

MEMORANDUM

To: Washington Township Planning Commission

From: Joe Tangari, AICP, Jill Bahm, AICP

Date: 4/5/2023

Re: Public Input Summary & Existing Conditions

Introduction

During 2022, the Planning Commission held numerous public workshops, and the Township administered several surveys to gather input for the Master Plan. As we move further into the plan drafting phase of the project, we should take stock of what we heard and the current lay of the land. An outline of the plan document is provided below, followed by text introducing demographic and other information about the township, and summarizing public input. At the end of the memo, pages from the draft plan showing some of the baseline maps and traffic data are provided to give a feel of the document's visual style.

existing conditions and public input summaries; show document format

Document Outline

1. Executive Summary
2. What Is a Master Plan?
3. History and Regional Setting
4. Demographics
5. Existing Land Use
6. Public Engagement Summary
7. Vision Statement
8. Goals & Objectives
9. Community Facilities Plan
10. Housing Plan
11. Commercial, Office & Industrial Areas Plan
12. Village Center
13. Transportation Plan: Complete Streets, Thoroughfare Plan
14. Future Land Use Plan and Map
15. Implementation Plan, including Zoning Plan
16. Appendices
 - a. Plan Notices and Adoption
 - b. Public Input: Detailed Responses

What Is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a guiding document future development of a community. It addresses future land uses, community development, and other community features in a coordinated fashion, and it includes a clearly stated vision supported by goals and objectives, and an implementation plan with specific action items that will work toward that vision. If followed carefully, the Master Plan will have a lasting impact on the built and natural environment. The Plan will likely be implemented over short-term, medium-term, and long-term timelines as specified in the Implementation Plan.

The Master Plan looks ahead 20 years and plans for projected growth and other change in that timeframe, with reviews and any necessary updates occurring every five years to maintain consistency with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008. The information and concepts presented in the Master Plan are used to guide local decisions on public and private uses of land and the provision of public facilities and services. It should be continually referred to in decision making.

The Washington Township Master Plan includes a Future Land Use Plan as well as other chapters addressing housing, community facilities, transportation and complete streets, and the township's non-residential development areas. The Master Plan enables the Township to address all these related topics in a coordinated fashion.

Demographics

Understanding where we are going necessarily requires understanding where we are and where we have been. Washington Township is a fast-growing community located in one of the primary growth corridors of Macomb County: the M-53 corridor. Development has gradually moved north along this corridor over the decades, and Washington Township is now squarely in the highest-growth area of the corridor.

Washington Township includes part of the Village of Romeo within its borders. All residents who live within the Township borders are Township residents. However, Romeo does its own land use planning, which is the purpose of the master plan. Therefore, since the master plan is primarily focused on land use and the Village makes its own land use decisions, data provided in this plan does not include that for Romeo when it was possible to separate Romeo from the Township. When data is presented that does include Romeo residents, it is noted. Unless otherwise noted, the data used in this plan is from the American Community Survey's 2020 5-year estimates.

Regional Comparison								
	Washington Township	Bruce Township	Romeo	Ray Township	Shelby Township	Oakland Township	Macomb County	Southeast Michigan
Population	26,207	7,328	3,908	4,022	79,840	19,336	870,893	4,747,794
Population growth*	12.7%	7.4%	4.8%	1.1%	7.6%	19.6%	4.8%	2.7%
Persons per acre	1.13	0.32	3.01	0.17	3.55	0.82	2.81	1.61
Households with children	30.3%	22.5%	24.0%	21.9%	27.6%	41.2%	28.2%	28.2%
Senior population	19.5%	23.3%	22.6%	17.4%	20.0%	14.5%	17.0%	16.2%

Regional Comparison								
	Washington Township	Bruce Township	Romeo	Ray Township	Shelby Township	Oakland Township	Macomb County	Southeast Michigan
Non-white population	7.9%	6.3%	17.1%	4.3%	13.1%	15.3%	21.9%	33.6%
Unemployment	5.0%	3.9%	5.2%	1.0%	3.9%	4.6%	5.6%	6.3%
Mean commute time (min)	29.29	32.21	25.44	30.96	28.35	31.41	27.71	26.58
Median household income	\$93,883	\$92,957	\$51,672	\$92,366	\$79,447	\$154,215	\$64,641	\$64,068
Owner occupied housing units	84.6%	94.9%	68.0%	81.5%	76.7%	96.0%	74.1%	68.9%
Vacancy rate	2.4%	2.7%	2.1%	2.7%	3.8%	6.0%	5.0%	9.3%
Single family housing rate	82.4%	91.7%	71.6%	95.4%	76.2%	92.1%	78.3%	75.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	38.2%	30.3%	30.2%	25.0%	35.9%	65.2%	25.9%	33.9%
*Calculated from the 2010 and 2020 decennial census Highest Lowest Above values for Southeast Michigan Below values for Southeast Michigan								

Washington Township Population and Housing Trends

More people, greater diversity

Washington Township's population has grown 12.7% between 2010 and 2020, and there has been a 14.4% increase in housing units. Similar to the rest of the country, the population is aging as those in the Baby Boomer generation reach senior status, and household size is decreasing from 2.74 persons in 2010 to 2.63 in 2020. The Township is more racially diverse than it was in 2010, with a 11.4% non-white population at the time of the 2020 Census compared to 7.7% in 2010.

Population Trends			
	2010	2020	Change
Total population	23,296	26,261	12.7%
Under 18*	5,835	5,698	-2.3%
Under 5*	1,372	1,306	-4.8%
5 to 17*	4,463	4,392	-1.6%
60 and over*	4,812	7,027	46%

Population Trends			
	2010	2020	Change
65 and over*	3,229	5,115	58.4%
65 to 84*	2,991	4,759	59.1%
85 and over*	238	356	49.6%
Race			
White	21,498 (92.3%)	23,279 (88.6%)	-1.2%
Black	33 (1.4%)	288 (1.1%)	-0.3%
Asian American	245 (1.1%)	370 (1.4%)	+0.3%
Multi-racial	251 (1.1%)	859 (3.3%)	+2.2%
Other	42 (0.2%)	104 (0.4%)	+0.2%
Housing units	9,020	10,317	+14.4%
Household size	2.74	2.63	-0.11%
*Indicates ACS 2020 data was used instead of 2020 Census data. 2010 Census data was used in for all variables.			

