

# NOTTAWA TOWNSHIP

## MASTER PLAN

### 2021



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# ADOPTED:

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This section gives a brief overview of the Master Plan and the process used to develop the plan.

## Purpose and Planning Process

The purpose of the Nottawa Township Master Plan is to provide guidelines for future development within the community while protecting the natural resources and the agricultural and rural character of the Township. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended, enables Nottawa Township to adopt, amend, and implement a master plan.

This plan examines current and pre-existing conditions in the Township. The current and pre-existing conditions are outlined in the demographic characteristics and economic data, as well as the analysis of natural resources and existing land uses. The background information is used to help develop the plan for future land uses in Nottawa Township. The plan reflects on those conditions and history and outlines the type, location, and scale of development desired by Township stakeholders.

Based on information gathered early in the process, it was determined that the Planning Commission envisions the community remaining predominantly agricultural and low-density residential for the foreseeable future. Through the planning process, the Planning Commission did express a desire for limited commercial development along M-86 and M-66. To ensure that the planning process was comprehensive, the Township developed goals and objectives. These goals and objectives, along with a series of maps including soils, existing land use, and zoning, provide the basis for the Future Land Use Plan.

The Master Plan was developed for the Nottawa Township Planning Commission by the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC). Generally, this plan looks at a twenty-year horizon, but it also provides a vision for the community long into the future. State enabling legislation requires reviews of this plan every five years, or sooner if warranted.

## Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this master plan is to guide Township officials and citizens when making land use decisions. This plan will serve as a signal of the Township's land use desires to officials, citizens, and land developers. To that end, a master plan is required when a Township has a zoning ordinance. The master plan is designed to inform the zoning scheme adopted and amended by a municipality.

## Nottawa Township History

By 1721, Native Americans from Wisconsin had migrated to the St. Joseph County area. England relinquished present Michigan to the United States in 1787 as part of the Northwest Territory. The area where Nottawa Township was established was the center of the Notawasepe Potawatamie Reservation founded in 1821. The Township's name was derived from Nottawa-seepe, meaning "a prairie by a river".

The first settlers of European descent arrived in 1829. In 1831 a petition was filed to create Nottawa Township and the village of Centreville was platted that same year. The St. Joseph River was the lifeline for supplies to the area in its early history. Navigable from its mouth in Benton Harbor to Constantine, goods were shipped by flat boats up the St. Joseph for overland distribution. Often those goods arrived via the Erie Canal to Buffalo and Great Lakes.

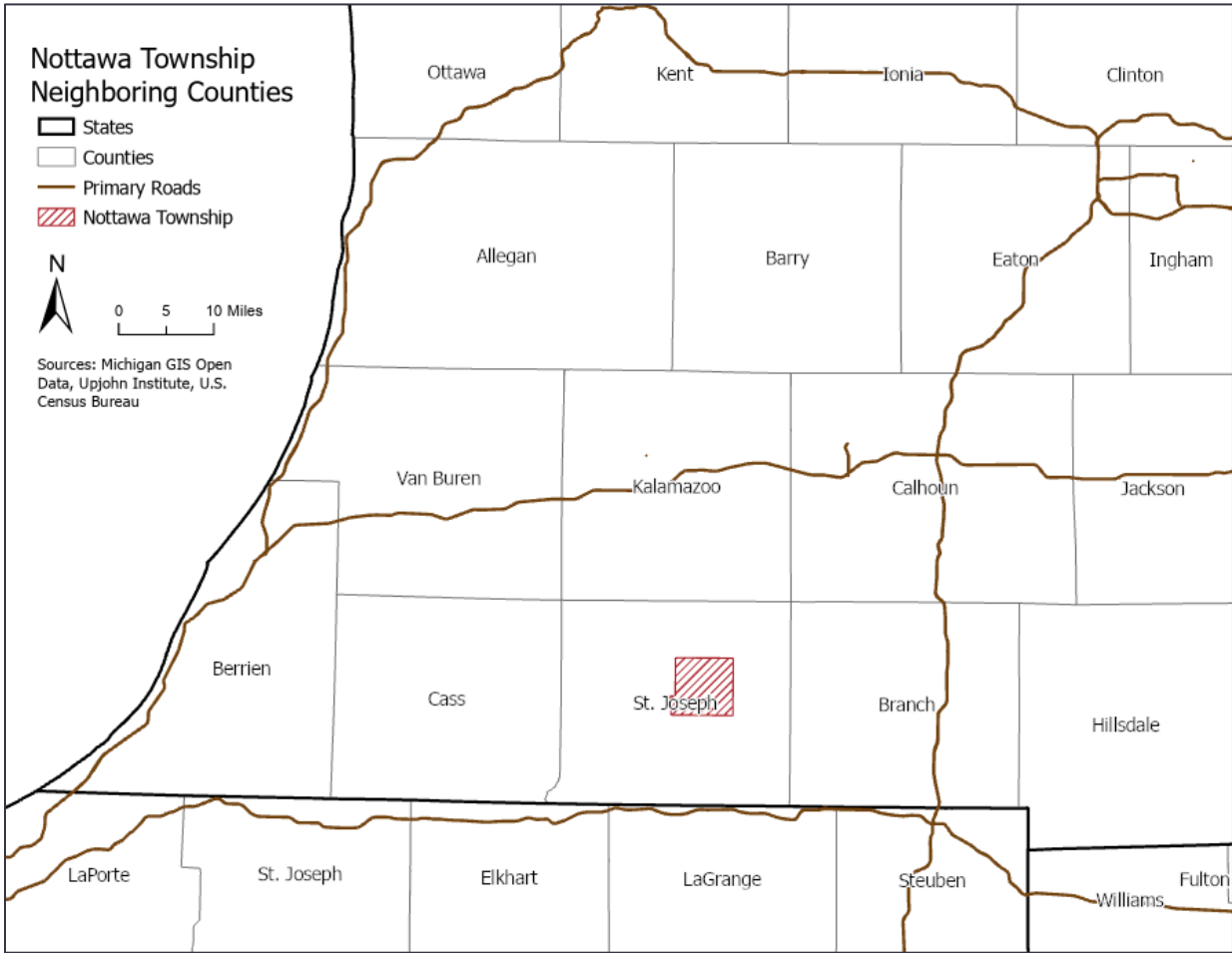
## Location and Regional Setting

Nottawa Township is located in the central portion of St. Joseph County, in the southwest region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Nottawa Township is located 27 miles southeast of Kalamazoo, 45 miles northeast of South Bend, 112 miles east of Chicago, and 125 west of Detroit. The Township is 37.6 square miles including one square mile of township area annexed into the Village of Centreville, the county seat of St. Joseph County.

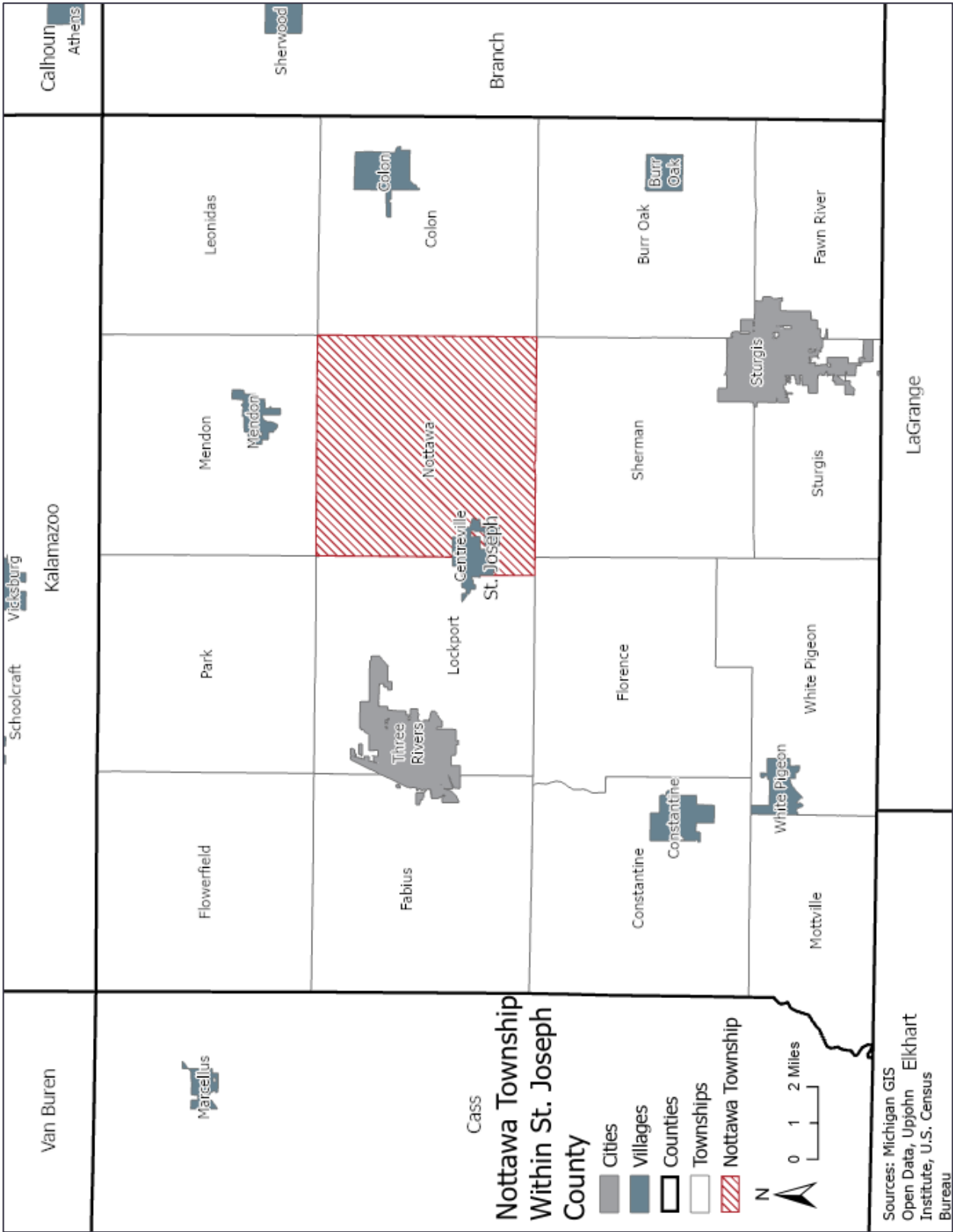
Nottawa Township is approximately 11 miles from both the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90) and US-131. The nearest access to I-69 is located 24 miles to the east of Nottawa Township in Coldwater. Some commercial and higher-density residential developments are located around the shores of Lake Templene, on the central southern edge of the Township, and along the shores of the St. Joseph River in the northwest quarter of the Township.

The Township is a mixture of large-scale farms with residential development scattered throughout the Township. Agriculture has shaped the Township's rural character, culture, and physical development over the last several decades, and this plan anticipates that it will continue to do so in the future. This plan and the Township wish to honor that heritage by preserving as much prime farmland as possible, while also allowing for appropriate development opportunities. To achieve these goals, the plan encourages new residential, commercial, and industrial developments to cluster with similar, existing land uses whenever possible, and to avoid encroaching upon lands currently used for agricultural purposes.

