



Land Use

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Land Use

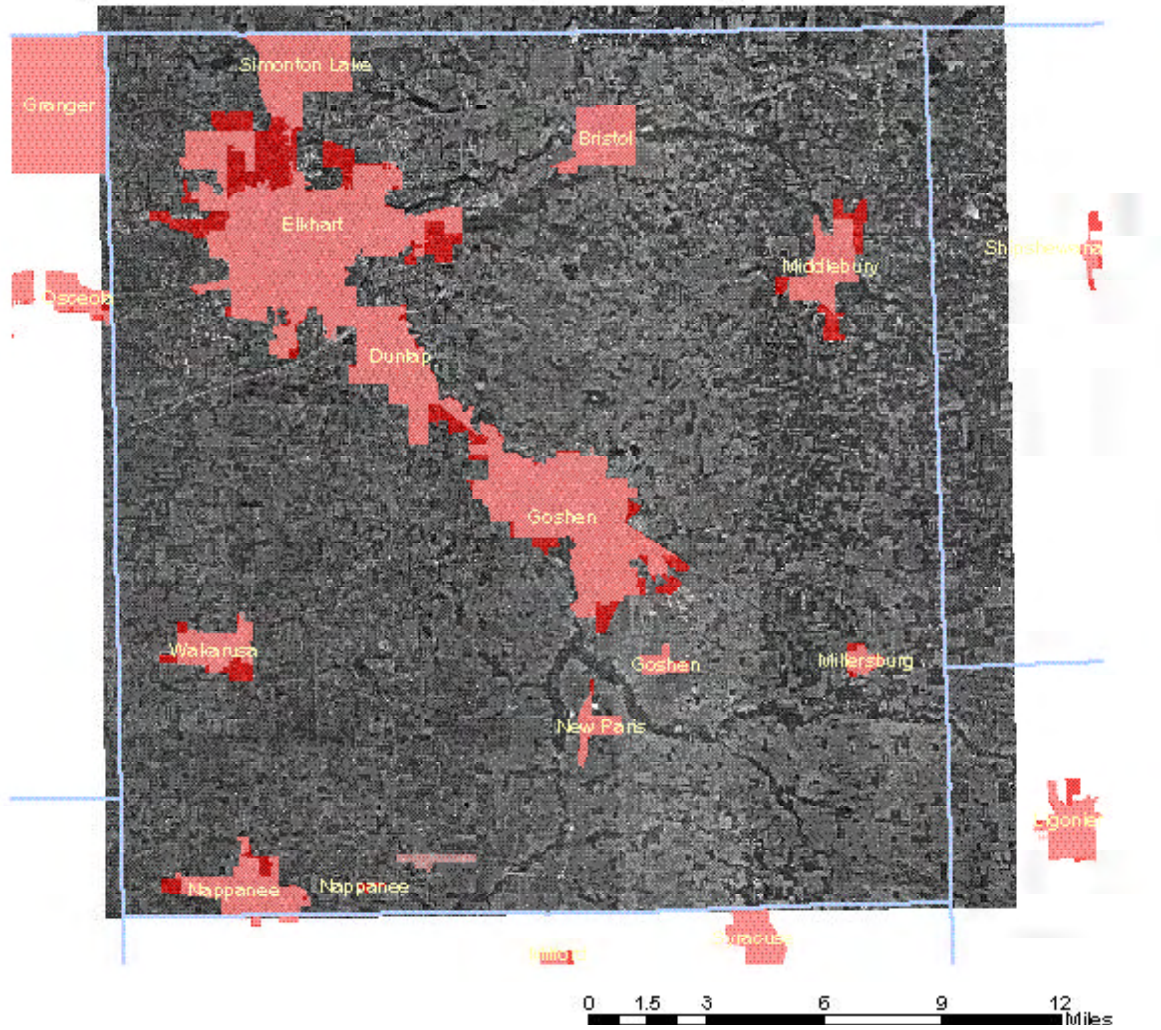
For the most part, Elkhart County population growth consistently outpaced the growth of the state and nation during the 20th century. Decennial increases hit a high of 26.4 percent between 1950 and 1960, and were more than double the state with an increase of 17.0 percent between 1990 and 2000. Although there are indications that the county's population growth rate will slow during the next twenty years, it is still projected that the county will grow by 15.4 percent between 2000 and 2010.

