

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Prepared By The
**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**
And
**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
BOARD of TUSTEES**

With The Assistance Of
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Approved By The
WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
January 17, 2013

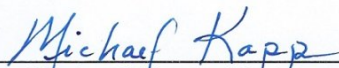
Approved By The
WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD of TRUSTEES
February 12, 2013

**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Statements of Approval

Planning Commission Approval

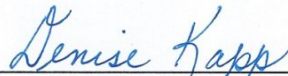
This is to certify that this Master Plan comprises the Wheatfield Township Master Plan approved by the Wheatfield Township Planning Commission on January 17, 2013.



Michael Kapp, Chairperson
Wheatfield Township Planning Commission

Township Board of Trustees Approval

This is to certify that this Master Plan comprises the Wheatfield Township Master Plan approved by the Wheatfield Township Board of Trustees on February 12, 2013.



Denise Kapp, Clerk
Wheatfield Township Board of Trustees

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Chapter One INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the Wheatfield Township Master Plan and the Master Plan's role, importance, preparation process, and principal policies. It presents the framework for what follows by defining what the Master Plan is and what it is intended to accomplish. Understanding the fundamentals of the Master Plan will enable township residents and officials to appreciate the role it plays in ensuring the future welfare of the community, its residents and its resources. Embracing this Plan as a vital tool in preserving and enhancing the public health, safety, and welfare of the township is essential if this Plan is to be effective.

What is the Master Plan?

Purpose

Just as individuals and families plan for their future well being, so must municipalities. Just as individuals may open savings accounts to save for an addition to their house for a growing family, municipalities must look to the future and take specific actions to address current and future needs. Such actions may involve improvements to roads, improvements to the level of emergency services, and the rehabilitation of deteriorating buildings.

One of the most significant and comprehensive actions Wheatfield Township can take in planning for its future is the development and periodic update of a Master Plan. A Master Plan is a policy document that identifies how growth and associated land use should be guided to enhance the future welfare of the particular community. Land use planning is a fundamental component of a Master Plan, and involves the determination of the most beneficial geographical arrangement of future land use such as agriculture, housing, commercial services and industry. This determination takes into consideration a number of factors such as local attitudes, existing land use patterns, infrastructure and public services, and natural features such as soils.

The following key words and phrases describe aspects of the Master Plan's purpose:

FUTURE ORIENTED: The plan concerns itself with long-range planning to guide and manage future growth and development. The plan is a picture of the township today and a guide to how the community should evolve over the next ten to twenty years within the context of growth, development and preservation.

GENERAL: The plan establishes broad policies to address future land use and public services.

COMPREHENSIVE: The Plan is comprehensive in that it addresses all principal types of land use and the practical geographic boundaries of each.

A PLAN: The Plan is a specific tangible document that consists of both text and maps, a key portion of which presents and illustrates the township's policies regarding its planned future land use pattern and associated public services.

DYNAMIC: The Plan is intended to be continually evolving in light of the aspirations of local residents, changing conditions in the township, and new strategies to manage growth.

This Plan is a continuation of the township's efforts to guide and shape growth, development and preservation, and not allow the community to evolve by chance.

Legal Basis

The Wheatfield Township Planning Commission, under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, prepared this new Master Plan. Section 7(2) of the Act (MCL 125.3807) provides:

(2) The general purpose of a master plan is to guide and accomplish, in the planning jurisdiction and its environs, development that satisfies all of the following criteria:

(a) Is coordinated, adjusted, harmonious, efficient, and economical.

(b) 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.

(c) Will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare.

(d) Includes, among other things, promotion of or adequate provision for 1 or more of the following:

(i) A system of transportation to lessen congestion on streets.

(ii) Safety from fire and other dangers.

(iii) Light and air.

(iv) Healthful and convenient distribution of population.

(v) Good civic design and arrangement and wise and efficient expenditure of public funds.

(vi) Public utilities such as sewage disposal and water supply and other public improvements.

(vii) Recreation.

(viii) The use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

4) Chapter Four – Coordinated Public Services presents policies addressing the coordination of public services with the planned future land use pattern and the township's overall welfare.

5) Chapter Five – Implementation presents implementation measures to effectuate the policies of the Plan.

6) The Appendices present an overview of existing conditions and trends in the township, addressing cultural features such as roads, land use, and public services (Appendix A); natural features such as soils, topography, and water resources (Appendix B); and demographic features such as population, housing, and education (Appendix C). Appendix D presents maps illustrating some of the physical aspects of the township.

This Master Plan is not a law or regulatory document. It is a "policy plan" to be implemented through, in part, zoning and other regulatory tools in addition to voluntary programs and incentives. For example, though the Master Plan is not a zoning ordinance, the Master Plan's recommendations and policies serve as a basis for updating the current Wheatfield Township Zoning Ordinance. In fact, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, which provides Michigan municipalities with the statutory authority to adopt zoning regulations, stipulates that a municipality's zoning regulations "...shall be based upon a plan designed to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, to encourage the use of lands in accordance with their character and adaptability, to limit the improper use of land, to conserve natural resources and energy..." This Master Plan addresses this statutory requirement and ensures a strong legal foundation for the township's zoning program.

Elements of the Master Plan

This Master Plan consists of the following key components:

- 1) Chapter One – Introduction presents an overview of the purpose and role of the Plan, the process followed in its preparation, key planning policies, and a summary of township conditions.
- 2) Chapter Two – Planning Considerations, Goals and Objectives presents a discussion of important planning issues facing the township today, and associated goals and objectives that address these considerations.
- 3) Chapter Three – Future Land Use Strategy presents policies addressing the planned future land use pattern for the township.

Importance and Application of the Master Plan

The importance and application of the Wheatfield Township Master Plan are demonstrated in:

- the long-term interests of the township
- the day-to-day administration of the township's planning and zoning program

Long Term Interests

There are a number of interests shared by residents and officials today that can be expected to continue for years to come and be similarly shared by future residents and officials. Some of these important interests include:

- Protecting the township's rural atmosphere
- Protecting the township's natural resources, including productive farmland, wetlands, woodlands and streams
- Minimizing tax burdens
- Ensuring appropriate land use and adequate services to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors
- Ensuring compatibility with the use and development of neighboring properties
- Protecting the quality of life

These and other long term interests are supported by the Plan's goals and objectives presented in Chapter Two, and the Plan's land use and public services policies presented in Chapters Three and Four.

Day-To-Day Administration

In addition to furthering the long-term interests of the township, the Master Plan also plays an important role in the day-to-day planning and zoning efforts of the township:

- Advisory Policies: The Plan is an official advisory policy statement that should be readily shared with existing and prospective landowners and developers. The Plan informs them of the long term intentions of the township regarding land use and encourages development proposals more closely integrated with the policies of the Plan.
- Regulatory Programs: The Plan establishes a practical basis for the township to revise, update, or otherwise prepare regulatory programs, including zoning and land division regulations, to ensure that the policies of the Plan are implemented.
- Review of Land Development Proposals: Chapter Two includes goals and objectives that should be reviewed when consideration is given to proposed rezoning requests, site plans, and related land use proposals, to further establish a record upon which the proposal can be evaluated. Equally important, Chapters Three and Four provide policies regarding the planned future land use pattern in the township and associated public services – valuable reference points upon which development proposals should be evaluated.
- Public Services Improvements: The identification of a planned future land use pattern enables the township to pinpoint areas that may be in need of current or future public services improvements. The identification also enables the township to better determine areas of future need, rather than playing "catch-up" while the township's welfare may be at risk. Chapters Three and Four provide important guidance in this area.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: This Plan provides the basis for township officials to communicate effectively with nearby communities regarding both the impact of their planning and zoning actions and opportunities for mutual gain through coordinated efforts in the areas of land use and public services.
- Factual Reference: This Plan includes a factual overview of relevant trends and conditions in the township. This factual profile can educate local officials and residents and aid in the review of development proposals, encourage constructive discussion of planning issues and policies, and serve as a base line for future studies.

How The Plan Was Prepared

Wheatfield Township adopted its first master plan in 1976. The 1976 Plan was fully updated in 1994 and further amended in 1997. The Planning Commission reviewed the 1997 Plan in both 2000 and 2007 and found the Plan to continue to present appropriate measures and policies for addressing growth, development and preservation. The township undertook the development of a wholly new plan in 2011 as part of its commitment to maintain a current plan and actively guide the evolution of the community and maintain responsive and effective land use, preservation and public services policies. In addition, the Planning Enabling Act requires that a municipality review its master plan at intervals no greater than five years and pursue amendments or a new plan if deemed necessary.

The Planning Commission's initial efforts were directed at gaining insight into the attitudes and aspirations of local landowners regarding growth and development issues and the "future vision" for the community. Surveys were mailed to all landowners in the township in the spring of 2011, with return postage included. Of the 629 surveys mailed, 254 surveys were returned. The 40% return rate is considered quite high and far exceeds the common return rate of 20% – 25% for surveys of a similar nature. Some of the dominant attitudes expressed by the survey respondents included:

- reasonable taxes
- manage growth and development
- maintain rural character
- preserve farmland
- protect natural resources
- rely upon surrounding communities for shopping and services
- direct new housing primarily toward the northern portions of the township, including near Williamston

The Planning Commission examined the 1997 Plan within the context of the results of the survey and other considerations in the community. This examination included the consideration of several alternative future land use patterns. The Planning Commission studied these alternatives, including the advantages and disadvantages of each, and developed a singular future land use strategy. Using the 1997 Master Plan as a "base," the Planning Commission then assembled a complete draft of the new Plan suitable for presentation to the community. The Commission held a public hearing on the draft Plan and subsequently approved the Plan.

Throughout the development of the Plan, the township followed the procedural requirements of the Planning Enabling Act including notification of neighboring communities of the township's intent to prepare a plan, and the township's solicitation for input from neighboring communities on the draft plan.

Wheatfield Township Overview

The following is a brief overview of Wheatfield Township. A more detailed review of the township's trends and conditions can be found in Appendix A, B, C, and D.

Wheatfield Township is a rural community of approximately 1,650 persons in the central region of Ingham County and covering approximately 18,500 acres (28.9 square miles). Like most townships in southern Michigan, Wheatfield Township is generally square in shape except for the presence of the City of Williamston and Williamstown Township in what would otherwise be the northeast corner of the township. Regional access to the township is provided by Interstate 96, which passes through the township's northern third.

The township's topography can be generally described as nearly level and drainage is facilitated principally by the Deer and Sloan Creeks. Both flow north through parts of the township before emptying into the Red Cedar River. The township includes a scattering of comparatively small wetlands and woodlands. The vast majority of the township is characterized by loam soils. Soil conditions present moderate to severe limitations to on-site sewage disposal (septic systems) although such limitations can often be overcome with increased lot sizes and/or specially engineered systems. The soils are generally very supportive of agricultural operations with more than half of the township classified as "prime farmland."

The landscape of Wheatfield Township is of a predominantly rural character. Approximately 71% of the township's acreage is comprised of farm operations and the balance is principally comprised of scattered residences and rural settlement areas along with pockets of wetlands and woodlands. Commercial and industrial development is limited. Commercial services are limited primarily to the Williamston Road/I-96 interchange area and further south along Williamston Road.

A five member Township Board governs Wheatfield Township. Government administration is funded by a millage. The township does not provide public sewer or water service. Fire protection is provided through a cooperative arrangement with five other nearby communities, and relies on the fire departments of the City of Williamston and Leroy Township. Police protection is provided principally by the Michigan State Police as the role of the Ingham County Sheriff's Department has decreased over recent years. The township is void of parks and public school facilities.

Overview of Planning Policies

This Plan presents a coordinated strategy that addresses growth, development and preservation. The Plan supports the continuation of Wheatfield Township as a predominantly agricultural community with comparatively limited encroachment of residential development into its planned agricultural areas.

The Plan provides opportunities for comparatively low density housing in the northwest quarter of the township north of I-96. The northeast quarter, north of I-96 and generally surrounding the City of Williamston, is planned primarily for housing of a more suburban and urban character provided adequate provisions are made for sewage disposal and potable water. The principal exceptions are limited opportunities for industry on the west side of Corwin Road near the CSX Railroad, and limited opportunities for commercial development on the north side of Linn Road east of Corwin Road. The principal commercial area of the township is to be the Williamston Road corridor, extending south from the I-96 interchange to Noble Road.

The balance and vast majority of the township is planned for agriculture with limited opportunities for residential encroachment except in association with several existing low density settlement areas.

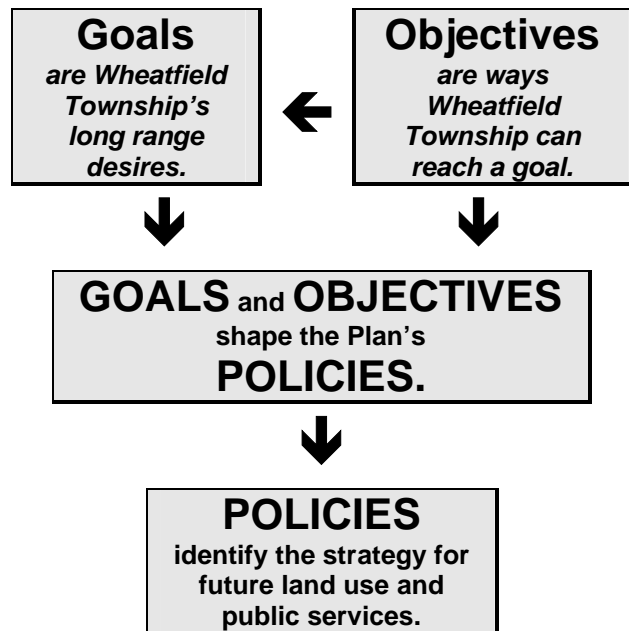
Public services improvements are to be focused in those areas of the community where heightened growth and development are anticipated, most particularly in the northeast portion of the township.

Chapter Two PLANNING ISSUES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Introduction

The primary goal of this Plan is to establish a basis for future land use, public services, and preservation efforts. The development of this Plan is a continuation of the township's commitment to guiding and shaping future growth and development and not allowing the community to evolve merely by chance. To effectively plan for the township's well being with regard to future land use, public services and preservation, it is necessary to identify important planning considerations pertinent to the community and clarify its long term goals and objectives. Following is a presentation of these planning considerations and related goals and objectives.

- The goals and objectives serve as references upon which future rezoning and other land development decisions can be evaluated.



Planning Considerations, Goals & Objectives

A number of key planning considerations are apparent today. These considerations vary in scope and are clearly inter-related. The future quality of life and character of the township will be largely shaped by the township's strategy in addressing these considerations. Each consideration presented in this Chapter is followed by a set of goal and objective statements. Planning goals are statements that express the township's long range desires. Each goal has accompanying objectives that are general strategies that the township will pursue to attain the specified goal. For example, a goal of the Robinson family may be to open a bakery in Wheatfield Township, while two of the family's objectives may be to seek a loan and meet with a real estate agent to look at properties.

The goals and objectives are important for several reasons:

- The goals and objectives provide current and future residents, business owners, and officials, with an overview of the intended future character of the community.
- The goals and objectives identify and outline the basic parameters which should be used in guiding land use, public services and preservation policies.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Plan

The planning considerations and associated goals and objectives are divided into the following major categories:

- Growth Management, Economic Development and Public Services
- Community Character
- Natural Resources and the Environment
- Farming
- Housing
- Commercial Services
- Industrial Development
- Circulation and Mobility
- Regional Coordination

The planning considerations presented in the following pages are not intended to be all inclusive. Rather, they are presented as the primary considerations that the community must address in the next five to ten years as it further defines a future for itself. These issues will evolve over time and should be reexamined periodically and the appropriate modifications made.

The objectives listed on the following pages should not be interpreted as limitations on the township's efforts to reach its goals. The township's commitment to the following objectives does not preclude it pursuing other objectives that it determines are beneficial. In addition, the objectives listed are not time specific. The township may choose to act on certain objectives within a shorter time frame than others.

Growth Management, Economic Development, and Public Services

Wheatfield Township is a very desirable place to live with abundant open spaces and an overall rural character, easy access to highways and employment centers, and nearby retail and other urban services. It is reasonable to expect that following the current economic turmoil in Michigan, the township will begin a new period of growth. The township's character and quality of life will be impacted by the way the township chooses to manage growth.

Managed growth can:

- minimize unnecessary loss or degradation of farmland and other natural resources.
- minimize conflicts between differing land uses.
- limit traffic hazards and nuisances.
- preserve the township's existing character and environmental integrity.
- encourage orderly land development.
- assure adequate public services and wise expenditures of township funds.

Tax revenues dictate, in part, the extent and quality of public services. Although development will increase the township's tax base, the same development will place additional demands upon public services. Maintaining the current quality of public services, let alone the pursuit of improvements can be challenging. Contrary to traditional planning wisdom, research has shown that development does not necessarily "pay its way," particularly as it applies to traditional single family residential development. Economic development in the form of commercial and industrial development has been shown to typically have a more positive impact upon the economic stability of a community. Development

patterns that minimize new public costs should be sought where practical. Economic development can minimize tax burdens as efforts to maintain and improve public services are pursued. However, economic development interests should not be at the cost of a healthy natural environment.

GOAL: *Manage growth and development in a manner that assures land use patterns compatible with public facilities and services and the cost-effective use of tax dollars, encourages economic stability, preserves the township's natural resources and rural character, and minimizes conflicts between differing land uses.*

Objectives

- 1) Identify locations in the township by sound planning and zoning that are most appropriate for agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial activity, taking into account the constraints and opportunities presented by the township's natural features, existing land use patterns, and the availability of public facilities and services, including road infrastructure.
- 2) Encourage forms of growth and development that minimize public service costs and adverse impacts to the community's natural resources and rural character, including compact forms of development that adhere to reasonable limitations on the intensity of development.
- 3) Preserve the township's natural resources through a coordinated future land use strategy that permits reasonable use of land while discouraging unnecessary loss and/or fragmentation of open spaces including farmland, woodlands, meadows, wetlands, and stream corridors.
- 4) Evaluate rezoning petitions, site plans, and other development decisions according to the policies, goals and objectives of this Plan.
- 5) Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural features, or built landscape buffers that adequately screen or mitigate adverse impacts.
- 6) Guide development into areas where public facilities and services have adequate capacity to accommodate the growth and increased development intensities, and where the provision or expansion of public facilities is most cost effective.
- 7) Discourage public services improvements that will encourage excessive growth and development, or development at a rate beyond the township's ability to ensure adequate public health, safety, and welfare, or development in areas of the township not designated for such growth.

- 8) Wherever legally permissible, local regulations should require new development to pay to the township for the direct and indirect public services costs associated with that development. These costs should not be imposed on existing residents, except where public interests and benefits may be at stake.
- 9) Continually monitor local attitudes about public facilities and services, including police and fire protection, roads, and recreation, and provide regular opportunities for substantive public input on growth and development issues.
- 10) Encourage economic stability in a manner that balances economic interests with the preservation of the township's rural character and natural resources.
- 11) Work with the City of Williamston in the development and maintenance of coordinated planning policies including the identification of planned community services areas for the accommodation of more intensive land uses where heightened public services and infrastructure will be a priority.

Community Character

Wheatfield Township's predominant character can be described as quiet and rural. "Rural character" is a subjective quality, but is typically associated with an overall perception of limited development, and extensive open spaces. The rural character of the township is largely shaped by its expansive farm operations evident in nearly all parts of the community, numerous commercial and private stables, and several rural settlement areas dispersed among the farms.

The township also includes small suburban and urban pockets including a commercial node near the I-96 interchange, and higher density residential neighborhoods in portions of the township's northern areas. Though these areas occupy a comparatively small portion of the community, they contribute to the overall fabric of the township and its character. Further, the presence of the City of Williamston in the township's northeast quarter impacts the overall character of Wheatfield Township and visa-versa, contributing to a "town and country" feel in the regional area.

These and other features combine to form the overall character of the township. The diversity of the area's character contributes to the area's desirability as a place of residence. The preservation of the township's character and identity is an important part of its long term welfare. Preservation efforts can protect property values, minimize negative impacts

between land uses, and enhance the overall quality of life.

As residential growth will likely be the most dominant change in the community in the coming ten to twenty years, it is likely that it will have the greatest impact on community character. This may be particularly true if the practice of stripping homes along the township's principal road network continues. Not only does this practice incrementally erode the panoramic views from road corridors, yielding continuous views of driveways, yards, cars, and garages, but the increased number of driveways undermines traffic safety.

