



Richmond Township

Master Plan

adopted September 2024

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Community Leadership

Richmond Township Planning Commission

Terry Gerber, Chairman

Douglas Sengelaub, Vice Chairman

Diane White, Secretary

Carrolin Ruppert, Township Board Representative

Jerry Wright

Township Officials

Maynard Bluhm, Supervisor

Linda Stieg, Clerk

Carrolin Ruppert, Treasurer

John Woods, Trustee

Ed Galloup, Trustee

Introduction

● Introduction - the purpose of planning

A Master Plan is a tool used by municipalities to analyze the current state of their community and plan for their future growth, development, and needs. This document addresses this issue by detailing Richmond Township's current conditions and looks to the future to take specific actions to plan for the needs of the community.

A Master Plan can generally be described by the following key characteristics:

- **Future Oriented:** The Plan is a long-range guide for growth and land use needs. The plan is not only a picture of the community today, but a guide to how the community should evolve over the next five to ten years.
- **General:** The plan establishes broad principles and policies to address future land use needs.
- **Comprehensive:** The plan addresses all types of land uses and the practical geographic boundaries of each. The Plan also refines the general aspects into specific goals and tasks so that the Plan is meaningful and usable.
- **A Plan:** The land use plan is a tangible document which consists of both text and maps, with maps typically illustrating the policies set forth within the text.

The purposes of the Master Plan are to preserve and create a community that is best for its residents and its neighbors. In order to achieve this, the Plan is written as an analysis of what the community has, and a guide regarding how to use it when making land use decisions.

Master Plans serve to:

- Seek citizen input on needs and services
- Illustrate an overall perspective of the land, how it is being used, and how it should be used in the future
- Create a general statement of the goals and objectives of the community
- Preserve the quality of life in the community
- Promote public health, safety, and welfare for the region's citizens
- Guide the use of limited resources and preservation in the most effective manner possible through clear and logical zoning decisions

The Michigan Planning Enabling Legislation, [P.A. 33 of 2008](#), as amended, says this another way:

“The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- i) Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- ii) Considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development.
- iii) Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- iv) Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:
 - (1) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets.
 - (2) Safety from fire and other dangers.
 - (3) Light and air.
 - (4) Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
 - (5) Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.
 - (6) Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.
 - (7) Recreation.
 - (8) The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

Master Plans do not have the force of law. ***As guides, they are intended to be referenced and kept current.*** The Future Land Use plan is the key feature of the plan when making zoning decisions, capital improvement decisions, utility expansions, land divisions and all decisions with neighboring communities. It is important to remember however, that *as a guide, as opposed to an engineering tool*, the maps contained in this document are not intended to be used to scale property lines, be a definitive source for tax purpose, or determine the exact boundaries of floodplains or wetlands, for example.

The Plan only has value if it is used and it has more ongoing value if it is used in conjunction with all the other planning efforts that are going on in Richmond Township and the surrounding communities. Coordinated planning helps each group leverage their individual funds, knowledge and momentum toward an outcome. Some of these efforts are:

- The Muskegon River Watershed
- Discussion and 425 agreements regarding provision of utilities
- Shared law enforcement – Osceola County Sheriff and State Police, DNR
- Same schools – Reed City Area Public Schools
- Other overlapping interests and needs with Osceola and Mecosta Counties
- Reed City Fire contract and Mutual Aid with other Townships
- Reed City Library
- Recycle of Osceola County, Inc., a nonprofit organization located in Reed City
- Richmond Township transfer station, provides services for Richmond Township residents and all others.

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1. Brief history and location

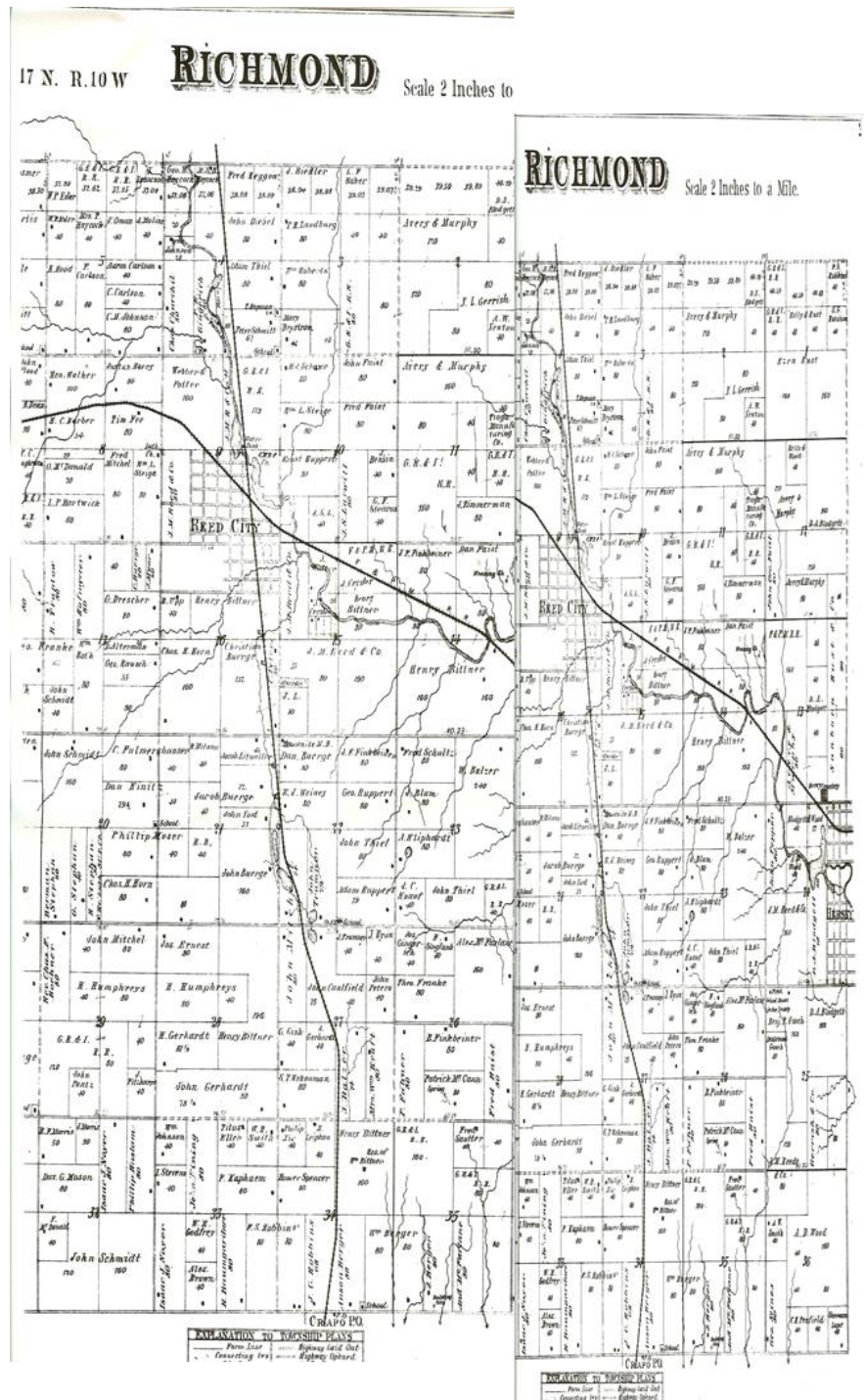
The Township was created in 1855, and at that time encompassed all of what is now Osceola County in Michigan. The Township was named by Delos A. Blodgett. Blodgett was one of the first pioneers in the area and was involved in the lumber business.

The first church in the county was the Lutheran Church, erected in 1865 in Richmond Township. Reed City, the only city in the Township, was founded by J. M. Reed & Co. in 1871.

The first rail service, built to transport lumber, was constructed in 1878. A rail junction was later constructed in Reed City. And although Hersey was the first county seat, the county seat was moved to Reed City in 1927 after a long dispute with Hersey. A portion of the Village of Hersey is located in the Township.

Richmond Township contains the highest concentration of 100-year or older farms in Osceola County, according to the Osceola County Equalization Department. Some of these farms were established in the early 1860s. There are 2675 documented Centennial/Century Farm acres currently in agricultural use in the Township. These farms own an additional 2071 acres.

Other agricultural acreage in the Township has been in families for over 100 years, but has not been documented. Agricultural acreage accounts for over 20% of the Township property values.



