



COMSTOCK
CHARTER
TOWNSHIP
VISION2025

MASTER PLAN

WELCOME!

Comstock Vision 2025 is a comprehensive master plan that provides the policy framework for physical development and land use in Comstock Charter Township for the next ten years. It presents the vision, goals, and strategies gleaned from Township leadership, stakeholders and residents with the intention of guiding the Township toward a desired and achievable future.

A Master Plan is the official policy guide for development in the Township, and as such, it is important for the plan to be rooted in the opinions and perspectives of the people who live, work, and play in the Township. This Plan reflects the dedicated efforts of elected and appointed officials, professional staff, key stakeholders and hundreds of local residents that shared their perspectives with the Township. As such, this plan is truly a reflection of the priorities and aspirations of the entire Comstock community.

Comstock Vision 2025 identifies current trends and needs and presents recommendations for meeting those needs. The Plan is the blueprint upon which future decisions will be based. By utilizing information gathered by traditional research methods coupled with significant input from the public, the Plan sets forth a vision for development in a manner that preserves, enhances and transforms the Township.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Comstock Vision 2025 involved significant effort of staff, consultants, and public participation including continuous feedback from Boards and Commissions, stakeholders, and citizens of the community. Without this support, completion of this plan would not have been possible.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - WHY PLAN?

Winter 2016

The fundamental purpose of a Master Plan is to enable a community to establish a direction for physical development, capital investment and growth. Therefore, a Master Plan such as Comstock Vision 2025 represents a foundational policy statement about what a community is, what its residents value and what those residents and businesses hope the community will become. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) specifically gives the Comstock Charter Township Planning Commission and the Township Board the authority to prepare and adopt a plan. Once prepared, adopted and maintained, this Plan will serve as an advisory guide for the physical conservation of certain areas and for the development of other areas.

Furthermore, Michigan law requires that a community’s zoning ordinance be based upon a plan. Therefore, in addition to serving as the policy basis for the Township’s elected and appointed officials, the Plan also serves as a foundation for the Township’s zoning and other land use regulations. The Plan is adopted to help provide a stronger legal basis for the Township Zoning Ordinance. Common uses of the Master Plan as a policy reference include justification for zoning changes as well as special land use applications. As required by the MPEA, Comstock Vision 2025 contains a Zoning Plan, which sets forth the principal district and use regulations of the Ordinance and how the zoning districts correspond to the future land use designations of the Plan.

In addition to legal and policy justification, Comstock Vision 2025 may serve as the principal marketing and design document for attraction, retention, and viability efforts implemented by a variety of possible contributors including the Township, its residents, Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan. A strong planning effort which instills buy-in and continuity creates the basis for a cohesive community moving forward. With planning comes broad and impactful input and the blending of ideas, traditions, and visions.

Comstock Charter Township - A Community with Opportunity!

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COMSTOCK CHARTER TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

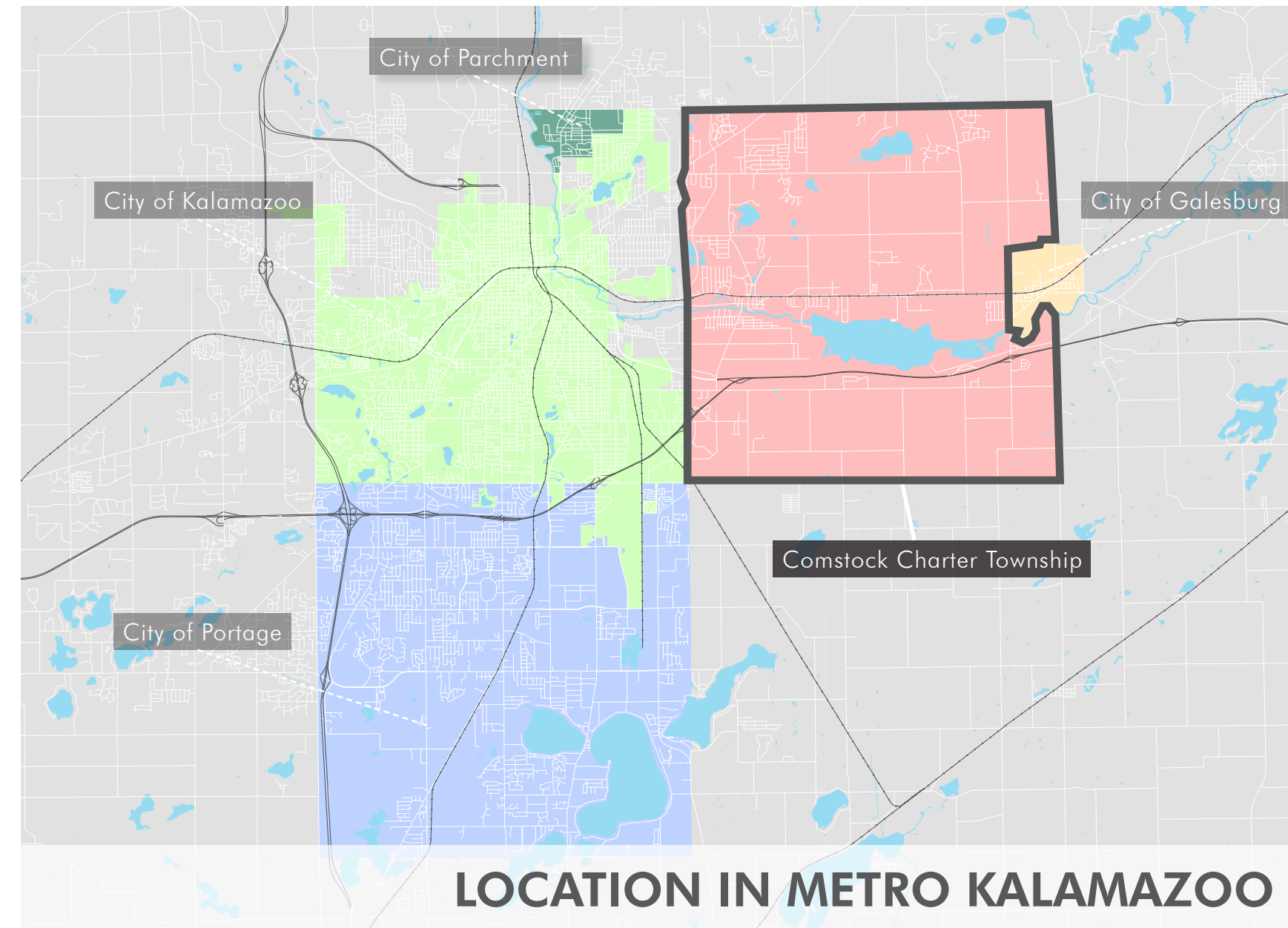


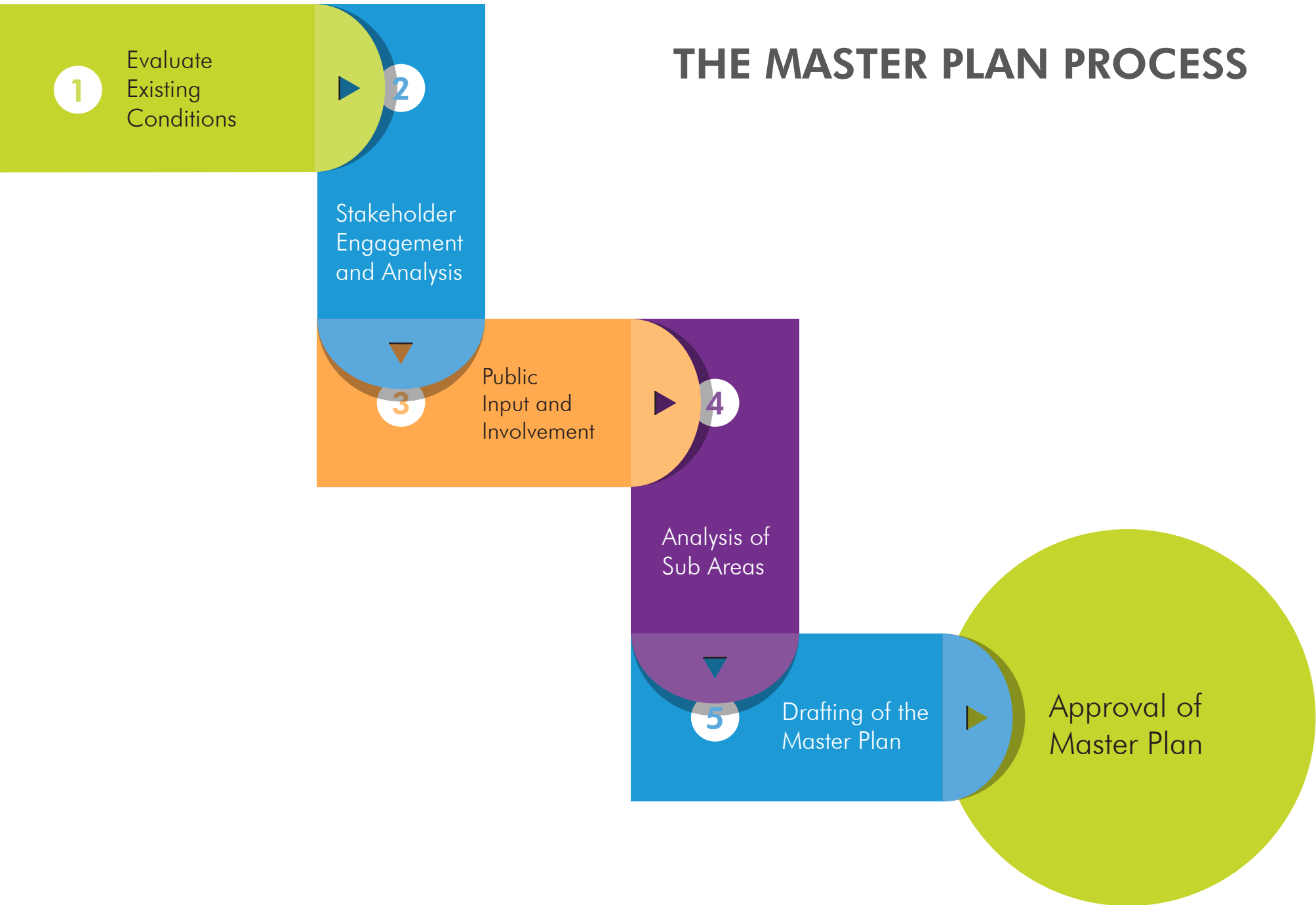
Title: Historic Comstock Township, Photo credit: Comstock Charter Township