GOAL: *Protect and enhance the character of the township in a manner that encourages a sense of identity, an overall rural character along with more urbanized pockets, and an atmosphere that defines the community as a desirable place to live and work.*

Objectives

- 1) Encourage development designed in scale with existing developed areas and the dominant rural character of the community, through reasonable standards addressing density, building size and height, and other development features.
- 2) Introduce appropriately designed and landscaped signage along key entrances into the township, which highlight the township's identity and place within the region.
- 3) Encourage the preservation of the township's visual character and unique identity as viewed from road corridors through reasonable measures to discourage strip residential development and encourage appropriate landscaping and screening of nonresidential uses.
- 4) Encourage development forms that actively strive to preserve natural open spaces (woodlands, wetlands, meadows, etc.) as part of a development project.
- 5) Encourage the maintenance of historically significant structures.
- 6) Encourage the placement of signs or markers at designated historic sites, buildings and areas, to highlight the historic resources of the township.
- 7) Encourage a structurally sound housing stock and the rehabilitation or removal of blighted structures and yard areas.
- 8) Work with the City of Williamston to highlight the unique character of the greater Williamston area and the assets that each community presents in shaping the desirability of the area as a place to live and do business.

- 9) Support the preservation of local farming, the keeping of horses, and other community features that help to define the township's rural character.
- 10) Update zoning and other regulatory tools to implement the "Community Character" goal and objectives.

See also "Natural Resources and the Environment" and "Farming" below for additional objectives addressing community character.

Natural Resources and the Environment

One cannot speak of community character preservation in Wheatfield Township without acknowledging the tremendous impact its natural resources play in defining the community's character. These resources include abundant productive farmland, the Deer and Sloan Creeks and other streams, and scattered woodland and wetland areas. These elements are important in shaping the character of the township but also provide vital environmental roles including wildlife habitats, flood control, water purification, groundwater recharge, and air quality enhancement. Preservation of these resources can be very difficult because encroachment and degradation can occur slowly. Substantial damage to an entire ecosystem frequently occurs over a long period of time. Increased environmental knowledge, awareness, and education, when incorporated into a comprehensive planning strategy, can minimize the potential for environmental degradation.

Managed growth and development can encourage the long-term integrity of the township's natural resources. The preservation of environmental resources is dependent upon complimentary planning policies and regulations, and site development practices that actively incorporate the protection of open spaces, natural resources and environmental ecosystems into the development plan.

GOAL: *Preserve the integrity of the township's natural resources including its productive farmland soils, wetlands, woodlands, and streams.*

Objectives

- 1) Document and periodically update resource inventory data such as water resource and wetlands, woodlands, and sites of contamination, for use in land planning studies and land use and development decisions.
- 2) Ensure that development does not unreasonably create increases in air, noise, light, land, and water pollution, or the degradation of land and

water resource environments including groundwater.

- 3) Ensure that all development is in compliance with applicable local, county, state, and federal environmental regulations.
- 4) Encourage land development which actively strives to preserve natural features and open spaces (topography, steep slopes, drainage, woodlands, wetlands, and fields) as part of the development plan, including the preservation of environmental corridors across multiple parcels and the community as a whole.
- 5) Review proposed development proposals in light of their potential impact on natural resources.
- 6) Recognize the special environmental role of Deer Creek, Sloan Creek and other stream corridors and discourage development that will disrupt their natural character and environmental integrity.
- 7) Coordinate permissible development densities with the constraints of the natural environment, generally increasing restrictions in environmentally sensitive areas and areas characterized by poor soils for on-site sewage disposal (where public sewer is not present), and guiding more intensive land uses away from environmentally sensitive areas and important natural features.
- 8) Discourage the expansion of public utilities into areas dedicated to conservation and resource protection.
- 9) Encourage awareness among residents about critical measures that help to protect the environmental integrity of the township's surface and ground water resources including management of yard waste and fertilizer use, minimizing impervious surfaces, maintenance of shoreline vegetation along stream corridors, avoidance of erosion and sedimentation, and the proper disposal of refuse and maintenance of septic systems.
- 10) Update zoning and other regulatory tools to implement the "Natural Resources and the Environment" goal and objectives.

Farming

Farming has historically been the dominant component of Wheatfield Township and, in 2011, comprised approximately 71% of the township's acreage. The stability of the township's agricultural base is supported by a number of factors including expansive soils that support high yield crop production, limited encroachment of non-farm residences in agricultural areas, farmland parcels typically of considerable acreage (most well over 40 acres), and a large number of farmland parcels

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enrolled in the P.A. 116 program. A survey of local land owners administered as part of the development of this Plan revealed broad support for farmland preservation.

There exists a demonstrated and increasingly critical need in the state for land devoted to agricultural use. Farm operations produce the food and fiber that our society relies on as well as the society of other countries. Agriculture has long been recognized for contributing to the economic stability of local communities and is a leading industry in Michigan. More and more research has found that farmland and other open spaces frequently produce more revenue than the cost to provide such land with community services, unlike many other land uses including traditional low density single family housing.

However, long term farming faces challenges. Competing land uses, particularly residential uses, can consume important agricultural lands and undermine the economic stability of farm operations. In addition, residential encroachment frequently results in land use conflicts between farm and non-farm residents.

These conditions emphasize the importance and need for farmland preservation strategies. This importance is further illustrated by the considerable attention farmland preservation has received by the Michigan legislature. Public Act 116 of 1974, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, established a program whereby land owners can enroll their properties to gain property tax relief, provided the property is maintained in an agricultural/open space status. In more recent times, the state has authorized the purchase of development rights (PDR) and the transfer of development rights (TDR). PDR enables a landowner to voluntarily sell the development rights to a governmental body in turn for placing an easement on the land prohibiting future non-farm development. TDR enables a landowner to transfer (through purchase) the farm parcel's development rights to another parcel in an area planned for growth and development. Both PDR and TDR provide landowners the opportunity to realize part or all of the development value of their land without having to actually develop it. Under both programs, all other private property rights remain intact. The protected land remains in private ownership and can be sold to anyone at any price. However the land cannot be developed for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.

While a PDR program may not be viable under the sole authority and administration of Wheatfield Township, the viability increases dramatically when administered on a county or greater regional/state level. The viability for such a program for Ingham County farmers increased significantly in 2008 when county voters approved a millage for such a program. Both of these voluntary programs are described in more detail in Chapter Five.

Ultimately, effective farmland preservation is dependent upon the management of the number and size of new non-farm lots, to avoid excessive encroachment and the wasteful conversion of excess tillable land for each home site.

GOAL: *Encourage the continuation of local farming operations and the long-term protection of farmland resources.*

Objectives:

- 1) Identify areas that are supportive of long-term farming and designate such areas for agriculture as a primary use.
- 2) Minimize potential land use conflicts in designated agricultural areas by limiting the encroachment of non-farm land uses while similarly providing flexibility for the conversion of farmland to reasonable alternative uses.
- 3) Discourage the wasteful consumption of farmland resources due to unnecessarily large residential lot size requirements, and locating non-farm uses on less productive soils.
- 4) Encourage buffer areas between new residential developments and abutting agricultural areas.
- 5) Support P.A. 116 farmland preservation agreements.
- 6) Periodically explore the viability of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs in Wheatfield Township.
- 7) Support voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs administered at the county or other regional level.
- 8) Discourage the extension of municipal utilities (such as sewer and water) into designated agricultural areas.
- 9) Minimize obstacles to the farming community that unnecessarily hinder local farm operations and "value-added" income sources, such as agri-tourism, farm markets, corn mazes, and other revenue generating activities that do not cause unreasonable impacts to surrounding properties.

Housing

Wheatfield Township is a very attractive place to live for many prospective residents. Residential development will likely be the major land use change in the coming ten to twenty years, and will have the greatest long-term impact on natural resources, demands for public services, and overall community character.

The township is interested in providing reasonable options for varied housing opportunities to address the differing economic and family stage needs of its residents. Opportunities for rural and suburban residential lifestyles are plentiful and will continue to be so. Soil conditions do not typically preclude home sites of approximately one to two acres in size. The lack of municipal sewer can limit opportunities for more varied and affordable housing. However, changes in the MDEQ's rules and regulations facilitate the development of private community sewer systems that serve individual subdivision developments. Thus, it is important to recognize the feasibility of higher-density development options that were not previously likely.

Establishing suburban and urban development areas is important as part of the township's efforts to provide varied housing opportunities and limit the extent of residential encroachment into less prudent areas such as agricultural conservation areas. It is also important to recognize that Williamston presents opportunities for residential development of a more urban character in coordination with the city's increased level of public services and infrastructure. Addressing housing needs on a regional level, through coordinated efforts of the city and surrounding townships, can be of greatest benefit to all.

The proper placement and design of residential development of a more urban character is critical if such development is to have limited impact upon the character of existing residential areas, the community's dominant agricultural and rural character, and the cost-effective delivery of public services.

Future residential development can be efficiently accommodated and need not unnecessarily consume natural resources and open spaces including farmland. The actual land area needed for future residential development is comparatively small. If Wheatfield Township's population grows by 500 persons by 2030, less than 250 acres of undeveloped land would require conversion to compact residential use to accommodate the additional 195 dwellings (based on an average lot size of one acre, the additional acreage necessary for roads, and a typical

household size of 2.6 persons). However, the same 195 dwellings can consume far greater acreage if located on large lots of five to ten acres or more in size. This less efficient development pattern can dramatically accelerate the rate at which farmland is converted to residential use or otherwise disturbed.

GOAL: *Provide a healthy residential environment in which persons and families can grow and flourish, and which responds to the opportunities and constraints of the township's public services and natural features, and preserves the overall agricultural, rural and single family housing character of the community.*

Objectives:

- 1) While maintaining single family rural housing as the primary housing option, afford opportunities for varied housing lifestyles to meet the varying preferences of current and future residents as they move through changing life and family cycles, including small lot single family dwellings, townhouses, apartments, and special housing opportunities for senior citizens.
- 2) Identify limited areas where non-rural residential development can be adequately accommodated, focusing principally on the Williamston area where road infrastructure and public services are of a greater level and where recreation opportunities, school facilities, and complimentary business districts are in close proximity.
- 3) Discourage strip residential development along the frontage of non-subdivision county roads such as Linn, Williamston, and Holt Roads, to minimize traffic safety hazards and congestion and preserve the existing rural character of the principal thoroughfares.
- 4) Encourage residential development that incorporates in the site planning process the preservation of natural resource systems and open spaces, and the preservation of the township's rural character as viewed from nearby public roads.
- 5) Ensure higher-density development areas are designed to minimize impacts on nearby lower-density settlement areas.
- 6) Encourage a housing stock that ensures dwellings are of appropriate design and scale to complement nearby conditions and the community as a whole.
- 7) Encourage creative design of neighborhoods to enhance their desirability such as the inclusion of sidewalks, bike and pedestrian paths, parks and playgrounds, and similar amenities.

- 8) Discourage uses and structures in residential areas that undermine the residential character and peacefulness of such areas, or result in nuisances.
- 9) Discourage commercial encroachment into residential neighborhoods.
- 10) Encourage the rehabilitation of blighted homes and residential properties.
- 11) Update zoning and other regulatory tools to implement the "Housing" goal and objectives.

Commercial Services

Traditional retail, office and service oriented uses in Wheatfield Township cover approximately six acres and is composed of such uses as a convenience store/gas station, veterinary clinic, towing/auto repair service, and equipment sales. Other commercial uses include a banquet facility, commercial stables, and a golf course. Most of the township's commercial development is located along Williamston Road between the I-96 interchange and Holt Road. The City of Williamston's business district provides a wide variety of predominantly locally-oriented retail, office and service oriented businesses.

Addressing commercial development includes considerations of need, location and character. Conditions suggest that there is comparatively limited demand for commercial expansion in the township at this time. The township's approximately six acres of more traditional commercial development in 2011 is comparably high when compared to the five to ten acres often considered necessary to facilitate a neighborhood shopping area that serves a population twice that of the township's. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the majority of present and future township residents will likely be within four miles of the full complement of commercial services in the City of Williamston. The township recognizes the benefit of the convenient shopping opportunities in Williamston and the critical role the city plays in addressing the consumer needs of township residents. I-96 provides excellent access and convenience to more regional consumer opportunities throughout the greater Lansing area including neighboring Meridian Charter Township.

Further, the land owner survey administered as part of the development of this Plan revealed that only a limited portion of respondents supported commercial expansion in Wheatfield Township and the majority preferred to visit other communities in the regional area for their consumer needs.

However, it must also be recognized that if the township desires to more aggressively pursue the

long-term economic stability of the community, some commercial expansion may be advantageous. The viability of future commercial development within a community is directly linked, in part, to access, visibility, activity areas, and improved levels of public services. Locating future commercial development with recognition of these factors will improve its long term viability, minimize additional public costs and negative impacts upon residential areas, and avoid inefficient development patterns.

GOAL: *Provide for a range of commercial services that cater to the needs of local residents and visitors in a manner that supports the predominant rural character of the community, facilitates safe motorized and non-motorized circulation, minimizes new public service costs, and recognizes Williamston as the primary business area to serve the township.*

Objectives

- 1) Provide opportunities for modest commercial growth in the township that are in coordination with Williamston's position and long-term viability as a commercial center.
- 2) Limit commercial growth in the township to uses that principally cater to the needs of the local population and highway traveler.
- 3) Guide commercial development in the township to existing commercial centers until such time that there is a clear demonstration of the need for new centers and this Plan is amended accordingly.
- 4) Coordinate the intensity of commercial development with available public facilities and services.
- 5) Ensure new commercial development is in character and scale with surrounding land uses, considering such features as building size and height, architectural design, setbacks, signage, landscaping and screening, and open spaces.
- 6) Encourage the rehabilitation of deteriorating and blighted properties including structures and yard areas.
- 7) Discourage the encroachment of commercial uses into residential areas, while providing opportunities for home-based occupations under conditions that preserve the surrounding residential character, neighborhood stability, and quality of life.
- 8) Encourage landscaping and screening to insure commercial development is sensitive to the dominant rural character of the community and minimizes adverse impacts on the normal use and enjoyment of adjoining land.

- 9) Ensure commercial development incorporates purposeful design measures that address safe and efficient access and circulation including the use of service drives and shared driveways, the avoidance of unnecessary access drives along roads, and parking areas that address vehicular and non-motorized travel.
- 10) Update zoning and other regulatory tools to implement the “Commercial Services” goal and objectives.

Industrial Development

Industrial activity in Wheatfield Township in 2011 was comprised of several facilities on Noble Road between Zimmer and Williamston Roads.

The limited presence of assembling, manufacturing, and related industrial activities in the township is not surprising. The township lacks some of the key conditions that support such uses including public sewer and water. In addition, Williamston and other regional urban centers with heightened services and infrastructure often present more appealing opportunities. However, it must be recognized that not all industry is of a heavy manufacturing or similar high intensity character, nor does all industry require heightened levels of public services, infrastructure, and access. Industry can improve the community’s overall economic stability and provide additional local employment opportunities. Existing conditions in the township suggest any future industrial development be limited and of a comparatively low intensity character.

GOAL: *Provide opportunities for a small industrial component in the township, characterized by “light” intensity operations of limited public services demands and impacts upon neighboring land uses.*

Objectives

- 1) Recognize the significance of Williamston’s industrial and other non-residentially planned areas as potential opportunities for the location of new neighboring industrial uses in Wheatfield Township, in addition to areas most apt to benefit from utility extensions from Williamston.
- 2) Limit industrial development to appropriately identified locations rather than be permitted to indiscriminately encroach into unintended areas.
- 3) Encourage new industrial development to be in character and scale with surrounding land uses, considering such features and building size and height, architectural design, setbacks, signage, landscaping and screening, and open spaces.

- 4) Limit industrial uses to those that are predominately characterized by assembly activities and similar “light” operations that do not require the processing of raw materials or added levels of public services, nor exhibit features that negatively impact surrounding land uses and the community as a whole.
- 5) Encourage industrial uses within industrial park settings, characterized by ample open spaces, landscaping, and buffering.
- 6) Ensure reasonable controls on industrial operations such as noise, odors, glare, vibration, and similar operational features.
- 7) Update zoning and other regulatory tools to implement the “Industrial Development” goal and objectives.

Circulation and Mobility

As new residential and non-residential development is introduced into the township, demands on the road network will increase. Even low density residential development can significantly increase local traffic levels. In addition, stripping residential lots along the township’s principal road network can significantly impact driving conditions. The increased number of driveways directly accessing the roads increases the level of congestion and safety hazards, travel times are increased, and the township’s rural panoramic views from road corridors are reduced to driveways, cars, and garages.

Increased traffic demands can be minimized through proper road maintenance and the coordination of road improvements with the planned future land use pattern and designated growth and development areas. Opportunities presented by the township’s improved thoroughfares, and appropriate land use management along these corridors, can maximize their potential and minimize traffic levels and maintenance costs along other road segments. In addition, access management measures can ensure safe and efficient travel.

Community circulation extends far beyond just accommodating vehicular traffic. More and more attention is being focused on ensuring road systems take into consideration all potential user needs including pedestrians, bicyclists, persons restricted to wheel chairs, and persons of all ages and physical conditions. Similarly, the value of circulation systems between communities that facilitate non-motorized travel have also been recognized as an important part of long range planning. Well planned and designed community and inter-community circulation systems can limit the reliance on the automobile and resulting environmental impacts, improve the health

of local residents, and improve the quality of leisure time.

GOAL: Maintain a transportation network throughout the township that encourages efficient and safe travel, consistent with the rural character of the community and coordinated with the planned future land use pattern.

Objectives

- 1) Work with the Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads to maximize road improvement and maintenance efforts, targeting road segments of greatest need in coordination with planned population centers and commerce areas.
- 2) Encourage access management measures designed to minimize congestion and traffic hazards such as turning lanes, acceleration and deceleration lanes, and minimizing access drives including the use of shared service drives.
- 3) Coordinate designated growth and development areas with road segments of adequate capacity to accommodate the increased demand, or segments planned for upgrades to provide the necessary capacity.
- 4) Where public safety and welfare will not be at risk, encourage flexibility in the design of public roads so as to minimize topographic alterations, clearing, and disturbances to other natural resources and ecosystems.
- 5) Encourage road and access drives in business areas to present an inviting atmosphere by the use of landscaping, screening, parking and building setbacks, and orderly and non-intrusive signage.
- 6) Encourage future residential lot split patterns that maintain the integrity of the township's road network and rural character.
- 7) Through proper review and development standards, and coordination with the Ingham County Department of Transportation, and Roads encourage non-motorized circulation networks linking population centers with recreational, commercial and other activity centers.
- 8) Encourage the inclusion of non-motorized access and movement in association with new residential subdivisions and non-residential development to facilitate safe and convenient travel for all.

Regional Coordination

Wheatfield Township exists within a regional network of communities, all of which impact one another. Wheatfield Township shares considerable boundaries with the City of Williamston and the townships of Williamstown, Leroy, Ingham, and Alaiedon. Wheatfield Township and nearby municipalities can greatly benefit by cooperatively pursuing common goals in the areas of land use and public services where mutually beneficial. Planned land uses, public services and preservation efforts should take into consideration conditions in these adjacent communities. Land use planning efforts should seek to establish a land use pattern compatible with surrounding conditions provided the goals of the township are not undermined.

GOAL: *Guide future growth, development, public services, and preservation efforts in a manner that recognizes the position of Wheatfield Township within the larger region, the mutual impacts of local planning efforts, and the relationships between the Wheatfield Township and the City of Williamston and surrounding townships.*

Objectives

- 1) Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that seeks to ensure compatibility among land uses along all municipal borders including Williamston and surrounding townships.
- 2) Guide commercial, industrial and more intensive residential development toward Williamston where public services and facilities are available, or can be provided most efficiently.
- 3) Encourage the vitality of downtown Williamston through appropriate restrictions on commercial uses in the township.
- 4) Establish and maintain a meaningful communication program with area municipalities and county agencies to discuss local and area-wide public facilities and services needs, land use conditions and trends, preservation goals and objectives, contemporary planning issues, and other mutually beneficial strategies to address short and long-term needs.
- 5) Encourage the review of proposed zoning changes, and development proposals, by adjoining municipalities where such changes and proposals are near municipal borders.

Chapter Three

FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGY

Introduction

Wheatfield Township’s principal planning components are contained in the Future Land Use Strategy, as discussed in this Chapter Three, and Chapter Four, Coordinated Public Services. The Future Land Use Strategy identifies the desired pattern of land use, development and preservation throughout the township. Chapter Four presents guidelines regarding public services to help ensure that future public services are coordinated with the planned land use pattern, and the achievement of the Plan’s goals and objectives.

The Future Land Use Strategy consists of policies addressing future land use and development in the township. Implementation of these policies rests, in part, with the regulatory tools of the township – most importantly the Wheatfield Township Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance regulates the type, location, and intensity of land development. The township may use other tools to further the implementation of the policies of this Plan. Chapter Five discusses implementation of the Plan in more detail.

The foundation on which the Future Land Use Strategy is rooted is the goals and objectives in Chapter Two, based in part on public input. These include the desire to guide future development in a manner that ensures land use patterns compatible with public facilities and services, the cost-effective use of tax dollars, the preservation of natural resources and the rural character of the community, and compact development where it is of a higher intensity. The Future Land Use Strategy is based upon an analysis of the township’s natural and cultural features such as community attitudes, road network, and existing land use patterns. Also considered are nearby conditions in neighboring municipalities. The opportunities and constraints presented by these features were evaluated in the context of the goals and objectives in Chapter Two to arrive at a planned future land use pattern.

