



Master Plan Update 2026

Garfield Township Bay County, Michigan

August 18, 2026 DRAFT

Adopted by the Garfield Township Planning Commission
on XXXX, XX, 2026

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Garfield Township Master Plan Update 2026

DRAFT August 18, 2026

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Garfield Township Master Plan Update 2026

DRAFT August 18, 2026



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Introduction and Executive Summary

Regional Setting

Garfield Township is located in western Bay County, northwest of Bay City. The adjacent townships are Mount Forest to the north, Fraser to the east, Beaver to the south and Mills (Midland County) to the west. The small, unincorporated community of Crump is located in the southeast portion of the Township. The Township is located approximately seven miles west of the Saginaw Bay (Lake Huron) shoreline.

The Township is part of the Bay City/Midland/Saginaw metropolitan area and the 14 County East Central Michigan Planning and Development Region (ECMPDR). The ECMPDR Region is one of fourteen regional planning areas in the state.

The Township is easily accessible from the I-75/Linwood exit, approximately one mile to the east, or through Garfield Road, a regional collector that runs north-south through the Township.

Authority

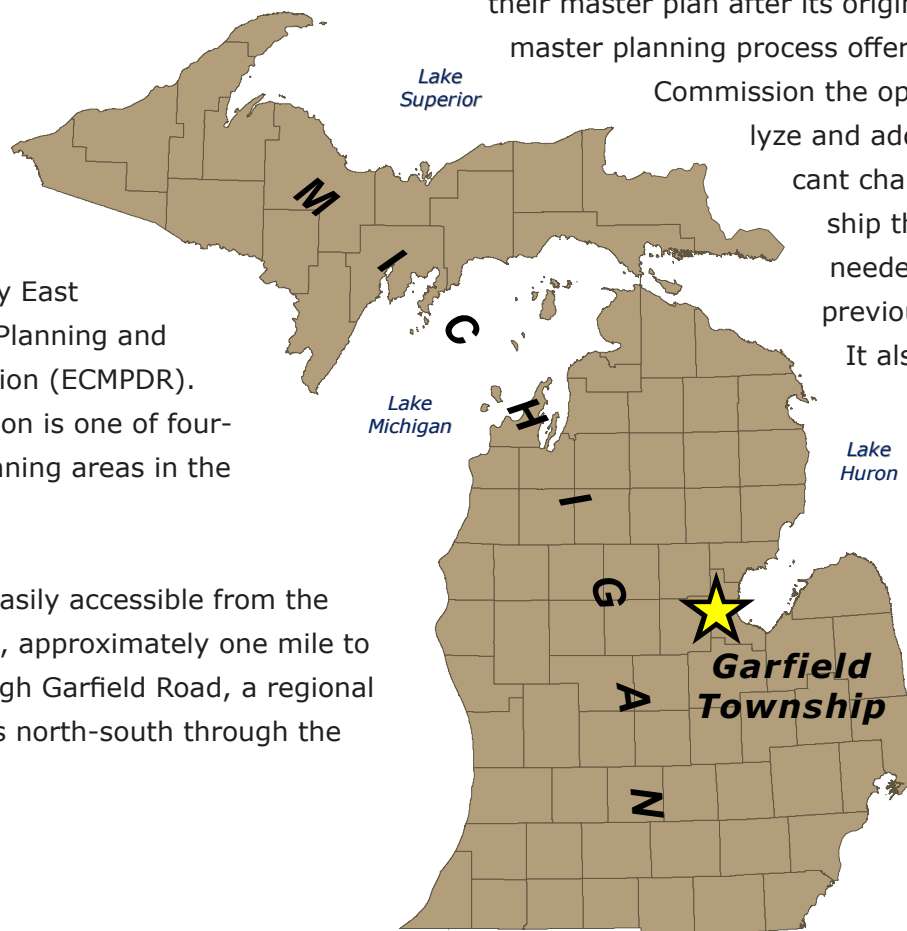
The Township derives its authority to Master Plan from the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, which was recently adopted by the State Legislature to replace the Township Planning Act. Public Act 33 states:

"The planning commission shall make and approve a master plan as a guide for development within the planning jurisdiction."

The master planning process is cooperative and public. Input from the public and various governmental entities are gathered throughout the planning process. Public Act 33 requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing before the final adoption of a master plan. Also, Public Act 33 requires review of a community's master plan after a five-year period but allows for change at any time. However, a public hearing is required if the Planning Commission wishes to alter or amend their master plan after its original adoption. The

master planning process offers the Planning Commission the opportunity to analyze and address any significant changes to the Township that may result in needed modifications to previous planning efforts.

It also provides the opportunity to ascertain progress in implementing the goals and policies outlined in previous planning efforts.



Purpose

The planning process was designed to involve conscious selections of policies and land use choices relating to growth and development in Garfield Township. The Master Plan serves to promote these policies through the following:

1. Provides a general statement of the Township's goals and provides a comprehensive view of the community's preferred future.
2. Serves as the primary policy guide for local officials when considering zoning, land division, capital improvement projects and any other matters related to land development. Thus, the Master Plan provides a stable and consistent basis for decision making.
3. Provides the statutory basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance, as required by the State of Michigan.
4. Helps to coordinate public improvements and private development activities to assure the judicious and efficient expenditure of public funds.



Garfield Township Hall

Public Involvement

The process of developing a Master Plan that is both meaningful to the community and feasible in its implementation must enjoy the participation of a larger stake-holding group. In order to garner this needed input, direct communication between the Planning Commission and Garfield Township stakeholders was pursued throughout the Master Plan process. Knowledge regarding the concerns of the community was gained through a public survey, multiple meetings, a public workshop, as well as a public hearing. This type of direct interaction with stakeholders allows for a more complete framework of the concerns and needs of Garfield Township community members.

Executive Summary

The Master Planning process began with a detailed assessment of existing conditions within the Township (Chapters 2 through 5 of this Plan). The most significant conclusions drawn from the existing conditions assessment include:

- The Township largely consists of agricultural and undeveloped land, comprising nearly 90 percent of the Township's total area.
- More than 3,500 acres of land within the Township is enrolled in the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116).
- Residential lands, predominantly rural single-family dwellings, comprise approximately 12 percent of the Township's total area.
- Non-residential lands (commercial, industrial, institutional, etc.) comprise a relatively small percentage of the Township's land area. Commercial uses are primarily concentrated in the community of Crump.

- More than 8,900 acres of land in the Township are covered by woodlands (40 percent of the total Township area).
- Soil surveys indicate that the majority of land within the Township contain soils that are well suited for farming.
- As of 2020, the Township's population stood at 1,693 residents, representing a 2.9 percent decrease from its 2010 population.
- Bay County is expected to decrease in population through the year 2045 to 97,022 citizens (a decrease of 5.3 percent from its 2025 population projection of 102,481 citizens).
- The major transportation routes within the Township include Garfield Road, Erickson Road, Anderson Road and Linwood Road. Interstate 75, located approximately one mile east of the Township, effectively connects Garfield Township to the larger region.
- Of the approximately 80 miles of roads within Garfield Township, well over half are paved.
- At present, no public water or sewer lines are located within the Township.

After gathering critical input from a dedicated group of citizens and Township officials, a clear vision for the future development of the Township was established. This vision is represented in narrative form through various goals and objectives (Chapter 6). Overarching community goals include: preserving the rural character of the community; protecting the rights of the individual property owner; relating land use to the long-

term natural characteristics of the land rather than short-term economic gain; and cooperating with the surrounding municipalities to provide needed community services.

Crafted through direct public participation, the Future Land Use Plan for Garfield Township is presented in Chapter 7. The Future Land Use Plan and Map establish seven future land use classifications, each of which contains specific recommendations for land use and the overall character of the land. The most dominant future land use classification is Agricultural/Rural Residential, which comprises nearly 95 percent of the total land area of the Township.

To assist the Township in implementing the various recommendations contained within the Master Plan, various resources and strategies for implementation are outlined in Chapter 8.

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Existing Land Use

Introduction

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

Survey Methodology

A parcel-by-parcel field survey was originally conducted in March 1997 to document existing development in Garfield Township. Each use was recorded on a base map and subsequently referenced for accuracy against aerial photographs. In June of 2009, a newly updated base map was obtained from Bay County, and the 1997 existing land use information was updated by Garfield Township staff. Again, the existing land use information was reviewed and corrected in 2026 for accuracy against aerial photographs.

The use of each parcel was categorized in accordance with a predetermined land use classification system, the Michigan Land Cover/Use Classification System, developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Acreage calculations for each land use category are derived directly from the data compiled on the Existing Land Use Map, and are presented in **Table 1**.

Land Use Characteristics

Map 1 illustrates how the land in the Township is being utilized as of May 2026. The image that is revealed after the "jigsaw" pieces are assembled is essentially a simple organization of land uses that resemble a rural mid-western farming community. The unincorporated community of Crump serves as the central commercial center and focal point for the Township. The vast majority of residences are located along section line roads throughout the entire Township. No medium to high density developments exist in the Township, thus preserving its rural character.

The Township largely consists of agricultural and undeveloped land. Combined, agricultural and vacant lands comprise nearly 90 percent of the Township's total area, out of a total Township acreage of 22,828. A detailed discussion of each land use classification is presented below.

Table 1: Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural	12,051	52.8%
Single Family Residential	2,636	11.5%
Mixed Use Residential	28	0.1%
Commercial	25	0.1%
Industrial	96	0.4%
Public/Semi-Public	11	0.0%
Parks & Recreation	420	1.8%
Vacant/Right-of-Way	7,561	33.1%
Total	22,828	100.0%

Source: 2010 Garfield Township Master Plan; Wade Trim Analysis, 2026.

Agriculture

The agricultural category includes lands under cultivation, horse farms, ranching operations, sod farms, pastures, orchards, and tree farms. The largest land use in Garfield Township, there are 12,051 acres dedicated to agricultural purposes, which amounts to 52.8 percent of the total land area. Generally, the southern and eastern portions of the Township are most heavily utilized for agriculture, while the more densely wooded western portion of the Township features less farmland.

Map 2 illustrates lands enrolled in the Michigan Department of Agriculture Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116) within the Township. The program is designed to preserve farmland and open space through agreements that restrict development, and provide tax incentives for program participation. Public Act 116 allows landowners to commit their property for agricultural use for a certain time period in return for a tax assessment based on the land's agricultural value rather than development or market value. Comparing **Map 1** with **Map 2**, it is evident that many of the larger agricultural lands are committed under PA 116. As of July 2009, lands enrolled in the program within Garfield Township comprise approximately 3,538 acres.



Cropland in Garfield Township



Pasture in Garfield Township

Single Family Residential

This category includes one-family detached dwelling units, two-family duplex dwelling units, trailers and mobile homes outside of designated mobile home parks, and accessory buildings such as garages that are related to these units. It also includes farmsteads and related agricultural buildings located near the principal dwelling. Within the Township, 2,636 acres, or 11.5 percent of the total land area is considered single-family residential. Single family homes are scattered throughout the Township in no particular concentration, primarily along the county-line roads.

Mixed Use Residential

This category includes uses with multiple utility. For example, a residence that doubles as a excavation contracting office would fall under the mixed use category. Within the Township, 28 acres, or 0.1 percent of the total land area is classified as mixed use residential.

Commercial

Uses included in the commercial category are building material sales, eating and drinking establishments, grocery stores, farm equipment dealers, and gasoline service stations. Garfield Township contains 25 acres of commercial land, which amounts to 0.1 percent of the total land area. Except for the Heritier Saw Mill located on 11 Mile Road, all commercial uses are concentrated within Crump, near the intersection of Garfield Road and Anderson Road.

Industrial

Included in this category are warehouses, processing facilities, and manufacturing and non-manufacturing uses which are primarily industrial in nature. This category may include land areas with or without buildings where raw or semi-finished materials are fabricated or those using or storing raw materials for primary production. Typical uses include warehouses, lumber yards, junk yards, fabrication establishments, collision shops, or industrial printing operations.

A total of 96 acres, or 0.4 percent of Township land is used for industrial purposes. The largest industrial use is an explosives manufacturer located off of 11 Mile Road.

Public/Semi-Public

Public/Semi-Public land uses include lands for cultural, public assembly and utility substations, (e.g., gas, oil, water, electricity), educational uses, and governmental administration and service buildings. Within Garfield Township, 11 acres are used for public/semi-public purposes. Facilities include the Township Hall, Fire Department and the Garfield United Methodist Church.



Rural residential living in Garfield Township

Parks & Recreation

This category includes all public and private recreational facilities within the Township. The only public recreational facility is the Garfield Township Park, 36.3 acres in size, which is located adjacent to the Township Hall on Erickson Road. Three private recreation facilities are located in the Township: the Bay County Conservation Club, located on Rogers Road; the Crump Conservation Club, located on Prevo Road; and the McLean Nature Preserve, located on Flajole Road. In total, parks and recreation lands comprise 420 acres or 1.8 percent of the total Township land area.

Vacant/Open Space/Other

This category includes lands that are lying fallow, vacant lands, woodlands, rivers and other open spaces for which no specific use is evident from field inspection. Also included are all dedicated rights-of-way including road, railroad and utility easements are included in this category. The second largest category in Garfield Township, this land use comprises 7,561 acres, or 33.1 percent of the total land area.



Garfield United Methodist Church



Garfield Township Park

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Natural Features Assessment

Introduction

The development of land can significantly impact, and in turn be impacted by, the natural environment. Thus, when preparing a future land use plan, it is important to determine the extent of environmentally sensitive areas within a community.

Environmentally sensitive areas are lands whose destruction or disturbance will immediately effect the life of a community by either:

1. Creating hazards such as flooding or slope erosion;
2. Destroying important public resources such as groundwater supplies or surface water bodies; or,
3. Wasting important productive lands and non-renewable resources.

Each of these effects is detrimental to the general welfare of a community and may result in an economic loss.

The purpose of this section is two-fold. First, it identifies which areas in the Township are most suitable for development; specifically, those areas which will minimize development costs and provide maximum amenities without adversely impacting existing natural systems. Second, it identifies land which should be conserved in its natural state

and is most suitable for open space or recreation purposes.

Topography, woodlands, and soil conditions are among the most important natural features that impact land use. Descriptions of these three features follow.

Topography

The topography of Garfield Township is relatively flat. Elevations range from a low of 630 feet above sea level in the southeast to a high of 675 feet above sea level in the northwest portion of the Township. The flat terrain presents few constraints to development.

Woodlands

Woodlands data for Garfield Township is derived from the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) Land Use/Land Cover data for Bay County. **Map 3** depicts the location of woodlands. As shown on this map, most woodlands are found in areas west of Garfield Road. In total, more than 8,900 acres of land are covered by woodlands within Garfield Township, comprising approximately 40 percent of the entire Township land area.

Woodland areas are complex ecological systems and, consequently, provide multiple benefits to the environment and its wildlife and human inhabitants. Woodlands play a role in flood protection by slowing the flow of surface run-off to allow for greater storm water infiltration. Woodlands also reduce air pollutants by absorbing certain airborne pollutants. In addition to providing wildlife habitats, forest vegetation moderates the effects of winds and temperatures while stabilizing and enriching the soil. For human inhabitants, forested areas offer a visual and audio barriers, which are considered aesthetically pleasing and offer unique opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

Woodland resources contribute greatly to the Township's environmental quality. The conservation of woodlands will play a positive role in maintaining and enhancing the future environmental character of the Township.

Soil Conditions

The review soil conditions includes an assessment of the various soil associations found within Garfield Township as well as insight into the soil's suitability to support agricultural production.

Soil Associations

There are three soil associations present in Garfield Township: Wixom-Pipestone-Tappan, Tappan-Londo-Poseyville, and Londo-Tappan. The following briefly describes the general characteristics of each soil association as reported in the Soil Survey of Bay County. **Map 4** delineates the general boundary line of each soil association.

