

COLFAX

TOWNSHIP

HURON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Master Plan Update 2018

Adopted by the Colfax Township Planning Commission
on October 1, 2018

Prepared by:
Wade Trim Associates
Bay City, Michigan

Prepared for:
Colfax Township
Huron County, Michigan

COLFAX TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION:
COLFAX TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2018

Resolution Number: 2018-1

The following Resolution was offered by Commissioner Pam Schantz and seconded by Commissioner Tim Gordon:

WHEREAS, Colfax Township, Huron County, Michigan has a duly constituted Planning Commission whose responsibilities under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, include the preparation of a Master Plan to guide future land use development in the community; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission did issue its notice of intent to prepare a plan in accordance with Section 39, (2) of Public Act 33; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has worked with the consultants at Wade Trim to oversee a planning process that included opportunities for public input as well as investigations and surveys of existing resources; and,

WHEREAS, a draft plan was prepared by the Planning Commission and presented to the Township Board in accordance with Section 41, (1) of Public Act 33, and the Township Board approved the distribution of the draft plan for review and comment pursuant to Section 41, (2) of said Act; and,

WHEREAS, after expiration of a 63 day review and comment period, the Colfax Township Planning Commission did give notice of a public hearing on the draft plan in accordance with Section 43, (1) of Public Act 33, with such public hearing being held on October 1, 2018;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the contents of the draft plan, dated April 10, 2018, with revisions as discussed during the October 1, 2018 Planning Commission meeting, is hereby adopted by the Colfax Township Planning Commission in accordance with Section 43, (2) of Public Act 33 by not less than a majority of its membership.

AYES: Mel McWacken Tim Gordon
 Bill Pirotter Rich Swartzenduber
 Pam Schantz Phil Peyerl

NAYS:

ABSENT: Dave Smith

I, Mel McWacken, Secretary of the Colfax Township Planning Commission, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution that was adopted by the Colfax Township Planning Commission at their regular meeting held on October 1, 2018.

Mel McWacken
Signature

Colfax Township
Master Plan Update 2018

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Appendix (Mapping)

Map 1 – Existing Land Use

Map 2 – Environmental Resources

Map 3 – Soil Conditions

Map 4 – Community Facilities

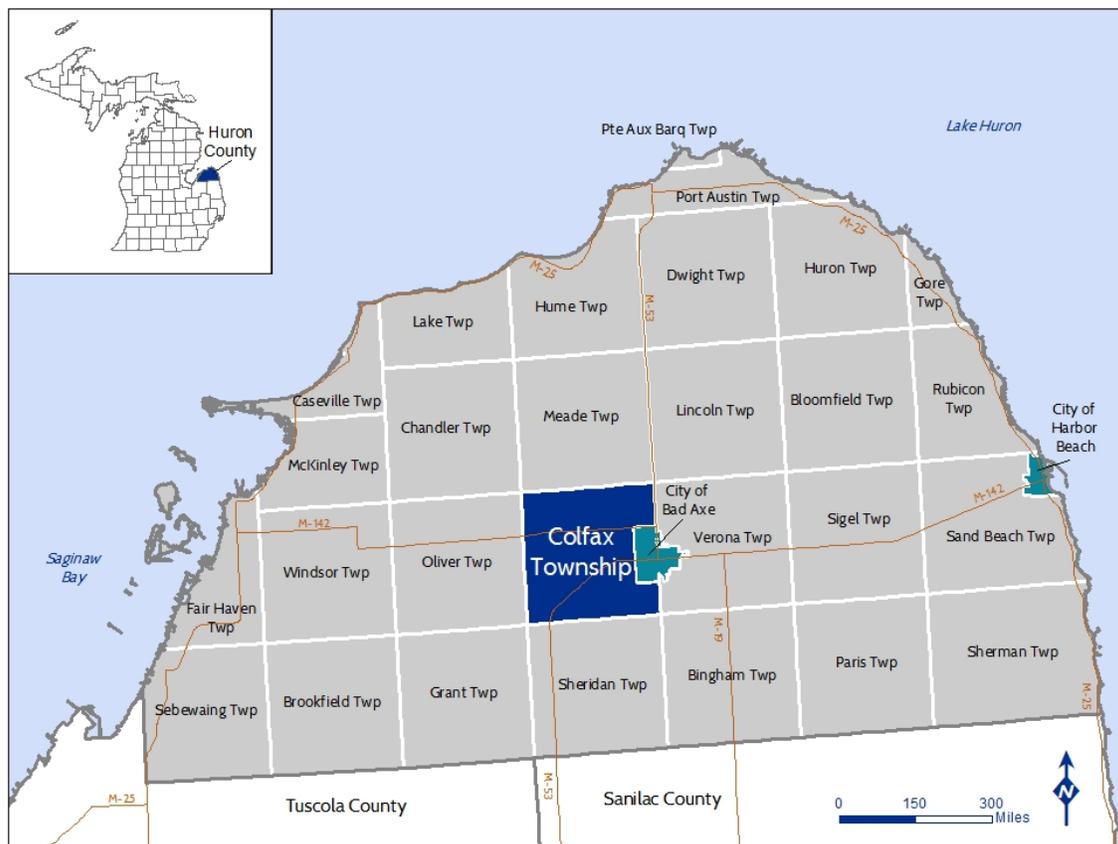
Map 5 – Future Land Use

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Location and Regional Context

Colfax Township is located near the center of Huron County, west of the City of Bad Axe. Huron County makes up the tip of “The Thumb” of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. With the exception of half of the City of Bad Axe, Colfax Township is made up of the geographic township T16N-R12E. The Township is bordered on the north by Meade Township, on the east by Verona Township, on the south by Sheridan Township, and on the west by Oliver Township. **Figure 1** shows the geographic location of the Township.

Colfax Township is 35 square miles. The Township has a population of 1,815, according to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Huron County is 836.6 square miles with a population of 32,290. Huron County is rich in agriculture. According to the 1998 Master Plan, 82 percent of the land inside Huron County was in farms in 1990, ranking it first among the 83 counties in Michigan. Colfax Township has seen urbanization throughout the eastern portion due to its close proximity to Bad Axe.



1.2 Purpose of the Plan

The Colfax Township Planning Commission has prepared this Master Plan under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008. Public Act 33 states:

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

The master planning process is cooperative and public. Input from the public and various governmental entities are gathered throughout the planning process. Public Act 33 requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing before the final adoption of a master plan. Also, Public Act 33 requires review of a community’s master plan after a five-year period but allows for change at any time. However, a public hearing is required if the Planning Commission wishes to alter or amend their master plan after its original adoption, as is the case with this 2017 Master Plan Update. The Colfax Township planning process offers the Planning Commission the opportunity to analyze and address any significant changes to the Township that may result in needed modifications to previous planning efforts. It also provides the opportunity to ascertain progress in implementing the goals and policies outlined in previous planning efforts.

Planning is a process, which involves the conscious selection of the policies relating to land use and development in a community. The Master Plan Update serves to promote these policies through the following:

- Provides a general statement of the Township’s goals and provides a comprehensive view of its vision for the future.
- Provides the statutory basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance, as required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006.
- Serves as the primary policy guide for local officials considering development proposals, zoning, land divisions, capital improvements, and other matters related to land use and development. Thus, the Master Plan provides a stable and consistent basis for decision making.

- Helps to coordinate public improvements and private development activities to assure the judicious and efficient expenditure of public funds.

The Colfax Township Master Plan will provide guidelines for future physical development of the community, while protecting the water resources, other natural resources and rural township character. This plan presents extensive background information for the Township and the surrounding area, including social and economic data, description and mapping of natural resources, and inventory of existing community facilities.

The background information is analyzed to identify important characteristics, changes and trends occurring in Colfax Township. Community concerns are identified based on Planning Commission comments and citizen participation in the planning process. Community goals and policies are presented to guide future development based on these background studies, key land use trends and community issues. These goals, along with a detailed map of existing land use, provides the basis for the Future Land Use Map that specifies the extent and location of where various types of future development can be accommodated within the Township. This plan also provides suggestions for implementation of the identified goals and policies.

1.3 Plan Organization

The Master Plan comprises three primary components. The background studies profile the demographic and environmental conditions, which existed at the time the plan was prepared. The goals, objectives, and policies provide the philosophical basis of the plan. The future land use plan describes the Township’s vision of its future in written and graphic form.

2.0 Background Studies Summary

Colfax Township Planning Commission undertook a series of background studies to document past trends, inventory current conditions, and make future projections. The results of these studies provided participants in the plan formulation process a common picture of community characteristics on which to base their land use planning efforts.

The following summarizes the findings of the background studies.

2.1 Socioeconomic Profile

- Colfax Township's population decreased 5.1% from 1,907 persons in 1980 to 1,815 persons in 2015.
- The 2015 population for the Township is estimated as 1,815 persons.
- In 2015, the largest age group in the Township was those 65 years or older (19.9%).
- The average household size (2.46 persons) in the Township in 2015 was slightly larger than Huron County (2.30 persons) and slightly smaller than the State (2.52 persons).
- The Township had a smaller proportion of married couples (52.4%) than the County (53.0%), but a greater proportion of married couples than the State (47.8%), and the United States (48.3%).
- The Township's median family income (\$54,671) was greater than Huron County (\$53,806), but lower than the State (\$62,247).
- An overwhelming proportion (95.7%) of the Township's housing stock is comprised of single-family homes, including 15.5% mobile homes.
- Nearly three-fourths (70.6%) of the occupied housing units are owner-occupied.
- The median housing value, as well as the median rent in the Township is greater than Huron County, but less than the State.

2.2 Existing Land Use

- Over three-fourths (75.4%) of the Township is used for agricultural purposes, spread throughout the Township.
- A significant proportion (14.1%) of the land remains vacant, mostly due to environmental limitations, such as woodlands and wetlands.

2.3 Natural Features

- Colfax Township's topography is relatively flat with elevations ranging from a low of 663 feet above sea level in the northwest to a high of 763 feet above sea level in the southwest.
- Woodlands are the Township's greatest natural resource, and cover approximately 15% of the Township.
- Nearly one-third of the Township area is classified as hydric soils. These soils are poorly to very poorly drained and pose severe limitations to development.

3.0 Socioeconomic Profile

An important component in the comprehensive planning process is understanding the community's social and economic characteristics. This chapter explores current and historical population changes, age distribution, household make-up, income, education, employment, and housing characteristics for Colfax Township. Where significant, Township data is compared to Huron County, the State of Michigan and the U.S. The purpose of this exercise is to identify factors that could influence future land use decisions and to assist policy makers with these decisions.

3.1 Population

The estimated 2015 population of Colfax Township was 1,815 residents (885 male – 930 female), according to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The American Community Survey is a survey conducted by the Census Bureau that gathers information on topics such as housing characteristics, income, and educational attainment. It surveys 3.5 million households per

year and produces population estimates each year. For the purpose of this report, the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates will be used when making comparisons to other governmental units.

Population trends for residents of Colfax Township from 1980 to 2015 are shown in **Table 1**. The most significant change occurred from 2000 to 2010 when the population decreased by 5.6 percent. Until 2010, the Township's population had been gradually rising. In 2015, the population decreased by 1.6 percent, which trends towards population stabilization. Since 1980, the population has decreased 5.1 percent overall.

The 2015 ACS Estimates shows a population density of 52.0 persons per square mile for Colfax Township's 34.9 square miles of land area. This population density compares to 15.1 persons per square mile for Huron County and 102.4 persons per square mile for the State of Michigan.

Table 1
Population Trends
Colfax Township, 1980 - 2015

Year	Population	Change	
		#	%
1980	1,907	-	-
1990	1,936	29	1.5
2000	1,954	18	0.9
2010	1,844	-110	-5.6
2015	1,815	-29	-1.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1980 – 2000), 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.2 Age Distribution, Racial Make-Up and Disability Status

Information on age distribution within a population can assist the community in matching public services to community characteristics and in determining special needs of certain age groups. For example, a younger population tends to require more rental housing units or smaller homes, while an elderly population needs nursing home facilities. Analysis of age distribution can be used by policy makers to identify current gaps in services and to project future service needs for housing, education, recreation and medical care. Age distribution

figures for Colfax Township, Huron County and the State of Michigan from the 2015 ACS Estimates are compared in Table 2. Analysis of the data indicates that the Township's population has a similar age distribution to the County, but a generally older population than the State. The number of individuals between the ages of 18-29 is significantly lower than the rest of Michigan. The largest age group in Colfax Township are those 65 years or older (19.9 percent). Median age for Township residents was roughly three years younger than the median age of residents of the County, but nearly six years older than the median for the State.

Table 2
Age Distribution
Township, County, and State - 2015

Age Range	Colfax Twp.	Huron Co.	State
	%	%	%
Under 5	5.6	4.8	5.8
5-17	16.2	15.0	16.9
18-24	6.7	6.8	10.1
25-29	3.9	4.5	6.1
30-44	17.2	15.0	18.1
45-54	17.2	14.6	14.4
55-59	6.6	8.4	7.3
60-64	6.7	7.8	6.3
65+	19.9	23.0	15.0
TOTAL	100	99.9*	100
Median Age	45.1	48.0	39.5

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding)

The racial composition of Colfax Township is relatively homogeneous. Of the 1,815 persons in the community in 2015, 98 percent were White. **Table 3** compares the Township's racial

composition to that of the County and State. The Hispanic population in Colfax Township accounts for 2.1 percent of the population.

