

# Akron Township Master Plan 2002



## Special Thanks to Planning Commissioners:

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The Akron Township Master Plan was adopted by the  
Planning Commission on November 26, 2002.



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Akron Township's Master Plan will provide an overall perspective of the future and provide guidance for future decisions.

# Introduction



Located in northwest Tuscola County, Akron Township is predominately an agricultural community. This area of the county was originally settled in the early 1800s by Ebenezer Davis, a lumberman from New York. Already an agricultural area, the forest fires that swept through the region in the late 1800s spurred the expansion of farming in the area. Akron Township was chartered in 1856.

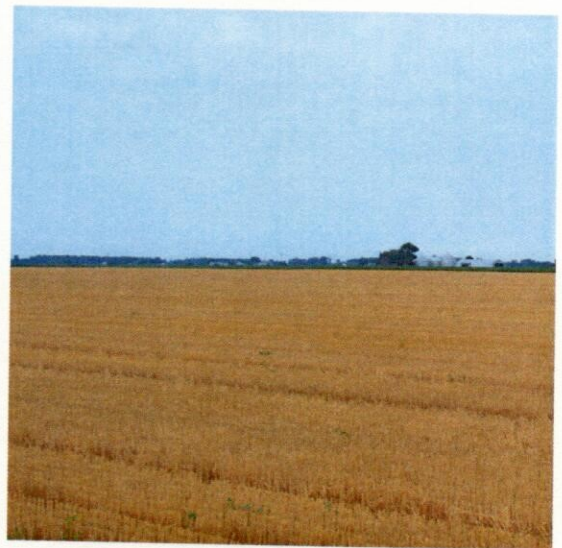
This plan intends to capture the goals, objectives and plans for Akron Township by gathering the thoughts of its residents, examining the land and its history and organizing the information in a way that can be easily understood.

The purpose of all Master Plans is to actively seek the participation of residents and stakeholders in order to establish goals and objectives for the future of the community. Specifically, Akron Township's Master Plan will:

- Provide an overall perspective of the future
- Develop a future land use map
- Guide the limited resources of the Township in the most efficient manner
- Improve the physical environment of the Township to the benefit of its residents

**This plan is intended to serve as a guide for the Township and its residents - guiding zoning decisions, capital improvements and helping to define community character.**

- Identify, and where appropriate, protect distinct natural resources within the Township
- Provide guidance for future zoning decisions
- Develop a clear picture of community character



Akron Township Agriculture.

# Regional location



With nearly 34,000 acres, Akron Township is the largest Township in Tuscola County - a total of 52.7 square miles. Akron Township extends furthest into Saginaw Bay of all Tuscola County and has some of the County's most extensive coastline, bordering Lake Huron or the Saginaw Bay. Fish Point Wildlife Area covers nearly the entire northern border of the township, providing a wildlife refuge for water fowl and fish.

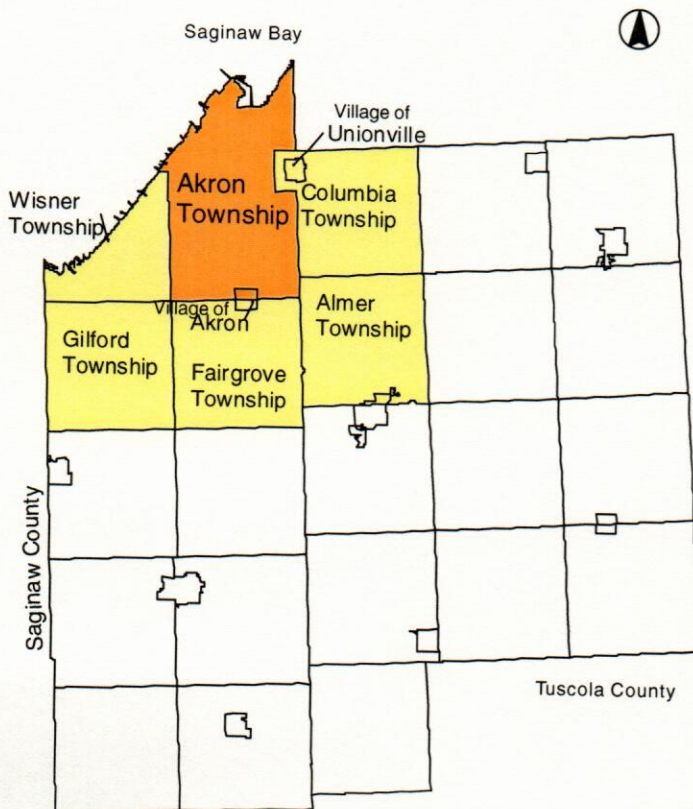
A portion of the Village of Akron is located within the Township limits and the Village of Unionville is located just east of the Township. The Township is bordered by Wisner Township to the west, Gilford Township to the southwest, the Village of Akron

and Fairgrove Township to the south, and Almer Township and Columbia Township to the southeast and east.

The closest opportunities for regional shopping are located in Bay City (20 miles away), Saginaw (30 miles away) or Caro (12 miles away).

There are two major thoroughfares in the Township, M-24 and M-25. M-24 runs north-south along the eastern border of the Township and M-25 runs east-west through the central portion of the Township. Sebewaing Airport, located in the northernmost tip of the Township, is the nearest airport.

The location of a community commonly influences the type, size and intensity of land uses, ranging from residential development to industrial land uses. In the case of Akron Township, its miles of Lake Huron coastline and vast agricultural lands are defining characteristics that keep the Township relatively rural despite its close proximity to two villages and Saginaw County.



# Existing Characteristics



This portion of the Master Plan provides a basis of trends and current conditions on which to base future decisions. Population and other demographic trends are researched, evaluated and analyzed. The characteristics of a population, such as age, and other features such as the type and quality of housing in the Township, will help to shape the needs, goals and objectives of this plan.

## Population

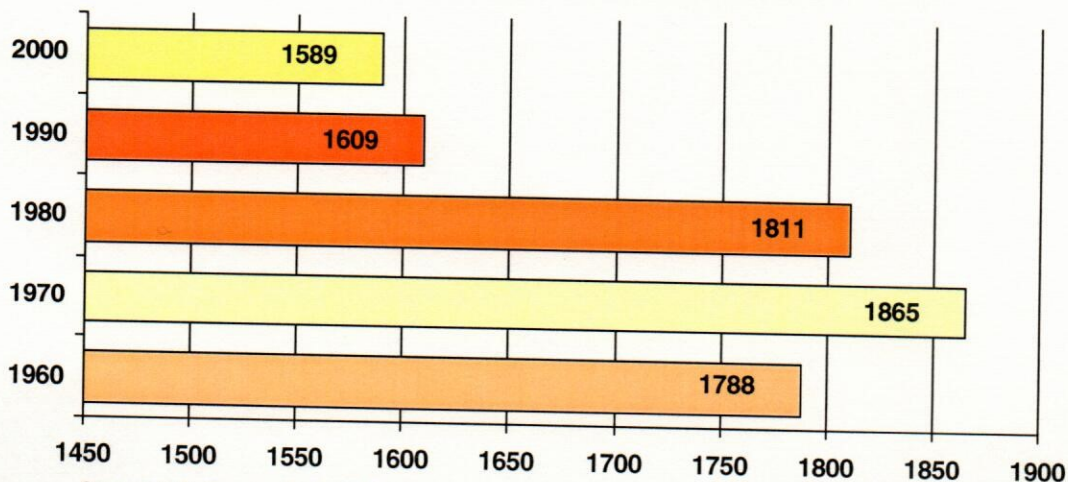
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Akron Township has total of 1,589 residents. In 1990, the Township's population was 1.2% higher at 1,609. Current projections for this area show a continued but slow decrease in population, buffered by small growth spurts. Because of the composition of the Township in terms of age, it is expected that within the next ten years the growth of the Township will decrease

**The Township has maintained a very stable population base over the past forty years.**

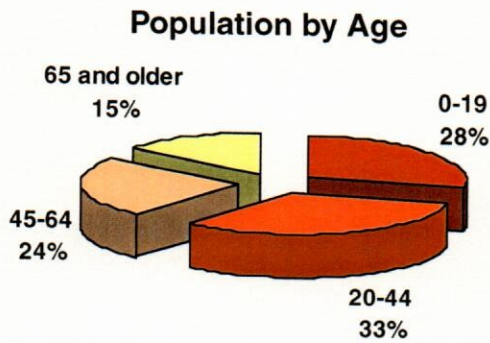
slightly but remain stable.

The two largest population groups in the Township consist of those between the ages of 20 to 44 at 33%, and those 19 and younger at 28%. These figures closely reflect both State and County trends. Census 2000 information shows the State of Michigan with 36% of its population in the 20 to 44 category, and the County with 32% and both the State and the County show 29% of residents in the 19 and younger age group. The needs and characteristics of these age groups are significant when

### Population History and Forecast



Source: U.S. Census Data 1960 - 2000



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

The age of the residents in Akron Township, the majority, 61% under the age of 44, presents a picture of a young and active Township. This influences level and types of land uses in the area.

planning the Township's future.

Population by sex in Akron Township is almost evenly divided, with 51% of the population being represented by men, and 49% by women. These figures are the inverse of both State and County figures which show women at 51% of the population and men at 49%.

