



O N E K A M A T O W N S H I P M A S T E R P L A N

2023

## “Gateway Community to M-22 North”

When you start your journey with Onekama, you begin with some of the Third Coast’s best resorts, dining, golf, sport fishing, and unspoiled beauty to be found in the North.

This route takes you along the magnificent Lake Michigan shore line – around the Leelanau Peninsula, through Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park, to Grand Traverse Bay and right into Traverse City. This is a route that rivals Route 66 for its appeal as a scenic drive to a spectacular array of wonderful places to visit and enjoy. Some of them include:

- Several inland lakes that have direct access to Lake Michigan – safe harbors and docking for boats of all sizes.
- Sport fishing on streams, inland lakes, and Lake Michigan – considered to be among the best in the world.
- Cherry, apple, and peach orchards, vineyards and vegetable farms with quaint roadside stands that compel you to stop.
- A growing grape/wine industry that already has national and international awards for taste and quality.
- Golf courses ranked among the best in the nation with dining opportunities to match.
- Beaches that rival those found in the Caribbean but without the crowds or the salt.
- Quaint and unique villages with surprises for shoppers for all tastes.

Onekama is a gateway to what the best of the “North” is all about and represents the beginning of an unforgettable Highway 22 experience in Northwest Michigan.

*Bob Wangbichler, 2010 Master Plan Leadership Committee Member*

# A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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# T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Why a Master Plan	5
Township Profile	11
Population	11
Households	13
Community Indicators	13
Employment	18
Existing Conditions	25
Regional Scope	26
Soils	28
Topography	29
Wetlands	31
Floodplains	33
Open Space	37
Community Opinions	43
Cornerstones	51
Future Land Use	57
Resource Management Zones	63
Zoning Plan	66
Action Plan	67
Focus Areas	67
Action Plan	68
The Last Word	69



# Why a Master Plan?

The Onekama Township Community Master Plan is a guidebook and public policy document describing how the Township should develop in the future. How a specific piece of property is used today and in the future will be regulated by the Onekama Township Zoning Ordinance.

## The purpose

The purpose of the Onekama Township Master Plan effort is to update the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) award winning 2010 Onekama Community Master Plan.

## What is a master plan?

“Master plan” is a serious-sounding name, and indeed it’s a serious document. Intended to provide a clearly articulated vision of the community 15 to 20 years into the future, it either succinctly describes persistent concerns or defines the development of the “ideal” community. It also contains a guide to achieve that

development based on careful study of many factors, and it can be legally referenced in land use decisions.

But before it’s all those things, a master plan is a dream.

The process of master planning begins with dreaming about how a community could be a better place to live. Citizens gather and share perspectives on their community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We talk about what the physical spaces in a community mean to us, how we would like to use them, and what we could do to make them better. We consider the challenges facing us and the organizations we could enlist to help overcome those challenges.

These are issues which must be considered for the success of any community, and the residents of the communities participating in this collaboration have decided to take it into our own hands. We know that unless we take control of our destiny, individually and as a region, our dreams may be left to debate.

## But...why?

The benefits of having an updated master plan are that it will:

- provide a point of reference for all land use decisions.
- prevent arbitrary or capricious decision-making.
- ensure wise use of resources.
- assist in preserving community assets.
- provide a sound basis for funding opportunities.
- protect land use types and natural resource assets.
- provide a well-documented and justified basis for funding requests.
- understand possible opportunities to achieve economies of scale.
- capitalize on existing assets.
- understand how sustainability plays a role in maintaining a high quality of life for current and future generations.

## ...and what we did next

The process of developing the master plans began with the formal development of a Master Plan Team. Consisting of representatives from the Onekama Township Planning Commission, this team constituted the linchpin of the Initiative: members provided guidance to the consultants, acted as liaisons with their respective boards, and worked with their elected officials. Chapter 1: Why a Master Plan describes the intent and goal of the master plan process. Chapter 2 discusses population and housing in the Township and Village.

Chapter 3 addresses existing conditions in the Township. Community input, described in detail in Chapter 4, was based on an Internet survey asking questions that will guide expectations and outcomes in the plan.

Chapter 5 called Cornerstones outlines the broad themes and strategies needed to address the expectations resulting from information gleaned from the previous chapters and community survey. Chapter 6 includes the vision for the Township and the Future Land Use Map, known as the “FLUM.”

Lastly, Chapter 7 addresses how to implement the recommendations and next steps for the Planning Commission and Township boards and committees.

## ...who are we

When Adam Stronach sought a place to build a sawmill in 1845, he knew the wooded acres along Portage Lake would be ideal. The area was known to settlers as early as 1840 by its Odawa name, onekamenk, or “portage.” Although its inhabitants called it by its English name for a time, there was another Portage, Michigan and the townspeople voted for a reversion to its historic name of Onekama in 1871. Though the lumber industry was crucial to early development, the scenic beauty and access to natural resources transformed the Township to a resort-based community.

The village of Onekama sits on the north end of Portage Lake, a body of water with a unique history in the area. Until 1871, the lake was landlocked, but at that time a channel was dug that evened out the level of Portage Lake with Lake Michigan. It allowed vessels to pass between the lakes. By 1879, the federal government stepped in to make it a harbor of refuge, since there was no refuge for boats along Lake Michigan between Ludington and South Manitou Island.

The Onekama Community has the glacial benefit of rolling topography, an extensive and sandy Lake Michigan shoreline, large swaths of woodlands, picturesque farms, and expansive natural areas. In and around the village and Portage Lake there are numerous tree-lined ridges that tuck the village and lake into their setting and act as a framework for the beauty of the surrounding community.

## Making it legal

According the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008, the general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

- is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.
- 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.
- will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare.

It also has to talk about at least one of the following things:

- a system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets;
- safety from fire and other dangers;
- light and air;
- healthful and convenient distribution of population;
- good civic design;
- public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements;
- the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

Due to climate and the recreational and resort nature of the Onekama Community, the population, as well as activity, increases in the summer months. These summer residents are scattered throughout the area in small communities such as Portage Point, Red Park and Wick-a-te-wah, to name a few.

### Onekama Village and Area

Since the 1870's the Village of Onekama has undergone several transformations. It began as an agriculture, lumber and sawmill logging community relying on Portage Lake and Lake Michigan for transportation and trade. As years passed Onekama, which established Village Government in 1891, became a community with a commercial hub composed of numerous thriving retail businesses and much commerce via boat and rail. Its current status is a small village with some convenience shopping. The Village has many older structures from the late 1800's and early 1900's, a few being of locally manufactured brick but most being of frame construction. Some newer structures are of brick or a combination of materials. There are several churches, a consolidated school district and a small business district along M22. There are also a number of seasonally used cottages in this Village of approximately 600 residents, many of whom are retired.

### Williamsport

Williamsport is located at the southwest end of Portage Lake. After being platted in 1872 as a small town, it developed in the early part of the last century as a resort residential area. Most of the homes are of frame construction and many would be eligible as local historic landmarks (the Sandenburgh-Rogers House, 1882-1 883, is on the State and National historic registers). There are a few split-rail fences and a few woven wire fences, but the majority of the property boundaries are marked with hedges. The density in this area would probably average about one residence per acre. There is no through traffic in this

area, since ingress and egress is by a single gravel road.

As a result of this, all homes enjoy a high degree of privacy. There is a platted public roadway to the south pier of the Channel that has been modified and developed by the Township for parking and pedestrian access to the pier.

### Red Park

This resort subdivision is located west of the center portion of the south shore of Portage Lake. It was opened as a resort in 1895 and has many cottages of historic significance that may merit designation on the State and National historic registers. It is also the location of Camp Tosebo, which operated from 1912 until 1977. The Camp property is on the State and National historic registers. All of the dwellings are privately owned, and some are rented out as resort property. They are mostly of frame construction and are located on relatively small lots. This area has a high degree of privacy, since many dead-end roads from Crescent Beach Road can extend into it.

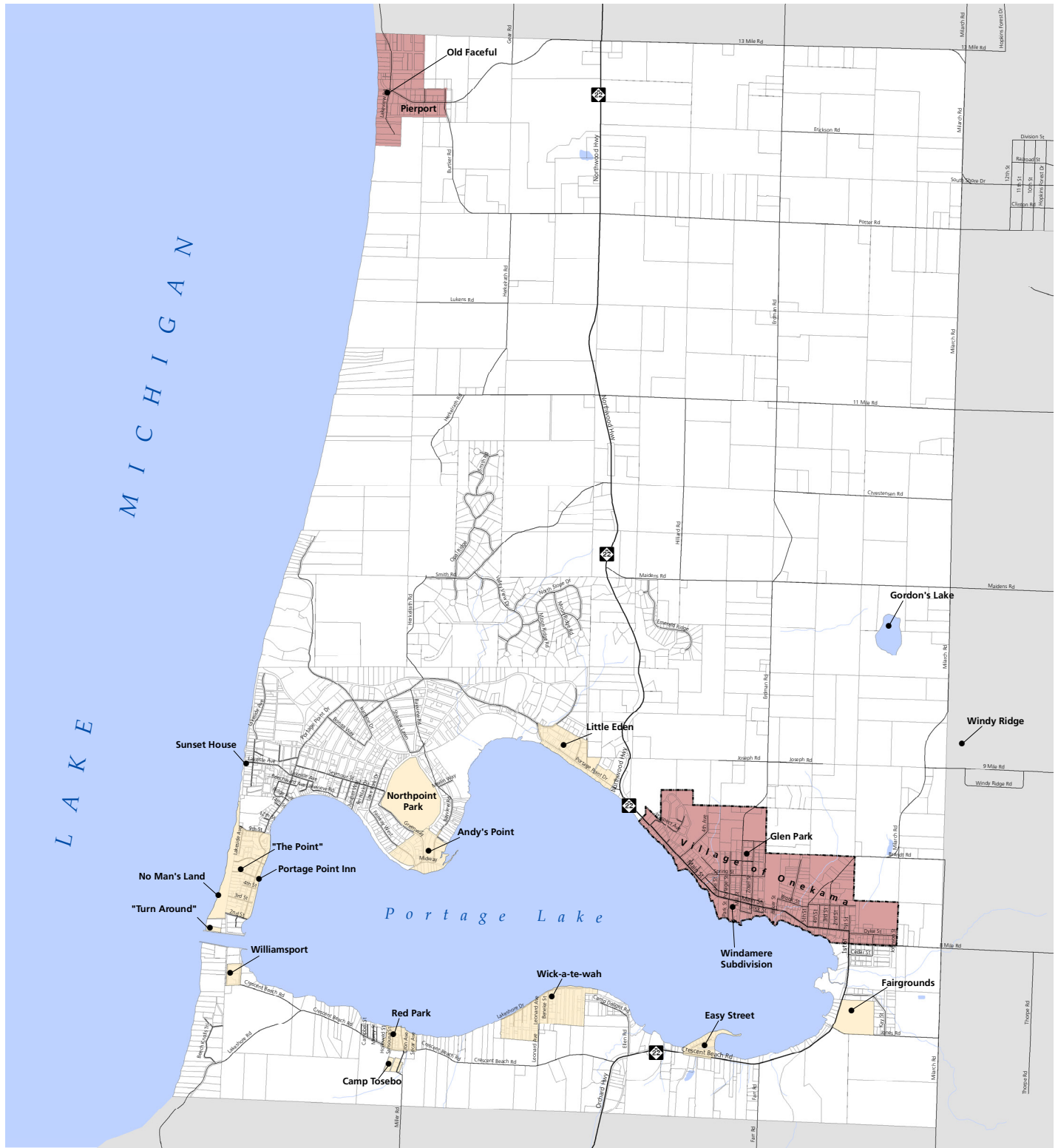
### Wick-a-te-wah

This resort subdivision is located at the center portion of the south shore of Portage Lake. It developed as a resort community in the early 1900's and now has many newer year-around homes. Many of these dwellings are a frame construction, but there are also many brick veneered and earlier ornamental concrete block dwellings.

### Eagle Point

This resort subdivision, platted in 1909, is the location of the Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp (since 1947), which was established as Camp Delight in 1912. This area also has a high degree of privacy, since only two dead-end roads from recent Beach Road can be used to access it.

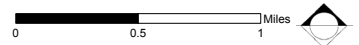




THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY

# Local Geographic Sites & Settlements

Data Source: Northwest Michigan Council of Governments



BASE MAP ELEMENTS

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Line
- Major Road

THEME ELEMENTS

- Settlement Area
- Local Geographic Area
- Local Geographic Site



## Little Eden Camp

This resort area in Portage Park Addition (1917) and Portage Park Addition No. 1 (1921) is located on the north center shore of Portage Lake and is the location of Little Eden Camp, which was purchased in 1944 by a Mennonite Church group. The Camp had been established in 1924 as the St. Mary's (Episcopal) Summer School and Camp, and is on the site of the former Seymour Inn, which was renovated into the Camp's headquarters (now demolished). An artesian well, now on Camp property, has provided water to passersby for over eighty years. In addition to the Camp, there are a number of cottages on the north side of Portage Point Road, some being on side streets. Many of these cottages date from the 1900's into the 1920's and are mostly of frame construction. Most enjoy a view of Portage Lake.

## Portage Point and Portage Park

These resort subdivisions are at the west end of Portage Lake and are unique in that there are many points of public access to Portage Lake and Lake Michigan. Portage Point is the location of Portage Point Inn (1902), which is on the National historic register. Portage Point was platted in 1902; Portage Park was platted in 1915.

There are a number of cottages of historical significance in these resorts. The R. E. Harris "Fenmoor" boat-house (1930), a cottage that was constructed in Portage Park to resemble a steamship, is on the State historic register and is by the stream bed of Portage Creek, where the mills and village of the early settlement of Portage were located. Most of the early cottages are of frame construction; however, many of the newer dwellings are of brick and concrete block construction.

## Andy's Point (Bayview-Midway)

This area of Portage Park Addition (1917) is located on North Point that juts into

Portage Lake from its north side. The area is also known locally as "Andy's Point." These homes are of varied construction styles, with some frame construction, some brick veneer, some stone veneer, and some concrete block. Most of these homes enjoy an excellent view of the Lake. There are few fences and most homes occupy relatively large lots. Access to this area is by a looped road from Portage Point Road. These homes enjoy a relative degree of privacy. Approximately sixty acres that originally were developed as a golf course for Portage Park Addition are now Onekama Township's North Point Park.

## Pierport

A pier had been built as early as 1866 at the location of this small community at the north edge of the Township on the Lake Michigan shoreline. This neighborhood can be accessed by paved roads from the east or south, and a gravel road from the north (which is a nature trail unique to Manistee County). It is a rather private community and has had little development since the early 1900's other than for resort purposes. Many of the structures have historical significance; most are of frame or log construction. A parklike access to Lake Michigan exists at the end of Thirteen Mile Road and has the artesian well "Old Faceful," which is marked "1931."

## Ellen Road-Easy Street-Farr Road-Crescent Beach Road (M-22) (Commercial-Residential)

This area is located at the eastern end of the south shore of Portage Lake. The Easy Street area is unique in that it is built up on fill made by digging its channels connecting with Portage Lake. All of these lots have waterway access to the Lake. There is a condominium development nearby, four permitted marinas, a restaurant, and a campground. All of the development in this area has been since the 1950's. A golf course with condominiums has been developed since the 1990's and is accessed by Farr Road, although this property is in Manistee Township. There are few fences in this area

and very little privacy, since most of this property is within sight of M-22.

## Sunset Point

Established in 1998, Sunset Point consists of a 29-unit site condominium located in Section 23. Access is off Maidens Road on Emerald Ridge Trail, a paved public road.

## Context

Onekama Township is a collection of historic resort communities and individual residential lot development. This combination creates a resort feel for the Township and serves to attract those seeking this rural-resort environment.





# Township Profile

Onkama Township consists of a mixture of year-round and seasonal residents who wish to enjoy rural living and the natural setting of Portage Lake and Lake Michigan.

## Population

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the Village of Onkama and Onkama Township have a year-round population of 380 and 1,255 residents, respectively, which was a 1% increase from the 2010 U.S. Census. Onkama Township and the Village growth were on par with the State of Michigan and higher than Manistee County which slightly declined.

Based on a study conducted by Michigan State University Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism, Manistee County seasonal residents increase the population by 59% during the months of July through August. Using this information the Onkama Township summer population is estimated at 3,060. This information is important because the increase in population during the summer months places a higher demand on public facilities and services but also increases the amount of disposable income available within the immediate market. Many local businesses rely on this annual bump in population to sustain their business through the winter season.

Figure 01: Population Comparison

	2020	2026	Change
Onkama Village	380	444	1.16%
Onkama Township	1,255	1,408	1.12%
Manistee County	24,539	24,914	1.01%
State of Michigan	9,973,907	10,211,228	1.03%
United States	326,569,308	345,887,495	1.06%

Source: US Census Bureau (2020) ACS 5-Year Estimates; ERSI 2022

## Population Indicators

Population trends and key indicators reveals that the Village and Township population are comprised of older residents. Over 54% of the year round populations are generation “G” (born 1945 or earlier) and generation “B” (baby boomers born between 1946 to 1964). School age population constitutes approximately 12%-14% of the year round population which should be a concern to the local public school district.

Since 2010 the population has been increasing but based on the demographic profile the increase isn't from new births but migration into the Township. The migration pattern is likely from former seasonal homeowners converting to year round residency. This is supported by high proportion of older residents and the low percentage of income, 17.1%, spent on mortgage payments. Younger population groups tend to spend a higher percentage of monthly income on mortgage payments.

The median value of housing in the Village and Township is \$156,300 and \$215,300, respectively, resulting from the percentage of homes valued in excess of \$400,000. Per capita income in 2020 was estimated at \$30,464 in the Village and \$37,841 in the Township which are higher than Manistee County estimated at \$28,365.

Median net worth is estimated at \$294,195 with the average net worth estimated at \$1,732,923 in the Township. The higher net worth households are 55 years and older. Net Worth is total household wealth minus debt, secured and unsecured. Net worth includes home equity, equity in pension plans, net equity in vehicles, IRAs and Keogh accounts, business equity, interest-earning assets and mutual fund shares, stocks, etc. 21.9% of Onekama Township households have a net worth over \$1,000,000 and 13.7% have a net worth over \$2,000,000.

Household income forecasts indicate that households with an income of \$50,000 or

less will decline between 2021 and 2026 while households over \$50,000 will see an increase. Median household income is projected to increase 2.62% per year between 2021 and 2026 while household growth is forecasted at 0.29%. This information indicates that community wealth will come from existing residents not through the introduction of new housing, although new households are forecasted but at a rate lower than household income.

As a result, the Township will continue to increase in wealth and be a magnet for wealthier households seeking a rural and resort lifestyle surrounded by an abundance of natural resources.

## Civilian Labor Force

The civilian labor force is defined as any individual over the age of 16 years old. In Onekama Township there are 1,254 individuals in this classification of which 586 are employed. Labor force participation is 48.6% with an unemployment rate of 3.9%. Of those employed, 57.4% are classified as white collar, 21.5% as blue collar, and 21.1% as services. The service classification includes healthcare support and protective services, and food-related positions. 25.7% of all employment is engaged in management or business/financial occupations.

## ALICE

As noted, Onekama Township has a concentration of higher income households with an average net worth of \$1,732,923. However, there are households in the Township that are struggling financially and these are referred to as asset limited, income constrained, employed, or ALICE households. These are households that are above the federal poverty level (FLP) that lack sufficient assets to weather a household or family crisis, and struggle meeting basic household necessities. In Onekama Township 32% of households fall into this category.

The household survival budget for Manistee County is based on a family with 2 adults, 1 infant and 1 preschooler. In total, this family needs in 2016 dollars, \$52,452 in annual earning, or \$26.23 per hour, to meet basic household necessities.



## Households

Year-round households in the Village and Township are projected to increase at rate above projected forecasts for Manistee County and the State of Michigan. Forecasts do not account for the construction of seasonal homes, however based on seasonal population estimates the number of total households within the Township will likely increase, as well. Figure 02 below enumerates the forecasted growth in households by entity.



Figure 02: Household Comparison

	2000	2010	2021	2026	2010 2021	2000 2026
Village of Onekama	197	205	223	227	8.70%	15.22%
Onekama Township	609	634	678	688	6.94%	12.97%
Manistee County	9,860	10,308	10,567	10,595	2.51%	7.45%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; 01-03-2022

## Community Indicators

Onekama Township is a homogeneous community. Esri Tapestry Segmentation provides a detailed description of America’s neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinct segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition. Neighborhoods with the most similar characteristics are grouped together, and neighborhoods showing divergent characteristics are separated.

Tapestry is a market segmentation system built from using a large, well-selected array of attributes of demographic and socioeconomic variables to identify numerous unique consumer markets throughout the U.S. These segments reflect

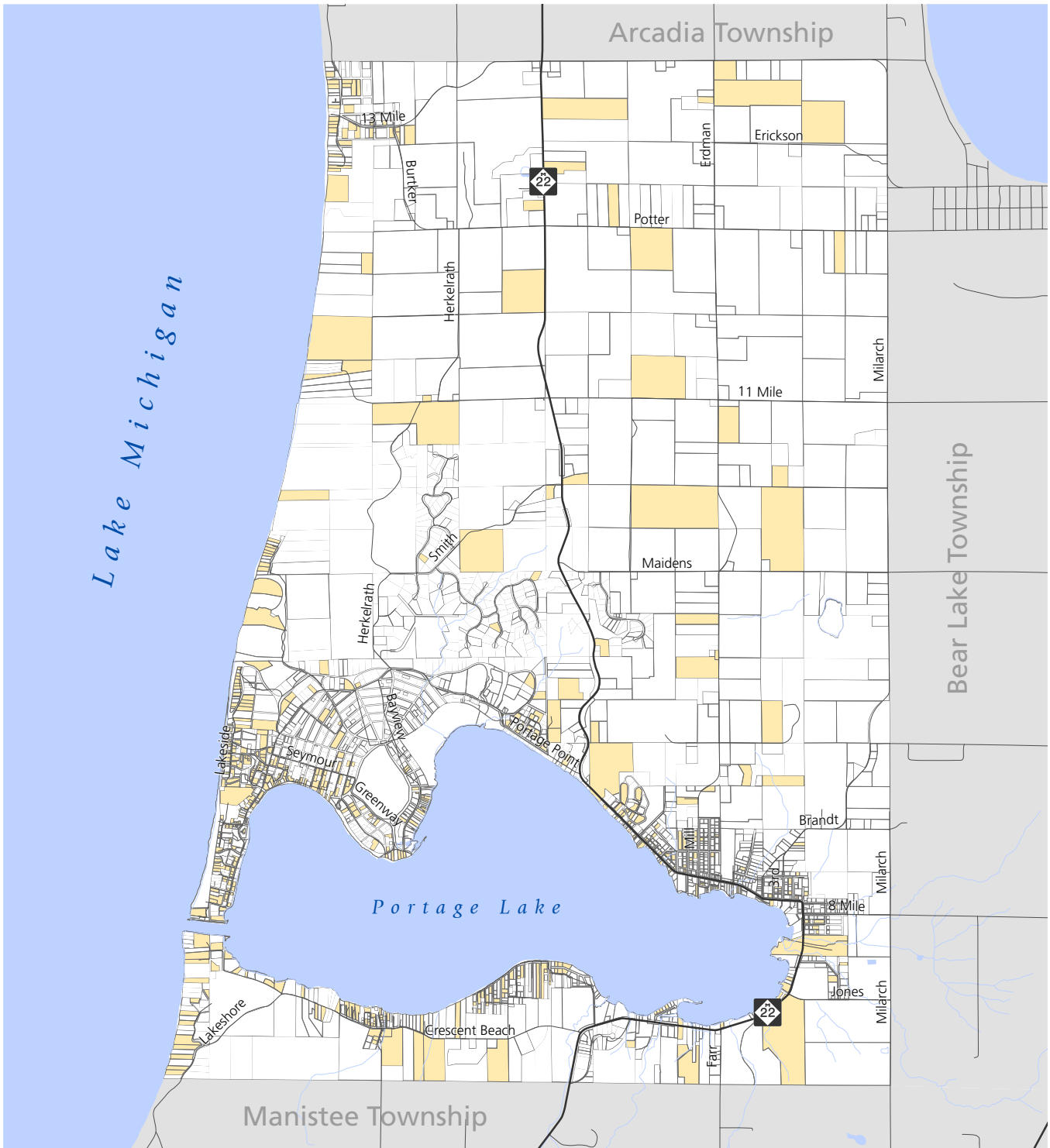
demographic shifts over the last decade to established consumer markets, as well as the emergence of new markets due to population growth, demographic and socioeconomic change and transforming consumer behavior.

