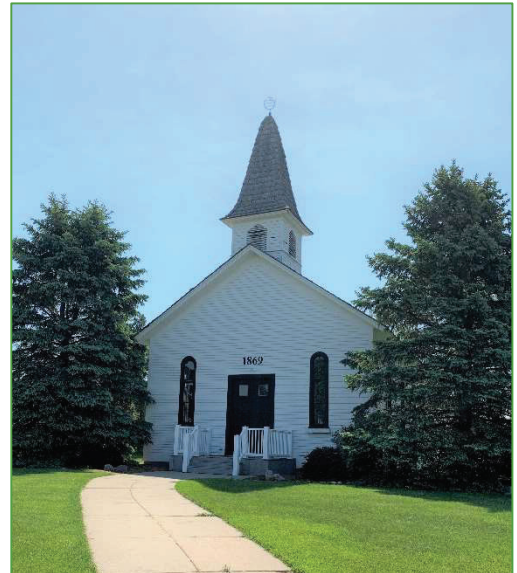
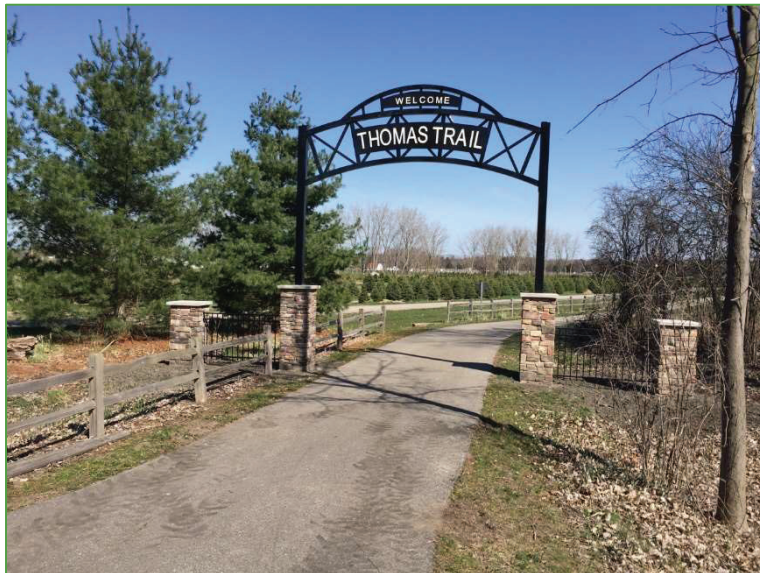




# THOMAS TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



2021 UPDATE



# THOMAS TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN 2021 UPDATE

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## TOWNSHIP BOARD

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Doug Bird  
Jennifer Curry  
Kimberlee Beam

The Thomas Township Master Plan 2021 Update was adopted by Resolution 21-01 of the Thomas Township Planning Commission on March 17, 2021 by authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, after holding a public hearing for this Master Plan on March 17, 2021.



Rod Iamurri, Chair  
Planning Commission  
Thomas Township



THOMAS TOWNSHIP  
249 N. MILLER ROAD  
SAGINAW, MI 48609

**With Assistance from**  
Spicer Group, Inc.  
[www.spicergroup.com](http://www.spicergroup.com)  
Robert R. Eggers, AICP  
1280992SG2019

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Purpose of a Plan .....	1
Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances .....	2
About this Document .....	2
Community Profile.....	3
Local Context .....	4
Population .....	4
Housing.....	7
Income, Education, and Employment.....	10
Taxable Value.....	15
Comparison Communities.....	16
Natural Resources.....	24
Significant Features.....	24
• Topography .....	24
• Woodlands .....	24
• Major Bodies of Water and Hydrology .....	26
• Wetlands .....	26
• Public Act 116/Farmland, Open Space and Preservation Act .....	27
Infrastructure, Services, and Facilities.....	32
Public Infrastructure .....	32
Community Services.....	34
Thomas Township DDA .....	35
Recreational Facilities and Opportunities.....	36
Transportation Network .....	38
Existing Land Use .....	43
Community Input.....	47
Survey .....	47
Community Goals and Objectives .....	56
Future Land Use Plan .....	61
Implementation Plan .....	68
Appendices	
Appendix A – Comparison Communities Summary Chart	
Appendix B – Water and Sewer System Maps	
Appendix C – Sidewalk Guidelines	
Appendix D – Downtown Development Authority Development Plan Project List	
Appendix E – Community Input Survey Results	
Appendix F – Resolution of Adoption	



# INTRODUCTION

Thomas Township is a suburban community located in the Great Lakes Bay Region of Michigan near the cities of Saginaw, Midland and Bay City. The Township is characterized by a unique blend of residential, commercial, and industrial lands that are largely centered around the M-46 corridor west of the Tittabawassee River. Agricultural land fills in the landscape in the western and northern portions of the Township. Cultural and recreational opportunities enrich the local quality of life. These opportunities include sports and recreational programs, parks, hiking trails, fishing opportunities, summer fairs, festivals and concerts.



As a member of the East Central Michigan Planning and Development Regional Commission (Region VII), Thomas Township is directly affected by regional conditions and trends. The cities of Saginaw, Bay City and Midland function as a single metropolitan community. The Saginaw-Bay City-Midland Metropolitan statistical area is Michigan’s fifth largest in terms of population.

## PURPOSE OF A PLAN

Preparing a Master Plan is one of the major functions of a Township. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) states “the planning commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction”. The Act requires that the plan be reviewed by the planning commission at least once every five years.

A Master Plan is a comprehensive document that is intended to guide a community through future growth and development decisions for the next 10 – 20 years. It is documentation of the goals and objectives that a community desires in terms of land use planning, natural resources preservation and various community development aspects. For a Master Plan to be successful it must accurately reflect the wants and needs of the community and coordinate with the values and ideals the local demographic holds.

A Master Plan serves to:

- Determine citizens wants and needs in accordance with services
- Provide a general statement of goals and objects
- Provide an overall perspective of the future of the Township
- Develop a future land use plan to guide future zoning decisions



- Guide the use of natural resources while preserving the environment of the Township
- Promote public health, safety, and general welfare
- Encourage cooperation and economic improvement through the goals and objectives

## MASTER PLANS AND ZONING ORDINANCES

A zoning ordinance contains a group of laws that mandate the regulation of land use. It differs from a Master Plan in that a Master Plan is a set of policies used to shape future development and determine how a community will grow and change. The Master plan outlines the community's vision of the future while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. A Master Plan influences a zoning ordinance but is not law, however, State law requires that a zoning ordinance be based on an adopted plan. Also, zoning decisions that are consistent with the Master Plan are more likely presumed to be valid if challenged in the courts.

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is an update of the November 2016 Thomas Township Community Master Plan. The Township chose to update selected sections of the 2016 plan.

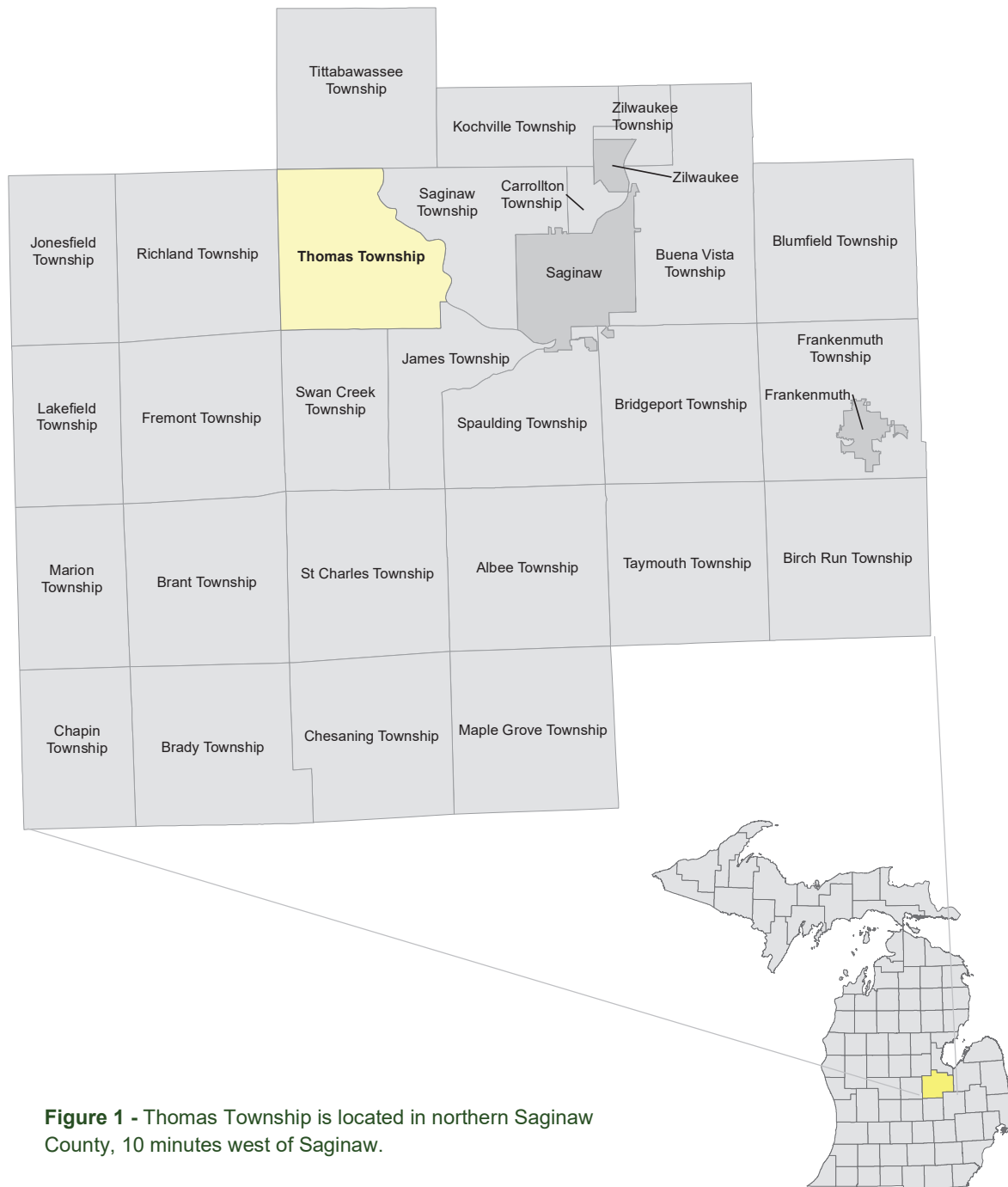
The sections that were updated and/or significantly changed in the 2016 plan include:

- Community Profile – New discussion regarding Township Branding, Placemaking and the Business District North.
- Infrastructure, Services, and Facilities – Update Recreational Facilities and Opportunities section to include Nature Center discussion and updated trails information.
- Future Land Use Plan – New discussion regarding the Wind Energy overlay district.
- Implementation Plan – Updated.

Thomas Township contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw to assist with the writing and development of the plan. The consultant met with the Thomas Township Planning Commission three times during the development of the plan. Meetings regarding key issues were also held with Thomas Township staff. The Township Board approved to make the document available for the required 42-day review on December 7, 2020. A public hearing was held on the Plan on March 17, 2021. The Thomas Township Planning Commission adopted the plan via resolution after the public hearing on March 17, 2021.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

In order to successfully plan for the future, a community needs to understand its demographic makeup. Census data, historic trends and other resources were analyzed. This section of the Master Plan examines important factors such as population trends, housing characteristics and the local economy.



**Figure 1** - Thomas Township is located in northern Saginaw County, 10 minutes west of Saginaw.

## LOCAL CONTEXT

Thomas Township is located in the northwestern portion of Saginaw County in the Great Lakes Bay Region of the State of Michigan as shown in Figure 1. It is within a 30 minute drive to the major employment and commercial centers of Saginaw, Midland and Bay City. Thomas Township is bordered by the Tittabawassee River to the east. Tittabawassee Township is located just to the north, Saginaw Charter Township to the east, Swan Creek and James Townships to the south and Richland Township to the west.

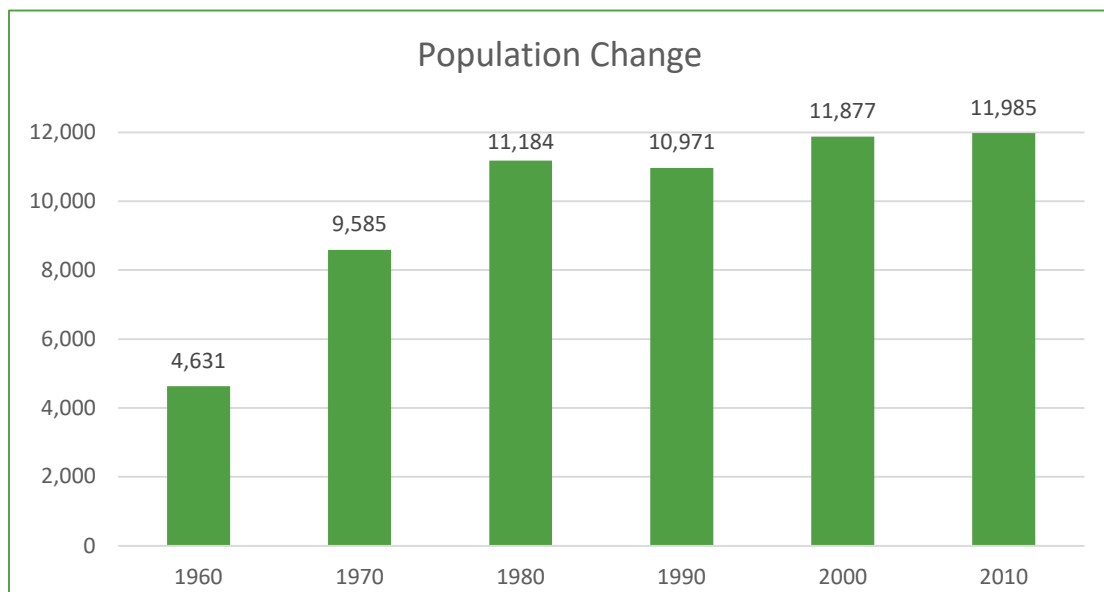
## POPULATION

The U.S. Census provides ample data on population characteristics. This report presents information from the 2000 and 2010 Census, the 2014 American Community Survey and other Historic Census data.

### POPULATION TRENDS

In general, the population in Thomas Township has been relatively stable since 1980.

Figure 2 shows how the population in Thomas Township has changed since 1960. The largest growth was seen between 1960 and 1980. The 1980 population was 11,184. The 2010 population is 11,985.



**Figure 2** - The population in Thomas Township has been relatively stable since 1980

*Source: U.S. Census*

Figure 3 shows the population trends for Thomas Township, Saginaw County and Michigan. Thomas Township has had larger relative increases in populations than both the county and state.

Between 2000 and 2010, both the county and state saw decreased populations which is not surprising due to the recession that took place during this time period. However, Thomas Township saw an increase. This shows the resilience in the local economy and is probably a reflection of the growth of Hemlock Semiconductor during that period.



Thomas Township saw population growth of nearly 160% between 1960 and 2010. Michigan experienced an increase of 26% and the county’s population increase 5% in the same time period.

