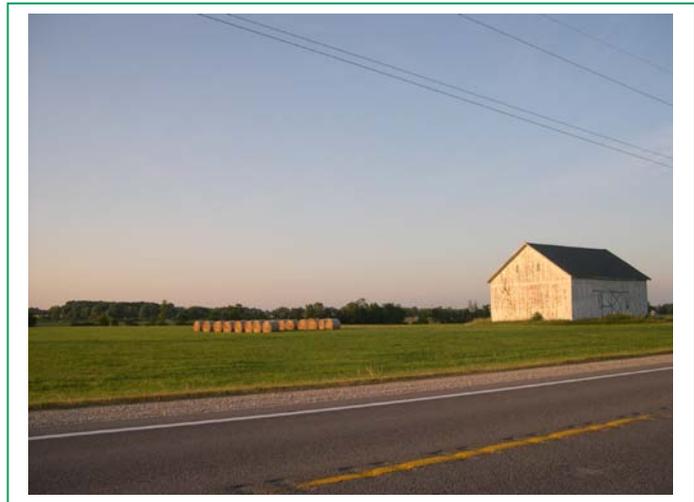




## Holton Township Master Plan

**2012**

Adopted February 12, 2013



**WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
(WMSRDC)**

The WMSRDC is a regional council of governments representing 127 local governments in the West Michigan counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and northern Ottawa.

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



**James Maike**, Chairperson  
**Joe Lenius**, Vice-Chairperson  
**Evelyn Kolbe**, Secretary

**Sandeep Dey**, Executive Director

**Project Staff:**

**Erin Kuhn**, Program Manager  
**Stephen Carlson**, Senior Planner

The Holton Township Master Plan was developed and approved with the guidance and support of the following Holton Township officials:

**Holton Township Planning Commission**

Thomas West, Chairman  
Mike Cygerit, Vice Chairman  
Julie Vanderboegh, Secretary  
Bill Halbower, Board Representative  
Val Jensen, Member  
Ken Schaub, Member  
Tim Ylitalo, Member

**Holton Township Board**

Mickey Noble, Supervisor  
Melanie Johnson, Clerk  
Bill Halbower, Treasurer  
Tammy Jager, Trustee  
Anita Kittel, Trustee  
Alan Wilson, Trustee

**Holton Township**  
**Master Plan**

---

**Table of Contents**

<b>Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
I. Purpose of the Plan.....	1
II. Legal Basis.....	2
III. Planning Process.....	2
IV. Relationship with Zoning.....	3
<b>Chapter 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
I. Geographic Context.....	5
II. Community History.....	6
III. Demographic Characteristics.....	14
a. Population Trends.....	14
b. Housing.....	15
c. Age and Gender.....	16
d. Racial Composition.....	16
e. Income and Poverty.....	17
f. Educational Attainment.....	17
g. Labor Force.....	18
h. Unemployment.....	19
i. Economic Outlook.....	19
IV. Township Government.....	20
V. Community Facilities and Services.....	21
VI. Education.....	22
VII. Transportation.....	22
VIII. Recreation Facilities and Public Lands.....	23
IX. Natural Features.....	26
a. Topography.....	26
b. Soils.....	29
c. Septic Suitability.....	30
d. Water Resources.....	33
i. Surface Water.....	33
ii. Wetlands.....	33
iii. Groundwater.....	36
e. Prime Farm Lands.....	37
f. Woodlands.....	37
g. Climate.....	38
X. Existing Land Use and Cover.....	41
<b>Chapter 3 – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b> .....	<b>43</b>
I. Township Visions.....	43
II. Goals and Objectives.....	44
<b>Chapter 4 – FUTURE LAND USE</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Chapter 6 – IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES</b> .....	<b>56</b>

Chapter 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
Chapter 8 – CONCLUSION.....	66

**APPENDICIES**

Appendix A – Public Notices and Approval Process.....	a1
Appendix B – Comments.....	a15

**TABLES**

Table 1: Driving Distance from Township Hall.....	5
Table 2: Population Trends and Projections.....	14
Table 3: Housing Occupancy.....	15
Table 4: Age & Gender Distribution.....	16
Table 5: Ethnicity.....	16
Table 6: Annual Income.....	17
Table 7: Household Income Distribution.....	17
Table 8: Poverty.....	17
Table 9: Educational Attainment.....	17
Table 10: Class of Employed Labor Force.....	18
Table 11: Industry Employment.....	18
Table 12: Civilian Labor Force.....	19
Table 13: Muskegon County Employment Projections.....	19
Table 14: Holton Township Budget.....	21
Table 15: Holton Township Tax Base.....	21
Table 16: Nearby Colleges and Universities.....	22
Table 17: Soil Erosion Basics.....	30
Table 18: Soil Limitations for Development.....	31
Table 19: Temperature and Precipitation Summary.....	39
Table 20: Land Cover 1997/1998.....	41

**MAPS**

Map 1: Muskegon County, MI.....	5
Map 2: Road Network.....	24
Map 3: Public Land & Recreation.....	25
Map 4: Topography.....	28
Map 5: Prominent Soils.....	32
Map 6: Water Features and Wetlands.....	35
Map 7: Thunderstorm Days per Year.....	40
Map 8: Land Cover 1997/1998.....	42
Map 9: Holton Township Future Land Use.....	54
Map 10: Downtown Holton Future Land Use.....	55

# Chapter I: Introduction

---

## I. Purpose of the Plan

The goal of any master plan is to combine the needs and desires of the citizenry with the land's suitability and capability for sustaining those uses, according to the ability and desire of a unit of government to provide public services throughout its jurisdiction. Such planning will minimize the potential for land use conflicts and inappropriate uses of land, for the betterment of all residents.

The Holton Township Master Plan is intended to guide and support land use actions and decisions within Holton Township. It is not intended to establish precise boundaries for different types of land uses. Rather, its functions are to manage growth using long-range goals and objectives, and indicate the general location and character of various land uses.

A community's decisions must be made with the knowledge that today's actions will have intended and unintended consequences well into the future. When making land use decisions, it is often easier to focus on and react to current issues, rather than take the initiative to proactively plan for the future. This document outlines the preferred future for Holton Township. It is appropriately general, recognizing that planning for the future is a delicate blend of art and science and that sufficient flexibility will be needed to respond to unanticipated challenges in the future.

The Holton Township Master Plan will be successful to the extent that it:

- Reflects the needs and desires of the citizens of the township;
- Reveals conditions, trends, and economic and/or social pressures present within the township;
- Presents a general vision for the future character and development of the township;
- Provides logical basis for the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance through the Goals and Objectives established during the planning process;
- Serves as the official advisory policy statement for encouraging orderly and efficient land use; and
- Offers a means of relating the township's plans to the plans of neighboring communities.

This plan represents the strong commitment of Holton Township to maintain and strengthen the community's character and local quality of life. By employing a thorough and thoughtful planning process, Holton Township has better prepared itself to respond to future challenges and continue meeting its citizens' needs.

## II. Legal Basis

Although this plan is enabled by Michigan law, it does not have the force of statutory law or ordinance. Its development is guided by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008 (MPEA) which states, in part, that:

“A plan comprehensive enough to meet the requirements of Sec. 7(2) must begin with an analysis of the area’s existing conditions, facilities, natural resources, population characteristics, economy, environmental features, and land uses. When appropriate, historical trends should be analyzed to assist in predicting future needs. It is also vital to encourage participation of a community throughout the development of a plan in order to ensure an accurate picture of the citizenry. In addition, the community should also engage the involvement of local, state, and federal organizations/ agencies during the development of the plan, which will foster coordination, collaboration and potential partnerships, which will assist in the implementation of the completed master plan.”

### **MICHIGAN PLANNING ENABLING ACT P.A. 33 of 2008**

**Sec. 7 (2)** The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfied all of the following criteria:

- (a) Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.
- (d) Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:
  - (i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets.
  - (ii) Safety from fire and other dangers.
  - (iii) Light and air.
  - (iv) Healthful and convenient distribution of population.
  - (v) Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds

Please note that the title of this document has changed from “Holton Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan” to “Holton Township Master Plan.” The impetus for this change is to establish consistency with P.A. 33 of 2008, which refers to all plans prepared by a planning commission under the new MPEA as “master plans.”

## III. Planning Process

In late 2011, Holton Township contracted with the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) to assist in the update of the Holton Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In January 2012, the WMSRDC began coordinating with the Holton Township Planning Commission to complete the plan. A “Planning Process” schedule was provided by the WMSRDC to enhance communication between the WMSRDC, the Holton Township Board, and the Holton Township Planning Commission throughout the various stages of plan development.

It was recognized that a master plan should always strive to remain consistent with the community's values. Therefore citizen input was vital in identifying and discerning the issues facing local residents, as well as in identifying a plan for a community's future. While public input was welcomed throughout the development of this plan, it was specifically requested at the outset and conclusion of the planning process. Holton Township invited its citizens, neighboring jurisdictions, and Muskegon County to public hearings on April 10, 2012 and January 15, 2013. Notices of these hearings were published in the Muskegon Chronicle no less than two weeks prior to each meeting. Copies of these notices are included in Appendix A of this document.

All comments and concerns were carefully considered and incorporated into a critical portion of this document, the Goals and Objectives. Appendix B includes a summary of the comments received at the April 10, 2012 public hearing. Feedback obtained at this hearing was perhaps the most influential factor in the formulation of the Goals and Objectives.

Due to certain and occasional changes in geographical and societal landscapes, the planning process is never truly complete. This plan should be considered a living document, and must be maintained through periodic review and revision. State law requires that the plan be reviewed and updated accordingly every five years; however the township may make adjustments as often as needed. The ability to do so allows the plan to evolve to meet needs and address issues of the township.

*This master plan, especially the Goals and Objectives, should be reviewed on a regular basis.*

Every effort has been made to present information that is current, accurate, and compliant with Michigan laws. Holton Township and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) shall not be held liable for any errors and/or omissions that are related to this plan. This plan is a general document; therefore, a thorough investigation with original research materials should be undertaken before proceeding with any specific implementation decisions. These materials might include site plans, legal reviews, etc. and would vary by situation.

#### IV. Relationship with Zoning

A municipality's lawful ability to adjust a zoning ordinance or zoning map is its primary means of regulating and adapting to land use change. The intent of this master plan is to inform, guide, and support that process of regulation and change. It should be consulted when determining the appropriateness of proposed adjustments to the zoning ordinance.

While most understand that there is a relationship between a master (i.e. land use) plan (with its future land use map) and a zoning ordinance (with its zoning map), it is often misinterpreted. This relationship is critical because one document cannot be appropriately utilized without the other. In general, a master plan is a policy document designed to provide a glimpse of future conditions; while a zoning ordinance is a regulatory tool used to implement the goals and objectives of the master plan.

Michigan state laws help to ensure this relationship through "zoning plan" provisions to be contained within a master plan. For communities with a zoning ordinance, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) requires a zoning plan that describes how

Future Land Use Map categories relate to zoning districts on the ordinance's Zoning Map. This is important because future land use categories are often more general than zoning districts. Provisions within the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, P.A. 110 of 2006 (MZEA) require a zoning ordinance be based upon a plan designed to promote public health, safety, general welfare, and etceteras. According to the MZEA, that plan should include the following elements:

- Standards or criteria to be used to consider re-zonings consistent with the master plan;
- Descriptions of current and proposed zoning districts;
- Proposed Zoning Map, or proposed changes to the existing Zoning Map; and
- A proposed schedule of regulations including height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises.

This master plan for Holton Township addresses the zoning plan elements within subsequent chapters. It should be noted that there are no provisions in the MPEA or MZEA for enforcement of the Acts. However, failing to follow such provisions can have consequences. Acts such as these are typically enforced by litigation. If a municipality or county does not make a good faith effort to conform to the requirements of the MZEA or MPEA, it greatly increases the likelihood of lawsuits and decreases its chances of winning such suits. Litigation of this kind seriously undermines the authority of the planning commission and legislative body, causing citizens to distrust their local government or question their competency.

It is paramount that future zoning and/or development decisions for the township should take into consideration the data and guidance presented in this plan, and should never conflict with the goals and objectives established during the planning process. An acceptable rezoning request should always be consistent with the master plan, as it represents the community's desires for their future.

*An acceptable rezoning request should always be consistent with the master plan.*

# Chapter 2: Community Profile

## I. Geographic Context

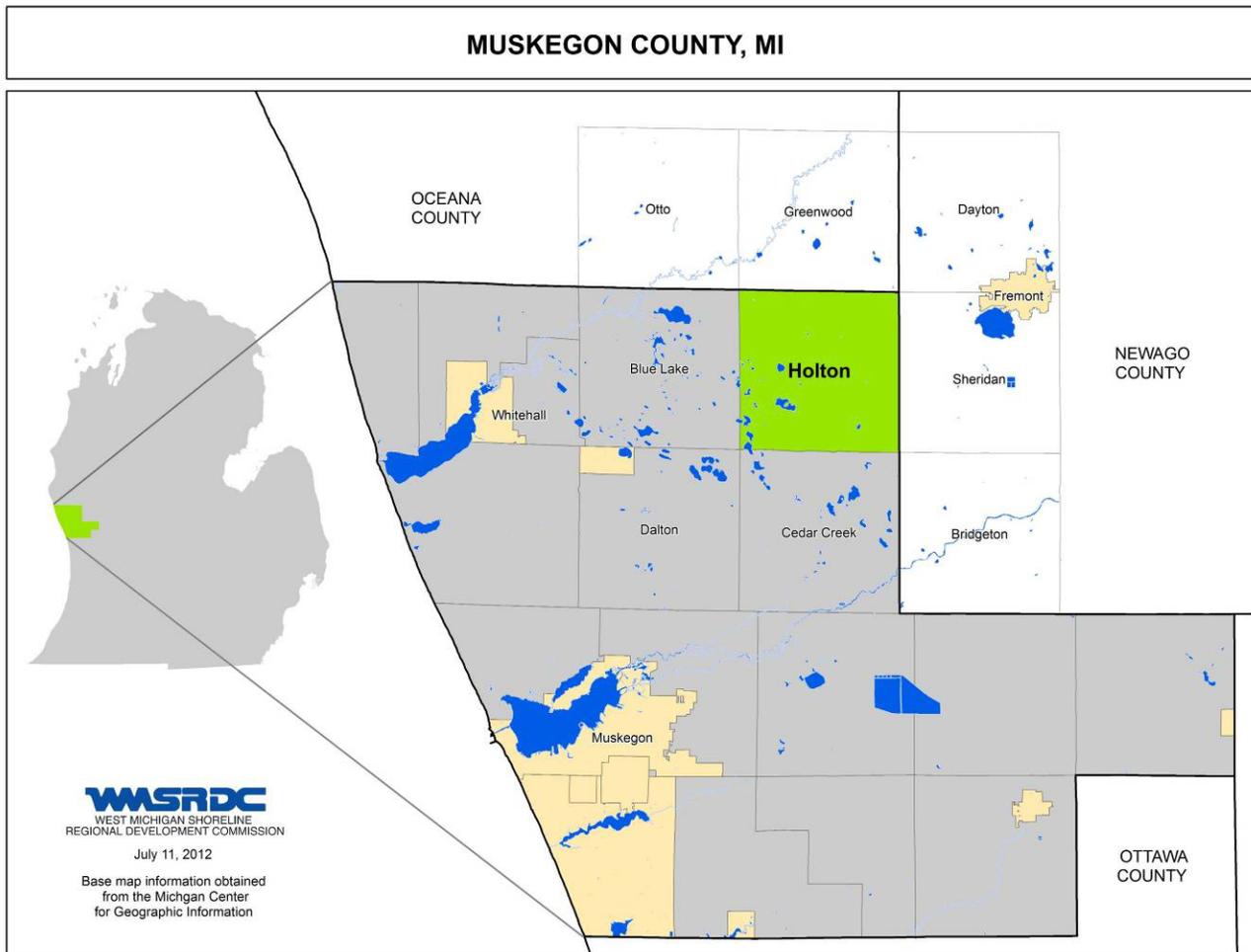
Holton Township is located in the northeast corner of Muskegon County. The county is on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, approximately halfway between Traverse City and the Michigan-Indiana state line. The total area of Holton Township is 35.7 square miles, of which 35.2 square miles are land and 0.5 are water. Townships adjacent to Holton include Blue Lake, Cedar Creek, and Dalton townships in Muskegon County; Greenwood and Otto townships in Oceana County; and Fremont, Sheridan, Dayton, and Bridgeton townships in Newago County. Table 1 identifies approximate driving distances from the Holton Township Hall to a number of regionally significant destinations.

**Table 1**

Driving Distance* from Township Hall	
Fremont	10 mi
Muskegon	18 mi
Grand Rapids	56 mi
Ludington	57 mi
Traverse City	118 mi
Chicago	201 mi
Detroit	211 mi

*\*Distances approximated with Google Maps*

**MAP 1**



## II. Community History

A brief history of Holton Township is invaluable to establishing the chronology of its development, both physically and culturally. Encompassing more than 140 years since its formal incorporation, Holton Township has a rich heritage that has roots in primary occupations such as farming and lumbering. This heritage includes a strong community commitment with a small-town atmosphere which, is felt by many to be its greatest asset.

### **Early Settlers**

The Ottawa Indians were the first to settle in the area now known as Holton Township. This was not due to their natural patterns of migration, but because the land had been given to the tribe in partial exchange for lands being settled by whites in the Grand River valley. While the Ottawas did take up residence here, "...the fishing and hunting territory was not to their liking, so they made little attempt to actually take possession of the land (Centennial, page 1)."

The first white settlers in Holton Township were Norman Cunningham and Rufus Skeels, who came to the area in 1855, settling in the northern part, which was then in White River Township. In 1859, two Norwegians named Christian Olson and Tollief Hendrickson came to the territory "direct from the old country (ibid)," thus attracting other Scandinavian people to cluster into a sizable settlement by the mid-1860's. The seventh generation of Hendricksons live in Holton today.

Harry L. Spooner, in his article published in the "Muskegon Chronicle" in 1926 on the history of Holton Township, summarized Holton's early settlement troubles:

"Although not as old as some other towns of northern Michigan, this village has an interesting history. That it is not as old as other places in the county is due to the fact that for some time it was an Indian reservation and for even a long time after the red man left for more congenial places, the title to the land could be obtained only after much red tape. Some of the early settlers, after settling on portions of the territory and making considerable headway in clearing and otherwise improving it, were required to give it up by the government and lost what they had paid on it. This chaotic state of affairs is what delayed the real settlement to a later date than some other parts of the county (ibid, page 20)."

Although soils are sandy and ill-suited for farming in many parts of Muskegon County, early settlers were able to search out the best plots of ground and establish a stable farming community. Some settlers planted orchards, which are still a part of Holton Township's agricultural livelihood.

### **Holton Becomes a Community**

Two entrepreneurs named Blodgett and Byrne were the first to begin building in the community of Holton, purchasing 4,500 acres in 1870 for \$15,500, thereby acquiring a wealth of virgin white pines. Their first improvements were to construct a sawmill with a dam on the Cedar Creek just upstream from the present bridge on Main Street. They next built a general store, having to transport their wares from Muskegon over rough roads, and finally platted the village in 1871.

The name of Holton was selected in honor of Muskegon resident Henry H. Holt, who was then the Lieutenant Governor of Michigan. Since the village Holt, in present-day Ingham County, had already been established, the name was changed slightly to “Holton” to prevent duplication. Holton Township was officially organized on March 23, 1871, as the fourteenth township in Muskegon County.

The Blodgett and Byrne sawmill was reported to be one of the largest in the country during its peak production, but by the early 1880s, all of the salable timber on the 4,500-acre tract had been cut and the mill closed down. Other mills had experienced a similar cycle, records showing a decline from 13 sawmills in 1859 to only eight in 1881.

While these were certainly an economic blow to the community, Holton remained a trade center, as other businesses were becoming established:

“By 1881 the village had risen to a population of around 500 and had a large number of business houses as follows: George E. Allen General Store and Elevator; Rand and Jennings, General Store and Furniture; Thompson Brothers, Wagon and Carriage Shop; William Apel, Boots and Shoes; Charles Tyson, European House; Isaac Cassidy, Blacksmith and Wagon Shop; John Hawkey, Jeweler; Ensing & Son, Boots and Shoes; M. J. Crahen, Wagon and Carriage Shop; William Badeauz, Saloon; James S. Rhodes, Livery and Barber; D. A. McDonell, Drugstore; M. Mumbræ, Photography; Mrs. M. Mumbræ, Millinery; and Edward Vaughn, Harness Shop (ibid, page 15).”

Following the lumbermen, an influx of farmers to settle the cleared land, assisted by the completion of the railroad to the area in 1872. This spawned the establishment of two shingle mills, a brickyard, a grist mill, and a creamery. Unfortunately, due to normal aging and fires, few of these buildings stand today, the last of them being John Glade’s mercantile, the second store established in Holton, which was finally razed in the early 1940s.

As in all early settlements, fire was a constant hazard:

“During the period of 1890 to 1900, three serious fires hit the community. The first fire was started July 4, 1890 by a firecracker in the townhall. The entire West side of the street was burned. On December 25, 1892, a fire of unknown origin swept through the buildings on the East side of the street. July 19, 1895, another blaze attacked the buildings on the East side of Main Street (ibid, page 17).”

Telephone service came to Holton in 1901, and was housed in the Holton Mercantile Company and “used for long-distance calls only (ibid, page 18).” Professional services such as lawyers and physicians came and went with the settlers’ movements. The first bank was established in 1909 as the Holton Savings Bank, but was forced to close in 1937 “due to insufficient business (ibid, page 19).”

The Holton Fire Department was officially organized in 1948 with construction of a new fire barn, which cost \$6,000. Prior to that, the community assembled to fight fires when the Methodist Church bell was rung (the bell was donated by Lt. Gov. Holt), or, after 1942, when the new siren was sounded. In the days of the telephone switchboard system, the operator used a special ring code to alert the volunteers of a fire.

Some unusual businesses and activities throughout Holton Township’s history include a fox farm, which was reported to be “recognized as one of the best in the industry (ibid,

page 23);” a 2-acre ginseng “garden,” where buyers from New York would come to export the ginseng to China; the “Emma Club,” in which all members must be named, of course, Emma; and the Holton Ground Observer Corps, who manned a Civil Defense airplane spotter tower until the end of the Korean War.

### **Ethnic and Religious Heritage**

While Holton Township is quite homogeneous today, its settlers came from a variety of locations, primarily in western Europe. These immigrants brought many family traditions that may still be seen in the celebrations and everyday lives of their descendants.

An example of this may be seen in a cookbook that was produced by the Holton Evangelical Lutheran church in honor of a family named Trygstad. The Trygstad family established its roots in Holton Township in the 1880s when a newly-married couple emigrated from Norway. In 1885, they established the farm north of Holton where their descendants reside today. Swedish traditions were intermingled in the family through marriage to another immigrant family, and the cookbook relates memories of Christmas suppers consisting of Lutefisk, spare ribs, and Christmas Rice. Other recipes not often seen in American Cookbooks include Swedish Coffee Yerk, Kalvadance, Smalands Kringlar, and Swedish Fruit Soup.

Many Settlers continued their traditions from the old country by establishing churches, which were usually constructed at cooperative work sessions on donated land. Several of Holton Township’s churches in particular have had long, interesting histories, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Methodist Church, and St. Michael’s Church.

