

# *Planning for Bliss: The 2040 Comprehensive Plan*

*Village of Blissfield, Lenawee County, MI*

Draft: September 20, 2023

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023



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Adopted by the Planning Commission on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

Adopted by the Village Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

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# Acknowledgements

## Thank you.

*The participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents, businesses, and members of civic organizations in the preparation of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is greatly appreciated; thank you for participating in its development. The content in Blissfield's 2040 Plan reflects the ongoing collaboration between Village Administration, residents, stakeholders, the Planning Commission, and Village Council.*

*In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of:*

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# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary ..... 1**
  - Welcome to Bliss!.....1
  - Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan for Land Use .....2
  - The Planning Process – Key Milestones.....4
- Chapter #1: Blissfield Today ..... 5**
  - The State of Bliss Today.....5
  - Regional Context and History .....6
  - Advancing All Planning Efforts and Resources.....8
  - Socio-Economic Analysis.....11
  - Housing Characteristics .....18
  - Economic Snapshot.....21
  - Existing Land Use Patterns.....23
  - Downtown Blissfield.....27
  - Community Facilities .....28
- Chapter #2: Recreation and Natural Features ..... 33**
  - The Natural Environment .....33
  - Natural Systems.....34
  - Sustainability and Preserving Natural Features .....35
  - Parks and Recreation .....38
- Chapter #3: The Complete Streets Network ..... 43**
  - The Transportation Network.....43
  - Complete Streets .....45
  - The Pedestrian and Bicycle Network .....45
  - Commuting.....46
  - Railroads.....47
  - Opportunities for Improvement.....47
- Chapter #4: Planning for Tomorrow ..... 49**
  - Community Outreach .....49
  - Strategic Goals .....56
- Chapter #5: Future Land Use Plan..... 61**
  - Future Land Use Planning .....62

The Zoning Plan .....65  
Top Priority Changes to the Zoning Ordinance .....66

**Chapter #6: Strategic Action Plan .....67**

    Implementing Plan 2040.....68

**Appendices .....73**



# Executive Summary

## Welcome to Bliss!

*Welcome to the Village of Blissfield’s Comprehensive Plan for Land Use (“Plan 2040”). This important document reflects a vision for the future of the community – one that addresses land uses, the local economy, the environment, downtown vibrancy, parks and recreation, housing, and transportation. Blissfield’s Plan 2040 is a blueprint for the village moving forward – it tells the story of the community’s past, present, and most importantly, its future potential.*

*The 2040 Plan is the culmination of efforts by the Village Council, Planning Commission, residents, business owners, and other Blissfield stakeholders to develop a long-range, strategic vision for the community. Plan 2040 sets the foundation for future improvements and meaningful reinvestment, with the intent to support the highest quality of life in Blissfield and build upon its history, providing for a bright future.*



## Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan for Land Use

### BACKGROUND

In Michigan, a Comprehensive (Master) Land Use Plan is used for a variety of purposes. At the most basic level, a comprehensive plan is the basis for a community's zoning ordinance. One of the legal tests of validity for a zoning ordinance is that it must be based on a comprehensive land use plan for the development of the jurisdiction, which is also required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006, as amended).

To accomplish this, Blissfield's 2040 Plan presents the vision for the community over the next 20+ years, while also prescribing specific, short-term implementation activities intended to realize the vision of the Plan. The recommendations presented in this Plan, both in text and graphically, provide a legal basis for zoning and other land use controls in the village, and are based upon identified community's goals and objectives.

Effectively, this comprehensive plan serves as the primary policy guide for local officials considering development proposals, land divisions, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development. In this respect, Blissfield's 2040 Plan provides a stable and consistent basis for decision making.



## OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN CONTENTS

As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, as amended), and in compliance with best practices established by the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Plan 2040 is comprehensive in nature and addresses the vast aspects of the community.

First, the Plan presents extensive background information on the village and surrounding area, including social and economic data, descriptions and mapping of existing land use and natural resources, and an inventory of existing community facilities and infrastructure.

Second, this background information was analyzed to identify important characteristics, changes and trends occurring in Blissfield. Challenges and opportunities were identified based on Planning Commission comments and citizen participation that was garnered throughout the planning process. Community goals and objectives are presented to guide future development based on these background studies, key land use trends, and community issues. These goals, along with a detailed map of existing land use, provide for the basis of the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Plan, which specifies the extent and location of where various types of future development can be accommodated within the village.

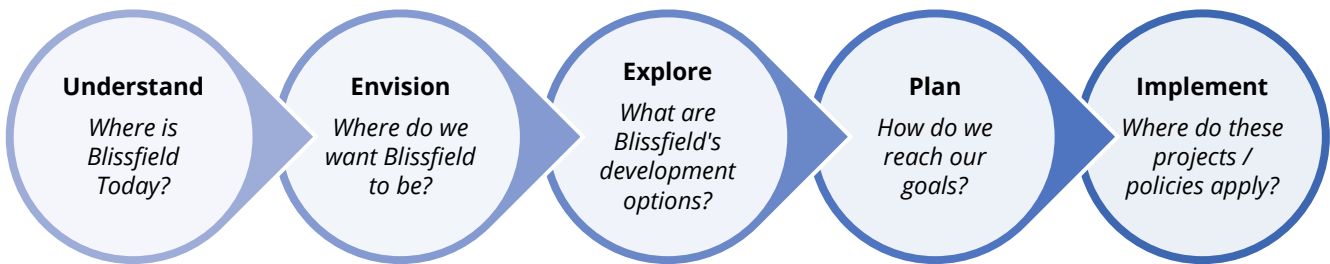
Plan 2040 concludes with a strategic action plan for the implementation of the identified goals and objectives, over both the near- and long-term.

## History of Past Planning Efforts by the Village

In 1973, Blissfield's first comprehensive master plan was completed. Since this time, the village has experienced numerous changes that have impacted the character of the community. In October 2017, the current Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted by Village Council; this Plan includes sections on community identity, growth and economic development, housing, public safety, and village services.

Plan 2040 will continue to guide the community on redevelopment and provide for the continued preservation and rehabilitation of the built and natural environments.

### The Comprehensive Planning Process:



## The Planning Process – Key Milestones

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND EARLY DATA COLLECTION

The planning process undertaken to develop Plan 2040 commenced in late 2021 and was conducted with ample opportunities for resident and community input. Citizen and business surveys were conducted, as well as in-person engagement events, to better ascertain the public's feeling towards land use issues. This included setting up a pop-up station for community engagement on Saturday, November 12, 2022, at the Yuletide festival in downtown Blissfield.

The draft Plan was also presented and discussed at several Planning Commission meetings (which were advertised and open to the public for comments), including:

- ◆ August 11, 2021
- ◆ September 13, 2022
- ◆ October 3, 2022
- ◆ January 3, 2023
- ◆ March 6, 2023
- ◆ April 3, 2023
- ◆ September 5, 2023

These discussions and expressed priorities led to the formulation of implementation strategies and redevelopment scenarios for the village moving forward.

### PLAN 2040 RELEASE AND ADOPTION

On September 5, 2023, the Planning Commission formally recommended to the Village Council that the draft Comprehensive Land Use Plan be released to the public for a 63-day period of review. The Village provided notices to all adjacent municipalities, utility agencies, regional planning bodies, and local stakeholders (economic development agencies, etc.). The Village Council then authorized the release of the draft Plan at their regular meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

The draft Plan was available at the Clerk's office and on Blissfield's website from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

On \_\_\_\_\_, 2023, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the final Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Following the public hearing, the Commission voted to adopt the new Plan 2040.

### CONTINUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Plan 2040 is intended to be a living document, one that is implemented and updated with residents and the business community. While the State of Michigan requires that comprehensive plans are reviewed every five years, Blissfield intends to have an open conversation and revisit Plan 2040 with the community as projects are implemented. Specifically, the goals and objectives (see Chapter #4: Planning for Tomorrow and Chapter #6: Strategic Action Plan) should be reviewed often and be considered in decision-making by the village, including the Planning Commission, DDA, and Village Council.



# Chapter #1: Blissfield Today

## The State of Bliss Today

*In order to develop and implement Blissfield's specific goals and strategies, it is first necessary to grasp the existing conditions of the community and surrounding area. Understanding Blissfield's regional position, existing land uses, built environment, and key socioeconomic demographics are all vital to painting a clear picture of the future fabric of the village.*

*These existing conditions and past trends allow for the community to anticipate future needs and demands which are directly related to the development of the future land use map and build out, the future transportation network, infrastructure needs, and more.*

## Regional Context and History

### LOCATION

Blissfield is located in the southeastern portion of Lenawee County, and per the 2020 US Census, is home to a population of 3,277 persons (see Regional Map). The Village encompasses 2.2 square miles and is located within Blissfield Township, which has a total population of 3,924 persons (2020 Census).

The Village is easily accessible from communities in the surrounding region and from the neighboring state of Ohio, primarily due to its position along US-223 (locally titled West Adrian Street). US-223 bisects Blissfield’s municipal boundary from the northwest to the southeast. US-223 eventually connects to US 23 to the southeast of the Village, which ultimately heads south to Ohio and the western portion of the greater Toledo metropolitan region, or north, to the City of Ann Arbor.

The county seat of Lenawee County is the City of Adrian, located to the northwest of Blissfield. Lenawee County was the eighth county formally organized in the Michigan Territory in 1826; and has a population of 99,423 persons (2020 US Census), which is the 21<sup>st</sup> most populated county in Michigan.

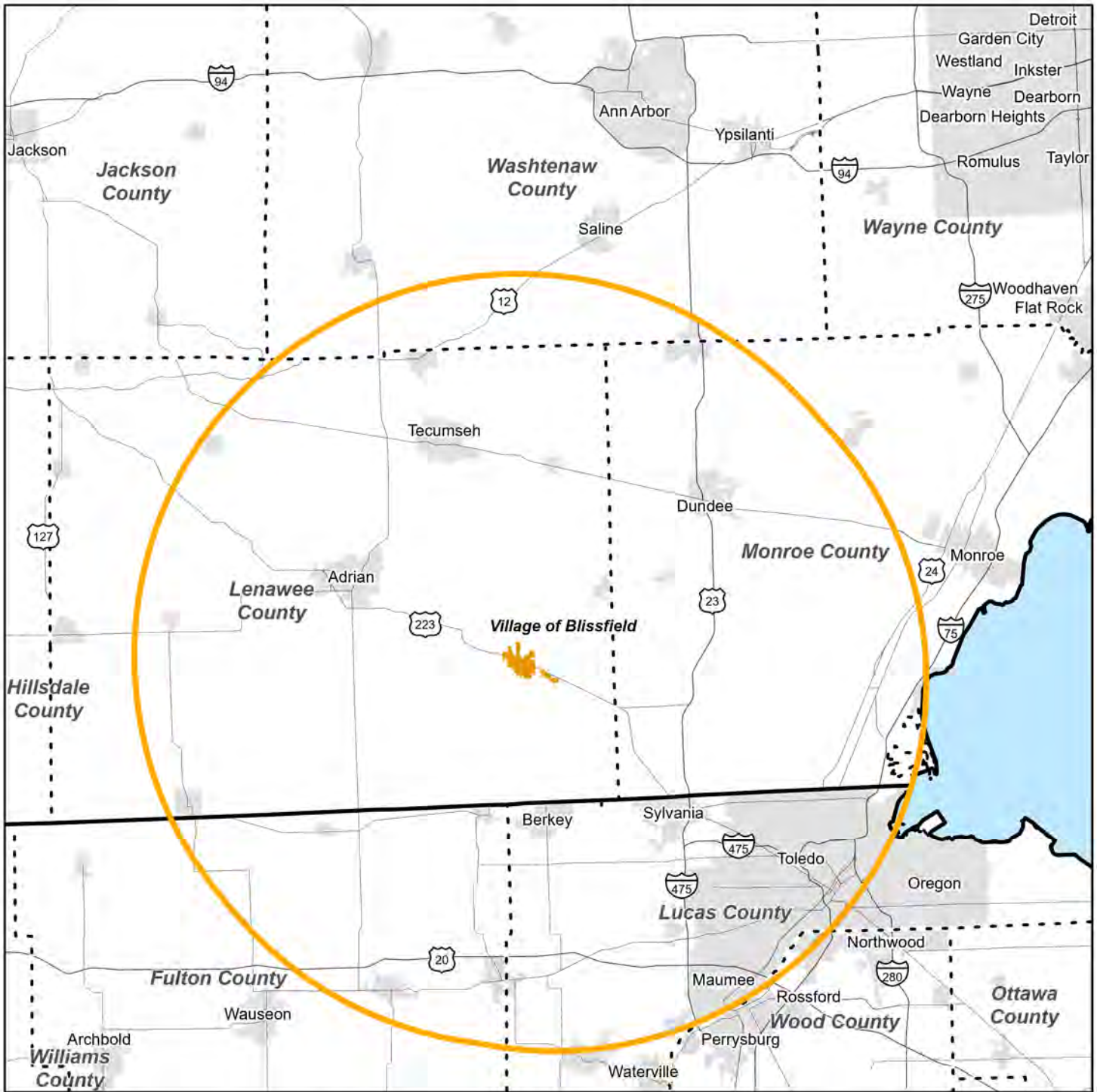


## A Brief History of Blissfield

Organized in 1824 by settler Hervey Bliss, the Village of Blissfield has long been admired for its idyllic small-town nature, rich in American railroad history.

In 1832, the Michigan territorial government authorized the construction of the Eric & Kalamazoo Railroad, the first railroad west of the Allegheny Mountains, intended to connect the eastern coast of the United States to Chicago. As a link on the Michigan Southern Railroad, the Village’s positioning along the rail supported economic and population growth that contributed to the development of the downtown Blissfield. At the turn of the twentieth century, Blissfield’s vibrant downtown exemplified diversity of architectural styles in the forms of Italianate, Late-Victorian, Arts and Crafts, and Commercial Brick.

Today, Blissfield’s downtown is recognized as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Home to lovely local shops, natural features, and plentiful community programming, the Village continues to encapsulate the blissfulness of a small American town.

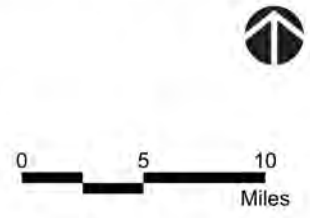


# Map #1: Regional Location

Village of Blissfield, Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023

- LEGEND**
-  Village of Blissfield
  -  30-Minute Drive Radius
  -  County Boundaries
  -  State Boundaries



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023.



## Advancing All Planning Efforts and Resources

In addition to this Comprehensive Land Use Plan, various State, regional, and local agencies play a large role in the future of Blissfield's success. Many of these agencies have developed their own strategic and long-range plans that will ultimately impact the further development of Blissfield and every effort should be made to partner with these organizations to further shared objectives. Such plans include:

### LOCAL PLANS

#### Blissfield's Downtown Development Plan and TIF Plan (2022)

The downtown district includes not only the downtown core at Lane Street, which is a well-preserved and well-defined, traditional, central business district, but also much of the length of the U.S. 223 corridor. Downtown Blissfield is administrated by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Main Street Board which was created by the Village Council in December of 1992. The DDA has continuously made significant investments in the business district for several decades.

Continued efforts through the Development and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plans are necessary to make funds available for public improvements to address some of the existing deficiencies, which limits development and reinvestment into the downtown area.

In 2022, the DDA updated these Plans, and every effort should be made to integrate the identified projects of the DDA with new investment and larger municipal projects. Goals for the Plan include improving the design and appearance of the downtown district; fostering collaboration and promoting downtown Blissfield; enhancing public spaces, and sustainability, protecting existing and expanding new housing options; and improving infrastructure and transportation.



#### 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2020)

Adopted in 2020, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves as the guide for all open space and recreation facility management in Blissfield. The village contains approximately 114 acres of parkland and public-school recreational facilities (±41 acres of public park space and ±73 acres of school district recreation areas). The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was created to determine the needs and opportunities that exist within the village in consideration of how many people will use recreational amenities and what type of facilities they want and need.