### Regional Population Change

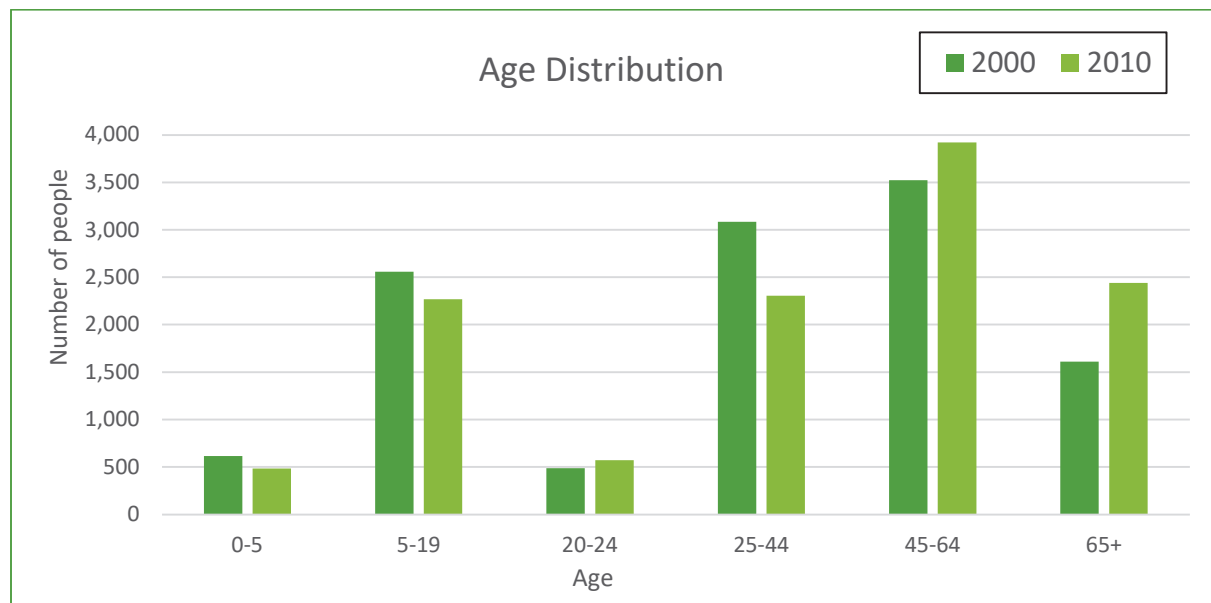
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1960 - 2010
<b>Thomas Township</b>	4,631	8,585	11,184	10,971	11,877	11,985	+159%
<b>Saginaw County</b>	190,752	219,743	229,059	211,946	210,039	200,269	+5%
<b>Michigan</b>	7,823,194	8,881,826	9,262,044	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	+26%

**Figure 3** - Thomas Township has seen large relative population growth since 1960 as compared to Saginaw County and the State of Michigan. *Source: U.S. Census*

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

Determining the age of the community allows for analysis of the public services and special needs a community requires. For example, if a community is full of young people, there may be a need for an increase of rental housing. This analysis may also be useful for policy decisions about filling gaps in services and future projects in housing, education, recreation and medical care. Following large generations such as the baby boomers and millennials helps a community be prepared as their needs change.

For this analysis, age groups were separated by life stages. The first is the preschool age group (0-5 years old), followed by school aged children (5-19 years old). People between the ages of 20-24 are just entering the workforce, furthering their education, or beginning a family. The age group 25-44 are the family formation years where children are born and living at home. The 45-64 age group is considered the empty nesters stage and 65+ is the age group of retirees.



**Figure 4** - Age Distribution of the Thomas Township Population in 2000 and 2010 *Source: U.S. Census*

As seen in Figure 4, the age distribution changes from 2000 to 2010 reflect that of an aging population. The number of young children decreased and the number of citizens in the empty nester and retirees age groups increased. An aging population has differing needs that can affect land use planning. Those include housing, transportation, and recreation.

The population of Thomas Township is older than that of Saginaw County and of the State of Michigan. The median age in Thomas Township is 47.1 years. This is significantly older than Saginaw County at 39.5 years and Michigan at 38.9 years.

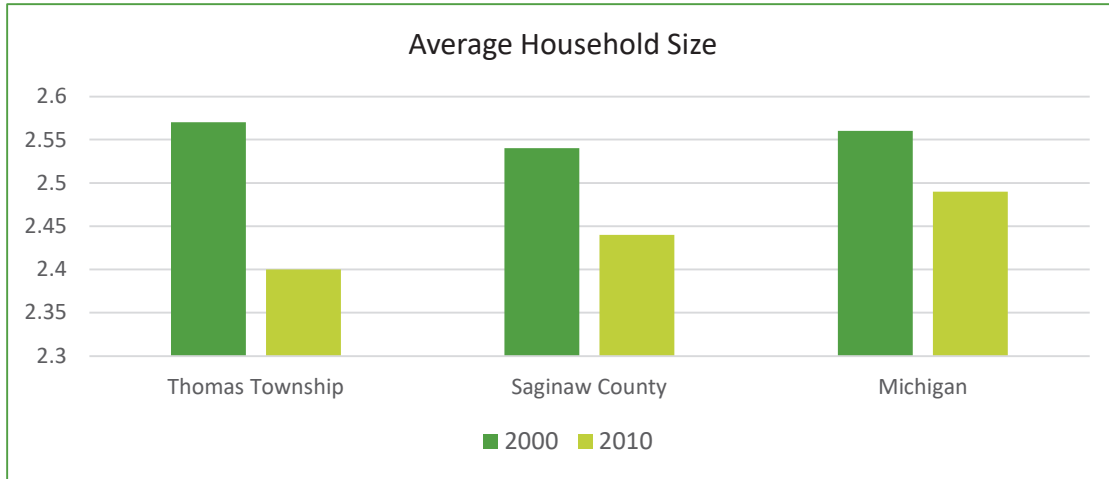
### DIVERSITY

Another important characteristic of a community is the racial make-up. Thomas Township is primarily White. Approximately 3.5% of the total population is African American or Hispanic. This is much less diverse than Saginaw County, which contains a 26.3% African American and Hispanic population. The population in the State is between these two at 18.4%.

The foreign born population in Thomas Township is small at 1.7%. Saginaw County contains a small foreign born population as well at 2.4%. The State has a larger percentage of foreign born population, at 6.1%.

### HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The number of persons per household constitutes the household size. Since the 1970's household size has decreased across the county. There are many factors that have contributed to this phenomena including increased lifespan, lower birth rate, higher divorce rates and the growing number of non-traditional households.



**Figure 5** - Average household size has been decreasing across Michigan *Source: U.S. Census*

The average household size is an important aspect of any community. It is useful when deciding on future development of housing types. For example, if the size of households is decreasing, it may mean that new housing types may be needed to accommodate smaller families. As seen in Figure 5, the decreasing household size in the Township, County, and State. As of 2010, Thomas Township has the smallest average household size of the three, unlike in 2000, when it had a slightly larger average household size than the county and state. The number dropped significantly between 2000 and 2010. This is largely attributed to the increasing population of empty nesters and retirees.

## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Along with the average household size, a community must know the type of families that are present. The household characteristics of a community helps demonstrate the need for specific types of housing. Families consist of people living in a single household who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Families vary in types according to the parental presence (single or couple). Non-families consist of a single person living alone or multiple people who are not related living together.

Figure 6 compares the household characteristics of the Thomas Township community to the county and state. In all three, the largest category is married couple families. Of the households in Thomas Township, 56.3% are married couple families. This is the largest percentage of the three groups. Both the county and state have just under 50% of total households filled with married couple families.

Single parent families account for just less than 20% of the total households in the county and state but only 13% of the total households in Thomas Township.

Household Type

	Thomas Township	Saginaw County	Michigan
Married Couple Families	56.3%	45.8%	48.5%
Single Male Families	3.9%	3.9%	4.4%
Single Female Families	8.8%	14.6%	12.8%
Single Persons Living Alone	27.7%	30.7%	28.7%
Other Non-Families	3.3%	4.9%	5.6%
Total Households	100%	100%	100%

Figure 6 - Types of Households in Thomas Township, Saginaw County and Michigan

Source: U.S. Census

## HOUSING

Housing is probably the most visible characteristic of any community. This section analyzes the housing stock by unit type, age, value and tenant type. This data helps a community determine the quality of existing housing and the potential need for new housing.

### HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

There are multiple types of housing that make up the housing stock in a community. The U.S. Census separates housing into five different categories: 1 Unit Detached (single-family homes), 1 Unit Attached (granny flats, single apartment unit connected to a single-family home), 2-4 Units (duplex units), 5 or more Units (apartment complex), and Mobile Homes or Trailer Units.

As previously mentioned, a large amount of households in Thomas Township are made up of married couple families which generally demand single-family homes. This correlates with the large percentage of



single-family homes found in the Township (75.5%), as seen in Table 7. These percentages are similar in Saginaw County and Michigan.

### Housing Distribution

Unit Type	Thomas Township	Saginaw County	Michigan
1 Unit Detached Structure	75.5%	76.3%	72.0%
1 Unit Attached Structure	4.1%	3.4%	4.6%
2-4 Unit Structures	3.3%	6.3%	5.1%
5 or More Unit Structure	8.3%	10.3%	12.8%
Mobile Home or Trailer Units	8.7%	3.7%	5.4%

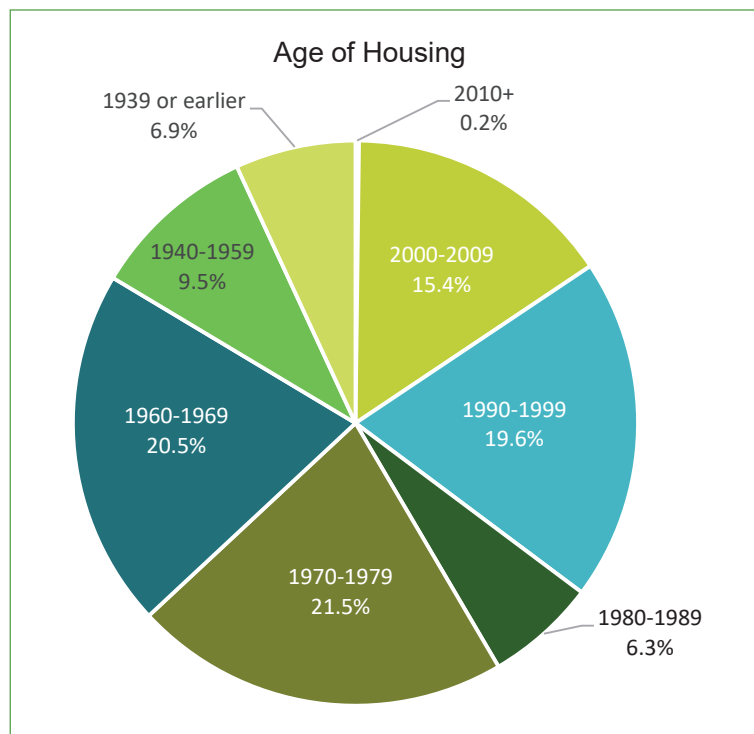
**Figure 7** - Types of housing in Thomas Township, Saginaw County and Michigan

Source: U.S. Census

Thomas Township has nearly equal percentages of 5 or more unit structures and mobile homes structures. The Township has a larger amount of mobile homes than the county and state but less structures with 5 or more units. Of the total housing in Saginaw County, 10.3% are structures of 5 or more attached units and 12.8% of the housing in Michigan is the same type.

### AGE OF HOUSING

Generally speaking, the useful age of residential structures is approximately 50 years. Beyond that point, repairs can become costly and it may be difficult to provide the type of amenities that are considered



**Figure 8** - more than 35% of the housing stock in Thomas Township is more than 50 years old.

Source: U.S. Census

standard for today's lifestyle. Therefore, determining the age of the housing located within a community is an effective way of measuring the quality.

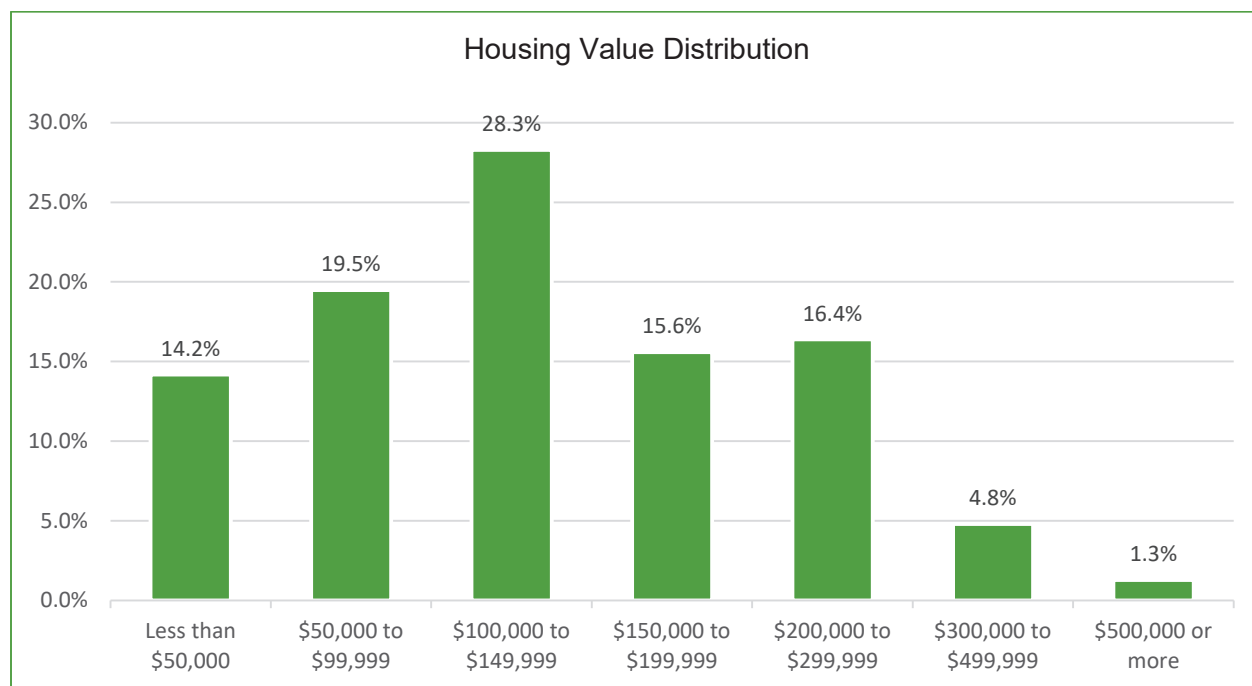
As seen in Figure 8, 16.4% of the housing stock in Thomas Township was built in 1959 or earlier. Slightly over 20% was built in the 1960's. So, approximately 35% of the housing stock in Thomas is more than 50 years old. Code enforcement may be important to maintain its quality.

Between 1990 and 2010, Thomas Township saw a large amount of housing built (35.2%). This points to a strong real estate market which points to a strong local economy. If Thomas Township continues to grow, the community must be ready to accommodate the increased housing needs in residential areas of the Township.

### HOUSING VALUE

Analyzing housing values is a way to determine both quality and affordability of housing. Most communities wish to maintain both quality housing as well as affordable housing to support a diverse community which will continue to attract new residents for future growth.

Thomas Township has a wide distribution in home values. The largest proportion of homes is valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999 as seen in Figure 9. The median home value in Thomas Township, according to the 2014 American Community Survey is \$126,500. This is higher than Saginaw County at \$94,800 and Michigan at \$120,200.



**Figure 9** - Housing Value Distribution in Thomas Township

*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

## INCOME, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT

A large part of the U.S. Census consists of economic characteristics. Economic characteristics help a community determine the vitality and ability to support future commercial, residential, and industrial development. This data must be analyzed because it exposes the strengths and weaknesses of a community while alluding to trends that may aid or hurt the economic future. This economic analysis utilizes 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census data and 2014 American Community Survey.

### INCOME AND POVERTY

Income and poverty trends help to measure the economic health of a community. Increases in income can show economic success while decreases show a time of economic misfortune. Two of the income levels measured by the U.S. Census are median household income and per capita income. These measures are shown in Figure 10.

Household income is the measure of the total incomes of the persons living in a single household. Per capita income is the measure of the total income divided evenly for each person, regardless of age or employment, to receive an equal amount. It is this number that generally represents the overall wealth of a community. Thomas Township is wealthier in both measures than Saginaw County and Michigan.

Thomas Township has a relatively low percentage of individuals below the poverty line when comparing the community to the county and the state, as seen in Figure 10. Approximately 5% of the total population in Thomas Township is considered below the poverty line. In the county, 18.1% of the population falls in this category and in the state 16.9% of people are below the poverty line. Having such a large population above the poverty line is a major strength in Thomas Township. It points to a vital economy and strong workforce.

