

Winfield Township Master Plan



The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt



**Winfield TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

RESOLUTION NO. 1 – 2003

WHEREAS: The Winfield Township Planning Commission desires to adopt a Master Plan and has made the necessary inquiries, investigations, and surveys of the appropriate resources of the township; and

WHEREAS: The Master Plan will promote public health, safety and general welfare; to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; to avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people; to lessen congestion on public roads and streets; to facilitate Adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and Consider the character of the township and its suitability for Particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and Population development; and

WHEREAS: The Winfield Township Planning Commission has noticed and conducted A public hearing in accordance with the requirements of the TOWNSHIP PLANNING ACT (Act 168 of the Michigan Public Acts of 1959, as Amended), said hearing held on the 2nd of January, 2003.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Winfield Township Planning Commission hereby adopts the Winfield Township Master Plan with the changes/modifications discussed at the planning and zoning commission meeting on December 16, 2002 and the public hearing on January 2, 2003.

YEAS:

Bill Boss, Dale Ulrich, Phyllis Larson, Charlie Kohler, Mike Gommesen.

NAYS:

Garrett Black, Norma Taylor

ABSENT:

Todd Young, Marvin Johnson

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

I Certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Winfield Township Planning Commission at its meeting on January 2, 2003.

 Secretary
Winfield Township Planning Commission

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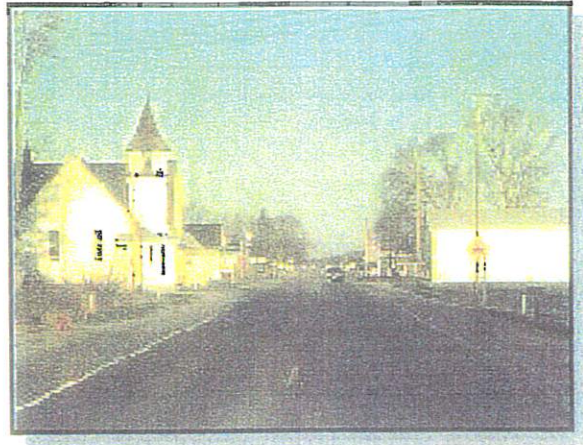
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INTRODUCTION

What will Winfield Township be like within 10 to 20 years?

Will it be a booming metropolis; a resort community; a farming region; an area of large lot single family homes with a small village? Will the community have strip commercial development along major roadways or will new commercial development be focused around the township hall? Will there be open space with parks and recreation within the community?



This Master Plan has been adopted by Winfield Township to ensure that decisions made regarding the use of land are based on a sound vision for the future.

In pursuing the vision, the plan is intended to serve as a decision making tool for land use decisions by public and private decision makers including the Township administration, boards and commissions, as well as businesses, community groups, the development community, non-profit organizations, and individuals.

Authorized by State Law

Master Plans are authorized by the Michigan Township Planning Act (168 of 1959). This Act lists the basic purposes and requirements of Master Plans including the need to:

- *promote the public health, safety, and general welfare;*
- *encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability;*
- *avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people;*
- *lessen congestion on public roads and streets;*
- *facilitate provisions for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, recreation and other public improvements; and,*
- *consider the character of the township and its suitability for particular uses judged in terms of such factors as the trend in land and population development.*

What is the Difference Between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance?

The relationship of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance is often misunderstood. Stated concisely, the Master Plan is a guide for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the Township, its residents, and others desiring to use and develop property within the Township.

Lawful Zoning Ordinances Need a Master Plan

The Township Zoning Act stipulates that zoning shall be based on a plan that is designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability; and to limit the improper use of land. The Master Plan fulfills the above obligation

Refer to the Master Plan in all Zoning Decisions

Use of the Master Plan ensures that the Township's desires regarding future development are translated into action. Therefore, on decisions on matters of rezoning, site plan review, special land use approval, and other zoning actions, it is important to refer to the Master Plan for guidance. It is those every day decisions that, when added up together, will create the future land use pattern for Winfield Township.

Encourage Other Decision Making Bodies to Use the Master Plan

The Master Plan should assist in guiding the decision making efforts of others. The planning and development programs of other agencies such as the County Road Commission and MDOT, County Public Works Department, and adjacent Townships, can help Winfield Township in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Keep the Plan Current

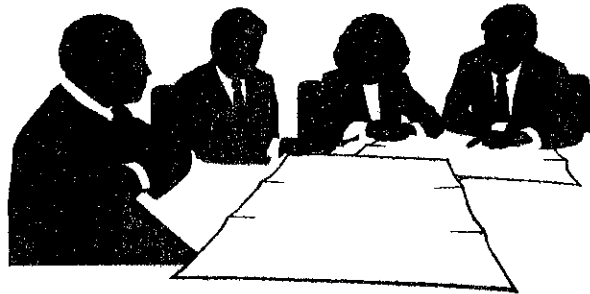
The Planning Commission should conduct an annual review of the Plan to ensure that the Plan is kept current. From time to time it may be necessary to amend the Plan to reflect changing community philosophies and needs.

How does the Master Plan Affect a Resident or a Landowner?

The Master Plan sets forth a prescribed plan of development for all properties within the Township. The plan includes detail on the location of land use districts, possible road and utility improvements, areas to be maintained as farmland, and other such information. This information is useful to residents and landowners when contemplating decisions regarding such matters as place of residence, potential investment and/or development opportunities, and other such matters.

How Should You Use This Plan?

Again, use of the Plan depends on one's interest in the future of Winfield Township, but generally, here is the procedure that may be followed:



Step 1 What land use is proposed for your property, or the area surrounding your property?

You will find this information on the Future Land Use map. This map is divided into separate land use categories. Find the category of land use in which your property is located.

Step 2 Determine how the Planning Commission views development in your area.

The text of the Master Plan will indicate to you the general direction of development within your area; it may be fairly specific, or it may be somewhat general. The Land Use text is meant to provide a general direction to the Planning Commission as to development within the Township.

Step 3 Determine the meaning of the land use designation for your property.

In Step #1 you were asked to determine the land use category into which your property falls. In the Land Use chapter there is a discussion covering each of these categories. Find the one that applies to you (the category in which your property lies) and read the discussion on the meaning of each land use designation. Depending on the nature of your interest in the Master Plan, this may be as far as you carry your initial investigation.

Step 4 Determine how the Plan affects your property.

The future land use designation will indicate to you how your property is planned for use in the future. This does not mean that you cannot continue the use that you currently have. Land use within the Township is also affected by the zoning for your property.

Over the life of the Plan, growth likely will occur slowly at times, more rapidly at others, and in somewhat different patterns and sequences than is currently foreseen. Even the best plan can be a well-educated guess about the future land uses. An effective plan must be flexible enough to succeed within a range of likely conditions and be adjusted as those conditions are monitored and evaluated, while maintaining a steady aim at the ultimate goals.

Plan Implementation

For the vision presented in this plan to become a reality however, other steps must follow its adoption. These include:

- ✓ development of a capital budget and program to outline long-term funding needs and commitments;
- ✓ development of area-specific plans, programs and policies to offer more detailed and site-specific strategies for selected parts of the area;
- ✓ ongoing evaluation of plans, policies and programs; and
- ✓ continuing community involvement in the planning and governing process.

This Master Plan must be considered a "living document" and not placed on a shelf until the next revisions are needed. It must be continually reviewed, modified and expanded as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and opportunities.

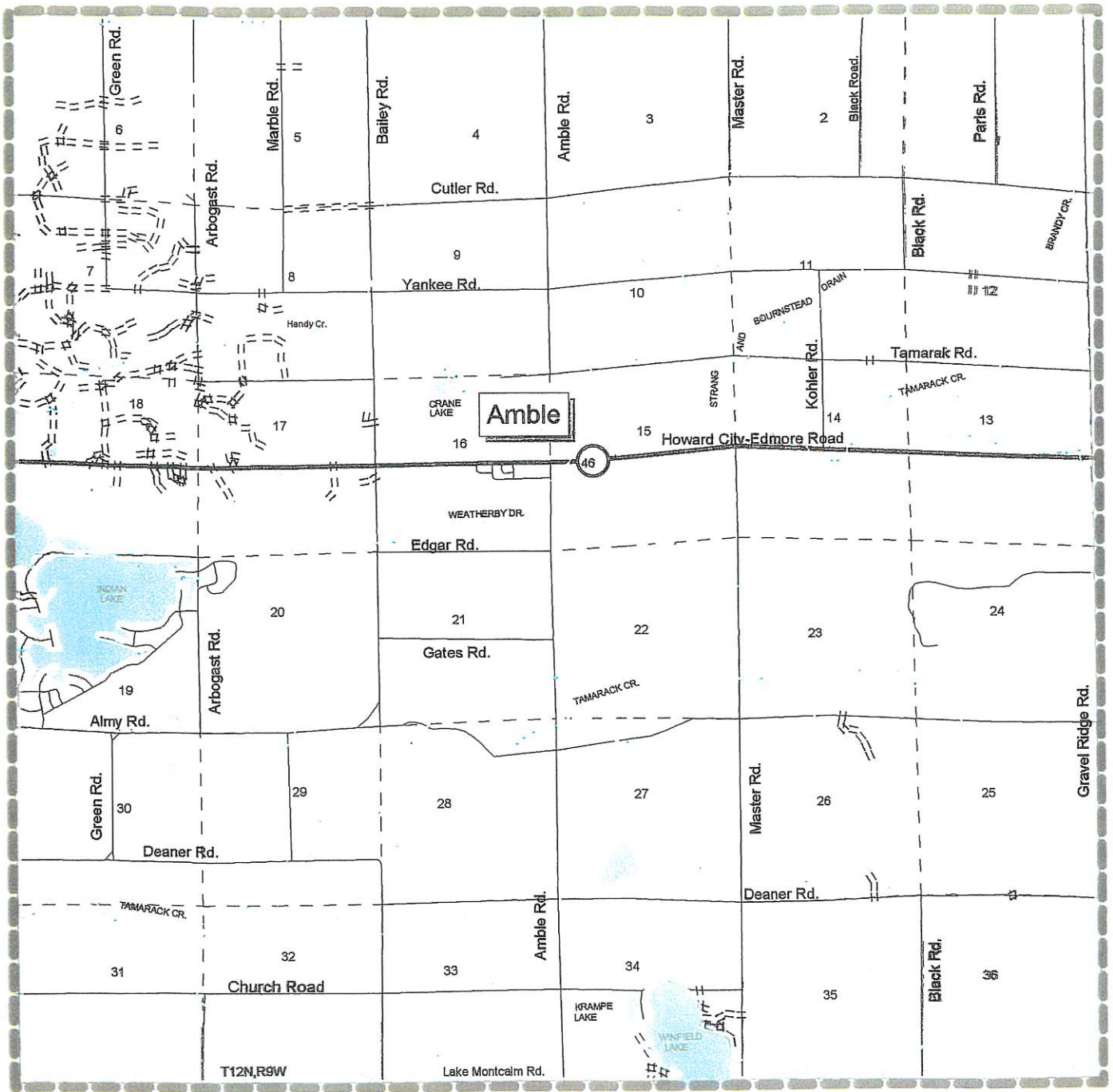
Conclusion








This Master Plan is a guide to ensure that the Township's desires regarding future development are translated into action one rezoning, plan review, special land use approval, and variance, at a time. It is those every day decisions that, added together, create the future for Winfield Township.

