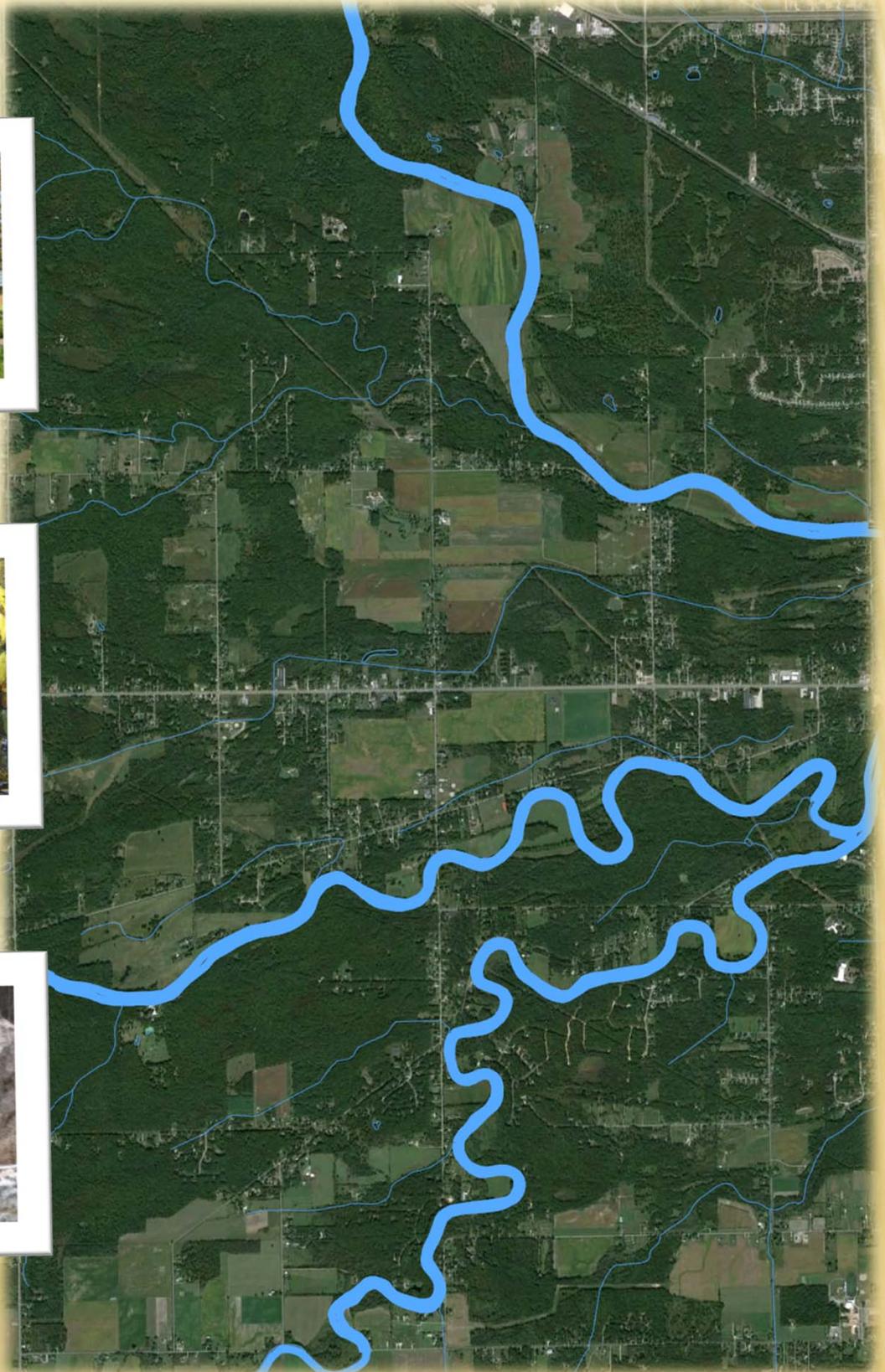
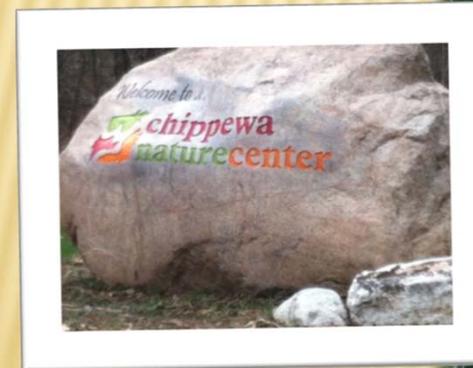


Homer Township Master Plan 2014



Homer Township

Master Plan 2014

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The *Homer Township Master Plan* was adopted by resolution by the Homer Township Planning Commission on September 8, 2014, and by the Homer Township Board of Trustees on September 17, 2014, by authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, after holding a public hearing for this Master Plan on September 8, 2014.



Sandra Simmons
Chair
Planning Commission
Homer Township

Homer Township

522 North Homer Road – Midland, Michigan, 48640-8615 – (989) 832-8617

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Chapter 1

The Planning Process



Introduction

This document is the outcome of a year-long effort by the Home Township Planning Commission to update its current Master Plan and to steer the course for the future. It reflects the community's concern for the future development of Homer Township and conveys a strong commitment to retain and strengthen the local quality of life. The preferred future, or vision, for Homer Township is outlined within this Master Plan. Specifically, the vision is expressed in the way this Master Plan:

- Documents citizen input on community needs and services,
- Articulates goals and related actions to be accomplished by local leaders,
- Provides an overall view of future physical development of Homer Township
- Presents a map that shows locations of how land is proposed to be used in the future.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, is the legal basis for Townships in the State of Michigan to develop a Master Plan. The main purpose of a Master Plan is to guide and enable a community to establish a future direction for its development. The Planning Act specifically gives communities the authority to prepare and officially adopt a Master Plan, which serves as the primary policy guide for local officials when considering matters related to land development. As a policy guide, the Master Plan is specific to Homer Township and considers market trends, community character, environmental conditions, the availability or capacity of public infrastructure and services, and the relationship to existing and planned land uses. As such, the Master Plan aims to:

- Guide the use of limited resources in an efficient manner,
- Promote public health, safety, and general welfare,

- Preserve the quality of the environment in the Township, and
- Guide future zoning decisions.

Because of constant change in our social and economic structure and activities, this Master Plan must be maintained through periodic review so that it reflects contemporary trends while maintaining long-range goals. The MPEA requires the Master Plan be reviewed by the Township at least once every five years.

Process and Statutory Requirements

Homer Township began the process to update its Master Plan in March of 2013. It contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw to assist the Planning Commission in the preparation of this Master Plan. The Planning Commission met with the Spicer Group planning consultants ten times between March 2013 and September 2014 to work on the plan. As required by the MPEA, Homer Township followed the required procedures for notifying neighboring communities and registered entities so that each interested party was made aware of the planning effort and was provided an opportunity to comment on the Master Plan.

The planning process began with a review and analysis of existing conditions and land uses in Homer Township. Then, community input was sought through a public input open house in June 2013 and an online community input survey made public between May and June 2013. Feedback from the community along with the pertinent background data was used as the basis for the goals, action program, and future land use outlined within this Master Plan.

A draft of this document was prepared in May of 2014 and delivered to the Planning Commission and Township Board for review. On June 18, 2014 the Township Board approved the distribution of the proposed plan. The plan was then distributed to neighboring communities, registered entities, and to Midland County for review. The final step in the planning process was a public hearing held on September 8, 2014 that is required by the Michigan Planning Act. This provided an additional opportunity for public information and input. Final Master Plan copies were prepared and the Planning Commission adopted the Master Plan on September 8, 2014 and adopted by the Board of Trustees on September 17, 2014.

Relationship of a Master Plan to a Zoning Ordinance

A Master Plan is a set of policies, not a law. The Master Plan represents a community's future vision, while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. The long-range goals of the Master Plan are the basis for a zoning ordinance and zoning decisions. Zoning is regulation of the use of land. A zoning ordinance controls how land is used today. It is

the law. State law requires that a zoning ordinance be based on an adopted Master Plan. Zoning decisions that are consistent with the Master Plan are more likely presumed to be valid if ever challenged in the courts.



Overlooking the Chippewa River from the Wildflower Garden at the Chippewa Nature Center.

Chapter 2

Learning about Homer Township



Location and History

Location

Homer Township is located in the center of Midland County Michigan, just west of the city of Midland. It is bordered by Mount Haley Township to the south, Lee and Jerome Townships to the west, Lincoln Township to the north, and the City of Midland and Midland Township to the east. The township is approximately 4 miles wide and six miles long. State route M-20, which connects the cities of Midland and Mount Pleasant, passes through the middle of the township. Some of the land that was originally in the Township has been annexed to the City of Midland, making for an irregular border in the northeast portion of the township.

History

Homer Township was established in April of 1862. Charles Cronkright was the first settler, having walked from Saginaw carrying all of his belongings in a backpack in 1837 with Sam Gordon. The logo of Homer Township includes three waterways which represent the Tittabawassee, Chippewa and Pine Rivers. It also includes pine trees and stumps, which highlight the extensive logging industry that initially contributed to Homer Township's economy. The logo

also includes arrows and head dresses symbolic of the Chippewa Native Americans who historically inhabited the area.

The community was established as a logging community. As the lands were cleared, it transitioned to a farming community. Today, Homer Township has a variety of land uses including large woodlands, farmlands, and residential use that tends to be concentrated in pockets across the Township. The first Township Hall was built in 1916.

Demographics: The People of Homer Township

Population

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Homer Township is 4,009. This is an increase of 85 people from the 2000 Census, when the population was 3,924. During the past 100 years, the township grew rapidly in the 50-year period from 1930 to 1980. Since that time population declined slightly from 1980 to 2000 and then grew slightly from 2000 to 2010. The declines from 1980 to 2000 are at least partially due to the annexation of some Township land to the City of Midland that occurred during that time period. See Figure 1 showing historic population change in the Township. See Appendix A where Homer Township's population is compared to other communities in Midland County.

The median age in Homer Township is 42.3 years. This is greater than the median age of Midland County at 40.4 years and the median age of Michigan of 38.9 years. In 2000, the

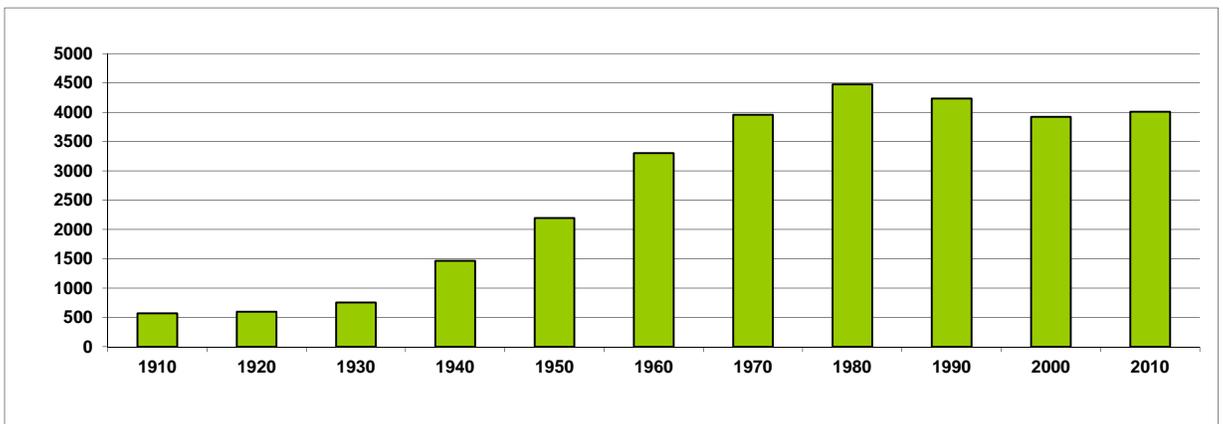


Figure 1. *Historic Population Change in Homer Township.* Source: 2010 U.S. Census.

median age in Homer Township was 37.3 years. These statistics show that the population of the Township is aging and that it is slightly older than Midland County and the state. An aging population may have different needs in terms of housing, recreation, and commercial services. Appendix A compares Homer Township's median age to other communities in Midland County.

Housing

There were 1,593 housing units in Homer Township, according to the 2010 Census. Records from the Township show that there were 1,622 housing units in the Township in 2013. This is a growth of 10.3% from the time of the 2000 census when there were 1,470 housing units through the end of 2013.

Average household size decreased in that same period from 2.71 to 2.6. (It is worth noting that the 1997 Homer Township Master Plan notes that average household size was 3.16 in 1980 – this declining household size trend has continued for more than 30 years.) The decreasing household size also reflects the general aging trend of the community whereby there are fewer households with children.

Housing Units vs. Households

A **housing unit** is defined as a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. It is important to note that **housing units may be vacant**.

Housing units are to be distinguished from **households**, which are defined as those who dwell under the same roof and compose a family. **Households** are exclusively related to **occupied housing units**.

	Homer Township	Midland County	Michigan
Average Household Size	2.6	2.46	2.49
Median Housing Value	\$131,700	\$131,900	\$137,300
% of Housing Units without a Mortgage	41.6%	37.2%	32.9%
% Owner Occupied Homes	90%	77.1%	71.2%

Figure 2. *Housing and household data for Homer Township Midland County, and Michigan.* Source: 2010 U.S. Census, 2011 American Community Survey.

It is important to note that figures found in this section related to specific detailed housing information, such as housing unit type, as well as specific social and economic data, come from the most recent available estimates of the American Community Survey (ACS). Other housing and demographic information comes from 100% data provided by the US Census provided every ten years. According to census estimates provided in the 2011 ACS, a vast majority (94.2%) of the homes in Homer Township are classified as 1-unit detached dwellings. The remaining 90 homes are classified as mobile homes. Ninety percent of the housing units in Homer Township are owner occupied. A community with a high percentage of owner occupied housing tends to be quite stable and less prone to large population swings and housing vacancies. Selected Homer Township housing and households statistics for 2010 are compared to Midland County and the state of Michigan in the figure above. Appendix A shares household data regarding the other communities in Midland County.

Age of Housing

The condition of housing in a community is, in part, related to its age. Traditionally the need for major repairs or rehabilitation becomes evident when housing stocks reach an age of 30 or more years. More than half of the housing units in Homer Township are more than 40 years old. See figure 3.

Data obtained from Homer Township Building Inspector indicate that 86 new single-family homes were built in Homer Township since 2005. See Appendix A. As housing ages, Homer Township will need to continue to monitor its housing structures for disrepair and blight.

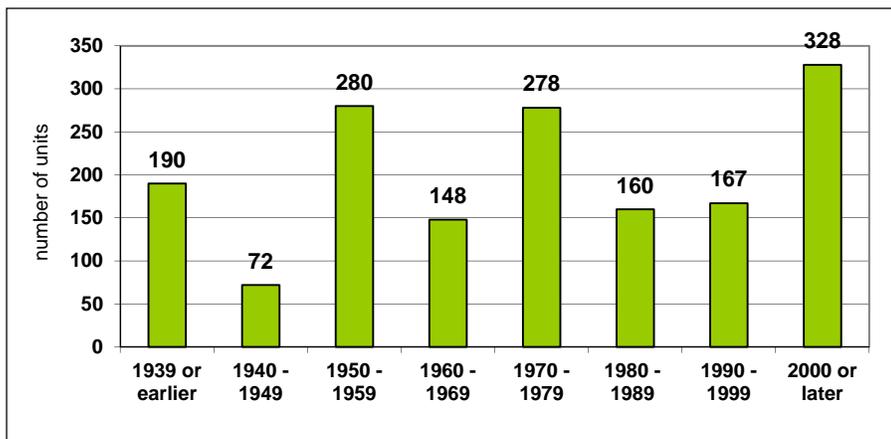


Figure 3. 60% of the housing units in Homer Township were built prior to 1980. Source: 2012 American Community Survey housing estimates and data provided by the Township Building Inspector regarding housing units constructed after 2010.

Income and Employment

Median household income in Homer Township is \$55,556 according to the 2011 American Community Survey. Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. This figure compares to \$52,465 for Midland County and \$48,669 for Michigan.

Per capita income in Homer Township is \$25,802. This compares to \$29,451 in Midland County and \$25,482 in Michigan. Per capita income is income per person in a population. Per capita income is often used to measure the standard of living in a particular geography. This is shown in Figure 4.

According to the 2011 American Community Survey, Homer Township has a larger number of households that have retirement income at 36.7%, compared to Midland County at 25.6% and Michigan at 22.3%.

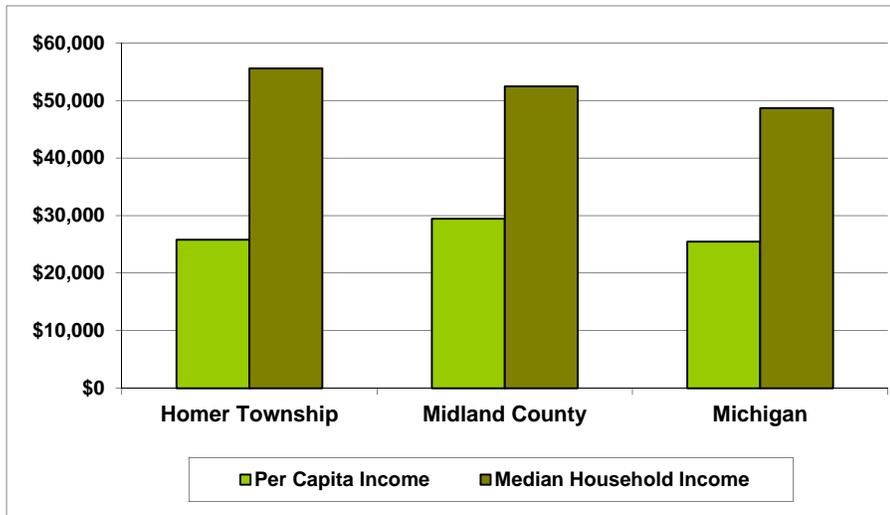


Figure 4. *Income data for Homer Township, Midland County, and Michigan.*
Source: 2011 American Community Survey.

Education

The percentage of the population of Homer Township that has a high school graduate or higher is 91.5%, which is very similar to Midland County at 91.4%. It is higher than that of Michigan at 88.4%. The percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher is 26.2%. This is less than Midland County at 31.9% but higher than the state of Michigan at 25.3%.

Taxable Value

Figure 5 shows how taxable values have changed in Homer Township and Midland County over the past 5 years. Taxable value in Homer Township fell in 2010 over 2009 and then has grown slightly each year thereafter. Homer Township's Taxable Value as a percentage of Midland County has remained relatively stable in the past 5 years with a high of 3.29% in 2009 and a low of 3.03% in 2011.

TAXABLE VALUE (Real and Personal Property)					
Year	Homer Township Taxable Value	Homer % Change from Previous Year	Midland County Taxable Value	Midland County % Change from Previous Year	Homer Taxable Value as a % of Midland County
2009	\$112,038,301		\$3,402,014,679		3.29%
2010	\$108,445,505	-3.21%	\$3,534,155,427	3.88%	3.07%
2011	\$109,501,808	0.97%	\$3,610,360,701	2.16%	3.03%
2012	\$111,852,557	2.15%	\$3,473,172,418	-3.80%	3.22%
2013	\$113,840,749	1.78%	\$3,627,649,340	4.45%	3.14%

Figure 5. *Taxable Value Statistics for Homer Township and Midland County.*

Community Facilities and Services

Homer Township Hall

Homer Township has a township hall with a meeting room that is available for rent. The hall is located at the northeast corner of Olson and Homer Roads. There is a small park at the township hall site that includes a children's playground, picnic tables, a college-approved baseball diamond and a basketball hoop.

Parks

Another park is located across from the public safety building. That park includes:

- Two Picnic Pavilions, Grills available in park
- Restrooms
- Children's Playground Area
- Skate Rink
- Three Soccer/Football Fields
- Four Softball Diamonds
- Concession Stand Open During League Play

Water and Other Services

A large portion of Homer Township is served by the City of Midland's public water system. A map of the water districts is provided in Appendix B. Regarding wastewater treatment, Homer Township does not have a waste disposal system. All Township waste disposal is handled through septic waste systems. Trash pick-up is contracted through Republic. Since 2011, the Township recycles and participates in the expanded program.

Schools

Homer Township is served by three public school districts. Land south of the Chippewa River is in the Bullock Creek School District. Bullock Creek High School, Middle School and Pine River Elementary School are all located in Homer Township. Most of the land north of the Chippewa River is in the Midland School District. A small area along Meridian Road and an area between Tittabawassee River Road and the Tittabawassee River is served by the Meridian School District. A school district map is shown on the map in Figure 6.

County Facility

Midland County operates Pinecrest at 413 N. Homer Road 1 mile north of M-20. Pinecrest is an approved group home facility licensed for 60 residents and is licensed by the Department of Children and Adult Licensing as a County Infirmary, also known as adult foster care. The Pinecrest campus includes 160 acres of land (fields, woods, gardens and a pond) offering multiple outdoor recreational opportunities. Pinecrest specializes in providing assisted living care under the supervision of a licensed nurse, to medically complex, elderly, mentally ill, and

developmentally delayed clients. The original facility was replaced in 2010 by a new state-of-the-art facility.

Police and Fire Services

Homer Township does not have its own police force and relies on the Midland County Sheriff's Office for Law Enforcement authority. The Township also has a zoning administrator / code enforcement officer.

The Township has its own fire department with a large public safety building that is located on Homer Road just north of E. Chippewa River Road. A portion of the facility is also leased to the EMS. The facility is a 911 back-up and also gets used as a county-wide training facility. Additionally, a section of the Fire Department building is also utilized by the Michigan State Police and the Midland County Sheriff.

Cemetery

The Homer Township Cemetery, located at 1136 E. Prairie Road, may have been settled as early as 1836 when Native Americans may have utilized the site for burials. The Cemetery was designated as an Official State of Michigan Historical site on September 19, 1991. Residents and non-residents may purchase lots at the Cemetery, and a Cemetery Committee selected by the Township is responsible for settling policies, identifying improvements needed, and future land needs.

Communications

Homer Township maintains a modern website and publishes a semi-annual newsletter. The Township also facilitates an email alert system whereby residents can sign up for free notifications about urgent and pending Township activities.

Infrastructure

Transportation

Roadways in Homer Township are arranged differently from the traditional intersecting grid pattern seen in many other rural Michigan townships. This is due to the location of the three large rivers that traverse the Township and because of the large undeveloped woodlands in the northwest and other portions of the township.

The three major rivers in Homer Township are the Tittabawassee, the Chippewa, and the Pine. There are no bridges over the Tittabawassee River in the Township and two bridges over the Pine River within the Township. There are two bridges over the Chippewa River. One is on Meridian Road and the other is on Homer Road. The lack of bridges isolates some areas of the township from other areas.

There are two main traffic carriers in Homer Township. The first is M-20, or Isabella Road, which travels east to west across the middle of the township. The four lane road carries a high volume of traffic from the city of Midland to Mt. Pleasant daily. Meridian Road forms the western border of the Township and it carries traffic from north to south, especially in the west side of the township. Homer Road is another important north/south traffic carrier within in the township.

The township contains several miles of local roads that serve small subdivisions. A transportation map that provides some average daily traffic counts is shown in Figure 7.

Regarding public transportation, the township is provided service in part by the County Connection – a State and locally sponsored public transportation service which provides affordable curb-to-curb transportation in small passenger vans and shuttle buses. County Connection of Midland provides wheelchair accessible vehicles and provides day care stops for children while parents are on board. The County Connection of Midland services all of Midland County and offers transfer service with Isabella, Gladwin, Bay, and Saginaw Counties. Discounted rates are available for off-peak hours as well as for seniors, children 11 and under, and persons with disabilities.



Wildflowers in bloom at the Chippewa Nature Center.