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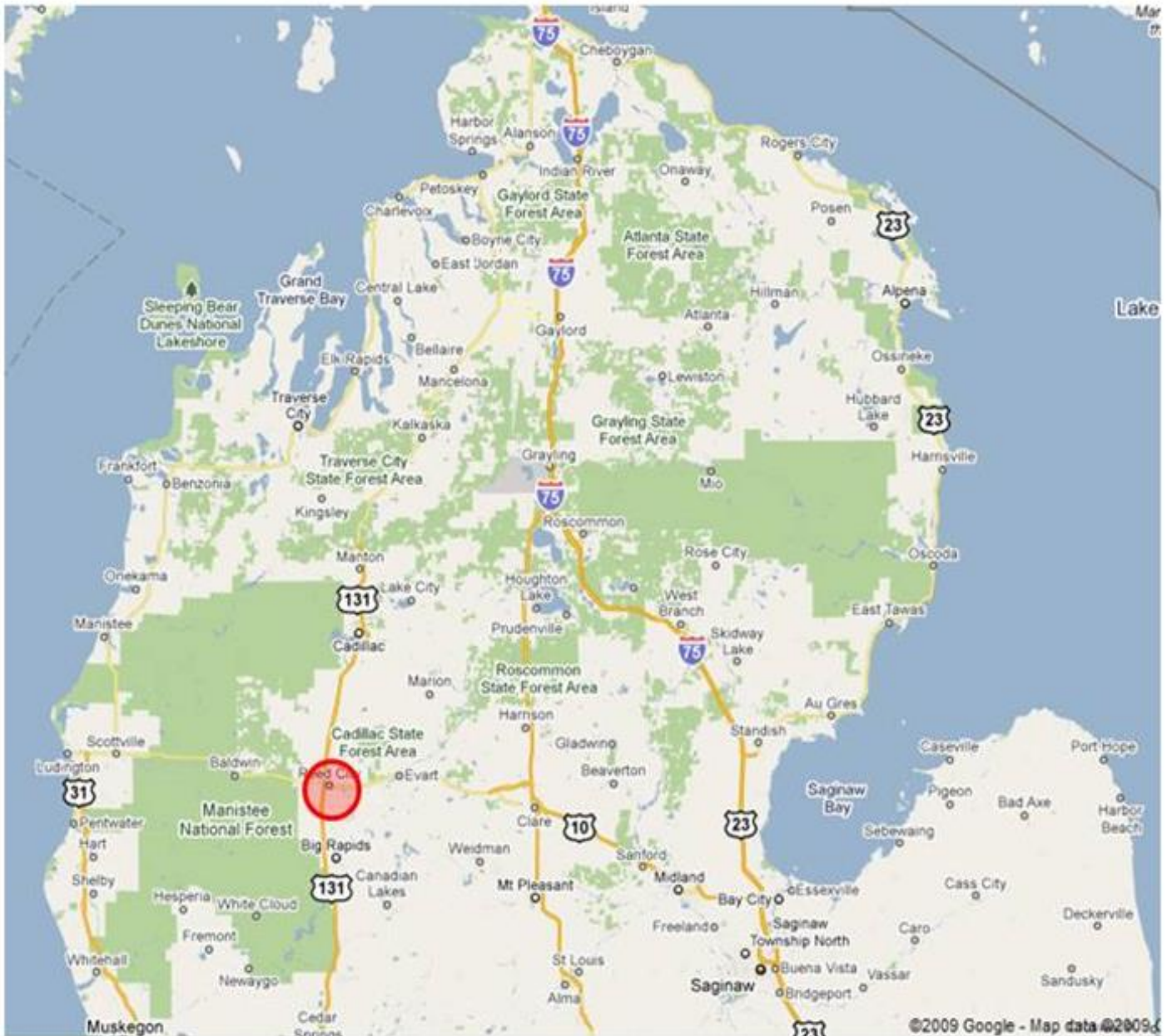
Regional Location

Richmond Township is 33.1 square miles in area and has a rough elevation of 1,076 ft. (Coordinates: 43°51'54"N85°30'17"W) The Township is located in the southwest corner of Osceola County in the southwestern part of the northern lower peninsula of Michigan.

Atlas of Osceola Co. Michigan C.O. Titus 1878

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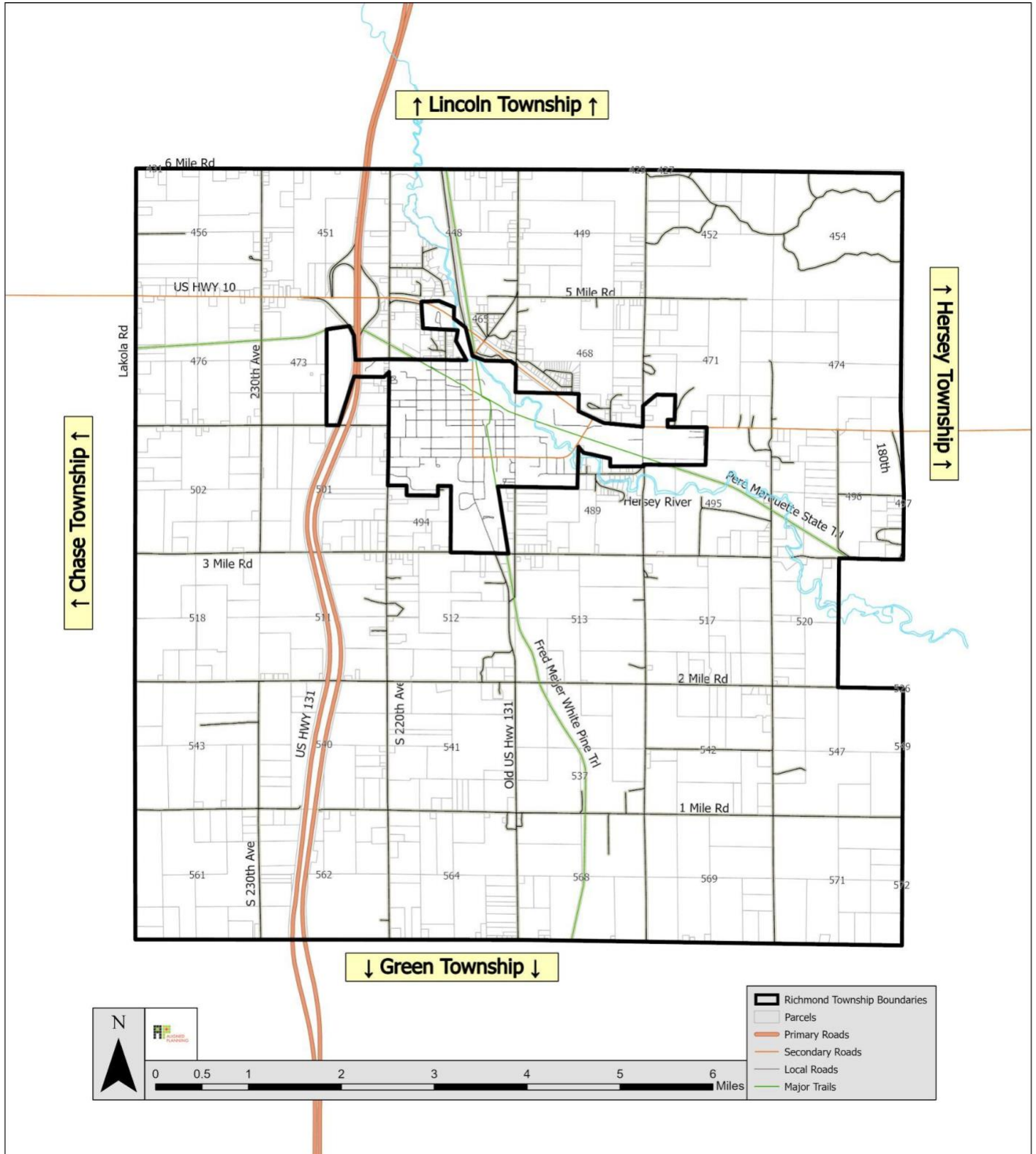
The western edge of the Township is bounded by Lakola Rd. and I 80th Ave. on the east, Meceola Rd. in the south, and 6 Mile on the north. Reed City is the only city in the Township.

Map 3 shows a base map of Richmond Township with all roads and parcel lines outside of Reed City and Hersey.

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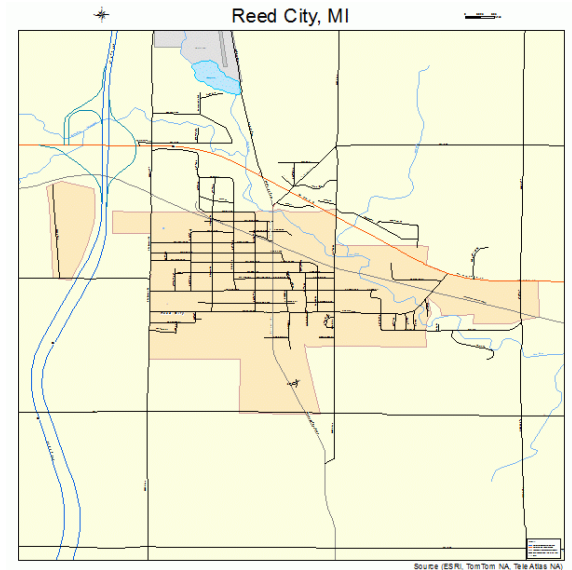
Map 3: Map of Richmond Township



Reed City

Reed City is the County seat of Osceola County, and is located almost in the center of Richmond Township at the crossroads of US 10 and US 131. The City’s population in 2020 was 2,465; almost one and one-half times that of the Township. The City encompasses 2.0 square miles. City services, the area’s schools, shopping and work opportunities influence Richmond Township.

Major area employers include Yoplait, Corewell Health-Reed City Campus, Reed City Area School District, Osceola County, Hydaker-Wheatlake, Kraftube, Reed City Group, H&R Screw, Cargill, Narton Corp., Tubelite Inc., Gerber Construction, Quality Concrete, Fox Ford, Reed City Auto Sales and H&R Screw Machine products.



Distances from other Towns/Cities in Michigan to the center of Richmond Township are listed in the following table.

Towns/Cities:	Distance from Richmond Township (3 Mile and 210th Street)	Towns/Cities:	Distance from Richmond Township
Ashton	8 miles	Grand Rapids	62 miles
Big Rapids	11 miles	Hersey	3 miles
Cadillac	27 miles	Ludington	47 miles
Chase	7 miles	Paris	6 miles
Clare	37 miles	Lansing	90 miles
Ewart	12 miles	Detroit	163 miles

Transportation Routes

US-10 runs east and west through the northern half of the Township, just to the north of Reed City. US-131 runs north and south through the western half of the Township. There is an interchange at US-10 and US-131 just northwest of Reed City, which provides access to the major markets in the area. US-10 is a federal highway extending across the State between Bay City on the Saginaw Bay and Ludington on Lake Michigan.

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US-131 is a federal multi-lane freeway extending between the Michigan/Indiana State line and the City of Petoskey, Michigan. US-131 Business Route runs through Reed City and becomes Chestnut St. in the City, then becomes Old US-131 south through the Township. The rest of the roads in the Township are the typical square mile grid of rural roads.

