



# Oceana County Master Plan



2016



# Oceana County Master Plan

*Prepared by the Oceana County Planning Commission, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission.*

Adopted by the Oceana County Board of Commissioners on April 28, 2016.

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## **West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC)**

The WMSRDC is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 120 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties.

The mission of WMSRDC is to promote and foster regional development in West Michigan through cooperation amongst local governments.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The Oceana County Master Plan is set forth by the Oceana County Planning Commission to promote public health, safety, and welfare through coordinated planning for the appropriate use of land and water resources and the provision of adequate public facilities and services. The plan was developed with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), which is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 127 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana counties.

### **a. Purpose**

The foremost purpose of the Oceana County Master Plan is to provide a vision for future land use and development decisions within Oceana County over the next twenty to twenty-five years. The conclusions contained within are based upon analyses of past trends, observations of current conditions, and input from the public. Although this is primarily a land use planning document, it also addresses areas of quality of life, environment, infrastructure, and economic development. This comprehensive view is intended to make the “plan” a coordinating tool for governments, agencies, businesses, and citizens within the county.

This plan is heavily influenced by the concept of sustainability; that decisions made today should meet current needs without undermining the prosperity of future generations. Although this plan includes land use and development recommendations, it has no regulatory power. It should be implemented incrementally through county and local government decisions, improvements to public infrastructure and services, and the actions of private property owners. In addition, this plan is intended to evolve with the times. It should be regularly revisited (at minimum every five years) to ensure forward thinking and to encourage the anticipation of challenges before they become problematic.

This plan was developed pursuant to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, M.C.L. 125.3801. The Oceana County Master Plan will be used by the Oceana County Planning Commission to guide its comments regarding local planning and zoning documents submitted to the Planning Commission for review. It will also guide recommendations made by the County Planning Commission to County and State authorities on roads, parks, public facilities, and other infrastructure. It is hoped that local city, village, and township planning and zoning documents will be made to be consistent with this plan.

### **b. Planning Process**

In 1995, amid issues concerning development and farmland preservation in Oceana County, the Oceana County Planning Commission decided to develop a plan based on the prevailing uses and conditions of the time. In 1996, WMSRDC was hired to produce the first master plan and future land use map for Oceana County. In 2004, the Planning Commission rewrote the master plan to comply with new State legislation regarding municipal planning. In 2009-2010, the Planning Commission reviewed and performed the first 5-year update to the plan. In 2014, the Planning Commission hired WMSRDC to perform a substantial update.

The planning process used for this edition of the Oceana County Master Plan included meetings of the County Planning Commission, public meetings, data analyses, mapping, and consideration of alternative planning and development options. In October and November of 2014, the County Planning

Commission kicked off the planning process by hosting a series of four public meetings at various geographic locations throughout the county. Each meeting featured a visioning session and open discussion regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Oceana County. A summary of the comments received at the public meetings has been placed in the appendix section of this document. Input collected at the meetings was compiled and sorted into five recurring themes: Quality of Life, Environment, Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Community Development. Each has its own chapter within this plan containing topical information and statistics, as well as a vision for the future of the subject area.

### **c. Historical Overview**

It is important to keep in mind that a master plan, while ostensibly designed for the future, must provide at least a cursory glance at the past. A historical summary can help a community realize how the present came to be, and how the future may be seized.

Since its inception, Oceana County has changed from a lumbering and small farming community into a land of vast orchards, large fertile farms, and wealthy resort areas. In 1831, seven years before Michigan became a state, the territorial legislature established an “Oceana County.” This included all of the present Oceana County along with parts of Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon and Newaygo counties. The first European settlement in Oceana County was on Lake Michigan near Whiskey Creek in present-day Claybanks Township. A sawmill was central to this first settlement of the area, as the lumber industry provided most of the employment opportunities to the residents of early Oceana County.

In 1855, the State of Michigan Legislature established Oceana County with its present boundaries and divided the county into three townships: Pentwater, stretched across the northern portion of the county; Stony Creek (later known as Benona), covered the middle portion of the county; and Claybanks across the southern portion. During this era, rapid growth characterized the area as roads and bridges were constructed and forests were cleared for farmland. Pentwater Village became the first incorporated community in Oceana County in 1867. By 1869, all sixteen present-day townships had been established. The struggle of deciding a county seat threatened to divide the county in the late 1800’s. Hart was eventually granted the county seat, though the election was filled with accusations of political back-biting and underhanded deal-making. Pentwater, which was more established as a village at the time, and Shelby both continued to fight for the county seat through the 1930’s.

As settlers of European descent gradually inhabited West Michigan, Native Americans played a vital role in the evolution of Oceana County’s development. In the late 1850’s, the Ottawa Indians relocated from the Grand Rapids/Kent County area to Oceana County. This was the result of an agreement between the tribes and lawmakers in Washington, D. C. The Ottawa Indians agreed to abandon their land on the Grand River in exchange for lands further north, which they were to select. The government built schools for the Native American and monies were appropriated for livestock and tools. The land chosen is now part of Elbridge and Crystal townships.

The Great Chief Cob-Moo-Sa was a respected orator, debater, and leader of people. Arguably the most famous Native American in Oceana County, he worked fervently to assure that the Ottawa tribe enjoyed the best quality of life possible. There is a lake in Elbridge Township named for him and a memorial in his honor at Taylor Road and 144th Avenue in Elbridge Township. Despite the efforts of Cob-Moo-Sa and others, insurmountable cultural differences existed between the Ottawa tribe and the European settlers

that caused conflicts. For example, the notion of individual land ownership was foreign to the Native American. This, along with the encroachment of white settlers, caused many to give up their land.

Early roads in the county were rough and undeveloped. "Two tracks" for wagon trains made it difficult to travel on the hilly terrain near Lake Michigan, especially in the cold cruel winters of West Michigan. The advent of the automobile changed everything by requiring that hard surface roads be built to support this growing mode of transportation. The first mile of hard surface road in Oceana County was built through a grant from the State of Michigan in 1906-1907. The project was funded at a \$1,000 per mile, was nine feet wide, and ran from the corner of the Methodist church in Mears one-mile west to Beebe's Corners. The new road was so popular that the City of Hart and Golden Township soon constructed roads as well. Golden Township's road (presumably 56th Avenue) was one mile long as well and ran north from the Methodist church in Mears.

Development of the automobile and roads to support it brought about many positive changes to the lifestyle of county residents, including improved access to basic health care. Two hospitals in Oceana County have enjoyed lengthy tenures as quality health care facilities. Oceana Hospital started in the 1920's in a small house on the corner of Courtland and Lincoln streets in Hart. In 1954, it was moved to a larger facility on East Main Street. The other hospital in Oceana County, originally known as Shelby Hospital, was established in 1922 by two nurses. A state-of-the-art building was constructed in 1925. Funds were raised through public clubs and donations from private interests. In 1928, control of the hospital was turned over to three doctors, two from Shelby and one from Ludington. The village acquired the hospital in 1938 and managed it through many changes. Additions were completed in 1948 and 1964, and the facility was renamed Lakeshore Community Hospital in 1969. The village transferred ownership to a non-profit corporation in July of 1984 to better serve area residents. The hospital expanded again during 1997 to make room for ancillary hospital uses. Today the hospital is known as Mercy Health Lakeshore Campus and is part of the Trinity/Mercy Health Partners group.

Sandy beaches, dunes, forests, and water bodies beckoned the earliest settlers of the area and continue to attract residents and tourists from far and near. Oceana County's rich recreation legacy goes back as far as 1919, when Carrie Mears, daughter of lumber baron Charles Mears, donated 25.19 acres of land in Golden Township to be designated as a state park. This land became known as Silver Lake State Park in December 1920. Its namesake lake was given by Charles Mears, who sometime in the 1880's threw a silver dollar into the lake and proclaimed "I christen thee Silver Lake." In 1923, Carrie Mears donated some of her father's former land in the Village of Pentwater that would become Charles Mears State Park. The development of cheaper automobile transportation, the proximity of the lake to the beautiful golden sand dunes, and an increase in the popularity of camping and outdoor recreation resulted in a boom of visitors to the area that started in the 1950's and continues to this day.

The worst flood in Oceana County's recorded history struck in September of 1986 and triggered the county's only declaration of major disaster by the President due to flooding. Oceana County received a record seven to ten inches of rainfall between September 9 and September 11. The extreme rain led to flooding across the county and caused the Hart Hydroelectric Dam to collapse. The dam failure caused the 250-acre Hart Lake to empty into the Pentwater River in a matter of hours. This led to downed trees, flooding of parking lots and backyards, erosion, and washed out roads and bridges. The northbound US-31 highway bridge over the Pentwater River collapsed completely, while the southbound US-31 bridge over the Pentwater River and the State Street bridge over Hart Lake sustained damages. The dam was rebuilt soon after, and is currently owned and managed by the City of Hart.

Additional historical information can be obtained through the Oceana County Historical Society, whose purpose is to collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge of the history of Oceana County.

*Historic Sites in Oceana County*

**Federal Register of Historic Places**

- Jared H. Gay House, Rt. 2, 128th Ave., Crystal Valley
- Little Sable Point Light Station, Little Sable Point, Golden Twp
- Green Quarry Site, Address Restricted, Mears
- Charles Mears, Silver Lake Boardinghouse, Lighthouse and Silver Lake Channel Rds., Mears
- Dumaw Creek Site, Address Restricted, Pentwater
- Navigation Structures at Pentwater Harbor, West End of Lowell St., Pentwater
- US 31-Pentwater River Bridge, US 31 over Pentwater R., Weare Twp

**State Register of Historic Places**

- Hart Historic Industrial District, 215-216 Lincoln St. & 109 Union St. (Hart)
- US-31 (Old) Pentwater River Bridge, Oceana Dr. over Pentwater River (Hart)
- Benona Township Hall, 5400 W. Woodrow (Benona Twp)
- Little Point Sable Light Station, Little Sable Point (Benona Twp)
- Charles Mears, Silver Lake Boardinghouse, Lighthouse & Silver Lake Channel rds. (Golden Twp)
- Veterans Day Storm-Graveyard of Ships Informational Designation, 421 S. Hancock St. (Pentwater)
- Jared H. Gay House, Route 2, 128th Avenue (Crystal Valley)

**d. Regional Context**

Oceana County is located in west-central Lower Michigan and is surrounded by Lake Michigan to the west, Mason County to the north, Lake County to the northeast, Newaygo County to the east, and Muskegon County to the south. A significant number of Oceana County residents travel outside the county to access employment, goods, and services. Therefore, existing conditions and development trends of neighboring communities are important to consider within the context of Oceana County’s future. Demographic and economic projections for the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana are included in Appendix B to provide a regional comparison with Oceana’s neighbors.



## CHAPTER 2: QUALITY OF LIFE

In this plan, “Quality of Life” is the general theme under which societal aspects of Oceana County are addressed. Good quality of life is present when characteristics such as nature, services, and community support are combined in proper proportions. Such aspects include good paying jobs, safe and sanitary housing, crime-free neighborhoods, excellent education facilities and programs, and readily accessible services. This chapter includes a number of indicators to help track development trends, as well as some key aspects of Oceana County that contribute to its overall desirability as a place to live, work, and play.

It is important to note that significant differences often exist between areas of Oceana County; primarily between the eastern half and the western half. As a result, countywide statistics rarely capture disparities that might exist between different areas within the county. For example, wealth in Oceana County is concentrated in the west near the Lake Michigan shoreline and US-31. Wealth generally tapers off towards the northeast where the area is typically rural and sparsely populated.

### a. Population

When measured over time, population trends can be identified to help communities and service providers know where infrastructure and services are needed. It should be noted that methods of obtaining population figures have changed over time; thus certain populations may not have been tabulated in a consistent manner over the years. That said, U.S. Census figures from 1970 through 2000 indicate that Oceana County experienced a sustained period of population growth. However, from 2000 to 2010 the population figures decreased 1.1%. From 2010 to 2013 the county lost another 1.2%. One aspect of the population that constantly increased in recent years was the Hispanic or Latino population.

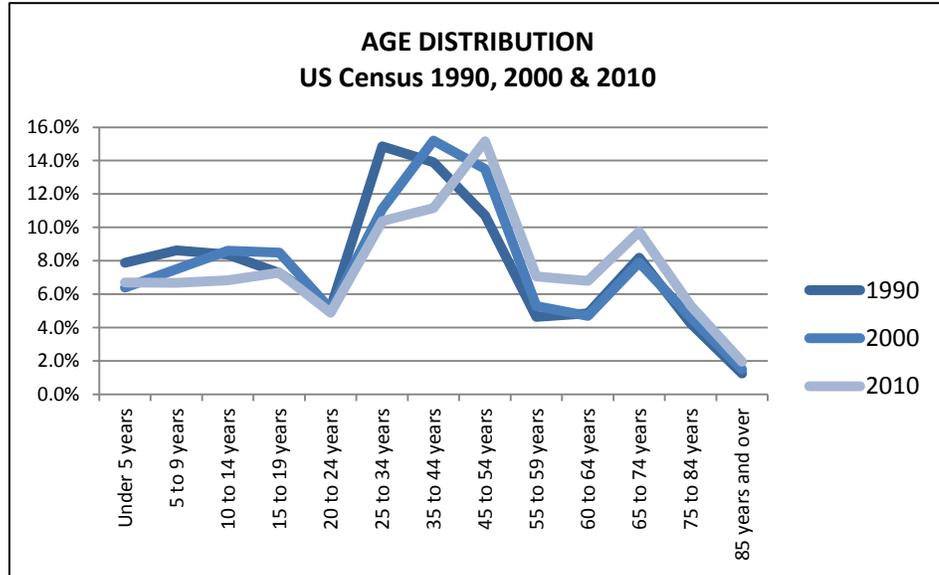
OCEANA COUNTY POPULATION						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2013 (est)
Population	17,984	22,002	22,454	26,873	26,570	26,245
% Change		22.3%	2.1%	19.7%	-1.1%	-1.2%
<i>Source: United State Census Bureau</i>						
	2010	2011	2012	2013		
Hispanic or Latino Population	3,502	3,568	3,645	3,663		
% of Total Population	13.0%	13.3%	13.7%	13.8%		
<i>Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates</i>						

As of the 2010 US Census, the age distribution in Oceana County was generally spread across the population. Just over one-quarter of the population was 19 years or younger, and just under one-quarter of the population was age 60 or more. It is notable that individuals aged 20-39 represented just 20% of the population; while 40% of the population was comprised of individuals aged 40-69.

Recent trends indicate that Oceana County’s overall population is declining while the median age is rising. Demographic projections released by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) in June 2014 estimated that Oceana County’s population will sink to around 25,000 by the year 2040. This projection was based solely on trends, and does not consider other factors, such as the economy. The previous edition of this plan cited a population projection which estimated the county’s population to be nearly 35,000 by the year 2030. Though not impossible, that estimate appears unlikely at this time.

AGE GROUPS in 2010	
Age 0-9	13.4%
10-19	14.1%
20-29	10.1%
30-39	10.3%
40-49	13.8%
50-59	14.5%
60-69	12.3%
70-79	7.3%
80 and up	4.2%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau</i>	

The median age has risen from 34 in 1990, to 36.9 in 2000, to 41.8 in 2010. The age distribution chart illustrates three trends that contribute to Oceana County's increasing median age: the largest segment of the population is aging; the proportion of school-aged individuals has declined; and the proportion of retirement age individuals has increased.



**b. Housing**

Availability of good-quality housing is an important aspect of Quality of Life. Conditions of homelessness, housing quality, housing choice, and extra-housing factors (e.g., neighborhood qualities, social support) are related to individual well-being. Changes in housing data often reflect important changes in the character of an area. Aspects such as age, occupancy rates, and affordability are all important indicators which carry implications for the local economy and community development planning. To be considered affordable, many standards state that a family should spend no more than 30% of its income on housing and utilities.

Only about one-quarter of the Oceana County population resides within an incorporated city or village. Therefore, one can surmise that the county's housing stock is generally dispersed across the rural landscape. In addition, there is a wide range of ages within the housing stock. According to 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, about 20% of the housing stock was built in or before 1939; yet about 40% was built in or after 1980.

According to the US Census, there was a significant increase in the total number of housing units from 1990 to 2000. However since 2000, the rapid growth has ceased as many aspects of housing in the county appear to have leveled off or declined slightly.

HOUSING STOCK		
Year built	2009-13 ACS Estimate	
Total housing units	15,876	%
Built 2010 or later	101	0.6
Built 2000 to 2009	1,774	11.2
Built 1990 to 1999	2,822	17.8
Built 1980 to 1989	1,782	11.2
Built 1970 to 1979	2,741	17.3
Built 1960 to 1969	1,505	9.5
Built 1950 to 1959	1,078	6.8
Built 1940 to 1949	985	6.2
Built 1939 or earlier	3,088	19.5
Value	2009-13 ACS Estimate	
Owner-occupied units	7,787	%
Less than \$50,000	1,401	18.0
\$50,000 to \$99,999	2,254	28.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,533	19.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,194	15.3
\$200,000 to \$299,999	904	11.6
\$300,000 to \$499,999	316	4.1
\$500,000 to \$999,999	173	2.2
\$1,000,000 or more	12	0.2
Median value of owner-occupied housing units	\$106,100	

Source: United States Census Bureau

The 2009-2013 ACS Estimates show that about 60% of all housing units were occupied, which is less than figures from previous years. The total number of vacant housing units in the county has been on the rise since at least 1990. This can be partially attributed to the high number of vacant housing units that are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. In 2010, those units made up about three-quarters of vacant units, and about one-quarter of all housing units in the county.

<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	2009-2013	%
Total housing units	12,857		15,009		15,944		15,876	
Mobile Homes			3024	20.1			3071	19.3
Occupied housing units	8,071	62.8	9,778	65.1	10,174	63.8	9,537	60.1
Owner-occupied	6,480	80.3	8,087	82.7	8,271	81.3	7,787	81.7
Renter-occupied	1,591	19.7	1,691	17.3	1,903	18.7	1,750	18.3
Vacant housing units	4,786	37.2	5,231	34.9	5,770	36.2	6,339	39.9
Vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	3,504	73.5	4,155	79.4	4,381	75.9		
Vacant for migratory workers			344	6.6	300	5.2		

*Source: United States Census Bureau*

The number of new home permits issued in Oceana County between 2009 and 2014 are shown in the table on the following page. The data suggests a declining trend in the total number of new home permits. Over the five-year period, 32% of the new home permits were for single-wide or double-wide mobile homes. This represents a noticeable increase of the proportion of mobile homes when compared to the existing housing stock. According to 2009-2013 estimates, mobile homes comprised 19.3% of the county’s housing. There are just four designated mobile home parks in the county, with an estimated total of 182 lots, or about 6% of the total number of mobile homes in the county. Therefore a substantial portion of mobile homes in the county are scattered about the landscape.

Over the previous five years, more than half of all new home permits were given in communities along the Lake Michigan shoreline, where it is more desirable and perhaps more profitable to build new homes. A study on homelessness prepared by the Oceana Housing Council in 2006 posited that “few contractors in the area have had an interest in the development of affordable housing in recent years.” This pattern of development may be contributing to the increasing need for quality, affordable housing in the county, especially inland away from Lake Michigan.

Looking ahead, an increasingly aged population will almost certainly put additional strain on the availability of housing for senior citizens. An analysis of senior services conducted in 2014 cited assisted living as the second-most important “senior service gap” in Oceana County. Contributing factors included: lack of availability; limited number of beds; financial need; and need for continuum of care.

NEW HOME PERMITS	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		Total
	mobile	stick built									
Benona Twp	1	5	1	5	0	9	0	4	0	9	34
Claybanks Twp	1	5	0	2	1	1	0	4	0	3	17
Colfax Twp	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	8
Crystal Twp	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	6
Elbridge Twp	1	0	2	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	9
Ferry Twp	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	7
Golden Twp	4	9	4	11	5	10	2	8	1	10	64
Grant Twp											
Greenwood Twp	1	1	2	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	10
Hart (City/Twp)	3	4	0	1	4	2	1	2	0	1	18
Hesperia Vil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leavitt Twp	8	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	12
New Era Vil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pentwater (Vil/Twp)	1	6	0	10	0	8	1	11	1	6	44
Rothbury Vil	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Shelby (Vil/Twp)	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	6
Walkerville Vil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weare Twp	1	1	7	1	2	3	2	2	0	4	23
Newfield Twp	2	3	2	3	1	1	0	3	3	2	20
Otto Twp	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	5
Total	31	38	20	38	20	39	10	39	11	38	284

Sources: Oceana County Inspection Department; North Country Inspection Services (for Newfield and Otto townships); Grant Township Building Inspector

### c. Income & Poverty

Figures from the US Census Bureau show that median household income in Oceana County has been on the rise since 1990. However, when adjusted for inflation, the buying power of income estimated in 2009-2013 is actually about 16% less than the figures from 2000.

The economic recession from 2007-2009 certainly took its toll on Oceana County. In the time between the 2000 Census and the 2009-2013 5-

OCEANA COUNTY INCOME & POVERTY			
INCOME	1990	2000	2009-13 (estimate)
Median household income	\$22,383	\$35,307	\$40,023
Per capita personal income	\$9,582	\$15,878	\$18,986
PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	1990	2000	2009-13 (estimate)
Total individuals in poverty	3,963 (17.9%)	3,875 (14.7%)	5,223 (19.9%)
Related children under 18 yrs	24.2%	19.6%	31.8%
Individuals 18 or older	15.1%	12.5%	16.1%
Individuals 65 or older	15.7%	9.0%	9.1%

Source: United States Census Bureau

year ACS Estimates, poverty increased significantly in Oceana County. In addition, the Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP) estimated in 2015 that 36% of children in Oceana County lived in poverty.

According to the MLPP, the hourly wage needed to cover a family’s most basic expenses – housing, food, utilities, clothing, child care and transportation – cannot be measured with the federal poverty level or the minimum wage. The Basic Needs Wage is the hourly wage that a full-time worker must earn in order to meet the needs of his or her family. See the table to the right for Oceana County’s estimated Basic Needs Wages.

<b>BASIC NEEDS HOURLY WAGES</b>	Oceana County 2014
Single Adult	\$10.13
Single Parent	\$18.89
Two Parents (Both Work)	\$11.57 each
Two Parents (One Works)	\$12.90

Source: <http://www.mlpp.org/our-work/work-and-wages>

**d. Education**

Oceana County is served by nine school districts and three intermediate school districts. Hart Public School District and Shelby Public Schools cover the greatest area in the county. Both are within the West Shore Educational Service District (ESD). There are also two private schools: New Era Christian School (K-8) and Oceana Christian School (preK-8).

<b>PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS</b>			
District Name	Intermediate School District	Student Count 2013-14	Coverage of Oceana Co. (SqMi)
Mason County Central Schools *	West Shore ESD	1,396	5.4
Shelby Public Schools •	West Shore ESD	1,379	150.0
Hart Public School District •	West Shore ESD	1,331	145.8
Walkerville Public Schools •	West Shore ESD	283	63.8
Pentwater Public School District •	West Shore ESD	265	36.9
Fremont Public School District *	Newaygo County RESA	2,240	6.5
Hesperia Community Schools *	Newaygo County RESA	1,082	72.4
Montague Area Public Schools •	Muskegon Area ISD	1,540	56.6
Holton Public Schools •	Muskegon Area ISD	918	8.4

\* Schools located outside of Oceana County  
 • Some students may commute in from outside Oceana County

Residents of Oceana County must typically travel outside the county to access career technical education (CTE) programs and higher education institutions. This may be a contributing factor to the lower proportion of county residents aged 20-24, as younger residents leave the area in pursuit of education or training. The West Shore ESD offers CTE programming at the West Shore Community College campus, as well as online.