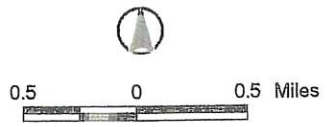
Winfield Township

Montcalm County, Michigan

General Base Map



-  Lakes
-  Streams & Drains
-  Roads
-  Highways
-  Two Tracks & Trails
-  Section Lines
-  Township Boundary



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Data Sources: Base Information - MDNR MIRIS 1978
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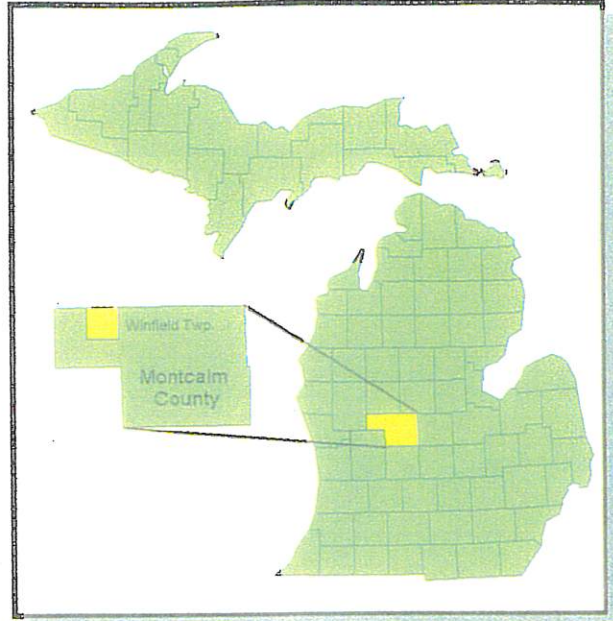
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Location

Winfield Township is centrally located within the heart of Michigan approximately 40 miles north of the City of Grand Rapids, 50 miles northeast of the City of Muskegon and 100 miles northwest of the City of Lansing.

The People

Evaluating the characteristics of the Township's population can help enlighten community leaders to the present conditions of the community. It can also determine trends that can set the stage for the Master Plan to address such questions as:



Winfield Township is ideally located in the heart of Michigan.

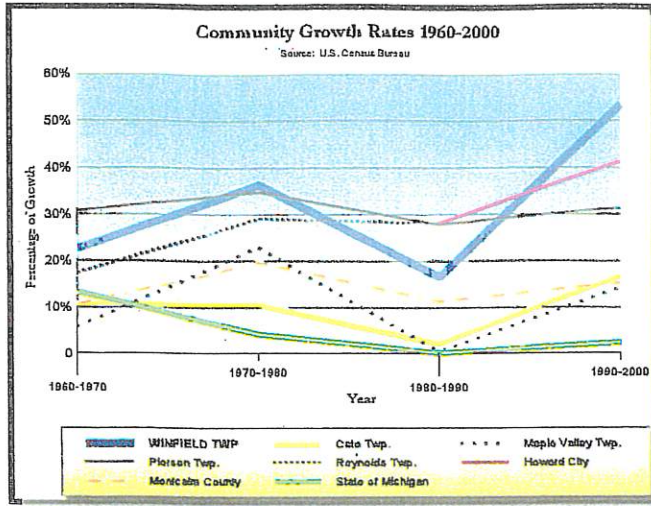
1. What impact will increases in the population have on infrastructure needs (e.g. roads, water, sanitary sewers, etc.)?
2. As the population increases, will there be a greater need/demand for local commercial services?
 - What considerations should be given to the protection of the environment? To the protection of farmland?
 - Is the Township capable of supporting a rapid rate of growth?

Total Population

The 2000 Census reported the Township's population at 2,049. This reflects an increase of 713 persons since 1990, an approximate 53% change. While the recent increase is rather significant, the Township has been steadily growing over the past several decades.



Tracking population growth rates help monitor overall growth by graphically showing the surges and declines in the number of residents. Looking at



growth rates is also useful when comparing communities of varying populations. The following graph and chart compares Winfield Township's growth rate with surrounding Townships, Howard City, and Montcalm County.

Reviewing the data shows that Winfield Township had the highest percentage change in population between 1990 and 2000 (53.4%); the next highest percentage increase occurred within Reynolds Township, which grew by 41.3% between the same time period. Reynolds Township also had the highest increase of people

(1,251) between 1990 and 2000, followed by Winfield Township at 713 people, Pierson Township at 689 people and Cato Township at 420 people.

POPULATION / FOR WINFIELD TOWNSHIP and SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES			
Community	1980	1990 (% change)	2000 (% change)
WINFIELD TOWNSHIP	1,145	1,336 (16.7%)	2,049 (713 or 53.4%)
Cato Township	2,441	2,500 (2.4%)	2,920 (420 or 16.8%)
Maple Valley Township	1,815	1,824 (0.5%)	2,083 (259 or 14.2%)
Pierson Township	1,701	2,177 (28.0%)	2,866 (689 or 31.6%)
Reynolds Township	2,362	3,028 (28.2%)	4,279 (1,251 or 41.3%)
Howard City	1,118	1,351 (20.8)	1,585 (234 or 17.3%)
Montcalm County	47,555	53,059 (11.6%)	61,266 (8,207 or 15.5%)
State of Michigan	9,262,078	9,295,297 (0.4%)	9,938,444 (643,147 or 6.9%)

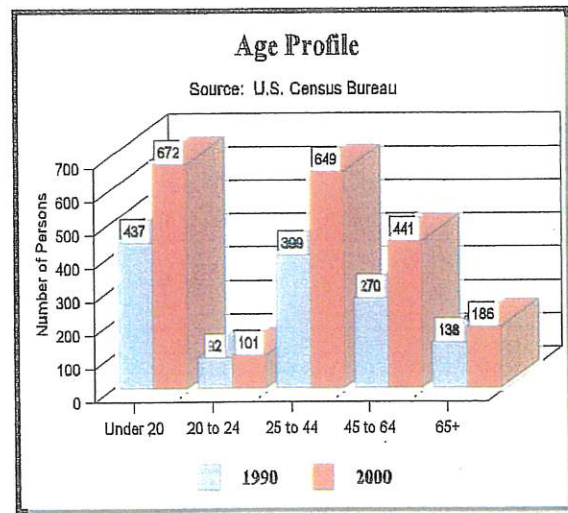
Racial Characteristics

Another population characteristic, the racial mix, has changed very little over the past several decades. The 2000 Census noted that 1,994 or 97.3% of the residents of Winfield Township classified themselves as White. The next largest ethnicity or race are Hispanics at 16 people or 0.8% of the population.

Age Profile

Age characteristics are often broken down by recognizable groups, known as "cohorts." Each group is given a name that identifies them as a station in life.

- Children under the age of 5 are typically referred to as the Pre-School Age group.
- Children between 5 and 19 are called the School Age group.
- Ages 20 to 24 are considered Young Adults.
- Adults between 25 and 44 are in the Family Forming years.
- The Mature Adults (e.g. empty nester group) are from 45 to 64.
- Above 64 may be considered the Retirement group.



In Winfield Township the School Age and Family Forming groups are currently the two largest segments of the population. The smallest age group is the Young Adults with only 4.9 percent of the total population. Clearly, this percentage is likely to increase in the next 10 to 20 years as the School Age cohort matures.

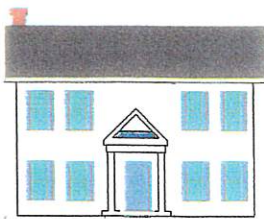
Large numbers in the School Age group often indicates that expansion of community facilities such as schools and recreational facilities may be necessary to handle the increased demand. The School Age group remained relatively the same through the 1990s. With a number reaching 700 persons, the Township, along with affected school system, will need to address issues that directly impact the needs of this group.

Similarly, the growing population in the Family-forming group, might indicate a need for more social and recreational opportunities. The Family-forming group increased in size by 1.8% over the 1990s. One factor that may have contributed to the increase could be that the more rural

lifestyle appeals to those wishing to start or relocate a family. Given Winfield Township's proximity to several regional employment centers, the desire for a more rural lifestyle is possible.

As people move from nurseries to nursing homes, shifts in demand for social and health care services will occur. As the number of "empty-nesters" and smaller households increasingly dominate the housing market, shifts toward smaller, although not necessarily less expensive, housing units can be expected.

The Housing



The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that Winfield Township has a total of 886 housing units at the time of the 2000 Census, compared to 626 units in 1990. Single-family dwellings make up a majority (over 83%) of the housing in the Township. Most of these are owner-occupied, with only 7.7% rented. A total of 260 additional housing units were developed between 1990 and the end of 2000.

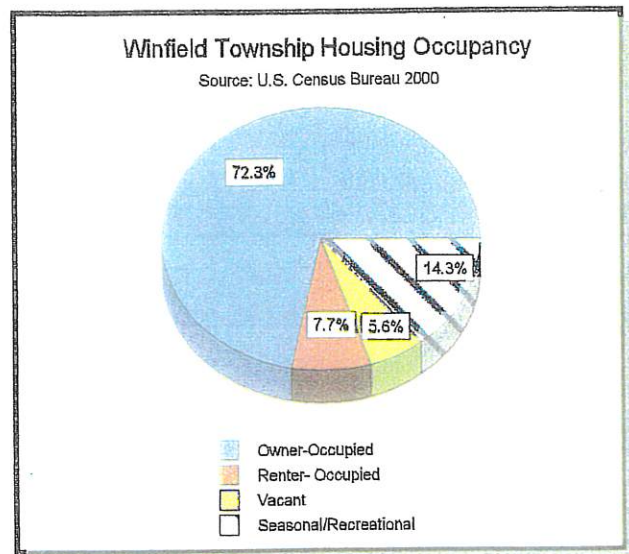
When compared to adjacent municipalities it is apparent that Winfield Township saw the second highest number of new homes being constructed between 1990 and 2000 (199 less than Reynold's Township, which had 459 new housing units). Winfield Township had the highest proportional increase of housing units when compared to all adjacent Townships, the County and State (see chart below).

HOUSING UNITS AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE 1990-2000				
Community	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	
			Number	Percent
WINFIELD TOWNSHIP	626	886	260	41.5%
Cato Township	1,158	1,307	149	12.9%
Maple Valley Township	837	910	73	8.7%
Pierson Township	1,131	1,343	212	18.7%
Reynolds Township	1,234	1,693	459	37.2%
Howard City	512	626	114	22.3%
Montcalm County	22,817	25,900	3,083	13.5%
State of Michigan	3,947,926	4,234,279	386,353	10.0%

Seasonal Housing

Seasonal housing is generally considered housing occupied for less than six months out of a year. In Michigan, it is also occasionally referred to as non-homestead housing. The 2000 Census reported Winfield’s seasonal housing count at 127 housing units. This reflects approximately 14% of the Township’s overall housing stock.

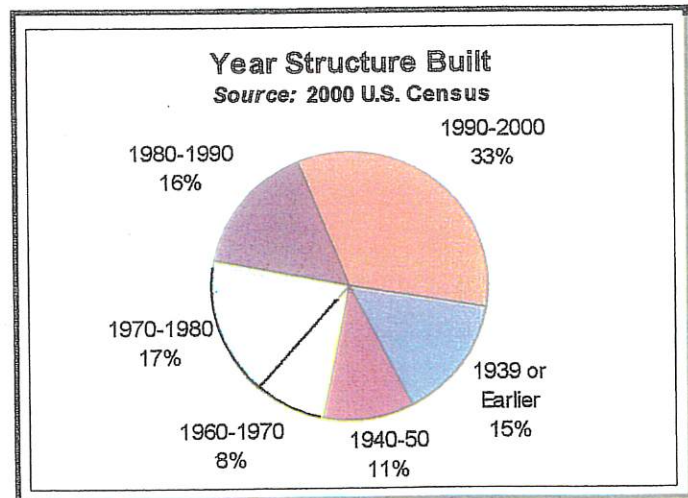
In Winfield Township, the majority of the seasonal housing is located near Indian and Winfield Lakes. At full occupancy, it is estimated the seasonal housing stock increases the local population count by roughly 250 people.



Age of Housing

The general age of the housing stock in the Township can indicate the level of growth and the possible direction of the community.

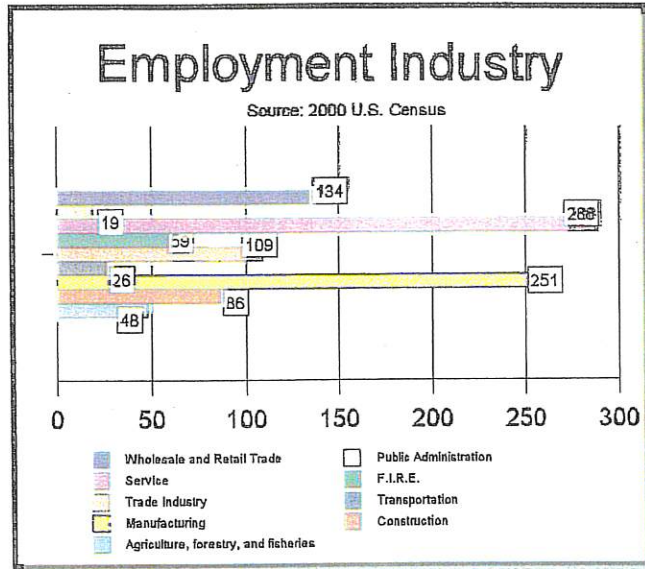
The last 20+ years has seen Winfield Township grow dramatically in the number of structures built providing a relatively new housing stock as a base. Only 25% of the housing stock are 40 years or older, generally the inverse of most rural townships where only a small percentage of housing are relatively new.



