

Section II

INTRODUCTION

People are a community's most valuable asset. They are the key element that allows the Township to function as a complete unit. This section of the Master Plan provides information about the population, housing, social and employment characteristics of Ross Township. By examining these factors, a clear picture of the Township's demographic conditions will emerge. Understanding these conditions provides both a valuable insight into the potential future state of affairs as well as a basis for projecting future needs in housing and land development.

POPULATION

Population Trends

The historic population trends for Ross Township from 1970 to 2010, as well as population estimates for 2017, are presented in Table II-1. These population figures exclude the Village of Augusta which, while primarily within the geographic boundaries of the Township, is not incorporated into this Plan. Table II-1 shows that the Township's population increased by almost 40 percent between 1970 and 2017, (Augusta, which had a 2010 population of 885, had an estimated 871 residents in the portion of the Village that is within Ross Township). About 35 percent of the Township's population growth over the past 47 years occurred between 2000 and 2010. With the exception of the time period between 1980 and 1990, the Township's rate of population growth since 1970 has exceeded that of the County by about 11 percent, but by the year 2000, that differential in the rate of growth decreased to six percent. In effect, the Township grew at a slightly higher rate than the County between 1990 and 2000. However, it is estimated that the Township and County have been growing at comparable rates since 2010. That is depicted in Table II-2, which uses the data presented in Table II-1 to determine rates of growth in 10-year increments.

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TABLE II-1 - HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017	% Change 1970-2017
Ross Township	3,485	3,863	3,832	4,176	4,664	4,837	38.8
Kalamazoo County	201,550	212,378	223,411	238,603	250,331	259,830	28.9

SOURCE: 1970-2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Table II-2 also shows that the County’s rate of growth has been more consistent than the Township’s over the past 50 years.

TABLE II-2 - HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS PERCENT CHANGES

	% Change 1970-1980	% Change 1980-1990	% Change 1990-2000	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2017
Ross Township	10.8	-0.8	8.9	11.7	3.7
Kalamazoo County	5.4	5.2	6.8	4.9	4.0

SOURCE: 1970-2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

The Michigan Department of Management and Budget has generated population projections for all counties within the State, including Kalamazoo County. Those projections for Kalamazoo County, which were published in 2018, have been calibrated in this Plan to conform to the 2010 Census and then adjusted for each of the projected five-year increments to the year 2030. Ross Township’s population forecast to the year 2030, based upon its average annual growth rate over the past 47 years (between 1970–2017) of 0.8 percent, is just over 5,300.

Table II-3 presents these projections.

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It must be noted that the Township’s projections are based upon past trends and reflect the potential population counts that could occur if no specific policies are put into place that would either accelerate or slow the historic growth rate. The Township has determined that it desires a relatively slow rate of population increase over the next 20 years, with an ~~target~~ **estimated** population of 6,000 or fewer residents. ~~While this “target” exceeds the projected 2020 population depicted in Table II-3,~~ **A 2040** population of 6,000 ~~is determined~~ **appears** to be more realistic ~~This is due to~~ **in light of** the ~~accelerated~~ level of development **that has occurred in the last 10 years** and is likely to occur over the next 20 years. The population forecasts used in this Plan to define the land use needs of the Township over the next 20 years are identified in Section VII.

TABLE II-3 - POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2020 – 2030 BASED UPON HISTORIC TRENDS

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	%Change 2010-2030
Ross Township	4,664	4,784	4,974	5,174	5,379	15.3
Kalamazoo County	250,331	259,830	267,738	278,172	290,090	15.9

SOURCE: Population Projections, Michigan Dept. of Management and Budget, 2018 (Township Projections)

Migration

~~Migration is the rate that the population moved into and out of the Township and further substantiates the rate of population increase.~~ **Geographic mobility is the measure of how populations move over time, commonly measuring migration within a population.** Table II-4 shows ~~migration in Ross Township between 1985 and 1990, the latest time periods for which Census information is available.~~ **the estimated migration pattern in Ross Township in 2017.** During this period, **Notably, in 2017 86** percent of the population remained in the same location. Of the **14** percent that did move, **7.6** percent moved within the County, with the remaining **6.4** percent moving from outside the County. Of these new residents, **4.4** percent came from a different county in Michigan, **1.9** percent came from a different state, and **0.06** percent resided previously outside the United States.