When the Township is examined by race, the 2000 Census data shows the Township as mostly white at 97%. The remaining residents identified themselves as black (0.2%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.8%), Asian (0.2%), some other race or (1.8%). Hispanic origin is considered an ethnicity and therefore is not reflected in the above race categories. A

#### Percentage of Population by Race Comparison

Population by Race	
White	97%
Black	0.20%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.80%
Asian	0.20%
Some other Race	1.80%

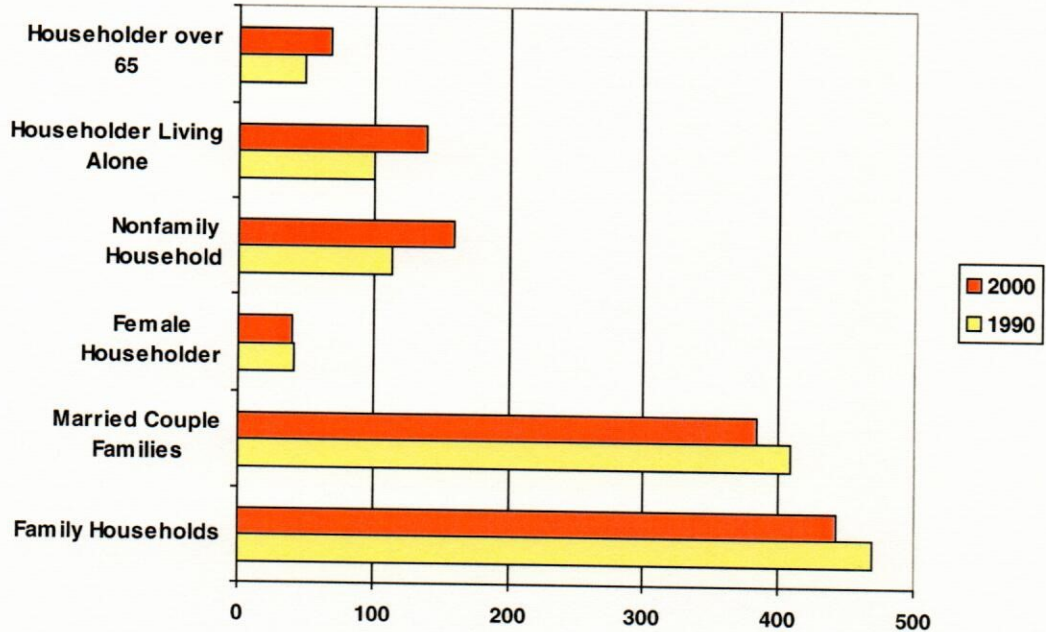
Source: 2000 U.S. Census

total of 4.6% identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin. Between 1990 and 2000 the characteristics of the Township when examined by race have not significantly changed, although small increases in the Hispanic population. A total of 1.3% of residents also noted that they identified themselves as being of two or more races. The primary difference between the 1990 and 2000 information is that 2000 Census provided residents with an opportunity to identify their races as two or more races.

#### Households

Within Akron Township there are a total of 583 households with an average of 2.58 persons per household. A household contains one or more people - everyone living in a household together comprises a household. Since the 1970s, the United States has seen dramatic changes in households. The number of married families with children has decreased while the number of single mothers with children

### Households by Group 1990 and 2000



Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

increased. Additionally, the median age at which people first married increased. These changes in household are results of an aging population, population growth and changes in the way people make decisions about how and where they live. Akron Township reflects many of these changes.

Clear trends emerge when comparing 2000 Census data to 1990 Census data. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of family households in Akron Township decreased from 80.4% to 73.4%. Family households are classified as having at least two members who are related by blood, marriage or adoption, one of whom is the householder. Following national trends, a

slight increase was seen in female-headed households and a decrease was seen in the number of family households with children under the age of 18.

As families decreased, the number of non-family households (persons living along or sharing a unit with a non-related person) increased. The number of persons per household has also decreased, from 2.76 persons per household in 1990 to 2.58 persons per household in 2000. The changes in households in Akron Township reflect an increase in the number of unrelated people sharing homes and a decrease in the number and size of families. These demographic shifts will affect the



development and growth patterns of Akron Township and will influence the type of development and quality of life its residents seek.

### Housing

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there is a total of 767 housing units in Akron Township. Between 1990 and 2000, a total of forty six structures were constructed in the Township. A total of 79% of the housing units in Akron Township are occupied and 21% are vacant. Vacant includes some homes used only for seasonal or recreational use . Within the Township, seasonal or recreation use homes account for a total of 120 homes, or 15.6 % of all vacant houses.

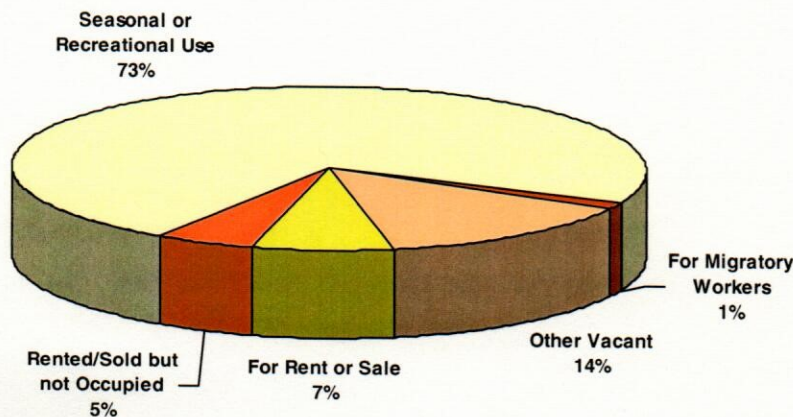
In Tuscola County, 92% of housing units are occupied and 8% are unoccupied or vacant. At the State level, 89%, are occupied, leaving 11% unoccupied or vacant.

**The level of vacant homes in Akron Township is misleading, as 120 of the 165 vacant housing units are used for seasonal and/or recreational use, leaving the truly vacant homes at 45.**

It is important to understand homeownership rates when considering future land use and potential demand for residential construction. Typically, communities with a higher homeowner occupancy have a more stable population and people are less migratory, meaning they stay in the Township for longer periods of time. High rental occupancy usually denotes shorter-term residents in the Township and traditionally a less stable population base. In Akron Township, 86% or 519 units, are owner-

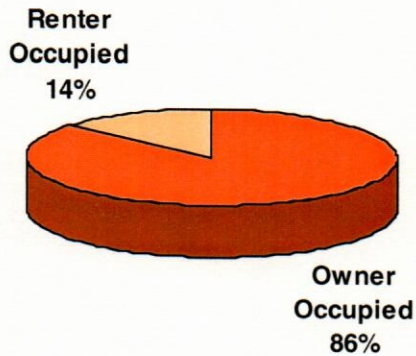
occupied. Rental units account for the remaining 83 units, or 14% of houses in the Township. The high number of homeowner occupied housing units in the Township denotes a more stable population base and typically residents who are committed to improving the Township and their own quality of life.

**Vacant Housing Units by Type**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

### Housing Tenure



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

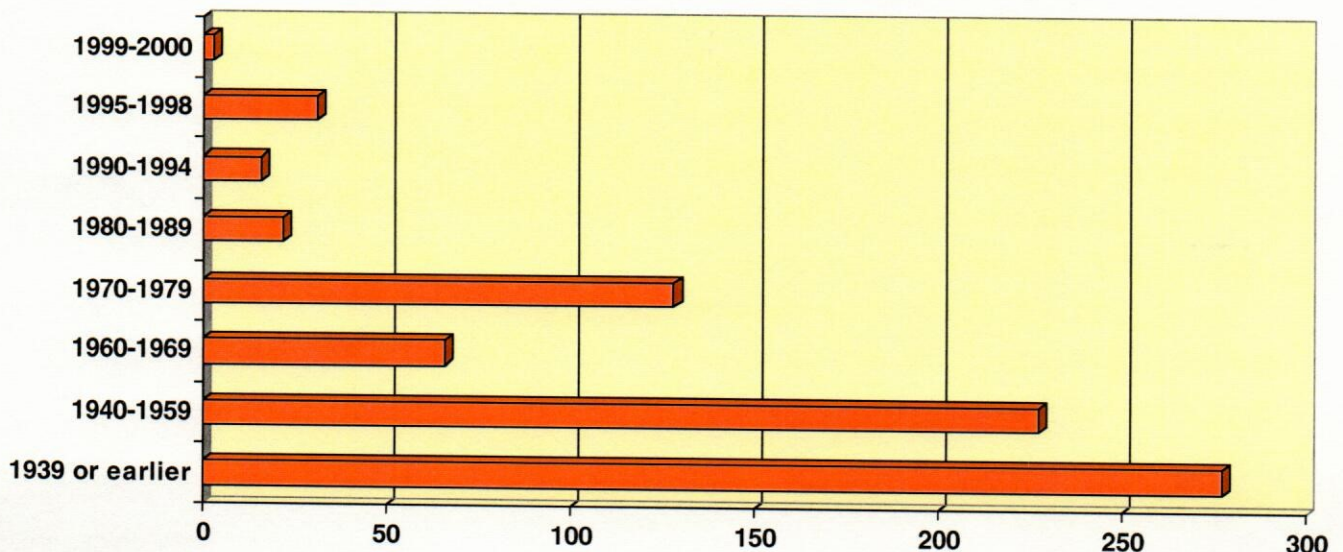
The type of housing available in the Township varies. The majority of structures in the Township were built prior to 1939. Between 1995 and March of 2000, there has been an increase in the number of housing units, with 34 constructed. This is consistent with population trends, which show fewer residents, and fewer people per home in this area.

More than 65% of the housing stock in Akron Township is fairly old, constructed prior to 1959. However, between 1995 and 2000, 34 new homes were constructed.

### Employment

Employment trends are calculated using the Township's work force. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 58% of the residents over the age of 16 are considered part of the work force. There is no typical occupation for residents in Akron Township. The largest portion of the work force, approximately 25%, report themselves as working as general laborers or in transportation

### Age of Housing Stock by Year of Construction



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

related jobs. The remaining residents classify themselves as employed in technical and administrative positions (22%), executive/professional related jobs (20%), manufacturing and production related occupations, (17%) and service occupations (15%). The remaining 1% of the work force classify themselves as farmers.

The commute to work for the typical Akron Township resident is 31.2 minutes. This is slightly more than Tuscola County residents as a whole, whose commute time averages 30.3 minutes. This is an important factor to consider when discussing and determining land use for the Township, as it appears the majority of employment takes place outside the confines of the Township. In this sense, Akron Township is the bedroom community for more developed areas, most likely providing its residents a more rural and relaxed quality of life as opposed to economic and employment opportunities.

