1. What Is a Master Plan?

BRUCE TOWNSHIP

Master Plan Update Open House

giffels webster

A Master Plan:

- Is a long-range vision for the future. It looks ahead 10 to 20 years and plans for change that may occur in that time.
- Serves as a guide for future development and land use decisions.
- Provides a framework to capture a clear vision of what the community wants to become. It is supported by goals and objectives.
- Directs development in areas of the township. Plans for where homes, businesses, parks, and other physical spaces will go and strives for compatibility.

Bruce Township last adopted a new master plan in 2016. A minor update was adopted in 2018 to make the boundaries of the planned water and sewer districts match. The plan was simply re-affirmed in 2021 and has not been changed in the meantime.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requires communities to review their plans at least every five years to ensure they reflect current conditions and community goals. While it is not necessarily required that a community update its plan every five years, review is still important. A Master Plan guides decisions about land use, development, and the provision of public facilities and services, so growing communities and communities that expect future growth should be especially diligent about master plan review.

How does the plan relate to zoning?

The Master Plan sets the community's vision for the future and includes recommendations for zoning. Zoning is the set of rules that helps make that vision happen by guiding what types of buildings and land uses are allowed in different areas. The Master Plan itself does not change any property's zoning, but it helps guide future zoning decisions if a property owner proposes a change.

What's the Difference Between a Master Plan and a Master Plan Update?

Generally, a master plan takes a comprehensive look at the community and all land uses within it. An update is typically more focused on specific topics in need of particular study. It could take the form of an area plan, an investigation of a particular category of land use, or an adjustment to the Future Land Use Map.

Goals Established in the 2016 Master Plan

The 2016 Master Plan established the following goals for Bruce Township:

- To preserve and protect the existing natural assets found within the Township. These include the extensive natural topography as well as the extensive woodlots, wetlands, open spaces, and farmland.
- To maintain a sense of pride and ownership within the Township, in particular, to maintain a sense of pride and ownership of this Plan and its recommendations by the residents.
- To promote developments which are sensitive to the existing environmental character of the Township and provide for innovative design and provide a variety of quality living conditions.
- To understand that Bruce Township will largely be a bedroom community where residents will primarily work, shop, and entertain outside of the Township in more densely developed communities.
- To promote and encourage long-range thinking, not only within public officials, but also in the residents.This Plan should also help in the viewing of issues of a larger scale or context, such as a County or regional level.
- To continue a well-planned growth and development policy by accommodating more densely populated and intense development in those areas of the Township where sewer and water service has been planned and is available while limiting development in other areas of the Township where no public sewer or water service is available.
- To preserve and continue to encourage the high quality community facilities, such as schools, parks, emergency services and open space.

2. What is the Purpose of a Master Plan?

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The Purpose of This Master Plan Update

In 2024, the Planning Commission discussed another review of the 2016 Master Plan. The Commission recognized that the Township had lost or given up many industrial parcels over time and the planned industrial corridor along 33 Mile Road is filling up. There has also been several applications to rezone parcels to industrial or commercial designations. The Commission determined that a formal review was needed to ensure that we continue to have a good balance of residential and industrial/commercial properties in the Township.

This update looks 20 years into the future and focuses on the Township's commercial and industrial land, addressing these key questions:

1. Does the Township have an appropriate amount of land zoned for industrial and commercial development?
2. Is the location of the land that is zoned for industrial or commercial use appropriate?

In order to investigate these questions, we need to ask several supporting questions:

1. How much land is currently zoned for commercial and industrial uses?
2. How much of this land is vacant, or near-vacant/occupied by obsolete uses or structures?
3. Where are our commercial uses that do not have commercial zoning?
4. How much commercial and industrial development is occurring in the Township?
5. What do the residents of Bruce Township think?

To answer the fifth question, a survey was administered last year. Results can be found on the fourth board in this open house.

Based on a review of regional demand, the Township Planner has provided the opinion that the township likely has enough land to deal with commercial and office demand over the next 20 years, but is likely to run out of easily developable industrially zoned land within that same timeframe.



Recently built industrial space south of 33 Mile Rd.



The Township's primary commercial area is located on Van Dyke Avenue.

