

Industrial and Commercial Vacancies

Lake County, Michigan
May 2025



Prepared by:



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to the individuals listed below and to many other business and community leaders whose insights and collaboration were instrumental in the development of this Economic Diversification Study & Strategic Plan. Their contributions have enriched the process and ensured that it reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of Lake County, Michigan.

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The Lake County Economic Diversification Advisory Group

This committee was specially formed for this grant work. It is made up of the full Lake County Economic Development Alliance Board and the following additional community members:

Barbara McGregory
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Julie Tatko
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TPMA provides professional consulting services and delivers insights to the complete workforce, education, and economic development ecosystem that allows them to move forward, together. TPMA envisions a world that thinks strategically, works collaboratively, and acts sustainably. TPMA's Economic Development and Community Resiliency Team provides expertise in assessing markets, identifying business sector opportunities, building entrepreneurial ecosystems, and conducting housing assessments to assist communities in developing solutions for local housing challenges consistent with community and economic development objectives.

AVAILABLE SITES AND BUILDINGS

Industrial and commercial vacancies and other available sites within Lake County were cataloged and analyzed. Sites were assessed based on their proximity to major transportation routes, infrastructure access, acreage, buildings, value, environmental concerns, and potential uses.

Prioritized Site Profiles

A few sites were prioritized for the purposes of this study. The focus was on properties with the potential to accommodate larger businesses and industries in Lake County. While other available land exists within the county, **the following properties have proximity to the county’s major transportation routes and infrastructure.** Site control is also a significant factor in selection. The prioritized sites are owned either by local government or by businesses prepared to cooperate and sell quickly. Lake County’s economic development services are open to reviewing other potential sites.

Astor Road Sites

The Village of Baldwin owns approximately 53 acres contiguous with Marquette Rail along Astor Road between 52nd St and 56th St. The site is 1 mile from M-37, 1.3 miles from US-10, and 3 miles from the Baldwin Municipal Airport. The southern part of the site is zoned by the Village of Baldwin as Light Industrial, while the Pleasant Plains Township portion to the north is currently zoned A-2 Medium Density Residential. The properties are adjacent to Stealthcraft Boats.

SITE DETAILS

- [Parcel ID: 41-004-017-00](#) - Acreage: 1.00
- [Parcel ID: 14-004-015-90](#) - Acreage: 19.2
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-81](#) - Acreage: 5.01
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-60](#) - Acreage: 10.01
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-40](#) - Acreage: 10.01
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-20](#) - Acreage: 2.62
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-15](#) - Acreage: 2.62
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-25](#) Acreage: 2.62
- [Parcel ID: 41-004-019-10](#) Acreage: 2.62

UTILITIES

Parcel I.D. # 014-004-015-90 comprised of 19.2 acres is not located within the Village of Baldwin, so it does not have access to either water or wastewater. The rest of the parcels have access to water but not wastewater. Natural gas is not currently available but there are lines terminating on the other side of contiguous railroad tracks.

Electricity is available with a capacity of 0.21 MW through an adjacent system with three-phase distribution lines. The owner of Stealthcraft an adjacent manufacturing business, reports that they currently operate a low voltage three-phase transformer to compensate for the absence of higher voltage. This contributes to significantly higher production costs. Growing electrical capacity will be critical to increasing the viability of these sites as more industries employ artificial intelligence (AI). Current modern industrial facilities require as much as 10,000 amps. Broadband can be made available up to 1000 Mbps+.

This site is located within a well head protection area. This reveals that no underground storage tanks should be constructed as part of any new development scenario. This would also prohibit any discharge into the surrounding soil. The current zoning for the site is light industrial.

