

3. EXISTING LAND USE

A. Physical Characteristics

The predominant character of Kimball Township is residential intermixed with agricultural-farmsteads. The smallest residential lots generally surround commercial nodes, whereas larger residential lots are scattered throughout the remainder of the Township.

Orchards, agricultural fields and pastures are an important and defining Township attribute. These lands are primarily broken into large tracts and are found throughout the Township, many taking advantage of unique and prime farmland.

Generally speaking, urbanized areas of the Township (residential, commercial and industrial development) are concentrated in small nodes, such as Sparlingville and Wadhams. Wadhams Road serves as the primary north-south commercial-industrial corridor for the Township. Development taking place east of Wadhams Road is generally of higher intensity than that found west of Wadhams Road.

Kimball Township is experiencing a slow but noticeable rural-to-suburban transition. Much of the agricultural and open lands that used to lie along Range Road, the eastern boundary of the Township, were converted to low- and medium-density, single-family residential units, as well as a variety of service-oriented commercial uses during the 1990s and 2000s. This area abuts the urbanized areas of Port Huron Township and the City of Marysville.

B. Existing Land Use

The focus of this chapter is an examination of current land use patterns, their distinguishing characteristics and their impact on future land development. One of the most important aspects of a Master Plan study is a firm understanding of the types of land use activities that are currently taking place within the community. A thorough knowledge of existing land use patterns and site conditions furnishes planners and community leaders with basic information by which future residential, commercial, industrial and public land use decisions can be made.

The existing land use map and acreage tabulation chart, provided in the following pages, will serve as key references for Kimball Township officials to utilize in their consideration of land use and infrastructure improvements in the future. (Insert CR), the Existing Land Use Map, was created by taking the 2007 map and updating it based on new development in the Township.

3. Existing Land Use

LAND USE DISTRIBUTION

Each existing land use was placed in one of 18 general land use categories. Map 1 depicts the geographic distribution of the land use classifications.

Kimball Township encompasses approximately 23,968 acres or about 37.5 square miles in area. Data provided in Table 3.1 indicates the approximate total acreage occupied by each land use type and its proportion of total land area within Kimball Township.

Table 3.1: Existing Land Use, 2013

Land Use Category	Approx. Acres	Percent
Agricultural/Farmstead	4,339	18.1%
Single Family Residential	7,208	30.1%
Two-Family Residential	5	0.0%
Multiple Family Residential	19	0.1%
Mobile Home Park	193	0.8%
Commercial	194	0.8%
Office	10	0.0%
Light Industrial	219	0.9%
Heavy Industrial	25	0.1%
Public	98	0.4%
Semi-Public	185	0.8%
Schools/Institutional	126	0.5%
Parks and Recreation	1,348	5.6%
Airport	693	2.9%
Landfill	234	1.0%
Extractive	123	0.5%
Water	226	0.9%
Vacant/Open Space/ROW/Other	8,723	36.4%
Total	23,968	100%

Source: Kimball Township Master Plan 2007, Kimball Township Planning Commission, McKenna Associates Aerial Survey

3. Existing Land Use

Agricultural-Farmstead

For planning purposes, the agricultural-farmstead category includes all parcels utilized for farming and crop cultivation purposes. Generally, lands in this category occupy large-sized parcels, and may include a single-family residence along with several outbuildings that are related to these units. In Kimball Township, the majority of this land is located west of Wadhams Road. Typically, individual parcels occupy between five to ten acres of land. In many instances, these lands are situated so that several contiguous parcels can be combined to form larger croplands.

Single-Family Residential

The single-family residential category includes site-built single-family detached structures used as a permanent dwelling, manufactured (modular) dwelling or a mobile home located outside a designated mobile home park, and accessory buildings, such as garages, that are related to these units. Generally, the Township's single-family homes are scattered throughout the interior area, with frontage along a county road. In a few cases, a common driveway or private road accesses large residential parcels.

Single-family dwellings in Kimball Township may be located as part of a subdivision or on an individual parcel. Figure A provides a visual representation of the variety of housing types found in Kimball Township.