The Tappan-Londo-Poseyville soil association is found primarily along the eastern sections of the Township and in large portions throughout the western half. This soil association is made up primarily of nearly level loamy sands that are poorly drained.

The Wixom-Pipestone-Tappan soil association is found throughout the central portion of the Township and along the segments of the Kawkawlin river. This association is considered to be somewhat poorly drained and nearly level in character.

The last soil association found along the eastern edge of the south east quarter of the Township is the Londo-Tappan. This association shares the same features as the previous two; nearly level and poorly drained.

Soil characteristics help to define lands capacity to support certain types of land uses. Soils most suitable for development purposes are well-drained



North Branch Kawkawlin River

and are not subject to a high water table. Adequate drainage is important to minimizing storm water impacts and the efficient operation of septic drain fields. Adequate depth to the water table is necessary to prevent water contamination from septic systems. A high water table also may limit the construction of basements. Though civil engineering techniques can be employed to improve drainage and maintain adequate separation from the water table, such techniques are expensive to construct and maintain.

Agricultural Suitability

Soils also play an important role in the food supply system. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identifies soils that are well or uniquely suited to crop production. When making land use decisions, it is important to consider the value of certain soils for agricultural purposes. Once a soil is developed or used for a non-agricultural purpose, it is permanently altered and its utility for agricultural production is greatly diminished if not destroyed. Although the agricultural industry is in decline, planners and public officials should carefully consider any development proposal which threatens this non-renewable resource.

According to the Soil Survey of Bay County, prepared by the NRCS, soils in Garfield Township are generally well suited for the production of crops commonly grown in the region. In order to more specifically identify the lands best suited for agricultural production, prime farmland data has been collected and mapped (see **Map 4**). The NRCS outlines five prime farmland categories, three of which are found within Garfield Township. The five prime farmland categories are defined below:

- Prime Farmlands - land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management.¹
- Farmland of Local Importance - land of importance to the local economy for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, or oilseed crops, as determined by the appropriate State or local agency or agencies, but does not meet the criteria of Prime Farmland.²
- Prime Farmland if Drained - lands that could be classified as Prime Farmland if provided with the proper draining techniques.
- Prime Farmland if Drained and Protected from Flooding - lands that could be classified as prime farmland if provided with proper draining and flood prevention techniques.

- Not Prime Farmland - lands not suitable for agricultural production for reasons of inadequate water supply, unfavorable temperature and growing season, and/or unacceptable nutrients for farming.

Reflective of the Township's strong agricultural heritage, and as shown **Map 4**, a substantial majority of land in the Township is classified as prime farmland if drained. In total, approximately 17,700 acres or 78 percent of the land within Garfield Township is classified as prime farmland if drained. Additionally, lands classified as farmland of local importance comprise approximately 1,300 acres or 6 percent of the total Township land area.

A relatively small amount of land in the Township is classified as not prime farmland. These lands are commonly found along water bodies, such as the North Branch Kawkawlin River and Erickson Drain. The prevalence of prime farmland in Garfield Township suggests that agricultural preservation be pursued as a community policy.

Wind Resources

The drive toward alternative energy sources, including wind energy, is gaining momentum. According to the Michigan Association of Planning's recently adopted Wind Energy Policy, "planners must be prepared to respond to the increasing demand for the development of alternative energy systems as a way to reduce dependence on fossil fuels." The policy also stresses that "municipalities must be prepared to embrace this new technology while protecting important local character, the environment, and quality of life," resulting in the need to obtain "a balance between the economic and environmental benefits of wind energy, and the likely adverse land use impacts."

In 2008, the Michigan legislature enacted a Renewable Portfolio Standard which, among other initiatives, mandates that 10 percent of the State's energy come from renewable sources by 2015. This mandate, coupled with Michigan's rich wind resources and declining costs of wind generation technology, has led to a strong interest in wind energy generation from both utility providers and private consumers (businesses, schools, homeowners, etc.). Two types of wind energy conversion systems are common: utility-scale, which supply energy to the utility grid for commercial profit; and on-site scale, which produce electricity used only by the primary residence, agricultural operation, or business.

In order to assess the potential for the generation of wind energy at the local level, the Land Policy Institute has developed a prototype wind prospecting tool. The purpose of the wind prospecting tool is to:

- Filter out areas of low potential for wind energy development.
- Focus efforts of stakeholders on high quality areas, and provide critical analysis of local and state policy gaps that could turn high quality areas into wind development ready communities where local interest and support is strong.
- Target statewide incentive policy and the wind development community investment toward those areas that are most conducive for wind energy development.
- Provide a clear benchmark of community wind development potential, and pathways to attracting investment

The wind prospecting tool relies on wind density data as calculated by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory using a 1 to 7 wind density rating scale (wind densities are recorded at a height of 50 meters). The wind prospecting tool assumes that wind densities rated higher than 3 are sufficient to support utility-scale wind energy conversion systems.

As detailed in the wind prospecting tool, existing wind densities within Garfield Township range between 1 and 2. However, several adjacent Bay County communities located along the Saginaw Bay, including Fraser Township and Kawkawlin Township, have been determined to have wind speeds sufficient to support utility-scale wind energy conversion systems. Even though utility-scale wind energy conversion systems may not be feasible within Garfield Township, the potential for private businesses, institutions, and homeowners to generate power from the wind does exist, and should be allowed and appropriately regulated within the Township.

Footnotes:

1. USDA Handbook No. 18, October 1993.

2. Farmland Protection Policy Act, Public Law 97-98, 7 U.S.C. 4201.

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Socioeconomic Profile

Introduction

Population and household characteristics are essential components to consider in the development of any Master Plan. An analysis of a community's existing and future population and household characteristics provides a foundation upon which a major portion of a Master Plan is based. While an evaluation of a community's current characteristics provides insight to immediate needs and deficiencies, population projections provide a basis for determining future land use requirements, public facility needs, and essential services.

The following examples illustrate this point. A younger population may demand schools, active recreation opportunities, and low density residential development, while an older population may require property maintenance assistance and higher density residential development. Also, persons characterized as low income typically generate a higher demand for publicly provided facilities than

persons in higher income categories who have access to private facilities.

This socioeconomic profile examines several elements which are central to understanding a community's population and housing characteristics. These items include population growth patterns, population projections, age breakdowns, household size, housing characteristics, income characteristics, and employment patterns.

Population Profile

Population Trends

Population growth is the most important factor influencing land use decisions in any community. Simply put, if the population of a community is growing, there will be a need for more housing, commerce, industry, parks and recreation, public services and facilities, or roads.

Table 2 compares population trends for Garfield Township, the adjacent Townships, Bay County and the State of Michigan between 1980 and 2020. In 1980, Garfield Township had a total population of 1,810, which declined to 1,736 by 1990. However, in 1990, the Township experienced population growth, increasing to 1,775 residents by 2000. Since 2000, the population has steadily declined, reaching 1,693 residents by the 2020 Census. Overall, Garfield Township decreased in population by 117 residents between 1980 and 2020.

Table 2: Population Trends, 1980-2020

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	Change 2010-2020	
						#	%
Garfield Township	1,810	1,736	1,775	1,743	1,693	-50	-2.9%
Beaver Township	3,027	2,810	2,806	2,885	2,723	-162	-5.6%
Fraser Township	3,954	3,680	3,764	3,188	2,994	-194	-6.1%
Mills Twp. (Midland Co.)	1,464	1,633	1,387	1,939	1,775	-164	-8.5%
Mt. Forest Township	1,444	1,457	1,363	1,392	1,399	7	0.5%
Bay County	119,881	111,732	110,157	107,771	103,856	-3,915	-3.6%
Michigan	9,262,078	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331	193,691	2.0%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, & 2020 U.S. Census; Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

This trend points toward continued decline into the future for Garfield Township, and is reflective of a continuing national trend of rural communities slowly declining in population over extended periods of time. **Table 2** demonstrates this trend among the majority of surrounding communities, and in Bay County as a whole.

The Township's historical decline is comparable to the surrounding Townships, Bay County and the State. Several communities declined in population between 1980 and 2020, including Fraser Township (-6.1 percent), Bay County (-3.6 percent), Mills Township (-8.5 percent), and Beaver Township (-5.6 percent). Only Mt. Forest Township (0.5 percent) and the State (2.0 percent) grew in population between 1980 and 2020.

Population Projections

Population projections for Garfield Township are not available. However, **Table 3** shows population projections for Bay County as a whole through 2045, based on a 2017 report published by the Michigan Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Planning. The statistics shown were provided by the East Michigan Council of Governments. The report uses a population projection model that is based on arithmetic measures of population dynamics over time, which are calculated

from age specific birth rates, death rates, and net migration.

According to the report, the population for Bay County is expected to decrease through the year 2045 to 97,022 citizens (a decrease of 5.3 percent from its 2025 population projection of 102,481 citizens). If Garfield Township mirrors Bay County's 5.3 percent projected decline, its population would decrease from 1,633 in 2025 to approximately 1,546 residents by 2045. However, it should be noted that all population projections rely on assumptions and do not anticipate unforeseen circumstances such as a major economic recession, the gain or loss of a major employer, or delayed retirement of older generations.

Age Distribution

Information on age distribution within a population can assist a community in matching public services to community characteristics and in determining special needs of certain age groups. For example, the younger population tends to require more rental housing units and smaller homes, while the elderly population may have a need for assisted living facilities. Analysis of age distribution may also be used by policy makers to identify current gaps in services and to project future service needs for housing, education, recreation and medical care. It is of equal importance in planning to anticipate

Table 3: Population Projections, Bay County, 2025-2045

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	% Change 2025-2045
Age 0 to 4	5,241	5,147	5,047	4,862	4,678	-10.7%
Age 5 to 15	11,606	11,487	11,495	11,362	11,031	-5.0%
Age 16 to 17	2,328	2,086	2,107	2,111	2,090	-10.2%
Age 18 to 24	7,675	6,936	6,337	6,370	6,349	-17.3%
Age 25 to 34	12,235	12,005	11,664	10,815	10,221	-16.5%
Age 35 to 44	12,650	12,944	12,633	12,553	12,201	-3.5%
Age 45 to 54	11,678	11,803	12,571	12,957	12,653	8.3%
Age 55 to 64	13,573	11,777	11,204	11,414	12,186	-10.2%
Age 65 to 74	14,020	13,680	11,987	10,498	10,076	-28.1%
Age 75 to 84	8,528	9,982	10,930	10,749	9,506	11.5%
Age 85 and older	2,947	3,531	4,424	5,315	6,031	104.6%
Total	102,481	101,378	100,399	99,006	97,022	-5.3%

Source: MDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning, 2017

Table 4: Age Group Trends, Garfield Township, 2020-2030

Population by Age	2020		2030	
	#	%	#	%
Under 5	88	5.2%	75	4.6%
5 to 9	95	5.6%	81	5.0%
10 to 14	100	5.9%	89	5.5%
15 to 19	110	6.5%	82	5.1%
20 to 24	67	4.0%	67	4.2%
25 to 34	176	10.4%	165	10.2%
35 to 44	221	13.1%	202	12.5%
45 to 54	230	13.6%	226	14.0%
55 to 64	260	15.4%	221	13.7%
65 to 74	223	13.2%	223	13.8%
75 to 84	106	6.3%	147	9.1%
Over 85	17	1.0%	36	2.2%
Median Age	44.5		47.2	

Source: 2020 Census and 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

which age groups are likely to increase during the planning period. Examples of this are the aging “baby boomers” and their children; both forming waves of population rise and fall as they move through their life-cycles.

Data in **Table 4** provide the age composition for Garfield Township in 2020 and projections for 2030. Projections indicate that the Township is expected to grow older, similar to state and national trends. In 2020, the Township had a median age of 44.5 years, which is expected to rise to 47.2 years by 2030. The aging Township population is further demonstrated by sharp increases in certain older age groups and decreases in certain younger age groups. Between 2020 and 2030, the largest increases were found in the 75 to 84 year age group (6.3 percent in 2020 to 9.1 percent in 2030) and the over 85 age group (1.0 percent in 2020 to 2.2 percent in 2030).

The prime working-age population (25 to 64 age cohort) is projected to decrease from 887 (52.5 percent) in 2020 to 814 (50.4 percent) in 2030, with the steepest decline in 55 to 64 age cohort (260 to 221, the largest numeric drop among cohorts). This decline, combined with flat or fall-

ing numbers in the 25 to 34 age cohort (176 to 165) and the 35 to 44 age cohort (221 to 202), may signal potential challenges for local businesses in hiring and succession planning, and underscores the need to attract and retain working-age households through housing choice, broadband and remote-work readiness, childcare availability, and quality-of-life amenities.

At the same time, older-adult age cohorts are projected to expand in both absolute and relative terms. Residents 65 years and over are expected to increase from 20.5

percent of the population in 2020 to 25.1 percent in 2030, with especially rapid growth among those age 75 to 84 years and those 85 years or older. The combined 75 and over population is expected to jump from 123 in 2020 to 183 by 2030, an approximately 49 percent increase, indicating rising demand for age-friendly housing, home- and community-based services, accessible transportation, and health and safety programming. Even where counts are flat (e.g., the 65 to 74 age cohort is expected to remain at 223), the share edges up, reflecting an overall aging population as totals decline.

Persons Per Household

The United States as a whole has experienced a decline in the number of persons per household. The number of persons per household has also declined in Garfield Township. This is important since, as the number of persons per household decreases, the need for housing units increases proportionately faster than the rate of population gain.

The 1980 U.S. Census reported that Garfield Township averaged 3.57 persons per household. By 2000, this number had decreased to 2.87. Based

on Esri estimates through 2030, the Township’s persons per household figure is expected to drop to 2.37 by 2030. Similarly, Bay County’s persons per household figure has been on the decline since 1980 and, based on Esri estimates, is expected to continue to decline through 2030 (see **Table 5**).

These trends have important implications for land use, housing supply, and service planning. Smaller household sizes typically translate into increased housing demand relative to total population, as the same number of residents are distributed across more dwellings. This may lead to rising interest in smaller single-family homes, senior-friendly housing formats, and flexible units suitable for young adults or aging residents living alone. At the same time, the reduction in average household size, combined with the Township’s aging population as reflected in other demographic datasets, indicates a need for continued diversification of housing types that support aging in place, including accessible one-story homes, accessory dwelling units, and low-maintenance cluster developments. These shifts also signal potential changes in community facility needs: declining numbers of school-age children may reduce pressure on local educational infrastructure, while an increasing share of older adults will likely elevate the importance of health-care access, mobility services, and emergency response capabilities. Overall, the Township’s

downward trajectory in household size emphasizes the importance of proactive planning to ensure that future housing and infrastructure investment aligns with emerging demographic realities.

Housing Profile

Housing Stock

Type of housing structure is the most basic measure of housing that refers to the type of housing units found in a community. Data in **Table 6** indicate the total number of housing units in Garfield Township and Bay County, and compares the change from 1980 to 2025. During that time-frame, even in the midst of a declining population, Garfield Township witnessed an increase in 182 housing units. For Bay County, the total number of housing units increased from 43,170 in 1980 to 48,757 in 2025.

Data on the type of housing units found within a community is available through the ACS 5-year estimates. **Table 7** shows the distribution of housing units by type for Garfield Township, Bay County, and Michigan in 2024.

As shown in Table 7, Garfield Township’s percent of single family detached dwellings (89.9 percent) is the highest of the compared jurisdictions. The Township also has a higher proportion of mobile

Table 5: Persons Per Household, 1980-2030

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025	2030
Garfield Township	3.57	3.11	2.67	2.87	2.49	2.4	2.37
Bay County	2.57	2.65	2.47	2.4	2.28	2.2	2.15

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, & 2020 U.S. Census; Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

Table 6: Housing Units, 1980-2025

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025	Change 2010–2025	
							#	%
Garfield Township	524	574	627	700	707	706	6	0.9%
Bay County	43,170	44,234	46,423	48,220	48,562	48,757	537	1.1%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, & 2020 U.S. Census; Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

home structures (9.8 percent) but a lower proportion of multi-unit structures as compared to the County and State. These housing characteristics suggest that Garfield Township has a lower level of housing diversity compared to the County and State, which is common among rural townships.

