MASTER PLAN

FOR

WATSON TOWNSHIP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

DECEMBER, 2009

LAND MARK STRATEGIES

WATSON TOWNSHIP

MASTER PLAN

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Adopted: December 3, 2009

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LandMark Strategies

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

The Watson Township Master Plan is a policy document aimed at encouraging orderly and efficient land use. It provides the legal basis for local zoning and the logical basis for subdivision design, public improvement plans and for facilitating and guiding the work of the Township Planning Commission and Township Board. It is also a way of communicating to private individuals and organizations how they might relate their building projects to official Township plans and just as importantly it is the official way of relating Township plans to those of adjacent communities, Allegan County and the region as a whole.

The Michigan Planning enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, gives Townships the authority to prepare and adopt Master Plans. The statute recognizes that the social and economic conditions affecting the Township are continuously changing and that to assure that the Master Plan remains a useful guide for community change the planning process must be unremitting. Annual reviews of the Master Plan are therefore recommended and comprehensive reviews of the Master Plan must be undertaken every five years.

The Master Plan (Land Use Plan) of Watson Township was originally adopted in June of 1990. The Planning Commission conducted several formal reviews of the Master Plan in the ensuing years and each time determined that the plan was still valid and representative of the community's vision. In 2008 it was determined however, that the plan should undergo a more thorough and complete review and that it be updated as needed to reflect more refined goals and policies. The current Master Plan is the result of analysis and numerous meetings and discussions by the Township Planning Commission and Township officials. It is, in essence, the result of an evolutionary process that has refined and built upon the previous Master Plan's goals and objectives, its policies and the future land use map itself.

The Planning Process

Planning, in simple terms, is a continuous process which seeks to improve a community and create a better environment. As such, the "Master Plan" is a tool by which "planning" can be reached. It is a tool to be used by both individuals and public officials when making decisions concerning the long-range future of a community.

The planning process consists of four basic steps:

1. **Analysis of the Existing Situation** – An analysis of the assets, problems and potential of the community. These "basic studies", include an evaluation of environmental factors, demographics, existing land use, the transportation network and other community infrastructure

2. **Plan Policies and Land Use arrangement** – A review and refinement of the stated community goals and objectives and the verbal and graphic representation of the form and allocation of land uses for the future. The "Future Land Use Plan" suggests how future growth should be directed into the most economical, healthful, aesthetically pleasing, and ecologically sound pattern of development.

3. **Plan Implementation** – The "action plan" or "implementation plan" element of this document describes what should be done to carry out the plan .The first step in the implementation phase is the adoption of this plan by the Planning Commission. Then, through a series of coordinated actions (such as public education, zoning and subdivision regulations, systematic utility extensions and street improvements), the Township will implement the provisions of the Plan.

4. **Continued Planning** – In order for the Plan to have credibility and meaningful effect, it is necessary to follow through with a program of continuous planning. This involves periodic review and amendment of the Plan (such as this effort), the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, capital improvements program and other official policies of the Township.

Chapter 2
NATURAL FEATURES
AND COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

In every community geography and the physical environment provides both opportunities and constraints for development. While easy access to an expressway may mean opportunities for economic development, economic development may bring unwanted change or problems with traffic congestion. While a wetland or heavy soils can hinder construction, the presence of a tree stand can enhance a development project. The natural environment also contains valuable resources such as potable groundwater supplies and farmland. These and other resources need to be both conserved and protected if they are to be enjoyed by future generations. The following discussion highlights the significant physical features of the Township and several aspects of the local environment that are important planning considerations for Watson Township.

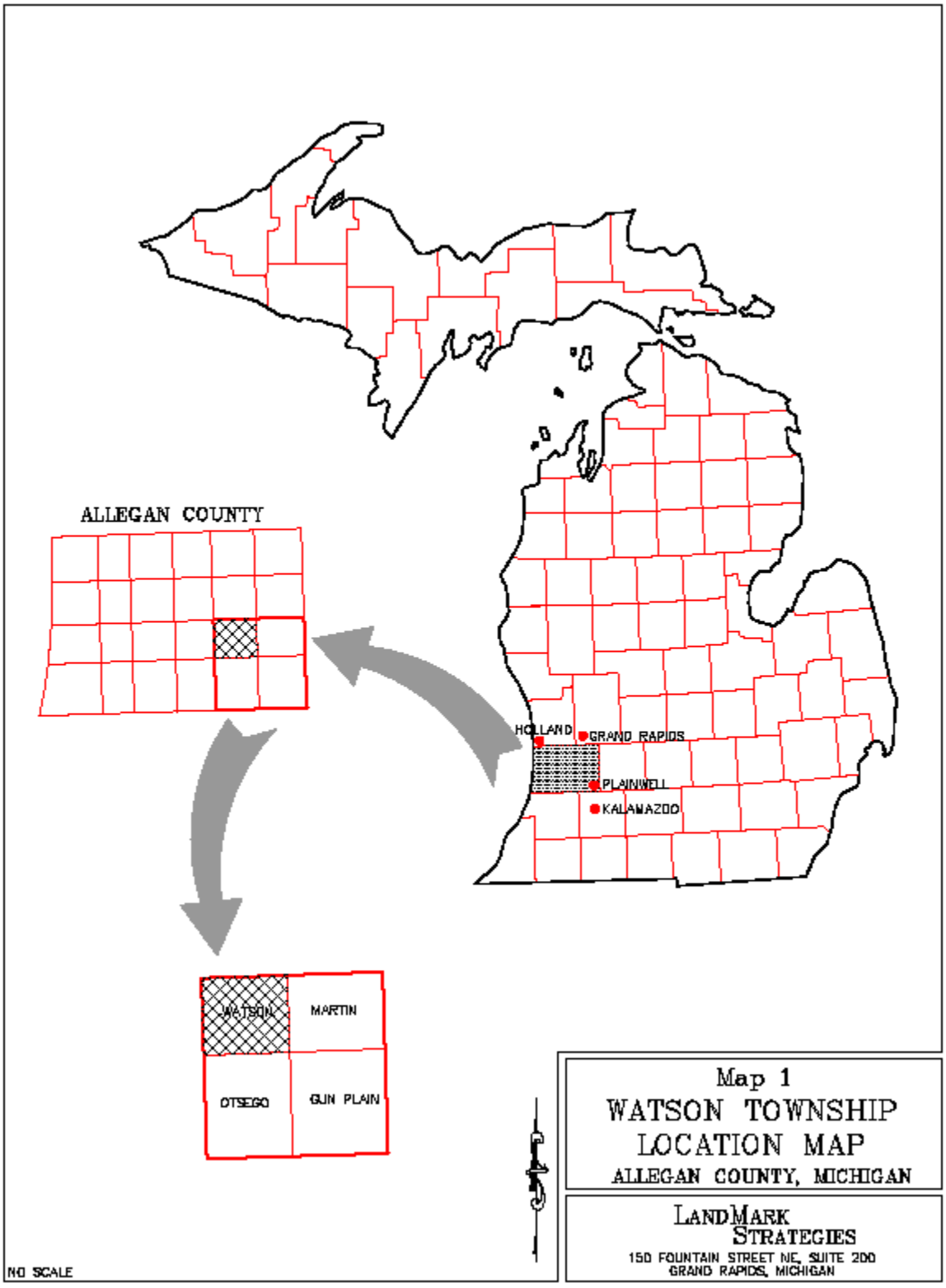
Regional Location

Watson Township encompasses 36 square miles of land area in the southeast corner of Allegan County which is situated in the southwestern portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. It is six miles north of the border of Kalamazoo County on the south and six miles from Barry County on the east. It is roughly 20 miles north of Kalamazoo and approximately 30 miles south of Grand Rapids. The City of Allegan, the county seat, is located only three miles to the west and the twin cities of Otsego and Plainwell are three and four miles south, respectively.

Two major transportation corridors traverse the Township. US-131 is a federal, limited access highway and M-222 is a two lane state highway. US-131 runs north and south along the eastern edge of the community, connecting points from the Indiana border area to the northern Lower Peninsula. M-222 travels through the southern portion of the Township in an east/west fashion. It connects US-131 to M-89 in Allegan. From Allegan, one can travel on M-89 to Holland, near the Lake Michigan shore. The US-131/M-222 intersection serves as the primary gateway for Watson Township as well as for the Village of Martin, which is located one half mile east of the US-131/M-222 intersection.

Topography

A basic understanding of the Township's topography is useful because differences in ground


ALLEGAN COUNTY
HOLLAND
GRAND RAPIDS
PLAINWELL
KALAMAZOO
WATSON
MARTIN
OTSEGO
GUN PLAIN
NO SCALE
Map 1
WATSON TOWNSHIP
LOCATION MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
LANDMARK
STRATEGIES
150 FOUNTAIN STREET NE, SUITE 200
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

elevation and slope have influenced and will continue to significantly influence the pattern of development and future land use. As with most of southwestern Michigan, Watson Township was shaped by the most recent glaciers as they were receding. This created Lake Michigan and most of the major inland water features, hills, ridges and low areas. The topography of Watson Township ranges from flat to hilly. The flattest terrain occurs in the southwestern portions and the steepest terrain exists in the north and northeastern sections of the Township. Watson Township relatively minor topographic changes occur within a general range of elevations from between about 690 feet above sea level where Miner Creek and Schnable Brook exit the Township in the southwest(Section 32) to around 920 feet above sea level in the hills located in the north in sections 8 and 9. The north and eastern three fourths of the Township are topographically the most diverse area and contain numerous ridgelines, woodlands, lakes and wetlands.

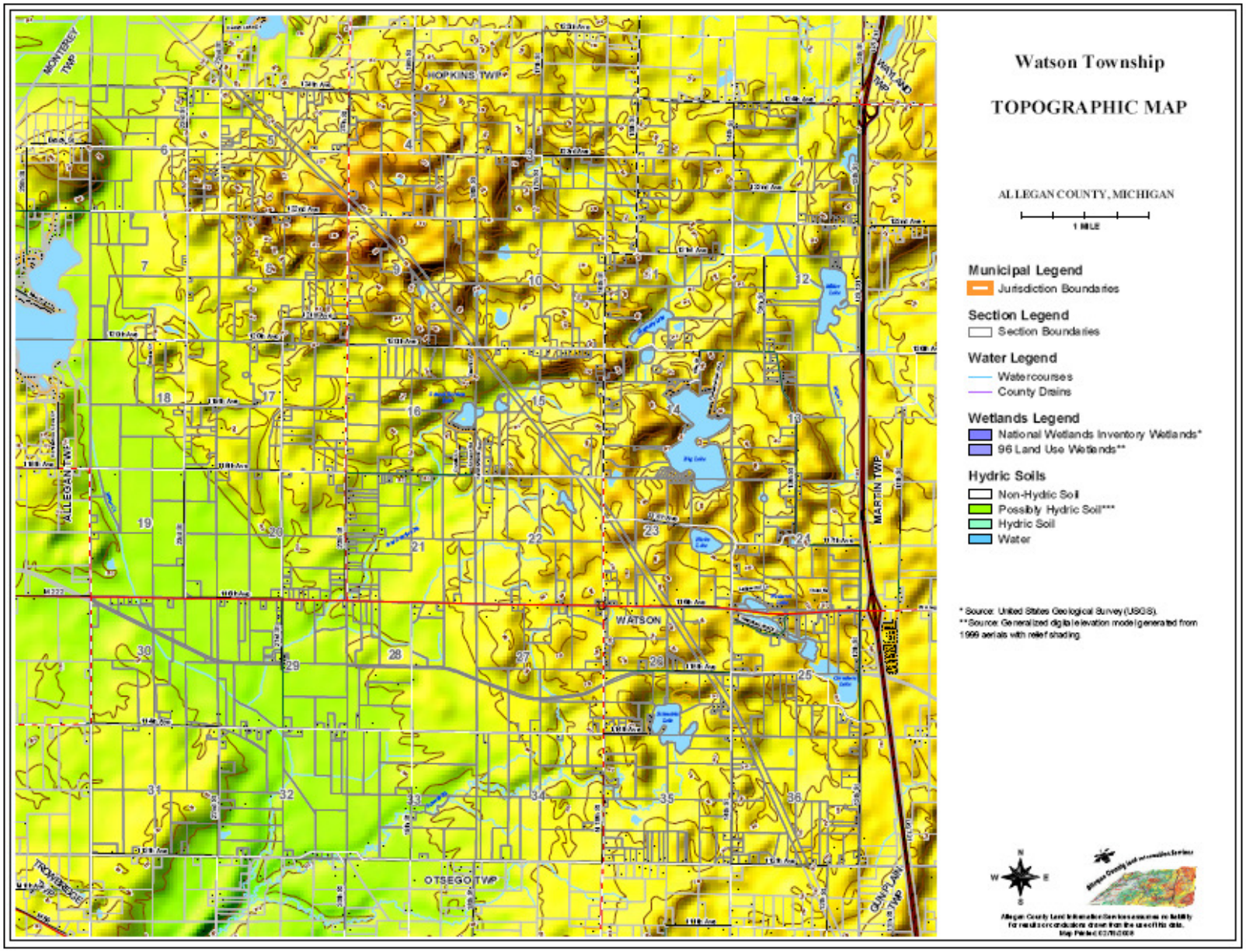
Climate

The climate is typical of much of southwestern Michigan. It is warm during the summer when temperatures average in the 70's and cold during the winter with temperatures in the 20's. The warmest month of the year is July with an average temperature of 84ºF. January is typically the coldest month with an average minimum temperature 17ºF. Precipitation averages 37.4 inches on an annual basis. Rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year however, September is the wettest month with an average rainfall of 4.1 inches.

Soils

Soils play an important part in determining the suitability of land for specific types of land uses. Agricultural uses in particular are determined based on what type of products can be grown in the soil type(s) present on a given parcel of land. More intensive uses of the land can also be based on soil characteristics such as permeability, slope, filtering capacity, bank stability, wetness etc.

The soils in Watson Township range from scattered areas of sand to predominantly heavy loams, clays and mucks. An overview of these soil associations is useful in identifying the general suitability of soils for certain types of land use and provide further insight into the topography and drainage of the Township. It is important to note that in Watson Township, existing land use has been largely determined by the suitability of the soils. In any rural community having as its goal the preservation of its rural qualities, attention to the natural suitability and limitations of the soil is paramount. Descriptions of the various soil associations as illustrated on Map -3 are as follows:

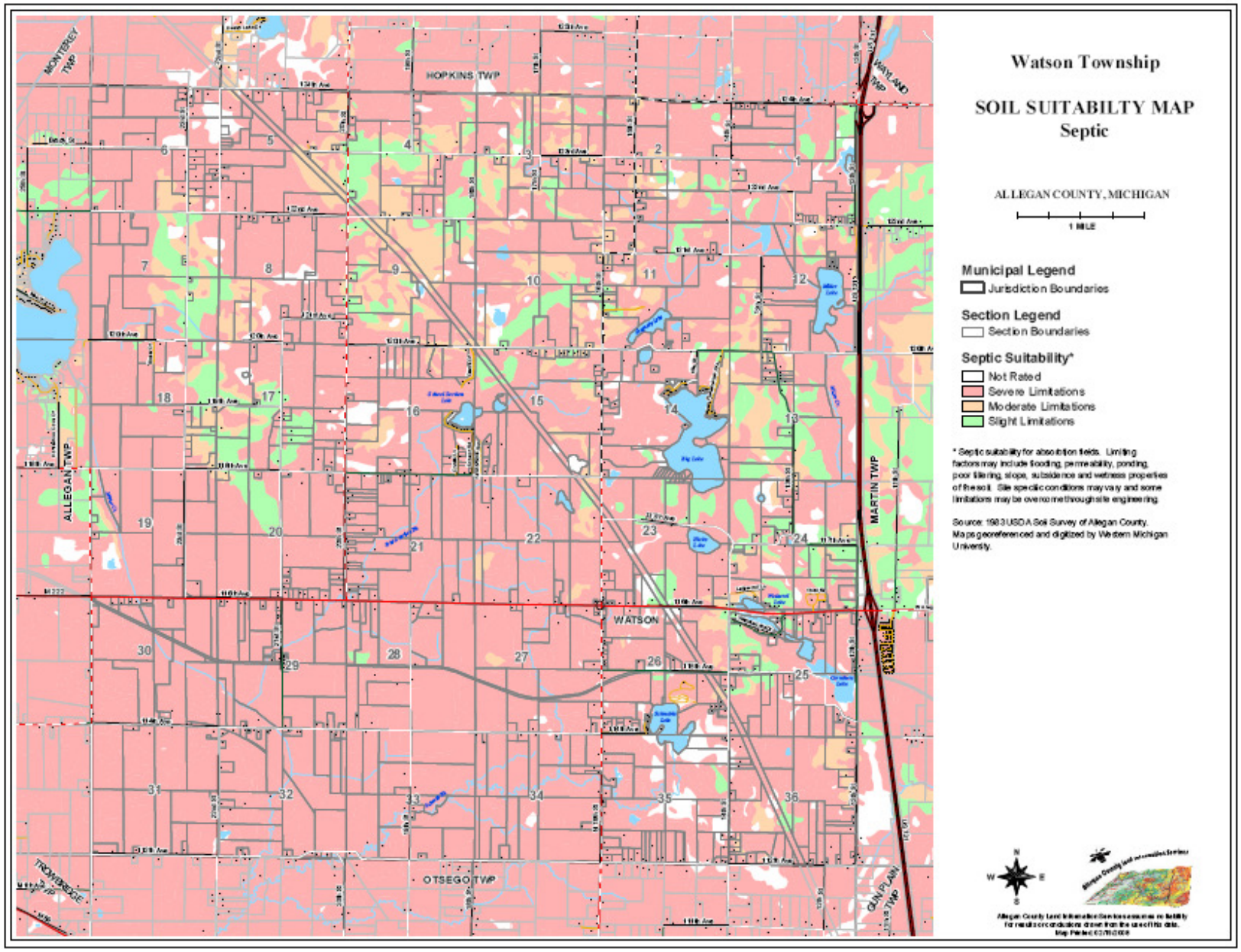

Watson Township
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Water Legend
Watercourses
County Drains
Wetlands Legend
National Wetlands Inventory Wetlands*
96 Land Use Wetlends**
Hydric Soils
Non-Hydric Soil
Possibly Hydric Soil***
Hydric Soil
Water
* Source: United States Geological Survey (USGS).
**Source: Generalized digital elevation model generated from 1999 aerials with relief shading.
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WAYLAND TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP

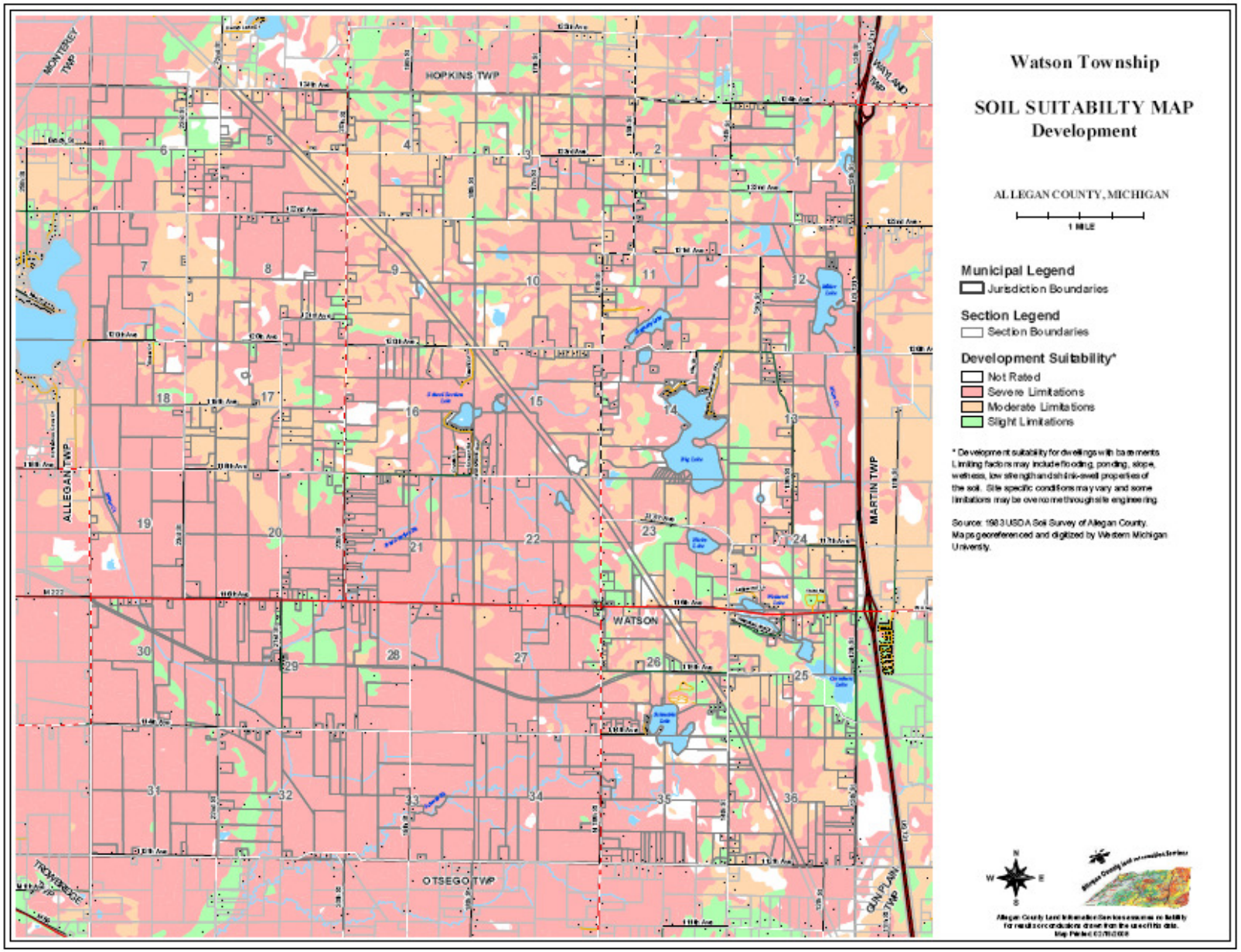
(Note: *The Soil Survey of Allegan County, 1987 is a complete resource on the area's soils and provides more detailed descriptions of the various soil associations and their characteristics*);

1. Capac - Rimer - Pipestone. This soil association covers the southeast one-third of the Township where topography is nearly level to undulating. The area consists of poorly drained loams, loamy sands and sands. The major soils in the association are very poorly suited for building purposes. Wetness and poor filtering capacity make the soils ill-suited for private septic systems as well. This association is, however, well suited for farming purposes.
2. Oshtemo - Chelsea - Ockley. This soil association is situated in the north central area of the Township. It consists of well drained to excessively well drained loamy and sandy soils. The topography is rolling to very hilly with many slopes in excess of 18%. Most of the area is presently wooded. The excessive slopes make this area generally unsuited for farming, building sites and septic systems.
3. Chelsea - Ockley - Oshtemo. This association of soils covers over 40% of the Township's land area. Situated throughout most of the Township's eastern and northeastern sections as well as in the northwest, these soils are predominantly sandy and loamy. In the northwest, the topography ranges from nearly level to gently rolling. In the north and east the topography is rolling. The major soils in this association are moderately suited to well suited for building and septic systems. Poor filtration capacity and excessive slopes are limitations that are found in many areas however.
4. Marlette - Capac - Metea. This association is situated in the central and extreme southeast portions of the Township. It covers approximately 4 square miles in total land area. In both areas the topography is hilly with several low wetland depressions and small lakes. The major soils are moderately well drained to poorly drained sands and loams. Most of the land is presently wooded or idle farmland. Those soils presently being farmed are fairly well suited for that purpose. Because of an underlying clay layer most of this association is poorly suited for building development and on-site septic systems.
5. Sebawa - Colwood - Brady. This association is found in the southwest corner of the Township and consists of nearly level, poorly drained sands, loams and silty material. Much of the higher ground in this area is well suited to crop land. The lower ground is excessively wet and is presently wooded. Because of the wetness and poor permeability, building development and septic systems suitability is very poor.

