



MASON COUNTY
MICHIGAN

MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2020



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MASON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
(Resolution No. 2020-1)

At a regular meeting of the Mason County Planning Commission held on November 17, 2020, at the Scottville Optimist Hall, 105 West Green St., Scottville, the following Resolution was offered for adoption by Planning Commission Member Denis Dunlap and was seconded by Planning Commission Member Jarret Anderson:

**A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED
MASON COUNTY MASTER PLAN TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS AND CONSTITUTING PLANNING COMMISSION
APPROVAL OF SUCH MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3801 *et seq.* ("MPEA") authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared an amended Master Plan and submitted such plan to the County Board of Commissioners for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on August 11, 2020, the County Board of Commissioners received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 17, 2020, to consider public comment on the proposed amended Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed amended Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amended Master Plan is desirable, proper, and reasonable and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. ***Approval of 2020 Master Plan.*** The Planning Commission approves the proposed Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, descriptive matters, maps and tables contained therein.

2. ***Distribution to the County Board of Commissioners.*** Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the County Board of Commissioners has asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan and therefore, the approval granted herein is not the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843. In addition, the Planning Commission hereby approves distribution of the proposed amended Master Plan to the County Board of Commissioners. The Planning Commission respectfully recommends to the County Board of Commissioners that the County Board of Commissioners give final approval and adoption of the proposed Master Plan.

3. ***Findings of Fact.*** The Planning Commission has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the County, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, and input received from the County Board of Commissioners and at the public hearing, as well as the assistance of a professional planning group. The Planning Commission also finds that the amended Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the County's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands within Mason County.

4. ***Effective Date.*** The Master Plan will be effective upon the date that it is approved by the Mason County Board of Commissioners.

YEAS: All

NAYS: None

ABSENT:

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated:

11/17/2020

By


Jim Wincek

Planning Commission Chair

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Mason County Board of Commissioners

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MASON COUNTY, MICHIGAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PROPOSED MASON COUNTY MASTER PLAN UPDATE

At a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Mason County, Michigan held on December 8, 2020, Commissioner Andersen offered, and Commissioner supported the following resolution.

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 128.381 *et seq* (MPEA) authorizes the Mason County Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development, and preservation of all lands in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Mason County Planning Commission prepared an updated Master Plan and submitted such plan to the Mason County Board of Commissioners for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on August 11, 2020, the Mason County Board of Commissioners received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission, authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA, and asserted its right to give final approval or rejection of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Mason County Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 17, 2020 to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan and to further review and comment on the proposed Plan; and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing was held, the Planning Commission voted to approve the updated Plan on November 17, 2020 and recommended adoption of the proposed Master Plan to the Mason County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the County Board of Commissioners finds that the proposed Master Plan is desirable, proper, reasonable, and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the County.

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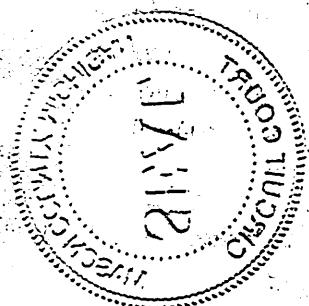
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NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Adoption of the 2020 Master Plan. The Mason County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the proposed 2020 Mason County Master Plan including all of the chapters, figures, descriptive matters, maps and tables contained therein.

2. Distribution to the Notice Group. Pursuant to MCL 125.3843 the Mason County Board of Commissioners approves distribution of the updated Master Plan to the Notice Group.

3. Findings of Fact. The Mason County Board of Commissioners has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the County, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, and input from the Planning Commission and the public, as well as the assistance of a professional planning group. The County Board of Commissioners also finds that the updated Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the County's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands within Mason County.

4. Effective Date. The amended Master Plan shall become effective on the adoption date of this resolution.

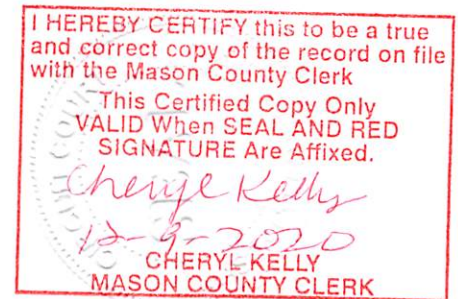
Roll Call Vote:

AYES: Hull, Bacon, Krieger, Lange, Squires, Andersen

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN:


ABSENT: Castonia



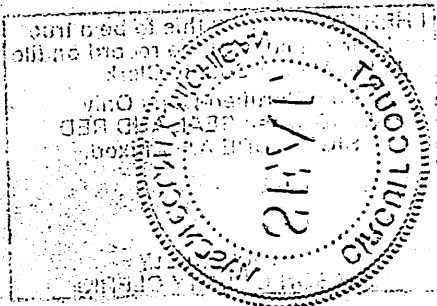
CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Mason County Board of Commissioners at the time, date, and place specified above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Dated: December 8, 2020


Cheryl Kelly
County Clerk

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Mason County Data Book
Public Meeting Report
Mason County Community Survey

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Generally, the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide policy that guides decision making for future land and infrastructure development within Mason County. Specifically, key planning issues are identified; community character is described; goals and policies are outlined; existing and future land uses are described and mapped; public facility standards are established; transportation improvements are identified, and specific implementation measures are recommended.

Specific Objectives of the Plan (adapted from the 2006 Master Plan Update) include:

- To prepare a plan that is consistent with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008 as amended.
- To provide the framework for the Mason County Planning Commission to serve in a proactive, coordinating capacity for all planning committees and commissions within the county.
- To provide a legal basis for county zoning in those portions of the county under county zoning pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended.
- To prepare a plan that is technically sound, internally consistent, and that focuses on current issues and future needs.
- To provide a means for residents to participate in determining the future of their community.
- To provide a broad framework for the county's decision-makers to assist them in both long-term and day-to-day matters.
- To search for innovative, creative, and sound ways in which to improve life in Mason County consistent with community goals.
- To minimize land use conflicts and inappropriate uses of land.
- To designate areas of land for uses in keeping with the natural soil properties, vegetation, terrain and availability of public sewer and water in anticipation of future development.
- To insure public use of land for recreational, civic, educational, and religious needs.
- To provide for an improved system of public services according to current and projected needs.

PLAN PURPOSES

This Plan is adopted by the Mason County Planning Commission to promote public health, safety, and welfare through planning for the appropriate use of land and water resources and the provision of adequate public facilities and services. Although this Plan states specific land use and development policy and proposes specific land use arrangements, it has no regulatory power. It will be implemented by county and local zoning decisions, public facility and infrastructure improvements and the actions of private property owners acting consistent with the Plan.

Photo 1-1
Mason County Lake Michigan Shore



Photo by Robert Garrett

The Planning Commission adopts this Plan pursuant to authority in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008. The Mason County Master Plan will be used most frequently to guide decisions by the Mason County Planning Commission and County Board of Commissioners in review of proposed rezoning requests by landowners under County Zoning; and on whether or not to approve local plans and rezoning approvals submitted for review under the appropriate planning or zoning enabling act. The Plan will also guide recommendations made by the County Planning Commission to county and state authorities on roads, parks, county buildings and other infrastructure, as well as on future PA 116 Farmland and Open Space Preservation applications, and grant requests.

The land area covered by this Plan includes the entire area of Mason County and all 20 units of local government in the county. It is intended to promote sensible and sustainable inter-jurisdictional land use planning. It is hoped that this Plan will guide the formation of Township, City and Village plans consistent with it and that subsequent local zoning and infrastructure decisions will also be made consistent with it.

All proposed future land use arrangements and policies presented in this Plan were developed based on a blending of:

- The natural capability of the land to sustain certain types of development or use and the important natural functions played by unique land and water resources in the area.
- The relative future need for residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial land uses; as well as the existing land use distribution.
- The relationship of agricultural and undeveloped lands to existing community character and the economic base of the county.
- The capabilities of the transportation network to sustain different types of development in different areas of the county.

- The desires of local residents and public officials as expressed through their participation in visioning sessions, the local leader survey and public Planning Commission meetings.

This Plan has a time orientation of twenty years into the future. It is heavily influenced by the “Concept of Sustainability:” that a community should make decisions today that meet the needs of the present without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

This Plan is an update of the Master Plan prepared by the Planning and Zoning Center in 2006. This Plan was also subsequently updated in 2012. The planning process to prepare this Plan carried on a Mason County tradition of providing broad public input opportunities. A County-wide land use and planning survey was conducted in 2019. The online survey hosted by SurveyMonkey was distributed through social media, email, flyers, and website links. The online survey yielded 848 responses including residents from all communities in Mason County. The survey results were used to develop updated goals, objectives and implementation steps. Survey results are included in the appendix.

Additionally, a Town Meeting was held in 2019 at the Graystone Event Center for any resident to participate. Over 19 people attended and were asked to develop “Hot Topics” for Mason County and discuss solutions. Key areas of focus included:

- ☐ Land Use & Preservation
- ☐ Environment & Water Quality
- ☐ Transportation & Mobility
- ☐ Housing & Affordability
- ☐ Economic Development

The full report is included in the appendix along with survey results. The planning process used in developing the Mason County Master Plan included many meetings of the County Planning Commission.

Image 1-2
Word Cloud of Community Input Desires for Mason County



As part of the planning process, the Mason County Data Book was prepared in order to update demographic, economic, natural resources, transportation, and public facilities information. The Mason County Data Book, updated in 2019, provides a snapshot view of the county in 2019 that serves as the basis for formulating goals, policy and strategies for the future.

Other documents also help to inform Mason County decision makers and help them plan for the future. These include the Mason County Recreation Plan, that describes specific park and recreation projects for the near future. The Mason County US-10/US 31 Access Management Plan, which was developed in 2006, sets forth goals and recommendations for improving safety and efficiency of travel along the US-31 and US-10 highways.

It would be many decades before the potential buildout population that ranges from 185,009 to 792,288 persons might be reached (depending on density selected by future developers). Portions of the county could develop at a density which appears to be far greater than residents envision or desire. Such a density of development could place a strain on the ability of communities to provide services, and would greatly alter the quality of life of residents as there would be little open space left that was not in public ownership.

VISION BASED PLAN

This plan is vision-based, with strategies intended to guide future county actions and decisions. It is not intended to establish precise boundaries of land use areas or exact locations of future types of developments, even though the Future Land Use Map has districts with distinct edges. These maps should be considered as general guides, and the Plan's function is to guide growth toward long-range, broad-based goals, and only generally indicate its location.

A primary challenge of a vision-based Master Plan is to combine the needs and desires of the citizenry with the land's suitability and capability for sustaining those needs and desires, as matched by the ability of a municipality to provide public services throughout its jurisdiction. Such planning will minimize the potential for land use conflicts and inappropriate uses of land for the long term betterment of all residents.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

There are six critical components to using this Plan as a decision making guide.

- First is the background information in the Mason County Data Book, as a separate document that provides basic information and trends in demographic, economic, land use, natural resources, tax base, transportation and public facilities of the county.
- The second component is the vision, goals, objectives and strategies in Chapter Two. These are based on public input from 2006, 2012, and 2019 and reflect where citizens want their county to be over the next twenty years.
- Third is the Future Land Use Plan, Future Land Use Map and associated policies presented in Chapter Three.
- Fourth is the Zoning Plan in Chapter Four. This lays out the changes in county and local zoning that are needed in order to implement the Future Land Use Plan.
- Fifth is the transportation and other infrastructure discussion in Chapter Five. This describes future improvements in roads, sewer and water to accommodate new development over the next 20 years.
- Sixth are the implementation strategies and inter-jurisdictional coordination steps found in Chapter Six. They outline the steps the county, townships, cities and villages need to take in carrying out the recommendations of this Plan.

This Plan is a statement by the County Planning Commission regarding the present and desired future character of the county and strategies to assure that character. As a formal and tangible document, this Plan is intended to instill a sense of stability and direction for county, city, village and township officials, and for Mason County citizens and businesses.

Every effort has been made to present factually correct, up to date and complete information in this Plan and the accompanying Mason County Data Book. Information was obtained from local, state and federal sources. Ultimately though, this Plan is a general document, and any site-specific decisions should be thoroughly investigated with original research materials before proceeding. The Plan is not regulatory like zoning. It is a policy guide to give direction to many future actions, including changes to the County Zoning Ordinance.

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Chapter 2

VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

VISION STATEMENT

Introduction

Mason County residents, businesses, and visitors have diverse needs, desires, and dreams, and satisfying them is a big challenge for any community. This chapter describes those needs, desires, and dreams in a vision for the future of Mason County, and includes goals, objectives, and strategies to reach that vision.

The vision statement that follows describes Mason County as the County Planning Commission and residents at a town meeting and/or by survey (held in 2012 and 2019, respectively) wanted it to be in the year 2030. The vision is organized into topic areas that separately focus on key elements of the County. The vision statement plus goals, objectives, and strategies from the Mason County 2006 Master Plan were the basis for goals, objectives, and strategies of this plan.

When reading this vision, it is necessary to mentally “transport” yourself into the future to the year 2030. Thus, there are references “back” to the early 2000’s.

21st Century Mason County

Mason County residents and businesses enjoy a rich quality of life and are reaping the benefits of commitments to future generations made years ago. Beginning in the early 2000s, proactive policies and initiatives, economic development plans, and resource preservation plans were undertaken which went well beyond common practice of the day. These initiatives improved the quality of life, and retained and attracted people and businesses to the county. The results of this hard work are obvious to visitors and residents alike.

Mason County has become a true reflection of sustainability (meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs) and diversity. Businesses, farms, neighborhoods, parks, schools, local government, and natural resources are healthy and self-sustaining in 2030. Mason County continues to have a strong agricultural identity and commitment to its farming heritage while cities, towns, and villages within the County preserve the mainstays of the past while promoting forward thinking and progressive initiatives for the future.

When asked about Mason County, residents use terms like “successful,” “beautiful,” “scenic,” “clean,” and “stimulating.” Residents are also quick to say that Mason County is an outdoor recreation paradise and a great place to raise families or retire.

Economic Development - A County of Opportunity

Mason County has a strong business base that is centered around technology, agriculture, health care, and education. A business friendly identity has drawn valuable economic opportunities into the area and established Mason County as a family friendly community that boasts economic stability. The cities, villages, townships and county continue to work together on an aggressive economic development program aimed at retention, expansion, and attraction of business and industry within the county. The primary objective is to create and maintain a healthy and growing economy in Mason County with high paying jobs. To appreciate the success of this initiative one needs only to visit the clean, unobtrusive, and compact industrial and business districts, successful farms, and productive forests in the county.

A high quality-of-life and strong community values have been part of the attraction of new jobs to the county. By continually reinvesting in compact and efficient sewer and water systems, utilities and transportation, communities within the county have demonstrated the capacity to satisfy basic industry requirements on par with any community in Michigan. A marketing program which proactively solicits business and industry has also been a significant factor in the economic success of the county.

Strong Neighborhoods and Diversified Housing

Revitalized older neighborhoods have provided an affordable housing market for families of various sizes and ages. This was in part due to significant reinvestment by owners, but also to strict enforcement of the local building, housing, and rental codes. Many of the county's least expensive neighborhoods have become some of the most popular for first time homebuyers. New affordable housing in subdivisions and condominium developments has been located within existing cities and villages and between Johnson Road and US-10/31. Through clustering and conservation principles, these new developments have protected sensitive environments. Residents of all ages and stages of life are able to find housing suitable to their needs. Older adults find that they can continue to reside in their cherished hometown in attractive and affordable retirement communities. Young adults and young families are able to find comfortable housing and communities are strengthened by broad homeownership opportunities.

Where the visual character, sounds, dust, smells, and level of activity of commercial and industrial development would not be compatible with residential neighborhoods and important scenic views, they are separated or buffered. Where commercial development can serve residential needs, it has been built adjacent to residential neighborhoods with an architectural design and layout that fits the character of the neighborhoods.

New housing developments emphasize the concept of connectivity and are constructed near existing homes with access to parks and trails, schools, retail and commercial outlets, health care facilities, and

municipal services. Residents benefit from living in neighborhoods where ease of travel by vehicle, bicycle, bus, or by walking increase connectivity and ensure a strong quality of life. Those choosing to live in rural areas are stewards of the land and continue the strong heritage of preserving and protecting the abundant open spaces and recreation amenities of the County.

Scenic Natural and Agricultural Landscape Character Preserved

The most common landscape view in Mason County continues to be a mix of woods, meadows, wetlands, river and lakeshores, and farm fields. This agricultural landscape includes commercial wind generators taking advantage of winds off of Lake Michigan.

Rather than succumbing to sprawl and the attendant loss of scenic and natural visual character that is occurring throughout the rest of the State, the alluring characteristics that initially attracted residents and tourists to the county have been maintained, and in some cases enhanced. (The visual character of a community is set by the style, size and upkeep of its homes, businesses and civic places such as parks, stores, schools and government buildings. It is also set by the presence or absence of water and vegetation, hills and highways.)

The rural landscape does more than simply provide scenery. The benefits of nature to residents' mental well-being and the attraction for tourists are important. Farming continues as a viable economic sector. Woods and fields help with water infiltration, maintaining biological diversity, and providing habitat for wildlife. Property owners have coordinated the retention of green space connections to create ecological corridors, enhance recreation, and provide a more continuous natural scenic view. Rivers, streams and lakes have buffer plantings that help protect water quality.

Photo 2-1

Mason County Woods in the Winter



Photo by Ron Carter

New growth and development have occurred in compact form and in locations that retain ample open space throughout the county, reinforcing the scenic visual character rather than detracting from it. In Mason County, large-scale changes to the landscape (especially of vegetation, views, open spaces, and the water's edge), have been minimized by encouraging thoughtfully designed and buffered new development, and redevelopment, in select locations.

Locations that were unattractive or lacked scenic character in 2005 have been improved. This philosophy has been applied to both residential and non-residential development. Existing and new development, particularly along transportation and scenic corridors has been screened with buffer plantings in character with Northern Michigan. Parking lots, big buildings, and outside storage areas can hardly be seen through thick vegetation. The number of signs has been reduced and remaining signs are well designed to enhance commerce and way-finding without detracting from scenic views.

A public well-versed in land and water protection approaches has been deeply involved in making decisions about preservation. Working with conservancies and the State Purchase of Development Rights Program, key parcels have been preserved through development rights purchases, donations, and other approaches over the past two decades. As a result, wetlands, forests, farmland, and green spaces that comprise the scenic character and ecosystem of the county are being permanently protected.

City and Village Centers

Mason County citizens and officials long ago recognized that for a city or village to remain “alive,” it must be a vital place for citizens and businesses. This emphasis on placemaking is evidenced by the structures and places of historical and architectural significance that have been protected and renewed and serve as reinforcing elements of visual character. City and village sidewalks are lined with shops and amenities and as a result are full of people. Community events make these centers the place to be on a regular basis. Parks and streets lined with stately trees welcome visitors and residents alike, while public art is evident in all public spaces. Strip commercial corridors have had visual improvements such as tree planting, to make them fit into the scenic Northern Michigan setting.

Transportation and Connectivity

Mason County is well known for its extensive non-motorized trails and access to public transportation. These amenities have attracted growth and visitors. New developments have been designed to complement existing transportation systems and serve the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and automobile drivers safely and efficiently. The cities of Ludington and Scottville, as well as the villages in the county are known as walkable communities, providing safe connections, separate from roads when practical, between residential areas and the many types of destinations within the community: shops, businesses, public buildings,

churches, schools, parks and restaurants. As a result of its increased walkability, more active residents are able to enjoy a greater level of health than in previous years.

Links continue to be established between residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial development to provide safe, attractive, and low cost pedestrian and bike routes as alternatives to automobile circulation. There are also links to undeveloped open land close to urban areas with trails that extend beyond Mason County into the region. These greenways serve both as recreational opportunities in themselves and to connect destinations such as the towns, parks, and shores of Lake Michigan, Hamlin Lake, and the Pere Marquette River.

Quality of Life - A County of Education and Stimulation

The county has long held education as an important aspect of quality of life. Mason County public and private school systems provide excellent, state recognized educational opportunities. Students are enthusiastic, respectful, computer literate, and have the opportunity to pursue varied endeavors. Occupational programs offered to students at West Shore Community College in Scottville focus on the development of employable skills in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and emphasize real world applications.

Involved and active citizenry allows parents, teachers, faculty, and school boards to develop a wide range of programs that prepare students for secondary education, higher education, and technical skills that are career focused. The community as a whole takes it upon itself to provide ample educational opportunities and this is demonstrated in the community events, civic infrastructure, and public engagement geared towards academic achievement for Mason County residents.

Citizens can continue higher education, obtain technical, job-related training, and can take adult enrichment courses in a wide variety of subjects. Music, art, and museum events in many civic and private facilities continue to provide entertainment for all generations of Mason County citizens. Youth and adult programs incorporate intergenerational learning opportunities that support a lifestyle of shared learning opportunities in Mason County,

Quality of Life- Arts, Culture, and Local History

A strong commitment to the arts keeps Mason County culturally engaged and provides residents with enriching experiences that are community oriented. Local organizations sponsor, support, and encourage participation in and appreciation for the arts. Community events engage citizens and nurture the development of the arts. People of all ages can expect to find resources, classes, and events that enrich and enliven creativity.

A regional center for the arts provides a venue for music, dance, theater, and traditional arts and ensures a high level of civic engagement. Annual fairs, festivals, and shows highlight Mason County's local history and

strengthen regional Northwest Michigan identities in agriculture, maritime history, and natural surroundings. Public art is a prominent feature of retail and commercial space, parks, town centers, schools, and municipal buildings. Streets and walkways benefit from a strong public art presence and enhance walkability and place making in cities, towns, and villages throughout Mason County.

Quality of Life - Recreation

The county has long held recreational opportunity as an important aspect of quality of life. Mason County is a destination for connected scenic recreational opportunities promoting health, safety, and economic benefits. Mason County residents enjoy increased access to Lake Michigan compared to two decades ago, as well as a variety of recreation opportunities at local and county parks, Ludington State Park, National Forest lands, public access sites, golf, and other facilities. Trails link many parts of the county, extend beyond the county and provide opportunities for fitness and enjoyment of the outdoors. Boating on the inland lakes as well as on Lake Michigan continues to be a popular pastime.

Mason County has established one of the most comprehensive regional recreation programs found in the State. By 2030, a county wide recreation program would ensure that residents have ample opportunities to enrich their lives through physical activity and coordinates efforts among various recreation organizations. Various venues could include public schools, West Shore Community College, and public access sites that provide ample recreation opportunities for all seasons.

Photo 2-2
Youth Ice Hockey Game



Photo Courtesy of Ludington Daily News, Copyright 2004

Friendly, Cooperative Community

County business and government leaders long ago recognized that working together is critical to the long-term economic and cultural vitality of the county. Civic groups also play an important role, assisting in keeping Mason County clean, attractive, and healthy with a sustainable environment and positive community spirit. Participation in community events, music concerts, and festivals such as the Petunia Parade and Freedom Festival is high.

Mason County is a friendly and caring place to live and visitors feel the hospitality. The community is supportive of its citizens and helps provide constructive guidance. Members of all generations of the community share in its identity. Both cultural and natural resources are preserved through wide community support by citizens who understand the value and principles of preservation.

Leaders work to encourage a high level of citizen involvement from both residents and nonresident property owners. In return, leadership is responsive to the direction expressed by citizens. Leaders hold the public's trust when enforcing regulations that protect the environment, implement the Comprehensive Plan, and otherwise ensure protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

Sustainability and Community

Mason County is a leader in West Michigan of green energy and long-range sustainable energy production.

By the year 2030, Mason County will have developed an Energy Plan that will reflect County needs and scale of uses in our community. The plan will be developed by active, involved citizens and will emphasize energy conservation and renewable energy sources that are in keeping with the scale of our community. New energy solutions will be prioritized contingent upon being green, clean, and supported by thorough research. The development and addition of alternative energy sources within the community will be thoughtfully planned and collaboratively enacted with residents' needs, community values, and scenic preservation in mind.

Intergovernmental Cooperation/Coordination

A shared set of policies structured around a common vision of the future serves as a framework for decision making between all governmental entities in Mason County that enhance transparency of government and increase customer satisfaction.

The common vision and related policies recognizes the autonomy of each unit of local government, but also establishes a mechanism for dealing with issues extending beyond local concern. Communities apply the dual principles of respect and cooperation on issues of mutual interest. Narrow interests and points of view no longer prevent achievement of area-wide interests and the uniqueness of each local government is celebrated.

Coordination of costs, timetables, responsibilities, and resources to continue upgrading the quality of life of the area are all included as an integral part of these cooperative policies. All county and local public services and facilities are coordinated, as are state, federal and private services and facilities when appropriate to do so.

While local land use decisions are guided by both county and local zoning standards, issues extending beyond local concern are subject to input from surrounding local governments both within and outside the county before a final decision is made. Special ad hoc committees aid communication among county and local governments in this process and help ensure adequate public participation.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The vision statement plus goals, objectives, and strategies from the Mason County 2006 Master Plan were the basis for goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan. These statements are also consistent with the Ten Smart Growth Tenets of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council and the Smart Growth Principles of the Michigan Association of Planning.

Goal: Goals are broad-based statements of intent and establish the direction for the Mason County Master Plan. Goals could generally be thought of as the desired "ends" of successful implementation of the County Plan.

Objective: Objectives are the stated "means" of achieving each goal, or the tasks to be carried out in the process of realizing goals.

Strategies: Strategies are action statements in order to accomplish the goal and objective.

I. GOAL – PRESERVE MASON COUNTY'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE BEAUTY OF ITS LANDSCAPE.

A. Objective – Provide for planning mechanisms and regulatory techniques that will preserve forests, wetlands, sand dunes, and other natural resources as well as farms and other vegetated landscapes.

1. Strategy – Local governments support applications of agricultural land owners to enroll in agricultural land preservation programs.
2. Strategy – The County and local planning commissions adopt design guidelines for small parcels and large parcel development that promote voluntary approaches to the protection of natural resources and scenic quality.
3. Strategy – The County and local governments encourage the creation of conservancies and land trusts to acquire or obtain development rights to important natural resource and scenic parcels.
4. Strategy – The County and local governments support the voluntary donation of conservation easements for important natural resources and scenic areas, especially roadside areas along scenic corridors.
5. Strategy – Encourage careful land use management on the part of County officials and landowners alike.
6. Strategy – Encourage cluster zoning, farm and open space preservation techniques in rural areas and compact settlement patterns in

villages, cities, and in urbanized parts of Pere Marquette and Amber Townships where the proper infrastructure is available.

7. Strategy – Further develop and refine greenbelt zoning techniques via maps and other tools to consistently protect and preserve sensitive areas.

8. Strategy – Work with individual jurisdictions to establish uniform floodplain protection ordinances.

Photo 2-3

**Water is an Important Part of the
Scenic Beauty of Mason County**



Photo by Ron Carter

9. Strategy – Review existing State of Michigan and local High Risk Erosion Area and Critical Dune permit procedures and experiences and recommend modifications as appropriate.

10. Strategy – Work with the County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, and local jurisdictions to refine private road standards to limit construction on steep slopes and to restrict private roads that contribute to erosion.

11. Strategy – Adopt ordinances that limit construction clearing on steep slopes and set performance standards for any construction on steeper slopes.

12. Strategy – Develop design guidelines that illustrate the least damaging building approaches for slopes.

B. Objective – A greenspace system of interconnected, undeveloped land, buffers, ecological corridors, forests, floodplains, wetlands, and other open space in private and public ownership is identified and protected in Mason County.

1. Strategy – Develop guidelines for property owners, developers, and business owners on how to preserve or sensitively develop near wildlife corridors.
2. Strategy – Maintain conservation subdivision (a subdivision that uses a maximum lot size that is smaller than the density requirements of the zoning district in return for permanent preservation of large blocks of open space) and cluster ordinances, and promote the use of these techniques for new development of both residential and commercial development. Consider creating a transfer of development rights program to make clustering more likely.
3. Strategy – Develop educational materials and programs for residential and commercial property owners on how to foster wildlife while protecting properties from wildlife damage.

C. Objective – The public is well informed about the value and importance of threatened and endangered species and plans for their protection are formulated by interested groups.

1. Strategy – Request volunteer groups to provide educational programs for the public regarding the value of preserving wildlife habitat and alternative preservation methods.
2. Strategy – Request volunteer groups to develop and implement preservation plans for areas of threatened and endangered species in cooperation with appropriate state and federal authorities.

II. GOAL – INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION WILL GUIDE AND APPROPRIATELY REGULATE THE TYPE AND AMOUNT OF GROWTH.

A. Objective – Ensure county and local regulations are properly directed to growth management and intergovernmental coordination.

1. Strategy – Periodically review local zoning ordinances and update as necessary to ensure their consistency with the Master Plan.
2. Strategy - Zone all areas of the county to prevent over-crowding of land and overuse of natural resources while maximizing efficiency of public utilities as the Plan indicates.
3. Strategy – Through existing federal, state and local laws and procedures, ensure that if property has any of the following

characteristics, those portions of the property with those characteristics shall not be built upon:

- a) Flooding, as determined by National Flood Hazard maps (encourage FEMA to complete floodplain mapping in the county)
- b) Inadequate drainage as determined by County Drain Commissioner
- c) Soil formations with contra-indications for development as determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service)
- d) Severe erosion potential, especially in the designated, high risk erosion area along Lake Michigan as determined by the EGLE
- e) Topography with steep slopes as determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service
- f) Designated critical sand dunes as determined by the EGLE
- g) Inadequate water supply and sewage disposal capabilities as determined by the District Health Department and/or the EGLE, and/or the responsible local public agency
- h) Wetlands as determined by the EGLE.

4. Strategy – Maintain formal site plan review procedures and standards for environmental protection of each of the environmental features listed above, and for groundwater protection in rural areas of the County.

B. Objective – Develop and maintain county and citizen involvement in the growth management process.

- 1. Strategy – The County Planning Commission and local jurisdictions meet annually to discuss growth and land use issues.
- 2. Strategy – Review the Master Plan every five years and update as necessary.
- 3. Strategy – Provide educational opportunities and leadership on planning and zoning techniques to manage growth. This could be done as part of an annual educational workshop on topics of contemporary interest that incorporates the first strategy above.

III. GOAL – ESTABLISH A SET OF REGULATIONS AND A PROGRAM OF ENFORCEMENT THAT PROTECTS QUALITY OF LIFE AND IS FAIR AND CONSISTENT FOR PROPERTY OWNERS.

A. Objective – Keep the county and local zoning ordinances consistent with this Plan, up-to-date, and ensure zoning enforcement is professional, fair and consistent.

1. Strategy – Encourage local officials to stay abreast of changing laws and regulations regarding planning and zoning and implement changes when necessary.
2. Strategy – Enforce the zoning ordinance in a consistent and fair manner.
3. Strategy – Maintain and utilize clearly defined procedures for granting or denying variances and rezoning efforts in an objective, measurable manner consistent with the Master Plan.
4. Strategy – As appropriate, continue to make zoning variances the exception rather than the rule.
5. Strategy – Implement the recommendations in Chapter Four of this Plan.
6. Strategy – Educate the public regarding the role of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and the procedures outlined above.
7. Strategy – Continue to provide the office of the County Zoning Director with adequate funds and legal support to properly enforce the County Zoning Ordinance.

IV. GOAL – UPDATE AGRICULTURAL ZONING TO BRING IN LINE WITH MODERN DAY FARMING METHODS AND EXPAND AGRICULTURAL TOURISM AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES.

A. Objective – Minimize the incompatibility of non-farm rural residential areas and large farm production facilities.

1. Strategy – Engage in an annual review of the Michigan Right to Farm Act to determine the extent that local control and/or input is allowed and educate the public about the findings.
2. Strategy – Encourage those farm practices that minimize odor, noise, and environmental risk, such as riparian buffers along streams and drains
3. Strategy – Encourage the Health Department to develop a program to maintain the quality of water wells by establishing protection zones around each well.

B. Objective – Harness the potential of agricultural uses and practices as tourism opportunities.

1. Strategy – Maintain and routinely review zoning provisions that allow for agri-tourism and agri-business activities to co-exist with active farms.

Photo 2-4
Farming is a Major Business in Mason County



Photo by Robert Garrett

V. GOAL – INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS AND COMPETITION IN THE COUNTY.

- A. Objective – Ensure land suitable for commercial and industrial development is adequately served with public sewer, water, and other essential public services and facilities.**
- B. Objective – Increase awareness of available land and strengths of area businesses.**
- C. Objective – Promote involvement of county and local governmental units in economic development decisions.**
- D. Objective – Encourage the establishment of businesses that provide year-round employment and offer quality jobs.**
- E. Objective – Recognize the changing dynamics of business resulting from technological advances.**

- 1. Strategy – Encourage the preparation and periodic update of a countywide economic development plan.
- 2. Strategy – Encourage cooperation and regular coordination between economic development activities and the County Planning Commission.
- 3. Strategy – Work toward ensuring that further processing of agricultural and natural resource products harvested from the county would, where feasible, be undertaken within the county.
- 4. Strategy – Work toward wi-fi availability within the County's primary employment centers, neighborhoods and rural areas by allowing future

communications infrastructure as well as co-location on existing towers by amending the zoning ordinance to lessen requirements.

5. Strategy – Evaluate and revise as necessary standards in the zoning ordinance to continue to allow small-scale home based businesses in Townships as permitted (in some districts) with approval by the Zoning Administrator.

VI. GOAL – VILLAGE AND CITY CENTERS HAVE AN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY.

A. Objective – Create vibrant and bustling villages and cities that are functional, people-oriented, and the center of cultural activity within the county.

1. Strategy – Existing civic and cultural facilities are retained in village and city centers and new or expanded civic and cultural facilities are placed in or very close to village and city centers.
2. Strategy – Maximize existing public infrastructure by utilizing brownfield redevelopment strategies to revitalize areas of the county.
3. Strategy – Encourage the preservation of historic structures through maintenance and renovation that retains historic character.
4. Strategy – Encourage pedestrian activity in cities and villages through the design and construction of sidewalks and small public spaces that are safe and filled with trees, art and other amenities.
5. Strategy – Promote voluntary participation in community and cultural activities.
6. Strategy – Encourage businesses and institutions to install public art, flowers, trees, benches and fountains.
7. Strategy – Expand the number and type of festivals and fairs especially in the lower activity months.
8. Strategy – Encourage residential densities, through infill and redevelopment, that are within a ¼ mile of existing development.

Photo 2-5
City of Scottville



VII. GOAL – PROVIDE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY.

- A. Objective – Ensure a wide range of housing choices.**
 - B. Objective – Allow for reasonable and fair low to moderate-income housing where compatible with other housing types.**
 - C. Objective – Meet the most urgent unmet housing needs of the physically and developmentally disabled, those with low and moderate incomes, the elderly, and those who are on public assistance.**
 - D. Objective – Continue to provide for compatibility among and between housing types for neighborhood stability.**
- 1. Strategy – Continue to allow for Mobile Home Parks and manufactured homes in designated zoning districts.
 - 2. Strategy – New housing developments/subdivisions should occur only in areas where public sewer and water are available or economically feasible.
 - 3. Strategy – New housing developments should be compatible with existing and planned, neighboring land uses and their circulation network should connect to the existing grid system of roadways.
 - 4. Strategy – The area east of Dennis Road, west of Stiles Road, north of US-10 and south of Johnson Road, should be targeted for a housing

density that permits persons of low and moderate income to affordably live there.

5. Strategy – Permit smaller format housing types in designated zoning districts with certain form requirements where appropriate.

VIII. GOAL – PROVIDE AN ATMOSPHERE WHEREBY AREA YOUTH HAVE A STAKE IN THE COMMUNITY.

A. Objective – Promote area educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities to citizens of all ages.

B. Objective – Encourage continuation/expansion and better awareness of the local educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities.

C. Objective – Encourage involvement of youth in their community.

1. Strategy – Provide direction and policy assistance so that entities like West Shore Community College can attract the best students, faculty, and facilities in conjunction with the statewide network of 4-year institutions.

2. Strategy – Outreach to students, whenever and wherever possible, in local governing, planning and collateral activities such as through representation on various County committees.

3. Strategy – Utilize existing recreational centers at area schools and the community college.

4. Strategy – Utilize existing cultural centers such as West Shore Community College and the Ludington Area Center for the Arts, to expand and enhance the diversity of cultural information available.

5. Strategy – Support Community College/Public School System collaboration on educational initiatives such as the West Shore Education District.

Photo 2-6
**West Shore Community College Provides
Key Cultural and Recreational Opportunities**



Photo Courtesy of West Shore Community College

IX. GOAL – MAINTAIN THE VIABILITY OF THE INLAND LAKE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTY.

A. Objective – Maintain planning and zoning mechanisms to maintain current levels of attractiveness and viability of the inland lakes in the county.

B. Objective – Execute steps necessary to achieve improvement and enhancement of overall water quality for these lakes and connecting waterways.

1. Strategy – Strictly enforce current or revised lakefront zoning.
2. Strategy – Utilize and promote lake boards and other forums to educate lake residents regarding fertilizer practices and other actions that could affect water quality.
3. Strategy – Utilize and promote lake boards and property associations to implement best management practices as recommended in lake studies including grant acquisition.
4. Strategy – Encourage the development of appropriately sited public access sites/boat launches for all citizens.
5. Strategy – Establish or promote an education campaign which informs the public about watershed management and water quality best practices for waterways in the County.

X. GOAL – PROVIDE UPGRADED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND BETTER MANAGED ACCESS WHERE THEY WILL PROVIDE THE GREATEST BENEFIT TO THE PEOPLE, BUSINESSES, AND TOURISTS IN THE COUNTY AS A WHOLE.

A. Objective – Safe and efficient movement of people and goods with a variety of transportation modes.

1. Strategy – Encourage the expansion of public transportation in the County.
2. Strategy – Continue to support air, rail, and harbor transportation.
3. Strategy – Develop a non-motorized transportation plan of blueways, greenways and marked pathway system that connect employment and population centers to local and regional destinations and trail networks.

B. Objective – Provide reasonable access by all segments of the population to jobs, services, recreation, and other opportunities.

1. Strategy – Encourage transportation infrastructure development that complements anticipated future land use patterns. In particular, implement the proposed connecting roads described in Chapter Five.
2. Strategy – Work with local units of government, the Michigan Department of Transportation and others to cooperatively implement plans for the commercial and industrial development of the US-10/US-31 corridor between Ludington and Scottville.
3. Strategy – Pave or improve only those roads where soils and other natural features will adequately support traffic from increased development.
4. Strategy – Facilitate a coordinated approach to transportation planning among responsible government units.

C. Objective – Provide complete streets along major and minor county corridors through proactive planning and design with the County Road Commission.

1. Strategy – Encourage the development of design standards and targeted locations for complete streets such that any County road improvement or repaving activity accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists, where feasible.
2. Strategy – Actively support the reduction of lanes and/or lane widths in support of complete streets designs that accommodate ample, protected, and well-marked bike lanes and sidewalks, where feasible. Areas in particular include Lakeshore Drive between Iris Road and

Pentwater and Jebavy with a minimum 18" or wider paved shoulder for bicyclists.

3. Strategy – Develop tools and techniques to enhance pedestrian safety along and crossing US-10, especially near Meijer and Home Depot.

XI. GOAL – PROVIDE A RANGE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTY, WHICH MEETS PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF EXISTING COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORTS THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

- A. Objective – Public sewer and water is provided to businesses and residents efficiently and in locations in which development does not negatively affect natural resources and community character or promote sprawl.**
- B. Objective – Public facilities, services, and programs provide for the health and safety needs of Mason County citizens, workers, and visitors.**
- C. Objective – Helping to ensure the health care and housing needs of our aging population are adequately addressed.**
- D. Objective – Police, fire and emergency services are consistent with public need and the ability to finance improvements in the most cost-effective manner.**
- E. Objective – Solid waste, recyclable and hazardous materials are disposed of safely, effectively, and efficiently according to the adopted Solid Waste Management Plan.**
- F. Objective – An intergovernmental plan, prepared by the county in conjunction with cities, townships and villages details when, and under what circumstances sewer service will be extended to new areas of the county consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan. The county will continue to cooperate with cities, villages and townships in the provision or expansion of other public utilities, as appropriate.**
- G. Objective – Police, fire, and emergency services respond as rapidly and effectively as possible in a largely rural county.**
- H. Objective – Residential development without public sewer service is limited to locations within the county where construction of on-site septic systems is not prohibited by soils.**

1. Strategy – Support expansion of sewer and water into an area only when consistent with the planned intensity of land use for that area and scheduled as to affordability.
2. Strategy – Encourage county participation in regional management of solid waste and recycling.
3. Strategy – Adopt site plan review regulations and support using septic system inspection programs to protect the quality of groundwater, inland lakes, and streams.
4. Strategy – Expand public facilities (especially sewer and water) so that they are timed to guide future development into particular areas consistent with the demand for additional service.
5. Strategy – Ask the County Planning Commission to continue review and comment on proposed County facilities so as to ensure continued conformance with this Plan.
6. Strategy – Maintain a map for the whole county that indicates the appropriate location of public facilities, extensions of sewer and water service, and new development.
7. Strategy – Review the county's ability to satisfy long-term solid waste disposal needs in a cost effective manner and expand recycling services through five-year reviews of the Solid Waste Plan.
8. Strategy – Coordinate infrastructure construction, repair, or maintenance with road construction, repair, and maintenance.
9. Strategy – Cooperate regionally in the provision of public safety and emergency services, community facilities, and programs.
10. Strategy – Provide educational opportunities to residents regarding emergency, social and health services, and self-help actions to reduce risk.
11. Strategy – Work with the City of Ludington to limit dead-end water lines in favor of looping lines to maintain water pressure.

XII. GOAL – ENCOURAGE COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES.

A. Objective – Provide for better living conditions and business opportunities for the largest contiguous area possible.

1. Strategy – Encourage the involvement and cooperation of local governments, citizens, and businesses in the development and

construction of water and sanitary sewer systems as appropriate for future growth.

2. Strategy – Continue inter-governmental cooperation by forming advisory boards and (where possible) unified operational boards to more cost-effectively deliver services.

XIII. GOAL – PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES SERVE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS WHILE CONTRIBUTING TO THE AREA ECONOMY.

A. Objective – Continue to maintain and periodically update the County Recreation Plan.

B. Objective – Coordinate efforts with local jurisdictions and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to implement the recommendations of the County Recreation Plan.

C. Objective – Identify and explore new opportunities for recreational projects with local jurisdictions as a means of better serving residents and enhancing tourism.

D. Objective – Link new and existing recreation areas and facilities with non-motorized trails.

E. Objective – Improve youth recreational opportunities throughout the county including indoor and outdoor sports activities.

F. Objective – Expand recreation opportunities to include heritage, ecological, and agricultural experiences.

1. Strategy – Support coordinated recreation planning at the state, county, and local level and involve private partners and the schools.

2. Strategy – Develop a funding program for the purchase of recreational lands in planned areas where a need has been determined or where a special opportunity exists.

3. Strategy – Develop a funding program for enhancing recreational programs and facilities throughout the county.

4. Strategy – Give priority to funding recreational projects that utilize existing facilities, underutilized facilities, and those locations that do not generate increased traffic in light traffic areas.

5. Strategy – Support development of a Mason County Heritage Trail which links cultural and historic attractions across the county and enhance wayfinding to all County park facilities.

6. Strategy – Promote opportunities for eco-tourism and agri-tourism.

7. Strategy – Support trail links throughout the county with a special focus on preservation of any abandoned railroad right-of-way.

8. Strategy – Support efforts of Ludington State Park to maintain and improve its facilities through coordination of public and private partners and the schools.

9. Strategy – Endorse and support four-season recreation, including the snow mobile trail facilities.

GOAL IX. MASON COUNTY BECOMES A LEADER AND A DESTINATION IN WEST MICHIGAN FOR GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION, MANUFACTURING, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

A. Objective - Achieve measurable reductions in energy use, water consumption, and waste generation.

B. Objective - Support small scale renewable energy generation when it is appropriately sized, in scale with the immediate surrounding context, and located in safe distance from surrounding uses.

1. Strategy- Develop zoning provisions which permit small-scale accessory solar energy collectors where they are appropriate.
2. Strategy- Develop zoning provisions which permit utility-scale solar energy systems in zoning districts which can support such systems and which is sensitive to the location of prime farmland.

C. Objective - Maintain and enhance educational and outreach regarding the importance of sustainability in business.

1. Strategy- Develop a comprehensive Energy Plan that collects data, establishes benchmarks, and sets goals, strategies and objectives to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse emission levels, while exploring the potential of wind, geothermal, water, and other natural resources for sustainable development.
2. Strategy- Provide information on best practices for sustainable land use and land development practices and provide that information for public outreach and education programs.

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Chapter 3

FUTURE LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents information on future land use in the context of existing land use in Mason County. It begins by describing existing community character (for a more complete description of existing land use, see the Mason County Data Book, Chapter 4 and 5). It then discusses key issues and key policies intended to respond to those issues (Part A dealing with townships under county zoning and Part B for townships, cities and villages not under county zoning). Finally, this chapter describes how different land use categories are proposed to be managed in the future.

EXISTING COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Mason County is characterized by large areas of farmland and forest. Along the Lake Michigan shoreline, there are extensive bluff and dune areas. Pristine rivers and streams flow through the county from east to west and empty into Lake Michigan. There are many small lakes, and large Hamlin Lake sits behind a dam and the dunes at Ludington State Park. Small wetlands dot the landscape. Many other wetlands in the agricultural areas were drained long ago. Most of the privately owned shoreline of Lake Michigan and the inland lakes is developed with cottages, seasonal and year-around homes. The City of Ludington is a deep water small port city, where tourists and industry both co-exist. Ludington's waterfront is largely dedicated to deep water facilities (including the pier complex for the Ludington to Manitowoc, Wisconsin ferry) and industry, but is converting to marinas, parks and water-related condominiums. Highway corridors are also important. US-31 is a freeway that comes from Muskegon to US-10 just east of Ludington. US-10 extends from the port at Ludington nearly due east to the county line and beyond to Clare and Bay City. It has become an important commercial corridor near the interchange. The US-10/US-31 corridor east of the interchange is rapidly developing, generally in a scattered and low intensity pattern. US-31 splits from US-10 at Scottville and extends north to the county line and the City of Manistee a short distance farther. Scottville is a small city in the center of the county and there are three rural villages, Custer, Fountain and Free Soil. There are 15 townships and one, Pere Marquette, is a charter township.

The diversity of landscapes in Mason County is highly prized by those that live and visit here. Orchards and farm fields, beaches and dunes, forests and wetlands, rivers and lakes provide a rich tablet for the eye to behold in the changing seasons. The small towns combined with a complete complement of retail and urban service options add to the variety of living, shopping, working and recreating opportunities. But changes to the landscape and to the job base have begun to threaten confidence that these prized characteristics will remain intact for enjoyment by future generations. This Plan proposes measures to restore confidence in a sustainable future.

KEY ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

Mason County faces a number of issues related to current trends and its vision for the future. Two issues are much more important than the rest and guide key policies in this Plan. They are discussed below.

Economic Base in Land Resources and Industry

Mason County's economy is based on agriculture, tourism and industry. Industry is suffering and there are land use trends working against sustained agriculture and tourism. The county needs to provide a means for new industry to become established, while at the same time, protecting agriculture and tourism.

About all a county can do to provide for new industry is to work with its cities, villages and townships to ensure an adequate supply of land that is well-served by all-weather roads, railroad, shipping and air service, and has public sewer and water to industrial sites. Of course the land must be suitably zoned and located so as to not undermine the integrity of adjacent land uses. The county can also participate in job retention and marketing activities to promote the benefit of siting in the county. Once these measures are taken, it will be a high quality of life for industry owners and workers that attract them to the area: good schools, medical care, arts, culture and recreation are chief among these amenities. Mason County has all these amenities and by valuing and sustaining them, it can attract new jobs for a prosperous future.

Protecting the environment is key to the survival of agriculture and tourism and to sustaining a high quality of life. Those environmental elements that should be protected include surface and groundwater, wetlands, shorelines, forests, productive farmland and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Mason County will need to be aware of the thresholds of the effects of unplanned development on the environment. The county will need to make sure that scattered residential and commercial development does not tip the county over the thresholds that seriously weaken its agriculture and tourism economies.

People are retiring at a younger age than the previous generation and many are moving north, looking to places such as Mason County as a retirement location. Many of them demand services they formerly enjoyed that are not currently available, thus putting pressure on budgets that are already under pressure from inflationary, and rising worker benefit costs. With this influx comes many challenges, from increased traffic to increased pressure on agricultural lands, forest lands, lakes and streams. For example, in Mason County today, recreational land is often selling for more money per acre than average agricultural land.

Agriculture is important in Mason County, but is facing sustainability problems. The conversion of agricultural land to residential use threatens the future of both the agricultural economic sector and the rural character that residents and tourists enjoy. As non-farm residences are built in farming areas, it becomes more difficult for farming operations to continue as non-farm residents often complain about noise, dust, odor, fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and many of the farm practices necessary on a modern farm.

Photo 3-1
Cottage on Big Sable



Photo by Ron Carter

Mason County is blessed with highly diverse agriculture and tourism. Agriculture includes orchards, row crops, livestock, Christmas trees, hops, blueberries and confined animal feeding operations. Tourism activities and attractions include camping, boating, historic sites, snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, and going to the beach. There are many motels, restaurants, a State Park, National Forest lands, a full compliment of retail stores, festivals, the county fair, the ferry to Wisconsin and primary and secondary homes on lakes and in the woods. This diversity is healthy, necessary for the economy, and the environment needs to be protected in order to maintain that diversity.

Maximize Existing Public Investments in Infrastructure—the Ludington to Scottville Corridor

The US-10/US-31 corridor is developing rapidly and is shifting the center of retail and service business from downtown Ludington to the freeway interchange of US-10 and US-31. Commercial and industrial uses are scattered all the way to Scottville.

Local communities and MDOT have already invested heavily in the corridor. There are several thousand acres of undeveloped land that should be built upon over time, in order to make efficient use of the existing investment in public sewer, water and the five lanes of US-10/US-31 itself. Building on the undeveloped land in the corridor will take development pressure off of rural land. This protects the agriculture and agri-tourism economies of the County, and protects the quality of life of those already living in rural areas. In addition to making good use of existing infrastructure, it delays the need for infrastructure investment elsewhere. It also improves opportunities for affordable housing as higher density is feasible.

Yet, there are reasons to be concerned about new development on the corridor. First, if it robs jobs and sales from existing businesses in Ludington or Scottville, then there is no net gain to citizens, only more empty storefronts in the two cities in the county. Second, if it happens too fast, or at too low a density it will underutilize the infrastructure

investment if stores close from lack of a market or others cannot be built because too much land is used to serve too few. Third, the corridor serves as one of the main entryways into the county and the City of Ludington, and some citizens are already concerned that its visual character presently reflects poorly on the community's sense of place. New development should be more carefully designed with an eye to an improved aesthetic. Fourth, if the design and layout is not carefully done, and if new parallel roads are not constructed as recommended in Chapter Five, then traffic safety and congestion will become problems as the corridor develops.

Encouraging a compact growth pattern for the corridor that includes residential, commercial, and industrial development in appropriate locations will be essential to the efficient provision of public services and sustainability of corridor businesses. While this Plan recommends a general arrangement of industrial and commercial development on the south side of US-10/US-31, commercial on the north side, and residential development north of the commercial, the over-arching purpose is job development with nearby affordable housing in neighborhood oriented clusters. This must occur in staged increments only as the market permits and only after all measures to properly build out Ludington and Scottville are taken.

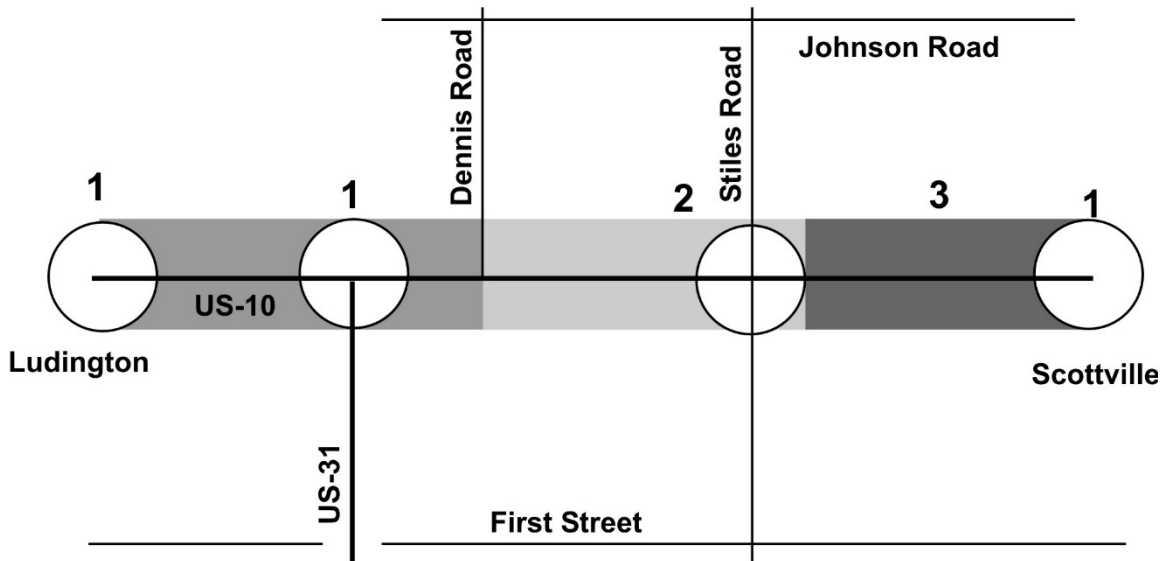
KEY LAND USE POLICIES—PART A

This section describes key land use policies in Mason County in townships subject to county zoning. It is intended to provide an overview of the direction the county intends for land use change in the future. Map 3-1 illustrates those key policies.

In general, the intent is to concentrate future development along the US-10/US-31 corridor from the interchange to Scottville, while preserving rural lands and natural features elsewhere. Development of the US-10/US-31 corridor would take place in stages (see Figure 3-1), with the first stage (from present up to about 20 years into the future) focusing first on Ludington and Scottville, and then development in the center part of the corridor. A node at the freeway interchange of US-10 and US-31 would continue to be devoted to “Big Box Retail” development. In the second stage (after about 20 years), new development would center around the intersection of Stiles Road and US-10/US-31. In a final stage (30 or more years from the present), development of the corridor from Stiles Road east to Scottville would take place. Job centers in the villages of Custer, Free Soil and Fountain are also encouraged, within defined community service areas once both public sewer and water are available.

These time frames are based on rates of change between 2012 and 2019. If change accelerates, then less time will pass before a stage is complete and vice versa. The biggest impediment to successful implementation of this policy is developers who do not use the developable part of property (i.e. avoid all wetlands) intensively enough. That will result in prematurely using up the scarcest resource in the county—undeveloped land served (or servable) by both public sewer and water. It will also push development into the rural areas of the county which should be preserved for their renewable natural resource value.

**Figure 3-1
Staged Development**



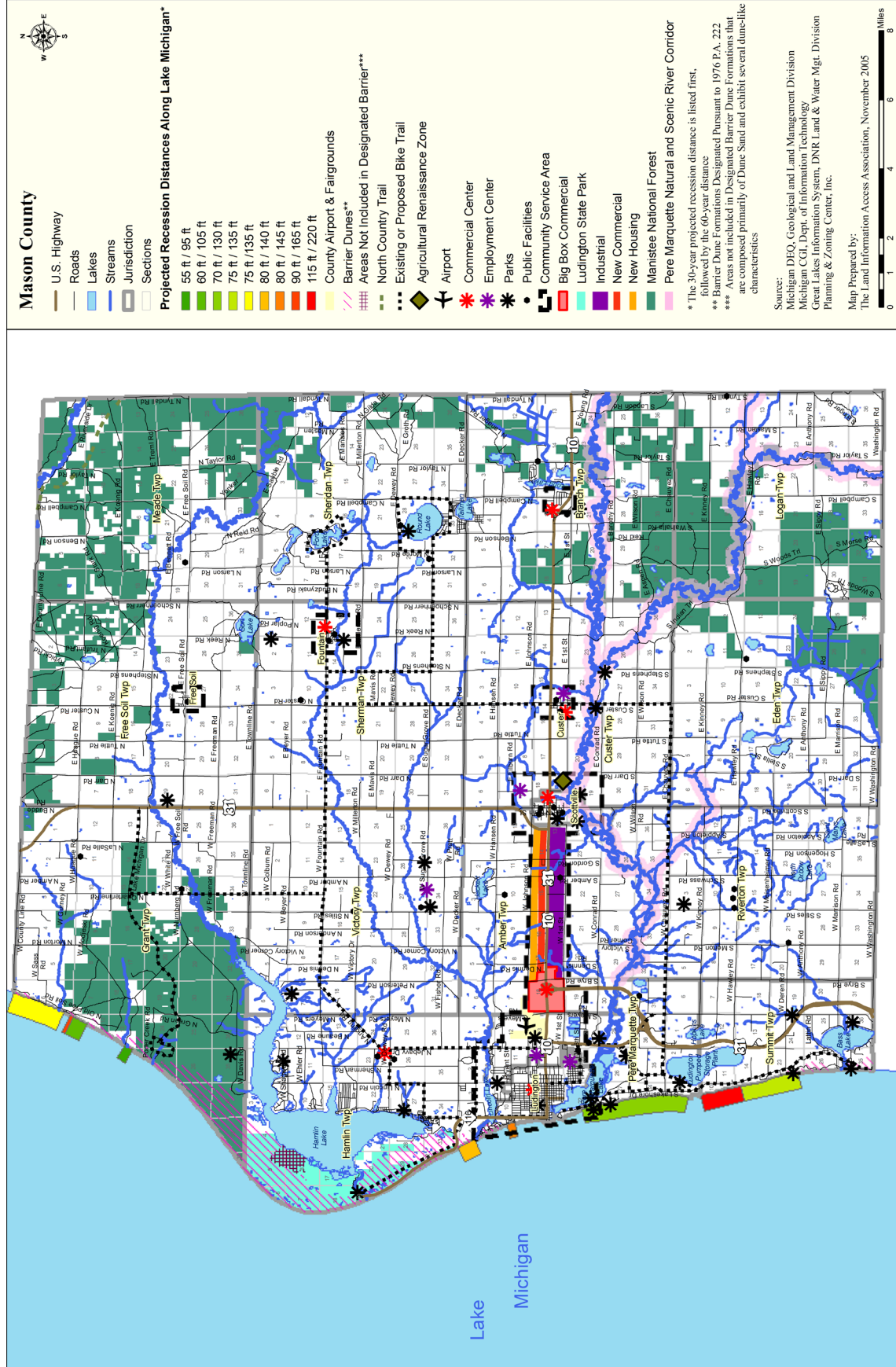
US-10/US-31 Corridor

The US-10/US-31 corridor from the freeway interchange to Scottville should be the focus of future development in order to take pressure off of rural areas and make the corridor an employment center. There will be a mix of uses, including commercial, industrial and residential in order to improve economic vitality and make maximum use of the investment the county has already made in existing public infrastructure. The highway will provide excellent access and the construction of new parallel roads as well as an efficient layout of commercial and industrial properties can help reduce congestion and traffic accidents. Attractive building, sign design, and landscaping will improve visual character. North of the highway commercial development, mixed office, small commercial and both medium density (4 dwelling units/acre) and high density (8-12 dwelling units/acre) housing will provide for walkability and convenience to work and shopping.

The corridor will extend about one half mile north of the highway to Johnson Road and one half mile south of the highway to First Street. Commercial development will be the designated land use in the first $\frac{1}{4}$ mile on both the north and south side of the highway. There can be some mixing of industrial and office uses in this area as this is already a characteristic. In the next band south, down to First Street, the primary use will be a mix of industrial and service commercial in order to take advantage of the railroad. Commercial establishments with a large number of employees may locate in the industrial area on the south side of the highway.

The US-10/US-31 corridor development area will require zoning changes in order to provide for mixed use development, changed designation of zoning districts and to address the appearance of the corridor. The area south of the highway in the corridor is presently zoned commercial, with only a small area zoned industrial. The industrially zoned area of the corridor needs to be much larger. See Chapter 4, Zoning Plan for more information.

Map 3-1 Key Mason County Land Use Policies



Eventually the development of this corridor will extend all the way east to Scottville. However, in the first stage, new residential, commercial, and industrial development will primarily extend to Dennis Road.

Currently, the US-10 corridor east of Scottville has commercial and higher density residential zoning along the south side of the highway all the way to Custer. There should not be any commercial or high density residential zoning between Scottville and Custer except for the first one half mile east of Scottville and about one quarter mile west of Custer on the north side of the highway. This is because of the lack of public sewer and water, and the presence of both utilities plus a five-lane road west of Scottville.

Big Box Commercial Designated Area

The area around the US-10/US-31 interchange will be designated as “Big Box Commercial.” This is where establishments known as “Big Box Stores” should be encouraged to locate (such as the Meijer, Home Depot, Lowes and WalMart that are already there). This location will provide better access for the larger stores, and will allow for a mix of other types of commercial, industrial and residential uses farther east along the corridor, where a variety of smaller businesses are located, and where the transportation and site impacts of “big box” stores could be more difficult to manage. There is a need for new connecting roads in this area as described in Chapter Five.

Protection of Important Natural Features

In order to protect water quality and sensitive environments in Mason County, careful development approaches will need to be used along rivers, streams, lakes, floodplains, wetlands and dunes. A continuing educational effort will be needed regarding the value of natural features and regulatory and volunteer methods to protect those resources.

Wetlands, Rivers and Streams

Of particular concern are wetlands, rivers and streams. These are shown on Map 3-2, Floodplains and Wetlands. Very few of the floodplains in the county have been mapped through the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program. The FEMA maps help identify areas that should not be built upon in order to limit the potential for property damage and to limit the potential increase in flooding due to floodplain development. Local units of government must request FEMA to produce the maps. Floodplain areas not mapped by FEMA should be identified and development limited in those areas. Map 3-2 provides clues to where some of the floodplains are for which FEMA floodplain maps have not yet been requested. These clues include river segments with multiple stream channels or frequent switchbacks and bends. FEMA reassessed and updated the floodplain maps in 2014.

Wetlands shown on Map 3-2 were identified by the National Wetlands Inventory. Wetlands exist across most of Mason County, which means that development will have to be designed very carefully in order to protect valuable wetland functions. Wetland functions include stormwater storage and cleansing, groundwater recharge, spawning area for fish, nesting habitat for birds and other animals, and natural scenery. Wetland mitigation will need to be considered to protect water quality and habitat and is required by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy if certain wetlands are impaired or destroyed. The County may also consider establishing a wetland mitigation bank in advance of anticipated losses.

Map 3-2 shows the location of rivers and streams in Mason County, most of which are of very high quality, supporting desirable species of game fish. Rivers and streams should be protected by setting development back from shorelines, providing vegetative filter strips, directing stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces away from surface water and preventing sediment, toxic chemicals and warmed water from entering the water.

Map 3-1, Key Policies, indicates streams that have protective greenbelt zoning provisions. The Pere Marquette River is designated as a state Natural River, and as a federal Scenic River. These designations mandate certain provisions to help retain the naturalness of the shoreline and to help protect river water quality. Those provisions include deeper setbacks for buildings, greater minimum lot widths, limitations on the size of signs, deeper setbacks for septic systems, a natural vegetation buffer strip, limitations on the clearing of shoreline vegetation and control of access to the river. The county will support enforcement of those provisions in order to protect this economic and quality of life asset.

High Risk Erosion Areas

Map 3-1 indicates where the state has identified Lake Michigan shoreline at high risk for erosion. The map legend indicates the projected rate of recession (erosion of shoreline bluffs in a landward direction), with shoreline segments identified by green bands likely to experience comparatively slower rates than the segments identified by yellow and red bands. The recession rate is expressed by two numbers, with the first representing the distance of projected recession over a 30 year period, and the second number the rate projected over a 60 year period. Development of shoreline properties should not be permitted within the projected recession area. Other measures, such as planting or retaining vegetation on dunes and bluffs, and directing the runoff from impervious surfaces away from the top of bluffs should be required. This will require careful coordination with the DEQ which administers high risk erosion area regulations.

Barrier Dunes

Map 3-2 shows the location of designated barrier dunes. These were originally identified as part of PA 222 of 1976. The "Critical Dune Area" portion of the law was separated out as Part 353 of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994 and retained the title of "Sand Dune Protection and Management", which is administered by the DEQ's Land & Water Management Division. The mining regulation became Part 637 with the title "Sand Dune Mining", and is administered by the DEQ's Geological Survey Division.

There are designated critical dune areas along the shore from the City of Ludington north into Grant Township. Much of this area is in public ownership, either Ludington State Park or the Manistee National Forest. In those areas that are privately owned, the county and local units of government should work closely with the MDEQ and MDNR to ensure that development or mining activities proceed in a manner that will ensure the sustainability of the shoreline dune environment.

Photo 3-2
Mason County Dunes



Photo by Robert Garrett

Public Facilities

The locations of existing public facilities are shown on Map 3-1. While some communities plan improvements to existing facilities (see the Mason County Data Book, Chapter 7, Public Facilities and Physical Services), there are no known plans for the construction of new facilities in the near future. All proposed new public facilities in the county by any governmental entity should be reviewed by the County Planning Commission for consistency with this Plan.

Recreation

Recreation is an important part of the tourism economic sector and of the quality of life for residents of Mason County. Map 3-1 shows the locations of parks, Ludington State Park, Manistee National Forest, the North Country Trail, and existing or proposed bike and snowmobile trails. Completing the proposed bike trail routes and providing for pedestrian and bike connections from residential areas to other points of attraction will be important in making the county more attractive for new businesses and residents. It will also help promote an active and healthy lifestyle for county residents.

Rural Areas

It is the policy of the county that the use of rural lands be devoted to agricultural and forest production and the occasional non-farm residence. Privately owned rural areas are shown in white on the Key Policies Map (Map 3-1). Two changes are needed to see this policy become effective. One, the permitted zoning density on existing agricultural and forest lands should be changed from one dwelling unit per acre, to something substantially less; in the area of one dwelling unit per 40 acres would be best. This is known as a quarter-quarter system. The maximum lot size for each dwelling unit would be 2 acres (unless the District Health Department required more because of soil conditions for the septic system). Thus, a farmer with 120 acres would be permitted 3 dwellings on 2-acre lots. This protects large amounts of farm and forest land for long-term farming and forest management. If a landowner desired a higher density, they would have to pursue rezoning to a zone which allowed a higher density. This change

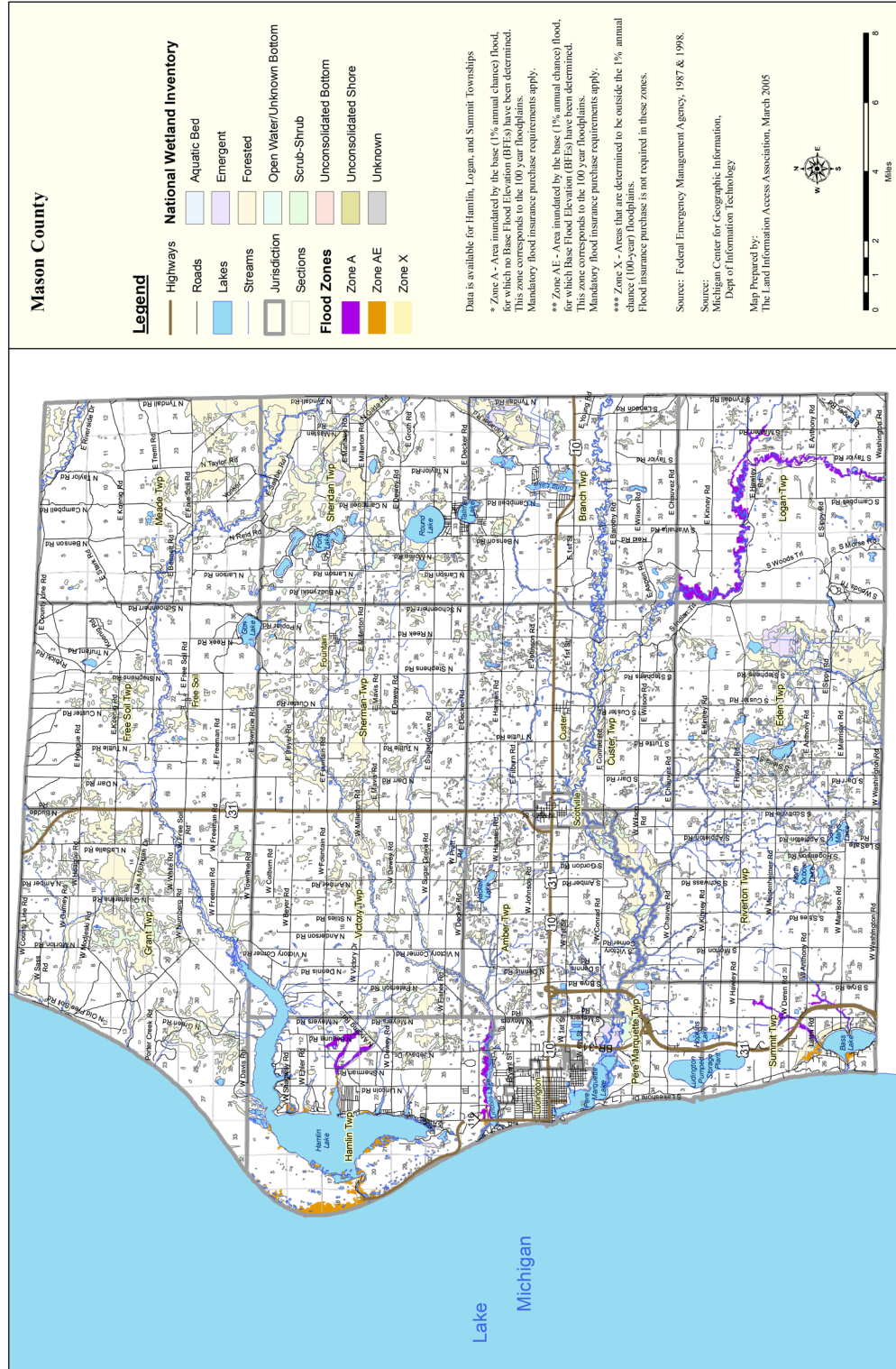
would allow farmers to score higher on the state or federal purchase of development rights (PDR) programs. These are long-term preservation programs where government pays farmers for the development rights to farmland. However, there are other options that should be considered if there is insufficient political support for moving to the quarter-quarter system. These other options are described later in this chapter. Second, the county should explore creating its own PDR program and a transfer of development rights (TDR) program as well. Development rights programs require new ordinance provisions. A TDR program requires the identification of “sending zones” and “receiving zones.” In Mason County, sending zones would be identified in agricultural areas where soils are especially suited for farming and where they may be under imminent threat of conversion from agriculture to other uses. Receiving zones would be set up where more concentrated development is desired, such as in the area designated for medium and high density residential along the US-10/US-31 corridor. However, at this time, there is no specific enabling legislation for TDR programs in Michigan.