Map 1-1: Location and Regional Setting

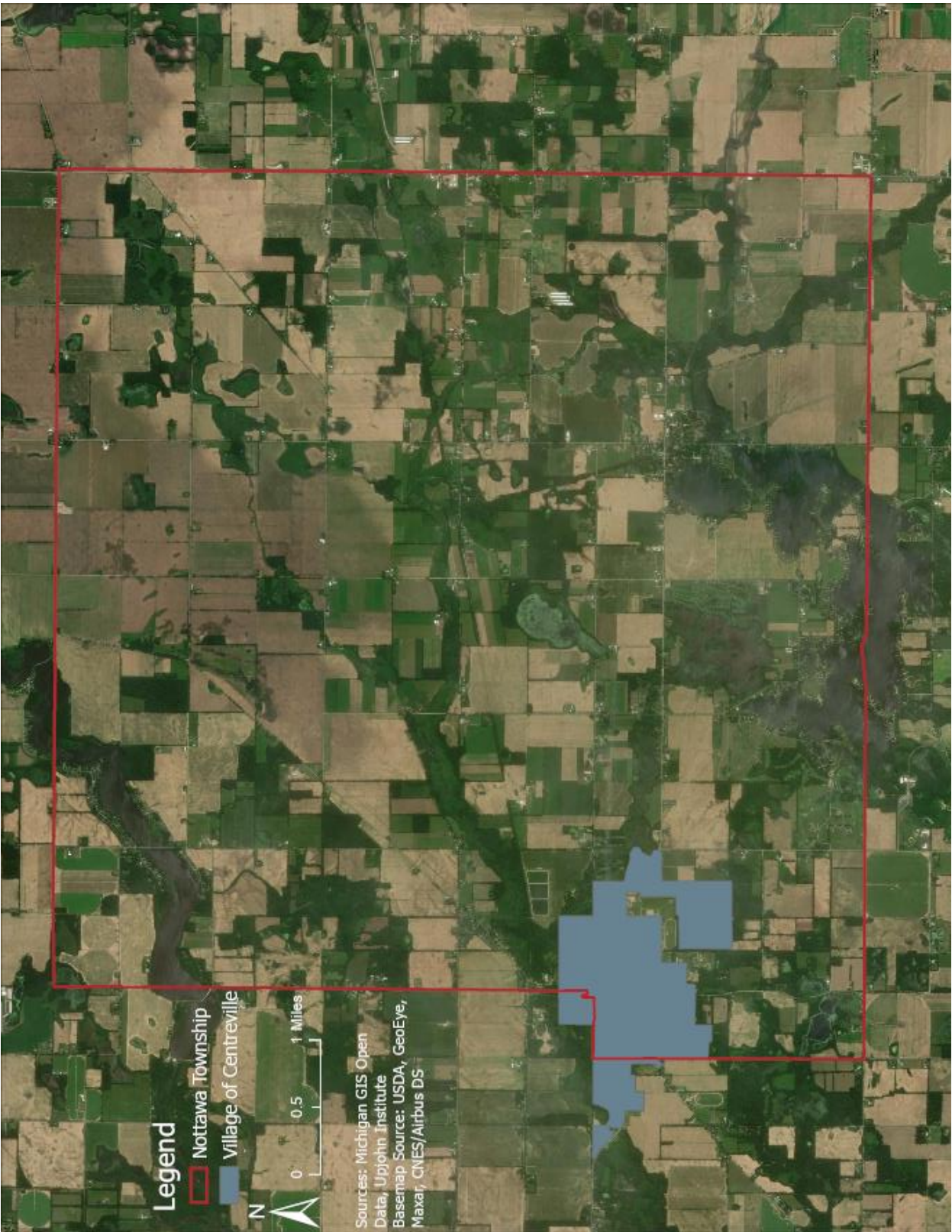


Map 1-2: Location and Regional Setting





**Map 1-3: Location and Regional Setting**  
**Aerial Photo of Nottawa Township, St. Joseph County, Michigan**



## CHAPTER 2: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter of the Master Plan outlines the goals for Nottawa Township and their related policies. Goals are an important way for the Township to articulate the long-term direction of the community. The goals should also reflect the vision of the Township Board, business owners, residents, and other interested parties regarding the future of the Township, and should shape the policies implemented by the Township. To this end, the following goals and objectives are achievable, relevant, and represent current community attitudes.

### Residential Development

- Goal 1: Enable existing residents to remain in their homes
  - Objective: Maintain the existing housing stock
    - Identify homes in disrepair
      - The Township could apply for grants or other funding sources to create a land bank or a home improvement revolving fund. The fund could acquire the homes and repair them; the sale of the home would recoup most, if not all expenses.
  - Objective: Assist residents with home maintenance to increase the desirability of the Township and help to increase property values
    - Educate existing homeowners and landlords on proper home maintenance
      - The Township should work with a local nonprofit organization to offer courses that teach homeowners basic maintenance skills. The Township government would need to apply for grants, recruit volunteers, coordinate and advertise these courses, perhaps in a periodic newsletter.
    - The Township should seek donations or create a fund for home maintenance materials, so that under-resourced residents can have what they need to keep up their homes.
    - The Township should work with a non-profit organization to create a tool lending program that would help residents maintain their homes
      - Develop and implement a program that would allow residents to borrow tools for home maintenance. These tools could include simple tools like shovels, rakes, and hammers, or more specialized tools like a roofing shovel, power tools, or a wet saw.
      - The tool lending program could be made available only to those residents who participate in the homeowners' basic maintenance courses. This would incentivize participation in the courses as well as appropriate use of tools.
    - Create an older resident assistance network to connect volunteers with those in need
      - Minimal time or cost devoted to the coordination. May need to find funds or donations for materials needed.



- Goal 2: While preserving the single-family character of Nottawa Township, increase the diversity of housing options found in the Township to accommodate the changing needs and preferences of residents.
  - Objective: Evaluate adjustments to zoning that may facilitate development of innovative and in-demand housing units, such as:
    - Accessory dwelling units/Mother-in-law units: A converted garage or space above a detached building can serve the needs of many families when they need to care for a loved one or generate additional income.
    - Tiny houses: Smaller houses that meet the cost needs of specific current or prospective residents.
    - Affordable housing
    - Senior living facilities
  - Objective: Encourage the development of cost-effective duplexes
    - Ensure the zoning code allows for the development of duplexes

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***According to US Census ACS estimates, Nottawa Township has 92.7% of its housing stock in either single family detached houses or mobile homes. The Township does not currently offer much diversity in housing types. Surveys conducted by the National Association of Realtors show a significant desire for a diversity in housing type. The Township survey for this plan indicated that residents would also like more affordable and senior living options.***

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- Goal 3: Provide for limited residential development in a manner that preserves the Township's rural character, quality of lake areas, and farms.
  - Objective: Promote clustered development with open space provisions
  - Objective: Promote a diversity of housing types in Goal 2
  - Objective: Increase the minimum lot size on lake-adjacent lots and in prime agricultural areas, while decreasing lot sizes elsewhere

### **Agricultural Development**

- Goal: Preserve, to the maximum extent possible, the Township's most productive agricultural areas and avoid conflicts between farm and non-farm uses.
  - Objective: Protect the most productive farmlands in the Township and take steps to encourage long-term commitments to agricultural activities in these identified areas.
    - Use soil maps found in Chapter 4 to identify prime agricultural lands.
    - Create zoning-based protections for prime agricultural areas.
    - When possible, use outside funding to purchase development rights.
  - Objective: Discourage residential land development activities in agricultural areas which would lead to land use conflicts or adversely affect farming operations and the economic viability of agricultural activity.
    - Only allow accessory residential uses in prime agriculture areas.
    - Maintain the minimum lot size in prime agriculture areas and review lot frontage requirements for applicability.
  - Objective: Encourage best practices for high intensity farming.
    - Ensure that potentially impacted farmers have the latest information on best practices.
    - Provide for agri-business type uses – clearly define these uses, provide limits and regulations to prevent nuisances.

- Determine if wind or solar facilities are appropriate for the Township. If they are, create rules and regulations, and identify acceptable locations for such facilities in the Township.

### Commercial Development

- Goal: Provide suitable areas for the orderly development of a variety of commercial and service activities to serve the needs of Township residents.
  - Objective: Encourage commercial and service facilities to locate in clustered developments where essential public services can be economically provided and traffic can be accommodated without increasing congestion.
    - Properties along M-66 and M-86 are the only appropriate areas at this time.
    - Refer to maps in Chapter 4 for traffic volumes
  - Objective: Encourage commercial development that serves the needs of Township residents.
  - Objective: Discourage commercial locations which could create land use conflicts with non-commercial/industrial areas.
    - Establish special use permit regulations for cottage industries.
    - Use zoning to ensure the peaceful coexistence of commercial, mixed use, special and other land uses along commercial corridors.

### Industrial Development

- Goal: Allow minimal industrial development if it meets the following criteria:
  - In locations with the following attributes:
    - Sites with direct access to major roadways without relying on residential access streets
    - Locations with minimal impacts upon adjacent land uses
    - Areas where essential public services can be provided
  - Operations that have minimal impact on adjacent landowners
    - Noise and light pollution minimized
    - Minimal traffic increases especially during evening and overnight hours
    - Limited scents and odors during normal conditions
  - Any negative impact on the community is offset by an equal or greater positive impact (jobs, tax base, etc.)

### Open Space and Recreation

- Goal: Provide adequate open space areas to meet the needs of the residents of the Township, and to preserve and enhance the Township's natural features, waterways, water bodies, and rural character.
  - Objective: Control lakeshore and stream bank development to ensure that development does not directly or indirectly destroy these areas
    - Examine and update development setback requirements for waterfront properties in the zoning code.
  - Objective: Encourage conservation and protection of natural, scenic, lake, wetland, and wooded areas for public enjoyment.
    - Coordinate and work with the County's trail managers.
    - Lease public access to Lake Templene.
  - Objective: Restrict floodplain development except for recreational purposes.
    - Create overlay districts that limit development.
    - For land division applications, prohibit the inclusion of areas subject to flooding in the minimum lot size requirement.

### Public Utilities

- Goal: Encourage the development of utilities to meet the needs and desires of current and future residents.
  - Objective: Monitor sewage, water distribution, and waste disposal needs of the Township.
    - Periodically review the sewage needs of houses around lakes and wetlands.
    - Ask residents to share water quality reports.
    - Identify the most appropriate funding streams (grants, loans, taxes, etc.) to invest in expanding residential sewer capacity, and work to gain residents' support for these investments.
    - Improve enforcement of dumping violations and engage with residents to increase use of dump passes.
    - Create an inventory of septic replacements by date and location
  - Objective: Encourage development of telecommunication facilities in the Township so that all who desire cellular or high-speed internet access can have it.
    - Conduct an assessment of cellular communication facilities and coverage.
    - Conduct an assessment of high-speed internet facilities and coverage.
    - Compel telecommunication providers to expand coverage to those in the Township that need or desire it.
    - Identify appropriate locations for cellular towers in the Township and use these to encourage providers to locate towers away from residential areas.
  - Objective: Allow the development of alternative energy systems
    - Provide for non-utility scale use of solar energy generators for individual residential and commercial properties.
    - Provide for non-utility scale use of wind energy generators for individual residential properties.
    - Provide for utility-scale solar energy systems in agricultural, commercial and industrial areas.
    - Provide for small-scale commercial wind energy systems in agricultural areas.

## CHAPTER 3: TOWNSHIP STATISTICS

### Population

The population of Nottawa Township saw major increases between 1960 and 2000 but has remained relatively stable since then. Between 1960 and 2000, the population of the Township nearly doubled. Since 2000, the population has decreased by 128 residents. This pattern of stagnation is fairly common among similarly situated townships, and is most likely due, in part, to limited employment growth and residential development in the area. Despite the recent decrease in population, the Township has fared better than the rest of St. Joseph County, which as a whole lost 2.5% of its population between 2000 and 2017 (US Census, American Community Survey).

**TABLE 3-1 Township Population Counts  
(1960-2017)**

Year	Count	Increase (decrease)	% Change
1960	1,193	---	---
1970	1,396	203	17.0
1980	2,222	826	59.2
1990	2,266	44	2.0
2000	3,999	1,733	76.5
2010	3,910	(-89)	-2.2
2017	3,871	(-39)	-0.9

Source: US Census ACS and Decennial estimates

This section of the Master Plan is an analysis of socioeconomic factors that define the character of Nottawa Township. The most important component in any community is the population, since their actions directly impact the character and future of the community. The diversity of backgrounds and similarities of residents gives a community its distinct and unique character and personality.

### Age Distribution

In addition to total population figures, analyzing the age distribution within a community is critical to understanding the needs of residents. The interests and demands of people living in a community can vary according to their age: a predominantly younger population has different attitudes and seeks different activities than an older population. These facts also help shape the Township's goals for future growth.

The U.S. Census estimates the median age of the population of Nottawa Township is 43.7 years, which is much higher than the median age of St. Joseph County (39.4), the State of Michigan (39.6), and the United States (37.8). The Township has a higher percentage of folks aged 55 to 84 than the County as a whole or the state. The most populous age group in the Township are residents aged 60-to-64 years old, making up 11.3% of the population.