Table 3
Racial Make Up
Township, County, State - 2015

Race	Colfax Twp.		Huron Co.		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
White	1779	98.0	31,477	97.5	7,823,875	79.0
Black/African American	18	1.0	128	0.4	1,381,388	14.0
American Indian/ Alaska Native	3	0.2	129	0.4	53,951	0.5
Asian	5	0.3	195	0.6	268,766	2.7
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	2,083	0.0
Other	0	0	97	0.3	109,184	1.1
Two or More Races	10	0.5	264	0.8	261,324	2.6
Total	1,815	100.0	32,290	100.0	9,900,571	99.9*

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding)

For tracking disability status, the U.S. Census breaks the population into two different age categories: working age and post-working age. Of the civilian non-institutionalized population in the age group 18-64 years in Colfax Township in 2015, 12.5 percent are listed as having a disability. In the 65 years and over age group,

45.1 percent have a disability. This is a significantly higher proportion than the County and State levels of 37.8 percent and 36.0 percent, respectively, for individuals over age 65 with a disability.

3.3 Households

American Community Survey data for 2015 shows that Colfax Township has an average household size of 2.46 persons per household, as compared to 2.30 persons per household for Huron County, and 2.52 persons per household for the State.

Table 4 compares the household characteristics of Colfax Township with that of Huron County, State of Michigan, and the United States. The Township has a lower proportion of single person households and a higher proportion of single male families than the other three geographic units.

Table 4
Comparative Household Characteristics
Township, County, State, and United States, 2015

Household Type	Colfax Twp.		Huron Co.		Michigan		United States	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number**	%
Married Couple Families	361	52.4	7,311	53.0	1,834,569	47.8	56,479	48.3
Single Male Families	49	7.1	549	4.0	175,804	4.6	5,613	4.8
Single Female Families	61	8.9	1,176	8.5	487,461	12.7	15,169	13.0
Single Person Non-Families	183	26.6	4,267	30.9	1,115,974	29.1	32,316	27.6
Other Non-Families	35	5.1	502	3.6	227,340	5.9	7,350	6.3
Total Households	689	100.1*	13,805	100	3,841,148	100.1*	116,927	100

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding)
** In thousands

3.4 Income and Wealth

Three measures of income (median household, median family and per capita) are illustrated in **Table 5** for the Township, County and State. The median family and median household income of Colfax Township residents is higher than that of the County, but lower than the State.

The table also illustrates poverty statistics comparing Colfax Township to the other units of government. The poverty threshold for 2015 was set at \$24,257 for a family of four. At 5.9 percent, the poverty rate for all persons in Colfax Township is less than that of the County at 9.7 percent and the State at 11.9 percent.

Table 5
Family, Household and Per Capita Income
Township, County, and State, 2015

Place	Median Family Income	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% of Families Below Poverty Level
Colfax Twp.	\$54,671	\$46,949	\$23,298	5.9
Huron Co.	\$53,806	\$42,161	\$23,382	9.7
State	\$62,247	\$49,576	\$26,607	11.9

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.5 Education

Education is an important factor in analyzing the capabilities of the local work force and in the economic vitality of a community. Educational attainment is tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau. Statistics from the 2015 American Community Survey indicate that 86.1 percent of Colfax Township residents (25 years of age or older) are high school graduates or higher, as

compared to 87.9 percent for Huron County and 89.6 percent for the State as a whole.

Township residents with a bachelor's degree or higher amount to 13.1 percent of the population over age 25, while County and State have 14.1 percent and 26.9 percent college graduates, respectively. These statistics are illustrated below in **Table 6**.

Table 6
Educational Attainment
Township, County, and State, 2015

Place	High School Graduate Or Higher (%)	Bachelors Degree or Higher (%)
Colfax Township	86.1	13.1
Huron County	87.9	14.1
State	89.6	26.9

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.6 Employment

Employment and unemployment data on the civilian labor force is presented in **Table 7**, comparing Colfax Township and Huron County for the years 2010-2015. It is important to note

that the information reflects place of residence and not location of employment. Between 2010 and 2015 the number of individuals in the labor force decreased, while the unemployment rate increased.

Table 7
Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Comparisons
By Place of Residence
Township, County, and State, 2010-2015

	Colfax Twp.		Huron Co.	
	2010	2015	2010	2015
Labor Force	987	907	16,240	15,048
Employed	926	814	14,800	13,869
Unemployed	61	93	1,415	1,170
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	6.4%	5.1%	4.4%

Source: 2006-2010 & 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 8 shows employment by occupation for persons working in Colfax Township. In 2010, a majority of Colfax Township residents worked in

management positions, but in 2015 the major occupation group was production, transportation, and material moving.

Table 8
Employment by Occupational Group by Place of Work
Colfax Township, 2010-2015

Occupation	2010		2015	
	#	%	#	%
Management, business, science and arts	248	26.8	205	25.2
Service occupations	197	21.3	131	16.1
Sales and office occupations	177	19.1	171	21.0
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	113	12.2	78	9.6
Production, transportation, and material moving	191	20.6	229	28.1
Total	926	100.0	814	100.0

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.7 State Equalized Value

State Equalized Value (SEV) provides an important characteristic of a community's wealth. By law the SEV, which constitutes a community's tax base, is equal to approximately one-half of the true market value of real property and certain taxable personal properties.

Table 9 shows the distribution of value among the different SEV categories for Colfax Township, comparing 2007 to 2017. As the table

demonstrates, over the past ten years there have been some dramatic shifts in the SEV of Township property. The value of agricultural real property, industrial real property and personal property increased the most over the ten-year span. In 2007 the majority (48.1 percent) of the Township's taxable property was residential, but in 2017 agricultural real property composed the largest proportion of taxable property value (44.9 percent). Analysis of the values of the different SEV categories can help identify community characteristics.

Table 9
Distribution of State Equalized Value (SEV)
Colfax Township, 2007 and 2017

Category	2007		2017	
	Amount	% SEV	Amount	% SEV
Real Property:				
Agricultural	\$19,929,935	30.9	\$79,815,500	44.9
Commercial	\$10,314,272	16.0	\$11,295,000	6.4
Industrial	\$9,211	Less than 0.1	\$436,400	0.2
Residential	\$31,067,675	48.1	\$35,376,000	20.0
Timber Cut-over	0	0.0	0	0.0
Developmental	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Real:	\$61,321,093	95.0	\$126,922,900	71.4
Personal:	\$3,249,600	5.0	\$50,755,200	28.6
Total SEV:	\$64,570,693	100.0	\$177,678,100	100.0

Source: Michigan Department of Treasury, State Tax Commission: Taxable Valuations

3.8 Total Housing Stock

An evaluation of the housing stock and property values can be very beneficial in determining community housing needs. Data from the 2015 American Community Survey show a total of 827 housing units in Colfax Township: 663 single-family units, 36 multiple-family units and 128 mobile homes. **Table 10** compares the 2015 type of housing structures for Colfax Township with Huron County. Single-family attached and detached dwelling units make up the majority (80.2 percent) of the housing stock. The

percentage of single-family dwellings for the Township and County are quite similar. Colfax Township has a higher percentage of its residents living in mobile homes, as compared to Huron County.

The median number of rooms per dwelling unit in the Township was 6.2 in 2015. The Census Bureau's measure of overcrowding is more than 1.01 persons per room. There are no Township housing units that fall into the overcrowding category, as of the 2015 ACS Estimates.

Table 10
Type of Housing Structures
Township and County, 2015

Unit Type	Colfax Twp.		Huron Co.	
	#	%	#	%
1 unit structures - detached or attached	663	80.2	17,652	83.4
2-4 unit structures	3	0.4	459	2.2
5-9 unit structures	20	2.4	501	2.4
10 or more unit structures	13	1.6	548	2.6
Mobile home or trailer	128	15.5	2,000	9.5
TOTALS	827	100.1*	21,160	100.1*

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding)

3.9 Housing Tenure

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national rate of home ownership has slightly decreased from 65.7 percent in 1997 to 63.7 percent in 2017. In 2015, the Colfax Township

home ownership rate of occupied homes was 70.6 percent. Colfax Township has a higher occupancy rate than Huron County. A majority of the County's vacant housing stock are seasonal units. Housing occupancy characteristics are illustrated in **Table 11**.

Table 11
Housing Occupancy Characteristics
Township and County, 2015

Category	Colfax Twp.			Huron Co.				
	#	% of Total Units		#	% of Total Units			
Occupied Housing								
Owner- Occupied	689	584	83.3	70.6	13,805	11,253	65.3	53.2
Renter- Occupied		105		12.7		2,552		12.1
Vacant Units								
Vacant Seasonal	138	38	16.7	4.6	7,336	5,683	34.7	26.9
Vacant Other		100		12.1		1,653		7.8
Total Housing Units	827		100		21,141		100	

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.10 Age of Structures

Generally, the economic useful life of a residential structure is approximately 50 years. Beyond that age, repairs become expensive and the ability to modernize the structure to include amenities considered standard by today's life-styles is diminished. When a community's housing stock approaches that age, the need for

housing rehabilitation, demolition and new construction will begin to increase.

Table 12 compares residential structure age of Colfax Township, Huron County and the State of Michigan. In 2015, approximately 41.4 percent of the Township's housing stock had exceeded that 50 year age limit, whereas, the County and States older homes amounted to approximately 52.5 percent and 50.6 percent, respectively.

Table 12
Comparative Age of Structures
Township, County, and State, 2015

Year Structure Built	Colfax Township	Huron County	State
	%	%	%
2000 or later	11.5	8.6	11.1
1970-1999	47.1	38.9	38.3
1940-1969	29.9	31.8	35.4
1939 or earlier	11.5	20.7	15.2
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.11 Housing Values and Rent

One comparative measure of the local housing stock is housing value. The median value of owner-occupied year-round housing units for Colfax Township in 2015 was \$102,000. This is more than the median housing value of \$92,900 for Huron County, but less than the median

value of \$122,400 for the State as a whole, as indicated in **Table 13**.

Table 13 also illustrates comparative rental rates, showing that median rent of \$658 for Colfax Township is higher than Huron County at \$606. The median rent statewide in 1990 was \$783.

Table 13
Comparative Distribution of Housing Values and Rent
Township, County, and State, 2015

Financial Characteristics	Colfax Township		Huron Co.		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	584	99.9	11,253	99.9	2,728,815	100.0
Less than \$50,000	103	17.6	1,857	16.5	428,909	15.7
\$50,000 - \$99,999	183	31.3	4,238	37.7	663,677	24.3
\$100,000 - \$149,000	95	16.3	2,085	18.5	536,873	19.7
\$150,000 - \$199,999	96	16.4	1,353	12.0	434,030	15.9
\$200,000 - \$299,999	72	12.3	894	7.9	384,790	14.1
\$300,000 or more	35	6.0	826	7.3	280,536	10.3
Median Value	\$102,000		\$92,900		\$122,400	
Gross Rent: Occupied Units Paying Rent	90	100.0	2,235	100.0	1,050,505	99.9
Less than \$500	23	25.6	814	36.4	155,388	14.8
\$500- \$999	64	71.1	1,204	53.9	617,876	58.8
\$1,000- \$1,499	3	3.3	169	7.6	214,721	20.4
\$1,500- \$1,999	-	-	27	1.2	41,018	3.9
\$2,000 or more	-	-	21	0.9	21,502	2.0
Median Rent	\$658		\$606		\$783	

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding)

4.0 Existing Land Use Analysis

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

4.1 Survey Methodology

A computer-generated base map for the Township was first created using the digital

information from the Huron County Geographic Information System (GIS). The map was further updated and checked for accuracy by the Planning Commission. The basemap included the Township boundary line, streets with names, water bodies, creeks, railroads, and property lines.

A parcel-by-parcel field survey of the entire Township was originally conducted in 1998 by Wade-Trim. For this Master Plan update, aerial photography was used to confirm and update the existing land use in the Township (**Map 1**). The map was reviewed with the Planning Commission for accuracy. Land use acreages were then derived directly from the digital information (**Table 14**).

Table 14
Existing Land Use Acreage, 2017

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent
1. Residential	1,777	8.2
2. Commercial	109	0.5
3. Industrial/Extractive	254	1.2
4. Institutional	140	0.6
5. Recreation/Cemetery	271	1.3
6. Agriculture	16,421	76.0
7. Vacant/ROW/Other	2,623	12.1
Total	21,595	100.0

Source: Wade-Trim review of aerial photography, August 2017.

4.2 Land Use Analysis

The Township of Colfax encompasses a total area of 21,595 acres, or 33.7 square miles. The overall land use pattern in the Township can be characterized as a combination of rural development, strip development, and suburban development. Nearly 90% of the Township is vacant land or rural development. Mixed-use strip development occurs along M-53 and M-142. Suburban growth is located west and south of the City of Bad Axe. Unless specifically noted below, the land use composition of the Township has not changed significantly between 1998 and 2017.

