

# Weesaw Township Master Plan Update 2015 Berrien County, Michigan

Adopted by the Township Board on



Image by Tim Dawson



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**WEESAW TOWNSHIP  
MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2015**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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Weesaw Township is primarily an agricultural community with residential homes in rural settings. To maintain the quality of life and the essential rural character of the Township, a guide is needed to determine how growth decisions will be made that reflect residents' desires regarding land use. As growth pressure continues resulting in the conversion of productive farmland into other uses, a plan for orderly development is necessary. The Master Plan serves as the land development policy guide reflecting community goals and philosophies in relation to the use of land.

A Township Master Plan was adopted in 2000. The planning process involved a Public Workshop held in April, 1999, and a Public Hearing in September, 1999 along with monthly Planning Commission meetings. The issues identified during the process are reflected in the goals, policies, and direction for future land use. In 2006, the Township began an update to the Master Plan and due to changes in the Planning Commission membership and other factors, the update was put on hold until 2009. The updated plan was reviewed and adopted according to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, which became effective in 2008. After review of the Master Plan Update draft by the surrounding municipalities and the Berrien County Planning Commission as required by the Planning Act, the Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on December 28, 2009 and recommended approval of the Master Plan Update. The Township Board adopted the updated Master Plan on January 20, 2010.



In the fall of 2014, another update to the Master Plan was determined to be needed by the Township. The planning process included several meetings with the Township Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator and a **Public Hearing on August 24, 2015. The updated plan was adopted on \_\_\_\_\_** according to the required process in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, of 2008.

Overall, the Weesaw Township Master Plan looks forward to a twenty year time horizon, from 2015 to 2035. Accordingly, the elements of the Master Plan are not meant to be accomplished overnight, but rather serve as the guide to growth, providing direction for the development decisions that will confront the Township. The Master Plan consists of several elements, including the Community Profile, Community Vision, Goals, Policies, Public Input, and Future Land Use.

- The Community Profile provides background material on the Township’s population, and demographic make-up as well as a summary of the *existing* use of land. This chapter was updated in 2014 to reflect newer demographic data and more information regarding natural features and agriculture was added.
- A Community Vision provides focus and identifies the key concerns that will be addressed by the Master Plan. This chapter was updated in 2015 to reflect new issues and conditions.
- Goals and Policies define how the Township will deal with those concerns and protect its community character.
- The Future Land Use text describes what types of new development the Township believes would be most appropriate in the community, and suitable locations for such development. This text was updated in 2015 to reflect current conditions.
- The Future Land Use Map is an illustration of the long-range land use pattern of the Township; and
- Public input is an essential component to the Master Plan process; through a public workshop, key issues were identified and residents’ desires were formulated. These issues were reviewed as part of the 2015 Update and were found to be still relevant.



When combined, all of these pieces fit together to create a picture of Weesaw Township twenty years from now.

## Rationale for the Plan

The basic rationale of the Master Plan is outlined in the *Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008)* and the related *Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Act 110 of 2006)*. Knowing the purpose of the Master Plan is important for a number of reasons:

- Provisions of the Plan must be based upon the Planning Act in order to pass careful scrutiny by a court of law;
- The purposes of the Act outline the basic intent of the Master Plan, including the subjects of planning efforts; and
- When formulating the Plan, it is important that the community understand the direction in which the Plan is heading, the purposes can provide the basis for future goals and objectives.

The Planning Act specifically identifies the purpose of the Master Plan: “*to guide and accomplish (development that) considers the character of the planning jurisdiction and its suitability for particular uses, judged in terms of such factors as trends in land an population development...(will) best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity*”

and general welfare...(and to encourage the) use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.” These guidelines serve as the foundation for the intent and use of the Plan.

## Zoning and the Master Plan

There are important distinctions between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. While the Master Plan is a *guide* for land use for the future; the Zoning Ordinance

*regulates* the use of land in the present. The Master Plan is not a binding, legal document; the Zoning Ordinance is a law that must be followed by the Township and its residents.

Implementation of the Master Plan is realized through the Zoning Ordinance. Local control of land use (with some exceptions, such as state and federal land uses) is an accepted legal principle. Land use regulation is controlled through the separation of land into various use areas, called zoning districts. The rules governing these districts are contained in the Zoning Ordinance. Overall, the policies regarding land use are expressed through the Master Plan. Therefore the plan should be reviewed to make certain that new development conforms to what was planned. But as events unfold these plans must be changed to take unanticipated events into account.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires the Master Plan to contain a *zoning plan* that describes how the land use designations on the Future Land Use Map correspond to the zoning districts shown on the Zoning Map. A zoning plan is included in this plan at the end. This zoning plan is a guide for updating the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to be consistent with the Future Land Use map and the recommendations of the updated Master Plan.

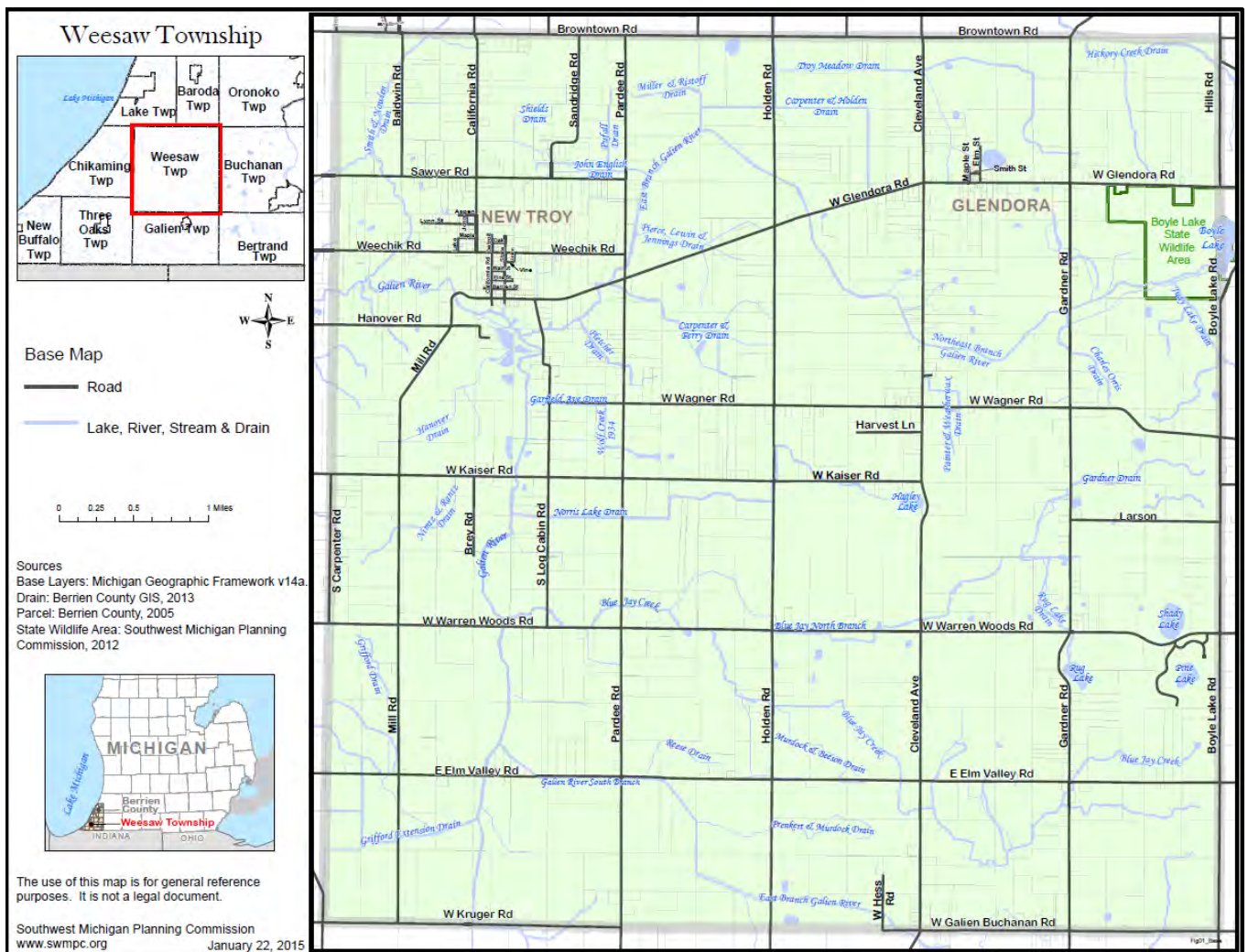
The Master Plan and The Zoning Ordinance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Master Plan is a Guide</li><li>• The Master Plan is adopted by the Planning Commission</li><li>• The Master Plan shows how land is to be used in the future</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Ordinance is a Law</li><li>• The Zoning Ordinance is adopted by the Legislative Body</li><li>• The Zoning Ordinance shows how land is regulated today</li></ul>



# II. COMMUNITY PROFILE

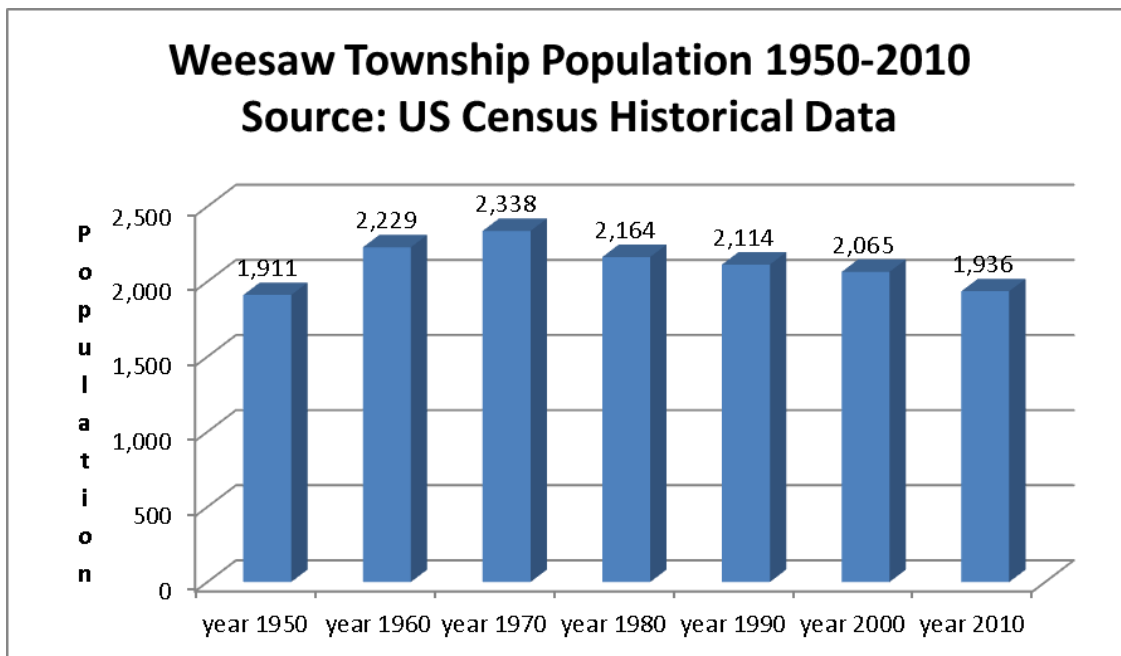
## Location

Weesaw Township is located in southern Berrien County. The Township contains two settlement areas called New Troy and Glendora and the Boyle Lake State Wildlife Area is in the northeast corner of the Township. Outside of the settlement areas, the Township has large parcels. The Galien River runs through the Township and an extensive drainage network drains the Township lands.



# Population

Most of Weesaw’s residents live in a rural sparsely populated setting except for two small unincorporated villages within it, New Troy and Glendora, are centers of small population concentrations. Weesaw Township reached its peak population around 1970 and experienced relatively steady growth until 1970. According to the US Census, the Township had 1,936 residents in 2010, which is a loss of 6% from 2000 to 2010 and a 17% loss from 1970 to 2010. Many of the surrounding townships experienced similar population losses over the same period. Only Bertrand and Buchanan Township witnessed a population increases. Berrien County decreased population by 3.5% and the State of Michigan decreased by 0.2% during this period.