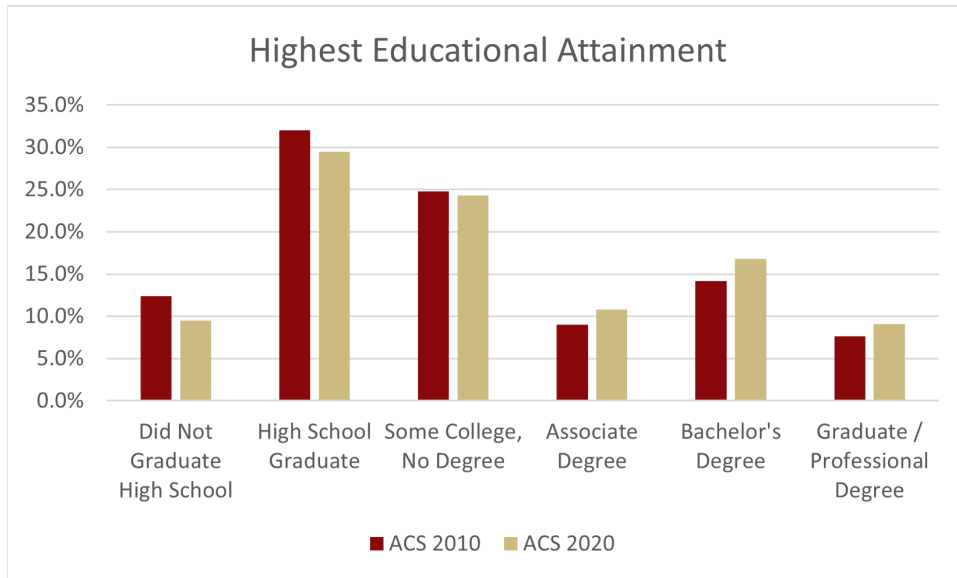
Residents are more financially stable

Measured on both a household and per capita basis, residents in Washington Township are making more money now than they did in 2010. Additionally, smaller proportion of the population and households are in poverty compared to 2010 numbers.

Income Trends			
	2010	2020	Change
Median household income	\$90,987	\$93,883	\$2,896 (+3.2%)
Per capita income	\$40,243	\$44,629	\$4,386 (+10.9%)
Persons in poverty	1,585 (7.1%)	1,161 (4.4%)	-424 (-2.6%)
Households in poverty	528 (6.2%)	531 (5.3%)	+3 (-1.0%)
ACS 5-year estimates were used for both years. 2010 values were adjusted to value in 2020			

A more educated community

A greater share of Township residents graduated from high school in 2020 compared to 2010, and larger proportions went on to complete at least one additional degree.

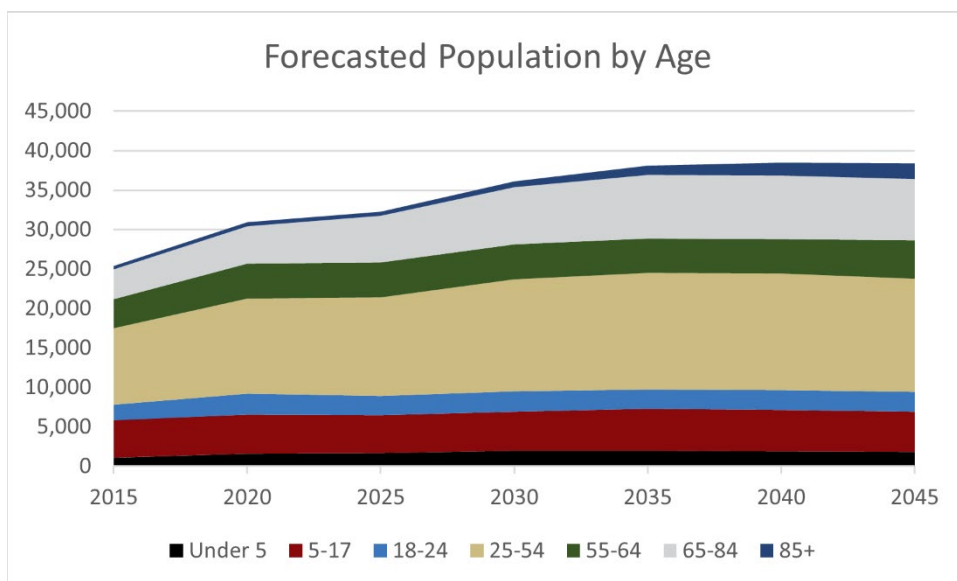


Washington Township 2045 Forecast

SEMCOG creates a forecast for its communities based on current data and trends. Here is what Washington Township can plan for:

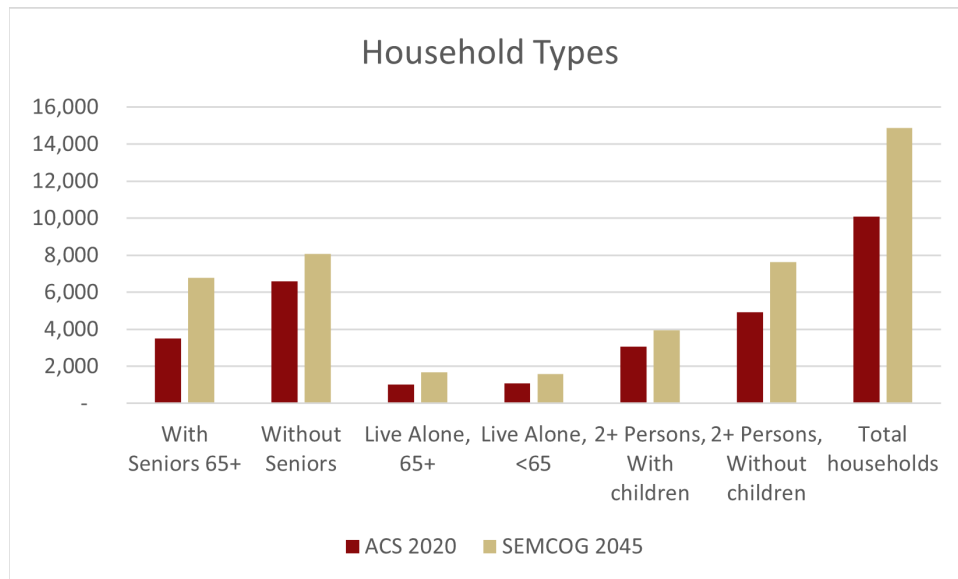
More people, and older people

By 2045, the total population is expected to grow 47% (12,164 persons) from 2020 numbers. The total population is forecasted to be just over 36,000 in 2030, and up to 38,521 in 2040. Much of this growth will be among those in the 65-84 and over 85 age categories. Forecasts show that there will be approximately 12,000 people over the age of 60, with 9,813 over the age of 65 and 2,032 over the age of 85. Youth population shares will continue to decrease, with 5,107 and 1,792 youth ages 5-17 and under 5, respectively, expected by 2045.



An increase in the number of households and a decrease in the number of people in them

The number of occupied housing units in the Township is forecasted to increase from 10,317 counted during the 2020 Census to 14,871. The average household size is expected to continue to fall, from 2.63 persons in 2020 to 2.58 in 2045. A larger share of households will include seniors (65 years or older) and be comprised of two persons without children.