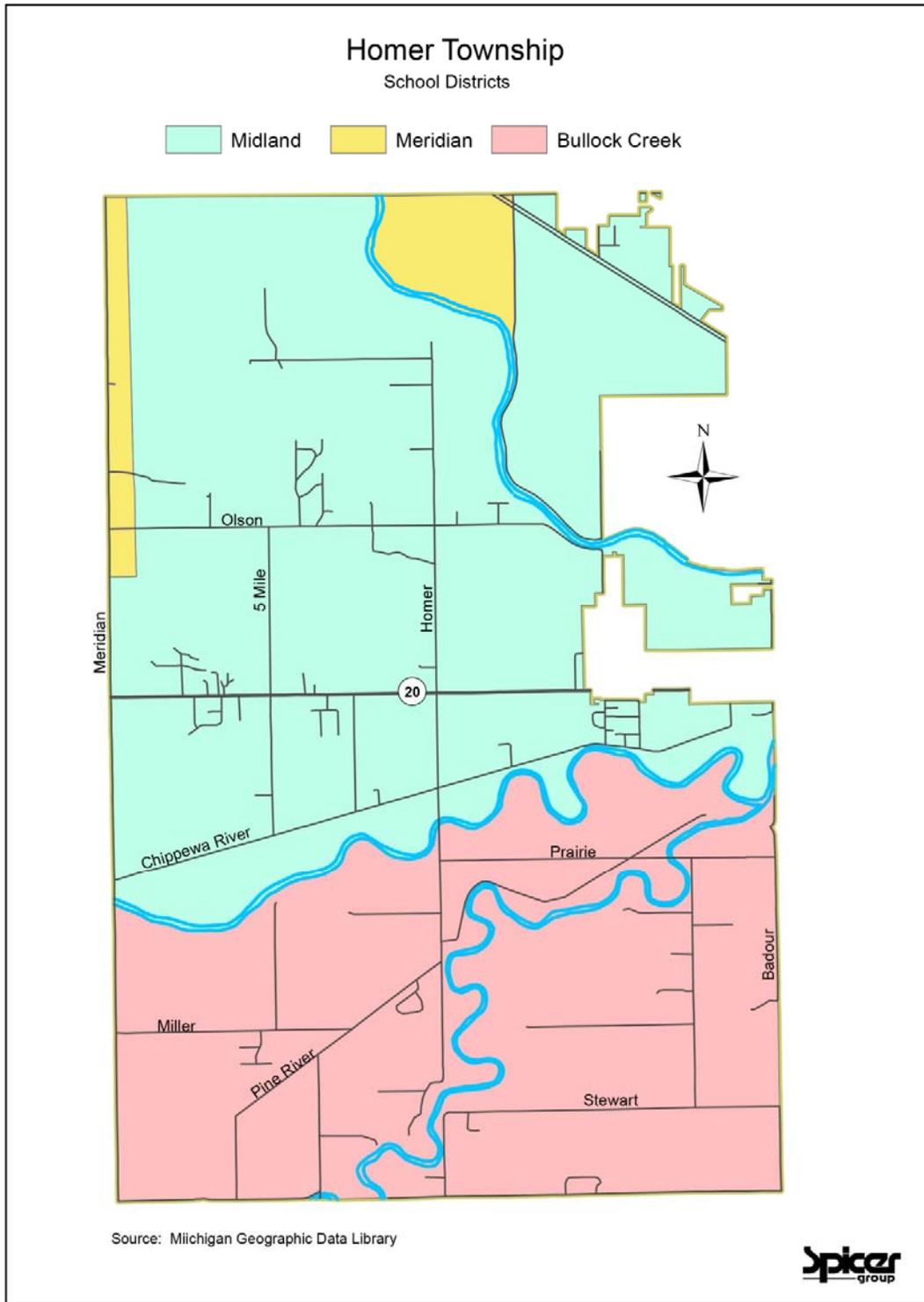


Figure 6. *Homer Township School Districts.*

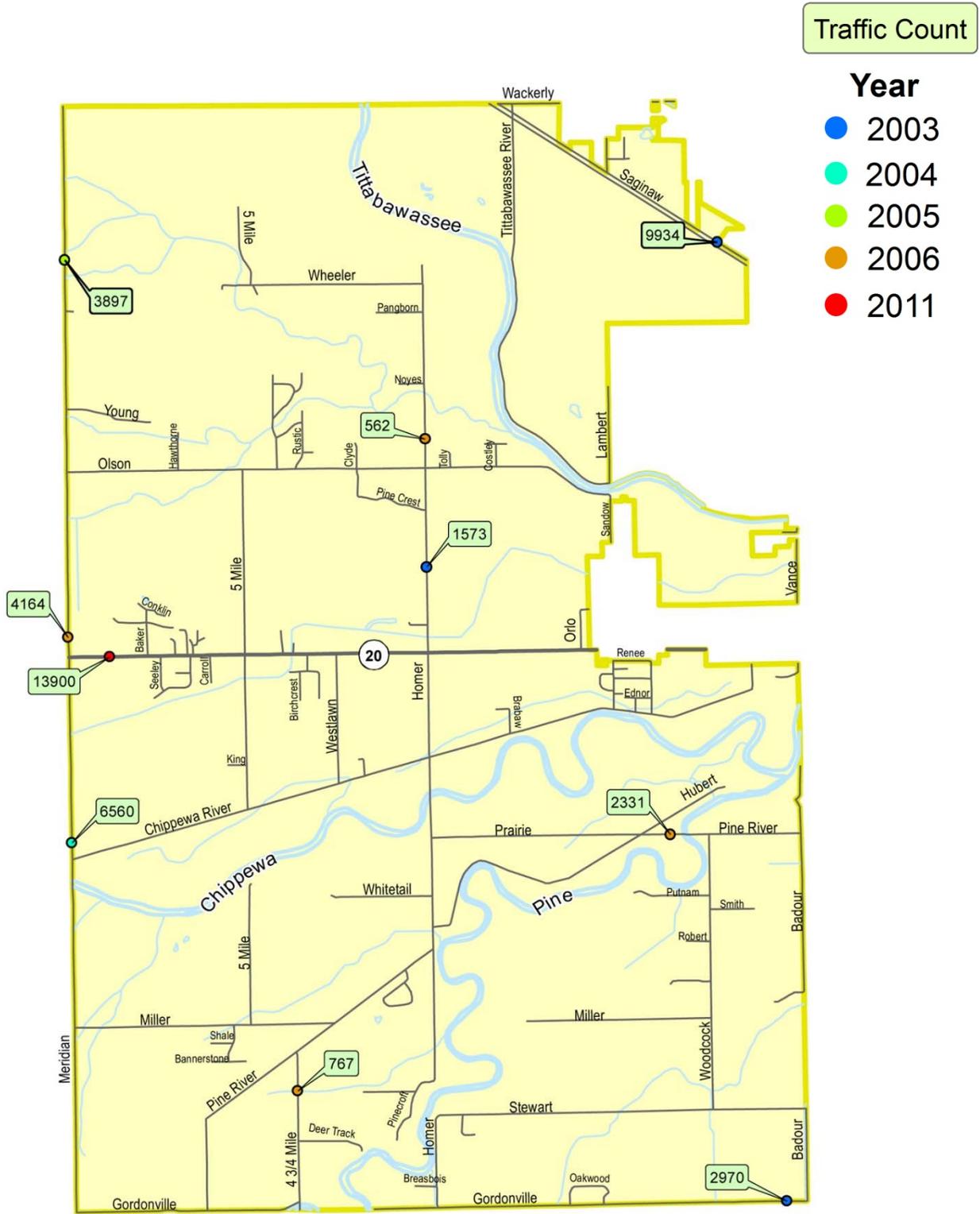


Figure 7. Homer Township Transportation – Depicts roads and average vehicles per day (“Traffic Count”).

Natural Features

It is important to understand the natural features of a community because they can have a significant impact on how a community can grow and develop. Significant natural features in Homer Township include rivers, wetlands, and woodlands.

Rivers

As previously mentioned in the transportation discussion, there are three significant rivers in Homer Township. These rivers provide a variety of recreational opportunities, scenic views, and fish and wildlife habitat.

- The **Tittabawassee River** is a stream which flows in a generally southeasterly direction through the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The river begins in Gladwin County at Secord Lake in Clement Township, at the confluence of the East Branch and the Middle Branch. The main river is 72.4 miles long and drains an area of 2,471 square miles.
- The **Chippewa River** is a stream in Michigan that runs 91.8 miles through the central Lower Peninsula. The Chippewa is a tributary of the Tittabawassee River and is thus part of the Saginaw River drainage basin. The main stem of the river begins in northeast Mecosta County in the village of Barryton. As the river flows east across Isabella County and in Midland County it is joined by the Pine River at the Chippewa Nature Center.
- The **Pine River** rises in from Pine Lake in eastern Mecosta County, flows mostly south and east through Isabella County, then south along the eastern edge of Montcalm County, then east and north through Gratiot County and Midland County, emptying into the Chippewa River, just about two miles before it joins the Tittabawassee River near Midland.

Wetlands

Wetlands are another important natural feature to understand when planning for the future in a community. Wetlands play a vital role in the ecosystem of an area. Wetlands are defined as lands where saturation with water is the dominant factor determining the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal communities living in the soil and on its surface. They are primary habitat for hundreds of species of waterfowl as well as many other birds, fish, mammals and insects. Wetlands naturally filter and recharge water. They act like sponges, slowing the flow of surface water and reducing the impact of flooding. Wetlands prevent soil erosion, and they buffer water bodies from potentially damaging land use activities such as agriculture.

Wetlands in Michigan are regulated by the Department of Environmental Quality and they generally cannot be used for development purposes. Homer Township's waterways and wetlands are shown in Figure 8.

Woodlands

Woodlands are located throughout Homer Township as seen in Figure 9. These woodlands are a significant portion of the landscape and aesthetic in the township. They provide an “up north” feel to this mid-Michigan community. Woodlands provide biodiversity in the environment, help stabilize the soil, serve as a habitat for thousands of animal and plant species, and they absorb carbon dioxide and generate oxygen. Woodland can also provide major economic value when used for forestry and the timber industry.

Slopes and Soils

Soils in the Homer Township area have widely varying properties with regard to drainage and other important characteristics. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) assigns hydrologic groups as a classification system for these and other soil characteristics. Hydrologic groups take into account several factors, including the following:

- **Runoff potential:** A measure of the likelihood of soil being infiltrated by water to full capacity and excess water from rain, snowmelt, or other sources flowing over the land.
- **Infiltration rate:** A measure of the rate at which soil is able to absorb water from rainfall or irrigation.
- **Soil texture:** A measure of the particle size of soil. Soils with higher clay content have a finer texture, while soils with a higher sand content have more coarse texture.

Soils can be generally be classified in groups A-D as relating to the characteristics below:

Hydrologic Group	Runoff Potential	Infiltration Rate	Soil Texture
A	Low	High	Coarse
B	↕	↕	↕
C			
D	High	Very Low	Fine

Soils can also be classified as dual hydrologic soil groups if a soil group with relatively high drainage potential and low runoff potential is found in the soil surface above soils of poorer drainage. These soils may be designated as A/D, B/D, or C/D. Many of Homer Township’s soils are in the B or B/D group (about 66%). Generally, soils in these groups are prevalent due to the presence of coarse-textured soils adjacent to the Pine, Chippewa and Tittabawassee Rivers and are often found adjacent to these rivers. See Figure 10 for soil hydrology information.

Soils in the “A” and “B” hydrologic groups most often correlate with coarse soil texture, meaning that the Township’s sandier soils are found in areas with A and B hydrologic groups. Figure 11

shows the dispersal of different soil texture groups throughout the Township. Fine-textured soils with higher clay content, which are often in hydrologic groups D and C, are found adjacent to the upland portions of the Township and are concentrated more heavily on the western and south-central portions of the Township. Generally, finer-textured soils with higher clay content have a greater ability to retain nutrients because of the relatively large overall surface area of clay particles and the negative charge generally held by these particles, and are thus desirable for crop cultivation. For this reason, soils with little or no clay content should generally not be considered for agricultural use. Sandier soils adjacent to streams and rivers do not necessarily hold the same advantages for agricultural use, but do offer the advantage of having less potential for runoff.

Overall, Homer Township's soils have low drainage, low runoff potential, and coarse texture. Because of the prevalence of coarse-textured soils in Homer Township, not all land is suitable for agricultural development. The distribution of different soil texture groups should be one of the key considerations used to determine the suitability of a particular land use. Portions of the township exhibiting significant fine-textured soil content will be more conducive to agricultural land uses in the future, while areas with coarse-textured soils, including much of the area north of East Prairie Road and south of the Chippewa River, should be considered for alternative uses such as recreation and open space. Approximately 87% of Homer Township's soils have either low or very low runoff potential. Because fine-textured, poorly-drained soils are often found under surface layers of coarse-textured soils, well-drained soils, as is the case for soils in the B/D hydrologic group, many of Homer Township's soils are poorly drained despite having low runoff potential. Approximately 62% of Homer Township's soils are poorly drained or very poorly drained. The Township should be cautious when considering development options in areas with low runoff potential and low drainage. Regarding soil texture, soils consisting of sandy over loamy texture are the most prominent of all groups, accounting for about 40.4% of soils in the Township.

Topography in Homer Township is strongly tied to the water resources in and around the Township; most notably the Pine, Chippewa, and Tittabawassee Rivers. The Township's slopes range from nearly flat on multiple large parcels to slopes exceeding 30% in some locations adjacent to its rivers. Slopes exceed 10 percent on many parcels adjacent to these rivers. Large portions of the Township immediately north of M-20 / Isabella Road, as well as the southwest corner of the Township adjacent to Meridian and Gordonville Roads and the northeast corner of the Township on the east side of the Tittabawassee River have large areas of relatively flat terrain. By far, most of the Township's land lies on grades under 5%. Given the overall flatness, the Township can consider planning for a variety of land uses. In the areas where slopes are steeper, particularly around the three rivers, much of the land will be difficult to develop and cultivate. These areas will be ideal for uses pertaining to recreation and open space preservation, and may serve important benefits for wildlife species which use the rivers and adjacent lands for habitat. See Figure 12 for topography information.

Chippewa Nature Center

Located at 400 S. Badour Road, the Chippewa Nature Center can be accessed in Homer Township via East Pine River Road. Founded in 1966, Chippewa Nature Center is a non-profit

environmental education organization with free daily admission that is situated along the Pine and Chippewa Rivers. In total, the nature center has over 1,200 acres of woodlands, wetlands, fields, trails, and rivers (over 470 acres are in Homer Township). Facilities include a visitor center and a reconstructed 1870s homestead farm.

Little Forks Conservancy

The Little Forks Conservancy was incorporated in 1996 with the mission to protect the area's key land features for future generations. Since incorporation, the Conservancy has completed projects in six counties surrounding its office in the City of Midland. In Homer Township, the Little Forks Conservancy maintains the 419-acre Riverview Natural Area located on Wheeler Road. The Riverview Natural Area is situated along two miles of the Tittabawassee River and has a parking area on Wheeler Road, with a mile-long trail loop that winds through the forest to the river.



Overlooking the Pine River.

Homer Township Wetlands and Waterways

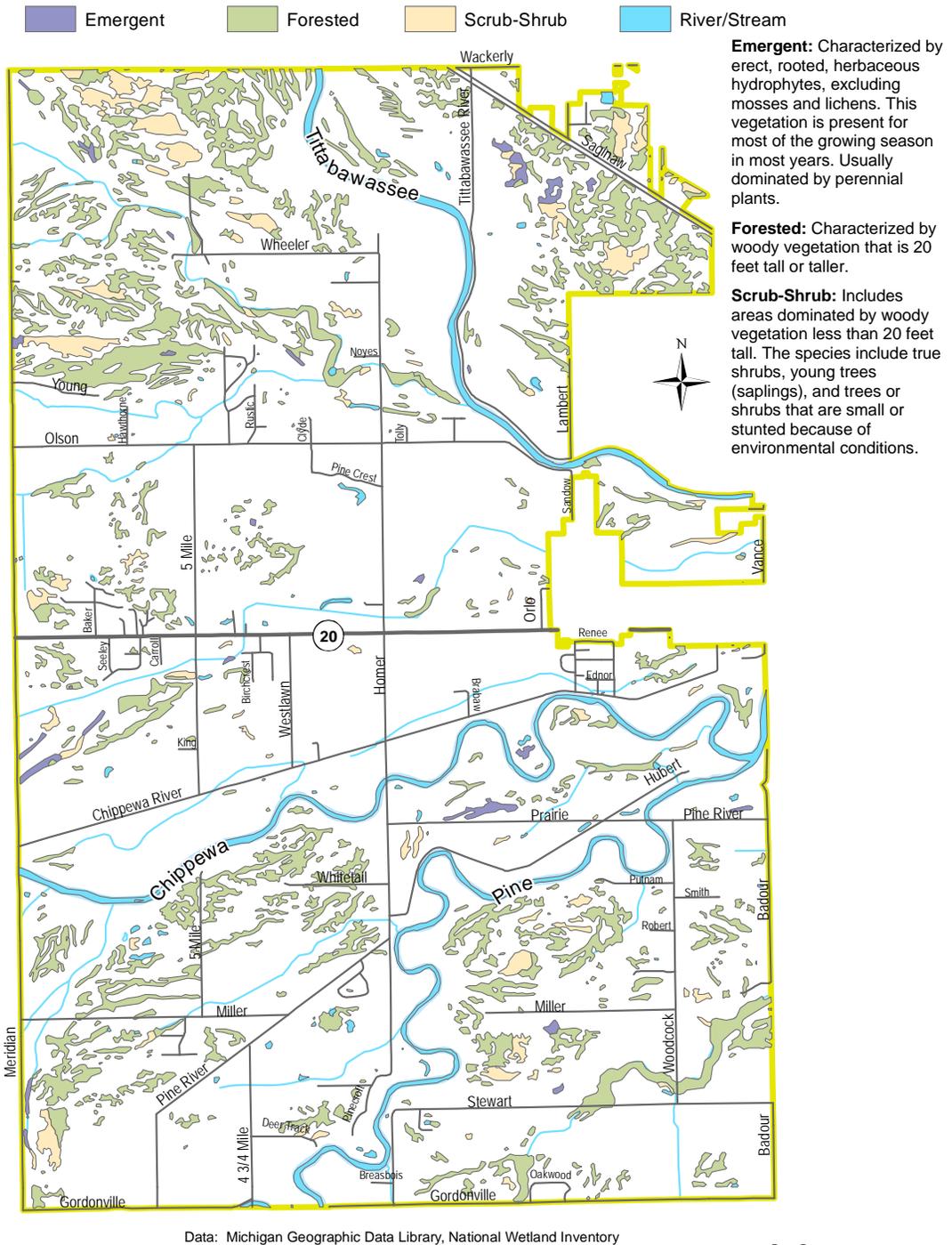
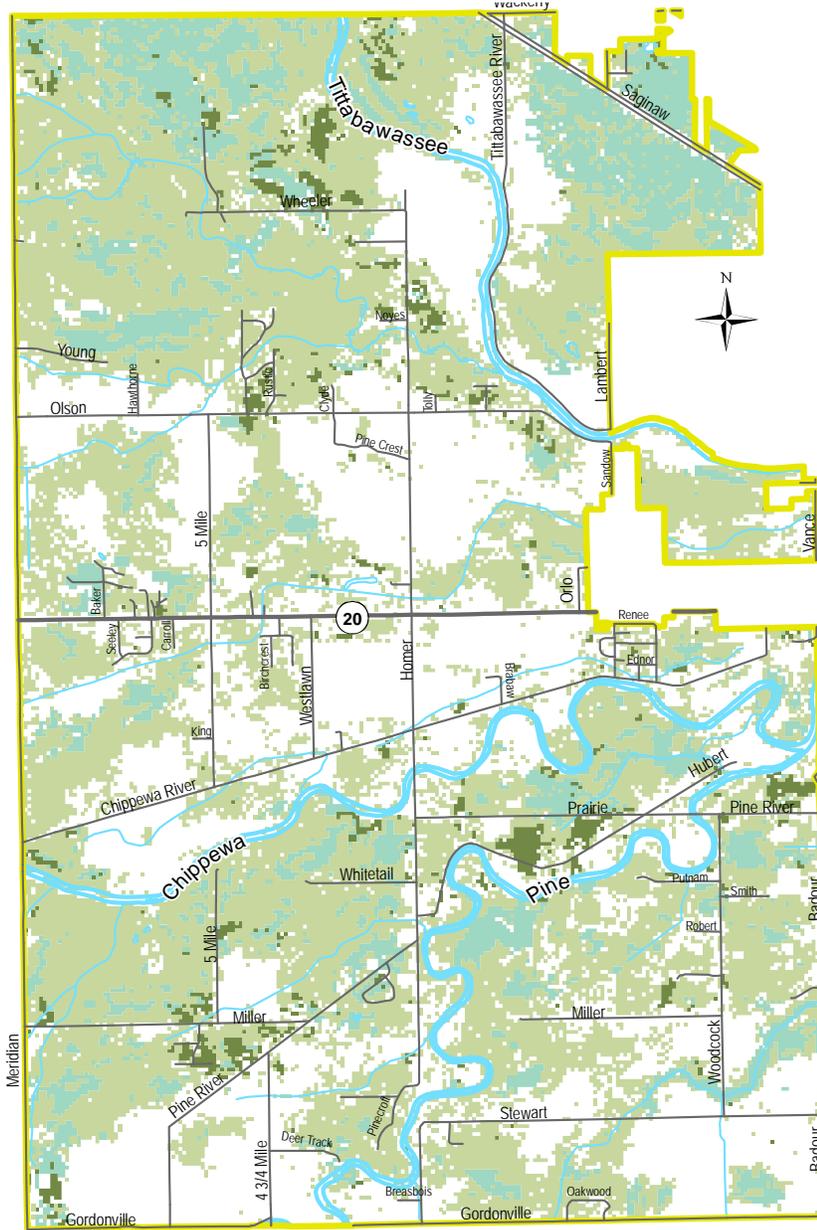


Figure 8. Wetlands and waterways in Homer Township.

Homer Township Woodlands

Deciduous Forest
 Evergreen Forest
 Woody Wetlands



Data: Michigan Geographic Data Library, 1992 Land Cover Data


 120477SG2013

Figure 9. *The landscape in Homer Township is dominated by woodlands.*

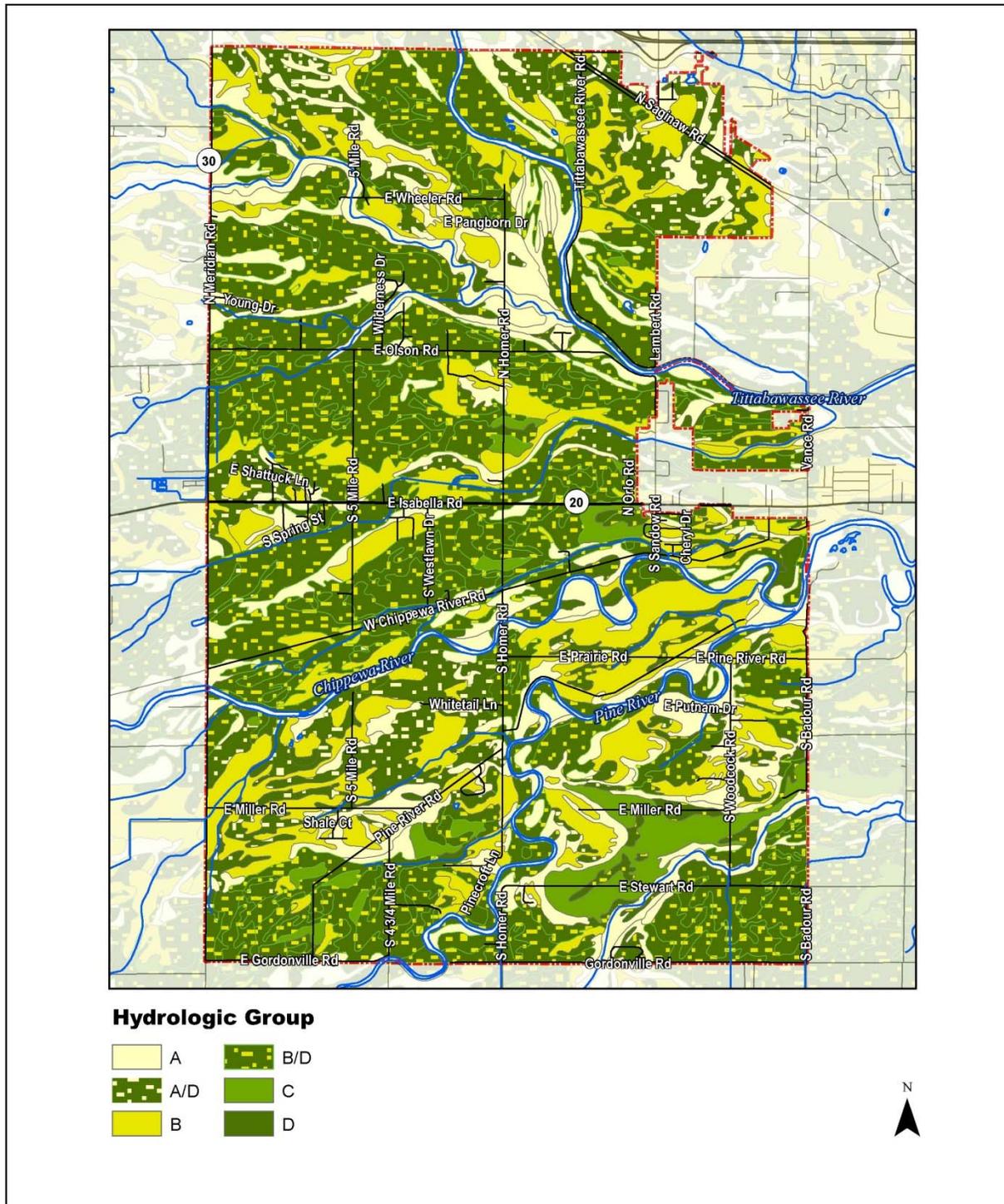


Figure 10. Soil hydrologic groups in Homer Township. See narrative on pp. 16 for hydrologic group descriptions. Data from the State of Michigan Geographic Data Library.

