

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

2014

MASTER LAND USE PLAN



Adopted August 18, 2014

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COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

TOWNSHIP BOARD:

Edward Spannagel, Supervisor
Christine Kolar, Clerk
Christina Parmenter, Treasurer
Michael Findlay, Trustee
Kathleen Trischler, Trustee

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Dick Dehmel, Chairman
Tom Zimmer, Vice Chair
Ed Spannagel, Secretary
Karl DeSimpelare
Dave Sting
Robert Becker
Dave DeSimpelare

Edward Spannagel, Zoning Administrator

Gary Howell, Township Attorney

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

MASTER LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

As authorized by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Columbia Township Planning Commission has prepared this Master Land Use Plan in order to guide future zoning decisions. In preparing this plan, the Columbia Township Planning Commission reviewed data from the United States Census and conducted a thorough review of the existing land uses throughout the Township as of 2014. The Planning Commission has also taken into consideration existing land uses in adjacent municipalities which may be impacted by zoning within Columbia Township.

Given the rural nature of Columbia Township, this proposed Master Land Use Plan is relatively brief and recognizes the fact that land use changes in the near future are likely to be incremental rather than involve large-scale developments other than the current wind energy projects.

A general township map showing the roads, railroads, and municipal boundaries as prepared by a representative of the Planning Commission is located on the next page.

Columbia Township

Tuscola County

Michigan



Map drafted by Richard Dehmel

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

HISTORY

Columbia Township (town 14 north, of range 9 east) was organized by the Tuscola County Board of Supervisors on December 31, 1855. The Township will have been in existence for 160 years as of 2015.

The initial township meeting was held on the first Monday in April, 1856 at the house of David Clark in Section 18. The inspectors of election were Wesley Hess, Andrew Marshall, Horace Marvin and Isaac Santee.

The first township officers were duly elected at the April, 1856 meeting. They were Supervisor, Allen Brewer; Clerk, Isaac Santee; Justice of the Peace, Horace Marvin; Commissioners of Highways, Andrew Marshall, Allen Brewer, and Charles Conner; Constable, Charles Conner and A. Smith; Treasurer, Horace Marvin; and School Inspector, Wesley Hess.

Prior to 1855, Columbia Township was part of Indianfields Township. Columbia is one of the northern townships of Tuscola County and is bounded on the north by Huron County, east by Elmwood, south by Almer and west by Akron. Columbia Township's boundaries were slightly changed in 1879 by the annexation of Section 36 of Geneva Township and Section 1 of Akron Township, which included the site of the Village of Unionville.

Supervisors who have served Columbia Township are as follows:

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

1856	Allen Brewer
1857	Wesley Hess
1858-60	Alson Greenfield
1861-67	Records not found
1868	E. Staley

1869-76	Alson Greenfield
1877-81	E. Staley
1882-84	Alson Greenfield
1885-90	Philip Eckfeld
1891-94	Edwin Hover
1895	A. H. Bethey
1895	Perry A. Marshall
1896-1914	Records not found
1915-17	O. D. Hill
1918	Wm. Hahn
1919	Chas. B. Eckfeld
1920	James A. Slocum
1921-33	Edward Dillon
1934-44	Wm. B. Barriger
1945-55	Arthur Dehmel
	(elected State Senator)
1955-70	Milton Bedore
1970-90	John H. DeSimpelare
1990-present	Edward Spannagel

POST OFFICES WITHIN COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

1861 - UNIONVILLE. Horace C. Marvin came here with his family in 1854 and built the first home. He opened a general store and became the first postmaster on October 18, 1861, holding the office until 1868. He named the village after his native Union, Ohio. Another pioneer and town surveyor was John Staley, Jr. who served as postmaster by 1873. Unionville was a station on the Saginaw, Tuscola & Huron Railroad. It was incorporated as a village in 1879.

1868 - COLUMBIA CORNERS. The first settlers in the area were Horace C. Marvin and Andrew Marshall in 1854. The Township of Columbia was named in 1855 and the village took its name. Rudolph Nemode became the first postmaster, with the office named Columbia, on June 18, 1879. The office operated until March 31, 1903.

1884 - COLWOOD. Colwood was named from its township (Columbia) and its principal product (lumber). Storekeeper Charles A. Post became its first postmaster on February 27, 1884. The office operated until May 31, 1905.

1903 - COLLING. The community was named for William Colling who came from Canada in 1880 and secured 180 acres of land. It became a station on the Michigan Central Railroad. Lumberman Clarence B. Mansfield became its first postmaster on January 30, 1903. The post office operated until October 31, 1936, leaving a grain elevator and a few homes.

1904 - ASHMORE. When storekeeper Charles P. Hill became the first postmaster of this rural post office on April 20, 1899, it was in Brookfield Township, Huron County. It was transferred to Tuscola County on May 31, 1904. The post office operated until September 30, 1911.