The Holton Evangelical Lutheran Church’s history spans more than 140 years, the congregation having been organized in 1869. The church was first named the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church by eleven members of the Scandinavian colony that was established in 1864 in the Holton area. A family named Olsen provided land for the cemetery, church, and parsonage, and the first structure was completed in 1881 at a total cost of \$500. This building was destroyed by a lighting strike in 1934, and replaced by a wooden church on Brickyard Road in 1938. The church seen today on Marvin Road was completed in 1986.

The Holton United Methodist Church was begun in 1874 as the Holton Methodist Episcopal Church. Its original location was the northeast corner of the Holton-Duck Lake Road and Marvin Road intersection, on land donated by the Blodgett and Byrnes Lumber Company. In 1877, the wooden structure was transported up the hill to the church’s former location on Second Street (Holton-Whitehall Road). A new brick church was built in 1915 there, with the wooden building being once more moved to its final destination on the corner of Main Street and Holton-Whitehall Road. The bell given to the church by then-Lieutenant Governor Holt was placed in the belfry, and subsequently moved to a new church, which is located north of town on Holton Duck Lake Road. The 1915 church building is now the Holton Township Hall, as well as the home of the Holton Historical Society.

St. Michael’s Church is located on the east side of Maple Island Road in the community of Brunswick, Newaygo County. Holton citizens figure prominently in its history. In 1885, the “Station County Line Mission,” a mission of St. Mary’s Church in Big Rapids,

was organized and began services in the home of Peter DeMarrs in Newaygo County. The George Koonsman family donated land for a church building which was built and dedicated in 1887 at the current location.

This original structure, a wooden building, was struck by lightning and subsequently torn down, its replacement dedicated in 1953. A parish hall was built first and was used for services until the new stone building was ready. St. Michael's is the "Mother Church" for Catholic churches in Fremont and Hesperia, and at one time operated a Catholic Church School for the three communities. (Source: Catholic Directory of the United Lists of Catholic Missions and Centennial Directory of St. Michael's Church.)

**Centennial Farms**

One of the elements of a community that provides stability is the number of families who have resided there for many generations. Holton Township is fortunate to have many families that have resided on or owned the same property for more than 100 years, thereby earning the "Centennial Farm" distinction.

In 2006, eleven Centennial Farms were identified in Holton Township:

Ruben Hayes, Brunswick Road, 1866
Charles and Elizabeth Proctor, Skeels Road, 1869
Gorgen and Karen Sophia Anderson, Marvin at Brickyard Roads, 1872
Mrs. Philemen Monette, Maple Island Road, 1875
Ben and Caroline Svenson, Brunswick Road 1878
Alexander Anderson, Maple Island Road 1881
David W. and Marie Trygstad, Holton-Duck Lake Road, 1882
Olaus and Beret Marie Trygstad, Holton-Duck Lake Road, 1884
John and Monica (Wagner) Slater, Raymond Road, 1886
Gust and Marie (Jensen) Holmes, Holton-Duck Lake Road, 1886
Chris and Lena M. Swenson, Swenson Road, 1891

By 2012, the list of names had changed somewhat. Reported below are owners of Centennial Farms in Holton, many of which are descendants of individuals listed above:

Robert Bean (Joe Anderson)
Mark Deblock
Jim Hansen
Walter Hogan (Trust)
Mary Monette (Trust)
Clarence Patelski
William & Margot Slater
Michael Slowik
Elizabeth Swenson (Severt Swenson)
Gary Trygstad
Steve Yeomans (100 years in 2014)

The only family having continuous family ties within the platted area of Holton is the Husted family. Eugene and Julia E. Husted purchased a block of platted lots in 1893 on Ward Street. One of these lots was purchased by Eugene's son, and a daughter of the son still resides on that lot.

## Holton Schools

As in many rural communities, the school system in Holton Township has played a vital role in not only educating children, but in acting as the institution that binds the community together. The first school in Holton Township may have been in Inglehart log cabin school located in Section 26 of the township, which was built and used to teach Lutheran Church students. It is also known that public school sessions were held in 1872 at or near the site of the Catholic Church, which was the DeMars home on Maple Island Road. A private school was available in 1873 in the Methodist Church, where a student could receive three months of schooling for \$1.50 tuition.

During the next year, 1874, school was held in the Methodist Church for “District #5 of the Holton Fractional School District.” At that time, a one-room frame structure was erected on school property on or near the location of the present bus garage. Other schools in the Fractional District were the Brunswick, Bunce, Olson, and School House Lake Schools in Holton Township and such schools as Evans, Maple Grove, McCauum, Ryerson, and a now-nameless school on the corner of Brunswick and Linderman roads in neighboring communities.

In ten years, another room was added to the one-room schoolhouse for grades one through eight. The current High School was organized in 1916 by four men who were directed by the township board and the residents to establish a high school, as they were “very anxious and interested in educating their children locally instead of sending them on to Fremont and Muskegon (Centennial, page 1).” Mrs. Cilley, the teacher in the first private school, helped circulate the petition in favor of this proposal.

The first classes were held in the G.A.R. Building (then the Holton Town Hall) located on the northwest corner of Main and Second Streets, led by “a tall, gracious and intelligent lady with an alert and enthusiastic sparkle in her eye (ibid),” Principal Etta Paulson Evans. Mrs. Evans taught English, math, history, science, music, Latin, and agriculture for a starting salary of \$80 a month.

While the subjects listed may appear to be similar to those taught in today’s schools, a 1921 Detroit newspaper article illustrates the differences:

“(the school) taught boys advanced methods of farming, and girls baking and other duties of the farm home – among other things the proper diet for baby --- (and that once weekly the students heard an area) practical farmer and a women well versed in the duties of a farmer’s wife...(ibid, page 2).”

This unique curriculum resulted in designation of the school as a “Rural Agriculture High School,” one of only three or four to be so designated in the state. Agricultural classes continued to be a part of the curriculum until the 1970s when declining finances and enrollment in the classes caused their removal from the program. These many decades of agricultural education have strongly contributed to Holton’s continued rural character.

In 1921, the High School year commenced in the Maccabee Hall across the street and as growth continued, using again rooms in the G.A.R. Building and the Martin Building on Main Street. Many changes in the physical facilities have occurred since the first building in 1874. In 1923, Junior High students were moved to the G.A.R. Building until 1932, when reunited with the K-8 grades in the new 3-room brick building that was constructed to replace the original schoolhouse.

In 1938-39, a second story was added to accommodate Senior High students in one location. In 1939, the first graduating class received their diplomas in the combined school, grades K-12. The current Elementary School complex was begun in 1965, with the last addition and renovation having been made in 2001. The current complex, housing the high school students, was completed in 1973-74.

With the passage of a bond proposal, a new middle school (grades 5-8) was completed in 2001. The school has now grown to see typical graduating class size of 70-80 students, and has modernized its curriculum and facilities. In 2005 and 2006, renovations were completed on the athletic complex. This included a renovated baseball and softball complex, a new synthetic turf football and soccer field (combined into one), and a new track, as well as new bleachers, ticket booth, restroom facilities, and concession stands. In an effort to reduce energy consumption, Holton Schools also upgraded much of their mechanical equipment with a 2009 energy bond.

### **Holton Area Centennial, 1971**

On August 26-28, 1971, Holton Township residents celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with both old-fashioned and modern entertainments, culminating many months of work and fund-raising that was probably enjoyed as much as the festival itself!

A ribbon-cutting kickoff was held on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and participants were solicited for contests such as Centennial Queen, Beard Growing, and Cross-Cut Saw Log Cutting. Fund-raising events held throughout the spring and summer consisted of square dances, a box social, a raffle for a bicycle-built-for-two, a flea market, a bake sale, and a "Miss America Doll Contest," which featured the male sector of Holton.

The celebration was truly an event that involved the entire community, as school-aged children were recruited to design and paint signs downtown, a boy scout pack had a clean-up day project, and the first day of the 3-day festival was pronounced "Children's Day." All events were well-attended, and the cooperation among all ages and sectors of the citizens provided a very successful 100-year celebration.

### **Civic Activities**

Civic involvement is the key to success of any community. The entire community benefits when citizens are actively involved in shaping their surroundings and making opportunities for positive things to happen. Often, civic groups begin by organizing around some institution that is in place.

Such is the case with the Parent-Teachers Association in Holton Township, which was formally organized in 1933, but informally active for years prior to that. Although affiliation with the national PTA ended in 1977, a local Parent-Teacher Organization is active in the school today.

Another outgrowth of school activity is Holton's 4-H clubs. Established during the early days of the Holton school system, today's 4-H leaders keep the agricultural school concept a part of Holton through civic projects and participation in local, county, and state fairs. Other school-centered groups include Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Athletic Boosters, and Music Boosters.

Some civic groups center their activities around municipal services provided to the residents. Three examples of this in Holton Township are the Fire Explorer Unit, the Holton Fire Department Auxiliary, and the Friends of the Library. The Fire Explorer Unit is a group of school-age children (age 14 and up) who participate in firefighter and leadership training. This unit, which is the only one of its kind in the area, is an example of the dedication of the firefighters to the community's youth.

The Holton Fire Department Auxiliary has been in existence for a more than twenty years working together to raise money to support the firefighters. Annual fund raisers are held to provide meals for the firefighters during lengthy fires and to contribute toward purchasing special equipment.

"Friends of the Library" was organized in 1988. As noted by the librarian, "this group has provided the branch with many of the added activities and books otherwise unaffordable to the library of this size (Community Brochure, page 5)." The activities of this group extends far beyond simply buying books: they sponsor a flu shot clinic, provide information on home health care, among other things.

Many communities benefit from the existence of a business association. Although downtown Holton has only a dozen or so stores, their Business and Civic Association now numbers 44 memberships. Business and Civic Association, for the purpose of promoting "the growth and development in Holton for the enrichment of its citizens (Business Directory, page 3)."

This group, which meets monthly, has been the primary impetus for accomplishing a number of things in the Holton area, including the creation of a community brochure designed to attract professional caregivers, development of a memorial park in the downtown area, Town Spring Cleanup Day, Spring Plant Sale, Community Day Ox Roast, McGruff Halloween Bags, and the annual Christmas Program in the Park. Proceeds from these events go towards upkeep of the memorial park, maintaining community welcome signs, general beautification, and Christmas decorations.

One of the Association's biggest projects was the creation of Severt Swenson Holton Township Park. The site of this park, located in the "heart" of the Holton business community, was formerly an old business that had experienced some fire damage. After the debris was removed and the site leveled, many residents commented that it would be a good location for a park.

Acting upon these comments, the Holton Business and Civic Association decided in November, 1987 to begin by planting a spruce tree in memory of long-time township supervisor Severt Swenson. This was done, and it was decorated that Christmas, beginning an annual community tradition. Plans quickly were implemented the following spring to install a sprinkler system, plant flowers and shrubs, and to do other landscaping. Because of the efforts of many dedicated, civic-minded citizens, the park was dedicated on July 30, 1988, just four months after it was begun.

The community brochure that was written by the Business and Civic Association in the hopes of attracting a doctor, dentist, or pharmacist to the area reflects the positive attitudes of many in the township, from elected officials to community leaders to ordinary citizens. The creation of this booklet illustrates the degree of commitment and drive this membership contributes to the community.

The oldest civic organization in Holton Township is the Holton Ladies Aid Society, which was formed in 1902. Its purpose is to perform Christian charitable work in the community. The two primary projects undertaken each year are the sewing of quilts to be given to fire victims and the preparation and distribution of “Comfort Boxes” to cancer patients for Christmas.

Holton’s agricultural background fostered the existence of the Holton Alumina Grange 585 in the mid-1800’s. Unlike many Michigan granges, the Alumina Grange 585 did not have its own grange hall, but met in a variety of locations, once renting use of a building for \$26 a year. Typical grange activities were engaged in, from discussions on agriculture to current political issues.

At one meeting in 1890, it was decided that “Land Plaster” should be purchased to beautify the homes in Holton. The grange apparently then bought “15 tons of it by train car load at \$9.80 per ton (Centennial, page 28).” Later that same year, a discussion of state political topics included debates on three questions: “Are you in favor of reducing railroad fare for passengers to two cents a mile? Are you in favor to change the Constitution of this State so that mortgages may be assessed as real estate? And are you in favor of Women (sic) Suffrage (sic)?” The Holton Alumina Grange 585 is no longer active in Holton but is fondly remembered by many.

Senior citizens in Holton Township are unified in an association that meets for lunch programs on various topics. Providing activities for this segment of the population is becoming increasingly important in many communities as the average ages increase.

One of the most active community groups is the Cobb-Trygstad-Anderson American Legion Post 397. 386 residents are members, plus another 151 auxiliary members and 80 “Sons of American Legion,” representing a sizable portion of the community! The post was established in 1958 and hold nearly a dozen different activities each year (some running weekly), and its members assist those in need in the community through loan of medical supplies, providing luncheons for families after funerals, blood bank donations, and providing an Honor Guard for area events.

The American Legion was instrumental in creating the memorial park at the township cemetery. On land donated by Elizabeth Perysian, a memorial to those serving in our nation’s wars was established in 1972. Many hours of labor were expended by members of the legion to clear and landscape the small area on the southeast side of the cemetery, overlooking M-120.

Much of the Holton Township historical information in this section has been provided by the Holton Historical Society, which operates a museum located at 6511 Holton-Whitehall Road. Additional resources utilized include:

- [Community Brochure](#), Holton Business and Civic Assn. Community Brochure, 1989.
- Hackley Library, Muskegon, records.
- Holton Public Library records.
- [Holton Area Centennial](#), 1871 to 1971.
- [Holton School PTA Centennial Cookbook](#), 1971.
- [One Hundred Years of Grace](#), The Lutheran Church Centennial Book.
- [Trygstad Family Recipes](#), 1987.

### III. Demographic Characteristics

Population characteristics; such as growth, age distribution, income, and educational level; and housing characteristics help community planners make predictions based on historic patterns. A picture of the future can be painted by analyzing these factors.

This section utilizes figures from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) to provide a statistical profile of Holton Township. Where appropriate, statistics of Blue Lake, Cedar Creek, Greenwood and Sheridan townships, as well as Muskegon County, are provided to give due regard to demographic characteristics of Holton’s neighboring communities.

#### a. Population Trends

According to the 2010 Census, Holton Township contained 2,515 persons. This was a 0.7% decrease from the 2000 Census. In comparison, Muskegon County’s population grew by 1.2%, Blue Lake Township grew 20.6%, Cedar Creek Township grew 2.5%, Greenwood Township grew 2.6%, and Sheridan Township grew 3.6%.

*Between 2000 and 2010, population of Holton Township decreased by 0.7% percent.*

Although the population of Holton Township is expected to increase slightly in the future, the rate of growth can only be estimated. For example, past predictions showed Holton Township growing at a much faster rate; however recent and unforeseen economic conditions in the United States have since guided the township down a different path. Table 2 details the township’s growth since 1970 and projects growth in five-year increments from 2015 to 2035. Note that these projections are done at the county level (annual average growth for the previous ten years applied to current population) and then aggregated to the municipal level according to the municipality’s most recent share of county population. They do not take into account variations in development trends between individual municipalities.

Table 2

Population Trends and Projections										
	Actual Census Figures					Projected Population*				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Muskegon County	157,425	157,589	158,983	170,200	172,188	173,191	174,199	175,214	176,234	177,260
<b>Holton Township</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>2,532</b>	<b>2,515</b>	<b>2,530</b>	<b>2,544</b>	<b>2,559</b>	<b>2,574</b>	<b>2,589</b>
Blue Lake Township	715	1,101	1,235	1,990	2,399	2,413	2,427	2,441	2,455	2,470
Cedar Creek Township	1,467	2,454	2,846	3,109	3,186	3,205	3,223	3,242	3,261	3,280
Greenwood Township	575	815	915	1,154	1,184	1,177	1,171	1,164	1,157	1,151
Sheridan Township	2,477	2,465	2,252	2,423	2,510	2,525	2,541	2,556	2,572	2,588

Source: 2010 U.S Census; WMSRDC

\*Projections calculated by WMSRDC

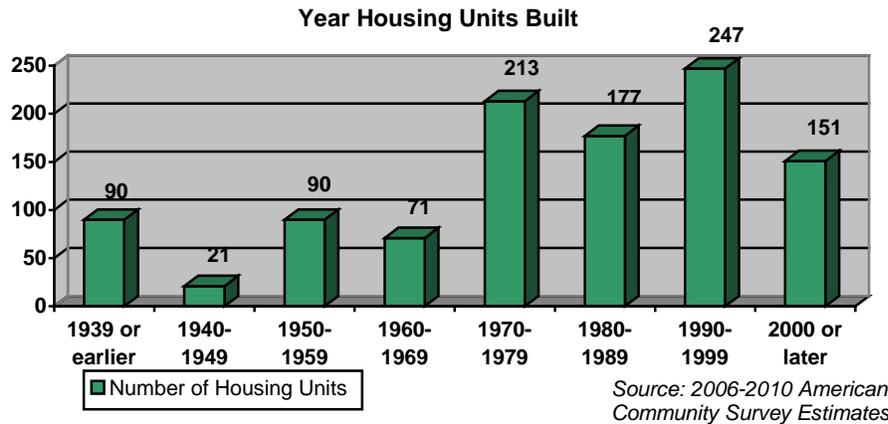
Population projections indicate that Holton Township’s population will remain steady through 2035. As ownership of land changes and economic variables fluctuate, so too will these projections. The projected population can be used to help predict other elements of population often associated with growth, such as the need for additional dwelling units. For example, given the additional 74 persons predicted between 2010 and 2035, the township will require 27 housing units if the average number of persons

per dwelling is 2.75. This number of dwelling units could be achieved through newly constructed or installed units, through the utilization of existing vacant housing units, or through a combination of the two.

**b. Housing**

Housing and any significant changes in an area’s housing stock have a key impact on planning decisions. It is important to note that changing trends related to housing stock are often the first indications that important changes are taking place with the population base and land use. It is also important to note that a vital aspect of housing stock is the presence of a variety of house choices (i.e. traditional single-family homes, duplexes, and manufactured homes). Various housing types allow for affordable housing opportunities for all segments of the population.

The graph below reveals the general age of the Holton Township housing stock, according to the 2006-2010 ACS Estimates. Of the 1,060 housing units in the township, 54 percent were constructed within the last 30 years.



According to U.S. Census, the total number of housing units in the township increased 6.6 percent between 2000 and 2010. The percentage of vacant units also increased from 7.9 to 12.8. Table 3 shows that housing units in Holton Township have a lower rate of occupancy (87.2%) than the entire county (89.2%) and, consequently, a higher percentage of vacancies. The vacancy rate is not necessarily cause for concern because 35.8 percent of vacant units are for “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.”

*The total number of housing units in Holton Township increased by 6.6 percent between 2000 and 2010.*

**Table 3**

Housing Occupancy				
	Total Units	Occupied	Vacant	Vacant for seasonal, recreational or occasional use
Holton Township	1,050	916 (87.2%)	134 (12.8%)	48 (4.6%)
Muskegon County	73,561	65,616 (89.2%)	7,945 (10.8%)	2,004 (2.7%)

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

With the aforementioned slight population increase expected, an increased number of occupied housing units in Holton Township should be expected. Considering the relatively low percentage of vacant housing units, it appears new housing units may be needed to accommodate any substantial population increases. The township must remain proactive in not only continuing to provide for a range of housing options, but also to maintain the existing housing and thoughtfully direct new development to appropriate areas to preserve the township's rural and environmental integrity.

### c. Age and Gender

It is useful to note an increase or decrease in certain population groups, specifically in the school and retirement age populations. These population groups can indicate whether or not there is an increased need for capital and service expenditures.

Table 4 shows that Holton Township has a healthy age distribution that is comparable to the countywide distribution. There are more young residents ages 0-19 (823) than older residents ages 65 and up (255); and there are more citizens aged 20-44 (862) than citizens aged 45-64 (592). Comparison between the 2000 and 2010 census figures reveals a slight shift of the age distribution: the overall number of young residents decreased, while the number of older residents increased. The current stability of the age distribution may be threatened if this trend continues in the future.

Table 4

Age & Gender Distribution						
Age	Holton Township				Muskegon County	
	2000		2010		2010	
0-4	158	6.2%	149 ↓	5.9%	11,315	6.6%
5-9	205	8.1%	146 ↓	5.8%	11,689	6.8%
10-14	243	9.6%	185 ↓	7.4%	11,940	6.9%
15-19	217	8.6%	210 ↓	8.3%	12,747	7.4%
20-24	119	4.7%	159 ↑	6.3%	10,658	6.2%
25-34	306	12.1%	248 ↓	9.9%	21,286	12.4%
35-44	437	17.2%	301 ↓	12.0%	21,429	12.4%
45-54	362	14.3%	442 ↑	17.6%	26,092	15.2%
55-59	149	5.9%	197 ↑	7.8%	12,047	7.0%
60-64	81	3.2%	157 ↑	6.2%	9,633	5.6%
65-74	165	6.5%	196 ↑	7.8%	12,247	7.1%
75-84	71	2.8%	97 ↑	3.9%	7,788	4.5%
85+	19	0.8%	28 ↑	1.1%	3,317	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,532</b>		<b>2,515 ↓</b>		<b>172,188</b>	
Male	1,326	52.4%	1,310 ↓	52.1%	85,451	49.6%
Female	1,206	47.6%	1,205 ↓	47.9%	86,737	50.4%

Arrows reflect increase or decrease from 2000 to 2010.

Source: U.S. Census 2000, U.S. Census 2010

### d. Racial Composition

Table 5 illustrates the racial distribution within Holton Township and Muskegon County. As noted in the table, the vast majority (98.4%) of the township residents have a white ethnic background. This concentration is greater than Muskegon County (80.0%).

Table 5

Ethnicity		
	Holton Township	Muskegon County
Total Population	2,515	172,188
White	2,475 (98.4%)	137,679 (80.0%)
Black or African American	11 (0.4%)	24,882 (14.5%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	32 (1.3%)	1,407 (0.8%)
Asian	16 (0.6%)	914 (0.5%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 (0.0%)	28 (0.01%)
Other Race	12 (0.5%)	2,362 (1.4%)
Multiracial	40 (1.6%)	4,889 (2.8%)
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)*	59 (2.3%)	8,261 (4.8%)

\*Hispanic origin is included in all races, therefore, totals will not equal the Total Population section

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

e. Income and Poverty

Another factor that helps to determine the variety of housing options within a community is household income. The annual income statistics in Table 6 show that Holton lags behind the county in median household and per capita income, but is ahead of Muskegon County in median household income.

Table 7 shows the distribution of income levels throughout the population. These figures reveal that the township and the county have similar income characteristics. Almost two-thirds of households in Holton Township earn less than \$50,000 annually.

Table 8 identifies poverty statistics for Holton Township and Muskegon County. The township has a slightly higher poverty rate than the county. One in five Holton residents lives in poverty.

f. Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is closely related to income. Generally speaking, a higher level of education translates into higher earning potential. Table 9 details educational attainment of Holton Township and Muskegon County residents 25 years of age and over. Nearly half (48.1%) of this demographic in Holton Township has had some college or obtained higher education degrees, compared to just over half of this population (51.8%) countywide.