Each land use category is described below.

1. Residential

Residential use accounts for 1,777 acres, or 8.2 percent of the total land area. Virtually all the residential use is in single-family homes located throughout the Township. The major concentration of homes are in several subdivisions west and south of the City of Bad Axe and along the M-53 corridor, west of the City. The rest of the homes are located along section line roads.

2. Commercial

Commercial use (109 acres, or 0.5%) in the Township includes small to medium size retail and service establishments and offices. Some larger big-box stores have located outside the City of Bad Axe, such as Walmart. The majority of commercial uses in the Township are located along M-53 and M-142.

3. Industrial/Extractive

Industrial/Extractive use accounts for 254 acres, or 1.2 percent of the total land area. In 1998 only 13 acres, or 0.1% of the land in Colfax Township was industrial. This increase in land use can largely be attributed to growth in extraction industries, including gravel pits. Industrial uses also include a handful of light industrial establishments along M-142.

4. Institutional

Land devoted specifically for institutional purposes amounts to 140 acres, or 0.6%. Land use included in this category are hospitals, schools, churches, and public buildings.

5. Recreation/Cemetery

This category (271 acres, or 1.3%) includes a large church-affiliated campground and park, off M-53, the Medical Care Park, also off M-53, a school park, and a cemetery, west of Bad Axe.

6. Agriculture

In keeping with Huron County's reputation as one of the most agriculturally productive County in the state, agriculture is the predominant use in Colfax Township. Agricultural use includes farms for crops or livestock, as well as Christmas tree farms. It covers 16,421 acres, or three-fourths of the Township land use area. Agricultural use is spread throughout the Township.

7. Vacant/ROW/Other

The remaining 2,623 acres, or 12.1%, in the Township is classified as vacant land and the land devoted to the road rights-of-way. Virtually all of the vacant lands are lands lying fallow or lands with environmental limitations, such as woodlands and wetlands.

4.3 Land Use Considerations

In the process of evaluating and adopting proposed land use policies for the Township, potential development problems and opportunities must be examined. These are discussed below.

Sprawl Development

Future land use planning in Colfax Township should take into account the regional location of the Township in relation to growth and development pressures spreading outward from the City of Bad Axe. Proper planning will help the Township guide future growth and counteract sprawl development pressures.

Parceling

There are many lots in Colfax Township which front section line roads, are excessively long and narrow, and require private roads or long drives to serve residences placed off the roadway. Often, a portion of a lot is developed while the balance remains vacant and impractical to develop or split. Without adequate land assembly, such vacant acreage will remain inaccessible.

Accessibility

The Township's location relative to M-53 and M-142 and other primary roads is an important consideration when planning for future development in Colfax Township. Highway access provides human and market mobility and broadens its relationship to surrounding communities.

Public Utilities

Sanitary sewer and public water supply systems are important not only from a public health and safety standpoint, but are necessary to accommodate high intensity development. Access to public utilities and potential expansion of utility services should be taken into consideration when determining the future land use of the Township. Currently, there are no public sanitary or water facilities available within the Township.

5.0 Natural Environment Assessment

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

Environmentally sensitive areas are lands whose destruction or disturbance will immediately effect the life of a community by either: 1) creating hazards such as flooding or slope erosion; 2) destroying important public resources such as groundwater supplies and surface water bodies; 3) wasting productive lands and non-renewable resources such as prime farmland. Each of these effects is detrimental to the general welfare of a community and may result in an economic loss.

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

Topography, woodlands, soils, water resources and geology are among the most important natural features that will impact land use. Descriptions of these features follow.

5.1 Topography

The topography of Colfax Township is relatively flat. Elevations range from a low of 663 feet above sea level in the northwest to a high of 783 feet above sea level in the southwest portion of the Township. This general fall in elevation is exemplified by the flow of all rivers and creeks to the north into the Saginaw Bay. The flat terrain presents few constraints to development.

5.2 Woodlands

Woodlands information for Colfax Township is derived from the Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) 1978 land cover/use data. The Environmental Resources Map (**Map 2**) depicts the location of woodlands.

Over 13% of Colfax Township is forested. The predominant forest types are central hardwoods (oak) and lowland forest. According to MIRIS land cover/use, oak forests and lowland forests each cover 6% of the Township. Tree species in the oak forests include red oak, white oak, sugar maple, red maple, black cherry, beech, basswood, and ash. Trees species in the lowland forest include red maple, silver maple, green ash, aspen, cottonwood, elm, and basswood. Other forest types found in the Township include lowland conifers (white cedar, spruce, and balsam fir) and upland conifers (red, white, jack, and scotch pine).

Woodlands are complex ecological systems and consequently, provide multiple benefits to the environment and its wildlife and human inhabitants. Woodlands play a role in flood protection by slowing the flow of surface run-off to allow for greater water infiltration. Woodland also reduce air pollutants by absorbing certain air borne pollutants. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, forest vegetation moderates the effects of winds and temperatures while stabilizing and enriching the soil.

For human inhabitants, forested areas offer scenic contrasts within the landscape and with the changing of the seasons. Forest lands act as buffers from noise on heavily traveled roads.

The primary uses of woodlands are the production of forest products and forestland recreation, in particular, deer hunting. The large tracts of forestland are typically owned by absentee landowners and are primarily used for small and large game hunting. Wildlife species include deer, turkey, and ruffed grouse.

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

5.3 Soil Conditions

Soil characteristics help to define the land capacity to support certain types of land uses. Soils most suitable for development purposes are well-drained and are not subject to a high water table. Adequate drainage is important to minimizing storm water impacts and the efficient operation of septic drain fields. Adequate depth to the water table is necessary to prevent groundwater contamination from septic systems. A high water table also limits the construction of basements. Though civil engineering techniques can be employed to improve drainage and maintain adequate separation from the water table, such techniques are expensive to construct and maintain.

Soils play an important role in the food supply system. The Natural Resource Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture identifies soils that are well or uniquely suited to crop production. When making land use decisions, it is important to consider the value of certain soils for agricultural purposes. Once land is converted from agricultural uses to urban uses, the soils is permanently altered and its utility for agricultural production is greatly diminished if not destroyed. The agriculture industry is important to the local economy. Planners and public officials should carefully consider any development proposal, which threatens this non-renewable resource.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has developed a detailed soil survey of Huron County. A digital or computerized version of the soil map was acquired from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MIRIS program. Table 15 provides information on soil types such as prime farmland, hydric conditions (wetlands), and building and septic system limitations.

Nearly 26% of the Township area is classified as hydric soils (**Map 3**). Hydric soil is a soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded during part of the growing season and is classified as poorly drained and very poorly drained. Hydric soils have poor potential for building site development and sanitary facilities. Wetness and frequent ponding are severe problems that are difficult and costly to overcome. Sites with high water tables may be classified as wetlands and a wetlands permit would be required to develop these areas.

Table 15
Summary of Soil Types and Conditions in Colfax Township

Soil Name	Prime Agric	Hydric	Building Limitations (Without Basements)	Septic Fields	Percent Township ¹
Shebeon Loam	Yes ²	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	10.8
Grindstone Loam	Yes	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	0.8
Kilmanagh Loam	Yes ²	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, percs slowly, floods	4.33
Avoca Loam	Yes ²	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	12.3
Plainfield Sand	No	No	Slight	Slight	0.4
Covert Sand, Loamy Substrate	No	No	Moderate: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	0.5
Badaxe Fine Sandy Loam	Yes ²	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	2.1
Tappan Loam	Yes ²	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, percs slowly, floods	1.4
Corunna Sandy Loam	Yes ²	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, percs slowly, floods	5.3
Covert Sand	No	Yes	Moderate: wetness	Severe: wetness	3.2
Fluvaquents, Loamy	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.8
Aquents & Histosols, Poned	NA	NA	NA	NA	>0.1
Boyer Loamy Sand	No	No	Moderate: slope	Slight	4.6
Bach Silt Loam	Yes ²	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, floods	3.0
Belleville Loamy Sand	Yes ²	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, percs slowly, floods	4.8
Pipestone Sand	No	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	2.4
Rapson Loamy Sand	No	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	0.8
Wasepi Loamy Sand	Yes	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	2.6
Tobico Mucky Sandy Loam	No	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, floods	2.9
Badaxe Cobbly Sandy Loam	No	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	0.3
Granby Loamy Sand	No	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, floods	0.6
Linwood Muck	No	Yes	Severe: wetness, floods	Severe: wetness, floods, subsidies	0.1
Shebeon-Badaxe Sandy Loams	Yes ²	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	18.9
Guelph-Londo Loams	Yes ²	No	Slight/severe	Moderate/severe	0.3
Shebeon Cobbly Loam	No	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, percs slowly	0.1
Riverdale-Pipestone Complex	No	No	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	4.6
Barrow Pits	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.2
Udipsamments, Nearly Level	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.4

Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

¹Includes City of Bad Axe.

²Prime, if drained.

5.4 Geology

The geology of Colfax Township, as well as the entire Lower Peninsula of Michigan, can be described in terms of surface geology or quaternary geology (materials deposited by continental glaciers) and bedrock geology (sedimentary rocks underlying the glacial deposits).

The quaternary geology of the Township developed 10,000 to 12,000 years ago through continental glacial activity. As the glaciers melted and retreated from the landscape, large amounts of sand, gravel, clay, and loam were deposited. Massive glacial lakes formed at the front of the retreating glaciers. Huron County, along with other coastal counties, were covered by one of the large glacial lakes. This relatively flat plain of glacial lacustrine origin is referred to as the Saginaw Bay Lake Plain.

The glacial melt water was laden with fine soil particles, which eventually settled to the bottom, creating clay and loam soils that dominate Colfax Township and Huron County. The glacial meltwater streams also deposited fine sands into the shallow glacial lakes. The northwestern half of the Township is dominated by lacustrine (deposited in water) clay and silt. The southeastern part of the Township is dominated by lacustrine sand and gravel.

The sand deposits were further altered by wave action from these glacial "Great Lakes," creating small sand dunes and low beaches across the landscape as the water levels declined and the lakes retreated to their current area of coverage. These low sandy ridges can be found within the Township, and today are considered prime sites for residential development.

Along the southern border of the Township, there is an area of low rolling hills with hummocky relief that is called a glacial moraine. During some periods, the continental glacier's advance and retreat stagnated. That is to say, the ice at the face of the glacier melted as fast as it advanced south from the polar ice cap. The debris laden, glacial ice then deposited large amounts of materials in one locale. Acting like a large conveyer belt, the materials piled up at the front of the glacier forming moraines or glacial hills. The end moraine consists of medium textured glacial till, which is mainly composed of non-sorted loam and silt loam with varying amounts of cobbles and boulders.

The subsurface geology of Colfax Township is sedimentary bedrock that was laid down during the Mississippi ages of the Paleozoic Era. Bedrock is covered by glacial deposits and, generally, depending upon the thickness of the glacial deposits, is located a depth from 40 or more feet below the surface. The bedrock was formed from ancient seas, which covered the area some 250-600 million years ago. The shallow marine seas deposited layers of silt, clay, sediments, marine animals, plants, coral, and other calcareous materials. These deposits formed sandstone, shale, coal, and limestone bedrock. The upper layer of bedrock in the western half of the Township is called the Michigan Formation and the bedrock in the eastern half is classified as Marshall Sandstone.

6.0 Community Services and Facilities

One of the primary contributors to the quality of a community is the type and variety of services made available to both local residents and visitors to the area. In many cases, a smaller community does not have the financial resources to provide all or even most of the services which would normally be considered essential. The more populated the community, the greater the variety of public, semi-public, and private services made available to residents.

This chapter of the master plan will identify the types and extent of services now available to residents and businesses in Colfax Township. Even through these services may be sufficient for the needs of the current population, future development may increase the demand to upgrade or expand the services and facilities the Township needs to maintain a satisfactory living environment in the future. In addition to the narrative, below, the location of selected facilities are shown on the Community Facilities Map (**Map 4**).

6.1 Water and Sewage Disposal

Colfax Township does not provide public water or sewage disposal systems for Township residents. The residents must rely on on-site private wells for domestic drinking water needs and private on-site septic systems for wastewater disposal. Generally, private septic systems have been satisfactory. As more lots become developed along major roadways or seasonal homes are converted to year-round use, problems with on-site systems occur more frequently. In addition, soils in the Township may not always be ideal for siting septic filter fields. Lots with wet soils close to the surface pose special problems for on-site sewage disposal. Even sandy soils, which percolate well, may lack filtering action necessary to protect nearby drinking water wells or surface water.

6.2 Transportation

Two state trunklines, M-142 and M-53, run through Colfax Township. M-142 runs east/west across the northern one-third of the Township connecting Pigeon and Harbor Beach. M-53 creates the main connection between the Township and the City of Bad Axe. It runs from the southwest corner of Colfax Township in a northeasterly direction into Bad Axe, then due north from the City. The entire length of M-53 connects Detroit to Port Austin at the very tip of "The Thumb."