**Median Income and Poverty  
Thomas Township and Region**

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% Below Poverty
Thomas Township	\$55,827	\$30,815	5.3%
Saginaw County	\$43,566	\$22,891	18.1%
Michigan	\$49,087	\$26,143	16.9%

**Figure 10** - Income and Poverty Measures in Thomas Township, Saginaw County and Michigan

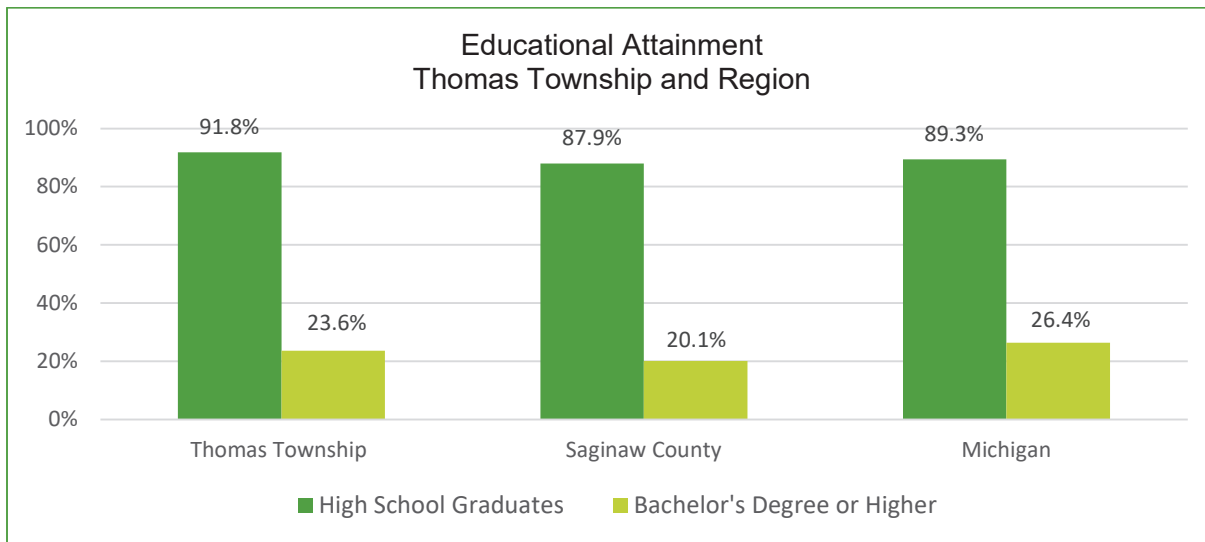
*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*



## EDUCATION

Educational attainment measures the educational level of a community. It illustrates the skills and capabilities of the labor force. For example, if there is a high educational attainment level, it may attract a larger diversity of industries that require a degree for employment.

Figure 11 illustrates the percentages of persons who are high school graduates and individuals who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in Thomas Township, Saginaw County, and Michigan. All are relatively similar. Thomas Township has the greatest percentage of high school graduates. Michigan has the largest percentage bachelor's degrees or higher at 26.4%. Thomas Township has slightly less at 23.6% with bachelor's degrees or higher. Saginaw County is the lowest of the three at 20.1%.



**Figure 11** – Education Levels in Thomas Township, Saginaw County and Michigan

*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

The distribution of employment throughout various industries shows the diversity of an economy. If there is a large majority of a population employed in one industry, the economy will be majorly affected if that industry falls. The distribution of employment by industry is shown in Figure 12.

The two largest employing industries in Thomas Township are educational, health and social services (28.3%) and manufacturing (15.6%). Saginaw County and the State have the same top two employing industries. Percentages are similar to that of Thomas Township.

Overall, it appears that Thomas Township has a resilient economy when it comes to employment. There is a good amount of diversity in jobs in terms of industry type. This has likely been a large factor contributing to the success the Township has seen over the years in terms of population growth and relative economic stability.

## Employment by Industry

Industry	Thomas Township	Saginaw County	Michigan
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%
Construction	7.9%	4.4%	4.8%
Manufacturing	15.6%	15.5%	17.4%
Wholesale trade	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%
Retail trade	9.4%	13.6%	11.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.0%	3.9%	4.1%
Information	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	4.8%	5.1%	5.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	9.4%	7.9%	9.3%
Educational, health and social services	<b>28.3%</b>	25.7%	24.1%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.0%	9.9%	9.5%
Other services (except public administration)	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%
Public administration	3.3%	3.7%	3.7%

**Figure 12** - Education, health, and social services employs the highest percentage of workers in Thomas Township.

*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

## PLACEMAKING AND BRANDING

***“Placemaking is the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, shop, learn, and visit.”***

According to the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute’s Placemaking Guidebook, *Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool*, The term “placemaking” has been used by urban planners, landscape architects, and architects since the early 1970s, but has only recently begun to gain popularity among the general population. It has primarily been used as a community design and community development tool with a special focus on public spaces, such as sidewalks, rights-of-way, public squares, boulevards, parks, and recreation areas. It continues to have enormous utility in those locations, which when well-designed

and close to dense populations of people, are magnets for interesting activity. But, placemaking also has considerable utility as an economic development tool and can guide public infrastructure development as well.”

In past years, Thomas Township has moved its planning efforts forward with a focus on Placemaking. For many years, Thomas Township has been known as the community of Shields. To many people, it is a place to drive through as one heads west out of Saginaw. Thomas Township wishes to be known as Thomas Township, a place where people can live, work, play, shop, learn, and visit – an interesting place in and of its own right. Community leaders want the community to be known as Thomas Township so that it reflects the entire township as opposed to the commercial areas centered around M-46.

Two sections of the Thomas Township Zoning Ordinance are being used as specific Placemaking Tools. The first is the Gratiot Road Design Guideline Overlay District. This overlay covers several different zoning districts along the Gratiot Road Commercial Corridor. Its intent is as follows:

*It is vital that Thomas Township maintains a strong and growing business corridor to insure property values remain strong and shoppers continue to feel safe and to use the businesses in the area. To that end, measures are necessary to help improve and sustain the health and safety of the public utilizing the Gratiot Road Design Guideline Overlay District. They include setting strong architectural design requirements that mandate the use of materials and designs that will contribute to an improved and safer business district for visitors and residents alike. A strong business district will also contribute to developments that are better planned and potentially safer for shoppers and residents to visit and to enjoy for years to come.*

Some of the guidelines used in the Overlay District that help to achieve a sense of place include:

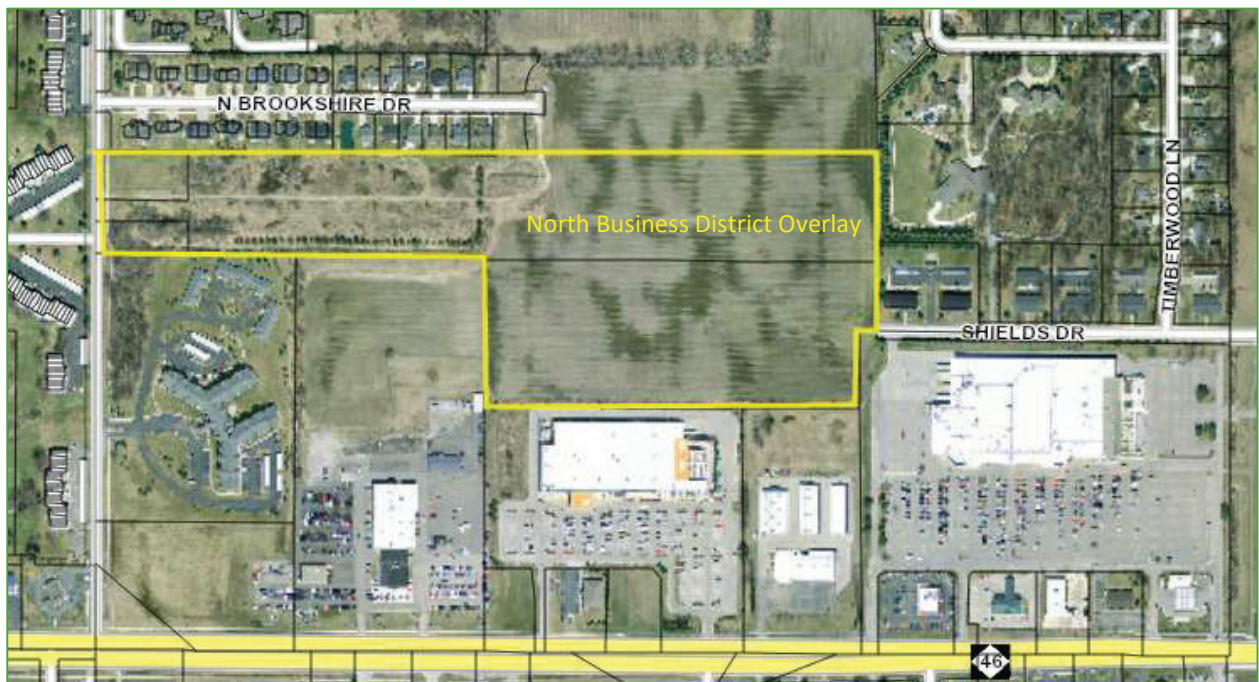
- Encouraging the incorporation of defined outdoor spaces into the buildings and site designs of all new commercial development.
- Enhancing the rear of existing buildings to improve public access from parking lots.
- Requiring a sequence of continuous pedestrian activity.
- Encouraging visually interesting activities at the sidewalk edge, such as planters and murals.
- Encouraging pedestrian open spaces such as covered walkways, courtyards and plazas, as well as the development of open and attractive passageways between buildings and uses.
- Encouraging outdoor seating and dining areas
- Using stone columns and simulated black wrought iron fencing at key locations across the district.

The second section of the Zoning Ordinance that addresses placemaking is the **North Business District Overlay**. This district is located north of Gratiot Road and east of Kennely Road in the area behind the Home Depot and Carter Lumber stores. According to the Zoning Ordinance, “This area will consist of mixed uses such as residential, office businesses, and service businesses. The purpose of this ordinance is to implement a structure and to set guidelines that will promote a more uniform visual quality to the overlay district within the Township. It will encourage an attractive architectural theme and encourage a walkabout and pedestrian friendly business district.”

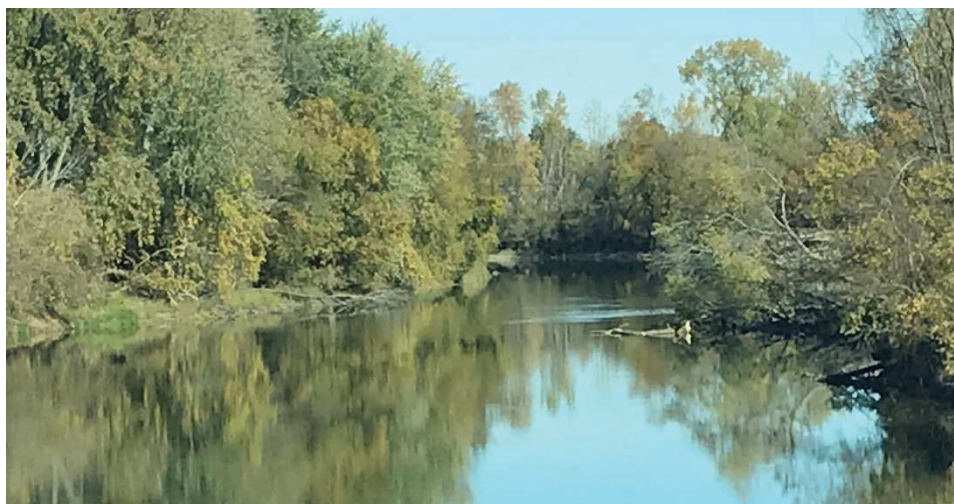


The provisions of the North Business District Overlay will allow for a uniform look at a pedestrian level, connecting Shields Drive westward to Kennely Drive. The area is ready for development, with public water main having been installed in the past 15 years.

The Township envisions that the North Business District will eventually develop as a small “downtown style” combined commercial and residential area. The mixed uses with parking behind the buildings will have buildings constructed closer to the roadway than in other areas of the Township. A strong focus on pedestrian travel would be very visible. Buildings would be two to three stories tall with residential dwellings on the upper floors and commerce activity on the first floor. Shields Drive would include special features such as a faux bridge, parallel parking, and speed tables.



**Figure 13** – The North Business District Overlay has been identified as a future mixed-use development area.



## TAXABLE VALUE

The taxable value refers to the taxable value of all real and personal property within a community. As seen in Figure 14, the taxable value of Thomas Township decreased from 2014 to 2015 by a small percentage. The only other municipality that decreased in this group of neighboring communities was the City of Saginaw, which decreased by a more substantial 4.8%.

**Taxable Value  
Thomas Township and Region**

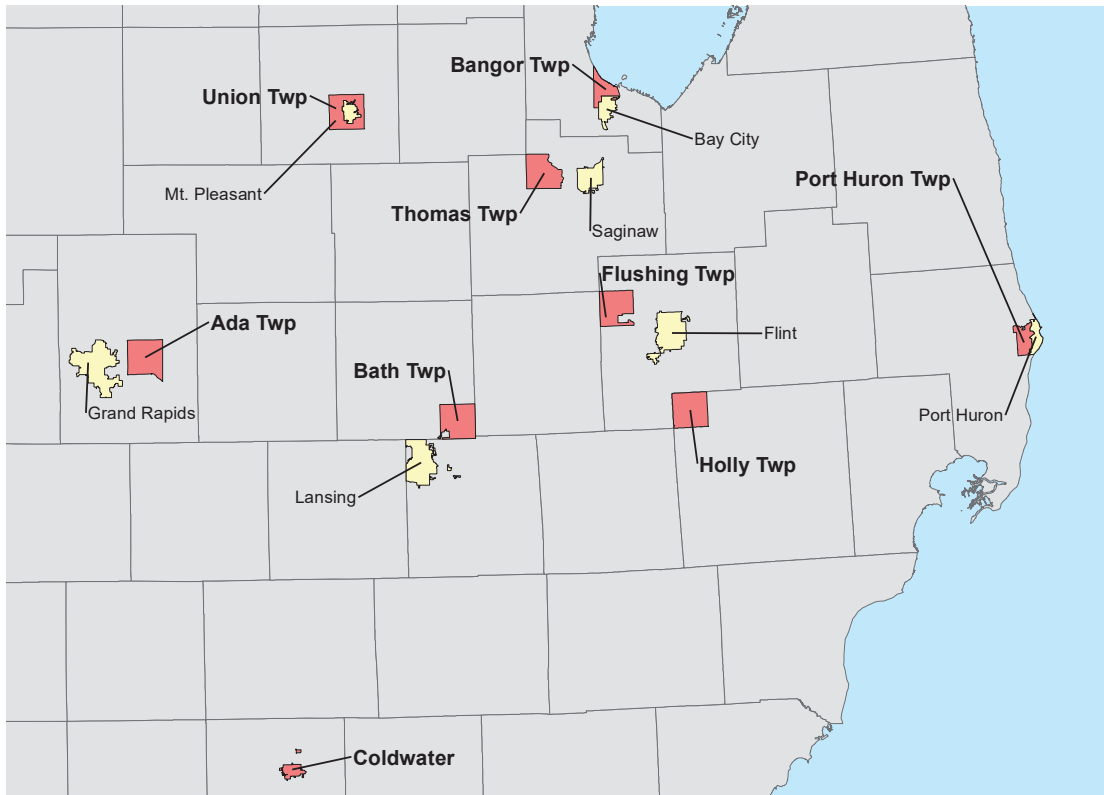
Municipality	2014 SEV	2015 SEV	Percent Change
Chesaning Township	\$115,783,692	\$117,096,835	1.1%
Kochville Township	\$187,396,724	\$195,277,045	4.2%
Saginaw Township	\$1,214,636,077	\$1,218,394,440	0.3%
Thomas Township	\$480,118,994	\$478,138,905	-0.4%
Tittabawassee Township	\$278,252,576	\$286,907,577	3.1%
Saginaw City	\$496,251,076	\$472,509,842	-4.8%
Frankenmuth City	\$267,169,388	\$281,949,559	5.5%

**Figure 14** - Taxable Value of Thomas Township as compared to other communities in Saginaw County.

*Source: Saginaw County Equalization*

# COMPARISON COMMUNITIES

To fully understand the characteristics of the Thomas Township community, it is worthwhile to benchmark it to similar communities across Michigan. Eight communities were chosen because they are similar in size to Thomas Township, and most serve as bedroom communities to larger cities.