Table 6

Annual Income (2009 inflation-adjusted)			
	Median Household	Median Family	Per Capita
Holton Township	\$40,735	\$45,096	\$18,294
Muskegon County	\$40,670	\$50,101	\$19,719

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 7

Household Income Distribution		
	Holton Township	Muskegon County
Total Households	932	65,778
Less than \$10,000	75 (8.0%)	5,802 (8.8%)
\$10k to \$14,999	50 (5.4%)	4,977 (7.6%)
\$15k to \$24,999	195 (20.9%)	9,028 (13.7%)
\$25k to \$34,999	91 (9.8%)	8,531 (13.0%)
\$35k to \$49,999	171 (18.3%)	10,912 (16.6%)
\$50k to \$74,999	131 (14.1%)	12,828 (19.5%)
\$75k to \$99,999	119 (12.8%)	7,250 (11.0%)
\$100k to \$149,999	75 (8.0%)	4,691 (7.1%)
\$150k to \$199,999	18 (1.9%)	1,121 (1.7%)
\$200k or more	7 (0.8%)	638 (1.0%)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 8

Poverty		
	Holton Township	Muskegon County
Percentage of population in poverty	20.0%	18.0%
Under 18 years in poverty	29.7%	24.2%
18 years and over in poverty	16.4%	15.8%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 9

Educational Attainment		
	Holton Township	Muskegon County
Population 25 years and up	1,599	113,390
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	77 (4.8 %)	4,253 (3.8 %)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	174 (10.9 %)	9,732 (8.6 %)
High School Diploma	578 (36.1 %)	40,701 (35.9 %)
Some College	445 (27.8 %)	28,464 (25.1 %)
Associate Degree	205 (12.8 %)	11,570 (10.2 %)
Bachelor's Degree	293 (5.8 %)	12,437 (11.0 %)
Graduate or Professional Deg.	27 (1.7 %)	6,233 (5.5 %)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**g. Labor Force**

According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the labor force of Holton Township consists of 55.2 percent of the total population over 16 years of age. Out of the labor force, only 4.6 percent is unemployed. Comparatively, 9.4 percent of the Muskegon County labor force is unemployed. Table 10 gives additional information about employed individuals in Holton Township and Muskegon County.

**Table 10**

<b>Class of Employed Labor Force</b>		
	<b>Holton Township</b>	<b>Muskegon County</b>
Employed Labor Force	992	69,840
Private wage and salary workers	853 (86.0%)	57,307 (82.1%)
Government workers	45 (4.5%)	8,138 (11.7%)
Self-employed workers	80 (8.1%)	4,198 (6.0%)
Unpaid family workers	14 (1.4%)	197 (0.3%)

*Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

Table 11 breaks down the estimated employment statistics for various industries in Holton Township and Muskegon County. Half of the township's employed laborers worked in one of the top two employment industries: Manufacturing (34.1%); and Education, Health and Social Services (16.6%). The third leading employment sector was Retail Trade (9.1%). These three sectors are also the county's top three employers.

**Table 11**

<b>Industry Employment: Ages 16 Years and Over</b>		
	<b>Holton Township</b>	<b>Muskegon County</b>
Total Employed	992	69,840
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	13 (1.3%)	1,042 (1.5%)
Construction	60 (6.0%)	3,188 (4.6%)
Manufacturing	<b>338 (34.1%)</b>	<b>17,430 (25.0%)</b>
Wholesale trade	7 (0.7%)	1,711 (2.4%)
Retail trade	<b>90 (9.1%)</b>	<b>8,510 (12.2%)</b>
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	56 (5.6%)	2,341 (3.4%)
Information	7 (0.7%)	1,068 (1.5%)
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	23 (2.3%)	2,376 (3.4%)
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	61 (6.1%)	4,354 (6.2%)
Education, health and social services	<b>165 (16.6%)</b>	<b>15,512 (22.2%)</b>
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	80 (8.1%)	5,802 (8.3%)
Other services (except public administration)	73 (7.4%)	3,700 (5.3%)
Public administration	19 (1.9%)	2,806 (4.0%)

*Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

## h. Unemployment

Table 12 features civilian labor force employment statistics from the 2006-2010 ACS for Holton Township, Muskegon County, the State of Michigan, and the United States. The data shows that the township's unemployment rate (8.4% of the civilian labor force) is lower than the county (15.4%) and state (11.5%) rates, but slightly higher than the national rate (7.1%).

Table 12

Civilian Labor Force				
	Holton Township	Muskegon County	Michigan	United States
Civilian Labor Force	1,083	82,547	4,938,337	154,037,474
Employed	992 (91.2%)	69,840 (84.6%)	4,369,785 (88.5%)	141,833,331(92.1%)
Unemployed	91 (8.4%)	12,707 (15.4%)	568,552 (11.5%)	10,969,884 (7.1%)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## i. Economic Outlook

### West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission Regional Economic and Demographic Projections

#### Muskegon County Employment Projections

Table 13

CODE	MUSKEGON COUNTY	Actual Figures					Growth Rate	Estimate 2010	Forecasted Employment					
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009			2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
	<b>Employment:</b>													
10	Total employment	84,283	85,214	84,331	83,190	78,292	0.20%	78,449	78,605	78,763	78,920	79,078	79,236	
	<b>By Type:</b>													
20	Wage and salary	67,997	68,189	66,767	65,557	60,486	-0.79%	60,011	59,540	59,073	58,609	58,149	57,692	
40	Proprietors	16,286	17,025	17,564	17,633	17,806	3.50%	18,429	19,074	19,742	20,433	21,148	21,888	
50	- Farm	462	442	452	444	440	-0.27%	439	438	436	435	434	433	
60	- Nonfarm	15,824	16,583	17,112	17,189	17,366	3.60%	17,991	18,639	19,310	20,005	20,725	21,471	
	<b>By Industry:</b>													
70	Farm	772	742	809	747	757	-0.27%	755	753	751	749	747	745	
80	Nonfarm	83,511	84,472	83,522	82,443	77,535	0.22%	77,706	77,877	78,048	78,220	78,392	78,564	
90	- Private	73,845	74,832	74,127	73,369	68,561	0.25%	68,732	68,904	69,076	69,249	69,422	69,596	
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	
200	- Mining	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	
300	- Utilities	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	
400	- Construction	4,711	4,368	4,183	3,965	3,540	2.60%	3,632	3,726	3,823	3,923	4,025	4,129	
500	- Manufacturing	13,813	13,551	13,214	12,872	10,390	-1.00%	10,286	10,183	10,081	9,981	9,881	9,782	
600	- Wholesale trade	1,709	1,694	1,637	1,648	1,547	1.00%	1,562	1,578	1,594	1,610	1,626	1,642	
700	- Retail trade	13,228	13,491	13,096	12,964	12,344	0.20%	12,369	12,393	12,418	12,443	12,468	12,493	
800	- Transportation and warehousing	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	
900	- Information	1,159	1,155	1,227	1,161	1,013	-0.30%	1,010	1,007	1,004	1,001	998	995	
1000	- Finance and insurance	2,032	2,072	2,314	2,706	2,932	0.30%	2,941	2,950	2,958	2,967	2,976	2,985	
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	3,576	3,776	3,621	3,636	3,557	0.80%	3,585	3,614	3,643	3,672	3,702	3,731	
1200	- Professional and technical services	2,418	2,470	2,572	2,564	2,485	2.30%	2,542	2,601	2,660	2,722	2,784	2,848	
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	155	159	159	156	146	0.00%	146	146	146	146	146	146	
1400	- Administrative and waste services	3,903	3,842	3,852	3,427	3,200	0.60%	3,219	3,239	3,258	3,277	3,297	3,317	
1500	- Education Services	1,234	1,322	1,395	1,399	1,419	1.70%	1,443	1,468	1,493	1,518	1,544	1,570	
1600	- Health care and social assistance	11,384	11,943	12,049	12,294	12,144	1.80%	12,363	12,585	12,812	13,042	13,277	13,516	
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,817	1,906	1,839	1,788	1,827	0.60%	1,838	1,849	1,860	1,871	1,882	1,894	
1800	- Accommodation and food services	6,385	6,687	6,625	6,411	5,913	0.20%	5,925	5,937	5,949	5,960	5,972	5,984	
1900	- Other services, except public administration	4,304	4,291	4,288	4,206	4,061	0.70%	4,089	4,118	4,147	4,176	4,205	4,235	
2000	- Government and government enterprises	9,666	9,640	9,395	9,074	8,974	-0.35%	8,943	8,911	8,880	8,849	8,818	8,787	
2001	- Federal, civilian	379	373	366	362	366	-0.23%	365	364	363	363	362	361	
2002	- Military	337	339	341	343	343	0.32%	344	345	346	347	349	350	
2010	- State and local	8,950	8,928	8,688	8,369	8,265	-0.25%	8,244	8,224	8,203	8,183	8,162	8,142	
2011	- State government	1,171	1,176	1,178	1,179	1,186	0.20%	1,188	1,191	1,193	1,196	1,198	1,200	
2012	- Local government	7,779	7,752	7,510	7,190	7,079	-0.30%	7,058	7,037	7,015	6,994	6,973	6,953	

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

(D) - According to NAICS data source, data not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information, but the estimates for this item are included in the totals.

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

(\*) - Data not available due to the lack of historical trends in this category.

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Growth rates are based on actual years of figures, as shown.

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

#### IV. Township Government

Townships are a product of Michigan’s early history. Michigan is one of 20 states that currently have some form of township government. “General law” and “charter” are the two types of townships in Michigan. State laws authorize townships to perform a wide variety of functions and are required to perform assessment administration, tax collection, and elections administration. Townships may choose to perform numerous governmental functions, including enacting and enforcing ordinances, planning and zoning, fire and police protection, cemeteries, parks and recreation facilities and programs, and many more.

Holton Township was established as a general-law township in 1871. It is currently governed by a five-member township board consisting of a supervisor, treasurer, clerk, and two trustees, all of whom are elected representatives of the citizenry. The terms are held for four years, elections being held the same years as the presidential elections. The Holton Township Board of Trustees meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the township hall located at 6511 Holton Whitehall Road, Holton, Michigan 49425.



*Holton Township Hall*

The township also contracts with the following officials on a part-time basis: ordinance administrator, ordinance enforcer, building inspector, electrical inspector, plumbing inspector, mechanical inspector, and rental inspector. There is no township manager or other paid, professional staff.

In 1982, the Holton Township Board of Trustees established a seven-member planning commission. Members are appointed to the planning commission by the township supervisor, with township board approval, and serve three-year terms with staggered expiration dates. Officers consist of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and four members. All appointments are at-large and non-partisan. The commission is a recommending body for the most part, reporting directly to the township board, but it does have some authorities granted for decision-making in land use matters by the zoning ordinance.

A Zoning Board of Appeals also exists, its purpose being to decide questions of proper procedure in zoning decisions and to grant variances as allowed by the zoning ordinance. Comprised of three citizens and one alternate, this board meets upon the call of the chairperson when there is necessary business.

The Holton Township Board of Trustees administers the annual township budget, which begins on July 1. The primary source of revenue for Michigan townships, such as Holton, is the local government’s share of the state sales tax, which has been drastically reduced in recent years. Other revenue is garnered from the millage rate applied to the

local property tax fees from the solid waste transfer station, fees for building permits and planning commission/zoning board of appeals review fees, and sale of cemetery plots. The budget includes funding for a wide range of township functions, including parks, cemetery, road improvement, and fire department. The basis of the township's budget is the General Fund. Table 14 reveals the July 2012 through June 2013 budget for Holton Township, while Table 15 reports the township's tax base in 2012.

Table 14

<b>Holton Township Budget July 2012 – June 2013</b>	
Township Board	\$22,544
Supervisor	\$15,457
Elections	\$3,400
Fire Fund	\$260,000
Fire Department Volunteers	\$3,000
Assessor & BD of Review	\$28,400
Clerk	\$14,875
Fire Department Equipment Fund	\$68,509
Street Light Fund	\$8,100
Treasurer	\$17,539
Township Hall & Grounds	\$52,220
Cemetery	\$25,466
General Government	\$47,600
Ordinance Enforcer	\$5,803
Building Inspector	\$6,000
Electrical Inspector	\$2,400
Plumbing Inspector	\$1,650
Mechanical Inspector	\$2,500
Planning Commission	\$8,200
County Drains	\$500
Road, Sidewalks, Bridges	\$20,000
Transfer Station	\$35,050
Ordinance Administrator	\$3,850
Board of Appeals	\$700
Parks & Grounds	\$14,000
Library	\$4,600
Road Construction	\$10,000
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$682,363</b>

Table 15

<b>2012 Holton Township Tax Base</b>				
	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>True Cash Value</b>	<b>Taxable Value</b>
<b>Real Property</b>				
Agricultural	157	\$11,818,000	\$23,675,121	\$7,412,714
Commercial	71	\$3,524,800	\$7,133,894	\$2,858,097
Industrial	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Residential	1,217	\$40,651,900	\$81,645,723	\$37,209,716
Timer-Cutover	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Developmental	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Real</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>\$55,994,700</b>	<b>\$112,454,73</b>	<b>\$47,480,527</b>
<b>Personal Property</b>				
Agricultural	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Commercial	91	\$949,000	\$1,899,600	\$949,800
Industrial	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Residential	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Utility	6	\$2,553,100	\$5,106,200	\$2,553,100
<b>Total Personal</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>\$3,502,900</b>	<b>\$7,005,800</b>	<b>\$3,502,900</b>
Exempt Property	70			
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>\$59,497,600</b>	<b>\$119,460,53</b>	<b>\$50,983,427</b>

Source: 2012 Muskegon County Equalization Report

## V. Community Facilities and Services

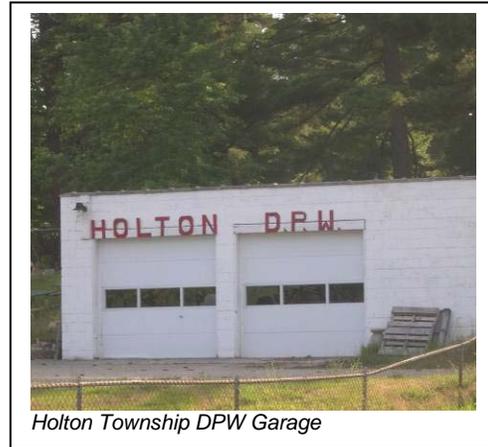
Holton Township provides a number of services, many of which are described in this section. Nearly all of the public and quasi-public facilities in the township are located within a half-mile radius of the community of Holton. Such facilities include schools, parks, a cemetery, churches, and governmental buildings.

The Holton Township Fire Department was established in the late 1940's. The current fire department employs about 17 part-time firefighters and is located at 6590 Holton-Whitehall Road. It services all of Holton Township and the eastern half of Cedar Creek Township. Law enforcement is provided to Holton Township residents through the Muskegon County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police Post in Hart.

The Holton Township Public Works Department performs the following services for the Township:

- Custodial duties and maintenance on township facilities, grounds, and equipment;

- Paint where necessary to maintain the appearance of buildings, fixtures, and equipment;
- Mow grass, rake, seed, and brushing as required;
- Plow snow and otherwise keep walkways in a safe condition; and
- Sexton for the Holton Oakwood Cemetery located on Marvin Road.



Holton Township DPW Garage

Holton also operates a Transfer Station at 7675 Holton-Duck Lake Road. For a fee, residents may utilize this facility to discard certain types of waste. The Transfer Station Department, under the direct supervision of the Township Supervisor, is responsible for the operation of the facility, which includes the collection of fees and their submission along with all records to the Township office; the weekly cleanup of the Transfer Station grounds; and snow removal when necessary.

## VI. Education

About 90 percent of Holton Township lies within the jurisdiction of Holton Public Schools, and Fremont Public School District covers about 10 percent of the township's northeastern corner. As in many rural communities, the school system in Holton Township has played a vital role in not only educating children, but in acting as the institution that binds the community together. The Holton public school system dates back to the early 1870s. Today, the Holton Public Schools district consists of one elementary, one middle school, and a high school all located on one campus. For the 2010-2011 school year, the district had 1,077 students and 60 teachers. The district reaches into Blue Lake and Cedar Creek townships in Muskegon County; Bridgeton Township in Newaygo County; and Greenwood and Otto townships in Oceana County.

In addition, there are five higher education institutions within approximately 60 miles from Holton Township. Table 16 lists these institutions, as well as the driving distances from the Holton Township Hall. The distances were estimated using Google Maps.

Table 16

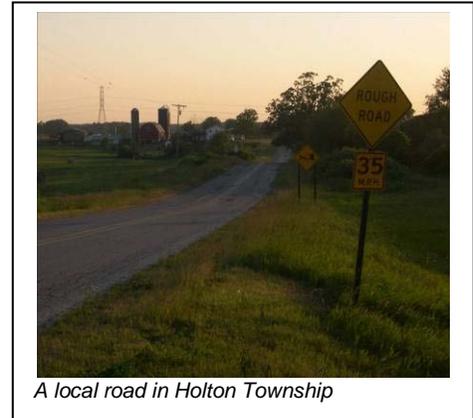
Nearby Colleges & Universities		
Baker College	<i>Muskegon</i>	17 mi
Muskegon Community College	<i>Muskegon</i>	17 mi
Grand Valley State University	<i>Allendale</i>	46 mi
Ferris State University	<i>Big Rapids</i>	55 mi
West Shore Community College	<i>Scottville</i>	60 mi

## VII. Transportation

Due to the rural nature and location of Holton Township, transportation options are somewhat limited. The primary mode of transportation is automotive, though it is common to see horse-drawn carriages in use by the local Amish population. Holton Township occasionally executes important road maintenance projects; however most of the township's roads are the responsibility of the Muskegon County Road Commission. Map 2 shows the township's network of local roads, while various other modes of transportation are discussed below.

*Highways* – Holton is serviced by one major artery: the M-120 corridor. This state highway runs north and east from the City of Muskegon to Hesperia, where it becomes M-20. The US-31 Expressway, a major north/south route along Michigan’s western lakeshore, is roughly 14 miles to the west of Holton Township.

*Rail* – There is one rail line currently active in Holton Township, which is operated by Michigan Shore Railroad. It runs non-stop through the township between Fremont and Muskegon, and connects to a larger railroad network to the south in Ottawa County.



*Air* – Holton’s nearest commercial airport, the Muskegon County Airport, is located about 26 miles to the southwest and offers daily passenger service to Chicago. The nearest major airport is the Gerald R. Ford International Airport of Grand Rapids, about 67 miles to the southeast. It offers flights to a number of locations in the United States and Canada. In addition, the Fremont Municipal Airport is a general utility airport located six miles to the northeast.

*Water* – The nearest deepwater port is Muskegon Lake, about 15 miles to the southwest. This lake offers shipping and recreational access to Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes. In addition, the Lake Express car ferry in Muskegon offers service to Milwaukee, Wisconsin from late April to October. Finally, recreational access to Lake Michigan is also available via White Lake, about 15 miles to the west.

## VIII. Recreation Facilities and Public Lands

Established parks and recreation facilities in Holton Township are few, despite a large amount of acreage owned by the state and federal agencies. The township currently has two parks: Severt Swenson Park and Holton Recreation and Nature Center. The Severt Swenson Park (pictured right) is a 0.5 acre community greenspace located on Holton Duck Lake Road between the Post Office and Holton Public Schools. The Holton Recreation and Nature Center is an 80-acre property on Syers Road recently purchased by the township. This park includes a ball field, multi-use fields, playground, and nature trail, and is currently undergoing further improvements.

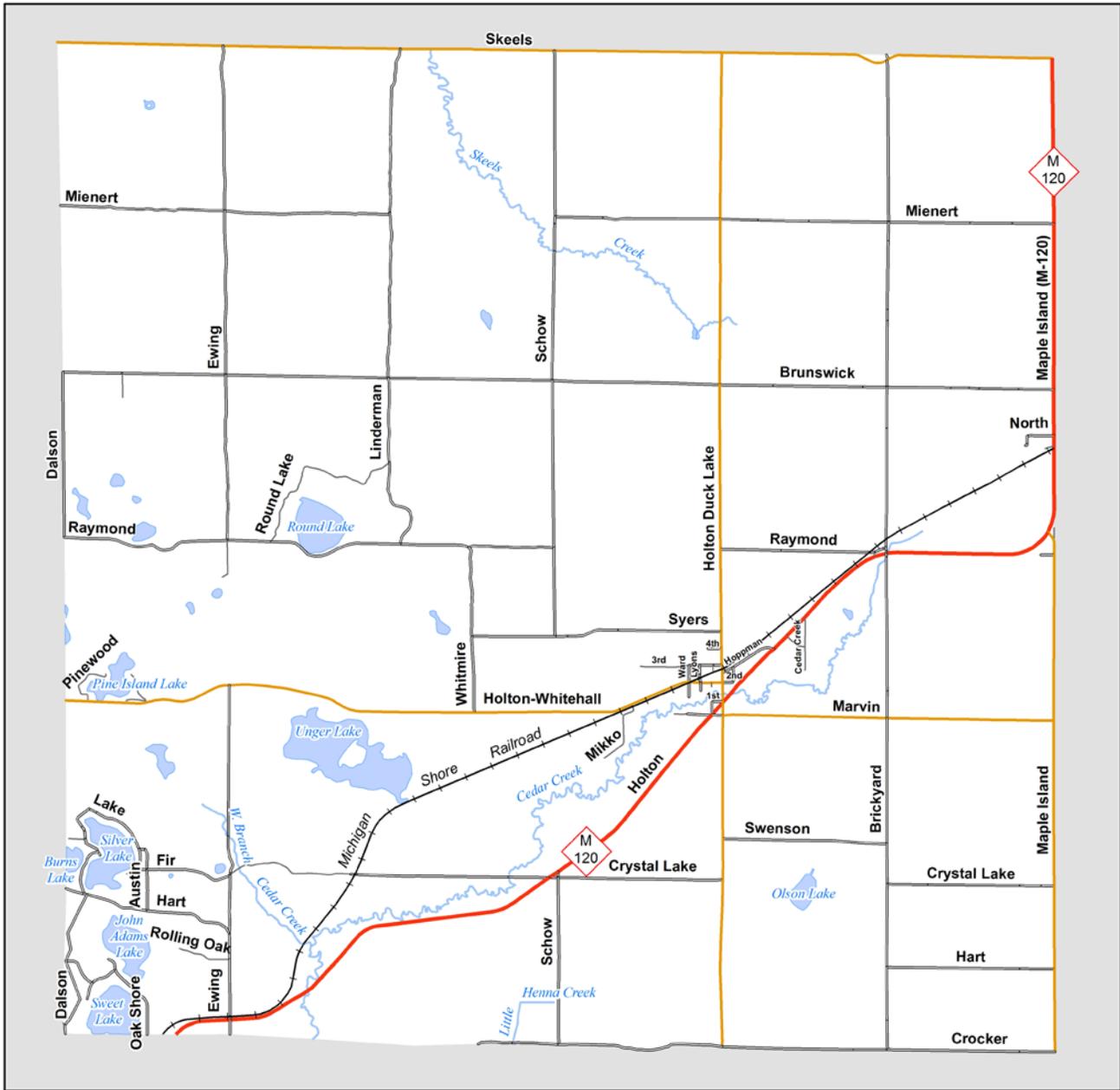


According to the 2007 Muskegon County Plat Book, Holton Township contains approximately 4,560 acres of Manistee National Forest and about 250 acres of State-owned land. Together, these public lands make up one-fifth of the township.

