

---

*Wise Township*

---

# Master Plan



Update 2014

# Table of Contents

---



<b>Why does Wise Township need a master plan?</b>	
Introduction .....	1
Need for a Master Plan .....	1
Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances .....	1
<b>How did Wise Township prepare its master plan?</b> .....	2
<b>Where is Wise Township?</b>	
Regional Setting .....	3
Transportation .....	3
Road Map .....	4
Traffic Count Map .....	5
<b>Who are the residents of Wise Township?</b>	
History .....	7
Population .....	7
Housing .....	9
Market Assessment .....	10
Employment.....	10
Income .....	10
<b>What are the Features of Wise Township?</b>	
Topography & Soils .....	12
Climate .....	12
Topographic Map .....	13
Soils Map .....	14
Wetlands & Waterways .....	15
Wetlands Map .....	16
Woodlands .....	17
Other Natural Resources .....	17
Community Facilities & Services .....	17
Schools .....	18
School District Map.....	19
<b>How is land used in Wise Township?</b>	
Land Use Classifications .....	20
Land Use Analysis .....	21
Existing Land Use Map .....	22

What do residents think about Wise Township?	
Survey .....	24
General Questions .....	24
Residential .....	25
Commercial .....	26
Agricultural Lands and Woodlands .....	26
Miscellaneous .....	27
Open Ended Responses .....	27
What are the future goals for Wise Township?	
General Community Character .....	29
Residential Land Use .....	29
Agricultural Land Use .....	30
Commercial Land Use .....	30
Industrial Land Use .....	31
Community Services and Infrastructure .....	31
How will Wise Township develop in the Future?	
Introduction .....	33
Future Land Use Map .....	34
Residential .....	35
Agricultural .....	35
Commercial .....	36
Industrial .....	36
How will Wise Township implement this plan?	
Community Support.....	37
Code Updating & Enforcement .....	38
Use of Development Incentives .....	39
Other Funding Sources .....	40
Revisions & Updates .....	40
Conclusion .....	41
Appendix A - Historic Plat Maps .....	42
Appendix B - Community Input Survey Results .....	45

## Why does Wise Township Need a master plan?

---

### Introduction

A Master Plans reflects the ideas and hopes of a community, translated into goals and actions. The Master Plan is a comprehensive document that is intended to guide development in the Township in the next 10 – 20 years, achieving a better community and living environment.

**The Michigan Planning Enabling Act states “A planning commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within a planning jurisdiction”.**

Master Plans serve to:

- seek citizen input on needs and services
- form a general statement of goals and objectives
- provide an overall prospective for the future
- develop a future land use map
- guide the use of limited resources in an efficient manner
- promote public health, safety, and general welfare
- Preserve the quality of the environment in the Township
- Guide future zoning decisions

### Need for a Master Plan

Preparing a Master Plan is one of the major functions of a Township Planning Commission. In 2008, the Michigan Legislature repealed the Township Planning Act (PA 168 of 1959) and replaced it with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008). The Michigan Planning Enabling Act states “A planning commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within a planning jurisdiction”. The new enabling legislation requires that “at least every 5 years after adoption of a master plan, a planning commission shall review the master plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the master plan or adopt a new master plan.”

### Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances

Zoning is public regulation of the use of land. A zoning ordinance controls how land is used today. It is law. A Master Plan is a set of policies, not a law. The master plan is the community’s vision while the zoning ordinance contains the rules that help govern the path toward that vision. The long range goals of the Master Plan are the basis for a zoning ordinance and zoning decisions. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act state that “A zoning ordinance shall be based upon a plan”. Zoning decisions that are consistent with the Master Plan are more likely presumed to be valid if challenged in the courts.

## How did Wise Township prepare its master plan?

---

Wise Township began the master planning process in the fall of 2002. It contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw to assist the Planning Commission in the preparation of the plan.

**The Wise Township Master Plan was prepared by the Township Planning Commission in conjunction with planning consultant Spicer Group of Saginaw.**

**Roy Ranck, Chair  
Andy Babosh, Vice Chair  
Doris Methner, Board Representative  
Pamela O'Laughlin, Secretary  
Gareth d'Haillecourt**

The Planning Commission met with Rob Eggers of the Spicer Group six times between October of 2002 and August of 2003 to work on the plan. As required by Michigan Public Act 263 of 2001, the township followed proper notification procedures for neighboring communities so that those communities were made aware of and had the opportunity to comment on the plan.

The process began with a review and analysis of existing conditions and land use in Wise Township. Then, a community input survey was developed and mailed to all residents of the township in January of 2003. Feedback from this survey along with pertinent background data was used as the basis for the goals and future land use outlined in the master plan. The draft master plan was prepared by Spicer Group and delivered to the Planning Commission and Township Board for review. It was also mailed to surrounding entities who registered through the "intent to plan" process.

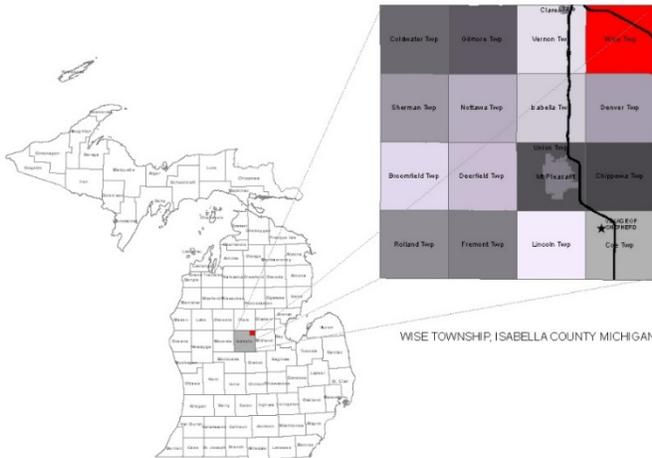
The final step in the planning process was a public hearing which is required by the Township Planning Act of 1959, as amended. This provided an additional opportunity for public information and input. Final master plan copies were prepared and the Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission on October 23, 2003. The Wise Township Board approved of the Plan by resolution on November 20, 2003.

In December of 2013 the Wise Township Board entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Isabella County to update the census and demographic data with the 2010 census data.

## Where is Wise Township?

### Regional Setting

Wise Township is a rural community located in the northeast corner of Isabella County in mid-Michigan. It is situated approximately 10 – 15 miles northeast of the Isabella county seat of Mt. Pleasant. It is approximately 20 miles northwest of Midland and 2 miles southeast of Clare. Mt. Pleasant, Midland, and Clare all serve as regional centers for shopping and employment.



All of Wise Township lies within the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation. However there are only 3 parcels of land (approximately 150 total acres) within the Township that are still in trust status from the Treaty of 1864.

### Transportation

Wise Township is a typical 6 mile by 6 mile Michigan township laid out in square mile grid format. Major thoroughfares in the Township include expressway US-10 exits are located within the Township. One of them provides access to the unincorporated community of Loomis and the other is Business Route 10 which accesses Clare.

Pere Marquette is the old State Highway 10 which parallels the expressway across the township. It connects Clare and Coleman and is the most traveled roadway in the township (other than US-10). Two major county roadways bisect the community. Coleman Road runs east to west and Loomis road runs north to south. A township road map and a township traffic data map are shown on the pages immediately following this section.

County Primary Roads in Wise Township are Pere Marquette Road, Coleman Road, Loomis Road, and Leaton Road north of Pere Marquette. The only other paved road in the township is Leaton Road from Pere Marquette to Stevenson Lake and From Coleman Road to Vernon Road.

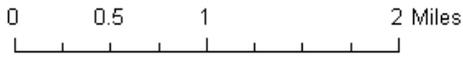
Both Clare and Mt. Pleasant have municipal airports. The closest full service airport is MBS International Airport in Saginaw County, approximately 40 minutes from Wise Township.