The closest commercial air service operates from MBS Tri-City Airport or Bishop International Airport in Flint. The Bad Axe Municipal Airport provides facilities for private aircraft.

6.3 Solid Waste

Colfax Township does not presently offer solid waste management or municipal waste disposal service. Emterra Environmental USA, a private hauler, handles the solid waste disposal needs of the area residents and businesses. The landfill used for Colfax Township wastes is located on South McMillan Road in neighboring Sheridan Township.

6.4 Utility Services

Detroit Edison supplies electric service to most areas of the Township. Thumb Electric Cooperative, Inc. provides power to scattered areas in the northwest area of the Township along Richardson, Ivanhoe, and Lackie Roads. Natural gas is available through Consumers Energy.

Ameritech provides local telephone service, while many residents also use cellular phone services. Cell phone coverage is provided by most major carriers, including AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint. Cable television service providers in the area include Direct TV, Dish TV, and Xfinity TV from Comcast.

6.5 Police, Fire, and Ambulance Services

Law enforcement protection for Colfax Township is primarily the responsibility of the Huron County Sheriff Department. When necessary, the Michigan State Police from the Caro post may be called upon.

Fire protection for Colfax Township is provided by a volunteer fire department in conjunction with the City of Bad Axe and Verona Township. Ambulance service is provided by Central Huron Ambulance Service.

6.6 Schools and Library

Big Burning School is the only school located inside the Township limits. It offers kindergarten through the eighth grade. During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 22 students attending. The Huron Intermediate School District (ISD) administrative office is located in Colfax Township. The Huron ISD K-12 Special Education Learning Center is located adjacent to the administrative office, and served 41 students during the 2014-2015 school year.

The southern, central and eastern portions of Colfax Township fall within the limits of the Bad Axe Public Schools district. This school system consists of the Bad Axe Elementary School serving grades K-3, the Intermediate School serving grades 4-7, and the High School serving grades 8-12. Ascent High School is an alternative high school in the district serving grades 9-12. Total district enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 1,067 students, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. The northeastern portion of Colfax Township falls within the Laker (Elkton-Pigeon-Bayport) Public Schools district. This district includes an elementary school, junior high school and high school, with a total district enrollment of 895 students for the 2016-2017 school year.

Post high school education for the residents of Colfax Township is generally not found locally, but can be found within the larger

region. These educational institutions include: Mid-Michigan Community College in Mt. Pleasant; Delta College and Saginaw Valley State University in Saginaw; Northwood University in Midland; Mott Community College, Kettering University and the University of Michigan-Flint in Flint; and, St. Clair County Community College in Port Huron.

Colfax Township residents have access to the Bad Axe Area District Library. Five other public libraries are located in Huron County.

6.7 Civic Organizations and Churches

Community service organizations in the general vicinity of Colfax Township and Bad Axe are:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Knights of Columbus Council 1546
- Lions Club
- Masonic Commandery No. 52
- Rotary Club

Listed below are churches in the Bad Axe/Colfax Township area:

- Bad Axe Church of Christ
- Bad Axe First Presbyterian
- Bad Axe First United Methodist
- Bad Axe Free Methodist
- Bad Axe Seventh Day Adventist
- Calvary Baptist Church
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- Evangel Life Assembly of God
- Faith Gospel Tabernacle
- Filion Church of the Nazarene
- First Baptist Church
- Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness
- Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran
- New Life Ministries Pentecostal Church
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church
- St. Joseph Catholic Parish (Rapson)
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- Victory in Christ Community Church

6.8 Medical Facilities

Three hospitals are located in Huron County: Huron Medical Center (located in Colfax Township); Scheurer Hospital; and, Harbor Beach Community Hospital. Larger hospitals are located in Bay City 50 miles away and in Saginaw 65 miles away.

6.9 Recreation

Colfax Township provides no recreational facilities. However, Township residents may use nearby facilities in Bad Axe, including:

- Bad Axe City Park
- Bad Axe Historical Society Museum
- Historic Pioneer Log Village
- Huron County Expo Center
- Wilcox Park

Additionally, nine Huron County parks and two State Parks are located in the County and may be utilized by all residents for entertainment, relaxation, and recreation.

6.10 Renewable Energy

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

In recent years, the Thumb Region has seen considerable development of commercial-scale wind turbine farms. In 2016, the new Pinnebog Wind Park began commercial operation, with 30 wind turbines spread across three townships, including 17 turbines within Colfax Township. The

locations of these 17 wind turbines are shown on **Map 1**.

Wind energy has been studied extensively at the local, County and Regional levels, and Colfax Township has adopted appropriate regulations related to commercial-scale wind energy systems. Therefore, this Plan does not include or outline any additional studies, findings or policies related to wind energy.

Commercial-scale solar energy farms are another topic to be considered by Colfax Township. Many communities within Michigan have been approached by prospective solar energy providers. At present, however, Colfax Township has not adopted regulations that would allow such facilities. Any such regulations would need to ensure that solar energy farms do not detrimentally impact adjacent development or result in the loss of productive agricultural lands.

7.0 Community Goals and Objectives

7.1 Introduction

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

The following is a recommended set of community goals (the ultimate purposes or intent of the Plan), and objectives (means of attaining goals) as established by the Colfax Township Planning Commission. These goals and objectives are based upon the background studies and analysis, as presented in the preceding Sections 3.0 through 6.0, and upon the input received from Township officials and citizens.

7.2 Public Participation

The process of developing the goals, objectives, and strategies for this plan involved multiple steps, including a public survey and workshop. The results of this citizen participation are detailed below.

In May of 2017, an online Master Plan public opinion survey was made available to Township residents and other interested persons. To advertise the availability of the survey, the Township posted flyers, distributed personal invitations, and placed advertisements in the newspaper. For those without internet access, hard copies of the survey were also printed and made available at the Township Hall and other locations in the Township.

Below is a summary of the responses to key online survey questions.

Please select the most important characteristics of Colfax Township that make it a desirable place to live today.

The top answer to this question was “small town/rural character”, being selected by 89% of survey respondents. “Safety” was another top choice (67%), followed by “access to goods and services” (44%), “affordability of housing” (44%), “agricultural resources” (33%), “natural resources/environment” (33%) and “quality of schools and facilities” (33%). The responses are an indication of the primary desire of the community to maintain these important characteristics.

Which of the following will be the biggest challenges facing Colfax Township in the next 10 to 20 years?

The answers to this question were fairly evenly distributed, with “attracting businesses to the area” being selected by the most respondents (67%), followed by “road quality” (56%), “changes in socioeconomic conditions” (44%), “public safety” (44%) and “lack of local shopping opportunities” (33%). Given that a valued characteristic of the community is its small town/rural character, it should be noted that the desire to attract new businesses to the area could potentially run into conflict with maintaining rural character. The responses suggest the need to include strategies for ensuring that new business growth does not result in the loss of small town/rural character.

Are changes needed in Colfax Township?

The majority (75%) of survey takers felt that changes are needed. Survey takers specifically noted the following needed changes:

- Being aware of mixing residential and commercial areas
- Adopt/enforce a blight ordinance

- Limiting trailer homes, especially on small lots
- Adopt a dog ordinance
- Need for biking, walking trails, recreational activities
- Need for business growth and job opportunities to attract and keep younger adults in the community

What changes should be made over the next 10 to 20 years to improve the quality of life in Colfax Township?

In particular, survey takers felt that changes related to “parks and recreation” (100% of respondents) and “employment/jobs” (100%) were needed. Related to employment/jobs, specifically mentioned comments included the need for more jobs and allowing/encouraging business development on major highways. Related to parks and recreation, specifically mentioned comments included the need for walking and biking trails and the need for a community park with facilities such as a splash pad or dog run.

The responses to this question reveal the need for the updated Master Plan to emphasize business development and the development of recreational amenities (including non-motorized facilities).

As you envision the future of Colfax Township, please indicate your level of desirability for the following types of development.

Survey takers looked favorably upon the following types of uses:

- Agri-tourism
- Industrial/enterprise parks
- Single-family residential subdivisions
- Senior housing/assisted living
- Eating and drinking establishments
- RV parks/campgrounds

Of the various types of uses listed, no use was identified by a majority of survey takers as being very undesirable or undesirable.

As a second method of public engagement, in October 2017, Colfax Township facilitated a Master Plan workshop. The workshop focused on establishing the vision, policies and plans for future growth and development of the Township. One of the workshop exercises prompted attendees to identify problems to be solved, and future aspirational needs. The following “problems to be solved” were generally identified by participants:

- Early communication of planning/zoning decisions to impacted property owners
- Protect Township assets, including valuable properties from annexation, and agricultural lands from commercial development
- Need flexible plans and codes
- Community aesthetics/blight enforcement
- Conflicting land uses
- Lack of regional multi-use trail route
- Avoid making properties non-conforming
- Lack of employment
- Need room for commercial development, without jeopardizing rural character
- Lack of civic engagement
- Lack of affordable housing

The following were generally identified by participants as “aspirational needs” (an idealized picture of what should be) for Colfax Township:

- Maintaining the small town atmosphere of the Township
- Farmland preservation
- Promote agri-tourism
- Community safety
- Recreational facility development
- Industrial development

- Commercial development
- Need for affordable housing
- Good roads
- Support local health-care providers

The following goals and objectives have been developed for Colfax Township and reflect the input received during the above described citizen engagement process.

7.3 Community-Wide Goals

1. To create an optimum human environment for the present and future residents of Colfax Township, an environment that will meet their physical, social and economic needs, while preserving the rural character of the community.
2. To promote the conservation of local agricultural resources and the continuation of farming activities and related agricultural uses.
3. To cautiously expand housing, employment, consumer, recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities for Colfax Township residents.
4. To preserve and promote the rights of individual property owners while maintaining the aesthetic character of the community.
5. To relate land use primarily to the natural characteristics of the land and the long-term needs of the community, rather than to short-term economic gain.
7. To encourage intergovernmental cooperation with Huron County and surrounding communities in the coordination of long-range planning for the provision of area-wide facilities.

7.4 Agriculture Goal and Objectives

Goal

To encourage the retention, wherever possible, of selected prime agricultural lands in the Township by protecting them from urban development through the concentration of urban growth.

Objectives

1. Recognize that agriculture is an important economic activity of the Township, as well as an environmental asset, and encourage the retention of productive agricultural lands and open space.
2. Discourage the rezoning, development, or expansion of infrastructure into prime agricultural areas for non-farm related uses.
3. Ensure that land development codes allow for activities that might reduce costs or provide supplementary income for local farmers, such as farm stands, consistent with community character.
4. Consistent with the Future Land Use Map, encourage farm and agricultural-related businesses, as well as locally oriented service establishments, to be located within strategic nodes or hamlets within the Township. Specifically, these nodes would include the intersections of M-142 at Pinnebog and M-142 at Barrie.
5. Encourage and promote agricultural tourism within the Township, at an appropriate scale and intensity that limits impacts to adjacent properties, public services and the natural environment.

7.5 Residential Goal and Objectives

Goal

To promote the development of residential areas designed to offer a variety of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing choices.

Objectives

1. Encourage and guide housing developments at densities that relate to the natural and environmental features.
2. Promote higher densities in areas which are, or may be, served by public utilities such as sewer and water, parks, and major roads, to reduce urban sprawl and random development.
3. Encourage innovative development techniques as a means of ensuring lasting identity and stability of residential areas.
4. Seek ways to encourage the development of suitable housing for the elderly population and for low and moderate income households.
5. Require adequate buffers or transition areas between residential and non-residential developments to maintain property values and attractiveness.
6. Encourage the removal of conflicting or undesirable land uses from residential areas through code enforcement and other means.
7. Promote concentrated code enforcement to help maintain the quality of residential areas, through the use of zoning and building codes to preserve the quality of housing in the Township, and to prevent blighted areas.

7.6 Commercial Goal and Objectives

Goal

To provide for a selected range of commercial facilities to create a stable economic tax base and serve the needs of the local population.

Objectives

1. Encourage new commercial uses and expansion of existing establishments, making sure that such developments do not adversely affect adjacent residential properties through the use of buffer devices such as walls, landscape areas, and transitional areas.
2. Focus new commercial development in locations where compact and coordinated development can occur, preferably near areas of existing non-residential development. Do so to promote more efficient vehicular circulation and to concentrate commercial development in smaller "nodes" where they can most effectively meet the needs of Colfax Township while having the least overall negative consequences with regard to safety, light pollution, noise, and other nuisances.
3. Discourage individually isolated commercial uses.
4. Review the architecture, landscaping, and signage associated with commercial establishments to ensure compatibility with the Township's rural and residential character.
5. Require all proposed commercial rezoning to be justified in terms of neighborhood, community, and market area needs, as applicable.

7.7 Industrial Goal and Objectives

Goal

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

Objectives

1. Encourage the development of new industries that are economically associated with the existing industrial base in the region.
2. Promote continued industrial development at locations which can be readily serviced by public utilities and are easily accessible to the existing transportation network; primarily near locations where industrial development currently exists.
3. Locate industrial areas that have reasonable boundaries, are easily accessible from existing transportation network, and are not subject to encroachment by incompatible uses.
4. Discourage industrial development that will negatively impact established residential areas, environmentally sensitive areas, or will require substantial changes to natural systems or infrastructure.

