



**almont township &
village of almont
master plan
2013**

ALMONT TOWNSHIP & VILLAGE OF ALMONT

MASTER PLAN

Village of Almont

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intoduction	1-1
Demographics	2-1
Natural Features	3-1
Existing Land Use	4-1
Visions & Strategies	5-1
Land Use Plan	6-1
Thoroughfare Plan	7-1
Community Facilities Plan	8-1
Appendix	9-1



1.0 Introduction

Introduction

This document presents the Master Plan for both the Village of Almont and Almont Township, Michigan. It establishes long-range recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of the community's existing atmosphere, as well as future planning concepts which will help maintain Almont's character as growth and development occurs. It also summarizes the results of a thorough planning process and incorporates feedback received from elected and appointed officials, as well as information and projections obtained from Lapeer County and the communities surrounding Almont.

History

The first record of settlement in Almont can be traced to 1827, when a road was cut through the wilderness, near what is now Main Street in the Village. The first homestead was located near the corner of Van Dyke and Hollow Corners Road. By 1833, there was a noticeable increase of settlers to the area.

In 1836, the Village was platted into building lots and contained five dwellings, a school, hotel, store, blacksmith shop, and a shoe shop. A postal route was also established from Mt. Clemens to Lapeer, via Macomb, Washington, Romeo, Bruce and Newburg, a distance of 48 miles. Almont received mail once a week from each direction. Development in this early settlement was aided by a waterwheel located along the river that winds through the Village. This waterwheel was the only source of power for area mills and factories.

The population of the Village reached 888 persons by 1840. Access to the settlement was provided by a stage route, operated between Newburg and Royal Oak, via Romeo and Utica. In 1839, the railroad between Detroit and Birmingham was completed. By 1843, the railroad was extended to Pontiac, with a stage providing access to points further north. Regular stage service was provided between Newburg and the following communities: Ridgeway, Romeo and Metamora.

In 1840, the first wagon shop was started. Wagon and carriage-making were, in later years, to become important and prosperous industries in the area. A farm implement foundry was started in 1844.

Up until 1846, the name Bristol had adhered to the Township, and Newburg to the Village. The postmaster at the time was instrumental in having the name of both communities changed to Almont after the well-known general, Juan N. Almont. The Village incorporated in 1865, with a population of 818 persons. This is 100 more people than it had when it entered the twentieth century some 35 years later.

Almont was an important community during the settlement of Lapeer and Sanilac Counties and was important to the lumbering industry that was the foundation of the economy at the time. Almont's regional setting would have been further enhanced were it not for the peculiarity of its location, being out of line of the railroads that penetrated the new state. Almont, however, lay too far north to be in the line of the Romeo railroad and too far south to be entered by the Port Huron and Lake Michigan Railroad built in 1870. This location effectively prevented Almont from expanding much beyond its role as a small village. The railroad line that eventually reached Almont in 1882 was a narrow gauge branch of the Port Huron and Northwest Railroad. The railroad was never extended west to Pontiac as originally intended and was subsequently abandoned in 1942.

The first electric streetcar from Detroit reached Almont in 1914. This streetcar also brought electricity with it, as Almont was one of the first communities in the area to be served by electric power. The electric powered transportation route was later extended to Imlay City and served the community until 1925. The tracks were torn out in 1929. Today, Almont is influenced by its proximity to major highways. The extent of this influence is described in the following narrative.

Purpose of the Master Plan

The Master Plan is a comprehensive document that provides direction for the community over a protracted period of time; it is intended to guide the future decision-making process as related to land use and development within the community. The State of Michigan passed enabling legislation which gave local municipalities, through designated planning commissions, the authority and responsibility to create a long-range plan for development. This ensures that incremental improvements are in line with the long-range vision for the community. This has great value to the community in that it provides a plumb line for considering development proposals and prevents elected and appointed officials from making decisions based on political pressure that may not be best for the community in the long run. The Master Plan is Almont's official policy guide for physical improvement and development. It is comprised of both short term strategies as well as projections for development 10 to 15 years in the future. Since many factors influence land use development patterns, the plan is comprehensive in scope and coverage. It covers the use of land and buildings, the protection of environmental assets, the movement of vehicles and pedestrians through public rights-of-way, and the provision of public facilities such as parks, schools and utilities.



P.A. 33 of 2008:

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The Master Plan establishes “ground rules” for private and public investment and also provides guidelines by which the Planning Commission can review and evaluate private development proposals. It ensures that individual developments are moving toward the common vision and ensures that public dollars are spent wisely. The Master Plan also provides a basis for refining the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and other development codes, all of which are used to implement planning policies adopted as part of this plan. Finally, the Master Plan can serve as a marketing tool to promote Almont as a unique place to live and establish a business. By promoting the community vision, officials can use the plan to attract new families and desirable investment to the community for years to come.

The Planning Process

The Township's current Plan was adopted in 2006 and has continued to serve as a blueprint for development in Almont Township until this plan was adopted. The Village had not updated its Master Plan since 1989. A Master Plan is generally a 20-year plan. However, in a County such as Lapeer, which has been emerging as a developing county, plans are often updated more often in order to consider changing conditions within the community and its relationship, economically, socially and environmentally, to the larger regional setting.

SECTION 1.0

It is essential that the Master Planning process be conducted within a public forum. Opportunities must be provided for public participation and input if the Plan is to be truly representative of the community as a whole. The support of the community can also help facilitate implementation. An approach that has been used successfully when planning for the future of a community involves preceding the planning process with an exercise designed to develop "a vision of the future" for Almont.

Public Input

In developing the Master Land Use Plan the Village and Township conducted a community-wide survey for property owners in the Village and Township. Specific questions were asked in the survey to gain an understanding of community sentiment and to gauge support for particular issues.

Future Land Use – Lapeer County Comprehensive Development Plan

In 2006, Lapeer County adopted a land use plan that acts as a guide towards suggested development and growth within the County. As part of this plan, the recommended designations for areas within Almont are identified below. These categories are meant to act as a guide for more specific planning within the community.

OS-2 Reserved Open Sector

This land use category is the largest within the County. This land use category is designed to protect the County's existing agricultural land uses and character. Agricultural land uses include farming (the production of crops, livestock, and related goods), orchards, nurseries, farmsteads, and other activities directly associated with agriculture.

The desired densities within the agricultural land uses is planned for one dwelling unit per every 40 acres, or 0.025 dwelling units per acre. The plan suggests that densities of these nature are necessary to ensure that parcels are large enough to contain agricultural uses which are economically viable.

This designation also notes the lack of public infrastructure in a large portion of the County and does not promote the extension of such infrastructure. The extension of such infrastructure would allow for smaller, more suburban natured lots which are not conducive to the agricultural character of the area. Further, most of the roadways within the OS-2 area are currently gravel and the Plan suggests that these remain gravel to reduce speeds and overall traffic volumes, thereby maintaining character.

Finally, these areas are intended to be the primary sending zones should the County, or a consortium of local municipalities implement a transfer of development rights program. The vast majority of the eastern portion of the Township is planned for the OS-2 Reserved Open Sector.

Stakeholders & Visions

Identify the "stakeholders", that is, those groups that have a stake in improving the quality of life in the Township and Village.

Involve the stakeholders in a process designed to identify what the future should be like in the Township and Village.

Build consensus among the stakeholders in setting forth the important characteristics of any new planning program.

Prepare a vision statement from the stakeholders' consensus that will serve as the underlying direction for the Planning Commission's work of preparing a new Master Plan.

OS-2A Reserved Open Sector - Prime Farmlands

The long-term use of prime farmland, as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is a goal of Lapeer County. This category includes the most productive farmlands in the county. Preservation of this farmland is considered critical to the long-term role of agriculture as a primary economic base. This plan discourages premature conversion to residential or commercial use. The majority of the western portion of the Township is planned for this designation.

G-1 Restricted Growth Sector

This designation is designed to accommodate the already existing development of commercial and industrial nodes along major roadways or intersections. The extension or expansion of these areas is strongly discouraged.

A small area of land on the north side of the Township along Van Dyke is designated as Restricted Growth. Several other small properties throughout the Township are also planned for G-1 Restricted Growth.

G-2 Controlled Growth Sector

This designation is intended to be the main development zone within the County. These areas are located around existing cities and villages as well as major intersections where existing infrastructure and facilities are already present. Further, the designation promotes the mixture of uses such as residential and commercial. The residential density is envisioned to be approximately 0.5 to 2.0 dwelling units per acre.

The designation also states that planned unit developments or clustered housing which preserves open space would be an appropriate form of development. These development types could include commercial development as a part of a neo-traditional development.

Intended commercial uses would include automobile related uses, general retail, grocery stores, professional offices, banks and restaurants. These additional commercial uses are intended to complement those which already exist in the commercial centers and downtowns.

Those areas immediately surrounding the Village of Almont are planned for G-2 Controlled Growth Sector. This boundary is approximately one quarter mile wide adjacent to the Village.

Infill Growth

The Infill Growth Sector is assigned to areas that are already developed and that have a potential for modification. It is shown on the General Development Plan as a developed area with bordering growth areas. This sector encourages revitalization, site design standards, and updates to existing structures and uses. The entire Village falls within this category.

SECTION 1.0

Enterprise

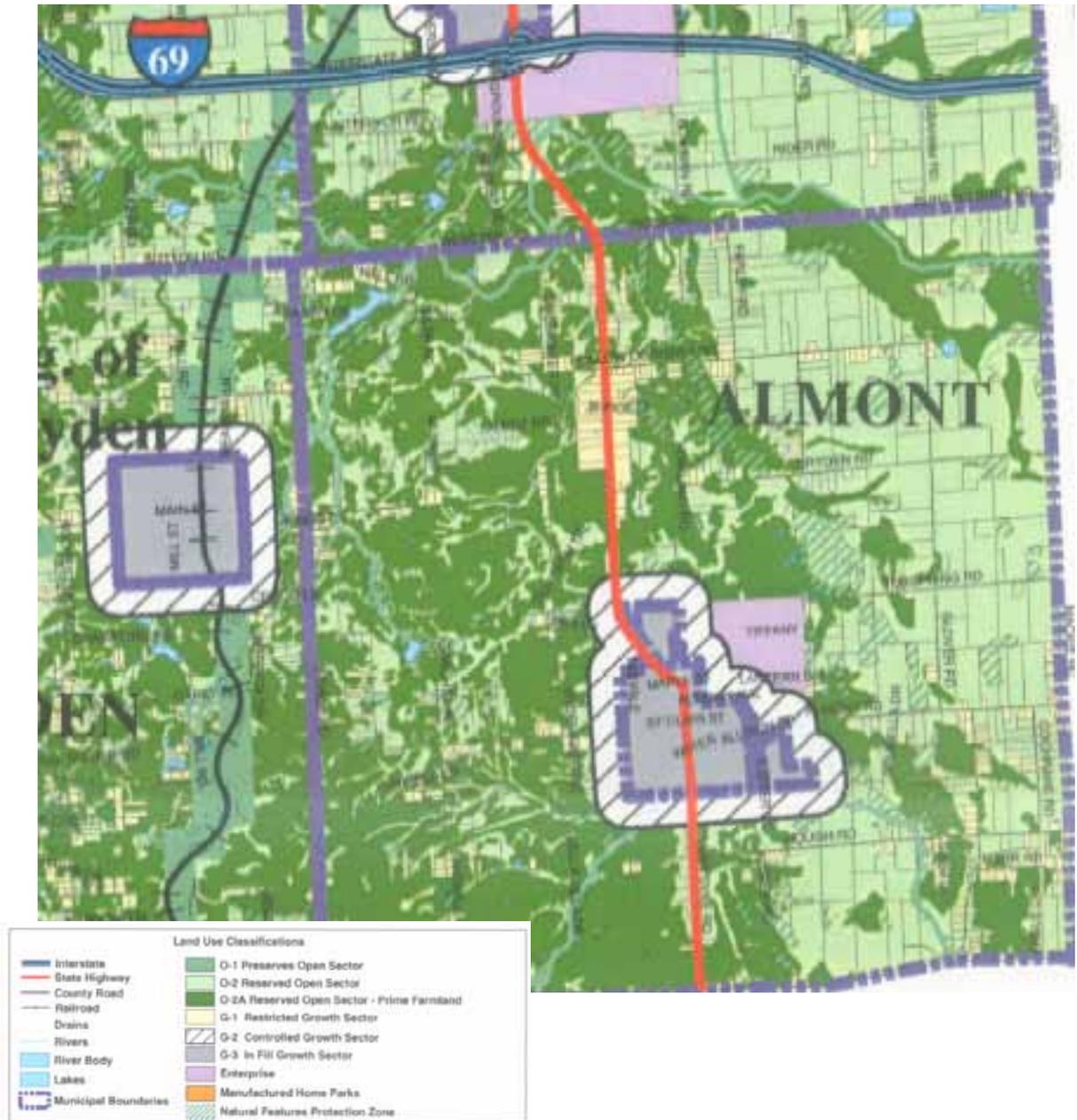
The Enterprise zones are centered at strategic locations where site access is a major component for development. The General Development Plan recognizes the need for developing and retaining a job and tax base for the community, surrounding region, and the County. Today, and in the future, industrial uses will include more office research/development and distribution companies. Storage may be needed on the outside of building for materials or finished updates to existing structures and uses. The area northeast of the Village is designated as an Enterprise Area in the Township.

Cooperative and Coordinated Land Use Planning

While the Village and Township are autonomous in terms of planning and zoning schemes, Almont should carefully consider the planning and zoning schemes of those communities which surround it (Berlin, Bruce, Imlay, and Dryden Townships). This ideal is reiterated within the State's planning policies for Master Planning, which requires Master Plans and planning policies to be reviewed by surrounding communities. Land use decisions for those properties which abut adjoining communities should take into account adjoining communities planning policies while protecting the Village and Township's right to plan and zone as deemed appropriate.

Generally speaking, the communities which surround Almont Township have similar planning policies as the Township: preserving agricultural land uses wherever possible, maintaining larger, more rural single family lots and allowing nonresidential land uses in those areas where such uses are most desirable and most viable such as along Van Dyke.

ILLUSTRATION #1
 FUTURE LAND USE
 LAPEER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006



SECTION 1.0



2.0 Demographics

SECTION 2.0

Population Analysis

The characteristics of a community's population are among the key ingredients given consideration in the long-range planning process. Historical and current population trends have several useful applications. They are especially relevant in identifying the need for various types of community facilities. Future land use and public utility demands are also related to population growth trends and demographic characteristics.

The following items are important to a fuller understanding of the characteristics of both the Township and Village of Almont's total population. These individual topics include the following:

- Population change over time.
- Age characteristics.
- Household characteristics.
- Population projections.

The most current available population data is employed in the examination of each of the above-listed topics. Wherever possible, comparable data for Lapeer County is also included. Information for the County is provided for the purpose of understanding the relationship of the Township to the larger geographical areas (within Southeast Michigan) of which it is a part.

Population Change

At the national level, the U.S. population exceeded the two hundred million mark for the first time in 1970. The 2010 U.S. Census indicates that our nation's population is now at nearly 309 million. Michigan's share of the national population had remained a stable four percent of the total U.S population since 1930, before dropping to three percent in 2010.

During the 70-year period between 1930 and 2000, Michigan's population more than doubled from 4.8 million to 9.9 million. However, the 2010 Census reveals population growth in the State was stagnant. The State's greatest periods of population growth over these seven decades occurred between 1940 and 1970. The 2010 U.S. Census data gives the State of Michigan a population of 9,938,444, virtually unchanged from the 2000 count.

Table 1 POPULATION							
COMMUNITY	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Almont Township	997	1,174	1,529	2,267	2,306	3,238	3,909
Village of Almont	1,035	1,270	1,634	1,857	2,354	2,803	2,674
Berlin Township	--	1,418	1,595	2,160	2,407	3,162	3,285
Bruce Township	996	1,538	2,213	3,823	4,193	6,395	6,947
Dryden Township	780	896	1,475	2,327	2,771	3,809	3,817
Imlay Township	1,474	1,847	2,170	2,238	2,143	2,713	3,128
Imlay City	1,654	1,968	1,980	2,495	2,921	3,869	3,597
Lapeer County	35,794	41,926	52,317	70,038	74,768	87,904	88,319

Population changes for Almont and its neighboring communities over the 60 year period from 1950 through 2010 are shown in Table 1. During this period, the Township's population increased by 2,912 persons, from 997 in 1950 to 3,909 in 2010. The Village experienced a slower growth rate over this time period and actually registered a population loss during the past ten years with a decrease of 129 persons. Of Almont's neighboring communities, Bruce Township, to the south, experienced the greatest 60-year gain. Imlay Township, to the north, had the smallest increase.

Despite a loss in population for the Village over the past decade due to a faltering economy across the entire country, the growth trend continues to move northward. This trend will only strengthen as the overall economy strengthens.

COMMUNITY	1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000		2000-2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Almont Township	738	48.3	39	1.7	932	40.4	671	20.7
Village of Almont	223	13.6	497	26.8	449	19.1	-129	-4.6
Berlin Township	565	35.4	247	11.4	755	31.4	123	3.9
Bruce Township	1,610	72.8	370	9.7	2,202	52.5	552	8.6
Dryden Township	852	57.8	444	19.1	1,038	37.5	8	0.2
Imlay Township	68	3.1	-95	-4.2	517	24.1	415	15.3
Imlay City	515	26.0	426	17.1	948	32.5	-272	-7.0
Lapeer County	17,721	33.9	4,730	6.8	13,136	17.6	415	0.5

Almont's share of the County's population has steadily increased between 1950 and 2010. In 1950 and 1960, for example, the Township and Village's combined residents, respectively, comprised approximately 5.7 percent of Lapeer County's population. For 1970 and 1980, the share increased to approximately six (6) percent. For 1990 and 2000, this proportion stood at 6.2 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively. According to 2010 population data, Almont now accounts for about 7.5 percent of the County's population.

Median Age

The steady aging of this nation's population is among the more important trends dimensioned by each Census. After reaching a high of 30.2 years in 1950, the median age for the nation declined the following two decades to 29.5 years in 1960, and to 28.3 years in 1970. The median age then began increasing and has continued to increase since. In 1980, the median age was reported as 30.0 years, and the 1990 Census indicated the median age had again risen to 32.9 years of age. The 2000 Census shows a continued increase of the nation's median age to 35.3 years, with the current 2010 Census showing a median age of 37.2 years of age.

Geographic Area	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Almont Twp/Village			25.1	27.8	32.1	35.5	40.4
Lapeer County	28.4	26.7	24.8	26.8	31.8	35.9	41.1
Michigan	31.5	28.3	26.3	28.8	32.6	35.5	39.0
United States	30.2	29.5	28.3	30	32.9	35.3	37.2

SECTION 2.0

The aging trend is clearly reflected in the median age figures noted. Each of the different geographic areas included experienced an increase in median age levels between 1970 and 2010. Since 1980, the Township and Village's median age has risen 12.6 years, to a level of 40.4 in 2010.

Population by Age

By reviewing the various age categories that comprise Almont's population, it is possible to determine how various segments of the population have changed over time and which groups have made the largest contributions to Almont's population increase over the past decade. The distribution of Almont Township's and Almont Village's population into designated age categories for 2000 and 2010 is shown.

Between 2000 and 2010, the Township's population increased by 671 persons, while the Village's decreased by 129 persons. In the Township, six of the eight age categories experienced a percentage increase between 2000 and 2010. In the Village, five of the eight categories experienced a percentage increase between 2000 and 2010. The largest decline in both communities occurred in the 20-24 age category.

Table 4 POPULATION BY AGE								
Age	Almont Township				Almont Village			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Under 5	202	6.2	167	4.3	213	7.6	163	6.1
5-19	800	24.7	890	22.8	699	24.9	639	23.9
20-24	122	3.8	189	4.8	133	4.8	135	5.1
25-44	1,010	31.2	893	22.8	946	33.8	720	26.9
45-54	506	15.6	760	19.4	334	11.9	439	16.4
55-64	340	10.5	549	14.1	219	7.8	272	10.2
65-74	162	5.0	308	7.9	132	4.7	172	6.4
75 and above	96	3.0	153	3.9	127	4.5	134	5.0
Total	3,238	100.0	3,909	100.0	2,803	100.0	2,674	100.0

HOUSEHOLDS

Household Growth Trends

The U.S. Bureau of the Census has two categories that it uses to describe living arrangements: households and families. A household is one person or a group of persons occupying a housing unit. The number of households and occupied housing units are, therefore, identical. Families, on the other hand, consist of two or more persons, related to each other, living in a household.

Household characteristics, in general, and the rate of new household growth, have become increasingly important indicators of demographic change within a community. Changes in the number of households and their composition are recognized as a more valid measure of community growth and vitality than absolute changes in the number of persons. Several reasons account for this view.

At the local level, households generate property tax revenues regardless of how many people are living within the household. Households also generate a demand for durable goods, including cars and appliances, as well as energy (electricity, gas and telephone services), which serve to stimulate local and regional economic growth. Local governmental services are impacted by household growth trends, especially the need for public utilities (water and sewage disposal), police and fire services, and solid waste disposal, among others. The number of households also influences traffic levels and the need for future transportation system improvements.

Table 5 Household Growth Trends

	1980	1990	Change 1980-90	Percentage Change	2000	Change 1990-00	Percentage Change	2010	Change 2000-10	Percentage Change
Almont Village	639	828	189	29.6	1,022	194	23.4	1,030	8	0.8
Almont Township	703	1,271	568	80.8	1,072	180	14.2%	1,382	310	28.9
Lapeer County	21,202	24,659	3,457	16.3	30,729	6,070	24.6%	32,776	2,047	6.7

Census data for 2010 indicates that the pace of housing growth has slowed considerably in both Lapeer County and Almont. During the past decade, the Township recorded a 28.9 percent increase in the number of households, while the number of households within the Village remained almost constant. Almont as a whole experienced a higher growth rate than the County figure of 6.7 percent.

Household Size

Accompanying these increases in household growth was a decline in the size of the average household. At the national level, household size has declined steadily since 1950, when it stood at a level of 3.37 persons per household.

Consistent with broader national and regional trends, the average household size has continued to decline in Almont. In 1980, the size of the average household was 3.66 persons in the Township and 2.91 persons in the Village. By 2010, this declined to 2.72 persons in the Township and 2.66 persons in the Village. Similar declines are noted for Lapeer County and the State of Michigan.

Table 6 HOUSEHOLD SIZE

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Almont Village	2.91	2.84	2.73	2.66
Almont Township	3.66	3.13	2.88	2.72
Lapeer County	3.30	3.03	2.80	2.64
Michigan	2.84	2.63	2.56	2.49

SECTION 2.0

Several factors are responsible for this decline: birth rate patterns, the distribution of the population on the age spectrum, and life style changes. The first of these factors is referred to as the baby-boom echo. America experienced a well documented population growth period following the Second World War, commonly known as the baby-boom. Children born during this period have reached the child-bearing years and are starting their own families, creating an echo of the earlier baby-boom. This baby-boom echo is not producing the same number of persons that occurred earlier due to significant declines in the birthrate. Women today are having fewer children than their mothers did. Fewer children mean smaller families and reduced household sizes.

Population distribution patterns also impact household size declines. The aging of the baby-boom generation has begun to increase the proportion of those persons that are no longer considered to be likely candidates for parenthood.

Finally, the increasing number of single-person households has contributed to this trend. Improved medical care has resulted in an increasing number of persons over the age of 65, many of whom are widows or widowers creating single-person households. Young persons have also shown a tendency to marry later and delay having children until later in their lives. Another consequence of this delay is a corresponding decision to have fewer children.

Household and Family Characteristics

Since 1970, there have been many changes in the American family's composition. The data available for the most recent decade, 2000-2010, shows the continued decline in the "traditional" family. This is true even though the number of married couples grew nationally.

In the United States, the traditional family dropped from 23.5 percent to 20.2 percent of all households. Families headed by unmarried women comprised 13.1 percent of the overall family percentage, and persons living alone or with unrelated people now make up one-third of all households, but are smaller and less traditional than ever before.

In Almont, family households account for 77.7 percent of all households. This is slightly higher than the Lapeer County total of 74.7 percent. Married-couple families represent 63.4 percent of all households, compared to the Lapeer County total of 60.4 percent. Between the Township and Village, there are 220 female-headed households, or 9.1 percent of all Township and Village households. This is slightly lower than the County-wide figure of 9.4 percent.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Number of Units

Almont Township's inventory of housing units increased to 1,296 units in 2010, up from 1,127 units in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the Township experienced its greatest period of growth with an increase of over forty (40) percent in the total number of housing units. The Village saw a slight increase from 1,058 units in 2000 to 1,116 units in 2010.

Housing Tenure

Home ownership is generally a reliable indicator of community stability. Home purchases often represent the single largest investment that a family will make and, therefore, usually signifies a long-term commitment to the community.

Approximately 95.1 percent of Almont Township's total occupied housing units and 82.0 percent of the Village's occupied housing units are owner-occupied, according to the 2010 Census. For Lapeer County as a whole, 83.5 percent of all housing units are owner-occupied. The Township, based on the U.S. Census, had 1,315 owner-occupied units in comparison to 67 rental units, while the Village had 845 owner-occupied units in comparison to 185 rental units.

Vacancy Rates

Vacancy rates are a significant indicator of conditions within a local housing market. They are particularly useful for evaluating the dynamics of the housing market. Vacancy rates between three and five percent are generally considered to offer evidence of a stable housing market. When vacancy rates drop below three percent, housing choice becomes restricted. High vacancy rates, on the other hand, are indicators of incipient housing problems.

Almont Township reported a total of 64 vacant housing units in 2010, for a total vacancy rate of 4.4 percent. The Village reported a total of 86 vacant housing units for a total vacancy rate of 7.7 percent. On a County-wide basis, 9.8 percent of all housing units are vacant.

Housing Value

The value of housing units is another useful measure of the quality of a community's housing supply. Fifty-nine (59) percent of the Township's and seventeen (17) percent of the Village's owner-occupied units are valued over \$200,000, compared to thirty-four (34) percent for Lapeer County.

	Almont Township		Almont Village		Lapeer County	
Less than \$50,000	45	3.7%	185	21.4%	2,140	7.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	43	3.6%	86	10.0%	3,269	11.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	104	8.6%	221	25.6%	6,120	22.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	305	25.3%	227	26.2%	6,778	24.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	468	38.7%	128	14.8%	5,760	20.7%
\$300,000 and Over	243	20.1%	17	2.0%	3,721	13.4%
Total	1,208	100.0%	864	100.0%	27,788	100.0%

SECTION 2.0

ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS

The demographic information used within this Master Plan is primarily taken from the 2010 U.S. Census. This information is useful in determining emerging trends, as well as providing a general understanding of the characteristics of the population.

Projections provide a basis for anticipating future land use and various community service demands. As noted in the previous discussion, the factor that will have the greatest influence on these demands is the anticipated number of new households. While there is no precise way of absolutely predicting the future, past trends offer a useful method of anticipating expected changes in the number of households and the number of residents. Several different techniques are customarily used to project anticipated household levels for a community. These include the constant proportion, growth rate, and arithmetic method. Each technique is based on certain assumptions regarding previous trends being carried forward into the future. These methods and their results for Almont are summarized as follows:

Constant Proportion

The constant proportion method assumes that the number of households in Almont Township and Almont Village will maintain the same ratio to Lapeer County's total households in the years 2020 and 2030 as they did in 2010.

Growth Rate

The growth rate method is an alternative technique which assumes that Almont's household growth rate between 2010 and 2020 will be similar to that which occurred between the 2000 and 2010. This method further assumes that the Almont's 2010-2030 household growth rate will be identical to what occurred between 1990 and 2010.

Arithmetic Rate

The arithmetic method is similar to the growth rate method, except that actual numbers rather than percentages are used.

Summary

Future population levels in Almont will depend on the rate of household growth and the size of the average household. Assuming the size of the average household in Almont will remain consistent through the year 2030, and applying that average household size to the previously identified household projection techniques, yields projected population levels through the year 2030. Each of these projection methods anticipates continued household and population growth in Almont through the forecast period (2030).

Table 8 POPULATION AND HOUSING UNIT PROJECTION SUMMARY

Almont Township						
	2010		2020		2030	
	Pop	HH	Pop	HH	Pop	HH
Constant Proportion	3,909	1,382	3,996	1,469	4,317	1,567
Growth Rate	3,909	1,382	4,292	1,578	7,048	2,591
Arithmetic Method	3,909	1,382	4,602	1,692	5,513	2,027
Almont Village						
	2010		2020		2030	
	Pop	HH	Pop	HH	Pop	HH
Constant Proportion	2,674	1,030	2,921	1,098	3,118	1,172
Growth Rate	2,674	1,030	2,761	1,038	3,407	1,281
Arithmetic Method	2,674	1,030	2,761	1,038	3,298	1,240

SECTION 2.0



3.0 Natural Features

SECTION 3.0

Introduction

Physical features exert important influences in shaping the development and character of a specific area. They are nature's contribution to Almont's environment. Collectively, these features can determine the overall physical character of the community.

