded to the survey. Based on this information we were able to calculate the survey's margin of error. At a 95% confidence level there is a 5% margin of error. As such, the results of this survey appear to be a reliable representation of how the community feels.

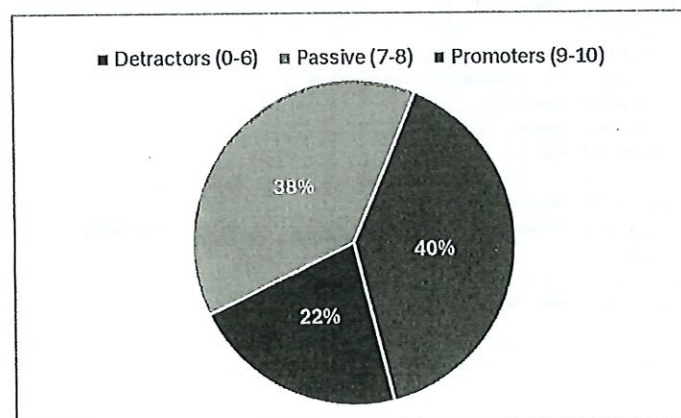
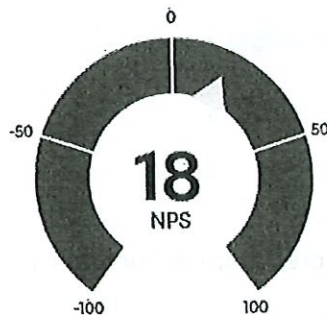
Section 3. Survey Results

The following are summaries of the individual survey questions.

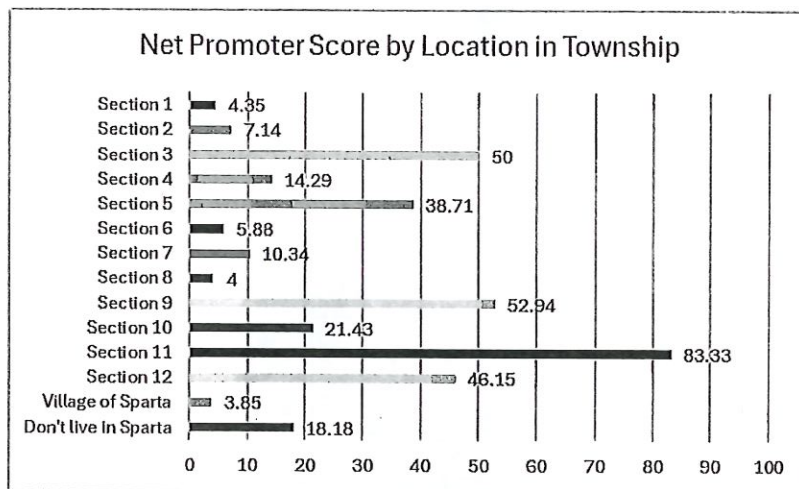
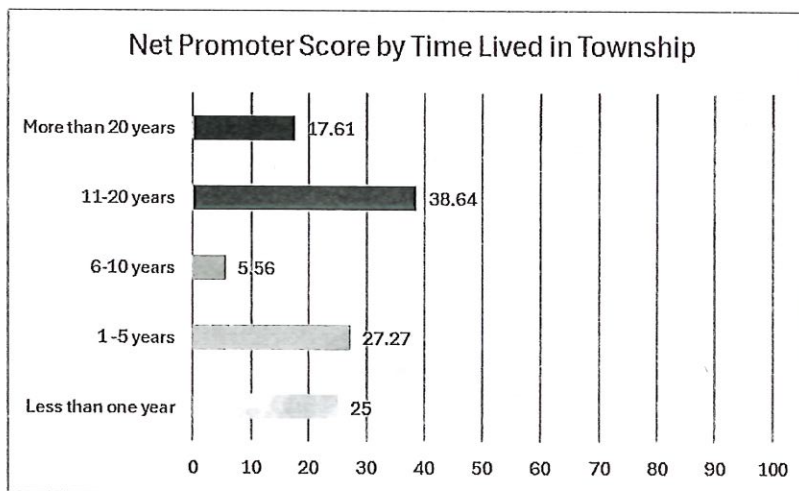
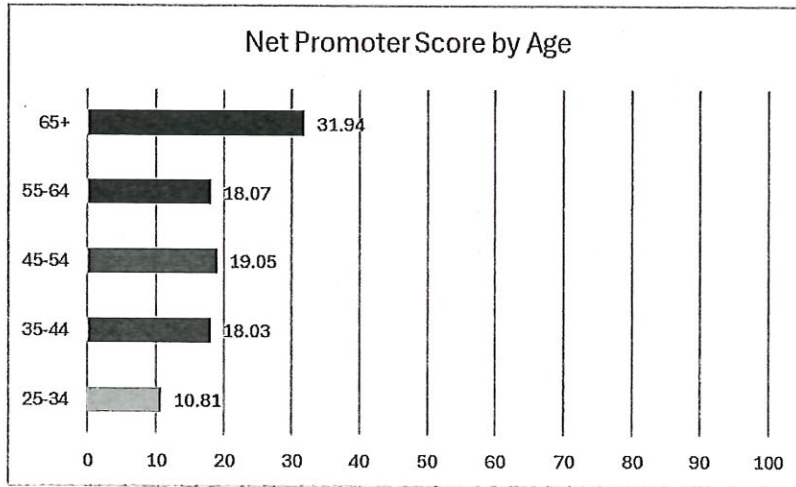
3.1. How likely is it that you would recommend living in Sparta Township to a friend or colleague?

This question is called Net Promoter Score, it was designed in 2003 as a way to gauge customer experience for private companies. We use the Net Promoter Score in your survey as a way to gauge the experience and relationship your residents have with the Township. Respondents are broken into three categories: promoters, passives, and detractors. Promoters are the residents that are the individuals that love the community and will go out of their way to promote it. Passives are those individuals that like the community but may not go out of their way to promote it. Detractors are the individuals who are unhappy with the community and may go out of their way to dissuade others from coming to your community. For a more detailed review of the meaning of net promoter score you can visit <https://delighted.com/net-promoter-score>

In addition to showing how many individuals are Promoters, Passives, and Detractors a net promoter score is also calculated. The net promoter scale goes from -100 to 100, with -100 meaning no one is happy with the community and 100 meaning everyone is happy with the community. As you review the following information regarding promoters/detractors and net promoter score please keep in mind that there is no universal benchmark for what a "good" net promoter score is. Please also keep in mind that for the public sector our job is not always to make individual residents happy, but to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of those we serve. In general, it appears that the community as a whole has a positive relationship with the Township and the Township has many more people who love or like the Township opposed to those who dislike the Township.

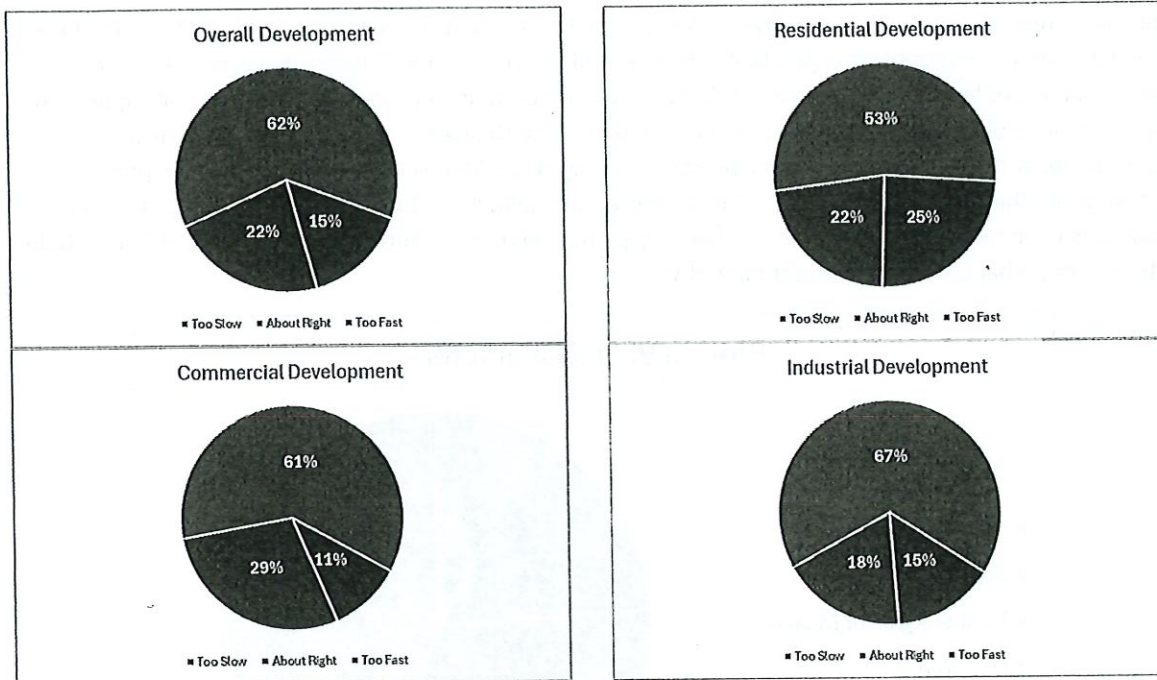


Further, we see that how old people are, how long they have lived in the Township, and where they live in the Township all have an impact on how likely they are to recommend living in the Township to others.



3.2. How would you characterize the rate of the following types of development?

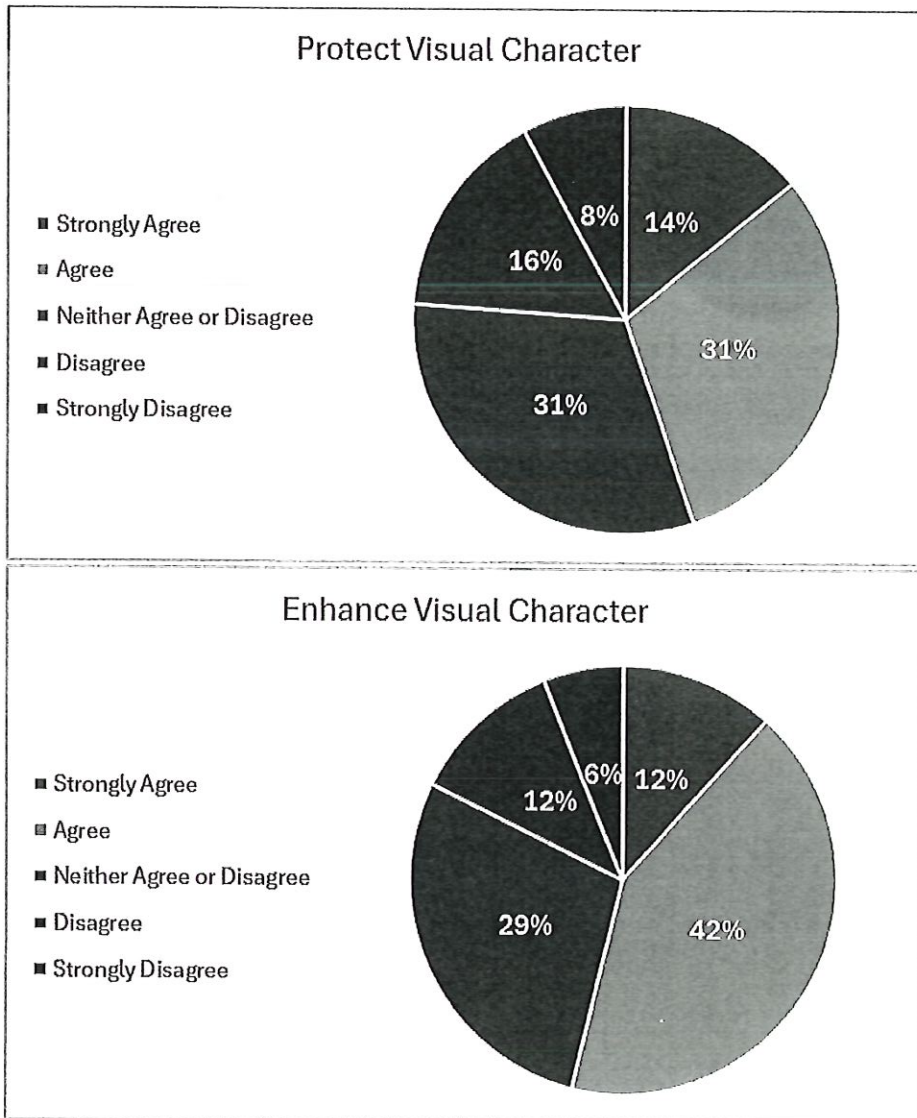
Overall, a majority of respondents feel that the rate of residential, commercial, and industrial development is happening at about the right speed. There may be some concern around how fast residential development is happening and some desire for more commercial development. This feeling seems to be consistent across age groups, how long they've lived in the Township and where people live in the Township.



3.3. Visual Character

Two questions were asked to gauge how people felt about protecting and/or enhancing the visual character of the Township. Should the Township do more to protect the visual character of the community? and Should the Township do more to enhance the visual character of the community? Both questions were accompanied by an explanation and example of what types of regulations may be put in place to accomplish these goals.

While many respondents were supportive of doing more to protect visual character and keep the community looking the same, a majority of respondents were neutral and opposed to "protecting visual character." However, in regard to enhancing the visual character of the community a majority of respondents appear to be supportive of regulations and investments that would enhance the look and feel of the community. More insights on what types of regulations and investments may be desired by the community may be provided in the review of other questions included in the survey. Additionally, if the Township determines to develop regulations to enhance visual character further engagement with subcommittees and/or the public may help better identify what is desired by the community.



3.4. If the Township had extra funds, how would you prioritize its use?

When asked how they would prioritize the expenditure of “extra” funds survey respondents universally identified roads as the main priority. However, outside of roads, respondent age appears to impact how the prioritize the listed items.

25-34		35-44	
Roads	6.61	Roads	6.31
Parks and Recreation	5.55	Parks and Recreation	6.17
Fire and EMS	5.42	Fire and EMS	5.14
Internet Access	4.79	Internet Access	4.72
Police	4.37	Public Water and Sanitary Sewer	4.41
Public Water and Sanitary Sewer	4.37	Police	4.3
Senior Services	3.89	Senior Services	3.95
45-54		55-64	
Roads	6.81	Roads	6.45
Fire and EMS	5.52	Fire and EMS	5.45
Internet Access	5.08	Police	4.87
Police	4.92	Senior Services	4.82
Parks and Recreation	4.59	Internet Access	4.75
Senior Services	4.39	Public Water and Sanitary Sewer	4.39
Public Water and Sanitary Sewer	3.69	Parks and Recreation	4.26
65+			
Roads	6.5		
Fire and EMS	5.85		
Police	5.24		
Senior Services	4.85		
Internet Access	4.43		
Parks and Recreation	4.38		
Public Water and Sanitary Sewer	3.74		

3.5. How likely is it that you would support an increase in property taxes to support the following?

At best respondents appear to be neutral to an increase in taxes to support the identified potential funding priorities. Based on this information it does not appear that a millage to support any of these items would have the support needed to pass. However, we are able to see how respondents prioritize projects when viewed with the lens that they would have to pay extra for their improvement.

Funding Priority	Will a Tax Millage be Supported
Fire and EMS	3.2
Agricultural Preservation Programs	3.13
Road Repairs and Improvement	3.06
Police	2.99
Improve and expand public park and recreation facilities	2.85
Attract and retain commercial businesses	2.52
Expansion of public water and sewer	2.52
Attract and retain Industrial businesses	2.38

- 5 = Highly Likely
- 4 = Likely
- 3 = Neutral
- 2 = Unlikely
- 1 = Highly Unlikely

3.6. Please rate each of the following characteristics of Sparta Township.

In general respondents appear to be happy with the character of the community. Rural Character and Ease of Travel were the two most highly rated items with access to job opportunities, availability of quality, affordable housing, and diverse housing options receiving a rating of fair. This may mean that the development of increased and more diverse housing options would better satisfy the desires of the community. However, with how highly rated rural character is, the development of residential uses should be directed to happen in such a way that the rural character of the community is maintained.

Characteristic	Rating
Rural Character	4.78
Ease of Travel	4.72
Access to healthcare facilities	4.36
Good educational opportunities	4.32
Recreational Opportunities	4.23
Access to shopping amenities	4.17
Access to job opportunities	3.51
Availability of quality, affordable housing	3.2
Diverse housing options	3.15

5 = Excellent
 4 = Good
 3 = Fair
 2 = Poor
 1 = I don't know

3.7. Please prioritize the following in the order that is most important to you. 1 = Most Important, 9 = Least Important.

The preservation of natural areas and farmlands are a clear priority for respondents, with the condition of roads a close third. After that access to recreational activities both private and public and affordable homes were the next priorities. With access to public utilities and jobs in the community not appearing to be a priority.

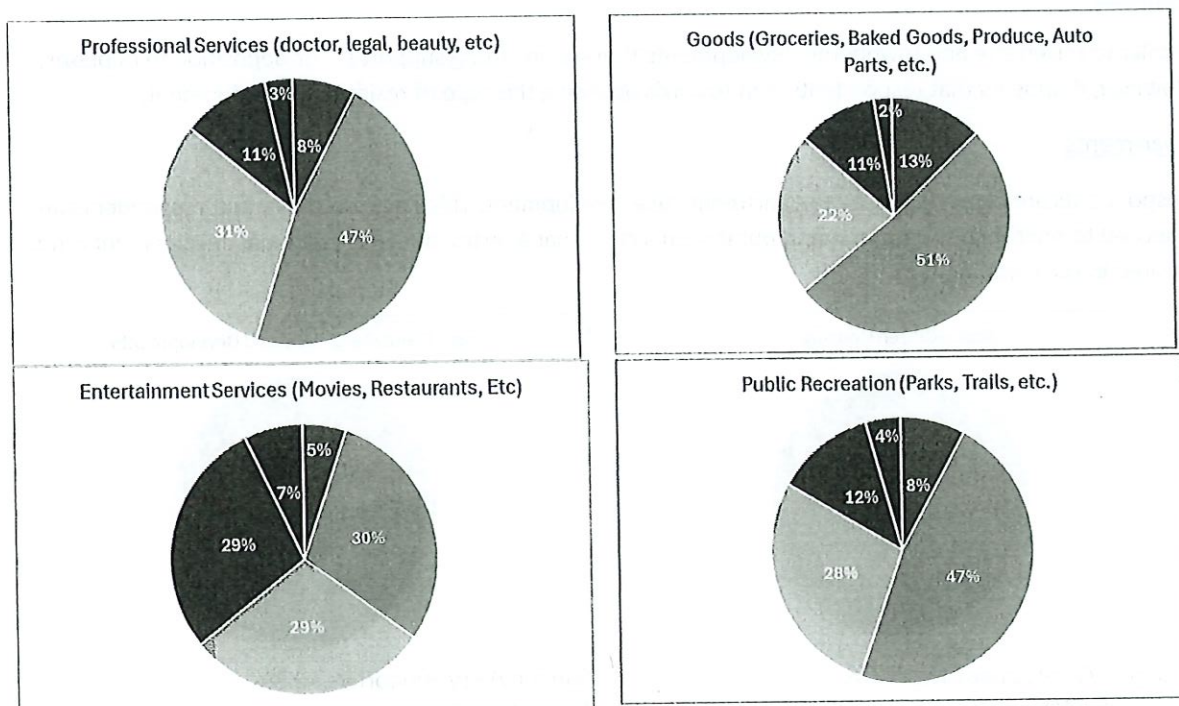
It appears that respondents value the natural/rural character of the community above all else. While access to more recreational opportunities may be desired, respondents are willing to trade these opportunities for the ability to live in a rural community. Further, respondents appear to be willing to drive from their homes to jobs outside of the community and there may be some concern regarding the availability of affordable housing in the community.

Item	Priority Rating
Preservation of natural areas (woods, non farmed fields, etc)	6.2
Preservation of farmland	6.11
Condition of roads	5.98
Access to commercial services (grocery, restaurant, bar, hairsalons and barbers, etc.)	5.57
Availability of public parks and recreational opportunities	5.02
Availability of homes that people can afford	4.99
Access to public water and sanitary sewer	4.21
Availability of office jobs in the community	3.51
Availability of industrial jobs in the community	3.42

3.8. Please rate your satisfaction with the availability of the following.

Overall respondents appear to be satisfied with the availability of Goods and Services within the Community. However, there may be some desire for more entertainment services such as movies and restaurants.

