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Macomb Township

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15 new subdivisions in the works in Macomb Township

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MACOMB TOWNSHIP — New houses are springing up all over the township once again, and officials are glad to see steady, consistent growth at a pace that they can handle.

According to Township Engineer Jim Van Tiflin, the township currently has about 15 residential developments in various stages of completion. Once finished, these projects will add roughly 1,800 new homes to the 36-square-mile, former farming community.

While this represents a significant recovery from the height of the recent economic downturn, Van Tiflin pointed out that the local market is at nowhere near the level that it was in the late 1990s or early 2000s — and that’s probably a good thing.

“When I first took over as township engineer (15 years ago), we were building at least 2,000 or 2,100 homes a year in Macomb Township,” he said. “But I don’t think we want to be building that quickly anymore — that pace was just crazy. Then we went through a long stretch (during the recession) where we weren’t building much of anything. Now developers are back and looking for land to build new subdivisions again.”

Van Tiflin added that the township constructed about 600 new homes in 2013, and it is on pace to construct roughly the same number again this year.

According to Township Clerk Michael Koehs, who also serves as secretary of the Planning Commission, after “the bottom fell out” around 2008 or 2009, the township has been able to bounce back slowly but surely.

“We’re not getting the same volume (of new developments) that we were getting in 2000 or 2004, at the peak of the housing boom,” he explained. “It’s more of a gradual, consistent increase than the crazy rocketship ride we were seeing before.”



Photo by Erin Sanchez

Wolverine Country Club Estates, one of about 15 new residential developments currently planned in Macomb Township, is expected to open this fall.

The biggest new residential development in the township at the moment is Stillwater Crossing, located along 23 Mile Road between North Avenue and Fairchild Road. The subdivision features 513 single-family homes, Van Tiflin said, and it is currently in the middle of its engineering review process.

The development that should be ready to open the soonest is Wolverine Country Club Estates near 25 Mile and Luchtman roads. The neighborhood includes 271 homes, and Van Tiflin anticipated that it would be completed "within the next month or so."

Other large subdivisions in the works include Monarch Estates near 22 Mile and Garfield roads, which features 274 homes; Wellington Estates along 24 Mile Road between Romeo Plank and Foss roads, which features 145 homes; and Riviera Ridge Estates along Card Road north of 22 Mile Road, which features 99 homes.

There are also a number of smaller neighborhoods in development, including River Pointe along 25 Mile Road east of Hayes Road, Lake Arrowhead along Card Road south of 22 Mile Road, Clear Stone at the corner of 26 Mile and Luchtman roads, and Hidden Meadows North near 21 Mile and Card roads.

Most recently, on Sept. 24, the Macomb Township Board of Trustees approved the preliminary and final site plans for phase one of Deneweth Farms, which will be located along the north side of 22 Mile Road between Hayes and Garfield roads. Once completed, the subdivision will add 235 new homes to the township.

As Koebs noted, most of these subdivisions constitute new developments, rather than the numerous old subdivisions that the township began working on before the recession and then had to put on hold once the economy took a nose dive.

"The ones that went south during the recession have almost all been completed at this point," the clerk said. "Now we're seeing demand from builders for brand-new developments, and that's very important for us. Some of them are old plans, but they were only paper plans where a shovel was never put in the ground."

A recent study conducted by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) indicates that between the 2010 U.S. Census and July 2014, Macomb Township's population jumped from 79,580 to 87,142. This change represents an increase of 7,562 residents, or about 9.5 percent, which is by far the largest growth of any community in Macomb County during that period.

This upward trend shows no signs of subsiding anytime soon. Koebs stated that he has seen projections from SEMCOG estimating that Macomb Township's population could rise to 150,000 or more over the next few decades, but he believes that, realistically, it will only get as high as 125,000 or 130,000.

Van Tiflin feels that the township can handle this rapid expansion as long as officials don't bite off more than they can chew. He contended that if residential development continues at its current pace, the township should be able to provide the necessary water, sewer, roads and other infrastructure needed to keep up with all the new residents coming in.

"There's still a lot of land that can be developed all over the township," Van Tiflin said. "Building the number of homes that we're building right now is a good number, and it's much more sustainable than what we were doing before."

Koehs agreed.

“The pace that we’re working at these days helps to create a more stable local economy,” he said. “If we could build between 600 and 800 (new homes) per year for the next 20 years, that’s a lot more sustainable than building 2,000 per year for four years, and then suddenly there’s nothing. We’ve been there before, and we know where that road leads.”

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