When integrated thoughtfully into development proposals, physical features serve to enhance the character and appearance of the constructed environment. Conversely, ignoring physical features or misusing them, can have significant, long-term negative consequences. Some well-defined physical features serve as a barrier to development and may be difficult to overcome, except at considerable expense. It is usually better to design with nature than to attempt to substantially change an area's physical environment.

Due to the nature of the existing development pattern in the Village and Township, it is important to ensure that the remaining available natural features are preserved and protected to the greatest extent possible. This section provides a detailed analysis of these features and offers solutions to assist in their long-term protection/preservation. The areas covered are as follows:

- Soils
- Wetlands
- Woodlands
- Watersheds



Soils

Soils play a major role in the long-term development of a community. With Almont Township being primarily an unsewered, rural community, the soil patterns have a major influence on directing the type, intensity and location of development, as well as the prominence of long-term farming. Soil patterns also have an impact on watershed issues, construction issues relating to infrastructure and siting of buildings, and addressing drainage problems in specific areas. A generalized soils map is provided on the following page. Some of the beneficial uses of knowing the general soil characteristics in an area are identified below:

- *Siting Houses and Commercial Buildings* - Locate soils with the fewest limitations for construction;
- *Streets, Driveways and Sidewalks* - Identify soils that have a high water table or high clay content, which can cause cracking;
- *Underground Utility Lines* - Identify soils that have properties that can cause breakage or corrosion of lines buried within them;
- *Control of Runoff and Soil Erosion* - Construction work compacts the soils and increases the amount of paved surfaces, thus increasing runoff;
- *Planting of Gardens and Landscaping* - Knowledge of the soils allows a homeowner/business owner to select plantings that have the best chance of survival;
- *Providing Suitable Recreation* - Identifying soils for the location of trails, play areas and picnic areas require a review of the drainage characteristics of the soil, the slope, the soil texture, the flood hazard and the stoniness.

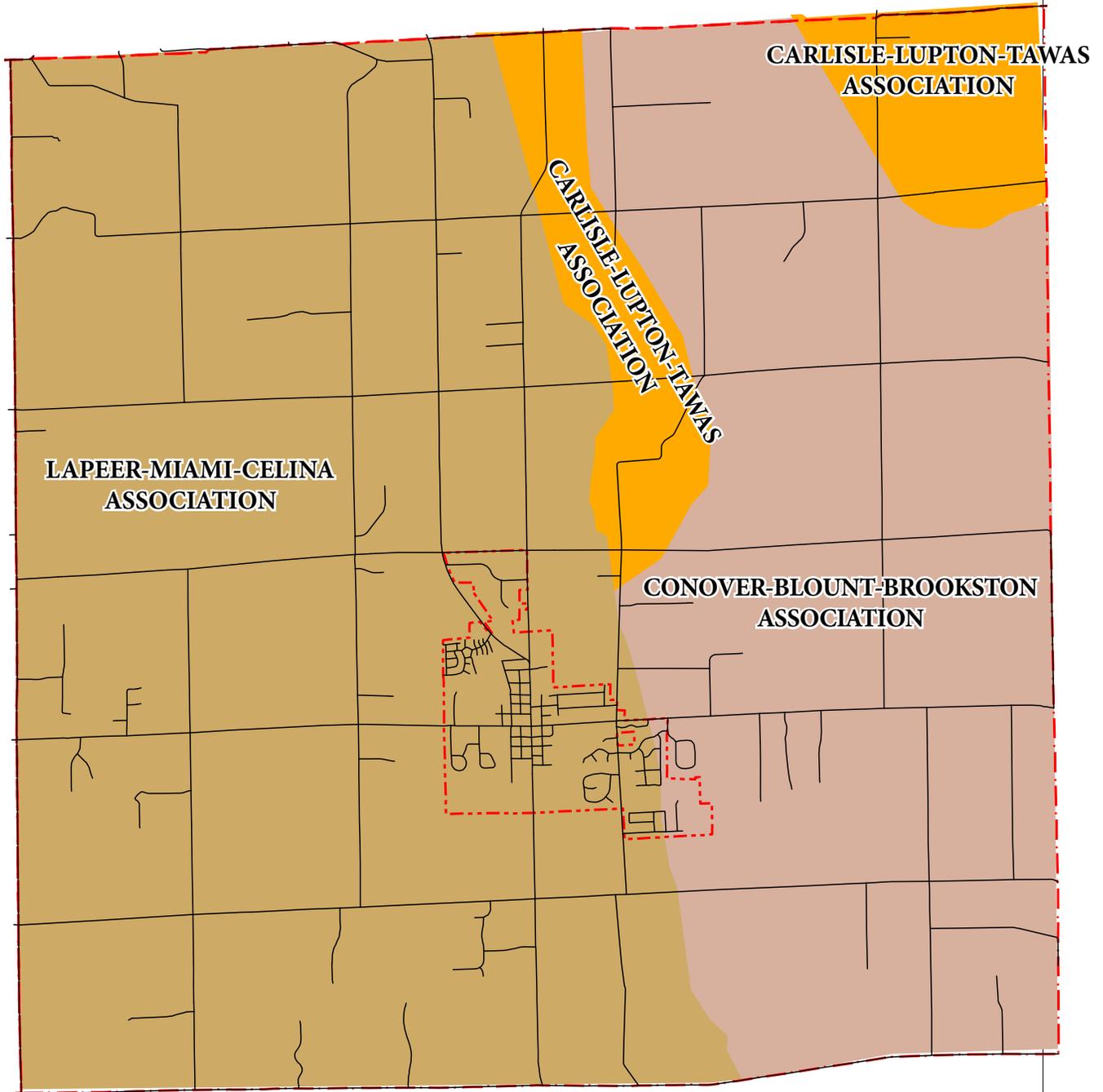
Soil Descriptions

Lapeer-Miami-Celina Association: Soils within this association occur in gently to strongly sloping areas and are well drained to moderately well drained. These soils are frequently found in a landscape consisting of small, hilly areas and steeper slopes next to major drainageways. This is the largest soil association comprising the Township and runs as a wide band extending through the west and central portion of the community. These soils are fairly well suited to agriculture. An erosion hazard is the main limitation for farming. Limitations for residential development are slight to severe, depending on the slope. The soils make good foundations for houses and streets.

Conover-Blount-Brookston Association: This soil association occupies a predominate part the eastern half of the Township. These soils are level to gently sloping, with somewhat poorly drained and poorly drained conditions. The overall landscape where these soils occur is predominantly one of flat land forms with slopes of 0-2 percent. The excessive wetness and slow run-off is the chief limitation of these soils for residential and recreational purposes. Wetness and associated frost heaving also limit the installation of utilities and roads. Limitations for agricultural purposes involve early frost in the low areas.

Carlisle-Lupton-Tawas Association: These soils are located in the northeast quadrant of the Township and occur in level and depressed areas. These areas feature very poorly drained peat and muck soils. While these soils are excessively wet and have low fertility, portions of the land where these soils occur are farmed. Many of these areas require artificial drainage improvements. Large areas of poorly drained soils that have not been artificially drained remain as woodlots. High water tables and instable organic soil materials are the chief limitation of these soils for residential development.

SECTION 3.0



Almont Village and Township

Lapeer County

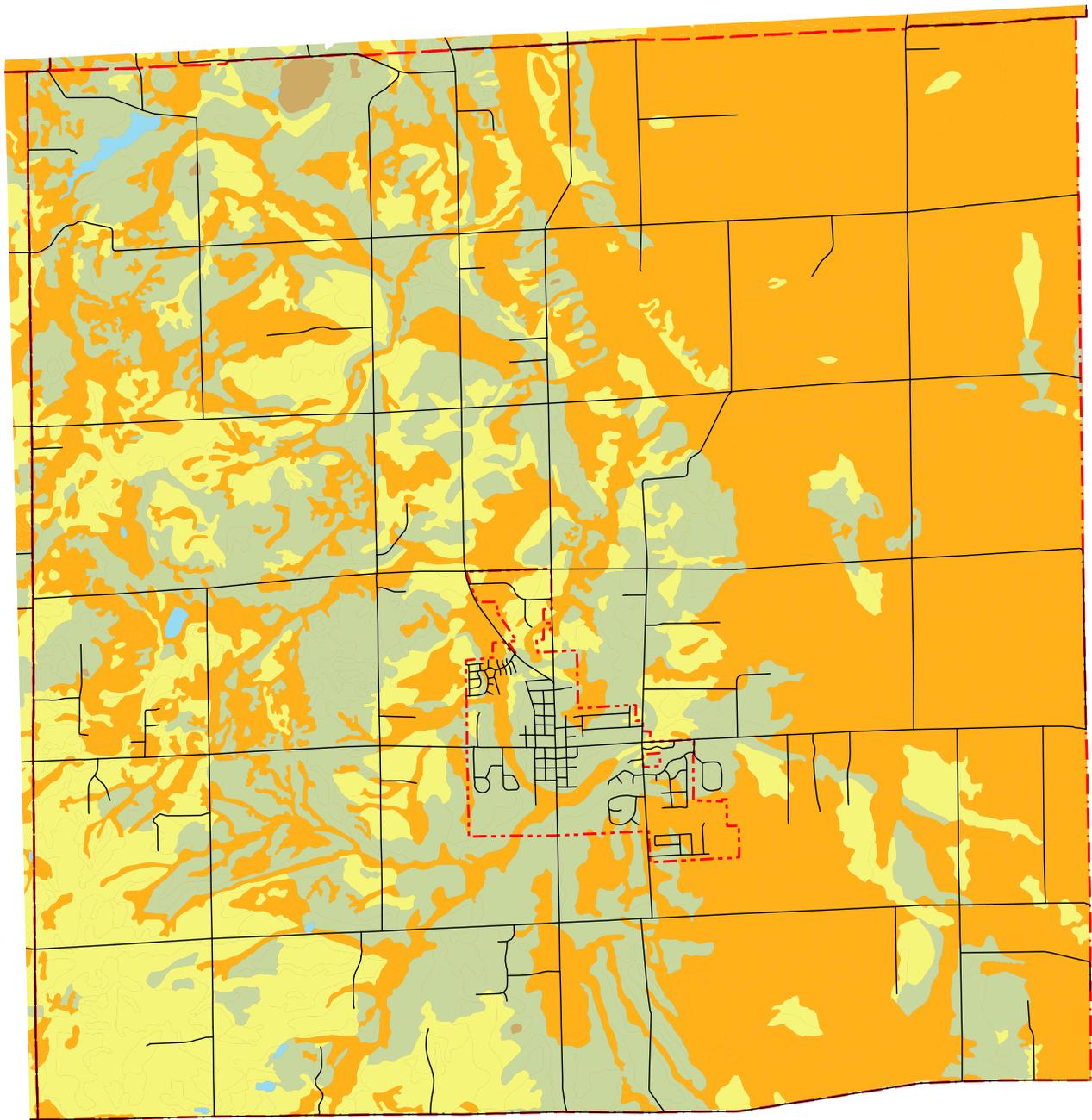
Map Prepared By:
Almont Village and Township Planning Commissions

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization



Residential Capabilities - Limitations for Septic



Almont Village and Township Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Almont Village and Township Planning Commissions

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

SECTION 3.0

Natural Features

Legend

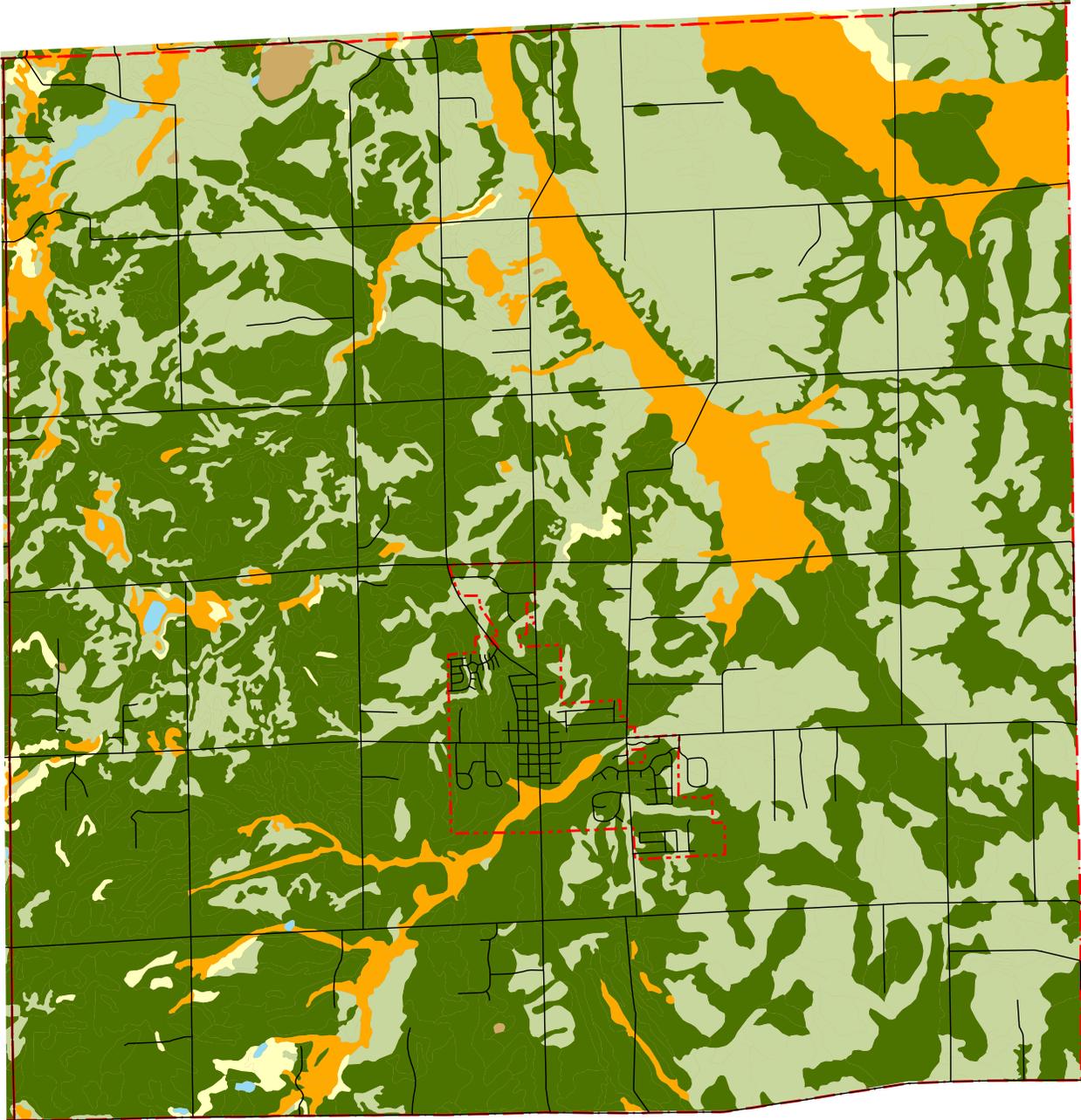
Limitations

- Slight
- Moderate
- Severe

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization



Agricultural Suitability



Almont Village and Township Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Almont Village and Township Planning Commissions

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

Legend

- Not Suited
- Poorly Suited
- Suited
- Well Suited
- Water



ALMONT

Wetlands

Significance of Wetlands

- Protect downstream water supplies by providing clean ground water as a result of the nutrient retention and sediment removal. Wetland vegetation traps these sediments and pollutants, thereby preventing them from being deposited in surface water bodies.
- Function as effective natural storage basins for floodwater. Wetlands may be considered large sponges that absorb large quantities of seasonal precipitation, gradually releasing it when the receiving channels are able to accept it.
- Protect the shoreline from erosion caused by wind and wave action and effectively serve as environmental shock absorbers.
- Provide a habitat for many types of plants and animals that thrive in the type of physical environment created by wetlands. These plants and animals provide an economic and recreational benefit as a result of hunting, fishing and other leisure activities.

Impact on Almont

Almont contains numerous wetlands located throughout the community. The majority of the potential wetlands within the Township are either emergent or forested wetlands. These wetland areas can impact the developable area of each site within the Township especially due to their presence along many of the Township's roadways. Care must be taken to integrate these environmental assets into development sites to ensure their long term viability even as development occurs.

Floodplain

A floodplain is an area of land along a lake, river or other water feature that is susceptible to being inundated by water as a result of heavy rains, snow melt, or other factors. With the presence of the Clinton River within the Village, there are areas that are either unbuildable or have building limitations due to the floodplain. Floodplain locations are reviewed by the Building Official at the time a permit application is submitted.

Types of Wetlands

EMERGENT - Includes bogs, meadows, marshes, fens, and potholes. An important marsh type is the 'Great Lakes Marsh' that is hydrologically connected to the Great Lakes and rivals rainforests in terms of biological productivity.

SHRUB-SCRUB - Shrub swamps are similar to forested swamps, except that shrubby vegetation predominates.

FORESTED - Forested swamps occur where trees grow in moist soils. They are often inundated with floodwater from nearby rivers and streams.

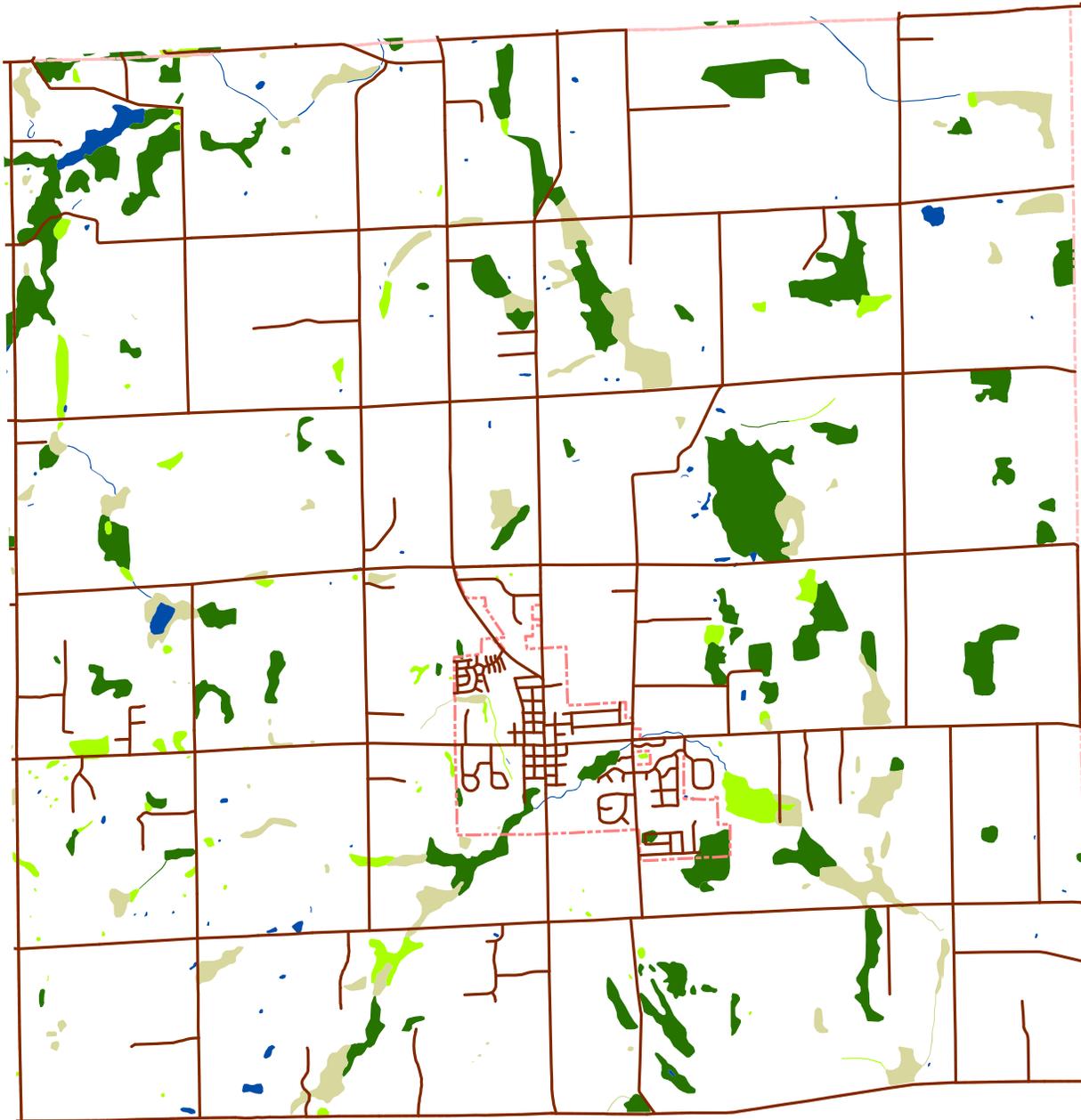
OPEN WATER - Deeper, perennial pools within wetlands and shallow portions of lakes and rivers. The warmth of the water supports numerous aquatic organisms. Typically home to submerged plants (plants that grow underwater) which provide unique habitat resources such as substrates for macroinvertebrates, cover and forage for waterfowl, and spawning and nursing for fish.

NREPA Part 303

Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA), authorizes the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE), to regulate the types of activities which may impact wetlands within the State.

SECTION 3.0

Potential Wetlands



Almont Village and Township Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Almont Township and Almont Village Planning Commissions

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

Legend

- Scrub-Shrub
- Forested
- Emergent
- Open Water/Unknown Bottom



Woodlands

Significance of Woodlands

In an environment such as Almont, the importance of woodlands, and trees in general, should not be underestimated. The abundance of these features does not minimize their importance on a site by site basis. Woodlands serve many useful environmental purposes that should be recognized for planning. These include:

- Slope stabilization and erosion control
- Conserving water quality
- Maintaining a micro-climate
- Filtering pollution from the atmosphere
- Decreasing noise
- Providing a habitat for wildlife

Woodlands in Almont

Large tracts of undeveloped woodlands are distributed throughout Almont, based on information supplied on the Department of the Interior's Geologic Survey Maps. No noticeable change has occurred to these woodlands. They remain an important physical asset that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the Township's visual and economic environment. Obviously those woodlands associated with a potential wetland should be preserved for not only the reasons noted above, but also for the wetland benefits. Stand alone woodlands (not associated with a wetland) should also be incorporated into the overall design of future development sites to provide a more mature setting for development, maintain existing habitat and wildlife areas, and provide an overall aesthetic.



Types of Woodlands (commonly found in Michigan)

White Red Jack Pine - This grouping includes Jack Pine, and is found primarily on sandy soils of the eastern upper peninsula and north central lower peninsula.

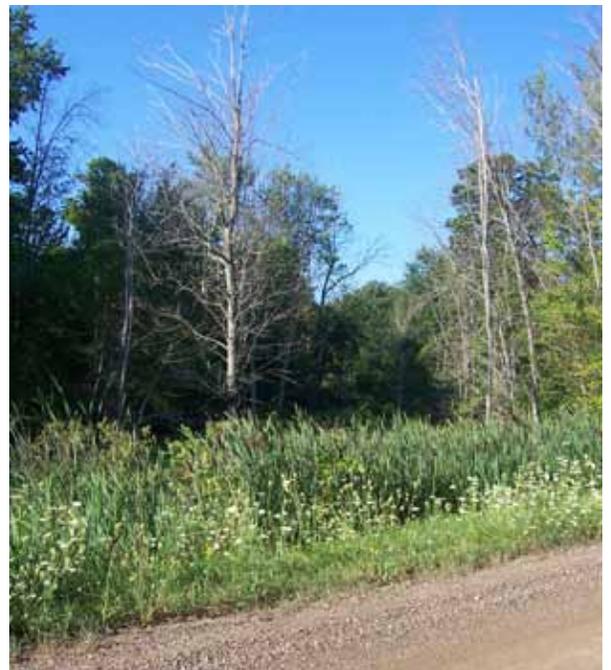
Spruce Fir - This grouping consists of White Cedar, Balsam Fir, White Spruce, and Black Spruce and exists primarily in the upper peninsula.

Oak Hickory - This group is mainly found in the sandy soils of southern Lower Michigan.

Elm Ash Cottonwood - This group is commonly referred to as lowland hardwoods. It is common in fertile soils and along streams.

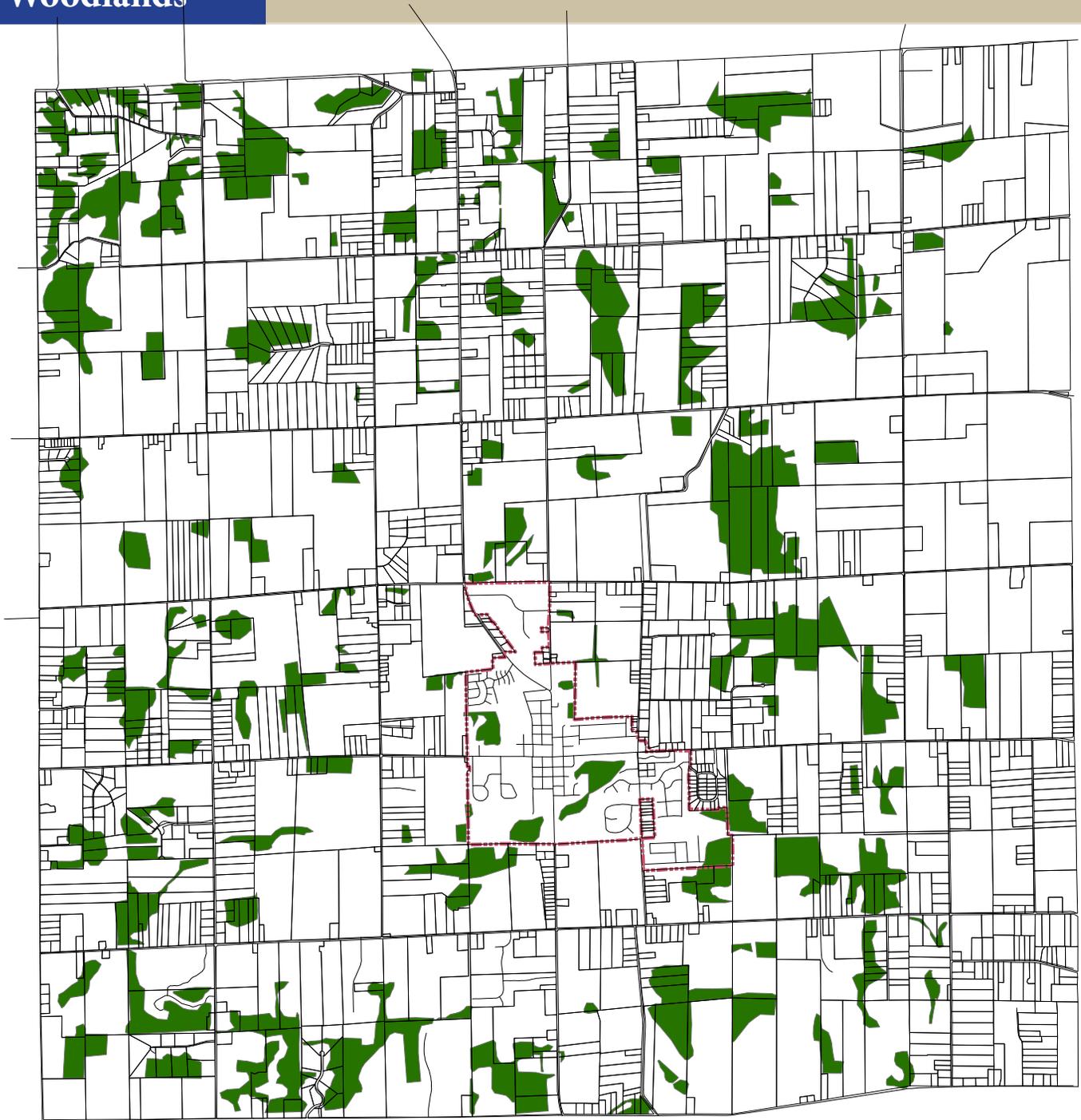
Maple Beech Birch - This group is typically found in northern Michigan and include Maples, Beeches and Yellow Birches.

Aspen Birch - This group includes Aspens and Paper Birches and is found primarily in the northern Lower and south Upper Peninsula, as well as scattered throughout the State.



