

Chapter 5 - Existing Land Use

Prior to determining future land uses and developing a future land use map, a community must have an accurate assessment of existing land uses. This chapter presents information on both the types and location of existing land uses. The process identifies both urban built-up land uses such as residential and commercial, along with natural land cover types like farmlands, forests, and wetlands. As a result the final map presented in this chapter is a hybrid that combines land cover and land use.

Land Division Patterns

As development occurs, larger tracts of land are generally broken down into smaller parcels. Therefore, studying the existing pattern of land divisions is one way to analyze the status of land use and development. Land division patterns for Mikado Township are discussed below.

Approximately 52 percent of the land in the Township is publicly owned. Some 32.7 square miles (46 percent) of the Township are under jurisdiction of the U. S. Forest Service, while the State of Michigan owns 4.5 square miles of land in the eastern one half of the Township. Most of the private ownership is in tracts that are 20 acres and larger in size. Smaller tracts of private land, 10 acres or less in size, can also be found in Mikado Township. Pine River Estates, Village of Mikado, Minthorn Addition to Village and Four Seasons are four subdivisions located in the township. The Village plats date back to the early 1900's. As with other parts of northern Michigan, private ownership is being divided into smaller tracts of 10 acres or less.

Existing Land Use Characteristics

The NEMCOG mapped existing land use in the Township in July of 2001. The map of existing land use, shown as **Figure 5.1**, illustrates the distribution of land uses throughout the Township. Michigan Resource Information Systems (MIRIS) land cover/use classification categories were used to map the existing land use. The map represents an update of the 1978 MIRIS land cover/use map. The MIRIS map was updated with 1998 aerial photographs and extensive field checking (conducted in July of 2001). The updated information was then computerized to produce the existing land use map and statistics. **Table 5.1** presents the land uses, showing the number of acres and percent of the Township in each of the land use categories. Each of the land use categories is discussed later in this chapter.

One important land use trend was noted during the MIRIS land cover/use map update. There has been an increase in low density residential development on both large and small tracts throughout the township. These are typically occurring on parcels two acres and larger.

Residential

As can be seen on the Existing Use Map and table, residential use ranks sixth in the amount of land currently in this use. Residential use occupies more than two percent (1,077 acres) of the land in the Township. Residential development is concentrated along county roads in the eastern part of the Township and within the northern tier of sections across the remainder of the community. Single family residential accounts for all of the residential development in the Township.

Mikado Township MASTER Plan

Commercial

Commercial areas are found in the community of Mikado and are concentrated around the intersection of Mikado-Glennie Road and County Road F41. Most of the commercial uses are service and retail. Lands used for commercial purposes comprise less than one tenth of one percent of the Township's area.

Industrial/Extractive/Transportation

Land in this use category covers less than one tenth of one percent or 28 acres of the Township. This category includes several sand and gravel pits and a private airport (Section 12).

Table 5.1 Existing Land Use Statistics Mikado Township		
Land Use Category	Number of Acres	Percent of Township
Residential	1077	2.4
Commercial	23	Less than 0.1
Industrial/Extractive/Transportation	28	Less than 0.1
Institutional/Recreational	80	0.2
Agricultural	3,510	7.7
Non-forested Uplands	3,477	7.6
Upland Forests	24,973	54.7
Lowland Forests	10,068	22.0
Wetlands	2,365	5.2
Water	79	0.2
TOTAL	45,680	100
Source: Michigan Resource Inventory System and NEMCOG photo interpretation, field verification and map updating.		

Institutional/Recreational

This category includes institutional uses such as churches, Township Cemetery and the Mikado Civic Center. Developed recreational facilities were mapped as part of this category.

Recreational facilities are Bruce Park , a ball field adjacent to the Civic Center and ball fields located off Barlow Road, all in section one of the eastern half of the Township . A private recreational facility is located in Section 34 of the eastern half. A U.S. Forest Service campground is located in Section 16 of the western half of the Township. This category accounts for 80 acres or 0.2 percent of the Township area.

As noted earlier, some 52 percent of Mikado Township area is in public ownership. While these areas were not classified as recreational, the considerable amount of public land does offer residents and visitors ample area for a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. For

Mikado Township MASTER PLAN

example, persons wishing to pursue the sport of fishing can access the Pine River and its many tributaries such as Van Etten Creek, Duval Creek, Grey Creek, Roy Creek, McDonald Creek, McGillis Creek, Gimlet Creek, Bryant Creek, Wallace Creek, Kurtz Creek and Samyn Creek.

Agricultural

Agricultural lands currently comprise approximately 3,510 acres or 7.7 percent of the Township. Farming activities include hay production, pasture land and row crops. In comparison to the 1978 MIRIS Land Cover Inventory, there is less land being farmed. However, generally the land is converting to a less intensive use of open lands and not being converted to subdivisions and commercial uses.

Non-forested Uplands

The non-forested land category is the fourth most prominent land cover type in the Township. This category consists of herbaceous open and shrub land. As shown in **Table 5.1**, 3,477 acres or more than 7.6 percent of the Township is in the non-forested category. A majority of the non-forest areas are old farm fields.

Upland Forests

The upland forested lands are the most predominant land cover in the Township and accounts for 54.7 percent or 24,973 acres of the Township. Of the forested lands, the most prevalent forest type is jack pine. Jack, red and white pine trees are found in the pine forest category. Draughty, low fertility sandy soils in the western half of the Township supported pre-settlement jack pine forests, that were perpetuated by wildfires. Today, the forest type is perpetuated by management activities of the U.S. Forest Service. Other forest types include aspen-birch, oak and northern hardwoods. More information on these forest types can be found in Chapter 4.

Lowland Forests and Wetlands

Wetlands include land that has sufficient water at, or near, the surface to support wetland or aquatic vegetation. These areas are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes and bogs. The wetland category comprises non forested types such as lowland brush (tag alder and willow) and wet meadows. Non-forested wetlands account for 2,365 acres or 5.2 percent of the surface area.

Lowland forests grow on soils with a seasonally high water table and are often classified as wetlands. Lowland forests, include areas that support lowland hardwoods and conifers, such as northern white cedar, black spruce, balsam fir, elm, red maple, ash and aspen species. Lowland forests occupy 10,068 acres or 22 percent of the Township area. Two of the most important functions of wetlands are water quality protection and ecological corridors. As can be noted on the Existing Land Use Map, the major wetland areas are adjacent to rivers and creeks. The network of wetlands receive surface water and subsurface water discharge, creating the many streams and creeks which in turn flow into the area lakes. The interconnected resources exemplify how activities distant from major water bodies can still have an impact on the water quality.

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Surface Water

Open water comprises less than 0.2 percent of Mikado Township. Delap Lake as well as several small ponds are included in this category.