Existing Housing

10,104 Households

2.4% Vacancy rate

\$320,800 Median housing value

82.4% Single family residences

84.6% Owner-occupied

2.59 Average household size

Single-family, owner-occupied housing is the dominant housing type, even though housing values have gone up and rent has not.

Most people live in single family housing, and that is the main type of housing that was built between 2010 and 2020. Most homes are owner occupied. Housing value has increased 1.5% since 2010, while median gross rent has decreased 0.6%. Multi-family units are still a minority of units in the township, but have growth at a higher rate since 2010.

Housing Trends			
	2010	2020	Change
Housing Types			
Single Unit	6,131	7,344	1,213
Multi-Unit	1,760	2,325	565
Mobile homes	726	683	-43
Occupancy Status			
Owner occupied	7,330	8,549	1,219
Renter occupied	1,162	1,555	393
Vacant	528	248	-280
Housing value and rent			
Median housing value	\$315,939	\$320,800	\$4,861
Median gross rent	\$1,122	\$1,116	\$-6

Public Input Summary

Workshops

As Washington Township set out to create its new Master Plan, it established a two-stage process, with stage one focused on outreach and public engagement, and stage two focused on drafting the plan and providing opportunities for comment. Stage one was built around a series of workshops, each with a different informational purpose. Workshops varied somewhat in format, but each included a presentation on a different topic of interest and allowed for feedback from the public, either in a direct discussion format, or via interaction with displays. The following workshops were held:

October, 2021: Kick-Off

This was a kick-off workshop that was intended to explain the purpose of a master plan, the process of creating a master plan, and the various topics to be covered. Some data about the Township was presented at this workshop.

June, 2022: Goals & Objectives/Fair Housing

This workshop focused on a discussion of the goals and objectives of the 2005 Master Plan, and included an informational component about Fair Housing.

- Each set of goals and objectives in the 2005 Master Plan was discussed; discussion focused on continued relevance/progress toward each item.
- Broad agreement that this new plan should strive to build an implementation plan that includes concrete action items.

July, 2022: Community Facilities

This session focused on community facilities, which includes water and sewer infrastructure.

- Many residents in attendance spoke to preserving natural beauty roads and recognizing the historical character of the township, particularly in the old Mount Vernon Village area.
- Others called for some portions of the Township to remain in a rural state as growth continues.

August, 2022: Industrial Development

The August workshop focused on industrial development and addressed trends in industrial development and land use.

- Industrial development is key to the Township's future economic development and tax base.
- Demand for industrial development is high and anticipated to remain so in the near future.
- There was agreement that industrial planning should consider impact mitigation.

September, 2022: Village Center

This session focused on the Village Center area, with discussion revolving around what is going well and what could be going better.

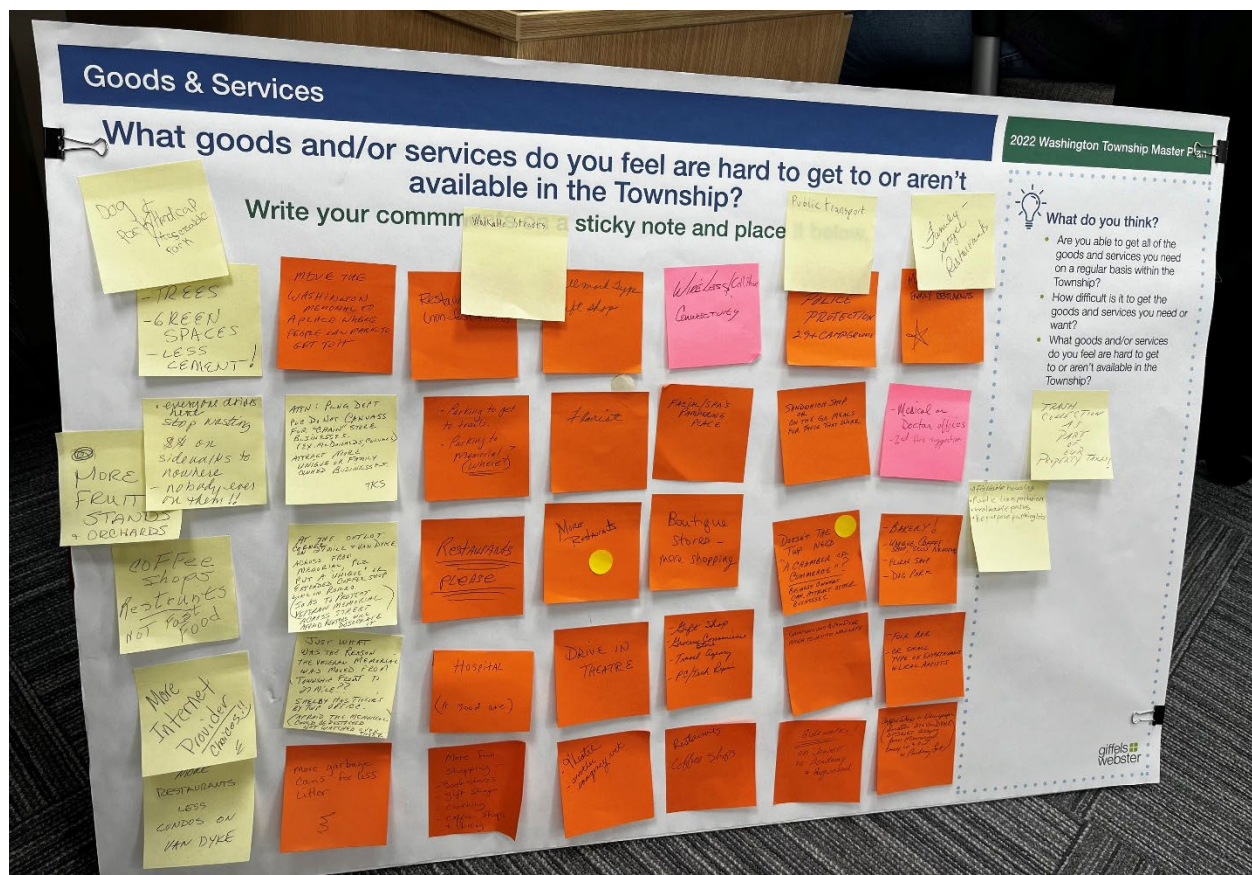
- In general, it was felt that progress has been made, history is being respected, and road widening should be avoided.
- However, traffic remained a major concern and must be addressed in planning.
- Public input indicated support for more concerted efforts, including establishment of a DDA; emphasis on need for a cohesive district.

October, 2022: Other Commercial Development

The October workshop focused on our commercial development outside the Village Center area.

- General agreement that more retail/office services are coming to the Township; residents were given the opportunity to tell us what they'd like to see.
- Attention should be given to the look and feel of this development, as well as buffering from neighboring residential uses.