**TABLE 3-2 Age Composition of Residents**

Total population	Twps 3,871	County 60,923	State 9,909,600
AGE	%	%	%
Under 5 years	5.6%	6.8%	5.8%
5 to 9 years	5.5%	6.8%	6.1%
10 to 14 years	6.6%	7.3%	6.5%
15 to 19 years	7.5%	6.8%	6.9%
20 to 24 years	6.2%	5.7%	7.3%
25 to 34 years	9.5%	11.9%	12.2%
35 to 44 years	10.2%	11.5%	12.0%
45 to 54 years	10.0%	13.3%	14.1%
55 to 59 years	5.2%	7.0%	7.3%
60 to 64 years	11.3%	6.7%	6.4%
65 to 74 years	8.8%	9.3%	8.8%
75 to 84 years	7.8%	5.1%	4.6%
85 years & over	1.7%	2.1%	2.1%

Source: US Census ACS 2013-2017 estimates



The US Census 2013-2017 American Community Survey estimates that more than one in six (18%) Township residents are 65 years old or older; another 16% of residents are between 55 and 64 years old. Both these proportions are higher than they were in 2000 and 2010. The Township is growing older and strategies are needed to help these residents age in place and remain Township residents. To ensure current population levels do not continue to decrease, the Township also needs strategies to attract younger residents. As remote work becomes more feasible due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the Township could see more people attracted by the area's rural character, but amenities like broadband will also be essential. Additionally, maintaining the homes occupied by older adults will ensure that quality houses are maintained not just for senior residents but also for the next generation.

**TABLE 3-3 Population Age Groups  
2000 to 2017**

	2000	2010	2017
Under 18	1,146	981	874
18-24	391	326	337
25-34	449	430	368
35-44	586	441	397
45-54	532	538	543
55-64	377	519	630
65 plus	518	623	712

Source: US Census ACS 2013-2017 estimates

## Educational Attainment

Another important characteristic of any population is the educational attainment of residents. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 28.0% of the Township's residents over the age of 25 years have obtained a college-level degree. 19.1% of residents have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. The Township has a similar level of educational attainment to the County as a whole, but lags far behind the state: 36.5% of Michigan residents have a college-level degree and 27.4% have at least a bachelor's degree.

**TABLE 3-4 - Educational Attainment  
By Percent of Population 25 years and over**

	Twp.	County	State
Population 25 years & over	2,660	40,651	6,682,881
Less than 9th grade	6.9%	5.6%	3.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	6.2%	8.4%	7.0%
High school graduate & equivalency	34.7%	38.9%	29.6%
Some college, no degree	24.7%	23.7%	23.8%
Associate degree	8.9%	8.1%	9.1%
Bachelor's degree	8.5%	9.5%	16.7%
Graduate or professional degree	10.6%	5.9%	10.7%

Source: US Census ACS 2013-2017 estimates

## Income

A reliable measure of the economic health of a Township is median household income, which is the midpoint of incomes for all households. Residents in the Township have income levels that far exceed the county as a whole, as well as those in the state.

The economic downturn in 2008 resulted in a general drop in median household income throughout the country. Nottawa was not immune but has rebounded well. Table 3-5 below presents information on the median household income for Nottawa Township, St. Joseph County, and the State of Michigan.

The U.S. Census estimates that median household income in Nottawa Township between 2013 and 2017 was \$52,319. Only 5.8% of residents were identified as being in poverty during the 2013-2017 ACS survey. This is far better than the county and state which were at 16.2% and 16.3% respectively.

15% of Township households have incomes under \$25,000 and 29% have incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999. These groups can only spend at most \$625 and \$1,250 per month on housing expenses according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development affordability metrics. Housing budgets as limited as these often do not allow for housing upgrades or even basic housing repairs in many instances.

TABLE 3-5 2017 Household Incomes		
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>100%</b>
Less than \$10,000	30	2.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	42	3.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	125	8.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	147	10.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	201	14.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	426	30.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	200	14.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	99	7.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	99	7.1%
\$200,000 or more	20	1.4%

Source: ACS 2013-2017 estimates

TABLE 3-5 Household Income & Poverty			
	Township	County	State
Median Household Income (\$)	\$52,319	\$45,410	\$50,803
Average Household Income (\$)	\$66,485	\$56,595	\$68,928
Per Capita Income (\$)	\$25,106	\$22,182	\$27,549
Individual Poverty Rate	5.8%	16.2%	16.3%

Source: US Census ACS 2013-2017 estimates

## Housing

Housing is another important feature of any community. Residential property is one of the primary sources of tax revenue, it is home to employees of local companies, and is home to children of local schools. Vacancy rates, the size of homes, the age of homes and other key metrics give public officials the information to make plans for the future of the Township. Most of the housing units found in the Township are single family or mobile homes (92.7%), and the majority (69.3%) of housing units have three or more bedrooms.

TABLE 3-6 2017 Housing Data		
Total housing units	1,676	100%
Duplexes	0	0.0%
Apartment buildings	123	7.3%
Mobile homes	154	9.2%
Single Family	1,399	83.5%
Bedrooms		
No bedroom	9	0.5%
1-bedroom	127	7.6%
2-bedroom	379	22.6%
3-bedroom	781	46.6%
4-bedroom	281	16.8%
5+	99	5.9%
Year built		
2014-present	3	0.2%
2010-2013	22	1.3%
2000-2009	281	16.8%
1990-1999	371	22.1%
1980-1989	176	10.5%
1970-1979	287	17.1%
1960-1969	137	8.2%
1950-1959	75	4.5%
1940-1949	78	4.7%
1939 or earlier	246	14.7%
Year moved into unit		
2015-present	153	10.9%
2010-2014	349	25.0%
2000-2009	383	27.4%
1990-1999	245	17.5%
1980-1989	173	17.5%
1979 or earlier	95	6.8%
Occupied housing units	1,398	83.4%
Vacant housing units	278	16.6%
Median value (\$)	\$143,100	
Median monthly rent (\$)	\$634	
Homeowner occupancy rate		96.2%
Rental occupancy rate		81.3%

Source: US Census ACS 2013-2017 estimates

## Employment & Unemployment

The unemployment rates for Nottawa Township and St. Joseph County have historically mirrored the State of Michigan and the United States. St. Joseph County's economy, like the state of Michigan, was stronger in the late 1990s. Since 2009, the annual average unemployment rate for St. Joseph County began to rise until finally reaching over 9.2% in 2012, which was higher than that for the State of Michigan (7.8%). After 2009, the unemployment rate in Nottawa Township stabilized at around 5-6% for three years, then began to decline. The unemployment rate fell to 3.0% in December 2017 and continued to decrease in subsequent years. The unemployment rate in St. Joseph County jumped significantly in April 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, but had declined to 5.8% by February 2021 (Michigan Dept. of Technology, Management, and Budget).

From 2013-2017, 52% of the labor force in Nottawa Township was employed. Manufacturing, and education, health care and social services were the largest occupational groups in the labor force. Together, those work groups account for 52% of the occupations. Retail trade accounts for almost 10% of the occupations in Nottawa Township, but no other employment group accounts for more than 7.6% of the Township's total employment. While agriculture is the largest land use, employment in agriculture only accounts for 7.1% of the Township's labor force. Socioeconomic shifts as a result of the coronavirus pandemic are likely to impact the Township's existing industries, although the magnitude of these effects is still unknown.

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Nottawa</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>State</i>
Ag, forestry, & mining	7.1	3.4	1.2
Construction	2.1	3.9	5.0
Manufacturing	36.2	37.7	18.0
Wholesale trade	2.5	1.9	2.4
Retail trade	9.9	8.9	11.3
Transport & warehousing & utilities	3.2	3.9	4.2
Information	0.4	0.9	1.6
Finance, insurance, & real estate	2.8	3.0	5.5
Professional, scientific, & management	4.5	5.4	9.4
Education, health care, & social svcs.	15.9	17.0	23.7
Arts, entertainment, rec., accomm. & food services	5.6	7.5	9.5
Other services, except public	7.6	4.4	4.7
Public administration	2.3	2.2	3.5

Source: US Census ACS 2013-2017 estimates

## CHAPTER 4: EXISTING LAND USE

### LAND USE ANALYSIS

Land use in Nottawa Township is typically undeveloped, agricultural, or low-density residential. Pockets of higher-density residential, commercial, and industrial uses exist but are very limited. High-density residential areas are mostly found adjacent to lakes, and areas of medium-density residential are found along the St. Joseph River. The land used for industrial purposes and commercial use lands are limited. Areas for expansion of either can be found along M-86 and M-66. Given recent patterns and a lack of development pressure, the Township is unlikely to see significant changes to the current land use composition.

### WATER RESOURCES

#### Wetlands

The National Wetlands Inventory (Map 4-1) reveals extensive wetlands adjacent to the lakes found in the Township. The area along the Prairie River between Lake Templene and Centreville also has wetlands, and several others are scattered throughout the Township. The center of the Township is mostly devoid of wetlands. Both federal and state regulations limit development in these areas. Given the regulations, environmental concerns, and construction challenges, only recreational uses are advised in these areas.

#### Groundwater

The Township should work to protect groundwater since it is the primary local source of drinking water. Careful consideration should be given to development of natural areas that capture, filter, and resupply groundwater sources.

Prior to developing a future land use plan and map, a community must first assess its existing land uses. This chapter presents information on the types and location of existing land uses and land cover. The process identifies both developed lands and natural land cover types like woodlands and wetlands. The maps presented in this chapter reflect land cover and land use currently seen in the Township.

#### Lakes

Three significant water bodies are located wholly or partially in Nottawa Township. They are as follows:

- Lake Templene
  - The largest lake in the Township
  - Located in the southcentral portion of the Township, the lake is split by the boundary with Sherman Township
  - Has public access site
- Sand Lake
  - Located in Section twenty-seven
  - Has public access site
- Evans Lake
  - Located in Section twenty-one

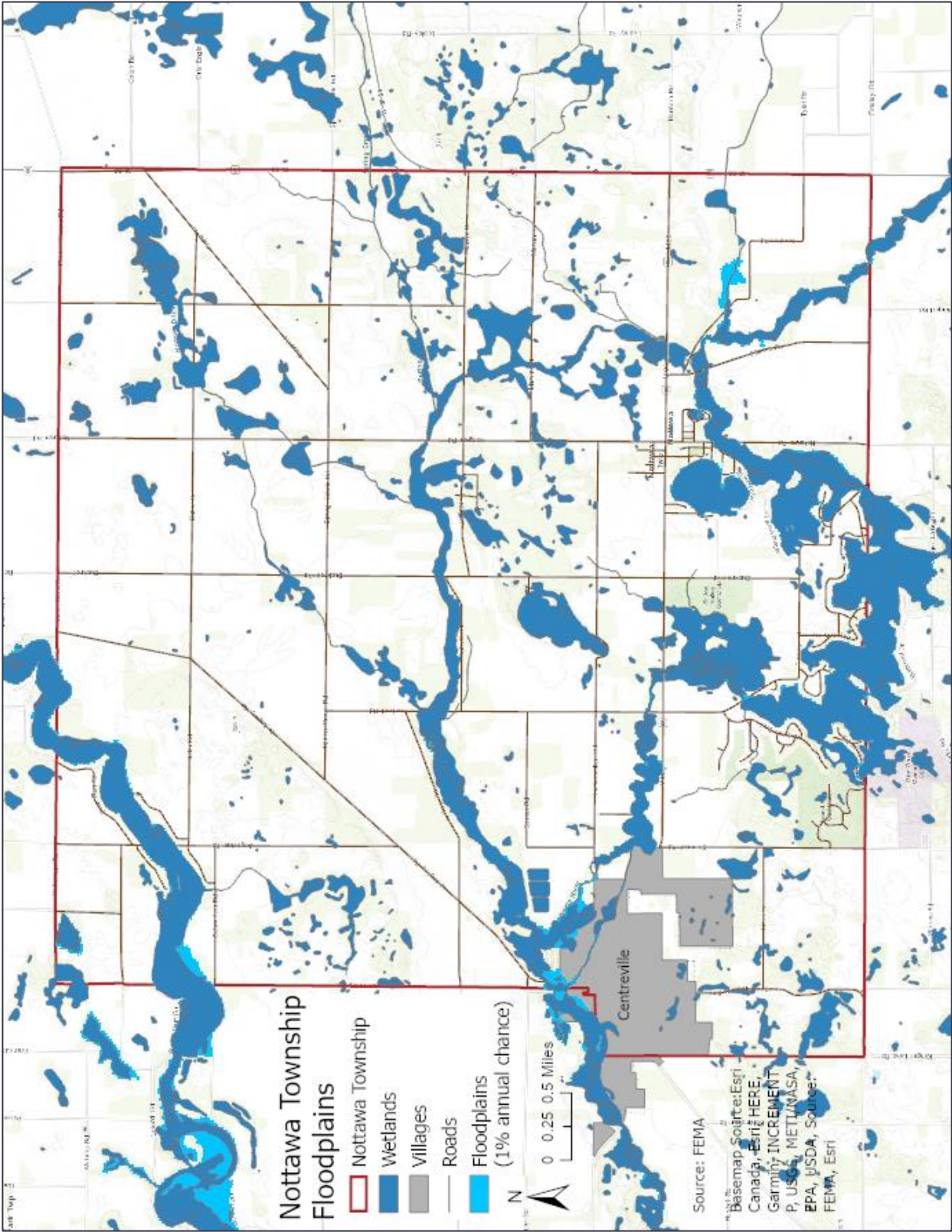
#### Rivers and Creeks

It is important to understand the risks and benefits of rivers and creeks when planning for land uses in the Township. Rivers and creeks were historically viewed as a resource for transportation or economic development. Towns were built around moving water because of the transportation possibilities and environmental and economic benefits. Today, rivers and creeks have lost much of their economic benefits, but they still offer many environmental and recreational benefits. Rivers and creeks also still pose flooding risks to development.