Growth from 1990 to 2000 showed a decentralization movement with the highest growth rates occurring in the less dense areas of the county. Although higher density areas in 2000 were still concentrated in the central Elkhart and central Goshen areas, the highest growth rates were found to the east of Elkhart and to the southwest of Goshen. Growth rates in the Bristol area were as high as 42.2 percent while growth rates directly east of Elkhart and southwest of Goshen ranged from 27.2 to 34.8 percent. Central Elkhart saw stagnant growth with growth rates between -2.3 and 5.2 percent. High growth rates outside of the central cities indicate a trend of continuing decentralization within the county.



This decentralization of the population has impacts in terms of future land use and development especially when impacting the county's agricultural heritage. The character of the countryside is quickly changing as farmland is converted into large lot and small cluster residential development. This type of growth is apparent throughout the county. Although the conversion of agricultural land, in its own right, is just the result of market forces and the movement of the urban boundary, it does represent risks to prime farmland. Prime farmland are classified lands that have a combination of soil type, drainage and crop yields which normally result in the highest economic return for farm production. These lands are also prime for development for many of the same reasons.

Most of the county's prime farmland is located in the southern two-thirds of the county. Growth pressures from Elkhart, Bristol, and Goshen are threatening a good portion of this prime farmland. If the county feels that the protection of prime farmland is of importance, development controls will need to be implemented to better guide development to more suitable locations.

Corporate Boundary Change 1990 - 2000



Legend

-  County Boundaries
-  1990 Boundary
-  2000 Boundary

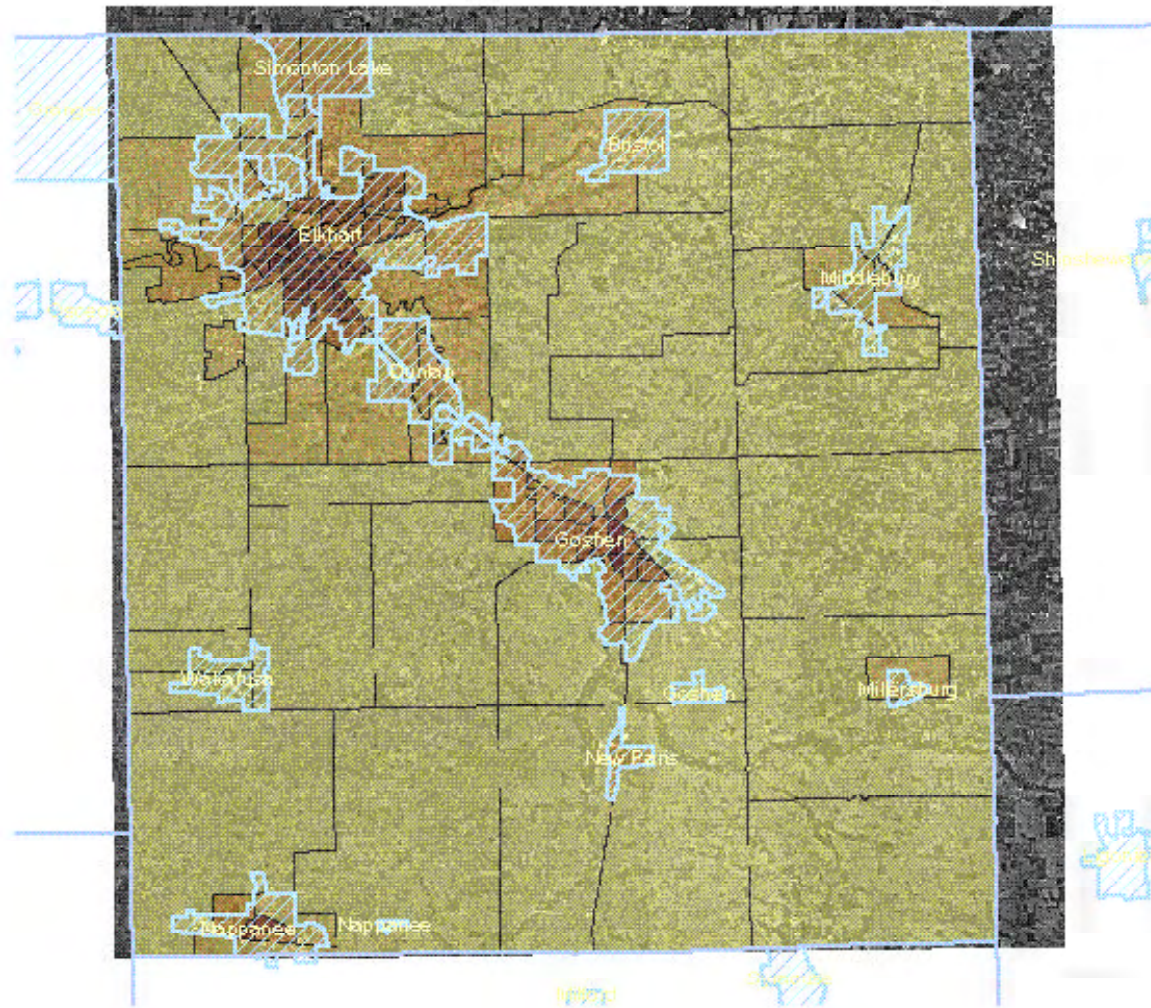
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2000 Population Density