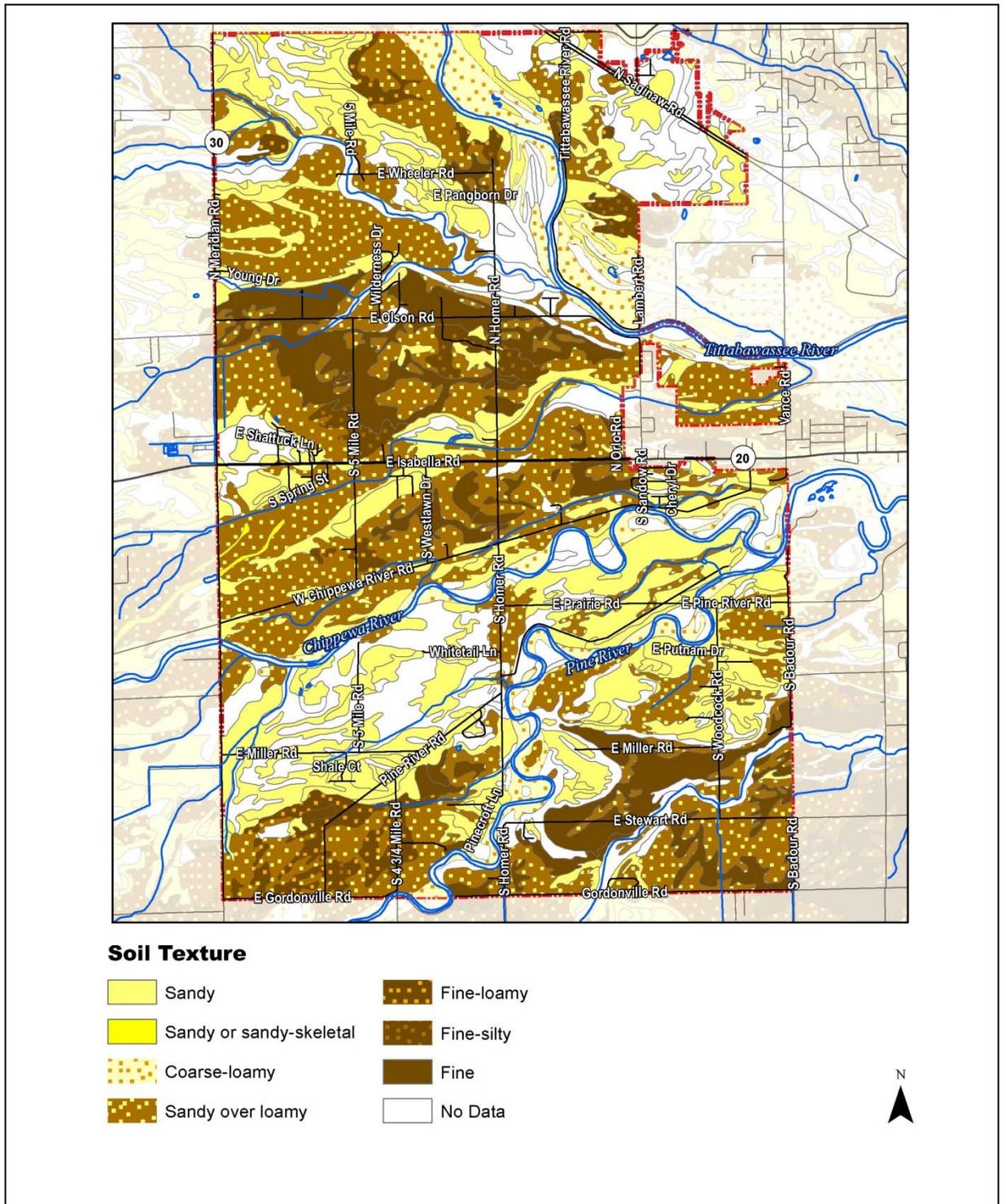


Figure 11. Soil texture classifications in Homer Township. Data from the State of Michigan Geographic Data Library.

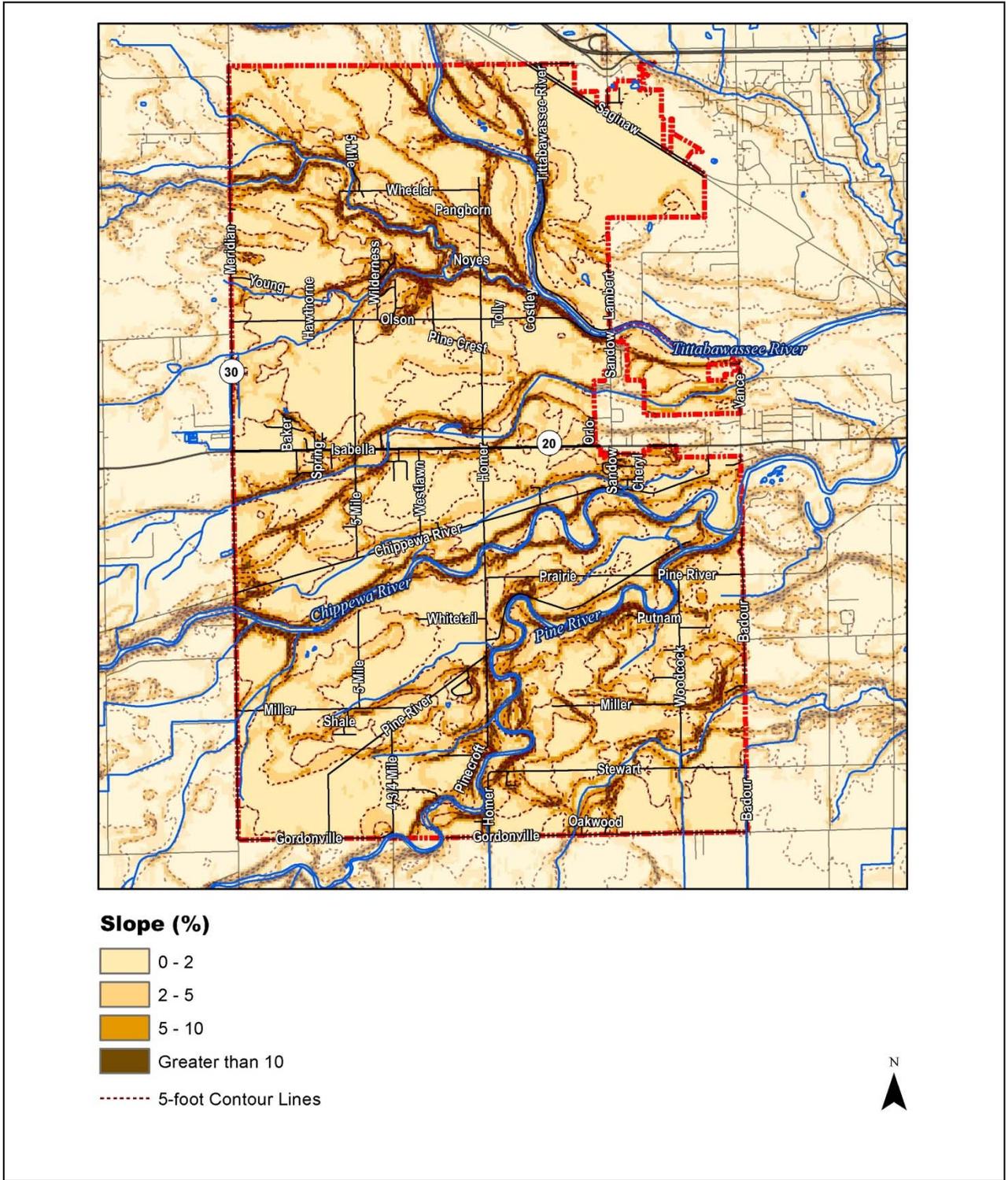


Figure 12. Topography in Homer Township. Data from the State of Michigan Geographic Data Library.

Chapter 3

Existing Land Use



Introduction: Land Use in Homer Township

The existing land use in a community is one of the most important pieces of data to analyze among the characteristics in a place like Homer Township. In many cases, the existing land uses have set a pattern that is unlikely to change. In other areas there may be vacant or underutilized land that can be evaluated for its development or conservation value.

An existing land use map is designed to provide a snapshot in time of how land in the Township is actually being used. Such a map is useful in developing a Master Plan since it provides a benchmark as to how property is being used, regardless of, or sometimes in contradiction to, zoning. It lets residents, Township officials, and other stakeholders see patterns in growth and development.

To provide a detailed account of the existing land uses, a review of the 1997 Homer Township Master Plan and spatial data collected from aerial photography from Google Earth were used to develop a draft of the land use map. Then, to account for changes over the intervening years, every road in Homer was driven in July of 2013, correcting the map as needed to identify land that was used for residential, industrial, public, recreational, and agricultural uses, including identification of undeveloped or open space areas.

Land Use Classification and Analysis

The land uses in the Homer Township are divided into nine categories for the purposes of mapping. General definitions of the uses follow. An existing land use map is shown at the end of this section on page 29. It is important to note that *existing land use* exhibits how the land is

currently being used, while *zoning* provides a set of regulations about how land should be used in the future. As such, the existing land use map does not necessarily correlate to the zoning map. Homer Township occupies an area of 13,384.7 acres (20.9 square miles). This does not take into account land used for roads. Table 1 shows the approximate acreage of how land is currently used in the Township. Single-Family Residential land, which covers about 35.7 percent of Homer Township, accounts for the greatest proportion of land use; followed by agricultural land, which covers about 23.7 percent.

Existing Land Use 2013	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Single-Family Residential	4,778.0	35.7%
Agricultural	3,171.8	23.7%
Woodlands	2,902.9	21.7%
Open Space	1,075.3	8.0%
Parks / Conservation Lands	856.8	6.4%
Commercial	251.8	1.9%
Public / Quasi-Public	187.7	1.4%
Multiple Family Residential	160.0	1.2%
Industrial	1.5	0.01%
Total	13,384.7	100%

Table 1.

Analysis of existing land uses in Homer Township. Land use data developed by Spicer Group via windshield survey and review of aerial imagery in Google Earth.

Single-Family Residential

This land use category describes areas composed of single-family dwellings with accessory structures such as garages and sheds. Single-family residential development is a predominant development pattern in the Township and accounts for 35.7% of the land area. Most of the land on the northern edge of Homer Township is composed of woodlands and park or conservation lands. Single-family land uses are widely distributed throughout the rest of Homer Township. Single Family uses are prevalent along relatively remote intersections such as Pine River Road at South Homer Road and East Olson Road at South Five Mile Road. There are also many single-family residential homes adjacent to the various commercial and public establishments along Isabella Road / M-20, especially between Meridian Road and North Homer Road, and along

Meridian Road / M-30. Single-Family Residential uses mostly occur at a very low density on large lots. This helps to give Homer Township its characteristic rural appeal.



A single-family residential home on Meridian Road.

Agricultural

Agricultural land uses include those that are being used for crop production, grazing, and other related activities and accessory farm buildings such as barns and elevators. Agricultural areas occupy 23.7%, or about 3,171.8 acres, of the land in Homer Township. Agricultural lands occur throughout the Township in various arrangements. There are several areas containing large parcels of agricultural land greater than 50 acres in size. These include the area adjacent to Wheeler Road east of the Tittabawassee River, the southeast corner of Wheeler Road and Homer Road, the southwestern portion of the Township near Gordonville Road and Meridian Road / M-30, and the Western portion of the Township near West Chippewa River Road and Meridian Road / M-30. In other areas, such as the area within a one-mile radius of the intersection of Homer Road and Isabella Road, agricultural lands occur as transitional areas between those parcels developed for residential and commercial uses and undeveloped or woodland parcels further from the center of the Township.



Image courtesy of Google Street View, 2013.

Agricultural land in Homer Township.

Woodlands

This category includes property that is covered with trees or wooded wetland areas which are not also managed specifically for conservation or recreation purposes. Wood lots are dispersed throughout Homer Township but occur in large tracts in two main locations. These are on the northwestern corner of the Township, southwest of 5 Mile in Sections 3 and 4 along the southern bank of the Chippewa River through the center of the Township. This existing land use accounts for 21.7 percent of the Township's total land area. Undeveloped woodlots and wooded wetland areas cover about 2,902.9 acres in Homer Township.



Woodlands near Wheeler Road and North Homer Road.

Open Spaces

Covering a total of about 1,075 acres, undeveloped open spaces account for about 8.0% of all land use in the Homer Township. Undeveloped open spaces may occur as meadow or grassland areas where forests have not grown. Open spaces may also occur as previously farmed or developed areas that are now being slowly overtaken by successional plant growth. Open spaces occur throughout the Township, but often occur as a buffer between two land uses of differing intensity. For example, a large tract of open space occurs on East Miller Road at South Five Mile Road between woodland and agricultural land uses. A large tract of open space occurs on Sandow Road, separating single-family residential uses along Isabella Road from agricultural uses to the north.



Open space along Meridian Road south of Olson Road.

Parks / Conservation Lands

This category includes all public land developed for the purpose of providing active and passive recreation and conservation purposes in Homer Township. This land use accounts for several different types of parcels. First, it accounts for public- and private-run facilities for active recreation including Homer Township Park, Homer Township Hall Park, and a private-run park south of Isabella



Image courtesy of Google Street View, 2013.

Homer Township Park, near Homer and Chippewa River Roads.

Road / M-20 at South 5 Mile Road. This land use category also includes larger aggregations of land used for passive recreation and conservation purposes. Included are large portions of land operated by the Chippewa Nature Center in the eastern half of the Township near South Sandow Road at Pine River Road as well as the Riverview Natural Area and River Bend Park, which are conservation lands owned and maintained by the Little Forks Conservancy near North Homer Road and East Wheeler Road. Parks and conservation lands account for 856.8 acres, or 6.4 percent, of the land used in Homer Township.

Commercial

Commercial development in Homer Township is generally small in scale and intended to serve the needs of Township residents as well as motorists using Meridian Road / M-30 and Isabella Road / M-20. Commercial use occupies 1.9 percent, or about 251.8 acres, of the land in Homer. Most commercial uses in the Township occur along Isabella Road / M-20, intersections such as Wheeler Road at Homer Road and Saginaw Road at Wackerly Road. Auto-oriented businesses comprise some of the commercial uses along Meridian and Isabella Roads.



Commercial use at M-20 and Homer Road.

Commercial land in Homer Township also includes some light retail establishments, local small business operators, and small grocery stores.

Public / Quasi-Public Lands

Public land uses generally include governmental facilities and offices, libraries, cemeteries, public works facilities, and post office buildings. Public land uses in Homer Township include the Township Offices, the Fire Department and the Township Hall. These are all generally located near the intersection of Isabella Road and Homer Road. Public Schools are also recorded as public lands in this section. Public schools in Homer Township include: Pine River Elementary School, Bullock Creek Middle School, and Bullock Creek High School. These schools are all in the eastern portion of the Township. Education & Training Connection, an adult education center which offers GED courses, located at 884 Isabella Road, is also considered a public land use in Homer Township. Quasi-public land includes areas with churches, religious institutions, and private institutions. Generally speaking, this use includes property held in the public interest and is usually exempt from real property taxation. Quasi-public land uses in Homer Township are scattered throughout the Township. Public and Quasi-Public uses comprise about 187.7 acres, or about 1.4 percent of the total land area in the Township.



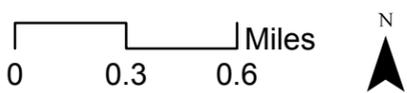
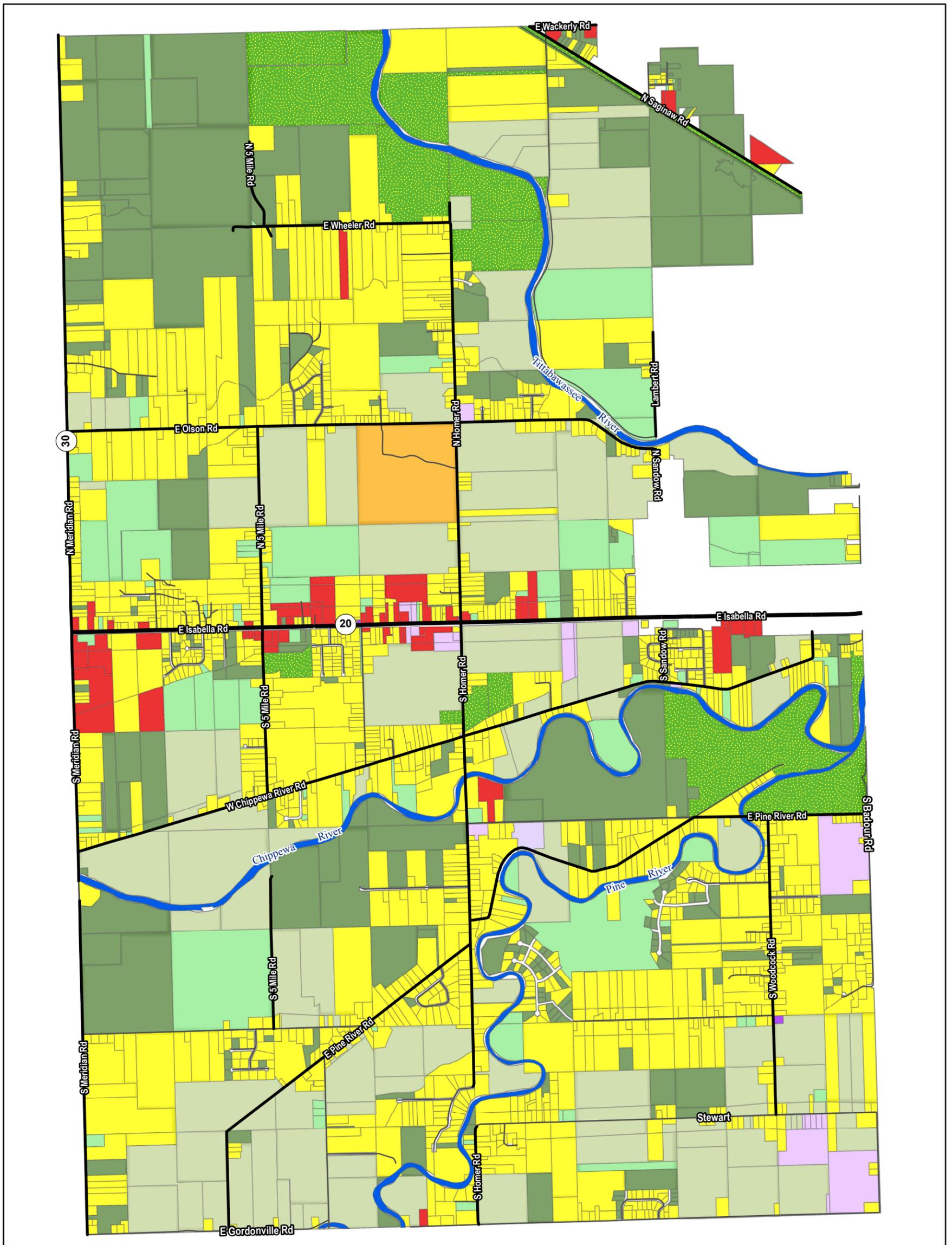
Bullock Creek High School.

Multiple-Family Residential

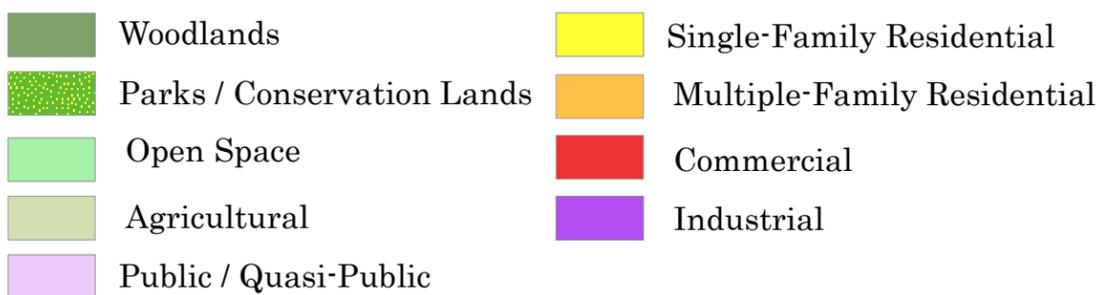
Land used in this category is for attached multi-family housing units. In Homer Township, this land use is only found in one area, southeast of the corner of Homer and Olson Roads. At this location, an assisted living complex called Pinecrest, operated by Midland County, with homes for 60 residents in detached or partially shared living spaces on 160 acres of land. This accounts for about 1.2 percent of all land use in Homer Township.

Industrial

Included in this category are warehouses, processing facilities, and manufacturing or non-manufacturing uses which are primarily industrial in nature. Though Homer Township includes industrial land use zoning districts along Saginaw Road, there are no parcels currently being used for industrial purposes other than utilities and power stations. Utilities and power stations are included in the accounting of industrial lands in Homer Township. These uses cover only about 1.5 acres in the township.



Homer Township: Existing Land Use



September 2014

Chapter 4

Listening to Homer Township



Basis for Community Input

To be effective, a Master Plan should incorporate the input and ideas of the local population. By basing the Master Plan on the goals and objectives of its residents, land use management decisions become politically feasible and represent the intents and vision of the community. In Homer Township, citizens were given the opportunity to participate in three methods of community input:

1. A community input open house held on June 18, 2013 at the Homer Township Fire Hall.
2. An online community input survey, hosted on surveymonkey.com, which produced results from 92 respondents.
3. A Facebook page for the Homer Township Master Plan, in which residents were allowed to comment and provide input about their future goals and desires for the Township.

Facebook Page: Providing Access to Online Information about the Plan

Shortly after the planning process began, an informational website on Facebook was created, as shown in Figure 13. It was developed to serve as an online presence that would display public information, describe the process, provide photos, and be a place for interested parties to comment on land use in Homer Township. The Facebook page was an important communication and outreach effort to community groups because it had the effect of encouraging them to take the online survey, described in more detail below.



Figure 13.

