

GENERAL INFORMATION AND HISTORY ABOUT WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

Townships first came into existence in Michigan through the Northwest Ordinance passed in 1787. Under this ordinance, Township boundaries were arbitrarily drawn on maps to facilitate the surveying and conveyance of land. Effort was made to make townships approximately 36 square miles in area; usually section 16 was aside for the support of schools. The general tendency was for the Clerk's Office to become the first full-time office in the Township government.

West Bloomfield Township was created by an Act of the Legislative Council on April 22, 1833. It remained a General Law Township until April 1, 1982 when it became a Charter Township by approval of a resolution. The difference between a General Law Township and a Charter Township is that General Law Township taxes cannot be raised without a favorable vote of the electorate, while the Township Board can levy up to 5 mills for municipal purposes in a Charter Township.

Township government is conducted by a Township Board consisting of 7 elected members: The Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer, who run the daily business, plus 4 Trustees. The Board makes appointments, adopts a budget, ordinances, and in its broad legislative capacity, adopts appropriate ordinances regulating public health, safety, and the general welfare of persons and property, fire and police protection, traffic and parking of vehicles, land use under zoning procedures, a nationally recognized building code, subdivision control, weed control, used car lots, bond financing and miscellaneous other subjects and enters into contracts. It has the discretion to recommend or not recommend new liquor licenses or the renewal of existing licenses.

West Bloomfield has a land area of 31.16 square miles or 19,948 acres. Situated within the Township borders are the City of Orchard Lake Village, the City of Keego Harbor, and the City of Sylvan Lake.

West Bloomfield is located in a glacial moraine.

West Bloomfield has 25 lakes that cover 1858.7 acres or 14.3% of land use. We have more lakes and ponds than that of any other township in the United States except for one in Minnesota.

Pine Lake Cemetery, dating back to 1831, is located north of Lone Pine Road on Middlebelt Road. Charles Lindbergh's mother is one of the people buried in the small cemetery as well as baseball great, Norman Cash. The Hosner Cemetery, located on Farmington Road between 14 and 15 Mile Roads, dates back to 1836 and has an historical designation.

When women won the right to vote in 1924, opinion was that it would never last; therefore, the women were listed in one voter registration book while men were listed in another.

After the third motion by the Township Board, (old) Town Hall, 4460 Orchard Lake Road, was proposed to be constructed in 1927 at a cost of \$40,000.00.

The Township Planning Commission adopted its first Master Plan in 1966. The Plan was updated in November 1975, and underwent revisions in 1983, 1989 and 1994 and 2005.

The Township bought 99 acres of land in Section 22 with Federal Revenue Sharing Funds in December of 1973 for future construction of a Civic Center. Construction on the new Town Hall was completed and opened in Fall 1989.

The Township observed our country's bicentennial celebration in 1976. The Township celebrated its Sesquicentennial (150th) Birthday in 1983. The Township celebrates its centeseptuquary (175th) Birthday in 1988.

West Bloomfield Township was struck by an ice storm on March 2, 1976 and again on March 14, 1997 (the worst in state history). A tornado struck on March 20, 1976, killing one person, damaging and/or destroying ninety-five residences. This tornado was largely responsible for the initiation of the tornado warning system in Oakland County.

The Wetlands Ordinance was adopted by the Township Board on May 16, 1977. The Woodlands Ordinance was adopted in April 1986.

The Fire Department's emergency Medical Services began operating May 1, 1978, with 2 rescue units and 14 trained personnel.

The Fire Department now has six fully-manned stations:

- Station #1 -4601 Orchard Lake Road
- Station #2 -6925 Maple Road which was opened in the early part of 1984
- Station #3 -3340 Green Lake Road
- Station #4 -5842 Greer Road
- Station #5 - MAIN STATION – 5425 W. Maple
- Station #9 - TRI-CITY – 3300 Orchard Lake Road

The major lakes in West Bloomfield are:

Bloomfield Lake	5.6 acres
Brookfield Lake	4 to 5 acres
Cass Lake	1,280 acres, 123 ft. max. depth -largest lake in Oakland County