According to ERSI Business Analyst, Onekama Township has a diversity rating of 13 out of a possible 100. The lower the rating the less diverse the population. 90.6% of the households are classified as “Rural Resort Dwellers” and the balance of households are classified as “Rooted Rural.”

Rural Resort Dwellers household type is single family/seasonal. Those residents that are not retired work in service-related or professional businesses. The median






age is 59.1 years (40.9 years for the State of Michigan and 38.8 years for the U.S.) which indicates a high proportion of retirement households with a median annual income of \$66,024. Over 50% of the households in this demographic group have a college or higher education level.

This demographic group have accumulated wealth and prefer to spend their disposable income on gear to support their hobbies, which include fishing and hunting. Median housing values is estimated at \$268,657. Average household size is 2.03 persons.



Onekama Township, Manistee County  
**Residential Homestead Exemption**

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Manistee County GIS, Esri Basemap

-  State Roads
-  All Roads
-  Rivers / Streams
-  Lakes / Ponds
-  <100% Homestead



## Housing Market

Although the Village and Township share a common geographical location their respective housing stocks are different. The Township housing stock is comprised of almost exclusively single family detached units. However, in the Village detached units only comprise 78% of the units.

The median age of the housing stock reflects the historical development pattern where the Village was the primary settlement on Portage Lake and the Township developed afterwards. The Village and Township both have a high percentage of seasonal housing units, 42% and 56%, respectively. These percentages are in line with the MSU seasonal housing study which noted that Manistee County summer population increases by 59%.

The aggregate taxable valuation of residential property in the Township is \$190,432,300. There are 758 parcels classified as homestead (principle residential exempt) with an aggregate valuation of \$114,362,600 and 505 non-homestead parcels with an aggregate valuation of \$80,069,700. The map entitled, "Homestead Properties," illustrates parcels are non-homestead. It is likely that non-homestead properties are also seasonal homes due to their tax status.

## Housing Models

A 2019 Target Market Analysis conducted by Land Use | USA for Networks Northwest indicated that Manistee County could support 332 rental units with 14 located in Onekama and 114 owner units with 7 located in Onekama. The study did not take into consideration the amount of housing that been pulled off the market due to their conversion to short-term rentals (STRs). The study also concluded that the housing market demand will likely continue due to housing supply shortage and the imbalance between wages and the cost of housing.

Figure 03: Housing Characteristics

Housing Units by Units in Structure		
	Village	Township
Total	353	1004
1, detached	276	990
1, attached	13	12
2	0	0
3 or 4	19	0
5 to 9	15	0
10 to 19	10	2
20 to 49	0	0
50 or more	0	0
Mobile home	20	0
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0
Vacant Housing Units		
Total Vacant Housing Units	205	634
For Rent	12	3
Rented, not occupied	0	0
For sale only	22	22
Sold, not occupied	0	0
Seasonal	150	567
For migrants	0	0
Other	21	42
% Detached Housing	78.1%	98.6%
% Vacant	58.0%	63.1%
% Seasonal	42.4%	56.4%
Median Age of Housing Stock	1961	1970

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In 2022, Beckett & Raeder used its proprietary housing model to assess the existing housing stock of Onekama Township against the housing preferences of the community.

Housing preferences are based on the tapestry segmentation profiles of the community and national averages from the American Community Survey. Tapestry segmentation profiles are select consumer groups developed by ESRI and defined by shared traits such as demographics, socio economic status, and consumer behavior. An “expected” housing stock was generated based on the tapestry segmentations in Onekama Township and represents a housing stock that perfectly matches the preferences of the community.

This “expected” housing stock was then compared to the existing housing stock, comprised of occupied and available (for sale and for rent) units, to identify what housing types are over- and underrepresented. While this analysis is helpful at showing how well the existing housing stock fits the current population, it is most hopeful when considering population change.

ESRI population projections were added to the model resulting in an “expected” 2026 housing stock. Because this “expected” housing stock accounts for over-representations of one or multiple types of housing, achieving a perfectly fit housing stock by 2026 would require demolishing units and constructing other units of a different type in their place, an unlikely and unfeasible option. Therefore, the analysis accounts for no demolition and provides a breakdown of how many units and of what type should be built to approach a housing stock that better fits the preferences of the community.

The housing model (Figure 04), based on the population and household profiles, indicates a future need for mobile homes and maybe a quadplex or several duplexes. Roughly two-thirds of forecasted units would be owner occupied. This forecasted

housing unit type is not surprising since there 32% of the households in the Township are considered ALICE households.

However, if there is not a local appetite to accommodate a mobile home park it is likely that this population and household segment will eventually migrate outside of the Township due to lack of housing preference and availability. The housing model also doesn’t account for new seasonal built homes which is reflected in the low single family detached and attached forecast. Population forecasts do not anticipate a growth in year-round high income households. However, there will likely be additional high income

households entering the market through the construction of seasonal homes. The pattern of seasonal homes converted to year-round housing will continue thus increasing the gap between high and lower income households in the community.





Figure 04: B&R Housing Model

Unit Type	Existing					2026 Projection		
	Total	Occupied	Available	Expected	Balance	Unadjusted		No Demo
						Expected	Balance	Balance
1, detached	545	490	55	401	-143	536	-9	0
Owner	497	456	41	359	-138	478	-18	0
Renter	48	34	14	43	-5	57	9	0
1, attached	10	9	1	8	-2	11	1	1
Owner	10	9	1	6	-4	8	-2	0
Renter	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	1
2 to 4	5	4	1	14	9	19	14	13
Owner	1	0	1	3	3	4	4	3
Renter	4	4	0	11	7	14	10	10
5 to 9	9	9	0	7	-3	9	-1	0
Owner	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Renter	9	9	0	6	-3	7	-2	-1
10 to 19	6	6	0	7	1	9	3	3
Owner	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Renter	6	6	0	6	0	8	2	2
20 to 49	0	0	0	5	5	7	7	7
Owner	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Renter	0	0	0	5	5	6	6	6
50 or more	0	0	0	5	5	6	6	6
Owner	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Renter	0	0	0	4	4	5	5	5
Mobile home	1	0	1	69	68	90	89	82
Owner	1	0	1	58	56	75	74	57
Renter	0	0	0	11	11	15	15	25
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Owner	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Renter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	577	518	59	518	-59	689	112	112
Owner	509	465	44	430	-79	573	64	64
Renter	68	53	15	88	20	116	48	48

## Employment Characteristics

An economic base sector analysis identifies what sectors of an economy export goods and services to the region. Basic sectors/jobs are those that export goods and services and bring wealth to the community, and non-basic sectors/jobs are those that support the basic sectors. This analysis is intended to identify what sectors are concentrated in the regional economy and therefore the region’s level of industry specialization.

To determine if a sector is considered basic or non-basic, a location quotient is calculated for each sector by taking the ratio of employment in each industry to total employment in the county and dividing it by the same ratio at the national level. The location quotient, calculated at the county level to maintain a regional perspective, is a simple estimate of relative share of jobs at the county compared to the nation to determine where a regional competitive advantage by sector exists. Location quotients over 1.0 are considered basic sectors. However, not every job in a basic sector is considered a basic job, for instance, administrative and support jobs in a basic industry are considered non-basic jobs because they do not directly contribute to the export of goods and services.

As the table titled “Base Sector Analysis for Manistee County” (Figure 05) shows there are six basic sectors in the County. Notably, the “Arts, entertainment, and recreation” industry has a location quotient of 3.14 indicating that the ratio of “Arts, entertainment, and recreation” jobs in the County is three times higher than the national average. The base sector analysis also highlights a significant lack of “Professional, scientific, and technical services” jobs, a location quotient of 0.31 indicates that these services must be imported for areas outside Manistee County.

Figure 05: Manistee County Base Sector Analysis

Industry Name	Location Quotient	Basic Employment	Non-Basic Employment
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3.14	488	227
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.42	55	130
Health care and social assistance	1.41	583	1434
Accommodation and food services	1.33	253	771
Manufacturing	1.13	139	1045
Construction	1.11	78	681
Retail trade	0.92	0	1058
Other services (except public administration)	0.75	0	375
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	0.72	0	316
Wholesale trade	0.64	0	171
Transportation and warehousing	0.60	0	333
Information	0.57	0	118
Finance and insurance	0.54	0	257
Real estate and rental and leasing	0.46	0	92
Professional, scientific, and technical services	0.31	0	231
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,540</b>	<b>7,110</b>

Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5 – Year Estimates



The basic sector analysis can also be combined with changes in employment to identify industry groupings and which industries are most primed for growth. Employment was compared between 2014 and 2019. Based on the location quotient and employment change industries fall into one of four groups.

- “Growth industries” have an established presence in the county and are continuously growing. Short-term and long-term planning efforts should focus on supporting these industries.
- “Emerging industries” are likely to become growth industries in the future, given continued employment growth, therefore long-term planning efforts should focus on supporting these industries.
- “Declining industries” are in immediate danger. Notably, education services is a declining industry in Manistee County, immediate interventions are needed to transition these industries out of the declining grouping.
- “Mature industries” are not in immediate danger, but continued employment declines may threaten these industries. These industries are most important to monitor because they are basic sectors and create significant indirect jobs so significant negative changes to these industries have far-reaching impacts across the county.

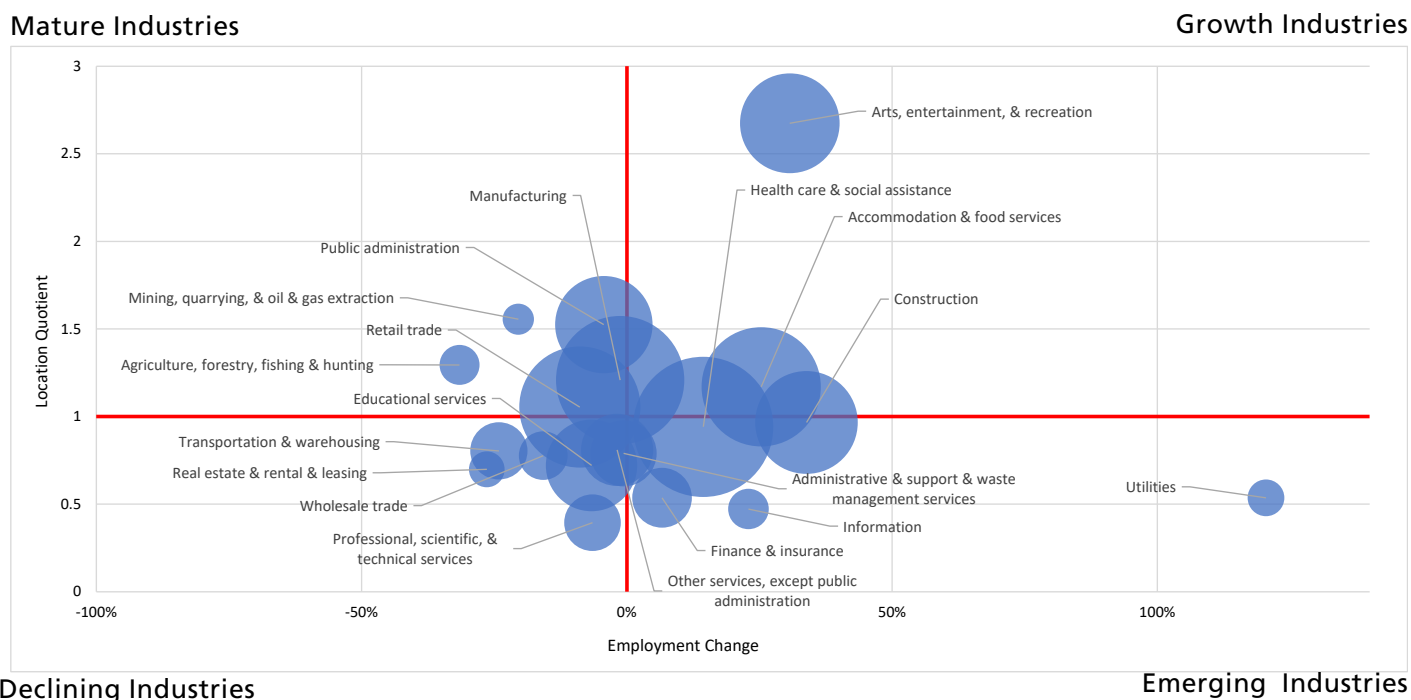
Every job in a basic industry creates an additional 5.74 jobs elsewhere within the economy. Employment growth in a basic industry will generate the greatest additional indirect employment.

**Figure 06: Industry Grouping for Manistee County**

Industry Group	Group Definition	Industry Name	Percent of Workforce
<b>Growth Industries</b>	Location quotient over 1.0 and positive employment growth (2014-2019)	Accommodation and food service	10.8%
		Arts, entertainment, and recreation	7.5%
<b>Emerging Industries</b>	Location quotient below 1.0 and positive employment growth (2014-2019)	Healthcare and social assistance	14.9%
		Construction	8.0%
		Finance and insurance	2.7%
		Information	1.2%
		Utilities	1.0%
<b>Mature Industries</b>	Location quotient above 1.0 and negative employment growth (2014-2019)	Manufacturing	12.4%
		Retail trade	11.1%
		Public administration	7.2%
		Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.2%
		Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.7%
<b>Declining Industries</b>	Location quotient below 1.0 and negative employment growth (2014-2019)	Education services	6.3%
		Other services	3.9%
		Administrative, support, and waste management services	3.3%
		Transportation and warehousing	2.5%
		Professional, scientific, and technical services	2.4%
		Wholesale trade	1.8%
		Real estate, rental, and leasing	1.0%
		Management of companies and enterprises	0.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5 – Year Estimates

Figure 6.5: Industry Sector Grouping



## Worker Movement

Understanding how residents travel to work, where they travel to, and where workers begin their commute helps explain how Onokama Township's workers operate in the regional economy. For example, if a large portion of residents leave for work that indicates that the township is a "bedroom community." However, if there is a large portion of workers traveling into the community for work, then the community is a regional employment. On average, residents in Onokama Township travel 18 minutes to work. Most residents that travel for work drive alone in a personal vehicle (90.4%), followed by carpool (8.7%), and a small percentage of workers walked (0.9%). According to the United States Census Bureau, 459 residents leave the township for work, 26 live and work in the township, and 163 people travel into the township for work, making the township closer to a bedroom community than an employment

hub. The most common employment destination for Onokama Township residents outside the township was Manistee Township (19.0%), followed by Bear Lake Township (12.6%), and the City of Manistee (5.2%). For workers traveling into the Township for work, the highest percentage live in Bear Lake Township (15.9%), the City of Manistee (11.1%), and then Manistee Township (9.0%). The tight geographic area for workers traveling to and from the township shows that the area's workforce is primarily concentrated around the City of Manistee.

The Inflow and Outflow map (Figure 07) illustrates that those within the Village and Township stay relatively close of place of residence and employment. The opposite is true for inflow workers that drive significant distances from their residence to place of employment. This would suggest that businesses and employers in the greater Manistee area are providing employment opportunities for local and regional workers. This in turn will place a higher demand on

housing and likely push up housing prices due to lack of housing availability.

## Workforce Qualifications

In addition to identifying important sectors and commute patterns, it is important to understand a local workforce's deficiencies. A workforce without diverse educational attainment levels or diverse occupations is not as resilient to changes in the local or national economy. An oversaturation of one type of worker can create problems if an industry declines or disappears. Employment sectors and educational attainment levels of Onokama Township residents who were employed and over the age of 25 were compared to national averages to identify any gaps or oversaturation (Figure 08). Estimated workers represent the current distribution of Onokama Township's workforce and recommended workers represent how many workers should live in Onokama Township to balance the workforce.

The table “Workforce Qualifications” demonstrates a deficiency of workers with advanced degrees and those with a high school diploma or less . The lack of workers in each of these ends of the spectrum leads to a self-compounding cycle. As highly educated workers disappear from the community, the jobs for them follow, or as jobs for highly educated workers disappear, the workers follow. The same is also true for workers with a high school diploma or less. One significant challenge of increasing the number of highly educated workers is the lack of higher education opportunities in the area, so to achieve

the higher education status people have to leave the area. Programs that recruit people back to the area, help connect students and workers to employers, or help employers and education systems develop programs that invest in the local workforce through internships, apprenticeships, and higher education will aid in the correction of the workforce imbalance.

**Figure 07: Inflow and Outflow of Worker Movement**

Data Source: State of Michigan Data Library, Manistee County GIS, Esri Base Map and U.S. Census Bureau

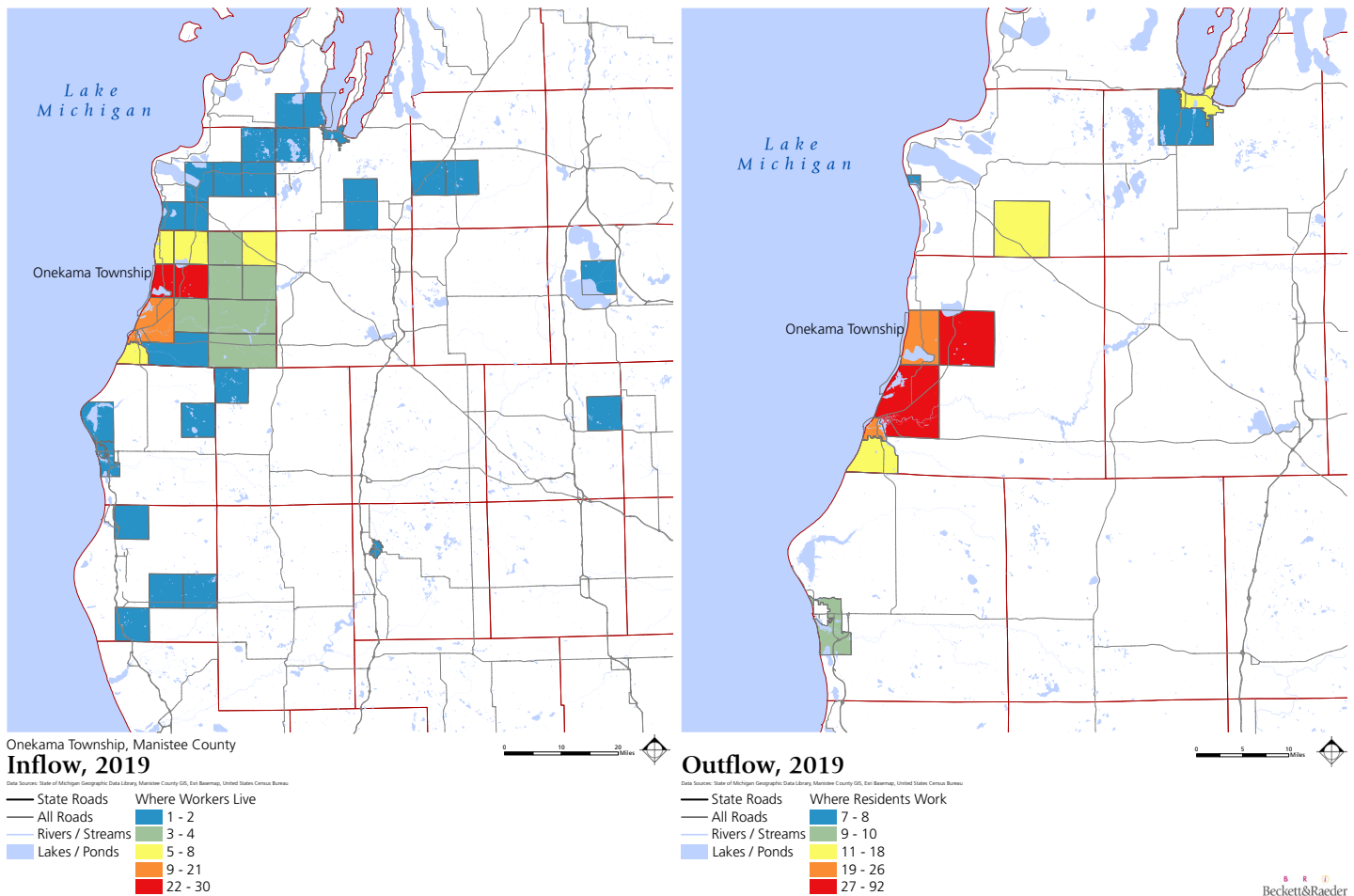


Figure 08: Workforce Qualifications

Industry	Less than High School Diploma	High School Diploma	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree (Master's / Doctoral / Professional)	Total
<b>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	1	11	49	75	64	201
Recommended Workers	3	16	41	68	81	210
Balance	-2	-5	8	7	-17	-9
<b>Service occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	3	19	43	18	3	87
Recommended Workers	10	29	39	18	5	101
Balance	-6	-11	4	0	-1	-14
<b>Sales and office occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	2	19	51	29	5	106
Recommended Workers	2	16	25	15	4	63
Balance	-1	3	26	14	1	43
<b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	4	13	17	4	0	38
Recommended Workers	6	11	9	2	0	28
Balance	-2	2	9	2	0	10
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>						
Estimated Workers	4	20	27	8	1	59
Recommended Workers	13	37	29	9	2	90
Balance	-9	-17	-2	-1	-1	-31
<b>Total</b>						
Estimated Workers	14	81	186	134	75	490
Recommended Workers	34	109	142	112	92	490
Balance	-20	-28	45	21	-18	0
Estimated Workers: How many current workers fall into this condition						
Recommended Workers: How many workers should fall into this condition based on national averages						

Figure 09: Summary from the Numbers

Classification	Observations and Trends	Possible Outcomes
Seasonal Population	Seasonal residents will likely to continue to contribute 50% more population to the community and County during the summer and shoulder months (May through October)	The added increase in population increases the amount of disposable income into the economy but also places an additional burden on community facilities. Seasonal homes also pay non-homestead taxes including an additional 18 mils to the public school system.
Year-Round Population	Data suggests that the year-round population will increase at a pace higher than Manistee County and the State of Michigan. This is likely due to the conversion of former seasonal home to year-round residences as homeowners retire and declare the Village and Township as their primary residence.	Higher year-round population. In addition, the data suggests that these households will likely have a higher net worth which correlates with a higher disposable income into the local economy.
Population Indicators	54% of the population is composed of Generation G (born earlier than 1945) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964). These population groups account for a higher median household income and median net worth. Trends indicate that households with an income of less than \$50,000 will continue to decline and higher income households will likely increase.	The divergence in median income results in a polarized resident population with a group in the ALICE category and another with high median incomes and net worth. Due to community's natural setting it is likely that lower median income households will eventually be replaced by higher net worth households that can afford the housing and locational costs.
Employment	Manistee County is slowly transitioning from a manufacturing economy to a tourist and agricultural economy. Some of this can be attributed to the Little River Casino and preferences for coastal living. The Base Sector Analysis indicates that County employment will likely be seen in the Emerging and Growth Industries groups.	Manufacturing is a mature industry. Unfortunately, arts, entertainment, accommodations and food service businesses pay lower wages than manufacturing jobs. The Growth and Emerging Industries groups will create jobs but further create a polarized population.