7.8 Transportation Goal and Objectives

Goal

To develop and maintain a network of roads, non-motorized routes, and transit facilities that meets the needs of all Township residents and businesses in a safe and convenient manner.

Objectives

1. Continue to improve the transportation network to promote the safe and efficient movement of people and commodities through various modes of transit (pedestrian, automotive, bicycling, etc.).
2. Cooperate with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Huron County Road Commission in the planning and design of road improvements.
3. Limit points of ingress/egress on major roads.
4. Segregate truck and automobile traffic as much as possible.
5. Develop and implement a plan for improvements of secondary roads through a public participation process.
6. Create an interconnected system of sidewalks, paths and trails to increase safety, promote healthy lifestyles and provide linkages between destinations.
7. Support county-wide and region-wide efforts to develop a system of non-motorized pathways in the region.

7.9 Park and Recreation Goal and Objectives

Goal

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

Objectives

1. Encourage public participation and utilize professional expertise to determine needed and desired recreation facilities.

2. Cooperate with the State of Michigan, regional entities and adjoining communities in the development of recreation and community facilities.
3. Acquire desirable sites to meet the future recreation needs of the Township residents.
4. Develop and keep current a 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan as a guide for the development of public and private recreation facilities which are needed to serve Township residents and visitors. Further, seek and secure outside funding to support new recreational facility development.

7.10 Natural Environment Goal and Objectives

Goal

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

Objectives

1. Implement land use patterns which will direct new growth away from environmentally sensitive areas, such as woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes and areas subject to flooding.
2. Implement development controls, which will maximize the protection of land-based natural resources while preserving the quality of air and water.
3. Encourage the use of the open space development option, cluster housing option, and other techniques to minimize the impact of new residential development on existing natural assets and make them an integral part of new development.

8.0 Future Land Use Plan

8.1 Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan is based upon the background studies and analysis, as presented in the preceding Sections 3.0 through 6.0, and the Community Goals and Objectives (Section 7.0). This plan is designed to serve as a guide for future development. If it is to serve the needs of the community and function effectively, it must incorporate several important characteristics.

1. The plan must be general

The plan, by its very nature, cannot be implemented immediately. Therefore, only generalized locations (not necessarily related to property lines) for various land uses are indicated on the plan.

2. The plan should embrace an extended but foreseeable time period

The Plan depicts land uses and community development strategies through the year 2035.

3. The plan should be comprehensive

The plan, if it is to serve its function as an important decision-making tool, must give adequate consideration to the sensitive relationships which exist between all major land use categories, including environmentally sensitive properties. Development in environmentally sensitive areas should be discouraged by Colfax Township. All future development as indicated on the Future Land Use Map (**Map 5**) should occur only as environmental conditions permit and should take into consideration, those environmental restrictions as outlined in the Natural Environment Assessment Section of this plan.

4. The plan should acknowledge regional conditions and trends

Colfax Township is an integral part of Huron County and the northern "Thumb" region. It is also impacted by what happens in Bad Axe. Therefore, the Plan should acknowledge the Township's regional context. Through recognition of regional implications, the Township's Future Land Use Plan will be more realistic and reasonable in terms of guiding the future utilization of land resources in the Township.

5. The plan must be updated periodically

The plan may require periodic revisions to reflect significant changes in local, state, or national conditions which cannot be foreseen at this time.

It is, of course, impossible to predict the type of changes which may occur over the next decade or two. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the Future Land Use Plan should be undertaken approximately every five years to provide for an adequate analysis of new conditions and trends. Should major rezonings, which are in conflict with the plan recommendations be accomplished, the plan should be reviewed and amended accordingly.

8.2 Plan Recommendations

Seven future land use classifications are proposed for Colfax Township. The various future land uses are portrayed on **Map 5** and in **Table 16**. A discussion of each future land use classification is presented below:

1. Rural Residential / Preservation

The Rural Residential / Preservation future land use classification, 3,552 acres or 16.4%, includes most of the forest land and wetlands under private ownership. Single-family homes that will have minimal impact on the natural character of the land are encouraged. A minimum lot area of one acre in size is recommended for each residential unit.

The Township should make every effort to preserve the rural attributes of this area to maintain the rural character of the Township, as well as to preserve its natural resources.

2. Agricultural / Rural Residential

The Agricultural / Rural Residential classification is intended to preserve the agricultural land resources that exist in the Township. A total of 15,413 acres (71.4%) of the land area is devoted to this classification. Farming and related agricultural activities and rural housing are the principal uses in this classification. Central sanitary sewer and water facilities are unavailable within the designated areas and will not be provided during the planning period.

The Agricultural / Rural Residential classification is designed to conserve, stabilize, enhance, and develop farming and related resource utilization activities; to minimize conflicting uses of parcels, lots, buildings, and structures detrimental to, or incompatible with these activities; and to prohibit uses of parcels, lots, buildings, and structures

which require streets, drainage, and other public facilities and services of a different type and quantity than those that currently exist. The classification, in preserving areas for agricultural uses, is also designed to prevent proliferation of residential subdivision and urban sprawl.

Agricultural properties may be used for general and specialized farming including the raising or growing of crops, livestock, poultry, bees, and other farm animals, and products. Buildings or structures may be located which are used for the day-to-day operation of such activities. Any lot that is kept as idle cropland should be treated to prevent soil erosion by wind or water and should be free of excessive weeds and shrubs. Agricultural tourism activities are encouraged within this classification; however, such activities must be carefully developed to not detrimentally impact surrounding land uses and the overall rural character of the Township.

Single-family homes that are compatible with the agricultural use and rural character of the Township are encouraged. A minimum lot area of one acre is recommended for each residential unit. However, to preserve agricultural lands and prevent sprawl residential development, the Township should consider establishing a sliding-scale approach to the number of allowable lot splits based on the parent parcel size. For example, one lot split may be allowed for each 10 acres of land. Thus, for a 100-acre parcel, no more than 10 one acre lots could be created as dwelling sites.

3. Residential

The Residential future land use classification, 905 acres or 4.2%, is intended to accommodate concentrated residential development at higher densities in comparison to

the low-density rural residential housing which characterizes much of Colfax Township. The lands designated in this classification are found immediately to the west and north of the City of Bad Axe, where higher-density residential and non-residential development already exists and where public infrastructure is generally in place to support higher-density development.

It is intended for lands within this Residential classification to support new housing growth comprising a variety of housing types. Single-family detached subdivisions, detached or attached condominiums, mobile home parks, and low-rise (3 stories or less) apartment complexes may all be appropriate within this classification. Senior living facilities, such as senior housing developments, assisted living facilities, and similar care facilities may also be appropriate within this classification.

The lands within this classification are generally located behind non-residential properties fronting M-53 to the west and north of Bad Axe. In order to ensure land use compatibility with these adjacent non-residential uses, and between residential uses of varying densities within the classification, appropriate land use transition schemes must be employed. For example, the non-residential establishments fronting M-53 would be bordered by higher-density residential uses, such as apartments or assisted living facilities, and the higher-density residential uses would be bordered by lower-intensity residential uses, such as subdivisions or condominiums.

4. Commercial

The Commercial future land use classification, 361 acres or 1.7%, is intended to serve the day-to-day retail sales and service needs of local residents, and to a limited extent, the needs of passer-by traffic along M-53

and M-142, while discouraging the proliferation of strip commercial development throughout the Township.

The Plan identifies two commercial areas adjacent to the City of Bad Axe. One such area is located along M-53, immediately to the west of the City of Bad Axe. The second is located along M-53 and M-142, immediately to the north of the City of Bad Axe. These two commercial areas include a variety of existing commercial establishments, as well as a planned Meijer store. Due to their location along M-53, a major corridor in the County carrying higher traffic volumes, these commercial areas could accommodate larger-scale commercial uses catering to passer-by traffic and residents of the larger region. However, new commercial uses must be carefully planned to ensure compatibility with neighboring uses, through such measures as land use transitions and/or generous landscape buffers. New commercial development within these areas must also be consistent with the rural character of the Township, through such measures as generous setbacks, substantial site landscaping, screening of buildings from the road, and/or the use of rural-style architectural materials.

Additionally, two commercial “nodes” are identified along M-142 at the intersections of Pinnebog and Barrie Roads. These nodes are intended to accommodate small-scale retail and/or service uses catering to local residents and the agricultural community.

5. Industrial / Extractive

The Industrial / Extractive future land use classification, 389 acres or 1.8%, is intended to accommodate limited, industrial operations in appropriate locations that are supported by existing public services, such as utility infrastructure and transportation networks. Additionally, this

classification includes lands that are presently devoted to extractive operations.

Many of the properties shown as industrial / extractive on the Future Land Use Map have been so designated because an existing industrial or extractive operation is present. However, a planned industrial area has been designated immediately south of the City of Bad Axe, along the west side of Bad Axe Road. This area is proposed to accommodate new light-industrial development in a “industrial park” setting.

6. Institutional

The Institutional future land use classification, 219 acres or 1.0%, includes a variety of existing institutional uses within the Township, such as medical and health care facilities and governmental facilities. Many of these are concentrated along the north side of M-53, west of the City of Bad Axe. New institutional uses may be accommodated throughout the Township, but must be adequately served by public infrastructure.

7. Recreation / Open Space

The Recreation / Open Space classification, 235 acres or 1.1%, is intended to accommodate existing recreational uses and open spaces (including cemeteries) within the Township. New recreational facilities may be developed throughout the Township, as appropriate.

Table 16
Future Land Use Acreage, 2018

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent
1. Rural Residential/Preservation	3,552	16.4%
2. Agricultural/Rural Residential	15,413	71.4%
3. Residential	905	4.2%
4. Commercial	361	1.7%
5. Industrial/Extractive	389	1.8%
6. Institutional	219	1.0%
7. Recreation/Open Space	235	1.1%
<i>Rights-of-Way</i>	521	2.4%
Total	21,595	100.0

Source: Wade-Trim review of aerial photography, August 2017.

9.0 Plan Implementation Resources

9.1 Introduction

Colfax Township's Master Plan is a long-range community policy statement comprised of a variety of both graphic and narrative recommendations intended to provide guidelines for making reasonable and realistic community development decisions. The plan is intended to be employed by Township officials, by those making private sector investments, and by all Township citizens interested in the future development of the community.

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

1. Assuring community-wide knowledge, understanding, support, and approval of the plan;
2. Regulating the use and manner of development of property through up-to-date and reasonable zoning controls, subdivision regulations, and building and housing codes;
3. Developing a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to fund public facilities and services in support of the plan;
4. Participating with the private sector in the process of co-development, whereby local government provides incentives, subsidy, or other inducements to assist the private sector in the development efforts.

9.2 Public Support for Long-Range Plan

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

In order to organize public support most effectively, Colfax Township must emphasize the necessity of instituting the planning program and encourage citizen participation in the planning process.

9.3 Zoning Plan

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

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

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

The Colfax Township Zoning Ordinance is a regulatory tool that guides land use and development within the Township. As stipulated by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended, the Zoning Ordinance must be based upon a Master Plan. Therefore, this Master Plan, by setting forth the long-term vision of Colfax Township, provides the basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance, which contains the rules that govern the path to that vision. As required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the following is an explanation of the relationship between the future land use classifications presented in this Master Plan and the zoning districts established in the Colfax Township Zoning Ordinance. Potential revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map, based on the recommendations of this Master Plan Update, are also outlined.

Existing Zoning Districts

The Colfax Township Zoning Ordinance has established a total of 7 zoning districts, as follows. Taken from the Zoning Ordinance, an excerpt of the intent statement for each zoning district is also listed.

- Agricultural (AG) – It is the intent of this District to conserve and promote the general continuation of this use.
- Single-Family Residential (R-1) – The purpose of this District is to reserve areas principally for single-family homes and other uses, which are compatible with the AG Agricultural District and help maintain the rural character of the Township.
- Single-Family/Two-Family Residential (R-2) – The purpose of this District is to reserve areas principally for single-family and two-family residential uses and to maintain safe and desirable conditions for year-round family living.
- Multiple-Family Residential (R-3) – This District is intended to offer a wide variety of housing choices in a single district by providing a mixture of single-family and multiple-family dwellings.
- Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) – The purpose for establishing this District is to provide for neighborhood shopping, personal services and professional office areas, where uses are somewhat more selective than the C-2 Highway Commercial District. Uses in this District are primarily compatible with and of service to Township residential uses.
- Highway Commercial (C-2) – This District typically accommodates those retail and business activities that cater to the needs of the permanent residents and tourists of the area. The District is designed to provide sites for more diversified business types along major thoroughfares.
- Industrial (IND) – The purpose of this District is to provide areas within the Township for the encouragement and conduct of industries, for processing raw materials and finished products, for storage of raw materials and industrial products, and for wholesale

commercial establishments, including office facilities customarily associated with any permitted use, none of which shall constitute a nuisance to any prior existing permitted use of any adjacent premises.