Understanding Zoning

Zoning provides certain property development rights. A property owner may develop a piece of property for a permitted land use as long as they meet the requirements of the district, as well as any other development requirements, including engineering regulations.

Understanding Zoning

A property owner has the right to request a change in the zoning of their property. When considering the request, the Township Board and Planning Commission must consider the future land use plan, and whether the requested zoning is consistent with the plan. A request that is not consistent with the plan may be denied.

3. Background Information: Demographic Summary

Master Plan Update
Open House

Bruce Township: Key Stats

35.81 square miles

Plus **1.39 square miles** of Romeo

Ford Proving Grounds occupies **6 square miles**

Population

Population has pushed outward from Detroit up M-53 for decades. Warren, Sterling Heights, and Shelby Township are suburbanized and Washington Township is growing very rapidly. This will put pressure on Bruce Township to approve more development.

Population Change in Bruce Township and Surrounding Communities				
Jurisdiction	**Pop 2010**	**Pop 2023**	**% Change**	**Difference**
Bruce Township	6,947	7,901	13.73%	954
Romeo	3,596	3,767	4.76%	171
Washington Township	23,296	26,535	13.90%	3,239
Addison Township	5,948	5,782	-2.79%	-166
Almont Township	6,613	6,956	5.19%	343
Armada Township	3,649	3,639	-0.27%	-10
Macomb County	840,978	874,928	4.04%	33,950
SEMCOG Region*	4,704,809	4,804,188	2.11%	99,379
Michigan	9,952,687	10,057,921	1.06%	105,234
United States	303,965,272	331,097,593	8.93%	27,132,321

- Bruce Township is growing faster than Macomb County, the greater SEMCOG region, Michigan, and the United States as a whole.
- SEMCOG projects another 1,000 people and 200-300 housing units through 2050, but this may be conservative.

Bruce Township's population is becoming older on average.

Population Characteristic	2010	2020	Change 2010-2020
Total Population	6,947	7,461	7.4%
Under 5	306	300	-2%
5 to 17	1,449	1,322	-9.9%
65 and over	895	1,467	63.9%
65 to 84	833	1,331	59.8%
85 and over	62	136	119.4%
Housing Units	2,477	2,742	10.4%
Household Sizes	2.95	2.83	-0.12%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, and SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast

Housing

Bruce Townships' household size is declining as the senior population grows.

Bruce Township Household Composition 2010-2022				
Household Types	**Census 2010**	**ACS 2022**	**Change 2010-2020**	**Pct Change 2010-2022**
With Seniors 65+	605	1,022	417	68.90%
Without Seniors	1,741	1,784	43	2.50%
Live Alone, 65+	127	397	270	212.60%
Live Alone, <65	171	107	-64	-37.40%
2+ Persons, With Children	864	780	-84	-9.70%
2+ Persons, Without Children	1,184	1,522	338	28.50%
Total Households	2,346	2,806	460	19.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

From 2010 through 2024, permits were issued for 578 housing units

Bruce Township Housing Characteristics 2010-2022			
Housing Characteristics	**2010**	**2022**	**Change 2010-2022**
Housing Types			
Single unit	1,972	2,500	528
Multi-unit	123	117	-6
Mobile homes	337	251	-86
Occupancy Status			
Owner-occupied	2,207	2,650	443
Renter-occupied	139	156	17
Vacant	131	62	-69
Housing Value and Rent			
Median housing value	$364,014	$379,300	$15,286
Median gross rent	$1,097	$1,350	$253