In a rural area such as Watson Township where public sewer facilities are not available and the prospect for their future provision on a large scale is unlikely, the ability of soils to accommodate private septic systems is a crucial element in land use planning. Due to poor percolation and wetness, and in the other extreme, the inability of permeable soils to adequately filter effluent before it reaches an under ground aquifer, many areas of Watson Township must be considered generally unsuitable for intensive development. As a result, the location and character of new development must in part be determined by the ability of soils to accommodate private septic systems.

The suitability of soils for supporting building structures can be another important influence factor


Watson Township
SOIL SUITABILTY MAP
Septic
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Septic Suitability*
Not Rated
Severe Limitations
Moderate Limitations
Slight Limitations
* Septic suitability for absorption fields. Limiting factors may include flooding, permeability, ponding, poor filtering, slope, subsidence and wetness properties of the soil. Site specific conditions may vary and some limitations may be overcome through site engineering.
Source: 1983 USDA Soil Survey of Allegan County. Maps georeferenced and digitized by Western Michigan University.
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WAYLAND TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP
N
W
E
S


Watson Township
SOIL SUITABILTY MAP
Development
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Development Suitability*
Not Rated
Severe Limitations
Moderate Limitations
Slight Limitations
* Development suitability for dwellings with basements. Limiting factors may include flooding, ponding, slope, wetness, low strength and shrink-swell properties of the soil. Site specific conditions may vary and some limitations may be overcome through site engineering.
Source: 1983 USDA Soil Survey of Allegan County. Maps georeferenced and digitized by Western Michigan University.
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WAYLAND TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP
N
S
E
W

on development. Some areas of the Township have soils which due to a high water table, flooding, shrink-swell potential, steep slope and other factors place severe limitations on the ability to construct buildings. Often times these limitations are so severe that special designs, special and costly construction methods and increased maintenance are required.

The preceding map set illustrates those areas of the township which have characteristics of soil, topography and drainage which are considered poorly suited for both structural development and septic systems. One map rates surface soils as to their suitability for supporting buildings (development) and the other rates soils on their ability to attenuate wastewater leachate from septic systems. The maps are based on information contained in the "Soil Survey of Allegan County, Michigan" prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The maps take into consideration soil percolation rates, wetness, filter qualities, shrink-swell properties and slope.

The soils which have been identified as being generally unsuitable for development or septic use but may still be judged useful based upon a more detailed site analysis or with on-site modification. However, significant development in these areas could greatly increase the potential for groundwater degradation and public health hazards and in turn, may eventually lead to a need and demand for public utilities. If such problems and their associated high cost are to be avoided, the density and intensity of development in rural areas with poor soils should be held to a minimum.

The "Farmland/Development Suitability Map" represents an analysis that gives further insight into farming and developmental capabilities of the various soils found in Watson Township. The analysis shows that the best farmland soils often times constrain non-farm use and development. As with soils in general, the primary limitations are poor drainage, wetness or rapid permeability, all of which contribute to an inability to support conventional on-site septic systems and/or present significant problems when constructing building foundations, basements and roads.

> **Soil Group A.** These soils (Darker green) are prime farmland or prime if drained. These soils pose severe septic and building limitations primarily due to wetness and ponding. These soils should be considered as the most desirable for long term farming purposes. Exceptions are prime soils that are found in flood plains and lowlands associated with stream courses. Intensive cultivation requires improved drainage and farming practices can be a significant threat to surface water quality.
>
> Theses soils should also be considered the least desirable from a development standpoint with or with out utilities and therefore should support the lowest densities of residential development. In Watson most of these soils are located in the southwest 1/3 of the Township.

Soil Group B. These (bright green) are soils well suited for specialty crops and/or moderately suited for field crops with severe septic system and severe building limitations. Due to high water tables and wetness these soils pose severe limitations on septic systems and buildings. These soils should be considered moderately to well suited for farming practices with increased management'. They are widely scattered and mostly in the northern half of the Township. Group B soils, along with Group A, should be considered the least supportive of development, with or with out utilities and therefore should support the lowest densities of residential development

Soil Group C These (yellow) are Prime Farmland or soils moderately suited for field crops or well suited for specialty crops with slight to moderate septic limitations and slight to moderate building limitations.

These soils are grouped together to illustrate the soil types that appear to be the most naturally suited for development without utilities. Many of the same soil qualities that allow them to support septic systems and structures also make them good farmland.

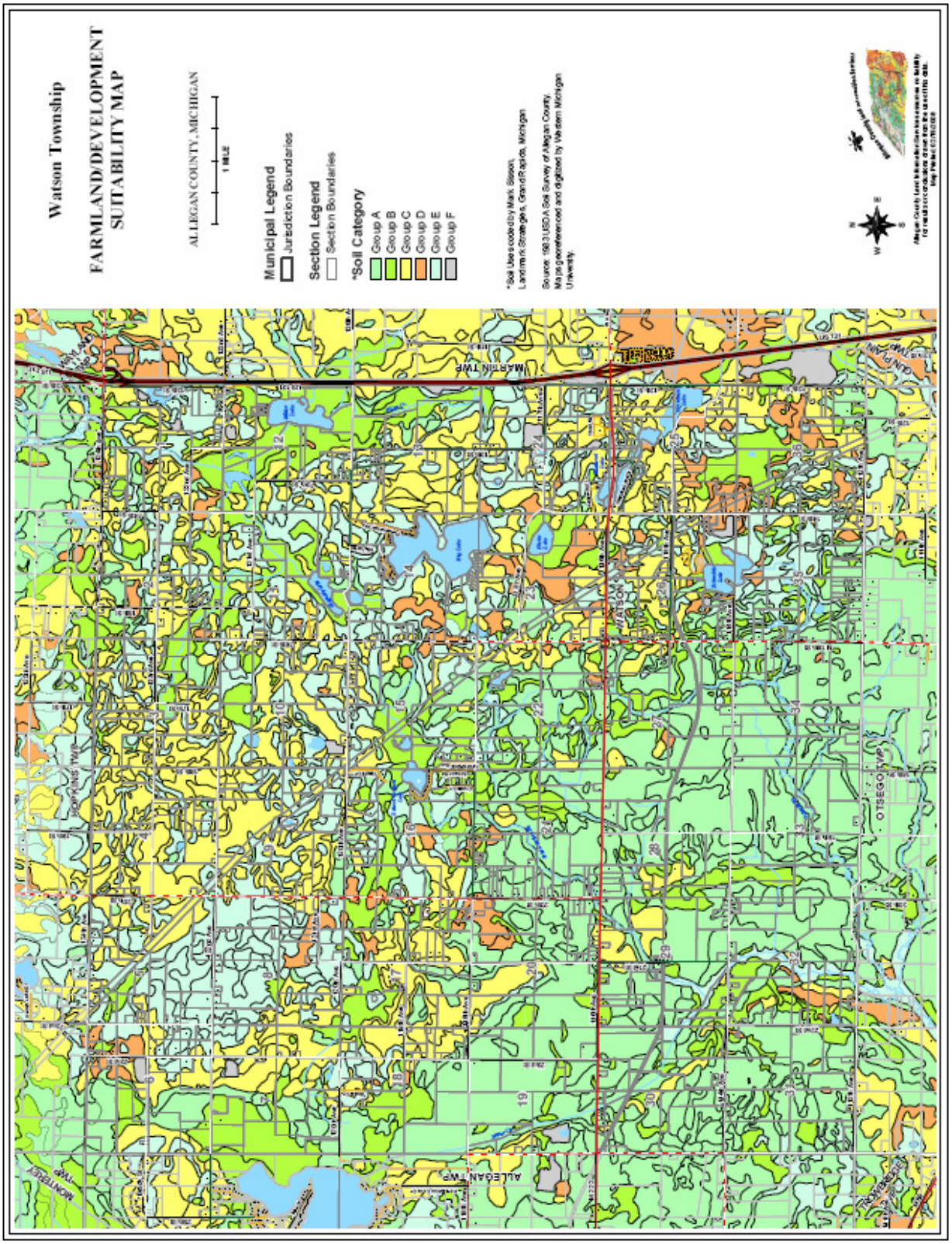
The high rolling nature of these areas in the north and northwest, and remnant woodlands help to make the northern part of the township unique to, both visually and environmentally. Due to the steep slopes, intensive erosion protection techniques and other farmland management methods are required to carry out farming on the soils. The importance of the areas as farmland should therefore not be considered as high as areas classified as prime or moderately suited farmland areas. Development should be limited due to the adverse environmental consequences that would result in the process of reshaping and altering the landscape in support of development.

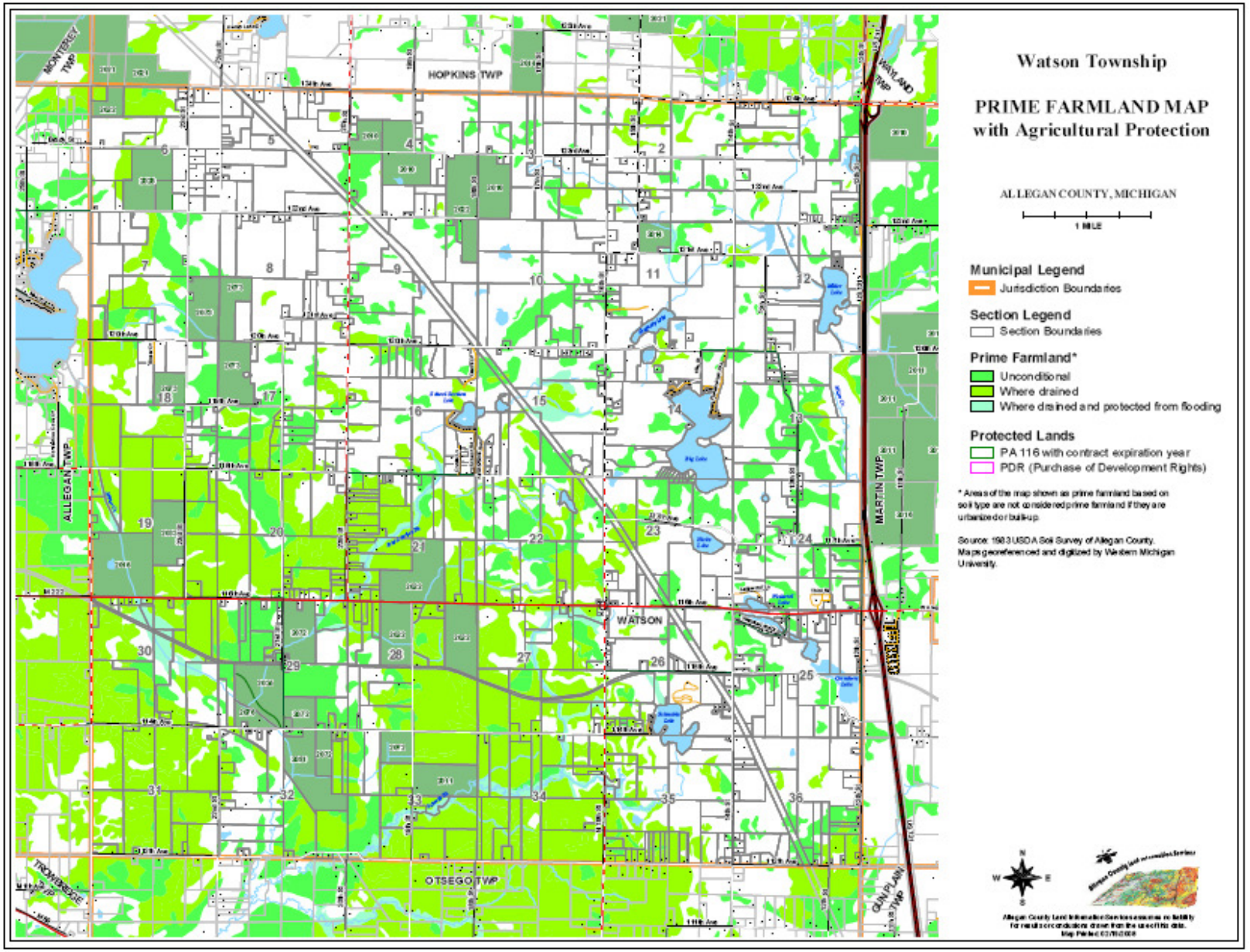
Soil Group D. These are (orange brown) Prime Farmland or soils moderately suited for field crops or suited for specialty crop soils with severe septic limitations but slight to moderate building limitations. They are scattered throughout but are not prevalent in the Township. The primary development limitation for these soils is rapid permeability which makes heavy or intensive septic system utilization a potential a threat to ground water. Very low development density maybe acceptable but increased densities of development should only be allowed if the ground water source is well protected. Moderate to high densities should only be allowed when utilities (at least sewer) are available.

Soil Group E. These soils (light blue) are poorly suited for farming and unsuited for development due to slope, wetness and flooding. The majority of these soils are in the steeply rolling hills found in the north and east central parts of the Township. In these areas slopes in excess of 12 percent and often in excess of 18 percent make farming difficult and intensive development impractical.

Also included are areas of wetlands that are unsuited for farming and development. The largest of these areas are found along the drainage courses and around the major lakes of the Township.

Soil Group F. Within Watson Township there are a small number of active or un-reclaimed sand and gravel mining operations where the surface and subsurface soils have been removed. These areas require independent investigation to determine their use capability.


Watson Township
FARMLAND/DEVELOPMENT
SUITABILITY MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 Mile
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
*Soil Category
Group A
Group B
Group C
Group D
Group E
Group F
*Soil Use coded by Mark Sisson,
Landmark Strategies, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Source: 1983 USDA Soil Survey of Allegan County.
Map georeferenced and digitized by Western Michigan
University.
MARTIN TWP
WATSON TWP
OTSEGO TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP


Watson Township
PRIME FARMLAND MAP
with Agricultural Protection
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Prime Farmland*
Unconditional
Where drained
Where drained and protected from flooding
Protected Lands
PA 116 with contract expiration year
PDR (Purchase of Development Rights)
* Areas of the map shown as prime farmland based on soil type are not considered prime farmland if they are urbanized or built-up.
Source: 1983 USDA Soil Survey of Allegan County. Maps georeferenced and digitized by Western Michigan University.
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WAYLAND TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP
N
W
E
S

The Prime Farmlands Map on the previous page shows the location of prime agricultural lands within the Township as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Prime farmland is land that is naturally endowed with the soil quality, growing season and moisture content that allows it to sustain high crop yields under average farming practices. The Prime Farmlands Map illustrates areas that are considered prime in their natural state as and also shows areas that are "prime" when augmented by improved drainage systems. Farm tracts that have been protected through enrollment in the P.A. 116 “Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program” are also illustrated on the map. The P.A. 116 program is further explained in the next chapter.

The Township's prime farmland soils are quite extensive but they are not universal. Most occur in the southwest one half of the Township. The existence of prime farmland and the fact that it and other “less than prime” soils in the township remains under active cultivation are very important factors in the development of the Master Plan for the Township.

Mining Resources

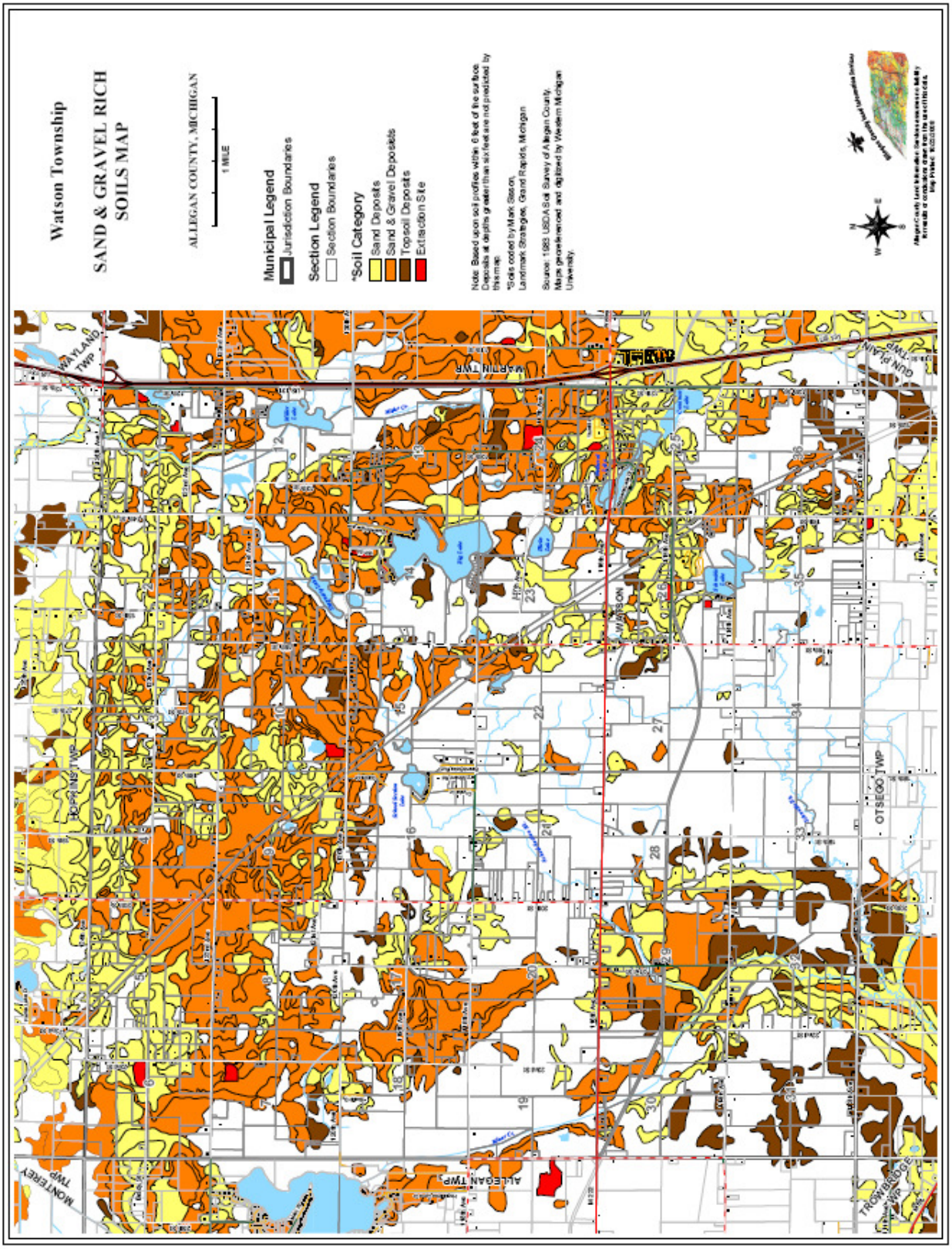
Within Watson Township are glacially created landforms which contain extensive deposits of sand and gravel. Used as construction material, these deposits are basic resources necessary for the construction industry and economic development in general. It is necessary and unavoidable that these deposits will continue to be tapped to support the construction of new roads and other development within and near Watson Township.

The following map illustrates the generalized classification of soils within 5 to 6 feet of the surface in terms of the possibility for finding usable deposits of construction materials (sand, sand and gravel and topsoil) As can be seen on the map, sand and gravel deposits are found extensively throughout the north and northeastern portions of the Township as well as in the southwest and southeast. At the present time, there are at least six (6) active sand and gravel mines in the Township.

Groundwater

All residents within Watson Township derive their domestic water supply from groundwater sources. The depth of the wells range from shallow stab wells to wells over 150 feet in depth. According to the Allegan County Health Department, water quality within the Township's aquifers continues to be generally good. Over the years however, there have been isolated instances where groundwater contamination has occurred.

Groundwater will continue to be the primary source of domestic water in Watson Township for the


Watson Township
SAND & GRAVEL RICH SOILS MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
*Soil Category
Sand Deposits
Sand & Gravel Deposits
Topsoil Deposits
Extraction Site
Note: Based upon soil profiles within 6 feet of the surface. Deposits at depths greater than six feet are not predicted by this map.
*Soils coded by Mark Sisson, Landmark Strategies, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Source: 1983 USDA Soil Survey of Allegan County. Maps georeferenced and digitized by Western Michigan University.
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MONTEREY TWP
MARTIN TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP

foreseeable future. Because of this, measures to protect the groundwater aquifers are important if residents are to continue to have safe supplies. From a general planning standpoint, such measures should involve limiting the densities of development in areas where the aquifers are shallow and unprotected by impermeable substrata.

Groundwater from private wells supply all of the water for residential, commercial and industrial land uses within Watson Township. Many of these wells draw from the confined glacial drift aquifer, which is separated from the ground surface by a *"confining"* layer of clay or rock. Some wells draw from the unconfined aquifer, which is more vulnerable to contamination from the ground surface.

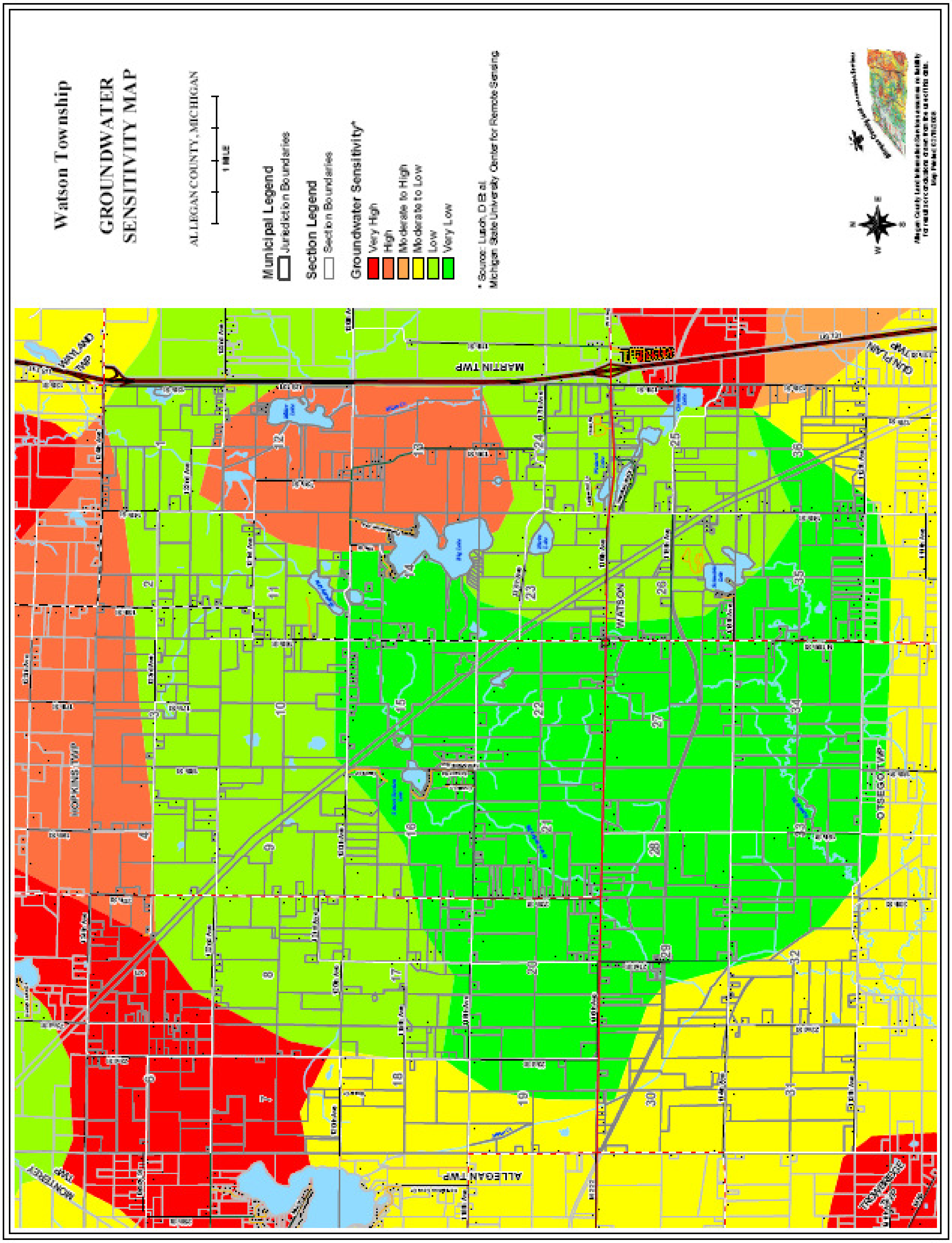
Groundwater is an important but unseen resource. Because it is not easily observed, it is particularly vulnerable to mismanagement and contamination. The leading causes of groundwater contamination in Michigan are from small businesses and agriculture. More than 50% of all contamination comes from small businesses that use organic solvents, such as benzene, toluene and xylene, and heavy metals, such as lead, chromium and zinc. The origin of the problem stems from careless storage and handling of hazardous substances.

