



Master Plan

VICTOR TOWNSHIP, CLINTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Master Plan

Victor Township, Clinton County, Michigan

Adopted January 9, 2022



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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
VICTOR TOWNSHIP VISION STATEMENT.....	6
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	7
<i>Improve Our Infrastructure</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Protect the Environment</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Respond to Changing Market Trends</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Maintain Fiscal Responsibility</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Adapt to Technological Advances</i>	<i>12</i>
PLANNING PROCESS.....	13
<i>Community Engagement Summary</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Data Sources</i>	<i>18</i>
IMPROVE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE.....	19
<i>Goal 1: Create a Quality, Safe, Multi-Modal Road Network</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Goal 2: Create a Robust Network of Non-Motorized Paths For Recreation and Transportation</i>	<i>23</i>
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.....	26
<i>Goal 1: Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Prime Farmland</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Goal 2: Watersheds, Wetlands, and Bodies of Water</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Goal 3: Promote Recycling and Other Sustainable Waste Management Methods.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Existing Land Use</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Future Land Use Map and Zoning Plan</i>	<i>44</i>
RESPOND TO CHANGING MARKET TRENDS	48
<i>Goal 1: Ensure the Township Remains a Desirable Place IN WHICH to Live.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Goal 2: Promote a Healthy Business Climate in the Township.....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Goal 3: Invest in Recreational Facilities to Meet the Needs of Residents.....</i>	<i>55</i>
MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY	57
<i>Goal 1: Ensure All Residents Can Participate Effectively in Township Government</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Goal 2: Continue to Enhance Victor Township Hall as a Community Landmark and Meeting Place</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Goal 3: Maintain Effective and Efficient Emergency Services</i>	<i>58</i>
ADAPT TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES.....	59
<i>Goal 1: Improve Broadband Connectivity Throughout the Township</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Goal 2: Improve Wireless Service Throughout the Township</i>	<i>62</i>
CONCLUSION.....	63

Executive Summary

Below are the key goals of Victor Township, as articulated through this master plan. Each of the goals is hyperlinked to its supporting data, analysis, and action items found in the body of the plan.

IMPROVE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 1: [Create a High Quality, Safe, Multi-Modal Road Network](#)

Goal 2: [Create a Robust Network of Non-Motorized Paths for Recreation and Transportation](#)

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Goal 1: [Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Prime Farmland](#)

Goal 2: [Protect Watersheds, Wetlands, and Bodies of Water](#)

Goal 3: [Promote Recycling and Other Sustainable Waste Management Methods](#)

RESPOND TO CHANGING MARKET TRENDS

Goal 1: [Ensure the Township Remains a Desirable Community in Which to Live](#)

Goal 2: [Promote a Healthy Business Climate in the Township](#)

Goal 3: [Invest in Recreational Facilities to Meet the Needs of Residents](#)

MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Goal 1: [Ensure All Residents Can Participate Effectively in Township Government](#)

Goal 2: [Continue to Enhance the Township Hall as a Community Landmark and Meeting Place](#)

Goal 3: [Maintain Effective and Efficient Emergency Services](#)

ADAPT TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

Goal 1: [Improve Broadband Connectivity Throughout the Township](#)

Goal 2: [Improve Wireless Service Throughout the Township](#)

Victor Township Vision Statement

Victor Township strives to ensure high quality of life for residents by protecting, preserving, and improving its key assets, including natural beauty, recreational attractions, rich soils, natural habitats, attractive housing stock, and a prime location within easy reach of big cities, small towns, and outdoor amenities.

*The township recognizes that, in order to leverage its assets, it must **continuously improve its infrastructure, protect the environment, respond to changing market trends, maintain fiscal responsibility, and adapt to technological advances.***

To support these core township functions, the Victor Township Planning Commission and Victor Township Board of Trustees have adopted this master plan to guide the future of Victor Township and its residents.



Goals and Objectives

The Victor Township Master Plan is the culmination of efforts of the Victor Township Planning Commission, Victor Township Board of Trustees, and residents of Victor Township. They joined together to update the previous master plan for the community's growth and development.

The Victor Township Master Plan has been developed to serve as a set of general policies to guide decision makers within the community and direct the future growth and development of the township over the next 10 to 15 years.

Because the township does not have local zoning, this is not a land use plan. While land use priorities are included to serve as a guide for the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) in administering zoning in the township, the primary purpose of this plan to articulate the community's strategic direction.

The community's consensus vision for its future is summarized in the Township Vision Statement that opens this plan. The vision is further refined and specified through the following **goals and objectives**. The goals stem directly from the Township Vision Statement and serve as the organizing principles for this plan.



IMPROVE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 1: Create a High Quality, Safe, Multi-Modal Road Network

1. Prioritize investing in heavily traveled roads. Use capital preventative maintenance efficiently to stretch township dollars further.
2. Annually update a road surface conditions map (PASER) that identifies poor/fair/good road surface conditions. Partner with the [Clinton County Road Commission](#) to inspect roads frequently and ensure the PASER map is kept up-to-date.
3. Budget road improvements over four years to make the best use of road millage funds.
4. Provide funds for ditching and gravel road repairs in addition to paved road surface maintenance.

Goal 2: Create a Robust Network of Non-Motorized Paths for Recreation and Transportation

1. Implement the [Clinton County Non-Motorized Plan](#).
2. Where possible and practical, improve safety for cyclists on designated cycling routes.
3. Provide wayfinding signs for cycling routes.
4. Clear sightlines by removing buildings and structures within the public right of way, especially at hazardous intersections.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Goal 1: Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Prime Farmland

1. Identify environmentally sensitive habitats and high-quality potential wetlands utilizing the data included in this master plan, as well as other sources.
2. Encourage residents, especially near environmentally sensitive areas, to participate in the Farmland Preservation Program (formerly PA 116) with the State of Michigan.
3. Discourage dense developments and small lots close to environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Promote development around existing developed areas.
5. Encourage passive solar energy systems.
6. Encourage and support sustainable practices in the management of forest resources.
7. Maintain township cemeteries using sustainable methods.

Goal 2: Protect Watersheds, Wetlands, and Bodies of Water

1. Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, fertilizers, and harmful chemicals that flow directly into township lakes and waterways.
2. Work with lake resident groups to preserve water quality in the township's lakes. Consider special assessment districts or other funding mechanisms to construct a public sewer system, and/or assist property owners with septic system upgrades and repairs.
3. Discourage land divisions in areas around the township's lakes.

Goal 3: Promote Recycling and Other Sustainable Waste Management Methods

1. Partner with Greater Laingsburg Recyclers to provide convenient recycling opportunities for residents.
2. Ensure township residents have access to information and resources in order to sustainably dispose of potentially hazardous household wastes, such as paint, gasoline, appliances, and electronics.

RESPOND TO CHANGING MARKET TRENDS

Goal 1: Ensure the Township Remains a Desirable Community in Which to Live

1. Understand changing markets in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the potential for workers to seek out naturally beautiful places like Victor Township for housing while only occasionally commuting to major job centers.
2. Protect Victor Township's natural beauty through effective land use controls in partnership with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#).
3. Leverage and expand recreational opportunities centered around the township's natural features.
4. Work with Clinton County to ensure adequate blight enforcement within the township.
5. Explore creative options to streamline blight reporting, such as creating a reporting portal on the township website.
6. Ask township residents how the township can provide or improve the services they need.

Goal 2: Promote a Healthy Business Climate in the Township

1. Respond to the post-COVID-19 demand for increased remote work by working to improve the township's communications infrastructure and promoting high-quality housing stock.
2. Determine appropriate places within the township for new and expanded businesses. Work with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) to develop and enforce zoning regulations to contain business within these appropriate places, while supporting the businesses themselves as they grow.
3. Operate an efficient and business friendly township government.

Goal 3: Invest in Recreational Facilities to Meet the Needs of Residents

1. Partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on programming at [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#).
2. Engage with the community to determine the amenities that should be available at the township hall park.
3. Seek out opportunities for additional township park space, as funds and sites become available.
4. Continue pursuing recreation development grant resources.
5. Complement the Clinton County parks system and programming.

MAINTAIN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Goal 1: Ensure All Residents Can Participate Effectively in Township Government

1. Regularly update the township's website with events and information about township services.
2. Continue to provide remote public access to township meetings.

Goal 2: Continue to Enhance the Township Hall as a Community Landmark and Meeting Place

1. Maintain the township hall kitchen to ensure a high-quality experience for renters.
2. Continue to market the township hall as a popular event space for the township and surrounding areas.
3. Grow partnerships with senior and youth organizations for regular township hall use.

Goal 3: Maintain Effective and Efficient Emergency Services

1. Focus new economic development on areas easily accessible by emergency services.
2. Regularly evaluate emergency medical service options.
3. Promote easily identifiable address plates for residents and property owners.
4. Ensure that all public roadways are in sufficient condition and designed appropriately to ensure access by emergency vehicles.
5. Work with property owners along private drives to encourage sufficient maintenance for emergency vehicle accessibility while maintaining private control.

ADAPT TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

Goal 1: Improve Broadband Connectivity Throughout the Township

1. Plan for broadband service connectivity and work with providers to expand service in the community.
2. Seek grant opportunities or other funding sources to ensure the economic viability of broadband expansions in the community. Specifically, seek out the Michigan Moonshot program.
3. Follow broadband-related developments at the state and federal levels to understand new programs as they are created, and position the township to be among the first to receive competitive grant funding.
4. Focus economic development on areas with the best broadband/internet access.

Goal 2: Improve Wireless Service Throughout the Township

1. Plan for improved wireless service and work with providers to expand service in the community. Specifically, aim to provide 5G wireless service throughout the community.
2. Focus development in areas with the best wireless service.
3. Support the construction of wireless telecommunications infrastructure in parts of the township that are underserved, including in and around [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#).
4. Partner with private landowners, especially those with tall structures like silos, to locate telecommunications infrastructure in strategic locations.

Planning Process



The Victor Township Master Plan is a crucial planning document for the community as it not only provides important information about the current conditions and trends, but also presents a vision for the future of the township with a plan for accomplishing that vision.

This plan is based on three key inputs – **demographic, economic, and geographic data from reliable sources, community input, and the vision of community leaders.**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

A fundamental part of the master planning process is the public involvement that identifies the community's desires for its future and its long-term vision for growth and development. The goals and objectives are the heart of the master plan and present the vision and the manner in which it will be achieved.

Community engagement was obtained in a variety of ways, including public hearings, two separate distribution and comment periods, and the presence of the draft plan on the township website throughout the process. However, the centerpiece of the engagement strategy was an online survey made available to residents in 2020.

Just under 200 residents responded to the survey. Key takeaways from the input were:

- **Enhanced quality broadband and internet services should be the township's highest priority.** Respondents indicate they would be willing to pay more in taxes to the township to accomplish this goal.
- **The importance of the natural beauty and overall environment of the township.** Survey responses indicate that taxpayers are willing to pay more to provide better water quality in lakes and rivers as well as more choice in waste collection and recycling services.
- **Respondents are generally accepting of new growth and development in the township, but it should be contained in planned areas.** This indicates the need for the master plan to focus growth and development in specific and pragmatic areas of the township, while balancing the township's rural character and existing low-density development that residents favor.
- **Residents are generally favorable to the inclusion of bike infrastructure in the township,** indicating a need to ensure bike safety as a priority when planning for road design.
- Residents support the township examining **opportunities for additional access to emergency medical services, fire protection, and law enforcement.**
- Respondents noted that the **lack of walking and biking facilities, lack of shopping options, and longer commuting distances** are the top three negative aspects of the township.
- The township should focus on maintaining the current balance of **incremental growth and development within the township's rural character.**

Survey response data follows. Questions are ordered by the importance of the topic, as designated by the respondents, rather than by the order they appeared in the survey itself.

QUESTION 10 – PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE TAXES FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES.

	Willing	Somewhat Willing	Not Willing	I Don't Know	TOTAL
Provide better broadband/internet service availability and reliability	37% (69)	27% (51)	27% (52)	9% (17)	189
Better protection of water quality in local lakes and rivers	32% (61)	34% (65)	22% (42)	11% (21)	189
Provide household waste and recycling collection services	23% (44)	28% (53)	39% (74)	10% (19)	190
Provide additional access to emergency medical services (EMS/paramedics)	19% (36)	42% (80)	26% (50)	12% (23)	189
Improve road surface conditions	19% (35)	45% (83)	33% (62)	3% (6)	186
Enhanced bicycle safety on township roads	18% (35)	31% (58)	41% (78)	10% (19)	190
Provide additional fire protection	17% (35)	42% (79)	28% (54)	13% (25)	190
Provide additional law enforcement protection	17% (32)	39% (74)	32% (61)	12% (22)	189
Provide more parks and recreation programming	11% (20)	40% (75)	38% (71)	12% (23)	189
Blight and other code enforcement services	9% (17)	35% (66)	34% (64)	22% (42)	189
Enhancing Victor Township Hall and grounds	8% (15)	29% (56)	52% (99)	11% (20)	190
Provide additional senior activities	7% (13)	31% (59)	36% (68)	26% (50)	190

QUESTION 6 - HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT DEVELOPMENT IN VICTOR TOWNSHIP?

