

2008
MASTER PLAN

LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP

KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

DRAFT

2008

Lowell Charter Township Master Plan

Township Board

Supervisor – Paula Blumm
Treasurer – Leslie Stougaard
Clerk – Linda Regan
Trustees – Carlton Blough
Clifford Bonn
Gerald Persha
William Thompson

Planning Commission

Dave Simmonds, Chairman
Mark Batchelor, Vice Chairman
Timothy Clements, Secretary
Carlton Blough, Board Representative
Dennis Stanford, Member

ADOPTED _____ 2008

By the Lowell Charter Township Board

*Prepared with the assistance of
Tim Johnson, AICP
MainStreet Planning Company*

Maps prepared by V-Tec Engineering

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to guide policy and decision making for the future use of land, and for the expenditures of public funds for public facilities, roads, utilities, park land, and open space in Lowell Township.

The preparation of the Master Plan derives its' legal authority from the Township Planning Act, PA 168 of 1959 as amended which authorizes the Lowell Township Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a Master Plan. The Master Plan is a reflection of philosophies regarding community design and function. These philosophies result in goals that shape the future of the Lowell Township community, both physically and socially.

The Master Plan addresses the following issues:

- The promotion of the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Lowell Charter Township;
- The preservation of active **farms and** farmland;
- The preservation of non-farm rural views and valuable natural resources;
- The zoning laws, subdivision design, and land division policies that create and preserve the character of Lowell Township;
- The types of residential land use that will be provided within the Township, such as rural estates, middle-income

homes, multi-family homes, and senior citizen housing;

- Commercial and industrial location and design;
- Provisions for public and private utilities;
- Capacity of existing roadways, as well as location of future roadways;
- The relationship of Lowell Township's plans to the plans of surrounding communities.

Review of Public Improvement Projects

With preparation of the Master Plan, the Planning Commission has the responsibility and authority to review public improvements projects. Section 10 of the Township Planning Act in part states:

“Whenever the planning commission has adopted the basic plan of the township...no street, square, park or other public way, ground or open space, or public building or structure, shall be constructed or authorized in the township...until the location, character and extent thereof shall have been submitted to and approved by the planning commission.”

Planning in Lowell Township

Lowell Charter Township formed its first Planning Commission in 1975 in response to a decade of a high rate of growth, and in 1978, the first Land Use Plan was completed. Another decade of significant growth followed, during which changes in public attitudes, economic conditions and

the overall appearance of the Township necessitated revisions to the Land Use Plan, resulting in the 1986 Lowell Charter Township Land Use Plan.

Continued growth prompted the Township to prepare the 1995 Lowell Charter Township Land Use Plan. This plan resulted in a Future Land Use and Road Location Map for Section 4, specifically. This map would serve to guide commercial development and access along the M-21 corridor, as well as development north of M-21 to the Township boundary and west to Cumberland Avenue.

In 2002 the Planning Commission prepared and adopted a new Master Plan. One of the major purposes of the 2002 Lowell Township Master Plan was to seek the opinions of Lowell Township residents.

This was done through a short survey which was made available at the Lowell Expo in March of 2001. This survey addressed issues such as residential development options, commercial opportunities, methods to address urban sprawl, preservation of open space, sidewalks, public water and sewer, and recreational opportunities.

Two public workshops were held on September 6 and 12, 2001 with over 150 people in total attending which provided additional direction from Township residents in the preparation of the Plan.

The Planning Commission also sought the opinion of Township farmers through a separate survey. Surveys were delivered personally by Planning Commissioner and Trustee Carlton Blough to 54 landowners in areas zoned Ag-1 and 38 surveys were returned.

Based on public involvement and its own analysis of Township resources and growth trends the Planning Commission determined to generally “stay the course” that it charted in previous Master Plans. Consequently there were only a few changes to the Future Land Use Map adopted in 1995.

Since 2002...

Commercial development continued along M-21 with the construction of a number of new buildings: a multiple tenant retail building; a Goodwill store; a self serve vehicle wash and oil change; a retail beverage store; AppleTree Learning Center; and the Flat River Ministries Thrift Shop which occupied the former Cumberland Village Retirement Center. A gas station/convenience store/sandwich shop was constructed on Alden Nash between Cascade Road and I-96 in 2004.

Between 2001 and the end of 2007, 239 new dwellings were added in Lowell Township for an average of 34 new dwellings per year. A number of these new dwellings were constructed in Whispering Hills Subdivision. In March of 2005 the Township Board approved the Cumberland Ridge Open Space Planned Unit Development in Section 5. This project consisted of 100 duplex condominium units on a private road.

In 2006 the U.S. Bureau estimated the population of Lowell Township to be 6733 people, an increase of 29% and 1514 people since 2000.

In early 2008 the development rights for approximately 80 acres of land owned by Merriman Farms at the south east corner of 52nd Street and Bancroft Avenue were

purchased under the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. This action permanently protects the land from future development and preserves it for farming.

Preparation Process for 2008 Plan

Based on the changes since 2002 and in consideration of the Township Planning Act requirement that a Township review its Master Plan every five years the Township Board authorized an update of the 2002 Plan in early 2007.

The Planning Commission prepared a citizen survey which was initially distributed at the Lowell Expo in March. The survey was subsequently posted on the Township web site and distributed at the Township offices as well.

This survey addressed issues pertaining to options for residential lot splits in the AG-1 Zone, land uses at the Alden Nash/Cascade Road/I-96 area and land use and traffic on M-21 west of the City of Lowell. The results of this survey are included as Appendix A.

The survey results were discussed at two public workshops held on June 11 and 12 which were attended by over 65 people on the two workshop nights. Participants were asked to discuss and prioritize some of the issues contained in the survey. The information distributed at the workshops and the results are in Appendix B.

The Planning Commission also sought the opinion of property owners in the AG-1 Zone through a separate survey mailed in November of 2007 to 180 property owners. Forty two surveys were returned (23% return rate). The purpose of the survey was to solicit the opinion of property owners on different options to regulate the creation of new residential lots in the AG-1 Zone. On November 12th the Planning Commission presented the results to a gathering of AG-1 property owners for further discussion.

Information was also compile and analyzed to determine the number of new residential lots which could be created in the AG-1 Zone under a number of different lot split formulas.

The Commission continued to prepare and discuss the Plan at monthly work sessions from November through February. Township residents also attended these work sessions and participated in the discussions.

On March 17, 2008, the Planning Commission met with the Township Board to discuss the Draft Master Plan.

On _____, 2008 the Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval to the Township Board which adopted the Master Plan on _____, 2008.

CHAPTER 1

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

A community's planning goals are statements that express both long and short range desires and serve to provide direction for related activities such as zoning, site plan review, development of infrastructure, economic development, and protection of natural resources. Goals are intended to provide a basic framework upon which long term development decisions and day to day decisions may be made by public and private agencies.

The Planning Commission developed the Goals and Objectives based upon a review of the 2002 Goals and Objectives, information gathered at the Township-wide Public Workshops, the farm survey and discussions among the Planning Commission members.

The Goals below are listed by topic areas; following the Goals are Objectives which give more specific means of reaching the desired overall Goals. In some cases, Strategies are included following Objectives; Strategies are simply even more specific tasks that help reach desired Objectives and thus Goals.

General Township Goals

1. To preserve the productive farmlands from urban encroachment and maintain the agricultural sector of the Township's economy.
2. To preserve sensitive environmental areas and rural landscapes.
3. To accommodate the growth of industrial development by providing for

suitable industrial park sites as well as individual industrial sites which will provide increased tax base as well as employment opportunities.

4. To provide attractive neighborhood convenience shopping facilities properly located to serve the present and future needs of the community accessible by vehicles and by pedestrians.
5. To create attractive, safe and convenient residential communities with good housing and adequate schools, parks, utilities, sidewalks and civic open space which can contribute to a sense of neighborhood.
6. To provide for a street system which will provide for an even distribution of traffic on existing and future streets.
7. To maintain a continuing program of reviewing and evaluating the planning needs and goals of the community.

Farmland Preservation Goals

The public health and welfare of the citizens of Lowell Township, Kent County, the State of Michigan, and the United States are greatly dependent upon the sustenance and economic benefits provided by a viable agriculture industry. The farmland preservation goals of this Master Plan are intended to ensure that land areas within Lowell Township which are well suited for production of food and fiber, are retained for such production, unimpeded by the establishment of incompatible uses which

would hinder farm operations and irretrievably deplete agricultural lands.

1. Preserve the prime agricultural land in Lowell Township for present and future generations.
2. Protect the agricultural industry from the effects of residential development in close proximity to farms by minimizing the conflicts between farming operations and residential areas.
3. Provide regulations which encourage housing in a more dense but livable arrangement so open space and rural character can be preserved, thereby slowing the rate of non-farm development.
4. Preserve woodlands and wetlands associated with farms which, because of their natural physical features, are useful as water retention, surface water purification and groundwater recharge areas, and as habitat for plant and animal life; and which have an important aesthetic and scenic value which contributes to the unique character of the agricultural district.
5. Encourage long-term investment in improvements needed to maintain and expand agricultural production by creating a stable environment for such production.

Residential Development Goals

1. Encourage the creative design and livability of neighborhoods by including sidewalks, bike paths, pedestrian ways, civic open spaces, parks, and playgrounds, and street design that results in more even distribution of traffic on public streets.
2. Strengthen and protect the viability of existing neighborhoods by controlling the expansion of incompatible land uses on

adjacent properties and protecting neighborhoods through open space, buffers, and landscaping.

3. Provide for and retain shopping opportunities within or next to neighborhoods for the convenience of nearby residents, to reduce vehicle trips and provide a sense of identity to the neighborhood.
4. Provide for a range of housing types to accommodate varying needs in household size and type and income levels.
5. Encourage housing for senior citizens that is close to neighborhood shopping facilities, pedestrian walkways, and parks and recreation facilities.

6. Require large lot, low density development in the central portion of the Township as a means to preserve the wooded hills which are the predominant natural feature of this area.