# WISE TOWNSHIP ROAD MAP

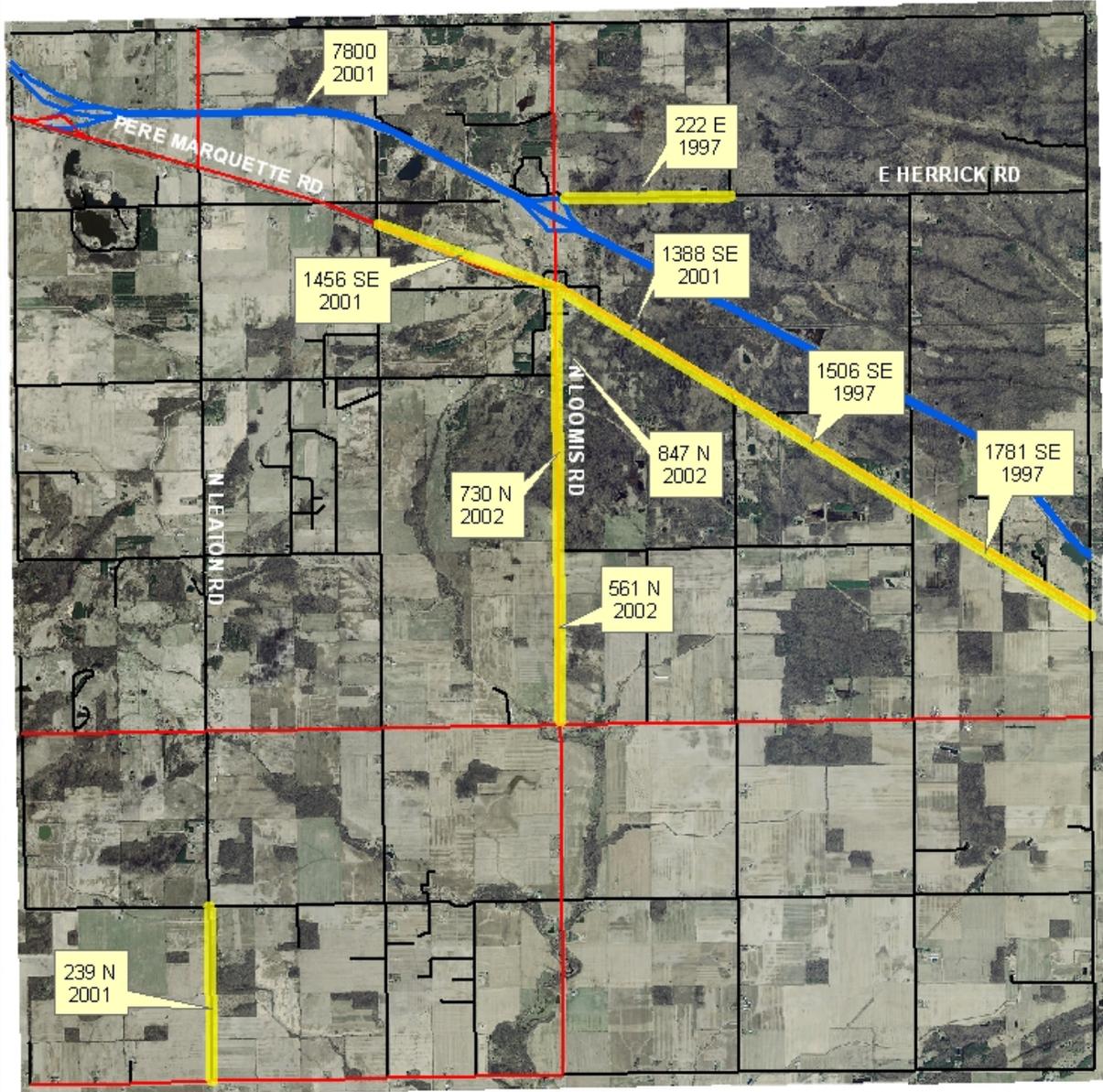


- STATE TRUNKLINE
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- COUNTY LOCAL

SOURCE: ISABELLA COUNTY GIS



# WISE TOWNSHIP TRAFFIC COUNT DATA



- STATE TRUNKLINE
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- COUNTY LOCAL

TRAFFIC COUNT

Daily Traffic Count - Direction  
Year of Count



SOURCE: ISABELLA COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION AND MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Who are the residents of Wise Township?

---

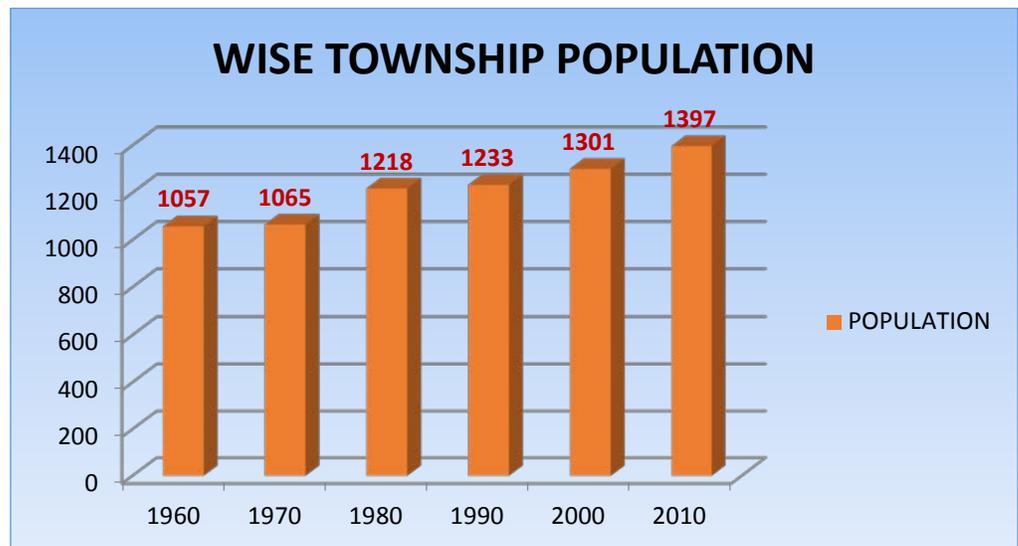
### History

Wise Township began to develop in the late 1800's with the construction of the Pere Marquette Railroad and the beginning of logging operations in the community. After the forest land had been cleared by the timber barons, it was purchased by settlers establishing family farms. Wise Township was organized in 1872, the twelfth of 16 townships in Isabella County. An 1879 Plat of Wise Township is given in Appendix A.

The Village of Loomis within the township was established in 1871 as a lumbering and sawmill town. An early history of Loomis as found on the MiGenWeb site is given on the following page. Nearly 400 lots were platted in 35 blocks in the village. An 1879 plat of Loomis is given in Appendix A. The village economy gradually declined after the woodlands had been cleared. Loomis is no longer officially incorporated but it does still have a small concentration of homes and handful of businesses.

### Population

Wise Township is a community of 1,397 residents, according to the 2010 census. It has seen slow but steady growth over the past 50 years as shown in the chart below. Actual growth from 1960 to 2010 was 24.3%, from 1057 to 1,397 persons. This is slightly less than overall state population growth during the same period which was 27.5%.



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

## A Colorful History of Loomis

Laid out by Erastus G. Loomis, George W. Wise and E. F. Gould on November 21, 1871, on section 9 and on section 10 of Wise Town-ship, Isabella County 16 miles north of Mt. Pleasant. There were platted three hundred and ninety one lots, in thirty five blocks. According to Isaac Fancher, the village thrived for some time and became quite notorious as the toughest place in the county. It was at first a lumbering and sawmill town. In the early days of the town, it was made up largely of lumber laborers, many of whom were reckless and disposed to drink and carouse, spending all of their earnings in the saloons. Very soon after the mill was established, one Cady opened a saloon, which was soon followed by one Long Tom (Tom Lommison) with another and proved to be the roughest kind of place. This man dealt out death and destruction in unstinted quantities to all that called. It soon became a menace to all good government, as well as to the safety and good order of the community. For all that, the place grew to be quite a village until the lumbering ceased and the town was forced to depend upon its agricultural resources and then being new and but little land cleared, there was not much to support a village and as the mill was closed the laborer sought work in other places. The hotel and boardinghouse closed for want of patronage. There is now left only a couple of stores (1911), a P.O., school house and few other concomitants that go with a small community with good railroad facilities. The Pere Marquette running through the center of the village. The people can now live in peace and quietude. The saloon has long since ceased to annoy the good citizens of the village and the church and school house are steadily repairing the waste places.

According to R.L. Dodge, Loomis was first named "Butchel". The area was first settled in 1870 and had a hemlock extract factory, two shingle mills and a sawmill at it's height. There were 350 people in 1877. Seth Bowdish was postmaster. There were also several general stores, two saloons, a meat market and two hotels.

Dodge interviewed Phil Worden (aged 87 in 1955) who told him that 700-800 people lived in the area of the village during the late 1860's during the building of the railroad.

Worden also indicated that a fellow by the name of Sam Zeiter owned a combination saw and shingle mill and that he also owned a race track and race horses, the track being about 80 rods west of the main cross roads of the village.

*as compiled by Donna Hoff-Grambau on the MIGenWeb Site for Isabella County  
[www.rootsweb.com/~muisabel/isabella.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~muisabel/isabella.html)*

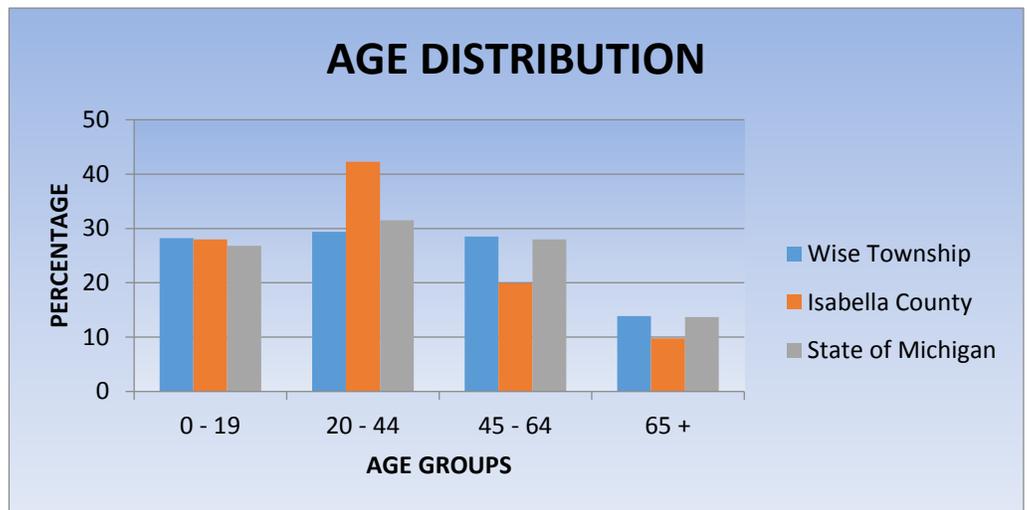
The total population has slightly more males than females (738 males and 659 females).

Over 57% of the population of Wise Township is under the age of 44. The 20-44 “family forming” age group is the largest at 29.4%. This statistic alone is a good indication that the Township will continue to grow. The 45 – 64 age group is second largest at 28.5%. The median age is 38.7 years. Actual numbers of persons by age group are shown below.