Answer Choices	Responses	TOTAL
Development should be focused in planned growth areas	65%	121
Development should be allowed with as few restrictions as possible	13%	24
Development should be discouraged	23%	42

QUESTION 9- PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE IN VICTOR TOWNSHIP.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	I Don't Know	TOTAL
Township hall and grounds	16% (31)	52% (98)	29% (55)	2% (3)	2% (3)	190
Parks and recreation programming	3 % (6)	30% (75)	39% (75)	6% (12)	22% (41)	191
Road surface conditions	3% (5)	32% (60)	47% (90)	18% (34)	1% (1)	190
Water quality of local lakes and rivers	3% (5)	24% (45)	40% (76)	15% (29)	18% (34)	189
Bicycle safety on public roads	3% (5)	4% (8)	25% (48)	46% (89)	22% (42)	192
Household waste and recycling services	2% (4)	24% (46)	27% (52)	32% (37)	21% (27)	191
Fire department response time	2% (4)	19% (36)	22% (43)	7% (13)	50% (96)	192
Emergency medical services response time	2% (4)	18% (34)	21% (41)	7% (13)	52% (99)	191
Senior activities	2% (3)	3% (5)	14% (27)	15% (28)	67% (128)	191
Law enforcement response time	1% (2)	18% (35)	24% (45)	7% (14)	50% (95)	191
Broadband/internet service availability and reliability	1% (2)	6% (12)	24% (47)	55% (105)	13% (24)	190

**QUESTION 11 - WHAT ARE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF LIVING IN VICTOR TOWNSHIP?
(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)**

Answer Choices	Responses	TOTAL
Rural character	86%	163
Natural open space	83%	157
Cost of living	51%	103
Easy to get around	51%	97
Schools	50%	95
Commuting distance	46%	88
Sense of community	43%	82
Recreation opportunities	41%	77
Housing	37%	70

**QUESTION 8 – PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING HOUSING/LAND AVAILABILITY
IN VICTOR TOWNSHIP.**

	More Than Needed	As Much as Needed	Less Than Needed	I Don't Know	TOTAL	Weighted Average
Single-family housing	3% (6)	38% (70)	12% (26)	44% (80)	182	2.01
Two-family housing	10% (18)	19% (34)	12% (22)	59% (107)	181	1.80
Multi-family housing	12% (22)	17% (31)	11% (21)	59% (107)	181	1.82
Rental housing	9% (17)	19% (34)	16% (28)	56% (101)	180	1.82
Fee simple ownership housing	6% (10)	18% (32)	4% (8)	72% (127)	177	1.58
Condominium	13% (23)	14% (25)	16% (29)	57% (104)	181	1.82
Rural/agricultural	3% (6)	38% (70)	18% (32)	41% (74)	182	2.04
Large lots	6% (11)	27% (49)	16% (28)	51% (92)	180	1.88
Subdivisions/neighborhoods	14% (25)	31% (56)	14% (25)	41% (74)	180	2.18
City/village	8% (14)	28% (50)	14% (25)	50% (88)	177	1.94

DATA SOURCES

The sources of data for this plan are as follows:

- U.S. Census Bureau, including both the American Community Survey and the 2020 Decennial Headcount
- Michigan Center for Geographic Information
- Clinton County Geographic Information Systems
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- U.S.D.A. Clinton County Soil Survey
- Clinton County Health Department
- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Clinton County Non-Motorized Plan
- Connected Nation
- AntennaSearch
- Rocket Mortgage

Improve Our Infrastructure



While Victor Township does not have full control over the infrastructure within its boundaries, it still takes an active role in promoting high quality of life through appropriately scaled and well-maintained roads, non-motorized pathways, communications, waste disposal, potable water, sewage disposal, and other networks.

While the goals in this chapter focus mainly on transportation, this plan's recommendations regarding other aspects of infrastructure (found elsewhere in this document) are crucial components of the township's vision as well.

GOAL 1: CREATE A QUALITY, SAFE, MULTI-MODAL ROAD NETWORK

The [Clinton County Road Commission](#) is responsible for the road system in Victor Township. The road commission plans for and provides road maintenance, road

improvements, and snowplowing, as well as intersection development, stop signs and traffic signal installation, and oversight of all new roads development.

The county road commission receives funding from both the state and federal governments for road maintenance and road construction. County dollars pay for 100% of maintenance, resurfacing, and construction on primary roads. The township pays the cost of resurfacing and construction projects on local roads, less any amount contributed by the county for a particular project. **Victor Township, along with all other townships in the county, acts in an advisory capacity to the road commission.**

In addition, Victor Township levies extra property taxes for additional road maintenance and improvements through a voter-approved millage. The millage was renewed in the August 2020 election, which will raise more than \$800,000 over the four-year term. The township will use the revenue for capital preventative maintenance of its roads and determine how to **use the millage funds to repair and maintain township roadways**. The most effective and efficient road funding strategy is to prepare a multi-year improvement budget and monitor current road conditions with an annual appraisal of roads prepared by driving and evaluating them using a standardized method.

While private roads make up only a fraction of the township's road network, it is crucial that they are maintained to an acceptable level of safety and efficiency, especially so emergency vehicles can safely traverse them. To that end, the township works with private road owners to ensure proper design and maintenance. **It is the township's position that Clinton County should only approve new private roads in situations where maintenance can be reasonably assured.**

Road System

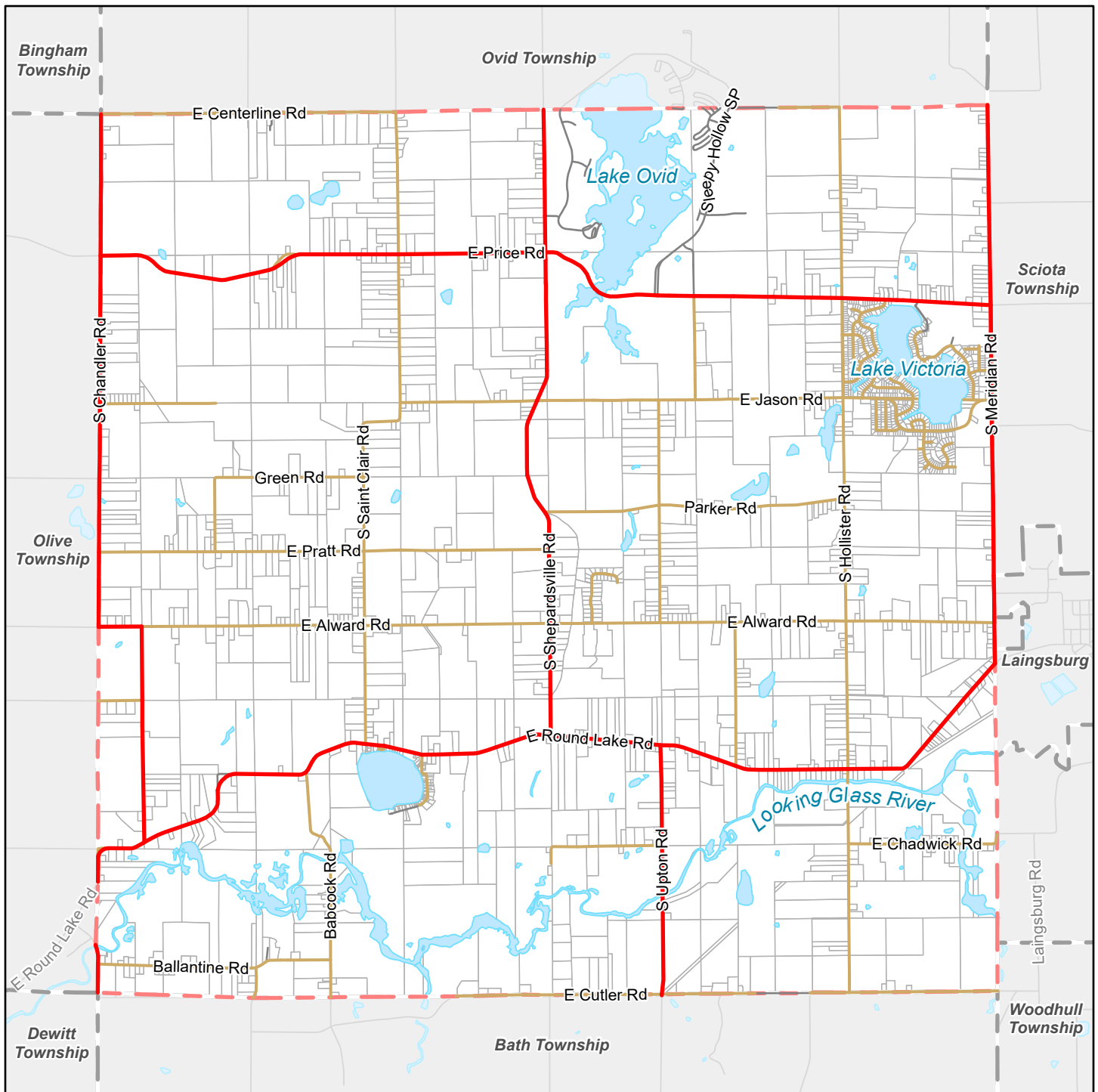
Michigan classifies county roads as either "primary" roads, which are designed to connect to key destinations throughout the county, or "local" roads, which connect primary roads to other primary roads. Subdivision streets are generally considered local roads (unless they are privately maintained). **There are 26.9 miles of primary roads, 13.35 miles of local asphalt roads, and 33.99 miles of local roads for a total of 74.24 miles of roads in Victor Township.** The primary roads in the township are:

- Round Lake Road
- Price Road
- Shepardsville Road
- Meridian Road
- Chandler Road
- Upton Road (south of Round Lake Road)

Action Steps: Roads

1. **Prioritize investing in heavily traveled roads.** The township board of trustees will work with the road commission to obtain up-to-date traffic count data and prioritize road maintenance based, in part, on the level of use each roadway receives.
2. **Use capital preventative maintenance efficiently to stretch township dollars further.** The township board of trustees will dedicate road millage money each year to preventative maintenance, to prevent emergency repair needs from overtaking other priorities.
3. **Annually update a road surface conditions map (PASER) that identifies poor/fair/good road surface conditions.** The township board of trustees will partner with the Clinton County Road Commission to inspect roads frequently and ensure the PASER map is kept up-to-date. Updated data will ensure the township board of trustees can make informed decisions on how to use the road millage.
4. **Budget road improvements over four years to make the best use of road millage funds.** The township board of trustees will make use of budgeting best practices in order to make efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
5. **Provide funds for ditching and gravel road repairs in addition to paved road surface maintenance.** The township's unpaved roads are a crucial part of the transportation network and will be treated as such.

The township's road system is mapped on the following page.



Act 51 Road Classification

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 13, 2020

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers
- Act 51 Classification**
- Non Act 51 Certified
- County Local
- County Primary



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



GOAL 2: CREATE A ROBUST NETWORK OF NON-MOTORIZED PATHS FOR RECREATION AND TRANSPORTATION

This plan supports and adopts the **2015 Clinton County Non-Motorized Plan** as it applies to Victor Township. The township fully supports the county's non-motorized transportation priorities and will assist the county in implementing the proposed new trails.

The [Clinton County 2015 Non-Motorized Plan](#) Vision:

"To provide Clinton County residents and visitors with an efficient, destination driven, and coordinated multi-purpose system of non-motorized facilities consisting of multi-use off-road trails, shared-use roadways, and on-road bicycle lanes. The system will provide a safety enhanced environment for bicyclists, equestrians and pedestrians to be active, whether for the purpose of recreation, health and fitness, or daily commuting, while benefiting the community by providing improved options for transportation, economic development through "place-making", and increasing the connectivity of neighborhoods. The system will respect the rights of private property owners, the natural environment, and the character of the Clinton County community."

Clinton County 2015 Non-Motorized Plan Goals include:

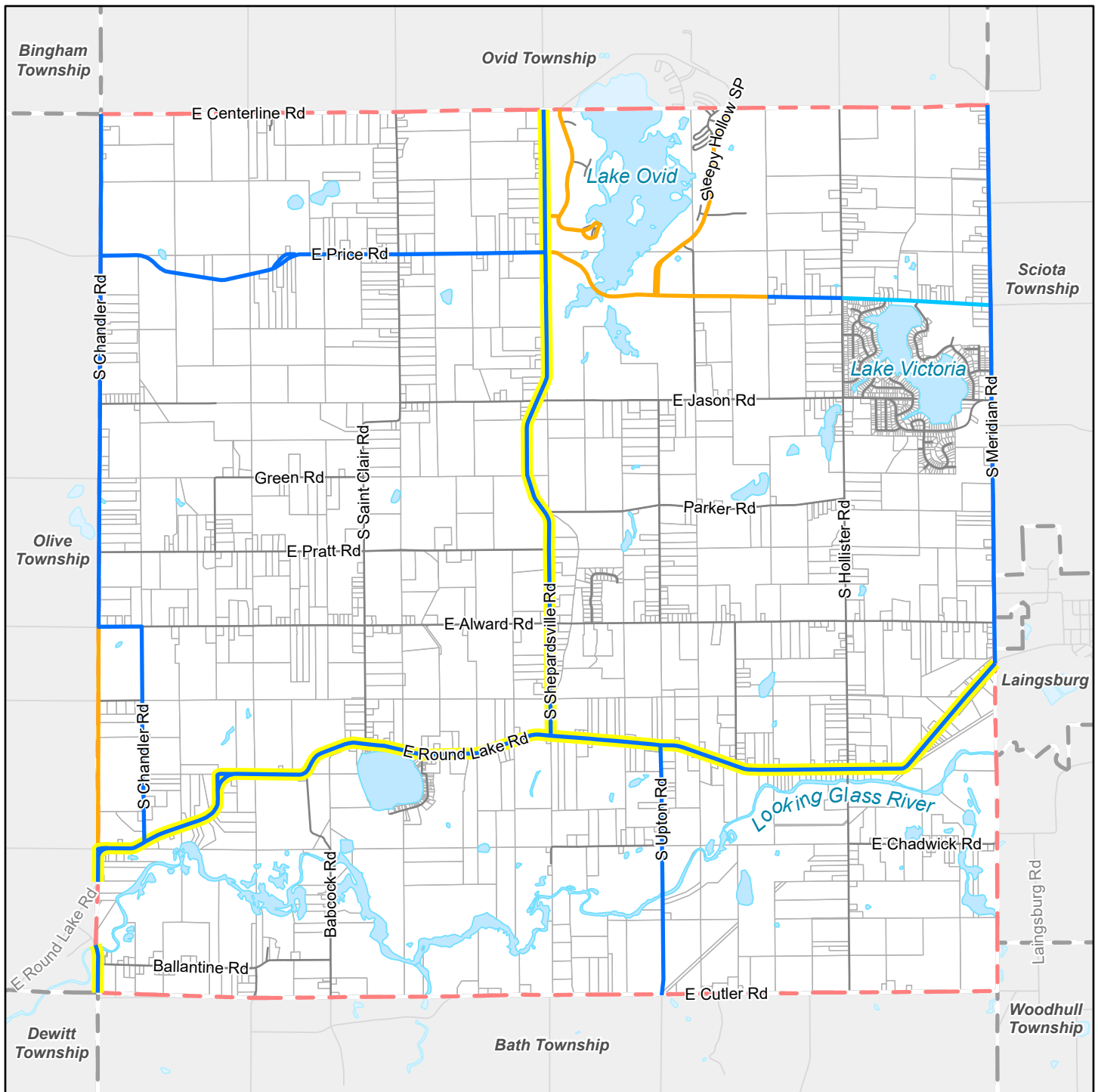
- An overall vision of linking users to destinations of value throughout the county.
- Link neighborhoods and communities found within Clinton County. Several township and city communities currently have their own non-motorized transportation plans. Linking local trail networks connects residents living in the county's more populated areas and adds value to existing/proposed infrastructure improvements.
- Establish portal routes to non-motorized facilities found in neighboring counties. Working with neighboring county agencies to establish a regional trail network further enhances the benefits of non-motorized transportation. The Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is working with state officials to link regional networks into a statewide non-motorized transportation system.
- Connect Clinton County communities with the Fred Meijer CIS Trail, Northern Tier Trail, [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#), [Francis Motz County Park](#), and [Clinton Lakes County Park](#), and other significant recreation venues.
- Provide close to home trail "loops" to encourage and improve convenience for county residents to enjoy a physically active lifestyle. Adult and childhood obesity are major local, state, and national health issues, and biking and walking are excellent ways to exercise and improve one's health. Safe local trails encourage regular exercise routines.