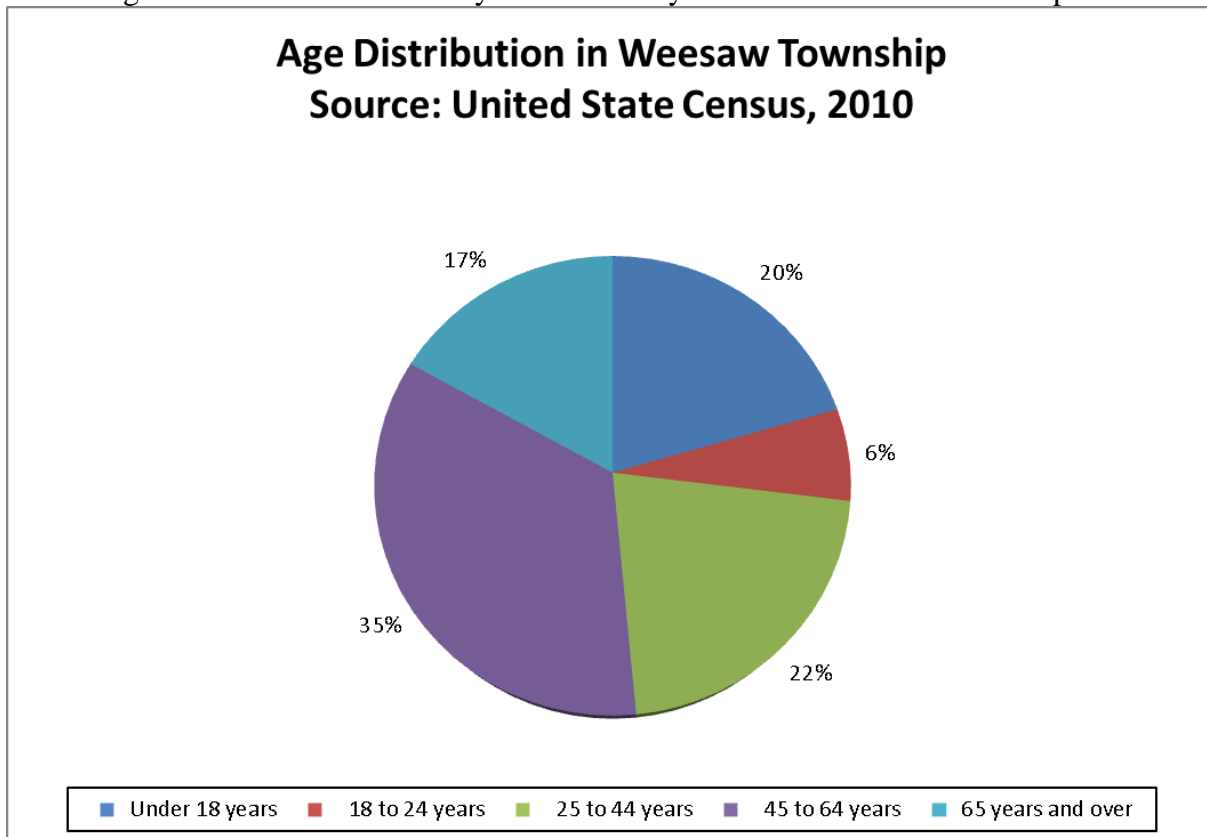
Population, Surrounding Communities, 1950-2010								
Community	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% change 2000-2010
Weesaw Twp.	1,911	2,229	2,338	2,164	2,114	2,065	1,936	-6.3 %
Baroda Twp.	1,558	1,877	2,102	2,666	2,731	2,880	2,801	-2.7 %
Bertrand Twp.	1,342	1,969	2,256	2,369	2,228	2,380	2,657	11.6 %
Buchanan Twp.	1,655	2,410	3,183	3,571	3,402	3,510	3,523	0.4 %
Chikaming Twp.	1,041	1,473	1,814	1,833	1,679	3,678	3,100	-15.7 %
Galien Twp.	1,380	1,685	1,671	1,786	1,591	1,611	1,452	-9.9 %
Lake Twp.	1,432	2,016	2,146	2,212	2,487	3,148	2,972	-5.6 %
New Buffalo Twp.	1,314	2,068	2,583	2,878	2,419	2,468	2,386	-3.3 %
Oronoko Twp.	4,737	6,397	8,482	10,761	9,819	9,843	9,193	-6.6 %
Three Oaks twp.	2,469	2,856	2,894	3,045	3,952	2,949	2,574	-12.7 %

Population projections for Weesaw Township from 2014-2019 prepared by the ESRI indicate that the population will increase at 0.10%. Population projections for Berrien County from 2014-2019 prepared by the ESRI indicate that the population will decrease by 0.18%. This compares to a 0.1% projected increase for the State of Michigan.

It is important to note, however, that there are reasons to believe that these projections may be inaccurate, and that even the Census population numbers, indicating a lack of growth over the last several years may present a misleading picture of the community. As it becomes clear from the housing statistics provided below, while a small population growth has been reported, the number of housing units in the Township may have slightly increased in recent years (see *Housing Units by Year Built* chart, page 9). The primary reason for this is that Weesaw Township, like other communities in the area, particularly those located on the shores of Lake Michigan, have been attracting people who permanently reside in the Chicago metropolitan area. The scenic natural beauty and the 50 miles of shoreline in Berrien County make it an excellent retreat from the big city. Thus, new homes are being built, but are primarily used seasonally, as second homes, and are not claimed as primary residences by their owners. Thus, growth in the area may be occurring without it being officially recorded.

## Age Distribution

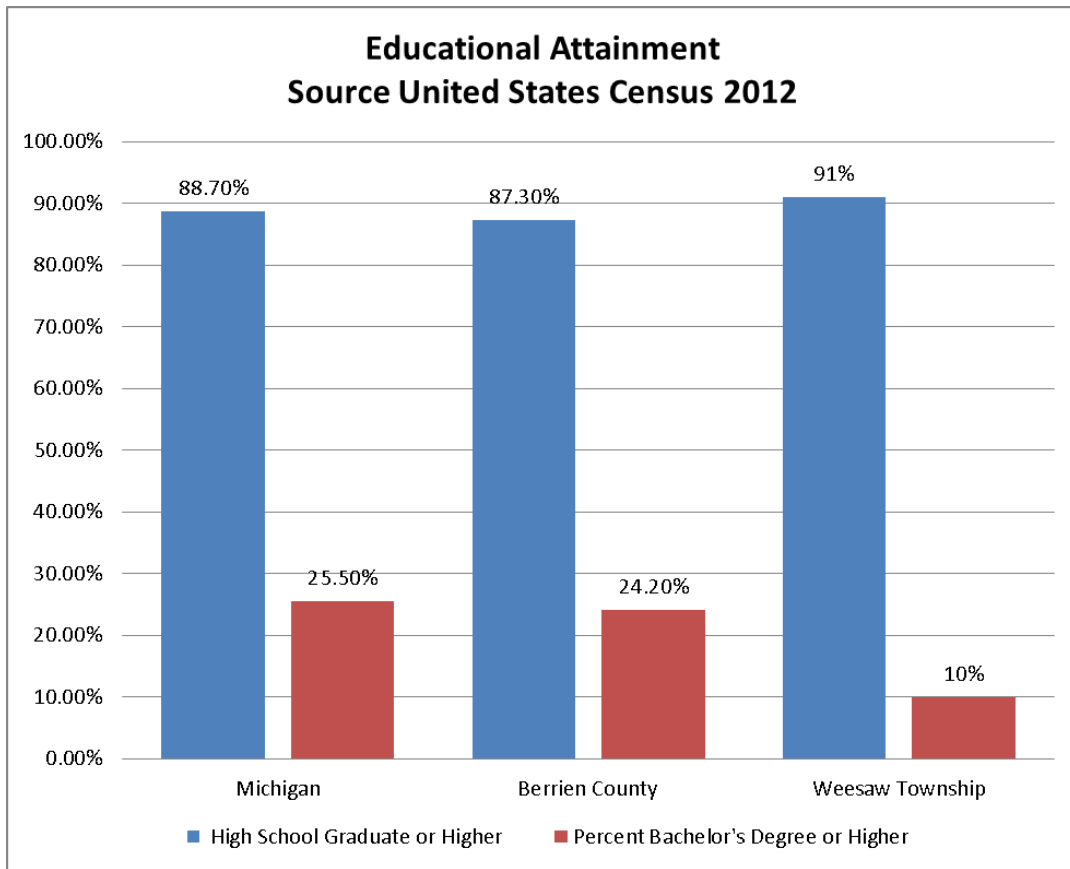
In 2010, the median age of Weesaw Township residents was 45.7 years. This is high compared to Berrien County at 41 years and the State at 38.9 years. This is a significant increase from the median age in 2000 which was 38.9 years and 33.4 years in 1990 for the Township.





# Education

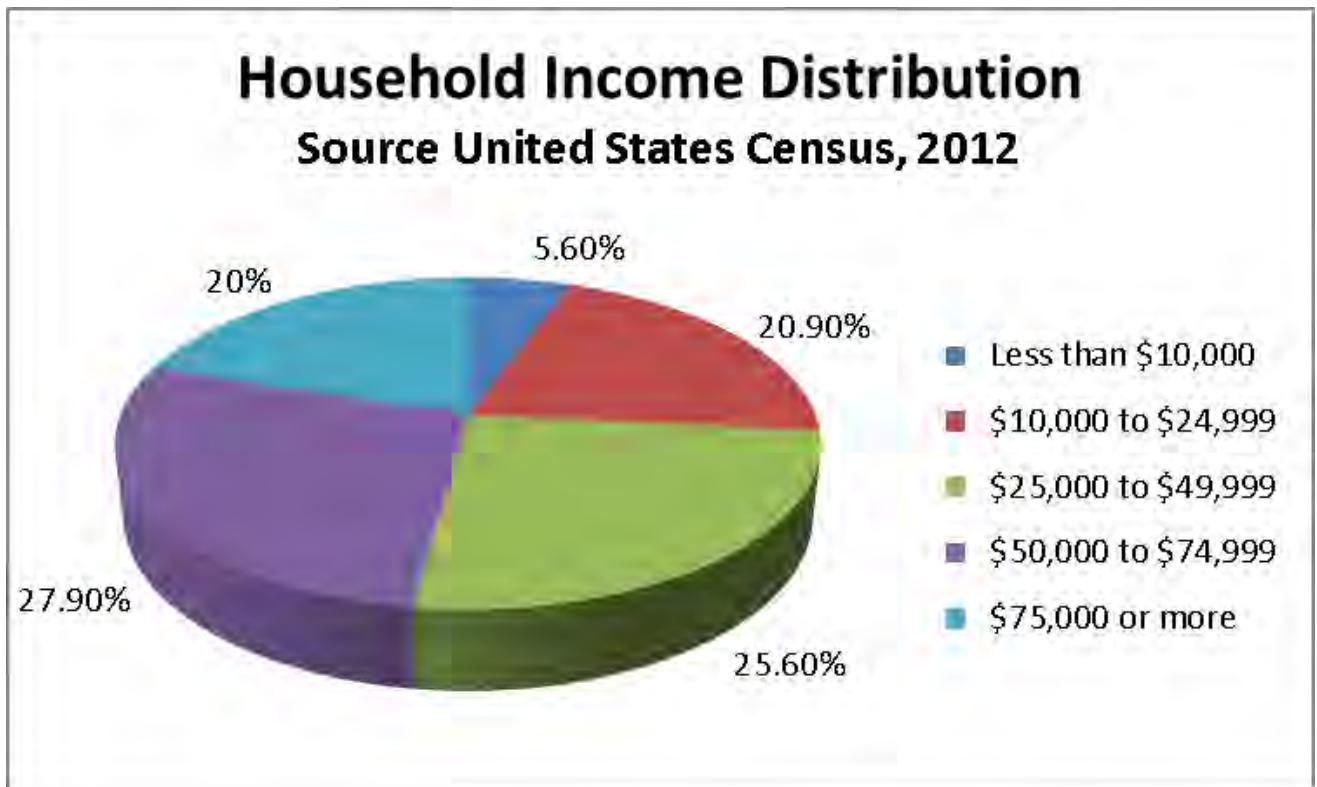
Educational attainment in Weesaw Township, as reported by the 2012 U.S. Census ACS, was not as high as in other parts of the County and the State. This was especially true for the number of persons having a Bachelor's degree or higher (only 10% in the Township as compared to 24% in Berrien County and 25% in the State of Michigan). All of the townships surrounding Weesaw had higher percentages of college graduates, with some having unusually high levels of educational attainment, such as Oronoko Township with 51% and Chikaming Township with 40% college graduates.



## Income

The 2012 median household income in Weesaw Township was \$48,711, as compared to \$43,471 in Berrien County and \$48,471 in the State of Michigan. Township's households had 52% of the incomes under \$50,000 a year and 5.6% earned less than \$10,000 annually.

The vast majority (76.7%) of households in the Township relied on wage and salary income. Self-employed workers constitute 11.4% of the workforce and government employees 11.1%. Twelve percent of the Township's residents live under the poverty level and almost half of those are either children under 18 years of age or elderly people.



# Unemployment

Unemployment trends in Weesaw Township and Berrien County have been similar to each other during recent years with the Township’s unemployment rates being just slightly lower than those in the County. The 2012 unemployment rate for Weesaw Township was 7.4% in 2012 and for the County it was 9%. Both, however, are less than the 2012 unemployment rate for the State of Michigan, 9.1%. In 2014 Berrien County’s unemployment rate was 8.1% while the State of Michigan’s rate dropped to 7.1%. Data for 2014 was not yet available for Weesaw Township.

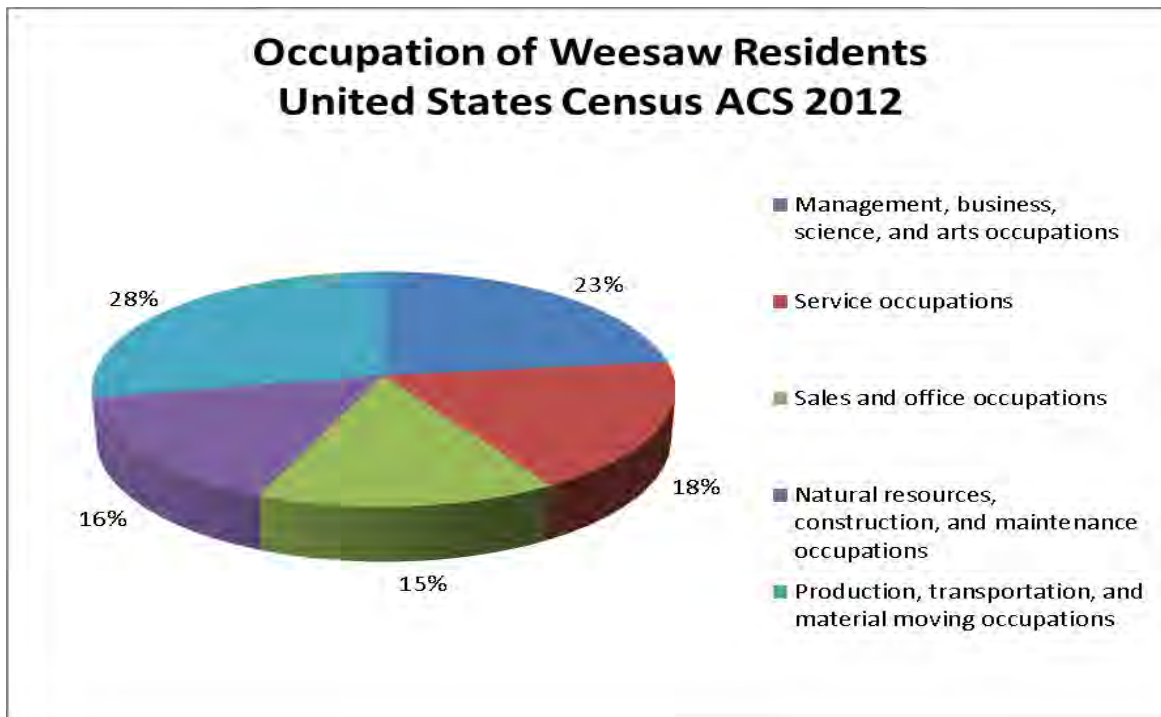
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Weesaw Township (Margin of Error +/-)*</b>	<b>Berrien County **</b>	<b>State of Michigan**</b>
<b>2014</b>	Not available	8.10%	7.10%
<b>2012</b>	7.40% (+/- 2.70)	9%	9.1%
<b>2009</b>	6.60% (+/- 3.10)	12.40%	14.1%