The Michigan Department of Transportation has monitored traffic levels at various locations along US-10, BR US-10, and Old US-131. The Annual Average Daily Counts, taken over a 24-hour time period for these sites from 2000-2007 are listed in the table below. Average Annual Daily Counts are the estimated mean daily traffic volume using seasonal and day-of-week adjustment factors.

Table 2 Traffic Counts - US-10, US-131; 2000-2007



Location	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
W. County line and US 131	5679	4678	4890	4807	5718	5501	5984	5822
Junction of US 131 and US 10BR	6783	6817	6618	7329	7373	6793	6678	6729
W. US 10BR and 210 th Ave.	7033	7068	5576	5772	5807	4912	4828	4753
210 th Ave. at US 10BR	6734	5827	5897	6860	6901	6049	5946	5820
E. US-10 BR and Patterson Rd.	253	7260	7347	8432	8483			
Junction of US-10 and N City line	2966	3159	3244	2987	2999	2109	2073	2579
Church at Chestnut at N City line	8298	7896	8109	7275	7304	5929	5828	5735
Junction of US 10BR at E City line	3497							
Old 131 at S City line	6597	6676	6011	5995	6019	5911	5811	5779
Old 131 at S US 10 BR	9075	9434	9689	7692	7723			

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Source: MDOT AADT, <http://apps.michigan.gov/tmis/Search.aspx>

The Osceola County Road Commission maintains traffic counts for county roads. Average Daily Counts are done periodically throughout the county. Those pertaining to Richmond Township are listed in the table below.

Table 3 Township Road - Traffic Counts 2001-2008

Road	Cross Street	Year	ADT
220 th Ave.	152' S Church	2001	1,375
220 th Ave.	247' north of Church	2001	2,010
220 th Ave.	717' south of Upton	2001	2,805
Mackinaw Trail	340' south of US10	2002	2,014
190 th Ave.	946' north of Clam	2002	67
5 Mile Road	West of 200 th	2002	104
5 Mile Road	East of 200 th	2002	30
200 th Ave.	North of 5 Mile	2002	271
200 th Ave.	South of 5 Mile	2002	284
2 Mile Road	0.5 mi. west of 180 th	2003	2,006
220 th Ave.	96' south of Apache Pass	2004	1,295
4 Mile Road	128' east of Lakola	2004	684
2 Mile Road	1776' west of 230 th	2004	295
3 Mile Road	141' west of 230 th	2004	556
2 Mile Road	1039' west of Old 131	2004	475
3 Mile Road	1234' west of Old 131	2004	1,103
220 th Ave.	1483' north of 3 Mile	2004	1,152
3 Mile Road	378' east of 200 th	2004	372
Craft Road	994' west of Maple	2004	136
200 th Ave.	1520' north of US 10	2004	405
2 Mile Road	999' east of 210 th	2005	1,786

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200 th Ave.	718' south of US 10	2005	250
180 th Ave.	810' south of 2 Mile	2005	287
3 Mile Road	3609' east of 210 th	2007	291
2 Mile Road	3005' west of 190 th	2007	1,783
230 th Ave.	688' north of US 10	2008	336
Old 131 Road	2367' north of US 10	2008	558
210 th Ave.	730' north of 5 Mile	2008	1,581
2 Mile Road	1064' west of 220 th	2008	354
3 Mile Road	895' west of 220 th	2008	438
220 th Ave.	510' north of 3 Mile	2008	1,005

Source: Osceola County Road Commission

There are no railroads in the Township. The old railway lines have been abandoned and acquired as part of the State and local rails-to-trails program. Additionally, there is no longer public airline service in the Township, as the former Miller Field (Nartron Airport) closed. The buildings and site remain, which include 4,506-ft main runway, a terminal with a 1200-person auditorium and a control tower, a separate hangar building, and hydro-electric power generation. In 1979, the facility was purchased by Norman Rautiola, owner of Nartron Corporation. Nartron makes electronics for the automotive industry, and used the airport buildings for its engineering and manufacturing operations, including advanced product development and wire products assembly. These activities were moved to another location in the late 1980s, and the airport ceased operations. It is important to note that the site is adjacent to the Hersey River, as well as a small pond that is present due to the dam in the river, which is slated for removal. The airport site is adjacent to Old US 131 and the White Pine Trail.

2. Community profile

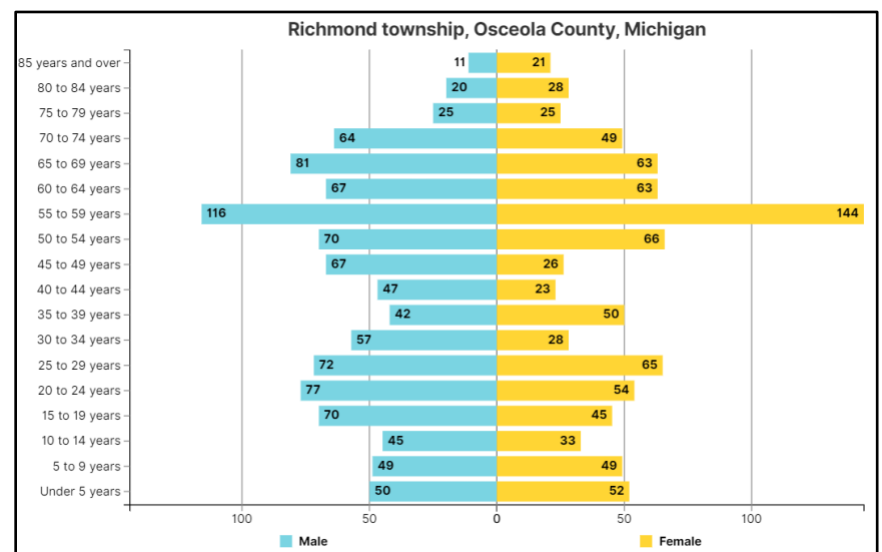
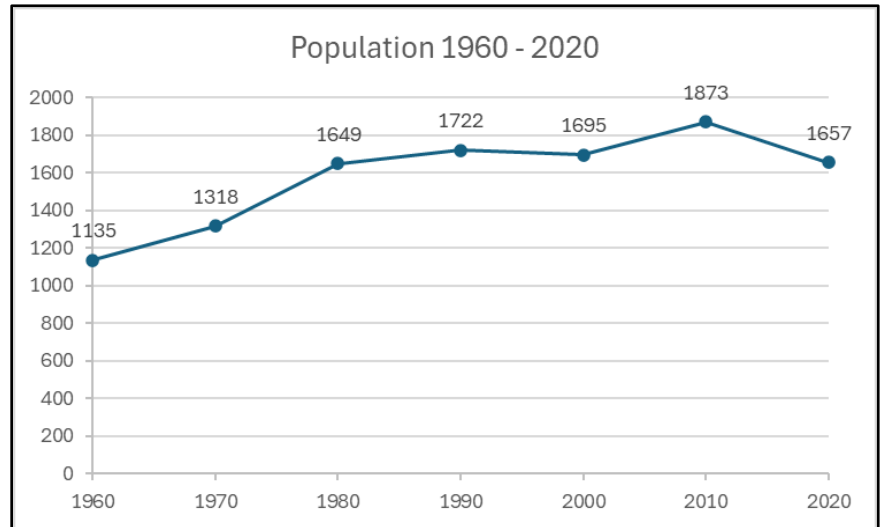
Population

Richmond Township is home to at least 1,657 people, according to the 2020 census. The ACS 5 year estimate is a little over 1,900. Based on the census data, there has been a general upward trend in population, with a dip in 2020, however the ACS estimate seems to indicate recovery and a return to the upward trend.

Over the past two decades, Richmond Township in Osceola County, Michigan, has experienced notable demographic changes. From 2000 to 2020, the population of the township has shown a slight decline, decreasing from 1,031 in 2000 to 994 in 2020. This decline in population contrasts with broader trends of population growth in urban areas and reflects the challenges faced by rural communities in maintaining their population levels.

The median age in Richmond Township has been steadily increasing, rising from 40.2 years in 2000 to 42.5 years in 2020. This trend suggests an aging population,

which could be attributed to younger residents moving to urban areas for better employment opportunities and older adults choosing to retire in the township.



Racial Profile

The racial composition of Richmond Township has remained predominantly white, though there has been a gradual increase in diversity. The percentage of white residents has slightly decreased from 96.1% in 2000 to 94.8% in 2020. In contrast, the percentages of Black, Hispanic, and Asian residents have seen small but steady increases. The Black population has grown from 0.5% to 0.8%, the Hispanic population from 1.0% to 1.5%, and the Asian population from 0.4% to 0.6%. Additionally, residents identifying as other races have increased from 2.0% to 2.3%. These changes reflect broader national trends of increasing diversity even in rural areas.