Two significant rivers traverse the Township. The St. Joseph River clips the northwest corner of the Township. The St. Joseph River originates in Hillsdale County, flowing west through Branch and Calhoun Counties, then it cuts diagonally through St. Joseph County on its 206-mile journey to Lake Michigan. The Prairie River crosses the southern quarter of the Township. The Prairie River originates in southcentral Branch County and flows west until it joins the St. Joseph River south of Three Rivers.



Map 4-1: Wetlands in Nottawa Township



## EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The Township is serviced by the St. Joseph County Intermediate School District and the local districts of Centreville, Nottawa, Mendon, and Colon. The majority of the Township is serviced by Centreville Public Schools and Nottawa Public Schools.

## MUNICIPAL UTILITIES & OTHER SERVICES

The Township does not contain any municipal utilities. As such, all households use well and septic systems for drinking water supplies and wastewater treatment. This plan examines the septic suitability of soils in the Township to help direct residential development.

The St. Joseph County master plan identifies two areas of Nottawa Township as “Pollution Abatement and Future Service Needs Areas”. These are the areas around Lake Templene and Sand Lake; and the area along both shores of the St. Joseph River. The County plan also identifies an area east of Centreville towards Lake Templene as a potential “Economic Development Service Area.”

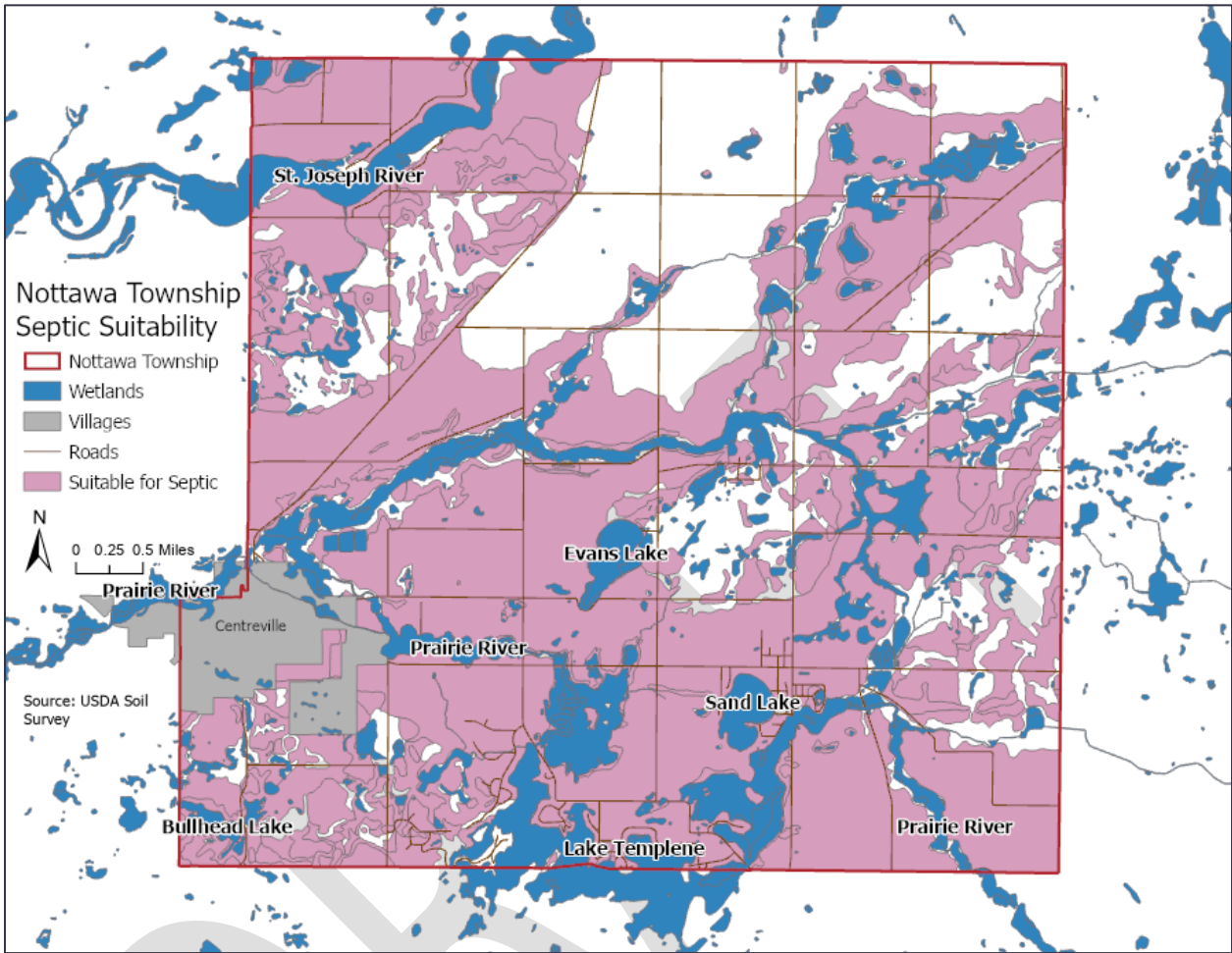
## Septic Suitability

The following soils found in the Township are not suitable for septic fields due to several limitations:

- Adrian – ponding & poor filter
- Brady – wetness
- Bronson – wetness & poor filtering
- Choctah – wetness, flooding & poor filter
- Elmdale – wetness
- Elson – poor filter
- Granby – ponding & poor filter
- Hillsdale – when on steep slopes
- Houghton – ponding & percs slowly
- Nottawa – wetness due to wetness & poor filtering
- Palms – subsidence & ponding

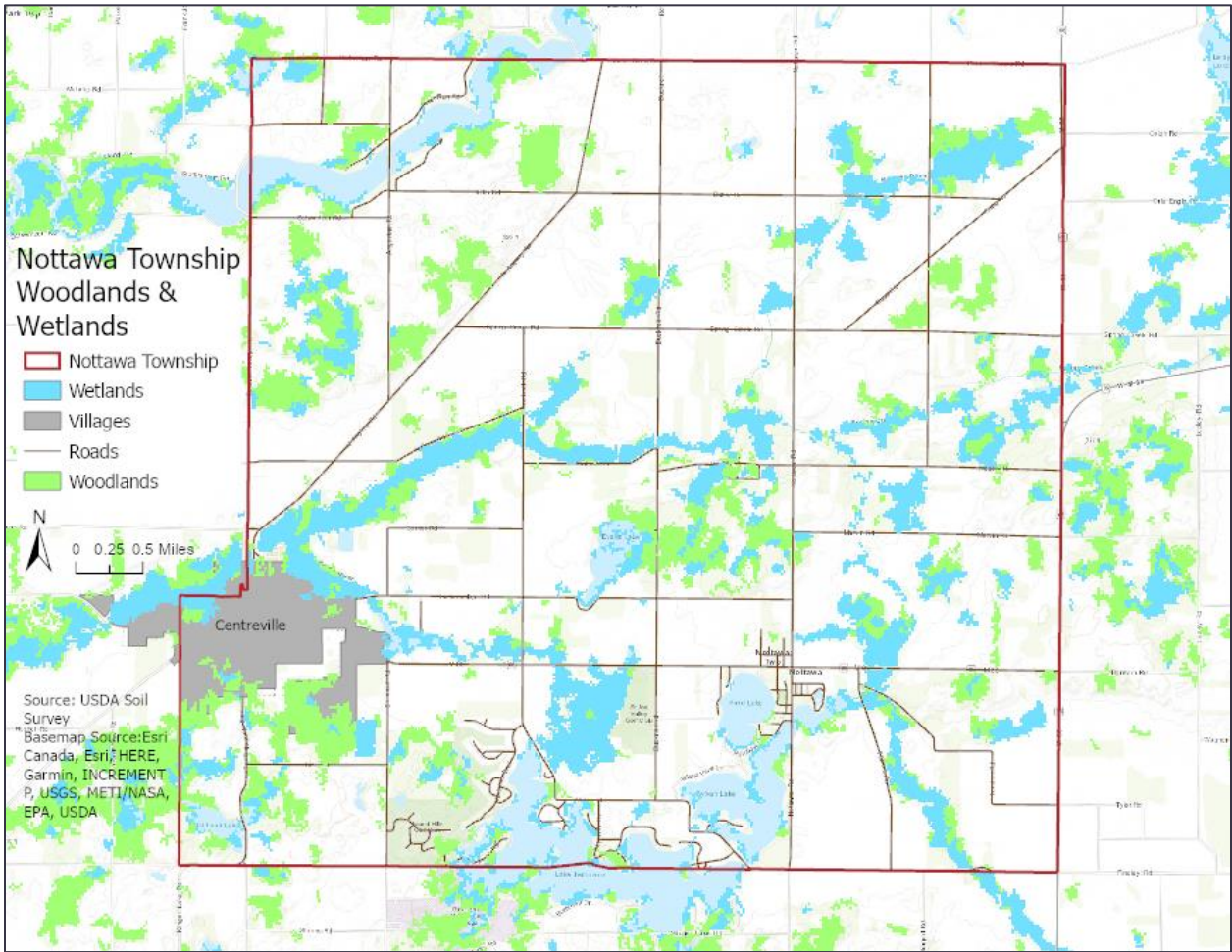
Nottawa and Elston soils are the most common soils found in Nottawa Township. Areas of the Township that are suitable for septic systems are shown in Map 4-2 on the following page.

Map 4-2: Septic Suitability in Nottawa Township





Map 4-3: Wetlands & Woodlands in Nottawa Township





## TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

### Roads

The Township does not have direct access to any major highways. The most significant roads to traverse the Township are M-66 and M-86. M-66 is a state-designated highway that runs south to north from the Indiana border through the City of Sturgis, along the eastern border of the Township, north through St. Joseph and Calhoun Counties, through the City of Battle Creek, then northward for another 120 miles before joining with M-115 east of Cadillac. M-86 is an east-west route running from Coldwater in Branch County to Three Rivers in St. Joseph County. This route connects US-131 to I-69.

The St. Joseph County Road Commission manages the local roads in Nottawa Township. In Nottawa Township there are 19.60 miles of Primary Roads and 50.56 miles of local roads. The county's primary Class A all-season roads are: Nottawa (entire length), 1.67 miles of Butler, 3.73 miles of North Angling, 0.64 miles of South River, 3.36 miles of Covered Bridge, 0.53 mile of Leland, 0.5 mile of Silver, 1.5 mile of Klinger Lake and 1.5 mile of Shimmel. Paved roads in the Township running east-west are: River Run, Prairie Corners, Schweitzer, 1.5 mile of Butler, Spring Creek, 0.5 mile of Wasepi, Marvin, Truckmiller and Findley; north-south paved roads are: Filmore, 1.5 miles of Bucknell, and 2.0 miles of Rambadt. Diagonal paved roads are Cupp, and Londick. The remaining roads are gravel. More information on roads can be found here: [https://stjoeroads.com/wp-content/uploads/St-Joseph-County-Map\\_20150306\\_0001.Class-A-Roads.pdf](https://stjoeroads.com/wp-content/uploads/St-Joseph-County-Map_20150306_0001.Class-A-Roads.pdf).