People in Wise Township		
Age Group	Number	Percentage
Age 0 - 19	394	28.2%
Age 20 - 44	411	29.4%
Age 45 - 64	398	28.5%
Age 65 +	194	13.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,397</b>	

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census*

Age distributions by percentage are very similar to the state as a whole but somewhat different from Isabella County. This is probably because many of Isabella County’s demographic statistics are influenced by the large student population at Central Michigan University.



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

Nearly 96% of Wise Township Residents identified themselves as white in the 2000 Census. The only significant minority percentage is

that of “American Indian and Alaska Native” at 1.8% (25 persons). Since the entire township lies within the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation, it is likely that most of the persons in this minority group are American Indian.

### Housing

There are 580 housing units within Wise Township, 527 of which are classified as occupied. Twelve of the unoccupied 53 units are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. The other 41 units are vacant. Over 450 of the occupied units are inhabited by the owner. Approximately 75 are occupied by renters. This high percentage (85.5%) of owner-occupied homes signifies a fairly stable population.

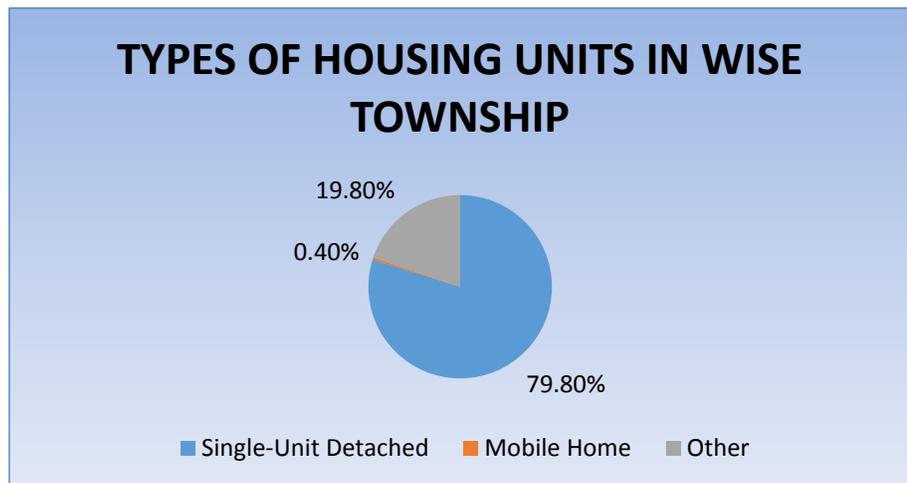
#### Township Housing

✓ 527 occupied housing units

✓ 85.5% are owner occupied

Nearly 79.8% of the housing units in Wise Township are one-unit detached dwellings. The only other significant category of housing unit in the township is the mobile home. Nearly 20% of the dwellings are mobile homes. This is considerably higher than the state and county. Only 5.5% of housing units in Michigan are mobile homes and only 10% of housing units in Isabella County are mobile homes. This relatively high percentage of

mobile home in the township may require special consideration for future rezoning issues.



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

According to the 2010 US Census, the median value of a home in Wise Township is \$108,600. This is 32.2% higher than the 2000 median value \$73,600. The 2010 median value is less than the county median of \$122,100 and the state median of \$128,600.

## Market Assessment

Total taxable property value for Wise Township in 2013 was \$31.1 million. Property Values have remained relatively stagnant since 2007 in Wise Township as well as Isabella County. Five years prior, in 2008, total taxable property was \$31.3 million and ten years ago (2003) the value was \$23.1 million.

## Employment

People in Wise Township work in a variety of occupations. Sales and office occupations make up the largest category at 175 people or 29.1% of the population. The complete occupational make-up of the Township is shown in the chart below.

Wise Township Employment			
Occupation	Number	Percent	
Sales & Office .....	118	.....	21.0
Management, business, science and arts.....	102	.....	18.2
Production, transportation, and material moving .....	91	.....	16.2
Natural Resource, construction, and maintenance .....	91	.....	16.2
Service .....	159	.....	28.3

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census*

U.S. Census 2010 data tells us that the average commuting time to work for Wise Township residents is 24.5 minutes. Because of this relatively long commute time, Wise Township can be classified as a bedroom community where the majority of residents work outside of the community in which they live. The commute time is higher than the county average of 18.2 minutes and the average of 23.9 minutes.

## Income

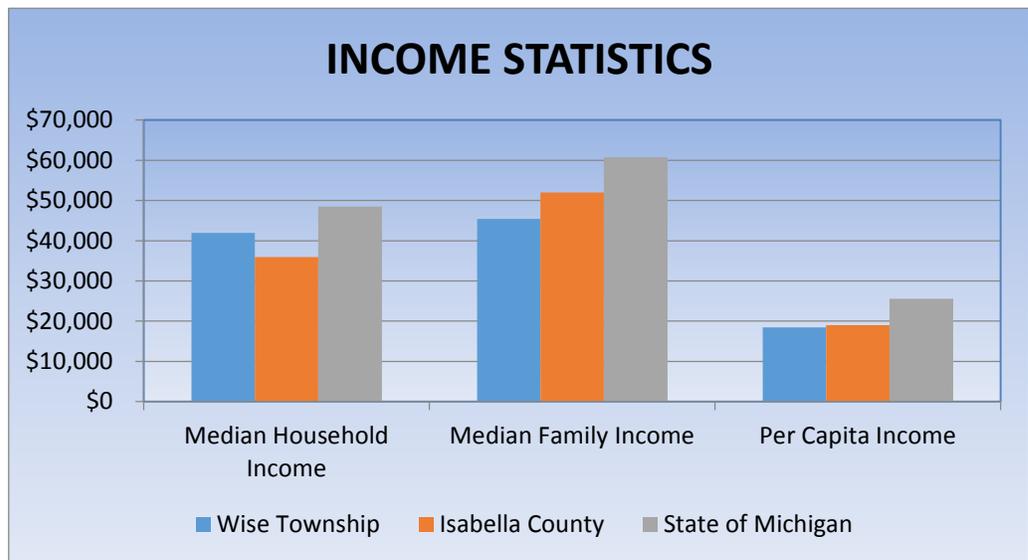
The median household income in Wise Township is \$41,903. The median household income is a measure that shows the income at which half of all households are above and which have are below. A household is all persons who live together in the same dwelling. This figure is above the county median of \$35,927 and below the state median of \$48,471.

**Wise Township facts:**

- ✓ Median household income = \$41,903
- ✓ Median family income = \$45,417
- ✓ Per capita income = \$18,457

The county median is probably skewed to the low side due to the college student population at Central Michigan University. Large numbers of unrelated college students with relatively low incomes live together, forming households which lower the county median. If family income is examined, the figures are more even. Family income is a measure of households that are made up of immediate family members.

Wise Township’s median family income is \$45,417. Isabella County’s median family income is \$51,950 and the State median family income is \$60,749. All of this income data is shown in the chart below.



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

The per capita income for Wise Township was \$18,457. This is slightly less than the county per capita income of \$18,988 but much less than the state per capital of \$25,547. Per capita income is income per individual.

Wise Township has 9.5% of its families living below the poverty level. This is better than the county at 14.3% and the State at 11.3% of families below poverty level.

## What are the Features of Wise Township?

---

### Topography and Soils

**The natural features of a township, like its water, soils and topography, shape its population, businesses, residential development and recreation.**

Wise Township is a rural community that generally has agricultural lands in the southern and western portions of the township and wooded land in the northeastern portion of the township. The southeastern portion of the Township has the most land used for cultivate row crops. The western portion tends to have more pastured agricultural land for horses and cattle.

The land as shown in the topographic map on the following page is generally flat in terrain averaging around 720 feet above sea level. The highest portion of the Township is in the northwest corner near Clare with elevations at 820 feet. There are minimal steep slopes that would hinder development or be vulnerable to excessive erosion.