# Existing Conditions

Understanding existing conditions within the community can assist with decision making for the future; especially the Future Land Use map and Action Plan.

The Onekama community is blessed with a quintessential northern Michigan environment. Abundant water resources, woodlands, sand dunes and open fields contribute to its desirability as a place to live and help define the character of the community. Therefore any development on the remaining vacant areas should be considerate of the existing natural features.

While Portage Lake and Lake Michigan are the most prominent natural features in the area, adjacent wetlands, floodplain, soils and vegetation complete the natural resource fabric of Onekama. The presence of existing woodlands and wetlands has been shaped over the course of time by the new development of streets, residential subdivisions, forestry, and agricultural activities.

## Regulation affecting Natural Resources

How land is used and planned for is the foundation of environmental quality as nearly every environmental problem

has a land use origin. Without careful consideration of natural resources and how they are impacted by development, local land use decisions may unintentionally degrade the environmental protection objectives of Onekama.

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 environmental areas. Local regulations can fill the gaps left by state regulations in order to protect the natural resources that are important to a community. For example, simple site plan review criteria, design standards and other zoning regulations can leverage local regulations to ensure new development will not unduly impact natural features.

An inventory of existing natural features was conducted to identify potential opportunities for conservation, and also to identify areas where natural features can be improved upon.

This chapter outlines the characteristics of the community's environmental features, and where applicable, makes suggestions for how to ensure their protection for future generations. Included are discussions on:

- Regional Scope
- Woodlands and Greenways
- Soils
- Topography and Steep Slopes
- Sand Dunes
- Wetlands and Floodplain
- Water Features
- Other Unique Environmental Features
- Artesian-Fed Creeks, Streams, and Wells

## Regional Scope

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a common body of water. Onekama is located within three watersheds that include Portage Lake, Big Bear Creek and Lake Michigan. Preserving natural water features, and their adjacent lands, is one of the most practical ways to protect water resources and manage stormwater.

Promoting low-impact development and preventing excess storm water runoff is a main priority for Onekama's immediate land area and also for the watersheds that eventually all drain into Lake Michigan. By providing standards for natural feature improvements, Onekama can improve the natural aesthetic of its community, while providing low-cost natural infrastructure (i.e. rain gardens, pervious asphalt and concrete, and innovative low-impact storm water management) that can enhance local water quality and improve the overall health of the watershed.

## Woodlands

While 45% of Manistee County is publicly owned in the form of large federal and state forest tracts, the 6,272 woodland acres of Onekama are all privately owned. Unlike State and National forests, which are managed through forest management plans, private woodlots are managed by

the property owner, who may or may not utilize best management land stewardship practices.

While the former practice of clear cutting a parcel for new residential development is no longer the norm, private woodlands have received little planning protection despite their contributions to wildlife corridors and establishing a natural, rural setting. As buffers and moderators of flooding, erosion, and noise and air pollution, woodlands are important to the region's quality of life.

Some of the values 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 question should not be whether or not to develop woodlands, but rather how development will occur. Mature roadside trees are sometimes considered hazardous, but always seen as attractive and valuable. To the extent possible, road improvements should respect and maintain these important landmarks, and their contribution to community identity.

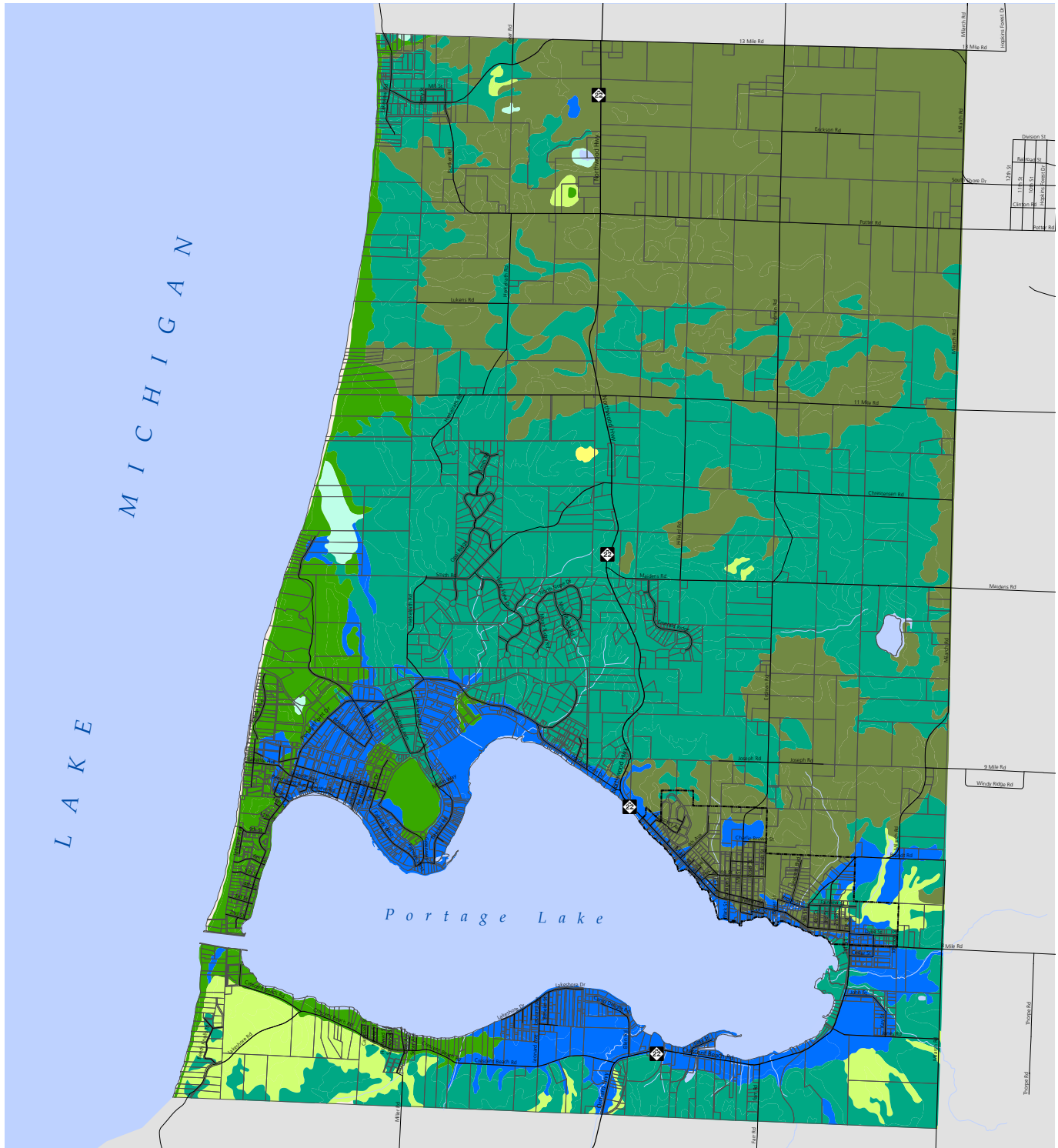
## Greenways

Greenways are open spaces used to conserve and enhance natural and cultural resources. Greenways may also provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and linkages for users between open space and recreational facilities. Establishment of a greenway adjacent to Portage Lake, for example, would provide significant benefits from both an environmental and community character perspective.

Greenways can also:

- Tie public land components together to form a cohesive land assembly for recreation and open space.
- Emphasize cohabitation with the natural environment.
- Preserve an attractive environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Allow uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement between parks throughout the community.
- Protect areas inappropriate for development such as flood plains, wetlands, and steep slopes.
- Promote recreational tourism and enhance the local economy.
- Foster a greater awareness and appreciation of historic and cultural heritage.
- Provide people with a resource-based outdoor recreational opportunity and experience.
- Promote a sense of place and regional identity.
- Provide an effective and sensible growth management tool.
- Enhance property values.

Greenways work best when sparsely developed. Some interruptions are inevitable because of existing roadways interposed between the open spaces. Wherever possible, the greenway corridor should follow natural drainage corridors since the and offers more habitat value, is important for natural storm water drainage, and is generally more difficult to develop.



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# Soil Association Groups

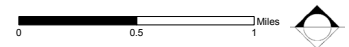
Data Sources: Benzie-Manistee Soils SSURGO Database, State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Soil Survey for Benzie & Manistee Counties (2008)

BASE MAP ELEMENTS

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Line
- Major Road

THEME ELEMENTS

- |                                    |                            |                                  |                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Covert-Pipstone-Adrian Association | Kaleva-Grattan Association | Fern-Spinks-Tekenink Association | Plainfield-Udipsammets Association |
| Adrian-Houghton Association        | Nordhouse Association      | Coloma-Spinks Association        |                                    |



## Soils

Like all of northwest Michigan, glaciers are responsible for the geology and topography of Onekama. What the glaciers left behind lies beneath the surface in the soils. A soil survey reveals a significant amount of information about an area that is not visible from the landscape. The soil survey for Onekama Township, including the Village, was recently inventoried in the Soil Survey of Benzie and Manistee Counties, Michigan Soils Inventory (2008) prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service.

Soil surveys assist in identifying areas that due to existing soil structures can either accommodate development or are unsuitable for development. Areas of poor soil suitability tend to concentrate in the low and level terrain near areas of Portage Lake where there is little natural drainage and where the majority of Township septic systems are located. This is also where the majority of existing floodplain can be found. Implementation of best management practices to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and preserve the native vegetation that grows within these areas can assist in the soil's ability to manage storm water and prevent excess runoff.

The Soil Survey of Benzie and Manistee Counties reveals 73 different soil types in the Township and Village grouped within seven (7) different soil association groups. A soil association group aggregates soils with similar properties and unique natural characteristics. The map entitled, "Soil Association Groups" illustrates the location of each soil association within the Onekama Community

**Covert-Pipestone-Adrian Association**  
Level to undulating, moderately well drained, somewhat poorly drained, and very poorly drained, sandy and mucky soils on outwash plains, lake plains, and

moraines. This soil association primarily surrounds Portage Lake and comprises many of the wetlands found around the perimeter of the lake.  
*Acreage: 1,100 acres*  
*Landform: Outwash plains, lake plains, and moraines*  
*Slope range: 0 to 6 percent*

**Adrian-Houghton Association**  
Level and nearly level, very poorly drained, mucky soils on outwash plains, lake plains, moraines, till plains, and floodplains. This soil association is found very sporadically throughout the Township and comprises less than ½ of 1% of the total acreage.  
*Acreage: 55 acres*  
*Landform: Outwash plains, lake plains, moraines, till plains, and flood plains*  
*Slope range: 0 to 2 percent*

**Kaleva-Grattan Association**  
Level to rolling, excessively drained, sandy soils on lake plains, outwash plains, and moraines. This soil association is found throughout the Village of Onekama and extends northeasterly from the Village and along the north portion of the Township between Lukens Road and 13 Mile Road.  
*Acreage: 4,282 acres*  
*Landform: Lake plains, outwash plains, and moraines*  
*Slope range: 0 to 18 percent*

**Nordhouse Association**  
Level to very steep, excessively drained, sandy soils on lake plains and dunes. This soil association is found along Lake Michigan and the southwest portion of Portage Lake.  
*Acreage: 797 acres*  
*Landform: Lake plains and dunes*  
*Slope range: 0 to 70 percent*

**Fern-Spinks-Tekenink Association**  
Level to very steep, moderately well drained and well drained, sandy and loamy soils on moraines, till plains, and outwash plains

*Acreage: 436 acres*  
*Landform: Moraines, till plains, and outwash plains*  
*Slope range: 0 to 70 percent*

**Coloma-Spinks Association**  
Level to very steep, somewhat excessively drained and well drained, sandy soils on moraines, deltas, stream terraces, and outwash plains. This soil association comprises the largest area (36.6%) in the Onekama Community and is found south of Crescent Beach Road and M-22 on the south side of Portage Lake and in the central portion of the Township between the north side of Portage Lake and Lukens Road.  
*Acreage: 5,082 acres*  
*Landform: Moraines, deltas, stream terraces, and outwash plains*  
*Slope range: 0 to 70 percent*

**Plainfield-Udipsamments Association**  
Level to very steep, moderately well drained to excessively drained, sandy soils on outwash plains, moraines, and lake plains.  
*Acreage: 5 acres*  
*Landform: Outwash plains, moraines, and lake plains*  
*Slope range: 0 to 70 percent*

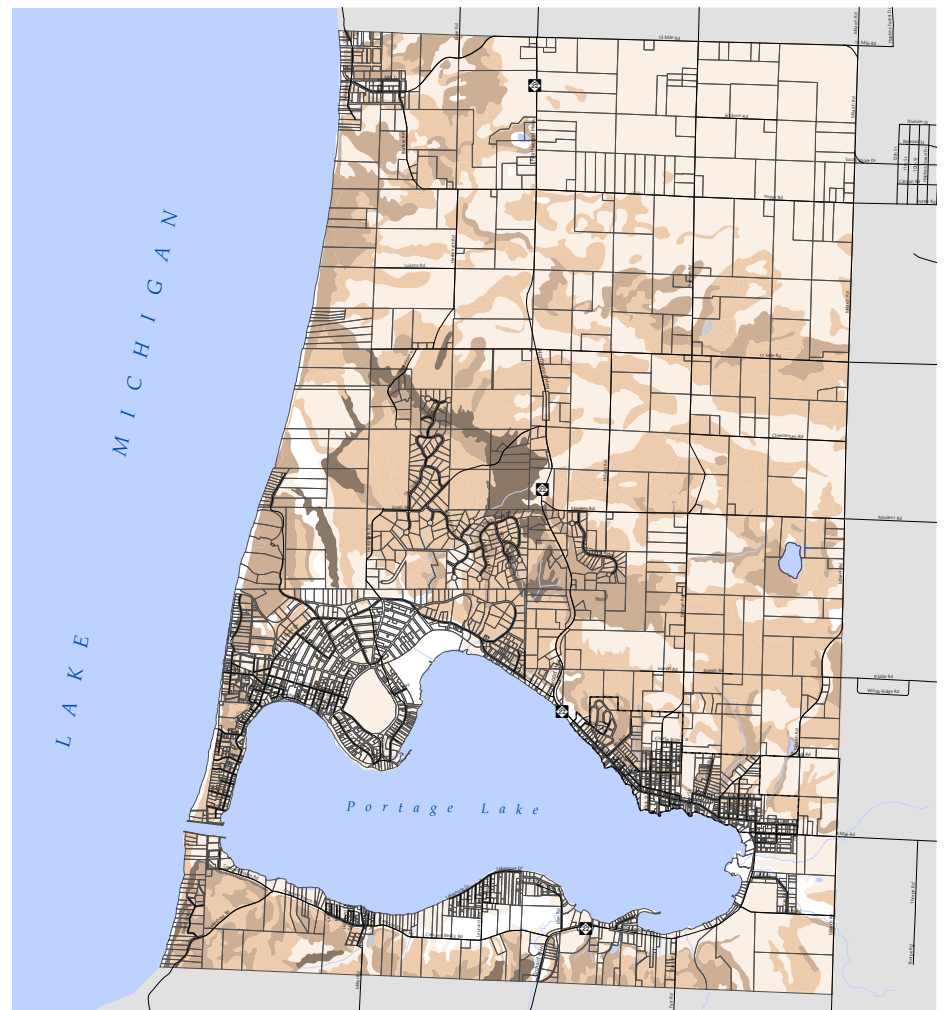
Of the 13,900 acres approximately 9.5% (1,315) are classified as hydric soils which are soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part of the soil profile. Many of these hydric soils occur around the perimeter of Portage Lake.

The Kaleva-Grattan and Coloma-Spinks soil groups, which comprise approximately 67% of the Onekama Community land area, are suitable for hardwood trees and have a moderate mortality rate for seedling growth.

## Topography and Steep Slopes

The majority of rolling terrain exists in the Township. Two distinct ridgelines are located in the central portion of the township running northwest to southeast. Area elevations within these ridgelines reach as high as 400 feet above Portage Lake and offer panoramic views of the Portage Lake basin and Lake Michigan. As such, these ridgelines offer prime residential development sites. Several subdivisions have been created within these areas, such as Emerald Ridge and Portage Ridge raising concerns that excessive clearing of trees on the top of the ridgelines have degraded the natural aesthetic of the area. Siting of future buildings should be located with an emphasis on maintaining high wooded ridgelines and placing buildings below these peak elevations within the ridge side or on the ridgeline with limited tree removal.

Another area of steep slopes exists to the south of Crescent Beach Road, running along the southern perimeter of Portage Lake. Several properties within this area have been developed for residential use. Tree removal or commercial log harvesting should balance the economic value of the logging operation with the prevention of excessive soil erosion and sedimentation, and drainage into Portage Lake.



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### Slope Classes

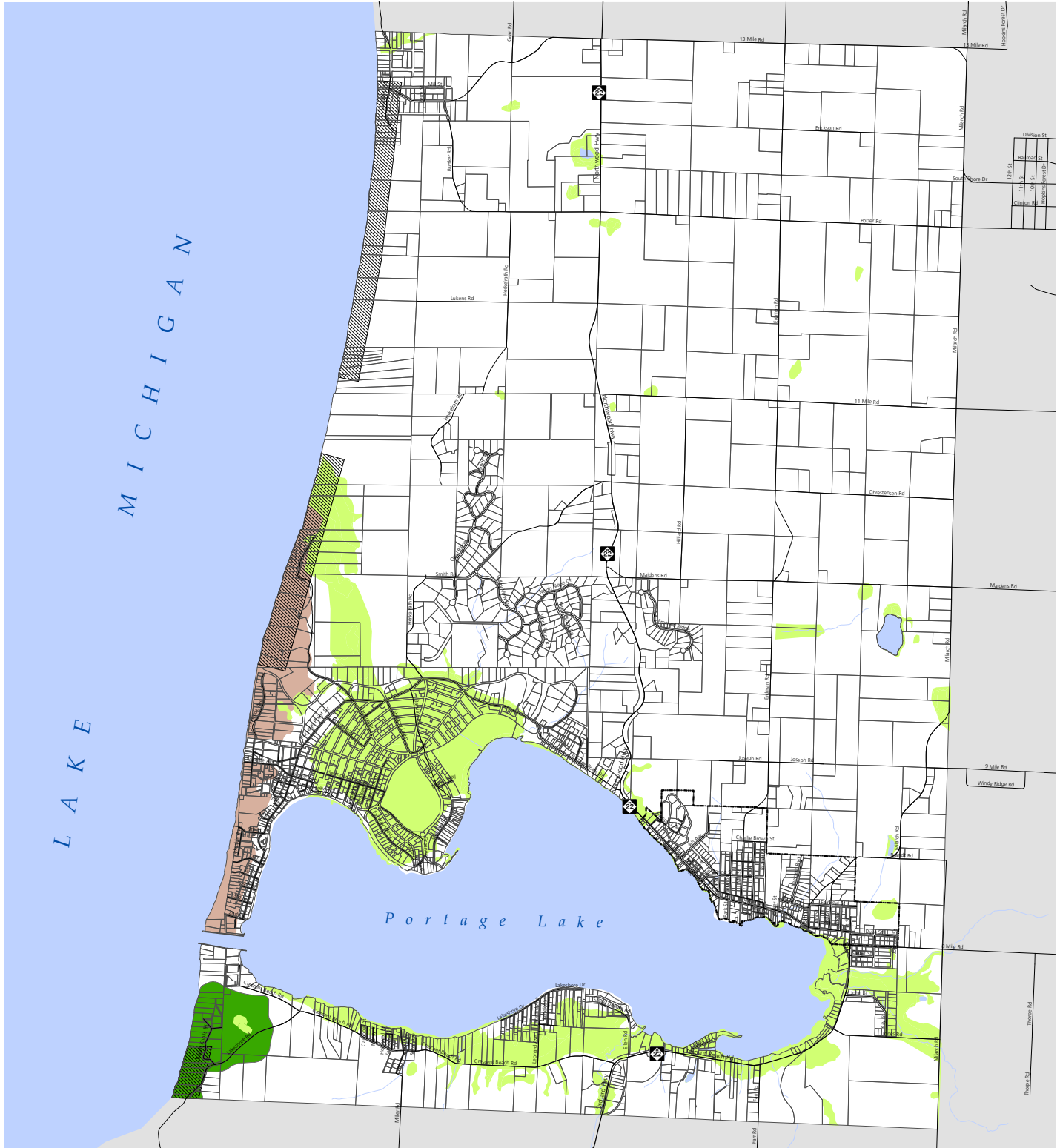
Data Source: Mari (Ike-Bende) Soti, SSURGO Database, State of Michigan Geographic Data Library

**BASE MAP ELEMENTS**

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Line
- Major Road

**THEME ELEMENTS**

- Nearly Level
- Gentle (1 - 6 Percent)
- Gradual (7 - 18 Percent)
- Moderate (18 - 35 Percent)
- Steep (36+ Percent)
- Mining Pit Operation






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# Sensitive Landscapes

Data Sources: National Wetland Inventory, Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality

BASE MAP ELEMENTS

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcel Line
-  Major Road

THEME ELEMENTS

-  Wetland
-  Barrier Sand Dune
-  Dune-Associated Plant Community Outside of Dune Formation
-  High-Risk Erosion Area

## Sand Dunes

State of Michigan Regulatory Acts in Michigan enacted for the protection of sensitive shoreline resources include:

### Critical Dune Areas

The Sand Dune Regulations are found under Part 353, Sand Dune Protection and Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, NREPA, 1994 PA 451 as amended.

Critical dune areas represent some of the most spectacular dunes extending along the Lake Michigan shoreline, with two of these areas located just north of the Portage Lake channel. Serving as natural barriers to Great Lake storm surges, these sand dunes are classified as “critical” due to their significant slope, over 35 percent in most cases. Given their highly erosive condition, the State of Michigan requires certain standards on construction and site design. The provisions under Part 353 require permits for new construction, additions to existing structures, sand removal, driveways and parking areas, changes to any contour areas, removal of vegetation and any industrial or commercial project. In most cases, projects that are designed with respect to the landscape and its area of concern can meet the critical dune requirement.

Site design and construction standards for sand dunes in Onekama Township should be addressed to prevent further deterioration of these fragile environments, such as standards to address vegetation, drainage and erosion protection.

### High Risk Erosion Areas

Regulation of High Risk Erosion Areas are found under Part 353, Shorelands Protection and Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, NREPA, 1994 PA 451 as amended.

High Risk Erosion areas run along Lake Michigan to the north of Portage Lake. The

determining factor on whether a shoreline area is “High Risk” is the rate at which erosion is occurring. Shoreline areas that are eroding at a rate greater than one foot per year for fifteen years are classified as High Risk Erosion areas. These areas can be extended inland from the ordinary high watermark as far as 1,000 feet. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (MEGLE) calculates recession rates and subsequently establishes required setback distances measured from the erosion hazard line to protect new structures from erosion for a period of 30 to 60 years, depending on size, number of living units and type of construction. The erosion hazard line is typically the line of stable vegetation. Setback distances are not measured from the present-day water’s edge. New structures must be located landward of the required setback distance.