Objectives

- A. Develop Township zoning ordinances to provide clear guidelines for residential development through site plan review and a subdivision control ordinance, which includes provisions for open space, bicycle paths, street design, pedestrian walkways, architectural style, and landscaping.
- B. Encourage new residential development patterns that utilize small lot, cluster techniques in conjunction with open space or conservation easements.
- C. Require the construction and maintenance of sidewalks in all residential areas and in other areas that may provide access to schools, parks, or shopping areas.

Preservation of Rural Character Goals

1. Protect those elements which contribute to the rural character of the Township including woodlands, wetlands, **farms and farmlands**, open views, **the dark night sky**, and architectural styles.

Objectives

A. Identify those areas or types of areas that reflect the rural character of the Township.

B. Encourage residential development patterns that utilize small lot, cluster development in conjunction with open space or conservation easements that may be retained in agricultural use or simply for the enjoyment of the associated residents.

C. **Continue to require a four acre minimum lot size for single family dwellings in those portions of the Township which are characterized by woods, wetlands and hilly terrain.**

D. **Maintain Township lighting ordinance requirements which provide practical and effective measures to control light pollution.**

Natural Resources/Environmental Protection Goals

1. Ensure that development takes place in a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for soil erosion, for disturbances to the natural drainage network, that protects the quality of surface and groundwaters, woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

Objectives

A. Through site plan review, require approaches to development that take into account natural features such as soils,

topography, steep slopes, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife habitat.

B. Establish landscaping guidelines for existing and future development which, through site plan review, would preserve and increase the number of trees and other natural vegetation in the Township, and that would limit the amount of impervious surface area (both pavement and lawns).

Commercial Goals

1. Direct commercial development to M-21 west of the City of Lowell where such uses can be served by public utilities.

2. Provide limited opportunity for commercial and service uses to serve the future industrial area and the traffic at M-50 and I-96 interchange.

3. Incorporate landscaping, **lighting, signage, site design**, and performance standards into the Township Zoning Ordinance to achieve commercial development that is aesthetically appealing, pedestrian friendly, and which operates in a safe and efficient manner.

Industrial Goals

1. Provide for industrial land uses on M-50 north and south of I-96.

2. Through the use of Planned Unit Developments and site plan review regulations, ensure that industrial developments are designed and operated to protect ground and surface waters, and to provide safe traffic circulation and aesthetically pleasing buildings and landscaping.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter presents factual information and data about Lowell Township. Location, natural features, community facilities, utility information, Township services, as well as the social and economic make-up of the Township all contribute to formation of philosophies that will guide future land use. In addition, roadways traffic volumes, and road improvement plans will be discussed in this chapter.

LOCATION

Lowell Township is located in the southeast corner of Kent County, Michigan (T6N, R9W). The western boundary of the Township is located six miles from the eastern boundary of the City of Kentwood, which is a primary component of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. **The eastern boundary of Lowell Township is approximately 35 miles from the City of Lansing the capital of Michigan.**

Interstate 96 traverses the southern portion of the Township in an east-west direction, linking Lowell Township to the Grand Rapids Metro area to the west. State of Michigan Highway 21 is an additional major east-west roadway that traverses the northern portion of the Township providing an additional link to the Grand Rapids metro area.

The City of Lowell is adjacent to the northeastern portion of the Township, and contributes to a sense of community for Township residents. While suburban and commercial development occurs in the northern portion of the Township, most of the Township is of a rural and agricultural nature.

The combination of access to the Grand Rapids metro area, a small-town atmosphere, and rural living opportunities have resulted in a community that will continue to attract residents.

NATURAL FEATURES

Topography

The terrain in the Township varies from primarily gently rolling in the southern portion to more rugged terrain and steeper slopes in the northern portion. The Grand River traverses the Township in an east-west direction. The lowest elevation in the Township is 630 feet and occurs at the intersection of the Grand River and Timpson Roads. The highest point in the Township is 890 feet, and occurs at the center line of Cascade and Timpson Road.

Slopes are indicated on Map 1.

Vegetation

Surface vegetation consists of large stands of predominately oak, birch, maple, pine, and aspen forests. Along low lying areas, one can spot stag-horn sumac, witch hazel, and other closely related species of brush which contribute to wildlife habitat and rural views.

Surface Water

There are numerous sources of surface water in the Township. The Grand River bisects the northern half and flows in an east-west direction. In the south half of the Township is Pratt Lake Creek which drains Pratt Lake and flows in the same general east-west direction as the Grand River. Three lakes are situated in Lowell Township. The largest, Pratt Lake, is approximately 175

acres and is surrounded by a considerable amount of wetland. This makes the lake unsuitable for public beaches, however, it provides habitat for waterfowl. Public access exists on Pratt Lake. McEwen Lake, consisting of 25 acres, has considerably fewer wetlands surrounding the lake, making it more accessible to Township residents. Morse Lake, smallest of the three at 12 acres, does not have public access sites. Other smaller bodies of water are present in the Township.

Drainage

Surface waters within the Township drain into two watersheds. The northern two-thirds of the Township drain into the Grand River. The topography of this area is generally quite steep and runoff water is quickly carried away by small streams and valleys into the river. Soil types in this area drain more readily than those in the southern one-third of the Township.

The southern one-third of the Township drains into the Coldwater River basin. Here topography is relatively flat. Runoff water is not carried away quickly, causing this portion of the Township to be wet during certain periods of the year.

As shown on Map 10, the 100 year flood plain boundary runs north and south of the Grand River and into the City of Lowell along the Flat River. Development within the flood plain is regulated by the State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Soils

The northern half of the Township is characterized by Chelsea Loams, Boyer Sandy Loams, and Oshtemo series of soils, all of which have low water retention qualities and good to fair percolation rates.

The soils of the southern half of the Township are composed of predominantly Capac, Marlette, and Parkhill Loams, which are noted for their slow percolation and ponding characteristics. The southern half of the Township is well suited to agricultural production. Prime agricultural soils are shown on Map 2.

Wetlands

Map 3 illustrates the various types of wetlands within the Township. Large wetland areas exist around Pratt Lake, within the Grand River Flood Plain and south of I-96 in Sections 29 and 32.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The population and housing characteristics of the people of Lowell Township all influence the future development of the community.

The following information presents information from the 2000 US Census. Map 2- Prime Farmland Soils

Table 1
Historical Population Change
1980 - 2000
Lowell Township
and
Adjacent Municipalities

<u>Community</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>Change 80-90</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Change 90-2000</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Lowell Twp.	3,972	4,774	802	20.2	5,219	445	9.3
City of Lowell	3,707	3,983	276	7.4	4,013	30	0.8
Bowne Twp.	1,719	1,907	188	10.9	2,743	836	43.8
Vergennes Twp.	1,822	2,492	670	37	3,611	1,119	44.9
Cascade Twp.	10,120	12,869	2,749	27.2	15,107	2,238	17.4
Boston Twp. (Ionia County)	3,681	4,313	632	17.2	4,961	648	15

Source: US Census

Although Lowell Township has grown steadily in the past 20 years, its rate of growth in the 1990's was slower than all adjacent communities except for the City of Lowell.

Table 1-A
Estimated Population Change
2000- 2006
Lowell Township and
Adjacent Municipalities

<u>Community</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2006</u> <u>Est.</u> <u>Pop.*</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Change</u>
Lowell Twp.	5,219	6733	1514	29
City of Lowell	4,013	4141	128	3.2
Bowne Twp.	2,743	2911	168	6.12
Vergennes Twp.	3,611	4171	560	15.51
Cascade Twp.	15,107	16682	1575	10.42
Boston Twp. (Ionia County)	4973	5118	145	3.18

*Source: U.S. Census

Based on building permits issued for new single family dwellings in Lowell Township between and including the years 2001 and 2007 (239 permits) the above population estimate is considered to be higher than the actual 2006 population.

Table 2
Median Age Comparison
1980 - 2000

	1980	1990	2000
Lowell Township	26.8	30.6	35.4

As evidenced in Table 2, the median age of Township residents is growing older. This could be due to the aging of existing residents and an increase of older people moving into the Township.

That the age of Township residents is growing older is evidenced by comparing the percentage of people in age categories in 1990 and 2000 as shown in the following table.

Table 3
Comparison of Age Categories
1990 - 2000

	% of under 18 yrs.	% of 45-64	% of 65 yrs. and over
1990	32.7	15.5	7.2
2000	30.2	23.3	8.3

In the 1990 census there was an age category of 18-20. In the year 2000 census this category changed to 15 to 19 which does not permit a valid comparison.

The category 44 years and younger comprised 77.3% of the Townships' population in 1990 compared to 68.5% in 2000. While this age category is shrinking, it is still a very large percentage of the Township's overall population.

Households and Housing

Table 4
Household Size
1980 to 2000

1980	3.15
1990	3.08
2000	2.83
Since 1980, persons per household has decreased by 0.32.	

Table 5
Total Housing Units
1980 - 2000

	<u>1980</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Ave./Yr.</u>
Total Housing Units	1,212	1,764	552	27.6

Of the total 1,764 housing units, 97.8% are occupied.

The majority of dwelling units in Lowell Township are single family detached homes. The largest subdivision, Eastgate Woods, is located north of Fulton Street, between Cumberland and Parnell Roads and consists of 280 homes.

Whispering Hills Subdivision located directly east across Cumberland Avenue is another large subdivision which will eventually contain 182 lots. At the end of 2007 four of the six phases containing 131 lots have been completed.

A few multi-family structures are located within the Township. Stone Ridge Apartments with 96 units was completed in 2002 along Boulder Drive west of the Meijer store. An assisted care facility, Cumberland Manor Retirement Village, contains 20 units located north of Fulton Street, approximately one-half mile east of Cumberland Road. Of all dwelling units in the Township, approximately 16% are mobile homes, most of which (286) are located in the Key Heights Mobile Home Park located north of Fulton Street and east of Cumberland Road.