Screenshot of Homer Township's Facebook page for the Master Plan, located online at: <https://www.facebook.com/HomerTownshipMasterPlan>

Online Survey

The online survey was made available from May 20 through June 28, 2012, complete with 17 questions each of which can be seen in Appendix C of this document. The intent of the survey was to establish an easy means of communication where residents and stakeholders of Homer Township could provide input about the existing community conditions and the need for future improvements. Public announcements to encourage survey participation took the form of an article in the Homer Township Newsletter, a link on the Township website, an announcement on a Facebook project web page, and flyers and postcards printed in color. More details about responses are given below.

Survey Summary

During the public input period, the Township collected many ideas and suggestions for land use, economic development, environmental protection, and overall quality of life. The following information is a summary of the major ideas the Township received from the online survey, the community input open house, and the Facebook page. The complete data are included in Appendix C of this document.

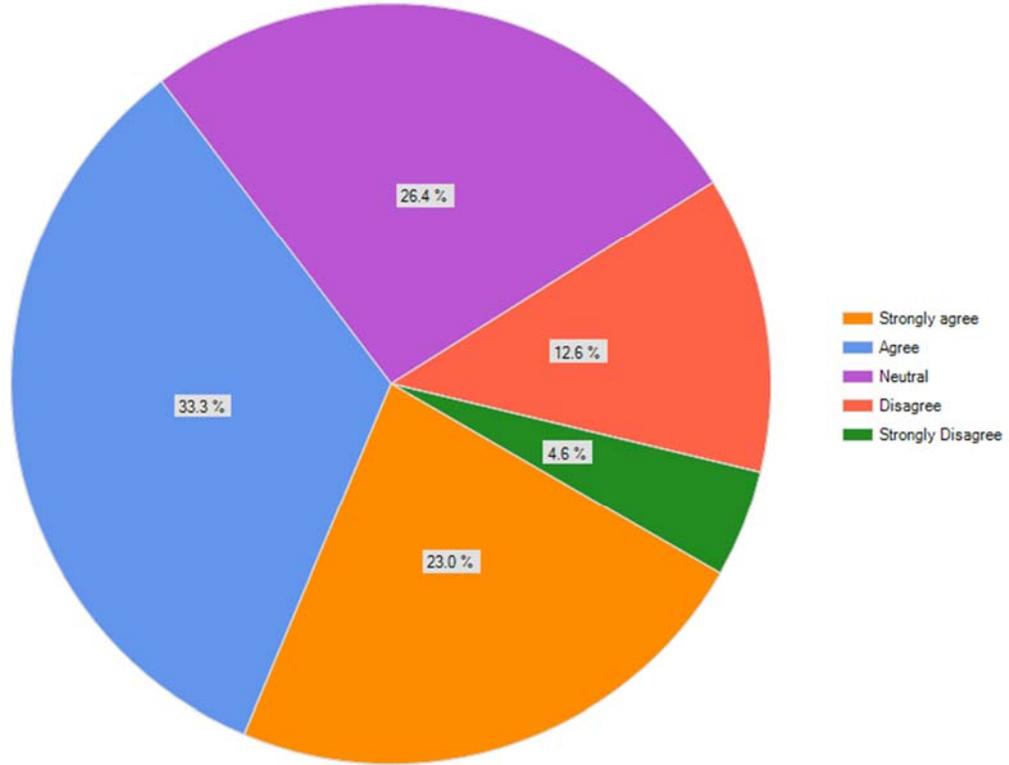
About the Respondents:

- Over 82% of the respondents were homeowners in Homer Township.
- Over 85% of the respondents live in Homer Township, while 3.5% of respondents live elsewhere in Midland County with no property in Homer Township.
- Approximately 38% of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44. Another 37% were between 45 and 64. About 19% were 65 or older.



How is new development perceived?

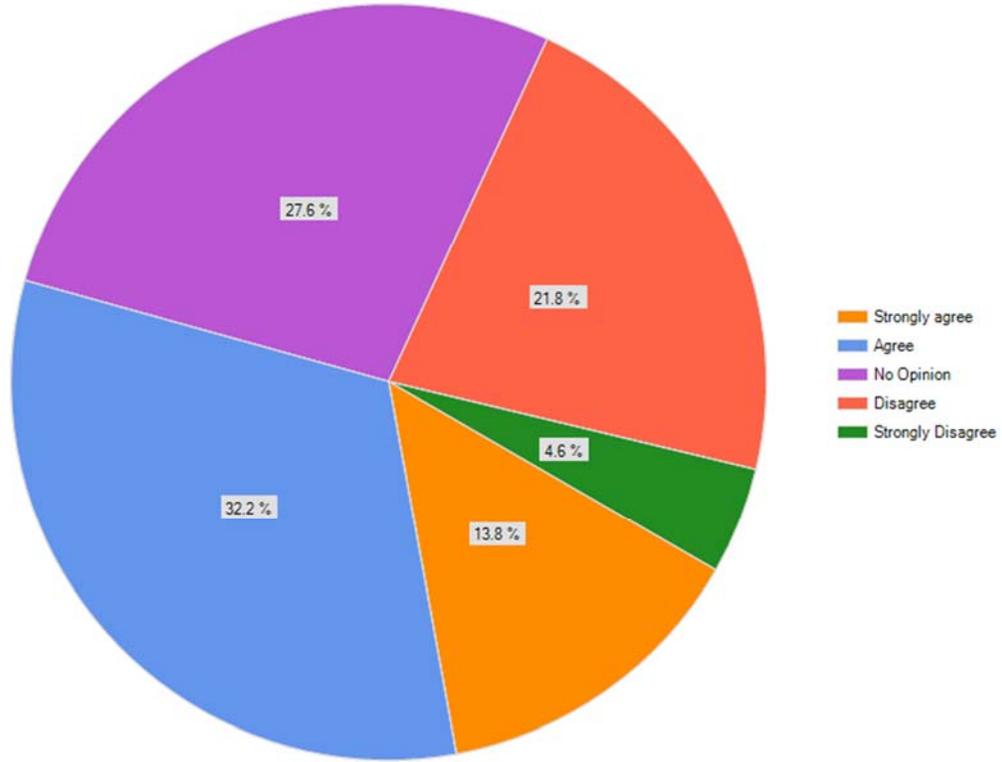
Question 1: Homer Township should encourage new development.



Question 1 asked respondents to gauge their feelings about new development in Homer Township. Respondents showed strong support for new development. About 56% of respondents stated that they strongly agree or agree that Homer Township should encourage new development. About 17 percent of respondents claimed to disagree or strongly disagree that new development should be encouraged in the Township. See the breakdown of responses for Question 1 above.

How is population growth perceived?

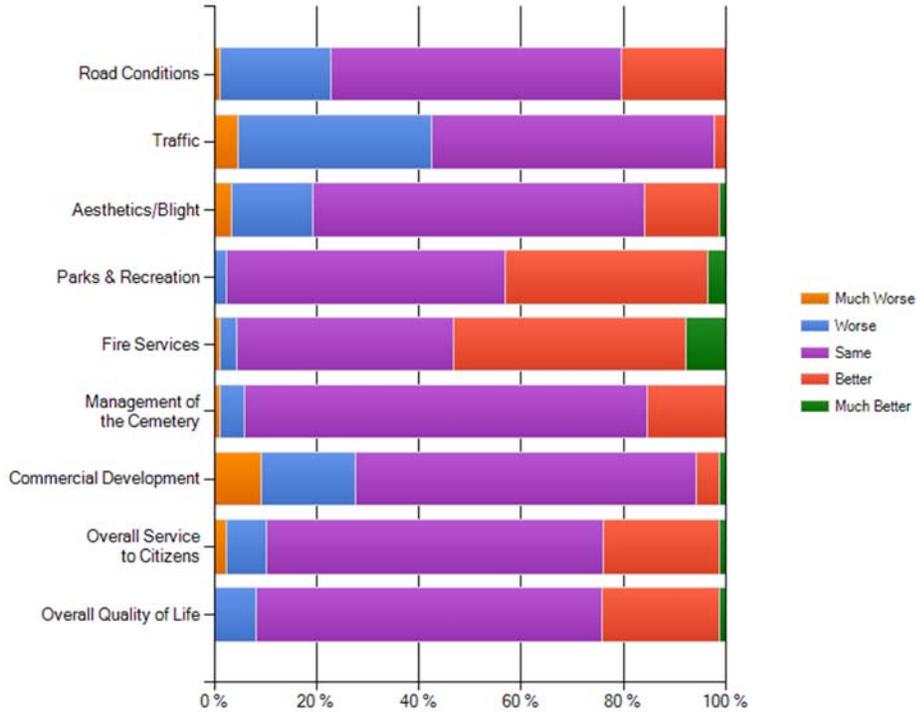
Question 2: Homer Township should grow in population.



Question 2 asked respondents to gauge their feelings about population growth in Homer Township. Respondents showed less enthusiasm for population growth than for new development, with only a total of about 46 percent either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that Homer Township should grow in population. About 27% of respondents stated that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. About 28% of respondents had no opinion on population growth in Homer Township. See the breakdown of responses for Question 2 above.

How has the Township changed?

Question 3: In the following categories, how do you feel Homer Township has changed in the past 5 years?



	Much Worse		Worse		Same		Better		Much Better		Response Count
Road Conditions	1	1.1%	19	21.6%	50	56.8%	18	20.5%	0	0.0%	88
Traffic	4	4.6%	33	37.9%	48	55.2%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	87
Aesthetics/Blight	3	3.4%	14	15.9%	57	64.8%	13	14.8%	1	1.1%	88
Parks & Recreation	0	0.0%	2	2.3%	48	54.5%	35	39.8%	3	3.4%	88
Fire Services	1	1.1%	3	3.3%	38	42.2%	41	45.6%	7	7.8%	90
Management of the Cemetery	1	1.2%	4	4.8%	66	78.6%	13	15.5%	0	0.0%	84
Commercial Development	8	9.2%	16	18.4%	58	66.7%	4	4.6%	1	1.1%	87
Overall Service to Citizens	2	2.3%	7	8.0%	58	65.9%	20	22.7%	1	1.1%	88
Overall Quality of Life	0	0.0%	7	8.0%	59	67.8%	20	23.0%	1	1.1%	87

Question 3 asked respondents to gauge their feelings about the change in condition of various community institutions, services, and infrastructure over the past five years. Generally speaking, in each area, except for fire services, respondents believed there had been no changes in the past five years. Parks and recreation and fire services were perceived as showing the most positive change, with 43.2% of respondents stating that parks and recreation services had become better or much better over the past five years

and 53.4% of respondents stating that fire services had become better or much better during the same time frame.

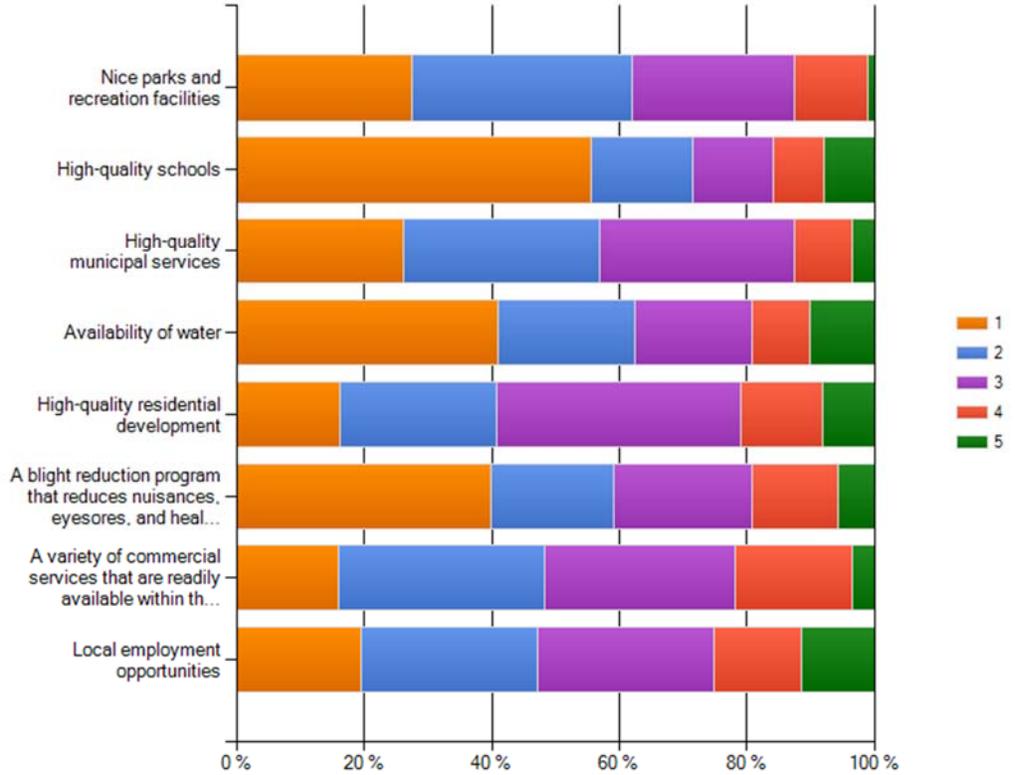
Traffic conditions were perceived as showing the most deterioration over the past five years, with a total of 42.8% of respondents stating that traffic had gotten worse or much worse over the past five years and only 2.3 percent of respondents claiming that they thought it had improved. Perceived change in commercial development produced a more mild response, though still relatively negative. While 27.6 percent of respondents felt that commercial development has gotten worse or much worse over the past five years, only 5.7 percent of respondents felt that it has gotten better or much better.

Overall quality of life and overall service to citizens also showed very favorable results, with 24.1 percent and 23.8 percent of respondents, respectively, believing that these had become better or much better during the past five years. Responses for this question show a strong sense of stability; as the portion of respondents expressing their belief that conditions remained the same had the largest share of responses for each of the nine options posed. See Question 3 on the previous page.



What affects quality of life in Homer Township?

Question 4: Please rank each of the following factors in terms of its importance to the quality of life in Homer Township.



	1 Very Important		2		3		4		5 Not Very		Response Count
Nice parks and recreation facilities	24	27.6%	30	34.5%	22	25.3%	10	11.5%	1	1.1%	87
High-quality Schools	49	55.7%	14	15.9%	11	12.5%	7	8.0%	7	8.0%	88
High-quality municipal services	23	26.1%	27	30.7%	27	30.7%	8	9.1%	3	3.4%	88
Availability of water	36	40.9%	19	21.6%	16	18.2%	8	9.1%	9	10.2%	88
High-quality residential development	14	16.3%	21	24.4%	33	38.4%	11	12.8%	7	8.1%	86
A blight reduction program that reduces nuisances, eyesores, and health or safety hazards	35	39.8%	17	19.3%	19	21.6%	12	13.6%	5	5.7%	88
A variety of commercial services that are readily available within the community	14	16.1%	28	32.2%	26	29.9%	16	18.4%	3	3.4%	87
Local employment opportunities	17	19.5%	24	27.6%	24	27.6%	12	13.8%	10	11.5%	87

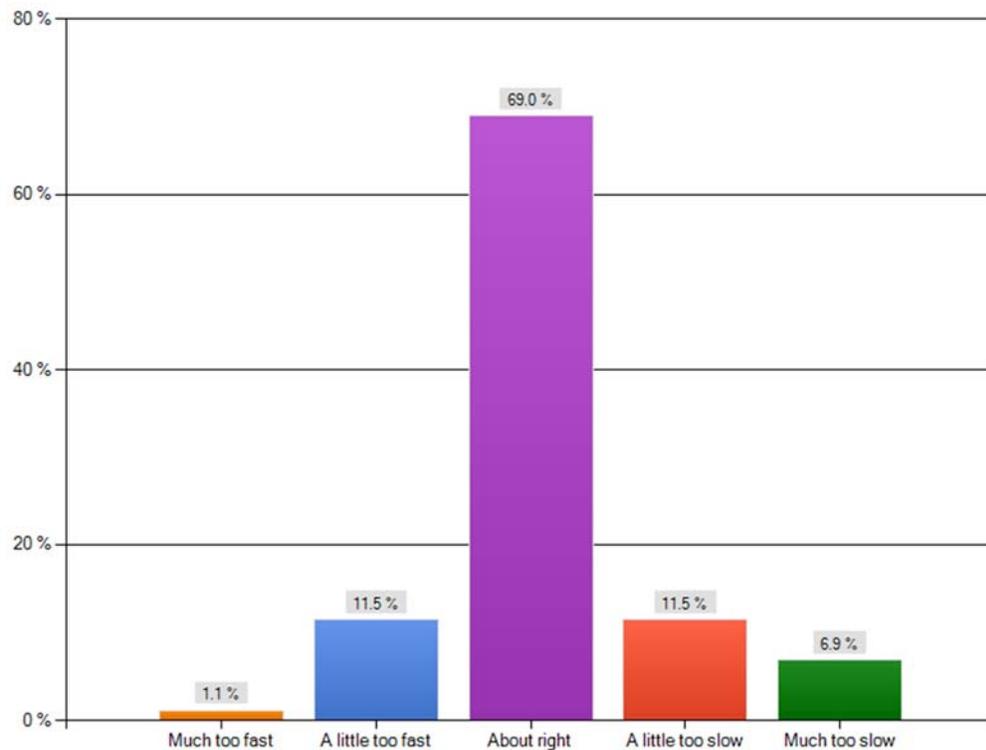
Question 4 asked respondents to rank an assortment of community amenities as they relate to perceived quality of life in Homer Township, on a scale from not very important to very

important. Overall, respondents ranked high-quality schools as being the most influential; with over 71% of respondents claiming that high-quality schools are important or very important to the quality of life. It is important to note that a significant number of students in Homer Township attend schools in the City of Midland, whose schools rank very highly. Respondents may be considering the quality of Midland Schools when answering this question.

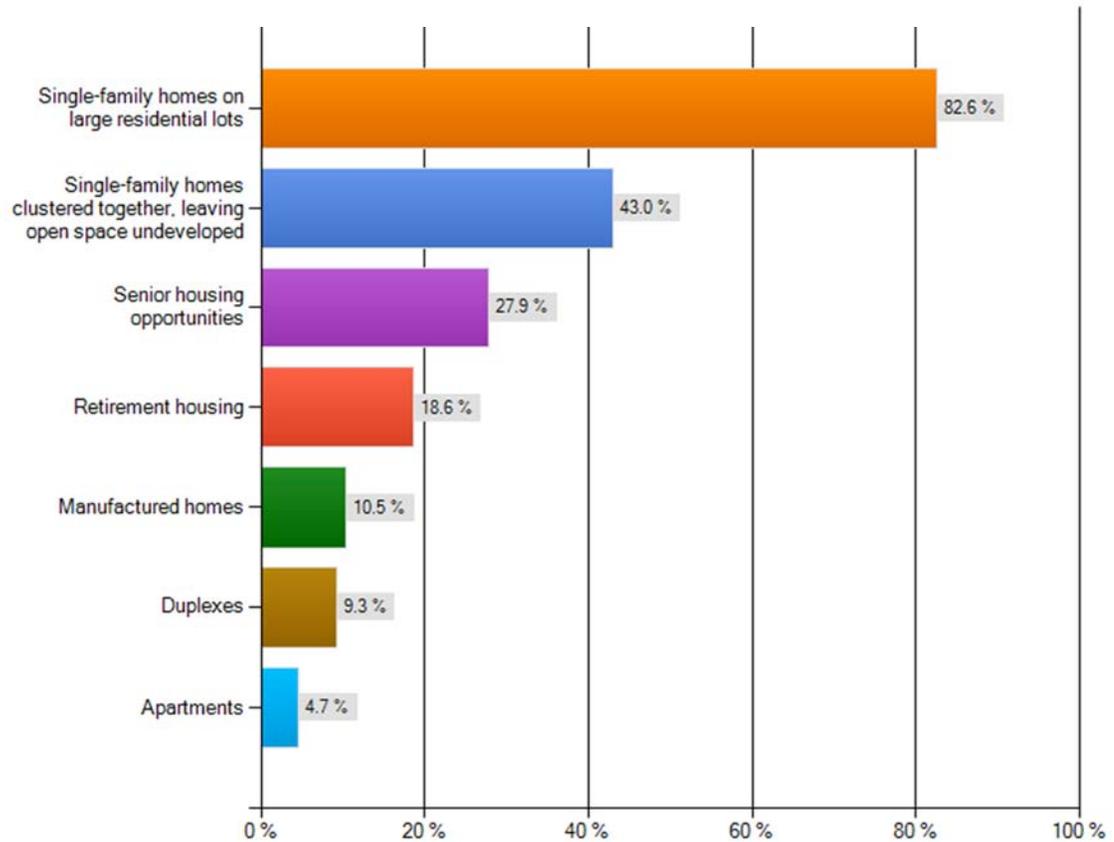
The next highest ranking features were the availability of water and the presence of nice parks and recreation facilities, both being perceived as important or very important by about 62% of respondents, followed by the availability of the blight reduction program at about 59%. The features rated least important were the availability of local employment opportunities and high-quality residential areas.

How is residential development perceived in Homer Township?

Question 5: How do you feel about the rate of residential growth in Homer Township during the past five years?



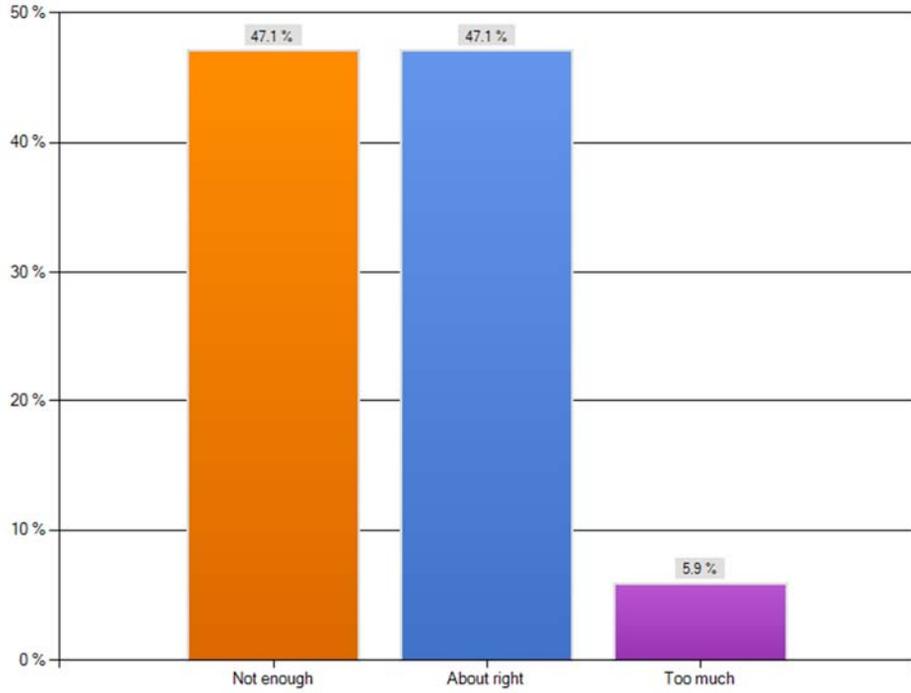
Question 6: I prefer that new residential development include the following (please check all that apply)



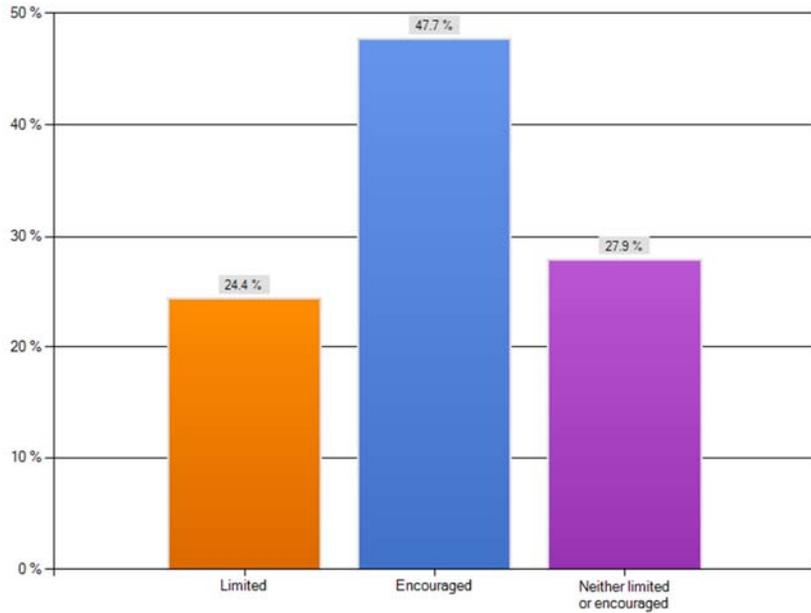
Questions 5 and 6 gauge respondents' beliefs about residential development. Question 5 asked respondents how they feel about the rate of residential growth in Homer Township during the past five years, on a scale from much too fast to much too slow. A large majority of respondents stated they feel the rate of residential growth to be about right, at 69 percent. A higher number of respondents feel the rate of residential growth is too slow or much too slow, at 18.4%, than feel the rate is too fast or much too fast, at only 12.6%. Question 6 asked respondents about which type of residential development they would like to see in the Township. Single-family homes on large residential lots had the highest number of responses, at 82.6%, while apartments attracted the lowest, at 4.7%. See the results of Questions 5 and 6 on the previous page. Nearly half (46%) of respondents indicated that retirement or senior housing opportunities should be considered, while about 43% expressed support for single-family homes clustered together, leaving open space undeveloped.