Comstock Charter Township is a centrally located Township in Kalamazoo County in the southwest corner of the Lower Peninsula. It is easily accessible by Interstate 94 and serves as an economic center as well as a commuter community for the cities of Kalamazoo and Battle Creek. The Township encompasses approximately thirty-five square miles and is bounded by four townships, the City of Kalamazoo, and the City of Galesburg.

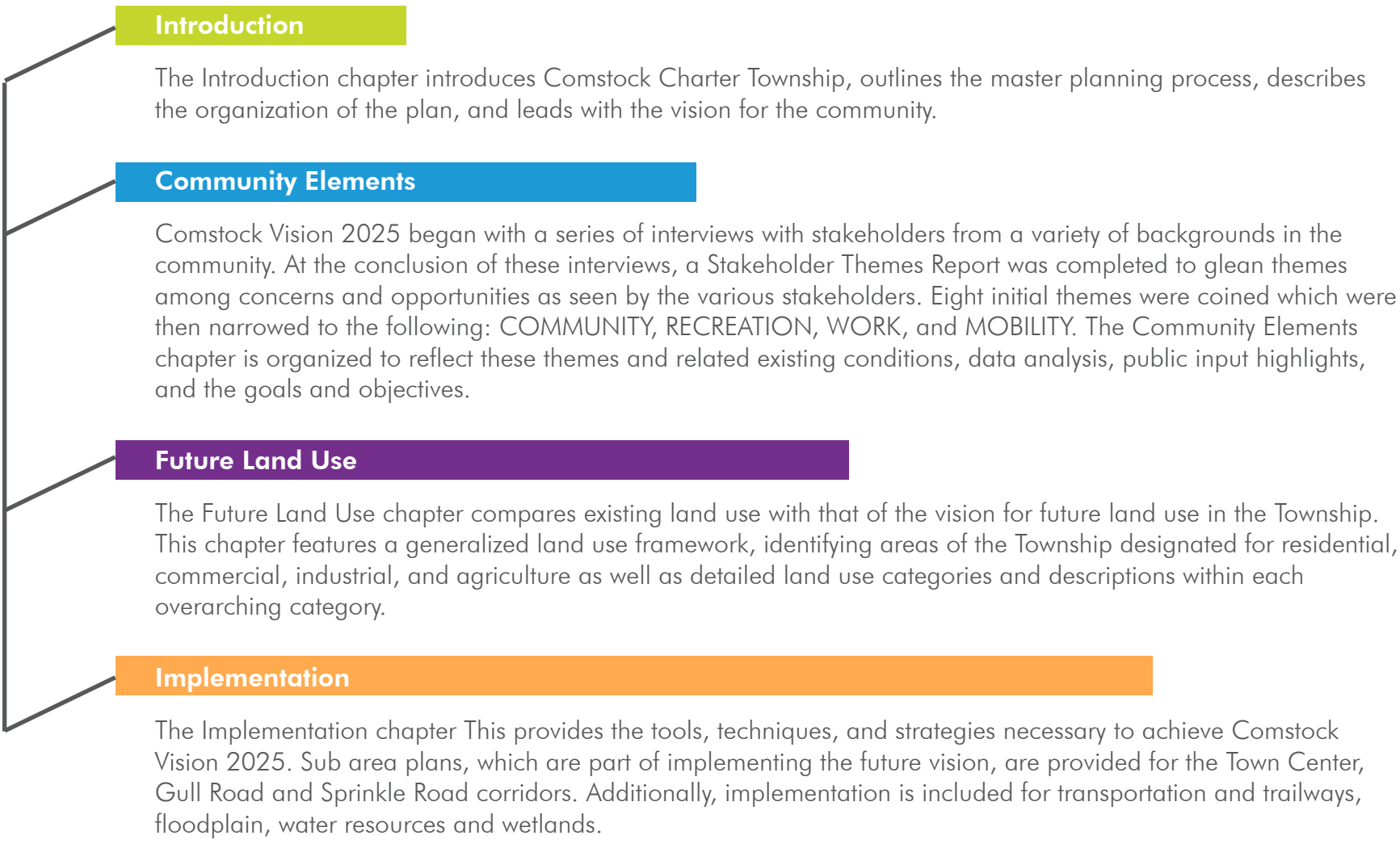
Organized in 1834, Comstock Township originally consisted of the present townships of Comstock, Charleston, and Climax. Since its inception, the Township has had a strong agricultural component which is now led by the bedding plant industry which resides in the southwest quadrant of the Township.

Comstock is a diverse community in transition. The Township has maintained strong agricultural roots while growing as an impactful neighbor of Kalamazoo. It is the home of Bell's Brewing Company, Landscape Forms, Benteler Automotive, and several other large-scale manufacturers. Changes in demographics, housing markets, economics, and industry require the Township to update and maintain a vision and policy direction that encompasses the needs of the entire community.





STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER PLAN



VISION

As you arrive, whether by foot, bus, bicycle, or car, Comstock Township welcomes you with lush and colorful gateways, planted and maintained locally—an indication of the abundance of valued green spaces and recreation amenities within the community. Throughout the Township, multi-generational neighborhoods are safe, attractive, and connected to community assets via non-motorized pathways. A strong business climate, supported by excellent

access to rail, roads, and an educated workforce, thrives with municipal collaboration and opportunities for expansion. Complementary land uses offer a mixed pattern of development that results in a strong jobs-housing balance. A diverse mix of residents have choices about the types of housing available, the means of moving about the community, and where to shop, play, and recreate. This is our vision for Comstock Charter Township.



Chapter 2: **Community Elements**



COMMUNITY

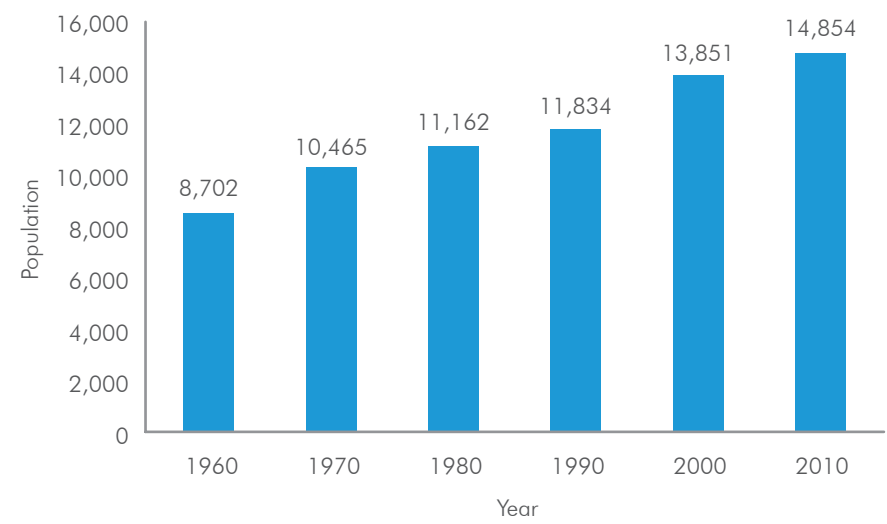
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Comstock Charter Township is ever evolving. Shifts in demographics help inform the policy direction of the Master Plan. With an aging population and a decrease in housing size, future land use planning must account for and predict future needs.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Comstock Charter Township saw modest population growth between 2000 and 2010 (7.2%) while the City of Kalamazoo saw a decrease in population (-3.7%). The majority of neighboring communities are seeing slow to moderate population growth with Texas Township seeing the highest percent increase (34.6%) between 2000 and 2010. Texas Township was identified by the Steering Committee as a regional comparison community and will be utilized as such when comparing and analyzing Comstock demographic and economic data.