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Economics

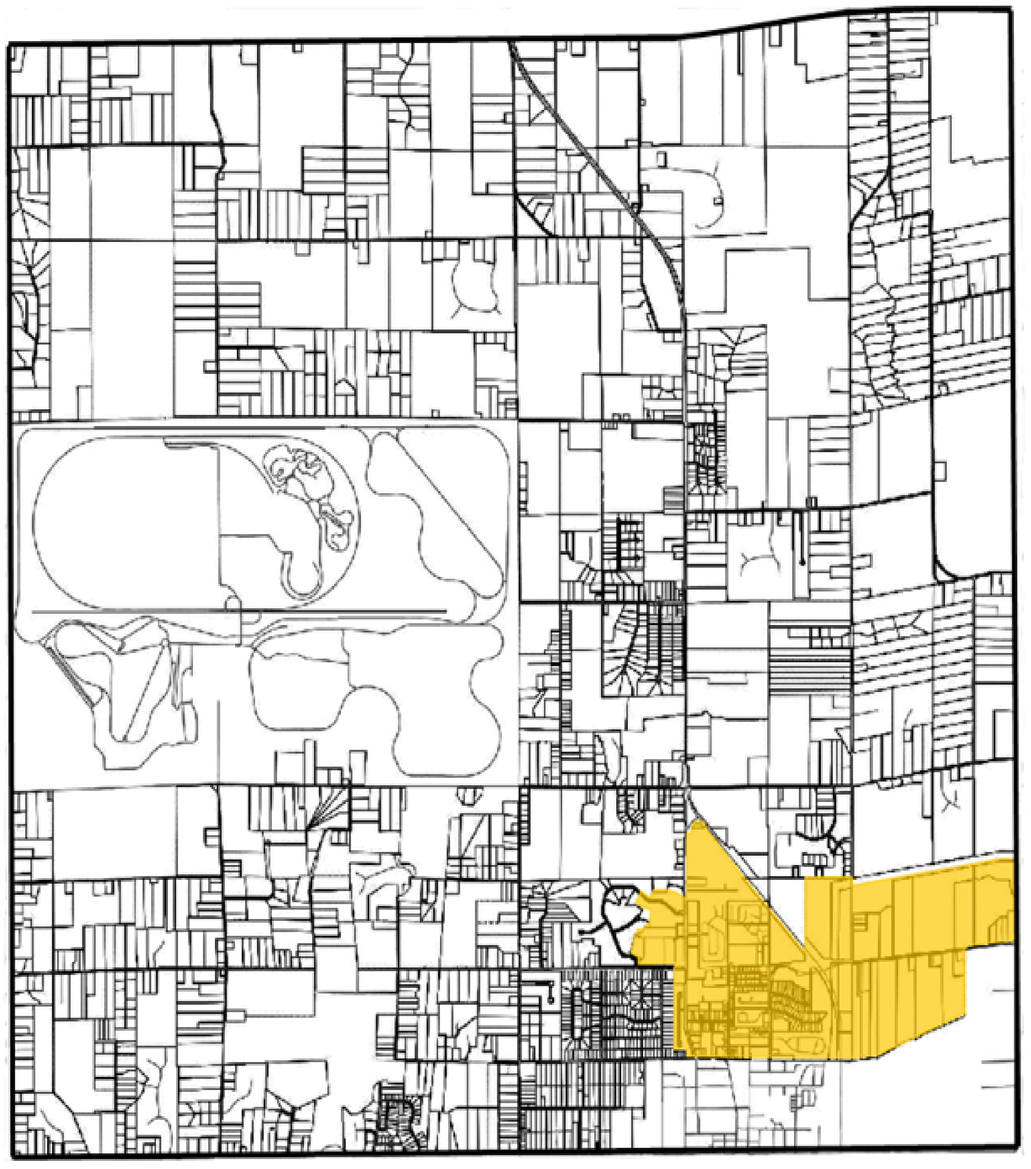
Bruce Township is on average an affluent community, with a higher median household income than any of its neighbors.

Median Household Income of Bruce Township and Surrounding Communities, 2022	
Bruce Township	$115,965
Romeo	$59,693
Washington Township	$102,829
Addison Township	$107,051
Almont Township	$86,858
Armada Township	$106,069
Macomb County	$73,876
SEMCOG Region*	$73,354
Michigan	$68,990
United States	$74,580

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Water & Sewer District Map

The Township's planned water and sewer district covers only a small portion of the Township near Romeo, limiting the density of developments occurring outside the district. Subdivisions have continued to be built with larger lots, using wells and septic fields.



Note that the Water and Sewer District is a planned district. Water is not currently available west of M-53, and sewer capacity is limited by current agreements with the Village of Romeo.

4. Background Information: Survey Results

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Survey administered in 2025—sent with summer tax bill (could be taken on paper or online).