Legend

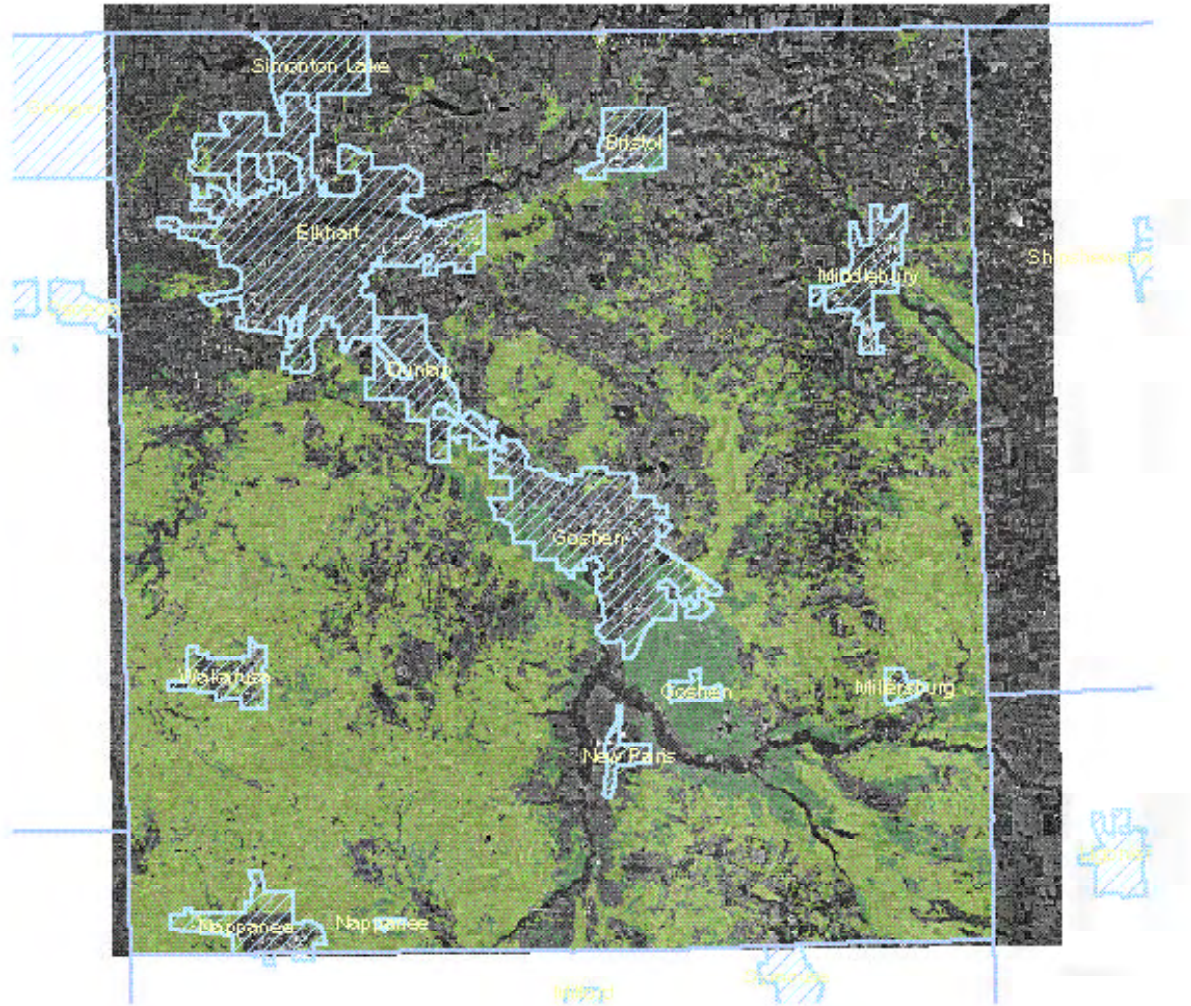
| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| County Boundaries | 959 - 1710 |
| Corporate Boundaries | 1711 - 2716 |
| TGR.TGR_GROUP.DENSITY | 2717 - 4096 |
| 41 - 396 | 4099 - 6493 |
| 399 - 956 | 6494 - 12206 |



