

# MASTER PLAN 2021-2041

WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP  
CLARE COUNTY, MICHIGAN



ADOPTED BY THE WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD ON MAY 10, 2022



WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2022-3

At a regular meeting of the Township Board of the Township of Winterfield, held at the Winterfield Township Hall, Marion, Michigan on May 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mark Hammar, Bonnie Blackledge, Linda Peterson, Shelly Laughlin, and Fred Prielipp

Absent: None

The following Resolution was offered by Blackledge and seconded by Hammar:

**Resolution of Adoption**

**Winterfield Township Master Plan 2021 - 2041**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Winterfield has established a Planning Commission under the Planning Enabling Act, State Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township Planning Commission is required by Section 7 of said Act to make and adopt a master plan as a guide for the physical development of the Township; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township Planning Commission has worked with the consultants at Wade Trim to oversee a master plan update process that included public input as well as investigations and surveys of the existing resources; and,

**WHEREAS**, the updated plan was presented to the public at a hearing held on April 12, 2022, before the Planning Commission, with notice of the hearing being provided in accordance with Section 43 of Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township Planning Commission did review the proposed plan, consider public comment, identify needed changes, and recommend adoption of the Master Plan on April 12, 2022; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township Board of Winterfield Township concurs with the recommendations and proposals contained in the plan pertinent to the future development of the Township;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that The Township Board of Winterfield Township does hereby adopt the Winterfield Township Master Plan 2021-2041 by means of the passing of this resolution, hereby adopted this 10th day of May, 2022.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Resolution is declared adopted.



Bonnie Blackledge  
Winterfield Township Clerk

State of Michigan

)ss.

County of Clare

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Township Clerk for Winterfield Township, Clare County, Michigan, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of certain proceedings taken by the Township Board of Winterfield Township at a regular meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2022.



Bonnie Blackledge, Winterfield Township Clerk

**WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION  
WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN 2021-2041**

Resolution Number: PC 22-1

The following Resolution was offered by Commissioner Shelly Laughlin and seconded by Commissioner Julie Traynor:

WHEREAS, The Township of Winterfield has established a Planning Commission under the Planning Enabling Act, State Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, The Township Planning Commission is required by Section 7 of said Act to make and adopt a master plan as a guide for the physical development of the township; and,

WHEREAS, The Township Planning Commission has worked with the consultants at Wade Trim to oversee a master plan update process that included public input as well as investigations and surveys of the existing resources; and,

WHEREAS, The updated plan was presented to the public at a hearing held on April 12, 2022, before the Planning Commission, with notice of the hearing being provided in accordance with Section 43 of Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The content of this document, as revised during the April 12, 2022 Planning Commission meeting, together with all maps attached to and contained herein, is hereby recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission as the Winterfield Township Master Plan 2021-2041, on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022.

AYES: 4 S. Laughlin, J. Traynor, B. Freiberg, R. Dommer

NAYS: Ø

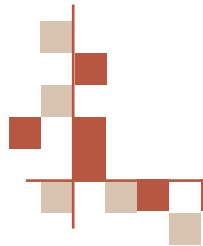
ABSENT: 1 A. Laughlin

I, Shelly Laughlin, Secretary of the Winterfield Township Planning Commission, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution that was offered by the Winterfield Township Planning Commission at their meeting held on April 12, 2022.

Shelly Laughlin  
Signature







# WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN 2021-2041

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ADOPTED BY THE WINTERFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD ON MAY 10, 2022



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 AUTHORITY TO PLAN

The Winterfield Township Planning Commission prepared this Master Plan under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. Article 3, Section 125.3831 of the Act states:

*A planning commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction:*

*a ) In the preparation of a master plan, a planning commission shall do all of the following, as applicable:*

- 1) Make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth within the planning jurisdiction with due regard to its relation to neighboring jurisdictions.*
- 2) Consult with representatives of adjacent local units of government in respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided.*
- 3) Cooperate with all departments of the state and federal governments, public transportation agencies, and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social, and physical development within the planning jurisdiction and seek the maximum coordination of the local unit of government's programs with these agencies.*

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Article 1, Section 125.3807 of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008 gives a summary of the purpose of a master plan:

*The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that...is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical; considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land and population development; and will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.*

Additionally, the Master Plan should provide a general statement of the community's goals and a comprehensive vision of the future. It should also serve as the statutory basis for the Zoning Ordinance, and as the primary policy guide for local officials considering development proposals, land divisions, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development, pursuant to section 203(1) of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006. Every community's master plan is unique, focusing on important issues and challenges specific to that community. This Master Plan is designed to highlight local issues and to identify solutions to meet local needs.





## 1.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

This Master Plan was formulated through a process of active participation of the citizens of Winterfield Township. Two primary methods were utilized to engage the public. The first was a citizen opinion survey facilitated as a means to gain an understanding of community interests, needs, desires and goals. This survey was active in October of 2020 and gained 80 total responses. The survey was available in both hard copy and online formats. The second key engagement method was a public workshop held in July of 2021. The workshop included a brief educational presentation about Master Planning and the purpose of a Master Plan, as well as highlights about the current community profile and recent survey results. The workshop allowed citizens to work together in small groups to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that relate to land use and development within Winterfield Township.

Pursuant to the public hearing notification requirements of Section 125.3843, Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, the Planning Commission, on April 12, 2022, conducted a public hearing on the Plan. Pursuant to the comments received from those present at the meeting, the Planning Commission identified several revisions and then passed a resolution recommending adoption of the plan. At their meeting on May 10, 2022, the Township Board followed the Planning Commission's recommendation and adopted the Master Plan.

## 1.4 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Master Plan report is comprised of nine sections. The first section of the Master Plan is the Introduction, which gives an overview of the Master Plan and Winterfield Township. The second section is the Executive Summary, which serves as a summary of the major findings and conclusions of the Master Plan for quick reference purposes.

The next five sections (Socio-economic Profile, Natural Resources Assessment, Existing Land Use, Transportation Analysis, and Infrastructure) form the background studies portion of the Master Plan. These sections highlight important conditions, characteristics, and trends within Winterfield Township that have direct impacts on current and future land use. Community Goals and Objectives form the eighth section of the Master Plan. The goals and objectives are formulated through citizen input and participation, and are presented to guide future development. The goals and objectives also consider the key land use trends, population trends, natural resources, and other issues presented in the background information sections.

The Future Land Use Plan forms the ninth section of the Master Plan. Based on the background information, goals and objectives, and other information such as current market trends, the Future Land Use Plan specifies the extent and location of where various types of future development can be accommodated within the Township.

The Implementation and Zoning Plan is the final section of the Master Plan. It serves as a guide for implementing the recommendations in the Master Plan.



## 1.5 LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Winterfield Township is located in the northwestern corner of Clare County, in the gateway region separating central and northern Michigan. Clare County is a rural county featuring bountiful environmental amenities such as lakes, rivers, and heavy forest lands. Tourists and seasonal residents are drawn to the area because of these environmental features and their related recreational activities.

No incorporated communities are found within Winterfield Township. The nearest incorporated communities include the Village of Marion to the west and the City of McBain to the northwest, and the City of Harrison to the southeast (Harrison is the county-seat of Clare County.) Larger communities are also located within a short distance from Winterfield Township, including Cadillac (20 miles northwest), Mt. Pleasant (40 miles south), Midland (50 miles southeast), and Traverse City (60 miles northwest). Major regional transportation routes include U.S. Highway 127, M-61, M-66, and M-115.

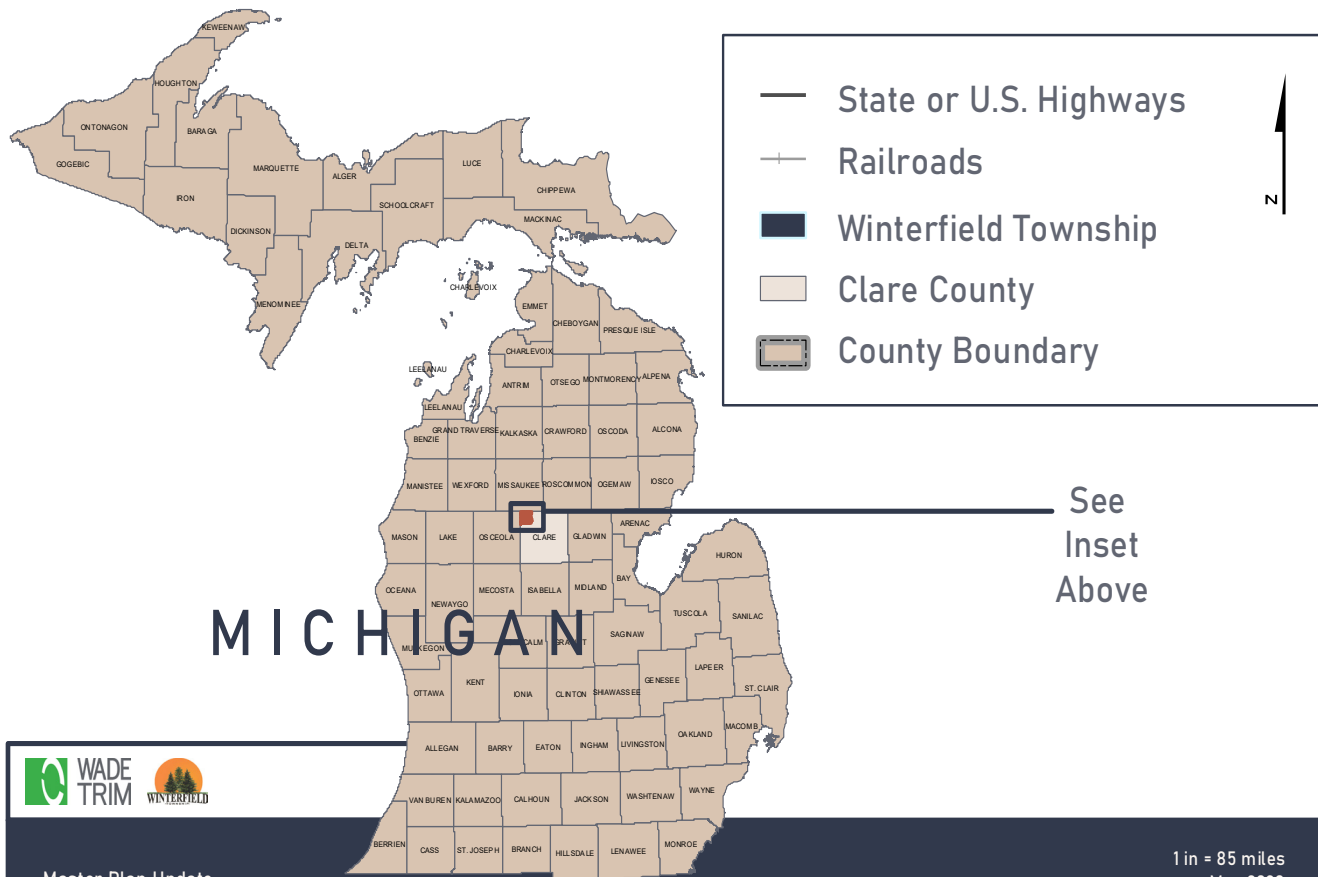
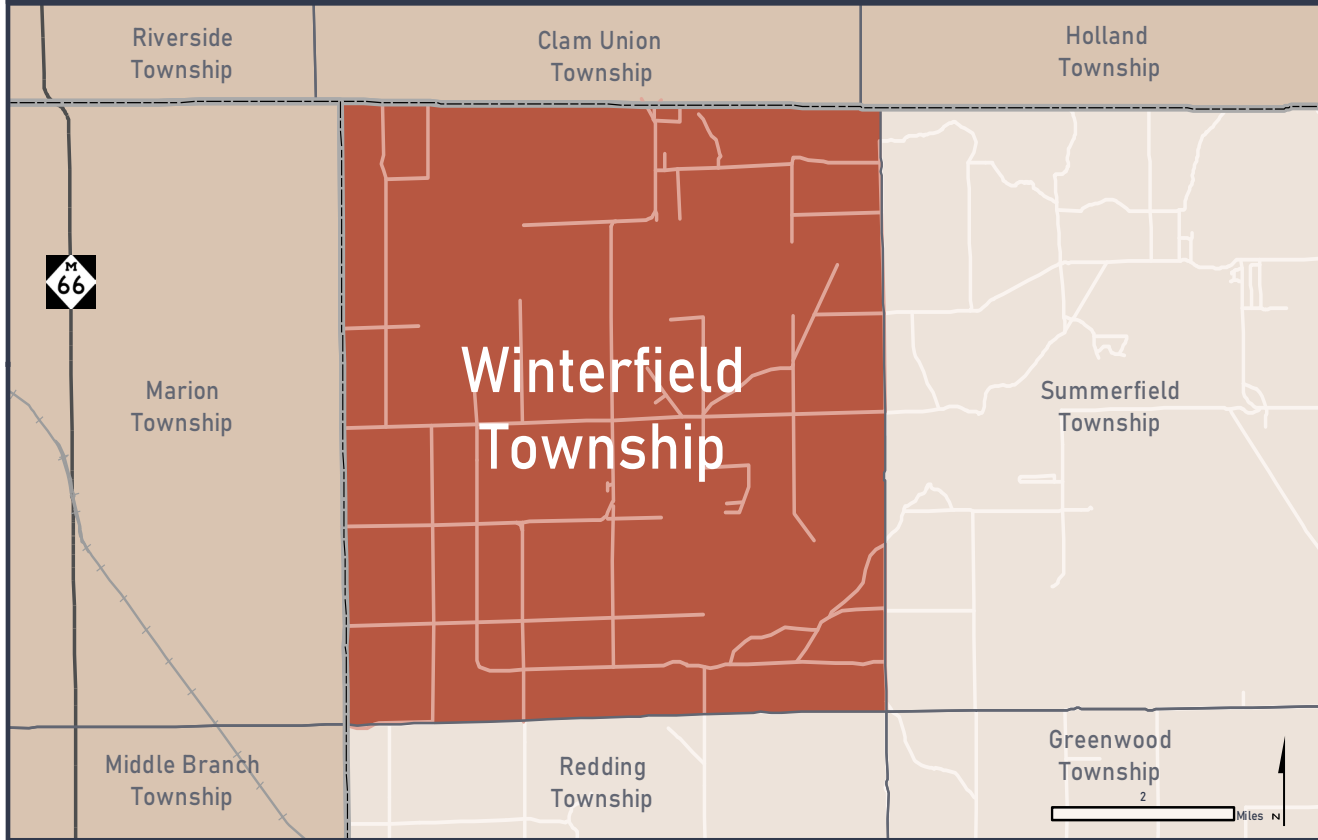
Winterfield Township is made up of the geographic township T20N-R6W of Clare County. Five townships in three different counties border Winterfield, including Clam Union Township and Holland Township (Missaukee County) to the north, Marion Township (Osceola County) to the west, Redding Township (Clare County) to the south, and Summerfield Township (Clare County) to the east. **Map 1** shows the geographic location of Winterfield Township.