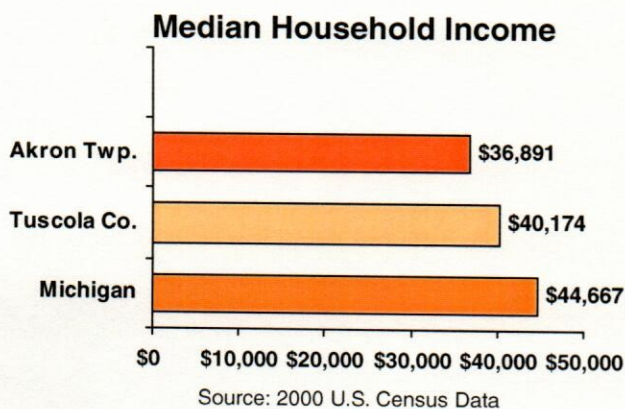
Unemployment is not significantly different for the Township when compared to the State of Michigan. According to the State of Michigan's Office of Labor Market

**Akron Township residents commute averages 31.2 minutes. This signals the Township as a bedroom community - more focused on quality of life than development and job growth.**

Information, unemployment for the Township is at a year to date average of 5.3%, as calculated through December 2001. This is close to the State average of 5.7%.

### Income

The median household income is a measure that shows the income level at which half of all households are above and half are below. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, median household income levels for the Township are below both the State and County figures as indicated below. The State's median income is \$44,667. The median household income graph shows the total of all income received by a household, regardless of source. Akron Township's median income is \$36,891.



### Poverty

Approximately 6.2% of all families in the Township are living below poverty level. The Census uses a national guideline called a threshold, to determine poverty

level. The threshold varies not by regional location but by the size and composition of a family. The Census considers money intake before taxes and does not count noncash benefits, such as housing or Medicaid, when making its determination. The number of families in the Township below the poverty level is higher than Tuscola County, which has 5.4% of families living below the poverty level.

### Transportation

Roads within the Township are classified on a National Functional Classification System. This classification is the grouping of roads, streets and highways in a hierarchy based on the type of highway service they provide. Generally, streets and highways perform two types of service, either traffic mobility or land access. Arterial roads, such as M-25 or Bay Park Road, emphasize movement of traffic. In general, vehicles traveling this type of road move at a faster speed and travel greater distances compared to roads of other classes. The next class of roads, collector roads, collect traffic from local roads and provide connection to arterial roads. Roads classified as either arterial or collector roads are also called Federal-aid highways, as they may be eligible to receive federal monies.

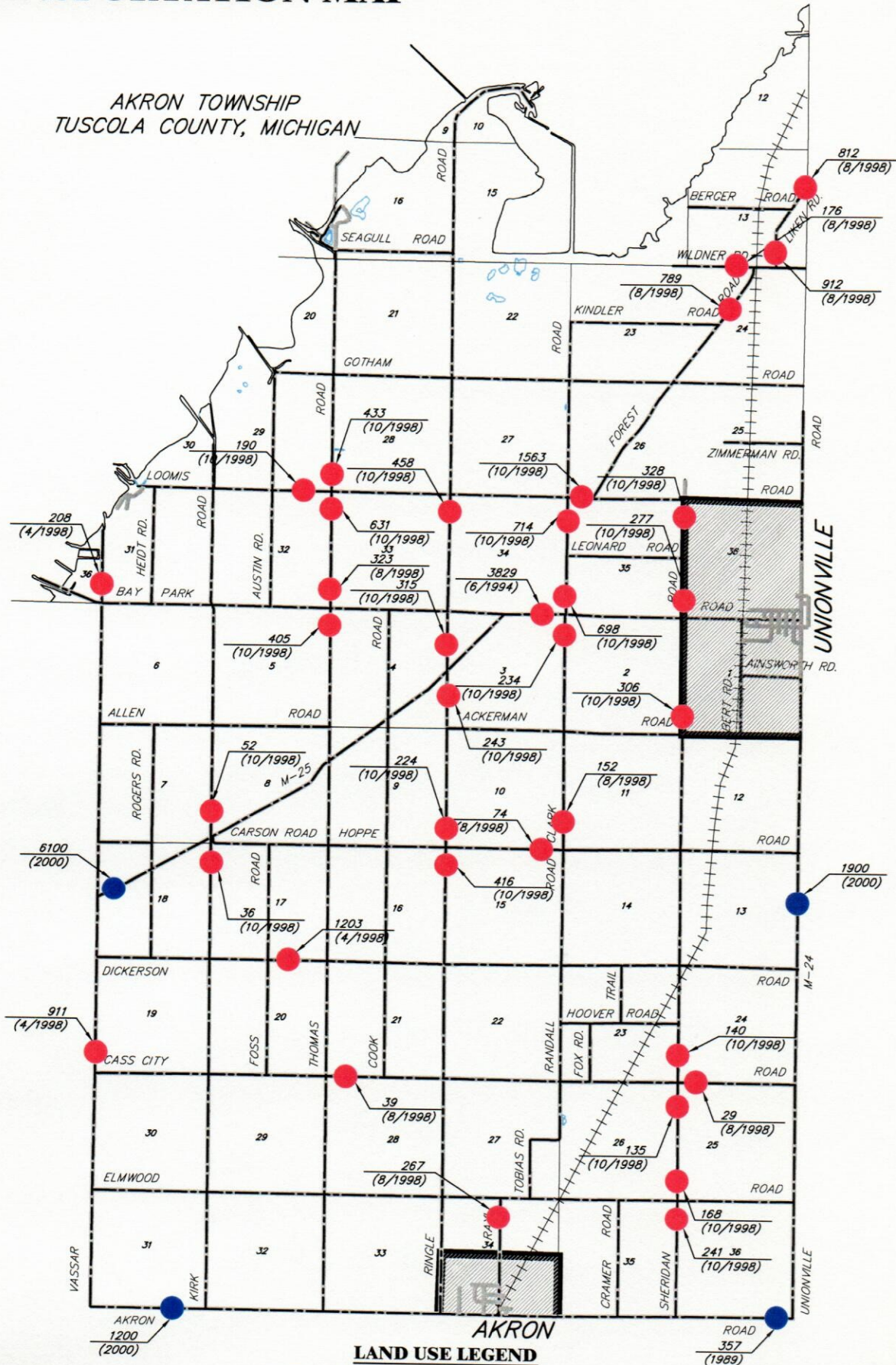
M-25 or Bay Park Road runs north and east through the Township. This State highway has the highest average daily

traffic (ADT) count in the Township of 6,100 vehicles. The count was taken in 2000 at a point along M-25 west of Rogers Road near the western border of the Township. Average daily traffic count is determined by MDOT and count bidirectional traffic in one specific location during a 24 hour period. The only other arterial road in the Township, M-24, runs north to south along the eastern border of the Township. Collector roads in Akron Township include all roads in and around both M-25 and M-24. These roads "feed" traffic to the local highways. The county road with the highest daily traffic count, 1,563 vehicles, is Loomis Road. The count was taken at a point between Randall Road and Forest Road in October of 1998.



# TRANSPORTATION MAP

AKRON TOWNSHIP  
TUSCOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN



- LAND USE LEGEND**
- # OF VEHICLES (YEAR COUNTED)  
MDOT TRAFFIC VOLUME, BI-DIRECTIONAL FOR A 24 HOUR PERIOD
  - # OF VEHICLES (YEAR COUNTED)  
ROAD COMMISSION MDOT TRAFFIC VOLUME, BI-DIRECTIONAL  
FOR A 24 HOUR PERIOD

# Natural Features



Within Akron Township there are several features that are inherent and unchangeable to its location within the State - its climate, soils, and water features.

Each of these natural features influences the type, location and intensity of development that can occur. This section describes in detail the climate, soils, and water features in the Township and how each relates to land use and planning.

## Climate

The climate in Akron Township is typical for the region, and in general, for the lower peninsula of Michigan. However, its location on Lake Huron produces a number of specific effects on the Township ranging from cooler weather to more precipitation than other areas in the region.

The following statistics and recorded



Looking north over Lake Huron.

**Akron Township's location in Michigan, specifically on the shores of Lake Huron, means the community experiences cooler weather and more precipitation than other areas in the State.**

data were taken at the Village of Sebewaing, approximately 3 miles northwest of Akron Township. As Akron Township is located directly on Lake Huron, the Township experiences much cooler summer temperatures averaging about 69 degrees Fahrenheit. Because the daily weather varies with the movement of the pressure system, the Township seldom experience periods of long extreme hot or cold temperatures. In addition, there is better than average snowfall of 33.6 inches in the winter. The annual precipitation is roughly 26 inches. The precipitation during the farming season, April to September, is on an average of 15.91 inches, thus giving adequate moisture to the crops. The average number of days for the growing season, from the first day of spring to the first frost, is 122 days. The prevailing southerly winds come off the lake at an

average of 10 miles per hour, with the highest wind speed recorded at 81 m.p.h..

### Soil Conditions

The type and quality of soil can be a determining factor when considering where to locate different types and intensities of residential, commercial and industrial development. The last soil survey in Tuscola County was performed in 1978. This map details the type of soil and its general limitations. Prior to any development, soil conditions should be properly evaluated to ensure that it meets any requirements for things such as septic systems, stability, foundations and more.

There are four soil associations or soil types, within Akron Township:

- Parkhill Londo
- Roscommon Brevort
- Rubicon/Roscommon Split
- Parkhill Tappan

Parkhill Londo is the largest soil association in the Township and located primarily in the south and eastern portion of the Township, moving north just past Unionville. This soil association includes poorly drained soils that are developed in loam or silt loam. These soils are nearly flat and have an overlying base of clay. The water table is at or near the surface throughout the year. This soil type has a high crop adaptability when artificial drainage is

**Soil conditions are often a determining factor in where development can take place and how intense it can be. Poor soils can prevent the installation of septic systems and foundations.**

provided. However, there is a poor to fair adaptability for farm machinery during wet periods.