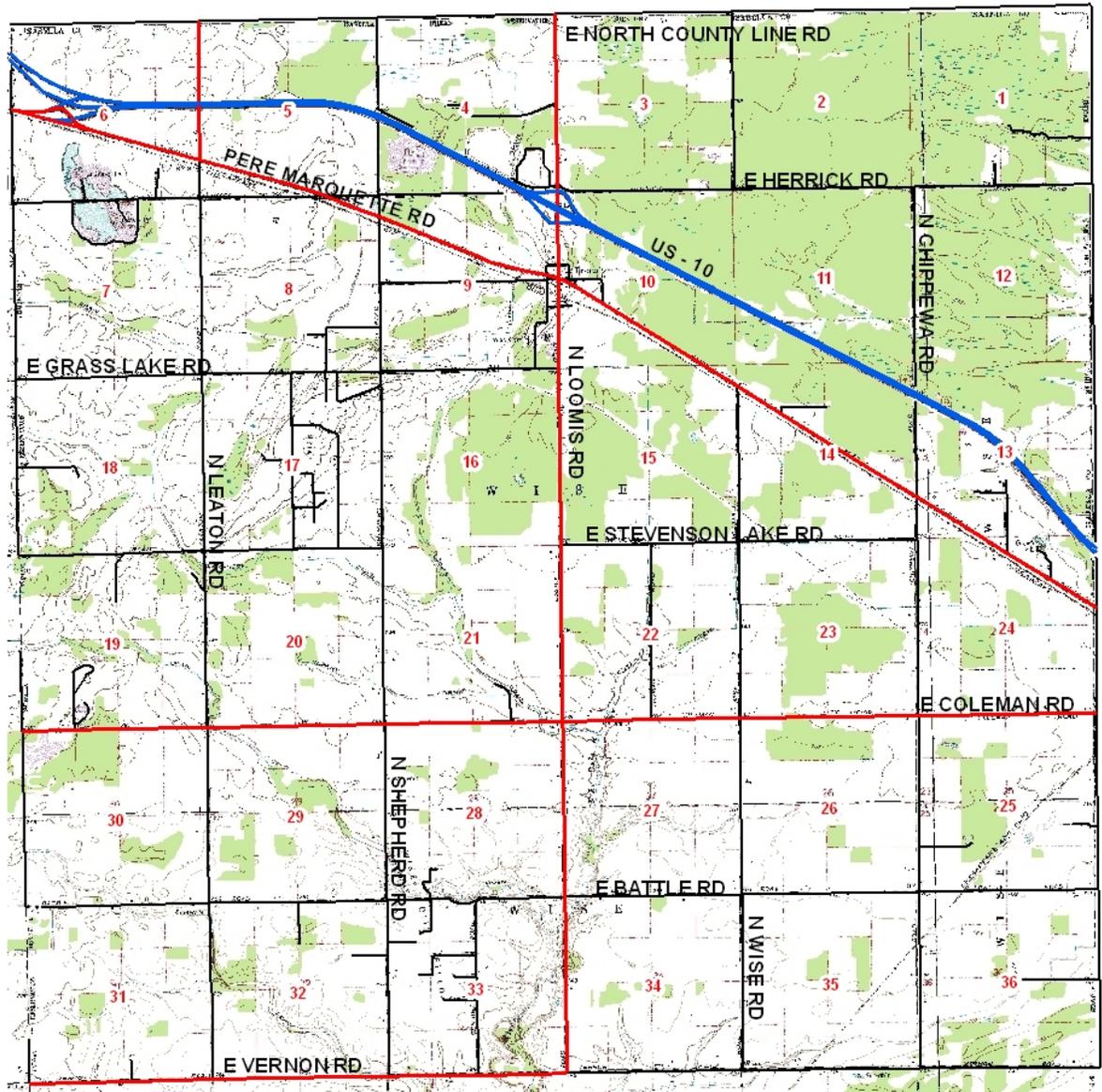
Soils in the Township consist of various combinations of loam, sand, and some muck. A soil map is given following the topographic map. While some of these soils are not ideal for development, each could support it if adequate drainage is provided.



### Climate

Isabella County's climate is considered a Cold Middle Latitude climate where the coldest monthly mean temperature goes below 27 F and a long season of cold weather and a significant winter snow cover develops. In this climate the westerlies dominate all year. As such, weather changes are more frequent. Average rainfall is approximately 30 inches per year and average snowfall is approximately 35-40 inches per year. Summer months have average high temperatures in the 80's with cool evenings in the 50's. Winter months see average highs in the 20's and 30's with lows in the teens and 20's.

# WISE TOWNSHIP TOPOGRAPHY



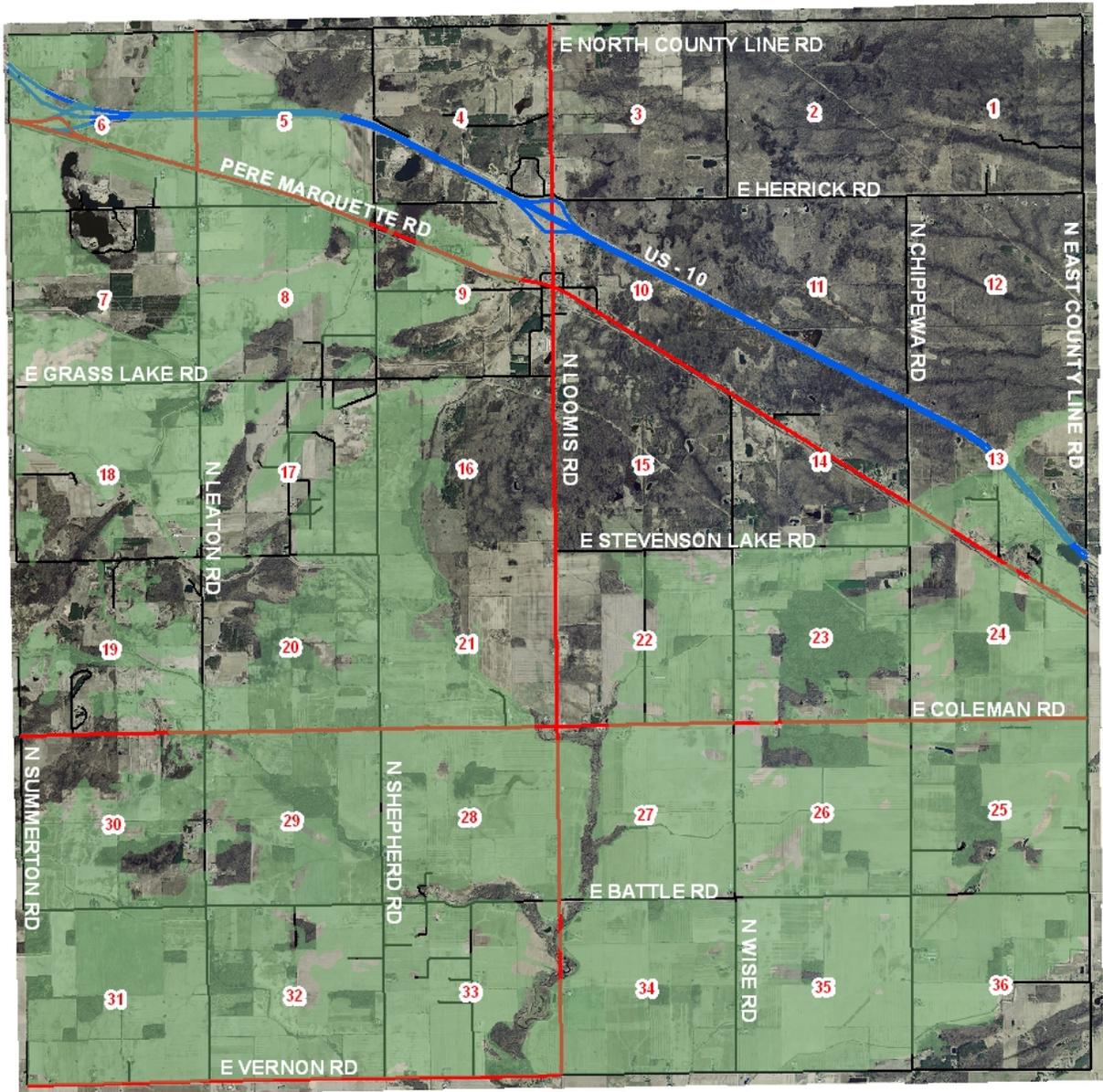
- STATE TRUNKLINE
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- COUNTY LOCAL

MORE DETAILED TOPOGRAPHIC  
 INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED  
 BY USING USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS



SOURCE: ISABELLA COUNTY GIS AND USGS TOPO MAPS

# WISE TOWNSHIP SOILS MAP



- STATE TRUNKLINE
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- COUNTY LOCAL

FOR DETAILED SOIL ANALYSIS  
VISIT THE USDA SOIL SURVEY  
FOR ISABELLA COUNTY



SOURCE: ISABELLA COUNTY GIS AND USDA SOIL SURVEY

## Wetlands & Waterways

Wetlands are valuable natural resources as they provide many important functions. Wetlands help regulate water levels within watersheds; improve water quality, reduce flood and storm damages; provide important fish and wildlife habitat; and support hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities.

**Nearly 5000 acres of land in Wise Township are classified as wetlands according to the National Wetlands Inventory.**

According to the National Wetlands Inventory, nearly 5000 acres of land within Wise Township are classified as wetlands. These are shown on the Wetlands Map on the following page. Wetlands can limit development in a specific area and each type and extent must be carefully examined before proceeding with development.

In 1979, the Geomaere-Anderson Wetland Protection Act was enacted by the State of Michigan. This legislation was passed to protect wetlands by restricting their use to certain activities (fishing, boating, farming, among others) while permitting other activities only after permit approval by the State of Michigan. Permits are approved only upon a review of an environmental assessment filed by the petitioner and upon a finding that the activity is in the public interest.