Action Steps: Non-Motorized Transportation

Specifically, within Victor Township, the plan envisions widened shoulders and shared use paths in the township. The following summarizes each component's role and facility type:

- **Shepardsville Road**, from Centerline Road south to the intersection with Round Lake Road, is a regional connection route, and will feature 4-foot-wide paved shoulders.
- **Round Lake Road**, from the west township line all the way to the east township line at the intersection with Meridian Road, is a regional connection route, and will feature 4-foot-wide paved shoulders.
- **Upton Road**, from the intersection with Round Lake Road south to the intersection with Cutler Road (at the township line with Bath Township), is a local bicycle route, and will feature 4-foot-wide paved shoulders.
- **Chandler Road (including a short jog on Alward Road)** is a local bicycle route, and will feature 4-foot-wide paved shoulders.
- **Unused right-of-way west of Chandler Road and south of Alward Road** will be used for an off-road non-motorized pathway.
- **Price Road**, from South Chandler Road east to South Shepardsville Road, is a local bicycle route with 4-foot-wide paved shoulders. The route continues through [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#), following internal hiking/biking trails, and exits the park to the east along Price Road. East of Sleepy Hollow, the plan calls for 4-foot-wide paved shoulders along Price Road to Hollister Road, then bike lanes east of Hollister.
- **Meridian Road**, from the northeastern township corner boundary south to East Round Lake Road, is a local bicycle route featuring 4-foot-wide paved shoulders.

A map of the proposed improvements is included on the next page.



Non-Motorized Facilities Conceptual Network Plan

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 14, 2020

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers
- Non-Motorized Facility Type**
- Paved Shoulder > 4ft
- Shared Use Path
- Bike Lane
- Regional Connection Route



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



Protect the Environment



Victor Township's natural beauty and environmental resources are some of its most important assets and also some of its most vulnerable. Therefore, it is incumbent on the township to proactively protect the wetlands, woodlands, farmland, lakes, and waterways that give Victor Township its distinctive character.

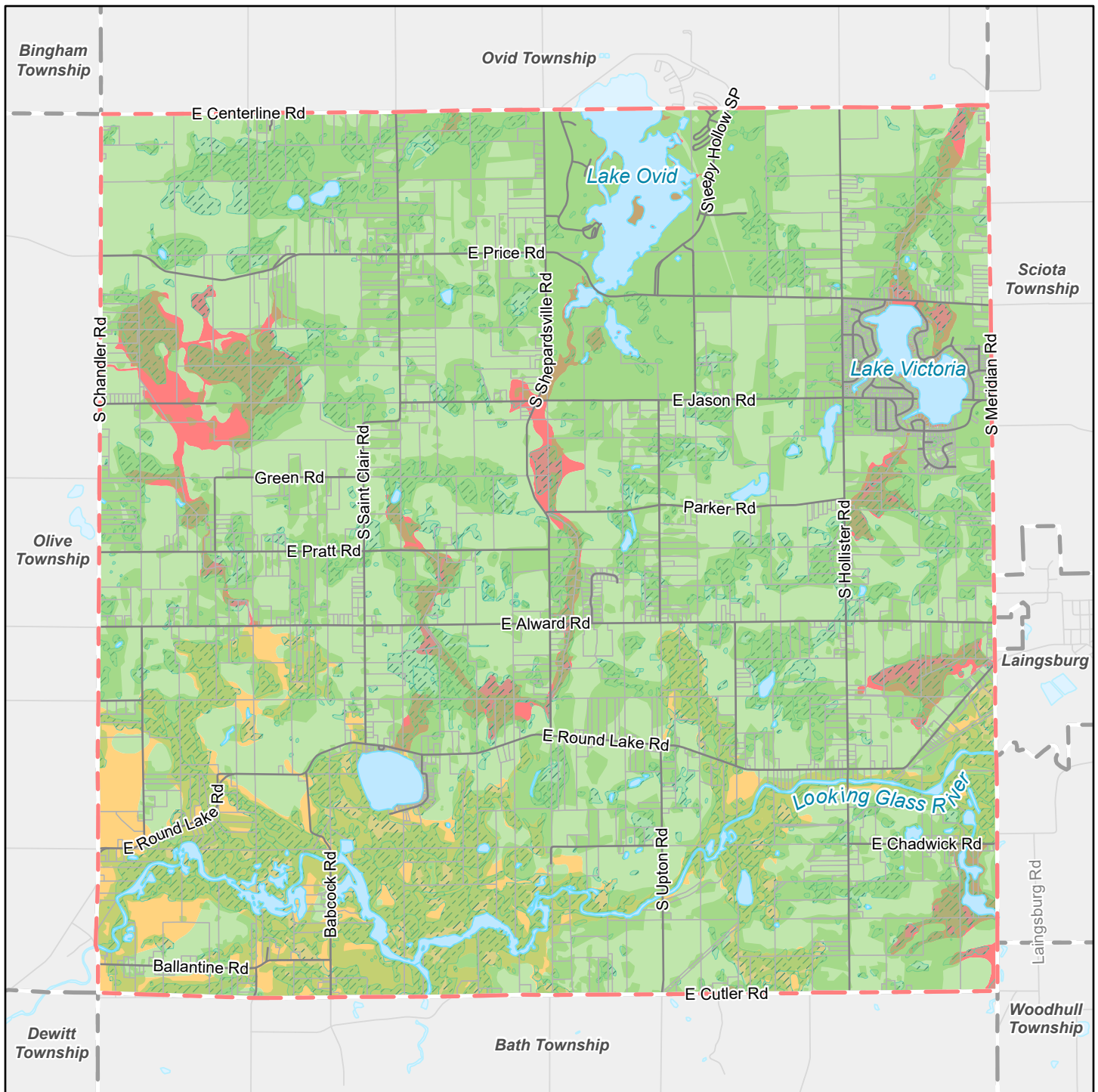
This chapter of the plan includes the future land use map and zoning recommendations for the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#). Those aspects of the plan are included here because the township's top land use priority is protecting its natural features.

GOAL 1: PROTECT ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS AND PRIME FARMLAND

Different physical characteristics influence how a community uses its lands. Factors such as soil types, topography, drainage, soil load-bearing characteristics, and water features can impact the viability of development and the importance of preservation.

When appropriately integrated into development proposals, physical features enhance the community's character. Ignoring or mistreating physical features can have significant long-term negative consequences. Some well-defined physical features are development barriers and may be difficult to overcome except at considerable expense. It is usually better to design with nature than to attempt to substantially change an area's physical environment.

A composite map of environmental features in the township is on the following page.



Composite Environmental

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 13, 2020

LEGEND

Victor Township Boundary

Other Municipal Boundaries

Roads

Lakes and Rivers

Tree Cover

Wetlands

Flood Zones

Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding, for which no base flood elevation determined.

Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding, for which a base flood elevation determined.

Minimal Risk



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



Geology

Michigan's physical setting, including the surrounding Great Lakes, resulted from glacier movements across massive bedrock formations. These bedrock formations mostly consisted of sandstone, limestone, and shale, which were **particularly vulnerable to the glaciers' weight and movement**. The weight and movement of the glaciers depressed the land mass surrounding Michigan, forming basins that would eventually become the Great Lakes.

The last glaciers that covered Michigan were responsible for the township's current landforms. **As these glaciers moved south, they deposited large quantities of soil across Central Michigan. This rich and fertile soil accounts for much of Michigan's productive agricultural land.**

Topography

The land surface of the county consists of level rolling glacial plains and moraines. **Clinton County's average elevation is slightly less than 800 feet above sea level and 200 feet above the level of Lake Michigan.**

Topography can significantly influence land development patterns and can impact such things as site location, orientation, building design, road layout and construction, and utility installation. For example, construction on extreme slopes is difficult because the land must support the building's weight and the surrounding soils must be prepared to mitigate potential erosion. Topographic variations also are opportunities to appreciate the surrounding environment. Homes on slopes, for instance, are usually positioned to take advantage of walk-out basements. However, land with little slopes usually needs more drainage improvements.

Climate

Victor Township has a relatively moderate climate typical of Central Michigan. The Great Lakes influence the climate with increased cloudiness that moderates temperatures during cold air outbreaks in fall and winter. Annual daily maximum temperature averages 58.5°, and summer month average maximum temperatures range between 80° and 84°. Annual daily minimum temperature averages 37° (January has the lowest average minimum temperature of 14.4°). The average annual precipitation is 30 inches. Snowfall averages 37.4 inches per year.

Soils

Soil conditions have an important influence on land's ability to support various uses, including roads, buildings, utilities, and agriculture. Soil appropriateness is assessed by considering the following important characteristics:

- **Bearing capacity** – the ability to support the weight of roads, buildings, or vehicles;
- **Stability** – soils' susceptibility to erosion hazards and the ability to handle weight without causing mass movements such as mudflows and mudslides;
- **Drainage** – soils' capacity to receive and pass water through it. This characteristic is extremely important for understanding how soils absorb stormwater because soil particle composition and water content affect soil drainage; and

- **Resource Value** – soils' economic worth for agriculture, fill, or mining.

Soils more suitable for dwellings with basements and septic tank absorption fields are located in the southern half of the township, where soils with few limitations for development are concentrated.

In the northwest corner of the township, there are concentrated areas of soils with several limitations for development. This corner is also mapped as **prime farmland** and has large amounts of land enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program. Soils in sections 2 and 11 also show severe limitations. They are mapped as prime farmland, except for the portion inside [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#).

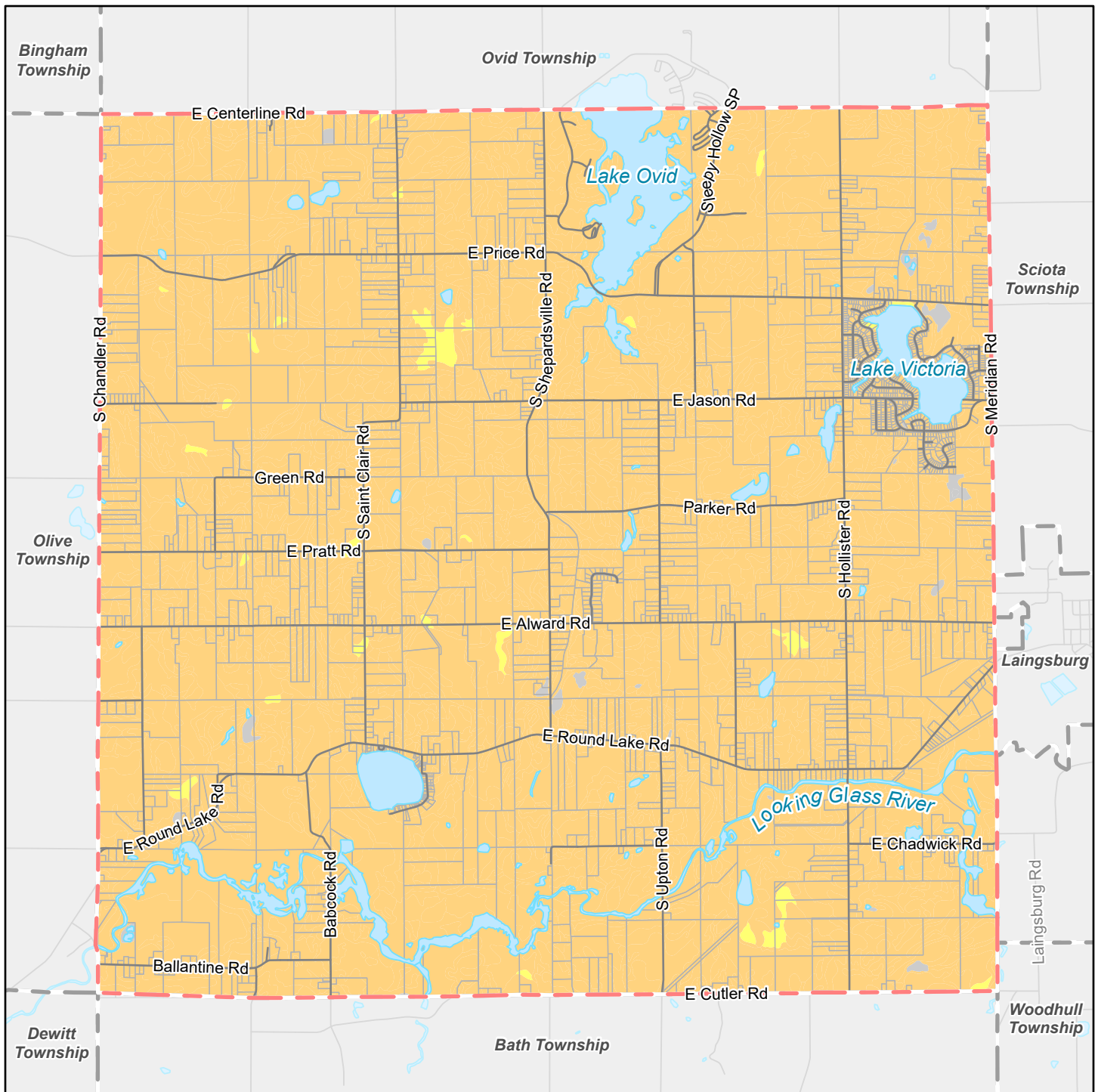
Individual building sites should be carefully selected for both the structure itself and the septic system. Design modifications should be made when necessary to overcome physical site limitations. Also, the township should encourage cooperation and coordination between the [Clinton County Building Department](#) and the [Mid-Michigan District Health Department](#) to assure compliance with all requirements for on-site septic permits.