## 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.”*

Wetland areas subject to regulation by the MEGLE 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.
- Wetlands which are larger than five acres and not contiguous to any lake, stream, or pond.
- Wetlands which are not contiguous to any lake, stream or pond, but are essential to the preservation of natural resources.

## Wetland Benefits

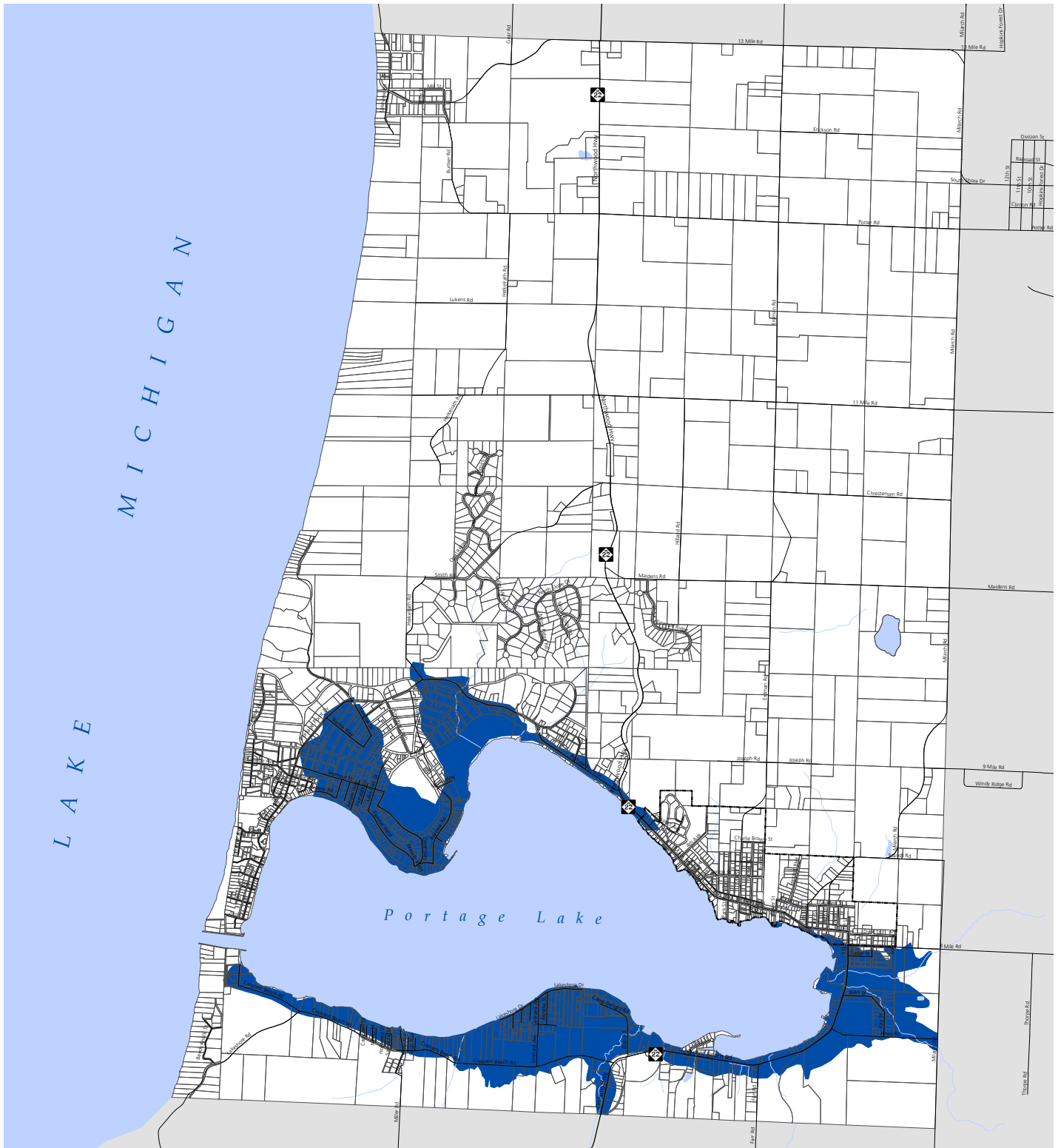
Wetlands are valuable natural resources providing many important benefits to residents and the natural environment. Wetlands help improve water quality, manage storm water runoff, provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and support hunting and fishing activities. Wetlands contribute to the quality of other natural resources too, such as inland lakes, ground water, fisheries, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands store excess water and nutrients, control floods, and slow the filling of rivers, lakes and streams with sediment. In addition, acre for acre, wetlands produce more wildlife and plants than any other Michigan habitat.

More specifically, benefits of wetlands include:

- Reduce flooding by absorbing runoff from rain and melting snow and slowly releasing excess water into rivers and lakes. (One acre, 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. This improves water clarity and quality.
- Recharge groundwater supplies when connected to underground aquifers.
- Contribute to natural nutrient and water cycles, produce vital atmospheric gases, including oxygen, and serve as nutrient traps when next to inland lakes or streams.
- Provide commercial and recreational values to the economy, by producing plants, game birds (ducks, geese) and fur-bearing mammals. Survival of certain varieties of fish directly depends on wetlands, requiring shallow water areas for breeding, feeding and escape from predators.

### Wetlands in the Onekama Area

The majority of wetlands in Onekama are located along the perimeter of Portage Lake. Recent wetland inventory maps completed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality evaluate potential wetland sites and wetland soils. These



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**Floodplain's Area of Influence**

Data Source: Northwest Michigan Council of Governments



- | BASE MAP ELEMENTS  | THEME ELEMENTS                 |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Municipal Boundary | Floodplain's Area of Influence |
| Parcel Line        |                                |
| Major Road         |                                |



are based on the overlay of wetlands as they are shown on the National Wetland Inventory Maps, produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There are four distinct wetland areas within the Onekama area. A segment of wetland that runs between Ellen Road and Miller Road, just north of Crescent Beach Road; a wetland area that runs between Bayview and Portage Point Roads along Portage Lake; a segment of wetland that is located northwest of Portage Lake at the end of Ivanhoe Road; and along the east side of Portage Lake. There are approximately 1,050 acres of wetlands in Onekama.

### State Regulation

Part 303 of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act is a consolidation of several laws into one act.

It seeks to, among other things, protect wetland resources through regulating land which meets the statutory definition of a wetland, based on vegetation, water table, and soil type. Certain activities will require a permit from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MEGLE) on a site which satisfies the wetland definition, including:

- Filling or placing of material in a wetland.
- Draining of 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.
- Dredging or removing soil from a wetland.

Generally, wetlands must be identified through individual property analysis, usually before a development will occur. Accordingly, the low lying areas or wetlands shown on the wetland map should be considered only for planning purposes and are indicators of where wetlands may be located. Individual site determinations are still necessary prior to development approvals.

In addition to the MEGLE having authority over the state's wetland resources, local units of government can take additional measures to augment state law through the enactment of a local wetland protection ordinance.

While most of the wetlands surrounding Portage Lake likely fall under some type of state regulation, not all wetlands and important drainage ways are covered by state regulations. Simple informational requirements during the site plan review process, like reflecting floodplain and wetland boundaries, can help the township visualize the character of the land and help property owners avoid disruption of these critical areas.

### Floodplains

The floodplains associated with the Portage Lake watershed occupy the low lying, level terrain adjacent to the lake. The nearly alluvial plain encompasses nearly 1,008 acres of land. Within these floodplain areas, a large percentage of existing wetlands are also present, along with a substantial number of homes. Approximately 821 parcels are located within the designated floodplain. Floodplain land receives some measure of protection under state and federal regulations. Areas designated as a flood hazard area include land, which on the basis of available floodplain information is subject to a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year. Despite these existing regulations, Onekama still has a key role to play in maintaining the integrity of the floodplain. Loss of floodplain land or a change in its use can cause diminished water quality and increased flooding. Areas located within the 100-year floodplain are approximate and should be used for general planning purposes only. The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), published under the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA), is the official source and is used by a professional surveyor to determine specific elevation and grade for the floodplain boundary.

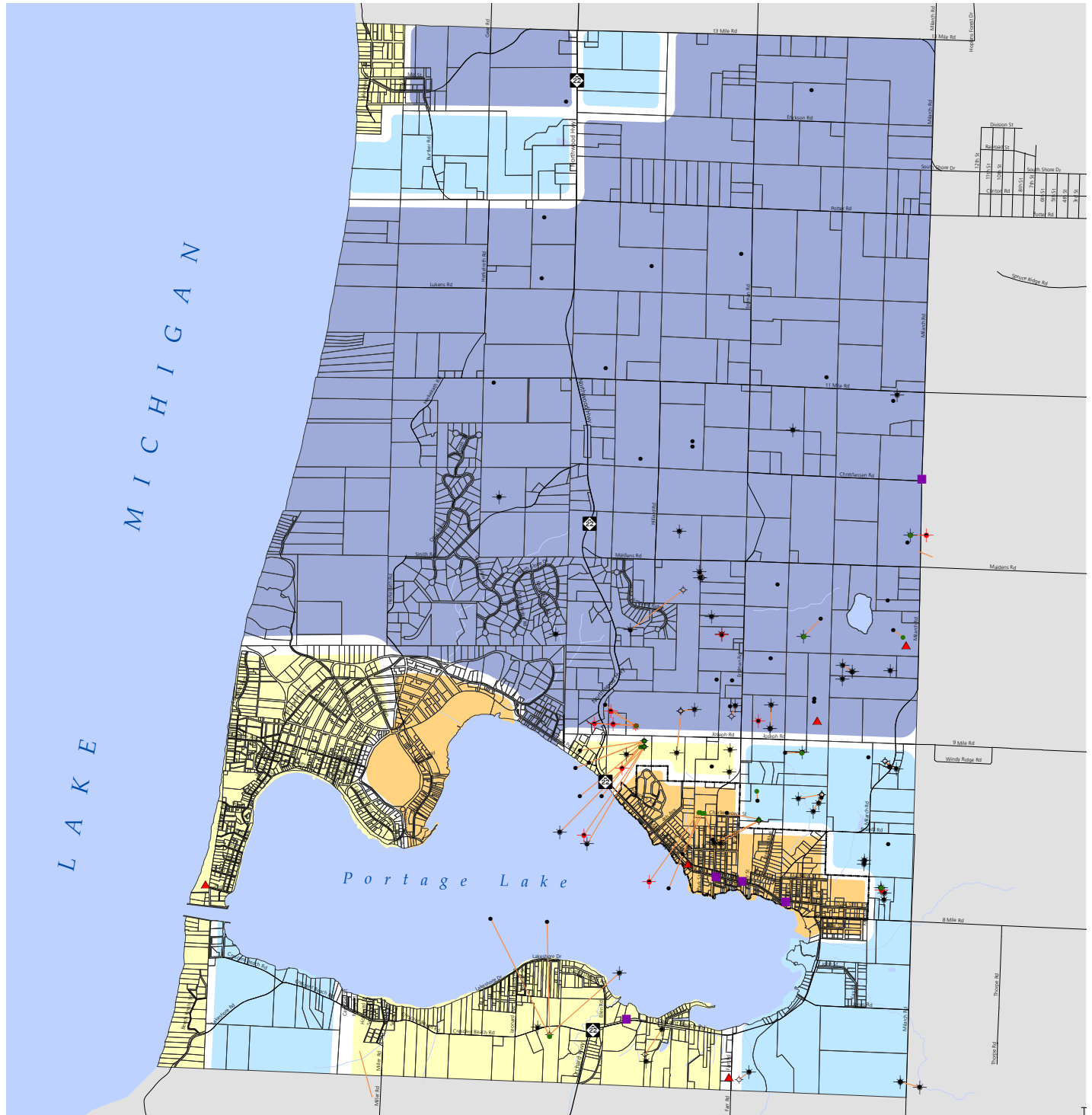
### Water Features

The Onekama community, like much of Manistee County, includes a number of water features within and adjacent to its boundaries. The Township lies within three watersheds: Portage Lake, Big Bear Creek and Lake Michigan. As a result, residents of Onekama have a long history of taking proactive steps toward the long term protection of their surface waters. For example, in 2007 the community of Onekama completed the Portage Lake Forever Watershed Plan, to ensure the wise use and enjoyment of Portage Lake for future generations. The plan has been approved for 1) The State Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, and 2) the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Section 319 program of the Federal Clean Water Act.

### Portage Lake

The largest inland lake in Onekama, as well as Manistee County, is Portage Lake. At 2,116 surface acres, Portage Lake reaches area depths of up to 60 feet with a mean depth of 19 feet. Portage Lake was connected to Lake Michigan through a manmade channel in 1871, which afforded a navigable access between the inland lake and Lake Michigan. The original "ditch" was dug in 1871 to lower Portage Lake. The turbulence of the water rushing to Lake Michigan was an unanticipated result that created a wider and deeper crevice that became the channel. According to the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan, over 20% of the shoreline has been altered by filling, dredging and sea wall construction. The primary land use surrounding Portage Lake is seasonal and permanent residential.

A recognized threat to Portage Lake's overall health, which has been documented in both the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan, as well as public input sessions for the community plan, is the threat of pollutants from individual septic systems. The Village of Onekama has a local sewer system,



THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY

# Groundwater Recharge Areas

Data Sources: Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality, Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources, Grobbel Environmental & Planning Associates



**ANNUAL GROUNDWATER RECHARGE RATE**

- 6 Inches or Fewer
- 7 - 9 Inches
- 10 - 11 Inches
- 12 - 13 Inches
- 14 Inches or More

**OIL & GAS MINING SITES**

- Active Plugged**
- Oil Well
  - Gas Well
  - Dry Hole
  - Permitted Well Location
  - Well Bottom
  - Surface-to-Bottom Directional

**KNOWN POLLUTION SOURCES**

- Underground Storage Tank Site
- Environmental Contamination Site

however the majority of land surrounding Portage Lake is located in the Township that is without public sewer.

### Gordon Lake

Located northeast of Portage Lake in the Township, Gordon Lake is a small inland lake located between two ridgelines. Gordon Lake has limited residential development.

### Lake Michigan Coastline

With over 6 miles of shoreline, Lake Michigan forms the western boundary of Onekama Township. Residential development has concentrated in two core areas, Pierport and the Portage Lake channel. Portions of the shoreline between these two concentrations of development have maintained their natural land cover. Much of the existing development along Lake Michigan near the channel is located in designated Critical Dune territory, while lakeshore development near Pierport is located in High Risk Erosion areas. Like many communities along Lake Michigan, the shoreline in Onekama Township is exposed to high winds and water erosion caused by frequent storms and fluctuating lake levels producing consequent wave action. These natural processes can have detrimental effects on the stability of the dune and the lakefront residential homes that reside within the dune system.

Water quality is an essential planning consideration for Onekama since it is utilized for recreation, residential living and water consumption. The Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan identifies the following sources of pollutants:

- **Impervious Surface in Watershed.**

When development occurs on a property, the amount of site grading (soil disturbance) and the installation of impervious surfaces (driveways, parking lots, and buildings) has a direct impact on adjacent and receiving tributaries and lakes. Uncontrolled runoff can significantly degrade the ecologic character of these water bodies. The percentages

below enumerate the degree of change to stream ecology based on the amount of the impervious surface.

- Nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrogen) from agricultural runoff that contains animal waste and lawn fertilizers, from leaking septic systems, and from storm water runoff. Nutrient loading can increase sediment levels and warm area waterways and stress aquatic species.
- Excess Sedimentation caused by soil erosion from stream banks, farm fields, and construction sites that degrades wildlife habitat.

## Threats to Area Water Quality

### Non-Point Source Pollution

Non-point source pollution poses one of the greatest threats to surface water. Rather than occurring from one major source, like a sewage treatment plant or industrial use, non-point source pollution results from rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As this runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants. These are deposited into lakes, rivers, wetlands, ponds, and groundwater.

In Onekama, sources of non-point contamination include a combination of agricultural practices, lawn chemicals, soil erosion, septic leachants, and storm water runoff. Of these, control of impervious surfaces (such as roofs and roads) and providing adequate vegetated buffers along existing waterways are management practices that can protect area water resources.

The greatest source of groundwater recharge occurs in the northern portion of the Township where farms and forests are still prevalent. Recharge rates in this zone exceed 14 inches annual. Management of the land uses above these recharge areas is critical to maintain subsurface aquifers and availability of water for wells and agricultural irrigation.

From a land use perspective, surface land uses that could contribute to contamination or impair of the recharge rates should be avoided.

### Point Sources

Some sources of potential groundwater contamination are somewhat easier to identify. They include industrial operations which may use hazardous chemicals, landfills, gasoline filling stations, and other direct sources of contaminates. For the most part, these sources are regulated by the state or federal government.

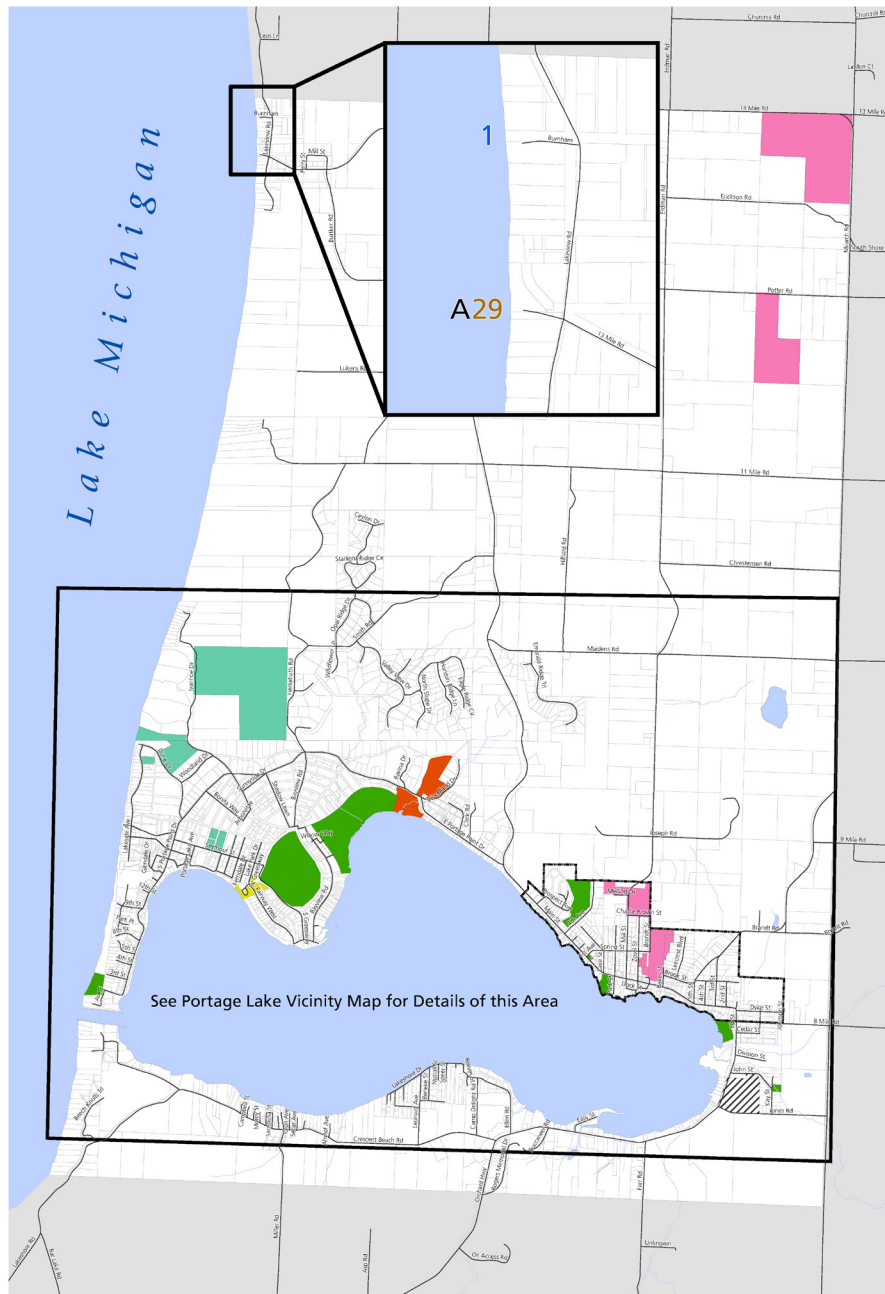
Other, larger sites, may also be considered point sources. Where there are larger, contiguous areas having a combination of poor soils unsuitable for septic systems, a high water table, an increasing amount of rural development, and a large number of intensive livestock operations, these areas can threaten the quality of the groundwater supplies.

The map entitled “Groundwater Recharge Areas,” shows the general zones for water recharge based on information prepared by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Quality (MEGLE) and Michigan State University. The highest recharge area is north of Portage Lake in agricultural and wooded tracts with sandy soil profiles.

Properties around Portage Lake have muck soils and a higher percentage of impervious surface (roofs, paved drives, parking lots, and compacted gravel surfaces). As a result, stormwater management is a more critical concern in low recharge areas and groundwater recharge protection is of greater concern in high recharge zones.