[plan document includes photos of boards such as the example below, and appendix has full transcribed responses]



November, 2022: Summary Session

This workshop provided a summary of planning efforts to date and laid out a road map for completion of the plan.

Surveys and Major Themes of Input

The Township conducted three online surveys, each of which was a complement to a workshop. Complete results from each survey are included in the appendix to this plan. Generally, the survey results mirrored the discussion at the workshops, with several major themes emerging:

1. Preserving the Township's natural environment and rural character to the extent possible is important to many residents. Township residents understand that the township is growing and that, in a sense, it is the current frontier for growth in the M-53 corridor, and most input received called for balancing that growth with consideration for historical resources, terrain, habitat, and agriculture.
2. Traffic is a major concern. Most major roads in the Township are considered by respondents to be at least somewhat dangerous, either due to high speeds, congestion, or other factors. As development continues, finding ways to mitigate vehicle volumes and conflicts, both with other vehicles and other road users (including wildlife) will be an important consideration.
3. Most residents would like to see greater availability of goods and services, entertainment, and other commerce in the Township, but would like it to be concentrated in corridors that already have a relatively high level of development, rather than spreading away from Van Dyke, M-53, and 26 Mile Rd.

4. New development should be in harmony with existing development. For some residents, this means concentrating higher intensity development in specific areas, away from lower-density development, while for others, this means concentrating on transitions between uses that will minimize impacts of new development.
5. The development of a village center remains a worthy goal, but it must consider the external impacts of one area of the Township becoming much more built up than the rest. A central organizing authority for the village center, such as a DDA, may be necessary to guide its development as a cohesive district.

Final Open House and Comment Period

[has not yet occurred; will be filled in]

Vision Statement

As a reminder, this is the vision statement for the plan.

As Washington Township continues to grow, new development will occur in a planned manner that respects the history, natural environment, and rural character of the community and preserves agricultural uses even as it acknowledges the need for progress. Washington Township's future will be built on a strong, diverse economy, housing opportunities that serve an array of needs, a high quality of life, and well-managed growth.

Goals and Objectives

Draft objectives have been established under each goal. Note that the "quality of life" goal has been removed from the list of goals and incorporated into the vision statement.

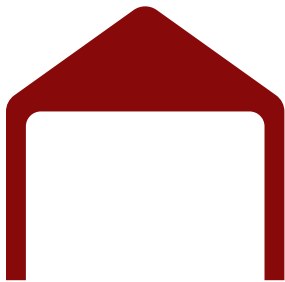
1. Economic Development. The Township will work to make itself attractive to businesses with the potential to provide professional employment opportunities, and plan to provide land for their facilities.
 - a. Track the supply of available land for industrial and commercial development, and ensure that an adequate supply exists.
 - b. Develop a comprehensive capital improvement plan that accounts for the provision and maintenance of critical infrastructure to support commerce.
 - c. Work with the County to target industrial investment in the Township.
 - d. Pursue the expansion of broadband service to underserved areas of the Township.
2. Access to Services. The Township will ensure that land is available for commercial development that provides services to residents in appropriate locations.
 - a. Concentrate commercial and industrial development in the primary non-residential corridors around Van Dyke and M-53, and along 26 Mile Road.
 - b. Facilitate the redevelopment, modernization, or revitalization of older commercial properties to prevent gaps in service from arising.
 - c. Work with businesses via zoning and other methods to permit outdoor uses, such as dining terraces, in a way that balances commercial demands with aesthetic concerns and the needs of nearby residents for a peaceful environment.

3. Housing. The Township will provide and permit housing that serves a variety of needs, facilitates aging in place, and offers a high level of quality and aesthetic appeal.
 - a. The Township will ensure that its zoning ordinance facilitates the construction of senior housing.
 - b. The Township will permit state-licensed residential care facilities and make reasonable accommodations for housing the disabled.
 - c. Where possible, the Township will seek opportunities to provide housing that is attainable for a variety of income levels.
4. Environmental Quality. New development and redevelopment, when it occurs, will respect the natural environment and preserve its important features to the maximum extent possible.
 - a. Evaluate environmental regulations regularly to ensure they are accomplishing their stated goals.
 - b. Work to preserve a dark night sky by evaluating lighting regulations.
 - c. Protect the Clinton River watershed from pollution.
 - d. Evaluate the effectiveness and enforceability of the Township's performance standards for industrial and commercial development.
 - e. Use open space preservation options in the Zoning Ordinance to preserve wetlands and important woodlands and topography. Consider an ordinance to protect wetlands not regulated by EGLE.
 - f. Consider an ordinance to address repair and maintenance of septic fields.
 - g. Consider implementing more green infrastructure on development sites that will pre-filter runoff and reduce the burden on the storm sewer system.
 - h. Develop standards for the appearance and landscaping of detention ponds to make these feel more integrated into the natural topography of the site; strive for a more natural look to these site features.
 - i. Develop regulations for large solar energy installations.
5. Transportation. The Township's road and pathway system will provide safe and efficient circulation for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. Road design will respect the context of the area surrounding the road.
 - a. Prioritize public safety in all transportation planning.
 - b. Use traffic studies and development impact statements to manage the growth of traffic in high-development areas.
 - c. Consider ways to provide paths for vehicular travel that are not concentrated on principal thoroughfares.
 - d. Continue to require and build out the Township's multi-use pathway system.
 - e. Manage site access to improve traffic safety. Consider the role that cross-access and frontage or backage roads might play in reducing turning movements onto and off of major thoroughfares.
 - f. Encourage or require pedestrian connections between neighboring subdivisions, and pedestrian circulation within subdivisions.
 - g. Incentivize the provision of bicycle parking facilities in commercial and mixed-use developments.
 - h. Engage with state and county authorities for improvements in access to and across M-53, with an emphasis on safety and mobility within the Township.
 - i. Continue to provide more access points and trailheads for the Macomb-Orchard Trail.
6. Community Facilities and Services. The Township will provide high-quality facilities and services that meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

- a. Plan to accommodate coming growth by acquiring land for future facilities, understanding areas of future demand, and engaging in capital improvement planning for those future facilities.
 - b. Maintain an up-to-date Parks and Recreation Plan and monitor opportunities for grants to improve or acquire new facilities. Consider small area parks as well as larger facilities that serve the whole Township, and continue to work with Bruce Township and Village of Romeo on collaborative efforts to provide recreation facilities.
 - c. Continue to provide information to residents in an open, transparent manner through the Township website.
- 7. Unique Places. The Township will recognize its unique areas and sites, including its historical, agricultural, natural, and principal commercial or mixed use areas and support their future development in accordance with each of their needs and characters.
 - a. Support the survival of existing agricultural uses by enabling reasonable agribusiness and agritourism uses and supporting farm-to-table uses.
 - b. Encourage the development of relationships between the local agricultural community and business community, to support local food production.
 - c. Protect the Township's historical assets, including historic buildings, districts, and scenic areas.
 - d. Invest in improvements to the Village Center area that will help create a cohesive district. Consider establishing a DDA and TIF district to finance and direct these improvements.
- 8. Harmonious Development. Where more intense uses are developed close to less intense uses, screening, setbacks, and other measures will be used to ensure that potential negative impacts are minimized.
 - a. Review landscaping and screening standards, including wall and fence requirements, to ensure that they truly provide an effective buffer between disparate uses, and that landscaping treatments are consistent throughout the Township.
 - b. Ensure that screening landscaping is maintained in good health, and replaced when necessary.
 - c. Where natural vegetation can be preserved to provide a buffer between uses, regulations should encourage and facilitate that preservation.
 - d. Analyze the physical relationships between zoning districts and provide for transitional zoning where possible.
 - e. Review lighting, noise, and nuisance regulations to reduce the impact of more intensive uses on less intensive uses.