Other points of recreation and public access include a public right of way on West Lake Road on Silver Lake; and the Holton Loop Motorcycle Trail, which runs for 29 miles through Holton and Blue Lake townships. Map 3 – Public Land & Recreation reveals the distribution of public lands and recreational assets within Holton Township.

Map 2

# Holton Township ROAD NETWORK



	State Highway		Lake
	Primary County Road		Creek
	Local County Road		
	Minor Road/Unpaved		
	Railroad		

August 22, 2012

WASRDC  
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

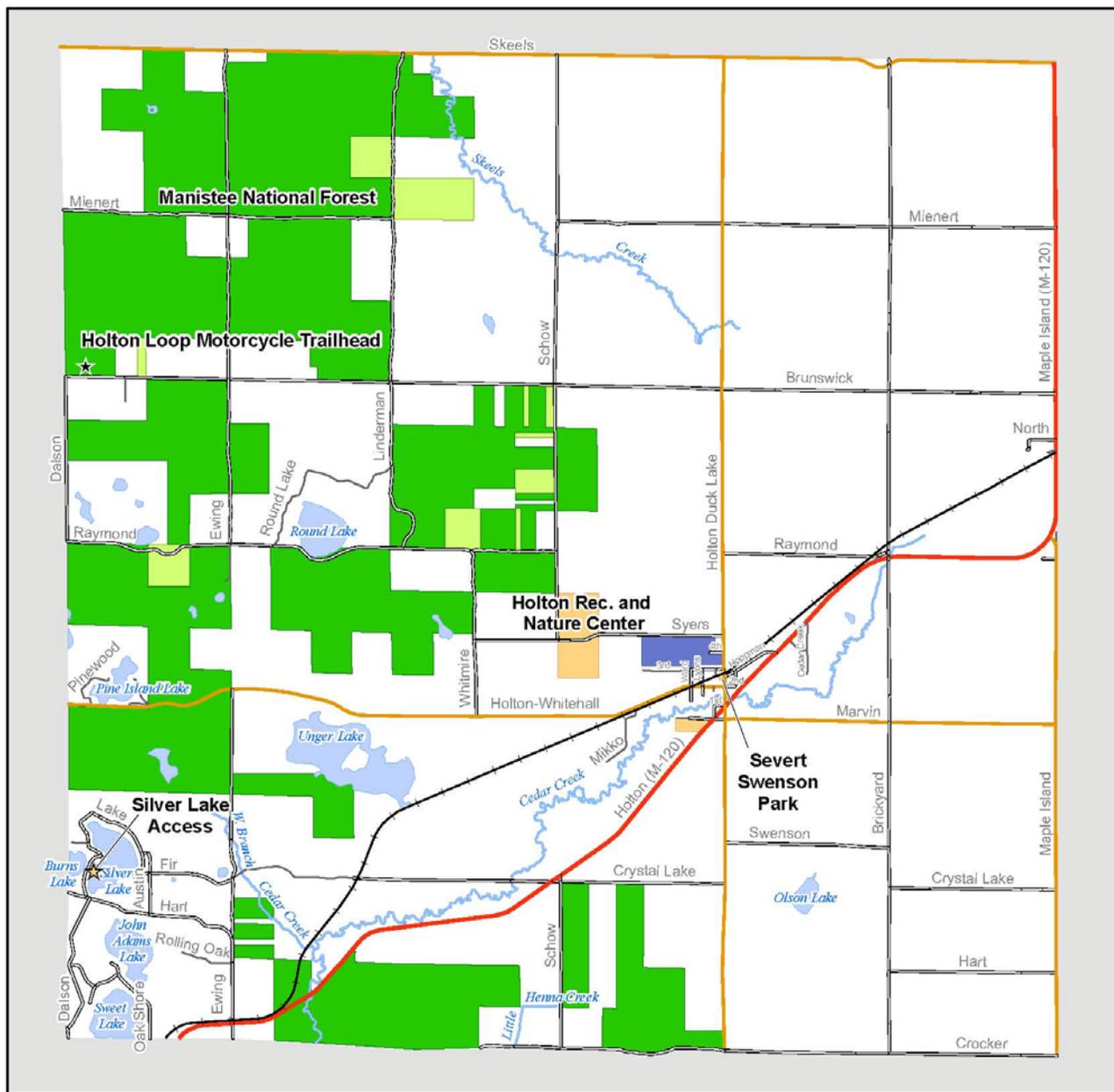
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Data Source: - Michigan Geographic Framework: Muskegon County (Version 11a), Michigan Center for Geographic Information.

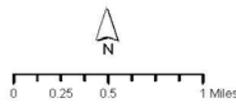
This map is intended for general planning purposes only.

Map 3

## Holton Township PUBLIC LAND & RECREATION



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Holton Township       |  State Highway       |
|  State of Michigan     |  Primary County Road |
|  US Forest Service     |  Local County Road   |
|  Holton Public Schools |  Minor Road/Unpaved  |
|  Lake                  |  Railroad            |
|  Creek                 |   |



August 22, 2012  
  
 WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Data Sources: - Michigan Geographic Framework: Muskegon County (Version 11a), Michigan Center for Geographic Information.  
 - Muskegon, Michigan 2007 Plat Book.

This map is intended for general planning purposes only.

## IX. Natural Features

Land use is the foundation of environmental quality because nearly every environmental problem has a land use origin. Without careful consideration of natural resources, local land use decisions may unintentionally degrade a community's natural features.

Changes to a landscape can happen incrementally and may often go unnoticed. However, their cumulative effects can have serious long-term impacts on water quality and rural character. As examples: Trees and natural vegetation may be cleared to make way for a few homes to be placed along the river or on a country road. Land may be cleared and leveled to make the layout and building of a small subdivision easier. Perhaps ten homes become located on the river over a period of several years. Over time, changes such as these can transform a countryside into a run-on subdivision rather than a rural environment. If even small-scale development is not thoughtfully placed and designed, over time it will gradually eat away at natural features like woodlots, wetlands, and natural topography.

In Michigan, natural features are regulated through the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), known as Act 451 of 1994, as amended. Under the Act, the State of Michigan and, in some cases local communities, have the power to regulate land uses in sensitive areas. Local regulations can fill the gaps left by state regulations to provide a more thoughtful approach to development. Simple site plan review criteria, design standards and other zoning regulations can provide local leverage to ensure new development will work with natural features rather than destroy them.

Natural resources are important factors in the planning process because they aid in determining the land's suitability for different types of development, and also because they significantly contribute to a positive quality of life for residents. If growth is not appropriately controlled and site planning is not monitored, natural features can be lost, and the ecological services they provide can be lost or altered to such an extent as to severely retard their functioning capabilities. Holton Township contains an abundance of undeveloped and natural areas that contribute to its rural character. The following sections describe those resources.

### a. Topography

The presence of topography is not always readily identified as a natural resource. Steep slopes and rolling hillsides – unlike other resources such as groundwater – do not have clearly defined public benefits. If disturbed, many of these areas cannot be restored. Topography exists in a balance with vegetation, precipitation and runoff, and wind. Maintaining stable slopes helps prevent nonpoint source pollution of water resources (particularly soil erosion) while preserving a distinctive feature of the local landscape. Topography can also be a large component of rural character. Imagine gently rolling hills from a local viewpoint. If these hills were suddenly graded for development, not only would it impact drainage patterns, erosion, and ultimately water quality, it would also significantly alter the look and feel of the area.

The varied topographic features found across Michigan, including Muskegon County, owe their existence to the activity of glaciers. The formation, movement, and recession of glaciers shaped the landscape by moving soil, cutting rivers and

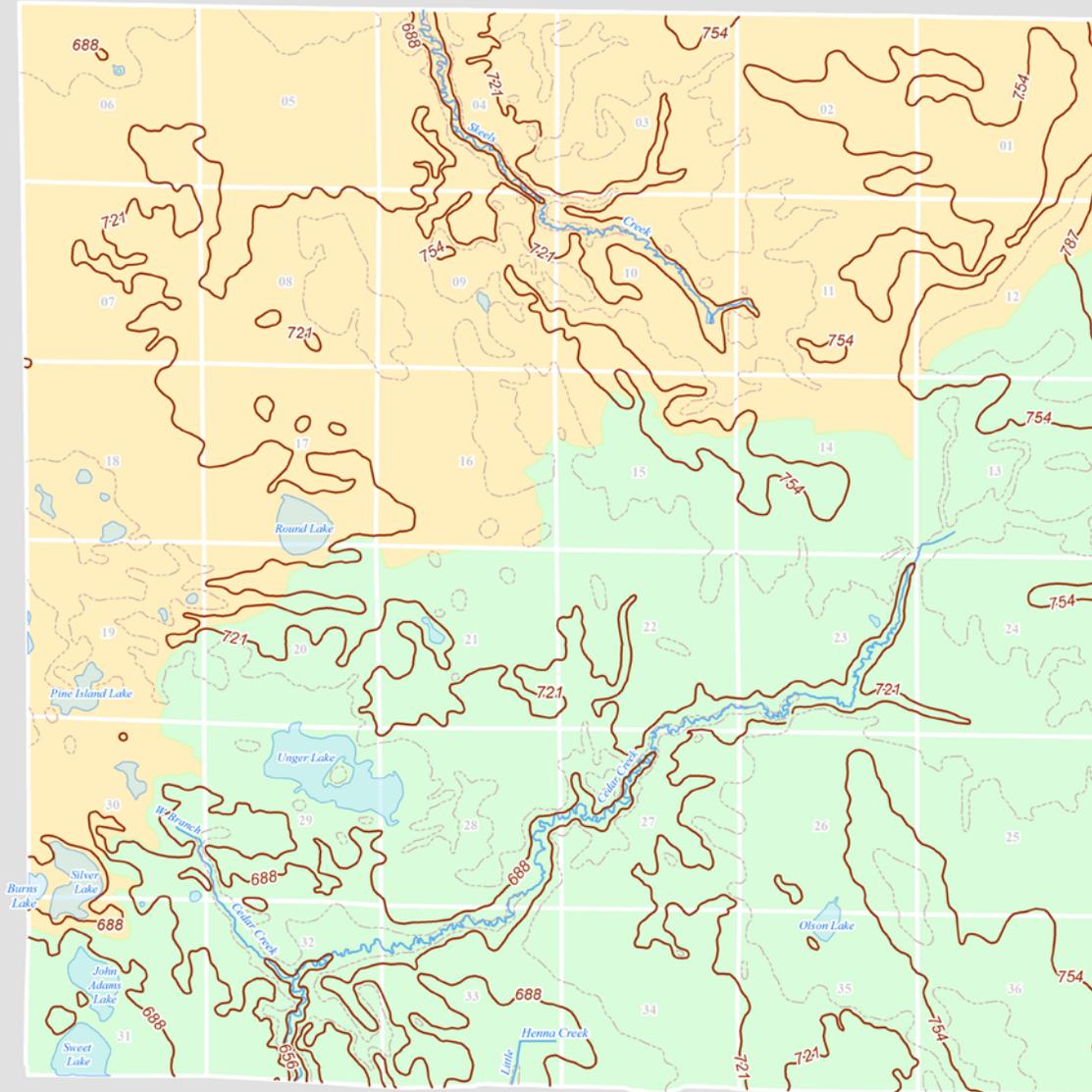
depositing lakes. The surface features of Holton Township consist of old lake plains, outwash plains, beach ridges, dunes, and glaciated uplands.

Elevation changes will generally influence the use of properties within those areas. For example, cropland, subdivisions, and commercial buildings favor level or gently sloping sites. Hilly sites are better suited to very low density residential and recreational land uses. Slopes of more than 18 percent usually prohibit development because of the potential for erosion and development hazards they present. If development occurs within areas of steep terrain, it is important to properly review development proposals with respect to drainage, slope erosion, and preservation of existing vegetation. Zoning techniques like slope protection measures, mandatory planned unit development, and clustering options are tools that can help protect slopes and other vulnerable natural resources.

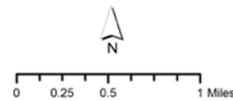
Elevation in the township ranges from a low of 650 feet above sea level in section 32 where Cedar Creek exits the township, to 798 feet just south of the intersection of M-120 and Meinert Road in Section 12 in the township's northeastern quadrant. The total relief is nearly 150 feet between the high and low points. Map 4 – Topography illustrates the general landscape, as well as the watersheds that drain Holton Township. Much of the northern and western portions of the township lie within the White River watershed, which includes the Skeels Creek subwatershed. The southern and eastern portions exist in the Muskegon River watershed, which includes the Cedar Creek subwatershed.

Map 4

# Holton Township TOPOGRAPHY



-  Elevation (feet above sea level)
-  Elevation Interval
-  Muskegon River Watershed
-  White River Watershed



August 22, 2012  
**WMSRDC**  
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Data Source:  
- Michigan Center for Geographic Information  
- Michigan Geographic Framework: Muskegon County (Version 11a).

Note:  
This map is intended for general planning purposes only.

## b. Soils

The suitability of soils for developments such as roads, foundations, wells, and septic systems is important to consider when determining their location and intensity. Soil is a primary factor in determining where future development will occur, especially in areas such as Holton Township where there are no public water and sewer services available. Future development and growth must be monitored to determine its current and future impact on the township's need for future infrastructure. Various soil characteristics such as depth, permeability, wetness, shrink-swell potential, erosion potential, slope, and weight-bearing capacity are all factors that determine a soil's suitability for a given use. Appropriate design and management can often overcome the soil characteristics that create development limitations.

Soil surveys are a primary source of soil information. Soils in Holton Township are described in the Soil Survey of Muskegon County (USDA Soil Conservation Service, 1968). It provides information that may assist in determining soil characteristics such as the extent and location of flood-prone areas, access to aquifers, erosion and sedimentation potential, ability to accommodate site septic tanks and absorption fields, and the limitations for construction. Maps are an important component of the soil survey and are critical to the planning process because they can geographically depict areas that have development limitations based on the soil(s) present. In some instances, mitigation measures can be used to alleviate some or all of the limitations of a particular soil type. However, these measures can be costly, both to the developer/owner, and to society at large via the natural environment. Therefore soil survey information often becomes an important guide for determining future development.

According to the 1968 Soil Survey of Muskegon County, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, there are several different soil series located in Holton Township. The four most prominent soil series, Rubicon, Rousseau, Nester and Grayling, are described below and illustrated on Map 5 – Prominent Soils.

The largest soil series found in the township is the Rubicon Series which consists of well-drained, deep, sandy soils on the nearly level, dry outwash plain and the rolling sandhills of the county. The original vegetation of this series was white pine, red pine, black oak, and white oak. These soils are permeable, have a low supply of plant nutrients, and are low in available moisture capacity. Rubicon soils are well suited to plantations of Christmas trees and to other forest products.

The Rousseau series consists of well drained and moderately well drained soils. These soils occur in nearly level to gently sloping areas of the lake plain in the eastern part of Holton Township. Mixed hardwoods including black oak and white oak were the dominate native vegetation for this series. Rousseau soils have a rapid permeability and are easily eroded by wind or water. Corn, small grains, and hay are the principal crops grown in this series.

The Nester series consists of well drained and moderately well drained soils. These soils occupy rolling to hilly areas on till plains and moraines. The native vegetation consisted mostly of mixed hardwoods, dominantly sugar maple, beech, and ash. Nester soils make up some of the best cropland in the county. These soils are

naturally fertile and have high available moisture capacity and moderately slow permeability.

The Grayling series consists of well-drained sandy soils on the rolling sand hills of the county. The native vegetation consisted of white pine, red pine, aspen, black oak, and white oak. These soils have rapid permeability and their natural fertility and available moisture capacity are low.

Another indicator of an area’s suitability for development is the tendency for soil erosion by water and/or wind. The prevalence of forests and other natural land cover in the township greatly reduces the erosion potential. Natural cover acts as a barrier to erosion in that trees, grasses, forest litter, and stones hold the soil in place, even during torrential rainfall. Removal of this cover could expose the soil to its erosion potential. In addition, changes in development patterns often create substantial changes in the ratio of permeable surfaces in an area. Even in a heavily forested area, addition of asphalt, pavement, and roofs can make a substantial difference.

**Table 17**

<b>Soil Erosion Basics</b>	
<b>1</b>	The amount of runoff generated is dependent upon the type of soil and the kind of land use prevalent in any given area.
<b>2</b>	Natural areas, where vegetation remains intact, are almost always better-equipped to absorb and retain water than are areas in either agricultural or urban use.
<b>3</b>	Those areas best able to absorb and retain rainfall include forests and other areas of dense vegetation.
<b>4</b>	Those areas which have the greatest impact on the amount of runoff created typically include urban lands with high percentages of impervious surfaces, and agricultural lands typically in row crops.

**c. Septic Suitability**

The location of soils, suitable for septic systems to properly function, is critical in determining the extent and location where development can occur without the need for public utilities. The soil is not considered to be suitable for septic systems if it has excessively high or low permeability, if the slope is excessive, or the water table is too close to the surface. The permeability and coarseness of soil has a direct impact on its ability to properly filter toxins (i.e. septic material) as they pass through the soil.

The primary concern with septic suitability is the pollution of groundwater. When the soil becomes saturated due to intense rain or flooding, toxins are removed from septic tanks and flow into groundwater or surface water. Septic systems contain materials such as household cleaners, bacteria, and other toxic nuisances that are more hazardous than human waste.

In order to reduce the amount of pollution released from septic tanks, citizens should refrain from disposing of household chemicals such as ammonia, bleach, or other hazardous substances into the septic system and perform routine proper septic maintenance. Septic tanks should be maintained on a regular schedule by adding necessary chemicals and cleaning and using them only to capacity. Additionally, a septic system should be emptied at a minimum of once every seven years but preferably every other year.

According to the Soil Survey for Muskegon County, nearly all of the eastern one-third of Holton Township has been rated as having soils with severe restrictions for septic fields. In addition, a sizable portion of the center of the township (parts of sections 15, 21, and 22) are similarly rated. The four-section cluster in the extreme southwestern portion of the township includes both “severe” and “very severe” ratings, particularly around low-lying areas adjacent to surface water bodies and tributaries of Cedar Creek. For the aforementioned reasons, it is most important that a review of the soil survey, per parcel, be completed prior to starting any development and the necessary measures taken to protect the environment from contamination.

Table 18 highlights soil limitations for building site development on the four most common soil types in Holton Township. It is important that on-site soil investigations be completed prior to any development and the necessary measures be taken to protect the environment from contamination.

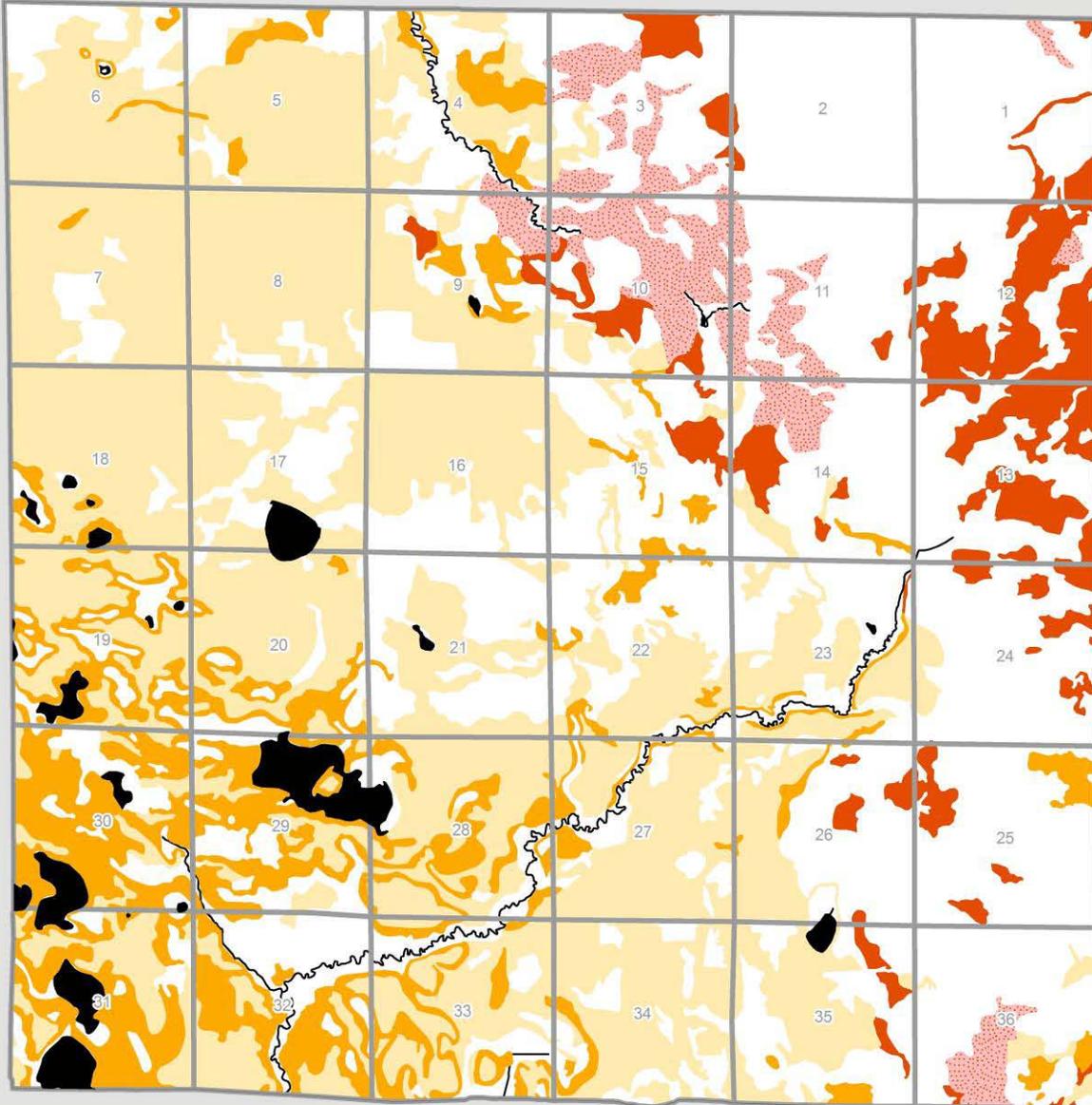
Table 18

Soil Limitations for Development Holton Township					
Soil Series	Degree of Limitations Affecting Use For:				
	Residential Development	Sanitary Facilities: Septic tank absorption fields	Sewage Lagoon Areas	Buildings for Commercial and Light Industrial	Local roads & streets
<b>Rubicon</b>	Slight	Severe, poor filter	Severe, seepage	Slight	Severe: droughty
<b>Rousseau</b>	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Slight	Slight
<b>Nester</b>	Severe	Severe, perks slow	Moderate to severe	Severe	Severe
<b>Grayling</b>	Moderate	Severe, poor filter	Severe, seepage to sandy	Severe	Severe: droughty
<i>Slight</i> -	Soil properties and site features are generally favorable for the indicated use and limitations are minor and easily overcome.				
<i>Moderate</i> -	Soil properties or site features are not favorable for the indicated use and special planning, design, or maintenance is needed to overcome or minimize the limitations.				
<i>Severe</i> -	Soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increases in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance are required.				