## Open Space and Recreation

Hosting one of the largest inland lakes in Manistee County along with over 6 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, the Onekama

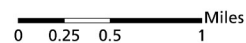


THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY

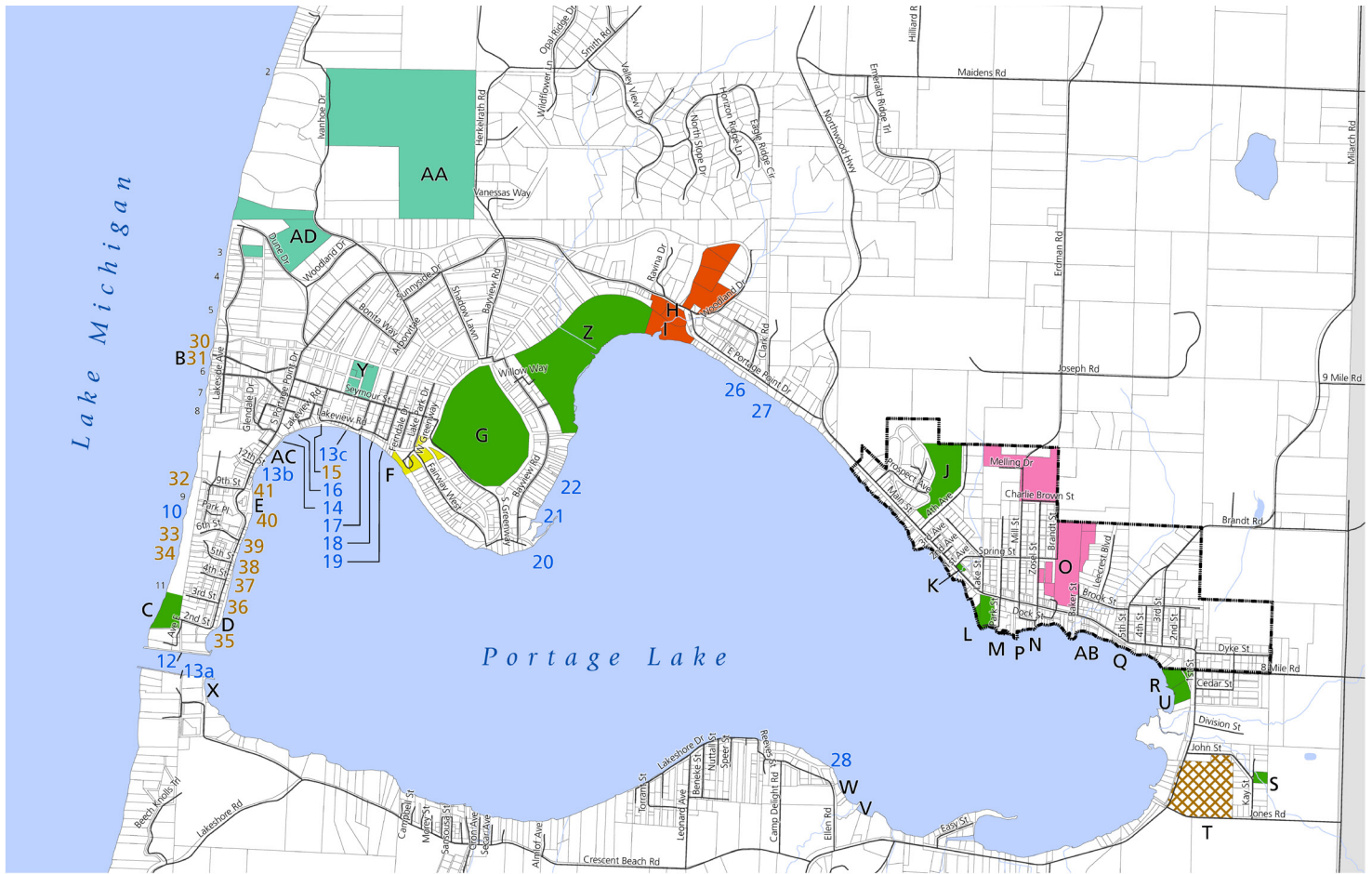
## Existing Recreation Facilities

Data Source: Portage Lake Community 5-Year Recreation Plan (2009)

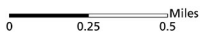
ENTIRE TOWNSHIP



- |                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. "Old Faceful"/Beach          | P. Onekama Marine - Yard 2          |
| B. Sunset House                 | Q. Farr Center                      |
| C. Captain John Langland Park   | R. Feldhak Park                     |
| D. Portage Lake Yacht Club      | S. Carden Park                      |
| E. Portage Point Inn            | T. Manistee County Fairgrounds      |
| F. Michigan DNR Boat Launch     | U. Eagles View Park                 |
| G. North Point Park             | V. Onekama Marine - Yard 1          |
| H. "Old Faithful" Artesian Well | W. Portage Lake Covenant Bible Camp |
| I. Little Eden Camp             | X. Portage Street Walkway           |
| J. Glen Park                    | Y. Cedar Grove Wetland Preserve     |
| K. Rotary Park                  | Z. Portage Wetland Preserve         |
| L. Onekama Village Park         | AA. Portage Point Woods Preserve    |
| M. Coho Center Resort           | AB: Portage Lake Marine             |
| N. Zosel Street Walk-In Park    | AC: Community Dock                  |
| O. Onekama School               | AD: Lucia K. Tower Preserve         |



**PORTAGE LAKE VICINITY**



**Land Ownership**

- Official Park (Township/Village)
- DNR Boat Launch
- Onekama School District
- Manistee County
- Conserved Property - Open to Public
- Private Camp / Resort

**Public Road Ends are Numbered. See Road End Ordinance ([LINK TO WEB](#))**

- ## Water Access - Governed by Township Road Ordinance
- ## Observation Area - Governed by Township Road Ordinance
- ## County Road Ends - Not governed by Township Road Ordinance

**County Road Ends - Lake Michigan**

- 29 Thirteen Mile
- 30 Avenue F
- 31 Lakeisle
- 32 Ninth St
- 33 Sixth St
- 34 Fifth St

**County Road Ends - Portage Lake**

- 15 Portage Lake Ave
- 35 Second St
- 36 Third St
- 37 Fourth St
- 38 Fifth St
- 39 Sixth St
- 40 Seventh St
- 41 Ninth St

community surrounding Portage Lake is a natural fit for passive recreation and scenic view sheds. Recreational activities such as fishing, boating, hiking and a multitude of other outdoor activities attract visitors from urban areas of Michigan and from other states to the Onekama area every year. The area's natural beauty is one factor that convinces many long-time visitors to move to the area and retire. Because of the abundant outdoor recreation activities and scenic view sheds, the natural environment for recreational pursuits is a major economic base and income generator for the Onekama community.

Township parks are managed by the Onekama Township Board of Trustees with the assistance and advice of the Onekama Village and Township Community Parks and Recreation Committee. The Committee also has representation from the Village of Onekama Council, which manages the Village parks and has partnered with the Township on several community park improvements, and the Onekama Consolidated Schools, which offers community recreation programs. The Parks and Recreation Committee in 2022 completed its third The Portage Lake Community Five-Year Plan for Parks and Recreation in the Village of Onekama, Onekama Township, and the Onekama Consolidated Schools. This plan is kept current so that application can be made for grants administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

While the County of Manistee does not currently own or manage any developed parks of its own, they have inventoried all available public recreational assets in their first Parks and Recreation Plan as adopted in 2008. The County's Parks and Recreation plan has documented available resources to assist in Onekama's park improvements and future land acquisitions. A description of the current Onekama park facilities and public spaces is as follows.

### North Point Park

The largest public natural resource area in Onekama Township at 60 acres, North Point Park, provides recreational and educational opportunities for the general public. The land was originally dedicated as a golf course in the 1917 plat for the Portage Park Addition subdivision and has since been improved to its current park status through the work of the Onekama Village and Township Community Parks and Recreation Committee. With several interior trail loops surfaced with paved asphalt, crushed stone or primitive sand and grass, the park is conveniently located within a high-density platted area along Portage Lake and is handicap accessible.

### Glen Park (Mineral Springs)

The first bona fide resort location in Manistee County, Glen Park is a now a 12-acre wooded parkland. Opened in 1976 as a day-use park, nature trails and two foot bridges lead visitors to three sheltered mineral springs that showcase Onekama's natural spring-fed streams.

### Manistee County Fairgrounds

Owned and operated by the Manistee County Fair Board, this 20-acre facility on M-22 includes concession stand shelters, 4-H display and livestock buildings, grandstands, a horse/auto race track, stables and parking facilities. In addition to hosting the Michigan Energy Fair and the annual County Fair, the facilities are also utilized by the Lions Chapter for weekly bingo games, meetings, parties and receptions. Local residents have expressed the need to improve these facilities and capitalize on its prime location in Onekama by seeking out new uses of this underutilized property for such things as a local farmers market, community focused activities, or a development site. The fairgrounds has also been used for the Michigan Energy Fair which has brought publicity, people, and income to Onekama Village and Township.

### Captain John Langland Park

Located at the west end of Second Street, facilities include a paved parking area,



Captain John Langland Park - North Entry

access to Lake Michigan beach a handicap accessible gazebo, and a vault restroom. The park provides access to swimming, sunset watching and beach walking, and access to the north pier. A large stone memorial honoring Captain John Langland is located at the turnaround to honor the first and only lighthouse keeper in Onekama.

### Old Faceful

Old Faceful is located at the west end of Thirteen Mile Road in Pierport which serves as an access to Lake Michigan. A paved parking area and artesian well have led many visitors to this site to drink from the well and enjoy views of Lake Michigan.

### Onekama Village Park

Located in the heart of Onekama, this community park is located on 3.914 acres along Portage Lake. Facilities include parking for 40 trailer boats and 32 cars, a boat ramp, a bath house with indoor toilets and sinks, a multi-purpose sports area, children's playground, a picnic shelter, and grills. Onekama's Concert in the Park are held weekly throughout the summer at the Village Park. Three historical markers are located in the park, the "Music" Propeller, the Memorial Fountain and the Portage Lake Region Marker.

### Sunset House

The Sunset House is located at the west end of Lakeisle Avenue with access to Lake Michigan. The shelter house ("Sunset House") is available for public use.

### Rotary Park

Identified by a granite marker at the west end of the Village at the corner of Main Street and First Avenue, this 0.30 acre park is on the main transportation corridor of M-22. The granite marker was originally placed at the Glenwood Resort to honor Paul P. Harris (1868-1947), founder of Rotary in 1905, who summered in Onekama for many years. The Manistee Rotary Club placed the bronze marker and the granite memorial in Rotary Park in 1991.

### Feldhak Park

Identified by a large stone and plaque, Feldhak Park is a small 2.415 acre public space located at the east end of Portage Lake surrounded by wetlands. It's a readily accessible, barrier-free park with a mown area and views out over the lake.

### Butterfly Garden

A living gift of the Portage Lake Garden Club on the grounds of the Farr Center, which has the Onekama Village Hall and the Onekama Branch of the Manistee County Library.

### Zosel Street Walk-In Park

This is a small, 0.181 acre mini-park with views over Portage Lake. It's a prominent waterfowl area. It is barrier-free and accessible.

### Wetlands Park

In 2010, Onekama Township completed the purchase of about 94 acres located on the north shore of Portage Lake between Little Eden Camp and North Point Park. Possibilities for a broadwalk through the

property linking to existing trails in North Point Park create an exciting recreation opportunity.

### Onekama School Sports Facilities

Recreational facilities include a football field, six lane asphalt track, baseball diamond, basketball court and playground equipment as well as tennis courts and a gymnasium. Located on 20 acres of property, some of the facilities have also been used by the Manistee Recreation Association for soccer and T-Ball programs.

### Water Access Points

The Onekama community has improved public boat ramp facilities within the Township and Village. Many local residents adjacent to Portage Lake utilize personal seasonal docks for launching their watercraft. However, residents residing off-the-water have expressed a need for the improved waterfront access areas despite having over 40 public road ends with access to either Lake Michigan or Portage Lake under the jurisdiction of Manistee County Road Commission



*Walking Path in North Point Park*

or Onekama Township. Township ordinance 2005-01 denotes the location and jurisdictional management of the road ends. A complete inventory of the road ends access points can be found in the 2016 Manistee County Parks and Recreation Plan on page 37 of that plan.

### Boat Ramps

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Boat Ramp The MDNR operated boat ramp and kayak launch provides access to Portage Lake on the west side of Andy's (North) Point. Facilities include a boat ramp, bathroom facilities and parking.

Onekama Village Park. An accessible boat ramp on Portage Lake with 40 available parking spots for trailered vehicles.

Given the limited amount of improved public access facilities along the waterfront, a public marina could reduce the existing conflicts between waterfront residents and those utilizing public road ends for access to Portage Lake.

Funding opportunities exist for both Onekama Township and the Village through their designation as Coastal Zone communities. By having this designation, Onekama is eligible for grants under Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality Coastal Management Program. The program is funded through The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), originally passed in 1972, which enables coastal states, such as Michigan, to improve protection of sensitive shoreline resources, to identify coastal areas appropriate for development, to designate areas hazardous to development, and to improve public access to the coastline.

## Other Private Recreation Facilities

### Portage Lake Yacht Club

Located northeast of Portage Point Drive and Second Street on Portage Point, this club hosts summer sailing regattas and races on Portage Lake.

### Surrounding Natural Area Facilities

In addition to the existing park and recreational facilities within the Onekama community, several outstanding natural areas exist within a short distance from the Township border.

### Arcadia Dunes

Located north of Arcadia in nearby Benzie County, this 3,000-acre preserve contains over 15 miles of trails that meander through sand dunes, woods and grasslands. Arcadia Dunes is owned and maintained by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

### BIG M Trail

The Big M Cross Country Ski and Mountain Bike Trail is located between the communities of Manistee and Wellston. There are no fees for the use of the trail system, which has over 30 kilometers of well-marked trails and a 26-mile single-track mountain bike trail. The U.S. Forest Service and volunteers maintain the trails in the summer months, and the Manistee Cross Country Ski Council maintains the trail in the winter.

### Orchard Beach State Park

Orchard Beach State Park is situated on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan in nearby Manistee Township. The park has 201 acres of recreation land with a modern campground and 2.5 miles of nature trails.

### North Country Scenic Trail

Approximately 120 miles of the North Country Scenic Trail runs through the Huron-Manistee National Forest lands, with a 20-mile trail section located

between Marilla and High Bridge Trailheads for local residents and visitors to hike and recreate.

### Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) - Arcadia Marsh

Located in Arcadia Township this 155-acre coastal wetland is owned, protected, and maintained by the GTRLC. Access to this unique ecosystem is accessible by an ADA boardwalk with opportunities for bird and wildlife watching.

## Township Park Priorities

Onekama Township park priorities are outlined in the 2016 Manistee County Parks and Recreation Plan [page 124]. The 2016 - 2021 plan was prepared by the Manistee County Planning Department and contains an inventory of park and recreation facilities [page 36] and a complete inventory of road end access points [page 37]. The updated plan, 2022-2026 Manistee County-wide Parks and Recreation Plan has been updated by Networks Northwest. (<https://www.networksnorthwest.org/userfiles/filemanager/ux1bnw8a82z69e4qsu0u/>)

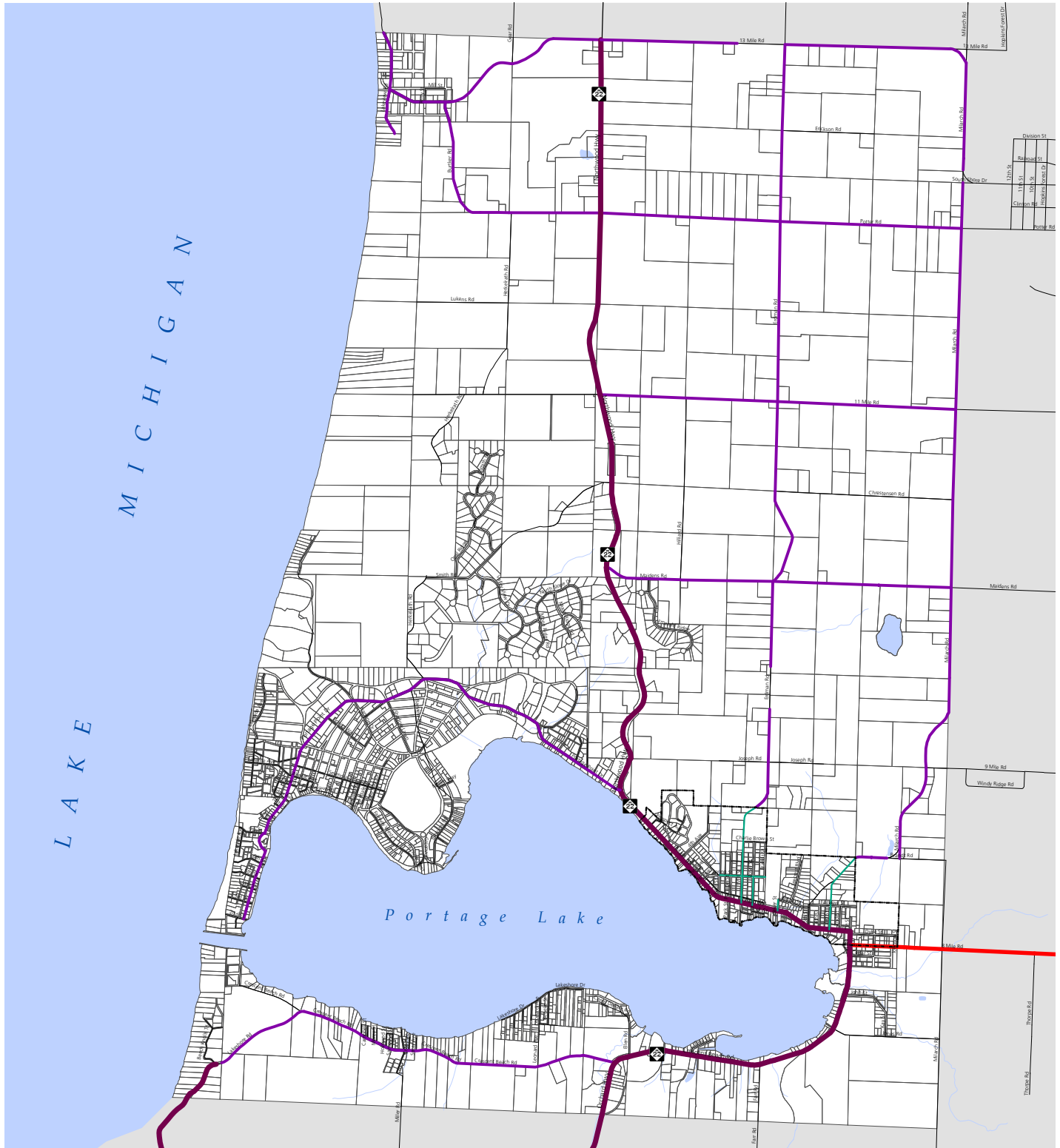
## Community Facilities

### Onekama Township

Onekama Township offers fire/rescue service through its central fire facility located adjacent to Township Hall. Law enforcement is provided through the Manistee County Sheriff Department and the Michigan State Police.

There are no publicly-owned water or sanitary treatment facilities in the Township at this time. According to the Manistee County Road Commission the Township has 47.7 miles of primary and local roads. Of this total mileage, 45.1 miles are plowed and 2.6 are considered seasonal.







THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY  
**Road Network**

Data Source: Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

BASE MAP ELEMENTS

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcel Line

THEME ELEMENTS

-  State Highway (M-22)
-  County Primary
-  County Secondary
-  Major Street (Act 51)
-  Local Street





# Community Opinions

Community outreach is an important aspect of the master plan process. Onekama Township has a practice of asking its residents their opinion on issues.

The Onekama Township Master Plan team conducted a survey of residents between January 2, 2022 and February 14, 2022 via the SurveyMonkey online platform. Residents were informed about the survey via a distribution conducted by the Township. In total, 272 people took the survey.

## Representativeness of Responses

The largest share of respondents (43%) live in Onekama Township year-round, and the second-largest percentage (36%) are seasonal residents. Seven percent of respondents reside elsewhere in Manistee County, and 14% are from further afield. Of those respondents who live in the Township either part time or full time, about 35% have been here for longer than 30 years and 27% for less than 10 years. The remaining 38% are split evenly between the 11-20 and 21-30 year categories. Seasonal residents most often stay for a period of 3-6 months (38% of those who did not select “year-round”; 24% of total respondents), followed by 1-3 months (25%/16%) and then 6-9 months (20%/13%).

The area along the northwest quadrant of Portage Lake (Area C) had the largest share of respondents (43%), followed by the area stretching along the entire south shore (Area E) of Portage Lake (28%). Another 17% of responses came from the part of the Township containing, and continuing northward from, Onekama Village. Areas A (Pierport) and B (approximately the northern third of the Township) had the fewest responses (7% and 6% respectively).

The highest number of responses was from those aged 65-74 (31%), followed by 55-64 (30%). Just 22% of respondents were under the age of 55, while 17% were above the age of 75. In comparison to Census counts for the Township as a whole, the age groups between 55 and 74 are overrepresented, while the younger cohorts are underrepresented.

Twelve percent of respondents reported having children in the home, compared to 22% of all Township households. The majority of those households (60% of households with children; 11% of total respondents) attend Onekama Public Schools, while the remainder (40%/8%) reported attending school in their primary place of residence, homeschooling, or Frankfort Public Schools.

## Portage Lake and Natural Features

When participants were asked to describe Onekama Township in one word, the most frequent response was “beautiful” and its companions “scenic,” “lovely,” and “picturesque,” which were offered by 38 respondents. Eighteen respondents mentioned “lake,” “water,” “sailing,” and “beach” as the community’s defining feature. Sixteen more respondents referred to “natural,” “unspoiled,” and “rural” characteristics. These descriptions point toward a strong incentive to recognize and preserve natural features in the Township, which was also reflected in respondents’ vision for the future. There, 60 of the 271 visions mentioned outdoor recreation, and another 33 spoke about preserving the natural character, features, and beauty of the area. Sixty-eight comments looked forward to a Portage Lake that is more accessible to all (42) and protected by infrastructure such as sewer (26). Support and preservation of farms and agriculture was important to 17 respondents.

Because Portage Lake is considered by many to be the defining feature of the Township, its management among many competing users is essential. When asked for an assessment of the water quality in Portage Lake, most reported that it is excellent (27%) or good (61%) and the remainder selected “neutral”; only three respondents (1%) said “poor” or “very poor.” In a follow-up question requesting more information about their assessment, 261 respondents provided 347 specific comments about Portage Lake’s quality

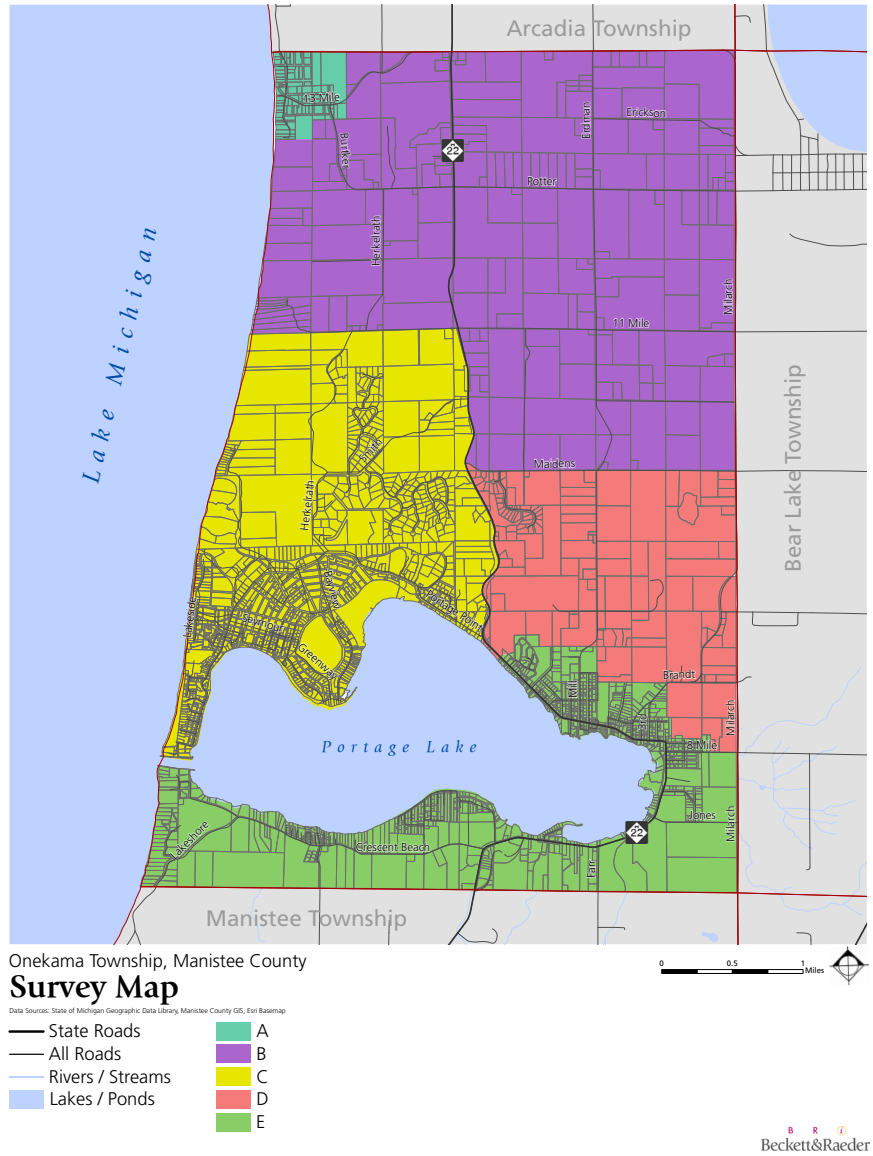
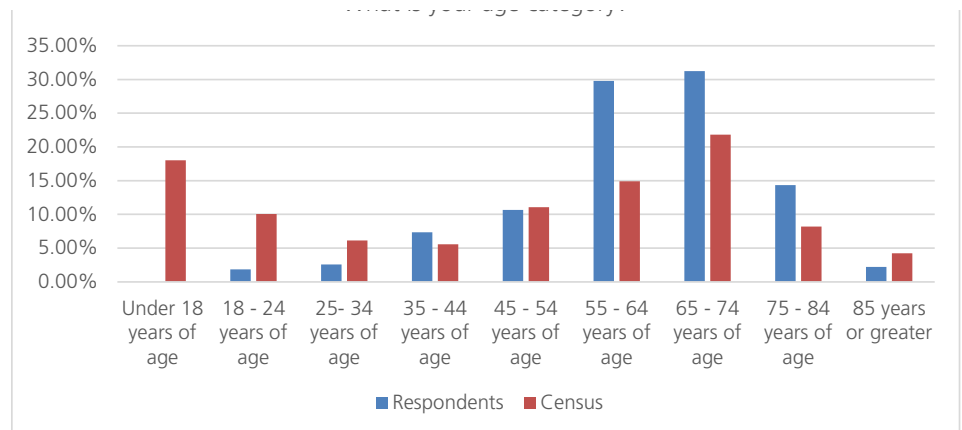


Figure10: Comparison Age of Respondents to Census



(many commenters addressed more than one issue, which were separated out for this analysis). The largest share of comments (82) offered a visual assessment which generally included clear water, sandy bottom, and lack of trash and weeds. Other positive assessments relied on personal experience such as swimming and boating (49), personal history (5), or admitted no scientific basis (18) yet confirmed that the lake “seems clean and beautiful.” Watershed management efforts were credited in 25 comments, some of which pointed directly to “careful use of shoreline” and “continuing treatment for invasive water species.” Water quality monitoring efforts appear to be an especially effective strategy, as 26 comments cited the results as evidence of their assessment.