Housing development trends that have occurred include building housing adjacent to the Townships Lakes and building housing on scattered lots in traditionally rural/agricultural areas.

The Employment

A majority of the labor force in the Township is in occupations related to manufacturing, (2000) the service industries, and wholesale, retail trade. This is typical of regional and national employment trends. As with the major industries in the area, manufacturing-related job opportunities remain the number one source of employment followed by the service and the trade industries.



Commuting to Work

The mean time that it takes one to travel to their place of employment offers some insight into the transportation network and the lifestyle desirability of the township as a place of residence. The 2000 U.S. Census indicated a mean travel time of just over 36 minutes in commuting to work. Residents can work in regional employment centers such as Grand Rapids, Cadillac and Mount Pleasant within that time. The report also indicated that only 3.6% (32 residents) of the working population in Winfield Township worked at home. This is important in looking at provisions for the Zoning Ordinance related to home based businesses/home occupations and whether this group of workers may increase during the next census cycle. Another 1.0% of the working population walked to work, indicating that job opportunities are available within the township within a reasonable walking distance. Almost 11.6% (103 residents) of the working population carpooled to work indicating that a good number of people work in the same employment areas and/or that many work in the related industries. It is encouraging for a rural community to have such a high percentage of carpooling workers.

Conclusion

Continued monitoring of population, housing and other trends will be important to guide growth to areas that are the most suitable and continue to protect sensitive areas such as wetlands and forested lands.

EXISTING LAND USE

The following pages contain an inventory and analysis of existing land uses in Winfield Township. The evaluation of the existing uses of land is necessary in order to estimate subsequent needs and services and allow the community to identify potential areas to preserve and potential areas to encourage development within.

The data contained herein has been collected from a variety of sources including from available air photos and a windshield survey that was conducted of the Township in April of 2002. Also reviewed were building permits issued over the past several years.

For the purposes of this document, the existing land uses are divided into classifications as follows:

EXISTING LAND USE IN WINFIELD TOWNSHIP (2002)

Land Use	Numbers of acres	Percent of total acres
Residential	284.0	1.20 percent of land cover
Commercial	5.30	0.02 percent of land cover
Industrial	201.0	0.90 percent of land cover
Forest and Wetlands	8,316	35.80 percent of land cover
Lakes	391.0	1.70 percent of land cover
Agriculture	12,463.7	54.0 percent of land cover
Open / Undeveloped	1,487.9	6.40 percent of land cover
Other	2.2	0.01 percent of land cover

Notes: "Other" includes transportation activities such as airports and other non-defined land cover; "Number of Acres" may not add due to rounding; data was obtained through air photo interpretation and a windshield survey that was conducted in April of 2002. Land use was determined using MIRIS data and field verifications. Parcels or rooftops were not used to calculate land use rather general areas of use were drawn on the map with the main purpose of showing an overall "picture" of the community with the importance not within the specific numbers but rather the general story they tell.

Residential

Approximately 1.2 percent (284 acres) of the land in Winfield Township is in the form of residential use. According to 2000 Census data, the 2,049 people that comprise the total population of the Township are housed in 886 occupied housing units. These housing units are scattered throughout rural & agricultural areas along major and unimproved roads of the Township and are also clustered in nodules around the lakes and within Amble.

As noted within chapter 2, many seasonal homes exist within the Township primarily surrounding the lake areas. Seasonal housing makes up nearly 14.3 percent of all available housing.

Demands on public services and infrastructure will increase as the number of new homes and residents rise.

Commercial

Only 0.02 percent (5.3 acres) of the total land area in Winfield Township is devoted to commercial use. All major shopping is performed outside the Township, predominantly in Grand Rapids, Big Rapids and Alma. Commercial uses of land in the Township are largely limited to gasoline service stations and other small enterprises, but also include agricultural-based commercial activities, which reflect the agricultural character of the area.

Industrial

Industrial land use within Winfield Township constitutes 0.9 percent (201 acres) of the total land area of the Township. This land area includes an oil/gas field located within Section 18 on the north side of M46 just west of Amble.

Lakes

Approximately 1.70 percent (391 acres) of the Township consist of lakes. These features are very important to the water quality of the Township both surface water and ground water. The Township has two large lakes, Winfield and Indian Lakes, while the Tamarack and Handy Creeks meander throughout most of the Township.

Forest & Wetlands

Approximately 8,316 acres, or 35.8% of the Township's total land area is comprised of forests and Wetlands. Tracts of woodlands/forest exist throughout the Township; the largest areas are within Section 23 & 24 of the Township as well as within sections 7, 8, 17 and 18. In general the forested areas are comprised of a northern hardwood mix with much of the lowland wetlands having Tamarack and White Cedar as the dominate species. Wetlands are located in areas surrounding the townships lakes, streams and creeks. In planning for future land uses, the township will want to take into consideration these uses and how they should be protected and to what extent.

Agriculture & Open Space

Open field agriculture is the largest single use of land in the Township. Agriculture has provided Winfield Township with a great deal of its present identity as a rural agricultural Township. Approximately 12,464 acres, or 54 percent of the land area is devoted to this category.

Recent trends seen within this community as well as other communities is for agricultural areas to slowly be lost to large lot single family home development, subdivisions and cluster housing developments. This practice generally occurs as farmers desiring to retire or having no or multiple heirs that no longer live within the area sell of the property for profit.

Infrastructure

The ability of Winfield Township to service the needs of new and existing residents in regards to police and fire protection, road maintenance, and if necessary in the future, public water and sewer, must be a consideration in long-term land use planning. As development intensifies within the Township additional public services may be required.

Community planning for infrastructure can have positive effects; including the preservation of community character and reduced public safety concerns related to transportation and environmental contamination. Failure to plan can result in unforeseen expenses and frustration for all involved.

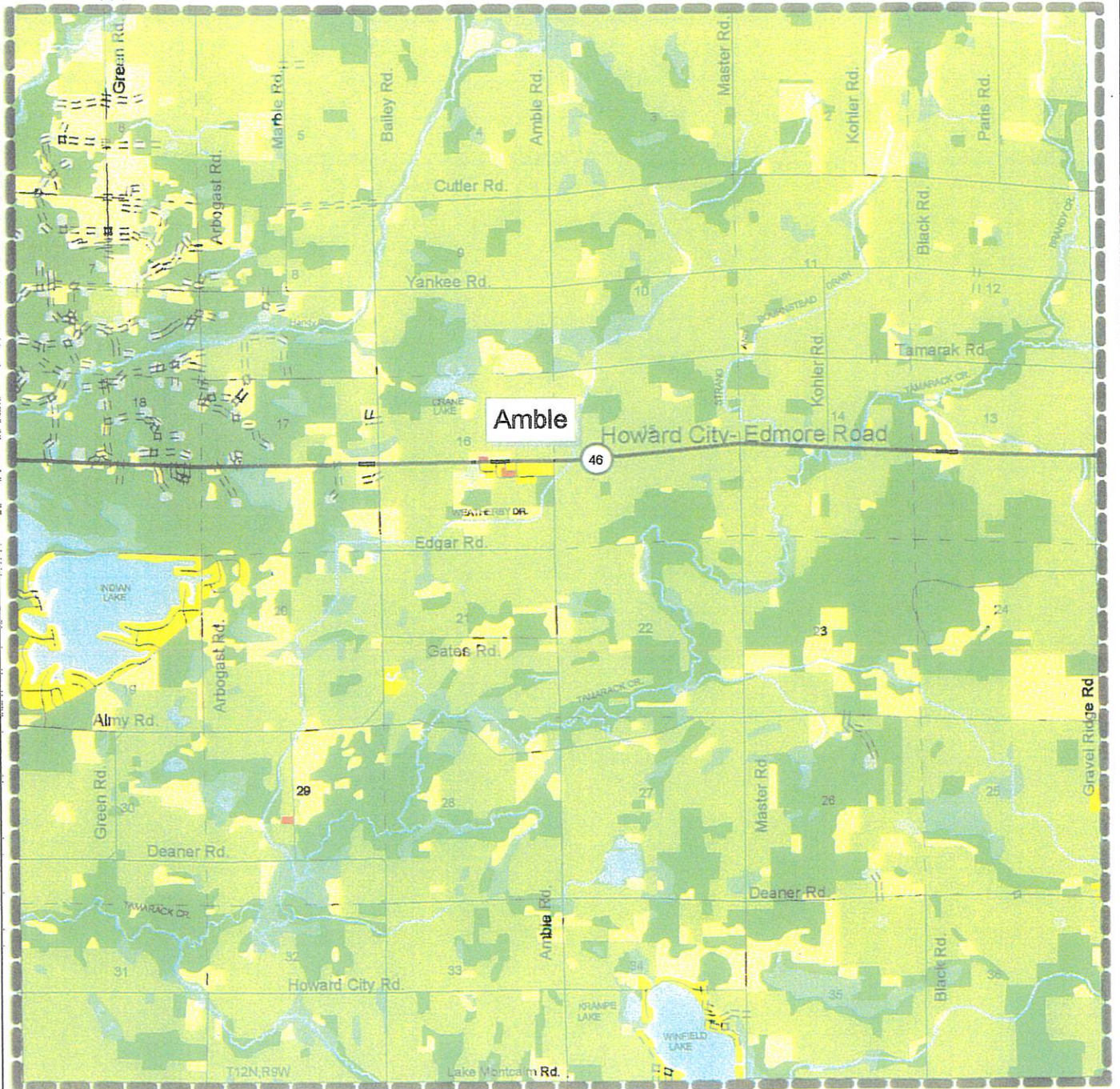
Conclusion

Despite new construction activity in the Township, the predominant characteristics remain rural and agricultural. Less than five percent of the Township's land area is actually developed. The remaining 95 percent is occupied by farms, orchards, wetlands, forests, lakes, and vacant land. However, as one drives within the Township, new development activity is apparent. Decisions must be made on what types of development the Township would like to encourage and where they would like to encourage them.

Winfield Township

Montcalm County, Michigan

Existing Land Use



- | | |
|---|---|
|  Residential |  Agriculture |
|  Commercial |  Open |
|  Industrial/Extractive |  Wetlands |
|  Forest |  Lakes |



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Data Sources: Base Information-MDNR MIRIS 1978
 Prime Farmland - USDA Conservation Service
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Natural Features

Winfield Township has an abundance of natural features which include lakes, streams, wetlands, woodlands and soils. These features make an important contribution to the quality of life for township residents providing such things as:

1. Clean water for homes served by wells;
2. Wildlife habitats that support various types of plant and animal life;
3. Flood control and pollution protection;
4. Aesthetics (views, serenity, rural nature, etc.);
5. Recreational value;
6. Soils for the production of food

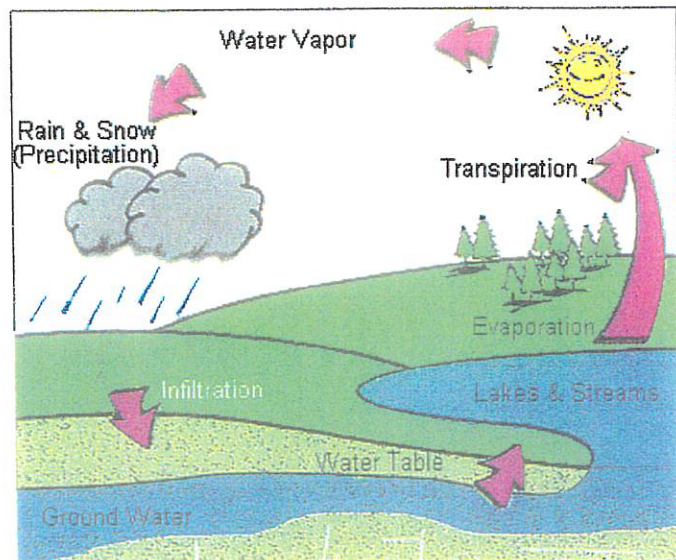


The following is an overview of some of the major natural features that are prevalent throughout the Township and their characteristics.