There continues to be a general lack of data regarding the local aquifers and the extent to which contamination may already exist. Recent advances at the county and state levels in collecting and mapping well log data promise to improve this situation and may soon allow local units to access well data for use in local land use planning. The following map shows the “sensitivity of various regions of the Township to groundwater contamination. Areas in the Township which are most vulnerable to groundwater contamination are shown in red and are located in the north and east central areas. Those least vulnerable are shown in green and are found in the central portions. The green areas are protected by layers of heavy soils whereas the red and pink areas often have porous layers of soil that allow rapid infiltration of pollutants.

Drainage, Wetlands and Water Resources

There are a two major watersheds in the Township'. The northern one-third of the Township drains to the north and is included in the Miller Creek/Rabbit River watershed. The southwestern two-thirds of the Township drains to the south, within the Miner Creek/Schnable Brook watershed. Both of these watersheds are within the Kalamazoo River basin.

The natural drainage network consists of several small streams including Miller Creek, Schnable Brook, Miner Creek and School Section Brook. This system of streams has been greatly modified


Watson Township
GROUNDWATER
SENSITIVITY MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Groundwater Sensitivity*
Very High
High
Moderate to High
Moderate to Low
Low
Very Low
* Source: Lusch, D Et al.
Michigan State University Center for Remote Sensing
MARTIN TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
ALLEGAN TWP

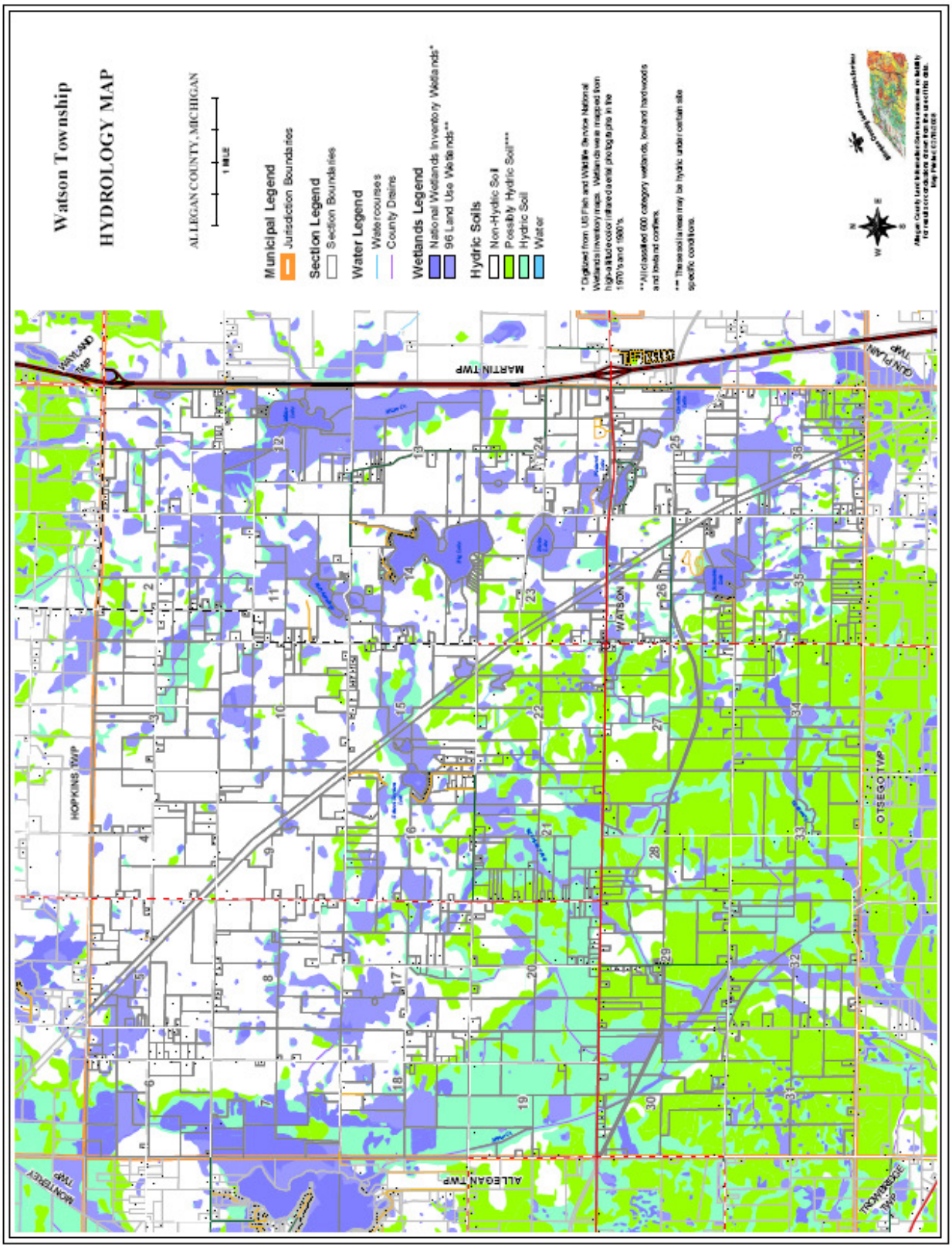
by man and augmented by an extensive system of surface drains and a few underground drains. The majority of these "county drains" are in the southwest portion of the Township where the topography is relatively flat and the water table is naturally high. The improved drainage network has allowed much of the areas most naturally fertile soils to be put into cultivation. The Allegan County Drain Commission has primary responsibility for maintaining this drainage system. There are no major flood plains in the community and with the exception of minor flooding around several of the local lakes, flooding has not historically been a major problem within the Township.

The largest lake is Big Lake. It is located in Section 14 and encompasses 140 acres of area. Other major bodies of water include Miller Lake, Schnable Lake, School Section Lake, Caruthers Lake, Wetherall Lake and Hicks Lake. With the exception of Hicks Lake and Caruthers Lake, each has seen some degree of residential and or recreational development. Only Big Lake has an established public access site. The fluctuation of water levels on some of these lakes has caused occasional septic field failures for homes located in low shoreline settings. The effects of these failures on surface water quality should be closely monitored.

In addition to several lakes being located in the Township, there are numerous smaller, water filled depressions and wetlands. Wetlands can be found ranging from an acre or smaller to areas in excess of 150 acres. In particular, larger wetland areas are located in proximity to Miller Lake, Schnable Lake, School Section Lake and Shagnasty Lake. Smaller areas are located throughout the township, most predominately in the eastern half. Many but not all of the wetlands are classified by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality as “protected wetlands” due to size or classification issues. However, for the purposes of land use planning, a wetland label is supported by the characteristics of water and/or saturated soils, plant and animal habitat and soil type. Wetlands play an important role in maintaining the ecological health and biological diversity of the place where they are located. Wetlands, depending on their type, can serve to filter water contaminants, prior to entering the groundwater table, and should be protected to the maximum extent possible.

Woodlands/Greenspace

Wooded areas are present in the township with the most extensive of these associated with steep hills and low lying wetlands and lakes. While there are no large scale upland forests remaining in the area, taken in combination with wooded wetlands there remains a fairly extensive patchwork of woodland cover especially in the north and east. Local forested lands include northern, central and lowland hardwoods; aspen and birch associations, and pine stands. These wooded areas provide a variety


Watson Township
HYDROLOGY MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 Mile
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Water Legend
Watercourses
County Drains
Wetlands Legend
National Wetlands Inventory Wetlands*
96 Land Use Wetlands**
Hydric Soils
Non-Hydric Soil
Possibly Hydric Soil***
Hydric Soil
Water
* Digitized from US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory maps. Wetlands were mapped from high-altitude color infrared aerial photographs in the 1970's and 1980's.
** All classified 600 category wetlands, lowland hardwoods and lowland conifers.
*** These soils areas may be hydric under certain site specific conditions.
MARTIN TWP
HOPKINS TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
OTSEGO TWP
CLYDE TWP
CLIN PLAIN TWP
MONTEREY TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP

of habitat settings for wildlife and are an important attribute of the local landscape. In the future, the limited woodland areas are likely to be attractive focal points for housing development. Development designs which recognize tree stands as an important amenity to be preserved should be required. Such designs will lead to better projects and will contribute to maintaining the overall rural character of the Township.

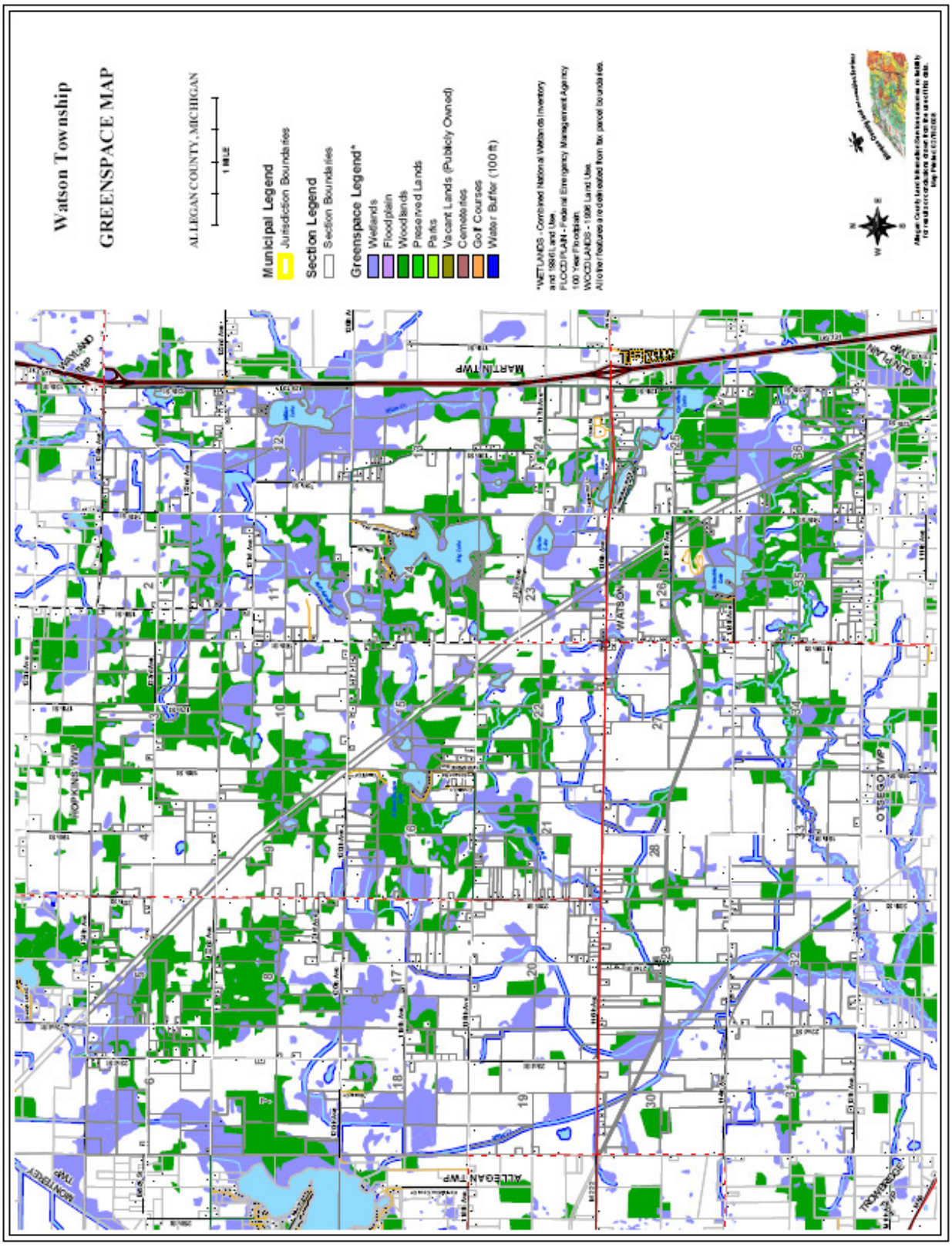
Wildlife

With a majority of the Township dedicated to agriculture and open land, it is prime habitat for white tail deer. The brush, woodlands, wetlands, native grasslands and waterways also provide good habitat for squirrels, and raccoon. Other wildlife includes cottontail rabbits, red and gray fox, muskrat, mink, opossum, skunk, various song birds, ruffed grouse, woodcocks, Great Blue Herons and waterfowl. Sandhill Cranes, and Trumpeter Swans may also exist in the Township and the Eastern Massasauga rattle snake may also occur here and is protected by the State of Michigan as a species of special concern. The many lakes along with the miles of small streams and open drains also support a variety of game fish. This variety of wildlife is an impressive resource and provides those who hunt, fish, and enjoy viewing wildlife with invaluable recreational opportunities.

Existing Land Use

The pattern of land use within Watson Township is typical of most rural townships in the region. Most development consists largely of low density, single-family housing, and is distributed rather thinly throughout the Township. The Township's total land area consists of 35.4 square miles or 22,650 acres. The existing land use remains heavily agricultural in nature but also includes large areas of wooded and open land with scattered rural residential concentrations. In general, the most intense development can be found within one half mile of the US-131 and M-222 interchange where a mobile home park and small industrial park have located and around several of the Township's lakes. Very little commercial development activity has occurred here and most residential development activity has been limited to small private road developments and single lot development along many of the Township's rural roads. A handful of gravel mining operations also occur in the northern half of the Township. Other land uses include scattered institutional uses such as churches, cemeteries the Township Hall, and several commercial campgrounds and RV parks. The only formal public recreational use is a DNR public access site on the north end of Big Lake.

Actively tilled or idled farmland covers over two-thirds of the Township. The heaviest


Watson Township
GREENSPACE MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 Mile
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Greenspace Legend*
Wetlands
Floodplain
Woodlands
Preserved Lands
Parks
Vacant Lands (Publicly Owned)
Cemeteries
Golf Courses
Water Buffer (100 ft)
*WETLANDS - Combined National Wetlands Inventory and 1978 Land Use.
FLOODPLAIN - Federal Emergency Management Agency 100 Year Floodplain.
WOODLANDS - 1978 Land Use.
All other features are delineated from tax parcel boundaries.
MARTIN TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
OVERISEL TWP
HEATH TWP

concentrations of farming activity are located in the southwestern one-third of the Township where the topography is generally flat. At the present time there are nearly 1700 acres of land within the Township that are enrolled in the P. A. 116, Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. This compares to the over 2908 acres that were enrolled in 1990. Under this program property owners agree to relinquish their non-farm development rights for periods in excess of 10 years in exchange for tax credits. Most of the land presently enrolled in this program is in the area considered "prime farmland". Of the land presently in P.A. 116, over 1300 acres are enrolled for periods that will keep them devoted to farming or open space use beyond the year 2020. The "Prime Farmland Map presented in Chapter 1 illustrates the location and enrollment expiration dates for land presently enrolled in the program.

In the past two decades the largest relative decrease in land use or cover occurred in the agricultural category. In 1978 the total number of acres being cultivated was placed at 13,000 acres. In 1996 the figure was 7735 acres. That number is expected to be even smaller today. The vast majority of change was not the direct result of development but rather the conversion of active cropland to fallow fields or inactive shrub land.

Within Watson Township the largest and most intensive area of residential development is found in Section 24 in the Country Meadows Mobile Home Park. This mobile home park contains approximately 60 mobile home sites and comprises roughly 40 acres. Other concentrations of homes are found on the west side of School Section Lake, on the north end of Big Lake, on the north end of Miller Lake and on the west side of Schnable Lake. Collectively, the settlements located on these lakes represent approximately 60 acres of land.

Throughout the remainder of the Township residential development has occurred in a scattered fashion along existing roadways. This has resulted in a noticeable lineal pattern of residential growth, especially along M-222, 16th and 20th Streets.

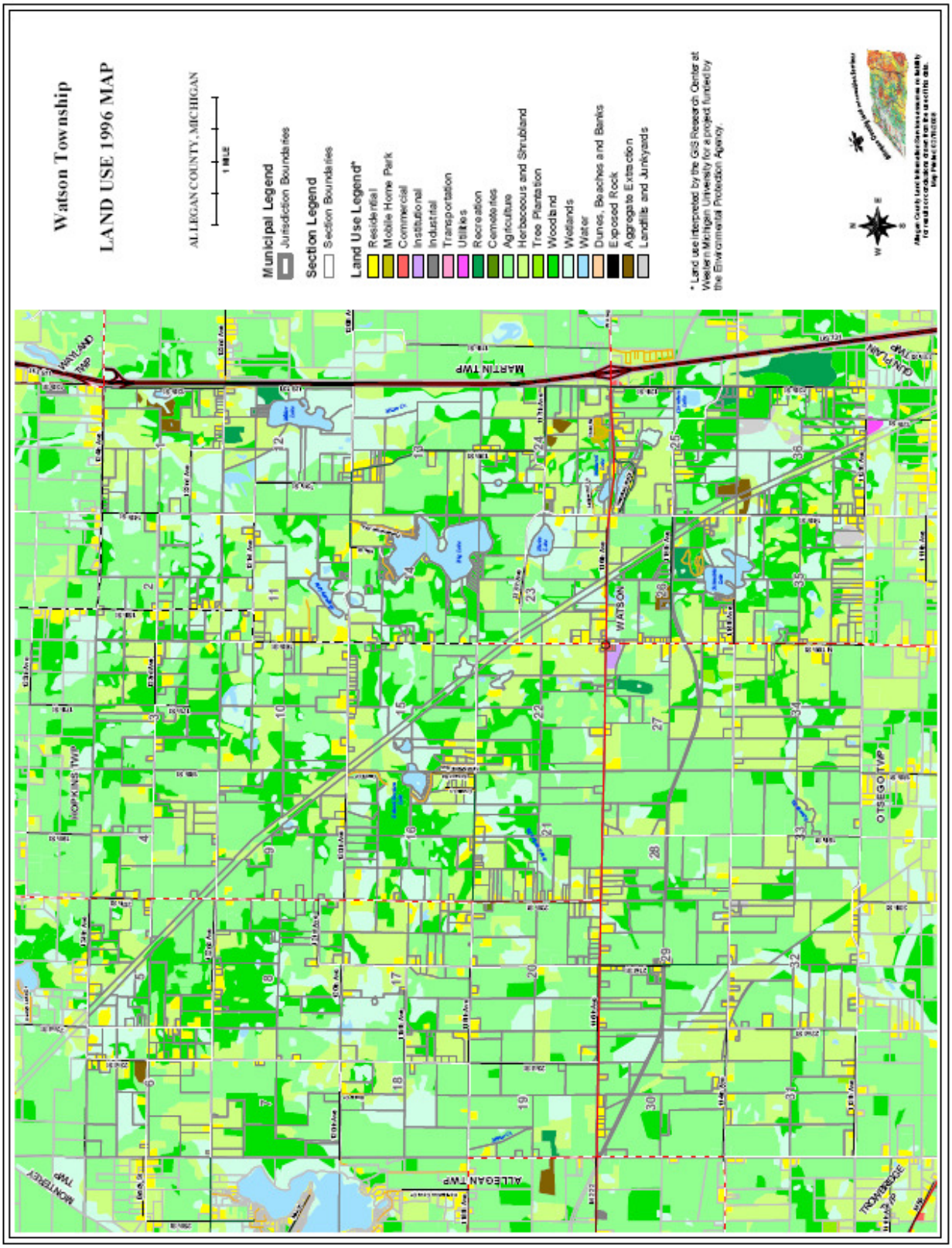
Being that Watson Township is very rural in character, residential land uses comprise a relatively small percentage of the Township's total land area. It is estimated that the Township's roughly 750 dwelling units occupy roughly 1,400 acres of land or less than 6% of the Township's total area. On average just less than 2.0 acres of land is estimated to be devoted to each residence.

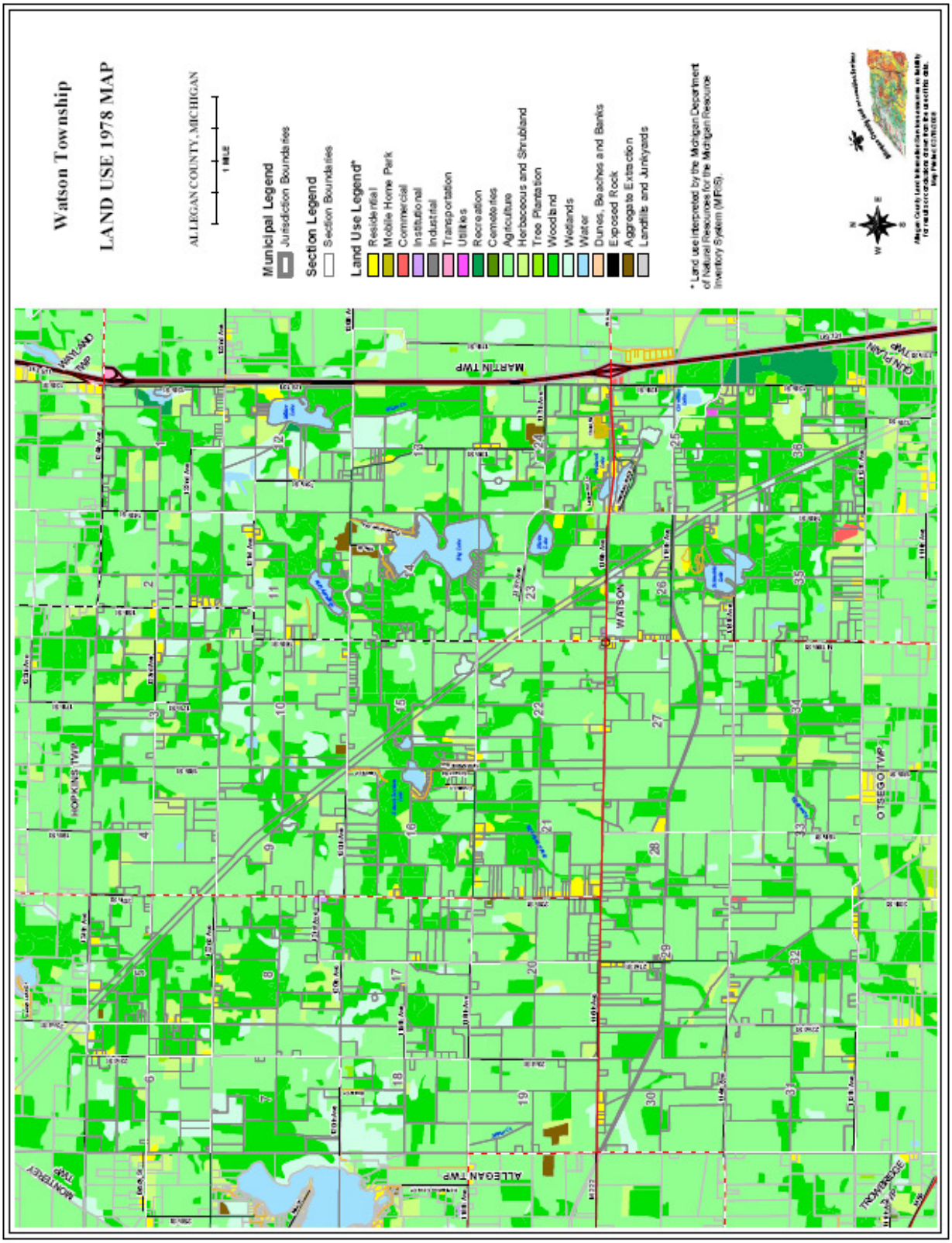
The following maps illustrate the land use and cover for the Township in the years 1978 and 1996. Based on the two maps the number of acres used for residential uses of all classes increased from approximately 400 acres in 1978 to roughly 1160 acres in 1996. That represented an increase of over

750 acres or 188%. Since 1996 the increase has not been quite as dramatic but given an increase of over 175 single family homes with an average lot size of 1.5 acres at least 260 additional acres of land for a total of approximately 1400 acres is now devoted to residential land uses.