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied or unsatisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very Unsatisfied



3.9. How supportive are you of the following types of residential projects?

Based on the results of this question, we not only see what types of residential projects respondents are supportive of, but we may also get some insight into how that development is desired to look.

Senior Citizen Housing

Respondents are supportive of senior citizen housing. Not only are a majority of respondents supportive of senior citizen housing, but there is very little opposition. However, senior citizen housing can be developed in many different ways (site condo, duplexes, apartments, mixed housing types) as such where and how senior citizen housing is developed can be informed on the responses towards other housing development types.

Single Family Neighborhood Developments

Similar to senior citizen housing, a majority of respondents appear to be supportive of single-family neighborhood developments. However, there is a stronger level of opposition to single family neighborhood

developments. This response paired with a possible desire for more regulations to enhance the visual character of the Township could mean that the community is supportive of more single-family housing as long as it happens in locations and with design elements that will protect and enhance the rural character of the community.

Mixed-use (Commercial/Residential) and Townhomes

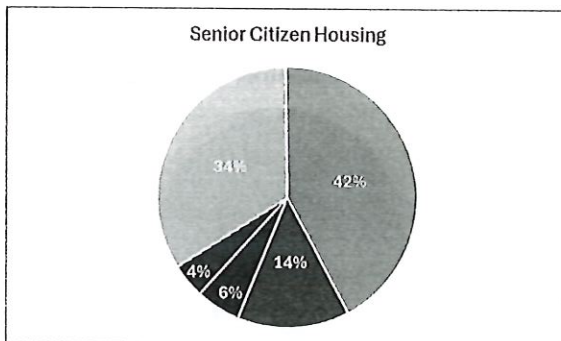
There is no strong support or opposition for these types of development. Respondents are split in their support of mixed-use and townhome developments. If desired these types of developments will likely require a large amount of community input to identify where they are best located and what type of architectural styles and design elements are desired.

Duplexes

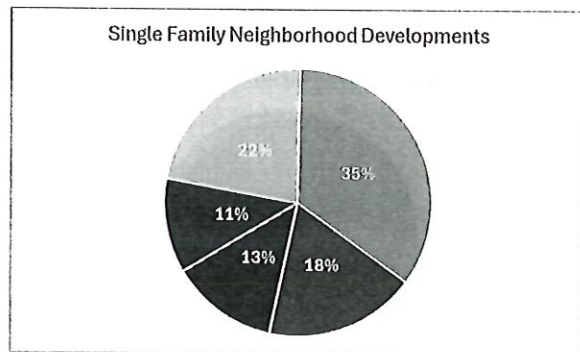
Similar to mixed-use and townhome developments there is no strong support for or opposition to duplexes. However, it appears that respondents lean towards opposing this type of residential development.

Apartments

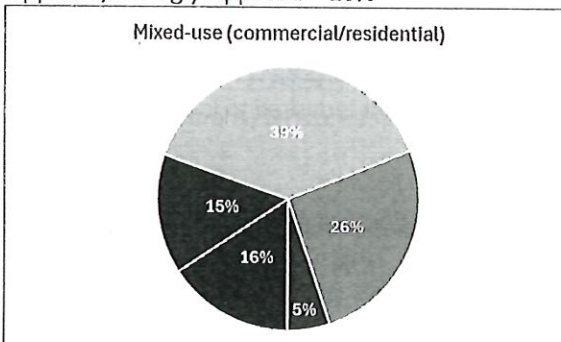
Respondents are clearly opposed to apartment style development. This does not mean that respondents are opposed to multi-family development, but it seems clear that apartment style residential development is not desired in the community.



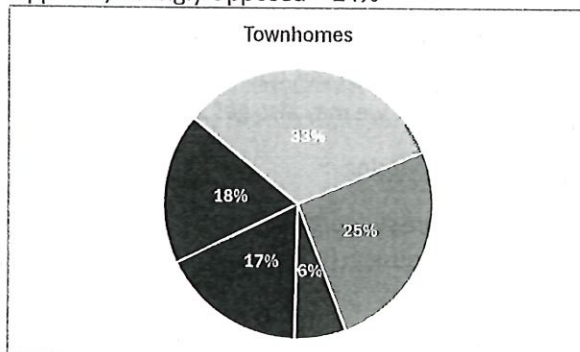
Support/Very Supportive = 56%
 Neutral = 34%
 Opposed/Strongly Opposed = 10%



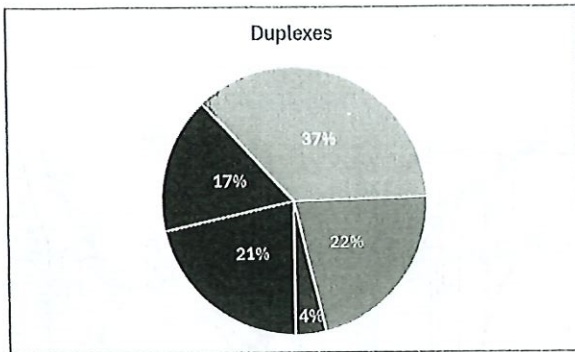
Support/Very Supportive = 53%
 Neutral = 22%
 Opposed/Strongly Opposed = 24%



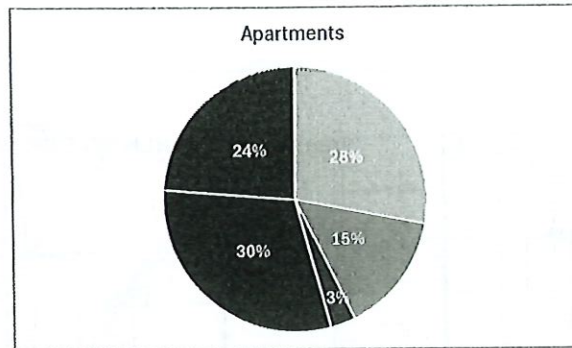
Support/Very Supportive = 31%
 Neutral = 39%
 Opposed/Strongly Opposed = 31%



Support/Very Supportive = 31%
 Neutral = 33%
 Opposed/Strongly Opposed = 35%

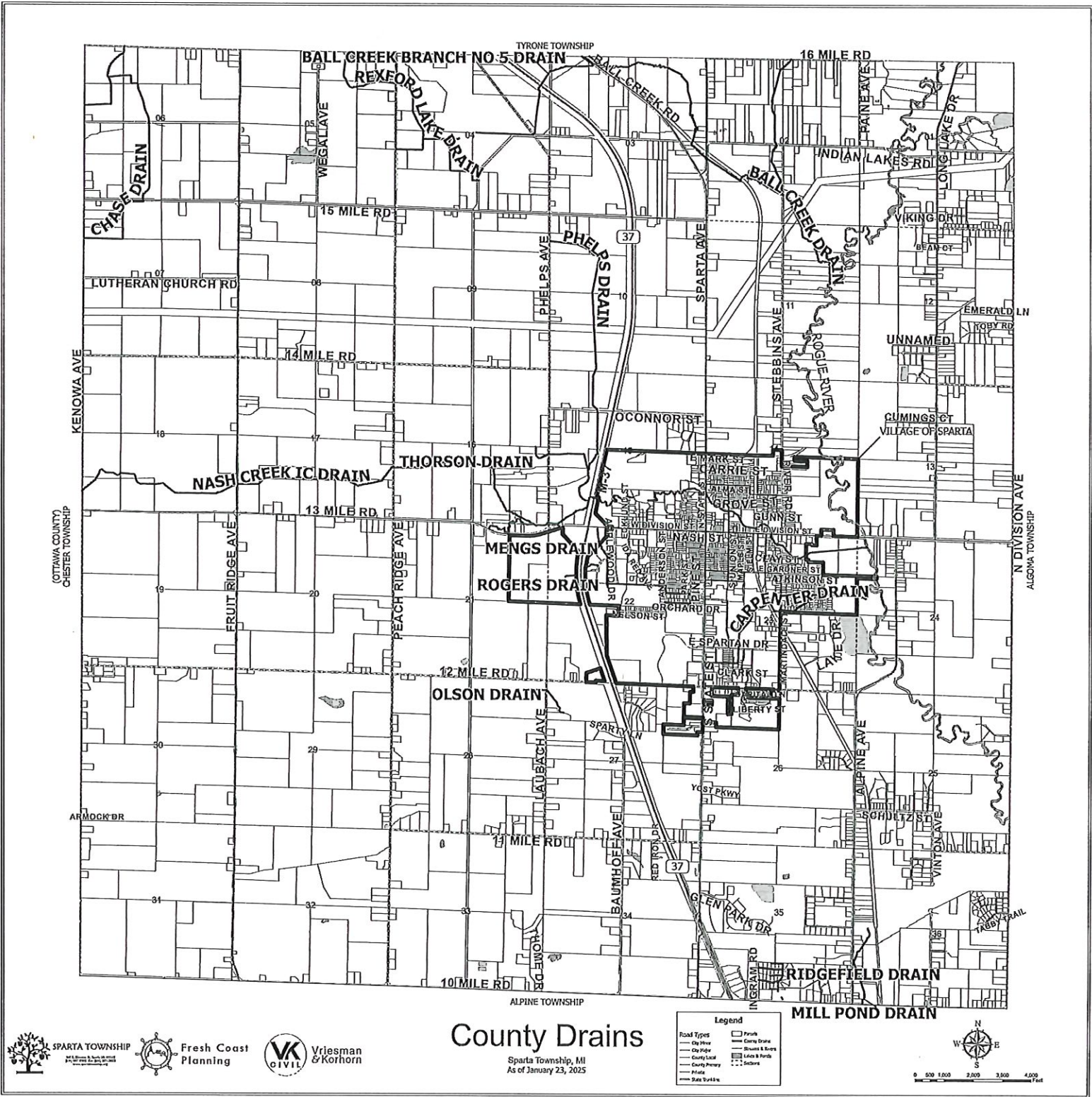


Support/Very Supportive = 26%
 Neutral = 37%
 Opposed/Strongly Opposed = 38%



Support/Very Supportive = 18%
 Neutral = 28%
 Opposed/Strongly Opposed = 54%

END OF REPORT



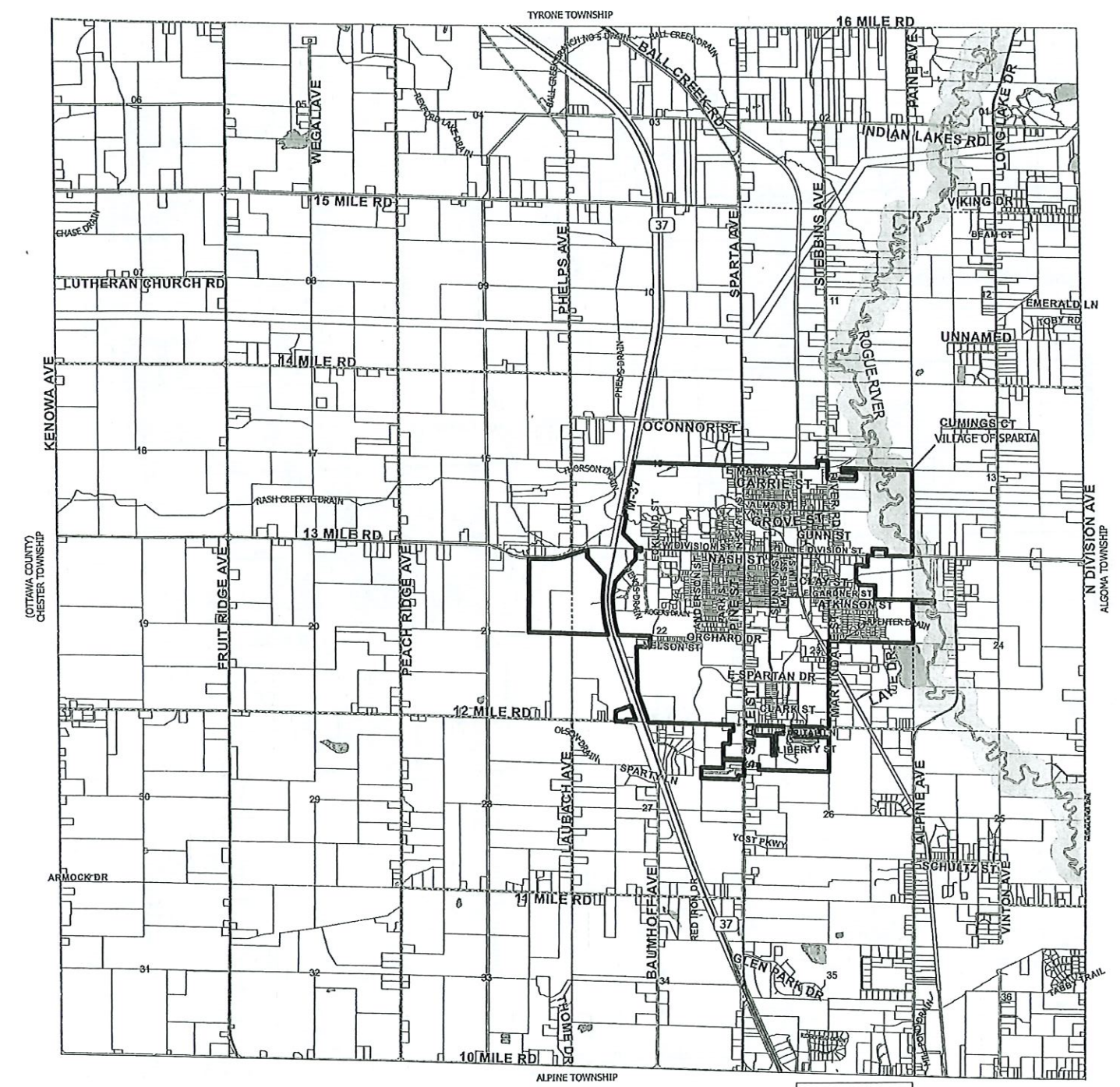
County Drains

Sparta Township, MI
As of January 23, 2025

Legend	
Road Types	Parks
City Hwy	County Drain
City Rd	Shores & Rivers
County Road	Lakes & Ponds
County Primary	Seams
State	
State Trunk	



0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet

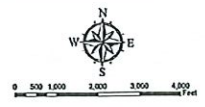


Natural River Area

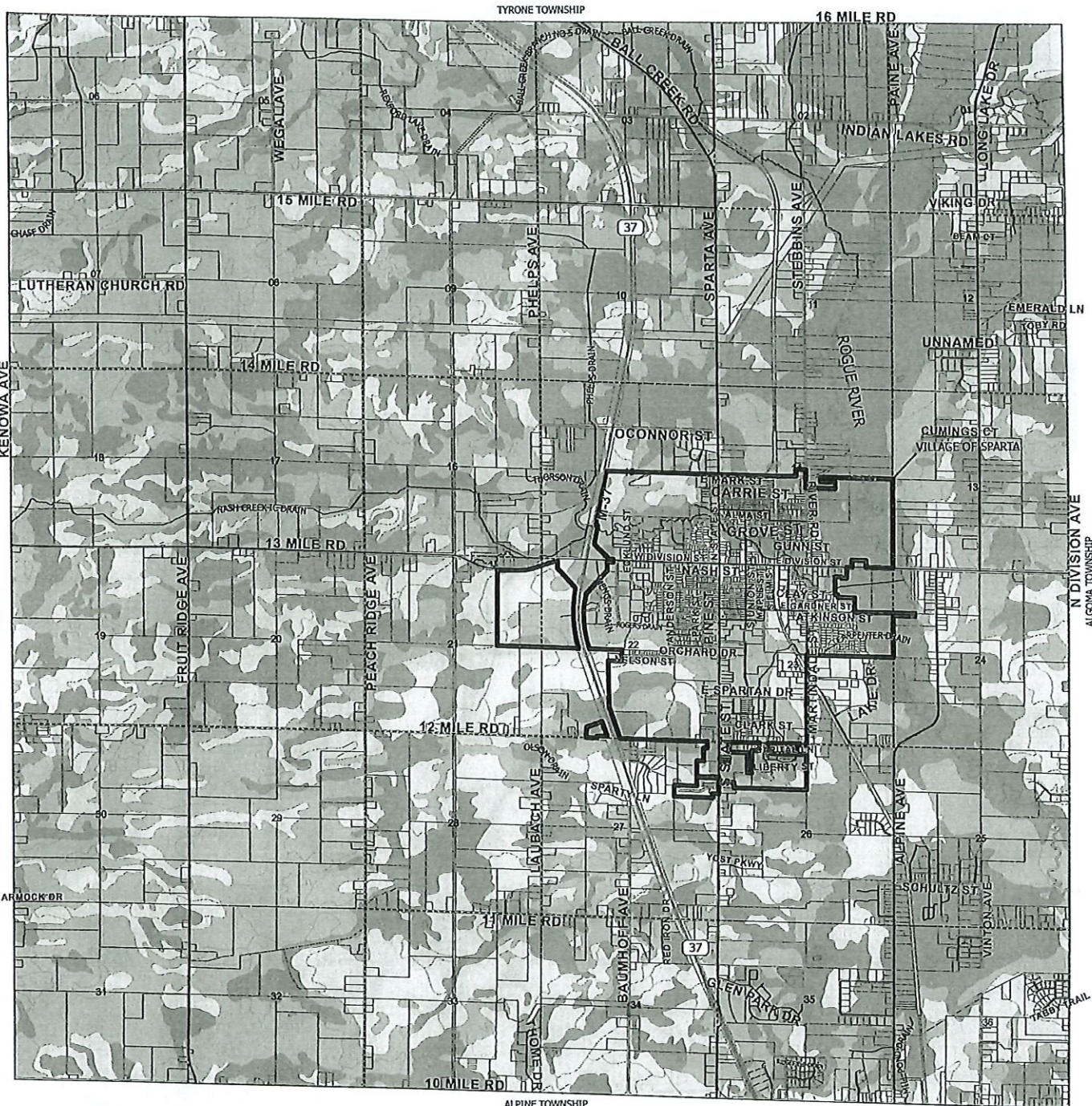
Sparta Township, MI
As of January 23, 2025

Legend

Road Types	Private
City Street	Natural River
City Ridge	Area
County Road	County Drain
County Local	Street & Water
County Primary	Lakes & Ponds
State	Section
State Trucking	



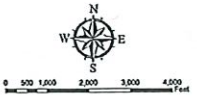
SPARTA TOWNSHIP
 Fresh Coast Planning
 VK CIVIL Vriesman & Korhorn