SECTION 3.0

Woodlands



Almont Village & Township

Lapeer County

Legend

 Woodlands



Map Prepared By:
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With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

ALMONT

Master Land Use Plan

Watersheds

Significance of Watersheds

Communities across the nation are finding that their water resources are degrading in response to growth and development. Activity within a watershed will likely impact the quality of that watershed. For instance, if a new shopping center is built, rain water which was once absorbed into that vacant property will now runoff into the nearest drain, collecting dirt, oils and other chemicals and carrying them into that drain and eventually into the rivers and lakes of the State.

Watershed management is one way to ensure that the water resources of an area are protected. As defined, a watershed is an area of land that catches rain or snow, eventually draining into a body of water (such as a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater).

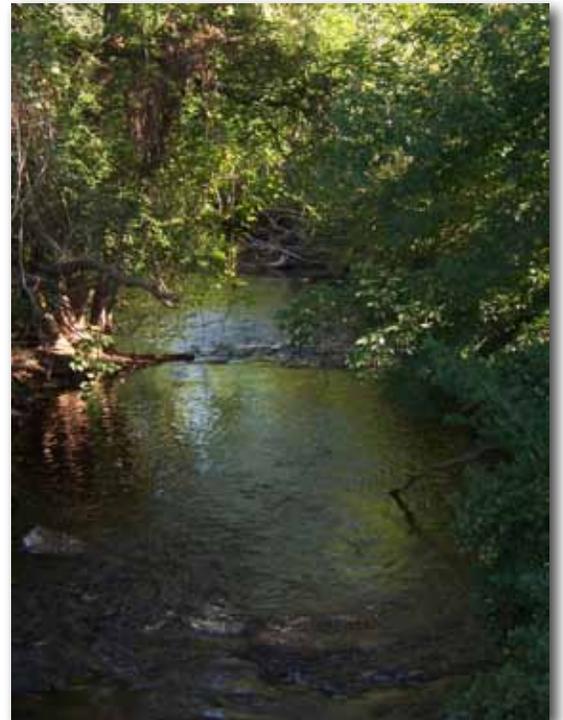
There are several reasons to protect local watersheds, including economic benefits, recreation, flood prevention, scenery and the overall quality of life. Some of the primary benefits that can be realized from watershed protection are:

- The restoration and enhancement of recreational areas/uses;
- The protection of aquatic life, wildlife and habitat, including native landscapes and vegetation;
- The protection of public health through improved water quality;
- The reduction of impacts from peak water flows due to proper flood management.

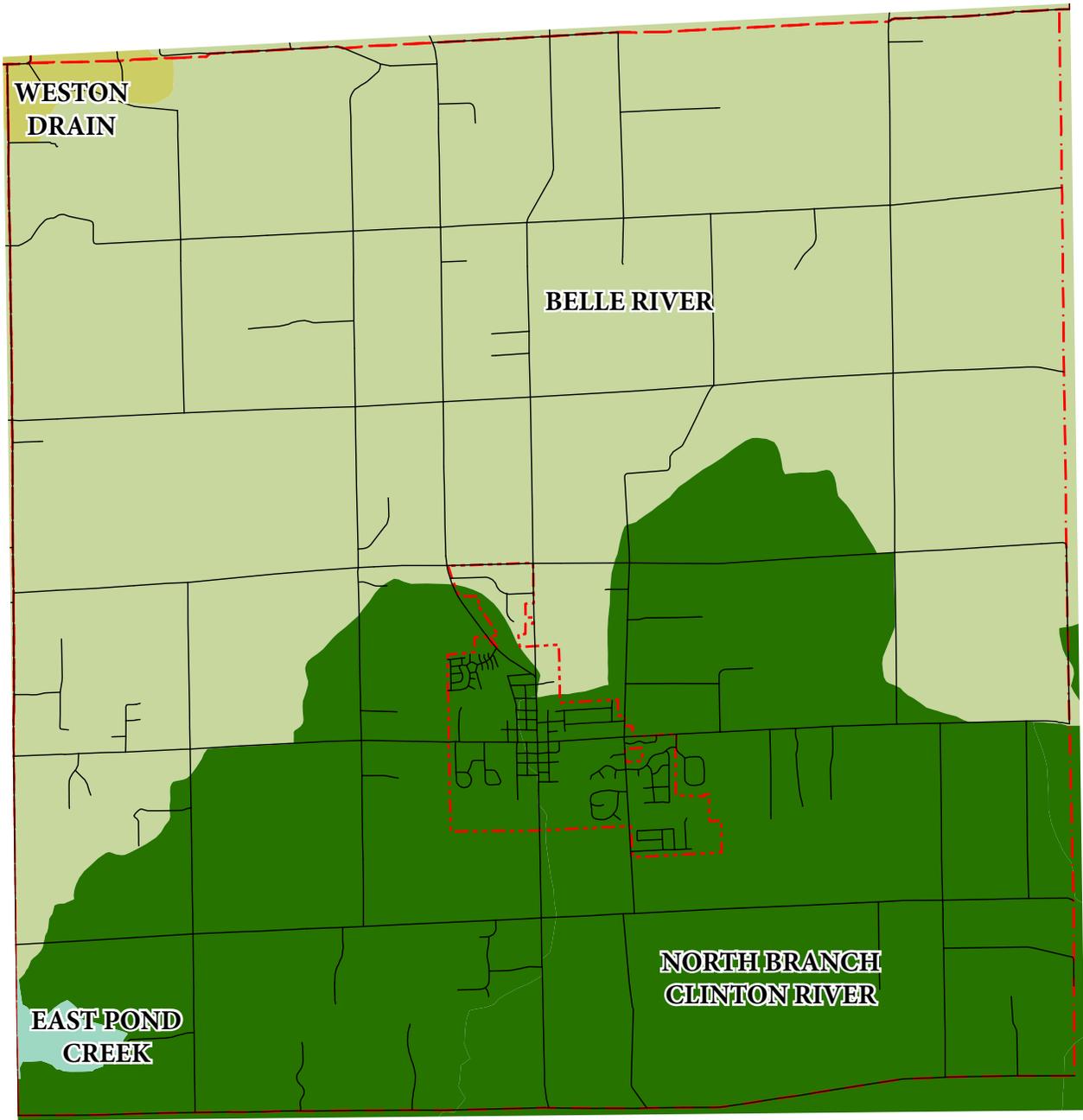
Watersheds in Almont

The southern portion of Almont Township and the majority of the Village is located in the North Branch of the Clinton River watershed. The majority of the northern portion of the Township is located within the Belle River Watershed.

- North Branch of the Clinton River - The North Branch of the Clinton River Subwatershed is located primarily in the southern half of the Township, encompassing the majority of the Village. The North Branch of the Clinton River Subwatershed contains approximately 200 square miles. A small portion of the southwestern corner of the Township is in the East Pond Creek subwatershed.
- Belle River - The Belle River Watershed occupies the northern portion of Almont Township. It is approximately 227 square miles in size and encompasses communities in Lapeer, Macomb and St. Clair Counties.



SECTION 3.0



Almont Village & Township

Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Almont Village & Township Planning Commissions

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

Legend

- Belle River
- East Pond Creek
- North Branch Clinton River
- Weston Drain



Almont's Environmental Responsibility

As noted, Almont is located **in two major watersheds – the North Branch of the Clinton River, and the Belle River Watershed**. Almont's development decisions have lasting impacts on not only the residents and businesses within the Almont community, but also the residents and businesses in these watersheds. The Township and Village should continue to collaborate with appropriate watershed groups and consider implementing Best Management Practices which are conducive to maintaining water quality.

The preservation of water resources is imperative to a healthy environment. Water resources are an integral component of natural areas in Almont and are part of the community's character, recreation network, economic success, and general quality of life.

Best Management Practices

Through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), the Plan encourages Low Impact Development (LID) techniques. LID strives to replicate virtually all components of the natural water cycle by:

- Minimizing total runoff volume,
- Controlling peak rate of runoff,
- Maximizing infiltration and groundwater recharge,
- Maintaining stream baseflow,
- Maximizing evapotranspiration, and
- Protecting water quality.

The goals and policies for LID and stormwater management should include elements that:

- Protect the land's natural ability to absorb, clean, and store stormwater,
- Minimize impervious surfaces in new construction and redevelopment projects to reduce the amount of runoff and improve infiltration,
- Use Best Management Practices (BMPs) throughout the community to reduce the impacts of stormwater,
- Implement community programs that improve water quality and educate the public about their role in water quality, and
- Link protection of water quality through stormwater management to the protection of residents' health, safety, and welfare.

Mitigate Existing Impervious Surfaces [Imperviousness]

By managing runoff from impervious surfaces before it enters the storm sewer system or nearby waterbody, peak flow rates, total volume runoff, and pollutant concentrations can be reduced.

The following concepts can be incorporated into regulation or policy to mitigate existing impervious surfaces:

- Vegetated parking lot islands;
- Vegetated road medians (in conjunction with the Road Commission of Lapeer County);
- Green roofs;
- Pervious pavement / pavers;
- Parking space requirement reduction (both number and size).

SECTION 3.0

Infiltration Techniques [Infiltration]

Using infiltration techniques to manage runoff reduces peak flow rates, total volume runoff, and pollutant concentrations that would otherwise enter the storm sewer system and impact a nearby waterbody. Where soils are conducive to infiltration, techniques can be utilized that promote groundwater recharge.

The following concepts can be incorporated into regulation or policy to reduce stormwater impacts through infiltration:

- Rain gardens / tree boxes / bioretention;
- Infiltration basins;
- Infiltration trenches;
- Porous pipe and underground infiltration systems; and
- Water spreading.

Filtration Techniques [Filtration]

Filtration techniques are similar to infiltration techniques in that they reduce peak flow rates, total volume runoff (if bio-filtration is used), and pollutant concentrations. They differ in that filtration is typically used in areas where the soils are not appropriate for infiltration. Subsequently, filtration techniques bring in an alternative filtering media, such as sand, and use an underdrain to direct the treated water to a storm sewer system or waterbody.

The following concepts can be incorporated into regulation or policy to reduce stormwater impacts through filtration:

- Sand/ organic / media filters (surface and underground);
- Pocket filters;
- Intermittent filters;
- Recirculating filters;
- Filter strips; and
- Perimeter sand filters.

Vegetative Buffers & Natural Conveyance [Natural Buffers]

Using vegetative conveyance to manage runoff reduces peak flow rates, pollutant concentrations, and in some cases total volume runoff that would otherwise enter the storm sewer system or nearby waterbody. The following concepts can be incorporated into regulation or policy to reduce stormwater impacts through vegetative buffers and natural conveyance:

- Herbaceous and forested riparian buffers;
- Wet and dry swales; and
- Vegetated channels.



SECTION 3.0



4.0 Existing Land Use

SECTION 4.0

Introduction

The character of our physical environment is influenced by many factors. Chief among these is the use of land, its distribution within the community, and the relationship of such uses to one another. These ingredients strongly influence the overall character and image of the community. They also influence quality of life and our relative degree of satisfaction with our surroundings.

Land use characteristics and relevant physical features are among the most perceivable aspects of the land use planning process. These features establish the observable setting upon which the future of the community will be based. They also influence the development potential of the community.

The main feature of this chapter is an examination of Almont's land use characteristics on a classification basis. Each of Almont's individual land use categories are discussed, including the amount of land devoted to each category and the distribution of uses within the community. Current information will also be compared to previous land use surveys in order to illustrate trends.

Methodology

Almont's boundaries are a product of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which established a uniform system of dividing land into a grid pattern. This system was devised to assist in the eventual settlement of the vacant interior portions of the United States. Townships created as a result of this process were subdivided into 36 one-mile square divisions known as sections. Almont Township is organized in this way, with the Village of Almont, centrally located within the Township, occupying over one square mile.

Existing land use data for Almont was gathered during a field survey of the community, conducted in the summer of 2012. Land use features were initially recorded on a parcel-by-parcel basis on a base map. This information was subsequently transferred to an updated base map according to individual categories.



Land Use Categories

Residential

Three categories of residential land uses were recorded during the field surveys: Agricultural or Single-Family Residential on Acreage, Single-Family, and Multiple-Family. Single-family home sites occupy a large share of Almont's developed land. More than 2,300 acres of land are being used for this purpose, representing 10.0 percent of the total area of land in the community.

Agricultural land, or residences on greater than five (5) acres of land, constitutes the largest amount of area in the community. Farmland and homes on large acreage occupy over 19,000 acres of land.

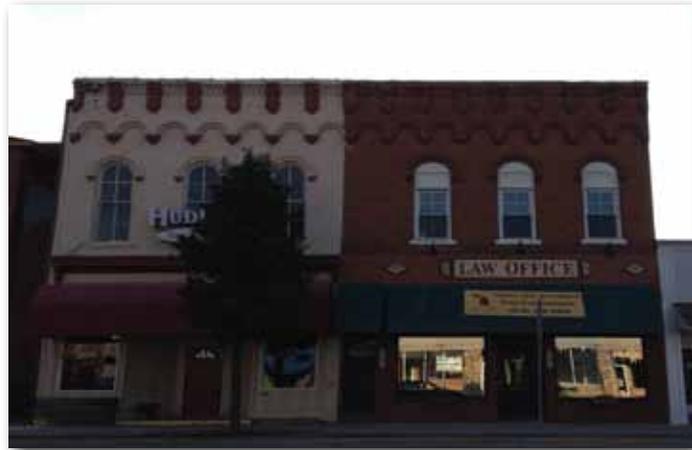
Single-family homes are located in private developments and along the frontages of the Township's section-line road system, as well as in the neighborhoods of the Village. Almont Township has only one platted subdivision, centrally located along Almont Road. Much of the new residential development has taken place in the southern half of the Township, especially the southeast corner.



SECTION 4.0

Office/Commercial

Commercial and office development in Almont constitutes 101 acres of land, or slightly less than one half of one percent of the community's acreage. Approximately half of this acreage is located with the downtown area of the Village. General commercial land uses account for much of the Township's commercial acreage. This category of commercial land refers to uses that require freestanding locations along major thoroughfares and rely on easily visible and convenient access. Automobile-oriented businesses, including gasoline service stations, repair garages and car dealerships, are examples of this type of use. Commercial recreation activities, such as golf driving ranges and plant nurseries, all fall into this broad category. All commercial sites are located along, or in close proximity to M-53.



Industrial

Industrial properties account for 240 acres of the total land area in Almont, with the majority being within the Township. An industrial park is located on the east side of Van Dyke within the Village. Existing industrial activities in the Township are primarily concentrated along M-53 between Dryden and Hollow Corners Roads. Other industrial sites are scattered along M-53, south of this area.



Public and Semi-Public

Public uses include schools, parks and other Township and Village-operated facilities. The largest of these sites is the high school located along Howland Road. Semi-public uses include land occupied by churches, utilities and various non-profit organizations. Over 136 acres of land are being used for this purpose in Almont.

Right-of-Way

The quantity of land used for right-of-way purposes is one indicator of a community's degree of development. More land is required for road purposes in communities that have more land being used for residential, commercial and industrial purposes.

A road right-of-way includes more than the land upon which the actual paved surface is built. It includes the wider path or corridor within which the paved surface is located. The width of the right-of-way varies, depending on the type of road. Section-line roads and their equivalent in Almont Township were assumed to have a right-of-way width of 120 feet; local subdivision streets and private roads have 60 foot rights-of-way. The Van Dyke Highway has a right-of-way width of approximately 120 feet. Road right-of-way uses account for 790 acres of land.

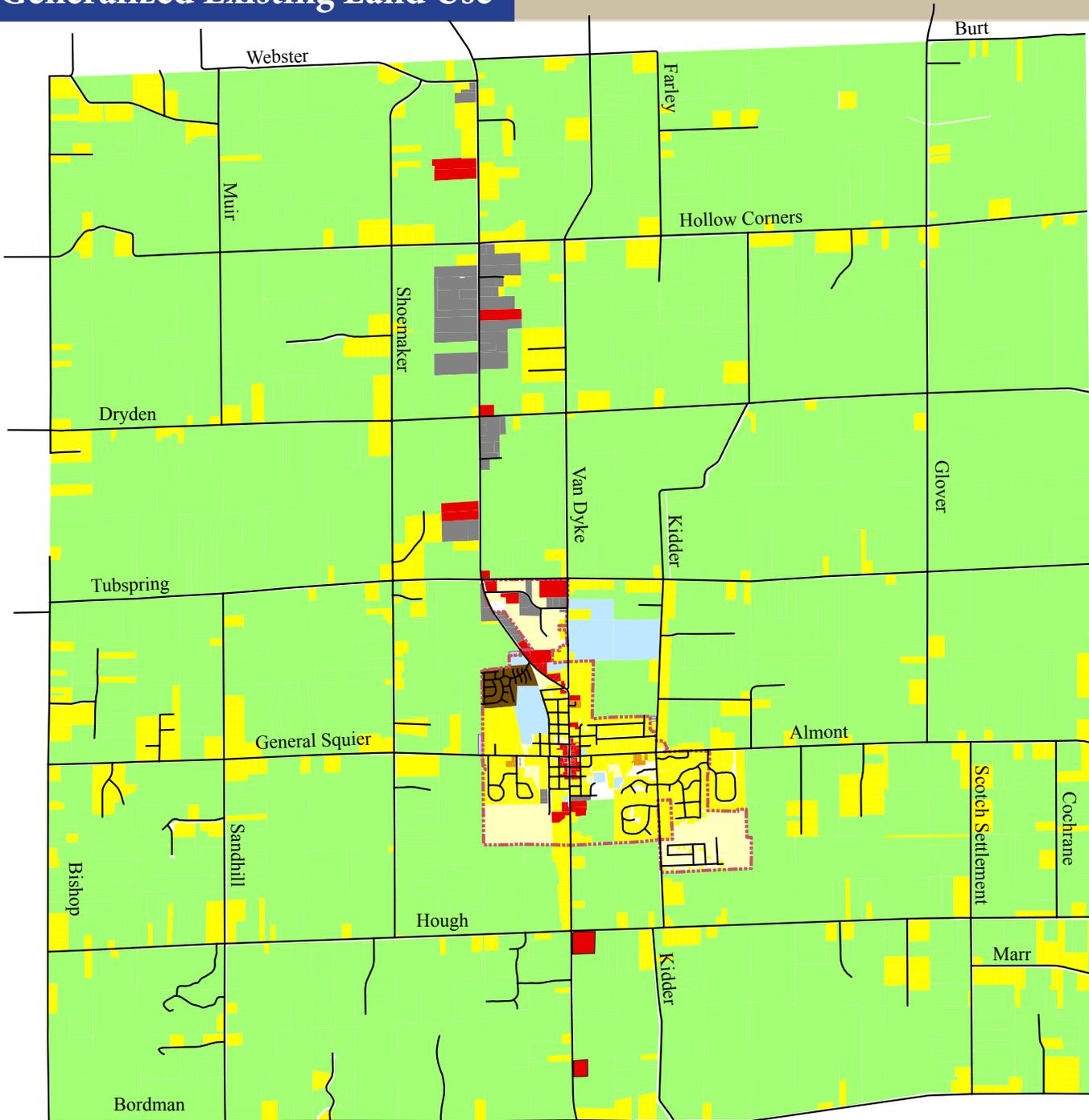
Water

Several small lakes are located throughout the Township. These bodies of water occupy 90 acres.

	Acres	%
Vacant	215	0.9
Agricultural or Residential on Acreage	19,352	83.4
Single Family	2,309	9.9
Multiple Family	7	0.3
Commercial/ Office	101	0.4
Industrial	240	1.0
Manufactured Housing Community	40	0.2
Public/Semi-Public	136	0.5
Right-of-Way	790	3.4
Total	23,190	100.0

SECTION 4.0

Generalized Existing Land Use



Almont Township

Lapeer County

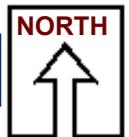
Map Prepared By:
Almont Township Planning Commission

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

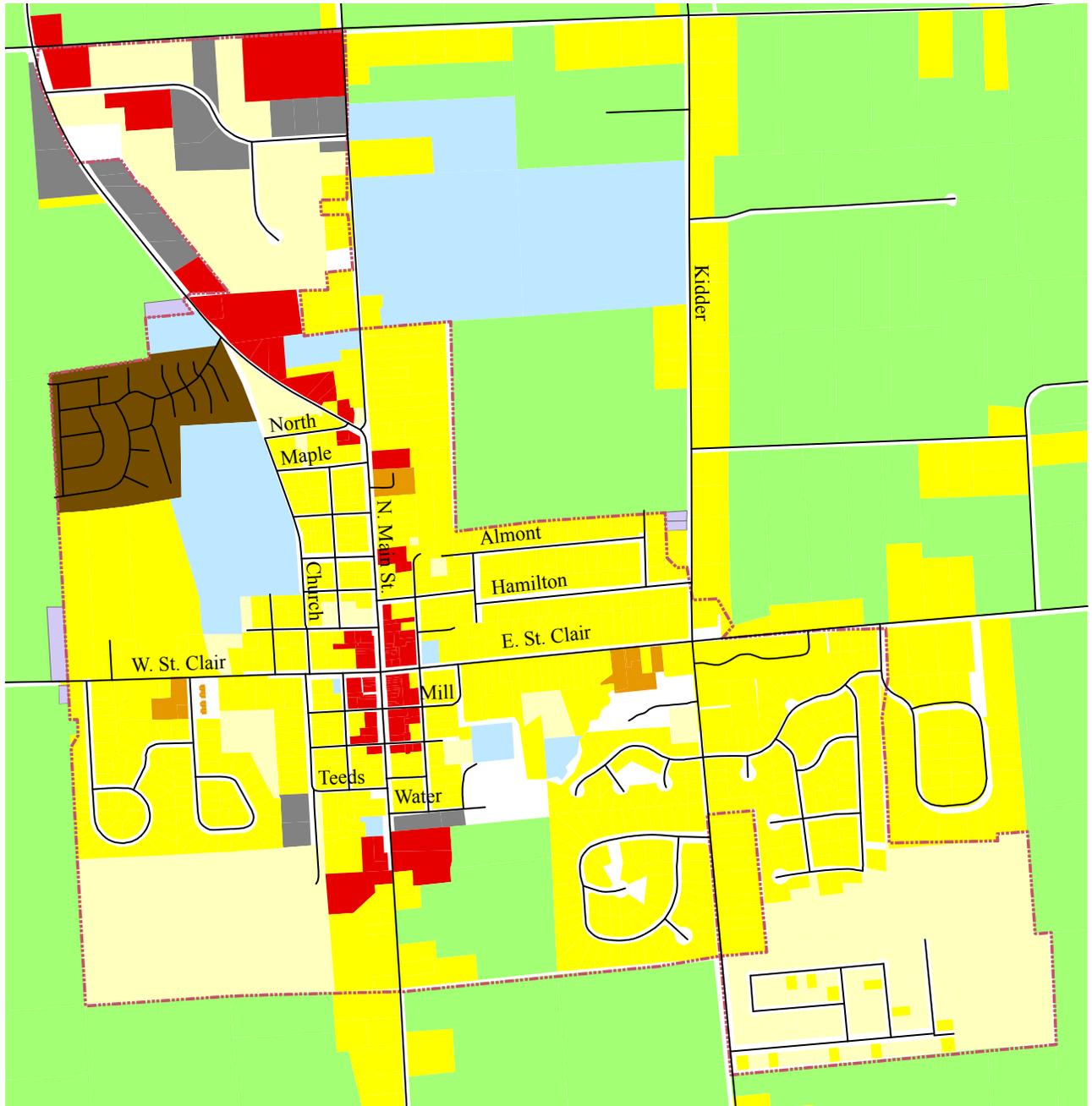
Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Vacant |  Commercial |
|  Agricultural or Residential on Acreage |  Industrial |
|  Single Family |  Manufactured Housing Community |
|  Multiple Family |  Public/Semi-Public |



Almont

Generalized Existing Land Use



Village of Almont Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Village of Almont Planning Commission

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

Legend

 Vacant	 Commercial
 Agricultural or Residential on Acreage	 Industrial
 Single Family	 Manufactured Housing Community
 Multiple Family	 Public/Semi-Public



SECTION 4.0

Existing Land Use



5.0 Visions & Strategies

SECTION 5.0

VISIONS AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

In the broadest sense, the Master Plan is a guiding policy. The Plan contains several policies, each supported by a group of objectives designed to serve as a guide to consistent and rational public and private decisions in the use and development of land and public improvements.

PURPOSES OF THE MASTER PLAN

The purposes of the Master Plan are:

1. To improve the physical environment of the Village and Township as a setting for human activities, thus promoting general health, safety and welfare by making Almont more functional, beautiful, desirable, healthful, interesting and efficient.
2. To facilitate the democratic determination and implementation of Township and Village policies and physical development. The Plan is primarily a policy instrument. The Plan constitutes a declaration of long-range visions and strategies and provides the basis for a program to accomplish visions. By placing the responsibility for determining policies with the Planning Commission and providing an opportunity for citizen participation, the Plan facilitates the democratic process.
3. To affect political and technical coordination in community development.
4. To inject long-range considerations into the determination of short-range actions.
5. To bring professional and technical knowledge to bear on the making of political decisions concerning the physical development of the Township and Village.

As an expression of desirable physical development, the Master Plan is an affirmation of visions and strategies.

POLICY BASIS

Only through careful analysis of existing conditions and the forces which have brought them about, can Almont understand its inter-relationship, identify its underlying purpose, anticipate future problems, and devise solutions.

Accordingly, Almont identifies its visions and strategies by relating them to current problems and issues and to tangible alternative solutions. At the same time, the Township and Village must attempt to anticipate future problems and recommend the steps necessary to prevent their occurrence or reduce their severity.

No Statement of Policy or set of objectives, however carefully and analytically developed, will be equally relevant at all times. Movements of people and the stimulation of activities relieve one set of problems and leave others in their wake. For example, when the automobile replaced the horse the streets became cleaner, but the air dirtier. As our production rises, distribution, rather than production of consumer goods, becomes the problem. As urbanization continues, flooding becomes a problem in previously well-drained areas because of increased water run off. Increases in population and income affect recreation demand and create weekend traffic congestion in areas usually free of such conditions.

While policy formation in practice is not as tidy and logical as it is in theory, it is important to note that policy decisions tend to move in sequence from the general to the specific. In this chapter, less emphasis is being placed on very general goals because it is presumed that they reflect universally accepted values (i.e., create a community of the highest quality in which to work, live and recreate, ensuring optimum protection of health, safety, welfare, etc.).

This section attempts to reflect the community structure and quality of community life which the Township desires. Decisions cited in this chapter and the resulting objectives are translated in a Master Plan that reflects Almont's key decisions in selecting future development patterns.

In this chapter, objectives mean those necessary steps, put into words, that amplify and implement policy and relate it to "short-range decisions," specific recommendations and, finally, to detailed regulations.

POLICY PURPOSE

Clear-cut statements of policy can go far to minimize the perceived arbitrariness of certain planning and planning-related actions. They can guide and substantiate honest, intelligent decisions. They can also serve the Community Planner and the Planning Commission as an anchor of objectivity. Policy statements also inform the public regarding the thinking of the Planning Commission with regard to land use decisions.

Almont Township Policy Concepts

Vision: The Township strives to retain the rural, country atmosphere of the community.

Strategies:

1. Place the general welfare of the community as a whole ahead of the specific interests of development.
2. Select and promote a defined direction for development.
3. Discourage development and policies that could be detrimental to the character of the Township.

SECTION 5.0

4. Preserve historic and natural features that contribute to the character of the Township, whenever possible.
5. When development is proposed, promote high quality, aesthetically-pleasing development.

Natural Resources

Vision: Protect and enhance the abundant supply of environmentally significant and aesthetically pleasing natural features that enhance the quality of life for residents.

Strategies:

1. Integrate preservation of natural features into the development process.
2. Preserve the rolling, open topography of the west side of the Township.
3. Rehabilitate mining sites to blend with adjacent land uses.
4. Preserve the Township's and Village's woodlands and water features.
5. Protect natural resources from intrusions by development that would jeopardize their delicate balance.
6. Discourage land uses that would negatively affect ground water supplies.
7. Encourage environmentally sensitive areas to be set aside as open or recreational space.



Residential

Vision: Residential structures of all forms will be designed in a manner that compliments the rural character of Almont.

Strategies:

1. Maintain the rural and low density residential character of the Township.
2. Encourage a high percentage of home ownership for all forms of residential development.
3. Protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of incompatible uses.