Water Features

The lakes, large and small, streams and interconnecting wetlands are notable and attractive features comprising approximately 2 percent of the Township land area. These surface water features are all part of a larger "Water Cycle".

The "Water Cycle" is a circular process whereby water travels from one form and location to another. For example, water may fall to the earth from rain clouds and land upon soil or pavement, then it may travel into a creek or stream which may flow into a wetland, then a lake or pond. Once in a lake or pond, water may remain there for a long time, it may



The water cycle.

evaporate, it may travel out via another creek, stream or river or it may seep into the ground and become groundwater. At any point through the water cycle pollutants may be picked up and the resource may be used by township residents or people within other communities. Knowing the characteristics of each type of water feature can allow a community to plan for their best use and preservation.

Wetlands

Wetlands are transitional areas between aquatic ecosystems and surrounding upland areas. They are low areas which are intermittently covered with shallow water and underlined by saturated soils. Vegetation which is adapted to wet soil conditions, fluctuation in water levels and periodic flooding can be found in wetlands.

Wetlands serve a variety of important functions which not only benefit the natural environment but also the community; these functions include:

1. Mitigating flooding by detaining surface runoff;
2. Controlling soil erosion and sedimentation loading in rivers and lakes;
3. Providing links with groundwater;
4. Improving water quality by acting as a filter to detain nutrients and chemicals resulting from rural and urban activities;
5. Functioning as highly productive ecosystems; and
6. Serving a variety of aesthetic and recreational functions.

Any wetlands greater than five acres in size or contiguous with a waterway are regulated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) through the Goemaere-Anderson Wetland Protection Act, Public Act 203, as amended. Wetlands of smaller size can be regulated by the township with appropriate ordinances.

Lakes

Lakes are among the Township's most valuable natural resource. The largest lakes in the Township are Indian Lake and Winfield Lake. There are a few smaller lakes in addition to the lakes mentioned. The lakes provide recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing and swimming. The quality of these water features enhances the value of adjacent property for residential opportunities.

Areas surrounding the larger lakes in the Township have been historically developed for smaller lot resort and more recently year round residential uses with individual septic drain fields. Areas surrounding the lakes have soil conditions that are generally not well suited for drain fields due to poor soil texture and a high water table.

Groundwater

Important factors in the evaluation of groundwater are the quantity and quality of the water. Quantity or yield standards for a typical residential or commercial use range from 7 gallons per minute to 20 gallons per minute. Water is generally available in sufficient quantity and will not likely be a factor in limiting growth.

Soil permeability of most upland areas is moderate to moderately rapid. As these areas become developed, the amount of water infiltrating the surface will decrease and the surface runoff will increase impacting the quantity of groundwater and quality.

Streams & Creeks (Drainage)

The topographic profiles reveal that the Township has generally low rolling hills throughout, except in the western portion of the township where it is relatively flat. Upland areas drain to low lying wetlands, lakes and ponds via streams and creeks that pass through the Township. Creeks within the Township include but may not be limited to Tamarack Creek, Brandy Creek, Handy Creek, Strang and Bournstead Drain and Weatherby Drain, all of which flow towards lake Michigan and are part of the Muskegon Watershed (see existing land use map between pages 3-4 to 4-1, and Watershed Map and Topography map on the pages that follow this chapter).

As areas of the township develop removing vegetation and adding pavement and buildings surface water runoff will need to be managed. Poor management of surface water runoff can lead to increasing the peak discharge to the areas drains, streams and lakes while reducing the amount of water infiltrating to ground water. Minimization of these impacts may involve protecting native vegetation, on-site storm water retention and clustered development.

Woodlands

Woodlands can be found throughout the Township; they provide a variety of benefits, including:

✓ **Reduction in air pollution:** Woodlands absorb carbon dioxide and return oxygen to the air. Tree leaves filter pollutants from the air, removing ozone, chlorine, hydrogen fluoride, sulfur dioxide and other pollutants. Large and dense stands of trees serve as a noise buffer as well.

✓ **Moderating Temperature:** Woodlands play an important role in moderating ground-level temperatures. Tree canopies buffer the ground surface from the sun's heat and wind. Temperature extremes during winter months can also be moderated with the help of trees.

✓ **Reduction in soil erosion:** Woodlands and other vegetation stabilize soils and help prevent soil erosion. The vegetation absorbs the energy of falling rain and the web of roots of all types help hold soil particles in place. Tree leaves reduce the impact of raindrops on the soil surface and give soil a chance to absorb water. Fallen leaves minimize the loss of soil moisture, help prevent erosion and enrich the soil to support later plant growth.

Wooded wetlands provide the additional benefit of trapping and holding storm water runoff. Dense vegetation can help slow flood surges and flows.

✓ **Wildlife habitat:** Woodlands provide essential shelter and food for deer, raccoon, rabbits, pheasants and other birds and animals. The opportunity to observe wildlife in a natural setting has educational benefits for County residents.

✓ **Township's natural character:** There is a significant amount of mature vegetation along many of the rural road corridors and along most lakes and streams contributing to the creation of a natural/rural atmosphere.

✓ **Screening:** Trees provide a visual barrier between individual properties and neighboring properties.

Soils

Within Winfield Township there are four major soil combinations as identified by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality/USDA.

The characteristics of soil composition is one of the most significant elements in land use planning. Soil suitability can assist in identifying agriculturally productive lands as well as areas suitable for development activities.

As detailed by the following map, the Township's soils are typically found in various soil combinations. Site specific soil surveys are needed for individual projects.

Development & Soils

Construction costs and risks to the environment can be minimized by developing areas that have suitable soils. Poor soils present problems such as poor foundation stability and septic limitations. The three major soil characteristics considered in the analysis of soil conditions are drainage, foundation stability and septic suitability.

Drainage: Development on poorly drained soils increases development costs, maintenance costs, and may lead to sanitary problems. Development costs are increased due to additional foundation, road and septic preparation. Maintenance costs and problems will be associated with septic field failures, flooded basements and impact to roads from frost action.

Foundation Stability: Soil types that do not provide stable foundations may experience shifting building foundations, cracked walls and cracked pavement and roadways. These problems often result in increased development and maintenance costs or, in extreme cases, structural failure.

Septic Suitability: Because there are many areas of Winfield Township that rely on individual septic systems, the location of septic systems on proper soils is extremely important. Septic field failures are often the result of poor soil permeability, high water table or excessive slope. Soils such as compacted clays and silts will not allow wastewater to percolate, a high water table prohibits adequate filtering and excessive slope does not provide opportunity for adequate percolation.

Soils Poorly Suitable for Development:

- ▶ Areas with little topographic relief, which does not allow proper drainage.
- ▶ Areas with excessive slopes which are susceptible to erosion.
- ▶ Mucks or soils with high organic materials.
- ▶ Silts and clays.
- ▶ Areas with high water tables.
- ▶ Soils generally found along lakes, creeks and wetlands.

Soils Well Suited for Development:

- ▶ Areas sufficiently above groundwater table.
- ▶ Loamy and sandy soils.

Agriculture & Soils

Soils best suited for farming activities are displayed on the "Prime Farmland" map on the pages that follow. In general, prime farmland consists fo soils that are rich in organic matter.

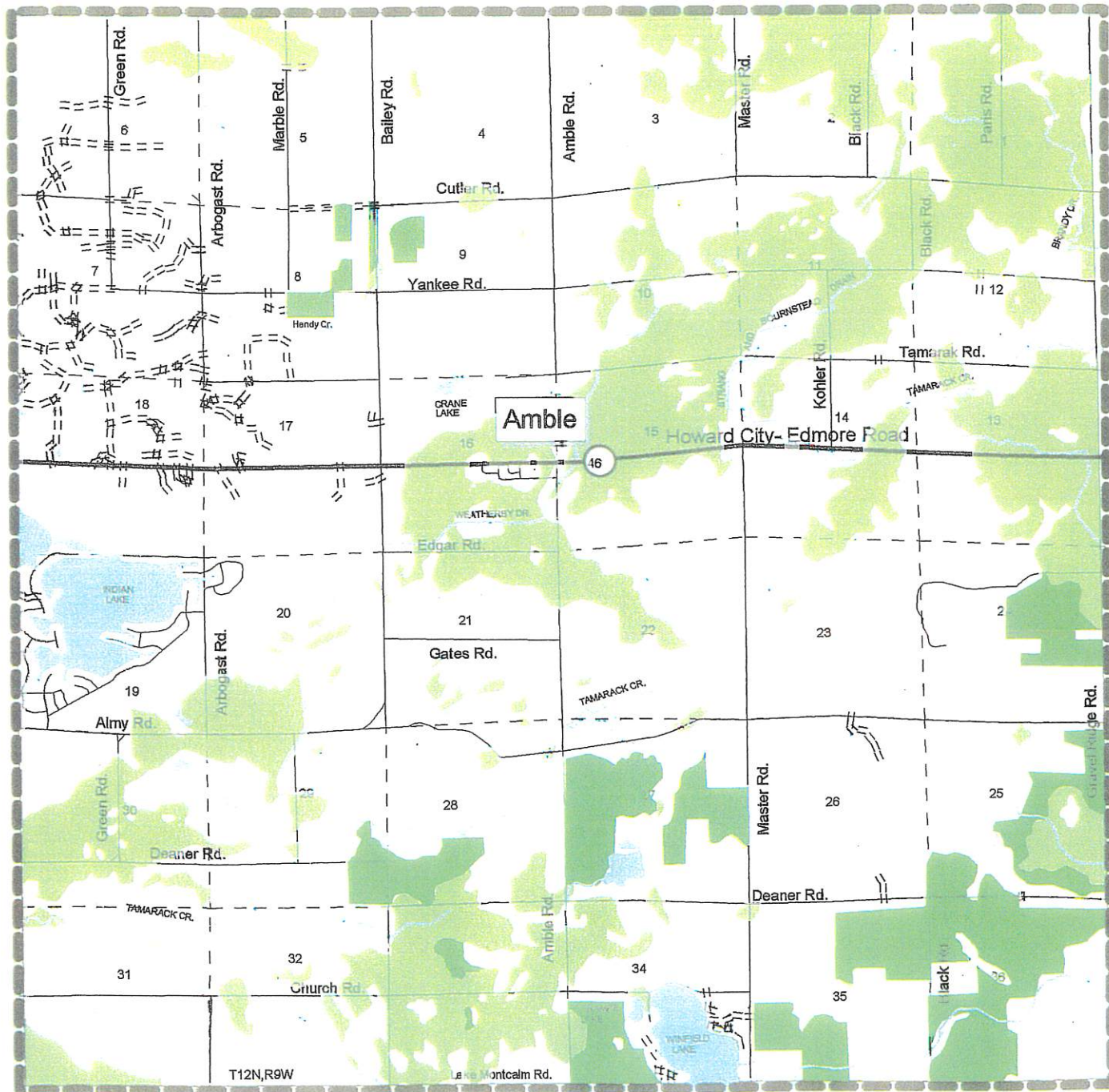
Conclusion

In considering development of any kind, all of these factors need to be taken under advisement when determining the compatibility of a proposed land use to the parcel. While each has their own individual characteristics; they are all connected and part of the same system and contribute to the quality of life for residents.

Winfield Township

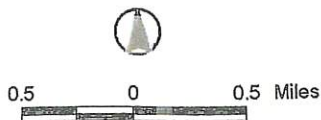
Montcalm County, Michigan

Prime Farmland



- Prime Farmland
- Unique Farmland (other than prime)

Note: Unique and Prime Farmland are categories created by and identified by the USDA. Unique farmland includes sandy soils that have high water tables. Prime Farmland includes soils that have clay, sand and organic matter suitable for supporting agricultural operations.