Figure 2.1: **Historic Population Trends**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2010

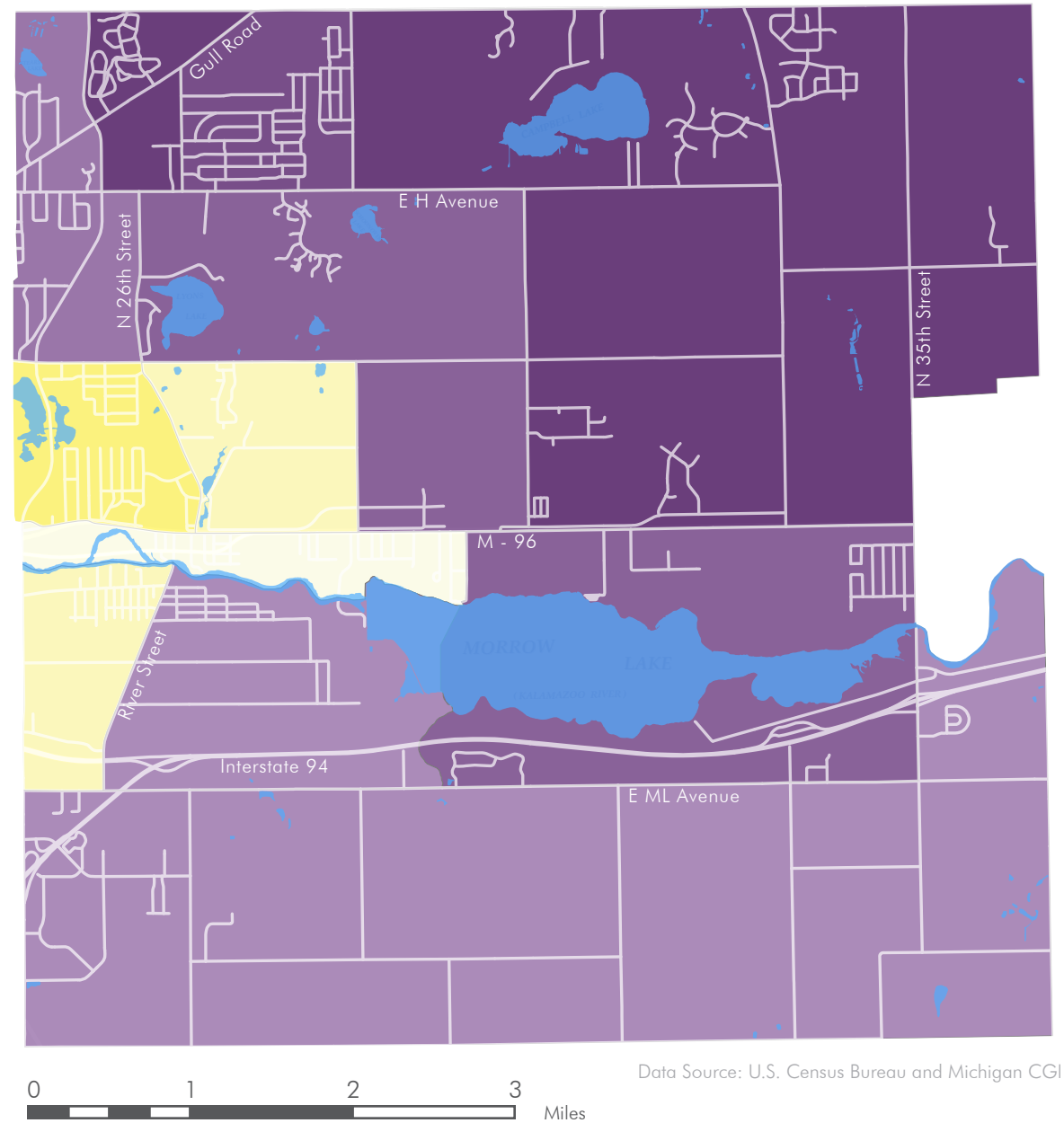
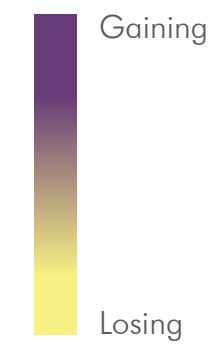
Table 2.1: **Population Comparison**

	2000	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
Comstock Township	13,851	14,854	7.2%
Texas Township	10,919	14,697	34.6%
Charleston Township	1,813	1,975	8.9%
Kalamazoo Township	21,675	21,918	1.1%
Pavilion Township	5,829	6,222	6.7%
Richland Township	6,491	7,501	15.6%
Galesburg, City	1,988	2,009	1.1%
Kalamazoo, City	77,102	74,262	-3.7%
Kalamazoo County	238,603	250,331	4.9%
State of Michigan	9,938,444	9,883,640	-0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

Figure 2.2:

Population Change 2000-2010



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Michigan CGI

Table 2.2: Population Projections: **Growth Rate Method**

Average Annual Growth Rate 1970-2010	2010	2020	2030	2040
0.88%	14,854	16,214	17,699	19,319

Table 2.3: Population Projections: **Arithmetic Method**

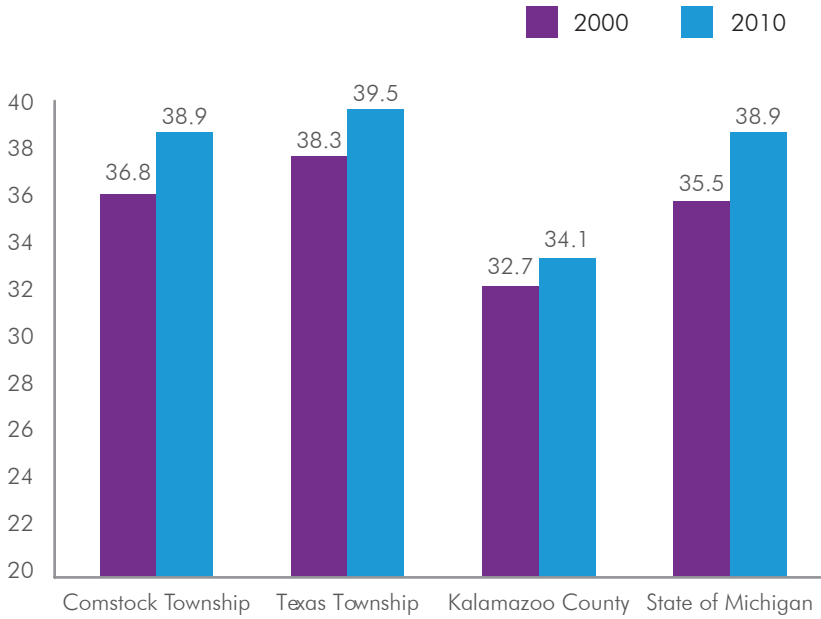
Average Annual Increase (Number of Persons)	2010	2020	2030	2040
110	14,854	15,954	17,054	18,154

Table 2.4: Population Projections: **Building Permit Method**

Average no. Permits / Year	Persons per Household	2010	2020	2030	2040
57	2.45	14,854	16,254	17,654	19,054

While population projections are not exact, they are generally adequate to give a general sense of growth trends; but they have limitations, especially in areas of rapid growth or decline that may run counter to statistical trends. Statistical averaging is typically used amongst a variety of population projection methods so as to provide a more balanced projection between methods. If the average of the three methods were applied to 2030, just beyond the scope of this plan, the Township should expect a population of approximately 17,469 persons compared to the 2010 population of 14,854; an increase of 2,615 persons.