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TABLE II-4 – GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY IN THE PAST YEAR FOR CURRENT RESIDENCE

Residence in 2017	Ross Township	
	Size	% of Total
Persons 1 Year and Older	4,770	100
Lived in Same House	4,104	86.0
Lived in Different House		
In Kalamazoo County	364	7.6
Different County in Michigan	209	4.4
Different State	90	1.9
Outside of United States in 1985	3	0.06

SOURCE: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Overall, the residential migration pattern indicates a stable residential base for Ross Township. Such stability is beneficial for long-term planning and investment by Township officials and residents.

Although 2020 Census data on mover ship is not yet available, the increase in residential development activity within the Township during the past several years would indicate a substantial suggest a healthy continuation of increase in new residents moving into the Township from other areas within and outside of Kalamazoo County.

Age Composition

The needs and lifestyles of individuals differ among age groups, and the demands for retail goods and services, as well as public or institutional programs, change with each age group. Table II-5 shows the composition of the Township's population by age group for 2000, 2010 and 2017 relative to Kalamazoo County. The Township's age distribution includes the Village of Augusta, hence the total population in Table II-5 is different than Tables II-1 and II-3.

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TABLE II-5 - AGE DISTRIBUTION (ROSS TOWNSHIP AND KALAMAZOO COUNTY)

Age Group	Ross Township			Kalamazoo County		
	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
Under 5 Years	250	180	184	15,447	15,646	15,735
% of Total	5.0	3.9	3.8	6.5	6.2	6.1
5-9 Years	352	243	142	16,254	15,689	15,383
% of Total	7.0	5.2	2.9	6.8	6.3	5.9
10-14 Years	417	308	363	16,453	15,918	16,224
% of Total	8.3	6.6	7.5	6.9	6.4	6.2
15-19 Years	333	341	349	20,263	19,456	19,034
% of Total	6.6	7.3	7.2	8.5	7.8	7.3
20-24 Years	148	174	245	25,197	27,752	32,180
% of Total	2.9	3.7	5.1	10.6	11.1	12.4
25-34 Years	453	353	567	32,311	33,196	34,176
% of Total	9.0	7.6	11.7	13.5	13.2	13.2
35-54 Years	1,837	1,436	1,036	66,604	63,262	60,095
% of Total	36.4	30.7	21.4	27.9	25.3	23.1
55-64 Years	599	855	1,011	18,826	28,632	31,080
% of Total	11.9	18.3	20.9	7.9	11.4	12.0
65 + Years	658	774	940	27,148	30,780	35,923
% of Total	13.0	16.7	19.5	11.4	12.3	13.8
Total	4,176	4,664	4,837	238,603	250,331	259,830
Median Age	41.7	47.7	47.9	32.7	34.1	34.1

SOURCE: 2000, 2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

According to Table II-5, Ross Township has experienced consistent changes in the proportion of some age groups and variations in the proportional composition of other age groups. Over the past 20 years there has been a ~~consistent increase~~ **significant decrease** in the number of residents under the age of 9, ~~although the proportion of the total population under the age of 5 has varied.~~ **Conversely,** the

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number of residents between the ages of 10 and 19 ~~decreased between 1980 and 1990 and increased between 1990 and 2000~~ has remained relatively stable since 2000. The number of residents between the ages of 20 and 34 declined in Ross Township between 1980 and 2000 but has shown to be very stable since 2000. ~~have been declining over the past two decades, both in actual numbers and proportionally.~~ This age group made up ~~over 21~~ only 12 percent of the Township's population in 1980 2000 and by the year 2000 comprised only 12 percent yet by 2017 is estimated to have comprised nearly 17 percent of those living in Ross Township. All age groups over ~~35~~ 55 have consistently increased in number and proportion over the past 20 years. While there is a general similarity in the proportional distribution of age groups between the County and Township, it is significant to note that there is a substantial disparity between the two jurisdictions among those in the 20-24 under 9 and 55 and older age groups. ~~That disparity is also becoming more significant in the 25-34 age group.~~