Rubicon and Roscommon Split association is the second largest soil association and is located through the northwest section of the Township and in a small block along the eastern border, north of Unionville. These are well drained soils that occur on nearly level to gently sloping low dunes, outwash and lake plains, which are developed in deep, medium sands. This soil type has narrow crop adaptability unless irrigated. In addition, it has low natural fertility and wind erosion problems.

Roscommon Brevort soils are located throughout the central portion of the Township and stretch northerly from the eastern border to the northeasternmost tip of the Township, generally following M-25 and Forest Road. These soils occur on nearly level to depressional areas in till plains, moraines and lake plains. The water table



is high throughout the year in these soils. Crops yielded in this association require artificial drainage and have fair to good bearing during the wet period for farm machinery.

Parkhill Tappan soils are located along the northern border of the Township along Saginaw Bay. These soils are nearly flat and are somewhat poorly drained, developed in sand and loamy sand. The water table is at or near the surface throughout the year. This soil type has wide crop adaptability, requiring artificial drainage for optimum crop yields.

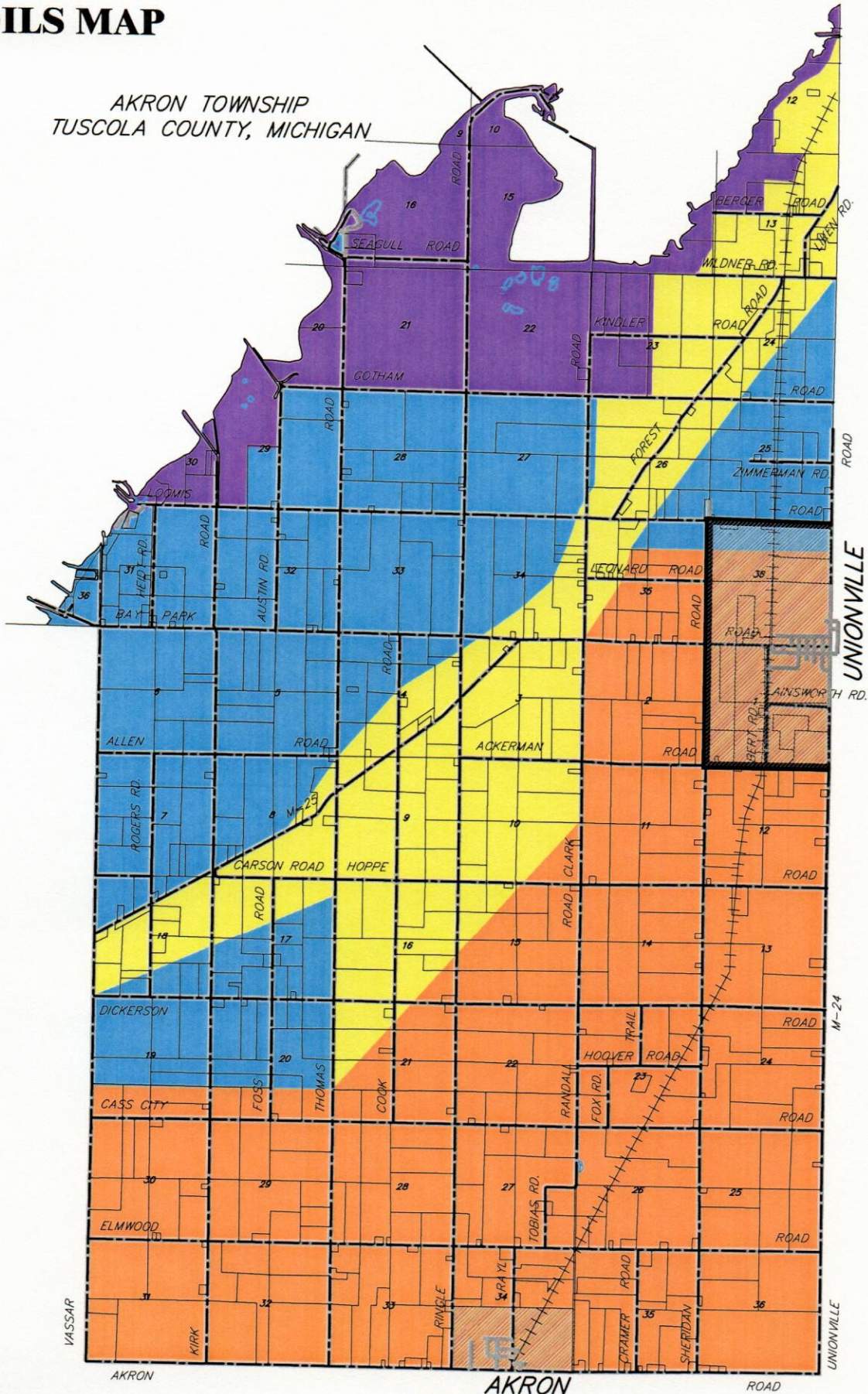


Much of the Township is well suited for farming, but requires extensive drainage, like this channel drain shown above.



# SOILS MAP

AKRON TOWNSHIP  
TUSCOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN



## AKRON SOIL LEGEND

- |                                                                                     |                     |                                                                                     |                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | PARKHILL LONDO      |  | - RUBICON & ROSCOMMON SPLIT |
|  | - ROSCOMMON BREVORT |  | PARKHILL-TAPPAN             |

# Existing Land Use



Existing land use provides a picture of how the Township is currently using its land. The way land is used often can explain why certain areas have residential or commercial development patterns and still other areas have no clear land use development pattern. It is important to recognize the difference between land use and zoning. Zoning regulates the intensity of use allowed, while land use provides a snapshot of how the land is actually being used. It is important to study existing land use because it often provides detail as to development trends and demands.

Existing land use is determined using several techniques. In Akron Township, given the large tracts of agricultural land, the planning consultants used aerial photos to rough in the inaccessible tracts of land, verify bodies of water and locations of roads. A driving survey, which took place in the summer of 2002, followed the initial mapping. During a driving survey, the consultants travel every road in the Township and code each land use, highlighting aspects that will influence the future land use and planning process. These aspects may include unusual land forms, nonconforming uses, nuisance features, road configuration or

**It is important to recognize the difference between land use and zoning: zoning regulates the intensity of the use allowed, while land use provides a snapshot of how land is used now.**

other unique features in the Township.

The land uses in the Township are divided into eight classifications for purposes of mapping. The Township is 52.7 square miles. Acreage in the charts does not add up to exactly that of a 52.7 square mile Township due to roads and water bodies.



Agriculture is the Township's largest land use - accounting for 84% of all the land in the Township.



## Land Use Classifications

### Agricultural

This land use comprises all land currently being farmed or used for grazing.

### Commercial

All retail and business enterprises are contained in this land use category.

### Industrial

Included in this category is land used for processing, manufacturing, fabricating, assembling materials, or for the outside storage of equipment and materials.

### Institutional/Public

Land area in this category is used for public and government buildings, parks and cemeteries. Schools, both public and pri-



Fish Point Wildlife State Game Area is mostly classified as vacant or wooded land. It is expected that this area will be held in perpetuity by the Department of Natural Resources.

**Agricultural land use accounts for 84% of the land in Akron Township. Vacant and wooded land account for more than 10% of land area, in part because of Fish Point State Wildlife Area.**

vate, as well as churches, are included in this classification. This category also includes utility easements, road right-of-way, and other infrastructure requiring land, like lagoons, and pump stations.

### Residential

All land used for residential housing is included in this category

### Woodlot

This category includes all the densely treed areas within the Township.

### Wildlife Area

The wildlife area is state-owned property, called the Fish Point State Wildlife Area and held in perpetuity. It is reasonable to expect that this land will be held as a wildlife area, without significant development. This is due to the state control and to the existing conditions which

make intense development unlikely, such as soil conditions. Though the wildlife area is not a land use per say, it is shown on the existing land use map to delineate the specific area over which the State Department of Natural Resources has control.

The exact land use within the state area is shown as well and ranges from commercial to residential, vacant and wooded. The Fish Point State Wildlife Area is divided into two sections, the Refuge and the Wildlife Area. The area is further delineated by whether or not it is actively managed. The refuge itself and the northernmost portions of the wildlife area located in the center of the Township are managed. The remainder of the state controlled property is not.

**There is limited development in Akron Township - commercial and industrial land is scarce, especially when you consider the size of the Township.**

**Vacant**

All vacant or undeveloped parcels are included in this category. Farm land which is fallow may also be included.

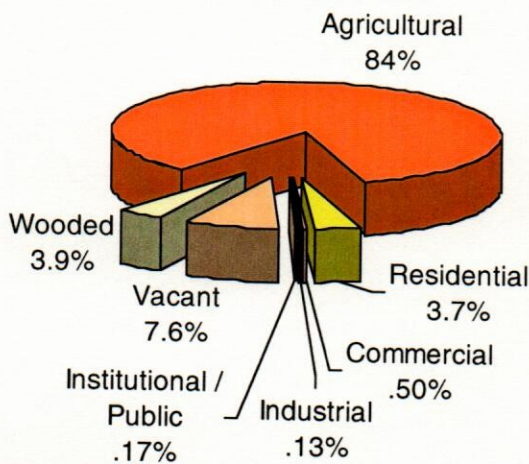
**Land Use Analysis  
Agricultural**

Agricultural land use in Akron Township is by far the largest land use. Land actively used for farming or pasture comprises 84% of the land within Akron Township. Aside from the northernmost reaches of the Township where Fish Point State Wildlife area is located, agricultural land is the dominate land use in every section of the Township.

**Commercial**

Commercial land use within Akron Township is infrequent and scattered. As would be expected there are some commercial land uses along the most heavily

**Existing Land Use  
by Category and Percent**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

traveled road in the Township, M-25, but they are relatively few. Commercial land areas also exist in the Village of Akron, which is adjacent to the Township. The lack of a strong commercial area within the Township points to the fact that the majority of the residents in the Township seek goods and services elsewhere, most likely in Bay City, Caro, and Sebawaing.