\*U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5 year estimates

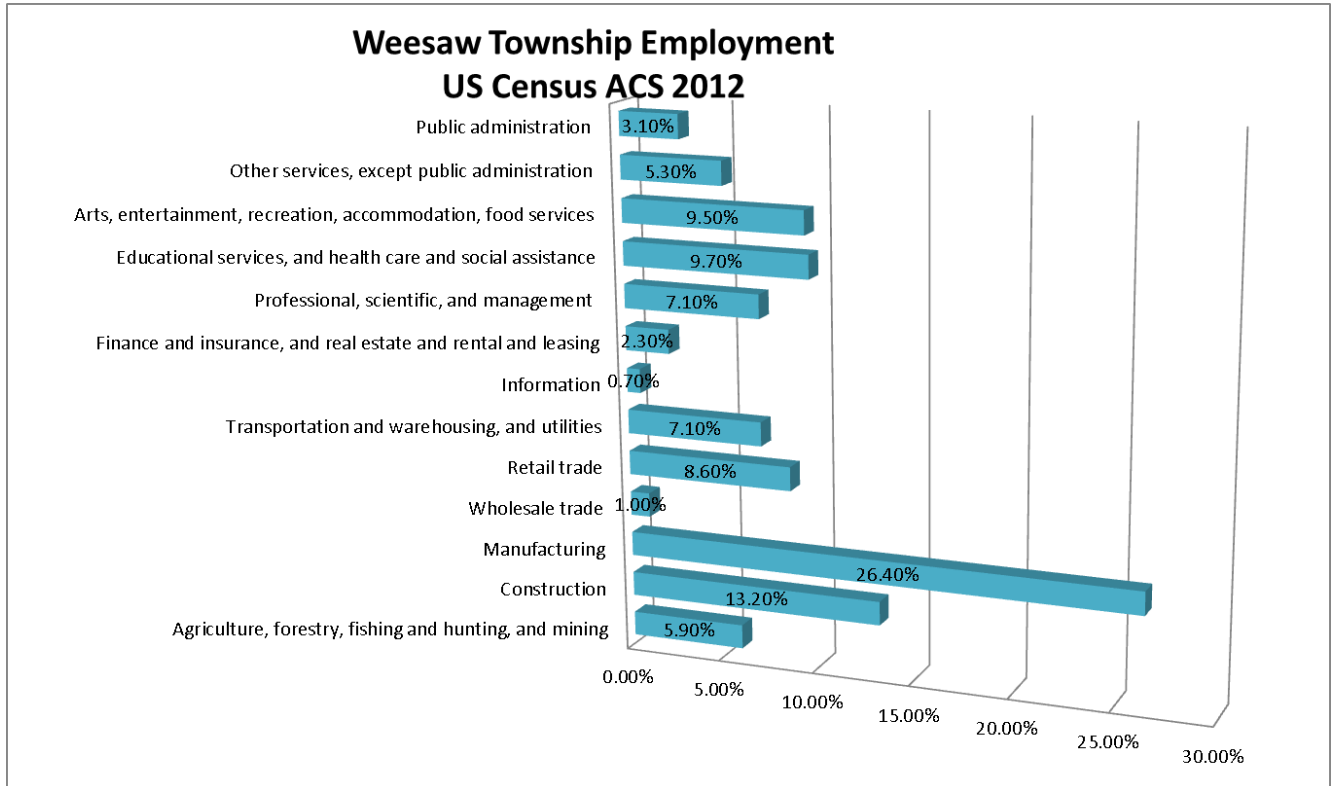
\*\*Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Employment and Industries

In 2012, the Township’s labor force included 988 persons. The largest occupation for Weesaw Township residents was production, transportation and material moving occupations (28%) followed by management, business, science and arts at 23%.



For employment in Weesaw Township, 26% are in manufacturing according to the US Census 2012 American Community Survey. At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census less than a third (28%) of the Township’s labor force was employed in the manufacturing sector compared to 38% in 1990. The second leading occupation in the township is construction at 13%.

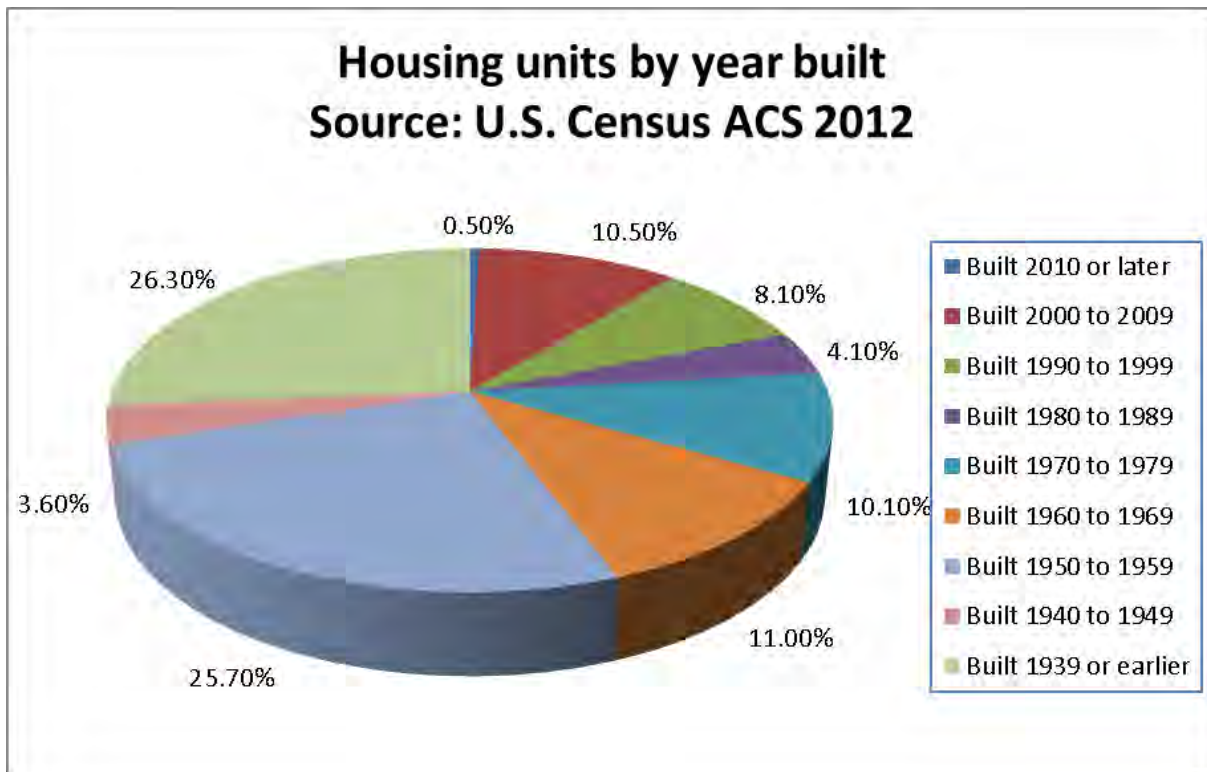


Vickers Engineering is one of largest employer located in Weesaw Township. With the large proportion of Township residents employed in the manufacturing sector and the relatively high mean travel time to work (26.3 minutes), one may conclude that many of the Township’s residents are commuting outside the Township. Some of the largest employers in the Berrien County are located in the cities of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor. These include Whirlpool Corporation, Leco Corporation, Modineer Company, Lake Michigan College, Lakeland Regional Health Systems and Berrien County Government. Other area large employers include Four Winds Casino in New Buffalo and Indiana Michigan Power in Bridgman.

# Housing

As of 2010, there were 951 housing units in Weesaw Township. This represented only 1.5% of the total housing stock in Berrien County and is consistent with population data (the population of the Township amounted to 1.2% of the County’s population). A large majority, 85.6%, of the housing units in the Township were owner-occupied, as compared to 71.5% in the County. Rural areas generally tend to have higher owner-occupancy rates, while rental units are usually more prevalent in urban areas. In addition, the Township does not have the Lake Michigan shoreline which attracts more seasonal residents. According to the 2010 US Census, 16% of the housing units in Weesaw Township were vacant. However, almost half of those were, in fact, used as seasonal or recreational dwellings. The vacancy rate in Berrien County in 2010 was slightly higher at 18% with half of those units being used for recreational or seasonal purposes. The State of Michigan vacancy rate in 2010 was 14% with 5.8% of those being use for recreational or seasonal purposes

Housing in Weesaw Township is older than in most of the surrounding communities. As of 2010, over half of the housing stock was built before 1960. Less than 25% of the housing stock was built after 1980, which is consistent with population trends. The median year in which housing units were built was 1960.



Housing in Weesaw Township is more affordable than in Berrien County and the State of Michigan. The median housing value for owner-occupied housing units in the Township, as of 2012 was \$128,800 and in 2000, was \$92,600. In 2012, this was \$7,000 less than the County’s median of \$135,100 and is almost the same as the State of Michigan median of \$128,600.



## Existing Land Use/Land Cover

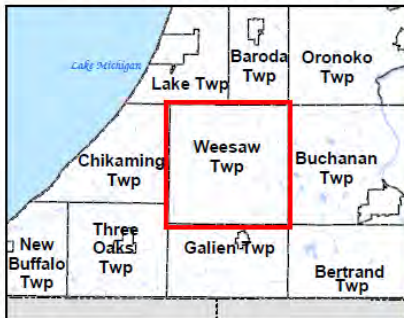
An updated 2010 land use/cover map and a 2013 cropland map provide a “snapshot” of existing land use conditions within the Township and are useful for identifying the issues that need to be addressed in the Plan. According to the 2010 NOAA CCAP map, Weesaw Township has only 2.3% of its land in low, medium or high density development. The Township has over 70% of the land in agricultural use and 23% in natural land cover (forest, shrub, grassland, wetland and water). As you can see from the map, most of the development is within New Troy and Glendora and also scattered along the rural roads.

<b>Land Use/Land Cover</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Developed, High & Medium Density	33	0.1%
Developed , Low Density	505	2.2%
Developed Open Space	58	0.3%
Cultivated Crops	16,916	74.3%
Forest/Shrub/Grassland	3,222	14.2%
Wetland	1,959	8.6%
Water	82	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,779</b>	<b>100.1%</b>

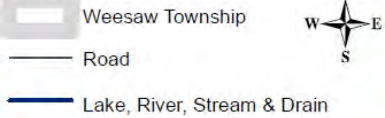
According to the 2013 Cropland Map, over 16,000 acres of the Township is in agricultural production. Most of the agricultural land in the Township is in corn at 42%, followed by soybeans at 34% and pasture/hay at 14%. The Township’s agriculture is diverse with grapes, orchards/nurseries and some vegetables.

<b>Agricultural Lands</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Corn	7,057	42.5%
Grains	204	1.2%
Grape	831	5.0%
Orchards/Nurseries	444	2.7%
Pasture/Hay	2,368	14.3%
Soybean	5,688	34.2%
Vegetables	21	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,614</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