How is commercial development perceived in Homer Township?

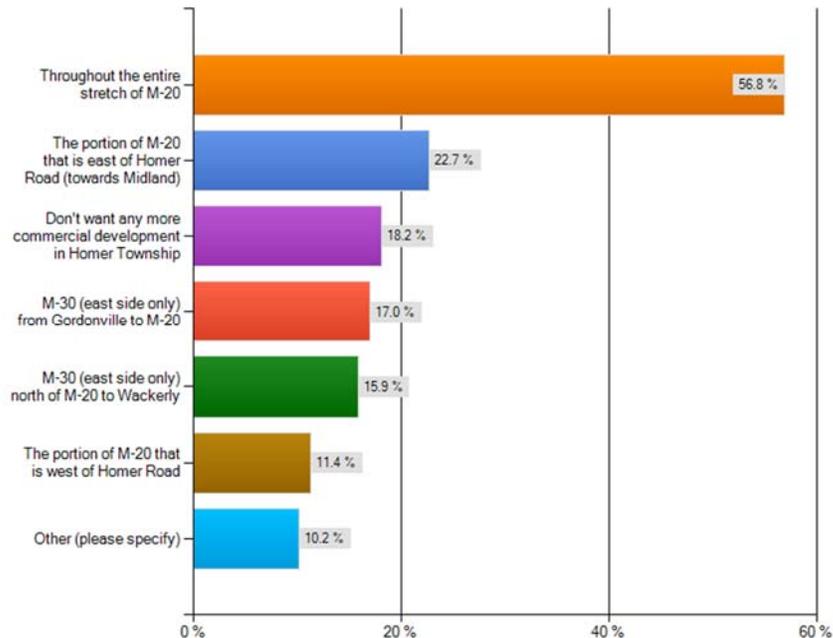
Question 7: Which describes how you view the amount of commercial (retail and service) businesses in Homer Township?



Question 8: In the next ten years, commercial growth in Homer Township should be:



Question 9: Future commercial development should be located: (Please check all that apply.)



Other (please specify) – 9 total responses:

- M-20 traffic flow volume and speed is not friendly for business.
- E M-20 - like "uncluttered" open space with farm acreage, churches, 1016 residence, 1 grocery, residential. W M-20 to Meridian- too much eye sore, blight, too many car junk, sales, detailing, etc.!! Add more variety=dry cleaners, bakery, fresh produce, a car wash.
- N. Saginaw Rd.?
- Homer has a reputation as highly discouraging and even disparaging toward small business. The only ones successful here are the ones willing to thumb their noses at the board.
- Have been a resident since 2002 and am beyond frustrated with the lack of commercial resources on M-20. Have to drive 10 miles into Midland and have never had any idea why these conveniences aren't available. Things that are heavily a desired: 1) Coffee shop (a real one, not a half-assed one like the recent attempt across from Family Life Radio), 2) A real grocery store; 3) drug store. I'm not one usually for "chain" anything. But the low brow mentality and constant visuals of storage unit after storage unit, used auto, a Dollar store etc., Homer Township just screams "white trash". I am in the Spring Street area and there are 3 houses in my neighborhood for sale. People who are looking or have found better housing and the convenience of being closer to town.
- No preference
- Need to make use of the commercial property that already exists.
- It just seems that we are getting the same services but being taxed out of the township ...
- If there is to be commercial growth, it should be limited. Homer Township has always been a small community where we all know each other. It is in country setting and that's why we

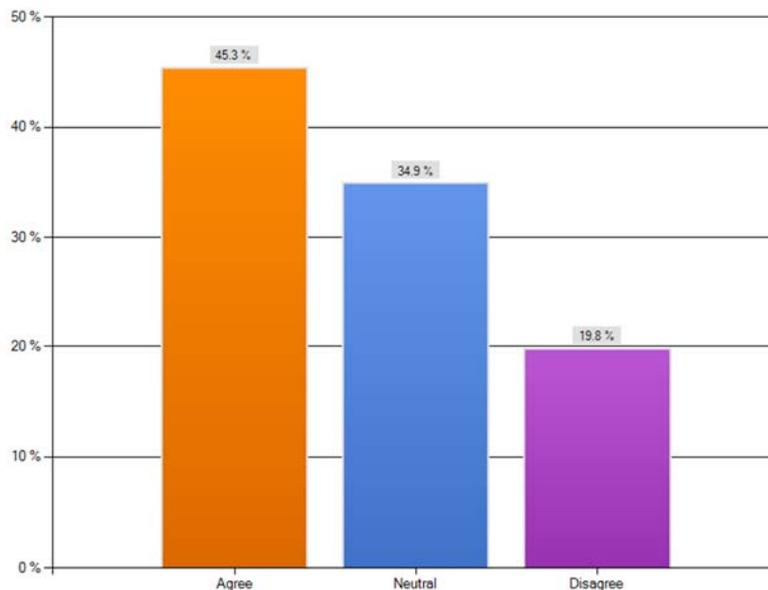
all like it. We don't want it to be filled with businesses. We can drive into town for that. We have farms and open land for a reason. Instead of changing in all into buildings, turn it into nature park or a small campground.

Questions 7 through 9 gauge respondents' beliefs about commercial development. Question 7 asked respondents how they feel about the amount of commercial (retail and service) businesses in Homer Township, on a scale from not enough to too much. Support for the notion that there is not enough commercial development and that the amount of commercial development is just right is equal, with about 47.1% of respondents agreeing with each of those statements. Only about 5.9% of respondents feel that there is too much commercial development in Homer Township.

Question 8 asked respondents to gauge how strongly they feel commercial growth should be discouraged or encouraged in the Township over the next ten years. Overall, respondents expressed more support for encouraging commercial growth (47.7%) than for limiting it (24.4%). Question 9 asked respondents where they would like commercial development to be located. Most respondents (56.8%) stated that they'd like to see development throughout the entire stretch of M-20. See the results of questions 7, 8 and 9 above and on the previous pages.

How is industrial development perceived in Homer Township?

Question 10: I favor industrial development that will be built near existing industrial land uses already operating in the Township.

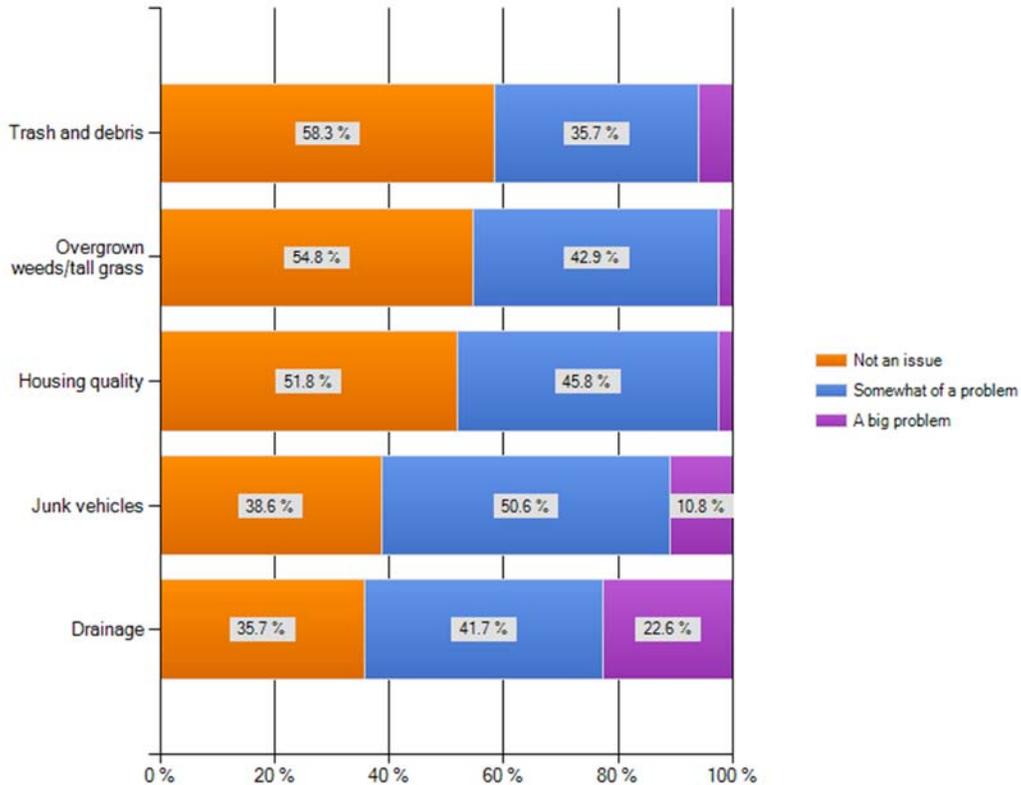


Question 10 asked respondents to gauge their feelings about industrial development in Homer Township. Overall, respondents were accepting of expanding industrial facilities in the Township, with 80.2% of respondents either agreeing or feeling neutral about the

statement that industrial development should be allowed when built near existing industrial land uses already existing in the Township. See the results of Question 10 above.

What is your opinion about specific issues in Homer Township?

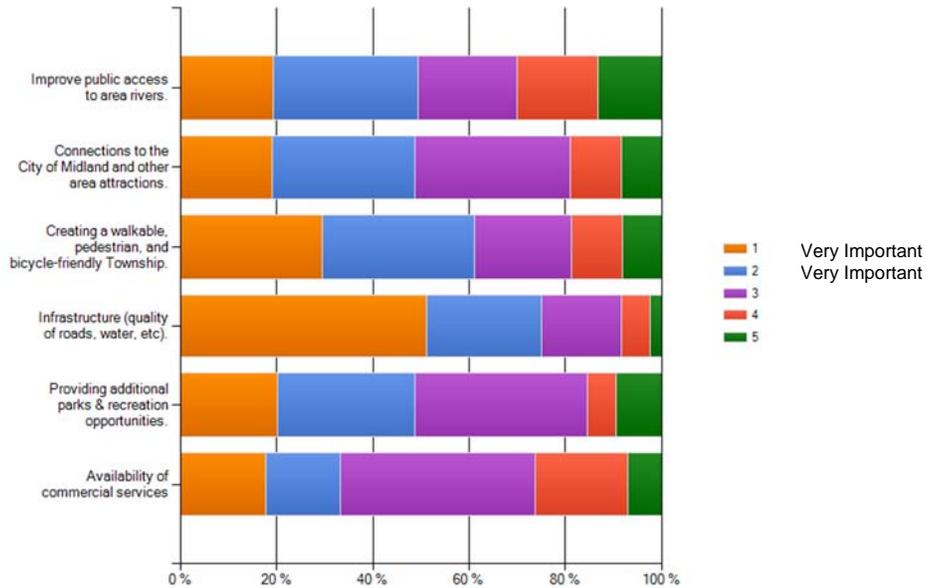
Question 11: What is your opinion regarding the extent of the following issues in Homer Township?



Question 11 asked respondents to share their opinion on selected issues in Homer Township. Overall, drainage was the issue of highest concern for respondents, with 64.3% of respondents identifying this as a big problem or somewhat of a problem. Respondents also found junk vehicles to be problematic, with 61.4% of respondents finding this to be somewhat of a problem or a big problem. Overgrown weeds and tall grass, as well as trash and debris, were perceived as lesser concerns. See the results of Question 11 above.

What are the most important issues facing the Township in the future?

Question 12: How important is each of the following issues when considering the future of Homer Township?



	1 Very Important		2		3		4		5 Not Very		Response Count
Improve public access to area rivers	16	19.3%	25	30.1%	17	20.5%	14	16.9%	11	13.3%	83
Connections to the City of Midland and other area attractions	16	19.0%	25	29.8%	27	32.1%	9	10.7%	7	8.3%	84
Creating a walkable, pedestrian, and bicycle-friendly Township	25	29.4%	27	31.8%	17	20.0%	9	10.6%	7	8.2%	85
Infrastructure (quality of roads, water, etc.)	43	51.2%	20	23.8%	14	16.7%	5	6.0%	2	2.4%	84
Providing additional parks and recreation	17	20.2%	24	28.6%	30	35.7%	5	6.0%	8	9.5%	84
Availability of commercial services	15	17.9%	13	15.5%	34	40.5%	16	19.0%	6	7.1%	84

Question 12 asked respondents to rank the perceived importance of various future community issues. Respondents ranked infrastructure, such as the quality of roads and water, as being the most important, with 85.0% of respondents saying that infrastructure is either important or very important. A high number of respondents also indicated that creating a walkable, pedestrian-friendly, and bicycle-friendly Township (61.2%) and improving public access to area rivers (49.4%) are either somewhat important or very important. Respondents rated the availability of commercial services the lowest of six choices in terms of importance, with only 33.4% of respondents ranking the availability of commercial services as either important or very important. See the results of question 12 on the previous page. Despite sizable support for commercial activity found in previous questions, residents also clearly emphasize other services and amenities as vital for the future of Homer Township.

What do you like best about Homer Township?

Question 13 asked respondents to comment on what they like best about Homer Township. 44 comments were received for this question. Of these, the following items consistently registered favorably among respondents:

- Small and quiet, friendly community.
- Like the rural setting.
- Like the community.
- Like the country life that is close to a city.
- Natural areas are an asset.

What is the one thing you would do to improve Homer Township?

Question 14 asked respondents to comment on what they would do to improve Homer Township. 45 comments were received for this question. Of these, the following items consistently registered favorably among respondents:

- Improve / diversify available commercial services.
- Need more restaurants.
- Develop M-20 appropriately.
- Parks improvements.
- Infrastructure improvements.
- Need better property maintenance.

Community Input Open House

A community input open house was held on Tuesday, June 18th, 2013 at the Homer Township Fire Hall. At this event, residents were given the opportunity to share ideas and input for shaping the direction of goals and future land use for Homer Township. Overall, 37 comments were given on a variety of subjects. Listed below are the topics addressed by residents who attended the open house. A complete list of open house comments is found on the following page.

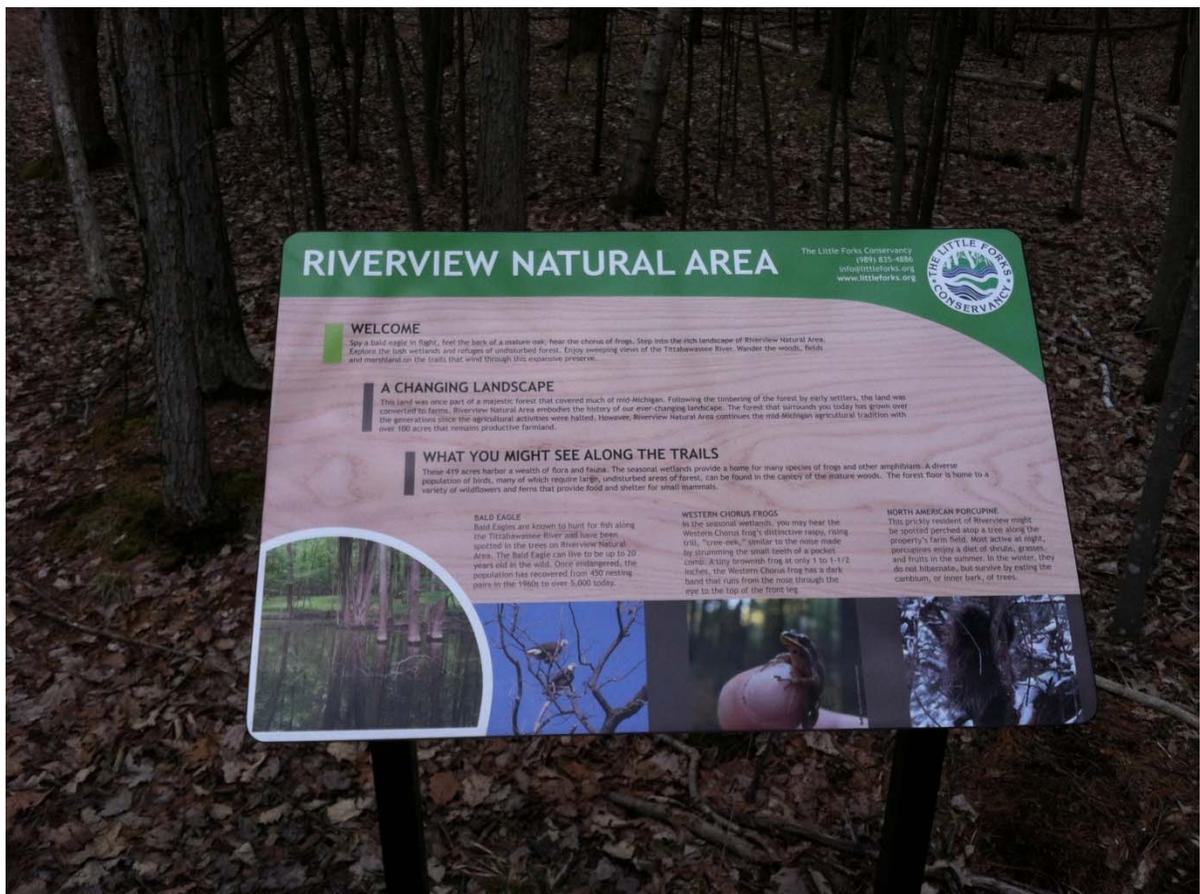
Subject	Number of Comments
Positive comments about the quality of life in Homer Township	10
Support for maintaining and expanding parks and recreational opportunities	8
Support for expanding commercial developments	6
Support for the rural character of the community	3
Support for maintaining and improving public utilities	3
Support for addressing blight, health, or safety issues	3
Support for restricting certain residential developments	2
Support for transportation improvements	2
Support for pedestrian improvements	1
Political comment	1
Support for a specific site improvement	1
Support for restricting certain commercial uses	1

Homer Township Master Plan: Public Input Open House | June 18, 2013

- Looking for progress on M-20.
- Would like to see future development on M-20.
- Would like a variety of businesses on M-20
- Improve recreation opportunities.
- Wouldn't want to be anywhere else.
- I enjoy the proximity to the City.
- I would like to see a few more restaurants or businesses in the Township or on M-20.
- Difficult to get across the Township.
- Like the rural setting. Enjoy the water service. Nice people.
- Restrict some of the residential development.
- Like the recreation.
- Please continue to keep blight in check.
- Convenience to Midland and Sanford.
- Enjoy the rural area – where I live.
- Like the longtime neighbors.
- Do not like to see sub-standard housing.
- Limit driveways on M-20.
- Limit new development – Moved here for rural setting.
- We have contended with drainage issues for over 60 years.
- Tierney Drain – Wasn't put in right. Doesn't work well.
- Easy access into Midland – Hospital / church / arts centers / pharmacy / Bank.
- Homer Township has a 4 generation homestead family. (Arthur Seeley)
- A good place to live. Good neighbors, responsible people.
- Elect progressive people to keep townships moving forward.
- Glad we have water!
- Homer Road to Meridian – 13 car-associated businesses – Too many!
- Would like to see a variety of businesses on M-20, such as:
 - ✓ Bakery
 - ✓ Dry cleaners
 - ✓ Car wash
 - ✓ Grocery store with fresh produce
- Liked to see space come in. Township wasn't friendly to business.
- Nature Center is an asset.
- Would like a paved pathway at local park, conveniently located for Homer Township residents.
- Need more public access to the rivers – canoeing, portages, etc.
- Sewer availability on M-20 to M-30 would be key to future development (M-20 is the place for future growth in Homer Township).
- Like Homer Township because you are close to the City, but still in the country. People still care about each other in Homer Township. It's beautiful.
- Good park space in Township, but still need quality play equipment for children.
- Homer Township could get creative with its parks – New, creative features would make residents more apt to use the Township parks.
- Need more sidewalks on M-20.
- Would like a Dog Park.

Conclusion

Most respondents viewed overall future development in Homer Township as favorable. There is a strong and widely shared sentiment for the need for more diversified commercial services. There is substantial concern for traffic and road conditions in the Township. The Township also favors expanded residential development, especially single-family residential and appropriate housing developments for senior citizens. Respondents also view the Township's water infrastructure and natural features to be important future assets. Overall, residents wish to retain the small community atmosphere of Homer Township and maintain its "rural appeal", yet want to also maintain the advantages of being close to the more urban amenities of Midland.



Chapter 5

How will Homer Township Look?



Introduction

Building on the action program produced from the desired land use goals and objectives of the Township, the future land use map will depict the desired form and character Homer Township should take over the next five to twenty years. The map depicting the future land uses for Homer Township is shown on page 56 at the end of this section. The proposed future land uses in Homer Township are divided into ten categories.

The future land use map also transforms the goals and capital improvements into a graphic guide for land development and management in Homer Township. The future land use map serves as a guide to decision making – it does not specify how every lot, parcel, or site should be used or zoned. While the future land use map attempts to translate future land use categories to specific zoning districts, it is mostly intended to provide a framework for future site-specific land use or zoning decisions that are brought before the Planning Commission. For example, the future land use map may indicate a single-family residential area, and yet it may not be zoned for residential until a property owner requests that zoning change and the Township adopts the rezoning request.

On the future land use map, it should be noted future land use categories are slightly different from the existing land use categories. This difference is attributed to the fact that future land use is developed with an eye toward the zoning classification that will be needed to actually

move toward the implementation of this plan. For example, while the existing land use map described woodland areas, these uses are not described on the future land use map. These existing land uses are combined into various other future land use categories because the future land use categories reflect how these wooded and agricultural land uses should be used in the future, and hence should be zoned. Ultimately, the recommendations shown on the future land use map are intended to help Homer Township officials, property owners, and residents make zoning and development decisions that are in the best interest of the Homer Township community. The future land use map seeks to guide development of residential and commercial districts, as well as the allocation of lands for future parks and conservation areas, into appropriate locations while maintaining the overall character and appearance of Homer Township. Descriptions of the new future land use categories begin below. See table 2 below for a list of future land uses. The future land use map is shown at the end of this section.



Future Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Single-Family Residential	5,068.7	37.9%
Agricultural	4,967.9	37.1%
Rural Residential	1,339.1	10.0%
Conservation Lands	1,033.1	7.7%
Neighborhood Service Commercial	440.2	3.3%
Public / Quasi-Public	211.1	1.6%
Public Schools	133.5	1.0%
Community Service Commercial	77.9	0.6%
Industrial / Heavy Service Commercial	60.2	0.4%
Parks	53.0	0.4%
Total	13,393.8	100%

Table 2. Future land use categories by acreage and percent of total area in Homer Township.

Single-Family Residential

This category includes single-family dwellings and related accessory structures. The purpose and intent of this future land use is to provide space for traditional neighborhood single-family growth, free from most other uses, except those that are compatible with the residents living in these neighborhoods. In general, single-family residential corresponds to the single family residential low, medium and high density (RA, RB, and RC) zoning districts. The future land use map shows that most of those areas would not change. Additionally, some of the land previously shown in the Township as rural residential and agricultural is proposed to be converted to single-family residential. Single-family residential will account for approximately 5,068.7 acres, or about 37.9 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.