### Industrial

There are only a few sites in Akron Township currently used for industrial purposes, all located in the southeastern portion of the Township, near the railroad tracks and relatively close to the Village of Akron. Limited industrial development in the Township is tied to the fact that, for the most part, the Township is a “bedroom community,” providing quality of life over economic opportunities. Additionally, intense or large scale industrial development requires costly infrastructure, including all weather roads, sewer, water, and high pressure gas.

### Institutional/Public

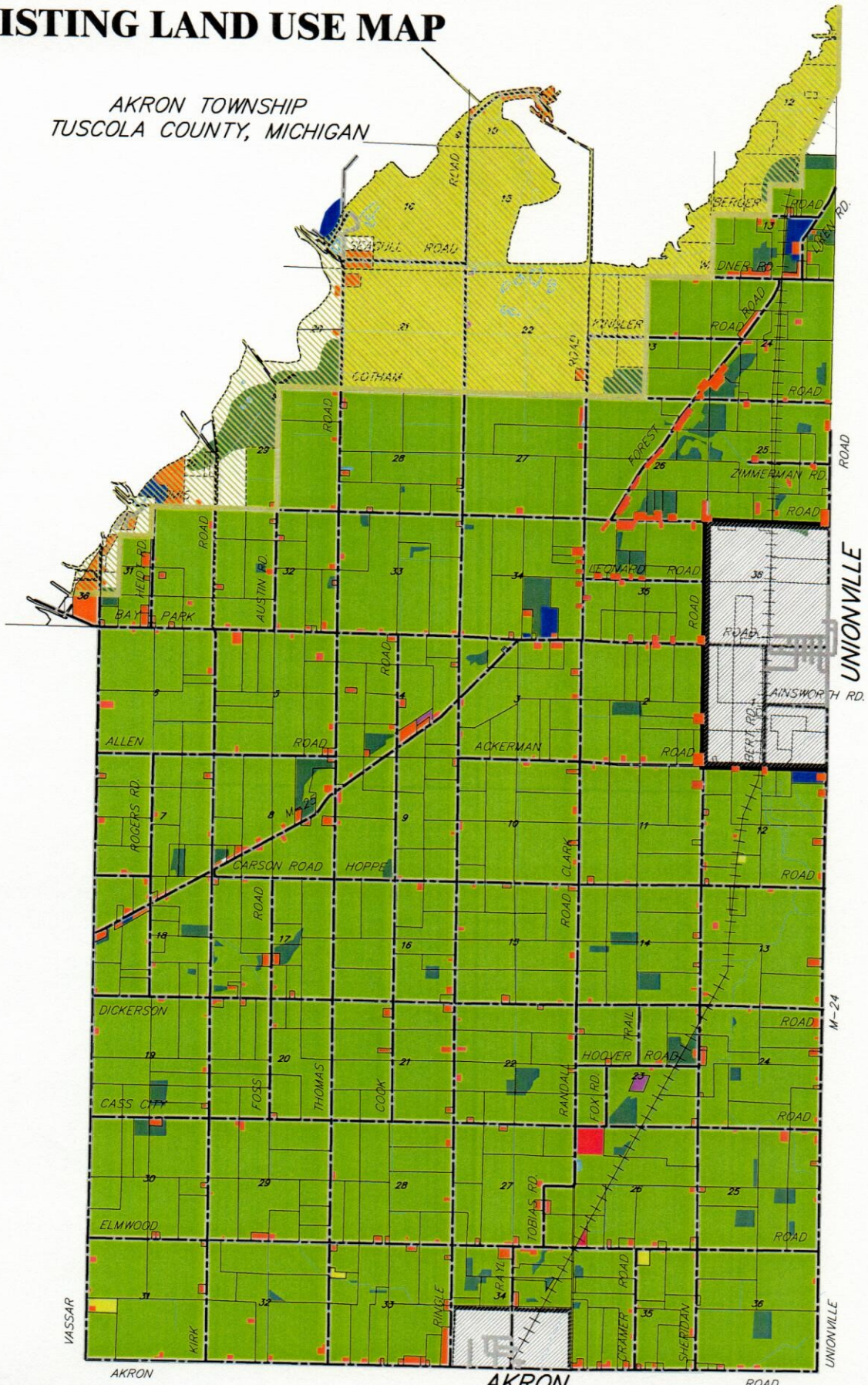
This land use too has just a few scattered locations. Institutional and public uses include the Township facilities along with churches and other public and semi-public places.

Land Use Category	Acreage
Agricultural	27,450
Commercial	154
Industrial	43
Institutional/Public	57
Residential	1204
Vacant	2492
Wooded	1295
<b>Total</b>	<b>32695</b>









Source: Spicer Group Driving Survey, Summer 2002

# EXISTING LAND USE MAP

AKRON TOWNSHIP  
TUSCOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN



## AKRON LAND USE LEGEND

- |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  - AGRICULTURAL |  - INDUSTRIAL    |  - RESIDENTIAL   |  - VACANT   |
|  - COMMERCIAL   |  - INSTITUTIONAL |  - WILDLIFE AREA |  - WOOD LOT |

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SOURCE: SPICER GROUP DRIVE STUDY, SUMMER 2002



# Community Participation



For a Master Plan to be implemented, it is important that the plan is based on the thoughts, wants and opinions of residents and stakeholders. In order to glean this information in Akron Township, several methods were used: a mailed survey, Steering Committee Workshops and a public hearing.

## Survey

A total of 500 surveys were mailed to a randomly selected group of households in Akron Township. The surveys were mailed, with instructions and a postage-paid envelope allowing two weeks for return. The survey resulted in a 42% return rate. The survey itself is divided into several sections:

- classification questions, concerning age of survey respondents and how long they have lived in the Township
- general questions, relating to broad

**The residential survey conducted for this Plan in Akron Township resulted in a 42% return rate. Most of those responding were 45 years or older and had lived in the Township 20 years or more.**

land use and development issues

- questions relating to specific types of development and land use, including residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses
- a section pertaining to respondents views on Township regulations, such as private property maintenance

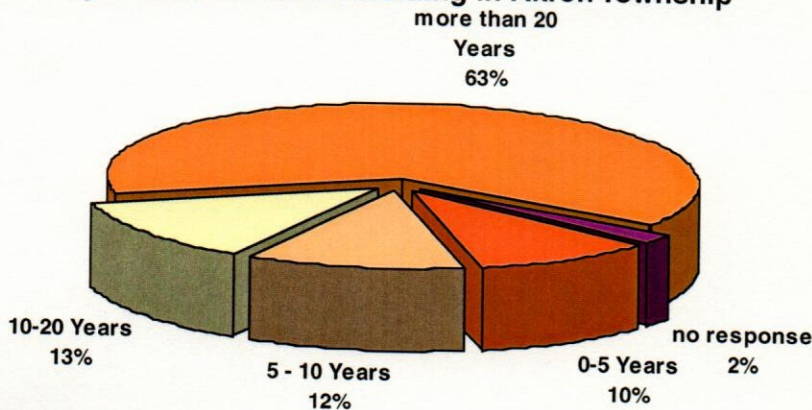
The majority, 79%, of all survey respondents were 45 years old or older. Additionally, more than 60% of the survey respondents have lived in the Township or more than 20 years. As most of the survey respondents were older,

only 23% had school age children residing with them.

The survey was designed to give respondents the opportunity to choose their opinion on a scale:

- strongly agree
- agree
- no opinion

**Survey Respondents by Number of Years Residing in Akron Township**



Source: Akron Township Residential Survey, 2002

- disagree
  - strongly disagree
- people to rate their views and place them into the most appropriate category. For many of the survey responses, a significant number of respondents choose no opinion.

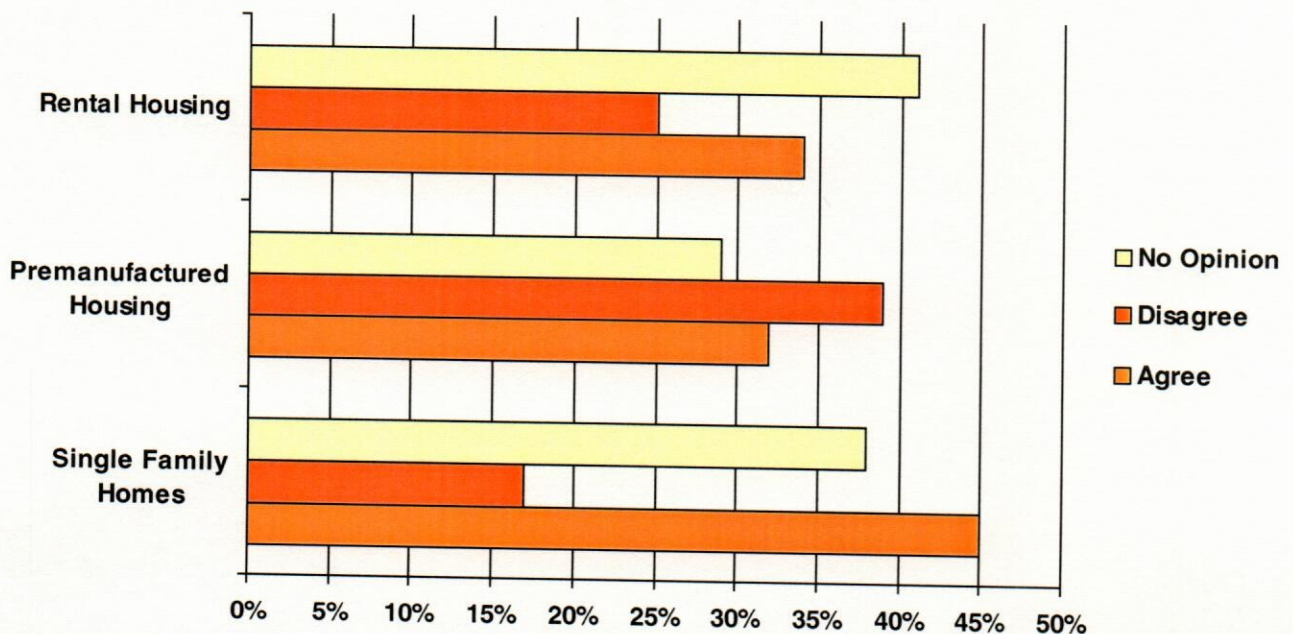
### Growth and Development Issues

In general, the majority of survey respondents supported growth and development across a broad range of issues - including commercial development and additional housing. More than 50% of residents agree that Akron Township should grow in population and development and that the Township should plan to provide water and sewer services in key areas. A

total of 19% of survey respondents disagreed, and about 20% of residents had no opinion. When asked if Akron Township should expand in the tourism area in relation to fishing and hunting, a total of 59% agreed, while 23% had no opinion.