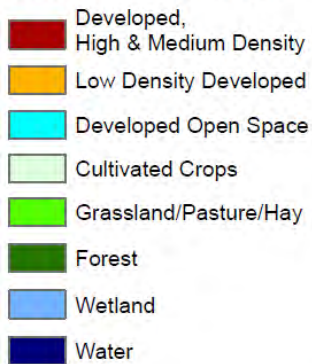
# Weesaw Township



### Base Map

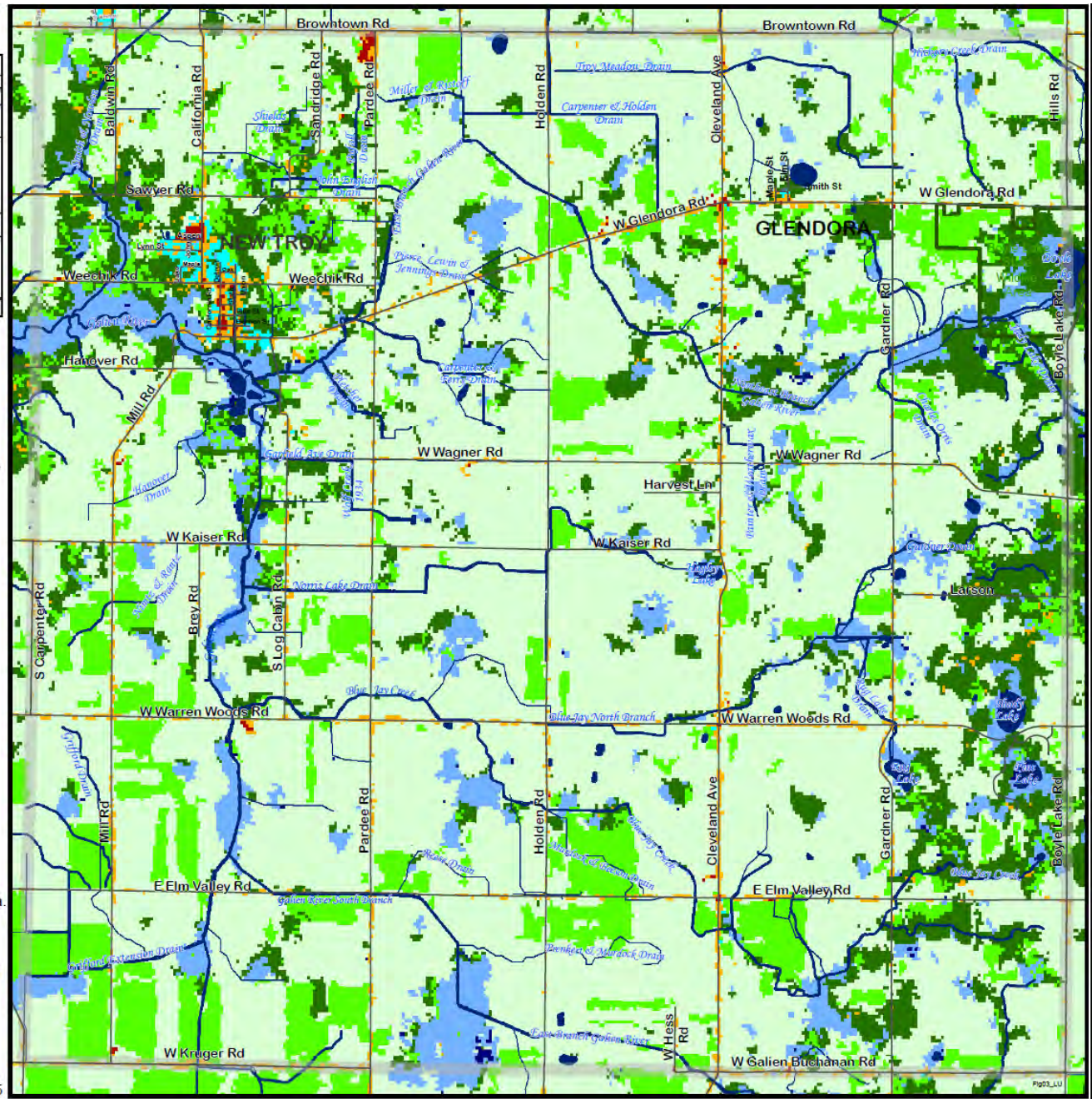


### Land Use/Land Cover

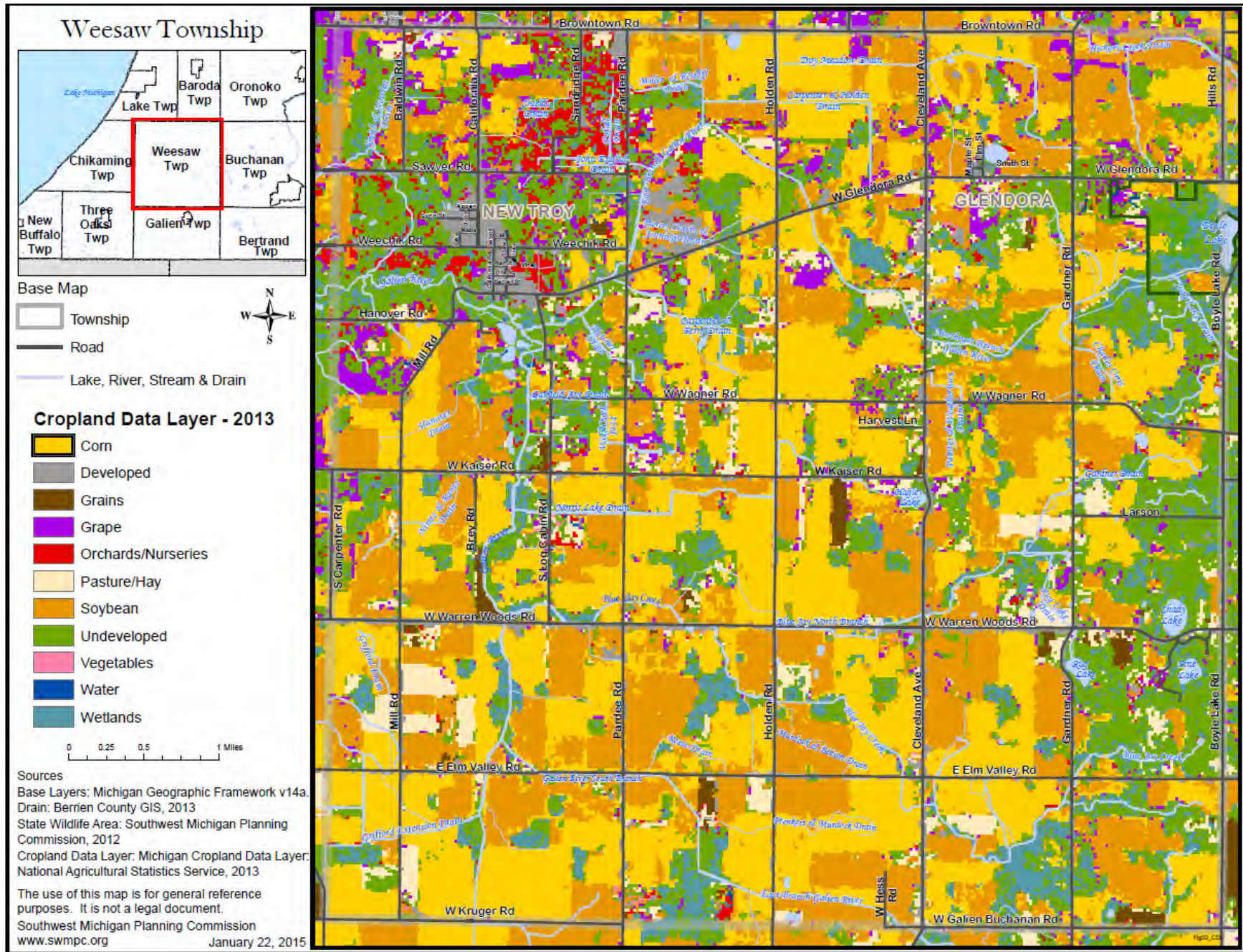


### Sources

Base Layers: Michigan Geographic Framework v14a.  
 Drain: Berrien County GIS, 2013  
 State Wildlife Area: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, 2012  
 Land Use/Cover: Western Great Lakes C-CAP 2010 Land Cover Data, NOAA's Ocean Service, Coastal Services Center (CSC), 2012  
 The use of this map is for general reference purposes. It is not a legal document.  
 Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
[www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org)  
 January 30, 2015







The following is the narrative description of land uses in the Township and corresponds with the Existing Land Use/Cover map on the following page.












- **Single Family/Multiple Family Residential-** There are over 800 housing units within the Township, primarily fronting on major roadways. Very little housing is located within the interior sections off of the County road system except in the New Troy area and portions of the Glendora area. The New Troy area in particular, has evolved as a traditional neighborhood environment with small lot, compact development. The remainder of the housing stock is generally on lots of 5 acres or greater. There are several multiple family units located within the Township primarily within the New Troy area. There is a new site condominium on Boyle Lake and Warren Woods Road called Orchards on the Lake with 32 units approved not shown on the map.
- **Commercial/Industrial-** Commercial uses are primarily concentrated in the New Troy area including a restaurant/convenience store and the U.S. Post Office. Industrial uses are also located in this area including Tru Die Cast (California Road north of Wee-Chik Road) and Vickers Engineering (Glendora Road east of Log Cabin Road). This category also includes several commercial greenhouses (located on Log Cabin Road), a trucking operation (Warren Woods Road west of Log Cabin Road), and a pipe line company (Browntown Road).
- **Public/Quasi Public-** This category includes the Township Offices, Mill Road Park, schools, churches, and cemetery uses. This also includes the DNR owned Boyle Lake Recreation Area land located in Section 12. In New Troy, there is the new Community Center and Township Park. There is also a new electric substation located on Glendora Road.
- **Vacant/Undeveloped-** All land not in agricultural production or land not being used for one of the uses listed above is included in this category.
- **Mining-** This category includes the gravel mining operation located south of New Troy within Section 17. There is also a newer gravel mining operation on Cleveland Avenue not shown on the map.
- **Agricultural-** The predominant land-use within the Township is in agricultural production, with the exception of most of Sections 7 and 8 (northwest corner of the township) and the wooded areas located along the eastern border of the Township. This category includes crop production, orchards, pastures, and livestock operations. Agricultural production is primarily taking place on large lots (40 acres and greater). The largest lots are found in the southern portion of the Township, south of Kaiser Road. There is also a shift to smaller agricultural operations on 10-30 acres. These smaller operations often supply local farmers markets and niche markets.

Berrien County boasts a very high percentage of land with prime farmland soil (soils meeting codes 1 and 2 in the Soil Conservation Service Prime Farmland Map). Agriculture is an extremely important economic activity in Berrien County. The diversity of agriculture production in Berrien County is only second to Orange County, California.



# Existing Land Use/Cover

Weesaw Township  
Berrien County,  
Michigan

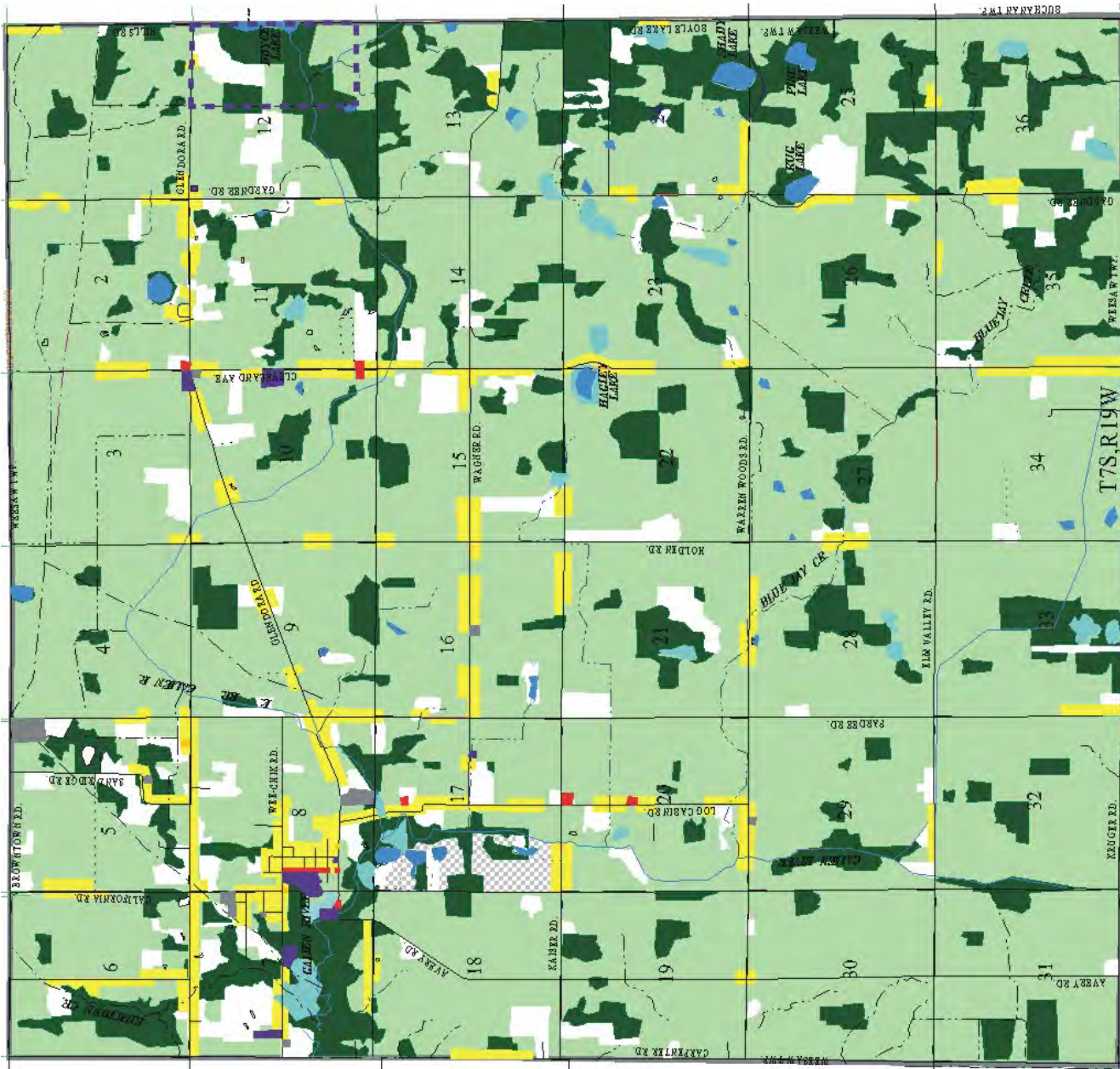
-  Single Family Residential \*
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Public/Quasi-Public
-  Vacant/Undeveloped
-  Mining
-  Agriculture
-  Forest
-  Wetlands
-  Open Water

\* Single Family Residential Areas Represent Areas Of 3 Or More Housing Units Within 1000' Feet Of Each Other

Data Sources: Land Use/Cover & Base Information - Michigan Resource Information System MDNR 1978, Residential Areas - Langworthy LeBlanc, Inc. Survey 1999