<b>NEARBY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION</b>	Approx. Driving Distance
West Shore Community College	30 mi
Muskegon Community College*	40 mi
Baker College - Muskegon Campus	40 mi
Baker College - Fremont Campus	40 mi
Ferris State University	60 mi
Grand Valley State University	70 mi

\*Universities of Grand Valley State and Western Michigan offer classes at the Muskegon Community College campus.

A unique facility in the Village of Pentwater called the Pentwater Artisan Learning Center provides a forum for community members of all ages to teach and learn artisanal skills such as woodworking, painting, and weaving. The facility has a wide variety of tools and materials for use, including a 3D printer.

Despite challenges of accessing higher education in Oceana County, the overall educational attainment of the population has been improving in recent years. The following table demonstrates that Oceana County residents aged 25 or more are becoming increasingly educated over time.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT										
	Population 25 years and over	Less than 9th Grade	9th-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	High School Diploma	Some College	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
1990	14,069	10.4%	16.3%	39.7%	16.8%	6.5%	6.5%	3.9%	73.3%	10.4%
2000	17,134	7.7%	12.6%	39.4%	20.6%	7.1%	8.0%	4.6%	79.8%	12.6%
2009-13 (est)	17,978	7.7%	8.2%	36.2%	23.1%	9.8%	9.1%	5.9%	84.1%	15.0%

Source: United States Census Bureau

### e. Recreation

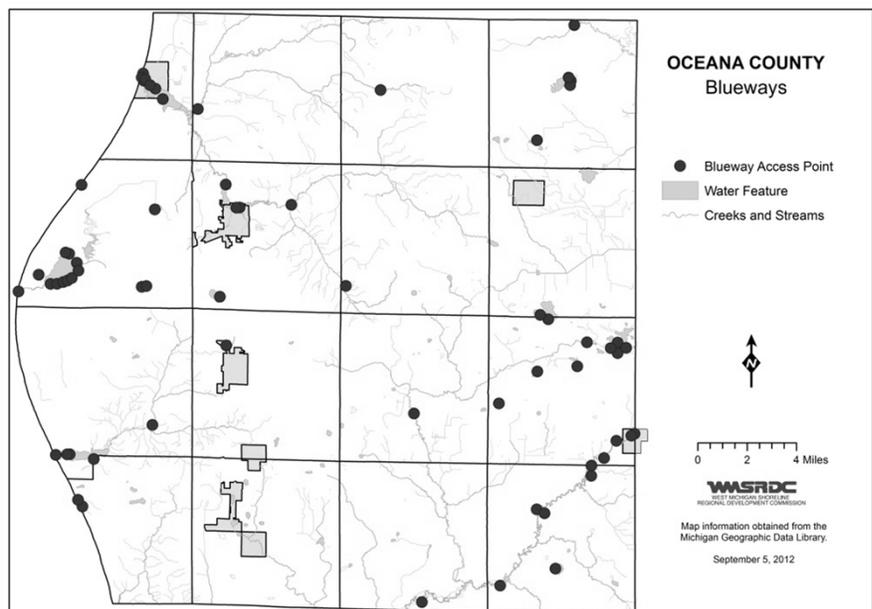
Recreation is any activity done for fun when one is not working. Hiking, biking, boating, fishing, hunting and camping are just a few of the high quality recreational experiences available in Oceana County. This is a point of pride for many residents and a major reason Oceana County is an attractive location to live and visit.

The West Michigan Blueways and Greenways Plan, Phase II is a study that was completed in 2012 to inventory public parklands and access to surface water resources. It identified 47 community parks covering over 870 acres of land in Oceana County; nearly 60,000 acres of state or federally-owned land; and over 100 miles of trails. The report also identified public access to water bodies, demonstrating a wealth of opportunities for public access to surface water resources. The report is available to the public at [wmsrdc.org/reports&publications.html](http://wmsrdc.org/reports&publications.html).

In 2014, the Oceana County Parks & Recreation Commission updated the Oceana County Recreation Plan. That document

OCEANA COUNTY GREENWAYS			
Park Type	Jurisdiction	Number of Sites	Total Size (acres)
Community Parks	State	4	91.35
	County	9	215.41
	Township	8	486.69
	City	6	44.78
	Village	19	36.41
	Other	1	2.25
	Total	47	876.89
Forest Land, Open Space, Natural Areas	Federal	Various Locations	51,210.97
	State	Various Locations	8,026.21
	Total	N/A	59,237.18
Linear Parks, Non-Motorized, ORV Trails	Federal	Various Locations	78.87 Miles
	State	Various Locations	27.87 Miles
	Total	N/A	106.74 Miles

Source: West Michigan Blueways and Greenways Plan: Phase II, 2012



was prepared to “continue present and future recreational resource development within the County” as well as satisfy Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requirements for state and federal grant eligibility. According to the plan, Oceana County currently maintains 194 acres of parkland, which is considered to be an adequate amount of open space for the current population of the county. The Recreation Plan also notes that Oceana County is limited in free public access to land adjacent to or with access to Lake Michigan. (As a side note, approximately 4.4 miles of the Oceana County shoreline is open to the public. That is equal to about 17% of Lake Michigan shoreline in Oceana County.) Other highlights of the recreation plan include a complete inventory of recreation parks and facilities; recreation goals and objectives; and a 5-Year Capital Improvement Program. The plan is available to the public at <http://oceana.mi.us/>.

#### **f. Health Care & Human Services**

Despite an abundance of natural resources and beauty in Oceana County, there are a number of obstacles standing in the way of long-term prosperity; such as an aging population, a high poverty rate, lack of good-paying jobs, and a lack of affordable housing. This section highlights a few resources in Oceana County that provide essential services to the general population or provide additional support to those in need.

Mercy Health Lakeshore Campus, located in Shelby, is the only full-service medical center in Oceana County. The Oceana County Medical Care Facility, located in Hart, is a 130 bed long-term care facility providing a comprehensive set of nursing home, rehabilitation, and Alzheimer’s/dementia services. Hospitals in the neighboring communities of Fremont, Ludington, and Muskegon also serve Oceana County residents. The following excerpt regarding health care in Oceana County comes from a report by the MSU Community Assistance Team in 2002:

*“Quality health care is one concern people have when locating a business or a family in a new community. Oceana is very fortunate to have a local hospital in Shelby... It is typical for health care systems to be the leader in economic development. No system has more at stake in the managed development of industry and its plentiful supply of benefit-based employees and families than a hospital system. They must be a leader in economic development.”*

Many programs and organizations in Oceana County are actively working to fill the gap between low wages and high housing costs. For example, Oceana’s Home Partnership offers new home construction and home rehabilitation to qualifying families with a variety of funds, including MSHDA, HUD and USDA Rural Development. Other organizations providing housing services include Oceana County Habitat for Humanity, Oceana Housing Council, and Muskegon-Oceana Community Action Program. The county also receives housing rehabilitation funds through the Community Development Block Grant program.

Two organizations that are dedicated to providing services to seniors in Oceana County are Senior Resources West Michigan and the Oceana County Council on Aging. In November 2014, Senior Resources conducted a gap analysis to identify deficiencies in services available to older adults in Oceana County. The top five gaps identified by the exercise, listed in order of importance, are as follows: 1) Transportation; 2) Assisted living; 3) Caregiver support; 4) Visiting physicians; and 5) Seniors not getting enough hours to meet needs (in-home).

## Quality of Life Summary

- Population is declining and median age is rising. If recent trend of an aging population continues, services for older residents will be stressed, especially those that are already identified as deficient.
- Housing unit vacancy rate is increasing; however this rate includes housing units intended for seasonal, recreational or occasional use, which are also on the increase.
- Lack of affordable housing may be caused, or perhaps enhanced, by development patterns that favor the Lake Michigan shoreline communities.
- Educational attainment has been improving, despite challenges in accessing career technical and higher education institutions.
- Recreation opportunities are abundant year-round.

## Public Comments

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor recreation opportunities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State/federal land</li> <li>▪ Rail trail</li> <li>▪ Weather allows variety of activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Strong sense of community</li> <li>- Agricultural lifestyle</li> <li>- Health care and medical services</li> <li>- Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recreation and cultural assets</li> <li>- Housing stock</li> <li>- Access to technology</li> <li>- Bike trail going east-west</li> <li>- Countywide ORV trails</li> <li>- Trailheads</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affordable housing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assisted living for seniors</li> <li>▪ Rental housing units</li> </ul> </li> <li>- High unemployment (lack of jobs)</li> <li>- Low wages</li> <li>- Local newspaper coverage</li> <li>- Access to higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of youth (aging population)</li> <li>- Trails/ORV trails</li> </ul>

## Visions for Quality of Life

- The county is known for its rural character and strong sense of community, which are augmented with ample access to services.
- The population is characterized by a healthy age distribution.
- Housing stock meets the needs of the community and attracts new residents.
- School systems and education programs are vibrant and nurturing.
- Numerous opportunities for year-round outdoor recreation exist for both residents and visitors.

## **CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENT**

Physical attributes and natural features are essential to the future of Oceana County; a place where agriculture and tourism are pillars of the local economy. Many of these natural assets may be damaged or lost if not managed properly. Likewise, poorly conceived developments could be damaged by natural forces. Therefore, a thoughtful assessment of the environment will aid in determining the land's suitability for a given development, and thus promote a sustainable way forward.

### **a. Physiography**

Oceana County's generally rolling landscape is largely the result of glaciation. The bedrock beneath the county is covered by a thick layer of glacial deposits, which formed through the complex action of the Lake Michigan Lobe of the Wisconsin glacial ice sheet approximately 8 to 12 thousand years ago. Glacial action resulted in dominant features—moraines, till plains, lake plains, ash plains, and drainage ways. Specific information about the distribution of these features can be found in the Soil Survey of Oceana County, issued in 1996 by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service.

### **b. Dunes**

Sand dunes and beach ridges in the county are prominent and well-known features typically found along the Lake Michigan coast. According to the Great Lakes Information Network, the longest stretch of freshwater dunes in the world is found along Lake Michigan. Dune environments are ecologically fragile, yet highly desirable areas for recreation and residential uses. The shoreline ecosystem is subject to damage through clearing or trampling of vegetation that holds the sand in place. Nearly all of the shoreline is sandy, although not all of it is high dunes. The potential consequences of development or clearing of vegetation in this area are wind erosion, structural damage or loss, damage to drives and roads, loss of habitat for rare plants and animals, and loss of scenic character.

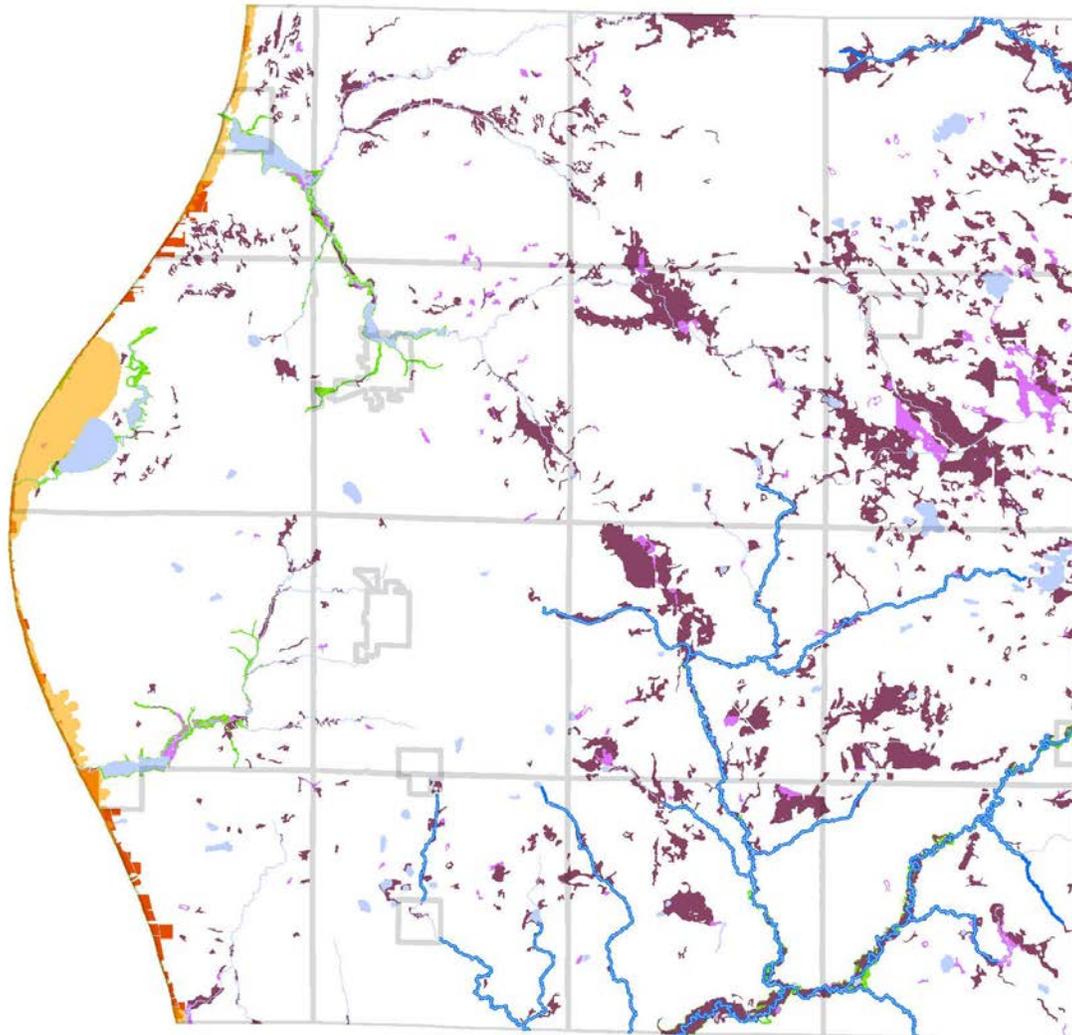
According to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the most fragile areas of Michigan's dunes can be protected while balancing the benefits of economic development, multiple human uses, and benefits of public access through the protection of steep, erosive slopes, using alternative construction techniques to reduce the impacts of development on dunes, and protecting dune vegetation essential to dune preservation and stability.

Michigan's sand dune protection program began in 1976 in response to concern for the impacts of sand mining. In 1989, critical dune areas (CDA) were established to provide protections for those areas from all types of human uses. Presently those areas are regulated under Part 353, Sand Dunes Protection and Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451 as amended. The act requires a permit from the MDEQ for those activities which significantly alter the physical characteristics of a CDA or for a contour change in a CDA. Oceana County has critical dune areas designated in each community along the Lake Michigan shoreline, as seen on the Sensitive Environments map on the following page.

The Sensitive Environments map also shows parcels that may be subject to the MDEQ High Risk Erosion Areas program. The purpose of the High Risk Erosion Area program is to prevent structural property loss in an area of the shoreland that is determined by the MDEQ, on the basis of studies and surveys, to be subject to erosion as required by Part 323 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act,

1994 PA 451 as amended. High risk erosion areas are those shorelands of the Great Lakes where recession of the landward edge of active erosion has been occurring at a long-term average rate of one foot or more per year, over a minimum period of 15 years. Recession rates change over time as water levels fluctuate and coastal conditions change. The recession rate research is ongoing and often results in changes to the locations of high risk erosion areas along the shoreline. The areas identified on the following map were identified by WMSRDC using parcel information provided by the MDEQ and Oceana County, and are considered to be accurate as of 2013.

Oceana County  
**SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS**



- |   |                             |   |                   |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
|  | Natural Rivers 150ft Buffer |  | Emergent Wetlands |
|  | Critical Dunes              |  | Forested Wetlands |
|  | High Risk Erosion Areas     |  | Flood Plain       |

Map created November 2015 for general planning and informational purposes only.

Sources for GIS data and information on this map include: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Oceana County, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), and FEMA.



### **c. Soils**

Soils are a primary factor in determining suitability for a given development, and must be considered to ensure a sustainable balance between development and the natural environment. Soil surveys assist in determining the extent of flood prone areas, prime farmland potential, access to aquifers, erosion and sedimentation potential, ability to site septic tanks and absorption fields, and limitations for construction and foundations. In addition, soil surveys can give direct information regarding areas more or less suitable for such recreational uses as camping facilities and golf courses.

In general, Oceana County's soils were formed from the remains of the last glacial retreat. This means that in Oceana County, like much of western Michigan, sandy soils are predominant. The Soil Survey of Oceana County includes detailed soil maps with interpretation guides to help determine the suitability of particular sites for various kinds of development. It identifies 93 different soil types, which fall into 60 soil series. The Survey also includes a General Soils Map (shown on the following page), which enables a broad overview of the county's soils through identification of major soil associations based on attributes such as pattern of soils, relief and drainage. The following descriptions summarize the prevailing characteristics of the soil associations shown on the map:

#### *Associations 1 and 2 on the General Soils Map*

##### Areas of Nearly Level to Very Steep, Moderately Well Drained to Excessively Drained Soils and Areas of Dune Land.

This makes up about 6 percent of the County. According to the soil survey, "These areas are used as woodland. The erosion hazard, equipment limitation, and seedling mortality are the major management concerns. The major soils are generally unsuited to cropland and are poorly suited or unsuited to pasture. Doughtiness is the major management concern".

#### *Associations 3 and 4 on the General Soils Map*

##### Areas of Nearly Level to Very Steep, Excessively Drained, Moderately Well Drained, and Poorly Drained Soils.

These areas make up about 23 percent of the County. According to the soil survey, "These areas are used as woodland. The erosion hazard, equipment limitation, the hazard of windthrow, and seedling mortality are the major management concerns. Some of the soils are suitable as cropland. If cultivated crops are grown, the major management concerns are soil blowing, water erosion, seasonal doughtiness and seasonal wetness.

#### *Associations 5, 6 and 7 on the General Soils Map*

##### Areas of Nearly Level to Very Steep, Excessively Drained and Well Drained Soils

These areas make up about 60 percent of the County. According to the soil survey, "These soils are suited to cropland and orchards. Water erosion, a low content of organic matter, a limited available water capacity, seasonal doughtiness, seasonal wetness, and the slope are major management concerns. If the soils are used as woodland, equipment limitation and seedling mortality are the major management concerns. The erosion hazard is a management concern in the rolling to very steep areas."

#### *Associations 8 and 9 on the General Soils Map*

##### Areas of Nearly Level to Steep, Well Drained, Somewhat Poorly Drained, and Very Poorly Drained Soils.

These areas make up about 7 percent of the County. According to the soil survey, "These soils are used as cropland. Soil blowing, water erosion, seasonal wetness, tilth in the surface layer, compaction, and the slope are the major management concerns. If the soils are used as woodland, equipment limitation, the hazard of windthrow, and seedling mortality are the major management concerns."

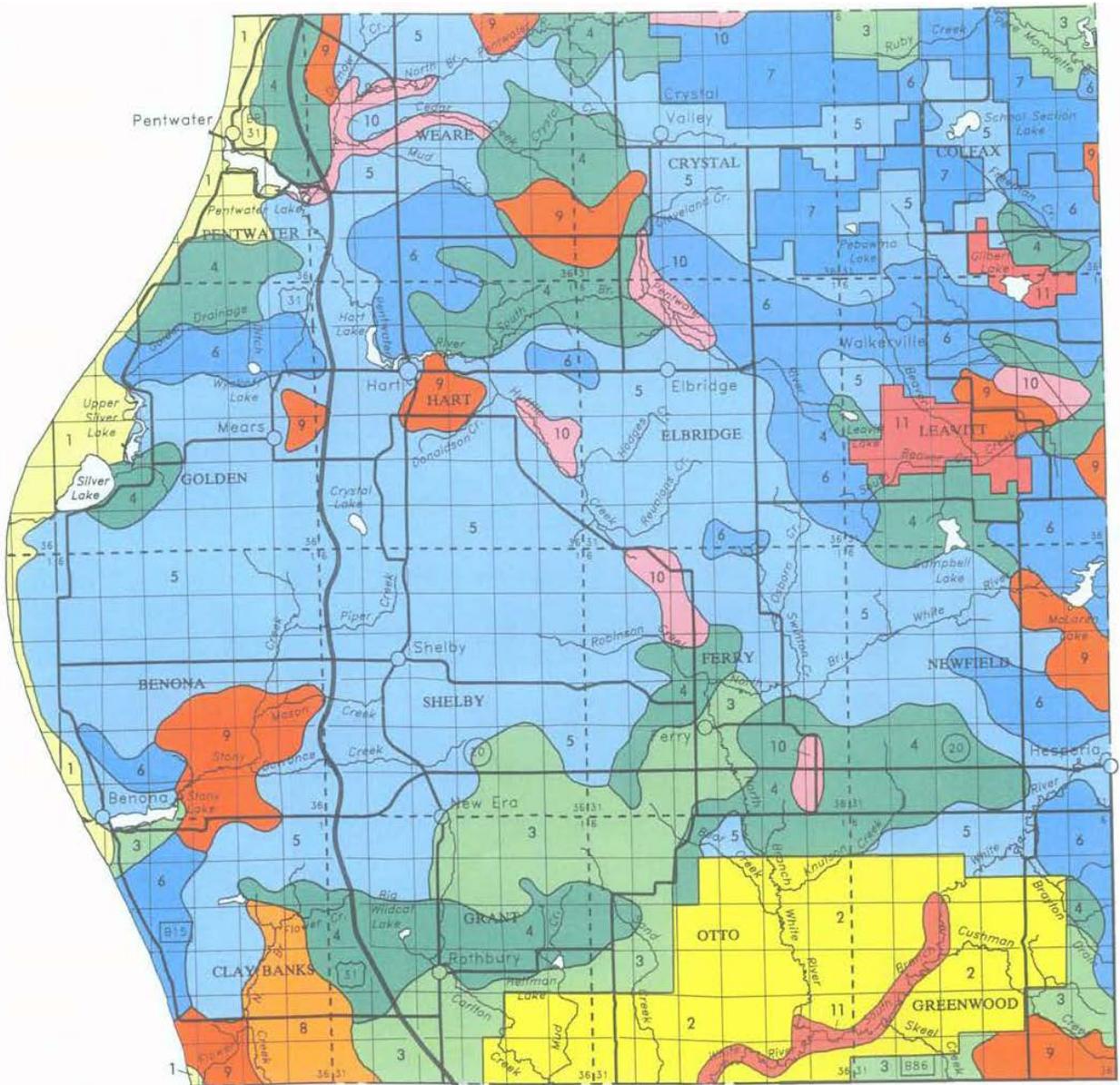
#### *Associations 10 and 11 on the General Soils Map*

##### Areas of Nearly Level, Poorly Drained and Poorly Drained Soils

This combination accounts for about 4 percent of the County. According to the survey, "These soils are used as woodland. An equipment limitation, seedling mortality, and the hazard of windthrow are the major management concerns".