Agricultural

Agricultural land uses are the second largest category of future land use in Homer Township. The Township will continue to maintain many existing agricultural and woodland areas but will not expand them. Agricultural land use will be spread throughout the Township. Residents feel that agriculture is an important component of the rural appeal of their Township. This category includes single-family dwellings and related accessory structures as well as agricultural and undeveloped parcels in the Township. In general, agricultural corresponds to the agricultural Residential (AR) zoning district. The future land use map shows that most of those areas would not change. Some of the agricultural land shown in the Township is proposed to be converted to rural residential use. Agricultural will account for approximately 4,967.9 acres, or about 37.1 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.



Rural Residential

This category includes single-family dwellings and related accessory structures in lower density than those in single-family residential districts. The purpose and intent of this future land use is to provide space for low-density neighborhood single-family structures and compatible uses while emphasizing the maintenance of open space and significant natural features such as woodlands. This is the least dense of the residential future land use categories shown on the future land use map. In general, rural residential corresponds to the Agricultural Residential (AR) and Rural Residential (RR) zoning districts. The future land use map shows that most of those areas would not change. Rural residential will account for approximately 1,339.1 acres, or about 10.0 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.



Conservation Lands

Land included in the conservation lands category shows lands currently managed as conservation lands, including those with some passive recreation opportunities, and designated open spaces along the Chippewa and Pine Rivers. Lands identified as conservation lands do not include any private or Township-operated recreation facilities. Currently, the area near Homer Road and Wheeler Road includes large portions of land owned by the Little Forks Land Conservancy, a non-profit conservation organization.



This includes large portions of land along the Tittabawassee River. Much of the land between the Pine and Chippewa Rivers off of Prairie Road east of Homer Road is designated as conservation lands as well. This includes a portion of the Chippewa Nature Center property, near Badour Road and Pine River Road on the east side of the Township. Also included in this category are lands preserved for portions of the Pere-Marquette Rail Trail and the Duck Hunter's Memorial in the northeast portion of the Township. Conservation land uses are intended to provide passive recreational opportunities to residents of Homer Township. They are also intended to preserve the environmental quality of the three rivers running through Homer Township; the Chippewa, Tittabawassee, and Pine Rivers. Conservation lands generally correlate with portions of the Township currently zoned as AR Agricultural Residential, RR Rural

Residential, and RA Single-Family Residential lands. Conservation lands will account for approximately 1,033.1 acres, or about 7.7 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.

Neighborhood Service Commercial

This is a semi-restrictive commercial category allowing for a limited array of commercial uses. In Homer Township these uses occur primarily on Isabella Road, or M-20, through the center of the Township, while some commercial lots are found in the northeast corner of the township along Saginaw Road.

Neighborhood service commercial use includes a variety of use capacities which correlate with two commercial zoning districts in Homer Township:

- Office Service Commercial District (OSC)
- Neighborhood Service Com District (NSC)



Neighborhood service commercial will account for approximately 440.2 acres, or about 3.3 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.

Community Service Commercial

This is a less restrictive commercial category allowing for a wide variety of commercial uses. In Homer Township these uses will be restricted to select parcels within an approximately 500-foot buffer south of Isabella Road / M-20, east of Westlawn Drive. Community Service Commercial use includes a variety of use capacities which correlate with the Community Service Commercial (CSC) zoning district.

Community service commercial use will account for approximately 77.9 acres, or about 0.6 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.

Public / Quasi-Public

This category includes public uses such as government facilities, libraries, public works facilities, and post office buildings. These facilities are encouraged to have buildings located and designed to promote a neighborhood scale and character. Another objective of the public / quasi-public future land use category is also intended to promote and maintain existing places of



worship in Homer Township. These uses are located throughout the Township are typically adjacent to nearby neighborhoods. Because of the general nature of this category, it does not necessarily correspond to any one of the existing districts in the Township's zoning ordinance. Public / quasi-public lands will account for approximately 211.1 acres, or about 1.6 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township. Public / quasi-public lands include the 5.4-acre parcel at 522 North Homer Road, which includes the Township Hall and the adjacent Township Hall Park.

Public Schools

Public schools of Homer Township are assigned a unique future land use category. This includes land owned and operated by Bullock Creek High School, Bullock Creek Middle School, and Pine River Elementary School. Public schools will account for approximately 133.5 acres, or about 1.0 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.



Parks

This future land use is assigned to all areas in the Township designated to providing active recreational opportunities. This includes three park facilities. The first of these is the approximately 32 acres of land covered by or adjacent to the existing Homer Township Park. Another is the approximately 17-acre private park south of the southeast corner of Isabella Road / M-20 and South 5 Mile Road. Parks will account for approximately 50 acres, or about 0.4 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township. The approximately 2.3-acre area adjacent to the Homer Township Hall, which includes a playground and a park, is categorized above under Public/Quasi-Public.



Industrial / Heavy Service Commercial

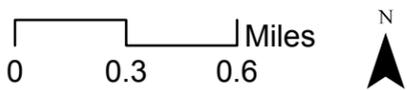
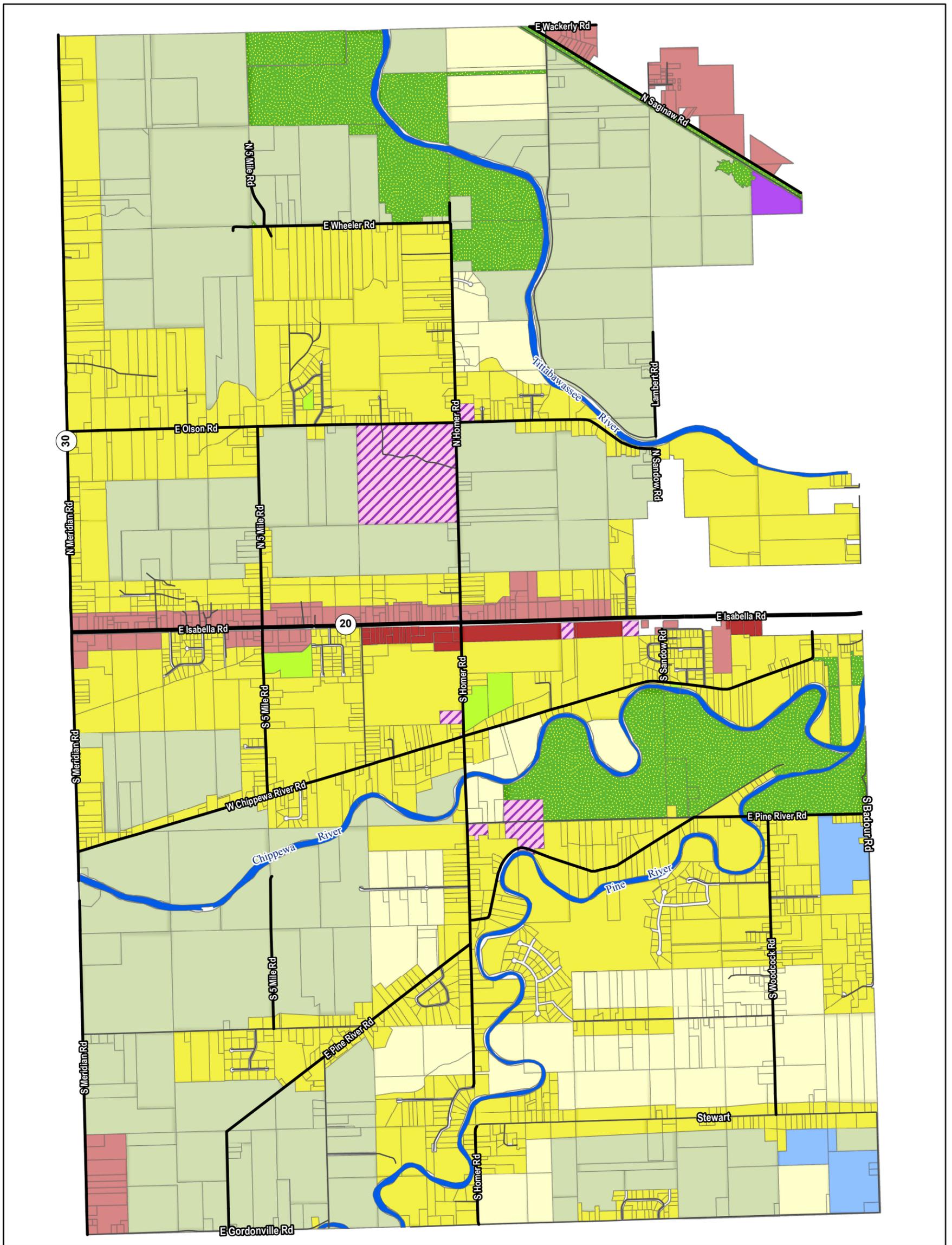
This future land use designation is intended to provide for traditional industrial and high-intensity commercial or land intensive uses. It corresponds to the Industrial (I) zoning district and the Heavy Service Commercial (HSC) zoning districts. Industrial and heavy commercial uses typically generate high amounts of truck traffic and as such, should be located away from residential uses in the Township. Industrial/heavy commercial use is proposed to be maintained at the northeastern edge of the Township along Saginaw Road. Industrial/heavy commercial

land will account for approximately 60.2 acres, or about 0.5 percent, of all future land use in Homer Township.

Conclusion

Homer Township has spent approximately a year addressing important issues impacting the community. The Township received valuable input from residents from an online community input survey, and the community input open house. As a result, the Planning Commission has compiled a thoughtfully prepared Master Plan that represents the data, efforts, and community spirit of Township residents. This plan is only the beginning of an action program for the next five to twenty years. Because the future welfare of the Township depends upon rational, coordinated action, the Planning Commission stands ready to meet any person or group interested in the future development of the area. The Planning Commission will be available to help and guide those needing advice or wish to be part of the plan implementation process. While this task is to be led by officials, implementation also depends on every responsible citizen in Homer Township. Through their cooperation, the Township will continue to be a desirable, attractive, and convenient community in which to live, work, and play.





This Future Land Use Map is a component of the Homer Township Master Plan, which was adopted by resolution of the Homer Township Planning Commission on September 8, 2014, and by the Homer Township Board of Trustees on September 17, 2014, by authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, after holding a public hearing for this Master Plan on September 8, 2014.

Sandra Simmons

Sandra Simmons
Chair
Planning Commission
Homer Township

Homer Township: Future Land Use

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Conservation Lands | | Rural Residential |
| | Parks | | Single-Family Residential |
| | Agricultural | | Neighborhood Service Commercial |
| | Public Schools | | Community Service Commercial |
| | Public / Quasi-Public | | Industrial / Heavy Service Commercial |

September 2014



Chapter 6

Action Program

The Vision for Homer Township

Determining the direction and desires for a community for the next five to twenty years can be a challenge. Being able to articulate what needs to be improved, what should be preserved, and what should be substantially changed is successful only when based on sound public participation and detailed analyses. In Homer Township, this goal-setting process was accomplished by a thorough review of existing characteristics in the Township, the results of the online input survey, and comments heard at the community input open house. Based upon this information, a number of goals were established. These goals are a major component of this Master Plan, which is intended to be the primary policy document for Township officials when considering matters related to land use, development proposals, and other community improvements.

Homer Township's goals are organized in the following chart and they relate directly to the issues identified as priorities by the residents and the Planning Commission. Goals for Homer Township address overall community character, residential land use, commercial land use, industrial land use, infrastructure, parks and recreation, and Township services to the community. After each goal, a number of action items are listed as well.

A **goal** is a destination, a final purpose which the community seeks to attain. It is a broad, general statement expressing the intent of the community. It is often written in a general way to be inclusive of many ideas that support principles that are valued by the local community.

An **action item** is the means for attaining a goal. One goal can have many supporting action items. Each action item can be thought of as an official task to help implement a corresponding goal, and should be directed and/or completed by a Homer Township official or employee.

The guiding force behind this Master Plan is the following goals and the action items, all of which have been designed to reflect the overall community vision for Homer Township. These goals serve as the guiding principle for future land use decisions by Township officials and can guide zoning decision and other land use questions that arise from time to time, such as resource protection initiatives and proposed new development.

Implementation Program	Start of Project			Leadership			Progress	
	Now 1-3 years	Soon 3-7 years	Later 7-10 years	Responsibility	Approvals Required	Requires Funding	Initial Below	
							Started	Completed

Goal: Maintain Homer Township's unique rural and natural community character.

<u>Action:</u> Support activities related to the Farmland & Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116).	X			PC, Board	Board, PC	No		
<u>Action:</u> Increase enforcement of ordinances related to blight.	X			ZA, Board	Board	Yes		

Goal: Allow and maintain attractive residential neighborhoods which contain a suitable mix of housing types.

<u>Action:</u> New residential development embodies sound community design and is consistent with existing community character.		X		PC	Board	No		
<u>Action:</u> Work to eliminate blight and sub-standard housing conditions by continuing to enforce existing ordinances.	X			ZA	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Encourage senior housing and assisted living housing to meet the needs of the aging population.		X		PC, Board	Board	No		

Goal: Promote well-planned development and redevelopment of commercial properties along M-20 with high-quality uses that expand the commercial options available in Homer Township, when appropriate infrastructure is available.

<u>Action:</u> Target M-20 as the main commercial destination for commercial services in Homer Township.		X		PC, ZA, Board	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Develop a 3-year plan to identify types of commercial developments suitable for Homer Township, along with potential sites and a means of attracting them.	X			PC, ZA, Board	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Explore the serving of wine/beer at established resaturants (excludes bars and night clubs).	X			Board	Board	No		

Goal: Maintain Homer Township's existing industry while expanding the industrial tax base with diverse, clean, and high-tech businesses.

<u>Action:</u> Develop a 3-year plan to identify types of industrial developments suitable for Homer Township, along with potential sites and a means of attracting them.	X			PC, ZA, Board	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Work with the State of Michigan in order to access any incentive programs that can strengthen local industrial, technology, and commercial operations and help create and/or retain local jobs.	X			PC, Board, Super	Board	No		

Key:

PC - Planning Commission, **Board** - Homer Township Board of Trustees, **Super** - Township Supervisor, **ZA** - Zoning Administrator, **MDOT** - Michigan Department of Transportation

Implementation Program	Start of Project			Leadership			Progress	
	Now 1-3 years	Soon 3-7 years	Later 7-10 years	Responsibility	Approvals Required	Requires Funding	Initial Below	
							Started	Completed

Goal: Provide quality infrastructure to safely and effectively service the residents of Homer Township.

<u>Action:</u> Meet the infrastructure needs of residents and businesses in a cost-effective manner.		X		Board	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Re-establish a water committee to explore obtaining more water, primarily along M-20, and explore sewer.	X			Board	Board	YEs		

Goal: Provide a system of parks and recreational opportunities that improves the quality-of-life for Homer Township's residents, as well as providing benefits to regional users of area parks and natural features.

<u>Action:</u> Preserve the quality of life in Homer Township by supporting and promoting significant recreational and educational amenities within the community.		X		Board	Board	No		
<u>Action:</u> Protect, enhance, and promote the recreational and environmental value of the Township's rivers.		X		Board	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Protect the quality of area rivers from the harmful impacts of development while at the same time promoting them as one of the Township's greatest assets.			X	Board	Board	No		
<u>Action:</u> Establish a parks committee and develop a parks plan.	X			Board	Board	Yes		

Goal: Provide quality, responsive, and cost effective services to the community.

<u>Action:</u> Explore moving Township offices and making the current hall into a larger hall rental area.		X		Board, Super	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Work with MDOT to plan future improvements to M-20 and seek funding of potential projects, including possible pathways (Transportation Alternatives Program grant program).			X	Board, Super	Board, MDOT	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Collaborate with the City on addressing any future needs for infrastructure.	X			Board, Super	Board	No		
<u>Action:</u> Improve public access to Township news and information.		X		Board	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Improve Township cemetery records and mapping.	X			Board, Super	Board	Yes		
<u>Action:</u> Improve public access to Township cemetery information.	X			Board	Board	Yes		

Key:

PC - Planning Commission, **Board** - Homer Township Board of Trustees, **Super** - Township Supervisor, **ZA** - Zoning Administrator, **MDOT** - Michigan Department of Transportation

Additional Implementation Considerations

The key to a well-planned community is the actual day-to-day use of planning documents, like this Master Plan. Because this plan is to be the basis for future zoning and planning decisions, it is imperative that the plan be available to Homer Township staff, elected and appointed officials, as well as business owners, developers, stakeholders from Midland County and the region, and the general public.

The implementation of this Master Plan depends on its continual use by the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees. In its best form, implementation of this plan will result in the achievement of the goals. Implementation is often the most difficult portion of the planning process because while the intentions of the Township and its residents and stakeholders are clear, the legal ways and available planning tools are often not. The following provides a review of additional tools available to Homer Township and the ways in which they can be used to ensure that the goals of this plan are met. The following tools can help ensure the continued progress toward the implementation of this plan.

Zoning Changes and Ordinance Updates With a new Master Plan in place, the Township has an opportunity to update its current zoning ordinance to reflect the goals adopted in this plan. Many of the changes may be minor but provide a substantial benefit. For example, one change may be to revise the kinds of permitted uses in commercial districts in order to provide clarity on what can be built on M-20 and other locations with the Township. Another change may be larger in scope, which takes a look at how the zoning ordinance is actually used and then finding ways to make it more a user-friendly document through the use of graphics and images. Another step may be to review the cases that have come before the Planning Commission to determine if there are trends that may need to be addressed in the zoning ordinance itself.

Grant Opportunities to Support Proposed Capital Improvements This Master Plan can also be used to identify potential funding sources to support proposed capital improvement projects, such as grant and loan programs to help fund priorities. At the Federal level, there is the Housing and Community Facilities Programs, the Public Works and Economic Development Program, and the Water and Wastewater Disposal and Grant Program, to name a few. At the State level, a potential funding source may be the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which offers grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Michigan Natural resources Trust Fund. The Michigan Department of Transportation also administers Federal funds appropriated under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (Public Law 112–141, MAP-21). Additionally, local funding programs, as initiated by Homer Township, such as a special assessment, can also be used for infrastructure projects.

Regional Cooperation Development, growth, and changes within Midland County as well as Saginaw and Bay Counties, will affect its quality of life and growth within the Township itself. Communities near Homer Township have experienced a variety of changes – some experiencing growth and others experiencing a loss of population and declining housing value. Homer

Township is rightly concerned with the effect that these changes can have on the Township. The Township has the opportunity to pursue cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with all the surrounding communities and Midland County. Cooperative relationships between and among Homer Township and neighboring communities can provide an opportunity for the full impact of new or expanding developments to be considered as well as provide an opportunity for communities to pool resources and skills to tackle similar challenges. At the least, Homer Township should actively participate with the review and opportunity for comment on neighboring communities Master Plans. Further, the Township should invite comment and suggestions from neighboring communities on major developments within Homer Township.

Local Planning Capacity Good planning practice and State law require the Township to review its plan every five years and update it if necessary. A cursory review of the plan should take place annually by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees. This provides an opportunity to consider the goals and intent of the plan against pending capital improvements, budget requests, and other developments that may impact the community. Homer Township provides important planning and development services with limited staff. When change confronts the community, it will be necessary to review the time and effort expended by the staff to address development proposals. Adjustments in fees and changes in the application processes may be necessary in order to cover the costs associated with new or expanding development.

Additional Implementation Tasks Many of the steps necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this Master Plan might not be obvious or are not part of an established Township fund. The implementation efforts that have been described in this section focus on the residents, landowners, and other stakeholders in Homer Township. To date, Homer Township has taken steps to keep residents and others involved and informed regarding Township issues. The successful implementation of this plan depends greatly on Township officials using the plan and residents being aware of the plan, knowing its purpose, and understanding how they might be able to use it. This can be accomplished by consistently referring to the document when making zoning decisions and even referencing the plan, when appropriate, during site plan reviews and variance decisions. Further, the Township should keep a copy of the Future Land Use Map on display and make provide a copy of the plan for review at the Township Hall at all times.

Appendix A

Additional Demographic Information

Table 1- Total Population for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County. *Data Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.*

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	3,924	4,009	2.17%
Edenville Township	2,528	2,551	0.91%
Geneva Township	1,137	1,056	-7.12%
Greendale Township	1,788	1,751	-2.07%
Hope Township	1,286	1,361	5.83%
Ingersoll Township	3,018	2,751	-8.85%
Jasper Township	1,145	1,180	3.06%
Jerome Township	4,888	4,796	-1.88%
Larkin Township	4,514	5,136	13.78%
Lee Township	4,411	4,315	-2.18%
Lincoln Township	2,277	2,474	8.65%
Midland Township	2,297	2,287	-0.44%
Mills Township	1,871	1,939	3.63%
Mount Haley Township	1,654	1,678	1.45%
Porter Township	1,270	1,277	0.55%
Warren Township	2,107	2,119	0.57%
Midland City	41,463	41,706	0.59%
Coleman City	1,296	1,243	-4.09%
Sanford Village	943	859	-8.91%

Table 2- The Median Age for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County. *Data Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.*

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	37.3	42.3	13.4%
Edenville Township	39.4	45.3	15.0%
Geneva Township	38.5	45.1	17.1%
Greendale Township	32.5	39.3	20.9%
Hope Township	41.3	46.2	11.9%
Ingersoll Township	38.2	41.8	9.4%
Jasper Township	35.6	40.9	14.9%
Jerome Township	38.5	44.3	15.1%
Larkin Township	36.7	42.0	14.4%
Lee Township	32.1	38.6	20.2%
Lincoln Township	35.8	44.4	24.0%
Midland Township	34.8	40.3	15.8%
Mills Township	34.6	39.6	14.5%
Mount Haley Township	36.4	41.0	12.6%
Porter Township	35.8	40.4	12.8%
Warren Township	36.4	43.2	18.7%
Midland City	36.2	38.3	5.8%
Coleman City	34.5	36.4	5.5%
Sanford Village	39.3	43.6	10.9%

Table 3- Total Households for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County. *2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.*

	2000	2010	Change from 2000 to 2010
Homer Township	1,424	1,521	6.8%
Edenville Township	988	1,016	2.8%
Geneva Township	436	440	0.9%
Greendale Township	616	657	6.7%
Hope Township	508	557	9.6%
Ingersoll Township	1,067	1,017	-4.7%
Jasper Township	418	444	6.2%
Jerome Township	1,920	1,955	1.8%
Larkin Township	1,502	1,772	18.0%
Lee Township	1,514	1,574	4.0%
Lincoln Township	838	1,004	19.8%
Midland Township	847	866	2.2%
Mills Township	659	705	7.0%
Mount Haley Township	616	634	2.9%
Porter Township	460	484	5.2%
Warren Township	769	823	7.0%
Midland City	16,648	17,435	4.7%
Coleman City	539	533	-1.1%
Sanford Village	382	369	-3.4%

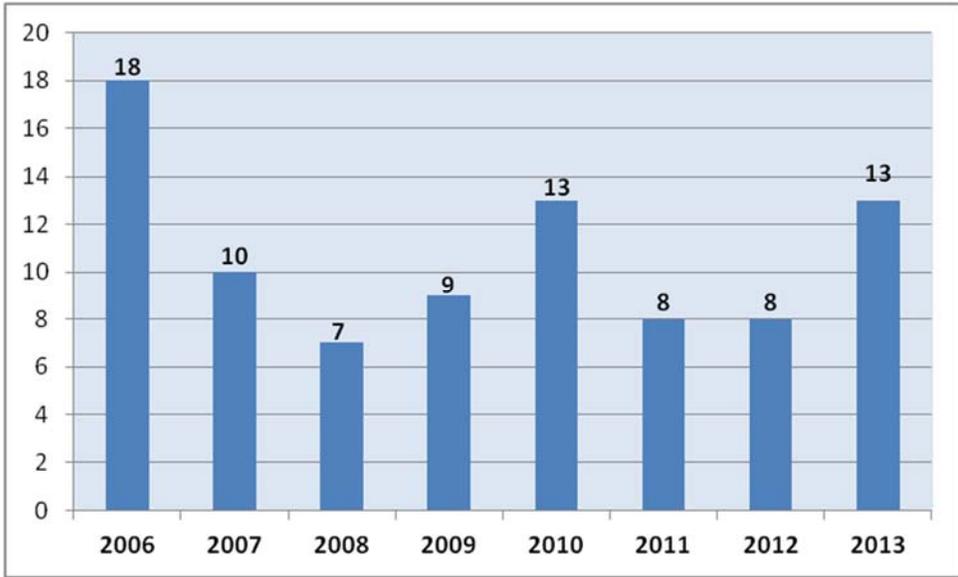


Figure 1. New Single-Family Dwellings for 2006-2013 in Homer Township. *Data Source: Kevin Varner, Township Building Inspector.*