Overall, the Township's residents are getting older. This increase in older residents as a percentage of total Township residents is reflected in the consistently higher median age over each decade between 1990 and 2010. Every 10 years, the Township's median age increases by about four or five years. During that period, it has been substantially higher than the median age of the County's population in general, by an average of about six years in 1990, and an average of nine years in 2000. In 2010, that disparity increased to almost 14 years. This pattern of an aging population represents the on-going nation-wide trend of older populations, as the members of the "baby boom" generation are beginning to reach retirement age and their off-spring, the "echo generation" are fewer in number. ~~There is, however, the beginning of a second "baby boom" generation occurring. These are the children of the "echo generation." This trend will likely result in a lowering of the median age in most communities after the next several decades.~~

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TABLE II-6 -- PROJECTED AGE DISTRIBUTION ROSS TOWNSHIP 2000-2020

Age Group	Ross Township			
	1990	2000	2010	2020
Under 5 Years	284	252	297	336
% of Total	6.4	5.0	5.7	6.0
5-9 Years	267	353	307	336
% of Total	6.9	7.0	5.9	6.0
10-14 Years	244	419	417	391
% of Total	6.5	8.3	8.0	7.0
15-19 Years	325	333	328	464
% of Total	5.5	6.6	6.3	8.3
20-24 Years	415	146	182	207
% of Total	5.1	2.9	3.5	3.7
25-34 Years	649	454	469	615
% of Total	15.3	9.0	9.0	11.0
35-54 Years	952	1,837	1,927	1,761
% of Total	31.8	36.4	37.0	31.5
55-64 Years	291	601	594	699
% of Total	10.7	11.9	11.4	12.5
65 + Years	406	656	688	783
% of Total	11.8	13.0	13.2	14.0
Total	3,832	4,176	4,617	5,105
Median Age	37.5	41.7	42.6	43.2

SOURCES: Michigan Department of Management and Budget, 1996
 Using Michigan Department of Management and Budget population age projection for Kalamazoo County and applying them to the 2000-2020 population projections, a generalized picture of future population age distribution for the Township can be obtained. Table II-6 presents the estimated age distribution projections, and indicates a continuing aging of Ross Township's population. The median age increases from 47.7 in 2010 to an estimated in 2030.

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Summary

The population of Ross Township has grown over the past 50 years with the population count fluctuating over each 10-year period. As households continue to be attracted to suburban and rural areas, it is anticipated that the growth of the Township's population will continue. While there have been relatively substantial variations among 10-year growth increments, a more accurate predictor of future population growth is the long-term trends of the past 50 years. Those trends reflect an annual growth rate of a little less than one percent. Projecting that long-term rate over the next 20 years, the Township could expect a 2040 population of 5,800 to 6,000. Current residents and Township leaders have indicated a desire for a "slow growth" approach to future development, which includes a population "target" for the year 2040 that would generally conform to the projected long-term trends.

The Township's residents continue to get older, following a national trend. This aging of the population is manifested to a greater degree in the Township than in Kalamazoo County in general, with the disparity in median age between the two jurisdictions increasing significantly since 1990, to the point where the average resident in the Township is 14 years older than the average resident in the County.

HOUSING

Household Composition

The number and type of households within the Township influence the social and economic dynamics of the Township and consequently impact the quantity and character of land development. Households are the standard unit of measurement for evaluating and projecting the number of housing units, retail sales and community

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facilities and services. Table II-6 shows the growth trends in the number of households in Ross Township between 2000 and 2017.

Between 2000 and 2017, households in the Township increased at an annual rate of 1.5 percent, which was slightly greater than the average annual population growth during this time period of just under one percent. This differentiation between household and population growth is a trend seen in many communities across Michigan and the nation, and is caused by a decrease in the number of individuals living in each household (average household size). Therefore, even while the population of a community increases slowly, stabilizes or declines, the number of households will increase.