Map 4 illustrates where residential development has taken place since the completion of the **2002** Master Plan. This map shows the number of building permits for dwellings from January of 2003 to the end of December, 2007. Permits for 168 dwellings were issued for this time period

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Water Service

Lowell Township has negotiated with the City of Lowell to create the Lowell Township Water District which serves a portion of Lowell and Vergennes Townships. (See Map 6) A 500,000 gallon water storage tank serving these

townships was constructed in 1994 in Vergennes Township on the north side of Foreman Street just west of Cumberland Avenue in Section 32.

Private water wells serve Key Heights Mobile Home Park and Cumberland Manor Retirement Village. Other dwellings and businesses in the Township are served by individual wells.

Sanitary Sewer Service

The City of Lowell provides sanitary sewer service to an area west of the City limits. Lowell Township has a contractual agreement with the City which reserves 18 percent of the capacity of the City's treatment plant. This amount equals 252,000 gallons per day (18 percent of 1.4 million gallons). **At the end of 2007, the Township was using approximately 96,000 gallons per day which is 38 percent of its designated capacity. 156,000 gallons per day remains available.**

In October of 2007 a preliminary analysis was done to determine if the remaining sanitary sewer capacity was sufficient to serve the areas planned for sewer service in the 2002 Master Plan.

The analysis took into consideration lands planned for Medium Density Residential (3.11 dwelling units per acre), projects approved for sanitary sewer but not constructed and the eventual provision of sanitary sewer service for Eastgate Subdivision. The analysis concluded that the existing sanitary sewer capacity of 252,000 gallons per day would not be sufficient to serve the lands planned for sanitary sewer service.

An additional 271,000 gallons per day would be needed to meet planned sanitary sewer needs.

The Eastgate Subdivision alone would need approximately 100,000 gallons per day (out of the current available capacity of 156,000 gallons) based on an average daily use of 350 gallons per dwelling per day. The remaining 56,000 gallons could serve approximately 160 new dwellings.

At an average of 40 new dwellings per year the remaining capacity could be fully utilized over a four to five year period.

The analysis considered residential use only and not the sanitary sewer needs of the vacant commercial land along M-21 west of the City of Lowell.

As development continues to use the remaining treatment capacity the Township will need to determine a course of action in order to meet projected sanitary sewer needs.

In 2001, Lowell Township established Special Assessment Districts to extend public sanitary sewer along M-21 about 1,900 feet west of Bowes Road with water being extended about 600 feet further west. Construction was completed in 2002. This project provides public water and sanitary sewer to a number of existing businesses and vacant properties along M-21 particularly on the south side.

Maps 5 and 6 illustrate the location of water and sanitary sewer lines.

Along the southern edge of the Township, sanitary sewer is provided to some residents on the north side of 60th Avenue from the community of Alto treatment system in Bowne Township. This system was

expanded in 2002 to serve a manufactured housing community built on the southwest corner of 64th and Alden Nash. This expansion however, is not being designed to serve any more properties in Lowell Township.

Utilities

Electricity is supplied to Township residents from two sources: Lowell Light and Power and Consumers Energy. Lowell Light and Power supplies less than ten percent of the average daily energy demand with Consumers supplying the bulk of the electrical services for the Township. In day to day situations, the power that Lowell Light and Power supplies is purchased from Wolverine. Consumers Energy also supplies natural gas to parts of the Township.

Recreation

In 1997, the Township acquired a 70.7 acre parcel on the south side of the Grand River in Section 10. The Township has constructed ball fields, a parking lot restrooms, picnic shelters, playground and paved trails with the help of State and Federal grants. More details on park improvements can be found in the Lowell Township Recreation Plan. **In 2007 the Township acquired approximately eight more acres on the west side of the park.**

Pratt Lake has a public access site making it available for fishing. There are parking spaces for five vehicles. McEwen Lake has public access and is also available for fishing and swimming. Deer Run Golf Course is located in the southeast quadrant of the Township. This 141 acre course contains 18 holes and is open to the public.

The North East Sportsman's Club is located in the northwest corner of the Township on

Grand River Drive. The Key Heights Mobile Home Park provides play areas and a swimming pool for the exclusive use of its residents and their guests.

A number of county parks and state game areas in surrounding communities are available to Township residents. Other local parks exist in neighboring communities such as Ada Township and in the City of Lowell.

The Kent County Parks Department is proposing to develop a 700 acre county park in Sections 22 and 23 (northeast corner of Alden Nash and Cascade Road). A number of parcels totaling 420 acres have already been purchased by the County Parks Department. These lands are illustrated on Map ____ as Public use.

Complete information regarding recreation in Lowell Township may be found in the Lowell Township Recreation Plan.

In 2005 the Planning Commission approved a Special Use permit for the BD White Nature Preserve. This 44 acre parcel is located between 36th Street and Alden Nash with a small parking lot on 36th Street. The Preserve is owned by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and the land is available to the public for walking.



Schools

The majority of the Township lies within the Lowell School District. The southwest corner of the Township is served by the Caledonia School District. No Lowell school district buildings are actually located within the Township boundaries, but are located within the City of Lowell, in the neighboring community of Alto and in Vergennes Township to the north, where the Lowell High School complex is located. No Caledonia School facilities are located within Lowell Township.

Police

Police services are provided through Kent County. A patrol car is assigned to the Lowell area, and is staffed with a single patrolman. No sheriff department outposts are located in the Township.

Fire

Fire services are contracted through the City of Lowell and Bowne Township. The City is a member of the Kent County Fire Commission and provides services to the City of Lowell, Lowell Township north of Cascade Road and Vergennes Township. South of Cascade Road, services are provided through an agreement with Bowne Township. Lowell Township pays the

County a fire assessment annually and pays both the City of Lowell and Bowne Township on a fee service basis. Also, there are cash contributions to each department for the purchase of new equipment. Lowell Township shares operational costs with both departments.

Ambulance

Ambulance services are provided through the Rockford/Lowell Ambulance Service to which the Township contributes support. The City of Lowell provides a rescue service on a fee-for-service basis, which is intended to be used for emergency, on the scene care only.

Transportation

I-96, a limited access expressway, runs east to west in the southern portion of the Township, and M-21, a two-lane state highway, runs east to west in the northern portion. Alden Nash Avenue is a county primary road which connects state highway M-21 on the north with the expressway, and also with state highway M-50 to the south.

Other county primary roads in the Township include Parnell Avenue, Snow Avenue, Grand River Drive, Cascade Road, 52nd Street, Morse Lake Avenue and parts of Segwun and Pratt Lake Avenue. These roads are maintained and improved by the Kent County Road Commission, while county local road improvements are funded in part by Lowell Township.

Several local roads in Lowell Township have obtained “Natural Beauty Road” designations. These roads include Timpson Avenue, Hilton Avenue, Court Drive, Bewell Avenue, 40th Street, and Kissing Rock Road. **The Township has 15.3 miles of gravel roads.**

Traffic Counts

Table 6 illustrates 24 hour, two-way traffic counts for the major roads in the Township. **All counts are taken within 100 feet of the intersection.**

**Table 6
Traffic Counts**

<u>Road</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>24 Hour Count</u>
Grand River East of Kissing Rock Road	1999 2005	1,807 1663
Alden Nash South of Cascade	2000 2005	9,509 13,539
Alden Nash North of Cascade	2000 2006	8,737 10,484
Alden Nash North of M-21	2000 2003	5,562 5681
Cascade East of Alden Nash	2000 2005	2,602 2689
Cascade West of Alden Nash	2000 2006	3,498 2829
M-21 West of Alden Nash	2000 2003	9,900 14,635

All of the above roads except M-21 are two lane paved roads which have a 24 hour capacity of 10,000 - 12,000 vehicles per day. Only Alden Nash north **and south** of Cascade Road is approaching its designed capacity. All other Township roads are well below their designed capacity.

In February of 2008 a traffic signal was installed at the intersection of Cascade Road and Alden Nash (M-21).

EXISTING LAND USE

Agriculture

Map 2 illustrates the location of prime farmland soils as defined by the US Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Survey of Kent County.

In 2007 there were 238 parcels for a total of 7,280 acres zoned AG-1, Prime Agricultural Preservation.

Residential

The majority of residential land use in Lowell Township is characterized by single family houses on 5-10 acre lots located along Township local roads particularly in Sections 8-21. These sections are zoned R-1, which requires a two acre minimum lot size, and AG-2 which requires a minimum lot size of four acres. The hilly and wooded terrain coupled with the size of these parcels results in many houses being located so they are not visible from the road which provides very natural enjoyable views along Township roadways.

To the west of the City of Lowell, more dense housing exists within the Eastgate **and Whispering Hills** subdivisions. The land to the west of Eastgate consists of large lot single family home sites. To the west of Parnell, the hilly terrain is also best suited for larger lot development.

Stone Ridge Apartments with 96 units approved in 2000 is located on M-21 in Section 4 and provides rental housing opportunities.

Commercial/Industrial

M-21 west of Alden Nash comprises the majority of commercial uses in the Township. The Meijer retail store and gas station which opened in the spring of 2001 is the most visible business and is expected to attract additional commercial uses along the M-21 corridor. **A Goodwill retail store, Stoneridge Retail Center and a carwash/oil change establishment were constructed in 2004 & 2005 on M-21 west of the Meijer store.**



A gas station/convenience store/sandwich shop opened in 2005 on Alden Nash between Cascade Road and I-96. This type of use was a recommendation of the 2002 Master Plan.