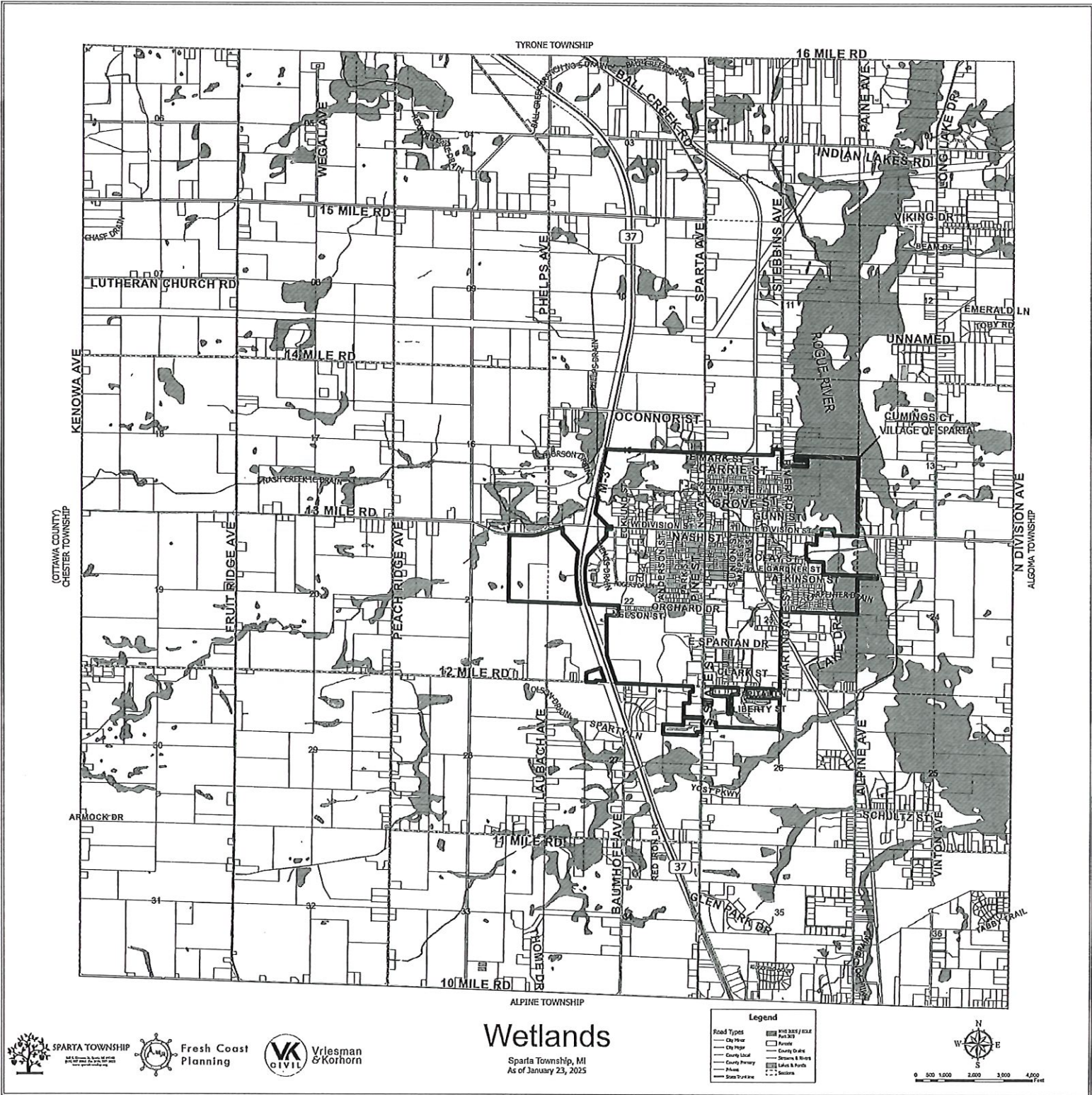
Prime Farmland Soils

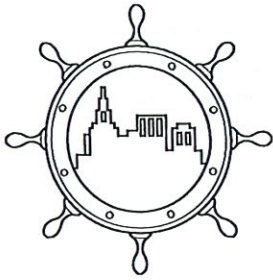
Sparta Township, MI
As of January 23, 2025

Legend	
Private	Soil Rating
County Drain	Prime Farmland
City Water	Farmland of National Importance
County Road	Farmland of State Importance
County Highway	Farmland of Local Importance
State Road	Prime Farmland of State Importance
State Road	Prime Farmland of Local Importance
State Road	Prime Farmland of National Importance



SPARTA TOWNSHIP
 Fresh Coast Planning
 Vrjesman & Korhorn
 CIVIL





Fresh Coast Planning

119 1/2 Washington Avenue, Studio B
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240
gr

Kevin Yeomans
616-349-0223
ky

Alexis Gulker
616-773-4638
ag

Aaron Bigelow
616-919-2370
ab

Andrea Goodell
616-313-9333
ag

MEMORANDUM

To: Sparta Township Planning Commission
From: Kevin Yeomans
Date: 4/2/2026
Re: Preliminary Review – 9440 Sparta Ave: Rezoning C1 to C2

Attached is an application from Paul and Rebeka Rogers (the "Applicant") to rezone a portion of their property at 9440 Sparta Ave, parcel number 41-05-26-300-037 (the "Property") from C-1: General Commercial to C-2: Highway Commercial. The Applicant is pursuing the rezoning as part of the sale of the Property to Tim Clay, who intends to sell new and used trailers, parts and accessories on the Property. Before finalizing their application, the Applicant is seeking preliminary feedback from the Planning Commission regarding the rezoning, specifically expanding the commercially zoned lands from 300 feet to 500 feet.

The rezoning is being sought because *automotive sales and services (including indoor and outdoor sales displays of automotive and auto-related equipment)* is not permitted in the C-1 Zoning District and is a use by right in the C-2 District. Mr. Clay is aware that if the rezoning is approved, he will still have to complete the site plan review process prior to commencing operations on the property. Because the use is a use by right in the C-2 District the site plan review will be conducted by Fresh Coast Planning, Pathfinder Engineering, the Fire Department, and others as necessary, but will likely not be brought to the Planning Commission for review.

Summary of Preliminary Findings

The Property is currently dual zoned, from Sparta Avenue to 300 feet east the Property is zoned C-1. The remainder of the property is zoned Ag-2: Agricultural. The 2002 Sparta Township Master Plan classifies the C-1 zoned lands as Commercial/Industrial (C/I) and further identifies that expansion of the C/I classified lands to a depth of 500 feet may be appropriate. The soon to be adopted 2026 Sparta Township Master Plan contains the same expansion ability but now classifies the C-1 zoned lands as Mixed Use Residential Commercial.

Given the existing character of Sparta Avenue, condition of infrastructure, standards in the Sparta Township Zoning Ordinance that require screening between commercial uses and residential uses (Section 154.265 – Lighting, Screening, and Fences), and that the request appears consistent with the Master Plan we have no major concerns to bring to the Planning Commission's attention at this time. Pending a more detailed review the requested rezoning and expansion to 500 feet appears appropriate.

Pending the Planning Commission's feedback the Applicant will need to provide a legal description for the lands proposed to be rezoned before returning for a public hearing.

Additional information for the Planning Commission to consider is provided below.

Existing Conditions

Lands on both sides of Sparta Avenue are zoned commercially to a depth of at least 300 feet from the border of the Village of Sparta to M-37. Further as depicted in Figure 1 below, the yellow outline shows the approximate lot lines for the Property, with the abutting property to the south being zoned C-2 (Rentsmart) and the property across the street also being zoned C-2.

Additionally, as depicted in Figure 2 below, the existing conditions (as of 2023) of surrounding properties are shown. Additionally, we've depicted the current depth of the commercial district (300 feet) and the expansion area (depth of 500 feet) so the Commission may better see the potential impact the expansion could have.

Figure 1

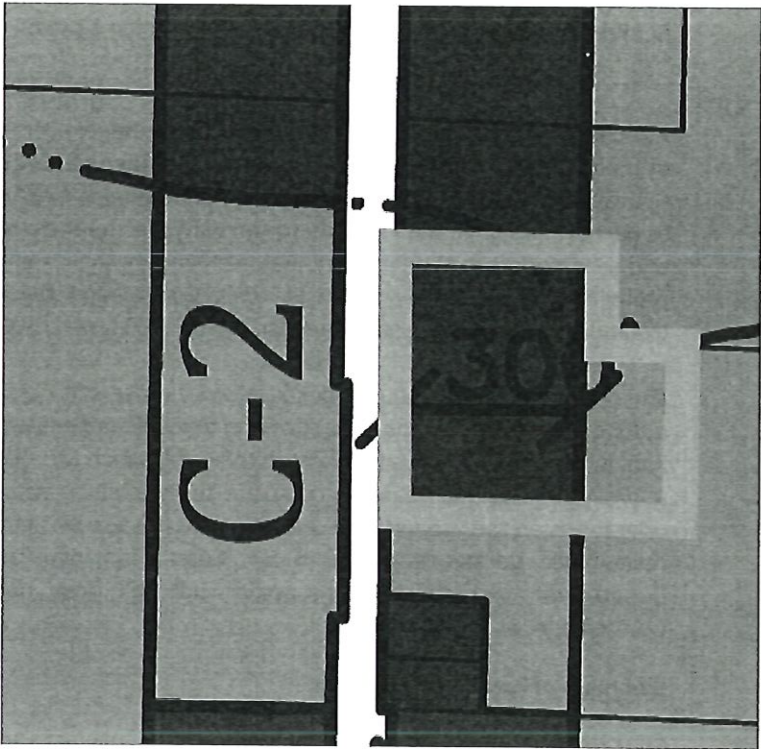


Figure 2



Standards of Review

As you are aware, the Sparta Township Zoning Ordinance does not contain express standards of review for a rezoning request. Given this we have consulted with the Township's legal counsel to develop the following standards. The Planning Commission should review these standards when making a final determination on a rezoning request. Given the preliminary nature of this review, we have not developed findings for the Planning Commission to consider.

1. Consistency with the Master Plan:

- a. The proposed rezoning must align with the township's master plan, which includes a zoning plan detailing land use categories and their relationship to zoning districts (MCL 125.3833(2)(d)).
- b. The rezoning should support the township's long-term vision for growth, infrastructure, and community character as outlined in the master plan. For example, if the future land use map designates an area for residential use, a rezoning request for industrial use may be denied unless justified by changed conditions.

2. Public Need and General Welfare:

- a. The rezoning should meet a demonstrated public need, such as providing housing, commercial services, or infrastructure improvements that benefit the community.
- b. It must promote the general welfare, ensuring that the proposed use does not negatively impact public health, safety, or quality of life (e.g., by creating excessive traffic, noise, or environmental issues).

3. Conformance with Good Zoning Practice

- a. The rezoning must adhere to sound zoning principles, such as ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses and avoiding spot zoning (rezoning a single parcel in a way that is inconsistent with the surrounding area).
- b. The proposed zoning district should be appropriate for the property's physical characteristics, such as size, shape, topography, and access to infrastructure.

4. Compatibility with Surrounding Uses

- a. The proposed use under the new zoning district must be compatible with existing and planned uses in the surrounding area.
- b. Consideration is given to whether the rezoning will negatively impact the value, enjoyment, or safety of neighboring properties.

5. Changed Conditions of Circumstances

- a. Courts and townships often require evidence of changed conditions (e.g., new infrastructure, economic shifts, or development patterns) since the original zoning was established to justify a rezoning. If no significant changes have occurred, the current zoning is presumed valid unless it is found to be unreasonable or arbitrary.

6. Rational Basis and Reasonableness

- a. Decisions on rezoning must be rational, reasonable, and supported by evidence, as arbitrary or capricious denials can be overturned by courts. The township should provide clear reasoning, often based on recommendations from the planning commission or zoning administrator.
 - b. The rezoning should not create conditions that are inconsistent with sound zoning policy or incompatible with surrounding zones.
7. Infrastructure and Environmental Considerations
- a. Will existing infrastructure (roads, utilities, sewer, water) support the proposed use under the new zoning district.
 - b. Environmental impacts, such as drainage, wetlands, or erosion, are considered to ensure the rezoning does not harm the natural environment or nearby properties.
8. Public Input and Community Impact
- a. Feedback from residents and stakeholders regarding potential impacts on property values, traffic, aesthetics, and quality of life should be considered.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Kevin Yeomans

Kevin Yeomans
Planner

Attachments

cc: Dale Bergman, Township Supervisor



SPARTA TOWNSHIP

160 E. Division St. Sparta MI 49345
(616) 887-8863 Fax (616) 887-3823
www.spartatownship.org

PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES FOR REZONING TO R-3, R-4, C, OR I DISTRICT

- Deadline:** The deadline to submit materials for a Planning Commission Meeting is by 5:00 p.m., 45 days prior to the next scheduled meeting date. The materials must be dropped off at the Sparta Township Office, 160 E. Division St., Sparta, MI 49345.
- Meeting:** The Planning Commission meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Sparta Township Hall meeting room.
- Cost:** Request Fee: \$900; Escrow: \$2,000
- Submittal:** Ten (10) identical packets must be submitted to the Township along with the fee by the deadline. They should be folded in 8 1/2" by 11" sizes. The packets should contain any supporting documents such as proof of ownership, surveys, site plans, drawings, pictures, and narratives. An electronic copy (PDF) of the packet shall also be submitted. When the rezoning request reaches the Township Board, eight (8) additional packets and an updated electronic copy are required to be submitted to the Township, at least one week in advance of said meeting.

Please call the Township Hall with any questions. 616-887-8863

DO NOT DISCARD THIS PAGE. YOU MUST SUBMIT THIS PAGE WITH YOUR APPLICATION

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - TOWNSHIP USE ONLY

Applicant Name & Address: _____

Application Fee/Escrow _____ Date Received _____ Date Notices Mailed _____

Public Hearing Date _____ Approved _____ or Denied _____ or Approved with Conditions _____

¹ Escrow funds are used to reimburse planning, engineering, and legal fees incurred. If the fund drops below 10% of the deposit, an additional deposit will be required to continue. Any funds remaining will be refunded when the project is complete. Any approvals will be subject to requiring any outstanding funds due are paid in full.



SPARTA TOWNSHIP

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(616) 887-8863 Fax (616) 887-3823
www.spartatownship.org

R-3, R-4, C, or I REZONING APPLICATION

Name of Applicant: Paul and Rebeka Rogers

Address of Applicant: 1932 Rusco, Kent City,

Telephone: _____ Email/Fax: _____

What is the Applicant's interest in making this application for rezoning?

Our interest is to sell new and used trailers, parts and accessories. Which we need a C2 zone for.

What is the nature and effect of the proposed rezoning?

To rezone to a C2

ALL SIGNED
Timothy Clay
03/16/26 03:23 PM EDT
ALL SIGNED
Paul and Becky Rogers
03/16/26 03:23 PM EDT

Mar 16, 2026

**Signature of Applicant

Date

ALL SIGNED
Paul and Becky Rogers
03/16/26 03:23 PM EDT

Mar 16, 2026

**Signature of Property Owner

Date

MAP AMENDMENT

List the name, address and interest of every person who has a legal or equitable interest in any land to be rezoned (map amendment).

Tim Clay 465 E Division St Sparta MI 49345

Paul and Rebeka Rogers 1932 Rusco, Kent City

What is the current zoning of any property requested to be rezoned? c1

What is the proposed zoning of any property requested to be rezoned? c2

Parcel Number of property requested to be rezoned: 41-05-26-300-037

the property is currently dual zoned as C1 and R, we need the R to stay and the division of C1 to be rezoned to C2

Provide a scaled map of the property, fully-dimensioned and correlated with the legal description, showing the following:

1. The land which would be affected by the proposed amendment;
2. If the land proposed for rezoning does not include the entire parcel or lot, the land and legal description of the portion of the parcel of the lot which is proposed for rezoning and the portion of the parcel of the lot which is not proposed for rezoning;
3. The present zoning of the land proposed for rezoning;
4. The present zoning of all abutting lands; and
5. All public and private rights-of-way and easements bounding and intersecting the land proposed for rezoning.

Attach the legal description of the property.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide proof of ownership. If ownership is pending a purchase agreement that is conditional to the Zoning Amendment request, please provide proof of said agreement.

In the instance there is an alleged error in the Ordinance which would be corrected by the proposed amendment, provide a detailed explanation of such alleged error and detailed reasons why the proposed amendment would correct the same:

purchase agreement is attached

State the changed or changing conditions in the area or in the Township that make the proposed amendment reasonably necessary to the promotion of the public health, safety and general welfare:

Our interest is to sell new and used trailers, parts and accessories. Which we need a

C2 zone

for.

State all other circumstances, factors and reasons which the petitioner offers in support of the proposed amendment:

would like zoned as c2 as far back as possible

MICHIGAN REGIONAL VACANT LAND PURCHASE AGREEMENT

DATE: Mar 12, 2026 (time) MLS # 26007512

SELLING OFFICE: City2Shore Gateway Group BROKER LIC.#: REALTOR@ PHONE:

LISTING OFFICE: City2Shore Gateway Group LISTING AGENT: Kelly Hover REALTOR@ PHONE:

1. Effective Date: This Agreement is effective upon the delivery of Seller's acceptance of Buyer's offer to Buyer or Buyer's Agent, or upon the delivery of Buyer's acceptance of any counteroffer to Seller or Seller's Agent, as the case may be, and this date will hereafter be referred to as the "Effective Date".

2. Agency Disclosure: The Undersigned Buyer and Seller each acknowledge that they have read and signed the Disclosure Regarding Real Estate Agency Relationships. The selling licensee is acting as (check one):

- Agent/Subagent of Seller Buyer's Agent Dual Agent (with written, informed consent of both Buyer and Seller) Transaction Coordinator

Primary Selling Agent Name: Kelly Hover Email: Lic.#:

Alternate Selling Agent Name: Email: Lic.#:

3. Disclosure Statement: Seller WILL WILL NOT complete the attached Seller's Disclosure Statement for Vacant Land within three (3) days after the Effective Date. The parties agree that a Disclosure Statement for Vacant Land is not mandated by Michigan law.

4. Property Description: Buyer offers to buy property located in the City Village Township of Sparta County of Kent, Michigan, commonly known as (insert mailing address: (street/city/zip code): V/L Parcel E Yost Parkway, Sparta, MI 49345 with the following legal description and parcel ID numbers: see lengthly legal

The following paragraph applies only if the Property includes unplatted land: Seller agrees to grant Buyer at closing the right to make (insert number) any and all division(s) under Section 108(2), (3), and (4) of the Michigan Land Division Act.

5. Purchase Price: Buyer offers to buy the property for the sum of \$ 155,000.00 one hundred fifty five thousand and no/100 U.S. Dollars

6. Seller Concessions, if any: none

7. Terms: The Terms of Purchase will be as indicated by "X" below: (Other unmarked terms of purchase do not apply.) SOURCE OF FUNDS TO CLOSE: Buyer represents that the funds necessary to close this transaction on the terms specified below are currently available to Buyer in cash or an equally liquid equivalent.

- CASH: The full Purchase Price upon execution and delivery of Warranty Deed. Buyer Agrees to provide Buyer Agent/Dual Agent verification of funds within five (5) days after the Effective Date, and consents to the disclosure of such information to Seller and/or Seller's Agent. If verification of funds is not received within 5 days after the Effective Date, Seller may terminate this Agreement at any time before verification of funds is received by giving written notice to Buyer. Any appraisal required by Buyer will be arranged and paid for by Buyer within ten (10) days after the Effective Date of this Agreement. NEW MORTGAGE: The full Purchase Price upon execution and delivery of Warranty Deed, contingent upon Buyer's ability to obtain a conventional type 30 (year) mortgage in the amount of 80 % of the sale price bearing interest at a rate not to exceed market % per annum (rate at time of loan application), on or before the date the sale is to be closed. Buyer agrees to apply for a mortgage loan, and pay all fees and costs customarily charged by Buyer's lender to process the application,

Seller's Initials [Signature]

Buyer's Initials [Signature]

within 3 days after the Effective Date, not to impair Buyer's credit after the date hereof, and to accept such loan if offered. Buyer agrees does not agree to authorize Buyer's Agent/Dual Agent to obtain information from Buyer's lender regarding Buyer's financing, and consents to the disclosure of this information to Seller and/or Seller's Agent.

SELLER FINANCING (check one of the following): LAND CONTRACT or PURCHASE MONEY MORTGAGE

In the case of Seller financing, Buyer agrees to provide Seller with a credit report within 72 hours after the Effective Date. If the credit report is unacceptable to Seller, then Seller will have the right to terminate this offer within 48 hours of Seller's receipt, or if Buyer fails to provide said credit report to Seller within the time frame allotted, then Seller will have the right to terminate this offer within 48 hours. Seller is advised to seek professional advice regarding the credit report.

\$ _____ upon execution and delivery of a _____ form (name or type of form and revision date), a copy of which is attached, wherein the balance of \$ _____ will be payable in monthly installments of \$ _____ or more including interest at _____ % per annum, interest to start on date of closing, and first payment to become due thirty (30) days after date of closing. The entire unpaid balance will become due and payable _____ months after closing.

EQUITY (check one of the following): Formal Assumption or Informal Assumption
Upon execution and delivery of Warranty Deed subject to existing mortgage OR Assignment of Vendee Interest in Land Contract, Buyer to pay the difference (approximately \$ _____) between the Purchase Price above provided and the unpaid balance (approximately \$ _____) upon said mortgage or land contract, which Buyer agrees to assume and pay. Buyer agrees to reimburse Seller for accumulated funds held in escrow, if any, for payment of future taxes and insurance premiums, etc.