4. Encourage the use of innovative planning and zoning techniques, such as Planned Unit Developments and cluster developments, which preserve environmentally sensitive areas of the Township.
5. Require that open space and recreation be provided for all forms of residential development within the Township. Including large lot development on acreage, subdivision development, open space development or multiple family development.
6. Plan for medium and higher density residential development only in those areas of the Township that have suitable access and can provide an acceptable means of sewage treatment and water service.
7. Provide an alternative to sprawl development by encouraging cluster development in low to moderate density areas.
8. Encourage the upkeep and preservation of residences with historic value.

Agriculture

Vision: Minimize the premature conversion of productive agricultural lands to suburban uses. The Master Plan encourages the long-term survival of farming as a viable and economical land use.

Strategies:

1. Provide opportunities for agriculture to exist compatibly with single-family homes.
2. Establish buffer or transition zones between existing farms and incompatible uses.
3. Recognize the role that agriculture has played in the Township's history and in establishing an identity for the community.
4. Provide flexibility to farmers recognizing their need to convert farmland to other uses.
5. Discourage utilities in areas that would lead to the conversion of farmland for suburban uses.
6. Consider a range of appropriate alternative measures for preserving existing farmland.
7. Recognize that productive agricultural land is an irreplaceable asset.



Commercial

Vision: The Township will accommodate potential commercial needs of the Township or surrounding region.

Strategies:

1. Allow commercial and office uses only in places of safe and easy access.
2. Recognize the Township's mutually beneficial relationship with the Almont Central Business District.
3. Support efforts to diversify the Township's commercial base.
4. Provide opportunities for commercial uses that meet the daily needs of Almont residents.
5. Encourage the development of planned commercial complexes and office parks.
6. Avoid commercial development where it negatively impacts residential development.
7. Recognize that Township residents have easy access to regional shopping centers that are located within a convenient driving radius from the community.
8. Upgrade commercial development standards to improve the curb appeal of all new commercial development in the Township as they relate to signage, landscaping, building appearance, setbacks and overall site design.
9. Encourage office development in areas designated for commercial purposes.
10. Combine commercial curb driveways and parking lots and discourage excessive curb cuts along major roads.



Industrial

Vision: The Township shall allow for the development of a clean, high quality industrial base to facilitate an environment that allows residents to both work and live in Almont.

Strategies:

1. Plan for expansion of the Township's industrial base that does not detract from the rural character of the community.
2. Support the development of non-nuisance light industries and high tech/research facilities that do not have adverse environmental impacts or are offensive because of noise or visual characteristics.
3. Recognize the contribution that industrial development makes to the community's tax base and the relationship of a stable tax base to maintaining the overall quality of life in the community.
4. Concentrate industrial uses only at those locations that are capable of supporting such development based on the availability of suitable transportation access.
5. Utilize existing properly located industrial sites as a base for future expansion.
6. Encourage the development of planned industrial subdivisions that provide necessary support facilities.
7. Upgrade industrial development design standards.
8. Provide adequate buffer areas where industrial and residential uses interact or abut.
9. Discourage heavy industrial uses that create excessive noise and/or vibration, or that require outdoor storage in areas of incompatible uses.

Recreation and Open Space

Vision: Provide adequate recreational facilities for the residents of Almont Township.

Strategies:

1. Provide a range of recreational facilities and activities to Township residents.
2. Consider the development of a combination Township Hall and recreation/community center.
3. Provide adequate park and recreational space as an integral part of each development including single-family subdivisions, multiple-family developments and mobile home parks.
4. Encourage cooperation with the Almont School District in providing recreational facilities and programs.

SECTION 5.0

5. Relate the location of future recreational facilities to existing and anticipated population growth areas, as well as to other community facilities.
6. Consider the availability and access to private and commercial recreational opportunities available in the Township or nearby communities in evaluating future recreation needs.
7. Encourage the interconnection of open spaces for potential recreational uses.
8. Encourage the use of railroad rights-of-way and utility corridors as suitable corridors for a pedestrian/bicycle paths.
9. Explore the reuse of abandoned mining sites for recreation purposes.
10. Encourage well-designed and well-operated recreational facilities.
11. Acquire scenic easements reinforcing the open space preservation objectives and community appearance.
12. Provide younger members of the community with an opportunity to participate in the development, operation, and maintenance of recreational facilities and programs.

Streets and Roads

Vision: Aware of its limited influence in directing improvements in the Township's major road system, the Township will plan a network of safe roads to assure proper local access and movement in the community.

Strategies:

1. Improve and expand the Township's existing road system to handle the anticipated traffic created by increases in the community's population and businesses.
2. Recognize issues of pedestrian traffic when considering development plans.
3. Permit the development of private or public roads when they contribute to the rural character of the community and which meet accepted planning, engineering, design and maintenance standards.
4. Require acceleration/deceleration tapers and bypass lanes in conjunction with development along all major roads.
5. Encourage the development of "dust-free" roads without compromising the rural character of the Township.
6. Establish well-defined truck routes, especially for gravel trucks.
7. Plan road improvements to coincide with development.
8. Provide a continuous vehicular circulation pattern within adjoining single-family subdivisions.

9. Limit the number of driveways allowed for commercial development and consolidate access whenever possible.
10. Reduce noise pollution associated with traffic in the Township.
11. Obtain right-of-way dedications and reservations consistent with local, County and State proposals.
12. Correct hazardous and unsafe areas by improving street alignments, where possible.
13. Improve the appearance of land within the Van Dyke Avenue right-of-way.
14. Support complete street legislation and multi-modal transportation options.

Public Facilities

Vision: The Township will carefully plan for the extension of public services to correspond to the increased development of the Township in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.

Strategies:

1. Encourage cooperation with adjacent communities relative to the shared responsibility of providing public services that cannot be realistically provided by individual communities.
2. Consider the expansion of the Village's sewer and water system, or the possibility of the future development of a Township system.
3. Recognize the fact that the availability of a public sewer and water system attracts and demands urban development.
4. Encourage large lots and on-site disposal systems where sewer extensions are not foreseeable within the planning period.
5. Plan for the most efficient and effective method of providing emergency services.
6. Consider the development of a Township Hall.
7. Promote a sound street name and numbering system to facilitate recognition and easy location for emergency vehicles.
8. Encourage the placement of all utilities underground in shared easements.
9. Consider the need for a master storm water drainage plan that addresses existing and anticipated surface water drainage problems.
10. Encourage the establishment of a Township-wide recycling center.
11. Study the possibility of acquiring land for community facilities and/or services.

SECTION 5.0

Almont Village Policy Concepts

Vision: The Village will endeavor to retain its rural heritage while continually striving to provide the highest possible quality of life for the Almont community.

Strategies:

1. Place the general welfare of the Almont community, as a whole, ahead of any one individual interest.
2. Select and promote a defined direction for responsible development.
3. Discourage development and policies that could be detrimental to the character of the Village and broader Almont community.
4. Preserve historic and natural features that contribute to the character of the Village, whenever appropriate.
5. Promote high-quality, aesthetically-pleasing development.
6. Promote collaboration between the Village and its neighboring political jurisdictions, whenever appropriate.

Natural Resources

Vision: The Village will protect its natural resources and act as a thoughtful caretaker of its environmental assets.

Strategies:

1. Balance growth and the need to protect natural resources.
2. Protect public health through careful stewardship of air, water, soil, and wildlife resources so that future generations may enjoy these resources in a condition that is equivalent to or better than their current state.
3. Coordinate with other political jurisdictions in an effort to clean existing streams and rivers while working collaboratively with neighboring entities to promote the protection of regional resources.
4. Integrate preservation of natural features into the development process.
5. Provide for long-term maintenance of existing drains.
6. Partner collaboratively with Almont Township in an effort to protect natural resources which enrich both jurisdictions.
7. Consider and possibly adopt a special zoning district for the floodplain within the Village.

Residential

Vision: The Village will plan for a variety of dwelling types to best house a representative cross-section of users. These dwelling units should compliment the rural character of the community.

Strategies:

1. Encourage diversified housing types.
2. Encourage the maintenance of the unique characteristics which comprise each individual residential neighborhood of the Village.
3. Encourage quality housing.
4. Preserve residential areas which reflect the community's heritage.
5. Preserve currently existing residential structures along M-53 (Main St.).
6. Rehabilitate or remove blighted residential structures and act to mitigate any potential blighting influences.
7. Direct medium and high density residential development to areas served with adequate public utilities and transportation.
8. Encourage a high percentage of home ownership and permanent housing types.
9. Provide sufficient open space for each dwelling unit through generous yard spaces or common open space areas.
10. Provide an alternative to continued sprawl development by encouraging cluster development in moderate density areas.

Agriculture

Vision: The Village recognizes the historical importance of agriculture to the character of the community and will act to preserve farmland, in conjunction with the other goals and strategies of this master plan.

Strategies:

1. Provide a permanent farmer's market for locally provided farm products.
2. Minimize the intrusion of urban activity into areas best suited for long-term agriculture use.
3. Establish buffer or transition zones between existing farms and incompatible uses.
4. Provide opportunities for agriculture to exist compatibly with single-family homes.

SECTION 5.0

5. Provide flexibility to farmers, recognizing their need to convert farmland to other legal uses.
6. Recognize that productive agricultural land is an irreplaceable asset.
7. Partner collaboratively with Almont Township in an effort to protect agricultural resources which enrich both jurisdictions.

Commercial

Vision: Support commercial opportunities that will strengthen the long-term economic viability of the Village and position it to adapt to anticipated changes in the regional and global economies.

Strategies:

1. Support the Almont Downtown Development Authority in its efforts to rehabilitate and strengthen business and buildings within its boundaries.
2. Encourage the upgrading and rehabilitation of buildings within the central business district.
3. Encourage consolidated commercial centers rather than unplanned linear commercial districts.
4. Encourage commercial facilities only where easy access and adequate parking can be assured.
5. Encourage the use of residential structures for home-based occupations and commercial purposes, when appropriate, in areas neighboring the central business district.
6. Provide for a diverse range of retail goods and services within the Village.
7. Promote a unique commercial identity for the Village that will serve to attract people from throughout the region.
8. Encourage the use of landscaping, setbacks, proper lighting, and related controls to provide aesthetically pleasing and safe shopping facilities.
9. Discourage large and inappropriately lighted signs along major roads.
10. Discourage spot and marginal strip commercial development.



11. Encourage communication and dialogue with Almont Township in an effort to promote commercial development that strengthens the Almont community.
12. Discourage commercial uses which negatively impact residential districts.
13. Consider and possibly adopt and enforce design guidelines and standards.
14. Consider and possibly adopt architectural controls and/or a form-based zoning ordinance.
15. Begin the process for implementing principles for the Redevelopment Ready Community program, including an assessment of the plan review process, developing a redevelopment plan for defined areas of the community, etc.



Industrial

Vision: Support industrial opportunities that will strengthen the long-term economic viability of the Village and strengthen the overall tax base of the region.

Strategies:

1. Direct industrial growth to the industrial park.
2. Buffer industrial uses from other uses through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and greenbelts.
3. Encourage the growth of clean, high-technology and research industrial facilities.
4. Discourage heavy industrial uses when such businesses would severely impact the community or when such uses are inconsistent with the remainder of the master plan.
5. Provide excellent utility service and transportation infrastructure to support development.
6. Encourage the placement of all utility lines underground.
7. Discourage uses that would result in nuisances or adverse environmental impacts.
8. Recognize the contribution that industrial development makes to the community's tax base and the relationship of a stable tax base to maintaining the overall quality of life within the Almont community.
9. Encourage communication and dialogue with Almont Township in an effort to promote industrial development that strengthens the Almont community.
10. Partner collaboratively with neighboring and regional political jurisdictions through organizations such as the Next Michigan Development Corporation in an effort to maximize collective resources.

SECTION 5.0

Recreation and Open Space

Vision: Provide adequate recreational facilities for the residents of the Almont community.

Strategies:

1. Provide high quality recreational facilities and activities to Almont residents.
2. Consider partnering with Almont Township for the construction of a recreation/community center.
3. Provide adequate park and recreational space as an integral part of each development including single-family subdivisions, multiple-family developments and mobile home parks.
4. Encourage cooperation with the Almont School District in providing recreational facilities and programs.
5. Consider partnering with Almont Township in order to create suitable corridors for pedestrian and bike paths.
6. Provide younger members of the community with an opportunity to participate in the development, operation, and maintenance of recreational facilities and programs.
7. Collaboratively partner with Almont Township in an effort to strengthen the Almont Community Park while evaluating how it can best serve the needs of the residents.
8. Maintain a master parks and recreation plan that will enhance recreational activities and the quality of community parks.

Transportation (Including Streets and Roads)

Vision: Maintain streets and roads within the Village while planning for advances in transportation that will promote regional mobility.

Strategies:

1. Encourage improvements that will balance the need to draw traffic to the central business district and the need to promote public safety.
2. Provide improved opportunities for pedestrian circulation along existing roads.
3. Collaboratively partner with neighboring and regional communities, when appropriate, to participate in efforts to establish regional transportation systems.
4. Correct existing street alignment inadequacies, particularly those that present hazardous situations for both motorists and pedestrians.
5. Obtain right-of-way dedications and reservations consistent with local, county, and state proposals.
6. Encourage communication and dialogue with Almont Township in an effort to respond to transportation challenges and opportunities affecting both jurisdictions.
7. Support a complete streets policy to reduce congestion and provide multi-modal transportation options.

Public Facilities

Vision: The Village will provide high quality public facilities that meet the needs of the Almont community.

Strategies:

1. Collaboratively partner with Almont Township in the delivery of future public services and facilities that can not be realistically provided by an individual community.
2. Explore opportunities for enhance collaboration and consolidation which recognize both the overall prevailing economic climate and the cost-savings that can be realized through joint endeavors.
3. Promote a sound street name and numbering system to facilitate emergency services.
4. Promote the need for a master storm water drainage plan that addresses existing and anticipated surface water drainage problems.
5. Encourage planned development patterns in order to provide for cost effective extensions of water and sewer services.
6. Consider the provision of water and sewer services to Almont Township in an effort to strengthen the overall Almont community.
7. Consider the purchase of land in order to provide a location for a new stand-by well source.



6.0 Land Use Plan

Introduction

Community planning is concerned with the rational utilization of land and the provisions of public services and facilities. The Master Plan strives to improve the quality of life within Almont through proper planning for the development of vacant land and the redevelopment of existing areas. To achieve this, the Master Plan is comprehensive, long-range, and regional in scope.

The Plan is general enough to permit progressive refinements and allow for unforeseen contingencies and should not be viewed as a precise “blueprint for the future.” Nevertheless, the Plan should not be deviated from without good and documentable cause. The Plan should serve as a narrative and graphic framework within which decisions related to development can be made realistically and with practicality of application. The Plan is more than just a mosaic presentation. Within the graphics and mapping are spatial distributions and relationships aligned with the Township’s and Village’s selected goals and objectives. This section outlines the land use plan for the Township and the Village. The Village Plan can be found towards the end of the document and the Township Plan begins in the following paragraph:

ALMONT TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN

Concept Plan

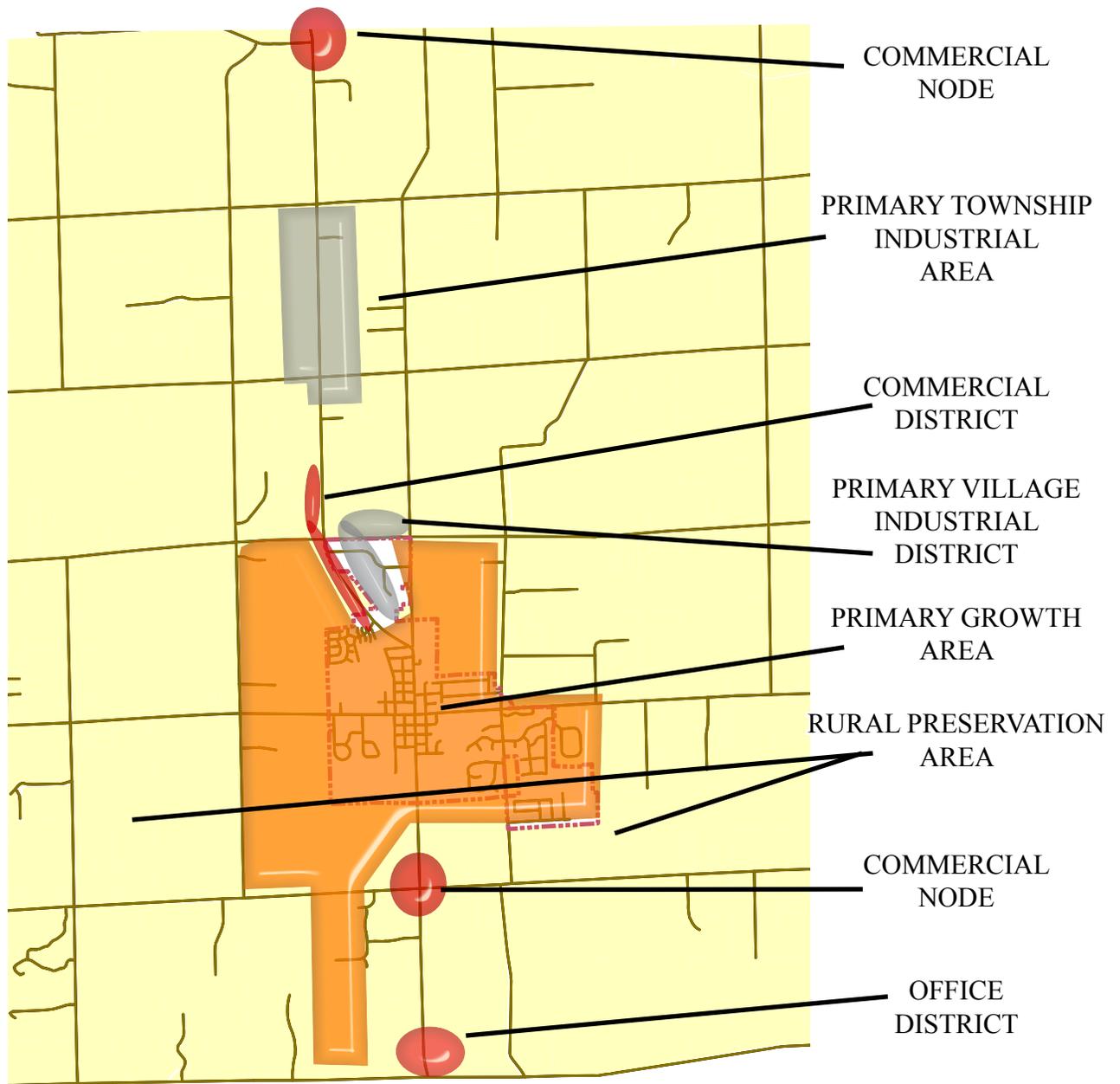
The potential physical arrangement and distribution of various land uses on vacant land is finite in number. Regional considerations, existing land use, the road network, soils, topography, population growth, and economic potential each act to narrow the number of possible optimum arrangements. The resulting alternatives are given further expression by the selected goals and objectives which provide the policy framework upon which future land use determinations in the Township will be guided. Collectively, these factors and influences shape future growth potential into a selected conceptual physical arrangement of land use distribution.

The conceptual development plan offers the basic land use framework from which a more refined and detailed pattern will be derived. The concept plan envisions that the greatest intensity of development will occur in a lineal fashion along the Township’s principal transportation corridor (M-53).

The principal development area is located in the southern end of the Township, between the Village limits and Bordman Road. This area contemplates a major commercial and office development area, supported by a more concentrated pattern of residential development and highway traffic on M-53.

A secondary development area is indicated west of the Village of Almont. Residential development south and west of the Village is expected to occur in a more compact pattern consistent with net densities of roughly one (1) unit per acre. Near the northwest corner of the Village, next to the existing mobile home park, the Concept Plan designates an area suitable for additional mobile home development.

A linear industrial district extends south along the east side of Van Dyke, from Hollow Corners Road to roughly a 1/4 mile south of Dryden Road. The district is also located on the east side of Van Dyke. Here, the district extends south from Hollow Corners to Tubsprings Road. This industrial designation then jogs east along Tubsprings to Howland Road at a depth of 1/4 mile. The Village Industrial Park runs parallel to this development area on the opposite side of Tubsprings Road.



Almont Township

Concept Plan



Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Almont Township Planning Commission

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

SECTION 6.0

Land Use Plan

Several commercial nodes are planned within the Township. The first commercial node is indicated north of Tubsprings in the area formerly occupied by the airport. A second node is located at the northwest corner of Van Dyke and Hollows Corners Road and runs approximately 1/4 mile. The final commercial node is indicated at the northern extent of the corridor at the Imlay Township border.

The remainder of the Township is designated for low density purposes, with a net density of roughly one-half (1/2) dwelling unit per acre.

RESIDENTIAL/AGRICULTURAL AREA PLANS

Housing provides one of the most basic of all human needs -- the need for shelter. It is provided in a number of different forms, including detached single-family homes, multiple-family buildings, mobile homes, and by numerous variations on these basic types. Predominant housing types within a community are dependent upon a number of factors, including local preferences, the availability of land, and economic characteristics, among others. Different housing types have varying land use requirements that need to be considered as part of the long-term planning process. Since the amount of land used for residential purposes frequently occupies large areas of the community, the characteristics of the housing type often influence the overall character of the community.

This section of Almont's Land Use Plan reviews the characteristics and the potential of the Township's residential areas. It begins with an examination of residential and agricultural development and preservation concepts, and then considers development densities within the Township which are consistent with the Goals and Objectives established in the previous section of the Master Plan. The density requirements and development concepts form a basis for defining the desired character of the various areas of the Township.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PLAN

Farming played an important role in the settlement and growth of Almont Township. While the Township's demographics have changed in recent decades, farming continues to be an important land use feature. Not only does agriculture make an important contribution to the community's tax base, it is also one of the principal features which contributes to the Township's open, rural character. Almont Township's image and identity are related to its agricultural base. The desirability of maintaining the community's rural character and preserving farmland is included within the Goals and Objectives portion of the Master Plan.

The benefits of agricultural preservation go beyond the aesthetic advantages of maintaining open space. The conversion of farmland to urbanization carries with it the frequently hidden costs of extending and/or expanding services such as schools, roads, police, fire and utilities to newly developed subdivisions. Frequently, these costs go unrecognized before development occurs. Dealing with the costs of this land conversion can be expensive to taxpayers. Several groups interested in farmland preservation have documented the fiscal impacts associated with agricultural preservation.

The American Farmland Trust Study, for example, estimates that farmland and open space require only 11 cents in public services for every dollar in taxes generated by that land use, whereas low-density residential development requires \$1.28.(1) A similar study in Dutchess County, New York, showed that for every dollar in taxes paid by an average rural residential unit, \$1.36 was required in public services. Yet, for every dollar paid by an average farm in the County, only 21 cents was demanded in services.(2) Other studies reach similar conclusions, which further support the desirability of preserving farmland from a monetary basis. In spite of these benefits, farmland preservation remains a complex issue without any one single solution.

While agricultural preservation is an issue with National implications, the Federal Government has done little to reduce the annual loss of approximately 1.5 million acres of farmland. Clearly, the greatest impact on this issue has occurred at the local level. In order for these programs to succeed, however, farmland must be viewed as an important natural, non-renewable resource rather than vacant land waiting to be developed.

A continuation of development trends and practices in other portions of southeast Michigan suggest a dim future for the Township's farmland. Portions of the remaining farmland in the Township have been approved for other uses in recent years, further reducing the inventory. To preserve some land for agricultural purposes on a long-term basis, policies and programs must be established to avoid a further erosion of this important natural resource. In pursuit of this goal, the Master Plan examines a range of different techniques for agricultural preservation. The Master Plan supports the use of these techniques based on feasibility and practicality. A summary of several techniques are provided as follows.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program

In 1974, the Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 116, the Farmland and Open Space Program. This program provides tax benefits to agricultural landowners in exchange for an agreement to maintain the land for farming purposes for a specified period of time. Parcels enrolled in P.A. 116 may be exempt from special assessments for improvements associated with urban development, including sanitary sewers, water mains, or street lighting.

Since the use of lands enrolled in this program are restricted to agricultural purposes, and in light of the fact that parcels may be enrolled for extended periods of time (sometimes 50 years), this program may be viewed as a "de-facto form of zoning." P.A. 116 is widely used throughout Michigan. Its success, however, is attributable primarily to its benefits as a tax relief program for farmers, rather than as a method of preserving farmland. This program has been more widely used in rural counties, where development pressures are minimal.

In 1996, the Act was amended to authorize the State to purchase a property's development rights. This practice is commonly referred to as the "Purchase of Development Rights" or "PDR." With PDR's, the landowner receives cash in exchange for the sale of development rights. The landowner still maintains ownership of the property; however, the property is generally restricted to agricultural uses.

SECTION 6.0

Lower Density Zoning Requirements

Any successful attempt to preserve farmland requires the ability to control the use of land, especially the encroachment of urban uses into agricultural areas. Within Michigan, the authority to control land use is vested with local governments in the form of zoning. For all its potential as a useful agricultural preservation technique, zoning, more often than not, falls far short of its expectations. Many agricultural zoning districts are agricultural in name only and represent little more than holding zones for future urban development.

The ability of a local community to restrict development through the establishment of agricultural zoning districts rests largely on two major factors: 1) the exclusion, or near exclusion, of non-farmland uses within agricultural districts; and 2) the establishment of sufficiently large minimum lot sizes or low densities to discourage the development of single-family homes in agricultural areas. The latter is one of the most direct methods of limiting the amount of non-farm development in agricultural zoning districts.

Minimum acreage requirements, however, are rarely effective unless the lot sizes are sufficiently large enough to discourage non-farm single-family development. For example, five or ten-acre minimums are ineffective and may, in fact, be responsible for retiring more farmland prematurely than small lot zoning standards. Frequently, no more than an acre of land is needed to accommodate the placement of the home, including all required setbacks and yard areas. The remaining land is not used for any productive purpose. It is too large for the homeowner to mow and too small for the farmer to farm. This results in a proliferation of parcels which barely exceed the ten (10) acre limit. Such parcels frequently have unsuitable access, may have limited usage, or result in misuse of prime agricultural land. The Township's Zoning Ordinance, along with the State Land Division Act, which both restrict length to width to a 4-to-1 ratio, has curbed the continued development of this type of lot division.

Purchase or Transfer of Development Rights

These concepts involve the exchange or purchase of the development rights of one parcel of land in an agricultural area to another non-farm parcel. This technique recognizes the value of farmland for non-farm purposes. Under this approach, property owners in a preservation district are able to sell their development rights to those owning land in a designated development district, where more intense development may be more appropriate. A variation of this approach includes purchasing the development rights of the property rather than transferring them to another site.

While this concept offers an innovative and potentially useful approach to farmland preservation, it can be complicated and expensive to implement, particularly if the local unit of government is involved in purchasing the development rights. To be successful, this type of program has to be organized to operate effectively in conjunction with the private real estate market system.

In 1996, the State amended the Zoning Act to include provisions authorizing Township's to purchase development rights for farmland or contiguous acreage. Under this program, the Township would be required to adopt an ordinance or zoning ordinance revision which establishes financing and administration rules consistent with the State Act.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a legal agreement through which property owners voluntarily restrict their land to a specific use, such as farming or forestry, in exchange for tax benefits. A landowner who conveys an agricultural easement to a public or private organization retains all rights necessary to continue the farming operation. However, non-farm development rights are separated and retained.⁽³⁾ Numerous tax benefits are available to property owners who enter into these agreements.

Buffer Strips

Buffer strips are setbacks between active farmland and adjoining residential home sites. Those setbacks can be effective devices for separating dwelling units from those aspects of a farming operation that may be considered to be incompatible with residential uses. Establishment of these buffers may be accompanied by an official notification that new residents are moving into an agricultural area.

Open Space Concept

The theory of open space zoning is to preserve agriculture, natural features or open space by concentrating the residential land uses in an area best suited for that use in exchange for the development rights on the remaining parcel. The farm or the open space is assured as a perpetual easement or land use. The residential area is established as a small neighborhood, rather than individual homes side-by-side along each Country road. Each land use pays taxes based on its market value and its existing land use.

The residential area is usually developed as a cluster or a site condominium project, with the individual homeowners sharing common open space and road systems. The overall density of this section of the community is not increased, but the two land uses complement each other, rather than conflict. This concept is discussed in more detail later in this Plan.

Conclusions

Clearly, the decision of a farm household to continue farming in the future is a complex issue involving many interrelated factors that are often impacted by broader economic issues that are well outside the Township's ability to either predict or control. As land values and property taxes increase, additional strains are placed on the economic viability of farming.