Photo 3-3
**Rural Areas Should be Devoted Primarily
to Agriculture and Forestry**



Photo by Robert Garrett

Map 3-2 Floodplains and Wetlands



KEY LAND USE POLICIES—PART B

This section describes key policies toward land use in townships, cities and villages in Mason County that are not subject to county zoning. It is intended to provide an overview of the direction the county intends for land use change in the future, and how those communities not subject to county zoning can participate in preparing for a common future with other communities in the county. Map 3-1 illustrates key policies.

In general, the intent is to concentrate future development in specific areas while preserving important natural resources, agriculture, forestry and rural character. Development areas include the US-10/US-31 corridor from the interchange to Scottville and in the existing cities and villages when public sewer and water are provided.

Not all of the important Lake Michigan shoreline, inland lakes, rivers and streams in Mason County are under county zoning. Important stretches are in Grant, Hamlin and Pere Marquette Townships, as well as in the City of Ludington, all of which have their own zoning. It is important to coordinate protection of important environmental features across all contiguous jurisdictions, as nature does not respect jurisdiction boundaries.

Community Service Areas

The Key Policies Map (Map 3-1) shows the outline of proposed community service areas around existing cities and villages. Inside these lines is where future commercial or high density development should occur, but only when public sewer and water are provided. The purpose of community service areas is to help communities manage the timing and location of growth so that community services can be provided efficiently and cost-effectively. In order for communities to provide affordable public sewer and water, there will need to be a sufficient number of and concentration of hook-ups to homes and businesses and participation by the development community. The Community Services Area lines shown on Map 3-1 indicate the proposed limits of community service areas over at least the next twenty years. As time passes, an evaluation of growth trends can be used to guide decision making on whether the area designated for community services should be expanded or contracted, and in what directions.

Protection of Important Natural Features

Although more highly developed, the three townships, two cities and three villages not under county zoning have extensive wetlands, rivers, streams and lakeshores. The protective greenbelt zoning for rivers and streams in townships under county zoning should also be adopted by those communities that do not have it. Wetlands and floodplain ordinances should also be adopted. Protection of lands at high risk of erosion along Lake Michigan and protection of designated sand dunes should continue to be coordinated with the DEQ.

MANAGEMENT OF LAND USE IN THE FUTURE

Introduction

This section describes how land is presently used within Mason County and discusses how land is proposed to be used in the future by land use type. The discussion of future land use includes the general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational, and other land uses. The categories listed here correlate closely to the zoning districts in the Mason County Zoning Ordinance. As in the Mason County Zoning Ordinance, the residential land use category is divided into several residential land use types according to general characteristics, purpose, location and density. Generalized existing land use is shown in the Mason County Data Book on Maps 4-4 (1978 aerial photograph data) and 4-5 (2001 satellite data). Future land use is illustrated in this chapter on the Future Land Use Map, Map 3-3. The legend uses standard colors for the land uses depicted. At some point the colors on the county zoning map should be changed to the same colors as on this map. Additionally, local governments in the county are urged to use the same colors on local future land use plans and zoning maps.

Land and Water Resource Conservation

Agricultural

Agricultural land makes up about one-quarter of the land in Mason County. Much of the designated agricultural land use is comprised of prime farmland soils (as is and if drained), and farmland of local importance. This designation is designed to maintain the economic viability and character of productive farmland and to allow for agri-tourism practices necessary for education and promotion of Michigan-made products.

Most of this designation generally matches the areas of prime soils in the county. However, these soils and registered lands in the P.A. 116 Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program may be fragmented within this designation. Agriculture is planned as the primary use for at least the next twenty years. If farmers remain committed to farming, then agriculture will be the primary use for much longer. Within this designation, all non-farm related residential development including premature, scattered or sprawling strip residential development will be discouraged.

Forty acres should be considered to establish residential density using the quarter-quarter system. Each new dwelling would be on a parcel no more than 2 acres in size unless more area is required by the septic system requirements imposed by the Health Department. This preserves much more land for farming. In order to permit more housing on a parcel, the land would have to be rezoned. Large landowners would be encouraged to cluster permitted units in a small area instead of scatter them throughout a site.

However, other options should also be considered if there is inadequate support for the quarter-quarter system. These options in descending order on the table below do a poorer job of protecting farmland while increasing the number of new residences in the rural area. More residences not only increase pressure on farmers to get out of farming (through complaints and rising property values—hence taxes), they also raise demands for public services—hence taxes over time. They also pose challenges for compatibility between land uses and may require a transition zone between areas where farmers commit to long term agriculture and areas of rural large lot zoning.

Other Options to Consider

Technique	Comment
Quarter-Quarter Zoning as proposed above with one dwelling unit per quarter-quarter section (or 40 acres) being the base permitted density. Existing lots less than 40 acres in size would be nonconforming and could be used for residential purposes, but if zoned agricultural, could not be divided further.	Very effective at farmland preservation for as long as farmers want to farm. If farmers want to develop they must seek a rezoning. A variation is to establish zoning standards to guide the district options which would be approvable when a rezoning is requested. For example, if farmers on adjoining lands are committed to long term farming, then the next lowest density would be selected. If surrounding lands are at a common density, such as one dwelling unit (DU) per 10 acres, then that density should be selected. If surrounding land is at a variety of densities, such as 1DU per 10 acres, 1 DU per 5 acres, and 1 DU per 2 acres, then the lowest compatible density should be selected (perhaps part of the farm at one density and the rest at another).
Quarter-Quarter Zoning as proposed above, but only farmers that petition to be rezoned into this district would be so rezoned. This requires a second agricultural zone as well, usually with a one DU/20 acre standard.	This eliminates the political problem, but it may not result in many protected acres. The benefit to farmers would be the higher score to participate in the state PDR program, or in an exclusive agricultural district tax benefit, if that legislation ever passes.
Quarter-Quarter Zoning as described above, but allowing two dwelling units per quarter-quarter section instead of one. The rest would be the same as above.	More residences in agricultural areas slowly undermines long term farming, so this technique is not as good as standard quarter-quarter zoning. It would still need standards to guide rezoning.
Twenty acre minimum lot size in the agricultural district (1 dwelling unit per 20 acres).	Not nearly as effective at saving farmland as quarter-quarter and over time results in 32 dwelling units/square mile which will create a long term public service burden at some future point. Plus, it is much harder for committed farmers to purchase additional farmland, as the land value is higher for residences.
Such other techniques as still protect considerable farmland while keeping the total number of residences per square mile low. These may be combinations of the above, or variations not even mentioned.	If density in the agricultural area is lowered below one DU/20 acres, virtually no farmland will be protected as the minimum unit size for most agricultural operations is 40 acres.

Forestry

Forest cover comprises about 51% of Mason County. This land use includes a mixture of private timber operations, private seasonal recreational holdings, and large lot, low density residential development. As indicated by the name, this land use is primarily wooded. The intent of this designation is to assure the continued harvest of forest products and opportunities for forest recreational activities for at least the next twenty years. Land in this designation neither requires nor is planned to receive intensive county services such as a high level of road maintenance, transit or public sewer and water service. Within this designation, only very low density residential development using the same quarter-quarter method as in the agricultural future land use designation. Clustering of permitted units would be encouraged so as to leave very large areas undisturbed.

The lands placed under the Forest District in the zoning ordinance should be carefully examined to ensure the land is presently used for and well suited for long term forest management. Both Norman Township and Stronach Townships to the north of Meade have 40 acre minimum lot sizes on private land in the National Forest. Norman Township sent back comments on the draft Plan saying forty acre minimum lot size zoning in the Mason County Forestry District was consistent with their plan and zoning ordinance. Forty acres is the usual minimum parcel size for economic forest management.

Proposed Transition Zone

If the quarter-quarter zoning or some higher density is ultimately approved in the agricultural areas, then a transition zone with a density in the one dwelling per 10 acre range may be necessary to serve as a buffer around farmland committed to long term agricultural use. However, any density greater than one dwelling per 10 acres will exceed the capacity of gravel roads and put great demand on the Road Commission to pave those roads. Paving will only increase demand for more dwellings in agricultural and forestry areas, so great care should be exercised before establishing a transition zone, or establishing any density greater than one dwelling per 10 acres.

Greenbelt

This overlay designation applies to relatively large, contiguous environmentally sensitive areas within Mason County, along rivers and streams to a depth of 300' on each side. This land use category reflects the desire to maintain the environmental quality of ecological systems not yet severely degraded by intensive development. Segments of the Manistee River, Big Sauble River, Lincoln River and the north and south branches of the Lincoln River are prominent among the rivers and streams included. While residential lots of a minimum of ½ acre are envisioned in this designation, provisions such as a native vegetation strip, limitations on construction within the floodplain, and setback requirements for septic systems are also encouraged. While the corresponding greenbelt zoning district provides specific standards, on site evaluation of development proposals will remain important.

Natural River: Pere Marquette Natural and Scenic River Corridor

The Pere Marquette River from the Pere Marquette Highway bridge east to the county line, and including several branches are designated as both a Natural River by the State of Michigan, and a Scenic River by the Federal government. The Natural River designation requires increased setbacks and lot widths, a natural vegetation strip with

limited vegetation clearing, limits on signs, and other provisions for a corridor extending 400' landward from each side of the river. The Federal Scenic River designation extends approximately ¼ mile inland from the centerline of the river on each side. Scenic rivers are those rivers or river segments that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. Scenic rivers are managed to help prevent damage due to overuse or misuse of the shoreline.

Natural river regulations may be enforced by the federal or state governments, as well as by county and local governments. Public access should continue to be provided, but the impact of those access sites should be minimized and periodically evaluated. Treatments to eradicate Lamprey Eels are permitted. Educational opportunities about the importance of the natural and scenic river designations and appropriate management of the rivers should be provided.

Public and Conservancy Land Uses—Manistee National Forest and Ludington State Park

These lands provide for recreational opportunities and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. This designation includes lands in the Manistee National Forest, Ludington State Park, other Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands, local parks and any land conservancy properties. To date, the efforts of land conservancies in Mason County have been primarily focused on providing expertise for the management of ecosystems, rather than on acquisition of land for long-term preservation.

Photo 3-4
Ludington State Park

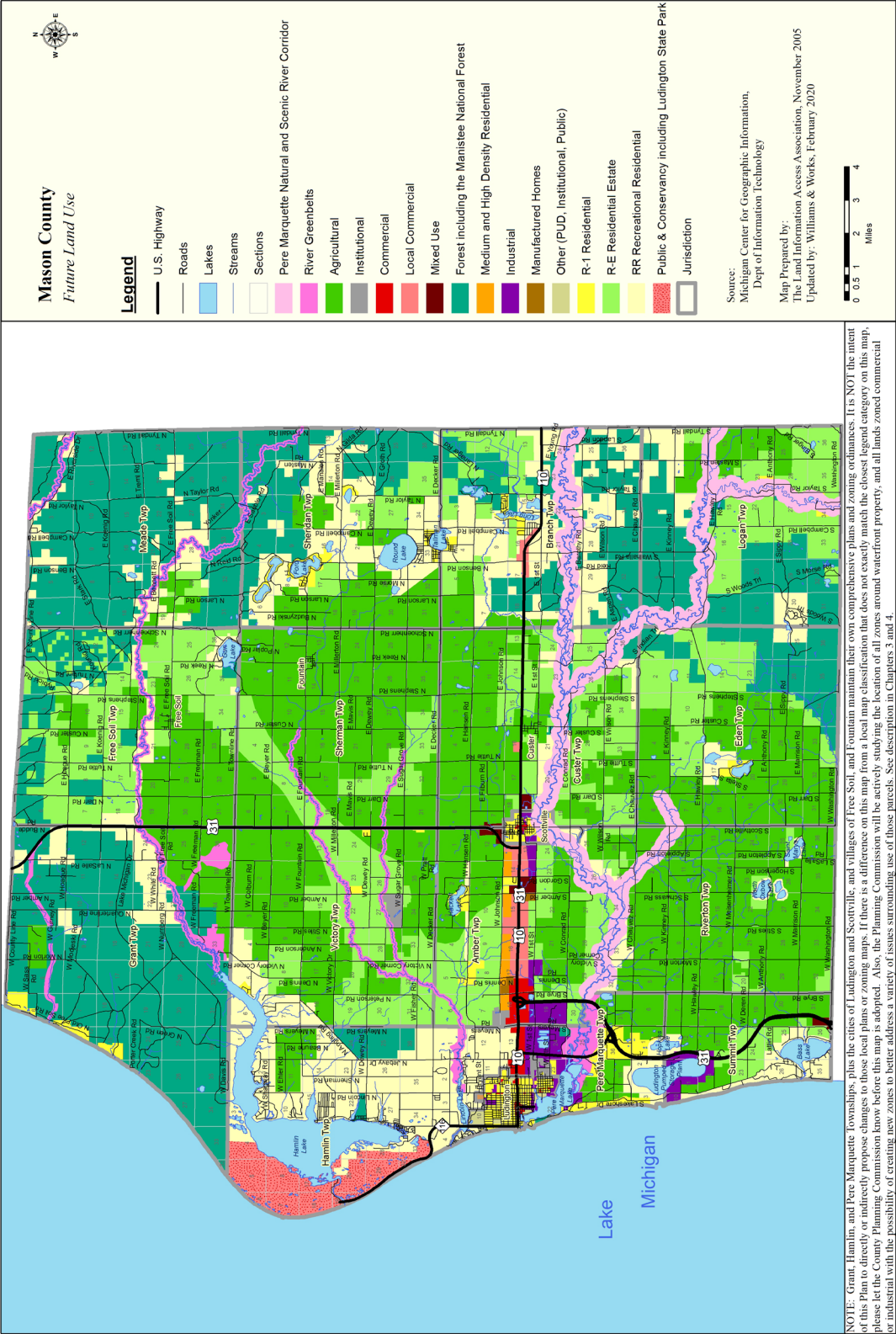


Photo by Robert Garrett

The county and local units of government should actively participate in discussions on the management of these lands in order to help promote citizen interests and ensure the continued benefit of these largely public lands. Sensitive environments such as wetlands, floodplains, sand dunes and areas of threatened or endangered species not already in public ownership should be protected by the acquisition of those lands by public entities or private conservancies where possible.

Local educational opportunities regarding sustainable management of public and conservancy lands should be encouraged, including guidance on appropriate management of private lands adjacent to public and conservancy lands.

Map 3-3
Mason County Future Land Use



Urban and Built Lands

Lands that are built upon comprise only 3.8% of Mason County. These include residential, commercial and industrial development. While only a small percentage of the area of the entire county, they have a significant visual and environmental affect. The discussion that follows describes how residential, commercial and industrial land uses should be managed in the future in order to insure that urban land uses have a positive effect on the county.

Rural Estates Residential

This future land use designation is intended to provide land for residential growth of a rural character in areas that are presently without public sewer and water and likely to remain without such services. It is also intended to permit continued agriculture, and to serve as a transition from agricultural uses to residential uses. The Rural Estates Residential designation is spread throughout the county, but generally is not on prime agricultural lands. This designation accommodates low density single family development on large lots where there may also be large gardens, limited farming, horses and other livestock managed by the gentleman or gentlewoman farmer. Residential development is presently permitted on lots of one acre or more. Conservation subdivisions and clustering should be encouraged within this land use as a means of preserving open space, and where feasible, the continuation of farming. Farms within this designation are encouraged to continue in farming, and non-farm residents should be provided educational opportunities regarding the dust, noise, smells and chemical use that are part of normal farming operations, and the importance of farming to the local economy.

Recreational Residential

This future land use designation is intended to provide for the orderly development of areas bordering on or adjacent to publicly owned recreation lands and/or undeveloped portions of inland lakes of the county. Most of the areas of this designation occur in large blocks, such as in Hamlin Township, as well as among National Forest lands in the eastern part of the county, and in small tracts bordering inland lakes and rivers. Activities relating to recreational pursuits occur within or adjacent to this designation and provide for such services as hotels and motels, boat liveries and community commercial service. Public sewer and water do not exist in these areas and county services are minimal. In some instances lake boards or associations have been created to represent riparian land owners within this land use designation. Owners of these parcels should be encouraged to practice stewardship of the natural resources adjacent to their properties. This means protecting lake water quality by limiting imperviousness, limiting the use of fertilizers and pesticides, providing a vegetation strip along lakeshores and riverbanks and making sure sediments do not enter surface waters. Private land owners adjacent to public lands can also practice stewardship by ensuring that fires do not spread to forest lands, junk is not deposited on public lands, and clearing of vegetation is limited. Land owners in this designation should be provided educational opportunities on lake stewardship and forest land management practices.

Presently this designation is being “asked” to do too much and it isn’t working very well to meet either landowner needs or natural resource protection needs in many places. One problem is that the corresponding zoning district has a 1/3 acre minimum lot size requirement, but many waterfront lots are already much smaller. Continue to monitor the policy adopted in the Zoning Ordinance that lessens setbacks in the RR district based on the width of the lot.

R-1 Residential

This future land use designation is intended to provide for medium density single-family residential development. Lot sizes of ¼ acre are permitted in areas where public sewer and water are available. Larger lot sizes are necessary in places where public sewer and water are not available, and lot size is determined by the ability to adequately provide for both an on-site well and a septic system. This designation is limited in area in the county, and is located along US-31 and along the Lake Michigan shore in Pere Marquette Township, along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Grant Township, along Hanson Road in Amber Township and in scattered locations in the eastern part of the county. It should be the minimum designation density for new development south of Johnson Road, east of the US-10/US-31 freeway interchange and west of Stiles Road.

Manufactured Home Parks

There are manufactured homes in manufactured home parks (also called mobile home parks) in Mason County and on individual parcels. Two manufactured home parks are provided for as a future land use in the US-10/US-31 development corridor. One is on the south side of the highway by Amber Road and the other is on the north side, adjacent to and just north of Meijer. In addition to existing mobile home parks in Pere Marquette Township, they are expected to be adequate for the provision of manufactured home parks for the near future. It is important that manufactured home parks be located where there is adequate sewer and water service, and all-weather roads adequate for the traffic load. That makes them an eligible land use along the US-10/US-31 development corridor.

Medium to High Density Residential

This future land use designation is intended to provide for single-family homes with a density greater than four units per acre and preferably 8-12 units per acre. This density is usually associated with small lot subdivisions, condominium development, mobile home parks and multi-family housing. These areas need to be close to job centers, shopping and other activities. High density residential is only available where there is public sewer and water available, and will help support publicly-provided infrastructure. For the near future, the only new areas of high density residential will be in Ludington, Scottville and along and north of the commercial area on the north side of the US-10/US-31 corridor between Ludington and Amber Road. High density residential as infill where parts of this designation are not already developed at maximum density would be an effective use of existing infrastructure. This district should also include sidewalks and bike trails that connect to schools, shopping, offices, industries, parks and civic facilities. Bike and walking paths should also connect into rural areas of the county.

Commercial

This future land use designation includes areas of concentrated regional commercial development along with areas planned for future permanent commercial activities. The intent is for this designation to encourage more intense retail, business and service uses to be concentrated within areas that allow for high volumes of traffic flow, are provided with public sewer and water, contiguous and adjacent to similar land use activities. The primary areas of commercial land use are along the US-10/US-31 corridor from Ludington to N Dennis Road. It is not intended for these land uses to proliferate or expand beyond the areas already designated.

All commercial areas should be designed in order to contribute to a high-quality visual character of Mason County. They should also employ access management principles as detailed in the Mason County US-10/US-31 Corridor Access Management Plan.

Local Commercial

This future land use designation includes commercial areas that primarily serve the needs of the residents of Mason County and surrounding community. The intent is for this designation to be less intense than the commercial designation and be more compatible with a larger variety of neighboring land uses. Local commercial areas include US-10 between N Dennis Road and Amber Road; along and on the north side of the US-10 corridor west of Custer; along a half mile segment of the US-10 corridor in Branch Township, and in a few other isolated locations.

All commercial areas should be designed in order to contribute to a high-quality visual character of Mason County. They should also employ access management principles as detailed in the Mason County US-10/US-31 Corridor Access Management Plan.

Mixed Use

This future land use designation is intended to provide for mixed uses in transitional areas including higher density residential as well as limited commercial and offices. Over time, residential properties in this designation may convert to higher density residential and non-residential uses as areas along US-10 are built out. The mixed use designation is primarily located along US-10 in Section 14 of Amber Township and immediately north and east of Scottville.

All commercial areas should be designed in order to contribute to a high-quality visual character of Mason County. They should also employ access management principles as detailed in the Mason County US-10/US-31 Corridor Access Management Plan.

Industrial

This designation includes both existing areas of, and desired areas for industrial development. It provides for manufacturing, as well as assembling and fabrication activities in a manner that will minimize the effects on abutting land uses. The industrial designation is intended to be located in areas that typically provide full public services such as public sewer and water, or where they can be easily extended. It is also the intent to provide sufficient space and traffic flow for industrial activities, and buffering from less intensive land uses or environmentally sensitive areas.

Photo 3-5
Mason County Industry



Photo by Robert Garrett

The industrial land use designation includes existing industrial businesses both in the industrial park in Ludington and those in other areas, such as in Pere Marquette Charter Township. It includes the area both south and north surrounding the Ludington Pump Storage Facility. It also includes a new industrial area along and to the south of the US-10/US-31 corridor between Ludington and Scottville. This is an area served by both railroad and highway. Because drainage is a problem in this corridor, special attention must be paid to on-site storage of stormwater. Other small industrial areas will also exist in Scottville, Custer and other villages. Because of the wide variation in industrial uses a distinction should be made between “heavy” and “light” industrial districts. This will require rezoning some parcels. See Chapter Four for more information.

Industrial sites should be designed to have a positive visual character, to protect sensitive environments and to have buffers with less intensive uses, such as residential.

Analysis of Plans and Ordinances of Adjoining Jurisdictions

How one community develops at its borders affects the communities on the other side of that border and vice versa. It is important for Mason County to understand the potential effect of adjacent community plans and ordinances while developing its own plan. The proposed arrangement of future land uses described in this chapter and the policies proposed to support that arrangement are compatible with existing plans in adjoining jurisdictions. Zoning in jurisdictions within Mason County were evaluated to ensure consistency along county borders.

Chapter 4 ZONING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter opens with a general description of a zoning plan. It is followed by a brief explanation of the relationship between this Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance of Mason County and individual community Zoning Ordinances within the county. Next, the intent and key dimensional standards of the zoning districts in the Zoning Ordinance are briefly described. As they exist, the districts are consistent with the Future Land Use Map and land use descriptions in Chapter 3, but they could be revised to be significantly closer to that proposed in Chapter 3. If the districts are changed, this chapter should be updated to reflect the changes made. While future land use designations are intended to correspond with specific zoning districts, flexibility in the boundaries of future land use categories is envisioned depending on market forces and site conditions.

WHAT IS A ZONING PLAN?

A “zoning plan” is required per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008, as amended. The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the county. It must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the county and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted. That inventory of conditions is found in the Mason County Data Book and this Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO MASTER PLAN UPDATE

This Master Plan update sets forth the vision, goals and policies for growth and development in Mason County for approximately the next twenty years. It includes a specific strategy for managing growth and change in land uses and infrastructure in Mason County over this period, and will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once each five years. This chapter presenting the Zoning Plan, along with the rest of the relevant parts of this Master Plan, is intended to guide the implementation of and future changes to the Zoning Ordinance. However, existing permitted uses of land, including density, setbacks and other related standards are as established in the Zoning Ordinance as this Plan is not a regulatory ordinance.

DISTRICTS AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

Following are the general purposes and characteristics of zoning within Mason County. The specific purpose of each zoning district and permitted land uses are listed in the Mason County Zoning Ordinance. The Section references indicate where detailed ordinance language is located within the ordinance. Chapter 3 presented information on future land use that should be used to update the district purpose/intent, dimensional and use regulations in order to be consistent with the Plan.

ZONING DISTRICTS

Residential Districts

The following zoning districts are considered “residential districts.” Corresponding future land use designations are identified in parenthesis.

Article VI	RE Rural Estates District (Residential Estate)
Article VII	RR Recreational Residential District (Recreational Residential)

Article VIII	R Single Family Residential District (Residential, Medium and High Density Residential)
Article IX	MHP Manufactured Home Park District (Manufactured Homes)

The principal purpose of these districts is to provide for a range of residential dwelling types at various densities within individual zones tailored for specific uses.

Single Family Cluster Housing (Section 3.21) may be permitted on parcels 10 acres or larger under single ownership and control. The resulting density can be no greater than if the parcel was developed according to minimum lot size for that residential zone. There are additional spacing and height requirements.

Commercial, Mixed Use, and Industrial Districts

The following zoning districts are presently considered “commercial, mixed use, and industrial districts.” Corresponding future land use designations are identified in parenthesis.

Article X	C-1 Highway Commercial District (Commercial)
Article Xa	C-2 Neighborhood Commercial District (Local Commercial)
Article Xb	C-3 Mixed Use Transitional District (Mixed Use, Medium and High Density Residential)
Article XI	I Industrial District (Industrial)

The basic purpose of these districts is to provide opportunities for regulated commercial, office, mixed use, or industrial activities serving local and area shopping needs, transitional areas, and industrial production. These needs include off-street parking, loading, screening, walkability, building form, and other factors.

Resource Production Districts

The following zoning districts are considered “resource production districts”. Corresponding future land use designations are identified in parenthesis.

Article V	AG Agricultural District (Agricultural)
Article XIV	F Forestry District (Forest including the Manistee National Forest)

These districts are designed for low intensity use due to the suitability of the lands for agriculture or forestry, and historic uses of agriculture and forestry. Other uses include agri-tourism (seasonal events, bed and breakfasts, temporary commercial, and retreat centers) and agri-industry.

Resource Protection Districts

The following zoning districts are considered resource protection districts. Corresponding future land use designations are identified in parenthesis.

Article XIII	GB Greenbelt District (Pere Marquette Natural and Scenic River Corridor, River Greenbelts)
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These districts are designed to maximize preservation of existing environments, particularly those of streams and wetlands, by requiring deep setbacks from the edge of the water for buildings and septic systems, providing for vegetative buffers and limiting the visual impact of development (along the designated natural river segments). The minimum lot area for a single family home in these districts ranges from 20,000 s.f. (green belt zone) to 30,000 s.f. (Natural River tributaries) or 40,000 s.f. (Natural River main stream and Big South Branch).

Photo 4-1
Mason County Industrial Facility



Airport Zoning Overlay Zone

The public investment in and safety of airport operations is protected by an “airport overlay zone.”

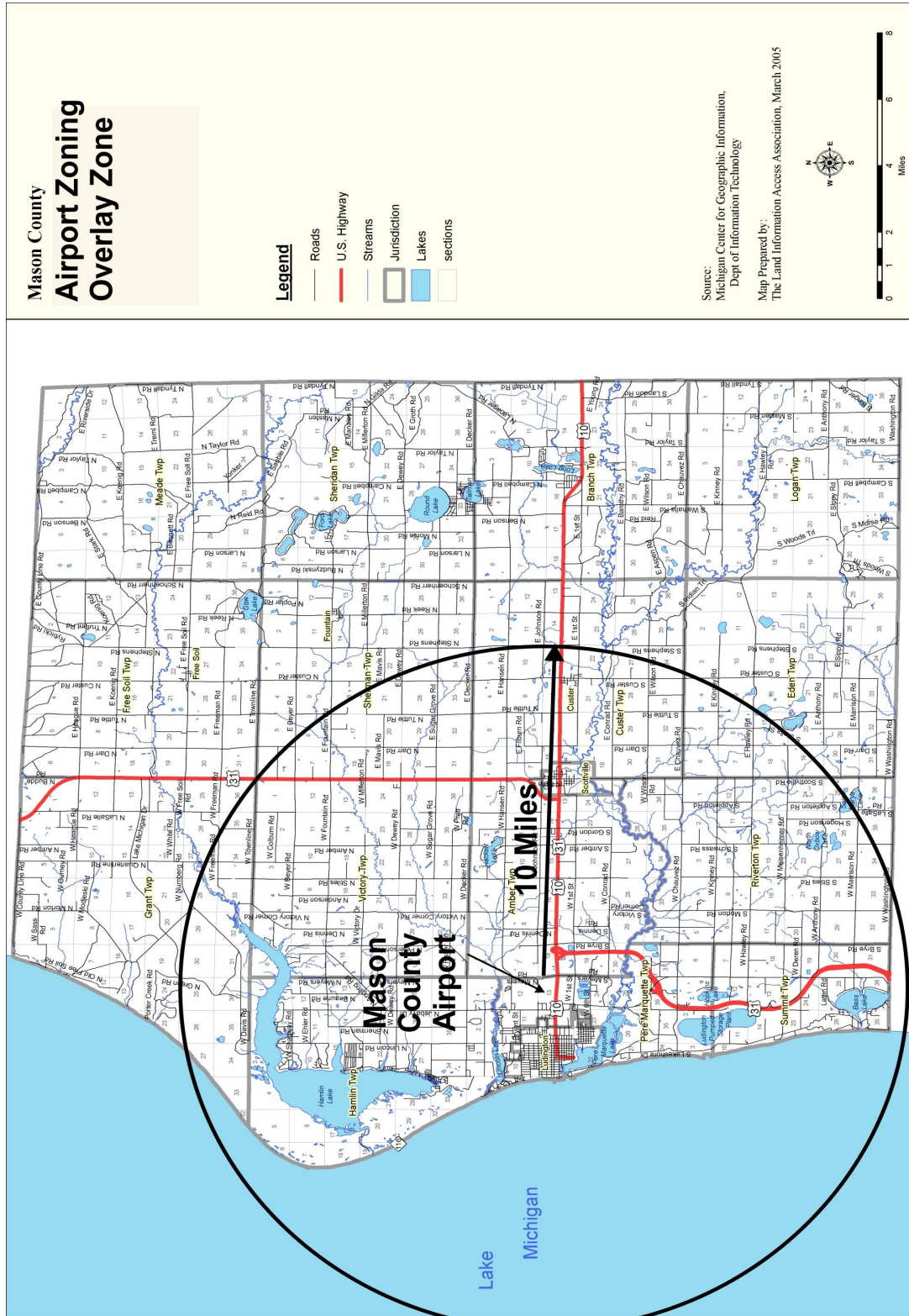
Article XV

Airport Zoning Overlay Zone

The purpose of the Airport Zoning Overlay Zone is to prevent the creation of hazards to aircraft landing and taking off on the flight paths related to the airport runways. The overlay zone provides for regulations on land within a 10 mile radius from the Mason County Airport. The ordinance establishes height restrictions so that immediately adjacent to the runways, structures and vegetation is limited to a height of 25'. This limitation increases to 500' at the outer edge of the 10 mile radius. The height restriction area is cone shaped with a greater slope closest to the center (by the airport) and is illustrated in detail on the 10 Mile Radius Map.

Map 4-1 roughly illustrates the affected area.

Map 4-1
Airport Zoning Overlay Zone



RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 3 set forth a number of recommendations for changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to best implement this Plan. Those recommendations are incorporated into this Chapter by reference and some are discussed again briefly below. In addition, other changes to the Zoning Ordinance are proposed to address day-to-day problems encountered with zoning administration.

Agriculture Zone

Most of the land zoned AG in Mason County is land whose soils are especially well suited for agriculture, or whose owners have continuously managed it for agricultural use for over 100 years. Property in AG districts that is not part of an existing farm operation is subject to a 1-acre minimum lot size requirement. If all agriculturally zoned land were ultimately developed this way, it could threaten the low-density character of the district as there is no density cap that would deny a subdivision-style development on 1-acre lots (except where it were close to an existing confined animal feeding operation). The primary focus of the AG district needs to be protection of bona fide agricultural operations and with it protection of this critical component of the economy of Mason County. To that end, density based zoning should be implemented that permits one dwelling per forty acres, but the residence would occupy a lot with a maximum of two acres unless more land is required by the Health Department to meet septic system requirements. The same change should be made in the Forestry District.

Recent appellate court rulings on GAAMPS and Right-to-Farm provisions should be reviewed and if necessary, additional changes to the zoning ordinance should be made to conform with recent rulings. The Right-to-Farm Act, PA 93 of 1981 establishes protections for farmers from nuisance suits if they are engaged in generally accepted agricultural management practices (GAAMPS). GAAMPS are adopted by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

The Rural Estates zone prohibits the owners of parcels smaller than three acres from keeping animals. Yet this is a common use in those areas. Consideration by the Planning Commission should be given to changing the RE zoning for small lots so that chickens, horses, cows and related animals are permitted provided these uses comply with GAAMPS.

Industrial

Increase the area zoned for industry. There is relatively little industrially zoned land in Mason County and this hampers the potential to grow more industry. Specifically, limited areas along and south of the railroad between Ludington and Scottville should ultimately be zoned in an industrial classification. This area is between First Street and the CSX railroad tracks. A larger industrial area is also envisioned for the area north of Conrad Road to the west of US-31 adjacent to Ludington. There are a number of homes in these areas on large lots that back up to the railroad and industrially planned property, and they will need to be buffered as industrial uses develop. The Industrial District provisions should be reviewed to ensure only industrial and some limited office and commercial uses are permitted in that zone if carefully designed and buffered from industrial uses.

The creation of a “light” industrial district such as small product assembly should be considered to permit less intensive industrial uses as a buffer when next to existing residential subdivisions, churches or schools. The new district name should be LI, and the existing industrial district should be renamed HI. Existing industrially zoned property should be reclassified on the Zoning Map into LI or HI as appropriate to the existing use. The Zoning Map should be amended after careful study and only after the Future Land Use Map (Map 3-3) is first amended as described in Chapter Three.

Commercial

There should be no new commercially zoned land along the US-31 corridor north of Scottville, or along US-10 east of Scottville that is not within the limits of the community service area around Scottville or Custer.

Residential

In order to provide for a more transitional use between commercial and low-density residential uses, the area directly north of the commercial district along and on the north side of the US-10/US-31 corridor between the interchange and Amber Road should be rezoned for higher density residential uses. The minimum density when averaged across the entire parcel should not be less than four dwelling units per acre, nor more than twelve, depending on the proposed use and market conditions. Currently, the C-3, Mixed Use Transitional zoning district is the only district available to implement the higher residential densities outlined in this Plan. While the C-3 district permits higher density residential uses, it allows for limited commercial uses as well. If conflicts between limited commercial uses and higher density residential uses becomes an issue in the C-3 district in areas designated for high density residential, the Planning Commission may need to establish a medium to high density residential zoning district.

The Zoning Ordinance already provides for cluster development and planned unit development (PUD). These should be encouraged. Also, conservation subdivisions should be permitted by right in all residential districts. A conservation subdivision is one that preserves open space by requiring residential lots to have a maximum lot size that is substantially smaller than the zoning density of the area while permanently preserving at least 50% of the site in open space. For example, if a 100 acre parcel in an area zoned at a density of one dwelling unit per ten acres, is proposed for residential development, under a conservation subdivision ordinance in which the permitted maximum lot size of a dwelling unit is 3 acres, ten three-acre lots could be platted, using thirty acres and preserving seventy acres as open space.

In waterfront areas, consideration should be given to creating several new waterfront zones as described in Chapter 3. This would result in rezoning nonconforming RR Land into new waterfront zones (such as WR-1 and WR-2) that fit existing lot sizes (width and area) so that far fewer nonconforming lots were affected. This would reduce the number of people who have to go through the variance process to build on a waterfront lot. These would be very limited districts and no new land could be divided at these lot sizes under these new districts. The RR district would still apply to undivided land along waterfront areas. The Planning Commission should jointly consider these options, and any others that are relevant, and the Future Land Use Map (Map 3-3) should be updated before the zoning ordinance is amended to accommodate such change.

Throughout

The Planning Commission should add language to the site plan review criteria to ensure that applicants have allowed adequate space to accommodate infrastructure replacement on-site.

Photo 4-2
Waterfront Residential Property



Photo by Robert Garrett

Other recommended specific changes to the Zoning Ordinance include the following:

1. Revisions to the requirements for private roads that address: what design standards are appropriate for private roads; the appropriate threshold for constructing private roads; when benefiting parties must pay their fair share of private road expenses; what mechanism will be used to collect funds to pay for private roads; and how these issues can be equitably handled in light of appropriate public and private interests.
2. The Planning Commission should review and consider incorporating the sample groundwater protection standards developed as part of the MSU Groundwater Education in Michigan initiative in the 1990s. These standards have been adopted by hundreds of Michigan communities. They require that site plans indicate all storage areas for hazardous chemicals, secondary containment facilities, floor drains and related facilities which if improperly designed could lead to groundwater contamination from leaks and spills of hazardous chemicals.
3. The Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to allow for greater extent of wi-fi internet connection through large and small towers serving various distances. Wi-fi availability will enhance small and home-based businesses which rely on internet communication and commerce.
4. Conditional rezoning is a practice of rezoning that is tied to a contract that is offered by an applicant and mutually agreed upon by the municipality. The

County Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include a review and approval process for these types of requests.

5. The minimum area of a single-family dwelling should be reviewed. The County should consider the change in demographics and preferences for smaller homes. Smaller homes are more energy efficient and require less maintenance.
6. Review access management requirements and consider lessening the threshold triggering access management review.

Chapter 5

TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly examines the infrastructure policy necessary to implement the vision described in Chapter 2, and the future land use and zoning recommendations in Chapters 3 and 4. The word “infrastructure” is used broadly to refer to the large-scale public systems, services, and facilities within the county that are necessary for economic activity and improved quality of life, including: roads, airports, harbors, public transportation, non-motorized transportation, public sewer and water, communications, power, schools, medical facilities, police and fire facilities, local government facilities, and parks and recreation facilities. For a description of Mason County Infrastructure see Chapter 6 Transportation, and Chapter 7 Public Facilities and Physical Services in the Mason County Data Book.

TRANSPORTATION

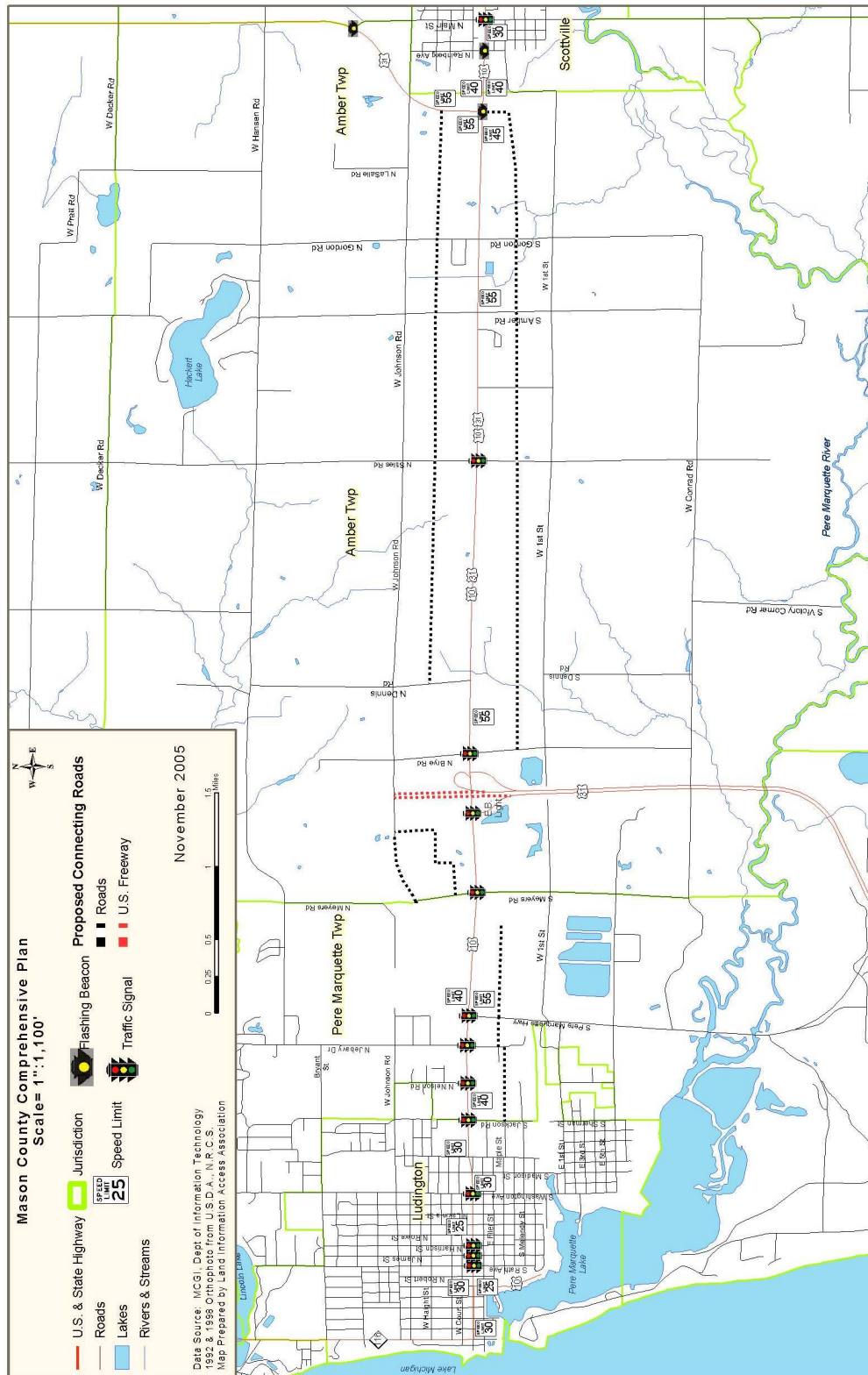
Roads

A quality system of interconnected city streets, county roads and state highways are the most essential component that facilitates economic activity, and for most people, daily life. The road system in Mason County is well established, largely in fair to poor condition and in key places has considerable excess capacity to accommodate traffic growth for many decades. It is very important that this system be properly maintained and incrementally expanded when the need for such expansion is evident. In most cases, road (as well as sewer and water) expansion costs should be borne by the private sector as each new business, subdivision or condominium development is constructed. In a few cases there is a growing need to expand the existing street network to improve traffic safety and flow in congested areas.

The future development proposed in Chapter 3 along US-10/US-31 will create large traffic congestion problems unless a parallel road system is also constructed, and unless at the appropriate time, both Johnson and First Streets are improved for all season traffic between US-31 (freeway) and Scottville. Parallel roads will take local trips off of US-10/US-31 and allow it to continue to serve longer distance travelers well. The public, through MDOT, has made an enormous investment in converting this segment to five lanes with paved shoulders and it would be inappropriate to allow new development to usurp this capacity without building parallel roads to handle the new local traffic. Such a requirement will take changes to the County Zoning Ordinance to properly implement.

Map 5-1 illustrates the location of proposed new roads along this vital corridor. Improvements west of the US-31 interchange with US-10 will likely be paid for with a combination of public and private sources, whereas those east of Dennis Road on the north side of US-10/US-31 and east of Brye Road on the south side are likely to be paid for by private funds as development proceeds. It may be necessary for developers to build longer segments and then enter into payback agreements with abutting property owners, or for the county to bond for some of the segments and be paid back by special assessment of the benefiting properties. These and other financing options should be explored at the appropriate time.

Map 5-1
Proposed New Connecting Roads



The justification for these roads and their integral relationship to access management issues is explained in detail in the Mason County US-10/US-31 Access Management Plan which is adopted by reference as a part of this Plan.

Access Management

Along the non-freeway segments of US-10 and US-31 throughout Mason County are dozens of unnecessary existing driveways, poorly designed driveways, driveways that are too close to intersections and other driveways, unconnected parking lots and few service drives. This leads to unnecessary risks of traffic crashes, congestion and reduced traffic flow. Over time, these problems can all be corrected, or at least improved, and future problems can be prevented through a coordinated system of local access management regulations. That means vehicular crashes can be minimized, damage to vehicles reduced, and personal injuries and deaths can be prevented. Such a benefit cannot be readily calculated, but it is huge, well worth doing and well within the ability of local governments in the county to achieve.

Representatives of the City of Ludington, Pere Marquette Charter Township, Amber Township, City of Scottville, Village of Custer, Grant Township, Mason County Road Commission, Mason County Planning Commission and MDOT worked cooperatively for six months in 2005 to identify problem areas along US-10/US-31 and develop cooperative solutions. These are embodied in the Mason County US-10/US-31 Access Management Plan.

It is very important that each of these jurisdictions with zoning authority adopt and maintain a common access management ordinance so that uniform standards are in place to guide future driveway and related access decisions consistent with the recommendations in the Access Management Plan. Periodic meetings to discuss proposed development along the corridor using common site plan review procedures is also essential to consistent implementation of access management regulations. A mechanism for such meetings is described in the Access Management Plan. The Access Management Plan should also be periodically reviewed and updated, when necessary, to adapt to changes in existing conditions and best practices.

Photo 5-1

Access Management Can Improve Traffic Safety



Photo by Mark Wyckoff

Highway Noise

A little considered, but very important future issue will be the impact of noise that comes from high speed highways—and in particular, the freeway portion of US-31. Currently traffic along this freeway segment is very low (for a freeway). Similarly, existing land use adjacent to the freeway is largely limited to farming, very low density residential and the pumped storage facility—so very few people are negatively affected by highway noise. But highway noise will rise as traffic volumes increase. While existing land uses are not proposed to be changed over the life of this Plan, it will be important to understand that if any new subdivisions are approved within 1/6 mile of the freeway portion of US-31, that those developments are not eligible for future noise walls or other noise mitigation measures, should highway noise become a problem. This is because both federal and state policies do not cover highway noise mitigation in this situation where the noise sensitive land use (like a residential subdivision) moves in close to the highway noise source—after the highway was constructed. The cost for any future noise mitigation measures would have to be borne by the landowners in the subdivision.

Of course, such a situation is highly preventable by only allowing noise compatible land uses next to highways. These include agricultural, forestry, and open space uses (among others). If noise sensitive land uses like homes, churches and schools are proposed next to the highway, they should be required to be sound proofed and designed to minimize highway noise impacts. The County Planning Commission should be alert to future opportunities to reduce the negative impacts of highway noise through various noise compatible land use planning and regulatory techniques.

Airport

The Mason County Airport is an important asset for attracting some types of economic development. It is an important asset that should be carefully managed and maintained to meet the demand for air travel and air freight shipment. The airport overlay zone in the County Zoning Ordinance is an important vehicle for ensuring the height of future structures do not exceed maximums established via the ordinance.

Harbor

The Ludington Harbor is a unique asset that is home not only to a Lake Michigan crossing that links both parts of US-10, but it also permits deep draft ships to dock in the harbor. The future potential economic benefits of this asset should never be underestimated, nor should future deep draft vessel opportunities be foreclosed.

Public Transit

Presently the county has a limited “dial-a-ride” service that provides public transportation to a small clientele. However, for many of those served, it is an important lifeline to work, medical care, shopping and education. As more people retire to Mason County and the existing population ages, and as new jobs develop along the US-10/US-31 corridor, the demand for fixed route, short headway, public transit service between Ludington and Scottville will grow. It will be important for the county to stay on top of this rising demand and to take the necessary steps, in cooperation with other benefited parties and jurisdictions, to provide public transit at a level of service necessary to meet the needs of an expanding ridership. Implementation of the proposed future land use arrangement described in Chapter 3 (especially the new residential) along the US-10/US-31 corridor will significantly improve the potential for expanded ridership and may speed the availability of fixed route service.

Non-Motorized Transportation

A well-coordinated and integrated system of pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle trails and pathways that link common destinations is critical to a high quality of life and to active healthy living. The most important livability improvement a city or village can usually make is to add an integrated sidewalk system if it does not already have one. Similar livability benefits can occur in townships—even very rural ones—if the pathways are connected and lead to common destinations like schools, recreation facilities and retail areas. Key parts of such a system are already in place in the county, but expansion is necessary in order to reach critical mass where use levels are high. In rural areas, trails should be designed for bicycle and pedestrian use in the summer and snowshoeing, cross country skiing and snowmobile use in the winter.

Photo 5-2
Cartier Park Trails



Railroad Service

Map 3-3, Future Land Use shows a major concentration of new business and industrial development south of US-10/US-31 between Ludington and Scottville. This policy is largely premised on the continued availability of excellent road and rail service, as well as public sewer and water. Quality rail service was provided to Mason County long before the current quality road service. Important employers such as Oxy Chem rely on rail service for both in- and out-bound shipments. Retention of long-term rail service to this corridor (and beyond into Lake County and then south to Grand Rapids) should remain an economic development and transportation priority in Mason County. Rail service from Walhalla to Manistee also presents opportunities for new economic development in Fountain and Free Soil and should also be retained.

Complete Streets

Planning the County's transportation system involves more than just moving vehicles efficiently and safely. A transportation system needs to meet the needs of all types of users – motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, freight, and individuals with mobility impairments. In some cases, this is accomplished with lower vehicle speeds to be supportive of bicyclists and pedestrians, while in other places, wider vehicle lanes and higher speeds may be needed to allow for movement of vehicles and goods. The design of the transportation system also needs to reflect the context of adjacent land

uses. Nationally, this approach is often referred to as “complete streets,” harmonizing streets with their surroundings while interlacing transportation networks to meet the mobility needs of all users. The County can implement context-sensitive street design solutions to accommodate all users and ability levels by encouraging or requiring the use of designs such as ADA-compliant curbs and ramps, pedestrian-friendly crosswalks, sidewalks of appropriate widths and distance from roadways, and on-street bicycle facilities (where feasible and appropriate). Implementing this policy and installing these improvements will need to be done in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Mason County Road Commission.

PUBLIC SEWER AND WATER

For most new commercial, office or industrial development in Michigan, and for all higher density residential development, the presence of both public sewer and water is an essential element for economic viability. In most rural communities, these public services are either in limited supply, or are not associated with a quality road system that has underutilized capacity. Yet on the US-10/US-31 corridor from Ludington to Scottville, these elements are all in place. Rather than spending significant public and private resources to build new sewer and water infrastructure elsewhere, it is most cost-effective to wisely use the infrastructure that is already in place. The future land use pattern and staging plan presented in Chapter 3 proposes to do this along US-10/US-31. As each new increment of development takes place, the sewer and water would be extended out from US-10/US-31 and linked to create loops with adjacent development. This would occur as the new streets in this area were constructed. It will be necessary to ensure that the site plan review standards in the County Zoning Ordinance adequately require use of public sewer and water by extending existing public sewer and water infrastructure as each new development occurs. It is also important to ensure that new development does not underutilize property. Since property served by both sewer and water is a relatively scarce commodity, it is important that as each new development occurs, it is dense and intensely uses these vital urban services so that there is little pressure to develop on rural land elsewhere in the County where there are limited public services. Another important policy is to not extend public sewer or water into any areas not shown as a community service area on Map 3-1.

Small villages that lack sewer or water service and wish to provide expanded land uses may need assistance from the county in backing bonds for installation of sewer or water service. However, except for Custer, these should be freestanding facilities and not extensions of the existing sewer and water service along US-10/US-31, or else other rural parts of the county will be subject to sprawl and the desired intensity of use along the US-10/US-31 corridor will not occur.

COMMUNICATIONS

The lines between traditional communication competitors such as television, radio, internet and telephone, are rapidly being obscured. The lines will continue to blur for some time. The important concern for Mason County is not to get lost in the transformation. High speed communications are essential to contemporary business models and to a high quality of personal and family life. Any opportunities the county has to assist in upgrading communication options should be seized. The benefits to future job and residential growth in the county cannot be overlooked. When it comes to attracting new high-tech economic development (every community's dream), high speed communications is essential.

NATURAL GAS & ELECTRIC

The presence of natural gas and all phase electric service is another critical component of new job producing development and higher density residential development. Again, these services are already available in the corridor targeted for future development between Ludington and Scottville. Public resources should not be spent to promote improvements to natural gas or electricity service elsewhere in the county unless there are extenuating benefits.

SCHOOLS

High quality K-12 educational facilities have long been a factor in attracting new businesses to a community, because it is easier to attract employees to an area with a reputation for quality schools. This reason alone (and there are many more) justifies a huge public effort to build and maintain quality schools. It is at least as important to ensure that the West Shore Community College remain a viable institution which produces graduates that employers need. New businesses are attracted to areas that have a well-trained workforce, and the necessary vehicles (like a community college) to quickly train many more workers. Continuing education opportunities are also of growing interest to retired persons and few sources of local circulating income are more stable than the pensions of retired persons. In short, there is never too much importance placed on building and maintaining a quality educational system in a community. While the county has little ability to influence decisions related to improvements to public schools, it should always help facilitate decisions that improve the economic competitiveness of the county and that help to better meet the educational needs of its citizens. When it comes to siting new school facilities, the county should be an active player and attempt to strongly influence siting decisions so that new school facilities are located in already developed or developing areas and strongly discourage, if not prevent the location of new schools in rural locations without adequate public roads, sewer and water facilities.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Rural communities are often at a significant disadvantage when it comes to attracting new jobs because they have limited medical facilities. However, Mason County has a much broader range of medical facilities, including a hospital, within the county than is typical. Again, this is an economic development and quality of life asset that should not be overlooked. As with schools, the county has little direct ability to influence the scope and quality of available medical facilities, but it should always try to facilitate improvements that enhance the ability to attract new jobs and better meet the medical needs of its residents.

POLICE AND FIRE FACILITIES

Presently the police, firefighting and EMS services within Mason County are being adequately met through a series of inter-jurisdictional cooperative agreements and private sector contracts. This is a great way to cost-effectively provide the needed services. However, future physical facilities like fire halls and police stations should be located within established developed areas so that these new public facilities do not contribute to sprawl.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

The same can be said about city, village, township and county general government buildings. They should be located within established cities, villages or well-developed suburban areas--not in the "middle of nowhere." Where and how the public spends

infrastructure dollars greatly influences private sector spending on new development. The public sector should lead by engaging in new facility siting practices that result in locations that are consistent with the policies of this Plan, and those of the County Zoning Ordinance. Similarly, the public should always build buildings using quality materials that last, and use well designed exteriors so as to set the bar on quality design for the private sector to emulate.

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

Last but not least, the number, size, location and characteristics of public parks and recreation facilities in the county has a lot to do with citizen contentment over quality of life. The state park and federal forests in Mason County are very important resources in this regard, but alone they cannot meet the daily recreation needs of local citizens. Active living leads to healthy people and high satisfaction over living choices. It also leads to fewer and often less serious medical needs. Thus, it is important that local parks and recreation facilities be constructed and maintained in locations that best meet the needs of the people who will use them. The county has and regularly updates a County Park and Recreation Plan that contains an inventory of existing county park and recreation facilities, needs and a strategy for future improvements. That Plan is a prerequisite to eligibility for many state and federal funds targeted at park and recreation facilities. It is very important for the county to continue to prepare and periodically update a County Park and Recreation Plan and then go after state and federal funds to help pay for future parkland acquisition and improvement.

Chapter 6

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

As important a benchmark as this Comprehensive Plan represents, the initiatives proposed in this Plan will not implement themselves. It will take the concerted efforts of citizens, elected officials and local and county administrative officials to bring this Plan from concept into reality. It will take continued support and commitment for many years. However, the goals of this Plan and the strategies proposed to implement it offer the promise of a much better future than that likely to occur if recent trends continue unchanged.

Benefits to all groups will be numerous and most visible in terms of an increased quality of life that can retain and attract new businesses and jobs, and greater satisfaction of residents. An increased quality of life comes from improved use of the transportation system, improved public facilities, creation of more distinctive residential neighborhoods and commercial areas and retention of the scenic character of the landscape (so cherished by residents and visitors). Many indirect benefits will also occur. These include improved access to information needed for decision-making and better cooperation among units of government.

The central ingredients to successful Plan implementation will be:

- Commitment by the County Planning Commission, the County Board of Commissioners, citizens and support from local units of government. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require the county and local governments, businesses and citizens to drop some old habits and adopt some new approaches. This is not always easy to do. However, the desired vision will not be reached without commitment by all involved.
- A better educated citizenry and local officials. While many citizens and officials want trends to change, they lack the knowledge to make them change or do not understand the cause and effect link of actions they take on an ongoing basis. Information about more appropriate residential development patterns, the fiscal and land use constraints of extending urban services, modern farming and forestry methods, scenery and open space preservation, natural resource protection and other tools to sustain the quality of life in Mason County need to reach citizens and officials or they will not understand why and how local decision-making must change.

FOCUSING ON PRIORITIES

It is easy for a Planning Commission at either the county or local level to become distracted with ongoing tasks or ad hoc, controversial issues. Still, the Commission needs to prioritize its tasks. Time needs to be set aside for high priority items. These include the preparation of an annual report and work program for the next year, and when appropriate, the five-year Plan update. These are discussed below.

Annual Tasks

An annual report on all activities undertaken by the County Planning Commission with a special focus on actions taken to implement the Plan should be made to the County Board of Commissioners. A proposed work program that identifies priorities and projected expenses for the next year should also be prepared and submitted in time to be included in the annual budget process. The Planning Commission should also continue to review proposed public facilities in the county for consistency with the Plan. Periodically, and at least once each five years, the Comprehensive Plan should be thoroughly reviewed and updated by the County Planning Commission.

Top Priorities

The Planning Commission can not be expected to accomplish all of the strategies listed in the goals, objectives and strategies. Many of these can only be accomplished by other agencies or groups. It is key that discussions begin with those groups so that they understand the goals, find agreeable common ground where there are differences and obtain a commitment to the action.

One approach to establishing priorities is to use the following standards:

- Make a high priority those actions that are the precursor to other steps. One example is the strategy to develop a regional economic development plan. This needs to happen before the county and local governments can ensure that public infrastructure and services can be provided to appropriate lands.
- Those actions that are assigned to a particular group are a high priority.
- A lower priority may be those actions that do not assign a group or broadly identify the "county," as the responsible party.
- If an action does not list a responsible party, it remains a lower priority until a group or agency steps forward.

The following activities should be the key priorities of the Planning Commission for the next five years:

1. Update the County Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with this Plan as recommended in Chapters 3 and 4.
2. Work with the County Road Commission, bike and recreation groups, and other stakeholders to develop a Complete Streets plan which would identify key roads and corridors which will accommodate pedestrian and bike facilities. The plan will be consistent with the County Parks and Recreation Plan and identify key community employment centers, areas of residential density, and popular bicycle routes to connect these attractions together. The Plan will include cross-sections for roadways planned for complete streets amenities and phasing. Phasing should comport with County priorities for roadway improvements, including reconstruction and repaving, when possible, however, bike lane and sidewalk enhancement should not be dependent upon it.
3. Educate all local units of government in the county about the vision, goals, objectives and strategies of the updated County Comprehensive Plan and provide technical assistance in the integration of these elements into local plans and zoning decisions through monthly updates to the County zoning ordinance. Consider a County Planning and Zoning related Facebook page that could be updated regularly with agenda, packets, relevant land use matters, and Master Plan implementation projects.

4. Educate all citizens about the vision, goals, objectives and strategies of the updated County Comprehensive Plan and provide technical assistance in the integration of these elements into property owner development and redevelopment efforts. Consider a County Planning and Zoning related Facebook page that could be updated regularly with agenda, packets, relevant land use matters, and Master Plan implementation projects.
5. Directly use this Plan in the analysis and review of proposed rezonings, zoning text amendments, and new or amended master plans submitted to the County Planning Commission for statutory review and approval. This means recommending approval for actions consistent with the Plan and denial or modification for actions inconsistent with this Plan.
6. Exercise review authority in ways to improve local decisions by guiding decisions toward integrated and coordinated solutions based on the core objectives and strategies in this Plan.
7. Provide training and technical assistance to local governments on general planning, zoning and capital improvement programming.
8. Monitor local and county agency decisions and periodically inform local governments and the County Board of Commissioners on the status of efforts to improve land use decision making in Mason County.
9. Strongly advocate the county budget for and maintain digital parcel records of all property in the county with the system fully in place and regularly updated.
10. Support FEMA in its efforts to get the Townships to adopt the floodplains ordinance consistent with their mapping efforts.
11. Provide technical assistance and guidelines on alternative approaches to deal with identified land use and infrastructure problems.
12. Join efforts with others outside the county to modernize planning and zoning enabling legislation and to authorize new tools to better manage growth and preserve open space.
13. Design guidelines should be developed and promoted by the County Planning Commission that illustrate how to protect rural and scenic character and open space values on private residential, commercial, industrial, public and institutional properties. An example is the Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook that illustrates a preferred development approach that protects scenic quality, open space, water quality and sensitive environments.
14. Residential development standards should be prepared that set aside open space and utilize vegetative buffers along roadsides and where there are sensitive environments, greenways and potential trail and wildlife corridors. These standards should be adopted as part of site plan review, cluster ordinances, conservation subdivision ordinances, site condominium ordinances and planned unit development ordinances.
15. Important vistas in the county should be identified and wherever private land is involved an effort to preserve the vista should be initiated through either voluntary measures by the landowners, purchase of development rights or conservation easements, or through smart designs that protect the vista as a part of the development process. The County Planning Commission should pursue creation of design guidelines as the first educational initiative after the vistas have been identified.
16. The number of county parks should be expanded per the elements of the Mason County Park and Recreation Plan, but special attention should be given to establishment of new county parks in the northern and eastern parts of the county and along the Pere Marquette River.

17. Preparation of a county subdivision control ordinance.
18. Development of a county-wide affordable housing plan and implementation strategy.
19. Research the viability of a “wetland bank.”

DEALING WITH ISSUES OF GREATER THAN LOCAL CONCERN

Local jurisdictions frequently deal with issues that have implications beyond the jurisdiction (both intra-county and inter-county). Public interests that are broader than simply local interests include (but are not limited to) those in Table 6-1.

Photo 6-1

Recreational Facilities are Abundant in Mason County



Photo by Mark Wyckoff

Table 6-1 Issues of Greater than Local Concern

Protecting the Environment and Natural Resources

- Watersheds and water quality
- Wetlands protection
- Floodplain protection
- Land pollution (contaminated sites)
- Soil conservation and stormwater pollution
- Air pollution
- Groundwater pollution
- Oil and gas pollution
- Noise pollution
- Water pollution of inland lakes (esp. Hamlin Lake, Round Lake and others), rivers and streams (Pere Marquette, Sable and others)
- Protection of sand dunes and areas with steep slopes
- Wildlife corridors and fish and wildlife habitat protection
- Protection of unique and endangered species
- Sustainability of privately owned forest land
- Water surfaces that are under control of multiple local jurisdictions, especially as relates to keyhole development
- Use of public access sites
- Maintaining a “sense of place” where that sense is the major attraction for tourists and the service sector economy.

Siting Public Facilities or Providing New Public Services

- Solid waste and recycling
- Emergency services (fire, ambulance, police) – to achieve greater efficiency (involves the U.S. Forest Service, and DNR)
- Transportation/roads
- Public transportation
- Trails (siting of) – federal, state, local, and property owners
- “Regional” park facilities (very large, e.g. pool or hockey rink – needs a large customer base)
- District library and district boundaries for libraries
- Mental and other health facilities
- Provision of senior services – location of facilities, including handicapped services
- Extension of utilities
- Schools (especially if consolidation is considered)

Maintaining a Sustainable Economy and Promoting Economic Development

- Real (livable) wages, job opportunities for young adults and families with children
- Lack of seasonal workers – lack of an intermediate job base
- Harbors (Ludington and Pere Marquette Township)
- Adequate lifelong educational opportunities for all citizens: health of the West Shore Community College
- Adequate affordable housing for middle and low income persons

Table 6-1 (Continued) Issues of Greater than Local Concern

Land Use

- LULU's (locally unwanted land uses that meet a regional need, such as gravel pits, junk yards, landfills, communication towers, electric generating windmills, etc.)
- Large scale development (resorts, shopping center, airports, etc.)
- Density in some rural areas that is too high to cost effectively service and a current zoned density that will exacerbate this problem.
- Compact settlement pattern vs. dispersed settlement pattern and the associated impacts on infrastructure extensions or establishment of infrastructure
- Siting affordable housing—especially mobile home parks
- Lack of similar regulations and enforcement across jurisdiction boundaries
- Compatibility of land uses along jurisdiction boundaries regarding zoning and land use issues
- Loss of open space
- Regional focus on open space preservation and farmland preservation
- Protecting important viewsheds and rural corridor views.

Other

- A growing nonresident (largely seasonal) population that (for the most part) does not vote locally, but does pay taxes locally
- Lack of a tax or fee of users of state and federal resources here
- Inter-jurisdictional equity issues
- Intergenerational equity issues
- Sustainability

In many instances, these issues of greater than local concern revolve around common environmental features (which do not respect municipal boundaries), infrastructure, and the needs of special populations.

It takes a basic change of attitude toward other jurisdictions to effectively deal with these issues. It takes recognition that the citizens of both (or several) jurisdictions face the same potential loss or gain. It takes acceptance that the other jurisdiction is not in competition or opposition, at least not on every aspect of the issue. It takes the ability to exercise mutual respect in areas of overlapping responsibilities and mutual support where responsibilities are separate, but compatible in pursuit of common goals and a common vision of the County. By jointly engaging the issues, common ground can usually be found. It is the common ground that is most often used as the basis for effective inter-jurisdictional cooperation.

ROLE OF KEY PLAYERS

It will take the efforts of many different groups to implement the Mason County Comprehensive Plan. Key among them are the local planning commissions and governing boards, the County Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Commission.

The framed text on Table 6-2 on the next three pages lists the traditional roles and responsibilities of local planning commissions, local governing bodies, the County Board of Commissioners and the County Planning Commission. These traditional roles are proposed to be continued, but some changes are also proposed to strengthen the ability of these entities to take actions to implement this Plan. These changes are summarized in the text following Table 6-2.

Table 6-2
Traditional Responsibilities of the Local Government Decision-makers

County Board of Commissioners

The County Board of Commissioners must take the lead in order to initiate planning in Mason County. Its basic statutory and administrative responsibilities are as follows (not all of these are currently being performed):

- Adopt the County Comprehensive Plan.
- Periodically hold a joint meeting with Planning Commission to go over issues of common interest. This could begin by meeting with a Committee of the County Board of Commissioners as opposed to the entire Board.
- Adopt amendments to the Mason County Zoning Ordinance and adopt subdivision regulations.
- Continue funding for the planning/zoning program each year including funds for training and continuing education of commissioners and staff, and for public education on planning and zoning.
- Continue hiring consultants as recommended by the Planning Commission and pursuant to an approved work program and budget.
- Continue to provide adequate funds for Zoning Ordinance administration and enforcement.
- Ask Planning Commission to prepare an annual report of activities and a proposed work program for the next year, in enough time to be considered in the budget process.
- Ask Planning Commission to review proposed capital improvements for consistency with the Plan prior to the County Board or other public agency action.
- Develop regional contacts and initiate and coordinate activities with representatives of other units of government on various issues of greater than local concern.

County Planning Commission

The County Planning Commission is responsible for:

- Preparing, maintaining, and adopting a plan for the development and protection of the County.
- Preparing and proposing amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance, and conducting required public hearings.
- Making recommendations on proposed Township plans and/or rezoning or text amendments.
- Attempting to prevent incompatible planning and zoning along governmental boundaries.
- Reviewing and commenting on proposed new public lands, facilities or improvements for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Review and comment on proposed PA 116 Farmland and Open Space Enrollments.
- Periodically reviewing and/or preparing various state or federal grant applications.
- Receiving, storing and sharing data from the Michigan Resource Inventory Program.
- Providing information and education services for the U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- Serving as County Council for the Resource Conservation and Development Program of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.
- Receiving citizen comments on local planning and zoning issues and acting upon or referring those comments as appropriate.
- Educating citizens and representatives of local units of government on various county planning and zoning issues.

Table 6-2 (Continued)
Traditional Responsibilities of the Local Government Decision-makers

- Learning about and staying up-to-date on the responsibilities of the Planning Commission and on various tools available to implement local plans.
- Coordinating planning and associated development regulations with other governmental units and public agencies.