The composition of a household is reflected in the number of people living within a residence as well as the relationship between them. A household may consist of a married couple with or without children, a single parent with children, two or more unrelated people living in a dwelling and sharing household responsibilities, or a person living alone.

Table II-6 depicts the composition of households in the Township in 2000, 2010 and 2017, reflecting a number of characteristics and trends that should be considered in planning for the future. Although the number of households has increased between over the three periods, traditional two-parent family households (households comprised of a family with a husband and wife), have decreased in actual numbers, as well as having proportionally decreased from 88 percent in 2000 to 80 percent in 2017. That is a result of an increase in the number of single persons and one-parent households, which reflects a national trend that has been occurring since the 1960s.

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TABLE II-6 - HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

	Ross Township		
	2000	2010	2017
Number of Households	1,680	1,946	2,055
Family Households	1,249	1,382	1,381
% of Total Households	74.3	71.0	67.2
Married Couple Families	1,094	1,161	1,108
% of Families	87.6	84.0	80.2
With Children Under 18	398	369	478
% of Married Couple Families	36.3	31.8	43.1
Female Head of Household	103	145	210
% of Families	9.8	10.5	15.2
With Children Under 18	71	74	N/A
% of Female Household Families	68.9	51.0	N/A
Nonfamily Households	431	564	674
One Person	448	464	490
65 and Older	155	161	250
% of One Person Household	34.6	34.7	51.0

SOURCE: 2000, 2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

The number of married couple families with children under 18 **has remained relatively similar in** number and percentage to the married couple families over the past **17** years, indicating a stabilizing effect on households. ~~and reflecting an~~

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increased propensity of married couples to have children (related to the second “baby boom” phenomenon mentioned earlier). Though steady between 2000 and 2010, there has been a marked increase in the number of female-headed households since 2010, the result of a continuing high rate of divorce and out-of-wedlock births. This segment of the population can be vulnerable to financial instability and the need for social services. Nonfamily households also continued to increase during the last 20 years, though at about half the pace than the trend that occurred between 1980 and 2000. The majority of those households (73%) were comprised of single persons, with the proportion of those who are over the age of 65 increasing between 2000 and 2017. During the same period, as identified in Table II-5, there was an increase in the number of residents in that age group. This would indicate that the one-person households of 65 and Older will likely continue to increase in number and proportion in the Township.

Housing Occupancy

Between 2000 and 2017, there was an estimated net increase of only 10 housing units, or 0.5 percent, within the housing stock in Ross Township, slightly less than the 1.2 percent increase in households (24) during that same period. Typically, most communities experience a greater increase in the number of housing units than the number of households over a defined period of time. In Ross Township’s case, the reverse implies that during that 20-year period, This trend would be supported by the substantial number of seasonal homes (primarily around the major lakes) that continue to be converted to year-round units. This generally serves to increase the overall quality of the Township’s housing stock, as well as the average value of a home.

Table II-7 presents Ross Township’s total occupied- and renter-occupied housing between 2000 and 2017. The Township experienced little movement in the owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing picture between 2000 and 2017, with a

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steady 84 percent of the occupied housing stock remaining owner-occupied. This is a positive trend for Ross Township, as residents who own their own homes create a more stable environment, one where they have a vested interest in their community's future.

TABLE II-7 – ROSS TOWNSHIP HOUSING UNITS 2000 - 2017

	2000	2010	2017
Total Units	2,334	2,378	2,344
Occupied Units (Year-round)	2,031	1,946	2,055
% of Total	87.0	81.8	87.7
Owner-Occupied Units	1,721	1,663	1,730
% of Occupied	84.7	85.5	84.2
Renter-Occupied Units	310	283	325
% of Occupied	15.3	14.5	15.8

SOURCE: 2000, 2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Almost nine out of 10 housing units were occupied year-round between 2000 and 2017. The balance was either used for seasonal occupancy or were vacant and for rent or for sale. This reflects the character and geographic location of Ross Township. Located between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, the Township is considered more of a “bedroom” community than a summer or winter resort area. Although the Township’s lakes, particularly Gull Lake, are recreation resources, the majority of those who use the lakes are year-round residents and those who live in nearby communities within easy commute distance to the Township. Consequently, seasonal residents comprise only a small portion of the Township’s population.