Some respondents looked directly to the Lake’s inhabitants for cues: 17 comments mentioned healthy, active, abundant, quality fishing conditions, with one pointing out the summer bass tournament and noting that “bass do not grow in polluted water.” However, not all agreed, and this is where competing issues begin to surface: another commenter lamented the “overuse” of the lake by that same tournament, and three commenters linked physical and chemical efforts to control lake vegetation with declining fishing conditions.

Overall, vegetation control is a complicated and multifaceted issue summed up by one commenter thus: “Weeds are a problem in the lake, but the chemicals that are being used to treat the issue is worse.” Eleven comments complained about weed growth, while 13 comments singled out lawn maintenance and herbicides as detrimental to the lake. Another four described algal blooms and connected them to fertilizer use.

The most frequently-cited concerns about overall water quality were related to managing the impacts of development. Septic systems and sewage treatment appeared 18 times, including flooding and leaching systems due to poor maintenance. Perceived petroleum pollution from watercraft warranted nine mentions. Four comments were concerned about soap residue or “soap suds”; three each mentioned trash and runoff; and one person cited the growing use of shoreline armoring (seawalls) as a factor working against water quality in Portage Lake.

## Growth and Preservation

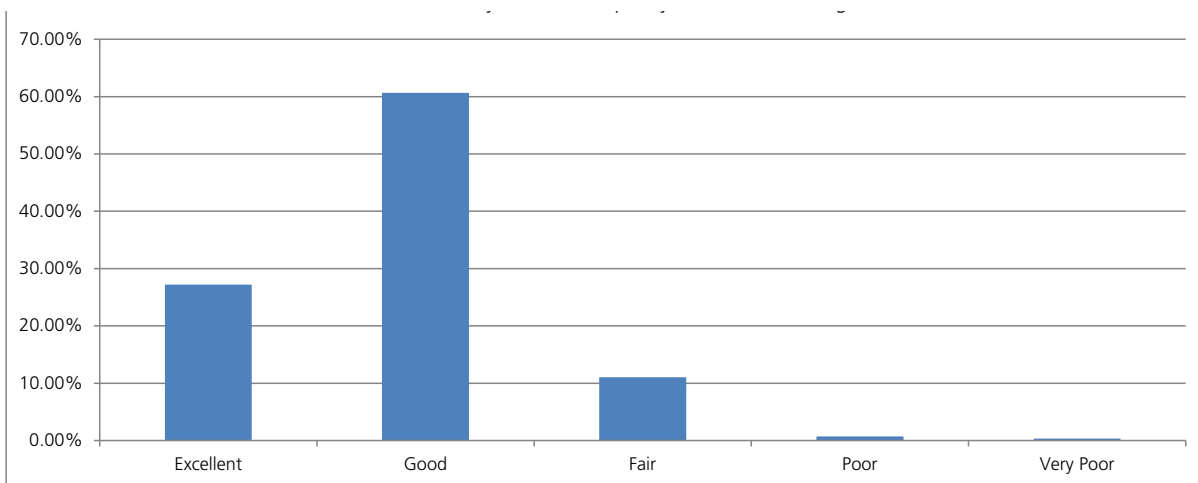
Tension between the desire to preserve and the desire to progress is evident. “Peaceful,” “quiet,” “serene,” “tranquil,” “relaxing,” and “sleepy” were the second

most frequent descriptors of Onekama as it is (36 comments). “Stagnant,” a less positive description of the same condition, appeared five times, while 11 respondents used the words “underdeveloped,” “underperforming,” “behind,” “neglected,” “outdated,” “old-fashioned,” and “backwards.” Another 11 respondents offered up “quaint”; seven respondents singled out “potential.” Twelve respondents said they thought Onekama Township is perfect the way it is: “idyllic,” “paradise,” “jewel,” “gem,” “heaven,” and “just right.”

In the visions described by respondents, 70 commenters volunteered that they would like to see “growth” or “more businesses.” When asked in a separate question to select the view that most closely resembles their sentiment about growth in the Township, 42% of survey respondents chose “I would like to see growth encouraged.” Another 35% “would prefer to see planned, limited growth,” and 21% “would prefer to let growth take its own course.”

Just 2% said they “would like no growth” at all. While 67 comments used words like “stay” or “same” when describing a preferred future, these comments almost always included a “but”: “with some improvements,” “but with growth in recreation,” “but more progressive,” “but

Figure 11: Impressions of Water Quality



needs more charm.” More than one quarter of the 67 comments (18) could be summed up in the words of this commenter: “I like it the way it is...but would like to see more shopping and dining opportunities.” This sentiment is examined in more detail in the following sections.

## Commercial Development

When asked about the most important business types to the Township, nearly all respondents recognized dining and lodging (97%) and farming/orchards/vineyards (96%) at the top, with resort and recreation (89%) and commercial/retail/service (86%) following close behind. These findings succinctly illustrate the area’s basic agricultural and recreational character. Conversely, industry was relatively unimportant. Health/social services, agricultural processing, and construction all ranked lower than the above concerns; light manufacturing did not register as “important” to even a majority of residents.

These findings point to a basic land use tension: agriculture and rural character

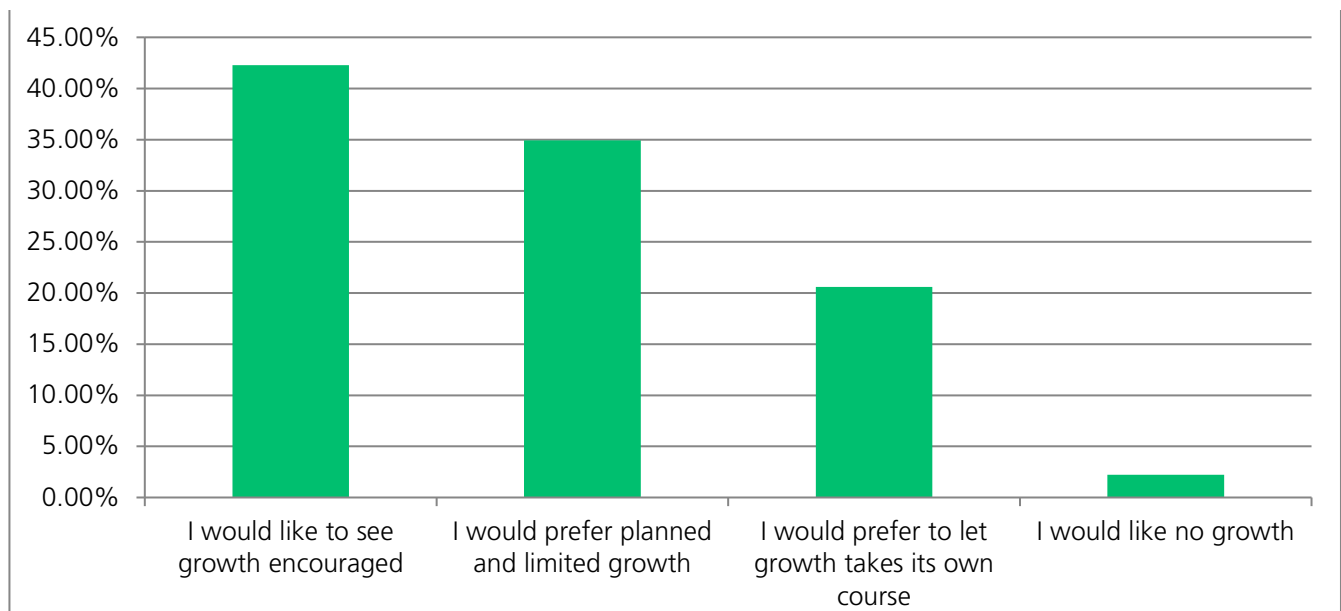
depend on large swaths of land relatively free of development, while dining, retail, and service uses depend on a threshold concentration of residential density. A village provides the traditional resolution to this tension by concentrating commercial development into a compact area that minimizes its impact on the surrounding character while providing a discrete focal point for the social and economic interactions that are crucial to residents’ quality of life. This is a basic functional relationship that is as old as the concept of a settlement. However, government structures which are meant to manage that relationship can sometimes complicate it instead.

The single most common element of a desired future, described independently by 121 open-ended survey comments, was better dining and retail options. The second most common request was for an improved “village” or “downtown” (82 responses), with another sizable segment (32 comments) using words like “vibrant” or “small-town feel” that imply a distinct area of commercial density. Normally, a solid finding like this would

give community leaders clear direction to focus investment in the Village. But because the Village and the Township are distinct political entities, it points instead to an insistent, ongoing need for cooperation and collaboration. Township residents have indicated that Village businesses are necessary for them to thrive, pointing out that the offerings and general conditions found there directly influence their quality of life. On the other hand, Village businesses must draw support from further afield than the Village boundaries to thrive. The Township and the Village have engaged in formal joint planning efforts in the past, and it may be advisable to implement ongoing structural opportunities for collaboration.

One commercial development that is firmly within the Township is the Portage Point Resort, also referred to as “the Inn,” which was mentioned in the future visions of 13 commenters. All supported it, looking to this local institution to provide the foundation of a “thriving resort area.” Expansion of both the Inn and the marina were mentioned.

Figure12: Views on Future Growth



## Housing

The survey inquired about the types of housing that residents and others would support in the Township. The most desirable format was single family detached housing, of which 83% of respondents were either “very” or “somewhat supportive.” Senior living centers or communities were also popular (65% “very” or “somewhat supportive”), though this finding may be related to the average age of the respondent. Seasonal housing and accessory dwelling units, also called granny flats, rounded out the top tier of preferred housing with 54% and 50% of respondents offering “somewhat” or “very” supportive responses. There was little difference in strength of preference for smaller homes (400-800 square feet), duplexes, townhouses/rowhouses, apartments, and short-term rentals, with all of enjoying some support from 35-40% of respondents. On the “somewhat” to “very unsupportive” end of the spectrum were tiny homes (47% between the two categories) and mobile/manufactured/modular homes (65%).

Because there can be a difference between support for a housing type generally and support for that housing type in close proximity to one’s own home, respondents were asked to note in the comments which housing types they would support in their own neighborhoods. Of the 272 respondents who answered the first question, 233 provided comments (86%), offering a reasonable if not perfect comparison.

Indeed a difference was found between those housing types that residents generally support and those they want in their neighborhoods—17 respondents said “all of the above”, and only four people answered by saying “same responses as previous question.” Sixty-five percent of those who commented would support single-family housing in their neighborhoods. After that, support nearly disappeared: eight percent identified ADUs as being welcome neighbors, six percent

suggested seasonal homes, five percent said smaller houses, three percent each would like to see townhouses, tiny homes, or duplexes, two percent suggested short term rentals, and only one percent wanted senior living in their neighborhoods. Six percent of respondents simply said “none.” The open-ended format allowed for a little more information than multiple choice, and most of it concerned cost or its proxy, size. Twelve respondents supported higher cost/size burdens such as dictating a large lot, minimum square footage, and owner occupancy, or used words like “custom” or “upper middle class.” Nine respondents advocated for smaller homes, homes that would be available for rent, or used the word “affordable.” There were also a couple of nontraditional requests: an RV park, a campground, and commercial/residential mixed use.

These findings bring us back to the statement, “I like it the way it is... but would like to see more shopping and dining opportunities.” There is a critical relationship between housing and commercial development that is summed up by the adage “retail follows rooftops.” Put another way, the idea is that if there was sufficient residential density to support more shopping and dining, it would already be there; a vacant storefront is more of an indication of lack of market than lack of establishment. Given the governmental constraints described above, the single most effective thing that the Township can do to support a more vibrant Village is to support a significant increase in the number of residents that patronize its businesses. However, such residential growth would need to be carefully managed in order to preserve the Township’s rural character. Compact, density-aware development that is in proximity to existing development is the method that achieves both a significant population increase and limited impact on natural features—and herein lies the crux of the conflict. Residents desire a vibrant commercial place, preserved natural areas, and only low-density development in their neighborhoods, but reality suggests that they must pick two and sacrifice the third.

## Industry

As noted above, industry and industrial development are neither prevalent nor widely desired in the Township. Twenty-eight commenters did mention it, often in conjunction with a desire to offer living wage jobs, diversify the economic base, and support year-round residency (26 comments) and families (19).

The survey inquired directly about marijuana cultivation and sales, which is an emerging industry in Michigan with considerable growth potential and unique location constraints. It is the only industry that a community may categorically decide whether to opt into or out of, and the sympathies of the majority of those who took this survey appear to lie with the latter. Fifty-one percent of respondents are “somewhat” or “very unsupportive” of medical marijuana growing/processing facilities; 54% do not support medical marijuana dispensaries; 55% would rather not see recreational marijuana growing/processing facilities; 58% prefer not to have marijuana microbusinesses; and 61% do not support retail recreational marijuana establishments. This may be another area where the age of respondent should be considered, as national polls conducted by Pew and YouGov regularly indicate higher support for marijuana legalization and commercialization among cohorts younger than 55 than among those aged 55 and up.

## Quality of Life and Land Use Issues

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with a range of services that impact their overall quality of life. Emergency services had the highest overall rating (76% rated “excellent” or “good”; excludes those who were unsure or did not apply), followed by variety of park and recreation facilities (72% rated “excellent” or good”) and quality of public schools (76%). The least satisfaction was

recorded in areas which are supported by denser community patterns: employment opportunities, transportation options, and access to shopping and dining. Of those who offered a rating in these categories, 80-85% gave it a “poor” one.

Internet and cellular service were investigated in more depth because these services can be especially challenging in rural Michigan. In each of these categories, respondents were evenly split between “excellent/good” and “fair/poor.” An open-ended inquiry about service providers revealed that the vast majority of respondents (73%) use Spectrum/Charter, with a smaller group using AT&T (10%) and about the same number are scattered across Comcast, Eclipse, Frontier, Hughes, and others (9%). Six percent of respondents do not have internet; one third of those (2% of total respondents) specifically noted that it was not available in their area. Four commenters included seamless, widely-available cellular and internet service in their vision of Onekama’s ideal future.

Blight and junk on private property was by far the most pressing land use and zoning issue in the community: 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it is a concern; ten comments further expressed a desire for stronger, quicker, and more equitable enforcement; and 11 respondents stipulated that their vision of an ideal future did not include blight. Redevelopment and reuse of vacant or underutilized properties followed (64% “agree” or “strongly agree”), and several comments supported these responses as well. Some of the comments simply advocated for development opportunities in general, using the word “open” in various contexts. Others had specific sectors (dining/retail) or geographies (north side of the lake) in mind. A similar proportion of respondents affirmed that fluctuating water levels are a concern (62% “agree” or “strongly agree”). However, the eight comments that mentioned the lake identified other issues: fair access to lake views, public access to the lake, crowded development, insufficient boat ramps, and

conflict between lakefront property owners and other Township residents. Short-term rentals were the item of least concern among those presented, and three of the five comments related to them expressed support, rather than concern, for their development.

## Infrastructure Development

The survey sought feedback on two current infrastructure trends: transportation choice and localized energy production.

Thirty-seven survey respondents described an ideal future Onekama that includes more walking, biking, and even boating as alternatives to getting around by car. When presented with a range of specific transportation modes, survey respondents were generally supportive. More bike lanes throughout the Township was the most popular choice (86% of respondents were “somewhat” or “very” supportive). Two options that are completely separated from vehicular traffic each enjoyed at least some support from about 82% of respondents: dedicated, off-road bike lanes and sidewalks/pathways connecting neighborhoods and businesses. Technically the least popular option, though still garnering support from 78%, was a dedicated, on-road bike lane with color pavement markings.

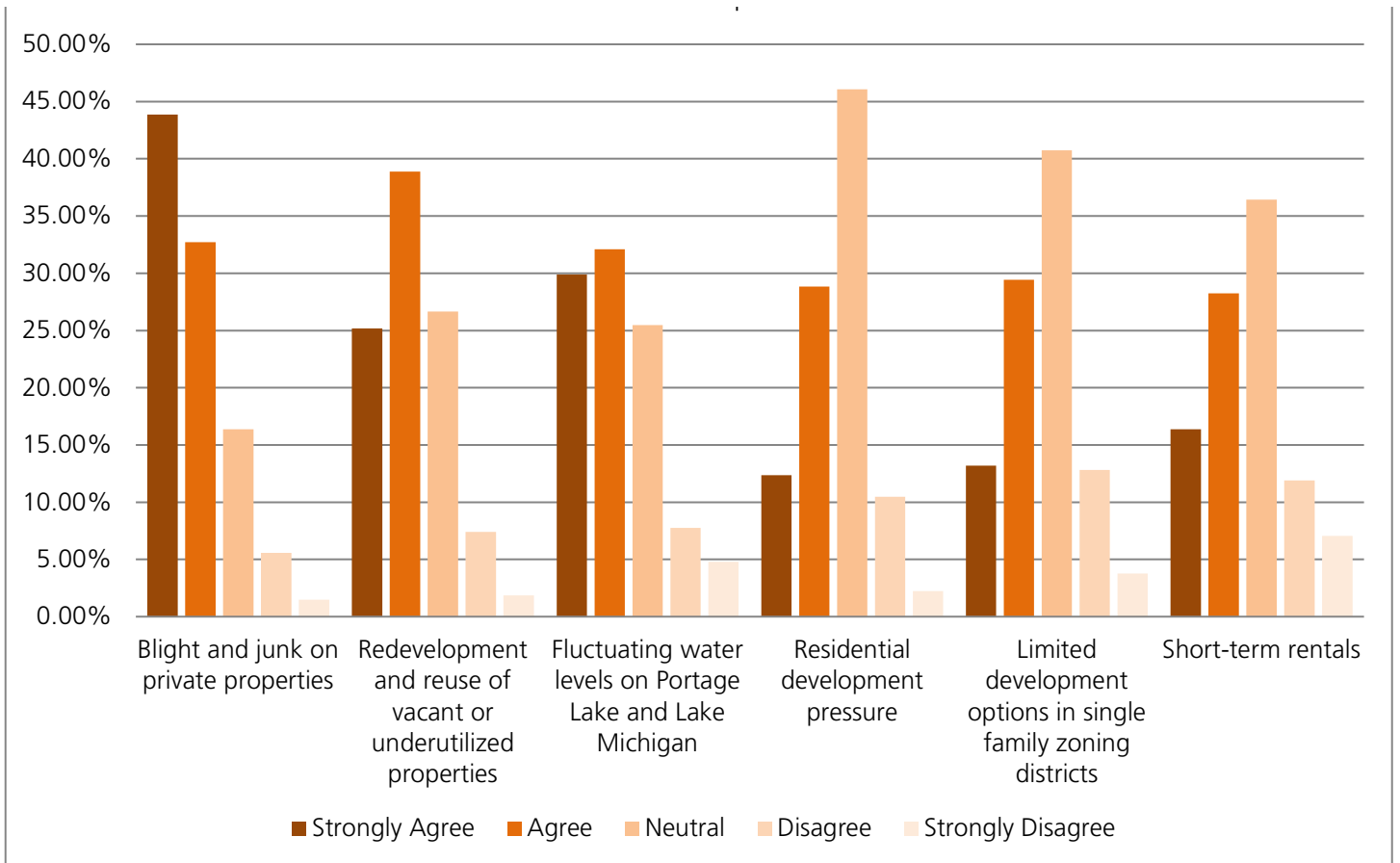
In the “Other, please specify” option attached to this question, 46 respondents left comments addressing 53 issues spanning transportation type, location, and design. A primary concern was summed up by this commenter: “Over the years, I have noticed a great increase in bicycle usage in the township. The township should recognize this and take steps to maximize the safety of riders.” Protected lanes, separated paths, and speed humps were suggested to minimize conflict between bicycles and the fast moving traffic on M-22, Portage Point Road, Crescent Beach Road, and other

roads (8 comments). A second recurring design concern was accessibility: six comments requested universally accessible trails, paved trails, and curb modifications. Seven comments focused on walking infrastructure, especially hiking trails or paths designed to connect the user with nature. Others ranged toward less traditional transportation modes: four comments called for connections to the state snowmobile trail system; two proposed public docking facilities; and one mentioned equestrian pathways.

Ten comments mentioned geography in their recommendations. Two main themes were a desire for biking/hiking paths around the lake, especially on Portage Point Road, and a desire for nonmotorized facilities that connect one community to another. There were also a number of recommendations in this Township survey that were focused on conditions in the Village, clearly demonstrating the value of coordinated planning for transportation routes that cross municipal boundaries: “better bike lanes throughout the Village,” “sidewalks in the Village are very important,” “crosswalk in the village,” etc. When considering energy production facilities, survey respondents generally expressed a strong preference for solar over wind, and a softer preference for personal systems over utility-scaled systems. Respondents were “very” or “somewhat supportive” of residential-scale solar energy in 70% of responses, with just 14% expressing disapproval. Active support for utility-scale solar dropped to 50%, while 34% were “somewhat” or “very unsupportive.” Residential windmills did not achieve a majority in the “very” and “somewhat supportive” categories, with 39% of respondents selecting either category, while a greater share of the tally fell into the “somewhat” and “very unsupportive” categories (44%). Finally, utility-scale wind production was actively unsupported by a majority (52%), and supported by only 32%.



Figure 13 Land Use Issues





# Cornerstone

## Develop trail systems that access the Portage Lake and our natural assets

An outcome of the 2010 Onekama Community Master Plan was a desire to provide a well-connected series of trails for biking, walking and hiking. This desire continues in 2022 and survey respondents expressed their preference for this form of passive recreation activity. And, why not. The Township is bounded by Lake Michigan, has a beautiful inland lake, and is surrounded by a series of hills that offer incredible vistas of northern Michigan.

