

Chapter 3

Existing Land Use

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.

It is readily apparent that Kimball Township is experiencing a *rural-to-suburban transition*. Much of the agricultural and open lands that lie along Range Road, the eastern boundary of the Township, are quickly being converted to low- and medium-density, single-family residential units, as well as a variety of service-oriented commercial uses. This area abuts the urbanized areas of Port Huron Township and the City of Marysville.

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.

Methodology

A field survey was conducted by Wade-Trim in early October 1999 to gather baseline existing land use data. A member of the Kimball Township Planning Commission accompanied Wade-Trim staff for a significant portion of this survey. In 2005, Kimball Township representatives updated the existing land use data to reflect new changes since the original survey.

Wade-Trim created a property line base map using paper digital map files obtained from the Kimball Township Assessors Office. The most recently available aerial photos (1995), obtained from the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission, were also used for further land use interpretation. During the existing land use survey, data was gathered for all parcels within the Kimball Township limits. Each parcel of property was inspected in the field and its use characteristics recorded on a 1999 Township base map. The land use field data was then transferred from the field survey notes into a computer-aided drafting (CAD) system. The resulting Existing Land Use map was prepared using ArcGIS software. Acreage tabulations for each land use classification were also calculated utilizing ArcGIS.

Land Use Distribution

Each existing land use was placed in one of 17 general land use categories. The Existing Land Use Map depicts the geographic distribution of the land use classifications.

Kimball Township encompasses approximately 23,968.1 acres or about 37.5 square miles in area. Data provided in **Table 3-1** indicates the total acreage occupied by each land use type and its proportion of total land area within Kimball Township.

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.

Lands categorized as agricultural-farmstead occupy 4,339.5 acres, or about 18.1 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.



Figure A

"Single-Family" housing is defined in many different ways in Kimball Township"

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agricultural-Farmstead	4,339.5	18.1%
Single Family Residential	7,222.2	30.1%
Two-Family Residential	5.0	0.02%
Multiple Family Residential	17.8	0.1%
Mobile Home Park	98.2	0.4%
Commercial	421.5	1.8%
Office	9.6	0.04%
Light Industrial	214.6	0.9%
Heavy Industrial	2.7	0.01%
Public	38.9	0.2%
Semi-Public	269.3	1.1%
Schools and Institutional	99.1	0.4%
Parks and Recreation	1,230.6	5.1%
Airport	693.2	2.9%
Landfill	234.4	1.0%
Rivers and Bodies of Water	225.6	0.9%
Vacant, Open Space, ROW, Other	8,845.9	36.9%
Total	23,968.10	100.0%

Source: Wade-Trim, Field Survey, October 1999, updated by Kimball Township, 2005.

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.

Land uses categorized as single-family residential development occupy 7,222.2 acres, or about 30.1 percent of the total land 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.

Land uses categorized as two-family residential development occupy 5.0 acres, equivalent to 0.02 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.

Multiple-family residential development occupies 17.8 acres, or about 0.1 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.



Figure B

Somerset Meadows Manufactured Home Park

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 (**Figure B**). 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.

Mobile home park development occupies 98.2 acres, or about 0.4 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.

For examples of typical commercial types in the Wadhams area commercial corridor, please refer to **Table 3-2**.

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.

Car Wash	H&R Block
Grace Performance	E&A Credit Union
Great Lakes Tire	Weston Transport
Gillett Electric	Scoops
Richard Construction	Blue Water Tax Service
Self-Storage	Farm Bureau
Wire Tech	Weston Transport
Wadhams Automotive	Fifth Third Bank
New Haven Electric	Wadhams Chiropractic
Fore Lakes (Flinchbaugh)	M&R Surplus
Dept. of Public Works	KOA Campground
By-Lo/Speedy Q	Mercy Family Care
McDonalds	Ferrellgas
USDA Inspection Service	Wadhams General Store
Wadhams Video Hut	Country Kitchen
Flower Patch	Black River Concrete
USDA Agriculture Office	Stemaco Products
All State Insurance	Jack White Awning
Diamond Valley Homes	Benjamins Motel

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 (**Figure C**) and local “mom and pop” establishments which are found at major cross streets.