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Age and Value of Housing

The quality and cultural significance of a community's housing stock is reflected in the age of that stock. The period during which much, if not most, of the housing units were built often reflect a popular architecture for that time. The types of materials that were standard in home construction during a particular period affect the structural quality of housing. For example, houses that were built up through the first part of the 20th Century used full-dimension lumber or timbers, giving greater strength to the structural integrity of the building. Some older houses typically used mass dimensions of various types of hardwood for interior finishes that is difficult or cost-prohibitive to obtain today. The distribution of the age of Ross Township's housing stock can be seen in Table II-8.

TABLE II-8 - AGE OF HOUSING STOCK BY YEAR BUILT

Year Built	# of Housing	% of Total
1939 or earlier	445	19.0
1940-1949	166	7.1
1950-1959	435	18.6
1960-1969	346	14.8
1970-1979	378	16.1
1980-1989	153	6.5
1990-1999	236	10.1
2000-2009	177	7.6
2010-2017	8	0.3

SOURCE: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

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According to Table II-8, approximately 55 percent of the Township's housing stock has been constructed since 1960. This is the general time frame during which residential building permits were first required. The remaining 45 percent were built in 1959 or earlier, with nearly 20 percent built before 1940. An estimated 0.5 percent, or 8 houses, were built between 2010 and 2017.

Table II-9 presents the median market value of owner-occupied housing in both Ross Township and Kalamazoo County for 2010 and 2017. 2000 Census data for detailed housing characteristics, including value, has not yet been released. The median market value of owner-occupied homes is another a good indicator of both housing quality and demand. In 2010, the median housing value of a home in Ross Township was 43.7 percent higher than the overall median housing value in the County. By 2017, this proportion decreased, but was still significantly different, at 32.4 percent higher. This reflects, to some degree, an increased demand for housing and the construction of more upper scale priced homes in the County overall relative to the Township. On the other hand, the Township's homeowner vacancy rate in 2017 was less than one percent compared to 1.2 percent in the County. An important consideration is the fact that the housing value data in the Census is derived from asking a random sample of Census survey respondents what they believe the value of their home to be. That information, which is subjective, can significantly skew the true value of housing within a jurisdiction.

TABLE II-9- ROSS TOWNSHIP MEDIAN OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE

	2010	2017	% Change
Ross Township	\$209,700	\$193,500	-8.4
Kalamazoo County	\$145,900	\$146,100	0.14

SOURCE: 2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

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Rental housing can be a significant contributor to the perception of housing quality in a community. Table II-10 highlights the median monthly contract rent paid to landlords in the Township and County in 2010 and 2017. By reviewing contract rent, an indicator of housing quality, as well as the availability of supply and demand for rental units can be implied.

TABLE II-10 – MEDIAN MONTHLY CONTRACT RENT

	2010	2017	% Change
Ross Township	\$858 (\$964*)	\$730	-24.3
Kalamazoo County	\$675 (\$759)	\$762	0.4
*Number represents rent amount in 2017 dollars, based upon Consumers Price Index			

SOURCE: 2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

According to Table II-10, in 2017, the median monthly contract rent rate in the Township was generally the same as found within the County as a whole. However, the percent change in rent between 2010 and 2017 may indicate that Ross Township's supply of rental/seasonal housing has not kept up with exceeded demand during the 2008 economic recession (hence a 24 percent decrease in median monthly contract rent rates). Kalamazoo County, during the same period, had a minimal median monthly contract rent change of 0.4 percent, indicating rental housing was more in line with overall demand.

Summary

Housing in Ross Township grew at a slightly slower annual rate than the average annual rate of population growth. This is estimated to be predicated on the slowing of the economy from 2008 to 2013 and the recent increase in construction focus in the Township on the conversion of seasonal housing units.