Crash Data

SEMOG collects crash data and provides analysis to support local communities to create safer roadways for everyone. The following statistics are based on data gathered between January 2012 and December 2021 for Washington Township.



5,704

Total number of crashes

Crash Severity	Number
Fatal	8
A-Level	63
B-Level	285
C-Level	755
Total ABC	1,103
PDO	4,593
A-level: a crash in which the worst injury that occurred was a serious injury	
B-level: a crash in which the worst injury that occurred was a minor injury	
C-level: a crash in which the worst injury that occurred was a possible injury	
PDO: a crash which resulted in property damage only	

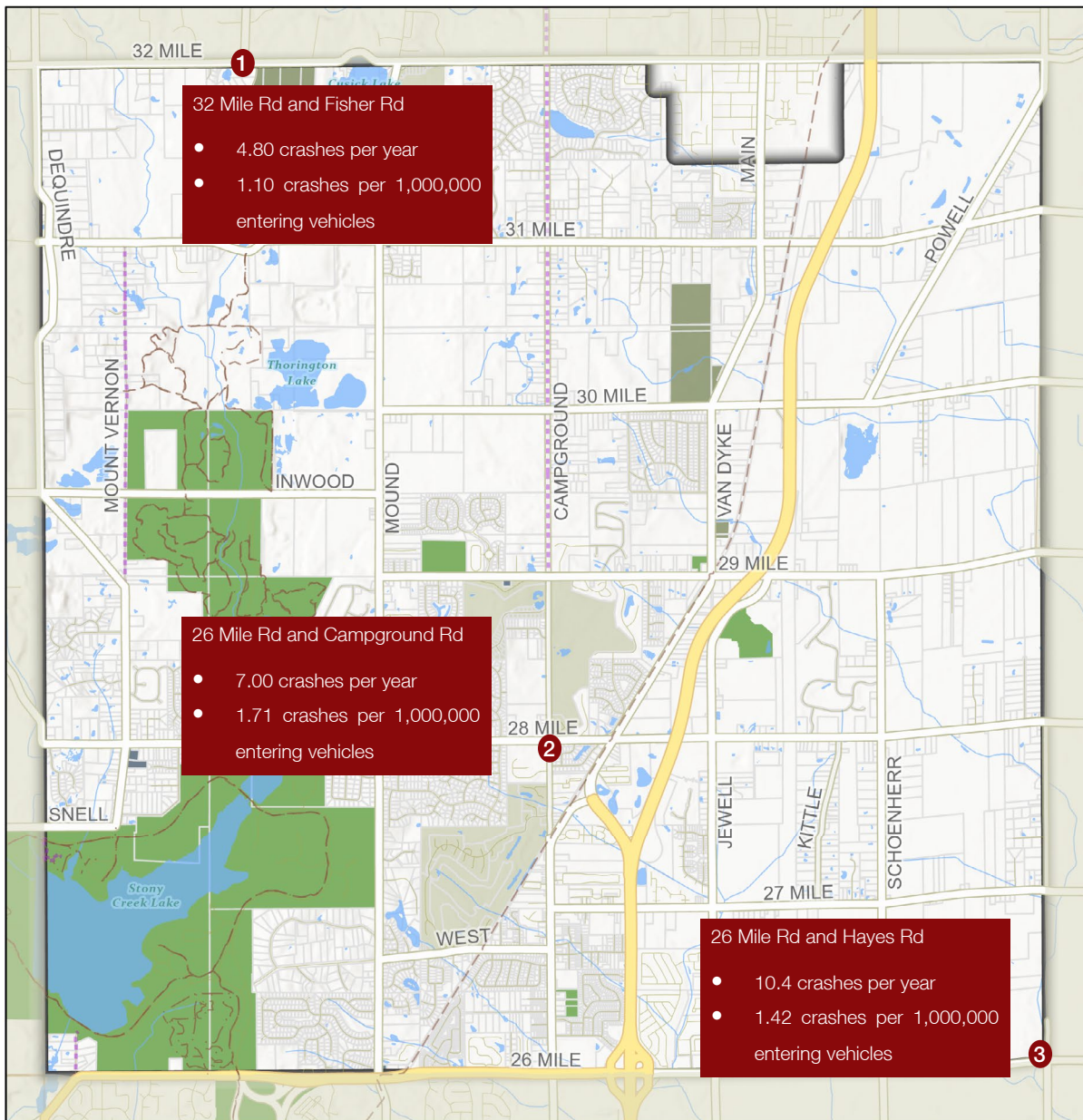
Top 5 types of crashes:

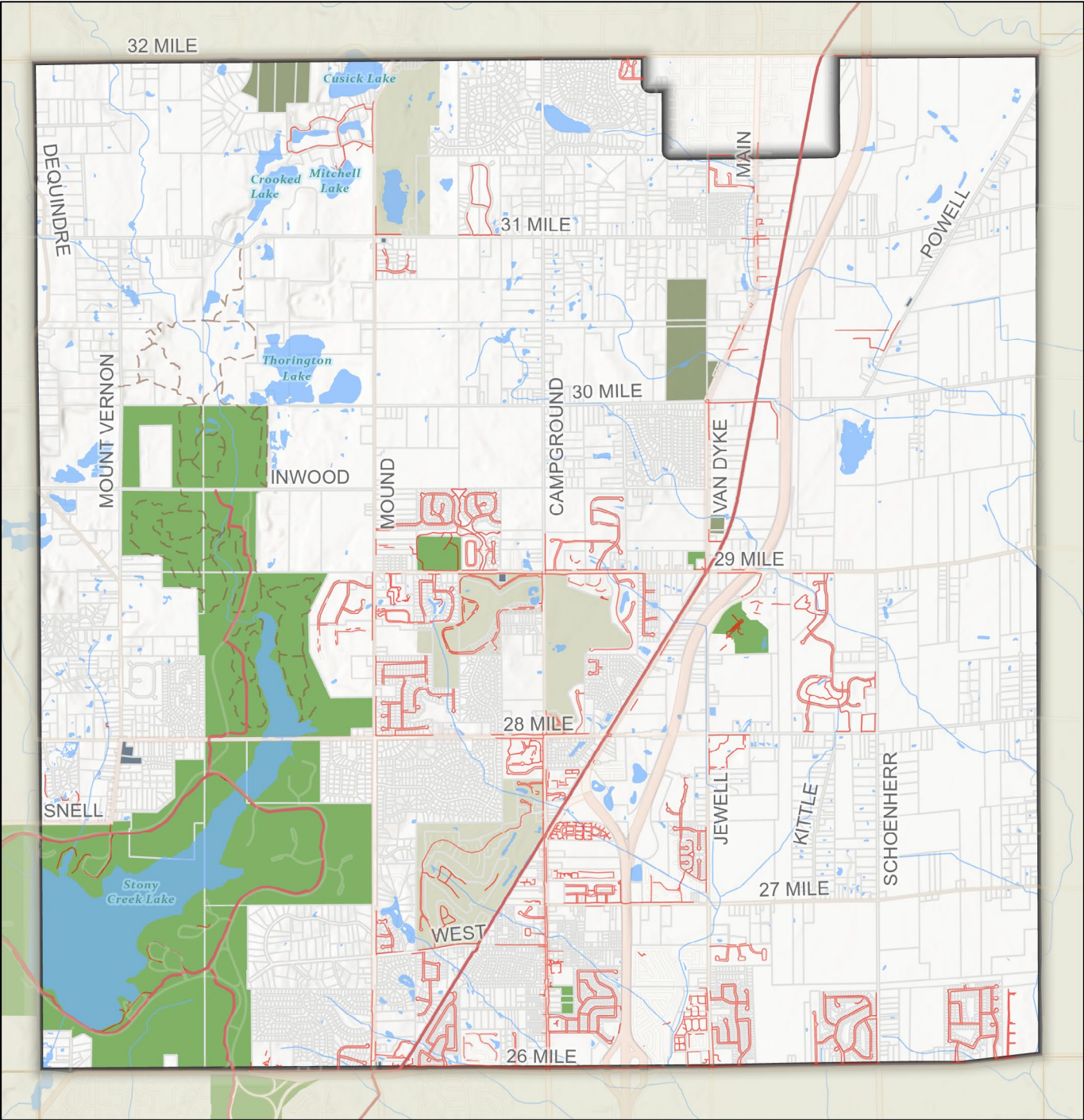
1. Rear end (29.5%)
2. Single vehicle (28.5%)
3. Angle (16.3%)
4. Sideswipe - same direction (10.4%)
5. Other/unknown (8.0%)



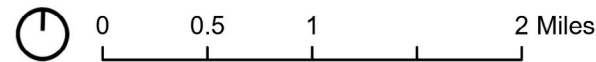
High Priority Crash Areas

SEMOG uses crash data to identify and prioritize areas for improvements to reduce crashes and improve safety. The following intersections have been identified as high-priority crash areas due to their disproportionate number of crashes and potential to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries between 2016 and 2020.





Data Source: Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA. Roads, Trails, and Parks: SEMCOG 2022. Map Exported: July 25, 2022. ©2022 Giffels Webster.

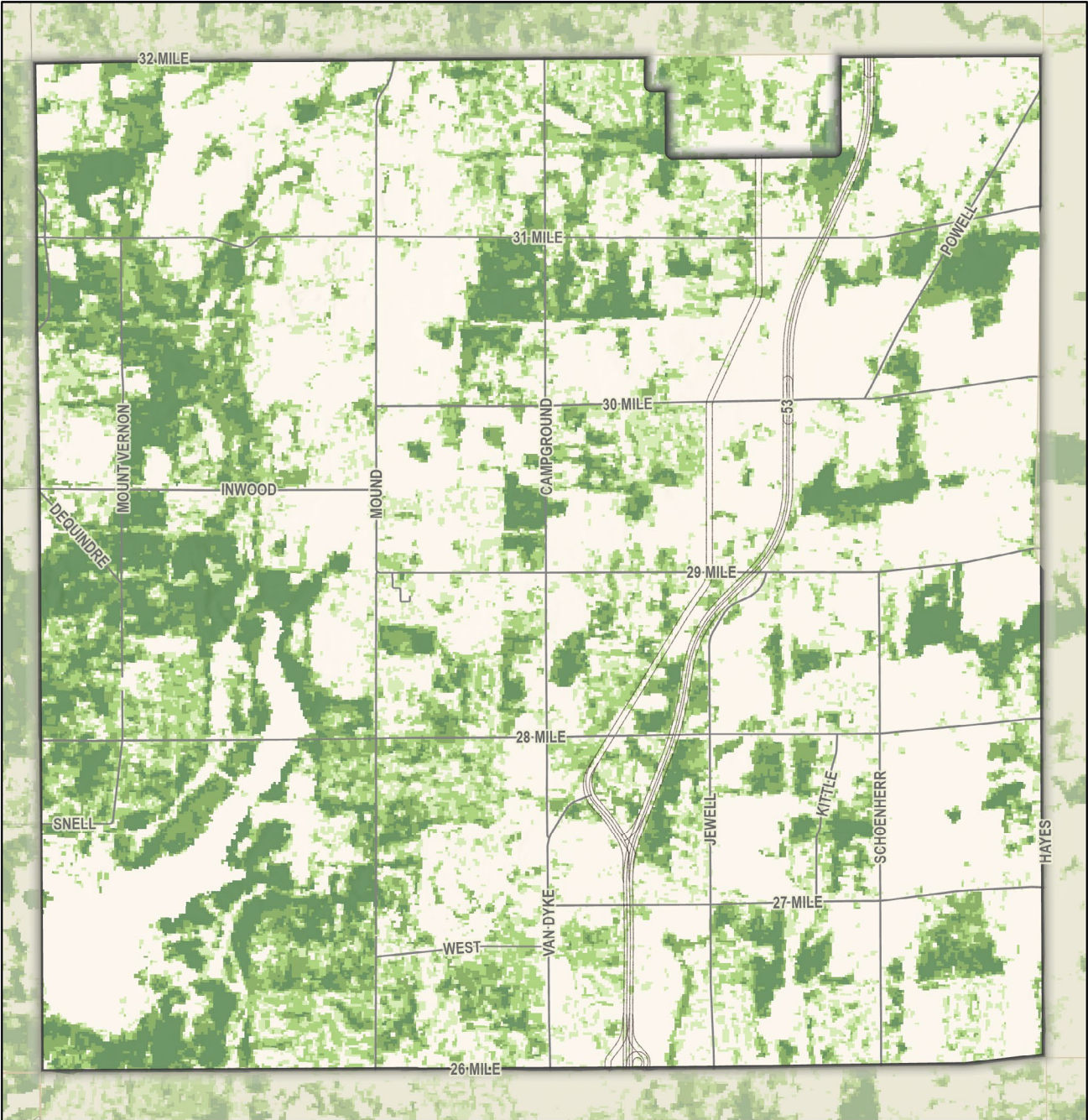


- Trails
- Sidewalks
- Main Trails

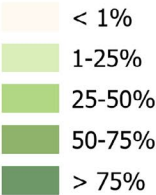
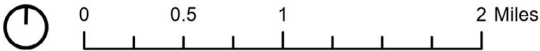