#### Public Participation Plan (2022)

Blissfield's Public Participation Plan is a guide for the leaders and stakeholders on how to structure and execute community engagement in a way that is effective, inclusive, and transparent. The Plan outlines the strategies available for public engagement, how and when they will be used, and actions that the village can take to improve engagement. Utilizing this Plan means that Blissfield will improve its communications and outreach efforts, which will also be a resource for stakeholders who are interested in the inner working of public engagement in the community.

## REGIONAL / STATE PLANS

### The Regional 2 Planning Commission (2021)

The counties of Hillsdale, Jackson, and Lenawee collectively form the Region 2 Planning Commission, which is a voluntary local government association that offers municipal research and support. One of the most relevant regional planning documents is the *2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, in which four specific strategies and objectives were established (pictured to the right). Redevelopment and continued growth in the Village of Blissfield is tied to four strategies (page 8 of the plan):



- ◆ **Strategy #1: Create fiscally sustainable, quality connected places.**
  - ◇ Facilitate opportunities for centered growth and infill development.
  - ◇ Work with local governments to foster efficient growth.
  - ◇ Maximize the use of existing transportation infrastructure to lessen financial pressures.
  - ◇ Increase financial literacy about innovative financing strategies and incentive policies.
  - ◇ Maintain a full spectrum of housing inventory and affordability.
  
- ◆ **Strategy #2: Link development with transportation and other infrastructure.**
  - ◇ Improve employers' access to workforce and customers, households access to jobs and education.
  - ◇ Ensure households within vulnerable communities have access to opportunities to meet their needs.
  - ◇ Fund infrastructure that strategically improves economic outcomes.
  - ◇ Invest and improve development of site infrastructure: water, sewer, fiber optic, and broadband in strategic locations.
  
- ◆ **Strategy #3: Provide placemaking amenities to attract talent.**
  - ◇ Pursue the development of an outdoor recreation economy through preservation minded leveraging of the region's natural and man-made recreation resources.
  - ◇ Encourage downtown development and revitalization in the region's cities, towns, and villages to support the attraction of skilled labor and to benefit existing residents.
  - ◇ Identify potential multi-jurisdictional placemaking projects that contribute to talent attraction and provide a positive regional impact.
  - ◇ Promote regional tourism opportunities and maximize local government's revenue through visitor activity.
  - ◇ Attract skilled labor through provision of beautiful, amenity-rich, and walkable communities.
  - ◇ Develop a regional branding and marketing campaign.
  
- ◆ **Strategy #4: Attract and retain businesses and encourage innovation.**
  - ◇ Business expansion and retention.
  - ◇ Encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.
  - ◇ Support growth of key industry clusters.
  - ◇ Increase local government economic development capacity.
  - ◇ Develop a workforce that meets the needs of the region.
  - ◇ Monitor, partner, and assist with catalyst projects.

**The Michigan Mobility 2045 Plan (2021)**

In 2021, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) produced a new, state-wide long-range transportation plan. The plan is the first of its kind to incorporate not only an overall vision of the state's transportation system, but to include two additional federally required documents: the State Rail Plan and State Freight Plan. Additionally, it includes a Statewide Transit Strategy Report and an Active Transportation Plan.

Blissfield is only specifically mentioned in relation to the existing ADBF (Adrian & Blissfield Railroad), as mapped on the Michigan Railroad Network.



**MI Healthy Climate Plan (2022)**

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), through its Office of Climate and Energy (OCE), developed the MI Healthy Climate Plan in 2022. This guiding document is the State's action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition toward economy-wide carbon neutrality. A key focus of the Plan is on solutions that support communities disproportionately impacted by the changing climate.

While the Climate Plan does not specifically mention Blissfield or Lenawee County, it does outline several goals for all communities to aspire to:

- ◇ Mitigate the worst impacts of climate change.
- ◇ Protect and improve the health of Michiganders.
- ◇ Protect natural resources and wildlife.
- ◇ Make Michigan energy independent.
- ◇ Address environmental injustices.



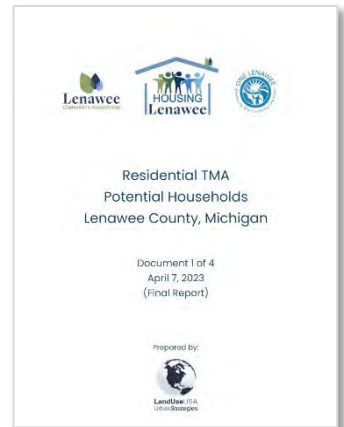
**Lenawee County Target Market Analysis (2023)**

The Lenawee Community Foundation (LCF) and One Lenawee (OL) commissioned a housing study in 2022 to measure the potential for new housing, the style of housing, those price points, and target demographics across the County.

In the Village of Blissfield specifically, the data alludes to a conservative market potential and thus, there is a strong need to retain existing households by rehabbing outdated units every year and to attract new housing by creating new rental units, specifically more in-demand unit types such as downtown lofts, walkups, and courtyard style apartments.

**River Raisin Watershed Management Plan (2009)**

While developed more than a decade ago, this management plan still contains goals and guidelines for the village to strive towards today and provide important information on the ecosystem and environmental quality of the land along the River Raisin. For instance, the Plan outlines prioritize areas for green infrastructure (such as rain gardens), to improve the water quality.







*The purpose of Blissfield’s socio-economic profile is to understand the past, present, and future population trends and demographic characteristics. This analysis presents a snapshot of the community, utilizing the most recent data available from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), the 2020 Decennial US Census, and the American Community Survey (ACS).*

## **Socio-Economic Analysis**

Blissfield’s community snapshot includes a review of the population, race, age structure, and educational attainment of the area. For purposes of analysis, comparisons have been made with neighborhood communities, Lenawee County, the State, and in some cases other relative Michigan communities, to gain a regional perspective.



### POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

As of 2020, Blissfield had a population of 3,277 people, representing a slight decrease (-1.88%) from its 2010 population of 3,340. However, the number of households in the village experienced an increase (2.81%) in the same period, indicating a shift in household composition, with a greater presence of single heads of household and those living alone. Household sizes in the Village has decrease from 2.44 (2000), to

Table 1 below provides a population and household comparison with surrounding communities and the County. Lenawee County, as a whole, also lost population over the past decade (-0.46%), although at a slower rate than Blissfield. City centers such as Tecumseh (4.07%) and Hudson (4.54%) experienced minor growths in their population over the past 10-years, as well as an increase in the number of households.

**Table 1: Population and Households Comparison, 2010 to 2020**

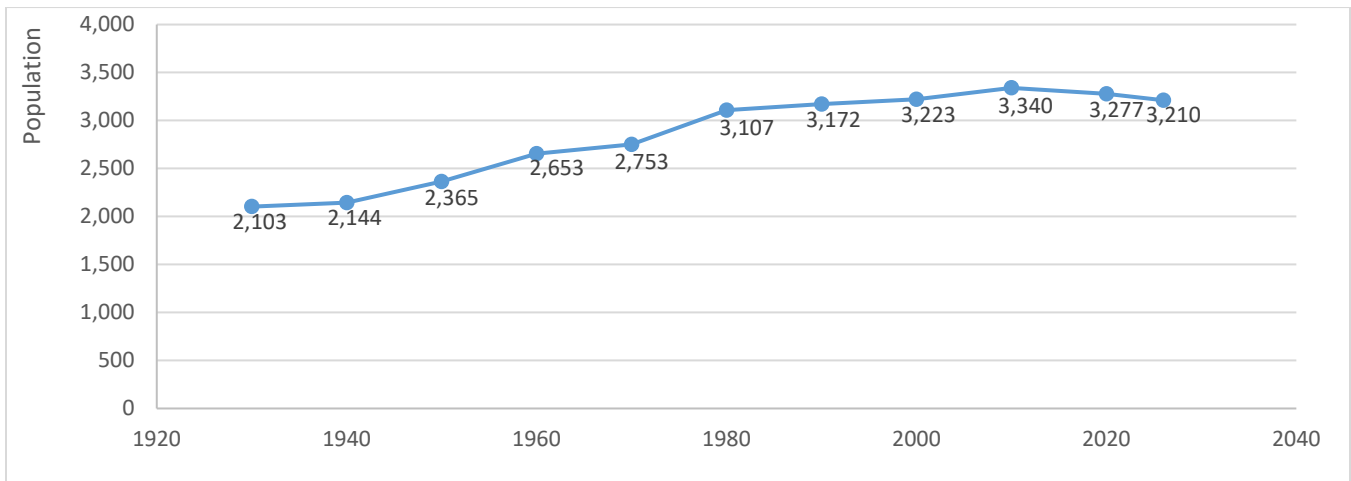
	Village of Blissfield	Blissfield Township	Village of Deerfield	City of Adrian	City of Tecumseh	City of Hudson	Lenawee County
<b>Population</b>							
2010 Population	3,340	3,970	974	21,130	8,340	2,310	99,890
2020 Population	3,277 ↓	3,924 ↓	901 ↓	20,645 ↓	8,680 ↑	2,415 ↑	99,423 ↓
<b>Households</b>							
2010 Households	1,350	1,728	345	7,830	3,540	860	37,510
2020 Households	1,388 ↑	1,634 ↓	359 ↑	7,893 ↑	3,835 ↑	891 ↑	38,581 ↑

Source: Decennial US Census

### POPULATION PATTERNS AND TRENDS

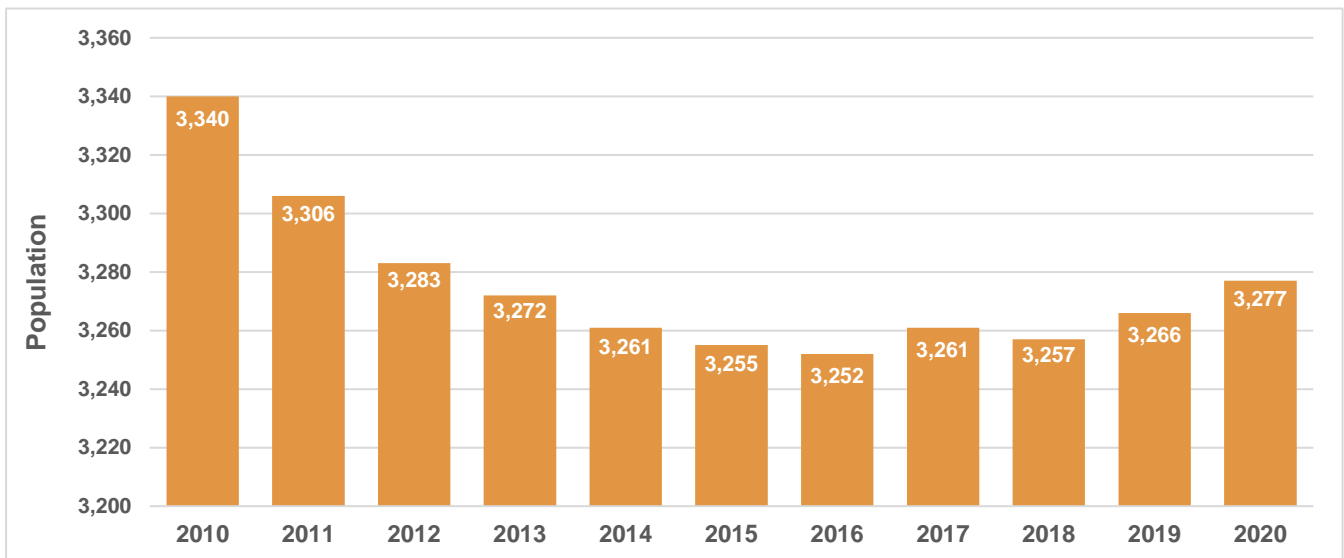
Historically, the Village grew rapidly in the 1940's and 50's, with population increases of over 10% (see Figure 1). Up until as recently as 2010, the Village has steadily attracted residents. However, the Village experienced a substantial decline in population from 2010 to 2014 (see Figure 2), and since 2015 growth has remained flat. Projections for 2026 indicate that the Village will lose approximately 70 individuals.

**Figure 1: Blissfield Population Trends, 1930 - 2026**

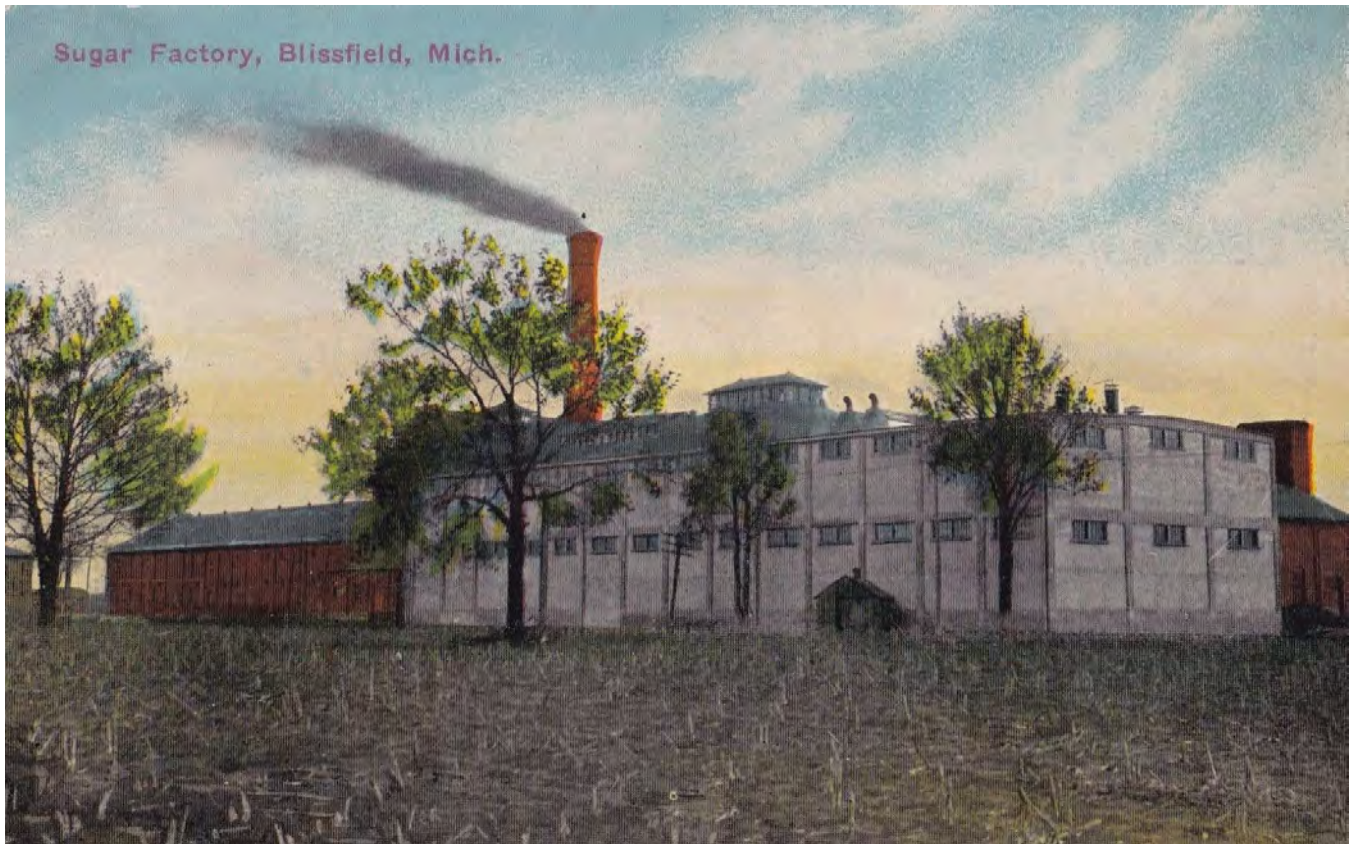


Source: Decennial US Census, ESRI 2026 Forecasts

**Figure 2: Blissfield's Recent Population Trends, 2010-2020**



Source: Decennial US Census, ACS 2011-2019



## RACE AND ETHNICITY

### Current Composition

The population of Blissfield is homogenous in terms of race and ethnicity, and this is similar to the composition of the County. In 2021, ±95% of the Village’s population reported being white alone, while Lenawee County was slightly more diverse, at ±92% reporting white alone. Since 2015, the village’s racial composition has not changed much (white alone reported at ±93%). In Lenawee County, approximately 8.4% of the population is of Hispanic or Latino race while Blissfield is slightly lower at 1.9% (2021 ACS).