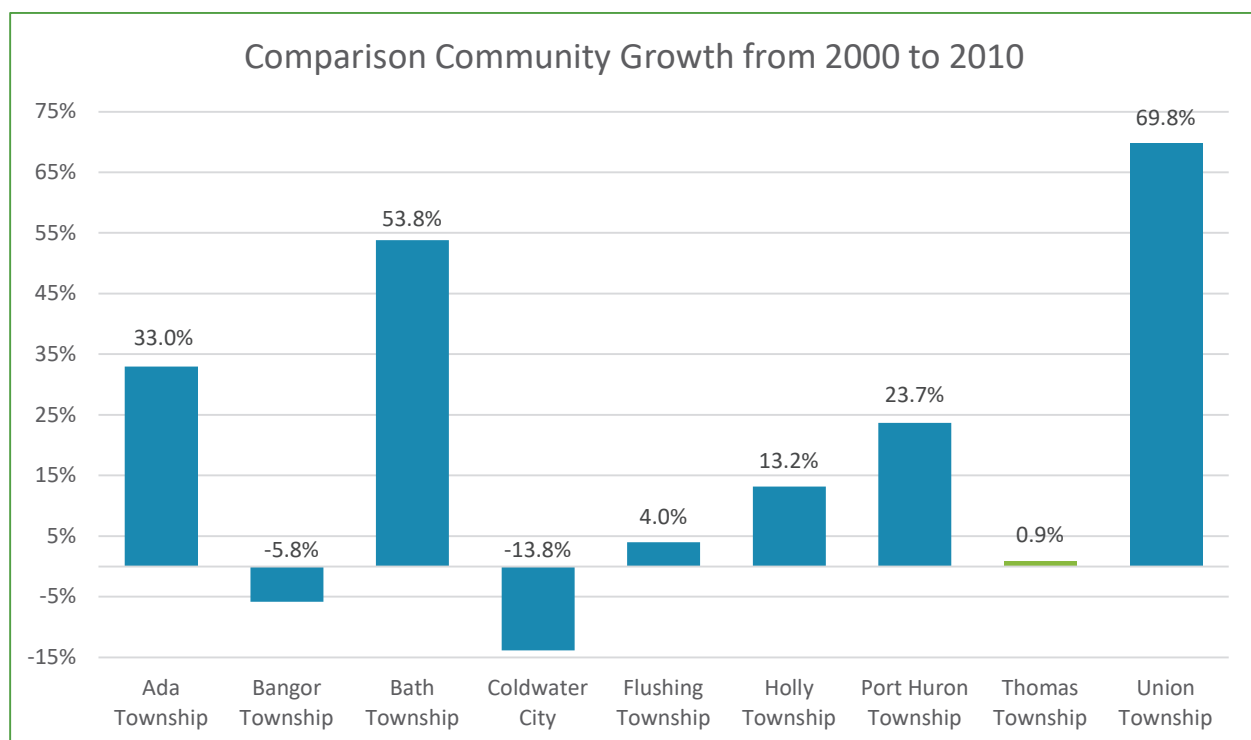


COMMUNITY	COUNTY	POPULATION	BEDROOM COMMUNITY FOR
Bangor Township	Bay County	14,651	Bay City
Ada Township	Kent County	13,145	Grand Rapids
Union Charter Township	Isabella County	12,927	Mt. Pleasant
<b>THOMAS TOWNSHIP</b>	Saginaw County	11,985	Saginaw
Bath Township	Clinton County	11,598	Lansing
Holly Township	Oakland County	11,362	Flint/Pontiac
Coldwater City	Branch County	10,945	NA
Port Huron Charter Township	St. Clair County	10,654	Port Huron
Flushing Charter Township	Genesee County	10,640	Flint

This analysis includes a comparative assessment of the economic, social, and demographic conditions. Data was collected from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census and the 2014 American Community Survey. A summary chart is located in Appendix A.

## POPULATION

The population of each comparison community is between 10,000 and 14,000 residents. The change in population of each community varied widely from 2000 to 2010. Union Charter Township grew by the largest amount at nearly 70%. Most of this growth is due to several new apartment complexes that were built, catering to Central Michigan University students. Much of Bath Township's growth of 54% is similar, with the addition of the Chandler Crossings complex which caters to Michigan State University students. Thomas Township's population was the most stable, with growth of approximately 1%. See Figure 15.



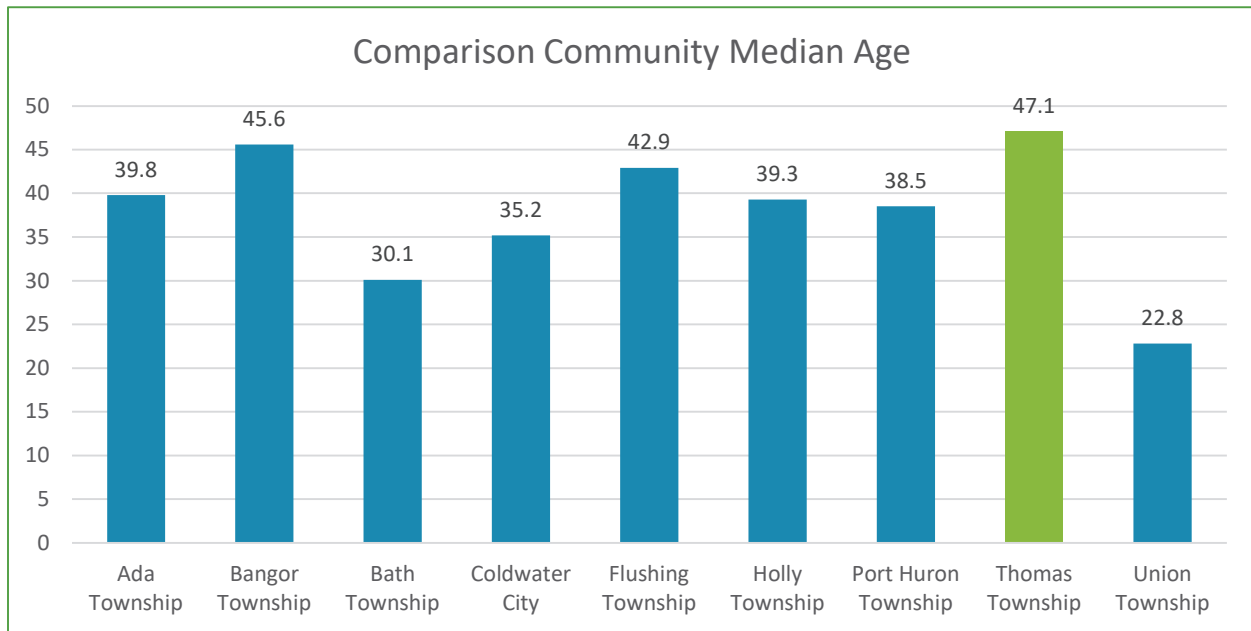
**Figure 15** - Population change between 2000 and 2010.

*Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census*

## AGE

Thomas Township's median age of 47.1 is higher than any of the other comparison communities. See Figure 15. As stated in the demographic analysis above, an aging population has unique needs in terms of housing, health care, recreation, and other public services. Union Township's very young median age of 22.8 is influenced by the Central Michigan University student population.





**Figure 16** - Thomas Township’s population is the oldest of all the comparison communities.

*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

**DIVERSITY**

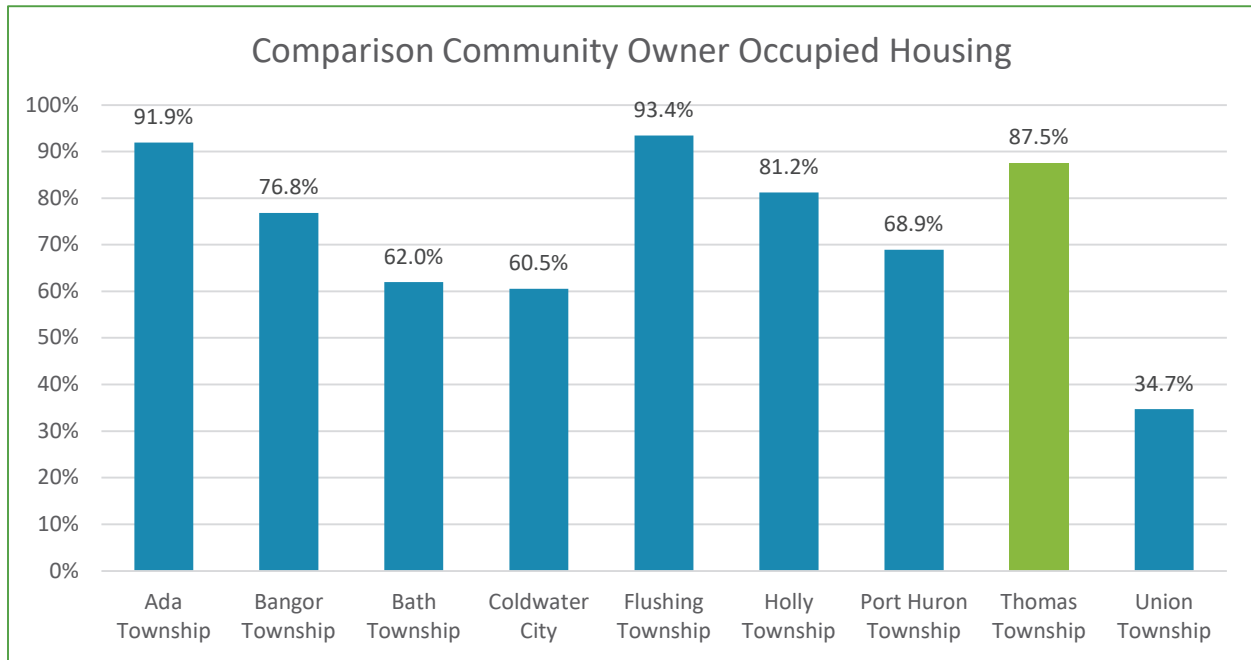
The communities that are being analyzed are primarily White. All contain a small percentage of ethnic and racial diversity.

All compared jurisdictions have African American and Hispanic populations of less than 10% of their total populations. Bath and Port Huron Charter Townships have the largest populations of African American and Hispanic persons at 8.6% and 8.3%, respectively. Thomas Township has one of the smallest percentages at 4.6%.

Ada Township has the largest percentage of foreign born residents at 5.6%. Again, Thomas Township contains one of the smallest populations at 1.7%. Most of the compared communities contain approximately 2% foreign born residents.

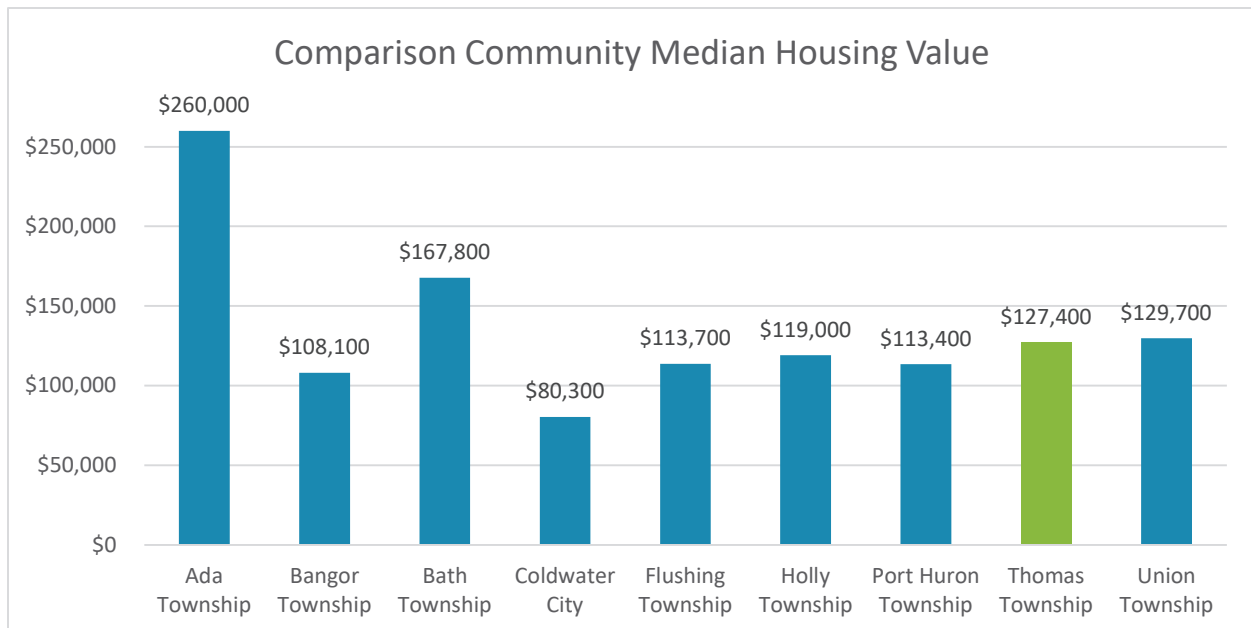
**HOUSING**

Most of the communities have a large majority of housing occupied by owners and small percentages of renter-occupied housing. See Figure 16. Port Huron Charter and Bath Townships, and Coldwater City have lower rates of owner-occupied housing between 60% and 70%. Union Charter Township has a much smaller owner-occupancy rate at 34.7%. Again, this is indicative of the large Central Michigan University student population. A large percentage of owner-occupied homes generally indicates a more stable community.



**Figure 17** - Ada, Flushing, and Thomas Townships have a relatively high proportion of owner occupied housing.  
*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

In terms of value, the majority of the comparison communities have a median housing value between \$100,000 and \$130,000 with a few outliers above and below these values. The community most different is Ada Township with a very high median housing value of \$260,000. The City of Coldwater has the lowest median housing value at \$80,300. Thomas Township falls near the middle of the comparison group with a median housing value of \$127,400. See Figure 18.

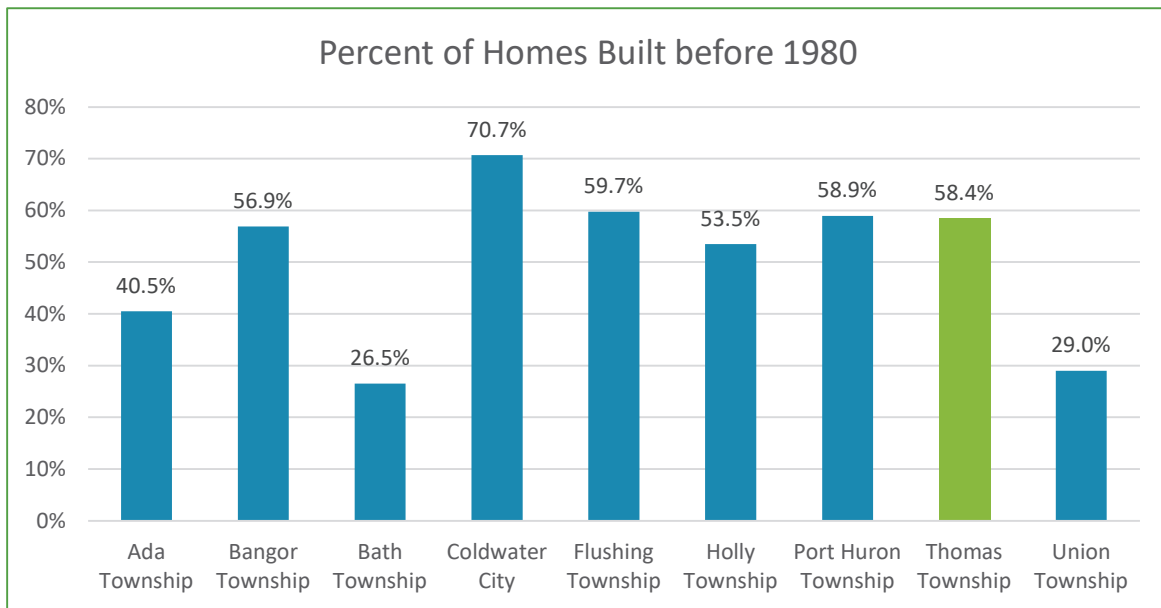


**Figure 18** - Most of the comparison communities have median housing values between \$100,000 and \$130,000.  
*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

## AGE OF HOUSING

Bath Township has the smallest percentage of homes built prior to 1980, at only 26.5%, followed closely by Union Charter Township which has 29%, as seen in Figure 19. The rest of the communities have an older housing stock with over 50% built prior to 1980. Coldwater has the highest percentage of housing (70.7%) in the same category. See Figure 19.