Table 4- Average Household Size for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County. *Data Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.*

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	2.71	2.60	-4.1%
Edenville Township	2.56	2.51	-2.0%
Geneva Township	2.61	2.40	-8.0%
Greendale Township	2.90	2.66	-8.3%
Hope Township	2.53	2.44	-3.6%
Ingersoll Township	2.70	2.67	-1.1%
Jasper Township	2.74	2.66	-2.9%
Jerome Township	2.55	2.45	-3.9%
Larkin Township	3.00	2.90	-3.3%
Lee Township	2.90	2.73	-5.9%
Lincoln Township	2.72	2.46	-9.6%
Midland Township	2.71	2.64	-2.6%
Mills Township	2.83	2.75	-2.8%
Mount Haley Township	2.69	2.65	-1.5%
Porter Township	2.75	2.64	-4.0%
Warren Township	2.73	2.57	-5.9%
Midland City	2.42	2.33	-3.7%
Coleman City	2.40	2.33	-2.9%
Sanford Village	2.47	2.33	-5.7%

Table 5- Percent of Vacant Housing Units for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County. *Data Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.*

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	3.1%	4.5%	1.4%
Edenville Township	15.7%	21.6%	5.9%
Geneva Township	7.0%	10.0%	3.0%
Greendale Township	4.6%	9.8%	5.2%
Hope Township	15.9%	17.5%	1.6%
Ingersoll Township	3.6%	6.4%	2.8%
Jasper Township	4.1%	8.3%	4.2%
Jerome Township	8.2%	8.7%	0.5%
Larkin Township	2.6%	3.4%	0.8%
Lee Township	6.7%	6.5%	-0.2%
Lincoln Township	4.8%	5.9%	1.1%
Midland Township	3.3%	3.8%	0.5%
Mills Township	4.4%	6.3%	1.9%
Mount Haley Township	3.9%	5.9%	2.0%
Porter Township	4.8%	6.7%	1.9%
Warren Township	6.1%	8.8%	2.7%
Midland City	5.8%	5.7%	-0.1%
Coleman City	7.4%	16.7%	9.3%
Sanford Village	6.1%	10.0%	3.9%

Table 6- Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County.
Data Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	89.5%	90.0%	0.5%
Edenville Township	90.3%	89.6%	-0.7%
Geneva Township	89.9%	89.8%	-0.1%
Greendale Township	85.9%	84.8%	-1.1%
Hope Township	91.5%	93.2%	1.7%
Ingersoll Township	83.3%	89.6%	6.3%
Jasper Township	90.9%	88.7%	-2.2%
Jerome Township	88.2%	86.8%	-1.4%
Larkin Township	94.9%	94.2%	-0.7%
Lee Township	81.6%	81.9%	0.3%
Lincoln Township	84.2%	87.3%	3.1%
Midland Township	91.5%	93.6%	2.1%
Mills Township	89.5%	89.8%	0.3%
Mount Haley Township	92.0%	90.7%	-1.3%
Porter Township	89.6%	91.3%	1.7%
Warren Township	92.5%	88.5%	-4.0%
Midland City	69.7%	67.0%	-2.7%
Coleman City	71.4%	59.7%	-11.7%
Sanford Village	83.2%	78.0%	-5.2%

Table 7- Percent of Renter-Occupied Housing Units for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County.
Data Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	10.5%	10.0%	-0.5%
Edenville Township	9.7%	10.4%	0.7%
Geneva Township	10.1%	10.2%	0.1%
Greendale Township	14.1%	15.2%	1.1%
Hope Township	8.5%	6.8%	-1.7%
Ingersoll Township	16.7%	10.4%	-6.3%
Jasper Township	9.1%	11.3%	2.2%
Jerome Township	11.8%	13.2%	1.4%
Larkin Township	5.1%	5.8%	0.7%
Lee Township	18.4%	18.1%	-0.3%
Lincoln Township	15.8%	12.7%	-3.1%
Midland Township	8.5%	6.4%	-2.1%
Mills Township	10.5%	10.2%	-0.3%
Mount Haley Township	8.0%	9.3%	1.3%
Porter Township	10.4%	8.7%	-1.7%
Warren Township	7.5%	11.5%	4.0%
Midland City	30.5%	33.0%	2.5%
Coleman City	28.6%	40.3%	11.7%
Sanford Village	16.8%	22.0%	5.2%

Table 8- Percent of the Population with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County.
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 data estimated from the 2011 ACS.

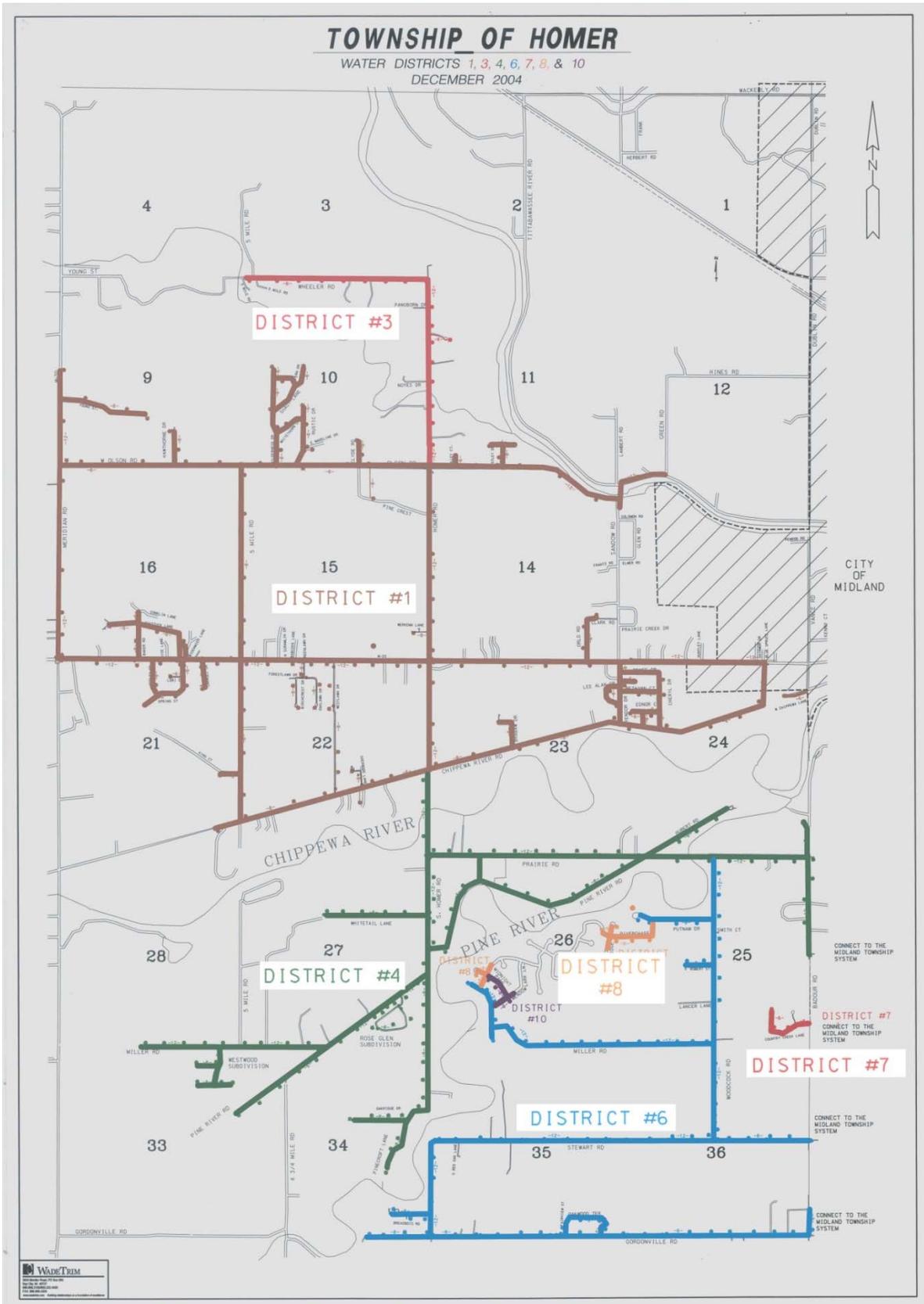
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	21.2%	26.2%	5.0%
Edenville Township	15.7%	20.3%	4.6%
Geneva Township	8.8%	14.2%	5.4%
Greendale Township	5.8%	12.3%	6.5%
Hope Township	14.7%	16.7%	2.0%
Ingersoll Township	18.1%	25.2%	7.1%
Jasper Township	8.1%	9.5%	1.4%
Jerome Township	14.0%	22.6%	8.6%
Larkin Township	39.7%	50.3%	10.6%
Lee Township	12.3%	17.3%	5.0%
Lincoln Township	17.1%	16.2%	-0.9%
Midland Township	18.1%	26.5%	8.4%
Mills Township	11.7%	10.6%	-1.1%
Mount Haley Township	11.9%	16.0%	4.1%
Porter Township	6.6%	7.2%	0.6%
Warren Township	11.3%	8.0%	-3.3%
Midland City	42.0%	42.5%	0.5%
Coleman City	5.7%	9.4%	3.7%
Sanford Village	23.9%	18.4%	-5.5%

Table 9- Median Household Income for 2000 and 2010 in Midland County. *Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 data estimated from the 2011 ACS.*

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change from 2000 to 2010</u>
Homer Township	\$51,029	\$55,556	8.9%
Edenville Township	\$46,118	\$51,466	11.6%
Geneva Township	\$43,906	\$46,875	6.8%
Greendale Township	\$36,776	\$48,500	31.9%
Hope Township	\$50,365	\$51,250	1.8%
Ingersoll Township	\$55,050	\$59,063	7.3%
Jasper Township	\$47,656	\$44,375	-6.9%
Jerome Township	\$45,234	\$50,813	12.3%
Larkin Township	\$80,177	\$97,969	22.2%
Lee Township	\$36,518	\$50,396	38.0%
Lincoln Township	\$42,167	\$55,938	32.7%
Midland Township	\$50,327	\$59,583	18.4%
Mills Township	\$40,530	\$51,302	26.6%
Mount Haley Township	\$42,321	\$68,333	61.5%
Porter Township	\$37,315	\$55,000	47.4%
Warren Township	\$40,063	\$55,104	37.5%
Midland City	\$48,632	\$50,286	3.4%
Coleman City	\$36,544	\$31,875	-12.8%
Sanford Village	\$39,063	\$51,397	31.6%

Appendix B

Water Districts

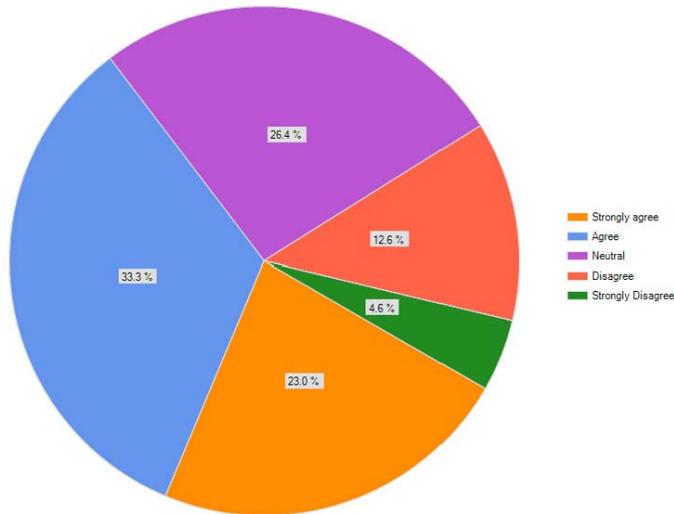


Appendix C

Community Input Documentation

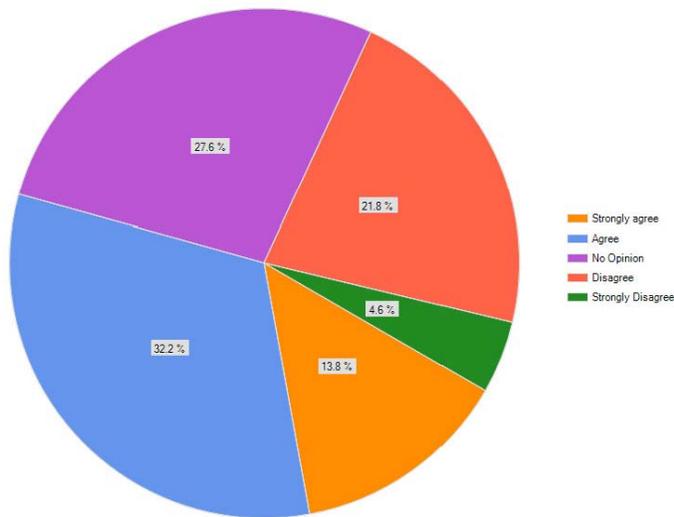
Homer Township Master Plan: Survey Results | June 28, 2013 | 92 Respondents

1. Homer Township should encourage new development



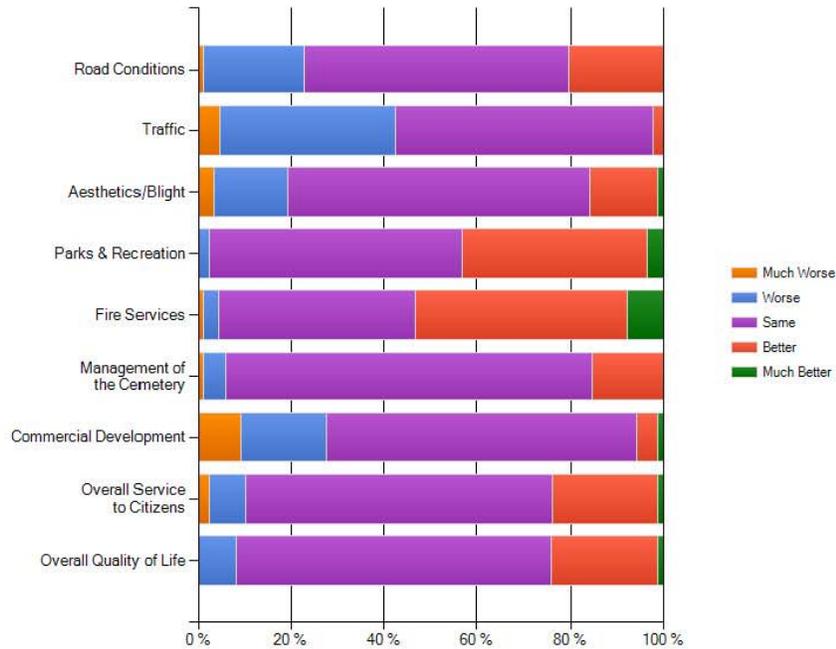
answered question: 87 | skipped question: 5

2. Homer Township should grow in population



answered question: 87 | skipped question: 5

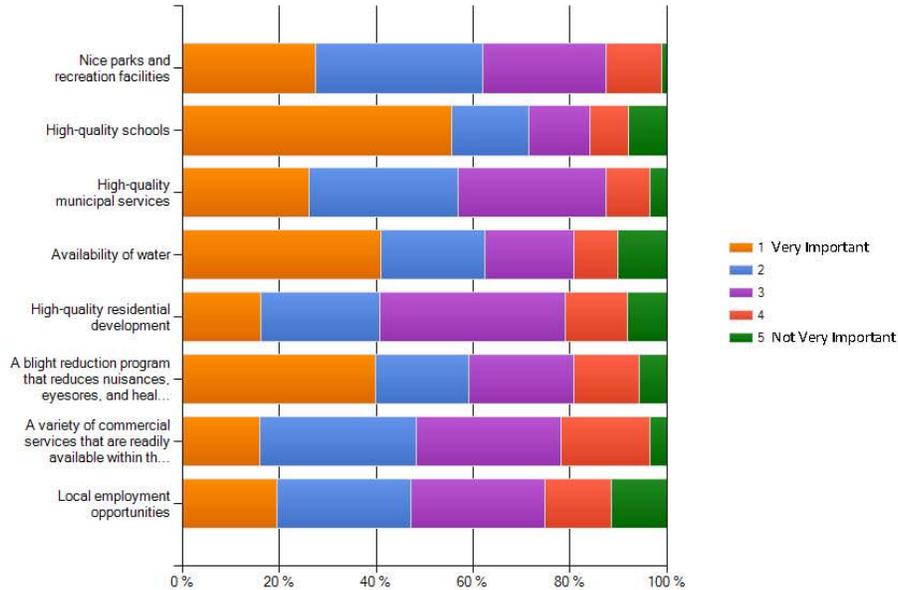
3. In the following categories, how do you feel Homer Township has changed in the past 5 years?



	Much Worse		Worse		Same		Better		Much Better		Response Count
Road Conditions	1	1.1%	19	21.6%	50	56.8%	18	20.5%	0	0.0%	88
Traffic	4	4.8%	33	37.9%	48	55.2%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	87
Aesthetics/Blight	3	3.4%	14	15.9%	57	64.8%	13	14.8%	1	1.1%	88
Parks & Recreation	0	0.0%	2	2.3%	48	54.5%	35	39.8%	3	3.4%	88
Fire Services	1	1.1%	3	3.3%	38	42.2%	41	45.8%	7	7.8%	90
Management of the Cemetery	1	1.2%	4	4.8%	88	78.6%	13	15.5%	0	0.0%	84
Commercial Development	8	9.2%	18	18.4%	58	66.7%	4	4.6%	1	1.1%	87
Overall Service to Citizens	2	2.3%	7	8.0%	58	65.9%	20	22.7%	1	1.1%	88
Overall Quality of Life	0	0.0%	7	8.0%	59	67.8%	20	23.0%	1	1.1%	87

answered question: 90 | skipped question: 2

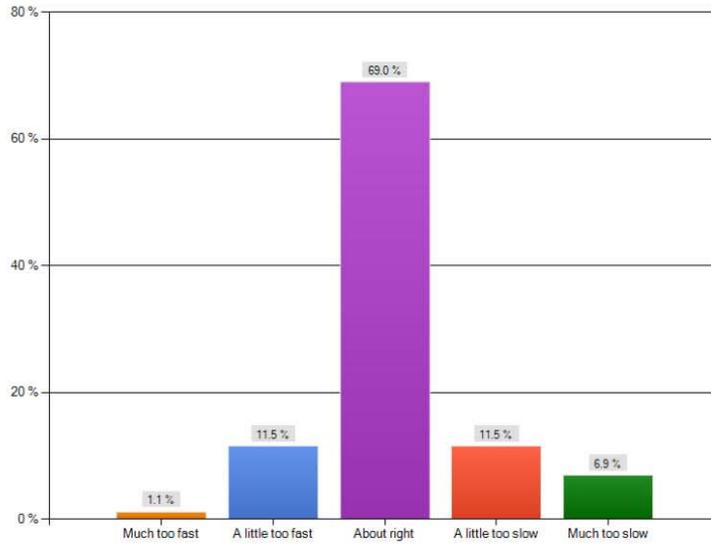
4. Please rank each of the following factors in terms of its importance to the quality of life in Homer Township. "1" is considered very important and "5" is not very important.



	1 Very Important		2		3		4		5 Not Very		Response Count
Nice parks and recreation facilities	24	27.6%	30	34.5%	22	25.3%	10	11.5%	1	1.1%	87
High-quality Schools	49	55.7%	14	15.9%	11	12.5%	7	8.0%	7	8.0%	88
High-quality municipal services	23	26.1%	27	30.7%	27	30.7%	8	9.1%	3	3.4%	88
Availability of water	36	40.9%	19	21.6%	18	18.2%	8	9.1%	9	10.2%	88
High-quality residential development	14	16.3%	21	24.4%	33	38.4%	11	12.8%	7	8.1%	86
A blight reduction program that reduces nuisances, eyesores, and health or safety hazards	35	39.8%	17	19.3%	19	21.6%	12	13.8%	5	5.7%	88
A variety of commercial services that are readily available within the community	14	16.1%	28	32.2%	26	29.9%	16	18.4%	3	3.4%	87
Local employment opportunities	17	19.5%	24	27.6%	24	27.6%	12	13.8%	10	11.5%	87

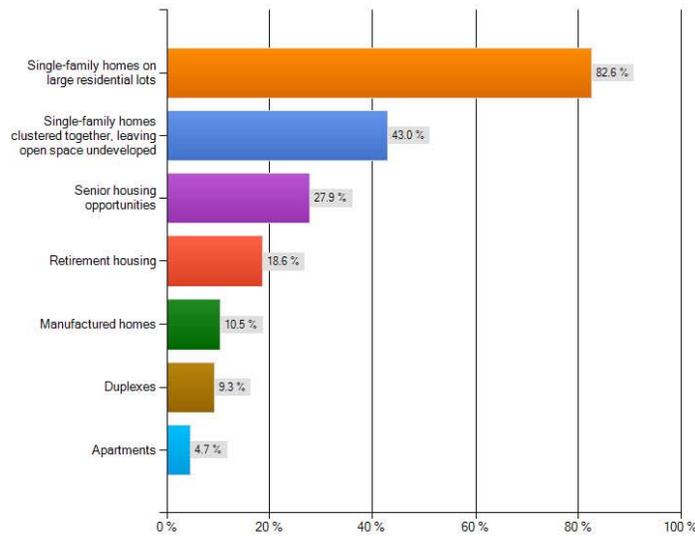
answered question: 88 | skipped question: 4

5. How do you feel about the rate of residential growth in Homer Township during the past five years?



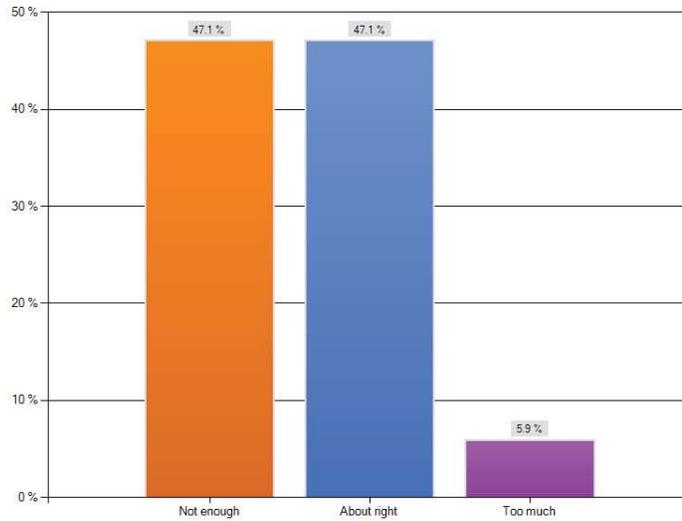
answered question: 87 | skipped question: 5

6. I prefer that new residential development include the following (please check all that apply):



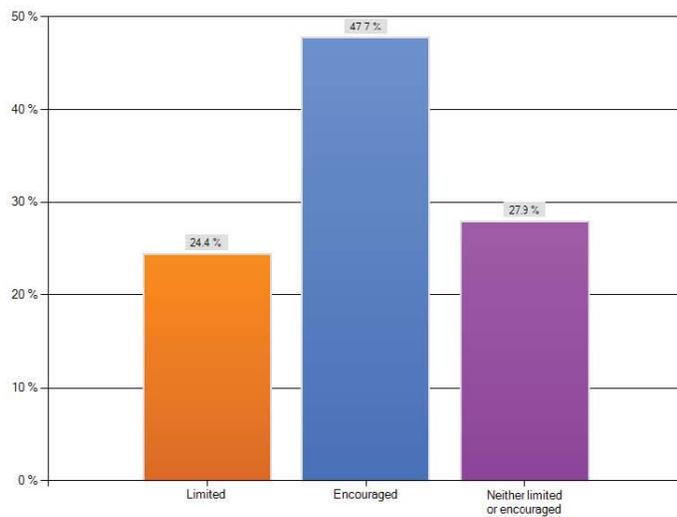
answered question: 86 | skipped question: 6