June 1999





# Natural Features

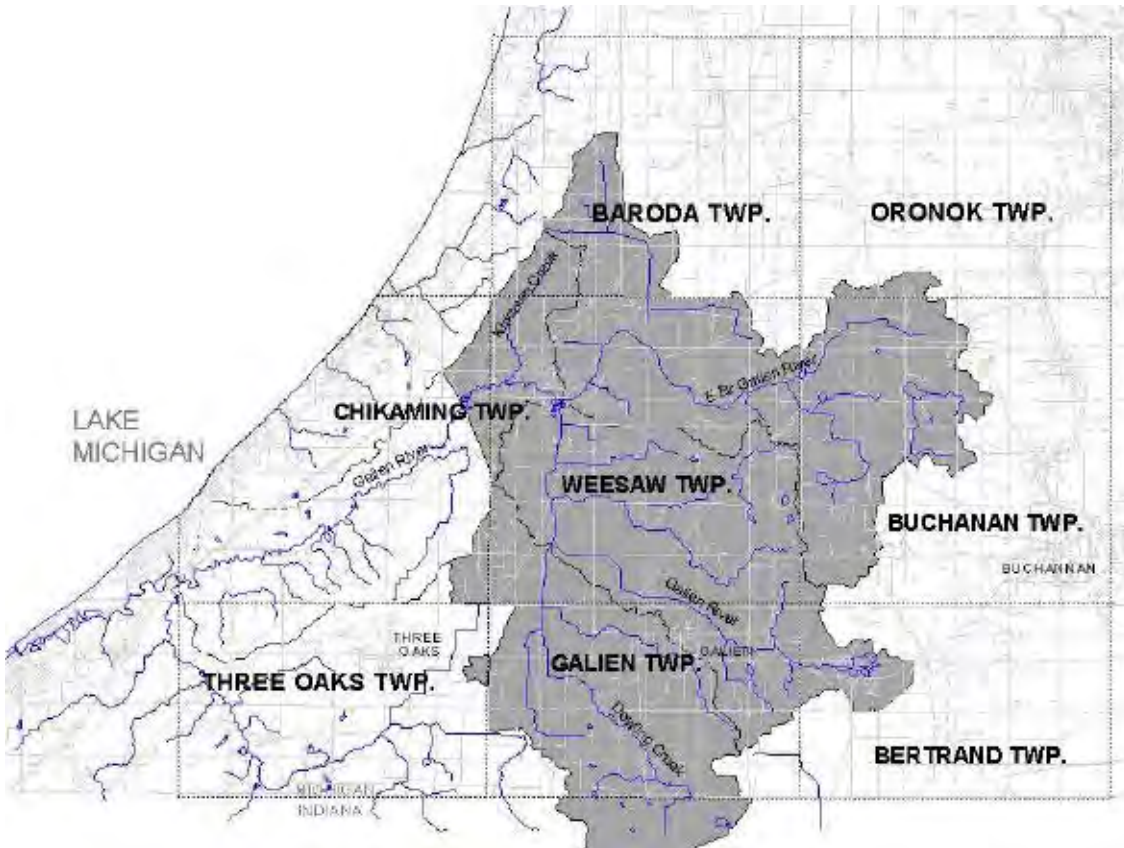
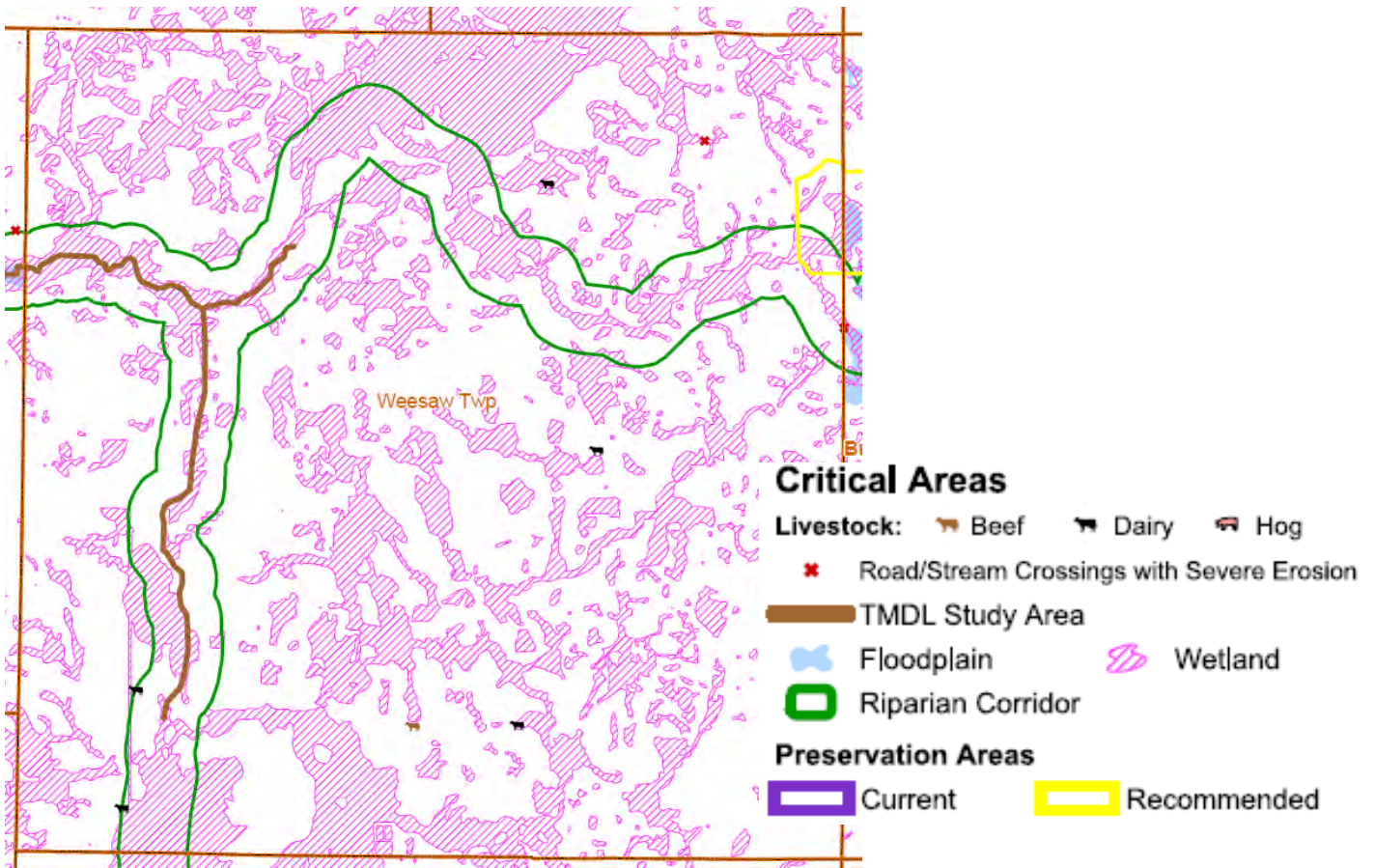
## Forests

Large tracts of forests are located in Sections 7, 12, 24, & 25 of Weesaw Township. Most of these lands are in private ownership with the exception of Boyle Lake State Wildlife Area. However, forested lands contribute significantly to the rural character of the Township and provide a wealth of goods and services to the public. Forested lands help ensure clean water and forest products, mitigate flooding, regulate climate change and provide wildlife habitat, open space, and opportunity for recreation and hunting. Managed forests can provide ample benefits to the landowner, environment and economy. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can help develop a forest management plan to help a landowner get the most economic benefit from their land in an environmentally sustainable manner.

## Galien River Watershed and Water Resources

All of the land in Weesaw Township drains to the the Galien River. The entire Township is within the Galien River Watershed. Through the efforts of the Galien River Watershed Project, there is a recognition that watershed communities must work together to improve and protect water resources. The branches of the Galien River wind through southwest Michigan in Berrien County and northwest Indiana, in LaPorte, and St. Joseph Counties emptying into Lake Michigan at New Buffalo, Michigan. The outlet of Dayton Lake defines the headwaters of the Galien River. The East Branch of the Galien River begins at Boyle Lake and runs through Weesaw Township from east to west. Several lakes exist particularly in the eastern half of Weesaw Township. These include Boyle, Higley, Shady, Pine, and Rug lakes.

The Galien River is a beautiful asset to the community offering opportunities for fishing and other recreational activities. However, the Galien River has some serious pollution issues that are addressed in the Galien River Watershed Management Plan (<http://www.swmpc.org/grw.asp>). The Galien River within Weesaw Township is on Michigan's Section 303 (d) list for not meeting water quality standards for *E. coli* (bacteria/pathogens). The Galien River was placed on the Section 303(d) list due to impairment of recreational uses by the presence of elevated levels of *E. coli*. Overall, the highest *E. coli* data collected in the Galien River were at Avery/Mill Road and Minnich Road. According to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study completed in 2002, the most common sources of *E. coli* are livestock operations, failing septic systems, illicit sewage connections, and combined sewer overflows and are coming from the entire area upstream of Flynn Road in Chikaming Township as shown in the map on the next page.



To protect water quality, septic systems need to be inspected regularly. Berrien County is considering creating a program that would require septic systems and wells to be inspected at the time of a property transfer. This could help to identify septic systems that are contributing to the elevated levels of pathogens in the Galien River.

Water quality protection is not just about public health and wildlife habitat, it's about money and the economy. Our high quality river systems are a crucial component of maintaining Michigan's \$1.5 billion a year fishing industry. In SW Michigan, the local economy depends greatly on the water quality of Lake Michigan and the tourism it generates. Beach closings due to bacteria contamination will greatly hamper the local tourist dependent economy.

Also, future growth should be planned carefully and use low impact development techniques to ensure as much water is infiltrated and filtered before entering surface waters. Increased impervious surfaces and loss of wetlands can change the watershed's flow regime - creating flashy streams and rivers with high flows after storm events. The increased runoff will also increase stream bank erosion and result in more pollutants (sediment, nutrients, etc.) reaching surface waters. Water resources are part of a fragile system, which is potentially at risk. Water quality protection needs to happen at the site level, municipality level and watershed level to be effective. Water resources include both surface (lakes, streams, rivers, ponds) and ground water. The protection of water quality is important for plant and animal life, tourism and drinking water supplies. Properly managed rivers offer abutting property owners higher property values. There are several examples when contaminated groundwater leads to substantial decreases of property values.

A combination of poor soils unsuitable for septic systems, a high water table, and an increasing amount of rural development resulting in increased runoff may begin to threaten the quality of an area's water supplies. Specific local regulations, such as those pertaining to site plan review standards, encouraging open space developments and low impact development techniques, increasing water body setbacks, maintaining buffers around streams and wetlands, protecting floodplains, instituting proper impervious cover standards, using overlay districts to protect natural features and reducing density in areas with soil limitations for septic systems are among the techniques that can assist in protecting surface and ground water quality.

One of the most important things a community or property owner can do to protect water quality is to maintain a vegetated riparian buffer along streams, ditches, rivers, lakes and wetlands. Many river or stream edges are currently mowed on a periodic basis for a manicured-lawn look. Although this may be aesthetically pleasing to certain residents, this practice is detrimental to water quality and the streams ecosystem. It is proven that a vegetated buffer (an unmowed corridor) along rivers, streams, drains, lakes and wetlands protects water quality by filtering polluted runoff from lawns, impervious areas and agricultural fields before it reaches the water body, shading and cooling the water, providing channel stability, and storage for floodwaters. Riparian buffers also allow for the development of natural stream meanders and increase the diversity of aquatic life, provide areas for diverse recreational opportunities, filter air and noise pollution and enhance wildlife habitat.

## **Wetlands**

The Township also has extensive wetlands with about 8% of the Township land in wetlands. However, the Township has also lost over 5,500 acres of wetland to agriculture and development since pre-settlement times. Before this loss, wetlands covered over 24% of the Township.

	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Existing Wetland	1,703.3	7.5%
Lost Wetland	5,504.6	24.2%

With the loss of these wetlands, there is also a loss of functions that wetlands serve. Beyond, wildlife habitat, two critical functions that wetlands perform are floodwater storage and sediment retention. The following maps show where existing wetlands perform the floodwater and sediment retention functions at a high capacity and also where lost wetlands used to perform these functions at a high capacity. The loss of these critical functions results in flooding problems and sediment loading of the Galien River. Both flooding and sediment build up in the harbor of the Galien River result in substantial economic impacts to the community. It is important to protect the remaining wetlands and the critical functions that benefit the community.