**Image 1.** Winterfield Township

# Map 1

# Geographic Location



Master Plan Update  
Winterfield Township, Clare County

1 in = 85 miles  
May 2020  
Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library





## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary is provided to highlight major findings of each section, for quick reference purposes.

### 2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

The socio-economic profile provides insight into the physical and financial characteristics of the residents, the housing stock, and the economy of Winterfield Township. This insight is important for developing timely, and appropriate, community policies in order to meet the diverse and changing needs of the population.

#### POPULATION

Over the past few decades, the population of Winterfield Township has risen and fallen with an overall upward trend. However, the population has been declining since 2000. Clare County exhibits a similar trend over the same time period. Based on the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) population projections, Clare County is expected to have a slow population growth through 2045. A similar trend can be expected for Winterfield Township.

The majority of the Township's population is within the Family Formation years and the Empty Nester years (20-64 years of age). The median age is 46.3 years, which is over 7 years higher than the average age for the State of Michigan, which is not unusual in retirement communities like Winterfield Township. The racial demographic of Winterfield Township residents is 89% non-Hispanic white.

#### HOUSEHOLDS

Since 2010, there has been an increase in single-person households, and a decrease in all other households sizes (2-person, 3-person, and 4-person). Additionally, over 33% of the Winterfield population is made up of households with at least one person 65 years and older. This supports the notion that Winterfield Township is primarily a retirement community with many elderly couples and empty-nesters.

#### HOUSING

In general, the majority of the Township's housing stock is single-family dwelling units that are owner-occupied. When compared to the number of owner-occupied units, there are very few renter-occupied units (approximately 17% of all occupied units). At present, there are approximately 353 housing units in Winterfield Township; of these units, only 189 are occupied, suggesting the presence of seasonal residents. In terms of age, most of the housing was built between 1950 and 2010, with very few units (2) being built in the last decade.

Housing values are a meaningful indicator to determine both housing quality and affordability. Per the 2014-2018 American Community Survey, the median home value in Winterfield Township is \$87,200. This value is similar to the County-wide median home value.



## ECONOMY

Income and poverty levels are helpful measures of the economic health of a community. In Winterfield Township, the median household income is \$38,295, which is higher than the median household income for Clare County (at \$37,369). Approximately 19% of the entire Winterfield Township population is living below the federal poverty line, while nearly 22% of the population of 35 years of age or older is below the poverty line. Since most of the population is older than 35 years of age, it is important to monitor this percentage to ensure that the needs of aging residents are met.

More than 90% of Winterfield Township's population (age 25 or older) has graduated high school. This is a positive statistic representing the highest high school graduate percentage of all of the surrounding townships and Clare County. A small percentage of the population completed a bachelor's degree or higher level of degree (5.6%). Educational attainment is often an indicator of financial success and economic health in a community. The level of education contributes to the employment opportunities and industries that will meet the skills of the local work force.

The major employment sectors in the Township are Educational and Health Care services, and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining. Together, these sectors account for 53% of the workforce. The workforce in Winterfield Township is quite small, according to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey. Therefore, it can be assumed that many of the residents are of retirement age.

## 2.2 NATURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

The natural environment is a major factor in how, where, and what gets developed in a community. Natural features may prevent certain development from occurring in the same way the policy and regulation may inhibit land development. Winterfield Township has a seasonal climate, with temperatures ranging from below 0-degree Fahrenheit in the winter to over 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer months. The county gets a decent amount of precipitation, totaling nearly 90 inches of snow and rainfall annually.

Winterfield's geology stems from shallow marine seas and glacial activity, originating millions of years ago. Together, the glacier and seas left behind several layers of different sediments, and stones, eventually forming the bedrock of sandstone, shale, coal and limestone that exists in the Township today.

In general, the topography of Winterfield Township is flat or gently sloped. While there are some areas of steeper elevation, the Township's elevation ranges only 190 feet from 1,040 feet above sea level to 1,230 feet above sea level. The Township does not have any steep hills that would impede development; however, as a best practice, those areas with lesser slopes are more suitable for land development.

Woodlands and forests are one of the primary natural features found throughout the Township. The Township is comprised of both upland and lowland forests, which together make up a diverse collection of trees. Woodlands presently



cover approximately 55% of the Township, offering many opportunities for scenic and recreation attraction. Wetlands are an additional, extremely important, natural resource found within Winterfield. These wetlands form approximately 5.5% of the Township, and many of the wetlands are protected by state and federal governments.

There are a few major water bodies that run through Winterfield Township, including the Muskegon River and its two tributaries: the Clam River, and the West Branch Clam River. There are also two lakes within the Township, one private lake and a portion of Cranberry Lake. There are six different prominent soil associations within the Township. Some of the soils are suitable for development, while others are more problematic.

The Township's natural environment, including open spaces, woodlands, wetlands and water bodies, supports an abundant and diverse wildlife population with an abundance of bird species including many migratory birds.

## 2.3 EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

An analysis of the existing land development informs the decisions made concerning proposals for new development and future development. The Existing Land Use Map was created using digital information from a variety of sources and includes the Township boundary line, streets, water bodies, and parcel lines.

Winterfield Township can be characterized as a rural community, which lacks intensive land uses, and commercial properties, while primarily supporting agricultural, recreational, and residential activities. The land use types which account for the majority of the Township are Vacant/Right of Way, Single-Family Residential, and State-Owned Land. Among the land use types found within the Township are agricultural, single-family residential, one commercial property, industrial uses and gas company uses, public/semi-public land, state- and federally- owned land, vacant land, and water bodies.

## 2.4 TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Winterfield Township is proximate to four state and U.S. highways, which allows for mobility to and from the Township to other major and minor cities in the region. Many roads within the Township are currently unpaved county roads, though several of the primary, more traveled roads are paved. There are few options for mobility and transportation other than via personal vehicle. Many of the more rural roads may be suitable for bikers; however, the conditions of the unpaved roads vary and these routes would serve primarily a recreational purpose.

## 2.5 INFRASTRUCTURE

Roadway infrastructure is maintained by the Clare County Road Commission. Potable water and sewer facilities are privately owned and operated through wells and septic tanks. Electricity and gas are provided through Consumers Energy, DTE Gas, and in some cases, Great Lakes Energy. Many residents privately own or rent LPG (Liquefied Propane Gas)





equipment and storage for residential use. LPG is supplied by many regional independent suppliers who in turn depend on reliable State infrastructure to obtain LPG product at competitive prices. Together, these systems provide the bulk of utilities and other services for residents and businesses within Winterfield Township. The Township owns and operates the Winterfield Township Transfer Facilities for the management and proper disposal of non-human solid waste. At this time, there are no renewable energy source producers located within Winterfield Township.

## 2.6 TOWNSHIP GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Winterfield Township developed goals and objectives that align with community needs, desires, goals, and sentiments that were identified as part of the Township's public participation process. As a result, the Township identified community-wide goals and land use-specific goals. The community-wide goals act as a guide for the specialized land use goals and objectives, and are centered around promoting environmental protection, access to recreation, smart and controlled growth, and intergovernmental cooperation for the provision of goods and services. The land use-specific goals complement the broader community-wide goals, but address the direct needs of each land use type: residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, public lands, and more.

## 2.7 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The overriding principle behind the Future Land Use Plan is to maintain the existing rural and environmentally rich character of Winterfield Township. The future land use categories are intended to uphold this principle while guiding the future growth of the Township. In keeping with several community-wide goals that seek to preserve and protect the Township's abundant natural resources and to maintain the rural character of the community, the greatest amount of land in Winterfield Township is designated for future Agricultural/Rural Residential use. This future land use classification is designed to accommodate rural land uses consistent with the Township's existing rural character and natural resources. The Low Density Residential future land use classification is intended to provide for a compact area within the Township that will accommodate future residential growth. Other future land use classifications have been established to accommodate limited growth, including Medium Density Residential, Commercial, Township Center and Industrial.

## 2.8 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A key implementation recommendation of this Master Plan is to proceed with a zoning ordinance update after the adoption of this Master Plan. Important zoning changes relate to topics such as in-home residential care facilities, senior living facilities, home occupations, agri-tourism and agri-business. Additionally, various minor changes to the Zoning Ordinance are likely necessary to address contemporary zoning issues.

### 3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

When developing a master plan, it is important to perform background studies to identify the nature and character of the community's natural, human, and institutional environments. Socio-economic characteristics are essential components in the development of any master plan and continuing planning processes. While an evaluation of the community's current situation provides insight into immediate needs and deficiencies, projections provide a basis for determining future land use requirements, public facility needs, and essential services.

By examining socioeconomic characteristics such as population, income, and employment base, a community can identify trends and opportunities that will influence future land use decisions and policy choices. Since certain socio-economic analyses have an identifiable impact upon the future of a community, appropriate sections have been detailed to relate social trends to future economic considerations. Secondly, the socio-economy of a township does not function in a vacuum. Consequently, this analysis is benchmarked, when appropriate, to larger socioeconomic environments and trends.

Throughout this section, the analysis of demographic and socio-economic data often suggests potential community wide "needs", such as types of housing. It is important to understand that these "needs" are meant to inform the development of this Master Plan but beyond that are not intended to establish public policy. Further, the data and discussions in this section should be used cautiously as it only pertains to year-round residents of the Township and does not include the significant number of seasonal community stakeholders.

#### 3.1 POPULATION

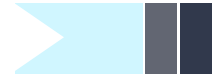
Population growth is the most important factor influencing land use decisions in any community. If the population is growing, there will be an increased need for housing, commerce, industry, parks and recreation, public services and facilities, and roads.

**Table 1. Population Trends (1940 to Present)**

Population Trends									
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018
Winterfield Township	311	297	285	335	418	371	483	456	443
Clare County	9,163	10,253	11,647	16,695	23,822	24,952	31,252	31,162	30,616
Michigan	5,256,106	6,371,766	7,823,194	8,875,083	9,262,070	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,952,687	9,957,488

Source: 1940 - 2000 U.S. Census; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 1** shows the population trends for Winterfield Township, Clare County, and the State of Michigan since 1940. As shown in the table, the population has increased and decreased over time with an overall upwards trend. Since the development of the last Master Plan, Winterfield Township has seen a decline in population decreasing from 483 in 2000 to 443 in 2018. While this decline in population is not a large number per se, it does represent a steady eight percent decline in population. The Township's pattern of population growth - peaking in the year 2000 and continuing to decline into the year 2018 - is similar to that of Clare County, which also saw a growing population with a peak of 31,252 in 2000 and whose current population rests at about 30,616. The State of Michigan has been steadily growing in population, nearly doubling since the year 1940 growing from 5,256,106 to 9,957,488.



**Table 2. Population Projections (Present-2045)**

Population Projections								
Clare County								
	2018	2019	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
0 - 4 Years Old	1657	1686	1717	1833	1842	1834	1868	1903
5 - 17 Years Old	4325	4334	4343	4535	4718	4925	4944	4906
18 - 34 Years Old	5528	5549	5571	5584	5394	5349	5550	5618
35 - 54 Years Old	6671	6566	6485	6587	7280	7856	8079	8080
55 - 74 Years Old	9219	9194	9180	8589	7717	6825	6342	6469
75 Years and Older	3058	3145	3220	3809	4347	4647	4656	4371
Total	30458	30474	30516	30937	31298	31436	31439	31347

Source: Economic & Demographic Outlook for EMCOG Counties Through 2045

Link: <http://www.emcog.org/forecasts.asp>

The East Michigan Council of Governments developed a population projection for Clare County that predicts population change from 2018 to 2045. Since Winterfield Township has historically followed a similar population change trend as Clare County, it can be assumed that the Township will follow a similar trend as the county in the future. These population projections predict that the County will see an overall growth in population leading up to 2045 (see **Table 2**). The year 2040 is predicted to be another peak year, with populations beginning to decline slightly in 2045.

## 3.2 AGE DISTRIBUTION

An age distribution analysis is used by demographers and policy makers to anticipate future changes and needs in housing, resource/goods consumption, medical care, education, and recreation. In this analysis, five general life cycles are defined:

- Preschool (0-4 years)
- School (5-19 years)
- Family Formation (20-44 years)
- Empty Nester (45-64 years)
- Elderly (65 years or older)

As shown by **Table 3**, the majority of Winterfield Township's population is between the ages of 20 and 64 years old, falling in the Family Formation and Empty Nester life cycles. When compared to Michigan, the Township's average age is high at approximately 46 years old (see **Table 4**). Together, these data indicate an aging population and inform the potential future and changing needs of the community, such as ADA improvements, smaller single-story homes, senior and assisted living facilities, infrastructure to promote aging in place, senior programming, and medical care facilities. The demand for education, recreation, and consumer goods from the younger age groups (0-19 years old) is not as high as the need for aging-related amenities.





**Table 3. Age Distribution (2018)**

Age Distribution			
	Winterfield Township	Clare County	Michigan
0 - 4 Years Old	25	1,648	572,374
5 - 19 Years Old	59	5,000	1,895,750
20 - 44 Years Old	130	7,875	3,133,298
45 - 64 Years Old	138	9,052	3,010,600
65 Years and Older	91	7,041	1,620,944
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

**Table 4. Median Age, 2010-2018**

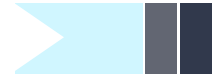
Median Age			
	Winterfield Township	Clare County	Michigan
2010	44.7	44.7	38.1
2018	46.3	47.2	39.2
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

### 3.3 RACE & ETHNICITY

The racial identities of Winterfield Township residents as reported in the two most recent American Community Surveys are presented in **Table 5**. A comparison of the data for the different years show that the non-white population more than doubled from around 5% in 2010 to more than 11% of the population in 2018.

**Table 5. Racial Distribution, 2010-2018**

Racial Distribution		
Winterfield Township		
	2010	2018
White	437	417
Black or African American	0	0
Asian	0	0
American Indian and Alaska Native	19	10
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0	0
Some Other Race	0	1
Two or More Races	0	15
Hispanic or Latino, Any Race	4	22
2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		



## 3.4 HOUSEHOLDS

The number of persons per household constitutes household size. Since the 1970s, the nationwide trend has been a decline in household size. This trend has occurred due to fewer children per family, higher divorce rates, and an increasing number of elderly people living alone.

Knowing whether the household size is increasing or decreasing helps to identify the community's housing needs. If the household size is decreasing, this means that new, smaller housing units may be required to accommodate for more people to live. This can be true even if a population is declining. In some municipalities, the new housing units are being built to accommodate the demand for housing created by lower household sizes despite an overall decline in populations. Since 2010, Winterfield Township, along with all neighboring townships, have experienced an increase in single-person households (a decrease in household size) (see **Tables 6 and 7**). This suggests there may be a need for diverse housing types, to accommodate either young individuals or elderly individuals living alone, such as smaller homes, multi-family housing types, such as apartment complexes, duplexes, condominiums, or townhomes. There has been a decline in all other household sizes (2-person, 3-person, and 4-person). This could be indicative of the empty-nest pattern, where children are leaving Winterfield Township to live in other communities.