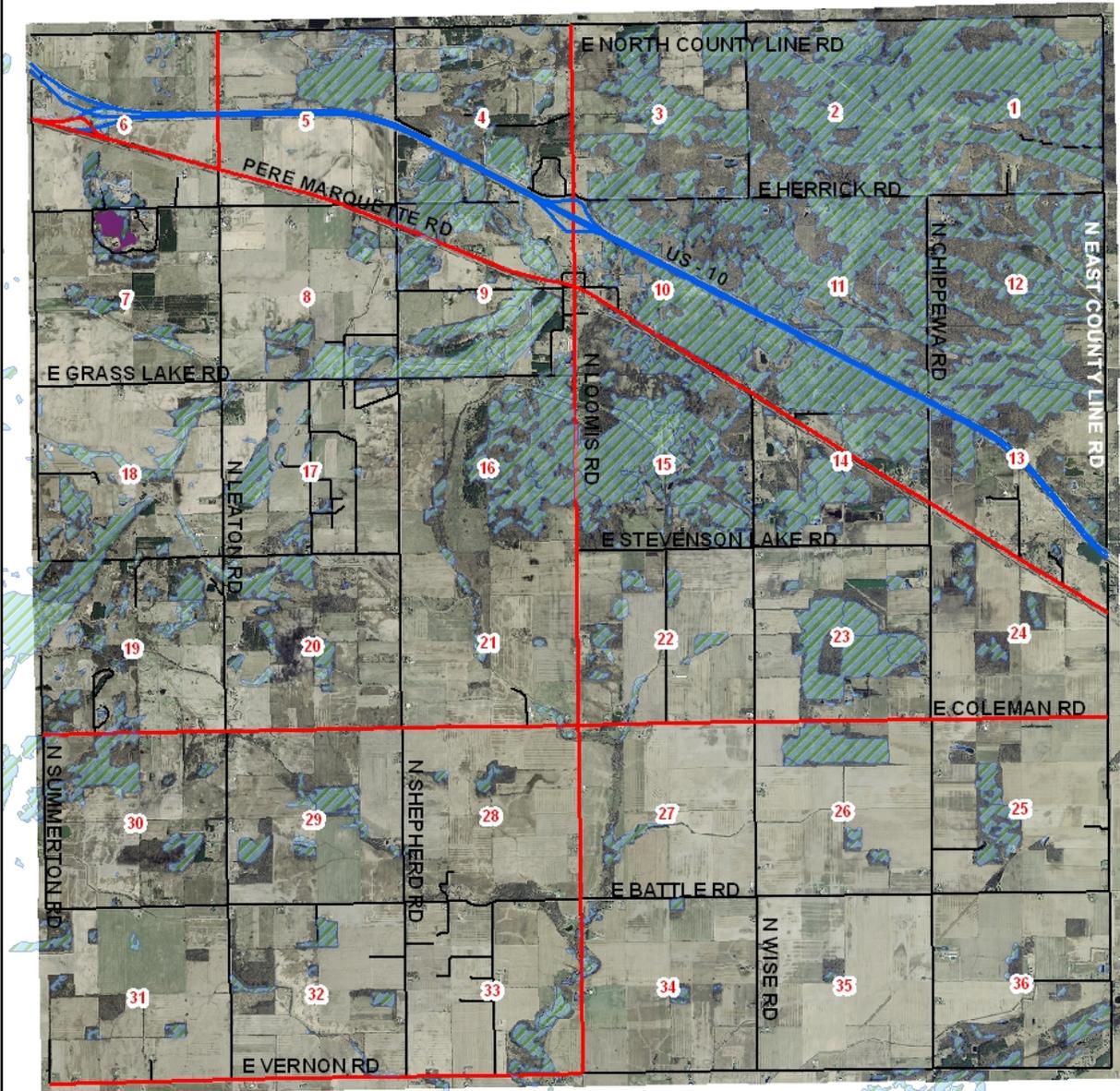
Under the Act, the following wetlands are protected:

- Wetlands contiguous to an inland lake, pond, river, stream, or similar natural water course. Wetlands adjacent to the drains in Wise Township would fall in this category.
- Wetlands five acres in size, or larger, in counties which contain a population of at least 100,000 people. Since Isabella County has less than 100,000 people this category does not apply.

The Loomis Drain, Lamphere Drain, and the McDonald Drain are the major drains in the Wise Township. They all flow into the North Branch of the Salt River in the southern portion of the township.

Wise Township is located on the western edge of the Tittabawassee River watershed. While there have been some dioxin contamination issues on the lower reaches of the watershed (south of Midland), the upper reaches in Wise Township have had no problems. On a larger scale, Wise Township and the Tittabawassee River watershed are part of the greater Saginaw Bay Watershed.

# WISE TOWNSHIP WETLAND MAP



- STATE TRUNKLINE
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- COUNTY LOCAL

- Lacustrine
- Palustrine

**Lacustrine** - includes wetlands and deepwater habitats with all of the following characteristics:

1. situated in a topographic depression or a dammed river channel;
2. lacking trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens with greater than 30% areal coverage;
3. total area exceeds 20 acres.

**Palustrine** - includes all nonfloral wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, mosses or lichens.



SOURCE: ISABELLA COUNTY GIS AND NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORY

## Woodlands

Wise Township contains large wooded areas located across the Township. The area north of US-10 is nearly completely covered with dense forest. Woodlands are valuable natural features which serve as windbreaks, aid in the absorption of rainwater, replenish oxygen, create natural beauty and character, and provide wildlife habitats.



## Other Natural Resources

Oil was discovered in Isabella county in the late 1920's. Wise Township has several operating oil wells which provide a modest income to the landowners where they are located.

## Community Facilities & Services

The Wise Township Hall is located in Loomis. It contains a meeting area, offices and restrooms. A small park with a playground is adjacent to the building. The Township owns a four acre cemetery just south of Loomis.

The Wise Township owns a closed landfill located on a 47 acre parcel at the corner of Summerton and Coleman Roads. It operated from 1933 until 1990. It was close at the time accordance with DNR regulations.

Police protection is provided by Isabella County, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribal Police, and the Michigan State Police. Fire protection is Wise Township is contracted to 3 different local fire departments: Northeast Isabella in Rosebush, Clare, and Coleman.



Over six miles of the Pere Marquette Rail Trail are located in Wise Township. This portion of the trail is owned and maintained by Isabella County. This trail currently runs from Midland to Clare but there are plans to extend the trail westward to Reed City. The main staging area if the Isabella County portion of the trail is located just west of the Wise Township Hall. Parking and a restroom are available for visitors at this area.

Two other Isabella County Parks are located in Wise Township. The Herrick Recreation Area is a 113 acre Park located just south of US-10 in the northwest corner of the Township. The south section of the park has 73 campsites, 5 rustic cabins, a fishing pond, a sand volleyball court and a small playground. The north section of the park offers more fishing, a



playground area, two large picnic pavilions, sand volleyball courts, horseshoes, swimming and a large sandy swimming beach area. It is within a 1/8 of a mile of the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail.

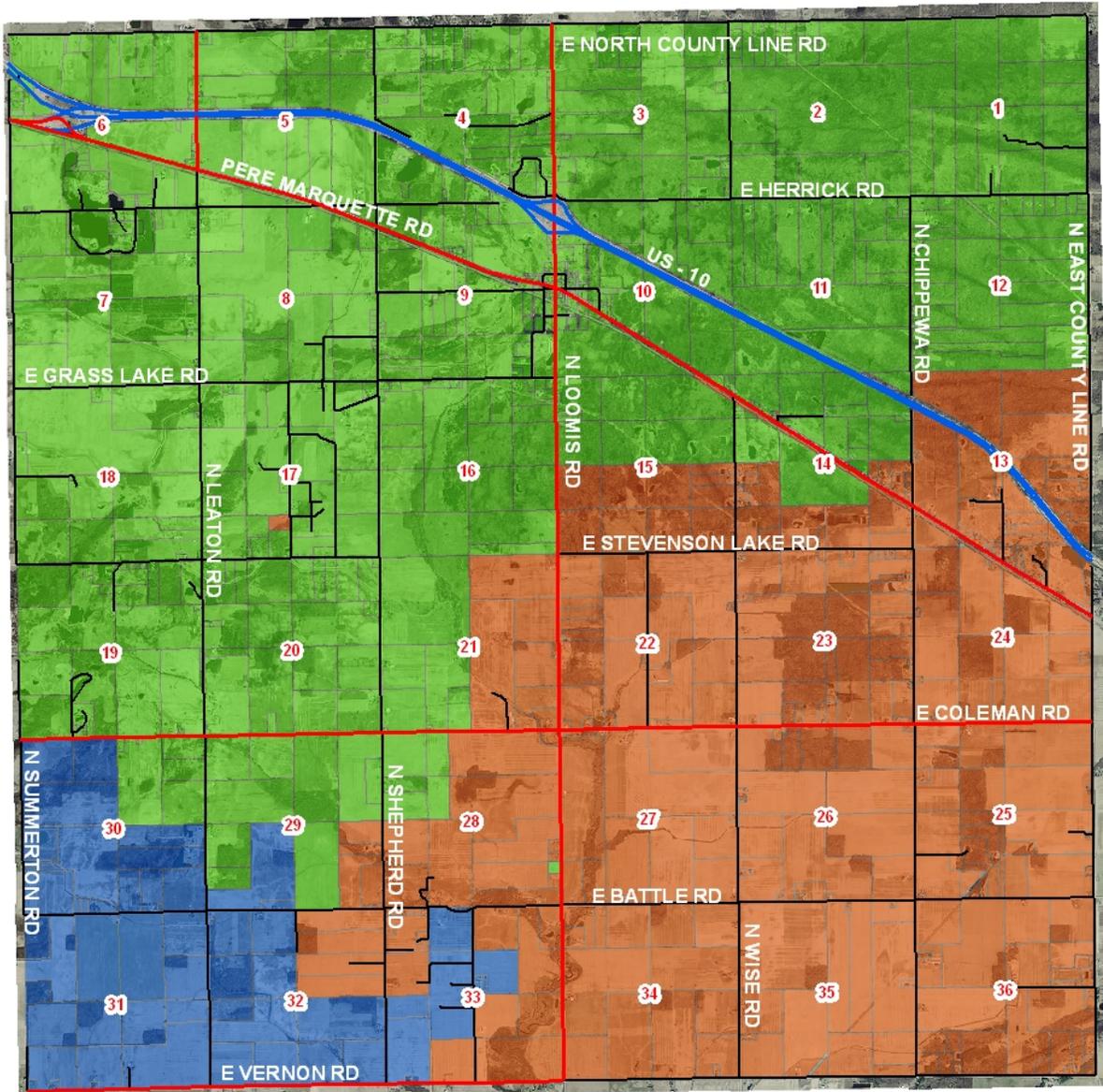
The Lawrence McDonald Wildlife Sanctuary is an 11 acre wetland area that is intended to stay unimproved. The Pere Marquette Rail-Trail, which runs along the northeast side of the sanctuary, provides a bridge from which to

overlook this wetland area.