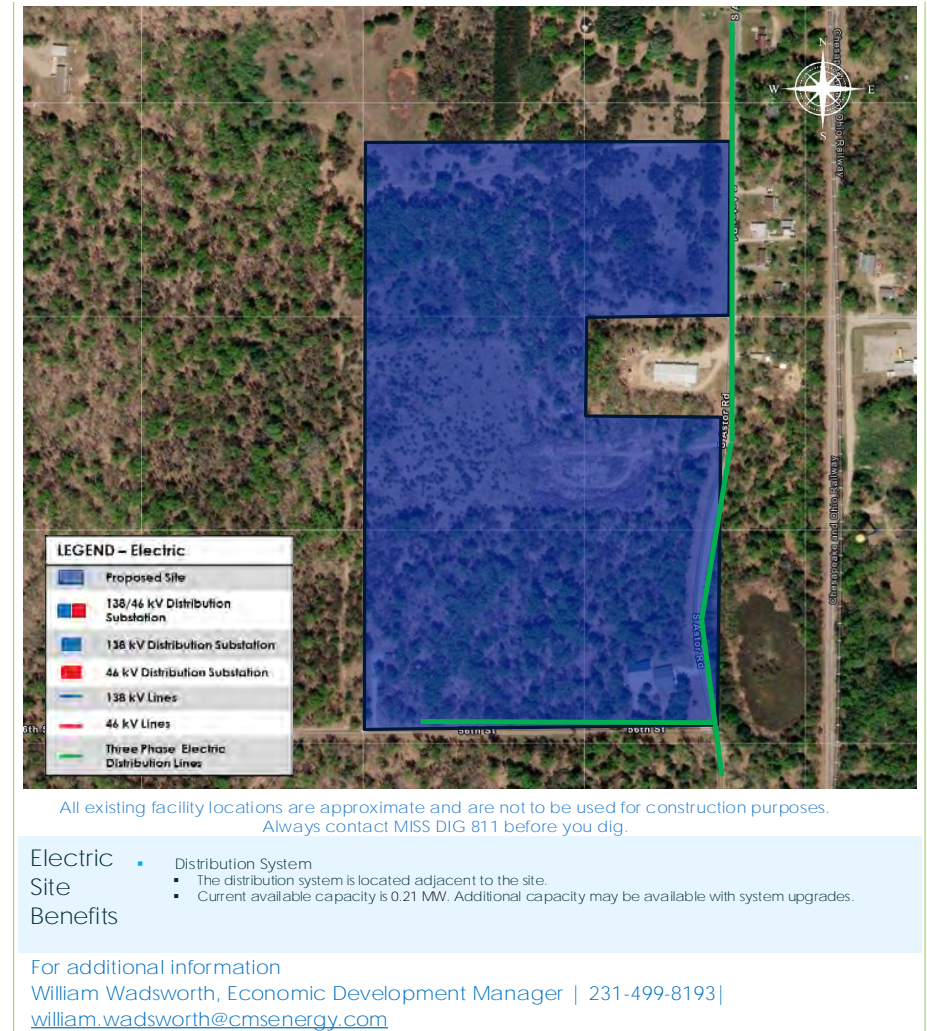
The Astor Road sites might also require either a Phase 1 and/or a Phase 2 assessment to secure debt or equity financing for development. No sites within this cluster have any current documented containment orders by either state or federal environmental regulatory agencies.

POTENTIAL USES FOR ASTOR ROAD SITES

Businesses that store or handle hazardous substances should not be located within well-protection areas, as they pose a significant risk of contaminating groundwater. Examples that are incompatible would include heavy industrial plants, dry cleaners, automotive repair, transportation, and gas stations.

Residential developments can also pose contamination risk, such as household chemicals, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, pesticides, gasoline, and other chemicals used in landscaping and gardening.

Instead, businesses that minimize the risk of contamination, such as those with robust spill prevention and containment measures, are generally considered suitable within well-protection areas. Examples might include warehousing, light assembly, light industrial (meeting strict guidelines), retail, and office space.



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Astor Road Sites

County-Owned Former Correctional Facility

The site was previously used as the Lake County Technical Rules Violations Facility. It is zoned C-2 Highway Commercial in the Village of Baldwin. The property is located along M-37, approximately 0.5 miles north of the intersection of M37 and eastbound US-10, and 1 mile south of the intersection of M37 and westbound US-10.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 42-034-017-60](#)

Address: 5565 S M-37

Owner: Lake County Bldg Auth (RRP)

Acreage: 15.