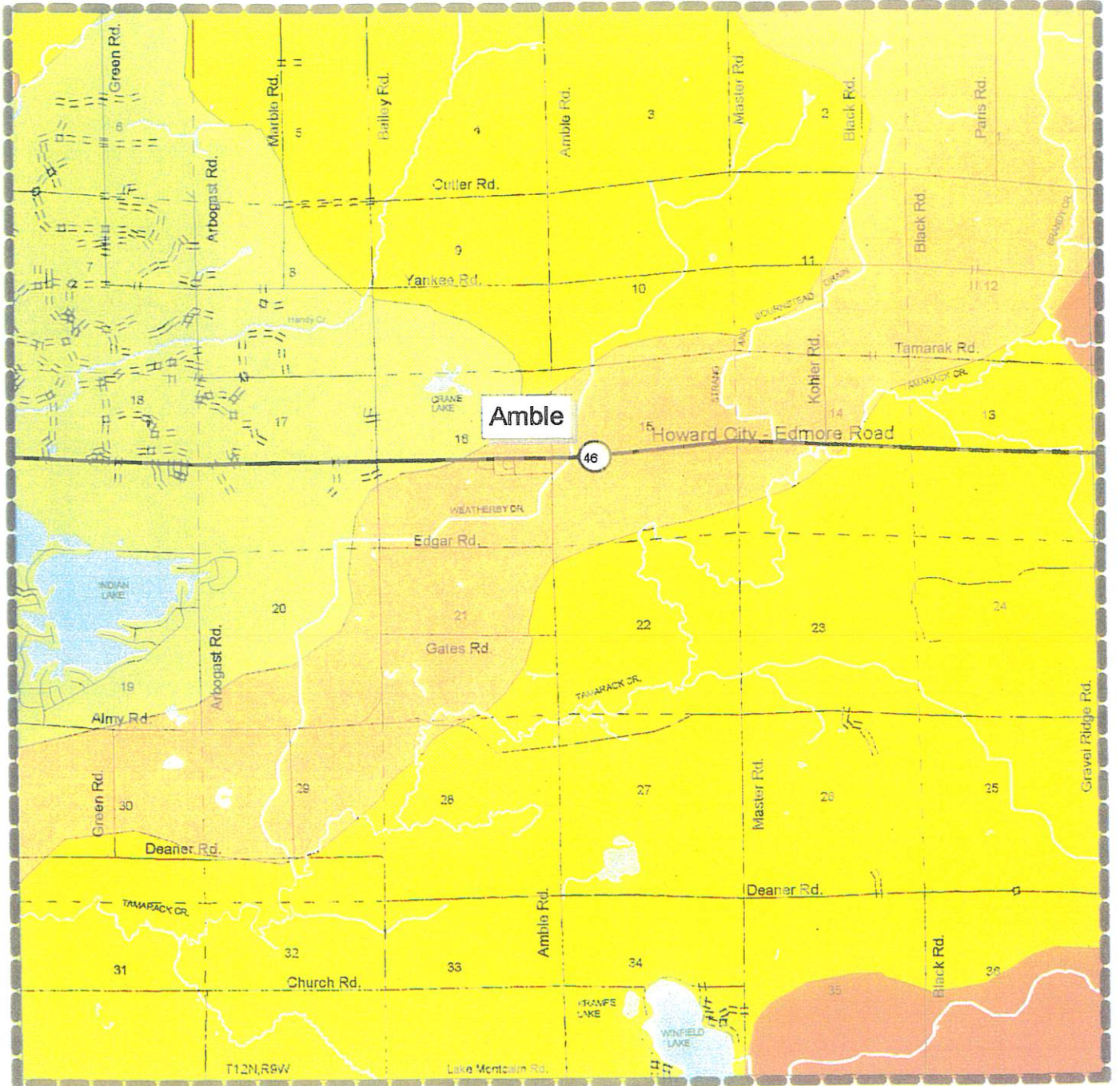
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Data Sources: Base Information - MDNR MIRIS 1978
 Prime Farmland - USDA Soil Conservation Service
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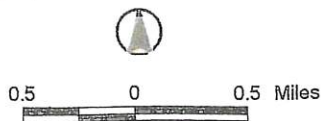
Winfield Township

Montcalm County, Michigan

Soils



- Boyer-Fox-Wasepi
- Marlette-Capac-Parkhill
- Plainfield-Spinks-Metea
- Remus-Spinks-Coloma



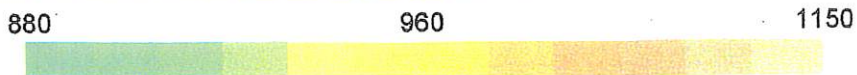
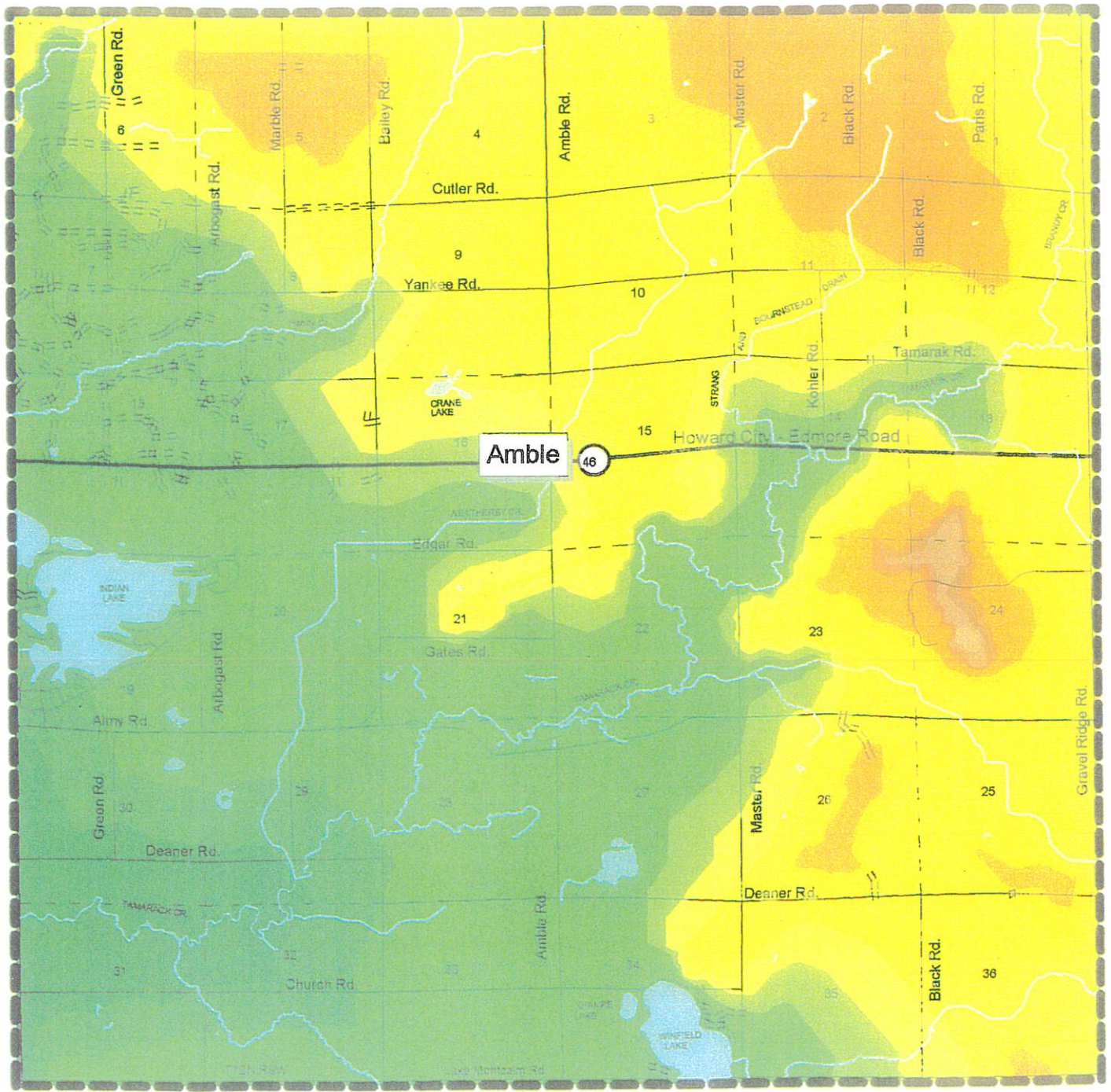
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Data Sources: Base Information - MDNR MIRIS 1978
 Land Use - MDNR MIRIS 1978
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Winfield Township

Montcalm County, Michigan

Topography



Elevation in Feet



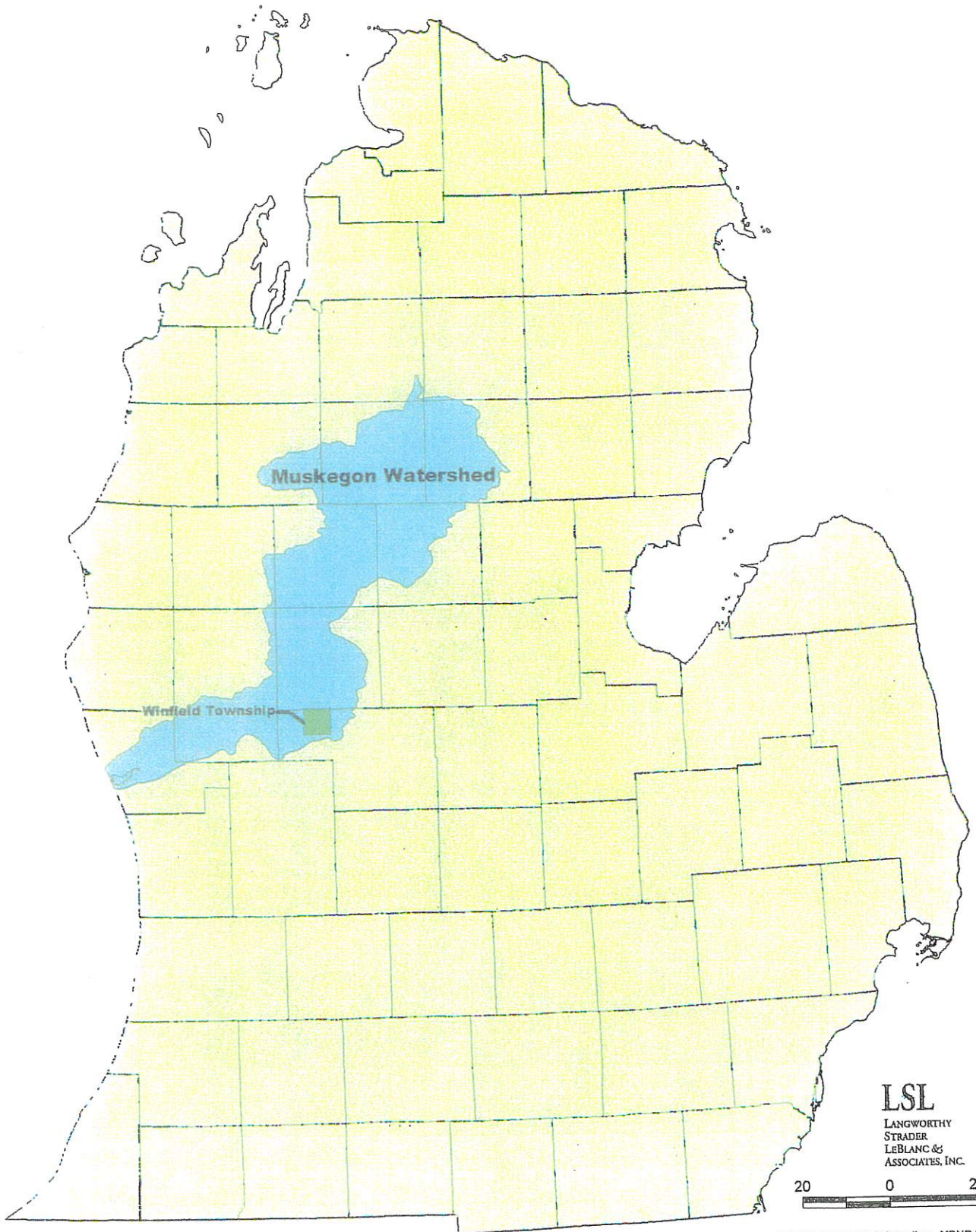
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Winfield Township

Montcalm County, Michigan

Watershed



Data Sources: Base Information - MDNR MIRIS 1978
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FUTURE LAND USE

The citizens of Winfield Township are concerned about the loss of farmland and the rural atmosphere that first brought them to the area. At the same time, there is a recognition that other people want to live in the same area and relish the same rural character enjoyed by current residents. To accommodate the desires of those who live here now, and those who wish to in the future, the Township must be able to provide the quality of life desired by its residents.