**Table 6. Household Size, 2018**

Household Size								
	1 Person		2 Persons		3 Persons		4 or More Persons	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Winterfield Township</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29.10%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>45.50%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7.94%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17.46%</b>
Clam Union Township	84	23.40%	130	36.21%	67	18.66%	78	21.73%
Summerfield Township	51	29.48%	78	45.09%	23	13.29%	21	12.14%
Redding Township	49	35.25%	62	44.60%	10	7.19%	18	12.95%
Marion Township	200	30.12%	256	38.55%	76	11.45%	132	19.88%
Clare County	3632	29.28%	5241	42.25%	1442	11.62%	2091	16.85%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 7. Household Size, 2010**

Household Size (%)				
	1-Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons
<b>Winterfield Township</b>	<b>19.10%</b>	<b>47.50%</b>	<b>14.20%</b>	<b>19.10%</b>
Clam Union Township	16.80%	40.70%	20.50%	21.90%
Summerfield Township	20.70%	57.40%	12.00%	10.00%
Redding Township	33.20%	42.20%	17.60%	7.00%
Marion Township	23.30%	39.30%	15.30%	22.10%
Clare County	29.00%	41.20%	12.10%	17.80%

Source: 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



**Table 8. Household Characteristics, 2018**

Household Characteristics					
	% of Total Households (these 3 columns equal 100%)			% of Total Households (these 2 columns do not equal 100%)	
	Married-Couple Family Households	Single-Parent Family Households	Nonfamily Households	Households with one or more people under 18 years	Households with one or more people 65 years and older
Winterfield Township	59.2%	15.1%	25.7%	20.9%	33.5%
Clam Union Township	56.3%	17.0%	26.7%	32.3%	26.7%
Summerfield Township	57.8%	8.1%	34.1%	14.5%	50.3%
Redding Township	54.0%	7.9%	38.1%	16.5%	41.7%
Marion Township	71.5%	9.4%	19.1%	31.8%	27.9%
Clare County	51.7%	14.5%	33.9%	23.8%	39.5%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 8** examines households in terms of the relationships among the persons who share a housing unit. Included are three different household types: married-couple family households; single-parent family households; and nonfamily households. Presently, nearly 60% of the Township's households are married-couple families. This married-couple family household percentage is notably higher than the County's percentage at 51.7%. About one-fourth of the Township's households are nonfamily households, representing single-person households or households with multiple persons who are not related by blood, marriage or adoption.

Of the 191 total households within the Township, about one-third (33.5%) include one or more people 65 years or older. Alternatively, one-fifth (20.9%) of the Township's households have one or more people under 18 years old.

## 3.5 HOUSING

Housing stock is the most basic measure of housing that refers to the type of housing units found in a community. The U.S. Census Bureau separates housing units into four different categories: 1-unit structures (single-family homes), 2-4 units per structure (duplex units), 5 or more units per structure (apartment buildings), and mobile home or trailer units. **Table 9** shows the distribution of housing units for the Township, surrounding townships, and Clare County in 2018. The housing stock of a community helps to indicate the lifestyles of the residents within the community. At this time, Winterfield Township's housing stock is primarily single-family dwelling units. The aging population and increase in single-person households suggest that there may be a need for more diverse and inclusive housing types, like senior living facilities, first-floor multifamily dwelling units, and small single-family homes. Although these types of units may be available in neighboring communities, it is likely that residents will seek to age-in-place and remain within the Township.



Housing occupancy measures the number of occupied (year-round) housing units and vacant housing units (seasonally-occupied units are considered vacant). Tenure identifies whether those occupied units are inhabited by renters or homeowners. Currently, only a little over half of Winterfield Township's available housing is occupied; seasonal occupancy is likely the top contributor to the high number of vacant units (see **Table 10**). Among those units that are occupied, the majority are occupied by owners (see **Table 11**). This trend is similar to the neighboring townships, where owner-occupied housing is dominant and there is an abundance of housing. High rates of home ownership generally mean that a community has stable and well-kept neighborhoods.

**Table 9. Total Housing Stock, 2018**

Total Housing Stock				
	1-Unit	2-4 Units	5 or More Units	Mobile Home or Trailer Units
Winterfield Township	288	0	3	62
Clam Union Township	472	6	3	51
Summerfield Township	543	0	0	102
Redding Township	400	0	0	120
Marion Township	631	28	27	91
Clare County	18,540	267	768	3,738
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

**Table 10. Housing Occupancy, 2018**

Occupancy Status		
	Occupied	Vacant
Winterfield Township	189	164
Clam Union Township	359	173
Summerfield Township	173	472
Redding Township	139	381
Marion Township	664	113
Clare County	12,406	10,907
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		



**Table 11, Housing Tenure, 2018**

Housing Tenure		
	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied
Winterfield Township	161	28
Clam Union Township	279	80
Summerfield Township	156	17
Redding Township	119	20
Marion Township	514	150
Clare County	10,111	2,295
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

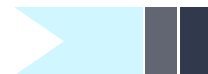
Analyzing the age of housing units is a way to measure the physical quality of the total housing stock of a community. Housing units are divided into categories according to the year the structure was built. These groupings are helpful in determining the economic viability of housing structures. Additionally, the age of a community's housing stock may indicate the need for rehabilitation, lead-paint abatement, and changing needs of the community. Any unit built prior to 1950 is likely in need of some level of housing repairs or rehabilitation. Homes built before 1950 are also more likely to have lead-based paint hazards. At the same time, some of the older housing in a community may be highly desirable due to the historical or architectural value. In Winterfield Township, there have been very few new builds since 2010, with the majority of housing development occurring between 1950 and 2010 (see **Table 12**).

Analyzing housing values is one way to determine both the quality and affordability of housing. It is of crucial importance that a community maintains quality, affordable housing for its current residents and for potential residents. Housing values in Winterfield Township are similar or above the median home value in neighboring townships. The median home value in Winterfield is just below the median value of homes in Clare County, at \$87,200 (see **Table 13**).

**Table 12, Age of Housing, 2018**

Year Structure Built					
	1949 or Earlier	1950 to 1969	1970 to 1989	1990 to 2009	2010 or Later
Winterfield Township	70	88	106	87	2
Clam Union Township	142	94	162	113	21
Summerfield Township	21	317	148	157	2
Redding Township	0	134	170	200	16
Marion Township	210	170	236	161	0
Clare County	2438	6397	7189	6832	456
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates					





**Table 13, Median Home Value, 2018**

Median Home Value	
Winterfield Township	\$87,200
Clam Union Township	\$122,700
Summerfield Township	\$63,300
Redding Township	\$57,700
Marion Township	\$81,600
Clare County	\$88,400
*Data refers to value for owner-occupied units	
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	

## 3.6 INCOME & POVERTY

Income and poverty level data are a good way to measure the relative economic health of a community. **Table 14** shows median household incomes for Winterfield Township, neighboring townships, and Clare County. Median household income is a measure of the average of the total incomes of the persons living in a single household. The average annual median household income in Winterfield Township is \$38,295, which is higher than all the neighboring townships and the County, except Clam Union Township. The average median household income for the State of Michigan is \$56,697 which is nearly 50% greater than the median household income for Winterfield Township and Clare County.

**Table 15** illustrates the percentage of people below the poverty line for Winterfield Township and the surrounding communities for the year 2018. Of the total population in Winterfield Township, over 19% is living below the federal poverty level. This value is lower than the county-wide percentage of 23.5%, but greater than the neighboring Clam Union Township at 12.8%.

**Table 14, Median Household Income, 2018**

Median Household Income	
Winterfield Township	\$38,295
Clam Union Township	\$49,375
Summerfield Township	\$38,125
Redding Township	\$24,750
Marion Township	\$34,583
Clare County	\$37,369
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	



**Table 15, Poverty Status, 2018**

Poverty Status (%)		
	Total Population Below Poverty Level	35 Years & Over Below Poverty Level
Winterfield Township	19.40%	21.60%
Clam Union Township	12.80%	17.00%
Summerfield Township	23.30%	29.10%
Redding Township	37.70%	74.90%
Marion Township	23.30%	35.10%
Clare County	23.50%	30.60%
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

## 3.7 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment is another important factor in analyzing the capabilities of the local work force and the economic vitality of the community. The educational attainment of the citizens of a community plays a major role in determining what types of employment industries are suitable or necessary. **Table 16** illustrates the educational attainment levels for Winterfield Township as well as the surrounding townships, and Clare County. Since educational attainment is often strongly correlated with income, it is an important factor in understanding the local economy, employment opportunities, and poverty status. As shown in the table, only 8.6% of the Township's population 25 years or older are not high school graduates; the remaining 91.5% of the population have graduated from high school (includes equivalency). This is a positive statistic representing the highest high school graduate percentage of all of the surrounding townships and Clare County. A total of 5.6% of the population 25 years or older has obtained their Bachelor's degree or higher degree.

**Table 16, Educational Attainment, 2018**

Educational Attainment (%)			
	Not a High School Graduate	High School Graduate (includes equivalency) or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Winterfield Township	8.6%	91.5%	5.6%
Clam Union Township	12.1%	87.9%	11.2%
Summerfield Township	10.8%	89.2%	2.1%
Redding Township	18.7%	81.4%	6.4%
Marion Township	14.0%	86.0%	14.2%
Clare County	15.3%	84.7%	12.1%
*Data refers to the population 25 years and older			
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			



## 3.8 EMPLOYMENT

The U.S. Census Bureau presents employment data in terms of employment by occupation. Employment by occupation data is a good way to analyze the types of professions that employ the Township's citizens. **Table 17** details the number of employed citizens, aged 25 years or older, within each occupational sector in Winterfield Township, the neighboring townships, and Clare County. In Winterfield Township, the occupation sector with the largest numbers of employees are the educational services, health care and social assistance, and agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining sectors.

**Table 17, Employment by Occupation, 2018**

Employment by Occupation						
	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services	Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services
<b>Winterfield Township</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>
Clam Union Township	166	39	7	10	74	14
Summerfield Township	9	4	3	7	16	15
Redding Township	2	6	0	2	14	7
Marion Township	63	40	11	25	121	42
Clare County	424	558	481	672	2270	1178
*Data refers to the employed population 25 years and older						
Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates						

## 4. NATURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

The natural environment plays a major role in land development. It can significantly impact development; for example, a steep slope may prohibit the construction of any structure. Conversely, the natural environment can be affected by land development. An example of this is the increased erosion potential caused by clearing vegetation. Thus, when preparing a Future Land Use Plan, it is important to examine the natural environment in order to determine where development is best suited, and where it should be discouraged.

In any environmentally sensitive area within a community, development should be prevented. Environmentally sensitive areas are lands whose destruction or disturbance will affect the life of a community by either:

1. Creating hazards such as flooding or slope erosion.
2. Destroying important public resources such as groundwater supplies and surface water bodies.
3. Wasting productive lands and non-renewable resources such as prime farmland and natural habitats like wetlands.

Each of these effects is detrimental to the general welfare of a community, resulting in social and economic loss.

The purpose of this section is twofold. First, the goal is to identify areas in the Township that are best suited for development. The focus is on areas that will minimize development costs and provide amenities without adversely impacting the existing natural systems. The second goal is to identify land that should be conserved in its natural state and is most suitable for preservation, open space, or recreation purposes.

Climate, geology, topography, woodlands, wetlands, water bodies, and soil conditions are among the most important natural features impacting land use in Winterfield Township.

### 4.1 CLIMATE

The climate of Clare County is seasonal, as the region experiences considerable changes in temperatures and precipitation throughout the year. The average temperature in January ranges from 9 to 27 degrees Fahrenheit. In July, the temperature ranges from 53 to 81 degrees Fahrenheit. The county experiences an average of 17 days with temperatures below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, while the county experiences an average of 10 days with temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The average growing season in Clare County lasts from 120 to 150 days. In terms of annual precipitation, Clare County averages around 32 inches of rainfall and around 55 inches of snowfall per year.

### 4.2 CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITIES

Many people believe that future changes to climatic variables such as air temperatures and precipitation represent a significant threat to our local environments. Chapter 21 of the Fourth National Climate Change Assessment (4th NCCA), produced in 2018, includes an analysis of the latest climate change research focused on climate projections for the Midwest region of the U.S. for a period 25-100 years in the future (i.e.: projections for climate in 2043-3018).



It is important to note that the report acknowledges significant scientific issues with our ability to accurately model and project potential local climate changes specifically in the Great Lakes region where Winterfield Township is located. Due to this level of uncertainty and the time frame involved it is inappropriate to set specific shorter term policy and strategies related to potential changes to climatic conditions for Winterfield Township.

Despite this, it is notable that the 4th NCCA recommends that to help mitigate potential negative impacts of suggested climate change, it is important to ensure that development and future land use decisions are made so as not to add additional stress to sensitive environmental areas. The goals developed in this Master Plan, as well as the public input on which they are based, are consistent with this climate change mitigation principle. Maintenance of the rural character of Winterfield Township and its natural green infrastructure while avoiding unnecessary development that would encroach on the natural environment is a top priority.

While there are no current observable impacts within Winterfield Township caused by a changing climate and insufficient prediction data at this time, this is an issue that may be revisited in future reviews/updates of the Master Plan. Also, the township may wish to consider establishing guidelines so that individuals, if they desire, may take advantage of emerging alternative energy technologies for their personal non-commercial use.

## 4.3 GEOLOGY

The geology of Clare County, as well as the entire Lower Peninsula of Michigan, is described in terms of surface geology or quaternary geology (materials deposited by continental glaciers), and bedrock geology (sedimentary rocks underlying the glacial deposits).

The quaternary geology of the Township developed 10,000 to 12,000 years ago through continental glacial activity. As the glaciers melted and retreated from the landscape, large amounts of sand, gravel, clay, and loam were deposited. Massive glacial lakes formed at the front of the retreating glaciers. Clare County was among those submerged in glacial water.

The melting glacier was laden with fine soil particles, which eventually settled to the bottom, creating clay and loam soils. The glacial melt water streams also deposited fine sand into shallow glacial lakes. The sand channels are several miles wide in places, but the sand in them is general only five to ten feet thick.