### Importance of the Hispanic Population in Blissfield

While not reflective in the current population, Blissfield was historically home to a large Hispanic population. During the 1920’s, Mexican laborers from Southern Texas were transported to the Adrian-Blissfield area for seasonal farm work on the sugar beet fields in Blissfield. By the 1930’s many of these workers began to stay in Blissfield year-round.

The importation of migrant workers from Texas was driven by the Great Lakes Sugar Company (previously the Blissfield Sugar Company, pictured above), and by 1940, 200 - 400 Mexican Americans were living year-round in a settlement two miles from the Village of Blissfield. During World War II, there was an increase in the demand for factory work and a decrease in the sugar beet industry. As a result of this employment shift, many Mexican American workers moved from Blissfield to Adrian where the defense plants were located.

**Table 2: Racial Composition: Blissfield and Lenawee County, 2021**

	Village of Blissfield		Lenawee County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Population of One Race</b>	<b>3,156</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>94,531</b>	<b>95.2%</b>
White	3,079	93.1%	90,792	91.4%
Black or African American	55	1.7%	2,126	2.1%
American Indian	0	0.0%	247	0.2%
Asian	0	0.0%	291	0.3%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	38	0.0%
Other Race	22	0.7%	1,037	1.0%
<b>Population of Two Races</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4,815</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,307</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99,346</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 4: Portion of the Population that is Hispanic or Latino, 2021**

	Village of Blissfield		Lenawee County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic	64	1.9%	8,358	8.4%
Other Race	3,243	98.1%	90,988	91.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,307</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100,357</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## AGE STRUCTURE

Per the 2021 ACS, the median age of the Village was 36.5 years, moderately lower than Lenawee County (42 years), and lower than the State of Michigan (40 years).

Distinct age groups include:

- ◇ Under 18 years old (±25%)
- ◇ 18-64 years old (±57%)
- ◇ 65 years and older (±18%)

To address future populations, the village should anticipate a demand for services that encompass all age groups.

**Table 5: Age Structure, Village of Blissfield, 2020**

AGE	Number	Percentage
Under 5 years	176	5.4%
5 to 9 years	224	6.8%
10 to 14 years	214	6.5%
15 to 19 years	207	6.3%
20 to 24 years	167	5.1%
25 to 29 years	186	5.7%
30 to 34 years	178	5.4%
35 to 39 years	222	6.8%
40 to 44 years	220	6.7%
45 to 49 years	205	6.3%
50 to 54 years	200	6.1%
55 to 59 years	225	6.9%
60 to 64 years	211	6.4%
65 to 69 years	192	5.9%
70 to 74 years	175	5.3%
75 to 79 years	110	3.4%
80 to 84 years	80	2.4%
85 years and over	85	2.6%

Source: Decennial US Census

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The educational attainment for people 25 years and older in the Village of Blissfield is shown in the table provided below. Within the Village, 88.5% have attained a high school diploma or higher. 30.9% of residents had received some college education but did not receive a degree. 10.7% of residents have obtained an associate degree; 12.4% of residents have obtained a bachelor’s degree; and 6.1% of residents went on to receive either a Graduate or Professional degree.

Within the State of Michigan, an estimated 30% of all residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. At the time of the American Community Survey data in 2019, only 18.5% of Village residents held a bachelor’s degree or higher. While the Village is behind the State estimate for higher education, the Village does exceed the number of enrolled students in kindergarten through 12th grade, which accounts for 74.5% of students, compared to the State estimate of 66.3%.

**Table 3: Education, Village of Blissfield**

Education	Percentage
High School	28.4%
Some College (no degree)	30.9%
Associate Degree	10.7%
Bachelor Degree	12.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	6.1%
Educational Attainment	
Bachelor's Degree or Higher: Blissfield	18.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher: Michigan	30.0%
School Enrollment	
K-12 Enrollment: Blissfield	74.5%
K-12 Enrollment: Michigan	66.3%

Source: ACS 2019

The village is host to three schools: Blissfield Elementary, Blissfield Middle and Blissfield High School. 15 minutes to the northwest in Adrian are two post-secondary educational institutions: Adrian College and Siena Heights University.

Adrian College is a private, co-educational college of liberal arts and sciences, which offers traditional four-year residential institutional experiences. Information provided by Adrian College (Adrian.edu) indicates that students have the option to pursue 50 majors and pre-professional programs, two-year master’s programs and advanced 3+2 master’s programs. In 2022-2023, the U.S. News & World Report of America’s Best Colleges ranked Adrian College as a regional top Baccalaureate college in the Midwest (ranked #19).

Siena Heights University is a Catholic university that offers 75 majors and programs. The university enrolls traditional-age students and working adults and was founded in the liberal arts tradition (sienaheights.edu). Siena Heights University also provides classes for high school students through dial enrollment. Including both undergraduate and graduate enrollment, just over 2,000 students are enrolled at the University.

## Housing Characteristics

The quality, affordability, and availability of a community’s housing stock has a significant impact on its overall vitality. The following analysis of trends relating to the number and type of housing units, the amount of owner-occupied, rental, and vacant units, monthly rent, age of housing, and housing values helps evaluate the health of Blissfield’s housing stock.

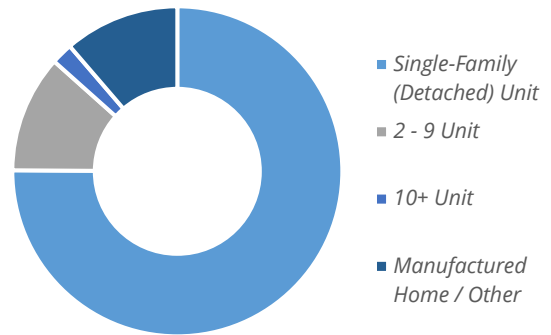
### HOUSING UNITS - TYPE AND TENURE

The total number of housing units within the village was 1,403 and of those units, 97.3% % are reported as occupied. Within those occupied units, 7.8% are owner-occupied and 22.2% are rentals.

**Table 7: Housing Type Breakdown, Village of Blissfield, 2020**

Housing Unit Type	Number	Percentage
Single-Family (Detached) Unit	1,054	75.1%
2 Unit Structure	84	6.0%
3 - 4 Unit Structure	68	4.9%
5 - 9 Unit Structure	8	0.6%
10+ Unit Structure	30	2.1%
Manufactured Home / Other	159	11.3%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ACS 2020



## Expanding Housing Choices

In Blissfield, much of the housing stock is comprised of detached, single-family homes (75%) or manufactured housing (11%). One of the goals in this future land use plan is to identify locations for medium-density housing. The graph above further illustrates the different proportions of housing unit types in the village, as of 2020; the lack of “missing middle housing” (2-unit to 9-unit structures) is one option to capitalize on so that the community gains households moving forward.



## HOUSING VALUE

The American Community Survey provides data on housing values. An estimated 28.9% of housing units within the Village were valued between \$100,000 and \$149,000 (United States Dollars). 20.6% of units were valued at \$50,000 or less, with the third highest category being \$50,000 to \$99,000 dollars. The table below provides further data on housing values. The median value of a home in 2019 was estimated at \$119,800.

**Table 4: Housing Value (2015 – 2019 ACS Estimate)**

Value	Estimate	Percent
<b>Owner-occupied Units</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
Less than \$50,000	206	20.60%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	202	20.20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	286	28.60%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	166	16.60%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	79	7.90%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	40	4%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0%
\$1,000,000 or more	21	2.10%
Median (dollars)	\$119,800	-

Due to the 2020 Global Pandemic, the village may want to invest in a supplemental housing market study to determine if housing values have been significantly impacted. This data would be beneficial when determining if future Village-wide millages should be leveraged for upgrades to existing community facilities and other community investments.

## HOUSING COSTS – MONTHLY EXPENSE

Housing affordability is an important factor in determining the long-term sustainability of a community. Municipalities should provide housing at affordable prices to maintain stable neighborhoods and allow existing residents to age in place. Housing affordability is measured as the percentage of households paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. It’s important to note that the median income (\$54,247) is approximately 90% of the State median income (\$63,202).

**Table 9: Percentages of Households that are House Burdened, 2020**

	Village of Blissfield	Blissfield Township	Village of Deerfield	Adrian	Tecumseh	Hudson	Lenawee County
Percentage of Households	33.2%	32.2%	25.7%	45.9%	28.5%	45.6%	40.1%

As shown above, the percentage of households in Blissfield who are “rent burdened” due to paying over 30 percent of their income towards housing is lower than the percentage for the County (40.1 percent) and similar to surrounding communities.

Of the occupied units within the village that are paying rent, the median cost was \$805 per month. The State of Michigan median gross rent payment per month was \$888 based on 2019 ACS data. As the table below shows, almost 58% of rent was between \$500 and \$999 dollars per month.

**Table 10: Unit Rental Costs, Village of Blissfield**

Paying Rent	Percentage
Less than \$500	4.7%
\$500 - \$999	57.9%
\$1,000 - \$1,499	34.9%
\$1,500 - \$1,999	0.0%
\$2,000 - \$2,499	0.0%
\$2,500 - \$2,999	0.0%
\$3,000 or greater	2.5%

**AGE OF HOUSING**

Data provided by the ACS 2019 indicates the village has a significant portion (37%) of its housing stock built in 1939 or earlier. 1960-1979 saw an estimated 11% growth in housing stock each decade. Since 1980, the village has not seen a significant number of new homes being built as compared to earlier decades. Due to the significant amount of housing units being 40 years old or more, Blissfield should highly consider encouraging reinvestment in the older housing stock to preserve the historical character of the community.

**Table 11: Age of Housing, Village of Blissfield**

Year Structure Built	Estimate	Percent
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>1,409</b>	<b>100%</b>
2014 or later	7	0.5%
2010 to 2013	42	3.0%
2000 to 2009	83	5.9%
1990 to 1999	126	8.0%
1980 to 1989	82	5.8%
1970 to 1979	165	11.7%
1960 to 1969	164	11.6%
1950 to 1959	99	7.0%
1940 to 1949	119	8.4%
1939 or earlier	522	37.0%

Source: ACS 2019

## Economic Snapshot

### RETAIL MARKET STUDY

#### Projected Retail Demand

Based on the market study, Blissfield has the potential to support up to an additional 34,500 square feet of new retail and restaurant space which could generate new annual sales of as much as \$12.1 million by 2027. This new commercial development could include approximately 28,000 square feet of new retail stores and 6,500 square feet of new restaurants. Table 13 on the following page further illustrates this demand with details for each retail and restaurant category.



Grocery Stores:  
**6,500 SF**



Pharmacy Stores:  
**3,800 SF**



Full-Service Restaurants:  
**2,700 SF**



Department Store  
Merchandise: **4,400 SF**



Fast-Casual Restaurants:  
**1,800 SF**



Apparel Stores:  
**2,500 SF**

### Trade Area and Background

To determine the estimated amounts and types of retail supportable in Blissfield, a trade area was first established – one that would serve the retail in the village based on geographic and topographic considerations, traffic access/flow in the area, relative retail strengths and weaknesses of competition, concentrations of daytime employment, and the retail gravitation in the market.

Based on the projected consumer expenditure capture (demand) in the primary trade area of the gross consumer expenditure by retail category, less the current existing retail sales (supply) by retail category, the potential net consumer expenditure (gap) available to support existing and new development can be projected. Net consumer expenditure (gap) is equated to potential retail development square footage, with the help of retail sales per square foot data provided by the Urban Land Institute and International Council of Shopping Centers.

**Table 13: Village of Blissfield - Additional Retail Demand, 2022**

Retail Category	Est. 2022 Supportable SF	2022 Sales / SF	Est. 2022 Retail Sales	2027 Sales / SF	Est. 2027 Retail Sales
<b>Retailers</b>					
Apparel Stores	2,500 SF	\$290	\$725,000	\$305	\$762,500
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	1,200 SF	\$330	\$396,000	\$345	\$414,000
Department Store Merchandise	4,400 SF	\$285	\$1,254,000	\$300	\$1,320,000
Electronics and Appliance Stores	2,900 SF	\$325	\$942,500	\$340	\$986,000
Furniture Stores	1,600 SF	\$285	\$456,000	\$300	\$480,000
General Merchandise Stores	3,300 SF	\$300	\$990,000	\$315	\$1,039,500
Grocery Stores	6,500 SF	\$430	\$2,795,000	\$470	\$3,055,000
Home Furnishing Stores	1,500 SF	\$280	\$420,000	\$300	\$450,000
Pharmacy	3,800 SF	\$360	\$1,368,000	\$385	\$1,463,000
<b>Retailer Totals</b>	<b>27,700 SF</b>	<b>\$321</b>	<b>\$9,346,500</b>	<b>\$342</b>	<b>\$9,970,000</b>
<b>Restaurants</b>					
Bars, Breweries, and Pubs	2,100 SF	\$320	\$672,000	\$335	\$703,500
Full-Service Restaurants	2,700 SF	\$330	\$891,000	\$345	\$931,500
Fast-Casual Restaurants	1,800 SF	\$280	\$504,000	\$305	\$549,000
<b>Restaurant Totals</b>	<b>6,600 SF</b>	<b>\$310</b>	<b>\$2,067,000</b>	<b>\$330</b>	<b>\$2,184,000</b>
<b>Restaurants and Retailers Total</b>	<b>34,300 SF</b>	<b>\$318</b>	<b>\$11,413,500</b>	<b>\$339</b>	<b>\$12,154,000</b>

Source: ESRI, 2022. Sales stated in constant 2022 dollars.

## Existing Land Use Patterns

Blissfield’s existing land use map analyzes the makeup of a community by understanding the current land cover and how the land is being used.

### LAND USE SUMMARY

As illustrated in Map #2: Existing Land Use and as detailed in Table 12, there are two predominate land uses within Blissfield: single-family residential and agricultural / undeveloped, which both account for 35% of the total land use.

Industrial uses are the third most common land type, accounting for approximately 11% of the total usable land area. However, some of the existing industrial areas, while included in this classification, are not fully maximized in terms of build out.

**Table 12: Blissfield Existing Land Use Type (Acreage), 2023**

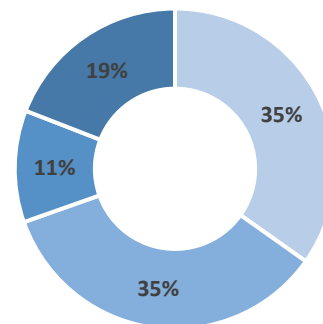
Land Use Category	Acreage	Percentage of Land Cover
Agricultural / Undeveloped	448	34.8%
Single-Family Residential	447	34.8%
Multiple-Family Residential	18	1.4%
Manufactured Home Community	34	2.6%
Local Commercial	35	2.7%
Traditional Downtown	7	0.5%
Regional Commercial	11	0.9%
Industrial	145	11.3%
Parking Lot	5	0.4%
Public / Parks and Open Space	91	7.1%
Semi-Public	45	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,286 acres</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Mapping Existing Land Uses

Existing land use mapping monitors change over a given period of time. Land use classifications are assigned to parcels, which illustrate how the land is currently being used. An existing land use map is different from a zoning map; a zoning map provides the context as to what types of uses are permitted within a given district (zone), while the existing land use map illustrates the current function of a given parcel of land.