7. Which describes how you view the amount of commercial (retail and service) businesses in Homer Township?



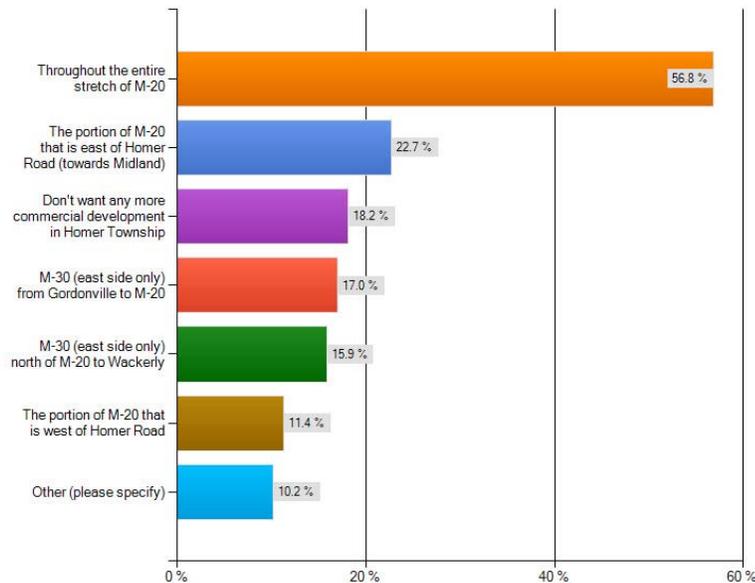
answered question: 85 | skipped question: 7

8. In the next ten years, commercial growth in Homer Township should be:



answered question: 86 | skipped question: 6

9. Future commercial development should be located: (Please check all that apply.)

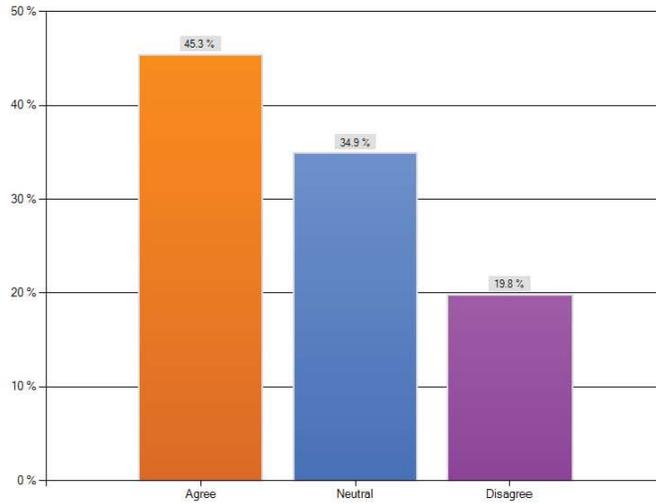


Other (please specify) – 9 total responses:

- M-20 traffic flow volume and speed is not friendly for business.
- E M-20 - like "uncluttered" open space with farm acreage, churches, 1016 residence, 1 grocery, residential. W M-20 to Meridian- too much eye sore, blight, too many car junk, sales, detailing, etc.!! Add more variety=dry cleaners, bakery, fresh produce, a car wash.
- N. Saginaw Rd.?
- Homer has a reputation as highly discouraging and even disparaging toward small business. The only ones successful here are the ones willing to thumb their noses at the board.
- Have been a resident since 2002 and am beyond frustrated with the lack of commercial resources on M-20. Have to drive 10 miles into Midland and have never had any idea why these conveniences aren't available. Things that are heavily a desired: 1) Coffee shop (a real one, not a half-assed one like the recent attempt across from Family Life Radio), 2) A real grocery store; 3) drug store. I'm not one usually for "chain" anything. But the low brow mentality and constant visuals of storage unit after storage unit, used auto, a Dollar store etc., Homer Township just screams "white trash". I am in the Spring Street area and there are 3 houses in my neighborhood for sale. People who are looking or have found better housing and the convenience of being closer to town.
- No preference
- Need to make use of the commercial property that already exists.
- It just seems that we are getting the same services but being taxed out of the township ...
- If there is to be commercial growth, it should be limited. Homer Township has always been a small community where we all know each other. It is in country setting and that's why we all like it. We don't want it to be filled with businesses. We can drive into town for that. We have farms and open land for a reason. Instead of changing in all into buildings, turn it into nature park or a small campground.

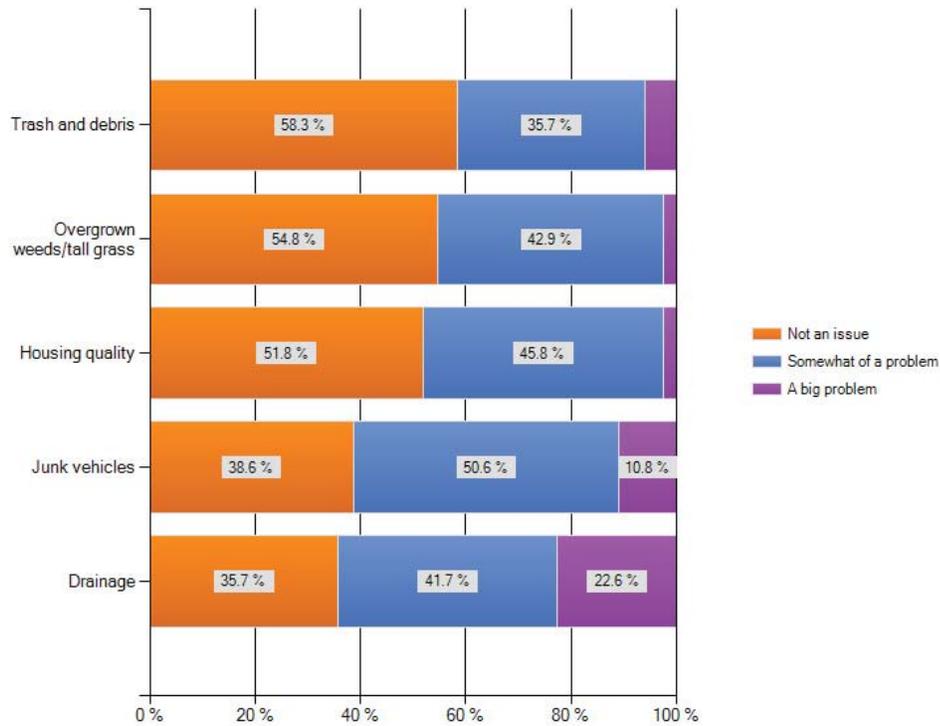
answered question: 88 | skipped question: 4

10. I favor industrial development that will be built near existing industrial land uses already operating in the Township.



answered question: 86 | skipped question: 6

11. What is your opinion regarding the extent of the following issues in Homer Township?

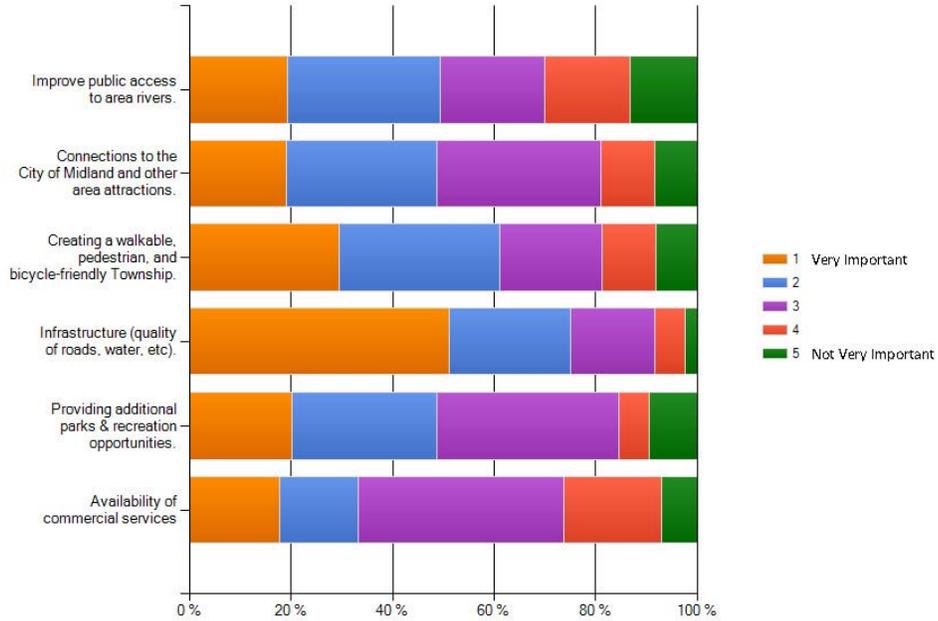


Other (please specify) – 6 total responses:

- Tall grass and weeds should be removed so fire hydrants can be easily located.
- Ditches and along road sides having debris removed/animal carcasses removed in a timely manner. ditches mowed
- I can't understand why we have ditches so choked with fauna that they don't operate properly. We try our best to clean them out on our property. But the guy next to us actually plants stuff in his: which causes problems.
- Need to develop higher quality commercial stores on m20 in existing structures.
- I think you pay for the property you should do as you wish with it as long as behind a fence ...and not seen by neighbors the government local or state has their noses way too far into people's affairs
- No city water on Saginaw Rd.

answered question: 85 | skipped question: 7

12. How important is each of the following issues when considering the future of Homer Township? "1" is considered very important and "5" is not very important.



	1 Very Important		2		3		4		5 Not Very		Response Count
Improve public access to area rivers	16	19.3%	25	30.1%	17	20.5%	14	16.9%	11	13.3%	83
Connections to the City of Midland and other area attractions	16	19.0%	25	29.8%	27	32.1%	9	10.7%	7	8.3%	84
Creating a walkable, pedestrian, and bicycle-friendly Township	25	29.4%	27	31.8%	17	20.0%	9	10.6%	7	8.2%	85
Infrastructure (quality of roads, water, etc.)	43	51.2%	20	23.8%	14	16.7%	5	6.0%	2	2.4%	84
Providing additional parks and recreation	17	20.2%	24	28.6%	30	35.7%	5	6.0%	8	9.5%	84
Availability of commercial services	15	17.9%	13	15.5%	34	40.5%	16	19.0%	6	7.1%	84

answered question: 85 | skipped question: 7

13. What do you like best about Homer Township?

Main Ideas

Small and quiet, friendly community.

Like the rural setting.

Like the community.

Like the country life that is close to a city.

Natural areas are an asset.

All Comments

- Born, lived, and retired -age 87; access to city and medical center
 - only 5 miles to hospital, to bank, Main St., pharmacy, and still live in countryside.
 - it is a 4 generation Homestead for my family
- Layed-back country folk with half a brain and pride.
- Resembles a small village.
- In the country but near the city.
- Good Safe Community -
- Rural setting. Still a farm community. Friendliness of neighbors.
- Easy access to Midland and Sanford.
- The open areas, the residents, the living conditions.
- We chose Homer and not the city because we did not want to live under the constant whim of local government. From time to time, Homer has had leadership that's forgotten it's place. At the same time, we've had members who were passionate about seeing good things happen in the community and we're all for that. It's our opinion that opening the township to job creation means working with local business owners to rehabilitate dehabilitated buildings and lots to bring real opportunities. As it stands, all of the insinuations in this survey are leaning toward plans that the township clearly cannot yet afford. Working with local business can change that.
- There are enough regulations to keep things clean and safe but overall I'm allowed to live my life and do what I want to on my own property. Lots of open spaces and trees. The birds wake me up and the frogs put me to sleep-not the sounds of cars and trucks.
- Quiet country living with easy access to downtown amenities
- Rural setting where I live but still very close to Midland.
- It is a great rural area close to the city. Please do not let the city limits move any farther and consume more of Homer Township.
- It is family friendly and neighborly. People move there and stay. People know their neighbors. We (mostly) don't mind driving in to town for most things and I at least like the residential quality of the area. We have a couple small stores to buy essentials and that's good enough for me.
- Chippewa Nature Center, Howl-A-Day, Little Forks Conservancy property off of Wackerly, Annabelle's Own, Windover
- Generally nice residential areas with good people, easy access to town
- It is country living, rentals & apartments are virtually a non issue.
- Small, rural-based community.
- rural environment
- Country living with big city stores and easy access nearby
- slower pace, mix of residential and agricultural land
- Friendly community
- The proximity to Midland for access to commercial services and employment, but is still rural without the city rules. We enjoy a large lot with garden, woods, and space between our neighbors.
- Rural Feel
- Connection with midland schools; nature center; community.
- Small groupings of homes that have a "village neighborhood" feel.
- close to City of Midland; keep taxes low
- I feel safe

Survey Results for the Homer Township Master Plan – Page 10 of 15

- It's a quiet community. When I come home I enjoy being able to sit back and enjoy the open spaces.
- It's not over crowded, rural living that is not to commercial.
- City water, trash service and fire department
- Small town feel
- Small feel, friendly, rural, pride
- It's peaceful.
- The community
- Great fire training center. Nice park.
- Parks, ball diamonds, northernly feel, friendly people.
- Being close to Midland to take advantages of restaurants and businesses, but living in a area that is not a overcrowded city.
- We have the "country" feel but are close enough to the convinces of city of Midland.
- It's rural and quiet
- The woods, creeks and rivers. I grew up playing and riding my bike in the woods, finding sledding hills in the winter. Playing in the creeks and swimming in the rivers. It was an excellent way to grow up and I want my children to grow up in that environment.
- I like that it's a close knit community. I grew up in Homer Township and I know almost everyone that lives there. We have a lot of woodland and it's nice and quite.
- Rural & Residential, little Govt interference, low traffic, low population density

answered question: 44 | skipped question: 48

14. What is the one thing you would do to improve Homer Township?

Main Ideas

Improve available commercial services.
Need more restaurants.
Develop M-20 appropriately.
Parks improvements.
Infrastructure improvements.
Need better property maintenance.

All Comments

- elect public officials knowledgeable about contemporary issues.
- elect township officials that are knowledgeable, have good intellect, have common sense, have skills in conducting public and private meetings, have interest of the people and the community, with less political bias.
- Help encourage residents and commercial growth.
- More small restaurants along M-20 (McDonald's, Wendy's, etc.)
- Improve the park.
- Make sure everyone does their part in keeping their property clean - grass mowed to help everyone else's property value and to just keep up the image of Homer Township.
- I would like to see the parks improved for the benefit of our seniors. A nice walking trail with benches along the way. The park seems so congested in the front. Too close to the road
- Clean up yards, mow tall grass, remove debris.
- Avoid any more permits for substandard housing.
- The traffic conditions.
- Create worthwhile, long term partnerships between the community and the businesses who want to serve it. Understand that we know that you are good people on this board: but you're simply SO out of touch that you don't generate a great deal of enthusiasm, and the outward appearance is that any contact with the township will be adversarial. Time to fix that.
- We're starting to see "regulation creep". I hope you don't start making all kinds of new laws just because some people think every action or activity needs a rule to go with it. I hope development is kept to a minimum. When I want the easy convenience of the city I'll move to the city. I love the "flavor" of Homer Township
- Add sewer service
- Types of commercial businesses that right now are only north of Midland (Eastman Ave).
- I like the idea of affordable senior housing. If seniors need assistance at least they wouldn't have to move do far from "home" and friends and neighbors would be closer than town.
- Get a good grocery store
- Clean up junk houses/stuff
- Keep small, no more commercial growth
- Less business on M-20.
- Get rid of billboards.
- More stores and restaurants on M-20. The planning for future maintenance and upkeep of Twsp Equipment. Better roads and services
- Increase and diversify commercial development which means access to city water. Identify type(s) of commercial development residents want and then seek them out and assist them in locating in the township.
- A New Hall and another bridge access to the city so you don't have to always go downtown or take M-30 through Sanford to go into town.
- Improve the conveniences on M-20 as mentioned earlier, and lure businesses that don't make M-20 look like such a dumpy wasteland.
- Too many folks do not care about the appearance of their property
- The width of roads makes using them somewhat hazardous for both motorists and pedestrians. Houses aren't that far off of the roads typically and motorists typically speed. Residents can't safely use the roads for pedestrian activities, bicycling, etc without accepting the risk to their

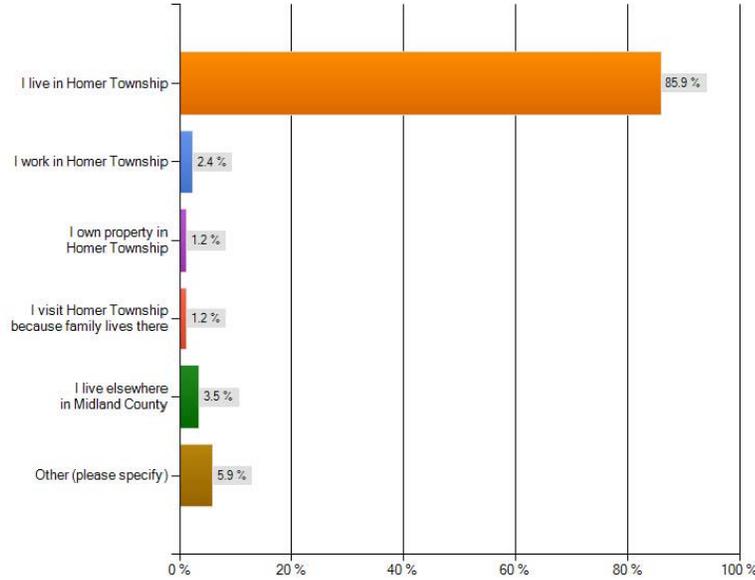
Survey Results for the Homer Township Master Plan – Page 12 of 15

safety.

- Blight reduction
- Higher quality commercial development on M20.
- Safer walking space on the side of roads with better tall weed management.
- Put a bridge at Sandow Rd to give quicker and shorter access to the mall area .
- no big changes; keep government small and taxes low, I like the rural feel
- I think we need a grocery store on 20 along with a few more restaurants.
- Traffic has become a real problem walking or riding your bike on Chippewa and Homer roads, feels downright dangerous cars fly down these narrow roads!!! Yet we need to walk and ride our bikes to stay fit and reduce pollution...
- improve quality of roads
- City sewer system
- Grocery store
- ??????
- Spray park. Update park equipment. More community events.
- Good Roads, clear out blight areas.
- Take a look at how we can offer services that are not offered in Midland, become a compliment to Midland. I feel the park is a great attraction to the area, how can the township benefit from the park? How can we take this park to the next level and offer complimentary services to the park? What about picking up the Pig Gig event? Sounds like Bay City is dropping the event, can the township make it a continued success?
- Improve recreation
- Access to the river. It's hard to get to the river, without driving into town. All of the property surrounding it on the side Homer Township is on, is owned by private parties and you can't get to the river without getting in trouble. It's unfair. The property across from Noyes Drive should be purchased by the county and turned into a campground and river access. I think it would be a WONDERFUL idea and it could bring in a lot of money. I got one, would be there all the time fishing.
- Fire Service response time
- More commercial business along M20 only
- More access to city water

answered question: 45 | skipped question: 47

15. Which of the following best describes your primary relationship to Homer Township? (Please select one choice below.)

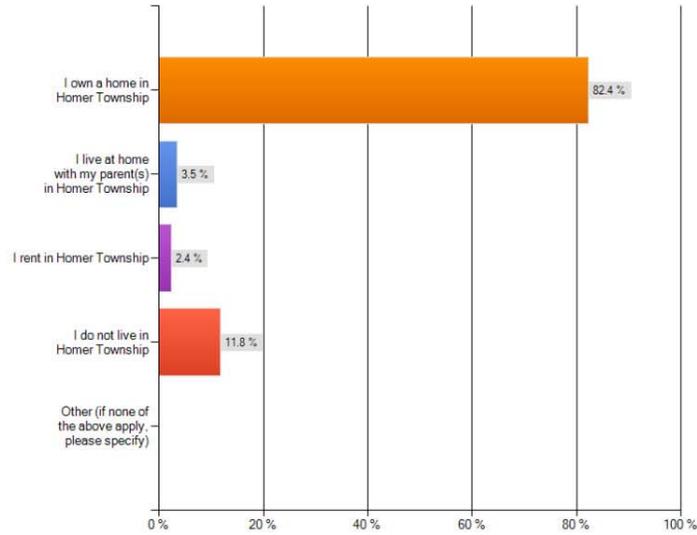


Other (please specify) – 5 total responses:

- I lived in Homer for 19 years and visit often
- I grew up off of M20. I now live in Edenville but frequently visit businesses and parks in Homer Township.
- I drive through on M-20 on a regular basis and use your gas stations to fill up. Also been to Chippewa Nature Center a couple of times with my family.
- was born and raised here
- I grew up in Homer Township. I don't live there now, but my family does and I visit them very often.

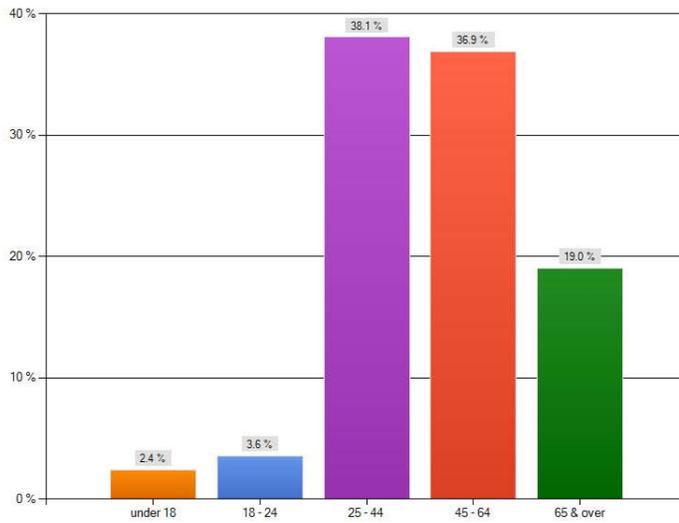
answered question: 85 | skipped question: 7

16. What is your residential status?



answered question: 85 | skipped question: 7

17. What is your age?



answered question: 84 | skipped question: 8

Appendix D

Adoption Documentation

Resolution to Recommend Approval and Adoption

Master Plan for Homer Township

By the Homer Township Planning Commission

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission has elected to draft, review, and adopt an update to the current Master Plan, adopted in 1998, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3801, *et seq*; and

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission hosted a special Open House meeting on the draft Master Plan document for the public to review all charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals for the Township on August 4, 2014, at the Homer Township Hall; and

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Master Plan, inclusive of the charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals, for the Township on September 8, 2014, at the Homer Township Hall.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Homer Township Planning Commission hereby recommends approval and adoption of this Master Plan to the Board of Trustees.

Motion by: GREG BATE Supported by: ERUA VARNER

Ayes: BATE, VARNER, MARSHALL, JOHNSON, SIMMONS

Nays: NONE

Absent: RICHARD

EXCUSED: STERN

Resolution declared adopted September 8, 2014.

Sandra Simmons 9/8/14

Sandra Simmons, Chair
Planning Commission
Homer Township

Resolution to Approve and Adopt

Master Plan for Homer Township

By the Homer Township Board of Trustees

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission has elected to draft, review, and adopt an update to the current Master Plan, adopted in 1998, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3801, *et seq*; and

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission hosted a special Open House meeting on the draft Master Plan document for the public to review all charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals for the Township on August 4, 2014, at the Homer Township Hall; and

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Master Plan, inclusive of the charts, maps, demographic data, future land use plan, and goals, for the Township on September 8, 2014, at the Homer Township Hall; and

Whereas, the Homer Township Planning Commission adopted a resolution on September 8, 2014, that recommended approval and adoption of the Master Plan to the Board of Trustees.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Homer Township Board of Trustees hereby adopts and approves this Master Plan.

Motion by: Norton Supported by: Proiett

Ayes: Norton, Varner, Lee, Johnson, Stern, Turk, Proiett

Nays: None

Absent: None

Resolution declared adopted September 17, 2014.



Todd Lee, Clerk
Homer Township Board of Trustees