The sand deposits were further altered by wave action from these glacial “Great Lakes,” creating small sand dunes and low beaches across the landscape as the water levels declined and the lakes retreated to their current area of coverage. The sub-surface geology of Winterfield Township is sedimentary bedrock that was laid down during the Pennsylvanian ages of the Paleozoic Era. Bedrock is covered by glacial deposits and, generally, depending upon the thickness of the glacial deposits, are located at depths from 40 to 300 feet below the surface. The bedrock was formed from ancient seas,





which covered the area some 250 to 600 million years ago. The shallow marine seas deposited layers of silt, clay, sediments, marine animals, plants, coral, and other calcareous materials. These deposits formed sandstone, shale, coal, and limestone bedrock.

## 4.4 TOPOGRAPHY

The overall topography of Winterfield Township can be characterized as flat or gently rolling, but there are several areas of the Township where steep slopes can be found. Within the Township, elevations range from a low of about 1,040 feet above sea level to a high of approximately 1,230 feet above sea level, for a total elevation change of about 190 feet.

**Map 2** shows the topography of Winterfield Township using graduated color contour lines on top of a parcel map of the Township. The contour lines show elevation change through a graduated color scheme where orange and reds are higher elevations and greens are lower elevations.

In general, the lowest elevations are found in the southeastern corner of the Township and along Muskegon, Clam and West Branch Clam Rivers. Hills and higher elevations are sporadically located in the western and northern portions of the Township. The gently sloping hills or flat areas that characterize the majority of the Township pose few constraints to land development.

## 4.5 WOODLANDS

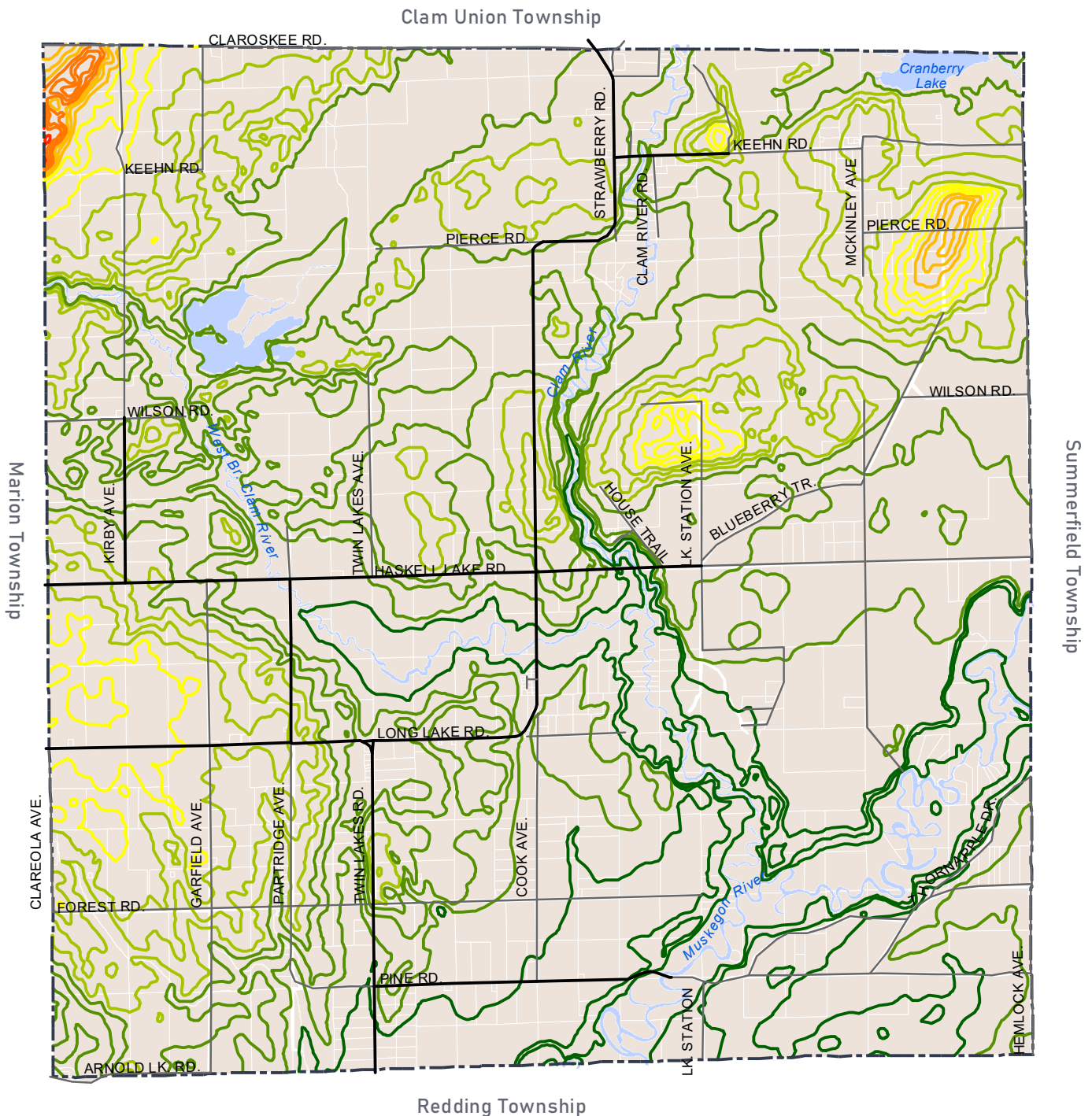
Woodlands information for Winterfield Township is derived from the Michigan Resources Information System (MIRIS) 1978 land use cover data provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The woodlands information was updated using 1998 aerial imagery also provided by the MDNR. The MDNR separates woodlands into two categories: upland forests and lowland forests. Upland Forests include mostly central hardwood (oak) trees such as red oak, white oak, sugar maple, red maple, black cherry, beech, basswood, and ash. Tree species in the lowland forest include silver maple, green ash, aspen, cottonwood, and elm. Map 3 shows the general locations of upland and lowland forests in Winterfield Township.



**Image 2.** Winterfield Township Woodlands

# Map 2

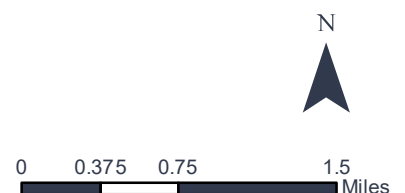
# Topography



## Elevation:

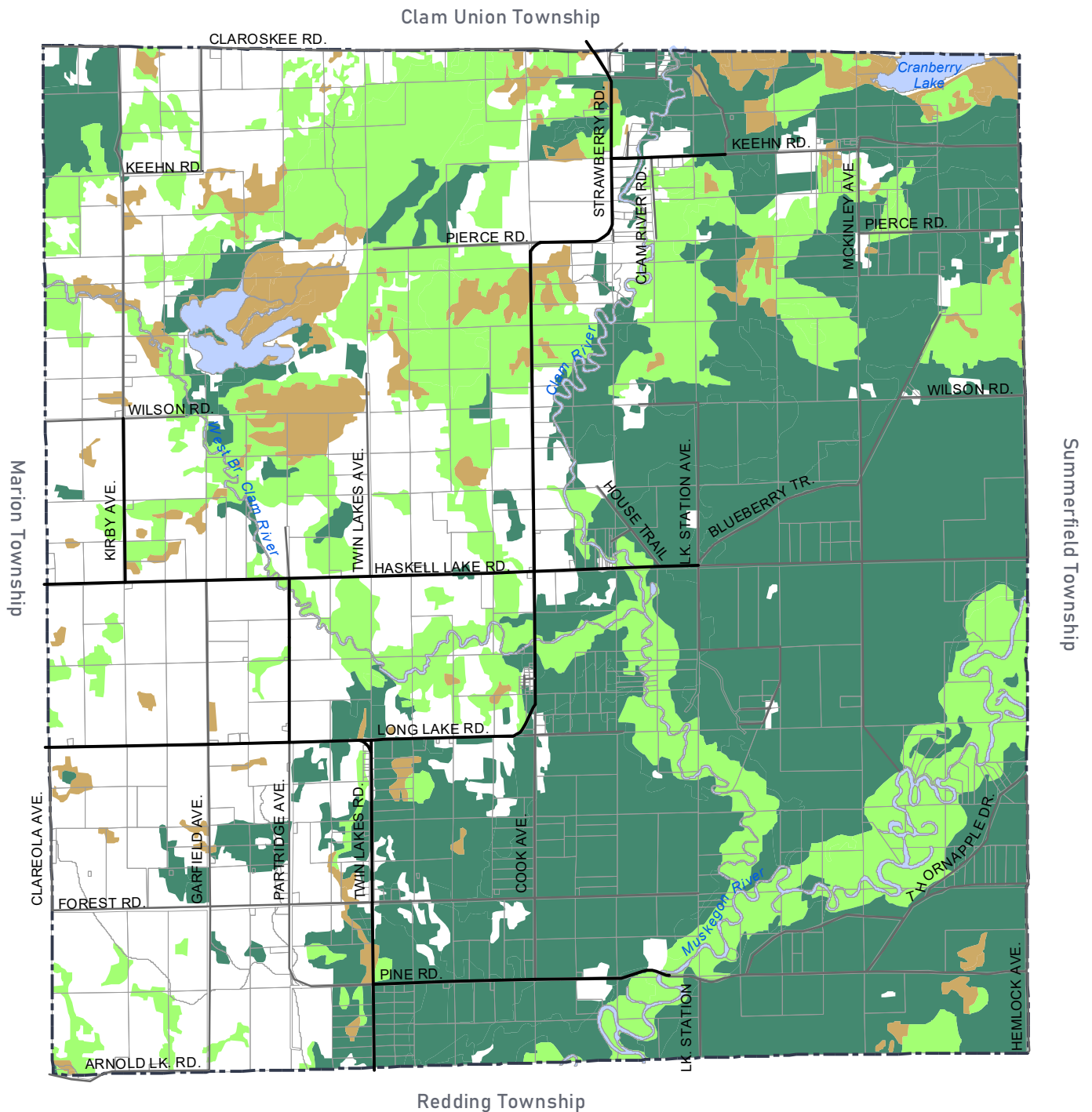
- 1040 ft - 1070 ft
- 1071 ft - 1100 ft
- 1101 ft - 1130 ft
- 1131 ft - 1160 ft
- 1161 ft - 1190 ft
- 1191 ft - 1220 ft
- 1221 ft - 1250 ft

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Water Bodies
- Winterfield Township Limits



# Map 3

# Environmental Resources



- Upland Forests
- Lowland Forests
- Wetlands

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Water Bodies

Winterfield Township Limits

N



0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles



In total, woodlands cover 55.8% of the Township. The majority of forests in Winterfield Township are classified as Upland forests (7804 acres or 33.4% of the Township). Lowland forests comprise 5234 or 22.4% of the Township. As shown on **Map 3**, upland forests are heavily concentrated in the southeastern and northeastern portions of the Township. Other smaller pockets of upland forests are found scattered throughout the Township. Lowland forests are most heavily concentrated in the north-central portion of the Township, but can also be found in other areas of the Township, including many riverbeds.

Because of many benefits associated with wooded areas, woodlands should be seen as a real asset to Winterfield Township. For human inhabitants, forested areas offer scenic contrasts within the landscape and provide recreational opportunities such as hiking, and nature enjoyment. In general, woodlands improve the environmental quality of the whole community by reducing the chances of flooding through greater rainwater infiltration, stabilizing and enriching soils, moderating the effects of wind and temperature, and providing habitats for wildlife.

## 4.6 WETLANDS

Wetlands are an extremely important, though commonly overlooked, natural resource which provide both aesthetic and functional benefits. Through the years, over 50% of Michigan's wetlands have been destroyed by development and agricultural activities. Therefore, Michigan enacted Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994 to protect the remaining wetlands.

The wetland act authorizes the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MEGLE) to preserve certain wetland areas. The MEGLE may require permits before altering regulated wetlands and may prohibit development in some locations.

The MEGLE defines and regulates wetlands as "land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life, and is commonly referred to as a bog, swamp, or marsh." MEGLE reserves the right to regulate wetlands if they are any of the following:

- "Connected to one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair.
- Located within 1,000 feet of one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair.
- Connected to an inland lake, pond, river, or stream.
- Located within 500 feet of an inland lake, pond, river or stream.
- Not connected to one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair, or an inland lake, pond, stream, or river, but are more than 5 acres in size.
- Not connected to one of the Great Lakes or Lake St. Clair, or an inland lake, pond, stream, or river, and less than 5 acres in size, but EGLE has determined that these wetlands are essential to the preservation of the state's natural resources and has notified the property owner."





Any wetlands in the Township not meeting the criteria for wetlands as defined by the MEGLE can be protected by local control techniques. Such techniques include a local wetland ordinance, policies in this Master Plan directing incompatible land uses away from wetlands, and specific wetlands provisions in the Zoning Ordinance.

As shown on **Map 3**, Winterfield Township has several concentrations of wetlands predominantly located in the northern half of the Township. In total, wetlands cover 1,297 acres or 5.5% of the Township.

## 4.7 WATER BODIES

Winterfield Township is home to many important water bodies. These water bodies significantly contribute to the overall attractiveness, rural, and environmental character of the Township.

Found in the southeastern corner of the Township, the Muskegon River is the Township's most prominent water feature. The river is a very important waterway in Michigan, originating in Roscommon County and flowing into Lake Michigan at Muskegon. Two tributaries of the Muskegon River, the Clam River, and the West Branch Clam River, both flow north to south through the Township eventually merging into the Muskegon River.



**Image 3.** Winterfield Township

There are two lakes located in Winterfield Township. A portion of Cranberry Lake is located in the extreme northeast corner of the Township while a private lake is located in the Township's northwestern quarter.