Clinton County Soil Survey

The Clinton County Soil Survey was a cooperative effort between the Soil Conservation Service and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. It was prepared for many different users, and farmers, foresters, and agronomists can use it to determine the potential of the soil and management practices required for its production. Also, planners, community officials, engineers, developers, builders, and home buyers can use it to plan land use, select construction sites, develop soil resources, or identify needed special practices.

The soil survey contains an abundance of soils information, including a general soils map for broad land use planning. There is also a series of detailed soils maps, which are useful for planning the small area uses. Another section addresses use and management of soils where field experience and measured data are combined to predict soil behavior in a general text format. For additional information, refer to the [Clinton County Survey](#).

Township soils are mapped on the following page.



Soils

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 13, 2020

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers
- Septic Tank Absorption Fields Rating**
- Not rated
- Somewhat limited
- Very limited



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



Woodlands

At the time Mid-Michigan was originally settled by Europeans, the area was covered with dense hardwood forests. As the number of inhabitants increased, these forests were cleared for lumber and the lands were converted to farming. Today, the quantity of land still occupied by mature vegetation has diminished. Where large contiguous woodlands remain, they provide considerable community benefits considered in the planning process.

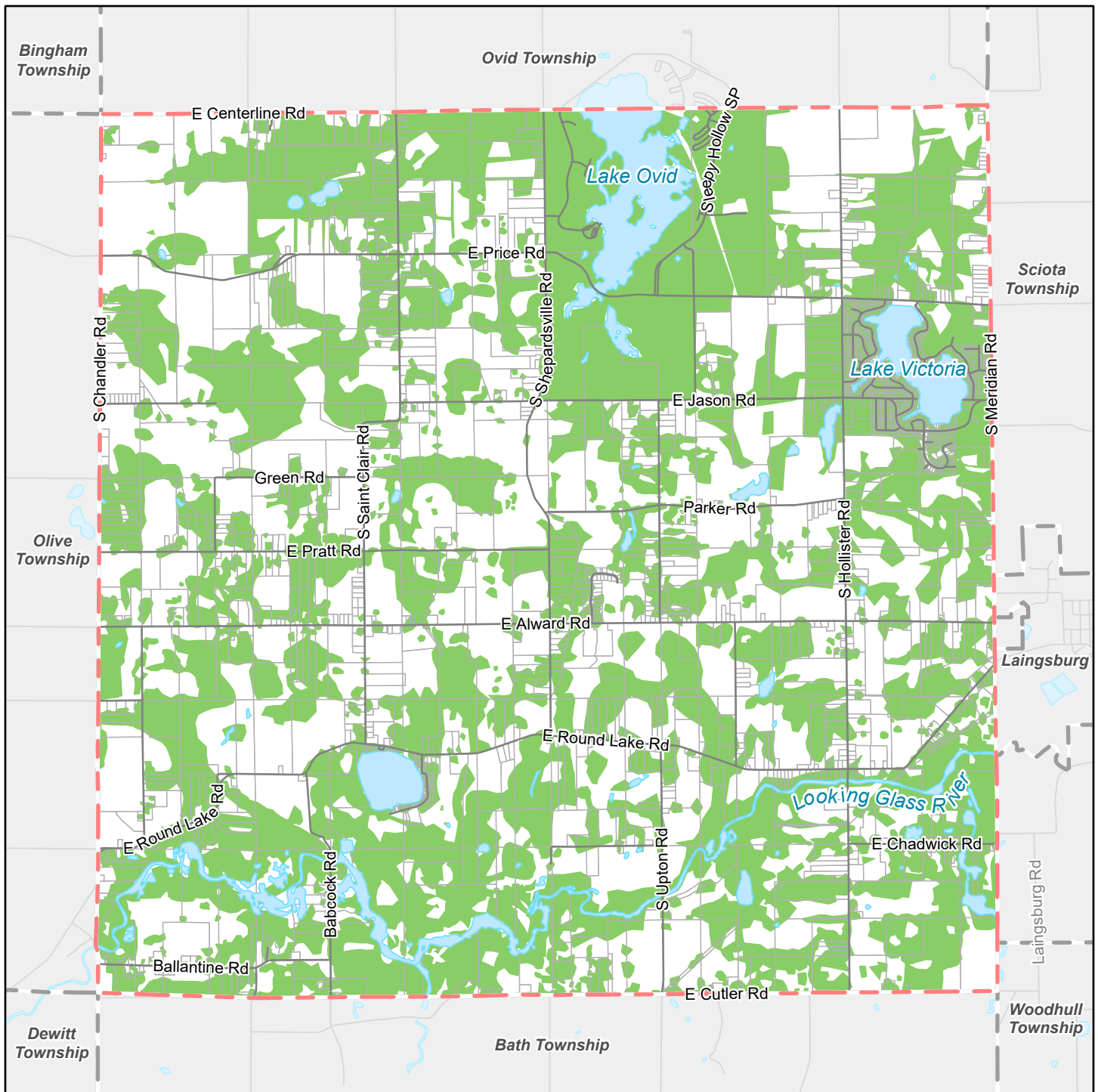
Woodlands are frequently only considered valuable as a visual amenity enhancing the natural or built environment. However, woodlands have other measurable benefits which include:

- **Slope stabilization and erosion control;**
- **Conserving water quality;**
- **Maintaining a micro-climate;**
- **Filtering pollution from the atmosphere;**
- **Decreasing noise; and**
- **Providing wildlife habitat.**

Woodlands also have economic benefits, including being a **source of wood and wood fiber for dimensional lumber, fuel, and a wide range of wood-based products such as veneer, paper, etc.** But those economic benefits can only be realized if stewardship of the woodlands is given high priority.

Recognizing these important physical properties and integrating woodlands into future development can improve the community's overall environmental quality and enhance the visual character of the built environment. Woodland areas were verified with recent aerial imagery.

Woodlands in the township are mapped on the following page.



Tree Cover

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 13, 2020

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers
- Tree Cover



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



Action Steps: Environmentally Sensitive Areas

1. **Identify environmentally sensitive habitats, utilizing the data included in this master plan, as well as other sources.** The maps and analysis in this chapter give an overview of the geographic distribution of sensitive environmental areas, but it will be incumbent on the township, property owners, and developers to respect the unique conditions of individual sites.
2. **Encourage residents, especially near environmentally sensitive areas, to participate in the Farmland Preservation Program (Formerly PA 116) with the State of Michigan.** Participation is high in parts of the township with prime farmland, but the township can continue to inform residents about the program and the associated tax benefits.
3. **Discourage dense developments and small lots close to environmentally sensitive areas.** See the future land use map for the specific geographic recommendations.
4. **Promote development around existing developed areas.** See the future land use map for specific geographic recommendations.
5. **Encourage passive solar energy systems.** Solar energy systems should be designed to minimize the impact on the immediate ecosystem through the preservation of wetlands and woodlands and the use of native, pollinator friendly plants as ground cover.
6. **Encourage and support sustainable practices in the management of forest resources.** The township will work with the Clinton County Conservation District, and others, to promote sustainable use of forests, including encouraging stewardship plans for their long-term viability, while meeting landowner objectives.
7. **Maintain township cemeteries using sustainable methods.** The township cemeteries can and should be thriving habitats, in addition to places of remembrance and reflection.

GOAL 2: WATERSHEDS, WETLANDS, AND BODIES OF WATER

Watersheds combine communities that help share the same drainage area. Watershed organizations promote best management practices that curtail contamination in river systems.

Groundwater, specifically the region's aquifer, is the township's major water source. Best management practices for all types of land uses inform and regulate public actions that protect drinking water resources.

Wetlands exist throughout the township and offer natural benefits including **water purification, flood management, and unique habitats**. Through coordination with Michigan regulatory agencies, Victor Township can continue to protect wetland resources.

Floodplains are areas prone to flooding as defined by federal regulations and corresponding Michigan law. They exist adjacent to lakes, rivers, and drains in the township and should be protected to prevent flood damage.

Watersheds

A watershed is a physical area of land which is drained by a common source – a river or river system. Because water naturally flows downhill, watershed boundaries are drawn by connecting the points of highest elevations around a body of water. All the land found within the raised boundary drains to the watershed's outlet body of water at the low point of the watershed.

With regard to aquifers, care must be taken above the ground to assure a plentiful, clean water supply. **Contamination from any one source can enter the aquifer and affect all the water within it.** Also, the rate at which water is removed from the aquifer needs to balance with the rate at which the aquifer is replenished, so that levels remain constant.

County and local agencies play an essential role in the implementation of a comprehensive groundwater protection program for the township. The Groundwater Management Board is one of the many programs housed at the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission that promotes methods of groundwater stewardship through area education programs. The burden of effective groundwater protection is shared by the [Clinton County Health Department](#) which has broad legal authority to regulate [groundwater protection](#). While there are both state and federal regulations in place which address groundwater protection strategies, the programs have gaps and are **underfunded and understaffed**.

An effective local strategy includes both partnership with state and federal regulatory agencies and working closely with Clinton County on land use control measures. As part of the state's program to address groundwater contamination through non-point source pollution, a series of "Best Management Practices" were introduced. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are defined as structural, vegetative, and managerial practices used to treat, prevent, and reduce water pollution. **These may include secondary containment requirements, blocking interior floor drains, density restrictions for unsewered development, minimizing impervious surfaces, and requiring compliance with applicable Michigan regulations.** At the local level, best practices can be implemented through a zoning ordinance or a separate hazardous substance ordinance as a township general law ordinance.

Victor Township residents depend on groundwater for drinking water. Groundwater contamination impacts property values, poses a threat to public health, can be costly to the community, and impacts the community's image. At the county level, the Mid-Michigan Health Department's Environmental Health Division has a Ground Water Quality Control Program ("The Program").

Townships may develop a local program of data collection through well logs which can provide specific information about groundwater quality and quantity. This program is available to all townships in Clinton County by contacting the [Mid-Michigan Health Department](#). At the state level, the [Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's](#) (EGLE) underground storage tank division [tracks leaking underground storage tanks \(LUST\)](#). The LUST site list shows 64 sites in Clinton County. EGLE's Environmental Response Division regulates sites defined as contaminated by Michigan statute. It is not clear how many leaking underground storage tanks are located in Victor Township because state records may not be comprehensive. **Sound planning practices assure that township residents can continue to enjoy a plentiful and safe water supply.**

Wetlands

Wetlands are another important element of Michigan's landscape. Before European settlement in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Michigan was thought to contain more than **eleven million acres of wetlands**. Like the extensive forests that once covered the state, the unique physical characteristics of many of these wetlands were permanently altered because of intensive human settlement. This change occurred as forests were stripped and swamps drained for farming. **Between 25% and 50% of these original wetlands remain in Michigan today.**

The types of wetlands in the township range from fringe wetlands around the perimeter of water bodies to larger systems independent of surface water connections. The township has significant regulated wetlands, all unique and different in their own way. Common wetland types include:

- **Freshwater Emergent** – Includes a variety of plants, primarily grasses and grass-like species (i.e., cattails);
- **Scrub-Shrub** – Includes primarily woody bushes, with or without grasses and other non-woody plants; and
- **Freshwater Forested** – Dominated by large trees that provide shading and generally are not wet all year.

Michigan statutes that regulate wetland development include the [Inland Lakes and Streams Act](#), the [Floodplains Regulatory Act](#), the [Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act](#), and the [Shoreline Protection and Management Act](#).