Cross Lake	7.3 acres
Darb Lake	16.5 acres
Flanders Lake	9.6 acres
Fox Lake	6.2 acres
Green Lake	166 acres, 65 ft. depth
Hammond Lake	85 acres
Lake Marion	6 acres
Middle Straits Lake	171 acres, 55 ft. depth
Mirror Lake	11 acres, 25 ft. depth
Moon Lake	3.7 acres
Morris Lake	15 acres
Orchard Lake	788 acres, 110ft. depth -Public Access
Pine Lake	395 acres, 90 ft. depth
Pleasant Lake	41
Rockwell Lake	2.7 acres
Scotch Lake	9.3 acres
Simpson Lake	13.2 acres
Union Lake	465 acres, 102 ft. depth
Upper Straits Lake	323 acres, 96 ft. depth
Walnut Lake	232 acres, 101 ft. depth
West Bloomfield Lake	12 acres
Woodpecker Lake	16 acres

There are three river basins in West Bloomfield: the Clinton, the Huron and the Rouge.

West Bloomfield has land border with Commerce Township, Waterford Township, Bloomfield Township, City of Farmington Hills, Cities of Orchard Lake Village, Keego Harbor and Sylvan Lake.

The City of Sylvan Lake was inforporated in 1947.

The City of Keego Harbor was incorporated in 1955.

The City of Orchard Lake Village was incorporated in 1964.

Population figures for West Bloomfield are:

1940	5,597
1950	8,720
1960	13,867
1970	28,563
1976 ...MID DECADE	36,316
1980	41,934
1987 ...MID DECADE.....	48,398
1990	54,516

1997 ...MID DECADE..... 61,129
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Roads are under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission for Oakland County at 248-858-4804). Private roads are maintained by property owners.

James Herrington and Benjamin Irish were the first residents in 1823.

The first post office was established in 1832 at the home of John Ellenwood, the second Township Supervisor.

The Police Department was established in 1920 with one officer.

West Bloomfield switched its method of voting from printer pack voting machines to punch card voting in August 1978 with computerized tabulation, to the Optech III P-Eagle electronic scanner in 1992, and the M-100 optical scanners in 2005.

Halsted Road from Fourteen Mile Road north of Walnut Lake Road was designated as a Natural Beauty Road in 1982. The named area runs two miles south from Walnut Lake Road to Fourteen Mile Road. A segment of Walnut Lake Road (from Halsted to Haggerty) was given the Natural Beauty Road designation on June 19, 1989.

In 1990, all Township Board and Commission meetings were authorized to be cablecast live on the municipal Channel 15 thru the Township cable company -Media One. The current cable company is Comcast Cable.

There are six private golf courses in West Bloomfield which consist of 654.1 acres or 8% of land area. They are Tam O'Shanter, Knollwood, Twin Beach, Orchard Lake, Pine Lake and Bay Pointe. Shenandoah Country Club on Walnut Lake Road, west of Farmington Road, is a public golf facility that is owned by the Caldeans.

There are seven school districts within West Bloomfield Township. They are: West Bloomfield with seven schools, Walled Lake with four schools, Bloomfield Hills with three schools, and Farmington with one school, Pontiac, Birmingham and Waterford have no schools within the geographical boundaries of the Township.

On October 2, 1989, the Township offices were relocated to the Civic Center Site at 4550 Walnut Lake Road. The Police Department moved into their building at the site on February 22, 1990 and the Parks and Recreation Department moved to their Civic Center location in 1996.

West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation www.westbloomfieldparks.org

The Parks and Recreation Commission originated in 1970 by popular referendum, having full parks and recreation authority according to Michigan Law (Act No. 271 of the Public Acts of 1931 and Act No. 156 of the Public Acts of 1917). A source of funding was also voted in 1970 in the form of a .25 mill tax. At the present time, the Commission operates on one mill (reduced to .8574): .25 mill for operations, .5 mill for land acquisition and development, and .25 mill for acquisition and development of active sports facilities.

The Commission operates and maintains 516 acres of parkland in addition to using a portion of the 99-acre civic center and the new recreation community center at the civic center campus. These are:

Bloomer Park, 7581 Richardson Road, is a 36-acre park on Middle Straits Lake, featuring a picnic area, grills, picnic shelter, nature trails, large accessible playscape, boat launch, cross country skiing, restrooms, drinking water, and a storage facility.

Bloomfield Knolls, 1750 Henbert, a 2-acre neighborhood park, features a picnic area with tables and grills, an accessible playscape, and basketball court.

Civic Center Park, on the civic center campus, includes the Meadow Haven Nature Trail and Snow Gulch, a winter recreation area featuring cross-country skiing, sledding and ice skating.