Out of the entire housing stock in Bath Township, 42.8% has been built since 2000. Union Charter Township has 35% of its total housing stock built since 2000. This is compared to the 15.6% that was built in that time period in Thomas Township.

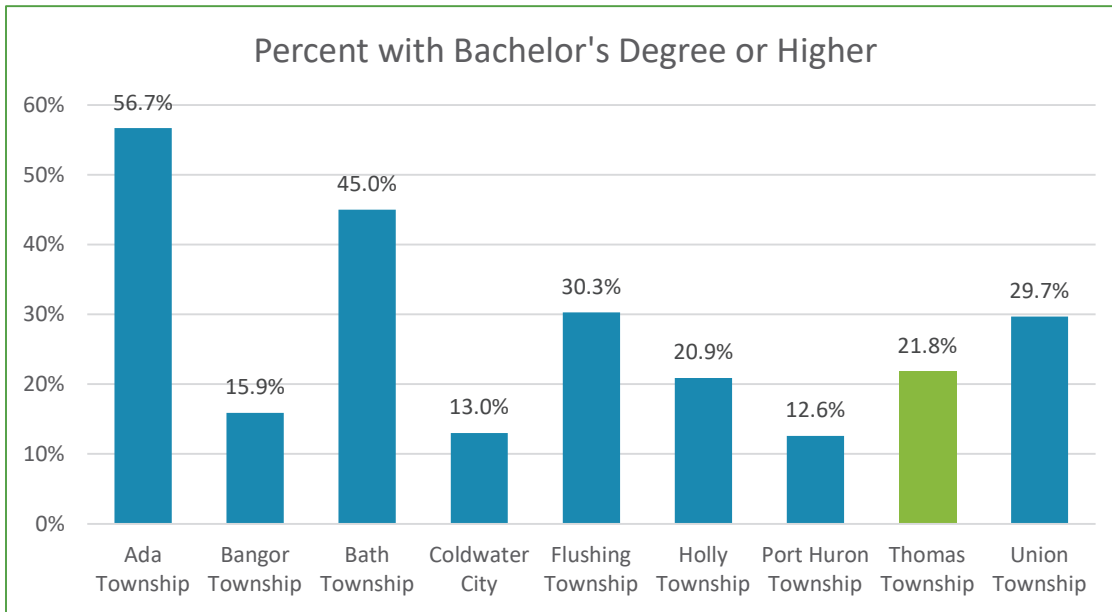


**Figure 19** - The City of Coldwater has the oldest housing stock. Bath Township has the smallest percentage of homes built prior to 1980.

*Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

## EDUCATION

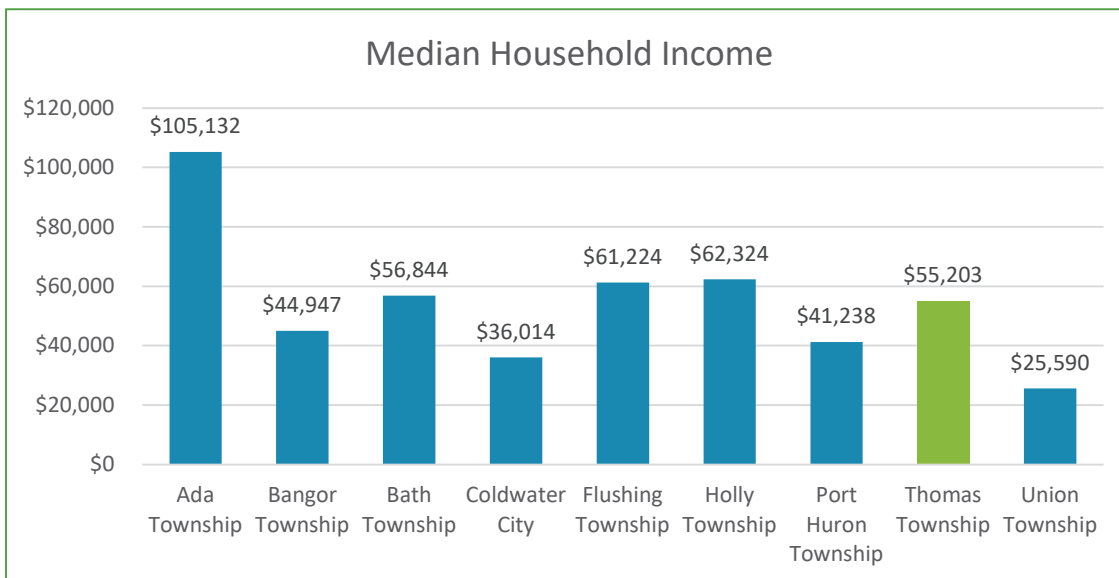
The comparison communities show a good deal of variation in educational attainment. Ada Township has the largest percentage of residents that have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (56.7%). This is followed by 45% in Bath Township. The lowest percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree is 12.6% of the population in Port Huron Charter Township. Thomas Township is in the middle of the range at 21.8%. See Figure 20.



**Figure 20** - Ada and Bath Townships have the highest percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher. Thomas Township fall in the middle of the range. *Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

**INCOME**

Median household income is shown in Figure 21. Thomas Township has a median income of \$55,203 which is about the average of the communities being compared. Ada Township once again shows its relative affluence with the highest median income at \$105,132. The smallest is in Union Charter Township at \$25,590. This is reflective of the high proportion of college students who live there that do not have a full-time income. A majority of the median incomes fall between \$30,000 and \$65,000.



**Figure 21** - Ada Townships has the highest median household income of the comparison communities. Thomas Township falls in the middle of the range. *Source: 2014 American Community Survey*

Most of the comparison communities' median household income increased between 2000 and 2010. Union Charter and Port Huron Charter Townships are the only communities that saw a decrease.

**EMPLOYMENT**

The industries that employ the largest percentage of people vary slightly between the communities. One of the top two in each jurisdiction is the educational, health, and social services industry. The other of the top two industries is either 1) manufacturing or 2) arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. Ada, Bangor, Bath, and Thomas Townships show very similar employment statistics as can be seen in Figure 22 below.

**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Top Industry, by Percentage of Employment</b>	<b>Second Highest Industry, by Percentage of Employment</b>
Ada Township	Educational, health, and social services (26.4%)	Manufacturing (15%)
Bangor Charter Township	Educational, health, and social services (24.1%)	Manufacturing (13.7%)
Bath Township	Educational, health, and social services (26.9%)	Arts, entertainment, accommodation and food services (14.4%)
Coldwater City	Manufacturing (23.9%)	Educational, health, and social services (21.9%)
Flushing Charter Township	Educational, health, and social services (28.4%)	Manufacturing (12.7%)
Holly Township	Educational, health, and social services (21.3%)	Manufacturing (20.4%)
Port Huron Charter Township	Manufacturing (24%)	Educational, health, and social services (20.3%)
<b>Thomas Township</b>	<b>Educational, health, and social services (27.1%)</b>	<b>Manufacturing (15.1%)</b>
Union Charter Township	Arts, entertainment, accommodation and food services (32.3%)	Educational, health, and social services (24.2%)

**Figure 22** - The education, health, and social services industry is the largest employer in most of the comparison

## STATE EQUALIZED VALUE

The State Equalized Value (SEV) is the total amount of real and personal property contained within a community. After the recession of 2008, communities across Michigan saw a drop in SEV. When looking at the comparison communities, this decrease was most drastic in Holly Township which had a drop of 37% in SEV from 2008 to 2012. All of the communities except Bangor Charter Township saw increases in SEV from 2012 to 2015. Thomas Township had the steadiest SEV from 2008 to 2015 and it was the only comparison community that had a growth in SEV from 2008 to 2012. See Figure 23.

### STATE EQUALIZED VALUE

Community	2008	2012	2015
Ada Township	\$991,336,100	\$922,384,900	\$1,050,142,500
Bangor Charter Township	\$558,485,550	\$452,548,550	\$445,647,900
Bath Township	\$500,177,250	\$402,450,491	\$451,258,900
Coldwater City	\$383,641,408	\$318,085,014	\$347,892,219
Flushing Charter Township	\$360,794,290	\$264,820,000	\$286,249,000
Holly Township	\$427,697,710	\$270,151,740	\$312,855,650
Port Huron Charter Township	\$326,301,100	\$240,981,766	\$249,068,500
<b>Thomas Township</b>	<b>\$497,530,400</b>	<b>\$506,183,700</b>	<b>\$499,796,800</b>
Union Charter Township	\$422,062,700	\$375,654,723	\$431,356,200

**Figure 23** - After the Recession of 2008, the State Equalized Value fell in communities across the state. Thomas Township is only one of three comparison communities that had SEV growth from 2008 to 2012.

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury



# NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural resources in a community are an important asset that must be analyzed in order to create a successful Future Land Use Plan which involves determining areas for future development and areas for preservation. The natural environment can have a significant effect on development. Conversely, development can have a detrimental effect on the environment and natural features of any community. If development and preservation are not coordinated, a community can see significant loss of vital natural systems and processes. For example, disrupting a watershed can result in flooding of the development and rerouting that storm water to another natural draining system can cause overflow problems. A Future Land Use Plan can help a community avoid disasters of this nature.

Thomas Township contains several environmentally significant natural resources that provide for an enhanced quality of life for all area residents. The Tittabawassee River, Swan Creek, agricultural soils, open space, clean air, woodlands and wetlands are natural features that will be affected as future growth and development continues to occur in the Township. The natural environment can have a significant effect on the costs and ability to develop. Likewise, excavation, fill, cleaning, grading, construction and other activities associated with the development of land significantly impacts the natural environment. Special attention must be given to environmentally sensitive areas to provide for the preservation of the Township's natural resources for present and future generations.

Identifying natural features help to determine land most suitable for development, which would require the least development costs and provide the maximum amenities without having adverse effects on existing natural systems. Secondly, identification of natural features will help identify lands most suitable for recreational conservation. The applicable natural features of Thomas Township are described below and the maps that are referenced are included at the end of this section.



## SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Thomas Township contains various significant features which can be defined as characteristics that serve to “shape the community”. In some instances, these characteristics may hinder development in order to preserve the character. These significant features do, however, attract specific land use activities.

### TOPOGRAPHY

The natural topography of Thomas Township which can be classified as nearly flat with a few steep or rugged areas. The Topography map shows land elevations that range from a height of about 698 feet above sea level near the intersection of Orr and Frost Roads, to a low of 582 feet above sea level north of Ederer Road in the southeast corner of the Township.

Steeper grade changes can be found along the Tittabawassee River, North River Road, and the Swan Creek. Such areas should be developed with caution in regards to potential erosion and drainage problems that might affect adjacent properties. Most of these steep grade changes also fall within the 100-year flood plain in Thomas Township, as well, which makes them unsuitable for development.

### WOODLANDS

Woodlands are an important feature of many Michigan communities. Thomas Township has numerous woodland areas throughout according to the United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) data. These likely second and third growth woodlands are valuable as wildlife habitats and for aesthetic and recreational enjoyment. Woodlands also moderate certain climate conditions, such as flooding and high winds, by protecting watersheds from siltation and soil erosion caused by storm water runoff or wind. Woodlands can also improve air quality by absorbing certain air pollutants, as well as buffer excessive noise generators. To the extent feasible, these woodlands should be protected from future land development.

The largest tracts of woodlands in Thomas Township are located in the western third of the Township and they are shown on the Woodlands map.



## **MAJOR BODIES OF WATER AND HYDROLOGY**

There are a few manmade lakes in Thomas Township that appear to be made as a result of excavation activities that have occurred on site. Natural and artificial lakes provide several aesthetic and recreational benefits. Lakes also serve as natural retention areas for storm water runoff, act as a ground water recharge resource and tend to moderate the microclimate in proximity to its shores. Protection of these natural assets should be given high priority in future land use planning decisions.

The Tittabawassee River and the Swan Creek are the major watercourses in Thomas Township. The Tittabawassee River is the larger of the two. It flows southeasterly and forms the eastern border of the Township. It is a popular fishing and water recreation spot in the Township. Other minor drainage ways and creeks include Williams Creek, Hatch Run, McClellan Run, Abbey Drain, Badger Drain, Bebee Drain and Dice Drain. Their locations are shown on the Drains & Water Features Map.

These water courses are prone to flooding during major wet weather events. Development within flood prone areas must be carefully managed. Floodplain management involves balancing the economic gain from floodplain development against the resulting increase in flood hazard. The Federal Insurance Administration of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has developed Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Thomas Township Flood Zone Map. They depict both the 100-year and 500-year flood boundary. This is considered the flood hazard area. The 100-year flood zone should be considered for recreation-conservation areas inasmuch as development within this zone is limited.

## **WETLANDS**

In 1979, the Goemaere-Anderson Wetland Protection Act was enacted by the State of Michigan. This legislation was passed to protect wetlands by restricting their use to certain activities including fishing, boating, and farming while permitting other activities only after permit approval by the State of Michigan. Permits are approved only upon a review of an environmental assessment filed by the petitioner and upon a finding that the activity is in the public interest. Most of the large tracts of wetlands in Thomas Township are located in the western third of the Township.

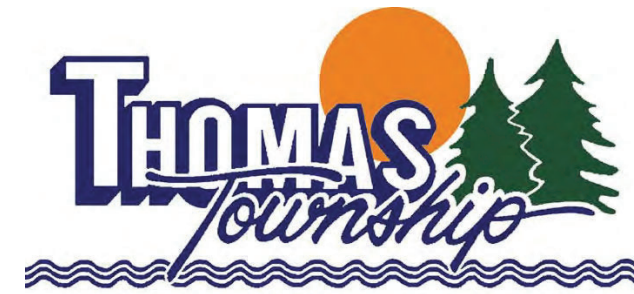
Under the Act, the following wetlands are protected:

1. Wetlands contiguous to an inland lake, pond, river, stream or similar natural water course.
2. Wetlands five acres in size or larger in counties which contain a population of at least 100,000 people.

## **PUBLIC ACT 116/FARMLAND, OPEN SPACE AND PRESERVATION ACT**

Information provided by the Township Assessor's office indicates approximately 25 tracts of agricultural land in Thomas Township that are registered under the provisions of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act. Under the requirements of the Act, the land generally may not be developed or built upon for a certain amount of time in exchange for certain tax credits as described in the Act. Land enrolled in P.A. 116 in Thomas Township is subject to the development restrictions for a period of time ranging between 1 to 37 years.