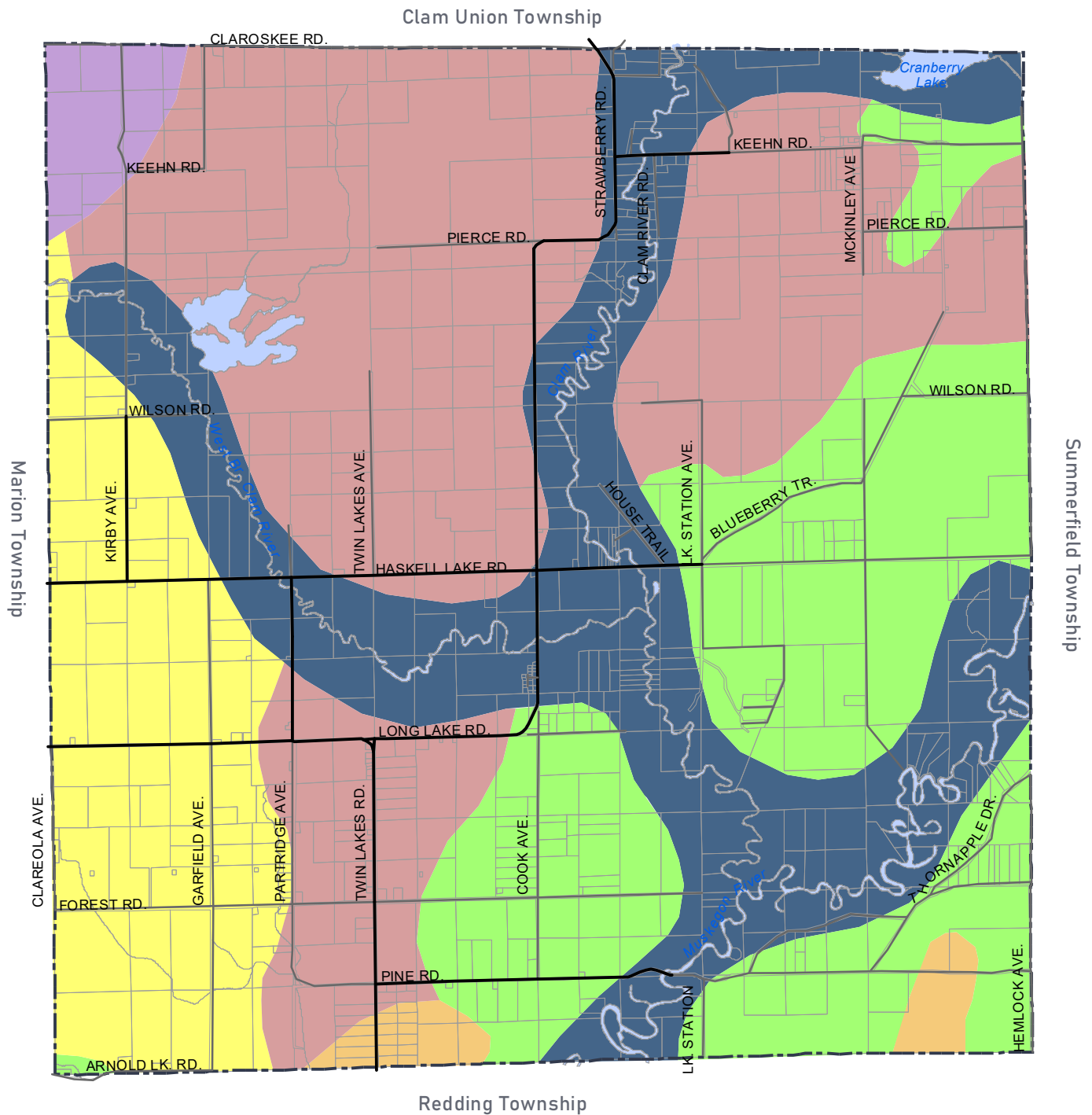
## 4.8 SOIL ASSOCIATIONS

Soil characteristics help define the land's capacity to support certain types of land uses. Soils most suitable for development purposes are well drained and are not subject to a high water table. Adequate drainage is important for minimizing storm water impacts and the efficient operation of septic drain fields. Adequate depth to the water table is necessary to prevent ground water contamination from septic systems. A high water table also limits the construction of basements. Though civil engineering techniques can be employed to improve drainage and maintain adequate separation from the water table, such techniques are expensive to construct and maintain.



# Map 4

# Soil Associations



## Soil Associations:

- Graycalm-Montcalm
- Grayling
- Lupton-Markey
- Menominee-Iosco-Kawkawlin
- Nester-Kawkawlin-Sims
- Rubicon-Croswell-Au Gres

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Water Bodies
- Winterfield Township Limits

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles



**Table 18, Soil Associations**

Winterfield Township Soil Associations	
Soil Association Name	Description
Graycalm-Montcalm Association	This soil association is composed of level to steep, somewhat excessively drained and well drained soils that have sandy and loamy subsoil. The soils of this association commonly support woodlands, but may be cultivated or pastured. Susceptibility to soil blowing, erosion, and droughtiness are the major problems for urban development. Soils of this association can only be found in the northwest corner of the Township and comprise approximately 2% of the Township.
Grayling Association	This soil association is composed of level to steep, excessively drained soils that have sandy subsoil. These soils are primarily found in the southwestern portion of the township and comprise approximately 23% of the Township. Because of extreme droughtiness, the soils pose poor potential for farming and grazing. Woodland is generally the best use for soils in this association because of the deep rooting capacity of the trees. The potential for urban development is good in the flatter areas and fair to poor in the hilly to steep areas. This soil association is a good source of sand.
Lupton-Markey Association	Found surrounding the Muskegon River, Clam River, West Branch Clam River, and Cranberry Lake, this association is comprised of nearly level and very poorly drained soils with mucky subsoil. In total, the association covers approximately 24% of the Township. This association is used mainly for woodland, but some areas are in marsh grass or are covered with brush. Excessive wetness and instability are the major problems for most uses. The soils are commonly flooded for long periods. Most areas are undrained because drainage outlets are very difficult to locate.
Menominee-Iosco-Kawkawlin Association	The majority of the soils in Winterfield Township are part of this soil association. In total, the association comprises approximately 36% of the Township. Soils in this association are nearly level to gently rolling with well-drained to somewhat poorly drained soils that have sandy and loamy subsoil. Common land uses found on the soils of this association include grazing lands and woodlands, with some areas of cultivation. Excessive wetness, susceptibility to soil blowing, and a high content of clay are the major problems for most uses.
Nester-Kawkawlin-Sims Association	The soils of this association are nearly level to rolling, well drained to very poorly drained soils that have a loamy subsoil. Found along the western edge of the Township, these soils comprise approximately 13% of the Township. These soils are used mainly as cropland and pasture, with cash crops, dairy herds, and beef herds as the main farm enterprises. The soil association has good potential for woodland and wildlife habitat, but fair to poor potential for most recreation and urban uses. Excessive wetness, susceptibility to erosion, and a high content of clay are the major problems for most uses.
Rubicon-Croswell-Au Gres Association	Two small areas on the southern edge of the Township are included in this soil association comprising approximately 2% of the Township. The soils of this association are used mainly for woodland, but some areas are pastured. Susceptibility to soil blowing and droughtiness are the major problems for most uses. Other problems are a seasonal high water table in the Croswell and Au Gres soils have fair to poor potential for urban development because they are wet, while Rubicon soils have good potential for urban development in the flatter areas.
Source: General Soils Map of Clare County, provided by the Soils Conservation Service	



According to the General Soils Map of Clare County, provided by the Soils Conservation Service, there are six soil associations found in Winterfield Township. The general locations of these associations are shown on **Map 4**. The map is not designed for site-specific applications. Rather, it can be used to compare land suitability for large areas.

Each soil association is composed of several soil series. Each series making up one association may occur in another, but in a different pattern and/or combination. A description of the six soil associations within Winterfield Township follows. Also included is a table summarizing the characteristics of each soil association as they relate to the potential for land use and development (**Table 18**).

## 5. EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

The rational application of the planning process for the Future Land Use Plan is possible only when there is a clear understanding of existing conditions of relationships between land uses. Knowledge of existing land development furnishes the basic information by which decisions can be made concerning proposals for future residential, commercial, industrial, and public land use activities. The Existing Land Use Map and Table, included in this section of the report, will serve as a ready reference for the Township in its consideration for land use management and public improvement proposals.

### 5.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A computer-generated base map for the Township was first created using digital information from the Michigan GIS Open Data portal and the Clare County GIS tax assessment maps. The base map includes the Township boundary line, streets, water bodies, and parcel lines. A parcel-by-parcel field survey of the entire Township was originally conducted by Wade Trim in May of 2002, and updated using online technologies in 2020. Each land use was recorded on the base map according to a predetermined land use classification system. Collectively, this information created the Existing Land Use Map (**Map 5**). Township officials reviewed the map for accuracy. Land use acreages were then derived directly from digital information (**Table 19**).

### 5.2 LAND USE ANALYSIS

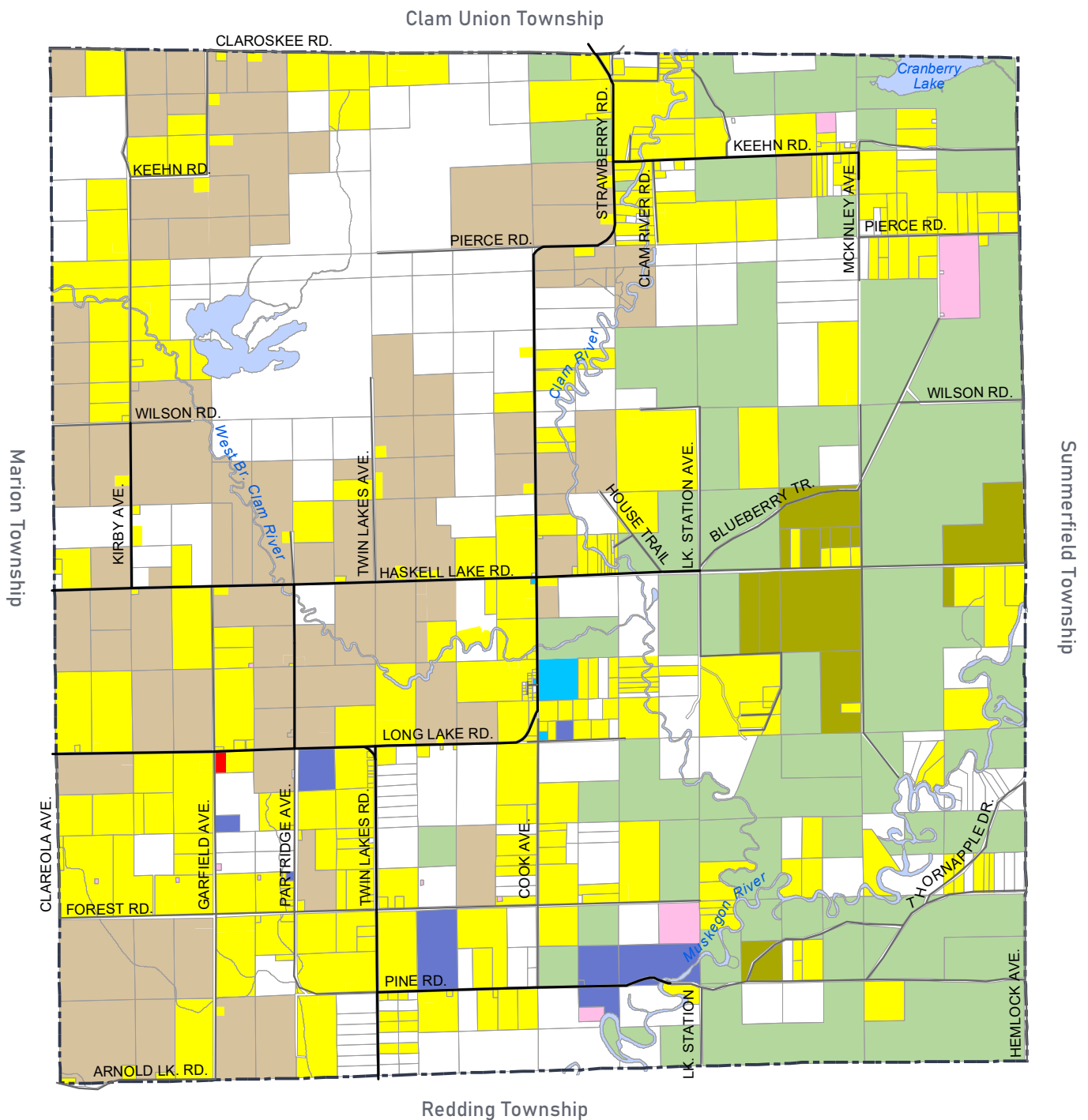
Winterfield Township can be characterized as a rural community. The community lacks significant intensive land uses, while it boasts scattered agricultural activities, and pristine environmental features such as woodlands and rivers. Together, these elements create a rustic, rural, and laid-back atmosphere. More than fifty percent of the land in Winterfield Township is undeveloped - represented by the existing land use categories of State Land, Federal Land and Vacant/Right-of-Way. The remaining land is characterized by very low density rural development patterns.

**Table 19, Winterfield Township Existing Land Use**

Existing Land Use, 2021		
Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total
Agricultural	4,669.6	20.0%
Single-Family Residential	5,783.0	24.7%
Commercial	5.3	0.0%
Industrial	261.9	1.1%
Property Owned by Gas Companies	138.4	0.6%
Public/Semi-Public	41.9	0.2%
State Land	5,309.5	22.7%
Federal Land	594.3	2.5%
Vacant/Right-of-Way	6,175.3	26.4%
Water Bodies	422.3	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,401.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Source: Wade Trim Field Survey, 2002; Wade Trim Analysis, 2020; Verified by Winterfield Township, 2021		

# Map 5

# Existing Land Use



- Agricultural
- Single-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Property Owned by Gas Companies
- Public/Semi-Public
- State Land
- Federal Land
- Vacant/Right-of-Way

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Water Bodies
- Winterfield Township Limits

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles







## AGRICULTURAL

Land that is being used for agricultural purposes such as crop production, grazing, and other related activities. Accessory buildings, such as barns and elevators, are included in the agricultural category.

In total, agricultural uses cover 4,669.6 acres or 20.0% of the Township. Nearly all of the agricultural lands are found in the western half of the Township.



**Image 3.** Winterfield Township Farmlands

This land use category includes land occupied by single-family dwelling units, seasonal dwellings, mobile homes outside of designated mobile home parks, and their related accessory buildings such as garages and sheds.

Winterfield Township does not have any heavy concentration of single-family residential homes or subdivisions. Unlike many other communities in Clare County, the highly desirable areas of the Township such as lakefronts, riverfronts, and heavy woodlands are predominantly free from residential uses. The majority of the existing homes in the Township are found in very low-density settings scattered along the major roads. In total, single-family residential lands comprise 5,783.0 acres or 24.7% of the Township.

Typical single-family structures in Winterfield Township include farm homes, medium sized suburban-style homes, and manufactured or mobile homes on individual lots. Seasonal housing units such as cottages can be found in the Township but are not concentrated in any one area.

Currently, Winterfield Township has no multiple-family housing structures such as apartments or condominiums. This is not surprising due to the Township's rural character and lack of intensive land uses.

## COMMERCIAL

This land use category includes land that is predominantly occupied by retail sales or service establishments. Offices such as financial institutions, professional offices, and clinics are also included in this category.

There is only one commercial establishment in the Township: Chuck's Bump & Paint located at the intersection of Temple Road and Garfield Avenue. Because of the lack of commercial establishments, the citizens of the Township must commute to surrounding communities to meet their everyday commercial needs. The nearest commercial centers to Winterfield Township are in Cadillac, Clare, Harrison, Lake George, Marion, and Mount Pleasant.



## INDUSTRIAL

This land use category is comprised of land occupied by manufacturing industries, processing facilities, warehouses, and non-manufacturing uses which are primarily industrial in nature. Lands so classified may include areas with or without buildings where raw or semi-finished materials are fabricated or those using or storing raw materials for primary production or extractive operations such as mining sites.