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Prime Farmland



Legend

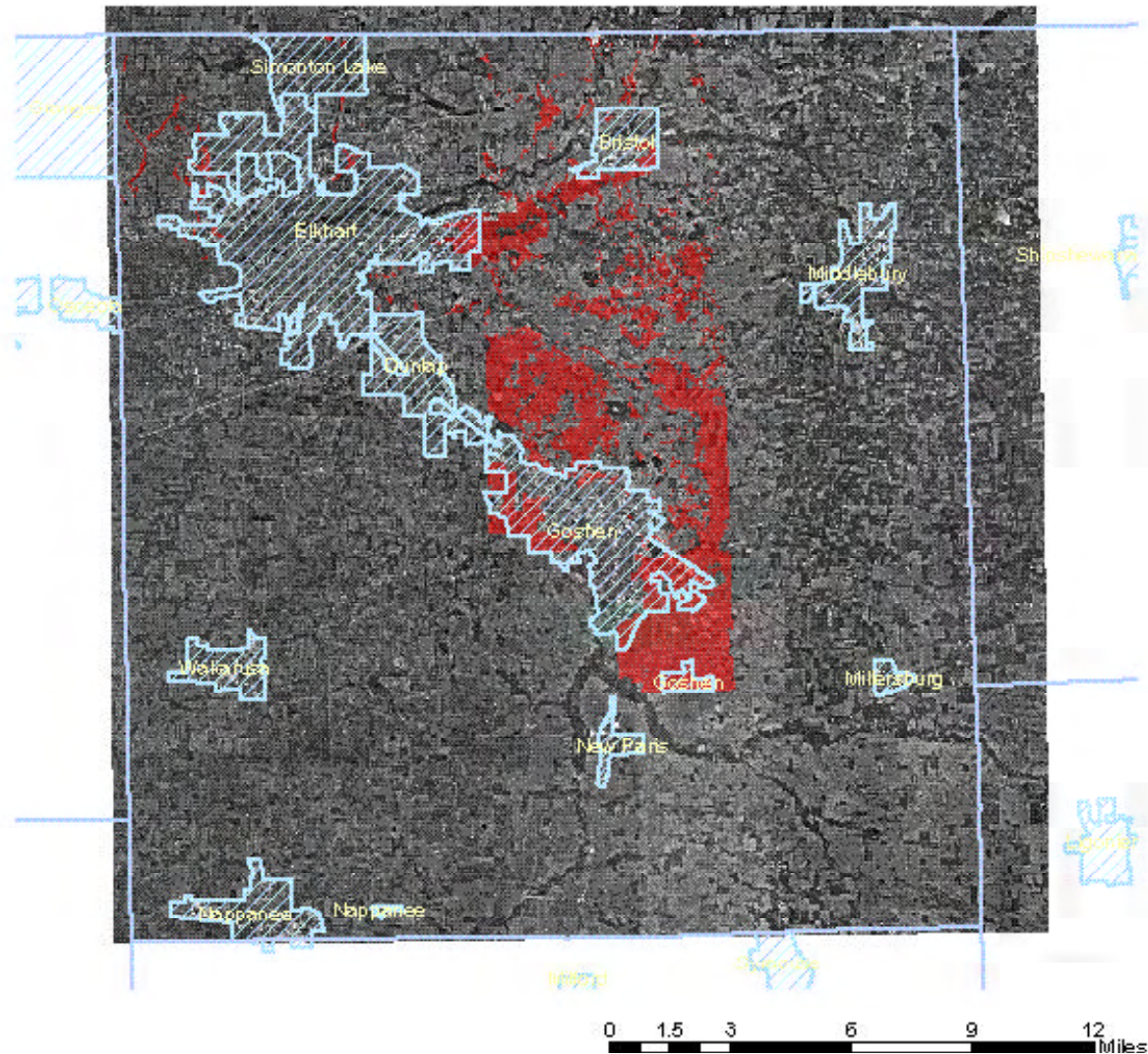
-  County Boundaries
-  Corporate Boundaries
- mapunit.primfml**
-  Prime Farmland
-  Prime Farmland if Drained
-  Prime Farmland if Drained and Flood Protected

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Threatened Prime Farmland



Legend

- County Boundaries
- Corporate Boundaries
- Threatened Prime Farmland



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