# GENERAL SOILS MAP

Source: USDA/Mich.Dept.Agr.(compiled 1995)



## SOIL LEGEND\*

AREAS OF NEARLY LEVEL TO VERY STEEP, MODERATELY WELL DRAINED TO EXCESSIVELY DRAINED SOILS AND AREAS OF DUNE LAND

- 1 Epworth-Dune land-Nordhouse Association
- 2 Typic Udipsamments-Entic Haploorthods, sandy Association

AREAS OF NEARLY LEVEL TO VERY STEEP, EXCESSIVELY DRAINED, MODERATELY WELL DRAINED, AND POORLY DRAINED SOILS

- 3 Plainfield-Coloma-Grattan Association
- 4 Grattan-Covert-Granby Association

AREAS OF NEARLY LEVEL TO VERY STEEP, EXCESSIVELY DRAINED AND WELL DRAINED SOILS

- 5 Benona-Spinks-Grattan Association
- 6 Spinks-Remus-Ferr Association
- 7 Entic Haploorthods, sandy-Alfic Haploorthods, sandy Association

AREAS OF NEARLY LEVEL TO STEEP, WELL DRAINED, SOMEWHAT POORLY DRAINED, AND VERY POORLY DRAINED SOILS

- 8 Claybanks-Nappanee-Hoytville Association
- 9 Perrinton-Gowdy-Ithaca Association

AREAS OF NEARLY LEVEL, VERY POORLY DRAINED AND POORLY DRAINED SOIL

- 10 Houghton-Kerston-Carlisle Association
- 11 Medisopriats, eutic-Typic Haploquolls, sandy over loamy-Mollic Psammaquents Association

#### **d. Surface Water**

Abundant surface water features in Oceana County include about 26 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, over 60 lakes, five rivers, and numerous streams. The largest lakes are Silver Lake (690 acres), Pentwater Lake (485 acres), Stony Lake (278 acres), McLaren Lake (271 acres) and Hart Lake (240 acres). The major rivers are the North and South branches of the Pentwater River, and the North and South branches of the White River, and the Pere Marquette River.

Two river systems in Oceana County, the White and the Pere Marquette, have received the “Natural River” designation from the Department of Natural Resources under the Michigan Natural Rivers Act, PA 231 of 1970, (Part of 305 of PA 451 of 1994). The Pere Marquette is considered a “Wild and Scenic River” and the White is considered a “Country-Scenic River.” The designation is intended to identify rivers, streams, and creeks needing protection from unwise use, exploitation, and development. Each river system has a plan developed by the Natural Resources Commission which (1) provides a physical description of the river and watershed, (2) reviews values of the river and factors affecting its future nature and use, and (3) provides a plan for its management so as to preserve, protect and enhance the natural qualities of the river area. Permits for properties within the Natural Rivers area are handled by the Department of Natural Resources.

Lakes and rivers in the county are significant assets and magnets for human activity. Primary uses of rivers are trout and salmon fishing and canoeing. Lakes are commonly graced with residential developments and frequently used for boating and fishing. These and other human activities present a slew of pollution and overuse threats, such as improperly fueled watercraft, lawn fertilizers, stormwater runoff, failed septic systems, and airborne particulate matter. Potential sources of pollution include increased erosion resulting from runoff from impervious surfaces, chemical pollution from fertilizer use, livestock, and temperature pollution from cleared lands and new roads. Polluted runoff containing toxic chemicals, phosphorus, or nitrates can lead to death of useful aquatic animals and insects. In addition, phosphorus accelerates the growth of aquatic plants and algae, and affects oxygen levels in deeper water.

One of the most important surface water protection tools is the greenbelt, or buffer strip. This is a strip of tall grasses, groundcover, shrubs, trees and other plants adjacent to a water body. It helps to filter sediment and pollutants from surface runoff and provide shade which helps to mitigate temperature pollution. Mowed turf is not considered an effective filter or buffer strip.

#### **e. Wetlands**

Wetlands are another important aspect of the water resource discussion. They provide many important functions, such as storing and filtering stormwater runoff; helping to prevent pollution from entering rivers and lakes; recharging groundwater; and easing floods by slowing and storing floodwaters. They also provide natural scenery and necessary habitat for wildlife, and are difficult to repair once damaged. Therefore, good stewardship and enforcement of regulations are needed to prevent their destruction. Wetlands can be found throughout Oceana County, with some of the largest wetland areas situated in the northeastern quadrant of the county.

According to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality website, state wetland regulations are enabled by Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act,

1994 PA 451, as amended. In accordance with Part 303, wetlands are regulated if they are any of the following:

- ◆ Connected to one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair.
- ◆ Located within 1,000 feet of one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair.
- ◆ Connected to an inland lake, pond, river, or stream.
- ◆ Located within 500 feet of an inland lake, pond, river or stream.
- ◆ Not connected to one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair, or an inland lake, pond, stream, or river, but are more than 5 acres in size.
- ◆ Not connected to one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair, or an inland lake, pond, stream, or river, and less than 5 acres in size, but the DEQ has determined that these wetlands are essential to the preservation of the state's natural resources and has notified the property owner.

The law requires that persons planning to conduct certain activities in regulated wetlands apply for and receive a permit from the state before beginning the activity. A permit is required from the state for the following:

- ◆ Deposit or permit the placing of fill material in a wetland.
- ◆ Dredge, remove, or permit the removal of soil or minerals from a wetland.
- ◆ Construct, operate, or maintain any use or development in a wetland.
- ◆ Drain surface water from a wetland.

The DEQ must determine the following before a permit can be issued:

- ◆ The permit would be in the public interest.
- ◆ The permit would be otherwise lawful.
- ◆ The permit is necessary to realize the benefits from the activity.
- ◆ No unacceptable disruption to aquatic resources would occur.
- ◆ The proposed activity is wetland dependent or no feasible and prudent alternatives exist.

There are also federal wetland regulations that may apply to areas of Oceana County. State and federal authorities overlap in coastal and certain other waters according to Section 10 of the federal Rivers and Harbors Act, and both federal and state permits are required. In accordance with the Clean Water Act, Section 404(g), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers retains federal jurisdiction over traditionally navigable waters including the Great Lakes, connecting channels, other waters connected to the Great Lakes where navigational conditions are maintained, and wetlands directly adjacent to these waters. Activities in these waters require a joint permit application which minimizes time and effort for applicants.

## **f. Watersheds**

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, a watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off it goes into the same place. As such, watersheds can be defined on a variety of scales. For example, Oceana County lies completely within the Lake Michigan watershed; but on the county level, seven smaller watersheds drain the landscape. Those watersheds include Flower Creek, Lake Michigan, Pentwater River, Pere Marquette River, Silver Creek/Lake, Stony Creek/Lake, and White River.

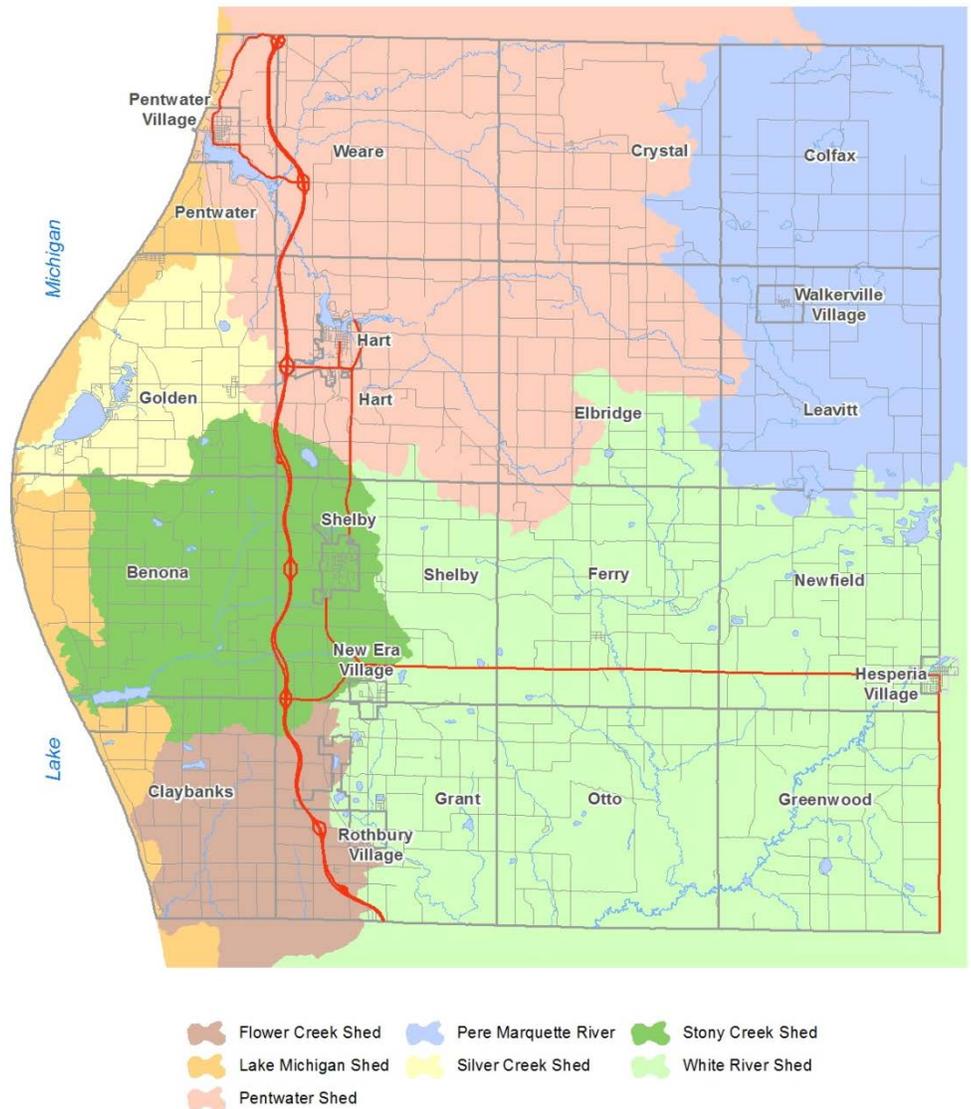
Proper resource protection and management throughout an entire watershed, rather than simply along or near certain water bodies, can help protect entire water systems from degradation. For example, consider the Stony Creek watershed, where proper practices in the Village of Shelby would help to ensure the quality of water resources “downstream” in Stony Lake. There are several ongoing efforts

aimed at managing watersheds in Oceana County, a few of which include: the White River Watershed Management Plan, adopted in 2009; the Pere Marquette River Watershed Management Plan, created in 2011; and the South Branch of the Pentwater River watershed plan, approved under the Clean Michigan Initiative.

**g. Groundwater**

The glacial drift in Oceana County ranges in depth from 350 to 400 feet. Wells in the area range from 30 to 70 feet, and from 150 to 180 feet. The Saginaw Bedrock Formation lies directly beneath the glacial drift in this area. This important aquifer for the central Lower Peninsula consists of sandstone with interbedded shale, limestone, coal and gypsum. Under this lies the Michigan Formation, which could have an aquifer but it is not being used at this time.

**OCEANA COUNTY  
Watersheds**



Due to the sandiness of the soils in Oceana County, and the absence of municipal water supplies in many areas, the community is very vulnerable to groundwater contamination through spillage or toxic material dumping. Thus, groundwater quality should be a major concern of citizens in Oceana County. According to the MDEQ were seven community public water supplies in December 2014, all of which relied on groundwater. These supplies are listed in Chapter 4 under Section b.

In general, the potential for groundwater contamination depends on the type of soil present at a given location. For example, sand is very permeable and thus allows for a greater amount of infiltration of surface water into the groundwater supply, whereas a layer of clay is much more restrictive against contamination. Clay is very impermeable; and if near enough to the surface, it will cause water to puddle or runoff to more permeable soils. There are varying grades of permeability depending on the

compaction and coarseness of the soil. Major sources of rural groundwater contamination include the following:

*Waste:* Land continues to be the primary medium for waste treatment in Michigan and the United States. As water passes through decomposing waste it can transmit organic and inorganic pollutants into the aquifer. Outflow from a conventional or land disposal system for municipal waste or even a home septic system can carry nitrates into the water supply. Indiscriminate dumping and junk storage also contribute to groundwater contamination.

*Farms:* Potential contaminants from farms include nutrients, pesticides, and other toxic organic, and salinity. Phosphates and nitrates are residuals of fertilizers and have the potential to contribute to eutrophication. Nitrates can also be leached from concentrations of animal waste or decomposing plant material.

*Fuel Storage:* An increasingly bothersome source of groundwater contamination is the uncharted network of underground storage tanks found throughout the countryside. Some of these tanks are abandoned, no longer functional, but continue to leak water-soluble contaminants. Benzene, a suspected carcinogen, is the most damaging constituent of gasoline. By the sheer number of contamination sites, the gasoline storage system is the most troublesome contamination source in Michigan. A single drop of gasoline has the potential to contaminate an entire small aquifer.

There are few reported groundwater quality problems in Oceana County at this time. On its website, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality hosts an "Inventory of Facilities," pursuant to certain requirements of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA). The inventory lists 20 identified Part 201 Environmental Remediation sites and 34 Part 213 Leaking Underground Storage Tank sites in Oceana County.

The most promising methods of groundwater protection are proper land use management and zoning, pollution regulation, and acquisition. Land use management is the first step in the process of protecting groundwater resources. Defensive regulation or control must be built on the base of logic and foresight contained in a land use plan. By itself, planning does not sufficiently protect sensitive groundwater areas but does provide the basis for land development control which can assist groundwater protection.

Conventional zoning provides a mechanism by which to regulate new land development but does not apply to the existing non-conforming or potentially hazardous uses. Specialized zoning, which promotes conditional use of land only after strict assurance has been given that the groundwater resources will not be harmed, requires locating dangerous developments in a given area that provides greater protection of the groundwater. For instance, a landfill would have to be located on a thick layer of highly impermeable clay instead of a much less costly parcel composed of sandy loam. Pollution regulation is another alternative for protecting groundwater resources and recharge areas. This procedure also requires accurate and dependable data in order to be defensible.

A final alternative for prevention of groundwater contamination is the acquisition of land through the use of transfer and/or purchase of development rights. Transfer of development rights involves convincing landowners not to develop in sensitive areas through incentives such as allowing developers to increase the density of other previously developed areas, or to transfer the proposed construction to other less sensitive parcels which have similar characteristics and potential. Through an administered market, those who have the right to develop (or restrict development, most notably the government) must reimburse those landowners whom they are attempting to restrict. The former grants private

rights to use certain land attributes while leaving other rights in public lands. Purchase of development rights entails obtaining certain land rights from property owners such as erosion rights, which would then permit the restriction of any practice on the property that would contribute to erosion. This is a technique which might be applicable to forest areas and other sensitive regions. Some agricultural land owners have already successfully implemented this strategy in Oceana County.

## **h. Forests**

Forested natural areas provide numerous benefits associated with wildlife, recreation, water quality, clean air, wild foods, and scenic views. Tree canopies in urban settings can provide cooler temperatures. Trees provide creeks and streams with the shade necessary to protect water quality by keeping them cool as well. In general, communities that protect and maintain large trees in commercial corridors and town centers offer visitors and residents a unique and attractive sense of place.

Forests span more land area than any other type of land cover in Oceana County. According to 2011 land cover data created by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium (MRLC), nearly 50% of the landscape is covered by a combination of deciduous forests, evergreen forests, and woody wetlands. Deciduous forests are the most common type, covering 30.7% of the county. Largest contiguous area of deciduous forest spreads across Grant, Otto, and Greenwood townships.

Much of Oceana County's forestland is rather insulated from development due to ownership of those areas by state and federal entities. The West Michigan Blueways & Greenways Plan: Phase II (WMSRDC, 2012) estimates that over 51,000 acres of land is owned by federal agencies, and over 8,000 acres is owned by the state. Federal land ownership is fairly common within the management boundaries of the Huron-Manistee National Forests, which are found in northern, eastern, and southern portions of the county. Large areas of state-owned lands are primarily located in Golden and Pentwater townships, including Silver Lake and Charles Mears state parks and the Pentwater River State Game Area.

## **i. Climate**

Significant climatic variations occur within Oceana County as a result of differences in topography and proximity to Lake Michigan. On average, locations closer to Lake Michigan experience lower maximum temperatures in the summer, higher maximum temperatures in the winter, and greater amounts of annual snowfall. Data observed between 1981 and 2010 at the City of Hart (about 6 miles from Lake Michigan) and at the Village of Hesperia (about 25 miles from Lake Michigan) are presented throughout this section to illustrate this phenomenon.

Oceana County enjoys a relatively stable and comfortable climate year-round, thanks to the moderating influence of nearby Lake Michigan. The average winter (December through February) temperature is 25.1 degrees Fahrenheit at Hart and 24.4 degrees at Hesperia. The average daily minimum temperatures were 18.3 degrees at Hart and 16.3 degrees at Hesperia. In summer (June through August), the average temperatures are 67.0 degrees at Hart and 67.1 degrees at Hesperia, while the average daily maximum temperatures are 77.7 degrees at Hart and 79.7 degrees at Hesperia.

The Oceana County Soil Survey of 1996 states that record high temperatures in the county include 104 degrees at Hart and 100 degrees at Hesperia; while the record low is -35 degrees at both Hart and Hesperia. From 1981 to 2010, Hart averaged 2 days with a high temperature of 90 degrees or more and

6 days with a minimum temperature of 0 degrees or less. Hesperia averaged 6 days with a high temperature of 90 degrees or more and 11 days with a minimum temperature of 0 degrees or less.

Average annual and monthly precipitation figures for Hart and Hesperia are shown in the table below. Typically, over half of the total precipitation falls in April through September. The growing season for most crops falls within this period. The heaviest 1-day rainfalls during the 30-year period occurred on September 11, 1986: 5.43 inches at Hart and 6.56 inches at Hesperia. Thunderstorms occur between 30 and 34 days each year, mostly in June, July, or August. The greatest 1-day snowfalls during the period were 15.0 inches at Hart and 12.3 inches at Hesperia. The greatest monthly snowfalls were 88.7 inches at Hart in December 2008 and 78.9 inches at Hesperia in December 2008. The greatest annual snowfalls were 201.4 inches at Hart in 2008 and 144.4 inches at Hesperia in 2008. The least annual snowfalls were 27.6 inches at Hart in 1998 and 30.0 inches at Hesperia in 1993.

CLIMATE AVERAGES, 1981-2010													
HART	Annual	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Daily Max (°F)	55.4	29.4	32.4	41.6	54.8	66.1	75.3	<b>80.0</b>	77.8	70.5	57.7	45.2	33.8
Daily Min (°F)	37.1	<b>16.3</b>	17.2	23.5	34.3	43.6	53.5	58.3	57.4	49.7	38.9	30.6	21.5
Precip (in.)	36.75	2.48	1.88	2.24	2.91	3.62	3.50	3.08	3.48	<b>3.80</b>	3.61	3.45	2.71
Snow (in.)	81.6	<b>26.9</b>	18.3	6.7	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	23.5
HESPERIA													
Daily Max (°F)	56.9	30.4	33.4	43.4	57.0	67.9	77.4	<b>81.7</b>	80.1	72.3	59.2	46.4	34.0
Daily Min (°F)	35.0	<b>14.3</b>	15.0	21.4	32.6	41.9	51.6	56.2	55.6	46.8	36.6	28.6	19.7
Precip (in.)	35.02	2.11	1.46	2.30	2.98	3.67	3.33	2.52	3.59	3.72	<b>3.74</b>	3.07	2.53
Snow (in.)	71.1	<b>20.8</b>	12.6	7.9	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	5.6	22.2

*Source: Michigan State Climatologist's Office*

## j. Natural Hazards

Natural hazards are weather-related events and natural earth processes that can impact lives, property, infrastructure, natural resources, and other significant assets. Common natural hazards in Oceana County include floods, thunderstorms, and severe winter weather. Recognition of, and planning for, such hazards will reduce long-term costs and enhance the community's resilience long into the future. Land use planning practices such as zoning, regulatory programs, and building code requirements can mitigate the impacts from hazards by enabling local officials to reconcile new growth and development in areas that are subject to the impacts of natural hazards.

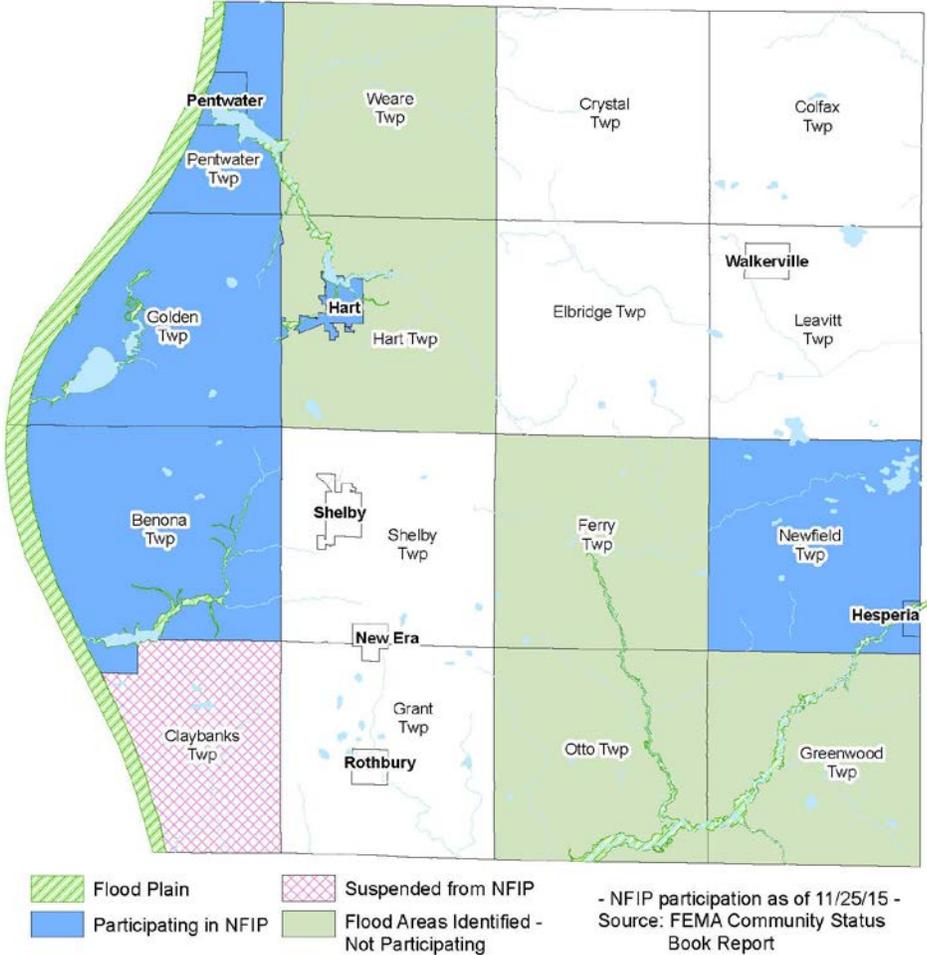
The Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan (WMSRDC 2015) is an effort to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural, technological, and human-induced hazards. It includes detailed descriptions of 31 individual hazards; historical frequencies of occurrence; and mitigation tools and techniques. The plan is intended to guide local planning decisions to ensure that development does not occur in hazardous areas, or is at least designed to withstand the impacts of hazards. The plan, which is maintained by the Oceana County Emergency Management office and overseen by the county's Local Emergency Planning Committee, concludes that the county is most vulnerable to winter storms, severe winds, wildfires, and extreme temperatures. These and other significant natural hazard risks identified in the plan are listed in the following below.