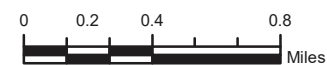
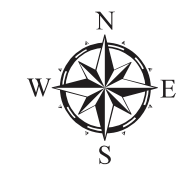
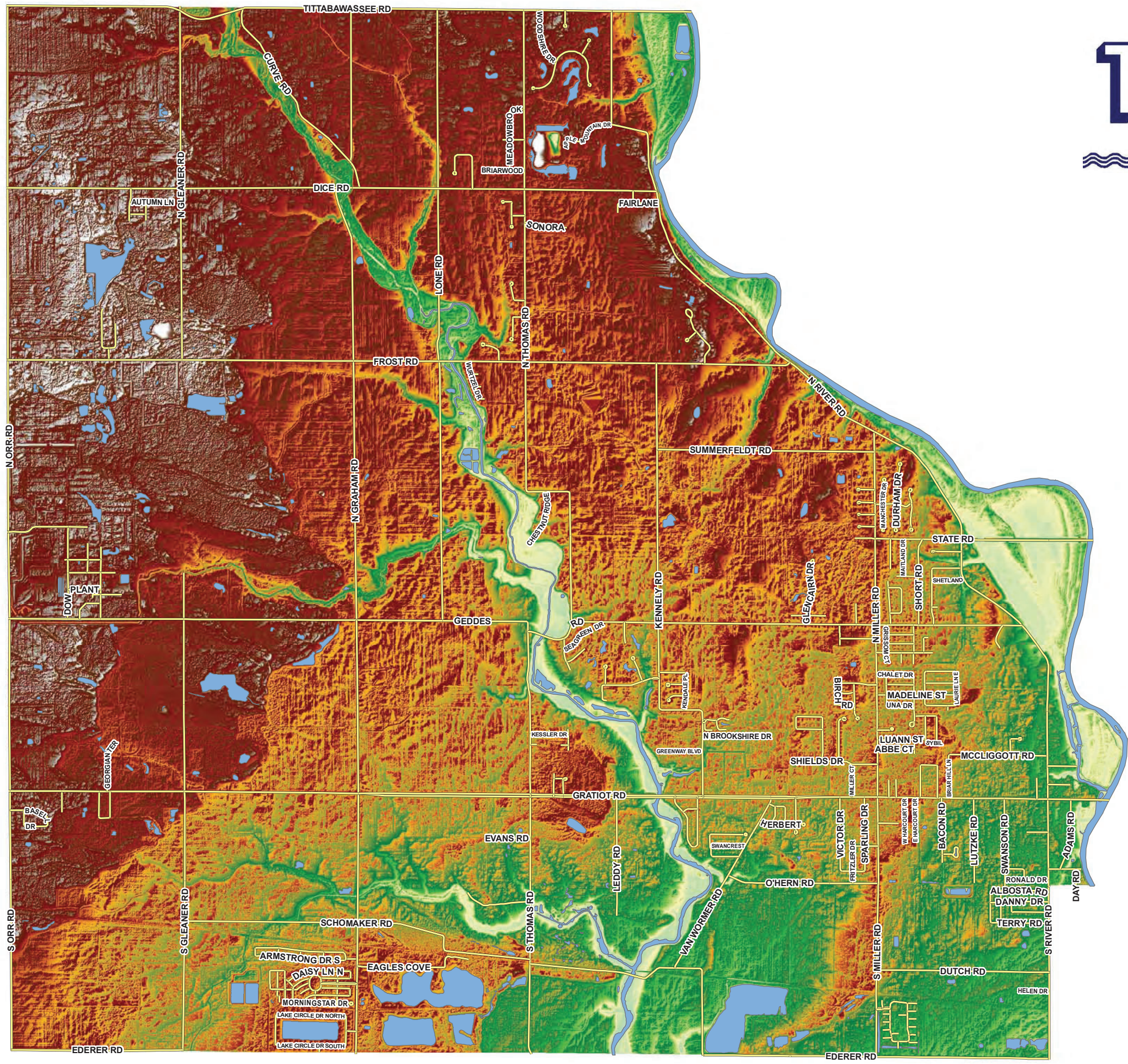
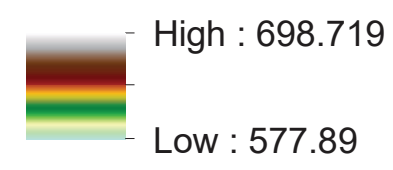




# Topography

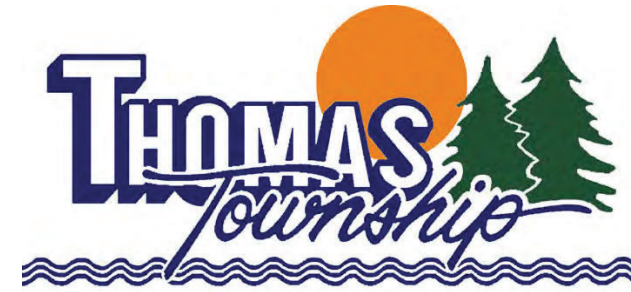
Map 1

## Legend

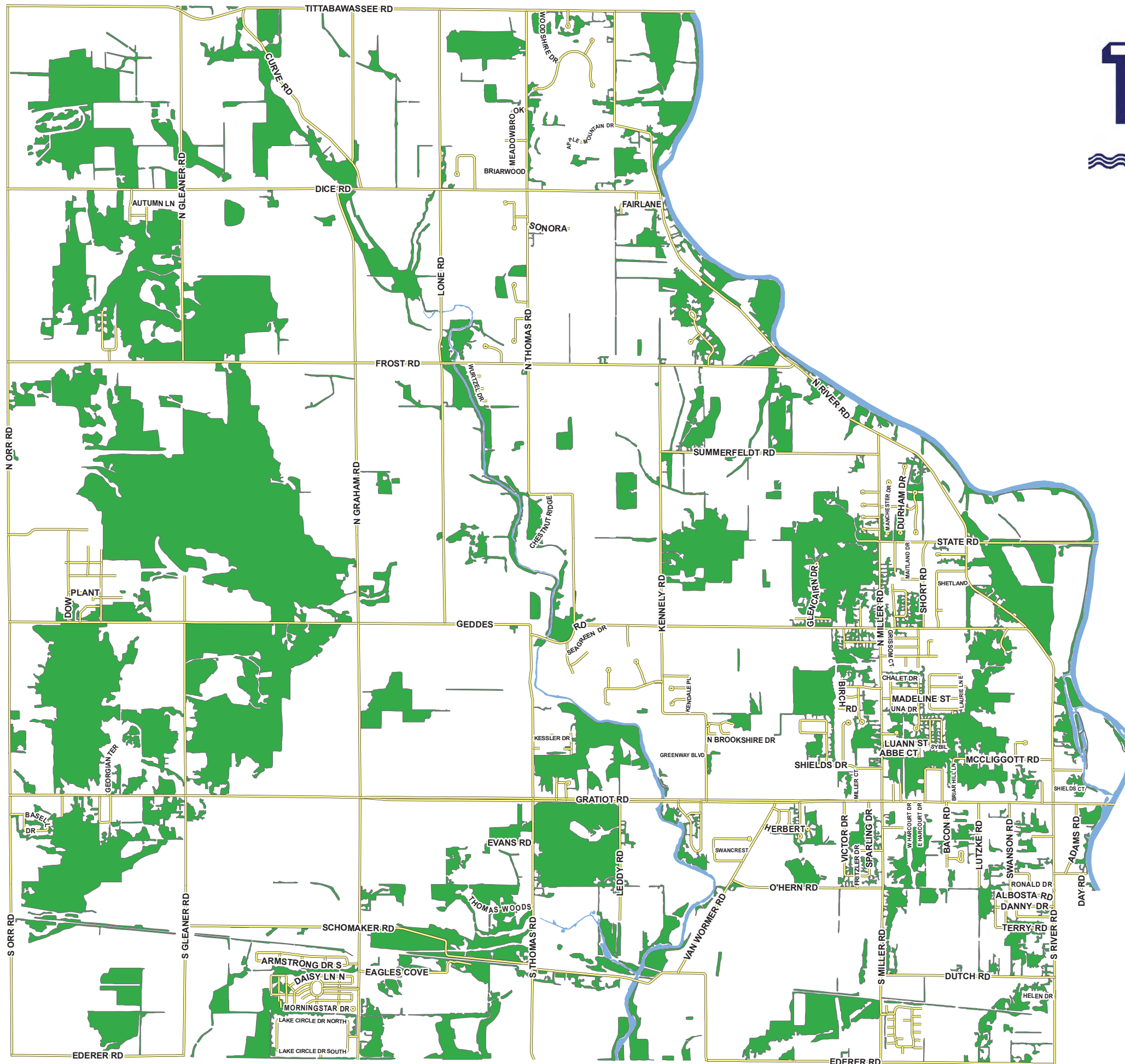


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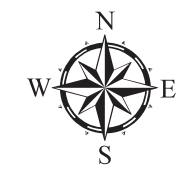




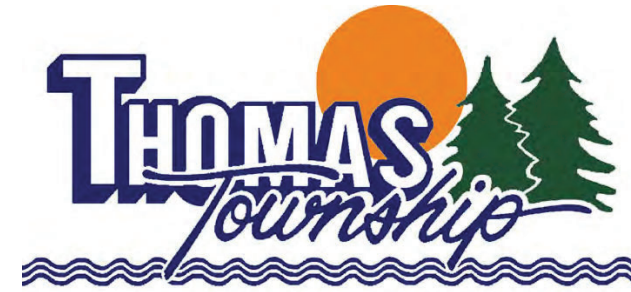
# Woodlands



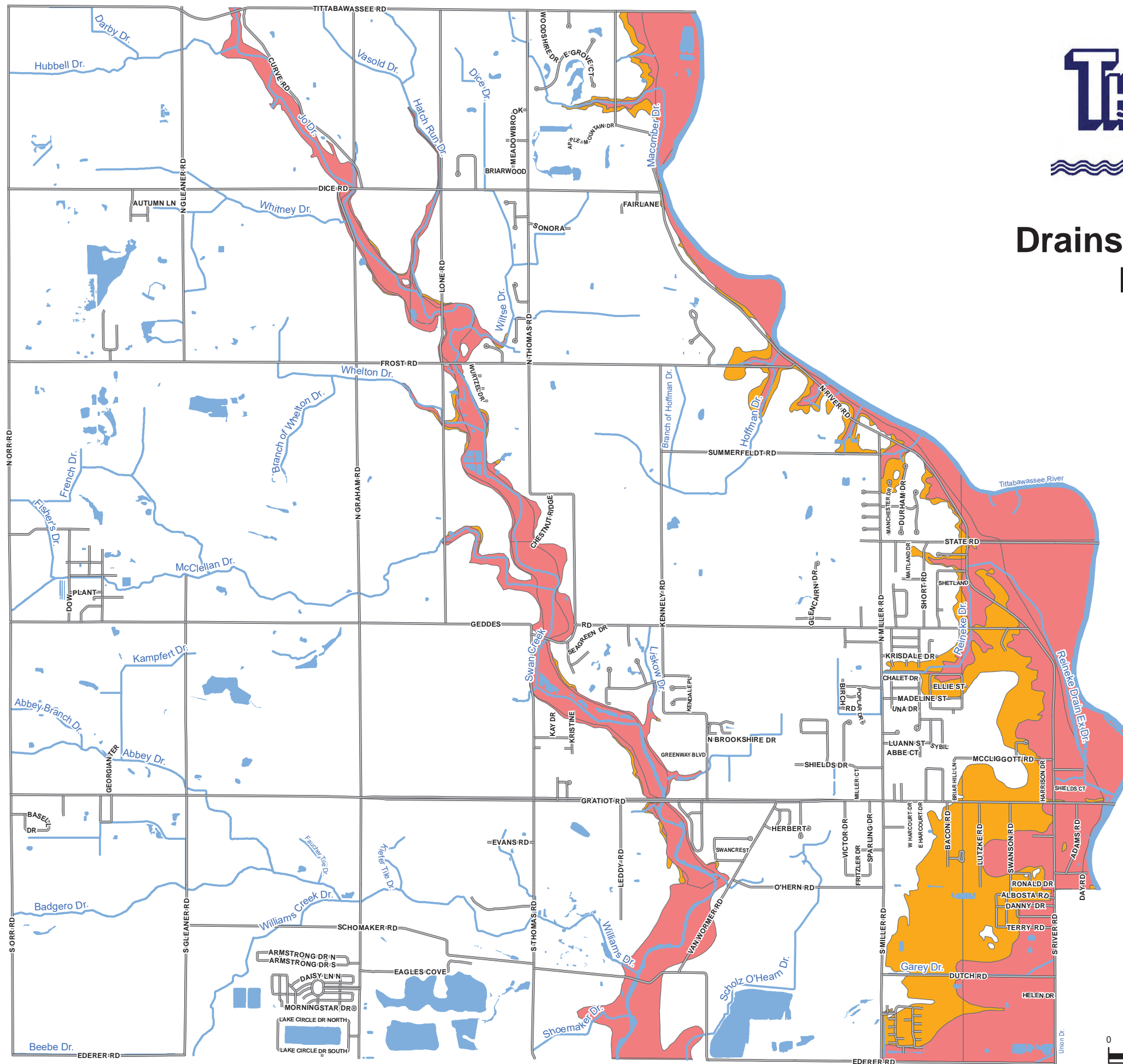
**Legend**  
 Woodlands





Created 6/25/2015

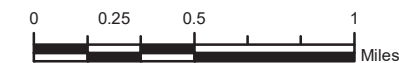


## Drains, Water Features & Flood Zones

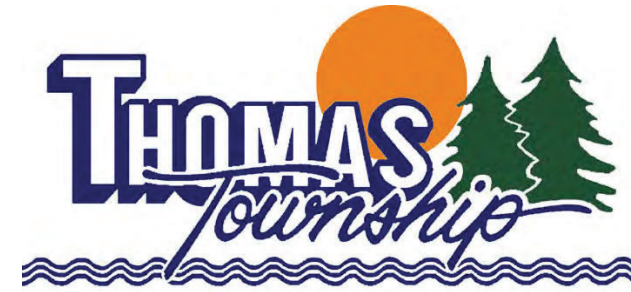


### Legend

-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  500 Year Flood Plain





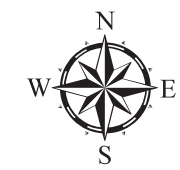
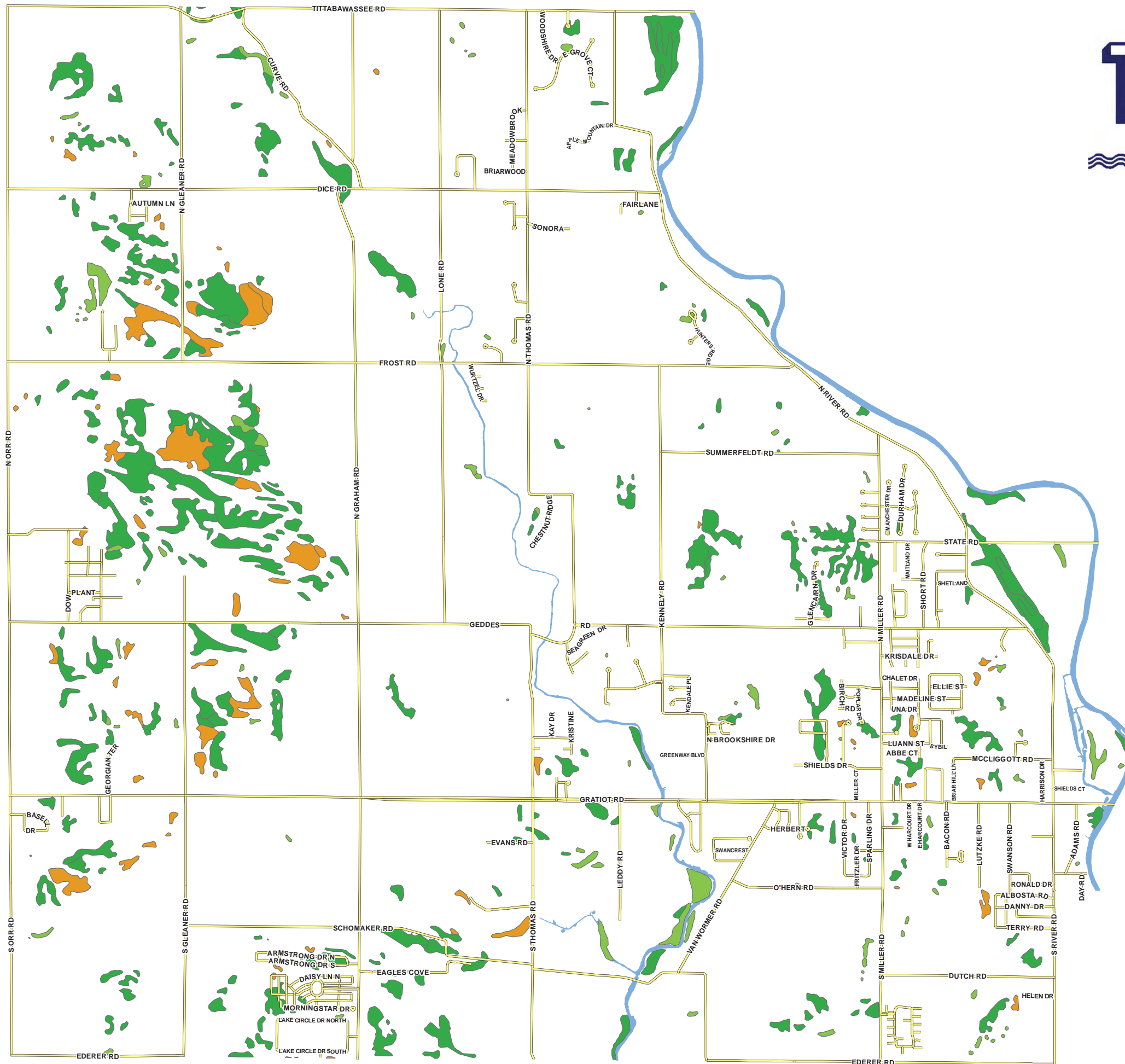