A large area of industrially zoned land, about 250 acres is located between Cascade Road and I-96 west of Alden Nash. The majority of this area was rezoned to L1, Industrial in 1993 with the provision that it be developed as a Planned Unit Development with public utilities. To date, no development has occurred on this property. **In 2005 the Township Board**

**took action to rezone this land to the
Industrial Planned Unit Development
(IPUD) District.**

CHAPTER 3 PLANNING IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

In July of 2006 **Bowne Township** which borders along the south of Lowell Township adopted an updated Master Plan. **This Plan calls for agricultural use with 2.5 acre minimum lot sizes along the border east of M-50. To the west of M-50 the Plan proposes 2 acre minimum lot sizes with residential as the predominant land use. Lands at the southeast intersection of 60th and M-50 are planned and zoned for industrial. The southwest corner is zoned industrial but is planned for medium density residential use (townhouses & multifamily) due the availability of sanitary sewer.**

Land uses in Alto itself are planned for medium density residential with minimum lot sizes at 30,000 sq. ft. without sanitary sewer and 10,000 sq. ft with sewer. These planned land uses would be considered compatible with uses in adjoining Lowell Township.

In 2000 a manufactured housing community with 389 lots, named Alto Meadows, was approved for construction on 64th Avenue between Alden Nash and Bancroft. Construction will be in three phases beginning in 2002.

This development will likely increase traffic on Alden Nash as these new residents access I-96 and also the City of Lowell.

Bowne Township has a small commercial area at the intersection of 64th and Alden Nash which is intended to serve the convenience shopping needs of nearby residents.

Along the north border in **Vergennes Township**, the 2007 Vergennes Township Master Plan calls for Agriculture/Rural Character Preservation land use; this recommends one house per three acres. **Land east and west of Parnell Road is set aside for long term farming.**

The area along Foreman Street between Cumberland and Alden Nash is proposed for Medium Density Residential use with lot sizes of one acre without public utilities to three units per acre with utilities. These proposed densities would be compatible with lands in Lowell Township.

Boston Township in Ionia County to the east does not have a zoning ordinance in effect at this time. The land is presently being used for agricultural and also for low density residential use.

The City of Lowell adopted a new Master Plan in 2007 to replace the 1995 Land Use Plan. The 2007 Plan calls for Low Density Residential use along the west, east and north border with Lowell Township. This land use category proposes single family dwellings at a density of two units per acre which is compatible with the residential uses propose and existing in Lowell Township.. The area south of the river on the eastern edge of the City is included in a Flood Plain District and is intended for open space uses.

On the western edge of the City, the City Plan proposes Mixed Use at the intersection of Alden Nash and M-21. This category allows a mixture of residential, office and commercial uses

with buildings located closer to the street and parking behind the building. Industrial uses are proposed along the south side of Bowes Road and along Alden Nash north of the commercial uses fronting on M-21.

Cascade Township abuts the west boundary of Lowell Township south of the Grand River. The 2000 Cascade Land Use Plan identifies uses in this area to be agricultural and large lot residential. The Cascade Township Zoning Map designates the area adjacent to Lowell Township for agricultural which includes residential and related use. This is compatible with uses and zoning in Lowell Township. **Cascade Township is updating its Plan in 2007 and 2008.**

A small portion of Ada Township abuts Section 6 in Lowell Township, north of M-21. The Ada Township Plan calls for residential land use with lot sizes of at least three acres.

CHAPTER 4 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This chapter contains the recommendations which will guide the development of Lowell Charter Township in the coming years. These recommendations were influenced by a number of factors:

- the viewpoints, concerns and suggestions of Lowell Township residents which were voiced at numerous meetings and through written surveys.
- location and availability of public utilities.
- analysis of existing circumstances and future needs.
- the influences of nearby municipalities.

Master Plan Concepts

The Future Land Use Map is based upon several major concepts for the general development of Lowell Township. These concepts are derived from the goals and objectives stated in Chapter Two and the desires of Lowell Township citizens and are intended to guide the growth of Lowell Township.

These major land use concepts include the following:

- The need to preserve the prime farmland which makes up much of Lowell Township and to protect the economic stability of the farming community by limiting the intrusion of non-farm uses.

- Development should be concentrated in those areas served or planned to be served by public utilities.
- Land use in Lowell Township should respect and compliment land uses planned in bordering communities.
- The rural views of agricultural and wooded lands in the Township are important elements in the quality of life of all Township residents and these need to be preserved and enhanced.
- A mix of land use types and density within the same area is desirable to provide for variety in daily living and to allow opportunity for a development pattern compatible with the natural features of the land.
- The development along M-21 should be designed to maintain traffic safety, provide for pedestrian access from nearby neighborhoods and result in pleasant and aesthetic shopping opportunities.
- The 2008 Future Land Use Plan maintains the recommendations for Section 4 which were set forth in the 1995 and 2002 Master Plans. These recommendations are described on the following pages and illustrated on Map _____.

Future Land Use Designations and Descriptions

The Future Land Use Map recommends a number of different future land use classifications. The following descriptions

of these classifications explain the type, intensity and location of the proposed uses.

These future land use classifications will not automatically change the zoning for that area. The property owner will still need to apply to the Township for a zoning change

if the Future Land Use designation does not match the current zoning.

A property owner is still permitted to use the land as it is currently zoned even if the zoning is different from the Future Land Use designation.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

<p>PRIME AGRICULTURE PA</p>
--

The purpose of this category is the long term preservation of farmland in Lowell Township. The principal land use is agriculture and agriculture support services which help to enhance and stabilize the farming industry. **Prime Agricultural is analogous to the AG-1 Zoning District.**

Support uses would include farm markets, hayrides, demonstration farms and petting farms. Other agriculture support services are farm implement repair, chemical sales and storage, apple packing houses and storage.

Current zoning regulations require a minimum lot size for a single family agricultural dwelling of two acres with 300 feet of road frontage. A non- agricultural dwelling requires a minimum of two acres and a maximum of four acres with 300 feet of frontage.

These regulations also stipulate that no more than two non-agricultural dwellings are permitted per quarter section. Additional non-agricultural dwellings however could be permitted by the Planning Commission if certain criteria were met

such as suitability of the land for agriculture and the likelihood of conflict with existing agricultural activities.

The intent of the **current AG-1 zoning regulations is to limit the number of dwellings (and land)** occupied by non-farmers in the Prime Agricultural areas in order to preserve the farmers ability to perform his or her occupation without undue interference from non-farm residents.

Virtually all of the land within the PA planned areas has been identified as prime farmland by the Kent County Soil Conservation Service. **The areas planned for PA use were first established in the 1986 Plan and remained the same in the 1995 and 2002 Master Plans.**

Other factors considered in recommending agricultural areas in 1986 were the size and number of parcels devoted to agricultural use, the proximity to non-farm land uses and the number of parcels enrolled in PA **116, the State of Michigan Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program.**

Most of these factors are unchanged and therefore the 2008 Plan recommends the PA designation for almost all of the land proposed in the previous Plans. Only a few areas are recommended for change

and these are described in the following section on Rural Residential.

AG-1 Lot Split Regulations

One of the major items of discussion in the preparation of the 2008 Plan was the lot split regulations in the AG-1 Zoning District which limits the number of non-Agricultural dwellings in the AG- 1 Zone and whether these regulations should be amended.

This discussion was prompted by a number of considerations:

- In recent years requests were made to the Planning Commission from landowners seeking to build a non-agricultural dwelling in a quarter section which contained two or more non agricultural dwellings as the applicants claimed their parcels were no longer suitable for agricultural use. These requests were not granted.

- Several citizen surveys taken in 2007 for the preparation of the 2008 Plan showed a fair amount of support to amend the AG-1 lot split regulations to allow more land splits. The survey results however did not provide a clear direction for the proper method to allow such an increase. The surveys also showed a fair amount of support to retain the existing lot split regulations.

- Another issue of concern was the Zoning Ordinance definitions of agricultural and non-agricultural dwellings. These definitions presented problems in administering the Ordinance as an agricultural dwelling could be sold

to a non-farmer in which case the dwelling would then be classified as a non-agricultural dwelling. There was also difficulty in determining whether the occupants were primarily engaged in an agricultural use of the property which was the definition of an agricultural dwelling.

In considering whether or not to amend these regulations the Planning Commission conducted an analysis of the parcels in the AG-1 zone. This analysis provided information on the number and size of both vacant parcels and parcels with a house. This parcel information was then utilized in a variety of formulas all of which would limit the number of new lots which could be created for the purpose of building a house. This analysis is contained in Appendix ____.

One of the principal goals of the 2008 Master Plan is to “Preserve the prime agricultural land in Lowell Township for present and future generations.”

In order to accomplish this it is important to limit the number of new lots created for dwellings, whose occupants are likely to be non-farmers. However it is also important to balance the objective of farmland preservation with the economic and age related needs of farmers and other AG-1 land owners whose major asset is often the land itself.

The following lot split concept and Zoning Ordinance amendments were analyzed by the Township Planning Commission and Board and discussed with AG-1 zone land owners in order to come up with an acceptable solution which will properly balance the Township’s goal to preserve

prime farmland with the economic needs and desires of private land owners.

Lot Split Concept and Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Further Consideration

- ◆ All vacant parcels would be eligible for a building permit or the vacant parcel owner would have the option of splitting off one parcel from the parent parcel for a new dwelling (min. 2 acres / max. 4 acres) if the parent parcel is 40 acres or more.
- ◆ The remaining portion of the parent parcel would not be issued a building permit but the remaining portion would likely be large enough to be farmed.
- ◆ Consideration could also be given to allowing the new lot to be located on that part of the parent parcel which has little or no value for farming subject to accessibility standards.
- ◆ Amend the Zoning Ordinance to delete the language which allows approval of more lot splits in the Table of Use Regulations if the standards in the Ordinance can be met and delete the definitions of agricultural & non-agricultural dwellings.

**RURAL RESIDENTIAL
RR**

This classification is intended to provide for residential development in a rural setting adjacent to prime agricultural land use areas. **The RR category is analogous to the AG-2 zoning district.**

In the 2002 Plan this category was called RA, Rural Agriculture. The change to Rural Residential in the 2008 Plan reflects the fact that the predominant

land use in this portion of the Township is residential rather than agricultural. Also, much of the RR area noted on the Future Land Use Map does not consist of prime agriculture land. The areas proposed for RR are primarily wooded with hilly terrain.