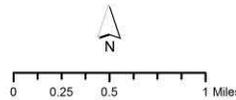
Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Forest Service. Soil Survey of Muskegon County, Michigan 1968/addendum 1995

Map 5

# Holton Township PROMINENT SOILS



- Grayling Soil Series
- Nester Soil Series
- Rubicon Soil Series
- Rousseau Soil Series
- Other Soils
- Water Feature
- Township Sections



July 17, 2012  
**WMSRDC**  
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Data Sources:  
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
- Michigan Geographic Data Library

This map is intended for general planning purposes only.

#### d. Water Resources

Surface water, wetlands, and groundwater resources located within Holton Township are valuable, environmentally sensitive assets. They are essential to the character of the township and provide diverse natural habitats, recreation opportunities, and desirable places to live. These attributes must be protected in order to ensure future prosperity and health. In addition, there are portions of two major watersheds, White River and Muskegon River, located in Holton Township. Both flow predominately westward and terminate at Lake Michigan.

##### i. Surface Water

Surface water features – lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams – are directly affected by land development and must be properly managed and protected to prevent detriment to the environment. Soil erosion, eutrophication, impermeable surfaces (such as parking lots and roofs), soil contamination, and recreational activities are all threats to surface water quality. Potential sources for polluted runoff in Holton Township include roads, parking lots, homes (including lawn care measures, sewage, etc.), and erosion. Populated areas around lakes are of particular concern where septic system malfunctions carry the potential to release excessive amounts of nutrients and contaminants into the lake.

There are eight named lakes in Holton Township that occupy about 356 acres in total. Lake sizes range from the 16-18 acres (Olson Lake) to 60-70 acres (Deer (Unger) Lake). Significant water features that drain the township are Cedar Creek in the Muskegon River watershed, and Skeels Creek in the White River watershed. These features are identified on Map 6 – Water Features and Wetlands.



##### ii. Wetlands

“Wetland” is the collective term for marshes, swamps, bogs, and similar areas often found between open water and upland areas. Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) defines a wetland as “land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh.”

Wetlands are valuable natural resources and important forms of “green infrastructure” providing many important benefits to residents and the natural environment. They help improve water quality, manage stormwater runoff, provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and support hunting and fishing activities. Wetlands also store excess water and nutrients, helping to control flood waters and moderate the flow of sediment into rivers, lakes, and streams.

*Green infrastructure is strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations.*

More specific wetland benefits include:

- Reduce flooding by absorbing runoff from rain and melting snow and slowly releasing excess water into rivers and lakes. (One acre of wetland, flooded to a depth of one foot contains 325,851 gallons of water.)
- Filter pollutants from surface runoff, trapping fertilizers, pesticides, sediments, and other potential contaminants and breaking them down into less harmful substances, improving water clarity and quality.
- Recharge groundwater supplies when connected to underground aquifers.
- Contribute to natural nutrient and water cycles, and produce vital atmospheric gases, including oxygen, and serving as nutrient traps when adjacent to surface water features.
- Provide commercial and recreational values to the economy by producing plants, game birds, and fur-bearing mammals. Survival of certain fish species that require shallow water areas for breeding, feeding, and escaping from predators depend solely on wetlands.

Regulation of wetlands by the State of Michigan is enabled by Part 303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA). This legislation is a consolidation of several laws into one act which seeks to, among other things, protect wetland resources through regulating land which meets the statutory wetland definition based on vegetation, water table, and soil type. Areas subject to these regulations include wetlands, regardless of size, which are contiguous to, or are within 500 feet of the ordinary high water mark of any lake, stream, or pond; and those wetlands which are not contiguous to any lake, stream, or pond, but are essential to the preservation of natural resources.

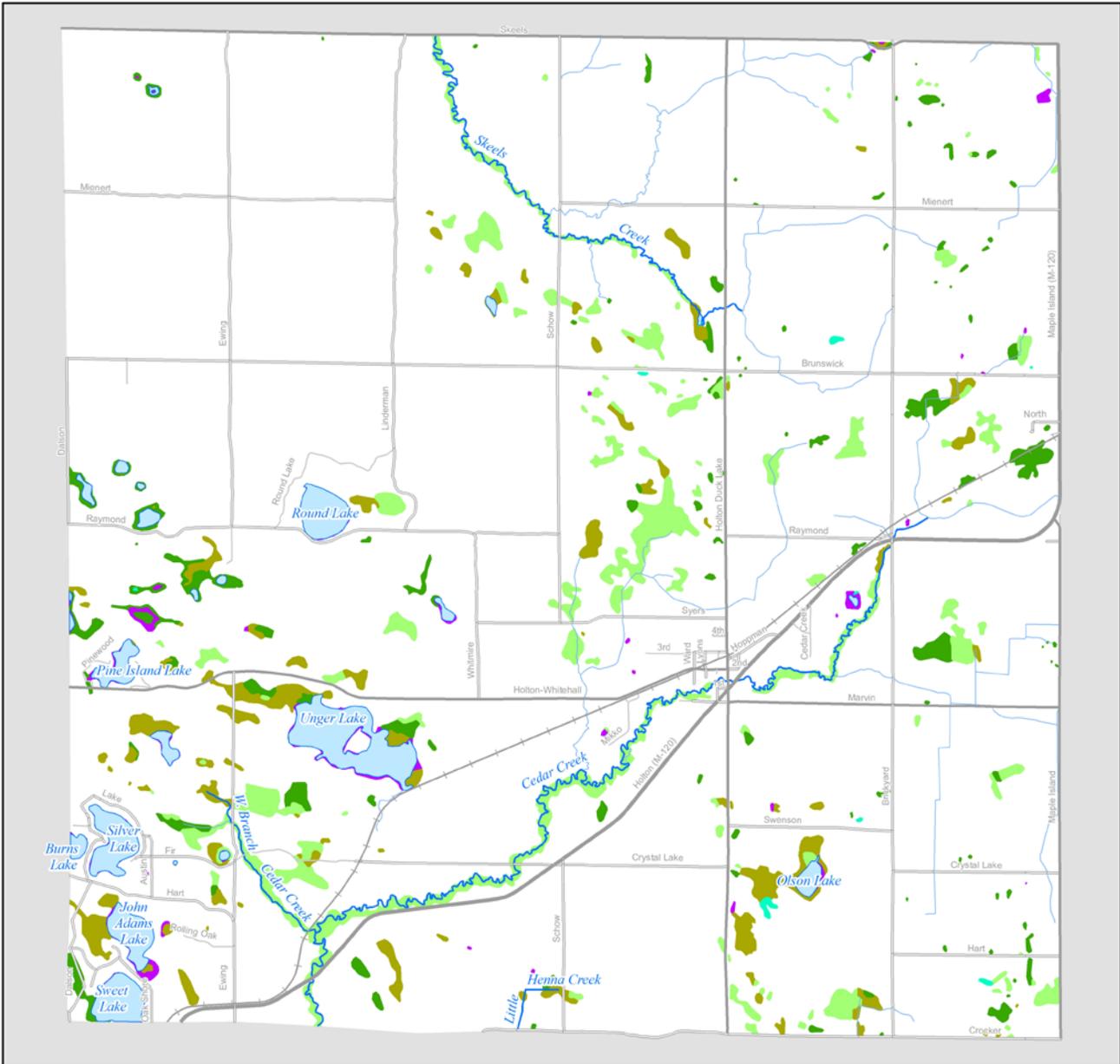
Certain activities will require a permit from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) on a site which satisfies the wetland definition, including: filling of material in a wetland; draining water from a wetland; removal of vegetation, including trees, if such removal would adversely affect the wetland; constructing or maintaining a use or development in a wetland; and/or dredging or removing soil from a wetland.

According to Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) wetland data, there are approximately 583 acres of wetlands in Holton Township. Of those acres, nearly 75 percent are shrub vegetation, 20 percent are aquatic bed vegetation, and the remainder is emergent vegetation. The most concentrated area of wetlands is in the southwest quadrant of the township, around the open-water lakes in sections 18, 19, 29, 30, and 31. There are also significant areas in section 35, and along Skeels and Cedar creeks. Map 6 shows wetlands identified by a different dataset, the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). The NWI data verifies findings of the MIRIS data, as it reveals wetlands are most prevalent in the southwest quadrant of the township and near water features.

Generally, wetlands must be identified through individual property analysis, usually before a development occurs. Accordingly, wetland areas shown on Map 6 should be considered only for planning purposes and are indicators of where wetlands may exist. Individual site determinations are still necessary prior to development approvals.

Map 6

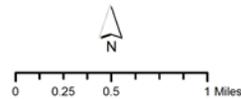
## Holton Township WATER FEATURES & WETLANDS



**NWI Wetlands**

- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent
- Forested
- Scrub-Shrub
- Unconsolidated Bottom

- Lake
- Creek
- Drain/Unnamed Creek



August 22, 2012  
**WMSRDC**  
 WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**Data Sources:**  
 - National Wetland Inventory (NWI), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.  
 - Michigan Geographic Framework: Muskegon County (Version 11a), Michigan Center for Geographic Information.

**Note:**  
 This map features potential and approximate locations of water features and wetland conditions. This map is intended for general planning purposes only.

### iii. Groundwater

All of Holton Township's citizens depend upon groundwater as their only source of potable water. Due to the predominant sandiness of soils in the township, the community is very vulnerable to widespread contamination through spillage or dumping of toxic material. Therefore, the protection of groundwater resources is a necessity. As with surface water, nitrates from fertilizers and septic systems can leach into groundwater supplies and impact their overall quality. While the Public Health Muskegon County has jurisdiction over the approval of wells and septic systems in the township, land use policy related to the type and intensity of development is the province of Holton Township.

Groundwater quality may be directly impacted by increasing levels of septic system use, industrial spills, underground storage tanks, abandoned wellheads, indiscriminate dumping and junk storage, and farm wastes including nutrients from manure, pesticides, and salt. Attempting to restore this valuable resource after contamination would both be cost prohibitive and inconvenient. A 1977 water quality study prepared by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission described the characteristics of the groundwater quantity and quality in Holton Township. The following three paragraphs are reprinted from a volume of that publication.

**Groundwater Location:** Aquifer locations in Holton Township vary considerably due to the fact that the glacial drift is composed of intermittent clay, sand, and gravel. Most of the wells in the Township seem to be in an aquifer which ranges from 50 to 100 feet from the surface. A few wells are, however, found in the 20 to 50 feet deep range. A thick layer of blue clay begins in the glacial drift about 200 feet beneath the earth's surface and thereby decreases the possibility of finding an available aquifer beneath that depth. The bedrock formation located beneath the glacial drift in Holton Township includes both the Michigan and Marshall Formations. The Michigan Formation is not expected to have an available aquifer, but the Marshall Formation might.

**Groundwater Quality:** Holton Township is a rural township, which has experienced few developmental pressures and thus very few groundwater contamination problems. The Muskegon County Health Department reports scattered instances where wells have been contaminated with nitrates. The presence of nitrates is, in this case, thought to be the result of natural phenomena such as decaying vegetation beneath the earth's surface. The Marshall Sandstone aquifer located beneath the Michigan Formation is probably too highly mineralized for most uses. The Marshall aquifer located directly beneath the glacial drift might have water of suitable quality.

**Potential Groundwater Degradation:** There are several areas within Holton Township which have rather shallow glacial drift aquifers. These areas are particularly susceptible to surface contaminants. The now-closed Holton Township Landfill in Section 34 is estimated as being within 20 feet of groundwater, which does not meet the Department of Natural

Resources' (DNR) recommended isolation distance. There are no known industrial-municipal groundwater discharges in Holton Township. (Source: Sourcebook for Water Quality Planning, Part VI, Appendix C, Assessment of Groundwater Quality, West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, 1977, page 75).

The presence of sandy soils in Holton Township requires thoughtful land use planning to protect the groundwater. Because the township does not have municipal sewer service, the presence and quantity of septic systems must be considered as a potential threat to groundwater quality. Also, as residential development encroaches upon sensitive natural areas, potential for groundwater impacts increases.

The most promising methods of groundwater protection are proper land use management, pollution regulations, regulated soil testing where appropriate, and acquisition of land. Land use management is the first step in the process of protecting groundwater resources. Planning alone does not sufficiently protect sensitive groundwater areas, but it does provide the basis for development controls such as zoning, which can assist in groundwater protection.

e. Prime Farm Lands

Prime farm lands, which are defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, are those which have the:

“best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and are also available for those uses. They have the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming methods. ...Prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no stones. They are permeable to water and air, ...(and) are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.”

Holton Township possesses approximately 3,800 acres of soils with a prime rating, concentrated primarily in the northeastern quadrant of the township. Prime soils occupy nearly 17 percent of the township's total land area.

f. Woodlands

Unlike certain critical environmental areas, private woodlands generally receive little planning protection, despite their contributions to wildlife corridors and establishing natural, rural settings. As buffers and moderators of flooding, erosion, and noise and air pollution, woodlands are important to the township's quality of life.

Benefits of woodlands include:

- Providing a varied and rich environment for plants and animals. Forest layers, including canopy, branches, trunks, shrubs, and plants on the forest floor, provide breeding, feeding, and refuge areas for many species of insects, birds, and mammals.
- Protecting watersheds and soils. Forest vegetation moderates the effects of winds and storms, stabilizes and enriches the soil, and slows runoff, allowing the forest floor to filter groundwater.
- Serving as buffers to the sights, sounds, and odors of roadways and agricultural operations. Forests mute noise from roadways and other land uses, and absorb air pollutants.
- Providing visual relief along roadways. Aesthetically pleasing roadways with natural vegetation tend to be more popular than those with little vegetation or highway clutter.

The most prominent land cover in Holton Township is upland hardwood, which is found extensively in the western two-thirds of the township. This land cover consists of native shrubs including staghorn sumac, fire cherry, greenbrier, winter green, and blueberry. Hardwoods common to this cover include aspen and birch; white and black oaks; beech, maple, red oak, hickory, and elm, ash, red maple, cottonwood, as well as, other upland hardwoods and swamp hardwoods. The woodland wildlife found in the upland hardwood land cover include birds and mammals such as the ruffed grouse, woodcock, thrushes, vireos, scarlet tanagers, gray, red, and fox squirrels, white-tailed deer, and raccoons.

Woodlands in Holton Township are both publicly and privately owned. It is important to note that about one-fifth of the entire township lies within either state or federal forests alone. It should not be taken for granted that these areas are currently protected from private development and managed by their respective agencies. Parcels may occasionally come under private ownership, and the township should advocate to keep large woodlands as in-tact as possible.

#### g. Climate

Muskegon County is classified as having “quasi-marine” and “continental” climates. When the prevailing westerly winds pass over the large expanse of Lake Michigan, they become moderated in temperatures and laden with moisture. When the wind becomes south-easterly or easterly, however, the air arrives in Muskegon County after having traversed over a large amount of land, and the climate adopts continental characteristics. The varying climate in Holton Township, as in all of Michigan, provides what many people perceive to be a pleasant quality of life. While weather conditions range from sun to snow, the township’s proximity to Lake Michigan tends to moderate temperature swings on both a daily and seasonal basis. Summers are cooler and winters milder in the western side of the lower peninsula of Michigan than in other areas of the state.

Table 19 shows notable climatic data from the period 1981 – 2010 observed in the nearby Village of Hesperia, 12 miles to the north. Data from Hesperia is presented

here for two reasons: 1) The Hesperia station is the nearest weather station to Holton Township; and 2) It is assumed that the township and the village experience comparable climatic conditions since they have a similar proximity to Lake Michigan. Temperature data shows that January is the coldest month with an average daily maximum of 30.4 degrees (Fahrenheit) and an average daily minimum of 14.3 degrees. July is the warmest month with an average daily maximum of 81.7 degrees and minimum of 56.2 degrees.

Table 19

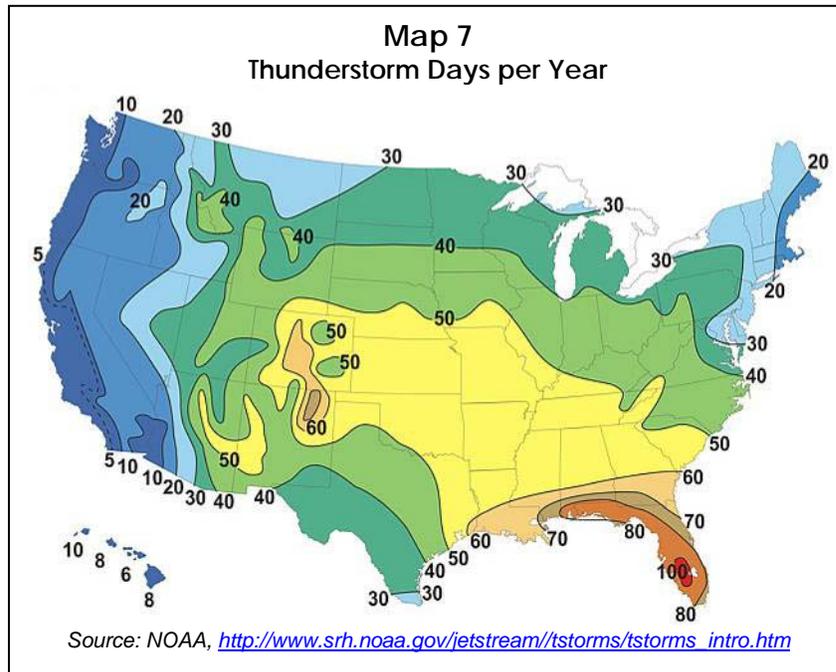
Temperature and Precipitation Summary Hesperia, MI 1981 - 2010								
Month	Average Daily Temperatures (Fahrenheit)			Average Monthly Precipitation (Inches)				
	max	min	mean	Liquid Equivalent			Snow mean	
				mean	mean # of days with at least:			
					.1"	.25"	.5"	
January	30.4	14.3	22.3	2.11	7	3	1	20.8
February	33.4	15.0	24.2	1.46	5	2	*	12.6
March	43.4	21.4	32.4	2.30	5	3	1	7.9
April	57.0	32.6	44.8	2.98	7	4	2	1.7
May	67.9	41.9	54.9	3.67	7	4	3	0.0
June	77.4	51.6	64.5	3.33	6	4	2	0.0
July	81.7	56.2	68.9	2.52	5	3	1	0.0
August	80.1	55.6	67.9	3.59	7	4	2	0.0
September	72.3	46.8	59.6	3.72	6	4	2	0.0
October	59.2	36.6	47.9	3.74	8	4	2	0.3
November	46.4	28.6	37.5	3.07	7	4	2	5.6
December	34.0	19.7	26.8	2.53	8	3	1	22.2
<b>Annual Averages</b>	<b>56.9°</b>	<b>35.0°</b>	<b>46.0°</b>	<b>35.02"</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>71.1"</b>

Source: Michigan State Climatologist's Office. <http://climate.geo.msu.edu/stations/3769/>. 7-13-12.

Precipitation is generally well-distributed throughout the year, with the crop season of May to October receiving an average of 20.57 inches, or 59% of the average annual total. October is the wettest month on average with 3.74 inches of precipitation, and September is a close second with 3.72 inches. February is the driest month with just 1.46 inches of precipitation. The average annual snowfall is 71.1 inches, with more than half accumulating in December and January.

The impact of Lake Michigan on Holton Township weather is not limited to moderating temperatures. Its close proximity also causes a meteorological phenomenon called lake effect snow. During the winter months, the relatively warm waters of the lake provide moisture for weather fronts as they cross over from Wisconsin. When these fronts reach the cooler land of Michigan, the moisture condenses and falls as snow. Lake effect snows can be serious and hazardous weather events; however, their actual duration and severity can vary greatly. Winter weather, often in the form of lake effect snow, will occasionally affect Holton Township with treacherous driving conditions, cost of snow removal, and infrastructure failures in the winter months. Rural and secondary roads often experience the worst driving conditions in the winter because they are the last to be cleared and salted.

In addition to severe winter weather, Holton Township may experience severe thunderstorms and high wind. According to FEMA's "Wind Zones in the United States" map, Holton is located on the northern fringe of Zone IV, where winds of up to 250 miles per hour are possible. These winds may be produced by strong weather systems, tornadoes, or thunderstorms. In addition, the NOAA estimates that the township should experience around 30-40 thunderstorm days per year. In general, thunderstorms are most likely to occur during the warm months between spring and fall, but are possible any time of the year.



## X. Existing Land Use and Cover

The vast majority of Holton Township is characterized by vegetation; be it forest, agriculture, or open fields; with widely scattered residential uses. The western two-thirds of the township is mostly comprised of forested land, much of which is owned by the federal government as a part of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. In the eastern one-third of the township, agriculture is the most common land cover. Concentrations of residential land cover are typically confined to the community of Holton and near lakes. Other “built-up” land cover, such as commercial, is common along the M-120 corridor and in the community of Holton.

The following land cover statistics and map are based on a Grand Valley State University, Annis Water Resources Institute analysis of conditions in Muskegon in 1997-1998. Although this data is somewhat outdated, land cover has remained generally the same over the last 15 years. Between 1990 and 2010, the population of Holton Township increased by about 200; while the most significant development during this period was the Oak Shores subdivision in the township’s southwest corner. Therefore, it is assumed that this land cover information presents a sufficient overall representation of land cover in Holton Township.

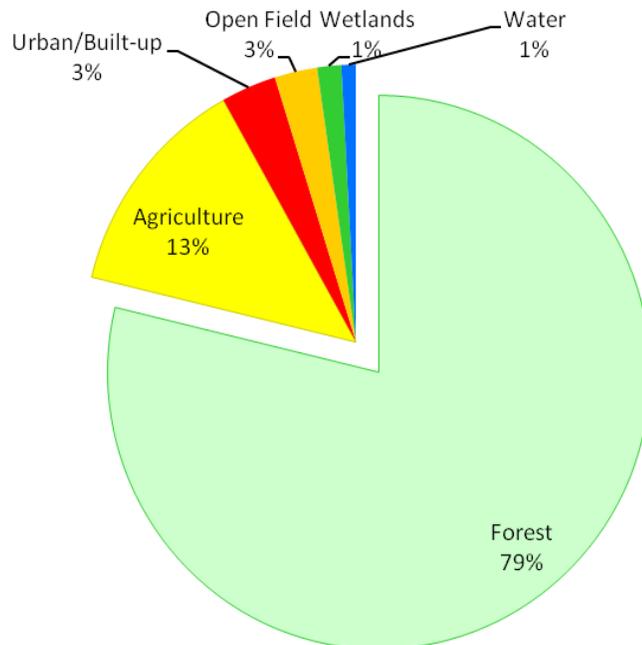
The rural and agricultural nature of Holton Township is evident on Map 8 – Land Cover 1997/1998. More than three-quarters of the total area is forest, while the second most common type of land cover is agriculture. Table 20 reports the distribution of land covers across Holton according to data shown on Map 8.

No significant changes or threats to the overall land cover pattern in Holton Township have been identified or foreseen in the near future.