When specifically asked about residential growth, 45% of respondents agreed that the Township should plan for more single family homes, 38% had no opinion and 17% disagreed. Less clear was opinions in terms of other housing options, including apartments and pre-manufactured housing. When asked if the Township should plan for a pre-manufactured home site, 32% agreed, 39% disagreed and 29% had no opinion. Apartments drew a similar re-

**Survey: Should additional housing growth be planned?  
by type**



Source: Akron Township Residential Survey, 2002



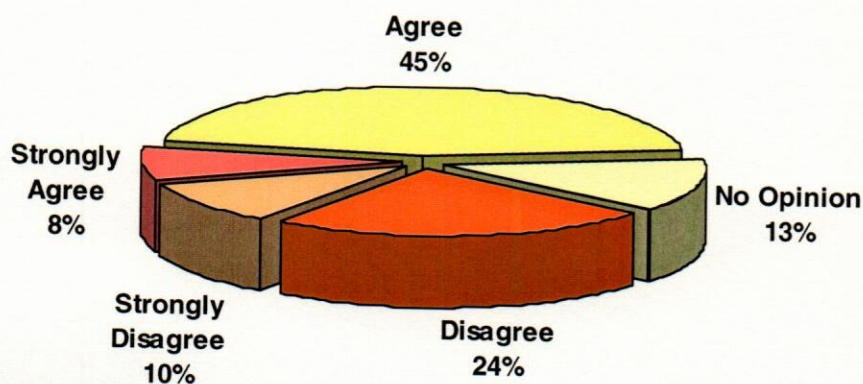


response, with 34% agreeing that the township should plan for additional rental housing, while 24% disagreed and 41% had no opinion.

Throughout the survey, there was strong support for the growth and expansion of the Township commercial uses. More than 75% of respondents agreed that some commercial growth is needed. When asked where the commercial growth should occur, respondents identified M-25, with 65% agreeing with commercial development along the state highway corridor. A total of 78% of respondents agreed with the concept of service businesses, such as personal care and groceries, being planned near residential areas.

Industrial development received strong support from those residents who completed and returned the survey. Given adequate roads and other utilities, 70% of respondents agreed that new light industrial

**Survey: It is acceptable to use some agricultural land for development?**



Source: Akron Township Residential Survey, 2002

**Quality of life issues, like agriculture importance and rural character, received high support from survey respondents. 94% of all respondents agree agriculture is an important feature.**

development should be planned. More than 65% of residents expressed that industrial development should occur near commercial areas.

### Quality of Life Issues

Open space, rural character and property maintenance are all issues which fall under the broad category of "Quality of Life." These issues are often less tangible than items like housing, and commercial and industrial development.

Within the Township there is over-

whelming opinion regarding agriculture as a significant feature in the Township. A total of 94% of all respondents agreed that agriculture is an important feature of the Township, none disagreed and 6% had no opinion. Further, a total of 89% of respondents agreed that agricultural land should be preserved. Four percent of



respondents disagreed and 7% had no opinion. When asked if it is acceptable to use some agricultural land for development, the issue became divided, with 53% agreeing, 34% disagreeing, and 13% having no opinion.

In terms of blight and property maintenance, the residents who responded to the survey clearly agreed that maintenance of property is important. A total of 76% of respondents agreed that there should be a restriction on the number of inoperable vehicles on private property and 89% agreed that private property should be

maintained to avoid nuisances, eyesores and health or safety hazards.

#### Written Comments

At the end of the survey, there were three open ended questions. They provided residents with the opportunity to explain

**When asked what they dislike about Akron Township, the most common written response was “nothing.” This statement shows support for the Township’s current quality of life.**



The quality and condition of the roads, including gravel versus pavement, was mentioned as a dislike in the residential survey.



what they like about the Township, what they dislike and why they live there. When asked what they like about the Township, the four most commonly received answers were:

- quiet atmosphere
- the people in the community
- nature and/or natural environment
- rural character

The response given more than any other was that respondents live in Akron Township because of its rural character. When asked what they dislike, the four most commonly received answers included:

- water quality
- blight (dilapidated housing, etc.)
- road quality and pavement
- nothing

The single most common written response to this question was that there was nothing in the Township that they disliked. When asked why they lived in Akron Township, the most common responses included:

- quiet
- born there
- the people in the community

The single most common response was that the respondent was born in the Township. This lends to the fact that most survey respondents had lived in the community for 20 years or more and were 45

years of age or older. This statement, and the fact that the most common response to what respondents disliked about Akron Township was nothing, shows a strong community commitment and general satisfaction with the existing quality of life.



# Goals and Objectives



Goals are an important component of the master plan, in that they indicate what should change and what should stay the same. Based upon input from the community survey, the Planning Commission has developed the following goals and actions for Akron Township. Some of these goals can be achieved through the zoning ordinance.

## **Goal: Maintain the rural character of the Township**

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey listed “quiet, rural character” or “peaceful feeling” as their favorite thing about the township.

### **Actions:**

- Control growth through planning and zoning mechanisms.
- Develop conservation development ordinance and incentives for preserving and protecting open space in planned developments. Conservation development ordinances direct how land can be developed into housing units. A typical ordinance specifies issues such as minimum lot size, how the land can be cleared, and it may give incentives for clustering housing together in order to preserve some open space within the development.

**Goals and objectives will provide the direction needed to improve the Township where and when needed and to preserve it as dictated by the wants and needs of its residents.**

## **Goal: Preserve Agricultural Land**

Township residents feel that farm land is a very important part of Akron Township. They were very united in their opinion that it was important to preserve the agricultural land in the Township.

### **Actions:**

- Examine zoning ordinance to ensure proper definition and description of agricultural use.
- Investigate the purchase of Property Development Rights and the potential for implementing a program in the township.
- Ensure agricultural machinery has fair access to the roadways.



### **Goal: Plan residential growth**

Residents have indicated that they do not want the Township to turn into a “city atmosphere” but that some residential growth is desirable.

#### **Actions:**

- Examine current lot size requirements.
- Determine residential development areas.
- Develop conservation development ordinance and incentives for preserving and protecting open space in planned developments. (See explanation under “Maintain rural character of township” above.)

### **Goal: Improve Community Services and Infrastructure**

Many residents and some planning commission members felt that there was room for improvement in the Township road system. Many survey respondents also commented on the need for better drinking water.

#### **Actions:**

- Develop a six-year Capital Improvement Schedule
- Work closely with the Tuscola County Road Commission to see to it that the Township receives its fair share of road funds.
- Eliminate hazardous traffic situations.
- Investigate ways to improve drinking water quality in the Township.

### **Goal: Preserve the Township’s recreational and wildlife land**

With several miles of shoreline and the State Wildlife area, recreational opportunities abound in Akron Township.

#### **Actions:**

- Develop a 5-year Recreation Plan.
- Enhance waterfront access.
- Zone for limited development in these areas.

### **Goal: Plan for commercial growth in key areas**

Many residents felt a need for more commercial use in the Township, particularly a grocery store. For practicality and to keep the rural flavor of the township, commercial development needs to be limited to specific areas.

#### **Actions:**

- Concentrate commercial development to the areas outside of Akron and Unionville as well as the M-25 corridor.
- Revise zoning to require site development standards for commercial use.



**Goal: Encourage limited light industrial growth in planned areas**

Industrial development is desired in the Township, but in very limited types and quantities. As a result industrial uses need to be closely regulated and located so that they have the least impact on the rural nature of the Township.

**Actions:**

- Accurately define "light industrial" in the zoning ordinance
- Keep industrial growth near the villages of Unionville and Akron



# Future Land Use

The discussion of Future Land Use in this Plan has a ten to twenty year horizon. The land uses outlined in this section of the Master Plan serve to promote focused growth in with special attention to quality of life issues. Akron Township is committed to preserving its natural resources such as the Fish Point Wildlife Area and agricultural land that comprises 84% of the total current land use in the Township. The Township is also committed to providing a desirable environment for its residents.

Keep in mind that many of these changes will not take place next year or even five years from now, but possibly ten to twenty years from now. These proposed changes should serve as a guide. Every goal stated will not be accomplished, nor will every parcel of land be developed as shown.

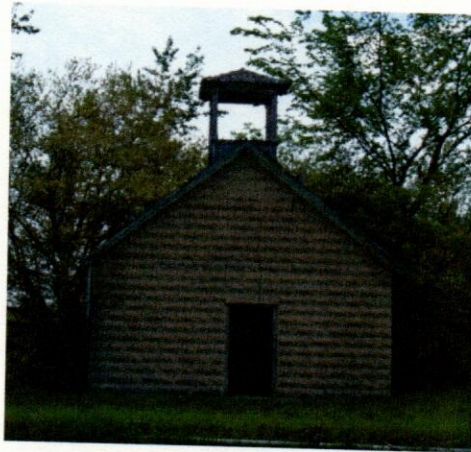
As a reminder, some of these proposed changes are not effective until the zoning is changed to allow development shown on the future land use map. That is, while the future land use map may indicate an area for commercial, the area may not be zoned commercial until the land owners request the change and the board approves it.