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

POPULATION TREND ANALYSIS

2010 CENSUS

Columbia Township has much in common with both Tuscola County and Huron County when the populations from the 2000 Census are compared to the 2010 Census. Tuscola County as a whole lost 2,537 people, or 4.4% of its population. Neighboring Huron County lost 2961 residents amounting to 8.2% of its population. However, these losses were not evenly distributed.

Among the 23 townships located within Tuscola County, 19 townships (including Columbia) lost population. In addition, the City of Vassar also lost population. The recently incorporated City of Caro was not separately counted and its population is reflected in the combined counts of Indianfields and Almer Townships. It is significant to note that the Columbia Township population loss (9.5%) was over twice the percentage of Tuscola County as a whole (4.4%). The Columbia Township loss was also greater than the overall loss in Huron County.

There were only four governmental units within Tuscola County which gained population between 2000 and 2010. However, the average gain among those four townships was only 1.7%. Three of the four townships that gained in population (Almer, Wells and Ellington) are located in the center of the county. The fourth township which gained population (Koylton) had a negligible gain of only four tenths of one percent, for a total increase of 6 people.

The significant population loss in Columbia Township is probably due to a number of factors. These include the consolidation of farms into larger units, the decline of businesses

within the Village, and the closure of nearby manufacturing employers such as Tower Automotive. The loss of Tower, an auto parts manufacturer, represented a loss of over 600 jobs in the general area.

An analysis of the population trends across Tuscola and Huron Counties and in Columbia Township would indicate that the Columbia Township area is very unlikely to experience significant population growth in the near future. Consequently, the Columbia Township Planning Commission believes that it has provided ample areas within its master plan designations for any growth foreseeable at this time.

2000 and 2010 CENSUS COMPARISONS*

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>2000 Census</u>	<u>2010 Census</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
TUSCOLA COUNTY	58,266	55,729	- 4.4%
Columbia Township	1,419	1,284	- 9.5%
Akron Township	1,589	1,503	- 5.4%
Elmwood Township	1,213	1,207	- 0.5%
Ellington Township	1,304	1,332	2.1%
Almer Township	3,023	3,101	2.6%
Sebewaing Township	2,944	2,724	-7.5%
HURON COUNTY	36,079	33,118	-8.2%

*Additional detailed census data on Columbia Township can be accessed at www.nwmcog.org.

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LAND USES AND FACILITIES

In 2014 the Columbia Township Planning Commission conducted an inventory of the existing land uses within the Township to assist in identifying future land use needs. The significant existing land uses which have been identified by the Planning Commission are described below:

Industrial. There is relatively little industrial activity within Columbia Township. Present land uses that might be classified as industrial would include the Vita Plus Elevator operation served by the Huron Eastern Railroad spur and located in the community of Colling on Dickerson Road. It would also include two electrical substations operated by the Thumb Electric Co-op and located at the intersection of French and Cass City Roads as well as at the corner of Ainsworth Road and M-24. Land currently zoned industrial within the Township is located on the west side of the Village along the Huron Eastern railroad right-of-way. This was formerly the site of a receiving station for a pickling operation.

There are industrial uses in the general area around Columbia Township which contribute some employment opportunities to persons within the Township. These industries include the Michigan Sugar plants located in Sebawaing and Caro. Other industries which would be included would be Axis Machining, Inc. located in Pigeon which does industrial castings, as well as the Blue Diamond manufacturing plant which does industrial finishing in the same community. Also operating in Huron County is Countryside Trucking which involves a major trucking operation hauling sugar and other dry freight. There are also other industrial

employment opportunities for Township residents who commute to Saginaw or Bay City.

Within the City of Caro are the POET ethanol plant, Harvest Ridge Processing (organic products), and Thumb Industries which manufactures auto fuel systems.

Road and utility assets which would encourage industrial development are somewhat limited within Columbia Township. Class A roads include Highway M-24 which traverses the entire length of the Township as well as Highway M-25 which extends two miles through the northwest part of the Township. Public utilities include the SEMCO gas lines which extend from Akron east across the Township along Elmwood Road to Cass City, as well as a Consumers Energy gas line which extends from M-24 along Dickerson Road to Remington Road. The only significant electrical power lines are the ITC lines extending into Section 36 of the Township on the west side of the Village.

Commercial. The business activities within the Township are primarily located inside the Village of Unionville. These include two insurance agencies, a hair salon, two auto repair shops, a funeral home, a bank, a party store, two bars, a parts store, a laundromat, a bump and paint shop, two antique shops, and a consignment shop. Two other significant quasi-commercial uses within the Village are the American Legion Hall and the Knights of Columbus Hall. Both rent their buildings for various activities and sponsor events. Outside of the Village there is a limited amount of commercial activity. The Unionville Market is located in the Township immediately west of the Village near the intersection of M-25 and Bay City Forestville Road. The only other identified commercial activities are a beauty salon/barber shop on French Road,

an equipment salvage and repair operation on Ashmore Road, and a commercial cell tower on M-25.