Environmental Quality

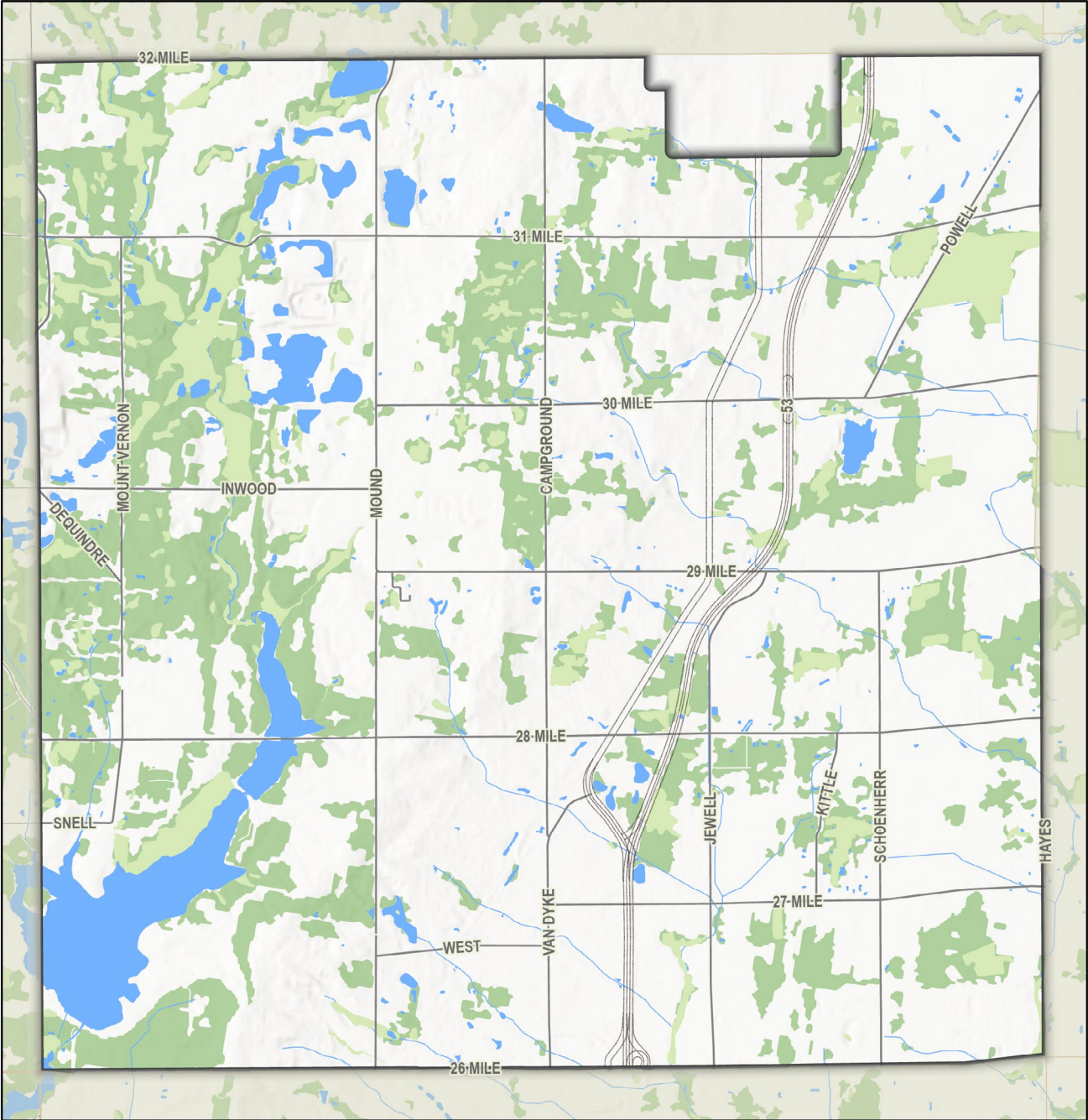




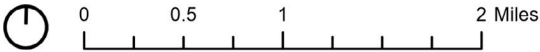
Data Source: Esri, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA. USA NLCD Tree Canopy. Roads and Parks: SEMCOG 2022. ©2022 Giffels Webster.