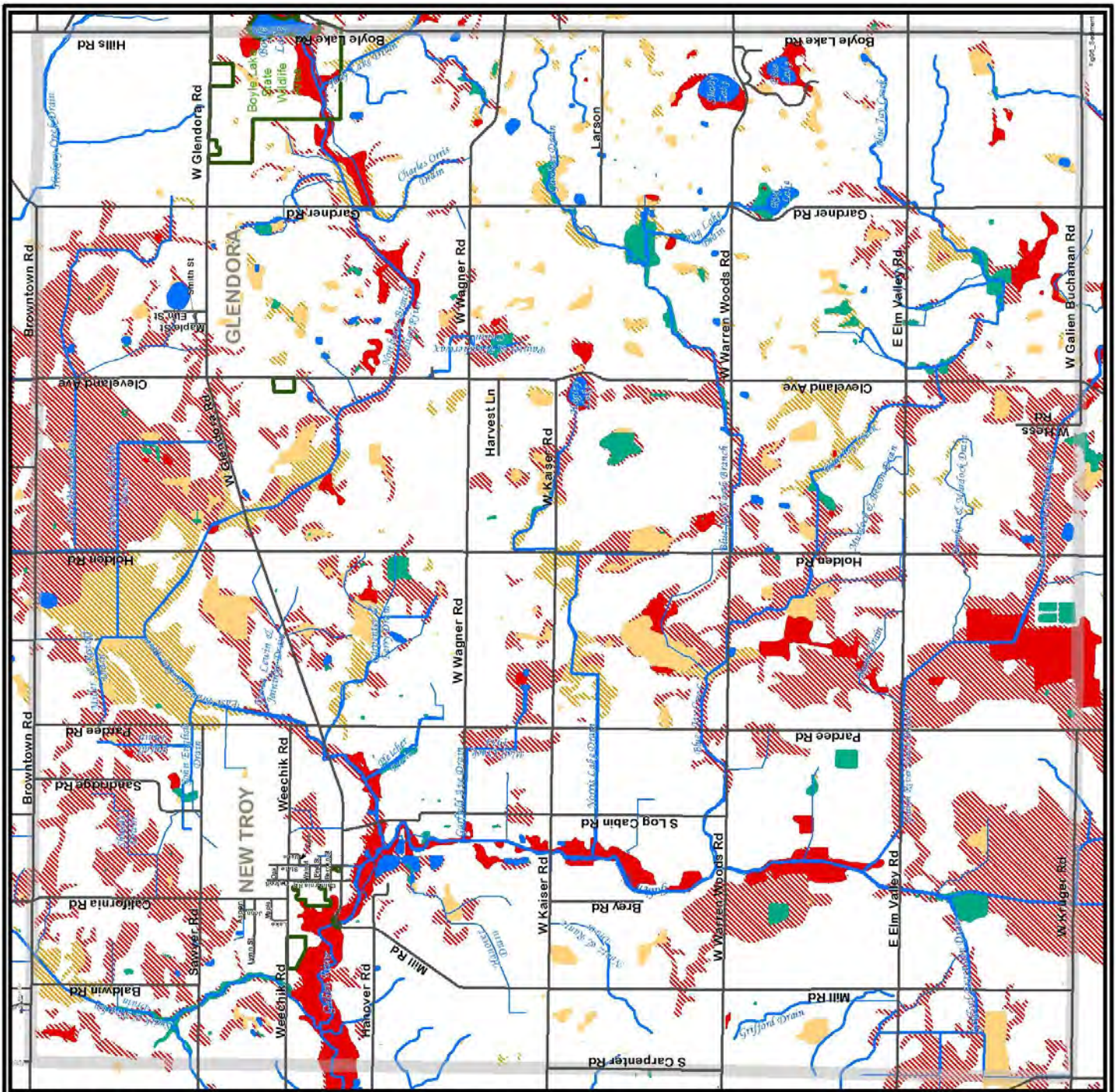




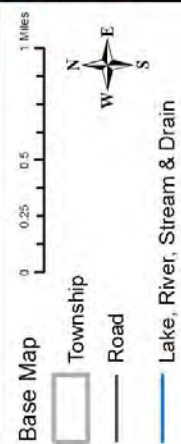








# Weesaw Township



## Wetland Functional Assessment SEDIMENT RETENTION

- Existing Wetland
- High Significance
- Medium Significance
- Lost Wetland
- High Significance
- Medium Significance

This map shows existing and lost wetlands and ranks them based on how well the wetland can store sediment and other particulate matter.

- Current Wetland\*

\*All other existing wetlands that are not shown in the Wetland Functional Assessment for Flood Water Storage.

Sources  
 Base Layers: Michigan Geographic Framework v14a  
 Drain: Berrien County GIS, 2013  
 State Wildlife Area: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, 2012  
 Wetlands: MDEQ, Land and Water Management Division, Wetlands, Lakes and Streams Unit, 2012  
 The use of this map is for general reference purposes. It is not a legal document.  
 Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
 www.swmpc.org  
 April 01, 2015



# III. GOALS & POLICIES

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A fundamental component of the Master Plan is to establish policies concerning the future direction of land use. While Weesaw Township has not yet experienced the rapid growth taking place in other areas of the region, it is important to identify the elements that define the community character, and establish policies to protect and enhance them for the future. As communities grow, they need a direction for future development. Key issues have been identified in the Community Profile Chapter. The goals and policies identified herewith, provide the instrument for achieving the desired direction. The overall vision serves to further define the Township's development philosophy.

## Community Vision

*Weesaw Township will be a prosperous and family oriented rural/ agricultural community with a balanced mix between industrial and agricultural uses. Residential neighborhoods and commercial/industrial areas will be developed in a controlled fashion, served by adequate water and sewer service, quality educational facilities, excellent transportation options, and affordable housing opportunities. A cornerstone to the community character is the agricultural base with areas preserved for long-term agricultural use, clean, neat, safe, and friendly neighborhoods, and preserved natural areas.*

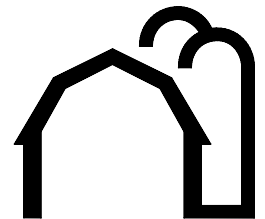
## Land Use and Township Character

**Goal** *The character of Weesaw Township will be primarily agricultural with residential homes in rural settings.*

**Rationale** Above all, most residents strongly desire to keep the township as a rural, agricultural community, with limited commercial and industrial development. While most would readily acknowledge the need to have a balance of other uses, the preservation of agricultural lands and rural residential homes will generally be an essential element of their definition of quality of life. This character is often evidenced by the township's rural surroundings and natural features.

### Policies

- *Encourage farmers to keep all productive agricultural lands in agricultural use.*
- *Encourage and support local participation in the county and state programs to purchase development rights within the designated Agricultural Preservation area.*



- *Adopt and implement Ordinance provisions whose purpose will be to minimize conflicts between agricultural and residential uses. The use of buffer zones, clustering, open space subdivisions, and other techniques will be used to achieve this objective.*
- *Encourage concentrations of new housing to be built adjacent to the New Troy area and areas where public utilities (i.e. water and sewer) exist or are planned.*
- *Review land use and zoning changes so that they include consideration of how the proposed development preserves the rural character and natural features of the Township.*
- *Limit non-agricultural based commercial and industrial development within the Township. New industrial/ commercial development should be directed to areas where proper services (i.e. water and sewer) and transportation systems can be provided, appropriate for a rural residential community.*
- *Explore the feasibility of developing a light industrial park that will be compatible with surrounding land uses, provide easy access to primary transportation routes, and served by proper utilities. A primary objective of the industrial park will be to centralize future light industrial development (i.e. free of major smoke, noise, and vibration).*
- *Develop code enforcement polices to maintain housing conditions and eliminate blighted conditions (e.g. trash, junk cars and materials).*
- *Identify appropriate area(s) for affordable and senior housing taking into consideration surrounding housing density and land use, availability of community services, traffic patterns, and public utilities.*
- *Encourage the development of homes that are of a compatible size and scale to housing in the surrounding area.*
- *Accommodate high density/manufactured housing development where public sewer and water is available.*



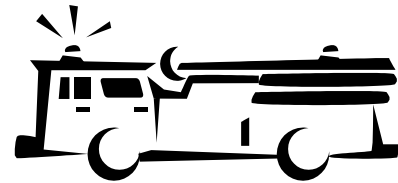
## Public Services and Facilities

**Goal** *Land use in Weesaw Township will emphasize agricultural uses and homes in rural settings. Accordingly, the Township will provide public services and facilities that are appropriate for an agricultural, low density community.*

**Rationale** The low density development and spread out nature of farms and homes in Weesaw make it difficult to provide extensive public services in a cost effective manner. Moreover, it is unlikely that public water or sanitary sewer will be available anytime soon to most of the Township. This emphasizes the concerns of the Township about groundwater protection and the impact of growth on water quality and other quality of life issues.

### Policies

- *Require development to have adequate water and sanitary sewer service prior to receiving any required Township approvals.*
- *Require applicants seeking land development projects to provide assurance that adequate utilities (roads, fire, police, medical services, public transit stops and other services) are adequate to serve the proposed uses before granting approval.*
- *Expand public water and sewer infrastructure based on need or public desire. Specifically investigate providing public sewer in Glendora.*
- *Investigate the feasibility of developing additional park/recreation lands in cooperation with local land conservancies and County and State agencies.*
- *Maintain existing park/recreation lands to provide quality recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.*
- *Add amenities to Weesaw Township Community Park and Mill Park to meet the recreational desires of the community.*





# Protecting the Environment

**Goal** *Land development in Weesaw Township will be planned and designed to protect important natural features and sensitive environmental areas.*

**Rationale** The existing quality agricultural production, vast woodlots, streams and wetland areas are an important part of the rural character of Weesaw Township. It is a desire of the township to preserve and enhance important natural features which help define the rural character and that serve critical functions such as protecting water resources and providing wildlife habitat.



## Policies

- *Ensure that the identification and protection of groundwater resources, surface waters, natural resources, and other environmental features will be a primary consideration when reviewing development proposals.*
- *Require applicants to provide information on the potential effects of a proposed development on area groundwater sources and surface water quality during the development review process.*
- *Develop review standards to minimize the negative impacts of industrial waste/heavy metals, and air/soil contamination.*
- *Implement an overlay zone to protect the Galien River and other natural features to improve and preserve water quality, recreational opportunities and aesthetic value.*
- *Enhance guidelines to protect floodplain areas from inappropriate development.*
- *Cooperate with neighboring communities to address land use and related issues potentially impacting the Galien River watershed. Specifically support Berrien County's efforts to implement a program to inspect septic systems when a property is transferred.*
- *Ensure that development avoids wetland areas because of their importance in mitigating flooding, cleansing water and providing wildlife habitat.*
- *Encourage residential, commercial and industrial developments to utilize low impact development techniques such as minimal grading of the site, preservation of wetlands and wooded areas and utilization of stormwater infiltration techniques (porous pavement, bio-swales, rain gardens, etc.).*
- *Ensure the Township Drain Committee works with the County Drain Commission's office for the maintenance and improvement of drains within the Township.*

# Transportation

**Goal** *The Township will pursue land development policies that foster a safe and efficient transportation network appropriate for an agricultural/rural residential community.*

**Rationale** Over time, new residential development will likely affect residents' perception of traffic when they begin to notice more cars and other vehicles along the major roadways. In addition, newer residents may start to ask that gravel roads be paved. The Township will have to balance the desires of residents for rural character (unpaved and private drives) with the need to provide a safe, efficient, high quality roadway system.

## Policies

- *Develop a partnership with Berrien County, under the provisions of State laws, to develop and maintain a priority review system for improving roads, considering such factors as road condition, resident desires, traffic volumes, roadway function, land use, and other appropriate elements.*
- *Encourage land development along major roadways that reduces the number of access points for individual uses, particularly for non-residential uses.*
- *Encourage roadway improvements adjacent to planned industrial/commercial areas to enhance access, aesthetics, and safety.*
- *Consider complete streets when improving roads to better accommodate all users such as pedestrians, bicyclists and public transit.*
- *Support the County's efforts to consolidate public transit service through a county-wide authority to provide more effective and efficient service to Township residents.*

**Complete Streets** are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, accessible pedestrian signals, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. Complete Streets in a rural area or small town will look quite different from a Complete Street in an urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

# IV. FUTURE LAND USE

## CLASSIFICATIONS

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The Future Land Use classifications are intended to reflect the goals and values of Weesaw Township. The proposed classifications focus on a goal which states: *The character of Weesaw Township will be primarily agricultural with residential homes in rural settings.*

The Township acknowledges that new development will occur, but strongly desires this growth to:

- emphasize orderly development of residential, commercial, and industrial uses;
- encourage new commercial and light industrial development uses to areas that are compatible with adjacent land uses;
- minimize conflicts between agricultural and residential uses;
- recognize that the availability of public utilities will be limited throughout the planning period and primarily confined to the New Troy area; and
- protect the groundwater resources from which its residents obtain water.

### **Agricultural Preservation**

The preservation of agricultural lands was identified as an important issue at the workshop meeting held in April, 1999, and is reflected in the goal and policy statements produced by the Planning Commission. The update process reflected that this philosophy remains. Most of the land in Weesaw Township is in agricultural production. Agricultural uses represent the backbone of the community and it is the desire of Township residents' to remain an agricultural community. The Township encourages the use of purchase of development rights and other techniques to preserve the unique and economically important farmland in the Township.

The Agricultural Preservation classification would serve to protect prime farmland and limit non-agricultural uses. Non-farm homes would be limited and non-agricultural uses would be discouraged. Along with large farm operations, small farms and niche agricultural uses should also be accommodated. Any residential development should be limited and be very low density. **Lots could be split according to the Michigan Land Division Act. Water and sewer lines should not be extended into the Agricultural Preservation area unless they are necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the existing residents of the area.**

To accomplish this goal, **the Township will participate in the County's Open Space and Farmland Program to offer a voluntary option for landowners to preserve farmland.** As such, the Township designates the Agricultural Preservation lands on the Future Land Use Map as the areas intended for preservation. These areas were determined by the cropland map (areas currently being farmed), large parcel sizes, lack of public sewer and water services and input from the community during public meetings.

Some new housing construction has been taking place recently in areas that were once

exclusively agriculture. Over time, non-agricultural development could create conflicts with the existing farming practices and diminish the importance of prime farmland. A related issue is the odor, noise, and intensity of agricultural practices adjacent to residential uses. Guidelines are necessary to minimize the conflicts that can occur between agricultural and nonagricultural uses. Minimizing the number of non-farm dwellings in these areas is one way to reduce conflicts. Another technique is to **require vegetative buffers between uses**. Buffers are generally imposed on residential developments, rather than on farming operations, principally because the farm was probably the first use in place. Buffers should be sufficiently wide to protect the farming operation from lawn fertilizers, playing children, and other conflicts. At the same time, they cannot be so burdensome as to require excessive land commitments from residential property owners.

## Rural-Agricultural Residential

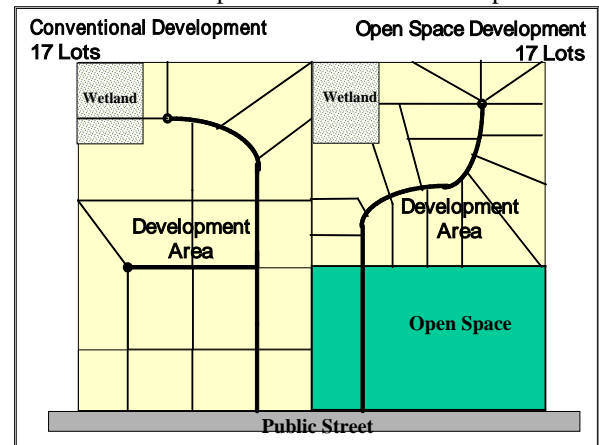
Unlike the Agricultural Preservation classification, this category would allow non-farm housing development and other special land uses, within rural areas. This classification is intended to preserve the rural residential character of the Township while recognizing that much of this land could be converted to residential use. Farm uses would continue to be allowed. The Township should provide incentives to developers to use the open space development option to preserve the rural character and open spaces in the Township. The Township should encourage abutting developments to preserve open spaces that are continuous.