Exceptions: _____

OTHER: _____

8. **Appraisal:** If the Property's value stated in an appraisal obtained by Buyer or Buyer's lender ("Appraisal") is less than the Purchase Price, Buyer may within three (3) days after Buyer has received the Appraisal, by written notice to Seller, either terminate this Agreement and receive a refund of Buyer's Earnest Money Deposit, or make a written proposal to Seller, which proposal must be in the form of an addendum and must be signed by Buyer in order for it to be effective. If Buyer fails to terminate this Agreement or present an addendum within the above referenced time period, then Buyer will be deemed to have accepted the Appraisal as-is. Seller may negotiate with Buyer, do nothing, or by written notice to Buyer, accept Buyer's addendum. If Seller fails to respond or to arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution within three (3) days after Seller's receipt of Buyer's addendum, then Seller will be deemed to have rejected Buyer's addendum. Buyer will then have three (3) days to provide written notice of termination of this Agreement, in which case Buyer will receive a refund of any Earnest Money Deposit. If Buyer fails to terminate this Agreement within the three (3) day period, Buyer will proceed to closing according to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

9. **Contingencies:** Buyer's obligation to consummate this transaction (check one):

IS NOT CONTINGENT - is not contingent upon the sale or exchange of any other property by Buyer.
 IS CONTINGENT UPON CLOSING - is contingent upon closing of an existing sale or exchange of Buyer's property located at:

_____. A copy of Buyer's agreement to sell or exchange that property is being delivered to Seller along with this offer. If the existing sale or exchange terminates for any reason, Buyer will immediately notify Seller, and either party may terminate this Agreement, in writing, within three (3) days of Buyer's notice to Seller. If either party terminates, Buyer will receive a refund of any applicable Earnest Money Deposit.

IS CONTINGENT UPON THE SALE AND CLOSING - is contingent upon the execution of a binding agreement and the closing of a sale or exchange of Buyer's property located at _____ on or before _____. Seller will have the right to continue to market Seller's property until Buyer enters into a binding agreement to sell or exchange Buyer's property and delivers a copy thereof to Seller. During such marketing period, Seller may enter into a binding contract for sale to another purchaser on such price and terms as Seller appropriate. In such event, this Agreement will automatically terminate, Buyer will be notified promptly, and Buyer's Earnest Money Deposit will be refunded.

Exceptions: _____

10. **Fixtures and Improvements:** All improvements and appurtenances are included in the Purchase Price; and any and all items and fixtures permanently affixed to the Property.

Exceptions: _____

11. **Assessments (choose one):**
If the Property is subject to any assessments

Seller to pay entire balance of any assessments related to the Property (regardless of any installment arrangements), except for any fees that are required for future connection to public utilities. OR
 Seller will pay all installments of such assessments that become due and payable on or before day of closing. Buyer will assume and pay all other installments of such assessments.

Seller has an ongoing obligation through the Closing to disclose to the Buyer any known pending assessments, including, but not limited to, any mandatory utility connection requirements, and/or benefit charges, and condominium special assessments, that have not been previously disclosed in writing to Buyer.

12. **Property Taxes:** Seller will be responsible for any taxes billed prior to those addressed below. Buyer will be responsible for all taxes billed after those addressed below.

V/L Parcel E Yost Pkwy, Sparta, MI 49345
Subject Property Address/Description Date Time

	Buyer's Initials
	Seller's Initials

No proration. (Choose one):

Buyer Seller will pay taxes billed summer _____ (year);

Buyer Seller will pay taxes billed winter _____ (year);

Calendar Year Proration (all taxes billed or to be billed in the year of the closing). Calendar year tax levies will be estimated, if necessary, using the taxable value and the millage rate(s) in effect on the day of closing, broken down to a per diem tax payment and prorated to the date of closing with Seller paying for January 1 through the day before closing.

Fiscal Year Proration - Taxes will be prorated as though they are paid in (choose one): advance. arrears.

Fiscal Year will be assumed to cover a 12-month period from date billed, and taxes will be prorated to the date of closing. Fiscal year tax levies will be estimated, if necessary, using the taxable value and millage rate(s) in effect on the day of closing, broken down to a per diem tax payment and prorated to the date of closing with Seller paying through the day before closing.

Buyer is also advised that the state equalized value of the Property, principal residence exemption information and other real property tax information is available the appropriate local assessor's office. Buyer acknowledges and agrees that property taxes for the Property may be higher than the amount of current property taxes. Under Michigan law, real property tax obligations can change significantly when property is transferred.

13. **Sidewalk Inspection:** If Property is in a municipality that requires a sidewalk inspection, Seller will order the inspection and pay for any repairs deemed necessary by the municipality, so that the Property will be in compliance with any applicable sidewalk ordinance as of the closing date.

14. **Inspections:** By signing this Agreement, Buyer is representing that Buyer is aware that professional services are commercially available at a fee by expert(s) selected by Buyer.

NO INSPECTIONS. Buyer elects to waive any and all inspections and agrees to accept the Property in "as-is" condition.

INSPECTIONS. Buyer has elected to arrange and pay for the following services/investigations, which will include, but not be limited to: soil suitability for intended use zoning classification availability of utilities availability of building or driveway permits existence of wetlands tax classification contents of applicable restrictive covenants and building codes general suitability for Buyer's intended use any existing well/septic flood zone Other (specify): _____

Buyer will have the right to terminate this Agreement and receive any applicable Earnest Money Deposit if the due diligence results are not acceptable to Buyer by giving Seller written notice within 10 calendar days after the Effective Date of this Agreement, otherwise the right to terminate will be deemed to have been waived.

During this period, Buyer, Buyer's agents and representatives will have reasonable access to the Property to conduct such investigations as Buyer deems appropriate. Buyer agrees to indemnify and hold Seller harmless from any liability or claim arising from or in any way connected with any such inspections, including all costs and reasonable attorney's fees. To the extent the Property is damaged due to any of Buyer's investigations, Buyer agrees to restore the Property to its original condition.

By closing this transaction, Buyer agrees to accept the Property in "as-is" condition and "with all faults."

Exceptions: _____

15. **Title Insurance:** Seller agrees to convey marketable title to the Property subject to conditions, limitations, reservation of oil, gas and other mineral rights, existing zoning ordinances, and building and use restrictions and easements of record. An expanded coverage ALTA Homeowner's Policy of Title Insurance in the amount of the Purchase Price will be ordered by Seller within five (5) days after the Effective Date and furnished to Buyer at Seller's expense, and a commitment to issue a policy insuring marketable title vested in Buyer, including supporting documents and a real estate tax status report, will be made available to Buyer promptly upon receipt. If Buyer so chooses, or if an expanded policy is not applicable, then a standard ALTA Owners' Policy of Title Insurance will be provided. If Buyer objects to any conditions, Buyer may, within three (3) days after Buyer has received the Title Commitment, by written notice to Seller, either terminate this Agreement and receive a refund of Buyer's Earnest Money Deposit, or make a written proposal to Seller to correct those unsatisfactory conditions, which proposal must be in the form of an addendum and must be signed by Buyer in order for it to be effective. If Buyer fails to terminate this Agreement or present an addendum within the above referenced time period, then Buyer will be deemed to have accepted the Title Commitment as-is. Seller may negotiate with Buyer, do nothing, or by written notice to Buyer, accept Buyer's addendum. If Seller fails to respond or to arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution within three (3) days after Seller's receipt of Buyer's addendum, then Seller shall be deemed to have rejected Buyer's addendum. Buyer will then have three (3) days to provide written notice of termination of this Agreement, in which case Buyer will receive a refund of any Earnest Money Deposit. If Buyer fails to terminate this Agreement within the three (3) day period, Buyer will proceed to closing according to the terms and conditions of this Agreement. Exceptions: _____

16. **Property Survey:** Broker advises that Buyer should have a survey performed to satisfy Buyer as to the boundaries of the property and the location of improvements thereon.

Buyer or Seller (check one) will within ten (10) days of the Effective Date order, at their expense, a boundary survey with iron corner stakes showing the location of the boundaries, improvements and easements in connection with the Property. Upon receipt of the survey, if Buyer objects to any conditions, in Buyer's sole discretion, which would interfere with Buyer's intended use of the Property, the marketability of the title, or zoning non-compliance, Buyer may, within three (3) days after Buyer has received the Survey, by written notice to Seller, either terminate this Agreement and receive a refund of Buyer's Earnest Money Deposit, or make a written proposal to Seller to correct those unsatisfactory conditions, which proposal must be in the form of an addendum and must be signed by Buyer in order for it to be effective. If Buyer fails to terminate this Agreement or present an addendum within the above referenced time period, then Buyer will be deemed to have accepted the Property Survey as-is. Seller may negotiate with Buyer, do nothing, or by written notice to Buyer, accept Buyer's addendum. If Seller fails to respond or to arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution within three (3) days after Seller's receipt of Buyer's addendum, then Seller shall be deemed to have rejected Buyer's addendum. Buyer will then have three (3) days to provide written notice of termination of this Agreement and will receive a refund of any Earnest Money Deposit. If Buyer

V/L Parcel E Yost Pkwy, Sparta, MI 49345

Subject Property Address/Description

Date

Time

Buyer's Initials

Seller's Initials

25. **Fax/Electronic Distribution and Electronic Signatures:** Buyer and Seller agree that any signed copy of this Agreement and any amendments or addendums related to this transaction transmitted by facsimile or other electronic means will be competent evidence of its contents to the same effect as an original signed copy. Buyer and Seller further agree that an electronic signature is the legal equivalent of a manual or handwritten signature, and consent to use of electronic signatures. Buyer and Seller agree that any notice(s) required or permitted under this Agreement may also be transmitted by facsimile or other electronic means.

26. **Wire Fraud:** Seller and Buyer are advised that wire fraud is an increasingly common problem. If you receive any electronic communication directing you to transfer funds or provide nonpublic personal information (such as social security numbers, drivers' license numbers, wire instructions, bank account numbers, etc.), **even if that electronic communication appears to be from the Broker, Title Company, or Lender, DO NOT REPLY** until you have verified the authenticity of the email by direct communication with Broker, Title Company, or Lender. **DO NOT** use telephone numbers provided in the email. Such requests may be part of a scheme to steal funds or use your identity.

27. **Expiration:** For valuable consideration, Buyer gives Seller until 8 pm (time) on Mar 12, 2026 (date), to deliver the written acceptance of this offer and agrees that this offer, when accepted by Seller, will constitute a binding Agreement between Buyer and Seller.

28. **Buyer's Approval and Acknowledgment:** Buyer approves the terms of this offer and acknowledges receipt of a copy of this offer.

Buyer 1 Address _____ X BLSIGNED
Connor Clay Buyer

Buyer 1 Phone: (Res.) _____ (Bus.) _____ Print name as you want it to appear on documents.

Buyer 2 Address _____ X BLSIGNED
Tim Clay Buyer

Buyer 2 Phone: (Res.) _____ (Bus.) _____ Print name as you want it to appear on documents.

29. **Seller's Response:** The above offer is accepted: As written. As written except:

Counteroffer, if any, expires _____, at _____ (time). Seller has the right to withdraw this counter offer and to accept other offers until Seller or Seller's Agent has received notice of Buyer's acceptance.

30. **Seller's Acceptance and Acknowledgment:** Seller accepts the terms of this Agreement and acknowledges receipt of a copy. If Seller's response occurs after Buyer's offer expires, then Seller's response is considered a counteroffer and Buyer's acceptance is required below.

X (Seller's Signature, Date, Time): BLSIGNED
Paul and Becky Rogers Is Seller a U.S. Citizen? Yes No*

3/12/2026, 5:15 pm
Print name as you want it to appear on documents.

X (Seller's Signature, Date, Time): _____ Is Seller a U.S. Citizen? Yes No*

Print name as you want it to appear on documents.

Seller's Address: _____ Seller's Phone (Res.) _____ (Bus.) _____

* If Seller(s) is not a U.S. Citizen, there may be tax implications and Buyer and Seller are advised to seek professional advice.

31. **Buyer's Receipt/Acceptance:** Buyer acknowledges receipt of Seller's response to Buyer's offer. In the event Seller's response constitutes a counteroffer, Buyer accepts said counteroffer. All other terms and conditions in the offer remain unchanged.

X (Buyer's Signature, Date, Time): BLSIGNED
Connor Clay

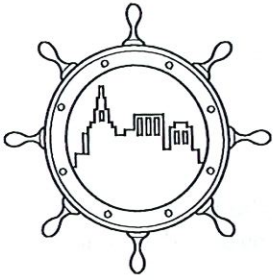
X (Buyer's Signature, Date, Time): BLSIGNED
Timothy Clay

32. **Seller's Receipt:** Seller acknowledges receipt of Buyer's acceptance of counteroffer.

X (Seller's Signature, Date, Time): Rebeka Rogers 3-12-2026 5:15pm

X (Seller's Signature, Date, Time): _____

Mar 12, 2026



Fresh Coast Planning

119 ½ Washington Avenue, Studio B
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240
gransford@freshcoastplanning.com

Kevin Yeomans
616-349-0223
kyeomans@freshcoastplanning.com

Alexis Gulker
616-773-4638
agulker@freshcoastplanning.com

Aaron Bigelow
616-919-2370
abigelow@freshcoastplanning.com

Andrea Goodell
616-313-9333
agoodell@freshcoastplanning.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Sparta Township Planning Commission
From: Kevin Yeomans
Date: 4/7/2026
Re: Data Center Regulation Review

At your March 10, 2026, meeting the Planning Commission deliberated regarding the creation of data center regulations for Sparta Township. As part of your deliberations, you requested more information regarding the following items:

1. Regulations from other communities in Michigan
2. Existing Data Centers in Michigan
3. Cooling Methods
4. More information regarding what is covered by subsection C(14) in the sample provided from Sparta Township's legal counsel.

Below we provide more details on the information we've been able to find. Additionally, we have attached multiple news articles to this memorandum.

Regulations from other Communities in Michigan

Solon Township

Solon Township is currently under a data center moratorium until August 2026. It appears they are on their second draft of proposed regulations, but a final ordinance has not yet been adopted. A copy of their second draft is attached.

Gaines Charter Township

Data Centers are identified as a use by right in the Office Service, Mixed Business, Light Industrial, and Heavy Industrial Districts. Gaines Township does not have any specific regulations for Data Centers. A Data Center would be required to go through site plan review and meet all applicable review standards.

The following definition for Data Center is contained in the Gaines Charter Township Zoning Ordinance:

Data Center. A facility composed of networked computers and storage used to organize, process, store, and disseminate large amounts of data for various purposes, such as computing operations, data storage, and networking. It typically includes servers, networking equipment, storage systems, and backup power supplies, all housed within a controlled environment to ensure reliability and security.

Dorr Township

In February 2026 Dorrr Township adopted a nine-month moratorium on data centers. We were unable to locate a copy of any draft data center ordinances.

Cascade Township

In March 2026 Cascade Township adopted a moratorium on data centers. We were unable to locate a copy of any draft data center ordinances.

Lowell Charter Township

The application in Lowell has been suspended at the request of the applicant. It appears that the Township is still in the process of deliberating on data center regulations. We were unable to locate a copy of any draft data center ordinances.

City of Lansing

It appears that the application for a data center in the City of Lansing has been withdrawn. Further the City of Lansing has a form-based code. Given this, we did not complete a full review of the City's Zoning Ordinance as it would likely not be a good reference for Sparta Township.

Michigan Townships Association (MTA)

Currently the MTA has not released a sample Data Center ordinance. We do not have a timeline for when the MTA's sample will be available.

Existing Data Centers in Michigan

According to datacentermap.com there are 74 data centers currently in Michigan. With a majority (46) in the Detroit Metro Area and other nearby communities. Eleven data centers are located in the Grand Rapids Metro Area. With the largest active data center in Michigan being the Switch Data Center in Gaines Charter Township.

Data Center Cooling Methods

Cooling methods for data centers are rapidly evolving. There is air-cooled, evaporative cooling, direct to chip, and immersion. Each cooling method has a different impact in regard to energy and water consumption. Given that energy providers are regulated by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) and that the MPSC has approved tariffs for heavy energy users, we recommend that zoning regulations focus on the potential impacts to water.

Subsection C(14) – Environmental Impact

In the sample provided by Sparta Township's legal counsel subsection C(14) broadly covers environmental impact by referencing State of Michigan law.

(14) Proof of environmental compliance, including compliance with Part 31, Water Resources Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act; (MCL 324.3101 et. seq.; Part 91, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (MCL 324.9101 et. seq.) and any corresponding County ordinances; Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, (MCL 324.30101 et. seq.); Part 303, Wetlands (MCL 324.30301 et. seq.); Part 365, Endangered Species Protection (MCL324.36501 et. seq.); and any other applicable laws and rules in force at the time the Township considers the application.

Below we provide more information in regard to large quantity water withdrawal and discharge. The other Acts mention in subsection C(14) reference other State laws that regulate potential environmental impacts. Given that an applicant would be required to provide proof of compliance with these laws prior to approval, we have no concerns to bring to the Planning Commission's attention.

Part 31, Water Resources Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act

It's our understanding that this act regulates both large quantity water withdrawals and discharge permits in the State of Michigan. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) reviews both of these permits.

Water Withdrawal Permits

A Water Withdrawal Registration is required prior to beginning a new or increased withdrawal with at least 100,000 gallons per day (70 gallons per minute) in withdrawal capacity but less than or equal to 2,000,000 GPD (1,388 GPM) capacity.

A Water Withdrawal Permit is required prior to beginning a new or increased withdrawal that:

will have more than 2,000,000 gallons per day (or 1,388 gallons per minute) withdrawal capacity

OR will transfer more than 100,000 gallons per day, averaged over any 90-day period, from the watershed of one Great Lake to the watershed of another Great Lake.

Exceptions - these withdrawals aren't required to obtain a Water Withdrawal Permit but are subject to Registration instead:

community water supplies - contact your Community Water Supply Program district engineer instead

bottled water production - review the Bottled Water Source Approval requirements instead

seasonal withdrawals - active for no more than 6 months per year AND average less than 2,000,000 GPD water use in any 90-day period within their season of operation

temporary withdrawals - short term withdrawals that total less than 180,000,000 gallons water use for the entire withdrawal period.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits

The NPDES permit program aims to protect water resources by addressing point source water pollution. Initiated by the Clean Water Act in 1972, the NPDES permit program controls the discharge of pollutants into surface waters by imposing effluent limitations to protect water quality. Although NPDES is a federal program, Michigan has been granted the authority to implement the program.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Kevin Yeomans

Kevin Yeomans
Planner

Attachments

cc: Dale Bergman, Township Supervisor

TOWNSHIP OF SPARTA

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE CRYPTOCURRENCY DATA MINING FACILITIES
AND DATA CENTERS**

The Township of Sparta ordains:

Section 1. Addition of New Section 154.235 to the Zoning Ordinance.

A new Section 154.235 entitled "Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facilities and Data Centers" is hereby added to the Township's Zoning Ordinance, to read, in its entirety, as follows:

Section 154.235 Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facilities and Data Centers.

A. Definitions.

CRYPTOCURRENCY DATA MINING FACILITY. A facility dedicated to operating data processing equipment for commercial cryptocurrency mining and the process by which cryptocurrency transactions are verified and added to digital ledgers.

DATA CENTER. A structure that houses information technology infrastructure and equipment for building, running, and delivering applications, and the storage of digital data. This includes Artificial Intelligence ("AI") Data Centers.

B. General Provisions.

- (1) Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facilities and Data Centers are permitted in the Township only as a special land use in the Industrial Zoning District.
- (2) The Township may enforce any remedy or enforcement, including but not limited to, the removal of any Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facilities and Data Centers pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance or as otherwise authorized by law if the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center does not comply with this Section.

C. Special Land Use Application Requirements. In addition to the requirements of Section 154.186, an applicant for special land use approval of a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must provide the Township with all of the following:

- (1) An application fee in an amount set by resolution of the Township Board.
- (2) A list of all parcel numbers that the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center will use; documentation establishing ownership of each parcel; and any lease agreements, easements, or purchase agreements for the subject parcels.