West Bloomfield Community Sports Park, 2750 Keith Road, is a 15-acre complex featuring top-quality ball diamonds, soccer fields, concession/restroom building, tennis courts, cross country skiing, picnic area and playscape.

Drake Community Sports Park, a 52-acre park featuring numerous wetlands and a 15-acre woodland, was designed for the active sports enthusiast with an emphasis on youth. The park includes ball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, a large accessible playscape, one mile paved exercise path, a building, picnic shelter, grills, drinking water, restrooms, concessions, wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, a meeting room, and the central maintenance facility for the parks division.

Karner Farm, 5911 Halsted Road, is the site for the Community Garden and the Off Leash Dog Area (OLDA). **The OLDA** is a fenced three-acre area where dogs may run and play off leash. In order to use the area, you must register with West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation at the Parks and Recreation Center in the Civic Center Complex. Only West Bloomfield residents may register their dogs and there is a fee. Contact Parks and Recreation for more information.

Marshbank Park, 2805 Hiller Road, is a 108-acre park featuring a Picnic Area, Picnic Grills, Picnic Shelter, Portable Restrooms, Nature Trail, Wildlife Viewing, Playscape, Ball Fields, Sand Volleyball The park offers opportunities to hike and cross-country ski. The Parks and Recreation Department uses this park for many of its special events.

Schulak Farm, 6889 West Maple Road, features a restored farmhouse.

Sylvan Manor Park, 2294 Woodrow Wilson, is a 3-acre park offering accessible playscape, picnic tables and grills, and a basketball court and a ballfield used for little league play. This park serves as the east trail head of the West Bloomfield Trail Network.

West Bloomfield Woods Nature Preserve, 4655 Arrowhead, is a 162-acre woodland and wetland nature preserve, designated as an Urban Wildlife Sanctuary, is an environmentally significant area. There are 2 miles of wood-chipped trail, boardwalks, bridges, interpretive exhibits within the woods, picnic area, cross country skiing, a paved parking lot and portable toilets. This park acts as the west trail head of the West Bloomfield Trail Network. The department has self-guided brochures for this park.

West Bloomfield Trail Network, 4655 Arrowhead Road, is a 28-acre, 4.25 mile, greenway traversing the Township. This Rails-to-Trails project meanders for 4.25 miles through West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake, Keego Harbor and Sylvan Lake. This trail is ideal for cross-country skiing, biking, nature walks and nature interpretation and is accessible. It includes bridge overlooks, boardwalks, barriers, site amenities, interpretive exhibits, and a stop light at Orchard Lake Crossing No. 1 to allow the safe passage for trail users. The department has self-guided brochures for the trail network; the West Bloomfield Woods Nature Preserve is the west trailhead and Sylvan Manor Park is the east trailhead. Where trains once rolled, you may now walk, cross-country ski or bicycle amidst wildflowers, wetlands, woodlands, commercial districts and residential communities.

West Bloomfield Recreation Community Center, 4640 Walnut Lake Road, part of the civic center campus, includes three multi-purpose rooms for a wide variety of programs and activities, a galleria and also houses the Commission's offices. The center opened its doors in September 1996.

The West Bloomfield Family Aquatic Center, 6200 Farmington Road, features a small indoor pool and a large outdoor pool, picnic area, drinking water, restrooms, and concessions. Residents can also rent the banquet room for parties, meetings and business seminars. Phone: 248-451-1901

West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation offers a wide variety of programs and activities for residents to enjoy. Information on these events is published three times yearly in PATHWAYS and delivered to every residence in the Township. For more information, please call Parks and Recreation at 248-451-1900.

The West Bloomfield Library www.wbllib.org

The West Bloomfield Library was established on April 4, 1938 by the Women's Club under Act 164, P .A. 1877. It was housed in several West Bloomfield and Keego Harbor buildings before locating to 5030 Orchard Lake Road in 1961, where it remained as the main library for over 20 years. The move to 4600 Walnut Lake Road on the Civic Center Site was made in January 1984 with extensive remodeling in 1999.

The Westacres Library, located at 7321 Commerce Road, was purchased in 1965 for the sum of \$50.00 and was remodeled and expanded in 1985 and 1999.

In 1974 the Circuit Court ruled that the Library was a separate authority with the right to levy taxes up to one mill without regard to the fifteen-mill tax limitation.