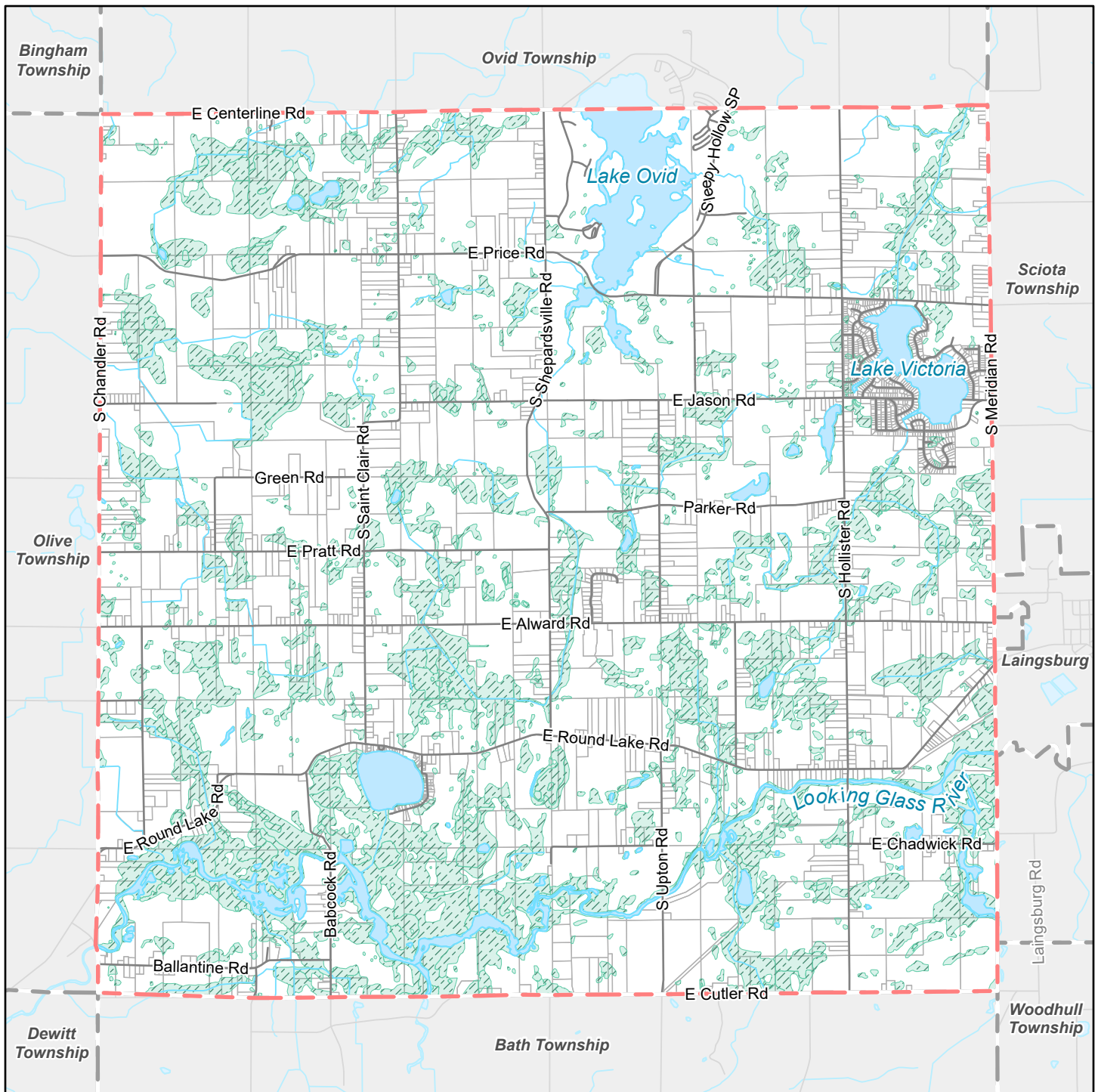
Wetlands are areas where land and water meet. They are sometimes called swamps, bogs, or marshes, but can also be low-lying forest or meadowland where water is not visible above ground. Wetland trees include cottonwood, red and silver maples, and northern white cedar, shrubs such as alder and cranberry, and plants like cattails and bulrushes. Wetland soils tend to be dark or dull, moist to the touch, and often high in organic content.

Wetlands provide rich habitat areas for fish and wildlife, sedimentation control, water purification, and flood control. They also provide scenic natural environments for recreation and tourism enhancement.

Wetland maps are regulated by state statute ([Part 303 of P.A. 451 of 1994](#)) and administered by EGLE. Activities that disturb wetlands such as dredging, filling, draining, or development are extremely limited and usually require a permit. Development is restricted within a wetland as a protective measure for environmental protection and because wetlands present several serious constraints to construction. Wetland soils are unstable, which can be costly to overcome from a construction standpoint. Even with specialized designs, cracked walls and foundations are common due to flooding and settling both in and around wetlands.

Although regulation of wetlands occurs at the state level, Clinton County and Victor Township must coordinate with EGLE to make the regulations as effective as possible by being aware of possible wetland areas. **Both the county and township have the legal authority to adopt a local wetlands ordinance but, like most local entities in Michigan, have chosen to work with state regulators instead.**

Wetlands in the township are mapped on the following page.



Wetlands

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 13, 2020

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers
- Wetlands



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



Floodplains

Floodplains are those areas which are adjacent to lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds that are prone to overflow and flood their banks, and are categorized based on the rarity of a flood large enough to inundate the floodplain. For instance, **land within the 100-year flood plain statistically has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year.** Floodplains differ greatly in size depending upon factors such as the permeability of the soil and the volume of water within the water body.

A floodplain contains three basic components. First, the channel, which is the area of normal stream flow. Second, the floodway, which is the 100-year flood plain. Third, the flood fringe, which is the land between the floodway and the outer limits of the areas known to be subject to possible flooding.

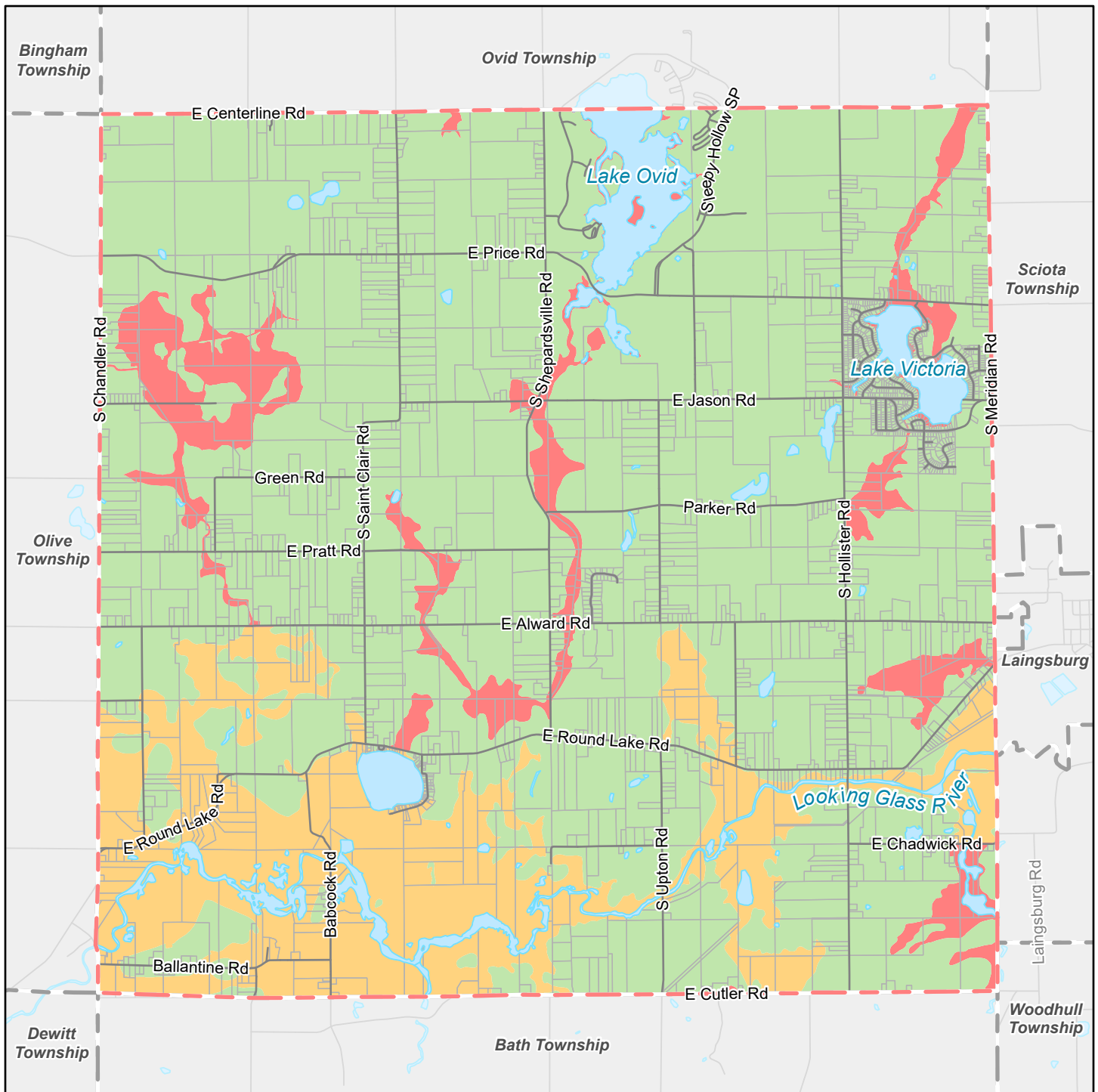
In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the **National Flood Insurance Act (NFIA)**, creating the [National Flood Insurance Program](#), which gave floodplains a regulatory significance as well. The NFIA shifted the financial burden of funding flood disaster from the government (and therefore the taxpayers as a whole) to those most likely to need the dollars through the establishment of a self-funding insurance program. **NFIA ensured that flood insurance, which had not been available before, was made available and was made a requirement of receiving a mortgage from any federally-backed lender for structures located in a 100-year floodplain.** The program is administered at the local and state level and imposes strict limitations on any type of development activity within the 100-year floodplain. Local government participates by adopting local floodplain management ordinances and must be participating in order for residents to be eligible for the insurance. **Victor Township entered the program in February 1989.**

In addition, floodplains are regulated by state statute ([Part 31 of P.A. 451 of 1994](#)). **A permit from EGLE is required for all activities within the floodplain that reduce the capacity of the floodplain to hold water.** The Clinton County Department of Community Development is responsible for implementing land use and development policies and enforces zoning ordinances. According to the county zoning ordinance, a floodplain permit or a letter of no authority from the state is required when an application for any type of development is made within a flood hazard area zone.

Floodplains in Victor Township

In the northern half of the township, floodplains exist along Adler Creek on the north side of Price Road, north of Lake Victoria. The area around (and including) Lake Ovid is also a floodplain area, which includes the Montagu Drain to the east and the Maple River, which flows into the lake from the south, and then out again to the north. Most of sections 7 and 8 are mapped floodplain areas, along with the northern half of sections 17 and 18, which includes the Holden, Ashley, Underhill, and Black drains. The floodplain around the Holden Drain flows northwest towards Stony Creek.

The township's floodplains are mapped on the following page.



Water Bodies and Flood Zones

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

April 13, 2020

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers

Flood Zones

- Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding, for which no base flood elevation determined.
- Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding, for which a base flood elevation determined.
- Minimal Risk



0 0.5 1
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Twp 2020. McKenna 2020.



Action Items: Watersheds, Wetlands, and Floodplains

1. **Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, fertilizers, and harmful chemicals that flow directly into township lakes and waterways.** The township will work with county, state, and federal entities to ensure septic systems are well-maintained, wetlands and floodplains are protected from development, stormwater is managed in sustainable ways, and residents use best practices in lawn maintenance and home design.
2. **Work with lake resident groups to preserve water quality in the township's lakes.** The township will consider special assessment districts or other funding mechanisms to construct a public sewer system or assist property owners with septic system upgrades and repairs. Septic systems should be carefully monitored so repairs or infrastructure investments can be made before a failure occurs.
3. **Discourage land divisions in areas around the township's lakes.** The township will partner with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) to ensure zoning regulations reflect the carrying capacity of the lakes.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE RECYCLING AND OTHER SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT METHODS

One of the most popular and effective sustainability best practices that individuals can implement is sustainable waste disposal. But in order for residents to participate in recycling or hazardous waste programs, the township must ensure that sufficient opportunities are available through partnerships and proactive action.

Action Items: Waste Management

1. **Partner with Greater Laingsburg Recyclers to provide convenient recycling opportunities for residents.** [Greater Laingsburg Recyclers](#) is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization that has created opportunities for recycling in the townships surrounding Laingsburg since 1989. Expanding the township's relationship with GLR could improve the convenience of recycling for Victor Township residents.
2. **Ensure township residents have access to information and resources in order to sustainably dispose of potentially hazardous household wastes, such as paint, gasoline, appliances, and electronics.** Clinton County maintains a [list of hazardous waste drop-off points](#), some of which are located in surrounding counties. Private businesses such as hardware stores frequently participate in certain types of hazardous household waste collection.

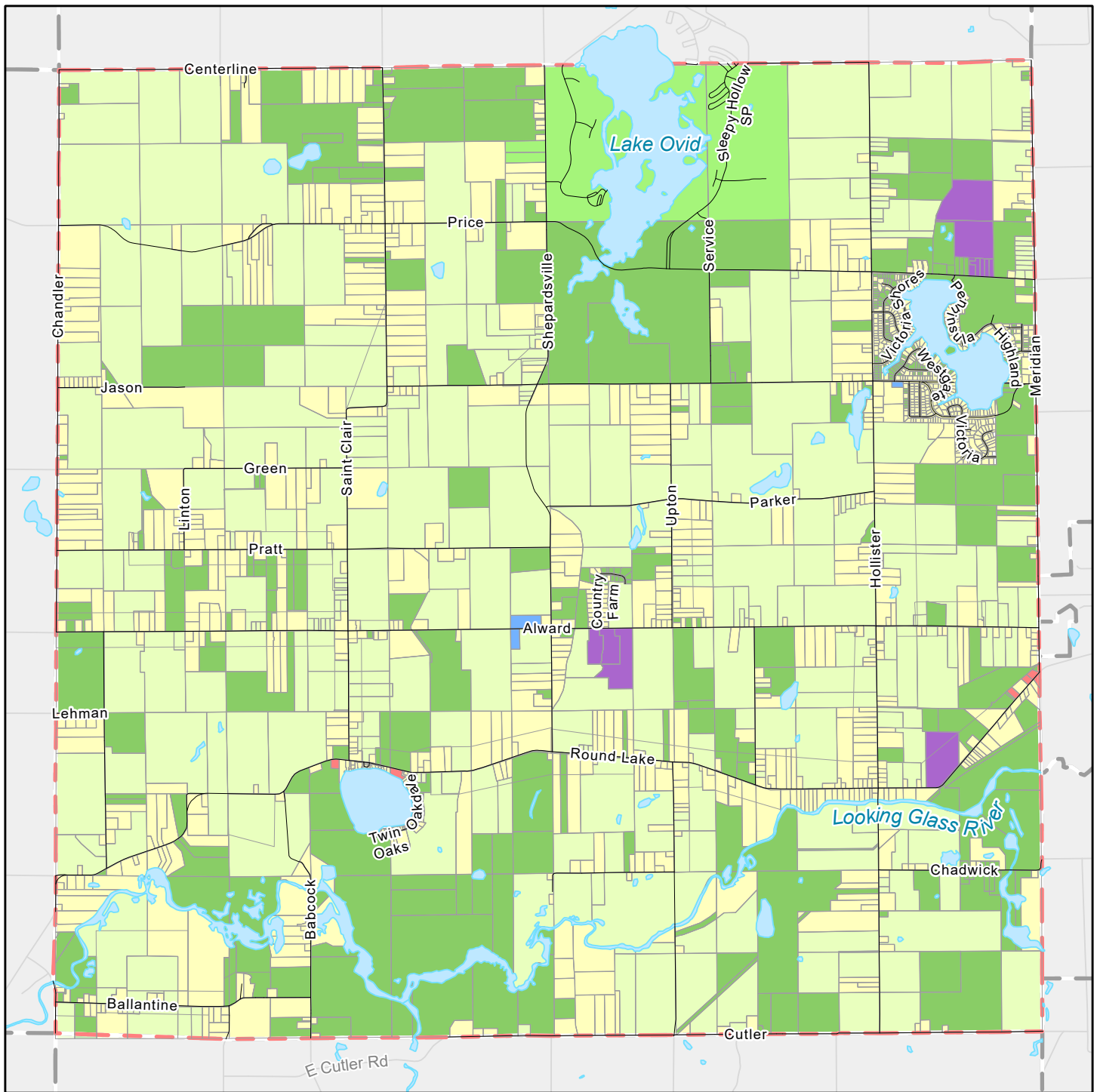
EXISTING LAND USE

Knowledge of current land uses allows the township to consider the compatibility of new land uses and is a valuable tool when considering the day-to-day challenges associated with land management and the delivery of key public services. **The existing land use survey provides an inventory of land uses within the community** and is a key source of background information for developing the master plan.