### Top 3 Land Uses

- Agricultural / Undeveloped
- Single-Family Residential
- Industrial
- All Other Land Uses Combined





*Emmy's Kitchen, an example of a local commercial servicing business in Blissfield.*

## 2023 EXISTING LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The land use categories below are illustrated on Map #2: Existing Land Use, and are generally described as:

### Agricultural / Undeveloped

Agricultural properties include land historically or actively used for farming and undeveloped lands include parcels that are currently not occupied with development (i.e., greenfield sites).

### Single-Family Residential

This category includes detached residential dwelling units on a single parcel. Most of the single-family neighborhoods follow a traditional, street-grid pattern, which is oriented in a typical north-south, east-west direction. However, some of the newer residential developments feature cul-da-sacs and/or curved streets (i.e., Westbrooke Lane, Kingsberry Drive, and East Boulevard), which should be prohibited in future neighborhood design.

### Multiple-Family Residential

The multiple-family residential category includes buildings that are designed to house more than one family, such as duplexes, triplexes, apartment complexes, and senior housing facilities. This housing style accounts for a very small portion of Blissfield's residential land.

### Manufactured Home Community

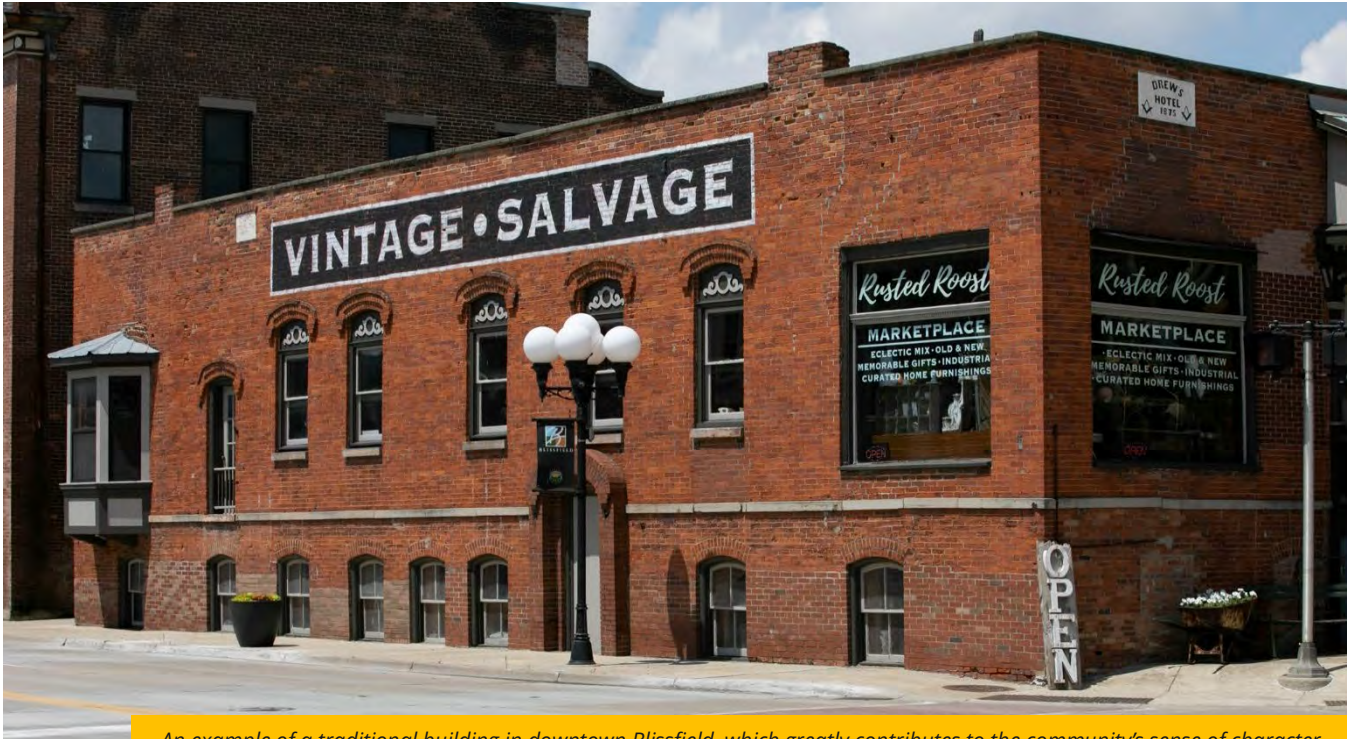
Blissfield is home to a manufactured home community with approximately 230 units (Coach Light Estates, established 1969) in the north-western corner of the municipality.

### Local Commercial

The local commercial designation includes businesses that are typically geared towards lower foot traffic counts, while still providing needed services and amenities to residents. These businesses tend to be smaller in scale and locally owned and operated (i.e., Borchardt Market, Emmy's Kitchen, etc.).

### Regional Commercial

Regional commercial uses are predominantly located along US-223 and provide a wide range of services to those within and outside of the community.



*An example of a traditional building in downtown Blissfield, which greatly contributes to the community's sense of character.*

**Traditional Downtown**

The downtown core at US-223 and Lane Street is a pedestrian-friendly, traditional downtown district that blends retail, shopping, dining, and service uses with some municipal functions and residential uses. Vertical mixed-use sites have commercial components located on the ground floor of the building, with residential units located on the stories above.

**Industrial**

Blissfield has multiple industrial properties, primarily located near the east and south-east portions of the community. Typical industrial uses range from warehousing and small workshops to more intensive industrial operations, such as the Michigan Agricultural Commodities, Inc. site. There are also a few small industrial properties located closer to the downtown center and some of the residential areas just off US-223.

**Parking Lot**

This category is limited to dedicated public parking lots that are intended to serve and support businesses; there is no principal building on these sites.

**Public / Parks and Open Space**

All public buildings or sites that are owned and operated by public agencies are considered public uses. This includes public schools, the parks system, and municipal facilities such as the Village Hall offices.

**Semi-Public**

All semi-public buildings or sites that are used by the public or a defined group of persons in the community are considered semi-public uses. Examples include the library, the post office, religious institutions, etc.





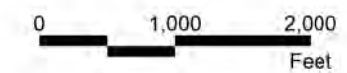
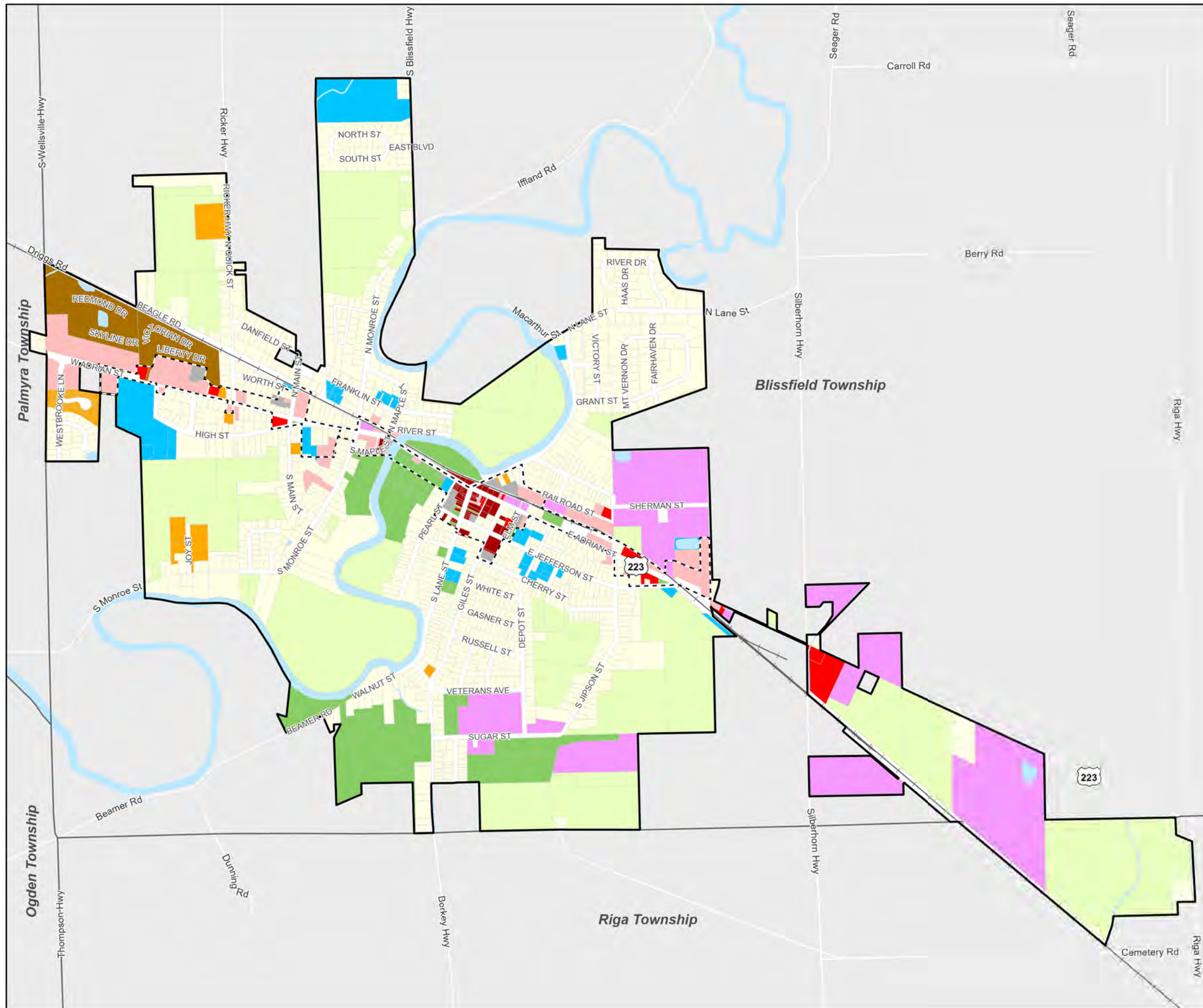
# Map #2: Existing Land Use

Village of Blissfield,  
Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023

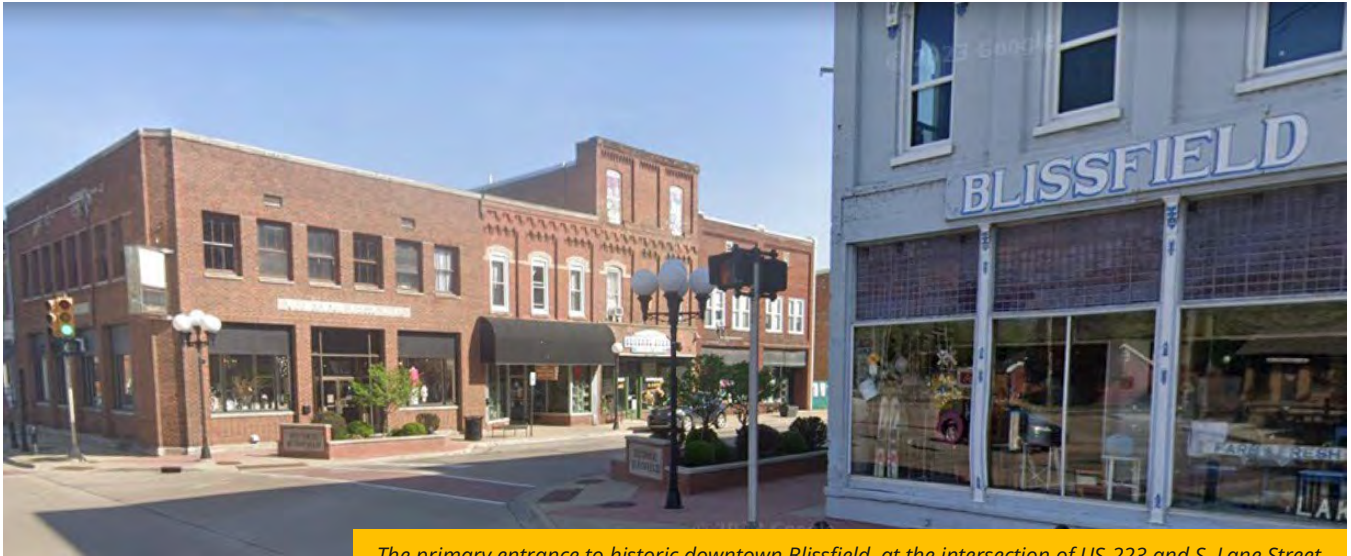
## Legend

- Agricultural / Undeveloped
- Single-Family Residential
- Multiple-Family Residential
- Manufactured Home Community
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Traditional Downtown
- Industrial
- Parking Lot
- Semi-Public
- Public / Parks and Open Space
- Downtown Development Area Limits
- Village Boundary
- Railroad



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023





*The primary entrance to historic downtown Blissfield, at the intersection of US-223 and S. Lane Street.*

## Downtown Blissfield

### A HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

One of the most valuable and unique assets in the community is the historic downtown center.

Blissfield's core downtown primarily consists of several blocks at the intersection of US-223 and S. Lane Street, featuring numerous historic buildings dating back to the early 1900's, featuring architectural styles such as Lake Victorian, Italianate, and Arts and Crafts. In addition to shopping, restaurants, and some services, Blissfield's downtown benefits from its numerous civic uses, including the Village Hall offices, the post office, and a pocket park. The proximity of the Schultz-Holmes Library (another block down S. Lane Street) also contributes this mix; the concentration of such civic uses strongly adds to the vitality and sense of place.

### DOWNTOWN CHALLENGES

However, the truck traffic and vehicle traveling speeds on US-223 present safety challenges for the pedestrian activity that is necessary for a vibrant downtown area. In order to reach its true potential as a walkable, mixed-use downtown center, roadway improvements (coordinated with the Michigan Department of Transportation, MDOT) are necessary. These improvements are discussed further in Chapter #3: A Complete Street Network.

## Community Facilities

A primary purpose of municipal government is the delivery of services for the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The responsibility for providing public services to the residents of Blissfield is shared by several public entities, including the village itself, Lenawee County, and other agencies. These facilities are illustrated on Map #3: Community Facilities. The availability of utilities also impacts the future development patterns of Blissfield.

### MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

#### Government Administration

The village hall administrative offices are located within the downtown district, at 130 S. Lane Street, and house the offices of the village administrator, clerk, treasurer, and zoning administrator. The village administrator reports to the village council, which is made up of an independently elected village president and six trustees.

#### Police Services

Blissfield operates its own Police Department which provides coverage to the community 24-hours, 7-days a week. The station is in the heart of the downtown district; this central location to the village as a whole helps keep emergency response times short.

#### Fire and Emergency Response Services

Fire protection services are provided through Blissfield Township, who maintains a department with paid, on-call firefighters (17 active members as of August 2022) and covers an area of approximate 21 square miles, (coverage to over 3,900 residents). The Township Fire Department responds to an average of 430 calls per year (August 2022) and partners with Madison Township to provide Emergency Advanced Life Support services.

#### Department of Public Works (DPW)

The DPW provides maintenance, repair, connection and services to the village's water and sewer infrastructure, in addition to performing water and sewer inspections, sidewalk installations and repairs and development construction inspections. The current DPW yard is located directly north of the downtown core at 105 N. Lane Street and is adjacent to the River Raisin, consisting of 2.7 recognized acres.



*Blissfield Village Hall offices.*



*Blissfield Historic Depot Museum.*

## UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Electrical and Natural Gas Services

Electrical services and natural gas are provided to residents and businesses by Consumers Energy. The existing service currently meets the needs of the village, however, future improvements to the capacity will be necessary to ensure Blissfield remains a competitive location for commercial and industrial businesses.

### Public Water and Sewer Services

Water and sewer services are served by the municipal water and sewer system. The Blissfield water treatment plant, located on Beamer Road, is a 1.4 million gallon a day (mgd) rated surface water plant; the plant receives its water source from the River Raisin as it flows through the community. The village also operates a wastewater treatment plant located just north of the village limits (at 415 MacArthur Street), which treats an average of 1.1 million gallons a day.