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL HAZARDS in OCEANA COUNTY	
Drought	A water shortage caused by a deficiency of rainfall, generally lasting for an extended period of time.
Extreme Temperatures	Prolonged periods of very high or very low temperatures, often accompanied by other extreme meteorological conditions.
Flooding	The overflowing of rivers, streams, drains and lakes due to excessive rainfall, rapid snowmelt or ice.
Great Lakes Shoreline	High or low water levels that cause flooding or erosion, and other threatening shoreline conditions, including storm surges, rip currents, and shoreline recession.
Severe Winds	Non-tornadic winds of 58 miles per hour or greater.
Wildfire	An uncontrolled fire in grass lands, brush lands, or forested areas.
Winter Storms	Severe winter weather hazards include snowstorms, blizzards, and ice and sleet storms.

*Source: Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2014*

The map to the right shows floodplains identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Flood insurance would be required for a structure situated within an identified floodplain; however flood insurance through the NFIP may only be obtained if the community it is located in is currently participating in the NFIP. In addition, if a community is participating in the NFIP, any resident within that community is eligible to obtain flood insurance through the NFIP, regardless of whether or not it is located within a floodplain.

Oceana County  
**NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP)  
 PARTICIPATION**



## Environment Summary

- The county’s physical geography, highlighted by coastal sand dunes along Lake Michigan, is characterized by a rolling landscape created by past glaciation.
- About 70% of the county’s soils are suited to cropland or orchards.
- Water features provide attractive locations for residential development and outdoor recreation.
- Most of the county is dependent upon groundwater. Due to the sandiness of local soils, groundwater resources are potentially vulnerable to contamination.
- About half of the county is covered by forestland, much of which is owned by state and federal entities.
- Lake Michigan has a significant impact on the local climate.
- The county is vulnerable to natural hazards, especially winter storms, severe winds, wildfires, and extreme temperatures.

## Public Comments

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural Beauty</li> <li>- Water features               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rivers, lakes, and groundwater</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Sand dunes</li> <li>- Forests</li> <li>- Weather (4 seasons)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deer hunting</li> <li>- Water</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High deer population</li> <li>- Increased irrigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Groundwater withdrawal</li> <li>- Agricultural activities</li> <li>- Water pollution</li> <li>- Soil pollution</li> <li>- Water exportation</li> <li>- Hydraulic fracturing</li> </ul>

## Visions for Environment

- Development and use of sand dunes is thoughtfully managed to ensure their protection.
- Lakes and rivers are attractive places to live and recreate.
- Groundwater is a prized and protected resource for both drinking and irrigation.
- Management of forestlands is coordinated between local, state, and federal entities.
- Consideration of natural hazards is incorporated into land use and zoning practices to ensure the development of resilient communities and public infrastructure.
- Mineral extraction and other human activities are practiced carefully to minimize the potential impacts on the environment and the population.

## CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure includes the basic physical structures and facilities needed for the operation of a society or enterprise. This chapter provides an overview of infrastructure related to transportation, municipal water and sewer, telecommunications, power, and oil and gas in Oceana County. According to the Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan, “Infrastructure Failure” is the fourth ranked hazard facing the county.

### a. Transportation

The transportation system is the physical and operational infrastructure which accomplishes the movement of people and goods. Transportation systems are broken into subsystems known as modes, such as automobile, rail, air, waterborne, etc.

Automobile is the primary mode of transportation in Oceana County. There are 1,264 miles of public roads in the county, about 212 miles of private roads, and 60 bridges. Oceana County has one U.S. highway route, US-31, and two state trunkline highways, M-20 and M-120. There are also two US-31 business routes designed to facilitate travel into commercial and industrial areas. US-31 is the main north-south corridor, linking Oceana County with other areas along Lake Michigan. M-20 runs east-west through the southern part of the county and connects US-31 to a number of north-south routes east of the county. M-120 proceeds along the southeastern border of the county, connecting the Village of Hesperia with the Muskegon area. The aforementioned highways generally serve the southern and western areas of the county. There are no highways or straight routes north of M-20 and east of Oceana Drive.

<b>COUNTY ROADWAYS - 2013 -</b>	Miles	% of Total Miles	% of Traffic in 2013
State Trunkline	107	5.73%	55.84%
County Primary	296	23.13%	32.17%
County Local	798	65.61%	3.22%
City Major	24	1.94%	7.71%
City Minor	43	3.58%	1.05%
Total Public Roads	1,264		

*Source: Michigan Transportation Management Council Dashboard  
<http://tamc.mcqi.state.mi.us/MITRP/Data/PaserDashboard.aspx>*

Oceana County’s economy is dependent upon roadways. Industrial establishments, which typically require year-round access to major transportation routes, are generally aligned near US-31 and Oceana Drive (Business Route 31). Agricultural operations require roads in less populated and less traveled areas to transport goods to market. Those roads typically experience low average annual traffic volumes with increased use and tremendous stress from agricultural loads and equipment during certain times of the year. Lastly, commerce and tourism rely on well-maintained, safe vehicle routes to usher in patrons and visitors. These roads can easily become congested in summer months due to the typical influx of tourists to the area.

There are 372 miles of federal aid eligible roads in Oceana County. The condition of those roads is monitored by the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC). According to TAMC data, a hefty portion of Oceana County’s roads are in bad shape. As of 2013, Oceana

<b>CONDITION of FEDERAL-AID PAVED ROADS</b>			
<b>Oceana County</b>	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Good	16.24%	16.8%	15.2%
Fair	15.94%	22.63%	33.97%
Poor	61.82%	61.29%	50.83%

*Source: Michigan Transportation Management Council Dashboard  
<http://tamc.mcqi.state.mi.us/MITRP/Data/PaserDashboard.aspx>*

County had the second highest percentage of “poor” rated federal-aid roads among Michigan counties. Moreover, Oceana was one of only seven counties in the state to have more than 50% of federal aid roads rated as poor. (According to the rating scale used by TAMC to assess pavement conditions, a “poor” rating indicates that a road is failing and would require reconditioning or complete reconstruction.)

Local roads are in a similar, if not worse, overall condition. The cost of needed repairs and maintenance often exceeds county and local government budgets. Simple capital preventative maintenance on a structurally sound roadway can be much less expensive over the long-term than rehabilitation or reconstruction of a structurally failed roadway. Still, a number of roads go unmaintained or under-maintained annually, leading to even more distress by the impacts of traffic loads and natural forces.

The Oceana County Council on Aging (OCCOA) provides transportation within Oceana County for all seniors through the bus transportation program. The program is available to all residents of the County, with seniors and the handicapped receiving first priority in order to receive support services, reduce isolation and promote independent living. The OCCOA also provides volunteer driving transportation for seniors who need transportation to and from medical appointments to outside of Oceana County.

The Oceana County Airport has a 3,500 foot asphalt runway, self-serve fuel, hangars, parking, courtesy car, lobby, pilots lounge, and conference room. Commercial air transport is available at Muskegon County Airport in Muskegon and Mason County Airport in Ludington.

Recreational watercraft access to Lake Michigan is available through Pentwater Lake and Benona Township Park at Stony Lake. The nearest deep-water ports are in Muskegon and Ludington. These harbors both provide for commercial shipping, recreational boating access to Lake Michigan, and car ferry service to Wisconsin.

There are no longer any railroads in Oceana County. The nearest active rails include the Michigan Shore Railroad short line from Muskegon to Fremont, and the Marquette Rail freight line that makes daily runs between Grand Rapids (Kent County) and Manistee (Manistee County). The rail runs north and south between Grand Rapids and Baldwin (Lake County), and then east and west between Baldwin and Walhalla in Mason County. From there, separate spurs connect to Ludington and Manistee. The nearest passenger rail services are available through Amtrak stations in Holland and Grand Rapids.

## **b. Municipal Water and Sewer**

The availability of municipal water and sewer plays a major role in the direction of development. Although development can occur in a rural area without benefit of these services, there are certain types of land use that cannot be put in place without them. Examples may include fast-food restaurants, large retail or industrial developments, and high-density residential complexes or hotels. In an age when economic well-being is unevenly distributed, municipal water and sewer becomes the kind of development that can either encourage or inhibit economic development.

Due to the presence of certain soil types and high water tables in parts of Oceana County, the treatment of sewage, or lack thereof, can have serious human health implications on potable groundwater and surface water bodies. For example, the Silver Lake watershed is under increased scrutiny for excessive nutrient loading into Silver Lake which may come from homes, campgrounds, businesses, and/or farms. The Silver Lake area may need a municipal wastewater treatment facility in the future.

Unfortunately, public water and sewer systems provide service to relatively limited geographic areas. In areas that are experiencing growth but do not have public water and sewer infrastructure, it may be wise to recommend that lot sizes be large enough to permit both water wells and on-site septic systems.

Public wastewater treatment systems are available in the City of Hart and the villages of Hesperia, New Era, Pentwater, Shelby and Walkerville. Public water systems are available in the City of Hart and the villages of Pentwater, Shelby and Hesperia. In addition, there are three other “community public water supplies” in the county: Golden Pond Estates (Golden Township), Greenlawn Mobile Home Court (Village of Rothbury), and Hylander Valley (Weare Township).

The Michigan Wellhead Protection Program of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality assists local communities utilizing groundwater for their municipal drinking water supply systems in protecting their water source. A WHPP minimizes the potential for contamination by identifying and protecting the area that contributes water to municipal water supply wells and avoids costly groundwater clean-ups. In Michigan, wellhead protection is voluntary and implemented at the local level through the coordination of activities by local, county, regional, and state agencies. According to data obtained from the Michigan Center for Geographic Information, wellhead protection areas in Oceana County are found in the City of Hart; the villages of New Era, Pentwater, Rothbury, Shelby, and Walkerville; and the townships of Colfax, Elbridge, Leavitt, Grant, Hart, Pentwater, Shelby, and Weare.

### **c. Telecommunications**

Telecommunication is communication over a distance by cable, telegraph, telephone, or broadcasting. Oceana County is well equipped with telephone service and several cellular telephone services are available in the county. However, cellular service reception in certain areas of the county is limited by terrain. The primary telephone service provider is Frontier.

Access to the internet is mostly restricted to dial-up, digital subscriber line (DSL), or wireless communication service. Fiber optic lines are needed in the county to enhance high-speed internet access and cable television service. Subscription satellite television and Internet services are widely available throughout the county.

### **d. Power**

Oceana County is well serviced with electric power. Most of the electric power in the county is provided by Great Lakes Energy or Consumers Energy. The City of Hart operates the Hart Hydroelectric Dam, which provides electricity to residents of that area. There are several electric transmission lines that traverse the county. According to the Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan, four transmission lines owned by ITC pass through Oceana County between the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant and the Midwest grid system. All four pass through the Walkerville Area Fire and Rescue protection area. In addition, the main Wolverine Power transmission line that powers the Oceana County Great Lakes Energy system comes to the Walkerville Substation from the northeast. This line connects to a substation north of Hart, a substation in Golden Township, and then passes into Muskegon County.

## **e. Oil and Gas**

In Oceana County, there are two primary aspects of oil and gas infrastructure: provision of heating fuel, and extraction and transmission of natural resources. The most common source of heating fuel in the county is LP gas, followed by natural gas. A major DTE natural gas transmission line runs through Oceana County, but natural gas service is limited to developed areas along Oceana Drive and along the extreme southeastern area of the county. According to the Michigan Public Service Commission, these communities include the City of Hart; villages of Hesperia, New Era, Pentwater, Rothbury, and Shelby; and townships of Grant, Greenwood, Hart, Newfield, Pentwater, Shelby and Weare. In addition, there are a number of small-scale propane distribution systems throughout the county, such as the one that serves residences of the Silver Lake area in Golden Township.

According to the Michigan DEQ, Office of Oil, Gas and Minerals in October 2012, there were 1,188 total oil and gas wells in Oceana County. While a vast majority of these wells were inactive or capped, 50 of them were “active” or “producing.” Seventy-four total wells are known to have had detectable levels of hydrogen sulfide in the following townships: Benona (3), Claybanks (20), Colfax (1), Crystal (1), Elbridge (4), Golden (1), Grant (1), Pentwater (12), and Weare (31). It is important to note that any type of oil or gas well, even one that has been capped, is capable of leaking dangerous levels of hydrogen sulfide.

Sour gas is any gas that contains significant amounts of hydrogen sulfide. Some wells producing sour gas in the county are connected to a pipeline to processing facilities to the north in Manistee County. There is a sour gas pipeline that runs north through Hart and Weare townships, with possible sour gas gathering lines in Elbridge and Leavitt townships. According to local knowledge of the system, there is a collector line from a well in Hart Township, and collector lines in the Claybanks Township area that go all the way to the compressor Facility in Elbridge Township. From Elbridge, a high pressure line (1,200 psi) runs north into Manistee County. It is possible that other small sour gas pipelines exist within the county; however their location and current status are unknown.

It is also worth noting that there have been two known oil and gas wells involved in hydraulic fracturing operations in Oceana County. One of those is believed to have been capped. This method, also known as fracking, is used for the extraction of natural gas and petroleum products. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), hydraulic fracturing involves a five-step process which may have impacts on groundwater resources. EPA is currently conducting a study to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

## Infrastructure Summary

- The movement of people and goods throughout the county is heavily dependent upon vehicular transportation and can be negatively impacted by the condition of the road network.
- The road conditions in the county have been rated among the worst in the State of Michigan.
- Railroads, commercial air, and commercial sea modes of transportation must all be accessed beyond the borders of Oceana County.
- Access to high-speed Internet is rather limited.
- Utilities and municipal water and sewer services are commonly accessible in developed areas, primarily along Oceana Drive and in Hesperia.
- There is a small network of oil and gas wells and transmission pipelines in the county.

## Public Comments

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy access to Muskegon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High-speed Internet</li> <li>- Alternative energy: wind &amp; solar</li> <li>- Standardize alternative energy regulations</li> <li>- Extend natural gas lines</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roads               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poor condition</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding &amp; maintenance</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Lack of a north-south roadway in the eastern half of the county.</li> <li>- Bridges</li> <li>- High speed Internet availability and affordability</li> <li>- Cell phone service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roads</li> <li>- Wind turbines</li> <li>- Hesperia Dam removal</li> </ul>

## Visions for Infrastructure

- Infrastructure improvements are designed to be sustainable and resilient to natural forces.
- Roadway conditions are no longer among the worst in the state.
- A direct route connects the northeast quadrant of the county to other area of the county.
- Established communities have dependable municipal water and sewer systems.
- High-speed Internet services are available and affordable countywide.
- Alternative energy regulations are standardized, and few barriers to development of alternative energy resources exist.

## CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA), economic development creates the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, firms, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, lower transaction costs, and responsibly produce and trade valuable goods and services.

Economic development in Oceana County is supported by the Oceana County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), a not-for-profit corporation originated to assist business development needs in Oceana County. The goal of the EDC is to promote planned, balanced, and sustainable growth of the economy in Oceana County. The following goals which guide the EDC's activities are focused on the creation of new jobs, building on the community's existing strengths.

- Strengthen the small business community
- Encourage the expansion and retention of local businesses
- Diversify the local economic base
- Utilize government employment and training funds
- Ensure that the county has up-to-date telecommunications infrastructure

### a. Economy

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the average weekly wage in Oceana County in 2013 was \$623. Although this was an 18% increase since 1990, it was well below state (\$887) and national (\$958) averages.

Agriculture and tourism are the cornerstones of Oceana County's economy and identity. Even so, the Manufacturing sector provides more jobs in the county than any other industry. According to the BLS, Manufacturing accounted for nearly one out of every five jobs in Oceana County in 2013. Relatively low average annual wages characterize three of the county's top four industries: Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting; Accommodation and Food Services; and Retail Trade. One explanation for this is the seasonal nature of those sectors. Wages from seasonal enterprises converted to annual wages will naturally be low. Even so, it is no coincidence that it is a top community priority to increase the number of well-paying employment opportunities in the county. It is believed that doing so will make the county more attractive to families and young professionals, help retain more of the county's youth, and provide an economy that is more resilient during adverse conditions, such as an economic recession or natural disaster.

<b>Annual Industry Distribution of Jobs and Average Wage in 2013</b>	<b>% of Jobs in County</b>	<b>Annual Avg. Wage Per Job</b>
Oceana County	100.0%	\$32,144
Private	79.2%	\$30,139
Agri., forestry, hunting	10.8%	\$24,131
Mining	0.4%	\$33,324
Construction	3.6%	\$31,860
Manufacturing	19.6%	\$41,285
Wholesale trade	5.2%	\$73,536
Retail trade	10.0%	\$18,901
Transportation, warehousing	2.1%	\$53,855
Utilities	D	D
Information	D	D
Finance and Insurance	1.9%	\$38,545
Real Estate, rental, leasing	0.9%	\$17,096
Professional, technical services	0.7%	\$38,957
Mgmt. of companies, enterprises	N/A	N/A
Administrative, waste services	0.8%	\$29,797
Educational services	D	D
Health care, social assistance	D	D
Arts, entertainment, recreation	2.2%	\$11,901
Accommodation and food services	13.7%	\$13,927
Other services, exc. public admin.	2.2%	\$17,875
Public administration	7.8%	\$32,949

*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*  
D = Not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information.  
N/A = This item is not available.

<b>OCEANA COUNTY TOP EMPLOYERS</b>		
Employer	# of Employees	Business Description
Peterson Farms	600	Quick frozen and fresh fruit packing services
Double JJ Resort	310	Hotel, Waterpark, Golfing Resort
Arbre Farms	300	Quick frozen vegetables
GHSP-Hart	250	Injection molded plastic products, vehicle parts
Oceana County Medical Care	227	Skilled nursing care facility
Shelby Public School	220	Public School
Michigan Freeze Pack	200	Quick frozen vegetables
Hart Public Schools	175	Public School
Lakeshore Campus-Mercy Health	155	General Hospital
Gray & Company	144	Canned maraschino cherries
Burnett Foods	265	Dry Beans and expanding

*Source: Oceana County Economic Development Corporation, 2015*

In the wake of the U.S. economic recession between 2007 and 2009, the Oceana County unemployment rate peaked at 22.1% in February 2010. Since then, unemployment rates have been steadily improving. According to the Measuring Distress tool on statsamerica.org, the 24-month average unemployment rate in Oceana County for the period ending March 2015 was 9.75%. Although this rate is higher than state and national averages, it signifies a dramatic improvement over a short period. As of March 2015, the U.S. seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate stood at 5.5%, while Michigan's was 5.6%.

<b>OCEANA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT</b>										
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Employment	10,820	11,048	11,185	10,652	10,639	10,355	10,005	10,097	10,351	10,120
By Type (all industries)										
Wage and Salary	8,379	8,522	8,551	7,996	7,963	7,929	7,556	7,571	7,664	7,376
Proprietors	2,441	2,526	2,634	2,656	2,676	2,426	2,449	2,529	2,687	2,744
Top Five Employment Industries										
Farm	1,000	1,009	977	948	991	1,089	1,101	1,067	1,236	1,115
Manufacturing	1,189	1,430	1,634	2,053	2,009	1,744	1,525	1,477	1,492	1,349
Retail trade	1,092	1,068	1,041	1,091	1,003	909	903	881	896	900
Accommodation & food services	1,173	1,198	1,216	1,237	1,299	1,123	993	1,101	1,064	1,083
Gov't & gov't enterprises	1,679	1,635	1,671	1,609	1,675	1,745	1,786	1,808	1,721	1,623

*Source: WMSRDC Regional Economic and Demographic Projections; August 2009 and June 2014*

The table above shows the number of proprietors (people who work for themselves) in the county has increased every year from 2008 through 2012. This can be a positive sign of entrepreneurialship; or it can indicate a lack of jobs which forces citizens to work for themselves to make a living. Considering that the number of wage and salary jobs in the county decreased nearly 7% between 2008 and 2012, the more likely scenario for Oceana County is a lack of jobs. This creates a standard of living challenge for county residents, encourages families and young professionals to move away, and limits the number of new working families moving into the county.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, the average commute for Oceana County workers is about 23 minutes; which is a shade under the statewide average of 24 minutes. In addition, about 41% of working Oceana County residents travel outside the county, which is well above the 30% average for Michigan counties. About 21% of all Oceana County commuters travel to Muskegon County for work. These figures imply that Oceana County is a desirable place to live; a potential benefit for prospective businesses looking to start-up or relocate.

The Starting Block

In 2006, The Starting Block opened its doors at the Hart Industrial Park, and has served as West Michigan’s non-profit regional kitchen incubator and entrepreneurial center ever since. As a shared-use facility, it helps entrepreneurs start food-related businesses at reasonable rentals without the initial investment in costly facilities and equipment. The facility offers a fully-equipped licensed, commercial kitchen as well as two additional commercial, licensed kitchens for specialty and small-scale production, and a USDA-inspected meat processing facility. This is the first USDA-inspected meat processing incubator facility in the state, and one of few in the country. Certified food handling and equipment operation staff are available for assistance and training. Other services available at the facility include: low-cost kitchen rental; refrigerated, frozen, and dry storage; warehouse space; office rental; and assistance and support related to product development, marketing and outreach.

**b. Agriculture**

Oceana County is one of Michigan’s leading horticultural producers. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the county ranked first in the nation in acres of asparagus and tart cherries, second in the state in acreage of harvested vegetables, and second in the state in value of sales of “cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops.” Other top crop items for the county noted in the census included “corn for grain” and “forage-land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenchop.”

<b>OCEANA COUNTY AGRICULTURE PROFILE</b>			
	2012	2007	% Change
Number of Farms	609	648	- 6
Land in Farms (acres)	127,779	123,284	+ 4
Average Size of Farm	210	190	+ 11
Market Value of Products Sold	\$101,180,000	\$78,126,000	+ 30
Crop Sales	\$64,095,000		
Livestock Sales	\$37,085,000		
Average Per Farm	\$166,141	\$120,565	+ 38
Government Payments	2,529,000	1,083,000	+ 134
Average Per Farm	13,313	7,963	+ 67

*Source: USDA, 2012 Census of Agriculture*

Between 2007 and 2012, farms in Oceana County generally got larger, the total market value of product sold increased, and the total number of farms decreased by 6 percent. The issue of whether or not these trends are economically or environmentally sustainable is uncertain and potentially divisive. According to the Community Assessment Team (CAT) report produced by the Michigan State University Extension in 2002, “the agricultural industry is impacted by foreign competition, low prices, continual higher cost of production and tremendous demand on utility. These factors limit creation of wealth.” In essence, the margin of economic benefit to the community has limits. Sustainable farming practices must be upheld in the face of external challenges in order to maintain the integrity of the environment and the productivity of the land well into the future.

Another trend related to the declining number of farms in the county is the steadily increasing average age of farm operators since at least 1978. This trend suggests that the younger population is not considering farming.

AVERAGE AGE OF FARM OPERATORS					
1978	1982	1987	1992	2007	2012
49.7	49.6	50.5	51.8	54.5	56.3

*Source: United States Department of Agriculture*

Annual employment figures for the agricultural sector are difficult to pin down because of (1) its seasonal nature; (2) a large numbers of seasonal and migrant workers involved; and (3) some processes associated with agriculture may actually be tallied in other sectors such as the food manufacturing subsector. With that said, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics attributed 10.8% of all Oceana County jobs in 2013 to the Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting sector with an average annual wage of \$24,131. Many of the county’s largest employers are agricultural operations, or are closely tied to the industry.

Migrant and seasonal labor is a significant aspect of agriculture in Oceana County. In 2013, an estimated 4,738 migrant farmworkers and their families came into the county. If all these people came at the same time, it would have increased the county’s population by 18%. This influx of population brings an increased need for social services encompassing employment, education, healthcare, public benefits, legal services, and other assistance. In addition, a majority of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are Hispanic or Latino, which adds dimensions of language and cultural barriers to the mix.