378 Total Responses

88.3% Township residents not living in Romeo

10.9% Township residents living in Romeo (north of 32 Mile Rd)

0.8% non-resident property or business owners

4.79% owned businesses in Bruce

10% worked in Bruce outside their home

20.75% worked at home

28.3% were retired

Major Themes of Responses

- People appreciate Bruce for the rural character of the area, peace and quiet, open space, agriculture, and natural areas
- Residents like that M-53 and Romeo provide proximity to services located outside the Township
- People want any change that happens to be well-managed, and do not want to lose rural character.

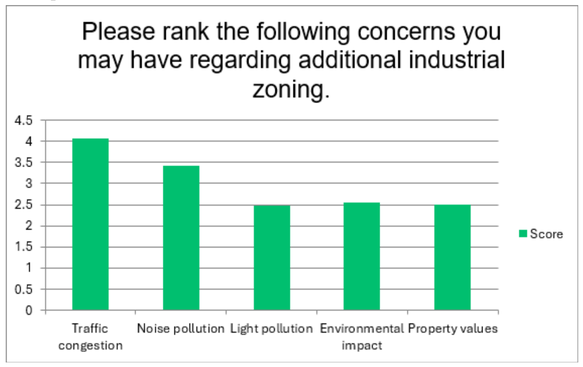
Please rate each of the following statements on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I do not mind driving to another community for most of my errands (grocery shopping, pharmacy, etc).	4.51%	5.04%	7.43%	28.91%	52.79%
I live in Bruce Township because it is mostly rural.	2.39%	2.12%	4.51%	16.45%	74.54%
I wish that more basic goods and services were available within Bruce Township.	33.16%	28.38%	19.63%	11.94%	5.57%
Having a longer commute to work is an acceptable trade-off for living where I do.	2.65%	1.33%	8.75%	20.95%	64.46%
It is important for Bruce Township to be financially stable.	1.86%	0.80%	9.28%	50.40%	36.87%
Traffic in the area around Romeo is excessive.	7.96%	16.71%	30.50%	28.12%	15.38%
M-53 is easy to access.	2.39%	3.18%	8.22%	47.21%	38.20%
M-53 is safe.	9.81%	23.34%	22.81%	31.03%	11.67%
Farms near M-53 should be able to diversify into commercial operations such as banquet facilities, entertainment, festivals, markets, and restaurants.	23.61%	18.04%	22.55%	27.59%	7.16%
Farms elsewhere in the township should be able to diversify into commercial operations such as banquet facilities, entertainment, festivals, markets, and restaurants.	29.18%	21.49%	22.28%	20.42%	5.57%
It is important for Bruce Township to maintain its rural character as it makes decisions about new land uses.	0.80%	1.86%	2.39%	14.06%	80.64%

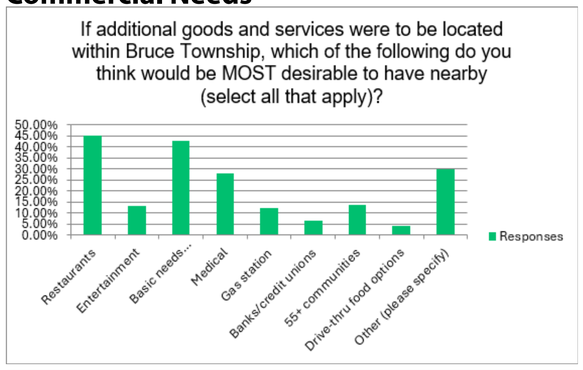
What are the biggest challenges facing Bruce Township today? (Select up to three)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Lack of local businesses	11.91%	48
Traffic and road conditions	36.23%	146
Property taxes	43.18%	174
Insufficient job opportunities	3.97%	16
Limited housing options	5.71%	23
Maintaining rural character	74.94%	302
Water & sewer fees	16.87%	68
Other (please specify)	21.34%	86

Respondents' Concerns



Commercial Needs





Industrial and Commercial Land

Industrial land generates significant tax revenue for the township, helping fund public services and infrastructure. These uses can also lead to increased wear on local roads due to heavier vehicle traffic. As the township looks to maintain and improve services without increasing the tax burden on residents, the balance between land use and revenue generation is important to consider. A visual of the township's industrial zones can be found on Board 5. Considering these factors, how should Bruce Township approach the potential expansion of land zoned for light industrial uses, such as small manufacturing facilities, research and technology companies, and similar enterprises?