Table 20

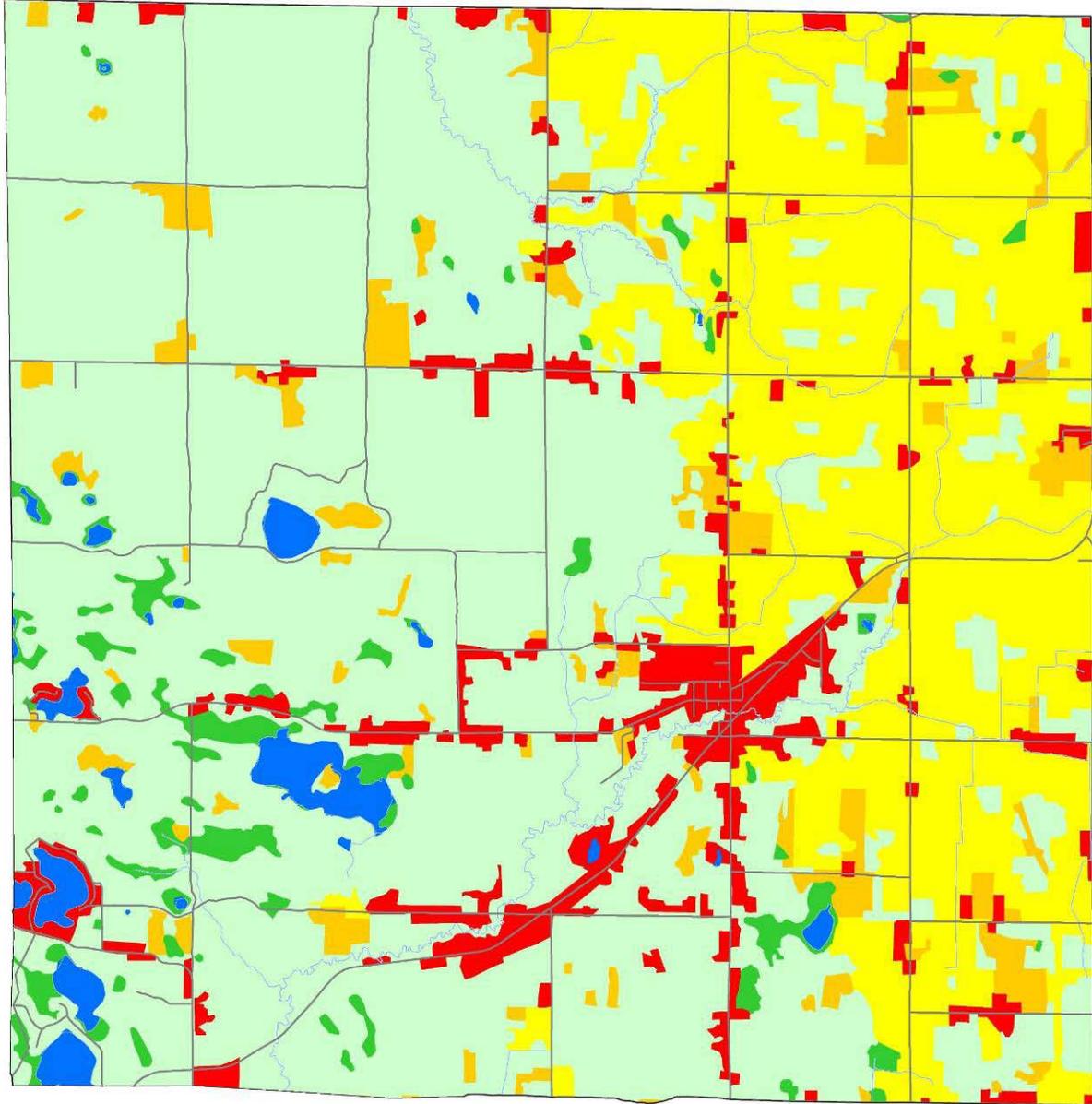
Land Cover 1997/1998		
Land Cover Category		%
Urban/Built-up		3.29%
Open Field		2.54%
Agricultural		13.11%
Forest		78.75%
Wetland		1.43%
Water		0.86%

*Statistics derived from Land Cover 1997/1998 data from the GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute.*



Map 8

Holton Township  
LAND COVER 1997/1998



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Agricultural |  Urban/Built-up Land |
|  Forest       |  Water               |
|  Open Field   |  Wetlands            |

**WMSRDC**  
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

July 16, 2012

Sources: GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute &  
Michigan Geographic Data Library

This map is intended for general planning purposes only.

## Chapter 3: Goals and Objectives

---

One must obtain a thorough understanding of a community in order to establish an appropriate development strategy for its future. The previous chapters of this document describe the township's history, demographics, infrastructure, and physical geography. However, one critical component to the analysis of Holton Township has yet to be addressed: public opinion. It is described in the "Township Visions" section below. The information presented therein is then synthesized with the information from previous chapters of this document to form the final section of this chapter, "Goals and Objectives."

It is important to note that the core values, or visions, in this chapter were founded during the planning process for the Holton Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 2005. Many of the principles established at that time remained pertinent in 2012, when the process of updating the plan began. Therefore, although minor adjustments to some goals and objectives have been made, the township's visions have remained consistent.

### I. Township Visions

In March of 2005, Holton Township held a public hearing to receive input for the Holton Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Attendees completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis in order to identify both existing and potential conditions of the community. The results of the SWOT Analysis in addition to discussions with the Holton Township Board of Trustees and Planning Commission were used to formulate the following Visions. Overall, four main vision areas surfaced during this process. They are listed in no particular order, and serve as the foundation for the Goals and Objectives revealed in the following section.

***Environment:*** Protect and preserve the environment and natural resources.

***Quality of Life:*** Maintain the rural character of the community.

***Economic Development:*** Promote and foster economic development.

***Land Use:*** Use practical land use decision-making and uphold property owners' rights.

On March 20 of 2012, a similar public meeting was held to begin the review and update of the Holton Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The meeting was hosted by the Holton Township Planning Commission, with assistance of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. Township officials published a notice of this meeting in the March 6, 2012 edition of the Muskegon Chronicle. Attendees participated in a visioning exercise to identify existing assets, shortfalls, and desirable future conditions of the community. There was also open discussion of various issues facing Holton Township. Overall, the results of the meeting confirmed the Visions established in 2005; and specific responses were used to re-formulate the following Goals and Objectives. A complete summary of the comments received at the meeting can be found in the Appendix.

## II. Goals and Objectives

The conclusions of this Master Plan are founded on the policies outlined in the following statements. The “Goals” are intended to describe a desirable end state or condition of the township twenty to twenty-five years into the future. They are intentionally general, but are believed to be attainable through a sustained, collaborative community effort. The “Objectives” tend to be more specific and may be viewed as milestones used in the process to achieve the larger goal. The following “Goals and Objectives” are listed in no particular order.

### Infrastructure & Community Safety

**GOAL:** Work with transportation agencies to develop and maintain roadway priorities. In addition, advocate appropriate location, density, pattern, and type of future developments to minimize unnecessary public expenditures for infrastructure and community safety.

**Objectives:**

1. Develop and maintain a working relationship with the Muskegon County Road Commission, as well as, other transportation agencies such as the Michigan Department of Transportation and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission.
2. Address the condition of local roadways through the development of a plan that inventories road conditions and identifies priorities.
3. Develop and implement a strategy for infrastructure improvements and maintenance to the community’s roads, sidewalks, and communications. Incorporate a vision for streetscape improvements to be made by the township, business owners, and community members.
4. Encourage development, or redevelopment, in areas of existing infrastructure and services to minimize costs of maintenance and community safety.
5. Continue to support the Holton Township Fire Department, and maintain communication with Muskegon County Emergency Services to maximize community’s preparedness and response to emergencies and disasters.
6. Develop and maintain a working relationship with the County Sheriff’s Department and the Michigan State Police in order to adequately meet the public safety needs in Holton Township.
7. Work to improve the safety of the M-120/Holton-Duck Lake Rd. interchange.

## Recreation & Community Facilities

**GOAL:** Utilize, promote, and preserve public land, open space, and forests for recreation by establishing parks and facilities for public use. The provision of adequate parkland and recreational activities is intended to attract visitors, improve residents' quality of life, and provide activities for the community's youth.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain and improve upon existing recreation facilities.
2. Maintain and update the Holton Township Community Recreation Plan to prioritize community needs, track progress, and retain the township's eligibility for available financial support.
3. Develop techniques to gauge, facilitate, and strengthen community consensus concerning recreation and the Township's role in providing the desired facilities.
4. Create and maintain a working relationship with Muskegon County Parks officials, as well as state and federal officials, to investigate potential recreational facilities development within the township.
5. Coordinate with Holton Public Schools, community organizations, and area adult education programs to develop and enhance organized recreational programs and activities.
6. Establish and promote trails, including signage, within the township. Also, search for and establish linkages to neighboring or regional trail systems.
7. Develop and promote a community facility to host community events, and possibly generate revenue for the Township.

## Planning & Growth Management

**GOAL:** Maintain the rural character of Holton Township through managed and thoughtful growth. Make land use decisions in accordance with a current and continually reviewed Master Plan that is approved through broad community involvement and support.

**Objectives:**

1. Evaluate and amend, as necessary, the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance to further the goals of the Master Plan as they evolve.

2. Highlight and utilize existing assets to encourage growth, protect natural areas, and encourage appropriate residential, commercial, and industrial activity within defined areas throughout the community.
3. Develop an inventory of redevelopment opportunities, including tools to encourage investment and reuse of underutilized properties.
4. Continually educate the Holton Township Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals on the advantages of managing growth and development.
5. Continually inform and educate the community concerning the advantages of managing growth and development.

## Economic Growth

**GOAL:** Provide ample infrastructure and services to support the existing economic base, and encourage development that is consistent with this Master Plan. Create opportunities for growth of small businesses that offer professional services and provide opportunities to retain the Township's youth.

**Objectives:**

1. Establish a working relationship with area business and industry.
2. Develop an economic strategy that includes an inventory of existing businesses and other economic assets, and identifies means to strengthen, promote, and preserve them.
3. Define the community's core and develop and implement mechanisms to establish and strengthen that core area.
4. Work with Muskegon Area First in order to promote economic growth within the Township and Muskegon County.
5. Highlight and leverage the Township's close proximity to Fremont, Muskegon, and camps such as Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Owasippe Scout Reservation, and Gerber Boy Scout Camp.

## Natural Resources

**GOAL:** Promote the abundant natural resources in Holton Township, and employ measures to protect natural features including surface water, groundwater, woodland, farmland, and wildlife habitat.

**Objectives:**

1. Create an inventory of public and private natural features within the community. Identify the uniqueness of each, as well as potential threats.
2. Establish a monitoring system to track the viability of natural features, with special attention paid to development in environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Build and strengthen relationships with state, federal, and county agencies to further the Township's goal of natural resources protection.
4. Communicate with neighboring communities regarding the protection and preservation of natural features from possible contamination, inappropriate development, and degradation.
5. Create, maintain, and continually strengthen a community consensus to sustain rational and responsible growth management strategies to be utilized by Holton Township elected and appointed officials.
6. Continually educate the community on the importance of protecting and preserving the natural resources in the community.

## Regional & Intergovernmental Cooperation

**GOAL:** Become a regional leader in promoting cooperation and mutual support between and among neighboring jurisdictions.

**Objectives:**

1. Recognize and support the Muskegon Area-wide Plan as the county-wide vision and strive to remain consistent with that plan.
2. Take inventory of existing relationships with local, county, regional, and state units of government, and evaluate the Township's role and the effectiveness of the relationships. Identify areas where future relationships could exist.

3. Maintain continuous and active participation in regional activities, capital improvements, economic development, watershed planning, land use planning, and transportation planning.
4. Continually seek common regional goals and employ cooperative approaches to meet them.
5. Seek consolidation of services that will enhance the availability and efficiency of those services.
6. As an important gateway to Muskegon County, keep apprised of issues in the neighboring counties of Newaygo and Oceana.

## Community & Housing

**GOAL:** Focus of the preservation and promotion of the rural character, strong sense of community, and valuable quality of life in Holton Township. Engage the community in planning for the future and reshaping the image of the Township.

**Objectives:**

1. Develop and implement housing that provides for the general health, safety, and welfare of township residents and promotes an aesthetic atmosphere.
2. Ensure a variety of quality housing for township residents.
3. Develop and implement effective programs to strengthen code enforcement measures eliminating blight and assuring safe, sanitary, and pleasing homesteads.
4. Define desirable aesthetic values for Holton Township homesteads and develop vehicles to strengthen them.
5. Develop and implement programs to renew and improve existing housing and pursue funding to renew areas that require attention.
6. Create opportunities for senior housing within the township.
7. Develop methods for increasing community participation in local issues to strengthen the Township's sense of community and develop consensus for new initiatives.

## Chapter 4: Future Land Use

---

A future land use map requires a synthesis of all the information included in a master plan and results in a map that generally depicts the various types of recommended land uses and their approximate locations in the community. The map is accompanied by text explaining the “districts” or “categories” used on the map. These categories describe the character of land uses as well as their relation, if any, to the zoning districts dictated by the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

A master plan and a zoning ordinance are separate, yet closely related, and often mistaken for one-another. Generally speaking, the master plan and future land use map are intended to reflect the future ambitions of the community, while a zoning ordinance provides the means to arrive at that point. The future land use map is intended to serve as a guide for land use decisions over a longer period of time, while the zoning map is a mechanism for shaping immediate development decisions.

A zoning ordinance is the legal arm of a master plan. It regulates land use and is the most frequently used and effective regulatory tool to implement a master plan. The primary land use regulation tool is a community’s ability to alter and adjust regulations spelled out in the zoning ordinance. The master plan and future land use map can be utilized to guide and encourage what and where zoning changes will occur. For example, rezoning requests are often required to be consistent with the master plan’s designations, which are consistent with the community’s desires for the future.

The word “district” is often used in both kinds of documents; however, the term must be used carefully. On one hand, using similar terms for the various land use designations is one way to demonstrate the relationship between the two documents, and it helps to avoid confusion and translation difficulties. On the other hand, it is imperative to acknowledge that future land use map and a zoning map districts are not necessarily equal. For example, the use of a term such as “cluster housing” in a future land use map does not necessarily translate into specific numbers in terms of lot sizes and other elements of zoning. Zoning districts should be specific and precise for legal reasons, while future land use categories should remain general to allow for future flexibility and interpretation.

### Future Land Use Categories

Ten general future land use categories have been identified for the township. They were laid out as a result of analyses of current land uses and zoning; physical and environmental suitability; and compatibility with goals and objectives identified in the plan. These land uses include:

- High Density Residential
- Cluster Residential
- Medium Density Cluster Residential
- Rural Residential
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Commercial Downtown
- Industrial
- Forest-Recreation
- Waterfront Protection

## **High Density Residential**

The High Density Residential designation refers to denser residential development for single-family, two-family, and other multi-family dwelling units. Development should be at a density consistent with the location's existing and planned infrastructure and land capabilities. These areas are served by wells and septic systems. Other uses that might be permitted in this category should be of similar to the residential character of existing development and might include adult and family care homes, churches, and education, public administration or public service buildings.

The three general areas designated for the location of this category are located in the center of the township near the unincorporated village of Holton; and on the eastern border at Brunswick; and on the western border at Burns and Silver lakes.

The High Density Residential future land use category closely corresponds with the "High Density Residential, R-1" district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

## **Medium Density/Clustered Residential**

The Medium Density/Clustered Residential designation is intended to provide land for residential growth close to the village of Holton without overtaxing current services while still providing a density of population close to schools and businesses. This category also serves the need to limit growth to the north, west, and east of the village where soils have severe limitations for septic systems. It is also intended to provide a lesser-intensity of development that will assist the community goals of preserving the natural beauty of vegetation and terrain while enhancing the rural setting now experienced by the residents. Through promotion of "clustering" new development, it is intended that this category will provide for the preservation of open space and natural resources. Other uses that might be permitted in this district should be of similar character to existing development and might include adult and family care homes, churches, professional offices, public parks, and education, public administration or public service buildings.

Areas designated for medium density and clustered residential uses are primarily located outside the vicinity of downtown Holton, around Pine Island Lake, near Hart Lake, and on Holton Road (M-120) along the township's eastern border.

The Medium Density/Clustered Residential future land use category closely corresponds with the "Medium/High Density/Clustered Residential R-2" district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

## **Medium Density Residential**

The intent of the Medium Density Residential future land use category is to provide for a traditional, rural, medium density or clustered type of development in those areas not suited for other types of development. The type of residential development envisioned in this category is single-family homes on large, multi-acre lots. Land selected for inclusion is not suited for agriculture in most cases. The soils are capable of supporting septic systems, as would be required in the rural areas comprising this district. Gentle slopes, often bordering scenic creeks, make these lands desirable building sites. Other uses that might be permitted in this district should be of similar

character to existing development and might include adult and family care homes, churches, public parks, and education, public administration or public service buildings.

The extent of the medium-density residential category has been dictated, in large part, by the existing use of the land for residences already in place. These areas are primarily located in the central and southern portions of the township, as well as the southwest corner. This designation covers about 5 square miles of the township and is the fourth most common future land use category on the future land use map.

The Medium Density Residential future land use category closely corresponds with the “Medium Density Residential R-3” district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Rural Residential**

The Rural Residential land use district provides a rural setting for single-family dwellings that will preserve the natural land, water, and vegetative attributes of the area. It also provides a needed buffer district between agriculture and residential uses, and between forest/recreation and residential uses. Providing this buffer will protect agricultural lands from neighboring incompatible land uses, and enhance residential districts by preserving the natural beauty and physical attributes of the area. Permitted uses should accommodate natural forest production, and small-scale truck-crop and specialty farming. Other land uses should be in accordance with these goals, and might include adult and family care homes, churches, soil or conservation programs, and education, public administration or public service buildings.

The Rural Residential future land use is located primarily in the western half of the township, as well as in the vicinity of water features such as Cedar and Skeels creeks, and Round and Unger (Deer) lakes. This category covers approximately 7 square miles of the township and is the third most common future land use category on the future land use map.

The Rural Residential future land use category closely corresponds with the “R4” district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Agricultural**

The Agricultural designation identifies areas of agricultural activity to promote and protect the stability of the farming population as a sector of the community, which is a very desirable feature in terms of providing a constant tax base and population. Many farms in the township are enrolled in Michigan’s Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (Act 116 of 1974), which provides financial incentives to designate lands for long-term farming use. This also promotes land use stability. Holton Township possesses a large amount of Muskegon County’s prime farm land. Nearly nine sections in their entirety and four partial sections consist of prime farm land. Therefore agriculture is the best use of the land in this area and represents a long-range vision for the benefit of the general public. Conversion of this land to other land uses that would be less economical or less-suited or designed for short-term, private gain should be discouraged.

Areas designated for agricultural use are located mostly in the eastern half of the township. This category covers approximately 13 square miles of the township and is the most common future land use category on the future land use map.

The Agricultural future land use category closely corresponds with the “Agriculture A-1” district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Commercial**

The Commercial category is intended to accommodate a wide variety of retail and services to meet the needs of local residents and the motoring public primarily along Holton Road (M-120). This category is best served when densely grouped, due to the potential generation of vehicular traffic and also to minimize the effects on adjacent districts. In order to preserve the existing character of the township, new commercial developments should be compatible and harmonious with adjacent surroundings. The preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, important open space, and natural corridors is strongly encouraged.

Areas included in the commercial designation are located mainly along the M-120 corridor near downtown Holton, and along the township’s eastern border.

The Commercial future land use category closely corresponds with the “Commercial Districts C-1” district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Commercial Downtown**

The Downtown Commercial category is intended to allow for a mixed use of commercial and residential development and maintain the physical character of downtown Holton. New developments should be highly cognizant of adjacent surroundings and strive to contribute aesthetically pleasing features to the downtown area.

Areas included in this category are specifically located along Holton Luck Lake Road between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Marvin Road.

The Commercial Downtown future land use category closely corresponds with the “C-2 Downtown District” described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Industrial**

The Industrial category is intended to provide employment opportunities within the township and improve the tax base. The intent is to develop industrial uses such as research, wholesale, and warehouse activities and light industrial operations which manufacture, compounding, process, package, and assemble and/or treat finished or semi-finished products from previously prepared materials. Ideal activities in this area would be compatible with each other and with other adjacent land uses, and exist without causing objectionable impacts on nearby properties, the general public, or the environment.

The area designated for industrial use is located along the southern border of the township along Holton Road (M-120). This location offers easy access to M-120 and an active railway is present as well.

The Industrial future land use category closely corresponds with the “ID, Industrial District” described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Forest-Recreation**

The intent of this category is to protect and preserve suitable land for recreational purposes and forested areas. It is designed to regulate and limit the location of buildings and structures to protect the natural resources, including, but not limited to, natural habitats of wildlife, waterways and water bodies, forestry capabilities, public and private recreational uses, and human, plant, and animal life. The large quantity of federal and state land in the township provides a unique opportunity for woodland preservation and recreational development. This future land use provides a good use of these undeveloped lands in the outlying areas of the township. Preservation of the natural and rural attributes of the township is a central “vision” of this document, and this category is intended to help maintain existing large tracts of forest land as a lasting natural resource.

Areas designated for forest and recreational uses are located mostly in the western half of the township. This land comprises a portion of the Manistee National Forest, and encompasses a number of privately-owned parcels within its boundaries. This category covers approximately 8.5 square miles of the township and is the most common future land use category on the future land use map.

The Forest-Recreation future land use category closely corresponds with the “Forest/Recreational, FOR” district described in the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

### **Waterfront Preservation**

One of the most effective means of preventing water quality degradation is through protection of the water's edge with a natural species vegetated buffer. The Waterfront Protection category is primarily intended to encourage protection of the shore land along lakes and streams, and to ensure that new development is compatible with the water quality and carrying capacity of the water resource.