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS (MSFW)	
Oceana County	
▪ Migrant-seasonal farmworkers: 3,625 (3 <sup>rd</sup> in state behind Ottawa and Van Buren)	
– Migrant: 2,480	
– Seasonal: 1,146	
▪ Non-farmworkers in migrant households: 2,258	
▪ Non-farmworkers in seasonal households: 1,077	
▪ Total MSFW workers and non-farmworkers: 6,960	
<i>Source: Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study, 2013</i>	

A survey conducted for the 2013 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Report for the state of Michigan found “a general sense there may be more seasonal workers and fewer migrants.”

The survey further identified that “this could be due to immigration issues which cause people to travel less and settle out of the migrant stream with their families around them.” This trend is likely contributing to the growing Hispanic and Latino population in Oceana County. Between 2010 and 2013, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates have shown a consistent increase in the Hispanic or Latino population, even as the total county population has declined.

**c. Tourism**

Tourism in Oceana County is typically centered around outdoor recreation opportunities during the warmer spring, summer, and fall months. Major tourist attractions in the county include state parks, camping, dunes and beaches along the Lake Michigan shoreline, bike trails, golf courses, Double JJ Resort, water sports, and festivals. Silver Lake State Park, which offers a slew of recreation opportunities, attracts approximately 850,000 visitors each year, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail State Park is a paved, 22-mile trail which offers biking, cross-country skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, and wildlife watching opportunities. A project to widen and repave the trail was undertaken in 2015 and 2016. Agri-tourism attractions such as Lewis Farms, Country Dairy, and various wineries are also gaining in popularity. During the snowy winter months, opportunities such as snowmobiling, cross country skiing, and ice fishing draw a smaller number of visitors to the county.

Unfortunately, many of the activities mentioned above are seasonal and do not provide year-round economic benefits. This aspect of the tourism industry presents a certain burden on the community. The 2002 CAT report posited that tourism brings few dollars into the community, yet demands large volumes of community and utility support.

Economy subsectors that depend upon tourism include Accommodation and Food Services; Arts, Entertainment Recreation; and Retail Trade. Altogether, these subsectors garnered 25.9% of all Oceana County jobs in 2013, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Double JJ Ranch in Rothbury is one of the county’s largest employers, and is generally open year-round.

**d. Manufacturing**

The Manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products. The assembling of component parts of manufactured products is considered manufacturing, except in cases where the activity is appropriately classified in the Construction sector.

Manufacturing establishments are often described as plants, factories, or mills and characteristically use power-driven machines and materials-handling equipment. However, establishments that transform materials or substances into new products by hand or in the worker's home and those engaged in selling to the general public products made on the same premises from which they are sold, such as bakeries, candy stores, and custom tailors, may also be included in this sector. Manufacturing establishments may process materials or may contract with other establishments to process their materials for them. Both types of establishments are included in manufacturing.

According to the 2002 CAT report, industrial businesses historically produce the most tax revenues for the least amount of required services (police, fire, tec.). Industrial businesses typically produce higher hourly wages, health care, and other long-term benefits than other sectors. They attract support, commercial, and office businesses; produce the need for daily professional services, such as attorneys, human resources experts, and accountants; and generate new revenue for philanthropic needs of the community.

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, Manufacturing held 19.6% of Oceana County jobs in 2013. In addition, Manufacturing provided the highest average annual wage per job among the county’s top four employment sectors, and the third highest among all sectors. Wholesale Trade and Transportation, Warehousing provided the top two in average wages, but only comprised 7.3% of all jobs.

<b>OCEANA COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARKS</b>	Total Acres	Total Developed Acres	Total Undeveloped Acres	Contact
Hart Industrial Park	40	20	20	Oceana County EDC Anne Hardy 231-873-7141
Shelby Industrial Park	45	35	10	

*Source: 2015 Annual CEDS Report, WMSRDC*

**Economic Development Summary**

- Agriculture and tourism are the foundation of Oceana County’s economy and identity.
- The unemployment rate in Oceana County is greater than state and national averages.
- A significant portion of residents commute to work outside the county, especially Muskegon County.
- Oceana County led the country in acreage of asparagus and tart cherries in 2012.
- Agriculture in Oceana County is reliant on labor provided by migrant and seasonal farmworkers.
- Agriculture and Tourism have seasonal impacts on the local economy.
- Nearly one in five jobs in Oceana County is in the Manufacturing sector.

**Public Comments**

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agricultural diversity</li> <li>- New businesses and opportunities for employment</li> <li>- Industrial parks</li> <li>- Starting Block incubator</li> <li>- Tech Center</li> <li>- Resorts (including Double JJ)</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tech training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses closing</li> <li>- Unprepared workforce</li> </ul>

**Visions for Economic Development**

- Citizens live and work within the county.
- Oceana County’s workforce is trained, educated, and able to accommodate a variety of manufacturing operations.
- Oceana County is a year-round destination for tourism and recreation.
- Oceana County is a leader in agricultural production of a diversity of high-value crops.
- Oceana County businesses create value-added products utilizing agriculture and forestry products harvested locally.

## CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community development ranges from small initiatives within a small group to large initiatives that involve the broader community. Within the context of this plan, community development considers broad conditions under which Oceana County is developing.

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE:

- a long-term endeavor,
- well-planned,
- inclusive and equitable,
- holistic and integrated into the bigger picture,
- initiated and supported by community members,
- of benefit to the community, and
- grounded in experience that leads to best practices.

*Adapted from The Community Development Handbook: A Tool to Build Community Capacity, by Flo Frank and Anne Smith for Human Resources Development Canada.*

### a. Land Cover and Land Use

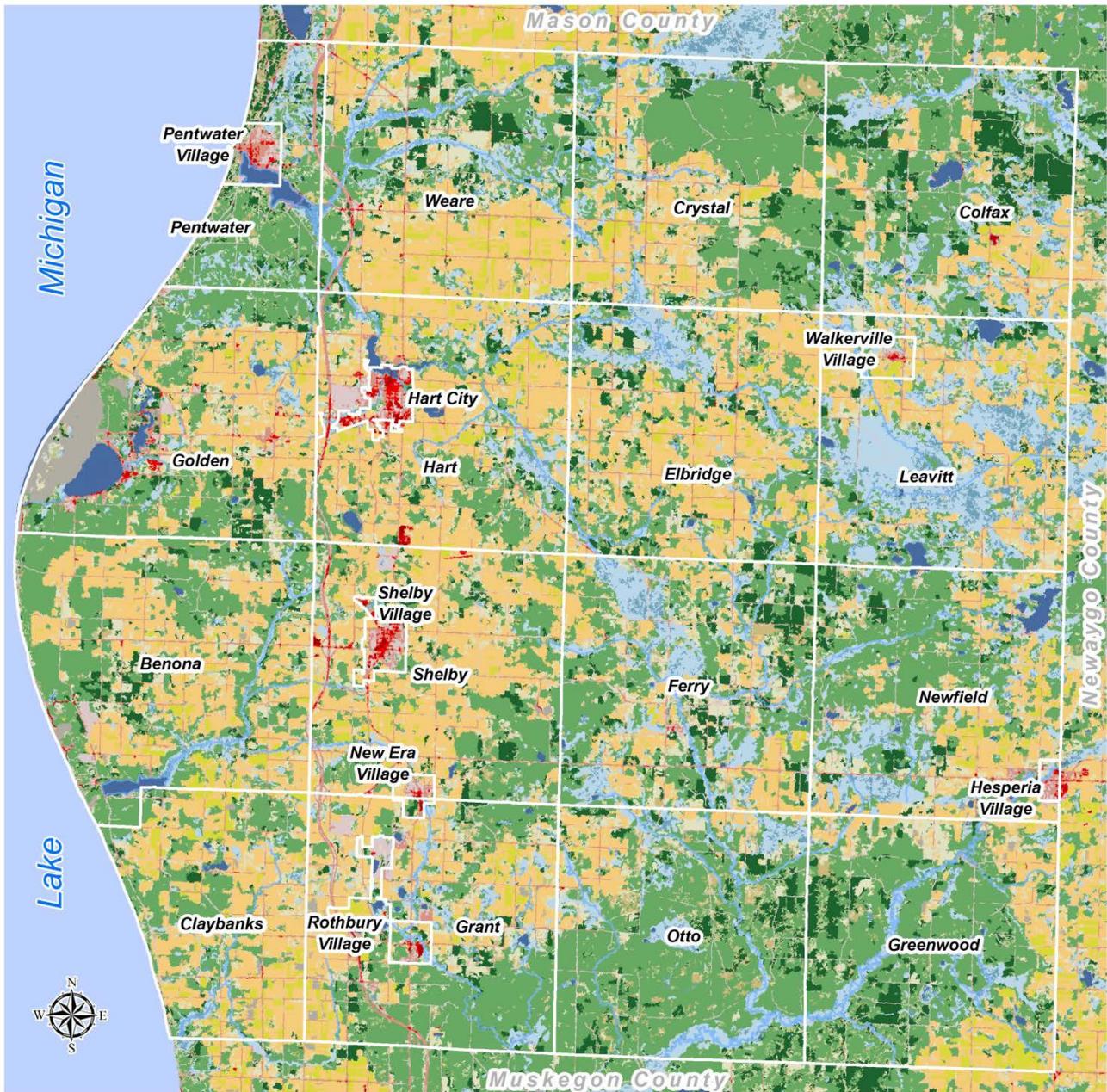
*Land cover* can be determined by analyzing satellite and aerial imagery. This is an important distinction from *land use*, which cannot be determined from satellite imagery. Land cover maps provide information to help understand the current landscape. Over time, land cover maps can be compared to evaluate past management decisions as well as gain insight into the possible effects of their current decisions before they are implemented. The following information is presented to establish a baseline for future land cover comparisons.

According to 2011 land cover data created by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium (MRLC), almost 31% of Oceana County is covered by deciduous forest with the largest portions in the southeastern and northeastern areas. Deciduous forest also covers significant portions of the mid- and north-western areas of the county. The second most prevalent land cover type is cultivated crops which make up about 24% of the total. This cover is generally interspersed through the county, and is most prevalent along the US-31 corridor and between Hart and Walkerville. Woody wetlands and herbaceous vegetation are the third and fourth most prevalent land cover types covering about 10% and 9% of the total land area respectively. These land covers exist mostly along rivers and streams. High, medium, and low intensity development only account for about 3.65% of the total land cover, and are most prevalent in the county's city and villages. However, notable densities do exist in the western part of the county and along the shores of Lake Michigan and some larger inland lakes.

In terms of land use, more land is used for agriculture than any other land use in Oceana County. In addition, the use of land for housing and shelter reflects a significant proportion of all land uses in most areas. While the western half of the county is close to Lake Michigan and easily accessible from US-31, the eastern half of the county is predominately rural and less developed. The western half has a great deal of tourism and tourism-based characteristics, while the eastern half is mainly agriculture and undeveloped forestland.

OCEANA COUNTY LAND COVER	%
Open Water	1.10
Developed, Open Space	3.85
Developed, Low Intensity	3.22
Developed, Med. Intensity	0.35
Developed, High Intensity	0.08
Barren Land	0.97
Deciduous Forest	30.69
Evergreen Forest	6.74
Mixed Forest	1.94
Shrub/Scrub	2.45
Herbaceous	9.01
Hay/Pasture	2.94
Cultivated Crops	24.30
Woody Wetlands	10.10
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	2.23
<i>Percentages calculated by WMSRDC. Source: MRLC NLCD Database, 2011</i>	

# Oceana County 2011 Land Cover



## NLCD Classifications

	Barren Land		Developed, Low Intensity		Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands		Mixed Forest
	Cultivated Crops		Developed, Medium Intensity		Evergreen Forest		Open Water
	Deciduous Forest		Developed, Open Space		Hay/Pasture		Shrub/Scrub
	Developed, High Intensity		Herbaceous		Woody Wetlands		

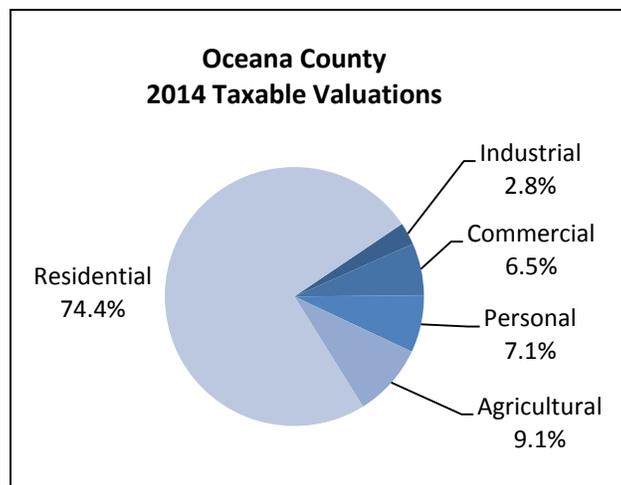
**WMSRDC** WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
 Map Created May 2014 Source: MRLC NLCD Database 2011, MI Geographic Framework V12

## b. Property Values

From 2002 through 2009, Oceana County experienced dramatic property valuation increases. However between 2009 and 2012, most local jurisdictions experienced declines in excess of 10%. Valuations began to level off by 2014. In 2015, according to the Oceana County Equalization Department, Oceana County saw the first countywide taxable value increase in eight years. It is notable that the shoreline townships of Benona, Claybanks, Golden, and Pentwater combined for over 50% of the county's property valuations in 2014.

	<b>TOTAL REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY VALUATIONS</b>						% Change	% Change
	2009 (\$)		2012 (\$)		2014 (\$)		2009-2012	2012-2014
Benona	262,932,400	14.53%	215,077,100	13.85%	209,287,631	13.90%	-18.20%	-2.69%
Claybanks	103,990,392	5.75%	84,833,862	5.46%	88,867,717	5.90%	-18.42%	4.76%
Colfax	54,349,161	3.00%	46,724,800	3.01%	48,498,300	3.22%	-14.03%	3.80%
Crystal	30,119,770	1.66%	30,221,560	1.95%	29,730,228	1.97%	0.34%	-1.63%
Elbridge	41,061,512	2.27%	38,956,878	2.51%	37,896,700	2.52%	-5.13%	-2.72%
Ferry	40,767,200	2.25%	35,904,400	2.31%	33,267,500	2.21%	-11.93%	-7.34%
Golden	281,288,819	15.54%	229,063,297	14.75%	228,448,779	15.17%	-18.57%	-0.27%
Grant	109,865,192	6.07%	82,438,961	5.31%	81,461,266	5.41%	-24.96%	-1.19%
Greenwood	37,261,400	2.06%	33,548,200	2.16%	32,243,900	2.14%	-9.97%	-3.89%
Hart	107,962,600	5.97%	110,326,400	7.10%	112,613,400	7.48%	2.19%	2.07%
Leavitt	34,075,158	1.88%	30,647,200	1.97%	31,565,000	2.10%	-10.06%	2.99%
Newfield	91,702,898	5.07%	73,329,025	4.72%	72,484,850	4.81%	-20.04%	-1.15%
Otto	29,123,400	1.61%	22,979,900	1.48%	22,924,000	1.52%	-21.09%	-0.24%
Pentwater	329,811,800	18.22%	292,410,000	18.83%	263,512,300	17.50%	-11.34%	-9.88%
Shelby	130,654,400	7.22%	115,445,700	7.43%	104,941,300	6.97%	-11.64%	-9.10%
Weare	59,059,500	3.26%	49,944,800	3.22%	52,101,800	3.46%	-15.43%	4.32%
Hart City	65,748,002	3.63%	61,215,173	3.94%	56,341,308	3.74%	-6.89%	-7.96%
Oceana Co	1,809,773,604	100%	1,553,067,256	100%	1,506,185,979	100%	-14.18%	-3.02%

Sources: Oceana County Equalization Department; Michigan Department of Treasury State Tax Commission



### **c. Local Planning**

Local governments in Oceana County are facing a bevy of challenges: attraction and retention of residents and jobs; provision, maintenance, and expansion of services and infrastructure; and protection of sensitive environmental and agricultural lands. These are but a sample of the common planning issues facing communities in the county. Resolving problems such as these requires a cooperative, comprehensive, and flexible approach.

One obstacle to crafting effective solutions lies in the existing planning structure of local governments: typically future development is guided by land use plans which are prepared and adopted by local units of government. There are 23 units of government within Oceana County, all of which are legally authorized to engage in community planning. Only two local governments are known to lack a land use plan, zoning ordinance, or both.

It is widely known that community development issues, such as housing affordability, availability, access to utility services and aesthetics, can be exacerbated in areas where zoning is limited, non-existent, or unenforced. On the other hand, over-zoning may inhibit the potential to achieve planned, incremental growth by permitting scattered growth over large areas of a community. It is important to acknowledge that a zoned, residential development may eventually demand more services (roads, schools, and public safety) than it will pay for in taxes. Zoning density should reflect existing levels of land use and public services. Planned density can be higher in communities that are willing and able provide to a higher level of public services.

Future development in Oceana County should be tailored in a way that protects the assets which make Oceana County a desirable place to live. Land use planning policies in Oceana County should encourage new development or redevelopment to be located within existing communities and infrastructure as often as possible. Doing so will help protect rural and forested areas from sprawling development, which if left unchecked, can be detrimental to a community by destroying irreplaceable natural resources and increasing demands for services and infrastructure. To the extent practicable, new developments outside of established communities should be designed to minimize impacts on natural resources and avoid fragmentation of natural areas.

This master plan is but one aspect in the pursuit of long term-prosperity and sustainability in Oceana County. It is not legally enforceable, and the County of Oceana does not engage in zoning. Planning and zoning are conducted primarily at the city, village, and township level. Therefore, the onus is on local leaders to ensure that local decisions and development plans help move the county toward the visions maintained within this document. The ultimate utility of this plan hinges upon the ability and willingness of local leaders to take collective ownership in this plan. This includes: incorporating this plan's goals into local planning processes; maintaining a relationship with the Oceana County Planning Commission to ensure that needs and desires are effectively reflected within this plan; and coordinating with other communities to ensure that local plans are coordinated and do not conflict with one another.

**Community Development Summary**

- Forests are the most common land cover in Oceana County; followed by cultivated crops and wetlands. Altogether, those types of land cover make up about three-quarters of the landscape.
- The prevailing land use, in terms of acreage, in Oceana County is agriculture.
- Residential properties make up nearly three-quarters of the county’s taxable valuations.
- Property values have declined significantly in recent years.
- A majority of county’s property value is held along the Lake Michigan shoreline communities.
- Planning and zoning on the city, village, and township level have the most authority to impact land use patterns.

**Public Comments**

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Farm land</li> <li>- Law enforcement &amp; fire protection</li> <li>- District #10 Health Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased communication</li> <li>- Intergovernmental cooperation</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication (east side vs west side)</li> <li>- Government &amp; leadership</li> <li>- No rental ordinance</li> <li>- Transportation planning and funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misinformation</li> <li>- Lack of long-term plans (reactionary planning)</li> <li>- Right to Farm Act revocation</li> <li>- High taxes</li> </ul>

**Visions for Community Development**

- The county and local communities engage in proactive planning, rather than reactive planning.
- New developments are encouraged to be planned in areas with access to utilities and services.
- Oceana County Planning Commission reviews and comments on proposed changes to local master plans and zoning ordinances to ensure consistency with countywide Goals and Objectives.
- Local communities and citizens support and contribute to countywide Goals and Objectives regarding the future of Oceana County.
- Youth and young adults are involved in planning for the future.

## CHAPTER 7: GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Chapters 2 through 6 provided an overview of existing conditions and public comments, which were then synthesized into optimistic “visions” for desired conditions 20-25 years in the future. Those visions are the foundation for the Goals contained within this chapter. The Goals are augmented by Objectives, which provide a greater level of detail and/or possible strategies for achieving the Goals.

The Goals and Objectives are intended to guide planning decisions throughout the county. They are not prescriptive and they are not set in stone. The Oceana County Planning Commission will assess the relevance, effectiveness and feasibility of the Goals & Objectives at least once every five years. However, the Planning Commission welcomes input and suggestions from citizens, local governments, and other community stakeholders at all times.

### Quality of Life

- Preserve the community’s rural character and strong sense of community.
  - Encourage new development to occur near existing infrastructure and services.
  - Enhance access to and coordination of senior services.
  - Work with hospitals and health care providers to meet underserved health care needs.
- Maintain a balanced age distribution.
  - Achieve a median age less than 40 years of age.
  - Retain young adults.
  - Attract families and young adults to balance the increasing number of retirees.
- Improve the housing stock to meet the needs of current and prospective new residents.
  - Increase the availability of assisted living units.
  - Improve the quality and quantity of rental housing, especially near jobs and services.
- Support K-12, Career Technical Education, and Adult Education programs.
  - Encourage career technical education (CTE) programming within Oceana County.
  - Establish relationships with nearby colleges and universities.
- Increase opportunities for year-round outdoor and indoor recreation for residents and visitors.
  - Increase public access to Lake Michigan.
  - Promote local arts and cultural activities.

### Environment

- Balance public and private uses of the Lake Michigan shoreline areas with preservation of sensitive dune environments.
  - Support activities that strike a balance between smart growth, public access, and the environment.
- Protect surface water features.
  - Support preservation of wetlands and use of greenbelts.
- Guard against potential sources of groundwater pollution.
  - Utilize and enforce wellhead protection areas around municipal wells.

- Encourage good agricultural practices and landowner stewardship.
- Coordinate forest management between local, state, and federal entities.
  - Encourage practices that allow large forest tracts to remain reasonably intact and connected.
  - Utilize the information and recommendations contained within the Oceana County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
  - Encourage development of forest management plans to responsibly harvest timber.
- Incorporate consideration of natural hazards into land use and zoning practices to ensure the development of resilient communities and public infrastructure.
  - Utilize the information and recommendations contained within the Oceana County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### **Infrastructure**

- Design infrastructure improvements to be more resilient to natural forces.
- Improve roadway conditions.
  - Utilize asset management to assess conditions and prioritize road and bridge maintenance.
- Improve access to the northeast quadrant of the county.
  - Support designation of direct routes.
- Maintain dependable municipal water and sewer systems.
  - Help communities maintain water and sewer infrastructure to prevent costly failures.
  - Adhere to state regulations around wellhead protection areas.
- Increase availability and affordability of high-speed Internet services countywide.
  - Work with service providers to develop high-speed Internet capabilities.
- Reduce barriers to development of energy resources other than fossil and nuclear fuels.
  - Standardize alternative energy regulations.

### **Economic Development**

- Increase opportunities for year-round employment.
  - Coordinate provision of Career Technical Education opportunities to prepare the workforce.
  - Encourage Starting Block patrons to locate permanent businesses in Oceana County.
  - Identify possible locations for additional low-impact manufacturing operations with access to, or within close proximity to municipal services.
  - Market the Oceana County quality of life to entice businesses to locate in the county.
- Diversify Tourism opportunities.
  - Develop and market more “off-season” attractions, such as winter recreation opportunities.
  - Support Agri-tourism.
- Support a diversity of agricultural production.
  - Pursue value-added agricultural and forestry activities.