Figure C
The Wadhams Plaza commercial development offers local residents a wide variety of services

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.



Figure D
The Horizon Outlet Mall

Township Comparison Commercial uses may be found at the Horizon Outlet Center, conveniently located at the I-94 interchange at Range Road (**Figure D**). This 161,200 square foot regional shopping facility offers a variety of retail shopping establishments. **Table 3-3** provides a representative listing of the tenants found at the Center:

The Horizon Outlet Center has enough retail space to accommodate up to 42 tenants. However, at the time of this study, the facility was experiencing a significant vacancy rate.

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.

At the present time, lands occupied by commercial and communication uses occupy 421.9 acres, or about 1.8 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.

Office development occupies 9.6 acres, or about 0.04 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

Table 3-3	
Horizon Outlet Retailers	
• Family Apparel:	Bass Company Outlet
• Home Furnishings:	Brasswerks, Welcome Home
• Men’s Apparel:	Van Heusen
• Footwear:	Famous Footwear
• Specialty Items:	Paper Factory, Book Warehouse
• Women’s Apparel:	L’eggs Hanes Bali Playtex, Dress Barn

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 including, but not limited to, Classic Aviation LLC, Greater Bay Capital, Jump Industries, Allied Photo Chemical, and PNT Registered Importers.

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

Light industrial development occupies 214.6 acres, or about 0.9 percent of the total land in Kimball Township

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.

Heavy industrial development occupies 2.7 acres, or about 0.01 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.

Township administration offices, including the fire department, are 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.

Public land uses occupy 38.9 acres, or about 0.2 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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, the Chrystal Gardens of Wadhams, located near the corner of Lapeer and Allen Roads 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. Semi-public land uses occupy 269.3 acres, or about 1.1 percent of the total land in Kimball 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 Elementary School (**Figure E**) and Indian Woods and Sparlingville Elementary Schools (**Figure F**). The Landmark Academy, located on Lapeer Road, and the G. Lynn Campbell Library, located just north of Sparlingville Elementary are also good examples.



Figure E
Kimball Elementary School

Land uses that fall under this category, occupy 99.1 acres, or about 0.4 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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 (**Figure G**) is located on Howard Road and has the following recreational elements:

1. Three Little League ball diamonds with a centralized concession stand.
2. A generous playground area complete with playscape activity structure.
3. A large fishing pond with two docks and beach areas.
4. Two, 20' x 40' handicap accessible pavilions for picnicking and other social gatherings.
5. Men's and women's bathroom facilities.
6. Ample parking facilities.
7. A tennis court.

Community Park No. 2 is located on Henry Street in Smith's Creek. It mainly provides passive recreational activities and contains a pavilion. During the winter, however, there is an ice rink. Most of the active recreational facilities found in Kimball Township's public park areas are in good to excellent condition.

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 occupies the southern portion of 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 county skiing, hiking, camping and many others.

Also included in this category is the 18-hole public golf course, located off Flinchbaugh Road.

Parks and recreation areas occupy 1,230.6 acres, or about 5.1 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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 (**Figure H**).



Figure F
Sparlingville Elementary School



Figure G
The swimming and dock area in Kimball Township Park #1



Figure H
The St. Clair County International Airport Control Center

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 St. Clair/Smiths Creek Landfill area occupies 234.4 acres, or about 1.0 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.

All water bodies, including rivers, streams and gravel pit areas occupy 225.6 acres, or about 0.9 percent of the total land in Kimball Township.

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.

This is by far the largest land use category in Kimball Township accounting for approximately 8,845.9 acres, or about 36.9 percent of the total land.