- (3) An operations agreement setting forth the parameters of the operation, the name and contact information of the operator, the applicant's inspection protocol, emergency procedures, and general safety documentation.
- (4) Current photographs of the subject property.
- (5) A site plan that includes all proposed structures and the location of all equipment, as well as all setbacks, the location of property lines, signage, fences, greenbelts and screening, drain tiles, easements, floodplains, bodies of water, proposed access routes, and road right of ways. The site plan must be drawn to scale and must indicate how the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center will be connected to the power grid.
- (6) A written plan for maintaining the subject property, including a plan for maintaining and inspecting drain tiles and addressing stormwater management, which is subject to the Township's review and approval.
- (7) A decommissioning and land reclamation plan describing the actions to be taken following the abandonment or discontinuation of the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center, including evidence of proposed commitments with property owners to ensure proper final reclamation, repairs to roads, and other steps necessary to fully remove the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center and restore the subject parcels, which is subject to the Township's review and approval.
- (8) A deposit for an escrow account in an amount set by resolution or fee schedule approved by the Township Board. The escrow account is used to cover all costs and expenses associated with the special land use review and/or approval process, which costs can include, but are not limited to, review fees of the Township Attorney, Township Planner, and Township Engineer, as well as any reports or studies which the Township anticipates will be required during the review and/or approval process for the application. At any point during the review process, the Township may require that the applicant place additional monies into escrow with the Township if the existing escrowed funds on account with the Township will be insufficient, in the determination of the Township, to cover any remaining costs or expenses with the review and/or approval process. If additional funds are required by the Township to be placed in escrow and the applicant refuses to do so within 14 days after receiving notice, the Township will cease the zoning review and/or approval process until and unless the applicant makes the required escrow deposit. Any escrow amounts in excess of actual cost will be returned to the applicant. An itemized billing of all expenses will be provided to the applicant upon request.
- (9) A plan for resolving complaints from the public or other property owners concerning the construction and operation of the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center, which is subject to the Township's review and approval.

- (10) A plan for managing any hazardous waste, which is subject to the Township's review and approval.
- (11) A fire protection plan, which identifies the fire risks associated with the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center; describes the fire suppression system that will be implemented; describes what measures will be used to reduce the risk of fires re-igniting (i.e., implementing a "fire watch"); identifies the water sources that will be available for the local fire department to protect adjacent properties; identifies a system for continuous monitoring, early detection sensors, and appropriate venting; and explains all other measures that will be implemented to prevent, detect, control, and suppress fires and explosions.
- (12) A transportation plan for construction and operation phases, including any applicable agreements with the County Road Commission and Michigan Department of Transportation, which is subject to the Township's review and approval.
- (13) An attestation that the applicant will indemnify and hold the Township harmless from any costs or liability arising from the approval, installation, construction, maintenance, use, repair, or removal of the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center, which is subject to the Township's review and approval.
- (14) Proof of environmental compliance, including compliance with Part 31, Water Resources Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act; (MCL 324.3101 et. seq.; Part 91, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (MCL 324.9101 et. seq.) and any corresponding County ordinances; Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, (MCL 324.30101 et. seq.); Part 303, Wetlands (MCL 324.30301 et. seq.); Part 365, Endangered Species Protection (MCL 324.36501 et. seq.); and any other applicable laws and rules in force at the time the Township considers the application.
- (15) Any additional information or documentation requested by the Planning Commission, Township Board, or other Township representative.

D. System and Location Requirements. In addition to the requirements of Section 154.170 for a site plan, the site plan must include all of the following:

- (1) Equipment. All equipment used in any Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must be housed in a metered, electrically grounded, and pre-engineered or prefabricated metal-encased structure with a fire rating designed to resist an internal electrical fire for at least 30 minutes.
- (2) Structures. All principal and accessory structures used for cryptocurrency mining operations and/or data centers, shall be arranged, designed, and constructed to be harmonious and compatible with the site and with the surrounding properties. If prefabricated, pre-engineered, or modular structures are installed, the following standards are required:

- a) All structures shall have concrete foundations.
 - b) All exterior facades shall have muted earth tone colors that will blend the facility into the natural setting and existing environment, and shall not be defective, decayed or corroded.
 - c) If intermodal shipping containers are utilized such installation shall comply with current National Electrical Code standards.
- (3) Lighting. The lighting of the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center is limited to the minimum light necessary for safe operation. Illumination from any lighting must not extend beyond the perimeter of the lot(s) used for the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center. The Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must not produce any glare that is visible to neighboring lots or persons traveling on public or private roads.
- (4) Security Fencing. Security fencing must be installed around all electrical equipment related to the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center. Such fencing must be a minimum seven (7) feet tall and must use materials, colors, textures, screening and landscaping, that will blend the facility into the natural setting and existing environment.
- (5) Noise. The noise generated by the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must not exceed 45 dBA Lmax, as measured at the property line of any adjacent parcel.
- (6) Signage. The Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center shall provide a 24-hour emergency contact signage visible at the access entrance. Signs shall include company name if applicable, owner/representative name, telephone number, and corresponding local power company and telephone number.
- (7) Underground Transmission. All power transmission or other lines, wires, or conduits from a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center to any building or other structure must be located underground at a depth that complies with current National Electrical Code standards, except for power switchyards or the area within a substation.
- (8) Drain Tile Inspections. The Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must be maintained in working condition at all times while in operation. The applicant or operator must inspect all drain tiles at least once every three years using a robotic camera, with the first inspection occurring before the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center is in operation. The applicant or operator must submit proof of the inspection to the Township. The owner or operator must repair any damage or failure of the drain tile within sixty (60) days after discovery and submit proof of the repair to the Township. The Township is entitled, but not required, to have a representative present at each inspection or to conduct an independent inspection.

(9) Fire Protection.

- a) Before any construction of the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center begins, the Township's fire department (or the fire department with which the Township contracts for fire service) will review the fire protection plan submitted with the application. The fire chief will determine whether the fire protection plan adequately protects the Township's residents and property and whether there is sufficient water supply to comply with the fire protection plan and to respond to fire or explosion incidents. If the fire chief determines that the plan is adequate, then the fire chief will notify the Township or his or her designee of that determination. If the fire chief determines that the plan is inadequate, then the fire chief may propose modifications to the plan, which the applicant or operator of the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must implement. The fire chief's decision may be appealed to the Township Board, and the Township Board will hear the appeal at an open meeting. The Township Board may affirm, reverse, or modify the fire chief's determination. The Township Board's decision is final, subject to any appellate rights available under applicable law.
- b) The applicant or operator may amend the fire protection plan from time-to-time in light of changing technology or other factors. Any proposed amendment must be submitted to the fire department for review and approval under subsection (a).
- c) The Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must comply with the fire protection plan as approved by the fire chief (or as approved by the Township Board in the event of an appeal).
- d) The Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center must contain an internal fire suppression system that shall be reviewed and tested once every twelve (12) months by a third-party contractor approved by the fire chief.

(10) Applicant must provide all Township Fire Department contractors with the appropriate equipment and training to address fires in the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center.

(11) Insurance. The applicant or operator will maintain property/casualty insurance and general commercial liability insurance in an amount of at least \$5 million per occurrence. The Township shall be listed as an additional insured on the policy at all times.

(12) Permits. All required county, state, and federal permits must be obtained before the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center begins operating. A building permit is required for construction of a Cryptocurrency Data Mining

Facility or Data Center regardless of whether the applicant or operator is otherwise exempt under state law.

- (13) Decommissioning. If a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center is abandoned or otherwise nonoperational for a period of one year, the property owner or the operator must notify the Township and must remove the system within six (6) months after the date of abandonment. Removal requires receipt of a demolition permit from the Building Official and full restoration of the site to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator. The site must be filled and covered with top soil and restored to a state compatible with the surrounding vegetation. The requirements of this subsection also apply to a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center that is never fully completed or operational if construction has been halted for a period of one (1) year.
- (14) Financial Security. To ensure proper decommissioning of a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center upon abandonment, the applicant must post financial security in the form of a security bond or escrow payment in an amount equal to 125% of the total estimated cost of decommissioning, code enforcement, and reclamation, which cost estimate must be approved by the Township. The operator and the Township will review the amount of the financial security every two (2) years to ensure that the amount remains adequate. This financial security must be posted within fifteen (15) business days after approval of the special use application.
- (15) Extraordinary Events. If the Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center experiences a failure, fire, leakage of hazardous materials, personal injury, or other extraordinary or catastrophic event, the applicant or operator must notify the Township within 24 hours.
- (16) Annual Report. The applicant or operator must submit a report on or before January 1 of each year that includes all of the following:
 - a) Current proof of insurance;
 - b) Verification of financial security; and
 - c) A summary of all complaints, complaint resolutions, and extraordinary events.
- (17) Inspections. The Township may inspect a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center at any time by providing 24-hour advance notice to the applicant or operator.
- (18) Transferability. A conditional land use permit for a Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center is transferable to a new owner. The new owner must register their name and business address with the Township and must comply with this Ordinance and all approvals and conditions issued by the Township.

- (19) Remedies. If an applicant or operator fails to comply with this Ordinance, the Township, may pursue any remedy or enforcement, including but not limited to the removal of any Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facility or Data Center pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance or as otherwise authorized by law. Additionally, the Township may pursue any legal or equitable action to abate a violation and recover any and all costs, including the Township's actual attorney fees and costs.

Section 2. Amendment of Section 154.247.

Section 154.247, is hereby amended to add Cryptocurrency Data Mining Facilities and Data Centers to the Table of Use Regulations as a special land use in the Industrial zoning district.

Section 3. Validity and Severability.

If any portion of this Ordinance is found invalid for any reason, such holding will not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 4. Repealer.

All other ordinances inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give this Ordinance full force and effect.

Section 5. Effective Date.

This Ordinance takes effect upon the expiration of 7 days after publication as required by MCL 125.3401(7).

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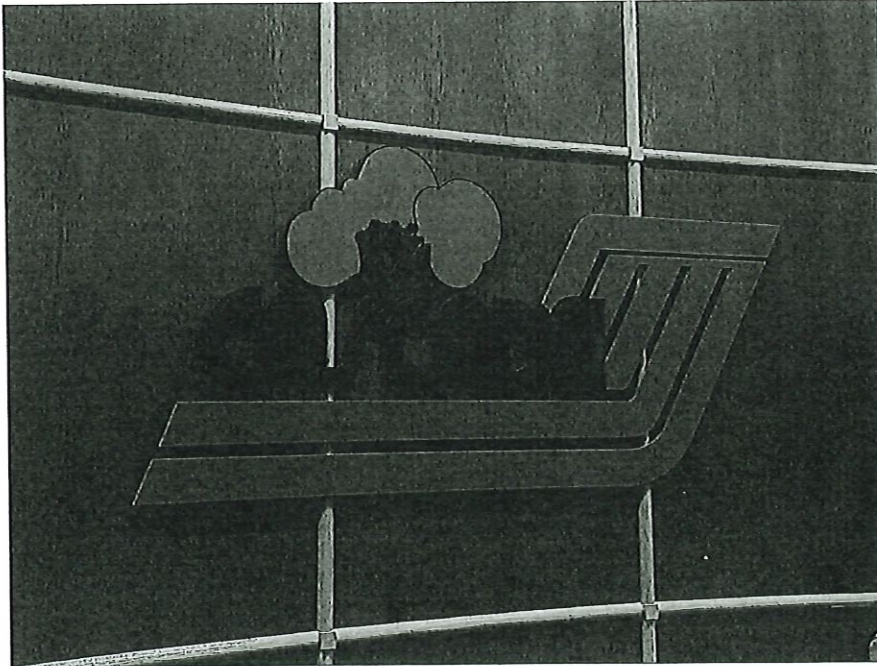
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GRAND RAPIDS

Grand Rapids suburb temporarily blocks data center proposals

Updated: Mar. 10, 2026, 11:44 a.m. | Published: Mar. 03, 2026, 3:04 p.m.



The Cascade Township Board of Trustees meets at the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE on Feb. 11, 2026. Photo by Matt Frick | MLive.com





By [Melissa Frick | mfrick@mlive.com](mailto:mfrick@mlive.com)

CASCADE TWP., MI – A Grand Rapids suburb has passed a temporary moratorium blocking any data center proposals as similar projects are popping up across West Michigan.

No data center projects have been proposed in Cascade Township, but the six-month moratorium is intended to give the township more time to develop regulations on data centers in case one is brought forward, said Cascade Township Manager Jade Smith.

The Cascade Township Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution introducing the moratorium at its Feb. 25 meeting, with plans to adopt the ordinance on March 12. Originally, the moratorium was going to last 12 months, but Trustee Timmy Noordhoek proposed shortening it because he didn't think the township needed a full year to develop the new rules. The township can add a six-month extension if needed.



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The board also appointed a temporary subcommittee to work with township staff and legal counsel on fact-finding and research related to data centers, in an effort to help guide the new regulations. Noordhoek and trustees Chris Noordyke and Scott Rissi will sit on the subcommittee.

The moratorium comes as Microsoft is eyeing two pieces of nearby land for data center development in Kent County. One is a potential \$1 billion data center on a 237-acre industrial parcel on Alden Nash Avenue in Lowell Township, and the other is a 40.5-acre parcel at 7147 Patterson Ave. SE in Gaines Township.

RELATED: Public outcry continues over Microsoft's proposed Kent County data center

Microsoft is hosting public forums in Gaines and Lowell townships this week so communities can learn more about the proposed data center projects.

The Gaines Township meeting is from 4-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, at the Kindred Event Center, 3449 76th St. SE, Caledonia, and the Lowell Township meeting is from 4-7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at the Fairway of Kent County Event Center, 13955 Cascade Road SE.

Solon Township and the Village of Sparta have both preemptively adopted new zoning language that would regulate the development of data centers, despite not having any formal proposals on the books.

Noordhoek, who proposed the creation of the subcommittee, said he wanted to research various public concerns around data centers including water usage, noise, pollution, and impact on local electricity bills.

The township's zoning ordinance currently does not have any provisions regarding data centers.

"As data centers represent a relatively new and rapidly expanding land use in Michigan, the township finds it necessary to conduct a thorough review and develop appropriate regulatory standards," Smith wrote in a memo to the board.

"Potential impacts requiring evaluation include land use compatibility, infrastructure demands, environmental considerations, and community character."

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Data centers are essentially warehouses full of computer hardware — servers, data storage systems and networking equipment.

They've been in Michigan for a long time now, but recent investments in "hyperscale" data centers that support artificial intelligence have drawn scrutiny from residents. These massive projects can draw as much electricity as an entire city and use significant amounts of water to cool equipment.

Cascade residents recently asked the township to add data center regulations during the overhaul of the township's zoning code, approved last month.



At the time, township officials said they weren't adding data center regulations during the zoning code rewrite because they needed more time to craft the complicated regulations.



Stories by **Melissa Frick**

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Michigan Wolverines guard Elliot Cadeau (3) grabs a rebound as Michigan faces Saint Louis in the second round of the NCAA basketball tournament in Buffalo, New York on Saturday, March 20 2026.

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Michigan Wolverines guard Elliot Cadeau (3) as Michigan basketball faces Alabama in the Sweet 16 at United Center in Chicago on Friday, March 27 2026.

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TOWNSHIP OF SOLON
COUNTY OF KENT, MICHIGAN

At a regular meeting of the Township Board of the Township of Solon, held in the Solon Township Hall, 15185 Algoma Avenue, within the Township, on the ___ day of _____, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: _____

ABSENT: _____

The following Ordinance was offered by _____ and seconded by _____.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOLON

[Data Centers and Digital Mining Uses]

THE TOWNSHIP OF SOLON ORDAINS:

Section 1. **Data Centers and Digital Mining Uses.** Chapter 3 of the Solon Township Zoning Ordinance (the "Zoning Ordinance") is amended by the addition of a new Section 3.39 regarding data centers and digital mining uses, which shall read in its entirety as follows:

SECTION 3.39 DATA CENTERS AND DIGITAL MINING USES.

- A. Purpose. The purpose of this section is to provide regulations for data centers within the Township in a manner that protects the property values and lifestyles of adjacent and nearby properties and also the health, safety and general welfare of the Township and its residents.
- B. Definitions.
 - 1. Accessory Data Center. A data center that is ancillary to the principal use of a lot of parcel, which is typically used solely to store or otherwise support an individual business's data and information technology needs. A data center is not considered

an accessory data center if it requires more than five megawatts (5 MW) of power to operate.

2. Closed-Loop Cooling System. A sealed system where coolant circulates continuously, absorbing heat from a source, and then transfers that heat to a heat exchanger for removal, without the coolant ever being exposed to the environment.
3. Colocation Data Center. A data center that is rented out by the owner to provide space to other businesses for their servers and other computing hardware. In addition to providing physical space, colocation facilities may offer additional services including maintenance, backup power systems, and multiple network connections. A colocation data center may be a small-scale, medium-scale or hyperscale data center.
4. Data Center. A use involving a building or other structure that is primarily occupied by computers and/or telecommunications equipment and related equipment, including supporting equipment, where information is processed, transferred, or stored. A data center use shall not include a digital mining use. A data center which includes on-site solar or wind energy generation facilities used or intended to be used to supply power to the data center shall comply with the requirements of the zoning ordinance and any other ordinances regulating those uses.
5. Digital Currency. Currency in a digital format that involves the use of encryption techniques to regulate the generation of units of the digital currency and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently from a central bank.
6. Digital Mining. The process whereby computers (also referred to as “nodes” or “mining rigs”) validate blockchain transactions for a specific item of digital currency (commonly known as “bitcoin” or “cryptocurrency”) for a financial benefit.
7. Digital Mining Use. A use involving a building or structure that is primarily occupied by computers used for digital currency mining purposes. Typical physical characteristics of a digital mining use include, but are not limited to, specialized computer hardware or data centers with a non-diverse electrical use for mining operations as well as equipment to cool the hardware and operating space. For the purposes of this Zoning Ordinance, the scale of a digital mining use that is not connected to a data center is determined by the same power measurements provided in the definition of small-scale, medium scale, and hyperscale data centers in this Section 3.39.
8. Hyperscale Data Center. A data center that is typically located in a warehouse-sized facility that stores servers to handle very large processing workloads, and typically host 5,000 or more servers. requires one hundred megawatts (100 MW) or more of power to operate.

9. Medium-Scale Data Center. A data center that requires between five megawatts (5 MW) and ninety-nine megawatts (99 MW) of power to operate.
 10. Megawatts (MW). A unit of power that is used for the measurement of bulk electricity, and is equal to one million watts.
 11. Small-Scale Data Center. A data center that requires less than five megawatts (5 MW) of power to operate.
- C. Application. A site plan shall be submitted and reviewed prior to the approval of a data center or an expansion or change of use for a data center under the provisions of Chapter 14, except where special land use approval is required, in which case special land use approval under Chapter 16 shall be required. An application for a proposed data center or digital mining use shall include all of the information required for site plan review under Chapter 14, and the following additional information:
1. The site plan for the proposed use shall include the location of proposed buildings, structures and other improvements, floodplains, wetlands, any bodies of water, and the zoning districts for all adjacent properties and any existing dwellings within ½ mile of the proposed use.
 2. Evidence of preliminary contact with the proposed electrical service provider regarding whether there is capacity for the proposed use and whether the existing infrastructure and facilities can accommodate the proposed use.
 3. A noise mitigation plan shall be submitted, including, at a minimum, a detailed acoustic study showing the amount of noise that would be produced by normal operations of the data center and strategies to minimize noise and achieve a neutral impact on adjacent and nearby properties.
 4. The submittal shall contain a detailed narrative of the arrangements to be made for stormwater discharge, water supply and sewage disposal service, including approximate capacity, source of water supply, discharge points for sewage disposal, and description of storm water management facilities.
 5. A project development timeline, including information regarding how the applicant will inform adjacent property owners and members of the community regarding the status of the project.
 6. A decommissioning plan, which shall include details regarding the planned method of safe removal and recycling or disposal of server infrastructure, any hazardous materials, batteries, electronic waste and related products.
 7. An agreement by the applicant to allow for periodic inspections to ensure compliance with the applicable regulations.
- D. Environmental Impact Assessment. The Applicant shall also provide an environmental

impact assessment with the application materials. This assessment shall describe the effect and impact that the proposed data center or digital mining use will or may have upon or with respect to the following matters:

1. The lands involved and the adjacent and nearby lands; streams, rivers, wetlands, and the quality and volume of surface and groundwater; wildlife and trees, and other significant vegetation; the effect, if any, on surrounding property values.
 2. A traffic impact study.
 3. Additional costs to governmental units; police and fire protection; storm water drainage; water supply and sewage disposal.
 4. Evidence that the disposal of wastewater and other materials will be accomplished in a manner that complies with local, state and federal regulations.
 5. Noise, vibration, dust and dirt, litter, smoke, odor, light, and glare.
 6. A community impact analysis.
 7. An analysis by a third party of the nature and effect of any private utility systems, including septic tanks and drain fields, storm water control and retention facilities, and water supply and distribution systems. This analysis shall include any impact on private utility systems located on adjacent or nearby properties up to ½ mile away from the proposed data center.
 8. Such other matters as the Planning Commission may request to be included. If requested by the Planning Commission, the environmental impact assessment shall include statements or comments from the following public agencies or officials concerning those aspects of the proposed data center within their respective responsibilities and jurisdictions: Kent County Health Department; Kent County Road Commission, Kent County Drain Commissioner, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, local school district(s); Kent County Sheriff's Department, the Township Fire Department, electricity providers, and the surrounding public water and sewer authorities and providers if applicable, along with other appropriate agencies.
- E. Reports. The Township shall have the right to require supplemental or amended reports related to matters including but not limited to impacts of the proposed development, prior to any zoning approval.
- F. Staff Review. The Zoning Administrator and Township Engineer shall prepare a report on the proposed site plan for the Planning Commission. The Township may also contract with other consultants to provide reports necessary to evaluate the proposed data center and its potential impacts.
- G. Fees. The applicant shall pay all fees and charges required by the Township including the

required escrow deposit set by the Township Board for site plan review and special land use approval, if applicable. In addition, the Township reserves the right to require the applicant to deposit an increased or additional escrow deposit if necessary for the Township to review the application and related materials, including escrows necessary to pay third parties or contractors to assist the Township with consideration of the site plan, special land use approval, or continuing operation of the data center or digital mining use.