The Rural-Agricultural Residential classification would serve to minimize conflicts between agricultural and residential uses while maintaining the rural character of the Township. This classification would serve as a transition area between concentrated residential development and more restrictive agricultural areas. It is recommended that new parcels within this classification achieve a maximum density of one unit per 2 acres. Lot frontage and setback requirements would be established to maintain the rural character of the area. Such techniques as buffer zones, clustering, and open space subdivisions would also be used to achieve this objective.

### *What is Cluster or Open Space Development?*

Clustering concentrates development in a limited area, with the overall, or "gross density" of the site remaining the same. Although clustering may increase the net density within a smaller area, the gross density must still fall within the requirements of the Master Plan and subsequent zoning regulations.

Cluster development does not increase the number of homes, but does allow the preservation of valuable open space. Approving cluster development through a planned unit development (PUD) provides the opportunity to ensure that land will be kept free from future development.



Apart from being a requirement of the PUD, preserved open space may be decided in equal parts to the property owners. Regardless of ownership, the remaining acreage would not be permitted to be developed with additional housing units.

By the use of the cluster development technique, portions of agricultural lands are also allowed to be protected and remain in production. Since farmers often lease fields in other portions of the community, open space lands provided as part of a cluster development could be incorporated in a long-term lease agreement with a local farmer. Farm operators may also take advantage of this option by developing only a portion of the property to gain additional financial resources, while retaining the remainder for agricultural purposes. This technique could also accommodate small farms that are less than 40 acres in size.

Agricultural buffers can also be used as a technique to reduce conflicts between active agricultural areas and other uses. Buffers are generally imposed on residential developments, rather than on farming operations, principally because the farm was probably the first use in place. Buffers should be sufficiently wide to protect the farming operation from lawn fertilizers, playing children, and other conflicts. At the same time, they cannot be so burdensome as to require excessive land commitments from residential property owners.

Buffers are most effective if a “no-disturb” zone is provided between residential properties and farmland. This requirement should be tied to subdivision, site condominium, planned unit development, or land division approval. It should also be required that the buffer be described in the property deed to alert potential buyers of the need to honor the no-disturb area.

## **Low/Medium Density Residential**

This classification is intended to include some of the higher density development which has already occurred in the Township such as in New Troy and the Glendora area, as well as future concentrations of residential development. Farm uses would be restricted from this classification.

Lands within this classification will contain more intensive development, including residential lots of at least one acre that are not served by public water and sewer and up to 2 units per acre with public water and sewer (up to 4 units per acre for multiple family with public sewer and water available). Other residential related development requiring a higher level of service (schools, churches, and golf courses), is also included in this classification. In addition, this classification would include two-family and multiple family uses, provided appropriate public services can be provided.

These areas would be the first to be served, if utilities were to be extended (water and sewer). Furthermore, new residential development will be limited to a size and scale to ensure that Township services are adequate to serve the proposed development.

Within the unincorporated village of New Troy, there are several lots within the original plat of the village that do not meet the minimum lot area and minimum lot width requirements of the current zoning (R-2, Low/Medium Density Residential). This affects the ability of these homeowners to make minor improvements and additions to their homes. Because of the historic village character of this area, these properties should be given special consideration.

Amendments to the zoning ordinance to create a separate zoning district or overlay district to allow for minor improvements are recommended.

## High Density Residential

This classification is intended to provide the highest density of residential use in the Township. The Township wants to provide the opportunity for a mix of housing styles, types and densities within the Township. The high density residential district will accommodate manufactured homes in a state-licensed manufactured home park. The district will also allow other uses such as family day care homes, state-licensed residential family care facilities, accessory buildings and home occupations. State-licensed residential group home care facilities and group day care homes would be considered as special land uses. These areas would need to be served by sewer and water and be adjacent to commercial/retail services. Additionally, these developments should consider providing public transportation stops for its residents.

### FUTURE LAND USE RESIDENTIAL CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY

Classification	Maximum Density/Lot Size
Rural-Agricultural Residential	One unit per 2 acres/2 acre minimum lot size
Low/Medium Density Residential	One unit per acre without public water and sewer; up to 2 units per acre with water and sewer (up to 4 units per acre for multiple family units)
High Density Residential	Intended for accommodating state-licensed manufactured home parks to provide diverse housing options.

## Commercial

There is a desire to limit future commercial development within Weesaw Township to areas where proper services (i.e. water and sewer) and transportation systems can be provided, appropriate for a rural residential community. Commercial development will be primarily limited to the New Troy area along with limited commercial development in the Glendora area. The low density/agricultural nature of the Township coupled with the lack of utilities, paved roads, and public services limits the suitability for large, new areas to be converted to commercial uses. In addition, it is the desire of the Township to discourage scattered commercial development in isolated locations along major roadways within the Township.

This does not preclude certain agricultural and home-based businesses from locating within the agricultural areas of the Township. Agricultural businesses would be restricted to those directly related to farming and cultivation of plants (greenhouses, roadside stands, farm markets, etc.). Relationships to adjoining properties would be carefully reviewed. Home-based businesses would be allowed on properties that have a residential use already established. However, there will be strict limitations on the extent of the business activity permitted.



## **Industrial**

Several existing industrial uses and vacant industrial zoned areas are located throughout the Township. Industrial uses in scattered locations can create problems related to incompatible adjacent land uses (e.g. industrial next to residential) and difficulty in providing public services and utilities such as fire/police protection and public water and sewer service. It is the desire of the Township to encourage light industrial development in areas that can be served by public water and sewer and proper transportation systems. To help achieve this objective, it is the desire of the Township to explore the feasibility of establishing a light industrial park within the New Troy area. This would serve to consolidate future industrial uses to areas with proper services and utilities. While it is recognized that the existing heavy industrial uses will continue, the Township will encourage new industrial uses to be light industrial in nature (i.e. free of smoke, vibration, or noise) and in areas compatible for such uses.

## **Public**

Several public and quasi-public uses exist within the Township and are anticipated to remain as such during the planning period. These include the Township Hall complex, Township Cemeteries (Wee-Chik Road and Cleveland Ave.), Mill Road Park, New Troy Community Center and adjacent Township Park and the DNR-owned Boyle Lake Recreation Area. The open water in the Township (lakes, rivers and streams) can also be considered public space.

These public spaces:

- contribute to the rural character of the township
- provide wildlife habitat
- provide passive and active recreation opportunities (fishing, bird watching, hunting, hiking, etc.)
- help prevent and / or reduce the severity of floods
- help to protect water quality
- contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the area

Open space helps to protect water quality because undisturbed land generally does not contribute pollutants to our streams and lakes. In addition, open space usually contains natural grasses, wetlands, plants, shrubs and trees that serve as filters, removing pollutants before they get deposited into our water bodies. When polluted water flows through these areas the plants, trees and wetlands "scrub" and filter much of the pollution out of the water before it finds its way into a stream. Further, attractive areas are more desirable to developers, enticing high quality growth to the community. This in turn brings more jobs and attractive places to live and shop.

Many studies demonstrate that the value of property is not only preserved, but improved by its proximity to preserved public lands.

# Natural Features Conservation Overlay

An “overlay” district is a resource-based zoning district. It is superimposed over underlying zoning districts to limit the impacts of development on resources that are found within more than one zoning district, or within only a portion of an underlying district. Since overlay districts follow the resource, they may apply to only a portion of a parcel — allowing development on land outside of the overlay district, while protecting resources on land within the district.

Overlay districts are commonly used to regulate development in flood hazard, wetland and riparian areas, but are increasingly being used to protect other natural resources, such as significant natural communities, wildlife habitat areas and travel corridors. “Special considerations” usually include different standards of review – for example, further limits on allowed uses, conditional use review of uses that require only administrative review in the underlying district, and/or district standards that apply to all uses in the overlay district. These supplements are applied in addition to the underlying district’s standards.

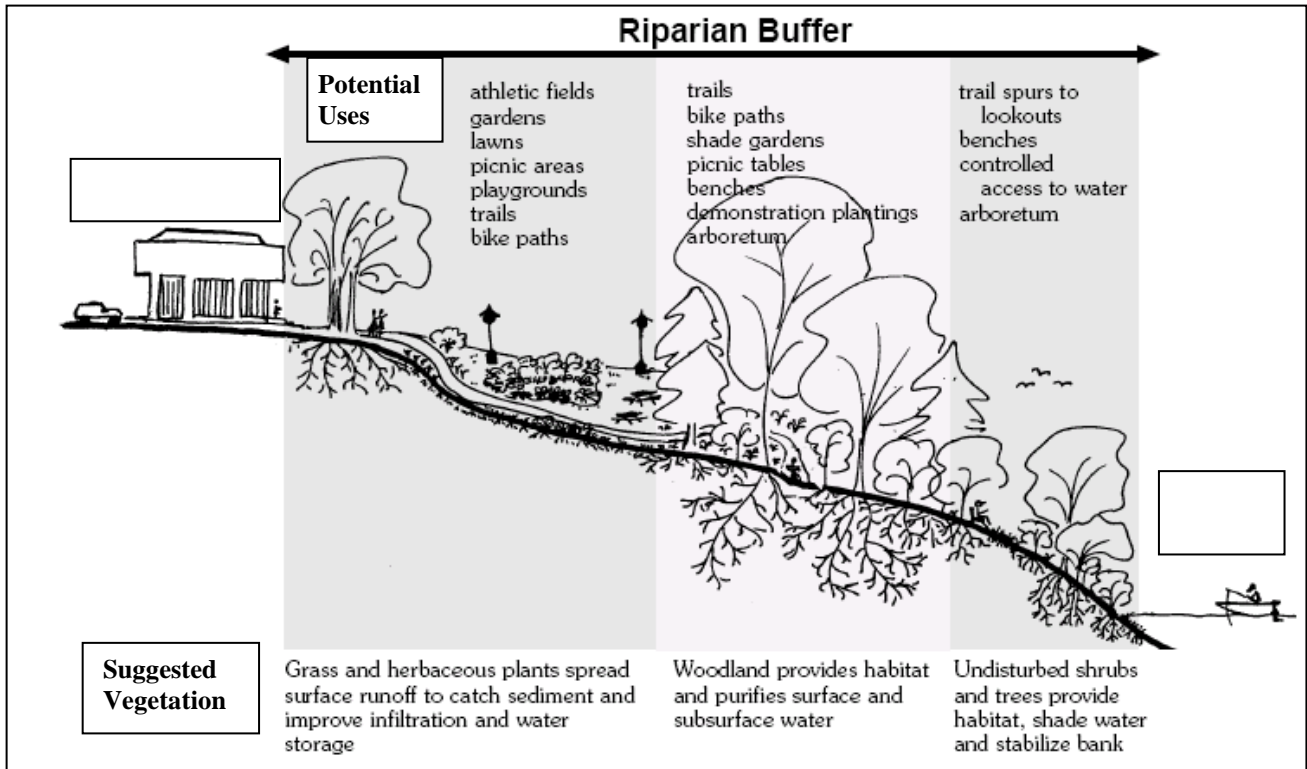
In Weesaw Township, a natural features overlay district is being implemented to protect existing wetlands and sensitive riparian areas. Protecting these features with setbacks and native vegetative buffers will help maintain clean water in streams, rivers and ultimately Lake Michigan. The lands in the overlay district include all existing wetland areas and waterbodies (rivers, streams, drains, lakes) plus the lands within a 100 foot buffer of these features.

Common components of overlay districts include:

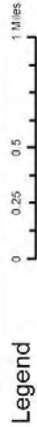
- Further limits on uses that are otherwise allowed within the underlying zoning district.
- Different density and dimensional standards for development within the overlay district.
- District standards that guide the siting of development, and help evaluate the impact of development on resources included in the overlay district, for example, development clustering with requirements for open space preservation and avoidance of critical habitat areas, setback and native vegetation buffering requirements for wetlands, streams, rivers and lakes.
- Consultation with natural resources specialists to understand and evaluate site-specific resources, for example, with the county conservation district, Chikaming Open Lands, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, a private consultant, or the Michigan Department of Natural Resources or Environmental Quality.

## **PURPOSES OF A RIPARIAN BUFFER:**

- reduce erosion and stabilize stream banks.
- encourage infiltration of stormwater runoff.
- control sedimentation.
- reduce the effects of flood and drought.
- provide forest areas to shade streams and encourage desirable aquatic species.
- provide and protect wildlife habitat
- offer scenic value and recreational opportunities for trails and greenways.
- restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of water resources.
- minimize public investment in waterway restoration, stormwater management, and other public water resource endeavors.