Manufactured Housing (Mobile Home) Park. Currently, there is no manufactured housing park within the Township. The Township has provided for such a development by zoning approximately sixteen acres along the south Village boundary. This proximity to the Village would enable such a development to have municipal sewer and water access. At the present time the land is being farmed.

Residential. Most of the single family residential development within the Township is located in the Village of Unionville. In addition, the communities of Colling, Colwood, Columbia Corners, and Ashmore contain a few homes located on original plats of residential lots. Residential rental units are also found within the Village portion of the Township. These include Union Villa Apartments on M-25, Trischler Apartments at the corner of Church Street and M-25, and a number of single family homes which are rented out.

Agriculture. With the exception of the areas identified above, virtually the entire Township is being used for agricultural purposes. In fact, most of the land in the Township is enrolled in the Michigan Farmland Preservation Program (commonly known as PA 116) which commits the land by contract to long-term agricultural use in exchange for certain property tax

benefits. The primary crops grown in the Township include sugar beets, dry beans, colored beans, corn, wheat, and soy beans. There are several organic farms in the Township which raise field crops and livestock. There is an organic processing facility for beans and spelt in the Township. Larger processing plants for crops are located in both Caro and Sebawaing.

Public Land Uses, Facilities, and Services. Most of Columbia Township is privately owned land. However, there are a number of public facilities within the Township. Several of the most significant public services are jointly provided by Columbia Township, the Village of Unionville, and the adjoining townships.

Cooperative services include the Unionville ACW Fire Department (Unionville, Akron, Columbia and Wisner) and the ACW Ambulance Service (Akron, Columbia, and Wisner). The fire hall is located within Unionville Village in a building shared by Village offices, police department and public works department. The fire hall was originally built as a joint effort with the Village and is one-half owned by both units of government. Columbia Township has recently acquired a site containing approximately one acre for future public use such as an ambulance base. It is located in the Village on Lohrer Street immediately east of the fire hall. Both the fire department and the ambulance service are partially financed through a voter approved millage.

In addition to providing general governmental services, Columbia Township also operates the Township Library on Center Street through a voter approved millage. This also serves as the location for Township meetings. The two adjacent lots immediately north of the library have been purchased by the Township for future expansion. Other land owned by the

Township includes two cemeteries. One is located just east of the Village on Graf Road and the other is in the southern part of the Township on Dickerson Road. The only other land owned by the Township is a 29 acre parcel located on Hoppe and Rick Roads and is a former landfill site. The Township currently facilitates garbage and refuse collection by a special assessment levied on all properties generating refuse. This has allowed the Township to discontinue the landfill as well as the transfer station formerly located on the twenty-nine acre site.

The Tuscola County Drain Commission is responsible for certain drains within the Township. The most significant are the Bach and Branches Drain, the Wiscoggin Drain, and the State and Colling Drain. The State and Colling Drains flow into the Sebewaing River and the other two flow into Saginaw Bay. The Tuscola County Road Commission is responsible for the primary roads within the Township while the Township primarily finances local road improvements through voter approved millages (currently three mills). The primary roads are Colling, Colwood, Dickerson and Bay City-Forestville. State highways are M-24 and M-25.

A number of additional public services are made available by the Village of Unionville. Two public parks are located in Unionville. Kemp Park contains a band shell, benches, and a veteran's memorial. The larger Village Park has baseball diamonds, a picnic pavilion, restrooms, a playground, a concession stand and a press box. The Village provides a municipal water system which is served through municipal wells and a water tower. A sewer system is also operated by the Village with the lagoon treatment area located in the Township immediately south of the Village. Other services provided within the Village portion of the Township are the Village Police Department and the Village Department of Public Works. The U.S. Post Office is also located within the Village.

One other significant public land use within the Township consists of over 200 acres of State Game Area land located in the north central part of the Township on Ashmore Road. This land is available for public hunting.

The Township is primarily served by the Unionville Sebewaing Area (USA) school system. However, small portions of the Township are served by the Cass City, Caro, Akron-Fairgrove, and Owen Gage school districts. All but the Owen Gage district are part of the Tuscola Intermediate School District. The only school building located within Columbia Township is the Christ the King Lutheran School which serves children from preschool through 2nd grade.

There are a number of churches within the Township. These include St. Paul Lutheran, St. Peter Lutheran, United Methodist, Moravian, Nazarene, Seventh Day Adventist, and Ministry of the Word. The Ministry occupies the former Unionville School buildings.