The success of any farmland preservation program ultimately rests on the willingness of agricultural property owners to participate. Such participation, however, depends on whether or not the program will economically benefit the property owner and how the program will be administered. Clearly, the Master Plan cannot compel someone to continue farming. It can, however, recommend the use of various incentives or options that enable a farmer to realize some development benefits, while continuing to farm large portions of their property. No single program can solve this problem by itself. Rather, a combination of techniques should be considered as a way of preserving the Township's remaining agricultural land.

SECTION 6.0

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Traditional Neighborhood Development

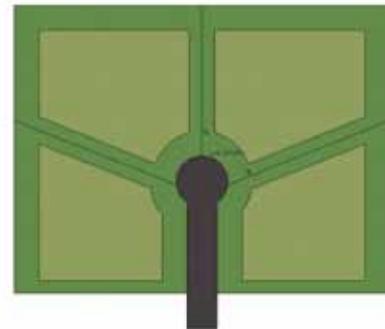
This type of development is only truly feasible along the Village/Township boundary or at a large scale. This type of development provides many of the amenities needed for the residents of the development within the site boundaries. These amenities can include retail areas, enhanced open space or park areas, and educational facilities. This concept involves the idea of “walkability” and human scale, allowing residents, especially children the opportunity to walk or ride bicycles safely within the development area. The layout of the development area usually consists of a grid pattern creating walkable street blocks with larger service roads creating the sites edge, centrally located common facilities, these include areas such as municipal buildings, parks, schools, and the like, and finally local commercial areas conveniently located to serve the residents.

Open Space Policy

The concept involved with open space planning is to create a situation where both public and private interests benefit. Open space allows the developer to condense the buildable area, reducing infrastructure costs, while still allowing the normal housing yield based on total developable land, not total land*. The goal is to preserve areas that are not only regulated by governmental agencies, but to also preserve lands that would preserve a sense of character or would enhance the aesthetic or environmental quality. The first step in developing an open space project is to conduct a site analysis that would depict areas that are environmentally sensitive and need to be preserved**. The second step would be to outline areas that are suitable for development. This would be followed by the placement of dwelling units that maximize views, vistas and settings. The final stage is to draw in lot lines. In this stage it is recognized that each lot will be smaller than required by normal ordinance. This should be permitted as long as the lot size differences are dedicated as permanent common open or recreational space. The Township favors open space developments over conventional subdivision design. Steps must be taken to create regulations which encourage the open space development option in Almont Township.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY DESIGNATIONS

The purpose in planning areas of varying residential densities by location within the Township is two-fold: first, such delineation of future desired density patterns gives the Township a locational guideline to avoid haphazard development; and second, future density patterns within defined neighborhoods provide the basis for determining the various community facility needs of the area’s residents, as shown in the Community Facilities Plan Chapter.



**CONVENTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**



**OPEN SPACE
DEVELOPMENT**

* It is important to realize that not all land is developable. Due to restrictions created by environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, woodlands, topography, and floodplains, along with any other lands deemed undevelopable by governmental regulations, the developer may not be able to develop his/her land to its fullest potential.

** The site analysis should include, but is not limited to, any and all easements, wetlands, woodlands, soil limitations, topography, vegetation, existing structures (both on site and within 200 feet), floodplains, cultural amenities.

The distribution of proposed land uses also provides for a variety of other types of residential uses to meet the housing needs of the Township's various population segments. There is latitude within the residential categories to encourage the use of innovative approaches to land development, such as the use of common areas for active and passive recreation. Residential density ranges which are related to existing conditions and future goals of the Township are shown below.

"Density" as referred to in this Plan, does not guarantee any specific number of lots from any individual parcel or group of parcels. Rather, density refers to the number of lots which can be platted on a given parcel, while meeting all of the criteria and regulations applicable to a conventional subdivision development. Such density calculations will specifically exclude rights-of-way, lakes, rivers, streams, floodplains, protected environmental resources, storm water, retention and detention areas, and any other site feature which preclude residential lot development. The shape and size of parcel, the availability of access, and land assembly problems may also reduce the allowable density on a parcel or tract of land. In fact, a parcel of land needs to be designed as a conventional subdivision in order to determine the "lot yield."

Agricultural-Residential Density

Approximately 20,477.5 acres are planned for this designation. This designation is consistent with the previous policy of larger lot development throughout most of the Township. Minimum lot sizes consistent with this classification are two (2) acres; however, these areas are encouraged to be developed as open space developments as described in the previous section. Such open space developments may include much smaller lot sizes, as permitted by the septic limitations of the soils or other sanitary treatment options, in exchange for permanent open space. Open space developments are the preferred development option in this plan designation area. Areas designated as Agricultural-Residential are not intended to be served with public utilities.

Low Density

A total of approximately 1,330.2 acres of land are dedicated to the low density classification. These areas are found primarily south and west of the Village, with another designation adjacent to the northwest corner of the Village. Single family units at a density consistent of one unit per acre is the recommended development type for this residential classification. As with the Agricultural-Residential designation, open space developments are the preferred development type. Areas designated as Low Density Residential are not intended to be served with public utilities.

SECTION 6.0

Mobile Home Park

This category is directly adjacent to the mobile home park that is currently under the jurisdiction of the Village. A total of 50 acres are designated as Mobile Home Park within the Plan. The recommended density of this district is five (5) to seven (7) units per acre. Density for mobile home districts are largely the authority of the Manufactured Housing Commission.

Capacity Development Estimates

Based on 2010 Census results, Almont Township contained 1,382 housing units and a population of 3,909 persons. Figures for 2000 determined that the Township had 1,124 housing units and 3,238 persons. It is important to realize that the Village of Almont is not included in these totals. Vacant areas designated for residential purposes on the Master Plan Illustration were then considered to arrive at a theoretical capacity population or “build-out” estimate for the Township. When these vacant lands were considered, the totals increased to 9,688 housing units, and 26,887 persons. Assumptions regarding housing density and household size are shown in the following table.

Residential Designation	# of Acres	Units Per Acre	Persons Per Household	Housing Units	Capacity Estimation
Agricultural - Residential	20,477	0.4	2.8	8,191	22,935
Single Family - Low	1,330	0.9	2.8	1,197	3,352
Mobile Home Park	50	5.0 - 7.0	2.0	300	600

The Township’s estimated total housing inventory, at full development, is 9,688 units. The estimated population at capacity approaches 27,000 persons. These estimates assume that all remaining vacant land will be developed at maximum potential yield. The estimates do not account for parcel configuration, the availability of access, land assembly problems, or environmental limitations, such as the presence of wetlands. These factors, alone or in combination, will likely reduce the estimates. Changes in the composition of the average household could have a similar impact.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

A Planned Unit Development area is included as part of the Master Plan. The PUD is an 80 acre site, located at the southwest corner of Dryden Road and M-53. This overlay designation is unique in that it provides for large scale mixed use developments which are broader in regional orientation and incorporate several anchor uses accompanied with the supporting residential developments. Innovative design, with respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation, building placement and style, and natural resource preservation are prerequisites of this type of development.

Because the property abuts the Township’s main transportation corridor, the uses must not include separate ingress/egress drives. Rather, such uses must be serviced by internal road/drive networks to reduce traffic conflicts in these high traffic areas.

In the case of a PUD, creative and innovative designs shall be incorporated into the development. Planned Unit Developments must be designed to provide a proper transition from non-residential uses to residential uses. Ideally, the design should incorporate residential uses in areas which abut residential uses outside the PUD development area, at a similar scale or step in intensity. All such developments shall be in character with the community as a whole, and shall be designed to incorporate elements which will enhance the overall health, safety and welfare of the community.

The PUD designations in this Plan are designed to provide for totally integrated development. Future lot splits and sales of properties within the PUD designated area could eventually prevent the objectives of this Plan from being fulfilled. It is, however, the goal of the Township to encourage integrated mixed use developments at this location. Absent the existence of an integrated development meeting all of the goals and objectives of this Plan, the area should be developed consistent with the underlying Plan designation. Planned Unit Developments may be considered at other similar locations in the Township.

COMMERCIAL AREAS PLAN

This section of the Land Use Plan considers the characteristics of Almont Township's existing commercial base and the extent to which new commercial development may be needed to accommodate anticipated market demands. The methodology used to make this determination includes analysis of the nature and extent of the Township's existing commercial establishments and the types of retail goods and services that they provide. Commercial characteristics are related to the market projections to determine, in more detail, anticipated commercial demand by retail category. Market demand is also related to commercial land use and zoning patterns to determine whether or not existing and anticipated commercial acreage quantitatively meets future needs. Based on this analysis, the extent and potential of commercial areas in the Township are identified.

EXISTING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

According to the existing land use survey conducted in 2012, approximately 101 acres of land are currently developed for commercial purposes in Almont Township. All of the 41 acres of commercial development is located along, or proximate to, Van Dyke (M-53). Much of the commercial is either of an industrial character or is agriculturally related. Convenience or comparison commercial facilities are almost nonexistent within the Township. Most of those services are offered in the Village of Almont Downtown.

FUTURE COMMERCIAL AREAS

Future commercial development in Almont Township is conditioned, to some extent, on the pattern of development portrayed by the existing land use survey. Portions of the Township that may be suitable for future commercial purposes are influenced by existing development and zoning patterns, anticipated future residential areas described in the preceding section, and the commercial goals and objectives developed by the Township. The commercially designated sites account for 191.8 acres of land, or about .9 percent of the Township's total land area. When determining the appropriate zoning designation for a property that is planned for commercial, the Township must take into account the location of the property, the surrounding land uses, the surrounding zoning pattern among other existing conditions.

SECTION 6.0

General Commercial

The location of general commercial uses is designated in nodes along Van Dyke Avenue. Offices, neighborhood business or commercial ventures that require exposure along heavily traveled roads may be appropriate uses. Unless carefully planned and regulated, this form of commercial activity can result in strip development which has many undesirable side effects.

Strip commercial development is a consequence of many factors, some of which are regional in scope. These areas evolve in a piecemeal fashion, with little attention directed to the relationship of adjoining uses. Common characteristics of these areas include the following:

- Dangerous disruption of traffic flow as a result of poor or multiple points of access.
- Uncontrolled turning movements and poor parking circulation.
- Inadequate parking facilities.
- No coordination of complementary commercial functions and activities.
- Random arrangement of buildings.
- Potential blighting influences, particularly in adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Inability to make several purchases at one central location.
- Poor coordination of service-related functions.
- Excessive and/or distracting signage.
- Absence of landscaping to soften harsh visual images in these districts.

The commercial designation recognizes the need to address these concerns through careful site planning, with an emphasis on controlled and shared access, uniform setbacks, limitations on the location, size and quantity of signage, as well as the continued use of landscaping to soften the appearance of these commercial districts.

The Land Use Plan allocation of 191.8 acres of land for commercial development is well above the estimated year 2020 demand. A 10 year projected commercial demand by category is shown in the following table.

	Projections/Need			Master Plan Allocation	Difference
	2000	2010	2020		
Total	40.1	38.3	52.8	191.8	+139.0

In addition to the specific commercial areas identified on the Land Use Plan, the Township has also considered the potential for a commercial user to locate along the Van Dyke corridor on property that has been identified on the Plan Illustration for residential purposes. Although only a small portion of the Van Dyke corridor is identified on the Land Use Plan as commercial, any of the properties located on Van Dyke may be appropriate to accommodate a large commercial user. In determining whether residentially planned property along Van Dyke would be appropriate for this type of commercial user, the Township will review a request based on the applicant's ability to demonstrate that existing commercially zoned and/or planned land within the Township is not suited to accommodate such a development.

Retail Zoning

The development of additional commercial uses in the Township is dependent on a number of factors, the most important of which is the availability of a sufficient amount of land zoned for commercial purposes. In some instances, municipalities, in their zeal for tax base, zone more land than can be absorbed within the market for retail use. This excess of zoned retail land over reasonable anticipated demand is commonly termed over zoning. It is worthwhile to analyze how projected commercial acreage demands compare with existing commercially zoned acreage totals.

The amount of land zoned for commercial purposes in Almont Township totals approximately 119 acres. This is nearly 39.7 acres less than the commercial allocation shown on the Master Plan Illustration. The amount of land planned for commercial purposes reflects a Township policy to accommodate any potential commercial growth in extensive areas of the community, particularly the frontage along Van Dyke. This practice, however, may encourage marginal, sporadic and strip commercial development and the problems that are frequently associated with this type of arrangement. Because planned commercial largely exceeds the anticipated commercial demand in the Community, commercial development standards will have to be upgraded to compensate for any potential loss of land value.

COMMERCIAL SUMMARY

The Master Plan Map designates areas for commercial development. This Master Plan also recognizes that timing and land use compatibility issues are major factors in considering a rezoning. The policy of this Plan is to support a commercial rezoning when such rezoning is compatible with the land use or zoning district on at least one side of the parcel in question and is located within an area planned for future commercial. This policy ensures a measure of compatibility by implementing a timing mechanism that is intended to protect existing residential uses in the area, as well as to limit piecemeal commercial development.

INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLAN

Land reserved for industrial purposes provides important economic benefits for the community. Not only does industrial development offer a source of jobs, it also makes a strong contribution to the Township's developed tax base.

Recognizing the importance of the Township's industrial base, this element of the Land Use Plan examines the characteristics of this category of land uses in more detail. This examination includes a review of existing industrial development and zoning patterns. It also considers the relationship of these industrial uses to broader regional development trends. This section concludes with a quantitative estimate of the amount of industrial development at capacity for the Township.

SECTION 6.0

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS

The 2012 existing land use survey revealed that approximately 240 acres of land were developed for various industrial purposes in Almont Township. This accounts for less than one percent of the Township's total developed land.

The existing land use survey also noted that the Township concentrated its industrial uses, most of which exist along the Van Dyke Corridor.

The quantity and distribution of industrially zoned property in the Township reflects only a portion of the Master Plan's recommendations. Approximately 260 acres are currently zoned for industrial purposes, as opposed to the approximately 390.8 acres that are Master Planned for industrial purposes. This acreage is located almost exclusively along the M-53 Corridor. Only one industrial zoning classification is currently planned for in the Township.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFLUENCES

To more fully understand the Township's existing industrial development pattern and future development potential, it is necessary to view Almont Township in a larger regional context. Almont Township is located outside of one of Macomb County's dominant industrial corridors, Van Dyke, this trend continues into Almont Township and Lapeer County. The Township is positioned, however, to take advantage of the convenient regional access offered by I-69 to the north. This expressway may make the Township more attractive to prospective industrial operations that require access to this expressway.

FUTURE INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The Land Use Plan allocates approximately 390.8 acres of land within the M-53 corridor for industrial purposes. This far exceeds the amount of land being used for this purpose and recognizes the need to provide a reasonable quantity of appropriately located industrial land to balance the Township's tax base and to provide a source of jobs for area residents.

The most desirable current/future industrial sites outside of the Village are located at the intersection of Dryden Road and the M 53 Freeway. Not only does this site offer the convenient access necessary to support industrial land uses, it also is not located near any existing neighborhood areas which may present compatibility concerns. The presence of several industrial sites already within this area further supports this designation.

A significant quantity of land within this corridor is currently being farmed. The Plan recognizes agricultural as an acceptable interim use for an indefinite period of time. Any future industry developed in this corridor should have a light industrial or preferably office research character and be aesthetically compatible with the area.

Most of the land allocated for industrial purposes by the Master Plan is conceptualized as being light industrial. This concept is intended to accommodate light assembly operations, warehousing and similar activities.

LOCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Industrial areas should also have access to major transportation corridors, including highways and/or railroad lines, to accommodate the high volumes of traffic that are generated by these uses. The location of industrial areas must take into account their intensity and the potential for nuisances that may be associated with particular industrial use types. Depending on the type of uses proposed, the relationship of industrial districts to less intensive use areas such as residential neighborhoods must be carefully planned and conflicts avoided whenever possible. When the edges of residential and industrial areas meet, measures should continue to be taken to mitigate potential compatibility problems.

These areas planned for future industrial purposes are located to capitalize on the presence of a regional freeway corridor through the community. The Master Plan encourages industrial uses that do not detract from the overall rural residential character of the community. The Plan also strives to minimize or mitigate any potential compatibility problems that may appear wherever industrial and non-industrial uses share a common boundary. Where these situations exist, careful attention should be directed to site plan review to mitigate any potential nuisances through careful building placement, as well as parking placement, which should be located in the side or rear yard, appropriate setbacks, and the provision of buffering and screening.

The small size of industrial lots is also a concern. Industrial uses, create a significant amount of wastewater, while also creating the need for large amounts of potable water. Due to the fact that the Township is not currently served by public utilities such as water and sewer, adequate space must be provided for conventional well and septic systems without contaminating groundwater.

VILLAGE OF ALMONT LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

Land use plans are essential for growing communities in an efficient and equitable manner. They are intended to ensure that land is used in ways which balance the rights of individuals with the public good. Indeed, the entire purpose of entering into the joint master plan process with Almont Township is to foster a collaborative effort to rationally utilize collective resources.

Concepts

Before introducing the specifics of this land use plan, it is important to note several concepts which were considered during the formation of the plan. In addition to seeking to fulfill jointly held goals, the limitation of sprawl with the master plan is of utmost concern. Sprawl increases the cost of public services and reduces the stability of the Village. The extension of the M-53 Freeway north of Almont was also considered, however because there are no existing plans for this extension, developing the land use plan around the extension was not pertinent. Should plans be created for the extension of M-53, the land use plan will need to consider issues of traffic alleviation and creating convenient access to Almont's Central Business District.

This plan illustrates the proposed physical arrangement of land use to meet the space requirements of Almont as it approaches the future. Generally, the Plan presents the proposed distribution and location of farmland, residences, industry, commerce, and recreational facilities. It is based upon the analysis of existing conditions, future development suppositions and the policies and objectives established in the preceding sections.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation

Farming is a historic and valued tradition within Almont and Lapeer County. Agriculture adds character to the rural residential nature of the Village. Farmland is an irreplaceable asset to the community and should be preserved as much as possible. Prime farmland should be reserved for long time agricultural use and not be utilized for urban development. At this time few farms operate within the Village limits. However, these uses can be protected through careful planning.



Action needs to be taken to preserve Almont's farmland. Michigan Public Act 116 of 1974 allows for the sale of development rights to farmland. Several Almont residents have already taken advantage of the opportunity to sell development rights to their farms to help preserve this valuable asset. In addition to this opportunity, urban development needs to be restricted from impeding upon existing farmland. Limiting the extension of utility services from reaching existing farmland can aid this goal. The limitation of sprawl was of the utmost concern for the Master Plan.

Residential

For the most part, Almont's population is housed in conventional single family homes. Within the Village these dwellings are located in platted subdivisions on smaller lots which yield a more dense development pattern. In contrast to the Village, residential development in the Township occurs on larger lots located primarily along the frontages of the arterial road system. Almont residences have been largely built for housing families and have often lacked in providing for the needs of smaller sized households. Only 19% of housing units in the Village and the Township combined have 2 or fewer bedrooms.

The future housing needs of Almont residents is difficult to determine because of the recent recession, credit crisis, and rising fuel costs. Although the economy is growing again, the extent of this growth and its effect on Almont's housing market is not easily determined. The patterns of the past decade have been unlike any other in Almont's history. It is likely that the population will remain stagnant in the nearest future but there will be growth within the next 10 to 20 years.



One housing matter, however, is certain: the size of households is decreasing. This has been the trend across the nation for some time and is also reflected in local household data provided by the census. Over the past decade, the size of households in the Village has decreased -4.8% and -5.6% in the Township. This trend is expected to continue and municipalities should make necessary adjustments. Smaller households will not require as much space per dwelling as have been built in the recent past. Development strategies should be created which reflect this need for smaller homes. These strategies could include the following:

- The ability to convert a single house into multifamily homes where appropriate
- Condominium and townhome development
- Encouraging high standards for existing mobile homes

SECTION 6.0

Housing in the Village should consist of a range of housing types for varying sizes of households. These housing models should be interspersed among each other as much as is reasonable to provide diversity of ages, income levels, and architectural distinction in each neighborhood. It will also help to stabilize neighborhoods in the event that one model of housing becomes less practical for a significant number of households. This practice should help to reduce vacancy rates in particular neighborhoods. In addition, neighborhoods should have unique characteristics that set them apart from one another. Design standards may be developed for each neighborhood to which housing units should conform. Design standards should take into consideration the historic and architectural aspects of the proximity to which they will apply. Other characteristics apart from design could be incorporated into the plan such as landscaping, landmarks, water features, etc.

Almont Village and Township has a homeowner vacancy rate that is higher than average for Lapeer County. However, the vacancy rate for all housing units is less than that of the County. Because of the increase in vacant housing units for homeowners, efforts need to be focused on finding uses for existing units as well as allowing new housing development. This could include finding alternative purposes for some structures aside from housing. There will continue to be a need for new housing because there continues to be a demand for new homes, often on larger sized lots in the Township. These situations should be weighed on a case by case basis to determine what developments most greatly benefit the public good. Haphazard and poorly planned development should be strongly discouraged.

Investment needs to be made into our current housing stock, particularly in the Village's historic homes which make up the backbone of Almont's residential areas. Special attention should be paid to the West St. Clair Street Historic District which is a part of the National Register of Historic Places. The Currier House on East St. Clair is also a part of the national register. There are many other historic homes in Almont which are a part of the community's rich heritage and should be protected. In addition, blight and unsightly property should be reduced to increase the value and appeal of Almont's residences.

Industry

Most of Almont's residents commute to work outside of Almont and are not employed by the industries within Almont. Further employment opportunities close to home could be created by growth in industrial and commercial sectors. Almont's regional setting, along one of southeast Michigan's historic growth corridors, suggests that the potential may exist for an expansion of the existing industrial base to one that provides a wider range of employment opportunities and a broader tax base. Almont's industrial sector is primarily located within the State-Certified Industrial Park east of Van Dyke and south of Tubspring Rd. The Village's Industrial Park was created in order to promote industrial growth within the Village yet continue to promote traditional town growth. The Industrial Park is suitable for low impact, non-nuisance industries. Operations located in the Industrial Park have access to public utilities which are critical to their business procedures, including water, sewer, storm sewer and fiber optic internet utilities. It is a valuable location for industries which find access to I-69 important. Industrial development of this kind can be promoted through the Village's participation in the Next Michigan Development Corporation initiative, a regional effort emphasizing future growth along the I-69 Regional Corridor.



ALMONT

It is possible that future industries will choose to locate in Almont which would require large lot sizes not satisfied by land areas in the Industrial Park. There may also be industries which could be considered nuisance industries which may be more suited for a location further from the Village. These industries will not be able to locate themselves in the Industrial Park. Instead, they may be able to locate between Dryden Rd and Hollows Corners Rd with access to M-53. This location is presently zoned Industrial with the Township.

It continues to be important for Almont's industrial sector to grow in ways which correspond with the character of the Village and do not interfere with residences or farmland. Like residential and commercial growth concerns, it is important for industrial development not to display characteristics of sprawl and for issues of compatibility with neighboring land uses to be minimized.

Commercial

The Master Plan envisions the consolidation of commercial development by functional classification at key locations along and with access to M-53 which are related to current development patterns. These commercial areas are tethered by the Central Business District. The flux of commercial development in Almont is located along Van Dyke Rd within the Village limits. The CBD contains small businesses which are mostly local commercial establishments. The CBD is more easily accessed by non motorized forms of transportation than most other commercial locations in the Township. It is well located in the center of town and experiences a desirable density of commercial lots so that each business can effectually help each of the others by drawing common consumers. The density allows customers to park once and shop in several convenient locations. Enhancement of this commercial focal point is an important component of Almont's image and identity.

The former land use plan envisioned the restriction of commercial development to the CBD and the M-53 Corridor directly north and south of the CBD. In practice, commercial development has expanded along the whole of the M-53 corridor and lacks density, direction, and identity. Instead of a commercial center, a commercial strip has begun to form through the center of the Township. There are several reasons why this has taken place including land prices and unique circumstances at the time of development; however action must be taken to limit the sprawl from continuing further to promote the best interests of Almont's citizens and businesses.



A commercial center is preferable to a commercial strip for the following reasons:

- Shared consumers and business support
- Increase efficiency in providing public services
- Increased space for agriculture and open space
- Identity for the commercial space
- Greater ease of creating shared parking space
- Protection of natural resources
- Increased walkability

SECTION 6.0

One specific way for the Village to accomplish the goal of creating commercial growth is to allow for and encourage the use of residential structures for commercial purposes. Policy that encourages residences to be used for this purpose could greatly benefit the Central Business District. It would provide for diversity of commercial forms in the Village without requiring the challenges often posed by new construction.

Becoming Redevelopment Ready

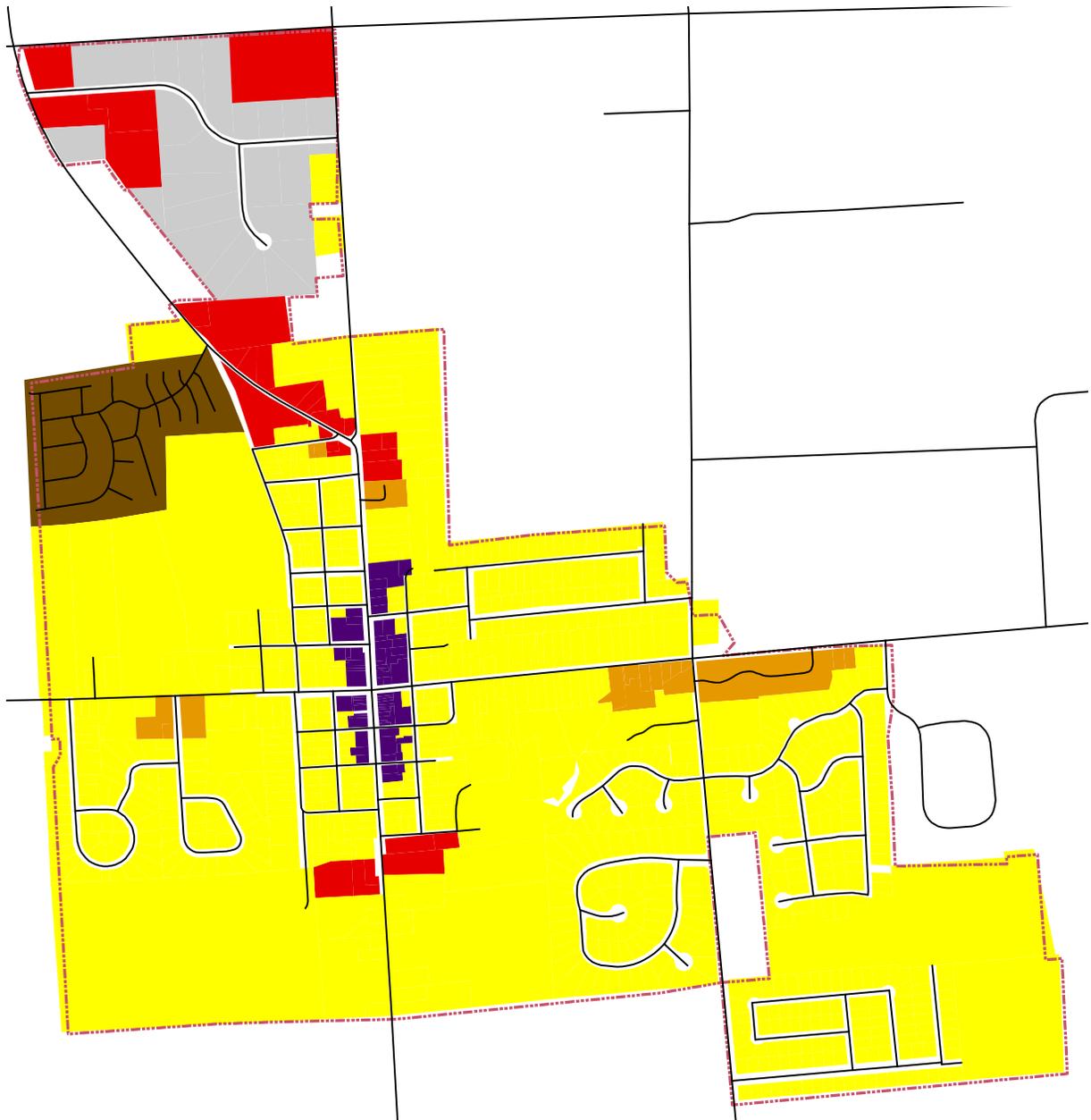
One of the goals established by the Plan is for the Community to become more redevelopment ready. In terms of the Master Land Use Plan, becoming redevelopment ready means reassessing the development review process in each community to ensure that the review process does not contain road blocks, is easy to understand and is as efficient as possible all while ensuring the standards of the Community are upheld. Further, the Plan suggests that a redevelopment plan be developed for the community, this plan provides an assessment of those properties in the community which may need particular attention for long term redevelopment and the methods in which each one of those properties may be best redeveloped. Since the Village contains most of the properties which may be most in line with this type of planning assessment this Plan may be best suited to be conducted by the Village Council/Planning Commission along with the DDA. If the Township has certain areas it feels should be addressed, it would also be appropriate to participate. The timeframe for the completion of the Plan should not exceed 2-3 years from the adoption of the Master Land Use Plan. Finally, once developed it will be important to review and update the Redevelopment Plan on a regular basis to ensure the Plan remains focused on the appropriate properties, is up to date on available techniques and tools for redevelopment and still maintains the goals and direction of the community.