Local Governing Bodies

Local city or village councils and township boards of trustees also have specific planning and zoning responsibilities. These include:

- Appointment of qualified persons to serve as members of the local Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Adoption of ordinances recommended by the Planning Commission for implementation of the comprehensive plan, including when supported by the governing body, a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.
- Providing an adequate budget for the Planning Commission to carry out its responsibilities including keeping the Plan and Zoning Ordinance current, and receiving proper training on their roles, responsibilities and new tools and techniques for improving the community.
- Providing adequate staff and financial resources (including setting fee levels) for proper enforcement of adopted regulations.
- Conducting required public hearings prior to acting on zoning, subdivision or infrastructure development matters.
- Receiving and acting upon citizen complaints related to planning and zoning issues and as appropriate, referring matters to the Planning Commission for action.
- Coordinating actions with representatives of other units of government on issues of greater than local concern.

Local Planning Commissions

Planning commissions in cities and villages in the County are organized under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008. Township planning commissions are organized under PA 33 of 2008. Some of their principal responsibilities include:

- Creating, adopting and maintaining a local comprehensive (or master) plan to guide future land use change and to serve as the legal basis for the local zoning ordinance.
- Creating, maintaining and administering responsibilities under the local zoning ordinance (for those municipalities with local zoning).
- Advising the local governing body on proposed rezonings, text amendments, plats, land divisions, capital improvements and related planning and zoning decisions.
- Responding to the recommendations of the County Planning Commission on planning and zoning issues.
- Making recommendations on special projects or delegated responsibilities (e.g. zoning ordinance enforcement)
- Working with property owners in order to try and achieve good development (or redevelopment)
- Educating citizens on the values and benefits of planning
- Receiving citizen comments on local planning and zoning issues and acting upon or referring those comments as appropriate.
- Learning about and staying up-to-date on the responsibilities of the Planning Commission and on various tools available to implement local plans.

CONCLUDING THOUGHT

This Comprehensive Plan represents hundreds of hours of input by the County Planning Commission, citizens and local government officials in Mason County over the past year. The circumstances it is intended to address did not occur overnight and they will not be resolved overnight. However, this Plan sets forth another option to a future that will inexorably be created if existing trends and uncoordinated decisions continue. Existing trends are fueled to a very great extent by existing plans, regulations and institutional relationships. To create a future different from existing trends, then current plans, policies, regulations and institutional relationships must also be changed.

Perhaps the catalyst for that change is for the preferred vision of Mason County, and what it takes to get to that vision, to be part of the "story" of Mason County that every resident, of every age, knows by heart. So, for example, if all Mason County residents know by heart that clustering, conservation subdivisions, community service districts, farmland preservation, design guidelines and vegetative buffers are necessary for Mason County to remain largely rural and scenic and continue to have a high quality of life, there is a greater chance that Mason County will have these characteristics. It is up to the County Planning Commission with support of the County Board of Commissioners to achieve this level of citizen understanding of and support for this Plan.

Photo 6-2

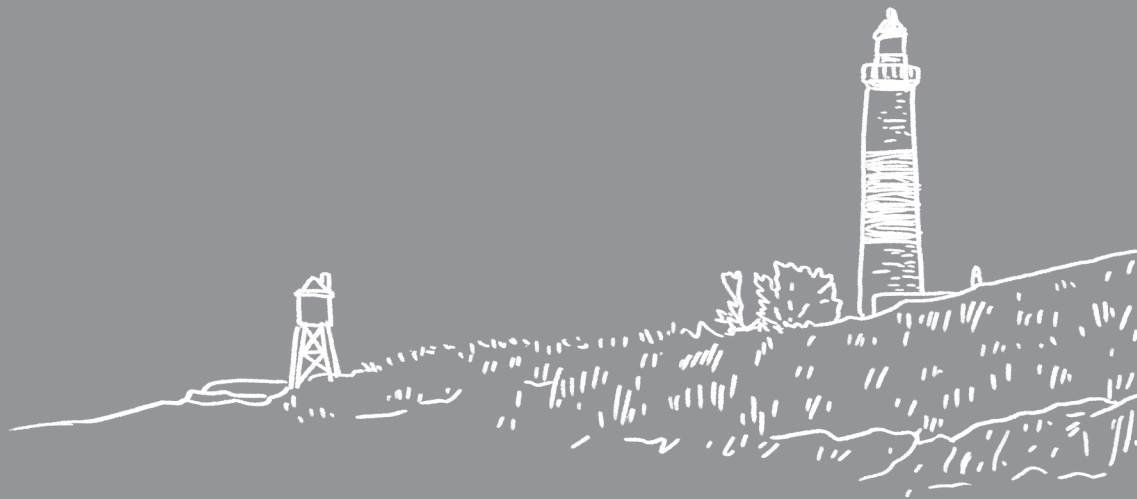
**Citizens will need to Commit to Preserving the Characteristics
Necessary to Maintain a Desired Quality of Life**





APPENDIX

MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2020



MASON COUNTY
MICHIGAN

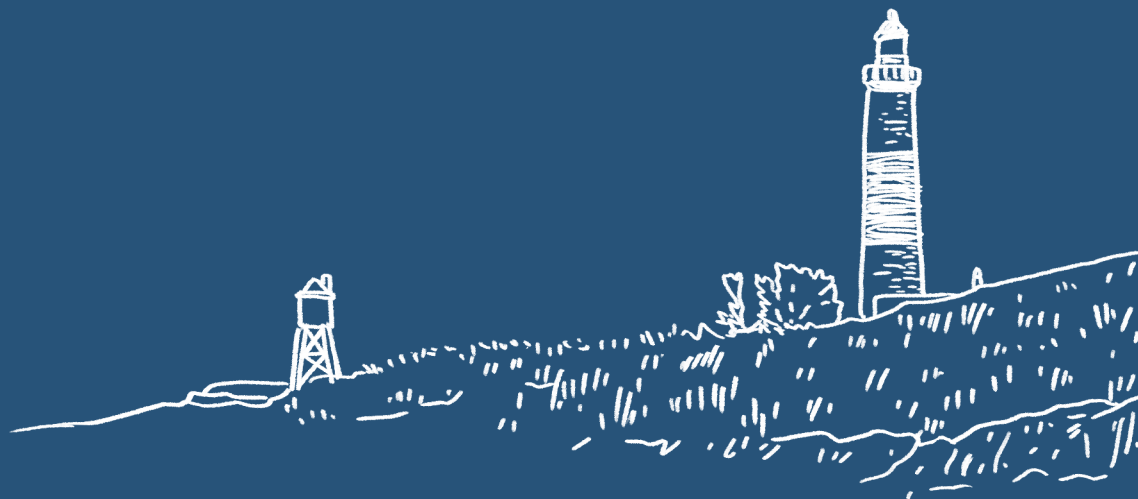
APPENDICES

- 1) DATA BOOK**
- 2) PUBLIC MEETING REPORT**
- 3) COMMUNITY SURVEY**



MASON COUNTY
MICHIGAN

DATA BOOK 2020



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This publication was prepared as part of the process to update the Mason County Comprehensive Plan in summer 2019. The fundamental purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to enable a community to establish a direction for physical development, capital investment, and growth.

The Mason County Comprehensive Data Book provides information citizens and county officials can use to help them review county-wide information and assist in the preparation of private and public plans for future projects that improve the quality of life for county citizens. Mason County's last Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2006 and reflected current conditions and trends at the time. The efforts to update it in 2012 and 2019 enabled the county and its jurisdictions to focus on particular challenges rather than restrict the effort to a more general overview.

The reader should note that only chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5 were updated in 2019. Chapters 4, 6 and 7 remain unchanged from 2006.

USES

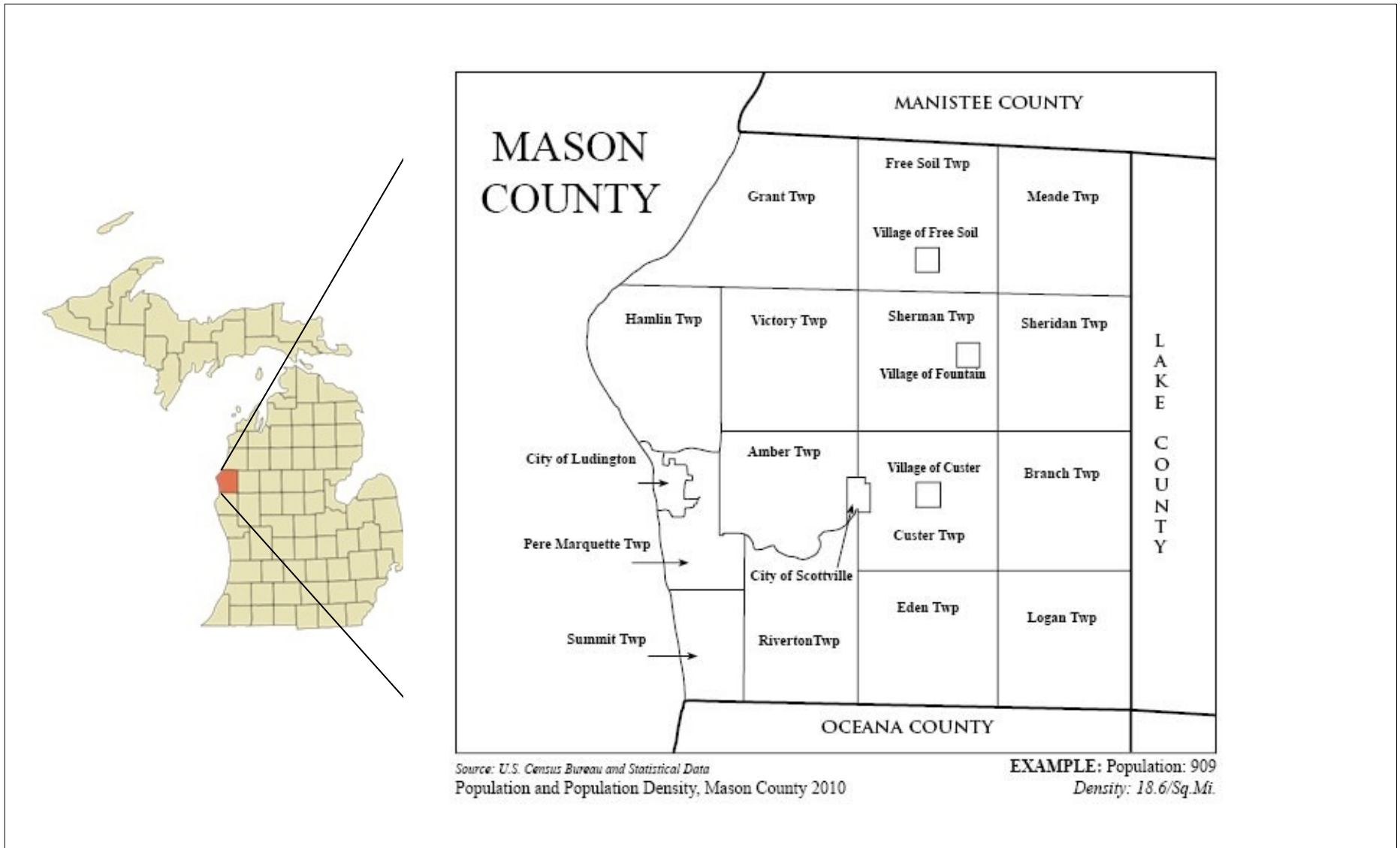
The data and trends presented in the Mason County Comprehensive Plan Data Book should be studied by elected and appointed officials, community leaders, service organizations, developers, realtors, and interested citizens. The results can help inform decisions involving Mason County land, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, and transportation systems.

OVERVIEW OF AREA

Mason County is located along the western shore of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The county includes 15 townships, 2 cities and 3 villages and is spread over 1,242 square miles. Map 1-1 shows the location of Mason County within Michigan and the location of townships, cities and villages within the County. The county seat is the City of Ludington. Please see map on following page.

Map 1-1

Mason County and County Jurisdiction



DATA BOOK CHAPTERS

In addition to this introduction, this Mason County Data Book contains the following chapters:

Chapter 2: Demographics. This chapter provides a profile of the Mason County population and how it has changed over the past thirty years. Trends in population change are presented, as well as projections based on these trends. Population and housing characteristics are discussed at both the county and local levels. Among the demographic characteristics presented are population size, age minorities, housing, income, poverty, and educational attainment. Last updated in 2019.

Chapter 3: Economy and Economic Development. This chapter provides an overview of important economic indicators, such as jobs and business growth in Mason County. It discusses the size of the labor force, employment, and unemployment, the sectors in which Mason County residents are employed, the major businesses in the county, and travel time to work. Last updated in 2019.

Chapter 4: Natural Resources and Environment. Land, water, and other natural resources provide for the livelihood of Mason County residents and enrich their quality of life. This chapter describes important Mason County natural resources such as soils, agricultural land, and watershed components (wetlands, floodplains, and water quality). Updated in 2006.

Chapter 5: Existing Land Use and Tax Base. How the land is currently used is an important factor in understanding the issues communities face and in planning for the future use of that land. This chapter describes the pattern of different land uses in Mason County, which include agriculture, residential, commercial, and industrial uses, and how those uses may be changing. This chapter also describes a “buildout analysis” that illustrates the potential extent of development if all land is developed according to existing zoning. This can be an eye-opening experience for communities that express a commitment to a popular community character, but find they are moving toward a different character because of provisions in local zoning. Last updated in 2019.

Chapter 6: Transportation. The transportation system of roads, rail, and air provides access for Mason County residents and visitors to the places and activities that occupy their lives. In addition to access, the transportation network provides for a high level of mobility and a high degree of choice of where to go and when. As the pattern and density of uses of the land evolve or respond to plan for its future, the transportation system will either promote the desired future or limit it. This chapter describes the current state of transportation in Mason so that plans for improvement can be made to complement future demands. Updated in 2006.

Chapter 7: Public Facilities and Physical Services. This chapter identifies the various publicly owned parks, city and township halls, fire stations, schools, utilities, and other facilities, as well as programs and services provided by Mason County. This information is valuable when comparing existing facilities against unmet needs and determining what new facilities and services will be needed by new development. Updated in 2006.

UPDATING AND COMPLETING THE DATA BOOK

The facts presented in this document represent information from the US Census Bureau. The most current Census data (2010) was used along with 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. Every attempt was made to acquire the most recent information possible, however, it is recommended that the information in this Data Book be updated and reanalyzed as Mason County changes over time.

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CHAPTER 2

DEMOGRAPHICS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the size, age, sex, poverty status, educational attainment, and other characteristics of the Mason County population. It looks at changes to the population and housing over the past few decades, and projects some trends in the future. Because the most recent Census data was collected in 2010 and is already included in this document, demographic data has been updated using the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, where applicable or available. It should be noted that these are estimates and may not always provide an accurate representation of the community. However, they have been included in our analysis to enhance our understanding of community trends until the next census is completed in 2020.

POPULATION PROFILE

Over the past 100 years (1900-2000), Mason County's population has grown steadily, but the rate of that growth has fluctuated over time. Since 1900, the population has grown by 52% or 9,820 persons, and most of this growth occurred in the last 40 years. **Table 2-1** lists Mason County's population each decade from 1900 to 2010, and **Figure 2-1** illustrates this change. In Mason County, the largest increase in population occurred between 1970 and 1980 (3,753 persons) and 1990 to 2000 (2,737 persons). According to 2017 ACS estimates, this trend of increasing population has likely continued.

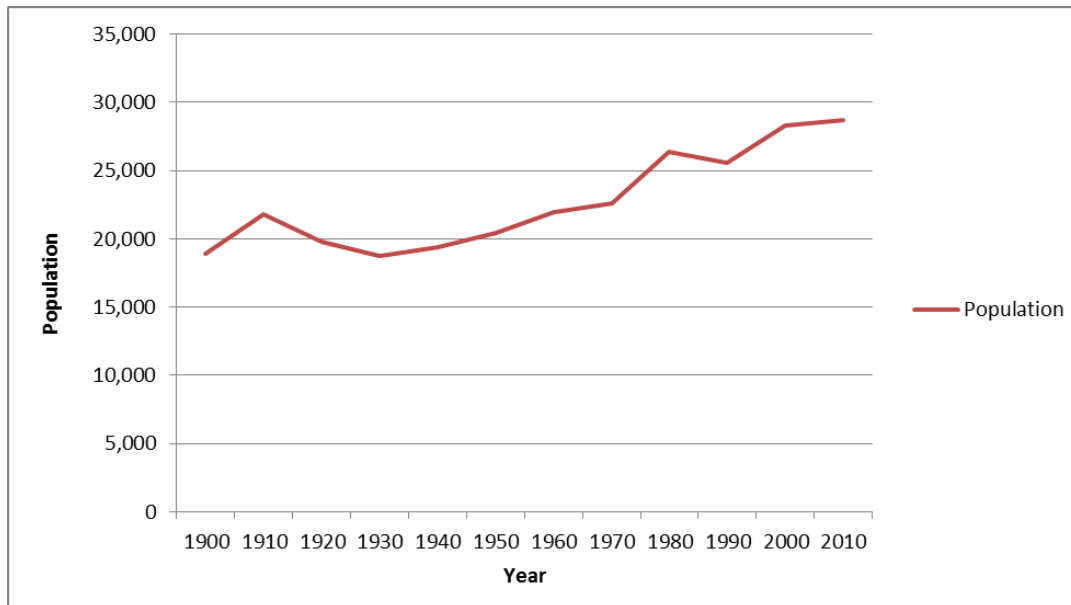
Table 2-1
Population Change for Mason County, 1900-2010

Year	Population	Change in Population	Percent Change in Population
1900	18,885		
1910	21,832	2,947	15%
1920	19,831	-2,001	-9%
1930	18,756	-1,075	-5%
1940	19,378	622	3%
1950	20,474	1,096	6%
1960	21,929	1,455	7%
1970	22,612	683	3%
1980	26,365	3,753	17%
1990	25,537	-828	-3%
2000	28,274	2,737	11%
2010	28,705	431	1.5%
*2017	28,800	95	0.3%
Change in Population 1900-2010		9,820	52%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Population Estimates

Figure 2-1
Population for Mason County, 1900-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION PROFILE OF THE LAST DECADE

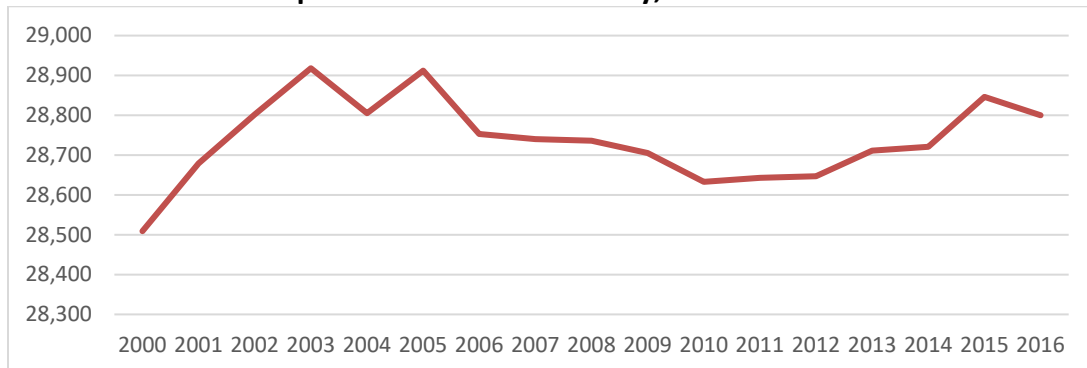
From 2000 to 2010, Mason County saw little change in its population. **Table 2-2** illustrates this change. The greatest growth occurred in the first half of the decade, between 2000 and 2004. Between 2004 and 2010, Mason County's overall population declined at a rate of roughly -0.2% every year; however, recent trends indicate population stabilization and slow growth. **Table 2-2** illustrates this change. Michigan experienced a decline in population in the first half of the decade, and has experienced slight growth since 2006, at a rate of roughly 0.5%. Overall, the population in Mason County from 2000-2010 increased by 431 persons, or 1.5%. 2017 American Community Survey estimates reveal that this modest rate of population growth has likely continued.

Table 2-2
Population Change for Mason County 2000-2017

YEAR	MASON COUNTY			MICHIGAN
	Total Population	Population Change	% Change	Yearly Change
2000	28,274			-0.5%
2001	28,509	146	0.5%	-0.8%
2002	28,679	170	0.6%	-0.7%
2003	28,802	123	0.4%	-0.6%
2004	28,918	116	0.4%	-0.02%
2005	28,805	-110	-0.3%	-0.1%
2006	28,912	107	0.3%	0.4%
2007	28,753	-159	-0.5%	0.3%
2008	28,740	-13	-0.05%	0.3%
2009	28,736	-4	-0.01%	0.7%
2010	28,705	-31	-0.1%	0.9%
2011	28,633	-72	-.025%	-0.01%
2012	28,643	10	0.03%	0.11%
2013	28,647	4	0.01%	0.13%
2014	28,711	64	0.22%	0.16%
2015	28,721	10	0.03%	0.04%
2016	28,846	125	0.43%	0.29%
2017 Population Estimate*				28,800
Change in Population from 2000-2010				431
% Change in Population from 2000-2010				1.5%

Source: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau
*2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Population Estimates

Figure 2-2
Population for Mason County, 2000-2016



Source: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau

MASON COUNTY AND ADJACENT COUNTIES

Mason County is adjacent to four counties: Manistee, Lake, Oceana, and Newaygo. **Table 2-3** illustrates the population change from 1970-2010 for all five counties. Between 1970 and 2010, Mason County had a relatively low change in its population in terms of percent over the last 40 years (29%). However, Mason County had the third highest net change in persons added to the county over that same time (6,462). Together, the five-county area added 45,664 persons or 48% between 1970 and 2010. **Table 2-4** illustrates more recent population changes within the five counties from 1990-2010. From 1990 to 2000, Mason County grew at the slowest rate (12%) in relation to the other four counties, adding 3,168 persons. From 2000-2010, Mason (1.5%), Lake (2%), and Newaygo (1%) had positive population growth, while Manistee (-4%) and Oceana (-1%) experienced population loss. From 1990-2010, the population of the five-county area increased by 19% (4,419 persons), and from 2000-2010 the amount of growth decreased to .8% (1,126 persons). According to the 2017 American Community Survey, the overall population for the five counties was estimated to have decreased by 0.64% since 2010.

Table 2-3
Mason and Adjoining Counties Population Change 1970-2010

County	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	*2017	Population Change 1970-2010	Percent Change in Population 1970-2010
Mason	22,612	26,365	25,537	28,288	28,705	28,800	6,093	27%
Manistee	20,094	23,019	21,265	24,527	24,733	24,432	4,639	23%
Lake	5,661	7,711	8,583	11,333	11,539	11,669	5,878	104%
Newaygo	27,992	34,917	38,206	47,874	48,460	47,899	20,468	73%
Oceana	17,984	22,002	22,454	26,873	26,570	26,317	8,586	49%
Five County Total	94,343	114,014	116,045	138,881	140,007	139,117	45,664	48%

Source: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau

*Estimated from the 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Population Estimates

Table 2-4
Mason and Adjoining Counties Population Change 1990-2010

County	1990	2000	2010	Change in Population 1990-2000	Percent Change in Population 1990-2000	Change in Population 2000-2010	Percent Change in Population 2000-2010
Mason	25,537	28,288	28,705	2,751	11%	417	1.5%
Manistee	21,265	24,527	24,733	3,262	20%	206	0.8%
Lake	8,583	11,333	11,539	2,750	32%	206	2%
Newaygo	38,206	47,874	48,460	9,668	25%	586	1%
Oceana	22,454	26,873	26,570	4,419	20%	-303	-1%
COUNTY TOTAL	116,045	138,881	140,007	22,836	20%	1,126	.8%

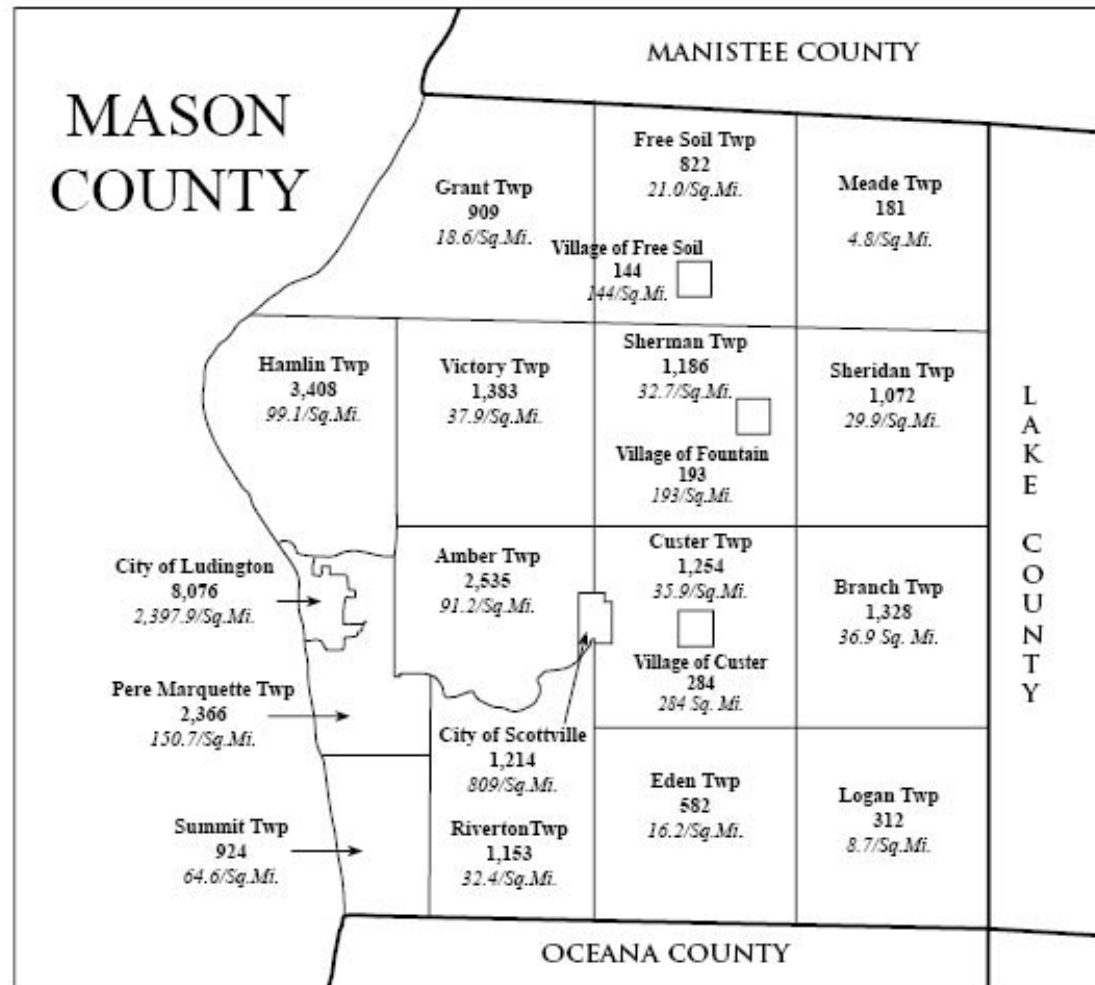
Source: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau

TOWNSHIP, CITY, AND VILLAGE POPULATION TRENDS

Mason County consists of two cities, three villages, and fifteen townships. **Map 2-1** is a reference for location, population, and population density of each jurisdiction from 2010. **Table 2-5** lists the populations of each jurisdiction from 1990 to 2010, as well as percent change in population and population density. The jurisdictions that had the greatest percentage increase in population within Mason County between 2000 and 2010 were Amber Township (23% from 2,054 persons to 2,535 persons), whose 23% growth far exceeds the Mason County total of 1.5%. Sheridan Township (11% from 969 persons to 1,072 persons), Branch Township (12% from 1,181 persons to 1,328 persons) and the Village of Fountain (10% from 175 persons to 193 persons) all experienced growth exceeding 10%. Those with the greatest total increase in population were Amber Township (481), Hamlin Township (216), and Branch Township (147). Due to the small sample size and higher margin of error of American Community Survey estimates in many of the County's smaller jurisdictions, 2017 American Community Survey population estimates were not included in the 2019 update for township, city, and village population.

The population density of Mason County jurisdictions ranged from a low of 4.8 persons per square mile in Meade Township, to a high of 2,397.9 persons per square mile in the City of Ludington, based on the 2010 population. Both Meade Township and the City of Ludington, respectively, have had the lowest and highest population densities for the past decade. In 2010, Custer was the most densely populated village with 284 persons per square mile, and Pere Marquette was the most densely populated township with 150.7 persons per square mile. The population density for Mason County overall in 2010 was 56 persons per square mile.

Map 2-1
Population and Density of Mason County Jurisdictions, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Statistical Data
Population and Population Density, Mason County 2010

EXAMPLE: Population: 909
Density: 18.6/Sq. Mi.

Table 2-5
Population and Density of Mason County Jurisdictions, 2010

County Jurisdiction	Land Area (Sq.Mi)	Total Pop. 2000	Pop. Density (per Sq.Mi) 2000	Total Pop. 2010	Pop. Density 2010	Change in Pop. 2000-2010	% Change in Pop. 2000-2010
City of Ludington	3.37	8,357	2,479.8	8,076	2,397.9	-281	-3%
City of Scottville	1.5	1,266	844	1,214	809	-52	-4%
Village of Custer	1.0	318	318	284	284	-34	-11%
Village of Fountain	1.0	175	175	193	193	18	10%
Village of Free Soil	1.0	177	177	144	144	-33	-19%
Township of Amber	27.8	2,054	74.4	2,535	91.2	481	23%
Township of Branch	36.0	1,181	32.8	1,328	36.9	147	12%
Township of Custer	35.0	1,302	37.2	1,254	35.9	-48	-4%
Township of Eden	35.9	555	15.5	582	16.2	27	5%
Township of Free Soil	39.1	934	23.8	822	21.0	-112	-12%
Township of Grant	48.9	850	17.4	909	18.6	59	7%
Township of Hamlin	34.4	3,192	92.8	3,408	99.1	216	7%
Township of Logan	36.0	329	9.1	312	8.7	-17	-5%
Township of Meade	37.6	158	4.2	181	4.8	23	14.5%
Township of Pere Marquette	15.7	2,228	141.9	2,366	150.7	138	6%
Township of Riverton	35.6	1,335	37.5	1,153	32.4	-182	-14%
Township of Sheridan	35.9	969	27.0	1,072	29.9	103	11%
Township of Sherman	36.2	1,094	30.2	1,186	32.7	92	8%
Township of Summit	14.3	1,021	71.4	924	64.6	-97	-9.5%
Township of Victory	36.5	1,444	39.5	1,383	37.9	-61	-4%
MASON COUNTY TOTAL	512.8	28,451	55.5	28,705	56.0	431	1.5%

Note that the Mason County Total in this table for the year 2000 (28,451) is different than that reported in Tables 2-2 through 2-4 (28,274). The U.S. Census corrected the 2000 population for Free Soil and Meade Townships but did not officially change the County total population. This Table (2-5) reflects the additional people in the corrected population for those two townships in the County total, raising it from 28,274 reported by the U.S. Census to 28,451.

Source: Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of the County's population, shown in **Table 2-6** indicates that the greatest number of residents live in the City of Ludington (8,076 persons) comprising 28% of the county's total population. Hamlin Township holds the second greatest number of residents (3,408 persons or 12%), and Amber Township (2,535 persons or 9%) has the third largest population in the county. The least number of residents live in the Villages of Fountain (193 or 0.6%), Free Soil (144 or 0.5%), and Custer (284 or 0.9%). Between 2000 and 2010, Amber Township showed the most significant increase in population, from 2,054 residents to 2,535, and held 7% of the population in 2000 and 9% of the county population in 2010.

Table 2-6
Distribution of County Population by Jurisdiction, 2000 and 2010

County Jurisdiction	Total Pop. 2000	Percent of county population	Total Pop. 2010	Percent of county population
City of Ludington	8,357	29%	8,076	28%
City of Scottville	1,266	4%	1,214	4%
Village of Custer ¹	318	1%	284	0.9%
Village of Fountain ¹	175	0.6%	193	0.6%
Village of Free Soil ¹	177	0.6%	144	0.5%
Township of Amber	2,054	7%	2,535	9%
Township of Branch	1,181	4%	1,328	4.5%
Township of Custer	1,307	5%	1,254	4%
Township of Eden	555	2%	582	2%
Township of Free Soil	934	3%	822	3%
Township of Grant	850	3%	909	3%
Township of Hamlin	3,192	11%	3,408	12%
Township of Logan	329	1%	312	1%
Township of Meade	158	0.5%	181	0.6%
Township of Pere Marquette	2,228	7%	2,366	8%
Township of Riverton	1,335	4.5%	1,153	4%
Township of Sheridan	969	3%	1,072	3.5%
Township of Sherman	1,094	4%	1,186	4%
Township of Summit	1,021	4%	924	3%
Township of Victory	1,444	5%	1,383	5%
MASON COUNTY TOTAL	28,274	100%	28,705	100%

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau reports village population counts within the township values. Therefore, village population values are not used to calculate the Mason County Totals.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

HOUSING UNITS

Mason County had a total of 1,230 new housing units constructed between March 2000 and April 2010. **Table 2-7** illustrates the comparison of housing units in 2000 and 2010. Amber Township had the greatest percent increase during this period, as well as the most new units added (48%, 390 new units). Grant Township (17%) had the second highest percent increase with 25 new units added. The City of Ludington (205), Branch Township (112), and Hamlin Township (226) all experienced net increases in housing units, while Pere Marquette Township (-86), Meade Township (-20), the Village of Free Soil (-9), and the Village of Fountain (-6) all experienced a net decrease in housing units from 2000-2010. Mason County experienced an 8% growth of housing units, from 16,063 to 17,293 from 2000-2010. According

to the American Community Survey, housing in Mason County was estimated to have increased by 1.1% between 2010 and 2017 for a total of 17,483 housing units. Due to the small sample size and higher margin of error of American Community Survey estimates in many of the County's smaller jurisdictions, 2017 American Community Survey housing estimates were not included in the 2019 update for the County's townships, cities, and villages.

Table 2-7
Housing Units Mason County 1990-2010

Jurisdiction	2000 Total Housing Units	2010 Total Housing Units	Change 2000-2010	% Change in Units 2000- 2010
City of Ludington	4,227	4,432	205	5%
City of Scottville	574	578	4	0.7%
Village of Custer ¹	132	137	5	4%
Village of Fountain ¹	89	83	-6	-7%
Village of Free Soil ¹	93	84	-9	-10%
Township of Amber	820	1,210	390	48%
Township of Branch	921	1,033	112	12%
Township of Custer	550	599	49	9%
Township of Eden	344	391	47	14%
Township of Free Soil	552	566	14	3%
Township of Grant	499	524	25	17%
Township of Hamlin	2,123	2,349	226	11%
Township of Logan	388	403	15	4%
Township of Meade	228	208	-20	-9%
Township of Pere Marquette	1,403	1,317	-86	-6%
Township of Riverton	550	564	14	3%
Township of Sheridan	1,013	1,062	49	5%
Township of Sherman	509	548	39	8%
Township of Summit	790	866	76	10%
Township of Victory	572	643	71	12%
Mason County Total	16,063	17,293	1,230	8%

¹The U.S. Census Bureau reports village housing unit counts within the township values. Therefore, village values are not used to calculate the Mason County Totals.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

HOUSING UNIT CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 17,293 housing units in Mason County in 2010, approximately 53% (9,128) were owner-occupied housing units, 16% (2,812) were renter occupied housing units, 31% (5,353) were vacant housing units, and 75% (4,051) of those vacant housing units were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Table 2-8 shows a breakdown of housing unit characteristics by jurisdiction. It is important to note that as a result of Mason County's residential tourism industry, many housing units remain unoccupied

unless used for recreational, seasonal, or occasional use. **Table 2-9** illustrates the type of occupied housing in Mason County in 2010. In 2017, the county was estimated to have approximately 17,408 housing units, with 70% (12,186) being occupied and 30% (5,222) being vacant housing units. Out of the occupied housing units, 77% (9,398) were owner-occupied units and 23% (2,788) were renter-occupied units. This suggests that the county has maintained a strong tourism industry with vacant units being used for recreational, seasonal, or occasional use.

Of the 17,293 housing units in Mason County, 76% (13,128) are one-unit detached homes, followed by mobile homes which comprise 11% (1,947) of the total occupied housing units. All other housing types including 1 unit attached, 2 units, 3 or 4 units, 5 to 9 units, or 10 units comprise roughly 12% of total housing. The 2017 American Community Survey reports the same percentages as the 2010 Census, with one-unit detached homes comprising 76% (13,213) of housing units and mobile homes comprising 11% (1,891) of the total 17,408 housing units in the county. Although the total number of housing units in the county are estimated to have increased, the proportions of housing units are estimated to be the same.

Table 2-8
Housing Unit Characteristics for Mason County, 2010

Jurisdiction	Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied Housing Units	Owner Occupied Housing Units as % of Total Housing Units	Renter Occupied Housing Units	Renter Occupied Housing Units as % of Total Housing Units	Total Vacant Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units as % of Total Housing Units	Number of Vacant Housing Units for Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	Percent of Vacant Housing Units for Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use
City of Ludington	4,432	1,980	45%	1,569	35%	883	20%	446	50.5%
City of Scottville	578	483	83.5%	180	31%	95	16.5%	13	13.5%
Village of Custer ¹	137	88	64%	22	16%	27	19.5%	2	7.5%
Village of Fountain ¹	83	57	67%	14	17%	12	14.5%	7	58%
Village of Free Soil ¹	84	54	64%	10	12%	20	24%	9	45%
Township of Amber	1,210	745	62%	288	24%	177	14.5%	68	38.5%
Township of Branch	1,033	487	47%	78	7.5%	468	45%	403	86%
Township of Custer	599	431	72%	61	10%	107	18%	37	35.9%
Township of Eden	391	201	51%	27	7%	163	42%	147	90%
Township of Free Soil	566	309	55%	36	6%	221	39%	177	80%
Township of Grant	524	338	60%	37	7%	149	28.5%	138	92.5%
Township of Hamlin	2,349	1,337	57%	103	4.5%	909	39%	774	85%
Township of Logan	403	126	31%	25	6%	252	63.5%	232	92%
Township of Meade	208	70	34%	10	5%	128	61.5%	116	91%
Township of Pere Marquette	1,317	796	60%	119	9%	402	30.5%	335	83%
Township of Riverton	564	398	70.5%	44	8%	122	21.5%	59	48 %
Township of Sheridan	1,062	404	38%	58	5.5%	600	56.5%	552	92%
Township of Sherman	548	392	71.5%	65	12%	91	16.5%	62	63%
Township of Summit	866	360	41.5%	39	4.5%	467	54%	419	90%
Township of Victory	643	451	70%	73	11.5%	119	18.5%	73	61%
Mason County Total	17,293	9,128	53%	2,812	16%	5,353	31%	4,051	75%
AVERAGE- FOR TOTAL OF 20 JURISDICTIONS									
Owner Occupied Housing Units as Percent of Total Housing Units				57%	Vacant Housing Units as Percent of Total Housing Units				32%
Renter Occupied Housing Units as Percent of Total Housing Units				12%	Percent of Vacant Housing Units for Seasonal, recreational, or Occasional Use				65%

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau reports village housing unit counts within the township values. Therefore, village values are not used to calculate the Mason County Totals.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2-9
Type of Occupied Housing in Mason County, 2017

Type of Housing Unit	Mason County	As % of Total Housing Units	Michigan
1 unit- detached	13,213	76%	72%
1 unit attached	325	2%	5%
2 units	303	2%	2%
3 or 4 units	474	3%	3%
5 to 9 units	417	2%	4%
10 or more units	759	4%	9%
Mobile homes, RV, boat, van	1,917	11%	5%
Total housing units	17,408	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

AGE OF HOUSING IN MASON COUNTY

The age of housing stock has implications for affordable housing, community character, and the potential need for neighborhood revitalization. The majority (58%) of housing in Mason County was constructed after 1970. Although a considerable number of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier (19.6%), significant development took place between 1970 and 2009 (**See Table 2-10**). This suggests that there is a variety of aged and newer structures throughout the county.

Table 2-10
Age of Occupied Housing Units in Mason County, 2017

Year Structure Built	Number of Units	% of Total
Built 2010 or later	192	1.1%
Built 2000 to 2009	2,479	14.2%
Built 1990 to 1999	2,402	14.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	2,227	12.8%
Built 1970 to 1979	2,783	16.0%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,410	8.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	1,556	8.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	939	5.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	3,420	19.6%
Total Housing Units	17,408	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-11
Building Permits Mason County, 2012-2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Mobile	Single Fam	Mobile	Single Fam	Mobile	Single Fam	Mobile	Single Fam	Mobile	Single Fam	Mobile	Single Fam	Mobile	Single Fam
Scottville	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Amber	2	4	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	4	2	6	3	4
Branch	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	4	0	4
Custer	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Eden	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	3	0	0
Free Soil	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	3
Grant	0	6	0	3	1	2	0	4	0	1	0	4	2	3
Hamlin	13	18	4	17	10	16	1	19	1	22	2	26	1	19
Logan	0	3	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	1
Meade	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
Riverton	0	2	0	4	0	3	1	3	0	3	0	3	0	3
Sheridan	0	1	0	5	1	3	0	4	2	4	0	5	0	1
Sherman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	2
Summit	1	1	0	5	2	9	3	3	0	6	2	5	0	3
Victory	0	1	2	4	0	3	0	4	1	5	1	4	1	7
County Total	17	43	11	47	16	50	7	48	4	54	8	72	7	56

Source: Mason County, 2018

POPULATION PER HOUSEHOLD

According to the 2000 and 2010 Censuses, the average number of persons per household fell for Mason County by 0.06, from 2.43 persons per household in 2000 to 2.37 persons per household in 2010 (**See Table 2-12**). In 2017, the average household size was estimated to be 2.32, which is slightly less than in 2010. All jurisdictions experienced a decrease in the average number of persons per household in 2010 with the exception of the City of Scottsville, the Village of Fountain, and Meade Township. The community with the highest population per household was the Village of Fountain (2.72), a change from 2000 when the highest population per household was in Riverton Township (3.01). The community with the lowest population per household was Logan Township (2.07). Due to the small sample size and higher margin of error of American Community Survey estimates in many of the County's smaller jurisdictions, 2017 American Community Survey average household size estimates were not included in the 2019 update for the County's townships, cities, and villages.

Table 2-12
Population per Household in Mason County, 2000-2010

**Average Household Size*

Community	2000	2010	Change in PPH 2000-2010	% Change in PPH 2000-2010
City of Ludington	2.21	2.19	-0.02	-0.9%
City of Scottsville	2.40	2.51	0.11	4.6%
Village of Custer	2.66	2.58	-0.08	-3%
Village of Fountain	2.46	2.72	0.26	10.5%
Village of Free Soil	2.36	2.25	-0.11	-4.6%
Township of Amber	2.64	2.41	-0.23	-9.8%
Township of Branch	2.33	2.35	0.02	0.8%
Township of Custer	2.63	2.55	-0.08	-3.5%
Township of Eden	2.68	2.55	-0.13	-4.8%
Township of Free Soil	2.41	2.35	-0.06	-2.5%
Township of Grant	2.62	2.42	-0.20	-7.6%
Township of Hamlin	2.38	2.37	-0.01	-0.4%
Township of Logan	2.21	2.07	-0.14	-6.3%
Township of Meade	2.26	2.26	0	0
Township of Pere Marquette	2.60	2.50	-0.10	-3.9%
Township of Riverton	3.01	2.61	-0.40	-13.3%
Township of Sheridan	2.33	2.31	-0.02	-0.9%
Township of Sherman	2.63	2.60	-0.03	-1.1%
Township of Summit	2.56	2.32	-0.24	-9.3%
Township of Victory	2.72	2.64	-0.08	-2.9%
Average (of 20 listed communities)	2.50	2.43	-0.07	-2.9%
Mason County	2.43	2.37	-0.06	-2.47%
State of Michigan	2.56	2.49	-0.07	-2.73%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CHANGES IN AGE DISTRIBUTION

The population of Mason County is growing older, and a large number are entering retirement ages. The breakdown of age groups present in Mason County is displayed in **Table 2-13**. The largest growing age group in Mason County is people aged 55 to 64 years, whose age group increased from 11% of the total population in 2000 to comprise 15% of the total age group in 2010. The second largest growing age group is people ages 65 to 74 years, increasing by 750 persons between 2000 and 2010. The greatest decrease in an age group between 2000 and 2010 in Mason County was for those aged 35 to 44 years, whose numbers decreased a total of 1,149 from 2000. This age group was the largest in 2000, and now is the third largest age group behind 45 to 54 years (15.7% of total population), 55 to 64 years (15.4% of total population). Children under 5 years of age were the only age group of persons under the age of 20 to experience a population growth between 2000 and 2010. The other growing age group among people under 25 years of age was 20-24 years, whose population grew by 135. **Figure 2-3** depicts the distribution of population by age and sex, which is helpful for visualizing population trends in Mason County. **Figure 2-4** offers a comparison of Mason County's population distribution with the state of Michigan.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey estimates, people aged 55 to 64 years continued to grow with an 8.4% increase since 2010. This age group was estimated to comprise 16.5% of the total population in 2017, remaining the largest age group overall and increasing in percent of the total population from 2010. The second largest growing age group in 2010 (65 to 74 years) also remained the second largest growing age group in 2017, growing 16.1% since 2010 and comprising 12.5% of the total population. The greatest decrease in an age group between 2010 and 2017 was for those aged 45 to 54, whose numbers decreased by 766 people and represented a 17.0% decrease since 2010. Changes in young age groups (19 years or younger) are consistent with past trends, continuing to decline in number and percent of total population between 2010 and 2017. **Table 2-14** compares the age breakdown of groups from 2010 to 2017. Overall, total growth in age groups between 2010 and 2017 (95 people) was lower than overall growth between 2000 and 2010 (431 people).

Table 2-13
Age Groups of Mason County, 2000-2010

Age	Total Population in 2000	% of Total Population in 2000	Total Population in 2010	% of Total Population in 2010	Change in Age Group 2000-2010
Under 5 years	1,537	5.4%	1,631	5.7%	94
5 to 9 years	1,885	6.7%	1,616	5.6%	-269
10 to 14 years	2,137	7.6%	1,754	6.1%	-383
15 to 19 years	2,031	7.2%	1,948	6.8%	-83
20 to 24 years	1,259	4.5%	1,394	4.9%	135
25 to 34 years	3,045	10.8%	2,753	9.6%	-292
35 to 44 years	4,351	15.4%	3,202	11.2%	-1149
45 to 54 years	4,156	14.7%	4,501	15.7%	345
55 to 64 years	3,125	11.0%	4,397	15.4%	1272
65 to 74 years	2,353	8.3%	3,103	10.8%	750
75 years and over	2,395	8.5%	2,406	8.4%	11
Mason County Total	28,274	100%	28,705	100%	431

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

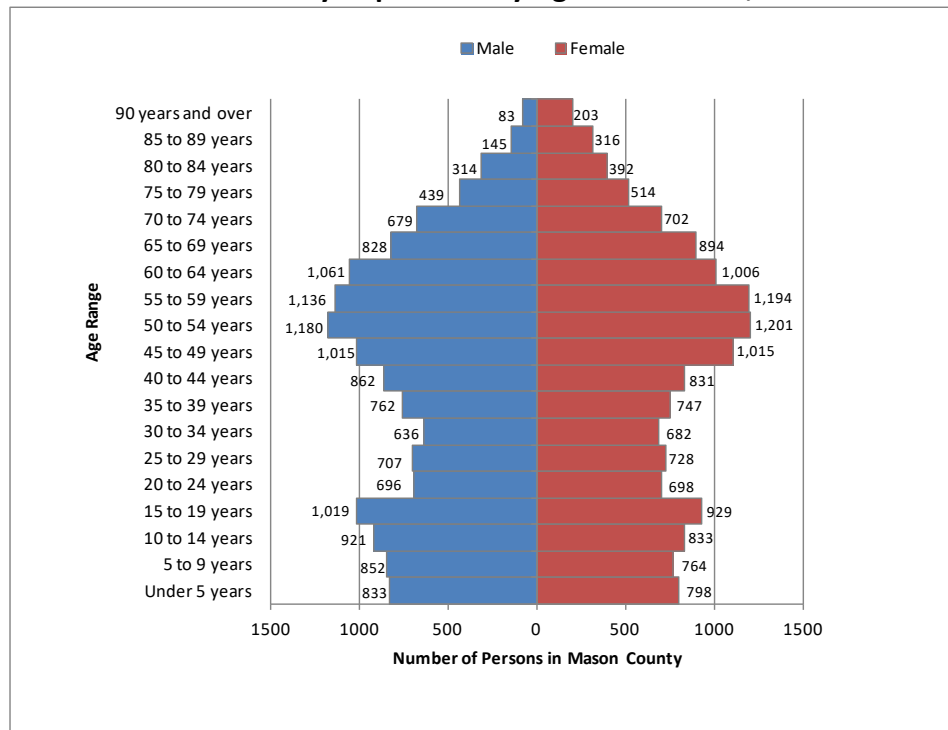
Table 2-14
Age Groups of Mason County, 2010-2017

Age	Total Population in 2017	% of Total Population in 2017	Change in Age Group 2010-2017	% Change in Age Group 2010-2017
Under 5 years	1,497	5.2%	-134	-8.2%
5 to 9 years	1,653	5.7%	37	2.3%
10 to 14 years	1,697	5.9%	-57	-3.2%
15 to 19 years	1,657	5.8%	-291	-14.9%
20 to 24 years	1,628	5.7%	234	16.8%
25 to 34 years	2,943	10.2%	190	6.9%
35 to 44 years	2,968	10.3%	-234	-7.3%
45 to 54 years	3,735	13.0%	-766	-17.0%
55 to 64 years	4,766	16.5%	369	8.4%
65 to 74 years	3,604	12.5%	501	16.1%
75 years and over	2,652	9.2%	246	10.2%
Mason County Total	28,800	100%	95	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

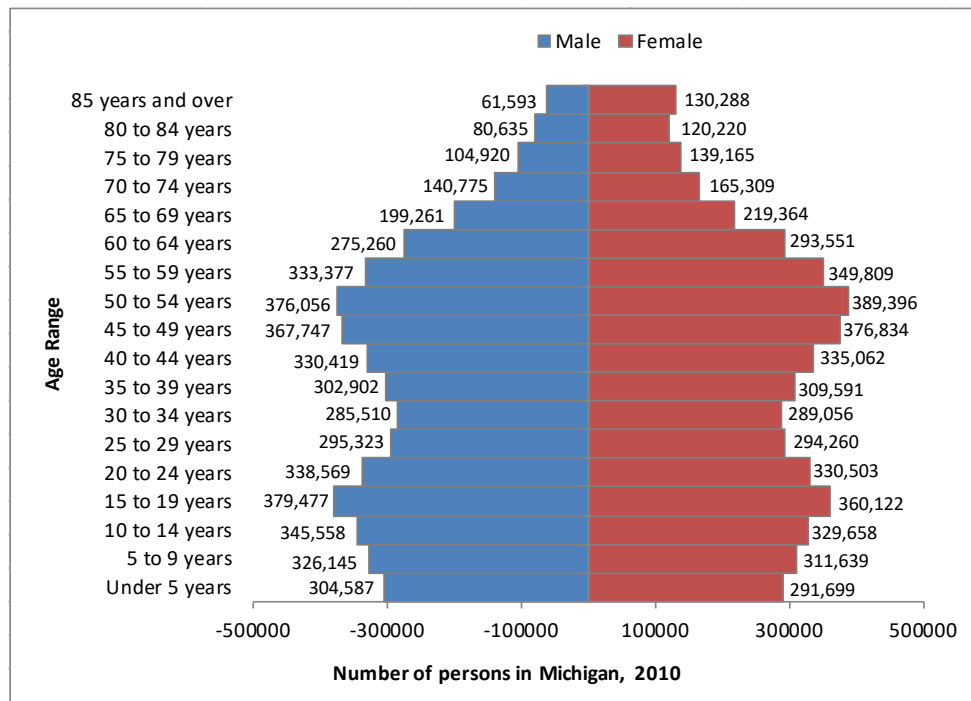
*2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2-3
Mason County Population by Age and Gender, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

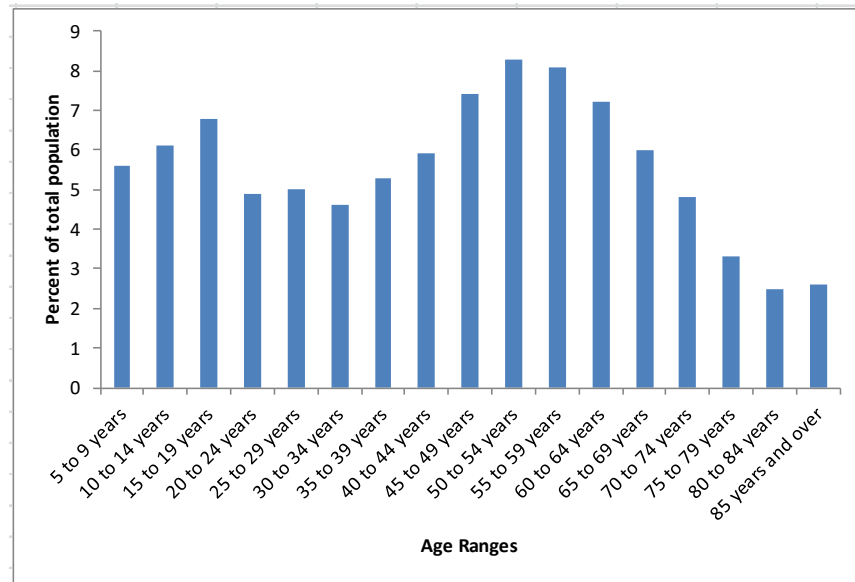
Figure 2-4
State of Michigan Population by Age and Gender, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2-5

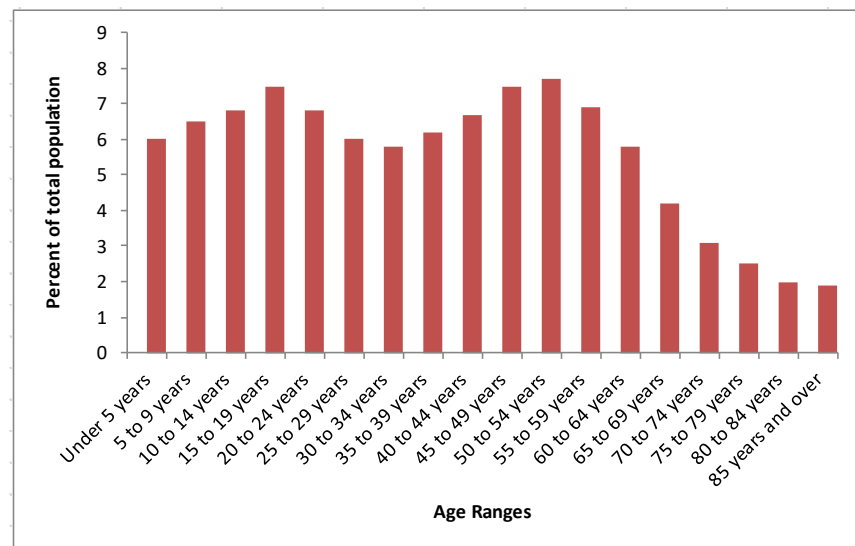
Age Ranges as Percent of Total Population, Mason County 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

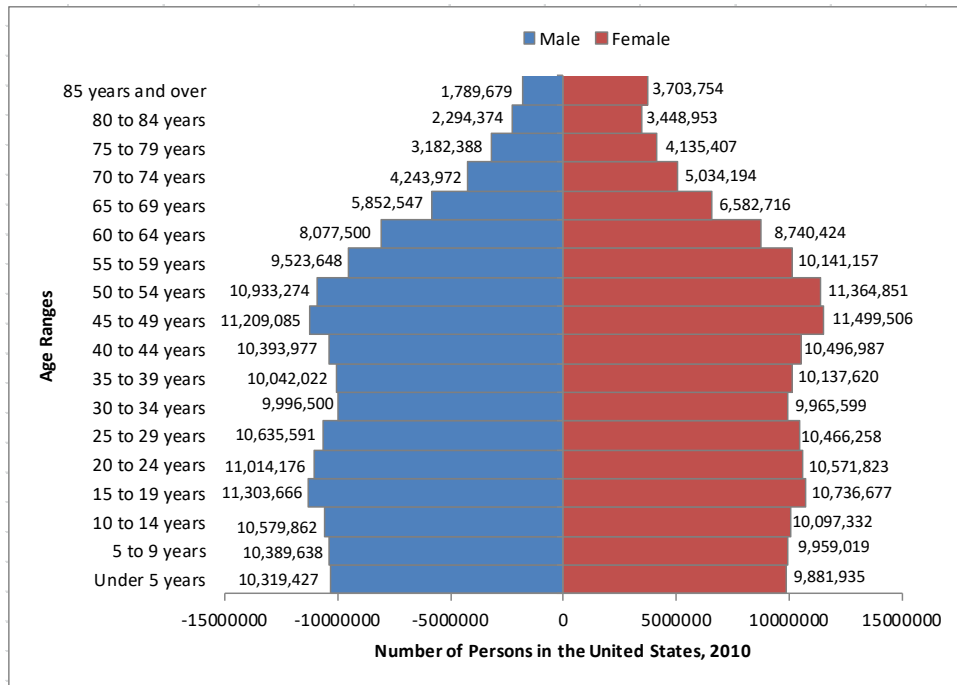
Figure 2-6

Age Ranges as Percent of Total Population, Michigan 2010



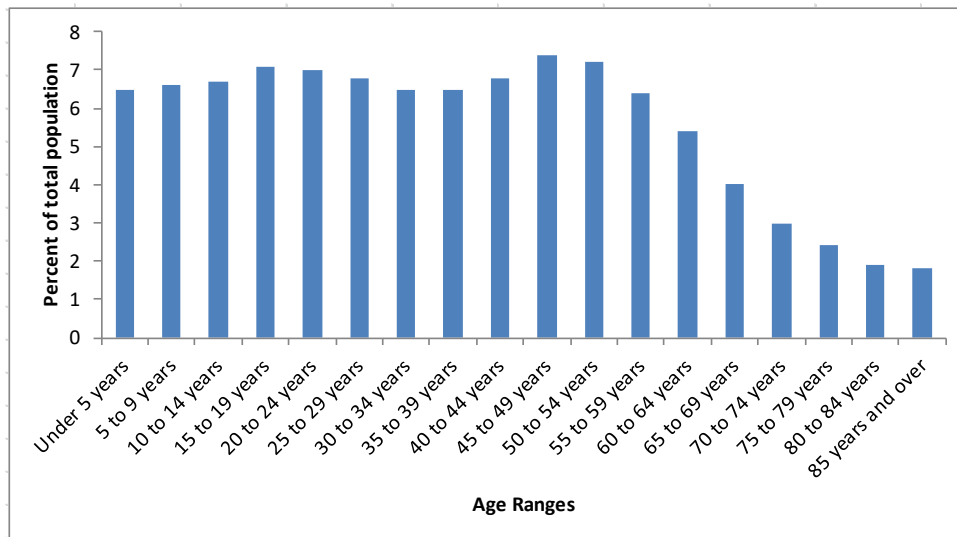
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2-7
U.S. Population by Age and Gender, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2-8
Age Ranges as Percent of Total Population, U.S. 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

MINORITY POPULATION

The total minority population in Mason County in 2010 was 3,229 persons and includes Hispanic and Latino populations. The minority population comprises 11% of the total population of Mason County, which is well below the 2010 statewide average of 19.8%. According to the American Community Survey, the total minority population in 2017 was estimated to be 2,586 persons, which comprised approximately 9% of the population in Mason County. Hispanic and Latino populations represented 4.5% of the total population and 49.7% of the minority population. Overall, the Hispanic and Latino population increased by 136 people (12%) between 2010 and 2017.

The largest minority population in Mason County in 2010 was persons of two or more races (547 or 37% of total minority population), followed by some other race (340 or 23%), persons of American Indian and Alaskan Native decent (289 or 19%), Black or African American (172 or 12%), and Asian (132 or 9%). In 2017, the largest minority population was still persons of two or more races (607 or 47% of the total minority population), followed by Black or African American (273 or 21%), American Indian and Alaskan Native decent (226 or 17%), and Asian (139 or 11%). Overall, the minority population decreased by 12.2% between 2010 and 2017. The Hispanic/Latino group indicates the number of people who identified as this ethnicity; however, because the Census allows people of Hispanic origin to be of any race(s), this is considered a broader category than other minority races. Those who identify as having a Hispanic/Latino ethnicity were estimated to increase between 2010 and 2017 by 11.8%. See **Table 2-15** for details.

Table 2-15
Minority Population in Mason County, 2010-2017*

Group	2010			2017*		
	Number of Persons	% of Minority Population	% of Total Population	Number of Persons	% of Minority Population	% of Total Population
Hispanic/ Latino Ethnicity	1,150	-	4.0%	1,286	-	4.5%
Black or African American	172	12%	0.6%	273	21%	0.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	289	19%	1.0%	226	17%	0.8%
Asian	132	9%	0.5%	139	11%	0.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0.0%	0	0%	0.0%
Some Other Race	340	23%	1.2%	55	4%	0.2%
Two or More Races	547	37%	1.9%	607	47%	2.1%
Total	1,480	100%	5.3%	1,300	100%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

INCOME CHANGES IN MASON COUNTY 1999-2010

The median household income in 2010 in Mason County was \$38,776 according to the 2010 Census. This is an increase in \$4,072 from \$34,704 in 1999. Mason County experienced the greatest percent increase (12%) in median household income between 1999 and 2010 compared to adjoining counties. **Table 2-15** details this growth. The highest median income in adjoining counties in 2010 was Newaygo (\$38,846) followed by Mason County (\$38,776). Lake County has the lowest median household income at \$28,526. All 2010 median household incomes for the five adjoining counties fell below the statewide median household income of \$45,354 in 2010, yet saw greater increases than the statewide change of 2% from 2000 to 2010.

In 2017, the median household income was estimated to increase for all five counties, averaging \$44,235. This represented an 8% increase over the median household income in 2010. Manistee County experienced the greatest percent increase of 19.8%; however, Mason County also had a high rate of increase at 17.4%. The average percent increase for all five counties was 17.2%, representing a substantial increase from 2010. All 2017 estimates for the five adjoining counties were still lower than the statewide income of \$52,668, but experienced increases greater than the statewide percent change of 16.1%.

Table 2-16
Median Household Income in Mason County, 1999-2010

County	1999 Median Household Income	2010 Median Household Income	*2017 Median Household Income	Change in Median Household Income 1999-2010	% Change in Median Household Income 1999-2010
Mason	\$34,704	\$38,776	\$45,524	\$4,072	12%
Manistee	\$34,208	\$37,479	\$44,882	\$3,271	10%
Lake	\$26,622	\$28,526	\$32,309	\$1,904	7%
Newaygo	\$37,130	\$38,846	\$45,645	\$1,716	5%
Oceana	\$35,307	\$37,629	\$44,382	\$2,322	7%
Michigan	\$44,667	\$45,354	\$52,668	\$687	2%
Five County Total - Average	\$33,594	\$36,251	\$44,235	\$2657	8%

Source: County Health, Population Health Institute, U.S. Census Bureau

*2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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Chapter 3

ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses unemployment, the labor force, and other economic characteristics of Mason County. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG), and other sources were used in this study. This information also includes brief discussions of planning implications supporting their inclusion.

EMPLOYMENT

The available labor force in a community can be a crucial determinant in the decision-making process for business attraction and retention. The labor force is defined as “all persons employed or unemployed who are able to work”. Mason County experienced a 1.5% decrease in labor force between 2000 and 2010, which further decreased by 0.73% between 2010 and 2019 (**see Table 3-1**). The number of those employed fell by 8.8% (1,238 persons) from 2000 to 2010, while the number of unemployed people rose from 711 in 2000 to 1,796 in 2010, a 153% increase. The jobless rate for Mason County in 2010 was 12.3%. This rate was less than the statewide unemployment rate of 14% as of August 2010, according to the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth. This significant increase in unemployment was influenced by the Great Recession in the late 2000s, during which time there was a national economic decline. However, Mason County has experienced substantial recovery since 2010, as its jobless rate in 2019 was at 4.8%, similar to historic averages. Additionally, between 2010 and 2019, employment increased by 7.8% and unemployment decreased by 61.3%.

Table 3-1
Annual Average Employment Trends in Mason County 2000-2019

Status	2000	2010	2019	% Change	
				2000-2010	2010-2019
Labor Force	14,792	14,576	14,470	-1.5%	-0.73%
Employed	14,018	12,780	13,775	-8.8%	7.8%
Unemployed	711	1,796	695	153%	-61.3%
Jobless Rate	4.8%	12.3%	4.8%	156%	-60.9%

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget; Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives

*The data source used for this table was the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), which produces monthly estimates of labor force, total employment, and unemployment for Michigan, metropolitan areas, counties, and major cities.

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/LAUS>

MASON AND ADJOINING COUNTIES EMPLOYMENT

Table 3-2 illustrates the total employed persons between 2010 and 2019 for Mason and its four surrounding counties. According to the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, Mason County had the second greatest number of persons employed in 2010 (12,780) and in 2019 (13,775) within the five-county area. Newaygo County had the greatest number of persons employed in 2010 and 2019 (18,692 and 23,040 respectively).

The number of employed persons increased in the nine-year period from 2010 to 2019. Newaygo had the greatest net gain in employment at 23% (4,348 persons) and Mason County had the second greatest increase at 8% (995 persons). Oceana County experienced the lowest increase in employment at 7% (822 persons). Overall, the five-county region experienced a 13% increase in employment between 2010 and 2019, equivalent to a total of 7,196 employed individuals.

Table 3-2
Mason and Adjoining Counties, Annual Average Employment 2010-2019

Region	2010 Employed*	2019 Employed*	Change 2010-2019	
			Total	%
State				
Michigan	4,147,000	4,788,000	641,000	15%
County				
Mason	12,780	13,775	995	8%
Lake	3,336	3,594	258	8%
Manistee	9,756	10,529	773	8%
Newaygo	18,692	23,040	4,348	23%
Oceana	11,781	12,603	822	7%
Five County Total	56,345	63,541	7,196	13%

* Not seasonally adjusted

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget; Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives

*The data source used for this table was the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), which produces monthly estimates of labor force, total employment, and unemployment for Michigan, metropolitan areas, counties, and major cities.

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/LAUS>

MASON COUNTY ECONOMIC BASE

Mason County's economic base is diversified, with a major contributing sector being the manufacturing industry, which employs 2,048 persons and 23.8% of the labor force as of 2017 (**See Table 3-3**). The county's retail trade industry follows with 1,477 persons making up 17.1% of the total. The third largest contributor to the economic base in Mason County is the health care and social assistance field which employs 1,159 persons and makes up 13.4% of the total in 2017.

The major changes in employment distribution between 2010 and 2017 for Mason County are highlighted by the dramatic increases in the agriculture/forestry/fishing sector with a 110.6% increase and the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector with a 77.5% increase. Other sectors that saw increases between 2010 and 2017 were utilities (15.2%), construction (46.5%), manufacturing (12.3%), retail trade (13.9%), transportation and warehousing (28.1%), professional and technical services (21.4%), administrative support/waste management (44.6%), accommodation and food service (42.2%), and other services (24.0%). Sectors that experienced decreases during the seven-year period were wholesale trade (-11.3%), information (-17.7%), real estate and rental leasing (-15.2%), and health care and social assistance (-11.0%). Sectors that remained fairly consistent over a seven-year period were finance and insurance (5.0%) and private education services (0.0%). Overall there was a 13.7% increase between 2010 and 2017 in total private sector employment. The distribution of private employment sectors can be viewed in **Figure 3-1**.

Table 3-3

Industry (Private Sector)	Total Employed 2010	Percent	Total Employed 2017	Percent	Percent change
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	141	1.8%	297	3.4%	110.6%
Utilities	92	1.2%	106	1.2%	15.2%
Construction	312	4.1%	457	5.3%	46.5%
Manufacturing	1,823	24.0%	2,048	23.8%	12.3%
Wholesale Trade	150	1.9%	133	1.5%	-11.3%
Retail Trade	1,297	17.0%	1,477	17.1%	13.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	270	3.5%	346	4.0%	28.1%
Information	124	.16%	102	1.2%	-17.7%
Finance and Insurance	219	2.8%	230	2.7%	5.0%
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	112	1.4%	95	1.1%	-15.2%
Professional and Technical Services	145	1.9%	176	2.0%	21.4%
Administrative Support/Waste Management	323	4.2%	467	5.4%	44.6%
Private Education Services	20	0.3%	20	0.2%	0.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,302	17.0%	1,159	13.4%	-11.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	71	.9%	126	1.5%	77.5%
Accommodation and Food Service	701	9.2%	997	11.6%	42.2%
Other services	312	4.1%	387	4.5%	24.0%
Total private sector employment	7,414	100%	8,623	100%	13.7%

Private Sector Employment Distribution in Mason County, 2010-2017

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

*The data source used for this table was the Industry Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/QCEW>

Changes in agricultural industries include an increase in persons employed in crop production between 2000 and 2017, from 128 persons in 2000 to 217 in 2017. According to Table 3-4, the animal production employment sector grew from 0 in 2000 to 51 in 2017. Average weekly wages for both crop production and animal production had slight increases between 2000 and 2017, totaling \$481 per week for crop production and \$432 per week for animal production in 2017. The number of crop production facilities has grown from 16 to 18 between 2010 and 2017, and the number of animal production facilities has remained steady between 2010 and 2017.