Relationship between the Future Land Use Classifications and Zoning Districts

This Colfax Township Master Plan has established a total of 7 future land use classifications. A complete description of each future land use classification is included in Section 8.0. Below is an explanation of how each classification relates to the zoning districts established in the Zoning Ordinance.

- Rural Residential / Preservation – The long-term implementation of the Rural Residential / Preservation future land use category will generally be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in the Agricultural (AG) Zoning District. The Township should explore whether a “natural features overlay district” is an appropriate mechanism to protect sensitive natural features found within this classification.
- Agricultural / Rural Residential – The long-term implementation of the Agricultural / Rural Residential future land use category will generally be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in the Agricultural (AG) Zoning District.
- Residential – The long-term implementation of the Residential future land use category will generally be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in either the R-1, R-2 or R-3 Zoning District. The exact zoning district determination would be made on a case-by-case basis, as the market dictates, and in line with the intent of the Residential

future land use classification described in Section 8.0.

- Commercial – The long-term implementation of the Commercial future land use category will generally be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in either the C-1 or C-2 Zoning District. The exact zoning district determination would be made on a case-by-case basis, as the market dictates, and in line with the intent of the Commercial future land use classification described in Section 8.0.
- Industrial / Extractive – The long-term implementation of the Industrial / Extractive future land use category will generally be accomplished, in terms of height, area, bulk, location and use, by the specific requirements outlined in the Industrial (IND) Zoning District.
- Institutional – The Institutional future land use classification does not relate to any particular zoning district. Rather, public, semi-public and other institutional uses could be accommodated in a variety of Zoning Districts. For example, public buildings are permitted as a principal use within the AG District.
- Recreation / Open Space – The Recreation / Open Space future land use classification does not relate to any particular zoning district. Rather, recreational uses could be accommodated in a variety of Zoning Districts. For example, public parks are permitted as a principal use within the AG District.

Potential Zoning Ordinance Amendments

In order to effectively implement the recommendations contained within this Master Plan Update, various changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are likely necessary. Therefore, it is

recommended that the Township proceed with a zoning ordinance review process after the adoption of this Master Plan. Various minor changes to the Zoning Ordinance are likely warranted to reflect contemporary zoning issues and would need to be determined as part of a detailed review of the ordinance. The more significant potential changes to the Zoning Ordinance, based on the recommendations of this Master Plan, are as follows:

- The Township should explore whether a “natural features overlay district” is an appropriate mechanism to protect sensitive natural features found on the lands identified as Rural Residential / Preservation on the Future Land Use Map.
- As a means to protect rural character and prevent sprawl residential development, for the Agricultural (AG) District, the Township should consider establishing a sliding-scale approach to the number of allowable lot splits based on the size of the parent parcel. For example, one lot split may be allowed for each 10 acres of land. Thus, for a 100-acre parcel, no more than 10 one acre lots could be created as dwelling sites.
- The Township should consider amendments to the Agricultural (AG) District allow and regulate agri-tourism and agri-business.
- The Township should review and amend the Zoning Ordinance, as appropriate, to allow for a more diversified variety of residential housing types, such as attached condominiums, and senior care facilities within the R-1, R-2 and R-3 Districts.
- The Township should consider establishing a planned unit development process, offering flexible standards unique and complex projects, such as projects that include multiple types or residential use, or

projects proposing to protect sensitive natural features.

9.4 Capital Improvements Program

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

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

In essence, the Capital Improvements Program is simply a schedule for implementing public capital improvements which acknowledges current and anticipated demands, and which recognizes present and potential financial resources available to the community. The Capital Improvements Program is a major planning tool for assuring that the capital improvements proceed to completion in an efficient manner. The Capital Improvements Program is not intended to encourage the spending of additional public monies, but is simply a means by which an impartial evaluation of needs may be made. The program is a schedule established to expedite the implementation of authorized or contemplated projects.

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

The Planning Enabling Act outlined a new requirement for all Planning Commissions in communities that have adopted a Master Plan and operate a public water and/or sewer system to annually prepare a capital improvements program. According to the Act, the program "shall show those public structures and improvements, in the general order of their priority, that in the Commission's judgement will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the ensuing 6-year period."

9.5 Enforcement

The ultimate success of a community's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, or other regulations depends on effective administration and enforcement. If administrative procedures are lax, or if enforcement of regulations is handled in an inconsistent or sporadic manner, the result will be unsatisfactory at best. The Colfax Township Zoning Ordinance states that enforcement shall be the responsibility of the Zoning Administrator or his deputies. The Zoning Administrator is, therefore, responsible for carrying out zoning/development related functions, including building inspections, ordinance administration, and community/developer interactions. Each of these functions requires a substantial investment of time. If sufficient time is not made available to carry out these critical functions, they may only be accomplished in a cursory manner.

Therefore, the Township should continue to assertively support its in-place review and administration procedures so that these essential day-to-day functions will receive the attention they require.

9.6 Funding Opportunities

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

To accomplish these policies and recommendations, Township leaders should begin to develop criteria and priorities for such efforts including the provision of technical assistance and coordination of local project funding. However, in this time of diminished revenue from local funding sources, communities such as Colfax Township must diligently monitor and aggressively seek funds from state and federal funding sources.

9.7 Annexation Issues

Under existing Michigan law, Townships are extremely vulnerable to changes in municipal boundaries. Unlike Cities and Villages, Townships may be reduced in size through the annexation process, without benefit of a supporting resolution from the Township Board, or a vote of the people. Clearly, it is difficult to plan for the future when key characteristics such as land area, population and tax base are subject to change generated by outside forces.

Historically, the presumption behind Michigan's annexation laws seemed to be that the Township form of government was intended to cover rural areas only. When urbanization occurred or when demands for utilities and urban services arose, Michigan law made it relatively easy for urbanizing

areas to be removed from the Township and incorporated into an adjacent City or Village. Today, when Townships can provide a broad array of utilities and services themselves, annexation laws seem especially biased. It is still possible, however, for a Township to address the annexation issue proactively, by becoming familiar with the current procedures for annexation, and methods of defending against these procedures. Further Michigan law now offers a few alternatives to annexation, which could prove very beneficial to Colfax Township.

Proposals for the most common type of annexation (the transfer of territory from a general law Township into an incorporated City) can occur in two ways. A petition for annexation can be signed by property owners who occupy at least 75% of the land area in the territory proposed for annexation, or by at least 20% of the registered voters residing in that territory. Annexation proposals are reviewed and decided upon by the State Boundary Commission. The Boundary Commission examines a number of criteria during its evaluation, including population, land use, property value, tax levels, and perhaps most importantly, the need for services and the relative ability of the Township and City to provide needed services.

In theory, at least, the Boundary Commission also evaluates the overall effect the proposed annexation would have on both the “sending” Township and the “receiving” City. The Boundary Commission has the authority to deny, grant, or modify an annexation request. If the area in question has fewer than 100 residents, The Commission’s decision is effective immediately. If there are more than 100 residents in the affected area, the annexation decision is subject to possible referendum.

Perhaps the most common reason for annexations today is a City’s refusal to supply needed sewer or water service to adjacent areas without annexation to the City. As a practical matter, if a City entertains piecemeal annexation proposals,

each designed to include fewer than 100 residents, a referendum vote can be avoided, and the proposal has a better than even chance of approval. Another shortcut to annexation can occur if the City buys property outside its limits. If there are no residents on City-owned land adjacent to current boundaries, such land can be directly annexed on motion of City Council, without going through the Boundary Commission. Later, the land can be re-sold for private development, and is already part of the City.

A township’s best defense against annexation is planning for future land uses and supporting services, before service needs become a critical emergency. Sewer, water, police, fire and emergency medical services are among the most important to evaluate. Additionally, Colfax Township should be aware that several options to traditional annexation now exist. The most important option is an “Act 425 Agreement.” Act 425 of 1984 (MCL 124.21 et seq.) provides a means for a two-party negotiated agreement setting up a temporary and conditional transfer of land from Township to City. In recent years, Colfax Township and the City of Bad Axe have successfully worked together to formulate tax revenue sharing arrangements through Public Act 425.

In addition to Act 425 agreements, Colfax Township may wish to consider the option of an Act 108 Interlocal Agreement (MCL 124.505A). Such an agreement can allow two or more local governments to share property taxes derived from specific commercial or industrial development. These agreements can be entered into without annexation, and have no specified time limits. A number of other Michigan statutes give authority for local governments to act together to carry out plans or deliver services. These laws include the Urban Cooperation Act (Act 7 of 1967) and numerous statutes enabling joint operation of sewer, water, solid waste facilities, police and fire service or public buildings.

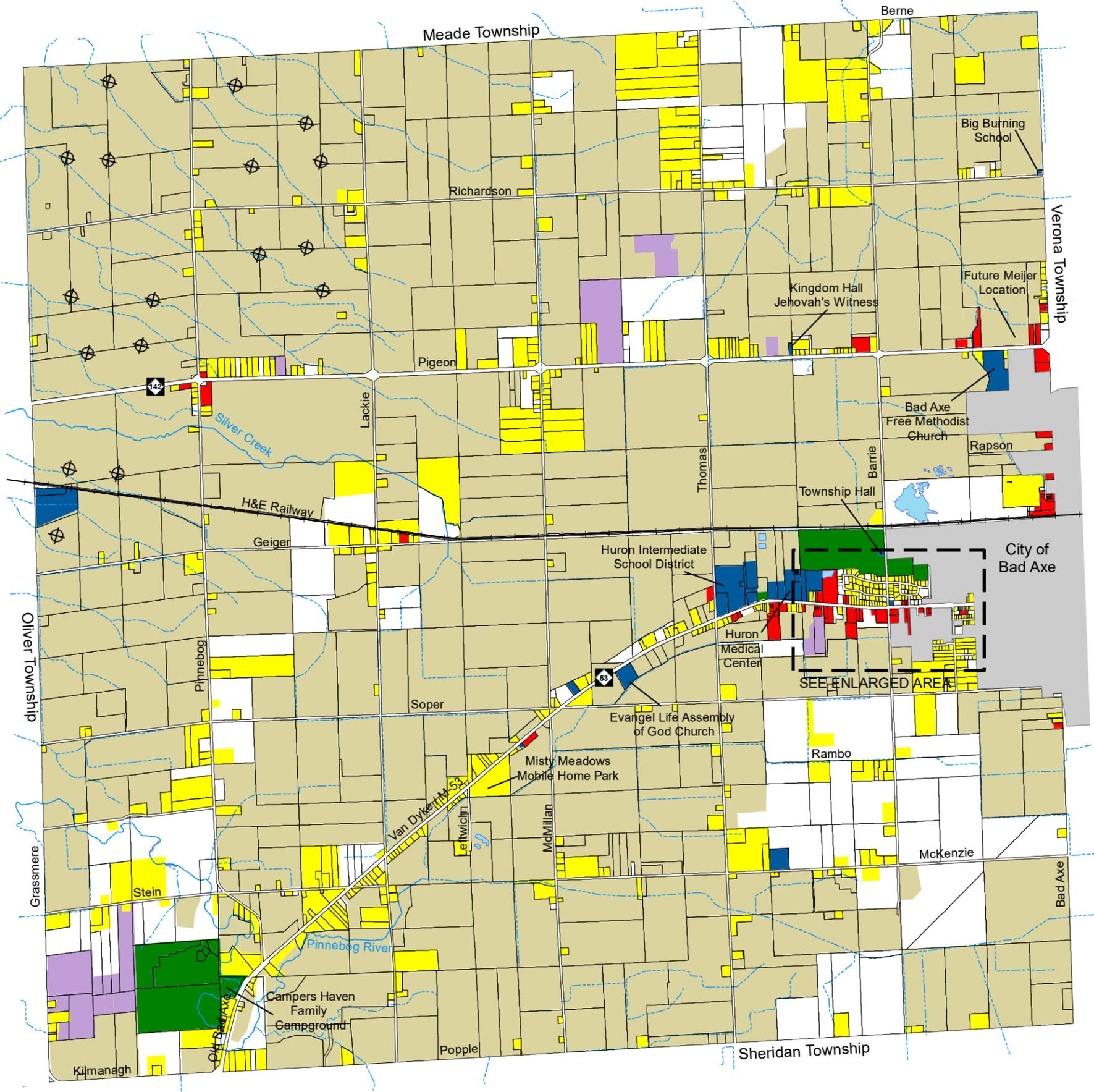
In summary, anticipating potential annexation issues, and addressing them early on may be a very important part of Colfax Township's plan implementation strategy. Although the Township will face certain disadvantages inherent in the structure of Michigan municipal law, the statutes do offer a few creative alternatives for effective intergovernmental cooperation which can and should be explored.