## **Community Development**

- Engage in proactive planning, rather than reactive planning.
  - Encourage new developments to locate in areas with access to utilities and services.
  - Encourage consistent enforcement of local zoning ordinances.
  - Foster working relationships with local communities and regularly share planning, land use, and infrastructure information.
  - Conduct a “build-out analysis” to provide insight into the current course of land use planning and zoning at the county scale.
  - Conduct an Agricultural Preservation Study to identify critical areas of county farmland and to justify their preservation at the local level.
- Promote countywide visions for the future of Oceana County.
  - Review and comment on proposed changes to local master plans and zoning ordinances to ensure consistency with countywide Goals and Objectives.
  - Coordinate planning, zoning, and infrastructure decisions with local, county, state, and federal agencies operating in Oceana County in a manner consistent with this plan.
- Involve youth and young adults in planning for the future.
  - Consider establishing a Planning Commission subcommittee for youth, perhaps in partnership with local school districts.
  - Identify the needs and desires of youth and young adults.

## CHAPTER 8: FUTURE LAND USE

Between 1990 and 2000, Oceana County experienced a large population increase of 19.7%. Growth has essentially stalled since that time; but concerns about uncontrolled growth in Oceana County have lingered. As a result, there is a strong desire for land use planning policies and practices that encourage new residential, commercial, and industrial development to occur within developed communities with access to municipal services. It is a major priority of the community to protect rural areas from sprawling development and preserve the rural character that typifies Oceana County.

This chapter presents eight generalized land use categories, which are defined within this chapter and illustrated on the Future Land Use Map. These categories are intended to convey a mix of preferred possible uses, rather than specific uses. When all are shown together on the Future Land Use Map, a broad overview of the county's future land use can be gleaned.

Overall, the proposed land use pattern is compact. It encourages the most intense residential, commercial and industrial developments to be located in and around locations with access to municipal water and sewer services. Areas that are public land and recreation in 2016 are assumed to mainly remain as such in the next 20- 25 years. Agricultural areas are also intended to remain as agriculture land use with minimal fragmentation from low density residential land uses.

This Future Land Use chapter is intended to help community leaders and developers visualize the development of Oceana County 20-25 years into the future. Also keep in mind that this vision is expected to change with the times. The proposed future land use categories and accompanying map were developed based on a blending of:

- A strong respect for local control of land use planning and zoning decisions. The existing future land use maps and zoning maps of Oceana County municipalities played a prominent role in the delineation of the future land use categories on the map.
- The importance of agriculture and undeveloped lands to the community character and the economic identity of the county.
- The desires of residents and public officials as expressed through their participation in public forums and meetings, and Planning Commission meetings.
- The natural capability of the land to sustain certain types of land use.
- The tangible and intangible benefits provided by natural resources and fragile ecosystems.
- The anticipated need for various land uses, given the existing land use distribution.

The Future Land Use Map should be a general representation of the recommendations of this Master Plan. Together with the Goals and Objectives, these become the vision for the development of Oceana County 20-25 years into the future. They will be most effective when used in coordination with the Existing Land Use Map, community profile information, and other resources referenced within this plan.

Please note that the Future Land Use Map does not intend to impose or imply the application of a particular set of regulations to a particular property. The scale is not sufficient to depict use on a parcel basis. Please refer to local zoning ordinances for parcel-specific regulations.

## **Generalized Future Land Use Categories**

### **a. Sensitive Environments Overlay**

This category indicates the general location of certain sensitive environments in Oceana County so that appropriate measures are taken before the land is developed. This may require due diligence to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations. These areas are valued for their natural functions, irreplaceable characteristics, and scenic benefits. On the Future Land Use Map, this category is represented by a transparent overlay to demonstrate its relationships and intersections with other land uses.

Environmentally sensitive features included in this category are wetlands, critical dunes, high-risk erosion parcels, and floodplains. Also included are setbacks for the two Michigan Natural Rivers systems within Oceana County: Pere Marquette River and White River. These features are described and shown within Chapter 3: Environment.

#### **Notes:**

- A 150 foot buffer on either side of the identified natural rivers and tributaries has been used to generally represent Natural River setbacks within this layer on the Future Land Use Map. The actual setback for a given river segment or tributary may be greater or lesser than 150 feet. Refer to the Natural River Plan for the Pere Marquette River and the White River for more information.
- National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data was used to represent wetlands within this layer, and may not necessarily include all wetlands that are subject to state and federal regulations. In addition, only wetlands of 5 acres or more were included within this layer on the Future Land Use Map.

### **b. Public Lands & Recreation**

This category includes existing public and private parks, nature preserves, youth camps, golf courses, lands owned by local, state and federal governments, and school properties.

Lands included within this category are generally assumed to maintain their current uses over the next 20-25 years. To the extent practicable, these areas should be connected by natural corridors in order to enhance natural wildlife and recreation opportunities.

### **c. Rural**

This category is intended to include agricultural and rural residential land uses, as well as privately-owned forests. Public water and wastewater services are not anticipated to be extended into this area.

Areas within this category that are actively farmed or are capable of being farmed should primarily remain undeveloped to preserve farmland and prevent the premature conversion of farmland into other land uses. Critical areas could be delineated more carefully as a result of a separate Agriculture Preservation Plan.

Residential uses within this category should primarily be characterized by low density residential use in areas typically not well suited for long-term agricultural production. Residential land use within this category may serve as an effective transitional buffer between the agricultural land uses and other types of development. There should also be an allowance for seasonal population concentrations to meet the needs of local agriculture.

A low density of residential development is preferred to appropriately accommodate rural residences with on-site septic systems. Risks of greater development densities may include impacts on groundwater resources, and additional strains on county and local services and transportation infrastructure. However, it may be possible that dwellings could be clustered on smaller lots with individual septic systems or a common septic system to leave more open space.

#### **d. Small Community**

This category acknowledges unincorporated settlements that lack access to municipal water and wastewater infrastructure. The character of these locations is predominately residential neighborhoods; however there may also be local commercial establishments to serve local and seasonal populations.

#### **e. Incorporated Community**

This category identifies incorporated communities (one city and six villages) which typically feature a mix of land uses, including Residential, Commerce, and Industry. Wastewater treatment and public water services may also be available in these areas, which allow for higher densities of development such as apartment buildings, townhouses, mobile home parks, affordable housing, hotels, and industrial developments.

#### **f. Residential**

This residential land use category would most commonly include single family residential developments and subdivisions with a range of densities. Higher densities may be found in areas that are connected to, or are located near, public or shared water and wastewater infrastructure. These areas are typically situated near incorporated communities, the Lake Michigan shoreline, or inland water bodies. Affordable housing developments, such as low and medium rise apartments, townhouses, and mobile home parks should be located near incorporated communities with access to goods and services. For purposes of this map, planned unit developments (PUD) are included in this category as well.

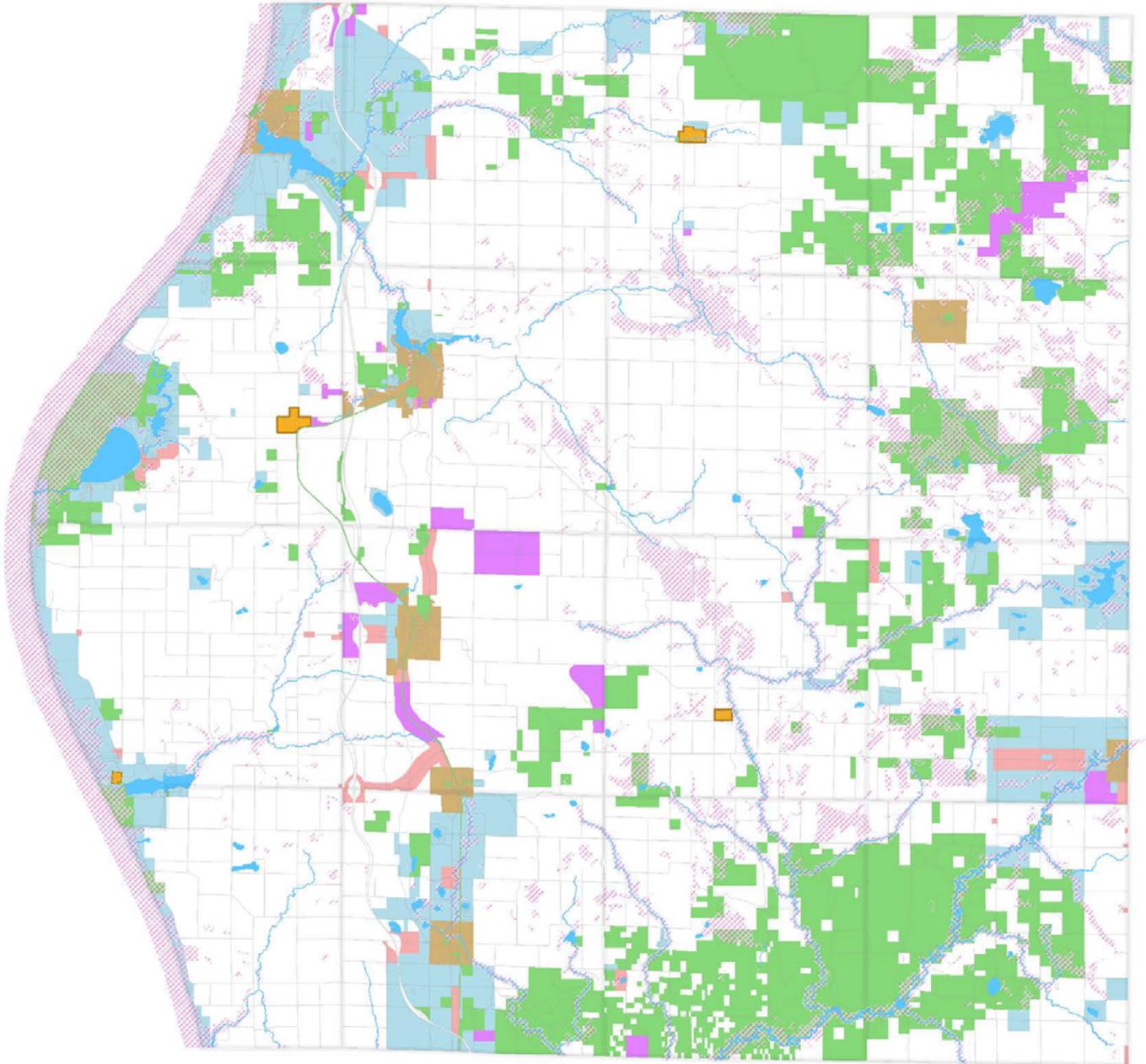
#### **g. Commerce**

This category includes commercial land uses that are beyond the boundaries of incorporated communities. The character of commercial activity would vary depending on its location: areas near highways may be geared towards serving the traveling population; areas near incorporated communities may be geared towards goods and services to serve local or regional populations; and isolated commercial areas in seasonal or rural locations may be geared towards serving the convenience needs of local residents and visitors.

#### **h. Industry**

New industrial development is intended to have minimal environmental impacts and would include a mix of operations such as light manufacturing, food processing, research, and vacant land in designated industrial parks. Other compatible activities within these areas might include warehousing, distributing, and office buildings. It is a preference that these areas have access to public water and sewer infrastructure and all-seasons roads. Existing industrial developments occur primarily within or near incorporated communities. Industrial sites associated with agricultural processes, such as processing plants, may also be found in rural areas where it is convenient to locate these facilities close to farms.

# Oceana County GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE MAP



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Rural                  |  Commerce                      |
|  Small Community        |  Industry                      |
|  Residential            |  Public Lands & Recreation     |
|  Incorporated Community |  Sensitive Enviroments Overlay |

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

This map is intended for general planning purposes only. Created in December 2015 for the Oceana County Master Plan.

**WMSRDC**  
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

## **CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION**

This plan presents a profile of Oceana County that is organized under the themes of Quality of Life, Environment, Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Community Development. Interestingly, many of the topics discussed within each theme could very well be discussed in another, demonstrating that Oceana County is an intricate ecosystem with an interconnected network of players and characteristics. To make matters more complex, the county ecosystem is constantly reacting to external forces that are often unforeseeable and unpredictable. Care must be taken to keep the bigger picture in mind when planning for the future.

The Oceana County Master Plan is designed to be flexible and change with the times. It should be used as a tool to stimulate dialogue between citizens, government officials, and other stakeholders regarding land use and community planning in Oceana County. A concerted effort from all community players to communicate and cooperate will help the county achieve the Goals & Objectives contained within this plan. It is the responsibility of the Oceana County Planning Commission to continuously seek input from community stakeholders and make the appropriate adjustments to this plan in order to maintain a relevant and realistic countywide vision for the future.

Chapter 7, Goals & Objectives, provides a mix of guiding principles and possible strategies for helping Oceana County achieve desired outcomes 20-25 years from now. This collection of statements and recommendations was developed through a planning process that included input from the public and research of data and demographics that were deemed relevant at the time. Implementation of the Goals & Objectives will primarily be in the hands of the Oceana County Planning Commission as it helps coordinate land use and community development throughout the county. It is also important that local governments consider the Goals & Objectives of this plan as they review their own plans for the future, and provide constructive feedback to the County Planning Commission so that it may stay in touch with local needs and desires.

**APPENDIX A**  
Documentation

**Public Notice Published in the Oceana Herald-Journal  
October 10 & October 31, 2014**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS REGARDING  
OCEANA COUNTY MASTER PLAN

The Oceana County Planning Commission, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, has begun the process of updating the Oceana County Master Plan. This planning document will communicate a vision for the future of Oceana County over the next 5 to 20 years.

A series of four public meetings will be held at various locations across the county to gather information from residents that will help shape the Master Plan. Each meeting will feature a SWOT Analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to Oceana County. The public is invited to attend any or all of the meetings listed below. All meetings will begin at 7:00 pm.

Monday, October 27 at Newfield Township Hall

Wednesday, October 29 at Grant Township Hall

Tuesday, November 11 at Walkerville Area Fire & Rescue

Wednesday, November 12 at West Shore Educational Service District (ESD) in Hart

For additional information about the Oceana County Master Plan or the Public Meetings, please contact Mr. Stephen Carlson, Senior Planner, at (231) 722-7878, extension 11 or at [scarlson@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrdc.org).

**Public Notice Published in the Oceana Herald-Journal  
February 18 & March 17, 2016**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING  
OCEANA COUNTY MASTER PLAN DRAFT

The Oceana County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, April 7, 2016 to receive comments regarding the proposed draft of the Oceana County Master Plan. The draft plan was created by the Oceana County Planning Commission, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC)

The public meeting will take place at 1:30 PM at the Oceana County Building located at 100 S. State Street, Hart, MI 49420. A paper copy of the proposed Master Plan is available for public review at the County Administrator's office, as well as at public libraries in Hart, Hesperia, Pentwater, Shelby and Walkerville. The proposed Master Plan is also available for download at <http://oceana.mi.us/oceana-county-master-plan/>.

Written comments regarding the proposed Master Plan may be submitted no later than April 6, 2016 to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, P.O. Box 387, Muskegon, Michigan 49440 or via email to [scarlson@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrdc.org). If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Stephen Carlson, Senior Planner, at (231) 722-7878, extension 11.

# Oceana County Planning Commission Minutes (excerpt) Draft Approval and Transmission to County Board

Oceana County Planning Commission  
January 7, 2016

and the rest is privately owned. In another aspect within the Community Wildfire Protection Planning process, a concern was raised that access routes are inaccessible to emergency vehicles. Having increased public access points would help.

Page 20 – with respect to the vulnerability of ground water, the wording “gasoline storage” should read “fuel storage”.

Page 21 – purchase of development rights are already taking place. This should be expanded to read some have already sold their development rights.

Page 23 – links should be listed to where additional information on FEMA floodplains can be referenced.

Visionary Section – update potential hazards depending on groundwater due to the sandiness of the soil.

Public Transportation Section - adjust to read Oceana County Council on Aging provides transportation to all county residents with handicap and seniors taking first priority.

Page 27 – Michcon needs to be adjusted to read DTE and gas serving Upper Silver Lake area

Chapter Five – in the Economic Development section, a vision statement should be included to read value added manufacturing in the area of forestry products can be produced from the large amount of forests within Oceana County. This would be valuable to the county.

Page 38 – Property values

Appendix 3 – a date correction from 2015 to 2014.

Population section – The 2010 census method changed from the 2000 census method which could have impacted the overall trends. A statement to this section should be added to reflect the method change.

Once the Board of Commissioners approves the Master Plan for public review and a public notice is in place, then the 63 day review period begins.

*Moved by Mr. Whelpley and seconded by Mr. Roseman to recommend to the Oceana Board of Commissioners the approved changes to the Oceana County Master Plan as corrected. Voice vote. Motion carried.*

## GIS UPDATE

Mr. Roseman stated he reviewed an article titled “GIS Technology a Life Saving Tool for Township Fire Departments”. The GIS committee is discussing options for opening documents, linking parcels and addresses to locations.

## OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Whelpley discussed his upcoming attendance at a MTA meeting in which the discussion will include setting up a training regarding Open Meeting Acts.

**Oceana County Board Resolution  
Draft Distribution and Right of Final Approval**



**Oceana County  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
County Building  
100 S. State Street, Suite M-4  
Hart, Michigan 49420



RESOLUTION RE APPROVAL OF OCEANA COUNTY MASTER PLAN

Moved by Mr. Byl and seconded by Mr. Walker to approve distribution of the draft Master Plan for the 63-day review period.

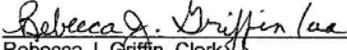
The purpose of the Oceana County Master Plan, a land use document that attempts to address issues different from those of an ordinary land use plan to include infrastructure, population, economics, county and other governmental services and the general quality of life, is to provide policy and guide decision-making for future land and infrastructure development decisions within the entire area of Oceana County.

Further, after the appropriate review period and approval of the final document by the Oceana County Planning Commission, the Oceana County Master Plan will be presented to the Oceana County Board of Commissioners for its final approval.

Roll call vote: Byl, yes; Walker, yes; Brown, yes; Kolbe, yes; Sebolt, yes; Gustafson, absent; and, Powers, yes. Motion carried.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The undersigned, being the Clerk of Oceana County, does hereby certify that on the 28th day of January, 2016, the Oceana County Board of Commissioners did adopt the above Resolution at its Regular Meeting.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rebecca J. Griffin, Clerk  
Oceana County  
Board of Commissioners

# Oceana County Planning Commission Minutes Public Hearing and Transmission to County Board

## OCEANA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Oceana County Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Soles on Thursday, April 7, 2016 at 1:30 P.M.

Roll was called. Present: Mr. Roseman, Ms. Ohrling, Mr. DeBrot, Mr. Byl, Mr. Salisbury, Mr. Wheeler and Ms. Soles.

Absent: Mr. Whelpley and Mr. Greiner.

Mr. Stephen Carlson, Lead Planner, WMSRDC; Mr. John Cavanagh, Oceana's Herald Journal staff writer; Ms. Sue Ann Johnson, Oceana County Administrator/Fiscal Officer; Mr. Denny Powers, Oceana County Board of Commissioners Chairperson; Mr. Kerry Krentz, Rothbury resident; Ms. Marilyn Werner, Weare Township resident; Ms. Martha Meyette, Greenwood Township resident and Ms. Lori Green, Weare Township resident, were also present.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Soles led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

*Moved by Mr. Byl and seconded by Mr. DeBrot to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2016 Oceana County Planning Commission Meeting. Voice vote. Motion carried.*

## VINCE GREINER ARRIVED 1:32 PM

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Johnson reported that there was a great turn out considering the weather for the Open Meetings Act training that was held on March 24<sup>th</sup> at Elbridge Township Hall

## PENTWATER TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN UPDATE DRAFT FOR REVIEW

The Planners reviewed the Pentwater Township Master Plan and no comments were offered.

## REQUEST FROM PLANNERS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mr. Byl suggested we contact Michigan Works! and Council on Aging. Mr. Roseman would like Mr. Osborn to present an update on the Emergency Management Department. He also requested a review of zoning from the county to the local entities.

## PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING MASTER PLAN

Mr. Carlson reviewed the three comments he received from the public regarding the Master Plan. Ms. Green reported that there had been a glitch with the WMSRDC link. Ms. Anne Hardy, Oceana County EDC Executive Director, sent an email indicating the current employment statistics were outdated. Lastly, Ms. Johnson forwarded Ms. Laura Krentz's comments regarding her concern that the county is appearing to usurp local control.

Mr. Krentz stated that he thinks this is a "top down plan". Much of what is in the plan is incorporated by State and Federal government regulations and guidelines. Examples given were with the forest and rivers. He

Oceana County Planning Commission  
April 7, 2016

believes the wild and scenic designation of the Pere Marquette river and the generation of fossil fuels (which he believes there are none) should not be in the plan. He also expressed that agriculture preservation should include farming. In conclusion, he suggested that the Master Plan be a bottom up program (1-Township, 2-State, 3-Federal & 4-Regional).

Ms. Green read from a handout she distributed. She commented that there are many statements in the master plan draft that usurp private property rights. The structure of our government, including local control at the township level, is NOT an obstacle. It is the very strength of our republic.

Ms. Martha Meyette voiced concerns with property rights of the individual property owners and the ability of the local government to oversee the local level.

Mr. Byl questioned the population projections for Oceana County. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Soles concluded the public comment part of the Master Plan.

*Moved by Mr. Byl and supported by Mr. Roseman to submit the comments along with the Master Plan to the Oceana County Board of Commissioners for formal adoption. Voice Vote. Motion Carried.*

Mr. Carlson asked the planners if a formal response was to be given to the comments made. Chairperson Soles responded that no formal response will be given.

#### OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Roseman asked if he ran for a Golden Township Board Position would he have to resign from the Planning Commission as soon as he files. Mr. Roseman would like the planners to look over the verbiage in the Oceana County ordinance.

#### OTHER OLD OR NEW BUSINESS TO INCLUDE PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA - None

There being no further business, Chairperson Soles recessed the Oceana County Planning Commission Meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Angela Aerts, Recording Secretary  
On behalf of Vince Greiner, Secretary  
Oceana County Planning Commission

Transcribed: 04/7/2016  
Edited: 04/15/2016

## Board Adoption Resolution



Oceana County  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
County Building  
100 S. State Street, Suite M-4  
Hart, Michigan 49420



### RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL OF THE 2016 OCEANA COUNTY MASTER PLAN

Moved by Mr. Gustafson and seconded by Mr. Byl that, pursuant to the development, completion and approval of the 2016 Oceana County Master Plan by the Oceana County Planning Commission on April 7, 2016, the Oceana County Board of Commissioners, upon the recommendation of the Oceana County Planning Commission, hereby approves said Plan to replace the 2020 Comprehensive Plan effective April 28, 2016.

The purpose of the Oceana County Master Plan, a land use document that attempts to address issues different from those of an ordinary land use plan to include infrastructure, population, economics, county and other governmental services and the general quality of life, is to provide policy and guide decision-making for future land and infrastructure development decisions within the entire area of Oceana County.

Roll call vote: Gustafson, yes; Byl, yes; Sebolt, no; Kolbe, yes; Brown, yes; Walker, no; and, Powers, yes.  
Motion carried.

#### CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned, being the Clerk of Oceana County, does hereby certify that on the 28th day of April, 2016, the Oceana County Board of Commissioners did adopt the above Resolution at its Regular Meeting.