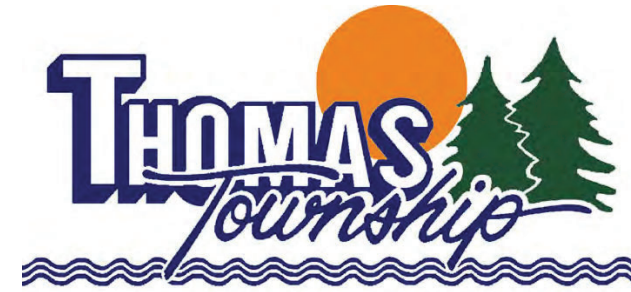
# Wetlands

## Legend

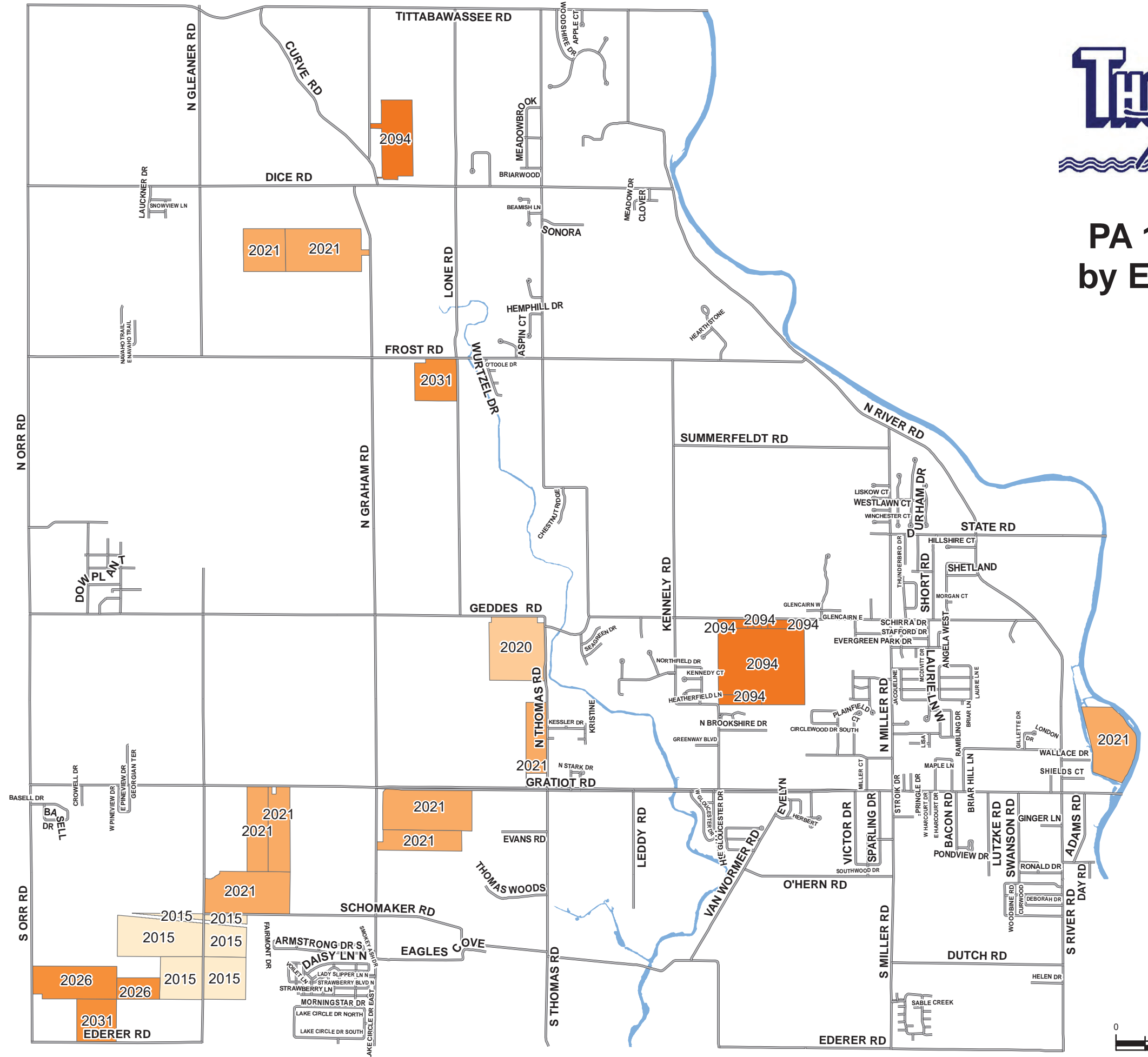
-  Emergent
-  Forested
-  Scrub-Shrub



Created 6/25/2015



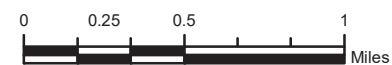
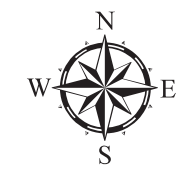
# PA 116 Contracts by Expiration Year



## Legend

- 2015
- 2016 - 2020
- 2021
- 2022 - 2031
- 2032 - 2094

\* Data Current as of 2013



# INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES, AND FACILITIES

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

### WATER SYSTEM

The Thomas Township Department of Public Works operates, maintains, repairs and improves the drinking water system. As of 2019, the community water system included over 130 miles of water distribution and transmission mains ranging in size from 4 inch to 20 inch in diameter and delivering **over 930 million gallons** of water per year. Most of the water infrastructure has been constructed since 1970 establishing Thomas Township’s system as one of the youngest water distribution systems within the Saginaw Metropolitan area. The system provides safe drinking water to over 12,000 residents.



The water system has continually seen significant capital improvements to meet the community’s water needs for today and tomorrow. Multiple water reservoirs provide redundant water supplies to the area including a 1.5 million gallon ground storage tank and a 1.5 million gallon elevated water tower. New water transmission mains and improvements to the water treatment plant have been recently constructed. Significant pumping improvements have been completed in the Township to continually meet growing needs. The Public Works department has devised a comprehensive seven-year Capital Improvement plan that continues to enhance the water distribution system.

Highly trained and certified teams work around the clock in the water treatment plant, laboratories and throughout the distribution system to support and provide a potable water supply to the community. All Federal and State water quality parameters are continually met, leaving the Township’s water quality as one of the best in the region. The Township’s dedicated water professionals provide safe, reliable drinking water to its customers, protects public health, provide fire protection, and enhances the quality of life “on tap” for the Township. A water system map is included in Appendix A.



### SEWER SYSTEM

Thomas Township’s sanitary sewer system collects and conveys roughly 1,200,000 gallons of sewage per day. This expansive system consists of 15 different sewer districts, sewage lift or pumping stations and over 65 miles of sewer mains, providing service for nearly 8,300 residents. The sewer system was constructed in the mid-1970’s, with continual system wide expansions being completed to this day, establishing the system as one of the most modern in the metropolitan area. A sewer system map is included in Appendix A.



Significant system wide improvements have been incorporated since 2006, including the replacement or upgrading of the pumping capabilities of the individual sewage districts, major pipeline replacements, and adding additional treatment capacity at the wastewater treatment facility. Other improvements recently completed have included the installation of a universal remote monitoring system, pumping system controls, and a systematic, comprehensive inspection and cleaning program of all of the Township's sewer mains. A seven-year Capital Improvement plan has been devised outlining a logical, well-thought-out process of system improvements. It is continually updated year to year.



Dedicated Public Works staff continually monitors, repairs, replaces or improves the sewage system. Working with Saginaw Charter Township, all sewage is continually treated to meet Federal and State Discharge Standards. This highly trained team of professionals works 24/7 to insure the reliability of the entire sewer system and the protection the community's public health.

### **BUILDINGS, GROUNDS, CEMETERY, SIDEWALKS AND FACILITIES**

The Department of Public Works assists in the maintenance and repair of 15 Township owned buildings, grounds and facilities including the Township's Owen Cemetery. These duties include landscaping, grounds-keeping, painting, general repairs, preventive maintenance and cleaning. Seasonal holiday and street decoration of the Township campus and Downtown area is also completed by Public Works staff.



Approximately 10.5 miles of sidewalks are installed along Township roadways and within subdivisions. Public Works staff routinely inspects and performs minor repairs on sidewalks throughout the community. The Township has a Sidewalk/Trail committee that has developed guidelines and a Master Plan for Sidewalk and Trail Development.

Thomas Township leaders have recognized for many years that its residents benefit from having a safe place to walk separated from motorized traffic. Many of the residents who responded to the Community Opinion Survey stated that sidewalks and trails were very important to them and add to living in Thomas Township. In addition to creating a safe walking area along roads, sidewalks and trails provide many other benefits including mobility within the community for those unable to drive, a healthier environment, and a safe place for young and old to access the many benefits that the Township provides such as parks, library, shopping, playgrounds, ball fields, community swimming pool and schools to only mention a few. Each year the Sidewalk/Trail Committee meets to review past projects, and to evaluate the proposed future sidewalk and trail locations. An emphasis is placed on expanding the sidewalk and trail network in Thomas Township, so much so that a new project is planned every other year.

In addition, all newly created subdivisions in Thomas Township must install sidewalks along all lot frontages prior to completion of any construction on a lot. Outside of subdivisions, sidewalk agreements are obtained for those areas that may see sidewalk projects in the future. This long-term planning is necessary to insure that residents continue to enjoy the benefits associated with having a safe place to walk separated from motorized traffic for years to come in the future.

The Sidewalk and Trail Master Plan map is included at the end of this section. The guidelines are included in Appendix C.

The Township's Owen Cemetery is a full service and poignant grounds located on North River Road. The cemetery was officially established in 1875, however the area was designated as a burial ground prior to 1845. Many of the existing gravesites are occupied with the community's prominent forbearers and namesakes. Grounds-keeping, monument foundation construction and burials are completed by Public Works staff.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### POLICE

In the early years of the Township, up to four elected constables had specific statutory duties by state law. Constables were the only form of township law enforcement until May 4, 1970 when the Township Board adopted a resolution to create the Thomas Township Police Department. The first Police Chief, David Eimers and Patrol Officers, Edwin Matzke, William DeVinney, and Robert Frost were all part-time employees of the department.

As the Township grew and the need for more police protection became apparent, Chief Larry Sicard was appointed the first full-time employee of the department in April of 1975. He was assisted by a staff of three part-time officers.

Today, the department consists of eight full-time sworn personnel and one full-time clerical staff person. Supported by a two mil Public Safety Millage (Police & Fire), the department provides 24 hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week coverage to the citizens of the Township.



Working in close conjunction with our community partners such as the Swan Valley School District, Hemlock Semiconductor, and the ever-growing number of commercial and retail businesses, the department strives to provide a safe and pleasant environment for those that work, play or travel through the community. The department also partners with other law enforcement agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Saginaw County Road Commission to make local roadways safer and more pleasurable to travel whenever the opportunity presents itself.

### FIRE

On September 1, 1963, the Thomas Township Fire Department was born after several community members spent two years creating its foundation. With this new addition to Thomas Township, two pumper trucks were purchased and housed in two fire stations. The stations were located at 249 N. Miller Road and 9970 Dice Road.

In 1967, an additional pick up was purchased for fighting grass and brush fires. In 1976, a new fire station was built at the N. Miller Road location along with the purchase of a Mack Tele-Squirt ladder truck. Both stations have been remodeled over the years. Station Two was expanded to meet current needs.

The Fire Department has remained fiscally responsible in updating fire equipment to meet the modern-day fire problems and ensuring the safety of our firefighters. The Township funds the fire department through two millages which fund and maintain 1) the fire department operations and 2) the fire trucks and equipment. This has allowed the department to not get behind in maintaining up to date equipment which is required of us. This also provides dividends to Township residents with lower homeowner's insurance premiums as the Township has a class 4 fire protection rating in the vast majority of the Township.

The Township Fire Department is staffed with two full-time employees (fire chief and inspector) three part-time (fire prevention, maintenance and administration) and 30 paid on-call/volunteer firefighters. These firefighters provided 24/7 coverage for both fire and specific medical emergencies within the community. The Township Fire Department is actively involved in mutual aid with neighboring fire departments.

The Township Fire Department currently has 10 pieces of equipment responding out of two stations which helps to ensure a rapid and adequate response to a variety of emergencies including but not limited to fires, medical emergencies, hazardous material, special rescue situations, water rescue and public assist calls. In addition to this, members train at least twice a month to keep up to date on their skills. The most recent purchase was a Pumper truck for Station #1 which replaced an aging fire truck. The Township responds to approximately 850 calls per year.

The Township Fire Department is also very involved in the community by conducting fire inspections and public safety educational programs. The firefighters have created a firefighters' association which helps support many community programs. For example, they each donate one hour of pay per pay period towards three high school scholarships which are given out each year.

The Fire Department bases its annual goals and budgets on trends and specific community needs. The Township continues to be a growing community which will require the Department to continue to grow and continue to provide a quality service to its customers. At some point, the Township will need to consider adding a third station in the western part of the Township due to the anticipated growth in that area. This growth will come from residential use and from business and industrial uses at the Great Lakes Tech Park, which will continue to expand.

## THOMAS TOWNSHIP DDA

On June 19, 2007, Thomas Township adopted Ordinance No. 07-G-01 creating and establishing the Downtown Development Authority of Thomas Township. The DDA was granted all powers permitted a Downtown Development Authority under the Act. In creating and establishing the DDA, the Township found that the DDA was necessary for the best interests of the public to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation where possible in the Township's business district, to eliminate the causes of said deterioration and to promote economic growth.

In October of 2008, Thomas Township approved the collection of a 2-mill levy on all non-residential and non-agricultural parcels in the DDA District. Funds from this levy will be used to finance the activities of the DDA.

In June of 2010, the Township adopted the DDA Development Plan and TIF Plan. Funds collected from tax increment financing will be used for improvement projects that the DDA wishes to undertake through 2038. That project list is included in Appendix D. The DDA Map is at the end of this section.



## RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are. Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access. Thomas Township has four parks, a trail, and an undeveloped nature park located across the Township. There are also an ample amount of recreation opportunities and events for residents to participate in.

### DAY PARK

This park is located on River Road, near the Shields Elementary School. It offers a great space for people of all ages. There is ample open space for various activities, two picnic table pavilions and a sledding hill for wintertime fun.



### COMMUNITY PARK

This park is located at the Thomas Township Offices. It is equipped with two full size basketball courts and a roller hockey court. In the winter there are two ice rinks located at this park as well.

### ROETHKE PARK

Roethke Park is located on Leddy Road in the southern portion of the Township. It features a pool, day camp, train, fishing pond, play area, concerts and miles of walking trails. There are also pavilions for picnicking and restrooms.

### ROBERTS PARK

This park is located on South Miller Road. It has been expanded recently to provide the community with many recreational opportunities. It is equipped with four baseball diamonds, three soccer fields, playgrounds, walking paths, four pavilions, and restrooms.

### THOMAS TOWNSHIP TRAIL

This 3.2-mile paved trail begins on North Miller Road just north of Area Drive. It heads westward through a Consumers Energy easement and then south to Shields Drive near the Thomas Township Public Safety Building. From there it continues south crossing Gratiot, O'Hern and Ederer Roads, where it connects to the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail. A trail map is included at the end of this section.

In 2015, Thomas Township constructed a trailhead building near Shields Drive to address the need for shelter and bathrooms for trail users. The building was funded with contributions from the Thomas McDonald Memorial Fund, Lions Club, Thomas Township Business Association, along with donated labor from Thomas Township staff and friends of Thomas Township.