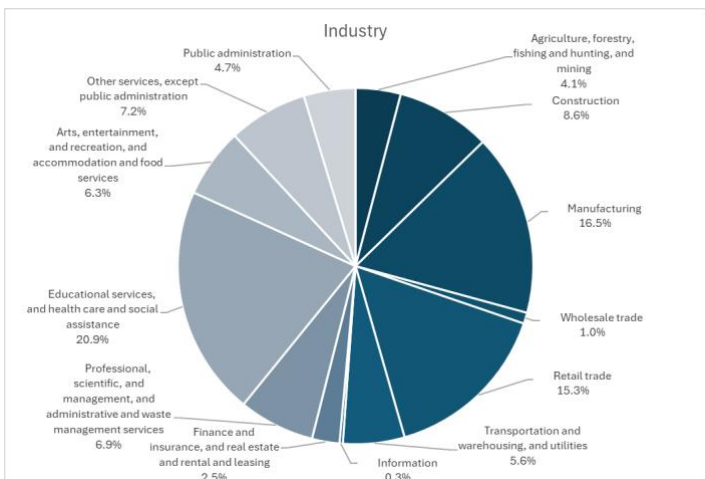
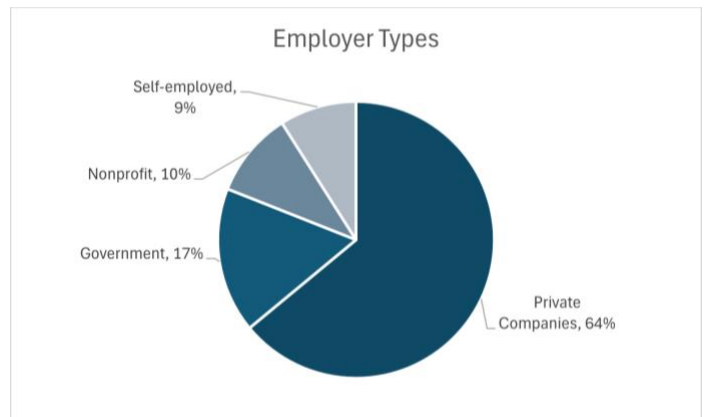
Housing

The housing landscape in Richmond Township has experienced modest changes since 2000. Richmond Township contains a total of 735 housing units, 697 of which are occupied, suggesting around 40 vacant housing units within the Township. The total number of housing units has seen a slight increase, with the number of occupied units remaining relatively stable. The majority of occupied units, about 91%, are owner-occupied. The low rate of rentership is likely related to the majority of the township being rural. The vacancy rate has risen slightly, possibly due to demographic shifts such as an aging population. Home values and rental prices have both increased, reflecting broader economic trends. Overall, the housing market in Richmond Township exhibits the characteristics of a stable rural community with slow but steady changes over the past two decades.



Employment

Most of the workers in Richmond Township are employees of private companies, around 64%. Employees of local, state, and federal governments make up 16.5% of the population. Nonprofits account for 10.5% of the workforce. Self-employed individuals, both incorporated and unincorporated represent 8.9% of the workforce. The national trend is to see an increase in entrepreneurs, which might



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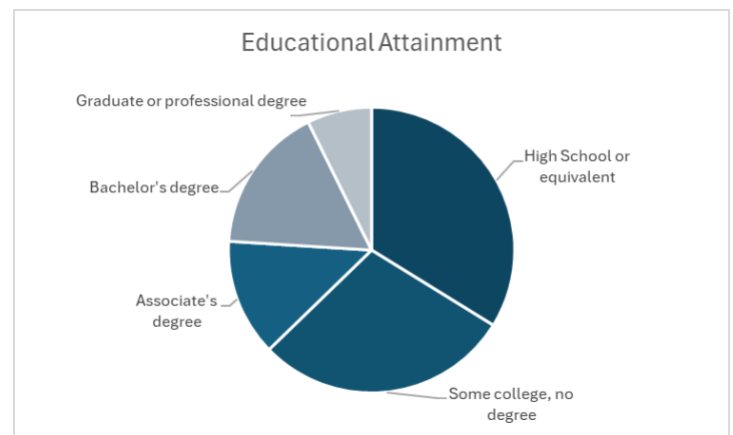
result in the need for the Township to consider methods to allow and regulate home based businesses, which can be more intensive uses than a home occupation. There is an overall 59.8% employment rate in Richmond Township, which is higher than Osceola County's.

Education, health care, and social services are the leading industry, employing 20.9%. Other leading categories are manufacturing and retail, at 16.5% and 15.3%. Construction, entertainment services, management services, and other services each account for more than 5%, but less than 10%. Despite the Township's largely rural nature, agriculture only accounts for around 4% of the workforce.

On average, workers in Richmond Township work 38.6 hours per week, which is comparable to the average for Osceola County. On average, men work 40.1 hours per week and women work 36.7 hours per week.

Education

The Census of 2020 estimates that 22.9% of the people over the age of 25 living in Richmond Township have a Bachelor's Degree or higher (including 7% with a graduate or professional degree). 32.4% have high school or equivalent education, and 27.7% have some college but no degree. This category would include both current college students who have not yet graduated and former students who are not returning to complete their degrees.



Income

The per capita income of Richmond Township is \$34,187, and the median household income is \$82,361 per year. The per capita income of Richmond Township is about 25% higher compared to Osceola County, and 10% lower compared to the State of Michigan. The median household income is one and a half times that of Osceola County and about 20% higher than that of the State of Michigan. There is an estimated 7.6% of the population below the poverty line. That percent is about half of the same for Osceola County and three-fifths for Michigan overall. Household income has seen a positive trend, with the median income increasing from \$40,000 in 2000 to \$50,000 in 2020. This growth in income, although modest, indicates some economic improvement, possibly due to local economic activities or an increase in property values.

In comparing the income trends between Richmond Township and Reed City from 2000 to 2020, there are similarities and differences reflective of broader economic patterns in rural Michigan. In Richmond Township, the median household income increased from \$40,000 in 2000 to \$50,000 in 2020, marking a 25% rise over two decades. This gradual increase indicates modest economic growth, likely driven by local economic

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activities and property value appreciation. In contrast, Reed City, the county seat of Osceola County, experienced a slightly different trajectory. In 2000, the median household income in Reed City was approximately \$35,000, lower than that of Richmond Township. By 2020, this figure had risen to around \$47,000, showing a more significant percentage increase of about 34%. Despite starting from a lower baseline, Reed City's income growth outpaced that of Richmond Township, possibly due to greater economic diversification and development efforts associated with its status as a local economic hub. Overall, while both areas saw income growth, Reed City's more pronounced increase highlights the potential benefits of economic initiatives in small urban centers compared to their rural counterparts.

Assessor Valuation

According to the Osceola County Equalization Department, in 2024 67% of the Township's property values were in Residential areas (up from 64% in 2002). Agricultural properties accounted for 17% (down from 21% in 2002), Commercial properties 10% (down from 11% in 2002) and the remaining 6% of assessed valuations were Industrial properties (up from 4% in 2002). It is important to note that land classification for assessing purposes is not the same as that is used for zoning purposes. This is why although there is a large percentage of land that is used for agricultural purposes, the majority of the valuation in the Township is tied to residential uses and structures.

In summary, the trend is an increase in residential and industrial, and a decrease in agricultural and commercial valuations.

Valuation	Parcels	2023	2024	% Change
Agriculture	135	13,919,700	16,615,300	19.7%
Residential	789	54,294,500	64,480,100	18.7%
Commercial	75	8,663,500	9,724,000	12.4%
Industrial	23	4,796,600	5,194,200	8.29%
TOTAL	1022	81,674,300	96,013,600	17.56%

Soils

According to US Fish and Wildlife data, there are over 61 different types of soils in the Township. Approximately 29% of the soils are classified as Montcalm loamy sands of various slopes. The remaining soils are other varieties of sands, loamy sands, and loams.

A study by Grand Valley State University, classified only 17.7% of the 22,547 acres in the township as poorly drained peat and muck, generally unsuitable for development. The remaining acreage is classified as various types of well-drained sandy loam or sand. Source: http://gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/6BDDB6FE-EF92-1DFF-13B97ABEB2F2651C/osceola_land_use/richmond_lustats.xls

Landform Description	Acres	%
Broad, flat outwash plain; very poorly drained peat and muck	3,993	17.7
Irregular moraine ridges; many kettle lakes; well drained sandy loam	718	3.2
Level plain; well drained sandy loam	1,070	4.7
Narrow outwash channel; well drained sand	2,884	12.8
Steep moraines; many kettle lakes; well drained sandy loam	6,487	28.8
Steep, broken moraine ridges; well drained loamy sand	7,394	32.8
	22,547	100.0

Prime Farmland

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air. Prime farmland is not excessively

eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding. (Source: [Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture](#))

There has been a gradual decrease in the total acreage of farmland. In 2000, Richmond Township had a significant amount of land dedicated to agriculture, but by 2020, the total farmland acreage had declined. This reduction can be attributed to various factors, including the conversion of agricultural land to residential and commercial uses, as well as changes in agricultural practices.



The Farmland & Open Spaces Act

The Farmland and Open Spaces Act enables a farm owner to enter into a Development Rights Agreement with the state. The agreement ensures that the land remains in agricultural use for a minimum of 10 years, and is not developed for any nonagricultural use. In return for maintaining the land in agricultural use, the landowner may be entitled to certain income tax benefits, and the land is not subject to special assessments for sanitary sewer, water, lights or non-farm drain projects.

How Does the Landowner Benefit from Enrollment in the Program?

There are two primary benefits for participation in a Farmland Agreement:

- Tax Credits: See www.michigan.gov/farmland for information.
- Special Assessments: Land that qualifies, and is enrolled in the program, is exempt from special assessments for sanitary sewers, water, lights, or non-farm drainage, unless the assessments were imposed prior to the recording of the farmland agreement. Land exempted from special assessment will be denied use of the improvement until the portion of the special assessment directly attributable to the actual use of the improvement is paid. When the farmland agreement is terminated, the local government may require payment of the special assessment; however, the amount of the assessment cannot exceed the amount the assessment would have been at the time of the exemption, and cannot include any penalty. This would only benefit a township adjacent to a city or where there are available services nearby.

For More Information on the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program:

Michigan Department of Agriculture
Environmental Stewardship Division
P.O. Box 30449, Lansing, MI 48909
PH: (517) 373-3328 • FX: (517) 335-3131
www.michigan.gov/farmland

Farmland Preservation Acreage

Richmond Township currently does not have any acreage enrolled in Michigan's Farmland and Open Spaces Preservation Program. (PA 116).

Additionally, Osceola County does not have a Preservation of Development Rights Ordinance that permits land owners to transfer the right to develop to the County as a permanent preservation tool for a fee. In the event the County has such an ordinance and the Township chooses to offer this option to its land owners, a section in the Master Plan must be devoted to Preservation of Development Rights and its importance to the Township.



Centennial Farms

Richmond Township has a high percentage of centennial farms, as well as four farms that are Sesquicentennial. Following is a list of designated farms, underlined include those designated as sesquicentennial.