**Road Conditions:** The PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation & Rating) (Map 4-5) analysis of roads in Nottawa Township lists road conditions for 23.02 miles of federal aid roads. For the 2010-2011 report, over 20 miles were reported in poor condition and this remained the same for the 2012-2013 report. Evidently, significant resurfacing work was done after that report, but the 2014-2015 report found around 12 miles in poor condition, 7 miles in fair condition and 5 miles in good condition. The 2015-2017 PASER report found once again 19 miles

of road in Nottawa Township to be in poor condition, 3 miles in Fair condition and only 2 miles in good condition.

**Traffic:** Traffic counts are available only for state highways in the Township: M-66 and M-86. The traffic counts are found in Map 4-7 and Map 4-8.

The traffic counts available for M-66 have an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume of 6,164 vehicles through the Township. Commercial traffic on M-86 is low, 437 CADT (Commercial Average Daily Traffic) through the Township.

**Special Traffic:** Nottawa Township has a significant amount of horse-drawn traffic. These road users require additional consideration especially when they interact with other forms of transportation.

**Bridges:** Two bridges on Findlay Road were rated as fair, and four others – all of which traverse waterways in the Township – were rated as poor.

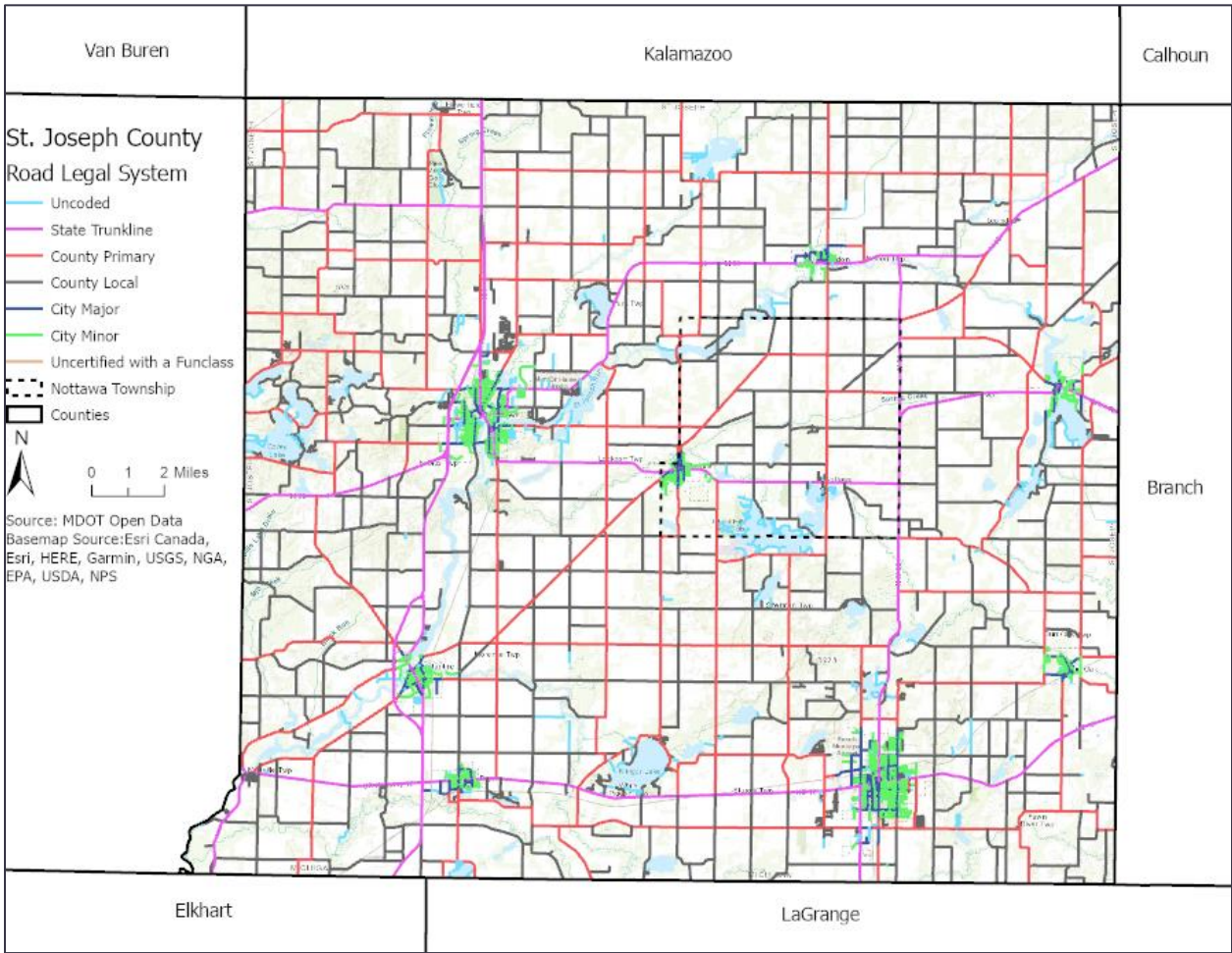
**Rail Transportation:** No rail lines traverse the Township.

**Public Transit:** The St. Joseph County Transportation Authority operates a dial-a-ride system, and Nottawa Township is included within the service area.

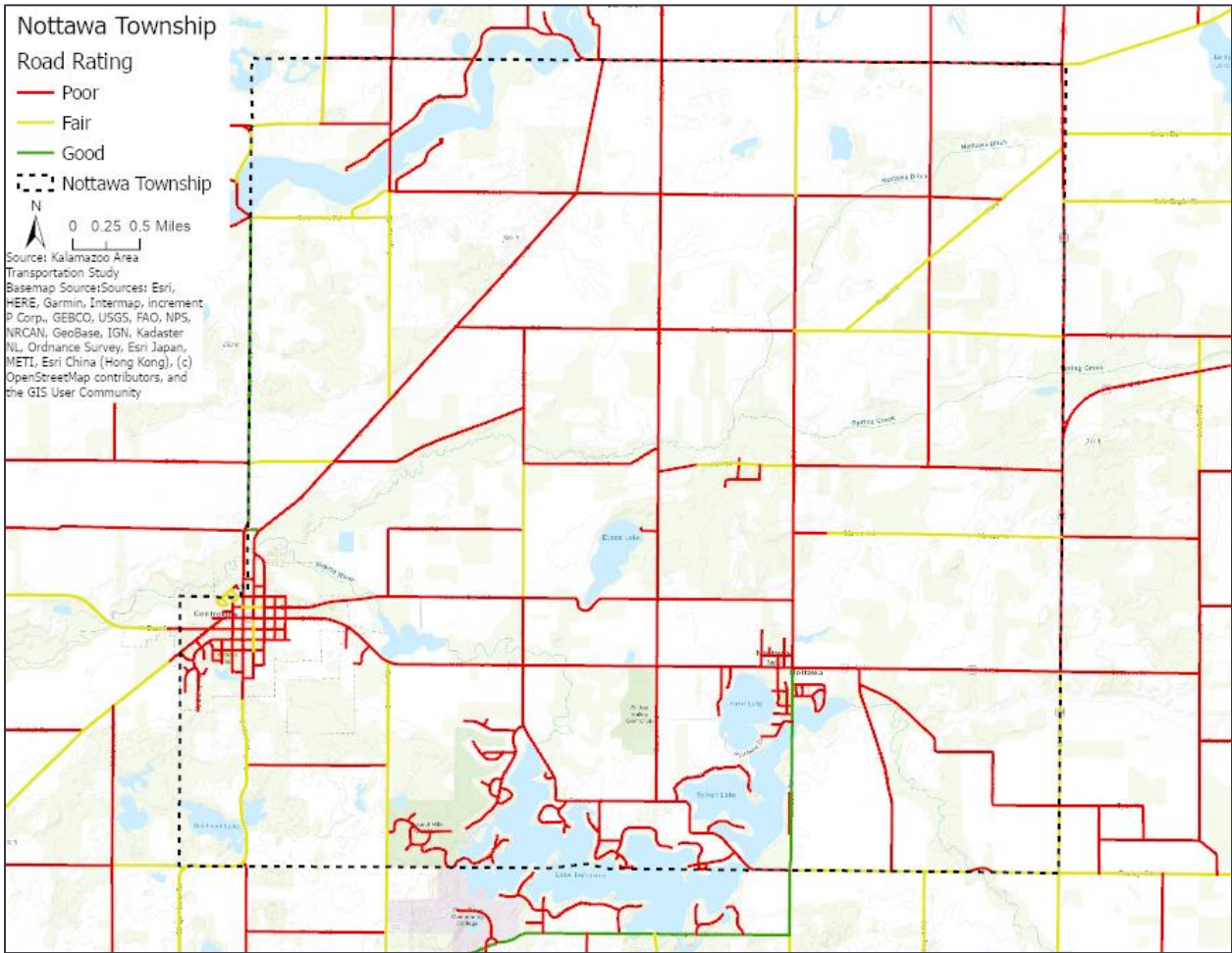
**Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel:** The Township has no formal pedestrian/bicycle travel facilities. Both M-86 and M-66 as well as Findley Road and Shimmel Road have paved shoulders marked for bicycle travel. Some of the smaller streets near lakes see a good deal of pedestrian and bicycle activity. Two rail lines crossed M-86 at Wasepi Road, but both have been abandoned. Unfortunately, the lines were not deeded to the railroad and are not available for the Rails-to-Trails system.

Pedestrian ways have not been provided in Nottawa center. Provisions for sidewalks in this area should be considered because of the population density and the presence of the school.