Table 3-4
Farming and Agriculture Employment in Mason County, 2000-2017

Type of Agricultural Industry	Total Employed			Average Weekly Wages			Number of Establishments		
	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
Crop Production	128	120	217	\$284	\$353	\$481	16	16	18
Animal Production	0	57	51	\$0	\$272	\$432	0	8	8

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

*The data source used for this table was the Industry Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/QCEW>

Of public sector employment (**Table 3-5**), the local branch accounted for more than 92% of total public sector employment. The federal branch (4.4%) and state branch (2.9%) followed. As of 2017, there were 1,677 persons employed in the public sector in Mason County. The data source (Industry Census of Employment Wages) prepared by the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget did not specify which employment branches were included in the public employment sector. However, those employed in local public school districts (West Shore Educational Service District, Mason County Eastern, Mason County Central, and Ludington Area School District) totaled 1,153 employees during the 2017-2018 school year. Therefore, public schools contribute to a high employment number in the local public sector.

Table 3-5
Public Sector Employment, Mason County, 2017

Public Sector	Total Employed 2017	Percent
Federal	73	4.4%
State	49	2.9%
Local	1,555	92.7%
Total public sector employment	1,677	100%

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

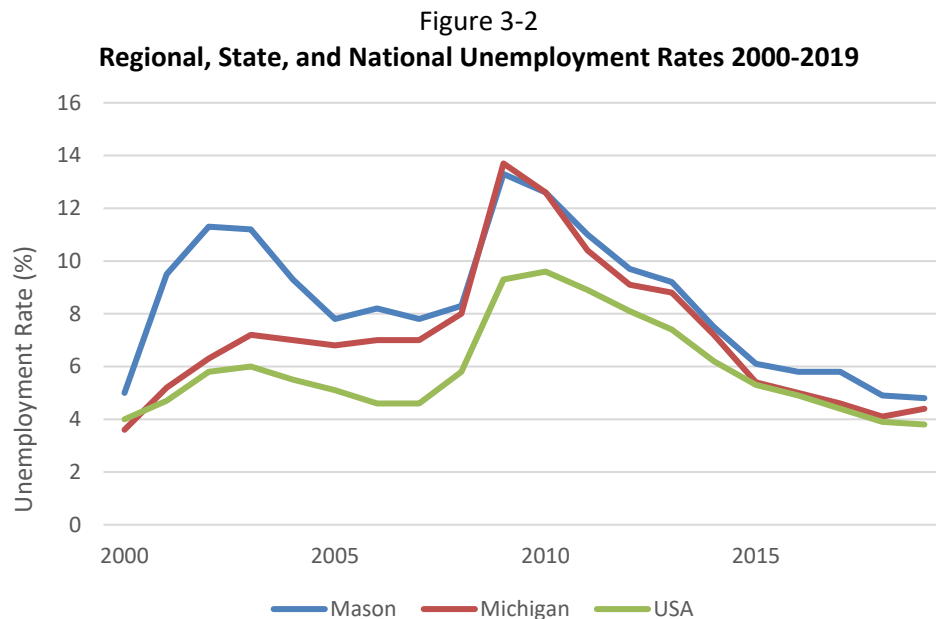
*The data source used for this table was the Industry Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/QCEW>

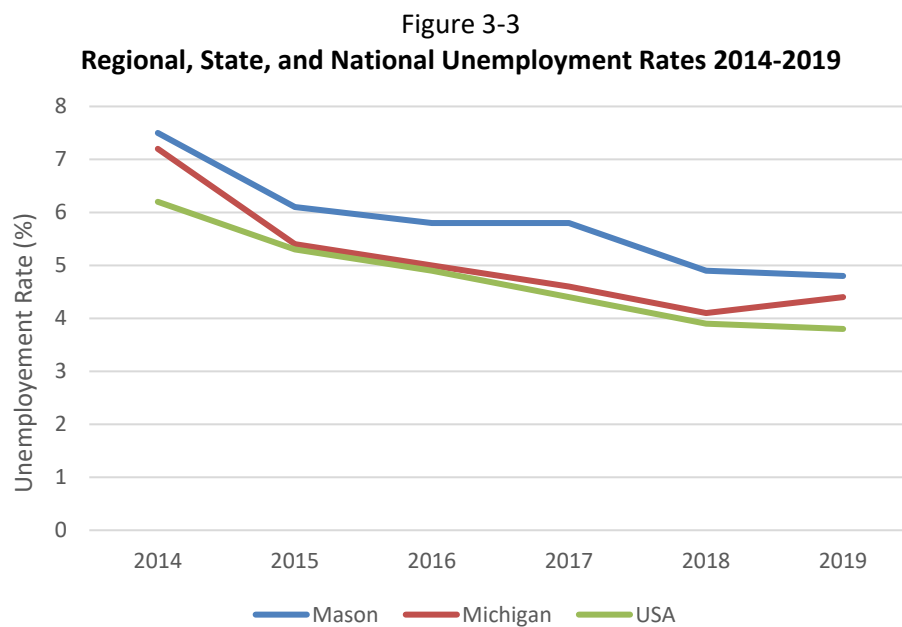
UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment fluctuated considerably between 2000 and 2019 in Mason County (**see Figure 3-2**) at a rate comparable to national and statewide averages, though Mason County did have slightly higher

unemployment rates than statewide and national averages. The significant increase in unemployment rate from 2008 to 2012 reflect the nationwide recession and economic crisis which peaked in 2009. However, more recent regional unemployment numbers from August 2014 to June 2019 (See Figure 3-3) reflect the substantial recovery after this recession. The unemployment rate in Mason County jumped from 5.0% in 2000 to 12.6% in 2010, and has since dropped to 4.8% as of June 2019.



Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget



Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT

It is important to note that regions with seasonal economic activities such as Mason and adjoining counties are uniquely challenged to maintain a healthy local market throughout the year. Mason's economy is largely tied to its natural features and attractions, and tourism plays a major role in its economy with features such as lodging and restaurants playing a role in both the local and regional economy. Economies based on tourism are highly susceptible to fluctuations in the broader national market.

The unemployment rates for Mason County and four adjoining counties from 2000 to 2019 can be viewed in **Table 3-6** and more recently from 2015 to 2019 in **Table 3-7**. Unemployment rates rose significantly from 2000 to 2010 within the five-county area including Mason County, with an average increase of 162%. Rates peaked in August of 2009 with an average unemployment rate 12.5%. Since then, unemployment rates have somewhat stabilized at an average of 5.4% as of June 2019 for Mason and adjoining counties. As of 2019, Mason had the second lowest unemployment rate (4.8%) compared to adjoining counties. Newaygo County had the lowest unemployment rate at 4.6%. Lake County has had the highest unemployment rate since 2008, while Newaygo County had the smallest percent change between 2015 and 2019 (-16.3%). However, substantial recovery has occurred for all adjoining counties, as decreases above 30% were experienced for every County between 2015 and 2019. The average unemployment rate for Mason and adjoining counties was 5.4% in 2019, with a 22.2% decrease since 2015. This average unemployment rate falls just above the statewide 4.4% unemployment rate and the national 3.8% rate as of June 2019.

The drop in the unemployment rates in Mason and adjoining counties illustrates a positive overall growth in the economy of the region as a whole since recession figures. Job retention and creation will be crucial issues over the next several years to maintain the relatively low unemployment rate and job growth.

Table 3-6
Unemployment for Mason and Adjoining Counties, 2000-2019

Region	2000	2005	2010	2019	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2019
USA	4.0	5.1	9.6	3.8	140%	-60%
Michigan	3.6	6.8	12.6	4.4	250%	-65%
Mason	5.0	7.8	12.6	4.8	152%	-62%
Lake	5.8	10.4	16.2	6.7	179%	-59%
Manistee	5.5	8.0	13.1	5.5	138%	-58%
Newaygo	4.7	7.5	12.7	4.6	170%	-64%
Oceana	6.0	8.1	16.2	5.3	170%	-67%
Average of 5 County Area	5.4	8.4	14.2	5.4	162%	-62%

Unemployment rate not seasonally adjusted

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget; Bureau of Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives

The data source used for this table was the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), which produces monthly estimates of labor force, total employment, and unemployment for Michigan, metropolitan areas, counties, and major cities.

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/LAUS>

Table 3-7
Unemployment Rate for Mason and Surrounding Counties, August 2015- August 2019

Region	August 2015	August 2016	August 2017	August 2018	June 2019	% Change 2015-2019
Nation						
USA	5.3	4.9	4.4	3.9	3.8	-28.3%
State						
Michigan	5.4	5	4.6	4.1	4.4	-18.5%
County						
Mason	6.1	5.8	5.8	4.9	4.8	-21.3%
Lake	8.6	7.5	8.1	6.9	6.7	-22.0%
Manistee	6.7	6.6	6.6	5.7	5.5	-17.9%
Newaygo	5.5	4.9	5	4.3	4.6	-16.3%
Oceana	8	7.3	7.2	6.1	5.3	-33.7%
Average of 5 County Area	7.0	6.4	6.5	5.6	5.4	-22.2%

Unemployment rate not seasonally adjusted

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

The data source used for this table was the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), which produces monthly estimates of labor force, total employment, and unemployment for Michigan, metropolitan areas, counties, and major cities.

Source: <http://milmi.org/DataSearch/LAUS>

MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND TOP EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

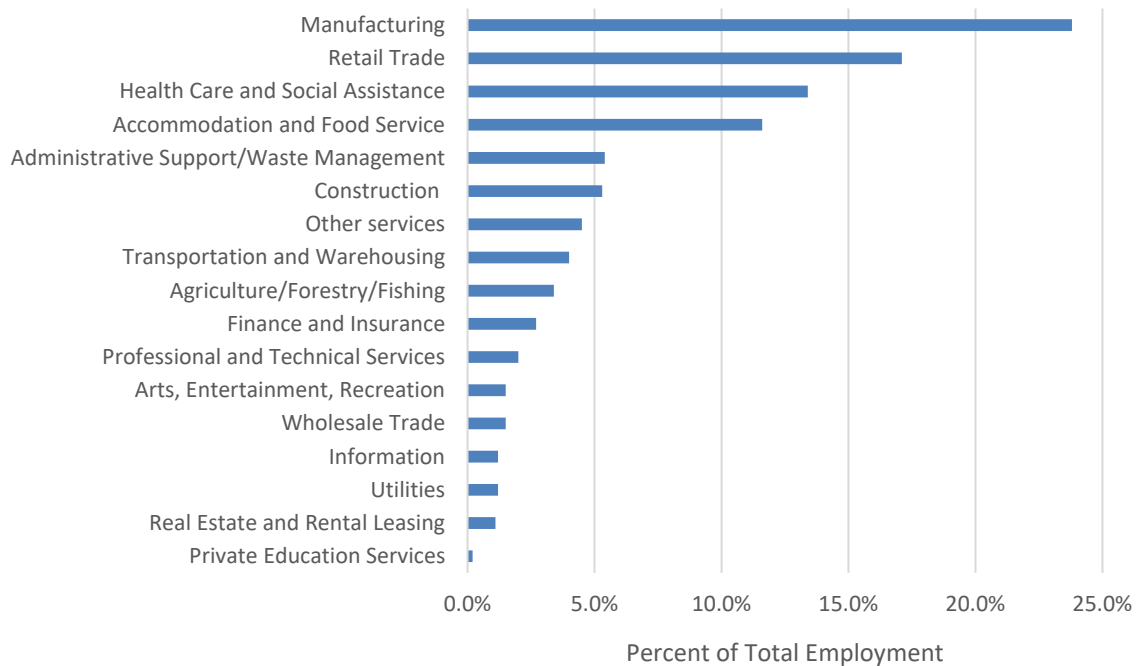
Major employers within Mason County are detailed in **Table 3-8**. The majority of major companies with over 50 employers are within the City of Ludington. West Shore Community College (100-249 employees) is the largest employer outside of the City of Ludington. Based on **Figure 3-4**, the largest employment sector for Mason County was manufacturing 2017, comprising roughly 24% of total employment, followed by retail trade (17%) and health care and social assistance (13%). Substantial changes of top sectors between 2008 and 2017 include an approximately 8% increase in manufacturing, a 13% increase in retail trade, and an 8% increase in health care and social assistance.

Table 3-8
Major Employers in Mason County, 2018

TOP EMPLOYERS IN MASON COUNTY		
50-99 Employees	Mason County Elementary School, Custer	Mason/ Lake Intermediate School District, Ludington
Hardman Construction, Ludington	Michigan Food Processors, Ludington	Tendercare, Ludington
Kaines West Michigan, Ludington	Foster Elementary School, Ludington	West Michigan Community Mental Health, Ludington
Brill Manufacturing Co., Ludington	Eagle Xpress, Ludington	Oakview Medical Care Facility, Ludington
Shop N' Save, Ludington	Mason County Central Schools, Scottville	West Shore Educational Service District, Ludington
Manistee National Golf and Resort, Manistee	Srs Industries LLC, Ludington	West Shore Community College, Scottville
S.S. Badger, Lake Michigan Car Ferry, Ludington	Franklin Elementary School, Ludington	250-499 Employees
Applebee's Neighborhood Grill, Ludington	Haworth Inc., Ludington	Metalworks Inc., Ludington
Big Boy, Ludington	UPS Customer Center, Ludington	Meijer, Ludington
P M Steamers Restaurant, Ludington	Western Land Service Inc., Ludington	Indian Summer Co-Op, Ludington
Scotty's Restaurant, Ludington	100-249 Employees	Ludington Area School District, Ludington
McDonald's, Ludington	Flora Craft Corp, Ludington	Occidental Chemical Corp, Ludington
Ludington City Hall, Ludington	Great Lakes Casting Co., Ludington	Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital
Diversified Natural Products, Scottville	Home Depot, Ludington	Whitehall Industries, Ludington
Mason County Jail/Sheriff, Ludington	Lowe's Home Improvement, Ludington	
Mason County, Ludington	Walmart, Ludington	
Mason County Eastern High School, Custer	Needlefast Evergreens, Ludington	

Source: Michigan Department of Management, Technology, and Budget
Source: <https://milmi.org/DataSearch/EmpDb>

Figure 3-4
Major Employment Sectors in Mason County, 2017



Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget
Source: <https://milmi.org/DataSearch/QCEW>

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCIAL BUSINESS

Of the 650 industrial and commercial businesses within Mason County, the retail trade sector had the greatest number of establishments in 2017 (101). **Table 3-9** lists other sectors with the greatest number of establishments including accommodation and food service (82), construction trades (73), other services (66), and health care and social assistance (63).

Table 3-9
Types of Businesses within Mason County, 2017

Industry	2017 Total
<i>Total</i>	650
Retail trade	101
Accommodation and Food Service	82
Construction	73
Other services	66
Health Care and Social Assistance	63
Manufacturing	41
Professional and Technical Services	39
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	30
Administrative Support/Waste Management	30
Finance and Insurance	28
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	27
Transportation and Warehousing	20
Wholesale Trade	18
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	17
Information	7
Utilities	4
Private Education Services	4

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget
Source: <https://milmi.org/DataSearch/QCEW>

TRAVEL TIME AND COMMUTING PATTERNS

The length of time it takes for one to travel to work can be used as an indicator of traffic congestion and can be used to gauge the degree to which a community is a “bedroom” community where most citizens commute a significant distance to work, or an employment center. According to the American Community Survey Estimates, the average travel time to work for residents in the County was 17.6 minutes in 2017. This indicates that many residents in the community travel a considerable distance for work and that the County has a few major employment centers that likely serve a large number of residents.

TOURISM

In addition to manufacturing, education, and government service, tourism is an important economic sector in Mason County. Tourism is loosely related to the employment sectors of entertainment, recreation, and food services. Mason County’s location along Lake Michigan, in addition to inland lakes, rivers, streams, campgrounds, forests, and other attractions provide ideal natural tourism attractions.

Chapter 5 TAX BASE & LAND TYPES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses what has been built on the land and how much it is worth. The discussion includes land use and land cover in the County, the value of different land uses, and how these have changed in recent years.

STATE EQUALIZED VALUES (SEV) OF PROPERTY

There are two main measures of property value, state equalized value (SEV) and taxable value. State Equalized Value (SEV) is determined by assessing 50% of the property's market value. The basis for SEV is supported in Article IX, Section 3 of the Michigan Constitution, which states that the proportion of true cash value at which property shall be assessed shall not exceed 50%. Property tax values are important indicators of the relative strength of different sectors of the local tax base. The most significant change in Mason County between 2010 and 2019 was an increase in value of industrial land (58.7%). Agriculture (4.6%) and residential (5.1%) had similar percent increases in value while commercial property lost value between 2010 and 2019 (-12.6%). This is evident by comparing the value of property by tax class over time, as illustrated in **Table 5-1** which compares SEV of different tax classes from 2010 to 2019 in Mason County. **Figure 5-1** illustrates the shift in tax class from 2010 to 2019.

As property values fluctuate over time, classes comprise different percentages of the County's total SEV value. The percent of total SEV dedicated to industrial uses increased from 18% in 2010 to 25% in 2019. The distribution of agriculture (5% to 5%) remained the same. Although residential property increased in value overall, its share in the percent of total SEV slightly declined from 67% in 2010 to 63% in 2019. Commercial property decreased in both value and its share of the percent total SEV (9.5% to 7%).

Table 5-1
Tax Classes as Percentages of Total SEV, Mason County

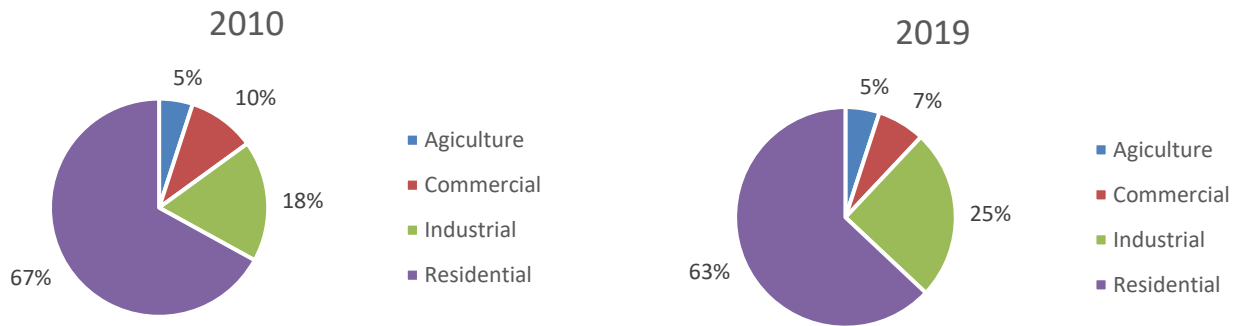
Class	2010 (\$)	% of total	2019 (\$)	% of total	Total Change	% change
Agriculture	92,487,600	5%	96,726,600	5%	4,239,000	4.6%
Commercial	178,939,900	9.5%	156,381,200	7%	-22,558,700	-12.6%
Industrial*	338,111,800	18%	536,506,700	25%	198,394,900	58.7%
Consumers Facility**	278,998,000	15%	486,069,100	23%	207,071,100	74.2%
Residential	1,259,828,885	67%	1,323,924,960	63%	64,096,075	5.1%
Total	1,869,368,185	100%	2,113,539,460	100%	244,171,275	13.1%

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury, 2019,

*Figure includes Consumers Energy facility

**Figure included to demonstrate impact of Consumers Energy facility on Industrial SEV

Figure 5-1
Percentage of Tax Class



Source: Michigan Department of Treasury, 2010 and 2019

INDIVIDUAL JURISDICTIONS

Among individual jurisdictions in Mason County, the greatest increase in tax class values between 2011 and 2019 was seen in Logan Township for agriculture (29%), the City of Ludington for residential (26%), Branch Township for commercial (26%) and Hamlin Township for industrial (107%). **Table 5-2** lists these changes.

Among individual jurisdictions in Mason County the greatest amount of agricultural land value in 2011 and 2019 was in Riverton Township. Valued at over \$26 million in 2019, Riverton's agricultural land value makes up 27% of the total agricultural land value in Mason County. Four jurisdictions saw a decrease in their agricultural land values, Branch Township (-2%), Hamlin Township (-25%), and Pere Marquette (-10%), and Summit Township (-8%). County-wide, agricultural land values increased by 8% between 2011 and 2019.

Hamlin Township has the greatest residential tax class land value at \$267 million, making up 20% of the total. Six jurisdictions saw a decrease in residential land value from 2011 to 2019, with Logan Township having the largest decrease of 15% from 32.6 million to 27.6 million. The greatest increase in residential tax value was the City of Ludington, whose residential land value grew 26% from \$187.2 million to \$235.6 million. The county total of residential land values increased 11% from 2011 to 2019.

Branch Township saw the greatest commercial land value growth from 2011 to 2019, a 26% increase from \$2.3 million to \$2.9 million. Most jurisdictions saw minimal growth or decreased in commercial land values during this period. Sherman Township and Logan Township experienced the greatest declines in commercial land values at 71% and 38%, respectively. Overall the county experienced an 8% decrease in commercial land values during this period.

There were several missing figures for individual jurisdiction's industrial property values; however, Hamlin Township was recorded as having the greatest increase in industrial land values from \$495,500 to \$1.0 million, a 107% increase from 2011 to 2019. The City of Scottville (-27%), Amber Township (-8%), and Riverton (-8%) experienced drops in value during this time. For all of Mason County, industrial property values rose 61% from 2011 to 2019.

Village totals are included in township totals.

Table 5-2
SEV by Tax Class by Jurisdiction in Mason County, 2011 and 2019

Area	Agriculture			Residential			Commercial			Industrial		
	2011 (\$)	2019 (\$)	% Change	2011 (\$)	2019 (\$)	% Change	2011 (\$)	2019 (\$)	% Change	2011(\$)	2019 (\$)	% Change
City												
Ludington			NA	187,187,300	235,554,750	26%	54,745,500	53,397,800	-2%	13,107,200	12,591,300	-4%
Scottville			NA	14,467,100	15,448,000	7%	3,648,000	3,189,300	-13%	3,778,500	2,749,900	-27%
Amber	4,082,400	4,391,000	8%	61,454,900	70,552,200	15%	40,321,900	35,130,900	-13%	1,717,600	1,578,600	-8%
Branch	2,056,400	2,013,400	-2%	55,717,600	58,912,400	6%	2,294,600	2,889,700	26%			NA
Custer	10,442,200	10,664,200	2%	31,794,700	36,241,400	14%	1,268,700	1,099,700	-13%			NA
Eden	9,117,500	9,817,100	8%	29,129,000	27,701,200	-5%			NA			NA
Free Soil	4,459,500	5,456,100	22%	35,097,550	38,435,000	10%	528,700	518,400	-2%			NA
Grant	2,388,500	2,886,400	21%	69,213,800	69,797,700	1%	873,500	926,500	6%	1,279,300	1,474,700	15%
Hamlin	901,300	675,500	-25%	214,297,600	266,986,800	25%	13,365,100	11,746,200	-12%	495,500	1,025,300	107%
Logan	2,663,100	3,447,800	29%	32,584,500	27,608,100	-15%	517,000	319,100	-38%			NA
Meade			NA	20,798,500	19,830,800	-5%			NA			NA
Pere Marquette	3,625,000	3,258,300	-10%	142,305,200	161,137,060	13%	42,229,900	42,865,700	2%	244,773,600	443,395,300	81%
Riverton	23,303,200	26,110,200	12%	30,491,200	32,726,050	7%			NA	1,599,300	1,467,200	-8%
Sheridan	3,486,100	3,634,300	4%	63,188,700	61,574,100	-3%			NA			NA
Sherman	5,912,100	6,828,700	16%	36,271,600	35,833,000	-1%	1,585,400	455,600	-71%	323,900	332,000	3%
Summit	6,861,000	6,294,000	-8%	121,442,400	116,310,200	-4%	2,707,600	2,496,300	-8%	65,480,800	71,892,400	10%
Victory	10,374,100	11,249,600	8%	47,963,600	49,276,200	3%	1,525,700	1,346,000	-12%			NA
County Total	89,672,400	96,726,600	8%	1,193,405,250	1,323,924,960	11%	169,611,000	156,381,200	-8%	332,555,700	536,506,700	61%

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury
<https://eequal.bsasoftware.com/ReportViewerPage.aspx>

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Mason County

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY REPORT



Mason County

Master Plan Update

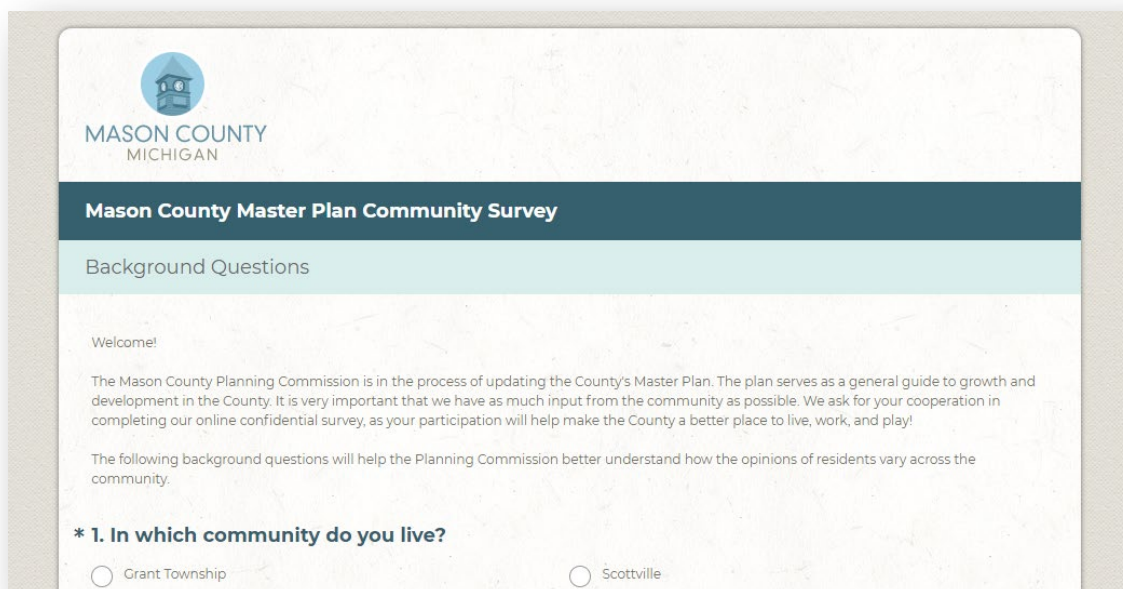
July 2019

williams&works

Introduction

In June 2019, Mason County finished collecting the results of the Master Plan opinion survey and held a public open house for the purpose of gathering resident input regarding land use, development, and planning in the County. These efforts to gather public opinions resulted in a large amount of quantifiable data and qualitative information from County residents, workers, and local officials to help guide policy decisions in the updated County Master Plan. The community survey had over 800 participants and resulted in a large amount of quantifiable data from residents regarding land use and planning in the County. The open house was more limited in scope, but provided valuable quantifiable data and qualitative information related to land use and policy decisions. This report presents the findings of the public open house, including a discussion of the methods used to solicit feedback, a summary of its findings in terms of the input and quantified data received, and an analysis of the significance of the results.

Online Community Survey

The image shows a screenshot of a web-based survey titled "Mason County Master Plan Community Survey". At the top left is the Mason County Michigan logo, which features a blue circle with a white building icon. Below the logo, the text "MASON COUNTY MICHIGAN" is displayed. The survey title is in a dark blue banner. Below this is a light blue section header "Background Questions". The main content area has a light beige background with a subtle pattern. It begins with a "Welcome!" message, followed by a paragraph explaining the purpose of the survey: "The Mason County Planning Commission is in the process of updating the County's Master Plan. The plan serves as a general guide to growth and development in the County. It is very important that we have as much input from the community as possible. We ask for your cooperation in completing our online confidential survey, as your participation will help make the County a better place to live, work, and play!". Another paragraph states: "The following background questions will help the Planning Commission better understand how the opinions of residents vary across the community." The first question is marked with an asterisk: "* 1. In which community do you live?". Below the question are two radio button options: "Grant Township" and "Scottville".

An online community survey was conducted between March 31st and June 7th using the online survey hosting service SurveyMonkey. The survey collected 848 responses from all communities in Mason County. The survey was publicized through flyers, social media posts, website links, and email. A copy of the survey results and survey results for selected communities are attached to this document as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Appendix 2 includes selected results from only communities which are under Mason County zoning authority. Results from the survey were used to inform the public input activities of the Town Hall Master Plan Meeting and the heat index focus groups outlined in this document. The themes identified

in the results of the survey included transportation & mobility, land use & preservation, environmental & water quality, housing & affordability, and economic development. The following are a selection of responses that contributed to the development of the themes after analyzing the survey results:

- Lack of good jobs (76% very serious or somewhat serious)
- Availability of affordable housing (68% very serious or somewhat serious)
- Pollution of lakes and streams (61% very serious or somewhat serious)
- Loss of private property rights (51% very serious or somewhat serious)
- Lack of public transit (57% very serious or somewhat serious)

Town Hall Master Plan Meeting

A Town Hall Master Plan Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 18, 2019, at the Graystone Event Center from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The Town Hall Meeting received approximately 19 attendees. The event was publicized through flyers, email, a newspaper article, radio announcement, and a notification on the closed survey link.

A short presentation kicked off the meeting, and gave attendees reference for what a master plan is, the document's content and process, preliminary findings of the community survey, and the geographic boundaries of the master plan. Several interactive stations were featured at this engagement event and were designed to solicit input from residents through engaging and fun activities. Activity themes were informed by responses received from the community survey, allowing an opportunity for further elaboration of topics that were of particular concern to survey respondents. The purpose of each activity was to prompt the public to share concerns or visions they have regarding land use and development in the County. This allowed the public to provide feedback on issues that are most important to them and share ideas regarding how they envision the County in the future.

Following the introduction, participants were asked to gather for an organized engagement activity. After this activity, attendees were given the opportunity to engage in any of the additional activity stations as they pleased and further discuss specific items of personal importance with County officials. Results from each of the activities are presented on the following pages, along with an analysis of the results and next steps.

HEAT INDEX FOCUS GROUPS (ORGANIZED ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY)

Attendees formed five table groups in order to collaborate on issues facing the County and their potential solutions. Five topics were given to each table group: transportation & mobility, land use & preservation, environmental & water quality, housing & affordability, and economic development. For each topic, groups were given prompts to rank issues as “sizzling,” “hot,” or “simmering.” “Sizzling” issues are those that should be considered immediately, “hot” issues should be addressed sooner rather than later, and “simmering” issues should be kept in mind for the future. Groups were given 10 to 15 minutes to collaborate on each issue. The comments

from each table group were compiled and coded by themes in order to generate general themes for each topic.

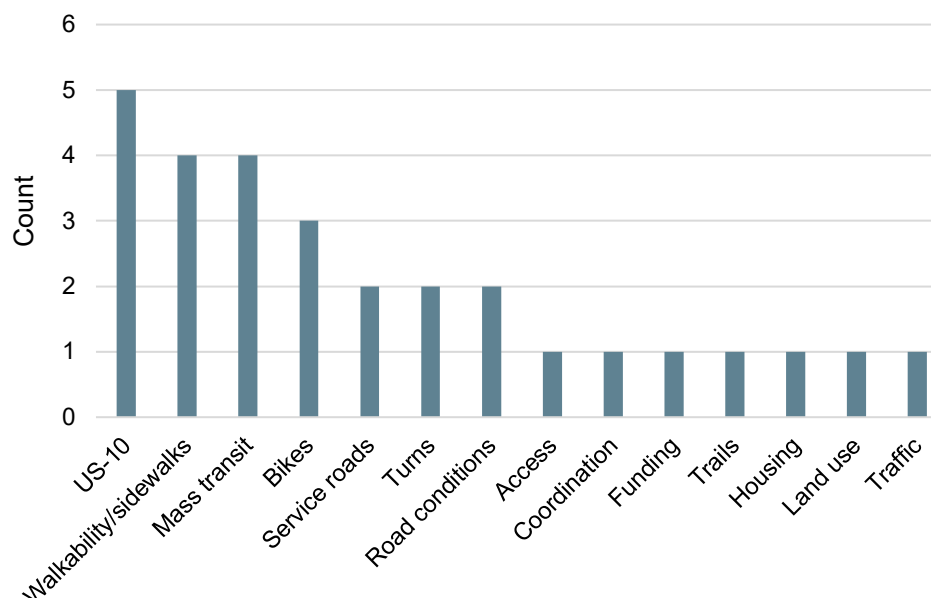


Transportation & Mobility Summary. The US-10 corridor was a primary concern in attendee comments. This was primarily related to safety, such as accommodating left turns and pedestrian crossings. Implementing a Michigan U-turn was suggested to help with left turns and pedestrian bridge was recommended to facilitate safe crossings on US-10. Walkability was related to safe passage on US-10 and facilitating connections in the community. Some attendees would like sidewalks required during commercial updates, while others questioned whether required sidewalks were a detriment to development along US-10. Overall, there does not appear to be appropriate pedestrian, bike, and vehicle interactions along US-10. Lack of mass transit was also identified as a “sizzling” concern among attendees. Attendees suggested creating busing routes and expanding Dial-A-Ride services. Transportation outside of the County was identified as a need to be fulfilled.

Table 1. Transportation & Mobility Concerns

	Sizzling	Hot	Simmering	Total
US-10	3		2	5
Walkability/sidewalks	2		2	4
Mass transit	4			4
Bikes		2	1	3
Service roads	2			2
Turns	2			2
Road conditions		2		2
Access	1			1
Coordination	1			1
Funding	1			1
Trails	1			1
Housing	1			1
Land use		1		1
Traffic		1		1

Figure 1. Total Transportation & Mobility Concerns

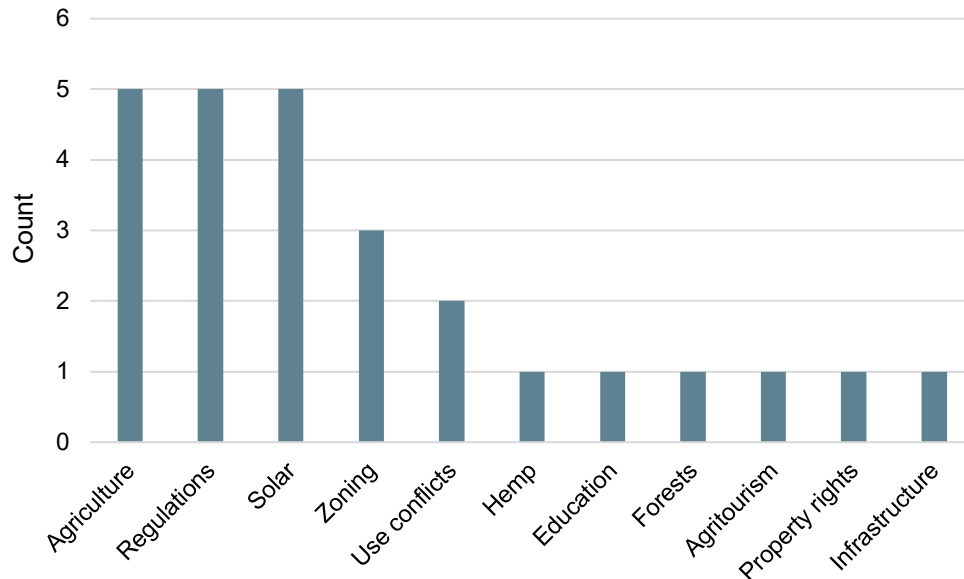


Land Use & Preservation Summary. Agricultural concerns received the highest number of “sizzling” comments. These related to preservation of farmland and protection from industrial solar energy developments. Additionally, attendees were concerned about preserving agricultural land during hemp production. The threat of industrial solar energy farms and hemp farms were related to regulations. Attendees desired clearer state guidelines for hemp and were largely concerned about local regulations for industrial solar farms.

Table 2. Land Use & Preservation Concerns

	Sizzling	Hot	Simmering	Total
Agriculture	5			5
Regulations	4		1	5
Solar	4		1	5
Zoning	2		1	3
Use conflicts			2	2
Hemp	1			1
Education	1			1
Forests	1			1
Agritourism			1	1
Property rights			1	1
Infrastructure			1	1

Figure 2. Total Land Use & Preservation Concerns

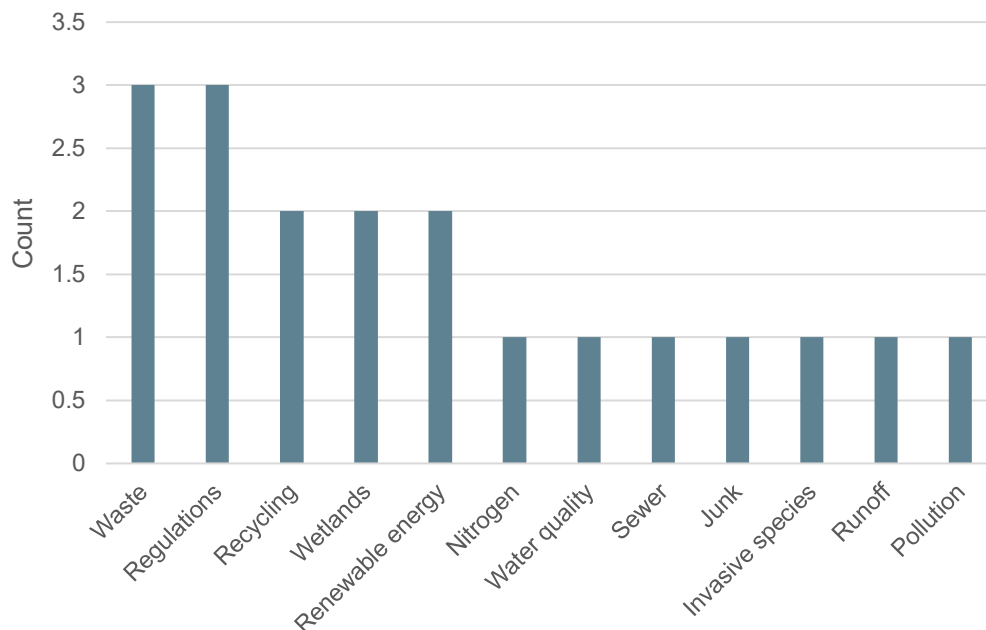


Environment & Water Quality Summary. Waste received the highest number of “sizzling” concerns by attendees, while regulations received the greatest number of “hot” concerns. Waste was related to offering more frequent collection days, attracting businesses that utilize waste, and creating more financial and community support of household hazardous waste. Concern for regulations were also related to waste, as one group desired the promotion of a junk ordinance in all townships. Additionally, regulations were concerned with commercial solar energy industries and pollution of water from commercial uses.

Table 3. Environmental & Water Quality Concerns

	Sizzling	Hot	Simmering	Total
Waste	3			3
Regulations		2	1	3
Recycling	1		1	2
Wetlands		1	1	2
Renewable energy		1	1	2
Nitrogen	1			1
Water quality	1			1
Sewer	1			1
Junk		1		1
Invasive species			1	1
Runoff			1	1
Pollution			1	1

Figure 3. Total Environmental & Water Quality Concerns

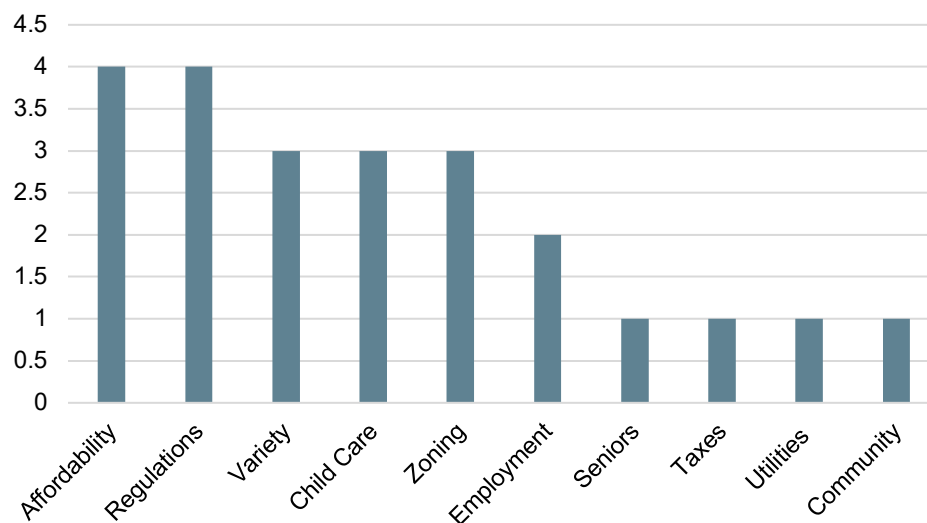


Housing & Affordability Summary. Attendees were most concerned about the lack of affordable housing in the County. Suggestions to address this issue encouraged the construction of smaller residential dwellings, income-based housing such as townhomes, apartments, and tiny home communities, and the permission of alternate housing types in appropriate districts. Some attendees were concerned about minimum size requirements for housing, as this value has already been lowered. Additionally, attendees suggested altering regulations to allow Air BnB establishments. Overall, a variety of housing types was desired.

Table 4. Housing & Affordability Concerns

	Sizzling	Hot	Simmering	Total
Affordability	4			4
Regulations	2	1	1	4
Variety	2		1	3
Child Care	2	1		3
Zoning			3	3
Employment	2			2
Seniors	1			1
Taxes	1			1
Utilities	1			1
Community	1			1

Figure 4. Total Housing & Affordability Concerns



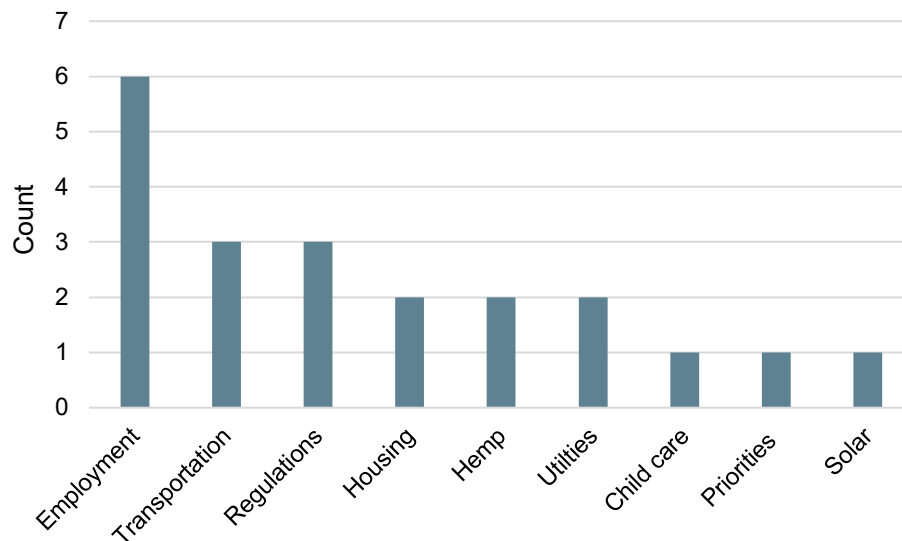
Economic Development Summary. Employment was the clear concern related to economic development in the County. Attendees commented on issues related to lack of quality jobs, a seasonal workforce, and the need to define the type of economy that is desired. Sustainable jobs with good pay are desired; in order to achieve this, attendees suggested proper training of workers and encouraging industrial or trade school jobs.

Transportation was also considered an important “sizzling” issue. Attendees commented on the desire for bus regulations to be less restrictive and transportation options to be increased. Additional infrastructure related to adequate roads and utilities was concerned important to increase economic development.

Table 5. Economic Development Concerns

	Sizzling	Hot	Simmering	Total
Employment	6			6
Transportation	3			3
Regulations	1	1	1	3
Housing	2			2
Hemp	1	1		2
Utilities	1	1		2
Child care	1			1
Priorities	1			1
Solar			1	1

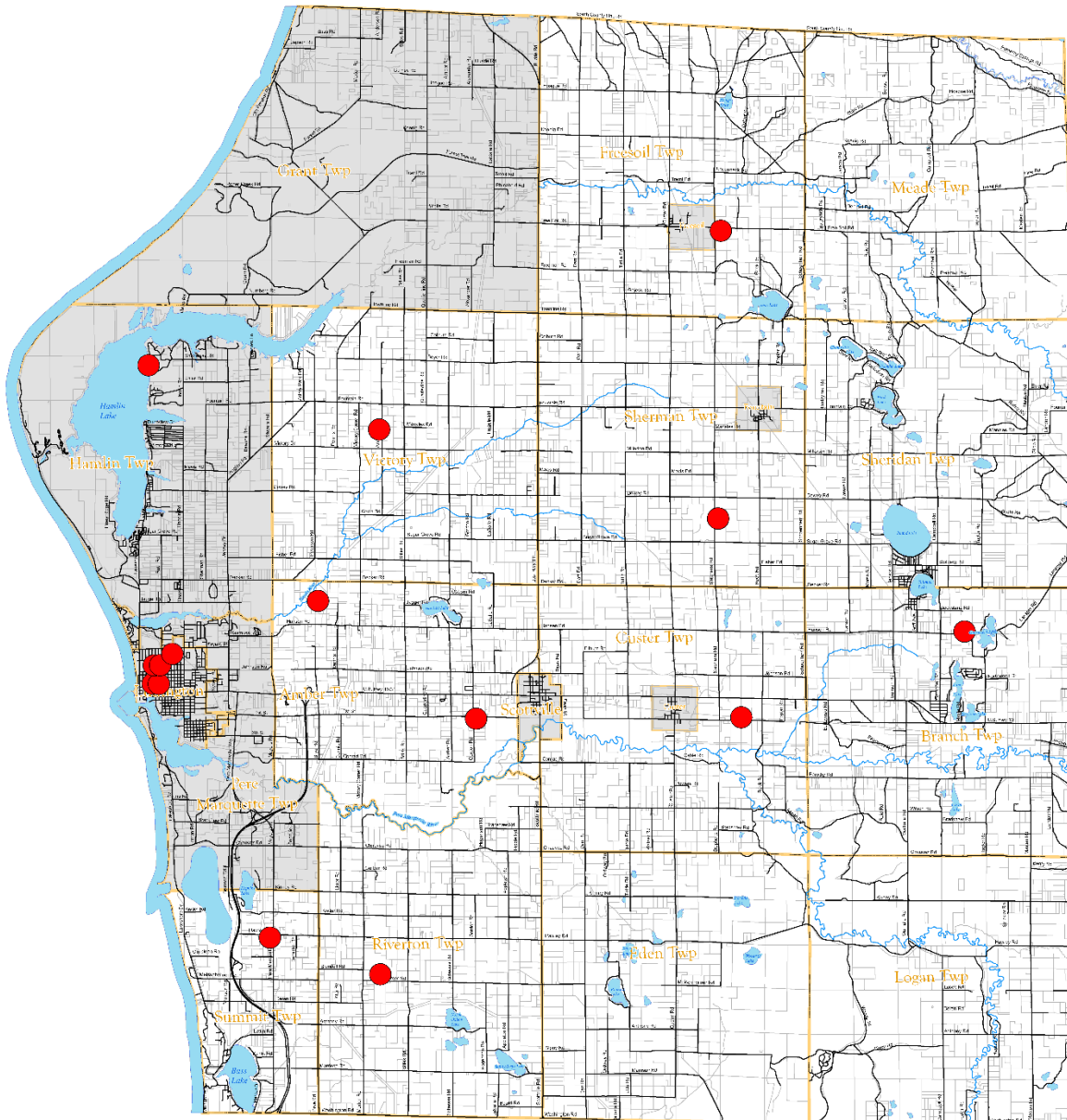
Figure 5. Total Economic Development Concerns



WHERE DO YOU LIVE? (STATION 1)

Attendees were asked to place a dot on a map indicating the locations in which they live (Figure 6). The purpose of this station was to gain an overview of the areas represented by attendees. This provides insight on key areas that were represented in attendee responses.

Figure 6. Attendee Places of Residence



The open house received input from fairly widespread geographic distribution of public participants. Based on the locations identified by attendees, input received during the open house was represented by 60% of the townships in Mason County. However, this should still be understood within the context of the number of participants, as the widespread distribution of attendees often resulted in one representative of an individual township. A greater number of

participants from each township would have provided a more comprehensive view of the opinions from each township.

The City of Ludington was the only geographic area that exhibited a cluster of attendees. This was expected, as it is the largest urban area in the County with a population of approximately 8,000 people. It is also worth noting that several attendees indicated that they live adjacent to or in close proximity to bodies of water. Water features contribute to the natural setting of Mason County and are often a primary concern in land use planning.

YOUR PRIORITIES (STATION 2)

Attendees were asked to imagine they were in charge of directing their tax dollars to items that they felt were most important. Each attendee was given a budget of 10 pennies and asked to place them into labeled jars according to how they would spend the County's funds (Table 6). By doing so, they were able to vote on preferred items for County investment.



Table 6. Attendee Priorities for the County's Tax Dollars

Category	Pennies
Protecting views & natural areas	24
Expanding public transit	23
Attract industry & jobs	20
Protecting farms and open space	19
Protecting surface water & groundwater	19
Encourage affordable housing options	14
Protecting private property rights	13
Recycling program development	13
Establishing & expanding trails	8
Fostering growth near developed areas	7

Attendees were primarily concerned with the preservation of natural areas and public transit. All penny jars related to open space and natural features received relatively high votes from the public, with “protecting views and natural areas” receiving the highest votes overall. The natural setting and abundant water features throughout the County largely contribute to the County’s character, and their protection was considered important to attendees. Expanding public transit and attracting more industry and jobs received the second and third highest votes.

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT (STATION 3)

To glean insights into how the public envisions Mason County in the future, attendees were asked to place flag notes on a map of the County to identify aspects that they love and locations that have potential for transformation and/or investment. The list below includes the transcribed comments and Figure 7 depicts the specific locations identified by attendees.

Positive Aspects

- Manistee National Forest
- Preserve open spaces, farms – small + large, forest areas
- Preservation of natural features
- Farm lands

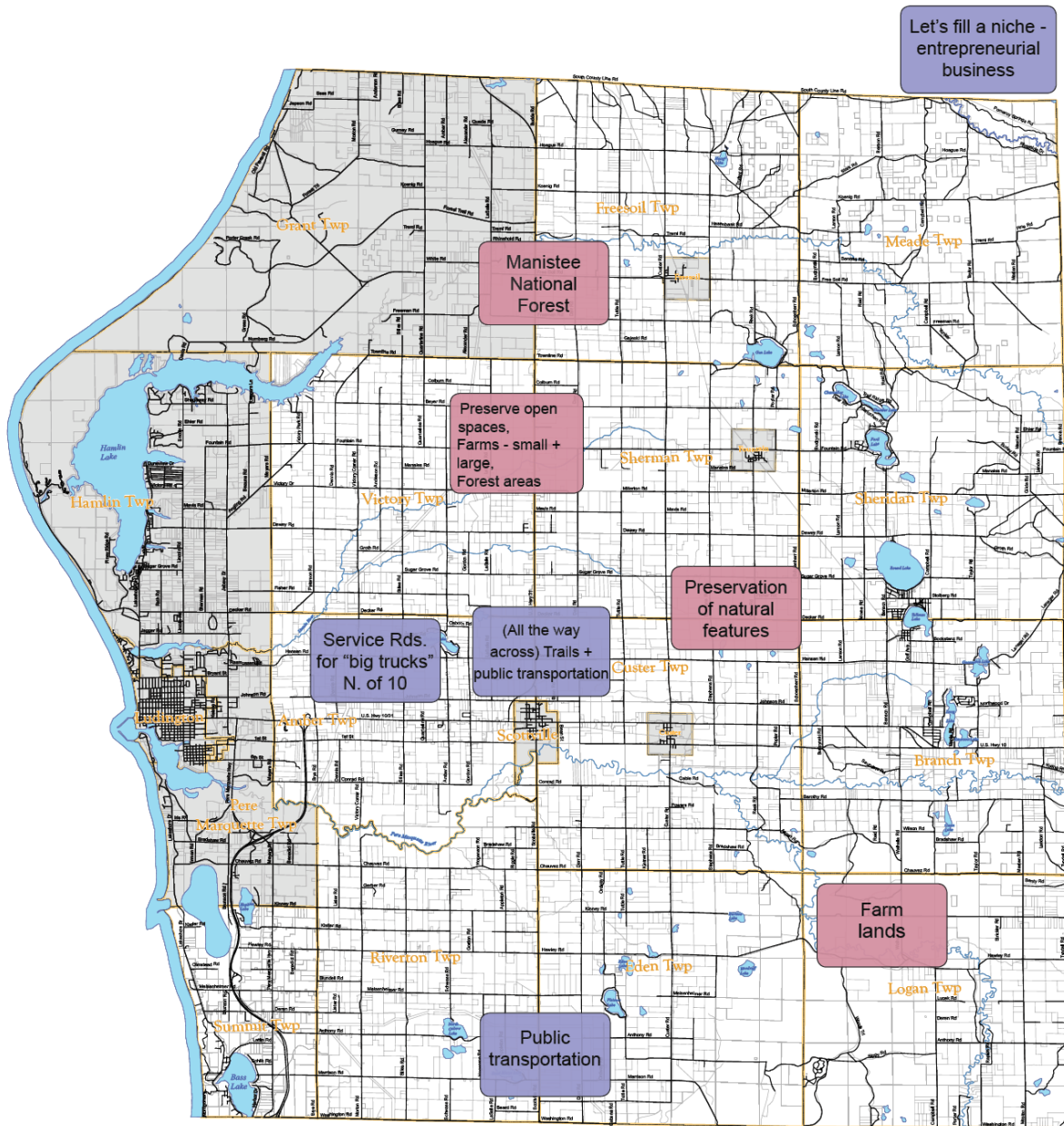
Big Ideas

- Let's fill a niche – entrepreneurial business
- Service Rds. for “big trucks” N. of 10
- (All the way across) Trails + public transportation
- Public transportation

Natural features were the most common positive element identified in the map. Participants emphasized the importance of open space, farmland, and forests. All of these elements enhance the natural character of the community. These natural features were identified throughout the County, with forests being more prominent towards the north and farmlands to the south. The presence of the Huron-Manistee National Forest largely contributes to the natural setting of the County.

The areas most identified for transformation or redevelopment were located generally in the southwest quadrant of the County. This corresponds to areas that have greater development west of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. These comments most commonly relate to transportation, including public transit and service roads. These is consistent with the results of Station 2, which also identifies public transit as an important priority.

Figure 7. Positive Aspects and Big Ideas for the County



GENERAL COMMENTS (STATION 4)

Attendees were asked to place a flag notes containing their written comments regarding additional assets, opportunities, and desired enhancements in the County. This activity allowed participants the freedom to inform the Planning Commission about other ideas or issues concerning land use and development in the County based on a few prompts. The list below includes the transcribed comments.

What are opportunities or areas for change you see for our County?

- Support and encourage small, creative businesses - organic farms, ect

How do we build on the opportunities to enhance the County?

- Encourage green technologies

Conclusions

Based on the above results, the County Planning Commission should consider the following as it updates the goals, objectives, and action items contained in the Master Plan:

- Protection of the County's natural areas, scenic views, farmland, and open space were identified as top priorities by the public during the open house. The Huron-Manistee National Forest offers natural forested areas that are enjoyed by residents. Additionally, the public values the preservation of existing farmland. Based on the results from the open house, preserving these aspects is of great importance to County residents.
- Environmental concerns were most commonly related to waste and junk in the County. Enforcement of a maintenance code was desired, along with increased awareness about how to dispose of hazardous waste. Attracting businesses that may utilize existing waste was viewed as positive. Therefore, preservation of natural features may be enhanced through appropriate waste disposal and utilization. Additionally, with the abundance of water features present in the County, protection of the natural setting may be enhanced through water quality protection strategies.
- Although the public deeply values the natural setting offered in the County, increased public transportation and additional employment opportunities are also desired. Public transportation was identified as a theme throughout many stations. Increasing bus services throughout the County may fulfill a need that is currently lacking for many residents.
- Safe interactions between bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles should be considered along US-10. Many comments were received concerning the lack of safe transportation along this corridor. The Planning Commission may wish to consider a corridor study to further investigate existing issues along this corridor and develop a plan for the safety of all modes of transportation.

- Options for housing affordability should also be further considered. Attendees at the public open house offered several different solutions to providing affordable housing, along with a few concerns regarding appropriate zoning districts and reducing the minimum dwelling size. This may be further considered as the Master Plan outlines appropriate dwellings in future land use categories.

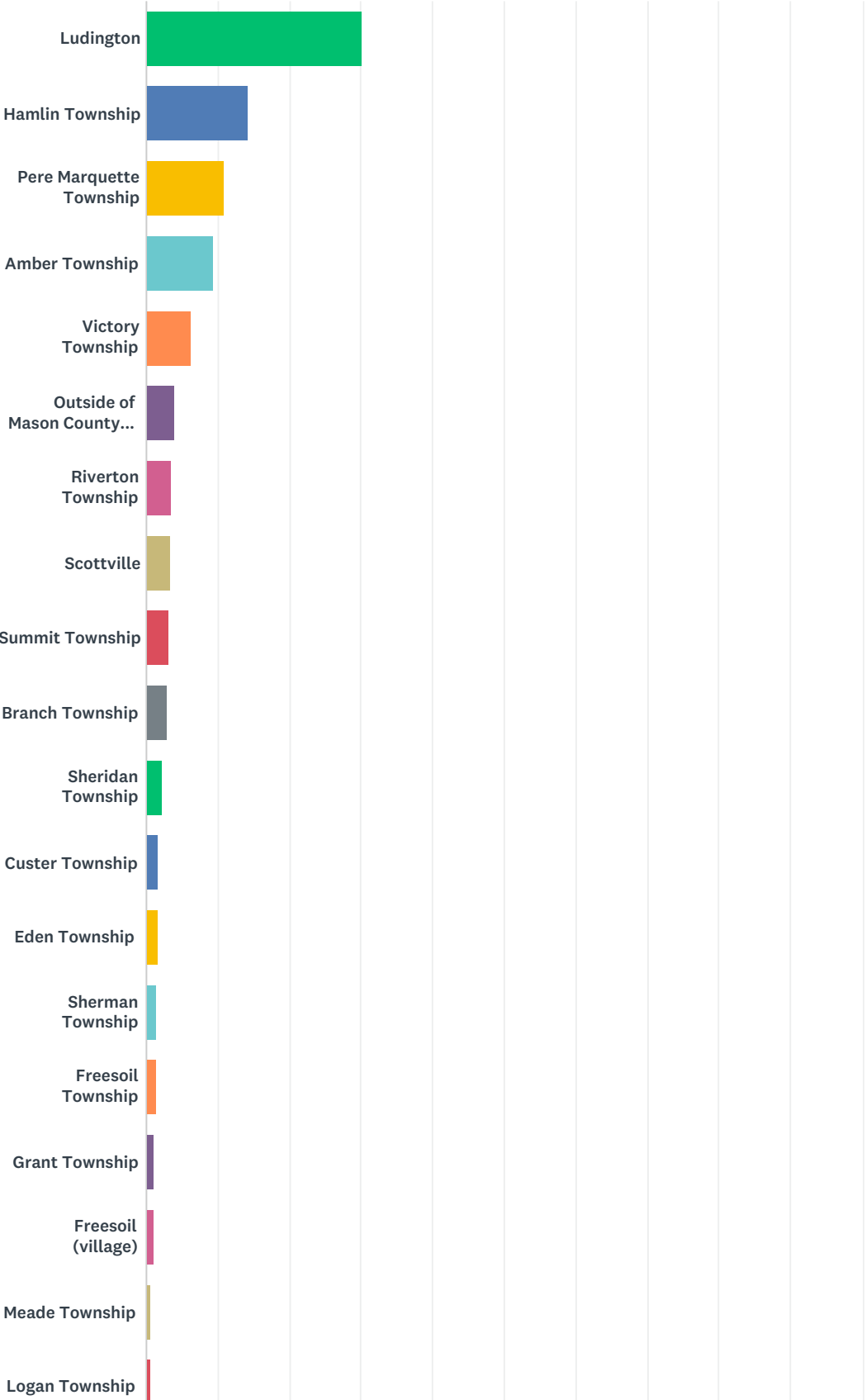
Next Steps

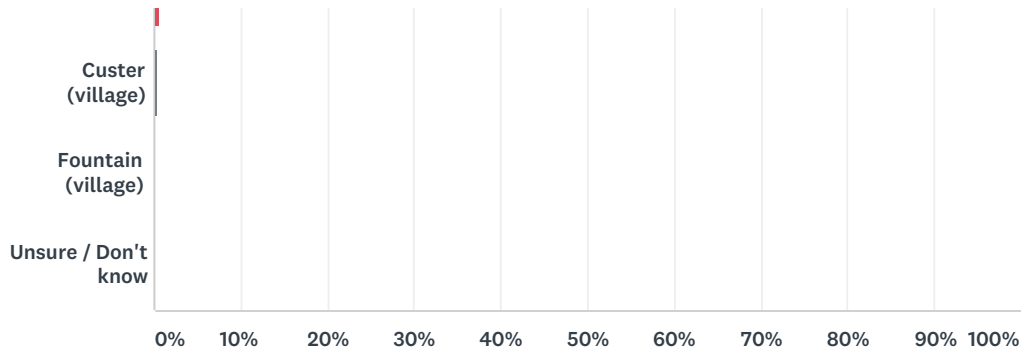
The Mason County Planning Commission should review and discuss the open house results contained in this report at their next meeting and future meetings. Over the summer and fall of this year, the County should use the results of this survey to inform edits to the Goals and Objectives, Future Land Use, and Implementation Strategies sections of the Master Plan.

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Q1 In which community do you live?

Answered: 848 Skipped: 0





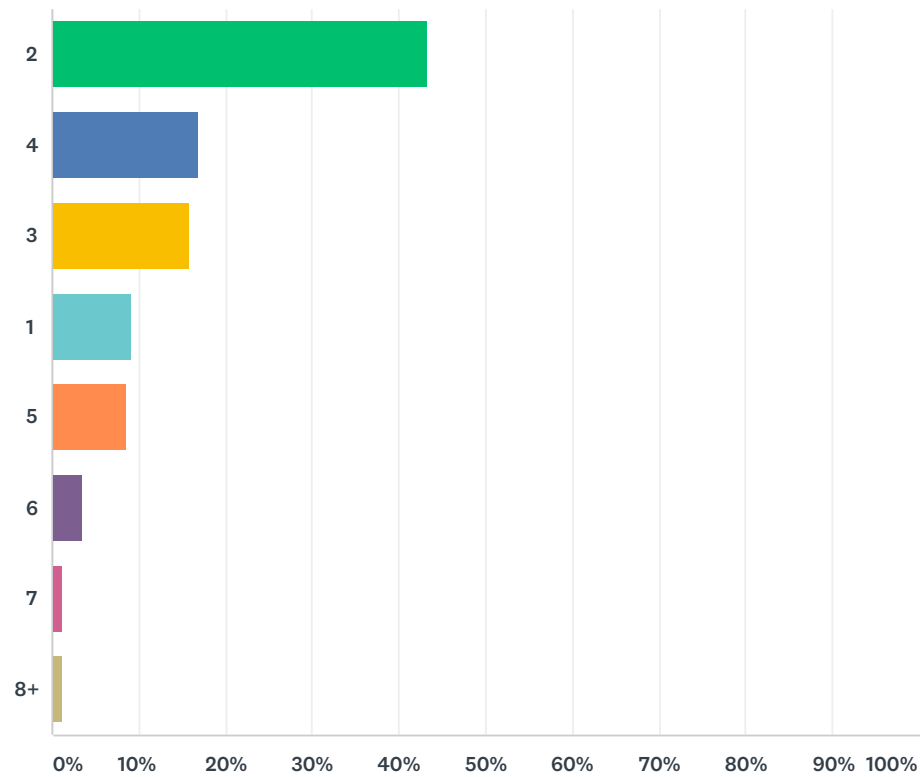
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ludington	30.07%	255
Hamlin Township	14.15%	120
Pere Marquette Township	10.85%	92
Amber Township	9.43%	80
Victory Township	6.37%	54
Outside of Mason County (please specify)	4.01%	34
Riverton Township	3.54%	30
Scottville	3.30%	28
Summit Township	3.07%	26
Branch Township	2.95%	25
Sheridan Township	2.24%	19
Custer Township	1.65%	14
Eden Township	1.65%	14
Sherman Township	1.53%	13
Freesoil Township	1.42%	12
Grant Township	1.06%	9
Freesoil (village)	0.94%	8
Meade Township	0.59%	5
Logan Township	0.59%	5
Custer (village)	0.47%	4
Fountain (village)	0.12%	1
Unsure / Don't know	0.00%	0
TOTAL		848

#	OUTSIDE OF MASON COUNTY (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Ottawa	4/29/2019 5:46 PM
2	Manistee	4/26/2019 10:34 PM
3	Manistee County. Filer Twp.	4/26/2019 5:44 PM

4	Manistee	4/26/2019 9:31 AM
5	Grand Rapids	4/25/2019 10:26 PM
6	Barry	4/25/2019 8:12 PM
7	Commerce twp	4/25/2019 8:10 PM
8	Lake county	4/25/2019 7:52 PM
9	Buckley former summit and grant twp resident with family still in Mason County	4/25/2019 7:42 PM
10	Ionia county home and Lake county Vacation home	4/25/2019 7:31 PM
11	Lake county Baldwin Mi	4/25/2019 7:00 PM
12	Manistee	4/25/2019 6:19 PM
13	Kent Co.	4/25/2019 5:52 PM
14	Mason, MI	4/25/2019 5:51 PM
15	Oakland County	4/25/2019 4:38 PM
16	Muskegon	4/25/2019 4:13 PM
17	Sacramento, CA	4/25/2019 3:31 PM
18	Muskegon michigan	4/25/2019 3:31 PM
19	Lake County	4/25/2019 3:28 PM
20	Osceola, Indiana	4/25/2019 3:12 PM
21	Oakland County	4/25/2019 3:12 PM
22	I live in Grand Rapids, but am from Fountain and have a place there.	4/25/2019 2:00 PM
23	Westland,MI second property in Ludington	4/24/2019 7:50 PM
24	Hart former Riverton resident of 40 years	4/24/2019 6:05 PM
25	North side of pentwater	4/24/2019 5:12 PM
26	Ingham county	4/24/2019 2:09 PM
27	SE Michigan	4/24/2019 1:15 PM
28	Washington road Pentwater, right on the county line	4/24/2019 12:31 PM
29	Manistee	4/23/2019 11:39 AM
30	Oceana County - Pentwater Township	4/22/2019 3:32 PM
31	Oceana Co - New Era	4/22/2019 3:32 PM
32	Pentwater Township	4/8/2019 8:24 PM
33	I own property in Amber, also	4/8/2019 12:28 PM
34	Massachusetts - plan to move back to Ludington soon	4/7/2019 10:17 PM

Q2 Including yourself, how many persons are in your household? (Please check one)

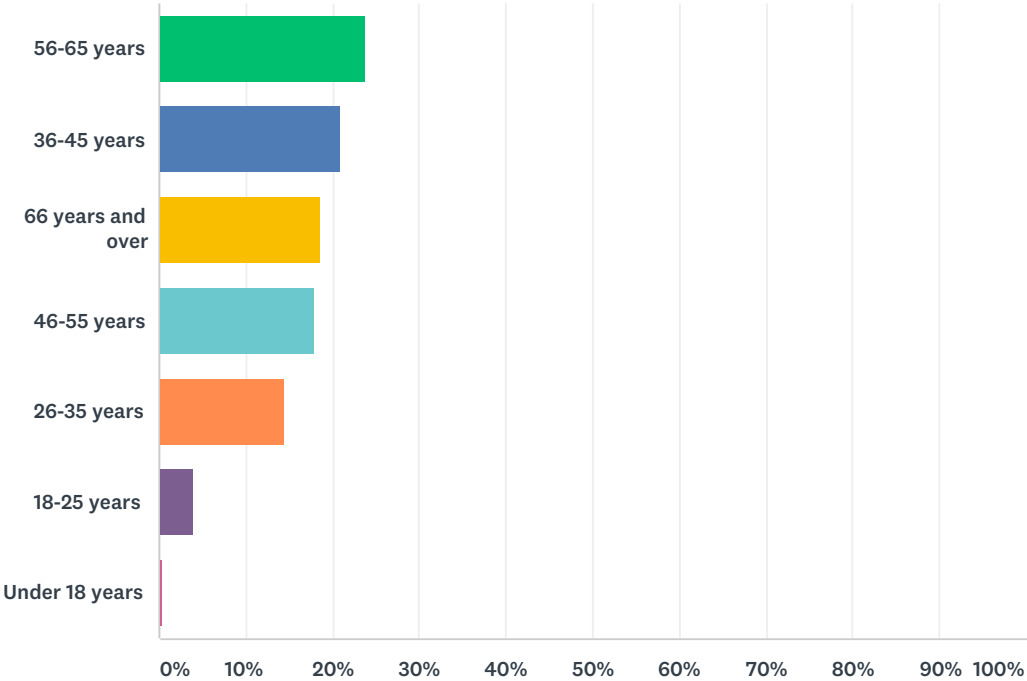
Answered: 844 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
2	43.36%	366
4	16.94%	143
3	15.88%	134
1	9.24%	78
5	8.53%	72
6	3.55%	30
7	1.30%	11
8+	1.18%	10
TOTAL		844

Q3 What is your approximate age?