1. Daniel L. Franke Farm
2. Earl A. Fuller Farm
3. Gottlib Drescher Farm
4. Charles Seelhof Farm
5. John Trimmer, Sr. Farm
6. John Ohman, Sr. Farm
7. William Otto Johnson Farm
8. John Blum Farm
9. Christian Schawve Farm
10. Wiegand Balzer Farm
11. John Mitchell Farm
12. Sara F. Singelaub Farm
13. John George Ruppert Farm
14. Earnest Alfred and Mary Toman Seager Farm
15. Adam Schwalm Farm
16. Christopher Schwalm Farm
17. Earl and Addie Fuller Farm
18. John and Margaret Thiel Farm
19. Phillip and Katherine Nix Farm
20. Louis A. and Mary C. Sutter Farm
21. Jacob and Sarah Wirth Farm
22. Andrew Klummp Farm
23. John and Margaret Trimmer Farm
24. Lorenz Peter Hartwigsen Farm
25. John and Catherine Schmidt Farm
26. Henry Bittner Farm
27. Henry Bittner Farm

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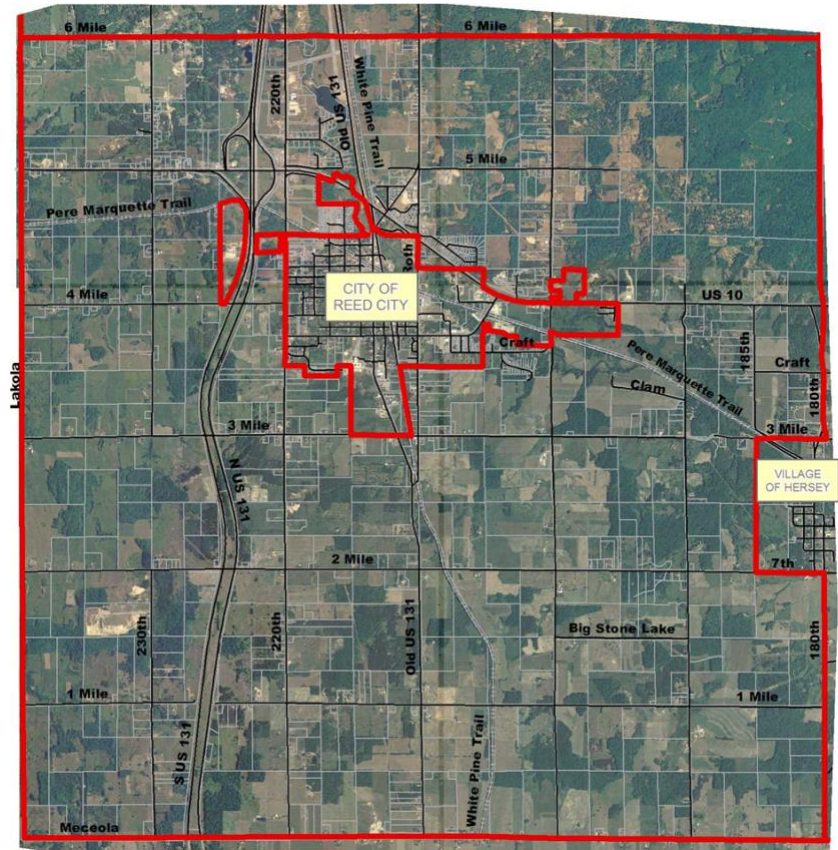
Surface Water

Richmond Township is part of the Muskegon River watershed. The Muskegon River watershed contains several water bodies, including: Muskegon River, Lake No-Sho-Mo (Miller Pond) Beaver Dam Lake, Lincoln Creek, Swiss Lake, Cat Creek, Mud Lake, Cedar Lakes, Robinson Lake, Indian Lake, Austin Lake, Lawrence Creek, Lincoln Lake, Todd Lake, Indian Creek, Alpine Lake, Eggleston Lake. Township creeks include Knuth Creek, Hewitt Creek, Jewitt Creek, and Johnson Creek.

The Hersey River provides spawning, nursery and seasonal refuge habitat for Muskegon River fish and is one of the principal coldwater sources for the Muskegon River. In the mid-1800's, a dam was built on the Hersey River to power a mill, but in recent years had become in a dangerous state of decay. Hersey Dam was near the river mouth (0.7 mile) and blocked fish migration between the Hersey and Muskegon Rivers as well as contributing to deteriorating water quality by increasing the water temperature. The dam was removed in October of 2006. This removal opened up over seven miles of high quality habitat for native brook trout and other aquatic organisms. (Source: Fish and Wildlife Journal, Hersey River Project)

Miller/Nartron Dam on the Hersey River creates a lake known as Lake No-Sho-Mo. Richmond Township has had discussions in the past with the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) regarding potential removal of Miller/Nartron Dam, which could possibly create new recreation/park opportunities for the Township.

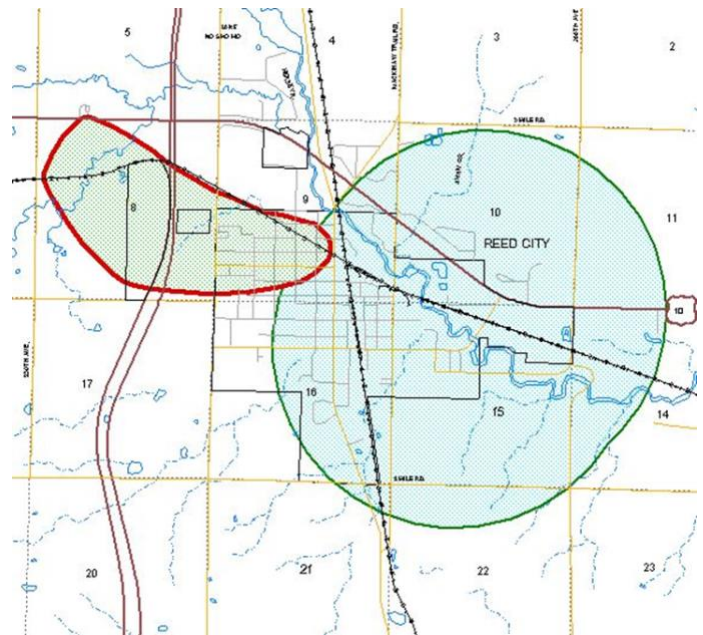
Richmond Township is very picturesque with gently rolling hills throughout a large portion of the township. The average elevation of the Township is 1,076 ft (328 m). Reed City has elevations just over 1100 ft, while there are sections of the western portion of the township at just over 1200 ft.



Wellhead Protection Program

The Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP) 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.

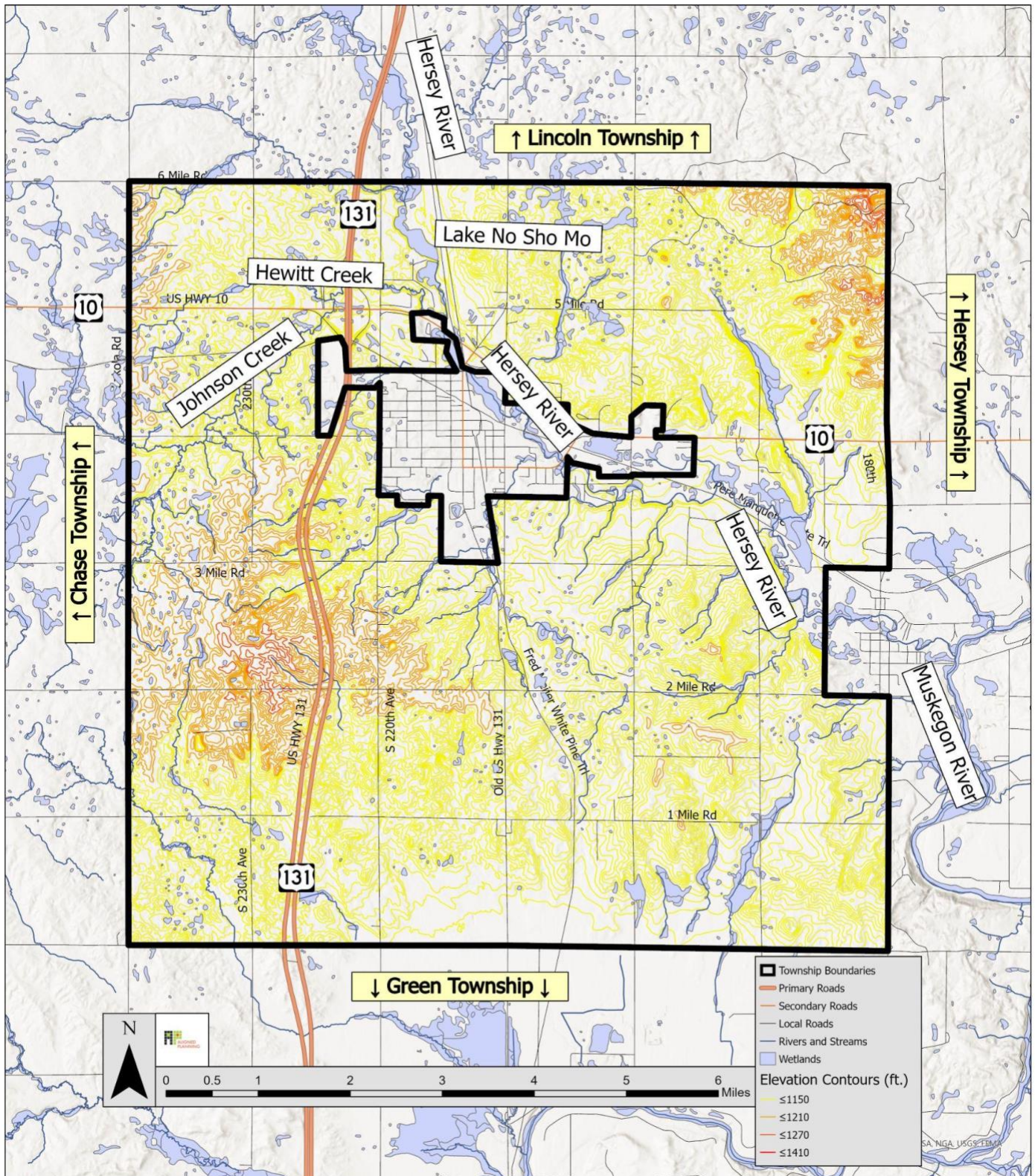
In 2001, two separate areas around Reed City were categorized as either part of the wellhead protection area or source water protection area in Richmond Township. Those areas are included on the map.