A further analysis of land used for residential purposes reveals the following:

1. Platted subdivisions are found primarily around the small lakes. There have been no new plats in over 20 years. The platted areas total approximately 100 lots and roughly 45 acres of land. Of the platted lots, roughly one half have been built on. Parcel sizes are in the 6,000 to 15,000 square foot range. Single family homes on platted lots consist of approximately 7 percent of the total number of homes. Many of these homes were originally developed as seasonal cottage type, dwellings. Since the 1990's a number of seasonal homes have been converted or replaced by larger, full time residences. Also since the mid 1990's, a number of small private road and site condominium developments have occurred in areas of the township both in association with the lake fronts and elsewhere. As a result, while the lakefront developments remain the most prevalent form of neighborhood development, they are no longer the only form of rural neighborhood development in the Township.
2. Most homes are still situated on parcels of property that are within the range of 1 to 5 acres. In addition, there are many homes situated on parcels that are of a size of 5 to 10 acres. It is estimated that these homes collectively consume nearly 1200 acres of land. The vast majority of land consumed by these residences is wooded or otherwise unimproved. Typically, only a small portion of each parcel is actually devoted to residential purposes.
3. There are between 260 and 275 home sites located on large parcels (ten acres or more) of property. Most of these are "farmstead" residences situated on large holdings of contiguous land.


Watson Township
LAND USE 1996 MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Land Use Legend*
Residential
Mobile Home Park
Commercial
Institutional
Industrial
Transportation
Utilities
Recreation
Cemeteries
Agriculture
Herbaceous and Shrubland
Tree Plantation
Woodland
Wetlands
Water
Dunes, Beaches and Banks
Exposed Rock
Aggregate Extraction
Landfills and Junkyards
* Land use interpreted by the GIS Research Center at Western Michigan University for a project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency.
WATSON
MARTIN TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
OTSEGO TWP
HOPKINS TWP
MONTEREY TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
CLEON TWP


Watson Township
LAND USE 1978 MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Land Use Legend*
Residential
Mobile Home Park
Commercial
Institutional
Industrial
Transportation
Utilities
Recreation
Cemeteries
Agriculture
Herbaceous and Shrubland
Tree Plantation
Woodland
Wetlands
Water
Dunes, Beaches and Banks
Exposed Rock
Aggregate Extraction
Landfills and Junkyards
* Land use interpreted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the Michigan Resource Inventory System (MIRIS).
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
HOPKINS TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE

Chapter 3
COMMUNITY FACILITIES
AND POPULATION PROFILE

As the number of people living in Watson Township increases over time, the need for local community services and infrastructure improvements has also increased. Below are brief descriptions of existing community facilities and infrastructure in the Township.

Township Hall

The Township Hall is a focal point within the community. The Township hall is located on 118th Ave. approximately ½ mile east of 20th St. Contained within the hall is an office area, meeting space with a capacity for approximately 50 persons, and kitchen facilities. The Township Fire Department is also housed on this site. Recently expanded, it is anticipated that the existing Township Hall will provide adequate capacity for Township administrative, and fire needs in the foreseeable future.

At the present time there are no library facilities located in the Township. Residents must rely on facilities located in Hopkins, Allegan, Martin and Otsego.

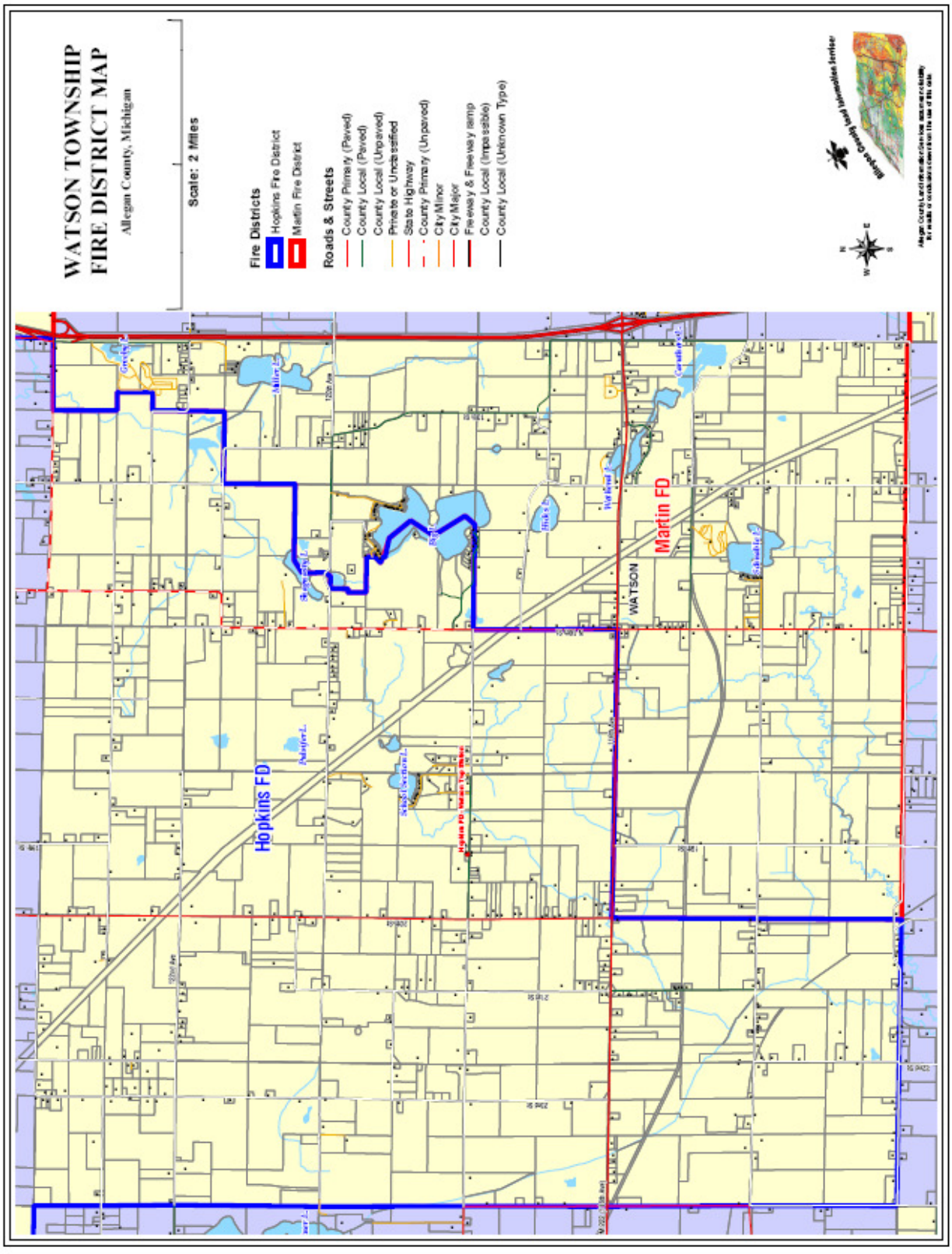
Fire and Police Service

As shown on the Fire District Map, the Township is served by two adjacent fire districts that collectively provide fire protection for all of Watson. They include the Hopkins Area Fire District based out of Hopkins to the north and the Martin Fire District based to the east. Some fire apparatus for the Hopkins District is based at the fire barn attached to the Township Hall on 118th St. The map on the following page illustrates the service areas of each fire district. The Township is also covered by mutual aid agreements with other nearby fire departments.

General police protection for Watson is provided by the Allegan County Sheriff's Department, which operates out of the City of Allegan, 4 miles to the west. There is also a Michigan State Police post located in the City of Wayland, approximately 6 miles to the north. Allegan County has developed a "911" emergency notification system for county residents. All portions of Watson Township are connected to the system.

Cemeteries

The Township continues to operate and maintain two cemeteries. One is located on 20th St., south of 118th Ave. The other is located at 117th Ave. and 14th St.


WATSON TOWNSHIP
FIRE DISTRICT MAP
Allegan County, Michigan
Scale: 2 Miles
Fire Districts
Hopkins Fire District
Martin Fire District
Roads & Streets
County Primary (Paved)
County Local (Paved)
County Local (Unpaved)
Private or Uncategorized
State Highway
County Primary (Unpaved)
City Minor
City Major
Freeway & Freeway ramp
County Local (Impassible)
County Local (Unknown Type)
Hopkins FD
Martin FD
WATSON

Utilities

There are no public sewer or public water utilities now serving the township and Watson Township is not under agreement that would enable utilities to be extended into its jurisdiction. The nearest utilities are located in Martin Township where sanitary sewer has been extended to serve the US-131 Drag Strip.

Recreational Opportunities

Public Parks and recreational facilities in Watson are limited. Currently, there are no dedicated public parks within the Township. The Township has however, acquired a large parcel of land on M-222 near 20th St. for future parks purposes. Public fishing access is provided on Big Lake and nearby Miner Lake. The largest land area devoted to private recreational use includes the Campground located on Miller Lake and the Hidden Ridge RV Park in Section 1 off 12th St. Other nearby recreational facilities include public school athletic and playground facilities located in Hopkins and Martin, the Martin-US-131 Drag Strip and Motor Park on 12th St. south of M-222 in Martin Township. At present, there are no schools within the boundaries of the Township.

Road System

The road network in Watson Township is laid out in a modified grid formation and contains the usual hierarchy of State highway, primary and local roads. The grid system provides a range of alternative routes throughout the Township and although the Townships numerous lakes have caused the true grid pattern to be disrupted, the street pattern effectively diffuses most local traffic. The Township's major east-west thoroughfare is M-222 connecting Watson to US-131 and the City of Allegan. Most local roads are fully improved: however, a number of unpaved road segments exist throughout the Township. U.S. 131 passes along the eastern edge of the Township providing easy access to the larger metropolitan areas of Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids but never entering the township's boundaries.

The following table provides estimated 24-hour traffic counts at select locations for two previous years. The counts were taken by the Allegan County Road Commission. The highest recorded traffic counts have been on the M-222 (a state route) east of 19th St. On the local roads the highest volumes are found on 16th St. north of the Township line and 20th St. south of 122nd Ave. The counts on the local roads fall well below the standard capacity of most two-lane paved roads, which is 8,000 vehicles per 24-hours. Even if traffic increases at a rate of 4 percent each year, however, as is a normal rate of increase used by the Allegan County Road Commission,

traffic counts should not exceed 8,000 vehicles per 24-hours on any of the local road segments in the foreseeable future. The need for ongoing maintenance and periodic resurfacing of the roads should be anticipated however.

Table 1
Two Way 24 Hour
Traffic Counts

Street Segment	2003	2007
16th Street North of 112th Ave.	1589	1734
16th Street South of 120th Ave	298	234
20th Street South of 122nd Ave.	1124	1108
112th Ave. West of 12th St.	360	436
M-222 East of 19th St.	N/A	6900

Source: Allegan County Road Commission, 2008

For planning purposes, it is useful to recognize that various roads within Watson Township have different functions. An understanding of these functions can lead to decisions as to the desirable use of each road segment, road right-of-way widths, and adjoining land use. The layout of the Township's road pattern can be readily identified on the following Township Base map. Below is a brief description of four road types which are important to Watson Township.

Limited Access Highway

These facilities are devoted entirely to the movement of large volumes of traffic over high speeds over relatively long distances. These roads provide little or no direct access to individual properties adjoining these roads. U.S. 131 is an example and because of US-131 Watson Township is within a reasonable commute to jobs within West Michigan making it an attractive place to live.

Major Arterial Roads (State Highways and County Primaries)

The major function of these roads is to move a good volume of traffic within and through an area. A secondary function is to provide access to adjacent land areas. In Watson Township, these roads include M-222 and the county primary roads - 20th St, and 16th St. south of 118th Ave.

Minor Arterial Roads (County Locals)

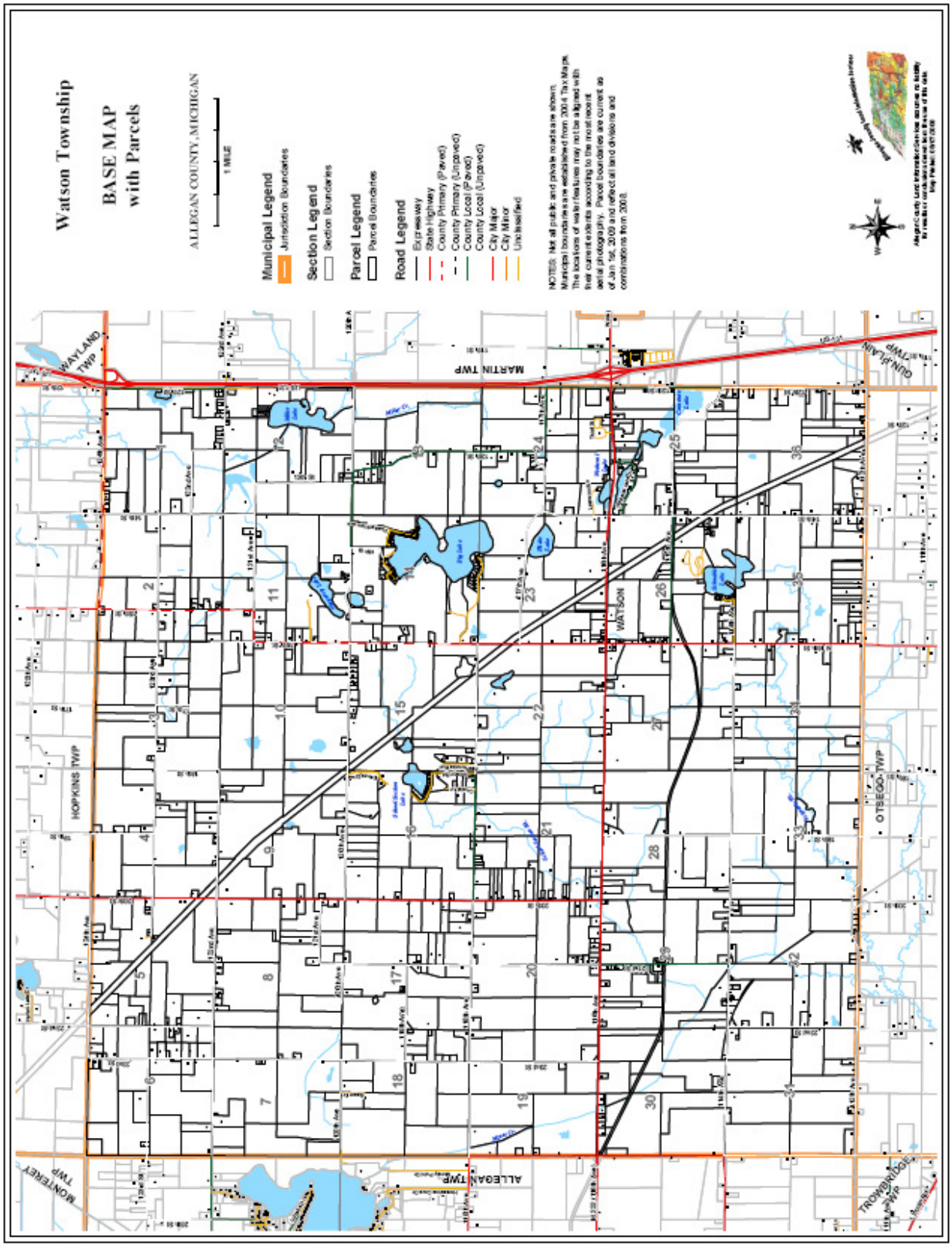
These roads provide for internal traffic movement within a community and connect these local land areas with the major arterial road system. Providing direct access to adjacent properties is also an important function of these roads. The majority of the roads in Watson now fall under this classification. However, over time, as development in the Township increases, traffic volumes along minor arterial roads will also increase. Some minor arterial roads may eventually become major roads.

Local Roads

The sole function of local roads is to provide access to adjoining properties. In many cases, thru-traffic is discouraged. Examples of such roads in Watson Township are found around several of the lakes located in the Township. Over time they will become more numerous as more subdivision development takes place. Private roads are also classified as local roads.

Population

The 2000 U.S. Census provides the most recent population profile of Watson Township and is the basis for


Watson Township
BASE MAP
with Parcels
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Parcel Legend
Parcel Boundaries
Road Legend
Expressway
State Highway
County Primary (Paved)
County Primary (Unpaved)
County Local (Paved)
County Local (Unpaved)
City Major
City Minor
Unclassified
NOTES: Not all public and private roads are shown.
Municipal boundaries are established from 2004 Tax Maps.
The locations of water features may not be aligned with
their current extents according to the most recent
aerial photography. Parcel boundaries are current as
of Jan 1st, 2009 and reflect all land division and
combinations from 2008.
WAYLAND TWP
MARTIN TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP
WATSON
HOPKINS TWP
OTSEGO TWP
MONTEREY TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP

the information presented below. While much of the data is now nearly a decade old, it is none-the-less reasonably accurate for purposes of understanding the composition of the community, making comparisons and identifying important trends. The following table and graph shows that growth in the Township has been substantial and has progressed at a steady pace between 1970 and 2000. From 2000 to around 2005, the growth rate in fact, is fairly dramatic but the economic downturn that Michigan has experienced in mid-decade has also slowed growth locally. This underscores the fact that growth is often cyclical and leads to the conclusion that the rapid increases seen early in the decade are not likely to carry through the remainder of the decade.

Table 2
Total Population Growth

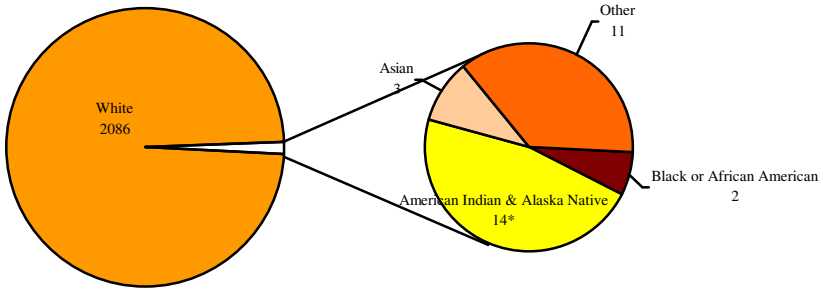
Decade	Population	Increase/Decrease	% In Decade
1970	1331	-	-
1980	1658	327	24.5%
1990	1897	239	14.4%
2000	2086	189	9.9%
Est. 2008	2275	189	9.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau and WMRPC. The 2008 estimate has been extrapolated from 2020 projections published by WMRPC.

Rural townships in West Michigan tend to have homogeneous populations and this is the case with Watson Township. Over 99% of the population is white. The remaining balance of persons are represented by other races including African Americans (0.1%) Two and one half percent (2.5%) of the population is listed as Hispanic or Latino.

Figure 1

Race - Watson Township - 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Though the Township is very homogeneous by race, considerable variation exists in the ancestry of the population. Ancestry backgrounds reflect nearly 20 major different groups. By size the most significant of these groups within the Township are those of German descent (23.5%), Dutch decent (approximately 16%), English (14%), Irish descent (approximately 11%) and Polish (5%).

There were approximately 694 households in the Township in 2000, 82% of which consisted of families (blood-related). This compares to the Allegan County average of only 74%. The average household size is approximately 3.01 persons. The average family size is 3.30 persons. Approximately 64% of the population 15 years and older was married in 2000, 14% separated, divorced, or widowed, and 21% single (never married). Of those persons 25 years and older in 2000, 47% had completed 4 years of high school and 10.4% had at least a college bachelors degree. The high school education attainment rate in the Township was approximately seven percentage points higher than the Allegan County as a whole, and the college degree attainment level was approximately five percent higher than the county average (15.8%).

The Township's year 2000 median age of 32.9 years is somewhat younger than the Allegan County and state averages, which were 35.2 and 35.5 years respectively. In 1990, the median age in Watson Township was 27.7 years. Consistent with state and national trends it is very clear that Watson Township's population is aging and is not escaping the social, health and fiscal implications associated with the aging of post World War II baby boomers.

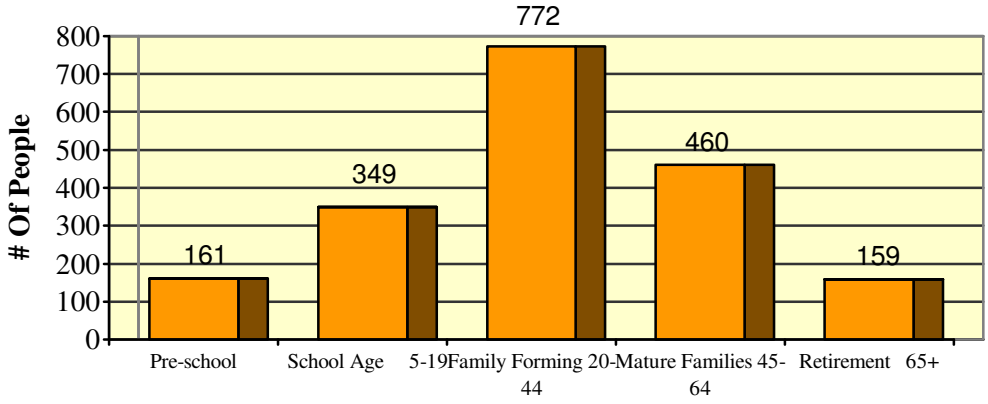
A good measure of change within a community can be obtained comparing age distribution over time. This helps to determine for example, the type of housing demands and recreational facilities that may be needed. If a community has a large segment of its population that is younger, the community might benefit from child care establishments and playground facilities. If there are a small number of retirees living here, it may be because older persons are being forced to move away due to a lack of senior living opportunities. Conversely, a higher than average number of retirement age persons may be a reflection that the area is the home of a large nursing home or a retirement community.

Watson Township's population is distributed by age in a typical pyramidal shape as illustrated in Figure 2. The 20 to 44 age bracket contains the highest number of persons. These people are in the family forming years. This group is also the prime wage earning population. A high number is indicative of an area with a strong demand for single-family housing, schools and recreational facilities. The age group numbers in the front end of the bracket (20 to 34 years) foretell future increases in the pre-school and school age group. The age group numbers in the bracket of "35 to 44 years" forecasts the upcoming increase in the numbers of mature families and retirees. In Watson Township nearly 18.2% of the population falls in this age group. This number is a full two percentage points higher than in Allegan County as a whole.