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
TREE CANOPY

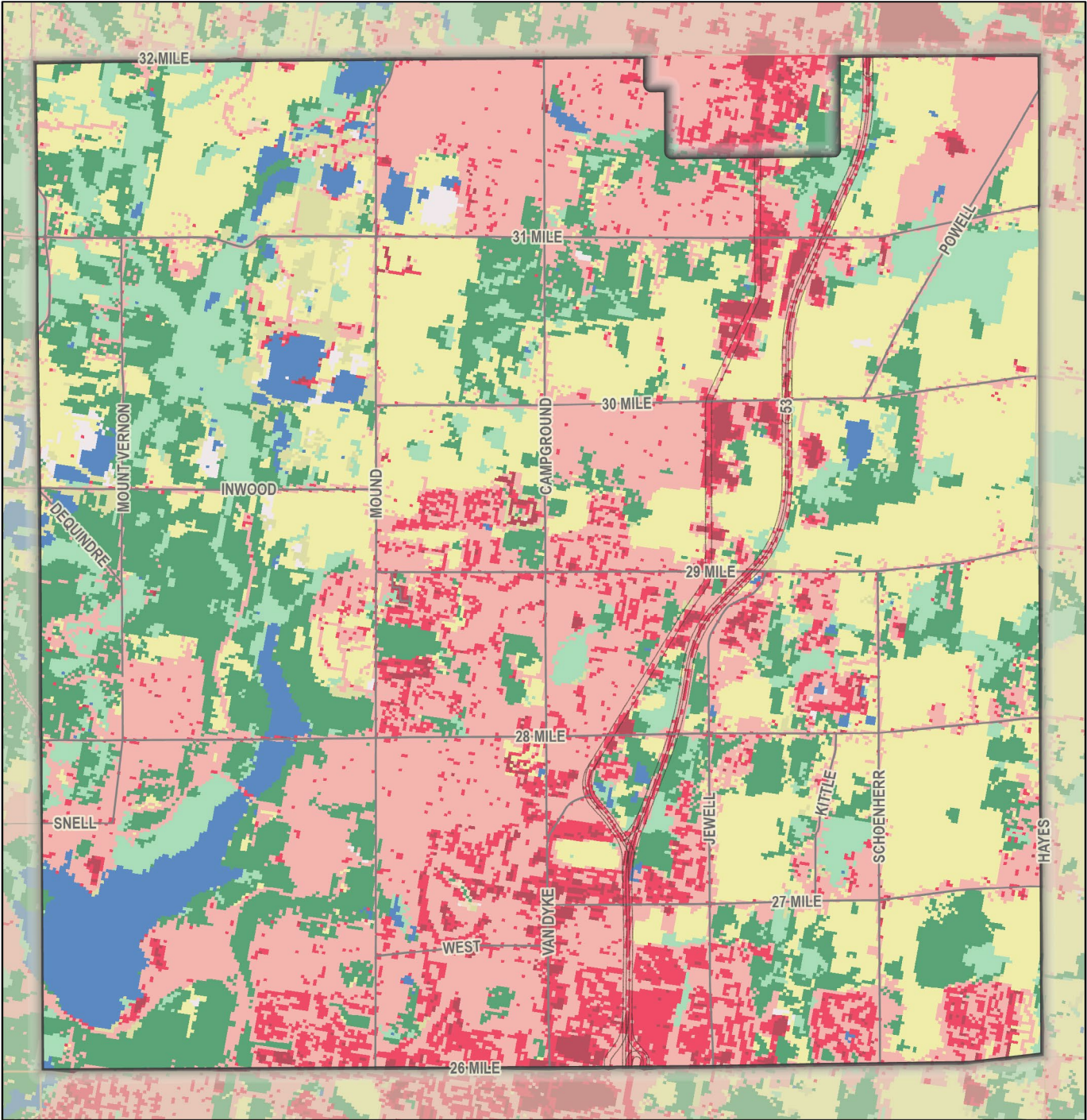


Data Source: Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA. Wetlands and Woodlands: National Wetlands Inventory. Roads and Parks: SEMCOG 2022. ©2022 Giffels Webster.

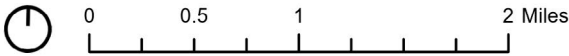


- Woodlands
- Wetlands
- Rivers and Lakes





Data Source: Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA. USA NLCD Land Cover. Roads and Parks: SEMCOG 2022. ©2022 Giffels Webster.

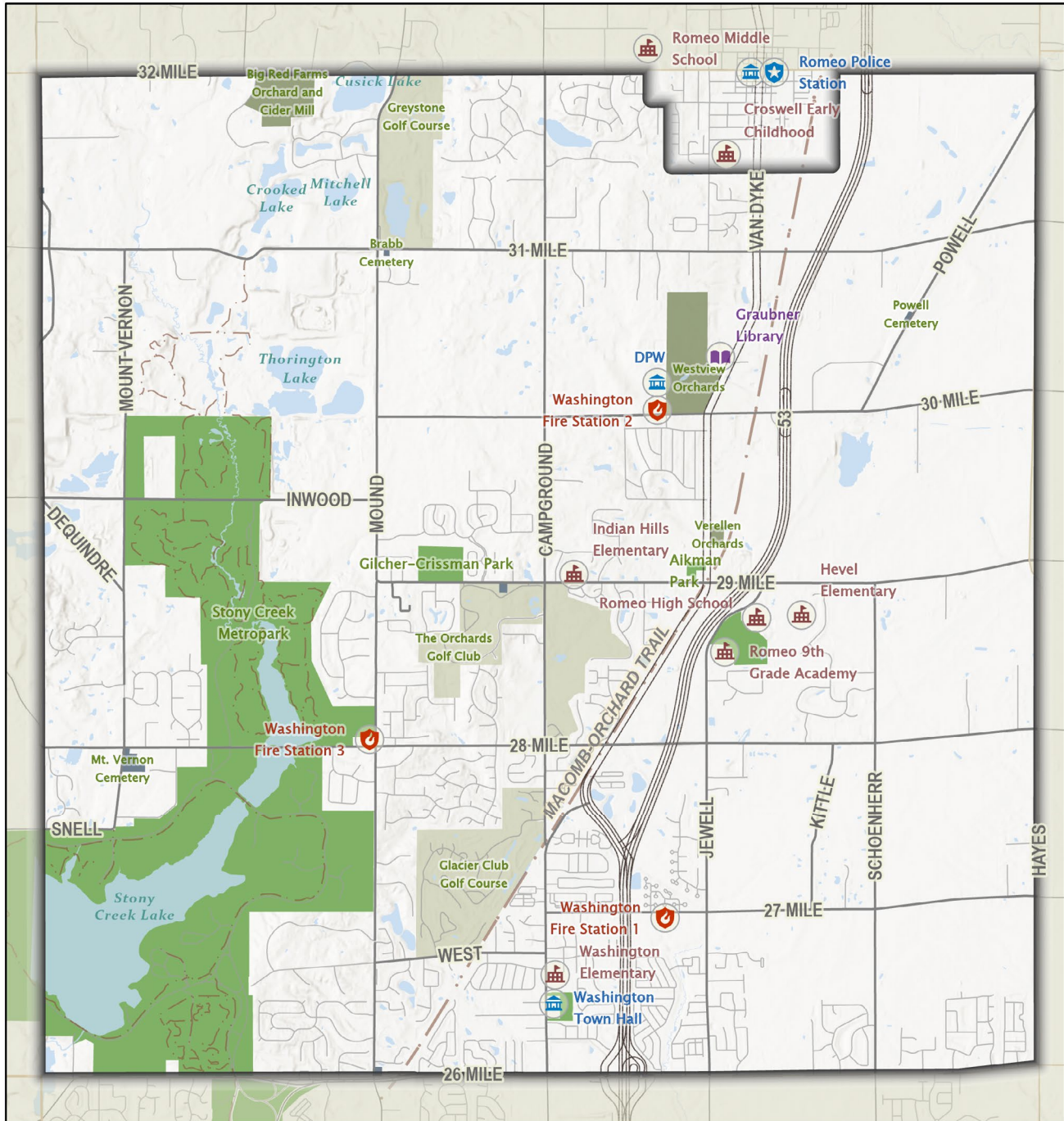


- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Low Intensity | Cultivated Crops |
| Medium Intensity | Wetland |
| High Intensity | Open Water |
| Mixed Forest | Barren Land |
| Shrublands | |
| Grasslands | |

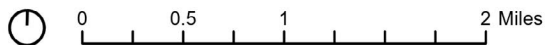


WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES



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- LIBRARIES
- SCHOOLS
- FIRE STATIONS
- MUNICIPAL OFFICES
- POLICE STATIONS
- PARKS
- ORCHARDS
- GOLF COURSES
- CEMETERIES
- TRAIL PATH