In order to preserve the natural features of this area lot sizes in the RR areas are required to be a minimum of four acres with 200 feet of road frontage for single family dwellings. A majority of RR planned areas are located south of the Grand River to 36th Street.

Although primarily a residential area agricultural activities are permitted in the RR classification. The lot size and agricultural activities recommended for this land use classification are intended to satisfy a demand for a rural lifestyle without using up prime agricultural land.

The RR classification is intended to serve as a transition or buffer zone between the prime agricultural classification and areas devoted primarily to residential use on **smaller lots**. This classification promotes and supports one of the primary goals of the Township Master Plan which is to preserve productive farmlands from urban encroachment and maintain the agricultural economy of the Township.

The Rural Residential classification is intended to divert development pressure away from the prime and unique farmland in the Township.

Several areas are proposed to be changed from the Prime Agricultural designation in the 2002 Plan to the Rural Residential category in the 2008 Plan. These areas include: the west half of Section 31; lands in Section 19, 20, 29 & 30; parcels on the

west side of Bancroft in Section 33; the north west corner of Alden Nash and Cascade Road; the west half of the south east quadrant in Section 13; a portion of the northwest quadrant in Section 24 and northeast quadrant of Section 23.

These areas all have certain characteristics which make long term farming impractical and therefore an RR designation is more reasonable. These characteristics include: a number of small parcels which make farming difficult; the presence of dwellings which are occupied by non-farmers; and the lack of non- prime farmland soils.

RR planned areas are encouraged to be developed under the Open Space Planned Unit Development (OS-PUD) regulations.

Under the OS-PUD rules, the density (number of dwellings per acre) would be controlled by the density recommended in the Master Plan for RR areas. The dwelling units permitted, however, would be clustered in a few selected areas on the parcel while the remainder of the land would be set aside as permanent open space for use by residents.

The premise of the Open Space PUD is that developments focus first on those areas which are to be preserved and then design the house sites and roads around these preserved areas.

Lot sizes would not need to adhere to the minimums required by a particular zoning district, but could vary depending upon the availability of public utilities and County Health Department requirements for private well and septic systems. This open space, if large enough, could also be used or kept as active farmland. This open space is protected by legal mechanisms such as deed

restrictions or conservation easements to ensure that it remains undeveloped.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LDR

This future land use category is proposed for single family dwellings on lot sizes of at least two acres. The LDR category is analogous to the R-1 zoning district noted in the Lowell Township Zoning Ordinance. This classification and zoning district is reserved for single family dwellings on two acre lot sizes with at least 165 feet of road frontage.

Because of this large lot size, public water and sanitary sewer are not envisioned for LDR areas. Duplexes would be a permitted use but only on lots with a minimum of four acres.

LDR areas are proposed south of the Grand River in Sections 7 through 12. This area is characterized by woodlands and hilly terrain and large lot, single family development. Several private roads have been constructed in recent years in this LDR area.

The 2002 Master Plan **recommended** a change from the 1995 Master Plan. Specifically, the area in Section 5 located adjacent to and west of Eastgate Subdivision to Parnell Road, was recommended in the 1995 Plan for Medium Density Residential development. The Medium Density Residential category would have permitted lots as small as 14,000 square feet if public sewer were to be provided.

However, based on comments from land owners in this area **at that time**, the Planning Commission determined that the timing for sanitary sewer in this area was not imminent and recommended in the 2002

Master Plan that this area be proposed for low density residential development. **The 2008 Plan re-affirms that recommendation.**

This new LDR area basically coincides with the area already zoned for R-1 on the Lowell Township Zoning Map in Section 5. The lot sizes for the R-1 area would be compatible with existing uses in the area and would also provide a measure of protection for existing residents from more intense development which might have been permitted by the MDR classification.

If public water and sanitary sewer are extended to serve the Eastgate Development in the future, the LDR area to the west may need to be re-examined in subsequent master plan updates to determine if MDR development is a more reasonable classification.

LDR planned areas are encouraged to be developed under the Open Space Planned Unit Development concept described in the previous section on Rural Residential land use.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL MDR

The Medium Density Residential classification is **analogous** to the R-2 zoning district. This category would permit single family dwellings without sanitary sewer to have minimum lot sizes of 40,000 square feet with 165 feet of road frontage. With sanitary sewer, lot sizes would be permitted to be a minimum of 14,000 square feet with 100 feet of road frontage for a density of 3.11 dwelling units per acre.

The Master Plan recommends MDR areas for the land on the east side of Eastgate

Subdivision and for the land in Section 4 as was recommended in the 2002 Master Plan. These areas have the most potential for being provided with public water and sanitary sewer. They also allow for growth to be concentrated in areas closest to the City of Lowell and closest to shopping opportunities and public services.

In 2005 the Qua-Ke- Zik Gun Club at 11736 Foreman Street in Section 4 was sold. This 120 acre parcel is characterized by hilly terrain and woods which would be drastically altered by conventional development methods.

In order to better preserve the natural features of this site the Plan recommends that it be developed as an Open Space Planned Unit Development (OS-PUD).

Under the OS-PUD zone the developer could achieve the same or a greater number of lots than if developed as a traditional platted subdivision (but not exceeding the R2 density of 3.11 units /acre with sanitary sewer) while being able to design the roads and lot locations to preserve large areas of woods and hills as permanent open space. The amount of site grading could also be reduced and construction costs lowered by reducing the length of the road system through lot clustering.

The Plan recognizes as MDR the R-2 zoned parcels located along the north side of 60th east of Bancroft which is in the community of Alto.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL HDR

The High Density Residential classification for the 2008 Plan is the same as proposed in

both the 2002 and 1995 Plans. The HDR area is proposed in the south half of Section 4 where public utilities are readily available. Single family dwellings with sanitary sewer are permitted in this area with 10,000 square feet minimum lot sizes and 80 feet of lot frontage. Multiple family dwellings are also permitted at a density of eight units per acre.

Stone Ridge Apartments with 96 units and the Whispering Hills subdivision with 183 proposed lots are major residential uses within Section 4. The HDR area is close to the commercial development along M-21 and again, concentrates growth in areas served by public utilities, public services such as police and fire and close to urban amenities.

The HDR category in terms of density would also accommodate a mobile home park which typically has a density of six to eight dwelling units per acre. Lowell Township currently has a sizable mobile home park development called Key Heights Mobile Home Park located north of Fulton Street and east of Cumberland Road. This manufactured housing community makes up approximately 16% of the total dwelling units in the Township. This is a significant number of this type of dwelling unit and the **2008** Master Plan does not make provision for additional mobile home park development.

Given the hilly terrain in this part of the Township, it would also be difficult to locate another mobile home park. The Plan does not recommend providing for another mobile home park in the area south of the Grand River as public utilities are not available. The Plan recognizes that larger mobile home park developments can provide community well and septic systems. However such developments would be out of character with the future land uses

recommended south of the Grand River. The intent of the Lowell Township Master Plan is to concentrate higher density developments north of the Grand River and north of M-21 where such developments can be served by public utilities and services and are closer to employment and shopping opportunities.

**COMMERCIAL
C**

Commercial and office development is proposed to be located primarily along both sides of M-21 west of Alden Nash. This continues the land use recommendation set forth in the 1995 & **2002** Township Master Plans. This area is a logical extension of the commercial uses at the west end of the City of Lowell. **The Future Land Use map proposes to extend the commercial designation to the parcel immediately west of Birmingham Drive which is the former Cumberland Manor site. This reflects the rezoning of this parcel to commercial in late 2006.**

The Plan does not propose any more commercial land to the west along M-21 than the limits of the commercial zoning in 2007 as the flood plain and steep slopes make development impractical and there is sufficient vacant commercial zoned land to meet the shopping needs for the foreseeable future.

Alden Nash / Cascade Area At the public workshops in June of 2007 participants showed strong support to retain this area for agricultural use. Three of the four corners have been actively farmed for many years and in 2007 included a farm market on the northwest corner. The “voting” from the workshop also indicated that a number of participants

supported a variety of non- agricultural uses such as commercial and service uses although the support for each of the different uses was less than the support for agricultural use.

A gas station / convenience store/ sandwich shop was completed on the southwest corner as was recommended in the 2002 Master Plan. This business will provide retail and service uses for the nearby planned industrial areas and currently provides retail/service uses for highway travelers exiting at the Alden Nash (M-50) interchange.

In light of the citizen support for continued agricultural use around this intersection, the lack of suitable soils for commercial type septic systems and the fact that the existing gas station / service use appears sufficient to meet the convenience needs of nearby residents and highway travelers, the Plan does not recommend any additional non-agricultural use for this area.

Additionally, a small part of the Industrial PUD zoned land at this intersection could be utilized for some supporting commercial uses with Township Board approval thereby minimizing the need to plan nearby productive farmland for some other non-agricultural use. In any event, the Plan recommends that no commercial, service, office or other non- farm or non residential use be established north of Cascade Road.

**INDUSTRIAL
I**

The Master Plan recognizes the Industrial Planned Unit Development zoning district

located west of Alden Nash between Cascade Road and I-96. This 238 acre tract was rezoned from Light Industrial to IPUD by the Township Board in October of 2005. No industrial uses have been established on this land.

The 2008 Plan recommends a change in the location of the Industrial planned land along Alden Nash south of I-96.

Both the 1995 and 2002 Master Plans had proposed Industrial land use south of 52nd between Alden Nash Avenue and the Pratt Lake Drain to 60th Street. The rationale was to provide opportunities for smaller industrial uses outside of the Industrial PUD zone.

This rationale remains valid but the Plan now recommends that the lands on both sides of Alden Nash at the intersection with 60th Street be designated for this type of future industrial use. Reasons for this change are lands previously planned Industrial have been actively farmed; the Township Board in 2005 rezoned a 10 acre parcel at the northeast corner of Alden Nash and 60th to Light Industrial and in 2007 received an application to rezone the adjacent 37 acre parcel to Light Industrial; the land to the south of 60th Street in Bowne Township is planned and zoned for industrial use with a number of industrial uses in operation; grouping future industrial uses at the intersection will allow for sanitary sewer to be more easily extended from the Bowne Township sewer system should the opportunity arise for this extension; the parcels proposed have more depth than the land between Alden Nash and the Pratt Lake Drain as proposed in previous Plans; the proposed location will avoid strip industrial uses and multiple driveways along Alden Nash.