H. General Regulations. The following general requirements apply to all data centers and digital mining uses within the Township.

1. Noise. Noise emanating from the use, operation, maintenance, or decommissioning of a data center or a digital mining use shall not exceed forty-five (45) decibels (dBA) Lmax as measured from any property line.
 - a. The maximum noise levels provided above shall not apply to emergency alerts or emergency alarms.
 - b. The Planning Commission may reduce the maximum noise level for any data center and/or particular mining use if necessary to protect adjacent residents and property owners, including but not limited to in the event that there is an audible noise due to the operation of a data center or digital mining use at adjacent property line(s), which contains a steady pure tone such as a whine, screech or hum.
2. Mechanical Equipment. To reduce the impact of additional noise on surrounding properties, any equipment necessary for cooling, ventilating, or otherwise related to operations of the data center or digital mining use, including power generators or other power supply equipment, shall be located within an enclosed building or structure.
 - a. The Planning Commission may waive this requirement for specified equipment if it finds that it is not mechanically feasible to fully enclose such equipment. If it does so, the specified equipment that has been approved to be located outside of an enclosed building or structure shall be screened by a wall or similar barrier.
3. Setbacks.
 - a. Setbacks from Residential Properties. Any building or structure that is used for a data center or digital mining use shall be located at least 500 feet from the lot line of any property located in a residential zoning district.
 - b. Setbacks from Non-Residential Properties. Any building or structure that is used for a data center or digital mining use shall be located at least 250 feet from the lot line of any property not located in a residential zoning district.

- c. Setbacks for Equipment. Any equipment necessary for cooling, ventilating, or otherwise related to operations of the data center or digital mining use, including power generators or other power supply equipment, shall be setback the same as the building setback above.
 - d. Setbacks for Accessory Data Centers. An Accessory Data Center shall comply with the applicable building and any other setback requirements for the district in which the small scale Accessory Data Center is located.
4. Outdoor Storage. Outdoor storage of materials, equipment, and supplies shall be prohibited.
5. Hazardous Materials. Due to the nature of a data center or digital mining use, hazardous waste and storage of hazardous materials is anticipated. If the proposed data center or digital mining use includes storage or disposal of hazardous materials or waste, the following is required:
 - a. The applicant shall describe the nature of the storage and processing of hazardous materials and waste as part of the application for site plan review. This shall include proposed safety measures and protocols to prevent the spread of hazardous materials outside of designated containment areas and procedures in the event that hazardous materials or waste are released and have the potential to damage persons, property or the environment. This information shall be provided to provide the Township with notice that hazardous materials or waste are present to coordinate in the event that hazardous materials or waste is released, and to inform public safety officials.
 - b. All storage and/or processing of hazardous materials and waste shall comply in all respects with state and federal law and regulations and the requirements of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and any other applicable agency. Storage and/or processing of hazardous materials and waste shall not commence until all necessary permits have been obtained and copies of such permits have been provided to the Township.
 - c. Storage and/or processing of hazardous materials and waste shall not occur within 500 feet of any lot line.
 - d. If storage and/or processing is proposed outside of a building or structure, those activities shall be screened from view of adjacent public or private rights-of-way and any property that is zoned in a residential district.
6. Air Quality and Water Quality. The equipment, including but not limited to any power generators, used in the operation of the data center or digital mining use shall minimize air pollutant emissions and water pollutant discharges and meet or exceed applicable state and federal laws regarding emissions and discharges. An owner or

operator or applicant for a data center shall provide affirmative proof of EGLE approval or EPA approval upon request of the Township.

7. Storm Water Management. A Township storm water permit is required for a proposed data center or digital mining use. Measures for control of storm water drainage shall be provided under the terms of the Township Storm Water Ordinance and any other applicable ordinances, regulations or statutes.
8. Cooling Methods. To reduce the potential impact on nearby potable water resources, any data center or digital mining use that proposes to use water cooling must use a closed-loop cooling system or recycled water system.
9. Power. Before the issuance of any building permits, the applicant shall provide written verification from the applicable energy service provider that states the following:
 - a. There is adequate capacity available on the applicable supply lines and substation for the data center or digital mining use and to ensure that there is sufficient capacity available to serve the needs of other customers within the service area, consistent with the normal projected load growth envisioned by the provider;
 - b. The utility supply equipment and related electrical infrastructure are sufficiently sized and can safely accommodate the proposed data center or digital mining use during the power provider's peak consumption hours;
 - c. Any system designed for cooling and operation of the facility (electricity, water, or other means) will be adequate and will not negatively impact the surrounding area; and
 - d. The use will not cause electrical interference or fluctuations in the line voltage on and off the operating premises.
10. Electric Utilities.
 - a. Integration of renewable energy to power data centers is preferred, if feasible. Data centers that are required to obtain power from renewable sources as part of eligibility for the sales and use tax exemptions under Public Act 181 of 2024, as amended, and Public Act 207 of 2024, as amended, shall comply with state laws and regulations. The applicant shall provide proof of compliance with this section.
 - b. To the extent feasible, electrical utilities shall be located underground.
 - c. The Applicant shall provide proof that the data center or digital mining use will not cause an increase in electricity costs for Township residents.

- d. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall provide the Township with written verification that the electrical work has passed a third-party final inspection.
11. Lighting. Any proposed outdoor lighting for a data center or digital mining use shall comply with the requirements of Section 3.21.
12. Fencing. Fencing may be required for a data center or digital mining use if necessary for safety or security purposes. The Planning Commission shall have discretion to approve the height, location and type of fencing.
13. Parking. Data centers and digital mining uses shall provide a minimum of one (1) off-street parking space for each employee of the data center, and an additional three (3) visitor parking spaces. In the alternative the Planning Commission may allow parking at 1 space per 100,000 square feet of building area.
14. Safety.
- a. A detailed emergency response plan shall be submitted with the zoning application, showing at a minimum that the data center has a plan in effect to address emergencies resulting from flood, fire, explosion and catastrophic weather events. The emergency response plan is subject to review and comments by the Township, including the Township Fire Chief, and may also be subject to review of the Kent County Sheriff's Department or other applicable law enforcement agency.
- b. The equipment used in any data center or digital mining use shall be housed in a metered, electrically grounded, and metal-encased structure with a fire rating designed to resist an internal electrical fire for at least thirty (30) minutes. The containment space for the equipment shall contain baffles that automatically close in the event of fire, independent of a possible electrical system failure.
- c. Any data center or digital mining use that is proposed to include battery storage or any other device or group of devices capable of storing energy in order to supply electrical energy at a later time shall demonstrate compliance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 855, Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems, or similar standards and must include fire suppression systems specifically designed for battery storage.
- d. The proposed data center or digital mining use shall include a fire suppression system that complies with the Michigan Construction Code, as amended, and any other applicable local, state or federal laws, rules or regulations. Compliance with all requirements of the Township Fire Chief related to fire suppression shall be required.

15. Emergency Contact Information. Each data center or digital mining use shall provide 24-hour emergency contact signage visible at each access entrance. The signs shall include the company name (if applicable), the owner or representative's name, the telephone number for the emergency contact person, and the local power company's name and telephone number.
 16. Nuisance Prohibited. The data center or digital mining use shall be designed, constructed and operated at all times in manner that does not create a nuisance by reason of heat, glare, fumes, dust, noise, vibration or odor beyond the property on which the data center is located.
 17. Modular Data Centers Prohibited. Except during the construction phase, prefabricated or "modular" data centers and shipping containers and similar prefab structures are prohibited. All data center uses shall be within site-built buildings.
 18. Compliance with Other Laws. The design, construction, operation use and decommissioning of a data center or digital mining use shall comply with all other applicable local, state or federal laws or regulations, including but not limited to laws or regulations regarding the environment, pollution, and mitigation of potential impacts on threatened or endangered species.
- I. Decommissioning Requirements. The application shall include a decommissioning plan that describes the anticipated life of the data center or digital mining facility and the manner in which the project will be decommissioned, actions that will be taken to restore the site, the removal of the equipment, the estimated cost of the decommissioning process, and the method for ensuring that the owner and/or operator will have sufficient funds available for decommissioning and restoration including but not limited to the posting of an appropriate bond, letter of credit or other security. If a data center or digital mining use is not operational for a continuous one-year period, or if substantial action on the project is discontinued for a period of one year, the project shall be deemed abandoned and must be decommissioned. The owner, operator, permit holder and/or their successor(s) in interest shall have one year to complete decommissioning of the facility. The decommissioning shall be in compliance with the approved decommissioning plan, and the owner, operator, permit holder and/or their successor(s) in interest shall notify the Township when the project has been decommissioned.
- J. Colocation Data Centers. Colocation data centers shall be permitted. The owner(s) and/or operator(s) of colocation data centers shall be responsible for ensuring that lessees and users of the data center or digital mining use facilities comply with the terms of this section and other applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations. The owner(s) and/or operator(s) of colocation data centers shall provide information regarding their plan to ensure that all of the lessees and users of the proposed data center or digital mining use will remain in compliance.
- K. Accessory Data Centers.
1. An accessory data center is permitted only in those zoning districts where an

accessory data center is a permitted accessory use.

2. Accessory data centers must be located on the same lot or parcel as the principal use.
 3. All equipment necessary for the operation of the accessory data center, including any equipment necessary for cooling, ventilating, or otherwise related to operations of the data center or digital mining use, including power generators or other power supply equipment, shall be located within an enclosed building or structure.
- L. Digital Mining Uses. Where a digital mining use is allowed as a permitted use or special land use in a zoning district, the following additional requirements apply:
1. All activities related to the digital mining use must be conducted within an enclosed building.
 2. The applicant must provide evidence to the Township, certified by a professional engineer, that the proposed use will not have an adverse effect on electrical or digital internet services in neighboring properties or the Township.
 3. All digital mining operations shall be designed, erected, and installed in accordance with all applicable local, state or federal laws, codes, rules and regulations.
 4. Digital mining shall not occur in any accessory building or temporary structure. The use of ISO shipping containers or other similar containers for digital mining shall be prohibited.
 5. Digital mining operations shall only be permitted between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Planning Commission may authorize additional hours if appropriate noise, light, screening and other protective measures are included.

Section 2. **Amendment of Section 5.03.** Section 5.03 of the Zoning Ordinance is amended by the addition of a new Section 5.03(S) to allow medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses as a special land use in the AG – Agricultural and Residential District, subject to the location requirements in Section 16.04(MM)(E), to read in its entirety as follows:

- S. Medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses, as regulated by Section 3.39 and Section 16.04(MM), but subject to the location requirements provided in Section 16.04(MM)(E).

Section 3. **Amendment of Section 9.02(B)(1).** Section 9.02 of the Zoning Ordinance

is amended by the amendment of Section 9.02(B)(1) to clarify that the “data processing” uses included in business services uses permitted in the NC Neighborhood Commercial District do not include data centers and/or digital mining uses, as defined in Section 3.39, to read in its entirety as follows:

B. Business services including:

1. Advertising agencies, adjustment and collection services, credit reporting services, direct mail services, photocopying and duplicating services, commercial art and graphic design, secretarial and court reporting, disinfecting and pest control services, building maintenance services, employment agencies, computer programming services, data processing (but not including data centers and/or digital mining uses as defined in Section 3.39), messenger/telegraph-service stations and parcel-delivery stations.

Section 4. **Addition of Section 9.02(J).** Section 9.02 of the Zoning Ordinance is also amended by the addition of a new Section 9.02(J) to allow data centers and/or digital mining uses as a permitted accessory use in the NC – Neighborhood Commercial District, to read in its entirety as follows:

- J. Data centers and/or digital mining uses as accessory uses, as regulated under Section 3.39.

Section 5. **Amendment of Section 10.02.** Section 10.02 of the Zoning Ordinance is also amended by the addition of a new Section 10.02(N) and 10.02(O) to allow data centers and/or digital mining uses as a permitted accessory use, and to allow small-scale data centers and/or digital mining uses as a permitted use in the HC – Highway Commercial District, to read in its entirety as follows:

- N. Data centers and/or digital mining uses as accessory uses, as regulated under Section 3.39.

- O. Small-scale data centers and/or digital mining uses, as regulated by Section 3.39.

Section 6. **Amendment of Section 11.02.** Section 11.02 of the Zoning Ordinance is amended by the addition of a new Section 11.02(Q) and a new Section 11.02(R) to allow data

centers and/or digital mining uses as a permitted accessory use, and to allow small-scale data centers and/or digital mining uses as a permitted use in the LI – Light Industrial District, to read in its entirety as follows:

- Q. Data centers and/or digital mining uses as accessory uses, as regulated under Section 3.39.
- R. Small-scale data centers and/or digital mining uses, as regulated by Section 3.39.

Section 7. **Amendment of Section 11.03.** Section 11.03 of the Zoning Ordinance is amended by the addition of a new Section 11.03(G) to allow medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses as a special land use in the LI – Light Industrial District, subject to the location requirements in Section 16.04(MM)(E), to read in its entirety as follows:

- G. Medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses, as regulated by Section 3.39 and Section 16.04(MM), but subject to the location requirements provided in Section 16.04(MM)(E).

Section 8. **Data Centers and Data Mining as a Special Land Use.** Chapter 16 of the Zoning Ordinance is amended by the addition of a new Section 16.04(MM) regarding special land use specific requirements for data centers and digital mining uses, which shall read in its entirety as follows:

SECTION 16.04 SPECIAL LAND USE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

MM. **Data Centers and Digital Mining.** Medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses may be permitted by the Planning Commission as a special land use upon compliance with each of the following requirements:

1. Definitions. The definitions provided for data centers in Section 3.39 shall apply.
2. Compliance with Section 3.39. Proposed medium-scale or hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses must comply with the requirements for all data centers under Section 3.39 in addition to the requirements of this section and the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Application. In addition to the application materials and environmental impact study required for data centers under Section 3.39(c) and 3.39(d), applications for

medium-scale or hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall include the following:

- a. A separate noise impact study which includes information on the noise levels to be generated by the construction, use and operation of the data center, measured in dB(A).
- b. A description of the proposed plan to obtain water required for all data center or digital mining uses, including whether the water would be taken from groundwater or surface water, whether private or public utilities are proposed, and indicating the quantity of water required. The description shall specify if any non-potable or recycled water is proposed to be used.
- c. A separate analysis of the impact on the use of the required water for the data center or digital mining use on the capacity of water available from public utilities or from groundwater or surface water sources. If the water for cooling is proposed to be from the required public water connection, the applicant must demonstrate that the public source has the capacity to provide water for the proposed data center or digital mining use or if infrastructure or facilities improvements would be required.
- d. Copies of required approvals from the applicable public water system and public sewer system. Any infrastructure or facilities improvements that are required to the public water system and/or public sewer system to accommodate the proposed data center and/or digital mining use must be paid solely by the applicant.
- e. The applicant shall also provide a water feasibility study regarding the use of public water and any use of nonpublic sources of water. Private wells shall not be used for general cooling or processing purposes. The water feasibility study shall include the following:
 - (1) Calculations of the projected water needs of the data center during normal operations and at peak operations.
 - (2) A geologic map of the area with a radius of at least one mile from the property.
 - (3) The location of all existing and proposed wells within 1/2 mile of the site, with a notation of the capacity of all high-yield wells.
 - (4) The location of all rivers, streams and lakes within 1/2 mile of the site.
 - (5) A determination of the long-term safe yield of groundwater based on the geologic formation(s) underlying the site.

- (6) A determination of the effects of the proposed water supply system and water discharge system on the quantity and quality of water in nearby wells and bodies of water.
 - (7) A statement of the qualifications and the signature(s) of the person(s) preparing the study.
 - (8) A detailed report on the method of retaining and disposing of all cooling system flushing and any dirty water produced by the data center.
- f. The applicant shall provide an analysis of the impact of stormwater discharged from the proposed data center and the impact on groundwater, surface water or other water sources.
 - g. The applicant shall also provide information regarding any preliminary review of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy.
 - h. The applicant shall provide information regarding discussions with the electric service provider indicating that capacity is available to serve the proposed data center or digital mining use.

4. Construction and Special Escrows.

- a. Construction Phasing Requirements. The construction of medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses are subject to special construction restrictions. The construction must be conducted in phases and only during such days of the week and hours as may be specifically approved by the Planning Commission as part of special land use approval. The construction shall not take place in a way which allows for unreasonable noise, dust or other negative impacts on nearby or adjoining properties or lands or water. In addition, although the construction is not subject to the operational noise restrictions for data centers and digital mining uses, the Planning Commission may place special noise restrictions on each phase of the construction.
- b. Special Escrows. In addition to all of the escrows provided herein, the owner and operator of any medium-scale and hyperscale data center shall pay or reimburse the Township for all inspections, analyses, reports and expenses incurred by the Township in not only monitoring the construction of the medium-scale and hyperscale data center and/or digital use, but also the ongoing cost of inspections and monitoring and enforcement, including decommissioning, of the medium-scale and hyperscale data centers or digital mining uses. In addition to the escrows provided elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance, the Township may establish separate and special escrows to cover these costs and expenses.

5. Location Requirements. Medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall be permitted as special land uses in the AG – Agricultural Residential and LI – Light Industrial District; provided, however, that medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall not be permitted in areas of the Township that do not have sufficient infrastructure or facilities to support those uses.
- a. Medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall be required to connect to public water and public sewer.
 - b. In addition, medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall not be located in areas that do not have existing electrical infrastructure and facilities that are sufficient to support medium-scale or hyperscale data centers or digital mining uses.
 - c. Medium scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall be located by highways or roads able to service the construction and use of the data center.
 - d. Accordingly, medium-scale and hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses must be located in the portion of the Township that is located south of 17 Mile Road, east of Algoma Avenue and west of White Creek Avenue. This is the only portion of the Township that has or could have sufficient infrastructure and facilities to support such uses.
6. Additional Requirements for Special Land Use Medium-Scale or Hyperscale Data Centers and/or Digital Mining Uses.
- a. Minimum Lot Area. The minimum lot area shall be 40 acres.
 - b. Building Height. The maximum building height shall be 35 feet.
 - c. Setbacks.
 - (1) The minimum setback for all buildings, structures and equipment from adjoining property lines that are zoned in residential districts shall be 500 feet.
 - (2) The minimum setback for all building, structures and equipment from adjoining property lines that are zoned in non-residential districts shall be 250 feet.
 - (3) Notwithstanding the above, guard stations placed by the entrance to the facility may be setback 150 feet if approved by the Planning Commission.