Planning Areas

The Future Land Use Strategy divides the township into “planning areas” and identifies the predominant land use pattern planned for each. These areas collectively formulate the planned land use pattern. These areas are as follows:

- Agricultural Preservation Area
- Rural Residential Area
- Suburban Residential Area
- Williamston Road Mixed-Use Area
- Corwin/Linn Roads Commercial Area
- CSX Industrial Area

It is not the intent of this Plan to identify the specific land uses that should be permitted in each of these Areas. This Plan presents broad-based policies regarding the dominant land use(s) to be accommodated in each. Specific permitted land uses will be determined by the township’s zoning provisions, based upon considerations of compatibility. There may be certain existing land uses that do not “fit” with the planned future land use pattern. This should not be necessarily interpreted as a lack of township support for the continuation of such uses. Zoning regulations will clarify this matter.

Boundaries: The boundaries of the planning areas are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map. The map depicts the boundaries in more detail than the explanatory text in this chapter. There is frequently room for discretion at the exact interface between the boundaries of two planning areas and appropriate uses at these points of interface. However, the approximate boundaries presented in this Plan have been considered carefully. Significant departures are strongly discouraged except for unique circumstances and only when the public health, safety and welfare will not be undermined. It is also important to recognize that neither the Future Land Use Map nor the explanatory text of this chapter is intended to stand on its own. Both the policy discussions and map are inseparable and must be viewed as one.

Densities: The discussions of each planning area that is intended to accommodate residences include policies about appropriate maximum development densities. Private community sewer systems, established as part of and to only serve a new subdivision (or similar development), are not to serve as a basis for development patterns and densities contrary to the policies presented.

Agricultural Preservation Area

The Agricultural Preservation Area includes the vast majority of land in the township and is most evident south of I-96. The Agricultural Preservation Area is comprised nearly entirely of farmland and farming operations, along with scattered residences and wetland and woodland areas. The intent of the Agricultural Preservation Area is to provide opportunities for farming and encourage the preservation of farmland resources and the long-term viability of local farming, while also providing limited opportunities for low-density residential development. This Area is established in recognition of the importance of agriculture and the need to encourage the preservation of farmland resources and viable farming operations. Agriculture is intended to be the primary use of land in this Area.

This Plan recognizes that farming plays an important role in the history and character of Wheatfield Township, contributes important food and fiber to local and regional populations, encourages economic stability, and is an important source of income. The Agricultural Preservation Area encourages the continuation of all current farming activities as well as the introduction of new agricultural operations. All typical farming activities, including the raising of crops and livestock and the erection of associated structures, are encouraged provided that they meet Department of Agriculture and Rural Development requirements for "*generally accepted agricultural management practices*" and any requirements of applicable township ordinances. In light of the township's interest in maintaining the quality of life for existing households, reasonable care should be exercised in accommodating specialized agricultural operations that may have heightened impacts on surrounding land uses (such as large concentrated livestock operations).

Lands in the Agricultural Preservation Area are largely characterized by conditions that support their long term agricultural economic viability including: 1) classification by the U.S. Department of Agricultural of substantial "prime farmland" areas; 2) minimum parcel sizes approaching 40 acres or more; 3) limited encroachment by non-agricultural land uses; 4) partial enrollment in the P.A. 116 Farmland and Open Space Protection Program; and 5) adjacency to other

farmland considered to offer similar opportunities for long term economically viable farming.

It is intended that development densities in the Agricultural Preservation Area be very low, to minimize the loss of farmland and conflicts between farm operations and neighboring land uses. Such low densities also further the township's commitment to managing growth, providing cost effective public services, and limiting urban development densities to specific and compact portions of the community.

Potential new residents in the Agricultural Preservation Area should recognize that the traditional noises, odors and agricultural operations associated with responsible farm operations are a significant component of the Agricultural Preservation Area and will continue on a long term basis. Wheatfield Township does not consider such activities and operations as nuisances. Rather, the township supports the long term continuation and protection of responsible farm operations and the local farming industry. Local developers and real estate agents should disclose this information to prospective buyers of land.

There are some existing small settlement areas in the Agricultural Preservation Area that are of a higher density than recommended. The Plan recognizes the viability and desirability of these settlement areas. On the other hand, these settlement areas are not to serve or be interpreted as future growth and expansion zones and for this reason, are not included in the Suburban Residential Area discussed in the following pages.

Cottage Industries: It is recognized that there are some activities that can be generally described as industrial in character yet are somewhat inconspicuous in rural areas. Pole barns and similar accessory buildings are common in the Wheatfield Township landscape. Small-scale and appropriately managed light industrial operations, functioning as home occupations, can exist with minimal impact on neighboring farm and dispersed residences. The Agricultural Preservation Area supports this type of industrial entrepreneurship provided measures are in place that ensures such activities do not become a nuisance nor undermine the intended character of the surrounding area.

In addition to the above, key policies of the Agricultural Preservation Area are:

1. The primary use of land should generally be limited to agriculture, resource conservation and other open space areas, and very dispersed residences.
2. Secondary uses should typically be limited to those that are uniquely compatible with the environmental and/or rural character of the Area such as kennels, stables, golf courses, and bed and breakfasts.
3. Maximum development densities should be substantially limited and be based on a sliding scale that recognizes the increased economic viability and importance of large acreage farming operations, and the corresponding increased importance of limiting residential consumption of such acreage. General guidelines for such a sliding scale should be:
 - one dwelling per approximately 10 to 20 acres for lower-end sized parcels, such as 40 acres or less.
 - one dwelling per approximately 20 to 50 acres for middle sized parcels such as 40 to 160 acres.
 - one dwelling per 50 to 100 acres for higher-end sized parcels, such as 160 acres or greater.

This sliding scale approach is not to suggest that large minimum parcel sizes for home sites should be instituted (such as 20 or 40-acre home sites), as such practices can undermine the township's rural character and the economic stability of farm operations, heighten the rate at which farmland is converted to alternative uses, encourage the destruction of ecosystems and natural resources, and encourage the inefficient use of the township's land resources

Rural Residential Area

The Rural Residential Area comprises the greatest portion of the township not otherwise included in the Agricultural Preservation Area. Several Rural Residential Areas are proposed. Rural Residential Areas south of I-96 are characterized predominantly by existing large parcel settlement areas with parcels typically of five to 20 acres in size and where the presence of farming is comparatively limited. The single Rural Residential Area located north of I-96, and occupying the northwest corner of the township, includes similar large residential parcels along with much larger farm parcels. The Rural Residential Area encourages the continuation of farming operations while, at the same time, provides greater opportunities for low-density residential development than the Agricultural Preservation Area, and in a predominantly rural setting.

The Rural Residential Areas recognize these existing rural settlement areas and provide for further opportunities for rural residential lifestyles in addition to the continuation of farming. Rural housing opportunities will be accommodated primarily in the northwest Rural Residential Area. This Area covers a far greater land area and does not present the obstacles to additional land splitting as do the other Rural Residential Area locations.

It is intended that development densities in the Rural Residential Area be comparatively low. Low densities are supported by a number of factors including: 1) the lack of public sewer and water; 2) the township's commitment to managing growth, providing cost effective public services, and limiting urban development densities to specific and compact portions of the community; 3) the township's commitment to protecting its natural resources and rural character; and 4) the presence of a market for low-density rural home sites.

Like the Agricultural Preservation Area, potential new residents in the Rural Residential Areas should recognize that the traditional noises and agricultural operations associated with responsible farm operations are present and may continue on a long term basis.

Also like the Agricultural Preservation Area, there are some existing small settlement areas in the Rural Residential Area which are of a higher density than recommended for this Area. These settlement areas are not to serve or be interpreted as future growth and expansion zones and for this reason, are not included in the Suburban Residential Area discussed in the following pages.

In addition to the above, key policies of the Rural Residential Area are:

1. The primary use of land should generally be limited to single family residences and agriculture including hobby farming.
2. Secondary uses should be limited to those that are uniquely compatible with the environmental and/or rural character of the Area such as kennels, stables, golf courses, and bed and breakfasts.
3. Maximum development densities should generally not exceed one dwelling per approximately five acres.

Suburban Residential Area

The Suburban Residential Area provides for residential development of a more suburban and urban character than planned elsewhere in the township. This Area includes existing residential development of a suburban/urban character as well as vacant land where new residential development of a similar character is considered most appropriate. These higher density development opportunities should ensure healthy living environments including sufficient open space and safe motorized and non-motorized circulation. The Suburban Residential Area occupies the township’s northeast corner north of I-96.

The Suburban Residential Area is characterized by conditions that support its particular appropriateness for higher density residential development including: 1) improved access via Williamston Road (including I-96 interchange), Linn Road, and Grand River Avenue to the north; 2) the existing suburban/urban character of nearby Williamston; 3) the immediate proximity of the Williamston business district; 4) heightened proximity to education and recreation facilities; and 5) heightened proximity to fire protection services. In addition, any extension of public sewer or water into the township is most likely to emanate from Williamston.

In addition to the above, key policies of the Suburban Residential Area are:

1. The primary use of land should generally be limited to single family and two-family residences, including opportunities for comparatively higher density small-lot subdivisions where adequate provisions are made for potable water and sewage disposal.
2. Secondary uses should be limited to alternative living arrangements such as townhouses, apartments, retirement centers, and similar housing options, and for uses that directly support and enhance desirable residential areas such as schools, religious institutions, and recreation facilities.
3. Maximum development densities should typically not exceed one dwelling per approximately one-half acre, and in no case should residential development occur on a site on which the site’s area, soils, or other characteristics do not support the issuance of public health permits for potable water and sewage disposal.
4. Development densities greater than two dwellings per acre may be reasonable but only after special review to determine if the project is appropriate on the proposed property. Minimum guidelines that should be considered are:

- a. Infrastructure and services should be capable of meeting the public services needs of the new development, including sewage disposal and potable water.
- b. Environmental impacts should be limited.
- c. Negative impacts upon existing residential development and/or neighborhoods should be minimized by appropriate design measures.
- d. Developments should be of such size, or otherwise developed in phases, to ensure the public health, safety and welfare of both the project’s residents and the township as a whole.

Commercial and Industrial Areas

The Future Land Use Strategy identifies several locations for the accommodation of commercial and industrial uses. While this Plan does not call for significant commercial or industrial expansion, the Plan does recognize the importance of encouraging convenient services and employment opportunities and enhancing the economic stability of the township.

Commercial centers typically require a heightened level of road infrastructure, access, public services and visibility. These factors directly impact the identification of future commercial areas along with other concerns including minimizing conflicts between existing and proposed land uses and encouraging compact development. The identification of appropriate locations for industrial uses should take similar factors into consideration although visibility from principal thoroughfares is not critical.

The Williamston Road Mixed Use Area supports the continuation of the I-96/Williamston Road interchange area as the principal business center of the township and provides for a mixed use commercial-residential corridor. This Area is to extend from the interchange to approximately 500 feet south of Noble Road. Commercial uses should generally be limited to locally-oriented businesses serving the local population and highway traveler. Numerous conditions support this location as the primary commercial node in the township including: 1) existing businesses in the local area; 2) the access and visibility afforded by Williamston Road and the interchange; 3) the location’s comparative proximity to fire protection services; 4) the natural extension of Williamston’s business corridor along Williamston Road; and 5) the business center’s location in relation to the planned Suburban Residential Area population base that both supports the viability of nearby businesses and reaps the benefits of conveniently located services.

This Williamston Road Mixed Use Area is also characterized by numerous existing residences. The Area supports the continuation of this corridor as a mixed use commercial-residential corridor. Recognizing the improved road infrastructure and access afforded by Williamston Road and the I-96 interchange, residential densities greater than those recommended for the Rural Residential Area are considered reasonable. However, maximum development densities in this Area should not exceed approximately four dwellings per acre in recognition that the Suburban Residential Area provides more appropriate locations for higher density housing options. Still, opportunities for higher density lifestyles where such developments are of a comparatively small scale and in keeping with the intended character of area may be reasonable.

The Corwin/Linn Roads Commercial Area is located at the intersection of Corwin and Linn Roads, extending approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection along Corwin Road and east along Linn Road. This commerce center includes an existing lawn equipment dealer and the pro shop that is part of the golf course further south and east. This planned commercial node is to provide additional opportunities for locally-oriented commercial uses serving the planned Suburban Residential Area and immediate area beyond, including retail, office and service-oriented businesses. This Area is intended to enhance the economic stability of the township and take advantage of the improved road infrastructure of Linn Road and the visibility it affords.

The CSX Industrial Area establishes a planned light industrial area to the west of Corwin Road and along the CSX Railroad, extending approximately one-quarter mile in each direction. The railroad provides transportation support for industrial activity and there exists several industrial uses along the railroad to the east of Corwin Road in Williamstown Township. Existing uses to the north in Williamston are of a predominantly commercial and industrial character. M-43 is less than a quarter mile to the north. There are comparatively few residences in the immediate area.

The boundaries of these three planning areas as described above are purposeful. None of these designated commercial and/or industrial centers are intended to incrementally evolve beyond the boundaries specified unless this Plan is amended accordingly. For example, the Williamston Road Mixed Use Area is intended to function as a clearly identifiable business and higher density residential area with definite limits – it is not intended to serve as a seed for incremental strip expansion beyond the limits specified.

In addition to the above, key policies of the Commercial and Industrial Areas are:

1. Primary commercial uses should generally be limited to uses that address day-to-day needs of the local population and highway travelers, including retail sales, offices, personal services, and eateries.
2. Secondary commercial uses should be limited to those that provide additional benefits but which may not cater to the local population and/or may have a greater potential to undermine the overall intended character of the commercial areas. However, “big box” developments and similar uses that are of a size, scale or intensity not in character with Wheatfield Township should be discouraged.
3. Industrial uses should generally be limited to those of a low intensive character such as lumber mills, sheet metal fabrication, assembly of pre-manufactured products and communication and information technologies. Manufacturing operations that involve the manipulation of raw materials to produce new products should be discouraged.
4. Site layout, principal buildings and accessory facilities should be of a character and design that encourages compatibility with adjacent and nearby land uses and the desired rural character of the area. Such compatibility should be based on, in part, appropriate signage; building height, size, and bulk; and landscaping/screening.
5. Special care should be exercised where nonresidential uses are proposed adjacent to residential lots to ensure that adequate site layout, including buffer yards and screening, minimize negative impacts.
6. No commercial or industrial uses should be introduced that do not provide adequate measures for sewage disposal, potable water, access and the storage and disposal of all operational wastes.
7. All commercial and industrial areas should incorporate appropriate access and circulation measures that encourage safe and convenient pedestrian, vehicular and other modes of travel, including the management of driveways to minimize congestion and circulation hazards.

See also “Cottage Industries” on page 3-2 for additional opportunities for industrial uses.

Conservation of Natural Resources

More than 15% of Wheatfield Township is characterized by woodlands, wetlands, and stream corridors including the Deer and Sloan Creeks. These areas require a strong conservation effort. The resources provide important environmental benefits including habitats for wildlife, flood control, groundwater recharge and discharge, and surface water purification. In addition, they provide special opportunities for recreation and contribute to the township's overall rural character. Public input received during the preparation of this Plan identified the township's natural resources as an important feature of the community that should be preserved.

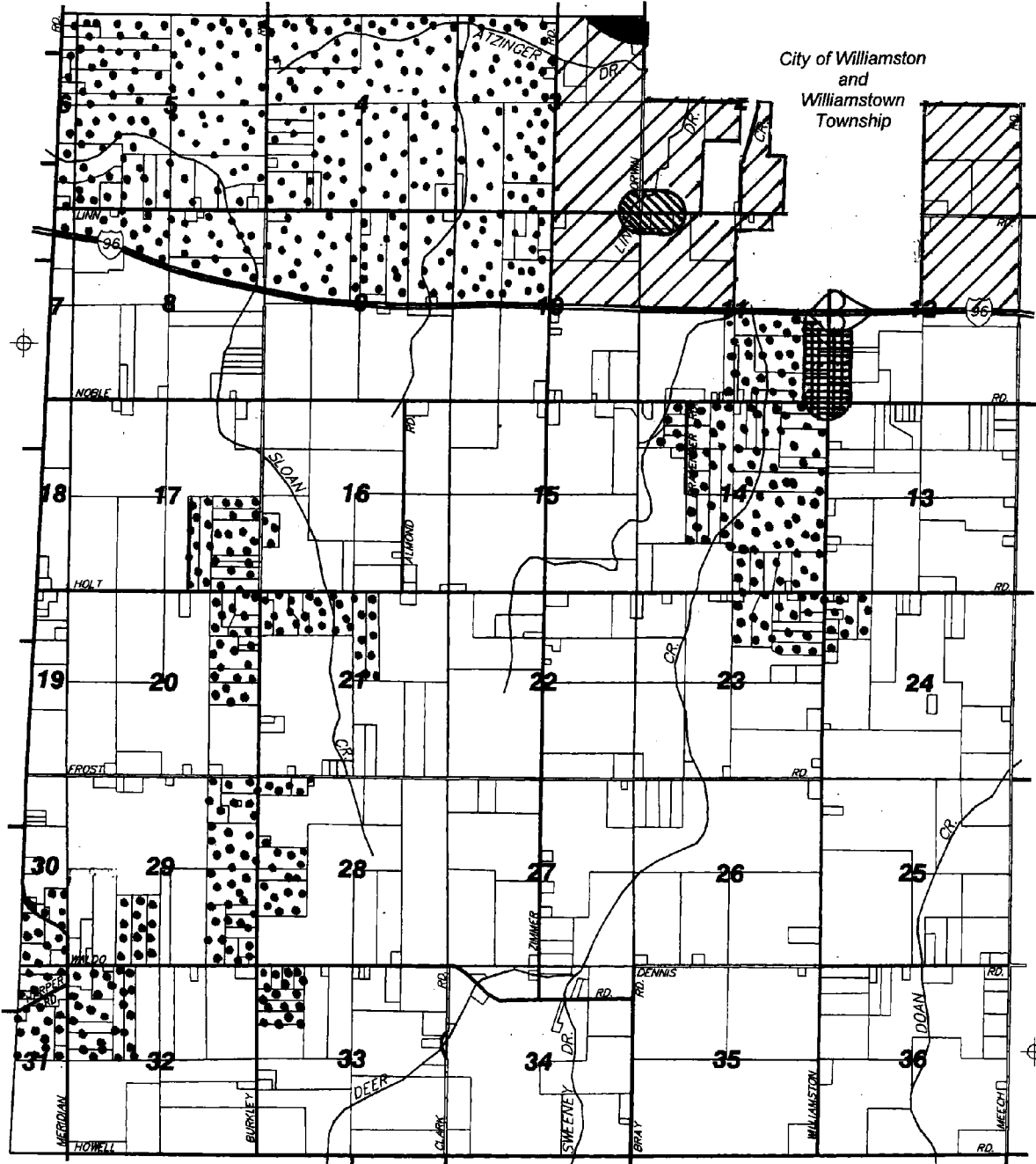
In light of the significance of these resources, the Plan strongly supports their protection. Preservation should take precedence over the unnecessary disturbance and/or destruction of these resources. The presence of such resources in areas designated for development should be recognized in the deliberation of rezoning, site plan, and similar proposals. Land uses requiring state and/or federal permits (such as in the case of wetland or floodplain alterations) should not receive final township approval until satisfactory evidence has been submitted verifying the acquisition of all necessary permits. Where a portion of a parcel contains environmentally sensitive areas, development should be directed elsewhere on the site.

As a tool to facilitate the conservation of important natural resources, this Plan supports what are commonly referred to as "clustering" or "open space developments" in association with platted subdivisions, condominium subdivisions, and similar neighborhood developments. This development option is discussed in detail on page 5-7.




Phased Zoning

This Plan recommends the rezoning of land to a more intensive zoning district in a phased or incremental manner only. For example, while the Plan may identify locations that are appropriate to accommodate suburban residential development, the Plan does not recommend "across the board" or immediate rezonings of such land from existing agricultural or low density residential districts to high density districts. The Plan recommends that rezonings to more intensive districts occur incrementally over time to ensure the township is capable of: 1) meeting the increased public service demands; 2) managing township-wide growth and development; 3) adequately reviewing rezoning requests as they apply to the specific subject property; and 4) minimizing unnecessary hardships upon the landowner as a result of the unintended creation of nonconforming uses and structures.

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



LEGEND

-  Agricultural Preservation Area
-  Rural Residential Area
-  Suburban Residential Area

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN
FUTURE LAND USE

-  Williamston Road Mixed Use Area
-  Corwin/Linn Roads Commercial Area
-  CSX Industrial Area

Landplan Inc. / February 12, 2013

Chapter Four

PUBLIC SERVICES STRATEGY

Introduction

Chapter Three described the planned pattern of land use throughout the township. Chapter Four discusses the public services strategy to be coordinated with the planned pattern of land use. The character and feasibility of land use and development is influenced by the extent to which public services are available. In addition, the character of public services can directly impact the perceived quality of life among residents in the community.

An important principle of this Plan is that no development should occur unless public services are adequate to meet the needs of that development. On the other hand, public service improvements and the increased development that may result from such improvements should not jeopardize the township's interest in managing growth and development. Thus, it is very important that future public service improvements be coordinated with the planned pattern of future land use.

Circulation / Complete Streets

As new residential and non-residential land uses are introduced in the township, demands upon the road network will increase. The additional residential development anticipated in this Plan will result in higher traffic levels, particularly in localized areas. This increased traffic may lessen the level of service along some of the township's roads. Conversely, road improvements may well attract new development which, in turn, will create additional demands.

The township's road system currently fulfills its function well for vehicular traffic. This is due, in large part, to the existing low development density throughout most of the township and the several county primary roads that cross the township and collect and move traffic, and the presence of I-96 and the Williamston Road interchange.

However, opportunities for safe pedestrian and non-motorized travel are comparatively limited. Safe pedestrian and non-motorized travel has received greater and greater focus within the planning and transportation arenas, on local, regional, state and

federal levels. The provision of opportunities for safe and comprehensive pedestrian and other non-motorized travel has been found to encourage health in individuals, provide alternative means of recreation, and lessen congestion, air pollution, and the consumption of fuel. The importance of safe and comprehensive pedestrian and non-motorized travel led the Michigan Legislature to amend the Planning Enabling Act in 2010 to require a "complete streets" element in a master plan.

"Complete streets" generally refers to the design of road corridors that take into account the circulation needs of all potential users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users. The "complete streets" program emphasizes safety along roads for all users including all age groups. While recognizing that there is no single "complete streets" design solution that applies to all roads in all communities, the program emphasizes the need for new roads to be designed, and existing roads be improved, to facilitate their safe and efficient use by all prospective users within the context of the particular community's needs and character. Placing the automobile as the sole design factor has fallen by the wayside.

As a rural community, implementation of a "complete streets" program is different than that of an urban center. While an urban community may pursue sidewalks, bike lanes or paved shoulders, bus lanes, convenient public transportation stops, median islands, frequent and well marked cross-walks, and other measures, rural communities such as Wheatfield Township typically have fewer options and frequently focus on paved shoulders. However, even in rural communities, the feasibility and importance of implementing a wider scope of "complete streets" measures increases in the community's planned residential settlement areas and commercial centers.

The Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads has jurisdiction over the township's public roads. Still, the township does have the opportunity to provide input regarding road maintenance, design and improvements.

Policies:

- 1) Functional classification of roads will dictate the priority of improvements when all other conditions are generally equal, with primary roads being of greatest priority. Among the county primary roads, greatest priority for improvements should be placed on those segments serving the Future Land Use Strategy's Suburban Residential Areas and planned commercial and industrial areas.
- 2) All future roads will be designed and constructed to Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads standards except upon a finding that, in specific instances, such standards do not justify the impact on the natural environment and rural character of the community or are otherwise unnecessary, and lesser standards will not undermine public safety and welfare and the long term stability of the road infrastructure.
- 3) All proposed road construction will be evaluated carefully for local and regional impacts on traffic flow, congestion, public safety, and land use. Road construction should be coordinated with other local and regional road improvements to address traffic movement in a unified and comprehensive manner.
- 4) The township will monitor development patterns and periodically explore the development of a non-motorized circulation plan to facilitate the provision of safe non-motorized travel, with particular focus on linkages within and between the Suburban Residential Area and planned commercial areas.
- 5) The township will work with the Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads to incorporate "complete streets" measures in all future road construction, maintenance and improvements. Emphasis should be placed on paved shoulders of adequate width and clearly visible crosswalks, and supporting signage.
- 6) The township will evaluate proposed developments within the context of "complete streets" to ensure all users of the developments are afforded opportunities for safe and efficient circulation, including neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.

site facilities. It must also be recognized that development pressures frequently coincide with the availability of public sewer and/or water improvements.

Policies:

- 1) All on-site sewage disposal and potable water facilities will be constructed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Ingham County Health Department and other applicable local, county, state and federal agencies.
- 2) Any future decision by the township to introduce public sewer or water service will be based on an in-depth analysis of all available options, including services provided by cooperative agreements with neighboring municipalities and regional entities.
- 3) Public sewer or water service will not be undertaken except upon a finding that it is necessary to maintain the public health, safety and welfare in response to a demonstrated existing or anticipated contamination threat, or that it will address a demonstrated demand for development intensities in excess of those available relying on safe on-site sewage disposal and potable water measures, and such development is in coordination with the Future Land Use Strategy.
 - a. Sewer and water service improvements should be limited to the Suburban Residential Areas and planned commercial and industrial areas.
 - b. Introducing public sewer or water service into the Agricultural Preservation or Rural Residential Areas for reasons other than to address a serious health risk is not considered prudent and will only undermine efforts to preserve farmland and other natural resources, and manage growth and development.
- 4) In addition to coordination with the Future Land Use Strategy, any public sewer or water service improvements should occur in a phased and incremental manner so that an overly large geographic area is not intensely developed at a rate beyond the township's ability to effectively manage growth and development.

Sewage Disposal and Potable Water

There is no public sewer or water in Wheatfield Township. Nearly all residents rely on septic systems for sewage disposal and private on-site potable water wells. Improperly operating septic systems can contaminate potable groundwater resources, lakes and streams. Local ground water quality is considered to be good throughout the township. Intensive industrial, commercial, and residential development generally have greater sewage disposal and potable water needs than can often be met by traditional on-

Storm Water Management

As buildings, parking lots and other impermeable surfaces associated with new development cover portions of the township's land surface, the quantity of storm water runoff increases. The vegetated landscape that previously absorbed and slowed much of the water associated with rainfall is replaced by impervious surfaces. Unless specific preventive measures are taken, this condition encourages flooding, soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution of area water resources. The township's water resources, including its wetlands and Deer and Sloan Creeks, are vulnerable to degradation. Though flooding, soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution may originate from site-specific circumstances, their impact can extend to adjacent properties and more regional areas including other downstream communities. Storm water management aims to minimize flood conditions, and control the quality and quantity of runoff that is discharged into the watershed system (streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes, etc.) from a development site.

Policies:

- 1) Increased runoff that may occur as a result of development will be appropriately managed to avoid placing excess demand on the capacity of the storm water system into which the runoff is discharged.
- 2) Increased runoff that may occur as a result of development will be appropriately managed to ensure that the quality of the runoff discharged does not undermine the environmental integrity of the township's surface and ground waters.
- 3) Storm water management measures will emphasize "green infrastructure" – planned networks of natural lands, functioning landscapes and other open spaces that minimize alterations to the natural landscape and lessen the reliance on storm sewer and similar "grey" infrastructure.
- 4) Proposed land uses will not be permitted if the level of service currently provided by existing storm water management systems and/or existing drainage patterns will be decreased, unless necessary improvements to such infrastructure or natural drainage courses are first made.
- 5) New and existing land uses will comply with all local, county, state, and federal regulations regarding storm water management and soil erosion, including the regulations of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner, except where local officials determine less stringent standards in site-specific instances are appropriate and will not undermine the public health, safety and welfare.
- 6) All development will be reviewed within the context of its impact on nearby water courses to ensure

discharge practices do not undermine the environmental integrity of these resources.

Police and Emergency Services

Wheatfield Township is served by the Northeast Ingham Emergency Services Authority. The Authority relies on both the Williamston and Leroy Township Fire Departments and Wheatfield Township is served specifically by the Williamston Fire Department. Police protection is provided principally by the Michigan State Police as the role of the Ingham County Sheriff's Department has decreased over recent years. As community growth and land development increases, so does the demand for emergency services.

There are no widely accepted standards for police protection levels. The survey administered as part of the preparation of this Plan revealed that only 17% of the respondents felt police protection service was "good." These perceptions come at a time when, like many Michigan counties facing budgetary shortfalls, Ingham County's ability to maintain its past levels of patrols and response times has eroded.

The survey revealed that 35% of the respondents felt fire protection service was "good." Commonly referenced standards regarding fire protection suggest a maximum service radius from a fire station in low density residential areas of approximately three miles, and an approximately three-quarters to two mile radial service area in commercial, industrial, and high density residential areas. When applied to Wheatfield Township, it is primarily the northeast quarter of the township that meets these guidelines.

Policies:

- 1) The township will require the provision of fire protection infrastructure (wells, water lines, etc.) for all new developments that are of such size and density that on-site infrastructure is considered critical. On-site fire protection infrastructure will generally be considered necessary for subdivision and similar residential neighborhood developments that concentrate building sites on lots less than approximately one-half acre.
- 2) The township will continually monitor police and fire protection needs and service to minimize service deficiencies and explore improving service levels. Considerations for the improvement of services will include joint services with neighboring municipalities.

Recreation

Wheatfield Township maintains a pavilion on the township hall property and includes picnic tables, electricity, and potable water. Other recreation facilities in the township available to the general public are limited to several commercial stables and a commercial golf course. Hunting is a recreation option for those residents owning or having access to large-acreage parcels. Biking is also a recreation option for persons comfortable with travelling along township roads. There are no official bike paths or routes in the township.

Local residents have a variety of recreation opportunities available in surrounding communities and the greater regional area such as the Ingham County parks system and the Dansville State Game Area. Regional school facilities also have playground and sports facilities.

The type and accessibility of recreational opportunities can impact the well being of local residents of all ages. "Accessibility" includes the ease and safety of getting to a park facility without the reliance on an automobile and the ease of moving comfortably throughout a park site by all users including all age groups and the physically challenged.

Policies:

- 1) The township will periodically monitor the extent to which area residents are satisfied with the scope and accessibility of recreation opportunities in the local area.
- 2) Should sufficient public sentiment warrant, the township will explore the development of a MDNR-approved five year recreation plan that provides a specific action plan aimed at providing needed township facilities and enable the township to compete for state and federal recreation grants to provide such opportunities.
- 3) Where there is a demonstrated demand for recreation improvements, and as financial resources may become available, the township will strive to provide recreation facilities in a manner that recognizes the particular needs of its residents.
- 4) The township will encourage the provision of open space and recreation areas within future residential development projects such as platted and condominium subdivisions, to facilitate close-to-home recreation opportunities.
- 5) The township will explore addressing the recreation needs of township residents through cooperative regional efforts where the township determines such efforts to benefit township residents.

Chapter Five IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Introduction

This Master Plan establishes a strategy for growth, development and preservation in Wheatfield Township. The Plan is comprised of graphic and narrative policies intended to provide basic guidelines for making reasonable, realistic community decisions. It establishes policies and recommendations for the proper use of land and the provision of public services and facilities. The Plan is intended to be used by local officials, by those considering private sector developments, and by all residents interested in the future of the township.

The Plan is a policy document. *As a policy document, this Plan's effectiveness is directly tied to the implementation of its policies through specific tools and actions.*

The completion of the Plan is one part of the planning process. Realization or implementation of the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan can only be achieved by specific actions, over an extended period of time, and through the cooperative efforts of both the public and private sectors.

Implementation of the Plan may be principally realized by actively:

- 1) ensuring knowledge, understanding, and support of the Plan by township residents and the business community, and the continued communication with and involvement of the citizenry.
- 2) regulating the use and manner of development through up-to-date reasonable zoning controls, building and housing codes, and other regulatory and non-regulatory tools.
- 3) providing a program of capital improvements and adequate, economical public services that address the needs of the community.

The purpose of this Chapter is to identify implementation tools and where applicable, specific actions to be pursued.

Public Support, Communication and Community Involvement

Citizen participation and understanding of the general planning process and the specific goals, objectives and policies of the Plan are critical to the success of the township's planning program. Understanding and support of the Plan by local citizens can greatly enhance its implementation. This enhancement may be found in citizen support for bond proposals, special assessments, zoning decisions, and development proposals.

In order to organize public support most effectively, the township must emphasize the necessity of, and reasons for long-range planning and the development of the Master Plan. The township must encourage citizen participation in on-going community planning efforts.

Specific actions that can be undertaken to encourage public understanding and support of the township's planning program, and the continued communication with and involvement of the citizenry, are as follows.

- 1) Ensure that copies of the Master Plan are readily available at the Township Hall.
- 2) Post the Future Land Use Map of the Master Plan in the Township Hall where it is clearly visible.
- 3) Establish a township web site and post on the site: a) the Master Plan; and b) current events and activities pertaining to local planning and zoning matters.
- 4) Through public notices, a newsletter, township hall postings, and other means, apprise residents of the township's planning efforts and of meetings that will address development and public service improvement proposals as the projects move through each stage of review and deliberation.
- 5) Periodically hold special meetings for the specific purpose of discussing the township's planning efforts and providing residents with the opportunity to share concerns and suggestions.

- 6) Encourage Neighborhood Watch programs in each neighborhood to promote cooperation and communication.

**Land Development
Codes and Programs**

Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance is the primary tool for implementing a Master Plan. A zoning ordinance regulates the use of land, divides a community into districts, and identifies the land uses permitted in each district. Each district prescribes minimum standards that must be met such as minimum lot area, lot width, and building setbacks.

Since 2006, zoning ordinances for Michigan communities are adopted under the authority of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, P.A. 110 of 2006. The purpose of zoning, according to the Act, is to (in part): *“regulate the use of land and structures; to meet the needs of the state’s citizens for food, fiber, energy, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land; to insure that use of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships; to limit the overcrowding of land and congestion of population, transportation systems, and other public facilities.”*

Wheatfield Township has had local zoning in place for more than 25 years. Its most current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1996 and was last amended in 2009. With the adoption of this Master Plan, the township’s zoning ordinance should be carefully reviewed to identify amendments that may be beneficial to implement the policies of the Plan and facilitate efficient day-to-day zoning administration.

The ultimate effectiveness of a zoning ordinance in implementing a master plan is dependent, in part, on the overall quality of ordinance administration and enforcement. If administrative procedures are lax, or if enforcement is handled in an inconsistent, sporadic manner, the result will be unsatisfactory. The Planning Commission, Township Board, and staff are responsible for carrying out zoning/development related functions including the review of development plans and site inspections. These functions can require special expertise and a substantial investment of time. Adequate staff and/or outside assistance are necessary to ensure that these essential day-to-day functions are met and appropriate development is facilitated.

Zone Plan: The following pages present a Zone Plan for Wheatfield Township. The Zone Plan establishes a foundation for the township’s zoning program. The Zone Plan is comprised of four elements.

- 1) Critical Zoning Ordinance Components
- 2) Overview of Recommended Zoning Districts
- 3) Zoning District Site Development Guidelines
- 4) Farmland, Natural Resources and Open Space Preservation Tools

Zone Plan, Part One – Critical Zoning Ordinance Components. The following identifies important general elements that the Wheatfield Township Zoning Ordinance should include to ensure its ease of use and effectiveness in advancing the goals, objectives and policies of the Master Plan. *The ordinance should be periodically reviewed within the context of these elements:*

- a) **Procedural Matters/Plan Review:** The Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to ensure it includes clear and comprehensive step-by-step provisions addressing procedural matters such as the application for and issuance of zoning permits, application procedures and approval standards for special land uses, application procedures and approval standards for ordinance amendments including the zoning map, application procedures and approval standards for matters before the Zoning Board of Appeals such as variance requests and appeals of administrative decisions, and violation and enforcement procedures.

The zoning permit application procedures should include clear requirements for the submittal of a plot plan or site plan illustrating proposed alterations and improvements to a parcel. Such a plan is critical in assisting local officials determine if the development complies with all standards of the Zoning Ordinance and if it is designed to encourage compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The provisions should ensure such plans include comprehensive information pertinent to the development including (but not limited to) the delineation of existing natural features, the extent of alterations to such features including limits of clearing and grading, and the salient features of the development including buildings, parking, screening, lighting, grading and storm water management. The provisions should also provide for a comprehensive set of approval standards addressing such matters as access management and vehicular/pedestrian circulation, emergency vehicle access, environmental protection, conformance with the purposes of the respective district, and compatibility with surrounding conditions.

- b) District Provisions/Special Land Uses: The ordinance should include a clear and comprehensive presentation of zoning districts including the purpose, authorized uses, and site development standards for each district. To this end, the districts should differentiate between uses authorized as “principal uses” versus “special land uses.”

Principal uses are the primary uses and structures specified for which a particular district has been established. An example may be a dwelling in a residential district. Special land uses are uses that are generally accepted as reasonably compatible with the principal uses and structures within a district. However, because of its particular character, a special land use is more likely to present potential injurious effects upon the principal uses within the district or is otherwise unique in character, and it may not be appropriate in certain situations or on certain parcels. These unique or special circumstances may be a result of traffic, noise, public services demands, or visual or operational characteristics. An example may be a kennel in a residential district.

Special land uses require special consideration in relation to the welfare of adjacent properties and to the township as a whole. District provisions should be reviewed to ensure authorized principal and special land uses support the Master Plan.

- c) Site Development Standards: In addition to the standards presented in the Zoning Ordinance for each district, such as minimum lot area and width, the Ordinance should be reviewed to ensure it presents clear and comprehensive standards addressing more general fundamental site development issues such as:
1. proper access to ensure public safety and welfare including access management along thoroughfares, accessibility to property for general and emergency vehicles, and proper design and maintenance of private roads.
 2. off-street parking and loading to ensure adequate facilities are provided on a development site and are of adequate design to encourage safe and efficient circulation.
 3. landscaping and screening provisions intended to ensure new development (commercial, industrial, institutional, etc.) is compatible with surrounding conditions and supportive of the desired character of the community.
 4. sign regulations to ensure local signage does not contribute to traffic safety hazards, visual clutter, confusion for vehicle drivers, visual blight, and decreased property values.
 5. environmental safeguard provisions to ensure new development minimizes disturbances to

the township’s natural resources including standards addressing sewage disposal, grading, impervious surfaces, natural features setbacks and storm water management.

- d) Nonconformities: The Zoning Ordinance should address lots, uses and structures that are nonconforming due to changes to the zoning ordinance, and the extent to which such lots, uses and structures can be replaced, expanded, enlarged, or otherwise altered.
- e) Site Condominium Regulations: The Zoning Ordinance should address site condominiums. Site condominiums come in many forms, but they typically involve residential developments that look identical or nearly identical to platted subdivisions. The principal differences between the two is that while privately owned lots comprise the entirety (or near entirety) of a platted subdivision, site condominiums are comprised of privately owned (or rented) building envelopes where there are no “lot lines” and greater portions of the development are under common ownership. Site condominiums are not comprised of “lots” in the traditional sense but the condominium units function in a similar manner. Zoning regulations must clearly address this form of development and correlate site condominium development with “lot” regulations to ensure such development is subject to the same review procedures and standards as otherwise applicable to other residential development of similar physical character (platted subdivisions).
- f) Farmland, Natural Resources, and Open Space Preservation: See Part Four of Zone Plan on page 5-7.
- g) Compliance with Current Law: The Zoning Ordinance’s provisions must comply with current law to ensure its validity and the ability of officials to enforce the Ordinance. The Township Zoning Act, under which Wheatfield Township first adopted its first zoning regulations, was repealed in 2006 and replaced by the Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110). The township amended its 1996 Zoning Ordinance in 2009 to address new requirements of the Zoning Enabling Act. The township’s zoning regulations should be continually updated to address any subsequent changes to the law.
- h) User Friendly Document: One of the most critical components of an effective zoning ordinance is that it be as user friendly as reasonably possible. A zoning ordinance can be a complex tool by nature. It must address a very broad scope of activities and specify procedures, standards, definitions, and more. The ability to minimize confusion and frustration among users of the ordinance, including officials, applicants, and the general public, and ensure fair, objective and

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

consistent administration and proper enforcement, can be greatly enhanced as the document's user friendliness increases. User friendliness should be exhibited on various levels such as overall organization and order and division of articles, individual page formatting, the use of tables, cross-referencing, and clear and simple wording of provisions.

Zone Plan, Part Two – Overview of Recommended Zoning Districts. Table 5-1 presents guidelines for the presentation of zoning districts in the Wheatfield Township Zoning Ordinance to implement the Future Land Use Strategy presented in Chapter Three (including the Future Land Use Map).

Zone Plan, Part Three – Zoning District Site Development Guidelines. Table 5-2 presents guidelines for basic site development standards for zoning districts to implement the Future Land Use Strategy presented in Chapter Three (including the Future Land Use Map).

**Table 5-1
Overview of Recommended Zoning Districts and Relation to Future Land Use Map**

The following table presents guidelines for the presentation of zoning districts in the Wheatfield Township Zoning Ordinance, within the context of how the recommended districts and the Master Plan’s Future Land Use Strategy (including Future Land Use map) relate on one another and the principal types of uses envisioned for each district. Secondary uses identified in the table, or others specified in the Zoning Ordinance, should typically be subject to comprehensive review to determine if the proposed use is appropriate on the subject site based on, in part, compatibility with surrounding land uses, environmental conditions, road infrastructure, and public services.

Zoning District (example names)	Primary Relationship to Future Land Use Map	Primary Intended District Uses	Examples of Secondary District Uses
<u>A-1</u> Agricultural	Agricultural Preservation Area	Agriculture and very low density single family residences.	Veterinary clinics, kennels, golf courses, mineral extraction, religious institutions, outdoor recreation, public and recreation facilities, and bed and breakfasts.
<u>AR</u> Agricultural Residential	Rural Residential Area	Low density single family residences, and agriculture.	Veterinary clinics, kennels, golf courses, mineral extraction, religious institutions, outdoor recreation, public and recreation facilities, and bed and breakfasts.
<u>R-1</u> Low Density Residential	Suburban Residential Area	Single and two-family residences.	Schools, religious institutions, community centers and parks.
<u>R-2</u> Medium Density Residential	Suburban Residential Area	Single and two-family residences.	Schools, religious institutions, community centers and outdoor recreation.
<u>R-3</u> High Density Residential	Suburban Residential Area	Single and two-family residences.	Schools, religious institutions, assisted living facilities, community centers and outdoor recreation.
<u>R-MHC</u> Manufactured Housing Comm	Suburban Residential Area	Manufactured housing communities.	Day care facilities and assisted living facilities.
<u>R-MF</u> Multiple Family	Suburban Residential Area	Apartments, townhouses, and similar living arrangements.	Day care facilities, outdoor recreation, and assisted living facilities.
<u>C-1</u> Local Commercial	Commercial Areas	Retail, office and personal service uses catering to local needs.	Hospitals, clinics, taverns, lumberyards, hotels, service stations, and vehicle sales.
<u>I-1</u> Light Industrial	Industrial Areas	Industrial uses of a “light” character such as small parts assembly, sheet metal fabrication, printing, central dry cleaning, and tool/dye.	Industrial activities that are more marginal than the primary intended uses such as auto repair garages, outdoor storage, and lumberyards.

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**Table 5-2
Zoning District Site Development Standards**

The following table presents general guidelines for basic site development standards of the zoning districts to implement the Future Land Use Strategy (Chapter Three). All guidelines are approximate and serve as a framework for detailed standards. The guidelines establish a realistic concept for each district, with recognition that specific conditions may suggest variations from the guidelines such as height provisions for farm buildings, setback provisions for non-residential uses that abut residential uses and lot width provisions for lots fronting on principal thoroughfares. It is also recognized that conditions may surface that suggest the need for divergences from the guidelines to resolve conflicts or otherwise ensure the public health, safety and welfare.

In addition to the district guidelines below, the Zone Plan recognizes that the inclusion of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) District according to the Zoning Enabling Act to provide opportunities for flexibility while supporting the overall goals of the Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan, may be beneficial.

Zoning District (example name)	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width and Frontage	Maximum Building Heights	Maximum Lot Coverage ²	Minimum Yard Setback		
					Front ³	Side ³	Rear
A-1 Agricultural	40 acres ¹	165 ft. – 250 ft. ¹	35 ft.	5% – 15%	100 ft.	25 ft.	25 ft.
AR Agricultural Residential	5 acres	250 ft.	35 ft.	5% – 15%	100 ft.	25 ft.	25 ft.
R-1 Low Density Residential	1 acre	165 ft.	35 ft.	15% – 20%	100 ft.	25 ft.	25 ft.
R-2 Low Density Residential	25,000 sq. ft.	80 ft.	35 ft.	20% – 30%	75 ft.	15 ft.	50 ft.
R-3 Medium Density Residential	12,000 sq. ft.	65 ft.	35 ft.	25% – 35%	60 ft.	10 ft.	50 ft.
R-MHC Manufactured Housing Community	10 acre project parcel	Conformance to Rules/Regulations of the Manufactured Housing Commission					
R-MF Multiple Family	1 acre	200 ft.	35 ft.	35%	50 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.
C-1 Local Commercial	1 acre	200 ft.	35 ft.	50%	100 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.
I-1 Light Industrial	5 acres	200 ft.	35 ft.	50%	100 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.

Footnotes to Table 5-2

1. While typical minimum lot sizes of approximately 40 acres are recommended for the A-1 District, opportunities should be made available for a limited number of smaller splits of no greater than five acres in size, according to a sliding scale formula based on the acreage of the parcel to be split. Such smaller lots should be a minimum 150' to 250' in width based on the particular acreage of such lots.
2. Lot coverage guidelines are presented as ranges, with the zoning ordinance to clarify what constitutes "lot coverage" and the appropriate standards within the recommended ranges.
3. Front yard setback guidelines based on measurement from road centerline. Side yard setbacks apply to each side yard.
4. Lots less than 5 acres may be appropriate in an industrial park in which lots gain access from an interior road.

Zone Plan, Part Four – Farmland, Natural Resources and Open Space Preservation Tools.

Farmland and natural resources preservation is an important theme of this Master Plan. While the previous elements of the Zone Plan begin to establish a strategy for such preservation interests, there are also other critical tools that are available to implement this component of the Plan. Some of the most effective tools are summarized below and are included into the Zone Plan as reasonable options for the pursuit of farmland, natural resources and open space preservation.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a land protection tool that pays landowners to protect their farmland from development. PDR is a voluntary and non-regulatory program through which a government agency, or private nonprofit organization, buys development rights from landowners in exchange for limiting development on the land in the future. This limitation is typically in the form of a conservation easement. The land cannot be developed for the term of the easement (usually, conservation easements are permanent). The buyer of the development rights typically pays the landowner the difference between the land's value as open space/farmland and its development value (its value without the development restrictions). PDR can be financially advantageous to the agricultural landowner since good farmland, which is typically cleared, well-drained, and relatively flat, is often highly valued for its development potential. Advantages of PDR programs include the opportunity for landowners to realize the development value of their land without having to actually develop it, and such a program enables communities to target areas to be preserved in perpetuity for farming or other open space. A disadvantage may arise if financing the cost of the development rights purchases requires public support and such support is not strong.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs allow increased development in areas that a community has designated for development in return for preservation of areas a community wants to protect. TDR is often used for agricultural and/or open space protection, although it can be used to protect any important resource. When the development rights are transferred from the "sending" property, the sending property is then restricted to agricultural or conservation use by a conservation easement, and the "receiving" land can be developed at a greater density than would typically be allowed under the community's zoning ordinance.

Farmland Agreements: The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (PA 116 of 1974, as amended) enables a farm owner to enter into a development rights Agreement with the State. The Agreement is designed to ensure that the land remains in an agricultural use for a minimum of 10 years and ensures that the land is not developed in a non-agricultural use. In return for maintaining the land in an agricultural use, the land owner is entitled to certain income tax benefits, and the land is not subject to various special assessments such as for sanitary sewer and water. The specific tax benefit under an Agreement is a function of the property tax assessed against the farm and the income of the landowner. Farmland Agreements must be for a minimum of 10 years and may be extended.

Overlay Zones: An overlay zone in a Zoning Ordinance is a separate district that "lies" upon one or more other districts of the Zoning Ordinance, or parts of other districts, and provides an additional layer of regulation. This additional layer of regulation is typically established to address a special condition or situation that may apply to the districts below the overlay zone. For example, overlay zones are sometimes used to regulate development in sensitive environmental areas including floodplains, stream corridors, steep slopes and wooded areas. Overlay zoning can be an effective tool for protecting specific resources from development pressures. However, such regulations increase the complexity of zoning provisions and administration, and should be considered primarily in the case where the issue(s) of concern cannot be adequately addressed by the underlying district(s).

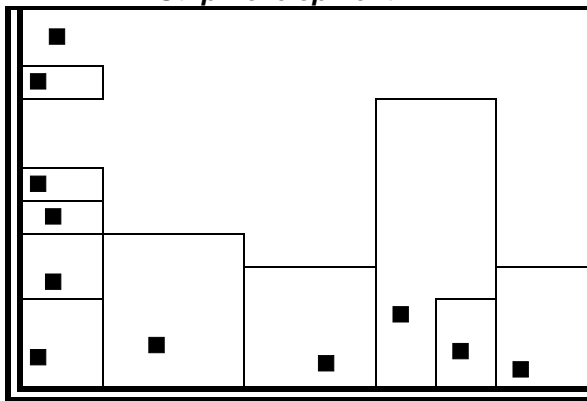
Clustering / Open Space Developments: As a tool to facilitate the conservation of important natural resources and ecosystems, this Plan supports what are commonly referred to as "cluster developments" and "open space developments" in association with platted subdivisions, condominium subdivisions, and similar neighborhood developments. The development option is a beneficial alternative to residential development than that frequently associated with large lot "rural sprawl," which consumes open space and creates lots that are too small for farming or meaningful habitat protection.

This form of development provides for the clustering of smaller lots than what is normally required, on only a portion of the development parcel, so that the balance of the parcel can be retained as open space and for the preservation of important environmental resources. As much as 50% or more of a site, and preferably the most environmentally significant, may be preserved in its existing natural state, with individual house lots occupying the remaining

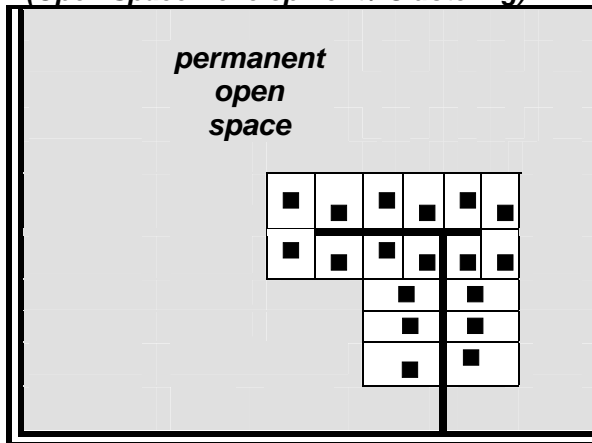
acreage. These “open space” areas can be reserved by the use of conservation easements, deed restrictions, or similar tools. A critical component of clustering should be the inclusion of new interior roads to serve the new lots, rather than stripping new dwellings along existing road frontages.

More traditional strip residential development along the township’s major roads is illustrated in Example A below. This is the easiest form of development but it impacts public safety due to the many driveways directly accessing the road and it can significantly undermine the rural character of the township. Example B, illustrating an open space development, improves public safety along the road, and more effectively preserves the existing character of the community including its open spaces and environmental resources and habitats. Clustering can also save infrastructure costs by reducing the length of roads and utility lines.

Example A
Strip Development



Example B
(Open Space Development / Clustering)



One of the most effective means to encourage the open space development option is through more flexible development standards than otherwise available, such as standards pertaining to permissible densities, lot sizes, and setbacks. This Plan supports appropriate incentives to facilitate this preferred form of development provided such incentives are not contrary to the principal policies of the Plan including the intended character of each Area comprising the Future Land Use Strategy. Accordingly, moderate increases in recommended maximum development densities presented in Chapter Three may be reasonable.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs): “Planned unit development” provisions in a Zoning Ordinance typically permit a more flexible form of development than normally permitted by the district in which the site is located or the other districts established in the Ordinance. PUDs are expressly authorized by the Zoning Enabling Act with the intent to facilitate development that, in part, encourages innovation in land use and variety in design, layout, and type of structures constructed; achieves economy and efficiency in the use of land, natural resources, energy, and the provision of public services and utilities; encourages useful open space; and provides better housing, employment, and shopping opportunities. PUDs can be treated as special land uses or as separate zoning districts requiring a rezoning, or as an overlay district. PUDs are sometimes used as a means to facilitate residential cluster development discussed above, but are more frequently used to facilitate development that provides a mix of housing units and nonresidential uses in one unified site design. The specific PUD provisions of an ordinance dictate the character and scope of development that may occur under such a development option.

Density Incentives: The provision of density incentives can significantly encourage desirable forms of development. A developer’s profit margin is frequently linked to the number of home sites that can be accommodated on the site. The number of home sites sold affects the extent to which development costs are offset, including the cost of the land, road infrastructure, utilities, and site amenities such as landscaping, trails and other recreational elements. The increased density that a community may offer to individuals pursuing a specific form of development, such a cluster development, may well be the deciding factor for some to undertake such projects, particularly if the cluster form of development is more complex or requires a lengthier review and approval process.

Subdivision and Land Division Ordinances

When a developer proposes to subdivide land, the developer is, in effect, planning a portion of the township. To ensure that such a development is in harmony with the Master Plan, the subdivision or resubdivision of residential and nonresidential land must be adequately reviewed. A subdivision ordinance establishes requirements and design standards for the development of plats including streets, blocks, lots, curbs, sidewalks, open spaces, easements, public utilities, and other associated subdivision improvements. The Land Division Act, P.A. 288 of 1967, as amended, provides the authority for municipalities to adopt local ordinances to administer the provisions of the Land Division Act including the platting of subdivisions.

With the implementation of a subdivision ordinance, there is added insurance that development will occur in an orderly manner and the public health, safety and welfare will be maintained. For example, subdivision regulations can help ensure developments are provided with adequate utilities and streets, and appropriately sized and shaped lots. Adopting a local ordinance addressing the creation of subdivisions can encourage a more orderly and comprehensive manner for the review and approval of subdivision plats.

Of equal importance is the reliance on a "land division ordinance." While a subdivision ordinance addresses unified residential developments of multiple home sites (plats), nearly all of the home sites in Wheatfield Township have occurred through incremental land divisions not part of a plat. A land division ordinance assures that these divisions meet certain minimum standards such as access and lot area and width. The Land Division Act referenced above also provides municipalities with the authority to adopt a land division ordinance. Such an ordinance can ensure consistency in review and approval practices. Wheatfield Township has adopted such an ordinance and it should be reviewed and updated as may be necessary, including to ensure consistency with the Master Plan.

Other Special Purpose Ordinances

While zoning and subdivision regulations are the most frequently used tools for the regulation of land use and development, the control of land use activities can extend beyond their respective scopes. Special purpose rules and regulations can complement zoning and subdivision regulations and further the implementation of the Master Plan. Such ordinances may address matters pertaining to noise, public nuisances, outdoor assemblies, junk, weeds,

and other conditions. Township officials should evaluate its current special purpose ordinances and determine what new ordinances, and/or amendments made to current ordinances, may be beneficial.

Capital Improvements Programming

The use of capital improvements programming can be an effective tool for implementing the Master Plan and ensuring the orderly programming of public improvements. In its basic form, a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a complete list of all proposed public improvements planned for a six year period (the time span may vary), including costs, sources of funding, location, and priority. It is a schedule for implementing public capital improvements that acknowledges current and anticipated demands, and recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the community. The CIP is not intended to encourage the spending of additional public monies, but is simply a means by which an impartial evaluation of needs may be made.

The CIP outlines the projects that will replace or improve existing facilities, or that will be necessary to serve current and projected development within a community. Advanced planning for public works through the use of a CIP ensures more effective and economical capital expenditures, as well as the provision of public works in a timely manner. Few communities are fortunate enough to have available at any given time sufficient revenues to satisfy all demands for new or improved public facilities and services. Consequently, most are faced with the necessity of determining the relative priority of specific projects and establishing a program schedule for their initiation and completion.

The importance of a CIP is illustrated by the fact that Sec. 65 of the Planning Enabling Act requires that a municipality prepare an annual six-year capital improvements program if the municipality owns or operates a water supply or sewage disposal system.

This Master Plan does not recommend specific increases in public services or infrastructure at this time (such as public sewer or water or the acquisition and/or development of park sites). As the township grows and increased demands for public services and infrastructure improvements surface, the benefit of a comprehensive capital improvement program for the township will likely grow.

Maintaining a Current Master Plan

Successful planning requires the maintenance of a current Master Plan. The Master Plan should be updated periodically. The Plan must be responsive to community changes if it is to be an effective community tool and relied upon for guidance. Periodic review of the Plan should be undertaken by the Planning Commission, Township Board, and other officials to determine whether the Plan continues to be sensitive to the needs of the community and continues to chart a realistic and desirable future.

Community changes that may suggest updates to the Plan include, but need not be limited to, changing conditions involving available infrastructure and public services, growth trends, unanticipated and large-scale development, and changing community aspirations.

The importance of maintaining a current Plan is reflected in the Planning Enabling Act's requirement that a Planning Commission review its Master Plan at intervals not greater than five years to determine whether amendments or a wholly new Plan is necessary.

Important questions that should be asked during a review of the Plan should include, at a minimum:

- 1) Does the Plan present valid and current inventory data (Appendices)?
- 2) Does the discussion of planning considerations and goals/objectives (Chapter Two) continue to be appropriate for the township today and, if not, what additions, deletions or other revisions should be considered?
- 3) Does the Future Land Use Strategy and Coordinated Public Services (Chapters Three and Four) continue to reflect preferred strategies to address development, preservation and public services and, if not, what revisions should be considered?

Amendments to the Plan, or the preparation of a wholly new Plan, must comply with the procedures delineated in the Planning Enabling Act in addition to measures the township believes will enhance the planning process. The township should seek substantive community input during the early stages of deliberations.

Appendix A

CULTURAL FEATURES

Regional Context

Wheatfield Township is a rural community of approximately 1,650 persons located in the central area of Ingham County in the south central region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The congressional area of the township is 30.8 square miles, of which approximately 1.9 square miles is occupied by the City of Williamston and Williamstown Township in its northeast region. Williamston has a population of approximately 3,850 persons. The nearest major urban center is the Lansing/East Lansing metropolitan area, located 10 miles northwest, with a population of approximately 465,000 including more than 35,000 Michigan State University students. Principal surrounding townships are Williamstown to the north, Leroy to the east, Ingham to the south, and Alaiedon to the west. Meridian Charter Township, with a population of approximately 40,000, borders a quarter mile of Wheatfield Township's northwest corner and is one of the most urbanized townships in the state. Wheatfield Township sits near the edge of the urbanized Lansing/East Lansing regional area and the township's expansive farm operations and open spaces stand in contrast to the more suburban and urban setting to the northwest. A number of comparatively small cities and villages are present within the more visibly rural landscape to the north, east and south such as Williamston, Webberville, Dansville, Mason, Stockbridge, and Perry. Mason is the largest of these towns with a population of approximately 10,000. Mason is located four road miles southwest and serves as the county seat.

Access and Circulation

Regional access to Wheatfield Township is provided by I-96, which crosses the northern third of the township and includes an interchange at Williamston Road. Williamston Road runs north-south through the entire township. Linn, Holt, and Howell Roads travel east and west across the entire township and these four roads comprise the backbone of local vehicular circulation. The local road network in the township generally reflects the traditional square mile grid that dominates much of the Lower Michigan rural landscape.

In compliance with the requirements of Michigan Act 51 of 1951, the Ingham County Department of Transportation and Roads (ICDTR) classifies roads under its jurisdiction as either "*primary*" or "*local*" roads. Primary roads are considered the most critical in providing regional circulation throughout the county and between counties. Roads in Wheatfield Township which the ICDTR classifies as "*primary*" are limited to Linn, Holt, Howell, Meridian, Williamston, and Zimmer (north of Holt Rd.). All other roads in the township under the jurisdiction of the ICDTR are classified as "*local*." The township's "*primary*" roads are paved as are nearly all local road segments.

The classification of roads by the ICDTR has important financial implications with regard to maintenance and improvements. Under Michigan law, townships have no responsibility for funding road improvements and maintenance. The ICDTR is responsible for local road maintenance and must maintain and improve primary roads at its own expense. However, state law limits the participation of Road Commissions to no more than 50% of the cost for improvements to local roads. Requests by local townships for local road maintenance levels beyond those considered adequate or feasible by the ICDTR, and requests for improvements to local roads, frequently require local funding. In reality,

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there are very few counties in Michigan where local townships are not actively involved in funding road maintenance and improvements.

Also of importance is the functional classification of roads as established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA). The FHA classifies road segments according to the extent to which the road is intended to facilitate traffic movement over long and short distances versus access to abutting property. This classification is referred to as the National Functional Classification (NFC). The relative hierarchy of the classification and its applicability to Wheatfield Township follows.

Principal arterials are at the top of the NFC hierarchical system and frequently include freeways and state highways between major cities. Principal arterials function to primarily facilitate long distance travel including access to important traffic generators such as major airports and regional shopping centers. Interstate 96 (I-96) is the only principal arterial in the township.

Minor arterials function similarly to principal arterials except that they facilitate shorter travel distances and access to lesser traffic generators. Minor arterials frequently include state highways between smaller cities. There are no minor arterials in the township.

Collectors function principally to provide access to property rather than long distance travel, and frequently funnel traffic from residential or rural areas to arterials. There are no “minor collectors” in the township. “Major collectors” in the township are:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Linn Rd., except east of the City of Williamston | Meridian Rd. |
| Holt Rd. | Zimmer Rd., south to Holt Rd. |
| Howell Rd. | Williamston Rd. |

Local Streets serve primarily to provide access to adjacent properties and minor collectors. Local streets in the township include all public roads not identified above.

Federal aid for road projects is limited to roads classified as major collectors or higher. Roads classified as minor collectors have only limited eligibility and roads classified as local streets are not eligible for federal funding.

Land Use and Development

The landscape of Wheatfield Township is predominantly agricultural. The vast majority of the township is dominated by farm operations and scattered residences, along with scattered woodlands and wetlands. The principal exceptions include several rural and more suburban settlement areas and several small commercial and industrial nodes. Table A-1 provides an overall area breakdown of general land use and land cover.

**Table A-1
Approximate General Land Use/Land Cover Allocation, 2011**

Land Use / Cover	Approximate Acreage	Portion of Township	Notes
Agricultural	13,030	70.6%	Includes cropland and pasture.
Other Open Space	3,735	20.2%	Open areas not included above (vacant land, scrub land, outdoor recreation including golf course, and additional woodlands and wetlands).
Residential	980	5.2%	Based on 1.5 acres of yard area per dwelling.
Circulation	740	4.0%	Includes road/rail surface and right-of-way.
Commercial	16	0.1%	Traditional office, retail and services uses are limited to approximately six acres.
Industrial	4	less than 0.1%	Auto parts, extrusion, blow molding, and tooling.

Table is based on 2011 aerial photography and “windshield” survey.

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A review of some of the more significant characteristics of land use and development in the township follows.

Agriculture

Farming operations occupy approximately 71% of the township's area and are evident in nearly all areas of the township. Some of the more commonly harvested crops are corn, wheat, soybeans and hay. In addition to traditional farming activities, Wheatfield Township is also home to an indoor shrimp farm in its far northwest corner on Meridian Road.

In an effort to better protect Michigan's farming interests, Public Act 116 of 1974 was adopted by the state, and has since been amended. The Act establishes a program whereby land owners can enroll their properties to gain property tax relief, provided the property is maintained in an agricultural/open space status. Approximately 45% of the township's farmland in 2011 was enrolled in this program. Approximately three-quarters of the PA 116 acreage is located across a central region of the township, between Holt Road to the north and Waldo/Dennis Roads to the south.

Residential Development and Land Division

The 2010 Census recorded 653 dwelling units in Wheatfield Township, an 11.1% increase (65) over the 588 dwellings recorded in 2000 and a 20.9% increase (113) over the 540 dwellings recorded in 1990. Approximately 98.6% of the units were single family dwellings constructed on-site, the majority of the balance comprised of mobile homes. 5.2% of the dwellings were classified as vacant. 88.7% of the occupied dwellings were owner-occupied and 11.3% were renter-occupied.

The 2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) reported that 21.8% of the dwelling units were constructed prior to 1950, and 53.9% were constructed during the following 40 years. Thus 24.4% of the dwelling units recorded in 2009 were constructed during the previous nineteen years. The 2009 median value of the owner-occupied housing stock in the township was \$215,700, approximately 50% higher than the county and state. See Table A-2.

TABLE A-2
Selected Housing Characteristics

Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

DWELLINGS	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE OF MICHIGAN
Year Built (%)			
1990 to 2009	24.4%	17.2%	21.5%
1950 to 1990	53.9%	57.7%	53.3%
Before 1950	21.8%	25.1%	25.3%
Median Value/Owner Occupied	\$215,700	\$140,400	\$147,500
Owner Occupied w/Mortgage	88.9%	71.6%	68.5%

Residential development in Wheatfield Township can be divided into two principal forms. The first and original form is that of farm homesteads. During the early half of the 1900s, primarily large farm parcels of 40 to 80 acres and more characterized the land division pattern in the community. Farm houses were erected to house the farm families. These farm houses are still very evident and this large tract land division pattern (parcels of 40 acres and greater) continues to comprise the vast majority of the township's acreage.

The second principal form of residential development are houses located on approximately one to ten-acre parcels fronting on the township's principal road network (section-line and similar roads), which have largely occurred from individual land splits off of farms. This land division pattern has incrementally evolved as the township has grown and is particularly evident in isolated areas such as along segments of Burkley and Williamston Roads. The proliferation of such parcels has not occurred in Wheatfield Township to the extent it has in so many rural Michigan communities. This trend of parcel splitting along the township's section-line roads is commonly referred to as *strip development*, and need not be limited to large parcels. This development pattern has been of increasing concern in the transportation and land use planning arena due to its negative impacts on traffic safety, congestion, farmland preservation, and rural character preservation.

In addition to the above, there are several platted subdivisions present in the township. The Pinecrest Farms and Pinecrest Farms No. 2 subdivisions are comprised of a total of 37 lots located off of Zimmer Road in the northern periphery of the township. The Jamestown and Jamestown No. 2 subdivisions are comprised of a total of 26 lots located off of Meridian Road north of Linn Road. Platted subdivisions consist of multiple lots established as a unified development/neighborhood project, pursuant to the platting requirements (platted subdivisions) of the Land Division Act (or former Subdivision Control Act). Lots in these subdivisions typically range between ½ – 1 acre in size.

Commercial Development

Traditional commercial development in Wheatfield Township is limited and is comprised of a service station/convenience store and a towing/car repair service at the Williamston Road/I-96 interchange, a veterinary clinic further south on Williamston Road south of Noble Road, and an equipment sales center on Linn Road near Corwin Road. These businesses occupy a total of approximately six acres. In addition, there are a number of commercial uses that are not of a typical office, retail, or service character including an inn/banquet facility further south on Williamston Road near Noble Road, and several commercial stables. A golf course with a banquet hall is also present on Linn Road near Corwin Road. The City of Williamston's business district provides a wide variety of uses of a predominantly retail, office and service oriented character.

Industrial Development

There are several industrial operations in Wheatfield Township. Williamston Products Inc., a manufacturer of interior trim products for the automotive industry, shares a facility on Noble Road (near Bravender Road) with R. N. Fink Manufacturing, specializing in extrusion, blow molding, and tooling.

425 Agreements

The township has entered into two "425 Agreements" with the City of Williamston. Public Act 425 of 1984, as amended, enables two local units of government to conditionally transfer property by written agreement for the purpose of economic development projects. The 1996 agreement covers approximately 200 acres located primarily along the west side of Williamston Road between Linn Road and I-96, but the largest single parcel is nearly 80 acres and located at the northeast corner of the I-96 interchange. The 1996 agreement will expire in 2016, at which time the acreage will become part of the city. The 2000 agreement covers a small triangular four-acre area directly west of Corwin Road between the CSX Railroad and the city. The 2000 agreement is to expire in 2020, at which time the acreage will also become part of the city. Both agreements place zoning authority for the acreage with the city. Townships frequently view a 425 Agreement as a more appealing alternative to annexation due to, in part, the commonly shared tax revenue from the properties during the period leading up to the expiration and the agreement (when the properties typically become part of the city).

Community Facilities and Services

Government Administration

A five member Township Board governs Wheatfield Township. Township offices are located in the Township Hall on Holt Road east of Almond Road. The Township Hall has approximately 4,000 square feet of floor area and includes a large and small meeting room in addition to restroom facilities, and administrative offices. The hall was constructed in 2002 and sits behind the 900 square foot township hall that previously served the community. A pavilion was added to the grounds in 2005.

Cemeteries

Wheatfield Township operates three cemeteries. Dennis Cemetery is located on Holt Road approximately one-quarter mile west of Williamston Road. Spaulding Cemetery is located on Waldo Road near the Zimmer Road intersection. Cabot Cemetery is located on Meech Road approximately one-quarter mile south of Noble Road.

Education

Wheatfield Township is served by three public school districts. Williamston Community Schools serves the entire north half of the township and limited portions south of Holt Road. The majority of the south half is served by Dansville Schools although Mason Public Schools serves limited portions of the township's western periphery. There are no public school facilities in the township, the closest being the elementary, middle and high schools in Williamston. There are also private school facilities in the regional area including in association with religious institutions.

Public Sewer and Water

Wheatfield Township provides no public sewer or water service, the City of Williamston being the closest community that provides such services. The city operates a sewage treatment facility in Wheatfield Township along Linn Road east of Corwin Road.

Emergency Services

Wheatfield Township provides fire protection to area residents through its membership with the Northeast Ingham Emergency Services Authority (NIESA). NIESA is a cooperative effort by the City of Williamston, the Village of Webberville, and the Townships of Leroy, Williamstown, Wheatfield, and Locke, to provide fire protection and emergency medical response services. NIESA relies on the fire departments of the City of Williamston and Leroy Township for fire protection. Police protection services are provided principally by the Michigan State Police, with the Ingham County Sheriff's Department playing a far lesser role in the last several years (and anticipated to continue in the near future as well).

Public Recreation

Recreation facilities operated by Wheatfield Township are limited to the township hall property, which includes a pavilion with picnic tables. Township residents benefit from a wide variety of local municipal recreation opportunities in the City of Williamston including parks and youth programs. The various school districts serving the township include outdoor recreation opportunities such as sports fields and playgrounds. The Williamston High School includes an indoor swimming facility. In addition, area residents are served by more resource-based regional facilities including county parks and the Dansville State Game Area.

Appendix B

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Geology & Topography

During the Paleozoic era of geological history, Ingham County and the state as a whole was inundated by successive warm, shallow seas during which large amounts of sediment were deposited. These deposits subsequently lithified to form bedrock. The entire area of Wheatfield Township sits upon Saginaw Formation bedrock, consisting of sandstone with interbedded shale, limestone, coal and gypsum. The Ice Age brought four successive continental glaciers across the Great Lakes area. As these ice sheets moved southward from Canada, they scoured and abraded the surface of the land leaving behind deeper valleys and more rounded hilltops. The advancing glaciers carried large quantities of rock materials scraped and gouged from the land's surface. These materials were then deposited during the melting of the ice to form drift materials covering the bedrock below. While the depth to bedrock exceeds 800 feet in some parts of Michigan, the depth of the drift layer in Wheatfield Township typically ranges between 25 to 75 feet.

The Township's topography can be generally described as level to nearly level. The vast majority of the Township reflects grades of 2% or less. There are only limited instances where grades exceed 5%. Township elevations generally range between 850 – 950 feet above sea level although the vast majority of the township is between 875 – 910 feet above sea level.

Drainage & Water Courses

Drainage is primarily facilitated through two watercourses – Deer Creek and Sloan Creek. Along with the secondary drains that feed it, Deer Creek drains the greatest portion of the Township. Deer Creek enters the township in its southwest quarter from Ingham Township and flows through the township's eastern half before flowing through the City of Williamston and emptying into the Red Cedar River. The Red Cedar subsequently flows into the Grand River in Lansing, and the Grand River ultimately empties into Lake Michigan. Sloan Creek originates in the township's southwest quarter and flows through the township's western half before emptying into the Red Cedar River in the southeast corner of Meridian Charter Township. Other drainage ways include Doan Creek in the township's southeast quarter and Frost Drain in its north-central region. There are several smaller drains and pockets of wetlands that also help to aid drainage. The township is void of any major water bodies although there are a number of small ponds of six acres or less in size.

Lands abutting or in close proximity to drainage courses, such as streams, ponds, and lakes, are subject to flood conditions when the drainage courses do not have the capacity to accommodate the rate of runoff from a single heavy rainfall or numerous lighter rainfalls over a relatively short period of time. Serious flooding has not been a common occurrence in Wheatfield Township. This is due in large part to the comparatively limited development (impervious surfaces) in the Township, and the network of drainage courses that carry and store runoff. Although Wheatfield Township may be relatively free of the threat of flooding, improperly managed land development practices can impact flood conditions both in the township and in communities downstream.

Groundwater

As runoff flows across land surfaces and travels through drainage courses, a portion of the runoff seeps into the ground and collects in great quantities in the underlying soils and deeper bedrock. These reservoirs of water are referred to as aquifers and serve as the sources of drinking water for nearly all residents of Wheatfield Township. The water drawn from the Saginaw Formation aquifer is considered to be of very good quality.

Aquifers can be “*confined*” or “*unconfined*” systems. Confined systems have an impermeable soil layer (typically clay) above them which acts to confine the aquifer and protect the aquifer from contaminants seeping into the subsurface above the confining soil layer, such as petroleum products, fertilizers, and improperly disposed household liquids. Unconfined systems do not have this protective layer of clay soil and are much more prone to contamination. Data from county well logs suggest that while a confining clay or shale layer is present throughout the county, this protective cover does not extend to all areas of the county.

Vegetation

Vegetative cover in Wheatfield Township is comprised largely of cropland, accounting for approximately two-thirds of the township area. The principal exceptions are those areas characterized by wetlands, woodlands, and urbanized areas including residential yard areas.

There are approximately 1,750 acres of wetlands in the township, comprising 9.4% of its landscape. The wetlands are located throughout the township but are most evident along or near stream and creek corridors. Nearly all of the wetlands are comprised of lowland hardwoods such as ash, elm, soft maples, and cottonwoods. The balance is comprised of shrub and emergent wetlands. In addition to the lowland woodlands that comprise portions of the wetlands, there are approximately 1,350 acres of upland woodlands in the Township (See “Woodlands” Map on page D-6). These woodlands are predominantly characterized by such species as sugar and red maple, elm, beech, cherry, and basswood. The upland woodlands are scattered throughout the township and typically range between 10 and 80 acres in size.

The network of wooded and non-wooded wetlands is important because of the vital role these resources play in flood control, runoff purification, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitats, recreational opportunities, and supporting the rural character of the township. Wetlands are environmentally sensitive resources and can experience degradation and destruction due to changes in water levels, erosion and sedimentation, filling, dredging, and draining. The degradation or pollution of a wetland area can have a destructive impact upon wetlands and related woodland resources distances away due to the frequent physical linkages between these resource areas. In addition to the environmental constraints wetlands pose for development, wetlands present severe physical constraints for land development due to flooding and instability of soils.

Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, has prepared a soil survey for Ingham County. The character of soils can have a profound impact upon the suitability of future land uses with regard to ground water contamination, buckling and shifting of foundations and roads, erosion, on-site sewage disposal, and agricultural productivity. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has identified specific individual soil units throughout the County based upon the characteristics of the upper soil layers (approximately five feet in depth) which provides a reliable basis for township planning purposes.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, nearly the entire Township is characterized by loam soils, including sandy loam soils. Loam and sandy loam soils occupy more than 80% of the township. Due to the character of these soils, approximately half of the township is characterized by severe limitations to septic systems. These limitations are due largely to seasonally high water tables, ponding, poor soil filtration characteristics and/or soil wetness. A primary concern is the soil's ability to absorb and break down the leachate from the septic drain fields before it reaches underground water supplies. This can be particularly troublesome where soils are characterized by wetness and poor percolation rates. For example, approximately one-third of the township is characterized by Capac loam soils. According to the soil survey, the winter and spring seasonal high water table approaches to within one to two feet of the ground surface. Limitations on septic systems by soils can often be overcome with increased lot sizes and/or specially engineered septic systems at additional costs. Soils that present only moderate or slight limitations to septic tank absorption are scattered throughout the township in a marbled pattern.

The Ingham County Health Department is responsible for issuing permits for on-site sewage disposal. A permit will not be issued unless all county requirements have been met. Under typical conditions, sites of one to two acres are typically adequate to meet the Health Department's requirements for effective septic systems, including a back-up area should the initial drain field fail. Even on a two-acre site, a mounded system (raised) may be required to minimize soil wetness below. Sites of one acre or less must meet more stringent standards and may not be able to do so due to soil conditions. Development at this density may require a sewer system.

It should be noted that while a site may be classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as presenting a limitation to septic systems and building construction, on-site investigation may show the classification to be less than fully accurate and/or show that the deeper soils (more than five feet deep) present different characteristics than the upper layer soils and thus, varying limitations. On-site investigations should be carried out before specific land development projects are initiated.

While the area soils present primarily moderate and severe limitations to septic drain fields, approximately 75% of the Township is classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as *prime farmland* and the majority of the balance is classified as *additional farmland of local importance*. (See "Farmland Resources" Map). The Natural Resources Conservation Service generally defines *prime farmland* as land that is, under proper management, particularly well suited to food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is capable of producing sustained high yields. These prime farmland areas are most concentrated in the Township's western half, but occupy approximately half of the township's east half as well. *Additional farmland of local importance* is generally defined as land that is nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields (under proper management).

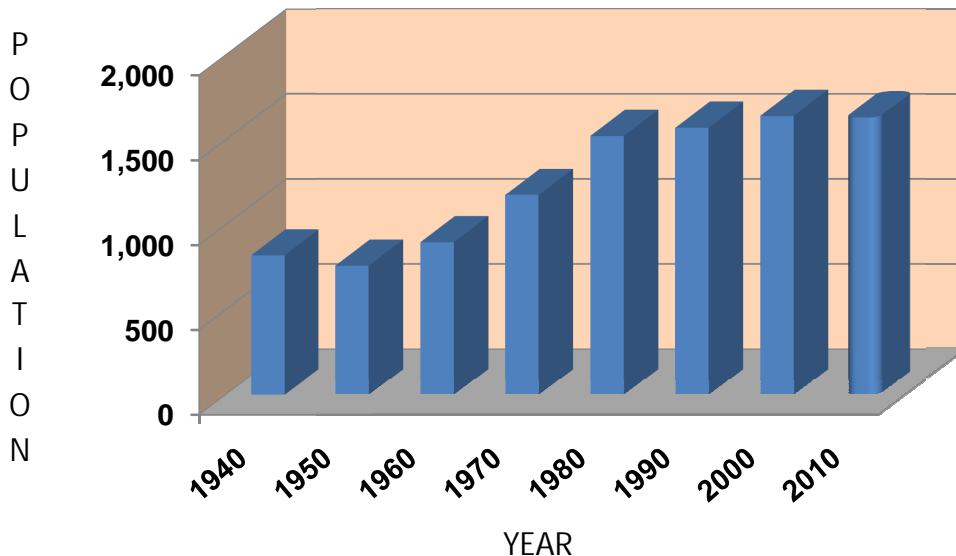
Appendix C DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Population Growth Trends

The 2010 U.S. Census (Census) recorded a Wheatfield Township population of 1,632 persons, a decrease of 0.5% from its 2000 population of 1,641 persons. The township's population has increased 99% since 1940 when its population was 821. Since 1940, the township has had varying periods of population growth and decline. Its strongest growth period, the 1960s and 1970s, resulted in a 70% increase in population. Its sharpest ten-year decline, -7.3%, was witnessed in the 1940s. The township's population loss from 2000 to 2010 is reflective of the economic and housing market decline across the nation and particularly evident in Michigan. Michigan as a whole experienced a 0.5% decline in population during this period as well, the only state to witness a decline in population.

Ingham County's growth trend has not been substantially different than the township's. The county's population has increased by 115% since 1940, rising to 280,895 in 2010. The only recorded decline occurred during the 1990s. Unlike the township and state as a whole, Ingham County experienced positive growth between 2000 and 2010, though slight at 0.6%.

FIGURE C-1
Wheatfield Township Growth
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Wheatfield Township's population has comprised the same general proportion of the county's total population since 1940, ranging between 0.5% - 0.6%. By comparison, the City of Lansing and Meridian Charter Township comprised the greatest proportions of the county's population, 17.3% and 13.6% respectively.

TABLE C-1
Population Trends & Growth Rates Comparison
 (previous ten-year growth rate indicated by “%”)

YEAR	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
1940	821	130,525	5,256,106
1950	761 -7.3%	172,941 32.5%	6,371,766 17.6%
1960	898 18.0%	213,103 23.2%	7,823,194 18.6%
1970	1,177 31.1%	261,463 22.7%	8,881,826 11.9%
1980	1,523 29.4%	275,520 5.4%	9,262,078 4.1%
1990	1,571 3.2%	281,912 2.3%	9,295,297 0.4%
2000	1,641 4.5%	279,320 -0.9%	9,938,444 6.9%
2010	1,632 -0.5%	280,895 0.6%	9,883,640 -0.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Estimating future population growth can provide important insights into identifying future land use and public services needs. Projecting the growth of a community's population over a prescribed period of time is not an exact science. The many unpredictable factors that affect growth make population projections somewhat speculative. The collapse of the housing market and severe downturn in the economy beginning in 2007 are examples of this condition. Because of the severity of the housing and financial market that surfaced in 2007, both in Michigan and nationally, projecting population growth at this particular time is uniquely challenging. By using several projection techniques, a range of growth estimates can be generated. These shed light on potential growth scenarios provided planning policies and land development regulations do not limit growth any more than in the past.

The historical trend approach assumes the township will grow at a rate that reflects the township's average 10-year growth rate between the years 1940 and 2010 (11.2% every ten years). The low growth trend approach assumes the township will grow at a rate 50% less than that of the historical trend rate, or 5.6% every ten years. The very low growth trend approach assumes the township will grow at a rate 75% less than that of the historical trend rate, or 2.8% every ten years. The high growth trend approach assumes the township will grow at a rate 50% greater than that of the historical trend rate, or 16.8% every ten years. The low or very low growth trend may be the most likely over the next ten years given current economic conditions in Michigan. See Table C-2.

TABLE C-2
Wheatfield Township Population Projections

Projection Trend	Year 2020	Year 2030	Year 2040
Very Low Growth Trend (2.8%)	1,678	1,725	1,773
Low Growth Trend (5.6%)	1,723	1,820	1,922
Historical Trend (11.2%)	1,815	2,018	2,244
High Growth Trend (16.8%)	1,906	2,226	2,600

SOCIAL and ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The 2010 Census showed Wheatfield Township to have a racial composition far more homogeneous than the state as a whole (See Table C-3). 94.4% of the township population was white, compared to 76.2% and 78.9% for the county and state respectively. This homogeneity is typical of rural Michigan communities, as compared to more urban areas such as Lansing.

**TABLE C-3
Wheatfield Township Race Profile, 2010
(By Percent)**

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

RACE	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
White Only	94.4	76.2	78.9
Black/African American Only	0.4	11.8	14.2
American Indian, Alaska Native Only	0.4	0.6	0.6
Asian Only	1.3	5.2	2.4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Only	0.0	0.0	0.0
Some Other Single Race Only	0.7	2.3	1.5
Two or More Races	2.8	4.0	2.3

The township’s median age of 46.3 years in 2010 was nearly 15 years higher than the county (31.4) and over seven years higher than the state (38.9). This heightened age composition is largely a result of the lesser proportion of persons in all age brackets under 45 years and a corresponding greater proportion of persons between 45 and 84. 52.0% of the township population fell within this age range compared to 34.3% and 41.6% for the county and state respectively. The county’s unusually low median age is due, in part, to the presence of the Michigan State University student population.

**FIGURE C-2
Wheatfield Township Age Profile
Source: 2010 U.S. Census**

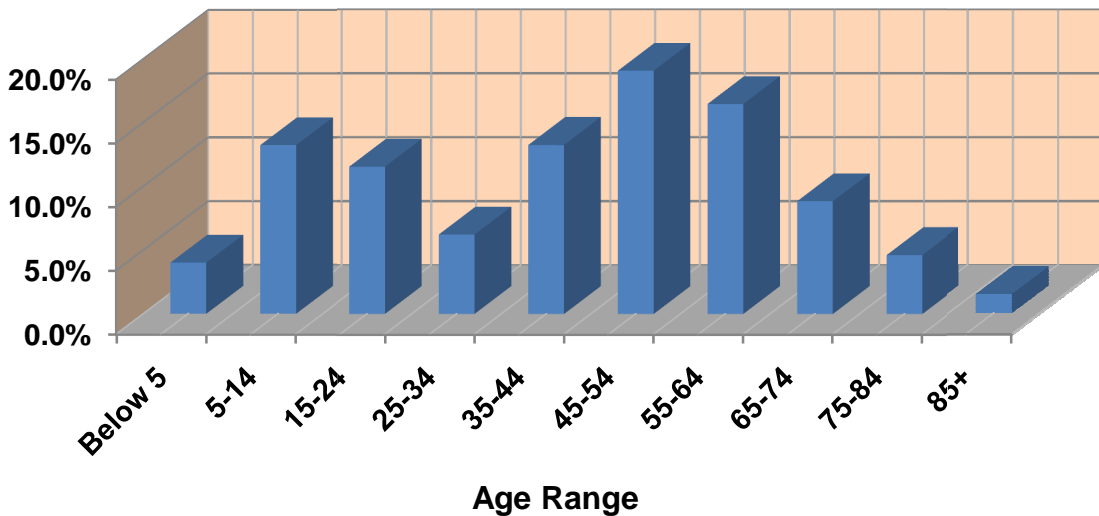


TABLE C-4
Age Profile Comparison
 (By Percent, except where otherwise noted)
 Source: 2010 U.S. Census

AGE	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Under 5 yrs.	4.0	5.7	6.0
5 – 14 yrs.	13.2	11.5	13.3
15 - 24 yrs.	11.5	23.1	14.3
25 - 34 yrs.	6.2	14.0	11.8
35 – 44 yrs.	13.2	11.1	12.9
45 - 54 yrs.	19.0	12.8	15.2
55 - 64 yrs.	16.4	11.2	12.7
65 - 74	8.8	5.5	7.3
75 - 84	4.6	3.3	4.5
85 yrs. or more	3.2	1.5	1.9
Under 18 yrs.	18.6	20.9	20.8
65 yrs and over	16.5	10.5	13.8
Median Age	46.3 yrs.	31.4 yrs.	38.9 yrs.

Like the balance of the state and nation, the township’s residents are continuing to mature. Its 2010 median age of 46.3 years reflects a 20.3% increase over its 2000 median age of 38.5 years. This aging of the township’s population can be expected to continue as the baby boomer generation further matures along with a comparatively low portion of township residents in the principal family-forming years (as compared to the county and state). See Figure C-2 and Table C-4.

The 2010 Census recorded 619 households and 472 families in Wheatfield Township. These numbers represent an increase of 44 households and six families. The township’s average household size of 2.6 persons in 2010 was slightly higher than that of the county and state, and lower than its average household size of 2.9 persons in 2000. The township’s average family size of 3.0 persons in 2010 was equal to that of the county and slightly less than that of the state, and slightly lower than its average family size of 3.2 persons in 2000.

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Of all the households in Wheatfield Township in 2010, 67.9% included a married-couple. This percentage is significantly greater than the county and state. Of the 8.4% of families not consisting of a married couple, slightly more than half were headed by a female householder. 23.7% of all households were comprised of non-family households, significantly lower than the county and state. Of these non-family households, 83.7% were comprised of the householder living alone and approximately half of these individuals were of 65 years of age or greater. See Figure C-3 and Table C-5.

FIGURE C-3
Wheatfield Township Household Type
 Source: 2010 U.S. Census

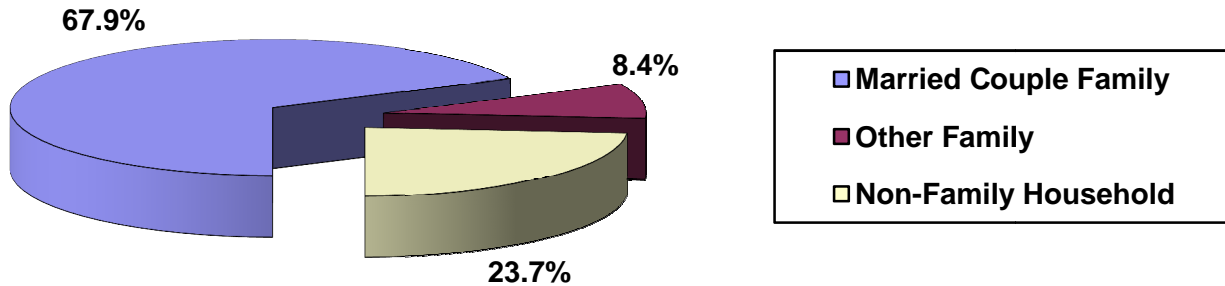


TABLE C-5
Household Type and Size Comparison
 (by percent, except where otherwise noted)
 Source: 2010 U.S. Census

	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE OF MICHIGAN
HOUSEHOLD TYPE			
Married-couple family	67.9	39.4	48.0
Other family:	8.4	17.1	18.0
(Male householder)	3.9	4.4	4.8
(Female householder)	4.5	12.7	13.2
Non-family household	23.7	43.6	34.0
PERSONS Per HOUSEHOLD	2.6 persons	2.4 persons	2.5 persons
PERSONS Per FAMILY	3.0 persons	3.0 persons	3.1 persons

The township's labor force in 2009 was comprised of 875 persons. The principal employment industry for Wheatfield Township workers, and those of the county and state, was education, health, and social services. This industry alone accounted for approximately one of every four workers' employment. The 5.7% of township workers employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining industries was more than four times that of the county and state. See Table C-6.

In 2010, 6.4% of township workers worked at home. For those who commuted to work, the average travel time was 25.2 minutes. This is indicative of the limited employment opportunities in the township and the importance of the Lansing area, including Michigan State University, as an employment center for township residents.

TABLE C-6
Employment by Industry Comparison
 (employed persons 16 years and older, by percent)

Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

INDUSTRY	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Education, health, and social services	22.7	28.7	22.4
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management, other services not listed (excluding public administration)	18.5	14.1	13.5
Public administration	12.9	7.7	3.7
Retail trade	12.4	11.6	11.6
Manufacturing	8.4	8.7	18.3
Finance, insurance, and real estate	7.4	6.6	5.7
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	5.7	0.9	1.2
Construction	3.8	3.9	5.6
Art, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services	3.0	10.4	9.0
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	2.4	3.1	4.2
Information	1.4	2.1	1.9
Wholesale trade	1.3	2.1	2.9

The Wheatfield Township community was in a far more prosperous position in 2009 when compared to the county and state. Its median household income of \$83,162, its median family income of \$87,375, and its per capita income of \$34,319 was 30% to 44% greater than that of the county and state. Not surprisingly, the portion of families and persons below poverty level in the township in 2009, 1.5% and 2.2% respectively, was nearly seven to ten times less than that of the county and state. See Figure C-4 and Table C-7.

FIGURE C-4
Income Characteristics Comparison

Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

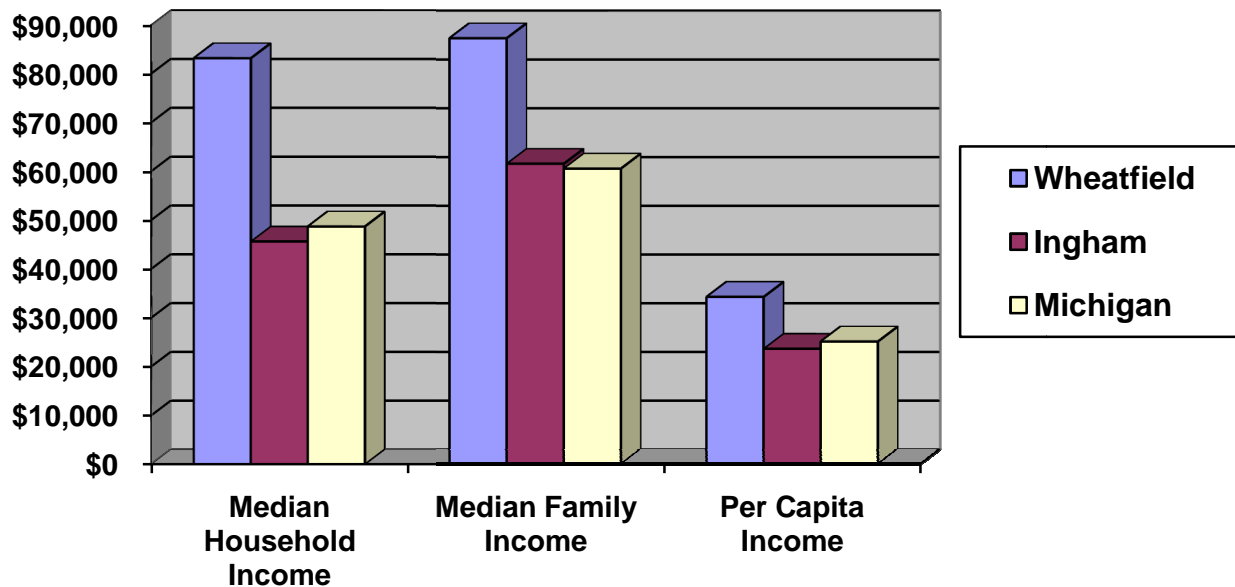


TABLE C-7
Income Characteristics Comparison

Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

INCOME CHARACTERISTIC	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE OF MICHIGAN
Median household income	\$83,162	\$45,606	\$48,700
Median family income	\$87,375	\$61,619	\$60,635
Per capita income	\$34,319	\$23,669	\$25,172
Families below poverty level	1.5%	11.8%	10.3%
Persons below poverty level	2.2%	19.9%	14.5%

Higher income levels are frequently associated with higher education levels, and this was the case with Wheatfield Township in 2009. 41.8% of the township's residents had acquired a bachelor's degree or higher level of education compared to 34.9% for the county and 24.5% for the state. See Table C-8 and Figures C-5 and C-6.

TABLE C-8
Highest Level of Education Attainment Comparison
 (for persons 25 years of age, by percent)

Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINMENT	WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP	INGHAM COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Less Than 9th Grade	1.2	2.9	3.7
9th to 12th, no diploma	3.6	6.4	8.9
High School Diploma	20.1	25.0	31.8
Some college, no degree	19.9	22.6	23.1
Associates Degree	13.4	8.2	8.0
Bachelor's Degree	26.8	19.9	15.2
Graduate/Professional Degree	15.0	15.0	9.3
High school graduate or higher	95.2	90.7	87.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	41.8	34.9	24.5

FIGURE C-5
Wheatfield Township Highest Level of Education Attainment
 (for persons 25 years of age)

Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

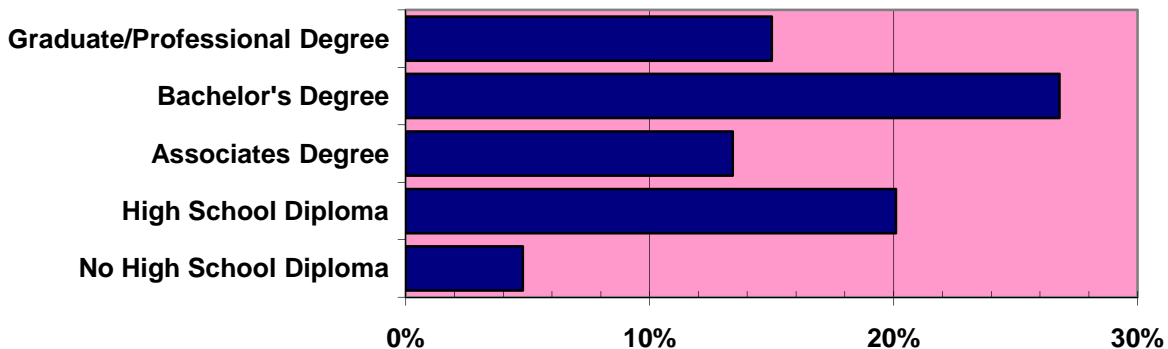
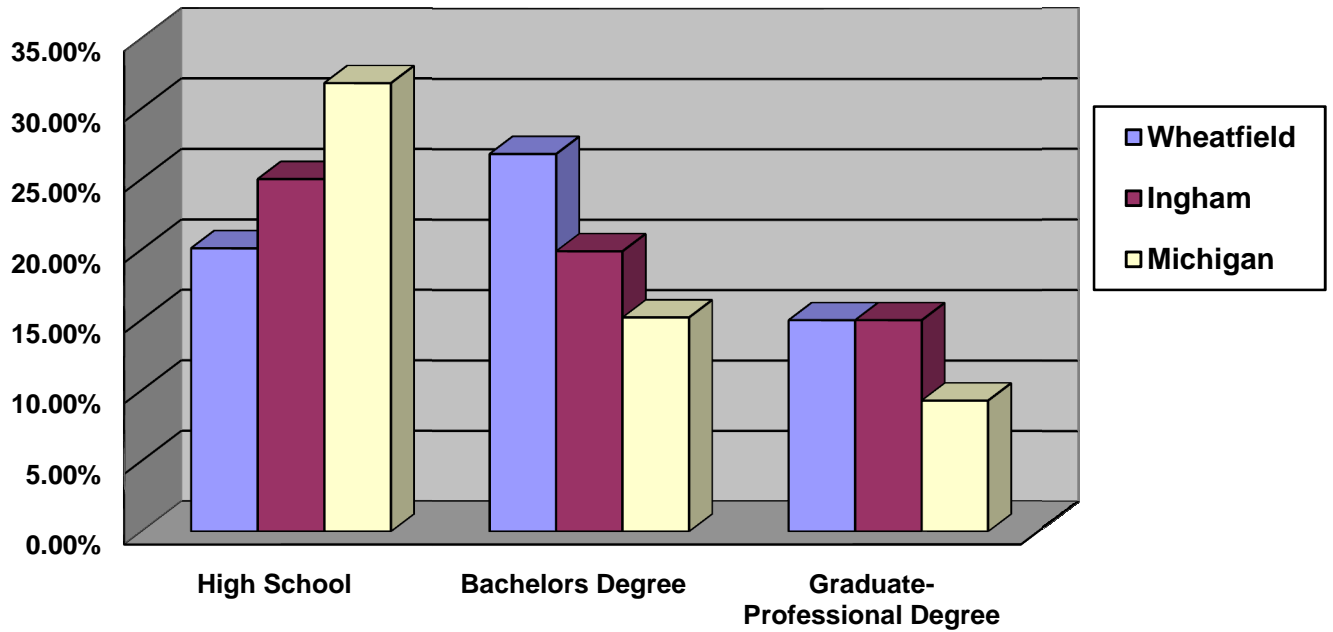


FIGURE C-6
Highest Level of Education Attainment Comparison
(for persons 25 years of age)

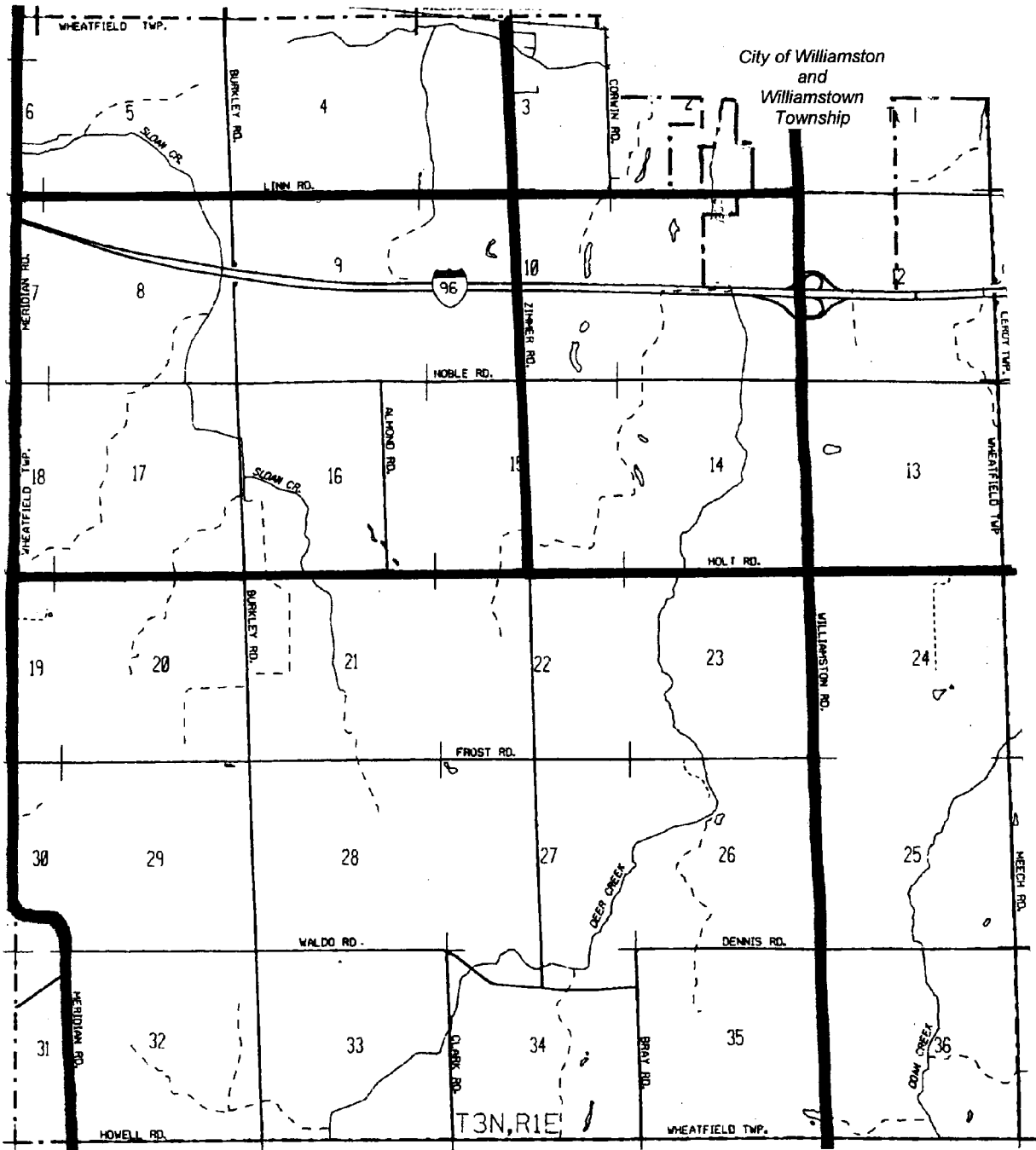
Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau



Appendix D **INVENTORY MAPS**

Roadway Network
General Existing Land Use
Important Farmland
Septic System Limitations
Woodlands
Wetlands

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



LEGEND

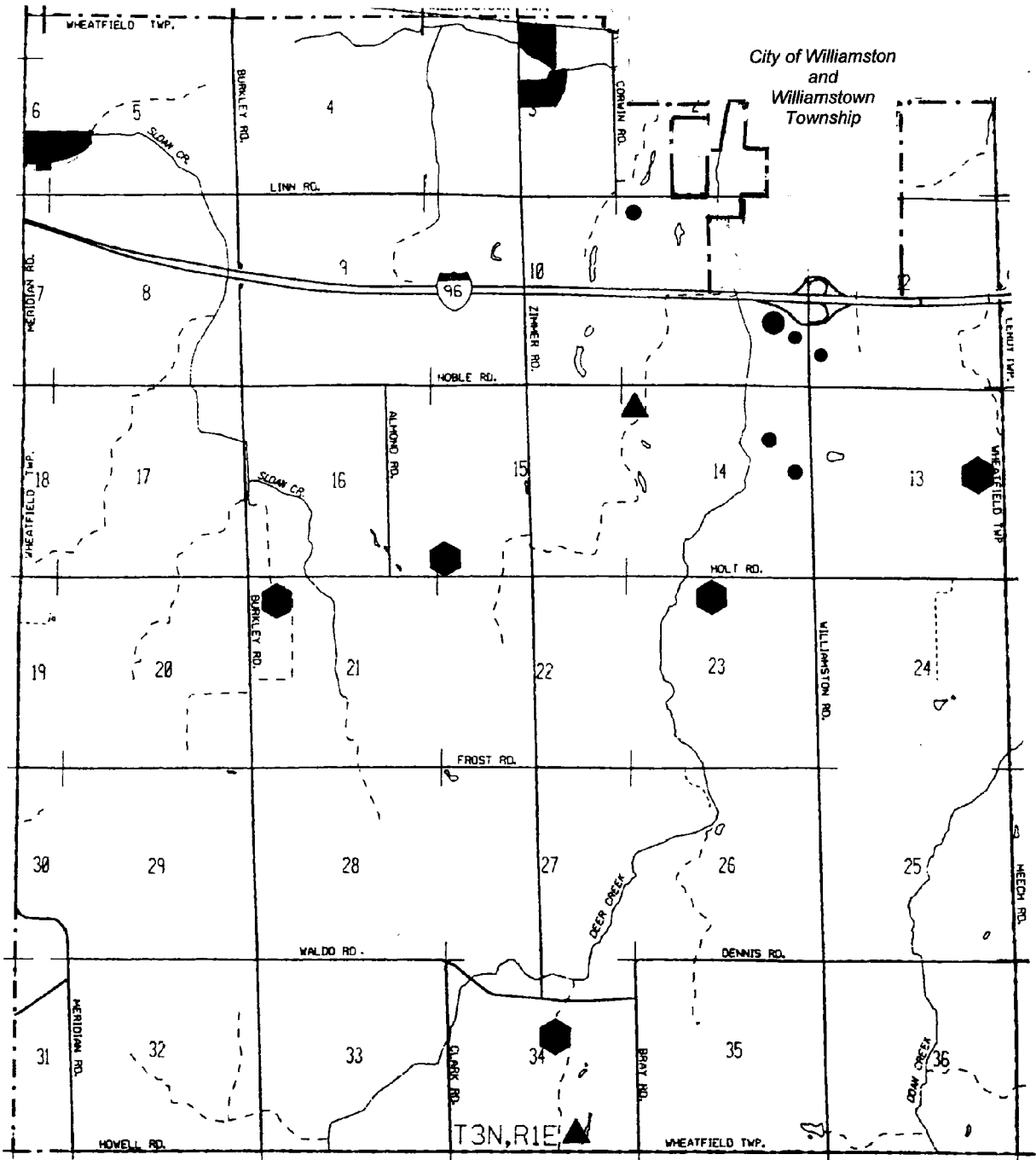
-  Interstate
-  Major Collector
-  Minor Collector
-  Local Streets/Roads

**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN**

ROADWAY NETWORK






Map Information Source
Ingham Co. Road Commission
Landplan Inc. / February 12, 2013

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



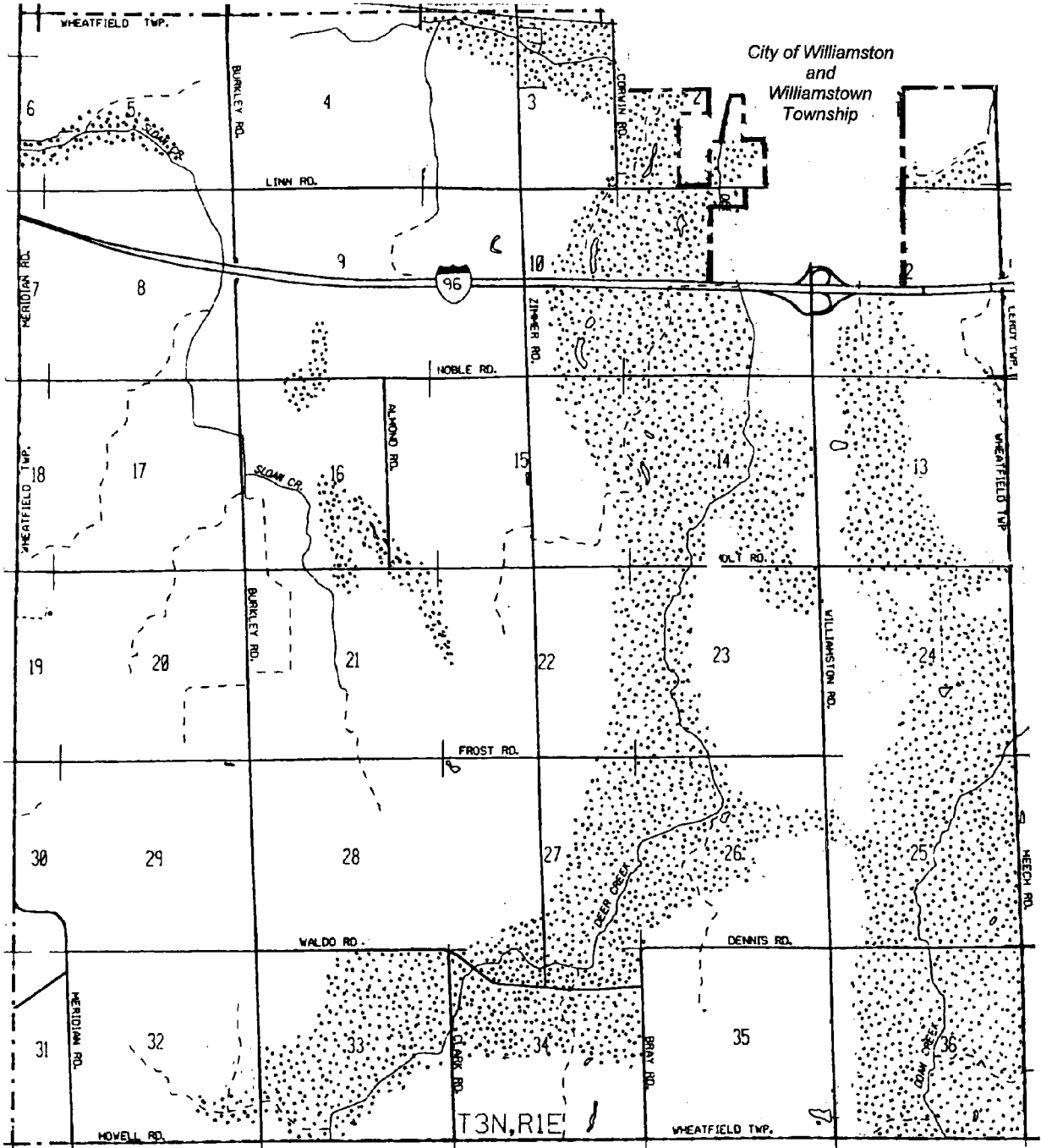
LEGEND

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN GENERAL EXISTING LAND USE


- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Agricultural including woodlands and wetlands, along with dispersed residential  Platted residential subdivisions and similar neighborhood developments  Commercial of a retail, office or service character | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Industrial  Public and institutional including cemeteries, township hall, and churches |
|--|--|


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WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



LEGEND

- 

General areas predominantly characterized by lands reflecting the best combination of physical and chemical properties for producing food, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. (often referred to as Prime Farmland)
- 

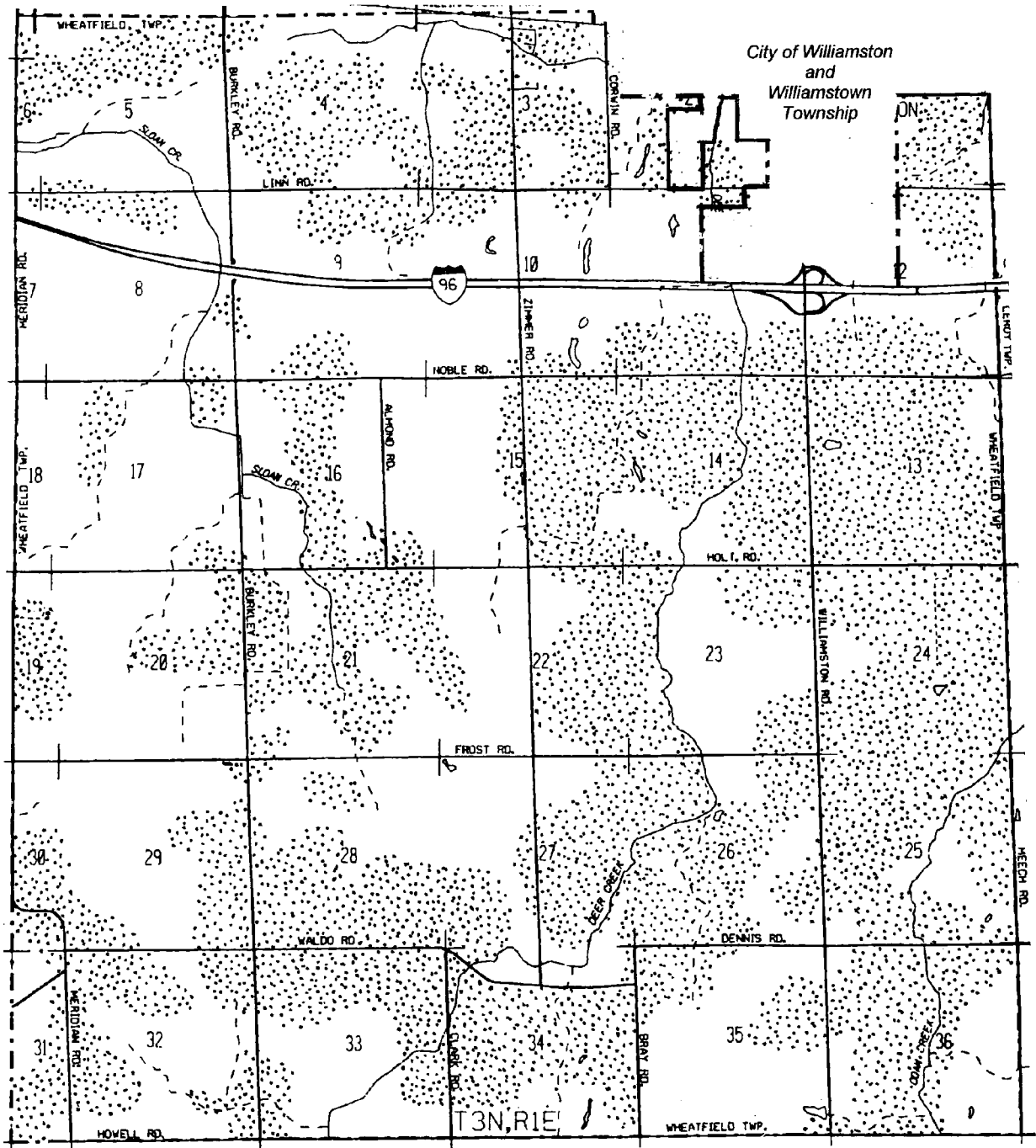
General areas predominantly characterized by lands nearly as productive as those considered Prime Farmlands.

**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN**



IMPORTANT FARMLAND

Map Information Source
 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service
 Landplan Inc. / February 12, 2013

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



LEGEND

-  Areas predominantly characterized by conditions presenting moderate limitations to septic systems.
-  Areas predominantly characterized by conditions presenting severe limitations to septic systems.

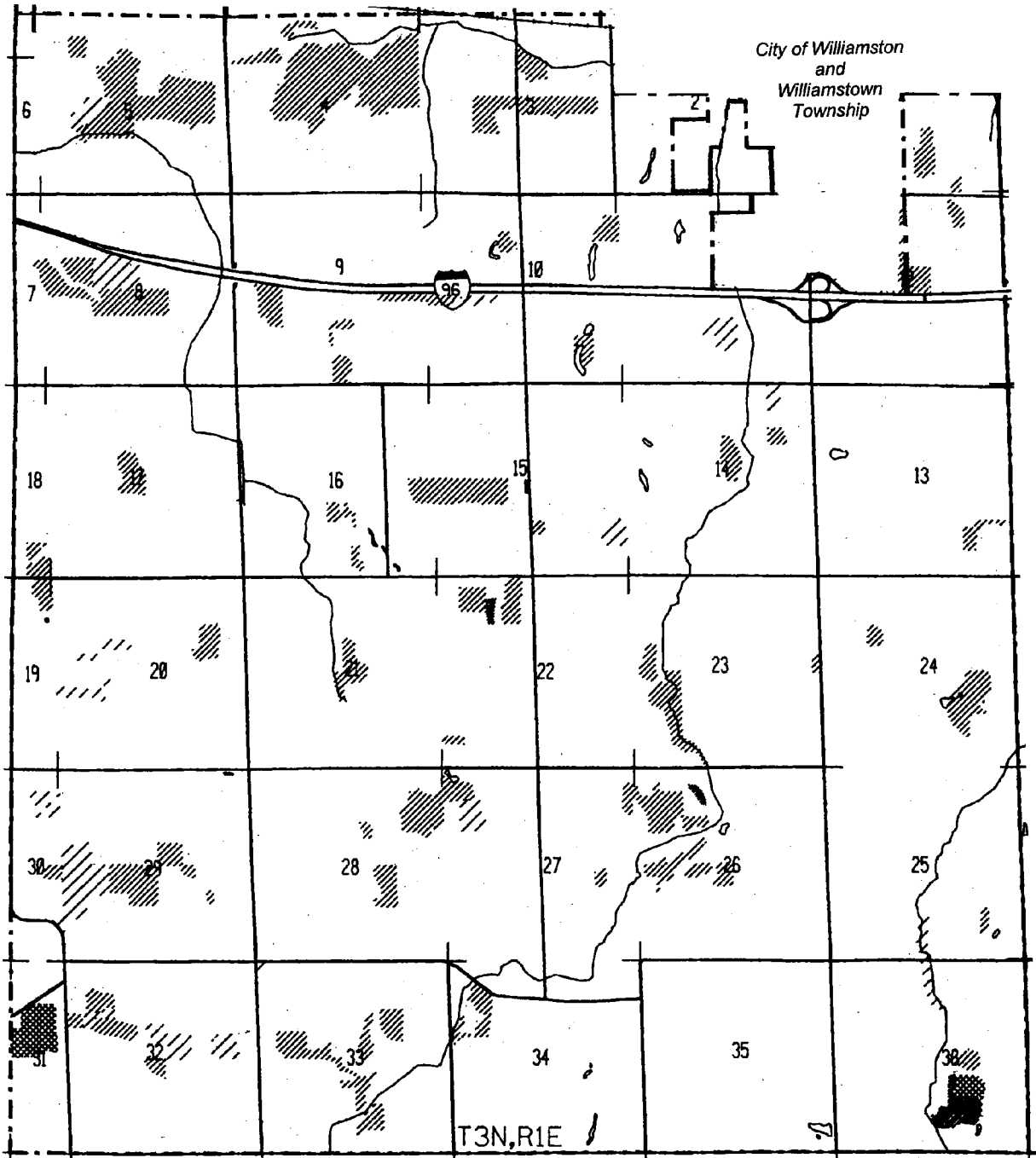
**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN**

SEPTIC SYSTEM LIMITATIONS





Map Information Source
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, SCS

Landplan Inc / February 12, 2013

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



LEGEND

-  Upland Hardwoods
-  Aspen/Birch
-  Upland Conifer
-  Christmas Tree

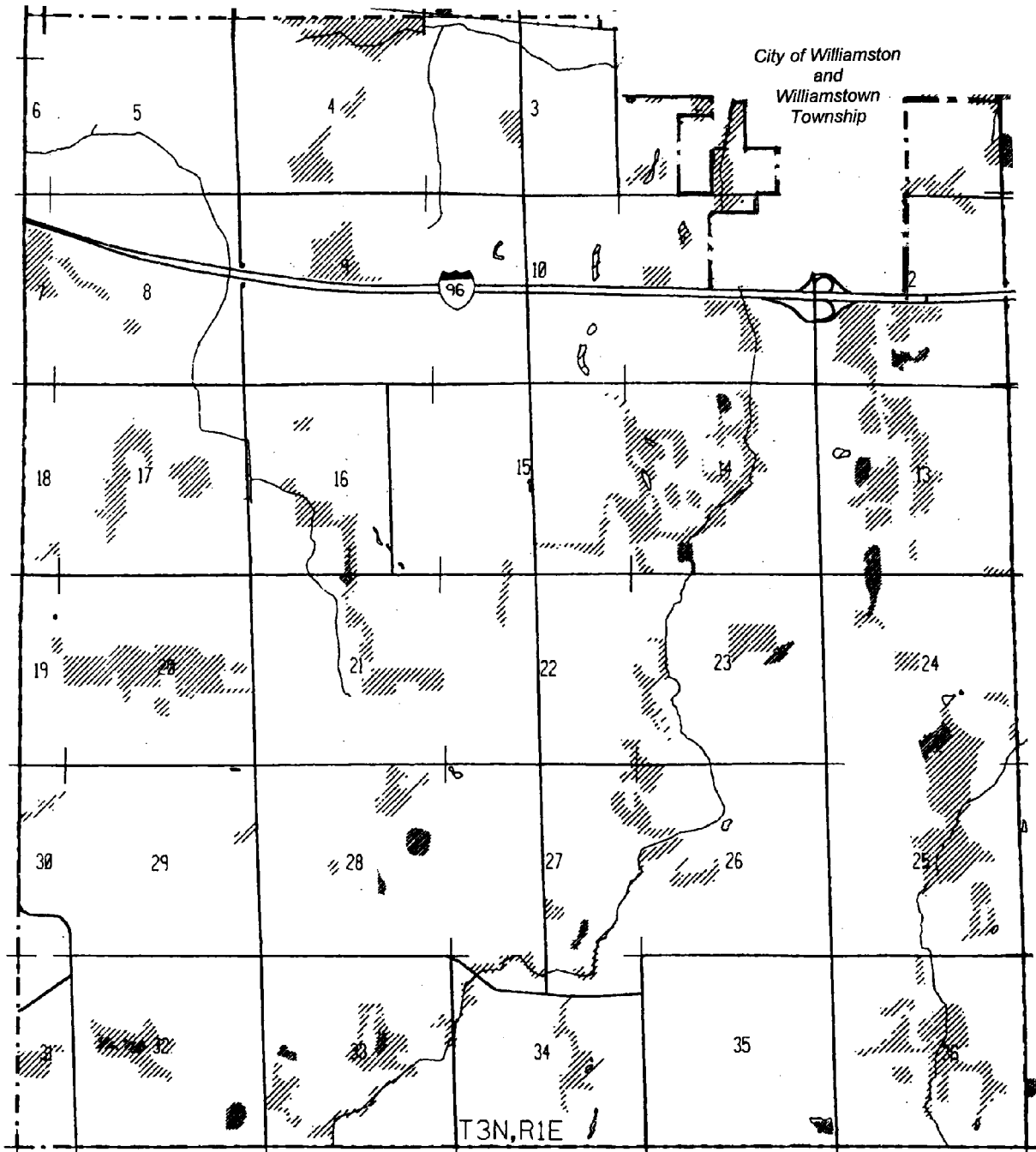
**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN**

WOODLANDS





Map Information Source
Michigan Information Resource Systems, MDNR, 1978
Windshield Survey / Aerial Photography, 2010-2011

Landplan Inc. / February 12, 2013

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN



LEGEND

-  Open Water
-  Shrub, Emergent, Aquatic Bed
-  Lowland Hardwood
-  Lowland Conifer

**WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN**

WETLANDS

Map Information Source
Michigan Information Resource Systems, MDNR, 1978
Windshield Survey / Aerial Photography, 2010-2011

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