Answer Choices	Responses	
The township should proactively seek opportunities to expand light industrial zoning.	9.16%	34
The township should be open to considering additional light industrial zoning if it is requested.	33.42%	124
The township should not consider adding any additional light industrial zoning at this time.	57.41%	213

Commercial development contributes significantly to the township's tax base, while generally requiring fewer public services (such as schools, parks, or emergency response) than residential areas. This makes commercial areas an efficient revenue source that can help reduce the need for future tax increases. However, these uses may increase traffic. A visual of the township's commercial zones can be found on Board 5. Considering these factors, how should Bruce Township approach potential expansion of land zoned for commercial use?

Answer Choices	Responses	
The township should proactively encourage additional commercial zoning.	7.86%	29
The township should be open to considering additional commercial zoning if it is requested.	36.59%	135
The township should not consider adding any additional commercial zoning at this time.	55.56%	205

If Bruce Township were to permit additional industrial uses, where do you think it would be most appropriate to do so? (select all that apply)

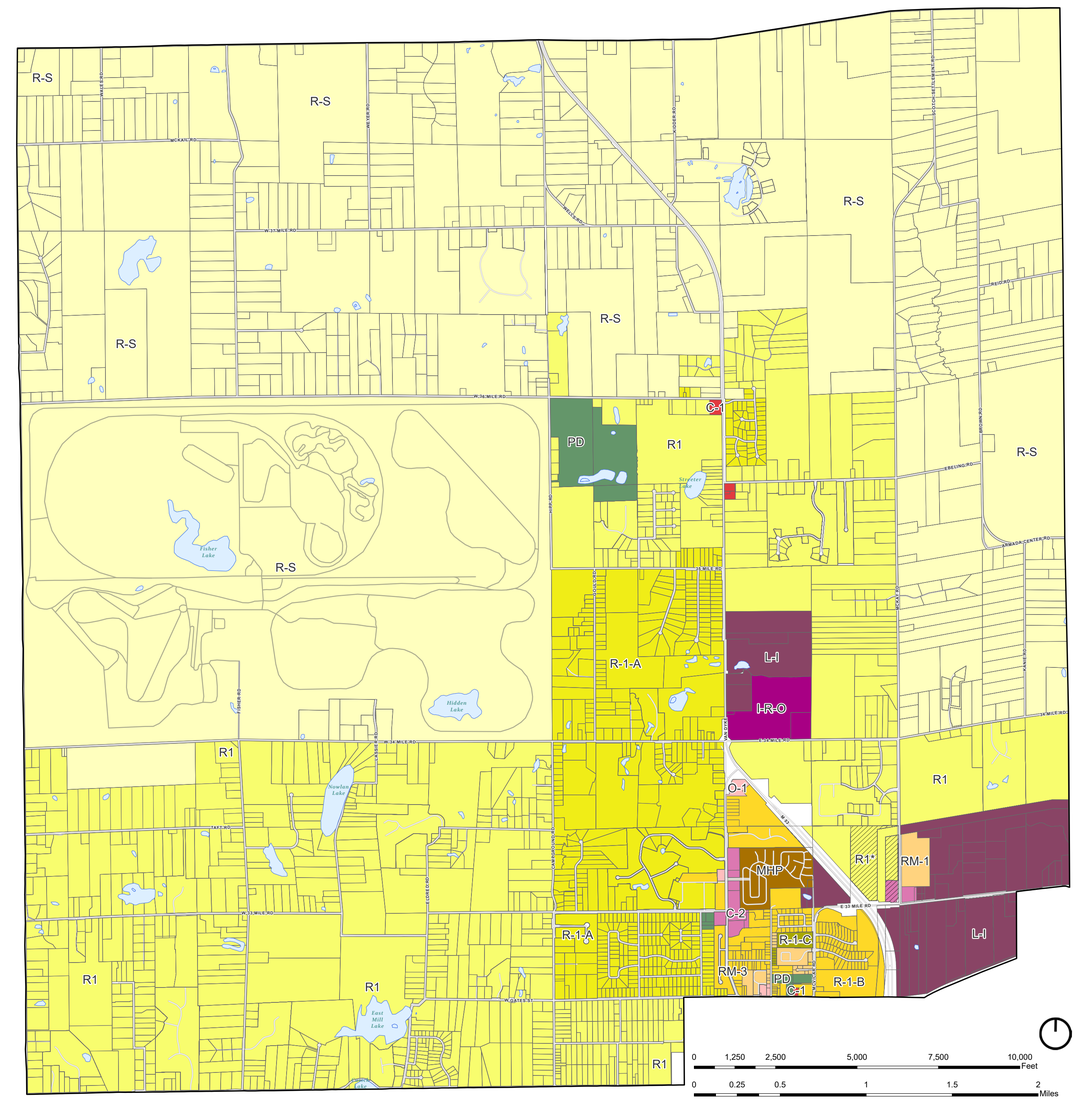
Answer Choices	Responses	
Directly along M-53 only	37.60%	138
Some other place (please specify)	5.72%	21
I would not like to see more land designated for industrial uses.	62.67%	230