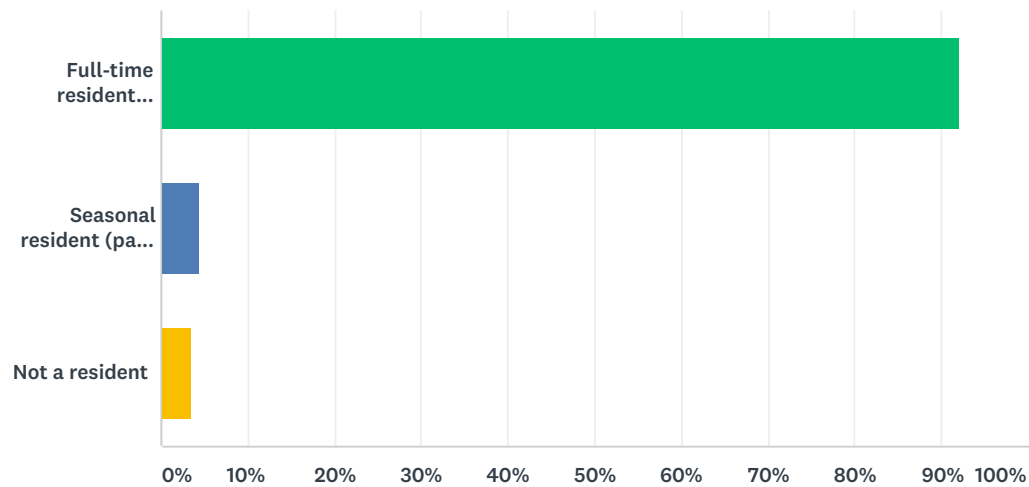
Answered: 842 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
56-65 years	23.75%	200
36-45 years	21.02%	177
66 years and over	18.53%	156
46-55 years	17.93%	151
26-35 years	14.49%	122
18-25 years	3.92%	33
Under 18 years	0.36%	3
TOTAL		842

Q4 What is the status of your residency in Mason County?

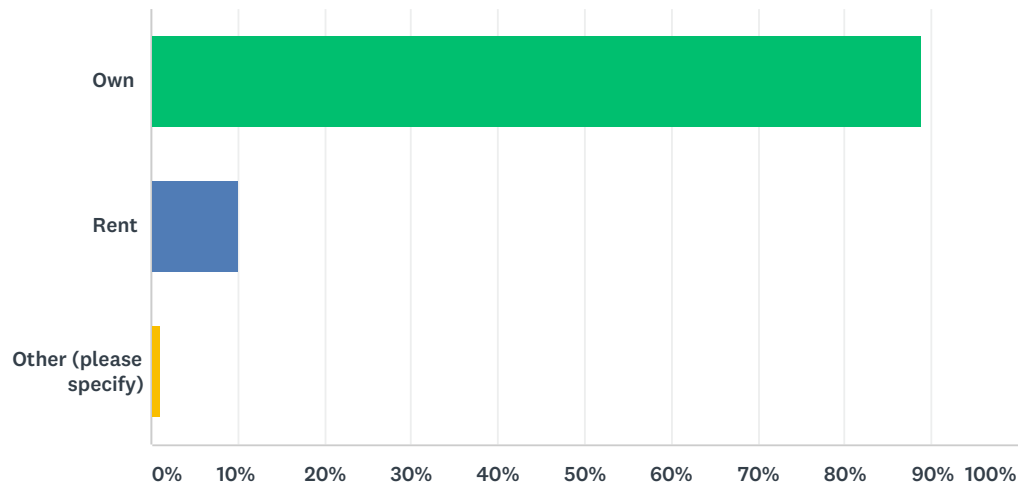
Answered: 848 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Full-time resident (year-round)		91.98%	780
Seasonal resident (part of the year)		4.36%	37
Not a resident		3.66%	31
TOTAL			848

Q5 If you live in Mason County year-round, do you own or rent your home? (if seasonal resident or not a resident, please skip to question 8)

Answered: 785 Skipped: 63

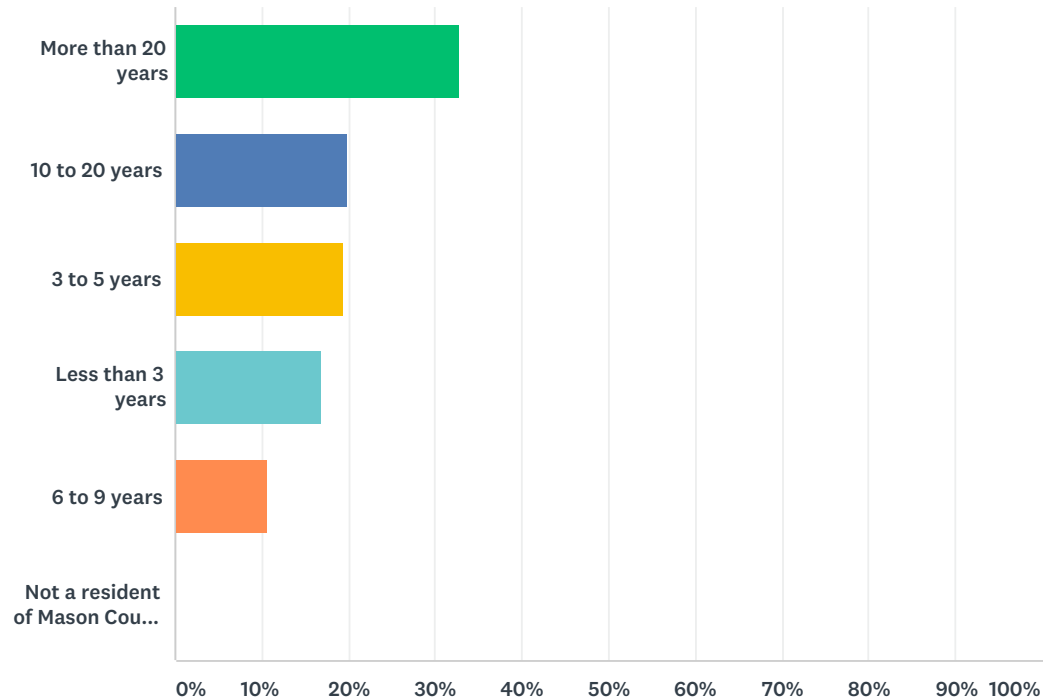


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Own	88.92% 698
Rent	10.06% 79
Other (please specify)	1.02% 8
TOTAL	785

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Live with Parents	4/28/2019 11:42 AM
2	Non Resident	4/25/2019 7:00 PM
3	Own trailer live in park	4/25/2019 10:53 AM
4	seasonal	4/24/2019 7:50 PM
5	Still own a farm in Riverton	4/24/2019 6:05 PM
6	By	4/24/2019 7:24 AM
7	Family owned home/caretaker	4/22/2019 2:06 PM
8	Own home but not land	4/8/2019 11:13 AM

Q6 If you live in Mason County year-round, about how long have you lived in your current home?

Answered: 780 Skipped: 68

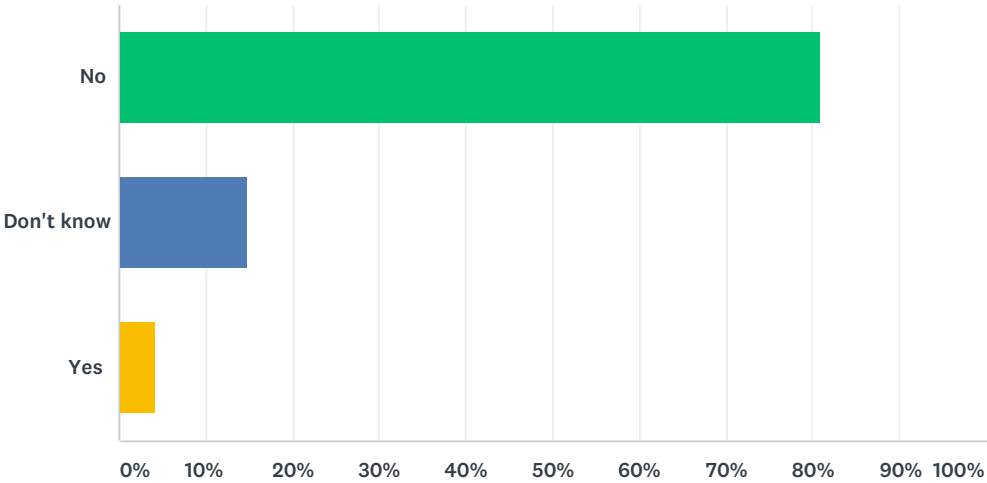


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
More than 20 years		32.95%	257
10 to 20 years		19.87%	155
3 to 5 years		19.49%	152
Less than 3 years		16.92%	132
6 to 9 years		10.77%	84
Not a resident of Mason County year-round (please specify the community in which you reside)		0.00%	0
TOTAL			780

#	NOT A RESIDENT OF MASON COUNTY YEAR-ROUND (PLEASE SPECIFY THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH YOU RESIDE)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

Q7 If you live in Mason County year-round, do you expect to move out of Mason County in the next five years?

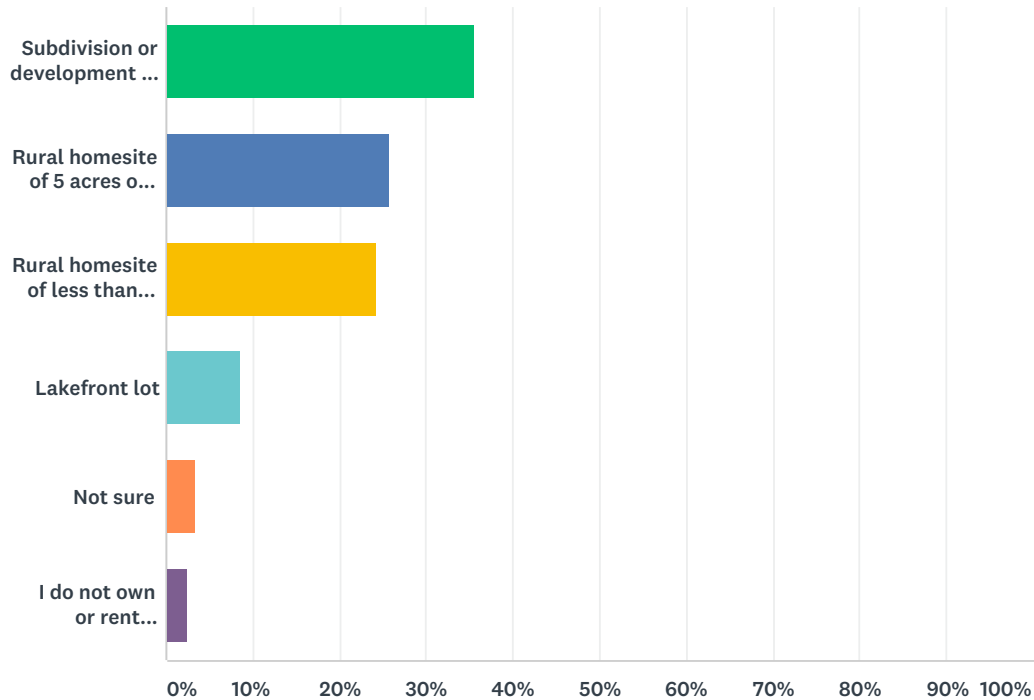
Answered: 786 Skipped: 62



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
No		81.04%	637
Don't know		14.76%	116
Yes		4.20%	33
TOTAL			786

Q8 If you own or rent residential property in Mason County, which of the following best describes your Mason County residence/property?

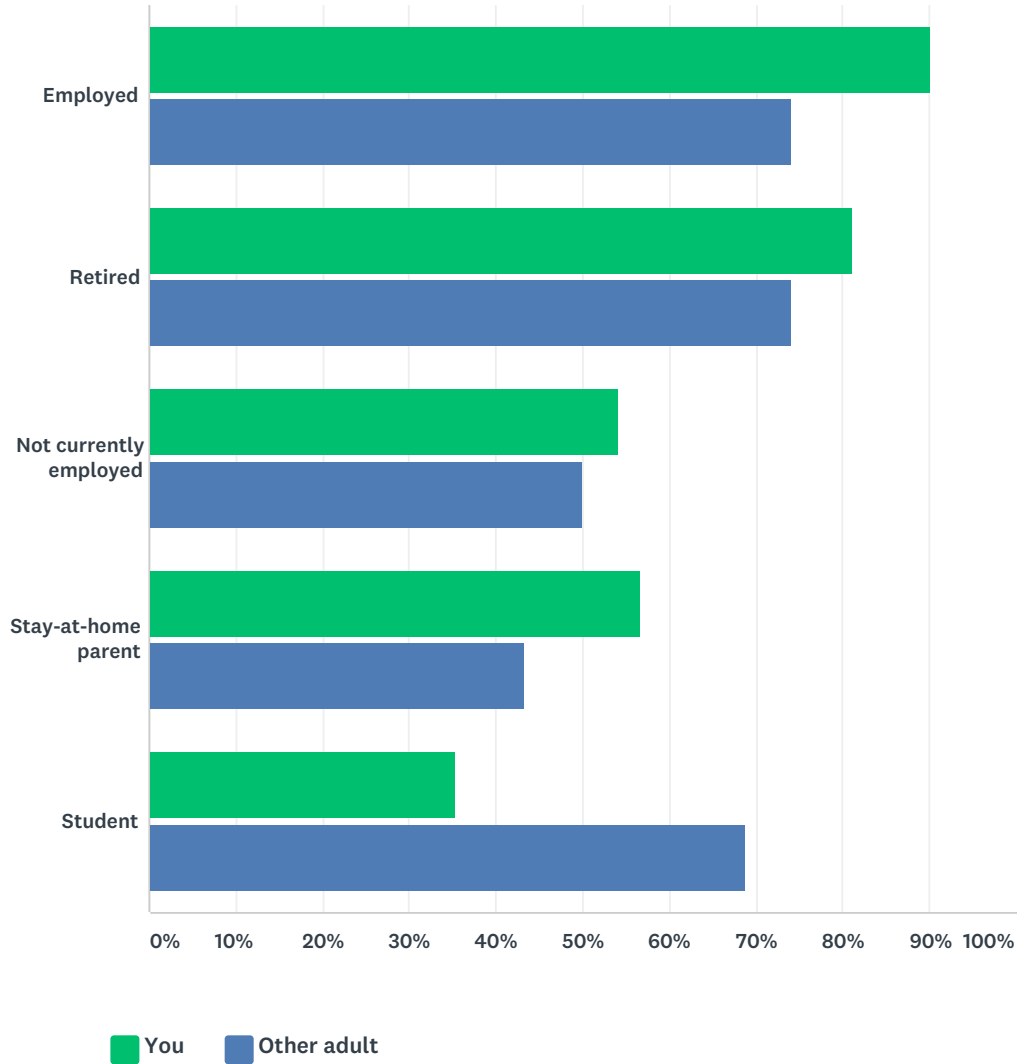
Answered: 785 Skipped: 63



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Subdivision or development in a township, city or village	35.54%	279
Rural homesite of 5 acres or more	25.73%	202
Rural homesite of less than 5 acres	24.33%	191
Lakefront lot	8.54%	67
Not sure	3.44%	27
I do not own or rent residential property in Mason County	2.42%	19
TOTAL		785

Q9 What is your employment status and that of any other adult in the household?

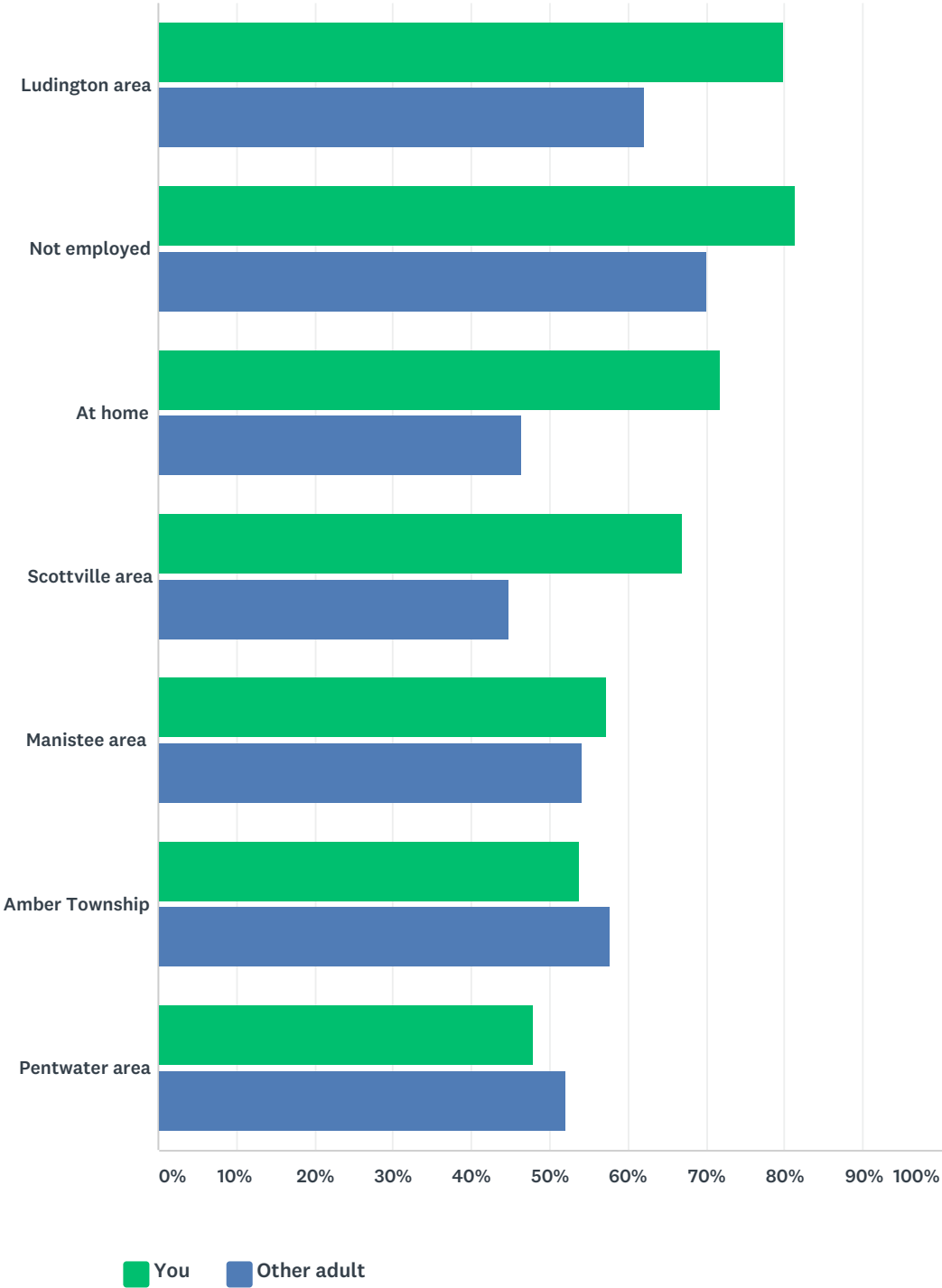
Answered: 809 Skipped: 39



	YOU	OTHER ADULT	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Employed	90.10% 564	74.12% 464	626
Retired	81.11% 219	74.07% 200	270
Not currently employed	54.17% 39	50.00% 36	72
Stay-at-home parent	56.67% 34	43.33% 26	60
Student	35.42% 17	68.75% 33	48

Q10 Where do you work?

Answered: 702 Skipped: 146



	YOU	OTHER ADULT	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Ludington area	80.00% 384	62.08% 298	480
Not employed	81.37% 131	70.19% 113	161

At home	71.82% 79	46.36% 51	110
Scottville area	67.02% 63	44.68% 42	94
Manistee area	57.38% 35	54.10% 33	61
Amber Township	53.85% 14	57.69% 15	26
Pentwater area	47.83% 11	52.17% 12	23

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	retired	6/3/2019 12:30 PM
2	Fountain	5/25/2019 10:36 PM
3	Self employed	5/13/2019 6:09 AM
4	Retired	5/11/2019 6:16 PM
5	cadillac area	5/10/2019 7:47 AM
6	Other adult - Hart	5/9/2019 1:22 PM
7	Retired	5/8/2019 12:59 PM
8	Walker, MI	5/7/2019 4:18 PM
9	Alma, MI	5/7/2019 10:05 AM
10	Muskegon	5/7/2019 8:48 AM
11	CFD and Custer Township	5/6/2019 4:09 PM
12	Grand Haven,Muskegon, Montague	4/30/2019 1:11 PM
13	Out of county	4/30/2019 7:26 AM
14	wexford county	4/29/2019 10:07 PM
15	Other Adult - Muskegon	4/29/2019 9:22 PM
16	Retired	4/29/2019 3:06 PM
17	Holland area	4/29/2019 8:49 AM
18	Whitehall MI	4/28/2019 3:16 PM
19	Village of shelby	4/28/2019 11:57 AM
20	Other	4/28/2019 11:27 AM
21	West Shore Community College	4/28/2019 8:25 AM
22	Retired	4/27/2019 1:14 PM
23	I'm disabled. Husband disabled/retired.	4/26/2019 9:08 PM
24	Other adult is a building contractor	4/26/2019 3:43 PM
25	Lake County	4/26/2019 1:46 PM
26	Other adult - Ottawa County	4/26/2019 1:41 PM
27	Nationwide	4/26/2019 1:18 PM
28	Gran Care in Custer	4/26/2019 12:09 PM
29	Fremont	4/26/2019 9:35 AM
30	Oceana County	4/26/2019 7:00 AM
31	Disabled	4/26/2019 5:54 AM

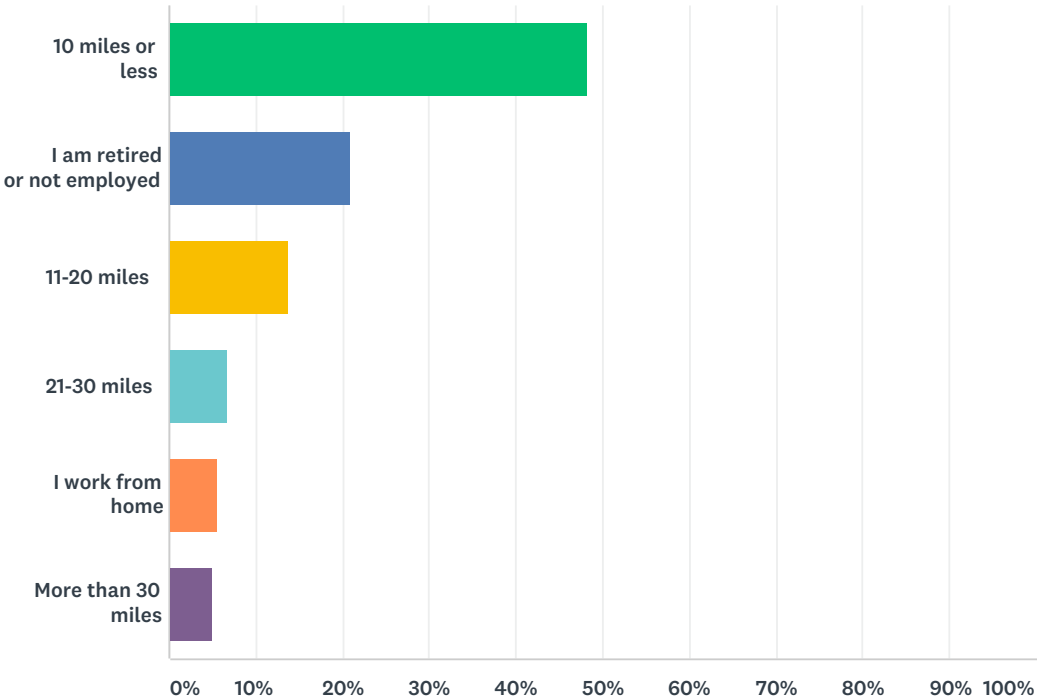
32	other adult travels for work	4/26/2019 4:23 AM
33	In California	4/26/2019 1:51 AM
34	Holland	4/25/2019 10:28 PM
35	Retired	4/25/2019 8:50 PM
36	nationwide	4/25/2019 8:30 PM
37	Kent	4/25/2019 8:14 PM
38	Emplpyeed Oakland county	4/25/2019 8:12 PM
39	Midland	4/25/2019 7:54 PM
40	Traverse	4/25/2019 7:44 PM
41	Grand Ledge and Ionia Michigan	4/25/2019 7:33 PM
42	Otr driver	4/25/2019 7:05 PM
43	Entire county. (Mason County Road Comm,	4/25/2019 7:05 PM
44	Retired	4/25/2019 7:04 PM
45	Hart	4/25/2019 5:33 PM
46	Both work in Muskegon	4/25/2019 5:28 PM
47	Muskegon Township	4/25/2019 4:15 PM
48	Grand Rapids part time	4/25/2019 3:48 PM
49	Muskegon county ⁷	4/25/2019 3:34 PM
50	Montague	4/25/2019 3:33 PM
51	Free Soil	4/25/2019 3:22 PM
52	Niles, MI	4/25/2019 3:14 PM
53	Oakland County	4/25/2019 3:13 PM
54	Holland Area	4/25/2019 3:09 PM
55	Company out of state	4/25/2019 2:28 PM
56	Grand Rapids	4/25/2019 2:02 PM
57	Other adult: Baldwin, Lake County	4/25/2019 1:30 PM
58	Hart area	4/25/2019 1:21 PM
59	Muskegon	4/25/2019 1:01 PM
60	Hart	4/25/2019 12:15 PM
61	Custer	4/25/2019 11:56 AM
62	self employed	4/25/2019 11:05 AM
63	Don't work when in the area. Only back in Illinois	4/25/2019 9:50 AM
64	Other adult works in Shelby	4/25/2019 7:59 AM
65	Baldwin- other Adult	4/25/2019 7:15 AM
66	Retired	4/25/2019 6:33 AM
67	Muskegon county	4/25/2019 3:33 AM
68	Oceana county	4/25/2019 2:40 AM
69	My husband is a service business owner who serves Mason, Manistee and Oceana Counties	4/24/2019 11:26 PM
70	Retired	4/24/2019 11:13 PM
71	Spouse about to be unemployed. Harsco	4/24/2019 11:11 PM
72	Mason and surrounding counties	4/24/2019 10:00 PM

73	New Era Michigan	4/24/2019 9:56 PM
74	Retired	4/24/2019 9:51 PM
75	Village of Shelby	4/24/2019 9:43 PM
76	Other adult Whitehall	4/24/2019 6:07 PM
77	Retired	4/24/2019 5:01 PM
78	retired	4/24/2019 3:29 PM
79	Grand rapids	4/24/2019 2:57 PM
80	Multiple areas	4/24/2019 2:38 PM
81	Holt,Michigan	4/24/2019 2:11 PM
82	Retired	4/24/2019 1:27 PM
83	SE Michigan	4/24/2019 1:19 PM
84	travels mostly Michigan	4/24/2019 10:35 AM
85	Custer	4/24/2019 1:54 AM
86	Muskegon County	4/23/2019 9:28 PM
87	Other Adults - West Michigan Territory	4/23/2019 9:26 AM
88	Grand Rapids, Cadillac	4/23/2019 7:49 AM
89	volunteer	4/23/2019 7:29 AM
90	Self-Travels	4/22/2019 8:16 PM
91	Wanted part time work but was not made welcome since we were from outside of Michigan	4/22/2019 6:33 PM
92	Travels in midwest states	4/22/2019 5:49 PM
93	20+ hour a week volunteer at Spectrum Hospital	4/22/2019 5:26 PM
94	I work in Muskegon County	4/22/2019 5:07 PM
95	Truck driver	4/22/2019 4:55 PM
96	St. Thomas, VI - other adult	4/22/2019 4:38 PM
97	Male head of household is losing job very soon , factory closing.	4/22/2019 4:19 PM
98	Other Adult - Baldwin	4/22/2019 3:41 PM
99	Spouse works in Holland, MI	4/22/2019 3:35 PM
100	Muskegon area	4/22/2019 3:35 PM
101	Travels around the state	4/22/2019 3:25 PM
102	Hart	4/22/2019 12:54 PM
103	Custer area	4/22/2019 11:32 AM
104	Grand Haven other adult	4/22/2019 11:17 AM
105	Other Adult - Hart Area	4/22/2019 11:13 AM
106	Big Rapids	4/22/2019 11:13 AM
107	Both in Free Soil	4/10/2019 5:01 PM
108	Iansing	4/10/2019 7:50 AM
109	Baldwin	4/9/2019 8:57 PM
110	Hersey	4/9/2019 6:54 PM
111	Owns business on east coast	4/9/2019 3:20 PM
112	Oceana county - both adults	4/9/2019 2:28 PM
113	Mason County, Pentwater, Manistee	4/8/2019 8:42 PM

114	Other adult is Self employed custom harvest green beans	4/8/2019 7:13 PM
115	County wide	4/8/2019 3:33 PM
116	I have applied for work in the Scottville area recently.	4/8/2019 1:40 PM
117	I worked at West Shore Community College and the other adult at West Shore ESD.	4/8/2019 12:31 PM
118	My husband works 2 days in Ludington and 2 days in Fremont. We have 1 college student and 2 retirees in our home.	4/8/2019 11:09 AM
119	Hart	4/8/2019 9:55 AM
120	Retired, on disability	4/8/2019 9:53 AM
121	self employed	4/8/2019 9:34 AM
122	Retired	4/8/2019 9:13 AM
123	See number 9	4/8/2019 7:41 AM
124	Retired	4/7/2019 10:24 PM
125	Retired, in Ludington	4/7/2019 10:14 PM
126	Free Soil	4/7/2019 9:57 PM
127	Muskegon but supervises oceana projects mostly	4/7/2019 9:41 PM
128	Retired	4/7/2019 9:36 PM

Q11 About how far do you travel one-way to work?

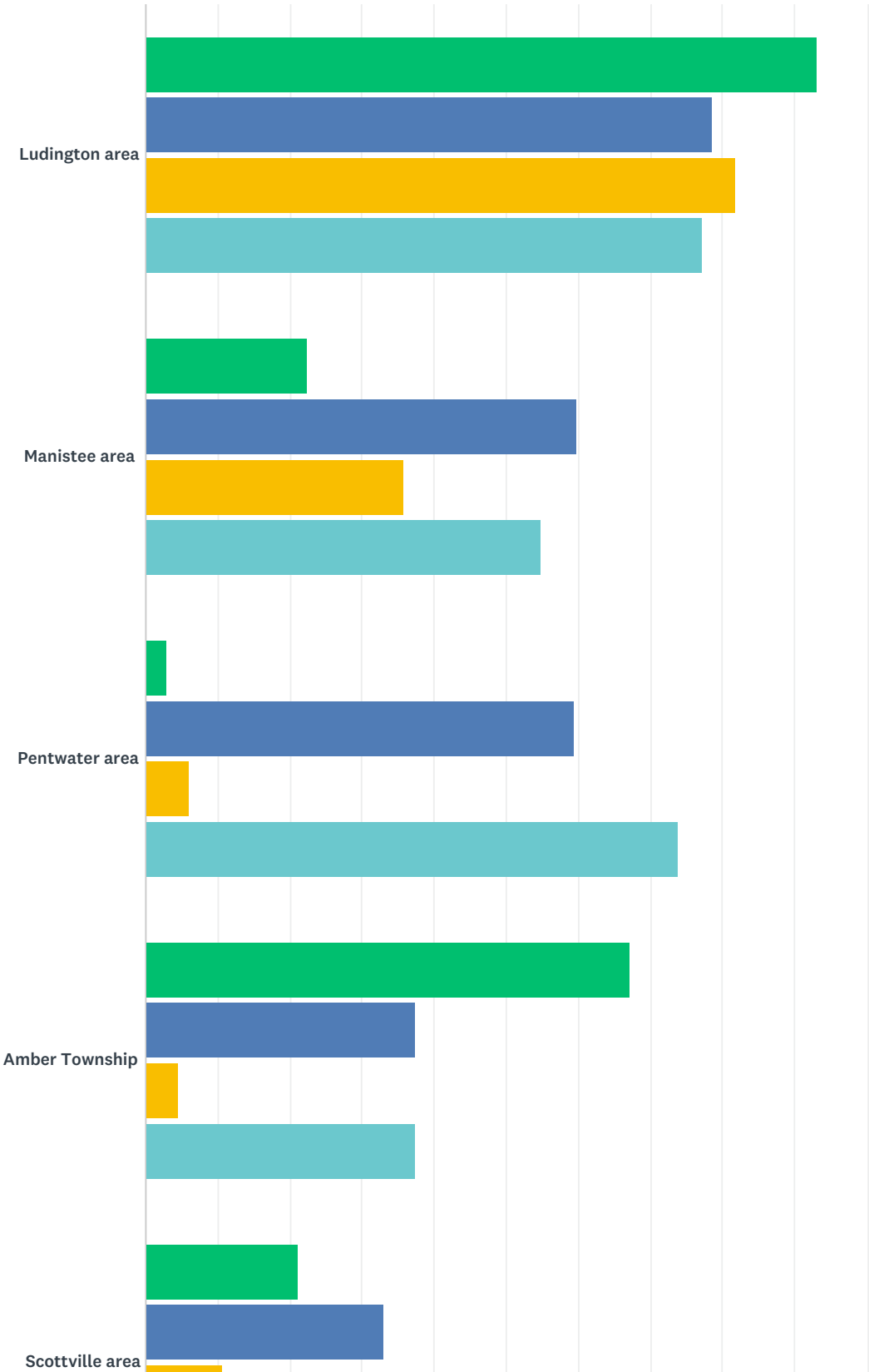
Answered: 771 Skipped: 77

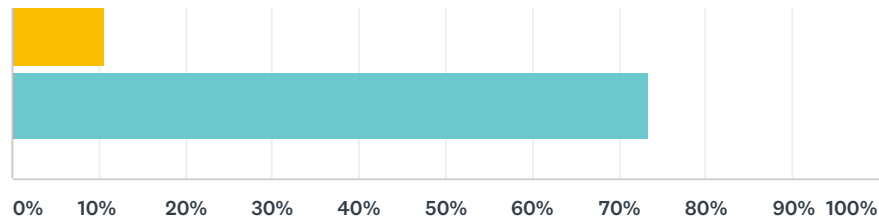


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
10 miles or less	48.25%	372
I am retired or not employed	20.88%	161
11-20 miles	13.75%	106
21-30 miles	6.61%	51
I work from home	5.58%	43
More than 30 miles	4.93%	38
TOTAL		771

Q12 Where are you most likely to go for the following goods and services?

Answered: 802 Skipped: 46





■ Groceries
 ■ Entertainment
 ■ Medical
 ■ Recreation

	GROCERIES	ENTERTAINMENT	MEDICAL	RECREATION	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Ludington area	93.00% 744	78.63% 629	81.75% 654	77.25% 618	800
Manistee area	22.41% 52	59.91% 139	35.78% 83	54.74% 127	232
Pentwater area	3.03% 5	59.39% 98	6.06% 10	73.94% 122	165
Amber Township	67.10% 104	37.42% 58	4.52% 7	37.42% 58	155
Scottville area	21.19% 32	33.11% 50	10.60% 16	73.51% 111	151

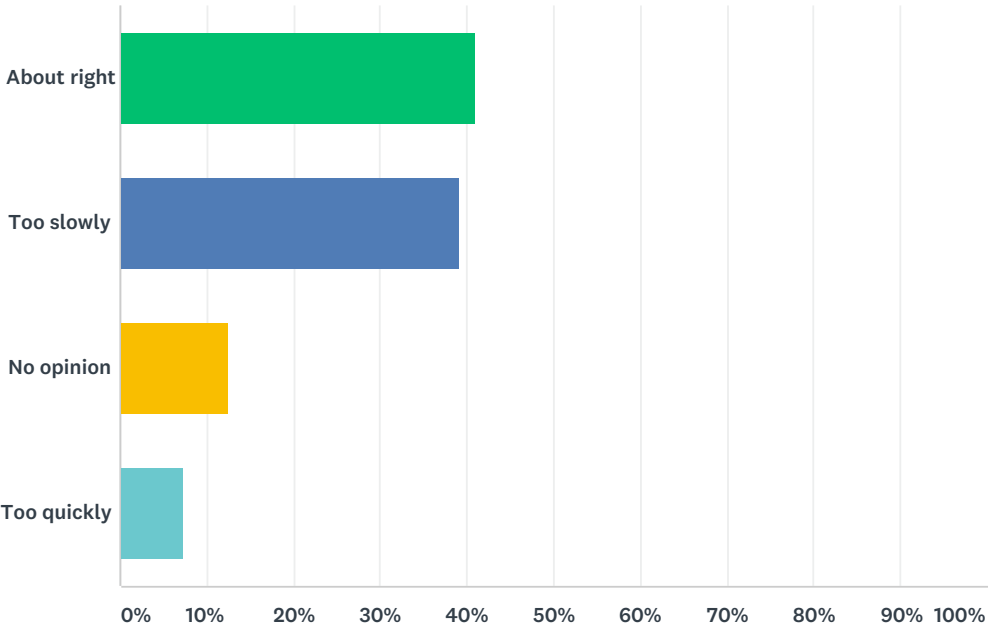
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Bass Lake Outlet Beach	6/4/2019 2:13 PM
2	Traverse City or Grand Rapids for Medical	5/25/2019 10:36 PM
3	Hart, Muskegon, Grand Rapids	5/20/2019 9:50 AM
4	recreation at National Forests	5/7/2019 10:14 AM
5	Muskegon, Grand Rapids	5/6/2019 7:20 PM
6	Baldwin	4/30/2019 7:26 AM
7	Grand Rapids j	4/28/2019 11:27 AM
8	Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Chicago	4/26/2019 9:35 AM
9	Medical - Grand Rapids	4/26/2019 8:46 AM
10	Medical Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor	4/26/2019 7:09 AM
11	Kent	4/25/2019 8:14 PM
12	Grand Rapids	4/25/2019 5:53 PM
13	Grand Rapids-Entertainmt/Medical-Muskegon	4/25/2019 5:28 PM
14	FreeSoil, recreation	4/25/2019 3:44 PM
15	While in Fountain, I generally go to Ludington or Manistee	4/25/2019 2:02 PM
16	Entertainment/Rec: Muskegon, Traverse City	4/25/2019 1:30 PM
17	We go out of the county for all of our recreation and entertainment.	4/25/2019 12:50 PM
18	Hart medical Sshelby	4/25/2019 12:15 PM
19	mercy here and shelby	4/25/2019 12:03 PM
20	grand rapids	4/25/2019 9:43 AM
21	Mostly around my home, but I fish all over in Manistee, Newago and Lake counties	4/25/2019 8:16 AM
22	medical - besides Ludington area also Pentwater and Manistee	4/25/2019 1:19 AM

23	Silver Lake	4/24/2019 11:35 PM
24	Hart	4/24/2019 10:52 PM
25	Medical-- Grand Rapids	4/24/2019 10:11 PM
26	Shelby Twp. MI	4/24/2019 10:09 PM
27	Some medical services in Grand Rapids	4/24/2019 4:04 PM
28	For entertainment I go to Grand Rapids as there are more opportunities at better prices. Medical I go to Hart as my family doctor is there and the Ludington hospitals track record is not good in my opinion.	4/24/2019 3:52 PM
29	medical- Grand Rapids, entertainment- Grand Rapids	4/24/2019 3:29 PM
30	Grand Rapids, Traverse City	4/24/2019 2:38 PM
31	Grand Rapids for entertainment	4/24/2019 10:37 AM
32	Grand Rapids	4/23/2019 9:28 PM
33	Out of county	4/23/2019 9:19 PM
34	Medical - Grand Rapids	4/23/2019 3:30 PM
35	All over Michigan	4/23/2019 11:46 AM
36	Traverse City	4/23/2019 11:20 AM
37	Medical-Currently Big Rapids	4/23/2019 9:33 AM
38	We travel out of town a lot for recreation and entertainment.	4/23/2019 8:33 AM
39	Muskegon or Grand Rapids	4/23/2019 7:56 AM
40	Grand Rapids	4/23/2019 7:39 AM
41	state park, PM River in E Mason county	4/22/2019 8:51 PM
42	Traverse City, Muskegon	4/22/2019 8:24 PM
43	Muskegon for shopping	4/22/2019 7:47 PM
44	TC, Frankfort, GR, Muskegon	4/22/2019 6:33 PM
45	Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Traverse City for Medical, GR and TC for entertainment	4/22/2019 5:26 PM
46	Muskegon	4/22/2019 3:35 PM
47	recreation: we generally camp in and out of the county	4/22/2019 3:34 PM
48	medical is either traverse city or grand rapids	4/22/2019 3:25 PM
49	UP	4/22/2019 2:43 PM
50	Out of county for medical/recreational	4/22/2019 2:10 PM
51	Medical - out of town	4/22/2019 1:44 PM
52	Muskegon	4/22/2019 1:23 PM
53	Medical in Muskegon	4/22/2019 12:36 PM
54	muskegon	4/12/2019 10:29 PM
55	Recreation-florida	4/9/2019 8:57 PM
56	Gr- Costco, Trader Joe's, target, sky zone	4/9/2019 3:20 PM
57	Medical- oceana or muskegon county for hospital	4/9/2019 2:28 PM
58	out of town for medical & recreation	4/8/2019 8:42 PM
59	Muskegon	4/8/2019 8:01 PM
60	Muskegon for medical too.	4/8/2019 7:52 PM
61	Bigger cities for entertainment & recreation	4/8/2019 6:10 PM

62	Summit Township for beach, Bortells	4/8/2019 6:04 PM
63	Baldwin Clinic	4/8/2019 1:40 PM
64	go out of town for vacations	4/8/2019 1:05 PM
65	Medical in Muskegon and Grand Rapids	4/8/2019 12:31 PM
66	Medical Grand Rapids abs Traverse City	4/8/2019 12:18 PM
67	Wherever is closest.	4/8/2019 12:14 PM
68	Muskegon for recreation & entertainment	4/8/2019 10:20 AM
69	I try not to have any serious medical treatment in Mason county. Too many quacks dealing out opioids	4/8/2019 9:53 AM
70	recreation Manistee National Forest	4/8/2019 9:34 AM
71	I generally travel to TC, Grand Rapids, or Detroit for recreation and entertainment.	4/8/2019 8:48 AM
72	Recreation around Branch township also	4/8/2019 8:14 AM
73	Muskegon	4/8/2019 7:43 AM
74	Muskegon	4/7/2019 10:56 PM
75	Muskegon and UofMa	4/7/2019 10:24 PM
76	Medical Traverse City.	4/7/2019 10:07 PM

Q13 Do you think Mason County is growing...

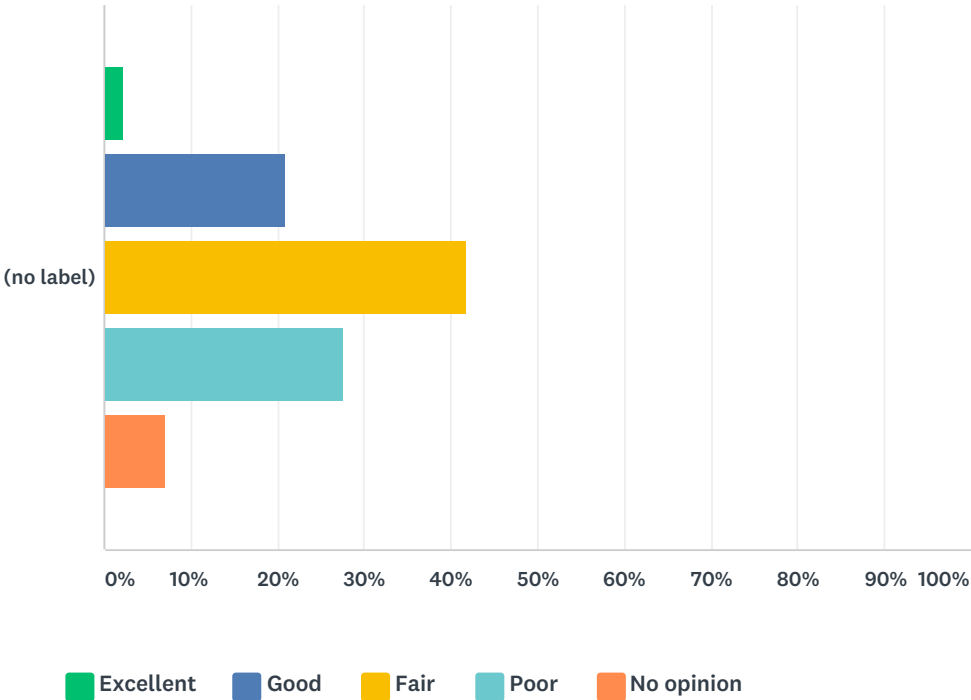
Answered: 811 Skipped: 37



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
About right		41.06%	333
Too slowly		39.21%	318
No opinion		12.45%	101
Too quickly		7.27%	59
TOTAL			811

Q14 How would you rate efforts to guide and direct growth in your community?

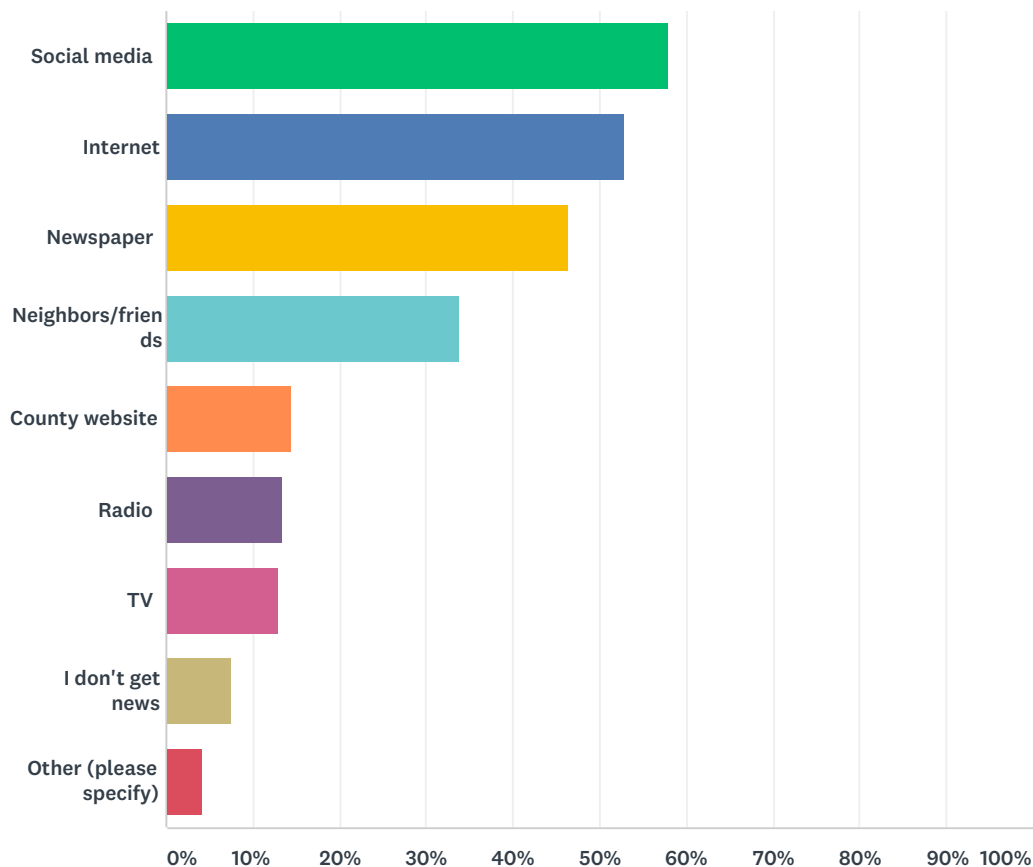
Answered: 809 Skipped: 39



	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.22%	21.01%	41.90%	27.69%	7.17%	809	1.98
	18	170	339	224	58		

Q15 How do you receive news and information pertaining to Mason County planning and zoning issues? (check all that apply)

Answered: 809 Skipped: 39



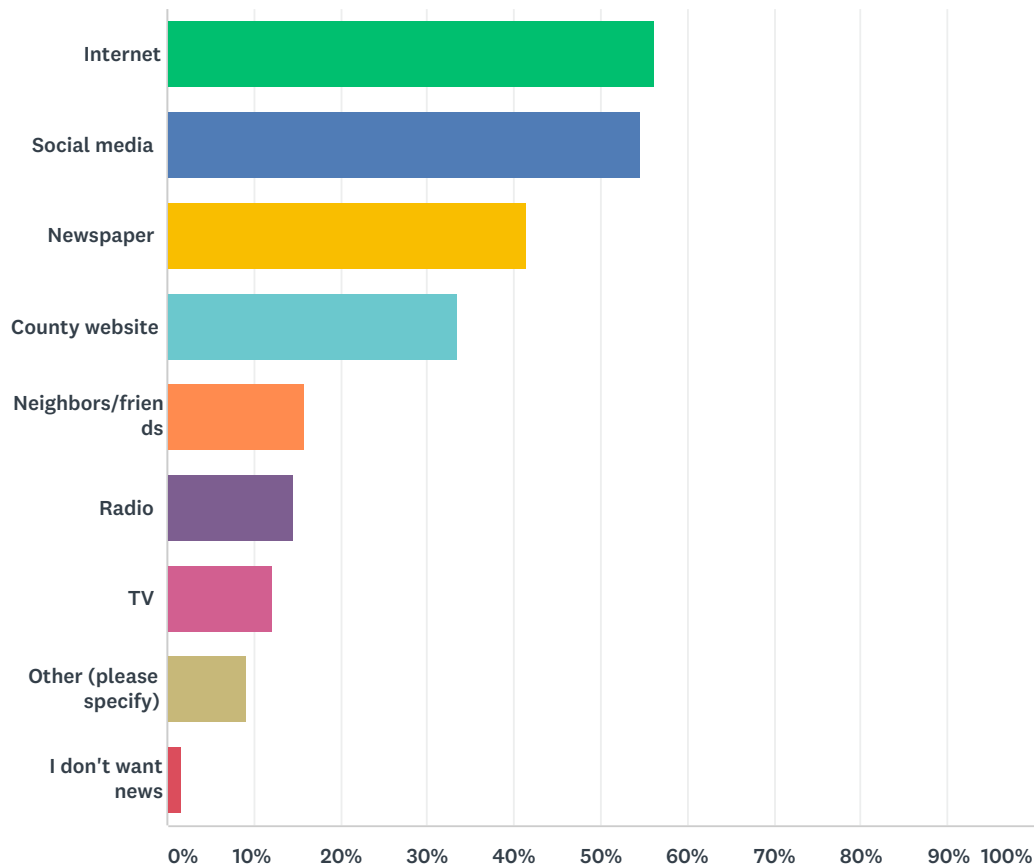
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Social media		57.97%	469
Internet		52.90%	428
Newspaper		46.48%	376
Neighbors/friends		33.99%	275
County website		14.34%	116
Radio		13.47%	109
TV		12.98%	105
I don't get news		7.54%	61
Other (please specify)		4.20%	34
Total Respondents: 809			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Mason County Republicans	5/9/2019 10:24 AM

2	Mason County Press	4/29/2019 3:06 PM
3	I know most of the commissioners	4/28/2019 4:47 PM
4	I'll	4/26/2019 10:00 PM
5	Lundington area schools website	4/26/2019 10:17 AM
6	on line, Mason County Press, Ludington Daily News	4/26/2019 7:09 AM
7	Mason County Press	4/25/2019 11:51 PM
8	Through my job working with the public	4/25/2019 10:18 PM
9	Ludington planning commission meetings	4/25/2019 9:44 PM
10	Mail	4/25/2019 8:07 PM
11	Mason County Press	4/25/2019 5:15 PM
12	Mason County Press	4/25/2019 12:04 PM
13	Family	4/25/2019 8:16 AM
14	Mason county press	4/25/2019 6:42 AM
15	Mason County Press1q	4/24/2019 10:52 PM
16	Internet	4/24/2019 10:11 PM
17	too bad WMOM tanked	4/24/2019 7:52 PM
18	Friends who live in Mason County	4/24/2019 1:19 PM
19	email	4/23/2019 6:30 PM
20	meetings attended	4/23/2019 2:44 PM
21	mail when there is a meeting asking for input	4/23/2019 9:21 AM
22	Rob Alway emails	4/22/2019 6:33 PM
23	Village meeting	4/22/2019 6:05 PM
24	Online news	4/22/2019 5:26 PM
25	work peers	4/22/2019 3:35 PM
26	Work	4/22/2019 12:50 PM
27	gossip	4/22/2019 12:36 PM
28	work	4/22/2019 11:17 AM
29	personal contact	4/13/2019 8:55 AM
30	Word of mouth	4/8/2019 7:23 PM
31	Mail	4/8/2019 1:40 PM
32	Reports from township meetings	4/8/2019 10:43 AM
33	Mason County Press	4/8/2019 10:35 AM
34	It's usually sent to the landowners, not renters. Which isn't fair, as we pay for services also.	4/8/2019 9:53 AM

Q16 How would you like to receive news and information pertaining to Mason County planning and zoning issues? (check all that apply)

Answered: 790 Skipped: 58



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Internet		56.33%	445
Social media		54.68%	432
Newspaper		41.52%	328
County website		33.42%	264
Neighbors/friends		15.95%	126
Radio		14.56%	115
TV		12.15%	96
Other (please specify)		9.24%	73
I don't want news		1.77%	14
Total Respondents: 790			

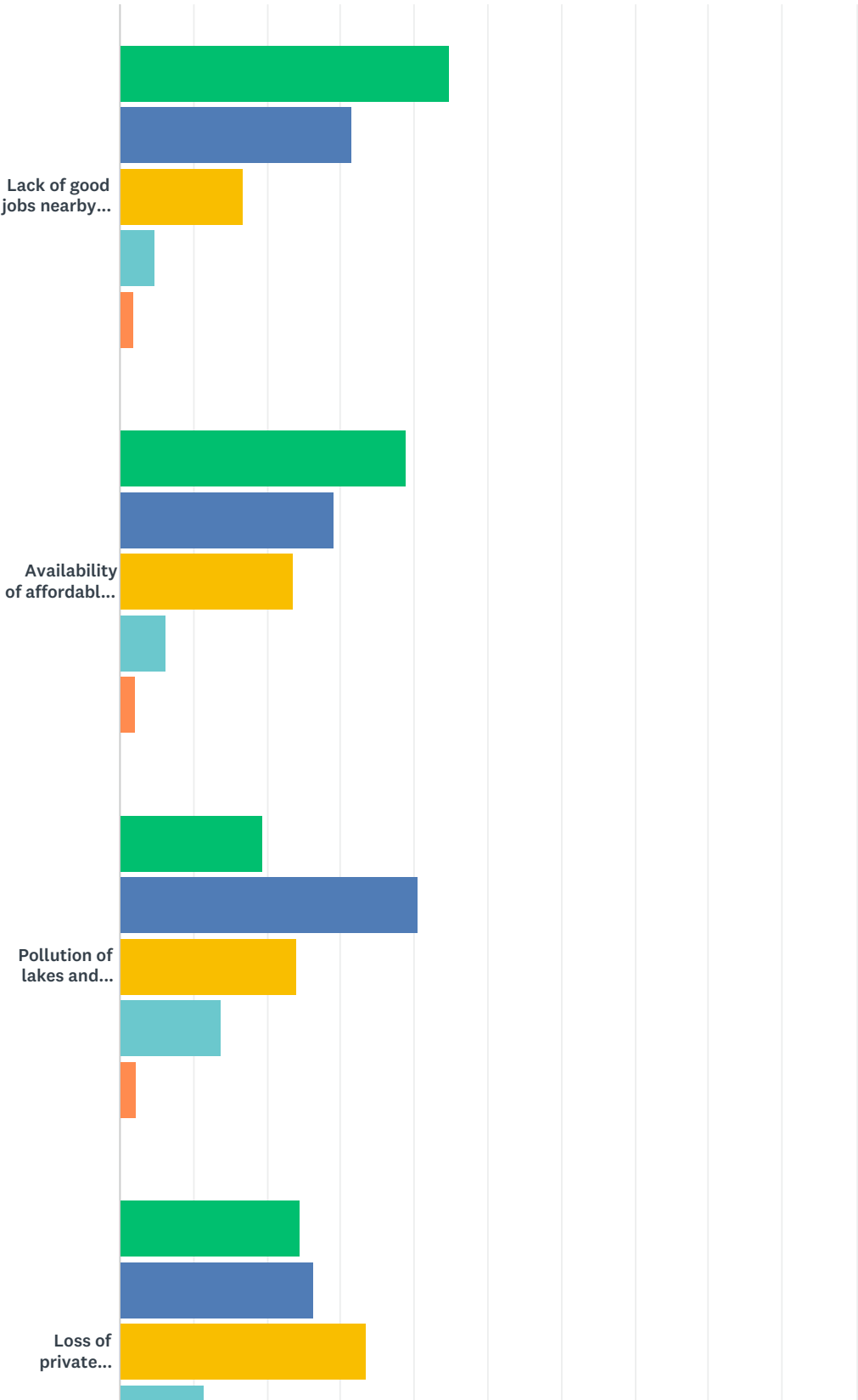
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Email	6/3/2019 11:04 AM

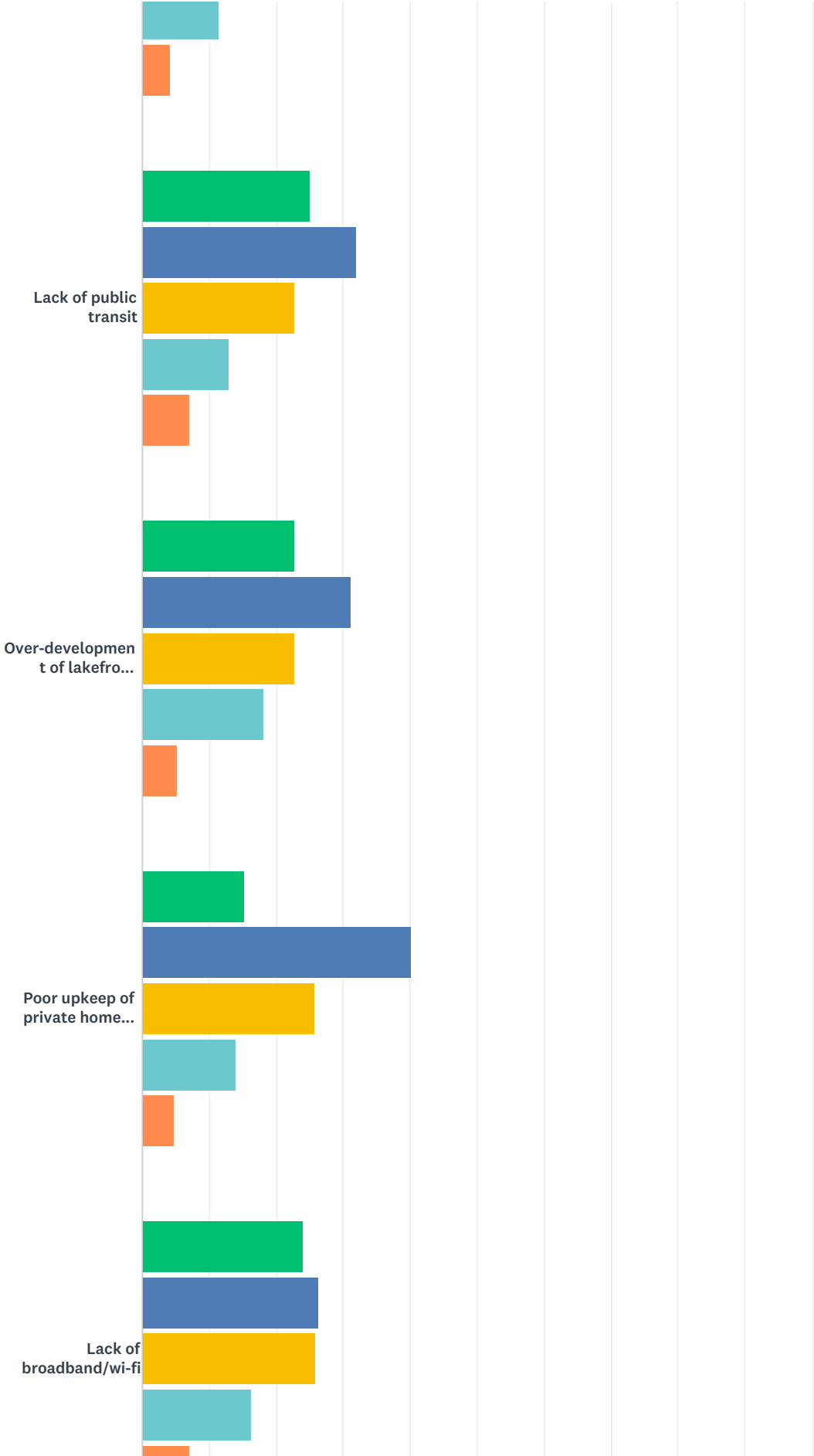
2	Email	5/16/2019 7:13 AM
3	There should be no zoning in rural mason county	5/10/2019 7:47 AM
4	Mason County Republicans	5/9/2019 10:24 AM
5	By mail	5/8/2019 12:24 PM
6	email or mail	5/8/2019 11:28 AM
7	Electronic communications like email	5/7/2019 6:40 PM
8	Email	5/7/2019 4:18 PM
9	emailed newsletter	5/7/2019 11:31 AM
10	More information concerning zoning applications could be made available on the County website	5/6/2019 7:20 PM
11	email or usps mail on changes affecting my township	4/29/2019 10:07 PM
12	Mason County Press	4/29/2019 3:06 PM
13	Mailers	4/28/2019 3:16 PM
14	News letter with specifics.	4/28/2019 11:57 AM
15	old fashion mail	4/27/2019 10:03 AM
16	Mail or flier for important issues/upcoming issues	4/26/2019 2:10 PM
17	Email	4/26/2019 7:44 AM
18	E-mails or Mason County Press	4/26/2019 7:09 AM
19	mail if it directly effects me	4/26/2019 4:23 AM
20	Mason county press	4/25/2019 11:51 PM
21	Mail	4/25/2019 8:07 PM
22	Newsletter	4/25/2019 8:01 PM
23	Newsletter	4/25/2019 7:13 PM
24	Mail	4/25/2019 6:59 PM
25	I would like the count to maintain a voluntary subscription email service and use it to send email with county minutes for commissioner and committee meetings, also with events and news like the new Code Red.	4/25/2019 6:45 PM
26	Mail	4/25/2019 6:14 PM
27	Mason county press	4/25/2019 5:41 PM
28	Mail	4/25/2019 4:19 PM
29	Email	4/25/2019 3:44 PM
30	mail	4/25/2019 3:06 PM
31	e-mail	4/25/2019 2:02 PM
32	Email	4/25/2019 11:48 AM
33	Family & Friends	4/25/2019 8:16 AM
34	Mason county press	4/25/2019 6:42 AM
35	By mail if it pertains to my specific location	4/25/2019 2:37 AM
36	mail	4/24/2019 11:35 PM
37	Email	4/24/2019 11:11 PM
38	Email	4/24/2019 8:15 PM
39	Mailings	4/24/2019 6:56 PM
40	Email newsletter	4/24/2019 6:26 PM

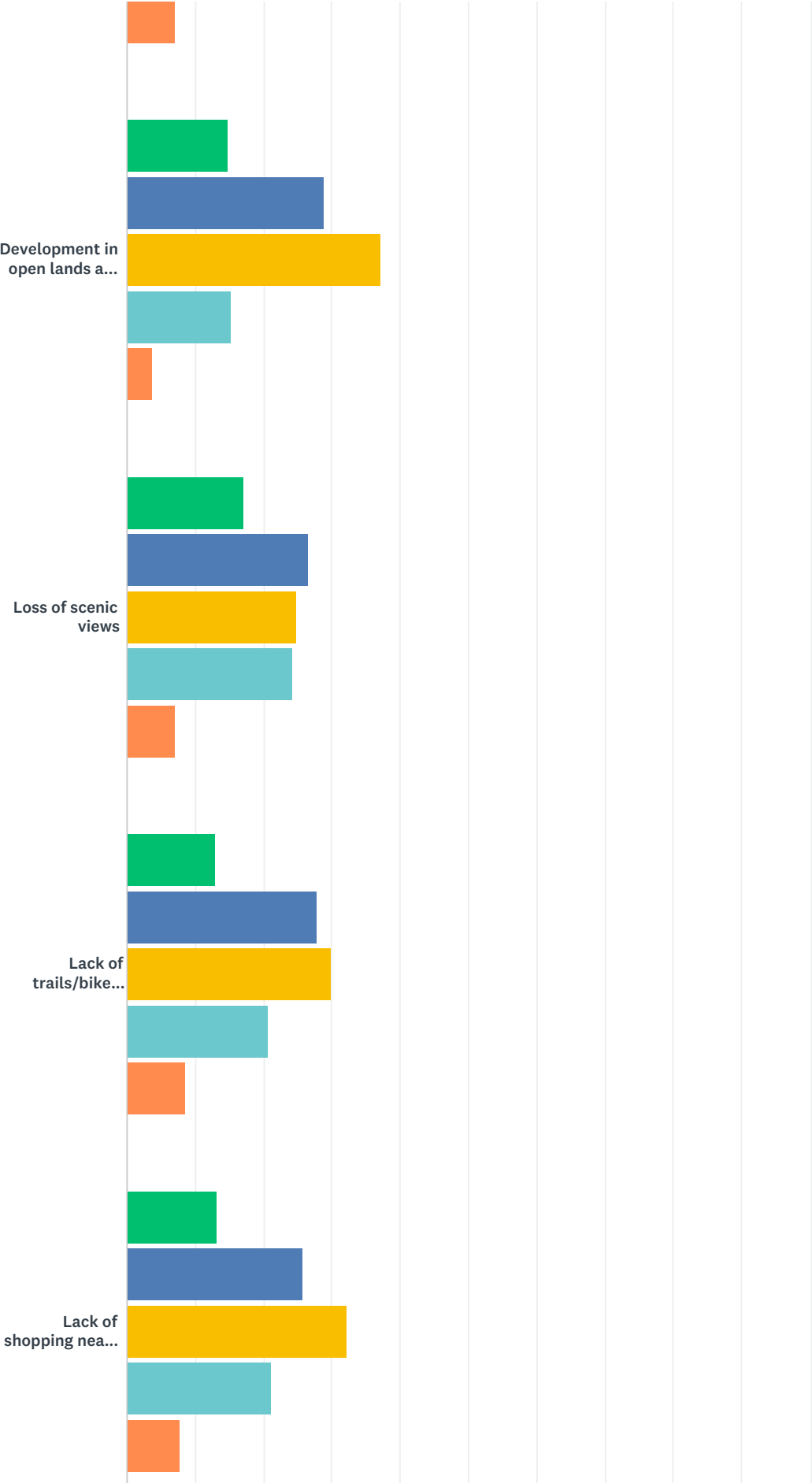
41	email- newsletter, e-blast etc.	4/24/2019 10:37 AM
42	mailings	4/24/2019 8:34 AM
43	email blast	4/23/2019 9:28 PM
44	email	4/23/2019 6:30 PM
45	Informational meetings	4/23/2019 2:44 PM
46	email	4/23/2019 7:29 AM
47	MC Press	4/23/2019 5:44 AM
48	e-mails for those who sign up to receive	4/22/2019 8:24 PM
49	Email	4/22/2019 6:33 PM
50	Email	4/22/2019 5:26 PM
51	mailings	4/22/2019 4:07 PM
52	Emails would be nice	4/22/2019 3:44 PM
53	US Postal Service	4/22/2019 12:36 PM
54	e-mail	4/22/2019 11:49 AM
55	Public forum	4/22/2019 11:49 AM
56	Email	4/10/2019 11:05 PM
57	email	4/10/2019 7:50 AM
58	A monthly newsletter would be nice.	4/9/2019 10:57 AM
59	A message or call stating if there is information out and ready to read	4/8/2019 9:38 PM
60	Mail	4/8/2019 7:23 PM
61	Email	4/8/2019 1:59 PM
62	Mail	4/8/2019 1:40 PM
63	email	4/8/2019 12:31 PM
64	County newsletter	4/8/2019 12:14 PM
65	Mason County Press	4/8/2019 10:35 AM
66	Mail	4/8/2019 9:55 AM
67	Mailed to individual residences would be nice	4/8/2019 9:53 AM
68	IPR- Interlochen Public Radio	4/8/2019 9:13 AM
69	Full minutes published on website	4/8/2019 9:10 AM
70	Text	4/8/2019 7:34 AM
71	Email	4/7/2019 11:58 PM
72	News letter	4/7/2019 10:36 PM
73	Mason County Press	4/7/2019 10:07 PM