Recreation

Almont presently has a variety of recreational activities available to its residents. Almont Community Park provides a picnic area and a play area for children. It is also the site of local events including Music in the Park. Its location at the end of Water St. near the Clinton River is ideal for a park of its kind. A trail leading from Kidder Road to the community park has been paved to allow for residents of nearby subdivisions to access the park more easily from their homes. The path is accessible to both pedestrians and bicyclists. The existence of this path encourages recreation, family interactions, and healthy lifestyle habits.

Future discussion may include potential construction of a community or recreation center. Although many decisions regarding this project would need to be made, the location of the center is what is significant for this section of the plan. Many sites may be proposed throughout the decision making process, however it is important that the site be low impact to the environment.





Village of Almont

Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Village of Almont Planning Commission

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Base Map: Lapeer County Equalization

LAND USE PLAN

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY
- COMMERCIAL/OFFICE
- DOWNTOWN
- INDUSTRIAL

SECTION 6.0

Land Use Plan

It should also be located near the center of the Village in order to be as accessible as possible to all citizens and to function in a way which will draw people into Almont. It should have adequate and safe sidewalks and be accessible by various modes of transportation.

A potential site could be the structure used for the old elementary school. The building is in relatively poor condition and may require significant construction work to reuse it. It would be a choice location for a community center because it fits well with its previous land use as an education center. It also corresponds with what the owners of homes near the building were expecting to live adjacent to. In any case, an option for the old elementary school must be chosen because the existence of a large vacant building could create a negative impact on property values.

SECTION 6.0



Thoroughfare Plan

SECTION

INTRODUCTION

The automobile has had a dramatic impact on land use development and human settlement patterns. Improved transportation facilities are, in large part, responsible for changes in our urban landscape from a more physically compact to a dispersed development pattern. Direct evidence of this change is apparent throughout southeast Michigan. Household growth in Lapeer, Oakland and Macomb County over the last half century would not have been possible without the automobile and the extensive network of roads serving the region.

Recognizing the direct functional relationship that exists between land use patterns and the movement of goods and people, there is an obvious need to coordinate land use planning activities with plans to upgrade and expand the capacities of the local and regional thoroughfare system.

Preparation of a Thoroughfare Plan has several practical applications that have important consequences for the community's ultimate development pattern. Through the identification of future right-of-way locations and standards, a community establishes the system of streets and roads that will provide access for future development. Furthermore, the cost of acquiring future road right-of-way can be significantly reduced if the necessary reservation is done well in advance of future road construction. Establishing right-of-way locations and standards through the Master Plan process provides the community with some authority to request right-of-way reservations through the land development process.

Designating right-of-way widths also helps a community establish consistent setback requirements, which is accomplished through the administration of a Zoning Ordinance. This minimizes the potential of having to acquire homes or businesses when road widening becomes necessary.

The Thoroughfare Plan provides the community with an opportunity to coordinate local transportation planning activities with those occurring on a county, regional and State-wide basis. Roads are the physical improvements that link communities together. Coordinating the planning associated with the regional transportation system offers some opportunities to consider mutually compatible land use policies relating to these systems. Finally, roads make a significant contribution to the community's image and identity. Streets offer an opportunity for urban design improvements in the way of landscaping and monuments as well as pedestrian amenities. Too often, this opportunity is neglected with streets becoming cluttered with excessive signage and overhead utilities.

Three topics are considered in this report. The first of these is an identification of thoroughfare planning concepts. Broadly accepted concepts are offered as a way of providing a common basis of understanding or vocabulary.

The next section describes the characteristics of Almont's local road system. This includes traffic volumes along major roads and identification of major traffic generators, among other factors.

The report concludes with a description of the Thoroughfare Plan and how the Plan relates to the community's overall Master Land Use Plan. Major proposals and recommendations for the future are also offered.

Orderly development and a desirable environment can only be achieved if full consideration is given to the relationship between the type and intensity of land uses and the need for proper access and the resulting traffic generation movements. Improved planning of the thoroughfare system will likely result in a better development patterns and, consequently, a much improved environment and efficient use of land.

CONCEPTS AND STANDARDS

Transportation Planning Concepts

Roads are grouped into a number of different classifications necessary for administrative, design and planning purposes. Most classification systems make a distinction based on the intended purpose of the road and the geographic areas it is intended to serve. Common road classifications include freeways/highways, major thoroughfares, collectors and local roads. Each classification carries with it suggested minimum design standards.

The benefit of a classification system extends beyond providing a common understanding or transportation planning vocabulary. Such a system establishes a functional system, permitting a community to relate categories of streets to various land use activities that they are best suited to serve. Classification systems should reflect the specific category and intensity of land use that they are designed to serve. In applying a classification system, the through-traffic movements and the access requirements of abutting property should be considered.

Expressway/Highway - This class is devoted entirely to traffic movement with little or no land service function; thus, it is characterized by at least some degree of access control. Except in rare instances, this classification should be reserved for multi-lane, divided roads with few, if any, intersections at grade. Expressways serve large volumes of light speed traffic and are primarily intended to serve long trips.

SECTION

Major Thoroughfare - This class of streets brings traffic to and from the expressway or highway and serves those major movements of traffic within or through the community that are not served by expressways or highways. Major thoroughfares the principal traffic generators within the community, as well as important rural routes. Major thoroughfares handle trips between different areas of the community and should form a reasonably integrated system. The length of the typical trip on the system should exceed one mile.

Collector - This class of streets serves internal traffic movements within an area of the community, such as a subdivision, and connects this area with the major thoroughfare system. Collectors do not handle long through-trips and are not, of necessity, continuous for any great length. In grid-iron street patterns, however, a street of several miles in length may serve as a collector, rather than an major thoroughfare, if the predominant use is to reach the next junction with an major thoroughfare and then turn off.

Local - The sole function of local streets is to provide access to adjacent land. These streets make up a large percentage of the total street mileage of the community, but carry a small proportion of the vehicle miles of travel. In and around the central business district (CBD), local streets may carry traffic volumes measured in thousands, but this is the exception. Local residential streets, especially in the outlying areas of the Township, in most cases, carry daily volumes of 1,000 or less.

The County begins with an alternate method of classifying roadways. The County primary road system provides access to higher types of roads and connects abutting communities and nearby areas. The following are classified as primary roads: Dryden Road, General Squire/Almont Road, and Glover Road. The County local road system consists of all Township secondary feeder roads to the primary system, Township residential streets, and County park drives. The remaining roads within the Township are deemed as local roads. It should be noted that Van Dyke is not included within these classifications.

Standards

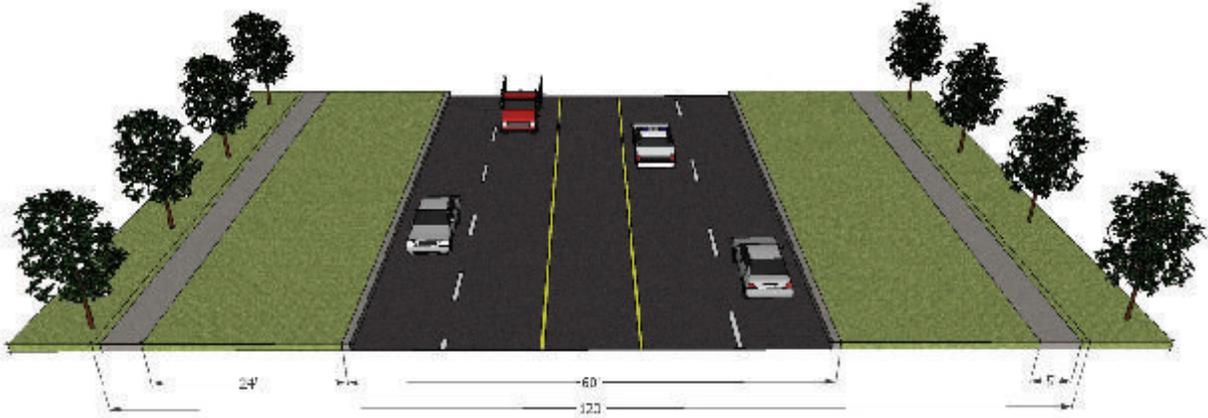
The configuration of the highway system throughout much of the nation, including southeast Michigan and Almont, is, in large part, a product of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. This noteworthy legislation continues to exert a broad and lasting impact on land use and transportation patterns.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 divided the Country into one-mile square grids, which serve as the paths for an extensive network of major thoroughfares or section line roads. This pattern is likewise evident in Almont Township. The Village is largely laid out in a smaller, tighter traditional street grid pattern, typical of a historical village design.

Road standards, including rights-of-way and pavement widths and specifications, were developed by the Inter-County Highway Commission and remain in use today by the Lapeer County Road Commission. Cross-section standards and right-of-way designations recommended for various categories of road are specified as follows:

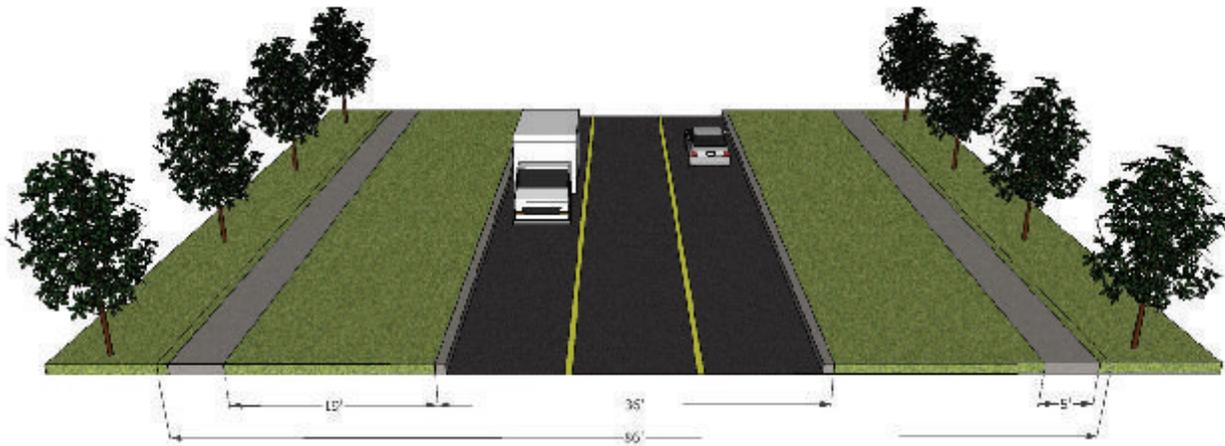
Road Cross Section

Major Roadway (120)



Road Cross Section

Collector Roadway (86)



Road Cross Section

Local Roads



SECTION

EXISTING CONDITION

Traffic Volumes

The heaviest traffic volumes in Almont Township are concentrated along M-53, which bisects the community. Between 10,000 and 20,000 trips occur along Van Dyke daily. This traffic is generated mainly by one of two means. The first being typical “bedroom” community traffic, caused by traffic leaving and returning from out of Township occupations. The second means of traffic generation is caused by through-traffic, due to Almont’s location along M-53 which is one of the main arterial to northern Michigan. This traffic is customarily generated at rush hours (southbound in the a.m. and northbound in the p.m.) on weekends and on holidays.

Other roads with significant traffic totals include Dryden Road, Glover Road, General Squire, amongst several others. However, the total daily volumes are substantially less than that seen on Van Dyke. Total daily volumes on these roads range from approximately 1,500 to 4,000 vehicles per day.

As traffic volumes increase, so do the difficulties of accommodating more vehicles. The number of accidents generally rises along with the increase in traffic volume. The major exception is freeways, which have considerably fewer accidents than may be expected from their volumes owing to their superior design standards.

Traffic Generation

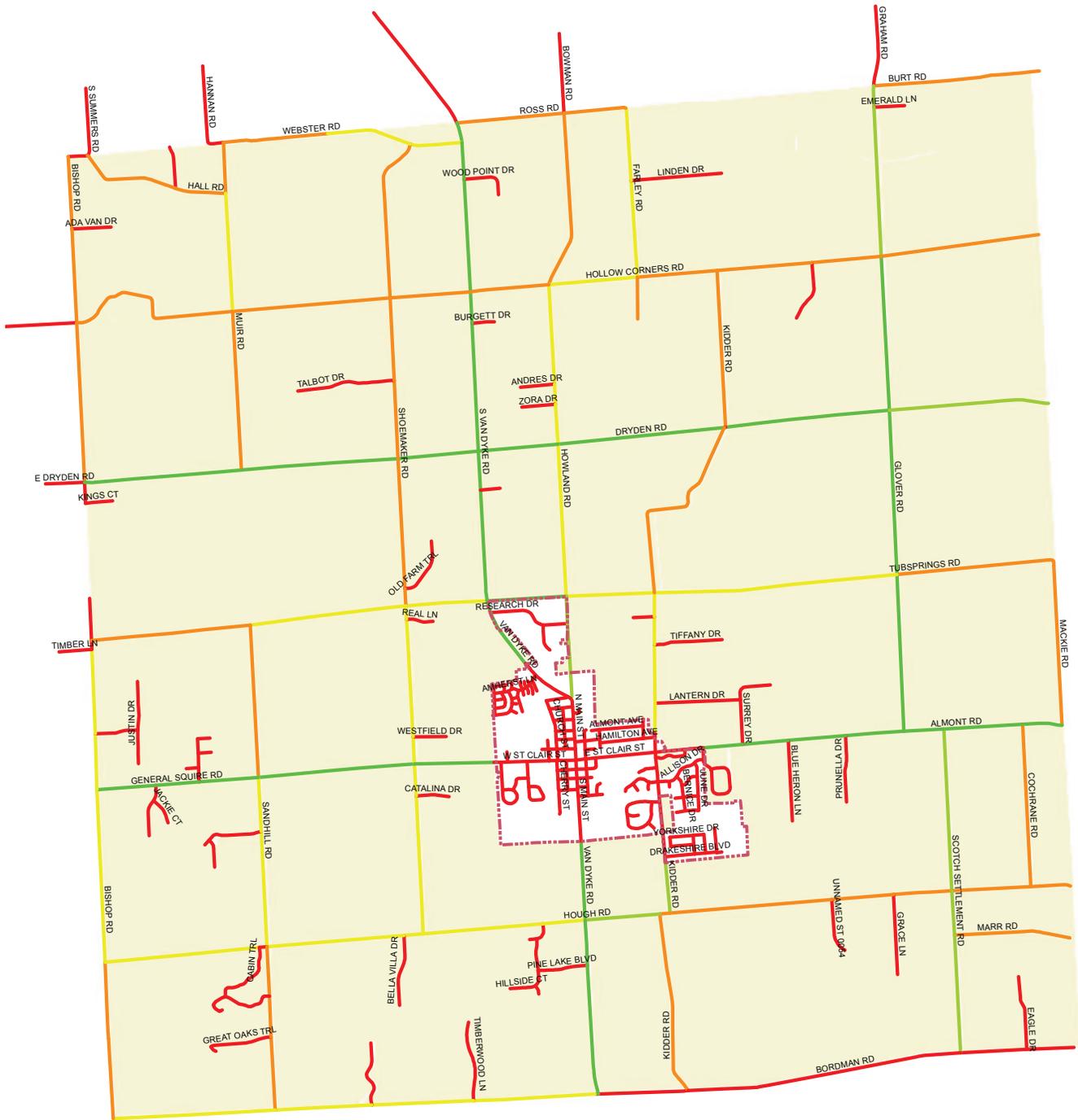
Almont can be seen largely as a bedroom community. The Village and the Township do have a number of industrial and commercial establishments, however, many workers travel outside of the community for their jobs. Therefore, traffic is largely generated by Almont’s 2,412 households (Township and Village combined). Individual residential units create between three (3) and twelve (12) vehicle trips per day, depending on the type of unit. Typically planning estimates would utilize slightly less than ten (10) trips per household on average for a community such as Almont. The actual number of trips generated by residential uses is influenced by several factors, such as household income, car ownership, household composition, and occupation location.

A final category of vehicle trip includes through-traffic, where neither the origin or destination point is located in the community. This type of trip is likely where an interstate freeway or State trunkline crosses the community such as M-53.

Each of the above-stated traffic generators places demands on the Township’s road system and suggests the need to carefully consider the relationship between land use and transportation planning.

SECTION

Traffic Counts



Almont Village and Township Lapeer County

Map Prepared By:
Almont Township and Almont Village Planning Commission

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Legend

- No Count
- 1 - 250
- 251 - 1000
- 1001 - 1500
- 1501 - 17500



Adequacy of Existing System

Major Streets - The major street system serving Almont Township principally follow section-line alignments. This system provides a framework for major and secondary roads, which permits access both through and within the Township. The principal function of these major streets is to efficiently move large volumes of traffic. Routes that provide continuous access can best achieve this purpose.

Improvements to the major road system in the foreseeable future should include right-of-way reservations to equal the recommended standards of the Master Plan, which is 120 feet in most instances, and pavement widening and resurfacing, where necessary, to improve the carrying capacity of these roads.

The only major streets within the Village are M-53 (Main Street), St. Clair and Kidder.

Subdivision/Residential Streets - Most of the Township's residential streets in newer subdivisions are constructed to Lapeer County Road Commission standards. These standards incorporate a 66-foot right-of-way width, with a 28-foot wide pavement cross-section measured from the back of the curb. Some subdivisions are constructed to different cross-section standards. These feature slightly narrower pavement widths and open drainage.

Many of the Township's existing subdivisions are located adjacent to undeveloped land. Stub streets should be provided, to permit the eventual extension of a continuous road system to this adjoining acreage. Piecing together this type of circulation system, including collector roads where necessary, should be an important planning objective.

Within the Village the majority of streets would be considered Residential Streets. The main issue with Village Residential Streets is the upkeep and maintenance of those streets.

Private Roads - Almont Township allows for the construction of private roads to facilitate the development of single-family home sites in the more rural portions of the Township that are not intended to be served by municipal utilities. Traditionally, this development option allowed property owners to divide their property for single-family purposes by serving those lots with a gravel road that did not conform to established Lapeer County Road Commission standards. The Individual property owners, who share frontage on the road, jointly share maintenance responsibilities. The Township however, now requires that roads within the Township meet specifications of the Lapeer County Road Commission. This was done to help address long term maintenance issues seen with earlier private roads that fell into disrepair due to their typical lesser construction.

Specifications for new roads may be gravel provided the new road has immediate access to a gravel County road. If the site has access to a paved County Road, the newly constructed road must be paved.

Within the Village private residential roads are not permitted.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Thoroughfare Plan incorporates the relevant goals and objectives considered earlier, along with the inventory information and concepts and standards introduced in this section. Major proposed improvements needed to support the land use and community facility elements of the Plan are identified below. It is important to realize that periodic review of the Thoroughfare Plan is needed, especially if there are any major differences in land uses not accounted for by the Future Land Use section of the Master Plan, major road improvements or roadway projects, etc.

Traffic Planning Principles

Certain general principles have been recognized by planners and traffic engineers as conducive to sound transportation planning for urbanizing communities. These principles may be summarized as follows:

1. There must be coordination between the Thoroughfare Plan and existing and proposed land usage in order to achieve a trafficway system that may efficiently service the land use patterns.
2. Because of its permanency, the existing road system must form the basis for long-range transportation planning, with modifications in the system made, where necessary, to accommodate future needs.
3. Existing and anticipated traffic volumes must be considered and provisions made to accommodate the increased traffic and changing trip movements generated by population growth.
4. There must be correlation between the Thoroughfare Plan and residential neighborhood units so that the Plan will provide for adequate service to the neighborhoods, however, wherever feasible, not bisect them with heavily traveled routes.
5. A comprehensive network of direct, continuous routes must unite all parts of the community insofar as is compatible with geography and land use so that improvement is achieved in the overall traffic flow and trip time throughout the community.
6. Modern design standards must be utilized in planning width of right-of-way and pavement and other development characteristics of the roads.
7. The Plan must consider the proposals of road planning agencies throughout the region in order to achieve a complete and functional road system.

Overall Roadway System

The Community as a whole, the paving of roadways and streets within the Township and Village are deemed as positives provided that the paving projects are context sensitive and do not impair the overall existing character of the area, whether within the Village or in the outlying areas of the Township.

Van Dyke / M-53

While the communities have no real control over Van Dyke/M-53 and any possible expansions to the expressway, the possibility of this happening needs to be accounted for. Whichever configuration is chosen for the M-53 corridor, it should provide adequate access to the Village area, and to the industrial sector of the Township between Dryden and Hollow Corner Roads. This route should also minimize impacts on the existing land uses, particularly the rural farmland character of the Township.

Major Roads (includes Secondary)

The Master Plan encourages the extension of the section line road system to provide improved traffic flow in and through the Township. While the existing one-mile square section line road system is fairly well established in the Township, there are numerous deficiencies in the system that should be completed as development occurs.

Two additional roads besides the section line roadways are considered to be major roadways. These roads are Kidder and Farley Roads. All of the roads under this classification carry a 120-foot road right of way.

Two segments of roadway that have been noted as being desirable for paving are Howland, from Dryden to Tubspring as well as Tubspring, from Kidder to Glover. Howland would provide an alternative access north and south, parallel to M-53 while Tubspring would allow additional east/west paved access, especially for emergency services from the Fire Hall.

Van Dyke Improvements

The Van Dyke corridor is under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation. The need to develop a working partnership is necessary to ensure the roadway efficiency is maintained and hopefully improved. Particular attention should be directed to improving traffic flow along Van Dyke, especially access to existing and proposed uses located along this road. Consolidation or joint use of driveways should be encouraged wherever possible. Acceleration/deceleration tapers and bypass lanes should also be required when justified by the intensity of development or peak-hour left turn movements.

Collector Roads

In some situations there remains a need for a modified collector road system to provide access to the interior undeveloped acreage bounded by section line roads. These roads are intended to have an 86-foot wide right-of-way and generally follow half or quarter section lines. However, topography, drainage and existing land use characteristics may alter the precise location of these roads or even limit their development in other areas. Additionally, other opportunities for the eventual development of these roads has been limited by extensive private road development in parts of the Township. Therefore, the Thoroughfare Plan does not plan for any new collector roads to be constructed and will rely on low density private roads and interconnected residential developments to provide access throughout each section of the Township.

Residential Streets

Within the Community, many of the community's single-family developments were developed as freestanding subdivisions or private roads. These roads serve as a direct means to get from one's home to a neighbor's home or to the larger network of the County roads. However, these streets can carry limited numbers of longer local trips if designed correctly. As these developments occur one preferred planning policy is to require stub streets to adjoining property to facilitate property to property connection for these local trips.

SECTION

There are several advantages to this concept that merit consideration. First, it permits continuous vehicular and pedestrian circulation through residentially developed areas, without using section line roads and thereby making the section line roads operate much more inefficiently. Further, these connections facilitate better access for emergency vehicles and improved response time for police, fire or rescue vehicles.

The problem of continuous access is especially a problem with private roads, which rarely offer any opportunities to connect with adjoining property or other private roads. Access for emergency vehicles is further complicated at times by the excessive length of these private roads with no secondary means of access. However, as each new development occurs the Township will review the development for safety and access ensuring that all developments meet acceptable standards.

Within the Village, the majority of streets would be considered residential streets. As any remaining properties development within the Village the residential streets should provide the same level of interconnection that the remainder of the Village streets provide.

Natural Beauty Roads

Frequently, local County roads make a significant contribution to a community's sense of rural character. Gravel roads, with dense vegetation along both sides of the road, are common features in rural settings across the County. This sense of character is frequently lost as roads are widened and paved to accommodate higher traffic volumes associated with suburban development. The Natural Beauty Roads Act of 1970 allows County Road Commissions to designate specific roads as natural beauty roads. This legislation is designed to minimize road improvements, such as widening or brush removal, unless needed to improve safety. Limiting unnecessary road improvements helps to ensure that the rural character of the road is maintained.

The only natural beauty road in the Township is Sandy Hill, from Bordman to Hough Road. This one mile stretch has been officially designated by the County. Efforts were made to designate Kidder Road from Bordman to Hough, but were never followed through on.

Character of Road – A natural beauty road shall have outstanding natural features along its borders. This can include native trees and other native vegetation - such as shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, and ferns – as well as open areas with scenic or natural vistas which, singly or in combination, set the road apart from other roads as being something unique and distinct.

Length – A minimum of one-half mile will be considered for designation as a natural beauty road. Stretches shall be continuous except where broken by a non-qualifying portion. Non-qualifying portions should normally not exceed one-half mile in length.

Roadside Development – Qualifying roads should preferably have no development along them, but such development as exists at the time the road is designated should be compatible with the surroundings, and should not detract from the natural unspoiled character and visual impact of the road area.

Road Bed – Natural beauty roads may be dirt, gravel, or hard surface.

Function of the Road – Roads shall be county-local roads before they are considered for designation. They shall not be collectors or primary roadways.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management and internal circulation are critical elements in creating a safe and efficient roadway system. The capacity of a regional or major thoroughfare can be enhanced and its useful life extended by careful attention to access controls and circulation between adjacent sites. This coordination and review will also likely reduce the total number of access drives as well as the total number of conflict points. The communities have the ability at this point in time to implement access management standards which will allow for the property planning and placement of access drives in the communities. If not implemented at this time, these standards will only become more difficult to implement as the Township continues to face growth pressures.

The concept of access management techniques is that the owners of property along a specified roadway, specifically those owning commercial, office or industrial property will be given access to their property, but not unlimited access. There are many access management standards which can be implemented within the communities. These include driveway spacing, limiting the number of access drives, shared drives and others. As part of the Master Plan, the communities have noted the following objectives for access management.

Joint Access Easement

Another method of reducing the need for access drives onto major thoroughfares is to provide joint or cross access easements between sites. During the site planning process, consideration should be given to the alignment of parking lot maneuvering lanes which would allow for continuous and safe travel between parking lots. Joint access easements allowing for such travel should be required prior to site plan approval. These documents will need to be reviewed by the Attorney as well as the Engineer for each applicable community.

Maximizing Corner Clearance

Curb cuts for properties located on a corner parcel require special attention. Access drives and curb cuts should provide the maximum amount of spacing possible from the intersection to the curb cut. Further, in most cases, the access drive should be limited to the secondary roadway rather than the primary. This will help in channeling vehicles to a common intersection rather than creating new turning areas.



SECTION

Maximize Clear Vision

Particular attention should be given to the areas of the Township where commercial access drives would be located on curves or undulating portions of roadways. This is not as prevalent in the Village. Clear vision for motorists in this area should be reviewed carefully due to potential blind spots. If possible, access drives should be located in such a manner where clear vision in both directions is maximized. Further, structures such as fences, signs, and other entry structures must be kept clear of the clear vision triangle.