Most of the township's land is classified as agricultural. While approximately 1/3 of the township's population lives around Lake Victoria, Round Lake also has residential neighborhoods surrounding it. The remaining areas of the township are characterized by sparse residential population set within agricultural and naturally preserved land.

Existing land uses are mapped on the following page.





Existing Land Use

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

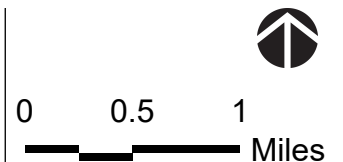
November 2, 2021

LEGEND

- Victor Township Boundary
- Roads
- Bodies of Water

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Residential
- Recreational
- Woodlands



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Township 2020. McKenna 2020.

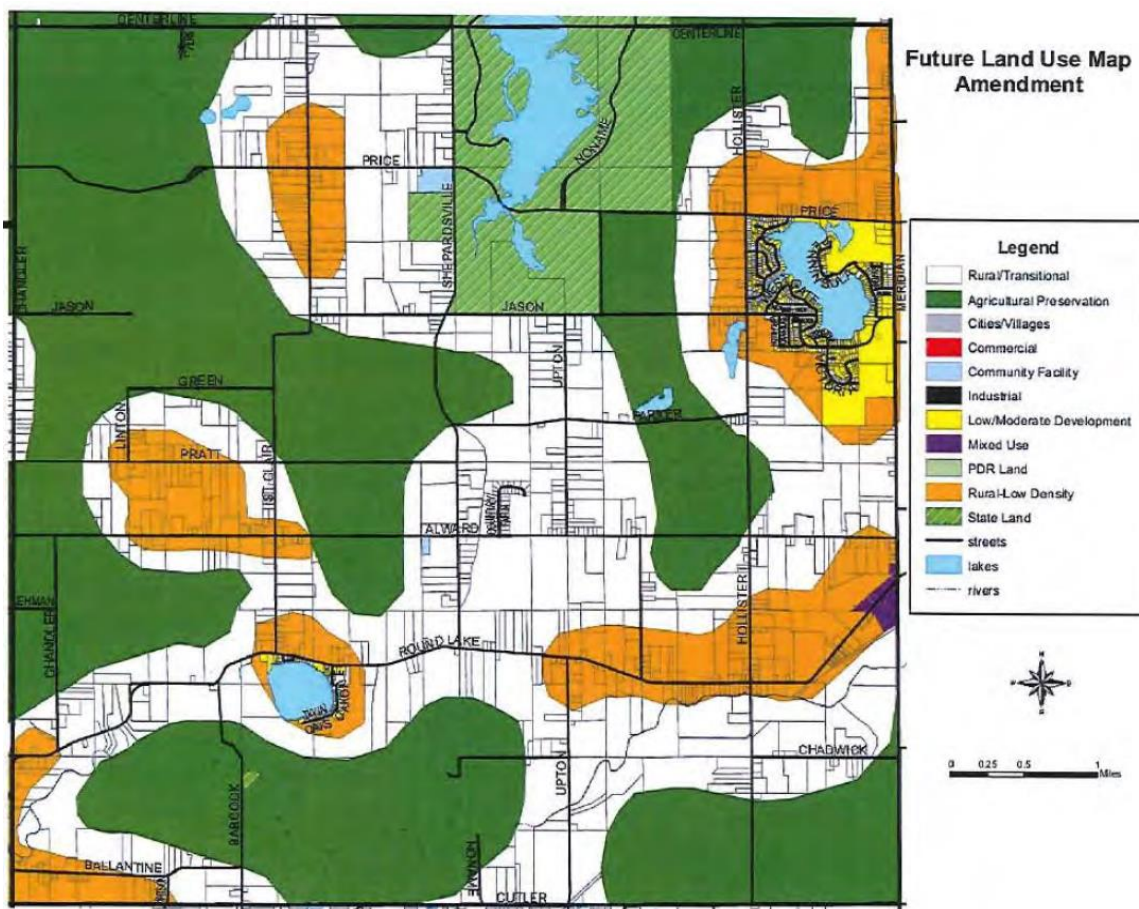
FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND ZONING PLAN

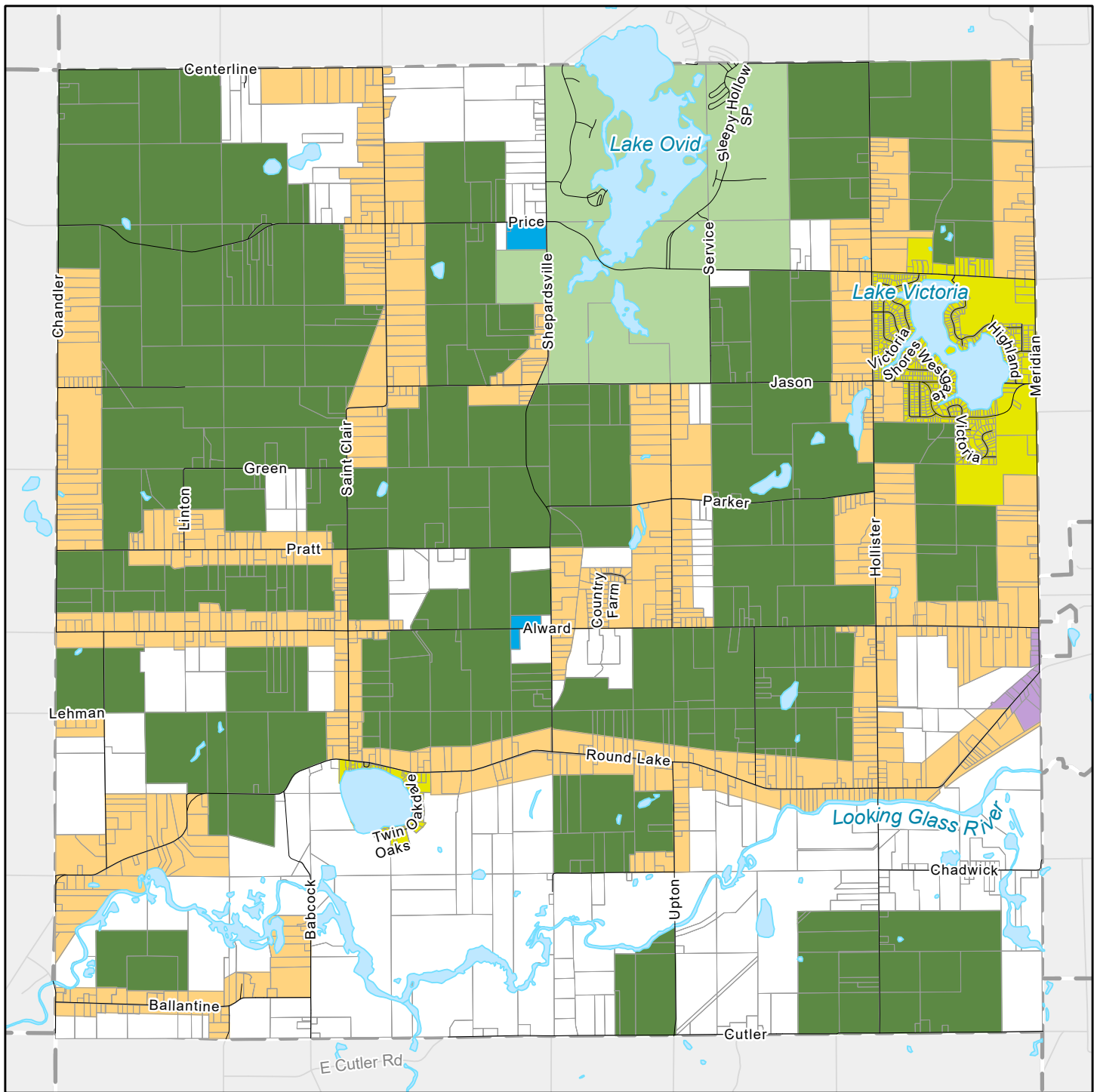
Victor Township does not have local zoning but instead relies on the [Clinton County Zoning Ordinances](#), administered by the Clinton County's Planning Commission and staff. However, the inclusion of a future land use map and zoning plan is still a key feature of the master plan.

The map and text below and on the following pages are more specific and detailed than the county master plan, while remaining consistent with that plan's overall vision (including using the same categories).

The future land use map is a policy illustration from the Victor Township Planning Commission to the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) regarding future zoning changes, investments in public improvements, and future land use concepts.

Below is a portion of the county's future land use map showing Victor Township. The Victor Township future land use map is on the following page.





Future Land Use

Victor Township, Clinton County, MI

October 29, 2020

LEGEND

- State-Owned Lands
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Low-Density Residential
- Moderate Density Residential
- Rural Transitional
- Mixed Use
- Community Facilities
- Bodies of Water



0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Victor Township 2020. McKenna 2020.



The township's master plan follows the general future land use categories designated by Clinton County during its 2016 [Comprehensive Plan Update](#). The categories, discussed in the following sections and indicated on the future land use map, are described below.

Agricultural Preservation

Agricultural preservation designated areas are prime agricultural lands used for production agriculture, small farms, low-density (very large lot) residential, agriculture-related businesses, and industry in order to conserve farming resource lands of long-term commercial significance for Victor Township constituents. Local regulations should not interfere with agricultural preservation lands abiding by Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs). Land use and public policy decisions should support the enhancement and growth of agriculture-related commerce.

Rural/Transitional

Lands designated rural/transitional include sparsely developed areas in the township where there are occasional low-density residential land uses following county roads but land is generally not suitable for most agricultural purposes due to soil type, flooding, topography, vegetation, and other reasons. This land use designation transitions between agricultural preservation lands, comprised of prime farmland, and low-density rural residential areas. The minimum parcel size in rural/transitional designated areas is five acres.

Rural Low-Density

The rural low-density residential land use designation includes residential areas with existing low-density residential developments. These areas are characterized by residential developments along roads, rural neighborhood subdivisions, and other developments between one and three units per acre. These areas allow smaller parcel sizes while maintaining a rural atmosphere.

Moderate-Density Residential

The moderate-density residential land use designation includes areas that have more than one dwelling unit per acre and could likely be serviced by public water and/or sewer utilities. Minimum lot sizes in the moderate-density residential designation are up to five units per acre, if water and sewer utilities are available. Moderate-density residential development patterns are prevalent around existing neighborhoods adjacent to Lake Victoria and Round Lake.

Mixed-Use

The mixed-use land use designation encourages a mixture of compatible land uses to provide employment, commercial activity, and recreation opportunities. Developments in the mixed-use land designation should match adjacent development patterns and should only be permitted where integrated and harmonious with neighbors.

Community Facilities

The community facilities land use designation identifies existing public or quasi-public facilities like Victor Township Hall, places of worship, and the three cemeteries within the township.

State Land

The state land designation includes land owned by the State of Michigan as open space or recreation areas. Many state-owned lands preserve valuable natural wildlife habitats and water resources. [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#) contains almost two square miles of Victor Township and is a valuable natural and economic resource in the community.

Action Step: Zoning Plan

The following table represents the Clinton County zoning districts that would appropriately implement the vision of the future land use categories as previously described above. Some districts may be appropriate in more than one future land use category. Victor Township strongly urges the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) to review rezoning requests against this table to determine whether the requested zoning district is supported by this plan. **Rezoning requests that are not consistent with this table are not supported by Victor Township.**

Future Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
Agricultural Preservation	A-1 Agricultural and Open Space
	A-2 General Agricultural
Rural/Transitional	A-3 Agricultural/Residential Transition District RR Rural Residential District
Rural Low-Density	RR Rural Residential District R-1 Single Family Residential
Medium-Density Residential	R-1 Single Family Residential R-2 Single Family Residential
Mixed-Use	C-1 Local Commercial C-2 General Commercial RO Research/Office I-1 Light Industrial MF Multiple Family Residential
Community Facilities	<i>The least intensive zoning district that allows the desired community facility.</i>
State Land	A-1 Agricultural and Open Space

Respond to Changing Market Trends



Natural beauty never goes out of style, but Victor Township has still had to redefine itself several times over the course of its nearly 180-year history. Today, Victor Township largely serves as a bedroom community for larger job centers, offering a rural lifestyle within commuting distance of metropolitan Lansing and other cities.

However, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, that bedroom community role is changing, with remote work suddenly popularized and the need for commuting reduced. That may increase the demand for housing within Victor Township – which could bring development pressure and make natural preservation more difficult.

This chapter contains data and context to allow the township to understand its place in the economic ecosystem of Mid-Michigan. The Victor Township Planning Commission and Victor Township Board of Trustees will use this section to ensure informed decision making regarding economic priorities.

Township History

The first European settler in Victor Township was Welcome J. Partello, who came during the **summer of 1836** and began clearing land in the southwest corner of section 31. Around this time, Clinton County was organized as one township named DeWitt. Partello became the first Township Supervisor. He also was the father of the first recorded child born in Victor Township after the organization of Clinton County, DeWitt Partello.

When DeWitt Township was broken up in 1843, the present townships of Victor and Bath were combined and named Owosso (not to be confused with the City of Owosso in Shiawassee County, which was not incorporated until 1859). **Victor's first township meeting was held on April 15, 1843.**

In the 1920s, the Round Lake Casino (known for a part of its existence as "Club Roma") was built and became a hub of recreational activity. The casino began a "Park Plan" for public dancing. It underwent renovations in 1935 and added boat rentals, an ice cream parlor, picnic areas, swimming, and dancing. Today, the casino is long gone, but Lakeview Banquet and Event Center still offers opportunities for events on Round Lake.

[Sleepy Hollow State Park](#) located on Lake Ovid in Victor (and Ovid) Townships opened in 1977. [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#) was part of the Department of Natural Resources plan to provide water-oriented recreation to regions of the state without Great Lakes access.

GOAL 1: ENSURE THE TOWNSHIP REMAINS A DESIRABLE PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE

To fulfill this goal, the township needs an understanding of the type of residents that Victor Township attracts. Below is a brief demographic profile of the township, as well as an analysis of the township's housing market.

Population

Population growth has been slow in Victor Township – just three residents in the past decade, according to the 2020 US Census headcount. Slow population growth is **not necessarily a bad thing** for a community that wants to preserve its rural character. Slow growth means less intense development pressure.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the trend of increased remote work are not yet present in this data.

Population Comparisons Table

	2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
Victor Township	3,460	3,463	+0.0%
City of St. Johns	7,865	7,698	-0.2%
Clinton County	75,382	79,128	+4.9%

Source: U.S. Census (2010 and 2020)

Age

The median age of Victor Township residents is estimated at 45.2 years. This indicates that Victor Township is attractive to an older demographic that prefers a rural lifestyle and can afford a larger house and acreage.

Township leaders should keep a watchful eye on age trends. Most likely, a new generation of families will be interested in the township's large lots and rural vistas, keeping the median age in the mid-40s. However, if the median age starts to creep up, that could indicate some weakness in demand from the next generation, and the township will need to take proactive steps to address that market reality.

Educational Attainment

The following table shows the educational attainment of township residents 25 years of age and older. About 92% of the township's population of those over the age of 25 have completed and graduated from high school or equivalent. This is reflective of the fact that high school graduation rates are significantly higher in more recent decades than in previous ones, and thus the percentage of the population with a high school diploma should continue to increase in the future.

About 34% of the township's population over 25 has completed a bachelor's degree or higher. That is a much higher rate than the State of Michigan overall (18%) and indicates the popularity of the township as a place to live among educated professionals.

Housing

It is important to understand housing in Victor Township because it serves as an indicator of the quality of life for residents living in the community. Furthermore, housing information also acts as an economic gauge for the community and surrounding area.

Age Characteristics Table

Age of Resident	Number	% of Population
Under 10 years of age	258	10.3%
10 to 19 years	378	10.8%
20 to 24 years	100	2.8%
25 to 34 years	620	14.8%
35 to 44 years	395	11.1%
45 to 64 years	1,052	30.1%
65 years +	706	20.1%
Total	3,509	100.0%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment Table

Education Level	% of Population
No High School Diploma	8.0%
High School or Equivalent Degree	24.1%
Some college, no degree	25.2%
Associate degree	8.7%
Bachelor's degree	24.2%
Graduate or professional degree	9.8%
Total	100.0%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Profile Table

	2010	2019	% Change:
Number of Housing Units	1339	1370	0.02%
Number of Households	1282	1309	0.02%
Average Household Size	2.7	2.66	-0.015%
Number of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	93%	94%	1.08%
Total Occupied Housing Units	1282	1309	0.02%
Median Housing Value in 2019 Dollars	\$209,211	\$172,242	-17.67%
Median Gross Rent in 2019 Dollars	\$1,209	\$1,381.71	14%
Median Monthly Housing Costs in 2019 Dollars	\$1,384.67	\$1,157.81	-16.40%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

While U.S. Census Bureau data is valuable for showing broad, long-term trends, it does not capture the ever-changing housing market of the community. Below, January 2021 data from Rocket Mortgage shows the state of the housing market around the time of plan adoption for Victor Township, Clinton County, and, for comparison's sake, Shiawassee and Ingham Counties.

Housing Information for Victor Township and Surrounding Region – Rocket Mortgage

	Victor Township	Clinton County	Shiawassee County	Ingham County
Median Home Price (Currently Listed Homes)	\$250,000	\$231,000	\$135,000	\$147,000
Change in Median Home Price 2019-2021				
Overall	+29.9%	+5.5%	+5.3%	+8.9%
1-2 Bedroom Homes	+14.3%	-0.3%	+23.7%	+8.0%
3 Bedroom Homes	+15.0%	+7.4%	0.0%	+7.5%
4 Bedroom Homes	+53.3%	+5.3%	+13.5%	+8.3%
5 Bedroom Homes	-29.8%	+11.9%	+11.7%	+9.8%

Source: 2021 Rocket Mortgage

Growth in the Victor Township housing market outpaced much of the region in 2020, especially for larger homes. While the township's attractiveness as a place to live is one factor, another factor may be the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the demand for rural living and larger homes. However, Victor Township is not as well-positioned to benefit from that trend as it could be, due to the poor internet connectivity in many parts of the township.

Commuting and Remote Work

An indication of the township's economic position, relative to the surrounding region, can be illustrated in travel time to work for residents. The data clearly shows that Victor Township is a bedroom community for Greater Lansing. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, **nearly 70% of residents commute between 20 and 40 minutes** to get to work. In that amount of time, a commuter can reach job locations throughout Greater Lansing, including not only downtown Lansing and East Lansing, but also outlying communities such as Grand Ledge or Mason.

A further 20% of commuters travel under 20 minutes to communities such as St. Johns, Laingsburg, and DeWitt – **but only 5% travel under 10 minutes, due to the small number of jobs in Victor Township itself**. Only around 10% of commuters travel further – to Flint, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, Oakland County, or other communities.

Commuting patterns may shift (or have already shifted) due to increased remote work during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Upwork Future of the Workforce Report, released in late 2020, employers project **an 87% increase in remote working hours in 2021 and the years following, compared to 2019**. While relatively few jobs will be fully remote, many jobs will allow flexibility with regard to required days in the office.

The resulting reduction in commuting will make communities like Victor Township more desirable for housing. While this is generally a positive thing – it will increase home values (and thus tax revenue) in the township – it may also come with downsides, like increased development pressure. At the time of this plan, the full impact of the remote work trend was not yet clear. Township leaders should monitor the market closely and be prepared to take proactive action to maintain high quality of life and rural character.

Action Items: Community Desirability

- 1. Understand changing markets in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the potential for workers to seek out naturally beautiful places like Victor Township for housing while only commuting occasionally to major job centers.** With limited data on this emerging trend, township leaders will need to monitor the market, and work closely with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#), to address any increase in development pressure while protecting rural character.
- 2. Protect Victor Township's natural beauty through effective land use controls in partnership with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#).** The future land use map and zoning plan in this master plan should guide land use decisions in the township.
- 3. Leverage and expand recreational opportunities centered around the township's natural features.** The township will seek grant opportunities and other partnerships with [MDNR](#) to ensure both [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#) and the township's recreational facilities are high quality and meet the desires of residents.
- 4. Work with Clinton County to ensure adequate blight enforcement within the township.** The township should review the capacity of the county to conduct enforcement, and, if it determines that the county does not have the capacity to give the township a sufficient level of service, the township should look into hiring a part-time code enforcement officer. Sharing an officer with a nearby community is an option, as is hiring a private company to provide an officer part time.
- 5. Explore creative options to streamline blight reporting, such as creating a reporting portal on the township website.** Township leaders should coordinate with Clinton County on the logistics of setting up improved blight reporting capacity, including the use of technology.
- 6. Ask township residents how the township can provide or improve the services they need.** The township should conduct frequent and robust community outreach, even when not undergoing a planning process.

GOAL 2: PROMOTE A HEALTHY BUSINESS CLIMATE IN THE TOWNSHIP

Victor Township is not a major business or employment center. However, there are businesses within the township boundaries, and the township will seek to support them by promoting a business-friendly environment.

As noted above, very few residents (under 5%) work at businesses within the township, and the township's unemployment rate is very low (just 1.9% per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). That means businesses must find workers outside the community.

The township also has a high median income - \$84,559 in 2019, well over the national median (which is approximately \$69,000). As an affluent bedroom community, the township could be positioned to attract boutiques and restaurants that cater to a luxury audience. But with other development pressure, that poses a risk to rural character.

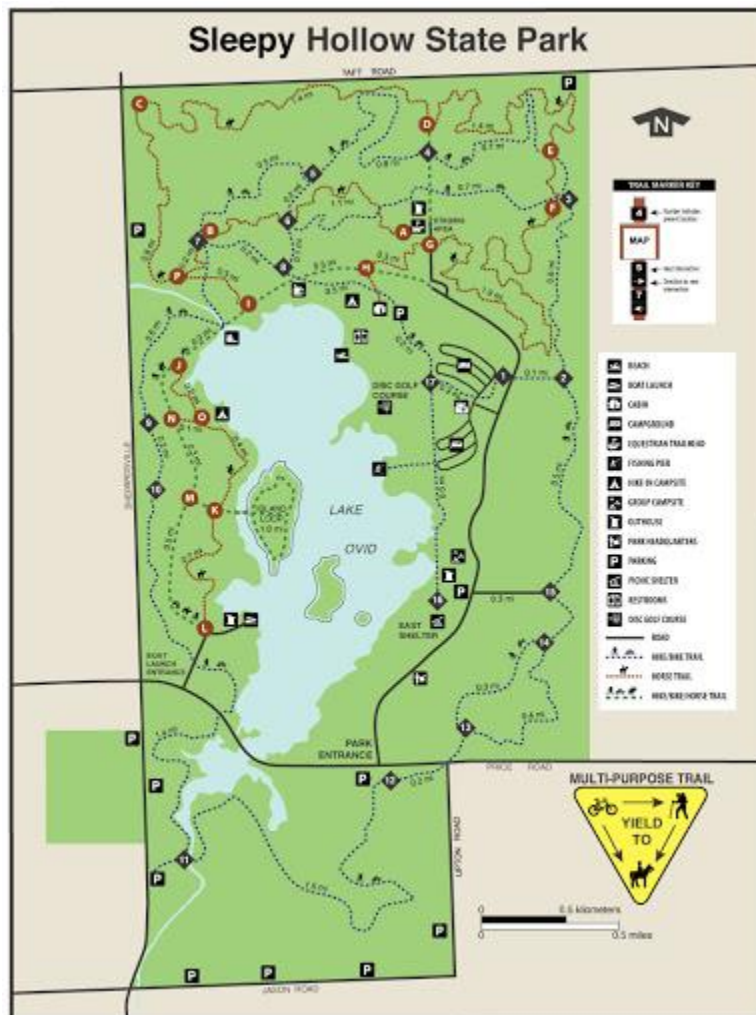
Action Steps: Business Climate

- 1. Respond to the post-COVID-19 demand for increased remote work by working to improve the township's communications infrastructure and promoting high quality housing stock.** The township should seek out existing programs, like Michigan Moonshot, advocate for increased broadband funding to its state and federal representatives, and be vigilant for new grant programs arising out of the current momentum for public broadband investment in both Lansing and Washington, D.C.
- 2. Determine appropriate places within the township for new and expanded businesses. Work with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) to develop and enforce zoning regulations to contain business within these appropriate places, while supporting the businesses themselves as they grow.** The future land use map designates a mixed-use area along Round Lake Road near Meridian Road (on the outskirts of Laingsburg), where several businesses are already located. This is the township's designated business growth area.
- 3. Operate an efficient and business-friendly township government.** The township should continue its practice of open and transparent government, including the use of technology to communicate with business owners.

GOAL 3: INVEST IN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS

Recreational amenities are a key factor in quality of life. Residents are attracted to communities where they can exercise, participate in group activities, and enjoy natural beauty and outdoor spaces.

Victor Township is home to much of [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#), a regional destination for camping, fishing, hiking, and biking, among other activities. The park attracts over 300,000 visitors per year. The proximity of the state park is an asset for the community, and partnerships between the township and [MDNR](#) could make it even more of a destination.



The township also operates a park surrounding the township hall, featuring soccer fields, playground, pavilions, and basketball courts.

But while the township has amenities, **fewer than 41% of survey respondents noted “recreation opportunities” as a positive aspect of living in Victor Township.** That response indicates that expanding and improving recreational amenities should be a priority.