Several industrial establishments are found in the Township, accounting for 261.9 acres or 1.1% of the Township. Nearly all of these facilities are related to gas extraction or storage. The largest industrial facility is the Consumers Energy Muskegon River Compressor Station located on Pine Road near the Muskegon River. Other major industrial establishments include Consumers Energy, Marion Township Gravel Pit and Layline Oil & Gas Corporation.

## PROPERTY OWNED BY GAS COMPANIES

The prevalence of gas extraction and storage companies in the Township, as well as in Clare County, means that many large and small parcels of land are under their ownership. For this reason, a separate land use category for property owned by gas companies has been created. Most of the gas company owned properties are located in the southern and eastern portions of the Township. In total, the category comprises 138.4 acres or 0.6% of the Township.

## PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

Public uses are land and facilities that are publicly operated and available for use by the public. Examples include schools, government buildings, water and sewer utilities, correctional facilities, and airports. Semi-public uses are land and facilities which may be privately owned or operated but used by the public or a limited number of persons. Examples include churches, cemeteries, hospitals, and power line rights-of-way. Two public uses are found in the Township, including the Winterfield Township Hall and Winterfield Township Cemetery. Additionally, a 40-acre property on Cook Avenue is owned by Winterfield Township, but is currently undeveloped. The Pine Haven Lodge is the only semi-public facility found in the Township. Public and semi-public uses comprise 41.9 acres in total.



**Image 4.** Winterfield Township Cemetery



## STATE LAND

Lands that are owned and operated by the State of Michigan for purposes such as conservation or research are included in this category. The State of Michigan owns a significant amount of land in the eastern half of the Township. Most of the State land is part of the Chippewa River State Forest. In total, 5,309.5 acres or 22.7% of the Township is under State ownership.

## FEDERAL LAND

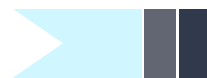
The United States Fish and Wildlife Service owns several large parcels located in the eastern half of the Township. In total, these lands comprise 594.3 acres, or 2.5%, of the Township.

## VACANT/RIGHT-OF-WAY

This category includes undeveloped lands in the Township such as woodlots, wetlands, open fields, and vacated buildings. Publicly owned road rights-of-way are also included in this category. In total, the vacant/right-of-way category comprises 6,175.3 acres or 26.4% of the Township.

## WATER BODIES

In total, water bodies cover 422.3 acres or 1.8% of Winterfield Township. A more detailed description of the water bodies in the Township is found in Section 4.7 of this report.



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## 6. TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Mobility and accessibility are vital components of the social and economic wellbeing of a community. The traffic circulation system is, in a large sense, the framework upon which a community is built, especially rural communities like Winterfield Township. This system must support the collective mobility of citizens and visitors of Winterfield Township. The system must also be fully coordinated with the other elements of the master plan, particularly future land use, so as to complement the collective goals, objectives, and policies of the plan, and to ensure that residents can access needed services and employment opportunities.

### 6.1 REGIONAL HIGHWAY NETWORK

The residents of Winterfield Township have good access to the region and the state through major county roads, local roads, and nearby State and U.S. Highways. Although no State or U.S. Highway passes through the Township, several are located just outside its boundaries. To the south is M-61, to the west is M-66 and M-115, and to the east is U.S. 127. These highways provide easy access to the larger communities in the region, such as Cadillac, Harrison, Clare, Mount Pleasant, Traverse City, and the Tri-Cities of Bay City, Midland, and Saginaw. These highways also provide access to the major metropolitan areas of the state as well as the entire Midwest. Major cities located within a one-half day driving distance from the Township include:

- Chicago - 275 miles
- Cleveland - 310 miles
- Detroit - 160 miles
- Grand Rapids - 100 miles
- Indianapolis - 340 miles
- Lansing - 90 miles
- Toronto - 340 miles

Therefore, responsible regionalism, coordination with other local and county-wide transportation plans, are extremely important in order to ensure and enhance inter-regional connections. Additionally, regional planning for transportation may be beneficial for future regional transportation investments.

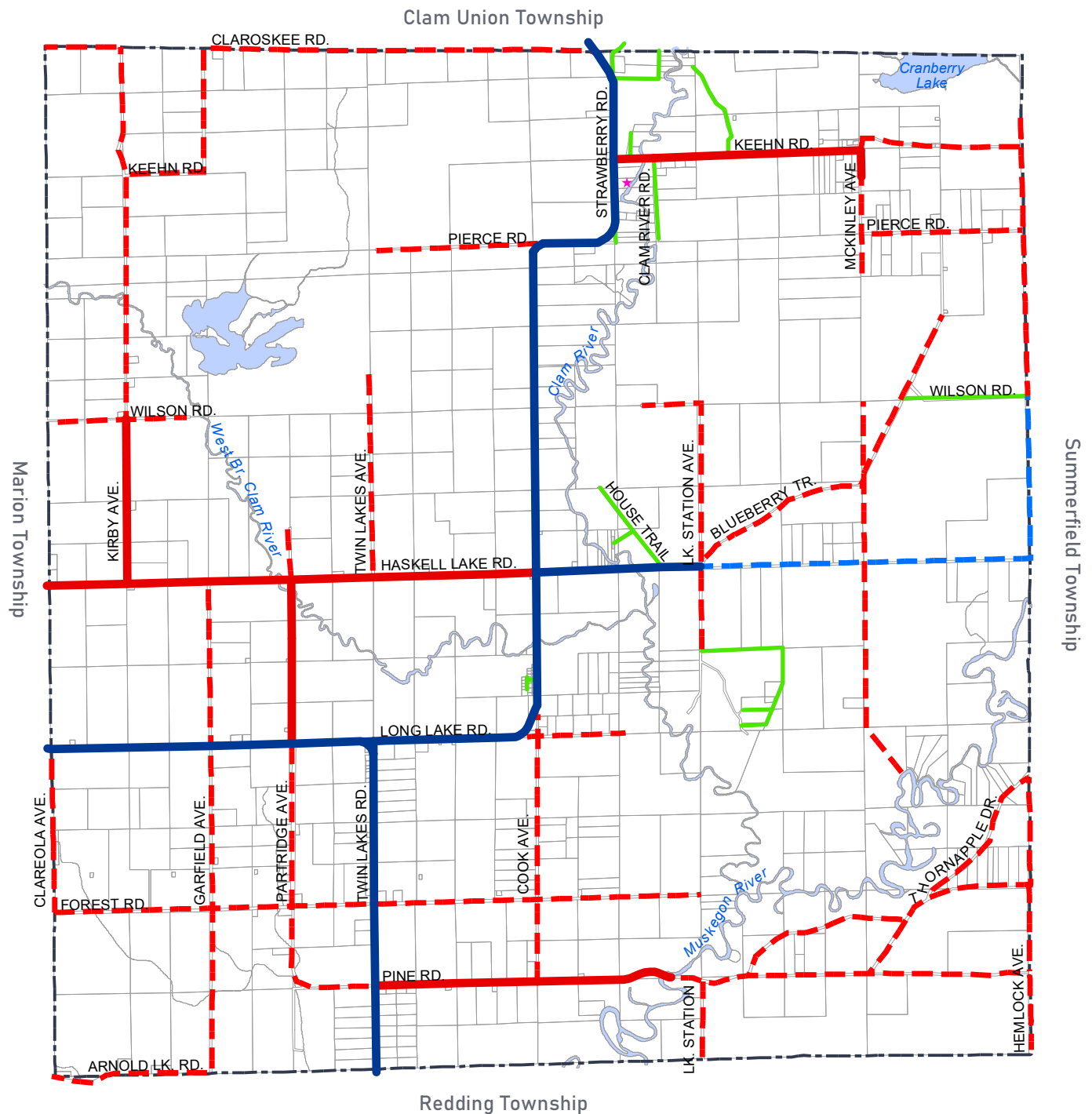
### 6.2 TOWNSHIP ROAD NETWORK

**Map 6** shows the current transportation network of Winterfield Township. All roads in the Township are divided into five categories by the Clare County Road Commission:

- County Primary Paved Road
- County Primary Unpaved Road
- County Local Paved Road
- County Local Unpaved Road
- Other Local Unpaved Road

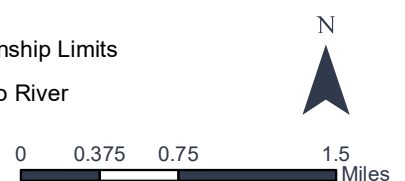
# Map 6

# Transportation Network



- County Primary Paved Road
- - - County Primary Unpaved Road
- County Local Paved Road
- - - County Local Unpaved Road
- Other Local Unpaved Road

- ~ Water Bodies
- Winterfield Township Limits
- ★ Public Access to River







Using this classification, **Map 6** shows the major transportation routes within the Township and the primary links to outside the Township. In general, the transportation network within the Township is fragmented, with many unpaved roads, dead end roads, and 90 degree turns on major roads. There are two primary transportation corridors in the Township:

- Long Lake Road east-west corridor
- Twin Lakes Avenue/Cook Avenue/Strawberry Road north-south corridor

Both of these corridors are comprised of County Primary Paved Roads. These two corridors provide the primary links to destinations outside of the Township. Currently, no paved road link is provided to the east of the Township. Access to the east is provided by Haskell Lake Road east of Cook Avenue and Hemlock Avenue, both of which are classified as County Primary Unpaved Roads.

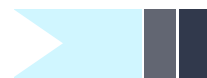
As shown on **Map 6**, there are several County Local Paved Roads within the Township, including sections of Pine Road, Haskell Lake Road, Partridge Avenue, Kirby Avenue, and Keehn Road. County Local Unpaved Roads can also be found in the Township, generally in the more isolated and less populated areas of the Township. There are several Other Local Unpaved Roads. These roads are mainly used by homeowners living along them.

## 6.3 OTHER FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is available to Winterfield Township residents through Clare County Transit Corporation dial-a-ride service. Airline Travel is provided through several airports. The nearest local airport for private usage is the Clare County Airport in Hayes Township. The nearest major commercial airports include MBS International Airport in Freeland and Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City.

In addition to multimodal and recreational pathways, the Township is proximate to ORV and Snowmobile Trails throughout Clare County. There are two primary ORV trail systems in Clare County, Leota Trail and Denton West Trails. Together, these trails make up and connect to hundreds of miles of trail systems throughout the County and the State. These trails serve primarily as recreation trails.

Many of the roads can serve as multimodal pathways and biking routes for residents and visitors, alike. While many of these roads are unpaved, they are also not inundated with heavy traffic, making them ideal paths for bikers. However, there are no official recreation trails or multi-modal paths within the Township.



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## 7. INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS

### 7.1 PUBLIC UTILITIES, SERVICES, AND FACILITIES

Winterfield Township is serviced by both Consumers Energy and Great Lakes Energy companies. Together, these companies supply electricity to residents within the Township. DTE Gas Company owns one parcel, and currently provides natural gas services to Clare County and subsequently Winterfield Township. Many residents privately own or rent LPG (Liquefied Propane Gas) equipment and storage for residential use. LPG is supplied by many regional independent suppliers who in turn depend on reliable State infrastructure to obtain LPG product at competitive prices. Cobra Oil and Gas, Layline Oil & Gas, and Dart Oil & Gas Corp are three oil and gas producers who own parcels or wells within the Township; however, these companies are not current service providers for residents and businesses within the Township. Rather, they operate as businesses independent from the infrastructural delivery systems.

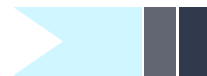
The Township's roads are maintained, constructed, and planned by the Clare County Road Commission, which operates through its own revenue and budget. The Road Commission is responsible for snow plowing, gravel road blading, improving drainage, pothole patching, roadside mowing, and the maintenance of bridges, signs, pavement markings and other equipment management.

Water and sewer facilities are maintained on a site-by-site basis through wells and septic tanks; there is no singular public water system that is managed by the Township. The Township does maintain and regulate the Winterfield Township Transfer Facility, which manages non-human waste for the Township. The Transfer Facility complies with both Township ordinances and the Solid Waste Management Act, Public Act 641 of 1978, as amended.

### 7.2 ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

There are no commercial solar, wind, or other renewable energy source producing facilities within the Township. Consumers Energy, DTE, and Great Lakes Energy companies all have various stakes in the renewable energy fields; however, they have not brought them to Winterfield Township. Presently, no large-scale wind or solar energy installations are located within Clare County. Several large wind farm developments are found to the south, within Isabella and Gratiot counties. In addition, there are wind and solar farm developments to the northwest in Missaukee and Wexford counties.

Winterfield Township's zoning ordinance does not presently allow for large-scale renewable energy development, such as solar or wind farms. The Township will consider incorporating provisions within the zoning ordinance that would allow small-scale (on-site) solar and/or wind energy systems.



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## 8. TOWNSHIP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Before a community can actively plan for its future growth and development, it must first establish a vision for its future in the form of a set of goals and objectives. Goals and objectives define the boundaries of the community's needs and aspirations. They must reflect the type of community desired by its citizens, given realistic economic and social limitations.

The following is a recommended set of community goals, which represent the ultimate desire of the community and the intent of the Master Plan, and objectives, which identify the means of attaining the goals. These goals and objectives are based upon the Background Information Analysis, as presented in Sections 3.0 through 7.0, and upon input received at a public workshop and through a citizen survey.

### 8.2 PUBLIC INPUT

In order to gain a thorough understanding of community interests, needs, desires, and goals, the Township ran a citizen survey throughout the month of October of 2020 and held a public workshop on July 29, 2021.

The citizen survey gathered 80 responses, 50 of which were from Township residents. The surveys were mailed to all Winterfield Township residents; the residents had the option to complete the survey online, return by mail, or drop off at the Township Hall. The total Township responses represents approximately 11.3% of the Winterfield population. The survey had thirteen questions that ranged from open-ended questions about Township's best and worst features, to multiple choice questions about residence, age, gender, and more. The majority of respondents (over 89%) were over the age of 45 and live in two-person households (over 65% of respondents).

The results of the survey indicate that the Township's rural character, natural resources, recreational options, and overall small-town atmosphere are its most desirable features. In contrast, many residents identified the lack of local amenities and commercial attractions, blighted homes, and the lack of affordable broadband internet providers to be Winterfield's least favorable features. Based on these collective identified features, respondents were asked to indicate the quality of life on a scale with four options; nearly 86% of all respondents indicated that the quality of life is great or needs minor changes.

When asked to elaborate, the majority of respondents identified two primary concerns:

- Blighted properties
- The need for improved infrastructure and services (cell service, internet, emergency response, and road repair)

Overall, the results of the survey indicate the need to increase recreational opportunities and preserve natural features, to improve public facilities and services, to reduce blight, and for controlled commercial/economic growth.



The Township also held a public workshop on July 29, 2021. This workshop served a similar purpose as the citizen survey: to gather input from residents. The workshop included a brief educational presentation about Master Planning and the purpose of a Master Plan, as well as highlights about the current community profile and recent survey results. The workshop allowed citizens to work together in small groups to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that relate to land use and development within Winterfield Township.