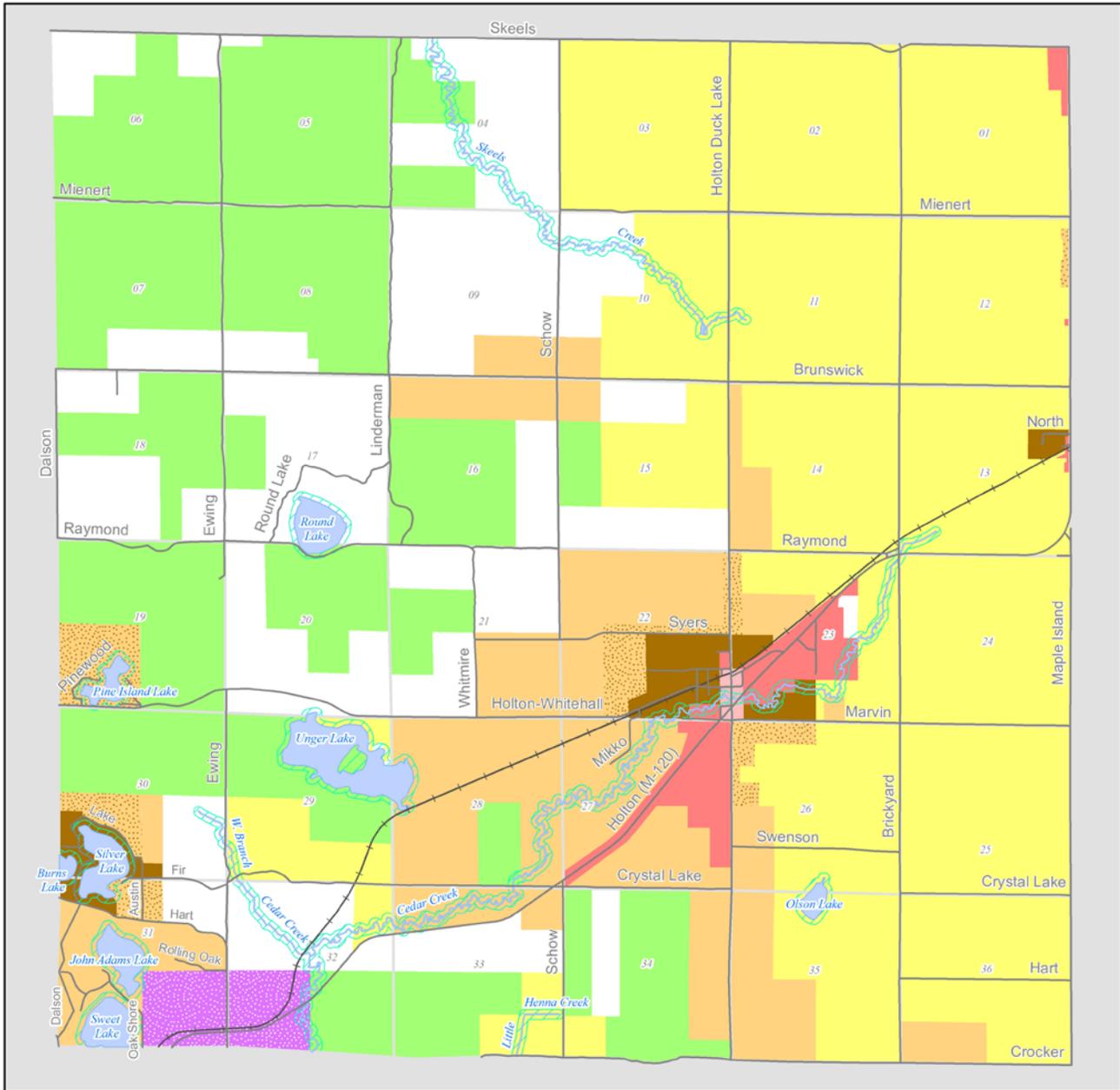
This category does not seek to prohibit development along water features. Rather, new development in these areas should have low-density residential or recreational characteristics. Sensitive site development techniques, such as preserving existing vegetation, should be encouraged to help control erosion and protect water quality.

Ideally, this category should apply to all shore lands surrounding surface water features. It is represented on the Future Land Use map by a 150-foot buffer around significant water features in Holton Township. These areas should be referenced as a general guide, as its boundaries are general in nature and not intended to establish finite boundaries.

The Waterfront Preservation future land use category does not correspond to any districts specified within the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance; however Sec.1.04W of the ordinance does contain setback requirements for new development adjacent to water bodies in Holton Township.

Map 9

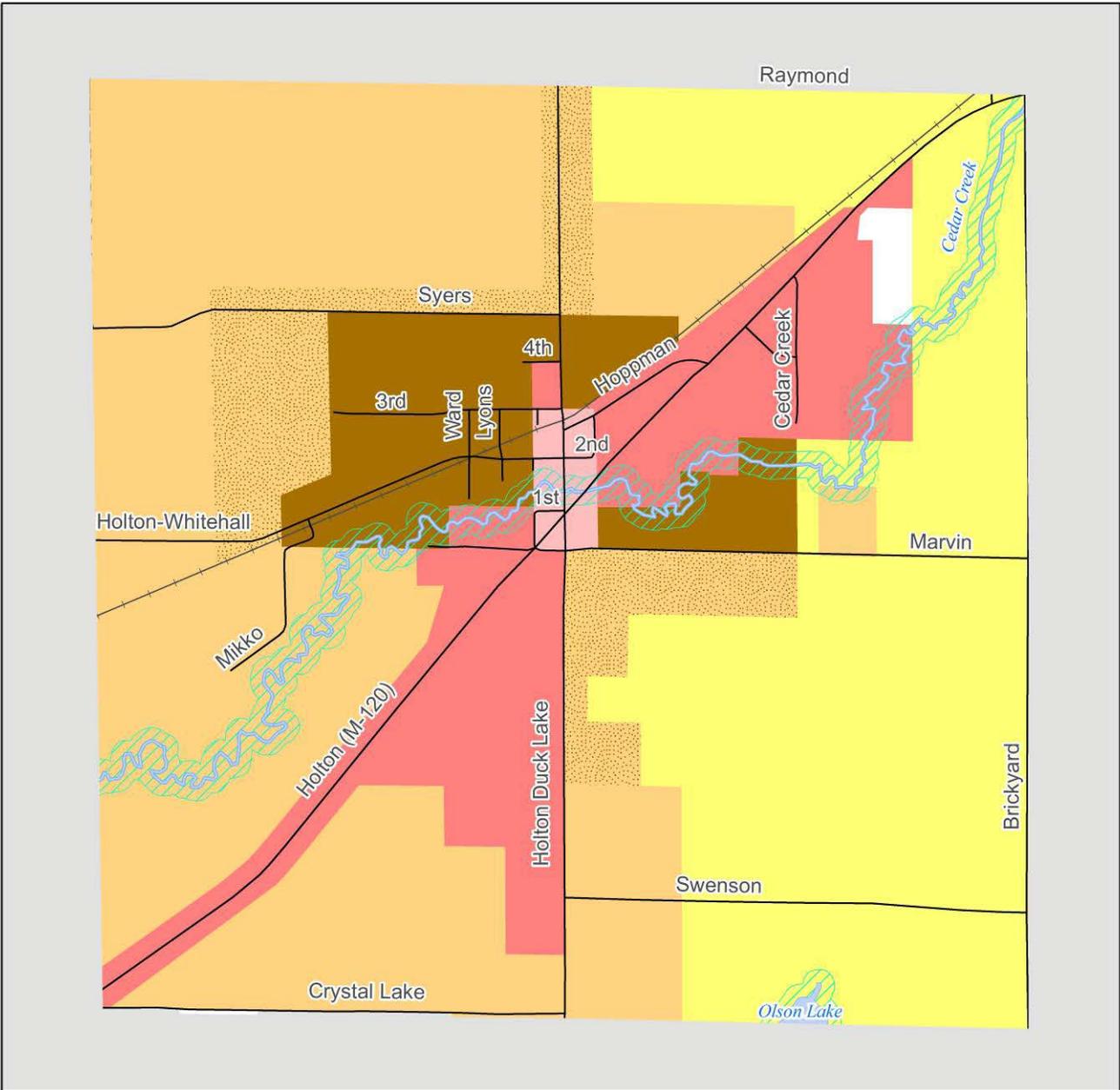
# Holton Township FUTURE LAND USE



High Density Residential	Commercial	 	August 22, 2012  WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Med. Density/Clustered Res.	Commercial Downtown		
Medium Density Residential	Industrial	Data Sources: - Holton Township Planning Commission - Michigan Center for Geographic Information  This map is intended for general planning purposes only.	
Rural Residential	Forest/Recreation		
Agricultural	Waterfront Protection		
	Township Sections		

Map 10

Downtown Holton  
**FUTURE LAND USE**



High Density Residential	Agricultural	 	July 17, 2012  WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Cluster Residential	Commercial		
Medium Density Residential	Commercial Downtown	Data Sources: - Holton Township Planning Commission - Michigan Center for Geographic Information	
Rural Residential	Waterfront Protection	This map is intended for general planning purposes only.	

## Chapter 6: Implementation Tools & Techniques

---

Implementation is the ultimate goal of planning. Implementing the ideas generated through the planning process is the culmination of analysis, goal setting, and interaction activities that occur during the creation of a master plan. This portion of the master plan is designed to guide the community in taking the actions to help achieve its goals and objectives.

This plan is intended to be a working document that provides township decision makers with guidance based on the desires communicated by the community. It should be consulted whenever policy issues arise, especially those relating to land use. Additionally, appropriate adjustments should be made to the plan when the visions of the township change or advance.

Successful implementation requires a dedicated effort on the part of the Holton Township Planning Commission, Township Board, and the community at large. It is essential that each member of the Planning Commission and Township Board understands the master plan, knows his/her own role as it relates to the plan, and promotes implementation of the plan.

The Goals and Objectives of the Holton Township Master Plan can be implemented through usage of the tools and techniques described in this chapter. The list of tools and techniques is certainly not exhaustive, and some items are more applicable to the township than others. Many of the tools and techniques have multiple uses, and can be employed creatively by the township to achieve its goals and objectives.

### Zoning Ordinance

The purpose of zoning is to assist in orderly development and growth, to protect property values and investments, and to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of citizens. The Holton Township Zoning Ordinance is perhaps the most important tool available to implement the land use and development concepts of the Holton Township Master Plan. Following the adoption of this plan, the township should review its Zoning Ordinance to ensure consistency between the two documents.

### **Evaluation of Land Use Changes**

Changing the land use or zoning designation for any property can have far-reaching consequences; physically, environmentally, financially, and legally. Therefore, careful evaluation of proposed rezoning is essential. As with any land use decision, the use of standards is essential to reaching fair and consistent decisions. The following evaluation measures are included to assist township officials when rezoning or future land use changes are contemplated. The zoning district intents and specified rezoning criteria provided in the zoning ordinance must also be considered during the evaluation process.

#### Standard 1 – Consistency with the Community Vision and Plan Strategies

If conditions (such as economic, demographic, environmental, etc.) upon which the master plan was developed have changed significantly since it was adopted, the

Planning Commission and Township Board should incorporate these factors into their deliberations to ensure that the plan is current. Particular attention should be paid to the Goals and Objectives to ensure that, 1) the township's visions remain valid, and 2) any proposed rezoning or land use change does not impair their intent.

#### Standard 2 – Compatibility with adjacent uses and districts

All land uses allowed in a proposed zoning district should be compatible with the conditions present on the site and in the immediate vicinity of the site especially in terms of density, character, traffic, aesthetics, and property values.

#### Standard 3 – Capability of being used as already zoned

It is the right of every property owner to receive a reasonable return on the investment placed on property. This does not mean that zoning is a slave to the "highest and best use" (which is not a zoning, but rather a real estate term). It does mean that there should be a reasonable use available within the zone district. But if the property is capable of being used as zoned, there should be a compelling reason to change the zoning. Such reasons may be related to the first two standards of consistency and compatibility.

Site plans should not be considered as part of a rezoning request. The Planning Commission and/or Township Board are encouraged to not be swayed by what is proposed by the petitioner. Instead, the township will make a specific finding that ALL of the uses permitted in the proposed district are appropriate for the site and area, not just the one shown on a proposed site plan.

#### Standard 4 – It is critical that the Master Plan be read in its entirety

Rather than attempting to isolate individual statements that may appear to support one position or another regarding the future land use in the township, the Planning Commission must consider the intent of the master plan as a whole. This requires an intimate knowledge of the plan to ensure that all considerations are included in the evaluation of any change.

### Land Division Act

Townships are authorized to regulate and control the subdivision of land within their jurisdictions pursuant to Public Act 591 of 1996, the Land Division Act (formerly known as P.A. 288 of 1967, the Subdivision Control Act). Amended in 1997, this Act gave a township with a land division ordinance more control over how land could be divided and lessened state controls. The act governed the division of existing parcels, called "parent parcels," as identified by the state.

A township can have an important voice in the design and layout of subdivisions and can set uniform standards for streets and roads, utilities, and other improvements with the utilization of a local land division control ordinance. The land division ordinance can reference all other township ordinances and require conformance with them. Conformance with the zoning ordinance and the insertion of land division design standards while updating the ordinance offers control over density.

## Planned Unit Development (PUD)

The planned unit development concept is utilized by many communities to encourage innovative and imaginative project design. As a development type, it permits flexibility in site design and usage. It allows buildings to be clustered by mixing types, or by combining housing with ancillary uses such as neighborhood shopping. It allows for better design and arrangement of open space and the retention of such natural features as forests, slope, and floodplains. As a regulatory tool, it allows variation in many of the traditional controls related to density, setback, use, and open space.

## Cluster Development

Cluster development is a residential site design and zoning technique used to protect natural, cultural, or recreational features of the landscape while allowing new development. The basic idea is to cluster new development on one portion of a property, while leaving a large tract of environmentally sensitive or scenic land intact on the remainder of the parcel. If used carefully, this technique can significantly lower the impact on the natural landscape and minimize the costs of providing public services to new homes since they are located in proximity to each other.

While similar to PUD development, Cluster development should not be confused with planned unit development (PUD). Cluster development places a greater emphasis on protecting open space and typically applies only to residential units. PUDs, on the other hand, focus on infrastructure reduction and often allow compatible commercial development (e.g., convenience stores, office, etc.) to be included in the overall development.

## Open Space Preservation

A variation on the PUD theme is an Open Space Preservation district. In this type of district, or in a residential district with this feature, developers are encouraged to set aside open space in perpetuity in exchange for flexibility on the part of the township with respect to zoning requirements. Open space conservation is important because open space needs to be planned and provided for prior to complete development occurring.

Key characteristics of an Open Space Preservation District/Overlay, when combined with elements of the PUD concept, include:

- Flexibility in the design of a development.
- Lot size restrictions in traditional zoning are converted to density limitations where the unit of measurement is the entire project, not the individual lot.
- Allowance for slightly greater density than normal zoning, in most cases, *as an incentive*.
- Buffering/open space in the development is *in exchange* for flexibility on the part of the township, so the alternative (i.e. traditional zoning) must be fairly rigid, more restrictive, and strictly enforced.

- The developer saves money through lower up-front costs for infrastructure, and tends to make more profit through higher initial sales price and greater sales volume.

Open Space Zoning allows the developer to have some additional units to market, in exchange for the promise to set aside a portion of the development as open space in perpetuity.

## Growth Management

Growth management refers to the systematic attempt by a community to guide the type, rate, location, timing, public cost of, and often the quality and character of land re-development. Growth management must be, first and foremost, well integrated into the planning and zoning process. As an overview, there are several possible avenues to explore when considering a growth management strategy. Among them are:

### Purchase of Development Rights

In this scenario, the township directly remunerates the land owner in return for exclusive rights to develop the property as the township sees fit or to preserve it. The rights may also be sold to yet another property owner who can (or will) develop the land as the township wishes. The land owner participates voluntarily, still owns the land, and can use or sell the land for specified purposes, such as farming or hunting.

Once a Purchase of Development Rights agreement is made, a permanent deed restriction is placed on the property which limits the type of development that may take place on the land. A legally binding guarantee is thus achieved to ensure that the parcel will remain as it is or be developed only as wished. The deed restriction can also be referred to as a conservation easement.

### Conservation Easements

The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act of 1974 provides for dedication of a conservation easement to a public entity while the Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Act of 1980 gives a third party, such as a land trust, the right to receive the resulting responsibility to enforce an easement. Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between landowners and a land conservancy or government agency and are distinct property rights that may be sold or donated separately from other rights.

Conservation easements are effective for preserving sensitive lands, providing public access along rivers or greenways, and allowing property owners to consider land stewardship while they continue to live on their land. They permanently limit development of the property in order to protect the conservation values of the land. The landowner continues to bear all costs and liabilities related to ownership and maintenance of the property.

The relationship between Purchase of Development Rights and conservation easements is close and the terms are often used interchangeably. However, conservation easements can be both sold or donated. When a land owner sells the development rights for less than their full value, it is called a “bargain sale.” Bargain sales and donations can reduce income, inheritance, and property taxes while providing cash for needed purposes when meeting the necessary requirements.

### Transfer of Development Rights

Although not authorized by statute for use between jurisdictions in Michigan, this technique has been used successfully elsewhere. It is a variation on the above, except a trade is made between two or more parcels. It essentially is a method for protecting land by transferring the “right to develop” from one area (sending) and giving it to another area (receiving). A consensus must be reached on where the public wishes to preserve low density or open space and where it will allow for increases in development densities.

“Receiving” areas generally have streets, public water and sewer, and other improvements or the improvements are such that they can be extended a short distance without extensive cost. The costs of purchasing the easements are recovered from the developers who receive building “bonuses” according to the values agreed upon. As with Purchase of Development Rights, the owner of the preserved site participates voluntarily and retains existing use rights while receiving compensation for the development value of the land.

### Concurrency

This is a situation in which the township ties development ( i.e. density and type) to established bench marks regarding public service (i.e. water, sewer, roadway capacity, police, fire, educational and others) to control development. No development can occur in a given area until the benchmarks are met, either by the township or the developer. This method also requires a carefully laid out capital improvements plan (CIP) to be fully effective. CIP is described below.

### Development Agreements

This would operate much like a contract/site plan review process combined. It would cover a fixed period in time, and would identify specific elements of development covered. It would offer assurances for both sides that planning could take place and there would be no changing of the rules in the middle of the game.

### Regional Impact Coordination

In a larger sense, this concept amounts to a specific agreement to involve other jurisdictions in any development which has a “regional impact”. One way to implement such coordination is through the establishment of a joint planning commission (JPC), as enabled by the State of Michigan’s Joint Municipal Planning Act PA 226 of 2003.

The State of Michigan has taken another step by making it mandatory that amendments to a community’s master plan be submitted, for review and comment, to all bordering jurisdictions, the acting regional planning commission, and ultimately the county. While presently these comments have no regulatory implications, this legislation is the first step in working towards a collaborative effort amongst bordering municipalities encouraging similar land uses on adjacent parcels.

## **Capital Improvements Program**

A capital improvements program (CIP) is a fiscal plan outlining the means for the township to finance selected projects requiring capital, either on a short-term or long-range basis. The CIP thus sets priorities for future development. Projects typically included are public facilities such as township halls and parks, land improvements, roads, bridges, acquisitions, utilities, planning projects, etc.

## Dedicated Millage

A dedicated millage can be used to generate revenues for a specific purpose and, in so doing, can implement recommendations of the Master Plan. For example, a dedicated millage could be used to establish a land acquisition fund, a recreational path fund, or a conservation easement program. All of these would be useful tools for promoting open space preservation.

Although acquisition of land by a governmental unit provides the greatest level of land use control, it is also the most expensive. In addition to acquisition costs, purchases remove property from the tax rolls and decreases property tax revenues.

## Land Conservancy

While property owners can voluntarily donate or sell land or easements in the interest of conserving natural resources or natural features, and perhaps qualify for income, estate and property tax benefits, private land trusts can facilitate a resource protection program by use of a variety of land acquisition and conservation techniques.

For instance, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM) “protects lands that contribute to the distinctive character and quality of life in West Michigan; lands that are important for their values as habitat for native plants and animals, as centers for study and quiet recreation, and as elements of scenic beauty and rural character. LCWM offers positive, non-regulatory solutions to disappearing open space that benefit landowners and local communities.”

LCWM acquires natural land through donation or “bargain sale” purchase of high priority land for the purpose of creating nature preserves that are open to the public. It also assists with conservation easements and works with developers to construct easements for open space design. Finally, LCWM assists local governments with identifying important natural areas, preserving lands, creating community parks, and writing grant applications for project funding.

## Farmland Preservation

There are numerous federal, state, and local mechanisms available to Holton Township that may be used for the preservation of farmland.

### Federal

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10-year duration. The CRP is another voluntary program, intended specifically for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, landowners can

receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

### State

To help alleviate the rapid and premature conversion of lands uniquely suited for agriculture to more intensive use in Michigan, Public Act 116 of 1974, the "Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act," and subsequent "Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR), Part 361 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act," are available to preserve farmland. In general, PA 116 allows agricultural landowners to develop an agreement with the State of Michigan to keep land in farming for a minimum of 10 years. The PDR program allows the development rights for land to be purchased by the State, to keep the land in agricultural production forever.

More recently, the state created a program called the Farmland and Open Space (FLOS) Protection Program. The FLOS program has five methods for preserving farmland and open space: farmland development rights agreements, purchase of development rights, agricultural preservation fund, local open space easements, and designated open space easements. The purpose of the agricultural preservation fund is to provide grants to eligible local governments for purchase of conservation easements through the purchase of development rights (PDR) programs. Generally the program allows a farm owner to enter into an agreement with the state that ensures that the land remains in agricultural use for a minimum of ten years. The maximum enrollment is for 90 years, agreements are extended in 7 year increments beyond the initial 10 year agreement. The primary benefits of the program to farm owners are tax credits and special assessment of the farm land. Land owners may still sell their land when it is under a conservation easement, but the agreement runs with the land, not the owner.

### County

Muskegon County has a Farmland Preservation Program established through the Muskegon County Farmland Development Rights Ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to provide a mechanism for farmland preservation through the acquisition of development rights voluntarily offered by landowners; authorization of cash purchase and/or installment purchases of such development rights; placement of agricultural conservation easements on properties which restrict future development; and provision of standards and procedures for the purchase of development rights and the placement of an agricultural conservation easement. However, due to lack of funds, this program is currently inactive.

## Chapter 7: Recommendations

---

Holton Township contains an abundance of assets, including: natural resources such as clean groundwater, prime agricultural soils, and forests; Holton Public Schools; proximity to larger population centers and access to state highway and railroad transportation infrastructure; and the rural nature and history of the community. These attributes have combined to create a desirable environment to live and play.

The following recommendations are supported by the Holton Township Planning Commission to encourage thoughtful and sustainable decision-making throughout the Holton Township government. The overall intent is to preserve and promote the rural character, quality of life, local economy, and valuable natural resources of Holton Township. They are listed in no significant order.

### **Recommendation #1**

*Review the Goals and Objectives on a regular basis; and at most, every five years.*

It will be important for Holton Township to frequently reference this plan to enhance and sustain the quality of life in the township, and to maintain its rural qualities and the integrity of natural resources. To ensure the plan's continued relevance and usefulness, the Planning Commission should regularly revisit the Goals and Objectives identified in this document. If utilized properly, this plan will provide a central vision from which township officials can make sound and consistent decisions.

### **Recommendation #2**

*Consult the Holton Township Master Plan when considering changes to the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance, and make appropriate amendments as necessary to either document to ensure consistency between them.*

At the time this master plan was approved, the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance was considered sufficient in its scope and content (such as zoning district descriptions, zoning map delineations, and requirements for height, area, setbacks, and etceteras). Therefore, this plan does not propose specific changes to the Zoning Ordinance. If future changes are to be considered or are anticipated, it will be important for the Planning Commission to ensure that any changes are supported by the intents contained within this master plan. It is recommended that the Planning Commission consider amending this plan prior to any significant or potentially divisive changes to the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance. Such a careful and calculated approach will help protect the township and Planning Commission in the event of a zoning dispute or litigation. (Future editions or amendments of this Master Plan may include mention of specific zoning changes within this section of the Plan.)

### **Recommendation #3**

*Remain cognizant of issues pertaining to agriculture in Holton Township.*

Agriculture is a key component of Holton Township's identity and is highly valued within the community. Land uses on fertile soils must be carefully monitored and managed so as to prevent degradation and/or loss of this resource.

#### **Recommendation #4**

*Explore the potential to leverage the assets of downtown Holton to encourage a combination of commercial and residential uses, and create an inviting sense of place.*

The downtown Holton area has many assets that may be utilized to spur a “rebirth.” The location is highly visible and easily accessible from Holton Road (M-120), an important Muskegon County gateway to Fremont, Newaygo and Oceana counties, and other points to the north and east. Also, there are a number of businesses and institutions existing in the downtown vicinity, including a grocery store, library, post office, schools, municipal buildings, and churches. This area of the township has potential to become a hamlet of activity with an increased population, supported by local businesses, and also attract commerce from motorists traveling along M-120. Additionally, potential “Brownfield” sites in the downtown area may be leveraged to obtain environmental remediation and redevelopment funds through state and federal agencies.