In 2000, 14% of the population was age 45 to 64. This is the empty–nester group with generally the highest incomes. Taken together, the age statistics of Watson Township in 2000 supported an

Figure 2

Major Age Group Comparisons
Watson Township, 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



increased demand for starter homes, but only a modest demand for empty nester housing and senior living opportunities. Quite often the demand for empty nester housing in rural townships is filled in nearby villages and towns. The numbers also begin to indicate a potential future demand for passive recreational facilities that older residents might enjoy such as walking trails and a shift away from active facilities such as ball fields and tennis courts. The beginning of the modest shift in the age makeup toward the older age cohorts can be seen in the Table 3 comparison of 1990 and 2000 age groups.

Table 3
Major Age Group Comparisons
Watson Twp.

		%	
	2000	**1990 vs. 2000**	
Under 18	652	32.8	31.3
18 to 64	1,285	59.2	61.6
Over 65	149	8.1	7.1
Total	**2,086**	**100**	**100**

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

Income

Median household incomes and per capita income and person below the poverty level are traditionally used to measure the economic strength of an area. They are also helpful as indicators of disparities between communities and often are directly related to other factors such as educational attainment and occupational skill level. Income can also have land use implications. People with high incomes often invest more in their homes and generally have higher disposable income. These factors generally mean more support for nearby commercial activity, larger homes and more cars per family.

In 1999 the per capita income for Watson Township was $18,095 and the percentage of people in the Township living below the 1999 poverty level was 5.8%. At the same time for Allegan County as a whole the per capita income was at $19,918 and the poverty level stood at 5.0%. While the Township per capita income is lower and poverty level is higher than the 1999 County average, the poverty figures for both the Township and Allegan County are several percentage points lower than state and national averages, which stood at 10.5% and 12.4%, respectively, in 1999.

In 1999, the median household income in the Township was $49,070. That figure compares with $45,815 for the County and $44,667 in Michigan. The following figure compares the household incomes of several adjacent townships. It shows that Watson Township's household income is higher than those of all of its neighbors.

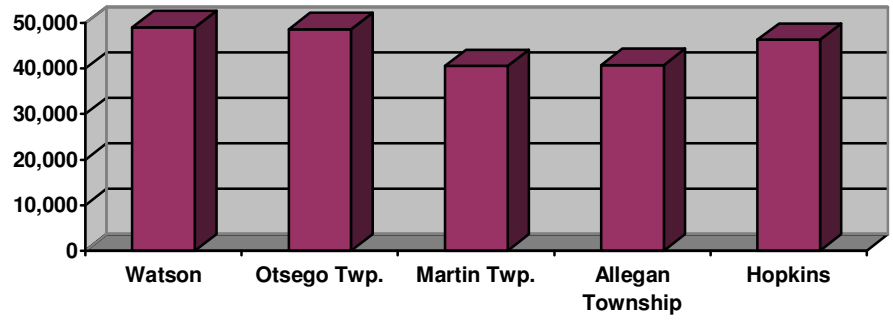
Housing Characteristics

There were 753 housing units in Watson Township at the time of the 2000 census. Between 1990 and 2000 there was an increase of 103 units or a nearly 16% increase.

Figure 3

Comparison of Household Incomes in Neighboring Communities in Dollars 2000

Source; 2000 U.S. Census



Two hundred seven or 27.5% of the dwellings in the Township were built prior to 1939, 76 (10.1%) were built between 1940 and 1959, 67 (8.9%) between 1960 and 1969, 139 (18.5%) between 1970 and 1979, and 90 units or (12.0%) between 1980 and 1989. The age of the Township's housing stock is indicative of a primarily rural area which has experienced most of its growth since World War II and as a bedroom community serving people employed in nearby towns and metropolitan areas. Since 2000, residential building permit data suggest that approximately 95 homes, or another 12.6%, have been added.

Figure 4
Year Dwelling Structure Was Built Watson Townhip 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

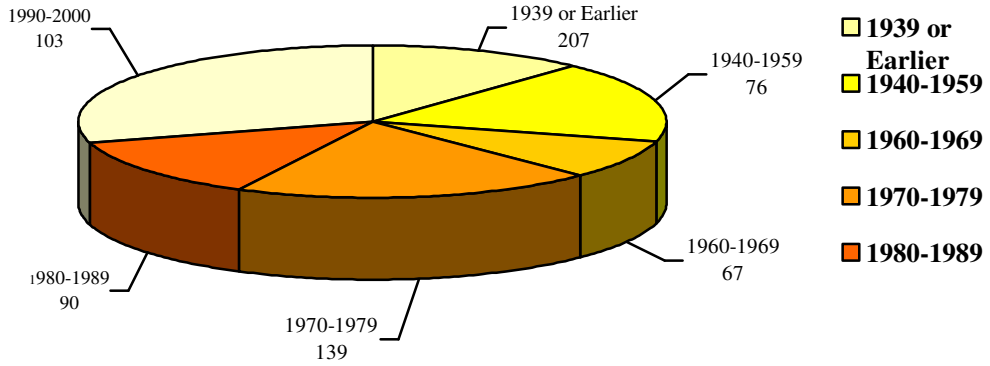


Table 4
Residential Building Permit Activity

Year	Single Family Homes
2000	11
2001	13
2002	13
2003	8
2004	11
2005	19
2006	14
2007	6
Total	**95**

SOURCE: Watson Township Building Inspector

Table 5 presents US census figures for the number and percentage of dwelling units by type within Watson Township for the year 2000 and for previous decade. In 2000, the majority of the units (73%) were conventional single-family homes, with the second largest category being mobile homes (approximately 25 percent). The remaining units (1%) are contained in two or multiple-family structures or are single family units used for seasonal or migratory labor purposes.

Table 5
Housing Units by Type

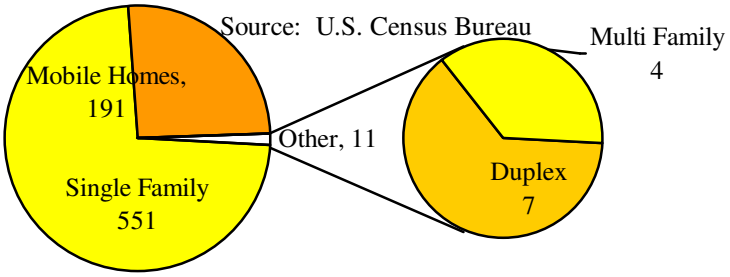
	# in 2000	Percent in 2000	# in 1990	Percent in 1990
Single Family Home	551	73%	530	81.5%
Two Family	7	0.9%	NA	-
Multi-Family (3 or more units)	4	0.3%	NA	-
Mobile Homes	191	25.4%	120	18.5%
Total	**753**	**100%**	**650**	**100%**

Source; 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Based upon building permits and empirical observations there has been only minor change in the mix of housing type in recent years. The majority of dwelling units constructed since 2000 continue to be site built single family homes but there does appear to be an increase in the overall number of manufactured homes being placed on sites outside of mobile home parks. It is estimated that the percentage of homes categorized as manufactured homes now stands at just over 25%. Many communities attempt to maintain the percentage of single family homes of all types outside of mobile home communities at 70% or above and the percentage of manufactured homes within mobile home communities at less than 20%. In Watson, this figure is less than 8%. Watson Township presently supports one mobile home community and roughly one half of the manufactured homes in Watson are sited within it. The remaining 10% of the housing stock is commonly comprised of various forms of attached and multi-family units.

All of the township's residences use well and septic systems.

Figure 5
Housing Units By Type - 2000 - Township Of Watson



In 2000, the vast majority (91.8%) of the 694 occupied housing units in Watson Township were owner occupied and only 22 units were classified as seasonal. Of the occupied housing units, 8.2 percent or 57 units were renter occupied in 2000. The median value of homes in 2000 was $110,100. For the renter occupied units, all paid a monthly rate of less than $1000 and the median rent was $459.00 in 2000.

One measure of the health of a community is the ratio of renter occupied homes to owner-occupied homes. Many growing communities try to maintain a 3:1 or better ratio of owner-occupied to rental housing within the market. The Watson Township ratio of 12 to 1 is well above that range but is not unusual for predominately rural townships.

In 2000, 7.2% of the housing stock or 54 units were vacant. Of the homes not considered rental, the vacancy rate was only 2.3%. For rental units the vacancy rate was 1.7%. The balance of the vacancies were attributed to seasonal homes. As a rule, when overall housing vacancy rates

exceed 5%, community stability begins to be a concern and when vacancy rates exceed 10% there is a good chance that the community is experiencing problems of blight. The vacancy statistics for Allegan County at large was 1.6% for non-rental units and 7.7% for rental units

Over the years, Watson Township has experienced an increase in population per dwelling unit. In 1980, there was an average of 2.74 persons per dwelling unit, in 1990- 2.91 and in 2000, the average household size was 2.98. The upward trend runs counter to a noticeable trend nationwide toward smaller family units and increased numbers of empty nesters, but is not unusual for rural areas such as Watson where families with children continue to dominate empty nesters such as young singles and senior citizens.

Employment

In 2000, there were 1490 persons 16 years and over representing the local Watson Township labor force. Of those, 1022 persons or 68.6% were employed. The 2000 census revealed that the average worker in the local labor force took approximately 27 minutes to travel to work. This supports the conclusion that Watson Township is a bedroom community with the majority of its residents working in other communities. Less than 1/2% of workers walked to work and 3.8% worked at home.

The following table illustrates occupations broken down into U.S. Census categories for Watson Township, Allegan County and the State of Michigan. Relative to the County and State, employment in the Township falls more heavily in the "production and transportation" categories than the other groupings. These occupations can be characterized by somewhat higher than average wage rates. This is consistent with the income information for the Township which shows the Township's household income to be higher than some of the neighboring jurisdictions which are more dependent upon service sector employment.

Table 6
Categorized Occupations-2000

	Watson Township		Allegan County		State of Michigan	
Occupation Category	**Employment**	**% of Total**	**Employment**	**% of Total**	**Employment**	**% of Total**
Admin., Prof. & Mgmt.	197	19.3%	12,520	24.0%	1,459,767	31.5%
Services	122	11.9%	6,866	13.2%	687,336	14.8%
Sales and office	193	18.9%	11,493	22.1%	1,187,015	25.6%
Construction & maint.	135	13.2%	5,897	11.3%	425,291,	9.2%
Production & transportation	360	35.2%	14,448	27.7%	856,932	18.5%
Farming & forestry	15	1.5%	879	1.7%	21120	0.5%

Source: Woods & Poole

Table 7 provides 2004 employment numbers and makes projections to the year 2014. U.S. Labor market statistics show that the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Labor Markets currently have unemployment rates of between 9.6% and 10.5%. While these rates are at modern historic highs, they are substantially below the state average of over 14% that occurred in the first half of 2009. Although employment is expected to remain weak for at least another two-year period, Allegan County still remains a relatively good employment center with a higher employment level than the state average.

When the forecasts in Table 7 were made in 2004, the greatest employment growth was projected in the sectors of professional and business services, education and health, construction and leisure, and hospitality. Even with the current economic recession, relative rates of growth in each of those sectors may be seen to hold course. Overall growth will however, be dependent on the length and severity of the recession and are likely to be more modest than indicated below. While private sector employment in the area is still expected to be dominated by manufacturing and retail, in the upcoming years most job growth is anticipated in the construction, finance, and health sectors and manufacturing will see the slowest growth.

Table 7
Industry Employment Forecasts
Grand Rapids Area

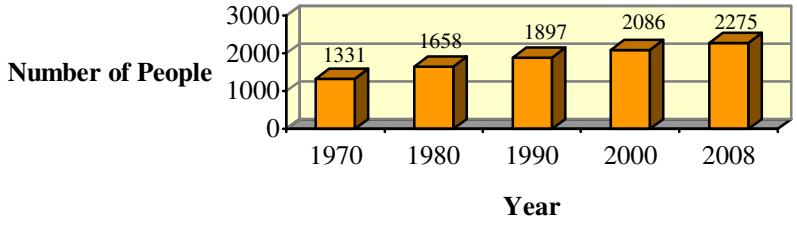
Industry	Employment 2004	Employment 2014	#	% Change
Natural Resources & Mining	390	420	30	6.1%
Construction	25,1990	28,340	3,150	12.5%
Manufacturing				
Durable Goods	82,890	118,410	2,260	1.9%
Non-Durable Goods	33,260	34,480	1,220	3.7%
Service Providing Industries				
Wholesale Trade	27,200	29,900	2,680	9.9%
Retail Trade	52,780	57,400	4,700	8.9%
Transportation; Warehousing & Utilities	15,820	17,210	1,390	8.8%
Information (Publishing-telecom)	6,500	6,810	310	4.8%
Finance & Insurance	18,190	20,070	1,888	10.3%
Real Estate	5,340	5,860	520	9.6%
Professional & Business Services	63,580	79,420	15,840	24.90%
Education & Health Services	96,580	112,940	16,360	16.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	39,740	45,630	5,890	14.8%
Other	21,430	24,220	2,790	13.0%
Government	17,530	18,540	1,010	5.8%

Source: Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth

Chapter 4
PLANNING ANALYSIS:
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Population trends refer to the historical direction a community has followed in respect to its population counts while population projections refer to the direction a community is anticipated to follow in future years. The Township has followed a steady increasing population trend over the past 35 years in reaching its current population, as illustrated in Figure 6. During that time the Township began the transition from a predominately agricultural community toward a predominately rural residential area. That trend continues today. From 1970 to 2000, the population, increased from 1331 to 2086, or 755 persons. The average annual rate of increase was 1.89%. During the same period Allegan County and the state of Michigan grew at average annual rates of .075% and .039% respectively. A continuation of the 30 year trend places the 2008 estimated population for Watson Township at approximately 2275 people.

Figure 6
Total Population Growth:1970-2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



It is also interesting to place the Township's population change into a regional context. Table 8 and Figure 7 compare the 30 year population growth history in Watson Township with that of several other neighboring Townships. As shown, growth is similar to the increases witnessed in most of the surrounding Townships. While Watson Township has not grown as rapidly as Allegan County as a whole or as fast as Gun Plain or Monterey Townships, its growth is substantial especially with respect to its implications on land use.

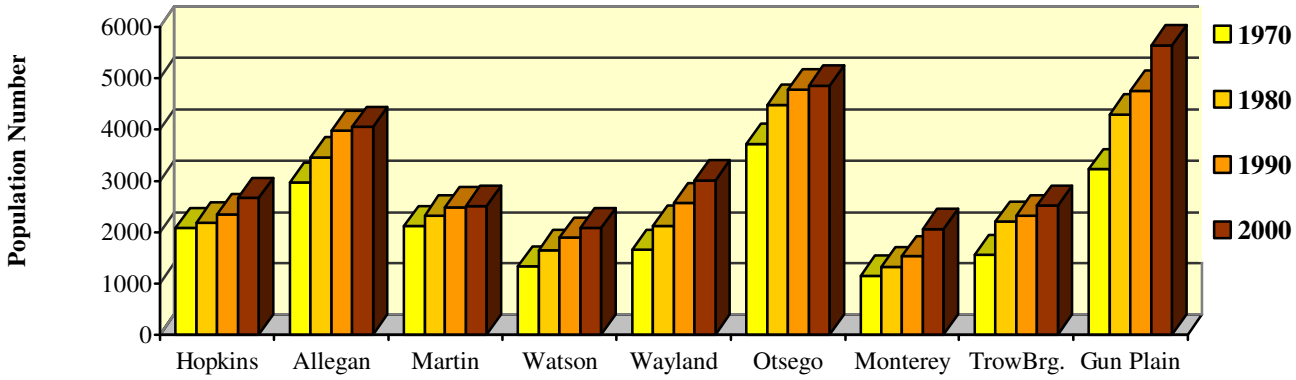
Statistical averaging techniques have been employed to project the Township's population growth to the year 2030. The projections included in Table 9 and Figure 8 anticipate that over the next 25 years the Township's population is likely to increase at rates similar to the historical rates. Due in part to more intensive growth pressures close by (but not in the Township) and also in part to Watson Township's land use policies and lack of utilities, the rate of growth in Watson can be predicted to continue to be somewhat lower than that experienced in several surrounding communities and the county as a whole. The Township's population will therefore represent a

Table 8
Historical Population Change
Watson Township and Nearby Townships

Township	1970	1980	1990	2000	Change 1990 to 2000	% Change 1990/2000
Watson	1,331	1,658	1,897	2,086	189	10.0%
Hopkins*	2084	2109	2350	2671	321	13.7%
Allegan	2970	3464	3976	4050	74	1.9
Gun Plain	3231	4295	4754	5637	883	18.6
Martin*	2125	2331	2487	2514	27	1.1
Monterey	1148	1320	1534	2065	531	34.6
Otsego	3721	4479	4780	4854	74	1.5
Trowbridge	1563	2210	2328	2519	191	8.2%
Wayland	1,661	2,131	2,569	3,013	444	17.3%
Allegan County	66,575	81,555	92,557	105,665	13,108	14.2%

Source: US Bureau of Census
* Includes Village populations

Figure 7
Historical Population Change
Watson Township and Nearby Townships
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



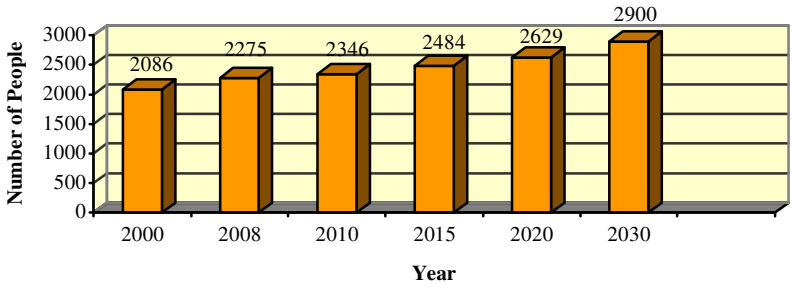
somewhat smaller proportion of the County's overall population in the future than is presently the case. The population projections indicate an additional 814 persons by the year 2030. Actual growth will be dependent on, regional, state and national economic conditions and as previously indicated, can be influenced by local land use and development policies.

Table 9
Population Projections
Watson Township and Allegan County

	2000	2008	2010	2015	2020	2030	Projected 2000 to 2030 increase
Watson Twp.	2,086	2,275	2,346	2,484	2,629	2900	39.0%
Allegan County	105,665	113,918	122,993	133,045	144,266	163566	54.8%

Source: The Watson Twp. and Allegan County 2010, 2015, and 2020 projections are a combination of percentage and arithmetic projections published by WMRPC. 2008 and 2030 projections have been extrapolated from those projections.

Figure 8
Population Projections
WatsonTownship
Source: U.S. Census Bureau and WMRPC



The number of anticipated future housing units within a community can be determined by utilizing a statistical formula. By dividing the projected population by the current average number of persons per dwelling unit, a projected number of housing units for various years is obtained. Table 10 presents projected total dwelling units based on the population projections found in Table 9. By subtracting the number of homes estimated to be in existence in 2008 from the projected number in 2030 it can be seen that essentially 209 new housing units are projected. This represents a 27 percent increase over the 22 year period.

In rural communities, it is important to look at population growth and economic development activity in a regional context and to recognize that development does not begin or end at political boundaries.

Table 10
Dwelling Unit Projections
Watson Township

2000	2008	Ave. 2000 Persons/Occ. Household	2010	2020	2030	Projected Increase from 2008 to 2030
694	755	3.01	779	857	964	209

Source: Data extrapolated from 2000 Census,

Converting the projected increase in dwelling units into raw land needs results in the following comparative estimates;

- 209 acres of land used at 1 dwelling per developable acre.
- 1416 acres of land used at .5 units per acre (2 acre zoning).
- 105 acres of land used at 2 units per acre (20,000 Sf. Lots).

Table 11 takes the projected population of the Township and applies basic planning standards or "rules of thumb" to determine rough projected additional acreage requirements for retail,

industrial, and recreational land for 2030. The amount of land that is ultimately allocated in each category is one of the primary functions of land use planning process.

Table 11

Non-Residential Land Needs

	Current Standard [1]	2030 Projected Need
Retail and service uses (41 sf. per capita x 3/43560)	6.4 acres	8.2
Industrial (.5 to workers per person x 1 ac. per 10 to 20 workers)	57 to 113 acres	72 to 174 acres
Recreation and Open Space (11 ac./1000 persons)	25 acres	32 acres

Sources: Development Impact Assessment Handbook, ULI, 1994
Population Projections, Landmark Strategies, 2008

[1] Current standard reflects the estimated land need based the application of ULI ratios to the 2008 population. It does not reflect a current land inventory.

Projection Summary

The forecasts presented above assume that the Township will continue to direct growth in the same essential patterns exhibited in the past. However, in a community such as Watson, which is located in commuting proximity to urban areas, the growth of housing and population will be strongly impacted by trends experienced within the larger geographic region. For Watson, this involves consideration of the growth characteristics of Northeast Allegan County, the Grand Rapids/Holland Metropolitan area and the Kalamazoo metropolitan area. Major determinants of future population and housing growth will include the following:

- The availability of public utilities or lack thereof.
- The timing and success of eventual casino development in nearby Wayland Township. which will impact the availability of jobs locally and elsewhere within commuting distance.
- The economic health of the nearby metropolitan areas.
- The effectiveness of growth management attempts in Watson and adjacent Townships and the quantity of housing development accommodated.
- Future gasoline/energy prices and their affect on people's willingness to commute to work. The quality of roads, congestion and the travel time to and from the area will also affect people's willingness to commute.
- The quality of life in terms of the availability and quality of local support services

required for development. These include police and fire protection, streets and sidewalks, parks and the quality schools and shopping opportunities.

Development Implications

The preceding chapters and sections of the Master Plan have described the existing land use, socioeconomic, and demographic conditions in Watson Township. This section draws from that data as well as from the public workshop and survey presented in the appendices. Following are some of the key planning issues or concerns that the Future land use plan must address:

1. The growth patterns north of Kalamazoo and south of Grand Rapids along US-131 indicate that growth pressure will continue to be felt in Watson Township. These pressures have been exacerbated by the completion of M-6 and the relative ease that people have in accessing the Township from the north.
2. Developing solutions to balance the need and desire to preserve farmland while not squelching private property rights and desirable economic development is very important in the planning process. Restrictive zoning and voluntary preservation options such as the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and other farmland preservation techniques must be recognized as methods by which to preserve farmland. In cooperation with Allegan County's farmland preservation initiatives, the Township is in a good position to facilitate the implementation of one or both of these voluntary methods.
3. The Township's farmland and its rural character are its most identifiable features. That "open space" may be its own worst enemy. As a result of society's desire for elbow room and clean air, farmland is lost and the countryside is converted to homes and other uses.
4. By requiring higher density residential development to be clustered and or located in strategic areas around the Township, farmland and open space can be preserved elsewhere in the Township. This helps to meet housing needs of the area, places priority on preserving open space and farmland and creates ability to better plan for economically feasible public utilities.
5. The region's transition from an agricultural and industrial based economy to a service base economy will on average result in a lower average per capita income for residents and newcomers. This will increase pressures for more affordable

housing. The demand for more affordable housing means that pressure to allow more dense residential developments will increase. Dense development scattered haphazardly throughout the Township will fail to enhance or preserve farmland and rural character and will inevitably degrade environmental quality. Cluster development or conservation subdivision and open space preservation regulations are mechanisms that can be more fully utilized to preserve open space. These are constructive growth management tools that have recently been implemented in Watson Township. Combined with PDR and TDR options and overlay regulations designed to protect important natural features Watson Township will be in a better position to manage its rural resources.