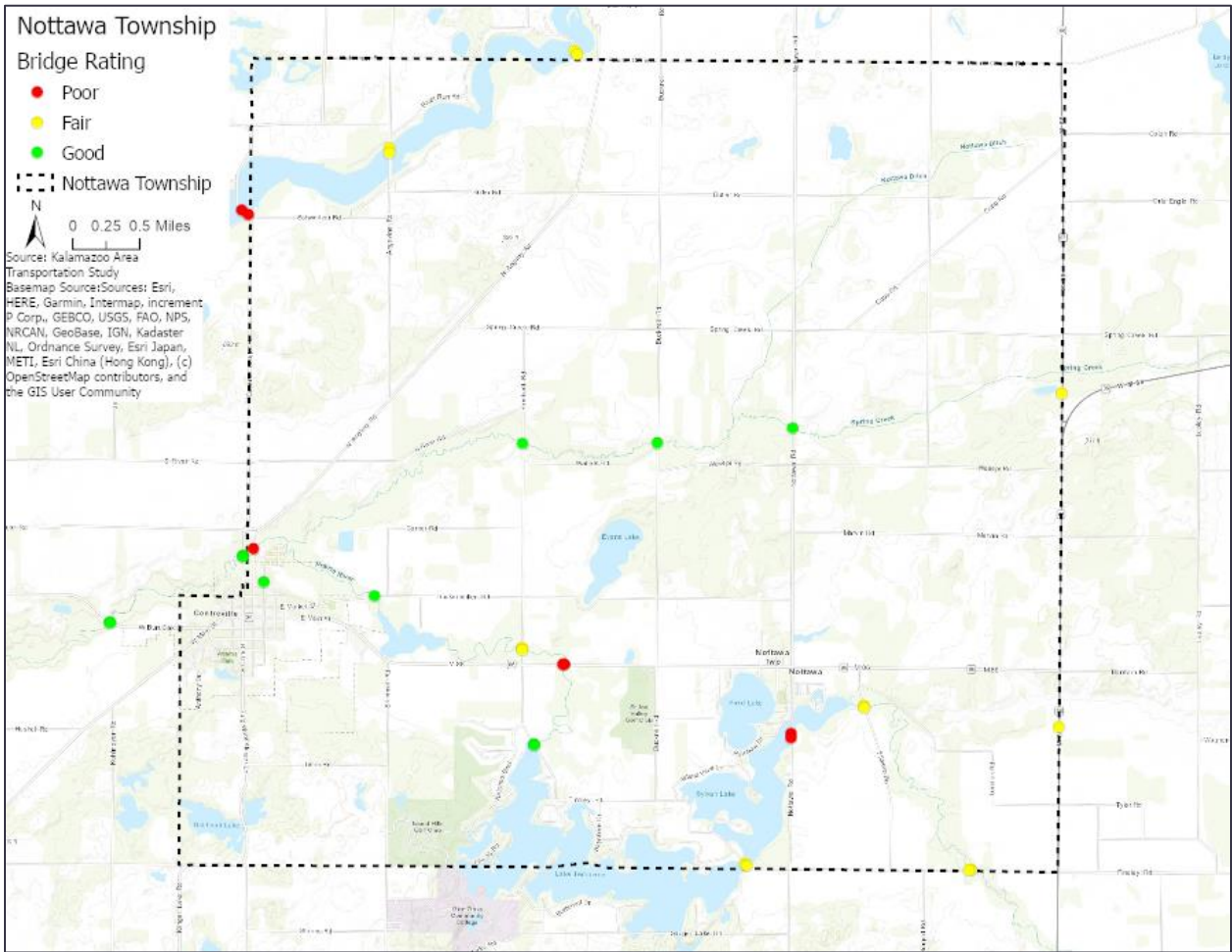
Map 4-4: Nottawa Township Roads



Map 4-5: Road Conditions in Nottawa Township

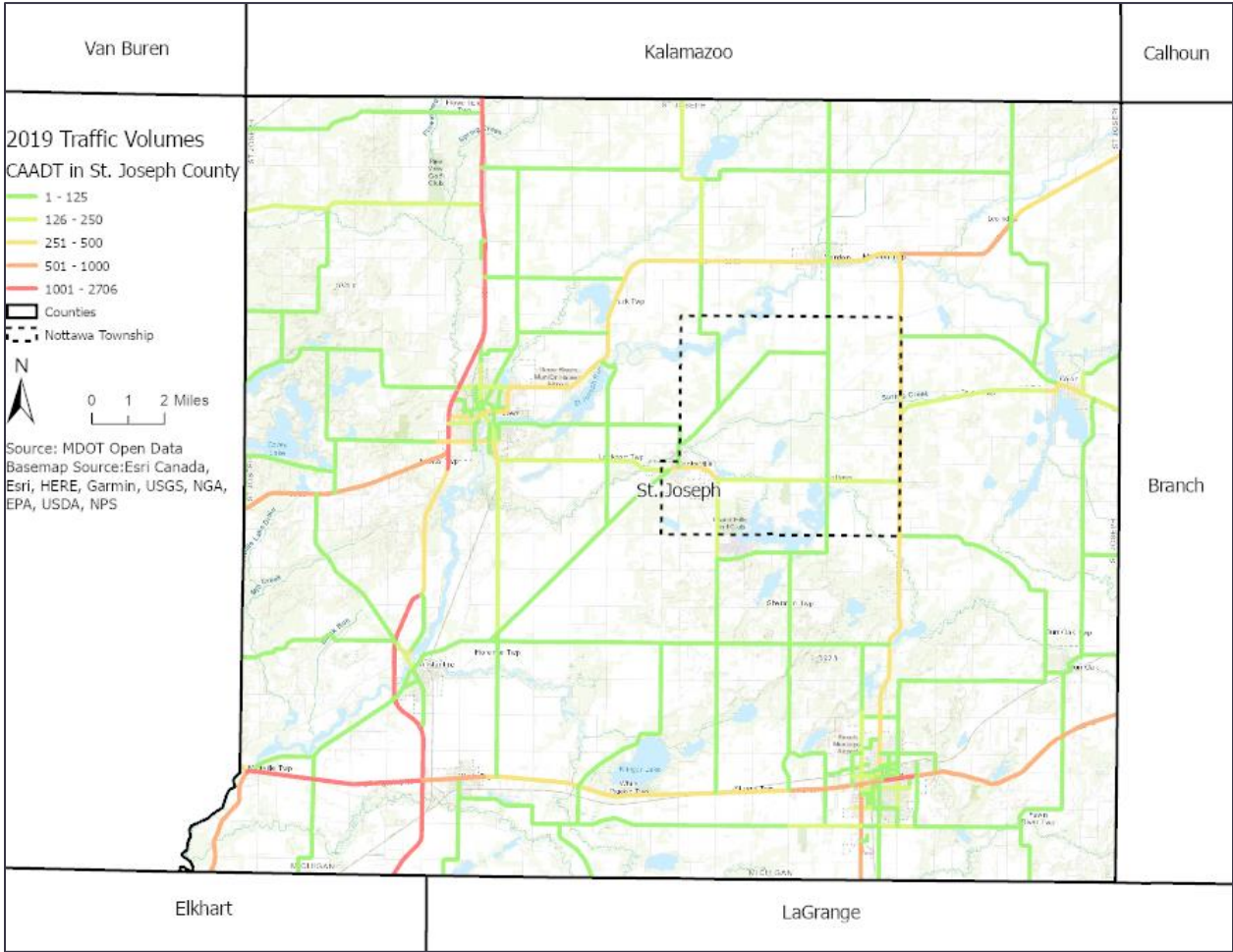


MAP 4-6: Bridge Conditions in Nottawa Township

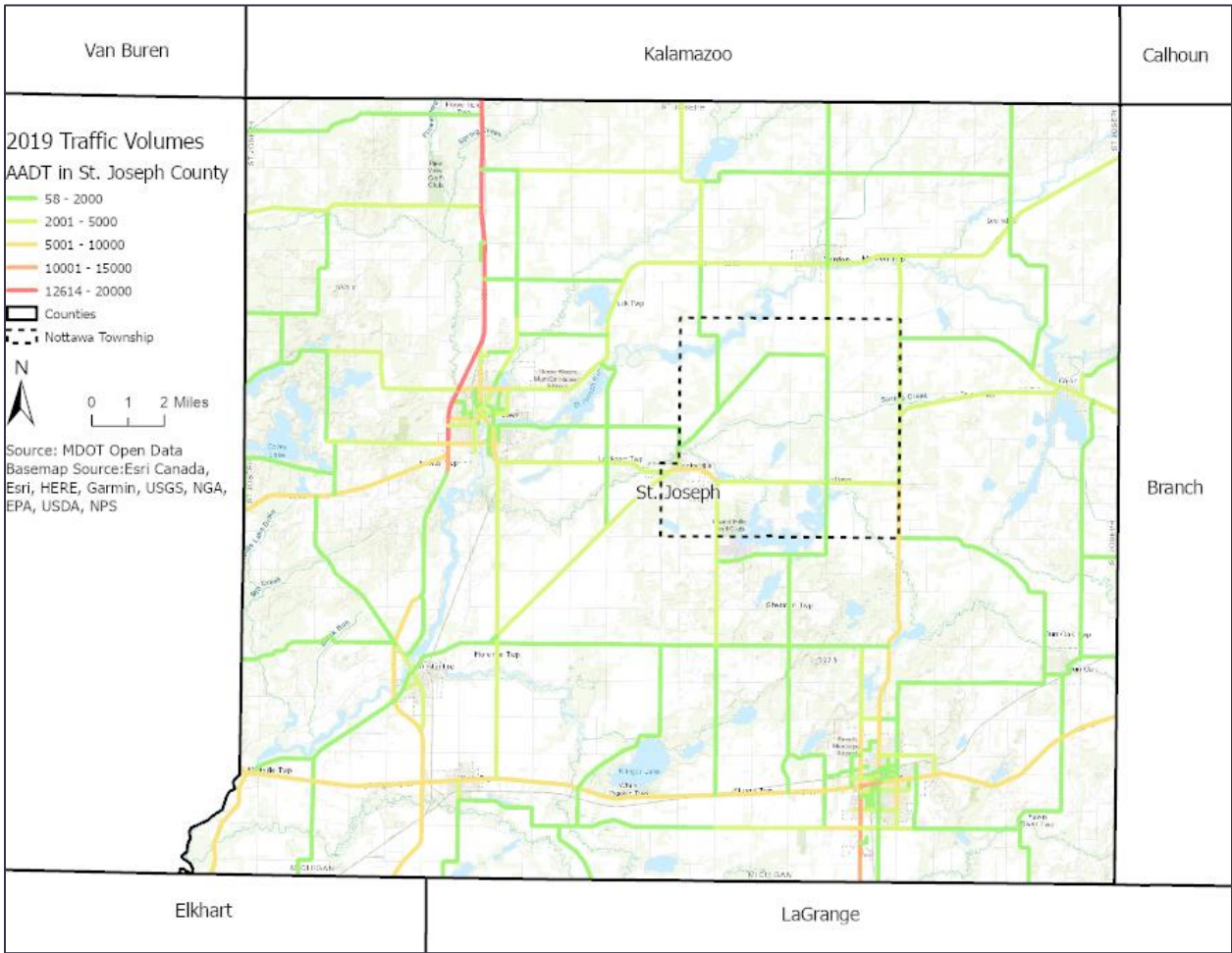




MAP 4-7: Commercial Average Daily Traffic Counts in Nottawa Township



MAP 4-8: Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts in Nottawa Township



## PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND LEISURE TIME PURSUITS

The Township has two County parks: Nottawa Park (or Sand Lake Park) and Covered Bridge Farm. Nottawa Township is also home to several lakes and waterways, as well as the Nottawa Community School, the Island Hills Golf Club, and the St. Joseph Valley Golf Club.

### Aquatic recreation

Two waterways that traverse the Township were mentioned as potential water trails by the St. Joseph County Water Trail Master Plan – the Prairie River and St. Joseph River. Water trails can provide residents and visitors the opportunity to access the river for boating, fishing, or educational opportunities. The water trail master plan and additional information is found at [www.stjoeht2o.com](http://www.stjoeht2o.com).

Several parks outside of the Township offer recreational opportunities. Those are listed below:

- To the East: Adams Park in Centreville
- To the North: Hoshel Canoe County Park
- To the South: Lake Templene boat launch

An officially adopted Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is a requirement for the submission of a request for land acquisition or park development funding.

The Plan, if prepared, would address the current and future recreation needs of the Township. National park and recreation planning standards acceptable to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources indicate that the total land reserved for parks and recreation purposes in the Township should comply with a ratio of 10.5 acres of land for every 1,000 residents. Therefore, the Township, with a future population approximating 4,500 persons in the year 2025, should have approximately 7.3 acres of parks and recreation land .

The State of Michigan gives priority to joint municipal parks and recreation plans for the selection of projects from the limited funding available. Such joint plans can involve a township, a city, a village, and/or a school district, or it can be a county-wide plan with sign-on by multiple jurisdictions.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

The climate, terrain, and variety of soils make several areas in the Township well-suited for agriculture. Open space lands including woodlands, wetlands and other environmentally significant areas are features normally associated with agricultural areas. These lands provide unique and economic benefits to the citizens of Nottawa Township and are an important part of the Township's natural and agricultural heritage. Agriculture also contributes to the local economy in direct sales of agricultural products. Many of the agricultural activities in Nottawa Township provide the opportunity to harvest locally grown foods to sell at roadside stands, farmers markets and local retail food stores to increase tourism and the local economic impact of agriculture.

Agriculture is an important economic activity for St. Joseph County, although statistics of economic impact at the township level are not available. In 2012, St. Joseph County ranked 2nd among counties in the state for production of broilers and other meat-type chicken; 2nd in potato production; 3rd in vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potato production; and 3rd in all types of vegetables harvested. In 2012, there were 967 farms in St. Joseph County. Of these, 57 were vegetable farms and 421 were in corn or grain farms. There was a total of 221,745 acres of land in farms with 10,842 acres in vegetables, 98,336 acres in grain corn and 52,453 acres in soybeans.

The average size of a farm in St. Joseph County in 2012 was 229 acres and the median size was 60 acres. In 2012, in St. Joseph County the average market value of agricultural products sold per farm was \$1,090,048 with the total market value of agricultural products in the County valued at \$238,053,000.

## Open Space and Farmland Preservation

Part 362 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), Michigan Public Act 451 of 1994 as amended, created the Agricultural Preservation Fund and the Agricultural Preservation Fund Board. The purpose of the fund is to provide matching dollars to qualifying local units of government Purchase of Development Rights Programs. In order to qualify for participation a local unit of government must:

- Have a comprehensive plan that has been adopted within the last 10 years, and have reviewed and/or updated the plan within the last 5 years to contain an agricultural preservation component, and
- Have adopted a purchase of development rights ordinance that includes a method to select parcels for possible purchase and also includes a method to determine the price to be paid for those development rights, and
- Provide for funds to match the State grant. Matching funds are not required to come directly from the local unit of government. They can come from a variety of sources, including private donations, landowner donations, and other grants.

In order to fulfill a portion of the requirements listed above, on March 15, 2005, the St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners adopted a county-wide Farmland and Open Space Preservation Ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to create a St. Joseph County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program that can:

- Protect eligible farmland by purchasing development rights voluntarily offered for purchase by landowners,
- Authorize acceptance of voluntary donations and the cash purchases and/or installment purchase of development rights of eligible farmland and the placement of conservation easement on these properties that restricts the future development,
- Establish a county comprehensive plan to be prepared in collaboration with local units of government within St. Joseph County that describes geographic areas within St. Joseph County where eligible property should be protected and preserved,

- Provide procedures and guidelines for selecting the farmland parcels to be
- protected; for determining the value to be paid for those rights; and, for the
- repurchasing of those rights for properties that no longer comply with the protection and preservation policies of the program and goals of the St. Joseph County Comprehensive Plan.

Townships such as Nottawa can qualify for state grants by participating in the County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. Criteria for participation can be found in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation ordinance, available at [www.stjosephcountymi.org/forms/educational\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.stjosephcountymi.org/forms/educational_brochure.pdf).

## Development Rights Sending Areas

Development rights sending areas are intended to provide owners of properties that have sever development limitation with an option to realize development opportunities. The concept is tied to the bonus provisions of the Planned Unit Development section of the Zoning Ordinance. Where higher density developments are possible, a developer, through a purchase/transfer of development rights provision, may purchase additional density rights from property owners in a sending area. These purchased development rights are then transferred to developable property in a receiving area of the township.

Potential Development Rights Sending Areas are:

- Properties larger than three (3) acres zoned Agricultural that cannot be rezoned to a higher density.
- Properties larger than one (1) acre within a Special Flood Hazard Area.
- If St. Joseph County exceeds a population of 100,000, then properties larger than one (1) acre located within a regulated wetland.
- Properties larger than one (1) acre having a documented lead/arsenic contamination situation or well-water source area with phosphorous above recommended levels resulting in property which cannot be reasonably developed.

### Temporary Farmland Preservation Agreements

The State of Michigan provides a program that offers farmland owners a tax credit for enrollment of their active agricultural land in a temporary easement intended to retain the enrolled property in active agricultural production.

## AGRICULTURE AND PA 116

In Nottawa Township, many farms are enrolled in Michigan's Public Act 116. Michigan's PA 116 is the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. The program is designed to preserve farmland and open space through agreements that restrict development, and provide tax incentives to property owners for program participation.

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture, the amount of land being farmed in St. Joseph County has increased from 215,425 acres in 2007 to 221,745 acres in 2012. The increase was experienced mostly in the acres used for cropland up from 181,051 acres in 2007 to 188,221 acres in 2012. USDA reports that 179,483 acres of cropland were harvested in 2012.

**...there are 8315 acres of land – about 36.3 % of the land area in the Township – enrolled in PA 116.**

Corn for grain, and soybeans for beans are the primary crops in St. Joseph County. The total market value of agricultural crop production in St. Joseph County in 2012 totaled \$238 Million with crop sales reaching \$190 Million and livestock production reaching \$47 Million.

### Agricultural Land Value

A 2014 study by Michigan State University produced estimates for farmland value for distinct areas of the state. Within the South-Central District (St. Joseph, Branch, Hillsdale, Calhoun, Jackson, Barry, Eaton, Ingham, Clinton, Ionia and Shiawassee Counties) the study estimated farmland values between \$3,610 per acre and \$4,724 per acre. State-wide the values ranged from \$3,699 to \$8,576 per acre with the higher value being for fruit trees, a classification not found in the South-Central district. For agricultural land converted to residential uses the average value was \$6,719 per acre and the average for farmland converted to commercial/industrial uses was \$11,500 per acre.

**TABLE 4-1: Agricultural Land Value**

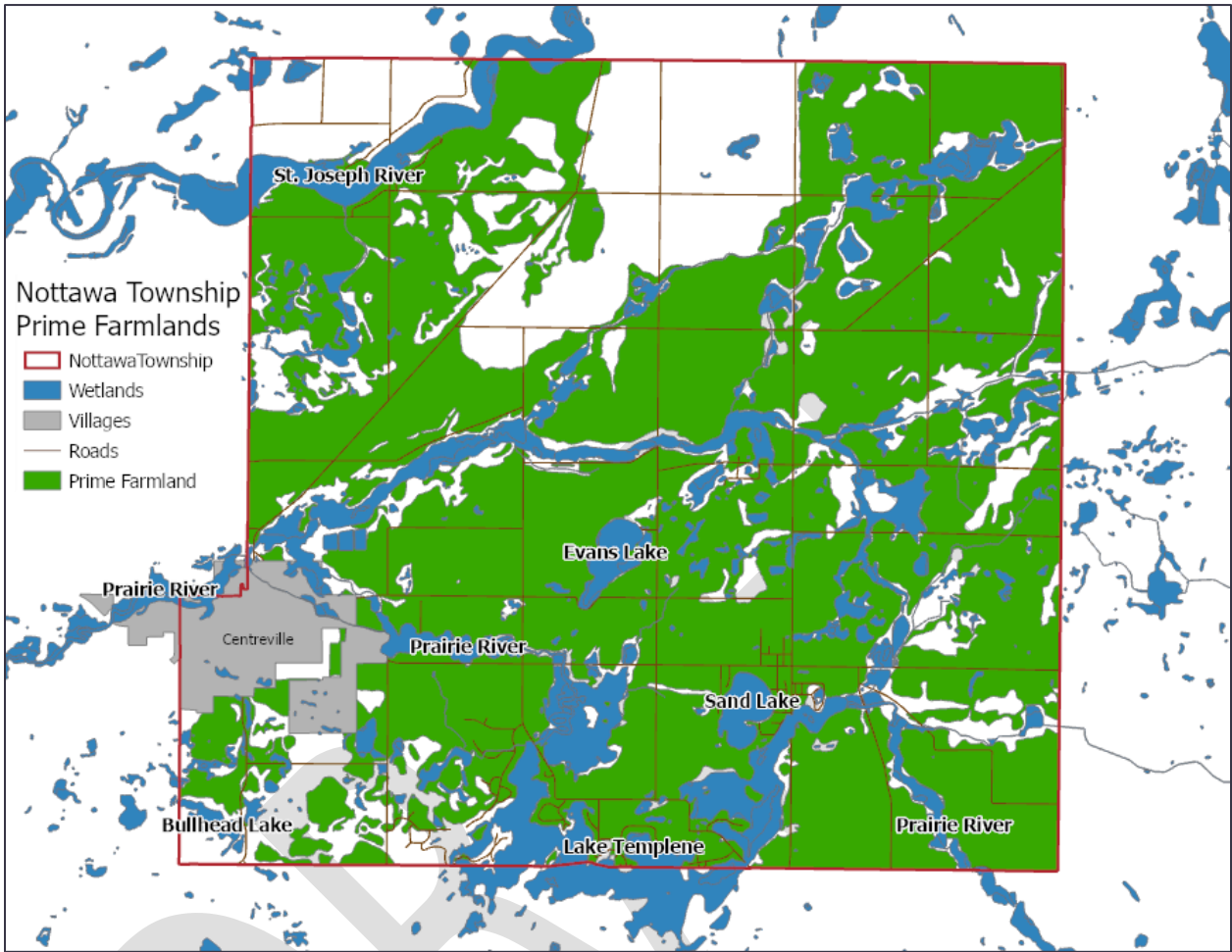
	Field Crop Tiled	Field Crop Non- field	Irrigated	Fruit Trees
South Central District	\$4,095	\$3,610	\$4,724	N/A
State- wide	\$4,646	\$3,699	\$5,144	\$8,516

Source: Michigan State University, Department of Agricultural,  
2013 Farmland Valuation Summary

St. Joseph County assessor's records reported in 2017 an average sale price per acre of \$4,687.97 for vacant land. Prices ranged from a high of \$38,888.89 to a low of \$1,339.28 per acre. In the Centerville/Three Rivers area, there were 188 acres sold in 2017 for an average price of \$5,434.5 per acre. The price per acre ranged from \$2,444 to \$10,000.



MAP 4-9: Prime Farmland Soils



## CHAPTER 5: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This chapter presents an overview of the intended land uses and zoning designations that will shape the future of Nottawa Township. The chapter also identifies priorities for redevelopment that will be aligned with the intended zoning designations.

### Findings

The future land use plan is based on the following findings:

- Nottawa Township occupies a total land area of 35.8 square miles.
- With a population density of 108.3 people per square mile and 39 occupied housing units per square mile, the Township is predominantly rural. There is on average one occupied housing unit per 16.4 acres in the Township.
- The Township is primarily a mix of agriculture, housing, and undeveloped lands. Only limited commercial and industrial uses are found in the Township.
- Significant portions of the Township have soils that are considered “prime” for agricultural use.
- Sand Lake, Lake Templene, and other waterways play important roles in shaping land use in the Township. Wetlands also limit development in some parts of the Township.
- State highways M-86 and M-66 traverse the Township and provide connections to nearby communities.
- Sand Lake Park and Covered Bridge Farm are the only public parks in the Township and are managed by St. Joseph County. There are two public boat launches, one at Sand Lake Park, and another on Lake Templene, both managed by the County. There are a few private recreation and campground areas around lakes in the Township.
- Although the rural-agricultural character has not changed significantly, the conditions of the Township are different from those found in the previous version of the Nottawa Township Comprehensive Development Plan, adopted in 1978. The Township’s population has been decreasing by approximately 0.19% per year since 2000, and the annual rate of residential construction has slowed to only around 10% of what was built from 2000 to 2009. The industrial makeup of the Township’s economy has stayed relatively the same, although occupations in education, health care, and social services have increased significantly.
- The Township first adopted a zoning ordinance in 1978 and incorporated updates in 2004. The Township adopted a new zoning ordinance in 2009 and incorporated updates in 2019.
- The Township adopted a comprehensive land use plan in 1978 which has not been updated.

### Future Land Use and Zoning Plan

This future land use plan will serve as the blueprint for future development of the township until amended or replaced. The zoning plan will describe the zoned uses and articulate the relationship between the current zoning and future land use plan.

# 1. Agriculture

## *Future Land Use Plan*

The Township wishes to preserve its rural and agricultural heritage while also allowing for growth and development appropriate to the Township's existing conditions. It plans to preserve the township's most productive farmland and prime soils for agricultural use for the future. The Township will give careful consideration to any proposed use other than agriculture on land with prime soils.

In the Agricultural Residential districts, the Township permits residential uses that do not substantially change the agricultural character of the township. However, the Township also aims to facilitate efficient development that serves residents' needs for employment, goods, and services. To balance these interests, the Future Land Use Map maintains nearly all areas currently zoned AR, while also allowing for additional commercial uses along designated corridors and under special conditions.

## *Zoning Plan*

Agricultural uses only occur in the Agricultural Residential district (AR) by right. The AR district covers the bulk of land area in Nottawa Township. Commercial and industrial uses related to agricultural products or practices, including home businesses and occupations, are allowed in the Agricultural Residential district by permit or special land use designation, depending on the situation. Other commercial and industrial uses are only allowed in the AR district by special land use permit.

The AR district is intended for agricultural, residential, and farm uses, including other uses generally associated with agriculture, and related non-residential uses. The purpose of this District is to preserve the agricultural, rural, and residential character of the lands within this District, minimize public service costs, limit development, and preserve a maximum amount of prime soils and open space. Preservation of traditional agricultural land uses practiced by the Amish, Mennonite, or other established groups is encouraged in the AR district.

Careful consideration is given to environmental concerns such as groundwater protection, surface water protection, and mitigating the impacts of development in rural areas with limited public services. The Township will issue permits after giving due consideration to the potential environmental effects of agricultural land uses, while also ensuring compliance with Michigan Public Act 93 of 1981, the Michigan Right to Farm Act.

- **AR, Agricultural Residential District:**

The purpose of the (AR) Agricultural Residential District to preserve the rural, countryside atmosphere of Nottawa Township; and to encourage the continuation of agricultural activities while permitting residential uses that do not substantially changing the agricultural character of these areas. Provision for an agricultural residential district is expected to prevent scattered semi-urban development, which cannot efficiently be served by public utilities or Township services. It is also the intent of this district to help maintain land values at levels which farm activities can support and to avoid property value increases through speculation for higher density uses, which can force prime farmlands into non-agricultural uses.