#### **Recommendation #5**

*Consider municipal collaboration as a means to provide ample services at the township level, and to help achieve the Master Plan Goals and Objectives.*

Communities surrounding Holton Township share many of the same social and geographic characteristics. Consequently, many of the communities’ needs may coincide as well. In some cases, it may be more desirable to fulfill these needs through municipal collaboration, rather than by each community on its own. While only appropriate under certain circumstances, municipal collaboration is a viable option to improve standard of living through the provision of more efficient and/or increased services. One example already being implemented within Holton Township is the provision of fire protection. The Holton Fire Department is able to utilize its available capacity to provide coverage to the eastern areas of the neighboring township of Cedar Creek. The potential for additional collaborations certainly exist, and could be further explored through regular communications with neighboring communities.

#### **Recommendation #6**

*Utilize existing county, regional, and statewide initiatives to promote a healthy economy, environment, and quality of life in Holton Township.*

As a rural township with limited resources, Holton should consider partnering with agencies and organizations in order to achieve the Goals and Objective of this Plan. Participation in regional initiatives can result in funding opportunities to which the township alone might not have access. One example is the Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP), a countywide master plan founded on “Smart Growth” principles. This initiative is directed by county stakeholders, and maintained by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. Participation in a multi-jurisdictional effort, such as the MAP, can be a significant asset to communities seeking grant funds. Other opportunities for participation in existing initiatives can be identified in the area of natural resources and waterfront protection. More specifically, Holton Township can utilize existing natural resource and water quality management plans to seek grant funds to implement “Best Management Practices.” Existing plans include

the Muskegon and White River 319 Watershed Management plans; MDNR Fisheries Management plans for the Muskegon and White rivers; and the Cedar Creek Habitat Assessment and Improvement Plan.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

---

The purpose of this master plan is to offer guidance, rooted in the desires of the community, to any and all actors whose decisions affect the land. It provides a broad yet clear vision for Holton Township's future. If properly used, this master plan will provide a framework to help Holton Township promote its assets, manage development, and protect its natural resources.

After this plan is adopted, the community must remain dedicated and proactive towards land use planning by reviewing this master plan at a minimum of every five years. This will enable the Holton Township Planning Commission to track progress of implementation, take the pulse of the community, and reassess the Goals and Objectives on a regular basis. It will also help to mitigate the effects of political turnover. This is a living document that should be updated as needed to keep it in line with the community's desires, and to maintain consistency with the Holton Township Zoning Ordinance.

It is important to recognize that changes are inevitable; both natural and man-made. This document, the Holton Township Master Plan, is a major step towards managing those changes as they arise. It is also a testament of the concern and dedication of the Holton Township Board and Planning Commission to preserve the township's character well into the future.



# Appendix A

## Public Notices and Approval Process

---

This section chronicles efforts of Holton Township to invite the public, neighboring communities, and public utilities to participate in the planning processes for the Holton Township Master Plan. Also included are meeting minutes and resolutions relevant to the development and adoption of this document.

**Notice of Intent to Plan** – Below is an example of the letter that was mailed to the Notice Group on February 1, 2012.

### NOTICE GROUP

Muskegon County  
Blue Lake Township  
Cedar Creek Township  
Dalton Township

Newaygo County  
Bridgeton Township  
Dayton Township  
Sheridan Charter  
Township

Oceana County  
Greenwood Township  
Otto Township

Consumers Energy  
DTE Energy  
Frontier Communications  
Michigan Shore Railroad

February 1, 2012

Ken Mahoney, Chairman  
Muskegon County Board of Commissioners  
Michael E. Kobza Hall of Justice  
990 Terrace Street  
Muskegon, MI 49442

Dear Mr. Mahoney,

On behalf of the Holton Township Planning Commission, and pursuant to requirements of Section 39 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, be advised that Holton Township with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission has started the process of updating the Holton Township Master Plan. Your cooperation and comment are requested during this process.

In addition, be informed that a public meeting has been scheduled for 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at the Holton Township Hall located at 6511 Holton-Whitehall Rd. The purpose of the meeting is to gather community input for the Master Plan.

A draft of the updated Holton Township Master Plan is expected to be completed by October 2012. At that time, a copy of the draft document will be submitted to you for your review and comment.

If you have any questions regarding the Holton Township Master Plan update, please contact me at (231) 722-7878 extension 11 or at [scarlson@wmsrhc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrhc.org). Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Stephen Carlson  
Associate Planner

**Public Hearing Notice** – Published in the Muskegon Chronicle on March, 6, 2012.

NOTICE OF TOWNSHIP MEETING REGARDING  
HOLTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

---

Please be advised that Holton Township, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), will hold a Town Meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 to receive public input for the Holton Township Master Plan Update. The meeting will take place at 7:00 PM at the Holton Township Hall located at 6511 Holton-Whitehall Road, Holton, MI 49425. The meeting is open to the public, and everyone with an interest in the future direction of Holton Township is encouraged to attend the meeting. Citizen participation in this process is essential.

Written comments regarding the Plan Update or the future of Holton Township may also be submitted by March 19, 2012 to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, P.O. Box 387, Muskegon, Michigan 49443 or via electronic mail at [wmsrdc@wmsrdc.org](mailto:wmsrdc@wmsrdc.org). If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Stephen Carlson, Associate Planner, at (231) 722-7878, extension 11 or at [scarlson@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrdc.org).

The Township of Holton will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services for this meeting, such as signers for the hearing impaired, to individuals with disabilities upon one week notice to the Township of Holton. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township of Holton by writing or call the Township Clerk at 231-821-2168.

**Public Hearing and Planning Commission Meeting Minutes** – A public hearing to receive public comment for the Holton Township Master Plan was held at the regular meeting of the Holton Township Planning Commission on March 20, 2012.

Approved May 15, 2012

---

**HOLTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Regular Meeting/Public Hearing**  
**March 20, 2012 - 7:00 p.m.**

---

Meeting called to order by chair, Tom West at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call:	Val Jensen	Guests:	Stephen Carlson - WMSRDC
	Ken Schaub		Erin Kuhn - WMSRDC
	Tim Ylitalo		Dave Hough – Bridgeton Township
	Mike Cygeirt		
	Bill Halbower		
	Tom West		
	Julie Vanderboegh		

Amendments to the Agenda - Michigan Fireworks Safety Act

Motion by Mike Cygeirt, supported by Tim Ylitalo to approve January 17, 2012 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comments – None

Chair, Tom West declared Public Hearing open at 7:05 p.m. Purpose of Hearing is to receive public input on Holton Township Master Plan update. Notice of this Hearing was published in the Muskegon Chronicle on March 6, 2012. Notices were also sent to surrounding townships, utilities and WMSRDC.

There was no correspondence received by WMSRDC or Holton Township regarding this Hearing.

No public opinions during Public Hearing.

Stephen Carlson and Erin Kuhn from WMSRDC commented on tour of Holton Township by Tom West and Bill Halbower earlier in afternoon.

Information/comment sheets were given to Planning Commission members to record their thoughts of following questions:

- (1) What do you like about your community?
- (2) What don't you like about your community and what would you like to change?
- (3) How would you like your community to look in the future?

Discussion on Planning Commission comments with WMSRDC staff.

WMSRDC staff will review notes and comments from Planning Commission members and incorporate in Master Plan update. Goals and objectives to be reviewed at April 2012 meeting.

Chair, Tom West declared Public Hearing closed at 8:15 p.m. Regular Planning Commission meeting resumed.

Report by vice chair, Mike Cygeirt on sections of Zoning Ordinance that Special Use Permit procedures need to be added:

- Section 1.04 F
- Section 1.04 S, 1
- Section 1.4 X, 2
- Section 1/04zz, 2 (d)
- Section 9.01
- Section 21.07, 3a
- Section 22.06
- Section 24.02,, Sec. 1

Letter sent to township attorney, Douglas Hughes regarding updating Township Ordinance. Mr. Hughes indicated he will review and get back with commission.

The 2011 Planning Commission Annual Report has been placed at Township.

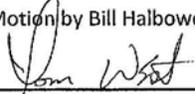
Chair, Tom West reviewed the new policy of the Michigan Fireworks Safety Act effective January 1, 2012.

New Business – None

Commissioner Comments – Val Jensen – House on Syers Road, request for condemning,

Next meeting scheduled for April 17, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Bill Halbower, supported by Tim Ylitalo to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Motion carried.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom West, Chair

5-12-12  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Vanderboegh, Secretary

5-15-12  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Right to Final Approval** – On August 14, 2012, the Township Board passed a resolution reserving its right to approve or reject a proposed master plan approved by the Planning Commission.

RECORDED  
SEP 07 2012  
WHSKDC

**TOWNSHIP OF HOLTON  
COUNTY OF MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN  
Resolution No. 2012 - 4  
RESOLUTION ASSERTING TOWNSHIP BOARD  
RIGHT TO APPROVE MASTER PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare or amend a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, the MPEA authorizes a township board to assert by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan or plan amendment approved by the Planning Commission;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, pursuant to MCL 125.3843(3), the HOLTON Township Board reserves to itself the right to approve or reject a proposed Master Plan or Master Plan Amendment approved by the Planning Commission; and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT**, after approval of a proposed Master Plan or Master Plan Amendment by the Planning Commission, the Holton Township Board shall approve or reject the proposed Master Plan or Master Plan Amendment. A statement recording the Township Board's approval of proposed Master Plan or Master Plan Amendment, signed by the Township Clerk, shall be included on the inside of the front or back cover of the Master Plan and, if the future land use map is a separate document from the text of the Master Plan, on the future land use map.

The foregoing resolution offered by Board Member Treasurer Halbower.  
Second offered by Board Member Trustee Wilson.

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

Aye: Treasurer Halbower, Supervisor Noble, Trustee Kittel, Trustee Wilson

Nay: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: Clerk Johnson

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2012

Melanie Johnson  
Holton Township Clerk

**Legislative Body Review Period** – Below is an example of the letter that was sent to the Notice Group on November 9, 2012 pursuant to the mandatory 63-day legislative body review period.

November 9, 2012

Ken Mahoney, Chairman  
Muskegon County Board of Commissioners  
Michael E. Kobza Hall of Justice  
990 Terrace Street  
Muskegon, MI 49442

Dear Mr. Mahoney,

On behalf of the Holton Township Planning Commission, and pursuant to Section 41 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 22 of 2008, MCL 125.3841, I would like to advise you that Holton Township, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, has completed a proposed draft of the Holton Township Master Plan. It is anticipated that this plan will act as the Township's official Master Plan once adopted.

At the September 11, 2012 Holton Township Board Meeting, the Board approved the draft Plan for the state-mandated 63-day legislative body review period. All local governments and other entities receiving this notice have until January 14, 2013 to review the Plan, which is available at <http://www.holtontownship.com/public-notice-holton-master-plan-draft.html>. A CD copy of the proposed plan is available upon request.

Please submit written comments to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, 316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340, P.O. Box 387, Muskegon, MI 49443, or via electronic mail at [scarlson@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrdc.org).

In addition, a public hearing to receive public comment is scheduled for January 15, 2013 at 7:00 PM at the Holton Township Hall located at 6511 Holton-Whitehall Rd. A public notice will be published in the Muskegon Chronicle closer to the date of the hearing.

If you have any questions regarding the Holton Township Master Plan, please contact me at (231) 722-7878 extension 11 or at [scarlson@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrdc.org). Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Stephen Carlson  
Senior Planner

**Compliance Statement** – A Compliance Statement was sent to the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners which included the names and addresses of all entities in the Notice Group that received notice of the proposed Holton Township Master Plan review period.

**Holton Township Master Plan  
Compliance Statement to County**

To: Muskegon County Board of Commissioners  
From: Holton Township Planning Commission  
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
Date: November 9, 2012

On behalf of the Holton Township Planning Commission, I am pleased to notify the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners that Holton Township, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, has submitted a copy of the proposed Holton Township Master Plan to the planning commission or legislative body of each local unit of government contiguous to Holton Township, and the utilities operating within Holton Township, for review and comment. The proposed Plan was distributed on November 9, 2012, and the deadline for written comments is January 14, 2013. Comments regarding the proposed Plan will also be received at a public hearing scheduled for January 15, 2013 at the Holton Township Hall.

This letter is sent pursuant to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3841, which also directs Holton Township to provide the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners with the names and addresses of each entity to which notification of the proposed Plan was sent. These entities are included on the attached page.

If you have any questions regarding the Holton Township Master Plan, please contact me at (231) 722-7878 extension 11 or at [scarlson@wmsrde.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrde.org).

Sincerely,

Stephen Carlson  
Senior Planner  
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Wes Lomax, Chairman  
Cedar Creek Township Planning  
Commission  
6556 Sweeter Road  
Twin Lake, MI 49457

John Knoll, Chairman  
Dalton Township Planning Commission  
1616 E. Riley Thompson Road  
Muskegon, MI 49445

Norm Swier, Chairman  
Blue Lake Township Planning Commission  
1491 Owasippe Road  
Twin Lake, MI 49457

Vernon Lyles, Chairman  
Otto Township Planning Commission  
5458 S. 128<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
PO Box 115  
Rothbury, MI 49452

Chairperson  
Greenwood Township Planning  
Commission  
5589 S. 200<sup>th</sup> Ave  
P.O. Box 358  
Hesperia, MI 49421

Keith Breuker, Chairman  
Dayton Township Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 68  
Fremont, MI 49412

Mary Pikel, Chairperson  
Sheridan Charter Township Planning  
Commission  
P.O. Box 53  
Fremont, MI 49412

Chris Matteson, Chairman  
Bridgeton Township Planning Commission  
11830 S. Warner Ave  
Grant, MI 49327

Adam Wright, Chairman  
Newaygo County Board of Commissioners  
7751 Basswood  
Newaygo, MI 49337

Larry VanSickle, Chairman  
Oceana County Board of Commissioners  
2491 E. Polk Road  
Hart, MI 49420

John Bixby, General Manager  
Michigan Shore Railroad  
101 Enterprise Drive  
Vassar, MI 48768

Dale Zuelch, General Manager  
Frontier Communications Company  
860 Terrace Street  
Muskegon, MI 49440

DTE Energy  
2359 Olthoff Drive  
Muskegon, MI 49444

Consumers Energy  
2010 Hoyt Street  
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

**Public Review and Hearing Notice** – Published in the Muskegon Chronicle on December 30, 2012.

NOTICE OF TOWNSHIP MEETING REGARDING  
HOLTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

---

Please be advised that Holton Township, with assistance from the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 15, 2013 to receive public input regarding the proposed draft of the Holton Township Master Plan. The meeting will take place at 7:00 PM at the Holton Township Hall located at 6511 Holton-Whitehall Road, Holton, MI 49425. A copy of the proposed Master Plan is available for public review at the Holton Library. The proposed Master Plan is also available for download from [www.holtontownship.com](http://www.holtontownship.com).

Written comments regarding the proposed Master Plan may be submitted by January 14, 2013 to the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, P.O. Box 387, Muskegon, Michigan 49443 or via electronic mail at [wmsrdc@wmsrdc.org](mailto:wmsrdc@wmsrdc.org). If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Stephen Carlson, Senior Planner, at (231) 722-7878, extension 11 or at [scarlson@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scarlson@wmsrdc.org).

The Township of Holton will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services for this meeting, such as signers for the hearing impaired, to individuals with disabilities upon one week notice to the Township of Holton. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township of Holton by writing or call the Township Clerk at 231-821-2168.

**Planning Commission Approval** – Following the Public Hearing on January 15, 2013, the Planning Commission approved the proposed Holton Township Master Plan by resolution and sent it to the Township Board for final approval. No comments were received from the public during either the public hearing, or the preceding public review period.

TOWNSHIP OF HOLTON  
 COUNTY OF MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN  
 Resolution No. PC 2013-1  
**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION TO ADOPT MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and  
 WHEREAS, on August 14, 2012, the Township Board asserted by resolution its MPEA-authorized right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan; and  
 WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Township Board for review and comment; and  
 WHEREAS, on September 11, 2012, the Holton Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and  
 WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and  
 WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 15, 2013 to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed Master Plan; and  
 WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed Master Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Adoption of 2012 Master Plan.** The Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2012 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables contained therein.
2. **Distribution to Township Board and Notice Group.** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843 the Township Board has asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan. Therefore the final step for adoption of the plan is approval by resolution by the Township Board. In addition, the Planning Commission approves distribution of the adopted Master Plan to the Notice Group, pending Township Board adoption of the Master Plan. *AS Amended*
3. **Findings of Fact.** The Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the Township Board and public hearing, and with the assistance of a professional planning group, and finds that the proposed Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands in Holton Township.
4. **Effective Date.** The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption by the Township Board.

The foregoing resolution offered by Planning Commissioner Val Jensen

Second offered by Planning Commissioner Mike Cygart

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

"Aye": All Yes Tom West, Mike Cygart, Julie Vanderboegh, Bill Halbower  
 (list names of members voting "aye") Ken Schaub, Timothy Ylitalo, Val Jensen

"Nay": no

(list names of members voting "nay")

The Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Julie Vanderboegh  
 (Name), Secretary Julie Vanderboegh



Resolution No. PC 2013-1 offered by Planning Commissioner Val Jensen, supported by Planning Commissioner, Mike Cygeirt to approve Resolution to adopt Master Plan and to send to Holton Township Board for final approval.

Roll Call Vote: Aye – Tom West, Mike Cygeirt, Julie Vanderboegh, Bill Halbower, Ken Schaub, Timothy Ylitalo, Val Jensen.

Nay - None

Unfinished Business:

Open/Close Public Comment – None

Bill Halbower reported on Special Use Permits in townships similar to Holton Township as to their procedure. Each township defines own special uses. Stephen Carlson encouraged Planning Commission to keep in contact and be involved in the Muskegon Area Wide Plan.

Civil Infraction wording report by Ken Schaub on fines being consistent in our ordinances. Ken to update penalty wording and bring back to next meeting.

Bill Halbower to check on Civil Infraction schedule.

Committee to begin update and reviewing Holton Township Zoning Ordinances. To be completed by end of 2013.

New Business:

Open/Close Public Comments – None

Election of Officers for 2013

Motion by Bill Halbower, supported by Ken Schaub to elect Tom West as chair. Motion carried.

Motion by Ken Schaub, supported by Tim Ylitalo to elect Mike Cygeirt at vice chair. Motion carried.

Motion by Tom West, supported by Bill Halbower to elect Julie Vanderboegh as secretary. Motion carried.

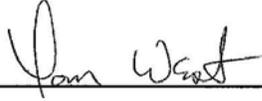
Officers for Holton Township Planning Commission 2013 are:

Chair	Tom West
Vice Chair	Mike Cygeirt
Secretary	Julie Vanderboegh

Scheduled Planning Commission training dates confirmed for February 19, April 16, June 18, 2013. All training session to begin at 7:10 p.m.

Reminder of next meeting – Tuesday, February 19, 2013 @ 7:10 p.m.

Motion by Mike Cygeirt, supported by Tim Ylitalo to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Motion carried.



3-19-13

Tom West, Chair

Date



3-19-13

Julie Vanderboegh, Secretary

Date

**Holton Township Board Approval – The Holton Township Master Plan was adopted by resolution by the Township Board on February 12, 2013.**

RECEIVED  
FEB 21 2013  
WMSRDC

TOWNSHIP OF HOLTON  
COUNTY OF MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN  
Resolution No. 2013-1  
TOWNSHIP BOARD RESOLUTION TO ADOPT MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township; and  
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Township Board for review and comment; and  
WHEREAS, on September 11, 2013, the Holton Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the proposed Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and  
WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and  
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 15, 2013 to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed Master Plan; and  
WHEREAS, on January 15, 2013, the Planning Commission approved and adopted by resolution the proposed Master Plan; and  
WHEREAS, the Township Board finds that the proposed Master Plan is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township;  
WHEREAS, on August 14, 2012, the Township Board asserted by resolution its MPEA-authorized right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. Adoption of 2012 Master Plan.** The Township Board hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2012 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables contained therein. Pursuant to MCL 125.3843 the Township Board has asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and therefore the approval granted herein is the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843.
- 2. Distribution to Notice Group.** The Township Board approves distribution of the adopted plan to the Notice Group.
- 3. Findings of Fact.** The Township Board has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the Planning Commission and public hearing, and with the assistance of a professional planning group, and finds that the Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands in Holton Township.
- 4. Effective Date.** The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.

The foregoing resolution offered by Board Member Treasurer Halbower  
Second offered by Board Member Clerk Johnson

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

"Aye": Treas. Halbower, Supervisor Noble, Clerk Johnson

(list names of members voting "aye")

"Nay": none

(list names of members voting "nay")

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

Melanie Johnson  
(Name), Clerk Feb. 12, 2013

Absent: Trustee Jager, Trustee Wilson

# Appendix B

## Comments

---

### Holton Township Master Plan - Public Hearing - March 20, 2012

#### Question #1: What do you like about your community?

- Close-knit
- Schools and teachers
- Good place to raise a family
- Quiet township
- Rural nature and low density of development
- Proximity to regional services in Fremont and Muskegon
- Development of recreation facilities
- Quality streams and rivers
- Well-defined/planned and varied areas of development
- Adequate commercial areas
- Community activities and festivals
- Easy access to local businesses
- Railroads and M-120

#### Question #2: What don't you like about your community or what would you like to change?

- Blight/trash
- Roads
- Lack of funding to upgrade and for services
- Lacking business (com/mfg/light ind.)
- Poor internet coverage
- Improve downtown area
- Improve m-120/Holton-duck lake rd intersection
- Poverty
- Lack of local professionals
- Community image
- Underutilized land
- Relocate scattered businesses to M-120 corridor

#### Question #3: How would you like your community to look in the future?

- Great place to visit
- Tourism/destination/recreation
- Better roads
- Senior/multi-unit housing
- Better quality housing
- Downtown revitalized
- Internet
- Retain youth
- Health services
- Support local business and encourage more to meet residents needs
- Activities for youth
- Clean up area
- Defined areas for additional growth
- Remain a small community and preserve character
- Better government/resident communication
- Leverage proximity to Blue Lake FAC and Scout Camps



P.O. BOX 328 6511 HOLTON WHITEHALL ROAD  
HOLTON, MICHIGAN 49425

PH. (231) 821-2168

FAX: (231) 821-2293

September 19, 2012

TO: Planning Commission

RE: 2012 Master Plan Draft

After reviewing the 2012 Master Plan Draft, the Holton Township Board would ask that the following be removed:

- #6 under Planning & Growth Management which reads, "Encourage scattered, existing businesses to re-locate to appropriate and defined areas of the Township."
- #4 under Economic Growth which reads, "Encourage relocation of scattered cottage industries to appropriately defined areas."

Thank you,

Melanie Johnson,  
Holton Township Clerk  
Per Holton Township Board

---

316 Morris Avenue - Suite 340 - PO Box 387 - Muskegon, MI 49443-0387

Telephone: 231/722-7878 - Fax: 231/722-9362

[www.wmsrdc.org](http://www.wmsrdc.org) - [wmsrdc@wmsrdc.org](mailto:wmsrdc@wmsrdc.org)