6. The Township lacks public sanitary sewer and water utilities. Good locations for future industrial development have been identified but they lack critical infrastructure. Coupled with the general economic shift away from industry to a service based economy major employment opportunities are not likely to develop locally. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in Watson Township and there is likely to be pressure to adopt land use policies that will help to foster small-scale "incubator" service uses and industries in the rural areas.
7. As in all communities, a full range of housing styles and opportunities should exist in the Township. Wherever possible, this requires the proactive allocation of sufficient land areas for manufactured housing communities and various other housing styles and densities.

Chapter 5
GOALS AND POLICIES

Planning goals are strategic statements that express and define the community's future. They provide long-range direction for virtually all planning activities. For that reason there needs to be a good understanding of the community's planning goals both in terms of the physical direction that they are leading you and in terms of social, economic and regulatory implications. Equally important, there needs to be a consensus among the elected officials and the Planning Commission that the goals stated in the Master Plan are relevant, realistic and reflective of the overall needs and desires of residents and land owners. For these reasons, it is important that elected officials and the Planning Commission periodically review and revalidate its planning goals and the tools that it uses to achieve its goals.

A community's Goals and Policies are related and co-dependent. The policies are in essence action statements that if pursued and implemented will serve to allow the community to reach its goals. The policies along with certain other recommended implementation measures also need to be periodically updated and validated.

- *A goal is a broad general statement of a final purpose or ambition; a position or situation which a community seeks to achieve.*
- *A policy is a specific action position that is specifically needed to accomplish a goal. Policy statements are most often directive in tone and often referred to as "objectives".*

The following Goals and Policies build upon the goals and objectives included in the previous Master Plan. They were refined subsequent to a process of identification and discussion of a number of current and emerging development issues. The process included analysis of demographic and development trends and discussions with Township officials about local development issues, concerns and priorities.

The statements below are listed by topic areas. Following each goal are policies that serve to state the specific means of achieving the desired goal.

GOAL #1

The Environment

To insure that new development takes place in an environmentally consistent and sound manner and that the potential for flood hazard, soil erosion, disturbances to the natural drainage network

and surface and groundwater contamination are minimized, thereby protecting natural resources and preserving scenic and environmental quality, as well as minimizing the public burden.

Policies

- Through zoning and site plan review, encourage approaches to land development that take natural features such soils, topography, steep slopes, hydrology, and natural vegetation into account in the process of site design.
- Implement Low impact design standards for commercial and industrial development and private streets.
- Natural Features Inventory and Protection-Conduct detailed natural features inventory and rank "high", "medium", and "low" priorities for preservation. Adjust development regulations accordingly by the institution of one or more of the following for use in development review and long range planning efforts:

  - Wetland, regulations (Township level)

  - Shoreline and stream bank regulations

  - Steep Slope Regulations

  - Woodland Protection

  - View Shed Regulations

  - Wildlife corridor

  - Open Space Preservation Plan

GOAL #2

Agriculture and Rural Character

To conserve agricultural land, promote the agricultural economic base of the Township and preserve the rural character of the community.

Policies

- Support the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, P.A. 116 of 1974 by encouraging use of preservation agreements by area farmers and approving such agreements that are consistent with the land use plan.
- Through zoning, discourage extensive non-farm development from occurring in those areas that contain high quality farmland.
- Monitor needs of the agricultural community. Consider "value added" land uses e.g. facilitate agri-tourism type business opportunities in the AG zone
- Reevaluate A-1 District boundaries and ensure adequate rural buffers
- Enable local farmers to participate in the Allegan County PDR program
- Monitor the effectiveness of the adopted Open Space preservation Project, Designated Open Space District and Conservation Subdivision PUD provisions.

GOAL #3

Housing and Residential Development

Provide for a wide range of housing opportunities within the township while encouraging a general low density pattern of residential development consistent with the rural/agricultural character

found in most areas of the township. Encourage higher densities to occur in areas most appropriate for such development

Policies

- Provide for the construction of single family homes, placement of contemporary quality mobile homes and construction of multiple housing at acceptable densities.
- Minimize delays due to review and processing of development regulations.
- Identify and plan for additional land area that may support higher density developments such as MHP and multi-family development should infrastructure be made available.
- Implement density standards that are consistent with the natural capacity of soils to handle on-site septic systems and which promote the preservation of the township's rural and agrarian qualities.
- Promote clustering as the preeminent and favored form of development to achieve desired “gross densities”.
- Encourage the concentration of development in locations where future public utilities and services can be most economically and efficiently provided, when they are needed.
- Improve infrastructure (utility and street improvements) policies and standards to recognize both public and private community utility systems.
- Adopt “concurrency” as an overarching principal pertaining to new, large residential and business developments.
- Continue to rely on the proximity to transportation and the real potential for future utilities as major factors in directing future medium and high densities in the eastern part of Township.

GOAL #4

Commercial Development

Provide for the basic service and shopping needs of the township's residents by directing commercial development to take place in suitable areas but in a manner which limits commercial strip development, minimizes conflicts with surrounding land uses and prevents unnecessary conflicts with the movement of traffic along major highways.

Policies

- Limit commercial development to a few concentrated areas, rather than allow strip development. This will entail "nodal" development at key locations along M-222 and elsewhere instead of commercial strip development.
- Anticipate the implications of the US-131 12th Ave. interchange and the Martin Speedway on adjacent land uses and plan for limited commercial development areas at each location.
- Avoid high densities of commercial development that would lead to the need for public utilities and services that cannot be economically and efficiently provided in the foreseeable future. Improve concurrency policies for infrastructure.
- Encourage the shared use of commercial driveways and limit the number and spacing of driveways.
- Promote high quality commercial development through local site plan review and site

design standards.

- Implement low impact and green approaches to site and building design.
- Evaluate using adaptive reuse of farm buildings for limited low impact service uses.

GOAL #5

Industrial Development

Provide for limited light industrial development in areas that are easily accessible by major transportation facilities.

Policies

- Re-evaluate district boundaries and additional potential industrial locations and promote the development of an industrial park and the clustering of industrial uses in the US-131/M-222 area rather than piece-meal single lot development.
- Promote high quality industrial development through local site plan review and site design standards while encouraging low impact and green approaches to site and building design.
- Evaluate using adaptive reuse of farm buildings for limited low impact industrial or service uses.
- Improve concurrency policies for infrastructure as related to intensive industrial uses and industrial processes involving significant traffic volumes and high volumes of water and wastewater.

GOAL #6

Economic Development

Increase the nonresidential tax base of the township and the availability of jobs within the community, thereby increasing the ability of the township to provide services, bettering the economic well being of residents and improving the overall quality of life in the area.

Policies

- Accommodate limited, high quality commercial development.
- Accommodate limited, high quality industrial development.
- Monitor and re-evaluate the effectiveness of the Township's tax abatement policies.
- Coordinate economic development initiatives with Allegan County and nearby Martin, Allegan and Hopkins Townships.
- Implement commercial and industrial land use goals and objectives.

GOAL #7

Land Use Conflicts

Discourage and avoid conflicts between land uses.

Policies

- Prevent the wide scale scattering of intensive and higher density non-farm land uses in the rural country-side.
- In areas of higher density, provide for the separation between conflicting land uses by

designating suitable transitional districts or requiring greenbelt or buffer areas.

- Institute or improve landscape and site location and design standards as needed for special uses that are identified as potentially problematic.

GOAL #8

Streets and Transportation

Maximize the efficiency, safety and ease of maintenance of the road system. Make provisions for road improvements that will promote growth in a way that is consistent with adopted goals and policies relating to land use.

Policies

- Limit the number of driveways along major highway arterials by encouraging the shared use of driveways by commercial establishments and other major uses through site plan review.
- Encourage clustered development.
- Maintain reasonable minimum standards for private streets while insuring that private streets do not interfere with the logical extension of the public road system or conflict with farmland preservation goals.
- Establish priorities for incremental road improvements based on the Master Plan and areas of highest need.
- Improve concurrency policies relative to the adequacy of roads prior to rezoning and development.
- Improve cooperation with the Allegan County Road Commission so that routes for future roads are planned and coordinated well in advance.

GOAL #9

Quality of Life

Prevent the establishment of uses which, by their existence, tend to lower property values and the quality of life within the community.

Policies

- Monitor and implement regulations necessary to prevent establishment of substandard housing units.
- Monitor and implement regulations aimed toward controlling outdoor storage of household equipment, household goods and other materials, where objectionable.
- Enforce regulations requiring the adequate siting and screening of those land uses which tend to have a blighting influence on the community.
- Provide necessary resources and expertise to enforce the provisions of the zoning ordinance.
- Encourage separation between conflicting adjacent land uses.

GOAL #10

Recreation

Provide for diverse recreational opportunities for all resident population groups.

Policies

- Develop a recreation plan which identifies the recreational needs of the community and sets forth a strategy for the acquisition and development of recreational facilities.
- Work closely with Allegan County, adjacent townships and the school districts in the provision of recreational facilities that can be used by area wide residents.

GOAL #12

Public and Private utilities

Common private community sized water wastewater systems are to be designed in a manner that permits the common distribution and collection lines to be easily connected to public systems should they become available in the future.

Policies

- Subject to plan approval and administrative details, the Township may assume ultimate responsibility of each common wastewater or water system.
- User associations shall be responsible for daily operations, cost of service and normal maintenance but major long term capital replacement, if needed may create the necessary assessment vehicles for financing required capital improvements. .
- Deed Restrictions shall be placed on each common wastewater or water system notifying all owners that the system may be required to connect to, or otherwise be made public in the future.
- Where feasible private collection and distribution lines and appurtenances of a private common water and waste-water treatment system to be designed and built to municipal standards adopted by the Township.

Chapter 6
FUTURE LAND USE

The Master Plan and Future Land Use Map will serve as a guide for future growth. The Future Land Use Map is a graphic manifestation of the previously presented goals and objectives and the ideals of managed growth and physical resource protection. It takes into consideration many factors including existing land use, land use trends and development issues, public input, demographics, environmental resources and physical limitations and a variety of transportation and infrastructure influences.

The most intensive land uses in the Township are likely to occur in a more or less linear fashion along the M-222 and US-131 corridors with a more centralized node near and around the US-131/ M-222 interchange itself. Due to these highways and easy access for automobiles, this corridor pattern of development is fairly common. If not controlled, however, this linear sprawl and a leapfrog pattern of development can threaten the Township's remaining rural character. Three basic planning principles can be embodied within the Master Plan to help minimize sprawls negative affects. They include:

> ***Utilize and Preserve Agricultural Resources.*** The Township continues to have a resilient agricultural community with an abundance of productive farmland. Land fragmentation and the proliferation of non-farm residences within the farming areas disrupt the efficiency of farm operations and results in irreconcilable land use conflicts. The majority of new development should be located where soils and topography are not fully conducive to modern agricultural practices and where conflicts with farming operations will be minimized.
>
> ***Smart Growth: Efficiency and Compactness.*** Most development activity whether as singular projects or as a series of smaller proposals with a collectively large impact, should be directed to locations where the existing commercial services and public improvements such as improved streets can be maximized. Significant development should only be zoned and allowed to occur when the infrastructure, (roads and utilities and protective services such as police and fire are capable of supporting and sustaining it. Where allowed, rural residential clusters of homes should use natural and man-made boundaries and landmarks to create well defined neighborhoods and to create sufficient buffers between home sites and nearby agricultural operations and sensitive environments.
>
> ***Protection of Natural Systems.*** Natural areas and open space define much of the area's visual and physical character. Special attention is required to protect environmentally sensitive areas, particularly along streams and around lakes and wetlands. Environmentally focused planning and regulatory tools are required to protect shorelines, wetlands and floodplains and to preserve key natural habitats and wildlife populations.

General Overview

The general pattern of development envisioned for the Township is one of continued dominance by agriculture, especially in the southwest and west and by very low density rural development. In the rural areas where residential development is supported the Township's numerous lakes are envisioned to continue as focal points of residential growth and elsewhere, small clusters of residential development are envisioned as the predominant form. Overall, the gross density of residential development is not expected to exceed one dwelling unit per five acres. Ample, contiguous areas of open space that will enable the conservation of farmland and preservation of natural systems of woodland and wetlands will be encouraged. An obvious aspect of the Future Land Use Map is also the focusing of moderate commercial and industrial development and the highest potential densities of residential growth in the US-131/M-222 intersection area. This strategy is supported by the area's good highway access and its consistency with existing land use patterns. It is noteworthy that while the extent of the proposed commercial and light industrial areas in the immediate intersection area has not been expanded from the previous plan, two additional commercial or mixed use areas are now indicated. These include the interchange commercial planning district in the northeast at the 124th Ave. /US-131 interchange and an area the southeast, roughly coinciding with the US-131 Drag Strip and Motor Park that is located in adjacent Martin Township. The M-222 corridor west from US-131 is also now recognized as a location where very low intensity service uses may be able to locate in a controlled fashion.

Only time will provide certain clarity on the type, relationships and ultimate scale of the development that occurs in the Township. For that reason, the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map must be periodically reviewed and revised. In that way the Master Plan can reflect changes brought about by changing economic conditions and social trends while still maintaining long-range goals. There is also no precise schedule to implement the recommendations contained in the plan. For example, the timing of a rezoning to allow for low density residential development in an area now zoned for agriculture use will be dependent upon a number of factors, the most important of which is the availability infrastructure which includes public utilities, adequate roadways and public services such a s police and fire protection. Another triggering or threshold factor that will be considered when reviewing any request for rezoning will be the availability of land that is already zoned and serviced in the vicinity.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The following paragraphs describe several key plan elements and presents supporting recommendations for each of the various future land use categories that are depicted on the

Future Land Use Map.

Agriculture Conservation and Rural Preservation

To prolong the agricultural base of Watson Township and to help maintain its rural character, the Master Plan promotes the continuance of an "Agricultural Conservation" planning district" and a Rural Preservation" planning district. Together, these planning categories comprise a strategy for maintaining the agricultural and rural character of the Township.

- ***Agriculture Conservation Planning District*** "(A-1 Zoning District) includes areas in which farming activity is promoted as the primary long term land use and non-farm development is discouraged. The focus is to enable strong farming influence to continue where it is well established and least impacted by existing development.
- ***"Rural Preservation Planning District***" (A-2 Rural Conservation Zoning District) includes areas where farming is still permitted but where limited residential development will be permitted at low densities. This district is characterized by rolling topography and extensive areas of shrub land and woodlands, significant areas of wetland and other open land in relatively natural or recently undisturbed state. Very low density residences and appropriately designed rural residential cluster developments with somewhat higher net densities may be accommodated on soils that are less productive for farming but in order to be supported, private community wastewater treatment systems may be required. The preservation of natural features and wildlife habitat (rural character) are high priorities in this planning area. Acceptance of residential developments occurring within the Planning District will be predicated upon the preservation of meaningful tracts of open space within and surrounding clusters of smaller home sites rather than extensive large lot developments.

Through the continued use of coordinated zoning and utility policies within these planning designations and by supporting private, county and state level farmland preservation programs, areas within the Township that are most suited for agricultural purposes will be retained. In areas where the viability of farms is less obvious and the justification for restrictive farm preservation techniques is less evident, a demand for rural residential development at very low gross density will be accommodated in a regulated fashion.

Agriculture Conservation Planning District (A-1)

The Agricultural Conservation Planning District coincides with the A-1 Agricultural Zoning District and its boundaries are intended to define the ultimate boundaries of A-1 Zoning District. It encompasses approximately twenty five percent of the Township's land area. Within these areas, farming operations are promoted as the predominant use. Single family homes are permitted on parcels that may be as small as one acre in size and as large as 2 acres but the number of residential lots permitted is limited by a sliding scale related to parent parcel size. The

sliding scale will result in a gross residential density for the district that is approximately one dwelling unit for each 12.5 acres. The Agricultural Conservation planning area contains the majority of the remaining land areas enrolled as P.A. 116, "Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program".

The "Farmland/Development Suitability" analysis found in Chapter 2 gives further insight into farming and developmental capabilities of the various soils found in Watson Township. The analysis shows that the soils throughout most of the Agricultural Conservation District also constrain non-farm use and development. The main limitations are poor drainage, wetness or rapid permeability, all of which contribute to an inability to support conventional on-site septic systems. Many of the Township's productive farmland soils also present significant problems when constructing building foundations, basements and roads.

Only relatively small areas of the Township's best farming areas are also naturally conducive to supporting septic systems and building structures. Most of those areas are loosely congregated in the north west in sections 8, and 17, in the north in parts of sections 3, 4, 9 and 10 and in more widely scattered areas in the east central sections. Many of those areas have already witnessed a good deal of land fragmentation and rural development and have thus been excluded from the Agricultural Conservation District.

The recommended mechanisms for achieving the objectives of the Agricultural Conservation District include:

- Use of Effective Zoning Techniques: The continued use of existing sliding scale zoning regulations that limit the scale of development and that treat farming and farm related activities as the primary land use is recommended as the basic zoning tool in this district.

  Fluctuating market conditions often force farmers to look for alternative sources of income and many count on the ability to sell off land for non-farm uses to augment finances. This ability is restricted under current zoning and only one form of clustering is allowable under the Township's "Open Space Preservation Project" The Township's "Conservation Subdivision PUD provisions offer another clustering option that could be considered and implemented in the Agricultural Conservation Planning District (A-1 Zoning district) should additional flexibility become warranted. If the additional clustering option is to be implemented, stringent buffering parameters coupled with bonus density provisions that maintain gross density at less than one dwelling per ten acres are recommended. Farmland and open space that is preserved under either of the two clustering options will be incorporated into the Townships "Designated Open Space Zoning District (DOS).

- Another flexible zoning tool is the use of Planned Unit Development provisions that enable farmland located in one area of the Township to be counted as the

required open space element of a development located in another part of the Township. This ability for farmers to transfer their development rights is a technique that is specifically enabled in the zoning enabling act and the Watson Township Zoning ordinance.

- Voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs. Participation by farmers in State and County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs which enable farmers to offer the sale of their development rights to the County and State. This voluntary program will enable some land owners to retain their land for continued farming while receiving cash payments for the sale of their non-farm development rights. While all lands within the Agricultural Conservation Planning District are intended to be eligible for the protection under these programs, funding limitations are expected to make the programs competitive in nature. Property that is nearest areas designated for future non-farm development are in theory at greater risk for development pressures and may be expected to be given a higher relative priority for PDR funding. Additional discussion pertaining to the Township's PDR policies is included in the discussion on *Voluntary Farmland and Rural Preservation Efforts* found in this Chapter.

Rural Preservation Planning District (A-2)

The intent of this planning district is to define areas where the overall long term character remains predominantly rural, regardless of the uses that might occur there. The district corresponds to the A-2 Rural Conservation Zoning District. Farming operations are expected to continue and development will occur in the form of individual lot splits and multi-lot subdivision developments. Care will be taken in the planning and design of the major development to ensure that the site layout will have minimized impacts on adjacent farming operations, natural features and surrounding properties. This will be accomplished through zoning standards that protect natural features, create appropriate setbacks and buffers along the roadways and which impose minimum open space set asides.

Zoning district provisions will provide for very low density, rural estate residential development either on large lots or on smaller clustered home sites. An area-wide gross density of approximately one unit per five or more acres is intended. Agricultural operations and activities are also envisioned to continue but are not necessarily viewed as the long term or permanent land use.

The Rural Preservation (RP) planning district recognizes a category of homebuyers that desire a rural environment in relatively close proximity to urban amenities. At the same time, this land category will encourage the preservation of wetlands, woodlands, and other open spaces, which are useful as water retention and ground water recharge, and habitat for wildlife. As a basic development option in the RP areas, large lot parcel splits will provide adequate area for septic

system placement and will create fewer non-farm activities and conflict points next to active farms than if more traditional one or two acre lots were to be accommodated. Zoning provisions that require the clustering of smaller home sites as an alternative to large lot zoning are already in place. This technique can be more beneficial to the environment; can be helpful in preserving the integrity of neighboring farm operations and for preserving rural character.

The factors considered in establishing the general boundaries and locations of the various Rural Preservation District areas include the lack of sewer and water utilities, a close relationship and proximity to active farmland, the existence of soils that are unsuitable to support intensive development due to septic system and building construction limitations and an extensive pattern of rural residential land fragmentation. These factors establish the RP district as not generally suitable for intensive development and less suitable for long-term investment in farming than those areas included in the Agricultural Conservation planning district.

Recommendations for implementing the open space objectives and one dwelling unit per five acre density of the RP planning district include:

- Continue to rely on existing large lot (5 acres) zoning as the basis for determining the overall density for the district.
- Through flexible open space and PUD standards encourage residential cluster developments.
- Limit the creation of new subdivision developments unless the development meets clustering (increased net density), common utility and preserved open space criteria.

Voluntary Farmland and Rural Preservation Efforts

In addition to the regulatory efforts employed by the Township to conserve farmland and rural character within the Agricultural/Open Space district and very Low Density Residential Districts there are a number of ways that property owners can insure that parcels of land will remain undeveloped or reserved for specific purposes. In doing so the land owner could, depending on the method, obtain potential property tax, income tax, inheritance tax and/or estate tax benefits. Among the preservation and conservation methods are:

Land Donations. A donation of land entails the direct transfer of property to another party, usually an organization that is capable of keeping and maintaining the property. It could be a governmental unit such as the County, or Township, a land trust, school or a nonprofit organization.

Private Deed Restrictions. Voluntary deed restrictions can be placed on the property deed which limits or releases certain property rights, such as the right to

develop a parcel of land, or which prohibits the new owner from destroying or modifying natural features.

Conservation Easements. A conservation easement is a less than fee simple interest in the land that is donated or sold by a land owner to a second or third party such as a County or Township or a nonprofit organization. The effect is that while the private landowner retains the ownership of the some of the rights normally associated with the parcel, some of the rights (such as the development rights) are relinquished to another entity for preservation.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, commonly referred to as P.A. 116, offers certain income and property tax reductions for land owners who are willing to agree that their farmland or open space will not be developed for a specified period of time.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Participation in the state and county Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs enable farmers to offer the sale of their development rights to the county and state. This voluntary program will enable some landowners to retain their land for continued farming while receiving cash payments for the sale of their non-farm development rights. Because funding is limited, enrollments are awarded on the basis of a competitive ranking system. The Township's declared support of enrollment applications is therefore critical to the programs local success. To that end, the "Agricultural Preservation District" within Watson Township (as referred to in the Allegan County Farmland Preservation Board's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) application) is represented by the combined areas of the Agricultural Conservation and Rural Preservation planning districts.

Parcels of property that exceed the 20 acres, are zoned A-1 or A-2 and are located within either the Agricultural Conservation or Rural Preservation planning districts (as shown on the Future Land Use Map), are as a matter of Township policy, eligible for inclusion in the PDR program. Due however, to land use patterns, soil and topographic constraints and other growth factors within these two districts there are isolated parcels that should not be given serious consideration for development rights purchase. The properties having low probability for consideration are defined as follows:

a. Parcels of property <u>not</u> zoned in a district that allows farming as a principal permitted use.
b. Parcels of property less than 20 acres in size that are not adjacent to another large farm tract.

A low probability parcel may also be larger than 20 acres if it exhibits a combination of two or more of the following characteristics:

- It is predominated by soils that are generally considered unsuitable for farming due to slope, wetness or flooding.
- It is predominated by woodland and is located in a flood plain area where the introduction of farm practices could pose a threat to surface water quality.
- Significant land fragmentation has already isolated the parcel.

Voluntary Zoning. The Townships "Designated Open Space Zoning District(DOS) designation is also offered to land owners who wish to voluntarily zone their

property for very limited farming and open space use. This zoning designation is automatically applied to preserved farmland and open spaces created as a result of approved residential cluster developments but is also available to other properties at least ten acres in size which meet certain voluntary eligibility requirements.