## COMMUNITY AMENITIES

### Blissfield Historic Society and Depot Museum

Located at 105 N. Lane Street (behind the train tracks and the old Drew’s Hotel, near the downtown core), the Depot Museum is open every Saturday and for special events. The museum displays items from throughout Blissfield’s history, and transports visitors through time once they step into the historical depot. Both the Historic Society and the Depot Museum are not-for-profit agencies.



*Blissfield is home to both an elementary, middle, and high school of the Blissfield Community School District.*

**Blissfield Community School District Facilities**

The community is served by the Blissfield Community School District, which services not only the village, but also Blissfield Township and many of the surrounding communities, ending at the county line to the east (Monroe) and state line to the south (Ohio). The District had an estimated 1,208 students enrolled in the school year 2019-2020, based on data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Within Blissfield, the school system is clustered in the southern portion of the community, with vehicular access along Beamer Road and S. Lane Street to reach the following three schools: Blissfield Elementary, Blissfield Middle School, and Blissfield High School.

**Pleasant View Cemetery**

Pleasant View Cemetery is a 14.3-acre public cemetery (owned and operated by Blissfield Township) that is located on the west side of the village, just south of West Adrian Street and west of High Street. The cemetery abuts the Anderson Rudd Funeral Home.

**Post Office**

The Blissfield post office is located at 302 S. Lane Street, on the corner of S. Lane Street and Union Street (only a block south of village hall). This is an advantage to the downtown district as the presence of such civic uses adds to the vibrancy of the area.

**Library**

The Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library opened in 1936 as the Blissfield Public Library. The location has changed throughout the years, but in 1956, it was moved to its current location at 407 S. Lane Street. During this relocation, it was also dedicated by Martha Schultz to Erma Holmes (Schultz), who perished in a boating accident. The Schultz family designated that their combined estate be given for the construction of the library. Today, the library holds over 31,000 volumes, provides public internet access and free Wi-Fi, and has an auditorium and kitchen space available for rental.

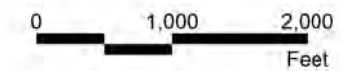
# Map #3: Community Facilities

Village of Blissfield,  
Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023

## Legend

- Civic Institutions / Municipal Facilities
- Recreational Facility / Park
- Public School Facilities
- Cemetery (Township Owned)
- Public Parking Lot
- Railroad
- Village Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023.







# Chapter #2: Recreation and Natural Features

## The Natural Environment

*The natural environment contributes to Blissfield's character, sense of place, and quality of life and is a highly visible characteristic of the village. For this reason, preservation of existing natural features should remain a high priority as the village grows. Similarly, the incorporation of green elements and sustainability should be factored into future developments to increase their availability in the community.*

*When and where development and redevelopment occurs, impacts to the environment should be minimized and mitigated. This Chapter provides not only an overview of Blissfield's parks and recreational facilities, open spaces, and natural resources, but also highlights the importance of sustainability measures and how the community can be more environmentally resilient.*



*Kayaking along the River Raisin, a significant natural resource for the community.*

## Natural Systems

A wealth of environmental features exists within Blissfield (as shown on Map #5: Natural Features), and greatly contribute to the physical landscape of the community, including:

### WATERCOURSES

The only natural water source in the community is the River Raisin, named by the French settlers for the wild grapes alongside its banks. In total, the River Raisin watershed is ±1,072 square miles and approximately 150 miles long and meanders from the southwest to the northeast through the central part of the village. While the river naturally empties into Lake Erie in Monroe, much of the river is now diverted through the Detroit Edison plant and discharged into Plum Creek to reduce pollution in Lake Erie.

**WETLANDS**

Blissfield is not significantly encumbered with wetlands, which is a benefit when considering the amount of land available for future development. The few emergent and forested/shrub wetlands that are located within the village boundaries are situated close to the River Raisin; these wetlands provide value by improving the natural water quality, assisting in flood protection, and reducing the potential for soil erosion. Wetlands also serve as local food sources for a variety of animals and offer many species of birds and mammals a source of water and shelter, especially during migration and breeding seasons. For these reasons, existing wetlands should be preserved, buffered, and enhanced with future development projects.

**WOODLANDS**

While woodland areas have been cleared in and around the village over the years for agricultural and residential purposes, some significant areas of woodlands remain; these are generally found along the River Raisin. Woodlands are critical to environmental quality and serve a variety of important functions that benefit the whole community, including reducing air pollution; reducing soil erosion; providing effective noise and wind screens to adjacent property owners; and providing important wildlife, flora, and fauna habitats.

*Open Spaces*

Open space areas refer to undeveloped land (such as forests or grasslands) or water areas that may conserve or enhance natural and scenic resources. Blissfield has over 500-acres of open space, which includes farmland, wooded areas, rivers, and parks.

**Sustainability and Preserving Natural Features**

**WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?**

Sustainability means *“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”* (United Nations). The three interrelated pillars of sustainable development are the environment, social equity, and economic development.

In Blissfield, sustainability is especially tied to the resiliency of the community and the protection of its ecosystems. The following are ways in which Blissfield can incorporate sustainability practices moving forward:



**Water Habitat**

Where already present or planned, retention ponds can provide habitat for marine animals, native plants, and birds. Planting these ponds with native wetland grasses provided habitat for birds and small amphibians in particular which take refuge in the tall brush. To keep both retention ponds and detention basins clear of mosquito breeding, it is necessary to keep the inlets, outlets, and the bottom of the pond clean of debris; maintain erosion; and maintain the vegetation around the ponds. Even smaller detention features such as rain gardens provide valuable habitat in local parks.

### Land Habitat

Tree planting alone is not enough to boost habitat quality and encourage new species. Replacing some traditional lawn areas with a variety of native plants, shrubs, and trees of differing size classes is necessary to encourage native birds, insects, and wildlife. A diversity of land plantings is needed to provide adequate habitat. This can easily be implemented in Blissfield's parks to create "multifunctional" green spaces – spaces which serve humans and other species at the same time through amenities enjoyed by all, such as gardens and nature trails.

### Low Impact Design (LID)

Stormwater infrastructure, which includes green infrastructure, is a form of public infrastructure that often goes unnoticed on a dry day. However, these systems play a vital role in every community, including Blissfield, because Michigan is one of the most water-rich and rainy states in the country and gets wetter every year. Stormwater infrastructure has traditionally consisted solely of storm drains and pipes. However, impervious (vegetated) surfaces that capture stormwater are now broadly considered to be a part of the stormwater infrastructure system, because they help control floods and naturally cleanse dirty runoff. These features, called "green infrastructure" (rain gardens, wetlands, swales, and more), both improve water quality and make the community more attractive by preserving valuable recreation land and wildlife habitat, as well as lowering air temperatures. These features lower the impact that storms have on the community by reducing the burden on pipes, reducing flooding, and providing numerous environmental benefits. The link between increased runoff volume (despite managing discharge rate and water quality) and degradation of downstream surface water bodies has become a key issue in managing storm water runoff. Low-impact practices (managing storm water at its source rather than on a site or regional-wide basis) have become a preferred method for managing stormwater.

### Trees as Infrastructure

Communities are increasingly considering trees as a key part of the stormwater infrastructure system. Trees act as a "living utility" by intercepting stormwater and absorbing it before it becomes a burden on municipal pipes and waterways. For example, the City of Ann Arbor maintains an extensive street tree network that captures 65 million gallons of stormwater each year, amounting to approximately \$4 million in infrastructure savings for the city. As communities' trend toward more invocative definitions for "utilities," it may be time for Blissfield to consider the inclusion of natural features, beyond green infrastructure, as a formal infrastructure asset. Parks are the ideal location to begin considering the individual value of trees, as well as in the public rights-of-way (tree lawns) as part of streetscape improvements.

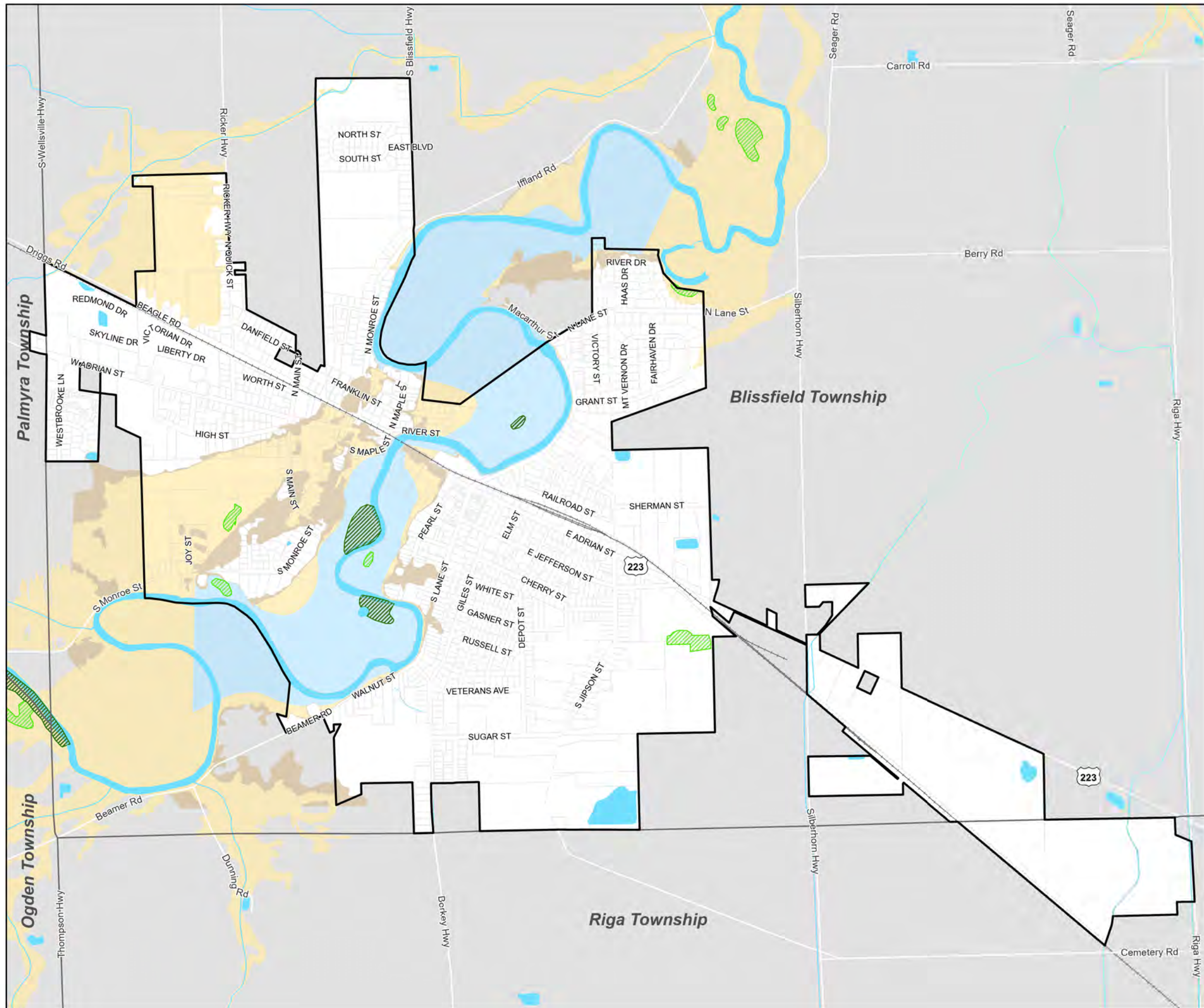
## PRESERVING OPEN SPACE

During the public engagement process, it was noted that the loss of open space to development is a concern to the community. The Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, Public Act 116 of 1974, can be an important tool for preserving farmland for rural/semi-rural communities. While the village itself is not a rural community, the surrounding area is predominantly rural with the primary land use being that of a farmstead. Under the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, owners of farmland receive a credit against their state income tax liability after entering into a development rights Agreement with the State. The Agreement is designed to ensure that the land remains in an agricultural use for a minimum of 10 years and ensures that the land is not developed in a non-agricultural use. Should Blissfield seek to protect the remaining open spaces from development pressures, additional resources (open space preservation ordinance; clustered development; purchase of development rights) should be utilized.

# Map #5: Natural Features

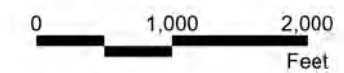
Village of Blissfield,  
Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023



## Legend

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Waterbody
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard (100-year)
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard (500-year)
- Regulatory Floodway
- Railroad
- Village Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023



*River Raisin, a significant natural resource for the community.*

## Parks and Recreation

### INTRODUCTION

The village has almost 115-acres of recreational land within its municipal boundary; the largest facility is the Blissfield High School complex, which offers 70-acres of football, baseball, softball, soccer, track, and other recreation capabilities. The largest publicly accessible park is Ellis Park, located along West Adrian Street, abutting the River Raisin.

Ellis Park features a playground, picnic shelters, baseball, softball, volleyball, a skateboard park, and other amenities that are beneficial to all age groups and recreational comfort levels. Additionally, Ellis Park is accessible from Bachmayer Park via a pedestrian bridge over the River Raisin.

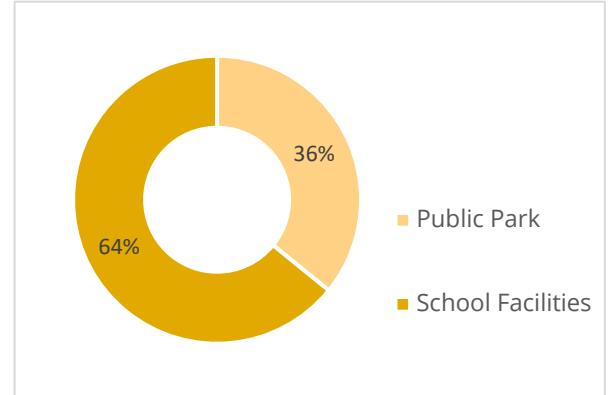
## BLISSFIELD'S PARKS

### Blissfield's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is appointed as a voluntary board by the Blissfield Village Council and is tasked with providing recreational opportunities for the Blissfield area as well as creating and maintaining a Park and Recreation Plan. It is comprised of seven board members.

### Summary of Parks and Recreation Offerings

The following table, largely derived from the 2020 Parks and Recreation Plan, further highlights the amenities at the existing parks throughout Blissfield:



Facility Name	Park Type (classification)	Size (acreage)	Amenities
<b>Public Facilities (total of 41.2 acres)</b>			
Ellis Park	Community Park	17.5 ac.	Playground, picnic shelters, baseball, softball, shuffleboard, volleyball, basketball, skateboard park, boat launch, dog park, and benches.
Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park		6.9 ac.	Picnic shelters, playground, benches. Recently, an ADA compliant pedestrian trail now links the bridge and one pavilion.
Aquatic Center (outdoors)		7.2 ac.	Outdoor water facilities: 6 lane lap pool with slide and diving board, wading pool with zero entry, splash pad, and exercise pool.
Bachmayer Little League Field	Neighborhood Park	4.4 ac.	Baseball, picnic shelter, boundless playground.
O. W. Farver Little League Field		4.7 ac.	Baseball fields.
O'Mara Park	Mini-Park	0.5 ac.	Benches, picnic facilities, gardens, clock.
Iott Diver Gilson Memorial Park		-	Downtown pocket park.
<b>School District Facilities (total of 73.7 acres)</b>			
Blissfield High School	School Park	70.0 ac.	Football, baseball, softball, soccer, track, exercise.
Blissfield Middle School		1.7 ac.	Tennis courts (2) and pickleball courts (2).
Blissfield Elementary School		2.0 ac.	Playground.
<b>Total:</b>		<b>114.9 acres</b>	

With the increase in demand for leisure and recreational facilities due in part to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, recreational planning and maintenance is crucial to the continued growth of the Village. Per the 2020 Parks and Recreation Plan, the village is committed to a planned and growth-oriented approach to recreational activities. The village has averaged an annual expenditure of \$285,000 for staff salaries, acquisition, capital improvements, general maintenance and upkeep of facilities and recreational programming.