- d. Site Design Requirements. The site and buildings shall comply with the Site Design Requirements in Chapter 10 for the Highway Commercial District, unless modified by this chapter.
- e. Greenbelts, Landscaping and Buffering.
- (1) Greenbelts and landscaping shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Sections 3.11 and 3.12.
 - (2) An additional berm with buffering landscaping shall be required along any property line shared with an adjacent property that is zoned in a residential district.
 - (i) All required berms shall comply with the requirements of Sections 3.11 and 3.12.
 - (ii) The Planning Commission may require additional screening at its discretion.
 - (3) The owner(s) and/or operator(s) of the data center shall continuously maintain the required landscaping, including the berm buffers for adjacent parcels that are zoned residential, including but not limited to replacement of any dead or diseased plantings.
- f. Cooling Methods. In addition to the closed-loop requirements in Section 3.39.H.8., the cooling methods for medium-scale or hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses are subject to the additional requirements:
- (1) The Planning Commission may require the use of geothermal, air-cooling, electrical-cooling, waste heat recovery systems, or other more advanced cooling methods which may become available. Use of open, evaporative cooling towers is prohibited unless specifically permitted as part of special land use approval.
 - (2) The facility owner or operator shall maintain a publicly-accessible website and shall provide written notice to the Township of all cooling system flushing, conditioning, or major maintenance at least 72 hours prior to providing that maintenance. In the event of an emergency, notice shall be provided as soon as reasonably possible by the same methods.
 - (3) All cooling system construction, operation, and maintenance shall be done in such a manner as to not negatively impact data center or digital mining center lands, or adjacent or nearby lands or water.

- g. Generators. In addition to all other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, medium-scale or hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses shall comply with the following additional requirements.
- (1) Generators shall not be operated for ongoing operations except during an emergency disruption of supply.
 - (2) Generators shall not be used for grid support services, peak shaving demand, response programs, or participation in energy markets.
 - (3) All generators, including temporary or emergency generators, must be housed in sound-mitigating enclosures to mitigate noise. Testing of generators may only take place during times approved by the Planning Commission as part of special land use approval.
 - (4) The Planning Commission may require generators to be powered by natural gas or other green energy as part of special land use approval.
- h. Rooftop Appurtenances and Equipment. All roof-mounted appurtenances and equipment shall be screened on four sides with materials that are consistent and harmonious with the building's façade and character. Such screening shall be provided in order to screen the equipment from off-site view and to buffer sound generated by such equipment.
- i. Utilities, Roads and Township Services. Applicants and facility operators and owners of medium-scale and hyperscale datacenters and/or digital mining uses shall provide the Township with an initial study, and with annual studies as requested by the Township, of all utilities, roads, and the type, size and quantity of firefighting equipment that will be used or need to be added to serve a facility of this size and for this particular use. The applicant, facility operator or owner shall pay for all extensions, additions, improvements or additional facilities, vehicles, or equipment needed to provide the additional utilities, roads, and/or Township services.
- j. Dewatering. Dewatering is specifically prohibited during the construction and operation unless specifically approved by the Planning Commission as part of special land use approval.
- k. Battery Storage. If a facility owner or operator or property owner desires to use battery storage or any other device or group of devices capable of storing energy in order to supply electrical energy at a later time, whether the energy is stored for use on-site or off-site, the facility owner and operator shall demonstrate compliance with all fire standards and other applicable requirements, and must include fire suppression systems and securities designed specifically for battery storage.

- l. Liability Insurance. The facility owner or operator shall maintain a current general liability policy covering bodily injury and property damage with limits of at least \$5 million per occurrence and \$5 million in the aggregate. Certificates shall be made available to the Township upon request.
- m. Annual Inspections and Third-Party Services. As a condition of special land use approval, the facility owner and/or operator shall agree to reimburse the Township for annual professional and independent inspection of the operations, including the use of third parties. In addition to allowing for inspections, the owner and/or operator may be required to provide additional reports as requested by the Township on annual operations, including but not limited to, all water and sewer usage, discharges, electrical usage, noise, and maintenance. The purpose of the inspections and reports is to determine compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, site plan and special land use approval. The applicant, owner and/or operator may be required to post an additional bond, security, or escrow to pay for the annual inspections and reports.
- n. Public Amenities. The Planning Commission may require public amenities consistent with the impact of the special land use medium-scale or hyperscale data center and/or digital mining uses, including the construction and maintenance of pathways along the areas where medium-scale or hyperscale data centers and/or digital mining uses run along public streets as well as additional similar-related public amenities necessary to offset the impact of the special land use medium-scale or hyperscale data center and/or digital mining use.
- o. General Compatibility. No use, activity or operation of a special land use medium-scale or hyperscale data center and/or digital mining use shall be conducted in a manner that is injurious, noxious, or offensive to adjacent or neighboring land uses; interferes with the reasonable use or enjoyment of life or property, or tends to depreciate the value of surrounding property due to noise, vibration, glare, lighting, omissions, traffic, visual impact, or other nuisance conditions.

Section 9. **Publication and Effective Date.** This Ordinance, or a summary of its provisions, shall be published in a local newspaper of general circulation within the Township. This Ordinance shall take effect seven days following such publication.

AYES: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT: _____

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

Dorothy Willoughby, Township Clerk

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of an Ordinance adopted by the Township Board of the Township of Solon at a regular meeting held on the date first stated above, and I further certify that public notice of such meeting was given as provided by law.

Dorothy Willoughby, Township Clerk

Solon Draft



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Company behind Downtown Lansing data center project withdraws application, officials say

Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore announced the withdrawal Monday afternoon.



Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore announced the withdrawal Monday afternoon.

By Kyle Beery

Published: Apr. 6, 2026 at 3:29 PM EDT | Updated: 23 hours ago





Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore announced on Facebook Monday afternoon the council received notice from leadership at Deep Green — the United Kingdom-based company behind the proposal — that the company is withdrawing its application for a zoning amendment that would have made the project possible.

The city council was scheduled to vote whether to approve the re-zoning at Monday night’s meeting. Those votes have now been canceled, according to Spadafore.

“Given the heightened public awareness on this topic, I wanted to share that here for those interested in tonight’s meetings,” Spadafore’s post said. “What this means: the data center proposal downtown will not move forward.”

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 **Peter Spadafore**
on Monday 

Today we received a communication from leadership at Deep Green formally withdrawing the Application for Zoning Amendment Z-3-2026; 220 S Larch St. and 3 adjoining parcels on E. Kalamazoo St. and S. Cedar St., Conditional Rezoning from “DT-3” to Urban Core to “IND-1” Industrial (PEND-4415), which is Item 29 on the Agenda for tonight’s Meeting of Lansing City Council.

As a result, the land sale and conditional rezone votes will not take place at tonight’s Committee of the Whol... See more

226 41 86

PREVIOUS COVERAGE:

- Lansing Mayor Andy Schor releases letter in support of Deep Green data center
- Lansing planning commission approves rezoning for Deep Green data center
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are confident that Michigan is a place that values responsible development, and we continue to work with local partners and communities in the region.

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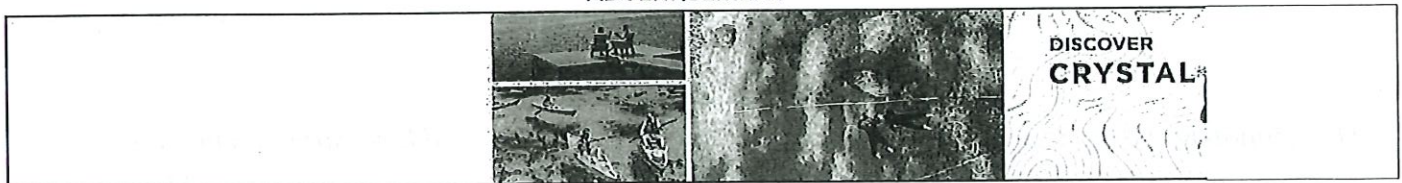
"We are fully energized in our mission to build the first data center of its kind in the United States, one that delivers advanced computing power while capturing and reusing waste heat for the benefit of the communities where we operate. This is the future of data center technology, where economic growth and environmental responsibility must go hand in hand."

A reason for Deep Green pulling out of the project — originally planned for the area of E. Kalamazoo Street and S. Cedar Street — is not immediately clear.

"While I was encouraged about new and sustained revenues to the City of Lansing for services such as housing, the fire department, neighborhoods, and aesthetics, I also have heard the concerns raised by some members of the Lansing public," Lansing Mayor Andy Schor said in a statement to News 10 Monday afternoon. "I have personally heard from both supporters and opponents and appreciate all those that provided constructive comments and criticisms. I also appreciate the work of Deep Green to try to do something unique in this country with heat capture, closed-loop cooling systems, and paying for needed infrastructure so there would be no rate increases, all without asking for an incentive or tax abatement from the city. And I appreciate the Councilmembers who came into this with an open mind and did their due diligence on behalf of our city."

With the property remaining empty parking lots, Schor said he is asking "all those who suggested housing on these parcels to provide their proposals for development into housing."

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Announcing plans last November, Deep Green officials touted the project as the "first of its kind" in the U.S., saying the 24-megawatt data center would generate free heat to be used by the Lansing Board of Water and Light's steam and future hot water utility.

While residents have pushed back on the project in the months since, Schor publicly supported the plan in a letter last week.

BWL General Manager Dick Peffley released the following statement:

"The Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL) understands that Deep Green has made the decision to withdraw their proposals for both the purchase and the rezoning of the E. Kalamazoo St. and S. Cedar St. property and defer project specific questions to them. We believe in the benefits this project would bring to the City of Lansing and our customers, including the benefit to our future hot water customers and related emissions reductions, as well as the annual \$120,000 donation to Pennies for Power to help customers who are struggling.

"We strongly value supporting the economic development of the region and working with new and growing businesses in our service territory. The BWL continues to stay focused on providing safe, reliable and affordable utility services while supporting the community we serve."

Tim Daman, President and CEO of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce released the following statement:

"The withdrawal of this \$120 million Deep Green data center development from the City of Lansing is a deeply disappointing outcome for our community. Lansing cannot expect improved services, expanded opportunities, and long-term growth while turning away the very investments that make those outcomes possible. In this case, Deep Green made an extraordinary effort to address every concern raised through formal, written responses and legally binding commitments.

Unfortunately, we are losing out on a significant investment that would have strengthened our economy, expanded opportunities, and positioned the Capital City for long-term success. Moving forward, it is critical that we foster a more informed and constructive dialogue around projects of this



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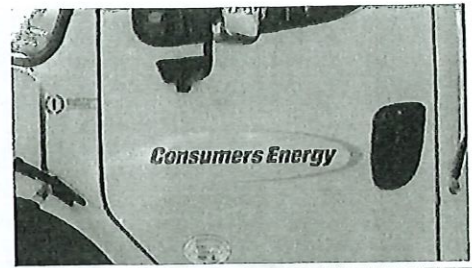
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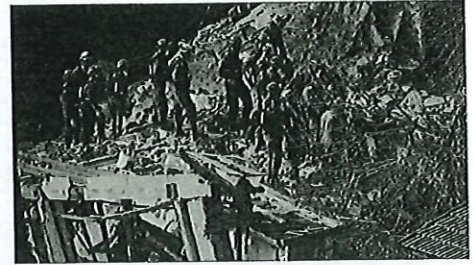
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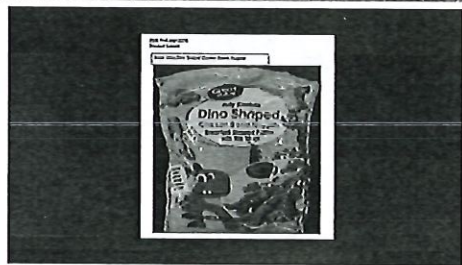
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LOCAL NEWS

Lowell Township pauses rezoning consideration for data center plans

Franklin Partners, who applied for the rezoning, requested the "indefinite suspension of the application and its approval process".



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Author: Sarah Edgecomb
Published: 9:07 AM EST December 18, 2025
Updated: 9:07 AM EST December 18, 2025



LOWELL, Mich. — Lowell Township leaders have paused a rezoning application that would allow a data center to be built in the area.

This comes after massive community pushback on the project. The Lowell Township Planning Commission's meetings to discuss the rezoning had to be postponed after community members packed Lowell Charter Township Hall.



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The crowd exceeded the number of people allowed to be at the meeting, so the commission rescheduled the public hearing to hold it in a larger venue. It was originally rescheduled for Jan. 12.

Franklin Partners, who applied for the rezoning, requested the "indefinite suspension of the application and its approval process".

"Until more specific project details are known and can be made available, Franklin Partners has informed the Township it is taking more time on its rezoning application for Covenant Business Park," Township Supervisor Jerry Hale said. "Our Planning Commission is removing this application from its January agenda but remains open to reconsider a rezoning request in the future if and when the applicant renews its request and provides more public information."

On Friday, Dec. 12, the City of Lowell also paused its participation in the project until Franklin Partners provided specific details about what they're asking for in terms of water and wastewater use to support the data center.

Many communities in West Michigan are considering adding data centers, leading to heated public comment sessions and a rally in Lansing. Residents are voicing concerns about the centers spiking electricity and water costs, along with depleting the state's water supply.

The planning commission will still hold a regular meeting on Jan. 12 at Lowell Charter Township Hall.

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Man headed to prison for Lowell crash that killed motorcyclist



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NRDC

Michigan Establishes New Rate for Large Energy Users Like Data Centers

November 6, 2025

MEDIA CONTACT

Jesús Canchola Sánchez

jcanchola@nrdc.org

Midwest Regional Communications Manager

LANSING, MI - The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) announced a new tariff directed at new heavy energy users, such as data centers, in the Consumers Energy territory. It is the first tariff of its kind in the state.

The following is a statement from Derrell Slaughter, Michigan policy director for Climate & Energy at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council):

"The MPSC's order makes strides on customer protection, ensuring that ratepayers aren't subsidizing large customers like data centers.

The commission falls short on compliance with Michigan's renewable and clean energy standards. Without guardrails from the public service commission order, it creates uncertainty about whether these large new customers will be powered by clean energy and ultimately help Michigan meet its clean energy goals."

Background:

Michigan and the region are facing unprecedented electricity load growth, driven predominantly by demand from big data centers. The MPSC ruling comes months after Consumers Energy filed an application to the commission to create a new, special tariff to meet projected data center

demand. In its February 2025 application, Consumers Energy said it had 15 GW of potential data center energy demand in its economic development pipeline.

The MPSC approved Consumers Energy's new pricing apply to data centers and other customers with a minimum service threshold of 100 megawatts (MW), or aggregated loads of 100 MW with individual sites within utility's service territory having loads of 20 MW or more with the same common owner.

NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Established in 1970, NRDC uses science, policy, law and people power to confront the climate crisis, protect public health and safeguard nature. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Beijing and Delhi (an office of NRDC India Pvt. Ltd).

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GRAND RAPIDS

Michigan is big on data centers, but what do Switch and Microsoft do for Kent County?

Updated: Jun. 30, 2025, 11:09 a.m. | Published: Jun. 30, 2025, 11:08 a.m.





The Switch data center campus near the corner of 60th Street SE and East Paris Avenue in Gaines Twp., Michigan in May 2025. Switch, a Las Vegas-based company, bought the former Steelcase Pyramid in 2015 and turned it into a data center.



By [Ehren Wynder | ewynder@mlive.com](mailto:ewynder@mlive.com)

KENT COUNTY, MI — Speculation is still buzzing about what Microsoft's potential data center means for Gaines Township.

The tech giant late last year [purchased 316 acres](#) from Steelcase for \$45.3 million. The property is on the northwest corner of Patterson Avenue and 76th Street in Gaines Township, a suburb of Grand Rapids.





While a new data center will most likely be built on the property, the company has been secretive about its plans.



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With limited information on Microsoft, another big data company in Gaines Township, Las Vegas-based Switch, has made good use of the former Steelcase Pyramid and even plans to open a new, \$700 million expansion later this year to accommodate West Michigan businesses' increasing demand for data.

While the data center hasn't led to the job growth people expected, the massive infrastructure required to get these types of projects online leads to a run-off effect of homebuilders looking to capitalize on the upgraded utilities for their own developments.

Michigan isn't pulling back on incentives to draw these types of developments, either, as business leaders argue they have become essential infrastructure for the digital economy, compared to railroads of the 1800s.

Manufacturing in particular relies on data centers to store computing power for artificial intelligence.

Here are a few ways Switch has impacted Gaines Township since its move in 2017.

Economic impact

Switch has benefited from massive tax breaks over its nearly decade-long presence in Michigan. The state Legislature in November passed HB 4906, which exempts data centers that make at least \$250 million in capital investment from sales and uses taxes on equipment through at least 2050. A companion bill passed a couple months earlier.

Critics of these tax breaks have argued that data demand will bring the facilities to Michigan eventually anyway. They also say the facilities don't actually create the number of jobs they claim to.

Switch promised to create 1,000 jobs in exchange for big tax breaks in 2015 but had only hired a fraction of that six years later, when the company came back seeking more tax breaks.

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The Michigan Strategic Fund approved the Switch campus in 2016 for a 15-year renaissance zone resulting in a \$1.1 million annual tax abatement.

Switch at the time anticipated it would invest \$151.2 million in the project and create at least 103 jobs by December 2021. While it has exceeded the investment requirement at \$195.2 million, it is behind on jobs, with just 43 reported as of December 2021, according to a MSF report.

The truth of the data center jobs is a little murky. John Truscott, CEO of Truscott Rossman, a public relations firm that represents Switch, said the Pyramid campus has indeed created over 1,000 jobs, but counted employees of Switch customers who are authorized to enter the building in that number. The current number of people employed by Switch in the building is about 46.

“When somebody signs an agreement with Switch, they will likely send employees of their own into the facility to watch over all the data and transmission, so a lot of their customers have employees in that site,” he said. “It’s the nature of the business. You don’t have people just sitting at desks, basically.”

Community impact

It’s unlikely that Switch or Microsoft will spur much business growth in the future. While Gaines Township has seen some new business development across the street from the Pyramid on East Paris Avenue, much of that area is zoned for light industrial use, and a variety of non-tech businesses could go there, Township Supervisor Dan Wells said.

“I don’t know that Switch or Microsoft itself will spin off that much, because we’re just kind of limited on how much industrial land we’ve got left,” he said.

Data centers could, however, spur more residential development in the township. When they make the decision to build or expand in an area, that means businesses are confident in the long-term prospects of the area, and developers pay attention to that, Jeff Hainer, land acquisition manager with JTB Homes, said.

“When we are looking for land to develop, we almost always start by identifying where public utilities are located within the municipality,” Hainer said via email. “Data centers require robust public infrastructure, so we know that the surrounding area should be able to capitalize on that.

“Many communities have shown willingness to expand or upgrade utilities in order to accommodate such private investment. This presents an opportunity for developers to piggyback.”

JTB Homes in February said it purchased 30 acres less than three miles away from Switch at 4950 76th St. SE to build Dutton Preserve, a 44-parcel housing community that w



Hainer said JTB Homes continues to look for viable land for future development in Gaines Township on the heels of the Switch expansion.

“Utilities and zoning have been the main obstacles to finding developable residential land in Gaines, and we are hoping continued private investment results in more public investment in infrastructure and desire for more rooftops,” he said, noting the community’s public schools also drive interest in the area.

According to the planning and zoning department’s 2024 annual report, Gaines Township approved 305 residential building permits last year, a steady climb from 142 building permits in 2017, even with a slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justin Buitter, owner of Railtown Brewing Co. in Dutton, just south of the Switch campus, said he hasn’t seen much direct impact from Switch, but agreed the community has grown in recent years.

Buitter was less critical of Switch itself than the tax credits these types of projects receive and how the state seems to “pick and choose” how it incentivizes job growth.

“I always feel like it’s a little stacked against small businesses,” Buitter said. “We do a good job of creating well-paying jobs in the area. It’s different when you get grants from the state to do the same thing at a corporate level, but overall (Switch) has been a good neighbor.”