## 2. Residential

### *Future Land Use Plan*

Residential uses are common throughout the Township although housing types and the density of land use varies in different settings. Housing is found among farms, wetlands, lakes, woodlands, and open spaces and low-density residential development patterns are important to the character of the Township. To preserve the rural and agricultural character of the area, the Township plans to encourage residential dwellings on parcels that are not characterized by prime soils and on parcels that can accommodate the well and septic systems of new residential development.

### *Zoning Plan*

The Township has six districts that allow housing: Agricultural Residential (AR), Low (R-1) and Medium (R-2) Density Residential, Waterfront Residential (R-3), Mobile Home Parks (RM-1), and Mobile Home Subdivisions (RM-2). Housing is not permitted in Commercial Districts (C) or in Limited Industrial Districts (I). Single-family detached housing units are allowed in R-1, R-2, R-3 Districts by right. Licensed residential and childcare facilities as well as home occupations, adult foster care homes, and foster family homes are allowed in all districts that allow housing. Duplexes are only allowed in R-2 Districts. Mobile Homes are allowed in RM-1 and RM-2 Districts by right, and in R-1 Districts by special use permit. AR Districts comprise the bulk of residential districts in the Township, while Low and Medium Density Residential Districts are found near Centreville and near the St. Joseph River in the north of the Township. R-3 Districts are adjacent to Sand Lake, Lake Templene, and the St. Joseph River. R-1, R-2, and R-3 Districts are intended to remain the primary land uses in areas adjacent to these waterways. The land between Centreville and Lake Templene is planned to transition its zoning category from AR to R-1.

District Definitions are as follows:

- **R-1, Low Density Residential District:** The purpose of the R-1 District is to provide for low density residential development away from major thoroughfares or public services, such as sanitary sewer. Careful
- **R-2, Medium Density Residential District:** the intent of the R-2 District to provide space for a greater variety of housing types at a moderate density near major transportation lines, utilities, and community services. This District allows for the development of vacant lands within established residential areas, while at the same time preserving the rural character of the area. Single-family homes as well as duplexes are allowed in R-2 Districts, while structures with three or more units require a special land use permit.
- **R-3, Waterfront Residential District:** The purpose of the R-3 District is to provide for single-family residential uses at moderate densities near the Township's lakes and waterways. R-3 Districts also are intended to protect Township lakes, rivers, and groundwaters from pollution as a result of concentrated residential wastewater and septic systems.
- **RM-1, Mobile Home Residential District.** The purpose of the RM-1 District is to provide locations for the development of mobile home parks that are healthy and safe for their residents and for the residents of adjoining premises. RM-1 Districts must be able to accommodate the increased traffic and sanitary requirements that result from this type of land use.
- **RM-2 District:** Mobile or Tiny Home Subdivision District. The purpose of the RM-2 District is to provide locations for the development of mobile home or tiny home

subdivisions that are designed with the character of residential neighborhoods, with dwellings on parcels of at least one acre. The purpose of the RM-2 District is to ensure that these subdivisions are healthy and safe for their residents and for the residents of adjoining premises. These Districts must be able to accommodate the increased traffic and sanitary requirements that result from this type of land use.

### 3. Commercial Development

#### *Future Land Use Plan*

Because Nottawa Township is primarily comprised of low-density rural and lakefront communities, the need for new commercial development is minimal. Most of the commercial needs of the residents of the Township are serviced by shops located in and around Sturgis, Centreville, and Three Rivers. Areas along state highways M-66 and M-86 are designated for commercial uses in the future land use plan. If the need arises for commercial services in the Township, those should be located along these two highways. To protect the rural character of the Township while also accommodating for and concentrating new resident-serving commercial uses, a new mixed-use zone will be created along M-86 and M-66.

Home-based businesses are common throughout Nottawa Township, but careful consideration is needed to ensure that commercial uses outside of Commercial zones do not detract from preserving the township's rural character nor become a nuisance to neighbors on adjacent properties. Thus, commercial land uses outside of areas zoned Commercial will be allowed only by special land use permit from the Planning Commission. Special use permits will be required if a commercial use occupies more than 3,000 square feet of any individual parcel, or more than 25% of the ground floor area of any residential structure.

#### *Zoning Plan*

The Township zoning scheme allows for commercial operations such as retail, services, restaurants, and other uses by right in Commercial (C) Districts. Other commercial uses are allowed by right or with a special land use permit from the Planning Commission

in other zoning districts. The purpose of Commercial Districts is to serve the needs of residents and visitors while limiting commercial development to specific areas of the township, to ensure harmonious land uses. The new commercial and residential mixed-use district will be created during the next update of the Nottawa Township Zoning Ordinance. This zone will extend 500 feet from the centerline of each state highway, beginning at West Sand Lake Street on M-86, extending east to M-66, north along M-66, and ending at the M-86 split-off north of Wasepi Road. New commercial operations in this district that entail a use allowable by right in Commercial districts will require a site plan review, but not a special use permit.

The definition of a C district is as follows:

- **C, Commercial District:** The purpose of Commercial Districts is to provide regulations concerning the development of commercial land uses that serve the needs of residents and visitors, while limiting scattered development and conflicting uses in the Township. This District also helps to concentrate commercial development in targeted areas of the Township, particularly along M-86 and M-66.



## 4. Limited Industrial District (LI)

### *Future Land Use Plan*

Industrial development is largely out of place in most parts of the Township. The intent of this District is to provide space for limited, small-scale warehousing, industrial and manufacturing uses. Only low-intensity industrial uses fit with the rural character of the Township, so these uses should be limited to the areas along state highway M-66 or adjacent to the Village of Centreville. Industrial uses should be compatible with nearby land uses and designed to minimize environmental impacts. New industrial uses will be carefully considered in order to minimize the potential of overburdening the Township's existing water and sewer systems, which could require annexation or PA 425 land use transfer agreements.

### *Zoning Plan*

Zoning restrictions limit the land uses in areas zoning LI. Some industrial uses are by nature directly related to agricultural use and could be allowed in the AR district under a special land use permit. Other industrial-type uses should only be allowed by special land use permit on a limited basis.

- LI, Limited Industrial District:** The intent of this District is to provide space for limited, small-scale warehousing, industrial and manufacturing uses characterized by low intensity uses and minimal impacts that preserve the character of the Township. These uses are characterized by moderate lot coverage, adequate setbacks, environmental sensitivity, and creative site design that encourage the development of attractive industrial sites, compatible with adjacent uses and serving those persons living and working within the Township. The zoning regulations are defined to exclude uses which would have a detrimental effect upon the orderly development and functioning of the District, as well as surrounding land uses.

## 5. Recreation

The Township is home to eight recreation facilities, listed below. There are a few private recreation facilities and campgrounds in the Township, as outlined in the Existing Land Use Chapter. Sand Lake Park and Covered Bridge Farm are public facilities maintained by St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation Department. Evans Lake is also used for recreation, but no public facilities are maintained. There is a private golf club at M-86 and Bucknell Road. There are no current plans for additional recreational facilities in the Township.

### Properties in Public/Semi-Public Recreational Districts:

- Southwest quarter of Section 19 adjacent to the Village of Centreville – c. 5 acres.
- West side of Bucknell Road, south of M-86 – This is an approximately 80 acres site.
- Southeast of the center of Section 29, South of M-86 – c. 4 acres.
- Northeast corner of Evans Lake – stretches along the lake shore. About 8 acres.
- On M-86 near the center of Section 26 - Three small lots. One acre each.
- On M-66/86 north of Wasepi Road – c. 8 acres.
- On Marvin Road west of M-66/86 – c. 1 acre.
- In Nottawa center from Sand Lake east to the old railroad right-of-way. – c. 2 acres.

## 6. Other Land Uses

### Public Uses and Transportation Facilities

Public uses and transportation facilities are minimal in the Township. The Nottawa Township hall is the only public building and is maintained by the Township. Transportation facilities found in the Township are roads, maintained by the St. Joseph County Road Commission and private landowners. St. Joseph County Transportation Authority also operates in Nottawa Township, providing public transportation as needed. Those facilities are outlined in greater detail in the Existing Land Use Chapter.

### Utilities, Wind and Solar Installations, and Other Alternative Energy Production Technologies

Alternative energy systems (wind and solar) are to be provided for in order to supplement agricultural incomes and to reduce the reliance of public utilities. Recognizing that solar and alternative energy production technologies are expanding and improving rapidly, the Township intends to make careful decisions about where to allow these types of uses. Small solar installations for individual households or businesses are allowable in all districts. Large-scale commercial or industrial solar land uses are allowed in other areas of the Township by special use permit only, and the Planning Commission will identify areas in the Township that are most appropriate for large-scale solar installations and other alternative energy production technologies. These areas will be chosen based on their proximity to other uses, proximity to interconnection with utilities, the Township's desire to preserve prime farmland soils, and each installation's ability to benefit to individual residents, private companies, and the Township.

### Zoning Plan

Regulations are needed to keep private utilities from creating public nuisances for adjacent properties. Well-developed regulations that are presented in open meetings and that consider public concerns can alleviate most negative impacts. Specifically, zoning regulations are needed to provide for both solar and wind energy systems. These should deal separately with small private use energy structures for individual homes, businesses or industries as well as large-scale commercial/industrial type facilities intended for the production and sale of electricity.

### Natural and Undeveloped Areas

The Township has many existing natural areas. The undeveloped wetlands found in many parts of the Township are well-preserved, and the Township is also home to many wooded areas and forests. There are very few undeveloped areas in Nottawa Township, with the bulk of the land being used for agriculture. The Township intends to give consideration to increasing protection of natural areas through zoning with greater setbacks from waterways, strengthened enforcement of environmental protections, and identification of areas prioritized for preservation.

### Marijuana

After due consideration, this plan recommends against the Township opting-in on medical marijuana, and for opting-out on recreational (Adult Use) marijuana. The Planning Commission should prepare a draft study of possible regulations for a recreational marijuana zoning amendment if it appears that a petition driven initiative develops to put an opt-in question on the ballot. This would allow the Township to have an ordinance in place in the event that such a ballot question were to pass in the Township.



## CHAPTER 6: PLAN PREPERATION AND PUBLICATION

### Plan Preparation:

This 2021 Nottawa Township Master Plan Update is a complete overhaul of the 2000 Nottawa Township Land Use Plan Update (adopted October 2000).

The planning process followed a strategy-first process. This process required the Planning Commission to establish goals and objectives before defining strategies, land use priorities, or examining community characteristics. This strategy-first approach based all aspects of the master plan on the goals and objectives established by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission created and distributed a survey the results of which drove the strategic planning discussions. Lee Adams from the Southcentral Michigan helped the Planning Commission interpret the results of the survey and led the Planning Commission through a strategic planning process using the previous version of the master plan as a starting point.

Once the strategic direction was established by the Planning Commission the planning work moved on to developing strategies designed to accomplish the goals and objectives. After the strategies were established the Planning Commission reviewed the existing land use patterns and compared those to the strategic direction. A future land use plan was established from the analysis of the existing land use patterns and the strategic direction of the Township. The Planning Commission quickly reviewed the community characteristics, introduction, and plan preparation and publication chapters to complete the master plan.

Where the previous master plan was based upon the Township Zoning Act, being Public Act 168 of 1959, the present, 2019 Master Plan is based on the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended. The 1959 law being rescinded and replaced in its entirety by the 2008 law.

Public input was accepted during the public hearing as well as from communications received during the 63-day review period all of which are included in the appendix.

**Publication:**

The Nottawa Township Board has reserved the right of final approval of the Master Plan. The Township Planning Commission recommended the 2021 Master Plan Update to the Township Board for distribution on \_\_\_\_\_.

The Township Board authorized distribution on \_\_\_\_\_, and comments were received from the St. Joseph County Planning Commission from their meeting of \_\_\_\_\_. (minutes in the appendix)

The Nottawa Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Master Plan Update (minutes in the appendix) on \_\_\_\_\_ and voted to recommend the plan to the Township Board on \_\_\_\_\_.

The Nottawa Township Board approved the 2019 Nottawa Township Master Plan Update on \_\_\_\_\_.



**CERTIFICATION:**

I, the undersigned duly qualified Clerk of Nottawa Township, St. Joseph County, Michigan do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the 2021 Master Plan and Future Land Use Map adopted by the Township Board of Trustees of the Township of Nottawa, County of St. Joseph, Michigan at a regular meeting held on [MONTH \_\_, 2021] at [7:00P.M]. prevailing Eastern Time and that said meeting was conducted and public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976.

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[name], Clerk

## APPENDIX

DRAFT