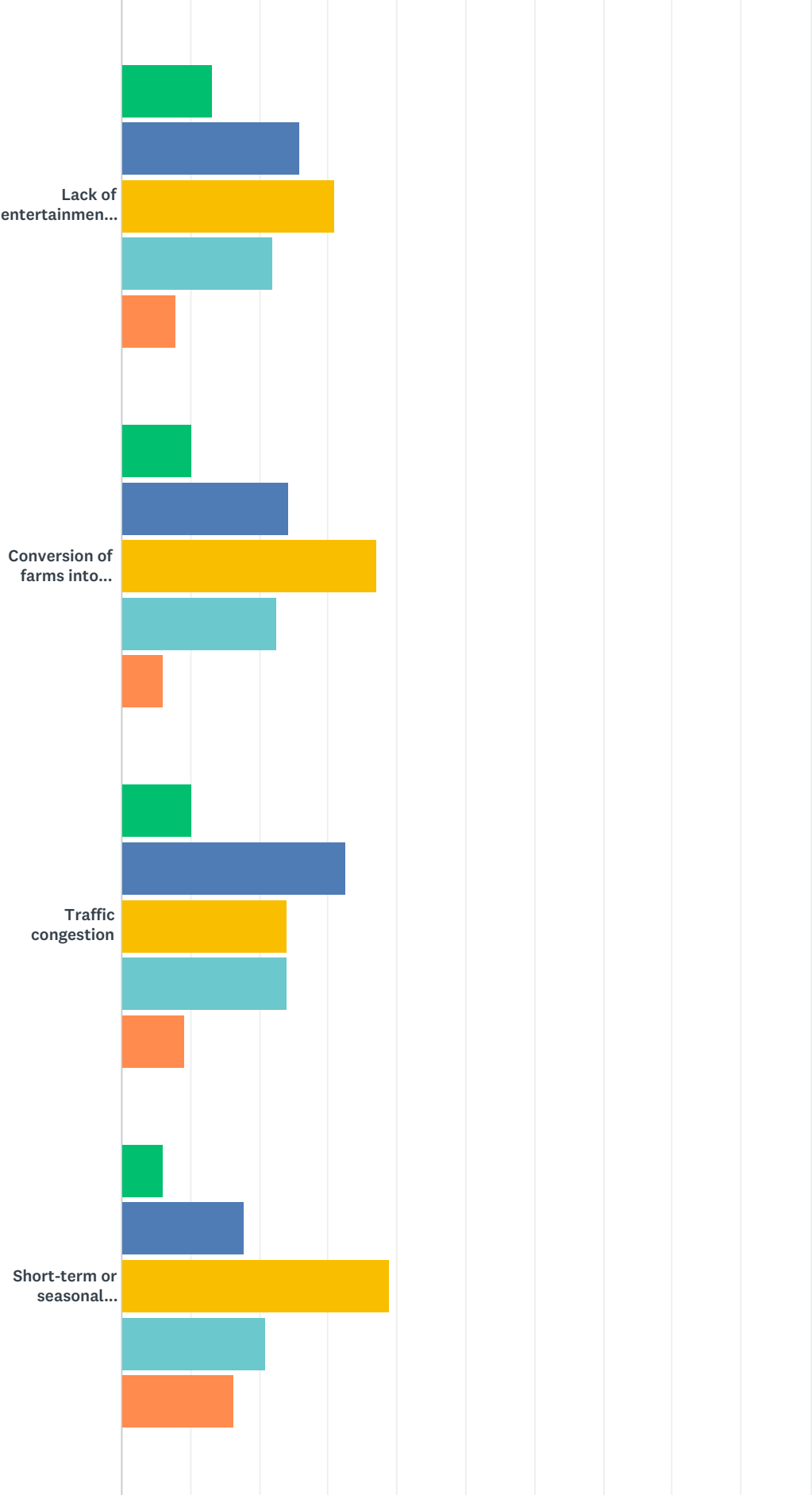
Q17 In the area where you live, how serious do you think the following problems or concerns are:

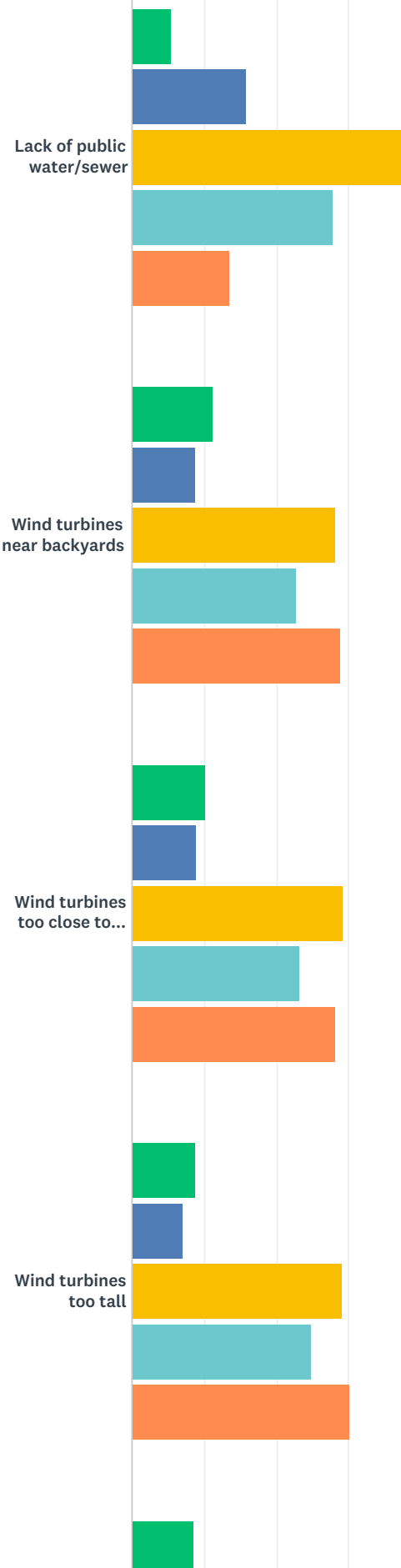
Answered: 765 Skipped: 83

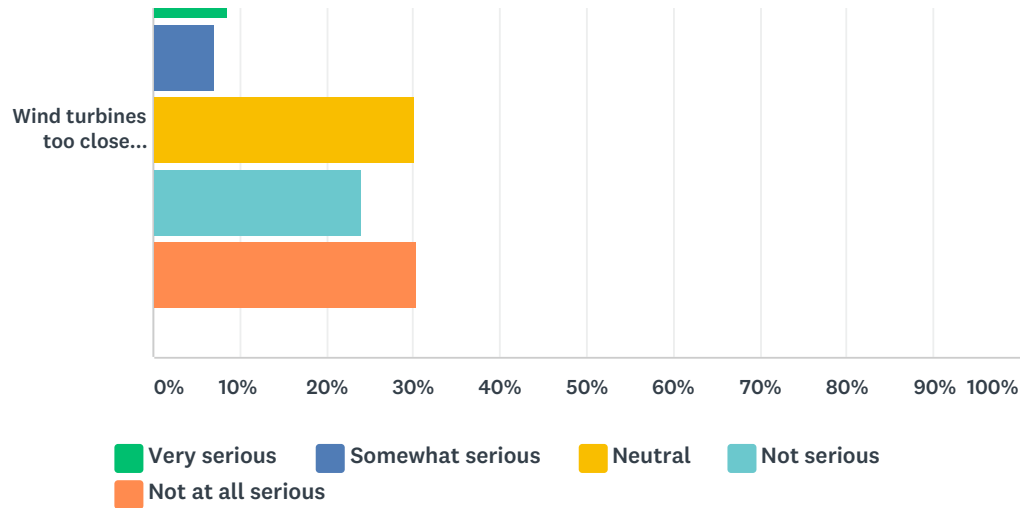












	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NEUTRAL	NOT SERIOUS	NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Lack of good jobs nearby (within 5 miles)	44.84% 339	31.61% 239	16.80% 127	4.76% 36	1.98% 15	756	4.13
Availability of affordable housing	38.86% 293	29.18% 220	23.61% 178	6.23% 47	2.12% 16	754	3.96
Pollution of lakes and streams	19.53% 148	40.50% 307	24.01% 182	13.72% 104	2.24% 17	758	3.61
Loss of private property rights	24.57% 185	26.43% 199	33.47% 252	11.42% 86	4.12% 31	753	3.56
Lack of public transit	25.13% 188	32.09% 240	22.73% 170	12.97% 97	7.09% 53	748	3.55
Over-development of lakefront areas	22.71% 171	31.21% 235	22.71% 171	18.19% 137	5.18% 39	753	3.48
Poor upkeep of private homes and yards	15.21% 115	40.21% 304	25.79% 195	14.02% 106	4.76% 36	756	3.47
Lack of broadband/wi-fi	24.04% 182	26.42% 200	26.02% 197	16.38% 124	7.13% 54	757	3.44
Development in open lands and natural areas	14.91% 112	28.89% 217	37.15% 279	15.31% 115	3.73% 28	751	3.36
Loss of scenic views	17.11% 128	26.47% 198	25.00% 187	24.33% 182	7.09% 53	748	3.22
Lack of trails/bike lanes	12.93% 97	27.87% 209	29.87% 224	20.67% 155	8.67% 65	750	3.16
Lack of shopping nearby (within 5 miles)	13.10% 99	25.79% 195	32.28% 244	21.03% 159	7.80% 59	756	3.15
Lack of entertainment and social activities	13.20% 99	26.00% 195	31.07% 233	21.87% 164	7.87% 59	750	3.15
Conversion of farms into house lots	10.27% 77	24.27% 182	36.93% 277	22.53% 169	6.00% 45	750	3.10
Traffic congestion	10.15% 76	32.58% 244	24.03% 180	24.03% 180	9.21% 69	749	3.10
Short-term or seasonal rentals	6.12% 46	17.69% 133	38.96% 293	21.01% 158	16.22% 122	752	2.76
Lack of public water/sewer	5.44% 41	15.80% 119	37.45% 282	27.76% 209	13.55% 102	753	2.72

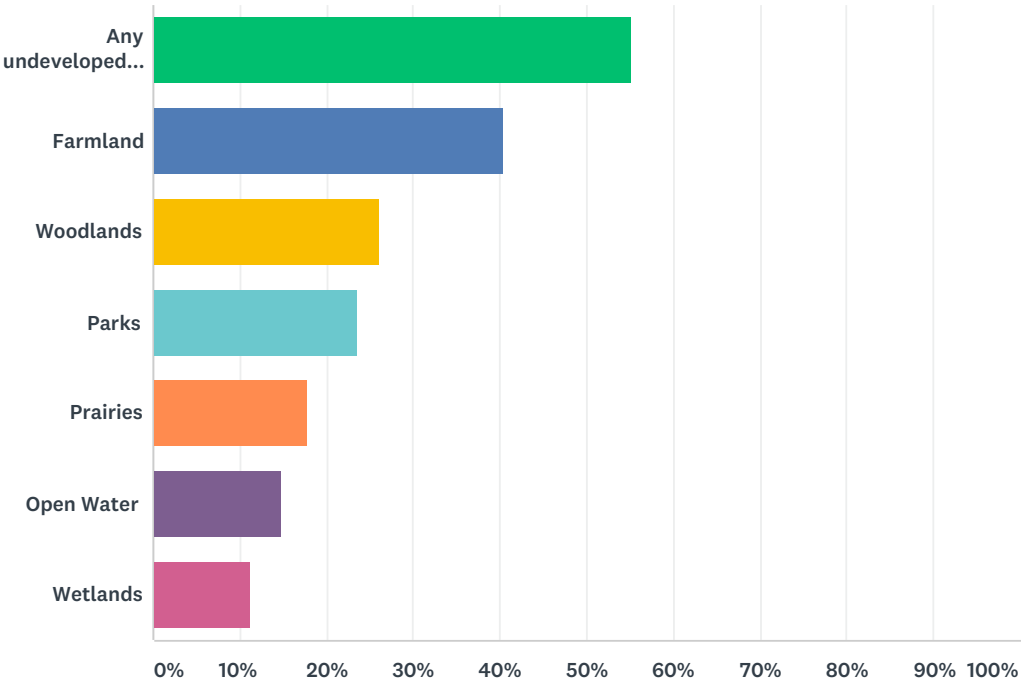
Wind turbines near backyards	11.29% 85	8.76% 66	28.29% 213	22.84% 172	28.82% 217	753	2.51
Wind turbines too close to homes	10.29% 78	8.97% 68	29.29% 222	23.22% 176	28.23% 214	758	2.50
Wind turbines too tall	8.86% 67	7.14% 54	29.10% 220	24.87% 188	30.03% 227	756	2.40
Wind turbines too close together	8.48% 64	7.02% 53	30.07% 227	24.11% 182	30.33% 229	755	2.39

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Allowing commercial/business endeavours in residential aresa	6/7/2019 12:52 PM
2	Traffic on Lakeshore Drive around Bass Lake much too fast.	6/4/2019 2:20 PM
3	The government needs to stay the fuck out of my business.	5/10/2019 7:49 AM
4	TERRIBLE DAY CARE IN AREA BECAUSE OF ALL THE RESTRICTIONS!	5/8/2019 2:02 PM
5	Alot of junk cars and un plated vehicles stored in yards.	4/30/2019 1:19 PM
6	Strip development on 10 is unsightly and creates traffic congestion	4/30/2019 7:30 AM
7	All or nothing approach to junk ordinance, need something in between that fits rural way of life but give options for serious problems.	4/29/2019 10:16 PM
8	Our roads are horrifying. Our internet is amazing thanks to the new small business (Sync Wave). I quite like the turbines (even though I don't have any on my property or within the feet to get a share of output).	4/29/2019 6:18 PM
9	We need more factory jobs less tourist based economy	4/28/2019 4:57 PM
10	Pathetic level of engagement by mason county too support acquisition of Sargent Sand Mining. Best part of Mason Count is conservation district!	4/28/2019 11:34 AM
11	We need more good jobs and affordable housing.	4/26/2019 9:10 PM
12	Also concerned about the area's ability to attract and retain with a good workforce small businesses, tech, and light industrial	4/26/2019 1:54 PM
13	Needs policy review and updating	4/26/2019 9:06 AM
14	Not enough dog friendly parks and beaches	4/26/2019 8:48 AM
15	Because we should have them!	4/25/2019 5:56 PM
16	Depends on location. I don't believe short term rental should be allowed in city limits.	4/25/2019 3:47 PM
17	We need more!	4/25/2019 3:39 PM
18	Need more business development	4/25/2019 3:19 PM
19	There is a house on Custer Road, just North of Freesoil Road that literally has trash blowing around on the roads and all the woodland areas	4/25/2019 2:26 PM
20	My largest concern is tying the local economy too closely tied to tourism.	4/25/2019 2:05 PM
21	access to buttersville via a foot-bridge from copeyon park to buttersville	4/25/2019 1:26 PM
22	Lack of public transportation from anywhere outside of Ludington is absolutely horrible. Dial a ride runs to Scottville during the week but I work weekends so I constantly have to have friends or family drive me. It's sad that there aren't more options.	4/25/2019 12:07 PM
23	Taxes way too high and lack of good paying YEAR AROUND jobs	4/25/2019 8:33 AM
24	Unnecessary hunting and fishing restrictions (bucks w/ 3 points, feeding deer, etc.)	4/25/2019 8:22 AM
25	Very disappointed with how the zoning board chooses to limit growing businesses in our area. Starving Artist is a perfect example.	4/25/2019 12:27 AM
26	Need more for our tourism	4/24/2019 10:02 PM
27	crime	4/24/2019 7:53 PM

28	Need short term rentals ie. airbnb vrbo	4/24/2019 7:10 PM
29	Better pedestrian crosswalks in downtown area and near schools	4/24/2019 6:53 PM
30	There is a serious lack of professional job opportunities in the community. Tourist industry is focused on too heavily. Entertainment in the area is limited to music or alcohol related activities. Housing costs are way to high for the employment opportunities in the area.	4/24/2019 4:01 PM
31	Shortage of affordable housing and rentals. Too many vacant buildings, especially downtown Ludington.	4/24/2019 3:44 PM
32	I support short term/seasonal rentals downtown and throughout the county	4/24/2019 3:33 PM
33	I believe there should be more short term and seasonal rentals allowed	4/24/2019 11:02 AM
34	We should very seriously think about allowing cannabis businesses until the area. It would be a great economic advantage and tourist attraction.	4/24/2019 10:38 AM
35	By living in the city, some of these issues don't pertain to me	4/24/2019 10:34 AM
36	Neutral - answered b/c do not apply, not on my radar	4/23/2019 9:28 AM
37	Can't tie into natural gas	4/22/2019 7:19 PM
38	short term or seasonal rentals can continue to bring tourists to our town	4/22/2019 5:45 PM
39	Lack of a true animal shelter serving Mason County; Manistee and Oceana have made the commitment	4/22/2019 5:30 PM
40	Turbines make too much noise!	4/22/2019 3:42 PM
41	lack of commercial districts in the out county.	4/22/2019 2:48 PM
42	Music, fireworks, obnoxiousness, lack of privacy	4/22/2019 2:12 PM
43	water/sewer infrastructure and drinking water quality	4/22/2019 1:28 PM
44	mental illness lack of quality resources, cost our county excessive amount despite having an agency who is to be accountable for this.	4/22/2019 12:45 PM
45	I think all of the questions depend on why you live where you live.	4/22/2019 11:26 AM
46	This is unfortunately what drives the areas economy w	4/8/2019 11:20 PM
47	Splash park & west end of Ludington Ave - NOT SMART!!!!	4/8/2019 8:45 PM
48	Unkept rental houses should be addressed	4/8/2019 7:57 PM
49	Roads need serious improvement	4/8/2019 7:27 PM
50	Road maintenance is very poor in our part of Hamlin.	4/8/2019 6:06 PM
51	I am very concerned over the Zoning Comm not providing a variance to a local Amber business, so that business could grow.	4/8/2019 12:34 PM
52	serious lack of industry in the county	4/8/2019 12:21 PM
53	Too many seasons rentals. Mason needs to deal with residents first, then create tourist habitats.	4/8/2019 9:56 AM
54	Need a dispensary.	4/8/2019 9:31 AM
55	We love the windmills! It is a sign of progression for Mason County	4/8/2019 8:27 AM
56	Sustainability practices, native plantings, overuse of lakes	4/8/2019 8:16 AM
57	lack of traffic control/law enforcement	4/8/2019 7:44 AM
58	Why can't people offer air bnb or vrbo in a tourist area?	4/8/2019 6:59 AM
59	Short term rentals should be an option for all homeowners	4/8/2019 5:29 AM
60	My answers are based on my eventual return to Ludington, not where I currently live.	4/7/2019 10:22 PM
61	Need for recycling options.	4/7/2019 9:39 PM

Q18 What comes to mind when you hear the word “open space”? (select only two)

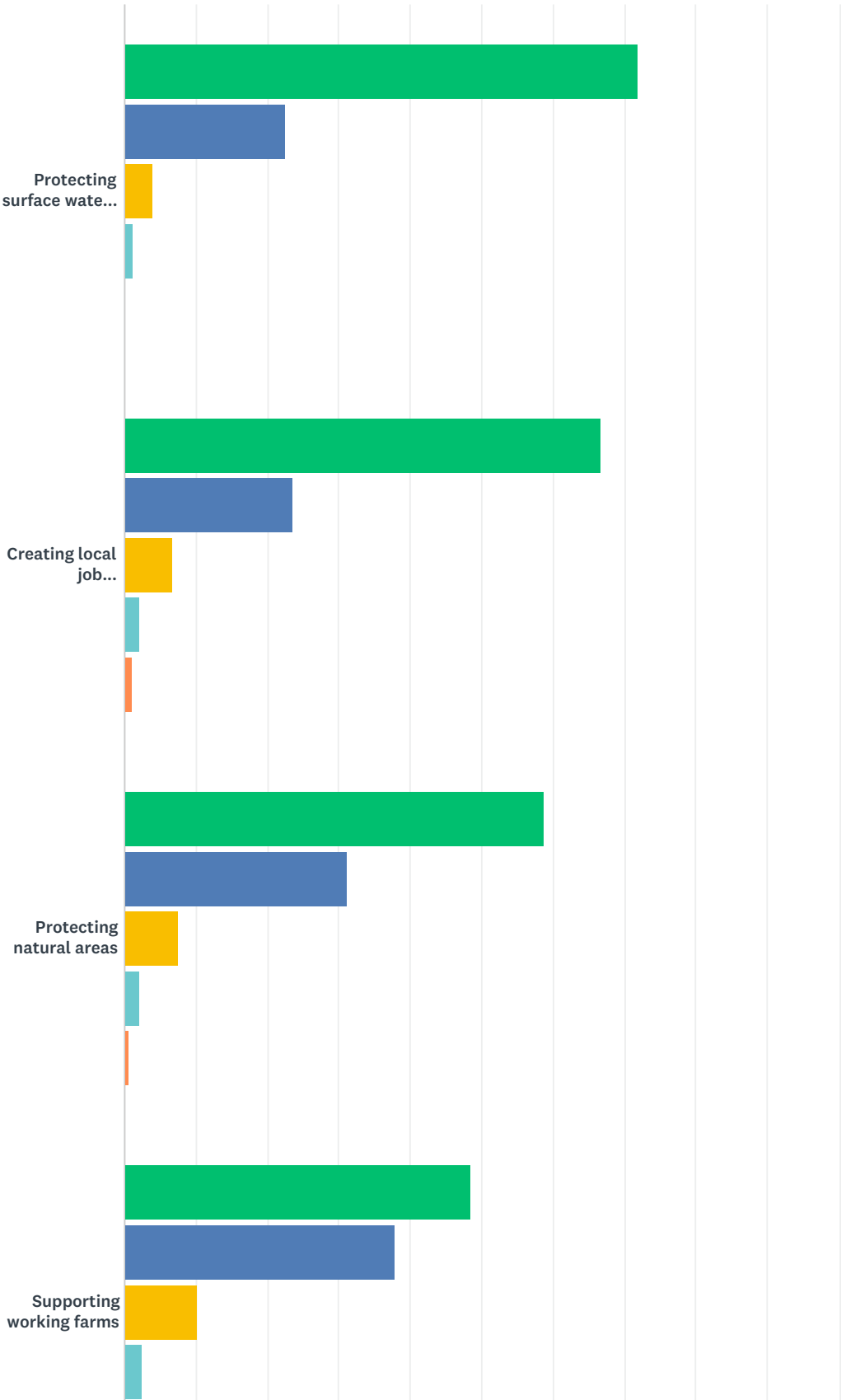
Answered: 764 Skipped: 84

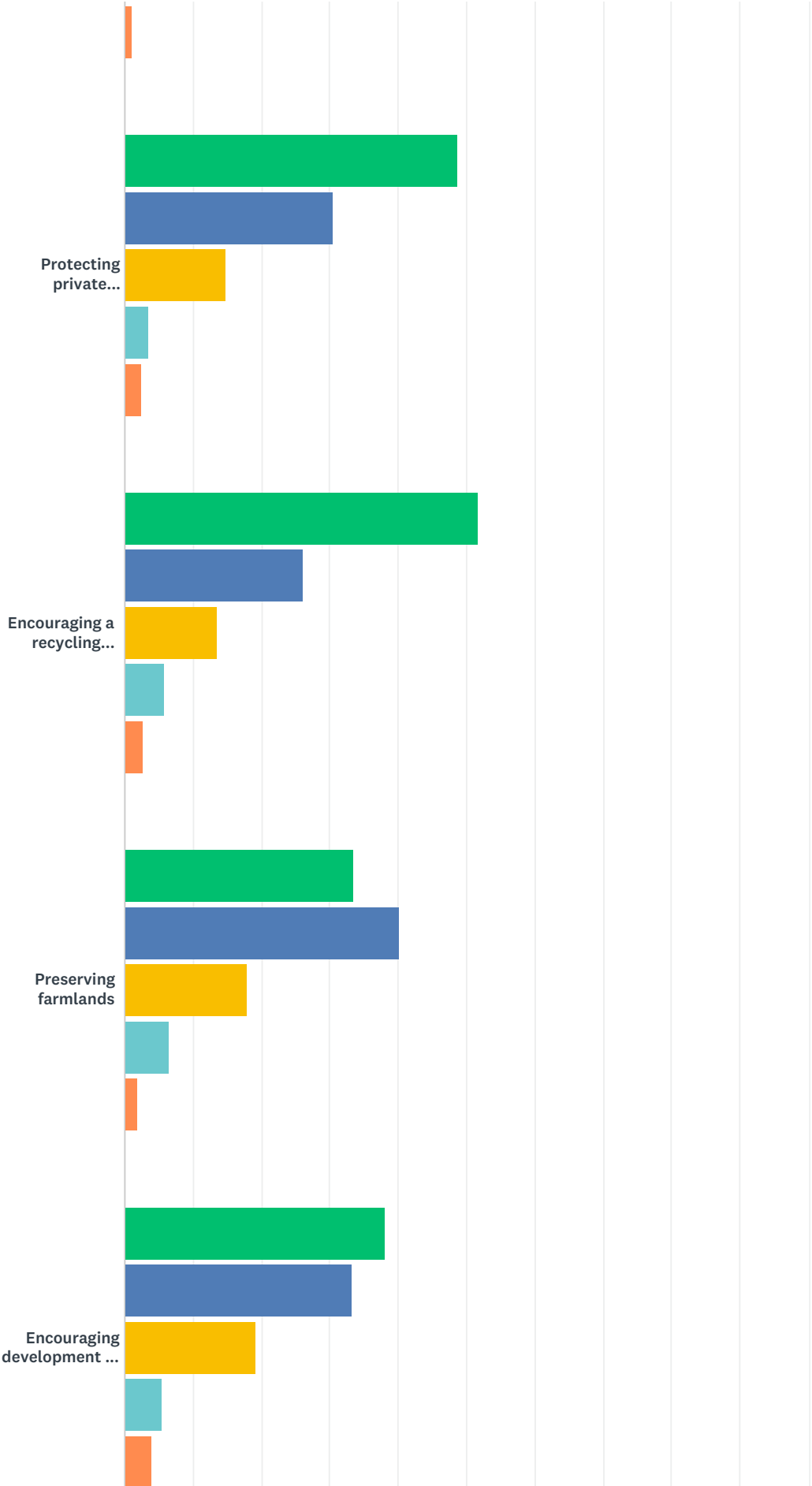


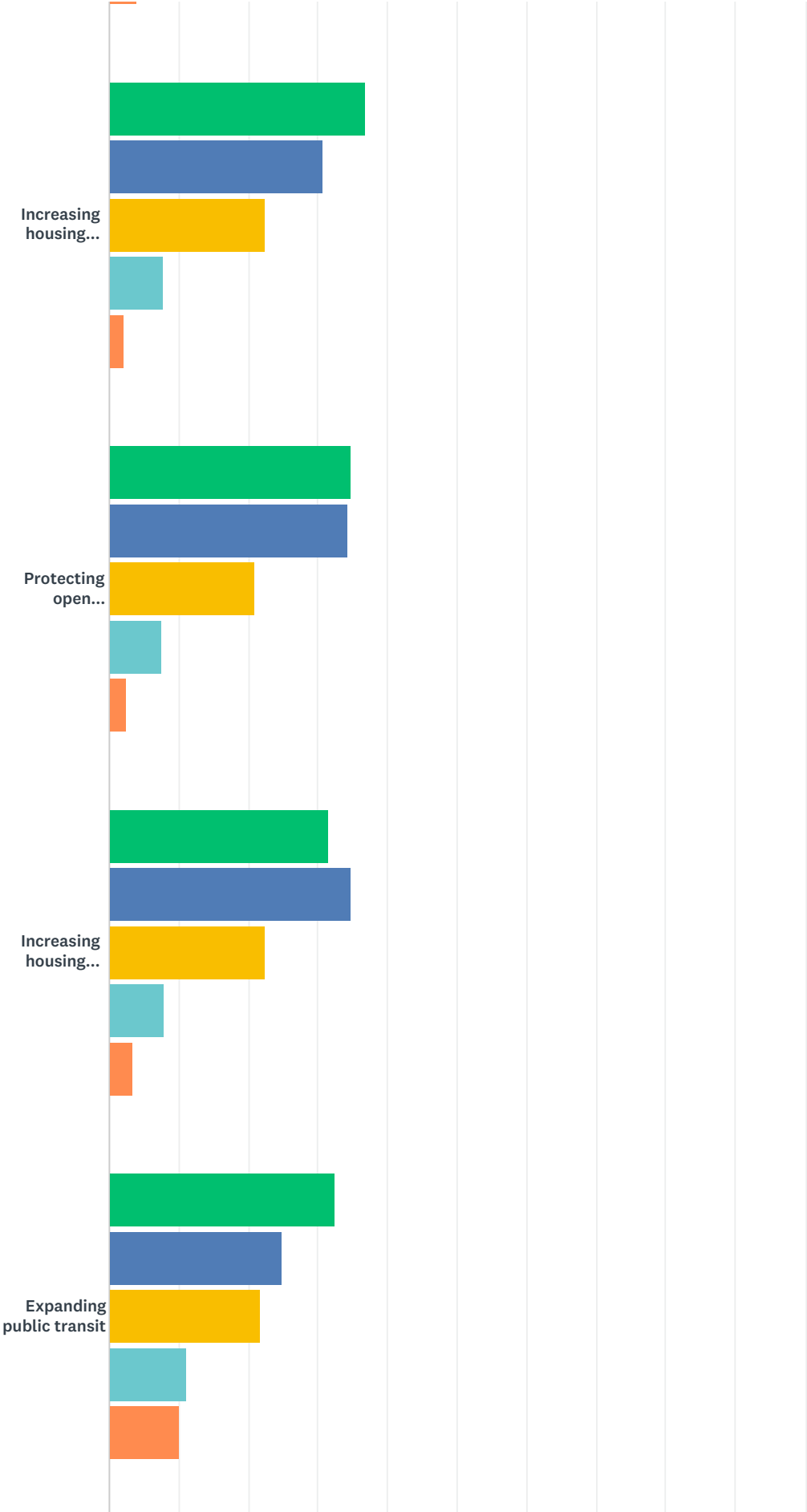
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Any undeveloped land	55.24%	422
Farmland	40.31%	308
Woodlands	26.05%	199
Parks	23.56%	180
Prairies	17.80%	136
Open Water	14.79%	113
Wetlands	11.39%	87
Total Respondents: 764		

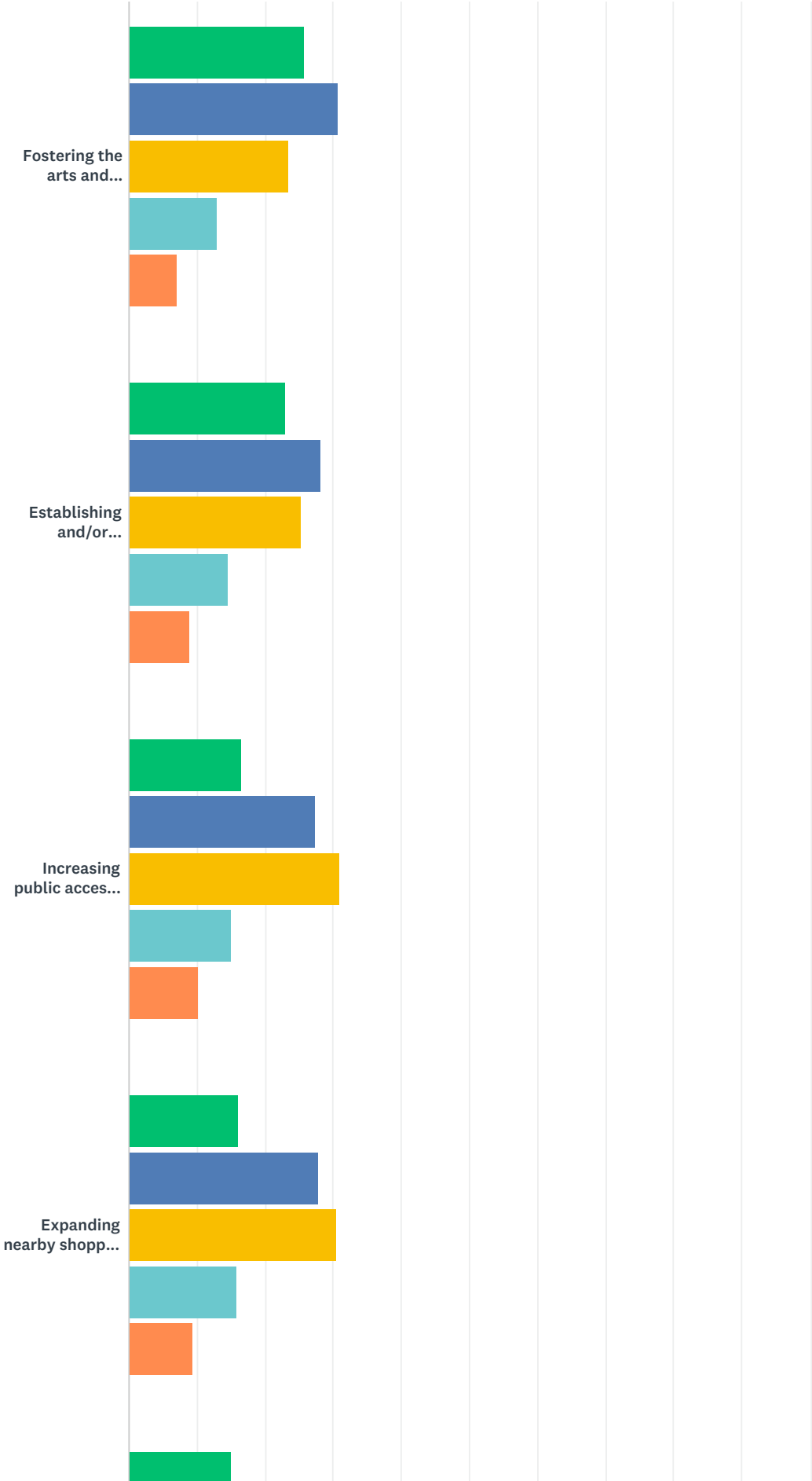
Q19 In terms of community priorities, how important are the following?

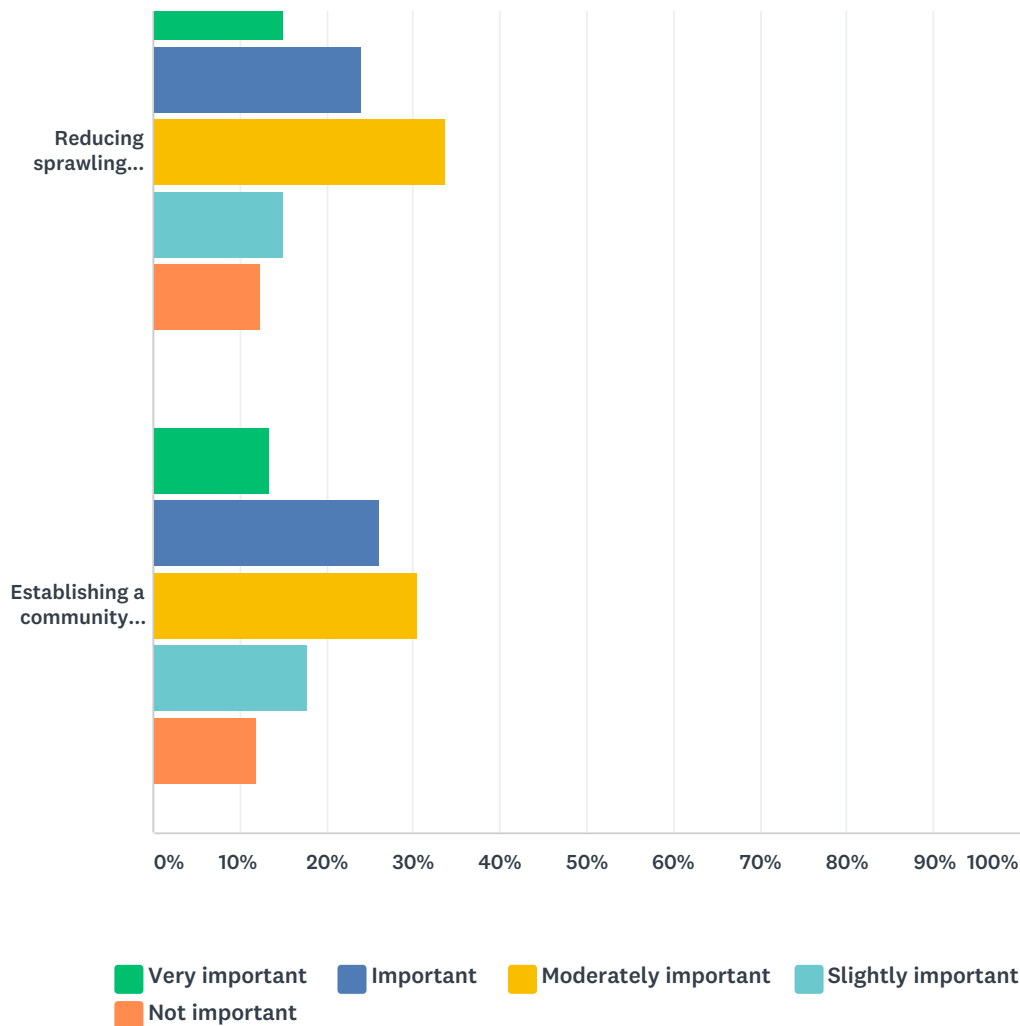
Answered: 744 Skipped: 104











	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Protecting surface water and groundwater	72.03% 533	22.57% 167	4.05% 30	1.22% 9	0.14% 1	740	4.65
Creating local job opportunities	66.71% 493	23.55% 174	6.77% 50	2.03% 15	0.95% 7	739	4.53
Protecting natural areas	58.73% 434	31.12% 230	7.44% 55	2.03% 15	0.68% 5	739	4.45
Supporting working farms	48.50% 356	37.87% 278	10.22% 75	2.45% 18	0.95% 7	734	4.31
Protecting private property rights	48.64% 359	30.49% 225	14.91% 110	3.52% 26	2.44% 18	738	4.19
Encouraging a recycling program	51.76% 383	26.08% 193	13.51% 100	5.95% 44	2.70% 20	740	4.18
Preserving farmlands	33.47% 247	40.11% 296	18.02% 133	6.50% 48	1.90% 14	738	3.97

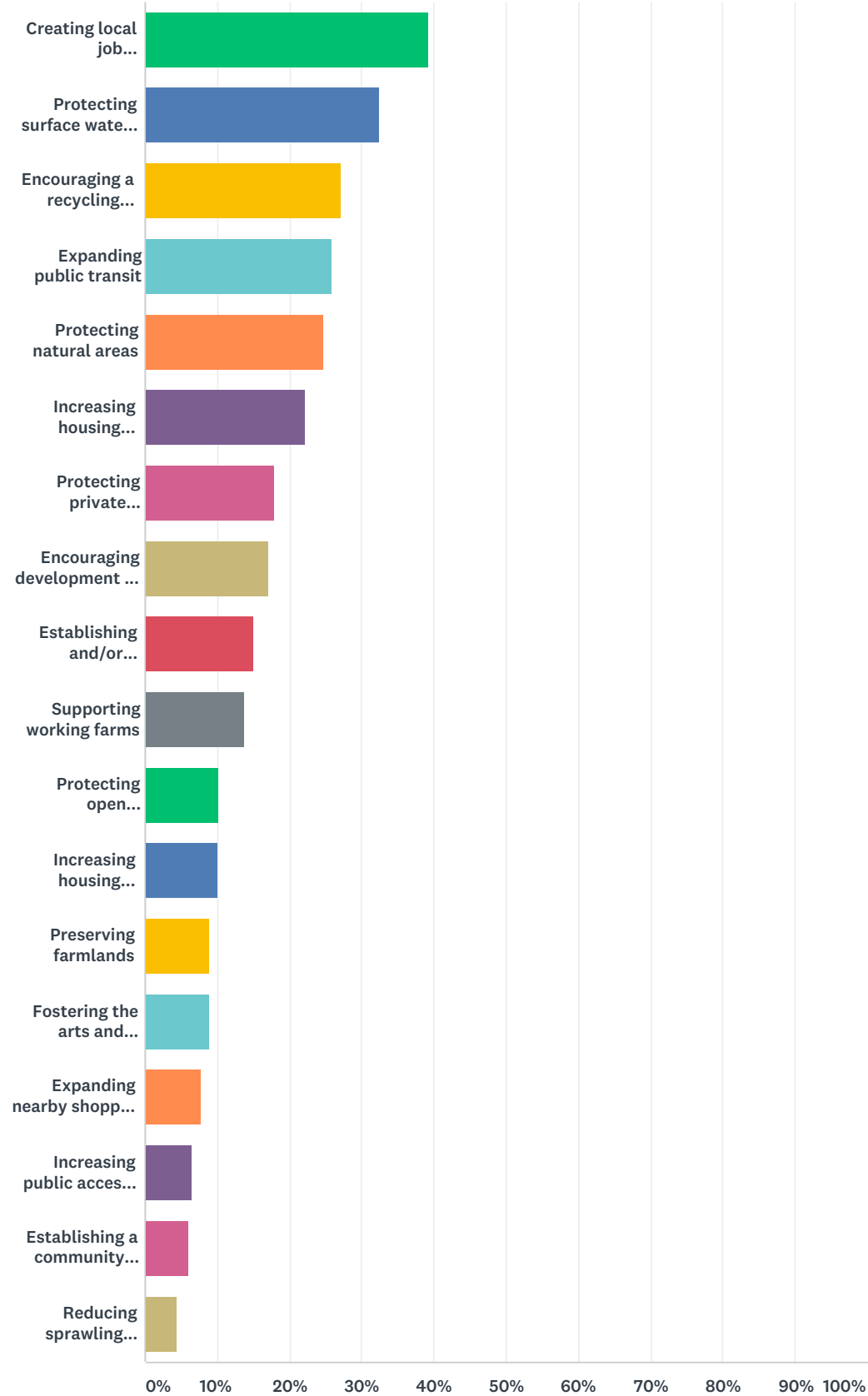
Encouraging development in Ludington, Scottville and the Villages	37.97% 281	33.24% 246	19.19% 142	5.54% 41	4.05% 30	740	3.96
Increasing housing opportunity for young families	36.89% 273	30.81% 228	22.30% 165	7.84% 58	2.16% 16	740	3.92
Protecting open space/views	34.69% 256	34.28% 253	21.00% 155	7.59% 56	2.44% 18	738	3.91
Increasing housing opportunity for seniors	31.62% 234	34.73% 257	22.43% 166	7.97% 59	3.24% 24	740	3.84
Expanding public transit	32.33% 237	24.83% 182	21.83% 160	11.05% 81	9.96% 73	733	3.59
Fostering the arts and cultural opportunities	25.82% 190	30.84% 227	23.37% 172	12.91% 95	7.07% 52	736	3.55
Establishing and/or expanding pedestrian and bike trails	22.91% 170	28.17% 209	25.34% 188	14.69% 109	8.89% 66	742	3.42
Increasing public access to lakes, rivers and streams	16.51% 122	27.33% 202	30.99% 229	15.02% 111	10.15% 75	739	3.25
Expanding nearby shopping opportunities	16.17% 119	27.85% 205	30.57% 225	15.90% 117	9.51% 70	736	3.25
Reducing sprawling patterns of growth	15.01% 109	23.97% 174	33.61% 244	15.01% 109	12.40% 90	726	3.14
Establishing a community center	13.47% 99	26.12% 192	30.61% 225	17.82% 131	11.97% 88	735	3.11

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	More local focus rather than tourism.	5/24/2019 10:52 AM
2	The government needs to stay out of landowners rights	5/10/2019 7:50 AM
3	I would like to see the barriers to development of the corridor eased.	5/7/2019 2:10 PM
4	County government needs to stop destroying our area's beautiful landscape - what other west coast of Michigan community has screwed up their landscape with ugly wind turbines?!	5/6/2019 7:33 PM
5	Need to realize a one size fits all approach to Mason county does not work for zoning and developement plans.	4/29/2019 10:26 PM
6	Protecting our world class coastal dunes!	4/28/2019 11:38 AM
7	Encourage & support new businesses	4/27/2019 2:45 PM
8	Ending mining in the sand dunes; attracting new small-to-mid-sized business, esp. manufacturing businesses (year-round)	4/26/2019 1:56 AM

9	Protecting the community's property rights, not just the individual private property owner. For instance, short term rentals benefit the landlord and can cause huge problems for the neighbors.	4/25/2019 6:51 PM
10	Supporting growth of established small businesses.	4/25/2019 6:39 PM
11	Support small local business growth!!!	4/25/2019 4:45 PM
12	walk in clinics for the poor	4/25/2019 1:29 PM
13	protecting the beach from becoming a concrete jungle	4/25/2019 11:51 AM
14	Increase Broadband Internet access	4/25/2019 9:36 AM
15	Work on lowering taxes and no bond projects	4/25/2019 8:36 AM
16	Be open to the new market opportunities	4/24/2019 11:24 PM
17	More focus on communities other than just Ludington	4/24/2019 10:58 PM
18	crime	4/24/2019 7:55 PM
19	Allowing marijuana shops. Hello tax money!!	4/24/2019 7:14 PM
20	Less regulation, zoning and tax breaks	4/24/2019 5:16 PM
21	I believe in private property rights IF the property is maintained. Not when they are eyesores as we have in Ludington now.	4/24/2019 2:59 PM
22	Jobs need to pay a wage that supports afford able housing for families. We don't need anymore low wage jobs.	4/24/2019 1:01 PM
23	I had lived in a large city in Kentucky where Preserving farmlands was a big issue.It really made it nice having the horse farms around.	4/24/2019 10:38 AM
24	Broadband	4/23/2019 8:02 AM
25	Supporting realistic farmers markets	4/23/2019 6:50 AM
26	establish a true animal shelter like Homeward Bound in Manistee	4/22/2019 8:30 PM
27	We have two Senior Centers; expand them to serve the community. Create an animal shelter and let AC have an office similar to Homeward bound in Manistee.	4/22/2019 5:35 PM
28	Expanding vocational/trade education; County-wide Infrastructure	4/22/2019 1:36 PM
29	improve our mental illness resources	4/22/2019 1:08 PM
30	Apartments bldg downtown ludington - way too tall !!	4/8/2019 8:48 PM
31	Promote local businesses	4/8/2019 8:02 PM
32	I believe our library is already a working community center, but one that is available to the community members at other times would be great.	4/8/2019 6:16 PM
33	Food paying jobs is the biggest need! And when I say something is important I am NOT saying there needs to be more laws ordinances etc.	4/8/2019 10:26 AM

Q20 Of the items listed in question 19 above, please select your top three priorities you would be willing to pay for through taxes or fees:

Answered: 720 Skipped: 128

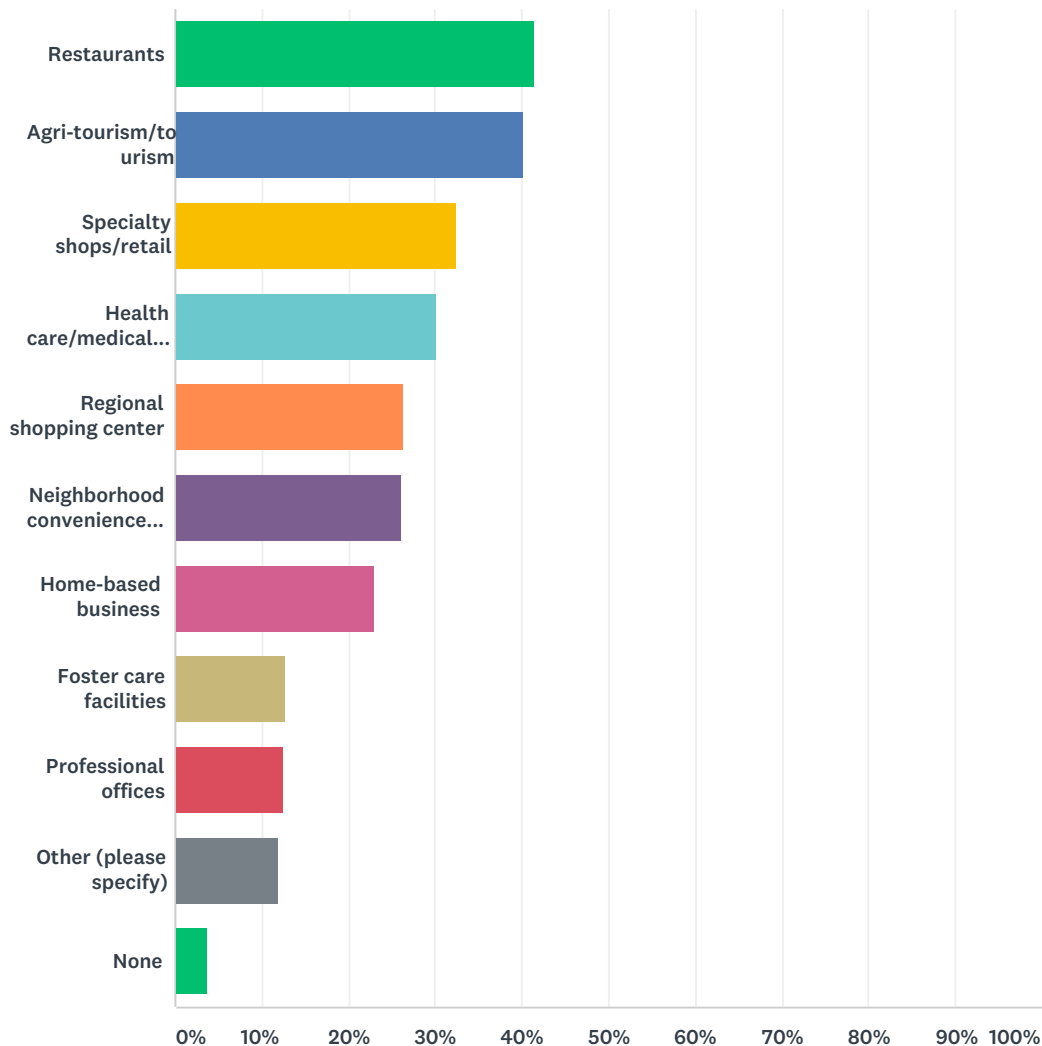


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Creating local job opportunities	39.31%	283

Protecting surface water and groundwater	32.50%	234
Encouraging a recycling program	27.22%	196
Expanding public transit	25.97%	187
Protecting natural areas	24.58%	177
Increasing housing opportunity for young families	22.22%	160
Protecting private property rights	17.92%	129
Encouraging development in Ludington, Scottville and the Villages	17.22%	124
Establishing and/or expanding pedestrian and bike trails	15.00%	108
Supporting working farms	13.89%	100
Protecting open space/views	10.28%	74
Increasing housing opportunity for seniors	10.00%	72
Preserving farmlands	9.03%	65
Fostering the arts and cultural opportunities	9.03%	65
Expanding nearby shopping opportunities	7.64%	55
Increasing public access to lakes, rivers and streams	6.39%	46
Establishing a community center	6.11%	44
Reducing sprawling patterns of growth	4.31%	31
Total Respondents: 720		

Q21 In Mason County as a whole, what types of commercial/service development should be encouraged? (check no more than 3)

Answered: 724 Skipped: 124



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Restaurants	41.44%	300
Agri-tourism/tourism	40.19%	291
Specialty shops/retail	32.46%	235
Health care/medical facilities	30.11%	218
Regional shopping center	26.38%	191
Neighborhood convenience stores/retail	26.10%	189
Home-based business	23.07%	167
Foster care facilities	12.71%	92
Professional offices	12.57%	91

Other (please specify)	12.02%	87
None	3.87%	28
Total Respondents: 724		

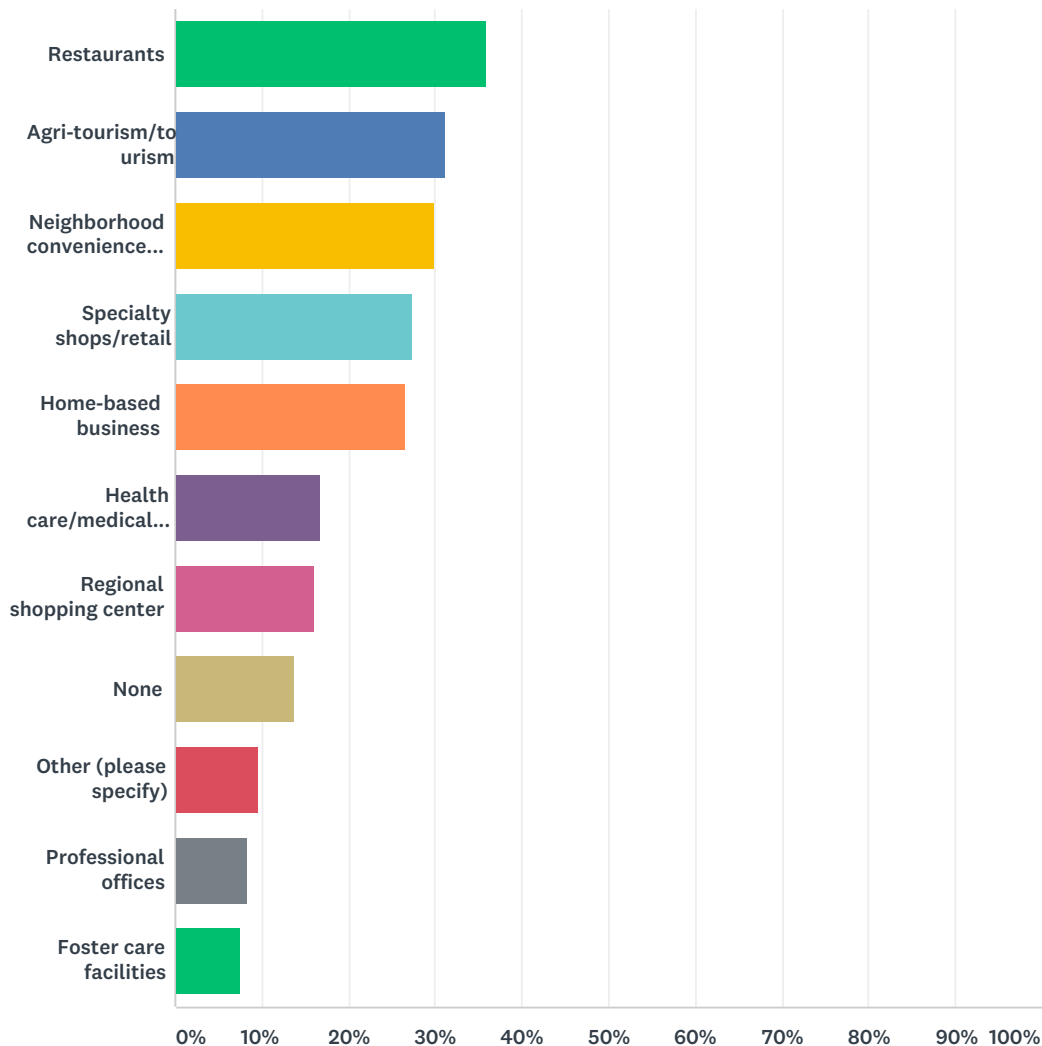
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Manufacturing	5/24/2019 10:55 AM
2	The free market should determine business, not the government.	5/10/2019 7:52 AM
3	Factories or really good jobs for people.	5/8/2019 3:02 PM
4	Public transportation to Grand Rapids	5/7/2019 2:46 PM
5	Mixed use spaces	5/7/2019 11:37 AM
6	Tech businesses - IT, Robotics, Light industrial	5/6/2019 7:39 PM
7	Recreational Motor Sports dual use trails and Day use areas	4/30/2019 1:37 PM
8	I'm currently extremely disappointed with the county's encouragement of village-only development and anti-marijuana business stance. There are few new job opportunities for us with farm land to earn a living in this county. I can only assume you think we have as the options afforded to you by your family, connections/church, and/or socioeconomic stays.	4/29/2019 6:27 PM
9	non-chain and non-strip mall retail. More nice quality stores downtown (the Lake, the Life, the Dream; Snyders; Lindseys; Todd and Brad Reed; Krave; Blu Moon . . .	4/29/2019 5:56 PM
10	not qualified t	4/29/2019 2:16 PM
11	We need some sort of production. I know the idea of factories or plants is scary but those jobs are sorely needed. Seasonal jobs won't keep families finicial healthy all year long.	4/28/2019 4:57 PM
12	A buisness should be alowed to expand.	4/28/2019 12:03 PM
13	manufacturing to provide jobs	4/28/2019 8:36 AM
14	Industrial	4/27/2019 12:03 PM
15	Production, offices, manufacturing, a mall	4/26/2019 9:18 PM
16	Contractor trades	4/26/2019 4:00 PM
17	DAYCARE!!!!	4/26/2019 7:35 AM
18	Tech/manufacturing jobs that pay well	4/26/2019 7:09 AM
19	affordable housing for seniors and young families	4/26/2019 4:30 AM
20	Attract small-to-mid-sized manufacturing firms	4/26/2019 2:01 AM
21	N/a	4/25/2019 9:26 PM
22	Industry/manufacturing	4/25/2019 8:10 PM
23	addiction services, mental health care	4/25/2019 7:55 PM
24	Hobby lobby , michaels or joanns	4/25/2019 7:11 PM
25	Distance learning and telecommuting opportunities.	4/25/2019 6:56 PM
26	Growing/ supporting small business growth.	4/25/2019 6:42 PM
27	Homeless/ addiction rehabilitation centers	4/25/2019 6:00 PM
28	Good paying jobs full time	4/25/2019 5:02 PM
29	Mental health	4/25/2019 5:00 PM
30	Marijuana	4/25/2019 4:51 PM
31	Child care	4/25/2019 3:55 PM
32	Year-round employment opportunities, industries	4/25/2019 3:54 PM
33	micro breweries	4/25/2019 3:23 PM

34	Breweries, other social venues	4/25/2019 3:19 PM
35	micro-breweries	4/25/2019 3:13 PM
36	Industry type jobs (manufacturing, IT, Agriculture, etc.) that are not tied too closely to tourism.	4/25/2019 2:30 PM
37	Things that are for the residents not the tourist	4/25/2019 11:20 AM
38	Senior living facilities, daycare centers	4/25/2019 10:21 AM
39	good paying jobs with benefits for trades	4/25/2019 8:38 AM
40	Manufacturing-jobs	4/25/2019 6:48 AM
41	More businesses	4/25/2019 3:55 AM
42	Recreation/Hunting and Fishing	4/25/2019 12:12 AM
43	Something indoors for childrens activities	4/24/2019 11:41 PM
44	Marijuana Dispensaries	4/24/2019 11:33 PM
45	Industry	4/24/2019 9:58 PM
46	Marijuana shops	4/24/2019 7:16 PM
47	Medical weed for the people who can't travel 100 miles to get it	4/24/2019 6:17 PM
48	Industry	4/24/2019 5:46 PM
49	Medical marijuana stores	4/24/2019 5:31 PM
50	All growth, and less control by government	4/24/2019 5:29 PM
51	Industry, skilled trades and engineering. There is a sever lack of opportunities in this area. Buisnesses that compliment the apparent tourism culture could be beneficial. Such as watercraft, hunting and fishing equipment or water sport equipment manufacturers. This would encourage other buisness such as dealerships and maintenance. Would create job opportunities and I believe draw more tourism.	4/24/2019 4:11 PM
52	Restoring/rehabilitating existing facilities into functioning work/recreation space	4/24/2019 10:44 AM
53	Entertainment/ arts	4/24/2019 10:41 AM
54	Bbc.co	4/24/2019 7:37 AM
55	Home care for people who need it.	4/23/2019 4:37 PM
56	2. Elder Stepped Assisted Living Facilities with Memory Care Options and 3. Continued Downtown Ludington revitalization of shops/restaurants/activities, parks and playgrounds	4/23/2019 2:32 PM
57	Manufacturing	4/23/2019 1:59 PM
58	Manufacturing and trades	4/23/2019 11:17 AM
59	Broadband	4/23/2019 10:29 AM
60	Short term vacation rentals	4/23/2019 9:47 AM
61	Manufacturing Facilities	4/23/2019 9:23 AM
62	Broadband	4/23/2019 8:06 AM
63	Decent, non-explotative jobs with healthcare and benefits fo workers with non-specialized skills	4/23/2019 6:54 AM
64	Senior care facilities	4/22/2019 9:12 PM
65	healthcare facilities that aren't already provided in mason county	4/22/2019 9:03 PM
66	Good restaurants, not bars...like Panera Bread or Olive Garden	4/22/2019 8:33 PM
67	Better school facilities	4/22/2019 6:55 PM
68	Larger book retailer, clothing and home goods similar to a JC Penney, Macy, or quality merchandiser, BED N Bath type retailer, quality bakery	4/22/2019 5:44 PM
69	Industry	4/22/2019 5:19 PM

70	companies that offer middle class job opportunities	4/22/2019 3:37 PM
71	Upscale hospitality	4/22/2019 2:54 PM
72	Need more skilled trades people (men & woman)	4/22/2019 1:43 PM
73	mental illness care	4/22/2019 1:11 PM
74	Manufacturing	4/22/2019 11:47 AM
75	Affordable childcare	4/12/2019 6:35 PM
76	white collar jobs	4/10/2019 7:59 AM
77	Businesses meeting needs in community and creating employment opportunities	4/9/2019 7:11 PM
78	microbreweries and tasting rooms	4/8/2019 10:00 PM
79	Public spaces for kids ages 10 to 18 can enjoy on their own	4/8/2019 9:08 PM
80	Mental health / Hadley at hospital closed.	4/8/2019 8:52 PM
81	Mental health, adult daycare	4/8/2019 6:19 PM
82	Non alcohol related activities and places to go	4/8/2019 10:31 AM
83	Scottville downtown development	4/8/2019 9:24 AM
84	Senior community living	4/8/2019 9:08 AM
85	Daycare centers	4/8/2019 8:45 AM
86	Good paying jobs for local residents	4/8/2019 8:05 AM
87	Office space to rent by half day for folks in From out of town who need a place to work or like me work From home and may need office space from time to time. Sometimes coffee shops are too public for conference calls	4/7/2019 11:12 PM

Q22 In the community where you live, what types of commercial development should be encouraged? (check no more than 3)

Answered: 713 Skipped: 135



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Restaurants	36.04%	257
Agri-tourism/tourism	31.14%	222
Neighborhood convenience stores/retail	29.87%	213
Specialty shops/retail	27.49%	196
Home-based business	26.51%	189
Health care/medical facilities	16.83%	120
Regional shopping center	16.13%	115
None	13.88%	99
Other (please specify)	9.68%	69

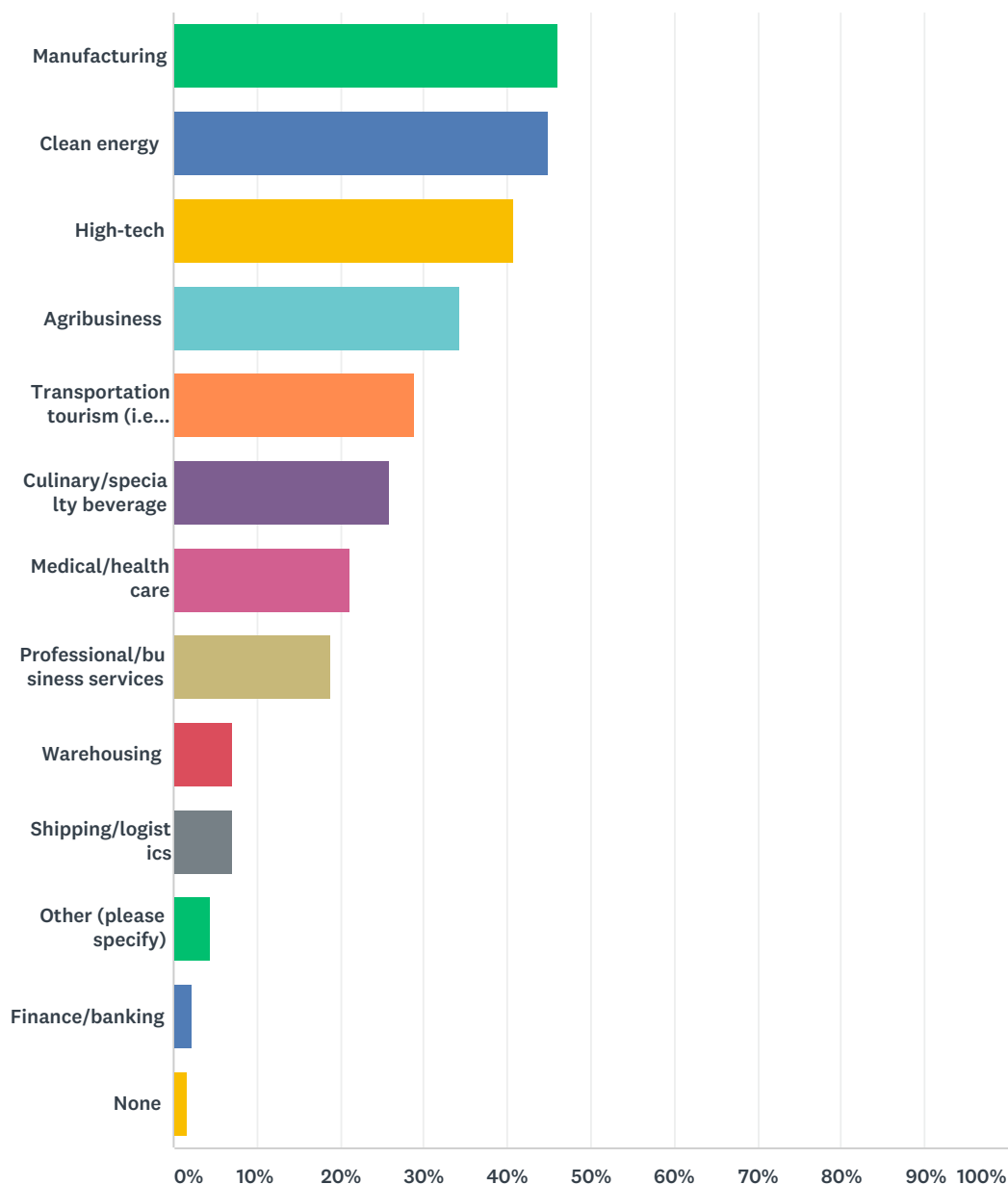
Professional offices	8.42%	60
Foster care facilities	7.57%	54
Total Respondents: 713		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	NONE	6/7/2019 12:56 PM
2	Small factory business	6/3/2019 4:41 PM
3	The free market should determine business, not the government.	5/10/2019 7:52 AM
4	A harbor with dockage and restaurant for visiting boats	5/9/2019 10:43 AM
5	LMTA	5/7/2019 2:46 PM
6	Dial a ride, LMTA	5/7/2019 2:46 PM
7	Agribusinesses need to follow the rules and be built on large enough parcels so they don't proliferate on small parcels throughout AG zoning	5/6/2019 7:39 PM
8	Light Manufacturing or Assembly plants (Jobs)	4/30/2019 1:37 PM
9	Same as above.	4/28/2019 4:57 PM
10	Outdoor activities/ wood working/ retirement village	4/28/2019 11:51 AM
11	Industrial	4/27/2019 12:03 PM
12	Apartments, Employment opportunities	4/26/2019 9:18 PM
13	Contractor trades	4/26/2019 4:00 PM
14	Community centers! Commerce!	4/26/2019 10:42 AM
15	Subsidized Housing	4/26/2019 8:35 AM
16	daycare!!! There is not very many daycares with openings	4/26/2019 7:35 AM
17	1) recreational trails; 2) year-round recreation-based center (conference center, eco-tourism center, new State Park interpretive center, new State Park campgrounds on sand mine property, assuming State and the mine owner complete the transfer as indicated)	4/26/2019 2:01 AM
18	Gym closer to Scottville	4/25/2019 9:21 PM
19	Agriculture	4/25/2019 8:10 PM
20	Remote/home office plan for a variety of large companies.	4/25/2019 6:56 PM
21	Full time good paying jobsk	4/25/2019 5:02 PM
22	Marijuana shop	4/25/2019 4:51 PM
23	Venue similar to Grand Rapids Downtown Market would be amazing!	4/25/2019 3:54 PM
24	Manufacturing facilities	4/25/2019 3:54 PM
25	micro breweries	4/25/2019 3:23 PM
26	Breweries, transit	4/25/2019 3:19 PM
27	micro-breweries	4/25/2019 3:13 PM
28	In Scottville	4/25/2019 1:38 PM
29	anything that brings jobs to the area, including marijuana shops	4/25/2019 12:11 PM
30	Grocery	4/25/2019 11:54 AM
31	Senior living facilities, daycare centers	4/25/2019 10:21 AM
32	More businesses, better health care for special needs children	4/25/2019 3:55 AM
33	Youth Center	4/24/2019 11:48 PM
34	Marijuana Farming, processing.	4/24/2019 11:33 PM