Low and Medium Density Single Family Residential

The current zoning map of the Township indicates various areas of R-1 Low density Residential and R-2 Medium Density Residential. It is the intent of this plan that the existing R-1 and R-2 Districts remain but that no new R-1 or R-2 Districts be created unless they are located within Residential Transition Area (RTA) discussed later in this chapter.

Lake Residential (LR)

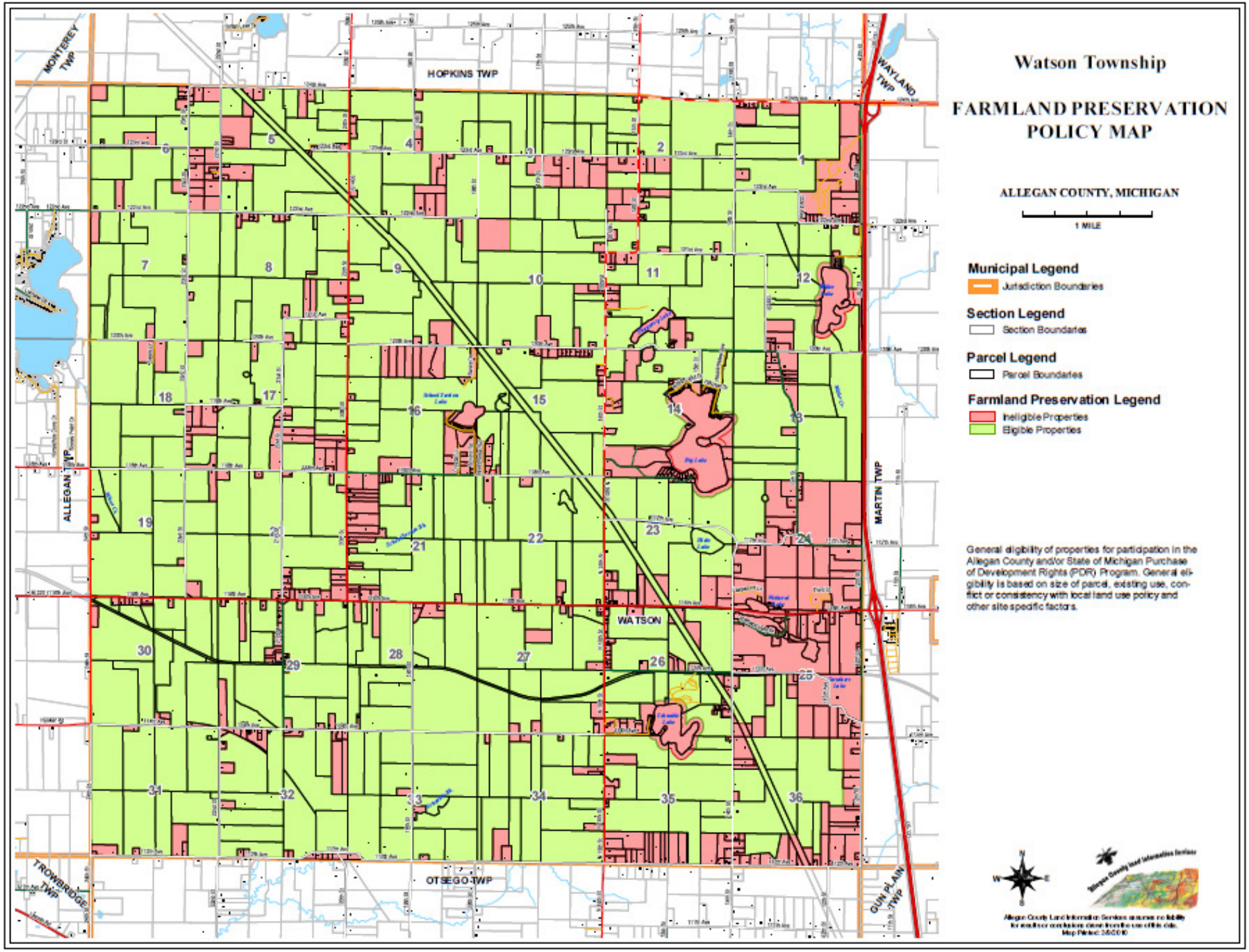
The Lake Residential area is a Medium Density Residential District devoted exclusively to Single Family Residential use in the waterfront and outdoor recreation environment afforded by School Section Lake, Big Lake, Miller Lake and Schnable Lake. The planning district corresponds with the LR Lake Residential Zoning District. There are several smaller lakes located in the township where the LR designation has not been applied. For the smaller lakes a combination of factors suggest that the intensity of development near should be limited in order to minimize the potential for their degradation. For most of the smaller lakes the limiting factors include their relatively small size and recreational carrying capacity and environmentally sensitive shorelines. For others, inaccessibility and existing land use patterns warrant their inclusion in the Rural Preservation planning district

Commercial Land Use

Commercial establishments typically seek out major streets with high traffic volumes to maximize their visibility and encourage drive-in trade. When a major street begins to develop commercially however, traffic congestion too often occurs and conflicts result between through traffic and the vehicles entering and exiting business driveways.

The Master Plan recognizes that the demand for development property to support a variety of commercial uses is likely to increase over time. These demands will continue to be greatest along the along M-222, and near the expressway interchanges. Commercial development areas are accommodated in these areas within the Mixed Use Transitional Areas (MUTA) through the designation of a commercial node at the intersection of M-222 and 24th St. and through the use of a limited “Rural Arterial Small Businesses Overlay District”. The objectives of the Commercial Land Use Plan are to:

1. Accommodate commercial facilities that provide sufficient amounts


Watson Township
FARMLAND PRESERVATION POLICY MAP
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
Municipal Legend
Jurisdiction Boundaries
Section Legend
Section Boundaries
Parcel Legend
Parcel Boundaries
Farmland Preservation Legend
Ineligible Properties
Eligible Properties
General eligibility of properties for participation in the Allegan County and/or State of Michigan Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. General eligibility is based on size of parcel, existing use, conflict or consistency with local land use policy and other site specific factors.
MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WAYLAND TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP

of goods and services to meet the daily needs of a growing township population while not duplicating services provided by establishments already located nearby.

2. To promote the physical clustering of commercial establishments rather than strip development, thereby providing for joint use of parking facilities, more convenient shopping, and minimized extension of utilities as they are needed.

Rural Arterial Small Businesses Overlay District

There is recognition that service businesses are increasingly attracted to the higher traffic volumes occurring along the M-222 corridor. If allowed to occur in a controlled fashion, such businesses can bring added convenience to rural residents and value to the agricultural community. Several alternatives to strip development exist that can be used to control the nature of development along this highway and to preserve some of the defined rural characteristics of the corridor. The land use concepts to be used along these corridors include:

- The allowance of limited commercial nodes adjacent to key high traffic intersections where local service and "heavy" types of commercial business could be located.
- Utilization of a corridor overlay policy to allow limited forms of service and retail businesses to locate within the corridor under stringent location and performance standards.

A small commercial node is proposed for intersections of 124 St and M-222. This intersection is intended to support local service and convenience types of uses such as convenience stores and local "heavy" commercial service uses such as auto repair and welding shops and equipment dealers. Such uses will be expected to adhere to access and site design standards that will enhance property values and minimize traffic conflicts.

Properties within both the Agricultural Conservation and Rural Preservation Districts having direct frontage on M-222 are included within the Rural Arterial Business Overlay. Otherwise intended to be farmed or support rural residential use, a limited number of properties within the Rural Arterial Business Overlay may be allowed to support some business uses. Uses contemplated include small, single offices, veterinary clinics, antique shops and farm support businesses. Once the overlay is implemented, these types of uses could be accommodated under a special use approval process that would for example allow the conversion of existing structures to the new proposed use. The provisions could also control number and location of business in the overlay so as to retain the rural density and character of the majority of the corridor.

The concept of small, rural business development is often desired by residents who desire to

preserve the rural character of the Township and who see the importance of preserving traditional farmsteads as key to the overall rural character. The adaptive reuse of existing farmstead buildings in the support of small rural businesses is one way of combining the two objectives. Properly regulated, the concept will be a useful way to promote a continuation of the farmstead as physical feature of the landscape. The Master Plan therefore supports the use of special use provisions that allow the adaptive reuse of certain existing underutilized farm buildings for the purpose of supporting small service and manufacturing enterprises within the overlay concept. Care must be taken, however to ensure that the location and scale of allowed operations will not jeopardize nearby property other stated land use goals.

Commercial Design Standards

Unless careful site planning and access controls are utilized, conflicts between uses can occur, opportunities for integrated uses lost, and the capacity of streets can be greatly reduced. It is recommended that site plans and the rezoning of land designated on the Future Land Use Map for commercial purposes be done cautiously to help assure that development is not done prematurely or haphazardly, with disregard for the lack of utilities, adjacent existing uses or those that will develop later, on an adjoining site. Implementation of the commercial land use plan should therefore include the following recommendations:

1. Encouragement of the use of flexible planned unit development zoning provisions allow the review and approval of proposals that incorporate integrated mixed uses, joint access and alternate access characteristics.
2. Knowledgeable use of zoning standards and the site plan review process. The Site plan review process should be used to promote land use and transportation objectives and the quality of such site plan features such as;
    a. Wastewater collection and storm drainage: Unless public sewer and engineered drainage systems are provided, intensive development should not be permitted and the potential range of commercial uses should be limited.
    b. Driveway Location and Spacing: Driveways should be located as far from street intersections as possible to avoid left turn conflicts and businesses should be encouraged to use joint driveways whenever possible. Driveways should be spaced to reduce conflicts and provide gaps in traffic for safer ingress and egress. To promote adequate driveway spacing, commercial parcels located on arterial streets have a minimum of 200 feet of street frontage.
    c. Landscaping: Commercial Development should provide landscaping along the street edge to enhance aesthetics and screen parking areas. Specific landscaping requirements should be maintained in the zoning ordinance for use in ensuring adequate and uniform landscape treatment among businesses.

d. Alternate Access: Wherever possible a secondary means of ingress and/or egress should be provided. For corner parcels, alternate access could take the form of access to an intersecting street. For interior parcels access across adjacent parking lots, access to another street to the rear of the property, a frontage road or service drive parallel to a major street are desired alternatives.

e. Signs: The number, size and location of signs should be controlled and kept to a reasonable minimum to avoid motorist confusion and to insure individual business identities.

f. Pedestrian Access: Where appropriate, sidewalks or pathways should be provided to link businesses with each other and residential areas.

Industrial Land Use

While industry is important to a diversified tax base and for providing local employment opportunities, good planning dictates that industrial areas have good highway access and are situated to minimize potential conflicts with residential uses. Generally, businesses involved with manufacturing, processing and fabrication should be supported by adequate sewer and water utilities. Because of accessibility and infrastructure limits the only industrial area indicated on the Future Land Use Map is the existing industrial zone found in Sections 24. If justified, industrial district expansions will be expected to occur within the Mixed Use Transitional Area designation nearest the M-222/US-131 interchange.

Transitional Planning Districts

The Future Land Use Map identifies several transitional areas where land use change will ultimately be facilitated should infrastructure improvements capable of supporting more intensive economic development come about. The areas are related directly to the two expressway interchanges. Public utilities or the lack thereof are a major consideration. The transitional areas at or near M-222 are situated where (at least proximally), future public utility extensions might be extended from the nearby existing public systems (Village of Martin). There have been previous investigations into such extensions and it could be envisioned that future population increases and economic development pressures might one day justify extensions into Watson Township. Since the extension would be predicated upon treatment capacity owned the City of Plainwell, as well as transmission capacity controlled by both Martin Township and Gun Plain Township, the prospects of such are not high at this time. In any event, the extension of public sewer into Watson Township is not likely to occur or be justified within the immediate (five year) planning period. Also not expected are the public funds needed to significantly expand police and fire protection or to make the street improvements necessary to support major

economic development in the interchange areas.

The primary function of the Transitional Areas illustrated on the Future Land Use Map is therefore to identify “holding zones” for lands that may ultimately be the most suitable for more intensive development. Unless already zoned to an alternate designation, zoning in the transitional areas will in the short range consist of R-2 and the current Commercial and Industrial Zoning designations. In each area farming and low intensity residential development are not necessarily considered to be the ultimate long-term uses however.

The transitional area planning districts are thus aimed at establishing “land banks" for land uses that may ultimately be allowed to occur when the Township determines that more intensive structural development is appropriate and when the necessary utility, street infrastructure and emergency and protective services are in place to support it.

Following are general descriptions and rationale for each of the identified Sub-areas. Included is a listing of the range of uses contemplated within each sub-area.

Mixed Use Transitional Areas (MUTA)

Both US-131 interchanges have been included within a mixed use MUTA sub-area. These sub-areas encompass most of the existing commercial and industrial zoning within the township and each are sized to accommodate fairly substantial amounts of economic development in the future. Each interchange area has the advantage of easy accessibility to the expressway and excellent highway visibility. Soils are poorly suited for development without utilities however and unimproved local roads are limiting factors.

Because of excellent highway visibility two of the three MUTA areas are attractive to land speculators. In the north MUTA at 124th Ave. and US-131, only the area in the immediate vicinity of the interchange is programmed for change and until the necessary infrastructure is in place, development will be discouraged. Once the infrastructure is in place the following range of uses will be considered.

- General, neighborhood and regional oriented businesses
- Light industrial
- Hospitality service business (hotels, restaurants)

It is obvious that the US-131/M-222 MUTA sub-area holds the potential for accommodating the majority of the future commercial and industrial concentrations in the township. It is desired that this growth be programmed within an overall development scheme and that it create a welcoming gateway to the Township. The PUD approach is therefore the desired tool to be used to obtain a desirable mix of uses and quality of character. Due to the fragmented nature of land ownership and zoning the Township will also employ conventional commercial and industrial zoning designations in the area. The following range of uses will be considered in the southern MUTA.

- General, neighborhood and regional oriented businesses
- Light industrial

- Hospitality service business (hotels, restaurants)
- Manufactured home community (40 to 80 acres)
- Multi-family residential

The third MUTA is located along 12th Street, across the road from the US-131 Motorsports Park. This area is identified as a transitional area due to the conflicts of noise and traffic caused by the motor sports park and the negative influences that these impacts will have on existing area home values. The Master Plan recognizes and anticipates that over time, many of the existing residential properties fronting 12th St. between 112th Ave. and 114th Ave. will transition to local service type business uses and/or businesses that rely on the motor sport facility.

Residential Transitional Area (RTA)

The RTA area is located in the US-131/M-222 interchange area west of the Mixed Use Transition Area and extends southward. It encompasses numerous existing single family residences and nearby vacant land in close proximity to the motor sports area in adjacent Martin Township. The intent is to allocate an appropriately sized area capable of supporting medium density single family residential to higher density attached and multi-family residential expansions in proximity to other areas of planned higher land use intensity and potential utility extensions. The envisioned mix of uses includes low and medium density single family residential subdivisions (R-1 and R-2) as well as alternative medium density home styles such as senior citizen housing, attached three-plexes, four-plexes and multi-family residences and/or a manufactured home community.

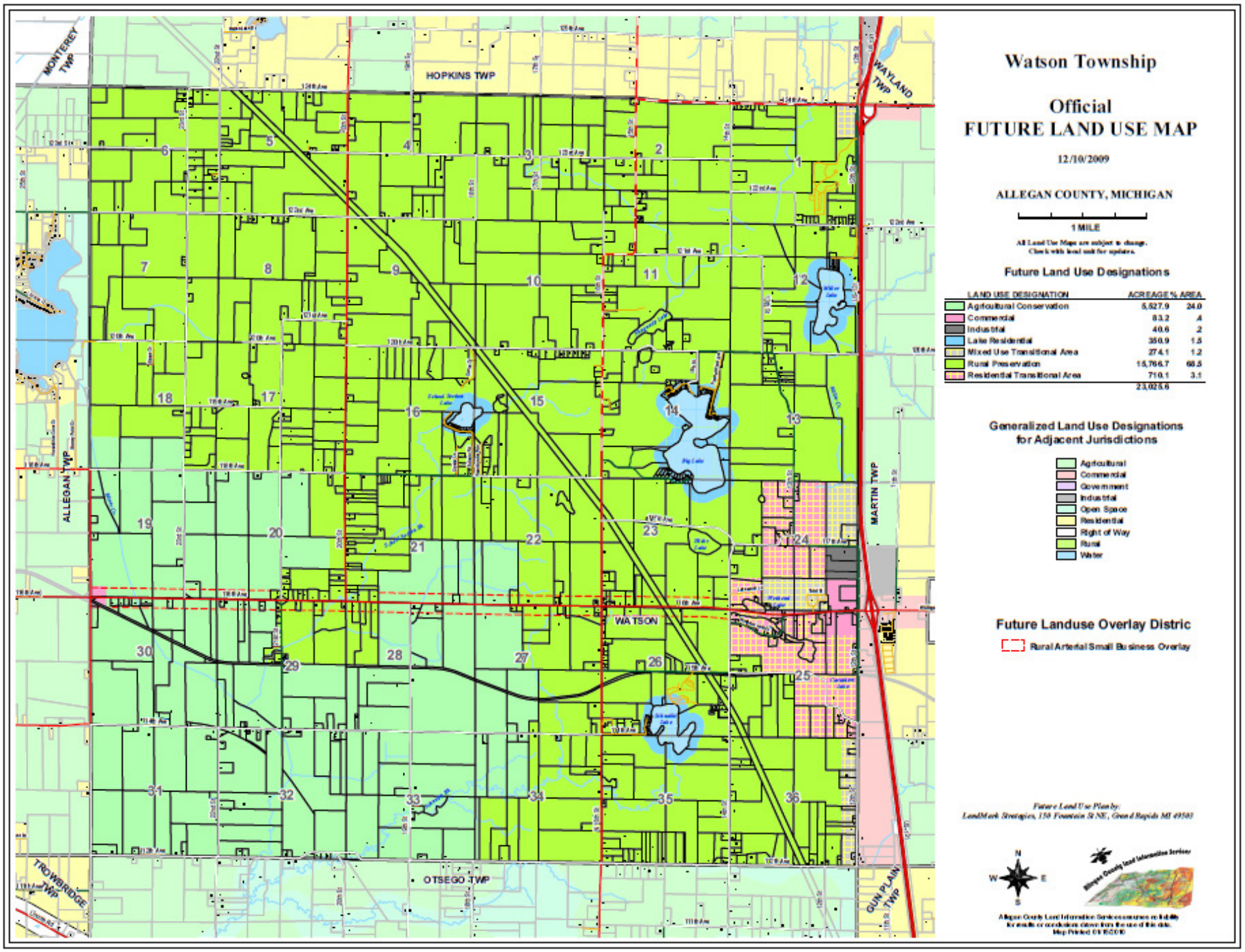
Public/Semi Public (Various Zoning Districts)

This category includes areas and facilities such as schools, government buildings, parks and golf courses which are available for use by the general public. Semi-public uses are those used by a limited number of people with specific interests which are generally non-profit in nature such as churches, non-public schools, private golf courses and medical or institutional facilities. The Plan recognizes that it is necessary to provide for the establishment of certain non-residential land uses within residential areas subject to the implementation of measures designed to insure compatibility. Such non-residential uses commonly include religious and educational institutions, recreational uses such as parks, and play fields, and public utility facilities.

Traffic generation, noise, lighting and trespassing should be carefully controlled in order to mitigate the negative impacts on residential uses. At this time the Future Land Use Map does not include any specific locations for these uses. Future locations should however be considerate of compatibility with adjacent land uses and the extent to which neighborhood character will be maintained.

Transportation

All of the existing public roads in the Township (except local neighborhood roads) are


MONTEREY TWP
HOPKINS TWP
WAYLAND TWP
ALLEGAN TWP
MARTIN TWP
WATSON
OTSEGO TWP
TROWBRIDGE TWP
GUN PLAIN TWP
Watson Township
Official
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
12/10/2009
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
1 MILE
All Land Use Maps are subject to change.
Check with local unit for updates.
Future Land Use Designations
LAND USE DESIGNATION ACREAGE % AREA
Agricultural Conservation 5,527.9 24.0
Commercial 83.2 .4
Industrial 40.6 .2
Lake Residential 350.9 1.5
Mixed Use Transitional Area 274.1 1.2
Rural Preservation 15,766.7 68.5
Residential Transitional Area 710.1 3.1
23,025.6
Generalized Land Use Designations
for Adjacent Jurisdictions
Agricultural
Commercial
Government
Industrial
Open Space
Residential
Right of Way
Rural
Water
Future Landuse Overlay Distric
Rural Arterial Small Business Overlay
Future Land Use Plan by:
LandMark Strategies, 150 Fountain St NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503
N
W
E
S
Allegan County Land Information Services assumes no liability
for results or conclusions drawn from the use of this data.
Map Printed 01/15/2010

accommodating more traffic demands than ten years ago and will be expected to carry still higher traffic loads during the coming years as the Township continues to grow. The following generalized transportation related recommendations are intended to address existing problems and to avoid problems in the future:

1. Development along arterial and collector roads, especially access by individual driveways, should be limited. New subdivision roads (both public and private) accessing the collector and arterial roads should be planned for interconnectivity and reviewed for safe sight distance, proper acceleration and deceleration lane tapers and any left hand turn problems that may occur.
2. Establish road improvement priorities. Through cooperation with the Allegan County Road Commission, monitor traffic volumes and road conditions as part of an ongoing program that establishes road improvement priorities. In this way, the Township and County can objectively allocate limited resources to those areas having the greatest need.
3. Consider the ability of existing roadway conditions to handle projected traffic volumes resulting from new development when reviewing rezoning requests, special land uses and PUDs.
4. Implement the Land Use Recommendations. The Master Plan's land use recommendations have taken into account the adequacy of the existing roadway system. Taken collectively, the incremental implementation of the various land use proposals could over the long term, minimize the need for some road improvements.
5. Private road regulations. The interconnectivity of the street network should be analyzed prior to the authorization of new private streets. The Township should reserve the right to require private street interconnectivity and/or the creation of a public street where the logical extension of a public street or interconnectivity of streets is judged necessary to maintaining the safety and capacity of that nearby collector and arterial streets.

The problems of strip commercial development have been well documented over the years. A multitude of commercial uses, each with its own driveway or driveways, creates traffic congestion problems, turning movement problems, and increases the likelihood of accidents. Apart from a recommended geographic allocation of land uses in response to existing and preferred development patterns, the Plan recognizes the need for access control measures along the M-222 corridor and other primary arterials. The following recommendations are geared toward those concerns.

1. *Access Controls.* Access control standards have been adopted to regulate and coordinate access to undeveloped land along the Township's major roads. These standards will address such items as driveway placement, width and number; acceleration and deceleration lanes; driveway distance from intersections; joint driveways; frontage roads and service drives; and

pedestrian movement. In implementing the access control regulations, the Township must enlist the support and cooperation of Allegan County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation officials in reviewing site plans for new development.

Natural Systems Plan: Sensitive Environment Overlay Districts

The Master Plan is intended to give policy support for the preservation of natural resources. At the local level there are already in place site plan review standards that can be relied upon to a limited extent to protect important natural features. Additional site plan implementation measures could include the adoption of local wetland protection ordinances and overlay districts that encompass other important natural features such as steep slopes and significant woodland features that are vital to sustaining wildlife. Once embodied as regulated features these attributes will be significant factors in review and authorization of development projects required to have open space set-asides. Farmers will generally be exempt from the zoning regulations but implementation measures will also include educational efforts to encourage farmers to use best management practices near watercourses.