More recently, Blissfield has completed upgrades to the river launch site located in Ellis Park, which includes riverbank stabilization, installation of a permanent retaining wall, bench placement, and other general park enhancements.



*Playground facilities at the Blissfield School complex.*

**Walkability and Access to Recreation Assets**

Map #4: Parks Coverage on the following page highlights the service coverage of existing Blissfield recreation amenities, including the public-school complex. While the majority of village households are located within a 15-minute walking distance to a park, the extremes of the village limits are located outside this service area, creating “park deserts” for several neighborhoods and residences.

Even more important to note is the fact that all parkland is located south of US-223, which presents a challenge and safety concern for children traversing the road. Applying this fact eliminates many residences and neighborhoods from a safe, 15-minute walk from park space. Prioritizing new and improved pedestrian crossings, along with a road diet on US-223, would improve resident access to programmed green space.



# Map #4: Parks Coverage

Village of Blissfield,  
Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023

## Legend

-  Recreational Facility / Park
-  15-Minute Recreation Facility / Park Walk Radius
-  Public School Facilities
-  15-Minute Public School Facilities Walk Radius
-  Railroad
-  Village Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023.





# Chapter #3: The Complete Streets Network

## The Transportation Network

*Land use patterns and transportation systems are inherently connected. Proximity to efficient and a connected, multi-modal transportation network is a primary factor in determining where new development occurs, and how accessible and inclusive developments will be.*

*Encircled by more rural lands, the personal vehicle is the primary mode for those coming and going from the village. However, within Blissfield's limits, walking and biking are more common modes of transportation, especially for simple errands or recreation. Every effort should be made to increase the multi-modal opportunities (travel not just by personal vehicle) that residents and visitors have available to get to, and around, Blissfield.*

## Complete Streets

Complete streets are designed to enable safe and efficient access for all users, both motorized and non-motorized. This includes pedestrian, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users. Complete Streets policies plan for the accessibility for users of all ages and physical capabilities. Complete Streets are achieved when transportation agencies routinely plan, design, construct, re-construct, operate, and maintain the transportation network to improve travel conditions for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit, and freight in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community.

In a semi-rural context, complete streets are important for enhancing the safety of the road network, promoting public health by creating walkable or bikeable roadways, improving a community's equity and economy, and increasing connectivity. Development of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure offers long term cost savings and opportunities to create safe and convenient non-motorized travel.

The Michigan Legislature has passed Complete Streets legislation through Public Acts 134 and 135 that requires the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to consider all users in transportation-related projects and work with residents, townships, cities, and villages to include planning for Complete Streets in their transportation programming. Complete Streets policies and practices that consider all users in transportation related projects and recognizes the importance of street infrastructure, landscaping, and modifications such as sidewalk enhancements/extensions, crosswalk improvements, shared use pathways, bicycle lanes, synchronized signals and accessible curb ramps that enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all is an important component of the Plan 2040.

## The Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

For the Village of Blissfield, roads may be considered a complete street by constructing a widened paved shoulder along the roadway to accommodate bicyclists, one that is separated by a physical, protected barrier (ex: bollards). According to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) standards, a safe paved shoulder width is at least four feet or wider. Due to the surrounding area being predominately agricultural in nature, roadways should also be able to accommodate for the transportation of heavy farm equipment.

Plan 2040 envisions a series of planned sidewalk connections within the community that will eventually create a well-connected pedestrian path network. Currently, Blissfield has a significant amount of sidewalk connections within its municipal boundary. However, additional connections are needed to serve areas within the village that do not currently have sidewalk availability. Areas that should be considered for future sidewalk installation include:

- ◇ Westbrooke Lane; Korey's Circle; South Brooke Circle.
- ◇ South Monroe Street from Village boundary to West Adrian Street.
- ◇ South Lane Street from Village boundary to Veterans Avenue.
- ◇ Grant Street, Fairhaven Drive, North Lane Street, River Drive, Haas Drive.
- ◇ West Street, South Street, North Street, East Boulevard.
- ◇ North Monroe Street from northern Village boundary to Brenot Court.

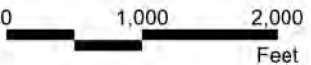


# Map #6: Existing Transportation Network

Village of Blissfield, Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023

- Legend**
- Major Roads
  - Local Roads
  - Existing Sidewalk
  - Village Boundary
  - Railroad
  - Road



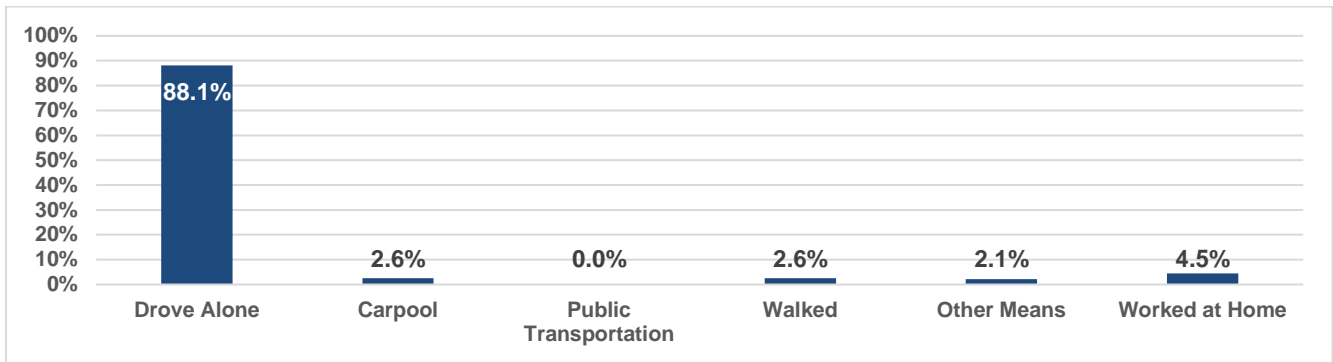
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023.



## Commuting

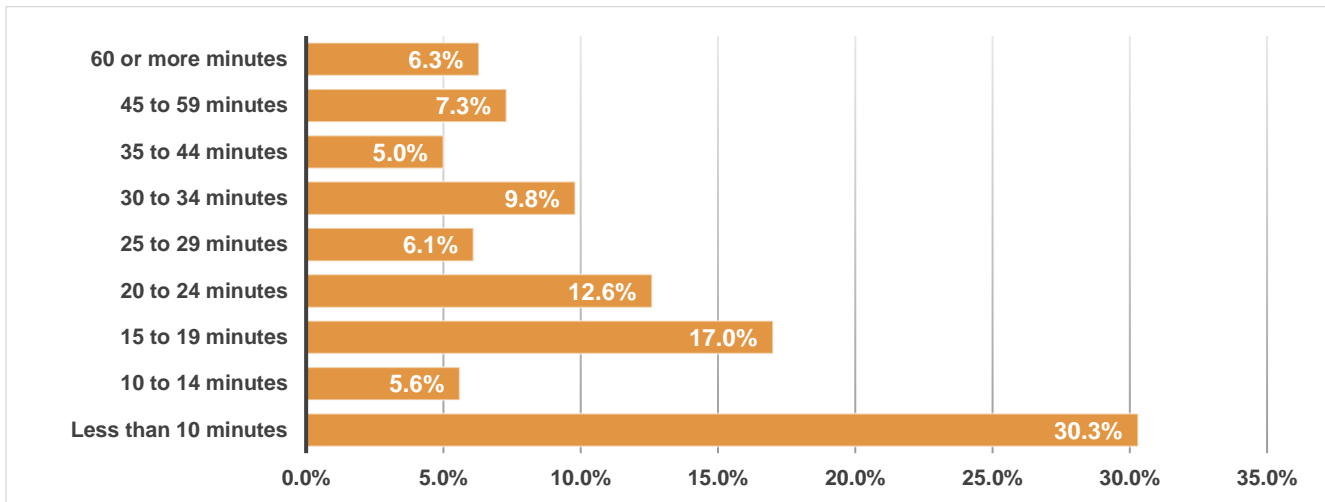
A commute is a journey between a person’s home and place of employment. Commutes can be undertaken in a variety of ways; the typical commute involves an automobile, or an alternate form of motorized transportation. Based on data provided by the American Community Survey, 88% of village residents drove alone to their place of employment. 4.5% of residents indicated that they worked from home – this number is anticipated to increase based on changing employment factors (remote work availability) in leu of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic.

**Figure 1: Means of Transportation to Work**



For the village, the 2019 American Community Survey data indicated that 74% of residents commute outside of the village for employment, while 26% work within the Village. Additionally, almost 19% of Village residents are reported to work outside of Lenawee County. 15.6% of residents reported working outside of the State of Michigan. Due to the Village being near a larger urban center, (Toledo, Ohio – 25 miles to the southeast) it is anticipated that residents of the Village will seek employment opportunities outside of the Village. The below graphic provides further review of travel time to work. The mean (central value) travel time to work was 22.3 minutes.

**Figure 2: Commute Times to Work**



## Railroads

The Adrian & Blissfield Rail Road (ADBF) is a short-line (class III) independent railroad that operates in southeast Michigan for 21 miles. It is one of the oldest operating rail lines in the United States, originally built in 1834. The Adrian & Blissfield Rail Road Company operates a total of five short-line railroads and also connects to the following Class I railroads (per Michigan Department of Transportation):

- ◇ Canadian National Railway (CN)
- ◇ CSX Transportation (CSX)
- ◇ Norfolk Southern Railway (NS)

The ADBF runs in a northwest to southeast direction through the center of Blissfield and is focused on freight shipping. The ADBF rail line allows for the movement of commodities from highways to rail or from rail to highways. The ADBF allows for multiple options of shipping: short distance, across the nation and across the continent. Spent grains from Calhoun and Lenawee counties, wheat flour from Branch County, and sugar from Bay County are notable outbound rail movements of food products.

In addition to hauling freight, the railroad operates a dinner train known as “The Old Road Dinner Train” in Blissfield and Charlotte.

## Opportunities for Improvement

### ADRIAN STREET (US-223)

Adrian Street (US-223) runs east/west through the community, and as a regional road, it will continue to carry heavier traffic volumes than more localized roads. Controlling traffic along arterials, with lower speed limits and traffic calming tools is a critical change for both traffic safety and efficiency. Enhanced pedestrian design and signalization, which limits access points are necessary. These measures would contribute to safer and more accessible roads and increase the downtown feel that the village continues to create.

### LOCAL AND COLLECTOR ROADS

Proposed and existing local roads should be well connected to maintain access throughout the village and to public amenities, to encourage proper circulation between neighborhoods, and to alleviate congestion on the arterial streets.

### NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

Enhanced efforts are needed to accommodate non-motorized travel, by constructing and linking sidewalks and bike paths throughout Blissfield. All new developments should include sidewalks that connect to existing sidewalks. By enhancing the non-motorized travel opportunities within the village, less reliance on the automobile can be achieved, which also reduces the stress and legacy management needed on the existing road network.





# Chapter #4: Planning for Tomorrow

## Community Outreach

As part of the multi-part public engagement process for this Comprehensive Land Use Plan update, several public engagement opportunities were conducted through 2021 and 2022, including:

- ◆ **Community-Wide Surveys.** Two important surveys gathered both resident and business owner input: the first was specific to the downtown area and was gathered in the spring and summer of 2021 and the second was available through the fall and winter of 2022.
- ◆ **Yuletide Festival in Downtown Blissfield.** A pop-up event was held on November 12, 2022; the activity boards from the event were also kept on display at Village Hall offices for several weeks following the event.
- ◆ **Public Meetings.** A series of public discussions were held at meetings of the Planning Commission and Village Council in preparation of Plan 2040.

Blissfield is updating its Master Plan!

Take the  
Survey!

Blissfield's Master Plan is a **long-range guiding policy document** that focuses on land use and plans for future development in the Village.

Please share your feedback and help shape the goals and vision of Blissfield! Follow the QR code to complete the survey online by **December 16, 2022**.

For more information, visit: [blissfield2040.com](http://blissfield2040.com)



Scan me!

## COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

254 total responses, the majority (76%) of respondents were village residents with an additional 23% identifying as a Blissfield business owner.



### Favorite / Least Favorite Aspects

Favorite aspects about the Village of Blissfield include:

- ◇ Community events (82%)
- ◇ Sense of community (66%)
- ◇ Historic downtown (57%)

Other notable mentions were the area schools (45%); Blissfield’s regional location to locations both in MI and OH (43%); availability of parks and recreation (42%); and public safety services (police and fire) (41%).

Least favorite aspects included:

- ◇ Quality of the housing stock (5%)
- ◇ Housing affordability (10%)
- ◇ Proximity to employment opportunities (12%)

The cost of living; the age of public facilities; and the truck traffic and traffic volumes were all identified as negative factors.

Top three improvements for the village to concentrate on are:

- ◇ Creating more entertainment and dining opportunities (61%)
- ◇ Reducing blight and developing vacant parcels (49%)
- ◇ Expanding the variety of retail options (39%)

Regarding the mix of land uses in the village, “downtown dining and entertainment” and “downtown retail” were prioritized as lacking, while “big box retail uses” were not identified as being so highly needed.

### Mobility

Many respondents (93%) either feel “very safe” or “safe” when walking and biking around Blissfield. Reducing speeds, improving lighting, and widening existing sidewalks when repairs occur will continue to ensure pedestrians have safe access to the transportation network in the future. 71% of respondents also confirmed support for the village to continue making improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. However, the lack of crosswalks and higher traffic speeds on US-223 were repeatedly mentioned. Cleaning up the corridor was also a theme.

### The Park System

Top three prioritized improvements to the park system:

- ◇ Increased maintenance of existing park facilities and grounds (56%)
- ◇ Creation of a livery on River Raisin (for kayaks, etc.) (48%)
- ◇ New sidewalks and pathways (37%)

Respondents generally stressed the need to improve and maintain the current facilities, as opposed to creating new park space. There was especially not much support for new or enhanced athletic facilities, but the enhancement of River Raisin was often cited. Regarding the redevelopment of the pool in Ellis Park, it’s location in a floodplain limits the use of the space, however a multi-functional, covered space that is largely outdoors could work, especially if flooding was mitigated through low-impact design (LID) systems (such as a rain garden). Festivals were mentioned, senior activities, etc.



## DOWNTOWN SURVEY

A survey was conducted to specifically gather the input of community stakeholders regarding the downtown area of Blissfield. Through the survey, it was found that over half visit the downtown area at least once a week, with the top three attractions as restaurants and bars, retail shopping, and downtown events.

### Improvements and Updates

In addition to understanding the current community perspective and usage of the downtown area, stakeholders were given the opportunity to voice their opinions on what they would improve and incorporate. Recommendations for updating and implementing the downtown area included:

- ◇ Increasing park / green space
- ◇ Expanding walkability
- ◇ Adding more attractions
- ◇ Finding use for vacant buildings.

People desire easy access to the parks by providing crossing walk, updates on the park restrooms, and suggested to utilize the park to host more downtown events. Having a diversity of attractions besides restaurants in the downtown area was suggested with ideas for festivals, farmers markets, social district, outdoor movies, live music, and a fitness center. In addition to events, residents voiced that they are unaware of amenities in Blissfield and would like to see more marketing of their historic areas with signage and potentially highlight the beautiful riverfront. Although attractions are a major suggestion, residents also voiced concern about the safety of walking in the downtown area, especially crossing US-223. Having definite crossing walks and similar quality of buildings and structures on both sides of US-223 was suggested by many.