Action Steps: Recreation

1. **Partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on programming at [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#).** The park's natural beauty attracts several hundred thousand visitors per year. That number could increase through events, new infrastructure (such as bike trails as envisioned in the [Clinton County Non-Motorized Plan](#)), or new amenities within the park.
2. **Engage with the community to determine the amenities that should be available at Victor Township Hall Park.** Survey respondents were generally positive about the amenities currently available at the township hall, but new amenities and facilities would be welcomed by residents. During the parks and recreation planning process, which should occur regularly on a five-year cycle, township leaders should be proactive in determining what amenities residents want and need.
3. **Seek out opportunities for additional township park space, as funds and sites become available.** With 36 square miles and nearly 3,500 residents, the township could support additional park space.
4. **Continue pursuing recreation development grant resources.** The township should always maintain an up-to-date approved parks and recreation plan on file with [MDNR](#), in order to maintain eligibility for state-level grant funding.
5. **Complement the Clinton County parks system and programming.** Clinton County operates two parks – [Motz County Park](#) and [Clinton Lakes County Park](#). The parks are adjacent to each other north of St. Johns, a 20 minute drive for most residents of Victor Township. Working together, the county and township may find opportunities to partner to increase recreational opportunities in the eastern part of the county.

Maintain Fiscal Responsibility



While Victor Township has numerous priorities to increase quality of life in the community, it must “live within its means.” With very little commercial or industrial property, and a high rate of homeownership (95% of residential properties are owner-occupied, according to census data), the township’s tax base comes almost entirely from residents.

Therefore, township leaders must be careful stewards of taxpayer funds and ensure that community money is used efficiently and responsibly for the benefit of the residents.

GOAL 1: ENSURE ALL RESIDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY IN TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

The township is committed to open and transparent government, and it will take the following **action steps** to ensure that all residents can participate and have their voices heard:

1. **Regularly update the township’s website with events and information about township services.** The township has a modern and easy-to-use [website](#) that will be continually updated so residents can stay informed.
2. **Continue to provide remote public access to township meetings.** Township meetings were held on remote video call platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. While in-person meetings will be the norm going forward (and board and commission

members are generally required to participate in person), the technology is now available for the township to allow the option for most residents to participate in meetings from home.

GOAL 2: CONTINUE TO ENHANCE VICTOR TOWNSHIP HALL AS A COMMUNITY LANDMARK AND MEETING PLACE

Victor Township Hall is one of Victor Township's gems and a popular gathering place for residents. Township leaders will undertake the following **action steps** to ensure the township hall remains popular and fiscally sustainable.

1. **Maintain the township hall all kitchen to ensure a high-quality experience for renters.** The township should ensure that the facilities at the township hall are well-maintained and up-to-date to continue to attract events and meetings.
2. **Continue to market the township hall as a popular event space for the township and surrounding areas.** The township hall facilities (indoor and outdoor) offer opportunities for gathering, community events, and recreation, and could be further marketed to the broader community to increase usage.
3. **Grow partnerships with senior and youth organizations for regular township hall use.** The township hall is a popular event facility, but could be used even more. Township leaders should actively recruit community groups to hold events at the facility.

GOAL 3: MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT EMERGENCY SERVICES

Township residents rely on their local government to protect their life, health, safety, and welfare through effective emergency services. Providing these services effectively in a rural community requires creative solutions. Township leaders will undertake the following **action steps** to ensure effective emergency services for all residents.

1. **Focus new economic development to areas easily accessible by emergency services.** New development must not strain emergency services resources. Growth should only occur if it can be adequately served.
2. **Regularly evaluate emergency medical services options.** The township should remain aware of its options to ensure residents receive the best possible EMS service.
3. **Promote easily identifiable address plates for resident and property owners.** This priority could be combined with the township's blight enforcement priorities. The township could also consider selling easily identifiable address plates as a fundraiser.
4. **Ensure that all public roadways are in sufficient condition and designed appropriately to ensure access by emergency vehicles.** The township should leverage its road millage funds to upgrade roads where there are concerns about emergency vehicle access.
5. **Work with property owners along private drives to encourage sufficient maintenance for emergency vehicle accessibility while maintaining private control.** The Planning Commission should also be regularly in touch with the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) regarding the design of private roads and whether land use approvals should be contingent on private road improvements.

Adapt to Technological Advances



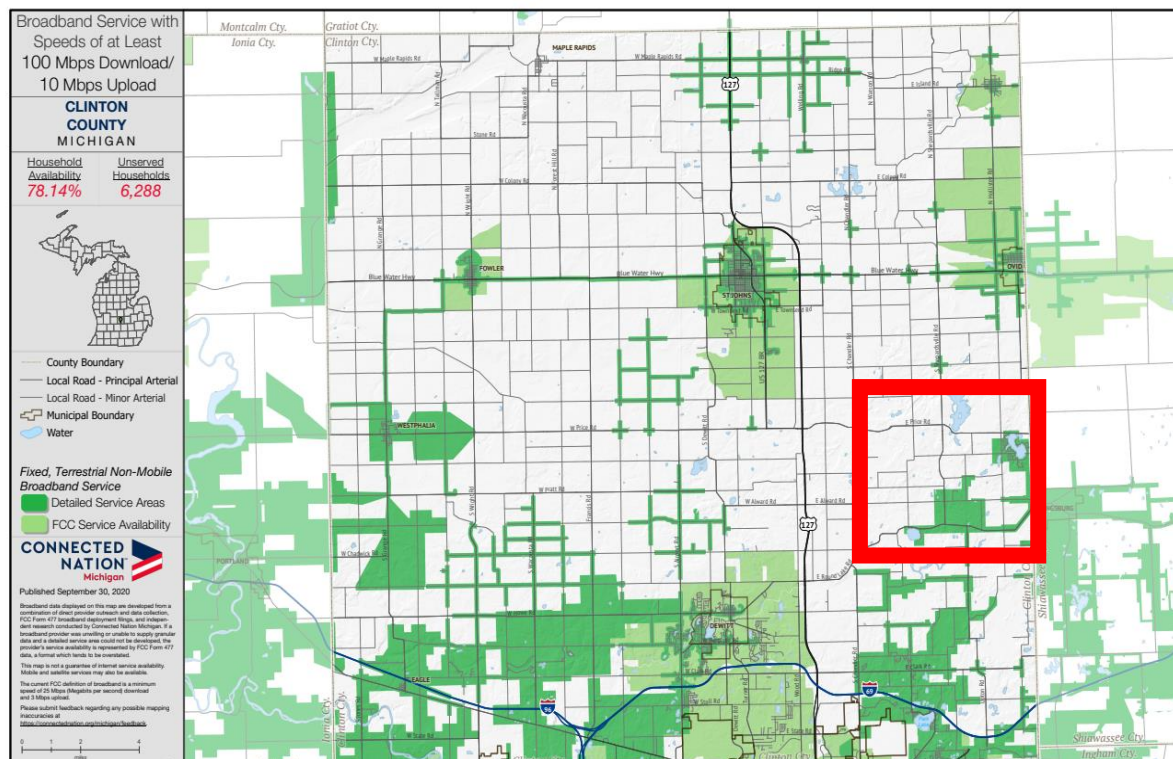
Communications technology has improved dramatically over the course of the early 21st century. Wireless communications have begotten smart phones that can access the internet from anywhere, and broadband connections can bring video communications, streaming entertainment, and business-quality download speeds to homes.

But all of that comes with a need for infrastructure, and rural communities like Victor Township have been left behind by the buildout. **The township must be proactive to attract its share of wireless and broadband infrastructure** to ensure economic competitiveness and high quality of life for its residents.

GOAL 1: IMPROVE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP

Broadband internet, with its fast download speeds and consistent connectivity, helps connect residents and businesses to the online world. As more and more economic and social activity moves online (especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic), communities without connectivity are placed at a disadvantage.

As shown on the map below from Connected Nation, **Victor Township (shown in the square) is underserved by broadband internet.** There is a portion of the center of the Township, roughly between Round Lake, Shepardsville, Alward, and Upton Roads, that is served, and there is some service near Lake Victoria. Other than that, service is limited.



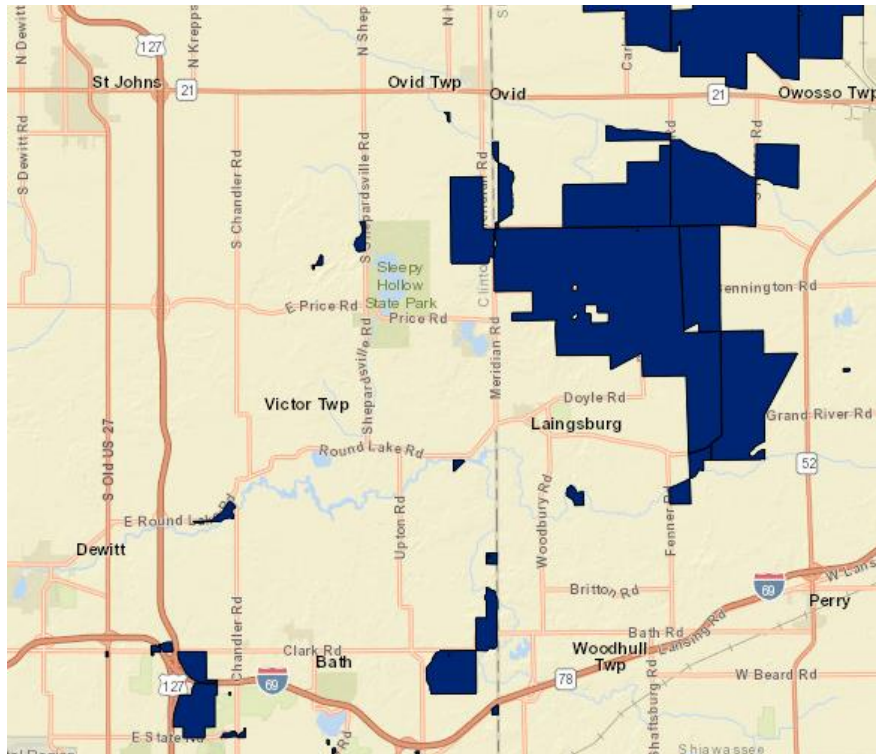
Source: Connected Nation

A combination of geography and economics are likely responsible for poor broadband coverage in the township. The township is a low-density, rural community, making private broadband providers unlikely to invest in infrastructure. But it is also not a low-income community and is located near suburban areas (such as DeWitt Township and Bath Township) that have good connectivity. Clinton County as a whole has broadband available in over 78% of households. These factors combined make the township a less likely candidate for grant programs.

However, improvements are being made. Through the [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund grant](#) program, additional broadband infrastructure is being built in and around Laingsburg. As shown on the map on the following page, the additional service area (in blue) will reach the northeast corner of Victor Township and may allow service connections to [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#).

Additional expansions of that infrastructure may be possible in the future. The [Michigan Moonshot](#) program “aims to leverage public and private partnerships to connect everyone in rural Michigan, regardless of geography.” The program is part of the Merit Network, which is a collaboration between Michigan’s public universities. Program leaders act as a catalyst by fostering public-private partnerships to expand broadband infrastructure to underserved areas.

Meanwhile, there is momentum at both the state and federal levels to invest public funds in expanding broadband technology. While those programs are still working their way through the legislative process, there may be additional opportunities (and funding) for Victor Township to improve its broadband connectivity.



Source: Federal Communications Commission

Action Steps: Broadband

1. **Plan for broadband service connectivity and work with providers to expand service in the community.** The township must be proactive. As demonstrated by Connected Nation, neither industry nor government decision makers will focus on the needs of Victor Township unless the community advocates for itself.
2. **Seek grant opportunities or other funding sources to ensure the economic viability of broadband expansions in the community.** Specifically, seek out the FCC Rural Opportunity Fund, the Michigan Moonshot program, and any new state or federal programs.
3. **Follow broadband-related developments at the state and federal levels to understand new programs as they are created and position the township to be among the first to receive competitive grant funding.** There is legislative

momentum in both Lansing and Washington, D.C. for public broadband investment. Township leaders should work with their state and federal representatives to support programs that would benefit Victor Township.

- 4. Focus economic development to areas with the best broadband/internet access.** As with other forms of infrastructure, development should occur only where it can be supported effectively.

GOAL 2: IMPROVE WIRELESS SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP

Wireless voice and data service is also an important part of the modern economy and lifestyle. But Victor Township lacks adequate service in many parts of the township. While wireless providers consider detailed coverage data proprietary, the communications research company AntennaSearch reports no wireless communications transmitters within two miles of the Township Hall and no wireless communications transmitters within two miles of [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#). The lack of service at the state park is particularly concerning for public safety reasons, but efforts are underway to build a wireless transmission facility to serve the park.

Improved wireless service may come to the township in the form of “small cell” technology. Small cells, which are generally located on poles of 40 feet or lower, are less expensive to install and less of an aesthetic blight on the landscape than traditional cell towers (which are usually 150-200 feet tall). The State of Michigan has already enacted legislation (including an amendment to the Zoning Enabling Act) to speed the roll out of small cells, which may hasten their installation in Victor Township and similar communities.

Action Steps: Wireless

- 1. Plan for improved wireless service, and work with providers to expand service in the community. Specifically, aim to provide 5G wireless service throughout the community.** The township must be proactive to attract “small cells” and other infrastructure improvements to expand high-quality wireless coverage.
- 2. Focus development to areas with the best wireless service.** As with other forms of infrastructure, development should occur only where it can be supported effectively.
- 3. Support the construction of wireless telecommunications infrastructure in parts of the township that are underserved, including in and around [Sleepy Hollow State Park](#).** The township should advocate that the [Clinton County Planning Commission](#) examine land use controls and ensure that zoning regulations are not slowing the buildout of wireless communications infrastructure in underserved areas.
- 4. Partner with private landowners, especially those with tall structures like silos, to locate telecommunications infrastructure in strategic locations.** Local and private partners can be effective in helping the township achieve its goals.

Conclusion

The township recognizes **the possibility of change and the fluidity of this document**. This plan must be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that action steps are still viable and that the vision is still supported by the consensus of the community. As events alter conditions within the community or the needs of township residents change, various adjustments or additions will need to be made to the plan. It is not anticipated that the plan's major goals and objectives will require change, but rather, as the plan is interpreted and implemented, certain aspects will require periodic adjustment.

The Planning Commission shall review the document at least once every five years, as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, to ensure the plan continues to represent the goals and objectives of the township's residents. The plan will be updated or revised, as needed, in order to continue to provide a firm foundation for township policy.





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