Typical Access Management Standards		
Posted Speed	Driveway Spacing (in feet)	
	Minimum	Recommended
30	150	185
35	175	245
40	200	300
45	315	350
50	350	455

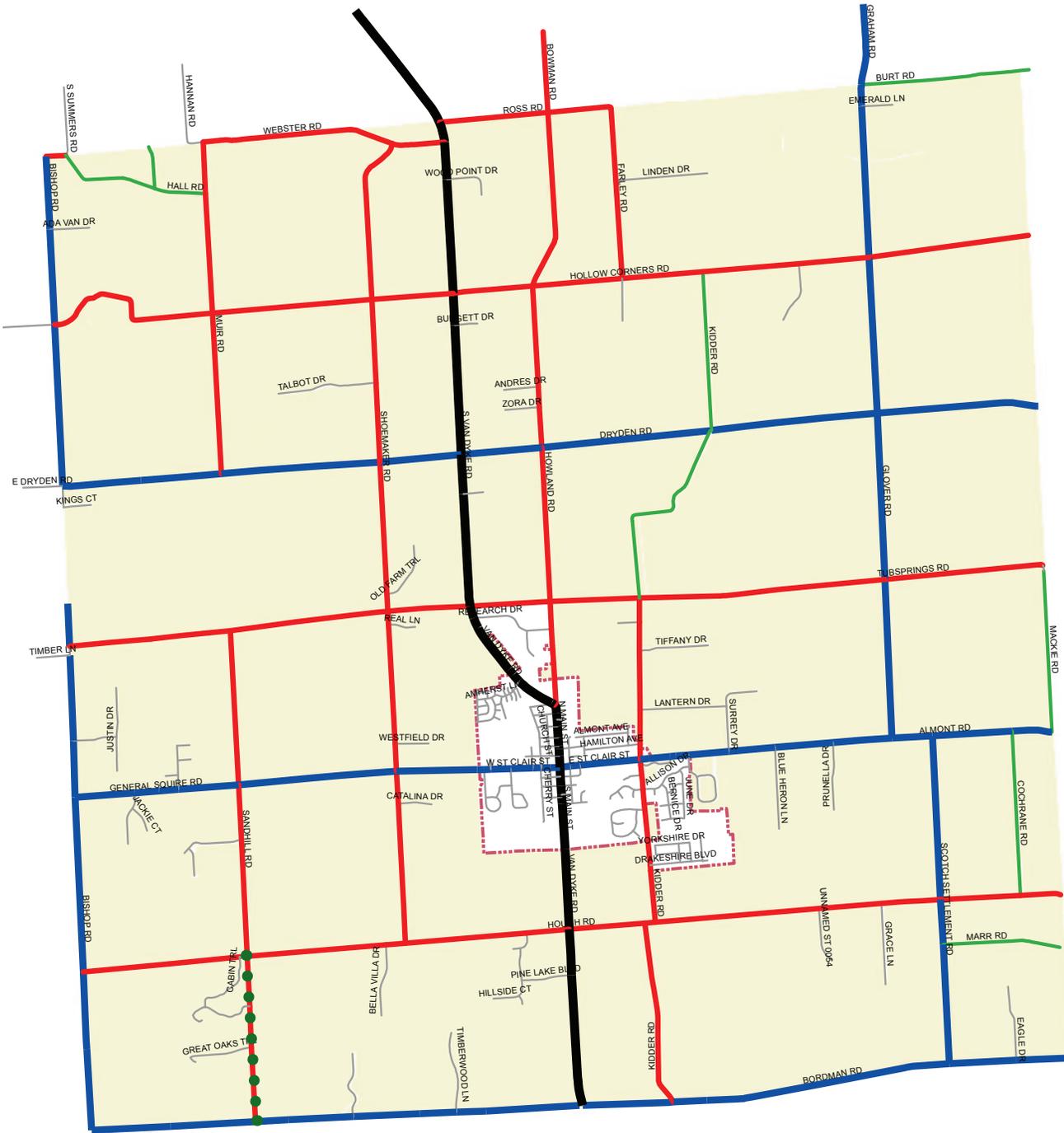
Maximize Drive Offset

The Planning Commission in their review of site plans, needs to pay particular attention to driveway offsets. Driveways and roadways on opposite sides of the road can increase the potential for conflict. Therefore, if drives cannot be aligned across a street, the distance between driveway center lines should be maximized. The Planning Commission must insist on existing drives and improvements being shown on the site plan which are within 100-200 feet of the subject site. This will show all potential conflict areas and allow the Planning Commission to make an educated decision. Further, the Commission may wish to implement Zoning Ordinance provisions which require safe driveway and offset distances between existing and proposed access drives.

Interior Parking Lot Review

The Planning Commission must also give attention to interior parking lot configuration. Review of parking lot efficiency and safety will allow for traffic to move onto the site quickly without generating traffic backups onto the adjacent roadway. Particular attention should be given to maneuvering lanes which cross the main access drive. This may cause conflict or the need for slowing or stopping. Further attention must be given to the potential conflict between pedestrians and automobiles.

Thoroughfare Plan



Almont Village and Township Lapeer County

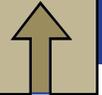
Map Prepared By:
Almont Township and Almont Village Planning Commission

With Assistance From:
Community Planning & Management, P.C.

Legend

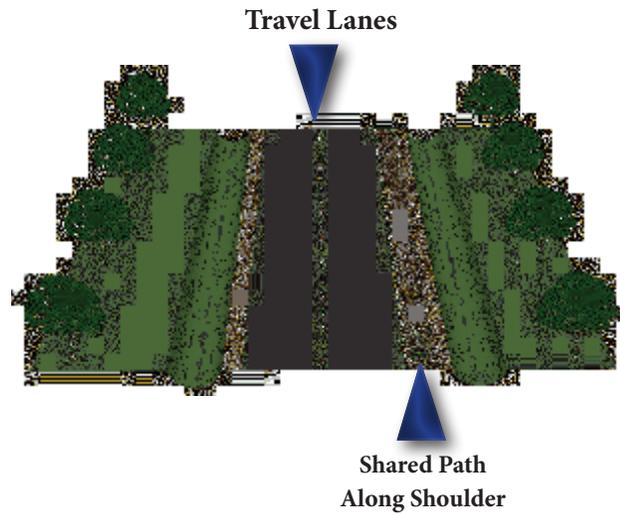
- Collector
- Secondary
- Major
- Highway
- Natural Beauty Road

NORTH



Bicycle Paths

Bicycling, jogging and walking are among the most popular forms of recreation and is seen more and more as an alternative means of transportation. Because of this expanded interest, it is necessary to incorporate improvements and facilities designed for bicycles and pedestrians into local recreation planning activities. Bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems can make existing park and school sites more accessible. The use of these paths can also be an enjoyable recreation activity of and by themselves. Aside from these obvious benefits, bicycle and pedestrian paths have broader benefits. The ultimate goal of a comprehensive bicycle/pedestrian path system is to bring local recreation activities to everyone's doorstep.



Currently there is no overall comprehensive plan for pathways to be developed as a part of the overall community. The Parks and Recreation Plan does envision a limited pathway system within the Village but this system does not extend out into the Township. The two communities may wish to establish policies regarding the development of a sidewalk/pathway system that would help ensure a connection between public places as well as those more densely developed areas of the Township and the downtown of the Village. Ultimately, at least one main north/south and east/west connection should be established providing connection throughout the community as well as those communities which surround Almont. These concepts and planned connections could be identified and presented through a pathway plan or as a part of a complete streets policy or both.

One roadway that has been noted as a thoroughfare which may be desirable for a pathway or shared roadway is Van Dyke or M-53. With the volumes and speed of traffic on the Township portions of M-53, careful consideration would have to be given to how the pathway is configured in relationship to the road. Those portions within the Township, which have higher speeds may need a separated pathway, while those in the Village where speeds are lower or where a pathway within the road right of way is not feasible may utilize a shared road concept.

Coordination with the State and the County Road Commission is desirable as road improvements come forward for M-53 or any other major roadway within the Township to determine the desirability of having a pathway system incorporated as a part of any significant roadway improvements.

Coordination with Other Agencies

Almont Township nor the Village has any direct control over the maintenance or improvement of the road system serving the community. Aside from the M-53 Freeway, which is under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation, the principal control over the remainder of local roads rests with the Lapeer County Road Commission. The Village maintains and operates the majority of the roads within the Village.

In spite of their limited control, the Township can influence the road improvement process by maintaining an ongoing relationship with those agencies responsible for transportation issues, including MDOT, and the Road Commission. Sharing local planning issues with officials at these agencies assists them in their efforts to allocate available funding to address existing or anticipated transportation needs.

Almont Township along with those applicable areas in the Village should require, in their continuing planning and implementing of ordinances, sufficient setbacks so that additional right-of-way requirements can be met clear of obstruction. The linear commercial and industrial uses should be closely regulated with respect to driveway spacing, turning movements, acceleration/deceleration lanes, bypass lanes, parking, setbacks, signs and displays. With the many hazards already along its major roads, the Township should rigidly enforce these and other requirements necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

Conclusion

Renewed growth and expansion in the Township as well as infill or redevelopment in the Village can be expected in the years ahead. The roadway network proposed in the Thoroughfare Plan will provide the necessary transportation framework for the next decade or two. As is the case with any plan, periodic review of the roadway network is necessary. It is imperative to adhere to the standards for right-of-way widths and pavement widths in all road and street improvements. As subdivision plats or site condominium plans are presented for approval, adequate rights-of-way should be required from the developer. Similarly, when a site plan for any type of use is submitted for approval by either community, adequate rights-of-way should be reserved. Implementation of the Plan should occur as appropriate so as to protect the interests of all residents and their ability to have proper access.

SECTION



Community Facilities

SECTION

INTRODUCTION

Community facilities are an important part of a municipality's overall development and, consequently, need to be considered in the preparation of the Master Plan. Those community facilities considered in this report include schools, parks, protective services, libraries, and other municipal buildings.

Each of these facilities has an impact on the community's future land use pattern and are important to the operation of a community. These facilities also make a significant contribution to a community's overall identity. Often, the impression created by a particular community is directly related to its municipal buildings, schools, parks, libraries and other public buildings. This is particularly true for those suburban communities where development is dispersed over a large geographic setting, as compared to the more compact physical form of many older cities.

Some types of community facilities, particularly schools and parks, have acreage requirements that need to be considered during the Master Plan process. It is desirable to allocate land for these facilities as a community grows so that neighborhoods are not left deficient in community facilities at the time of total development. Considering these needs as part of the community's total development offers a practical basis for a community to address these needs during the budgetary process.

QUALITY OF LIFE

All of the topics discussed under the Community Facilities section of the Master Land Use Plan help to establish and develop Almont's quality of life. Well developed parks, open spaces, and recreational amenities as well as a strong school system are features that will help make the community an attractive place for retaining existing residents as well as drawing new residents in. In addition, public safety services are essential for providing a sense of safety and community.

SCHOOLS

While the communities have no control over school operations or functions, school needs, particularly the location of schools, impact the community's overall land use plan. Schools are, therefore, considered as part of this analysis for coordination purposes.

Both communities are served solely by the Almont School District.

Almont High School Grades 9-12 4701 Howland Road	2011-2012 Enrollment 548
Almont Middle School Grades 5-8 4624 Kidder Rd.	2011-2012 Enrollment 496
Orchard Primary Grades K-4 and Early Development 4664 Kidder Rd.	2011-2012 Enrollment 626

Development trends within the Township, and enrollment levels, should be monitored to provide the necessary coordination between school needs and future land use patterns.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Administrative Structure

Any resident of the Village of Almont or Almont Township is considered a part of the general membership of the Almont Parks and Recreation Board by simply attending a meeting of the Board. The general membership elects the Executive Board at the first meeting of the Board each year. The Executive Board consists of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer and the number of trustees determined by the general membership. The Parks and Recreation Board is responsible for developing the Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which serves as the vision for the future.

The funding and expenses for parks and recreation is provided in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and is noted below for the year 2013.

Operating Supplies	\$800
Maintenance and Service Contracts	\$15,000
Picnic and Festival	\$4,500
Liability Insurance	\$355
Electrical	\$550
Water Utilities	\$500
Tennis Court-Grant	\$2,000
Playground Equipment	\$2,000
Total	\$25,705

Both parties contribute equally to the Parks and Recreation budget. The budget, as of 2013, was \$25,705 for development and maintenance of the one municipally owned park, Almont Community Park.

Revenue for the park is

Township	\$10,000
Village	\$10,000
Park Rentals	\$1,200
Donations	As Received

Recreation Inventory

1. *Almont Community Park*

Size: 14 Acres

Purpose: Community Park

Service Area: Almont Community

Facilities:

- Playground equipment
- A picnic pavilion with kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Picnic tables, benches, and barbeque grills
- A ball diamond
- Swing sets
- Tennis courts
- A large sledding hill

SECTION

2. Burley Park

Size: 0.5 Acres

Purpose: Memorial

Service Area: Almont Community

Facilities:

- Flag Pole



3. Murphy Park

Size: 0.5 Acres

Purpose: Memorial

Service Area: Almont Community

Facilities: • Flag Pole



4. Almont Administrative Offices

Size: 20 Acres

Facilities:

- Baseball diamonds
- Tennis courts
- Playground
- Indoor gymnasium

Orchard Primary School

Size: 14 Acres

Facilities:

- Soccer fields
- Playground
- Indoor gymnasium



6. Almont High School and Middle School

Size: 30 Acres

Facilities:

- Ball diamonds
- Tennis courts
- Football field
- Running track
- Basketball nets
- Indoor gymnasium

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

A community's recreation needs, both short and long-term, should be evaluated in relation to the amount of land available for recreation purposes, the types of facilities available at these sites, and the range of programs and services offered to Township residents. Unmet existing recreation needs and projected future needs relating to each of these areas are considered in the following analysis.

Several techniques are used for the purpose of projecting future needs. Frequently, these techniques rely on comparisons of existing facilities to commonly accepted standards. These standards present optimum conditions as a benchmark against which progress can be measured. The risk in using these standards is that they are not uniformly applicable to all communities and need to be adapted to the unique physical, social and economic conditions that may characterize a specific community. The community's participation in other recreational facilities provided nearby also needs to be factored into the formula.

Neighborhood Park Needs

These sites are intended to be areas for intense recreational activities, such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus areas, skating and picnicking, among others. This type of park is optimally suited to serving a neighborhood consisting of approximately 5,000 people and having a service radius of one-quarter to one-half mile. The desirable size of such a facility is considered to be between five (5) to ten (10) acres.

Between one (1) and two (2) acres of neighborhood park land should be provided for each 1,000 persons anticipated to reside within a given neighborhood area. Applying this to the Almont community, a total of approximately nine to eighteen (9-18) acres of neighborhood park would be necessary. Such facilities should be easily accessible to the neighborhood they are intended to serve, with consideration given to pedestrian and bicycle safety. This type of park may be appropriately developed in conjunction with an elementary school.

When neighborhood parks are developed in conjunction with elementary school sites as shared school/park sites, they have many inherent advantages. These include reduced land costs and economies of scale relative to both development and maintenance. Joint use arrangement avoids duplication of services and requires less total acreage than developing each facility independent of one another. The one negative to a joint use park of this nature is that the park is not typically available to the general public when school is in session.

Community Park Needs

These parks customarily include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes and community recreation facilities and are frequently areas of diverse environmental quality. They may also feature an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation activities, such as walking, viewing, sitting and picnicking. Community parks are intended to serve several neighborhoods located within a one to three-mile radius and should be easily accessible to these neighborhoods.

Community-wide recreation needs are examined by comparing anticipated recreation needs to the availability of existing community or school-operated facilities. Ideally, community parks should be provided at a ratio of between five (5) and eight (8) acres per 1,000 persons. Based on existing population, a total of approximately 45-72 acres would be necessary. The desirable size of such a facility is considered to be between thirty and fifty (30-50) acres.

SECTION

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼- to ½-mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable-depends on function.
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.
Large Urban Park	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.

RECREATION PLAN

The previous estimates offer a statistical evaluation of anticipated future recreation needs on the basis of commonly accepted planning standards. These estimates, however, need to be evaluated in relation to the community's existing and proposed development pattern and the availability of other recreation opportunities in the community and in nearby communities.

As population and housing growth continue as the economy slowly strengthens, there is frequently an expectation on the part of residents for those services customarily available in a more suburbanized setting. The availability of parks is among the type of services that are frequently requested and expected by residents. Parks and recreation services can also make a significant contribution to the community's overall quality of life which is becoming a more and more significant factor in where a family will reside.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to consider the community's recreation needs on a long-term basis. The longer view is necessary, especially for considering land acquisition needs. Land required for any future park sites should be identified and acquired before choice sites are committed to other uses. Acquisition of needed acreage at a later date, when the development pattern is set, is frequently more expensive than when it is done earlier in the development process.

While the Plan anticipates a broader role for the Township and Village as a recreation provider, it recognizes the financial limitations accompanying such an expanded role. To lessen the financial burden of an expanded recreation role and to avoid an unnecessary duplication of services, the Plan promotes the need to foster cooperative arrangements with other recreation providers, especially the Almont Community School District and the State of Michigan. Opportunities for cooperation with these other recreation providers are explored throughout the Recreation Plan.

Finally, the Township and Village have adopted a joint recreation plan for the two communities based on the State of Michigan Recreational Plan standards. This document deals solely with the recreational needs and plans of the two communities. The Plan will need to be reevaluated at least every five years based on the State's standards. Elements of that plan are included in the Master Land Use Plan and that Plan should provide the controlling direction of recreation within the two communities.

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT ALMONT FIVE YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

2013-2017

A Joint Planning Project Between the
Village of Almont and Almont Township

SECTION

Neighborhood Parks

The neighborhood unit planning concept commonly utilized in community planning envisions the development of self-contained residential neighborhoods, each of which are served by parks which are centrally located and easily accessible, especially for children. Because of the size of many of the Township's identified neighborhood planning areas and the low density rural character of many of these areas, it may not be practical nor desirable to plan for neighborhood parks for each of these neighborhoods. Further, this type of ideal may not be completely practical within the Village either, the availability of land is limited since the Village is largely built out. A more practical response may be the acquisition and development of several parks within the Township where land is more readily available and patterned the new park areas after the existing park, Almont Community Park, located to the south end of the Village. Each of these parks would be located to serve existing and proposed population concentrations. Specific site locations are not indicated in the Plan to allow the communities to respond more freely to acquisition opportunities. These parks would be considered more community parks than neighborhood parks and are addressed below.

Community Parks

Neighborhood parks, being smaller in nature, frequently are not adequately equipped to provide for organized athletic and sporting events. The Master Land Use Plan recommends that the communities provide a series of sites that can accommodate the more intense recreation activities commonly found at community park sites.

Each community park site should ideally occupy approximately 30-50 acres of land (smaller sites could also provide some of the necessary recreation amenities) and include similar types of facilities, such as playground equipment for children, picnic tables, walking paths, ballfields, open play areas, landscaping and tennis courts, among other improvements. The design of each site should, obviously, be related to the characteristics of the selected site and the preferences of neighborhood residents.

Regional Parks

Currently, the Almont community itself is not home to a regional park facility, but the community does have access to a number of State and Regional Parks that are found within a thirty (30) mile radius. Some of these parks include: Lapeer State Game Area, which contains approximately 13,000 acres; The Ortonville Recreation Area, which contains approximately 4,000 acres; Stony Creek Metro Park, located in Washington Township which consists of approximately 4,600 acres; The Wolcott Mill Metropark, located in Ray Township which consists of approximately 2,600 acres; Bald Mountain Recreation Area, located in Lake Orion which consists of approximately 4,600 acres; and the Torzewski County Park, located in Oregon Township which also offers numerous recreational facilities. With the number of regional parks located within a thirty (30) mile radius the Township does not need to establish an equivalent park.

RECREATION PLAN ACTION PLAN

The following is the action plan of the recently developed Almont Village and Almont Township Parks and Recreation Plan.

A. Improve Park along Clinton River

The Board proposes to clean up the area by thinning out the overgrown trees and shrubs. This will make it easier to see into the area from the other side of the river and from the top of the slope, and will improve park security and safety. Damaged trees and trees of poor quality will be removed. The thinned out canopy will provide more sunlight into the area, making it possible to plant trees and flowers in the area.

B. Acquisition of Property

Acquisition of property adjacent to the park or a new site would expand the potential for park facility development and would allow the Village and Township to address a wider range of recreational needs. Acquisition of one of the parcels fronting on Main Street and adjacent to the park could increase the park's visibility

C. Paved Bikeway/Walkway Development

Phase 1: From Main Street East to Park Bridge (1,000 LF)

Phase 2: From Park Bridge, Northeast along North Side of River (400 LF)

Phase 3: From the end of Phase 2 North and then West to the Former Street ROW, then North to St. Clair Street (1,300 LF)

Phase 4: From Existing Park Bridge, Northeast along South Side of River (1,000 LF)

Phase 5: From the End of Phase 4 to Kidder Road (1,400 LF)

D. Develop Basketball Court in Almont Community Park

This facility would expand the range of athletic facilities in the Village and Township. It is proposed as part of the redevelopment of tennis courts adjacent to the Lions Club building.

E. Expand Playscape for Younger Children

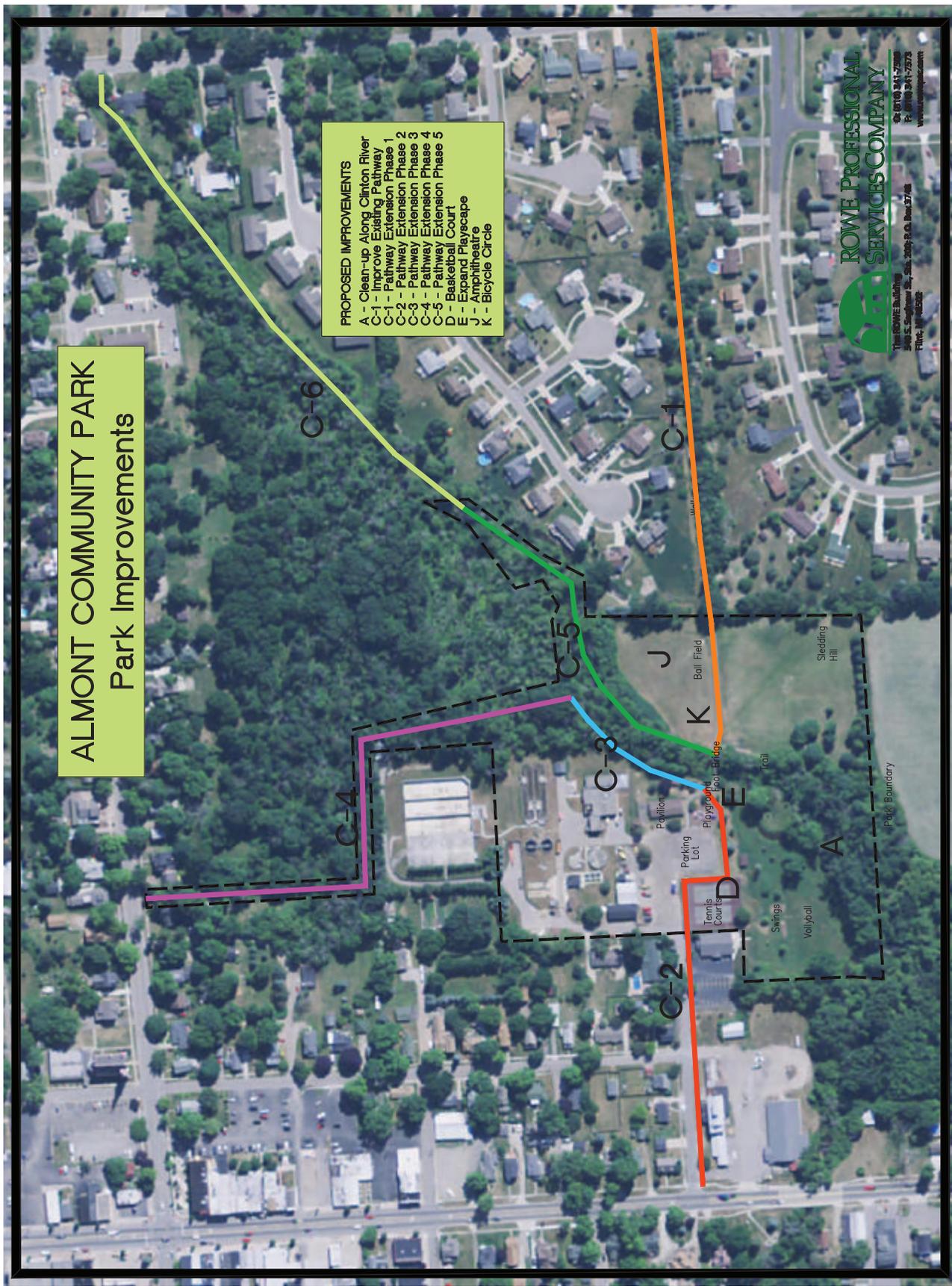
Several swing sets and spring toys are located a moderate distance away, along the river. The swing sets and spring toys need to be replaced. It is proposed that they be located near the foot bridge as part of an expansion of the play area.

F. Development of a Community Center

The Board proposes to develop a multi– use indoor facility to serve a wide range of ages and interests. A community center could be utilized for a wide range of community events, classes, and workshops. As a potential revenue stream, facilities could be rented for wedding receptions, banquets, parties, etc. A swimming pool would be included in the facility. A swimming pool would greatly expand the range of programming in the community. The pool would be utilized for a wide range of activities, including school activities such as varsity practice and meets, lifeguard classes, learn to swim programs, water aerobics programs, senior activities, early morning swims, and other community. The Village and Township would consider developing and maintaining the community center jointly with the Schools. A specific location has not been selected at this time. It is suggested that consideration should be given to locating the complex in a location that makes it pedestrian– friendly, particularly the elderly.

ALMONT COMMUNITY PARK Park Improvements

- PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**
- A - Clean-up Along Clinton River
 - C-1 - Improve Existing Pathway
 - C-2 - Pathway Extension Phase 1
 - C-3 - Pathway Extension Phase 2
 - C-4 - Pathway Extension Phase 3
 - C-5 - Pathway Extension Phase 4
 - C-6 - Pathway Extension Phase 5
 - D - Basketball Court
 - E - Expand Playscape
 - J - Amphitheatre
 - K - Bicycle Circle



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G. Establish Recreation Coordinator Position

One of the goals of the Parks and Recreation Board is to strengthen the cooperation between the Village of Almont, Almont Township, and Almont Community Schools. The Coordinator could effectively coordinate programming and facility use between the three entities. There are many facilities, particularly school facilities, which could be utilized more intensively. The Board feels that establishing a Coordinator position would be the most effective way to spearhead the parks and recreation planning effort for the community. The position would be jointly funded by the Village, Township, and School, and could be full time or part time, depending on the responsibilities of the position and the resources available.

H. Security Cameras

The Park Board is working on the installation of security cameras in the Community Park. The cameras are intended to increase the public's sense of safety and to reduce vandalism of equipment in the park. Installation of the cameras is expected to occur in 2013.

I. Ice Skating Rink

The Park Board is currently working on development of a seasonal ice-skating rink on a vacant lot at the corner of M-53 and School Street in the Village downtown. The long-term goal is to find a permanent site for the rink.

J. Amphitheater

The ballfield north of the sledding hill is rarely used and redevelopment of the site is proposed by the Park Board. Development of an amphitheater would take advantage of the site's natural slope and provide a facility that could be used by a range of age groups.

K. Bicycle Circle

One need identified by several young residents of the community is a safe place to ride their bicycles. A paved circular track located near the proposed site of the amphitheater is proposed. The site would include benches for parents to sit.

Implementation

Clearly, the greatest recreation challenge facing the community in the near future is the need to acquire additional land for recreation purposes. As observed earlier, sites should be acquired before, or in conjunction with, the development process. The acquisition of local park land remains a local municipal responsibility. While the Almont Parks & Recreation Board is the programming and administrative arm of the community for recreation purposes, it does not have any authority to purchase land on its own. It is, therefore, necessary that the need for future park sites be reflected in the Master Plan and mechanisms put into place to secure needed sites.

Several alternatives exist to accomplish this. First, property could be purchased by either community, with funds budgeted for this purpose by the existing recreation millage. It is also possible to use these millage dollars to leverage additional funding in the way of matching grants available through an annual recreation funding program available through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Finally, the Township more so than the Village could explore administrative or regulatory tools that could be used to provide park sites as part of the land development process. Some combination of techniques may offer the best possible solution to this problem.

The other potential in providing recreational amenities is to repurpose existing buildings within the community. These may include existing public buildings, school buildings, industrial buildings and the like that are either not being utilized or are being under utilized. Either the outright purchase or long term leases could be established for the public or recreational use of the buildings.

LIBRARY

Libraries are sometimes given a lower priority in municipal development. However, libraries, together with recreation programs, form an integral element in the character and reputation of desirable communities. Libraries today provide a diverse range of services that touch a broad spectrum of the community, including children and adults, as well as business and industry.

<http://www.adlmi.org/>

Currently the Library has over 20,000 material items on hand for patron use. These items include books, magazines, book on tape, large print books, videos, and CDS. The Library also provides a wide range of services for its residents, such as computer software, copy machines (including a color copier), computers with access to the Internet, access to the Internet from home computers, e-mail service, and fax services.

The Almont Library is located within the limits of the Village and is run by the Library Board, which reports to both the Township Board and Village Council. Funding for the library is provided through two separate millages. The Library is funded through a millage rate of 1.25 mils, which generates approximately \$250,000 in revenues and the library has a budget of slightly less than \$300,000.