Rebecca J. Griffin, Clerk  
Oceana County  
Board of Commissioners

**APPENDIX B**  
Public Comments

## SWOT Analysis - October 27th, 2014 Public Meeting (1st Meeting)

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Water (Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Ground Water)	Roads	Better recreation to keep young folks	Losing young folks
Farm land	Lack of high- speed internet	Tech center	Water withdrawal
Hunting land	Senior housing	Economic development	Loosing young people
Lakes, streams, and rivers	Bridges	Tech center	Water being polluted
Farm land	Roads	County-wide tech training	High taxes
Sand dunes	Lack affordable high-speed internet	Agriculture - variety & diversity	Removal of Hesperia Dam
Lakes and rivers	Bad roads	Deer hunting	Revocation of Right to Farm act
Farm acreage	Lack of high- speed internet	Diverse agricultural market	Water export / polluted
Water resources	Bad roads	Transportation- roads	Exodus of youth
Agriculture	internet access- high speed	Diverse agriculture	Irrigation increased
Agricultural lifestyle	Mobile homes	New business opportunities	ground water - farm practices
Muskegon Access	Not enough affordable housing	Bike trail (East & West)	Roads
Healthcare	Income	New employment opportunities	Irrigation development
Housing is better	Employment	Industrial parks	Clearing of land
Medical facilities nearby	Roads- funding and maintenance	Jobs	Closing businesses
Rivers, lakes	Deer herd	New businesses	Pollution to surface water
Healthcare	Housing rental shortage	Bike trail going East to West	Loosing young
Rivers, lakes	Transportation planning	Jobs	Business' closing
Tourism	Funding & maintenance of roads	New businesses	Business
Environment	High deer population	Bike trail going East to West	Increased irrigation
Agricultural lifestyle	Need cellular & internet	Diverse agriculture markets	Public schools
Farming	Lack Sr & housing affordable housing	New businesses	Public safety
Rivers, lakes	Internet & cell phone	Bike trail East & West	Pollution of rivers
Tourism	Roads & maintenance	Industrial parks	Pollution of ground water
Rivers, lakes	Newspaper coverage to East side	Tech center at WSCC	Pollution of soil
Tourism	Lack of senior housing		
Way of life	Internet & cellphone service		
Not far from medical	Poor roads & road maintenance		
New housing	Internet & cell phone		
Apples	Roads- method of funds & maintenance		
Rivers	Deer		
	Shortage of rentals		
	Lack of recreation for young kids		
	Newspaper coverage		
	Internet & cellphone		
	Sr. Healthcare & services for seniors		
	Affordable housing		
	Bridges in county		
	Water-bottled		
	Irrigation increases		
	Roads- funds		

## SWOT Analysis - October 29th, 2015 Public Meeting (2nd Meeting)

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Farm land	Road upkeep	JJ Resort	Lack of planning- reaction
Lakes, and streams	Bridges	Labor force	Pollution
Sense of community	Lack of good jobs	Wind energy	Unplanned development of lakes, streams, & farm
Law enforcement	Poor rental property	JJ Ranch potential growth + jobs	Long and short term planning or lack thereof
Churches	Senior living options	Agri-tourism	Workforce that isn't prepared for higher tech jobs
Parks - rail trail	Lack of high speed internet in outlying areas	Vocational training with local schools now available in Newago & Muskegon	Layers of government with different agendas
Fire protection	Roads & bridges	Food incubator @ Hart	lack of leadership
Community education	Lack of good jobs in Oceana County	Wonderful weather area for a lot of different activity	Housing quality
Farming	Lack of quality rental housing & quality land lords	JJ	Lack of planning / short sighted
Lakes and streams	Senior housing options	County-wide ORV trail	Intergovernmental cooperation
Strong community	Community & private college classes	East- West bike trail	Roads, roads, roads
Law enforcement & fire dept	High speed internet unavailability	High speed internet	Misinformation on citizen rights
Churches	Much unemployment	Intergovernmental cooperation	Roads in disrepair
Parks including rail trail	Too many unwilling to work any job	More open communication	USFS
Pride in school	Road maintenance	Countywide ORV trail	Misinformation
Recreational opportunity	Employment & wages	High-speed internet	Gas-fracking
Hart Main St. active year-round	Housing / rentals - rules	ORV Trails E/W & N/S	
Agriculture	Senior housing	Adult Foster / Assisted Living	
Some industry	Higher ed options	Internet access	
Resort	High speed internet	Solar	
Sense of community	Lack of affordable senior housing	Communication	
Farming	Lack of affordable housing	Farmer's market	
Lakes & streams	High speed internet	Cultutural assets	
Law enforcement- fire dept	Newspaper	Double J	
Recreation options	Communication - West vs. East		
Community ED @ schools	Senior resources- senior housing		
Recreational opportunity	Weak EDC board and director		
District health department	Communication- West vs. East		
Agriculture	Health Department		
Rec living - Sportsmen - RVs	Roads		
White River	Vocational training		
Agriculture	College satellite		
DHD # 10			
Recreational / Sportsmanship			
Agriculture			
Police / Fire			
Schools			

## SWOT Analysis - November 11th, 2015 Public Meeting (3rd Meeting)

Strengths	Weaknesses		Opportunities
Agriculture	Lack opportunity to support families	Lack of Trails/ recreation activities	Gas line (natural gas)
State and Federal Land	Low pay jobs	No natural gas	Technology- kids
Agriculture	Internet & cell service	Housing is deteriorating	Energy
State/ Recreation Land	Tech education	Lack of cross - county trail	<b>Threats</b>
	decent affordable housing	Road system - need Eastside north/south road	(none)

## SWOT Analysis - November 12th, 2015 Public Meeting (4th Meeting)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Tourism	Infrastructure (Roads, Internet, sidewalks)	Trail system throughout the county	Jobs
Quality of Life	Forestry work on trails	Upgrade housing stock	Housing
National Forest / Recreation	Lack of rental housing	Access to health/emergency services	Infrastructure
Local information availability	Lack of low income senior housing	County-wide road mileage	Need plan for community input
Diversity of Agriculture	Rental ordinance lacking	Jobs	Trails
Diversity of People	Internet & communication	Power	Power
Community	Unemployment	Resorts	Forest service blocking forest road
Kids	Disability	Trailheads	Wind turbines
Tourism	Roads	Starting block	ORV trails
Quality of life	Gov't Culture	Link trails	
National forest - Recreation	Infrastructure (Roads, Internet)	Jobs	
Tourism	Low income housing	Housing	
Quality of Life	Low income senior housing	Infrastructure	
Water	Roads	Work trail systems	
Recreation	Internet	Building trades	
Medical	Housing- low income family	National forests- recreation	
Tourism	Housing - low income senior	Establish trail heads	
Quality way of life- housing	No youth involved in local gov't	Upgrade housing	
National forest- 10 sec of natural forest Crystal Twp	Roads - everywhere	Employment improving	
Recreation options	Internet	Water	
Medical- good facilities	Sidewalks- tourism	Resorts	
Tourism	Limited low- income family housing	ORV trails	
Quality of life	Limited low-income senior housing	Starting Block	
Medical care facility	No rental ordinance	Artisan center	
Natural beauty	Assisted living	Safe environment community	
Diversity of agriculture	Roads		
Diversity of population	No low income housing		
	No low income senior housing		
	Jobs		
	Unemployment		
	Assistance from Gov.		
	Roads		
	Lack of internet		

**Comments received during 63-day review period ending April 7, 2016**

1. Email received from Lori Green, February 7, 2016

*There is a link to a WMSRDC report that does not work. It is found on page 10, at the end of the second paragraph.*

2. Email received from Anne Hardy, February 26, 2016

*Hi, one of the Board of Commissioners stopped by my office yesterday. I noticed that some of the information was dated. I am attaching a couple of documents that are more recent, and you might want to add it to the Master Plan.*

*Also, the EDC phone is 231.873.7141. The number listed is the phone to MSU Extension Office.*

**Oceana County Four Year Unemployment Rates**  
According to Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives  
Compiled by the Oceana County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

	2015	2014	2013	2012
January	11.1%	12.7%	14.8%	14.6%
February	10.4%	13.3%	14.9%	14.7%
March	10.0%	12.5%	13.7%	13.6%
April	7.8%	10.2%	11.9%	10.9%
May	7.4%	9.1%	11.2%	10.3%
June	6.9%	8.6%	10.8%	10.5%
July	6.8%	8.7%	10.8%	10.6%
August	5.5%	6.5%	9.7%	9.4%
September	5.1%	6.5%	9.4%	8.5%
October	5.4%	6.2%	9.7%	8.5%
November	6.2%	6.6%	10.2%	9.5%
December	6.8%	7.7%	11.4%	11.9%

**Oceana County Four Year Unemployment Rates**  
According to Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives  
Compiled by the Oceana County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

2015	Rate	Workforce	Employed	Unemployed
January	11.1%	12,450	11,0075	1,375
February	10.4%	12,352	11,066	1,286
March	10.0%	12,550	11,300	1,250
April	7.8%	12,275	11,325	950
May	7.4%	13,250	12,275	975
June	6.9%	13,575	12,625	950
July	6.8%	13,825	12,900	925
August	5.5%			
September	5.1%			
October	5.4%	12,664	11,977	687
November	6.2%	12,425	11,650	775
December	6.8%	12,300	11,450	825

3. Email received from Laura Krentz, April 4, 2016

I find many things troubling about the proposed Oceana County Master Plan. Much of it has to do with the county appearing to usurp local control. On page 39, the second paragraph calls the land use plans of local units of government an "obstacle." An obstacle to whom? Certainly not to the local residents. The closer the government is to the people, the better it is for the people.

Also on page 39, the last paragraph says the "onus" is on local leaders to ensure that local decisions and development plans help move the county toward the visions maintained within this document. Why? Local leaders were elected and are capable of planning and zoning their local areas. There is no reason for them to take "collective ownership" of this master plan.

The last paragraph on page 48 states that, "Implementation of the Goals & Objectives will primarily be in the hands of the Oceana County Planning Commission." This is NOT the job of the Oceana County Planning Commission. The Oceana County Master Plan is merely a vision, and it is not enforceable. It is the job of local governments (townships, villages, etc.) to plan, zone and to implement their own goals and objectives.

I am asking that you do not adopt this county master plan as is. Although the plan is not legally enforceable, it could be used as a stepping stone to a legally enforceable document. And I don't like the wording that makes it sound like the county has authority over locally elected boards with regard to land use.

Laura Krentz  
199 West Wilke Road  
Rothbury, MI 49452

**Comments received during Public Hearing on April 7, 2016**

1. Mr. Kerry Krentz, Rothbury resident

*Mr. Krentz stated that he thinks this is a "top down plan." Much of what is in the plan is incorporated by State and Federal government regulations and guidelines. Examples given were with the forest and rivers. He believes the wild and scenic designation of the Pere Marquette river and the generation of fossil fuels (which he believes there are none) should not be in the plan. He also expressed that agricultural preservation should include farming. In conclusion, he suggested that the Master Plan be a bottom up program (1-Township, 2-State, 3- Federal &4- Regional).*

2. Ms. Lori Green, Weare Township resident

*Ms. Green read from a handout she distributed. She commented that there are many statements in the master plan draft that usurp private property rights. The structure of our government, including local control at the township level, is NOT an obstacle. It is the very strength of our republic.*

Handout provided by Ms. Green:

To Oceana County Planning Commission and the County Board of Commissioners:

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA Act 33 of 2008), Chapter 125.3807, Sec. 7, (2) states: "The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish...development that satisfies all of the following criteria." The important part in this is that the master plan is **meant to be accomplished**. As such, this master plan should not be taken lightly. Therefore, I ask the planning commission and the board of commissioners to use extreme caution in adopting the 2016 Oceana County Master Plan in its current form.

There are many statements in the master plan draft that usurp private property rights. Wording such as "*appropriate use of land*" (found on page 1), and "*preferred uses*" (found on page 44) are just two examples. However, one of the most bothersome paragraphs is found on page 44. The third paragraph reads as follows:

*Overall, the proposed land use pattern is compact. It encourages the most intense residential, commercial and industrial developments to be located in and around locations with access to municipal water and sewer services. Areas that are public land and recreation in 2016 are assumed to mainly remain as such in the next 20- 25 years. Agricultural areas are also intended to remain as agriculture land use with minimal fragmentation from low density residential land uses. (end quote)*

Who are we to assume that we can predict how future residents will want to live? Who are we to decide how current and future landowners will want to use their land? As for farmland, anyone who lived in this county in the days before it was discovered that asparagus grows best on sandy soil will remember that farming in Oceana can be difficult. It is not reasonable to assume that the asparagus industry will always be viable. Why restrict landowners' options? This is NOT a path to growth and prosperity. This statement and others like it will lead to the erosion of private property rights.

Perhaps the most onerous statement is found in the last paragraph on page 39. It states, "*One obstacle to crafting effective solutions lies in the existing planning structure of local governments.*" The structure of our government, including local control at the township level, is NOT an obstacle. It is the very strength of our republic.

Why not use the master plan to encourage widespread free enterprise? Are we afraid of growth and prosperity?

It is for these reasons that I urge the planning commission and the board of commissioners to NOT adopt the 2016 Oceana County Master Plan in its current form.

3. Ms. Martha Meyette, Greenwood Township resident

*Ms. Martha Meyette voiced concerns with property rights of the individual property owners and the ability of the local government to oversee the local level.*

**APPENDIX C**  
Regional Economic and Demographic Projections



## **DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS**

**June  
2014**

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) is releasing its official demographic and economic projections for Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties for the years 2015 through 2040 (population) and 2014 through 2018 (employment).

Please note the following:

- Population projections are based on trends only and do not consider projected economic development.
- Population projections are developed at the county level. As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated.
- Economic and population projections are most accurate in the earliest forecasts listed.
- Population projections are shown for Northern Ottawa County and economic projections were not derived for Northern Ottawa County.

### **Population Projection Methodology**

The population forecasts were developed using variations of the traditional cohort survival technique of population forecasting and historical trends. This method examines trends in population as provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

To determine the population forecasts for each township, city, and village (local unit), the Proportional Forecasting Technique was used. This technique involves calculating each local unit's population as a percentage of the total county population for a recent representative year in which data is available. This proportion for each local unit is applied to the county level projections, which are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, to arrive at local unit projections. Caution is advised at the local unit projection level because these projections may not account for in and out migration.

### **Employment Projection Methodology**

The employment projections are by place of employment (not residence), and are based on data from the Regional Economic Information System (REIS) published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Michigan Department of Career Development/Employment Services Agency, Labor Market Analysis Section. The economic projections were also based on data provided by the Institute for Research on Labor, Employment, and the Economy at the University of Michigan through the Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) economic and demographic forecasting and simulation model.

The projection methodology utilizes past trends, existing economic activity, and anticipated growth to estimate employment totals for each county. The county totals are also separated into specific economic sectors.

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Regional Demographic Projections**

**Population Forecast 2015 to 2040**

Lake County	Actual Census Figures				Census Estimate 2013	Forecasted Population					
	1980	1990	2000	2010		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total Population	5,661	8,583	11,333	11,539	11,386	11,394	11,415	11,435	11,456	11,476	11,497

Population projections are developed at the County level. As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated. The projections are based on past population trends of the county.

Chase Township	752	999	1,194	1,137	1,121	1,122	1,124	1,126	1,128	1,130	1,132
Cherry Valley Township	172	248	368	396	389	389	390	391	391	392	393
Dover Township	201	318	332	395	390	390	391	392	392	393	394
Eden Township	116	235	377	487	480	480	481	482	483	484	485
Elk Township	325	580	900	985	977	978	979	981	983	985	987
Ellsworth Township	376	622	821	817	805	806	807	808	810	811	813
Lake Township	341	700	849	862	852	853	854	856	857	859	860
Newkirk Township	426	586	719	632	621	621	623	624	625	626	627
Peacock Township	144	344	445	492	485	485	486	487	488	489	490
Pinora Township	249	414	643	717	702	703	704	705	706	708	709
Pleasant Plains Township	1,211	1,464	1,535	1,581	1,563	1,564	1,567	1,570	1,573	1,575	1,578
Sauble Township	194	297	323	333	329	329	330	330	331	332	332
Sweetwater Township	115	223	238	245	242	242	243	243	243	244	244
Webber Township	614	968	1,875	1,699	1,679	1,680	1,683	1,686	1,689	1,692	1,695
Yates Township	425	585	714	761	751	752	753	754	756	757	758

Villages*											
Baldwin	502	821	1,107	1,208	1,199	1,200	1,202	1,204	1,206	1,209	1,211
Luther	129	343	339	318	317	317	318	318	319	320	320

\*Village population included in Township figures

Sources: Census Bureau, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Forecast by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

June 2014

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Regional Demographic Projections**

**Population Forecast 2015 to 2040**

Mason County	Actual Census Figures				Census Estimate 2013	Forecasted Population					
	1980	1990	2000	2010		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total Population	26,365	25,537	28,274	28,705	28,605	28,656	28,785	28,914	29,044	29,174	29,305

Population projections are developed at the County level. As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated. The projections are based on past population trends of the county.

Amber Township	1,556	1,684	2,054	2,535	2,524	2,529	2,540	2,551	2,563	2,574	2,586
Branch Township	1,021	973	1,181	1,328	1,321	1,323	1,329	1,335	1,341	1,347	1,353
Custer Township	1,338	1,176	1,307	1,254	1,249	1,251	1,257	1,262	1,268	1,274	1,280
Eden Township	511	491	555	582	581	582	585	587	590	593	595
Free Soil Township	925	860	809	822	819	820	824	828	832	835	839
Grant Township	747	749	850	909	919	921	925	929	933	937	941
Hamlin Township	2,616	2,597	3,192	3,408	3,396	3,402	3,417	3,433	3,448	3,464	3,479
Logan Township	177	203	329	312	310	311	312	313	315	316	318
Meade Township	135	142	287	181	179	179	180	181	182	183	183
Pere Marquette Township	2,068	2,065	2,228	2,366	2,367	2,371	2,382	2,393	2,403	2,414	2,425
Riverton Township	1,177	1,115	1,335	1,153	1,148	1,150	1,155	1,160	1,166	1,171	1,176
Sheridan Township	828	837	969	1,072	1,065	1,067	1,072	1,077	1,081	1,086	1,091
Sherman Township	996	952	1,090	1,186	1,181	1,183	1,188	1,194	1,199	1,204	1,210
Summit Township	922	815	1,021	924	922	924	928	932	936	940	945
Victory Township	1,170	1,084	1,444	1,383	1,370	1,372	1,379	1,385	1,391	1,397	1,404

Cities	1980	1990	2000	2010	Census Estimate 2013	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Ludington	8,937	8,507	8,357	8,076	8,040	8,054	8,091	8,127	8,163	8,200	8,237
Scottville	1,241	1,287	1,266	1,214	1,214	1,216	1,222	1,227	1,233	1,238	1,244

Villages*	1980	1990	2000	2010	Census Estimate 2013	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Custer	341	312	318	284	284	285	286	287	288	290	291
Fountain	195	165	175	193	193	193	194	195	196	197	198
Freesoil	212	148	177	144	144	144	145	146	146	147	148

\*Village population included in Township figures

Sources: Census Bureau, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Forecast by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Regional Demographic Projections**

**Population Forecast 2015 to 2040**

Muskegon County	Actual Census Figures				Census Estimate 2013	Forecasted Population					
	1980	1990	2000	2010		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total Population	157,589	158,983	170,200	172,188	171,008	171,133	171,445	171,757	172,070	172,384	172,698

Population projections are developed at the County level. As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated. The projections are based on past population trends of the county.

Blue Lake Township	1,101	1,235	1,990	2,399	2,422	2,424	2,428	2,433	2,437	2,441	2,446
Casnovia Township	2,158	2,361	2,652	2,805	2,809	2,811	2,816	2,821	2,826	2,832	2,837
Cedar Creek Township	2,454	2,846	3,109	3,186	3,161	3,163	3,169	3,175	3,181	3,186	3,192
Dalton Township	5,897	6,276	8,047	9,300	9,285	9,292	9,309	9,326	9,343	9,360	9,377
Egelston Township	7,310	7,640	9,537	9,909	9,813	9,820	9,838	9,856	9,874	9,892	9,910
Fruitland Township	4,168	4,391	5,235	5,543	5,583	5,587	5,597	5,607	5,618	5,628	5,638
Fruitport Township	10,646	11,485	12,533	13,598	13,692	13,702	13,727	13,752	13,777	13,802	13,827
Holton Township	2,022	2,318	2,532	2,515	2,495	2,497	2,501	2,506	2,511	2,515	2,520
Laketon Township	6,327	6,538	7,363	7,563	7,597	7,603	7,616	7,630	7,644	7,658	7,672
Montague Township	1,359	1,429	1,637	1,600	1,601	1,602	1,605	1,608	1,611	1,614	1,617
Moorland Township	1,521	1,543	1,616	1,575	1,580	1,581	1,584	1,587	1,590	1,593	1,596
Muskegon Township	14,557	15,302	17,737	17,840	17,778	17,791	17,823	17,856	17,888	17,921	17,954
Ravenna Township	2,471	2,354	2,856	2,905	2,921	2,923	2,928	2,934	2,939	2,945	2,950
Sullivan Township	2,356	2,230	2,477	2,441	2,462	2,464	2,468	2,473	2,477	2,482	2,486
Whitehall Township	1,341	1,464	1,648	1,739	1,736	1,737	1,740	1,744	1,747	1,750	1,753
White River Township	1,215	1,250	1,338	1,335	1,358	1,359	1,361	1,364	1,366	1,369	1,371

Cities											
Montague	2,332	2,276	2,407	2,361	2,360	2,362	2,366	2,370	2,375	2,379	2,383
Muskegon	40,823	40,283	40,105	38,401	37,213	37,240	37,308	37,376	37,444	37,512	37,581
Muskegon Heights	14,611	13,176	12,049	10,856	10,831	10,839	10,859	10,878	10,898	10,918	10,938
North Muskegon	4,024	3,919	4,031	3,786	3,785	3,788	3,795	3,802	3,809	3,815	3,822
Norton Shores	22,025	21,755	22,527	23,994	23,998	24,015	24,059	24,103	24,147	24,191	24,235
Roosevelt Park	4,015	3,885	3,890	3,831	3,830	3,833	3,840	3,847	3,854	3,861	3,868
Whitehall	2,856	3,027	2,884	2,706	2,698	2,700	2,705	2,710	2,715	2,720	2,725

Villages*											
Casnovia (Part)	181	187	139	143	144	144	144	145	145	145	145
Fruitport	1,143	1,090	1,124	1,093	1,102	1,103	1,105	1,107	1,109	1,111	1,113
Lakewood Club	695	659	1,006	1,291	1,284	1,285	1,287	1,290	1,292	1,294	1,297
Ravenna	951	919	1,206	1,219	1,219	1,220	1,222	1,224	1,227	1,229	1,231

\*Village population included in Township figures

Sources: Census Bureau, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Forecasted by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Regional Demographic Projections**

**Population Forecast 2015 to 2040**

Newaygo County	Actual Census Figures				Census Estimate 2013	Forecasted Population					
	1980	1990	2000	2010		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total Population	34,917	38,202	47,874	48,460	48,001	48,021	48,070	48,119	48,168	48,217	48,266

Population projections are developed at the County level. As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated. The projections are based on past population trends of the county.