The potential for a non-motorized community linking natural resources, economic centers, and places where residents live, play and work is very favorable. Currently, Crescent Beach Road, Portage Point Drive, Seymour, Fairway West and Bayview offer opportunities for walking and biking within the community. M-22 (Northwood Highway) through the Village of Onekama has sidewalks and is walkable through the business district and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The 2014 Portage Lake Community Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan also supported opportunities to connect

natural, cultural, and recreational amenities throughout the Township.

Recommendations Herkelrath Road offers an opportunity to connect Portage Lake with the Pierport settlement at the northwest corner of the Township. This public right-of-way roughly parallels the M-22 corridor without the conflicts of regional traffic. The Northwest Michigan Regional Non-Motorized Strategy (2008) suggested M-22 and Erdman Road from the Village of Onekama to 13 Mile Road as local non-motorized routes.



### Building blocks

1. Develop a Township non-motorized plan that accommodates biking, hiking, and snowmobiles.
2. Work collaboratively with partners to develop a regional trail system linking multiple points of interest.
3. In conjunction with the Village, survey and assess the functionality and integrity of the existing sidewalks.
4. Conduct a wayfinding campaign to provide visual cues necessary to direct residents throughout the trail systems and community at large.
5. Review, assess, and update the zoning ordinance to include trail system strategies.
6. Conduct a road survey, in partnership with the Manistee County Road Commission, to understand the needs for accommodating trail system needs on the existing road system.

### Foundation

Manistee County Parks & Recreation Plan	Improve access to natural resources and recreational facilities for recreational purposes.	Develop nature and natural resource based tourism within the county.	Look for ways to improve collaboration and partnerships to support recreation.	Develop a county wide, multi-use, trail system that connects communities, natural features and is universally accessible.
Onekama Priorities	More bike lanes throughout the Township	Sidewalks and pathways that connect neighborhoods	Dedicated, off-road bike lanes	Snowmobile trails

# Cornerstone

## Create a vibrant and attractive downtown for residents and tourists.

The 2010 Onekama Community Master Plan focused on the revitalization of the downtown business district. An outcome of the planning effort was an investigation into the establishment of a Downtown Development Authority lead by the business community. Unfortunately, the effort lost traction at the governmental level and was never publicly vetted.

The results of the 2022 community survey notes a continued desire to have a vibrant and active downtown. Respondents envision downtown Onekama to be comparable with Ludington and Frankfort; active waterfront business districts. The dilemma is that the business district is primarily confined within the Village of Onekama and many of the residents desiring a high quality experience live in the Township. In the 2010 M-22 Economic Development Strategy there were 35 general merchandise and restaurants located in the Village. This study further noted that the Village business district could accommodate 8,500 additional square feet retail-related

business with over 50% allocated to quality restaurants, family restaurants, and specialty foods.

Revitalization is an unwritten but acknowledged local government policy deeply supported by local business owners and real estate interests who understand that a vibrant business district leads to higher sales, increased property values, and healthier neighborhoods and communities. The Onekama business district will never realize its full potential without an inter-governmental effort focused on revitalization and recruitment of business.



### Building blocks

1. Determine level of interest by the business community to revitalize the business district.
2. Convene a meeting with downtown business owners to determine their level of interest to establish an informal or formal business organization focused on downtown revitalization.
3. Convene a joint meeting between the Village of Onekama and Onekama Township elected officials to explore their level of interest to establish a Downtown Development Authority, Corridor Improvement Authority under Act 57 of 2018, or equivalent organizational authority.
4. Reach out to the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce to determine what services they can provide to attract retain and recruit new businesses to the downtown district.
5. Update the M-22 Economic Development Strategy; specifically the retail market assessment to determine what retail venues are either missing or in need of expansion in the business district.
6. Utilize wayfinding, in conjunction with branding, to increase visitor/tourism traffic along M-22.
7. Take the necessary steps to forward the goal to build a public dock in the Village business district on Portage Lake.

Michigan Main Street	Walkable, human-scale environments	Unique, historic and visually attractive architecture	A mix of uses, activities and consumers	Positive community image and identity
M-22 Economic Strategy	Establish a Formal Business Network	Joint Downtown Development Authority	M-22 improvements and streetscape	M-22 Wayfinding System

# Cornerstone

## Provide a variety of housing types that are attractive to all age groups

The predominate housing type in Onekama is a combination of lakefront smaller lot detached single family and large lot, inland, detached single family homes. According to the U.S. Census there is not much variation in housing types, roughly 98% of the Township housing stock is detached single family. As noted in the housing assessment the median value of housing in the Township is out of reach for most working family households. This trend will likely continue into the future.

A 2019 Target Market Analysis conducted by Land Use | USA for Networks Northwest indicated that Manistee County could support 332 rental units with 14 located in Onekama and 114 owner units with 7 located in Onekama. The Beckett & Raeder housing model indicated a need for 80 lower-priced housing units.

The Township is an attractive place to live, and invest in a second seasonal home. As the seasonal population ages the

second home may become the primary home. Based on socio-economic data these post retirement households have high net worth and disposable income which far exceeds working households in the Township or County. As a result, moderate to middle income households are being pushed out of the homeowner market.

Local policies disfavor mobile and manufactured housing. Large lot zoning further exacerbates the housing issue. Innovative zoning can provide limited opportunities for middle-income housing but unfortunately a community can't zone itself out of a housing dilemma.



## Building blocks

1. The zoning ordinance should be reviewed to encourage greater utilization of the Planned Unit Development option outlined in Article 88 for cluster style housing.
2. The minimum floor area of 800 square feet in the AG-1 Ag-2, SUR, RR2, RR3, RR4, and C-1 zoning districts is reasonable to accommodate a residential unit similar to the adjacent image which is a very desirable housing format for a cluster housing development.
3. Consider the enactment of an ordinance amendment that would allow accessory dwelling units (ADU's) as a permanent housing option; not for short-term rentals.
4. Consider utilizing MSHDA financing in conjunction with a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) to encourage housing accessible to moderate income employees (i.e. teachers, police officers, retail, and restaurant)
5. Consider the development of an affordable apartment complex within the proposed sanitary sewer service area.
6. Evaluate the sewer system capacity to ensure that has sufficient capacity to support future housing and population growth.

Manistee County Target Market Analysis	Promote rehabilitation of existing units	Encourage a variety of housing types and choices	Increase the number of rental units in the market	Regulate short term rentals
Michigan Statewide Housing Plan	Housing stock is aging; 47% built prior to 1970	Construction of new units not keeping up with demand	Housing affordability is a major barrier	ALICE households struggling to afford housing

# Cornerstone

## Ensure that our agricultural and rural character is preserved

Onekama Township’s agricultural land occurs in the northern and eastern portion of the Township. Tax records indicate thirty-nine (39) agricultural-related property owners comprising 2,856 acres. The agriculture land use is the largest land use category in the Township. This zone extends east of M-22 from Joseph Road (9 Mile Road) north to 13 Mile Road and west of M-22 from 11 Mile Road to 13 Mile Road. Many year-round residents either have their residence on operable farms and orchards or live on large lots within this area. In addition, some of the properties are on the eastern slopes of the ridgeline and have the same land development limitations as properties on the lakeside of the ridge. Lastly, there are existing and dormant gas and oil exploration wells in this area.

In Onekama Township, rural character can be quantified by the increase or decrease in agricultural-related acreage over time. This plan establishes that benchmark for future evaluations.

Agricultural properties also serve as the primary water recharge area for township aquifers. So, it is critical that land management practices recognize the importance of the

groundwater recharge area when the property is farmed or converted to another use in the future.

In the 2010 Economic Development Strategy for Onekama and Arcadia Townships, many of the areas currently farmed east of M-22 were identified by MSU as land suitable for vinifera vineyards. The mid section of the Township is particularly suitable to this type of agricultural operation.



### Building blocks

1. Assess why Township agricultural property owners are not using PA 116, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act to preserve their farmland status and received tax income benefits. Based on MDARD data only several farms in Marilla Township are using this incentive.
2. Evaluate the use of “transfer of development rights” which allows farmland property owners to sell their vested zoning density rights to another property owner as a means of preserving their farmland.
3. Evaluate the use of the USDA Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program which is focused on protection of existing agricultural use and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses.
4. Evaluate the Onekama Township Permanent Zoning Ordinance, Section 3703; Special Uses under the AG-1 zoning district which allows for a variety of light industrial land uses that could be detrimental to adjacent agricultural uses and the underlying groundwater recharge area.

Manistee County master plan goals	Advocate for agricultural and forest management activities	Encourage farm businesses and farmers’ market enterprises	Advocate that designated agricultural properties remain low density	Support applications that enroll property owners in the PA 116 program
Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Key Goals	Food safety, human and animal health	Environmental sustainability	Economic Development	Efficient effective government

# Cornerstone

## Support local government efforts to implement quality of life initiatives

Local government provides a variety of services to residents and businesses. As part of the master plan update a community survey was available to residents between January 2 and February 14, 2022. During that time period 272 people took the survey. 43% of the respondents were year-round residents and 36% were seasonal property owners. The highest number of responses was from those aged 65-74 (31%), followed by 55-64 (30%). Just 22% of respondents were under the age of 55, while 17% were above the age of 75.

One section of the survey focused in on quality of life and land use issues which ranged from public safety, quality of roads, cellular service, access to shopping, and employment opportunities. Although survey respondents did not desire higher density patterns they did want enhanced access to broadband and cellular services which typically are lacking in less density, rural areas. Another issues was the prevalence of blight and junk on private property. This was by far the most

pressing land use and zoning issue. Another issue was the desire to redevelop underutilized and vacant property.

In terms of land use topics, commercial development was notable. The single most common element of a desired future, described independently by 121 open-ended survey comments, was better dining and retail options. The second most common request was for an improved village” or “downtown” with another sizable segment using words like “vibrant” or “small-town feel” that imply a distinct area of commercial density.



### Building blocks

1. Pursue efforts to create a Downtown Development Authority, Corridor Improvement Authority, or equivalent organization between the Village and the Township using an Intergovernmental Agreement as the basis for the initiative. The Onekema Community desires a vibrant and active downtown that reflects the lifestyle of its residents.
2. Adopt a police power ordinance focused on blight elimination utilizing the Lakes to Land Regional Imitative model blight ordinance as a guide.
3. Brand the Village and the Township as a resort waterfront community and create a strategy for development that is embraced by both units of government.
4. Along M-22 in the business district ensure that nonmotorized traffic is encouraged and accommodated.
5. Establish an internal and external training program for Planning Commission and Trustees on topics, such as, innovative zoning, redevelopment strategies and, blight control and code enforcement.
6. Continue water quality advocacy through the Portage Lake Watershed Forever initiative.
7. Investigate the formation of a locally based land conservancy.
8. Develop a community strategy to “age in place” to accommodate an aging population.
9. Continue to encourage policies that promote “dark sky” designations.

Manistee County master plan vision for the future	Wide range of housing opportunities	Agri-tourism has become an integral part of the County tourism industry	High quality of life serves to attract new businesses and residents	Provide housing opportunity so the elderly can age in place
Strong Towns	Supporting incremental development	Making the community bike friendly	Strengthening local businesses	The need for great public spaces







# Future Land Use

The future land use text and map constitutes a public policy of how the Township should develop in the years to come. It is a blueprint; a guide for the future.

The Future Land Use Plan and Map define the future land development vision for Onekama Township based on sound planning principles, overlaid with the community's expectations for the future. It builds on the historic development patterns of the community, factoring the unique environmental setting of the Township and its desire to protect its unique northern Michigan character along with the intrinsic value associated with Portage Lake. The future land use plan and map will assist Onekama Township to promote the harmonious, efficient, and economical use of land, and promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the community.

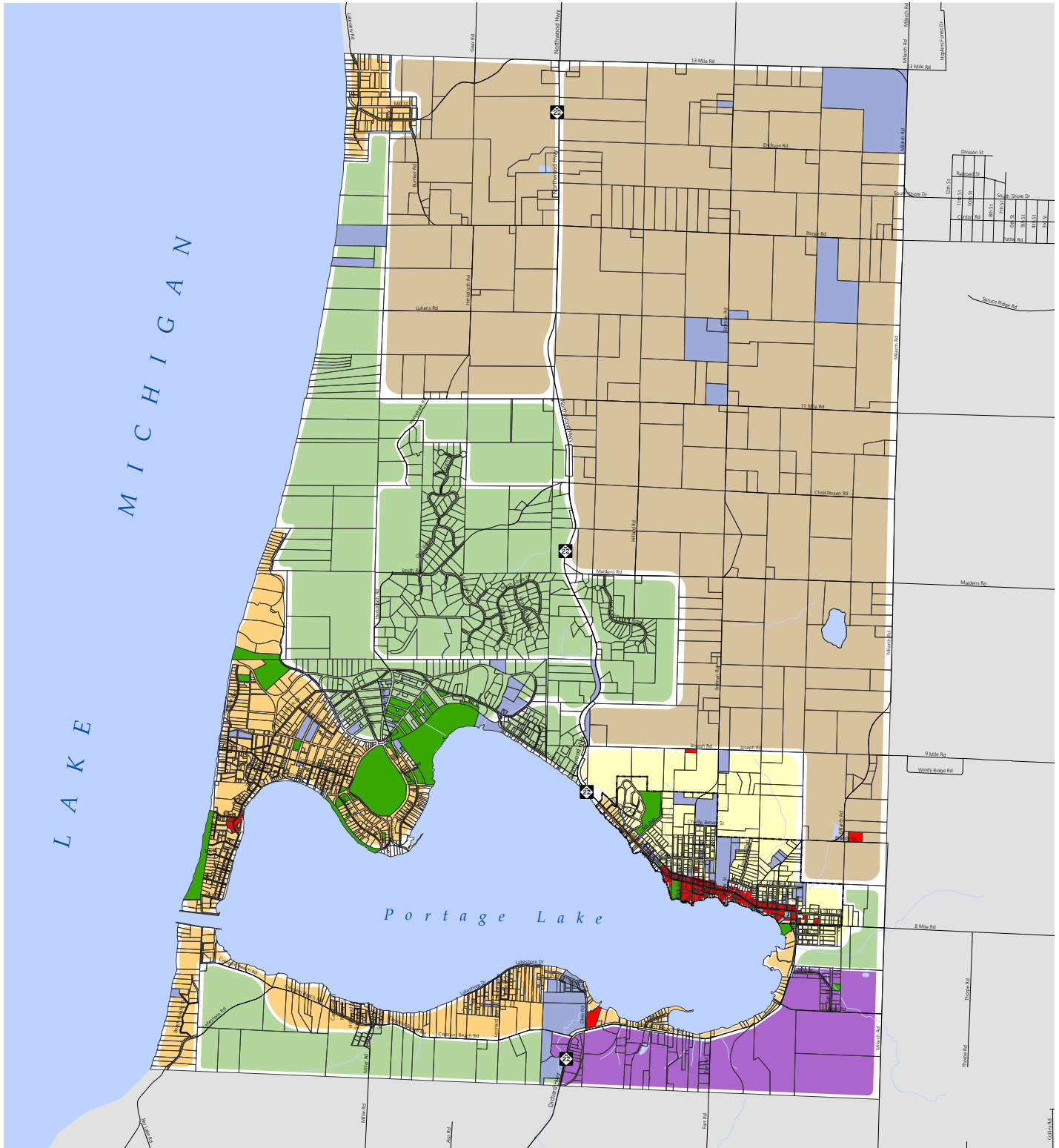
## Sustainability and Strategies

The Onekama Township Master Plan is structured around the ten tenets (principles) for "Smart Growth" as a means to achieve community sustainability where the needs of today's residents are met without compromising the quality of life and the environment for future generations. The bi-partisan Michigan Land Use Leadership Council chaired by former Governor William G. Milliken and former Attorney

General Frank Kelley accepted these principles, encouraging their use in state and local land use policy. When consistently applied through planning and zoning techniques, the tenets balance property rights, environmental protection, and preservation of open space, and create a unique sense of place.

The ten tenets of the Smart Growth initiative include these points:

1. Create a range of housing opportunities.
2. Create walkable neighborhoods.
3. Community and Stakeholder collaboration.
4. Create a strong sense of place.
5. Make the development process fair and predictable.
6. Allow for a mix of land uses.
7. Preserve open space and protect farmland.
8. Have a variety of transportation choices.
9. Direct development to existing communities (developed areas).
10. Allow for compact development design.



THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY  
**Future Land Use**

BASE MAP ELEMENTS

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Line
- Major Road

THEME ELEMENTS

- Residential--Rural (Low Density)
- Residential--Resort (Medium Density)
- Residential--Settlement (Medium Density)
- Residential--Mixed Use (Low Density/Commercial)
- Agriculture/Orchard
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Park & Open Space

## Planning Objectives

Planning objectives used to create this Master Plan and Future Land Use Map include:

- Creation of a defined and planned commercial area along M-22 (Main Street).
- A long-range opportunity to create walkable neighborhoods called “Settlements,” where the design and land development regulations will create traditional neighborhoods, specifically north of and adjacent to the Village.
- Accommodation of expected growth through a deliberate and planned process.
- Advancing sustainable design through the application of Smart Growth tenets.
- Efficient use of existing infrastructure, development, and transportation patterns.
- Preservation of agricultural lands east of M-22 and north of Joseph Road, and west of M-22 and north of 11 Mile Road.
- Classification of residential areas by type rather than density recognizing their character, qualities, and opportunities for innovative development.
- Integration of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan recommendations, and
- Protection of existing natural features.

## Reasons behind the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map

The development of the future land use plan was based on an evaluation of the 2010 Onekama Community Master Plan future land use map to determine if the

fundamental principles represented on that policy map had changed significantly over the ensuing twelve year period. It was concluded by the master plan committee that the allocation of the land uses was the same and supportable. The guiding principles behind the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) include:

- Strong desire to protect Portage Lake and improve its water quality and fisheries.
- Manage runoff to Portage Lake and infiltration to groundwater recharge areas.
- Recognition that proactive planning is preferred over reactive planning.
- The need to create a walkable and integrated network of pathways and trails.
- Create a “green” sustainable economy involving agriculture, alternative energy, biodiversity and ecosystem enhancements.
- Recognition that future residents need a variety of housing, including smaller lots, which encourage affordable family housing.
- Identifying quality education and student achievement as the key for future economic development.
- Create a sense of place and community for the overall community, and
- Respecting the needs of year-round and seasonal residents.

## Residential Land Uses

Plentiful water and woods provided the opportunity for lumbering, power, and transportation for Onekama Township as it began to utilize its natural resource base. In time, the lure of northern Michigan’s climate and access to fishing, hunting, and recreation transformed the area into a seasonal resort anchored

by a strong farming community. Today, many former seasonal residents have relocated to Onekama permanently. The agricultural base is still the strongest economic influence in the community and the Village business district serves the convenience needs of local and seasonal residents, as well as tourists; but it is the residential sector which provides the bulk of the developed land and highest proportion of taxable value.

There are four residential classifications proposed for Onekama Township reflecting the location and functional characteristics of their respective areas. These residential classifications include:

### Residential - Rural

*Development Intensity: Low Density*

These are scattered-site residential properties located within wooded and forested areas, and in some instances located on ridgelines. Land development consists of low-density (1 unit per 5 or more acres) on sites served with private well and septic systems. Some of these properties are located on topography where special attention should be given to reduce site disturbance, soil erosion and sedimentation, runoff and excessive site clearance. Within this land use classification are properties with varied topography, steep slopes, wetlands, and large intact forests located along Lake Michigan between Pierport south to Smith Road, and south of Crescent Beach Road to the south Township jurisdictional line. Some of the properties along Lake Michigan are within “high-risk erosion” areas as determined by the State of Michigan. Due to the sensitive landscape conditions and topography of these properties lower density development through scattered site placement, and in some instances conservation / open space subdivisions, and open space cluster development is encouraged.

*Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Large lot residential development.
- Utilization of conservation / open space subdivisions to protect sensitive landscapes.
- Setback from high-risk erosion zone, if applicable.
- Building pad site selection based on minimal disturbance to woods.
- Viewsheds selectively cleared to minimize disturbance to slopes and limit soil erosion.
- Minimal and shielded exterior site lighting to maintain night sky.

**Residential - Resort**

*Development Intensity: Moderate to Medium Density*

This type of residential development is primarily located on lots with water frontage to Portage Lake or Lake Michigan. The lots vary in size from 19.4 acres to less than 1,000 square feet with the average lot size of approximately 17,800 square feet. Many of these properties were developed as seasonal homes with some being converted to year-round residences. Properties located in the Township are served by private well and septic systems, and due to their proximity to the water there is concern about defective septic systems and the need to control pesticides and fertilizers. Development should be curtailed within wetlands and flood-prone areas.

*Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Low-scale development limited to two stories in height.
- Developments with multiple units should be designed and situated on the property to maximize views of Portage Lake and Lake Michigan.
- Minimal disturbance within the riparian zone. Incorporation of a sufficient natural buffer between the structure and the water’s edge.
- No direct runoff from impervious surfaces to Portage Lake.
- Residential areas to be connected

- with trails and walkways, and
- Minimal exterior lighting along water frontage.

**Residential - Settlement**

*Development Intensity: Medium Density*

These residential properties are located within the Village of Onekama. This form of residential development is characterized by a traditional “grid-street” network with small lot residential neighborhoods, in close proximity to churches, the Onekama Consolidated Schools, Village and Township offices, and public parks. It is referred to as “settlement” because it provides a higher concentration of residential development within a walkable distance to institutional uses and commercial establishments. New in-fill residential development should be encouraged within the Village of Onekama and, if needed, expansion should occur immediately north and adjacent to the Village. New development should complement the character and scale of existing residential properties. Properties along the north side of M-22 should be considered candidates for attached residential and when in proximity to the business district first-floor commercial with upper story residential.

*Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Continuation of the grid-street network when expansion occurs into adjacent undeveloped areas.
- Sidewalks and trails throughout.
- Traditional neighborhood architecture (one to two story in height).
- Occasional higher density residential development (attached condominiums, townhomes) on the north side of M-22.

**Residential - Mixed Use**

*Development Intensity: Medium Density Residential and Commercial*

This classification is used in the Village and Township where commercial properties coexist with single-family residential dwellings. These areas include the south side of M-22 corridor from John Street to the south Township jurisdictional limits and along M-22 between First and Third Avenues in the Village. These areas have been zoned a combination of residential and/or commercial for many years with the majority of the properties utilized as residential. This type of designation comes with an inherent responsibility to balance the site impacts (lighting, hours of operation, etc.) often associated with commercial properties with the qualities of living in a home.

*Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Residential uses on larger lots similar in size to the Residential-Rural classification.
- Subject to the availability of utilities potential site(s) for medium density apartments.
- Use of well planned multiple family complexes.
- Vehicular-oriented commercial businesses (restaurants, offices, etc.)
- Placement of commercial businesses along M-22.
- Utilization of access management principles.
- Minimal and shielded exterior site lighting to maintain night sky.

## Non-Residential Land Uses

### Agriculture - Orchard - Vineyard *Development Intensity: Very Low Density*

The Agriculture – Orchard land use is the largest land use category in the Onekama Community. This zone extends east of M-22 from Joseph Road (9 Mile Road) north to 13 Mile Road and west of M-22 from 11 Mile Road to 13 Mile Road. Many year-round residents either have their residence on operable farms and orchards or live on large lots within this area. In addition, some of the properties are on the eastern slopes of the ridgeline and have the same land development limitations as properties on the lakeside of the ridge. Lastly, there are existing and dormant gas and oil exploration wells in this area. There need to be adequate protections for adjacent properties.