Since Switch moved into the pyramid, residents have noted an uptick in traffic from the nearby Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The brewery itself has seen a significant increase in airport traffic in the past three years, Buitter said, although he hesitated to attribute all of it directly to Switch.

“I don’t know if that’s directly from them or if it’s just that we’re a growing restaurant that’s close enough to the airport, but we expect to see some more of that, in addition to meetings or private gatherings,” he said.

Locals are more concerned about their future neighbor Microsoft, which still has not disclosed its plans for the land it purchased late last year, Buitter said.

“It’s a lot of property for data centers, so there’s concern that there might not just be data centers going in there,” he said. “It is going to put a strain on the infrastructure here.


“Progress has to happen -- we all get that. At the same time, I think seeing some of these fields turn into big developments over the course of five years can be hard to watch.”

With more farmland turning into housing in Gaines Township, officials are working to preserve the remaining natural resources south of 76th Street, Wells said.

The township board this year approved a natural resources assessment, which includes a survey of the township’s remaining woodlands, agriculture and surface water resources.

The assessment will help inform the township of what areas are valuable in terms of aesthetic qualities, ecological values and more, ahead of updating its master plan in the next few years.

AI and cloud computing in the West Michigan job sector

New technologies like artificial intelligence in the broader business sector are driving a “momentous” need for more data centers in Michigan, said Andria Romkema, senior sident of business development at The Right Place, the economic development organization for Kent County.

“Think about how we needed railroads to move goods and services in the 1800s,” Romkema said. “Data centers are that same kind of essential infrastructure for a digital economy that underpins all of our industries and daily lives.”

West Michigan’s advanced manufacturing sector is particularly reliant on data centers, which is why it’s important to attract them with tax incentives to have them built close to home, Romkema said.

Current data centers are just built for housing ones and zeros, but AI needs upgraded infrastructure to host these complex programs, Mike Taylor, director of venture creation at the Michigan State University Research Foundation, said.

When most people think of AI, they think of consumer-facing products like ChatGPT, but in manufacturing, AI is just the next evolution of machine learning, which offloads the processing of complex information, Taylor said.

“AI will look for logistics patterns, being able to queue your product and distribute your product differently based on traffic loads and seasonal influences like tornado season,” he said. “It’s telling manufacturers where to put their inventory in anticipation of problems.”

Most manufacturers in West Michigan don’t have the capacity to store AI themselves and are reliant on data centers to host these programs. It’s also important to have these data centers close to the source of need to avoid computing delays, Taylor said.

The short supply of usable land also has created a new approach to development. Taylor pointed to Takanock, a Traverse City-based startup in the research foundation’s investment portfolio. Takanock performs site selection and infrastructure work, including electric and fiber optics, to ensure land is “shovel-ready” for new data center development.

Conversely, startups like Takanock are reliant on cloud computing because they don’t own any hardware initially. Without the storage that data centers provide, their business would struggle to grow, Taylor said.

“Data centers are turning into base infrastructure like power, water, sewer and highways,” Taylor said. “It’s just part of what’s required to get work done.”

Energy demand

It’s unknown how much power Switch or Microsoft will need to sustain its operations in Gaines Township. Consumers Energy did not disclose Switch’s load or service information. In an [earlier filing](#) with the Michigan Public Service Commission, however, the utility said it had inquiries from more than 30 prospective data center developers, representing a total of over 15 gigawatts in demand.

Those aren’t done deals, but to put the number in perspective, Consumers’ J.H. Campbell coal-fired power plant in Ottawa County, is rated at 1.45 gigawatts, capable of serving a million people.

With the rapid pace at which AI is changing, however, there is no certainty how much energy these data centers will demand, Truscott said.

“There’s so much chaos in the industry right now,” he said. “Who knows how much AI is going to demand as far as storage, and it might be less than what they were predicting six months ago.”





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Ehren Wynder

Ehren Wynder is a business and development reporter at MLive.com covering Ottawa and Muskegon counties.

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Powering Michigan's Growth

Count on us to deliver



Growth is Good for Michigan

- **More Jobs:** New projects create jobs, from construction to operations, and boost local businesses that support workers and companies.
- **More Tax Revenue:** Economic growth expands the local tax base, giving the state, cities, municipalities, and schools more resources to fund roads, teachers, and public safety.
- **More Opportunities:** When businesses grow, families have more choices—better jobs, stronger schools, and thriving communities where people want to live and stay.

We Have the Energy Supply

- We have plenty of reliable energy supply to meet growth demands even on the hottest days.
- Our long-term Energy Supply Plan is on track to support growing demand with additional generation capacity.
- Our long-term plans include natural gas, dispatchable renewable energy and battery storage.

Data Centers Will Not Raise Your Rates

- Residential customers will not pay a single penny to bring data centers online but will instead benefit from the investments they bring.
- Data centers will help spread fixed costs, like transmission, distribution and generation, across a broader customer base.
- Consumers Energy's large load tariff outlines regulatory safeguards to protect all our customers.

We are Committed to Reliability

- Infrastructure investments made by data centers, such as new or upgraded poles, lines and equipment, can contribute to improved reliability for all local customers.
- This can mean improved reliability without additional costs for customers.

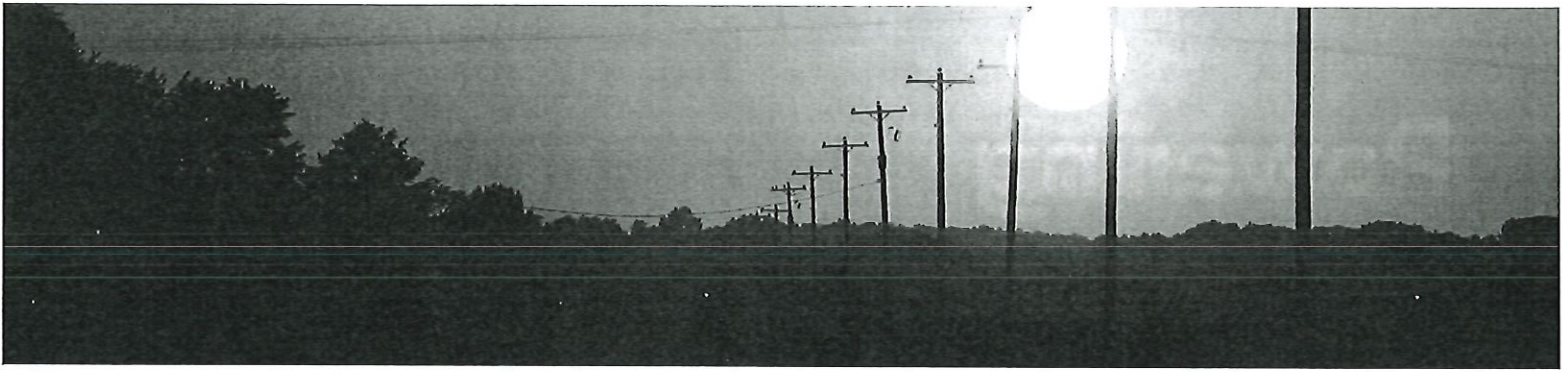
We are Committed to the Environment

- We are committed to responsible development that prioritizes preserving the clean air, water and land that matters to all of us.
- Our Energy Supply Plan will not just comply with Michigan's 2023 energy law but also add cost-effective resources to ensure new growth is served with a diverse portfolio of reliable energy.

Learn more at
ConsumersEnergy.com/MichiganGrowth

Consumers Energy

Count on Us®



Frequently Asked Questions

Will new data centers in Michigan raise my rates?

No. Residential customers will not pay a single penny to bring data centers online, but will instead benefit from the investments they bring¹. Consumers Energy currently serves just one data center in its service territory. And while several projects are being considered, it will be years before additional data centers come online. When they do, they will pay more than their fair share of all transmission, distribution, and generation costs associated with the energy we provide them. That's in addition to millions of dollars in tax benefits and other massive community investments the world's top tech companies are committed to making.

Where is the energy coming from to support these large projects?

Consumers Energy has plenty of energy supply to meet today's customer demands. With natural gas plants in our portfolio, along with dispatchable renewable resources and energy storage, we will continue to supply reliable, on-demand electricity to meet Michigan's energy needs. Our experts, armed with advanced modeling technology, are forecasting how much power we'll need in the coming decades and identifying the best options to meet that demand, which includes new large-load projects. We continue to grow our supply capacity each year to meet the needs of customers. Through our industry-leading energy efficiency and demand response efforts, we continue to encourage cost savings and efficient energy use.

What about the environmental impacts of data centers?

We are committed to the environment, which includes clean air, water and land, and to protecting the planet we all care about. Our Energy Supply Plan will comply with Michigan's 2023 energy law, while adding cost-effective resources to ensure new growth is served with a diverse portfolio of reliable energy.

Does Consumers Energy have enough power to support these large projects, and should we expect brownouts?

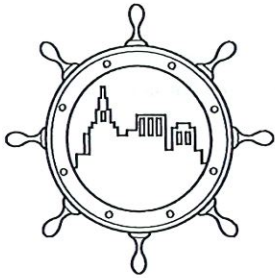
We have plenty of reliable energy to meet today's growth demands and support future expansion across our state, contrary to some third-party stakeholder claims. We detail in our long-term Energy Supply Plan (Integrated Resource Plan)² the evolving energy landscape and how we will meet demand with cost-effective generation for the next twenty years. As future large customers come online, our blueprint will transparently demonstrate how we will reliably meet the demand of all customers including proposed projects in Michigan's pipeline.

¹MPSC approves terms of service between Consumers Energy and data centers, other very large customers; adds protections for existing customers. 2025, November 6. michigan.gov/mpsc

²MPSC Resource Planning, michigan.gov/mpsc

Learn more at
ConsumersEnergy.com/MichiganGrowth

Consumers Energy
Count on Us[®]



Fresh Coast Planning

119 1/2 Washington Avenue, Studio B
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
616-638-1240

Kevin Yeomans
616-349-0223

Alexis Gulker
616-773-4638

Aaron Bigelow
616-919-2370

Andrea Goodell
616-313-9333
a.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Sparta Township Planning Commission
From: Kevin Yeomans
Date: 4/3/2026
Re: Home Occupation Regulations Review

Per the Planning Commission's deliberations at your March 2026 meeting, we have edited the draft home occupancy amendment. Attached is a copy of the second draft of this amendment. The following changes have been made:

1. Sketch Plan (pg. 2): This has been added so that a home based business does not have to prepare a formal site plan unless required by the Planning Commission. It includes standards for a sketch plan, and standards the Commission must consider in order to require a formal site plan.
2. Non-transferability: This has been added so that a home based business cannot be transferred to another owner unless authorized by the Planning Commission.
3. Inspection: This has been added so that the Township has authority to periodically inspect the home based business to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and any conditions of approval.
4. Non-resident employees: This language has been added to allow home based businesses to employ persons who do not reside on the property if specific requirements are met. The Planning Commission should determine whether the proposed limits are conditions meet your intent.
5. Sale of Merchandise: Language was added to ensure that if a home based business intends to sell products on site, it is brought to the Planning Commission's attention at the time of application so that you can determine if the proposed sales and method of selling is consistent with the intent of the Zoning Ordinance.
6. Maximum Floor Area: The maximum floor area has been increased to 3,300 square feet. This number is used because it is the maximum accessory building square footage for a one-acre lot in Sparta Township. The Planning Commission should determine if this is the appropriate limit. The Planning Commission could determine a larger or smaller number is appropriate.

Alternatively, the Planning Commission could put provisions in place that regulate based on lot area but also includes a maximum. For example:

1,000 square feet of floor area per acre, not to exceed 5,000 square feet.

7. Outdoor Storage: The language has been simplified to exclude the language specific to number of vehicles and trailers and more clearly identify the screening requirements for outdoor storage areas.

The Planning Commission should also determine if any minimum required setbacks for outdoor storage areas should be included. For example:

Outdoor Storage area shall not be permitted in any front yard and shall be setback 20 feet from side and rear lot lines.

Items for Consideration

Given the Planning Commission's deliberations regarding sketch plans for home based business, we want to bring the following question to your attention. Would you like to include the same sketch plan provisions for accessory dwelling units?

We have no other specific items to bring to the Planning Commission's attention.

Kevin Yeomans
Kevin Yeomans

Planner

Attachments

CC: Dale Bergman, Township Supervisor

Definition – Section 154.006

HOME BASED BUSINESS. This is similar to a Home Occupation but can be conducted both in a single-family residential dwelling and an accessory building if approved as a special land use by the Planning Commission.

HOME OCCUPATION. A profession or other occupation not otherwise permitted in the zoning district involved, that is conducted as an accessory use within a single-family dwelling by one or more members of the family residing in the dwelling, and that conforms to the provisions of § 154.208 of this chapter.

§ 154.208 HOME OCCUPATIONS AND HOME BASED BUSINESSES.

(A) Home occupations, as defined in this chapter, are permitted as a use-by-right as an accessory use as provided in § 154.247 of this chapter; provided that, all of the following regulations shall control.

(1) No other than members of the family residing in the dwelling shall be engaged in connection with such home occupation at the same time.

(2) The use of the dwelling unit for the home occupation shall be clearly incidental and subordinate to its use for residential purposes by its occupants and not more than 25% of the floor area of the dwelling unit shall be used in the conduct of the home occupation.

(3) There shall be no change in the outside appearance of the building, no variation from the residential character of the dwelling, and no visible evidence of the conduct of such home occupation other than one sign, not exceeding two square feet in area, non-illuminated and mounted flat against the wall of the main building.

(4) No home occupation shall be conducted outdoors or in any accessory building.

(5) There shall be no sale of products or services, except as are produced on the premises by such home occupation.

(6) No traffic shall be generated by such home occupation in greater volumes than would normally be expected in a residential neighborhood, and any need for parking generated by the conduct of such home occupation shall be met off the street and other than in a required front yard.

(7) No equipment or process shall be used in such home occupation that creates noise, vibration, glare, fumes, odors or electrical interference detectable to the normal senses off the premises if the occupation is conducted in a single-family dwelling. If conducted in other than a single-family dwelling, such nuisance shall not be detectable outside the dwelling unit. In the case of electrical interference, no equipment or process shall be used that creates visual or audible interference in any radio or television receivers off the premises or cause fluctuations in line voltage off the premises.

(8) In particular, a home occupation can be, but is not limited to: art studio; dressmaking; teacher, with musical or dancing instruction limited to four to six pupils at a time; contractor's office; professional office or studio or a physician, dentist, author, artist, musician, lawyer, engineer, architect, community planner, realtor, accountant, one-chair salon or similar use; but shall not include animal hospital, automotive repair service, restaurant, tearoom, tavern or similar use.

(B) Home Based Businesses, as defined in this Chapter, are permitted as a special land use as an accessory use as provided in § 154.247 of this chapter; provided that, all of the following regulations shall control.

(1) Home Based Businesses shall meet all of the requirements for a Home Occupation.

(2) Sketch Plan: In place of a site plan a sketch plan may be submitted. The sketch plan shall be drawn to scale. The sketch plan shall include the location, dimensions, and area, of all structures and parking areas on the site. The sketch plan shall include a scale, north arrow, date of drawing, property owner's name and address, and description of the nature of the home based business. Section 154.162 – Standards for Review and Approval shall still apply.

(a) The Planning Commission may require a site plan meeting the requirements of Section 154.170 if deemed necessary. In making this determination the Planning Commission shall consider the following:

1. The scale of the proposed home based business.
2. Distance to the nearest non-participating structure.
3. Nature of the home based business and its potential impact to nearby properties.
4. The magnitude of proposed changes to existing grades and the natural landscape.

(3) Non-transferability: No home based business shall be assigned, transferred, or otherwise conveyed to another person or business entity. Any change in the ownership of the home based business shall require the filing of a new application and a full compliance review.

(1)(4) Inspection: The home based business shall be subject to periodic inspections by the Zoning Administrator or other designated officials to determine that the home based business is proceeding in accordance with the conditions and requirements of the approved sketch plan and special land use approval.

~~(5)~~ No other than members of the family residing in the dwelling shall be engaged in connection with such home occupation at the same time. The home based business shall be conducted primarily by one or more persons residing in a dwelling on the same lot.

~~(a)~~ On a lot five acres or larger, a home based business may employ a maximum of three (3) persons who do not reside on the premises, subject to the following conditions:

1. Additional off-street parking for non-resident employees shall be provided and screened from view from adjacent properties and the road.

1-2. Non-resident employees shall only be permitted to work between the hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

~~(2)~~~~(6)~~ There shall be no sale of products or services, except as are produced on the premises by such home occupation home based business and only if permitted by the Planning Commission.

~~(3)~~~~(7)~~ There shall be no change in the outside appearance of the building, no variation from the residential character of the dwelling, and no visible evidence of the conduct of such home occupation based business other than one sign, not exceeding two square feet in area, non-illuminated and mounted flat against the wall of the main building.

~~(4)~~~~(8)~~ No traffic shall be generated by such home occupation based business in greater volumes than would normally be expected in a residential neighborhood, and any need for parking generated by the conduct of such home based business shall be met off the street and other than in a required front yard.

~~(5)~~~~(9)~~ No equipment or process shall be used in such home based business that creates noise, vibration, glare, fumes, odors or electrical interference detectable to the normal senses off the premises.

~~(6)~~~~(10)~~ Districts Allowed:

(a) Ag-1

(b) Ag-2

(c) R-1

~~(7)~~~~(11)~~ Minimum Lot Area

(a) Ag-1

(b) Ag-2

(c) R-1

~~(8)~~(12) A Home Based Business may occur within the single-family dwelling and not more than one accessory building located on the same lot as the single-family dwelling.

~~(9)~~(13) The use of the dwelling unit or accessory building for the home based business shall be clearly incidental and subordinate to its use for residential purposes by its occupants.

~~(10)~~(14) Maximum Floor Area

(a) Dwelling: Not more than 25% of the floor area of the dwelling unit shall be used in the conduct of the home based business.

(b) Accessory Building: Not more than ~~1,2343,300~~ square feet of floor area within an accessory building shall be used in the conduct of the home based business.

~~(11)~~(15) Setbacks

(a) Dwelling: Shall meet the setback requirements for a single-family dwelling as required by the zoning district.

(b) Accessory Building: Shall meet the setback requirements for an accessory building as required by the zoning district. However, in their review of the special land use the Planning Commission may required greater setbacks and/or additional landscaping and/or screening between the accessory building and adjoining properties and/or road to ensure that home based business will have no substantial adverse impacts by reason of noise, fumes, vibration, lights, or views.

~~(12)~~(16) No toxic or hazardous materials may be used or stored on the premises to support such ~~H~~home ~~B~~based ~~B~~business except in a safe manner and in full compliance with federal, state, and local requirements as to use, handling, storage, transport, and disposal of any such materials.

~~(13)~~(17) All machinery and other equipment, associated with the ~~H~~home ~~B~~based ~~B~~business must, at all times, be located within a completely enclosed accessory building, accessory to the residential dwelling which is on the same parcel as the business or within an outdoor storage area that is screened from public view.

(a) Outdoor Storage Screening: No visible outdoor storage is permitted. Visual buffers, such as year-round greenery, decorative fencing, or earthen berms, shall be utilized to maintain a continuous screen of all outdoor storage from public view in all seasons.

~~(b) Motor Vehicles: All vehicles associated with the home based business shall comply with all applicable provisions of Section 154.260 of this Chapter. No more than three (3) vehicles associated with the home based business shall be parked outdoors.~~

~~1. For the purposes of this section the term Motor Vehicle shall mean any vehicle of motor vehicle which can be started, drawn by its own power and legally operated on public streets or highways, not including heavy machinery such as excavators, bulldozers, loaders, cranes, and dump trucks.~~

~~(c) Trailers: All trailers associated with the home based business shall comply with all applicable provisions of Section 154.260 of this Chapter. No more than two (2) trailers associated with the home based business shall be parked outdoors.~~

~~1. For the purposes of this section the term Trailer shall mean a vehicle designed to be drawn by a motor vehicle for transporting equipment and materials.~~

~~(14)~~(18) In particular, a home based business can be, but is not limited to: electrical, plumbing, heating, landscaping, and building contractors and excavators or similar use; but shall not include warehousing, distribution, or automotive repair.

NOTE: Review and, if necessary, update table of permitted uses.