The purpose of a Master Plan is to provide a community with a guide for future development

The purpose of a Master Plan is to provide a community with a guide for future development. Future land use districts described on the pages that follow are intended to retain, and enhance, the character of Winfield Township by providing a general guide for the Planning Commission and Board as they review development proposals for the community. It is important to note that these do not always correspond to zoning districts. Zoning regulations and district boundaries should, indeed, reflect the Plan recommendations. But while the Plan is long-range in its scope, the zoning ordinance is short-term and will not immediately reflect the same patterns as the Master Plan.

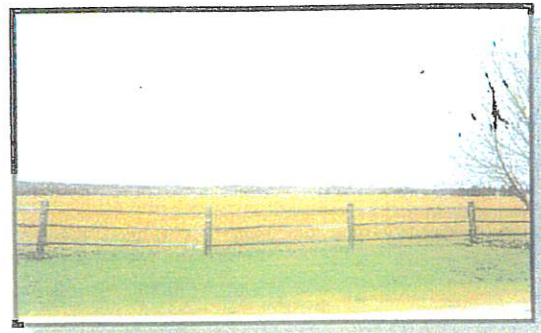
Future land use districts are based on:

- existing land use
- soils
- the probable extent of future utilities
- accommodating the needs of residents
- protecting the natural environment
- the carrying capacity of the area
- Citizens survey

Agriculture

A major emphasis is placed on supporting the continuation of farming as an essential land use in the Township. During the process used to formulate the Plan, the goal of preserving prime and important agricultural lands was given strong support. Farming has played a major role in the history of Winfield Township and is an important part of its economy and culture. New development clearly threatens farming and related agricultural uses.

In order to further the Township's efforts to preserve farmland, zoning regulations should be adopted to emphasize the important public purpose of protecting food and fiber production and to minimize the extent to which potentially incompatible non-farm development will be permitted to encroach into these designated areas. Permitted residential densities in this area should be very low, with overall densities no greater than one unit per two acres. Any new residential development should be limited and designed to minimize conflicts between agricultural and residential uses and to help preserve the most important farmland in the Township.



Productive agricultural land in Winfield Township can be Sustainable with sound stewardship and planning.

Most of the Township's land area is designated as Agricultural. This encompasses the developed and undeveloped lands that remain rural and, in most cases, still exhibit those features considered most important to the rural character of the community - agricultural, open spaces, woods, fields, hills, and wildlife.

Some of the land in this category has begun to experience parcel splits and accompanying single family home development scattered along the main roads. The purpose of this land use category is to define those areas of the Township where controlled low density residential development can be permitted, but which should respect the character of the land and surrounding area.

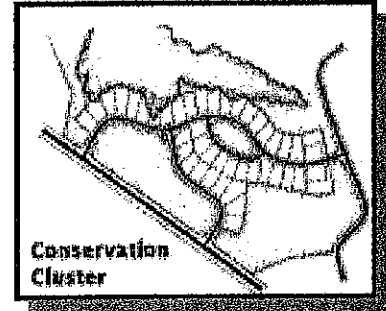
Residential densities in this area should be limited to no more than one unit per two acres overall. In addition, it is recommended that the Township adopt zoning regulations that reinforce the Master Plan goals and policies through planned unit development provisions, cluster zoning, and other incentives to preserve the rural assets of the community. Through the use of such techniques, permitted densities can actually be increased slightly, but with less impact on the rural character.

Clustered residential development should be allowed in the Agricultural Zone, in order to allow the land owner some greater development value.

Rural Residential

Areas designated for Rural Residential development are generally found within the western portions of the township near M46, Howard City, the Village of Amble and near Indian Lake.

This district is intended to preserve open space through the use of a 2 acre minimum lot sizes for single family residential homes. Lesser densities may be appropriate with development proposals such as cluster housing developments that preserve natural features of the township in useable form for residents.



Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential is designated within the Village of Amble along M46 and Amble Road. This classification has been modeled after the Medium Density Residential district of the township Zoning Ordinance, and should allow those types of permitted uses to develop. Minimum lot sizes of 1 acre are appropriate for this district to maintain sufficient room for individual water and septic systems and maintain existing character of the Village.

Lakeside Residential

Many of these areas have been platted and contain very small lots.

Due to the fragile nature of the lakes and their environs, further intense development should be discouraged. Further, intensive development of already developed lakes and significant development of yet relatively undeveloped lakes will degrade water quality, threaten drinking water aquifers, place further strain on already inadequate utilities and infrastructure, and threaten the environment.

Lot area minimums may be as low as 11,000 square feet.

Techniques specifically aimed at lake and watershed protection should also be considered. These may include increased minimum lot size and/or width requirements for lakefront lots, as well as stricter regulation of docks, funneling, and lake access.

Manufactured Home Park

This classification has been modeled after the Manufactured Home Park district of the township Zoning Ordinance, and should allow those types of permitted uses to develop.

General Commercial

There is only modest commercial development in the Township. According to the opinion survey and Planning Commission discussions, there is not a strong desire for widespread commercial in the future. Indeed, there is a desire for some limited convenience service at specific locations, but these should be compatible with the character of the community, complement the business development that already exists, and not create the appearance of commercial strips. The Future Land Use map designates the Village of Amble as the area intended for commercial development; within this area commercial uses should be allowed to co-exist with office and residential uses to create a more traditional community atmosphere.

It is recognized that commercial and business services are readily available in adjacent communities. Furthermore, given the rural character and desire to preserve it and the lack of utilities and infrastructure, significant additional commercial uses would place an undue burden on the community.

Light Industrial

Winfield Township does not envision any intensive industrial development within the planning period. It is the intent of the Plan to provide a location where these uses can be accommodated in an environment that is both conducive to the use and compatible with the surroundings.

Lakes

The location of lakes are predetermined, however, they are noted on the Plan.

Overarching Principles

The overriding philosophy that should guide future development of Winfield Township is "**sustainability**." From annual town meetings, volunteer governments and working farms, stewardship of the Township and its landscape are the fabric and culture of the Township and its people. In summary, sustainable development is nothing more than "future-oriented" common sense.

Elements of a "sustainable community" include:

- ✓ **Ecological Integrity:** including satisfying basic human needs such as clean air and water; protecting ecosystems and biodiversity; and, pollution prevention strategies.
- ✓ **Economic Security:** including local reinvestment; meaningful employment opportunities; local business ownership; and, job training and education.
- ✓ **Empowerment and Responsibility:** including respect and tolerance for diverse views and values; a viable non-government sector; equal opportunity to participate in decision-making; and, access to government.
- ✓ **Social Well-Being:** including a reliable local food supply; quality health services, housing and education; creative expression through the arts; safety from crime and aggression; respect for public spaces and historic resources; and, a sense of place and self-worth.

If Winfield Township is to have a sustainable community, future development within the area must further the following principles:

- ✓ *Support and strengthen existing developed areas.*
- ✓ *Concentrate development within the Village of Amble.*
- ✓ *Utilize mixed-use development and multi-use structures.*
- ✓ *Lessen the dependence on the automobile.*
- ✓ *Respect for the area's history and natural systems.*
- ✓ *Support long-term solutions.*
- ✓ *Promote cooperation through working partnerships.*

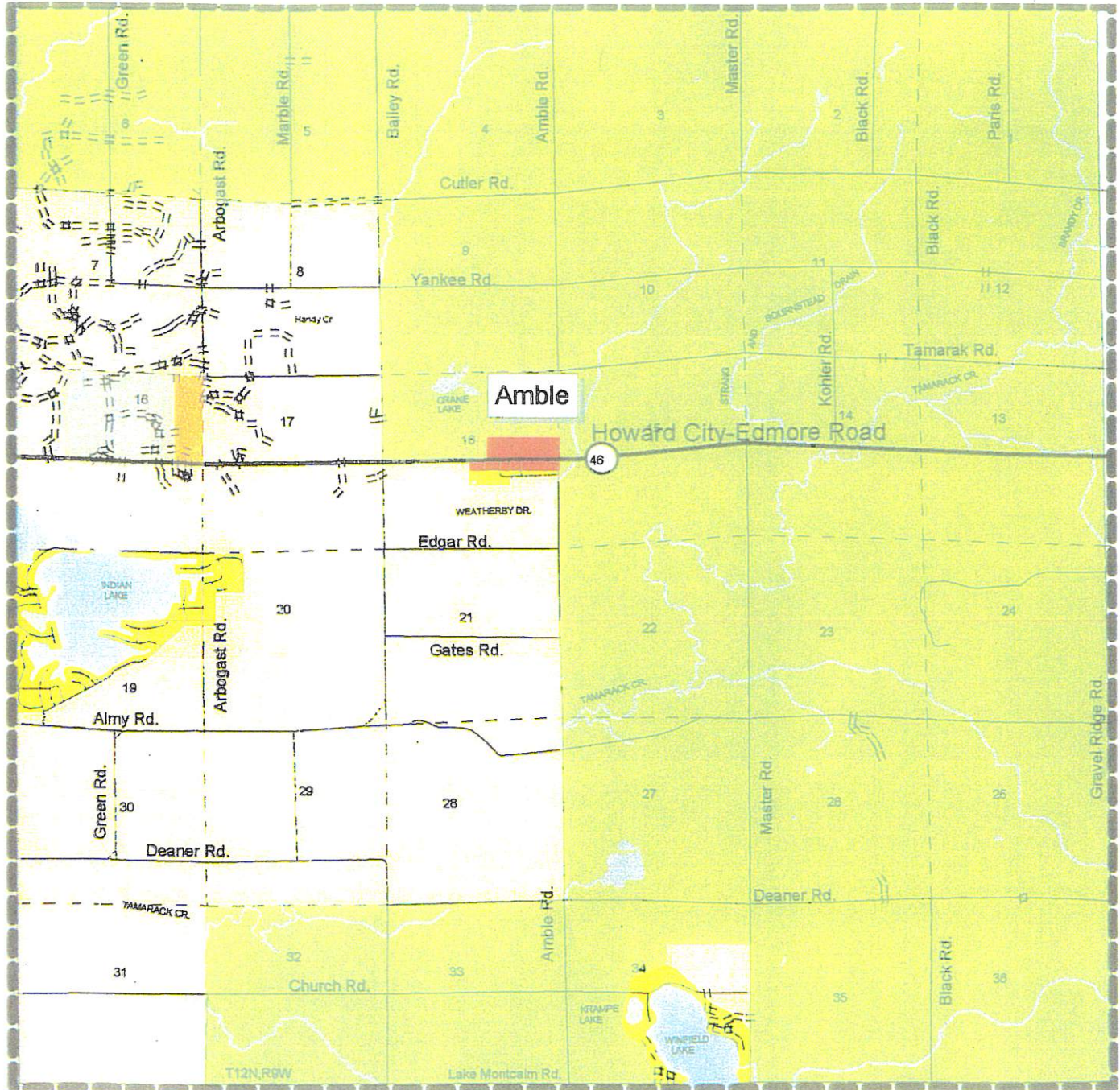
Summary

The Township, only a 40-minute drive to Grand Rapids, has not seen the extent of spillover population growth that other areas have seen. However it is certain that Winfield Township will continue to grow and change. The future land use categories and their locations are intended to improve and maintain quality of life both for current and future residents.

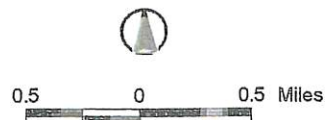
Winfield Township

Montcalm County, Michigan

Future Land Use



- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Rural Residential |  | General Commercial |
|  | Lakeside Residential |  | Agriculture |
|  | Medium Density Residential |  | Light Industrial |
|  | Manufactured Home Park |  | Lakes |



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Data Sources: Base Information - MDNR MIRIS 1978
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Goals and Objectives

Developing quality Goals and Objectives is the key to a successful Master Plan. They provide specific direction for the future of Winfield Township, and serve as the backbone of the Master Plan. Goals and Objectives are similar in that they are both actions that the Township should strive to take, however, they differ in definition:

GOAL - A goal is a destination, a final purpose which a community seeks to attain. A goal should be a broad general statement.