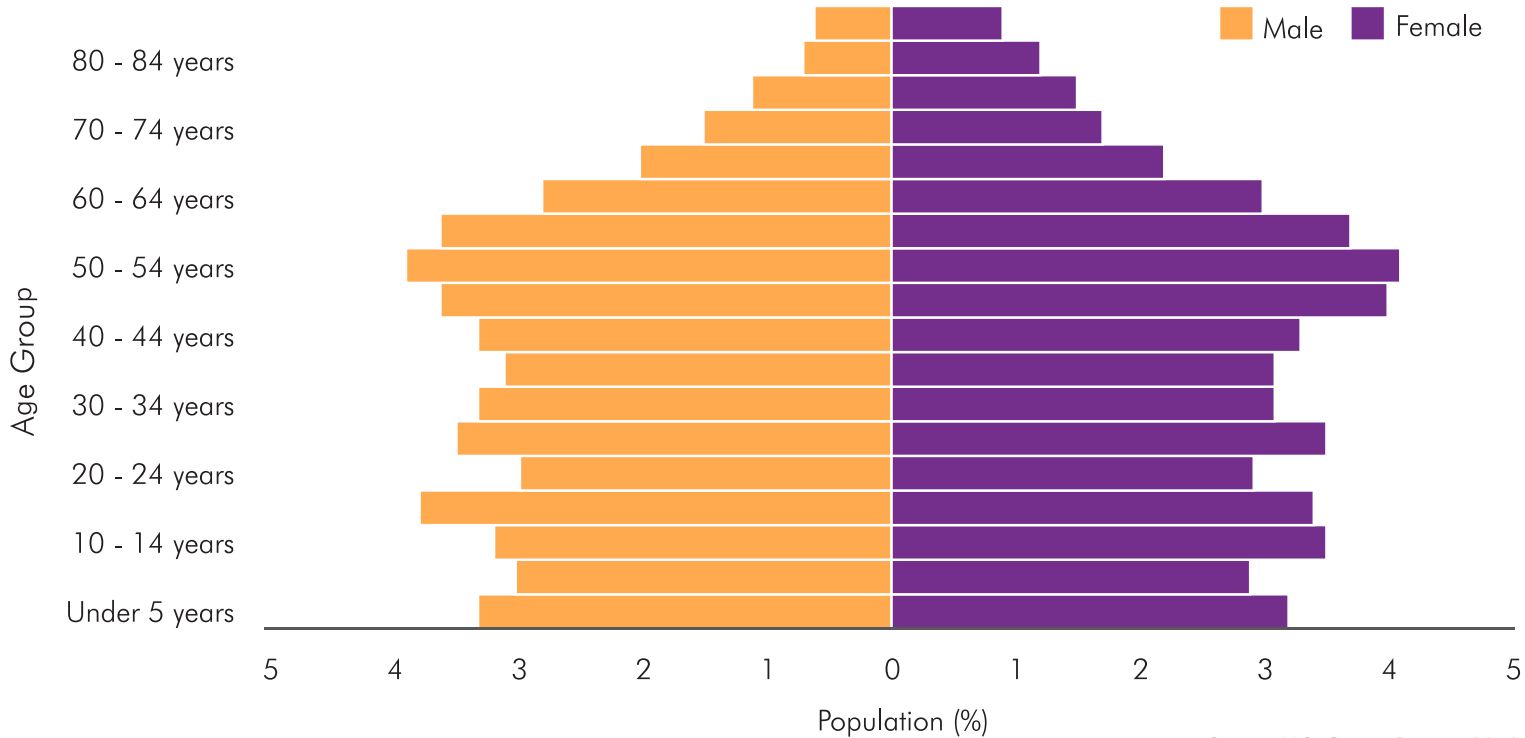
Figure 2.3: **Median Age Comparison**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010

Like many communities across Michigan and the United States, Comstock is aging. The median age in the Township rose approximately two years between 2000 and 2010. Currently, the median age in the Township is similar to the regional comparison community Texas Township (39.5) identical to that of the State of Michigan as a whole (38.9) and older than Kalamazoo County as a whole (34.1). This trend is expected to continue through 2020 as current residents continue aging and the average household size in the Township continues to decrease.

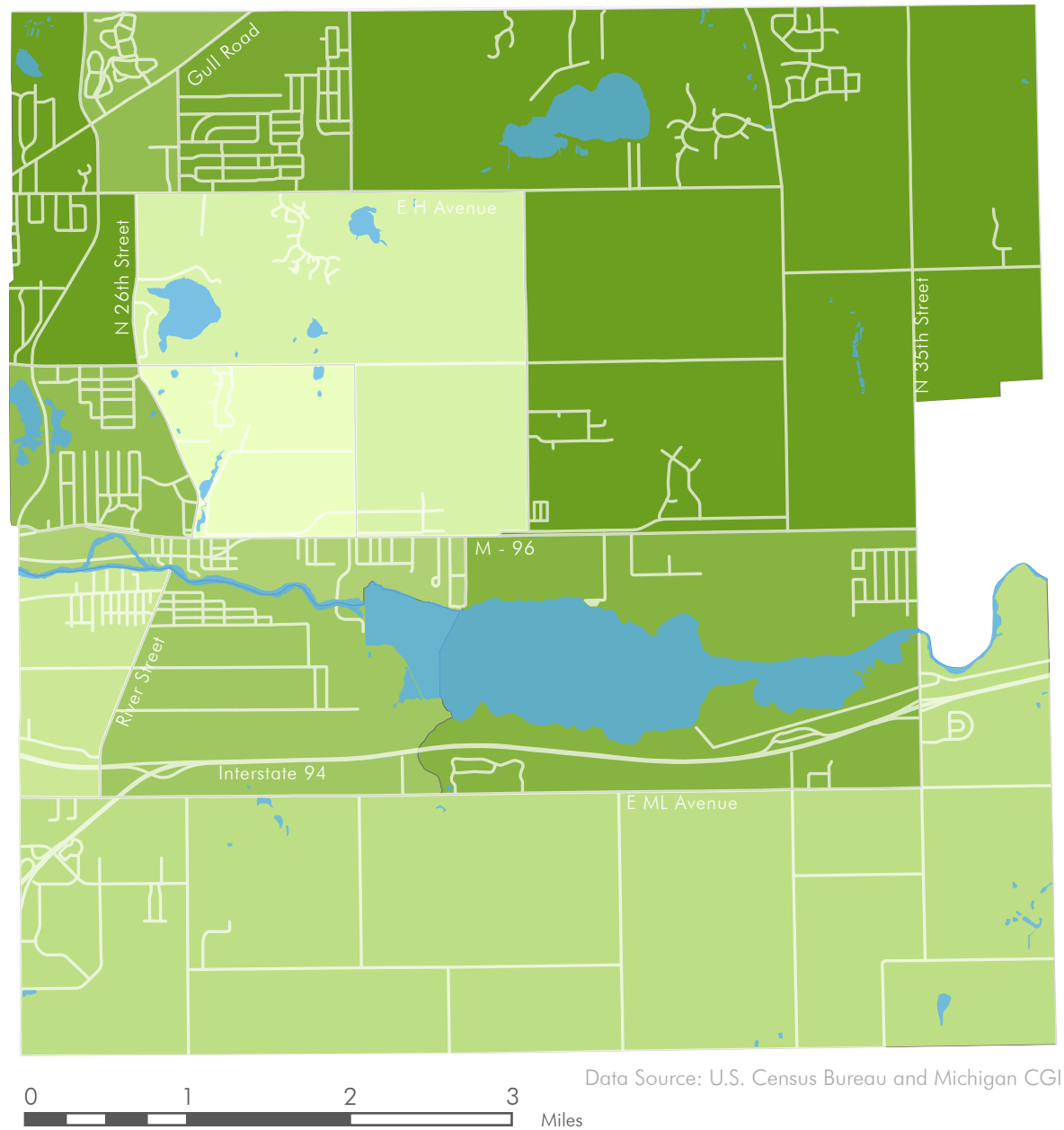
Figure 2.4: **Population Pyramid**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