Two-Family Residential

The two-family residential category includes all attached housing structures having two separate living units, which are combined under one roof (duplexes). These structures may be located as part of an overall planned community or as single structures occupying an individual parcel.

Specifically in Kimball Township, a group of four, two-family residences are located along Lapeer Road, midway between Wadhams and Allen Roads. Additional two-family units are found in the Whispering Winds condominium development, located on Griswold Road, as well single units on Leland and Dove Streets, near the commercial node of Sparlingville.

Multiple-Family Residential

The multiple-family residential category includes housing structures consisting of more than two units that are located on the same site. These may be apartments or townhouses developed individually or in complexes. It also includes related lawn areas, parking lots, and any accessory recreation facilities.

A specific example of multiple-family residential use found in Kimball Township is the Black Forest Apartment complex, located on Lapeer Road, just west of Bartlett.

Mobile Home Park

The mobile home park category includes land assembled for the purpose of locating a planned mobile or manufactured home community on the site. Land so classified includes related service and recreational areas.

Two of the three mobile home parks found in Kimball Township specifically cater to manufactured homes. These parks offer generous amenities including ample open areas for playgrounds, as well as community center facilities for exclusive use by park residents.

The other mobile home park in Kimball Township, Dove Road Mobile Home Estates, caters to more a traditional form of mobile home. No recreational facilities associated with this park were identified.

3. Existing Land Use

Commercial

The commercial category includes convenience stores, comparison shopping centers, and general commercial businesses, as well as communication facilities, transmission towers, and radio transmitting towers.

Convenience stores are commercial establishments which satisfy the day-to-day shopping needs of residents. Convenience uses include food stores, hardware stores, and barber shops.

In Kimball Township, most of this type of development is clustered around the node areas of Wadhams and Sparlingville. Many of these establishments take the form of small commercial strip developments and local “mom and pop” establishments, which are found at major cross streets.

General commercial businesses do not require a location in a shopping center; rather, such uses benefit from a location on a major thoroughfare that permits good access. Such uses include gasoline stations, restaurants, automotive sales, light auto repair/service facilities, motels and greenhouses.

For Kimball Township, the majority of these uses are found along primary county roads, such as Lapeer Road, Wadhams Road and Range Road. Many of these establishments garner additional benefit by being located in close proximity to either Interstate 69 or Interstate 94.

Comparison shopping centers are developments that offer merchandise, products, or services needed less frequently, but which a customer usually does comparison shopping before buying. Included in this category are clothing stores, furniture appliance showrooms, and department stores.

Township Comparison Commercial uses may be found at the Port Huron Factory Shops, formerly known as the Horizon Outlet Mall, which is located at the I-94 interchange at Range Road. This regional shopping facility offers a variety of retail shopping establishments, but has struggled with vacancy.

Communication uses are establishments furnishing point-to-point communication services, whether by wire or radio, and include radio and television broadcasting stations, as well as towers establishing cellular services. Communication towers in Kimball Township are located at the center of the northwest quadrants of Township Sections 8, 13, and 25.

Office

The office category includes business, financial, medical, professional offices, and related service establishments. Typical office development in Kimball Township consists of small office buildings located within the commercial core of Wadhams, near the intersection of Wadhams and Lapeer Roads.

Light Industrial

Light industrial uses include all warehouses, heavy auto repair facilities and non-manufacturing uses which are industrial in character and which may have significant outdoor storage or shipping/receiving requirements.

The most significant number of light industrial facilities in Kimball Township are contained within the campus-like environment of the Air Industrial Park, located just east of the St. Clair County International Airport. Included in the park are a variety of manufacturing facilities.

Additional smaller-scale light industrial uses found in Kimball Township are scattered along major thoroughfares like Range, Wadhams, and Lapeer Roads.

Heavy Industrial

The heavy industrial category generally includes the most intensive forms of manufacturing, assembling and general fabricating facilities. An example of heavy industry in Kimball Township is the concrete plant, located on Lapeer Road.