OBJECTIVE - Also known as "Policy Statements" are the actions necessary in order to accomplish the goals. An Objective or Policy Statement is specific and gives direction.

The goals and objectives were created by the Planning Commission taking account planning policies which have evolved from previous actions, current conditions and information obtained from a community attitude survey.

The community attitude survey was mailed to each property owner within the Township in order to gain a better overall understanding of the community issues. Over 1,120 surveys were sent out and 256, or about 23%, were returned.

The Township Planning Commission and Township Board, along with the many public officials responsible in one way or another for the day-to-day activities in Winfield Township, must consciously adhere to the adopted goals and recommendations outlined in this Plan document.

Agricultural/Open Space Preservation

Goal: Encourage the preservation of active farmland as a valuable resource for the community.	
Objectives	
1	Land use decisions will support the desires of individual property owners who wish to keep their land in active agricultural production.
2	The Township will identify areas where farmland should/could be considered for future residential development based on poor soils, incompatible surrounding character, low productivity, smaller acreage etc. and encourage the development of those areas first.
3	The Township should use appropriate ordinances to protect its prime farmland areas or determine other methods of maintaining these areas.
4	The Township will encourage the education of landowners on the advantages of farmland preservation.

Natural Features and the Environment

Goal: Strive to protect environmental resources, such as rivers, lakes, wetlands, & woodlands from the negative impacts of new development.	
Objectives	
1	The Township, through review of development plans, will ensure that development takes place in an environmentally consistent and sound manner by minimizing the potential for flood hazard, soil erosion, and disturbances to the natural drainage network, and protecting the quality of surface and groundwater resources, open space areas, wetlands, and woodlands.
2	Through zoning and growth management policies, the Township will establish guidelines to protect its surface waters. Specifically, develop a waterfront zoning district(s) through which such guidelines can be enforced.

Objectives	
3	The Township will work with public agencies and private landowners to encourage reforestation and wildlife habitat improvement programs on public and private lands.
4	Through zoning, site plan review, and education, the Township will encourage approaches to land development that effectively integrate the preservation of natural features such as soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, air quality, unique views and vistas, and natural vegetation into the process of site design.
5	The Township should use appropriate ordinances to protect its natural features or determine other methods of maintaining and enhancing these features.
6	For all types of development, the Township will work with County and State officials to develop improved standards regarding the suitability of soils for septic system placement and use. In those locations containing soils which are not conducive to acceptable on-site septic use and/or may result in the degradation of ground water, institute one of the following depending upon the nature of the proposed project and potential ground water impact: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Decrease development densities to levels consistent with the loading capabilities of area soils. b) Require connection to a municipal sanitary system where available.
7	Through appropriate watershed management planning, the Township will promote the highest feasible quality of groundwater.
8	Through site plan review, the Township will discourage practices which would alter the natural, valuable function of wetlands, including those not protected under the State of Michigan Wetlands Protection Act (P.A. 203 of 1979 [now Part 303 of Act 451, as amended]).

Residential Growth and Development

<p>Goal: Limit the densities and determine appropriate locations of residential development in order to preserve rural character.</p>	
<p>Objectives</p>	
1	<p>The Township will determine optimal locations for future single-family residential development giving consideration to agricultural preservation, environmental protection, infrastructure availability and the surrounding character.</p>
2	<p>Through zoning, the Township will implement adequate lot width requirements which ensure adequate home spacing in rural areas to maintain rural character.</p>
3	<p>The Township will encourage development patterns that utilize small lot, cluster, development in conjunction with the establishment of open space areas and/or conservation easements dedicated to the preservation of unique natural features.</p>
4	<p>The Township will limit higher density residential development to locations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Public utilities exist; or where: b) Public utilities do not exist but, as a component of a proposed development, will be extended to serve that development; or where: c) it does not adversely affect the rural/agricultural character of the area.

Commercial Growth and Development

Goal: Allow commercial development to occur in the township in a controlled and responsible manner.	
Objectives	
1	The Township will limit new commercial development to those types of businesses which serve the needs of the residents.
2	The Township will encourage commercial development to occur on parcels of appropriate size and scale to maintain consistency with the surrounding character.

Community Facilities and Services

Goal: Provide necessary facilities and services that will serve the needs of its residents consistent with the township's rural character.	
Objectives:	
1	Promote a coordinated approach among local communities for the planning, provision, and expansion of public sanitary systems.
2	Promote safety along streets through the provision of adequate pedestrian areas and the requirement of these features in all new developments.
3	Intensify code enforcement to enhance aesthetics in the community, such as requiring the removal of junk in yards in the township.
4	Pursue development of a Parks and Recreation Plan meeting State of Michigan requirements.

Plan Implementation

In order for the master plan to be something more than an academic exercise, steps must be taken to actually use it. As alluded to earlier, the plan is not an end in itself, but rather is a framework for future action. Moreover, validation of the plan requires more than just Planning Commission and Township Board adoption. True affirmation of the plan is achieved through its active use for such things as capital improvement scheduling, grant submissions, recreation planning and amendments to the zoning ordinance that are consistent with the master plan.

Regulation of land use can be highly controversial, and can frequently trigger legal action. As such, active use of the plan helps to shield the community from charges of selective enforcement or arbitrary action in the event litigation over a particular zoning matter.

Since zoning represents the most direct application of land use control at the local level, the Township should perform an audit of its existing zoning ordinance, and adopt any necessary amendments as a first step toward implementation of the plan. Thereafter, the plan should serve as a permanent reference guide, providing direction for all policy decisions with a land use/development aspect.

Winfield Township Zoning Ordinance

The Township Rural Zoning Ordinance Act, Act 184 of the Michigan Public Acts of 1943, as amended, provides that zoning shall be based on a plan. As discussed earlier, a master plan provides the basis for the range and spatial location of zone districts. The zoning ordinance, in turn, is thus the primary plan implementation tool.

Local control of land use, as provided for by zoning, is an accepted legal practice. The principles on which zoning is based include the need to:

- ✓ balance the interests of all landowners and residents with the rights of individual landowners;
- ✓ help provide a long term vision for the Township;
- ✓ protect the environment;
- ✓ ensure development is adequately served by roads and utilities;
- ✓ achieve the quality of life desired by residents;
- ✓ provide fair and consistent review of development needs; and,
- ✓ protect the public health, safety and welfare.

Since the Master Plan identifies the desired future land use, zoning decisions should be consistent with its provisions. Again, this is not to say that all zoning matters, such as rezonings, that are consistent with the Future Land Use (i.e. Master Plan) Map should be automatically approved.

However, if all of the preconditions of the Master Plan are met, approval of the request should probably be granted.

The following table contains a series of evaluation factors which may be used to determine if a change to a land use element of the Master plan is warranted.

FUTURE LAND USE EVALUATION FACTORS	
1.	DOES THE PROPOSED NEW CLASSIFICATION MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS NOTED IN THE APPROPRIATE SECTION OF THE MASTER PLAN DISTRICT CHAPTER?
2.	ARE THE ZONING DISTRICTS AND THEIR USES WHICH MAY APPLY TO THE NEW CLASSIFICATION, COMPATIBLE AND APPROPRIATE IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPERTY UNDER CONSIDERATION?
3.	HAVE ANY CONDITIONS CHANGED IN THE AREA SINCE THE PLAN WAS ADOPTED WHICH MIGHT JUSTIFY THIS CHANGE?
4.	WILL THERE BE ANY COMMUNITY IMPACTS WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED, SUCH AS INCREASED TRAFFIC, OR OTHERS WHICH MIGHT CREATE A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES OR IMPROVEMENTS?
5.	ARE THERE ANY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY BE CONTRARY TO THE INTENT OF THE EXISTING OR PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION OF LAND USE?
6.	WAS THE PROPERTY IMPROPERLY CLASSIFIED WHEN THE PLAN WAS ADOPTED OR AMENDED? ARE THE QUALITIES OF THE PROPERTY (ARE) DIFFERENT THAN THOSE DESCRIBED IN THE PLAN?
7.	WILL THERE BE ANY ADVERSE IMPACTS ON ADJACENT PROPERTIES AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGE?
8.	WHAT IMPACTS WILL RESULT ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE?

AS GROWTH OCCURS, THE TOWNSHIP WILL BE FACED WITH A RANGE OF NEW DEVELOPMENT REQUESTS. UNLESS CAREFULLY REGULATED, MANY OF THESE CAN HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS, OTHER LAND USES, TRAFFIC, LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES AND SERVICES. THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THE TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE MAKE GREATER USE OF REGULATORY TECHNIQUES AFFORDED BY THE ZONING STATUTE. THESE INCLUDE THE USE OF SPECIAL LAND USE REGULATIONS AND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) REGULATIONS.

THE RANGE OF USES FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE ZONE DISTRICTS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED TO DETERMINE POTENTIAL LEVELS OF NEGATIVE IMPACT OR HARM ON SURROUNDING PROPERTIES, PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. USES IDENTIFIED WITH MODERATE OR SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF POTENTIAL IMPACT SHOULD BE

HANDLED UNDER SPECIAL LAND USE REGULATIONS, AS OPPOSED TO BEING PERMITTED BY RIGHT. FOR INSTANCE, LAND USES EXHIBITING THE FOLLOWING FACTORS TEND TO RESULT IN SITUATIONS WHICH

Continued 7-2

warrant special review.

- ▶ Outside, non-screened, storage of materials
- ▶ Establishments involving the queuing or stacking of vehicles such as fast food restaurants, car washes and funeral homes.
- ▶ Retail establishments handling used merchandise.
- ▶ Sites used for multiple buildings or uses.
- ▶ Uses involving public assembly.
- ▶ Temporary sales lots.
- ▶ Businesses and industries producing or handling products or materials which are subject to state or federal environmental controls.
- ▶ Establishments which cater to auto-owners, such as gas stations.
- ▶ Businesses and industries likely to emit off-site noise and odors, vibrations, etc.
- ▶ Businesses and industries operating on a 24-hour basis.
- ▶ Natural resource extraction industries.
- ▶ Developments located on a major highway (i.e. M-46) for which the community wishes to coordinate development activity.

While the above list should not be considered exhaustive, it indicates the types of factors likely to result in land use compatibility problems unless carefully planned and properly regulated.

Special Land Uses

Unlike uses permitted by right, special land uses are subject to both discretionary and non-discretionary review standards. They also require a public hearing for public comment. As part of the approval process, special land uses may be conditional upon certain performance guarantees and operational restrictions, to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area. Although pre-existing uses such as an existing excavation operation are guaranteed certain vested rights to continue, implementation of regulatory measures governing such uses (e.g. future expansions) are possible under zoning.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Planned unit development is a creative design and development tool found in most zoning ordinances. PUD standards typically permit some level of relaxation of the of the regulations (e.g. minimum lot area, setback requirements, density standards etc.) normally applied to the zone district in which the PUD is to be located. Relaxation is predicated on the design and construction of a project offering amenities considered highly desirable by the community. For instance, in return for allowing an increase in housing density in clustered fashion, the developer will agree to reserve a large portion of the development site as permanent open space.

In addition to the above tools, the Township Zoning Ordinance should contain up to date standards governing:

- ✓ site design/ landscaping/ streetscaping
- ✓ comprehensive parking standards which are closely geared to specific land use types
- ✓ site access and circulation standards
- ✓ home occupations, day care facilities, communication towers, etc.

Winfield Township Capital Improvements Program

As stated earlier, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a schedule of short and long range capital projects that have been earmarked for funding by the Township Board. Elements of the CIP include: project identification, project description, implementation timetable, project cost, funding sources, party responsible for undertaking project.

New State Legislation

The State of Michigan has recently enacted a law requiring communities to develop open space preservation provisions, such as those recommended in this Master Plan. The newly enacted Act No. 177 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 2001 ("Act 177") requires that zoned townships having a population of 1,800 or more, and having undeveloped land zoned for residential development, must adopt provisions in their Zoning Ordinances known as "open space preservation" provisions. These provisions must permit lands, satisfying specific criteria, to be developed with clustering. These provisions are to be at the option of the landowner/developer, which is significant because PUD's are at the discretion of the Township. The development is permitted to have the same number of dwellings as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance, but not more than 50 percent of that, as determined by the Township, could be developed (i.e. at least 50 percent of the land area is to remain as open space).