RICHMOND TOWNSHIP

Master Plan

Wetlands



RICHMOND TOWNSHIP

Master Plan

Richmond Township's most prominent body of water is the Hersey. Johnson Creek and Hewitt Creek flow into Hersey River northeast of Reed City. Just to the west of the township boundaries, the Hersey River joins the Muskegon River, making the Township part of the Muskegon River Watershed. The south of the Township also has a few creeks and streams, which also feeds into the Muskegon River. Lake No Sho Mo is currently located to the north of Reed City, however there are plans to remove the dam, meaning it will be drained in the near future.



Recreation

The Township contains a portion of the Pere Marquette Rail Trail that runs from Midland to Ludington. This trail crosses the Hersey River three times. The White Pine State Park Trail runs 92 miles from Grand Rapids to Cadillac. The Pere Marquette and White Pine Trails intersect in Reed City. The recreation trail crossroads is a unique opportunity for Reed City and the Township to prioritize and build up the tourism infrastructure to support increased commerce and small business opportunities. Additionally, these resources are important to protect and ensure that compatible land uses are nearby, and not detrimental to the serenity and natural habitats that surround them.



RICHMOND TOWNSHIP

Master Plan

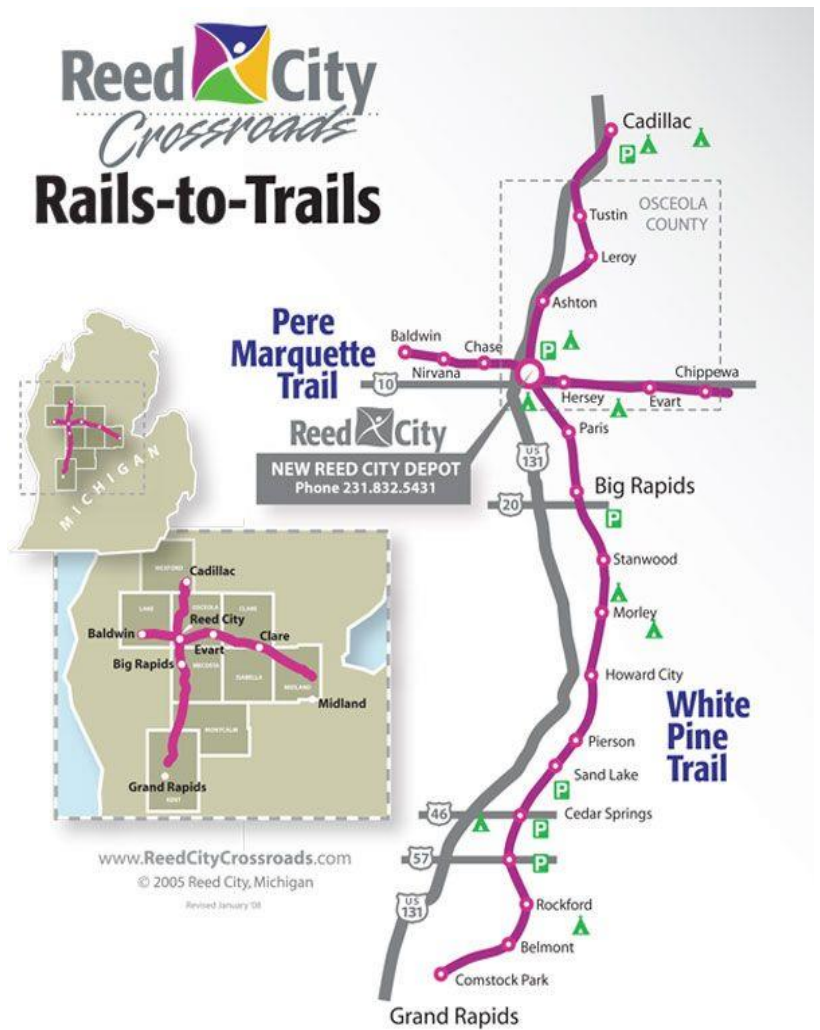
Other recreational land uses are fishing, hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, horse riding, biking, cross country skiing, ORVing, bird watching and walking. The Reed City Sportsman's Club is located in the Township. This club is a recreational shooting club featuring trap and skeet.

Spring Valley Golf Course, an 18-hole course, is located on US Highway 10 and is open to the public.

Albright Camp is a former United Methodist public campground that is now an event venue for weddings and other large-scale celebrations. It is possible that more of this type of rural event spaces become sought after in the Township due to the topography and natural setting.

Rocket Field is also in the Township which provide a space for Rocket Football practices and games dedicated to area youth.

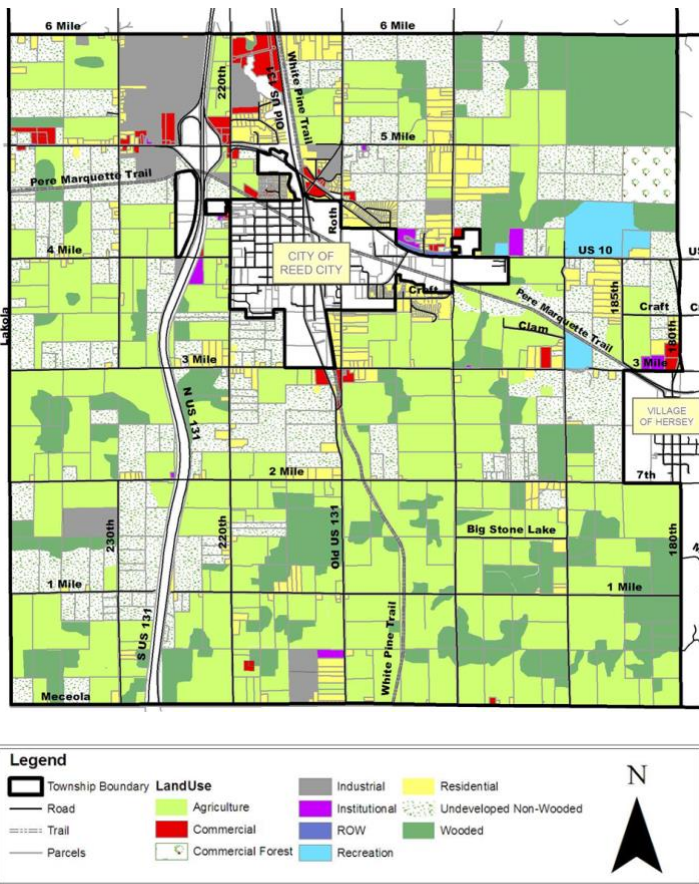
A separate recreation plan has been written by Osceola County and includes Richmond Township's recreational resources and plans.



3. Land use

Existing land use

Below are summaries of the existing land uses in the Township, with the percent of allocation for each category. A typical township has 23,040 total land area in acres. In Richmond Township roughly 320 acres are part of the Village of Hersey, an estimated 960 acres are within the borders of Reed City and the estimated balance is devoted to water and road rights of ways. The existing land use acreages show the rural extent of Richmond Township. Combining the “Agricultural” and “Undeveloped” categories of land uses indicates that 67% of land is unimproved. If the “Wooded” and “Commercial Forest” land is added into that figure, the percentage of undeveloped land reached 83%.



2024 Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	8,730	43%
Undeveloped/ Nonwooded	4,987	24%
Wooded	3,677	15%
Residential	1,596	9%
Industrial	699	4%
Commercial	309	3%
Commercial Forest	160	<1%
Recreation	262	1%
Institutional	91	<1%
TOTAL ACRES	20,511	100%



Agricultural

This classification describes all land area used for crops or pasture as well as all orchard facilities. This category includes the commercial forest area for discussion purposes.



Commercial

This category includes all parcels containing commercial facilities and uses, all public and quasi public uses and other institutional uses for discussion purposes.



Industrial

Included in this category is land used for processing, extractive, manufacturing, fabrication, assembling materials, utilities, or for the outside storage of equipment and materials.



Residential

This classification includes both single family and multiple family uses. Richmond Township currently does not have any multiple family uses.



Undeveloped, Nonwooded

All existing vacant or undeveloped parcels are included in this category.



Recreation

This category includes recreational land uses excluding drainage features, but including the floodplain and Hersey River.



Wooded

Wooded land includes stands of trees generally larger than five acres.

Future Land Use

The rural nature of Richmond Township is the most prominent as well as the most important feature of the Township throughout the Master Plan. The community, through public input, has stressed that they would like the Township to remain rural and specifically agricultural.

The community is also concerned about heavy industrial uses and contamination of water resources, as well as industrial impacts near residential areas. There is a desire for a balance with light industry and job growth. Therefore, the Future Land Use map introduces a new future land use category to include “Recreational Mixed Use”, which is designated around the former airport property, north of Old US 131. While the zoning in this area is a mix of residential and industrial, any rezoning would be to a new zoning district, Recreational Mixed Use, or a hybrid of single family residential and neighborhood-scale commercial.

Ninety-three percent of overall land use is designated for agriculture and undeveloped on the Future Land Use map, a clear statement that development requiring additional infrastructure is not part of the Township’s near future despite hosting the freeway interchange of US-131 and US-10. In the agreement with Reed City, the Township can only extend utilities north and south, therefore, no other major changes in land use intensity is foreseen.