Appendix (Mapping)

1

EXISTING LAND USE

Master Plan Update, 2018



Legend

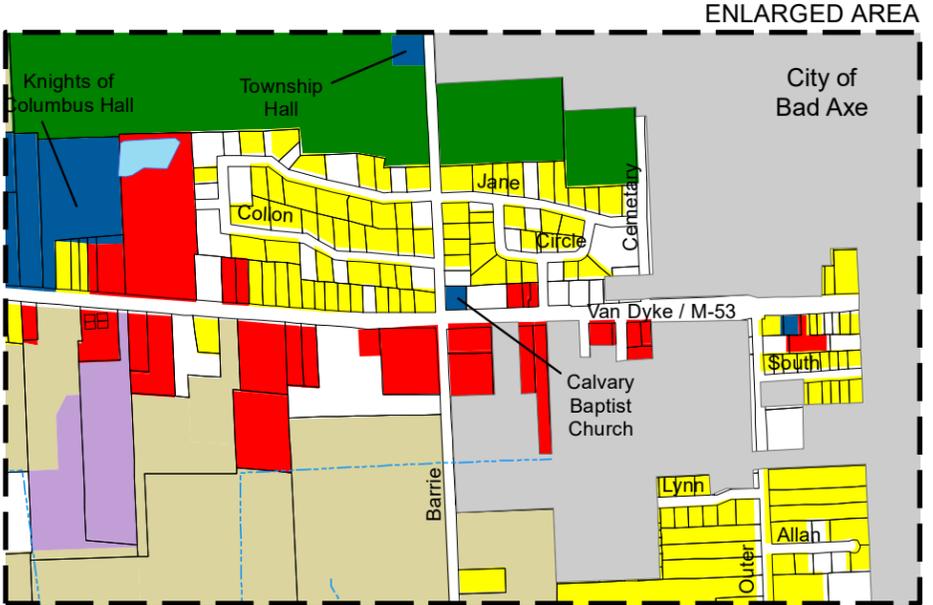
Existing Land Use

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial/Extractive
- Institutional
- Recreation/Cemetery
- Vacant/ROW

Base Data

- Rivers and Streams
- Creeks and Drains
- Water Bodies
- ColfaxParcels
- Railway
- City of Bad Axe
- Existing Wind Turbines

Source: Wade Trim field survey, August 2017

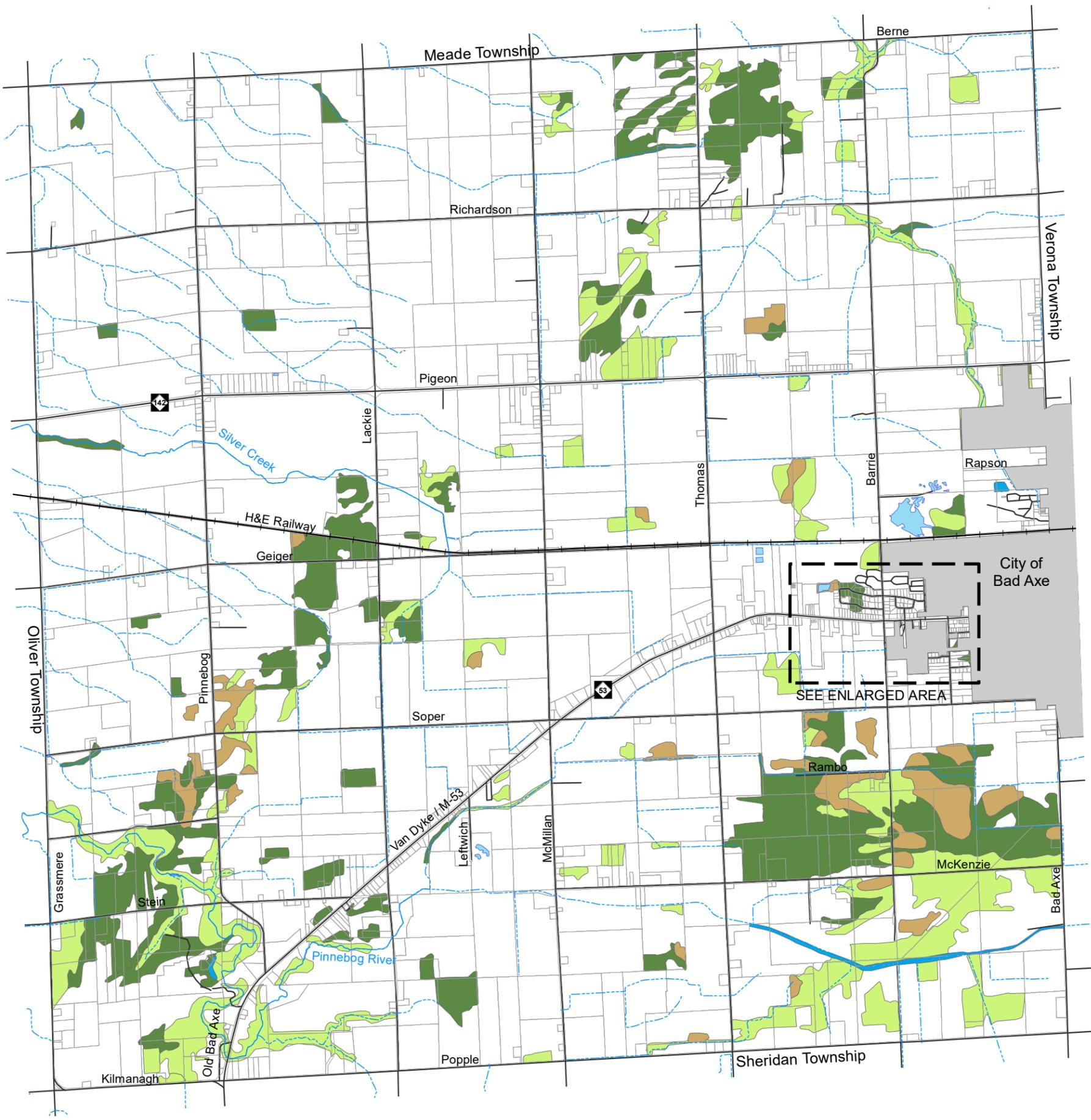


Colfax Township
Huron County, Michigan



2 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

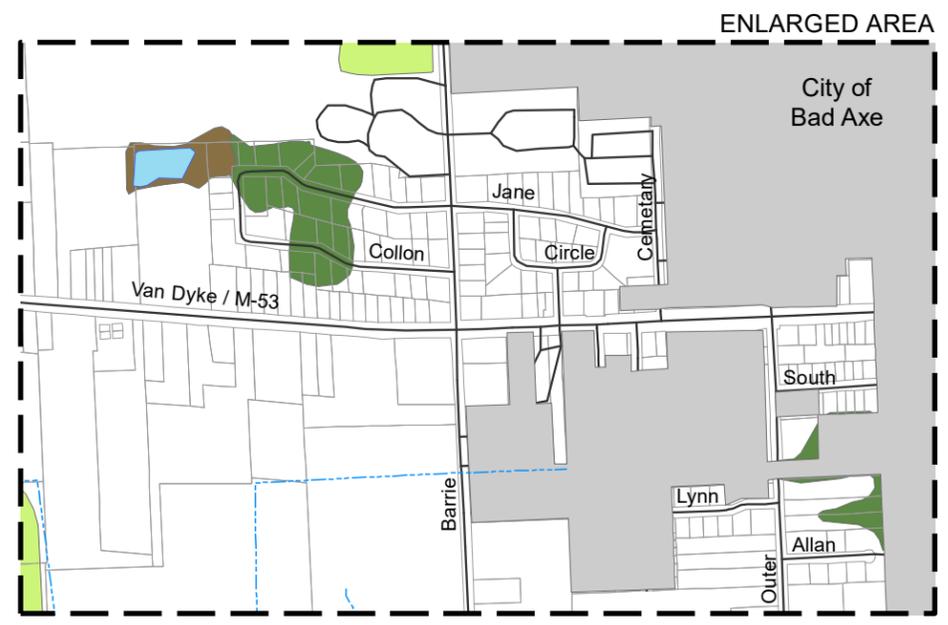
Master Plan Update 2018



Legend

Environmental Resources	Base Data
Lowland Forest	Rivers and Streams
Upland Forest	Creeks and Drains
Wetlands	Water Bodies
Water	Streets
	Railway
	Parcels
	City of Bad Axe

Source: MIRIS 1978 Land Cover/Land Use

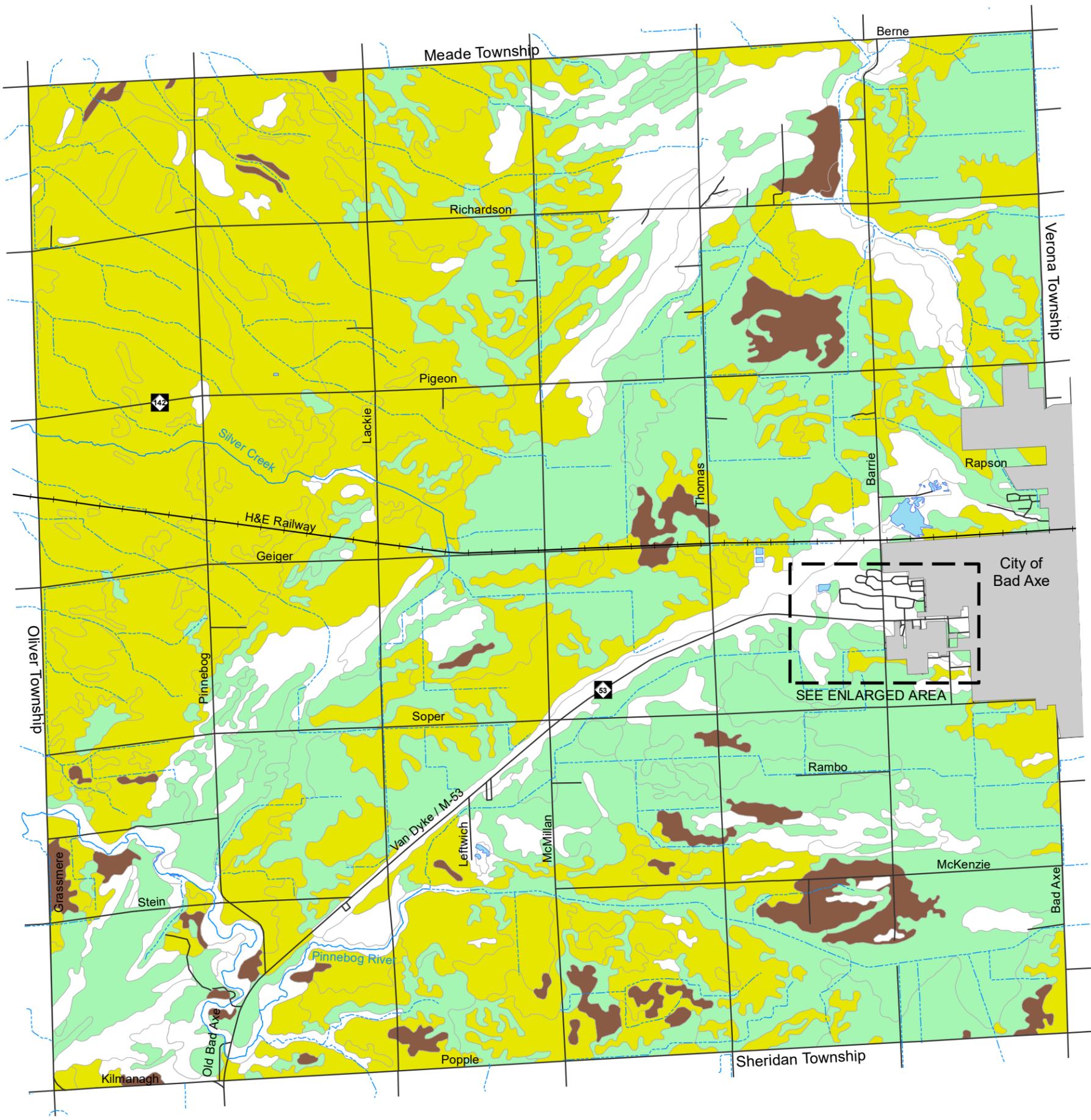


Colfax Township
Huron County, Michigan



3

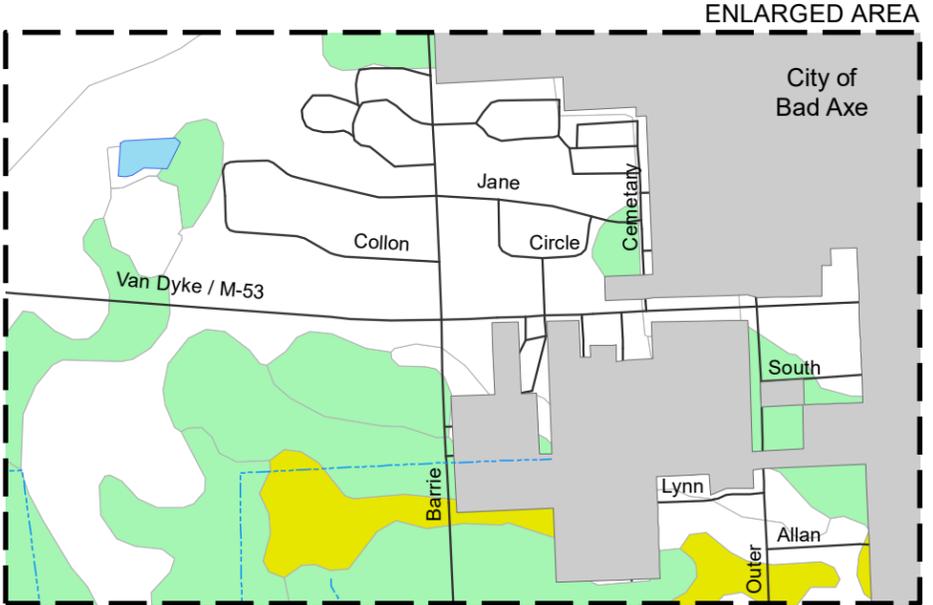
SOIL CONDITIONS Master Plan Update 2018



Legend

Environmental Resources	Base Data
 Hydric	 Rivers and Streams
 Non Hydric	 Creeks and Drains
 Prime Agriculture	 Water Bodies
 Prime If Drained	 Streets
	+ Railway
	 City of Bad Axe