Each land use is discussed in further

**Akron Township is committed to providing a desirable environment for its residents.**

detail by general category and then by specific use.

The planned expansion and growth of commercial land will not take away from the strong agricultural feel of the Township as the existing agricultural land will dominate primarily the southern half of the Township, with M-25 dividing the Township, leaving a northern section of ag-residential and the Fish Point Wildlife Area.



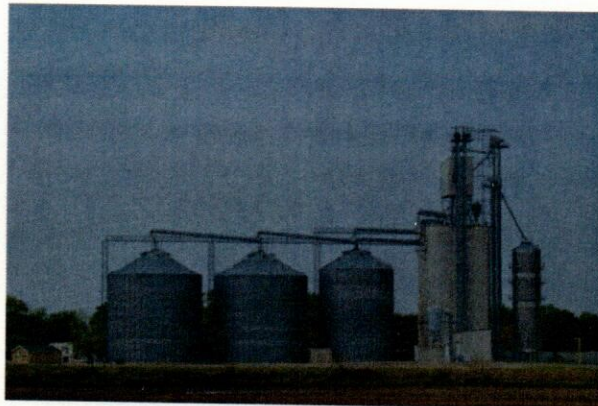
Older buildings give Akron Township character.

## Residential

Being aware of the Township's desire to promote its natural features and strong agricultural base,

residential growth has been carefully planned for. With less than 4% of the total land use, there are specific areas within the Township that have been determined as

areas for residential growth. The first area is located between Dickerson Road and Carson Road, extending from Vassar Road to Kirk Road. This area has been designated as a site for a potential subdivision of homes that will not interfere with farming and would bisect potential commercial growth along M-25. In addition to this site, planning for a manufactured housing park in the future is necessary as the Township grows. There is a parcel of poor farmland that is located directly north of the Village of Akron between Rayl Road and Ringle Road, just south of Elmwood Road. This multi-family residential location is ideal in that it is close to the Village, as well as commercial and industrial land uses, acting as a buffer for the surrounding agricultural land.



Coop elevators in Akron Township.

### Commercial

Currently commercial land use accounts for less than 1% of the total land use in the Township. As Akron Township is more of a “bedroom community”, there is a need to bring some of the light commercial uses closer in, and build on the existing commercial land uses as well. There are five areas planned for limited commercial growth in the Township. The first and second areas are located directly to the east

and west of the Village of Akron along Akron Road, extending to Thomas Road and Sheridan Road. This is ideal for those traveling in and out of the Village. The third area is a small commercial development along M-25, which bisects Rogers Road and lies east of Vassar Road. Another area designated for commercial growth is located along Unionville Road, directly south of the Village of Unionville, from Ackerman Road to Hoppe Road. The last area targeted for light commercial expansion is close to the northern tip of the Township, south of Liken Road extending to Wilder Road and Unionville Road.

### Industrial

Industrial land accounts for the lowest percentage of land use in the Township at 0.13%. Industrial land use is important to communities in that it stabilizes the tax base and provides employment for local residents as well. Areas planned for expansion and development include a small section located along M-25 from Clark Road to Ringle Road, on both sides of this arterial highway. Another area planned for industrial development is located north of the Village of Akron, east of Rayl Road, extending further east to Cramer Road. This





location is ideal in that it is close to the Village and is surrounded by commercial and multi-family residential land uses.

### **State and Recreational Land**

A good portion of Akron Township's land is dedicated to the Fish Point Wildlife Area and used for recreational purposes. Much of this land is a wooded wetland that is home to many birds and fish native to Lake Huron. This area extends along the northern border and coastal area from Vassar Road east to the northern tip of the Township. There is one small section planned for recreational growth along the edge of this area, on the southeast corner of Austin Road and Loomis Road. The Township would like to preserve this wetland area, for its natural features and wildlife that inhabit the area.

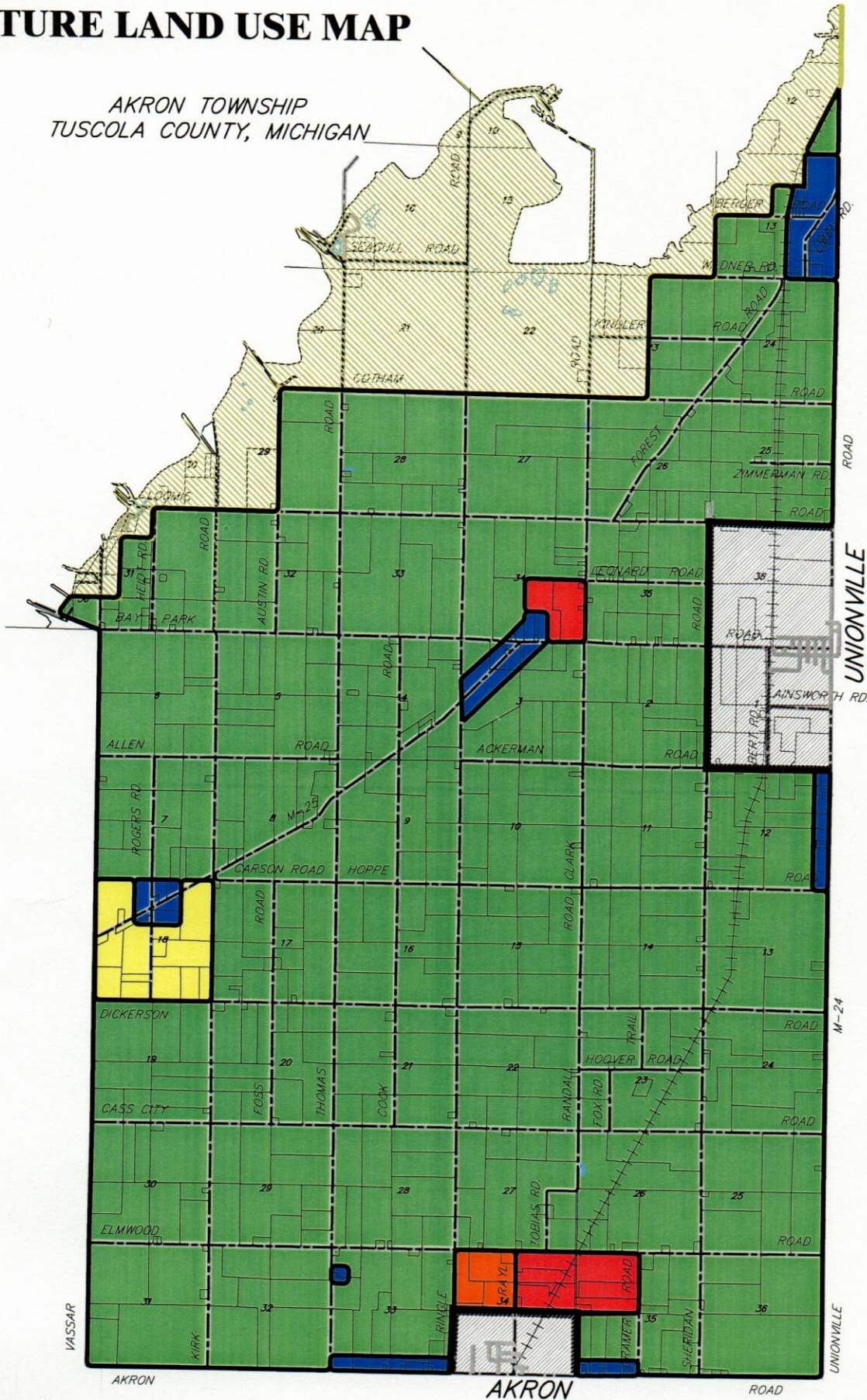


**Fish Point Wildlife Area**



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP

AKRON TOWNSHIP  
TUSCOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN



## FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND

- |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black;"></span> - AGRICULTURAL | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> - MANUFACTURED HOUSING                                                                  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> - COMMERCIAL    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></span> - INDUSTRIAL                                                                               |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> - RESIDENTIAL | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px); border: 1px solid black;"></span> - WILDLIFE AREA |

Q:\Proj\2002\104963.02 Akron\dwg\la-24430.dwg, flu - a24430-04, 12/12/02 08:24:40 AM, nuvemana

# Implementation



We have explored all pertinent information regarding Akron Township. The Master Plan Steering Committee has spent ten months discussing and examining the issues, in addition to receiving valuable input from Township residents in the form of a public survey and committee meetings.

As a result, the Master Plan Steering Committee has compiled a complete, carefully prepared document that represents the data, efforts and collective thoughts of Akron Township residents. This Master Plan will serve as Akron Township's guide for decision making in the years to come.

This Plan is intended to be used by all Township officials, Planning Commission members, Zoning Board of Appeals members, Township Board members, those making private sector investments and by all citizens interested in the future development of the Township. The completion of this Master Plan is the foundation of the community planning process. The implementation of the goals and objectives of this plan is the next step. This must be an ongoing effort and can only be achieved through cooperation of the Township officials, the Township citizens and the private sector.

**Akron Township's Master Plan will serve as a guide for decision making in the years to come.**

Key steps for the implementation of this Plan include:

1. Community knowledge and support of the Plan.
2. Zoning and Building Code updating and enforcement. Zoning must follow the concepts expressed in the Future Land Use map or both the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance will lose their effectiveness and enforceability.
3. Use of available preservation and conservation development incentives in zoning and land use activities such as open space requirements in developments.
4. Consistent use of the Plan to ensure that commercial development is encouraged to increase in density rather than to sprawl outside the identified areas.



## Community Support

It is important that the general public be aware of and understand this planning document. The Township has taken steps to ensure orderly future development for Akron Township and it should be promoted to the citizens to foster support. Lack of citizen understanding can hinder the implementation process, although residents are very active in the development of their community as expressed in their thoughts in the community input survey and through committee meetings. There are several ways to increase citizen awareness, including:

1. Keep the plan visible and available for citizens use at all Township meetings.
2. Seek media attention regarding the Plan and the public hearing for the Plan.
3. Display the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map at the Township Hall or local gathering place.
4. Cite the Master Plan in Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals decisions to establish the Plan as the justification as well as the accepted development path for the Township.