If Bruce Township were to permit additional commercial uses, where do you think it would be most appropriate to do so? (select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
In the area around Romeo	22.91%	85
Along M-53, south of 35 Mile Road	28.84%	107
Along M-53, north of 35 Mile Road	19.41%	72
Some other place (please specify)	4.04%	15
I would not like to see more land designated for commercial uses	51.48%	191

5. Current Commercial & Industrial Zoning

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Zoning Map

Amended through Ordinance # 161-02-25,
effective October 8, 2025.

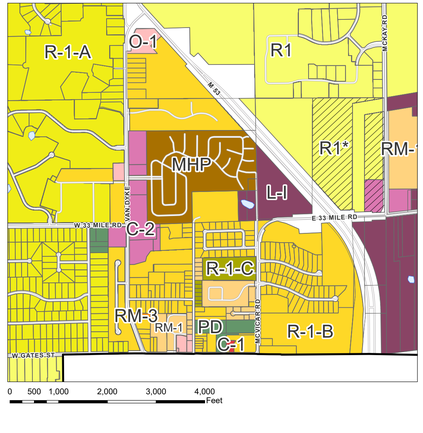
Zoning Districts

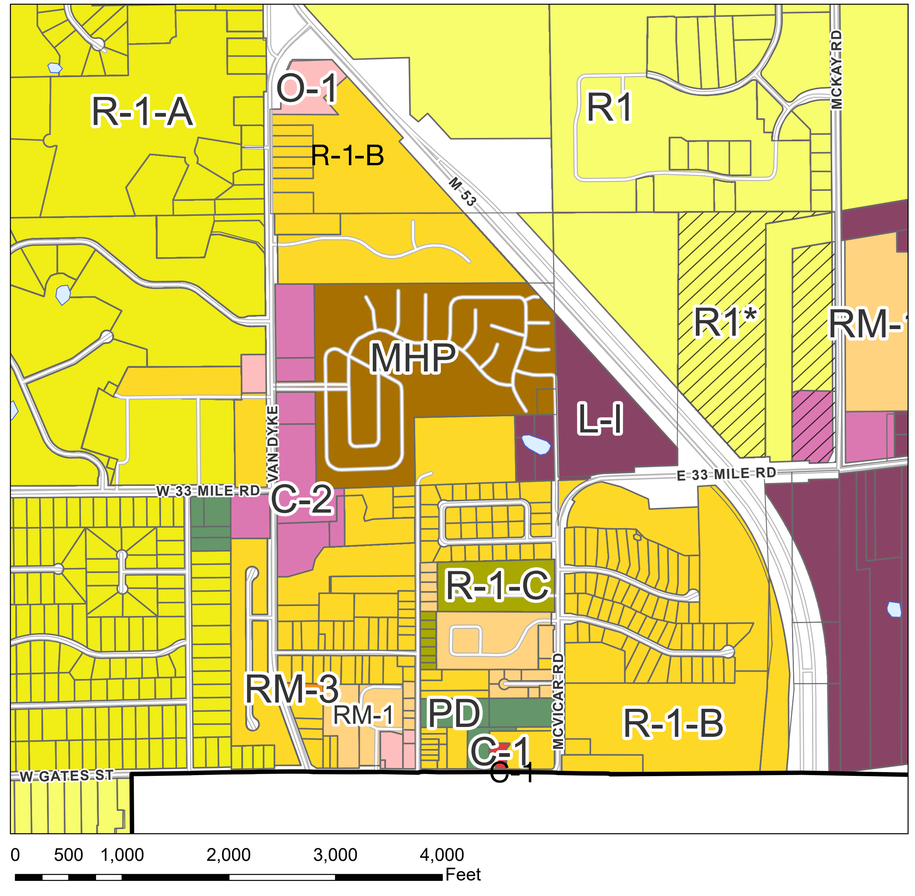
- CONSENT JUDGMENT
- R-S RURAL SUBURBAN
- R1 RESIDENTIAL ONE FAMILY
- R-1-A RESIDENTIAL ONE FAMILY
- R-1-B RESIDENTIAL ONE FAMILY
- R-1-C RESIDENTIAL ONE FAMILY
- RM-1 RESIDENTIAL MULTIPLE FAMILY
- RM-3 RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT
- MHP MOBILE HOME PARK
- O-1 RESTRICTED OFFICE
- C-1 LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- C-2 PLANNED SHOPPING CENTER
- L-I LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- I-R-O INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH OFFICE
- PD PARK DISTRICT