Public

This category includes all land devoted for public purposes such as municipal offices, fire departments, department of public works, sewage and water treatment facilities and other comparable uses found throughout Kimball Township.

The Township fire department is located along Allen Road, within the commercial node of Sparlingville. The Township Department of Public Works maintains a maintenance facility located on Wadhams Road. The Township also owns the vacant parcel immediately to the north of this facility. It is anticipated that this property will be used in the future for community facilities expansion.

Kimball recently built a new Township Hall on Wadhams Road between Griswold Road and I-69.

Semi-Public

This category includes structures or areas generally open to the public such as churches, meeting halls, auditoriums, cemeteries and other comparable uses. Specific examples of semi-public uses in Kimball Township include a wide variety of churches, and the Fraternal Order of Police Hall, located on West Howard Street. These types of facilities tend to be located at or near centers of population within the Township (Wadhams, Sparlingville, and Smiths Creek), and as such are easily accessible to most residents.

Also included in this category is the rural Caswell Cemetery, located on Burns Road in the west-central portion of the Township.

Schools and Institutional

Generally, this category includes all lands used for public and private education, hospitals, libraries and other related purposes. Examples of this type of use in Kimball Township include Kimball and Indian Woods Elementary Schools. The Landmark Academy, located on Lapeer Road, and the G. Lynn Campbell Library, near the corner of Allen and Griswold, are also good examples.

Parks and Recreation

This category includes lands principally used for recreational purposes. This may include active recreation facilities such as playground equipment, ball diamonds, soccer fields and public and private golf courses. In addition, passive recreation facilities, such as hiking trails, beach and picnic areas, are also included in this category.

Kimball Township has two community parks open from dawn to dusk, seven days a week, for public use. Community Park No. 1 is located on Howard Road and includes baseball diamonds, a playground, a pond, a tennis court, and pavilions

3. Existing Land Use

Community Park No. 2 is located on Henry Street in Smiths Creek. It mainly provides passive recreational activities and contains a pavilion.

The Kimball Township residents are fortunate to have a large portion of the Port Huron State Game Area within their borders. Although the majority of this area is within Clyde Township, approximately 720 acres lie within Kimball Township's boundaries. These lands are available for public use for a variety of outdoor recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, trapping, cross country skiing, hiking, camping and many others.

Also included in this category is the 18-hole public golf course, located off Flinchbaugh Road, the KOA Campground on Lapeer Road, and some other private recreational facilities.

Airport

The St. Clair County International Airport occupies approximately 676 acres within southeastern Kimball Township. The airport serves both public and private aircraft activities, and provides hanger storage for a number of private aircraft.

Landfill

The St. Clair/Smiths Creek Landfill area is located on Smiths Creek Road, occupying the western half of Township Section 32. All communities in the County heavily utilize the landfill. It accepts all types of industrial, commercial and residential refuse, including building demolition material, metal barrels, tree stumps, tires, asbestos material, medical waste and special wastes (sludge, contaminated soils). It also provides recycling for glass and plastic containers.

The landfill also supplies a nearby power plant with methane gas to produce electricity. Leachate from the landfill is pumped into the Township sewer system. By preventing the landfill from filling with water, the productive life of the landfill will be extended.

Extraction

The Extraction category includes the quarry located at Griswold and Sturdevant Roads. The quarry is currently dormant, despite having several decades of extractive life remaining. It will eventually need to be remediated, and the resulting lake will produce development opportunities for the area.

Rivers and Bodies of Water

The Pine and Black Rivers represent the most significant bodies of water found in Kimball Township. The northern portions of the Pine River have been developed for residential use, while a considerable amount of the southern reaches of the river have yet to be developed. The banks of Black River have also been sparsely developed. This may be due, in part, to the steep slopes found along its banks. Additionally, there are a number of abandoned gravel pits in the Township, which have, over time, filled with water.

Vacant, Open Space, Rights-Of-Way and Other

All dedicated rights-of-way (highways, roads, and major utility easements) are included in this category. In addition, lands lying fallow, woodlands, and vacant land for which no specific use was identified are included. Vacant lands are interspersed throughout the entire Township.