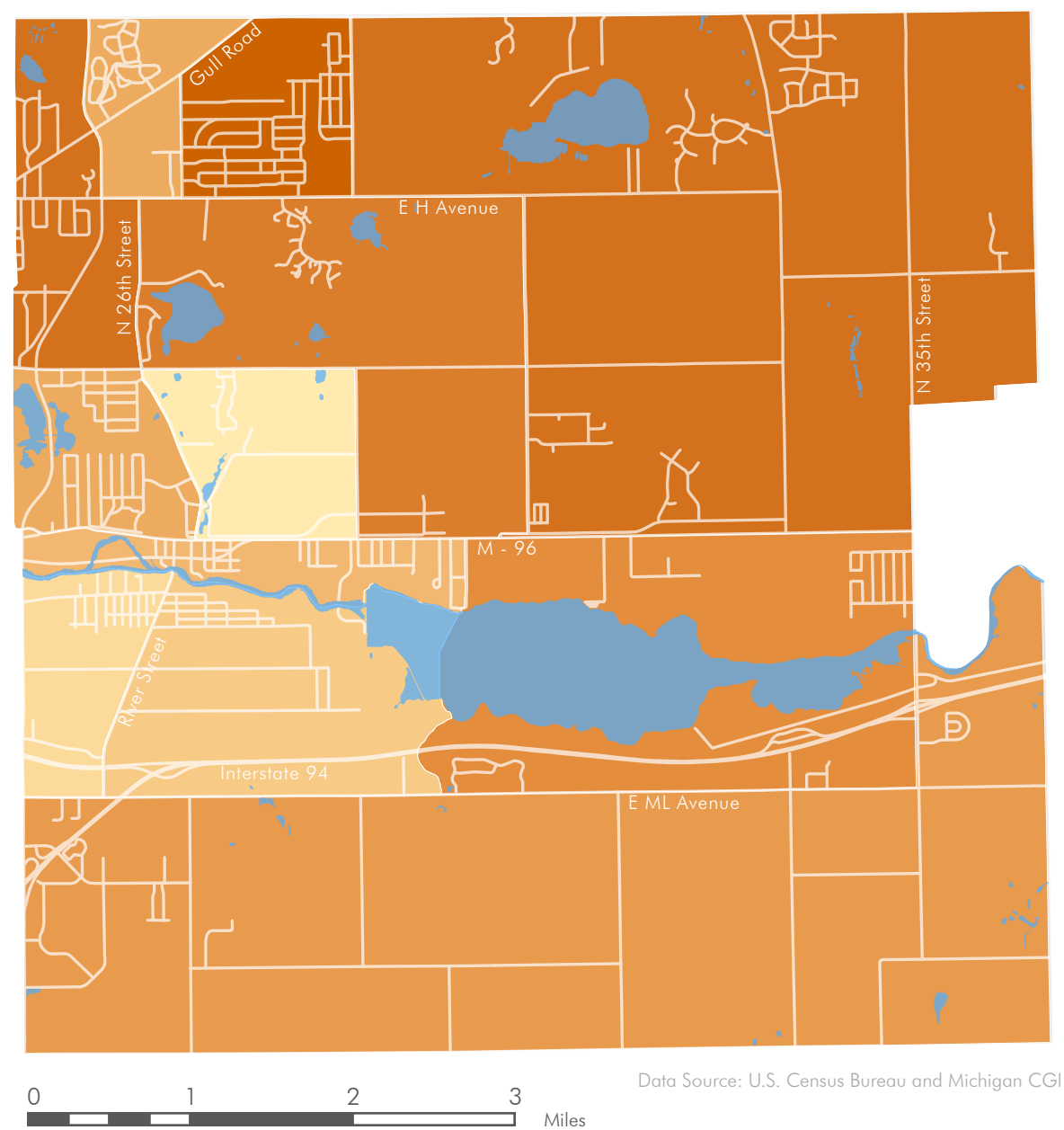
The diagram above displays the population of the Township by age group and gender. Population pyramids are helpful in visualizing the distribution of ages, particularly the contrast between older populations and younger populations. While the largest statistical group in the Township seems to be the Baby Boomer generation, there is a fairly even distribution of younger age groups that should replace the older population over time. Thus, Comstock should not see any significant declines in population due to aging. However, the large baby boomer generation will likely look for alternative housing options as they continue to retire and their children continue to move out. It is pertinent that the Township prepare for this housing shift as part of Comstock Vision 2025. Figure 2.5 and 2.6 indicate that the majority of small children and seniors currently live in the northern half of the Township.

Figure 2.5:
**Age Concentration:
5 and under**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Michigan CGI

Figure 2.6:
**Age Concentration:
65 and above**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Michigan CGI

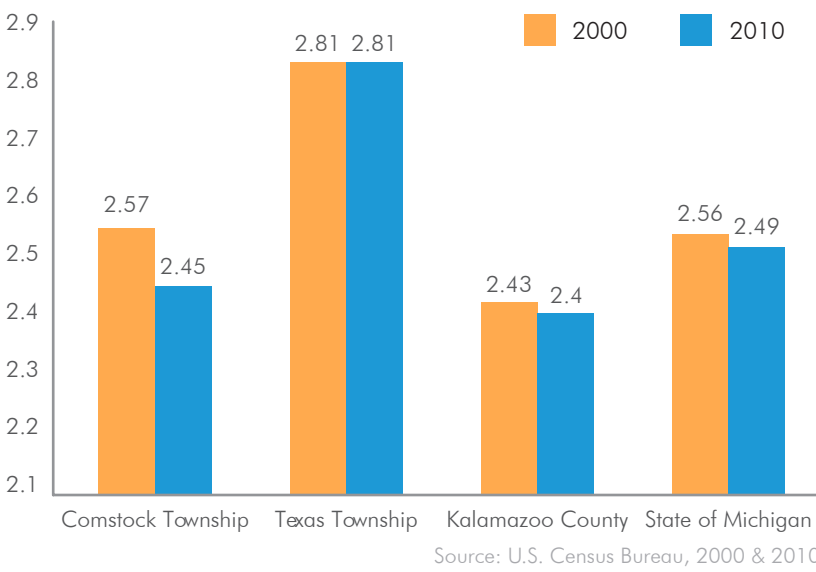
Figure 2.7:



Housing and Households

Similar to Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan, Comstock saw a decrease in average household size between 2000 and 2010. This is largely due to an aging population and the increased presence of “empty nesters” as children move out on their own. Comparatively, Texas Township did not see a change in average household size between 2000 and 2010.

Figure 2.8: Average Household Size



Median Home Value

The median home value in the Township (\$130,500) is similar to that of Kalamazoo County (\$136,700) as a whole. Comparatively, Texas Township has a much higher median home value of \$242,000. Note that Comstock Township and Texas Township have higher median home values than the neighboring City of Kalamazoo (\$97,600). The higher home values seen in suburban townships such as Comstock and Texas when compared to neighboring older central cities such as Kalamazoo is fairly consistent across Michigan. This phenomenon is largely due to the presence of strong school districts outside of urban areas.

Figure 2.9:

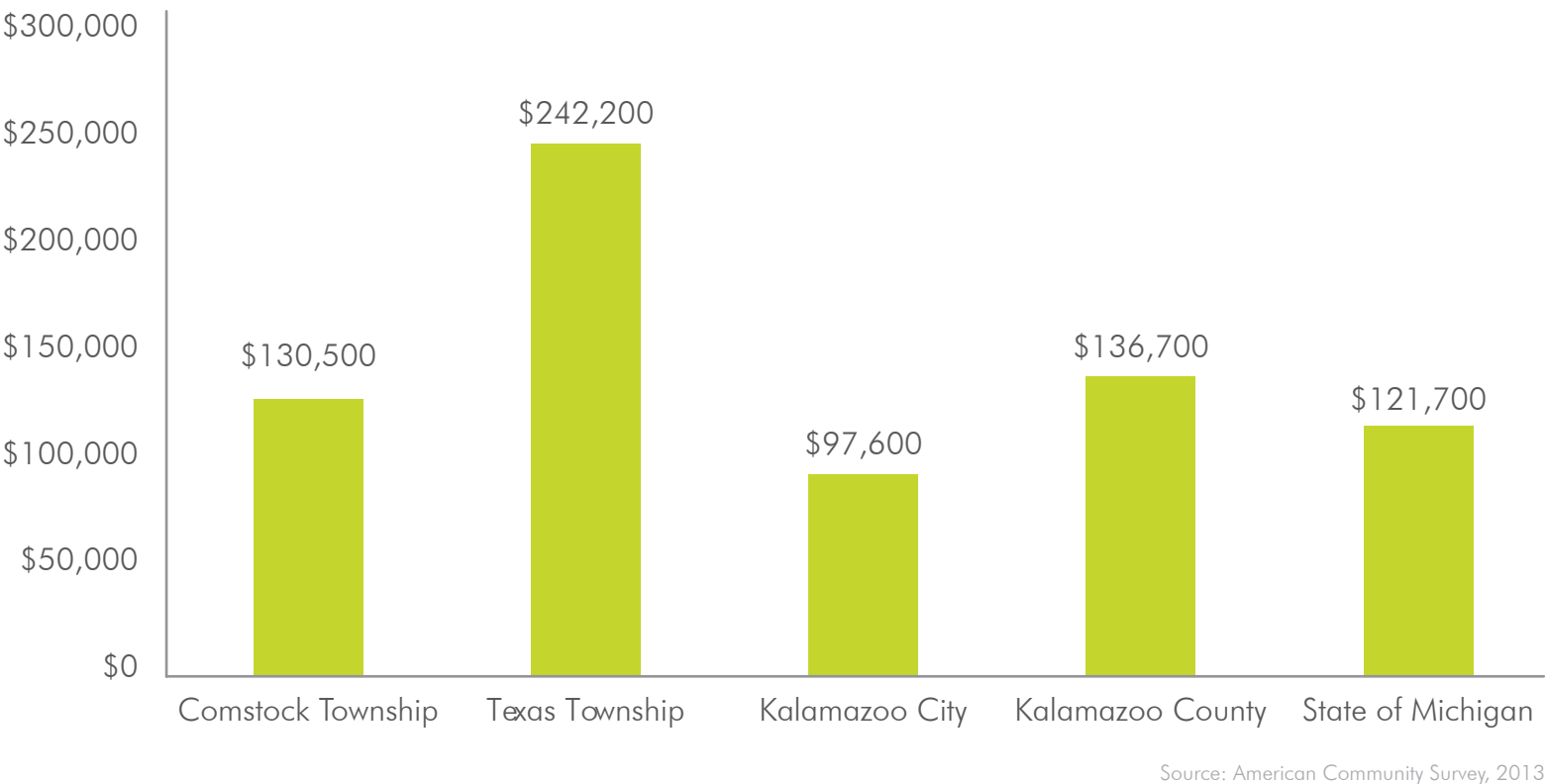


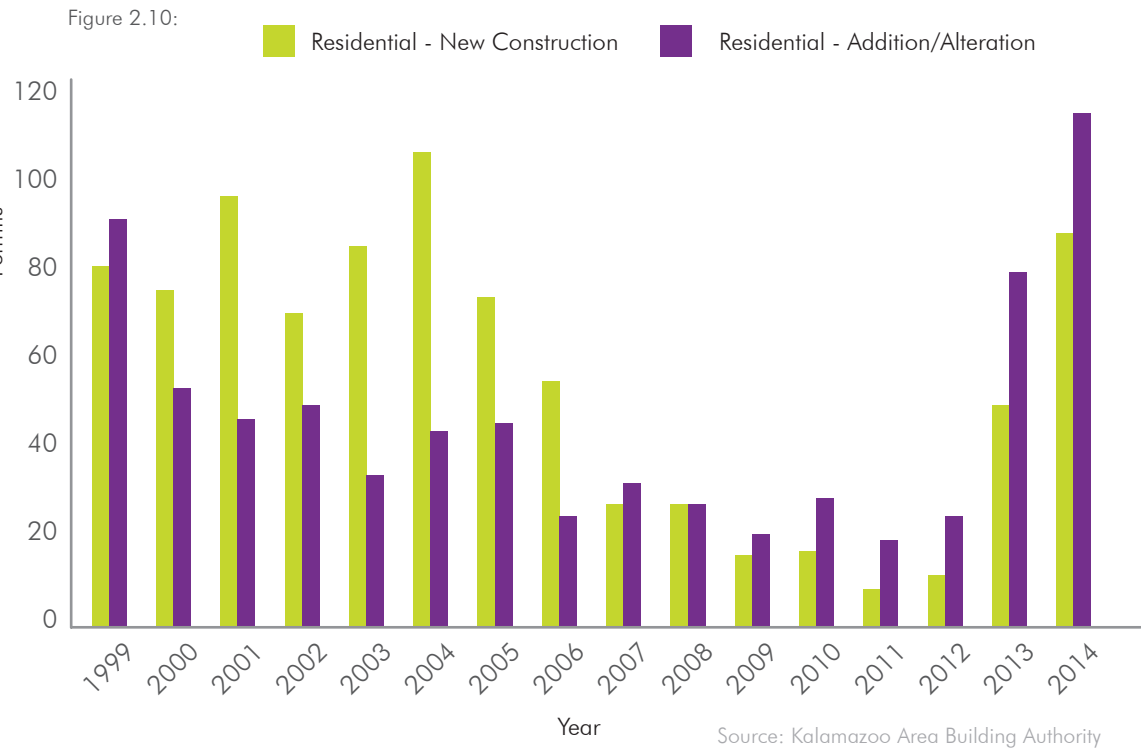
Table 2.5:

Year	Residential - New Construction	Residential - Addition/Alteration
1999	80	93
2000	75	57
2001	97	43
2002	70	48
2003	87	34
2004	109	41
2005	78	42
2006	58	23
2007	27	32
2008	27	27
2009	15	22
2010	16	30
2011	10	20
2012	16	28
2013	50	79
2014	95	118

Residential Building Permits

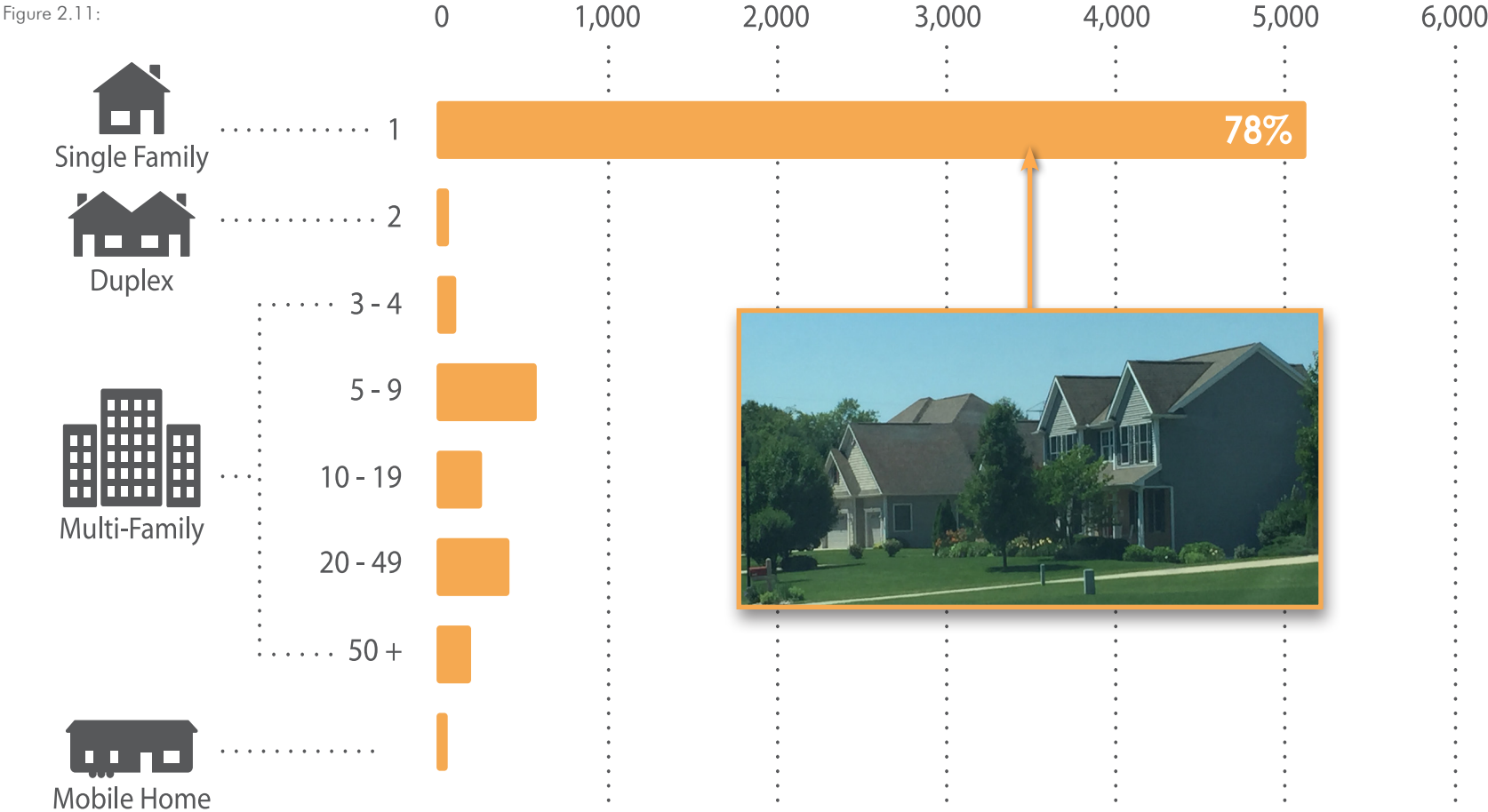
Residential building permits issued in Comstock Township between 1999 and 2014 indicate that the local housing market may be returning to pre-recessionary levels. In 2014, 95 residential permits were issued for new construction, compared to 15 in 2009 during the middle of the recession. Residential permits for additions and alterations have also increased from 22 in 2009 to 118 in 2014.

Population projects predict a 2030 population of 17,469, or approximately 2,615 additional persons between 2010 and 2030. If the 2010 average household size is applied to the increase, the Township should expect 1,067 additional households by 2030, which will likely contribute to the addition of roughly the same number of additional dwelling units.



Housing Diversity

Figure 2.11:



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

The predominant housing type in Comstock Township is the single-family home with 78% of dwellings in the Township making up this designation. Despite the dominance of this housing type, multiple family dwellings, particularly those with 5-9 and 20-49 units comprise a notable proportion of dwellings in the Township. Due to the Township’s aging population, multi-family senior living units and attached condominium units may become increasingly desirable.



Public Water System

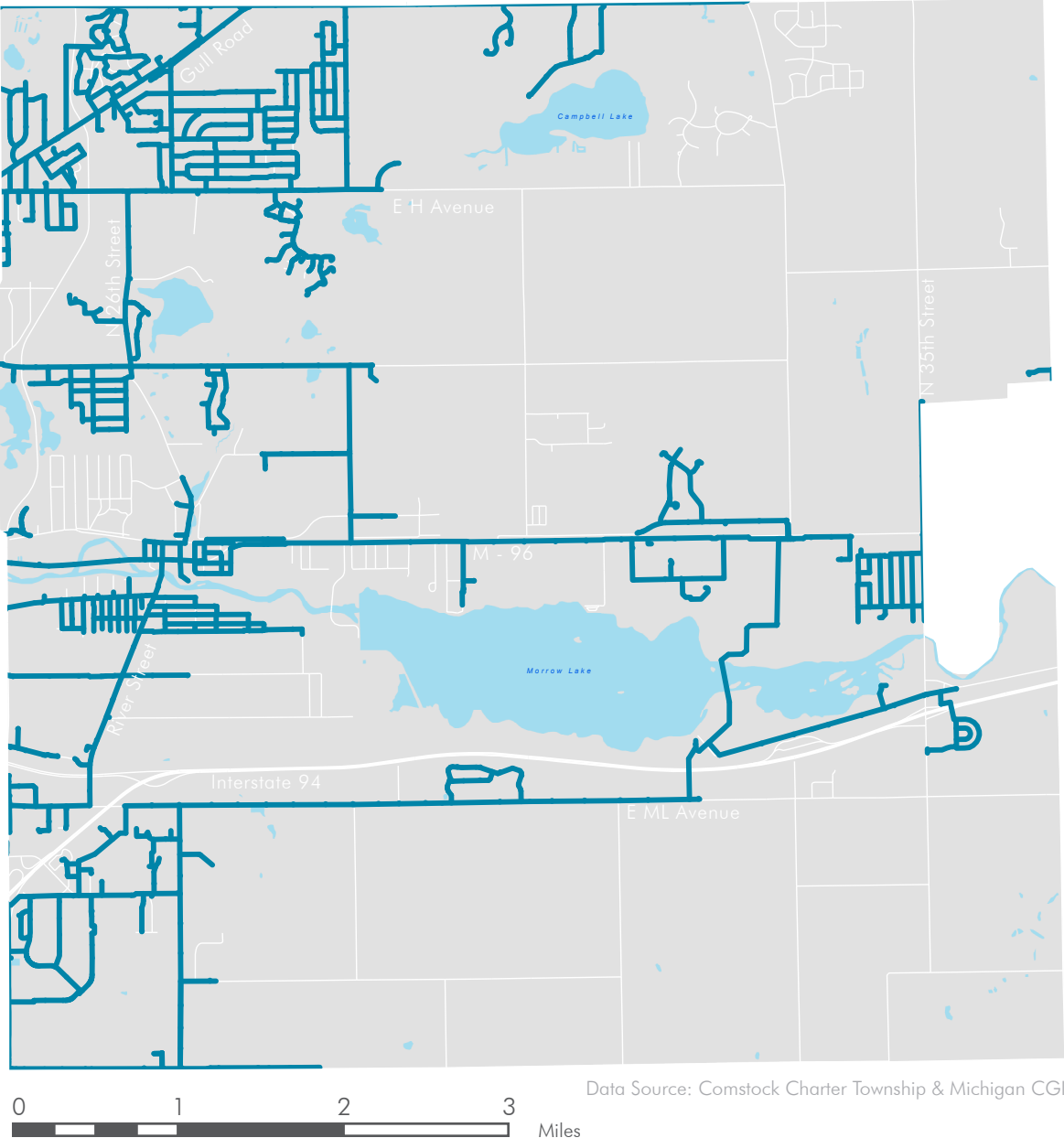
Similar to other townships in the area, public water services in Comstock are provided via a contract with the City of Kalamazoo. Public water services are concentrated in the western half of the Township as well as the area north and east of Campbell Lake and the area surrounding Morrow Lake to Galesburg.

The City of Kalamazoo Water System is the second largest groundwater-based system in the State of Michigan with 101 production wells and 18 water-pumping stations. The system produced 6.8 billion gallons in 2008 with an average daily rate of 18.7 million gallons. In addition to Comstock, the system currently serves the City of Kalamazoo, the City of Portage, the Village of Richland, Cooper Township, Kalamazoo Township, Oshtemo Township, Pavilion Township, Richland Township, and Texas Township.

The water system infrastructure is owned by Comstock Charter Township while maintenance of the system is contracted with the City of Kalamazoo via a maintenance agreement. Future connections to the public water system should be concentrated in the western half of the Township and adjacent to existing development.

Figure 2.12:
Public Water System

Water Main





Public Sanitary Sewer System

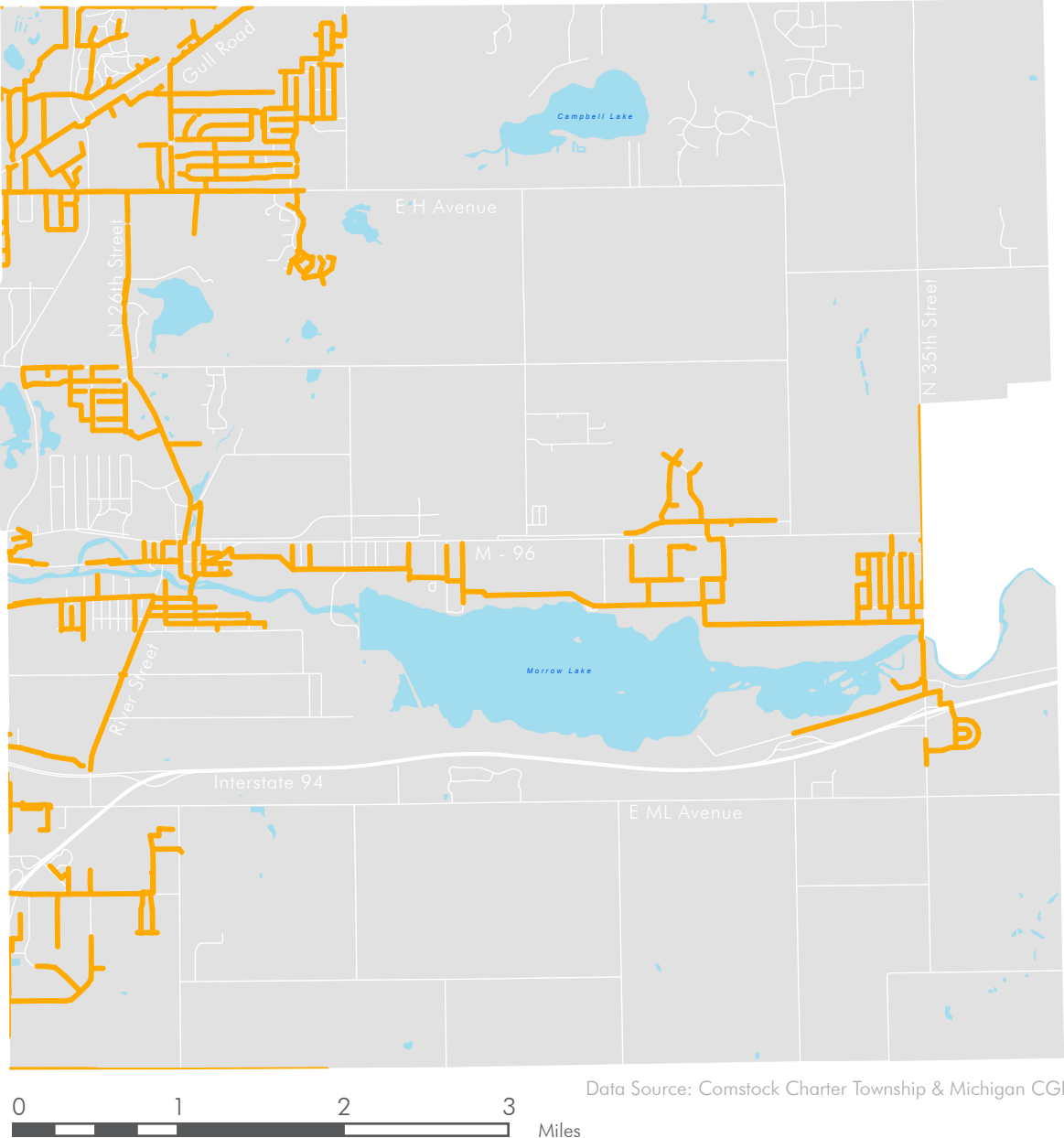
Similar to residents in surrounding townships, Comstock residents are served with sanitary sewer and sewage treatment on a contractual basis with the City of Kalamazoo. Sanitary sewer service is concentrated in the western half of the Township as well as the M-96 corridor adjacent to Morrow Lake, making a connection with the City of Galesburg.

Formally known as the City of Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant (KWRP), the plant currently provides treatment services to more than 180,000 residents in 18 Kalamazoo area municipal jurisdictions. The Township is contracted with the KWRP to process 1.73 million gallons per day. City representatives indicate that the plan operates under capacity.

Similar to the public water system, the sewer infrastructure is owned by Comstock Charter Township while maintenance of the system is contacted with the City of Kalamazoo via a maintenance agreement. Future connections to the sanitary sewer system should be concentrated in the western half of the Township adjacent to existing development and along M-96 between Downtown Comstock and the City of Galesburg. Particular consideration for service connections should be made for neighborhoods or plats on the western half of the Township that do not currently have public sanitary sewer and have an issue with failing septic systems. Furthermore, homes with sewer available should be encouraged to connect to the system. The Township may also wish to adopt policy which requires connection to the system.