The Plan recognizes existing industrial uses on Grand River Drive at Division Street just south of the bridge crossing the Grand River.

**PUBLIC
P**

This future land use category recognizes those lands and facilities that are owned or operated by a government agency or are supported by public funds and include government buildings and parks, cemeteries and public schools. In Lowell Township these include: the Lowell Charter Township Offices on Alden Nash; Grand River Riverfront Park owned by Lowell Township; a parcel in Section 5 intended for future Township park use; the approximately 400 acres of Kent County owned land in Sections 22 and 23 intended for public park use; the County wetland preserve in Sections 34 & 35; four Township cemeteries; and a public boat launch on Pratt Lake in Section 25.

**SOCIAL /CULTURAL /
INSTITUTIONAL
S**

The land in this classification includes places and buildings which are used for private recreation and religious purposes, such as the Christian Life Center on Alden Nash, the Evergreen Missionary Church on Settlewood, the Veterans Center on Alden Nash, the B.D. White Nature Preserve on 36th Street, the Northeastern Sportsman's Club on Grand River Drive at the west end of the Township and the Veen Observatory on Kissing Rock Avenue.

Deer Run Golf Course on Cascade Road is included in this category and this use is expected to continue for some time. The Plan, however, recognizes that this land may be developed for other uses in the future and if so would recommend a Rural Residential land use using the open space planned unit development technique.

This category also includes the Consumers Energy land which extends north to south close to the western border of Lowell Township.

**FLOOD PLAIN
F**

This category illustrates the 100 year flood plain along the Grand River. In order to preserve the ability of this area to discharge a flood of this magnitude building of structures and alteration of the terrain should be prohibited or allowed only if there is no change in the flood carrying capacity. The Plan recommends that the flood plain zoning regulations be reviewed to ensure proper protection for the natural function of the flood plain. The new regulations could be in the form of an overlay zone or a separate zoning district. According to an analysis conducted by the Michigan Department of environmental Quality the limits of the 100 year flood plain within Lowell Charter Township range from an elevation of 734 at the east end of the Township to 732 at the west end. Map _____ illustrates the flood plain along the south side of M-21.

FUTURE LAND USE FOR SECTION 4

Most of this area has developed according to the plan first laid out in the 1995 Master Plan. Stone Ridge Apartments, Whispering Hill Subdivision and the accompanying road system have followed the land use recommendations of this Plan which was re-affirmed in the 2002 Plan. As shown on Map ____ for Section 4, commercial development is also proposed along both sides of the M-21 frontage west of Alden Nash.

An office and/or multi-family development area is identified further to the north of the Meijer store and fronting on Alden Nash. A High Density Residential area is proposed for the former Qua-Ke-Zik Gun Club described in a previous section. The remainder of the area is proposed for Low Density Residential use.

An open-space area or vegetative buffer strip along the severely sloping areas should be maintained between each proposed land use area located in the relatively level areas. This development pattern will accomplish the following objectives: (1) maximize the use of level areas and encourage compact development patterns to reduce development costs; (2) protect the natural environment by reducing soil erosion and sedimentation as a result of development on steep slopes; (3) create a buffer strip between incompatible land uses; (4) maintain open space and natural beauty; (5) provide potential recreational opportunities and linear pathways; and (6) reduce the overall visual impact of a highly developed area.

Circulation

The location of roads serving this area is an extremely crucial component of this plan. The plan envisions limited curb cuts along M-21 west of Alden Nash for non-residential uses. Future locations for traffic signals are illustrated on Map__ as these locations will serve as main entry points to access the commercial uses along M-21.

Not every parcel will be permitted its own driveway and access to land uses would be via public roads, rear and front service roads and connecting parking lots. Through site plan individual developments may be allowed a curb cut but conditioned upon future closure of the curb cut when access becomes available by another means such as a rear service drive.

It is the intent of this plan to encourage M-21 to remain a major arterial serving the transportation needs of the region. Roadways and curb cuts accessing onto M-21 should be minimized, as a proliferation of this would slow the flow of traffic and create dangerous and inefficient traffic movement.

Traffic accessing a high-volume corridor such as M-21 should be channeled to a minimum number of routes to avoid undue congestion. Restricting access reduces the number of “friction points” along the corridor. Each time a vehicle enters or exits a parking lot; traffic along the major corridor must slow down or stop. By limiting these “friction points,” traffic efficiency would be greatly improved.

Boulder Drive running west from the Meijer property to a point north of the Goodwill Store serves as an excellent example of a rear service road. This road allows residents from Stonebridge Apartments and Whispering Hills and

other lands to the west to access Meijer and other retail businesses without driving on M-21.

A similar road is envisioned on the south side of M-21 as illustrated on Map _____. This would likely be a public road and would be provided by the developers of these commercial planned properties.

TOWNSHIP TRAILS

Lowell Township intends to encourage and cooperate with the development of a North Country Trail leg in Lowell Township that follows the abandoned Mid-Michigan Railroad track along the eastern border of the Township from Lowell to Elmdale as illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

The Plan recommends that the Township cooperate in the development of a non-motorized trail along railroad tracks that are either abandoned or scheduled to be abandoned by the Mid-Michigan Railroad that connects Lowell, Greenville, and Ionia. As very little of the proposed trail path is in Lowell Township, an active role in development is not expected although the Township will support the trail effort.

A trail is proposed over the Grand River to connect Grand River Riverfront Park with the lands fronting on M-21. This would be a part of the Lowell Area Trailway.

The proposed trailway would link together the City of Lowell, Lowell Township and Vergennes Township. The trailway will provide a place for hikers, walkers, cyclists, runners, inline skaters, cross-country skiers, children, and

physically challenged individuals to experience nature in a way that promotes exercise and good health.

The trailway is owned and maintained by the Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA). This is a separate legal entity which was established in November of 2004 by a mutual agreement between Vergennes Township, Lowell Charter Township and the City of Lowell. The three municipalities are working together "for the purpose of developing, acquiring, constructing, operating and maintaining one or more trails for the use and enjoyment of the residents of the Townships and the City.

The Township is committed to long term development of community trails in the Lowell Township/Lowell City/Vergennes Township region and shows this commitment by actively participating in the Lowell Area Recreational Authority.

As land is proposed for development the Township project review procedure should ensure that future trail locations which might cross or be close to the land can be coordinated with the development so there is adequate room for future trail construction.

CHAPTER 5 IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide to the continued development of Lowell Township, it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Board, the Planning Commission and the Township staff. This is done through a number of methods. These include ordinances, programs, and administrative procedures which are described in this chapter.

It is important to note that the Master Plan itself has no legal authority to regulate development in order to implement the recommendations of the Plan. This implementation must come from the decisions of the Board and Planning Commission to provide needed public improvements and to administer and establish regulatory measures relative to the use of the land.

The private sector, which includes individual land owners as well as developers, is also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan by the actual physical development of land and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the Township. Cooperation and coordination among individuals, private developers, and public agencies is, therefore, important in successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Chapter 1 of the Plan sets forth goals and objectives which serve to guide the future development of Lowell Township. Many of the specific implementation recommendations of this chapter are taken from these objectives, while others are taken

from the land use recommendations made in Chapter 4.

The following sections identify the major activities which the Lowell Township Planning Commission should pursue in order to be pro-active in the implementation of the Master Plan.

ZONING

Zoning represents a legal means for the Township to regulate private property to achieve orderly land use relationships. It is the process most commonly used to implement community Master Plans. The zoning consists of an official zoning map and zoning ordinance text.

The official zoning map divides the community into different zones or districts within which certain uses are permitted and others are not. The zoning ordinance text notes the uses which are permitted and established regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setback, lot sizes, and accessory uses.

The zoning ordinance also sets forth procedures for site plan review, conditional uses, and sign controls. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as the type of development.

In order that the recommendations and goals of the Master Plan be implemented, the following amendments to the Zoning Ordinance must be prepared and adopted:

1. **Revise the AG-1 Zoning District regulations pertaining to lot splits as recommended in Chapter 4 along**

with deleting the definitions of agricultural and non agricultural dwellings and the language in the Table of Use Regulations which allow the Commission to permit additional dwellings in the AG-1 Zone.

2. **Consider amending the Ag-1 Zoning District regulations to permit existing agricultural buildings to be used for non agricultural purposes such as equipment contractors, storage of recreational vehicles or uses which may have similar operational characteristics to farming and which would generate little traffic and little need for public services.**
3. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a Flood Plain Overlay Zone or Zoning District to provide more stringent standards for construction within the 100 year flood plain.
4. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to change the name of the AG-2 Rural Agricultural Zone to RR, Rural Residential.
5. **Revise the Industrial District chapter to better specify uses allowed by right and by special land uses. In particular, the provision which allows any use permitted in the General Commercial zone to be permitted in the Industrial zone as a special land use needs to be revised to only certain commercial or service uses in the Industrial zone.**
6. Amend the Prime Agricultural, Rural Agricultural and R-1 chapters to reflect the fact that the State of Michigan Agriculture Commission now regulates the placement and operation of intensive farming operations such as

feed lots and manure storage facilities. The Township can no longer regulate such uses by special land use.

Monitor Sanitary Sewer Capacity

As noted in Chapter 2 the amount of sanitary sewer capacity allocated to Lowell Township from the City of Lowell's treatment plant is not sufficient to serve all the areas recommended for Medium and High Density Residential use plus commercial uses along M-21.

The Plan recommends that the Township's sewer capacity be monitored and appropriate measures taken to ensure that the capacity be increased to meet development needs.