The median market value of owner-occupied housing in Ross Township dipped slightly between 2010 and 2017, which was not consistent with Kalamazoo

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County's stability over the same period. However, the Township's overall median housing value remained significantly higher in 2017 than the County as a whole (\$193,500 vs. \$146,100), indicating that while the value of the housing stock in the Township has not been experiencing strong growth, values remain higher than in the County overall. This could be due to a higher proportion of upper-scale housing being built in the rest of the County, a relatively lower demand for housing in the Township, or the inherent anomaly associated with the Census survey.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

Education and Occupation

The level of formal education and occupational status are among the factors that define the ability of an individual or a household to be financially productive and contribute to the quality of life in their community. Typically, a person's occupation is related to the amount and type of education he or she achieved. Table II-11 lists the educational attainment of Ross Township and Kalamazoo County residents in 2000 and 2010. This information is not yet available for the year 2000.

Educational levels increased in Ross Township between 2000 and 2010, with a significant increase in the population earning additional knowledge via post-high school education, be it a four-year college or an Associate Degree. In 2000, almost 43 percent of the Township's population had a Bachelor's Degree or better, substantially higher than the County's average of 33.4 percent.

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TABLE II-11 – EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OLDER

Highest Educational Level Attained	Ross Township		Kalamazoo County	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
Less than 9th Grade	49	48	4,307	3,652
% of Total	1.4	1.3	2.9	2.4
9 – 12 Grade/No Diploma	189	106	11,967	8,976
% of Total	5.3	2.9	8.3	5.9
High School Graduate	906	999	37,615	39,404
% of Total	25.5	27.5	25.9	25.9
Some College or Associate Degree	1,278	926	45,917	49,141
% of Total	35.9	25.5	31.7	32.3
Bachelors Degree	767	963	27,586	31,493
% of Total	21.6	26.5	19.1	20.7
Graduate/Professional Degree	362	589	17,603	19,322
% of Total	10.3	16.2	12.1	12.7

SOURCE: 2000, 2010 U.S. Census

The higher a person's educational attainment, the more likely he or she is employed in higher paying professional or executive/managerial occupations. Table II-12 compares the occupational characteristics of Ross Township and the County for 2017. This information is not yet available for the year 2000.

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TABLE II-12 – OCCUPATIONS

	<u>Ross Township</u>	<u>Kalamazoo County</u>
	2017	2017
Management, Business, Financial	468	19,259
% of Total	18.7	14.9
Computer, Engineering, Science	121	8,090
% of Total	4.8	6.3
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, Media	267	14,844
% of Total	10.7	11.5
Healthcare Practitioner	147	8,498
% of Total	5.9	6.6
Healthcare Support	51	4,216
% of Total	2.1	3.3
Protectives Services	54	1,710
% of Total	2.2	1.3
Food Preparation, Serving	139	9,029
% of Total	5.5	7.1
Building/Grounds Maintenance	105	4,469
% of Total	4.2	3.5
Personal Care/Service	22	5,053
% of Total	0.9	3.8
Sales	526	29,100
% of Total	20.9	22.6
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance/Repair	260	7,883
% of Total	10.3	6.1
Production	190	10,379
% of Total	7.5	8.1
Transportation, Material Moving	157	6,408
% of Total	6.3	4.9

SOURCE: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

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In 2017, occupations in the Sales and Office field made up nearly 21 percent of all residents surveyed in the Township. That is similar to the County as a whole, and represents a more financially healthy and well-educated community population base than the County in the general. At almost 19 percent, the second largest occupational category among Ross Township residents is Management, Business and Financial, another well-paying occupational category, defined as white collar workers who are employed in special, technical fields (such as an environmental engineer). Both the Education, Legal, Community Service and Construction occupations rank third among Township residents, with 10 percent of the total surveyed. For Kalamazoo County, Sales is the highest occupation at 23 percent, with the Management, Business, and Financial category second highest at 15 percent.