Age of Housing Stock

Data in **Table 8** identify the number of housing units by the year in which they were built. Generally, the average lifespan for residential structures is 50 years, dependent on the quality of materials, construction, and upkeep provided. Thus, approximately 50 percent of the Township’s housing units were potentially approaching the end of their life cycle (assumes that a house built prior to 1975 is reaching its effective lifespan by 2025). Conversely, with the other 50 percent of the housing stock less than 50 years old, it can be assumed that the

majority of units comprising the housing stock in Garfield Township are structurally sound.

Occupancy Characteristics

The home ownership rate is a very important aspect of a community. A high home ownership rate could be an indication that the community has stable and well kept neighborhoods. A higher percentage of rental housing might indicate a more transient population. Owner and renter occupancy rates can also reveal whether the housing stock in the community is affordable. Lower income citizens, who may include single persons, young families, and the elderly, require more affordable housing options including rental housing. A low percentage of rental units could indicate that the community is not providing adequate housing for these groups.

Table 7: Units in Structure, 2024

Unit Type	Garfield Township		Bay County		Michigan	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 unit structures detached	579	89.9%	34,989	77.6%	2,953,669	72.5%
Duplex	0	0.0%	3,047	6.8%	283,978	7.0%
3-9 unit structures	2	0.3%	2,045	4.5%	278,786	6.8%
10 or more unit structures	0	0.0%	3,149	7.0%	368,537	9.0%
Mobile home or other	63	9.8%	1,873	4.2%	191,399	4.7%
Totals	644	100.0%	45,103	100.0%	4,076,369	100.0%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Table 8: Age of Housing, Garfield Township, 2025

Year Structure Built	Percent
2020 or later	0.0%
2010 to 2019	3.7%
2000 to 2009	9.5%
1980 to 1999	30.6%
1960 to 1979	36.8%
1940 to 1959	13.7%
1939 or earlier	5.7%

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

Occupancy characteristics from the 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles for Garfield Township and Bay County are presented in **Table 9**. Over 95 percent of the Township’s housing supply is occupied, with owner-occupied units accounting for nearly 89 percent of all occupied units. Conversely, only 6.5 percent of all occupied dwelling units are renter-occupied. Garfield Township’s ownership figures are quite high when compared to Bay County and the State as a whole.

Knowledge of vacancy statistics can be helpful in predicting future growth and housing needs. A high vacancy rate might be an indicator of residential decline, but also shows that in the event of growth, housing units are available. Generally, a five- percent vacancy rate is considered necessary to provide an adequate housing selection and to keep home prices from rising faster than inflation. Vacancy rates below five percent indicate a restricted housing market. As shown in **Table 9**, vacant units represent 4.7 percent of Garfield Township’s total housing count. Of these vacant units, a handful may be considered to be seasonal, recreational or of occasional use, while the remainder are vacant year-round. In contrast, Bay County’s overall vacancy rate was slightly higher than Garfield Township at 6.9 percent as of 2025.

Housing Value

Analyzing housing values and rent could be the best way to determine both the quality and affordability of housing. It is of crucial importance that both quality and affordable housing is maintained to help retain current residents and attract new homeowners to a community.

Housing values in Garfield Township reflect a competitive but somewhat moderate market position within the region. According to the provided data, the median home value in Garfield Township is \$178,935, with an average value of \$206,966. These figures place the Township above the Bay County median of \$164,167 and average of \$198,949, indicating that Garfield’s hous-

ing stock holds comparatively higher value than the countywide baseline. However, when viewed alongside neighboring and peer rural communities, Garfield Township’s home values are generally lower. For example, Beaver Township (\$224,545 median; \$258,124 average), Mills Township in Midland County (\$222,188 median; \$261,031 average), and Mt. Forest Township (\$220,205 median; \$227,092 average) all report significantly higher values. In the broader context, the State of Michigan’s median home value of \$259,246, with an average of \$308,107, underscores that Garfield Township remains an affordable rural community relative to state norms.

Income Profile

Studying income and poverty levels is a good way to measure the relative economic health of a community. Three measures of income (median household, median family, and per capita) are recorded by the Census Bureau. Household income is a measure of the total incomes of the persons living in a single household. Family income is a measure of the total incomes of a family unit. Family income does not include non-family units, such as single persons living alone, and for this reason is

Table 9: Housing Occupancy Characteristics, 2025

	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant Units	Total Housing Units
Garfield Township	88.8%	6.5%	4.7%	706
Bay County	72.9%	20.2%	6.9%	48,757
Michigan	65.1%	23.9%	11.0%	4,642,597

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

Table 10: Housing Value Trends, 2025

	Median House Value	Average House Value
Garfield Township	\$178,935	\$206,966
Beaver Township	\$224,545	\$258,124
Fraser Township	\$165,519	\$219,195
Mills Twp. (Midland Co.)	\$222,188	\$261,031
Mt. Forest Township	\$220,205	\$227,092
Bay County	\$164,167	\$198,949
Michigan	\$259,246	\$308,107

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

usually higher than household income. Per capita income is a measure of the incomes of every citizen of an area. Because per capita income is based on all individuals, they are much lower than family or household incomes.

According to the data provided in **Table 11**, Garfield Township’s median household income rises from \$85,465 to a projected \$96,752 between 2025 and 2030, while per capita income increases from \$38,244 to \$42,834 over the same period. These figures significantly outpace countywide income levels, where Bay County’s median household income is projected to increase from \$61,832 to \$68,047, and per capita income from \$35,370 to \$39,513. Garfield Township’s median household incomes also surpass Statewide averages, with Michigan’s median household income projected to grow from \$72,645 to \$80,812. While the State’s per-capita income remains somewhat higher, the Township’s household-level income advantage suggests a prevalence of larger or more financially stable households contributing to higher total earnings.

Household income patterns in Garfield Township indicate a community with a relatively strong middle- and upper-middle-income profile compared with Bay County overall. As shown in **Table 12**, the Township has a notably smaller share of households in the lowest income brackets: only 3.6 percent of households earn less than \$10,000, compared with 7.2 percent Countywide, and 0.9 percent fall within the \$10,000 to \$14,999 range, less than one-third of the County’s 2.9 percent. Similar gaps persist through the \$15,000 to \$39,999 ranges, where Garfield Township consis-

Table 11: Household & Per Capita Income, 2025-2030

	2025		2030	
	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Garfield Township	\$85,465	\$38,244	\$96,752	\$42,834
Bay County	\$61,832	\$35,370	\$68,047	\$39,513
Michigan	\$72,645	\$41,134	\$80,812	\$46,149

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

tently shows lower proportions than the County, suggesting fewer extremely low-income households and potentially more economic stability within the community.

The income distribution shifts upward in the middle-income ranges, where Garfield Township maintains a solid representation. For example, 9.8 percent of households earn between \$60,000 and \$74,999, closely aligned with Bay County’s 10.1 percent, while the Township’s share of households in the \$50,000 to \$59,999 bracket (4.0 percent) is roughly half the County’s 8.4 percent. The difference becomes more pronounced at higher income levels. Garfield Township’s largest income brackets are \$75,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000 to \$124,999, accounting for 18.3 percent and 18.9 percent of households respectively, compared with Bay County’s 13.5 percent and 11.1 percent. The Township also exceeds the County in the \$125,000 to \$149,999 and \$150,000 to \$199,999 ranges, reflecting a comparatively more affluent residential profile. Although the highest income categories (above \$200,000) represent small shares of total households, Garfield Township remains generally proportionate to County ranges in these upper tiers.

Employment Profile

Employment by occupation and employment by industry are two related, yet individually significant indicators of community welfare. Employment by occupation describes the trades and professions in which Township residents are employed, such as

a manager or salesperson. Employment by industry quantifies in what field that manager or sales person may be employed. For instance, two sales persons may be present in the “Sales and Office Occupations” category of the employment by occupation table, but may be employed in two different fields. That is, a sales person in the manufacturing industry and a sales person in the real estate trade would be categorized within those different classifications in the employment by industry table.

Employment data by selected industry groupings for Garfield Township is displayed in **Table 13**. Garfield Township’s employment base is dominated by goods-producing sectors, with manufacturing (21.4 percent) and construction (17.6 percent) together comprising nearly 40 percent of all local jobs, far higher than Bay County’s 16.0 percent and 6.5 percent respectively. This indicates a workforce strongly rooted in skilled trades and production-oriented occupations. Service-sector employment is present but generally below County levels: health care and social assistance accounts for 15.3 percent of Township employment (vs. 19.4 percent Countywide), and retail trade represents 8.4 percent locally compared to 11.8 percent Countywide. Notably, Garfield Township exceeds the County in arts and recreation (4.4 percent vs. 1.6 percent), pointing to local strengths in outdoor-recreation or tourism-aligned activities.

Employment data by selected occupation for the Township in 2025 is displayed in **Table 14**. Garfield Township’s occupational mix is more trade and labor oriented than Bay County overall, with blue-collar jobs making up 38.8 percent of local

Table 12: Distribution of Household Income, 2025

Households by Income	Garfield Township		Bay County	
	#	%	#	%
<\$10,000	24	3.6%	3,246	7.2%
\$10,000-14,999	6	0.9%	1,321	2.9%
\$15,000-19,999	22	3.3%	2,117	4.7%
\$20,000-24,999	36	5.4%	2,207	4.9%
\$25,000-29,999	29	4.3%	1,514	3.3%
\$30,000-34,999	16	2.4%	2,144	4.7%
\$35,000-39,999	17	2.5%	1,674	3.7%
\$40,000-44,999	20	3.0%	1,891	4.2%
\$45,000-49,999	12	1.8%	2,090	4.6%
\$50,000-59,999	27	4.0%	3,812	8.4%
\$60,000-74,999	66	9.8%	4,583	10.1%
\$75,000-99,999	123	18.3%	6,129	13.5%
\$100,000-124,999	127	18.9%	5,037	11.1%
\$125,000-149,999	65	9.7%	3,154	7.0%
\$150,000-199,999	56	8.3%	2,856	6.3%
\$200,000-249,999	12	1.8%	671	1.5%
\$250,000-299,999	7	1.0%	331	0.7%
\$300,000-399,999	5	0.7%	261	0.6%
\$400,000-499,999	1	0.2%	108	0.2%
\$500,000+	2	0.3%	241	0.5%

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

employment compared to 26.2 percent County-wide, driven largely by high shares in construction/extraction (16.4 percent) and production (10.6 percent). White-collar occupations account for 42.9 percent of the workforce—below the County’s 55.2 percent—though the Township has a notably higher proportion of workers in management roles (13.5 percent), suggesting a strong presence of supervisory staff, business owners, and independent contractors. Service occupations represent 18.3 percent, closely aligning with the County average of 18.6 percent, with workers distributed across food service, building maintenance, personal care, and healthcare support. Overall, the Township’s occupational structure reflects a skilled, hands-on workforce with a modest professional segment, underscoring the need for policies that support trades, enable home-based enterprises, and maintain infrastructure for residents who commute to jobs in professional and service-sector fields.

Table 13: Employment by Industry, 2025

Industry	Garfield Township		Bay County	
	#	%	#	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	20	2.5%	485	1.0%
Mining	3	0.4%	58	0.1%
Construction	141	17.6%	3,122	6.5%
Manufacturing	171	21.4%	7,726	16.0%
Wholesale Trade	24	3.0%	846	1.8%
Retail Trade	67	8.4%	5,691	11.8%
Transportation, Warehousing	32	4.0%	1,826	3.8%
Utilities	2	0.3%	908	1.9%
Information	0	0.0%	574	1.2%
Finance, Insurance	31	3.9%	1,803	3.7%
Real Estate	4	0.5%	513	1.1%
Professional, Scientific, Tech	8	1.0%	1,440	3.0%
Management of Companies	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Admin, Support, Waste Management	19	2.4%	1,914	4.0%
Educational Services	18	2.3%	3,113	6.5%
Health Care, Social Assistance	122	15.3%	9,363	19.4%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	35	4.4%	773	1.6%
Accommodation, Food Services	31	3.9%	3,531	7.3%
Other Services (Excluding Public)	58	7.3%	2,769	5.7%
Public Administration	13	1.6%	1,709	3.5%
Totals	799	100.0%	48,164	100.0%

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

Table 14: Employment by Occupation, 2025

Occupation	Garfield Township		Bay County	
	#	%	#	%
White Collar	343	42.9%	26,594	55.2%
Management	108	13.5%	4,120	8.6%
Business / Financial	38	4.8%	2,101	4.4%
Computer / Mathematical	3	0.4%	826	1.7%
Architecture / Engineering	15	1.9%	1,293	2.7%
Life / Physical / Social Sciences	7	0.9%	680	1.4%
Community / Social Service	6	0.8%	668	1.4%
Legal	0	0.0%	303	0.6%
Education / Training / Library	18	2.3%	2,188	4.5%
Arts / Design / Entertainment	0	0.0%	587	1.2%
Healthcare Practitioner	50	6.3%	3,942	8.2%
Sales and Sales Related	34	4.3%	4,759	9.9%
Office / Administrative Support	64	8.0%	5,127	10.6%
Blue Collar	310	38.8%	12,610	26.2%
Farming / Fishing / Forestry	3	0.4%	211	0.4%
Construction / Extraction	131	16.4%	2,664	5.5%
Installation / Maintenance / Repair	42	5.3%	2,095	4.3%
Production	85	10.6%	3,892	8.1%
Transportation / Material Moving	49	6.1%	3,748	7.8%
Services	146	18.3%	8,960	18.6%
Healthcare Support	42	5.3%	2,770	5.8%
Protective Service	0	0.0%	598	1.2%
Food Preparation / Serving	39	4.9%	2,550	5.3%
Building Maintenance	34	4.3%	1,726	3.6%
Personal Care / Service	31	3.9%	1,316	2.7%
Total	799	100.0%	48,164	100.0%

Source: 2025 Esri Demographic and Income Profiles

5

Transportation, Utilities and Services Assessment

Introduction

Garfield Township, with support from a variety of outside public and private agencies, strives to ensure a high quality of life for residents and businesses within the community through the efficient provision of services. These services fulfill essential community needs such as public safety, public health, sanitation, social welfare, recreation, education, and mobility.

By ensuring that future land development occurs at an appropriate scale and location given the existing or planned capacity of public services, sound land use planning is an important tool for maintaining a high quality of life. In order to determine suitable locations and allowable types of new development, the existing or planned capacity of all types of public services must first be considered, particularly the capacity of the transportation network and availability of public utilities.

Transportation

National Functional Classification System

Garfield Township is served by a hierarchical network of roadways with various functions. This hierarchical network is defined by the National Functional Classification (NFC) system, which is a federal classification system for all public highways, roads and streets. The two primary considerations in classifying the functionality of highway

and street networks are access to property and travel mobility, as defined by trip travel time or operating speed. For example, local roads provide efficient access to property, but would be rated low in mobility. The basic classifications for the NFC are:

- Arterial roads, which generally handle longer trips and operate at higher and more uniform speeds;
- Collector roads, which collect and disperse traffic between arterials and the local roads; and,
- Local roads, streets, and other public ways, which serve the land access function to the residential areas, businesses, farms and other local areas.

Map 5 documents the transportation network of Garfield Township. As is shown on the map, no arterial roads are found within Garfield Township. The nearest arterial roadways to Garfield Township include I-75, which runs north-south approximately one mile east of the Township, M-13, which runs north-south approximately four miles east of the Township, and U.S. Highway 10, which runs east-



Erickson Road

west approximately 10 miles south of the Township.

Several major collector routes are found within Garfield Township: Garfield Road; Erickson Road; Anderson Road, west of Garfield Road; and Linwood Road, east of Garfield Road. Garfield Road runs north-south through the Township, connecting the Township with Mt. Forest Township to the north and the City of Auburn and U.S. Highway 10 to the South. Erickson Road runs east-west and extends from Fraser Township to the east, through Garfield Township, to Mills Township to the west (as it enters Midland County, Erickson Road becomes Levely Road). Linwood Road runs east-west along the southern edge of the Township. Importantly, Linwood Road serves as a “gateway” route in and out of Garfield Township, as it connects to I-75 just east of the Township. Anderson Road runs east-west and extends from Garfield Township to Mills Township to the west, ultimately connecting with M-30 in Midland County (as it enters Midland County, Anderson Road becomes Shaffer Road).

Three minor collector routes are also found in Garfield Township: Flajole Road, north of Erickson Road; Prevo Road, east of Garfield Road; and Linwood Road, between Garfield Road and Carter Road.

The remaining roads in Garfield Township are classified as local roads or are not classified.

County Primary and Local Roads

Aside from a few private roads, the road network of Garfield Township is under the jurisdiction of the Bay County Road Commission. The County Road Commission classifies roads as either County Primary roads or County Local roads. This local classification system is important in that County Primary roads receive precedent for road improvements, repairs and maintenance (i.e., snow plowing). Consistent with the NFC, all of the collector

routes within Garfield Township are classified by the County Road Commission as County Primary roads. All other County roads are classified as County Local roads (see **Map 5**).

Traffic Counts

Map 6 displays twenty-four hour Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts for all County roads segments within Garfield Township. These traffic counts were obtained from the Bay County Road Commission, while the actual counts were taken at different time periods between 2000 and 2008.

A graduated color scheme (yellows to greens to reds) has been used on the map in order to depict the highest and lowest traveled roads in the Township. As shown on the map, the two highest traveled road segments in Garfield Township (over 2,000 ADT) are: Linwood Road, extending from the east into Garfield Township and up to Garfield Road; and Garfield Road, extending from Linwood Road through the unincorporated community of Crump to Prevo Road.

Several road segments featured significant traffic counts ranging between 1,500 and 1,999 ADT. These road segments included: Garfield Road between Prevo Road and Erickson Road; and Anderson Road between Carter Road and Garfield Road. Other relatively higher traveled road segments (greater than 500 ADT) include segments of Garfield Road, Erickson Road, Anderson Road, and Prevo Road.

The traffic count data on **Map 6** clearly show a traffic pattern that is heavily influenced by the Linwood Road interchange at I-75, located approximately one mile east of the Township. Traffic volumes are highest along Linwood Road in the southeastern corner of the Township and gradually disperse to the other collector routes (i.e., Garfield Road, Anderson Road, Erickson Road) and ultimately to the local routes.

Surface Type

Map 6 also identifies the surface type of County roads as either paved or gravel. All of the County Primary roads in the Township are paved. In addition to these, many of the County Local roads are also paved. Of the 76.93 miles of roads within Garfield Township, well over half (43.46 miles or 56.5 percent) are paved.

Gravel roads are spread throughout Garfield Township but are most common in the western and northern portions of the Township. These gravel roads are mainly section line roads that provide access for a limited number of homes and the adjacent agricultural lands.



11 Mile Road

Public Utilities and Services

Public utilities and services, particularly emergency medical services and water supply and sanitary sewer systems, are important not only from a public health and environmental quality standpoint, but they also enable higher density development. The presence of utilities can also be an instigator of development, as developers and prospective business owners seek sites that have utility services in place.

Community Services

Public safety within Garfield Township falls within the jurisdiction of the Bay County Sheriff's Department, headquartered in the Bay County Law Enforcement Center in downtown Bay City. The Bay County Jail is also located in the Law Enforcement Center.

Fire and emergency response service is provided through the Garfield Township Fire Department, a volunteer fire department located on Erickson Road near the Township Hall.

No medical facilities are located within the Township, however a variety of medical facilities are found within the larger Bay City, Midland and Saginaw metropolitan area.

The Garfield Township Park, located adjacent to the Township Hall on Erickson Road, provides ample recreational opportunities for Township citizens. Included at the park is a playground area, basketball court, baseball fields, duck pond, walking trail, pavilion and picnic area, and outdoor rest rooms.

Public Utilities

At present, no public water or sewer lines are located within the Township. For potable water supply, property owners must rely on private well systems. The review and approval of private well systems falls under the jurisdiction of the Bay County Health Department.

Property owners within Garfield Township must rely on private septic systems for sanitary sewer service. The regulation of on-site septic systems falls under the jurisdiction of the Bay County Health Department.

The limited extent of public water and sanitary service within Garfield Township will have a significant impact in the future land use plan, as future locations for non-residential and higher density development must be planned concurrent with infrastructure capacity.



Garfield Township Park

6

Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Before a community can actively plan for its future growth and development, it must first develop a set of goals and objectives that define the boundaries of its needs and aspirations and, thus, establish a foundation for Master Plan formulation. The goals and objectives must reflect the type of community desired and the kind of lifestyle its citizens wish to follow, given realistic economic and social constraints.

Goals and Objectives Defined

Each goal listed in this Chapter is a basic statement that sets a critical path, provides direction, and describes to the community how the desired outcome should look. Goals are a critical part of the planning process in that they are flexible, defining for the community, and timeless. Goals stay with the community until they are achieved. Goals are ambitious and general. They address issues and specific needs or problems, but they are grand in scope and speak to fundamental change and directly serve the mission of the community.

Objectives are the means to achieve a goal. An objective is a plan of action that sets a more specific task within a goal and helps gauge success. Objectives should often meet the following criteria:

1. An objective must be specific.
2. An objective must be measurable, that is, there must be no question that the objective was begun, carried out, and completed and that a tangible result can be produced.
3. An objective must be able to be assigned to a responsible party. There must be a party made to be in charge of each objective to ensure that it will be carried out and that there is no confusion as to who should answer for the results of the objective.
4. An objective must be trackable, or easy to follow. Each objective must be carefully monitored and its status must be known at all times. It is essential that the objective be set to a specific schedule and “landmarks” within it be set to convey its ongoing progress to residents and businesses alike.

Basis for the Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives listed in this Chapter are based upon the collective desires of the citizens of Garfield Township. Below is a more detailed description of efforts and activities that shaped the Township’s goals and objectives.

Garfield Township Community Survey

Community engagement is a valuable part of the planning process in soliciting public input. A survey was made available to the public in the Spring of 2025. A public survey ensures that the plan reflects the needs, priorities, and lived experiences of the community it serves. It also builds transparency and trust, helping decision-makers create more informed, widely supported, and implementable outcomes. A total of 135 surveys were completed.

The below survey summary narrative identifies instances where differences in responses were especially notable.

Overall Perception of Change

When asked about how Garfield Township has changed over the past five years, opinions were mixed. Approximately 19 percent of responses indicated improvement (3.9 percent Much Better, 15.5 percent Better), while 64.9 percent felt conditions have stayed the same. Notably, 15.8 percent felt conditions have declined (11.8 percent Worse and 4.0 percent Much Worse). This split suggests general stability, but with a meaningful minority perceiving decline, an important consideration for future planning.

Infrastructure and Road Conditions

Road conditions emerged as the single most significant concern in the survey, both quantitatively and in open-ended responses. While 62.8 percent of respondents rated road conditions as “the same”, nearly 30 percent rated them as “worse” or “much worse.” Only 7.8 percent felt road conditions had improved. Complaints focused on gravel roads, poor grading, dust, potholes, drainage issues, bridge closures, and inconsistent maintenance. Roads were cited repeatedly as the top priority needing attention and were frequently linked to opposition to new development.

Open-ended comments reinforced these findings, with frequent references to:

- Deterioration of gravel and formerly chip-and-seal roads
- Dust, potholes, washboarding, and poor grading
- Drainage and ditch maintenance issues
- Bridge closures (especially Erickson Road)
- Snow plowing and seasonal accessibility

Concerns about roads were linked to new development, with many respondents indicating infrastructure deficiencies should be addressed before considering growth.

Public Safety and Township Services

Perceptions of Township services were generally neutral to slightly positive, largely reflecting limited direct use. Most respondents indicated these services had remained unchanged:

- **Fire Services:** 78.7 percent rated as same; 10.6 percent rated as worse or much worse
- **Police/Law Enforcement:** 72.1 percent same; only 6.6 percent worse or much worse
- **Ambulance Services:** 70.3 percent same; 8.4 percent worse or much worse
- **Traffic Conditions:** 71.9 percent same, with only 6.6 percent negative ratings

Township facilities also rated favorably:

- **Hall and Parks:** 81.6 percent rated as same, with fewer than 6 percent negative
- **Cemetery:** 62.9 percent same, though approximately 25 percent rated conditions as worse or much worse, a higher negative share than other facilities

Overall, public safety and community facilities are not major drivers of dissatisfaction, especially compared to roads.

Rural Character and Agricultural Identity

A dominant and consistent theme throughout the survey is the strong desire to preserve the Township's rural and agricultural character. Across responses, residents most commonly identified reasons for living in Garfield Township as

- Rural lifestyle
- Farming and agricultural activity
- Low population density
- Quiet, privacy, and open space

This sentiment cuts across age groups and length of residency. Many respondents explicitly stated that they chose Garfield Township because it is not urban and expressed concern about any changes that could shift that identity.

Growth and Development Preferences

Survey responses show limited support for growth, with many residents favoring either no growth or very slow, carefully managed growth. Preferences, where growth is acceptable, include:

- Scattered single-family homes
- Low-density development
- Growth only after infrastructure (especially roads) is addressed
- Development that strengthens the tax base without changing Township character

Strong opposition was expressed toward apartments, dense subdivisions, and large-scale commercial or industrial uses.

Energy and Industrial Development

Opposition to wind energy, solar farms, and industrial development was one of the strongest and most consistent opinions in the survey. Residents raised concerns about:

- Loss of productive farmland
- Visual and landscape impacts
- Increased industrialization
- Outside corporations benefiting at local expense
- Perceived lack of responsiveness to public input during prior energy discussions

These sentiments suggest a high sensitivity to land-use changes with long-term impacts.

Blight and Property Maintenance

Blight and property upkeep were frequently mentioned as growing problems. Respondents cited:

- Junk vehicles and debris
- Abandoned or neglected structures
- Unmaintained properties affecting community appearance

While some cautioned against excessive regulation, a strong majority of comments supported consistent enforcement of blight and property maintenance standards to protect quality of life and neighborhood character.

Desired Services and Amenities

Where residents expressed interest in additional services, the focus was primarily on basic conveniences and quality-of-life improvements rather than growth drivers. Commonly mentioned needs included:

- High-speed internet (especially in rural areas)
- Recycling services

- Municipal water in select locations
- Small-scale retail (hardware store, grocery)

These items were generally framed as improvements for existing residents rather than as tools to attract new development.

Final Comments

The community survey reflects a Township that is deeply valued by its residents for its rural, agricultural character, while also revealing frustrations regarding infrastructure, particularly road conditions. Responses came from a broad range of ages, lengths of residency, and property sizes, though the survey skewed heavily toward long-term residents and older age groups.

Taken together, the survey portrays Garfield Township as a community that values stability, rural identity, and agriculture, while expressing clear concern about infrastructure maintenance, particularly roads. While most residents perceive conditions as unchanged, the proportion expressing dissatisfaction is substantial enough to warrant focused action. The findings strongly support planning policies that prioritize infrastructure reinvestment, farmland preservation, limited growth, and responsiveness to long-standing community concerns.

Garfield Township Visioning Workshop

On September 16, 2009, a visioning workshop was held to ascertain citizen viewpoints related to the future planning and development of Garfield Township. The workshop was attended by approximately 15

Planning Commissioners, Township officials and citizens and included both individual and small group visioning exercises. An individual exercise prompted participants to answer the following three questions:

1. Why do you live in Garfield Township?
2. What do you treasure in Garfield Township?
3. What in Garfield Township are you most concerned about?

The inset on this page outlines the results of the individual exercise, with the responses generalized by topic and prioritized based on the number of instances.

Results of the Garfield Township Visioning Workshop

September 16, 2009, 6:30 pm

Summary and Prioritized Ranking of Treasures

- T1. My home and my property (10)**
- T2. Good medical response (7)**
- T3. Spacious lots/not crowded (7)**
- T4. Woodlands (5)**
- T5. Location near urban centers (4)
- T6. Peace and quiet (3)
- T7. Small town feel (3)
- T8. Small population (3)
- T9. Farmland (2)
- T10. My church (2)
- T11. The Saginaw Bay (2)
- T12. Wildlife (2)
 - Trails/ORV
 - Great hunting
 - New Township hall
 - No water/sewer
 - Parks
 - Bicycling opportunities
 - Walking opportunities
 - The community and people

Key:
Top Priority (8 or more instances)
Middle Priority (5 to 7 instances)
Low Priority (2 to 4 instances)
Other Issues (1 instance)

Summary and Prioritized Ranking of Concerns

- C1. Blight/slums (9)**
- C2. Subdivisions/urban sprawl (6)**
- C3. Loss of woodlands (5)**
- C4. Loss of farmland (4)
- C5. Local government efficiency/responsiveness (4)
- C6. Need to increase citizen awareness of Township government (4)
- C7. Need to maintain good fire protection (4)
- C8. High taxes (3)
- C9. Lack of gas lines for heating (3)
- C10. Property rights/taxpayer rights (do not want to lose) (2)
- C11. Gravel road maintenance (2)
- C12. Increased traffic (2)
 - Water quality/well water
 - Not enough paved roads
 - Aging housing
 - Low tax base/need money for Township services
 - Loss of businesses
 - Need to improve schools
 - Animal control

In the end, the postcard exercise was successful in building consensus and provided the project team with direct insight about community values and a variety of points of view.

On October 21, 2009, a meeting was held with Planning Commissioners, Township officials and citizens to conduct a detailed review of the Township's currently adopted goals and objectives. The meeting began with a presentation of the prioritized results from the visioning workshop. Then, using a customized evaluation tool, each of the Township's currently adopted goals and objectives was reviewed and critiqued for relevancy, effectiveness, and consistency with the overall community vision. After the review, the necessary additions, revisions and deletions to the currently adopted goals and objectives were made clear.



Team 1 Postcard of Tomorrow



Team 2 Postcard of Tomorrow

Goals and Objectives

Community-Wide Goals

1. To create an optimum human environment for the present and future residents of Garfield Township, an environment that will meet their physical, social and economic needs, while preserving the rural character of the community.
2. To preserve and promote the rights of individual property owners while maintaining the aesthetic character of the community.
3. To relate land use primarily to the natural characteristics of the land and the long-term needs of the community, rather than to short-term economic gain.
4. To encourage intergovernmental cooperation with Bay County and surrounding municipalities in the coordination of long-range planning for the provision of area-wide facilities.

Agricultural Goal

Encourage the retention of prime agricultural lands within the Township in recognition of the agricultural industry's direct impact on the region's economy and quality of life.

Agricultural Objectives

1. Protect those land areas that are economically important to the agricultural industry from encroachment and interference by incompatible uses.
2. Recognize that agriculture is an important economic activity of the Township, as well as a natural asset, by encouraging the use

of tools and techniques such as the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act (PA 116), farmland conservation easements, and purchase of development rights programs, among others.

3. Ensure that land development codes allow for activities that might reduce costs or provide supplementary income for local farmers, such as farm stands, consistent with community character.
4. Promote sustainable agricultural practices, with its emphasis on environmental stewardship, wholesome food production, and a locally-oriented customer base.

Residential Goal

To promote the development of stable, high-quality and well-maintained residential areas designed to offer a variety of housing choices at affordable prices

Residential Objectives

1. Encourage and guide housing developments at densities that relate to the natural and environmental features.
2. Encourage innovative development techniques as a means of ensuring lasting identity and the preservation of sensitive environmental features
3. Require adequate buffers or transition areas between residential and non-residential developments to maintain property values and attractiveness.
4. Encourage the removal of conflicting or undesirable land uses from residential areas through code enforcement and other means.

5. Encourage the removal of unsanitary or unsafe housing through code enforcement or other means.
6. Encourage the development of housing designed to meet the specialized needs of the elderly population, enabling them to “age-in-place” in the Township.

Commercial Goal

To provide for a limited range of commercial facilities to serve the needs of the local residential population.

Commercial Objectives

1. Encourage the continued development of Crump as the commercial center of the Township.
2. Discourage strip commercial development.
3. A compatible relationship should be established between commercial and adjacent residential uses through the use of buffer devices such as walls, fences, landscaped areas, and transitional uses.
4. Recognize the role that the nearby communities of Midland and Bay City play as the primary commercial, shopping, cultural and entertainment destinations within the area, and relate the amount of planned commercial land accordingly.
5. Encourage the creation of home businesses that are compatible with adjacent properties.

Industrial Goal

To encourage limited light industrial development with attractive sites to strengthen the tax base and provide employment opportunities for area residents.

Industrial Objectives

1. Locate industrial areas that have reasonable boundaries, are easily accessible from existing transportation network, and are not subject to encroachment by incompatible uses.
2. Encourage the creation of home businesses that are compatible with adjacent properties.
3. Recognize the role that the nearby communities of Midland and Bay City play as the primary industrial and employment destinations within the area, and relate the amount of planned industrial land accordingly.
4. Given the Township’s agricultural and rural residential development pattern, predominance of prime agricultural lands, lack of public infrastructure systems, and limited community service capacity, a thorough analysis is needed before shifting to more industry and considering any data processing facility, whether it is low-impact, small-scale or large-scale (or “hyperscale”).

Transportation Goal

To develop and maintain a network of roads that meet the needs of all Township residents and businesses in a safe and convenient manner.

Transportation Objectives

1. Cooperate with the Bay County Road Commission in the planning and design of road improvements.
2. Limit points of ingress/egress on major roads.
3. Segregate truck and automobile traffic as much as possible.
4. Develop and implement a plan for improvements of secondary roads through a public participation process.

Park and Recreation Goal

To preserve the natural resources of Garfield Township and provide for the recreation needs of all Township residents.

Park and Recreation Objectives

1. Encourage public participation and utilize professional expertise to determine needed and desired recreation facilities.
2. Cooperate with the State of Michigan and adjoining communities in the development of recreation and community facilities.
3. Through a combination of funding sources including general funds, grants, and donations, continue to develop the Garfield Township Park with more active recreation facilities.

4. Maintain a community recreation plan to be used as a short term and long term guide for recreation improvements and to ensure eligibility for certain State recreation grant opportunities.

Natural Environment Goal

To preserve and enhance the natural and environmental resources of the Township for all current and future Township residents.

Natural Environment Objectives

1. Implement land use patterns which will direct new growth away from environmentally sensitive areas, such as woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes and areas subject to flooding.
2. Encourage the use of the open space development option, cluster housing option, and other techniques to minimize the impact of new residential development on existing natural assets and make them an integral part of new development.
3. Encourage the removal of conflicting, unattractive, or undesirable land uses from the Township.
4. Link natural features and open space areas to create a system of natural corridors.

Community Facilities and Services Goal

Continue to offer efficient services and facilities to residents and businesses, offering a variety of opportunities for human fulfillment, in locations appropriate for their development and utilization.

Community Facilities and Services Objectives

1. Operate a responsive and efficient Township government while allowing for meaningful involvement and participation by Township citizens and stakeholders in all planning processes.
2. For Township provided facilities, plan, locate and provide public areas based on a long-range general plan, short range project plans, and capital improvement programming.
3. Continue the cooperative relationship with neighboring and regional governmental agencies for the shared provision of public services and facilities, like recreation, emergency services, library, and senior services.
4. Diligently monitor and seek funding opportunities to develop and improve essential community services.
5. Encourage and support community volunteerism by providing opportunities for citizens motivated to contribute to the community's well-being, and to satisfy one's personal need for fulfillment, sense of accomplishment, and self-esteem.
6. Encourage long-term sustainability and the reduction of fossil-fuel emissions through the promotion and implementation of energy efficient facilities, services, programs and incentives.
7. Explore the feasibility of the Township's wind resources as an economic development tool and means to reduce energy consumption, weighed against potential impacts to the natural environment and rural character.

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Future Land Use

Introduction

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

1. The Plan must be general. The Plan, by its very nature, cannot be implemented immediately. Therefore, only generalized locations (not necessarily related to property lines) for various land uses are indicated on the Plan.
2. The Plan should embrace an extended but foreseeable time period. The Plan depicts land uses and community development strategies over an approximately 20-year timeframe.
3. The Plan should be comprehensive. The Plan, if it is to serve its function as an important decision-making tool, must give adequate consideration to the sensitive relationships which exist between all major land use categories.
4. The Plan should acknowledge regional conditions and trends. Garfield Township is an integral part of Bay City-Midland-Saginaw Region; therefore, the Plan should ac-

knowledge the Township's regional context. Through recognition of regional implications, the Township's Future Land Use Plan will be more realistic and reasonable in terms of guiding the future utilization of land resources in the Township.

5. The Plan must be updated periodically. The Plan may require periodic revisions to reflect significant changes in local, state, or national conditions which cannot be foreseen at this time. It is, of course, impossible to predict the type of changes which may occur over the next decade or two. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the Future Land Use Plan should be undertaken approximately every five years to provide for an adequate analysis of new conditions and trends. Should major rezonings which are in conflict with Plan recommendations be accomplished, the Plan should be reviewed and amended accordingly.

Plan Recommendations

Seven land use classifications are proposed for Garfield Township. The various land uses have been portrayed on **Map 7** and in **Table 15**. A discussion of each land use category is presented below.

Agricultural/Rural Residential

The Agricultural/Rural Residential future land use category is intended to preserve the agricultural heritage and rural character of the Township and is the predominant land use. An approximate total of 21,400 acres (93.7 percent of the land area in the Township) is devoted to this classification. Farming and related agricultural activities and rural housing are the principal uses of the Agricultural/Rural Residential classification. The lands included in this classification contain the majority of the protected farmland currently enrolled under PA 116.

The Agricultural/Rural Residential category is designed to conserve, stabilize, enhance, and develop farming and related resource utilization activities; to minimize conflicting uses of parcels, lots, buildings, and structures detrimental to, or incompatible with these activities; and to prohibit uses of parcels, lots, buildings, and structures which require streets, drainage, and other public facilities and services of a different type and quantity than those that currently exist. The category, in preserving areas for agricultural uses, is also designed to prevent proliferation of residential subdivision and urban sprawl. Additionally, lands within this category would be prime candidates for participation in the Bay County Purchase of Development Rights Program, if one is established.

Agricultural properties may be used for general and specialized farming, including the raising or growing of crops, livestock, poultry, bees, and other farm animals, and products. Buildings or structures may be located which are used for the day-to-day operation of such activities and other bona-fide agricultural enterprises, including limited sales of agricultural products produced on the premises (i.e., farm stands). Any lands that are kept as idle cropland should be treated to prevent soil erosion by wind or water and should be free of excessive weeds and shrubs.

Single family homes that are compatible with the agricultural use and rural character of the category are encouraged. A minimum lot area of one acre is recommended for each residential unit. Lot sizes must be large enough to provide for an approved on-site septic system, as public sanitary sewer facilities are unavailable within the designated

Table 15: Future Land Use

Category	Acres	Percent of Total
Agricultural/Rural Residential	21,400	93.7%
Medium Density Residential	205	0.9%
High Density Residential	20	0.1%
Commercial	60	0.3%
Industrial	104	0.5%
Public/Semi-Public/Recreation	45	0.2%
Conservation	996	4.3%
TOTALS	22,830	100.0%

Agricultural/Rural Residential areas and are not anticipated to be constructed within the planning horizon.

Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential future land use category is intended to accommodate a slightly more dense residential area within the community of Crump. This category may include single family detached structures including permanent dwellings and accessory structures, and other facilities intended to support the residential area such as schools, churches and parks.

Although more dense than the Agricultural/Rural Residential lands, the overall character of the community of Crump is decidedly rural; therefore, any new residential development must be reflective of this character. A minimum lot area of three-quarters of an acre is recommended for each residential unit, given the ability to construct an approved on-site septic system. In total, lands within this category comprise approximately 205 acres or 0.9 percent of the Township.

High Density Residential

This future land use category is intended to provide opportunities for more affordable housing and alternatives to traditional single-family detached development. High density residential develop-

ment may serve as a transitional land use; for example, one which buffers single-family units from more intensive commercial uses. High Density Residential lands may include such uses as duplexes, attached condominiums, senior living, and garden apartments. Manufactured, mobile or modular home parks may also be permitted within this land use category. To ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses and the overall rural character of the Township, intensive landscaping and buffering is required along the perimeter of any new development, while a maximum permitted density of 4 dwelling units per acre must be maintained. Additionally, access to approved sanitary sewer facilities must be provided.

One area within the community of Crump, totaling approximately 15 acres, has been designated as High Density Residential. A second location along Garfield Road, a former school building, has also been designated High Density Residential.

Commercial

This land use category includes those areas of the Township that are currently developed or are planned to be occupied by retail and service facilities. These commercial areas, thoughtfully designed and oriented, will accommodate the commercial needs of established residential areas within Garfield Township and will provide for the logical expansion of the commercial areas located within the community of Crump.

It is recommended to allot approximately 60 acres (0.3 percent of the Township) for various types of commercial development. Most of the commercial uses are located in the Crump area and are intended to serve the local market only.

Industrial

The Future Land Use Plan allows adequate space within the Township for industrial development. The Plan designates 104 acres (0.5 percent of the

Township) for industrial development. In addition to existing operations on Flajole Road and Eleven Mile Road, the remaining planned industrial land is located in Crump. The proposed industrial land in Crump is adjacent to planned agricultural, high density residential and commercial lands. Due to this relationship, this category should allow for those uses which are generally compatible with, or, which under the imposition of certain reasonable standards, may be safely and aesthetically located in close proximity to commercial or residential uses. Light industrial uses are recommended.

Light industrial uses include operations which are generally confined within enclosed structures. Compliance with reasonable performance standards is required in an effort to reduce adverse impact on neighboring properties. Typical light industrial uses may include the manufacturing of products for component parts, parts assembly, food packaging, warehousing, and tool and die shops.

Public/Semi-Public/Recreation

This category was established to embrace all developed or undeveloped lands owned by various governmental and public agencies and institutions (including municipal services, schools, religious uses, and park space).

The Future Land Use Plan designates 45 acres (0.4 percent of the Township's total land area) for Public/Semi-Public/Recreation uses. All of the areas designated for public/semi-public/recreation uses are reflective of existing facilities.

No areas slated for future public/semi-public/recreational use are included in the Future Land Use Plan. Rather, any new facilities could be accommodated throughout the Township, where appropriate and consistent with the requirements of the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance.

Conservation

The Conservation future land use category is designed to preserve and protect sensitive environmental areas of the Township. Totalling approximately 996 acres, this category comprises 4.3 percent of the Township. The category encompasses all of the lands along the North Branch Kawkawlin River as well as existing conservation lands including the Bay County Conservation Club, McLean Nature Preserve, and the Crump Conservation Club.

Preserving sensitive natural resources is important to the essential qualities of the Township that help to attract and retain Garfield Township residents. Therefore, future actions and policies to protect the natural environment found within this category will be of utmost importance. To ensure that residential development is compatible with natural areas, reasonable lot size, setback and lot coverage restrictions will need to be developed. In addition, criteria will need to be established to help land owners understand what natural assets are to be protected and the extent of preservation that is expected on their property.

Uses within this category may include preserves, wildlife sanctuaries, and open spaces. Public and private outdoor recreation uses such as parks, gun ranges, and golf courses may be considered under special conditions to ensure that such developments would be appropriate.

Other Recommendations

Home Based Businesses

With the continuing improvements in communications and transportation, there are a number of occupations and businesses that do not need to be located in exclusive commercial districts. The intent of this specific land use is to permit Township

residents to conduct certain of these occupations and businesses in their homes or on-site accessory buildings as a secondary use as long as the operation of the business has no demonstrably adverse effect on neighboring properties.

Home occupations and businesses should be limited to those having low impact such as the legal, engineering, and accounting professions; computer uses; software development; consulting; insurance; design; artistic endeavors; sewing; wood-working; tutoring; and similar occupations. The existence of a home business shall not be considered an adequate reason for rezoning either the property on which it is based or neighboring properties to commercial or industrial zoning districts.

To ensure that home businesses have negligible impact on neighboring properties, permits may be required and limitations placed on the number of employees, the amount of floor area used for the business, the amount of business traffic, the hours of operation, and such other restrictions as may be necessary.

Zoning Plan

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

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

Existing Zoning Districts

The current Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance has established a total of two Zoning Districts as follows:

1. Open District
2. Commercial District

The purpose of the Open District, as generally stated in the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance, is to retain the character of the large open land areas of the Township. A variety of uses are permitted by right within the Open District, including farms, preserves, recreational uses, dwellings, educational facilities, places of worship, clubs, nursing homes, and golf courses. Uses permitted by special permit in the Open District include airfields, kennels, cemeteries, mining activities, commercial and industrial enterprises, correctional institutions, and mobile home parks.

The purpose of the Commercial District, as generally stated in the Zoning Ordinance, is to provide retailing, personal and business services of all kinds to satisfy the needs of residents and visitors of the Township as well as wholesaling and industrial uses. Uses permitted by right within the District include business enterprises, light industrial enterprises, vehicular sales, auto service stations, mortuaries and animal hospitals. Uses permitted by special permit in the District include single and multiple family dwellings (4 units or less), theatres, vehicle wrecking yards, animal sales yards, bulk storage operations, and more intensive business and industrial enterprises (i.e., manufacturing).

Relationship Between the Future Land Use Categories and Zoning Districts

As outlined above, the Garfield Township Master Plan has established a total of seven Future Land Use Categories:

1. Agricultural/Rural Residential
2. Medium Density Residential
3. High Density Residential
4. Commercial
5. Industrial
6. Public/Semi-Public/Recreation
7. Conservation

As the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance currently exists, with only two broadly defined Zoning Districts, the land use recommendations proposed in the seven Future Land Use Categories are not well represented or accomplished by the current Zoning Ordinance. For example, the Commercial Future Land Use Category describes an area where retail and service facilities would be located. The existing Commercial District within the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance, by allowing a variety of uses well beyond the scope of "retail and service facilities," including industrial uses, would not be consistent with the Commercial Future Land Use Category.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that a comprehensive update or a complete re-write of the Garfield Township Zoning Ordinance be conducted to better reflect the vision and recommendations of this Master Plan. In terms of Zoning Districts, it is recommended that, at a minimum, the following new Zoning Districts be established:

- A District intended to accommodate agricultural uses, rural residential uses, and other complementary uses as described in the Agricultural/Rural Residential Future Land Use Category
- A District intended to accommodate medium density residential uses and other complementary uses as described in the Medium Density Residential Future Land Use Category

- A District intended to accommodate high density residential uses and other complementary uses as described in the High Density Residential Future Land Use Category
- A District intended to accommodate commercial uses and other complementary uses as described in the Commercial Future Land Use Category
- A District intended to accommodate industrial uses and other complementary uses as described in the Industrial Future Land Use Category

Because public, semi-public, recreation, and conservation uses would likely be allowed within one or more of the new Zoning Districts, it may not be necessary to create a new Zoning District to exclusively accommodate the uses recommended within the Public/Semi-Public/Recreation or Conservation Future Land Use Categories.

Implementation Resources

Introduction

The Garfield Township Master Plan is a comprehensive community policy statement. The Plan is comprised of a variety of both graphic and narrative policies intended to function as benchmarks and to provide basic guidelines for making reasonable, realistic community development decisions. The Plan is intended to be used by Township officials, by those making private sector investments, and by all of those Garfield Township citizens interested in the future development of the Township.

The completion of the Plan is but one part of the community planning process. Realization or implementation of the recommendations of the Plan can only be achieved over an extended period of time and only through the cooperative efforts of both the public and private sectors. Implementation of the Plan may be realized by actively:

- Assuring community wide knowledge, understanding, support, and approval of the Plan
- Regulating the use and manner of development of property through up to date reasonable zoning controls, subdivision regulations, and building and housing codes
- Providing a program of capital improvements and adequate, economical public

services by using available governmental financing techniques to encourage desired land development or redevelopment

- Reviewing the plan periodically (at least every five years) to evaluate its consistency with changing trends and citizen desires

Public Support of the Master Plan

Citizen participation and understanding of the general planning process and policies of the Plan are critical to the success of the Township's planning program. A well organized public relations program is needed to identify and marshal public support. Lack of citizen understanding and support could well have serious implications for the eventual implementation of planning proposals. Failure of the public to back needed bond issues and continuing dissatisfaction concerning taxation, special assessments, zoning decisions, and development proposals are some of the results of public misunderstanding and rejection of long range plans.

In order to organize public support most effectively, the Township must emphasize the necessity of, and reasons for, instituting the planning program. Accordingly, the Planning Enabling Act under Section 51 states that the Township Planning Commission "may publish and distribute copies of the Master Plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education." Additionally, the Planning Commission "shall consult with and advise public officials and agencies, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional, and other organizations, and citizens concerning the promotion or implementation of the Master Plan." In this spirit, the Township may wish to prepare a plan summary brochure for public distribution upon its adoption.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning regulations are adopted under the local police power granted by the State for the purpose of promoting community health, safety, and general welfare. Such regulations have been strongly supported by the Michigan courts, as well as by the U.S. Supreme Court. Zoning consists of dividing the community into districts, for the purpose of establishing density of population and regulating the use of land and buildings, their height and bulk, and the proportion of a lot that may be occupied by them. Regulations in different kinds of districts may be different. However, regulations within the same district must be consistent throughout the community.

The intent of zoning is to assure the orderly development of the community. Zoning is also employed as a means of protecting property values and other public and private investments. Because of the impact that zoning can have on the use of land and related services, it should be based on a comprehensive long range community plan.

Zoning is an effective tool not only for the implementation of the Plan, but also benefits individual property owners. It protects homes and investments against the potential harmful intrusion of business and industry into residential neighborhoods; requires the spacing of buildings far enough apart to assure adequate light and air; prevents the overcrowding of land; facilitates the economical provision of essential public facilities; and aids in conservation of essential natural resources.

Enforcement

The ultimate effectiveness of the various ordinance requirements, however, is dependent upon the overall quality of ordinance administration and enforcement. If administrative procedures are lax, or if enforcement of regulations is handled in an inconsistent, sporadic manner, the result will be

unsatisfactory at best. The Township Zoning Administrator is often responsible for carrying out zoning/development related functions including building inspections, ordinance administration, community/developer liaison, and so forth. Each of these functions requires a substantial investment of staff time. If sufficient time is not made available to carry out these critical functions, they may only be accomplished in a cursory manner. Therefore, the Township should provide for adequate department staff levels and/or consulting assistance to assure that these essential day-to-day functions will receive the professional attention required to assure quality development.

Capital Improvements Program

The term "capital improvements" is generally intended to embrace large-scale projects of a fixed nature, the implementation of which results in new or expanded public facilities and services. Such items as public building construction, park development, sewer installation, waterworks improvements, street construction, land acquisition, and the acquisition of certain large-scale pieces of equipment (graders, sweepers, trucks, etc.) are included in the capital improvements budget.

Few communities are fortunate enough to have available at any given time sufficient revenues to satisfy all demands for new or improved public facilities and services. Consequently, most are faced with the necessity of determining the relative priority of specific projects and establishing a program schedule for their initiation and completion. The orderly programming of public improvements is to be accomplished in conjunction with the long-range Master Plan for development.

In essence, the capital improvements program is simply a schedule for implementing public capital improvements, which acknowledges current and anticipated demands and which recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the

community. The capital improvements program is a major planning tool for assuring that the projects proceed to completion in an efficient manner. The capital improvements program is not intended to encourage the spending of additional public monies but is simply a means by which an impartial evaluation of needs can be made. The program is a schedule established to expedite the implementation of authorized or contemplated projects.

Long-range programming of public improvements is based upon three fundamental considerations. First, the proposed projects must be selected on the basis of community need. Second, the program must be developed within the community's financial constraints and must be based upon a sound financial plan. Finally, program flexibility must be maintained through the annual review and approval of the capital budget. The strict observance of these conditions requires periodic analysis of various community development factors, as well as a thorough and continuing evaluation of all proposed improvements and related expenditures.

The Planning Enabling Act outlined a new requirement for all Planning Commissions in communities that have adopted a Master Plan and operate a public water and/or sewer system to annually prepare a capital improvements program. According to the Act, the program "shall show those public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, that in the Commission's judgement will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the ensuing 6-year period." Because it does not operate a public water or sewer system, Garfield Township is not required by State Statute to prepare a capital improvements program. However, capital improvements programming remains a valuable exercise and tool for determining and prioritizing needed public improvements.

Planning Education

Planning Commissioners should be encouraged to attend planning and zoning seminars to keep themselves informed of current planning issues and learn how to better carry out their duties and responsibilities as a Planning Commissioner. These seminars are regularly sponsored by groups as the Michigan Association of Planning, Michigan Townships Association and the Michigan State University Extension Service.

Funding Opportunities

Garfield Township's Master Plan has focused on providing an overall recommended pattern for future land uses in the Township. At the same time, however, it also has identified a number of policies, programs and services that will be important for the successful implementation of the Plan's goals. In particular, these policies and recommendations are listed in the Goals and Policies chapter of this Master Plan.

To accomplish these policies and recommendations, Township leaders should begin to develop criteria and priorities for such efforts including the provision of technical assistance and coordination of local project funding. However, in this time of diminished revenue from local funding sources, communities such as Garfield Township must diligently monitor and aggressively seek funds from state and federal funding sources. To assist in the implementation of the Master Plan, a comprehensive matrix of funding opportunities applicable to Garfield Township has been created (**Table 16**).

Table 16: Matrix of Funding Opportunities

Category/ Program Name	Sponsor	Funding Opportunity Description	Required Local Match Percentage	Link to Program Description
Parks, Recreation and Trails				
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	MDOT/ SEMCOG	Activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options, including provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.	20%	https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_17216_18231---,00.html
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	MDNR	Purchase of land; development of outdoor recreational facilities and trails	25%	https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79134_81684_79209_81657---,00.html
Land and Water Conservation Fund	MDNR	Development of outdoor recreational facilities and trails	50%	https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79134_81684_79209_81655---,00.html
Recreation Passport	MDNR	Development of outdoor recreational facilities and trails	25%	https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79134_79210---,00.html
Community Forestry Grants	MDNR	Grants to support urban and community forest activities such as tree inventories, management plans, planting and other maintenance activities	No Match	https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79237_80942---,00.html
Community Facilities and Infrastructure				
Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Program	USEDA	Projects that stimulate employment (i.e., industrial parks) in areas that have experienced severe economic distress	Varies	https://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/index.htm
Public Works and Economic Development Program	USEDA	Construction or rehabilitation of essential public infrastructure and facilities necessary to generate or retain private sector jobs and investments.	Varies	https://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/index.htm
Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF)	EGLE	Grants and low-interest loans for water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, nonpoint source pollution control, and watershed and estuary management.	No Match	https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3307_3515_4143---,00.html
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF)	EGLE	Grants and low-interest loans to install, upgrade, or replace infrastructure to continue to ensure safe drinking water.	No Match	https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3307_3515_3517---,00.html
Rural Development Community Facilities Program	USDA	Grants and low-interest loans for essential community facilities and capital projects or equipment that supports police, fire and health services in rural areas (20,000 or less population)	25% for grants	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/community-facilities-programs
Rural Development Water and Environmental Programs	USDA	Grants and loans for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and storm drainage facilities in rural areas (10,000 or less population)	Varies	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/water-environmental-programs
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program	FEMA	Grants to fire departments to enhance their ability to protect the public and fire service personnel from fire and related hazards	10-20% depending on service area population	https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefightr.htm#:~:text=funding%20in%20action.,Contact,and%20conduct%20grant%20monitoring%20activities
Transportation (Including Non-Motorized)				
Safe Routes to School Program	MDOT	Trail development to improve school access	No Match	https://saferoutesmichigan.org/
Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF)	MDOT	Category A: funding to assist in the development of highways, roads and streets necessary to support economic growth (must partner with the Monroe Co Road Commission)	20%	https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_17216_18230---,00.html
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	MDOT/ SEMCOG	Activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options, including provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.	20%	https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9621_17216_18231---,00.html

Source: Wade Trim, April 2026.

Acronym Key:

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency
EGLE = Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy
MDLEG = Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth
MDNR = Michigan Department of Natural Resources
MDOT = Michigan Department of Transportation
USEDA = United States Economic Development Administration
USDA = United States Department of Agriculture

5-Year Master Plan Review

The Garfield Township Master Plan is a flexible document that should be updated periodically to address major changes in the community, such as the addition/loss of a major employer or changing citizen attitudes relating to a controversial issue.

At least every five years after the adoption of a Master Plan, the Planning Enabling Act requires that a Planning Commission “review the Master Plan and determine whether to commence the procedure to amend the Master Plan or adopt a new Master Plan.” The findings of the review must be recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting or meetings of the Planning Commission.

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A



Appendix: Mapping

Map 1, Existing Land Use

Map 2, PA 116 Farmlands

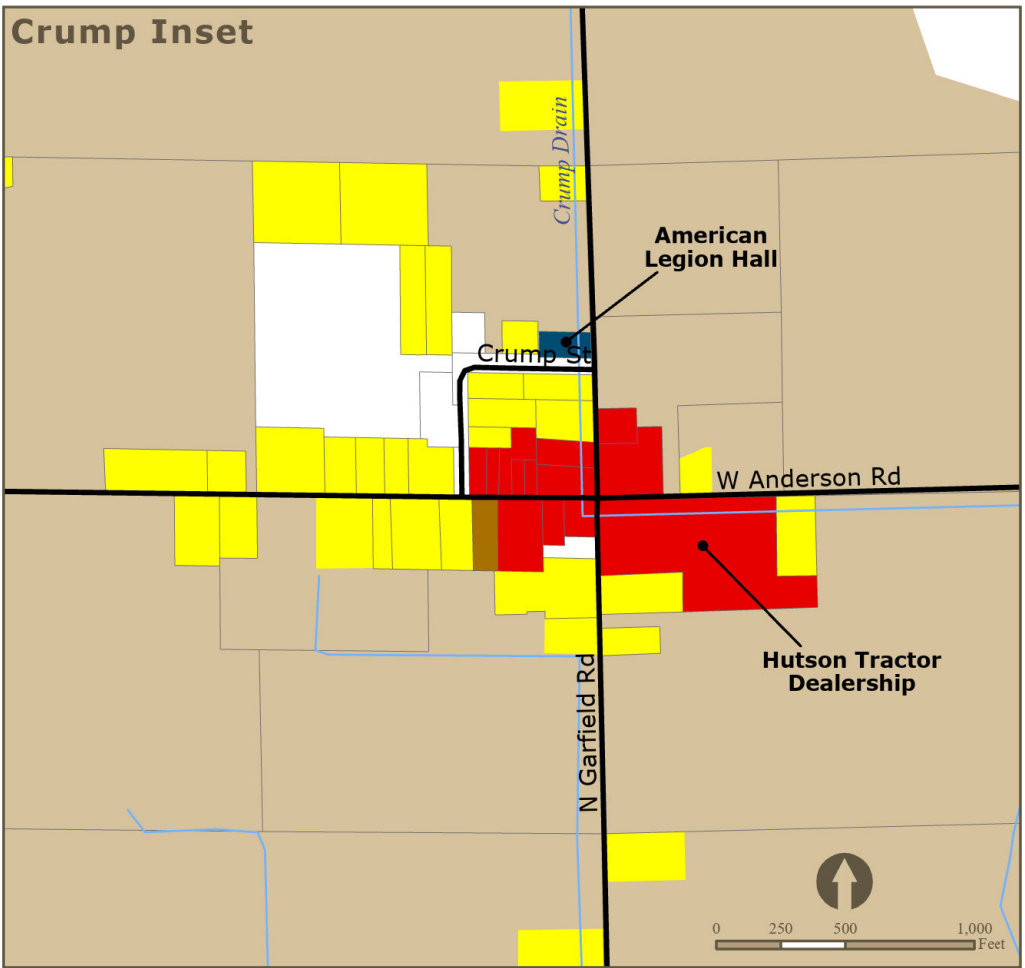
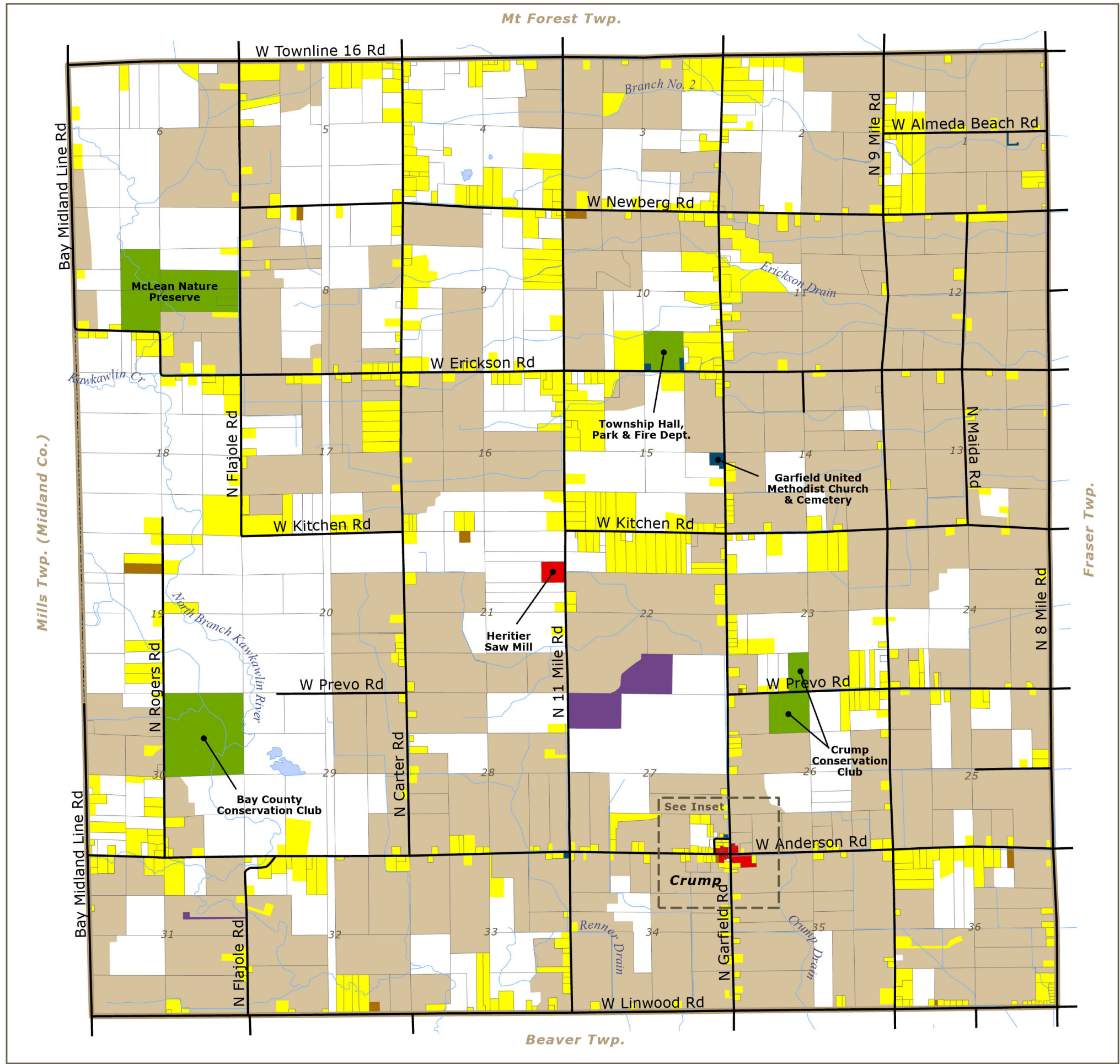
Map 3, Woodlands

Map 4, Soil Conditions

Map 5, Transportation Network

Map 6, Transportation Analysis

Map 7, Future Land Use



**Map 1
Existing Land Use**



Master Plan Update

Legend

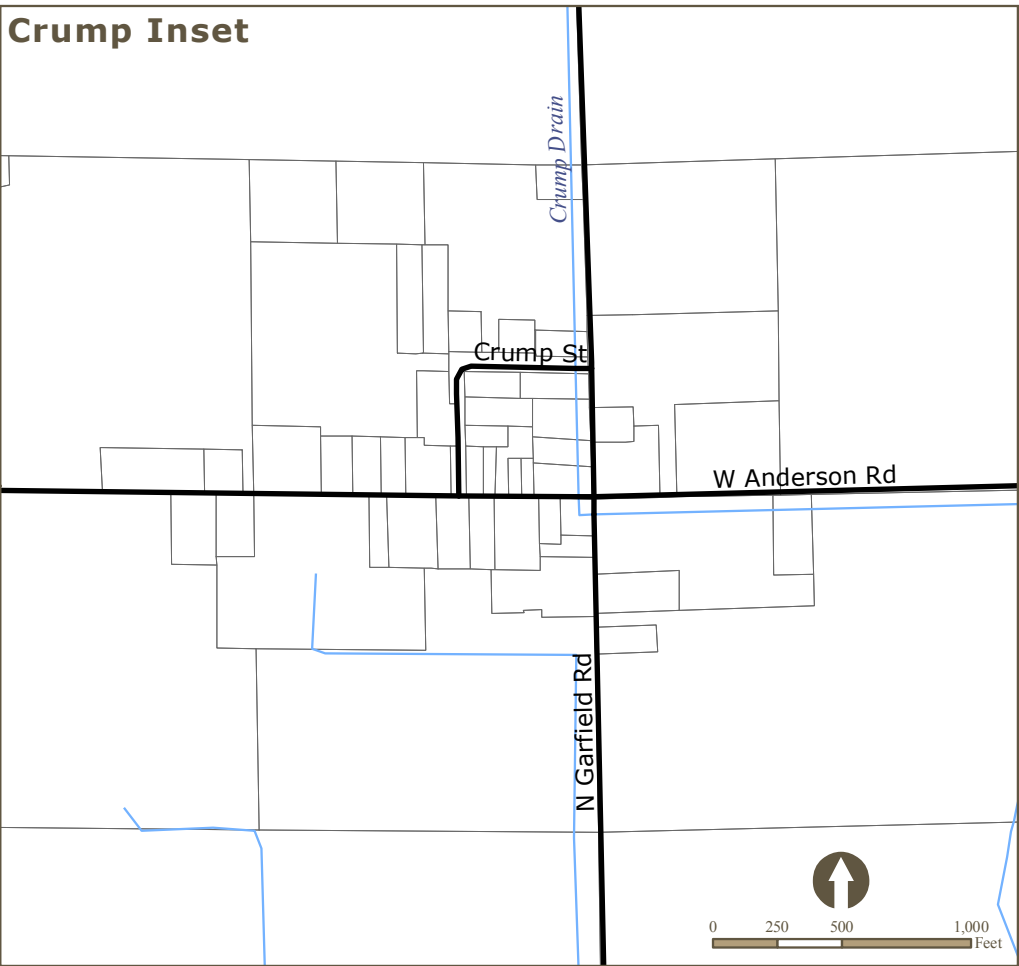
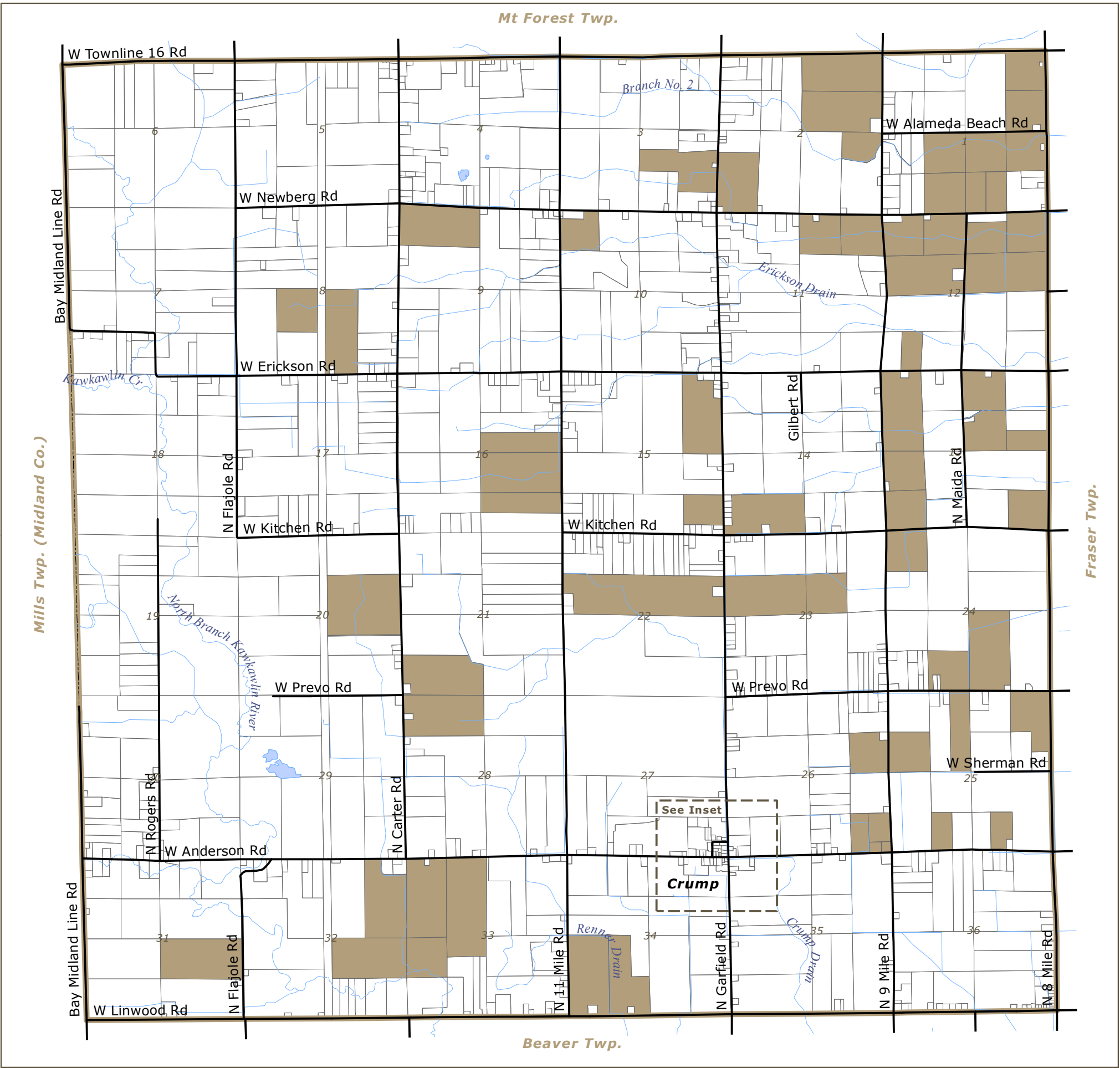
- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Agricultural | Roads |
| Single Family Residential | Rivers and Creeks |
| Mixed Use Residential | Water Bodies |
| Commercial | Municipal Limits |
| Industrial | Parcels |
| Public/Semi-Public | |
| Parks and Recreation | |
| Vacant/Rights-of-Way | |

Base Data Source: Michigan Geographic Framework, 2008.
Parcel Source: Bay County GIS, 2009.
Existing Land Use Source: 2010 Master Plan;
Wade Trim Analysis, 2026.



Garfield Township
Bay County, Michigan





Map 2 PA 116 Farmlands

Master Plan Update

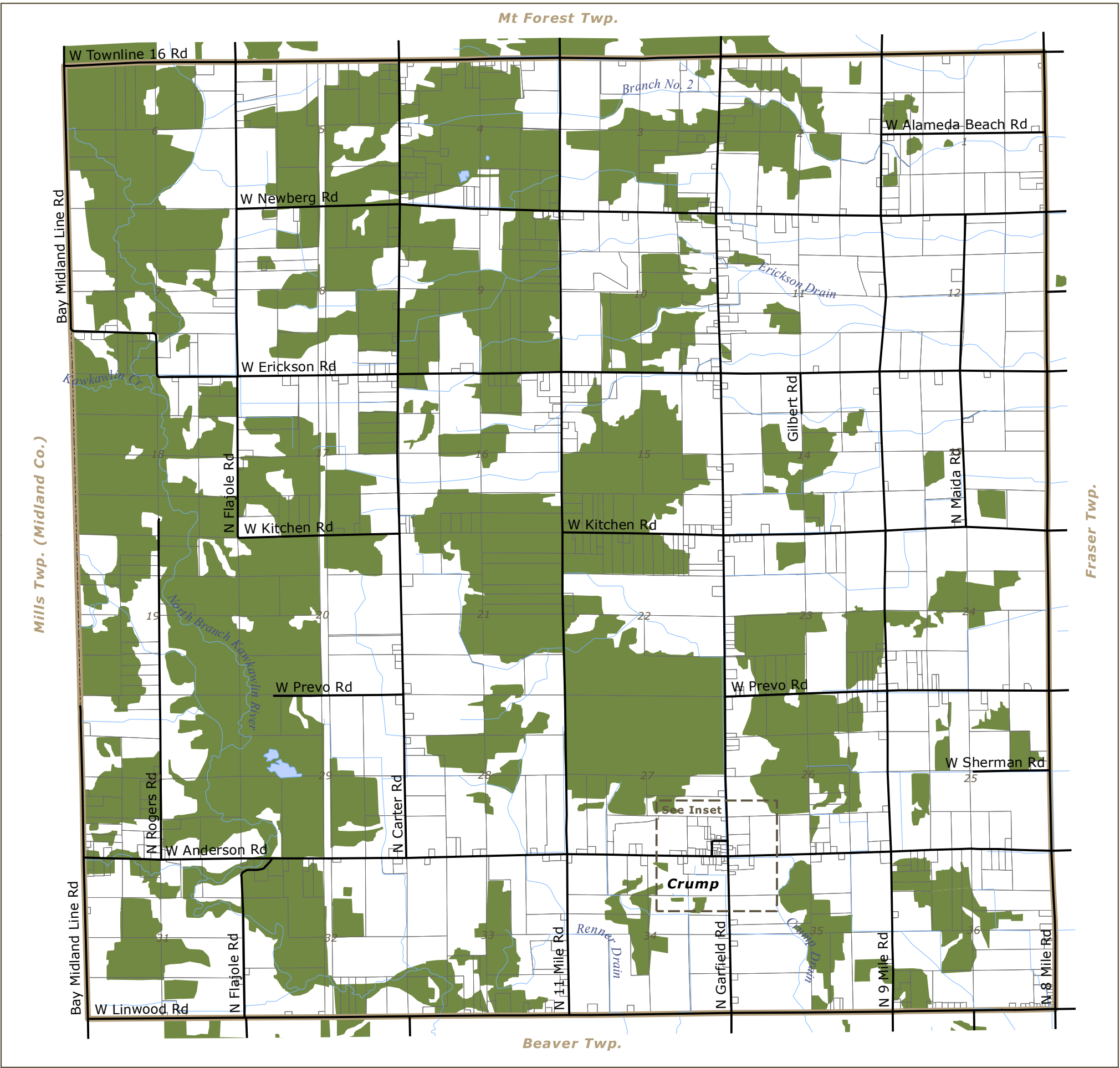
Legend

- PA 116 Farmlands
- Roads
- Rivers and Creeks
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Limits
- Parcels

Base Data Source: Michigan Geographic Framework, 2008.
Parcel Source: Bay County GIS, 2009.
PA 116 Source: Michigan Department of Agriculture, Environmental Stewardship Division Listing as of 7/15/2009.



Garfield Township
Bay County, Michigan



Map 3 Woodlands



Legend

- Woodlands
- Roads
- Rivers and Creeks
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Limits
- Parcels

Base Data Source: Michigan Geographic Framework, 2008.
Parcel Source: Bay County GIS, 2009.
Woodlands Source: MIRIS Land Use/Land Cover for Bay County, 1978.

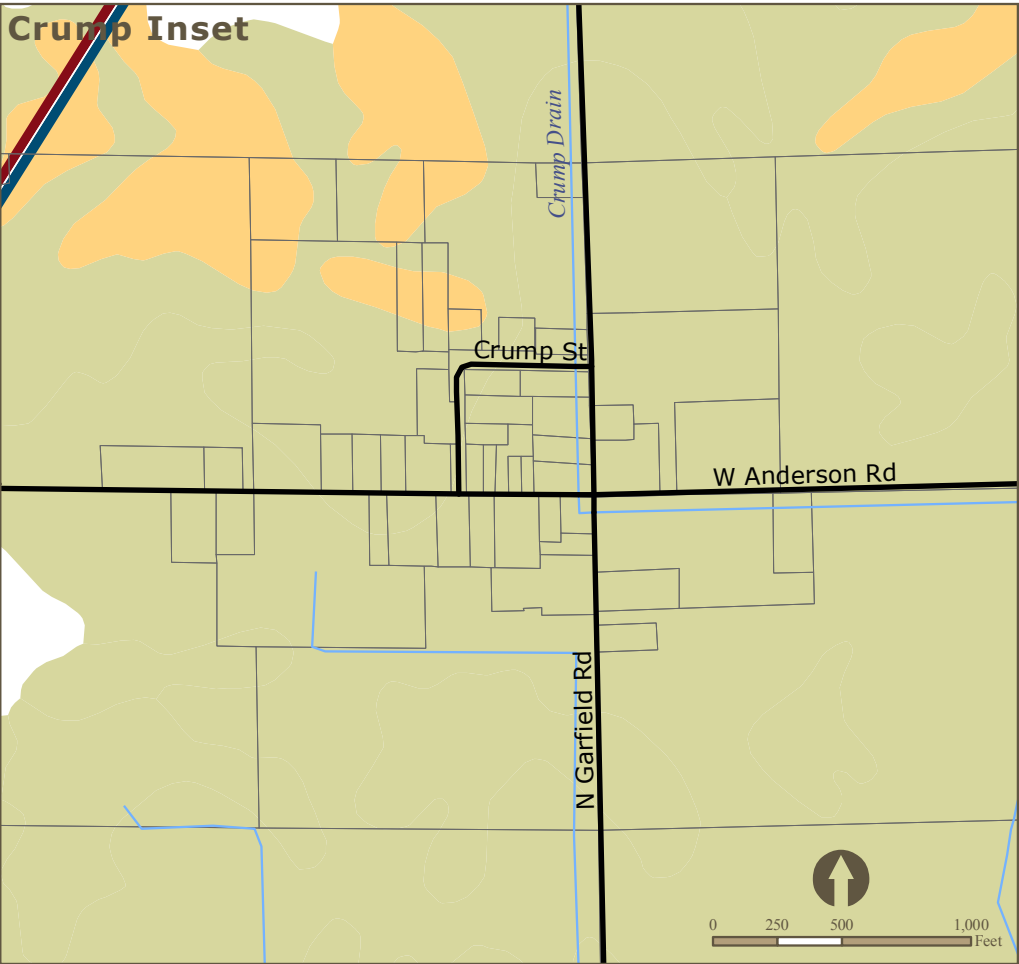
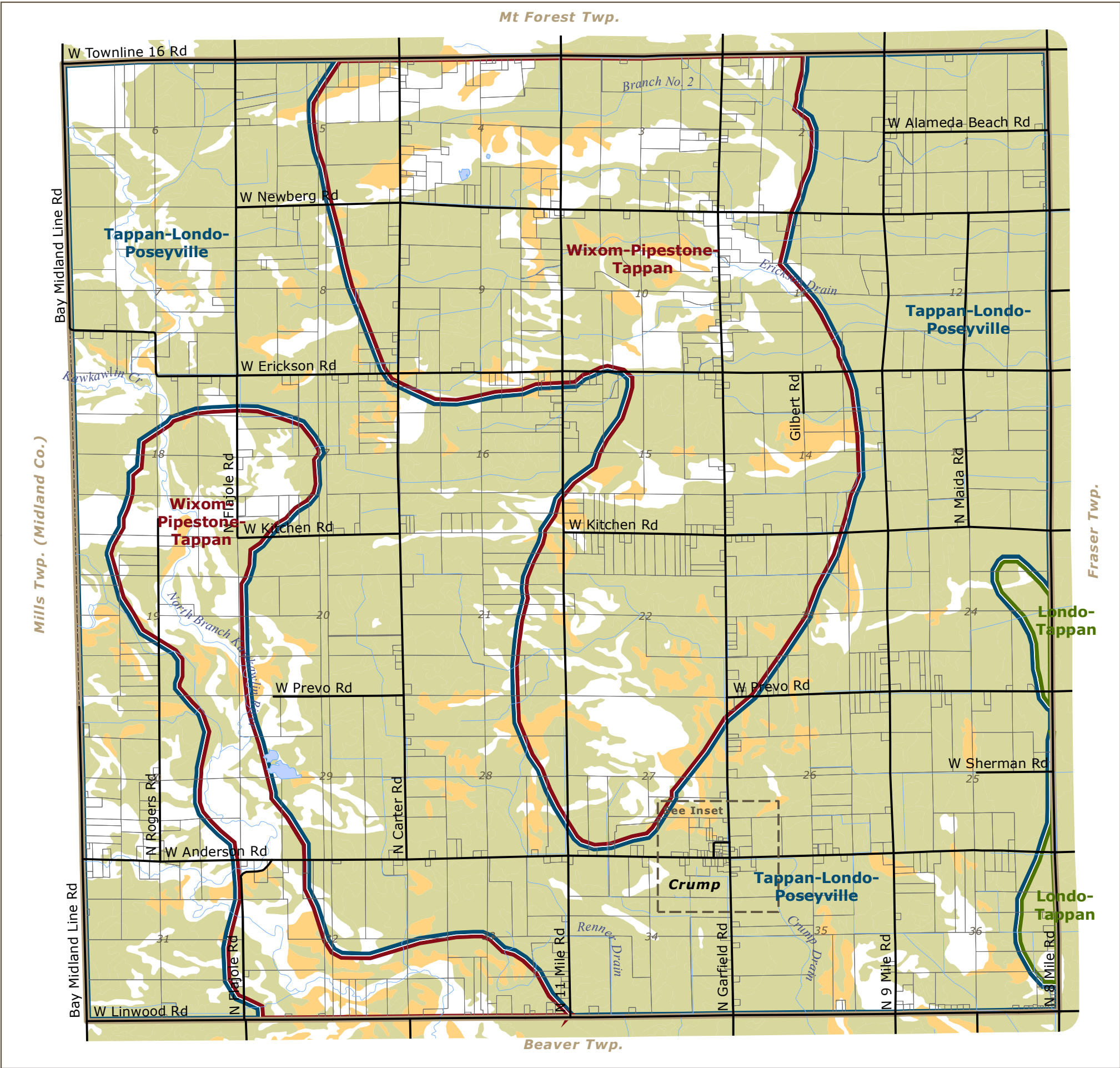


Garfield Township
Bay County, Michigan



800.482.2864 WadeTrim.com

\\Tydata\Projects\GFL6000\01t\Gis-data\Projects\3 Woodlands.mxd



Map 4 Soil Conditions

Master Plan Update

Legend

Soil Associations:

- Wixom-Pipestone-Tappan
- Tappan-Londo-Poseyville
- Londo-Tappan

Prime Farmland:

- Farmland of Local Importance
- Prime Farmland if Drained
- Not Prime Farmland

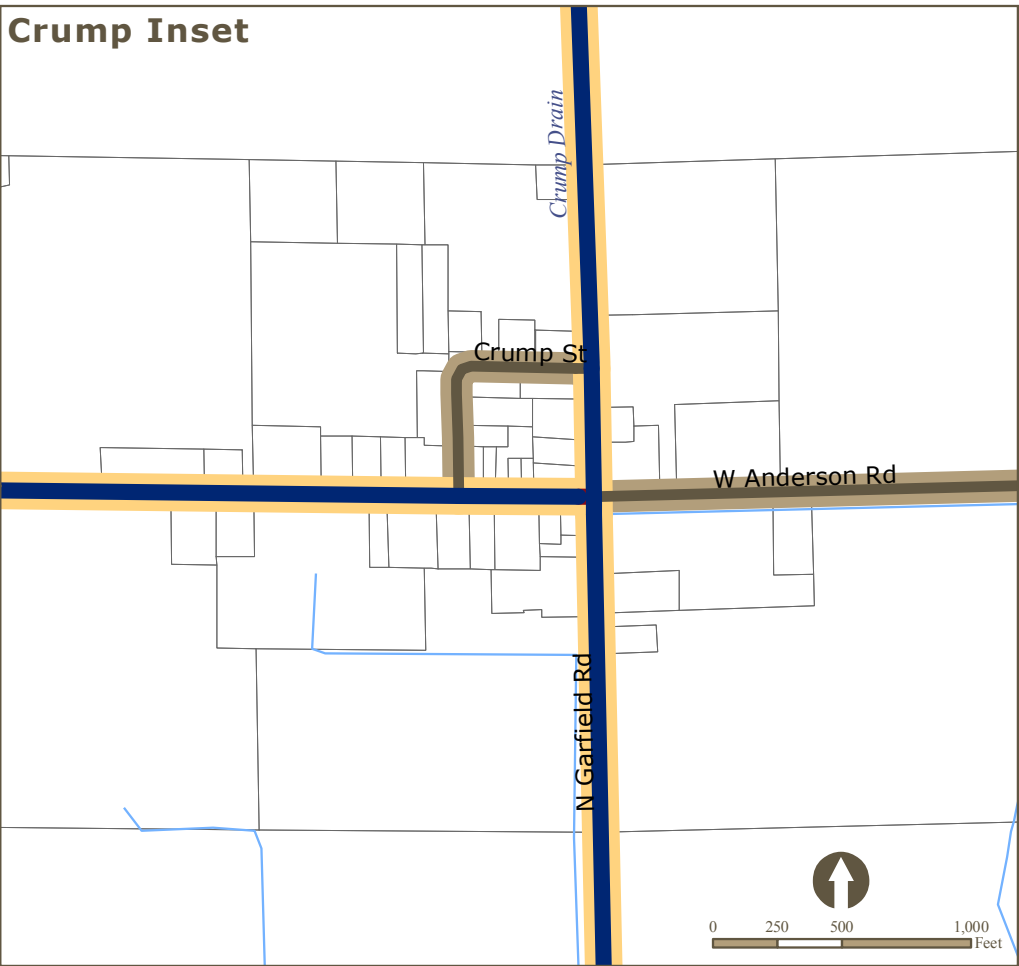
- Roads
- Rivers and Creeks
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Limits
- Parcels

Base Data Source: Michigan Geographic Framework, 2008.
Parcel Source: Bay County GIS, 2009.
Soil Association Source: Garfield Township Master Plan, 1997-2020.
Prime Farmland Source: SSURGO Soil Survey of Bay County, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2000.



Garfield Township
Bay County, Michigan





Map 5 Transportation Network

Master Plan Update

Legend

National Functional Class (NFC):

- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Road
- Not Classified

Legal System:

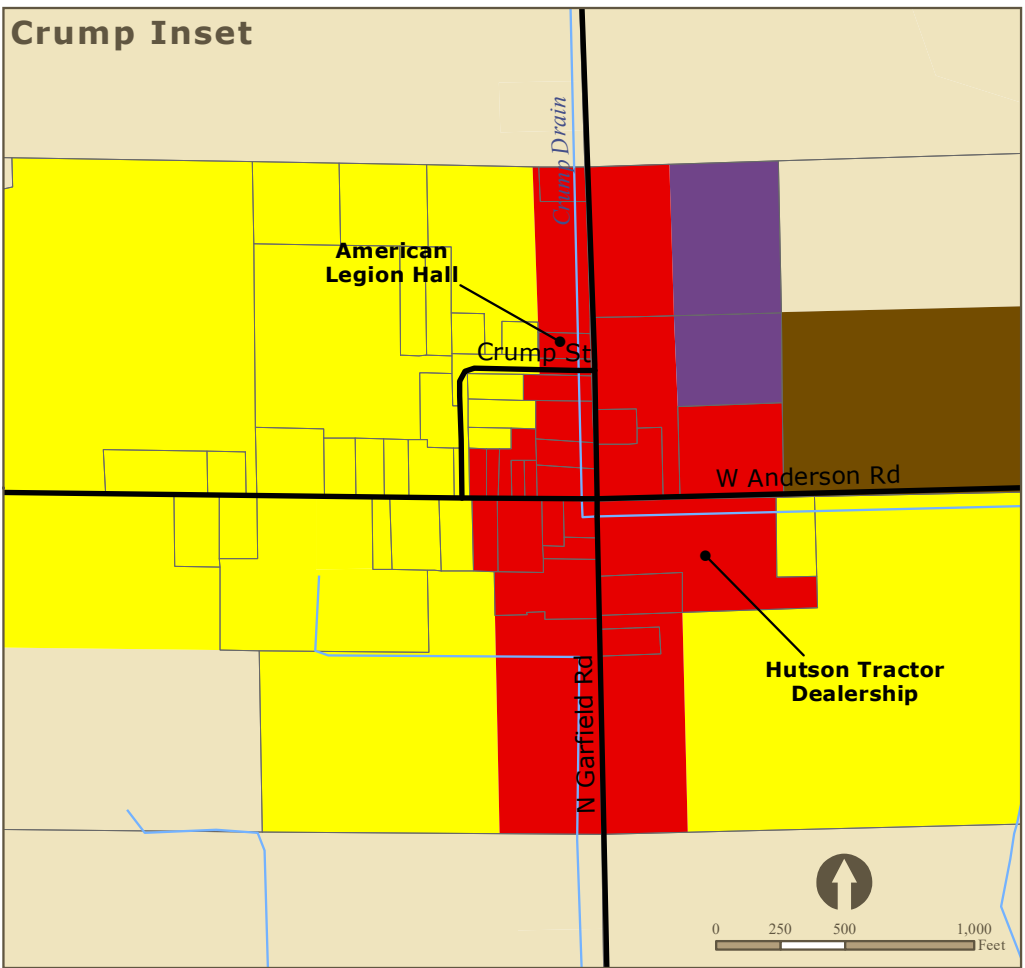
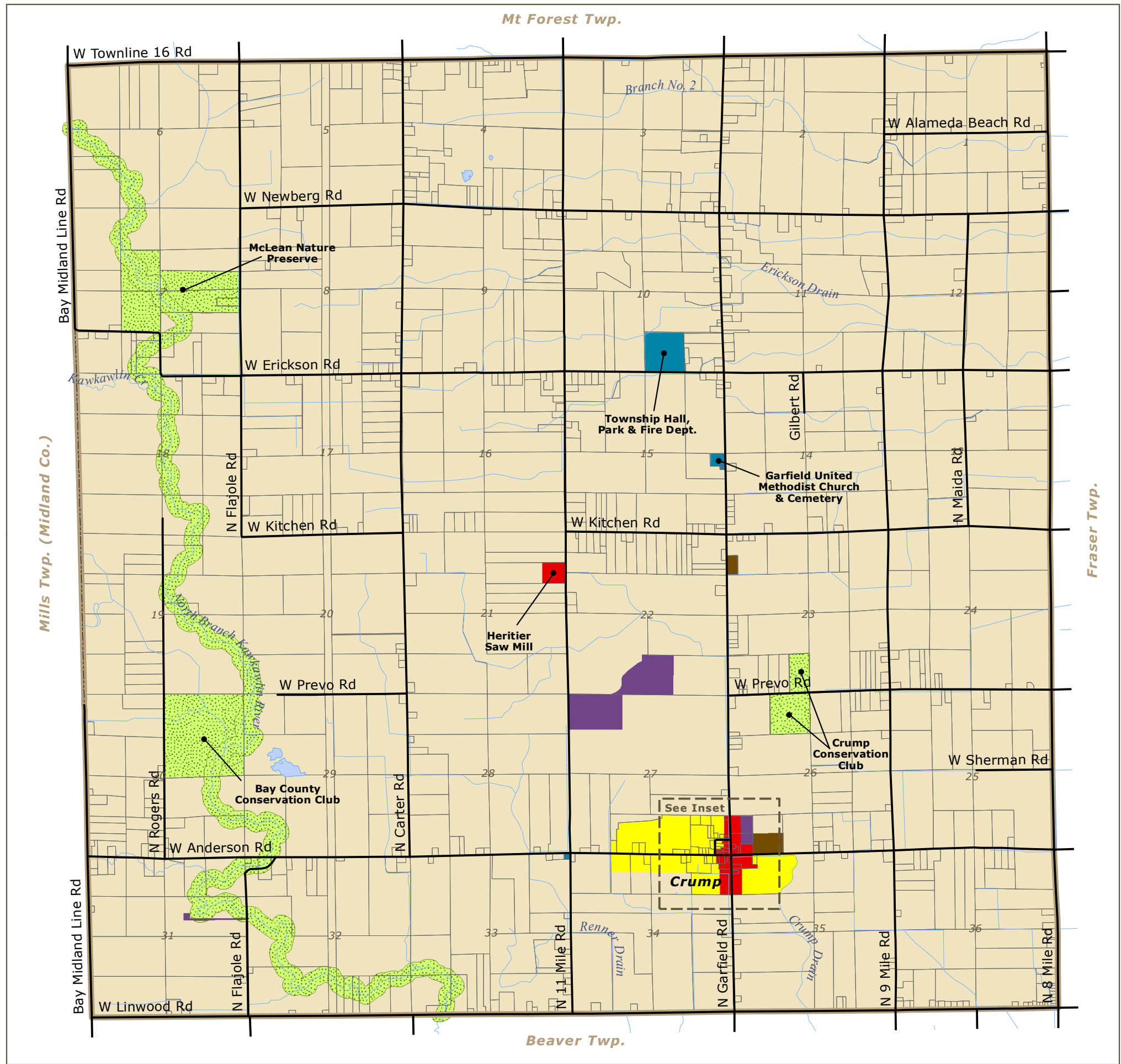
- County Primary Road
- County Local Road
- Private/Other

Rivers and Creeks

Water Bodies

Municipal Limits

Parcels



Map 7 Future Land Use

Master Plan Update

- Legend**
- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Agricultural/Rural Residential | Roads |
| Medium Density Residential | Rivers and Creeks |
| High Density Residential | Water Bodies |
| Commercial | Municipal Limits |
| Industrial | Parcels |
| Public/Semi-Public/Recreation | |
| Conservation | |





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