Wind Energy. There is currently under development in the Township a major wind energy project sponsored by Consumers Energy. Designated as the Cross Winds Energy Park, the development consists of 19 wind turbines to be located in Columbia Township. There will be an additional 43 turbines in the project located in Akron Township. The total estimated investment by Consumers Energy for the project is \$265 million. The map on page 16 shows the properties currently under lease for wind energy as well as the proposed location of each wind turbine. Columbia Township has adopted an extensive wind energy ordinance to regulate the development in the public interest.

WIND ENERGY MAP



CROSS WINDS ENERGY PARK

HURON COUNTY



LEGEND

- #1 PROPOSED WIND TURBINE GENERATOR
- PROPOSED METEOROLOGICAL TOWER
- PROPOSED ACCESS ROAD
- PROPOSED COLLECTOR SYSTEM
- PARTICIPATING PARCEL
- APPROXIMATE PROJECT BOUNDARY
- WETLAND (PER USFWS NW1 DATABASE, MODIFIED WITH SITE SPECIFIC DETERMINATIONS)
- FLOODPLAIN (PER FEMA WEBSITE)

COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP

PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USES

The Planning Commission has carefully considered the census data, as well as existing development and growth trends, in recommending the appropriate location for future residential, commercial and industrial development. Ample areas have been provided for expansion of each of these land uses. However, it is recognized that the large majority of land in the Township is prime agricultural land which will likely continue to be farmed indefinitely.

Only higher density residential land uses have been identified as to location. The occasional single family home on an acreage parcel will occur throughout the agricultural area. Any manufactured housing (mobile home) park would be located at the south Village boundary along Ainswoth Road. This location provides close access to sewer and water service as well as proximity to Village parks and other municipal services. In addition, there is close access to commercial enterprises to serve residents. Similarly, any subdivision or multiple dwelling development would be located along the east boundary of the Village on Graf Road for the same proximity to public services.

Commercial land uses are proposed to develop along M-25 immediately north of the Village. This area has the highest traffic count in the Township and would be a logical extension of the current commercial activity in the Village.

Industrial development would be encouraged on the west side of the Village on the south side of M-25, which is a Class A road for heavy truck traffic. This 60 acre site is also adjacent to the railroad and would have access to municipal sewer and water.

Columbia Township

MASTER PLAN MAP



- Agriculture and Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- Commercial
- Industrial

TOWNSHIP OF COLUMBIA

TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION ADOPTING MASTER LAND USE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Columbia Township Planning Commission developed a Master Land Use Plan for the Township during 2014 after issuing a Notice of Commencement to all surrounding municipalities and the Tuscola County Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Planning Commission developed the plan based on a review of existing land uses, population data, existing and potential community services, and projected future land use needs; and

WHEREAS, copies of a draft of the proposed Master Land Use Plan were distributed to surrounding municipalities and the Tuscola County Planning Commission on May 20, 2014, as authorized by the Columbia Township Board; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the proposed Master Land Use Plan was held on August 18, 2014 at the Columbia Township Hall after publishing a Notice of Public Hearing in the Tuscola County Advertiser on July 23, 2014; and


WHEREAS, all procedural requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 have been completed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Columbia Township Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2014 Master Land Use Plan for the Township of Columbia.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2014 Master Land Use Plan be referred to the Columbia Township Board for ratification.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

The undersigned Secretary of the Columbia Township Planning Commission hereby certifies that this resolution was duly adopted by a vote of the Planning Commission at a meeting held on the 18th day of August, 2014.


Edward Spannagel
Columbia Township Planning Commission

TOWNSHIP OF COLUMBIA

TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING MASTER LAND USE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Columbia Township Planning Commission developed a Master Land Use Plan for the Township during 2014 after issuing a Notice of Commencement to all surrounding municipalities and the Tuscola County Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Planning Commission developed the plan based on a review of existing land uses, population data, existing and potential community services, and projected future land use needs; and

WHEREAS, copies of a draft of the proposed Master Land Use Plan were distributed to surrounding municipalities and the Tuscola County Planning Commission on May 20, 2014, as authorized by the Columbia Township Board; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the proposed Master Land Use Plan was held on August 18, 2014 at the Columbia Township Hall after publishing a Notice of Public Hearing in the Tuscola County Advertiser on July 23, 2014; and

WHEREAS, all procedural requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 have been completed; and

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Commission has adopted the Master Land Use Plan and has referred it to the Township Board for ratification.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Columbia Township Board hereby accepts the 2014 Master Land Use Plan for the Township of Columbia as previously adopted by the Township Planning Commission.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: 5 Nays: Ø Absent: Ø

The undersigned Clerk of Columbia Township hereby certifies that this resolution was duly adopted by a vote of the Township Board at a meeting held on the 15th day of December, 2014.


Christine Kolar
Columbia Township Clerk