* Subject to Consent Judgment recorded 1-23-2015

This is to certify that this is the official Zoning Map referred to in Section 8.00 of Ordinance No. 161 of Bruce Township, Macomb County, Michigan. Effective Date: November 11, 2004. Amended through Ordinance # 161-02-25, effective October 8, 2025.

Adopted By: Bruce Township Board of Trustees
Prepared By: Bruce Township Planning Commission





Commercial & Industrial Acreage

The Township currently has about 810 acres zoned for various non-residential uses, not including the Ford Proving Grounds. These acres are broken down by zoning district in the following table, which also indicated roughly how much of each district is currently vacant land. Vacant land is based on total acreage of each parcel, and there are parcels in the LI-1 and IRO districts with a use occupying only a small portion of the lot, leaving a large area with the potential for future development.

Land currently zoned for commercial & industrial uses

District	Total Acreage	Vacant (going by parcel)
O-1 Restricted Office	9.1	4.15
C-1 Local Commercial	10.45	4.15
C-2 Planned Shopping Center	60.87	35.63
LI-1 Light Industrial	631.17	177.72
IRO Industrial Office Research	98.36	12.18

Vacant land is included in the total acreage in this table.

6. Future Land Use Map

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Open House

What Is a Future Land Use Map?

The Future Land Use Map identifies areas of the Township that are planned for certain uses. A future land use map is NOT a zoning map, nor does it change the current zoning of any property. Rather, it establishes a basis for the Zoning Map and the Zoning Ordinance, which is a local law. It is also important to consider that the boundaries of future land use areas on the map are meant to be generalized and do not necessarily represent specific properties. This is a key distinction to make when the Township is asked to consider future requests for rezoning.

Acreage

The new future land use map proposes to remove some small areas of office and commercial along M-53 and redesignate them for residential use. While it does not directly expand the area planned for industrial development, it does identify two areas where future industrial development may expand into along M-53 if the Township runs out of vacant industrial land. The intention for these expansion areas would be to accommodate the less intensive uses permitted in the IRO Industrial Office Research district.

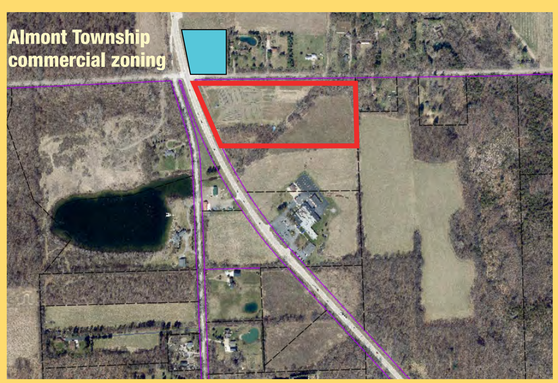
Agribusiness

The Township is not planning to significantly changes permitted agribusiness uses at this juncture, though the draft Master Plan will recommend improving clarity and processes in the zoning regulations that do exist.