Planning Commission Work Program

The Plan recommends that the Planning Commission prepare an annual work program in the beginning of each year. This work program would set forth the tasks of goals which the Planning Commission determines to accomplish for the upcoming year. This will allow the Commission to stay focused on important tasks, in order to develop and implement goals and strategies identified within this Plan.

Planning Education

The Planning Commissioners should be kept informed of planning seminars to learn how to better carry out their duties and responsibilities as Planning Commissioners. These seminars are regularly sponsored by the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) and are a valuable resource for Planning Commissions.

There are also several planning publications which are useful information tools for Planning Commissions. The main publications are Planning and Zoning News and Michigan Planner Magazine.

The Michigan Citizen Planner Program which is administered by the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service is also an important education program for Planning Commissioners.

Revisions to Master Plan

Amendments to the Township Planning Act effective on January 9, 2002 require Township Commissions to review their Master Plans every five years and determine whether to amend the plan or adopt a new plan. This review allows the Commission to be responsive to new growth trends and current citizen attitudes.

As growth occurs over the years, the Plan's goals, land use information, population projections, and other pertinent data can then be reviewed and revised as necessary so the Plan can continue to serve as a valid guide to the growth of the Township.

APPENDIX B

**RESULTS of LOWELL CHARTER TOWNSHIP
MASTER PLAN WORKSHOPS JUNE 11 & 12, 2007
PLUS SURVEYS**

Attendance at June 11, 2007 Workshop:	50
Attendance on June 12, 2007 Workshop:	18
Surveys Returned:	138

1. Which of the following options do you prefer for the Ag-1 zone?

- **Maintain the current lot split rules.** **99 votes**
 - **Change the rules to allow more lot splits per quarter section.** **31 votes**
 - **Change the rules to allow each parcel to have a certain number of lot splits based on the size of the parcel.** **55 votes**
(Sliding scale approach)
-

2. What type of land uses should be allowed to develop at the Alden Nash/ Cascade Road intersection? (Participants could pick more than one)

- **Keep as Agriculture** **72 Votes**
- **Commercial/ service uses** **47 Votes**
- **Mix of commercial & residential** **46 Votes**
- **Industrial** **23 Votes**
- **Professional offices** **17 Votes**
- **Residential** **4 Votes**

(Total votes for non-agricultural uses: **137**)

3. What type of land uses should be allowed to develop south of I-96 on Alden Nash ?

- **Keep as Agriculture** **75 Votes**
- **Commercial/ service uses** **36 Votes**
- **Mix of commercial & residential** **33 Votes**
- **Industrial** **37 Votes**
- **Professional offices** **13 Votes**
- **Residential** **9 Votes**

(Total votes for non-agricultural uses:**128**)

Questions 4, 5 and 6 were discussed only at the June 25th workshop

4. Should commercial zoning be extended west of Cumberland Drive?

- **Do not extend** **7 Votes**
- **Extend on South side only** **1 Vote**
- **Extend but zoning line should follow terrain** **1 Vote**

5. List your Likes & Dislikes regarding land uses on M-21 west of the City of Lowell

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---------|
| <u>Likes</u> | Commercial uses contained between the City & Cumberland | 1 vote |
| | Commercial uses look nice | 1 vote |
| | Boulder Drive provide good rear access | 1 vote |
| | | |
| <u>Dislikes</u> | Need sidewalks/bike path on M-21 | 5 votes |
| | Need center turn lane | 1 vote |
| | Need restaurants | 1 vote |
| | Need Township identity | 1 vote |
| | Keep landscaping & other standards reasonable | 4 votes |

6. List traffic concerns

- **Repave Cascade Road from Alden Nash west to the Kent County line** **10 votes**
 - **Need Snow Road bridge over the Grand River and build interchange at I-96** **9 votes**
 - **Extend Gee Drive across Alden Nash to connect to Meijer** **2 votes**
 - **Need By-pass land on Alden Nash at 36th.** **1 vote**
 - **Need rear service drive on the south side of M-21** **1 vote**
-

7. What are your land use preferences for the following areas north of the Grand River?

- **Between Parnell Avenue and the west township line:**
 - Keep 4 acre minimum lot size **6 votes**
 - Allow smaller lots directly on M-21 and transition to large lots **1 vote**
- **Between Parnell Avenue and Cumberland Drive**
 - Keep R2 zoning **2 votes**
- **Between Cumberland Drive and the City**
 - Senior housing behind Meijer **1 vote**

WORKSHOP MATERIALS FOR JUNE 11, 2007

AG-1 ZONING DISTRICT EXERCISE

I. Discuss if the current AG-1 Zone regulations (outlined below) should be maintained as a method to regulate development.

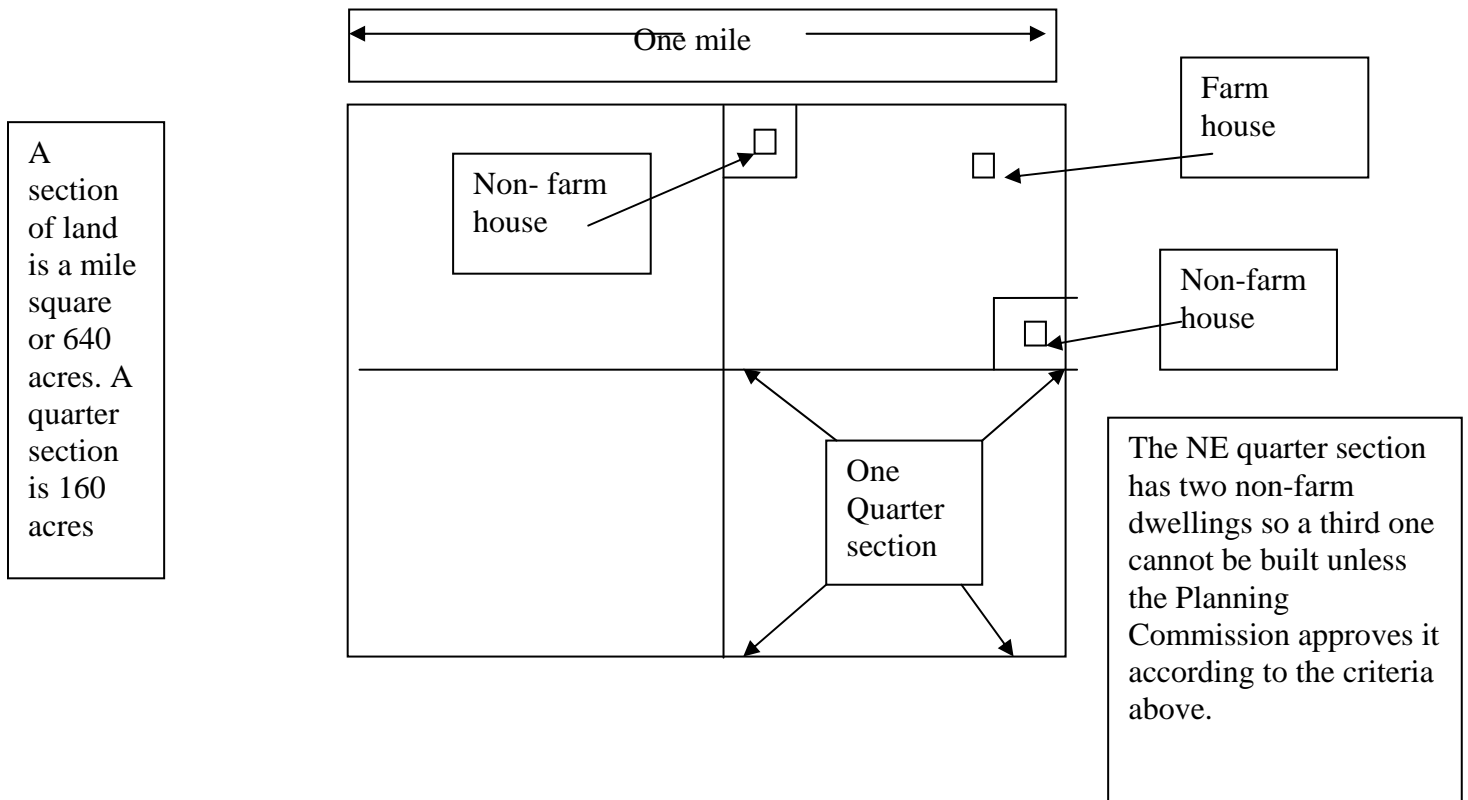
Current AG-1 Zone Regulations for Non- Farm Dwellings

- Minimum Lot Size: 2 acres
 - Maximum Lot Size: 4 acres
 - Minimum Road Frontage: 300 feet

 - **The regulations to create a lot for a new non- farm dwelling are as follows:**
 - In each quarter section (160 acres) two new lots may be created for the purpose of constructing a non-farm dwelling on each lot. A non farm dwelling is defined in the Zoning Ordinance as a dwelling used to house persons not primarily engaged in agriculture.
 - If there are already two non-farm dwellings in that quarter section any non-farm dwellings above two could only be built if approved by the Township Planning Commission if all of the following conditions are met:
 1. The parcel which would contain the dwelling is poorly suited for agricultural use due to soil conditions, slope, water table or other factors;
 2. There will not be a likelihood of conflicts between the new non-farm residents and nearby farming activities, and
 3. That granting permission for more non-agricultural dwellings will not have an adverse impact on the long term development plans of the Township by setting a precedent for more development.
- See illustration on next page*
- Private roads are not permitted in Ag-1 zones.

Label one large tablet sheet “Maintain Current Rules” and write reasons for maintaining the current regulations.

Current Rules



Other Methods to Regulate Dwellings in the AG-1 Zone

Discuss other methods listed below to regulate non-farm dwellings and why these should be put into place instead of the current rules.

OPTION II. Allow more lot splits per quarter section than the two lot splits currently allowed. For example, allow four new lots per quarter section whether farm or non-farm.

OPTION III. Sliding Scale Method

Allow each parcel in the AG-1 Zone to have a certain number of lot splits for new houses based on the size of the parcel and take out the reference to non-farm dwellings.