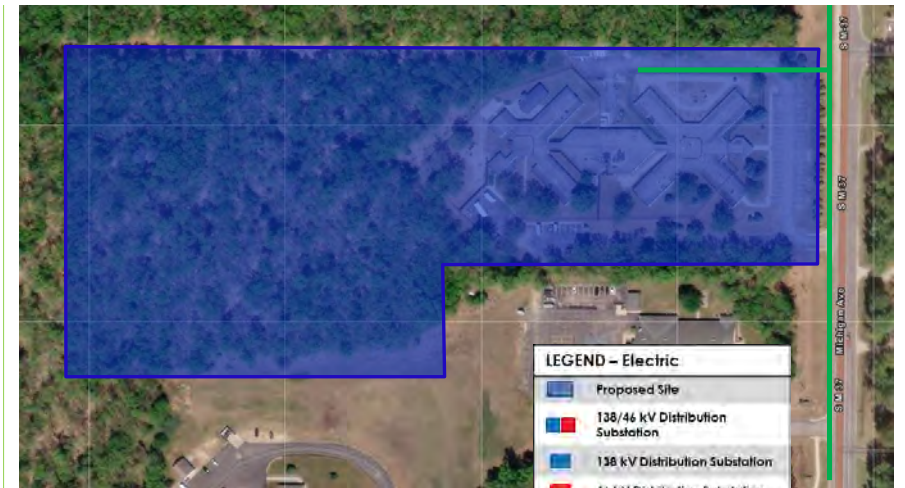
Building Area: 49,420 sq ft

UTILITIES

Utilities for the property are serviced by Consumers Energy (electric), the Village of Baldwin (water/wastewater), and DTE (gas). There is a four (4) inch gas line serving this site that can handle most gas loads. The current electricity capacity is 0.15 MW through an adjacent three-phase distribution system, which can be increased through upgrades. Broadband is available with speeds up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Commercial – such as childcare, adult care, commercial kitchen, community center, education, behavioral health center, other healthcare, or residential (with zoning approval).



All existing facility locations are approximate and are not to be used for construction purposes.
Always contact MISS DIG 811 before you dig.

Electric Site Benefits

- Distribution System
 - The distribution system is located adjacent to the site.
 - Current available capacity is 0.15 MW. Additional capacity may be available with system upgrades.

For additional information

William Wadsworth, Economic Development Manager | 231-499-8193 |

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County-Owned Correctional Facility

East Michigan Avenue Site

This parcel within the Village of Baldwin is across from Blarney Gas near the M37 and US-10 intersection. There are no existing buildings on the property at this time.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 42-034-021-30](#)

Address: no address assigned at this time

Owner: Rancier Investment 1 LLC

Acreage: 2.44

SEV: \$27,100

UTILITIES

Water and wastewater are available from the Village of Baldwin. The site is surrounded by a 1 ¼ inch 60# main gas line that is reportedly adequate for heating with standard pressure. Electricity is provided with a capacity of 0.6 MW through an adjacent three-phase distribution system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Commercial or residential development.



All existing facility locations are approximate and are not to be used for construction purposes.
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East Michigan Ave – Baldwin DDA

Washington Street Site

This site is located on US-10 just east of the M-37 intersection, near the Downtown Baldwin Corridor. It was previously used as a restaurant with additional commercial/office units. The property needs renovations and upgrades, and developers should exercise due diligence regarding any environmental concerns. Lake County Land Bank owns this property and is taking steps to prepare the site and existing units for lease to commercial businesses. Within development plans, it is recommended to consider a walkable connection to the nearby Pere Marquette Trail and the Baldwin downtown commercial district.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 41-003-027-50](#)

Address: 1075 Washington St - VOB

Owner: Lake County Land Bank Authority

Acreage: 0.679000

SEV: \$69,400

UTILITIES

Water and wastewater are provided by the Village of Baldwin. Gas is provided through a 2-inch 60# main in the street at the front of the building with an existing 5/8-inch service line. Electricity capacity is 2 MW provided by an adjacent three-phase distribution system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Commercial (food and beverage, entertainment, retail, service industries, office space); potential for mixed-use; tenant use should be appropriate relating to adjacent properties.



LEGEND - Electric	
	Proposed Site
	138/44 kV Distribution Substation
	138 kV Distribution Substation
	44 kV Distribution Substation
	138 kV Lines
	44 kV Lines
	Three Phase Electric Distribution Lines
	Single Phase Electric Distribution Lines

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Electric Site Benefits

- Distribution System
- The distribution system is located adjacent to the site.
- Current available capacity is 2 MW. Additional capacity may be available with system upgrades.

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Washington St - Former Restaurant

Downtown Baldwin Corridor

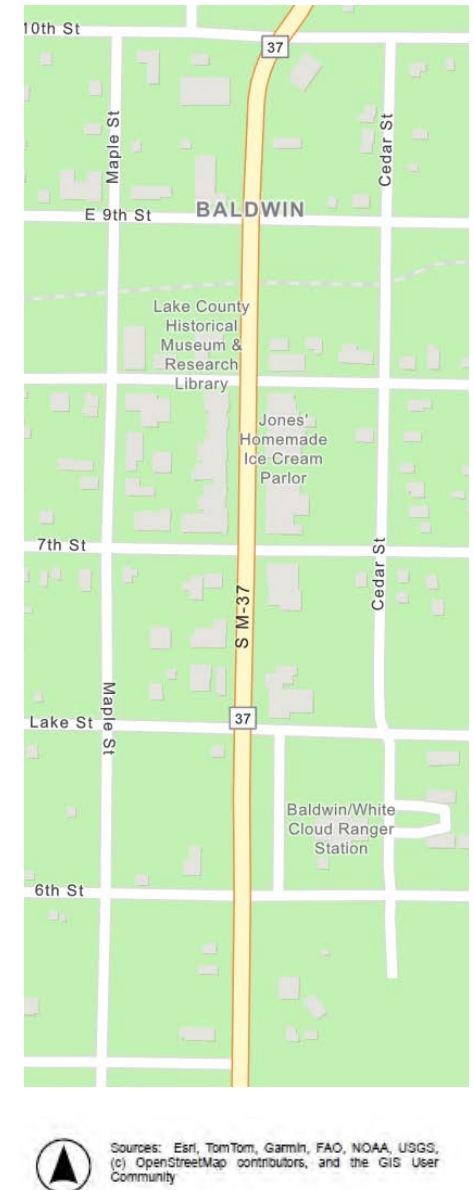
The Town of Baldwin's downtown commercial area is located on the primary north/south transportation route through Lake County, M-37. For the purposes of this study, we are defining a Downtown Baldwin Corridor along M-37 from Fifth St to Washington Street (U.S. 10). All properties in this corridor are zoned C-1 Central Business District. The Village of Baldwin provides water and wastewater. The corridor is served by a 1 ¼ inch 60# main gas line that is reportedly adequate for heating with standard pressure. Electricity is provided with a capacity of 0.6 MW through a local three-phase system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps.

Because of the corridor's classic "main street" design and current industry mix, it is well suited for retail, restaurants, entertainment, lodging, community amenities, and service industries. The Lake County Economic Diversification Study provides data and analysis, suggesting that the county could capture a greater share of local spending. Market leakage is high in the "Retail Trade," "Accommodation and Food Services," and "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation" industries, and all of them could be expanded in this corridor.

Placemaking is also key to increasing economic activity within the corridor. It is walkable with ample parking, but the street is wide. **Efforts to slow traffic in the corridor could greatly improve its success. This would increase safety for pedestrians and give motorists more opportunity to notice things that pique their interest, such as attractive window displays, signage, and building facades. Continuing to improve public amenities, beautification, and community programming within this corridor will draw more customers for its businesses.**



More than a dozen potential properties have been identified for business attraction in this corridor. Many of these properties in the corridor are privately owned and not currently listed for sale. Downtown Baldwin has recently seen some promising movement in commercial real estate sales for redevelopment. To continue the momentum, the following assets could be used to attract investment. These properties include the Baldwin Business Center and commercial real estate listings as of April 2025.



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Baldwin Business Center

This property is in the heart of downtown Baldwin. The building has signage which reads “Baldwin Business Center” but is not currently functioning as such. The property is owned by the local bank, which is amenable to collaborating for a community or economic development project. It should be noted that the owners of the Baldwin Business Center are open to other commercial uses in addition to the proposed entrepreneurial hub.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 41-113-010-01](#)

Address: 830 Michigan Ave

Owner: Lake Osceola State Bank

Acreage: 0.459

SEV: \$89,600

UTILITIES

Water and wastewater are provided by the Village of Baldwin. The site is surrounded by a 1 ¼ inch 60# main gas line that is reportedly adequate for heating with standard pressure. Electricity is provided with a capacity of 0.6 MW through an adjacent three-phase distribution system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Zoned C-1 Commercial – entertainment, lodging, community center, business hub, retail

Former Village Cafe

Formerly known as the Village Cafe, this property is currently for sale by owner. Significant renovations are likely needed, suggesting that the time and cost of opening a business in this space could be a barrier to potential investment. Some restaurant equipment may be included. Its location and window frontage are assets for commercial use.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 41-114-006-50](#)

Address: 825 Michigan Ave

Owner: Ellis & Willie McClain

Acreage: 0.117

Building Area: 4,288 sq ft

SEV: \$27,600

UTILITIES

Water and wastewater are provided by the Village of Baldwin. The site is surrounded by a 1 ¼ inch 60# main gas line that is reportedly adequate for heating with standard pressure. Electricity is provided with a capacity of 0.6 MW through an adjacent three-phase distribution system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Zoned C-1 Commercial – food and beverage, retail, service, entertainment, attraction

Former Duffy's Barber Shop

Formerly known as Duffy's Barber Shop, this property is listed (MLS# 24061422) for sale at \$65,000. Improvements have been made to bring electrical system up to code. The small space stands out with its unique facade and sizeable street-facing window.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 41-114-006-00](#)

Address: 833 Michigan Ave

Owner: Suzanne & Dean Parker

Acreage: 0.055

Building Area: 600 sq ft

SEV: \$9,700

UTILITIES

The Village of Baldwin provides water and wastewater. The site is surrounded by a 1 ¼ inch 60# main gas line that is reportedly adequate for heating with standard pressure. Electricity is provided with a capacity of 0.6 MW through an adjacent three-phase distribution system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Zoned C-1 Commercial – small retail or personal service space

Duplex in Commercial Zone

This property is listed (MLS# 24018224) at \$134,900 and is split into two residential units, both leased at this time. It is located north of 9th Street, near a convenience store and within easy walking distance of a recreational trail and the core commercial section of downtown Baldwin. Recent improvements have been made to roof, electric, furnace, etc.

SITE DETAILS

[Parcel ID: 41-113-010-01](#)

Address: 1038 Michigan Ave

Owner: Kenneth Nichols

Acreage: 0.18

Building Area: 1,640 sq ft

SEV: \$37,300

UTILITIES

Water and wastewater are provided by the Village of Baldwin. The site is surrounded by a 1 ¼ inch 60# main gas line that is reportedly adequate for heating with standard pressure. Electricity is provided with a capacity of 0.6 MW through an adjacent three-phase distribution system. Broadband is available up to 1000 Mbps+.

POTENTIAL USES

Zoned C-1 Commercial – lodging, residential (with zoning approval)

Historic Idlewild

Idlewild is recognized on the National Register of Historic Places as a site of national significance. Founded in 1912, it served as a rural retreat for African Americans during segregation. At its peak, the resort attracted up to 25,000 visitors each summer. Renowned entertainers such as Sammy Davis Jr., Della Reese, Bill Cosby, Louis Armstrong, Aretha Franklin, and the Four Tops were frequent performers at its vibrant venues. However, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, which allowed African Americans access to previously restricted resorts, Idlewild's popularity declined. Today, the historic community is experiencing a resurgence, drawing thousands of visitors each summer for annual concerts and events. It continues to be a destination for year-round vacationers, offering access to three scenic lakes, a public beach, and boating, jet skiing, and swimming opportunities. Multiple properties within the Idlewild community have redevelopment investments and plans.

UTILITIES

The enclaves of Idlewild are serviced through Yates Township water and wastewater. Additionally, Idlewild is served by adequate electricity provided through a combination of a three-phase distribution system and smaller lines for residential parcels. DTE gas lines are also present throughout both enclaves. Broadband is available at up to speeds of 1000 Mbps+. The area should address blight elimination, unpaved roads, and remediation of environmental hazards from one superfund site.