### Schools

Children in Wise Township attend either Clare, Mt.Pleasant, or Coleman Schools. A School district map is shown on the following page.

# WISE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL MAP



- STATE TRUNKLINE
- COUNTY PRIMARY
- COUNTY LOCAL
- COLEMAN SCHOOLS
- MT PLEASANT SCHOOLS
- CLARE SCHOOLS



SOURCE: ISABELLA COUNTY GIS

## How is Land Used In Wise Township?

---

The existing land use in a community is probably the most important piece of data to analyze among the existing characteristics in a community. In many cases, the existing land uses have set a pattern that is unlikely to change. In other areas there may be vacant or underused land that can be evaluated for its development or conservation value.

In order to provide a detailed account of the Existing Land Use, the consultants first used aerial photography to develop a draft of the land use map. After a draft was developed, the consultants used the draft as a guide and drove each road in the Township in November of 2002, correcting the map as needed to identify land that was used for agriculture, commercial development, residential development and to identify land that was currently wooded or vacant.

### Land Use Classifications

The land uses in the Township are divided into six classifications for purposes of mapping. General definitions are given below.

#### Agricultural

This classification is intended to accommodate primarily agricultural land uses, farm dwellings, and non-farm dwellings that are in keeping with the agricultural character. Agricultural land uses would be characterized by traditional cash crops, animal raising, horse boarding, and pasture lands.

#### Residential

This classification is for areas with residential dwellings and accessory structures.

#### Commercial

Included in this category are all parcels containing commercial facilities.

#### Public/Semi-Public

Land area in this category is used for public and government buildings, parks and cemeteries. Schools, both public and private, as well as religious institutions, 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.

**Vacant**

All existing vacant or undeveloped parcels are included in this category.

**Wooded**

Land area that is covered with forests and trees.

**Land Use Analysis**

The following chart shows how land is currently being used in Wise Township. The existing land use map is shown at the end of this section.

Land Use In Wise Township		
Type .....	Acreage .....	Percent
Agricultural .....	13,385 .....	57.0%
Commercial .....	46 .....	0.2%
Public/Semi Public .....	225 .....	1.0%
Residential .....	1,103 .....	4.7%
Vacant .....	469 .....	2.0%
Wooded .....	8,313 .....	35.3%
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>23,541 .....</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

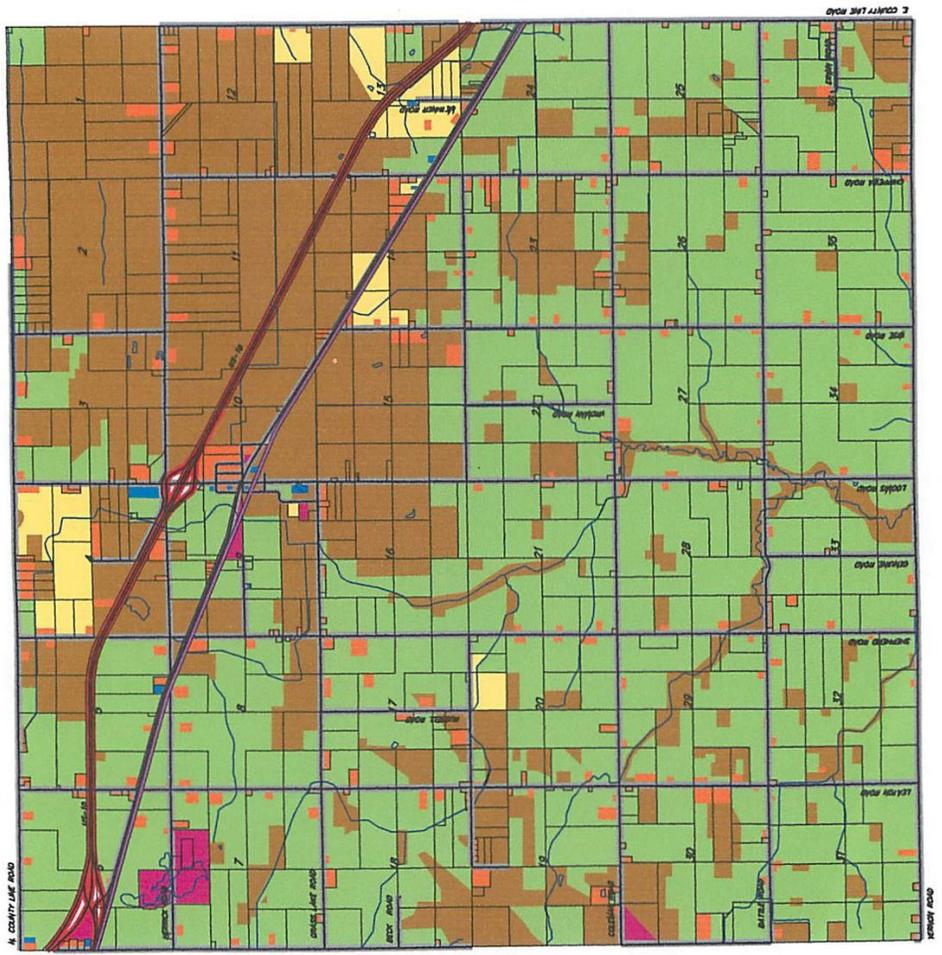
*Source: 2002 Drivina Survey*

**Agricultural**

Agricultural is currently the largest land use in the township, at over 13,000 acres or 57% of the land. Agricultural use is located primarily south of US-10. Most of the tilled land is in the southeastern quarter of the township. Crops grown include corn, soybeans, alfalfa, wheat, and dry beans. Much of the other agricultural land in the township is used for pasturing.

**Wooded**

Wooded lands account for the second largest land use in Wise Township at 8,300 acres or 35.3%. The land north of Pere-Marquette and east of Loomis Road is nearly all heavily wooded. There are significant other large tracks of woodlands across the rest of the township also, such as in the middle of section 23 and on the north side of section 19.



SCALE: 1" = 1600'  
 MASE TOWNSHIP  
 ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

- LAND USE LEGEND**
- AGRICULTURAL
  - COMMERCIAL
  - RESIDENTIAL
  - PUBLIC/SEM PUBLIC
  - VACANT
  - WOODED

DATE: 05/20/2013	SHEET: 25 OF 48
SCALE: AS SHOWN	FILE NO.
<b>MASE TOWNSHIP</b> <b>ISABELLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN</b>	
<b>MASE TOWNSHIP</b> <b>EXISTING LAND USE</b>	

## Residential

Residential use accounts for approximately 5% of the land within the township. The majority of residential use is on small tracts of land or as part of a larger farm parcel located along road frontages throughout the Township. Occasionally, several homes will be grouped more closely together and/or located on the same parcel. The only significant cluster of residential use is in the Loomis area.

## Vacant

Two percent of the land, or 469 acres, are considered vacant. Vacant land is generally clear of most trees and is not used for agricultural purposes. Vacant land is scattered across the township with clusters in section 4 and section 13.

## Public/Semi-Public



Approximately one percent of the land in Wise Township is used for public or semi-public use. Most of that is the Herrick Recreation Area and the Rail Trail. Other public uses are the closed landfill, the cemetery, and the Township Hall area.

## Commercial

Wise Township currently has less than 50 acres of property that are considered commercial. There are approximately a half dozen businesses in the Loomis area and then another handful of small businesses scattered around the township (Such as Mullett's Tack & Saddle on N. County Line and Simon's Meat Packing on Bawkey Road).

## What do residents think about Wise Township?

---

Master Plans are founded on the goals of the community. A good plan will seek out the thoughts, ideas, and wishes of the community to help guide the development of the township. In Wise Township, citizens were given the opportunity to participate through a community input survey mailed to *all* township residences.

### Survey

The community input survey was mailed to 472 residences in Wise Township in February of 2003. Forty-three percent or 202 of the surveys were completed and returned. This is an outstanding response rate. A typical mailed survey will receive a response rate of 12%. Responses from a high percentage can be interpreted to be representative of the entire community. A summary of all the responses can be found in Appendix B.

#### Mailed Community Input Survey

**472 surveys mailed**  
**202 returned**  
**43% response rate**

The survey grouped questions in six different categories: General, Residential, Commercial, Agricultural and Woodlands, and Miscellaneous. In addition to the 18 multiple choice questions, respondents were also given three open-ended questions in which to write responses.

### General questions

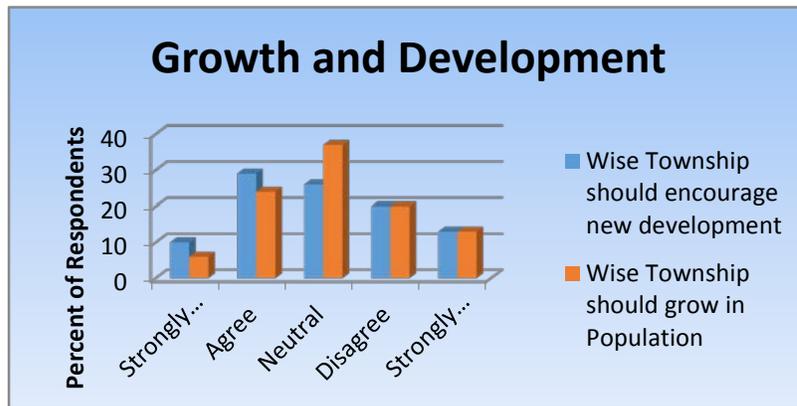
The general questions began with a group of five categories in which residents were asked to assess relative change in the past five years. Significant responses show that, compared to five years prior:

- 51% of the respondents felt that road conditions were better or much better
- 54% of the respondents felt that traffic was worse or much worse
- 45% felt that township services were better or much better
- More than half felt that privacy and the natural environment were relatively the same

General questions about overall growth and development drew very mixed responses. Thirty-nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Wise Township should encourage new development," 26% were neutral, and 33% strongly disagreed or disagreed with that statement. Feelings about population growth were similar. Thirty percent agreed or strongly agreed that the town ship should

grow in population. Thirty-seven percent were neutral, and 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Actual responses are shown in the chart below.