The results of the workshop aligned closely to the results of the survey. The top three identified strengths are Winterfield's:

- Natural resources and natural environment
- Quality roads
- Friendly, small-town community

Similar to the survey responses, the workshop identified blight, lack of timely emergency response, and the need for improved internet and cell phone services as the primary weaknesses in the Township.

Building off of these strengths and weaknesses, residents at the workshop also identified opportunities and threats for development in Winterfield Township. Among the opportunities are:

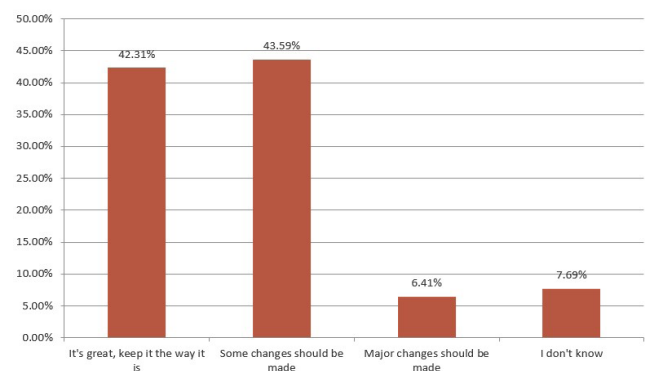
- Increasing recreational opportunities and access to public land
- Increasing home-based business opportunities
- Increasing tourism opportunities

Tourism was also identified as a potential threat to the Township's development. Other identified threats were rapid growth (population-wise and economic), and inefficient government functioning

Collectively, these responses work to inform the Township's environmental, social, political, and economic goals for the future. There is a strong desire to maintain the Township's rural character, as is reflected in the goals and objectives identified throughout this section.

### Q3: Overall, what is the state of the quality of life in Winterfield Township?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 2  
X-axis = answer choices  
Y-axis = percent (%) of total responses  
Labels = percent (%) of total responses



Question 3 from the Winterfield Township Citizen Survey





## 8.3 COMMUNITY-WIDE GOALS

The community-wide goals identified in this section are the broad-reaching goals that guide each of the development-specific goals and objectives. They reflect the desires of the residents and uphold a vision for the future of the Township. In general, these goals focus on the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of the Township's natural resources and rural, friendly character.

1

**Preserve and protect the Township's abundant natural resources, such as farmland, woodlands, lakes, and wetlands.**

2

**Capitalize on the Township's abundant resources for the purpose of creating an attractive community that meets the physical, social, and economic needs of its residents and businesses in an environmentally sensitive manner.**

3

**Manage new growth in a manner that will retain the rural and friendly character of the community.**

4

**Preserve and promote the rights of individual property owners while maintaining the character of the community.**

5

**Relate land use primarily to the natural characteristics of the land and the long-term needs of the community, rather than to short-term economic gain.**

6

**Encourage intergovernmental cooperation between Winterfield Township, surrounding communities, Clare County, and the State of Michigan in the provision of area-wide facilities and services.**

7

**Alleviate blight to present a better image of the Township.**

8

**Increase access to recreational opportunities throughout the Township to promote environmental consciousness and resident health.**



## 8.4 NATURAL FEATURES GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Encourage the preservation of natural assets and open spaces as a means to maintain the health of natural systems, wildlife habitats, community character and quality of life of Winterfield Township.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Protect and enhance sensitive and other environmentally significant areas, such as water resources, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats and scenic views throughout the Township.
2. Reinforce in the zoning ordinance the use of riparian buffers adjacent to tributaries, drains, and wetlands and provisions to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Link natural features and open space areas to create a system of natural corridors.
4. Maintain a community recreation plan to be used as a short term and long term guide for recreation improvements and to ensure eligibility for certain State recreation grant opportunities.

## 8.5 AGRICULTURE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Encourage the retention, wherever possible, of selected prime agricultural lands in the Township by protecting them from urban development through the concentration of urban growth.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize that agriculture is an important economic activity of the Township, as well as an environmental asset, by encouraging use of tools and techniques such as the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (Act 116) and farmland conservation easements.
2. Support only very low density, dispersed residential uses in primarily agricultural areas.
3. Ensure that land development codes allow for activities that might reduce costs or provide supplementary income for local farmers, such as farm stands, agri-tourism and agribusiness, consistent with community character.

## 8.6 RESIDENTIAL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Provide a wide variety of safe, attractive, sanitary, and affordable housing choices to present and future residents of Winterfield Township.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Encourage the improvement and beautification of existing residences as a means of ensuring lasting identity and stability of residential areas.
2. Encourage new residential developments whose densities, styles, and locations will not adversely affect the current rural and small-town character of the community.
3. Discourage residential development in environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Require adequate buffers or transition areas between residential and non residential developments to maintain property values and attractiveness.
5. Encourage the alleviation of conflicting or undesirable land uses from residential areas through code enforcement and other options.
6. Encourage the alleviation of unsanitary or unsafe housing through code enforcement or other options.

## 8.7 COMMERCIAL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Provide for a limited range of commercial facilities, including home-based businesses, to serve the needs of local population and support commerce and employment.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Encourage the development of small commercial establishments in strategic locations in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.
2. Prohibit strip commercial and haphazard commercial development along major roads and where inconsistent with the Future Land Use Map.
3. Establish a compatible relationship between commercial and adjacent residential uses through the use of buffer devices such as walls, fences, landscaped areas, and transitional uses.
4. Review the Township Zoning Ordinance to ensure that citizens have the ability to engage in home-based businesses, with minimum regulations to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses.

## 8.8 INDUSTRIAL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Encourage a variety of light industrial developments with attractive sites to strengthen the local tax base and to provide employment opportunities for area residents.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Encourage the development of new industries that are economically associated with the existing industrial base in the region.



2. Consistent with the Future Land Use Map, locate industrial areas that have reasonable boundaries, are easily accessible from the existing transportation network, and are not subject to encroachment by incompatible uses.

## 8.9 TRANSPORTATION GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Develop and maintain a network of roads that meets the needs of all Township residents and businesses in a safe and convenient manner.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Coordinate with the Clare County Road Commission to develop and implement a plan for the improvements of unpaved roads through a public participation process.
2. Coordinate motorized and non-motorized transportation enhancement with neighboring communities and regional entities.
3. Segregate truck, automobile, and off-road trail traffic as much as possible.
4. Limit points of ingress/egress on major roads.

## 8.10 COMMUNITY SERVICES GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

Continue to offer efficient services and facilities to residents and businesses in a cost-effective and environmentally sensitive manner.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Cooperate with surrounding communities in meeting community service and infrastructure needs of the community.
2. Match new development with the available or planned infrastructure capacities.
3. Monitor and seek funding opportunities to develop and improve essential community services.
4. Encourage and support community volunteerism by providing opportunities for citizens motivated to contribute to the community's well-being.
5. Work with local cell phone and internet providers to ensure reliable and affordable access for all residents.



## 9. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Map is the physical result of the Master Plan development process. It was developed with participation from Township officials and citizens during meetings and other engagement activities during the planning process. The completed Future Land Use Map provides a visual representation of the desired direction for future Township land use.

The Future Land Use Plan is designed to serve as a guide for future development. If it is to serve the needs of the community and function effectively, it must incorporate several important characteristics as follows:

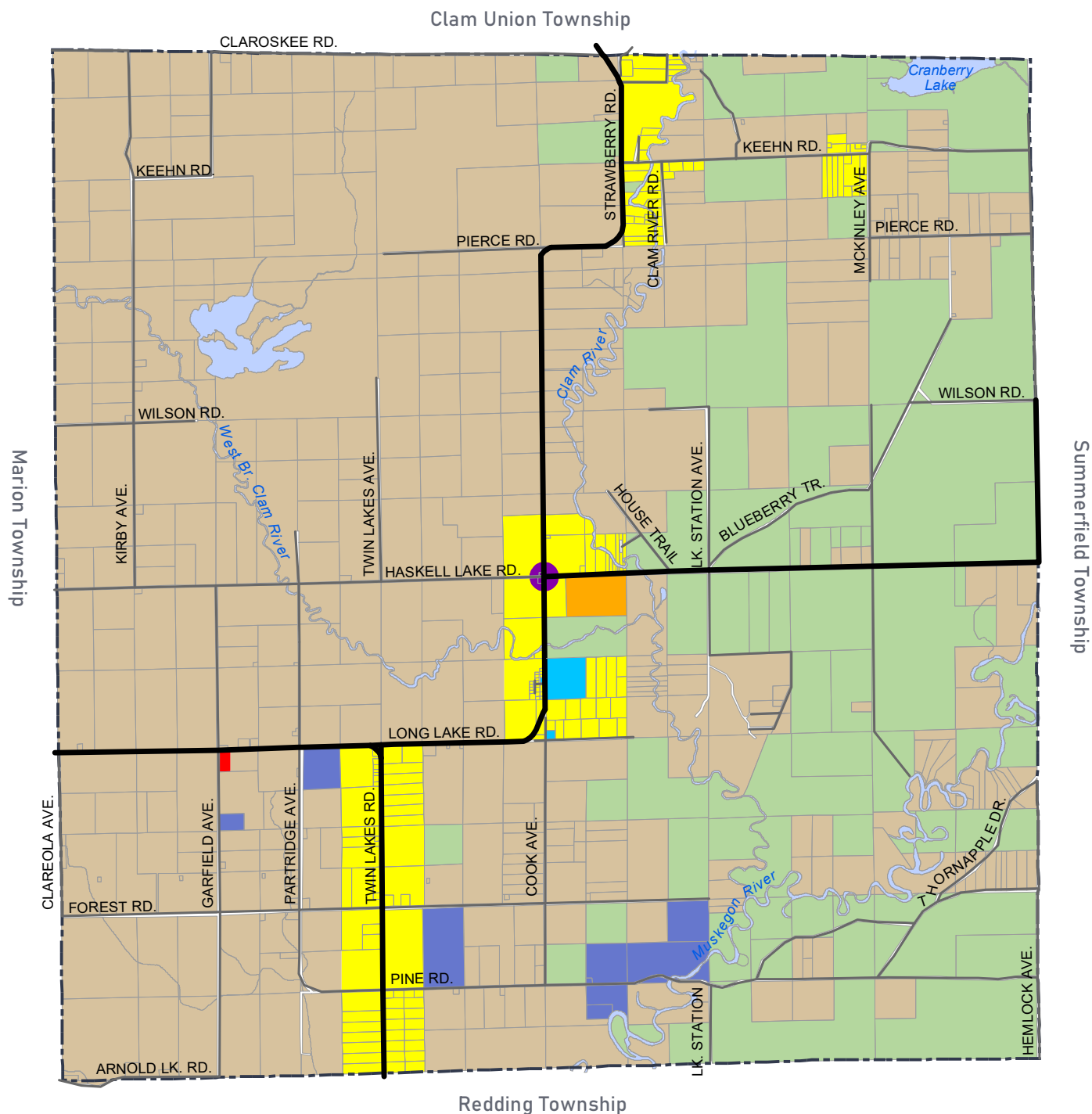
1. The Plan must be general. The Plan, by its very nature, cannot be implemented immediately. Therefore, only generalized locations (not necessarily related to property lines) for various land uses are indicated on the Plan.
2. The Plan should embrace an extended but foreseeable time period. The Plan depicts land uses and community development strategies through the Year 2041.
3. The Plan should be comprehensive. The Plan, if it is to serve its function as an important decision-making tool, must give adequate consideration to the sensitive relationships which exist between all major land use categories.
4. The Plan should acknowledge regional conditions and trends. Winterfield Township is part of the Central Michigan Region, and is in close proximity to nearby centers including Harrison, Clare and Cadillac; therefore, the Plan should acknowledge the Township's regional context. Through recognition of regional implications, the Township's Future Land Use Plan will be more realistic and reasonable in terms of guiding the future utilization of land resources in the Township.
5. The Plan must be updated periodically. The Plan may require periodic revisions to reflect significant changes in local, state, or national conditions which cannot be foreseen at this time. It is, of course, impossible to predict the type of changes which may occur over the next decade or two. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the Future Land Use Plan should be undertaken approximately every five years to provide for an adequate analysis of new conditions and trends. Should major rezonings which are in conflict with Plan recommendations be accomplished, the Plan should be reviewed and amended accordingly.

### 9.2 FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The overriding principle behind the Future Land Use Plan is to maintain the existing rural and environmentally rich character of Winterfield Township. The future land use categories are intended to uphold this principle while guiding the future growth of the Township. Eight future land use classifications are proposed for Winterfield Township. The various future land uses are portrayed on **Map 7**. A narrative describing each future land use classification is presented on the following pages.

# Map 7

# Future Land Use



- |  |                                |  |                     |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|
|  | Agricultural/Rural Residential |  | Commercial          |
|  | Low Density Residential        |  | Industrial          |
|  | Medium Density Residential     |  | Federal/State Lands |
|  | Public/Semi-Public             |  | Water Bodies        |
|  | Township Center                |  |                     |

- Major Roads (County Primary)
- Local Roads
- Winterfield Township Limits

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles





## AGRICULTURAL/RURAL RESIDENTIAL

In keeping with several community-wide goals that seek to preserve and protect the Township's abundant natural resources, such as farmlands, woodlands, wetlands and lakes, and to maintain the rural character of the community, the greatest amount of land in Winterfield Township is designated for future Agricultural/Rural Residential use. This future land use classification is designed to accommodate rural land uses consistent with the Township's existing rural character and natural resources.

The Agricultural/Rural Residential category is intended to accomplish a number of goals:

1. Protect the existing agricultural uses in the Township.
2. Preserve and enhance the environmental resources, including forest land, wetland and water bodies, for future generations.
3. Steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas in the Township such as wetlands.
4. Prevent large-scale residential developments from locating in the district.

All agricultural activities such as farmhouses, croplands, grazing lands, and orchards are compatible uses in this classification. Low-density single-family homes, compatible with the rural character of the Township, are welcome in this district. A minimum residential lot size of 5 acres is recommended. Other compatible land uses within this category may include outdoor commercial recreation activities such as riding stables and golf courses, and open space uses such as campgrounds and nature preserves.

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Low Density Residential future land use classification is intended to provide for a compact area within the Township that will accommodate future residential growth. This will accomplish a goal of providing public services and amenities to the largest number of Township population in a cost-effective manner. It will also accomplish the goal of retaining a majority of the Township land as rural. This classification is intended to provide areas for suburban-style, single-family residential development and related uses such as golf courses, churches, and in-home day-care facilities. A minimum residential lot size of 1 acre is recommended. New single-family developments should conform to the Township's rural character and be compatible with existing rural development.

The Low Density Residential classification is designated for lands in four areas of the Township:

- Along Twin Lakes Road, south of Long Lake Road
- Along Cook Avenue, near Long Lake and Haskell Lake Roads
- East side of Strawberry Road along the Clam River
- Keehn Road at McKinley Avenue

These areas generally contain existing single-family residences on smaller lots as well as vacant lands well suited for new single-family residential growth.



## MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Medium Density Residential classification is intended to provide opportunities for affordable housing, smaller lot development, and/or alternatives to traditional single-family homes. Small lot single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, apartments and mobile home parks may be included within this classification, along with related accessory uses. Senior living and care facilities may also be allowed within this category. Somewhat higher density development can be accommodated within the classification. For single-family residential use, a minimum lot size of 12,000 square feet is recommended. For multiple-family residential use, a maximum density of 4 dwelling units per acre is recommended. Given the higher allowed density, development of medium density residential use is dependent on securing adequate water and sanitary service, whether public or private.

No such development currently exists in Winterfield Township. Therefore, a new location for Medium Density Residential development is proposed near the southeast corner of Cook Avenue and Haskell Lake Road in the geographic center of the Township. In the event that different or additional lands are needed for medium density residential use, the following criteria should be used for evaluating the development and its location:

- In keeping with the small town character of the Township, the density for new developments should be kept to no more than 4 dwelling units per acre.
- The development must be adequately served by public utilities.
- Since this development generates more traffic than single-family development, it must be located along a major thoroughfare.
- The new development should be used as a zone of transition or buffer between single-family uses and more intensive uses.

## COMMERCIAL

This classification is intended to support predominantly freestanding commercial and office uses that serve both the local and regional market. The one existing commercial property in the Township has been included in this category. New commercial use would also be appropriate within the Township Center future land use classification.

In the event that new commercial uses are proposed in the Township, the following criteria should be used:

- The local or regional market must show a clearly defined need for the proposed commercial development.
- The development must be adequately served by public utilities.
- The development should be located on a major road that will have minimal negative traffic impact on the surrounding properties.
- The proposed development should be compatible with the surrounding property uses and an acceptable buffer or screen should be provided between the proposed development and adjoining residential uses.



## TOWNSHIP CENTER

The Future Land Use Plan proposes the creation of a Township Center to be located at the intersection of Haskell Lake Road and Cook Avenue. The proposed center is intended to be the central focal point of Winterfield Township, with a mix of different uses including civic uses, Township and other governmental facilities, and semi-public uses. Locally-oriented commercial uses may also be accommodated within the Township Center classification, provided they meet the criteria outlined in the Commercial classification narrative.

## INDUSTRIAL

Reflective of existing development, the Future Land Use Map designates several sites within the Township for future Industrial use. This classification includes existing industries as well as some of the land immediately adjacent to these industries. Providing new locations for industries is important to Winterfield Township in order to promulgate the established industrial goal of “encouraging the development of new industries with attractive sites to strengthen the tax base and provide employment opportunities for area residents.” The following criteria should be used for evaluating new industries:

- The development should have good access via a major road.
- The development must be adequately served by public utilities.
- The proposed development should have no appreciable impact on existing residential neighborhoods.

## PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

The Public/Semi-Public classification is comprised of all the existing public and semi-public uses in the Township. Future public and semi-public uses should be located in areas suitable for development with adequate utilities and transportation access.

## STATE AND FEDERAL OWNED LAND

This classification includes the large and numerous parcels of land in the Township currently owned by the State of Michigan and/or the Federal government. These State or Federal lands are concentrated within the eastern portion of the Township. Natural resource conservation and related activity is the sole purpose contemplated for this classification.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### Major and Minor Roads

The Plan classifies all roads as either major roads or local roads. All of the existing County Primary roads are classified as major roads, with the rest of the roads classified as minor roads. Because of the importance of the major roads as



regional thoroughfares, there exists an opportunity for the Township to capitalize through enhancement and beautification of the roads and their adjoining land uses. Streetscape plans, proper landscaping requirements, and access control policies are all strategies that can enhance the experience of travelers on these roads, and create a positive image of the Township.

### **Township Entryway**

In order to present a positive image for people driving into or passing through the Township, the plan recommends the development of four Township entryways. The locations for the four entryways are as follows:

- Strawberry Road at the northern border of the Township
- Long Lake Road at the western border of the Township
- Twin Lakes Avenue at the southern border of the Township
- Haskell Lake Road at the eastern border of the Township

An entryway is not intended to be a particular land use district. It is meant to serve as an area where the Township would encourage attractive developments, alleviate blight, if it exists, and install specially attractive features such as signage and landscaping. Most of these features can be installed on the street right-of-way, or on private property easements.



## 10. IMPLEMENTATION AND ZONING PLAN

### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall intent of this Master Plan is to identify and develop the most appropriate land use strategies for meeting Township needs in a manner which supports the health, safety, and welfare of the current and future residents. These strategies are embodied within this Plan both graphically and in text. However, without the implementation of these strategies, this Master Plan becomes nothing more than a document upon a shelf. A Master Plan is a statement of policy and is ineffective unless acted upon.

There are a number of avenues that Winterfield Township can follow to implement this land use plan. Before implementation can occur, it is critical that the appropriate Township governmental bodies recognize and support this Master Plan. Once the Plan is adopted, it is considered official and should be used by the Planning Commission, Township Board and other Township bodies as a guide for future planning and resolving conflicts. Implementation of the Plan may be realized by actively:

1. Regulating the use and manner of development of property through up-to-date and reasonable zoning controls, subdivision regulations, and building and housing codes.
2. Assuring community-wide knowledge, understanding, support, and approval of the Plan.
3. Providing a program of capital improvements and adequate, economical public services by using available governmental financing techniques to encourage desired land development or redevelopment.
4. Reviewing the plan periodically (at least every five years) to evaluate its consistency with changing trends and citizen desires.

This Section discusses further the strategies for implementing the goals, strategies and land use recommendations of this Master Plan.

### 10.2 ZONING PLAN

The Winterfield Township Zoning Ordinance, adopted on July 1, 2003, is a regulatory tool that guides land use and development within the Township. As stipulated by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, the Zoning Ordinance must be based upon a Master Plan. Therefore, this Master Plan, by setting forth the long term vision of Winterfield Township, provides the basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance, which contains the rules that govern the path to that vision.

As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the following is an explanation of the relationship between the future land use categories presented in this Master Plan and the zoning districts established in the Winterfield Township Zoning Ordinance.



## EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS

The currently adopted Winterfield Township Zoning Ordinance has established a total of seven zoning districts as follows:

- CN, Conservation
- A-R, Agricultural/Rural Residential
- R-1, Single-Family Residential
- R-2, Multiple-Family Residential
- R-3, Manufactured Home Park
- C-1, Commercial
- M-1, Light Industrial

The intent statements for each zoning district, as generally stated in the Winterfield Township Zoning Ordinance, are provided below:

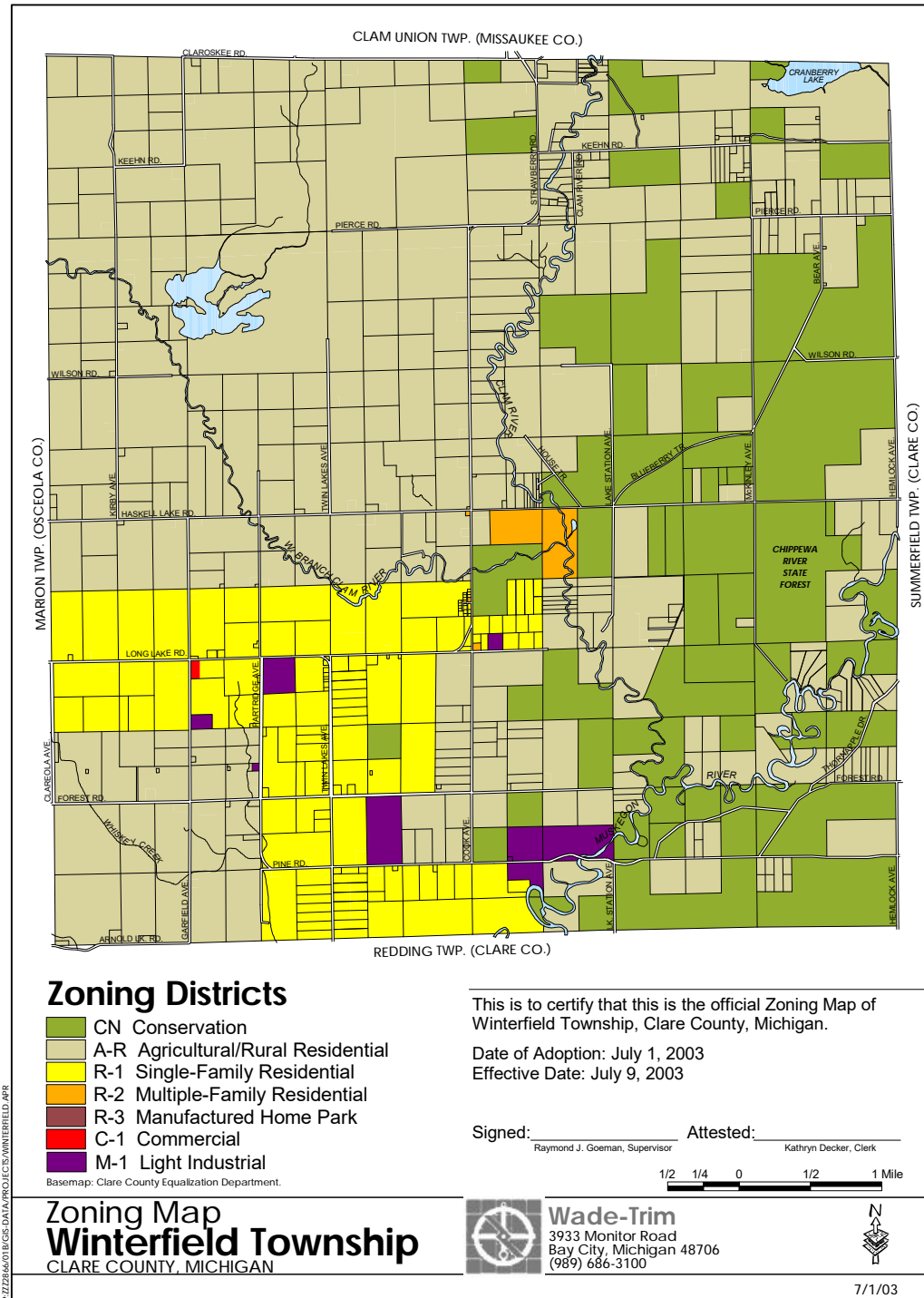
- The CN District is intended for the conservation of state and federal owned land in the Township through the prevention of destruction and loss of natural land and water features and natural historic sites, provision of habitats for wildlife, and conservation and preservation of outdoor recreation uses, including certain lands formerly used for farming.
- The A-R District is intended for very low density single-family housing as well as the preservation of natural open space lands and lands that are unsuitable for development due to constraints such as flooding, or lack of infrastructure. The district also provides for farming, ranching, and commercial gardening activities.
- The intent of the R-1 District is to provide for low density, single-family residential development and related public and semi-public buildings, facilities, and accessory structures, consistent with the essentially rural character of the Township.
- The intent of the R-2 District is to provide for an efficient and economic use of land through a mixture of single-family, two-family, and multiple-family housing types together with such public and semi-public buildings and facilities and accessory structures as may be necessary and are compatible with such residential developments.
- The intent of the R-3 District is to preserve the interests of alternate types of residential developments by providing for manufactured housing developments and to protect the residents of any manufactured home development.
- The intent of the C-1 District is to provide for areas that are designed for the commercial needs that appeal to a wider community interest. The general character of this district comprises a broad range of retail and service uses, entertainment uses, community facilities, and general office uses.
- The intent of the M-1 District is to provide areas that are appropriate for the industrial needs of the Township. The district may include a variety of mixed wholesale and warehousing activities, light manufacturing, processing and assembly plants, general offices, and research and development. Development in this district is to be restricted to clean industry that does not produce substantial air or water pollution and excessive noise or odor.

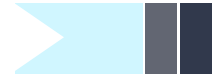




The currently adopted Winterfield Township Zoning Map is shown below. The majority of lands are presently zoned A-R District or CN District. A significant area of R-1 District zoning is found in the southwestern portion of the Township. Primarily reflective of existing development, C-1, M-1 and R-2 zoned properties are scattered around the Township.

Winterfield Township's Currently Adopted Zoning Map





## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND ZONING DISTRICTS

As outlined above, the Winterfield Township Master Plan has established a total of eight future land use classifications:

- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Commercial
- Township Center
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Federal/State Lands

The below table highlights how each of the eight future land use classifications is intended to be accomplished through zoning district designations:

**Table 20**

Relationship Between Future Land Use Classifications and Zoning Districts		
Future Land Use Classification	Current Zoning District	Notes
Agricultural/Rural Residential	A-R, Agricultural/Rural Residential	
Low Density Residential	R-1, Single-Family Residential	
Medium Density Residential	R-2, Multiple-Family Residential or R-3, Manufactured Home Park	
Commercial	C-1, Commercial	
Township Center	n/a	Public and semi-public uses are allowed in the A-R and R-1 Districts; Local commercial uses are allowed in the C-1 District
Industrial	M-1, Light Industrial	
Public/Semi-Public	n/a	Public and semi-public uses are allowed in the A-R and R-1 Districts
Federal/State Lands	CN, Conservation	

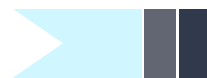


## 10.3 PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THE MASTER PLAN

Citizen participation and understanding of the general planning process and policies of the Plan are critical to the success of the Township's planning program. In order to organize public support most effectively, the Township must emphasize the necessity of, and reasons for, instituting the planning program. Accordingly, the Planning Enabling Act under Section 51 states that the Township Planning Commission "may publish and distribute copies of the Master Plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education." Additionally, the Planning Commission "shall consult with and advise public officials and agencies, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional, and other organizations, and citizens concerning the promotion or implementation of the Master Plan." In this spirit, the Township should make the adopted Master Plan available on the Township website.

## 10.4 FIVE-YEAR MASTER PLAN REVIEW

The Winterfield Township Master Plan is a flexible document that should be updated periodically to address major changes in the community, such as the addition/loss of a major employer or changing citizen attitudes relating to a controversial issue. At least every five years after the adoption of a Master Plan, the Planning Enabling Act requires that a Planning Commission "review the Master Plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the Master Plan or adopt a new Master Plan." The findings of the review must be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting or meetings of the Planning Commission.



PREPARED BY:  
Wade Trim  
500 Griswold  
Suite 2500  
Detroit, MI 48226  
[www.wadetrim.com](http://www.wadetrim.com)

PREPARED FOR:  
Winterfield Township

Adopted: May 2022