POLICE

Twenty-four (24) hour police protection in the community is provided by the Village and then contracted out to the Township. The Village Police Department which consists of six (6) full-time and six (6) part-time officers. The Township has contracted with the Village to provide the cost of three (3) full-time officers and two (2) patrol vehicles. The budget for providing police protection (public safety) is approximately \$700,000 based on the Village's budget. The Township pays the Village approximately \$300,000 annually for their dedicated protection.

<http://www.almontvillage.org/1/324/police.asp>

FIRE

Among the most important services that a local government can provide is fire protection. This protection not only protects residents and business owners from personal harm or injury, but also from financial loss.

<http://www.almontfire.org/>

Fire Fighting Facilities

The most important services provided by the local government is fire protection. Fire fighting facilities are important because they protect residents, businesses, and industries from financial loss and personal injury, and because they can also substantially reduce the cost of fire insurance. Almont Village and Almont Township cooperatively operate a volunteer fire department with a single station located on Tubspring Road in the Township. The Fire Department has 24 firefighters, including the Chief, all paid on call. Costs associated with the Fire Department are largely covered by a 1 mil assessment for fire services which as of 2013 generates approximately \$200,000.

Future Facility Needs

Expansion of the Fire Department will ultimately be necessary to accommodate the future land use pattern shown on the Master Plan. The communities will need to coordinate efforts in developing future fire stations and determining the most appropriate locations to ensure top response times.

Other Needs

As new construction continues in the community, it is important that the Fire Department be involved in all phases of the development review and approval process. During site plan and plat review, the Fire Department should be involved to assure that adequate access is provided to all new developments. Providing multiple access points and connections between existing and proposed development is necessary. In the event that one entrance is blocked, another route may be used. Long dead-end roads should be avoided for this reason.

Copies of approved site plans should be provided to the Fire Department for inspection purposes and for building inspection purposes. The Fire Department's file should also include the hazardous substances reporting form.

CONCLUSIONS

As the community of Almont continues its gradual evolution from a rural community and small downtown to one that is increasingly characterized by a more suburban development pattern surrounding the downtown, the demand to provide additional services commonly provided in a suburban setting will increase. The provision of services, however, needs to be coordinated and timed to coincide with development. This portion of the Master Plan provides the Township with an opportunity to anticipate the level of services that may be needed at a future point in time. Identifying these needs in advance of development is a useful tool for the budgeting process.

The two communities will need to cooperate moving forward to provide many of the other services described in this chapter. Schools, libraries and recreation services are typically provided on a larger geographic basis. Certain economies of scale and saving can be realized with these larger service areas, as seen with the newly created Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Services that could not be efficiently or cost-effectively provided by a community acting alone, may be provided by several communities working together. These cooperative arrangements should be continued and considered for other services, as applicable.



APPENDIX

Village of Almont
Housing Analysis and Recommendations
July 2012

Introduction

In light of the recent revision of the Village's Master Plan, it is appropriate for an analysis of the Village's housing characteristics should be compiled for review. It is the intention of this analysis to provide information to the Village regarding Almont's current housing situation. Demographic information will be provided to demonstrate the population characteristics of Almont's residents as well as data that relates to the Village's housing stock.

Part 1: Population and Housing Demand

Size of the Population

In general, Almont's population has been in decline. Between the years of 2000 and 2010, Almont's population reduced -4.6%. This decline has not been the same across all age groups. Some age groups have experienced sharp losses, yet others have seen significant gains as shown in Table 1.

It is apparent from Table 1 that although the population of young families with children has been decreasing, the number of residents aged 50 and older has been increasing. One would expect a decline in the size of Almont's households due to having an older population who often have adult children living independently.

Table 1: Population Changes by Age

	2010	2000	% Change by Age Group	% Change 2000-2010 Cohort	Cohort Retention Ratio
Total population	2674	2803	-4.6%		
Under 5 years	163	213	-23.5%		
5 to 9 years	196	265	-26.0%		
10 to 14 years	206	244	-15.6%	-33.2%	67
15 to 19 years	237	190	24.7%	3.2%	103
20 to 24 years	135	133	1.5%	54.9%	155
25 to 29 years	155	212	-26.9%	11.8%	112
30 to 34 years	177	228	-22.4%	-40.8%	59
35 to 39 years	182	253	-28.1%	-38.7%	61
40 to 44 years	206	253	-18.6%	-30.0%	70
45 to 49 years	221	193	14.5%	-5.7%	94
50 to 54 years	218	141	54.6%	46.1%	146
55 to 59 years	149	124	20.2%	78.2%	178
60 to 64 years	123	95	29.5%	129.5%	229
65 to 69 years	105	70	50.0%	112.9%	213
70 to 74 years	67	62	8.1%	98.4%	198
75 to 79 years	47	57	-17.5%	84.2%	184
80 to 84 years	42	38	10.5%	76.3%	176
85 years and over	45	32	40.6%	46.9%	147

Source: The US Census 2010 Table DP-1 and Census 2000 Table QT-P1

Household Size

Populations frequently decrease more quickly and more significantly than the number of households. As the population decreases, households tend to become smaller and spread themselves among the housing stock. This proves true for the Village. In the year 2000 there were 1022 households living in Almont and in 2010 that number actually increased to 1030 households despite the loss of total population. As previously mentioned, the age of the population is a significant factor for the decrease of the number of people living in a household. Between 2000 and 2010, the size of Almont's households has decreased by -4.8%.

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic makeup of the Village has been changing over the past decade. There has been some increase in the number of people who identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

Table 2: Ethnicity

	2010	%	2000	%
Total population	2674	100	2803	100
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	198	7.4	116	4.1
Not Hispanic or Latino	2476	92.6	2687	95.9

Source: US Census Table DP-1

The change in the racial makeup of the Village is mixed. Some racial groups have seen an increase yet others have decreased. There has not been a significant enough change in either the racial demographics or citizenship status of Almont's residents to determine if immigration plays a factor in housing provisions as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Race and Citizenship

	2010	2000	% Change
Total population	2674	2803	-4.6%
One race	2644	2777	-4.8%
White	2489	2678	-7.1%
Black or African American	9	9	0.0%
Amer Indian or Alaskan Native	9	15	-40.0%
Asian	6	10	-40.0%
Some Other Race	131	65	101.5%
Two or More Races	30	26	15.4%
Foreign-born population	85	82	3.7%
Naturalized U.S. citizen	35	42	-16.7%
Not a U.S. citizen	50	40	25.0%

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010 tables DP-02, QT-P4, and DP-1

Tenure

In the year 2000, 96.6% of housing units in Almont were occupied, but in 2010 that number dropped to 92.3%. This is a significant percentage increase in the number of vacant units as shown in Table 4. Homeownership rates also decreased over the past decade. In 2000 the rate was 85.1% but in 2010 the rate was only 75.7%. As a natural result, the number of renters living in Almont has grown. Renters increased from 11.5% to 16.6%, however this rate is still significantly less than the national average of 35%.

Table 4: Tenure and Occupancy

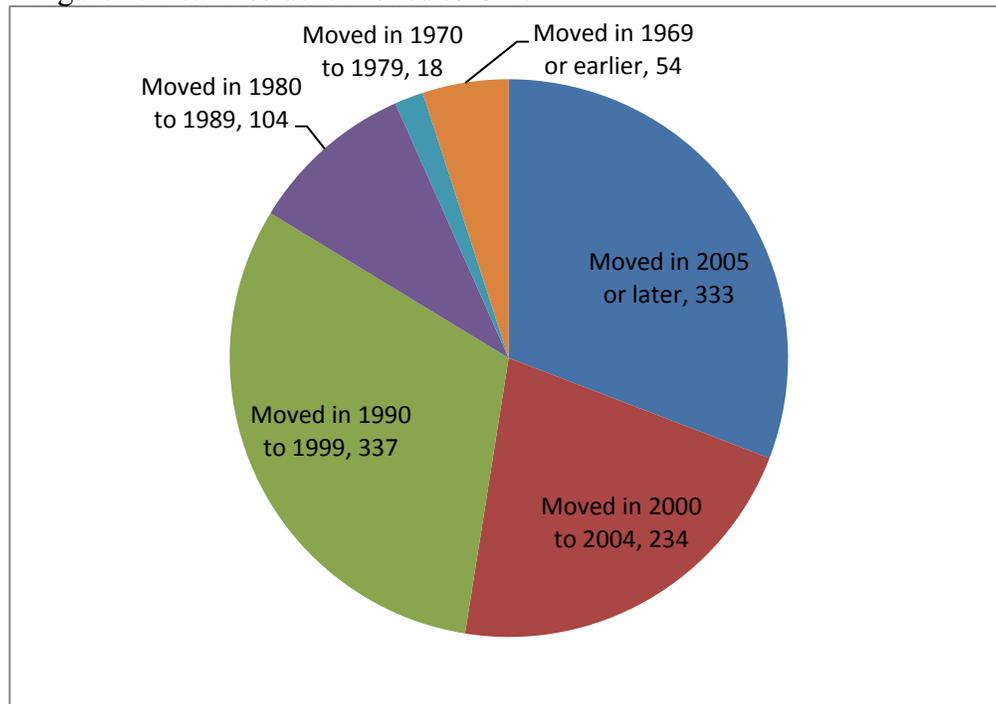
	2010	2000	% Change
Total housing units	1116	1058	5.5%
Occupied housing units	1030	1022	0.8%
Owner occupied	845	900	-6.1%
Owned with mortgage or loan	558		
Owned free and clear	287		
Renter occupied	185	122	51.6%
Vacant housing units	86	36	138.9%

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010 Tables QT-H1 and QT-H14

Residency & Household Composition

Although many Almont residents have lived in the Village all their lives, others are relatively new to Almont. Figure 1 demonstrates when households moved into their current housing unit by year.

Figure 1: Year Resident Moved to Unit



Almont's residents live in a variety of housing models from apartments to single family dwellings. Most homes are well suited to house the average household size of 2.6 people. Table 5 shows the number of housing units in the Village which have varying numbers of bedrooms.

Table 5: Bedrooms

	# Units	% Units
No bedroom	0	0.0%
1 bedroom	114	10.1%
2 bedrooms	275	24.3%
3 bedrooms	529	46.7%
4 bedrooms	166	14.7%
5+ bedrooms	49	4.3%

Source: US Census Bureau ACS 5 year est Table DP-04

The number of households with children has decreased somewhat over the past decade. Most of this is due to the loss of young families, however the number of families with teenage children appears to have risen. The number of married couples has decreased by 13%, yet the number of female headed households has also decreased as shown in Table 6. More households now have members over the age of 65 living with them. This could mean that investing in housing nearer the center of town where residents who can no longer drive can still walk to complete daily errands and exercise may be advisable.

Table 6: Tenure

	2010		2000	
Age of Householder				
under 65 owner	661	64.1%	735	71.9%
under 65 renter	158	15.3%	104	10.2%
65+ owner	184	17.9%	165	16.1%
65+ renter	29	2.8%	18	1.8%
Family Composition				
Family Households	728	70.7%	747	73.1%
Married	521	50.5%	599	58.6%
Female Headed*	88	8.5%	112	11.0%
Non Family Households	302	29.3%	275	26.9%
Living Alone	267	25.9%	235	23.0%
Households with individuals under 18 yrs	384	37.30%	431	42.2%
Households with individuals 65+ yrs	228	22.10%	201	19.7%
Avg Household size	2.6		2.73	
Avg Family size	3.1		3.24	

*no husband present with children under 18

Source: US Census 2010 and 2000 Table DP-1

Income and Spending

The percentage of the population which is a part of the labor force has remained fairly constant over the years as shown in Table 7. The recent recession, however has taken a toll on the number of people in the workforce who are able to be employed. This is clearly a significant factor in Almont residents' ability to afford housing. The median household income in 1999 was \$70,657 (adjusted for inflation to 2010 dollars). By 2010, that number dropped -31.8% to \$48,214.

Table 7: Employment

	2010	%	2000	%
Population 16 yrs +	2047		2039	
In labor force	1419	69.3%	1435	70.4%
Employed	1217	59.5%	1398	68.6%
Unemployed	202	9.9%	37	1.8%
Not in labor force	628	30.7%	604	29.6%

Source: US Census ACS 5 yr Estimates Table DP-03 and Census 2000 Table DP-3

Although precise figures for housing costs are difficult to determine in Almont due to the small sample size, the US Census Bureau estimates that roughly 40% of home owners with a mortgage pay above 30% of their incomes on housing costs. In turn, over half of all renters pay more than 30% of their incomes on housing. Table 8 compares home affordability rates in Almont to that of other locations for evaluation.

Table 8: Housing Affordability

	SMOCAPI above 30% (Homeowners)	GRAPI above 30% (Renters)
Almont	40.4%	52.4%
Lapeer County	37.4%	53.2%
Michigan	35.9%	54.0%
United States	37.6%	50.8%

Source: US Census ACS 5 year Estimates Table DP04

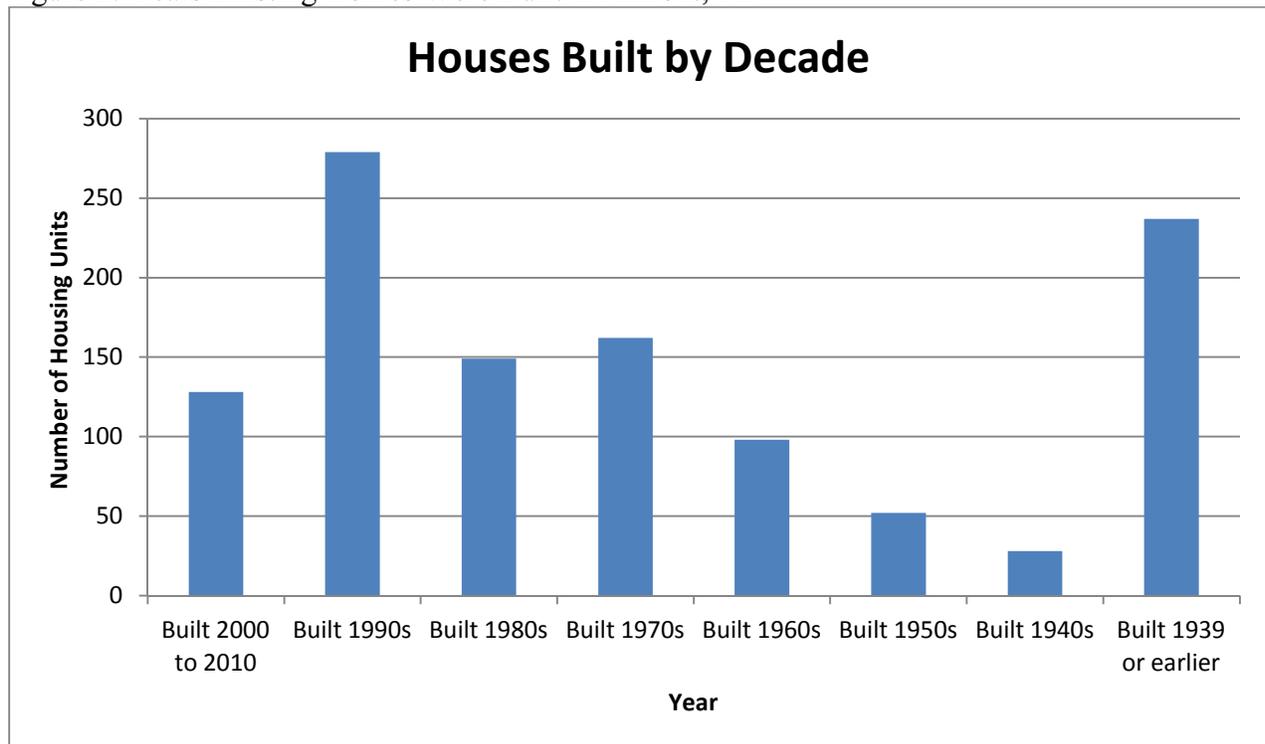
*Note: SMOCAPI is Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of income. GRAPI is Gross Rent as a Percentage of Income.

Part 2: Housing Supply

Housing Stock

Now that the nature of Almont's housing demand has been evaluated, an analysis of the Village's housing supply can be examined. Almont has a variety of housing models including mobile homes, apartments, condominiums, and single family homes. A chart depicting the number of existing housing units built each decade shows how Almont has grown over the years.

Figure 2: Years Existing Homes Were Built in Almont, MI



Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates Table DP-04

As Figure 2 indicates, many existing homes are either very old or relatively new. Not as many houses were built between the 1940s and the 1960s; at least that are still in existence today. The historic nature of many homes in the Village is a desirable quality for many seeking homeownership. The more recent construction of the 1990s demonstrates the quick growth Almont was experiencing at that time. This growth in the housing stock has tapered off as economic changes have affected Almont's housing market.

Sales

The way that residents have selected to purchase and sell homes has changed over the past decade. Table 9 demonstrates the status of vacant housing units. Although the sales market has not been as favorable to sellers as in the 1990s, more people have chosen to put their homes up for sale rather than rent them to tenants. There are 5% fewer vacant housing units for rent and nearly 10% more of such units for sale.

Table 9: Occupancy and Costs

	2010	%	2000	%
Total housing units	1116	100%	1058	100%
Occupied housing units	1030	92.3%	1022	96.6%
Vacant housing units	86	7.7%	36	3.4%
Vacancies	86	100%	36	100%
For Rent	22	25.6%	11	30.6%
For Sale	32	37.2%	10	27.8%
Other Vacant	32	37.2%	15	41.7%
Median Gross Rent	\$593		\$673*	
Median SMOC	\$1,413		\$1,425*	

*Adjusted for inflation to 2010 dollars

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates: Tables QT-H1, DP-4 and DP-04

Although there are fewer units for rent today than there were 10 years ago, the median cost of rental property has been reduced 11.9%. Demand for rental units has increased, however the price has gone down. Many rental units in Almont are still at higher than affordable rents as was displayed in Table 8 and as will be explored in greater detail later in this study. Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC) have insignificantly changed for homeowners. Overall, the cost of homeownership has remained fairly stable.

Part 3: Matching Supply and Demand

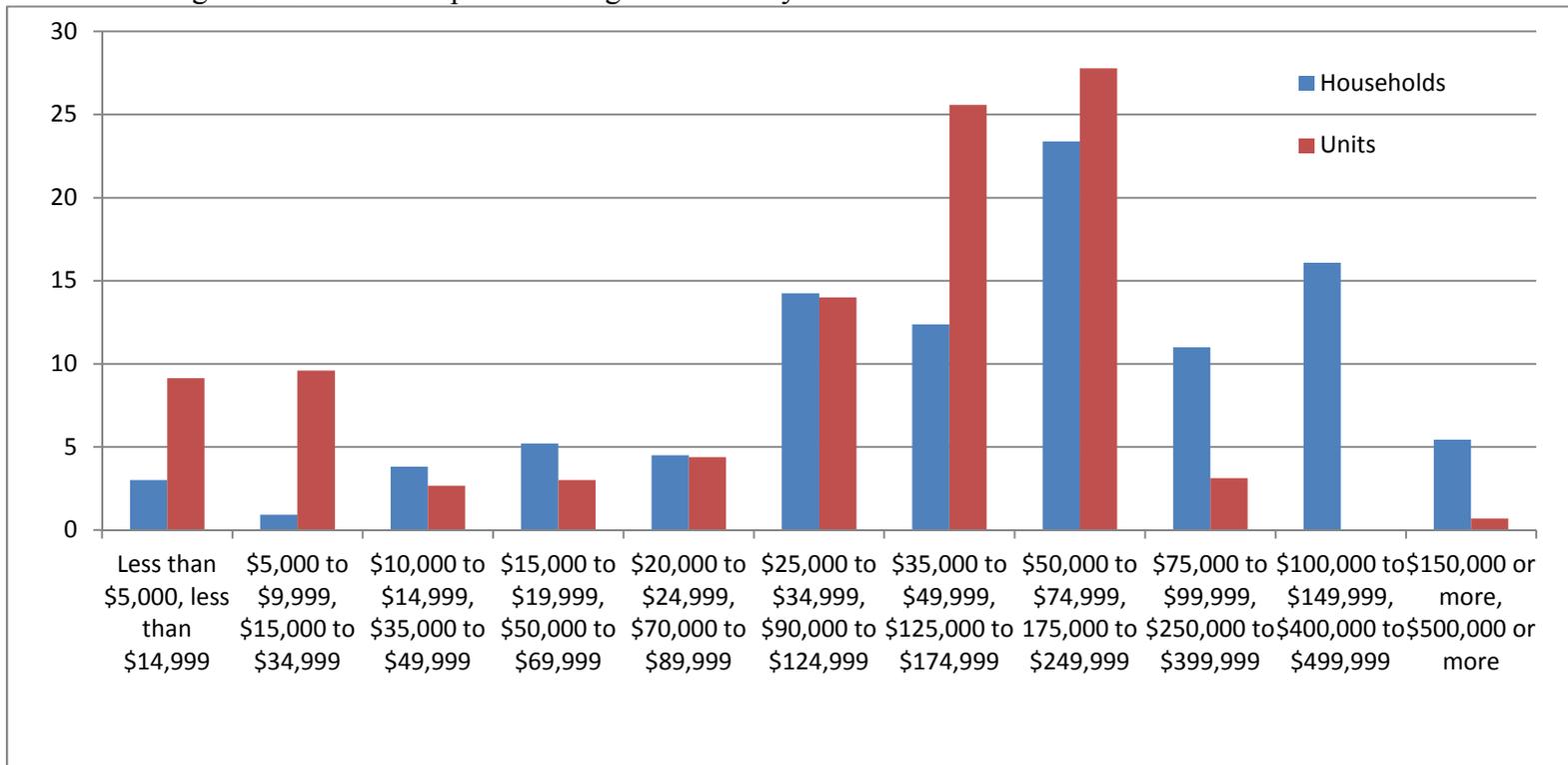
Spending on Housing

In general, the cost of housing that is considered affordable for a consumer is no greater than 30% of one's income. For the following analysis, note that a few assumptions will be made. It will be assumed that a household will not spend more than 30% of their income on housing, that homeowners cannot afford to borrow over 90% of their home's value, and that homeowners cannot afford to spend more than 28% of their incomes repaying their mortgage. Using these assumptions, it is possible to construct a picture of the general state of housing affordability in the Village based on income category.

Owner's Market

Figure 3 portrays the affordability of housing for homeowners in Almont.

Figure 3: Owner Occupied Housing Affordability 2010



Source: US Census 2010 Tables B25118 and B25075.

Figure 3 shows the matchup of households of differing incomes which can afford housing of various values. For example, look at the very first pair of red and blue columns on the leftmost side of the chart. The chart shows that roughly 3% of households (the blue line) make less than \$5000 a year. In general, these households can only afford to purchase a house that is \$14,999 or less in value. It also shows that of all the housing units in Almont, about 9% of them (the red line) are valued at \$14,999 or less. Therefore, 9% of all housing units are within the purchasing power of the poorest 3% of Almont's homeowners. There is a surplus of housing for low income households in the owner's market.

Almont's owner's market is quite balanced for those with annual incomes between \$10,000 and \$34,999 where home sales is still competitive. A shift occurs when we look at households that make \$35,000 or more. There appears to be a shortage of housing for upper income residents of Almont, however a significant portion of this can be attributed to a decrease in property values. For many people in these income brackets, their homes were worth more when they purchased

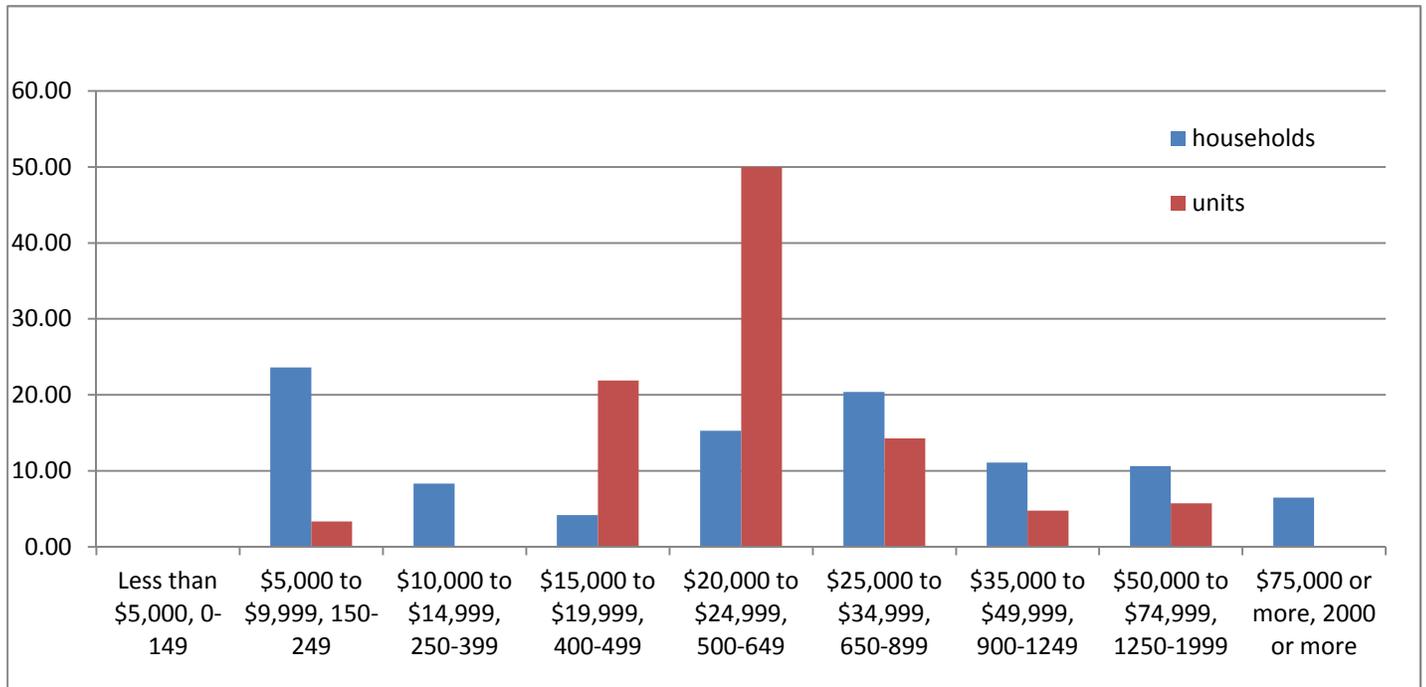
them than they are today. For instance, someone who makes \$150,000 annually may have purchased a \$400,000 home, but since that time the house's value dropped to \$325,000 yet they are still making the same mortgage payment as they did when the house had a greater value. Another explanation is that many people choose not to maximize their housing budgets. Although they could afford a more expensive home, they choose a less expensive one because maximizing their housing capacity is not important to them. This is a less frequent occurrence and only explains the housing discrepancy to a degree.

In any case, there is a great deal of competition for houses that are valued between \$175,000 and \$250,000. People who could afford a more expensive house have few options and are forced to buy a less expensive home or build a new home themselves. People who cannot afford a home more expensive than this value bracket are competing with people who have more money to offer.

Rental Market

Figure 4 shows the affordability of rental housing in the Village.

Figure 4: Renter Occupied Housing Affordability 2010



Source: US Census 2010 Tables B25118 and B25063

The rental market is generally more straightforward than the owner's market. When looking at the chart, a few things are immediately obvious. The first notable feature is the vast surplus of housing units for rent between \$500 and \$649 a month. Although roughly 15% of renters would maximize their housing budget by acquiring such housing, half of all rental units fall into this category.

A second implication of the chart is that there are very few low income housing units for rent, despite the demand. The residents with the lowest incomes in Almont must pay higher rents than they can afford. This may cause them to look for housing in other municipalities where it is more affordable to live.

There appears to be a lack of information to landlords regarding the state of Almont's rental market and what renters are looking for when they choose a housing unit to rent. More communication and information for landlords could help them to more appropriately price their housing units.

Implications

When comparing the owner's market with the renter's market, it is notable that there is a surplus of homes which low income people could afford in the owner's market and a shortage of affordable homes for low income people in the renter's market. Many people are unable to purchase a home due to past bankruptcy, foreclosure, etc. It would be beneficial to the Village for many of the homes that are for sale to instead be listed for rent. Fewer people are willing to rent today than there were 10 years ago for undetermined reasons (see Table 9). This may be a reason for the low income rental/owner disparity. Should more homes that lower income residents can afford be put on the rental market, the total number of homes on the market will be reduced. This could lead to higher property values for the remaining homes on the sales market and help stabilize Almont's housing market.