# Weesaw Township



## Legend

- Weesaw Township
  - Lake, River, Stream & Drain
  - Sewer Line
  - Water Main
- The Water Main and Sewer Line data is shown as an approximate location of the infrastructure.
- Natural Features Conservation Overlay**

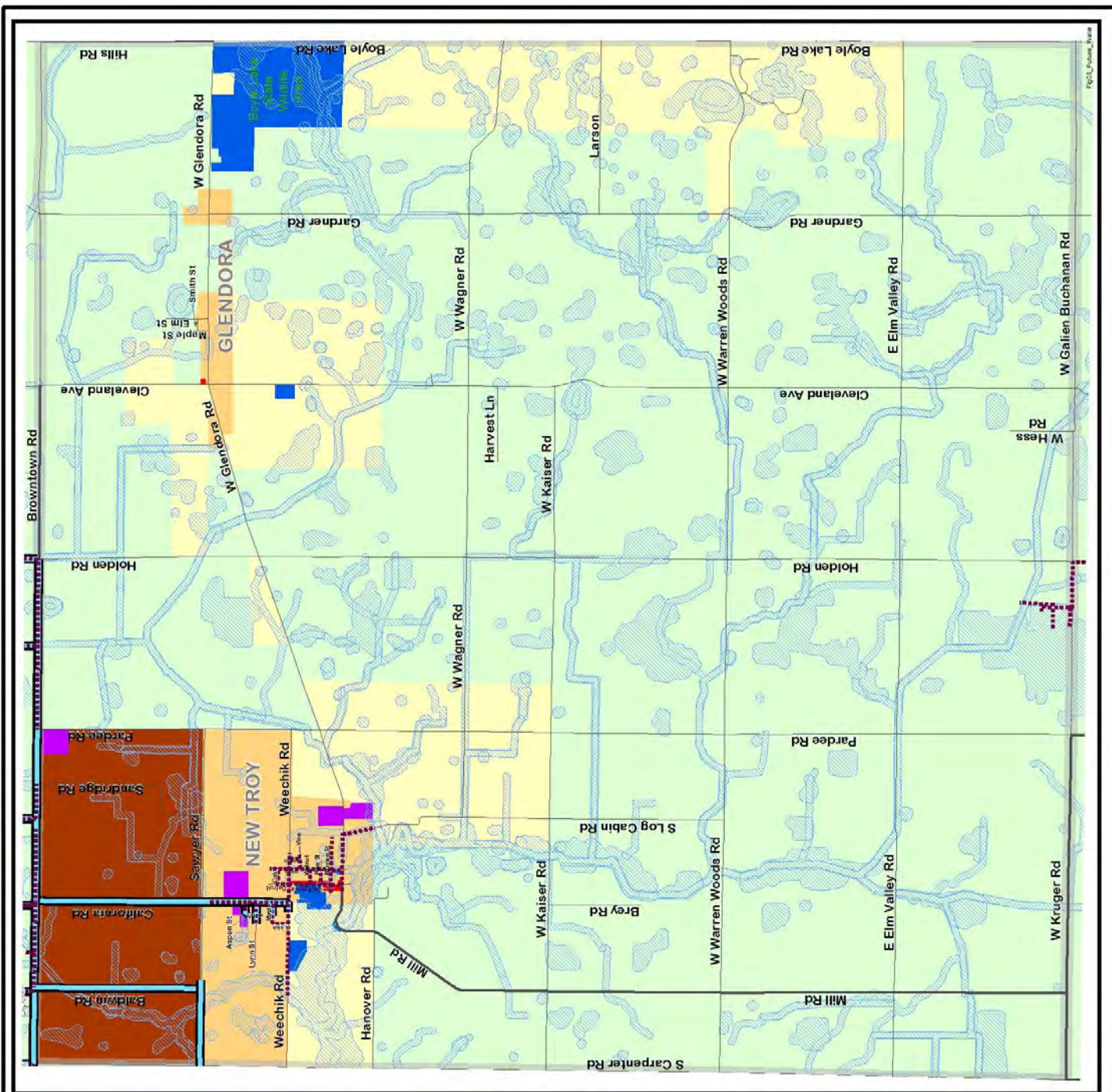
## FUTURE LAND USE

- Rural Agricultural Residential
- Low/Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Quasi Public
- Agricultural Preservation

**Sources**  
 Base Layers: Michigan Geographic Framework v14a.  
 Drains: Berrien County GIS, 2013  
 Sewer & Water Mains: Berrien County GIS, 1999  
 State Wildlife Area: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, 2012  
 Future Land Use: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, 2014

The use of this map is for general reference purposes. It is not a legal document.

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
 www.swmpc.org  
 April 01, 2015





# V. ZONING PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Zoning Plan and recommendations offer implementation strategies to meet Master Plan goals. It also links the future land use classifications of the plan with zoning districts on the Weesaw Township Zoning Map.

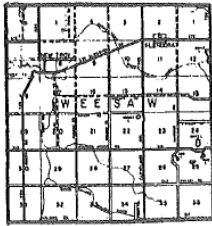
Future Land Use Plan Designation	Zoning Districts
Agricultural Preservation	Corresponding current district is A-1, Rural-Agricultural Residential; however, the 1-acre minimum lot area in this district does not implement the recommendations for agricultural preservation in this Plan. The Michigan Land Division Act will be used to determine how lots can be divided in this District. A new Agricultural Preservation district could be added to the Zoning Map to reflect the areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
Rural - Agricultural Residential	A-1 Rural-Agricultural Residential and PUD Districts: Intended to provide a low intensity, rural environment which preserves natural features and agricultural lands. Open Space cluster developments are encouraged to protect natural features and farmland.
Low to medium density residential	R-2 Low/Medium Density and PUD Districts: Intended to provide low and medium density, single family residential living environment and to foster stable, high quality neighborhoods
High Density Residential	R-3 Manufactured Home Park and PUD Districts; Intended for areas with public water and sewer that are immediately adjacent to commercial services.
Commercial	C-1 Community Commercial District and C-2 Village Commercial: Intended to provide concentrated pockets of limited commercial uses to accommodate the needs of township residents.
Industrial	I-1 Light Industrial District: Intended to provide limited light industrial, trucking and wholesale operations.

Future Land Use Plan Designation	Zoning Districts
Natural Features Conservation Overlay	Corresponding current district is the F-1 Floodplain District: however, important natural features such as wetlands may be located outside of floodplain areas. Wetlands are important to protect to ensure clean water in streams, rivers and lakes. The F-1 District is intended to protect residents from flooding hazards and also protects natural features found in floodplains including wetlands, forests, wildlife habitat, and riverbanks. This district should provide flexibility in design to work around natural features, not destroy them. A new overlay district should be added to the zoning map to reflect the areas identified in the Future Land Use Map in this plan.
Public/Quasi Public	Not currently identified on the Zoning Map as a category. A category should be added to the Zoning Map to reflect these areas.

**Plan Implementation Recommendations**

1. Create zoning districts and standards to correspond to future land use categories for Agricultural Preservation; Natural Features Conservation Overlay and Public/Quai Public lands.
2. Participate in the County’s Open Space and Farmland Preservation Program by passing a resolution indicating the Township’s participation.
3. Strengthen site plan review standards to emphasize the importance of protecting natural features and encouraging low impact development techniques.
4. Develop standards for the natural features conservation overlay district, such as riparian buffers, to protect these important areas and the functions they provide. Also more clearly define natural features in ordinance definitions.
5. Consider requiring site plan review for more than 2 land divisions to ensure access and lot lay-out is efficient.

# VI. APPENDIX – PLANNING NOTIFICATION/ADOPTION PROCESS



**WEESAW TOWNSHIP**  
**County of Berrien**  
13518 State Street, P.O. Box 38  
New Troy, Michigan 49119  
Telephone (269) 426-3002 • Facsimile (269) 426-7114



September 19, 2014

To: Berrien County Planning Commission  
Baroda Township Planning Commission  
Buchanan Township Planning Commission  
Chikaming Charter Township Planning Commission  
Galien Township Planning Commission  
Lake Charter Township Planning Commission  
Three Oaks Township Planning Commission

To Whom It May Concern:

This is written to advise that the Weesaw Township Planning Commission is beginning the process of revising its Master Plan as required by law. Upon completion of this process, we will forward a copy of the revised plan to you for perusal.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Mike Metz, Planning Commission Chairperson, at the above address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wanda Green".

Wanda Green  
Township Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary





## Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

To: Berrien County Planning Commission

From: Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Date: April 20, 2015

Re: Distribution of Proposed Master Plan for Review

Weesaw Township has been working to update its Master Plan defining the community's vision, goals, policies and strategies for the next 20 years. The proposed plan has been approved by the Township Board for distribution and is now available for review. You can download a copy of the proposed plan at <http://www.swmpc.org/weesawtwp.asp>. The file is an Adobe Acrobat file. You will need Adobe Reader to open the file. Adobe Reader is available on-line for free at [www.adobe.com/products/reader](http://www.adobe.com/products/reader). To request a paper copy of the proposed plan, please call Marcy at 269-925-1137 x1525.

Weesaw Township welcomes your comments on this draft plan. Please send comments to Weesaw Township, PO Box 38, New Troy, MI 49119. Comments need to be received by June 29, 2015.

This draft plan was also sent to the following for review:  
Baroda Township PO Box 215 Baroda, MI 49101  
Buchanan Township 15235 Main St. Buchanan, MI 49107  
Chikaming Charter Township PO Box 40 Harbert, MI 49115  
Galien Township PO Box 246 Galien, MI 49113  
Lake Charter Township PO Box 818 Bridgman, MI 49106  
Three Oaks Township PO Box 55 Three Oaks, MI 49128  
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, 376 W. Main Street, Ste 130, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Sincerely,

Marcy Colclough  
Senior Planner

376 West Main Street, Suite 130 • Benton Harbor, MI 49022-3651

[P 269.925.1137](tel:269.925.1137) • [F 269.925.0288](tel:269.925.0288) • [W www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org) • [E swmpc@swmpc.org](mailto:swmpc@swmpc.org)

**NOTICE: WEESAW TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**WEESAW TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

A public hearing will be held by the Weesaw Township Planning Commission for the purpose of receiving comments on updates to the Township Master Plan. A copy of the revised Master Plan may be viewed online at [www.weesawtownship.com](http://www.weesawtownship.com) or at the Township Hall, P.O. Box 38, 13518 State Street, New Troy, MI 49119, on Mon-Wed from 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

The Master Plan Public Hearing will be held:

**Monday, 8/24/15, 7:05 p.m., at the Township Hall**

There will be an opportunity for public comments at the public hearing, or comments may be submitted in writing and should be received at the Township Hall at the above address, no later than the close of business on 8/24/15.

Wanda Green  
Township Clerk

*“Weesaw Township is an equal opportunity provider and employer”*

This notice was published in the paper on \_\_\_\_\_ and emailed to the following entities on \_\_\_\_\_:

Baroda Township  
Buchanan Township  
Chikaming Charter Township  
Galien Township  
Lake Charter Township  
Three Oaks Township  
Berrien County Community Development

**Letter and A Summary of Comments Received During Review Period**



**County of Berrien  
Community Development**

BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER  
701 MAIN STREET  
ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN  
49085-1392

TELEPHONE: (269) 983-7111 EXT. 8617  
FAX: 269-982-8611

June 10, 2015

Wanda Green, Clerk  
Weesaw Township  
P.O. Box 13518  
New Troy, MI 49119

SUBJ: MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Dear Ms. Green:

At its meeting on June 9, 2015 the Berrien County Planning Commission reviewed the 2015 draft update to the Weesaw Township Master Plan, with the following result:

The Commission commends the Weesaw Township Planning Commission on the timely update to its Master Plan. In general, it found it to be compatible with the County's Master Plan, which also was just recently amended and approved. The same appears true regarding neighboring community master plans. The updating of maps, demographics and more extensive analysis of natural features can serve as a strong guide for the Township's development. The inclusion of a Zoning Plan, as prescribed by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) is a good start for moving towards implementation of the Plans objectives.

There is one area of the Township as identified on the Plan's Future Land Use (FLU) map, that the Commission felt bears watching. It being the northwest corner that's part of and just north of New Troy. It's designation for high-density residential (as opposed to extending the low/medium-density residential out of New Troy) appears somewhat incompatible with it's current use and the projected use of adjacent lands in the FLU designations of Lake and Chikaming township master plans. It was interesting to see that significant change for that area from the previous Weesaw Township master plan, and some of the goals of this draft to retain as much rural character as possible. This is not to suggest that it's wrong somehow, just that there might be some competing views on how that area develops and property owner opinions about it. It's nothing that the Township board isn't probably already aware of, but just something the Commission felt worth noting. It recognizes that a master plan must balance the desires to preserve what exists with development pressures.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,  
BERRIEN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Katie Montoya  
Assistant Director, Community Development



**Weesaw Township Planning Commission Response:**

The Township is interested in providing additional areas in the Township for development. There isn't much opportunity for infill development in the small town areas. The area northwest of New Troy already is served by utilities as indicated on the Future Land Use Map, so the Township wanted to concentrate development around New Troy where utilities already exist to accommodate additional growth. The Township feels that this maintains the majority of the Township as rural and the Township supports Farmland Preservation efforts.

The following resolution will be updated with the new one once the plan is adopted.

# 23-10

**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
WEESAW TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2009  
WEESAW TOWNSHIP BOARD**

WHEREAS, Act 33, Public Acts of Michigan 2008, as amended, provides for a Township Planning Commission to prepare and recommend adoption of a master plan for the physical development of the Township; and,

WHEREAS, the Weesaw Township Planning Commission has prepared a Master Plan Update for Weesaw Township in compliance with Act 33; and,

WHEREAS, The Weesaw Township Board has passed a resolution asserting the Board's right to adopt the Master Plan and all elements and updates of that Plan, as allowed by Act 33, Public Acts of Michigan 2008, as amended; and,

WHEREAS, Weesaw Township distributed the draft Master Plan Update to the county planning commission and the planning commissions of surrounding units of government, and all other relevant agencies for review and comment in compliance with Act 33; and,

WHEREAS, the Weesaw Township Planning Commission held a properly noticed public hearing on the draft Master Plan Update on, December 28, 2009, in accordance with the requirements of Act 33 and other applicable State statutes; and,

WHEREAS, at the public hearing held on December 28, 2009, the citizens of Weesaw Township were afforded the opportunity to provide oral and written comments on the draft Master Plan Update, which comments the Planning Commission has taken into consideration; and,

WHEREAS, the Weesaw Township Planning Commission has adopted a motion by a majority vote of its membership recommending adoption of the Master Plan Update to the Township Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Weesaw Township Board does hereby adopt the Weesaw Township Master Plan Update, to be dated as adopted this day of January 20, 2010.

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION:

Offered by: *Wanda Green*  
Supported by: *Melodie Culverhouse*  
Yeas: *Jane T, Wanda G, Jack J, Irene D + Melodie C*  
Nays: *0*  
Absent: *0*

I, Melodie Culverhouse, Clerk of Weesaw Township, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Weesaw Township Board by a roll call vote at a regular meeting of the Board held on January 20, 2010 in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

*Melodie Culverhouse*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melodie Culverhouse, Clerk  
Weesaw Township, Berrien County, Michigan