Ashland Township	1,751	1,997	2,570	2,773	2,741	2,742	2,745	2,748	2,751	2,753	2,756
Barton Township	558	624	820	717	743	743	744	745	746	746	747
Beaver Township	443	417	608	509	503	503	504	504	505	505	506
Big Prairie Township	1,202	1,731	2,465	2,573	2,511	2,512	2,515	2,517	2,520	2,522	2,525
Bridgeton Township	1,562	1,574	2,098	2,141	2,109	2,110	2,112	2,114	2,116	2,118	2,121
Brooks Township	2,349	2,728	3,671	3,510	3,474	3,475	3,479	3,483	3,486	3,490	3,493
Croton Township	1,556	1,965	3,042	3,228	3,203	3,204	3,208	3,211	3,214	3,217	3,221
Dayton Township	1,938	1,971	2,002	1,949	1,936	1,937	1,939	1,941	1,943	1,945	1,947
Denver Township	1,422	1,532	1,971	1,928	1,900	1,901	1,903	1,905	1,907	1,909	1,910
Ensel Township	1,461	1,984	2,474	2,635	2,616	2,617	2,620	2,622	2,625	2,628	2,630
Everett Township	1,360	1,519	1,985	1,862	1,827	1,828	1,830	1,831	1,833	1,835	1,837
Garfield Township	1,822	2,067	2,464	2,537	2,511	2,512	2,515	2,517	2,520	2,522	2,525
Goodwell Township	387	358	551	547	542	542	543	543	544	544	545
Grant Township	2,274	2,558	3,130	3,294	3,308	3,309	3,313	3,316	3,319	3,323	3,326
Home Township	185	202	261	232	229	229	229	230	230	230	230
Lilley Township	568	565	788	797	786	786	787	788	789	790	790
Lincoln Township	885	969	1,338	1,275	1,257	1,258	1,259	1,260	1,261	1,263	1,264
Merrill Township	508	451	590	667	658	658	659	660	660	661	662
Monroe Township	263	247	324	320	316	316	316	317	317	317	318
Norwich Township	450	499	557	607	600	600	601	601	602	603	603
Sheridan Township	2,465	2,252	2,423	2,510	2,490	2,491	2,494	2,496	2,499	2,501	2,504
Sherman Township	1,810	1,866	2,159	2,109	2,089	2,090	2,092	2,094	2,096	2,098	2,101
Troy Township	199	173	243	283	279	279	279	280	280	280	281
Wilcox Township	772	831	1,145	1,098	1,076	1,076	1,078	1,079	1,080	1,081	1,082

Cities											
Fremont	3,672	3,875	4,224	4,081	4,050	4,052	4,056	4,060	4,064	4,068	4,072
Grant	683	764	881	894	889	889	890	891	892	893	894
Newaygo	1,271	1,336	1,670	1,976	1,969	1,970	1,972	1,974	1,976	1,978	1,980
White Cloud	1,101	1,147	1,420	1,408	1,389	1,390	1,391	1,392	1,394	1,395	1,397

Village*											
Hesperia (Part)	347	300	364	339	338	338	338	339	339	340	340

\*Village population included in Township figures.

Sources: Census Bureau, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Forecast by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Regional Demographic Projections**

**Population Forecast 2015 to 2040**

Oceana County	Actual Census Figures				Census Estimate	Forecasted Population					
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2013	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total Population	22,002	22,454	26,873	26,570	26,245	26,150	25,913	25,678	25,446	25,215	24,987

Population projections are developed at the County level. As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated. The projections are based on past population trends of the county.

Benona Township	1,203	1,133	1,520	1,437	1,429	1,424	1,411	1,398	1,385	1,373	1,361
Claybanks Township	733	679	831	777	772	769	762	755	748	742	735
Colfax Township	328	374	574	462	453	451	447	443	439	435	431
Crystal Township	602	658	832	838	822	819	812	804	797	790	783
Elbridge Township	899	820	1,233	971	960	957	948	939	931	922	914
Ferry Township	898	1,033	1,296	1,292	1,268	1,263	1,252	1,241	1,229	1,218	1,207
Golden Township	1,358	1,302	1,810	1,742	1,710	1,704	1,688	1,673	1,658	1,643	1,628
Grant Township	2,366	2,578	2,932	2,976	2,914	2,903	2,877	2,851	2,825	2,800	2,774
Greenwood Township	815	915	1,154	1,184	1,189	1,185	1,174	1,163	1,153	1,142	1,132
Hart Township	1,801	1,513	2,026	1,853	1,840	1,833	1,817	1,800	1,784	1,768	1,752
Leavitt Township	848	804	845	891	878	875	867	859	851	844	836
Newfield Township	1,968	2,144	2,483	2,401	2,366	2,357	2,336	2,315	2,294	2,273	2,253
Otto Township	426	404	662	826	808	805	798	791	783	776	769
Pentwater Township	1,424	1,422	1,513	1,515	1,507	1,502	1,488	1,474	1,461	1,448	1,435
Shelby Township	3,506	3,692	3,951	4,069	4,026	4,011	3,975	3,939	3,903	3,868	3,833
Weare Township	939	1,041	1,261	1,210	1,192	1,188	1,177	1,166	1,156	1,145	1,135

City											
Hart	1,888	1,942	1,950	2,126	2,111	2,103	2,084	2,065	2,047	2,028	2,010

Villages*											
Hesperia (Part)	529	586	590	615	613	611	605	600	594	589	584
New Era	534	520	461	451	450	448	444	440	436	432	428
Pentwater	1,165	1,050	958	857	851	848	840	833	825	818	810
Rothbury	522	407	416	432	424	422	419	415	411	407	404
Shelby	1,624	1,871	1,914	2,065	2,043	2,036	2,017	1,999	1,981	1,963	1,945
Walkerville	296	262	254	247	247	246	244	242	239	237	235

\*Village population included in Township figures

Sources: Census Bureau, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Forecast by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Regional Economic Projections**

Lake County  
Employment Projections

CODE	LAKE COUNTY	Actual Figures					Growth Rate	Estimate 2013	Forecasted Employment				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	<b>Employment:</b>												
10	Total employment	3,458	3,368	3,418	3,520	3,430	0.64%	3,452	3,474	3,496	3,518	3,541	3,563
	<b>By Type:</b>												
20	Wage and salary	1,631	1,624	1,632	1,741	1,608	-0.16%	1,605	1,603	1,600	1,598	1,596	1,593
40	Proprietors	1,827	1,744	1,786	1,779	1,822	1.48%	1,849	1,876	1,904	1,932	1,961	1,990
50	- Farm	161	160	161	161	160	0.00%	160	160	160	160	160	160
60	- Nonfarm	1,666	1,584	1,625	1,618	1,662	1.63%	1,689	1,716	1,744	1,773	1,802	1,831
	<b>By Industry:</b>												
70	Farm	182	183	182	189	183	0.04%	183	183	183	183	183	183
80	Nonfarm	3,276	3,185	3,236	3,331	3,247	0.67%	3,269	3,291	3,313	3,335	3,358	3,380
90	- Private	2,807	2,714	2,731	2,831	2,763	0.63%	2,780	2,798	2,815	2,833	2,851	2,869
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	(D)	(D)	(D)	85	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
200	- Mining	40	57	113	90	93	27.07%	118	150	191	243	308	392
300	- Utilities	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
400	- Construction	339	302	(D)	280	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
500	- Manufacturing	(D)	(D)	(D)	118	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
600	- Wholesale trade	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	24	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
700	- Retail trade	344	328	299	298	305	-2.28%	29805.93%	291	285	278	272	266
800	- Transportation and warehousing	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	166	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
900	- Information	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1000	- Finance and insurance	121	(D)	108	115	121	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	250	(D)	233	239	254	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1200	- Professional and technical services	127	(D)	131	(D)	129	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0
1400	- Administrative and waste services	114	(D)	126	(D)	113	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1500	- Education Services	(D)	31	29	24	24	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1600	- Health care and social assistance	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	423	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	86	80	(D)	64	67	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1800	- Accommodation and food services	260	307	(D)	287	255	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1900	- Other services, except public administration	308	301	284	298	309	0.99%	312	315	318	321	325	328
2000	- Government and government enterprises	469	471	505	500	484	1.01%	489	494	499	504	509	514
2001	- Federal, civilian	65	67	83	65	63	-0.29%	63	63	62	62	62	62
2002	- Military	21	21	21	21	20	-1.59%	20	19	19	19	18	18
2010	- State and local	383	383	401	414	401	1.60%	407	414	421	427	434	441
2011	- State government	59	59	58	55	56	-1.68%	55	54	53	52	51	51
2012	- Local government	324	324	343	359	345	2.21%	353	360	368	377	385	393

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)  
Estimates and Projections by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

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(L) - Less than 10 jobs, but the estimates for this item are included in the totals.

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Numbers may not add due to rounding.

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Growth rates are computed only if more than 2 years of data is present.

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission**  
**Regional Economic Projections**  
Mason County  
Employment Projections

CODE	MASON COUNTY	Actual Figures					Growth Rate	Estimate	Forecasted Employment				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	<b>Employment:</b>												
10	Total employment	14,950	14,330	14,510	14,657	14,911	1.33%	15,110	15,311	15,516	15,723	15,932	16,145
	<b>By Type:</b>												
20	Wage and salary	10,936	10,322	10,498	10,604	10,766	1.41%	10,918	11,073	11,229	11,388	11,549	11,712
40	Proprietors	4,014	4,008	4,012	4,053	4,145	1.13%	4,192	4,239	4,287	4,336	4,385	4,434
50	- Farm	382	379	381	380	379	0.00%	379	379	379	379	379	379
60	- Nonfarm	3,632	3,629	3,631	3,673	3,766	1.25%	3,813	3,861	3,909	3,958	4,007	4,057
	<b>By Industry:</b>												
70	Farm	560	562	551	607	567	0.54%	570	573	576	579	582	586
80	Nonfarm	14,390	13,768	13,959	14,050	14,344	1.38%	14,542	14,742	14,945	15,151	15,359	15,571
90	- Private	12,299	11,660	11,853	12,006	12,238	1.63%	12,437	12,639	12,845	13,054	13,266	13,482
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	(D)	89	88	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
200	- Mining	(D)	59	78	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
300	- Utilities	98	91	97	99	97	2.21%	99	101	104	106	108	111
400	- Construction	933	854	857	828	817	-1.45%	805	793	782	771	759	748
500	- Manufacturing	2,261	1,901	1,972	1,967	1,970	1.21%	1,994	2,018	2,042	2,067	2,092	2,118
600	- Wholesale trade	241	224	246	258	246	3.35%	254	263	272	281	290	300
700	- Retail trade	1,997	1,959	1,853	1,803	1,838	-2.06%	1,800	1,763	1,727	1,691	1,657	1,623
800	- Transportation and warehousing	461	453	489	539	569	7.91%	614	663	715	772	833	899
900	- Information	135	132	146	116	179	14.79%	205	236	271	311	357	410
1000	- Finance and insurance	489	492	495	431	442	-3.26%	428	414	400	387	375	362
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	603	577	597	632	670	5.11%	704	740	778	818	860	904
1200	- Professional and technical services	446	(D)	(D)	(D)	427	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	0	(D)	(D)	(D)	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1400	- Administrative and waste services	585	568	640	741	660	5.84%	699	739	783	828	877	928
1500	- Education Services	117	128	132	126	132	1.11%	133	135	136	138	140	141
1600	- Health care and social assistance	1,572	1,567	1,574	1,633	1,603	0.79%	1,616	1,628	1,641	1,654	1,667	1,680
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	273	303	327	322	319	1.82%	325	331	337	343	349	355
1800	- Accommodation and food services	1,080	1,053	1,055	1,058	1,123	2.21%	1,148	1,173	1,199	1,225	1,252	1,280
1900	- Other services, except public administration	838	793	791	773	797	0.19%	799	800	802	803	805	806
2000	- Government and government enterprises	2,091	2,108	2,106	2,044	2,106	0.00%	2,106	2,106	2,106	2,106	2,106	2,106
2001	- Federal, civilian	105	106	116	92	92	-3.75%	89	85	82	79	76	73
2002	- Military	67	68	70	68	69	0.52%	69	70	70	70	71	71
2010	- State and local	1,919	1,934	1,920	1,884	1,945	0.21%	1,949	1,953	1,957	1,962	1,966	1,970
2011	- State government	201	202	198	188	191	-1.81%	188	184	181	178	174	171
2012	- Local government	1,718	1,732	1,722	1,696	1,754	0.44%	1,762	1,770	1,777	1,785	1,793	1,801

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)  
Estimates and Projections by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

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**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission**  
**Regional Economic Projections**  
Muskegon County  
Employment Projections

CODE	MUSKEGON COUNTY	Actual Figures					Growth Rate	Estimate 2013	Forecasted Employment				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	<b>Employment:</b>												
10	Total employment	83,134	78,446	77,642	79,852	81,736	1.39%	82,875	84,030	85,201	86,388	87,592	88,813
	<b>By Type:</b>												
20	Wage and salary	65,768	60,823	60,000	61,210	62,601	0.98%	63,214	63,832	64,457	65,088	65,725	66,368
40	Proprietors	17,366	17,623	17,642	18,642	19,135	2.81%	19,672	20,224	20,792	21,376	21,976	22,592
50	- Farm	444	440	442	440	438	-0.15%	437	437	436	435	435	434
60	- Nonfarm	16,922	17,183	17,200	18,202	18,697	2.88%	19,236	19,790	20,360	20,947	21,550	22,171
	<b>By Industry:</b>												
70	Farm	752	757	737	834	765	0.75%	771	776	782	788	794	800
80	Nonfarm	82,382	77,689	76,905	79,018	80,971	1.40%	82,107	83,260	84,428	85,613	86,814	88,032
90	- Private	73,099	68,504	67,875	70,344	72,523	1.94%	73,929	75,363	76,824	78,314	79,832	81,380
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
200	- Mining	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
300	- Utilities	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
400	- Construction	4,008	3,529	3,284	3,437	3,555	0.38%	3,569	3,582	3,596	3,610	3,624	3,638
500	- Manufacturing	12,968	10,665	11,012	12,277	13,030	6.96%	13,937	14,906	15,944	17,053	18,240	19,509
600	- Wholesale trade	1,718	1,598	1,568	1,663	1,708	2.30%	1,747	1,787	1,828	1,870	1,913	1,957
700	- Retail trade	13,090	12,617	12,546	12,805	12,772	0.41%	12,825	12,878	12,932	12,985	13,039	13,093
800	- Transportation and warehousing	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
900	- Information	1,179	1,037	976	1,016	983	-1.68%	967	950	934	919	903	888
1000	- Finance and insurance	2,358	2,473	2,411	2,546	2,618	1.97%	2,670	2,722	2,776	2,831	2,887	2,944
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	3,155	2,956	2,980	3,081	3,152	2.17%	3,220	3,290	3,362	3,434	3,509	3,585
1200	- Professional and technical services	2,534	2,462	2,456	2,436	2,502	0.55%	2,516	2,530	2,544	2,558	2,572	2,586
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	248	223	270	296	302	10.91%	335	371	412	457	507	562
1400	- Administrative and waste services	3,286	3,204	2,881	3,299	3,254	1.02%	3,287	3,321	3,355	3,389	3,424	3,459
1500	- Education Services	1,334	1,348	1,410	1,368	1,328	-0.43%	1,322	1,316	1,311	1,305	1,299	1,294
1600	- Health care and social assistance	12,255	12,029	11,836	11,416	12,265	0.76%	12,358	12,452	12,547	12,643	12,739	12,836
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,820	1,844	1,936	1,983	1,844	0.14%	1,847	1,849	1,852	1,854	1,857	1,859
1800	- Accommodation and food services	6,370	5,873	5,728	5,801	5,942	0.41%	5,966	5,991	6,016	6,041	6,065	6,090
1900	- Other services, except public administration	4,556	4,648	4,622	5,016	5,251	4.22%	5,472	5,703	5,944	6,194	6,455	6,728
2000	- Government and government enterprises	9,283	9,185	9,030	8,674	8,448	-2.75%	8,216	7,991	7,771	7,558	7,350	7,149
2001	- Federal, civilian	362	366	433	338	332	-1.80%	326	320	314	309	303	298
2002	- Military	339	339	343	336	329	-0.98%	326	323	319	316	313	310
2010	- State and local	8,582	8,480	8,254	8,000	7,787	-2.80%	7,569	7,357	7,151	6,950	6,756	6,566
2011	- State government	1,372	1,382	1,353	1,286	1,305	-1.86%	1,281	1,257	1,234	1,211	1,188	1,166
2012	- Local government	7,210	7,098	6,901	6,714	6,482	-2.98%	6,289	6,101	5,920	5,743	5,572	5,406

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)  
Estimates and Projections by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

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**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission**  
**Regional Economic Projections**  
 Newaygo County  
 Employment Projections

CODE	NEWAYGO COUNTY	Actual Figures					Growth Rate	Estimate 2013	Forecasted Employment				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	<b>Employment:</b>												
10	Total employment	16,953	16,349	16,299	16,409	17,173	1.68%	17,461	17,753	18,050	18,353	18,660	18,973
	<b>By Type:</b>												
20	Wage and salary	11,800	11,373	11,328	11,252	11,917	1.61%	12,109	12,305	12,504	12,705	12,911	13,119
40	Proprietors	5,153	4,976	4,971	5,157	5,256	1.85%	5,353	5,453	5,554	5,657	5,762	5,868
50	- Farm	816	810	814	813	810	0.00%	810	810	810	810	810	810
60	- Nonfarm	4,337	4,166	4,157	4,344	4,446	2.21%	4,544	4,645	4,747	4,852	4,960	5,069
	<b>By Industry:</b>												
70	Farm	1,156	1,161	1,141	1,249	1,171	0.50%	1,177	1,183	1,189	1,195	1,201	1,207
80	Nonfarm	15,797	15,188	15,158	15,160	16,002	1.79%	16,288	16,580	16,877	17,179	17,486	17,799
90	- Private	13,059	12,508	12,497	12,605	13,506	2.64%	13,863	14,229	14,605	14,991	15,386	15,793
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
200	- Mining	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
300	- Utilities	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
400	- Construction	1,090	999	930	948	942	-1.87%	924	907	890	874	857	841
500	- Manufacturing	1,731	1,467	1,485	1,524	2,244	17.03%	2,626	3,074	3,597	4,210	4,927	5,766
600	- Wholesale trade	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
700	- Retail trade	2,266	2,229	2,174	2,176	2,249	0.33%	2,256	2,264	2,271	2,279	2,286	2,293
800	- Transportation and warehousing	396	339	353	(D)	356	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
900	- Information	103	101	116	108	97	-0.74%	96	96	95	94	93	93
1000	- Finance and insurance	879	906	910	988	1,014	3.88%	1,053	1,094	1,137	1,181	1,227	1,274
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	605	620	610	608	626	0.34%	628	630	632	635	637	639
1200	- Professional and technical services	(D)	553	553	579	616	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1400	- Administrative and waste services	581	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1500	- Education Services	133	131	138	137	138	1.78%	140	143	146	148	151	153
1600	- Health care and social assistance	1,586	1,548	1,559	1,542	1,545	-0.06%	1,544	1,543	1,542	1,541	1,540	1,539
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	285	256	272	247	242	-1.66%	238	234	230	226	223	219
1800	- Accommodation and food services	922	990	1,054	1,025	1,021	1.11%	1,032	1,044	1,055	1,067	1,079	1,091
1900	- Other services, except public administration	1,331	1,283	1,304	1,341	1,350	1.72%	1,373	1,397	1,421	1,445	1,470	1,495
2000	- Government and government enterprises	2,738	2,680	2,661	2,555	2,496	-2.33%	2,438	2,381	2,325	2,271	2,218	2,166
2001	- Federal, civilian	100	115	162	138	136	8.20%	147	159	172	186	202	218
2002	- Military	91	90	91	90	87	-1.11%	86	85	84	83	82	81
2010	- State and local	2,547	2,475	2,408	2,327	2,273	-2.80%	2,209	2,148	2,088	2,029	1,972	1,917
2011	- State government	337	339	332	316	320	-1.87%	314	308	302	297	291	286
2012	- Local government	2,210	2,136	2,076	2,011	1,953	-2.94%	1,896	1,840	1,786	1,733	1,682	1,633

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)  
 Estimates and Projections by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

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**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission**  
**Regional Economic Projections**  
 Oceana County  
 Employment Projections

CODE	OCEANA COUNTY	Actual Figures					Growth Rate	Estimate 2013	Forecasted Employment				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	<b>Employment:</b>												
10	Total employment	10,355	10,005	10,097	10,351	10,120	0.40%	10,161	10,201	10,242	10,283	10,325	10,366
	<b>By Type:</b>												
20	Wage and salary	7,929	7,556	7,571	7,664	7,376	-0.78%	7,319	7,262	7,205	7,149	7,094	7,039
40	Proprietors	2,426	2,449	2,526	2,687	2,744	3.88%	2,850	2,961	3,076	3,195	3,319	3,448
50	- Farm	553	549	551	548	545	-0.24%	544	542	541	540	538	537
60	- Nonfarm	1,873	1,900	1,975	2,139	2,199	5.02%	2,309	2,425	2,547	2,675	2,809	2,950
	<b>By Industry:</b>												
70	Farm	1,089	1,101	1,067	1,236	1,115	0.99%	1,126	1,137	1,148	1,160	1,171	1,183
80	Nonfarm	9,266	8,904	9,030	9,115	9,005	0.38%	9,040	9,074	9,109	9,144	9,179	9,214
90	- Private	7,521	7,118	7,222	7,394	7,382	1.23%	7,473	7,564	7,657	7,751	7,846	7,942
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
200	- Mining	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	175	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
300	- Utilities	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
400	- Construction	610	568	515	509	524	-2.52%	511	498	485	473	461	450
500	- Manufacturing	1,744	1,525	1,477	1,492	1,349	-3.91%	1,296	1,246	1,197	1,150	1,105	1,062
600	- Wholesale trade	354	335	415	425	450	10.72%	498	552	611	676	749	829
700	- Retail trade	909	903	881	896	900	-0.10%	899	898	897	897	896	895
800	- Transportation and warehousing	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
900	- Information	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1000	- Finance and insurance	210	211	219	222	224	2.02%	229	233	238	243	248	253
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	278	291	335	351	375	8.91%	408	445	484	528	575	626
1200	- Professional and technical services	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	164	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1400	- Administrative and waste services	193	205	188	189	194	-1.71%	191	187	184	181	178	175
1500	- Education Services	39	37	48	52	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1600	- Health care and social assistance	480	464	411	418	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	207	190	155	190	208	4.54%	217	227	238	248	260	272
1800	- Accommodation and food services	1,123	993	1,101	1,064	1,083	3.10%	1,117	1,151	1,187	1,224	1,262	1,301
1900	- Other services, except public administration	534	530	499	509	534	0.36%	536	538	540	542	544	545
2000	- Government and government enterprises	1,745	1,786	1,808	1,721	1,623	-3.09%	1,573	1,524	1,477	1,431	1,387	1,344
2001	- Federal, civilian	172	175	188	164	158	-3.00%	153	149	144	140	136	132
2002	- Military	50	50	50	49	48	-1.35%	47	47	46	45	45	44
2010	- State and local	1,523	1,561	1,570	1,508	1,417	-3.14%	1,373	1,330	1,288	1,247	1,208	1,170
2011	- State government	165	166	163	155	157	-1.81%	154	151	149	146	143	141
2012	- Local government	1,358	1,395	1,407	1,353	1,260	-3.28%	1,219	1,179	1,140	1,102	1,066	1,031

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)  
 Estimates and Projections by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

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**APPENDIX D**  
Acknowledgements

United States Census Bureau

- 2000 Census
- 2010 Census
- 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

Oceana County Soil Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, 1996

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