Bordman & M-53

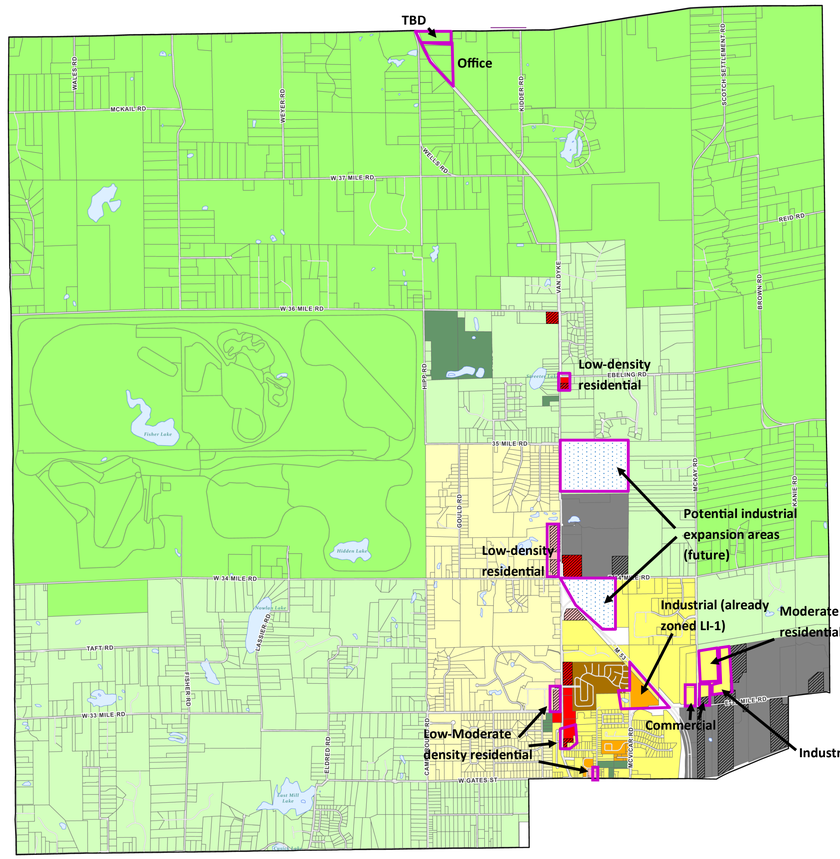
The area at the southeast corner of Bordman and M-53 includes a vacant medical facility, with a lavender farm north of it directly on the southeast corner. Almont Township has established commercial zoning on a portion of the northeast corner (shown below). The Planning Commission believes an office designation is appropriate for the medical facility in order to aid its productive reuse. The PC has discussed several possibilities for the corner parcel. Use the dots to mark your preferred option(s) for the corner parcel. Post-its can be used to provide comments.

	Commercial
	Commercial (corner only)
	Office
	Office (corner only)
	Residential
	Rural/Agricultural



Future Land Use

Status of Commercial & Industrial Land



Sources: Future Land Use: Bruce Township. Parcels, Roads: Macomb County. Map Exported: October 30, 2026. ©2026 Giffels Webster.

- RURAL - AGRICULTURAL
- RURAL - ESTATE
- LOW DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- LOW-MODERATE DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY
- OFFICE
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC - PARK
- VACANT

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Summary of Recommended Changes to Future Land Use Map 9/28/2026.

7. Tell Us What You Think

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Please let us know what you think about the proposed future land use map. Use the post-its to tell us your opinion. There is no limit on the number of responses you may post.

Remaining Steps in the Process After This Open House

- The Planning Commission will discuss the feedback received at this open house at its next meeting and decide whether to make any changes to its recommendations. If more information is needed, a final decision on changes may occur at a later date.
- The draft master plan update will be finalized.
- The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the draft plan, and either make additional modifications or adopt the plan. The public hearing will be advertised in the local newspaper 15 days in advance.
- Once the Planning Commission adopts the update, the Township Board also has the option to adopt it.