Future Land Use Categories

These descriptions provide a comprehensive framework for planning and zoning decisions, ensuring that development aligns with the township's goals and preserves its rural character.

I. Agricultural

Purpose: The Agricultural land use category is designated to preserve and protect farming activities, support agricultural businesses, and maintain the rural character of the township.

Description:

- **Primary Uses:** Crop production, livestock farming, dairy operations, orchards, vineyards, nurseries, and other agricultural activities.
- **Secondary Uses:** Farmhouses, barns, silos, greenhouses, agricultural processing facilities, and ancillary structures related to farming. Small and large solar farm.

- **Development Standards:** Low-density development to minimize conflicts with agricultural operations. Large lot sizes (typically 2 acres or more) are encouraged to sustain viable farming activities.
- **Conservation Practices:** Implementation of best practices in soil conservation, water management, and sustainable agriculture to enhance environmental quality.

2. Residential

Purpose: The Residential land use category is intended to provide a variety of housing options that accommodate the township's population while maintaining the rural ambiance and community character.

Description:

- **Primary Uses:** Single-family homes, two family homes (by special land use), and accessory dwelling units.
- **Secondary Uses:** Home-based businesses, small-scale agriculture (e.g., personal gardens, agricultural entertainment), and community facilities (e.g., schools, parks).
- **Development Standards:** Varied lot sizes to offer a range of housing densities, with an emphasis on large lots in rural settings (typically 1 acre or more). Cluster developments may be considered to preserve open space and natural features.
- **Design Guidelines:** Encourage designs that blend with the natural landscape and promote a cohesive community atmosphere.

3. Commercial

Purpose: The Commercial land use category aims to support business activities that serve the needs of township residents and visitors, fostering economic development while preserving the township's rural character. Commercial is also an opportunity for mixed uses, and having housing near employment and community recreational assets.

Description:

- **Primary Uses:** Retail stores, restaurants, offices, service businesses (e.g., banks, salons), multi-family, two-family, and small-scale markets.
- **Secondary Uses:** Mixed-use buildings with residential units above commercial spaces, community centers, and public spaces.
- **Development Standards:** Concentrated in designated areas such as the town center at the highway interchange, or along major roadways. Building sizes and designs should be consistent with the rural character, with appropriate setbacks and landscaping.

Parking can be minimized in favor of low impact development practices so long as deferred parking areas are available on site. Signage should be low profile, small-scale, with low, static lighting. Sidewalks would be required along road frontages.

- **Accessibility:** Adequate parking, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and connections to public transportation (if available) to enhance accessibility and convenience.

4. Light Industrial

Purpose: The Light Industrial land use category is designated to accommodate businesses engaged in light manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, and distribution, providing employment opportunities while minimizing environmental impacts.

Description:

- **Primary Uses:** Light manufacturing, assembly plants, research and development facilities, warehouses, distribution centers, and technology-based industries.
- **Secondary Uses:** Ancillary offices, storage buildings, and limited retail sales related to the primary industrial use.
- **Development Standards:** Located away from residential areas to reduce potential conflicts. Emphasis on buffering and screening (e.g., landscaping, fencing) to minimize visual and noise impacts. Sites should have adequate infrastructure, including roads, water, and sewer services.
- **Environmental Considerations:** Implementation of measures to manage waste, control emissions, and protect natural resources.

5. Mixed Use

Purpose: The Mixed Use category is intended to create areas that combine recreational amenities with complementary residential and commercial uses, promoting active lifestyles and community interaction.

Description:

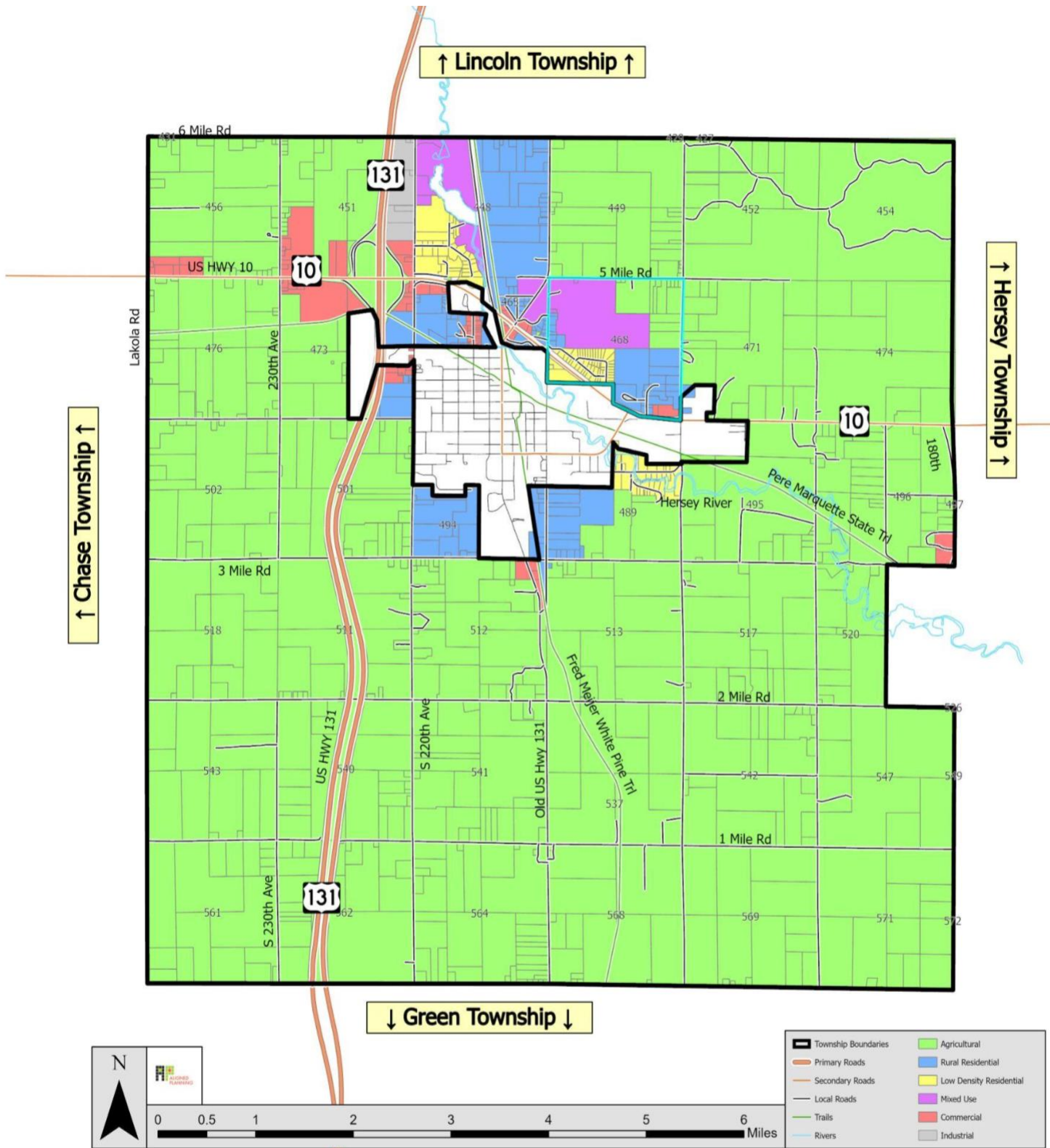
- **Primary Uses:** Parks, playgrounds, sports fields, trails, and other recreational facilities blended with walkable residential and commercial uses dedicated to tourism and recreation.
- **Secondary Uses:** Residential developments (e.g., townhomes, apartments), small-scale retail (e.g., cafes, convenience stores), and community facilities (e.g., community centers, event spaces). Drive-thrus, national-chains or industrial would not be anticipated.

- **Development Standards:** Integrated design that balances open space with built environments. Emphasis on pedestrian connectivity, multi-use paths, and access to natural features (e.g., rivers, forests) as well as the regional trail system. Commercial uses would include livery and tourism-based activities, blended with residential. Outdoor seating opening to woodlands, trails, and waterways would be envisioned. Residential densities may vary but should support the recreational focus of the area.
- **Design Guidelines:** Promote architectural styles and landscaping that enhance the recreational experience and aesthetic appeal. Encourage sustainable practices, such as green building techniques and conservation of natural habitats.

The future land use map on the following page, together with the zoning plan, should guide requests from landowners for new zoning districts. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act states that zoning should be based on a plan for the community. That plan is the Future Land Use map.

RICHMOND TOWNSHIP

Master Plan



Zoning Plan

Richmond Township should use the future land use map and the zoning plan when considering a rezoning request. The zoning plan is a regulatory tool to manage land use and development. It is a key component of the overall land use planning process and is typically implemented through local zoning ordinances.

Future Land Use Category	Compatible Zoning District	Considerations
Agriculture	Agricultural	
Residential	Residential	The Residential Medium Density/Multi Family should be considered when municipal water and sewer exist only
Commercial	Commercial	
Mixed Use	Commercial or Residential	The densities and building types would include attached single family (townhouse) and small-scale multi-family (6-8 units in a building), with small-scale businesses catering tourism and linked to the regional trail system and Hersey River.
Industrial	Industrial or Commercial or Residential	Blending housing, commercial and light industrial is suggested to ensure that people can live close to employment. Sidewalks and non-motorized pathways could connect jobs to housing, as well as to recreation opportunities. Heavy industrial is not recommended near important natural areas, such as the Hersey River corridor or wetland areas due to the delicate nature of these resources.

Rezoning Considerations

The rezoning process involves changing the zoning designation of a piece of land, which dictates how that land can be used. This process typically involves several steps and considerations, especially concerning future land use categories. Here's an overview of the process and the key considerations for a planning commission and township board:

- 1. Assessment of Current Zoning and Land Use:** The first step is to assess the current zoning designation and land use of the property. This involves understanding the existing zoning regulations,

land use patterns in the surrounding area, and any applicable comprehensive plans or zoning ordinances.