35	Medical weed for patients	4/24/2019 6:17 PM
36	Medical marijuana stores	4/24/2019 5:31 PM
37	All types, we are losing jobs and growth by to many zoning rules and high property taxes.	4/24/2019 5:29 PM
38	Prefer to see Hamlin Twp. remain mostly residential	4/24/2019 4:11 PM
39	Industry, skilled trades and engineering. There is a sever lack of opportunities in this area. Buisnesses that compliment the apparent tourism culture could be beneficial. Such as watercraft, hunting and fishing equipment or water sport equipment manufacturers. This would encourage other buisness such as dealerships and maintenance. Would create job opportunities and I believe draw more tourism.	4/24/2019 4:11 PM
40	Restoring/rehabilitating existing facilities into functioning work/recreation spaces	4/24/2019 10:44 AM
41	Entertainment/ arts	4/24/2019 10:41 AM
42	Discount gasoline	4/24/2019 7:37 AM
43	Home care for people who need it.	4/23/2019 4:37 PM
44	Senior living facilities with buy in and stepped care	4/23/2019 2:32 PM
45	Manufacturing	4/23/2019 1:59 PM
46	Manufacturing and trades	4/23/2019 11:17 AM
47	Food trucks	4/23/2019 10:36 AM
48	Broadband	4/23/2019 10:29 AM
49	Short term vacation rentals	4/23/2019 9:47 AM
50	Manufacturing Facilities	4/23/2019 9:23 AM
51	Broadband	4/23/2019 8:06 AM
52	Better school facilities	4/22/2019 6:55 PM
53	Better quality stores for home goods, clothing, shoes	4/22/2019 6:40 PM
54	none in town, but in the industrial parks we need to encourage more copanies that would offer middle class job opportunities and re-establish a solid foundation for all these entry-level workers to obtain skills and move up to become more productive and self-sustaining	4/22/2019 3:37 PM
55	Need more skilled trades people (men & woman)	4/22/2019 1:43 PM
56	Manufacturing	4/22/2019 11:47 AM
57	Affordable child and respite care	4/12/2019 6:35 PM
58	Businesses meeting needs in community and creating employment opportunities	4/9/2019 7:11 PM
59	Things for middle school/ high school kids to do in the winter that is appropriate for their age	4/9/2019 2:34 PM
60	Public spaces for kids ages 10 to 18 can enjoy on their own	4/8/2019 9:08 PM
61	Mental health facility needed	4/8/2019 8:52 PM
62	Movie theater downtown	4/8/2019 8:01 PM
63	Mental health, adult daycare	4/8/2019 6:19 PM
64	Public transportation	4/8/2019 11:26 AM
65	Since there are only gas stations anything would be a bonus	4/8/2019 10:31 AM
66	Community center that has reasonable event rental ffee	4/8/2019 9:24 AM
67	daycare centers	4/8/2019 8:45 AM
68	Employers. It's so obvious.	4/8/2019 8:05 AM
69	Office space to rent by half day	4/7/2019 11:12 PM

Q23 What types of economic development opportunities should be encouraged in Mason County? (check no more than 3)

Answered: 712 Skipped: 136



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Manufacturing	46.07%	328
Clean energy	44.94%	320
High-tech	40.73%	290
Agribusiness	34.41%	245
Transportation tourism (i.e. Lake Michigan cruise ship dock, passenger train)	28.79%	205

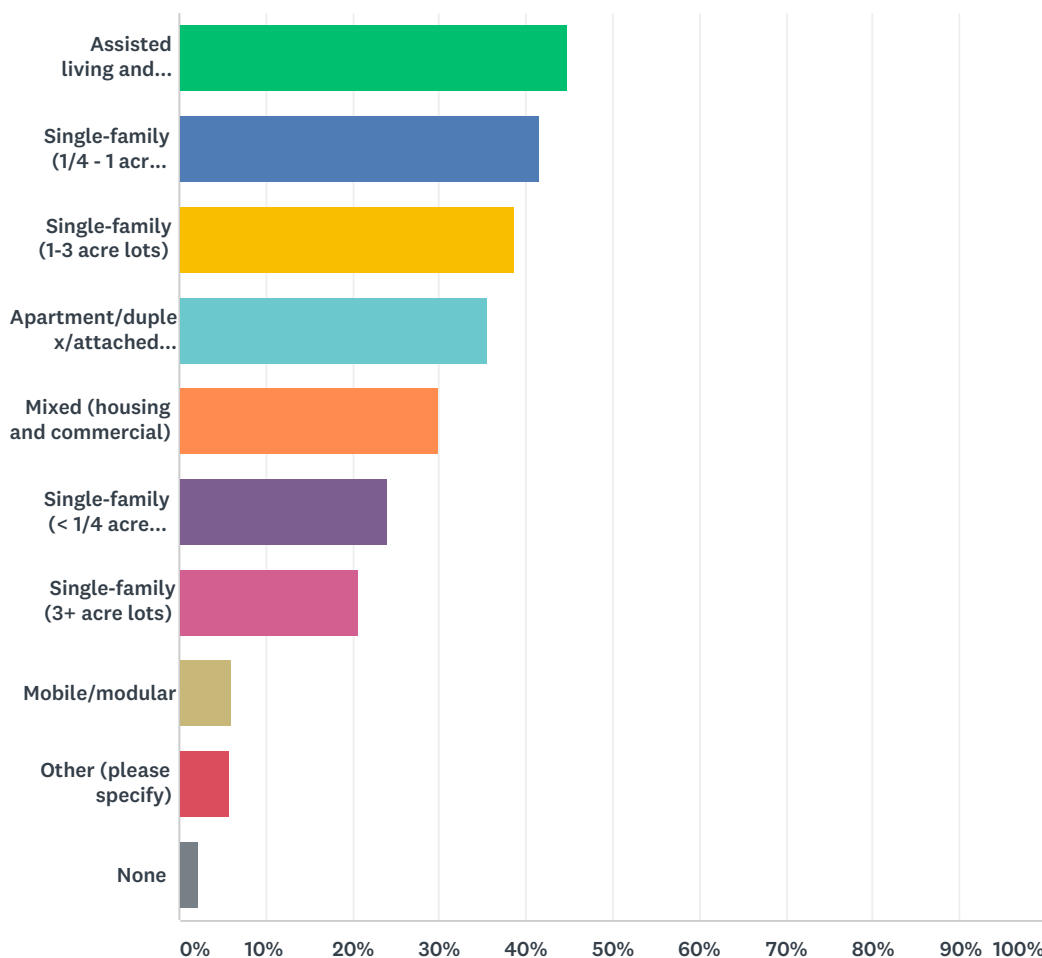
Culinary/specialty beverage	25.84%	184
Medical/health care	21.07%	150
Professional/business services	18.82%	134
Warehousing	7.16%	51
Shipping/logistics	7.16%	51
Other (please specify)	4.49%	32
Finance/banking	2.39%	17
None	1.69%	12
Total Respondents: 712		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	The free market should determine business, not the government.	5/10/2019 7:52 AM
2	Small business	5/8/2019 12:33 PM
3	Done responsibly	5/7/2019 1:23 PM
4	Recreational Vehicle Usage Summer and Winter working with DNR to connect trails into the town to promote local establishments.	4/30/2019 1:37 PM
5	Mason county needs jobs that provide a living wage	4/28/2019 5:00 PM
6	Protection of coastal dunes!	4/28/2019 11:51 AM
7	Uber, Goodeats, etc.	4/26/2019 9:18 PM
8	Revive the 4th ward!	4/26/2019 10:42 AM
9	Any small business	4/26/2019 7:08 AM
10	Medical marijuana sales	4/26/2019 6:43 AM
11	Marihuana is the future. Get your heads out of you butts.	4/26/2019 12:01 AM
12	NO CRUISE SHIPS	4/25/2019 6:13 PM
13	TechAgriculture	4/25/2019 6:02 PM
14	Marijuana shops	4/25/2019 4:51 PM
15	Small business, rezoning	4/25/2019 2:50 AM
16	Outdoors/Recreational activities	4/25/2019 12:12 AM
17	B	4/24/2019 9:59 PM
18	prisons	4/24/2019 7:57 PM
19	Medical weed dispensary	4/24/2019 6:17 PM
20	Medical marijuana stores	4/24/2019 5:31 PM
21	All jobs that pay a living wage. Stop supporting low paying industries in our area and we won't need these low income housing projects at the cost of 10's of millions of dollars in lost property taxes.	4/24/2019 5:29 PM
22	Cannabis	4/24/2019 10:41 AM
23	Shoulder season tourism	4/23/2019 9:06 PM
24	Any viable jobs with the least impact on the environment that coordinate with the promise scholarships to keep youth and young families in our community	4/23/2019 2:32 PM
25	Trades Education	4/23/2019 11:55 AM
26	Short term vacation rentals	4/23/2019 9:47 AM

27	Except for a grandfathered polluNothing new that contaminates our air or water. The Badger is an embarrassment everywhere we go and claim that we live in Ludington.	4/22/2019 3:37 PM
28	Vocational training for skilled trades people (men & woman)	4/22/2019 1:43 PM
29	education	4/22/2019 11:17 AM
30	Trade related business, Mechanical trades, places that support industry	4/8/2019 11:03 AM
31	Sustainable, green businesses	4/8/2019 8:23 AM
32	Good paying jobs for residents. Don't fixate on tourists so much	4/8/2019 8:05 AM

Q24 In Mason County as a whole, what types of new housing should be encouraged? (check no more than 3)

Answered: 712 Skipped: 136



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Assisted living and retirement communities	44.80%	319
Single-family (1/4 - 1 acre lots)	41.57%	296
Single-family (1-3 acre lots)	38.62%	275
Apartment/duplex/attached condo	35.53%	253
Mixed (housing and commercial)	29.92%	213
Single-family (< 1/4 acre lots)	24.16%	172
Single-family (3+ acre lots)	20.65%	147
Mobile/modular	6.04%	43
Other (please specify)	5.76%	41
None	2.25%	16

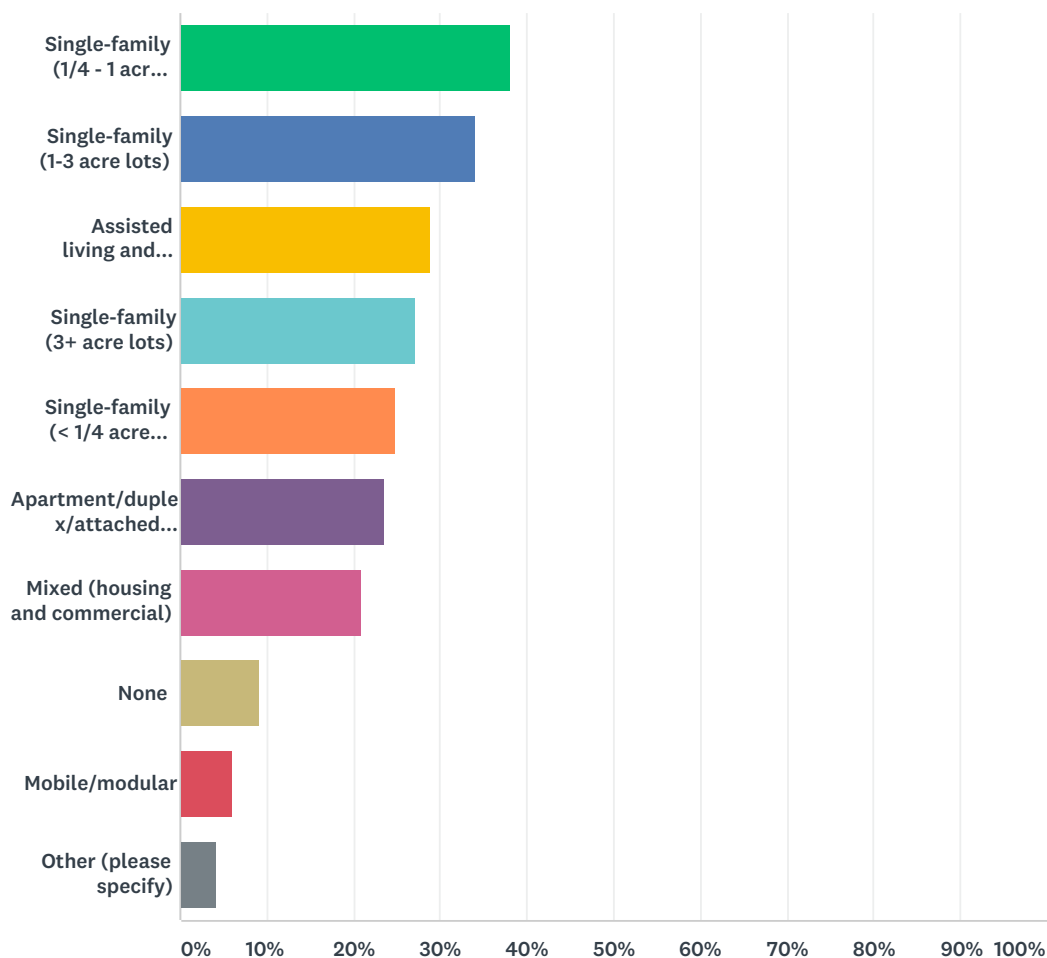
Total Respondents: 712

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	It all should be encouraged	6/3/2019 11:12 AM
2	The government should not encourage housing. let the free market determine what is needed.	5/10/2019 7:52 AM
3	Boating	5/9/2019 10:43 AM
4	wekend vacation rental properties	5/7/2019 3:31 PM
5	Senior couple assisted uving	5/6/2019 9:39 PM
6	Tiny Housing, small units	5/6/2019 7:39 PM
7	We need good paying jobs, not cheap housing	4/28/2019 5:00 PM
8	Senior and low income housing	4/26/2019 12:20 PM
9	Short term rental district established downtown	4/26/2019 9:46 AM
10	Not low income housing, but housing for those who are middle class	4/26/2019 7:08 AM
11	Tiny houses	4/25/2019 8:18 PM
12	All	4/25/2019 8:18 PM
13	Whatever Landowners choose	4/25/2019 8:10 PM
14	Quality low-income	4/25/2019 3:54 PM
15	affordable apartments/housing/house trailers for residents. NO Condos	4/25/2019 11:20 AM
16	Affordable Housing	4/25/2019 12:12 AM
17	An experimental development of a self sustainable homeless shelter/soup kitchen	4/24/2019 11:33 PM
18	QUALITY AFFORDABLE TINY HOMES	4/24/2019 11:12 PM
19	All types, but NO LOW INCOME HOUSING as that just sucks huge tax payer dollars out of our community.	4/24/2019 5:29 PM
20	Just plain affordable. Housing costs that match the income of the area.	4/24/2019 4:11 PM
21	One level mid price condos with attached garage, 55 over would be great.	4/24/2019 3:07 PM
22	Low income housing	4/24/2019 1:27 PM
23	Eco-communities	4/24/2019 1:09 PM
24	homeless shelter	4/24/2019 10:30 AM
25	Clean up & improve private homes & rental properties	4/24/2019 7:38 AM
26	Whatever is needed	4/24/2019 6:59 AM
27	Affordable	4/23/2019 7:17 PM
28	affordable for lower-mid income and seniors	4/23/2019 10:01 AM
29	short term coop housing for families	4/23/2019 6:54 AM
30	No more high end condos , only affordable apartments .	4/22/2019 4:25 PM
31	Hey	4/22/2019 4:15 PM
32	The more economically disadvantaged housing we create, the more that way of living is condoned and will remain here.	4/22/2019 3:37 PM
33	low income housing	4/22/2019 2:57 PM
34	tiny living	4/22/2019 1:11 PM
35	affordable housing for homeless	4/22/2019 12:57 PM
36	low income	4/22/2019 11:55 AM
37	Low income housing for everyone.	4/8/2019 7:33 PM

38	Tiny houses	4/8/2019 11:16 AM
39	Most anything as long as there are NOT so many owner restrictions that owner loses rights to use as they choose.	4/8/2019 10:31 AM
40	developments with clustered housing and surrounding natural spaces with trails and parks	4/8/2019 9:41 AM
41	Obviously, affordable housing for all residents.	4/8/2019 8:05 AM

Q25 In the community where you live, what types of new housing should be encouraged? (check no more than 3)

Answered: 700 Skipped: 148



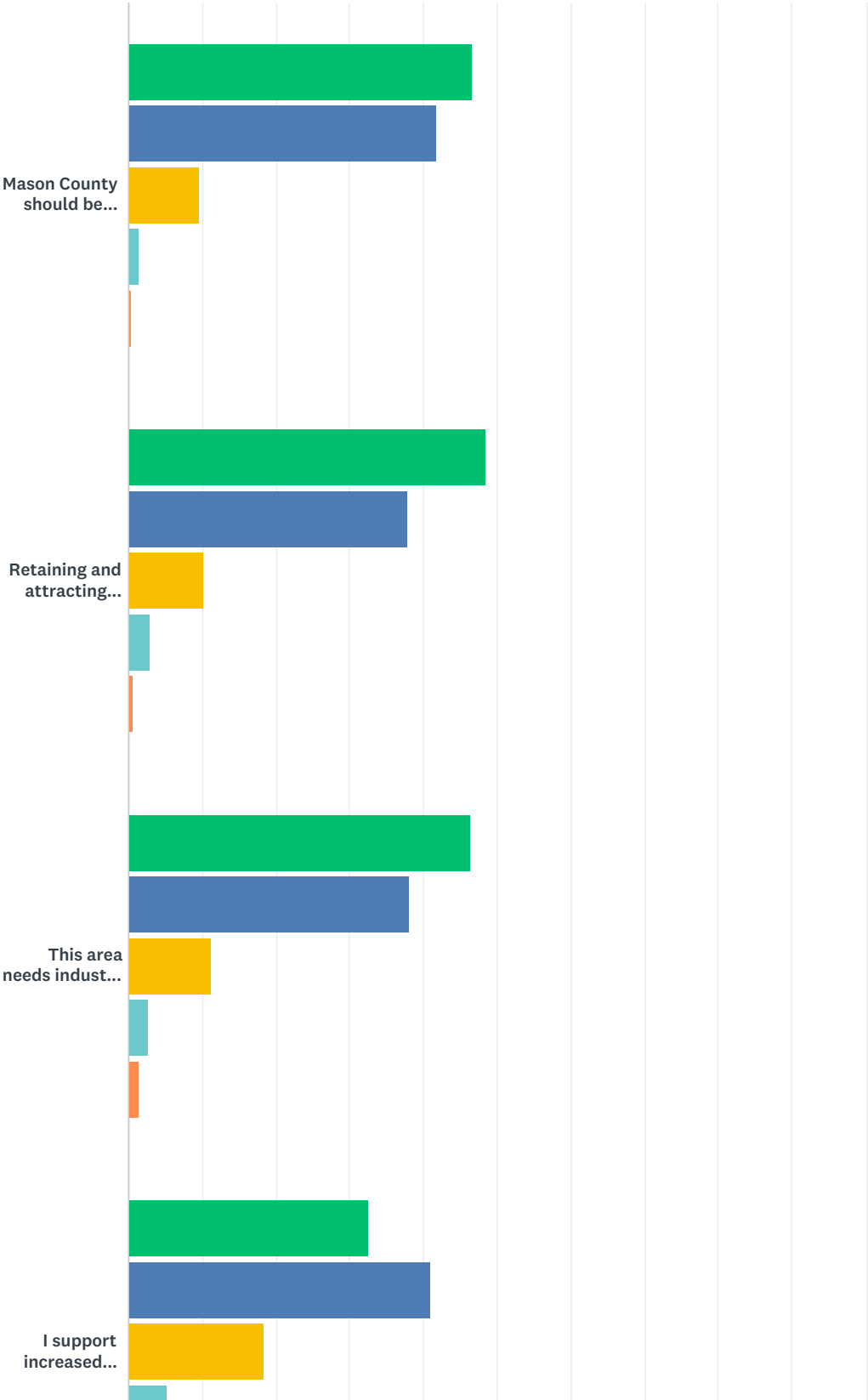
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single-family (1/4 - 1 acre lots)	38.14%	267
Single-family (1-3 acre lots)	34.14%	239
Assisted living and retirement communities	28.86%	202
Single-family (3+ acre lots)	27.14%	190
Single-family (< 1/4 acre lots)	25.00%	175
Apartment/duplex/attached condo	23.57%	165
Mixed (housing and commercial)	20.86%	146
None	9.29%	65
Mobile/modular	6.00%	42
Other (please specify)	4.29%	30

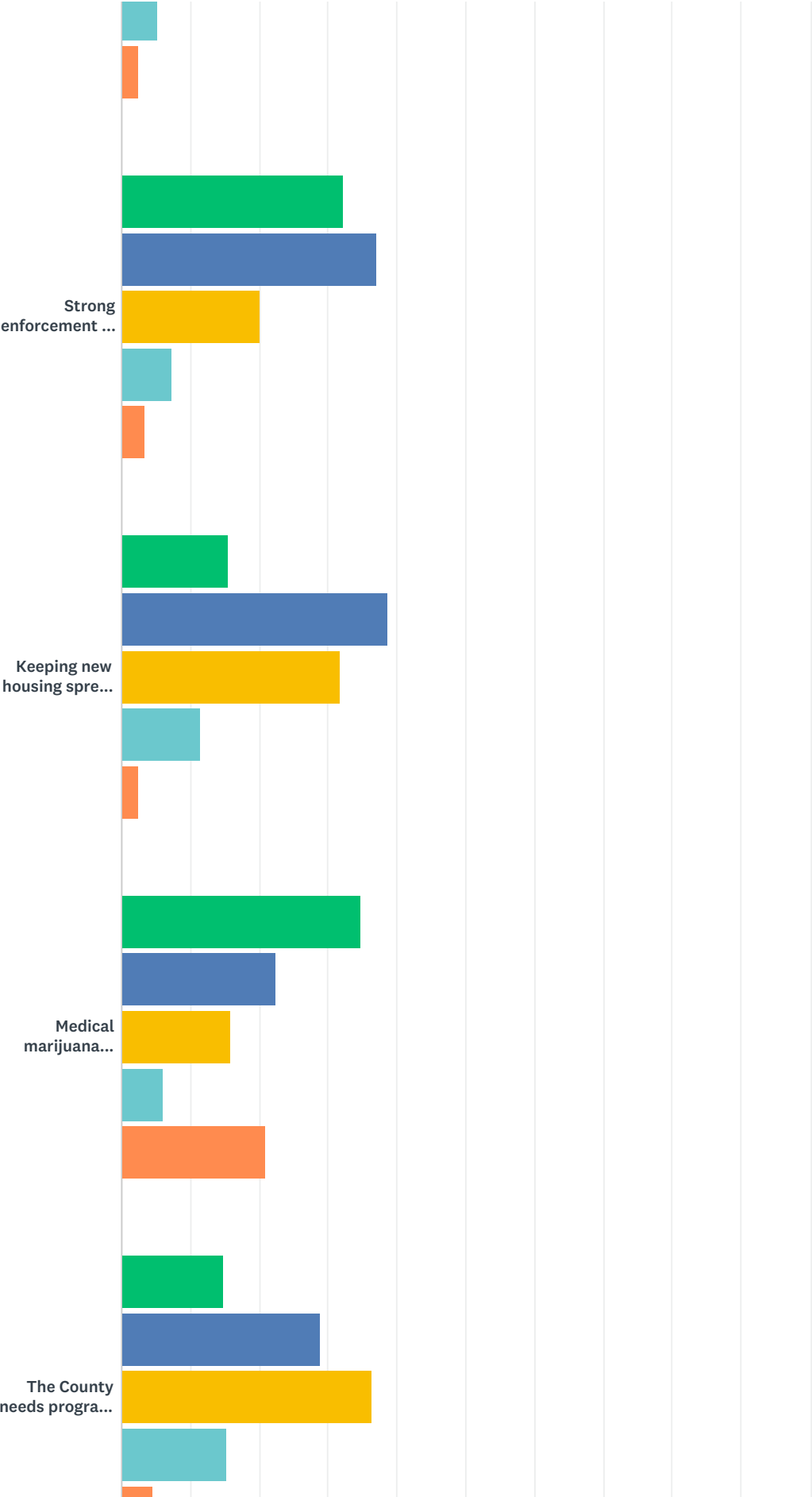
Total Respondents: 700

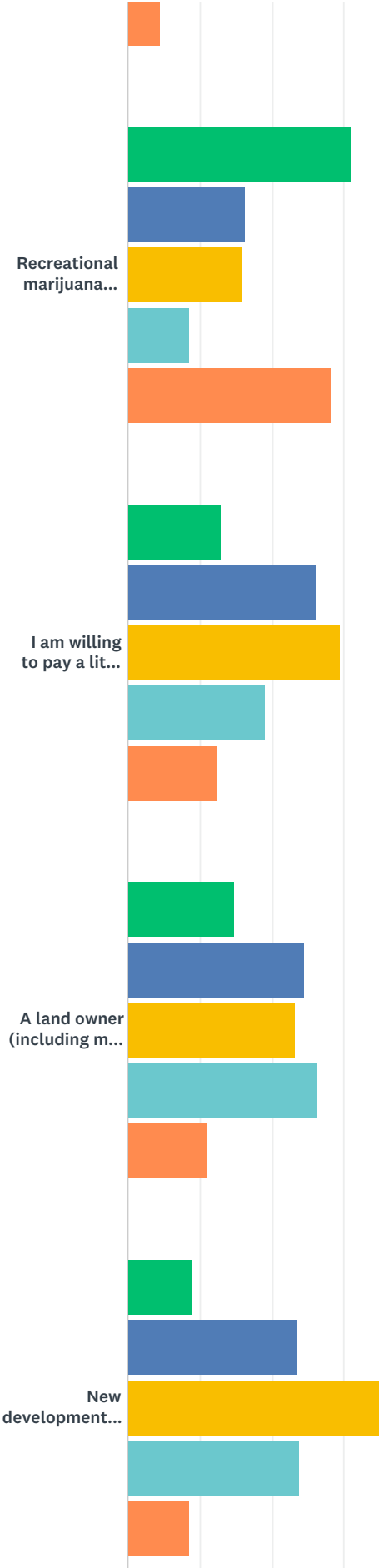
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	The government should not encourage housing. let the free market determine what is needed.	5/10/2019 7:52 AM
2	1 acre lots	5/9/2019 10:43 AM
3	Family farms	5/8/2019 12:33 PM
4	There is no water and sewer so smaller lots don't make much sense	5/6/2019 7:39 PM
5	Permanent "small" houses (less than 1000 sq ft)	5/2/2019 2:10 PM
6	Roads, traffic, stronger support of Mason Couny keithCole specifically piney ridge road.	4/28/2019 11:51 AM
7	Senior and low income housing	4/26/2019 12:20 PM
8	Tiny houses	4/25/2019 8:18 PM
9	All	4/25/2019 8:18 PM
10	Whatever Landowners choose	4/25/2019 8:10 PM
11	Modular homes	4/25/2019 6:49 PM
12	Housing area less than 720 square feet.	4/25/2019 5:14 PM
13	Quality low-income	4/25/2019 3:54 PM
14	affordable apartments/housing/house trailers for residents. NO Condos	4/25/2019 11:20 AM
15	QUALITY AFFORDABLE TINY HOMES	4/24/2019 11:12 PM
16	All, less zoning opens opportunities for all.	4/24/2019 5:29 PM
17	Just plain affordable. Housing costs that match the income of the area.	4/24/2019 4:11 PM
18	We need mid priced single level condos with attached garage.	4/24/2019 3:07 PM
19	homeless shelter	4/24/2019 10:30 AM
20	affordable for lower-mid income and seniors	4/23/2019 10:01 AM
21	tiny living	4/22/2019 1:11 PM
22	low income	4/22/2019 11:55 AM
23	NO mobile homes/single wide trailers should ever be allowed in the county, anywhere.	4/9/2019 11:05 AM
24	Low income housing	4/8/2019 7:33 PM
25	Tiny houses	4/8/2019 11:16 AM
26	Same as above	4/8/2019 10:31 AM
27	developments with clustered housing and surrounding natural spaces with trails and parks	4/8/2019 9:41 AM
28	Fix up the existing homes	4/8/2019 9:08 AM
29	Energy efficient ones	4/8/2019 8:23 AM
30	People are homeless, cant find affordable housing. Not enough housing. Seems all directed toward tourists or the rich or wealthy	4/8/2019 8:05 AM

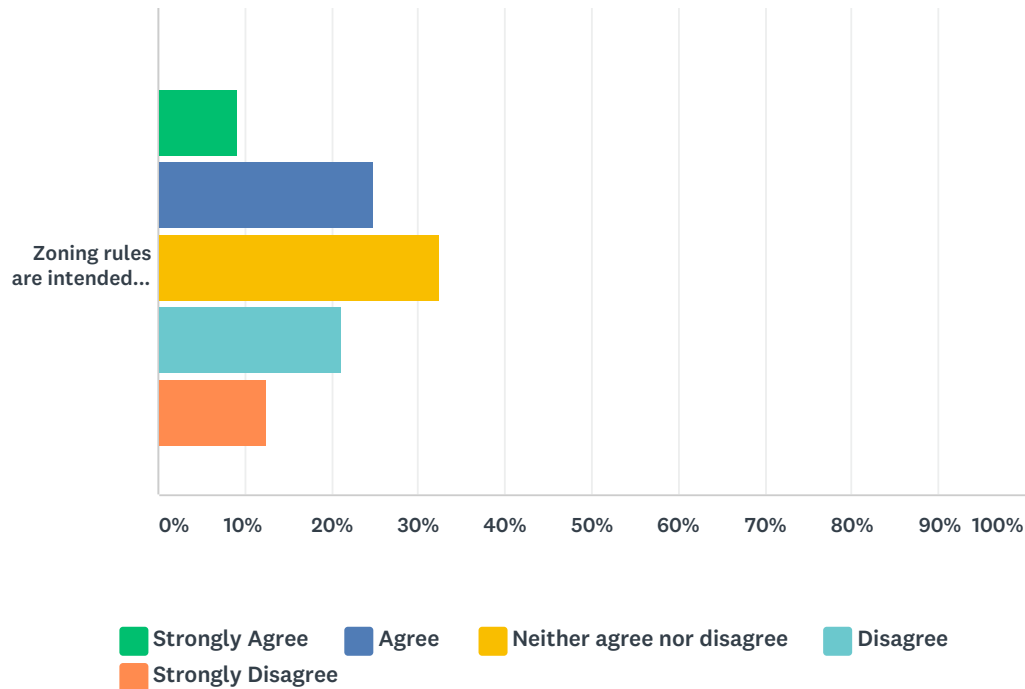
Q26 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Answered: 710 Skipped: 138







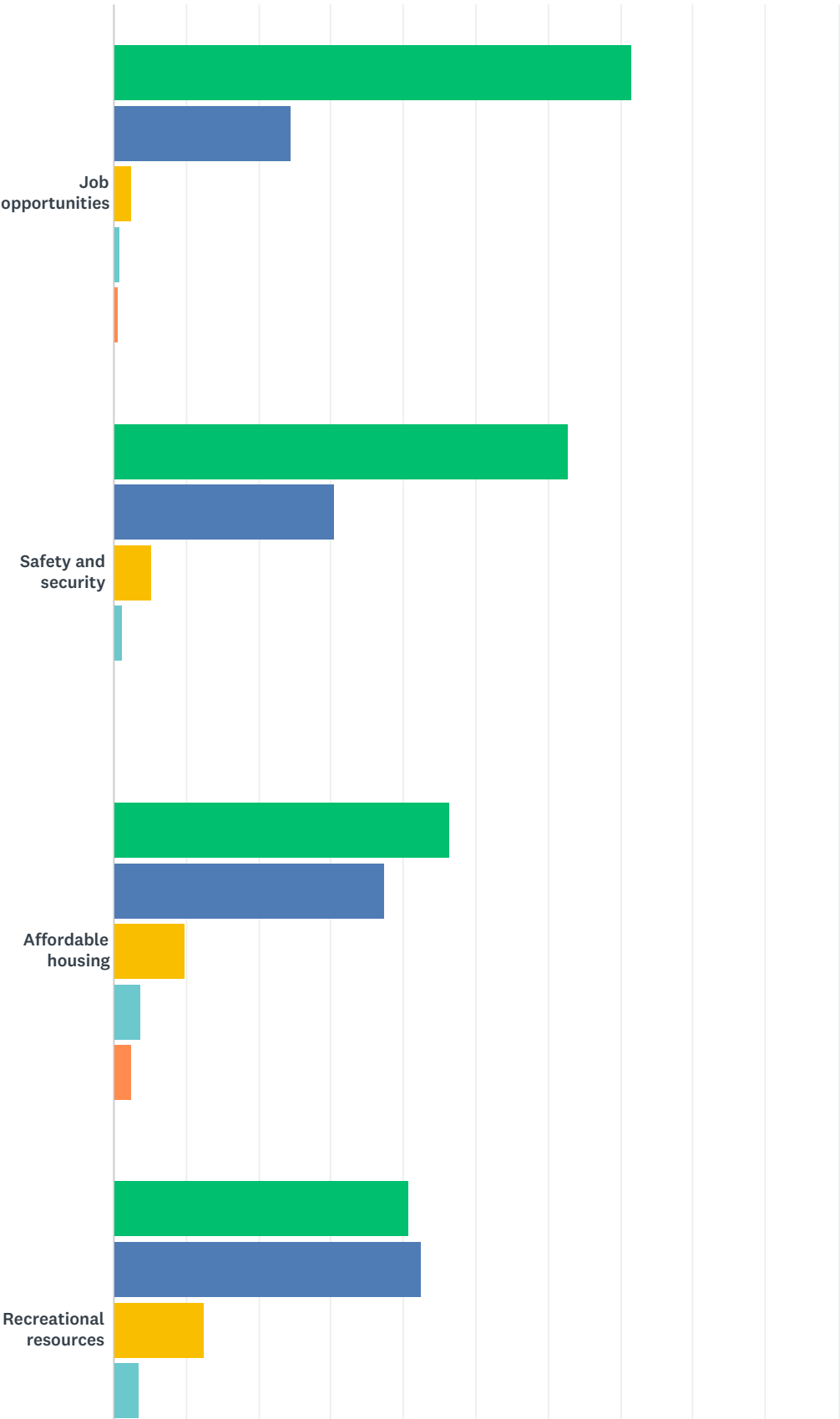


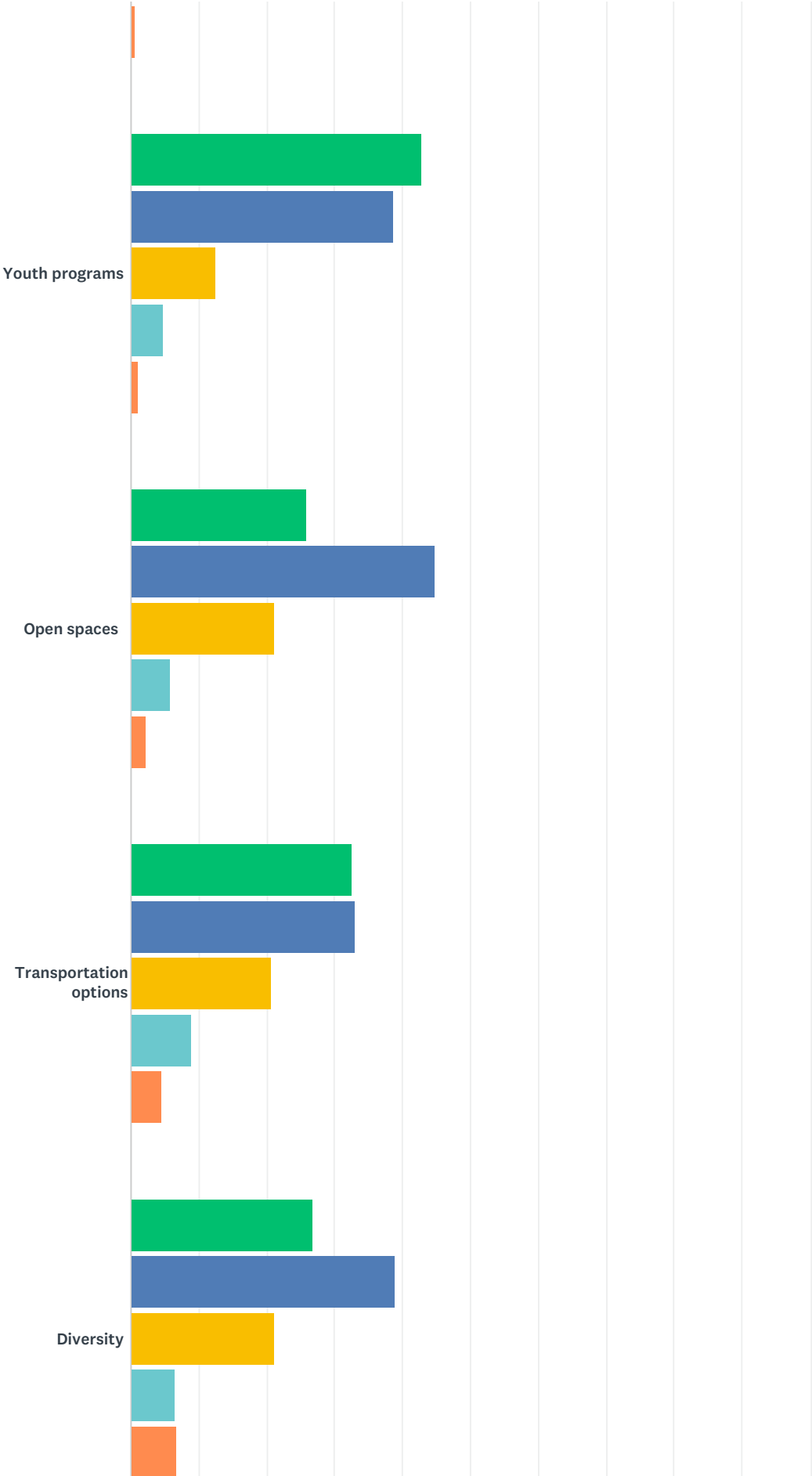
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Mason County should be "business - friendly."	46.66% 328	41.82% 294	9.53% 67	1.56% 11	0.43% 3	703	4.33
Retaining and attracting talent is important for attracting industry and jobs.	48.58% 343	37.82% 267	10.20% 72	2.83% 20	0.57% 4	706	4.31
This area needs industry to provide higher paying jobs.	46.52% 328	38.01% 268	11.35% 80	2.70% 19	1.42% 10	705	4.26
I support increased controls on development to protect groundwater and water quality in the rivers, lakes and streams.	32.72% 231	41.08% 290	18.41% 130	5.24% 37	2.55% 18	706	3.96
Strong enforcement is needed to get some messy properties cleaned up.	32.24% 227	37.07% 261	20.03% 141	7.39% 52	3.27% 23	704	3.88
Keeping new housing spread out on large lots helps to preserve the rural feel of the County.	15.50% 109	38.69% 272	31.86% 224	11.52% 81	2.42% 17	703	3.53
Medical marijuana facilities should be allowed to locate within Mason County.	34.79% 246	22.35% 158	15.84% 112	6.08% 43	20.93% 148	707	3.44
The County needs programs to prevent the conversion of large tracts of farmland into residential or commercial developments.	14.75% 104	28.94% 204	36.45% 257	15.18% 107	4.68% 33	705	3.34
Recreational marijuana facilities should be allowed to locate within Mason County.	30.87% 217	16.36% 115	15.93% 112	8.53% 60	28.31% 199	703	3.13
I am willing to pay a little higher taxes for government to purchase and protect areas threatened by development.	12.96% 91	26.07% 183	29.49% 207	19.09% 134	12.39% 87	702	3.08

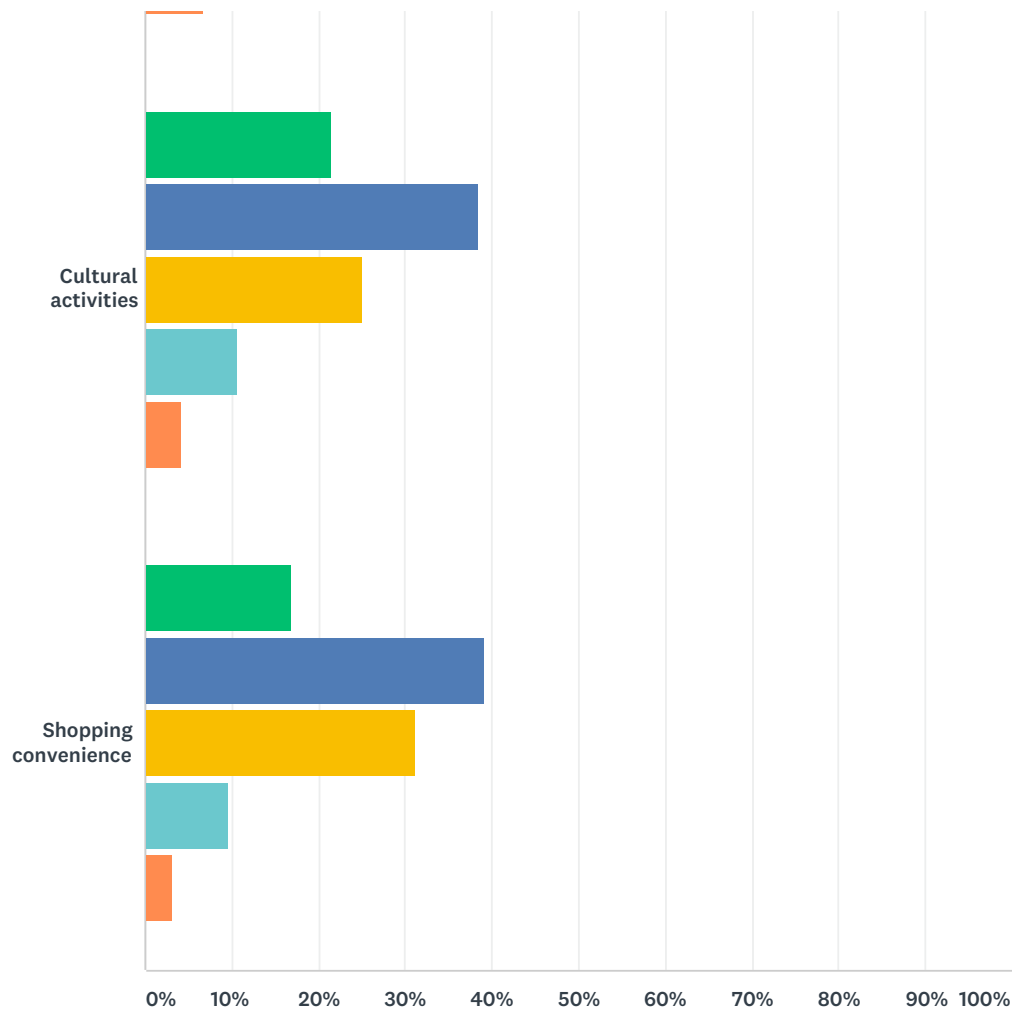
A land owner (including my neighbor) should be able to do pretty much what he/she wants with his land.	14.91% 105	24.43% 172	23.15% 163	26.42% 186	11.08% 78	704	3.06
New development should occur only when municipal sewer and water services are available.	8.99% 63	23.68% 166	34.95% 245	23.82% 167	8.56% 60	701	3.01
Zoning rules are intended to help me make the best use of my property.	9.22% 65	24.82% 175	32.34% 228	21.13% 149	12.48% 88	705	2.97

Q27 How important are the following to quality of life Mason County?

Answered: 712 Skipped: 136







■ Very important
 ■ Important
 ■ Moderately important
 ■ Slightly important
 ■ Not important

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Job opportunities	71.51% 507	24.54% 174	2.54% 18	0.85% 6	0.56% 4	709	4.66
Safety and security	62.66% 443	30.55% 216	5.23% 37	1.27% 9	0.28% 2	707	4.54
Affordable housing	46.40% 329	37.52% 266	9.73% 69	3.81% 27	2.54% 18	709	4.21
Recreational resources	40.82% 289	42.37% 300	12.57% 89	3.53% 25	0.71% 5	708	4.19
Youth programs	42.82% 301	38.69% 272	12.52% 88	4.84% 34	1.14% 8	703	4.17
Open spaces	25.88% 183	44.70% 316	21.22% 150	5.80% 41	2.40% 17	707	3.86
Transportation options	32.53% 230	33.10% 234	20.79% 147	9.05% 64	4.53% 32	707	3.80
Diversity	26.69% 189	38.98% 276	21.19% 150	6.50% 46	6.64% 47	708	3.73

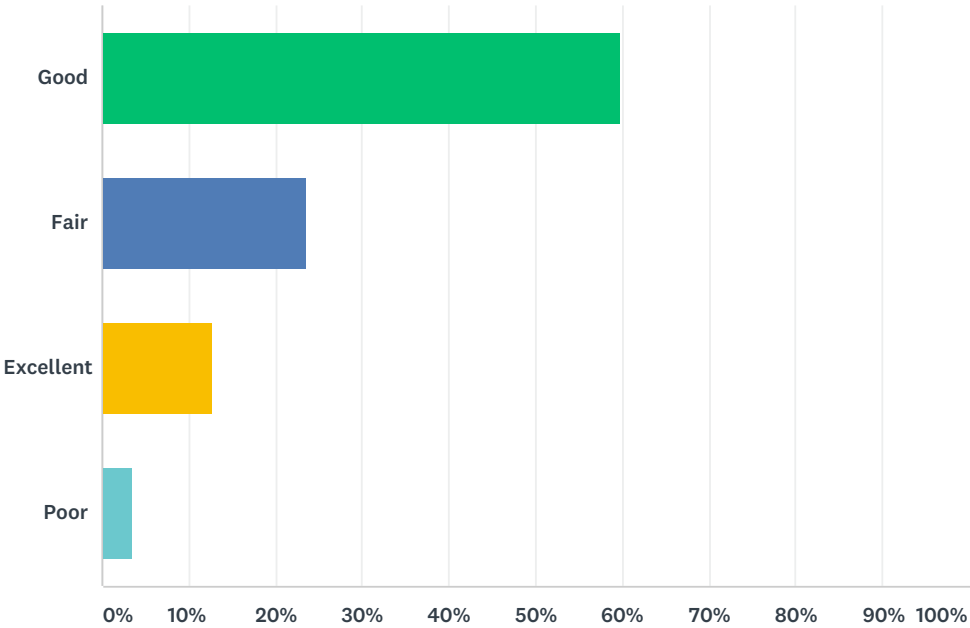
Cultural activities	21.59% 152	38.49% 271	25.14% 177	10.65% 75	4.12% 29	704	3.63
Shopping convenience	16.95% 120	39.12% 277	31.21% 221	9.60% 68	3.11% 22	708	3.57

#	WHAT OTHER FACTORS PERTAIN TO QUALITY OF LIFE? (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	"good ole boy" club. Not very friendly to people that move in that were not born and raised here.	5/24/2019 11:01 AM
2	The government leaving me alone	5/10/2019 7:53 AM
3	negative encroachment of utility companies on private land (i.e. wind and solar too close to homes)	5/8/2019 11:39 AM
4	"Diversity" is a loaded statement when asked by some government officials. Does it mean gov will tax me to create housing for illegal aliens and/or people that do not want to speak English? I think NOT!	5/7/2019 4:03 PM
5	The lakes and beaches. That's why I live here.	5/7/2019 2:17 PM
6	having good medical care and good teachers & educational facilities	5/6/2019 8:03 PM
7	Serenity of Surroundings.	4/30/2019 1:42 PM
8	quality of life comes from within	4/29/2019 2:21 PM
9	Jobs should be the top priority. If well paying jobs are in Ludington affordable housing won't be as much of a need.	4/28/2019 5:00 PM
10	Preserving world class natural beauty!	4/28/2019 11:55 AM
11	Better roads - infrastructure	4/26/2019 11:49 AM
12	Arts	4/26/2019 2:03 AM
13	Broadband service	4/25/2019 6:59 PM
14	Access to well-care and sick-care	4/25/2019 6:03 PM
15	Excellence education availability	4/25/2019 5:12 PM
16	Most of the above listed, but not with direct government involvement.	4/25/2019 4:00 PM
17	Community involvement, active churches, community support of public schools	4/25/2019 3:58 PM
18	Programs or jobs for youth aiding in cleanup of water and land	4/25/2019 1:43 PM
19	support for the elderly via activities/discounts	4/25/2019 1:39 PM
20	lower taxes on property and gas	4/25/2019 8:41 AM
21	Small business opportunities	4/25/2019 2:54 AM
22	Community service opportunities	4/24/2019 11:38 PM
23	BAD ROADS	4/24/2019 9:59 PM
24	crime prevention	4/24/2019 7:59 PM
25	Bike friendly! Safer shoulders allowing for recreational and alternative transportation.	4/24/2019 6:40 PM
26	Less government taxes, zoning and regulations is most important	4/24/2019 5:34 PM
27	Clean air and clean water.	4/24/2019 4:16 PM
28	Having less restrictions on my property	4/24/2019 7:10 AM
29	Nondiscrimination of any kind.	4/23/2019 9:50 PM
30	Community involvement opportunities	4/23/2019 10:40 AM
31	affordable housing	4/23/2019 10:04 AM
32	Broadband Internet	4/23/2019 8:09 AM
33	a fare wage and good education	4/23/2019 7:45 AM
34	cost of living	4/22/2019 8:36 PM

35	Increased ability to find a doctor taking new patients. Providing better resources to the community via A true Animal Shelter vs a poorly run Animal Control that does nothing to ensure the animals are spayed/neutered and given shots.	4/22/2019 6:45 PM
36	High speed internet and cable capability, providing the community with a better alternative for pet welfare, than the limited services and compassion shown by Animal Control, through a true county shelter as done in Manistee and Oceana, educating current business leaders to hire best qualified for open jobs as many do not want to consider those who have come from outside Mason County, bringing new companies into the area for both manufacturing and high tech jobs before more manufacturing is lost.	4/22/2019 5:56 PM
37	Access to water.	4/22/2019 3:45 PM
38	Senior living and programs, medical care	4/22/2019 3:41 PM
39	Co-operatives to help property owners maintain their property	4/22/2019 3:18 PM
40	Affordable medical care, treatment options	4/22/2019 2:19 PM
41	Police and fire protection.	4/22/2019 1:25 PM
42	Health that you do not need to travel for specialties	4/22/2019 12:45 PM
43	Affordable child care	4/12/2019 6:40 PM
44	A factor to the quality of life in mason county is whether you are living here because you love it or your here because you are stuck here.	4/9/2019 3:37 PM
45	health care and related transportation/costs	4/8/2019 10:02 PM
46	drugs, suicide prevention, a mental care facility.	4/8/2019 7:38 PM
47	Creation of "resident only areas". Places that are of limits to anyone but residents. le....beach area, park spots, etc. The residents take care of this town, as well as catering the tourists. They should be rewarded for it.	4/8/2019 10:05 AM
48	Recycling, sustainability practices	4/8/2019 8:26 AM

Q28 Do you believe the quality of life in Mason County is:

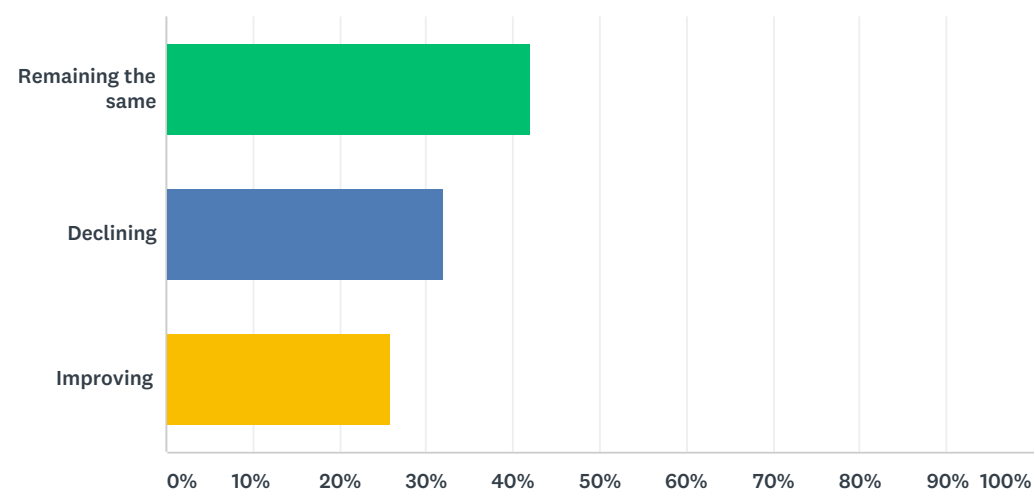
Answered: 708 Skipped: 140



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Good	59.89%	424
Fair	23.73%	168
Excellent	12.85%	91
Poor	3.53%	25
TOTAL		708

Q29 Do you believe the quality of life in Mason County is:

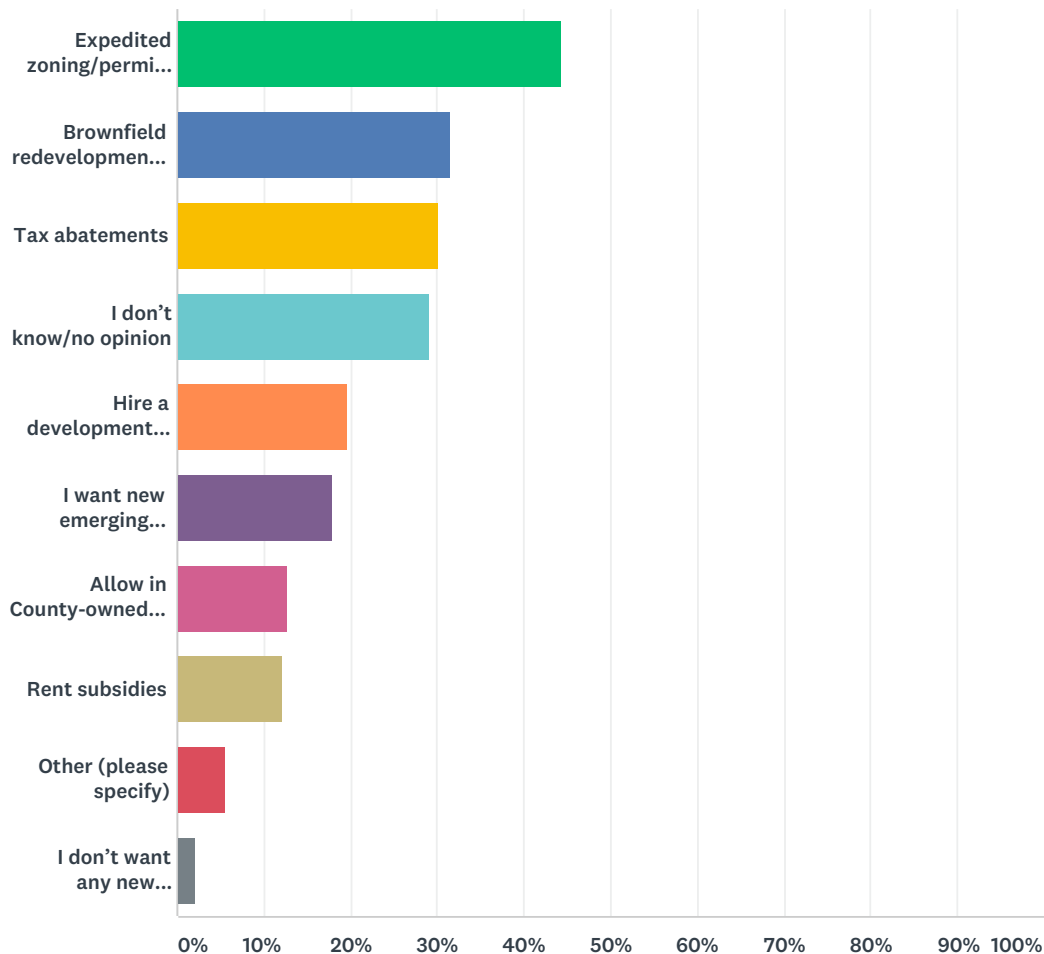
Answered: 710 Skipped: 138



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Remaining the same	41.97%	298
Declining	32.11%	228
Improving	25.92%	184
TOTAL		710

Q30 If Mason County were to encourage economic development, how should they do so? (check all that apply)

Answered: 689 Skipped: 159



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Expedited zoning/permitting process	44.27%	305
Brownfield redevelopment programs	31.49%	217
Tax abatements	30.04%	207
I don't know/no opinion	29.17%	201
Hire a development advocate/liaison	19.59%	135
I want new emerging economic / industrial development, but no incentives	18.00%	124
Allow in County-owned buildings	12.77%	88
Rent subsidies	12.05%	83
Other (please specify)	5.66%	39
I don't want any new emerging economic or industrial development in Mason County	2.03%	14

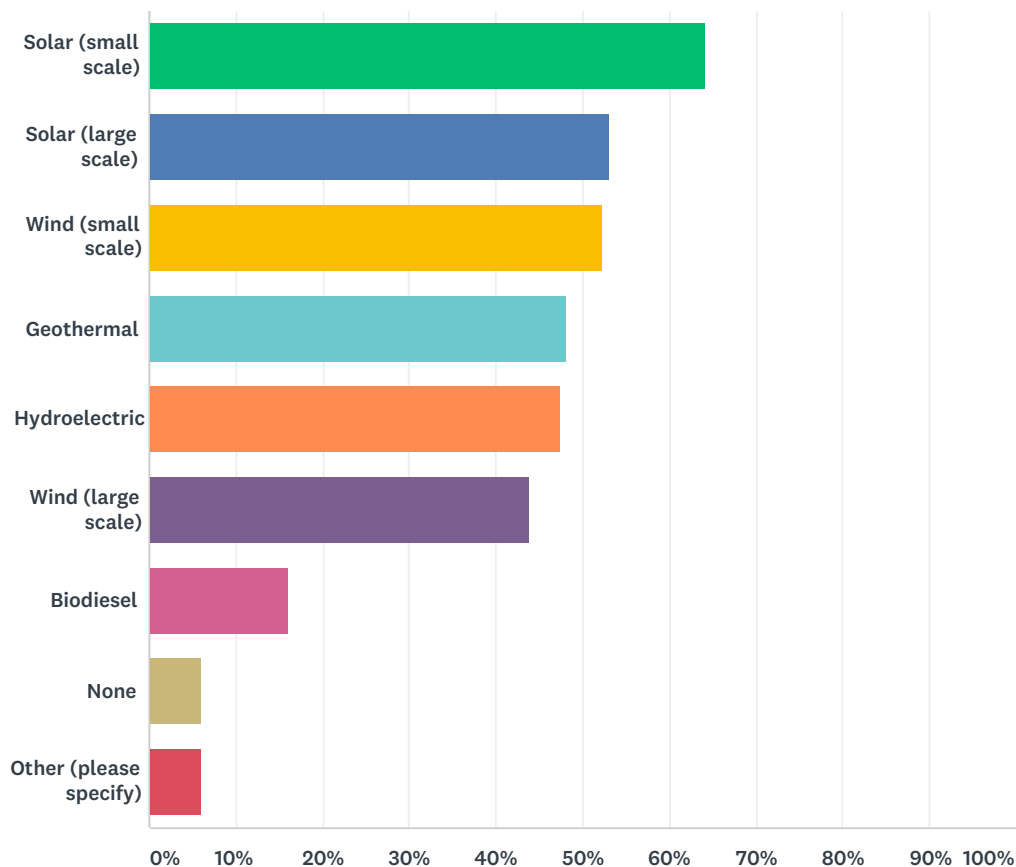
Total Respondents: 689

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Economic/industrial development with incentives	6/3/2019 4:52 PM
2	Zoning and planning have to back off	6/3/2019 11:23 AM
3	The government should not encourage anything. Allow the free market to decide.	5/10/2019 8:04 AM
4	Not up on this enough to know except NO on the hire someone!	5/8/2019 2:26 PM
5	A lot of Gov folks think that Government creates wealth. Just reduce regulations and cut taxes. Growth will happen. MAGA!	5/7/2019 4:57 PM
6	There are plenty of free consultants to be found.	5/7/2019 11:41 AM
7	tax abatements for new businesses	5/6/2019 8:03 PM
8	Help down town Scottville seems to be owned by one business not allowing new businesses	4/29/2019 4:10 PM
9	not qualified to answer	4/29/2019 2:33 PM
10	Fresh members on the commissions.	4/26/2019 7:11 PM
11	promote the sale/use of existing empty buildings for new business ventures to create new well paying jobs in the county. The development of land in the eastern portion of the county to promote good paying jobs with benefits.	4/26/2019 4:07 PM
12	Lower Taxes on families and businesses, lower government involvement in programs that benefit a select few.	4/26/2019 5:30 AM
13	The Townships, County, and State already provide too many incentives to commercial entities. For instance, Sargent Sand invested \$20M in capital equipment over the last ten years for their operations. They netted, conservatively, \$250M in profit over that time. The State forgave property tax on the \$20M in capital equipment; the 'loss' (not really a loss; what Sargent did was legal) in the property tax millage related to Ludington Schools alone, was worth \$1M total, spread over seven years. Ludington Schools could've used that money. To my knowledge, the State did not make up the lack. That's a black-and-white example of what incentives cost, or rather what the trade-offs are.	4/26/2019 2:22 AM
14	N	4/25/2019 10:11 PM
15	-	4/25/2019 7:52 PM
16	Become a senior friendly community	4/25/2019 5:39 PM
17	Do not blindly enforce zoning rules that may be detrimental	4/25/2019 3:27 PM
18	Hire new more educated staff	4/25/2019 2:48 PM
19	Less property taxes. We are taxed enough.	4/25/2019 12:28 PM
20	why waste \$ hiring someone to tell city what to do when the people in that position should have that education to do so themselves	4/25/2019 8:49 AM
21	Focus on other parts of the country other than Ludington.	4/25/2019 12:18 AM
22	Stay open minded to new ideas.	4/24/2019 11:45 PM
23	close MCE merge with MCC and convert MCE to a mini prison	4/24/2019 8:22 PM
24	Less controls, NO low income housing, No subsidies for low paying manufacturing jobs, encourage independent tech workers to live here.	4/24/2019 5:42 PM
25	Businesses receiving incentives should have to meet strong wage and employee care requirements and loose the incentives if they cannot care for our citizen employees.	4/24/2019 1:17 PM
26	Support organizations that are already doing economic development in Mason County.	4/23/2019 9:42 PM
27	Why aren't they doing it right now?	4/23/2019 9:19 PM
28	Not informed enough to choose, but we need to be competitive with other communities and keep industry in areas with other industry to protect residential areas and recreational areas.	4/23/2019 2:40 PM
29	Broadband Internet	4/23/2019 8:52 AM

30	Active seeking out industries and !quality! employers	4/23/2019 7:11 AM
31	I would only offer incentives to rehab existing structures	4/22/2019 7:40 PM
32	Hire a professional who isn't known by everyone and then isn't swayed	4/22/2019 6:48 PM
33	Get the college to provide better manufacturing and training programs beyond catering to nursing	4/22/2019 6:17 PM
34	Infrastructure; Skilled trades; invest in "green" businesses	4/22/2019 4:02 PM
35	Get an objective point of view, look at demographics and compare to a vision-set goals to achieve them. Merge silos of effort and get several organizations to work together instead of individually. There's so many entry level positions and nothing to grow into; but there are also just as many people without skills that should be acquiring them for better jobs and off assistance to reduce low income housing nad improve quality of life just right there.	4/22/2019 3:51 PM
36	In whatever way is possible, while maintaining quality companies who contribute to their employees and the community.	4/8/2019 7:56 PM
37	I'm not informed enough to have input.	4/8/2019 1:27 PM
38	To many programs are exploited by those in power, or those that are friendly with those in power.	4/8/2019 11:29 AM
39	A good business will thrive without incentives, if it's a desirable community which Mason county is a good business will come, we don't need the ones that want an incentive.	4/8/2019 10:20 AM

Q31 Which of the following types of alternative energy should be encouraged in Mason County? (please check all that apply)

Answered: 670 Skipped: 178



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
Solar (small scale)	64.33%	431
Solar (large scale)	53.13%	356
Wind (small scale)	52.39%	351
Geothermal	48.21%	323
Hydroelectric	47.46%	318
Wind (large scale)	44.03%	295
Biodiesel	16.12%	108
None	6.12%	41
Other (please specify)	6.12%	41
Total Respondents: 670		

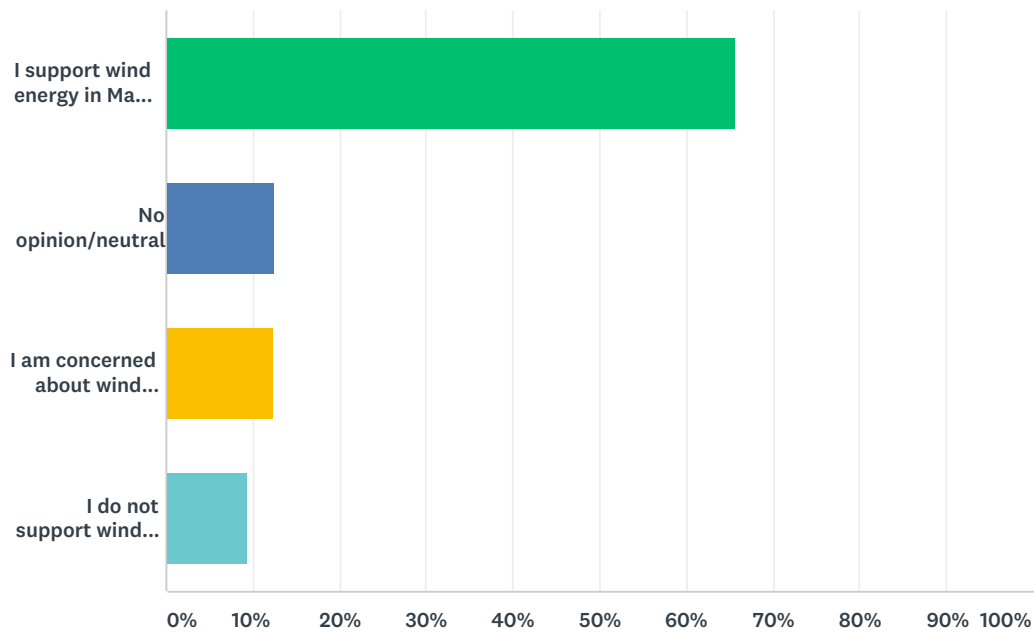
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	wood harvesting	5/27/2019 9:03 PM

2	The government should not encourage anything. Allow the free market to decide.	5/10/2019 8:04 AM
3	At this time there is no viable alternative energy available, I am against government subsidy to energy. If it is viable then consumer demand is all that is necessary.	5/8/2019 4:33 PM
4	Not up on this enough to comment	5/8/2019 2:26 PM
5	NEVER on a large scale, even though private land owners should be able to do what they want on their property, it should not affect others as directly as utility companies have made it (i.e. Lake Winds)	5/8/2019 11:48 AM
6	The County shoved the WIND FARM down Riverton's throats. Property value lost. Reminds me of when the Pig Factory came in (down wind) on Kinney. No thanks.	5/7/2019 4:57 PM
7	Large scale wind if not as close to houses as current Lakewinds development!	5/7/2019 11:12 AM
8	Allow the free market for energy	5/7/2019 10:30 AM
9	Wind turbines a joke! Hopefully county learned their lesson	5/6/2019 10:00 PM
10	No Commercial Scale Wind Turbines!	5/6/2019 8:03 PM
11	Recreational motor Sports usage Summer and Winter sports	4/30/2019 2:11 PM
12	Program to assist homeowners in developing their own individual alternative energy source	4/30/2019 7:41 AM
13	Nuclear	4/29/2019 10:40 PM
14	Rooftop solar	4/28/2019 5:10 PM
15	We have the pumped storage facility, which is clean energy	4/27/2019 2:52 PM
16	Let the people invest on their own. The government should not be involved.	4/26/2019 5:30 AM
17	We should continue to leverage the Pumped Storage Project, and the high-tension power line infrastructure. The offshore wind turbine project (which Pentwater second-home owners nixed several years ago) would've been a better fit than the land-based 272 turbines we now have, given complaints about noise. The esthetic effect on the horizon view would've been negligible IMO. This issue should be revisited.	4/26/2019 2:22 AM
18	I don't know	4/25/2019 9:05 PM
19	Nuclear	4/25/2019 8:48 PM
20	-	4/25/2019 7:52 PM
21	Anything that works here	4/25/2019 4:09 PM
22	Nuclear	4/25/2019 1:11 PM
23	Nuclear, Natural Gas	4/25/2019 8:46 AM
24	I don't know	4/25/2019 7:42 AM
25	hamsters or gerbils running in wheels to make kinetic energy	4/24/2019 8:22 PM
26	Coal most reliable power source there is	4/24/2019 12:52 PM
27	YES!	4/24/2019 10:57 AM
28	The hydroelectric we have is important but additional could be an environmental concern.	4/24/2019 10:11 AM
29	H	4/24/2019 7:45 AM
30	Anything that is clean and renewable	4/23/2019 2:40 PM
31	gas turbine peaking	4/23/2019 10:46 AM
32	depends on economics	4/22/2019 8:44 PM
33	I do not know enough about alternative energy	4/22/2019 5:53 PM
34	We already have large scale wind turbines- probably enough	4/22/2019 4:19 PM
35	Any collection of energy alternatives that grow jobs and reduce global warming trends	4/22/2019 4:02 PM
36	Anything that does not call for oil and gas.	4/22/2019 12:05 PM
37	unsure/need to do more research on this topic before forming an opinion	4/9/2019 2:46 PM

38	I am interested on how to put roof top solar on Harbor Condo Terrace Condos	4/8/2019 10:04 PM
39	We don't have geothermal capabilities here...	4/8/2019 9:07 PM
40	I don't know enough about this to make a choice.	4/8/2019 5:33 PM
41	A variety to give residents options	4/8/2019 8:11 AM

Q32 Please indicate your opinions regarding wind energy:

Answered: 695 Skipped: 153



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I support wind energy in Mason County	65.76%	457
No opinion/neutral	12.52%	87
I am concerned about wind energy in Mason County	12.37%	86
I do not support wind energy in Mason County	9.35%	65
TOTAL		695

Q33 Please use the remaining space to write down your ideas and opinions concerning development in Mason County.