The major elements of the environment that could be protected in overlay fashion along with suggested parameters of regulation include:

Wetlands

Land development adjacent to wetlands should be discouraged from making earth and drainage changes that impair the wetlands. Boundaries of wetland areas in each development should be clearly defined.

- Where practical, a buffer zone of 50 or more feet should be required between any disturbed area and the perimeter of the wetland.
- When faced with adjacent development, whenever possible wetlands should be included in common, protected open space elements of developments. Lot lines for platted lots or site condominium unit boundaries should be allowed to project into a regulated wetland.
- Closed storm drains should not be permitted to discharge directly to any wetland area.

Shorelines:

Protecting the remaining undeveloped shoreline of the township's several inland lakes is an important objective. As such, the following guidelines will be considered:

- Establishment of a natural buffer strip, extending 50 or more feet landward from the established shoreline.

- Tree clearing, earth changes or structures should be discouraged within the 50 foot wide buffer strip, excepting seasonal boat docks that may be permitted by the MDEQ.
- Whenever shoreline involves steep banks (slopes in excess of 12%) and elevation of 20 or more feet above the water elevation, development nearby should be evaluated for purposes of determining how best to preserve the shoreline's natural environment and views. In any event, clearing of existing trees and disturbance of vegetation will not be permitted within the required setbacks.

Unique Habitats:

Development on sites where there is evidence of unique animal habitat or protected flora and fauna should be preceded by a professional habitat survey. In some cases, such areas may be protected by Federal or State law and will require participation from the regulatory agency. In others, such habitat or plant life may not be otherwise protected but will require protection by regulation of the Township. Guidelines for unique habitats include:

- Whenever the Commission believes unique animal habitat or flora and fauna exists on the proposed development site, it will require a professional survey of wildlife and plant life on the premises.
- Any such area identified on premises, if considered unique by the Commission or the area of species appear on the Federal endangered or threatened species list, the area in which such habitat or plant life exists will be excluded from the development project.
- The Commission should consider establishing specific design treatment and measures to effect protection of these areas. In some cases, these areas may be deeded to a land conservation group or placed in public ownership.

Woodlands:

Woodlands are an important natural element within the Township. As such, it is necessary to establish policies to limit tree clearing from land development sites. Sites with five or more acres of contiguous woodland will be addressed using the following policies:

- Plans for all new residential sites and locations of buildings for non-residential development should depict boundaries of existing woodlots and proposed tree clearing in relation to new roads, proposed building footprints, home sites, drainage areas and any removal occasioned by earth changes.
- For wooded sites of five or more acres, tree clearing should not exceed fifty percent of the total area of the woodlands.
- For all forms of subdivisions, preservation of remaining woodlands shall be included in the proposed set of deed restrictions as applied to all home sites and common areas.

Each of the above types of resources are important as individual components but when combined they become exponentially significant as the overall natural resource system. Their preservation in a continuous or nearly continuous "greenway corridor" pattern can be very effective in maximizing their benefits. They should be highest priority for preservation efforts such as land acquisition, purchase of development rights, open space (cluster) development and conservation easements. When reviewing development proposals, design standards can also be used to ensure that development in and near these important natural areas respect the natural systems.
The following guidelines can be used in establishing site development standards for the protection of natural systems:

1. Incorporate significant natural resources, cultural features and important destinations within the community into a Greenways Plan.
2. Utilize the Greenways Plan as a mechanism to conserve valuable natural resources.
3. Accommodate pathways within areas of the greenway system that are suitable for development and open space connections through sensitive segments of the system.
4. Integrate the Greenways Plan with the Pathways Plan to maximize connection opportunities.
5. Build relationships with individuals, public agencies and private groups for planning, financing and implementing the Greenways Plan.
6. Coordinate with private land developers to ensure new development respects the planned system through conservation easements, required open space, clustering options and setbacks.
7. Promote efforts to link greenways in Watson Township with those in adjoining communities.
8. Require subdivision and non-residential development proposals to provide an environmental impact assessment to determine the effect(s) the proposed development may have on various environmental features in the vicinity of the proposed development. The environmental impact assessment may be required to include a natural features inventory based on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) guidelines.
9. Development should maintain existing unbroken hedgerows (fence rows). Additional plantings of similar species should be provided where significant gaps in a hedgerow appear. Where it is not feasible to maintain a continuous hedgerow plantings should be used elsewhere on the property to mitigate the loss.
10. Residential clustering is encouraged in situations where important natural features can be protected and that would otherwise be impacted from a conventional form of residential development.
11. Encourage use of Farmland and Open Space Preservation Programs (P.A. 116), conservation easements and other methods to protect lands with important natural features.
12. Require subdivision and non-residential development storm water management facilities (detention and retention) to create ecosystems

through the use of native plants. Require the developer and homeowners association to commit to a monitoring and management plan that runs at least three to five years after completion of planting. Preferably there should be an on-going maintenance program established by the developer and homeowners association.

13. Obtain public control of greenway segments through property acquisition and easements.

Mineral Resources

By its very nature, surface mining of sand and gravel is a high impact land use. Equipment noises, truck movements and blowing dust each represent nuisances for adjacent residences. Other important operational and management issues include: the depth of excavation or the "pit floor" elevation relative to groundwater (assurance of adequate "freeboard" is important), methods and quantities of on site processing to be done (stone crushing & screening), sand and sediment spillage on paved roadways, wear and tear on roadways, public safety (pits are often considered "attractive nuisances") and site reclamation and reuse. In addition, operating hours and child safety are often among the most critical issues when the mines are in close proximity to homes.

Whenever a mining extraction operation is proposed or an existing operation is expanded, adjacent lands are impacted. Extraction uses have high nuisance characteristics and as such, they create negative conditions that tend to discourage new development nearby. Siting issues, including the location of access, relative grades, sight lines, buffer areas, the size and intensity of the operation, and the duration of the operation are all significant matters that must be addressed to help minimize potential impacts on surroundings. When evaluating mining operations, the following guidelines are applicable:

1. Zoning decisions regarding mineral extraction should be supported by:
   - Careful and thorough analysis,
   - Findings of fact relative to the need to extract the resource and its impacts,
   - Precisely written and easy to enforce conditions that govern the operations.
2. New operations should be required to be within ½ mile of a county primary road or a Class A, All-Weather Road. Where the site does not directly access a county primary or a Class A road, the intermediate roadway should be brought up to at least the standard for paved local county roads by the mine operator before commencement of mining activity. If not brought up to the Class A standards, all road segments used by the operation should be utilized as "seasonal only" with seasonal load restrictions.

Wind Energy

Wind Energy Systems (WES). There are some areas of Allegan County where the development of large scale WES appears to be fairly well suited. There are two major factors that could favor their development. The most important factor is of course wind availability (steady, relatively high winds) and the second is the absence of extensive development such as is found in agricultural areas. Where the two factors are found in concert, the potential for WES development is highest.

Analysis of these two factors and other known physical limitations can be used to create a WES overlay analysis to help identify the potential that an area may have for supporting commercial or utility scale WES. The Agricultural land use pattern that is represented by the Agricultural Conservation and Rural Preservation Planning Districts, coupled with wind availability

assessment maps and other physical features limitations.

Wind Availability

The US Department of Energy's Wind Energy Program and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory have created a series of wind resource maps for the state of Michigan. One of the resource maps shows wind power estimates at 50 meters (approximately 165 feet) above ground and identifies the areas that might hold potential for commercial scale WES development. The maps classify the wind according to "wind power" based on prevailing wind speeds. The classes range from class 1(poor) to class 7(superb). Wind classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 are as a group considered good resources, Class 3 is fair, Class 2 is marginal and Class 1 is poor. The "50 Meter Wind Power Map" indicates that there are some Class 3 areas in Ganges and Saugatuck townships, near the Lake Michigan shoreline. If other factors are also favorable, the class # resource areas in those townships may be suitable for utility scale WES development. In Watson Township the highest wind resource is classification is Class 2 or "marginal". The Class 2 areas mostly consist of the hills found in the north central and northeastern portion of the Township.

Undeveloped areas

Agricultural areas are generally supportive of wind turbines as an alternative energy source because they are generally more isolated from intensive non-farm development. Isolation in turn may represent lower land values and improve the financial feasibility of holding large tracts of land needed for wind farms. Such areas are found in the south, west and northwest portions of Watson Township.

Limiting factors

Several factors can limit the wind power class/Agricultural Conservation-Rural Preservation Overlay strategy. These factors will assist in identifying "potential" sites using the overlay approach:

1. Tree Cover Areas: Areas of extensive tree cover are less suited to development of alternative energy resources (WES's) because, generally, these areas have less open areas with less wind volume. Encouraging wind turbine development in heavily treed areas may also precipitate removal of existing vegetation to increase the efficiency of the generators. These areas are less suited for agricultural use and, assuming the soil conditions support development, are often more suitable for residential or other nonagricultural land use.
2. Wetland Areas: Wetland areas are considered environmentally sensitive, and generally speaking, very limited development is allowed in these areas.
3. Proximity to Airports: According to information from the Federal Aviation Administration, any tall structure (greater than 200 feet in height) requires FAA approval. Further, towers less than 300 feet above ground level located closer than four nautical miles from an airport are considered an obstruction to air navigation and may require, on a case-by-case basis, "obstruction lighting". Obstruction lighting techniques need to be reviewed when located near residential areas due to it negative impact. Therefore, areas within 4 nautical miles of an airport are considered a limitation. Portions of the agricultural area located in the southeastern portion of the Township are within 4 nautical miles of the Allegan airport.

These limitations affect certain parcels to a greater extent than others; and as a result some of the

factors are more limiting than others.

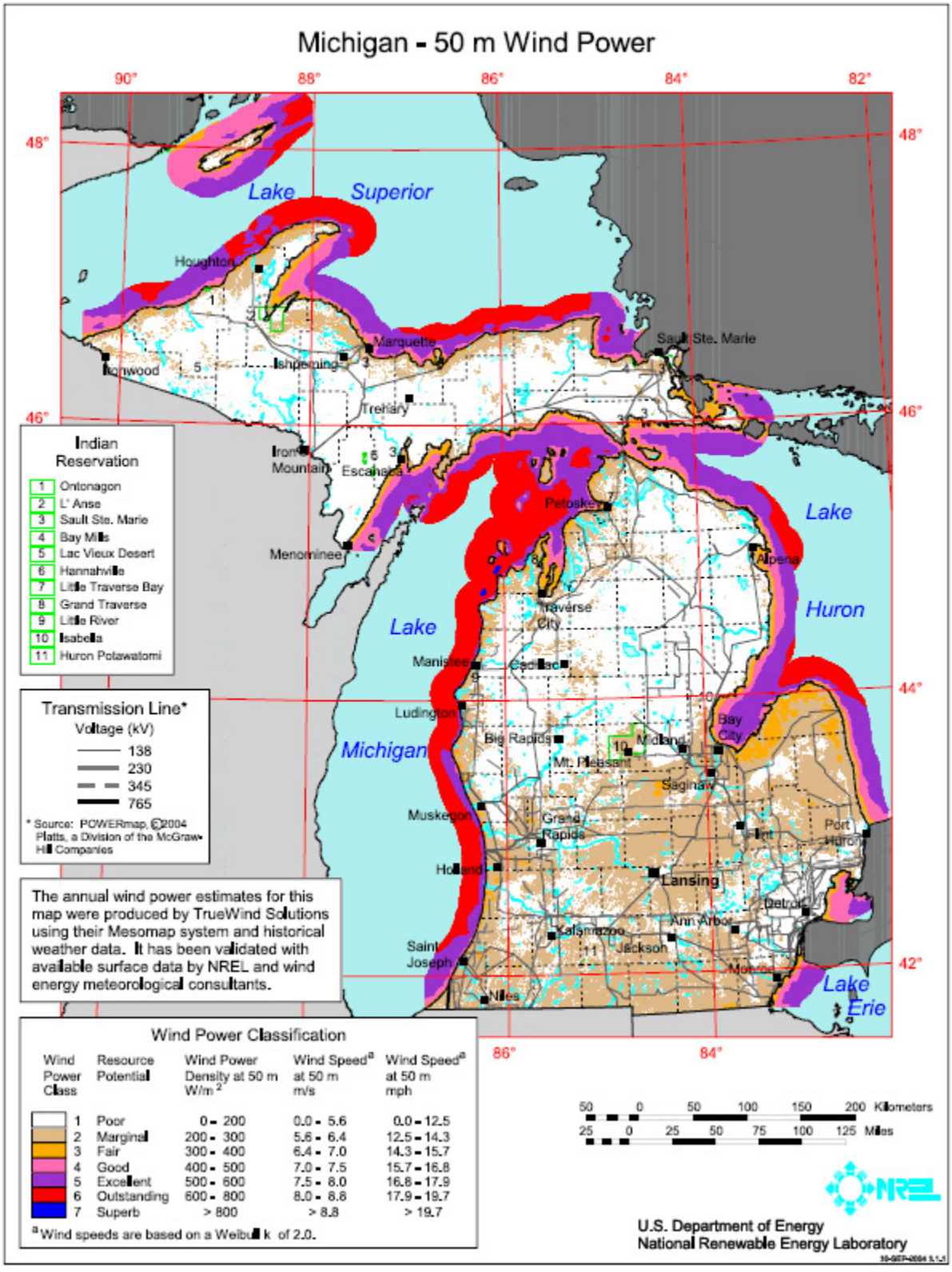
The overlay approach couples the township's agricultural land use pattern with wind availability assessment maps and the above listed physical limitations. The analysis indicates that there are few if any locations in Watson Township that are favorable as locations for utility scale WES.

Small scale WES

Small scale WES can be installed and used by individuals land owners offset the amount of the electricity taken from the utility grid system. Just as future technological improvements may increase the potential for large scale WES, the technology for small scale systems is improving rapidly and as the technology improves and the costs go down, the use of small scale WES is increasing within rural areas as well as in developed residential and business areas. As a result, the effects of an increased number of small scale WES has become a contemporary zoning issue relating directly to public safety, nuisance (noise) aesthetics and property values. Many communities have therefore found it necessary to address WES from a local regulatory standpoint.

WES Policy

The Master Plan recommends that the Township adopt a basic set of standards and regulations governing both larges scale WES and small scale WES. The regulations should be based upon contemporary standards of the industry. Utility -scale systems development should be focus to the less developed AC and RP planning Districts where land use compatibility will be less of an issue. Small scale systems should be permitted only in settings where large lots can be used to insure adequate setbacks from homes and other neighboring uses that are sensitive to noise and visual impacts.


Michigan - 50 m Wind Power
90°
88°
86°
84°
82°
48°
46°
44°
42°
Lake Superior
Houghton
Marquette
Sault Ste. Marie
Ironwood
Ishpeming
Trenary
Iron Mountain
Escanaba
Menominee
Petoskey
Alpena
Lake Huron
Traverse City
Lake Michigan
Manistee
Cadillac
Ludington
Bay City
Midland
Big Rapids
Mt. Pleasant
Saginaw
Muskegon
Grand Rapids
Port Huron
Holland
Lansing
Detroit
Ann Arbor
Kalamazoo
Jackson
Saint Joseph
Niles
Monroe
Lake Erie
Indian Reservation
1 Ontonagon
2 L' Anse
3 Sault Ste. Marie
4 Bay Mills
5 Lac Vieux Desert
6 Hannahville
7 Little Traverse Bay
8 Grand Traverse
9 Little River
10 Isabella
11 Huron Potawatomi
Transmission Line*
Voltage (kV)
138
230
345
765
* Source: POWERmap, ©2004 Platts, a Division of the McGraw-Hill Companies
The annual wind power estimates for this map were produced by TrueWind Solutions using their Mesomap system and historical weather data. It has been validated with available surface data by NREL and wind energy meteorological consultants.
Wind Power Classification
Wind Power Class
Resource Potential
Wind Power Density at 50 m W/m2
Wind Speed[a] at 50 m m/s
Wind Speed[a] at 50 m mph
1 Poor 0 - 200 0.0 - 5.6 0.0 - 12.5
2 Marginal 200 - 300 5.6 - 6.4 12.5 - 14.3
3 Fair 300 - 400 6.4 - 7.0 14.3 - 15.7
4 Good 400 - 500 7.0 - 7.5 15.7 - 16.8
5 Excellent 500 - 600 7.5 - 8.0 16.8 - 17.9
6 Outstanding 600 - 800 8.0 - 8.8 17.9 - 19.7
7 Superb > 800 > 8.8 > 19.7
[a] Wind speeds are based on a Weibull k of 2.0.
50 0 50 100 150 200 Kilometers
25 0 25 50 75 100 125 Miles
NREL
U.S. Department of Energy
National Renewable Energy Laboratory

Chapter 7
IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide for the controlled development of Watson Township, it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Watson Township Board, the Planning Commission and the Township staff. This is done through a number of methods including the adoption and enforcement ordinances, capital improvement programs and cooperation and partnerships with other public agencies and the private sector and administrative procedures.

The Master Plan itself is not a regulatory device. The implementation of the plan must occur as the result of regulatory, policy and capital improvement decisions of the Township Board and Planning Commission relative to land use and public land acquisition. Private citizens, including individual home, business and land owners are also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan by the actual physical development of land uses and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the Township. Cooperation between the public and private citizens, including developers, is therefore important in the successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Zoning and Related Land Development Regulations

Zoning is a legal mechanism used to regulate private property for the purpose of achieving orderly land use relationships. Zoning is the process most commonly used to implement community master plans. The zoning process consists of an official zoning map and zoning ordinance text. The official zoning map divides the community into different zones or districts within which certain uses are permitted and others are not. The zoning ordinance text identifies the uses which are permitted and establishes regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setbacks, lot sizes and accessory uses. Among other things the zoning ordinance can also be used to set forth procedures and regulations for identified special land uses and for addressing special areas of concern such as signs, private roads and resource removal. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as the type of development. Other land development regulations include Subdivision and Site Condominium Control Ordinances; land division ordinances, junk and blight ordinances.

Along with the recommendations contained in the Future Land Use Chapter, specific implementation measures, including several changes to the zoning Ordinance and Zoning

Map are outlined in the Goals and Policies Chapter of this plan and the revisions will be needed if the recommendations of the Plan are carried out. Subsequent to the adoption of this Plan, the Township Planning Commission and Township Board will be charged with making the appropriate revisions to the Township's zoning regulations and to other development standards.

Prepare and a Adopt Capital Improvements Program

Capital Improvements Programming (CIP) is the first step in a comprehensive management system designed to match capital improvement priorities and other Township sponsored programs to community's goals and objectives. It is also a tool used to plan for the funding and implementation of major construction and land acquisition activities. The typical CIP is six years in length and is updated yearly. The first year in each CIP contains the capital improvement budget. The program generally includes a survey of the long-range needs of the entire governmental unit, covering major planned projects along with their expected cost and the relative priority of each. The Township Board then analyzes the project's financing options and the interrelationship between projects. Finally, a project schedule is developed. High priority projects are included in the Capital Improvements Program. Low priority projects may be retained in a longer range Capital Improvements Schedule which may cover as long as 20 years.

The CIP is useful to the Township, private utilities, citizens and investors, since it allows or encourages coordination in activities and it provides the public with a view of future expectations.

Recreation Plan

The Master Plan recommends that the Township adopt a recreation plan in order to be eligible for state recreation funding programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). Assistance under these programs is available for planning, acquiring land and developing a wide range of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The programs are administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and are financed by funds appropriated by the Federal Government and State Legislature. Under the LWCF program, grants of up to 50% of the cost of a project are available; under the MNRTF Program, 100% funding may be obtained.

Planning Education

Planning Commissions should attend planning seminars and/or enroll in specialized planning

commissioner training programs to keep themselves informed of planning issues and learn how to better carry out their duties and responsibilities as Planning Commissioners. Seminars are regularly sponsored by the Michigan Association of Planners (MAP), the Michigan Township Association (MTA) and Allegan County. The MSU Cooperative Extension Program offers a highly regarded "Citizen Planner" training program. All are valuable resources for Planning Commissions. There are also several useful planning publications for Planning Commissioners.

Inter-Governmental Cooperation

Inter-governmental cooperation on certain land use issues and utility issues can pay dividends to all involved. In an effort to manage growth properly, the Township desires to establish goals and regulations consistent with those of its neighbors so that the immediate area develops in an efficient and compatibly manner, without over development. Watson Township hopes to minimize incompatible land uses across municipal boundaries and to manage growth in such a way that the strengths of each community are taken advantages of and that competition between communities for tax base and economic development dollars is minimized. The implementation of programs or policies resulting from this strategy will necessitate endorsement and support from all jurisdictions involved. This activity must be on-going and includes the notion of collaborating with adjacent communities in areas such as utilities and joint land use planning rather than competing with neighbors for land uses that operate on a regional scale or depend on a large regional market.

Public Information

It is important that the proposals of this Plan be discussed and understood by the citizens of Watson Township. Acceptance of this Plan by the public is essential to its successful implementation. Steps should therefore be taken to make Township residents aware of the Master Plan and the continuing activities of the Planning Commission. In large part, this can be accomplished through topical updates to the Township's internet website and by newspaper reports of Planning Commission activity. Contact with local civic and service organizations is another method which can be used to promote the Township's planning activities and objectives.

Revisions to the Master Plan

Under Michigan statute, the Master Plan must be reviewed annually and updated every five years. This will keep the plan responsive to new growth trends and current Township citizen

attitudes. In the annual and five year review processes the planning goals, land use information, population projections and other pertinent data should be revised as necessary.

APPENDIX

RESOLUTIONS OF MASTER PLAN ADOPTION

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WATSON TOWNSHIP

ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Watson Township Planning Commission, held at the Township Hall, 1895 118th Avenue, Allegan, MI 49010, on the 2nd day of December, 2009, at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Members: Troy Baker, Rod Zeinstra, Dave Carter, Ben McKinnon, Michelle Harris, Jim Baas and Barb Wroblewski

ABSENT: Members: None

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Troy Baker and seconded by Rod Zeinstra:

WATSON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION,

RESOLUTION OF MASTER PLAN ADOPTION
RESOLUTION NO. 12-02-2009

WHEREAS, the Watson Township Planning Commission has prepared a proposed amended Watson Township Master Plan for the future use, development and preservation of lands within the Township, in accordance with procedures set forth in Act 33 of the Public Acts of 2008, as amended, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act;

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2009, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider approval of the proposed amended plan, following the publication of notice and after expiration of the statutory comment period, in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission now desires to approve the proposed amended Master Plan in accordance with the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 43(3) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Township Board has chosen to assert its right to approve ~~subject~~ the Township Master Plan, after approval thereof by the Planning Commission.

Greg

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Watson Township Planning Commission hereby approves the amended Watson Township Master Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A.

2. Pursuant to Section 43(2) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the amended Master Plan is hereby referred to the Township Board for its consideration. The Planning Commission recommends to the Township Board that the Master Plan be adopted as proposed, pursuant to the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

ON ROLL CALL, the vote this 2nd day of December 2009, was as follows:

YEAS: Troy Baker, Rod Zenstra, Dave Carter, Michelle Harris, Jim Bacon, Beverly McKinnon - Barb Wrobleski

NAYS: None

Resolution No. 12-02-2009 **Declared Adopted**

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Watson Township Board at a regular meeting thereof held on the date first stated above, and I further certify that public notice of such meeting was given as provided by law.

Barbara Wrobleski

Barbara Wrobleski, Secretary
Watson Township Planning Commission

WATSON TOWNSHIP

ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Watson Township Board, held at the Township Hall, 1895 118th Avenue, Allegan, MI 49010, on the 3rd day of December, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members: Stephanie Bogdan; Chuck Andrysiak; Rod Zenstra; Candy Adrianson; and Kelli Morris

ABSENT: Members: None

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Stephanie Bogdan and seconded by Rod Zenstra: