

OLIVER TOWNSHIP

Land Use Plan 2005



Spicer Group, Inc.

230 South Washington Avenue - Saginaw - Michigan - 48607

OLIVER TOWNSHIP

Land Use Plan 2005

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Plan Adoption: June 2006

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THE NEED FOR A LAND USE PLAN IN OLIVER TOWNSHIP

Introduction

The *Oliver Township Land Use Plan 2005* is the outcome of an effort by the Oliver Township Planning Commission to create its first plan to manage land use. This document reflects the community's concern for the rural character of the Township and conveys a strong commitment to retain and strengthen the local quality of life. The preferred future, or vision, for Oliver Township is outlined within this Land Use Plan. Specifically, the vision is expressed in the way this Land Use Plan:

- Documents recent citizen input on community needs and services,
- Forms general goal statements for the Township's future,
- Provides an overall view of future physical development of Oliver Township, and
- Presents a map that shows locations of how land is to be used in the future.

Public Act 168 of 1959, as amended, commonly known as the Township Planning Act, is the legal basis for Townships in the State of Michigan to develop a Land Use Plan. The main purpose of a Land Use Plan is to enable a community to establish a future direction for its physical development. The Township Planning Act specifically gives Townships the authority to prepare and officially adopt a Land Use Plan, which serves as the primary policy guide for local officials when considering matters related to land development. It will serve to:

- Guide the use of limited resources in an efficient manner,
- Promote public health, safety, and general welfare,
- Preserve the quality of the environment in the Township, and
- Guide future zoning decisions.

Because of constant change in our social and economic structure and activities, this Land Use Plan must be maintained through periodic review so that it reflects contemporary trends while maintaining long-range goals. Public Act 263 of 2001, which amended the

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Township Planning Act, accounts for this fact and requires the Land Use Plan be reviewed by the Planning Commission at least once every five years.

The Master Planning Process

Oliver Township began the process to start its Land Use Plan in January of 2005. It contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw to assist the Planning Commission in the preparation of this Land Use Plan.

The Planning Commission met with the Spicer Group planning consultants four times between January 2005 and September 2005 to work on the plan. As required by Public Act 263 of 2001, the Township followed proper procedures for notifying neighboring communities and registered entities so that each interested party was made aware of the planning effort and was provided an opportunity to comment on the Land Use Plan.

The planning process began with a review and analysis of existing conditions and land uses in Oliver Township. Then, a community open house was held at the Township Hall in May of 2005. Feedback from this open house along with the pertinent background data was used as the basis for the goals, objectives, and future land use as outlined within this Land Use Plan. A draft of this document was prepared in August of 2005 and delivered to the Planning Commission and Township Board for review. It was also mailed to neighboring communities, registered entities, and to the Huron County Planning Commission which issued its consistency report.

The final step in the planning process was a public hearing that is required by the Municipal Planning Act. This provided an additional opportunity for public information and input. Final Land Use Plan copies were prepared and the plan was adopted by the Planning Commission on May 18, 2006. The Township Board adopted the Master Plan by resolution on June 6, 2006.

ALL ABOUT OLIVER TOWNSHIP

Regional Setting

Oliver Township is located in the Thumb Area of Michigan, almost centrally located in Huron County (Figure 1). The Township is bordered by Chandler Township to the north, Colfax Township on the east, Grant Township to the south, and Winsor Township on the West. The Village of Elkton is centrally located within Oliver Township. The nearest regional shopping and health care services are available in Bad Axe, the County Seat, just 10 miles to the east off M-142. Bay City is 49 miles to the west, just south of The Saginaw Bay. Detroit is 125 miles to the south. Lansing, the capitol of Michigan, is 150 miles to the southwest. Lake Huron and the Saginaw Bay are accessible by a 12-mile drive northwest to the Village of Caseville.

Brief History

In 1879, Oliver Township seceded from Lake Township. Then, in April of that year, Oliver Township held its first election and Frank Black was chosen Supervisor. The Township did not experience the level of destruction from the lumbering-era fires as other areas in Michigan during this period. Among the Township's early settlers were S. D. Grimmey and John Oliver, after whom the Township is named. Another notable settler was Patrick Bliss, who carried in the first cook stove for his own use on his back, making four trips to bring the various pieces in from Caseville. Roads back then were essentially trails through the forest. Miss Agnes MeAulay, of Caseville, taught at the first school in Oliver Township. Among her pupils were the children of Mr. McGillivray, who built the first house in Elkton. Mr. McGillivray was a blacksmith by trade. Legend has it the Village of Elkton got its name from a notable story about an elk being killed in a nearby marsh that, literally, weighed a ton. Mr. Dennis F. Smith tells of cutting hay in this same marsh in 1859. (Preceding narrative adapted from the Deckerville Public Library at <http://www.deckervillelibrary.com>)

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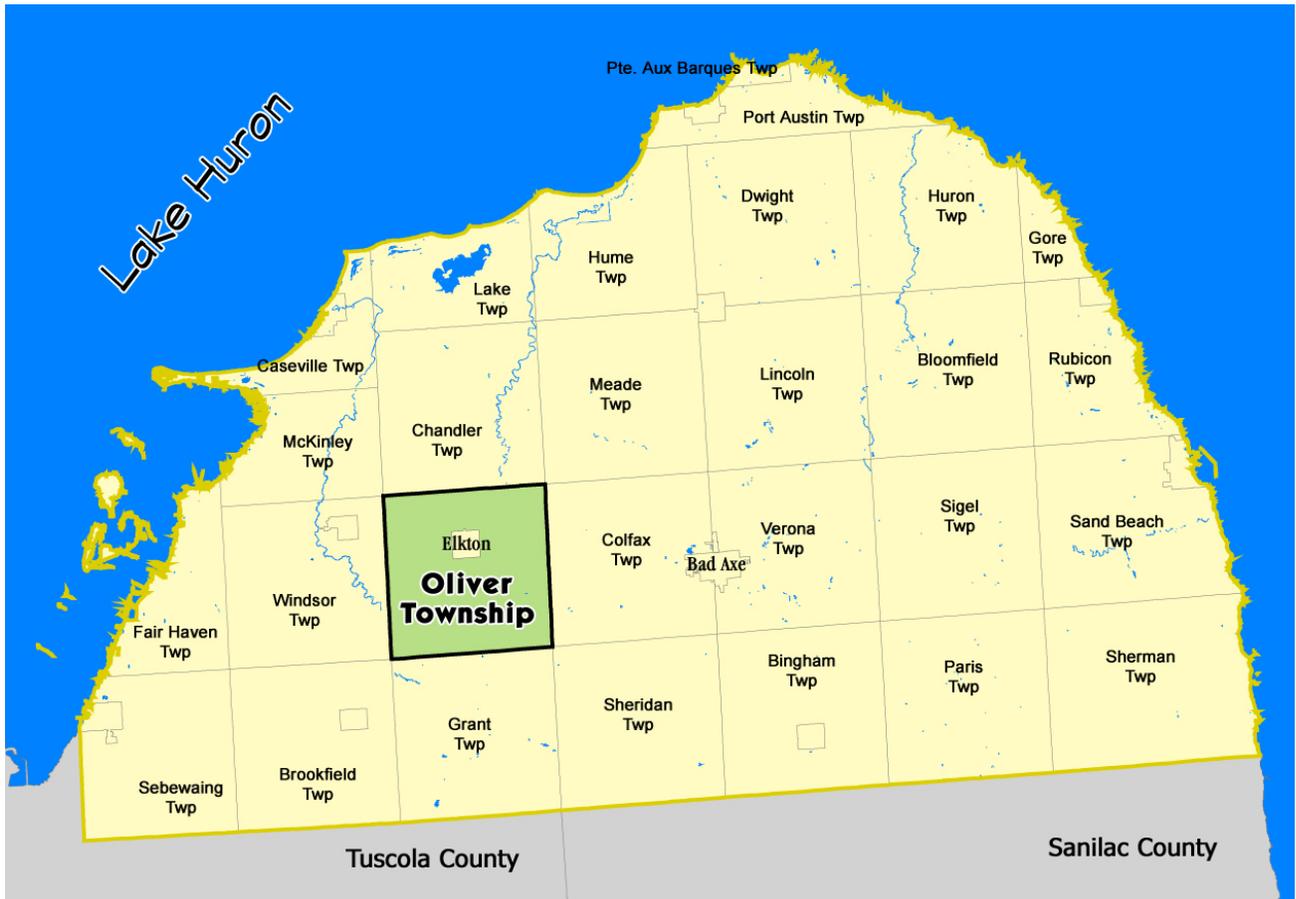


Figure 1 - Location Oliver Township is located in Huron County (Data: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Geographic Library, www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mgdl)

General Description of the Population

According to the 2000 U. S. Census, the population of Oliver Township was 1,626. This includes the Village of Elkton, which had a population of 863 at the time of the 2000 Census. After the data for Elkton is separated, the resulting population for Oliver Township in 2000 becomes 763 people (Figure 2). In 1990, Oliver Township had 727 residents. Between 1990 and 2000, the Township added 36 residents, growing by 5%. A similar growth trend was also seen in Huron County and the State of Michigan, both of which grew by 3.2% and 6.9%, respectively.

	1990	2000	Change	Percent
Oliver Township	727	763	36	5.0%
Huron County	34,951	36,079	1,128	3.2%
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	643,147	6.9%

Figure 2 - Population Change Population trends for Oliver Township, including comparisons with Huron County and the State of Michigan. Data for Oliver Township does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

The ratio of males to females in Oliver Township during 2000 was 51.1% to 48.9%, a split slightly skewed toward males. The national ratio was 49.1% male to 50.9% female, where the ratio is skewed toward females.

In general, the population of Oliver Township is about the same age as most other Michigan communities. The median age in Oliver Township in 2000 was 35.3 years. The median age is that point in which half the population is older and the other half is younger. The median for the State of Michigan was 35.5 years, which is younger than Huron County, at 41.2 years, and slightly older than the rest of the nation, which was 35.3 years. In terms of median age, Oliver Township is very much like the rest of the nation. A closer look at Oliver Township's population shows a surge between 1990 and 2000 in the size of its

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population that is between 45 and 64 years (Figure 3), growing from 16% of the population to about 24%. Every other age group decreased in size, if only slightly, over the same period. This trend implies families are not having as many children, and those that are at the prime family-forming age have not been moving into Oliver Township. In addition, the trend also suggests individuals that are past or nearing completion of their prime child-rearing years has been actively moving into the Oliver Township community.

	1990		2000		Change
0 to 19 years	228	31%	228	30%	-1%
20 to 44 years	262	36%	261	34%	-2%
45 to 64 years	115	16%	181	24%	8%
65 and over	122	17%	93	12%	-5%
Total	727	100%	763	100%	5.0%

Figure 3 - Age Distribution Structure of the Oliver Township community based on age categories. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

When looking at the racial composition in Oliver Township, about 97.3% of the residents said they were white, according to the 2000 Census. Only four people, or 0.2% were black or African American. Five individuals, or 0.3%, identified with the Asian category. Six people, or 0.4%, said they were of some other race. The remaining 1.8% living in Oliver Township said they identified with two or more races.

When examining educational levels, 74.8% of the population age 25 and over in Oliver Township had earned a high school diploma or higher. By comparison, the figures for Huron County and Michigan were 78.3% and 80.4%, respectively. Generally, educational levels affect income and employment.

Profile of Homes and Households

There were 276 households in Oliver Township in 2000. This is a slight increase of over 2%, or 6 households, since 1990 (Figure 4). The average household size in 2000 was 2.65 people, a decrease of almost 2% from 1990 when it was 2.69. This decrease follows the national trend, which has been toward smaller household sizes for some time now.

Between 1990 and 2000, the average household size in the nation fell, from 2.63 to 2.59 persons per household. The decrease at the national level is attributed to the fact that people are having fewer children and smaller families. In Oliver Township, this appears to hold true. The average family size fell by 4% between the last two Census surveys, dropping from 3.10 in 1990 to 2.97 in 2000. Interestingly, while the average household size fell during the same ten-year period, the median household income in Oliver Township grew, up 42%. This growth is about average. Between 1990 and 2000, median household income grew by 44% throughout the State of Michigan, and nationally, it grew by 40%.

	1990	2000	Change
Households	270	276	2.2%
Average Household Size	2.69	2.65	-1.5%
Median Household Income	\$22,821	\$32,315	42%

Figure 4 - Household Data General household characteristics and trends for Oliver Township. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

There were a total of 298 housing units in Oliver Township in 2000 (Figure 5). This is a slight growth of 0.7% since 1990. Of all the units in the Township, 93% were occupied. The remaining housing units were vacant. Of the occupied units, 13% were rentals, a drop of 14 total rental units since 1990. This means more people are becoming homeowners in, where the number of owner-occupied housing units grew from 81% in 1990 to 87% in 2000. Most of the housing in Oliver Township is comprised of one-unit structures, which occupy nearly 81% of all area homes. The remaining housing types are mobile homes, which comprise 19% of the total housing stock in the Township.

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	1990		2000		Change	
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%
Occupied Housing Units	270	91%	276	93%	6	2%
Vacant Housing Units	26	9%	22	7%	-4	-15%
Total Housing Units	296	100%	298	100%	2	0.7%
Owner-Occupied Units	220	81%	240	87%	20	9%
Renter-Occupied Units	50	19%	36	13%	-14	-28%
Occupied Housing Units	270		276		6	2.2%

Figure 5 - Housing Occupancy and Tenure Status and trends of housing types in Oliver Township between 1990 and 2000. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

Just over 42% of the existing housing stock in Oliver Township was built before 1939 (Figure 6). About 18% was built between 1940 and 1959. Between 1960 and 2000, the number of new housing units built each decade in the Township remained steady. During the 1960s, a total of 21 units were built. During the 1970s and 1980s, only 38 and 31 were built, respectively. In the 1990s, the number of new units leveled off somewhat, with 28 units built.

The median value of owner occupied housing units in Oliver Township, according to 2000 Census data, was \$67,900 (Figure 7). This is an apparent growth of 68% in value from the \$40,300 statistic reported by the 1990 Census. But when the reported median housing values are adjusted for inflation, converting both the individual 1990 and 2000 dollar values to 2003 dollars, the real change in value was only 28%. When compared to the growth in median housing values for Huron County and Michigan, 33% and 46% respectively, it appears that the Township is lagging, relatively speaking. However, the national growth in median housing values was only 16%, a rate that is 8% lower than the Township. Together, these data indicate housing values are growing for Oliver Township, albeit at a rather slow pace.

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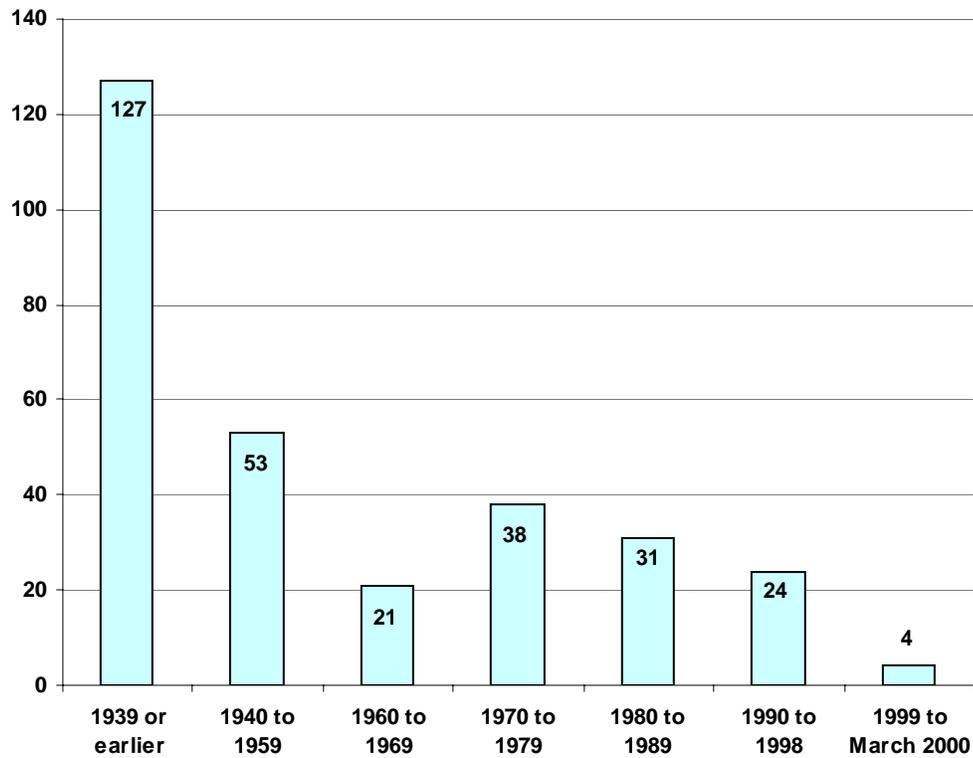


Figure 6 - Age of Homes Distribution of Oliver Township's homes in 2000, based on the year the structure was built. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

	1990	2000	Apparent Change		1990 Conversion to 2003 Dollars	2000 Conversion to 2003 Dollars	Real Change	
Oliver Township	\$40,300	\$67,900	\$27,600	68%	\$56,700	\$72,600	\$15,900	28%
Huron County	\$44,500	\$78,000	\$33,500	75%	\$62,600	\$83,400	\$20,800	33%
State of Michigan	\$60,100	\$115,600	\$55,500	92%	\$84,600	\$123,600	\$39,000	46%
United States	\$78,500	\$119,600	\$41,100	52%	\$110,500	\$127,900	\$17,400	16%

Income, Earnings, and the Workplace

As shown in Figure 4, median household income in Oliver Township in 2000 was \$32,315. This compares to \$35,315 in Huron County, and \$44,667 in Michigan. Household income is a sum of all income received by persons in a household. The household earnings in Oliver Township households are also shown in Figure 8, which illustrates how income was distributed in 2000. Almost 40% of Township residents earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000. About 20% of the population earned between \$10,000 and \$25,000, and about 32% of the population earned over \$50,000. The remainder of Oliver Township residents, or 9%, earned less than \$10,000.

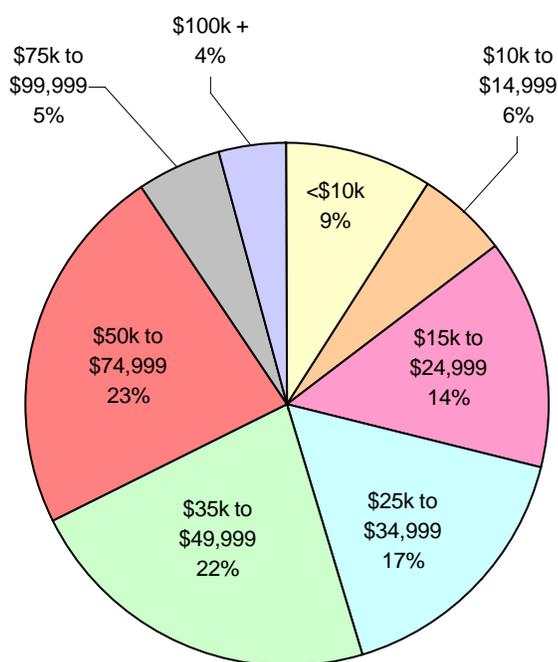


Figure 8 - Income Breakdown of 2000 household income for Oliver Township. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

Per capita income is a measure of the amount of income each person would receive, regardless of age or employment, if all income earned in the entire Township was equally

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divided among all residents. This measure is useful in that it provides one statistic to compare the overall wealth of an area on an equalized basis. Per capita income in Oliver Township in 2000 was \$15,482. The figures for Huron County and Michigan were \$17,851 and \$22,168, respectively.

Almost 15% of the households in Oliver Township relied on Social Security income in 2000, just about the same level when compared to 1990 data (Figure 8). This statistic tends to reflect the number of homes in Oliver Township with resident senior citizens. In Huron County the figure was 38%, and in Michigan it was 26%. The number of households in Oliver Township that received public assistance in 2000 was about the same when compared to 1990 data. Households receiving retirement income was also relatively stable between 1990 and 2000, right around 5%.

	1990		2000		Change	
With Social Security Income	103	16%	93	14%	-10	-10%
With Public Assistance	19	3%	16	2%	-3	-16%
With Retirement Income	35	5%	36	6%	1	3%

Figure 8 - Non-Employment Income Sources Households in Oliver Township that received income from sources other than employment. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

The number of individuals in Oliver Township living below the poverty level in 2000 was 132, or 17% (Figure 9). This compares to 10% in Huron County and 11% in Michigan. Further, the percentage of residents below the poverty level in Oliver Township increased since 1990 when it was at 11%. Poverty is measured by using 48 thresholds that vary by family size, number of children within the family, and age of the householder. To determine whether a person is poor, one compares the total income of that person's family with the threshold appropriate for that family size and characteristics.

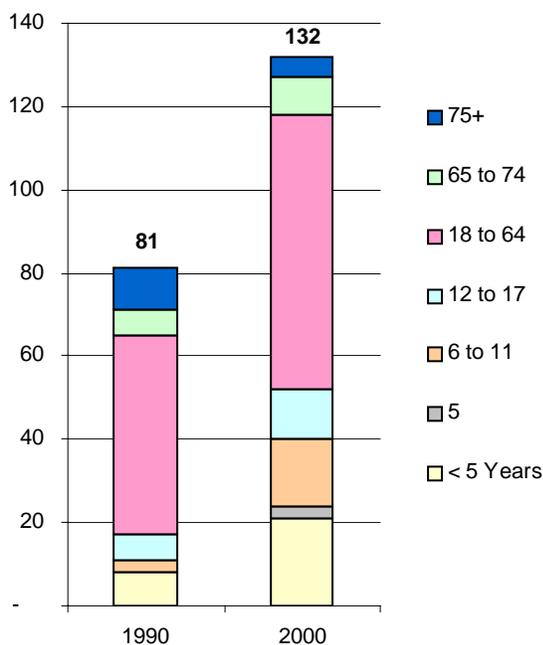


Figure 9 - Income Below Poverty Level The number of individuals in Oliver Township living at or below the poverty level. Township data does not include figures for the Village of Elkton. (Data: U. S. Census)

According to the 2000 Census, 370 of Oliver Township's residents aged 16 and over were in the labor force. The labor force includes those who are employed and those who wish to be employed. Those not in the labor force are generally considered to be retirees and those who do unpaid work in their own homes.

Recent statistics from the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth show that the average unemployment rate in Oliver Township for 2004 was 5.7% (Figure 10). After gradual increases, the unemployment rate is leveling off - in 2003 it was 7.0%. During the eight-year period from 1997 to 2004, Oliver Township maintained a comparable unemployment rate to the entire State of Michigan. Relatively speaking, Oliver Township's

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economy was lagging for some time. However, its recovery appears to mimic that of the State of Michigan, with the Township's recent unemployment rate dropping from 7.0% in 2003 to 5.7% in 2004.

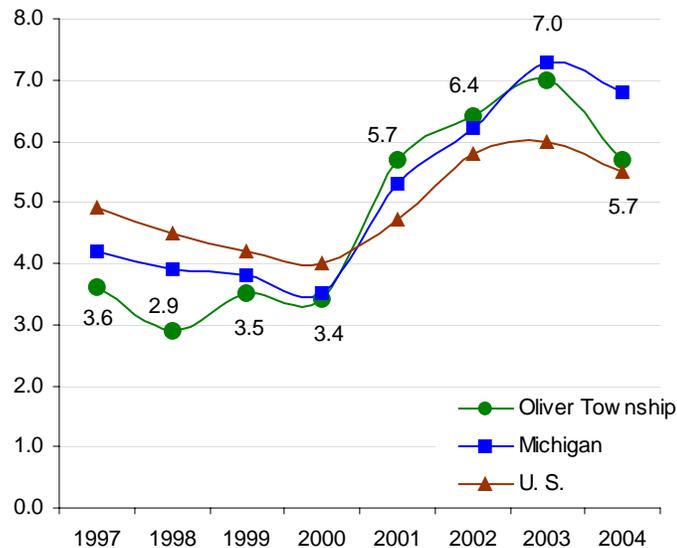


Figure 10 - Recent Unemployment Trends

Comparison of unemployment trends between Oliver Township, the State of Michigan, and the nation. Not seasonally adjusted. (Data: Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth - Employment Services Agency, www.michlmi.org)

Figure 11 shows that nearly 23% of Oliver Township's residents were employed at manufacturing industries at the time the Census was conducted in 2000. Those employed by the educational, health, and social services industries were ranked second, with 20% of Oliver Township residents working in these areas. Those working in the agricultural and forestry industries were the next highest employment sector, at 11% of total Oliver Township workers. Just over 10% of workers in the Township were in retail.

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Industry	Number	Percent
Manufacturing	76	22.7%
Educational, Health, Social Services	67	20.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	37	11.0%
Retail Trade	36	10.7%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	23	6.9%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, Waste Management Services	20	6.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	16	4.8%
Construction	16	4.8%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	14	4.2%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	11	3.3%
Information	9	2.7%
Public Administration	6	1.8%
Wholesale Trade	4	1.2%
Total	335	100%

Figure 11 - Employment by Industry Industries worked by Oliver Township residents. These data are not occupations. The data relate the kinds of business conducted by a person's employing organization. Does not include Village of Elkton Data. (Data: U. S. Census)

Transportation Network

The road system in Oliver Township is laid out as a square tract of land, with sides of six miles each, containing 36 sections of land. Pigeon Road, or M-142, is the major east-west road through the Township. It carries most of the travelers and residents through the Township from the more populated areas to the west in Bay City, and to the east in Bad Axe. Other roads crisscrossing the Township are shown in Figure 11. The Pinnebog River runs through the Township, as does the C&O Railroad company.



Figure 11 - Roads Oliver Township road network. (Data: <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us>)

Topography

Topography in Oliver Township is flat to gently rolling. See Figure 12 below. The northwest portion of the Township is the lowest in elevation at approximately 635-640 feet above sea level. Elevations around the Pinnebog River are lower, around 620 feet. Elevations rise in the southeast, approximately 720 - 750 feet above sea level.

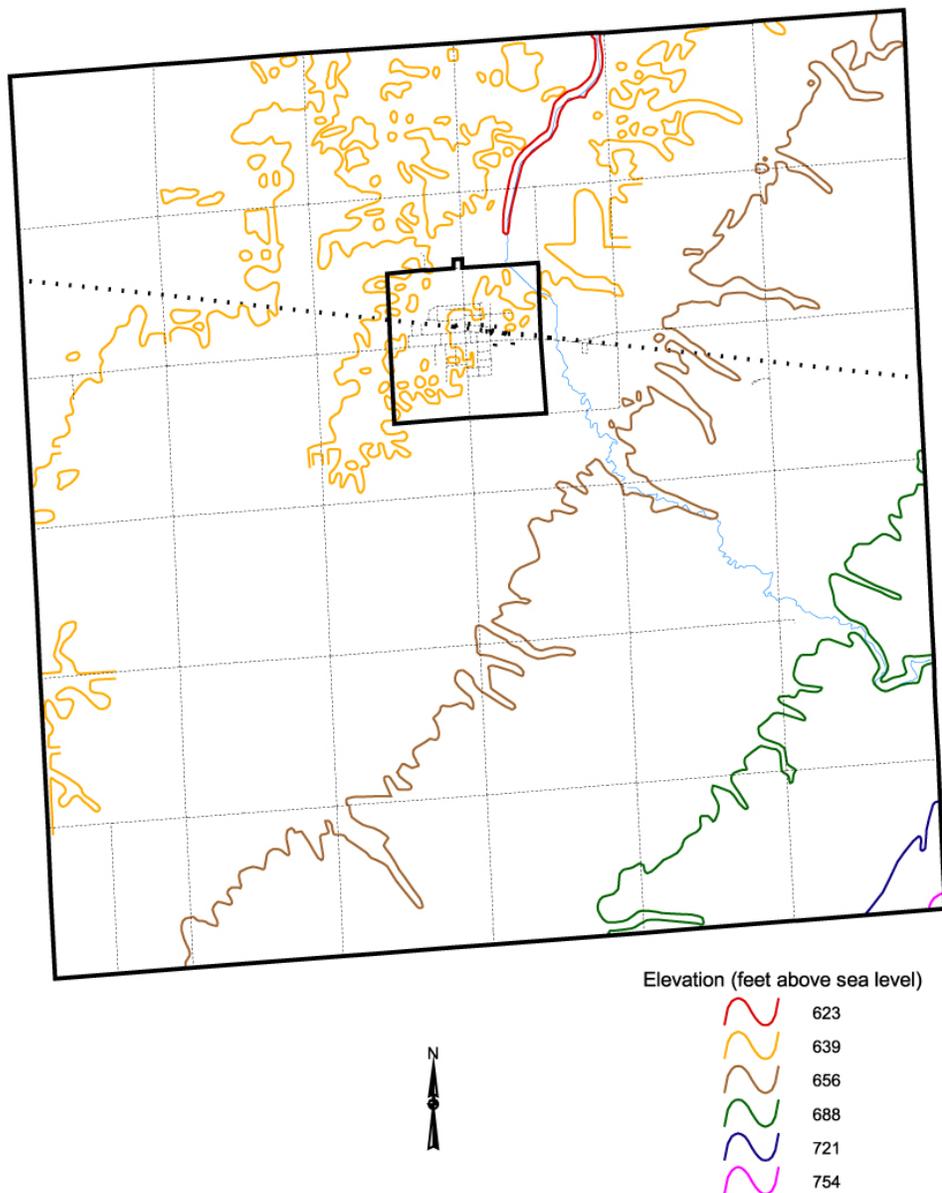


Figure 12 - Topography Elevations in Oliver Township. (Data: <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us>)

Soils

There are four different soil types in Oliver Township (Figure 13). The Kilmanagh-Shebon-Grindstone soils are nearly level and gently undulating, somewhat poorly drained, and poorly drained. The Guelph-Londo-Parkhill soils are nearly level to rolling, well drained to very poorly drained. The Londo-Avoca-Sanilac soils are nearly level or gently sloping, moderately well drained, and somewhat poorly drained. And finally, the Spinks-Houghton-Boyer soils are nearly level to gently rolling, well drained, poorly drained, and very poorly drained. Each soil presents unique challenges for development and any potential development site should be thoroughly researched by a soils expert.

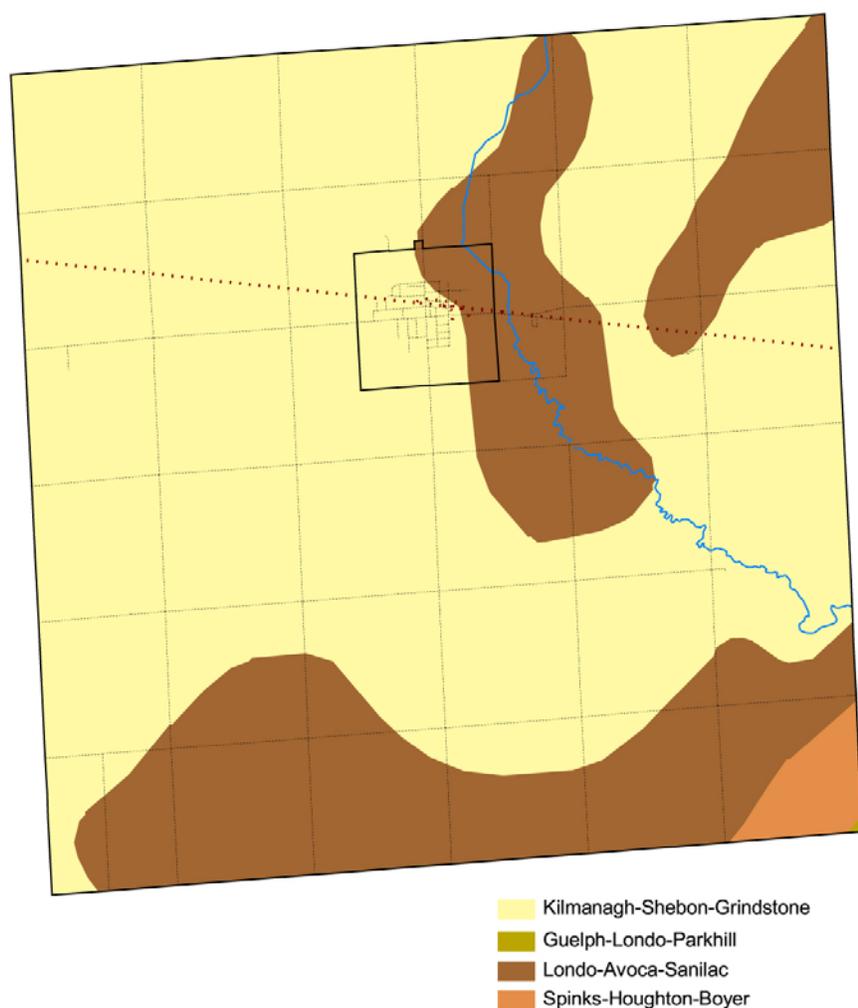


Figure 13 - Soils Oliver Township soil types. (Data: NRCS STATSGO database)

Climate

The climate in Oliver Township is stabilized by Lake Huron, which moderates the air temperatures in the area. Winter temperatures vary from an average minimum of 13° F to an average maximum of 28° F. Summer temperatures vary from an average minimum of 57° F to an average maximum of 81° F. The average number of days below 0° F is 11. The average number of days above 90° F is 8. Oliver Township has a growing season of 151 days. The average 1:00 p.m. relative humidity varies from 55% for May to 74% for December, and averages 62% annually. The average annual rainfall is 29 inches. Average annual snowfall is 54 inches.

Wetlands and Waterways

Wetlands provide many important functions. They help regulate water levels within watersheds, help improve water quality, reduce flood and storm damages, provide important habitat, and help support hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. The US Fish & Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory program has identified wetlands in Oliver Township. These wetland areas are shown in Figure 24. Descriptions for the three major wetland types present in Oliver Township are:

- **Emergent** These wetland areas characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens. This vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years. Usually dominated by perennial plants.
- **Scrub-Shrub** Includes areas dominated by woody vegetation less than 20 feet tall. The species include true shrubs, saplings, and trees or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions.
- **Forested** Characterized by woody vegetation that is 20 feet tall or taller.

Wetlands can limit development in a specific area and each type and extent must be examined before proceeding with any development project. In 1994, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (PA 451 of 1994) was enacted in Michigan.

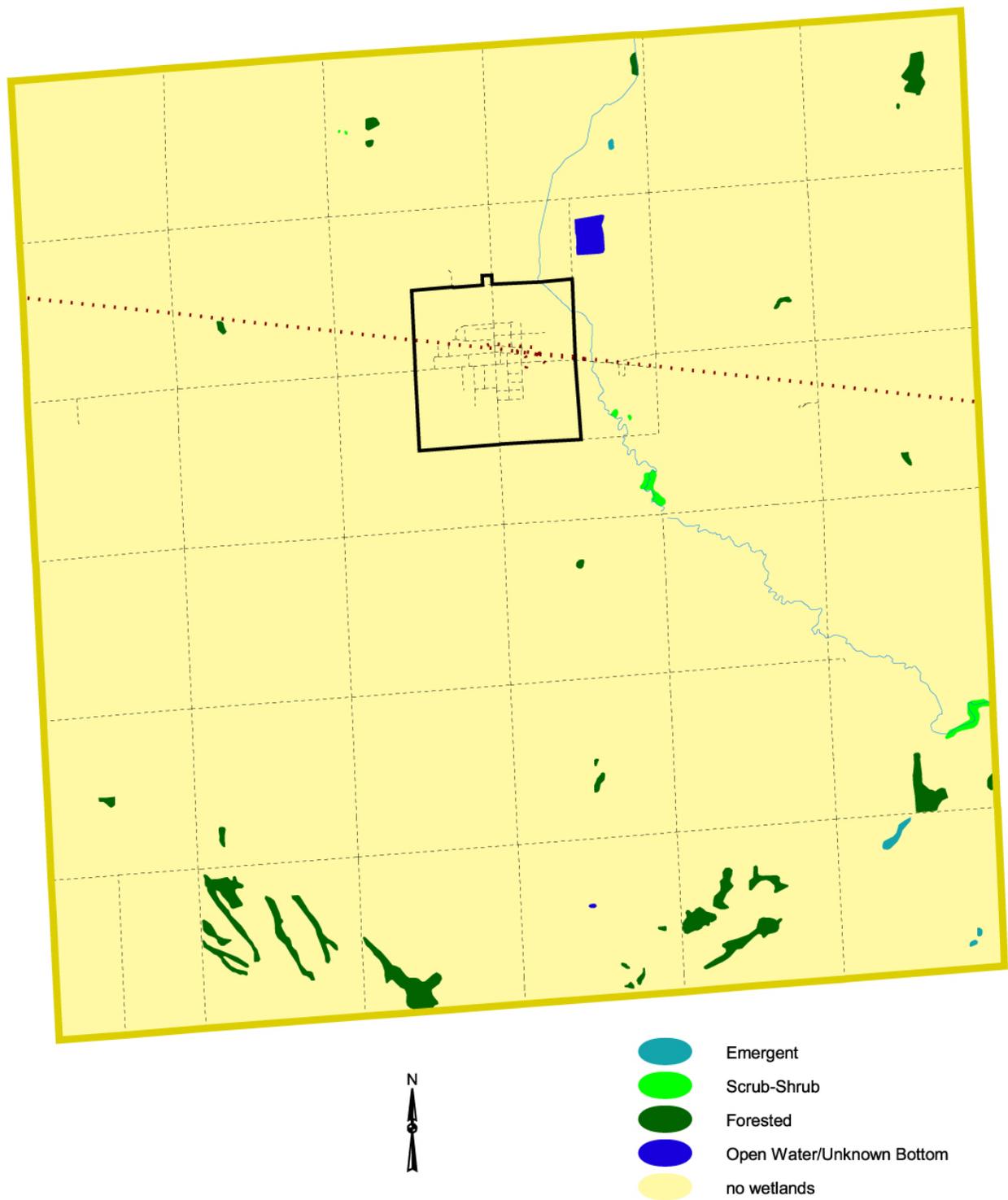


Figure 14 - Wetlands Where wetlands are located in Oliver Township. (Data: <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us>)

Part 303 of PA 451 is Michigan's wetland regulatory program. The Land and Water Management Division of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality administers this permit program. PA 451 was passed to protect wetlands by restricting their use to certain activities, such as fishing, boating, farming, and others, while permitting other activities only after permit approval by the State of Michigan. Permits are approved only upon review of an environmental assessment filed by the petitioner that shows the avoidance of wetland resources to the greatest extent possible and minimization of unavoidable wetland impacts. Under PA 451, the following wetlands are protected: any that are contiguous to an inland lake, pond, river, stream, or similar natural watercourse, and wetlands five acres in size, or larger, in Counties with a population of at least 100,000 people. Oliver Township has one watercourse, Pinnebog River. The first restriction may apply to any development near these areas. The second restriction does not apply since Huron County has a population of less than 40,000 people.

Existing Land Use

How land is currently being used is perhaps the most critical piece of data to analyze among the physical characteristics of any community. This is called the *existing land use*. In many cases, the existing land use sets a pattern that is unlikely to change. In other less-defined areas, some properties can be evaluated for its development or conservation value. The map of existing land uses, Figure 15, is an easy reference for Oliver Township officials when they consider land use management decisions.

The Oliver Township existing land use map is based upon data available from the Michigan Center for Geographic Information. The data used by the Michigan Center for Geographic Information is from the National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD). It was compiled from satellite imagery, circa 1992, with a spatial resolution of 30 meters and supplemented by other data. The NLCD classification contains 21 different land cover categories. The land cover types found in Oliver Township can be seen in Figure 15. General definitions for these land cover types are listed after the existing land use map, on page 22.

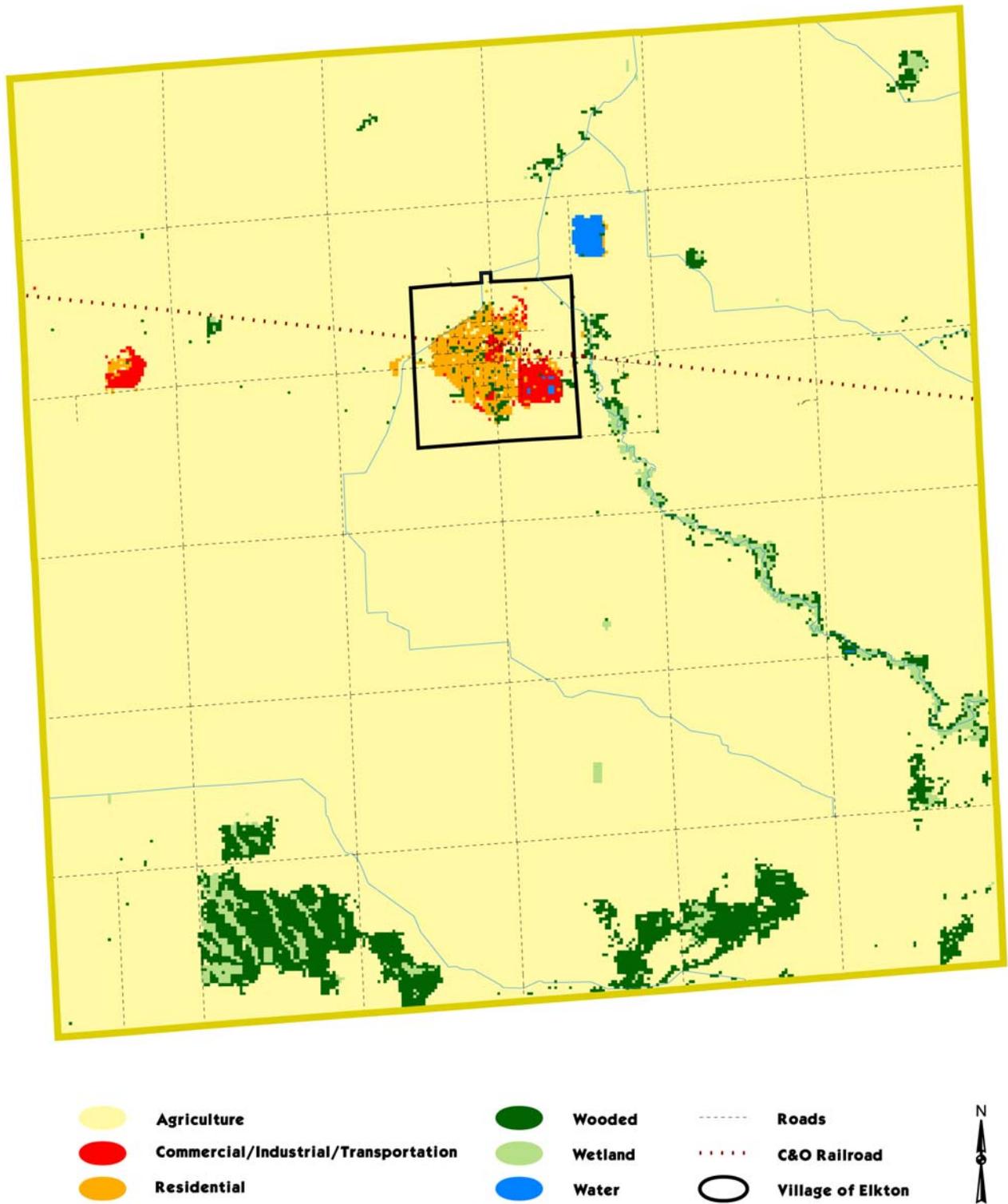


Figure 15 - Existing Land Use

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1. **Agriculture** Areas characterized by herbaceous vegetation that has been planted or is intensively managed for the production of food, feed, or fiber; or is maintained in developed settings for specific purposes. Herbaceous vegetation accounts for 75-100 percent of the cover.
2. **Commercial/Industrial/Transportation** Includes infrastructure (e.g. roads, railroads, etc.) and all highways and all developed areas not classified as residential.
3. **Residential** Includes areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. Constructed materials account for 30-80 percent of the cover. Vegetation may account for 20 to 70 percent of the cover. These areas most commonly include single-family housing units. This land cover types also includes heavily built up urban centers where people reside in high numbers. Examples include apartment complexes and row houses. Vegetation accounts for less than 20 percent of the cover.
4. **Wooded** Areas characterized by tree cover (natural or semi-natural woody vegetation, generally greater than 6 meters tall); tree canopy accounts for 25 to 100% of the cover.
5. **Wetland** Areas where the soil or substrate is periodically saturated with or covered with water. Includes woody wetlands where forest or shrubland vegetation accounts for 25 to 100% of the cover, and emergent herbaceous wetlands where perennial herbaceous vegetation accounts for 75-100 percent of the cover.
6. **Water** Areas of open water.



Agriculture is the dominant land use in Oliver Township.

COMMUNITY INPUT

To establish its effectiveness, a Land Use Plan should incorporate the input and ideas of the local population. By basing the Land Use Plan on the goals and objectives of its residents, land use management decisions become politically feasible and represent the intents and vision of the community.

In Oliver Township, citizens were given the opportunity to participate through a two-hour community input open house held on Thursday, May 19, 2005, at the Elkton Civic Center. Over 30 residents and stakeholders attended. Letters announcing the open house were mailed to taxpayers on May 6, 2005. Several questions were posed to the audience in order to generate discussion. The questions were:

- What do you like about Oliver Township?
- What do you dislike about Oliver Township?
- Where should commercial growth occur?
- Should agricultural land be protected?
- Where should residential growth occur?
- Do you support wind energy?
- What do you consider as an issue to Oliver Township?

In terms of the things Oliver Township residents said they liked, comments focused on the fact that the Township is quiet, there are wooded areas, and the area wildlife is enjoyable. They also said the people living in Oliver Township was their greatest asset. Residents also liked the fact that the Village of Elkton was nearby. They liked the fact that productive farmland was plentiful in the Township, and that there was the infrastructure to support it. They liked the area's largest employer, Tower Automotive. Other things residents liked included the low crime rate, the proximity of Huron Memorial Hospital, and the excellent area schools. Residents also thought there was excellent police and fire protection, good ambulance coverage, good roads, good water, good roads, and a nice area parks.

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Over 30 people attended the community input open house held in May of 2005.

Of the things mentioned to be dislikes in Oliver Township, some residents complained about electrical outages. Some people mentioned that natural gas was limited. Others thought there were very limited employment opportunities in the area. Children of residents who go off to college typically do not come back to Oliver Township. For example, the foundation for the local economy centers around two industries, agriculture and Tower Automotive. Area schools tend not to focus on adult education. Residents stated that they needed to go all the way to either Bad Axe or Saginaw for additional educational services or training. Activities for children are also limited in Oliver Township. While Elkton is convenient, residents also said some retail services are quite limited. They said they did most of their shopping in Pigeon, Bad Axe, Saginaw, or Bay City.

Suggestions for appropriate future commercial development included general locations just east of Elkton and along M-142 to the west. Some wondered how Oliver Township

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functioned as a community, believing it to be a bedroom community with an opportunity to develop a theme to encourage tourism. Broadly speaking, most of the people in attendance seemed to agree that commercial activity should be kept close to Elkton.

Regarding future industrial development, people believed new non-farm industrial activity should be kept near Tower Automotive and the railroad terminal. Someone also addressed the changing nature of agricultural activities in the Township, stating that farming is a major industry and residents should expect large parcels to be attractive to large industrial-style intensive agricultural operations for the foreseeable future. Another person suggested the Township investigate Michigan Department of Agriculture generally accepted agricultural management practices (GAAMP) and their applicability to local farming operations.

Some residents thought that future residential development should be contingent upon any new jobs and economic development that comes to the Township. Residents recognized the need for segregation between farm and non-farm uses when and if residential development came to Oliver Township. Someone suggested that there may need to be two agricultural districts on the Future Land Use map, one that encouraged long-term agricultural production and another that accommodate residential development.

Wind energy was a topic of much discussion. The Thumb area of Michigan, including Huron County and Oliver Township, has sparked the interest of entrepreneurs looking to capture energy created by the winds coming off Lake Huron. Discussion ranged from the potential benefits to some of the costs and negative impacts to the community. Some benefits that were discussed included possible increases in land values and more income for farmers when they sell their wind energy. Some negative impacts considered were aesthetics and possible noise from larger wind farms.

Blight issues in Oliver Township were also discussed. A number of residents talked about how household junk, refuse from construction sites, and used tires were dumped along the

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banks of the Pinnebog River and roadside ditches. Residents said that it has become harder for people to dispose of larger household trash since the old Oliver Township dump was sold to the State of Michigan. But overall, people thought that homes and farms in Oliver Township were well kept.

Approximately six anonymous comment cards were submitted at the end of the Community Input Open House. One concern addressed the impact of large-scale farms on water quality and local watercourses such as the Pinnebog River, including the practice of pumping liquid manure into roadside ditches. Another concern stated that the reliability of wind turbines need to be determined before wind energy is captured in Oliver Township. Along those lines, another comment provided support for wind energy because of its wide-ranging benefits, including economic and environmental benefits for Oliver Township. One comment card focused on public health and inquired about alleged high rates of cancer in the area. Another urged that the Township maintain the minimum separation between residential structures already in the Zoning Ordinance.



Agriculture is an important industry for Oliver Township and its residents.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR OLIVER TOWNSHIP

Introduction

This Land Use Plan is intended to be the main land management policy for Oliver Township. Therefore, it describes a vision for the community that will guide the actions and decisions of the Oliver Township Planning Commission. This future vision for the community is expressed in the following goals and objectives. A **goal** is a broad statement that expresses the intent of the community. It is written in a general way to include many ideas that support a principle that is valued by the local community. An **objective** is the means for attaining a goal and can be thought of as an action item. The goals and objectives for Oliver Township are described below and incorporate the results from the community input open house and ideas from Township officials.

General Community Character

Oliver Township is described as a place with friendly people in a quiet, country setting. Residents put a high value on farmland and agriculture. At the same time, residents recognize the need for economic development that is appropriate and sensitive to the Township's natural setting and can help strengthen their community.

Goal: Preserve and maintain the natural beauty of Oliver Township.

- Objective: Manage growth through planning and zoning mechanisms.
- Objective: Prevent the proliferation of blighted structures, unused or dysfunctional vehicles, and recreational items.
- Objective: Identify important natural features in the Township, such as rivers, wetlands, and woodlands, and develop strategies to protect them.
- Objective: Work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to preserve and enhance significant recreational features.

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- Objective: Encourage site design that protects the existing terrain, preserves significant vegetation, and maintains the health of the Pinnebog River.

Goal: Preserve the rural atmosphere of the community.

- Objective: Review and update the Township zoning ordinance as necessary to reflect the goals of the Township Land Use Plan.
- Objective: Update the zoning ordinance to include a set of standards and guidelines to ensure new residential, commercial, and industrial development promotes the Township's rural character.
- Objective: Limit industrial and commercial growth to areas where infrastructure currently exists.

Agricultural Land Use

The people of Oliver Township believe that agriculture is important to the local economy. It is a stable and sustainable industry for the Township. With modern advances and new technologies, value-added agriculture and alternative energy resources are becoming feasible and gaining momentum. The food and fiber produced on the farms in Oliver Township is part of a greater regional landscape that connects the agricultural economy of the Thumb region to the consumers of Michigan and the Great Lakes region. To ensure agriculture remains a viable and growing force in the Township, the pursuit of innovative value-added agriculture industries and the development of alternative energy resources are encouraged.

Goal: Encourage the preservation of agricultural land and open space.

- Objective: Revise the zoning ordinance to allow for a diverse range of agricultural-related commercial and industrial operations.
- Objective: Review zoning ordinance to determine if allowed minimum lot sizes are appropriate.
- Objective: Investigate the use of an open space preservation ordinance.

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- Objective: Develop land division regulations in the Township that discourage the fragmentation of viable agricultural lands.

Goal: Investigate the appropriateness of developing alternative energy resources in Oliver Township.

- Objective: Update the zoning ordinance to address alternative energy resource developments in Oliver Township.
- Objective: Restrict alternative energy resource developments to the agricultural district.
- Objective: Map and identify areas in the Township that are appropriate for alternative energy resource developments.
- Objective: Require site plan review for all developments proposing alternative energy resource facilities.
- Objective: Work with Huron County officials to understand issues related to the development of the countywide overlay policy for wind energy conversion facilities.

Residential Land Uses

Oliver Township residents and officials recognize that future growth is contingent upon new economic development. To encourage new residential development, the Township wants to promote a number of diverse ways to develop new housing. As such, there are now three different residential land use categories to allow varying densities, broadly following a transition from greater density near Elkton to lower densities throughout the Township.

Goal: Promote and maintain a quality housing stock.

- Objective: Enforce building and zoning codes consistently throughout the Township.
- Objective: Maintain an inventory of all nonconforming uses and structures throughout the Township.
- Objective: Update the zoning ordinance to allow certain permitted home occupations while addressing the impacts generated by such uses.

- Objective: Discourage residential development in environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal: Encourage a variety of residential growth options.

- Objective: Promote residential development that includes a mix of new homes that are affordable to all income levels and household types.
- Objective: Encourage through the site plan review process, innovative development and alternative designs to meet the needs of the elderly, physically challenged, and special needs individuals.

Commercial Land Uses

Many Township residents want more options for commercial services. However, new commercial development tends to be attracted to population centers along major access routes, places in Huron County like Bad Axe and along the M-25 and M-53 thoroughfares. While not the same as the north & south routes in the County, M-142 traverses west to east through Oliver Township and Elkton, connecting Pigeon to the Bad Axe area. From this perspective, the M-142 corridor becomes a strategic opportunity to attract new commercial development. To maintain the rural character of Oliver Township, future commercial land uses are provided in limited areas, close to existing services and infrastructure around the Village of Elkton.

Goal: Plan for commercial growth near the Village of Elkton and along M-142.

- Objective: Encourage commercial operations that meet the needs of residents and do not detract from the rural character of the Township.
- Objective: Encourage quality construction and use of materials and design that is respectful of the Township's rural character.
- Objective: Require landscaping in parking lots of larger commercial developments as a means of regulating traffic within lots while providing a safer environment for pedestrians and customers.

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- Objective: Update the zoning ordinance to include a set of design guidelines that would apply to all new developments. Guidelines should place an emphasis on landscaping so as to maintain the rural character of Oliver Township.
- Objective: Work with local and state economic development agencies to assist with commercial growth needs.

Goal: Update zoning ordinance to allow certain permitted home occupations in agricultural and residential districts while addressing impacts, such as traffic, generated by such uses.

- Objective: Investigate typical restrictions and operational standards, such as sign restrictions, deliveries, and hours of operation, among others, for the home occupations that are to be allowed in Oliver Township.
- Objective: Restrict the more intensive home occupations to the agricultural district while allowing the least intensive in the residential districts.
- Objective: Establish a review procedure for home occupation applications, with the purpose of maintaining neighborhood character and compliance with the zoning ordinance.

Industrial Land Uses

Industrial development is desired because it is a secure tax base and provides employment opportunities for area residents. Existing industrial uses in Oliver Township are located along M-142 and the railroad tracks. Additional industrial uses can boost the local economy, however, industrial development is strongly dependent upon the availability of adequate roads, utilities, and other public services.

Goal: Plan for industrial growth to strengthen the Township's economic and employment base.

- Objective: Provide for adequate buffer between industrial uses and residential uses, or other conflicting uses.

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- Objective: Develop a set of design guidelines and zoning ordinance standards to guide new development and promote the rural character of the Township.
- Objective: Work with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth in order to access any incentive programs that can strengthen local industrial operations and help retain local jobs.
- Objective: Actively work with the Huron County Economic Development Corporation to help bring new industry to Oliver Township.

Community Services and Infrastructure

It's useful to think of the services and infrastructure provided by Oliver Township as the skeleton for development. Without needed services and infrastructure, new development, whether residential, commercial, or industrial, will not happen. Further, in terms of the quality of life for everyone in Oliver Township, recreation and open space have become increasingly important to both residents and businesses looking for new places to locate. Together, with adequate services, infrastructure, and open areas, the Township can move toward consistent and constant improvement while minimizing capital outlays.

Goal: Continue to improve Township roads.

- Objective: Use a rating system to prioritize roadways within the Township in order to provide a picture of potential need for improvements.
- Objective: Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Huron County Road Commission to review the status of M-142 and any associated or planned improvements.

Goal: Examine ways to improve Township solid waste services.

- Objective: Communicate with surrounding communities to determine how they meet the solid waste disposal needs of their residents.
- Objective: Work with Huron County to help update and implement its Solid Waste Management Plan.

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- Objective: Provide information to residents on proper disposal methods and disposal locations for household waste in Huron County.

Goal: Preserve and protect the Pinnebog River.

- Objective: Designate a recreation/conservation buffer zone along the Pinnebog River to ensure new development does not impair the integrity and proper ecological functions of the river.
- Objective: Update zoning ordinance to include provisions for an open space preservation option, PA 177 of 2001.
- Objective: Encourage property owners to enroll in the “open pace” provisions of the Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, PA 116 of 1974.
- Objective: Create a voluntary "adopt-a-stream" program composed of area residents and students to start an awareness and water quality monitoring program for the Pinnebog River.
- Objective: Work with the Huron County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to secure grants and technical expertise for the Pinnebog River awareness and monitoring program.
- Objective: Encourage landowner participation in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Goal: Investigate ways to use the Pinnebog River as a greenway for recreational purposes.

- Objective: Create and adopt a five-year Community Recreation Plan approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- Objective: With an approved Community Recreation Plan in place, seek grants from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Objective: Seek grant opportunities from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network.

VISION FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN OLIVER TOWNSHIP

Introduction

Building on the goals and objectives described in the previous section, a Future Land Use map depicts the desired form and character Oliver Township should take over the next ten to twenty years. The map depicting the future land uses map for Oliver Township shown on page 36. This map transforms the goals and objectives into a graphic guide for land development and management in Oliver Township. The Future Land Use map serves as a guide to decision making - it does not specify how every lot, parcel, or site should be used or zoned. While the Future Land Use map can provide a framework for site-specific land use or zoning decisions, it does not translate directly to specific zoning districts. For example, the Future Land Use map may indicate a commercial area, and yet it may not be *zoned* commercial until a property owner requests that zoning change and the Township approves the change.

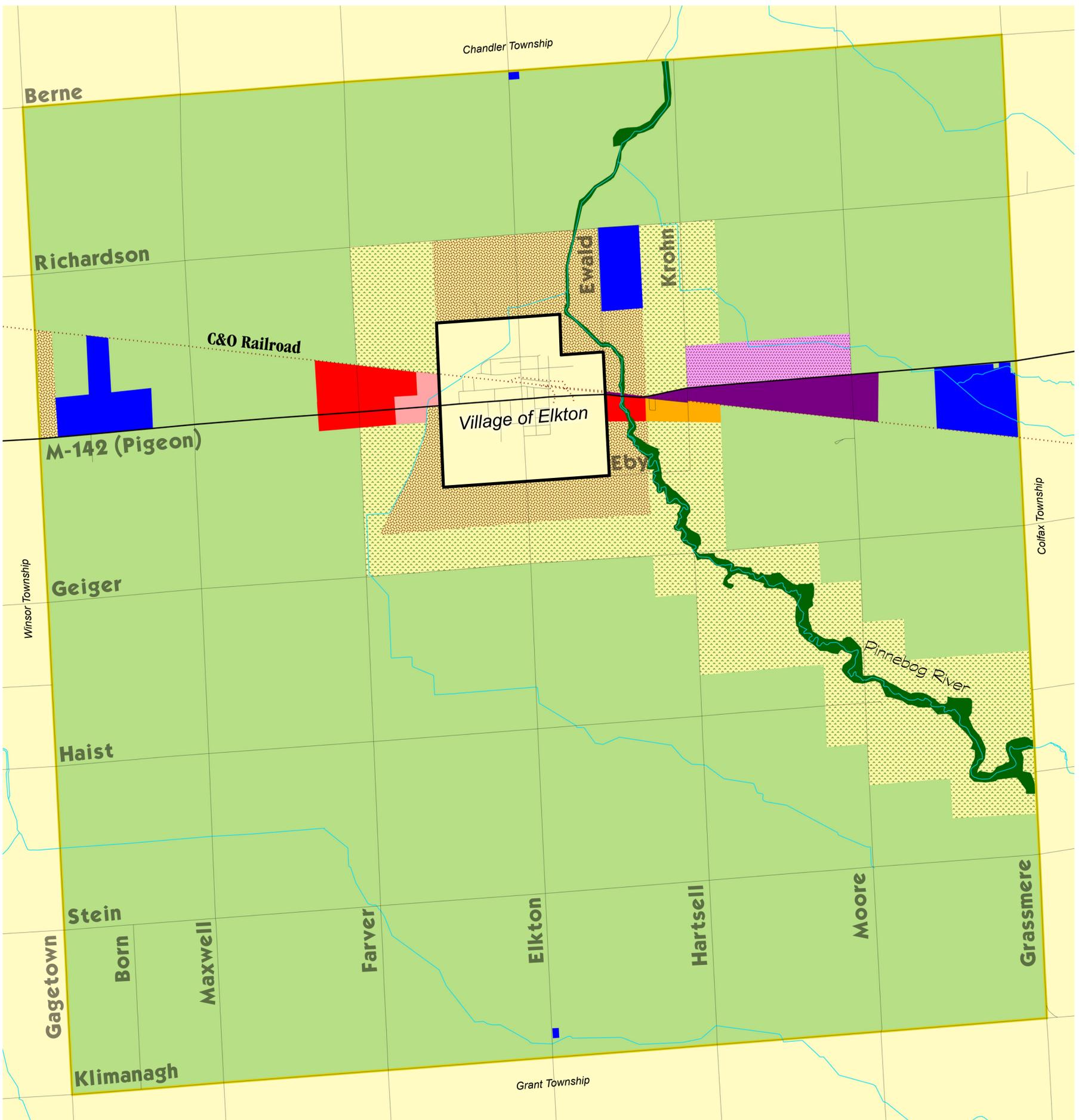
On the Future Land Use map, it should be noted future land use categories are slightly different from the existing land use categories. This difference is attributed to the fact that future land use is developed with an eye toward the zoning classification that will be needed to actually move toward the implementation of this plan. For example, while the Existing Land Use map described *wooded* and *wetland* existing land uses, these uses are not described on the Future Land Use map. These existing land uses are combined into various other future land use categories because the future land use categories reflect how these *wooded* and *wetland* land uses will be zoned. Ultimately, the recommendations shown on the Future Land Use map are intended to help Oliver Township officials, property owners, and residents make zoning and development decisions that are in the best interest of the Oliver Township community. The Future Land Use map seeks to guide residential,

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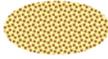
commercial, and industrial development into appropriate locations while maintaining the overall rural character and appearance of the Oliver Township community. Descriptions of the new future land use categories begin on page 37.



While providing more opportunities for economic development and housing choice, the Future Land Use map does maintain the primacy of agricultural uses in Oliver Township.



Oliver Township - Future Land Use Map

-  **Agricultural**
-  **Rural Residential**
-  **Village Residential**
-  **Multi-Family Residential**
-  **Neighborhood Commercial**
-  **Regional Commercial**
-  **Light Industrial**
-  **Industrial/Manufacturing**
-  **Public**
-  **Recreation/Conservation**



May 2006



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Oliver Township Land Use Plan

Agricultural

The Oliver Township community values its extensive farmlands because they are the basis for the success of the local economy and their quality of life. Residents have made it clear through the community input open house that they wish to preserve these lands and maintain their agricultural heritage. The Future Land Use map identifies the vast majority of lands in the Township as agricultural. All alternative energy resource developments in Oliver Township are restricted to this district. Most home occupations are allowed in this district.

Rural Residential

Rural Residential is an intermediate land use between the *Agricultural* and *Village Residential* land use categories and is intended to maintain the rural character of Oliver Township while providing a limited but specific type of large-lot housing development. It includes low-density single-family homes on lot areas of at least one acre and acts as a buffer between agricultural uses and other residential land use. All agricultural activities, such as farmhouses, croplands, grazing lands, and orchards are still allowed. Other compatible land uses within this category include outdoor commercial recreation activities such as riding stables, golf courses, and open space uses such as parks, nature preserves, and other public or municipal services. Certain home occupations, with low to medium impacts to the surrounding neighborhood, are allowed in this district.

Village Residential

The Village Residential future land use incorporates the style of development already permitted under the existing Residential zoning district. It is denser than Rural Residential, with minimum lot sizes slightly larger than a quarter-acre and minimum lot widths at 75-feet. Residential development of this type is located adjacent to the Village of Elkton, concentrating homes in a centralized area close-by to essential services. Low impact home occupations are allowed in this district.

Multi-Family Residential

The Multi-Family Residential future land use designation is intended to provide opportunities for affordable housing and alternatives to traditional single-family homes. Included are duplexes, townhouses, apartments, senior housing, retirement communities, and any residential development that includes two or more dwelling units per parcel. The Future Land Use map shows this area to be located just east of Elkton, along M-142.

Neighborhood Commercial

This classification includes retail, service, and office uses, located in along M-142, adjacent to the Village of Elkton. Currently, very little land is used for commercial uses in Oliver Township. Residents recognize the need for local convenience. However, they also live in relative proximity to shopping destinations in Bad Axe and Bay City. Therefore, this land use designation is intended to include businesses that provide local goods and services to the residents of Oliver Township.

Regional Commercial

The Regional Commercial future land use designation is intended to accommodate the needs of a larger consumer population. Businesses tend to cater to the greater region and are typically dependent upon major thoroughfare traffic. Examples of this use typically include retail strip developments with ample parking areas that serve two or more retail anchors, discount department stores, large-scale supermarkets, and automotive sales and service. This land use is located in two places in Oliver Township, an area west of Elkton along M-142 and bordered on the north by the railroad tracks, and another but smaller area just east of Elkton.

Light Industrial

Light Industrial is located on the north side of M-142 just east of Elkton. The area accommodates less intensive industrial activities, such as offices, research laboratories,

and wholesale distribution. Unlike its Industrial/Manufacturing counterpart, sites in this future land use category are to be designed with landscaped buffers and appropriate building setbacks. The idea is to minimize impacts through the use of architectural and landscaping enhancements and screening of outdoor storage and loading areas.

Industrial/Manufacturing

Oliver Township residents expressed a strong need for job growth. Existing industrial facilities are located along M-142 and the railroad tracks, east of Elkton. The Industrial/Manufacturing land use is needed to provide tax base for the Township and to provide employment opportunities, and includes many types of wholesale, warehousing, and manufacturing operations. The location shown on the Future Land Use map for industrial has sufficient infrastructure to support industrial development.

Public

There is a limited quantity of public lands in Oliver Township. Included in this category are schools, lands owned by the State of Michigan, cemeteries, and churches. Only existing facilities are shown on the Future Land Use map.

Recreation/Conservation

Input from the community stressed the need to address the quality of the Pinnebog River. Residents claimed the river has long been used a dumping ground for household garbage. The area shown on the Future Land Use map surrounding the Pinnebog River is a buffer zone with the primary goal of maintaining the health and proper functioning of the riparian ecosystem while restricting development away from the river. As Township officials work to implement this goal, the buffered areas along the Pinnebog River may also be used for recreation purposes. For example, a greenway trail system can link a number of outdoor features in a continuous corridor, surrounded by just enough natural vegetation to give residents the feel of a large, spacious park.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

The key to a well-planned community is the actual day-to-day use of planning documents, like this Land Use Plan. Because this plan is to be the basis for future zoning and planning decisions, it is imperative that the plan be available to Township staff, elected and appointed officials, as well as farmers, business owners, developers, stakeholders from Huron County and the region, and the general public.

The implementation of this Land Use Plan depends on its continual use by the Planning Commission and the Township Board. In its best form, implementation of this plan will result in the achievement of the goals and objectives. Implementation is often the most difficult portion of the planning process because while the intentions of the Township and its residents and stakeholders are clear, the legal ways and available planning tools are often not. The following sections provide a review of the tools available to Oliver Township and ways in which they can be used to ensure that the goals and objectives of this plan are met. The sections that follow are: Zoning Changes and Ordinance Updates, Annual and Capital Budgeting, and Local Planning Capacity. These tools will help ensure the continued progress toward the implementation of this plan.

Zoning Changes and Ordinance Updates

With a new plan in place, the Township has an opportunity to update its current zoning ordinance to reflect the goals adopted in this plan. Many of the changes may be minor but provide a substantial benefit. For example, one change may be to establish a new residential district that provides a broader range of housing options. Another change may be broader in scope, providing ways to develop alternative energy sources in agricultural areas, especially important in consideration of changing national energy trends and the regional availability of renewable energy resources. Another step may be to review the

cases that have come before the Planning Commission to determine if there are trends that may need to be addressed in the zoning ordinance itself.

Annual and Capital Budgeting

This plan should be consulted annually as the Township Board develops its budget. Capital improvement requests should be compared against the Future Land Use map and consideration should be given to how infrastructure improvements or expansions may impact growth. The plan could also be used to identify potential funding sources, based on the priorities of the Township residents. For example, there are grant and loan programs to help fund these priorities. At the Federal level, there is the Community Facilities Program, the Public Works and Economic Development Program, and the Water and Wastewater Disposal and Grant Program. The Rural Business Enterprise Grant is also helpful. At the State level, a potential funding source may be the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which offers grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Michigan Natural resources Trust Fund. The Michigan Department of Transportation also administers Federal funds appropriated under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2005 (SAFETEA), the reauthorization of the TEA-21 program. Additionally, local funding programs, as initiated by Oliver Township, such as a special assessment or issuing bonds, can also be used for specific capital improvement projects.

Local Planning Capacity

Good planning practice, and now State law, requires the Township to review its plan every five years and update it if necessary. A cursory review of the plan should take place annually by both the Planning Commission and the Township Board. This provides an opportunity to consider the goals and intent of the plan against pending capital improvements, budget requests, and other developments that may impact the community. Oliver Township provides important planning and development services with limited staff. When change confronts the community, it will be necessary to review the time and effort expended by the staff to address development proposals. Adjustments in fees and

changes in the application processes may be necessary in order to cover the costs associated with new or expanding development.

Additional Implementation Tasks

Many of the steps necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this Land Use Plan might not be obvious or are not part an established Township fund. The implementation efforts have been already described in this section focus on the residents, landowners, and other stakeholders of the Township. To date, Oliver Township has taken steps to keep residents and others involved and informed regarding Township issues. The successful implementation of this plan depends greatly on Township officials using the plan and residents being aware of the plan, knowing its purpose, and understanding how they might be able to use it. This can be accomplished by consistently referring to the document when making zoning decisions and even referencing the plan, when appropriate, during site plan reviews and variance decisions. Further, the Township should make every effort to provide a copy of the plan for review at the Township office at all times.

Conclusion

Oliver Township has spent nearly a year addressing important issues impacting the community. They received valuable input from residents at the community input open house. As a result, the Planning Commission has compiled a thoughtfully prepared Land Use Plan that represents the data, efforts, and community spirit of Township residents. This plan is only the beginning of an action program for the next ten to twenty years. Because the future welfare of the Township depends upon rational, coordinated action, the Planning Commission stands ready to meet any person or group interested in the future development of the area. The Planning Commission will be available to help and guide those needing advice or wish to be part of the plan implementation process. While this task is to be led by Township officials, implementation is also depends on every responsible citizen of Oliver Township. By working together, Oliver Township will become a desirable, attractive, and convenient community in which to live, work, and play.