

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

LOCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Larkin Township is located in the east central portion of Midland County, immediately north of the City of Midland. Larkin Township is a part of the region commonly known as Mid-Michigan or Central Michigan, named after its location in the middle of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The "Tri-Cities" of Midland, Saginaw, and Bay City serve as the major population, economic, and cultural centers of the region. Bay City is located 20 miles east and Saginaw is approximately 25 miles southeast of Larkin Township.

The primary transportation arteries of the region include the U.S. 10 freeway, which runs east-west along the Township's southern border, and Interstate 75, which runs north-south and is located approximately 15 miles east of Larkin Township. These freeways effectively connect Larkin Township with the rest of the state as well as the entire Midwest. Other major state transportation routes located near Larkin Township include M-20, M-30 and M-47. Table 1 presents approximate driving distances and times from Larkin Township to several major cities.

Two airports are located within a short distance of Larkin Township. The nearest airport is Jack Barstow Airport, located just south of Larkin Township in the City of Midland. The major commercial airport in the region, MBS International Airport, is located approximately 15 miles southeast of Larkin Township.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND LAND USES

The economy of the entire region is primarily driven by manufacturing. In Midland County, the largest employers are The Dow Chemical Company (6,500 employees) and the Dow Corning Corporation (2,500 employees), which

manufacture chemicals, plastics, and silicon products. The Mid-Michigan Health Care system is also a significant area employer.

In addition to The Dow Chemical and Dow Corning companies, there are several other major land uses outside of Larkin Township which impact the lives of Township residents. One example is the Midland Mall, which is located just outside of the Township boundary at the Eastman Road and U.S. 10 Interchange. Within recent years, this regional commercial shopping area has seen tremendous growth and is now home to several large businesses including Meijer, Wal-Mart, Kohl's, Lowe's, Home Depot, and Target, as well as a large number of smaller retail, entertainment, and restaurant establishments. These uses provide residents with ample shopping and entertainment opportunities, employment opportunities, and could lead to increased growth and development in Larkin Township.

There are also a large number of cultural, recreational, educational, and service land uses in the Greater Midland area that contribute to the quality of life of Larkin Township residents. Most of these land uses are found in the City of Midland and include the Midland Center for the Arts, Midland County Fairgrounds, Dow Gardens, Downtown Midland, Midland City Forest, Northwood University, Chippewa Nature Center, Mid-Michigan Medical Center, and the Pere Marquette Rail Trail.

REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

The most significant planning policy having an impact on Larkin Township is the Midland Urban Growth Area (MUGA) policy. This regulates the growth and development of communities directly adjacent to the City of Midland through the controlled expansion of the municipal water system. Areas outside of the City but within a prescribed band between one and two miles wide surrounding it (represented by an adopted MUGA line) are not granted access to municipal water service without first being annexed into the City. Areas outside of the MUGA line are permitted to purchase City water unconditionally. A more detailed discussion concerning the purpose, history, and implications of the MUGA Policy is included in the Community Facilities portion of this report.

Table 1

Destination	Approx. Distance	Estimated Driving Time
Flint, MI	70 miles	1 hour, 15 minutes
Lansing, MI	120 miles	2 hours
Detroit, MI	130 miles	2 hours, 15 minutes
Chicago, IL	330 miles	5 hours, 15 minutes