Farming accounted for only 1.9 percent of occupations for Ross Township, just slightly higher than the County at less than 0.5 percent. This is reflective of a decrease in full-time farming in the Township and the increased urbanization of the Township and the County as a whole.

Significant local employers include ~~Fort James Corporation in Parchment~~, Pharmacia Corporation in Kalamazoo/Portage, the Federal Center and Kellogg Corporation in Battle Creek, Imagyn Medical Technologies in Richland, Eaton Corporation in Galesburg, and the Target Distribution Center in Charleston Township, all outside of Ross Township. The Kellogg Biological Station and Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service are major institutional entities within the Township, employing people in the teaching and environmental research communities.

Location of Employment

Beyond the type of work residents do, the location of employment also contributes to the character of the Township. Table II-13 shows the number and proportion of employed residents who work either within Ross Township, or outside the Township borders. In 1990, over 73 percent of Ross Township residents were employed

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outside the Township, with approximately 26.6 percent working somewhere within the Township. Though estimates for location of employment for the year 2017 are not available, 'travel time to work' estimates suggest that about 26% of the work force is still employed within the Township, while the percent employed within the region decreased to around 36%, causing the percent employed outside of the region to increase to around the 36%.

TABLE II-13 – GENERAL LOCATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR ROSS TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS - 1990

	#	% of Total
Employed in Township	553	26.9
Employed in Remainder of Region	963	46.9
Worked Outside of Region	537	26.2

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing - STF3A

Travel time to work is important for anyone looking to locate within a community. It also can help be a measure about where most of the jobs are located in relationship to the Township. Table II-14 lists the travel times to work for Ross Township residents.

TABLE II-14 – TRAVEL TIMES TO WORK - 2017

Minutes	#	% of Total
Less than 10	362	15.0
10 – 14	272	11.3
15 – 19	296	12.3
20 – 24	388	16.1
25 – 29	222	9.2
30 – 34	424	17.6
35 – 44	99	4.1
45 – 59	82	3.4
60 or more	265	11.0
Work at Home		

SOURCE: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

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According to Table II-14, approximately 55 percent of Ross Township residents commute to work in 24 minutes or less. This likely indicates that most of the jobs outside of the Township are located in neighboring cities and townships, including the cities of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo.

Income

Household income is an important measure of the economic wellbeing of Ross Township, helping to determine the quality and quantity of retail goods and services purchased both within the Township and surrounding areas. Table II-15 lists recent median household incomes for the Township and Kalamazoo County, and indicates that household income in the Township in both 2000 and 2010 was significantly higher than the County as a whole. When adjusted for inflation, Kalamazoo County shows a 6.6 percent change in median household income between 2000 and 2010, while Ross Township's median household income grew by 18.5 percent over the same period. Household income data through the 2000 Census has yet to be released.

TABLE II-15 – MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – 2000/2010

	2000	2010	% Change
Ross Township	\$58,446	\$69,265	18.5
Kalamazoo County	\$42,022	\$44,794	6.6

SOURCE: 2000, 2010 U.S. Census

Table II-16 reflects the estimated median household incomes for Ross Township and Kalamazoo County in 2017. American Community Survey (U.S. Census) estimates that Ross Township continued to out-perform the County as a whole. Though Kalamazoo County saw an increase in the median household income of nearly 16% percent during 2010 to 2017, Ross Township's median household income remained almost \$20,000 higher than that of the County.

Section II

TABLE II-16 – ESTIMATED MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME - 2017

	2010	2017	% Change
Ross Township	\$69,265	\$71,190	2.8
Kalamazoo County	\$44,794	\$51,945	15.9

SOURCE: 2010 U.S. Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Summary

Ross Township has a healthy educational and income base. Educational attainment for the Township is generally higher than the County as a whole. Occupations for Ross Township residents indicate a higher percentage of Executive, Administrative and Managerial professionals than in the overall County, indicating an equally higher income level due to these better paying professions. Indeed, median household income in Ross Township was significantly higher than Kalamazoo County during the 2000 - 2010 period, and it is estimated that this trend continued on through 2017.