This new legislation reflects what Winfield Township is attempting to promote through this Master Plan. Therefore, Winfield Township should develop new zoning regulations that are in compliance with this new legislation by the end of 2002.

Purchase of Development Rights & Transfer of Development Rights

The purchase of development rights (PDR) program is authorized under the Township Zoning Act. Its main purpose is to allow a landowner to voluntarily sell the development rights to his/her property, providing compensation for not developing the land. The landowner maintains full ownership of their land for agricultural uses and the land can be sold or transferred, but cannot be used for non-farm development.

Benefits of using purchase of development rights don't only exist with the preservation of farmland. With the income from the sale of the development rights the landowner has money to expand the farm operation, pay off debt, pay for college education, provide inheritance to non-farm related children, provide retirement funds, and much more. Besides extra income, the sale of development rights allows the land to be assessed at a lower tax rate, decreasing property tax and inheritance taxes of the land.

Funds for the PDR program may come from private agencies like the American Farmland Trust, state bond referendums, grants, donations, P.A. 116 lien fund, or an increase in other local funding sources such as a special assessment district. For the township to facilitate the PDR program it must have a program of farmland preservation which includes the adoption of a PDR ordinance.

The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) option can compensate a landowner for not developing their land by allowing the development rights to be transferred to a development district. For TDR to work two districts need to be established, a preservation, or "Sending" area, where no development will occur, and a "Receiving" area that uses the rights for higher development densities above current zoning guidelines. The TDR then becomes a tool to redirect growth from one area of the community to another.

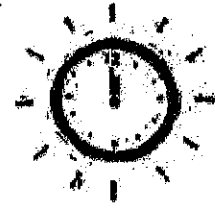
TDR has similar characteristics to PDR. Each has as its focus the protection of agricultural land while allowing the landowner to be compensated for not selling and developing their land. Compensation benefits include reduced tax assessments, the right to buy, sell, or transfer the property, and the knowledge that the land will be preserved for future generations to use and enjoy. TDR would require more planning and oversight by the township.

Public Act 116 of 1974

Although not a tool that can be directly administered by the township; the PA 116 program is a land preservation tool that can be used by farmers within the township to preserve farmland and may as a result affect how land changes within the community as time goes by.

The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Eligible farmland includes parcels that are 40 acres or more in size with at least 51% of the land used for agriculture; parcels that are less than 40 acres in size, but at least 5 acres in size with more than 51% of the land in agriculture and the land produces a gross annual income of more than \$200 per tillable acre; or the farm has been designated by the Michigan Department of Agriculture as a specialty farm at least 15 acres in size and has a gross annual income in excess of \$2,000 per year.

Benefits of the PA 116 program include land preservation (for a set number of years), tax credits for property owners and potential exemptions from special assessments.



Plan Education

Citizen involvement and support will be necessary as the Plan is implemented. Local officials should constantly strive to develop procedures which make citizens more aware of the planning process and the day to day decision making which affects implementation of the Plan. A continuous program of discussion, education and participation will be extremely important as the Township moves toward realization of the goals and objectives contained within the Master Plan.

Plan Updates

The Plan should not become a static document. The Township Planning Commission should attempt to re-evaluate and update portions of it on a periodic basis. The land use portion should be reviewed annually and updated at least once every three to five years.

Winfield Township Master Plan 2002 Community Survey

We need your help in determining Winfield Township's future!

We are asking that you answer the following questions about issues concerning Township. ***There is no need for you to put your name or address on this survey. All Questions Are For Classification Purposes Only and Will Not Be Disclosed Individually.***

1. How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements about the quality of life in Winfield Township? Please circle your response.						
1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
a.	I am proud to say that I live in Winfield Township.	65	53	92	26	13
b.	There is a strong sense of community in Winfield Township.	35	29	100	47	30
c.	Natural features (trees, fields, and lakes) in Winfield Township are important to me.	177	32	22	4	5
d.	Winfield Township is changing too quickly.	43	44	88	35	28
e.	The new homes being built are good for the township.	65	64	74	25	21
f.	Traffic is a problem on my street.	44	31	54	41	16
g.	People should be able to operate businesses out of their homes.	76	37	65	30	40
h.	I like the fact that Winfield Township does not have a lot of homes or businesses.	62	53	75	37	27
i.	Homes on large lots are needed to preserve our open space, even if those lots are more expensive to buy.	86	50	42	29	46
j.	I am concerned about how growth might affect the township.	91	60	54	23	21

2. How important are these issues for Winfield Township in the next 10 years? Please circle your response.						
1 Very Important to 5 Not Important At All		Very Important		Not Important At All		
a.	Keeping my neighborhood the way it is now	116	54	44	20	16
b.	Preserving views to open fields, forests, and lakes	147	55	29	10	8
c.	Attracting new industrial businesses for jobs	54	42	63	37	56
d.	Protecting the water quality of our lakes	218	27	12	0	1

**2. How important are these issues for Winfield Township in the next 10 years?
Please circle your response.**

1 Very Important to 5 Not Important At All		Very Important		Not Important At All		
e.	Encouraging new commercial businesses and services	62	51	61	33	45
f.	Putting restrictions on businesses run out of homes	73	39	61	32	41
g.	Protecting the quality of our groundwater (well water)	191	30	20	3	3
h.	Improving existing roads	185	41	27	2	3
i.	Directing growth to planned areas	104	72	46	12	18
j.	Developing parks and recreational activities	83	58	61	30	20
k.	Providing more public access points to lakes	47	43	73	38	53
l.	Preventing lakeshore erosion	122	69	44	10	13
m.	Maintaining property rights	192	42	17	3	2
n.	Improving public services, such as road maintenance, ambulance response, and fire/police services	160	56	36	6	1
o.	Preserving farmland	137	44	48	17	11

**3. How much of a problem are the following conditions to you?
Please Circle your response.**

1 Significant Problem to 5 No Problem		Significant Problem		No Problem		
a.	Cars driving too fast on township roads	101	47	61	33	22
b.	Boat/recreational traffic on lakes	50	45	84	31	38
c.	Quality of my drinking water	76	38	47	31	54
d.	Safety of township roads	85	56	65	23	19
e.	Junk in people's yards	129	48	39	17	20
f.	Not enough job creating businesses	66	34	78	33	46
g.	Current rate at which the township is growing	46	35	97	37	37
h.	Timeliness of snow removal	50	36	82	42	40
i.	Condition of paved roads	125	46	50	18	8
j.	Degree to which government infringes on property rights of individual land owners	60	53	81	18	21
k.	Too many homes and driveways along roads	16	29	76	53	76

**3. How much of a problem are the following conditions to you?
Please Circle your response.**

1 Significant Problem to 5 No Problem		Significant Problem			No Problem	
l.	Lack of law enforcement on lakes	48	34	66	51	52
m.	Loss of farmland to new homes	74	47	59	38	36
n.	Conflicts between farm operations and new residents	44	43	89	37	42
o.	Loss of trees and open spaces	79	48	66	31	28
p.	Lack of commercial businesses in the township	36	45	69	43	56
q.	Changing large tracts of land into small lots	83	43	59	34	31
r.	Rising costs of property and homes	78	48	54	33	34

**4. How strongly do you agree/disagree with these statements?
Please circle your response.**

1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		
a.	New homes should be allowed as long as adequate public services are available (septic, roads, water, fire, police, schools, etc.)	98	66	51	21	19
b.	Lots that are too large are a waste of land.	33	21	40	42	119
c.	Growth is all right as long as the township is made up mostly of homes that are widely spaced apart.	52	47	85	30	38
d.	Having more commercial and industrial businesses can help keep my taxes reasonable.	65	36	81	28	38
e.	Growth and development are acceptable to me as long as natural areas are preserved.	80	75	59	18	20
f.	The Township should carefully control the amount and location of new development.	112	63	37	14	23
g.	Allowing too many small lots will cause the township to lose its rural character.	114	47	29	34	22
h.	Winfield Township needs more homes.	23	22	94	43	66
i.	New commercial businesses and services should be kept out of the township.	25	17	72	35	100
j.	Industrial businesses don't belong in the township.	36	28	66	38	84
k.	I will still live in Winfield Township even if new people keep moving into the township.	103	55	64	11	15

4. How strongly do you agree/disagree with these statements? Please circle your response.

1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
l.	Junk and old cars in yards is a big problem to me.	145	24	31	20	23
m.	The Township should pass regulations to make it difficult to develop home sites on farmland.	53	43	63	37	56
n.	The Township should offer incentives to property owners or developers to preserve natural areas, like wetlands.	119	63	44	5	13
o.	More homes and businesses will cause Winfield Township to lose its rural character.	66	47	60	37	37
p.	Mobile Homes will offer an affordable housing option to Winfield Township.	28	24	55	39	100

5. Please select the ONE statement that best describes your feelings about growth in Winfield Township. Please read all responses before selecting ONE.

a.	Growth should be encouraged in the township, with some restrictions.	113
b.	Growth should be allowed with as few Township restrictions as possible.	27
c.	I am satisfied with the way growth is occurring in the township.	32
d.	Growth is inevitable and the Township has little control over it.	18
e.	Growth should be tightly restricted everywhere in the township.	46
f.	The Township should try to prevent as much new development as possible.	17

6. How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements about housing in Winfield Township? Please circle your response.

1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
a.	Families wanting to move into Winfield Township should have a broad range of housing types, such as mobile homes, site-built homes, and apartments, available to them.	42	38	60	38	66
b.	Families wanting to move to Winfield Township can find homes they can afford.	65	64	91	15	10

6. How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements about housing in Winfield Township? Please circle your response.						
1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
c.	Smaller lots should be allowed to make homes more affordable for young families.	41	34	74	48	51
d.	The value of my home has continued to increase.	99	75	53	10	13
e.	The homes near me are well maintained.	81	77	49	19	22
f.	My home is assessed in a fair and equal manner.	42	51	85	37	33
g.	I plan to make improvements to my house in the near future.	53	56	70	30	36
h.	The Township should encourage the building of more homes.	34	35	85	37	59

7. How important were the following when you decided to move to/live in Winfield Township?						
1 Very Important to 5 Not Important At All		Very Important			Not Important At All	
a.	Family or job nearby	64	28	38	27	91
b.	Quality of schools	65	33	51	24	74
c.	Natural features (woods, lakes, open space)	163	41	27	8	9
d.	Minimal governmental regulation	58	58	98	13	20
e.	Good air and water quality	146	60	29	6	11
f.	Low crime rate	138	65	33	9	6
g.	Rural surroundings	147	57	38	4	4
h.	Being away from larger cities	142	41	25	6	14
i.	Farming opportunities	83	16	27	44	76
j.	A home I could afford	114	47	58	14	19
k.	Availability of lakefront property	78	29	47	22	69
l.	A good place to spend my retirement years	129	32	44	20	25
k.	Easy availability of housing/land	59	54	86	19	28
l.	Quick access to larger cities	84	60	52	22	34

GENERAL QUESTIONS

These questions are for classification purposes only and are not disclosed individually.

**8. Which of the following best describes your home in Winfield Township?
Please circle all that apply.**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Single family homeowner [162] | 5. Manufactured home owner or renter [24] |
| 2. Single family renter [2] | 6. Seasonal resident [28] |
| 3. Apartment renter [1] | 7. Lakefront property [67] |
| 4. Farm resident [37] | 8. Seasonal renter [0] |
| | 9. Other (please specify) [13-land owner] |

9. How long have you lived in Winfield Township?

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Less than a year [12] | 5. 15 to 20 years [24] |
| 2. 1 to 5 years [78] | 6. 20 to 25 years [10] |
| 3. 6 to 10 years [32] | 7. More than 25 years [57] |
| 4. 10 to 15 years [40] | |

10. How long have you lived in your current home?

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Less than a year [17] | 5. 15 to 20 years [24] |
| 2. 1 to 5 years [75] | 6. 20 to 25 years [18] |
| 3. 6 to 10 years [36] | 7. More than 25 years [41] |
| 4. 10 to 15 years [35] | |

11. What is your age?

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 24 or under [12] | 3. 45 to 64 [110] |
| 2. 25 to 44 [77] | 4. 65 and older [55] |

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL OUT THIS IMPORTANT SURVEY.

COMMENTS

In the space below please make any comments you wish to express about any of the questions, or any other issue important to you. If you need more space please feel free to attach additional pages.