## Residential



For the most part, survey respondents live in Wise Township because they like the rural living and natural environment. Seventy percent of the respondents checked this response on the survey. Other popular reasons for living in Wise Township were



- born and raised in the community (44%)
- close to family and friends (42%)
- like the community (40%)

Residents were asked to check all the reasons that would apply for living in Wise Township. Therefore, the percentages total greater than 100%.

As with general growth issues, Wise Township residents were evenly divided in their views on the need for new residential growth. Thirty-one percent strongly agreed or agreed that new residential growth was needed, 34% were neutral, and 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

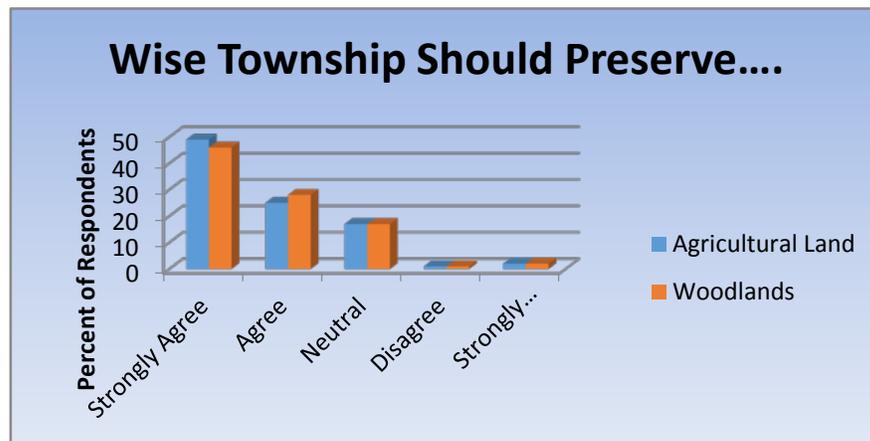
When asked where residential growth should be planned, 32% of the respondents indicated they did not want residential growth in Wise Township. Thirty percent felt growth should occur in the Loomis area. Eighteen percent wanted residential growth near Clare and 16% wanted residential growth near Coleman.

## Commercial

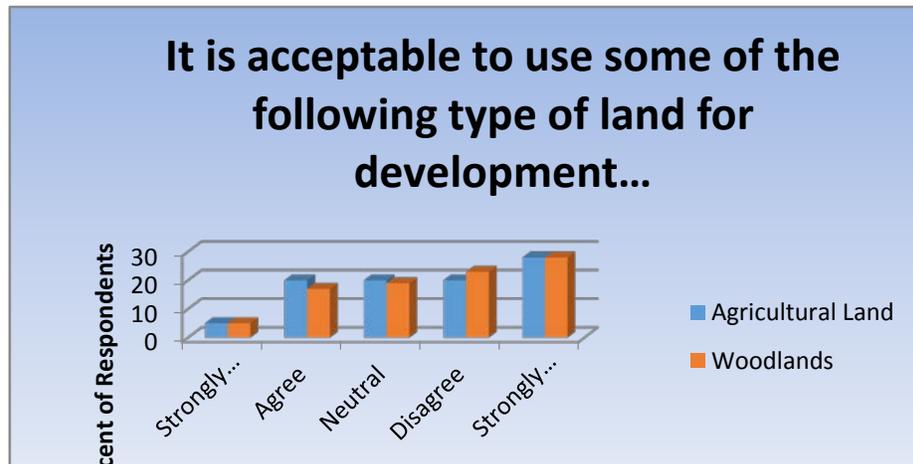
Thirty-three percent of the respondents feel that there is not enough commercial business in Wise Township while 56% feel that the amount is about right. When asked where future commercial growth should be located, 31% of the respondents indicated that they don't want more commercial development, 40% felt that it should be located near Loomis Road and the expressway. Thirty-four percent felt commercial growth should be located on Pere Marquette Road near Clare.

## Agricultural Lands and Woodlands

Wise Township residents felt very strongly about preserving agricultural lands and woodlands. Seventy-four percent of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that each type of these lands should be preserved. The "strongly agree" category was the highest of any response in the entire survey. Specific responses are shown below.



Residents also felt somewhat strongly that agricultural lands and woodlands should not be used for development purposes. Forty-eight percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that it is acceptable to use some agricultural land for development. Fifty-one percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that it is acceptable to use some woodlands for development. The responses to these questions are shown in the chart below.



### Miscellaneous

The only questions posed regarding industrial development showed similar responses to that of other types of development. Respondents had mixed opinions. Thirty-nine percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Wise Township should plan for industrial development if adequate roads, utilities, and other public services are available.” Twenty-four percent were neutral and 35% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.

Only 15% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “Drinking water quality is adequate in Wise Township,” indicating that there may be no immediate need for a public water system.

Two blight questions evoked strong responses from the township residents. Sixty-one percent of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there should be a restriction on the number of inoperable or unlicensed vehicles allowed on private property. Seventy-four percent strongly agreed or agreed that private property should be maintained in a way to avoid nuisances, eyesores, and health or safety hazards.

### Open ended responses



The last three questions of the survey were open-ended questions that respondents were asked to fill in. About half the respondents answered each of these questions. Several listed more than one item in response to each question.

The question, “What do you like about Wise Township?” received a wide variety of responses. Of those who wrote in an answer, the responses most frequently given are listed below.

- rural and country living - 48%
- peaceful and quiet atmosphere/low crime - 24%
- the people - 18%
- rail trail - 6%

When asked “What do you dislike about Wise Township?” the residents who wrote in an answer responded most frequently with the following replies:

- road and ditch problems - 39%
- blight - 24%
- high taxes - 12%

Lastly, when asked “What would you do to improve Wise Township?” the respondents again returned to road and ditch problems and blight. Forty-two percent of those who wrote in an answer suggested improvements to the roads or ditches. Many wanted gravel roads paved, or simply to have better dust control. Many mentioned poor grading of the roads that allowed water to pond in the roadway instead of draining to adjacent ditches. Others thought the ditches needed to be cleared of weeds to improve drainage. Fourteen percent suggested improvements to blight issues such as removing junk cars or cleaning up messy property.

## What are the future goals for Wise Township?

---

Articulating goals about what should change and what should stay the same is especially important when a community is defining its direction for the next ten years. Based upon the community input, Wise Township has developed goals for its future.

### General Community Character

Wise Township is described as a quiet community where residents enjoy the rural atmosphere that features woodlands and farmlands. To the maximum extent possible, these lands should be preserved and maintained.



Goal: Preserve the rural character of the community  
Actions

- Examine options for speed reduction on Loomis Road.
- Maintain natural features for the enjoyment of current and future residents.
- Encourage site design which protects the existing terrain, preserves significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporates native trees and shrubbery into landscape plans.

Goal: Preserve Woodlands  
Actions

- Examine the use of a Conservation Development Ordinance.
- Development should be low-impact and primarily limited to passive recreation and conservation areas.

### Residential Land Use

Since Wise Township residents have mixed opinions on the need for residential growth, it is important that any such growth be properly planned so as not to excessively interfere with the existing rural character of the township. There are many parcels of land within the township that would not be considered prime farmland or densely wooded. It would make the most sense to use these lands for potential residential growth.

Wise Township residents are united on the need for residents to

maintain their property to avoid eyesores. The township needs to put measures in place that will encourage homeowners to properly maintain their residences.

Goal: Plan for residential growth Actions

- Plan for single family development in the Loomis area
- Identify and plan for a medium density residential area

Goal: Maintain quality housing Actions

- Investigate blight issues and actions to reduce junk cars.
- Review and update housing standards in zoning

### Agricultural Land Use

Township residents feel that the preservation of agricultural land is very important in Wise Township. The Township wishes to support agricultural activities as an essential part of the economy in the Township, County, and State. Efforts should be taken to avoid using farmland for non-agricultural development purposes.

**Future goals articulate what should change and what should stay the same in the community.**

Goal: Preserve agricultural land Actions

- Identify prime farmlands.
- Investigate Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance.
- Examine lot size in zoning ordinance.
- Investigate the use of an open space ordinance.

### Commercial Land Use

While commercial land use currently accounts for less than 1% of the existing land use in the Township, there is a need to plan for carefully developed commercial areas that will meet the needs of residents without negatively impacting upon the rural flavor of the community.

Goal: Plan for commercial growth Actions

- Encourage small commercial operations that meet the needs of the township and do not detract from the visual character and rural atmosphere of the Township.

- Investigate the possibility of water and sewer services to meet the needs of development.

### Industrial Land Use

While there are no existing industrial land uses in Wise Township, the Planning Commission does feel that it needs to plan for it in the future. Development of industrial land uses is strongly dependent upon the availability of adequate roads, utilities and other public services.

Goal: Plan for industrial land use Actions

- Determine where industrial land use may be best suited in Wise Township.