### THOMAS TOWNSHIP NATURE PRESERVE AND NATURE CENTER

The Thomas Township Nature Preserve is a 67-acre undeveloped park located adjacent to the Tittabawassee River on the east side of the Township. The Nature Center will be developed from a former

insurance office building that was acquired with the assistance of a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. It is located on Gratiot Road and is adjacent to the Nature Preserve Property. The Township's goal is to develop the complex into a indoor-outdoor regional draw for nature study, education, relaxation, and enjoyment. The Township is planning to work with other nature organizations such as the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge on interpretive programs and education.

The long-term plan is to develop the building into a Nature Center with interpretive areas and classrooms. The Preserve will be accessed through the Nature Center. The Nature Preserve will primarily focus on passive recreation with paths, observation decks and boardwalks through wetland areas. Construction on the first phase of development is scheduled to begin in 2021. It will include a new entry drive to the Nature Center, some building renovations, paths and an observation area behind the Nature Center.





Future home of the Thomas Township Nature Center.

## RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Thomas Township Parks and Recreation department provides the community with various events, programs and activities throughout the year. These include:

- Archery program
- Multiple Picnic in the Park concerts
- Soccer program
- Boys and girls basketball programs
- Floor hockey
- Day camps
- Senior citizen programs
- Men's and girl's softball

The Township regularly completes a 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan that is developed in accordance with the guidelines for Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Please refer to that document for further information on park and recreation planning in Thomas Township

A map depicting Township owned property is included at the end of this section.

## TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

### ROADS

Thomas Township is served by a transportation system that contains two state highways and county roads.

The major roads located within Thomas Township include M-46 and M-52. M-46 runs east to west across the entire State of Michigan. M-52 begins at its intersection with M-46 and carries traffic southward to Ohio. M-47 runs north just east of the Township across the Tittabawasee River. I-75 is located approximately 10 miles away from the Township and allows access to the southern and northern portions of the State.



Other major roads within the Township that carry large amounts of traffic through the community are Geddes Road and Frost Road which run east to west, Thomas Road which runs north and south, and River Road which runs north west along the Tittabawassee River.

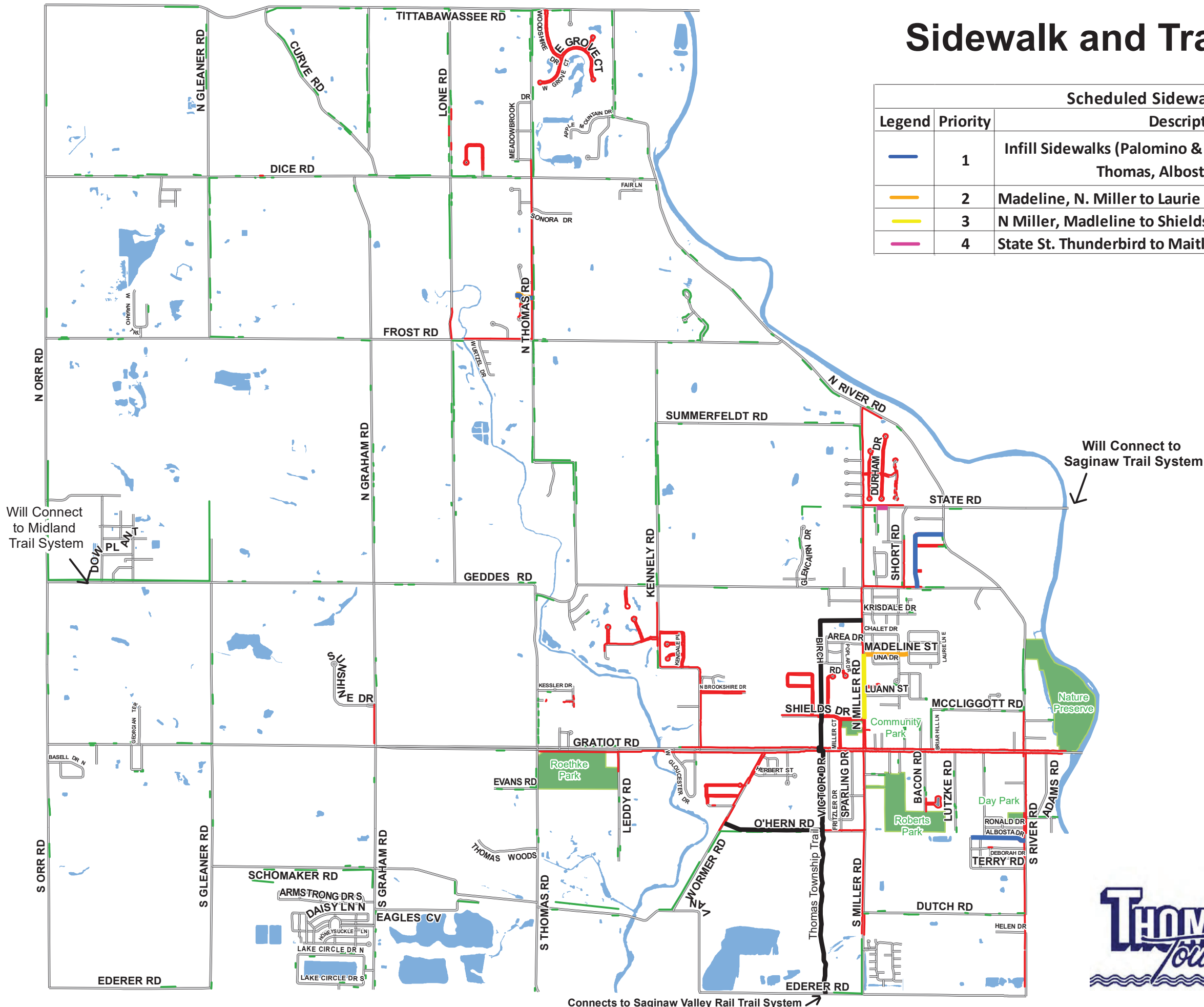


**AIRPORTS**

Thomas Township is located near two large airports. Saginaw County H.W. Browne Airport is the smaller of the two. It is county-owned and located in Buena Vista Township, approximately 15 miles east of Thomas Township. MBS International Airport is the largest airport located near the Township. It is located in Freeland, Michigan, approximately 10 miles north of Thomas Township and it is serviced by several major passenger airline carriers.

# Sidewalk and Trail Master Plan

Scheduled Sidewalk Projects			
Legend	Priority	Description	Budget Year
	1	Infill Sidewalks (Palomino & Appaloosa, Hemphill -N Thomas, Albosta - S. River)	2020/2021
	2	Madeline, N. Miller to Laurie Ln. (North side)	2021/2022
	3	N Miller, Madeline to Shields (East Side)	2023/2024
	4	State St. Thunderbird to Maitland (South side)	2025/2026

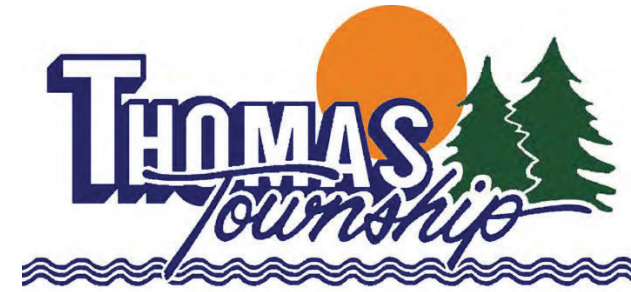


- ### Legend
- Thomas Township Trails
  - Sidewalk Agreements
  - Sidewalks Installed
  - Township Parks



Created 10/6/2020

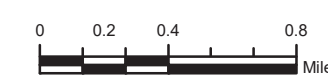
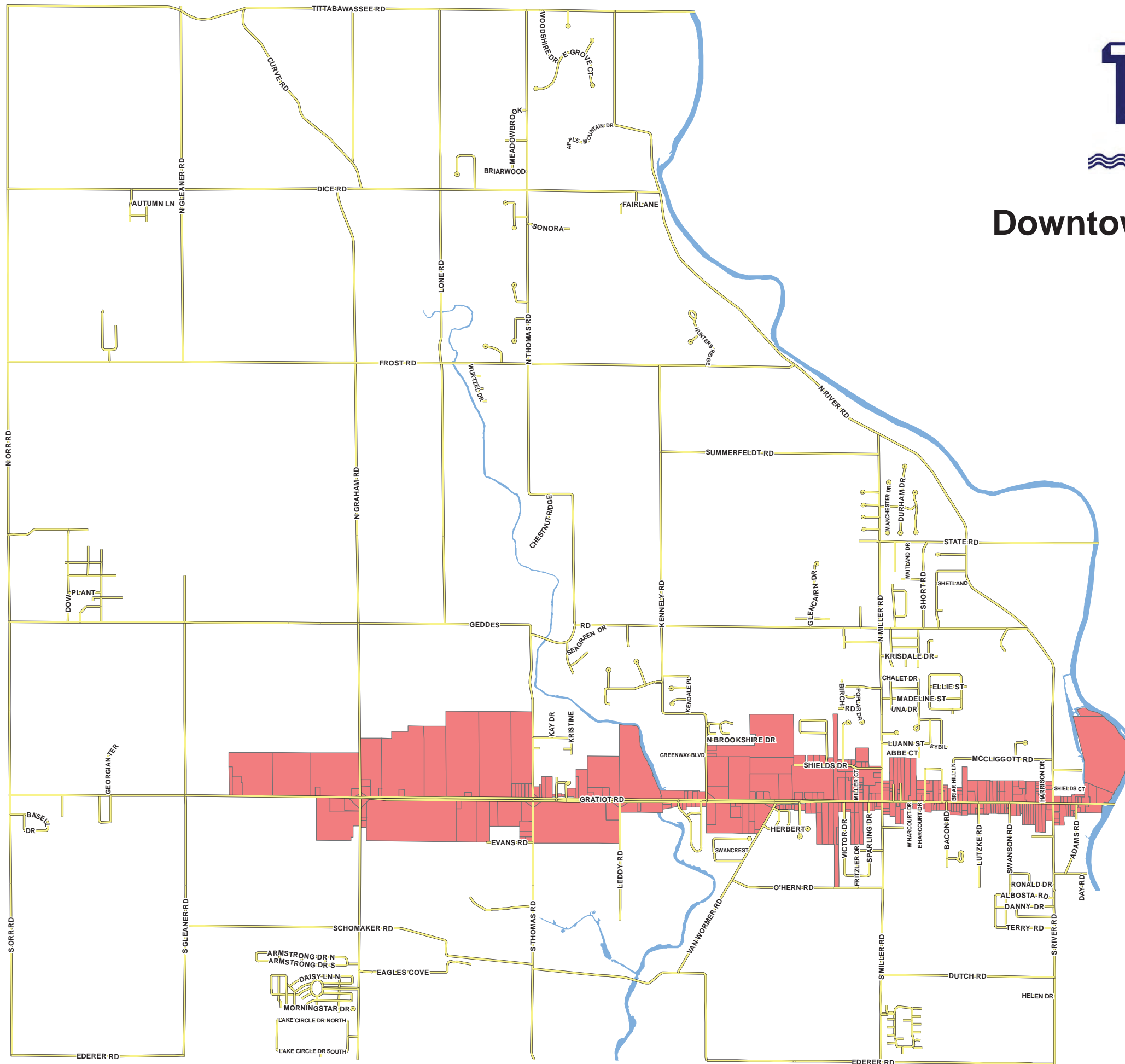
Connects to Saginaw Valley Rail Trail System



# Downtown Development District

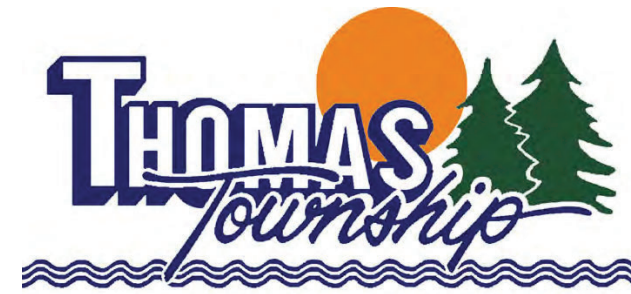
## Legend

 DDA Parcels

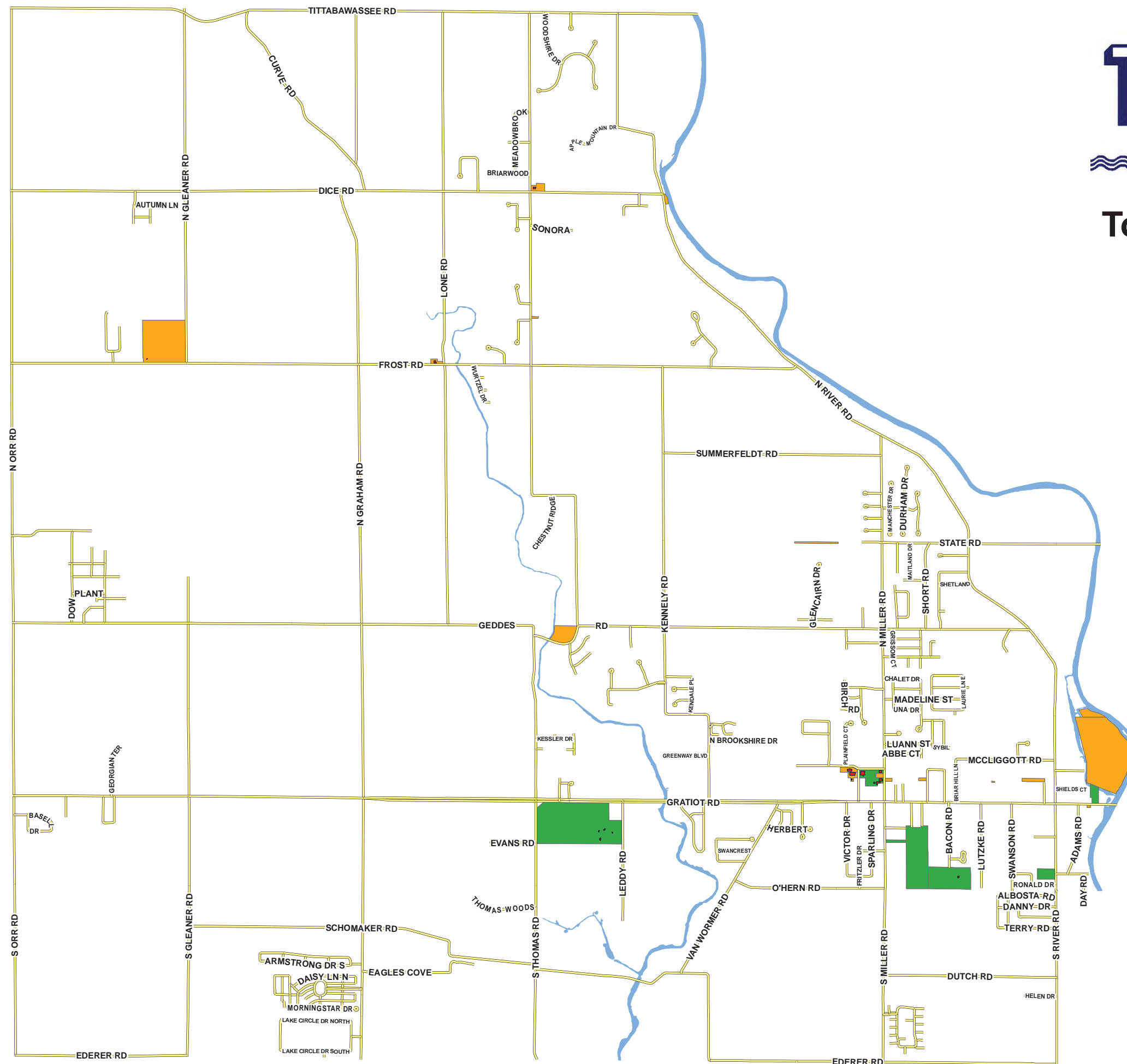


Created 6/25/2015





# Township Facilities



## Legend

- Thomas Township Parks
- Thomas Township Other Property
- Thomas Township Buildings