## Code Updating and Enforcement

The zoning ordinances and zoning maps must correctly reflect the goals and land use areas identified in the Master Plan. These documents must work together. Without this, the desired community results will be difficult to achieve. The zoning ordinance accomplishes many things; it separates incompatible uses of the land, protects property values, dictates development spacing, protects natural resources and prevents overcrowding of the land.

There are numerous zoning concerns that have surfaced during the Master Planning process, ranging from the protection and preservation of prime agricultural land to location of planned residential growth.

A thorough review of the existing zoning should be done to address any inconsistencies and outdated aspects. In addition, the zoning map should be updated to correct the past revisions and the inconsistencies among zoning districts.

Consistent enforcement of the zoning ordinances and building codes are the next tools used to implement the Plan. Therefore, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Ordinance Enforcement Officer, and the Building Inspector should be knowledgeable of the Plan and its



intentions. Many of the community's goals can be utilized and implemented from strict adherence and enforcement of codes.

### **Use of Development Incentives**

The Township Board and Planning Commission members must take an active role to propel the desired development or limit development within a community. This can include grant requests, tax issues, special assessments, and development incentives. To keep a community vital, local government must be aware of all the tools at hand. In many cases it can prove beneficial to work with a developer or the private sector to spur the desired development. Some of the incentive tools available for such co-development are:

1. The TEA-21 Program, using transportation funding.
2. Michigan Land Trust Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund administered through the Department of Natural Resources.
3. Development incentives administered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.



# Appendix



## Planning Akron Township's Future

Akron Township is currently developing a Master Plan. We need the help of the residents in determining how the Township should evolve in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Please read the statements below and circle the answer that best describes your opinion. Please return this form in the enclosed addressed and stamped envelope by July 31, 2007. Thank you.

The following three questions are for demographic purposes only and will be confidential. Circle the appropriate response.

Age (circle one) 18-24 25-44 45-64 65 and older

I have lived in the Township: 1) 0-5 years 2) 5-10 years 3) 10-20 years 4) more than 20 years

Number of school age children residing with you:

1) none 2) one 3) two 4) three or more

### General

A. Akron Township should grow in population and development.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

B. Akron Township should anticipate and plan for water and sewer service in key areas of the Township.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

C. Akron Township should expand in the lake/river area with respect to fishing and hunting.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

### Residential

A. Akron Township should plan for more single family homes.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

B. Akron Township should plan for a pre-manufactured home site.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

C. Akron Township should plan for additional rental housing such as apartments.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

D. Akron Township should plan for additional seasonal/recreational housing, as needed in the Township.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

### Commercial

A. Some commercial growth is needed in the Township.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

B. Commercial development should be planned along the M-26 Corridor.

1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree



# Planning Akron Township's Future

Akron Township is currently developing a Master Plan. We need the help of the residents to determine how the Township should evolve in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Please read the statements below and circle the answer that best describes your opinion. Please return this form in the enclosed addressed and stamped envelope by July 31, 2002. Thank you.

The following three questions are for classification purposes only and will be confidential. Circle the appropriate response.

**Age** (circle one)    18-24        25-44        45-64        65 and older

**I have lived in the Township:**    1) 0-5 years        2) 5-10 years        3) 10-20 years        4) more than 20 years

**Number of school age children residing with you:**

1) none    2) one    3) two    4) three or more

## General

- A. Akron Township should grow in population and development.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- B. Akron Township should anticipate and plan for water and sewer service in key areas of the Township.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- C. Akron Township should expand in the tourism area with relation to fishing and hunting.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree

## Residential

- A. Akron Township should plan for more single family homes.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- B. Akron Township should plan for a pre-manufactured home site.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- C. Akron Township should plan for additional rental housing such as apartments.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- D. Akron Township should plan for additional seasonal/recreational housing, as needed in the Township.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree

## Commercial

- A. Some commercial growth is needed in the Township.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- B. Commercial development should be planned along the M-25 Corridor.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree
- C. Service businesses (grocery, video, drug store, personal care) should be planned to be near residential areas.  
1) strongly agree    2) agree    3) no opinion    4) disagree    5) strongly disagree

**Industrial**

- A. New industrial development should be planned for if adequate roads, utilities and other public services are available.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree
- B. Industry should be located near commercial areas.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

**Township Regulations**

- A. There should be a restriction on the number of inoperable/unlicensed cars on private property.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree
- B. Private property should be required to be maintained in a way to avoid nuisances, eyesores and health or safety hazards.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

**Agricultural**

- A. Agriculture is an important feature of the Township.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree
- B. Akron Township should preserve agricultural land.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree
- C. It is acceptable to use some agricultural land for development.  
1) strongly agree 2) agree 3) no opinion 4) disagree 5) strongly disagree

**What do you like about Akron Township?** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you dislike about Akron Township?** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Why do you live in Akron Township?** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form by July 31, 2002.**  
**To return the survey, place the survey in the enclosed envelope. Postage is already paid.**  
**Please do not include your name.**

**Send to:**  
 Akron Township  
 3480 Hoppe Road  
 Unionville, MI 48767



**Akron Township Survey Results.** A Residential Survey was mailed to 500 residents, with 208 returned surveys for a return rate of 42%.

Age (circle one)

18-24	1%
25-44	17%
45-64	40%
65 and older	39%

I have lived in the Township

1. 0-5 years	10%
2. 5-10 years	12%
3. 10-20 years	13%
4. more than 20 years	63%

Number of school age children residing with you:

1. None	75%
2. One	9%
3. Two	12%
4. Three+	2%

### General

A. Akron Township should grow in population and development.

1. strongly agree	14%	
2. agree	40%	<b>54%</b>
3. no opinion	27%-----	
4. disagree	13%	<b>19%</b>
5. strongly disagree	6%	

B. Akron Township should anticipate and plan for water and sewer service in key areas of the Township.

1. strongly agree	20%	
2. agree	32%	<b>52%</b>
3. no opinion	29%-----	
4. disagree	13%	<b>19%</b>
5. strongly disagree	6%	

C. Akron Township should expand in the tourism area with relation to fishing and hunting.

1. strongly agree	21%	
2. agree	38%	<b>59%</b>
3. no opinion	23%-----	
4. disagree	14%	<b>18%</b>
5. strongly disagree	4%	

### Residential

A. Akron Township should plan for more single family homes.

1. strongly agree	11%	
2. agree	34%	<b>45%</b>
3. no opinion	38%-----	
4. disagree	11%	<b>17%</b>
5. strongly disagree	6%	

B. Akron Township should plan for a pre-manufactured home site.

1. strongly agree	6%	
2. agree	26%	<b>32%</b>
3. no opinion	29%	-----
4. disagree	27%	<b>39%</b>
5. strongly disagree	12%	

C. Akron Township should plan for additional rental housing such as apartments.

1. strongly agree	5%	
2. agree	29%	<b>34%</b>
3. no opinion	41%	-----
4. disagree	24%	<b>25%</b>
5. strongly disagree	1%	

D. Akron Township should plan for additional seasonal/recreational housing, as needed in the Township.

1. strongly agree	9%	
2. agree	30%	<b>39%</b>
3. no opinion	37%	-----
4. disagree	19%	<b>24%</b>
5. strongly disagree	5%	

#### Commercial

A. Some commercial growth is needed in the Township.

1. strongly agree	21%	
2. agree	57%	<b>78%</b>
3. no opinion	12%	-----
4. disagree	6%	<b>10%</b>
5. strongly disagree	4%	

B. Commercial development should be planned along the M-25 Corridor.

1. strongly agree	20%	
2. agree	45%	<b>65%</b>
3. no opinion	18%	-----
4. disagree	13%	<b>17%</b>
5. strongly disagree	4%	

C. Service businesses (grocery, video, drug store, personal care) should be planned to near residential areas.

1. strongly agree	20%	
2. agree	58%	<b>78%</b>
3. no opinion	11%	-----
4. disagree	8%	<b>11%</b>
5. strongly disagree	3%	

#### Industrial

A. New light industrial development should be planned for if adequate roads, utilities and other public services are available.

1. strongly agree	19%	
2. agree	51%	<b>70%</b>
3. no opinion	18%	-----
4. disagree	9%	<b>12%</b>
5. strongly disagree	3%	

B. Industry should be located near commercial areas.

1. strongly agree	16%	
2. agree	50%	<b>66%</b>
3. no opinion	20%	-----
4. disagree	11%	<b>14%</b>
5. strongly disagree	3%	

### Agricultural

A. Agriculture is an important feature of the Township.

1. strongly agree	60%	
2. agree	34%	<b>94%</b>
3. no opinion	6%	-----
4. disagree	0%	<b>0%</b>
5. strongly disagree	0%	

B. Akron Township should preserve agricultural land.

1. strongly agree	49%	
2. agree	40%	<b>89%</b>
3. no opinion	7%	-----
4. disagree	3%	<b>4%</b>
5. strongly disagree	1%	

C. It is acceptable to use some agricultural land for development.

1. strongly agree	8%	
2. agree	45%	<b>53%</b>
3. no opinion	13%	-----
4. disagree	24%	<b>34%</b>
5. strongly disagree	10%	

### Township Regulations

A. There should be a restriction on the number of inoperable/unlicensed cars on private property.

1. strongly agree	40%	
2. agree	36%	<b>76%</b>
3. no opinion	17%	-----
4. disagree	5%	<b>7%</b>
5. strongly disagree	2%	

B. Private property should be required to be maintained in a way to avoid nuisances, eyesores and health or safety hazards.

1. strongly agree	48%	
2. agree	41%	<b>89%</b>
3. no opinion	8%	-----
4. disagree	1%	<b>3%</b>
5. strongly disagree	2%	