Answered: 235 Skipped: 613

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Question 32 about wind ... it got forced down the throats of many people in the county which was never fair. it should NEVER expand.	6/3/2019 12:38 PM
2	The planning commission has too much power. Before them we had zoning which worked well. They need to have guidelines to work from if they are going to keep existing. Not every business is the same and they need to realize this. Seems they want to hinder growth and make expansions or remodeling a terrible thing. They need to loosen up and come alongside the business owner and make it happen, not declining nit picky things and then charging \$400+ to reapply. The major hindrance to growth in the county is the planning commission.	6/3/2019 11:23 AM
3	The County should respect the rights of relatively helpless people when encouraging development. The rights of Susan Kaiser were horribly trampled when the wind park was built in Mason County.	5/27/2019 9:03 PM
4	Updated Shopping and services will become more needed as retirees from Detroit and Chicago. That's what they are accustomed to. It appears that businesses and local government show preference to people that were born and raised here and are just moving back. There's alot of dedicated and talented individuals that want to live here. Rural doesn't have to mean outdated or behind the times.	5/24/2019 11:09 AM
5	We need more intelligence-based jobs in this county. Marketing, software development, professional services, laboratories, administrative offices, and such other businesses would help make this happen.	5/13/2019 12:32 AM
6	The government should stay out of development and let the free market determine what is developed and what is not.	5/10/2019 8:04 AM
7	I kept looking for a question on how bad daycare is in this area and not a single question concerning this alarming problem was addressed! We can't expect young single parents to earn an income if we can't get them daycare. Regulations have become stifling and people are no longer willing to take on the challenge. THIS IS A HUGE PROBLEM IN MASON COUNTY and to see it not addressed tells me just how out of touch the planning committee is!	5/8/2019 2:26 PM
8	Mason County needs its own public bank. County officials representing their voters and not just voting their opinions. We need to decide that there is more to running this county than corporate money and handouts.	5/8/2019 12:43 PM
9	I do firmly believe that the current (and previous 1-2 years) zoning board has been very fair, intelligent, caring, and diligent. If this board would have been in place during the SLUP process for Lake Winds Energy Park, the process and outcome would have been much more fair to everyone affected. Please always offer questionnaires or surveys to the public citizens (who live in a townships to be affected by a major change) before the process is underway. We still live with the negative effects of being so close to industrial wind turbines and it affects our lives every day. Someone who lives in a different township should have no say in what happens within a surrounding township. In the first 1 or 2 meetings with the current zoning board that I attended, I heard more concern and questions raised (by board members) about any discussed topic than I ever heard during the years worth of weekly meetings before the approval of the LWEF SLUP. Thank you!	5/8/2019 11:48 AM
10	commercial development needs to happen in the areas that has the infrastructure to support it. Tourism should not be the focus in total for all of Mason County and should be encouraged as the higher priority along the lake shore but the rural area of the county should be limited in development in order to try to protect the rural character.	5/8/2019 8:59 AM

11	I was warned when I came to Michigan that the local governments were powerful and oppressive and full of regulations. However, I did NOT anticipate the property losses we would experience due to the wind farms and other issues. Also note: When the wind farms were going in, a White Construction worker asked: "Where are the blacktop roads?" We looked surprised. Then he said: "Of all the wind farms he has been on, this is the first location where the blacktop was not put in before." Answers?	5/7/2019 4:57 PM
12	The wind turbines are too close to our farm house. During windy periods of the day and night, the noise level from the turbines is unacceptable. They have spoiled the landscape.	5/7/2019 2:57 PM
13	The Wind turbines are too close to my residence. I am surrounded by them. The constant sound, movement and vibration diminish my quality of life. When they are off, it is noticeably more quiet and peaceful, a blessing. These Machines need to be situated farther away from homes. (minimally 2 miles, rather than the .5 mile of Summits turbines). However, I know money the money make for people is more important than my concerns.	5/7/2019 2:56 PM
14	Not sure what you meant by "business friendly". Clean energy is necessary but must consider placement more carefully than you did previously with Lakewinds. By "open spaces" I think of non-farm areas that protect of and encourage diversity of plants and animals. I'd like the county to encourage and support sustainable agriculture that doesn't pollute land, air and water. Previously, we lived in an agricultural area where our water became poisoned with nitrates. Protecting lake and groundwater is of the utmost importance for our well-being.	5/7/2019 11:12 AM
15	Federal law says marijuana use is illegal. We shouldn't have a facility in mason county.	5/7/2019 10:49 AM
16	Overall I think Mason County is a great place to live because I recreate in the outdoors. I would like to see urban sprawl stay in the existing cities or villages.	5/7/2019 10:30 AM
17	Please prevent the placement of wind turbines in residentially developed farm areas like was allowed in Summit Township. If need more turbines, place them in isolated open spaces in the county instead.	5/7/2019 9:58 AM
18	The county has spent probably close to a million on legal fees regarding wind energy after falling suckers to the promise of Consumer Energy snd their promise of big tax dollars ... now they are depreciating the turbines down to minimal value and revenue for county. County board failed the community and taxing units and innocent residents.	5/6/2019 10:00 PM
19	The Mason County economy is too seasonal. There is such a slow down in winter with restaurants and businesses closing. There need to be more year around light industrial and tech jobs so families can have good incomes. Once state and local regulations have been developed, marijuana business should be allowed in appropriate commercial areas where security is high and visible. Mason County has been a beautiful part of Michigan, but the local government is squandering the beauty that it had with ugly wind turbines and massive power lines. The wind turbine project was a ridiculous choice for our area - ugly towers, flashing red lights, noise, many zoning regulation headaches, maintenance issues, court cases, tax appeals by Consumers Energy to reduce their tax valuation. We don't need any more of these ridiculous, poor development choices that despoil our landscape. Young adults need starter homes and good jobs. More job opportunities will encourage them to stay in the area. Continuing development of the arts and cultural activities create a better quality of life and also give young people a reason to want to be here as well as lifelong residents, professionals, educators, and businesses. We need specialty services at the hospital in Ludington - a resident cardiologist and neurologist for emergency heart attacks and strokes. Senior citizens need services such as transportation and home delivery of goods so they can stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Then senior housing options need to be available for them to move to when they need to downsize and still be fairly independent for as long as possible. Businesses that help seniors as they age need to be encouraged. Zoning rules need to be fair for all and followed by everyone including big developers and favored businesses.	5/6/2019 8:03 PM
20	I have been told that one area that Mason County is lacking is a diverse, trained labor force and housing for those people to move into our county.	5/6/2019 4:52 PM
21	I would like to see continued trails for hiking and biking. I would also like to see the opportunity to build "tiny or small" homes less than 1000 sq ft both within the cities as well as the county as a whole. I also think we need to continue to encourage more diverse businesses to move into the area and possibly a greater focus on agribusinesses and technology based businesses. Finally, we need to do what we can to keep our lakes and streams clean and family friendly. If that means encouraging/enforcement of alcohol bans, I am fine with that too! Thank you for this opportunity to present our thoughts.	5/2/2019 2:19 PM

22	I am of the opinion that Mason County has been more prohibitive than encouraging towards business expansion and growth. It is my opinion that the county needs to do more to encourage expansion for the betterment of the whole county - creating jobs and trickle-down effects throughout. Mason County needs to remain a location where people want to come for vacation. They need activities and places to stay.	4/30/2019 3:37 PM
23	Employment lacking good paying median jobs within the community we live, A lot of folks drive to Grand Rapid, Muskegon, Hart or Whitehall to secure their employment to afford to live in our communities. Recreational motor sports and day use of our national parks and rivers are not promoted enough. Working With DNR Snowmobile and Motor sports trails thru grants to create trails that link to smaller town to help local business with Tourisms dollars and Taxes for part time residences We should be helping expand these great assets. All communities need a balance of Industry and recreational to support growth or at the least a affordable life style. Look to green technologies as a area for bring in innovative industrial growth that is sustainable know and into the future. Work with employers to educate our children for the demands of the 21st century. Not all student are 4yrs collage bound we need skilled tradesman in our communities also.	4/30/2019 2:11 PM
24	Some roads need better maintenance. Other than existing brownfields or areas currently zoned for such use, there needs to be no more land sacrificed for industry and manufacturing. Stop the commercial sprawl on 10. More higher end tourist accommodations, and individual owned small businesses.	4/30/2019 7:41 AM
25	I installed geothermal on my property and it helped get me through freezing temperatures and difficult access to limited gas refills. That should be encouraged-as should solar and wind ESPECIALLY in our isolated communities. As much as the county seems to want to preserve rural life, there the 4-H program in Mason is dying. With a lack of members, there is a part-time director who's degree is in history and English (but his dad was the Oceana Co director). I'm so disappointed	4/29/2019 6:35 PM
26	Parking solutions for all areas of the county needs to be given way more attention, especially in Ludington. More and more parking gets taken away even as they build more apartments and businesses that will need to accommodate more cars. It doesn't make any sense and isn't sustainable. It already is negatively impacting residents and visitors and will continue to get worse based on the impact of upcoming projects. Someone that actually knows something about community development needs to be part of decision making when it comes to long term community development.	4/29/2019 6:25 PM
27	The town or county needs to help Walhalla Scottville and dust to build new business	4/29/2019 4:10 PM
28	having recently returned to the area I do not see any unity to the new growth on 10 in Ludington plus I am frustrated that there is no safe way to get to all this new building by bicycle	4/29/2019 2:33 PM
29	We need more good paying jobs in the area. We are loosing them faster all the time. Tourists jobs done pay the workers bills.	4/29/2019 10:22 AM
30	People talk about affordable housing as if poor wages here are a given. If we had good paying jobs, people could afford housing. \$10-12 per our discussion not w sustainable wage. Large scale solar should be kept on rooftops. No farmland should be sacrificed until rooftops are filled.	4/28/2019 5:10 PM
31	The most areas expanding the most in the state are centered around industry. If you want growth and development those jobs are needed in the area. If well paying jobs are available the need for affordable housing goes down. The thought process should be bring in jobs that allow people to live the life they want. Minimum wage shouldn't be the highest that people strive for. People can't afford to buy houses or rent apartments on minimum wage because it was never designed to be that way.	4/28/2019 5:06 PM
32	We will be living in the 20th century if we don't embrace and promote wind energy, both on land and in Lake Michigan.	4/28/2019 3:50 PM
33	Actually listen to the voters. They vote for a certain topic. Go by that tally.	4/28/2019 3:27 PM
34	My main concern is the lack of housing in downtown ludington for year round residents. My family has been trying to find a home to purchase for over a year now. Tourists are buying property too quickly for permanent residents to even get a chance to look at the property. When houses come onto the market and are sold in less than 24 hours, there's a problem.	4/28/2019 12:17 PM
35	I believe Amber Townships zoning process needs to be more tolerant of expansion. Starving Artist should be allowed to expand its buissiness otherwise why would any local buissiness want to thrive if they are not able to expand. And living by Hamlin lake maybe a bike trail to town would be nice.	4/28/2019 12:15 PM

36	3D additive manufacturing cluster. Protecting mason county roads by eliminating tandem trucking of incredibly HEAVY sand. Eliminate all citizen owned fireworks! Speed limit sign on Piney Ridge Road 25 mph. Lower speed limit on 116! Bicycles are not safe.	4/28/2019 12:08 PM
37	Over-regulation and restrictions by government de-incentivize innovation and growth. I agree with your hopes for the future of Mason County; I just hope that you will get out of the way when appropriate and let businesses get established and grow. Just because you can regulate, doesn't always mean that you should.	4/28/2019 8:50 AM
38	Main county government should make it ready for businesses to locate & grow here. Reduce rules, regulations, & taxes for all, and business & talent will come.	4/27/2019 2:52 PM
39	Top notch educational opportunities are paramount....traditional, trade, business, alternative, tech, etc, and the job opportunities. Also, the protection of our natural resources....any growth or change must be in the most environmentally friendly way!!!	4/27/2019 1:34 PM
40	Far to many industrial companies have closed up shop in the last couple of decades. Factories create a lot of new jobs and provide a decent (better than normal) income. Which in turn will lead to more development and opportunities. This will also help our current local business owners because it means more dollars staying in our community. I currently drive to Manistee every day for work because there isn't a job in Ludington that pays close to the same amount I currently make at PCA. Which means I spend more on transportation expenses than i normally would if I worked in Ludington, which in turn leaves me with less money to spend on goods and services in our community. Since I moved to the area in the early 1990's I have seen a decline in opportunity for the middle class and population. Simply there isn't enough good paying year round jobs. I also would encourage the use of our shipping and harbor as a means to kick start industry in our community.	4/27/2019 12:22 PM
41	Mason County should encourage small, diverse businesses, entrepreneurs, and other business expansions. They should encourage all of this to create jobs. This country is built on the mom/pop small business and they should be encouraged and not road-blocked with red tape.	4/27/2019 11:23 AM
42	More jobs, better pay. Need more than tourism.	4/27/2019 10:28 AM
43	High speed Internet would help.	4/26/2019 8:07 PM
44	Mason county zoning has effectively written new zoning regulations that have stymied and shut down wind in the county. Only money shut up the nay-sayers. After all, its always about the money, isn't it? We should not let a committee of old white men to set the rules. Its time to get some younger committee members (HS or College students?) who have more open minds about the solutions. Other states have large solar projects and large wind projects that are changing the nation. We need to jump on that for our future and green energy.	4/26/2019 7:11 PM
45	I will always financially support (taxes) investment in renewable energy, culture and arts programs, protecting natural areas and maintaining open spaces in town, recycling program (need!)downtown businesses, downtown grocery, diversity of businesses and restaurants downtown is a big need. Don't like the sprawl east of town (Ludington).	4/26/2019 5:45 PM
46	Believe that any more development along us10/31 between Scottville and Ludington should be developed with an access road to main crossroads and only allow right turns into and out of a business direct onto US10/31. Would like to see strong effort made in getting a business established into the soon to be empty Harsco Track facilities. The encouragement of businesses other than restaurants/alcohol establishments in the downtown areas of both Ludington and Scottville.	4/26/2019 4:07 PM
47	We really need high tech jobs that are going to stay in the area and youth programs.	4/26/2019 3:18 PM
48	More pet friendly beaches	4/26/2019 2:29 PM
49	Standards in some of the townships (e.g. bordering Hwy 10 east of Ludington City limits) produce an eye sore corridor. We should be encouraging businesses to design to some integrated standard, use low signage, landscape their properties, including trees, and add sidewalks for walking/biking.	4/26/2019 2:12 PM

50	Without better roads in the majority of the area (think Nurnberg) property values will remain low which thereby lessens the taxable revenues flowing to the townships and the county. Funding road improvements will exponentially increase taxable values. Mason County is in a geographically rich environment. Local boards and commissions should work for those who are innovating and trying to improve economic expansion in the area. Reading about the Starving Artist brewery zoning decision was very disappointing. To dissuade entrepreneurs is disheartening and short sided. Discouraging economic development and corresponding employment opportunities will only serve to exacerbate the drug epidemic in this community. Do better for your constituents.	4/26/2019 12:05 PM
51	The rent/ house prices in our community are too high for the factory pay in this county. Allow marijuana dispensaries and use the taxes to fix our surface streets maintain parks. We need growth for tourism but the new changes are ugly at best!! People come here for small town beauty. The splash pad should have gone in a central area for all kids to use not in an already beautiful park off the beaten path that the locals use to escape the bulk of tourism!! The smoking ban at local events is a mistake!! Many won't attend because of that!! Give incentives for the small businesses to grow along with new industry. There are small businesses that suffer off Ludington Ave. during the summer when all activities are meant to stimulate only those businesses. Let's make this community the beautiful gem it once was!!	4/26/2019 10:59 AM
52	Provide more opportunities, without giving the city a cluttered feeling. We have been not been putting enough investments into the 4th ward! I also think that to encourage more growth we have to break the stereotypes in the 4th ward, maybe more neighborhood driven communities that make people feel cared for! And provide besides dial a ride, a bus for each township to ride into the city and back! :) I also support much more wind and solar, the investmentments take time to turn over but it is worth it!	4/26/2019 10:53 AM
53	If you don't facilitate change, nothing will ever grow.	4/26/2019 9:54 AM
54	Great survey - thank you!	4/26/2019 9:51 AM
55	Incentives to revitalize existing buildings not in use especially if mixed use with unused residential units	4/26/2019 9:14 AM
56	Wind energy is ALREADY here....it's working...its a great alternative. Most of the concerns regarding our wind farm are either incorrect, untrue, or have been addressed. But it is not the only alternative energy source and we need to continue to explore other options as well. Climate change is REAL and we need to take the responsibility to do all we can.	4/26/2019 8:43 AM
57	It seems to me that Mason County does nothing to encourage newer small businesses. I Definitely think Ludington could benefit from a Medical Marijuana Dispensary. Mason County definitely needs more housing for lower income families.	4/26/2019 7:51 AM
58	To grow this community, you need to let new ideas in. The young in the community will countinue to leave until everyone working in the county develops an open mind to all. You can't please everyone but let people have opportunities for business if you want to see this community thrive	4/26/2019 7:45 AM
59	We need more affordable child care for Mason county then adults would be able to work more, there are alot of people not working because they can't find childcare, I wanted to open a country daycare but I can't afford the cost of the start up right now because I do not have a good paying job, but I would like to open a in home daycare that would be 6 parents that would be able to work or look for jobs	4/26/2019 7:40 AM
60	Encourage new and small businesses with an expedited permit process. Let people rent rooms in their homes to tourists.	4/26/2019 7:31 AM
61	We have a lot of options for low income families, but a married couple (both with college degrees) are still trying to make ends meet because their job opportunities pay the same amount as many who didn't go to college. But yet, college grads have loans to pay back and the price of housing in Ludington is high. Two working professionals with jobs in their field should not struggle to continue to live in Ludington. We need higher paying jobs for highly qualified people.	4/26/2019 7:14 AM
62	Give city job vacancies to young adults, so they stay in the area, instead of giving to retiring city employees. Not right in the economy to let many city and county employees collect a pension and another check.	4/26/2019 6:48 AM

63	Our taxes, when combining federal, state, sales, property, license and other fees, etc. are WAY TOO HIGH. The government charges too many fees for every little thing we do. I would prefer to keep my hard earned money and use it the way I want to use it instead of paying it to the government. Government programs for property and economic development tend to favor the few who take advantage of them but are paid for by all of us. Remember, the government only has money to give away in grants if it first collects it from someone else. Why should my taxes be used to pay for someone else to develop a facade on their downtown business.	4/26/2019 5:30 AM
64	I wish the planning/zoning committees would actually listen to the residents when considering developments instead of letting big money make poor decisions. Too many times the focus is on big money and the people who actually live in the communities and pay the real expenses in our area suffer.	4/26/2019 4:35 AM
65	Mason County's economy has transitioned many times over nearly 200 years. From furs and fur trade; to timber and logging; to brine salts and mineral processing; to oil & gas; to commodity silica (sand); to a transport hub for cross-lake iron ore and coal; to a light-to-medium manufacturing center. Overall, while most of these elements of the local economy have waxed and mostly waned (brine salt processing, and manufacturing, continue, although the manufacturing sector is presently under stress due to business moves and layoffs), farming and recreation have remained strong. There is a two-fold problem. On the one hand, much of the historical economic development has centered on use of natural resources. Yet, most of the natural resource development has not been sustainable. On the other hand, development of natural resources in a depletion mode, robs the County of future economic promise based upon sustainable recreational use of the County's tremendous natural resources. The County should seek sustainable economic elements. At present, these include: wind energy; recreation; light-to-mid-level manufacturing; farming. The County should seek more, and more sustainable, economic uses of its resources. And, the County should seek (from the recreation perspective) to attract visitors to the shoulder seasons. Yes, this has always been an issue over my lifetime (64 years). But it can be done. By the way, schools are essential to being able to attract high-quality year-round manufacturing firms. Offering to reduce property taxes, in order to attract business, reduces the resources for Ludington Schools, and schools in the County. Other incentives should be sought.	4/26/2019 2:22 AM
66	Let Starving Artist Brewery have their tasting room.	4/26/2019 12:51 AM
67	In all seriousness, you guys need to get on the bandwagon and look at how to use marijuana to your benefit instead of fighting what's happening despite your old opinions and biased views based on years of manipulative advertising and false claims by government.	4/26/2019 12:08 AM
68	The present zoning board needs to be replaced .They're not helping the smaller businesses to grow. This board should be a board that cares about our community with positive growth suggestions , to assist and listen to our friends , neighbors needs.	4/25/2019 10:43 PM
69	There is already a big problem in Mason county with drugs and alcohol. We do not need any more of that in this area.	4/25/2019 8:57 PM
70	I believe there is an anti-business / anti-development sentiment in Mason County. The zoning laws in the county are ridiculous in some cases, enforced by folks who have no intention of promoting growth. And property taxes for non-residents and commercial properties are way too high. Eliminate those obstacles, and Mason County would flourish and tax revenues would increase.	4/25/2019 8:48 PM
71	We need more restaurants, shopping centers and trails.	4/25/2019 8:40 PM
72	Get honest and intelligent people for the zoning commission.	4/25/2019 8:39 PM
73	We lived in a southern town many years ago that had sign height restrictions and requirements for greenery along the highway. We saw something similar recently in South Carolina (which is not known for affluence.) Coming into those towns was much more welcoming than traveling through Mason County. Coming from Baldwin, we have great examples of rural living. Approaching the County Seat from any direction is a disheartening experience. There is not a single way into town that is attractive. We need to look for grants for using vegetation to screen the industrial blight and strip mall sprawl. We need to do anything we can do to encourage a community attitude of, "we will make decisions and act respectfully and responsibly because we are humans who live here, not because tourists visit"	4/25/2019 8:39 PM
74	I thought the commission was going to change to land use for private land last year what happened to all the changes they proposed?	4/25/2019 8:23 PM
75	I think this survey is a step in the right direction. Start the conversation.	4/25/2019 8:21 PM

76	There's way to much government taxing and restricting us. It's detrimental to business and restricting our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Personal vendettas of officials should be stopped! Krepps!	4/25/2019 8:19 PM
77	You need to be open to new business that will bring people to other parts of Mason County	4/25/2019 7:52 PM
78	Na	4/25/2019 7:26 PM
79	We need other shopping options other than Walmart and Meijer's. We should be open to marijuana growing and selling. Like it or not, it has been great tax revenue for other communities.	4/25/2019 7:17 PM
80	Mason county is a wonderful place to live. It could be even better!	4/25/2019 6:35 PM
81	Something needs to be done with traffic when the tourists are here. Either fix the problem or quit encouraging so many tourists.	4/25/2019 6:21 PM
82	Mason county needs to find a balance between economic development and resource preservation. A great way to accomplish this would be to put more emphasis on agribusiness. The new master plan should lay framework to make the growth of agribusiness easier for landowners in the area. As it currently stands, albiet new, the rules on agribusiness stifle and discourage landowners. If a landowner may need a varience from these rules the process becomes even more frustrating and leaves the decision of an agribusiness' growth in the hands of a select few.	4/25/2019 6:16 PM
83	I believe a living wage and health care coverage should be mandated for all sized businesses within mason county.	4/25/2019 6:05 PM
84	Development in Mason County is severely behind other communities in our state. We lack jobs with wages that support our families. We lack adequate, affordable housing. We lack resources for elderly. Mason County needs to grow.	4/25/2019 5:46 PM
85	I think that the minimum square footage of single family residences should be smaller. Not everyone needs a large home.	4/25/2019 5:35 PM
86	I have not lived in Mason County for 35 years. However, I have a lot of relatives there and have had family in the county for about 120 years or so. I do own a small home in Fountain that I frequent as much as possible. I hope to retire there some day. I have concerns for the county, it does not seem to be as care free and safe as I recall growing up in the late 60's and 70's. Mostly I see the economic opportunities as less than they used to be. I am all for tourism and it's various forms, but as I see it the county needs a good diversification in industry, education, commercial, governmental and medical fields. I am concerned that too much emphasis is placed on tourism and not enough on the meat and potatoes that can really provide a good economic base for those who call Mason County home. Thanks for asking for input on Mason County.	4/25/2019 4:33 PM
87	I am not at all happy with the recent treatment of the Starving Artist Brewery. What they were requesting should be encouraged not discouraged and the Zoning Board should work WITH businesses not against.	4/25/2019 4:30 PM
88	I think a lot of the nay-sayers in our community are afraid of their taxes going up with little job security in place. It would be nice if there were some tech programs/job mentoring accessible for adults, at a heavily discounted price or for free. There are a lot of people in this community that don't know how to write a resume and don't know how to do anything on the computer beyond social media. It's the hierarchy of needs— they can't focus on abstract growth ideas, when they are experiencing such economic stability. If we can invest in these people's futures, they'll probably be more open to new businesses and school improvements. Let's bring in new businesses and make Mason County residents the best people to work there!	4/25/2019 4:09 PM
89	We need county and local governments that are less tax intrusive, less invasive into private property rights, less restrictive, amd more prone to allow private property owners to use their land as they deem best. We need to decide if we're going to he a tourist-based economy or manufacturing, and the focus on it and do it well. And if we decide "both" is the right answer we need two separate entities to aggressively pursue each area in communication with each other but independent of the other. We need more "real" opportunity but less "booze related" opportunity.	4/25/2019 4:07 PM
90	I have noticed our elected officials have not been very active in helping our community move forward. With unfair zoning of small businesses. And oldfashioned officials going against laws that locals voted for, that would benefit our community financially. They have also seemed to turn there heads at the rental poverty we have in this county, the condition and price of rental property is deployable. I will not be voting for anyone currently in office next election. And I will be voicing my concerns for the better of this county.	4/25/2019 3:33 PM
91	thank you for taking interest in the citizens opinion	4/25/2019 3:29 PM

92	As a once a year "tourist", since 1987, we have watched Ludington grow into a beautiful city and great vacation spot. We will always consider it our second home.	4/25/2019 3:27 PM
93	I believe Mason County is an absolutely beautiful place! The one thing that I would like to see is some type of trash management on private properties throughout the county. In this survey I mentioned just one house that literally throws trash out on the their front porch and yard. The trash is blowing everywhere and has for years. I don't want to image what is in the wooded lot across the street. I just assume it can be dangerous for the wildlife. If they threw that out the window of their car, they would get hit with fine, I wish that could be the same if they just throw it out of their house. This particular house is so close to one of the most important access points to my community. Everyone that goes through the 4-way stop in Freesoil can/will see that. With the North Country Trail's access East of town, I can only image what people have said about our town/county.	4/25/2019 3:00 PM
94	There isn't enough space on here to voice all of my concerns...however- A rental house next to us (in a good neighborhood-in town) had a heroin overdose last summer. The landlord is a sub par landlord at best. He should be made to clean up the house and make it presentable. It's a drug house. The siding is falling off (among other things) and there are 3-4 cars parked out front year round that do not run. Instead of the DDA/Ludington focusing on ice skating rinks, West End renewal and the plaza redo maybe focus on cleaning up the eye sores and stricter laws on drug dealers. On that note-there are some amazing things happening here. We still have one of the best towns along the shoreline. □	4/25/2019 2:48 PM
95	Until the younger generations quit getting everything handed out free to them there will be no growth in this county or any other. You can't bring new business' if there's no one who wants to work. The school system is a joke. Kids can't read,write or do basic math let alone balance a check book or work out a budget. I believe it's time to get back to the very basics. It may be old-fashioned but it still works.	4/25/2019 2:27 PM
96	Mason County is a beautiful place to live but lacks in the availability of good paying jobs, developmental youth programs, and recreational/entertainment options.	4/25/2019 2:25 PM
97	Mason county should develop more outdoor activities that are free or reasonably priced so more people can enjoy the beautiful area. Example; more trails, bike paths, dog parks Indoor activities as well to attract families and adults. Example: Aj's, Dave & Busters;aquatic center Keep up maintenance on lakes, rivers and streams To maintain homeostasis. Encourage recycling in residential communities. Maintain downtown roads.	4/25/2019 1:51 PM
98	I'm 100% concerned about U.N. Agenda 21/2030, how it's impacted my life, my property, and the future of Ludington, Michigan, itself. If you're a citizen of this community, and you're reading this, you SHOULD be 100% concerned yourself of how this Agenda affects you, your loved ones, and your property! U.N. agenda 21/2030 does NOT belong being improvised in ANY community, as a citizen, I strongly urge any constituent to fight against it. If you're uninformed about this 'sustainable development' plan, then now is the time to GET INFORMED!	4/25/2019 1:49 PM
99	Thank you for offering this survey and making it easy to find and complete !	4/25/2019 1:42 PM
100	Industry coming to area should not be encouraged to pay the prevailing wage rates. Tax abatement should NOT be disapproved because an employer wants to pay higher wages.	4/25/2019 12:30 PM
101	I think there are people that would like to have a home based small business & if they have the room to do it. Such as a service of upholstery or sewing repairs for example.	4/25/2019 12:29 PM
102	we need good paying jobs in order to keep our kids here, we need housing that people can afford, We need decent wages paid to those that do work so both parents don't have to work two jobs to survive. roundabouts at intersections instead of lights, people just run the lights anyway at least with roundabouts they would have to slow down to enter the turns.	4/25/2019 12:18 PM
103	I think zoning has no business telling people what they can and can't do with their property. If a property owners wants to have their camper on their property, no one has the right to tell them they can only have it there for a certain number of days. Too many things require permits that shouldn't.	4/25/2019 11:44 AM
104	I do support wind energy in Mason County but there are areas where the wind towers are way to close to the home, the setback needs to be farther away from home sites.	4/25/2019 11:10 AM
105	Way to many restrictions on private and commercial properties, for taxing purposes.	4/25/2019 10:35 AM

106	Let marijuana shops open anywhere in Mason County. Recreational and medical. It will bring a lot of people from out of town to our area, and give people an option locally to get the stuff they've already been doing. Also a much better alternative to the 10+ bars we have in the area.	4/25/2019 10:18 AM
107	Broadband access is one of the first steps to 1) improving quality of life 2) attracting new residents who may be able to work remotely	4/25/2019 9:41 AM
108	Mason County is starting to look in the right direction. Our development has been hindered because the old small town feel was the best way to live, however that is no longer sustainable. Our county needs to keep downtown feeling nostalgic while expanding in the townships.	4/25/2019 8:50 AM
109	Nothing is being developed in Mason County except summer tourist trade. The people who live here year round are taxed way too high for property and now you want to build a new school and raise taxes even more....we are a "throw away" society. We are taxed on WSCC but if we want to use facility we have to pay "again" to use what we pay for in our taxes....	4/25/2019 8:49 AM
110	Industrial development should be encouraged near those areas that can support the required activity like transportation (near the expressway for example). Development of adult /senior care should be encouraged in the rural areas where possible. Mason county is blessed with National forest resources and in my opinion none of these questions centered around any issues that would take advantage of these natural resources. Hunting and fishing use of the great lakes, hiking trails, etc seem to have been neglected. The historical value of the area also seems to have been neglected. Encouraging and supporting the arts and the provisions for supporting the many artists and small business opportunities has not been addressed. I know you had "other" in the questionnaire, but still, I think these areas need to have categories to consider the options and not leave it up to the respondents to create them. I believe that small business and home based businesses are the driving forces of success and shouldn't be neglected in a survey for a rural community like Mason County.	4/25/2019 8:46 AM
111	It is my belief that a hired liaison that represents our county regarding business recruitment and retainment could go a long way. We should not have larger companies shutting down and losing valuable jobs.	4/25/2019 7:39 AM
112	Need jobs/businesses to attract people to the county.	4/25/2019 6:58 AM
113	We need good paying jobs. Not worry so much about tourism	4/25/2019 4:08 AM
114	Open up zoning for more small business opportunities too restrictive	4/25/2019 2:57 AM
115	With some manufacturing closing or cutting back and the cost for living in Mason County all efforts should be made to bring more jobs to Mason County. It would also be nice to have roads in Mason County fixed. Mass transit in areas currently not covered.	4/25/2019 1:40 AM
116	Keep the forest areas and farm lands rustic and underdeveloped. Rural roads are in very poor shape. Clean water needs to be a top priority. Water used by a manufacturer that is discharged into a drain should be cleaner then the water received. No special privilege to House of Flavors or any company. No F.O.G. either.	4/25/2019 1:07 AM
117	Mason County needs to do everything it can to promote business development. I do not feel that Mason County is business friendly and has too many rules and regulations. I was very saddened to hear about the idiotic way the zoning board handled the request from Starving Artists. Here is a business willing to spend money and expand and we are shutting them down. Shame on the zoning board. The surrounding property owners did not object, this business in the middle of nowhere, there is no reason to block it.	4/25/2019 12:42 AM
118	Mason County is more than Ludington	4/25/2019 12:18 AM
119	Too many drug related mentally ill adults and too many children wandering the streets alone. Need a youth center where they can go to be safe after school. Parents need affordable housing. Not a very friendly environment to raise a family, unfortunately.	4/25/2019 12:07 AM
120	I believe that Mason County needs to quit catering to the tourist and worry about their own. We need affordable housing, we need more programs to keep our youth out of trouble/drugs and possibly do a Police Academy for the Youth in our cities, with all of the Police presence in the area, I firmly believe it will help our youths by becoming better individuals making better choices. http://www.clarecountyreview.com/news/15th-annual-clare-police-youth-academy/ https://www.cityofholland.com/police/junior-police-academy https://www.canton-mi.org/1145/Youth-Academy https://www.cityofjackson.org/770/Teen-Citizen-Police-Academy	4/24/2019 11:51 PM
121	More focus needs to be centered on: improving the area east of Stiles Rd., affordable housing, reasonable water bills & property taxes in Scottville	4/24/2019 11:20 PM

122	We need to have more options for our Senior population. The people who have lived many many years in Mason County working, playing, paying taxes and contributing. It is very sad that there isn't enough to offer regarding our Dementia Senior citizens. They are having to live in nursing facilities far away. It's not right to separate them from family in their last years of life. Please do something to increase care and housing for our Senior Citizens who need specialized Dementia/Alzheimer's care. They have done so much for Mason County we owe them this.	4/24/2019 10:19 PM
123	Because of the bad road situation, we are considering leaving Mason County. This feeling is common among my neighbors. It is inconvenient to have to pay for Hughesnet service to get high-speed internet, but the cost is something we put up with. The dirt roads are another issue. We are retired, so we can usually rearrange our schedules to use the roads when passable, but it would be impossible for employed people. All other issues (jobs, shopping, recreational/cultural opportunities, etc.) are meaningless unless transportation is taken care of. Mason County could easily become a literal "backwater " unless people are confident of transportation.	4/24/2019 10:16 PM
124	Listen to the people who make a positive influence in the community. Trade schools.	4/24/2019 10:03 PM
125	Housing is definitely a huge issue. We are a middle class family with a relatively great income, yet we cannot find a house we can afford within Ludington. We are at a point where we've started looking outside of Ludington.	4/24/2019 9:53 PM
126	City of Ludington needs to start working on needs of locals instead of tourism.	4/24/2019 9:45 PM
127	Need permanent homeless shelter Transitional housing Transportation for people in rural areas to get to work Dial-A-Ride throughout county Probation office and CMH to have hours that cater to their clients, so they can be more employable. Funded sidewalk plowing around schools Traffic light at Jebavy & Tinkham Clean up buildings on 31 North from bridge to 31/10 intersection	4/24/2019 9:18 PM
128	I've made considerable investments into our home that is also used as a weekly vacation rental during peak summer months. I'm concerned of some type of "Airbnb ban" negatively affecting those of us who have invested already into the vacation rental sphere, and hope we would be grandfathered in if such a ban where to take place. I would be ok with an annual fee or inspections for vacation rentals.	4/24/2019 8:37 PM
129	You have to ask the question what draws a person to the county if they are willing to move here. We're rural and a service economy area. So to expect large scale industry to come here won't happen. To expect innovative technology to locate here won't happen. Realize we are 1.5-2 hours from a commercial airport. We get a great amount of snow on roadways to any large area. We are 60 minutes away from a medium sized hospital. So companies have to think about what we don't offer if they wish to relocate. We're not grand rapids , we'll never be grand rapids or TC. The first thing you have to do is attempt to make the county feel more safe than it is. You can do what you are doing (REACTING) which isn't working or you can act to prevent crime and drug use while the kids are still young. Instead of investing \$500,000 a year in 4 deputies split that money and invest half into crime prevention at age 10-21. Condition the next generation of kids to not do drugs or commit crimes. Create a monetary incentive to raise GPA, increase HS grad rates and prevent crimes by asking kids to reach for a large carrot. Essentially offer a 10 year old the chance at \$50,000 when they hit age 21. Provided they get to 21 without a criminal record or drug history they are entered into a random drawing for \$40-50K . they simply have to have graduated HS with a D or better. NO criminal record from age 10-21 . And have to be a US citizen. not much to ask .. If they win they get 20K at age 21 to be spent as they wish . Age 22 \$10K more to be used towards job training , college or a house downpayment or for a retirement payment. Age 23 \$10,000 more to be placed into a revocable trust towards retirement. But that's for a D student. A C student gets \$2,500 more, B student \$5,000 more, A student \$10,000 more. Now if the winning student elects to place a certain amount of the discrecionalary money (The \$20,000) into the revocable retirement account , you match the money. So any dollars they elect to place into the retirement fund the county matches but it can't be withdrawn until age 65 and is only paid out if the winner hasn't committed any felonies from age 21 to 65. You want to create an incentive for a ten year old kid to reach for, to modify his /her behavior. To give the kid who hasn't yet tried drugs to say to them selves " If I get caught doing drugs I'm out of the contest" If I get caught stealing something from Walmart or meijer I'm out of the contest" You want to create positive peer pressure to keep these kids from becoming miscreants and criminals from age 10-21. Maybe after graduating high school they'll be able to find a job because they can pass a pee test or a mouth swab and don't have a criminal record that an employer can ask about. But instead we just spend money on cops.	4/24/2019 8:22 PM

130	No more corporate big box stores or fast food places. Encourage Community gardening and sharing. Paid Community work programs for youth between the ages of 15 and 18. Silver sneakers programs for seniors if not already in place. They've sold off the shoreline unfortunately so there is no space for a large glassed in, moderately priced restaurant. Develop the Spartan into a restaurant or dance hall with the owners help. No tall buildings in the city limits.	4/24/2019 7:35 PM
131	My opinion is the zoning regulation is too rigid. It is a one size fits all for the county, yet I am in the country and cannot build a garage to the size I need due to zoning. I understand within a more populated area, but when I can legally store vehicles, recreational vehicles, etc. without a garage in a yard, but if I want to build a large enough building for them, it does not meet code. Also the amount for every permit is crazy. There should be some flexibility with building zoning and potentially should be up to each township to have a say in the zoning as they know what is best for their immediate area.	4/24/2019 7:25 PM
132	I love living in Mason County! I think attracting talent to the area is affected by the condition of our schools and hospitals in addition to fair compensation for work. The Lake should not be part of the employer's benefit package. Our employers should concentrate on retention by offering competitive salaries, flexible schedules, and vacations. I also feel that our government should focus on retention of businesses and not just attracting new businesses. Encourage innovation with financial incentives, reduced restrictions, and provide/identify resources.	4/24/2019 6:56 PM
133	Need more quality restaurants that isn't considered a bar or that just serves bar type foods...ie Olive Garden, etc.	4/24/2019 6:32 PM
134	You can't use the city of Ludington to decide on what Mason county does. Most people are part time transplant or retired from other regions. I've lived here excluding the last two years for over 50 years. Seeing outsiders elected to posts in Ludington has been a sad thing to accept. Don't let people who have not been here for their lives decide our fate	4/24/2019 6:26 PM
135	Keep Mason County a family friendly, senior friendly place to visit. Do not build it up with unnecessary development. It is fine just the way it is. Let the beauty of the County on the shores of Lake Michigan continue to be a nice, safe, peaceful place to go to get away from the hustle and bustle of the cities.	4/24/2019 6:08 PM
136	Lower property taxes, NO government subsidies for low income manufacturing jobs, NO more low income housing tax give aways, Less government zoning rules as most of the rules are outdated or not thought out well and limit possibilities. Limit needs for special land uses by just allowing what the public wants not what a few people think is needed.	4/24/2019 5:42 PM
137	Where to begin! Honestly the only good thing we have is the beach and state park. Nothing else really to do for teenagers and young adults. No uber or lyft for affordable, safe transportation. All the bars downtown but only a couple taxis? That charge a a ton of money. Like cmon now. I truly believe The city of Ludington and Mason County is scared to make money. Imagine all the tax money the city and county would if they allowed marijuana dispensaries. But this town is controlled by baby boomers that are scared for growth. If this town was ran by actual people you this survey wouldn't be a thing. This isn't the 1980s or 1990s, time to grow up and allow things that are uncomfortable for some people.	4/24/2019 5:20 PM
138	Allow hemp growth and medical marijuana stores. Collect the tax money. Use that instead of taxes to people	4/24/2019 4:33 PM
139	Instead of building on undeveloped land and sprawling out, use the vacant spaces we have around town (Ludington). There are some old factory and warehouse buildings (like on Harrison) that are just empty. Either renovate into apartments or tear it down and rebuild on the site. My old hometown of Columbus, GA renovated old cotton mills into affordable apartments on the first floors and luxury condos on the top floors and it has been working out really well!	4/24/2019 3:52 PM
140	We need to clean up our towns to make it more attractive to new residents. We have some real eyesores. We came to Ludington as new retirees and have met many other people like us. We have often discussed the struggle to find an ideal retirement home. There is only one single level condo development in Ludington and there is nothing available there. We continue to see rent controlled senior development but nothing for seniors of average income. Not all of us like high rises and most of us are far from assisted living.	4/24/2019 3:18 PM
141	My main concern is the speed limit of 55 mph all the way to PM Hwy. Too many businesses to access at too high of a speed. Should be 45mph starting at Meijer.	4/24/2019 2:25 PM

142	Fix the roads more people may come. Support the railroads as they are the second most efficient way of transportation minus marine shipping. Recreational Marijuana will be a very large increase of business for the area. With the amount if people that come here in the summer from Chicago Indiana and Ohio it would bring in thousands in extra revenue for the county. I can not do drugs due to DOT random drug testing for my job so it would not benefit me other than for a large inclease for the county.	4/24/2019 12:52 PM
143	Pave all gravel roads. Especially stream and river crossings.	4/24/2019 12:42 PM
144	When locally owned businesses try to expand upon said business, the county should work with them to attain their goal. Not turn them down for silly reasons. How is 10 acres considered "micro"? Neighbors approve, that's what should REALLY matter. To draw in younger families to actually reside here, we need to be progressive. We need decent paying jobs! This does NOT require us to lose our "small town" feel. Lake Michigan and our beaches will always draw in tourists. But if things don't start to change soon, this city is going to turn into a giant assisted living retirement community.	4/24/2019 11:39 AM
145	I would really like to see more short term rentals in ludington. I think it offers a different option for vacationing families. I also think it could be a good investment potential for year round families. I would also like to see the complete addition of Sargent sands to the State Park.	4/24/2019 11:18 AM
146	I'm new to Mason county . Four months, so I just learning about the people who live here. I see a community with a lot of older citizens that where able to make a living with Dow chemical company and other larger employers. Now I see less opportunities for the younger people. I can't see them living here. That's why I see Ludington declining. The new American way, unfortunately! With too many seasonal jobs, the average household wage is below the average national wage.It hard to increase taxes and build the community, keep your property up, drive new automobiles, etc. when you have low wages.High health care is also destroying america as well as every county in Michigan.I was surprised by how much property taxes were in Ludington. I was buying a house in a large city in Kentucky. The same price as my house in Ludington but may pay between one thousand to fifteen hundred more in taxes.The large city in Kentucky had everything, this city has all most nothing during the winter.If you like to eat and drink alcohol, you're all set. But I'm already ten pounds overweight, and don't like drinking alcoholic drinks so I struggle to find things to do over winter.Then we have the No Fault insurance, paying twice the rate here. Let's hope the new governor keeps her pledge to end that.Even before moving here, I expected to pay more for my sixty year old house insurance that I paid on my brand new house, because anything less than your automobile insurance would look good, and I was right.So let's see, we make less money but pay out more in taxes, health care, insurance. How can we improve our county and city?There isn't much left !	4/24/2019 11:16 AM
147	Keep our rural heritage and rural areas intact for the future generations of hunters and fishermen and outdoorsman.	4/24/2019 11:10 AM
148	Work to help Starving Artist Brewery continue to stay open. This brings many tourist to Mason Co.	4/24/2019 10:13 AM
149	We need a comprehensive approach with a dedicated team looking at the issue as a whole, housing, transportation, etc., someone who will work with the programs and people in the community now and coordinate efforts.	4/24/2019 10:11 AM
150	The only thing Mason County needs is cheap gas like they have in Ottawa or Newaygo Counties.	4/24/2019 7:45 AM
151	Should be a more practical approach to planning and zoning. Board members should not agendas! Need to encourage new leaders to step into leadership roles	4/24/2019 7:13 AM
152	I would love to see a focus on healthy communities. A healthy community is where everyone supports each other and there is no elitism in our community. The haves and have-nots. Decisions made for everyone not just the people who know the right people. Eliminating this mentality in our community will strengthen mental health in youth and families. Positive social events or activities to encourage people to get to know each other. Talk across economic barriers or social status. Investing in the people for positive change.	4/23/2019 10:03 PM
153	What about affordable childcare? I wish there was a Y in this area. I believe they encourage community and help give kids programs and family's the ability to stay healthy together especially during the long winter months I think we should be focusing more on locals and their needs instead of the tourists that come for a couple months a year No one is going to want to come here to live and raise a family or start a business or work if they aren't supported in that endeavor. Especially small family's and their need for better housing options	4/23/2019 9:49 PM

154	The County Zoning Boards and Commissioners need to be more supportive of our small businesses and entrepreneurs. I would encourage them to educate themselves on emerging business trends and community development initiatives happening around our state. Let's work together to build up our passionate small business owners and become a place that others like them want to locate because we value all businesses and treat them with respect.	4/23/2019 9:42 PM
155	The county needs to be more proactive in encouraging and supporting development.	4/23/2019 9:19 PM
156	We need county wide public transportation	4/23/2019 7:18 PM
157	The most important issue in Mason County is the lack of good paying jobs. The poverty level is getting to a dangerous level. People cannot make a decent living because there are limited jobs. Families are struggling (even my middle class family).	4/23/2019 3:49 PM
158	we have a wonderful county, full of open spaces, water, woods with good health care, banking and schools(Ludington needs to pass the proposed school millage to keep up with other communities similar to us). We should encourage more employment, more affordable housing, more school to work programs and for sure; safety. Governments should not be heavy handed but rather take a supportive role to encourage the growth in employment and strive to make this a more year around county, especially Ludington, with out dampening our tourism, and retirement opportunities	4/23/2019 2:22 PM
159	This community has a sincere lack of jobs for the blue collar worker. It seems there are either jobs for those with no skills or jobs for high degree holding college graduates. However, for those with associates degrees or many years of experience in a trade, there are no jobs that pay enough to keep a family out of the poverty level. For instance, in an area like Holland, MI, a trade worker can find a job paying \$25-30 an hour (\$10+ more an hour than Mason County) and housing is also cheaper in the Holland area. From experience, a 3 bedroom home rents for \$800 a month in Holland. The same home would rent for \$1200 a month in Ludington. However, the pay scale does not match the rent costs. If we want to maintain working families here, we need to offer opportunities to them in the job and housing markets.	4/23/2019 11:24 AM
160	The business district downtown needs to expand to Rowe St. on the east and William on the west. Currently, it feels like there is a focus on Harrison to Rath and visitors dont see the rest of the "downtown ". A parking garage would be a great asset as well. We've lost a lot of parking availability and for locals, its difficult to find parking. I hear that they won't come to downtown in the tourist season, too much traffic on the Avenue and not enough parking.	4/23/2019 10:49 AM
161	we need more for local kids to do. less for summer tourist season and more for year round kid programming/facilities.	4/23/2019 10:46 AM
162	1. Build small Publically Owned Waste Water Treatment Plants throughout Mason County to move household sewage away from surface waters. 2. Install Fiber Optic High-Speed Internet back-bone throughout the county.	4/23/2019 10:46 AM
163	Mason County is a community with astute community and business leaders. There is organization, structure and planning to much of what the county does. It is a great place to live and play!	4/23/2019 9:47 AM
164	Would like to see forums available to residents concerning priorities expressed in this survey. A once a month town meeting offered to local populations addressing concerns, and expansions. Bring in experts that have witnessed current concerns or expansions. ie: invite realtors to speak on the current and future needs of housing in Mason Co. Addressing best placement, numbers, and potential costs.	4/23/2019 9:23 AM
165	I believe that inexpensive access to fiber optics throughout the county would prompt economic growth	4/23/2019 8:52 AM
166	Mason County is a good area to live; but needs to expand opportunities for workers so they can work in a safe environment with a living wage. There also needs to be more attention towards environmental concerns like clean water (PFAS), renewable energy, recycling (glass!!) and preserving open space/recreation. This is such a beautiful area and has lot's of potential to make it more community based. Thank you for supporting positive change for our community.	4/23/2019 7:56 AM

167	Please encourage medical and recreational cannabis. Patients are currently driving hours out of area to obtain supply for cancer, ptsd, etc, etc. If you decide to encourage it, consider mandating vertical integration, regional sourcing and permit to local business instead of out of state/out of area companies. Encouraging retirees to move here is great, but it is going to further alienate young families by drowning their votes with new resident, retiree votes that do not value the needs to younger families. (housing, jobs, etc) Encourage new small business models. Aka Starving Artist. (I get there are two side of the zoning coin on this issue) I don't know if this is possible. . . consider taxing abandoned rural buildings heavily in an effort to remove blight. Indiana did this. It worked. Get younger people that have out of area experience on county boards.	4/23/2019 7:11 AM
168	Development would be better if the property taxes were not so high. It does make it difficult for elderly on fixed income to survive.	4/23/2019 5:36 AM
169	Planning / zoning office needs to be more business friendly when dealing with in-coming potential businesses. Don't nit-pick minor items that discourages new entrepreneurs.	4/22/2019 9:30 PM
170	One big concern is the lack of safe walking and biking paths outside of the city limits. Our government wishes its citizens to take steps to adopt a healthy lifestyle to reduce medical cost. We pay taxes. Use some of that money to provide us opportunities to get out and be active without fear of being killed by a drunk driver, driver on drugs, someone texting while driving, or someone speeding on rural country roads which have speed limits that are to high. Nothing infuriates me more than the driving habits of people around here.	4/22/2019 8:44 PM
171	We desperately need more diversity, in all areas including business, cultural, restaurants etc.	4/22/2019 7:55 PM
172	I really want natural gas extended all the way to upper Hamlin.	4/22/2019 7:40 PM
173	As a kickback for our community having the wind turbines, it would be good if our schools could get a discount on their electricity bills. I think people would be more accepting of the turbines if this could happen.	4/22/2019 7:02 PM
174	Almost all other counties have a county animal shelter; far more effective than Animal Control. Get people using computers by getting High speed broadband access.	4/22/2019 6:48 PM
175	Mason county is losing the few high paying manufacturing jobs with the loss of Harsco, the flat business of Great Lakes Castings, the limited hiring of Western Land and the concern of possibly losing jobs from Whitehall Industries. That is where a majority of those who want to work knows. There are few professional jobs in Finance/Marketing/Human Resources to employ college grads and the spouses of those who relocate here. Primary care physicians are at a premium with most not accepting new patients or having 6 to 8 month waits for a first appointment. This doesn't help to draw new professionals. Never mind not having access to specialists. Those relocating to Mason County find those making hiring decisions at the Sheriff's office, Hallmark Store, Spectrum and Mercy and many of the manufacturing companies are outwardly hostile to candidates, or hires, that are not locals. Not a good situation for trying to attract new businesses and no way to retain outside talent. Work from home opportunities are slim without high speed internet. Many employees in the area don't even have cell phones or computer access from home. Mason County is like falling backwards in time by 25 years in terms of broadband, cell phones and computer literacy. And then there is dealing with a huge drug usage problem with potential and current employees.	4/22/2019 6:17 PM
176	I am disgusted that people voted in to help a community grow and prosper (Angela Serna) would be so negative and nasty. It is very upsetting that this behavior is tolerated.	4/22/2019 5:53 PM
177	Pet friendly. This town makes it exceptionally hard for people to own pets if they are renting and it causes many issues with Animal Control and rescues. Many out of town people do not want to move to Mason County because of how anti-pet this place is. It seems trivial to home owners or people that do not care to own pets but to the great amount of renters, tourists, and potential residents looking to move here it is at least worth examining.	4/22/2019 5:27 PM
178	This area cannot sustain workers who seek employment with a benefit package(healthcare). Yes, there are jobs , most of us are working two jobs. However when you lose a good paying job with benefits , moving from the area or commuting to an area with jobs is the only answer. We will spend our dollars in other areas if we take jobs elsewhere. In addition, we will have less to spend in any area.	4/22/2019 4:32 PM
179	The wind energy farm was a huge mistake!	4/22/2019 4:21 PM

180	I'd like Mason County to promote and invest in skilled, vocational and Green trades that better utilize indigenous resources and talents to create sustainable careers (education, technology, agriculture/agri-tourism, holistic wellness), increase affordable housing (new, revitalized, alternative), and work proactively for safe water (drinking and recreational) and a viable infrastructure (above and below ground) throughout the county.	4/22/2019 4:02 PM
181	How does a community become more attractive for a company to come in with middle class or higher positions without offending anyone because they have no skills and don't see a need to acquire them? Focus on those that do pay the bills and are leading self-sustainable lives without government assistance, that do take care of the community, lakes and property and/or volunteer. Assistance should only be temporary. The more you provide the more that will come as we are already seeing and feeling the affects from. The more you invite by building low-income housing, the more that will come and we'll never get any further serious industry or business innovators in our area. Government will always be pinching pennies to cover all the needs.	4/22/2019 3:51 PM
182	I think Mason County is at a unique place in its history. I think Mason County can be a great place to live, work and raise a family. However, I think we face some challenges in preserving that status if we don't make some changes now. Access to good jobs, not just jobs, is vital to the health of a community. To support those jobs and workers, our community needs access to affordable housing across all income levels. Broadband internet access is becoming more and more vital for businesses to compete, and for students to succeed in school. The role of the Planning Commission and a Master Plan is to think proactively about one of our most vital resources, our land, and what the best use of the land is in the interest of health, safety, and public welfare. Part of that public welfare is helping to foster growth and development that supports Employers in providing good jobs, employees in living within their means and with access to resources, and our youth to grow up in a community that affords them the opportunities they need to be successful in the future. It is an awesome responsibility that should not be taken lightly. We should encourage development in a way that benefits the community. It is time to get creative and learn from others and ensure we know how we can shape Mason County to be the best version of itself it can be, and how Planning and Zoning can help.	4/22/2019 3:46 PM
183	I really believe that we need additional shopping opportunities, restaurants and entertainment themed businesses in Mason County. I feel that I always go to Muskegon or Grand Rapids to shop and I'd rather stay in Mason, however, there's not enough here. I feel that we have had development here in Mason County, but not in the area that I would enjoy or that would lead me to spend additional dollars here in Mason County. I also feel that an emphasis should be placed on public transportation and affordable housing opportunities as well.	4/22/2019 3:39 PM
184	Mason County, and Ludington in particular, is in desperate need of more high end shopping and dining and in less need of low income housing projects. Ludington is a potential gold mine and it's wasting away - almost as if it intentionally doesn't want to better itself. Mason County and again, Ludington in particular, is in desperate need of diversity, but I don't know how to make the area more diverse. Maybe better shopping, dining, and housing and the trickle down effect from that would entice more diverse people to come our way.	4/22/2019 3:23 PM
185	There are some serious issues facing the small community: drug use, lack of affordable housing, low job opportunities, natural resource abuse, and lack of youth activities. The community is supported by local business owners, several large manufacturers, and tourism but the different sectors do not appear to be working well together for community betterment. How about appealing to community planning college programs to be a case study and see if they have ideas on how we can improve our community collaboratively?	4/22/2019 3:15 PM
186	Mason County has thriving areas and areas that are stagnant. My concern is that legitimate businesses are allowed to locate in strategic areas. Building a good economic base and adding to a community. We have not looked forward enough to allow commercial to grow in the out county areas. Housing is lacking in availability. We need areas for first time buyers, retirees to purchase. Too many houses in the County are too inefficient and taxes are out of reach. New subs with ability to build smaller, efficient houses would allow new housing owners. Upland condos would work also. The rules are too strict. Not all industries are pretty. Like some agricultural operations, not good to look at, but vital for our community. Be open to those.	4/22/2019 3:07 PM

187	Professional opportunities (not jobs, but careers) are severely limited in the area and there is little to no cultural diversity. This is what drives intelligent and ambitious high school and junior college students to other states/regions to complete their education, where many of them remain — or from which many of them move on to even more diverse areas with even greater options for professional growth. I'd like to see WSCC continue to partner with more 4-year universities. I'd like to see the county and the Chamber of Commerce working more aggressively to pursue economic growth and development. I'd like to see more job opportunities for college educated people, with competitive salaries that will allow them to thrive, grow and build families and longterm homes in the area. I'd like to see better mental health services available following the loss of the area's psychiatric offices; this would not only help the average person, but would aid law enforcement officials in combatting the opioid epidemic, which is inextricably linked to complex mental health issues that general practitioners are not trained to address.	4/22/2019 2:28 PM
188	I feel good quality jobs are a must in Mason County. We need to bring younger families in that can afford to live here to support our local businesses. We need good quality schools for younger families. We do not need any more low income housing in the area. I also feel that we are becoming a retirement community and that is very sad as Mason County has so much more to offer young families.	4/22/2019 2:02 PM
189	It is important to remember that Mason County's most valuable resources are its natural resources, open spaces, rivers, and lakes, which are the reasons so many people come here to visit, and to live permanently. We cannot sacrifice our natural resources and open spaces on the altar or money and commercial "development". That approach reduces the quality of life for everyone. Let us concentrate on improving what we have, and remember that bigger is not necessarily better. We must restrict further expansion and development to areas that can sustain it, and reduce such expansion and development if it will inevitably lead to a reduction in the very natural resources which cause us to be here in the first place.	4/22/2019 1:33 PM
190	we continue to have mental illness issues despite a local agency who should be accountable to improving this area. We need this agency to care for inmates and reduce expenditures related to other agencies (law enforcement) also taking the responsibility to provide crisis management, no crisis should exists if their management was more stable.	4/22/2019 1:16 PM
191	The county board should pull their heads out of their ass's and work for the community and not for them selves just like this great experiment of self governing was untended by our forefathers. Not taken for self promotion and gain. Remember you are voted in "by the people " and so removed by them in return. Take care of your core " local government employees" and they will make your existence easier and renewable.	4/22/2019 1:02 PM
192	Please don't plan everything around the tourists. Ludington has to develop with everyone in mind so it can be appealing to the general population	4/22/2019 12:05 PM
193	We need a no kill animal facility that is operated independently by a non profit organization. The Mason County Commissioners and Zoning should have flexible rules so that the facility can be located in the most visible area.	4/22/2019 12:04 PM
194	Taxpayers rights should be protected to a degree, as long as they are not polluting the ground & air quality of others or having filth that attracts rodents and cause health dangers for areas. Property owners should not feel as though they have no control over their land. I guess living in Mason County and growing up here has been great for me. I like the rural feeling and convenience of living in a less crowded area.	4/22/2019 11:58 AM
195	We need better and more affordable housing options for all demographics. We need businesses to be able to afford to pay for their employees' health and retirement benefits. We need employment options which pay a reasonable wage. We need to support law enforcement and their war on drugs and violence. We need to support year-round residents and not put so much focus on tourism.	4/22/2019 11:42 AM
196	There has to be a better balance of property owners cleaning up their property and zoning. Especially related to the large amount of old/dangerous/eye-sore moble homes. If it is out of sight to the neighbors and passing motorist, they should be allowed to store whatever they want as long as it is not polluting the water/ground. If this is not followed, there needs to be a more efficient way of enforcing the clean-ups.	4/13/2019 8:05 PM
197	County commissioners should listen to more of what the residents want- not just what they want!!	4/13/2019 9:10 AM
198	Would like to see less urban sprawl coming down us 10 and some more businesses in the outlying communities.	4/10/2019 8:12 AM

199	While affordable housing is a concern, we cannot revert back to a time when we allowed single wide trailers and reduced square foot dwellings to pop up, especially in rural areas. They create not only a eye-sore, but decrease neighboring property values and discourage economic growth and sustainability.	4/9/2019 11:14 AM
200	We need to bring in high paying jobs, not more T shirt shops. Good jobs will solve many other problems. We don't need to attract more tourists. They don't create high paying jobs and we're overwhelmed by them for ten weeks a year. The other forty-two weeks they aren't helping the community at all. People need year around jobs.	4/9/2019 10:52 AM
201	It is not the planning commissions job to encourage one type of business over another. The free market takes care of that. You keep trying to make yourself too important.	4/8/2019 10:54 PM
202	I think once the Mason County Promise for higher education becomes a stronger program at West Shore Community College it will be very beneficial to all in our community - it also needs to add life support along with tuition and fees.	4/8/2019 10:04 PM
203	I wish the area focused more on the residents who live here all year round We are starting to see our areas develop into nothing but tourism and watching the good jobs get shut down with nothing to replace. This forces our younger generation out.	4/8/2019 9:51 PM
204	Ludington is developing against the peoples wishes. The west end of Ludington Avenue should not be developed. It is taking away needed parking spaces and the absolute beautiful unspoiled view. Spash pad at Copeyon park. Petitions against it ignored. Goose poop everywhere... now add water. YUCK. Next to an electric station. Who is going to pay for the maintenance and upkeep? The apartment buildings currently being built in Ludington are too tall. A skating rink? in downtown Ludington. What a waste of money. The locals stay away from Ludington in the summer. What a shame. Bonfires quit because tourism is over instead of being in the fall which would make sense. Can't buy any meat or veggies in Custer or Scottville. Only choices are the Dollar Store or outdated items at the Mercantile. SAD!! Why not combine some schools/busing/administration. Ludington, Scottville & Custer overlap.	4/8/2019 9:09 PM
205	I've loved living in Ludington the last 14 years. Would like to see existing empty buildings/businesses renovated rather than another strip mall. We have an obligation to preserve and protect our natural resources from pollution. After all, that's why most of us choose to live in this beautiful area.	4/8/2019 8:34 PM
206	Need to establish an incubator facility for new entrepreneurial businesses.	4/8/2019 8:14 PM
207	Too much focus on the beachfront/lake and not neighborhoods. Houses that are run down owners should be given a time period to fix/clean up. After that time if not completed fines should be implemented.	4/8/2019 8:07 PM
208	We need companies who contribute to their employees. These companies need to be required to hire directly not through a temporary agency. They should contribute to the community as well. We need more low income housing, no more condo's. We need to dedicate our resources to the permanent year-round residents. Quit focusing on only tourism. Tourism doesn't support us in the winter. The Eastern side of the county needs more business' that can support that side of county. That side needs more attention to encourage positive growth. We need to control of the drug use and prevent suicides. Both of those things are the only thing that seems to be growing, which should be declining.	4/8/2019 7:56 PM
209	Keep it small town, self employed. Create more structured events for youth and seniors. Tourism is enough income. No new taxes. More accountability how our taxes are distributed.	4/8/2019 6:23 PM
210	Development in Mason County shouldn't be limited to the City of Ludington area.	4/8/2019 5:33 PM
211	Tech and tourism. Food and bev as an industry. Plant based proteins.	4/8/2019 4:43 PM
212	I wish that the City of Ludington specifically would have put more thought into the current redesigning and building going on, We should have followed the lead of other communities like ADA that have a theme that is being used across the downtown and commercial areas. I am not all please with the redevelopment at the West End of Ludington Avenue. That area should be cleaned up and left alone. It is the last dune within the city and we are basically destroying it. In addition, the mishmash of architectural style going on downtown is awful. Why are we putting up huge builds that obscure the view? It is a mistake and one that cannot be rectified now.	4/8/2019 12:43 PM
213	When townships and county fight people loose... I HATE that I have no public transport in Amber. Just plain DUMB and discriminatory.	4/8/2019 11:32 AM

214	No specific business or energy plan should be encouraged or discouraged by the County. Let the free markets and demand be the driving factor. To often the County says no to an idea or start-up that a person or individual brings to the table. Even with local support and encouragement the idea is stopped because it doesn't fit "the plan". If it truly doesn't belong or have support it will fail and return its former purpose. Don't find ways to say no, find ways to say yes!!!	4/8/2019 11:29 AM
215	My main concern for Mason County is the ever increasing symptoms of alcohol and drug abuse. A short list being; impaired driving (under all the familiar acronyms), domestic violence and sexual abuse, and theft in its various forms. Perhaps I could add crimes that might come under the heading of "I have nothing better to do". Development (if it is simply 'using land wisely') is not a cure for the above. But development with the goal of providing good, respectable paying jobs (or for the young people, having the hope that such a job exists) is in itself incentive for Mason County to do its best to attract these jobs. So, Mason County needs to develop those policies/guidelines/direction which will protect the environment and peoples rights and way of life, while attracting/encouraging those businesses that will live up to those guidelines.	4/8/2019 11:21 AM
216	We need to be more welcoming and embrace diversity.	4/8/2019 11:20 AM
217	Property owners need less government restrictions. You don't tell me how to live my live and I won't tell you how to live yours.	4/8/2019 10:37 AM
218	I think Ludington is going in the direction for our county.	4/8/2019 10:35 AM
219	I think overall Mason county is doing a good job, the only tax incentive I would give a business ,is a living wage tax break, if a company pays \$15.00/hr they get a discount on taxes . There is actual proof that paying a living brings the economy up in communities that have it, people have more money to buy the things they need and business profit as well as the community, trickledown economics have been proven a 100% failure every where it's been used. Time to step up and use incentives that actually work.	4/8/2019 10:20 AM
220	I think Splash pad waste of money. Kids have always had fun (and make their own fun) just by being near water. We don't need to waste those resources (including the water). We need a mall. We need a parking garage in downtown Ludington. We need a dispensary. We need more high paying, year-round jobs. We need more (and more affordable) housing. We need more museums. Less activities involving beer, beer, beer. Beer tent, beer crawl, open another brewery, blah blah.	4/8/2019 9:49 AM
221	Ludington is moving toward providing a nice atmosphere for tourists, but the rest of the county has a great deal of potential for additional quiet outdoor recreation opportunities. There is still a huge psychological divide between Ludington and the rest of the county. Ludington doesn't seem to think we exist.	4/8/2019 9:47 AM
222	Because our greater world is increasingly homogeneous, it is difficult to tell one area of the country from another (picture the US 10 approach to Ludington). Try to preserve what is special and unique about Mason County. Once bulldozed, leveled and paved over, we never get the once-special areas back.	4/8/2019 9:47 AM
223	There should be some property tax relief for seniors. Transportation in rural areas for those who no longer can/or should not be driving. Farms should NOT be allowed to have junk cars, house trailers or other non-farm junk exempt from zoning junk law. Some farms look like ill kept junk yards	4/8/2019 9:36 AM
224	I think the zoning commission should allow for small business development in rural areas. I believe the zoning commission is stifling growth of small businesses because of the decisions they are against them.	4/8/2019 8:51 AM
225	Wind turbines should not be built close to homes without the permission of neighbors.	4/8/2019 8:43 AM
226	We need to focus on transportation for ALL who live in Mason County so we can connect individuals to jobs and resources.	4/8/2019 8:30 AM
227	I would like to see more energy efficiency buildings, Recycling and composting facility. More enforcement of blight.	4/8/2019 8:28 AM
228	Our roads are getting worse and traffic is poorly controlled.	4/8/2019 8:09 AM
229	I fully support Starving Artist and any new small county business in Mason county	4/8/2019 7:01 AM

230	New businesses coming in to empty space should provide a business plan and interview for the space in a way. Too many businesses move into spaces and dont make it more than a year or 2. Example is cops and donuts. Apartments by downtown Wesco already takes away from the view and IA an eye sore. There are condos with so many empty places, why not turn those into apartments rather than tearing places down and building new. I think it appears folks in charge are brain washed by developers and don't look at what mason county has or has tried already to learn From it. The high end furniture store is another one that I don't see making it. Many things haven't made it in scottville haven't made it, but holdens have and they continue to grow and expand. That is they type of market there is now. Reuse, buy used, repurpose. Thanks	4/7/2019 11:25 PM
231	Development is important but I don't want the area to lose its small town and rural identity. I grew up here, left and returned 40 years later. Hope all who live here appreciate what a beautiful and great area it is.	4/7/2019 10:57 PM
232	We need to support a drug recovery program there is a big problem in Mason county and surrounding areas but know where to get help and long term treatment for our people	4/7/2019 10:49 PM
233	Mason County should aggressively search for and entice companies such as warehousing, logistics, and other various professional services, that can employ people at a livable wage to help retain and attract new young people and families. As the businesses grow, new affordable housing subdivisions could be built. If it can accomplish this, new shopping and restaurants would surely follow, and Mason County can become a vibrant year round community as opposed to a sleepy tourist town.	4/7/2019 10:29 PM
234	Restructure the business model of LMTA to include service to the US 10 corridor.	4/7/2019 10:28 PM
235	I think any new developments should be put to vote by city residents. Not just decided by a few on the DDA or City councils	4/7/2019 9:48 PM