Sliding Scale Example

If you own

Lot Splits allowed for new dwellings

0-10 acres	No splits
10.01 – 20 acres	1 split
20.01 - 40 acres	2 splits
40.1 - 80 acres	3 splits
Over 80 acres	4 splits

The above table can be revised to change the size of the parcel and the number of splits allowed. This is only an example to illustrate how the Sliding Scale works.

Label one large tablet sheet Option II and another sheet Option III and list on each sheet reasons why each Option should be put into place instead of the current rules.

LAND USE PLANNING EXERCISE

I. Alden Nash/ Cascade Road Intersection

Discuss the type of land use which you would prefer to see develop at the Alden Nash/ Cascade Road intersection. This area includes all four corners and the adjacent lands about 1/4 mile around the intersection.

You may pick from the following list or come up with your own ideas. The maps at your table may be helpful for this exercise.

Land Use List

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial / service use | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural. | <input type="checkbox"/> A mix of commercial and residential |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional offices | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential (what type) |

Label a large tablet sheet Alden Nash/ Cascade and write down the land uses preferred by each member of your group.

II. Alden Nash – South of I-96

Discuss what type of land uses you would prefer to see develop south of I-96 along Alden Nash to 60th Street.

You may pick from the following list or come up with your own ideas. The maps at your table may be helpful for this exercise

Land Use List

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial / service use | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural. | <input type="checkbox"/> A mix of commercial and residential |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional offices | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential (what type) |

Label a large tablet sheet Alden Nash / I-96 and write down the land uses preferred by each member of your group.

GENERAL COMMENTS EXERCISE

Please feel welcome to comment on any Township topic, concern or issue and record these on a large tablet sheet labeled “GENERAL COMMENTS”.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS FOR JUNE 12, 2007

EXERCISE 1 **M-21 LAND USES & APPEARANCE**

I. Review the Zoning Map and 2002 Future Land Use map on your tables regarding M-21 west of the City of Lowell. List responses from your group as to whether or not commercial zoning and land uses should be extended west of Cumberland Drive and if so how far to the west.

DIRECTIONS: Label one large tablet sheet “COMMERCIAL ZONING”; divide into two columns : Extend and Do Not Extend, and record the responses from your group then hang each sheet on the wall.

Be sure to ask each person at your table for their response, record it, and then ask the next person until all have had an equal chance to respond. Then discuss the responses.

II. List the Likes & Dislikes of the existing land uses along M-21 west of the City of Lowell. Examples might be: need more sidewalks, buildings are too far from M-21, would like to see more restaurants, or too many driveways, etc.

DIRECTIONS: Label one large tablet sheet “M-21 Land Uses” divide into two columns: Likes and Dislikes, and record the responses from your group then hang each sheet on the wall.

Be sure to ask each person at your table for their response, record it, and then ask the next person until all have had an equal chance to respond. Then discuss the responses.

EXERCISE 2 **TOWNSHIP TRAFFIC**

I. List concerns about the traffic conditions in Lowell Township. This might include a hazardous intersection or commercial driveway, a dangerous stretch of road or a road with traffic congestion problems.

Also, list those roads or streets which need to be better maintained.

DIRECTIONS: Label one large tablet sheet “Traffic Conditions” and record the responses from your group then hang each sheet on the wall.

Be sure to ask each person at your table for their response, record it, and then ask the next person until all have had an equal chance to respond. Then discuss the responses.

II. Discuss locations where the construction of a new road (not just the expansion of an existing road) would improve traffic circulation in the Lowell Township.

DIRECTIONS: Label one large tablet sheet **“New Roads”** and record the responses from your group then hang each sheet on the wall.

Be sure to ask each person at your table for their response, record it, and then ask the next person until all have had an equal chance to respond. Then discuss the responses.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>EXERCISE 3</u> RESIDENTIAL LAND USES WEST OF THE CITY</p>
--

I. Discuss the type of residential land uses which you would prefer to see develop for each of three geographic areas outlined on the map on your table. You may pick from the following list or come up with your own ideas. You may pick more than one land use type for each area.

DIRECTIONS: Label large tablet sheets **AREA I, AREA II and AREA III** and record the land use preferences from your group for each area then hang each sheet on the wall.

Be sure to ask each person at your table for their response, record it, and then ask the next person until all have had an equal chance to respond. Then discuss the responses.

- Houses on lots with a minimum of 4 acres (AG-2 zoning)
- Houses on lots with a minimum of 2 acres (R-1 zoning)
- Houses on lots with a minimum of 1 acre (R-2 zoning)
- Houses on lots with a minimum of 10,000 sq. ft with public sanitary sewer (R-3 zoning)
- Apartments
- Attached condominiums
- Senior housing(Attached condominiums / assisted living)
- Open space subdivisions (houses on individual lots with 20-40% of the site set aside as preserved open green space)

APPENDIX C

AG – 1 ZONE LOT SPLIT FORMULA'S & ANALYSIS December 10, 2007

General Comments

1. According to an analysis conducted by MainStreet Planning Company approximately **36 new lots** could be split or created for non agricultural dwellings on land zoned AG-1 under the current rules which allow two non agricultural dwellings per quarter section. This number can be used as a basis for comparison with the number of lot splits which would be possible under the following formulas.
2. There are 238 total parcels zoned AG-1. Of these 156 contain a dwelling. Adding the 36 new lots which could be split for a new house would result in a total of 192 total dwellings in the AG-1 Zone.
3. Lot size is assumed to be 2 acres minimum with 200 feet of road frontage. The current maximum lot size for a non agricultural dwelling is 4 acres.
4. The number of possible building permits in the formulas below is a maximum number and not all possible splits will be created for new dwellings.
5. Those existing parcels which are not allowed any splits in the formulas below will still be eligible for a building permit if the parcel is vacant.
6. If a maximum lot size is adopted and the owner takes the maximum number of splits allowed under one of the formula's below any remnant parcel will not be issued a building permit.

<u>Formula 1.</u>	<u>Sliding Scale</u>	
<u>If you own</u>	<u>Splits allowed for new dwellings</u>	<u>Possible new buildable lots</u>
0-10 acres	No splits	23
10.01 – 20 acres	1 split	15
20.01 -40 acres	2 splits	90
40.1 -80 acres	3 splits	84
Over 80 acres	4 splits	<u>72</u>
		Total 257

The 257 possible buildable lots are 221 more than the 36 new lots possible under the current AG-1 zoning rules. Adding 257 to the 156 existing dwellings results in a possible 413 dwellings in the AG-1 zone.

<u>Formula 2</u>	<u>Sliding Scale</u>	
<u>If you own</u>	<u>Splits allowed for new dwellings</u>	<u>Possible new buildable lots</u>
0-20 acres	No splits	31
20.01 – 40 acres	1 split	45
40.01 -80 acres	2 splits	84
Over 80 acres	4 splits	<u>54</u>
		Total 214

The 214 possible buildable lots are 178 more than the 36 new lots possible under the current AG-1 zoning rules. Adding 214 to the 156 existing dwellings results in a possible 370 dwellings in the AG-1 zone.

<u>Formula 3</u>	<u>Sliding Scale</u>	
<u>If you own</u>	<u>Splits allowed for new dwellings</u>	<u>Possible new buildable lots</u>
0-40 acres	No splits	57
40.01 – 80 acres	1 split	42
Over 80 acres	2 splits	<u>36</u>
		Total 135

The 135 possible buildable lots are 99 more than the 36 new lots possible under the current AG-1 zoning rules. Adding 135 to the 156 existing dwellings results in a possible 291 dwellings in the AG-1 zone.

Formula 4 One Building Permit Allowed Per Vacant Parcel

- All vacant parcels would be eligible for a building permit **or** the vacant parcel owner would have the option of splitting off one parcel from the parent parcel for a new dwelling (min. 2 acres / max. 4 acres) if the parent parcel was over 40 acres.
- The remaining portion of the parent parcel would not be issued a building permit but the remaining portion would likely be large enough to be farmed as it would be at least 36 acres in size. The 40 acres is an example and the Commission could decide this should be increased in size to 60 or 80 acres.
- Consideration could also be given to allowing the new lot to be located on that part of the parent parcel which has little or no value for farming. This lot would likely not have frontage on a public road and the owner (seller) would need to grant an access easement for the driveway. Standards could be required to ensure the driveway is accessible for emergency vehicles although no such standards are required for long driveways in any other zoning district but perhaps such standards should be required.

Total 82 possible lot splits

The 82 possible buildable lots are 46 more than the 36 new lots possible under the current AG-1 zoning rules. Adding 82 to the 156 existing dwellings results in a possible 238 dwellings in the AG-1 zone.

Formula 5A & 5B Increase the Number Of Lot Splits Allowed Per Quarter Section

5A

- Increase the number of lot splits allowed per quarter section from **two to four**.
- Remove the definitions of agricultural & non-agricultural dwellings so anyone could create a new lot for a new house.
- Minimum of two acres & maximum of four acres with a minimum of 200 feet of frontage.
- The Commission could retain the existing language which allows approval of more lot splits if the standards in the Ordinance can be met.
- Based on a current analysis of dwellings in the AG-1 Zone there are several quarter sections where four or more dwellings already exist so no more dwellings could be built if the new rules are adopted.
- **Under this formula there would be 83 possible lot splits.**

The 83 possible buildable lots are 47 more than the 36 new lots possible under the current AG-1 zoning rules. Adding 83 to the 156 existing dwellings results in a possible 239 dwellings in the AG-1 zone.

5B

- Increase the number of lot splits allowed per quarter section from **two to three**.
- All other items would be the same as 5A.
- **Under this formula there would be 46 possible lot splits.**

The 46 possible buildable lots are only 10 more than the 36 new lots possible under the current AG-1 zoning rules. Adding 46 to the 156 existing dwellings results in a possible 202 dwellings in the AG-1 zone.