Public opinion on the preservation, improvements, and creation of projects for Blissfield's downtown area were collected from residents who were able to choose the top three choices they would like to see. Preservation of shopping/dinning, walkability and historic architecture were most valued. Improvements made for economic development such as job opportunities and more businesses, physical buildings improvements such as landscaping, and lastly updating parks and trails and were all rated as the top three areas for improvements.



### Building Design and Architecture Character

The character in the downtown area is significant to the personality of the community that sounds it and can be displaced by the appearance of buildings and amenities. Maintaining the historic design elements and material on existing buildings as well as those that are renovated were the most important aspects rated in the survey.

### Transportation

Driving to the downtown area and walking were the top two forms of transportation. Over 90% of people are opposed to paying for metered on-street parking and surface parking. When asked where they would like to see bike racks placed in the downtown area, responses did not want to include bike racks on main streets but rather in parking lots or near major facilities like libraries, post office, parks, breweries, and store fronts. Jefferson and Lane were specific streets that were mentioned to include bike racks on.

### Changes and Programs

Increasing the parking behind buildings and making the area more walkable, adding to the diversity and variety of businesses, building improvements and cleaning vacant lots, safer access for non-motorized transportation, decreasing the speed limit at US-223 and Lane Street to ensure safety, legally compliant cannabis dispensary, adding public restrooms, increasing activities and appeal (such as outdoor dining and decorative lighting in the downtown area) were all future changes respondents noted.

In terms of added programs and services, stakeholders wanted to see more events, activities, and public restrooms. There are currently events pertaining to shopping, but surveyors desired to see more festivals, live music, game nights and other social events for adults and children to connect with people within the community. Outdoor drinking events have been mentioned multiple times throughout the survey. Physical activities such as self-defense courses, dancing, and community bike rides were also desired. Partnerships between the DDA and local businesses of Blissfield was the highest desired partnership.

### VILLAGE KICK-OFF AND STRATEGIC ISSUES MEETING

A kick-off meeting was held on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, with the Village Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority, and members of the Village Council. The Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis below highlights the key discussion points that were raised.



Table 14: SWOT Summary

Strengths	Opportunities	Weaknesses	Threats
Busy Downtown Fire and Police Services Library Club Farming Good Housing Mix Historic Downtown Aqua Center Service Clubs Things to Do Walkability Park Visibility Schools Former DDA Director Ms. Marks for her Guidance Route 223 / Regional Location Streets Accessibility	Farm Museum For Sale Properties DPW Relocation Industry Park Downsizing Home / Family Needs Convert Agricultural Land for Residential Housing Construction Costs Danfield Subdivision Sub-division Potential Continued Redevelopment Dinner Train River More Outdoor Seating / Dining Walking Trails Wayfinding Signs Pedestrian Amenities Playground Another Business Draw (ex: clothing store; urgent care, etc.)	Specialized Housing Community Perception Vehicle Traffic River (flooding, pollution) Not enough parking (or perception thereof) Store Schedules Wages US-223 Walkability Utility Payments Aging Infrastructure Job Growth Housing Inventory	Housing Stock Loss of Trees – esp. along the River Flooding / Erosion Issues Workforce Location and Regional Draw / Attraction Business Retention

A summary of the comments heard and discussed among the elected and appointed Village offices Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat are further detailed on the following pages.

**STRENGTHS**

*One of the key strengths shared was the high-quality level of service from public safety (Police and Fire) that are provided not only to the Village, but also to surrounding areas. For instance, it was indicated that the response time of the Village Police Department exceeded their demands. In addition to and in conjunction with having an outstanding Police Department, attendees indicated that the community feels “safe” and that there is little concern over crime.*



It was also noted that the walkability of the community is strong and that, save for a few small segments within the Village, most areas have public sidewalks and are well connected.

Participants were also appreciative of the variety and frequency of community events that are hosted throughout the year, which allows for residents and business owners to engage with each other. Attendees indicated that the community events also seem to be an area draw, which also assists with supporting the local businesses.

**WEAKNESSES**

*When asked about perceived weaknesses within the community, one of the common themes during this discussion centered on the housing stock. Specifically, it was indicated that there is a lack of niche housing options for those who may require assistance with aging in place, such as assisted living.*

A lack of job growth within the Village was also raised as a weakness. With the city of Toledo (Ohio) being only a 30-minute drive, it was questioned what incentives does the Village have to offer prospective employers for locating within the Village and not a large urban center? Discussion focused on what weaknesses need to be addressed to make the community more attractive for relocation.

In conjunction with a lack of job growth, it was also indicated there are not consistent hours of operation for downtown businesses, which in turn diminishes the desire to visit. Attendees wished to see more of a commitment from shop owners to expand and/or keep consistent hours of operation.

## OPPORTUNITIES

*It was noted by multiple participants that downtown Blissfield has the capacity to expand and feature new businesses, which in turn would enhance the downtown area. Participants felt that more health-oriented services, (ex: local clothing store, urgent care, etc.) and other non-box chain stores would be a positive addition to the business market.*

Participants also shared that by creating a regional draw, such as enhancing the Dinner Train and creation of a Farm Museum, Blissfield would become a destination instead of a through-fare.

To expand the Village's population, attendees felt that a conversion of agricultural land into new housing development would have a significant positive impact on the community. By increasing the housing stock, that could subsequently increase the demand for local services, thus allowing for local business expansion.

Another common opportunity that was discussed related to the river in the Village. River Raisin has the potential to provide additional recreational opportunities to community and the region. It was opined that further river enhancements would be a positive impact for the entire community.

## THREATS

*Threats are potential problems that could arise which would have a negative impact on the community. One such threat expressed was the current condition of the housing stock, specifically over the lack of investment made, and that this disinvestment could create a negative 'spillover' effect to surrounding properties, and ultimately discourage future investment into the larger neighborhood.*

Concerns with business retention were also discussed. With increasing vacancy due to the Global Pandemic (COVID-19), a serious threat posed is that an increase in business loss could discourage new business acquisition due to the number of empty storefronts. However, it was discussed that if enhanced promotion of businesses could take place, then there is the potential to retain businesses (even with COVID-19) and ultimately expand the commercial footprint within Blissfield.



## Strategic Goals

As Blissfield plans for its future, goals and objectives must be identified to define the boundaries of the community's needs and aspirations (this also establishes a basis for the development of the village's Future Land Use Plan). These goals and objectives reflect the future vision for Blissfield and the culture and values its residents wish to promote and prioritize, given realistic economic and social constraints.

The following section outlines goals and objectives to guide local decision makers in reviewing future land use proposals and new projects and redevelopment. Goals represent the defining purpose or intent of Plan 2040, while objectives are the means of obtaining those goals. Specific policies to guide the actions of the village are detailed in the Strategic Action Plan (see Chapter #6).



## Downtown Blissfield Goals

The 2023 DDA / Main Street goals are also at the forefront of Plan 2040 and include the following key priorities:

- Increase the number of repeat visitors and customers, and downtown event attendees.
- Support the expansion of food and arts heritage experiences.
- Create a business environment that supports and sustains full-time businesses that serve residents and visitors alike.
- Build a downtown identity and messaging that honors Blissfield's history and heritage, while supporting and sustaining growth.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Blissfield adopts the following community goals, with specific objectives, to guide future action, programs, and land use decisions in the village:

### **Goal #1:**     *Celebrate Blissfield’s character and identity.*

#### **Objectives:**

- 1.1 Identify, celebrate, and preserve historic and heritage sites (including agricultural assets).
- 1.2 Collaborate with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and other agencies to promote and enhance commercial centers and the downtown district.
- 1.3 Promote local businesses that are unique and/or are a positive destination for the village.
- 1.4 Encourage and support events and programming, including cultural programming.
- 1.5 Provide a wealth of well-maintained recreational services.
- 1.6 Leverage infrastructure and development projects to support public art, especially from local artists, as a placemaking tool.

### **Goal #2:**     *Provide safe and reliable multi-modal transportation for all ages and abilities.*

#### **Objectives:**

- 2.1 Design “complete streets” – ones that prioritize the safety and comfort of people walking and biking.
- 2.2 Require and support non-motorized connections to and within neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, employers, parks, and destinations, even those outside the community for regional linkages.
- 2.3 Promote alternatives to parking as the only mode of transportation, such as the inclusion of bicycle racks, pedestrian amenities, shared parking lots, and trail and sidewalk enhancements.
- 2.4 Implement access management best practices to reduce conflict points of the roadway (reducing the number and width of driveways).
- 2.5 Encourage shared parking areas and support a culture of park once and walk.
- 2.6 Improve walkability, accessibility, and safety along all major corridors and at all intersections.
- 2.7 Work regionally to identify future public transit and high-quality biking connection to economic centers throughout the region.

**Goal #3:** *Provide inclusive, accessible, and attainable housing for all.*

**Objectives:**

- 3.1 Increase opportunities for senior and aging-in-place housing (e.g., by encouraging all housing projects to have a certain percentage of accessible units).
- 3.2 Provide a range of housing stock, for both owners and renters. A diversity of housing includes missing middle housing such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, lofts, townhomes, work/live units, and accessory dwelling units.
- 3.3 Incentivize reinvestment into the existing housing stock, especially historic structures, to sustainably improve accessibility.
- 3.4 Prioritize infill housing developments (homes constructed on underutilized and/or vacant land closest to services and amenities).
- 3.5 Prohibit random scattered residential developments that do not connect to existing neighborhoods.

**Goal #4:** *Enhance the environment quality of the community and ensure Blissfield remains sustainable.*

**Objectives:**

- 4.1 Maintain a clear environment, reducing air and noise pollution (ex: truck traffic).
- 4.2 Minimize stormwater runoff by expanding low impact design (LID) technology in developments (e.g., rain gardens, green roofs, native plants, permeable pavements, bioswales, etc.).
- 4.3 Incorporate renewable energy into projects, such as solar energy systems.
- 4.4 Grow the network of active and passive recreation areas.
- 4.5 Promote uses such as community gardens to expand healthier food options for residents.
- 4.6 Limit negative impacts of construction by promoting adaptive reuse.
- 4.7 Increase the tree canopy coverage with native, diverse and Michigan climate resilient species.

**Goal #5:**     *Drive sustainable and diverse economic growth.*

**Objectives:**

- 5.1 Encourage the growth of businesses and industries that support diverse employment and entrepreneurship.
- 5.2 Support the expansion and enhancement of downtown Blissfield as a vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly destination.
- 5.3 Prioritize publicly owned sites for mixed-use developments, with affordable housing components.
- 5.4 Require high-quality architectural and building design standards to create walkable and welcoming building frontages that create a sense of place.
- 5.5 Encourage land to be used for buildings (resulting in a higher taxable land value) and people-focused amenities, rather than surface parking lots.
- 5.6 Enhance streetscapes with inviting building facades, native landscaping, wide sidewalks, street furniture, wayfinding, pedestrian and bike amenities, and decorative lighting.

**Goal #6:**     *Provide for quality infrastructure and transparent governance.*

**Objectives:**

- 6.2 Update and invest in infrastructure services and equipment.
- 6.2 Prioritize transparent communication from the village administration, utilizing multiple methods to reach residents, the business community, and visitors.
- 6.3 Follow the adopted Public Participation Plan to ensure future communications with residents, the business community, and all stakeholders are inclusive and empowering.





## Chapter #5: Future Land Use Plan

*Blissfield's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is intended to guide the future growth and development of the village. The basis for the development of Plan 2040 is Blissfield's desire to allow the community to continue to evolve while maintaining the small-town character residents have experienced over the past decades and cherish to this day.*

*To achieve this balance, the village encourages sustainable, high-quality development while limiting the potential impact of an undesirable pattern of development that is consistent with conventional planning and zoning philosophies.*

## Future Land Use Planning

The Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for Blissfield's vision for the next 15+ years and is based on an analysis of land use challenges facing the village, existing uses and conditions, demographic housing statistics, physical and natural constraints, and infrastructure, community engagement, and the goals and objectives of this Plan. Through land use planning and zoning controls, Blissfield intends to ensure that the character of its neighborhoods is preserved, that economic development is encouraged, and that the designed downtown core and mixed-use areas are vibrant, active, and thriving places to live, work, and visit.

The Future Land Use Plan constitutes the development policy of the Blissfield, and as the community grows and redevelops, the Plan should be updated to address how the growth has impacted infrastructure, existing retail and neighborhood areas, and the character of the village.

### FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The Future Land Use Map on the following page contains the following land use classifications:

#### Low-Density Residential

This designation largely comprised of single-family homes on traditional neighborhood streets. However, it includes other "missing middle housing" typologies such as duplexes, and triplexes. Neighborhood parks, open space, and schools, religious institutions, and government facilities that are within walking distance are also envisioned.

#### Medium-Density Residential

Larger-scale multiple-family buildings are appropriate, as well as single-family houses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and other missing middle housing typologies. This category also includes manufactured housing communities, which is limited to the current boundary of the Coach Light Estates Park. Again, neighborhood parks, open space, and schools, religious institutions, and government facilities that are within walking distance are also envisioned.

#### Mixed-Use

Designed areas for mixed a of uses to promote live/work/play elements in the village. For instance, such a mixed-use development could include first-floor restaurants, or offices and businesses with upper floor multiple-family units or businesses. Developments in the mixed-use

## Residential Design Guidelines

As new development occurs, best practices for the design of residential developments includes:

**Street Connectivity.** A connected street network facilitates traffic flows, alleviates congestion, and reduces the number of trips. Principles:

- Streets are well connected to one another in a grid fashion, to both major roads and local streets in adjacent neighborhoods.
- Cul-de-sac and dead-end roads are not permitted.
- Sidewalks or bike paths are installed on both sides of the street. Additional pedestrian corridors are installed where appropriate (ex: pathways along natural features or through wooded space, to other amenities and destinations, etc.).

**Housing Character.** Durable, high-quality materials used increase the life space of the neighborhood and reduces routine maintenance. Principals:

- Durable materials include brick, stone, and fiber cement siding.
- Architectural variety and diversity if given.
- Front porches and entries that are oriented to the street, setback garages, and landscaped front yards create more welcoming and inclusive neighborhoods.

district should typically contain residential units, as well as one or more of the following:

- ◇ Retail space
- ◇ Office space
- ◇ Institutional, community, or research space
- ◇ Light industrial / makers space (in certain circumstances)

Single-use developments could be approved if they clearly support the economic vibrancy, mixed-use vision, and walkability of the area (such as townhouses or a senior living facility that is properly designed and situated on a site). Parking areas must be located in the side or rear yards, so that buildings front the street and provide parking to the rear.

### **Regional Business**

Designated for higher intensity commercial uses, these areas are primarily concentrated along US-223 at the west and east village limits. These areas may include big box stores, drive-through uses, shopping plazas, all served by higher traffic volumes and regional in nature of the demographic they serve.

Durable and high-quality building materials must be used, which wrap around the entire building, paired with robust landscaping throughout the site. Parking may be located in the front yard of buildings, however, shared parking lots and access between other commercial and mixed-use sites is necessary.

### **Downtown Business**

This category includes the traditional downtown Blissfield district and should promote development to stimulate the economy of the village. This district can support taller, mixed-use buildings with block-sized footprints, continuing and expanding the current level of intensity. Downtown Blissfield should provide amenities for residents, as well as attract visitors. Appropriate land uses included mixed-use or commercial (including office, general retail commercial, food service, and entertainment), civic uses, and upper-story residential, as well as apartment buildings. Automotive-oriented uses such as gas stations, auto repair, or drive-through facilities are not appropriate.

### **Parks / Open Space**

Parks and open space areas include play equipment, formal and informal playfields, paved and unpaved pathways (for walking, hiking, running, or biking), preservation areas, and other similar uses. Civic and municipal uses, such as schools, are also appropriate for this category.

Village parks should provide space and venues to accommodate public events and social gatherings and offer regular programming for all age groups. Activities that allow for enjoyment in the colder months should be pursued where possible to create opportunities to use these areas even with inclement weather. This area also includes places that may be ecologically sensitive. Established natural areas, particularly forests and wetlands within 500-feet of a waterway, should be protected from high-impact development through appropriate screening and should not be destroyed for new structures if at all avoidable.

### **Light Industrial**

Appropriate land uses in this category include light manufacturing, office, research, warehousing, and similar uses. Outdoor storage may be appropriate in certain limited instances where the outdoor component is shielded and where the use will not generate any negative impacts on nearby residential neighborhoods or major streets. Developments should be designed and operated to be respectful of their surroundings, with minimal truck traffic, noise, odor, or dust.

### **Heavy Industrial**

Heavy industrial allows for the greatest intensity of manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and production from raw materials (agricultural production).

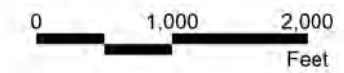
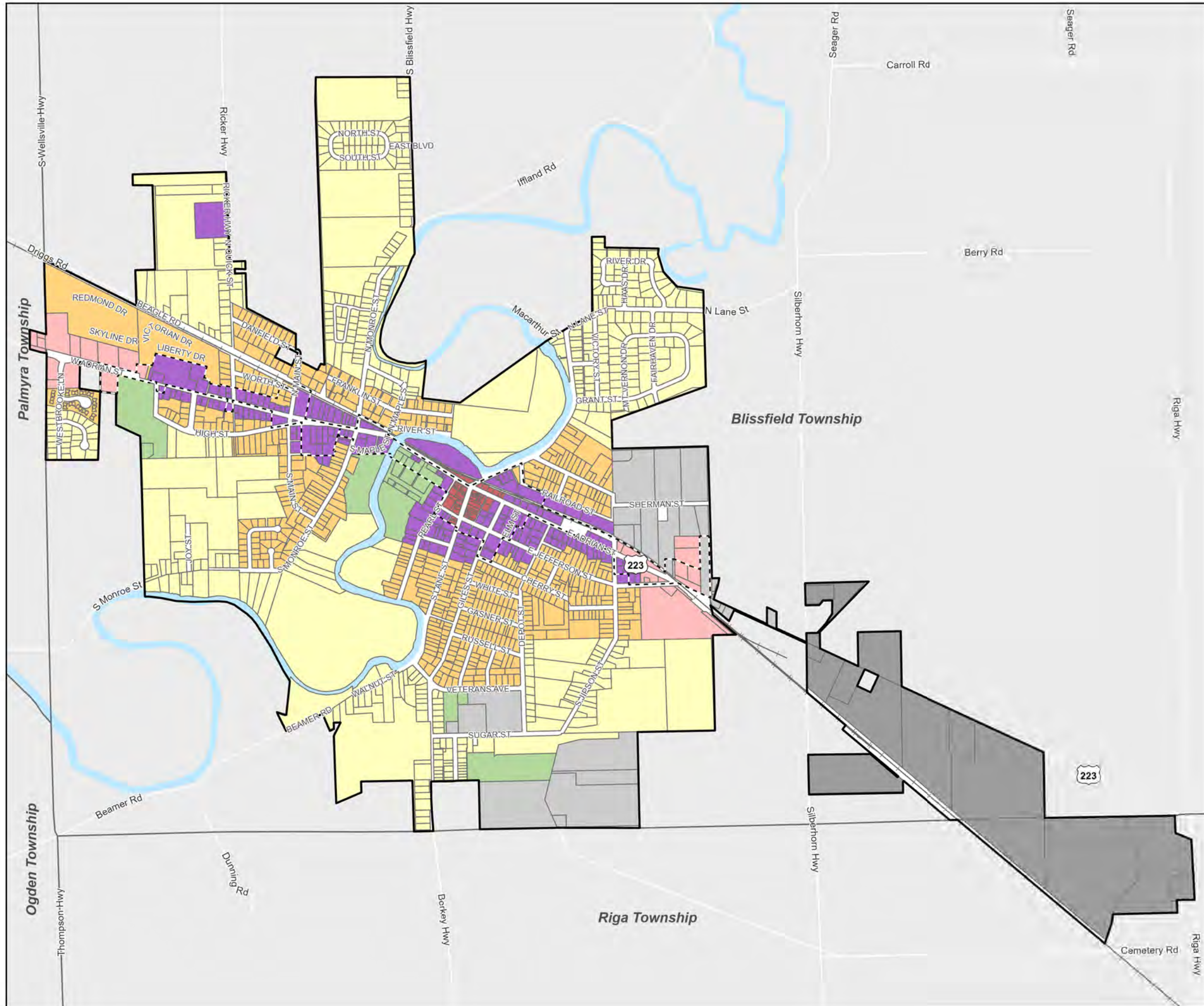
# Map #7: Future Land Use

Village of Blissfield,  
Lenawee County, Michigan

August 18, 2023

## Legend

- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Regional Business
- Downtown Business
- Parks / Open Space
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Downtown Development Area Limits
- Village Boundary
- Railroad



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
Data Source: Lenawee County 2020, McKenna 2023



## The Zoning Plan

The State of Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, requires that a local unit of government, having adopted a zoning ordinance, prepare a zoning plan for various zoning districts controlling height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The zoning plan includes an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.

Below is Blissfield’s Zoning Plan, which describes the relationship between the village’s Future Land Use categories and their corresponding zoning districts.

## Translating the Future Land Use Map

The zoning plan shows the zoning districts that would most appropriately implement the vision of the Future Land Use Map.

Rezoning (map amendment) requests should be reviewed against this table to determine whether the requested district is supported by this 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In some cases, a new zoning district may be the most effective way to implement this vision of the Future Land Use Plan.

**Table 15: Zoning Plan**

Future Land Use Category	Corresponding Zoning District	Recommended Action / Future Zoning District Summary
Low-Density Residential	R-1, One Family Residential R-2, One Family Residential	Create a new district: Low-Density Residential - combine the R-1 and R-2 Districts and revise.
Medium-Density Residential	RM-1, Multiple Family Residential	Create a new district: Medium-Density Residential District.
Parks / Open Space	PL, Public Land	-
Mixed-Use	C-1, Local Commercial O/R, I – Office, Research & Industrial MU-1, Mixed-Use	Create a new district: Mixed-Use District.
Downtown Business	C-2, Central Business	Create a new Central Business District (CBD).
Regional Business	MU-1, Mixed Use C-3, General Commercial	Create a new district: 223 General Commercial District.
Light Industrial	I-1, Industrial	Revise district uses and site standards.
Heavy Industrial	I-2, Heavy Industrial	Revise district uses and site standards.

## Top Priority Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

The following priority text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are recommended to be studied and adopted by the Planning Commission, in order to implement the goals of the Plan 2040:

- ◆ Improve the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process and development requirements.
- ◆ Residential districts:
  - ◇ Allow duplexes by right in the Low-Density Residential District.
  - ◇ Allow for triplexes, fourplexes and other missing middle housing in the Medium-Density Residential District.
  - ◇ Allow for Manufactured Home Communities in the Medium-Density Residential District (eliminate references to mobile home parks) and revise the Village's Mobile Home Park Ordinance.
  - ◇ Update the Table of Dimensional Requirements to better facilitate missing middle housing typologies.
- ◆ Transportation and parking:
  - ◇ Modernize the parking use table and the required minimum number of spaces. Consider provisions such as a maximum parking allocation, to reduce unnecessary impervious surfaces.
  - ◇ Develop access management standards.
- ◆ Incorporate provisions to better encourage renewable energy, especially related to solar energy systems and EV charging.
- ◆ Create a new Mixed-Use District, with a focus on pedestrian oriented uses (including breweries, artisan spaces, etc.). Auto-oriented uses (such as gas stations or drive-throughs) should not be permitted.
- ◆ Simplify and modernize the landscape requirements for each district; incorporate best practices such as native plantings and species diversity requirements. Include guidelines such as the size and type of tree for the right-of-way (tree lawn) planting areas based on the width of the planting zone.
- ◆ Undertake a sign code update to create design and architectural character standards and ensure all sign content requirements are content neutral.
- ◆ Create architectural and design standards for the new Central Business District (CBD) and incorporate graphics to illustrate preferred design treatments.



## Chapter #6: Strategic Action Plan

*Blissfield's Comprehensive Land Use Plan represents a vision for the future of the village – a vision to preserve and enhance the best characteristics of the community while making the most out of opportunity that come with development and reinvestment.*

*Successful implementation of this Plan will be the result of action taken by elected and appointed officials, village staff, and private citizens, business owners, and civic organizations.*



## Implementing Plan 2040

The table on the following pages presents a detailed summary of all the recommended implementation activities, who is responsible for ensuring completion, and potential funding resources for each project. Since many of Plan 2040's recommendations are important to the long-term success of Blissfield, the community must aggressively pursue outside funding to provide matching dollars to achieve its start seeing benefits in the short-term.

### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Recommendations for future projects are organized around the six goals of this Plan:

- Goal #1: Celebrate Blissfield's character and identity.
- Goal #2: Provide safe and reliable multi-modal transportation for all ages and abilities.
- Goal #3: Provide inclusive, accessible, and attainable housing for all.
- Goal #4: Enhance the environment quality of the community and ensure Blissfield remains sustainable.
- Goal #5: Drive sustainable and diverse economic growth.
- Goal #6: Provide for quality infrastructure and transparent governance.

### IMPLEMENTATION KEY

The key below describes actions and tools available to implement the vision of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

“Priority” indicates the level of importance of a given action task. While all the identified projects are important, limited resources dictate a choice and a system of prioritizing funding as available.

“Responsible Parties” indicates the organization and individuals that must be involved to successfully carry out the project.

Priority		Responsible Parties	
A	Most Important	BSD	Blissfield Community School District
B	Very Important	BO	Business Owners
C	Important	BT	Blissfield Township
		CM	Community Members
		CO	Community Organizations
		DDA	Downtown Development Authority / Main Street
		EGLE	MI Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
		FB	Faith-Based Organizations
		HO	Homeowners
		LC	Lenawee County
		MDNR	MI Dept. of Natural Resources
		MDOT	MI Dept. of Transportation
		MEDC	MI Economic Development Corporation
		MSHDA	MI State Housing Development Authority
		PC	Planning Commission
		PD	Private Developers
		PR	Parks and Recreation
		RR	River Raisin Watershed Council
		R2	Region 2 Planning Commission
		RX	Railroads (ADBF, CN, CSX, and NS)
		VA	Village Administration
		VC	Village Council
Timeframe			
The timeframe is measured as a range of years, extending from the adoption of this Plan in 2024. Some projects are noted as “on-going”.			
Near-Term	1-4 years		
Mid-Term	5-9 years		
Long-Range	10+ years		
On-going	-		
Funding			
<b>Public</b>	Public funds from the village’s operating budget, and any County or State funding (including any local government bonds and grants).		
<b>Private</b>	Funds from private sources such as grant monies, corporate funding, or private investment dollars.		
<b>DDA / TIF</b>	Tax increment financing provided by the Blissfield Main Street (DDA) Board.		

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Goal Support	Task	Priority	Timeframe	Partnerships	Funding
#1, #2, #5	Engage MDOT on the redesign and road dieting of US-223 (including a streetscape plan).	A	Long-range	BO, CM, DDA, LC, MDOT, PC, R2, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #5, #6	Relocate the DPW garage and construct a new facility.	A	Mid-term	PC, VA, VC	Public
#1, #4, #5	Redevelop the former pool facility in Ellis Park into a multi-purpose space (ex: covered pavilion) that could be rented out, for yoga classes, etc.	B	Mid-term	CO, PR, VA, VC	Public
#2	Implement traffic calming measures on local streets through updated engineering standards.	A	On-going	VA, VC	Public, DDA
#5	Continue to redevelop and improve the Springbrook Commons Shopping Plaza.	C	On-going	BO, DDA, PC, PD, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#2, #4	Install EV charging stations throughout the community (downtown, at the library, etc.).	C	On-going	CO, DDA, PC, VA, VC	Public, Private, DDA
#2, #5	Coordinate with partners on the implementation of the regional trail and bike segments (ex: Lenawee County on greenway projects).	A	Long-range	BT, CO, DDA, EGLE, LC, MDNR, MDOT, PC, PR, R2, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#2	Continue to expand the pedestrian infrastructure by installing sidewalks on both sides of roads (where possible) and include protected crossings where appropriate.	A	On-going	VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #2, #3, #4	Improve recreation access to the River Raisin with walking trails and water access points.	A	Mid-term	DDA, EGLE, LC, MDNR, PC, PR, RR, R2, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #4	Upgrade facilities and access to and within the parks to be universally accessible.	B	On-going	PC, PR, VA, VC	Public
#1, #4	Improve drainage, stabilize the bank, and aid in debris removal from the River Raisin.	B	On-going	EGLE, LC, MDNR, PC, PR, RR, VA, VC	Public
#1, #2	Develop community gateways to further create a sense of unique identity; assess where additional wayfinding signage may be appropriate.	C	On-going	DDA, VA	Public

**Goal Key:**  
*Goal #1: Celebrate Blissfield's character and identity.*  
*Goal #2: Provide safe and reliable multi-modal transportation for all ages and abilities.*  
*Goal #3: Provide inclusive, accessible, and attainable housing for all.*  
*Goal #4: Enhance the environment quality of the community and ensure Blissfield remains sustainable.*  
*Goal #5: Drive sustainable and diverse economic growth.*  
*Goal #6: Provide for quality infrastructure and transparent governance.*

Goal Support	Task	Priority	Timeframe	Partnerships	Funding
#1, #2	Develop a Mobility Plan. Specifically, engage property owners along US-223 to explore access management and street frontage improvements to pave the way for a more walkable corridor.	B	On-going	BO, CM, DDA, HO, LC, MDOT, PC, R2, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#6	Establish regular, working meetings with the DDA to encourage reinvestment and to identify future partnership opportunities.	A	On-going	DDA, PC, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#5, #6	Continue to foster relationships with local business owners, industrial employers, and educational institutions to assist with growth and development where needed.	B	On-going	BO, CO, FB, PD, VA	Public
#3	Incentivize new housing development for young professionals and seniors to provide additional choices / stimulate the market.	A	Near-term	DDA, PC, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #4, #5	Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2025.	A	Near-term	MDNR, PC, PR, VA	Public
#1, #4, #5	Apply for MDNR grants for park improvements.	B	On-going	MDNR, PC, PR, VA	Public
#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6	Conduct a rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance to equitably reflect current and future land uses, economic development, parks and recreation, accessibility, housing, and sustainability needs.	A	Near-term	PC, VA, VC	Public
#1, #5	Identify blighted structures that cannot be rehabilitated and create a program for targeted demolition.	B	Mid-term	DDA, PC, PD, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #6	Review the Master Plan for Land Use every five years (next update to start in 2029).	C	Mid-term	PC, VA, VC	Public
#1, #5	Make improvements to the downtown streetscape to widen the sidewalks and allow for more outdoor dining opportunities.	B	Mid-term	BO, DDA, PC, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#5, #6	Continue to do utility rate studies and seek opportunities for grant funding to offset infrastructure costs.	B	On-going	VA, VC	Public
#1, #5	Expand public art exhibits within the community (ex: building murals).	B	On-going	DDA, PC, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #4, #5	Implement a street-tree program to replace dead / dying trees within the rights-of-way.	B	Near-term	DDA, PC, PR, VA, VC	Public, DDA

**Goal Key:**  
*Goal #1: Celebrate Blissfield's character and identity.*  
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Goal Support	Task	Priority	Timeframe	Partnerships	Funding
#1, #2	Illuminate the pedestrian bridge along US-223.	C	Mid-term	DDA, MDOT, VA, VC	Public, DDA
#1, #5, #6	Expand code-enforcement, especially for blighted structures.	B	On-going	VA	Pubic

**Goal Key:**

- Goal #1: Celebrate Blissfield's character and identity.*
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# VILLAGE OF BLISSFIELD

## Appendices

NO  
PARKING  
2AM TO  
5AM