POTENTIAL USES

Historic Idlewild holds the potential for significant investment by primarily tourism-related businesses. Many projects are already underway. The Hotel Casa Blanca received a historic preservation grant. The historic Morton's Motel has reopened and the Red Rooster has been transformed into Peyton's Place Bar and Grill. Properties to highlight for potential redevelopment might include the historic Flamingo Club, Robert Riffe Youth Center, among others. Idlewild should consider walkability and adequate parking near popular recreational (such as lake access) and commercial areas of the community. It might be beneficial to identify properties adjacent to existing businesses in Idlewild to create a cluster or district for visitor attraction.

The area is generally well-suited for food and beverage, entertainment and attractions, lodging, convenience stores, grocery, specialty retail, and event venues. Idlewild could also greatly benefit from increased signage/wayfinding, sidewalks, trail linkages, bicycle access, and additional historical markers.

Village of Luther

The Village of Luther is located in the northeast part of Lake County, with half of the village in Newkirk Township and the other half in Ellsworth Township. It is a very small and rural area but includes a distinct corridor of businesses along State Street that attracts tourists and provides amenities for residents. The village has lost its local grocery and hardware store to fire, leaving a void in important local assets. They have a convenience store (Dollar General) in the village, and the nearest grocery store is a 20-30 minute drive from Luther.

The downtown has some businesses, including two restaurants and a retail boutique. Facade improvements, attractive window displays, additional streetscape, and professional development for current business owners and staff could increase attraction from tourists and residents alike. Similarly, enhancing outdoor recreation and park amenities could drive more visitors and residents to the area.

The Village of Luther could investigate the viability of possible incentives for business retention and attraction. Partnering with the county and neighboring communities may increase opportunities for such incentives, such as microloans and matching grants. The village could also consider the possibility of a TIF district.



UTILITIES

Luther faces a significant barrier to development with no water or wastewater infrastructure. Luther's master plan commits to conducting septic tank inspections and enforcing regulations. The town would like to establish a road improvement plan, expand broadband access, and encourage DTE to make natural gas available.

POTENTIAL USES

The village hopes to attract small forestry operations. Opportunities exist for more small businesses and amenities along or near the State Street business corridor, which is very walkable. Attracting a new grocery or hardware store to Luther is a stretch goal. Regardless, a variety of small retail, services, and other amenities could thrive in the village.

Mill Pond Park, near the State Street business corridor, could be improved and activated for additional community and visitor events. The village could consider nearby properties for convenient visitor lodging within walking distance of amenities.

UTILITY SITE ANALYSIS NOTES

The mapping of existing natural gas and electricity lines is provided in a constructed multi-layer geographic information system (GIS) map. In sum, the GIS map reveals that county-wide utilities concentration (gas, electricity, water, wastewater and broadband) currently cluster around the Village of Baldwin, south central Webber Township, north central Pleasant Plains Township and the northeast quadrant of Yates Township (Idlewild & Idlewild Lake.) The principal thoroughfares of M37 and US Highway 10 form the axis of concentration for most of the clusters of utilities. There is a single cluster of electricity lines in Chase Township but no access to gas lines. Additional information can be found in the Infrastructure Inventory and Utilities Assessment.

A review of the GIS Map reveals that Lake County has limited infrastructure, particularly utilities, to sufficiently support larger-scale industrial, manufacturing, and warehousing. In most instances, current capacity clusters are around Baldwin Village, Webber, and Yates Townships.

Discussions with leaders at private utilities reveal a willingness to expand services but only once sufficient demand by developers and businesses is communicated and verified to justify investment.

Conversely, prospective developers or businesses closely analyze access to sufficient infrastructure as a key determination on final site selection.

This document aims to provide actionable market intelligence to stimulate regional investment in infrastructure to support economic development. A discussion with Stephan Carlson, Director of Economic Development, suggests an interest in supporting Lake County in targeting specific sites (such as the Astor Road sites) to catalyze investment for facilities, infrastructure, and planning from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA).