

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

December 1, 2011



HAMILTON TOWNSHIP • CLARE COUNTY • MICHIGAN

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Prepared By

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Under The Direction Of The

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION**

And The

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
BOARD of TRUSTEES**

Approved By The

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
November 10, 2011**

Approved By The

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP BOARD of TRUSTEES
December 1, 2011**

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
CLARE COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

Statements of Approval

Planning Commission Approval

This is to certify that this Master Plan comprises the Hamilton Township Master Plan approved by the Hamilton Township Planning Commission on November 10, 2011.



Robert Bess, Chairperson
Hamilton Township Planning Commission

Township Board of Trustees Approval

This is to certify that this Master Plan comprises the Hamilton Township Master Plan approved by the Hamilton Township Board of Trustees on December 1, 2011.



Finette LaBoda, Clerk
Hamilton Township Board of Trustees

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Chapter One INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the Hamilton 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. This Plan is intended to serve all township residents, landowners, and visitors, including seasonal and year-round residents.

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.

This Master Plan is a policy document that identifies how growth and associated land development should be guided to enhance the future welfare of Hamilton Township. The following key words and phrases can generally describe the Master Plan:

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 in response to growth and community aspirations.

GENERAL: The plan establishes broad principles and 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 which 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 Master Plan was prepared by the Hamilton Township Planning Commission under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A 33 of 2008, as amended). 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.*

This Master Plan is not a law or regulatory document, but a "policy plan" to be implemented through, in part, zoning and other regulatory and nonregulatory tools. 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 Hamilton 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 land development 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 regulations.

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 Issues, Goals and Objectives presents a discussion of important planning issues facing the township today, and associated goals and objectives that address these issues.
- 3) Chapter Three – Future Land Use Strategy presents policies addressing the planned future land use pattern for the township and coordinated public services.
- 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 growth, employment, and education (Appendix C).

Importance and Application of the Master Plan

The importance and application of the Hamilton Township Master Plan are demonstrated in: 1) the long-term interests of the township; and 2) 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 new officials. Some of these important interests include:

- Protecting the township's rural character.
- Protecting the quality of life.
- Protecting the township's natural resources, including Cranberry Creek, the Cedar River, forest lands, wetlands, and wildlife.
- 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.

The Master Plan supports these long-term interests by providing a future-oriented strategy that seeks to further these interests. Chapter Two establishes goals and objectives, and Chapter Three establishes future land use strategies, to secure these and other long-term interests.

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, intended to ensure that the policies of the Plan are implemented.

- Review of Land Development Proposals: Chapter Two includes a list of township goals and objectives which should be reviewed when consideration is given to future proposed rezoning requests, site plans, and related land use proposals, to further establish a record upon which the proposal can be evaluated. Equally important, Chapter Three provides policies regarding the planned future land use pattern in the township – valuable reference points upon which land use 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 health, safety, and welfare may be at risk. Chapters Four and Five 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: The 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

Hamilton Township adopted a master plan in 2000. The township undertook the development of a wholly new Plan in 2010 as part of its commitment to maintaining a current set of goals, objectives and policies regarding growth, development, and preservation.

One of the first tasks undertaken by the township was the holding of a “Future Vision” Town Meeting. The purpose of the Town Meeting was to gain insight into some of the thoughts of local residents about current aspects of the township and aspirations for the future. Those residents who could not attend were given the opportunity to mail in a brief survey addressing the same.

The prevailing thoughts uncovered during the Town Meeting and mail survey included:

- Positive aspects of the township considered most important were its natural features and rural character, the character of its residents, board members, emergency services/safety (including drug enforcement), and the Dodge City business area.
- Negative aspects of the township considered most important were its blight conditions, road litter and trash, the lack of a community/recreation center including recreation opportunities and organizations for kids, road conditions, and taxes.
- “Future visions” for the community that were identified as most important were a community education/recreation center, the absence of blight, the preservation of farmland and rural character, and economic development.

The Planning Commission’s initial efforts were also directed at establishing a database about the Township for use during the planning process. This involved a review of physical and cultural conditions in the township including soils, topography, road network, existing land use patterns, public services, and demographic characteristics.

The Planning Commission then directed its efforts to identifying important planning issues facing the community and established a set of goal and objective statements to address these issues and guide the policies of the Plan.

Several alternative future land use patterns and strategies were then developed based upon the data collected to date and the goals and objectives statements. The Planning Commission studied these alternatives and selected the most preferable. Based upon the selected alternative, the Planning Commission assembled a complete draft of the Plan suitable for presentation to the community. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft Plan and subsequently finalized the Plan for adoption.

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 subsequent solicitation for input from neighboring communities on the draft plan.

Overview of Planning Policies

This Plan presents a coordinated strategy that addresses growth, development and preservation in Hamilton Township. The Plan supports the continuation of the township as a desirable place to live for seasonal and year-round residents including families and retirees, where persons and families can live within a resource-rich rural setting with abundant woodlands, water resources and farm operations, and where dispersed and compact settlement areas combine to offer varied housing opportunities.

The Plan encourages the continuation of farming, most particularly in southern and eastern portions of the community. Residential development in these agricultural and other portions of the township is intended to be of a predominantly low density character. Higher density living arrangements are to be focused principally in the Dodge City area and south.

The Plan supports the Dodge City area as the principal commerce center in the township, with opportunities for limited additional commercial and/or industrial uses north of Dodge City and along M-61 near N. Hoover Road.

The Plan recognizes Hamilton Township is characterized by abundant forests, water resources and wetlands, and embodies a strong preservation theme.

Hamilton Township Overview

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

Hamilton Township is located in the northeast quarter of Clare County. The township is located three miles east of the City of Harrison. Regional access to the township is provided by US-127, which passes within three miles of the township's west border. M-61 forms the township's south border.

The landscape of Hamilton Township is very rural in character, comprised nearly entirely of woodlands, wetlands, farm operations, and scattered residences. The principal exception is the area of the township generally referred to as Dodge City, at the intersection of Townline Lake Road and Dodge Lake Road. This settlement area includes the township's single commerce center and the majority of the township's residences.

The 2010 U.S. Census recorded a Hamilton Township population of 1,829 persons, 790 households, and 519 families. In 2010, 97.5% of the township population was white and 53.8% of the households included a married-couple.

The vast majority of Hamilton Township is characterized by loamy and sandy soils. The township's topography can be generally described as rolling but ranging from nearly level to grades approaching 15% and more in instances. The township is home to approximately 15 lakes greater than five acres in size and about half of these lakes are located in the township's southwest quarter. Its greatest concentration of lakes is the seven named lakes in Section 19 and around which much of Dodge City was founded. Hamilton Township includes numerous rivers, creeks and smaller and intermittent water courses, the most significant being Cranberry Creek and the Cedar River including the West and Middle Branches of the Cedar River. In addition to its lakes and water courses, the township includes more than 2,000 acres of wetlands.

A five member Township Board governs Hamilton Township. Government administration and services are funded by a millage. There is no public sewer or water service. The City of Harrison Fire Department provides fire protection to the township, and the township relies on the Clare County Sheriff's Department for police protection in addition to the Michigan State Police (along M-61). The township operates a single park in Dodge City and two cemeteries, and is void of public school facilities.

Chapter Two

PLANNING ISSUES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Introduction

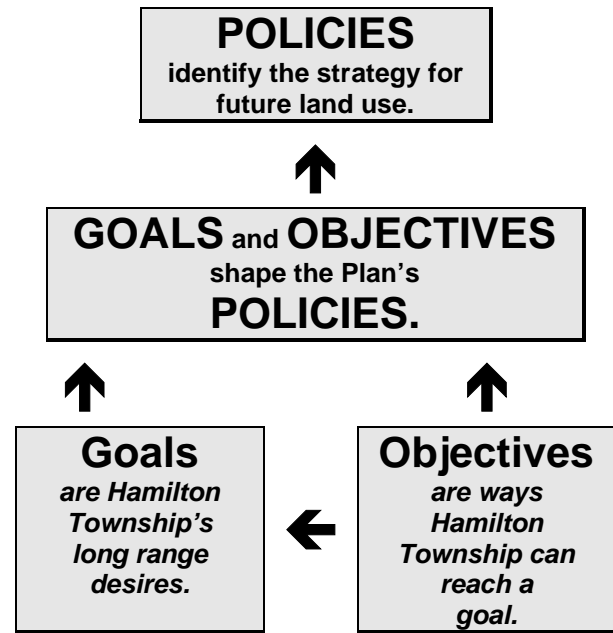
The primary goal of this Plan is to establish a basis for future land use and public services. Through the development of this Plan, Hamilton Township continues to be actively involved in guiding and shaping future growth and development and not allow the community to evolve merely by chance. To effectively plan for the township's well being with regard to future land use and public services, it is necessary to identify important planning issues facing the community and clarify its long term goals and objectives.

Planning Issues, Goals & Objectives

A number of key planning issues are apparent today. These issues 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 dealing with these issues. Each issue 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 campground, while two of the family's objectives may be to seek a loan and meet with a real estate agent.

The goals and objectives are important for several reasons:

- The goals and objectives provide current and future residents with an overview of the intended future character of the community.
- The goals and objectives identify and outline the basic parameters that should be used in guiding land use and public services policies.
- The goals and objectives serve as references upon which future rezoning and land development decisions can be evaluated.



Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Plan

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

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

The planning issues presented in the following pages are not intended to be all inclusive. Rather, they are presented as the primary issues that the community must address as it establishes 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

Hamilton Township is a very desirable place to live with an overall rural character including abundant natural resources and open spaces; good access to highways and employment centers;; and nearby retail and other urban services. It is reasonable to expect the township's overall positive growth during the past 30 years will continue once current state-wide economic conditions improve. The character and quality of life will be impacted by the way the township chooses to manage growth and development. Managed growth can minimize unnecessary loss or degradation of natural resources including woodlands and water resources; preserve the township's existing character and environmental integrity; encourage orderly land development, economic stability, adequate public services and wise expenditures of township funds; and limit traffic hazards and nuisances.

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. Contrary to traditional planning wisdom and thought, recent research has shown that development does not necessarily "pay its way," particularly as it applies to traditional single family residential development. Commercial and industrial development has been shown to typically have a more positive impact upon the economic stability of a community. Input received from residents during this Plan's preparation suggests that current public services are meeting local needs, with the exception perhaps of recreation opportunities and timely responses to police calls. Maintaining the current quality of public services, let alone the pursuit of improvements, can be very difficult in the face of unmanaged growth and development. Economic development can minimize tax burdens as efforts to maintain and improve public services are pursued.

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, 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 appropriate for residential and non-residential use, including resource conservation, taking into account the constraints and opportunities presented by the township's natural features and the level of public facilities and services present, including road infrastructure.
- 2) Preserve the township's natural resources through a coordinated future land use strategy and related implementation tools that permit reasonable use of land while discouraging unnecessary destruction or loss of natural resources including woodlands, wetlands and water resources.
- 3) Separate incompatible land uses by distance, natural features, or man-made landscape buffers that adequately screen or mitigate adverse impacts.
- 4) Encourage forms of growth and development that facilitate the cost-effective delivery of public services, including compact forms of development.
- 5) Guide development into areas where public facilities and services have adequate capacity to accommodate the growth, and where the provision or expansion of public facilities is most cost effective.
- 6) Discourage growth and development that requires levels of public facilities and services not yet available.
- 7) Discourage public services improvements that will have the effect of encouraging 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 developments 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, potable water and sewage disposal, and recreation, and provide regular opportunities for substantive public input on growth and development issues.
- 10) Recognize that recreational opportunities are a fundamental component of the township and continually explore and undertake steps to enhance recreation opportunities that address

year-round and accessible opportunities for all age groups.

- 11) Encourage economic stability, including the maintenance of a healthy tourism industry, in a manner that balances economic development with the preservation of the township's natural resources.
- 12) Evaluate rezoning petitions, site plans, and other development decisions according to the policies, goals and objectives of this Plan.

Community Character

The character of Hamilton Township can be described on many levels. The visual character is defined, in part, by its abundant forest lands, wetlands, lakes, streams and other open spaces, its rural residential areas and more suburban and urban settlement areas including Dodge City, and the recreational activities around these resources. The township is defined by its sense of peacefulness and, like many other "up-north" communities, a place of excitement and leisure in the midst of nature's beauty. It is a community that is defined by the wisdom of its many retirees while also serving as a place of nourishment for young persons and families. It is a community of year-long residents and residents and visitors who make the community their home for only weeks and months at a time. The protection of the township's character is very important to the residents of Hamilton Township.

Most of the township is very rural in character. "*Rural character*" is a subjective quality, but is typically associated with an overall perception of limited development and extensive open spaces. Recognition of the more suburban/urban areas of the community, most significantly the Dodge City area, is equally important. Though these areas occupy a comparatively small portion of the community, they significantly contribute to the overall fabric of the township and its character.

While Dodge City is an important and integral element of the township and serves as the township's primary settlement area, supported by convenient local services and water recreation opportunities, its visual appearance suffers from numerous blight-like conditions including houses and automobiles in disrepair and the outdoor storage of household items. This condition undermines public safety and nearby property values including interests in reinvesting in such properties, and encourages neighborhood instability including vacant housing.

Residents strongly support the overall existing character of the community including its visual features and natural resources, atmosphere, and way of life, although blight conditions have frequently been raised as a primary issue of concern.

GOAL: *Maintain Hamilton Township as a beautiful and quiet "up-north" rural community dominated by abundant natural resources and small attractive3 settlement areas, creating a resource-rich setting appealing to all age groups and family cycles.*

Objectives

- 1) Encourage land development designed in scale with existing developed areas and the dominant rural character of the community, through reasonable standards addressing density, building size, height, architecture, signage and other development features.
- 2) Encourage land development which actively strives to preserve natural open spaces (woodlands, wetlands, and fields) as part of a development project.
- 3) Encourage the maintenance of historically significant structures and a structurally sound housing stock.
- 4) Encourage the rehabilitation or removal of blighted structures and yard areas in Dodge City and elsewhere in the community.
- 5) Encourage the preservation of the township's streams, lakes, woodlands, wetlands, and other open spaces as dominant visual features of the township.
- 6) Encourage the incremental beautification of the Dodge City commercial center.
- 7) Update zoning and other regulatory tools to implement the "Community Character" goal and objectives.

See also "Natural Resources and the Environment" below for additional objectives pertinent to community character.

Natural Resources and the Environment

One cannot speak of community character preservation in Hamilton Township without acknowledging the tremendous impact its natural resources play in defining the community's character. These resources include Cranberry Creek and the Cedar River, forest lands of upland and lowland character, wetlands including lengthy wetland corridors, and fields. These elements are important in shaping the character of Hamilton Township but also provide vital environmental roles including wildlife habitats, flood control, water purification, groundwater recharge, and air quality enhancement. These same

resources play a fundamental role in recreation in the community. Increased environmental knowledge, awareness, and education, when incorporated into a comprehensive planning strategy, can minimize the potential for environmental degradation.

Residents strongly support the preservation of the township's natural resources. The preservation of natural resources is dependent upon complimentary planning policies and land use regulations that encourage 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 streams, lakes, wetlands, woodlands, other open spaces, and groundwater.*

Objectives

- 1) Document and periodically update resource inventory data such as water bodies and drainage courses, wetlands, woodlands, and sites of contamination, for use in land planning studies and land use and development decisions.
- 2) Encourage land development that actively strives to preserve natural open spaces as part of the development plan.
- 3) Ensure that the quantity and quality of new development does not unreasonably create increases in air, noise, land, and water pollution, or the degradation of land and water resource environments including groundwater.
- 4) Encourage development plans that recognize the importance of preserving environmental corridors across multiple parcels and the community as a whole.
- 5) Guide more intensive land uses away from environmentally sensitive areas and important natural features.
- 6) Ensure that all development is in compliance with applicable local, county, state, and federal environmental regulations.
- 7) Discourage the expansion of public utilities into areas dedicated to conservation and resource protection.
- 8) Review proposed development in light of its potential impact upon on-site and regional natural resource areas.
- 9) Educate the public about critical measures that help to protect the environmental integrity and recreation value of local water resources including management of yard waste and fertilizer use, minimizing impervious surfaces, maintenance of shoreline vegetation, avoidance of erosion and sedimentation, and properly operating septic systems.
- 10) Educate the public about waste management and the township's fundamental reliance upon groundwater resources for potable water supplies and the potential detrimental effects of irresponsible land use and development practices including improperly functioning septic systems.

Farming

Farming has always been part of the Hamilton Township landscape since its settlement. It occupies approximately 17% of the township's land area.

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. Studies undertaken in 1995 by the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University (Dr. Robert Burchell, *Fiscal Impacts of Alternative Land Development Patterns in Michigan*) found that farmland and open space typically produce more revenue than the cost to provide such land with public services.

However, competing land uses, particularly residential uses, frequently result in escalating land prices that undermine the economic viability of local farm operations. This is especially critical for the next generation of farmers who may not be able to afford to buy farmland or otherwise maintain an existing family farm. In addition, land use conflicts between farm and non-farm residents frequently heighten as residential encroachment increases.

The importance of farmland preservation is illustrated by the considerable attention the matter has received by the state legislature during the past ten years including the authorization of the purchase of development rights (PDR) and the transfer of development rights (TDR). Both PDR and TDR provide landowners the opportunity to realize 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.

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.

The township recognizes the economic and other challenges facing the local farming community. The township also recognizes the economic benefits of local farm operations not only for their productive capacity and contribution to the local economy, but also for their limited demand on public services, infrastructure, and township revenues. The challenge before the township is to encourage farmland preservation while, at the same time, ensuring the farming community reasonable alternatives should interest in the pursuit of agricultural operations dwindle.

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, while still exploring other options for managing the extent of new residences in agricultural areas.
- 4) Support P.A. 116 farmland preservation agreements.
- 5) Discourage the extension of municipal utilities (such as sewer and water) into designated agricultural areas.
- 6) 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

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

prospective residents, as demonstrated by strong growth prior to the state's economic downturn

Hamilton Township is interested in providing reasonable options for additional and varied housing opportunities. Opportunities for rural and suburban residential lifestyles are plentiful as soil conditions generally support home sites of approximately one acre or more in size. The lack of municipal sewer and water significantly limits opportunities for more varied and affordable housing. However, private community sewer systems may be a reasonable alternative in some instances.

Not only does the establishment of suburban and urban development areas facilitate varied housing opportunities to meet the varying housing and lifestyle needs of current and future residents, it also limits the extent of residential encroachment into less prudent areas such as forest lands, wetlands and farm areas. In addition, public studies during the past 10 years have documented that higher density housing, including multiple family development, unlike low-density residential development, typically generates more municipal revenue than the cost to provide it with services.

Whether of low or higher density, the proper placement and design of residential areas, is critical if such development is to have limited impact upon the character of existing residential areas, the community's dominant rural character, and the cost-effective delivery of public services.

If Hamilton Township's population grows by 1,000 persons by 2030, approximately 500 acres of undeveloped land would require conversion to residential use to accommodate the additional 435 dwellings (based on an average lot size of 1.0 acres and a household size of 2.3 persons). However, the same 435 dwellings can consume as much as 2,500 acres or more 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 the township's natural resources are converted to residential use including accessory yard/lawn areas. It must also be recognized that small acreage zoning across the township without any density limitations, such as one acre zoning, provides for a build-out population (the population resulting from all land being developed at a density of 1 dwelling per acre, exclusive of wetlands and future road rights-of way) approaching 13,000 dwellings and 30,000 persons. Such a growth pattern will have dramatic effects on community character, natural resources, taxes, and public services demands.

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

Objectives:

- 1) Encourage the continued dominance of single family housing of an overall low density.
- 2) While maintaining single family housing of an overall low density as the primary housing option, provide opportunities for alternative housing to meet the varying preferences of current and future residents, including small lot single family dwellings and multiple family housing.
- 3) Identify limited areas in the township where higher density residential development, including multiple family development, can be adequately accommodated. Priority should be given to locations that have greater access to improved thoroughfares and necessary public services, and within walking distance of planned commercial areas.
- 4) Discourage strip residential development along the frontage of existing state and county roads such as M-61, Dodge Lake Road, Townline Lake Road, and Athey Avenue, to minimize traffic safety hazards and congestion and preserve the existing rural character of the principal thoroughfares.
- 5) Encourage innovative residential development that incorporates in the site planning process the preservation of on-site natural resource systems and open spaces, and the preservation of the township's rural character.
- 6) Encourage opportunities for special housing for senior citizens to enable their continued stay in the township, including apartments, assisted living arrangements, retirement centers, and nursing homes.
- 7) Encourage a housing stock that ensures affordable housing to all, including starter homes and multiple family dwellings, while also ensuring all dwellings are of appropriate design to complement nearby conditions and the community as a whole.
- 8) Discourage uses and structures in residential areas that undermine the residential character and peacefulness of such areas, such as commercial encroachment, or increases conflicts between landowners such as accessory buildings of excessive size or inappropriate location.
- 9) Encourage the rehabilitation of blighted homes and properties.
- 10) Encourage a tourism industry that minimizes negative impacts upon residential areas including the maintenance and management of rental properties.

Commercial Services

Commercial development in Hamilton Township covers approximately 27 acres and consists of predominantly retail and service-based uses. Commercial development is principally limited to the Dodge City area.

Addressing commercial development includes considerations of need, location and character. Residents participating in the preparation of this Plan did not support significant expansion of commercial uses.

Hamilton Township's current 27 acres of commercial land comprises approximately 3% of its total developed land area, a proportion will within the range commonly found in similar rural communities. In addition, the township's commercial acreage far exceeds the approximately 5 – 10 acres commonly recommended for the smallest of neighborhood centers (to serve 3,000 – 4,000 persons).

It must also be recognized that Hamilton Township witnesses considerable seasonal fluctuations in population, a challenge for many commercial enterprises. Still, 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, proximity to activity areas, and improved levels of public services such as road infrastructure. Locating future commercial development with recognition of these factors will improve its long term viability and minimize negative impacts including public costs and inefficient development patterns. To this end, and to the extent additional commercial development is accommodated in the community, special attention should be directed toward the Dodge City area.

Commercial uses can vary significantly in character. The character of Hamilton Township does not support commercial uses of a "big box" character or similar uses that draw from a more regional market and which contribute to excessive traffic levels and public services demands.

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, minimizes new public service costs, and protects the viability and desirability of the Dodge City commercial center and nearby residential areas.*

Objectives

- 1) Focus new commercial development toward the Dodge City commercial area.
- 2) Enhance the viability and desirability of the Dodge City commercial area through incremental beautification efforts and pedestrian/bike-friendly circulation.
- 3) Recognize the significance of M-61 as a potential secondary location for limited commercial uses.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Future commercial development should not be permitted to indiscriminately encroach into residential areas.
- 6) Provide opportunities for a mix of commercial uses that target local day-to-day consumer needs, and discourage “big box” and other large scale retailers and similar uses that cater to a more regional population.
- 7) 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.
- 8) The intensity of commercial development should be coordinated with available public facilities and services.
- 9) Provide opportunities for home-based occupations under conditions which will support the desired character, appearance, and quality of life for surrounding residential areas.

Industrial Development

Industrial development is presently limited to a sawmill north of Dodge City and several Michcon sites. The township is largely void of any traditional industrial activity such as assembling or manufacturing.

The absence of assembling, manufacturing, and related industrial activities is not surprising. The township lacks many of the key conditions that support such uses including public sewer and water,

immediate proximity to a highway interchange, and a strong year-round employment base. In addition, other regional urban centers present more appealing opportunities. Public sentiment does not support industrial expansion. However, it must be recognized that not all industry requires heightened levels of public services and infrastructure as industrial activity can vary in intensity. In addition, industrial development can improve the community’s overall economic stability and provide additional local employment opportunities. Existing conditions in the township suggest any future industrial activity be of a comparatively limited and light character.

GOAL: *Maintain a limited industrial component in the township that is sensitive to predominant rural character of the community and is characterized by light intensity operations of limited public services demands and impacts upon neighboring land uses.*

Objectives

- 1) Recognize the significance of M-61 and existing industrial locations as potential opportunities for the location of new limited industrial development.
- 2) Assure new industrial development is 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.
- 3) Future industrial development should be clustered in appropriately identified locations rather than be permitted to indiscriminately encroach into areas planned for a different purpose.
- 4) Limit industrial uses to those which 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 negatively impact surrounding land uses and the community as a whole.

Circulation

As new residential and non-residential land uses are introduced into the township, demands on the roadway network will increase. Even low density residential development can significantly increase local traffic levels. Increased traffic demands can be minimized through adequate road maintenance and the coordination of road improvements with the planned future land use pattern and designated growth and development areas. The extent to which higher density and intensity land uses, including commercial and industrial land uses, are in comparatively close proximity to improved

thoroughfares will minimize future maintenance costs and traffic levels along the township's other roads.

Maintaining adequate vehicular circulation is not solely dependent on the road system itself. The future pattern of residential lot splits and subdivisions will have a significant impact upon the functioning of the township's roads. Residences "stripped" along the existing county road frontages can be debilitating because: 1) the increased number of driveways directly accessing the county roads increases the level of congestion and safety hazards along these corridors; 2) travel times are increased; and 3) the township's rich rural panoramic views of woodlands, fields, and other open spaces, as experienced from the roads, may be reduced to images of driveways, cars, and garages.

Providing bicycle, pedestrian and other nonmotorized means of travel within and between communities has long been identified as an important goal in improving quality of life. The past 20 years have witnessed an unprecedented surge in interest in trail systems on the local, state, and federal level as their value gains greater understanding. These trails can limit the reliance on the automobile, 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, by vehicular, pedestrian, and other nonmotorized modes, consistent with the rural character of the community and coordinated with the planned future land use pattern.*

Objectives

- 1) Identify priority road segments for systematic maintenance and improvement, based upon the planned future land use pattern and existing and projected traffic patterns.
- 2) Discourage high-traffic generating land uses and development patterns along the township's secondary roads.
- 3) Pursue access management measures to minimize the potential for traffic congestion and safety hazards along adjacent roadways, including limitations on the number, size, and shape of new land divisions and limitations on curb cuts.
- 4) Encourage future residential lot split patterns that maintain the integrity of the township's roadway network and rural character.
- 5) Work with the Clare County Road Commission to discourage road improvements that will increase growth and development pressures in areas of the township not specified for such growth.

- 6) Encourage the inclusion of pedestrian/bicycle paths in association with new residential subdivisions and non-residential development to facilitate safe and convenient non-motorized movement.
- 7) Encourage the linking of residential and commercial centers through pedestrian, bike and snowmobile trails.
- 8) Maintain communication and cooperative efforts with the Clare County Road Commission to improve opportunities for safe non-motorized travel along all road segments.
- 9) Encourage incremental improvements to road segments that do not permit adequate access including emergency vehicles.

Regional Coordination

Hamilton Township exists within a regional network of communities, none of which are islands unto themselves. Hamilton Township abuts the principal townships of Franklin, Sage, Arthur, and Hayes, and the City of Harrison is three miles west. Hamilton 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 abutting 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 development and public services in a manner that recognizes the position of Hamilton Township within the larger region and the mutual impacts of local planning efforts.*

Objectives

- 1) Where practical, identify a planned future land use pattern that seeks to ensure compatibility among land uses along municipal borders.
- 2) 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, planning issues including vehicular and nonmotorized modes of travel, and mutually beneficial strategies to address short and long-term needs.

Chapter Three

FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGY

Introduction

Hamilton Township's principal planning components are contained in the Future Land Use Strategy, as discussed in this Chapter Three, and the Public Services Strategy discussed in Chapter Four. 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 regarding future land use and development in the township. Implementation of these policies rests with the regulatory tools of the Township – most importantly the Hamilton Township Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance generally regulates the type, location, and intensity of land development. The township may also adopt other supporting regulatory tools to further the implementation of the policies of this Plan. Chapter Five discusses implementation strategies 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/recreational 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, public infrastructure, and environmentally sensitive areas. Also considered are nearby conditions in neighboring municipalities. The opportunities and constraints presented by these characteristics 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 Area
- Rural Conservation Area
- Suburban Residential Areas
- Commercial and Industrial Areas

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 zoning provisions of the township, 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 approximate borders of these 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 understand that neither the Future Land Use Map nor the explanatory text 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), should not serve as a basis for development patterns and densities contrary to the policies presented.

Agricultural Area

The Agricultural Area comprises nearly the entire southeast quarter of the township and extends into eastern portions of the northeast quarter. The Agricultural Area is comprised of farmland along with other open spaces such as woodlands and wetlands, and very dispersed residences. The intent of the Agricultural Area is to provide opportunities for and encourage farming and the preservation of farmland resources, while also providing opportunities for very low-density residential development. This Area is established in recognition of the importance of agriculture and the local farming industry, while accommodating opportunities for the conversion of limited farmland for primarily residential purposes. Agriculture is intended to be the predominant land use.

The Agricultural Area is largely characterized by conditions that support its agricultural value including: 1) minimum parcel sizes typically approaching 40 acres or more; 2) limited encroachment by non-agricultural land uses; 3) active farm operations; and 4) partial enrollment in the P.A. 116 Farmland and Open Space Protection Program. The Agricultural Area encourages the continuation of all current farming activities as well as the introduction of new farming activities. Still, care should be exercised in farming practices including specialized agricultural operations that may have heightened impacts (such as large concentrated livestock operations).

It is intended that development densities in the Agricultural 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 Area should recognize that the traditional noises and agricultural operations associated with responsible farm operations are a significant component of the Agricultural Area and will continue on a long term basis. Hamilton 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 Area which 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 Areas discussed on page 3-3.

In addition to the above, key policies of the Agricultural 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 provide important public benefits such as schools, religious institutions, and recreation facilities, or uses 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 20 acres. This is not to suggest that large minimum 20-acre parcel sizes should be the only option available to landowners in the Agricultural Area, as such divisions can consume unnecessary acreage just to accommodate a single home site. The allowance of limited smaller lots under appropriate density controls, encourages farmland preservation while affording the farmer with a degree of flexibility.

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 Hamilton 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 Area supports this type of industrial entrepreneurship provided measures are in place that ensure such activities do not become a nuisance nor undermine the intended character of the surrounding area.

Rural Conservation Area

The Rural Conservation Area comprises the majority of the township not otherwise included in the Agricultural Area or the Suburban Residential Areas. The Rural Conservation Area is comprised predominantly of woodlands, wetlands, state forest and recreation land, dispersed residences, vacant land and limited farming activities. The Area is intended to encourage the preservation of the abundant woodland and wetland environments and its stream corridors, and provide opportunities for low-density residential development that encourages the preservation of the community's overall rural character, natural resources, and open spaces.

The Rural Conservation Area recognizes that the township's abundant natural resources have played an important role in the history and character of Hamilton Township, support important environmental benefits, and contribute to the "up-north" feel of the community and the desirable atmosphere within which to live and recreate.

It is intended that development densities in the Rural Conservation Area be comparatively low. Low densities are supported by a number of factors including: 1) the lack of public sewer and water; 2) limited road infrastructure; 3) 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; 4) the township's commitment to protecting its natural resources and rural character; and 5) the presence of a market for low-density rural home sites.

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

Also like the Agricultural Area, there are some existing small settlement areas in the Rural Conservation 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 Areas discussed on page 3-3.

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

1. The primary use of land should generally be limited to single family residences, agriculture, resource conservation and resource-based public recreation facilities including the state's forest lands.
2. Secondary uses should be limited to those that provide important public benefits such as schools, religious institutions, and recreation facilities, or uses 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 ten acres.

Suburban Residential Areas

The Suburban Residential Areas provides for residential development of a more suburban and urban character than planned elsewhere in the township. These Areas include 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 pedestrian and vehicle circulation.

The Primary Suburban Residential Area extends approximately one-half mile to the east and west of Dodge Lake Road, from M-61 north to include the area within an approximately one-half mile radius of the Dodge Lake/Townline Lake Roads intersection. The Area also includes the entire Dodge City area, the existing Springwood Lakes neighborhoods, and the Birch Hills Subdivision extending along the perimeter roads of Sections 32 and 33. Certain areas are excluded from the Dodge Lake Road development corridor such as the AuSable State Forest lands including private holdings largely surrounded by the forest lands, and certain areas in Dodge City planned for commercial use.

The Primary Suburban Residential Area is designated as the principal location in the township for the accommodation of new suburban/urban residential growth.

The Primary Suburban Residential Area is characterized by conditions that support its appropriateness for higher density residential development including: 1) improved access via county primary roads and M-61, including the M-61/US-127 interchange further west; 2) the presence

of existing suburban/urban development patterns including the principal population centers of the community; 3) proximity to existing and planned commercial services; and 4) heightened proximity to fire protection services.

The Primary Suburban Residential Area includes historical neighborhood developments along the numerous lakes in the Dodge City area, as well as more recent housing developments and including those in association with Springwood Lakes. Some of the Dodge City area neighborhoods are showing signs of decline including blighted yard areas and dwellings in partial disrepair. This Plan supports the protection of the desirability and stability of these neighborhoods.

The Secondary Suburban Residential Area extends approximately one-half mile in radius from the Townline Lake/Atthey Roads intersection. The Secondary Suburban Residential Area is established in recognition of this existing small settlement area and to provide limited opportunities for expansion. The Secondary Suburban Residential Area is served by paved county primary Townline Lake Road and is centered around the township hall, an important element of the community's social and governmental activity.

In addition to the above, key policies of the Suburban Residential Areas 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.
5. All new development and redevelopment should incorporate measures that protect neighborhood lakes including, but not limited to, lake setbacks, preservation of native shoreline vegetation, proper yard waste disposal (leaves, grass cuttings, etc.), effective and well maintained septic systems, and effective management of storm water to minimize pollutants and debris entering the lake.

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 Dodge City Commercial Center supports the continuation of the Townline Lake/Dodge Lake Roads intersection area as the commerce center of the township. Commercial development is not to extend more than approximately ¼-mile from the intersection area and commercial uses should generally be limited to locally-oriented businesses. Numerous conditions support the inclusion of the Dodge City Commercial Center in this Plan including the area's existing business character, the access and visibility afforded by the county paved primary roads serving the location, the location's comparative proximity to fire protection services, and the business center's adjacency to Dodge City and

the population base that both supports the viability of the center and reaps the benefits of conveniently located services. New commercial uses should not encroach into residential neighborhood settings.

The M-61 Mixed Use Center establishes a planned commercial/industrial mixed use area at the intersection of M-61 and Hoover Road, extending approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection along both roads. This mixed use center is planned as a means to provide a viable alternative for commercial and industrial uses outside of the Dodge City area. It is intended to enhance the economic stability of the township and takes advantage of the improved road infrastructure of M-61, the heightened access and visibility afforded by M-61 and Hoover Road, and the location of the intersection area approximately midway between Harrison and Gladwin and the comparatively high traffic levels moving between the two.

As the phrase implies, the center is considered appropriate for both commercial and industrial uses depending upon market conditions, the particular needs of the business owner, and the character and merits of specific development proposals.

It must be recognized that Howland Creek and tributaries are present in this general area and development must exhibit effective measures to ensure the protection of these water resources.

The Rodgers Ave Industrial Area establishes a planned light industrial area along the west side of Rodgers Avenue, extending from the Dodge City Commercial Center north approximately ¼ mile and including the existing lumber mill and mobile home parts/service business. This segment of Rodgers Avenue already reflects a somewhat industrial character including the presence of overhead electrical transmission lines. These conditions lessen the road segment's desirability for accommodating new residences and the paved primary road status of Rodgers Avenue further enhances the location's appropriateness for accommodating limited industrial expansion.

The boundaries of these three areas, as each is 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 Dodge City Commercial Center is intended to function as a clearly identifiable business 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 seasonal visitors 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 Hamilton Township are should be discouraged.
3. Industrial uses should generally be limited to those of a low intensive character such as lumber mills, 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 along roads and highways to minimize congestion and circulation hazards.

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

Conservation of Natural Resources

Hamilton Township is characterized by large areas that require a strong conservation effort. These include abundant forests, wetlands and water courses, including the fabric of wetlands and woodlands that characterize extensive portions of Cranberry Creek, the multiple branches of the Cedar River, and the Spike Horn Swamp. These 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.

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 requests. Land uses requiring state and/or federal permits (especially for 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. Public input received during the preparation of this Plan consistently identified the township's natural resources as a vital feature of the community that must be preserved.

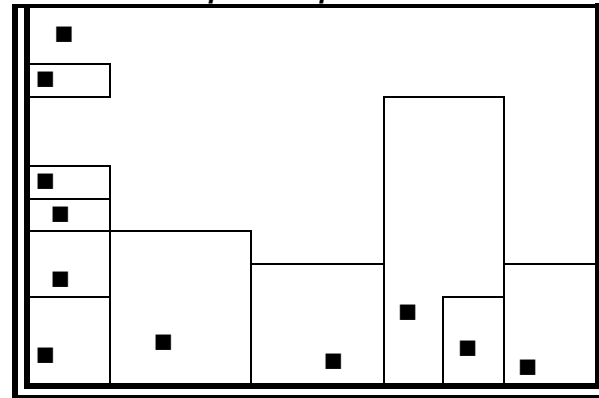
Open Space Developments: As a tool to facilitate the conservation of important natural resources, this Plan supports what are commonly referred to as "open space developments" in association with platted subdivisions, condominium subdivisions, and similar neighborhood developments.

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. 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.

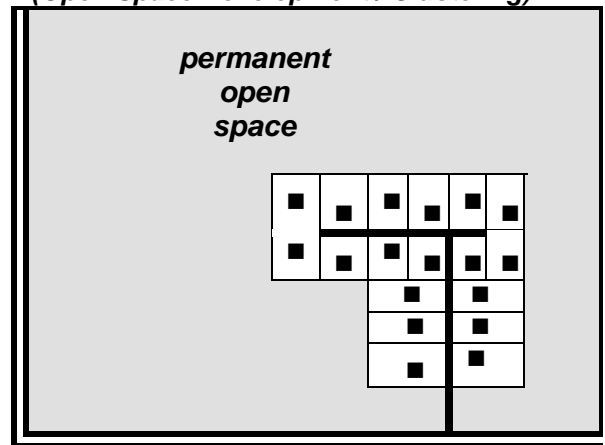
More traditional strip residential development along the township's major roads is illustrated in Example A. This is the easiest form of development but it impacts public safety due to the many driveways

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, its open spaces, and environmental resources and habitats.

Example A
Strip Development



Example B
(Open Space Development / Clustering)



The township's lakes are a defining feature of the community and the majority of residential development in the community today is centered around the lakes. However, the Plan recognizes the extremely fragile environmental character of the township's lakes, the environmental, recreational, and aesthetic role the lakes play, and the particular challenges the lakes present for land use management. Past and future development along the lakes will continue to place pressure on the lakes. It is widely recognized that shoreline development increases the potential for degradation of the water resource due to erosion, septic field leaching (where

sanitary sewer is not available), sediment discharge, and excess use of surface waters by water craft. Future development and redevelopment along the township's lakes should exhibit measures to minimize such negative impacts.

The use of a waterfront lot as common open space for waterfront access for dwellings located away from the waterfront, and commonly referred to as keyhole or funnel development, should be subject to comprehensive review procedures and standards to minimize disturbances to neighboring land uses and the overuse and environmental integrity of the lake.

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 township 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 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 lots, uses and structures.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

Future Land Use Map

Chapter Four

COORDINATED PUBLIC SERVICES

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, it must be recognized that 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 M-61 along the township's southern edge. 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 arena, on local, regional, state and federal levels. The

provision of opportunities for safe and comprehensive pedestrian and 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 is falling 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 Hamilton 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.

Hamilton Township recognizes that the Clare County Road Commission 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 Clare County Road Commission 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 Areas and planned commercial areas.
- 5) The township will work with the Clare County Road Commission 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.
- 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 travel, including neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.

Sewage Disposal and Potable Water

There is no public sewer or water in Hamilton 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-site facilities. It must also be recognized that

development pressures frequently coincide with the availability of public sewer and/or water improvements. The Dodge City area presents particular challenges due to its comparative high density – a density that could not likely be feasible today under current health department rules.

Policies:

- 1) All on-site sewage disposal and potable water facilities will be constructed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Clare 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. Priority for any public sewer should be directed to the existing small-lot subdivisions comprising Dodge City.
 - b. Introducing public sewer or water service into the Agricultural or Rural Conservation Area 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.

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 many lakes and the Cedar Creeks, Cranberry Creek and Spike Horn Creek corridors, 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 property 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 Clare 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 Fire Protection Services

The Harrison Fire Department provides fire protection to Hamilton Township, with the nearest fire station located in the city. Police protection is provided by the Clare County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police provide service along M-61 or as other needs may arise. As community growth and land development increases, so does the demand for emergency services.

There are no widely accepted standards for police protection levels. 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. No portion of Hamilton Township is within these recommended ranges.

Policies:

- 1) The township will require the provision of fire protection infrastructure (wells, water lines, etc.) for all new developments which 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 expansion of services will include the expansion of joint services with neighboring municipalities. and in the case of fire protection, the reestablishment of a fire station in the Dodge City area or other beneficial alternative location.
- 3) Priority for improvements to police and fire protection service levels will be directed toward the Suburban Residential Areas and planned commercial/industrial areas

Recreation

Hamilton Township operates a single park site located in the Dodge City area – LaLonde Park. The park is approximately two acres in size, with the northern portion being primarily grassed and including a picnic pavilion, a swing set, a baseball backstop and informal baseball field, and a gravel parking lot. The southern portion is wooded.

The Au Sable State Forest occupies approximately 500 acres of Section 30. A private nine-hole golf course open to the general public operates north of Dodge City and there are several hunt clubs in the township as well.

Local residents have a variety of recreation opportunities available in surrounding communities and the greater regional area (provided they have a means of transportation) such as the Wilson State Park in nearby Harrison and the Tittabawassee River State Forest in neighboring Gladwin County. Regional school facilities and other municipalities also have playground and sports facilities.

The type and accessibility of nearby 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 pursue the development of a MDENR-approved five year recreation action 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.

Chapter Five IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This Master Plan establishes a strategy for growth, development and preservation in Hamilton 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 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 to accommodate desirable land development and redevelopment.

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 to 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) Post the Master Plan on the township's web site.
- 4) Post a regularly updated listing of current events pertaining to planning and zoning matters at the township hall and on its web site.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.

- 7) 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. The ordinance generally 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 regulations 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.”*

Hamilton Township has had zoning in place for many years. Its most current zoning ordinance was adopted in 2000 and it has been periodically updated to address changing conditions and policies. With the adoption of this Master Plan, the township’s zoning ordinance should again 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 consulting 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 Hamilton Township. The Zone Plan establishes a foundation for the township’s zoning regulations. The Zone Plan is comprised of three elements.

- 1) Critical Components of the Hamilton Township Zoning Ordinance
- 2) Overview of Zoning Districts
- 3) Zoning District Site Development Standards

Zone Plan, Part One – Critical Components of the Hamilton Township Zoning Ordinance. The following identifies important general elements that the Hamilton 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 reviewed within the context of these elements:*

- 1) **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.

- 2) 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 “by right” versus as “special land uses.”

Uses permitted by right 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 primary uses and structures within a district. However, because of its particular character, a special land use may present potential injurious effects upon the primary 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.

As a result, special land uses require special consideration in relation to the welfare of adjacent properties and to the township as a whole. An example may be a kennel in a residential district or a mining operation in an agricultural district.

- 3) 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:
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

- 4) 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.
- 5) 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 commonly owned. 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).
- 6) Open Space Preservation or Clustering Regulations: Both of these phrases are used interchangeably to describe a more innovative alternative to residential development than that frequently associated with large lot “rural sprawl,” and which the Future Land Use Strategy describes in more detail on page 3-7. This development approach permits new construction to be located on only a portion of the development parcel than would normally occur, and with lots that are smaller than normally required, thereby enabling the balance of the parcel, and most environmentally significant portion, to be permanently protected under a conservation easement. This development alternative can facilitate the preservation of special natural resources and environmental ecosystems. The open space provisions must recognize the specific requirements of Sec. 506 of the Zoning Enabling Act. The current open space preservation provisions of the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed to determine if opportunities may be present to simplify provisions, make this development option more appealing through incentives and/or user-friendly provisions, and minimize application burdens on the applicant.

- 7) **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 Hamilton 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 2000 Zoning Ordinance in 2011 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.

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

Zone Plan, Part Three – Zoning District Site Development Standards. Table 5-2 presents guidelines for basic site development standards for zoning districts to implement the Future Land Use Strategy presented in Chapter Three of the Master Plan (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 Hamilton 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 Area	Agriculture and very low density single family residences.	Veterinary clinics, kennels, golf courses, mineral extraction, religious institutions, parks, public and recreation facilities, and bed and breakfasts.
<u>RR</u> Rural Residential	Rural Conservation Area	Low density single and two-family residences, and agriculture.	Veterinary clinics, kennels, golf courses, mineral extraction, religious institutions, parks, 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 parks.
<u>R-3</u> High Density Residential	Suburban Residential Area	Single and two-family residences.	Schools, religious institutions, and parks.
<u>R-MHC</u> Manufactured Housing Comm	Suburban Residential Area	Manufactured housing communities.	Day care facilities.
<u>R-MF</u> Multiple Family	Suburban Residential Area	Apartments, townhouses, and similar living arrangements.	Day care facilities, golf courses, and assisted living facilities.
<u>C-1</u> Local Commercial	Commercial Centers	Retail, office and personal service uses catering to local needs.	Hospitals, taverns, veterinary clinics, kennels and funeral homes.
<u>I-1</u> Light Industrial	Industrial Centers	Industrial uses of a comparatively "light" character such as the assembly of small parts and tool and dye.	Industrial activities that are more marginal than the primary intended use.

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, lot width provisions for lots fronting on principal thoroughfares, and lot coverage provisions for lots in close proximity to water resources. 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 supports 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.

Zoning District (example name)	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width and Frontage	Maximum Building Heights	Maximum Lot Coverage	Minimum Yard Setback		
					Front	Side	Rear
<u>A-1</u> Agricultural	20 acres ¹	400 ft.	35 ft. 2.5 stories	5%	50 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.
<u>RR</u> Rural Residential	10 acres	330 ft.	35 ft. 2.5 stories	5%	50 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.
<u>R-1</u> Low Density Residential	25,000 sq. ft.	80 ft.	35 ft. 2.5 stories	20%	40 ft.	15 ft.	50 ft.
<u>R-2</u> Medium Density Residential	12,000 sq. ft.	65 ft.	35 ft. 2.5 stories	25%	35 ft.	10 ft.	50 ft.
<u>R-3</u> High Density Residential	5,000 sq. ft.	50 ft.	35 ft. 2.5 stories	50%	25 ft.	3 ft. to 10 ft. ²	20 ft.
<u>R-MHC</u> Manufactured Housing Community	10 acre project parcel	330 ft. project parcel	Conformance with Rules and Regulations of the Michigan Manufactured Housing Commission				
<u>R-MF</u> Multiple Family	40,000 sq. ft.	150 ft.	40 ft. 3.0 stories	35%	50 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.
<u>C-1</u> Local Commercial	30,000 sq. ft.	150 ft.	40 ft. 2.0 stories	50%	60 ft.	10 ft.	25 ft.
<u>I-1</u> Light Industrial	40,000 sq. ft.	200 ft.	40 ft.	50%	60 ft.	25 ft.	25 ft.

Footnote to Table 5-2

1. While typical minimum lot sizes of approximately 20 acres are recommended for the A-1 District, opportunities should be made available for a limited number of smaller splits to minimize unnecessary consumption of acreage to accommodate an individual home site.
2. Side yard setbacks in the R-3 District should be variable, based on the width of the specific lot.

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. 571 of 1996, 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 units (plats), nearly all of the residential development in Hamilton Township during recent years has been incremental land divisions for the purpose of establishing individual home sites. A land division ordinance assures that incremental divisions not part of a subdivision 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. Hamilton Township has adopted such an ordinance and it should be reviewed and updated as may be necessary.

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 to further implement the Master Plan.

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), but it does encourage the reestablishment of a fire station in the Dodge City area.

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 issues 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 and Public Services Strategies (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, should follow the minimum 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

Hamilton Township is a rural community of approximately 2,000 persons, located in the northeast quarter of Clare County in the central region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The township reflects the traditional six-mile by six mile congressional boundary, comprising approximately 23,300 acres. Hamilton Township is located three miles east of the City of Harrison (approximately 2,000 population) and five miles west of the Village of Gladwin (approximately 3,000 population). Principal surrounding townships are Franklin to the north, Sage to the east in Gladwin County, Arthur to the south, and Hayes to the west.

Approximate driving distances to more regional urban centers of a population of 2,000 persons or more are:

Grayling	2,000 persons	50 road miles north
Clare	3,000 persons	20 road miles south
Cadillac	10,000 persons	45 road miles northwest
Mount Pleasant	27,000 persons	35 road miles south
Midland	41,000 persons	50 road miles southeast

Aside from the City of Harrison and Village of Gladwin, the regional landscape is dominated by agriculture, woodlands, wetlands and other open spaces, and scattered residential development. US-127 travels within three miles of the township and M-61 provides direct access to the community, from an interchange along US-127.

Access and Circulation

Regional Access

Regional access to Hamilton Township is provided by US-127 and M-61. US-127 travels north and south through the state, connecting the Lansing area to the south with Grayling and I-75 to the north, and passes within three miles of the township's west boundary. M-61 serves as the township's southern border, connecting M-115 (25 miles to the west) with the City of Standish (40 miles to the east). Exit 170 along US-127 provides direct access to M-61. Regional access is also available from several commercial airports including the Clare Municipal Airport, Clare County Airport and the Gladwin Zettel Memorial Airport.

Local Roadway Network

Hamilton Township's local public road network generally exhibits the general square mile grid that dominates much of the Lower Michigan rural landscape (See Public Roads Map, Appendix D). However, there are substantial voids in the network due to various factors including the presence of wetlands and water courses, and the minimally populated portions of parts of the community. Aside from M-61, all public roads are under the jurisdiction of the Clare County Road Commission (CCRC).

There are a number of “private” roads that are not part of the CCRC’s public road network and are owned and maintained by private entities. The vast majority of these private roads are part of the Dodge City area and Spring Lake Subdivision in the southwest quarter of the township.

In compliance with the requirements of Michigan Act 51 of 1951, the CCRC classifies all 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. The classification of roads by the CCRC has important financial implications with regard to maintenance and improvements. Under Michigan law, townships have no responsibility for funding road improvements and maintenance. The CCRC 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 CCRC, and requests for improvements to local roads, frequently require local funding. In reality, there are very few counties in Michigan where local townships are not actively involved in funding road maintenance and improvements.

The roads in the township that the CCRC classifies as “*primary*” are Arnold Lake Road, Dodge Lake Road/Rodgers Road, Hoover Ave., Townline Lake Road east to Hoover Avenue, and the one-half mile segment of Stockwell Road between the eastern and western segments of Hoover Avenue. The balance of the roads are classified as “*local*.” All primary roads are paved and all local roads are of a gravel surface or otherwise unimproved.

Also of importance is the functional classification of township 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 as applied to Hamilton Township follows.

Interstates and Other Freeways are at the top of the NFC hierarchical system and frequently include freeways and state highways between major cities. Interstates and freeways function to primarily facilitate long distance travel including access to important traffic generators such as major airports and regional shopping centers. There are no interstates or freeways in the township, the closest being US-127 several miles west.

Principal arterials function similarly to interstates and freeways except that they facilitate shorter travel distances and access to lesser traffic generators. Principal arterials frequently include state highways between large cities. M-61 is the only principal arterial in the township.

Minor arterials are similar in function to principal arterials, except they carry trips of shorter distance and to lesser traffic generators. Minor arterials frequently include state highways between smaller cities. There are no minor arterials in Hamilton Township.

Major collectors function with a much greater focus on providing access to property rather than long distance travel, and frequently funnel traffic from residential or rural areas to arterials. Major collector road segments in Hamilton Township are limited to Arnold Lake Rd., Dodge Lake Rd./Rodgers Rd., Hoover Ave., the one-half mile segment of Stockwell Rd. between the eastern and western segments of Hoover Ave., and Townline Lake Rd. west of Dodge Lake Rd.

Minor collectors are similar to major collectors except for the still greater focus on providing access to property rather than long distance travel. Townline Lake Rd. between Dodge Lake Rd. and Hoover Ave. is the only minor collector road segment in the township.

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

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

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 roads are not eligible for federal funding.

The CCRC periodically records 24-hour traffic counts throughout the county along selected roads, and the Michigan Department of Transportation records annual counts along state highways. Following are the average daily traffic counts of the CCRC recorded between 1987 – 2010, and the state highway average daily traffic counts recorded in 2010.

<u>Townline Lake Rd.</u>		<u>Clarence Rd.</u>	
W. of Dodge Lake Rd.	2,573 (2005)	W. of Hoover Rd.	71 (2010)
E. of Dodge Lake Rd.	413 (1987)	E. of Hoover Rd.	47 (2010)
<u>Dodge Lake Rd.</u>		<u>Cranberry Lake Rd.</u>	
N. of M-61	1,398 (2010)	E. of Hoover Rd.	110 (2010)
N. of Townline Lake Rd.	1,778 (2005)	<u>Hoover Rd.</u>	
S. of Townline Lake Rd.	2,529 (2005)	N. of M-61	495 (2010)
<u>Lilley Lake Rd.</u>		<u>M-61</u>	
E. of Dodge Lake Rd.	465 (2010)	Near Hoover Rd.	2,600 (2010)
<u>Athey Rd.</u>			
N. of Lilley Lake Rd.	67 (2010)		

As would be expected, M-61, Dodge Lake Rd., and Townline Lake Rd. are the most traveled thoroughfares for which counts have been recorded.

There are many factors that impact the capacity of roads and their ability to assure efficient and safe travel. These factors include, but are not limited to, road alignment, frequency of driveways, road side development, driveway turning patterns, and traffic controls (lights, signs, etc.). It is not uncommon for a two-lane paved rural road to be capable of accommodating between 9,000 – 15,000 trips per day without the need for additional lanes. A major factor contributing to the need for additional lanes is the extent to which road side development encourages driveway ingress and egress, particularly left-turn vehicle movements. Recorded traffic counts suggest that there is ample capacity along the township's primary road segments for which counts have been recorded.

Land Use and Development

The landscape of Hamilton Township is very rural in character, comprised nearly entirely of woodlands, wetlands, farm operations, and scattered residences. The principal exception is the area of the township generally referred to as Dodge City, at the intersection of East Townline Lake and Dodge Lake Roads (particularly to the southwest). This settlement area includes the township's single commerce center and the vast majority of the township's residences.

Table A-1 provides the overall area breakdown of general land use/cover.

Table A-1
Approximate General Land Use/Land Cover Allocation, 2010

Land Use- Land Cover	Approximate Acreage	Approximate Portion of Township
Natural Open Spaces such as woodlands, wetlands and meadows, including state forest and hunt club acreage.	17,200	73.8%
Agriculture	4,000	17.4%
Residential, assuming an average of 1/2-acre of yard area per home site	800	3.4%
Public roads	500	2.2%
Water, such as lakes, rivers and streams	350	1.5%
Outdoor Recreation, limited to golf courses and township park	125	0.5%
Commercial	27	0.1%
Industrial, limited to sawmill and Michcon's surface facilities	15	---
Other, such as churches, cemeteries, and township hall	10	---

--- = less than 0.1%

Table is based on aerial photography and "windshield" survey.

A review of some of the more significant characteristics of land use and development in the township follows. See General Land Use Map, Appendix D.

Agriculture

Farming operations occupy approximately 17% of the township's area. Of the approximately 4,000 acres dedicated to farming, approximately one-half of the acreage is concentrated in the southeast quarter of the township and, in particular, Sections 25 and 36 (approximately 1,000 acres). The southwest quarter of the township reflects the least concentration of agricultural activity and is nearly non-existent. Farming activities include both crop and livestock operations, the most common crops being corn, soybeans, and alfalfa.

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 farmers can enroll their properties to gain property tax relief, provided the farmland is maintained in an agricultural/open space status. The minimum enrollment period in the program is seven years and many landowners opt to enroll for a much longer period. PA 116 lands in Hamilton Township in 2010 comprise approximately 620 acres, or 2.8% of the entire township land area. All of the acreage enrolled in the

PA 116 program is located in Sections 25, 35, and 36, and the enrollment periods extend to year 2017 and beyond. The 620 enrolled acres is comparatively minimal in contrast to many other communities with more supportive farming soils where enrollment can extend to more than two-thirds of a township's area.

Residential Development and Land Division

The 2010 Census recorded 1,628 dwelling units, a decrease of 34 units recorded by the 2000 Census. While some units may have been lost due to destruction or otherwise removed from a lot (particularly in the case of mobile homes), the seasonal residency of many of the township's landowners may account for a significant portion of this recorded decrease. Many residents live in the township during the warmer months only and do not arrive until after the early spring Census survey. The Census Bureau estimates that approximately 98% of all dwellings in the township in 2010 were single family dwellings, approximately 11% of which were mobile homes. The balance of dwelling units was comprised of duplex structures. Approximately 88% of the occupied dwellings were occupied by the dwelling's owner and the balance was occupied by renters.

The Census Bureau reported that in 2009, 7.7% of the township's dwelling units were constructed prior to 1950 and 71.3% were constructed during the following 40 years. Thus 21.0% of the dwelling units were constructed during the previous twenty years. The 21.0% of the township's dwellings constructed in 1990 or later was similar to that of the state and somewhat less than the county. The 2010 median value of the owner-occupied housing stock in the township was \$83,800, 11.1% less than the county and 43.2% less than the state. In 2009, the median monthly housing costs among households with a mortgage was \$847 and median rent payments were \$808. See Table A-2.

The township's housing stock in 2009 had an average of 4.5 rooms per dwelling. Bottled, tank or LP gas accounted for approximately 73% of the occupied dwellings' heat source and wood accounted for approximately 16% of the dwellings' heat source, with the balance (11%) relying on utility gas, electricity or fuel oil.

TABLE A-2
Selected Housing Characteristics

Source: 2010 Census and 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

DWELLINGS	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Year Built (%)			
1990 to 2009	21.0%	24%	21.5%
1950 to 1990	71.3%	67.0%	53.3%
Before 1950	7.7%	14.8%	25.3%
Median Value/Owner Occupied	\$83,800	\$94,300	\$147,500
Median Monthly Housing Costs Among Mortgaged Dwellings	\$847	\$902	\$1,349
Median Rent Payment	\$808	\$575	\$709

Residential development in Hamilton Township can be divided into three principal forms. The first and original form is that of farm homesteads. During the early half of the 1900s, large parcels of 40 to 320 acres and more characterized the land division pattern in the community. The original homes were occupied, in part, by farming families including those in the timber industry. It was rare to come upon a parcel less than 40 acres in size. Many of these original homesteads are still evident today but this large tract land division pattern (parcels of 40 acres and greater) comprises approximately 25% less of the township's acreage as it did in the 1930s. See Land Division Map, Appendix D.

The second principal form of residential development is houses located on approximately one to ten-acre parcels fronting on the township's principal road network (section-line and similar roads). This form of housing evolved as some of the original large tracts in the township were incrementally split up. This land division pattern began to appear during the 1950s and 1960s and is now present in nearly all of the township's 36 sections. In 2010, parcels of 5 – 20 acres in area accounted for approximately one-fifth of the township acreage. 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.

A third principal form of residential development in Hamilton Township, and that which comprises the greatest portion of the township's dwellings, is that of platted subdivisions. Platted subdivisions consist of multiple land divisions established as a unified development/neighborhood project, pursuant to the platting requirements of the Land Division Act (or former subdivision laws). All of the township's platted subdivisions are located in its western half, and the vast majority of all platted lots are located in the township's southwest quarter. The largest of the subdivision developments are:

Dodge City Subdivisions #1 – #8 in Section 19; approximately 730 lots.

Townline Wilds Subdivisions No. 1 and No. 2 in Section 19; approximately 325 lots.

Springwood Lakes Subdivision in Sections 28 and 29; approximately 185 lots.

Birch Hill Subdivisions No. 1 – No. 3 in Sections 32 and 33, and surrounding the Birch Hills Sportsman's Club; approximately 145 lots.

These developments alone account for approximately 1,400 lots and nearly 90% of all platted lots in the township. Platted subdivisions first appeared in the township in the mid-1950s, led by the Townline Wilds and Dodge City Subdivisions.

Lot sizes among the subdivisions vary. The earlier subdivisions, such as the Townline Wilds and Dodge City Subdivisions and other subdivisions platted prior to the mid-1960s, were platted with lots typically ranging from one-sixth to three-quarters acres in size (7,000 – 15,000 sq. ft.). These subdivisions were platted prior to health department rules and regulations that would now frequently prohibit such lot sizes and densities without sanitary sewer service. More recent subdivisions reflect lot sizes of typically $\frac{3}{4}$ acres and more.

It should be noted that many of the particularly small platted lots are not used as individual home sites but are under common ownership with adjoining lots where the lot owner uses multiple lots as a single home site. In addition, many of the particularly small platted lots under separate ownership have never been built upon.

Commercial and Industrial Development

In 2010, Hamilton Township was comprised of approximately 27 acres of land devoted to commercial activity and approximately 15 acres of industrially used land. Commercial and industrial activity is primarily limited to the Dodge City area near the Townline Lake/Dodge Lake Roads intersection. Commercial uses within approximately 1,000' of this intersection include video rentals, two gas stations with convenience stores, a general store, two restaurants, mini-storage facility, mobile home parts and supply sales, and an outdoor recreational vehicle storage facility. Most of the commercial uses extend from the intersection's southwest corner south along the west side of Dodge Lake Road.

Visible industry in the Dodge City area is limited to a saw mill along Rodgers Road approximately one-half mile north of the intersection.

There are also a number of vacant storefronts in the Dodge City area, the largest of which is an approximately 6,000 sq. ft. building north of the Dodge Lake/Townline Lake Roads intersection that formerly housed various retail sales businesses. This property was recently acquired by the township.

There are several other commercial/industrial uses scattered elsewhere in the township such as a golf course along Rodgers and Cranberry Lake Roads, a tavern at the intersection of M-61 and Dodge Lake Road, and several Michigan Consolidated Gas Company facilities including a metering station on Hamilton Road and a compressor station on Arnold Lake Road west of Athey Avenue. While the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company's surface facilities occupy less than ten acres, the Mid-Michigan Gas Storage Company owns more than 400 acres in the township's northwest quarter that it uses for the underground storage and transmission of natural gas.

A vacant commercial property is also present at the southeast corner of the Cranberry Lake and Hoover Roads intersection.

Community Facilities and Services

Township Administration and Land

A five member Township Board governs Hamilton Township. Township offices are located in the Township Hall at the southwest corner of the Townline Lake Road/Athey Avenue intersection. The hall was constructed in the early 1900s. The hall sits on a lot of approximately one-quarter acre in area and the hall itself includes approximately 2,500 sq. ft. of floor area. The hall houses a meeting room, administrative areas, kitchen, and rest rooms, and the balance of the lot is used for parking. The hall has been substantially expanded and renovated over the years. Government administration and services are funded by a millage.

The township purchased in 2011 an approximately 10-acre parcel on N. Rodgers Ave. just north of E. Townline Lake Road. The parcel is the site of a comparatively large vacant building (approximately 6,000 sq. ft.) that formerly housed various retail sales businesses.

Cemeteries

Hamilton Township operates two cemeteries. The Hamilton Township Cemetery is located on Hoover Avenue north of Cranberry Lake Road. The township recently acquired the former Hamilton Mennonite Church property on Rodgers Road, just south of Stockwell Road, which includes a cemetery in addition to the church building. Gerrity Cemetery is a private cemetery in Section 12.

Education

Hamilton Township is served by two public school districts. Harrison Community Schools serves approximately 70% of the township area and all but approximately two square miles of the western two-thirds of the township. Harrison Community Schools has had an average enrollment during recent years of approximately 2,200 and all school facilities are in the immediate Harrison area. Gladwin Community Schools serves the majority of the southeast quarter of the township and approximately one-third of the northeast quarter. Gladwin Community Schools has had an average enrollment during recent years of approximately 2,100 and all school facilities are in the immediate Gladwin area.

The nearest collegiate institutions include the Mid-Michigan Community College several miles south of Harrison, and the four-year universities of Northwood Institute (Midland), Central Michigan University (Mt. Pleasant), and Saginaw Valley State University (Saginaw).

Sewage/Refuse Disposal and Potable Water

There is no public water or sanitary sewer service in Hamilton Township. Township residents typically rely on on-site wells for potable water and septic systems for sewage disposal. Hamilton Township contracts with Waste Management to provide refuse and yard waste collection.

Emergency Services

Hamilton Township provides fire protection to area residents through an agreement with the Harrison Fire Department. The fire station is located on Sullivan Drive in the city. Ambulatory services are provided by private companies dispatched through the 911 Emergency system. Both fire protection and ambulance calls are funded through user fees (versus tax assessments). Police protection services are provided by the Clare County Sheriff's Department on an as-needed basis. In addition, the Michigan State Police provide service along M-61 or as other needs may arise.

Recreation

Hamilton Township operates a single park site located in the Dodge City area along Townline Lake Road west of Dodge Lake Road. The facility is called LaLonde Park and is approximately two acres in size. The northern two-thirds of the park is primarily grassed and includes a picnic pavilion with picnic tables, a swing set, a baseball backstop and informal baseball field, and gravel parking near Townline Lake Road. The southern portion of the park is wooded.

The Au Sable State Forest, occupies approximately 500 acres of Section 30. The forest is managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and permitted activities include hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, and camping.

Local residents have a variety of recreation opportunities available in surrounding communities and the greater regional area (provided they have a means of transportation) such as the Wilson State Park in nearby Harrison and the Tittabawassee River State Forest in neighboring Gladwin County. Regional school facilities also have playground and sports facilities.

A private nine-hole golf course open to the general public operates north of Dodge City and there are several hunt clubs in the township as well, the largest occupying approximately 550 acres in Sections 32 and 33.

Appendix B

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Geology & Topography

During the Paleozoic era of geological history, Clare 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. Hamilton Township exhibits two bedrock classifications – Red Beds and the Saginaw Formation. The majority of the township rests above the Saginaw Formation including nearly the entire southern one-third of the community. The balance of the township reflects a mix of the two bedrocks. Red Beds bedrock is composed of sandstone, shale and clay. The Saginaw Formation consists primarily 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, bedrock depth in Hamilton Township ranges from approximately 300 to 600 feet and generally increases as one moves diagonally across the township in a northeast direction.

The township's topography is quite varied. Approximately one-half of the township is level or nearly level, exhibiting grades of 0% – 6%. The balance of the township is more rolling in character, with grades typically ranging from 6% – 18%. Though comparatively small in area, there are instances where grades approach 25%. These isolated instances tend to be along the Cranberry Creek corridor. Not only does the township's topography reflect variable relief, but the more rolling and steeper areas are intermixed with the more level areas. The principal exception is the southeast quarter of the township, which reflects far less topographic relief than the balance of the township.

Topographic elevations in the township range from approximately 849' to 1,232' above sea level, and generally increase as one moves across the township in an east to west direction. The lowest elevations are most prominent in the eastern third of the township, with the lowest point located along the Cedar River in Section 13 where it flows into Sage Township to the east (approximately 849' above sea level). The highest elevations are most prominent in the western third of the township, with the highest point located in the northwest corner of Section 7 (approximately 1,232' above sea level).

The character of an area's geology and topography can have bearing on development and land use planning. Hamilton Township's varied topography does present challenges for development. It is generally recommended that development be restricted in intensity where grades exceed approximately 12%, and be strongly discouraged where grades exceed 18%. As grades increase in severity, significant challenges arise for septic systems and there is an increased potential for soil erosion and sedimentation of water courses and wetlands. Construction costs frequently increase as well.

Geology can also impact development within the context of the availability of adequate potable water (where water service is not available). This issue is discussed under "Groundwater."

Drainage & Water Resources

Hamilton Township is characterized by approximately 350 acres of open surface waters such as lakes, rivers and streams (1.5% of the township). An additional 3,300 acres are characterized by wetlands, which are discussed in more detail on page B-3. According to the U.S. Geological Service, the township is home to approximately 15 lakes greater than five acres in size and approximately half of these lakes are located in the township's southwest quarter. Perhaps of greatest significance are the seven named lakes in Section 19 and around which much of Dodge City was founded. The lakes include Townline Lake, Boathouse Lake, Icehouse Lake, Sand Lake, Dodge Lake, Haven Lake, and Canada Lake. These lakes range in size from approximately four acres (Canada Lake) to 40 acres (Townline Lake, a portion of which extends into Hayes Township). However, the largest of the township's lakes is the western half of Springwood Lakes in Section 29. The west half of Springwood Lakes covers approximately 70 acres and flows into its eastern half in Section 28, which covers approximately 20 acres.

In addition to its many lakes, Hamilton Township also includes numerous rivers, creeks and smaller and intermittent water courses. The most significant are Cranberry Creek and the Cedar River including the West Branch and Middle Branch of the Cedar River. Cranberry Creek flows east from Hayes Township through the central region of the township. The North Branch of the Cedar River flows south from Franklin Township to the central region of the township as well. These two water courses merge just north of the center of the township and form the main branch of the Cedar River. The Middle Branch of the Cedar River also flows south from Franklin Township into the northeast corner of the township, and continues to flow south before merging with the main branch of the Cedar River. The Cedar River continues to flow easterly into Sage Township and subsequently flows into Tobacco River near Beaverton in Gladwin County. The Tobacco River flows into the Tittabawassee River and the Tittabawassee River flows into the Saginaw River which empties into the Saginaw Bay. This interconnectivity of water courses illustrates how land use and development policies and practices in one community can impact water resources in many other communities.

The Cedar River and its tributaries drain approximately two-thirds of the township. The principal exception is the southwest quarter of the township where portions drain to the west by way of Mostellar Creek and into which Sand Lake flows. Other portions drain to the east and south including into the expansive Spike Horn Swamp to the east and south of the Springwood Lakes, which flows into the Spike Horn Creek just south of the township. Howland Creek, which originates at Howland Lake in Section 34, flows southeast into Arthur Township and drains southern portions of the township's southeast quarter.

Drainage in Hamilton Township is facilitated through its network of lakes, rivers and creeks, and is also supported by expansive wetland areas that collect and store significant volumes of runoff.

Lands abutting or in close proximity to drainage courses, such as streams, ponds, and lakes, are subject to flood conditions where 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. No flood studies have been prepared for Hamilton Township by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in association with its National Flood Insurance Program. Serious flooding has not been a common occurrence. This is due in large part to the comparatively limited development (impervious surfaces) in the township, the network of drainage courses and wetlands that carry and store runoff, the township's frequent rolling topography, and its predominantly sand and loam soils that facilitate the absorption of rainfall.

Improperly managed land development practices can impact flood conditions both locally and in the 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 Hamilton Township. Wells in Hamilton Township do not typically extend to the bedrock to draw potable water due to the depth of the bedrock. Rather, wells in the township typically draw from the glacial drift aquifer above the bedrock. The overall quality of the groundwater is considered to be very good but with some instances of high mineral content.

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. Even confined systems can be contaminated due to hazardous material entering the groundwater due to groundwater flows from nearby non-confined aquifers. There is a confining layer of clay across the majority of Hamilton Township. However, where wells are particularly shallow, such as around the lakes in the Dodge City area, the confining clay layer is below the wells and these and similar shallow wells are particularly vulnerable to groundwater contamination.

Contamination of ground water resources can originate from a number of sources including, but not necessarily limited to poorly operating septic drain fields, floor drains that discharge to the outdoors, the storage of hazardous and toxic substances without the necessary safeguards, the improper disposal of fuels and oils, excessive use of fertilizers, and improper disposal of wastes by industrial, commercial and residential activities. Thus, the protection of groundwater quality requires appropriate land use management along various fronts.

Woodlands and Wetlands

Hamilton Township is comprised of approximately 13,000 acres of woodlands, or 56% of the township's land area. Of the approximately 13,000 acres of woodlands, approximately 16% (2,100 acres) are comprised of wooded wetlands including oak, red maple, and willow. An additional approximately 300 acres of wetlands are of a shrubby character. About 80% of the township's upland forest's are comprised of aspen and birch stands, with the majority of the balance being comprised of upland hardwoods such as maple, elm, beech and cherry.

Wetlands are located throughout the township but are most prominent in association with the township's drainage courses. Many of the wetland areas are part of extensive elongated systems stretching one-half or more miles in total length. Of particular significance is the extensive wooded wetland comprising the Spike Horn Swamp, beginning in the central region of the township and extending southwest to form the headwaters of the Spike Horn Creek in Arthur Township. This wetland extends more than four miles in length into Arthur Township and accounts for more the one-quarter of Hamilton Township's total wetland acreage.

The network of upland and lowland woodlands, including 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, they present severe physical constraints for land development due to flooding and instability of soils.

Because of the important environmental role of wetlands, they are protected by the Michigan Environmental and Natural Resources Protection Act, Part 303. Wetlands are regulated by the state if they meet any of the established criteria including, but not limited to, wetlands connected to one of the Great Lakes or located within 1,000 feet of one of the Great Lakes, wetlands located within 500 feet of an inland lake, pond, river or stream, and other wetlands of five acres or more in area. The law requires a permit be obtained from the state for depositing fill in a wetland, dredging or removing soil from a wetland, constructing or operating a use in a wetland, or draining surface water from a wetland. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will not issue a permit unless it finds, in part, that there would be no unacceptable disruption to aquatic resources, and that the proposed activity is wetland dependent or no feasible and prudent alternatives exists.

Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, has prepared a soil survey for Clare County. The survey reveals that, like the county as a whole, the vast majority of Hamilton Township is characterized by loamy and sandy soils. Loamy and sandy soils include sandy loams and loamy sands and comprise approximately three-quarters of the township's land area.

The character of soils can have a profound impact on the suitability of development with regard to groundwater 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 community planning purposes.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, nearly all township soils present "very limiting" conditions to on-site sewage disposal (septic systems). A primary concern in this regard is the soil's ability to absorb and break down the leachate from the septic drain fields before it reaches underground water supplies. The soils are rated as "very limiting" due to such conditions as surface ponding, soil wetness, slow percolation rates, and high water tables. Many of the township's soils have water tables within inches of the ground surface. Limitations on septic systems by soils can often be overcome with increased lot sizes and/or specially engineered systems at additional cost.

The Central Michigan District Health Department is responsible for issuing permits for on-site sewage disposal. A permit will not be issued unless all Department requirements have been met. Under typical conditions, sites in the township of approximately one-half to one acre are typically adequate to meet the Department's requirements for effective septic systems, including a back-up area should the initial drain field fail. According to current standards, neighborhood development on smaller building sites typically requires a sewer system.

On the other hand, the township's soils present far less limitations to the construction of buildings both with and without basements. The more limiting soils typically raise concerns due to their shrink-swell potential and high water table. Like limitations on septic systems by soils, limitations on building construction can often be overcome by special construction measures that may increase normal construction costs.

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.

Just as the township's soils present limitations for septic systems, the soils are not particularly supportive of long-term economically viable farming. Only approximately 15% of the township's land area is classified as "prime farmland." 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.

Appendix C

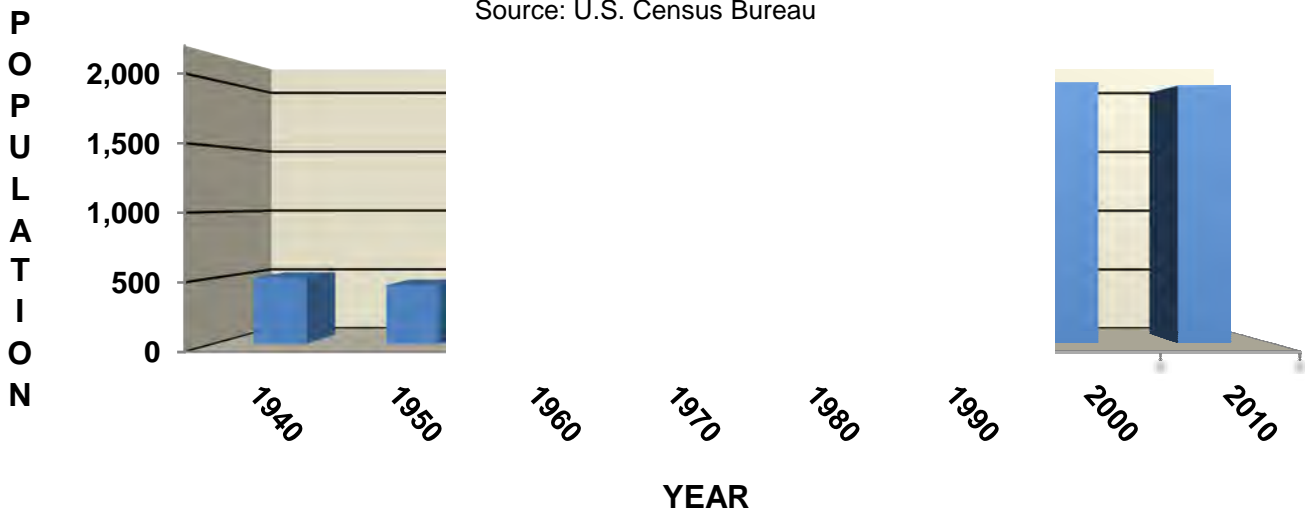
DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Population Growth Trends

The 2010 U.S. Census (Census) recorded a Hamilton Township population of 1,829 persons, a decrease of 8.0% from its 2000 population of 1,988 persons. The township's population has increased 262% since 1940 when its population was 504. Since 1940, the township has had varying periods of population growth and decline. Its strongest growth period, the 1970s, resulted in a 100% increase in population. Its sharpest decline, -11.7%, was witnessed in the 1940s.

In contrast, Clare County as a whole has experienced continued positive growth since 1940 except from 2000 – 2010, when it witnessed a 1.0% decline in population. The 2010 Census recorded a total county population of 30,926, a 238% increase over its 1940 population of 9,163. The township's and county's population decline from 2000 – 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, the only state to witness a decline in population.

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



Even though the township witnessed periods of negative growth between 1940 and 2010, the township's overall growth has resulted in a slight increase in the proportion of township residents comprising the total county population. The township's population comprised 5.5% of the county population in 1940 and 5.9% of the county's population in 2010.

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

YEAR	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
1940	504	9,163	5,256,106
1950	445 -11.7%	10,253 11.9%	6,371,766 17.6%
1960	513 15.3%	11,647 13.6%	7,823,194 18.6%
1970	796 55.2%	16,695 43.3%	8,881,826 11.9%
1980	1,595 100.0%	23,822 42.7%	9,262,078 4.1%
1990	1,546 -3.1%	24,952 4.7%	9,295,297 0.4%
2000	1,988 28.6%	31,252 25.2%	9,938,444 6.9%
2010	1,829 -8.0%	30,926 -1.0%	9,883,640 -0.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The township's overall rising population has increased population density. Its population density (based on land area) was approximately 14 persons per square mile in 1940 and 51 persons per square mile in 2010, four persons less per square mile than that of the county as a whole. By comparison, the City of Clare is the most densely populated community in the county and had a population density (based on land area) in 2010 of approximately 1,005 persons per square mile.

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 (25.2% 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 12.6% 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 6.3% 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 50.4% 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
Hamilton Township Population Projections

Projection Trend	Year 2020	Year 2030	Year 2040
Very Low Growth Trend (6.3%)	1,944	2,067	2,196
Low Growth Trend (12.6%)	2,059	2,319	2,611
Historical Trend (25.2%)	2,290	2,867	3,589
High Growth Trend (50.4%)	2,751	4,137	6,222

SOCIAL and ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The 2010 Census showed Hamilton Township to have a racial composition similar to that of the county, and far more homogeneous than the state as a whole (See Table C-3). 97.5% of the township population was white, compared to 78.9% for the state. This homogeneity is typical of rural Michigan communities, as compared to more urban areas such as Clare.

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

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

RACE	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
White Only	97.5	96.8	78.9
Black/African American Only	0.3	0.5	14.2
American Indian, Alaska Native Only	0.7	0.7	0.6
Asian Only	0.1	0.3	2.4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Only	0.0	0.0	0.0
Some Other Single Race Only	0.4	0.2	1.5
Two or More Races	1.1	1.4	2.3

The township's median age of 48.5 years in 2010 was more than three years higher than the county (45.3) and nearly 10 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 – 84. 53.7% of the township population fell within this age range compared to 48.3% and 39.7% for the county and state respectively.

FIGURE C-2
Hamilton Township Age Profile

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

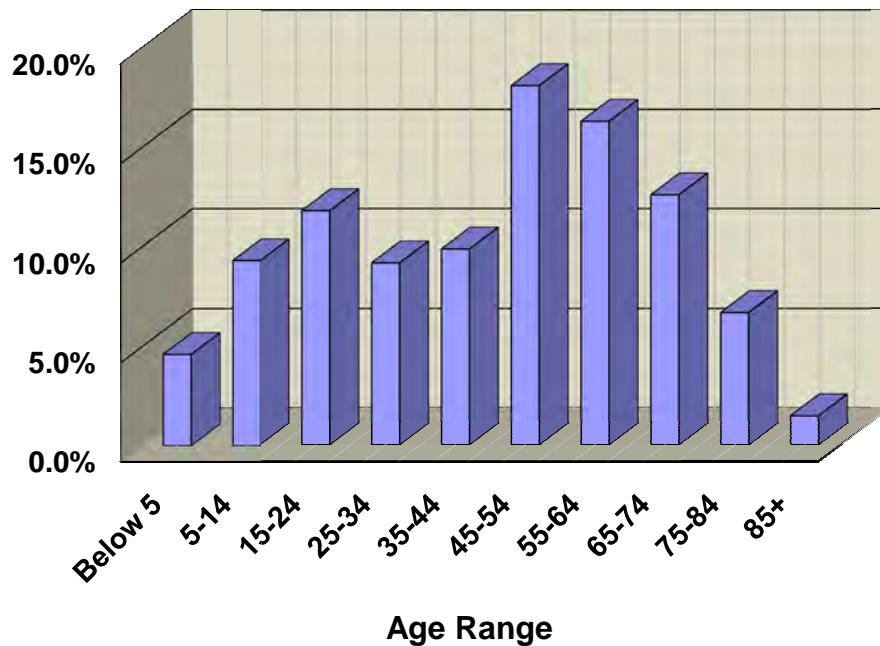


TABLE C-4
Age Profile Comparison
(By Percent, except where otherwise noted)
 Source: 2010 U.S. Census

AGE	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Under 5 yrs.	4.6	5.7	6.0
5 – 14 yrs.	9.3	11.2	13.3
15 - 24 yrs.	11.8	11.9	14.3
25 - 34 yrs.	9.2	9.4	11.8
35 – 44 yrs.	9.9	11.3	12.9
45 - 54 yrs.	18.1	15.2	15.2
55 - 64 yrs.	16.3	15.2	12.7
65 - 74	12.6	11.9	7.3
75 - 84	6.7	6.0	4.5
85 yrs. or more	1.6	2.0	1.9
Under 18 yrs.	17.6	20.9	20.8
65 yrs and over	20.8	19.9	13.8
Median Age	48.5 yrs.	45.3 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 48.5 years reflects a 17.5% increase over its 2000 median age of 43.4 years, and a 24.7% increase over its 1990 median age of 38.9. 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 state). See Figure C-2 and Table C-4.

The 2010 Census recorded 790 households and 519 families in Hamilton Township. These numbers represent a decrease of 32 households since the 2000 Census and a loss of 67 families, a likely reflection (in part) of the difficult economic conditions since 2007. The township's average household size of 2.3 persons in 2010 was slightly lower than that of the county and state, and equal to its average household size in 2000. The township's average family size of 2.8 persons in 2010 was equal to that of the county and less than that of the state, and slightly lower than its average family size of 2.9 persons in 2000.

Of all the households in the township in 2010, 53.8% included a married-couple. This percentage is somewhat greater than the county and state. Of the 11.9% of families not consisting of a married couple, nearly two-thirds were headed by a female householder. 34.3% of all households were comprised of non-family households, comparable to the county and state. Of the 34.3% of all households comprising non-family households, 79.0% were comprised of the householder living alone and 53.9% comprised a householder of age 65 years or greater. See Figure C-3 and Table C-5.

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

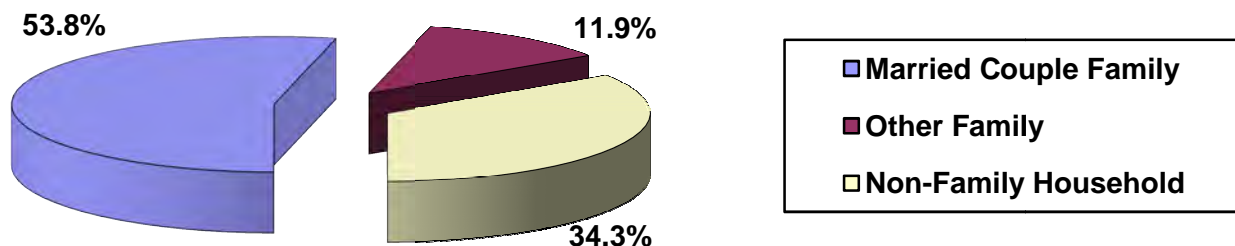


TABLE C-5
Household Type and Size Comparison
 (by percent, except where otherwise noted)
 Source: 2010 U.S. Census

	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE OF MICHIGAN
HOUSEHOLD TYPE			
Married-couple family	53.8	51.0	48.0
Other family:	11.9	15.2	18.0
(Male householder)	4.7	5.2	4.8
(Female householder)	7.2	10.0	13.2
Non-family household	34.3	33.8	34.0
PERSONS Per HOUSEHOLD	2.3 persons	2.4 persons	2.5 persons
PERSONS Per FAMILY	2.8 persons	2.8 persons	3.1 persons

The township's labor force in 2009 was comprised of 895 persons. The two principal employment industries for Hamilton Township workers were: 1) art, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services; and 2) manufacturing. These two industries alone accounted for 31.5% of township workers' employment. In contrast, education, health, and social services was the primary employment industry for county and state workers. The 6.6% of township workers employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining industries was nearly two times that of the county (3.6%) and six times that of the state (1.2%). See Table C-6.

In 2010, 3.4% of township workers worked at home. For those who commuted to work, the average travel time was 23.7 minutes. This is indicative of the limited employment opportunities in the township but the increased opportunities in nearby urban areas such as Gladwin, Harrison, and Clare.

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	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Art, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services	17.4	12.1	9.0
Manufacturing	14.1	12.0	18.3
Retail trade	13.0	13.9	11.6
Construction	12.9	10.8	5.6
Education, health, and social services	11.6	21.6	22.4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	6.6	3.6	1.2
Public administration	6.1	3.9	3.7
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	5.8	4.4	4.2
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management, other services not listed (excluding public administration)	5.4	9.9	13.5
Finance, insurance, and real estate	3.5	4.3	5.7
Wholesale trade	2.4	2.0	2.9
Information	1.3	1.5	1.9

The Hamilton Township community was in a comparatively less prosperous position in 2010 when compared to the county and state. Its median household income of \$32,716 was 6.8% less than that of the county and 36.5% less than the state. Its median family income of \$39,306 was 7.6% less than the county and 35.2% less than the state. The township's per capita income of \$17,492 was similarly slightly lower than the county and significantly lower than the state. Not surprisingly, the portion of families and persons below poverty level in the township in 2009, 23.6% and 26.6% respectively, was 27% to 95% more than that of the county and state. See Figure C-4 and Table C-7.

FIGURE C-4
Comparison of Income Characteristics, 2009
 Source: 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

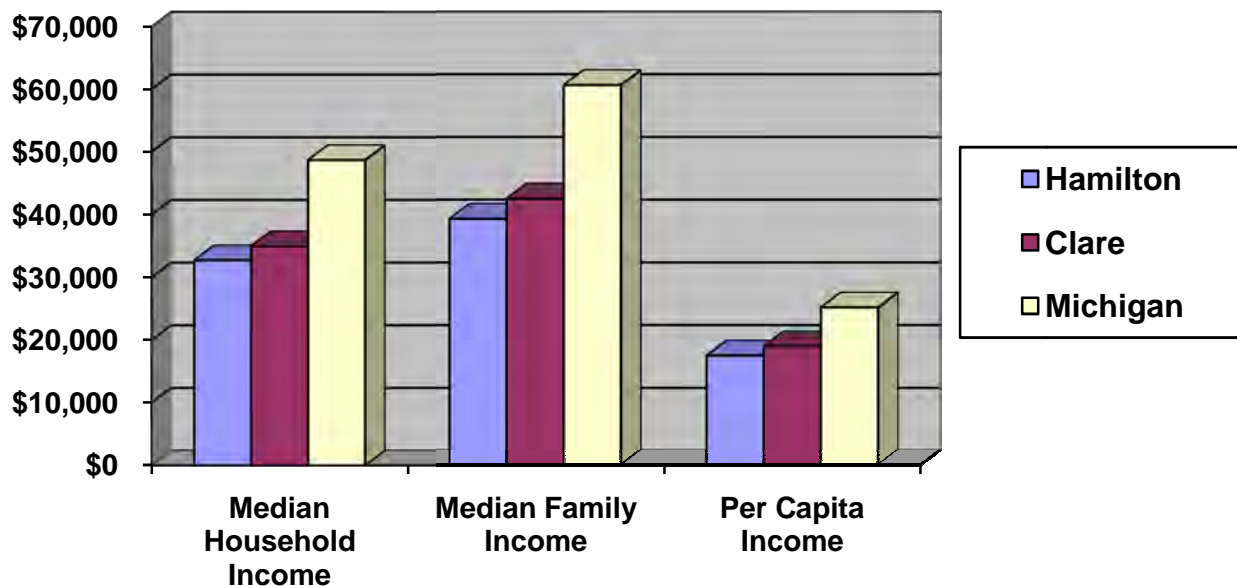


TABLE C-7
Income Characteristics Comparison

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

INCOME CHARACTERISTIC	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE OF MICHIGAN
Median household income	\$32,716	\$34,957	\$48,700
Median family income	\$39,306	\$42,533	\$60,635
Per capita income	\$17,492	\$18,980	\$25,172
Families below poverty level	23.6%	14.5%	10.3%
Persons below poverty level	26.6%	19.3%	14.5%

Lower income levels are frequently associated with lower education levels, and this was the case with Hamilton Township in 2009. While the attainment of a high school diploma was the highest level of education attained by 45.8% of township residents of 25 years of age or older, the county and state proportions for the same level of education were 41.0% and 31.8% respectively. 4.7% of the township's residents had acquired a bachelor's degree or higher level of education compared to 10.1% 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	HAMILTON TOWNSHIP	CLARE COUNTY	STATE of MICHIGAN
Less Than 9th Grade	2.0	5.3	3.7
9th to 12th, no diploma	19.8	12.4	8.9
High School Diploma	45.8	41.0	31.8
Some college, no degree	24.4	24.4	23.1
Associates Degree	3.3	6.9	8.0
Bachelor's Degree	3.0	6.1	15.2
Graduate/Professional Degree	1.7	4.0	9.3
High school graduate or higher	78.2	82.3	87.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.7	10.1	24.5

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

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

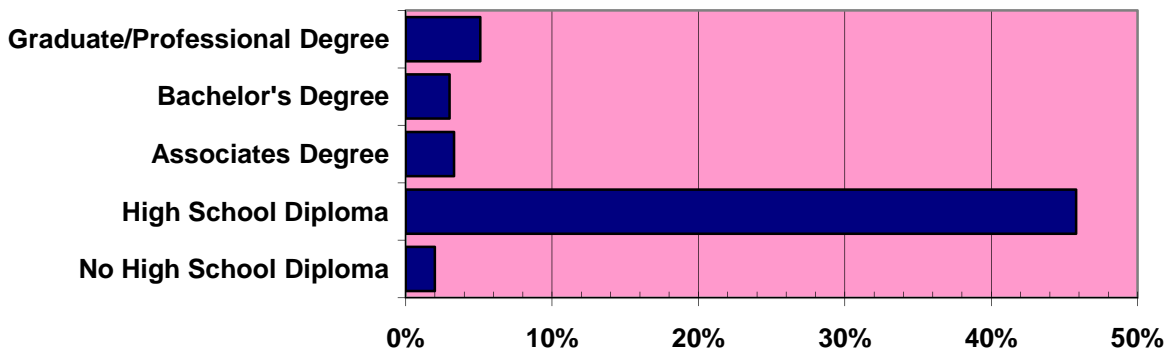
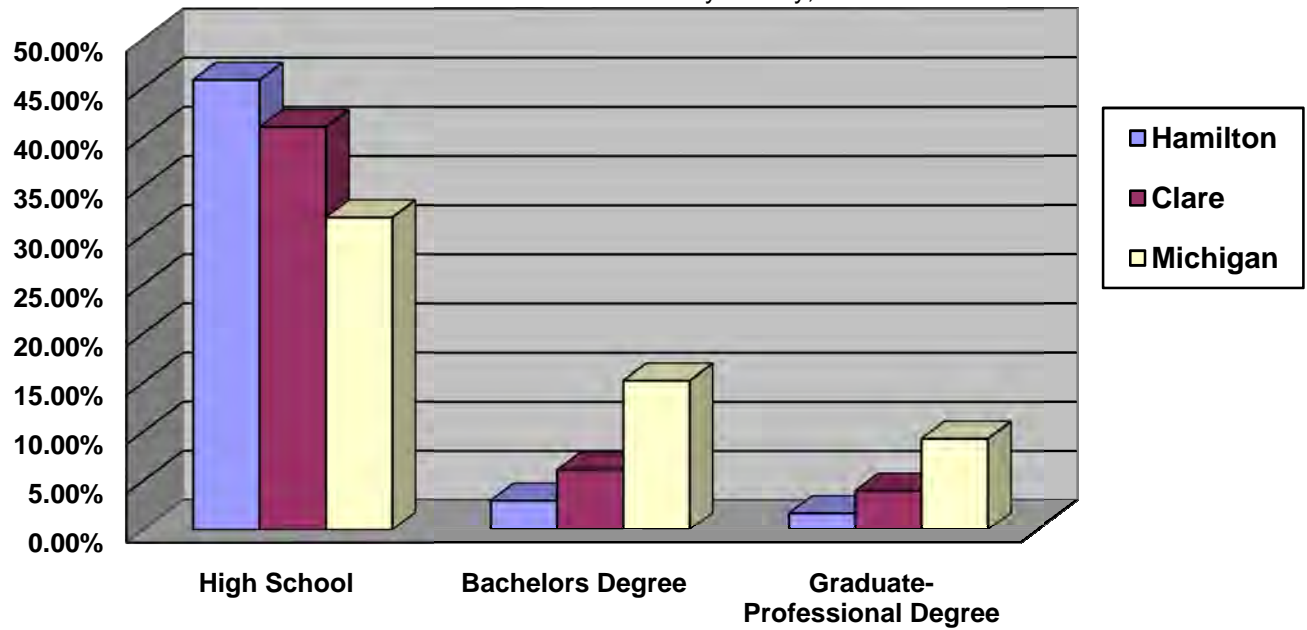


FIGURE C-6
Comparison of Highest Level of Education Attained
(for persons 25 years of age)

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



Appendix D

INVENTORY MAPS

Roads, Lots and Parcels
Existing Land Use
Water Features and Wetlands

FUTURE LAND USE

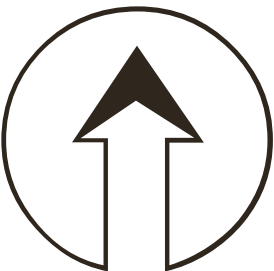
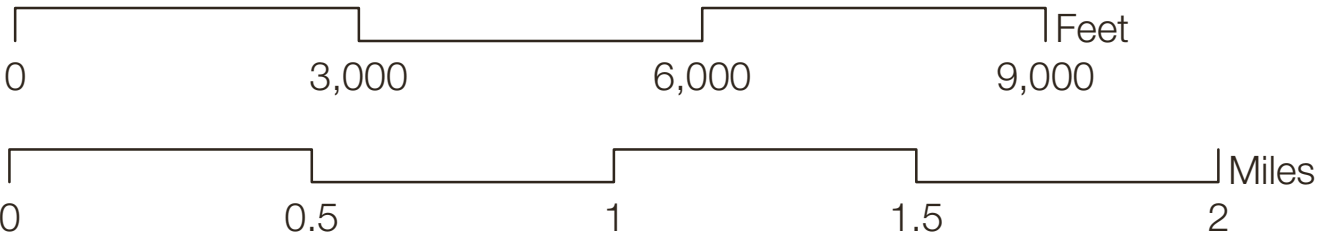
Hamilton Township

MASTER PLAN

July 19, 2011

LEGEND

- Rural Conservation Area
- Agricultural Area
- Primary Suburban Residential Area
- Secondary Suburban Residential Area
- Dodge City Commercial Center
- M-61 Mixed Use Center
- Rodgers Avenue Industrial Area
- Section Line
- Waterway
- Water Body
- Parcel Boundary
- Municipal Boundary



CLARE COUNTY

Winterfield Township	Summerfield Township	Frost Township	Franklin Township
Redding Township	Greenwood Township	Hayes Township City of Harrison	Hamilton Township
Freeman Township	Lincoln Township	Hatton Township	Arthur Township
Garfield Township	Surrey Township	Grant Township City of Clare	Sheridan Township