Source: MIRIS Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Huron County



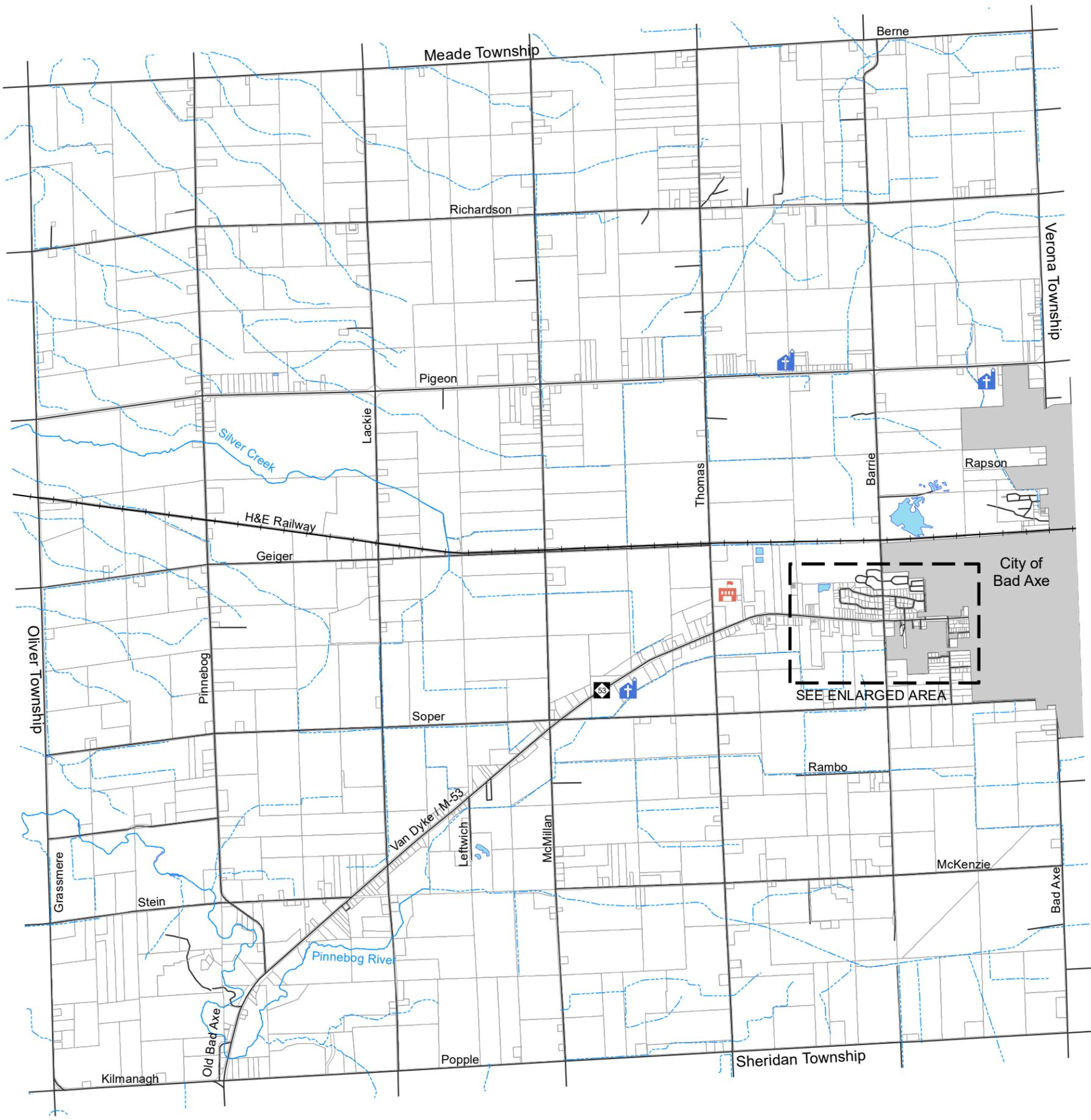
Colfax Township
Huron County, Michigan



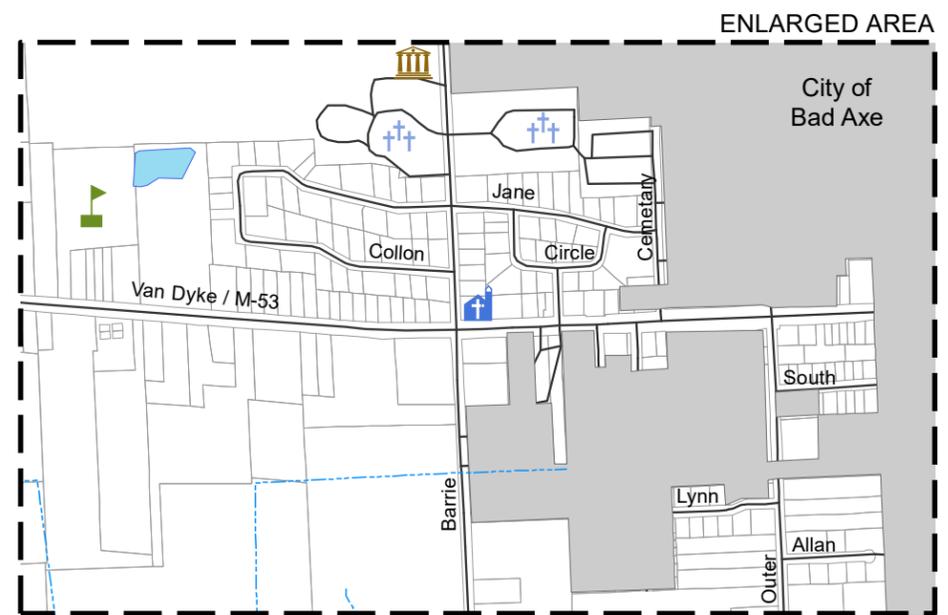
4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES Master Plan Update 2018

Legend

- | Community Facilities | Base Data |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Church | Rivers and Streams |
| Township Hall | Creeks and Drains |
| Cemetery | Water Bodies |
| School | Streets |
| Fraternal Organization | Railway |
| | Parcels |
| | City of Bad Axe |



SEE ENLARGED AREA



Colfax Township
Huron County, Michigan



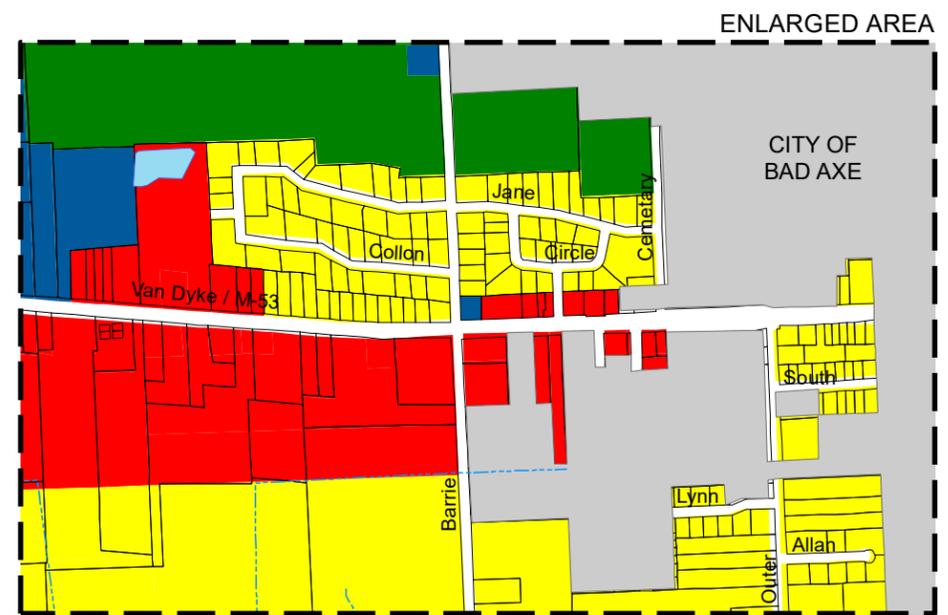
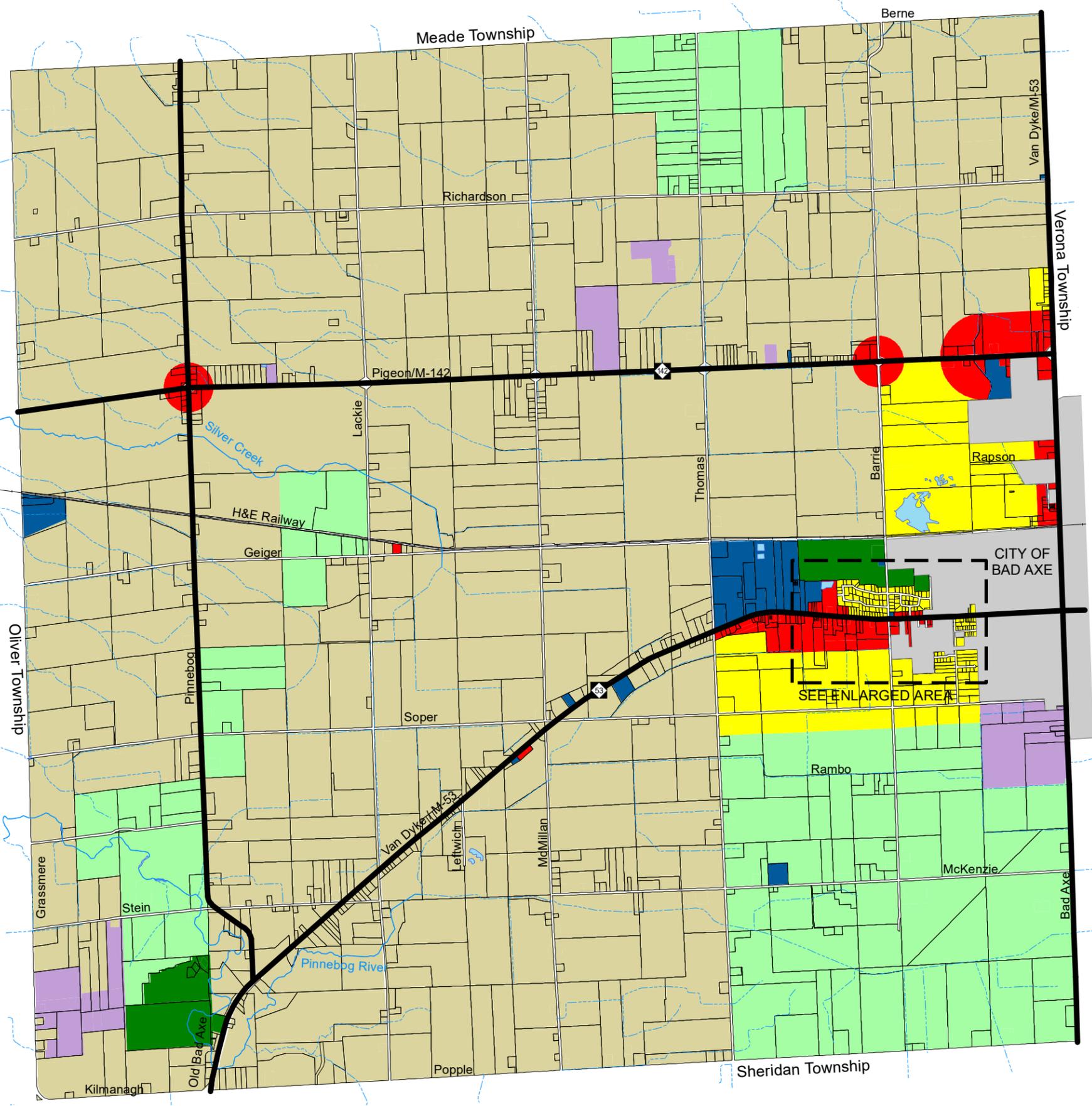
5

FUTURE LAND USE Master Plan Update 2018

Adopted October 1, 2018

Legend

Future Land Use	Base Data
Rural Residential/Preservation	Rivers and Streams
Agricultural/Rural Residential	Creeks and Drains
Residential	Water Bodies
Commercial	Major Roads
Industrial/Extractive	Railway
Institutional	Parcels
Recreation/Open Space	City of Bad Axe



Colfax Township
Huron County, Michigan





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