#### *Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Continuation of farms and orchards.
- Residential uses located in open space subdivisions, cluster housing developments or residential uses within agricultural planned unit developments (PUD's).
- Utilization of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR's) as permitted in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.
- Vineyards.
- Minimize soil erosion and soil sedimentation.
- Minimize impacts associated with gas and oil exploration through zoning regulations.

#### **Commercial**

##### *Development Intensity: Compact*

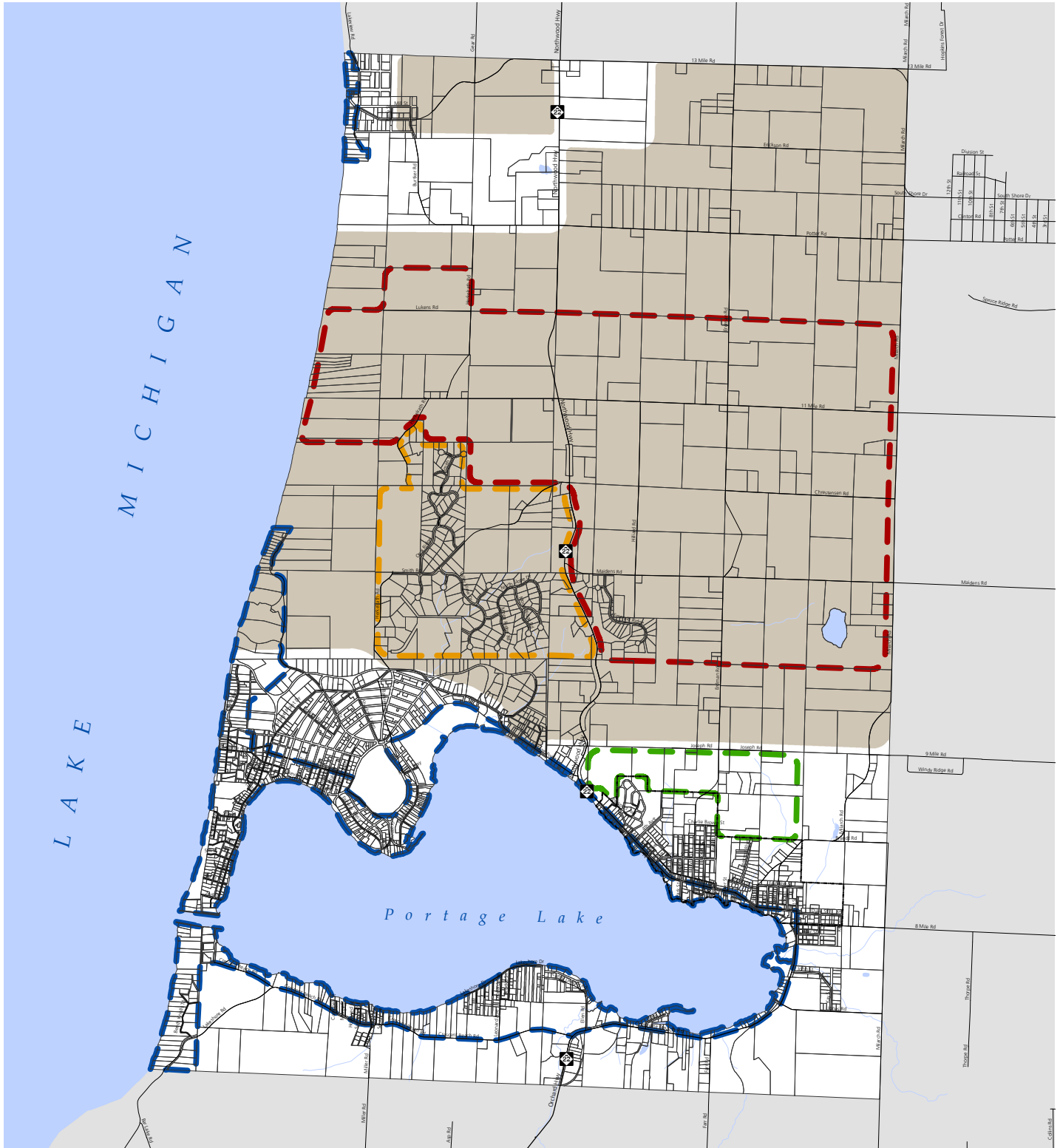
The commercial land use is relegated along M-22 in the Village of Onekama with the exception of some limited commercial on the south side of Portage Lake. The long-term vision for the M-22 business district is to utilize in-fill development to create a walkable and compact business district to serve the immediate Onekama Community and seasonal tourists.

Long term the commercial district should encourage building development on the north side of M-22 along the front lot line with parking in the rear. Businesses requiring large amounts of off-street parking should also be located on the north side of M-22. Businesses along Portage Lake should provide opportunities for lakefront pedestrian access.

#### *Desired Future Development Patterns*

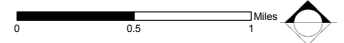
- Compact development with zero front yard setbacks.
- Minimize vehicular-dependent business within the core of the business district in order to create a more pedestrian environment.
- Three-story and mixed use development on the north side of M-22.
- Uniform streetscape improvements and sidewalks within the business district.





THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY

# Resource Management Zones



**BASE MAP ELEMENTS**

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Line
- Major Road

**THEME ELEMENTS**

- Neighborhood Formation Zone
- Settlement Expansion Zone
- Riparian Management Zone
- Steep Slope Management Zone

- Groundwater Recharge Zone

## **Institutional**

### *Development Intensity: Site Specific*

This classification is reserved for Village and Township offices, schools, churches, cemeteries and other governmental uses.

### *Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Building architecture should complement surrounding area.
- When practical these uses should have access to walks and trails.

## **Park / Open Space**

### *Development Intensity: Site Specific*

This classification is reserved for Village and Township owned parks and open spaces and properties owned by the State and the Nature

Conservancy. It is the intent of the plan that these areas will remain as park and open space for the enjoyment of the Onekama residents.

As the “southern gateway” to the M-22 corridor and to position itself for permanent and second home residential growth, the Portage Lake waterfront should be more intensively utilized. Waterfront parks should be developed adjacent to the Farr Center and at the current Onekama Village Park. These facilities should be viewed as magnet park facilities with walkways, playgrounds, boating access, and festival staging areas for cultural and musical events. Although a specific property is not identified, an inland winter sports park should be developed for sledding, ice skating, and outdoor hockey.

### *Desired Future Development Patterns*

- When practical these uses should have access and connections to walks and trails.

## **Industrial (Light and Warehousing)**

### *Development Intensity: Site Specific*

This classification is reserved for light industrial, warehousing and natural resource-related processing facilities.

The land use classification does not appear on the Future Land Use map as a primary land use classification and the accommodation of this land use will be regulated by an overlay zoning district in the Onekama Community Zoning Ordinance. The general area for future industrial uses will likely include all or a portion of Section 1, 2, 11 and 12 in the northeasterly corner of the Township.

### *Desired Future Development Patterns*

- Low scale buildings with enclosed storage facilities, paved parking lots with on-site and low-impact stormwater management facilities.

## **Resource Management Zones**

Supplementing the land use categories are resource management zones which focus on natural resource items or address land development options. These zones would eventually be converted into zoning overlay districts which include site specific requirements.

The resource management zones also reinforce certain community expectations regarding preservation of local character, improving water quality of Portage Lake, and protecting the natural resource base of the area.

### **Groundwater Recharge**

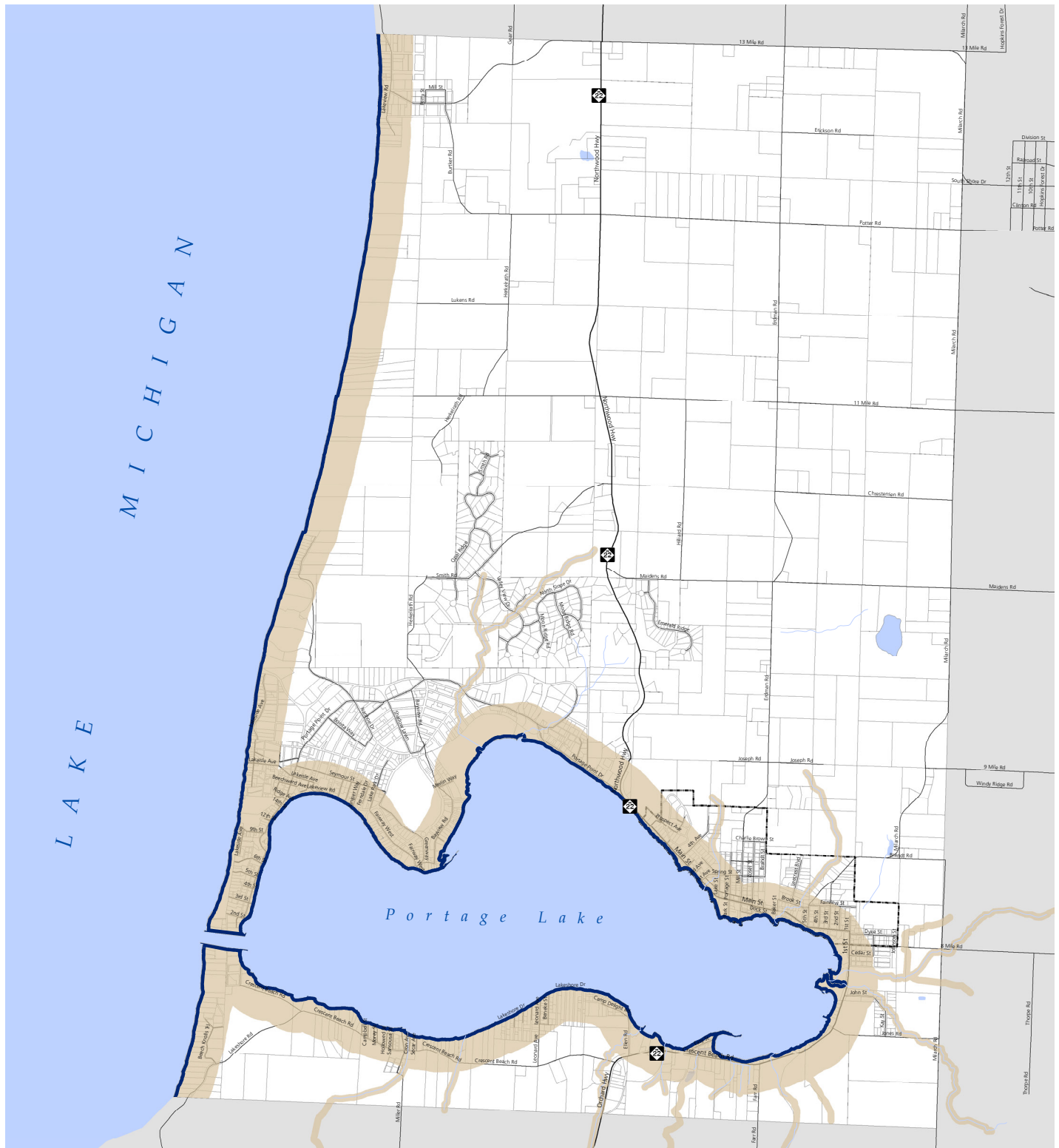
Groundwater is the primary source of water for drinking, agriculture, recreation, and stream and lake replenishment. Special attention should be given to areas that serve as principle water recharge areas for underlying aquifers and Portage Lake. Zoning regulations can be enacted to manage the type and intensity of land uses within high-quality recharge zones, regulate site disturbance, control excessive tree removal, and mitigate site and soil impacts associated with gas and oil exploration.

Some of these land uses may include:

- Automobile body/repair shop
- Gas station
- Fleet/trucking/bus terminal
- Dry cleaner
- Electrical/electronic manufacturing facility
- Machine shop
- Metal plating/finishing/fabricating facility
- Chemical processing/storage facility
- Wood preserving/treating facility
- Junk/scrap/salvage yard
- Mines/gravel pit
- Confined animal feeding operations
- Land divisions resulting in high density (>1 unit/acre) septic systems
- Equipment maintenance/fueling areas
- Injection wells/dry wells/sumps
- Underground storage tanks for certain corrosive chemicals

### **Neighborhood Formation**




This management zone covers the property known as Portage Ridge located northwest of the Village of Onekama. This upscale development is approximately 330 acres mostly consisting of 1 to 3 acre lots (one with 7 acres) with many having unique views of Lake Michigan and Portage Lake. The lots hold true to the vision of limiting environmental impact and allow for large, undisturbed green space between homes. The development has underground utilities including natural gas, electric, and high speed Internet along with covenants in place that are governed by the Portage Ridge Condominium Association. Its Architectural Control Committee upholds the Associations’ Bylaws while it governs new home plans and construction. Most homes built to-date are occupied by year-round retired persons; a few residents re families with children or young adults or some working in the community or remotely from home. The development is within the Onekama Consolidated School district and is open to more year-round residents with families. Portage Ridge also has a pool that is exclusively used by its members.





THE ONEKAMA COMMUNITY  
**Watershed Priority Areas**

Data Source: Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

BASE MAP ELEMENTS

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcel Line
-  Major Road

THEME ELEMENTS

-  Shoreline Buffer (100 ft)
-  Riparian Buffer (1,000 ft)



Out of a deep respect for the natural beauty and uniqueness of the overall property, the vision is to remain faithful to the Bylaws while encouraging construction of new homes and developing a strong sense of community.

### Settlement Expansion

The master plan envisions the eventual expansion of the Village of Onekama north into the township terminating at Joseph Road (Nine Mile Road). Expansion would concentrate housing within a traditional neighborhood very walkable to the business district, Portage Lake, and Onekama Consolidated Schools facilities. The neighborhood should consist of smaller lots (50 – 60 feet wide) located on a grid-street system similar to the Village. New streets should connect with existing streets, and sidewalks should be installed to ensure that children can walk to school. All properties should be connected to a public sanitary system.

### Riparian Management

This management zone comprises properties adjacent to Portage Lake and portions of Lake Michigan. The goal of this management zone is to protect and enhance the water quality of Portage Lake and Lake Michigan through the

application of storm water collection and treatment techniques, building restrictions on non-regulated wetlands, and limitations on site clearance and site grading. These innovative and low-impact stormwater techniques are recommended in the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan. The riparian management zone differs from the riparian buffer referenced in the Watershed Priority Map. The riparian buffer in the Portage Lake Forever Watershed Plan extends landward 1,000 feet from the water’s edge. The riparian management zone includes either properties adjacent to Portage Lake or Lake Michigan or properties extending landward to the first major road.

The water quality of Portage Lake is intrinsically linked to the long-term real estate value of adjacent lakefront properties. For this reason, it is important that legislative and engineering remedies be aggressively employed.

### Steep Slopes

Managing how development or site grading occurs on slopes prevents soil erosion and sedimentation, protects water quality and habitat (specifically fisheries), helps stabilize property values, promotes quality development and forest

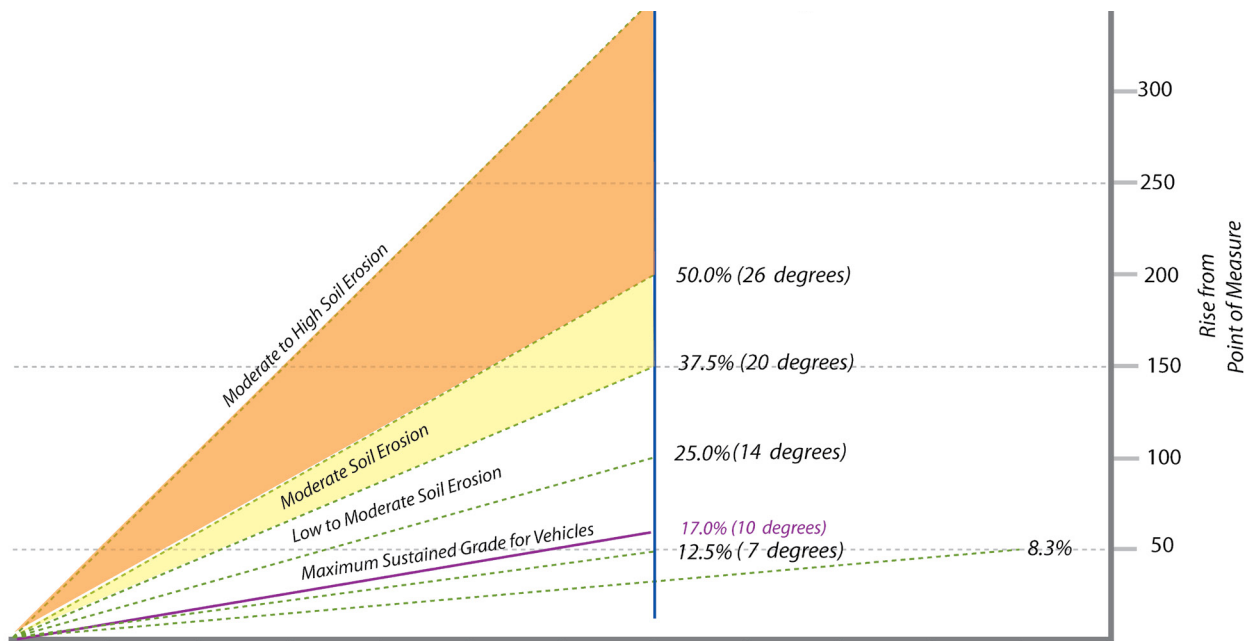
stewardship, and preserves viewsheds.

Depending on the soil type and degree of site clearance the severity of soil erosion and sedimentation will vary. The illustration above highlights the general standards often associated with hillside development provisions or site grading standards. Many of these provisions allow residential development on hillsides when combined with limited site disturbance and clearance.

## Zoning Plan

For the past several years, the Onekama Township Planning Commission has regularly reviewed the Zoning Ordinance, and other police power ordinances. Modifications to the ordinances have resulted from revisions in State statutes, citizen initiated concerns, and changes in the current development of the Township. The Planning Commission has worked diligently to create a Zoning Ordinance which promotes growth, protects the environment, and maintains a possible structure for sensible development.

At this time, the Planning Commission feels that the Zoning Ordinance can address and meet the objectives of the Future Land Use map.







# Action Plan

The action plan is used to incrementally implement the policies emanating from the master plan process. It is used by the Planning Commission as its work program.

Although the recommendations embodied in the Future Land Use Map may take 20 to 30 years to achieve, the Action Plan is focused on short term attainable actions that the Township may take to bring about noticeable change. The five-year timeframe is used to correspond to the planning commission's role to re-evaluate the Master Plan every five years under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008). The Action Plan table outlines a planned implementation schedule for each action and includes a general timeframe for implementation, the party responsible for implementing, priority, and anticipated funding source.

The Action Plan schedule should be used by the Planning Commission to prepare their Annual Report (MCL 125.3819 (2)) to the Township Board outlining their annual work effort and budget. This process also helps to establish a realistic measure of Planning Commission performance.

## Focus Areas

The Action Plan is structured to address the building blocks outlined in the Cornerstones and the Zoning Plan. The topics in the Cornerstones focused on trails, downtown, housing, agriculture, and quality of life. The Zoning Plan focused on revisions of the zoning ordinance to match the future land use classifications.

The Action Plan is structured to address the capacity (personnel and fiscal resources) of the Planning Commission and the Township. Rather than outlining a lengthy set of tasks, the Action Plan articulates a reasonable set of tasks that can be achieved over a five-year timeframe.

## Action Plan

TASK	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	SCHEDULE
TRAIL SYSTEM	Prepare a Township-wide trail plan that addresses bike, hike, and snowmobile constituents. When completed this should be incorporated into the Onekama Township Parks and Recreation Plan and/or the Manistee County Parks and Recreation Plan in order to qualify for MDNR and MDOT funding.	Planning Commission in conjunction with Park Committees	2024-25
DOWNTOWN	Conduct a business / property survey to gauge the level of interest to establish a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), or Business Improvement District (BID) as organizational tool to revitalize the M-22 business district.	Planning Commission	2024-25
	Engage a design firm to prepare a conceptual plan for the development of a public dock which is within the downtown business district. This plan can then be used to procure funding from MDNR Trust Fund or MDNR Waterways.	Township Board	2025
HOUSING	Revise the Township zoning ordinance to include Cluster Housing and Planned Development provisions. These provisions will complement the current zoning dimensions and square footage requirements while preserving open space and protecting sensitive landscapes.	Planning Commission	2024
AGRICULTURE	Conduct an outreach program to the agricultural community regarding the PA 116 Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program and its various tax incentives.	Planning Commission	2025
QUALITY OF LIFE	Enact a police power blight ordinance based on the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative model. This task can be coordinated by the Planning Commission but its enactment is done by the Township Board since a police power ordinance is not part of the zoning ordinance.	Planning Commission and Township Board	2024

## The Last Word. . .

The true potential of the Onekama community will never be realized until the Village of Onekama and Onekama Township can find common ground to work together.

The outcome of the 2010 Onekama Community Master Plan was the initial start of a cooperative environment between the Village and the Township. A Joint Planning Commission was established and the possibility of establishing a Downtown Development Authority was underway. In 2012, both local units of government were involved in a process to consolidate the Village and Township into one entity. However, this voted initiative failed. The joint Planning Commission was later dissolved and the establishment of a Downtown Development Authority, although largely supported by the business community, never evolved past informal discussions.

Shortly after the adoption of the 2010 Onekama Community Master Plan, a steering committee comprised of governmental and business owners from Arcadia and Onekama Townships worked on the M-22 Economic Strategy. This plan outlined a series of projects and programs for Onekama and Arcadia Townships and the Village of Onekama, such as, a streetscape through the business district, developing in the Village of a farm market and arts and craft center, wayfinding and signage, and promotion of local festivals. Unfortunately, little was accomplished because there was no one entity that could champion the implementation.

The aspirations and visions that surfaced as part of the 2022 master plan process would again involve the cooperation between the Township and Village. Residents and visitors to the community generally view the Onekama Community as one entity, however, it is two separate jurisdictions. Township residents want a viable downtown and business district which is outside the jurisdiction of the Township. A Downtown Development Authority could be the tool to assist in the revitalization of the district but likely requires an inter-governmental agreement between the Village and Township to establish and operate the entity. The business district would benefit from an accessible marina that accommodates transient and Portage Lake boaters but that requires Village involvement to secure outside funding.

An example of jurisdictional cooperation is the Onekama Village and Township Community Parks and Recreation Committee which oversees eight (8) parks sprinkled around the Township and Village. So, inter-governmental cooperation can work. Although governmental consolidation was attempted and failed in 2012 it should be reconsidered in the future. The Township and Village would be far more efficient and cost-effective if one entity focused on leveraging the assets of the overall community, providing streamlined governmental services, and fully utilizing available state and federal funding programs. Regardless if local government consolidation occurs, the level and degree of inter-governmental cooperation will define the future outcomes of the Village and Township.

Although not an action item for the Onekama Township Planning Commission, a first step toward building community consensus could be the preparation of a strategic plan that involves both the Village and Township elected leadership. The outcome of the strategic plan could include those projects and programs that both governmental entities agree with. A great example of this process occurred north of Onekama in the Village of Honor and Homestead Township where both entities were involved in a process facilitated by the Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP), a local non-profit. Outcomes from that strategic plan have resulted in the acquisition and development of the Platte River Park, construction of the Honor Village Apartments, reviving the “Coho” Festival, and working with the National Park Service on a new gateway to the Lakeshore National Park. Successful collaboration can produce great results.