2. **Identifying the Need for Rezoning:** Rezoning may be initiated for various reasons, such as accommodating growth, promoting economic development, or addressing changes in community needs. The planning commission and township board should identify the specific reasons for considering rezoning and how it aligns with long-term community goals and objectives.
3. **Future Land Use Categories:** Future land use categories are typically defined in comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances. These categories specify the desired future development patterns and land uses for different areas within the jurisdiction. When considering rezoning, it's essential to evaluate how the proposed change aligns with the future land use categories outlined in this plan and the zoning plan.
4. **Public Input and Stakeholder Engagement:** Public input and stakeholder engagement are critical components of the rezoning process. The planning commission and township board should solicit input from residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed rezoning. Public hearings and community meetings provide opportunities for feedback and discussion.
5. **Compatibility and Consistency:** When evaluating a rezoning request, the planning commission and township board should consider whether the proposed change is compatible with surrounding land uses and consistent with the community's long-term vision for development. They should assess factors such as land use intensity, density, building design, infrastructure needs, recreation, public infrastructure, and environmental impacts.
6. **Zoning Criteria and Standards:** Zoning criteria and standards outline specific requirements and considerations for rezoning applications. These may include factors such as lot size, setback requirements, height restrictions, parking provisions, and landscaping standards. The planning commission and township board should evaluate whether the proposed rezoning meets these criteria and standards.
7. **Review Process and Decision-Making:** The rezoning process typically involves a formal review process, including application submission, staff review, public hearings, and deliberation by the planning commission and township board. The decision to approve or deny a rezoning request should be based on thorough analysis, consideration of relevant factors, and adherence to established procedures and criteria.
8. **Legal Considerations and Due Process:** Throughout the rezoning process, it's essential to adhere to legal requirements and due process principles. This includes ensuring transparency, fairness, and compliance with state and local laws, regulations, and constitutional principles. Proper documentation and record-keeping are also important to support the decision-making process and provide a basis for any potential legal challenges.

4. Goals and objectives

The following provides the overarching vision for Richmond Township to guide land use decision-making for the next 20 year planning horizon. This vision responds to the desire of the community to continue its rural pace and lifestyle, while also recognizing the need for job growth. Jobs and industry that preserves natural features, and is located around the highway interchange are desired and reflected in the future land use plan. Additionally, the concept of recreational mixed use, where housing blends with small-scale tourism-based commercial development is also supported along the Hersey River and Old US 131.

Overall Vision: Create a vibrant and sustainable rural community that balances economic development, environmental protection, and a high quality of life for residents.

1. Preserve Farmland and Promote Agriculture:

- **Objective 1.1:** Implement agricultural land preservation programs (e.g., purchase of development rights) to protect a specific percentage of farmland acreage over a set timeframe.
- **Objective 1.2:** Develop a farmers market and/or support existing ones to promote local produce and agricultural products.
- **Objective 1.3:** Encourage and support agri-tourism initiatives (e.g., farm tours, u-pick operations, agricultural entertainment) to connect residents and visitors with local agriculture.

2. Develop Sustainable Tourism:

- **Objective 2.1:** Enhance the Hersey River for recreational uses (e.g., fishing, canoeing) while maintaining its ecological health.
- **Objective 2.2:** Develop a network of walking and biking trails that connect with regional trails, highlighting natural features and scenic views.
- **Objective 2.3:** Create a trailhead with information kiosk to promote local attractions, businesses, and events, as well as bike parking and repair.
- **Objective 2.4:** Encourage development of eco-friendly tourism accommodations (e.g., bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, outfitters and cafes) that minimize impact on the environment.

3. Foster Economic Growth and Job Creation:

- **Objective 3.1:** Identify and attract businesses that complement the rural character and capitalize on tourism and agriculture.
- **Objective 3.2:** Work with Ferris State University professors and students to create a sub area plan for the former airport site that would be a location for new housing, recreation jobs, and tourism while protecting the Hersey River floodplain.
- **Objective 3.3:** Explore opportunities for broadband internet expansion to facilitate remote work and business development.
- **Objective 3.4:** Studying the feasibility of municipal water and sewer.

4. Increase Housing Diversity and Affordability:

- **Objective 4.1:** Update the zoning ordinance to reclassify residential, commercial, mixed use, and light industrial land uses to ensure they locate in areas best suited for growth and compatibility with natural resources and agricultural land.
- **Objective 4.2:** Ensure that attached residential housing types, including duplexes, townhomes, and small-scale apartments (up to 8 per building) are located where public utilities exist, and are connected to sidewalks, non-motorized pathways and the regional trail system.
- **Objective 4.3:** Encourage rehabilitation and renovation of existing housing stock.

5. Protect and Enhance Natural Features:

- **Objective 5.1:** Implement environmental zoning practices, such as dark-sky lighting, deferred parking, increased landscaping, tree preservation, and river and wetland setbacks to promote sustainable land use practices.
- **Objective 5.2:** Develop educational programs to raise awareness and encourage resident participation in environmental stewardship.
- **Objective 5.3:** Establish a conservation setback along the Hersey River to protect sensitive natural habitats and provide recreational opportunities.

5. Implementation

This plan outlines steps for implementing the master plan in Richmond Township which places a focus on adhering to the future land use plan, and supporting a continued priority for agriculture and farmland preservation, supporting recreation and tourism opportunities with the regional trail networks passing through the community, and preserving the unique features of the community including the woodlands, rolling topography, and Hersey River.

Phase I: Planning and Assessment

- **1.1 Public Engagement:**
 - Conduct community surveys and hold public forums to gather resident input on priorities and concerns.
 - Establish a social media presence to share updates on the planning process and community involvement opportunities through posted agendas for Board and Planning Commission meetings.
- **1.2 Inventory and Analysis:**
 - Inventory existing recreational facilities, agricultural land, potential natural area sites, and current zoning regulations to ensure zoning practices align with the Master Plan while protecting private property rights.
 - Analyze regional trail connections and tourism opportunities in collaboration with Osceola County.

Phase 2: Implementation Strategies

- **2.1 Recreation:**
 - Collaborate with Osceola County to implement long term vision for improved access and a trailhead along the White Pine Trail.
 - Organize community events and programs promoting outdoor recreation.
- **2.2 Agricultural Land Preservation:**
 - Research and implement agricultural land preservation programs (e.g., purchase of development rights, conservation easements).
 - Partner with local and state agricultural organizations to support farmers' markets and educational initiatives.
 - Explore opportunities for agri-tourism development, and add agricultural entertainment uses into the zoning ordinance.

- **2.3 Regional Trails and Tourism:**

- Collaborate with regional trail organizations to connect the township's trails with existing networks.
- Develop a tourism marketing strategy highlighting the Hersey River, trails, and unique rural experiences.
- Encourage development of ecotourism businesses and visitor accommodations in the commercial and recreational mixed use land use areas in the future land use plan.

- **2.4 Updated Zoning:**

- Establish zoning regulations that encourage development patterns compatible with agriculture, tourism, and natural area preservation.
- Explore mixed-use zoning options to increase residential living options near commercial corridors and the White Pine trail corridor.
- Ensure zoning regulations adhere to best practices for environmental protection.

Phase 3: Monitoring and Evaluation (Ongoing)

- Monitor progress on achieving the master plan's goals and objectives at each Planning Commission meeting.
- Annually, conduct a joint implementation meeting with the Township Board, Planning Commission, DDA and ZBA.
- Regularly engage with Osceola County and the community to maintain public support and encourage participation in implementation efforts.

Additional Considerations:

- **Funding:** Identify potential funding sources for each implementation strategy (grants, public-private partnerships, general fund, fundraising).
- **Staffing:** Assess staffing needs to implement the plan and identify potential partners for expertise.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide training for township officials and staff on relevant topics like planning and zoning, grant writing, environmental protection, and recreation.

Success Factors:

- Strong community engagement throughout the planning and implementation process.
- Effective collaboration with regional partners (Osceola County, trail organizations, agricultural agencies).
- Secure and diversified funding sources.
- Commitment and leadership from township officials and residents.

By following these steps and considering the additional factors, this implementation plan can guide the rural township towards achieving the goals of its master plan and building a vibrant, sustainable future.

TOWNSHIP OF RICHMOND
COUNTY OF OSCEOLA, MICHIGAN

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Township Board of Richmond, Osceola County, Michigan, held at the Township Hall, 21717 Howard St., Reed City, MI 49677, on the 12 day of September, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Bluhm, Stieg, Ruppert, Galloup, Woods_____

ABSENT: none_____

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Ruppert and supported by Member Galloup:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-09-12-01

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ADOPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN
AMENDMENT AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.**

WHEREAS the Michigan Planning Enabling Act provides for the preparation and adoption of Master Plans and amendments therein for the use, development, and preservation of lands in the Township;

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has prepared an Amendment to the Township Master Plan of 2010 that updates demographics, goals, objectives, and future land use;

WHEREAS, on July 9, 2024, the Planning Commission approved the tentative text of the Amendment and requested that the Township Board authorize distribution of the draft Amendment to the contiguous municipalities and other relevant planning and governing entities, and following public notices required by law;

WHEREAS, On September 12, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval after posting all required notices and having the plan out for public comment for the required 42 days;

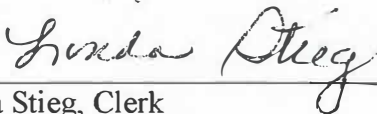
WHEREAS, on September 12, 2024, the Township Board considered and adopted the 2024 update to the Richmond Township Master Plan and Future Land Use Map;

IT IS, THEREFORE, RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Members: Bluhm, Stieg, Ruppert, Galloup, Woods

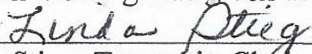
NAYS: Members: none _____

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.



Linda Stieg, Clerk
Richmond Township

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



Linda Stieg, Township Clerk