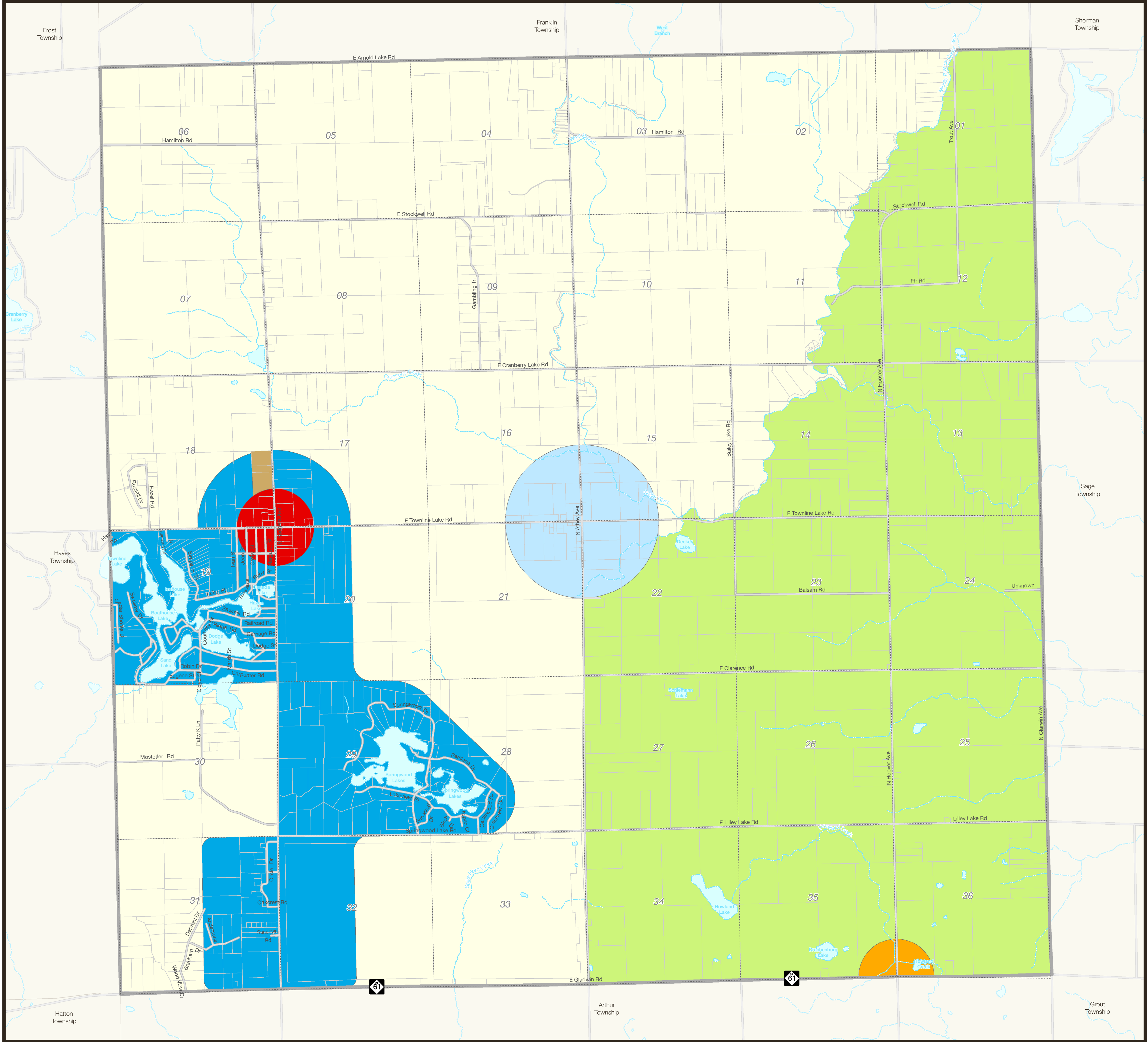
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ROADS, LOTS, and PARCELS

Hamilton Township

MASTER PLAN

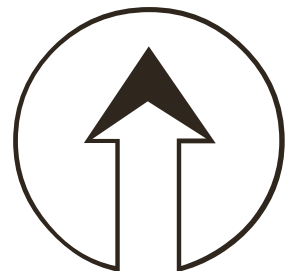
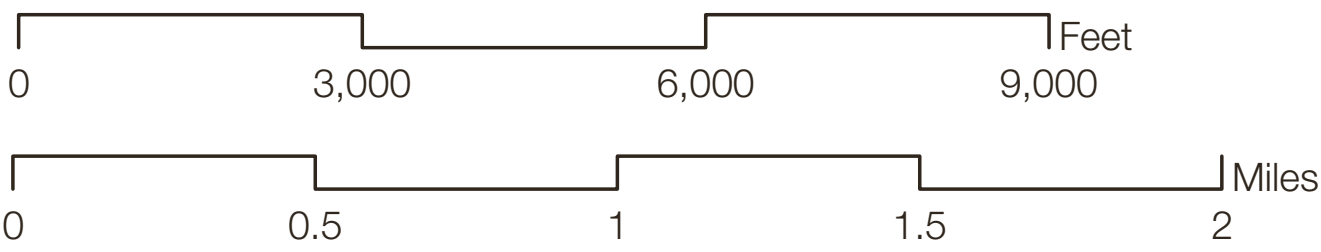
July 19, 2011

LEGEND

Road Classification

- State Highway
- County Primary Road
- County Local Road
- Private Subdivision Road

- Section Line
- Waterway
- Water Body
- Parcel Boundary
- Municipal Boundary



CLARE COUNTY

Winterfield Township	Summerfield Township	Frost Township	Franklin Township
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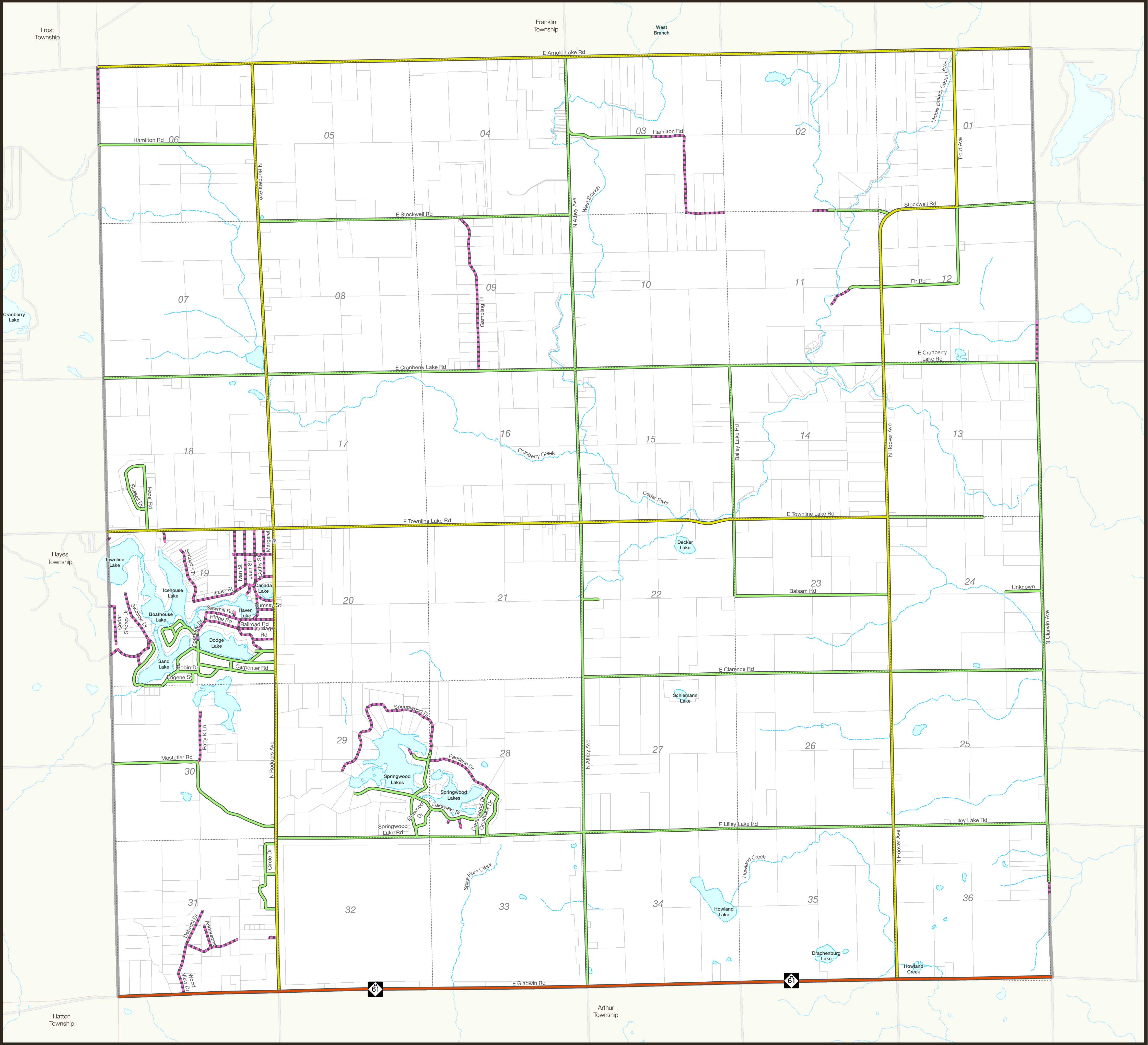
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EXISTING LAND USE

Hamilton Township MASTER PLAN

July 19, 2011

LEGEND

- Section Line
- ~~~~~

Waterway
- ~~~~~

Water Body
- Parcel Boundary
- Municipal Boundary

Agricultural

Areas comprised principally by farm operations approaching 40 acres or more of crop, orchard, or pasture land, and may include limited woodlands, wetlands, and residences.

Suburban/Urban Residential

Areas comprised principally of platted subdivisions and other residential settlement areas of a similar neighborhood character.

Commercial

Areas comprised principally of businesses such as sales, services, and offices, including vacant storefronts.

Industrial

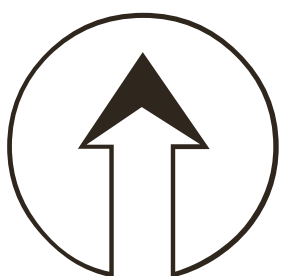
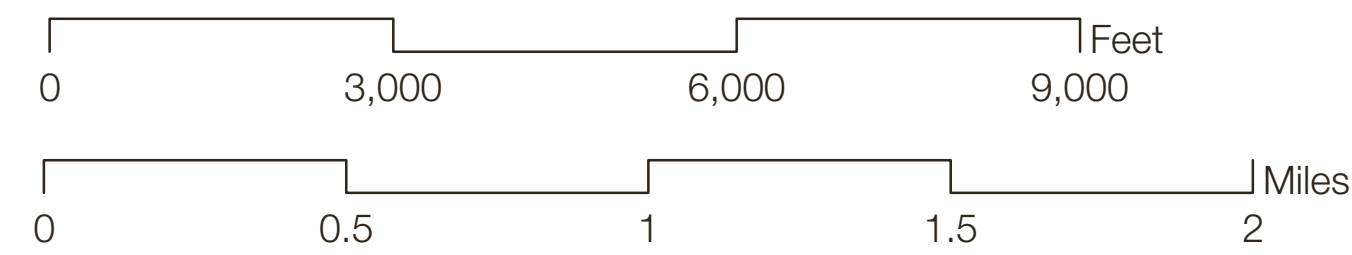
Areas comprised principally of industrial activities, such as utility substations and lumber mill.

Dipersed Residential/Open Space

Areas comprised principally of wetlands, woodlands, and similar natural open space areas, in addition to scattered residences on parcels typically of five acres or more.

Public/Semi-Public

★ Public parks, religious institutions, cemeteries, township hall, and similar uses.



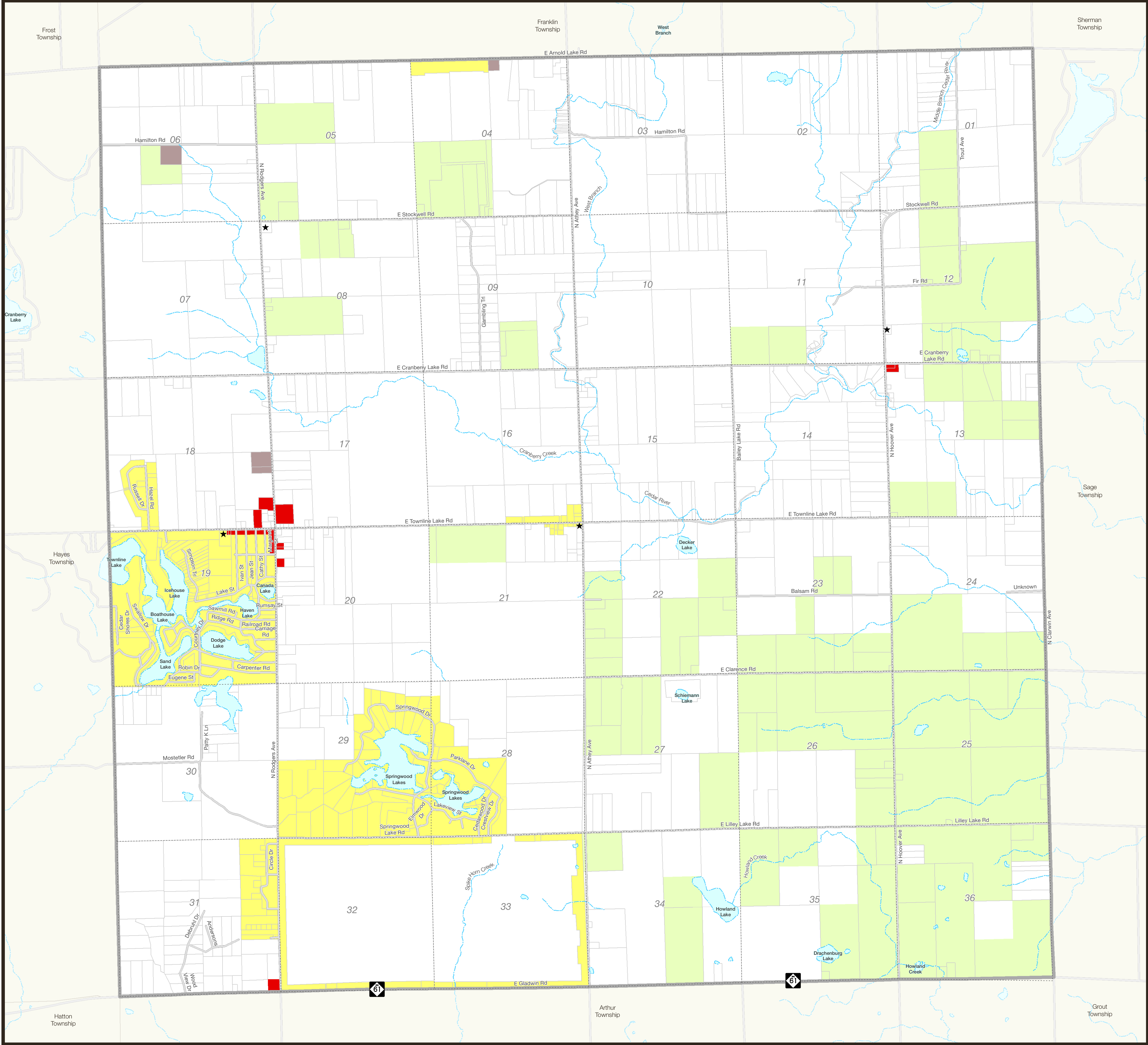
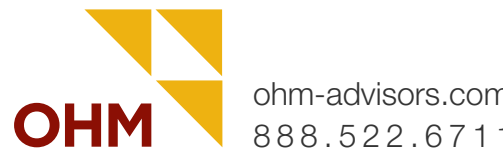
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