### Community Service and Infrastructure

Many residents were concerned with road and drainage issues. Wise Township needs to analyze and prioritize exactly what needs to be done so that they can make best use of limited resources.

Goal: Improve community services and infrastructure Actions

- Investigate use of Coleman Public Library for Township Residents. This is the closest library to the Township and Wise Township residents currently are not able to obtain a library card from the Coleman Library. Residents have expressed an interest in being able to check books out from the facility.
- Address road and drainage maintenance issues and investigate road improvements.
  - Pave Leaton Road from Stevenson Lake Road to Coleman Road.
  - Conduct a road inventory.
  - Work closely with Isabella County Road Commission and Drain commissioner to address maintenance issues.
- Investigate the possibility of water and sewer service to meet the needs of development.

Many survey respondents wrote in concerns with road and drainage issues. Wise Township needs to analyze and prioritize their needs so they can make the best use of limited resources.

- Work with Chippewa Indian Tribe to anticipate and plan for the use of 2% semi-annual gaming distribution funds.
- Develop a capital improvement schedule.

## How will Wise Township develop In the future?

---

### Introduction

The future land use discussion in this Plan has a ten to twenty year Horizon. The land uses outlined in this section of the Master Plan serve to convey the community's desire to promote growth in specific areas while striving to maintain, enhance, and protect the rural agricultural character of the Township.

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

**The future land use map is a guide for development for the next 10-20 years. Not every parcel will develop exactly as**

As a reminder, these proposed changes will not be effective until the zoning is changed to allow development of the varying types to occur. That is, while the future land use map may indicate an area for commercial, the area may not be *zoned* commercial until the land users request the change and the Township Board approves it.

It is worth noting that future land use categories are slightly different from existing land use. This is because future land use is developed with an eye towards the zoning that will be needed to actually bring this plan to fruition. For example, while there were significant woodlands identified on the existing land use map, there is no "wooded" category in future land use. It is combined with agricultural because "agricultural" is the term for how all of the wooded and agricultural lands will be zoned.

The future land use map is shown on the following page.



## Residential

Being mindful of the Township's intent to preserve woodlands and agricultural land, residential growth will be encouraged only in specific areas that are not considered to be prone farmland or that are heavily wooded.

**Residential growth will be planned in areas that are not considered prime farmlands or in areas that are heavily wooded.**

Low Density Residential (LDR) is intended to be developed at a density of approximately one to two dwellings per acre and is typified by conventional single family homes. Future LDR is planned in areas of the northwest quadrant of the Township along Leaton Road and Pere Marquette Road. Certain non-residential uses such as parks, churches, and schools, are also compatible with permitted in LDR area.

Medium Density Residential (MDR) is land in Wise Township that is typified by dwellings clustered together on smaller lot sizes than those in low density residential. It may include single family homes and low family or multifamily units. MDR lands that have been identified in two areas of Wise Township. The first is in Section 10 just southeast of the Loomis and Pere Marquette Road intersection. The second area is triangular in shape and is located in the northwest corner of the township bordered by US-10, Pere Marquette Road, and Shepherd Road.

A Pre-manufactured Mobile Home Park residential land use is being designated in the Loomis area just south of the expressway. Wise Township already has a relatively high proportion of mobile homes (25%) for housing units. They are currently scattered about the township. Concentrating future mobile homes in an area that has direct access to the expressway and Pere Marquette Road will be convenient for the residents while still preserving prime agricultural lands and wooded areas.

## Agricultural

Wise Township's farmlands and woodlands are valued by the community and they are the essence of the rural, scenic character of the Township. Residents have made a strong statement though the community input survey that they wish to preserve these lands.

The future land use map identifies the vast majority of lands in the Township as agricultural. The most productive farmlands, which are in the southern portion of the township, are identified as prime farmlands on the future land use map. The prime farmlands have better drainage and more fertile soils and have been actively used for crops such as hay, corn, soybeans, dry beans and wheat for several decades. Prime farmlands

produce the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources, and farming these lands results in the least damage to the environment.



Most of the woodlands in the agricultural land use area are in the northeast portion of the Township. These lands are somewhat self-preserving because they are difficult for development due to naturally wet conditions with poor drainage and limited access because of few roads in the area.

### Commercial

Very little land is currently used for commercial use in Wise Township. However, residents have expressed a need for additional basic commercial business such as a gas station, convenience store, or small restaurant. The commercial future land use in Wise Township is centered around the community of Loomis at Loomis Road and Pere Marquette Road. This is where most of the existing businesses are and there is a relatively high density of population in the Loomis community. Furthermore, the area has higher traffic counts due to its access to US-10.

There are two other small pockets designated for future commercial land use. One is around the intersection of Loomis and Coleman Roads where there once was a neighborhood gas station. The second area is in a small existing commercial area at the northwest corner of the township near the Clare exit for US-10.

### Industrial

Currently, there are no industrial land uses in Wise Township. However, based upon the community input, the township feels it should plan for industry in the future. Industry could only be developed if adequate roads, utilities and other public utilities are available. Based upon this criteria, the township has designated an area along Pere Marquette Road on the far east side of the township as industrial use. This area was chosen because it is along a county primary road and is closest to Coleman where water and sewer service may be available. It runs up to the expressway which allows the industrial use to serve as a buffer between the highway and residential uses. Furthermore, there is another industrial land use close by to the southeast along Coleman Road in Warren Township.

## How will Wise Township implement this plan?

---

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.

Key steps for the implementation of this Plan include:

**The General public Needs to be aware of And understand the Master Plan. Lack of Understanding and apathy can hinder Implementation.**

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. An example of this would be to require or provide an incentive for providing open space in a new subdivision development.

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 Wise Township and it should be promoted to the citizens to foster support. Lack of citizen understanding and apathy can hinder the implementation process. There are several ways to increase citizen awareness, including:

1. Notify township residents via newsletters or mailings that the plan is complete. Share community input and goals. Keep the plan visible and available for citizen's 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. The zoning ordinance also guides the process for development by addressing site plan review and approval, special use approval, and controls over signs.

**The zoning ordinance and zoning map work together with the Master Plan to Achieve the desired Land use goals in Wise Township.**

There are numerous zoning concerns that have surfaced during the Master Planning process, ranging from residential upkeep and abandoned vehicles to open space laws.

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 County 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 the Planning Commission must take an active role to propel the desired development or limit unwelcome development within the community.**

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 in Wise Township are:

1. The TEA-21 Program, using transportation funding. These moneys are available through the Michigan Department of Transportation and include such activities as historic preservation, landscaping and beautification, pedestrian pathways, and roadway improvements.
2. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund administered through the Department of Natural Resources. These funds are generally used for park, recreation, or environmental improvements.
3. Development incentives administered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. These funds are used for a wide variety of projects that are all tied to increasing employment.
4. Gaming funds from the Chippewa Indian Tribe. Since the advent of gaming activities within the Chippewa Reservation in 1994, Wise Township has received semiannual 2% gaming awards distributions from the Chippewa Tribe. The semi-annual allotment has ranged from less than \$6,000 in spring of 1994 to over \$180,000 in fall of 2002. Larger allotments generally have funds earmarked by the Tribe for special uses such as paving of specific roads.

## Other Funding Sources

Three other specific funding sources that are available for capital improvement projects are described below:

**Dedicated Millage:** Special millages can be used to generate revenues for a specific purpose. Examples that may be relevant in Wise Township would be to fund road improvements, recreation programs or improvements, or funding for a farmland preservation program such as purchase of development rights.



**Special Assessment:** A special assessment is a tax or levy customarily imposed against only those specific parcels of real estate that will benefit from a proposed public improvement like a roadway, sewer or water line.

**Bond Programs:** Bonds are among the principal sources of financing used by communities to pay for capital improvements. General obligation bonds are issued for specific community projects and are paid off by the general public via property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of projects that generate revenue (i.e. parking structure or community pool, etc.). These bonds are retired using income generated by the project.

## Revisions and Updates

The Master Planning process is continual and ongoing. The Master Plan must be reviewed at least once every five years according to the new Township Planning laws passed in 2001. The planning commission or a committee of the planning commission should initiate the review to make one of the following determinations:

- no update is needed
- the existing plan needs to be amended
- a new plan needs to be written.

The review should be done to ensure that the plan still reflects the current goals and desires of the Township. Generally, a plan needs to be updated or rewritten at least once every ten years in order to be responsive to new growth trends and current Township attitudes.

## Conclusion

The Wise Township Planning Commission has spent nearly a year discussing and examining issues regarding the future of the Township in addition to receiving valuable input from Township residents in the form of a public survey.

**Township officials and the Planning Commission are the leaders in carrying out the Master Plan, but the process is dependent upon every responsible citizen of Wise Township. By working together, Wise Township will continue to be a desirable, attractive, and convenient community in which to live, work and play.**

As a result, the Planning commission has compiled a complete, carefully prepared document that represents the data, efforts and collective thoughts of Wise Township residents. This Master Plan is only the beginning of a program of action for the next 10 to 20 years. Because the future well-being of Wise Township depends upon rational, coordinated action, the Planning Commission stands ready to meet with any person or group interested in the future development of the area. The Planning commission will be available to help and guide

those who need advice or wish to be part of the Master Plan acted upon.

Carrying out the Master Plan is a task which is led by Township officials and the Planning Commission, but is also dependent upon every responsible citizen of Wise Township. By working together, Wise Township will continue to be a desirable, attractive, and convenient community in which to live, work and play.

Appendix A:  
Historic Plat Maps



1879 Plat of Wise Township  
 (Scale not accurate)



Source: MGenWeb site for Isabella County

Appendix B:

Community Input  
Survey Results