Figure 2.13:
Public Sanitary Sewer System

Sewer Main



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS



The preceding **Community** analysis and data can be summarized in the following conclusions that affect the long-term future of Comstock Charter Township:

As the baby-boomer population continues to age, many will likely be looking for new and unique or alternative housing options such as senior living facilities, mixed-use neighborhoods, accessory dwellings such as “granny flats” or guest houses, and attached condominium dwellings. The Township’s large single-family housing stock may not fulfill market demands moving forward. The Township should look at permitting higher densities in certain areas to accommodate senior housing as well as adopt policies that encourage “aging-in-place.”

The Township’s decrease in household size, aging population, and modest population growth may pose an issue for enrollment at Comstock Public Schools. Future Land Uses that allow a mixed-use pattern of development in a walkable environment adjacent to schools and services will be essential for attracting and retaining residents of a variety of age groups including both baby-boomers and millennials.

It is likely that the increasing senior population led by the baby-boomers will increase demand for local businesses and facilities intended to serve an older population. New development and redevelopment should be carefully reviewed to ensure that buildings and properties are easily accessible by seniors, users of assistance devices, and disabled persons.



GOAL

GOALS FOR COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP

Comstock Township will be a healthy community by ensuring that each resident has access to a public recreation facility that meets their recreational needs. Investing in parks and recreation is an economic development strategy. Healthy communities with robust place-based recreation features provide a desirable amenity to existing and prospective residents and employers.

Comstock Township will be a place of natural beauty, and its neighborhoods will provide a safe environment for residents through quality building stock, regular code enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and planned development where services (roads, utilities, transit, and schools) exist.

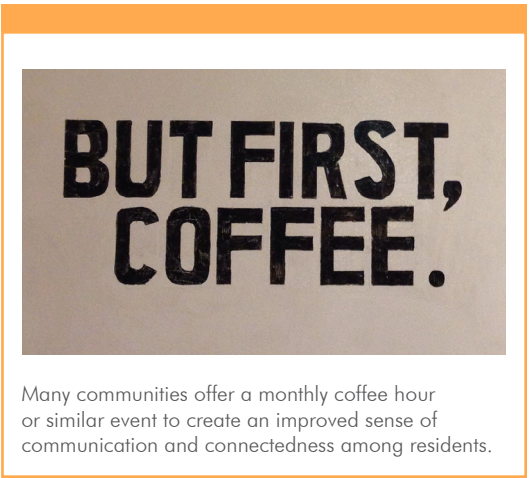
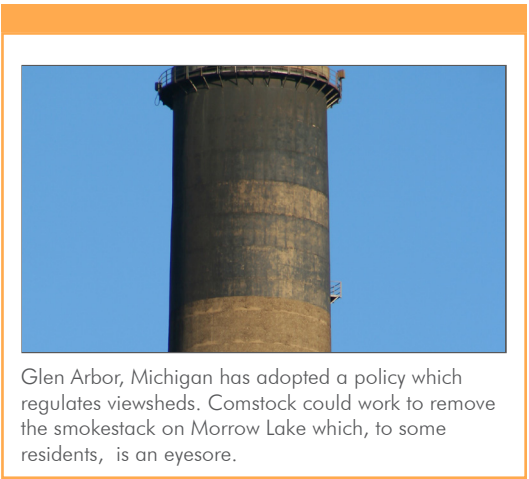
Comstock Township residents will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of highly educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth, and complementary uses will support workforce needs.

Comstock Township will have a variety of safe and affordable modes and means of travel choices available to its diverse population, which is considered a retention and attraction strategy. Transportation choices support local business, increase student performance outcomes, and result in better community health.

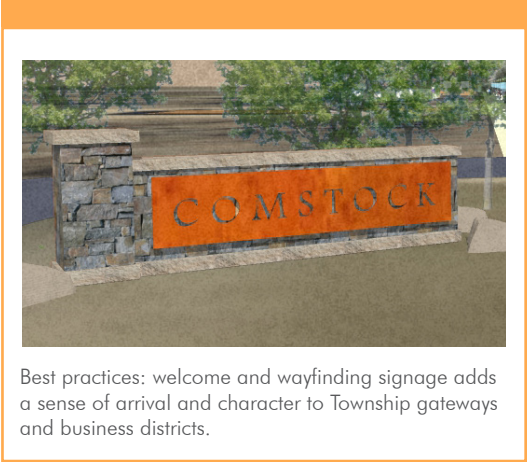
Comstock Township will be a place of natural beauty, and its neighborhoods will provide a safe and attractive environment for residents of all ages through quality building stock, regular code enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and planned development where services (roads, utilities, transit, and schools) exist.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 To ensure that neighborhoods are safe and secure, codes must be enforced. Consider expanding the community clean-up program for seasonal collection, and actively recruit participation through various communication channels including area employers, religious institutions, the community centers, schools, and the Township library/hall.
- 2 To maintain community public health and welfare, consider a single Township-wide recycling and waste service to ensure that rental properties have regular waste management services.
- 3 To protect groundwater and eliminate failing septic systems, expand public water and sewer systems into existing neighborhoods.
- 4 To reclaim scenic viewsheds, consider prominent views and vistas in the Township by recognizing the visual impact of the Consumer’s Energy smoke stack.
- 5 To improve community engagement, host a regular coffee talk or other face-to-face events with local officials rotating in attendance and meeting with community members to hear about concerns. These coffee talks will be one-on-one opportunities for community members to meet with a local official, for example a trustee, to answer questions and raise issues in a relaxed environment.



- 6 To enhance Township identity and communication, update the Township logo, website and social media, on-line resources, signage and wayfinding.
- 7 Develop a consistent brand for the community and identify destinations and amenities for the traveling public by including wayfinding elements for Township navigation and recreation enthusiasts.
- 8 To beautify and celebrate the rich horticultural history of the Township, partner with the bedding plant industry to install planters at all community gateways and in Downtown Comstock. Comstock Township will have colorful arrangements throughout the community as one of the identifying features of the Township.
- 9 To create a safer community, enforce laws and codes which regulate dangerous buildings and hazardous materials and continue an aggressive approach to clean-up dilapidated and blighted properties.
- 10 To ensure provision of safe water and to protect groundwater quality, adopt and enforce a policy to require utility hook ups for new construction when utilities are available at or near the subject site as well as a policy to require connection to public utilities within five years.





RECREATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Comstock Charter Township's crown jewels are its **community recreation facilities and natural features**. Community recreation facilities support **healthy communities, increase nearby property values**, provide important community gathering places and **protect natural areas**.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission completed the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2015-2019 in 2015. The mission of the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission is to work on behalf of the citizens of Comstock Township to build a healthy community and a sustainable environment by promoting active lifestyles and strong individuals and families through parks, programs, and partnerships. For the purposes of collaboration, it is vital to reiterate the importance of this effort and include it in the overall land use strategy identified by stakeholders and residents of the Township.

Park Facilities

Comstock Charter Township is home to an extensive public park system including parks and recreation facilities maintained by Comstock Township, Kalamazoo County, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Figure 2.14 compiles the various parks and recreation facilities in Comstock Township and their amenities or athletic accommodations. Additionally, the table outlines the size in acres of each park. The Township contains a total of 1,083 acres of park land, or approximately 73 acres of park for every 1,000 persons in 2010. Additional park details can be found in the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2015-2019.



820 acres
wetlands



1346 acres
water



73 acres
park/1,000 persons



5.8 miles
natural trail

Natural Recreational Assets

Park facilities aside, the Township’s largest natural recreational assets include the Kalamazoo River and Morrow Lake. Largely ignored by residents and people of the region due to a negative stigma regarding pollution and the recent Enbridge oil spill, these natural resources are currently underutilized by residents and the greater Kalamazoo community. Nevertheless, the preservation of natural features, including parks and open space, as well as the protection of water quality in lakes and rivers were among the leading interests of residents as indicated by the Comstock Community Survey.

Kalamazoo River

The Kalamazoo River is a 130 mile river that runs through approximately eight counties in southwest Michigan before emptying into Lake Michigan. Within Comstock Charter Township, the river exists largely in the form of the backwaters that make up Morrow Lake. Nevertheless, two smaller sections, one to the east of Morrow Lake, and one to the west, form the River’s natural floodway. The River runs adjacent to Downtown Comstock and Merrill Park, offering access for canoes and kayaks to make their way toward the City of Kalamazoo.



Cooper Park, Photo credit: Comstock Charter Township

Morrow Lake

Morrow Lake is a large man-made lake that exists due to the presence of a dam on the Kalamazoo River. Morrow Lake can be accessed by a DNR boat ramp and a boat launch within River Oaks County Park, which sits on the shores of Morrow Lake. Morrow Lake is largely used by fisherman and paddlers in the late spring and summer months.



Photo credit: Comstock Charter Township

Figure 2.14:

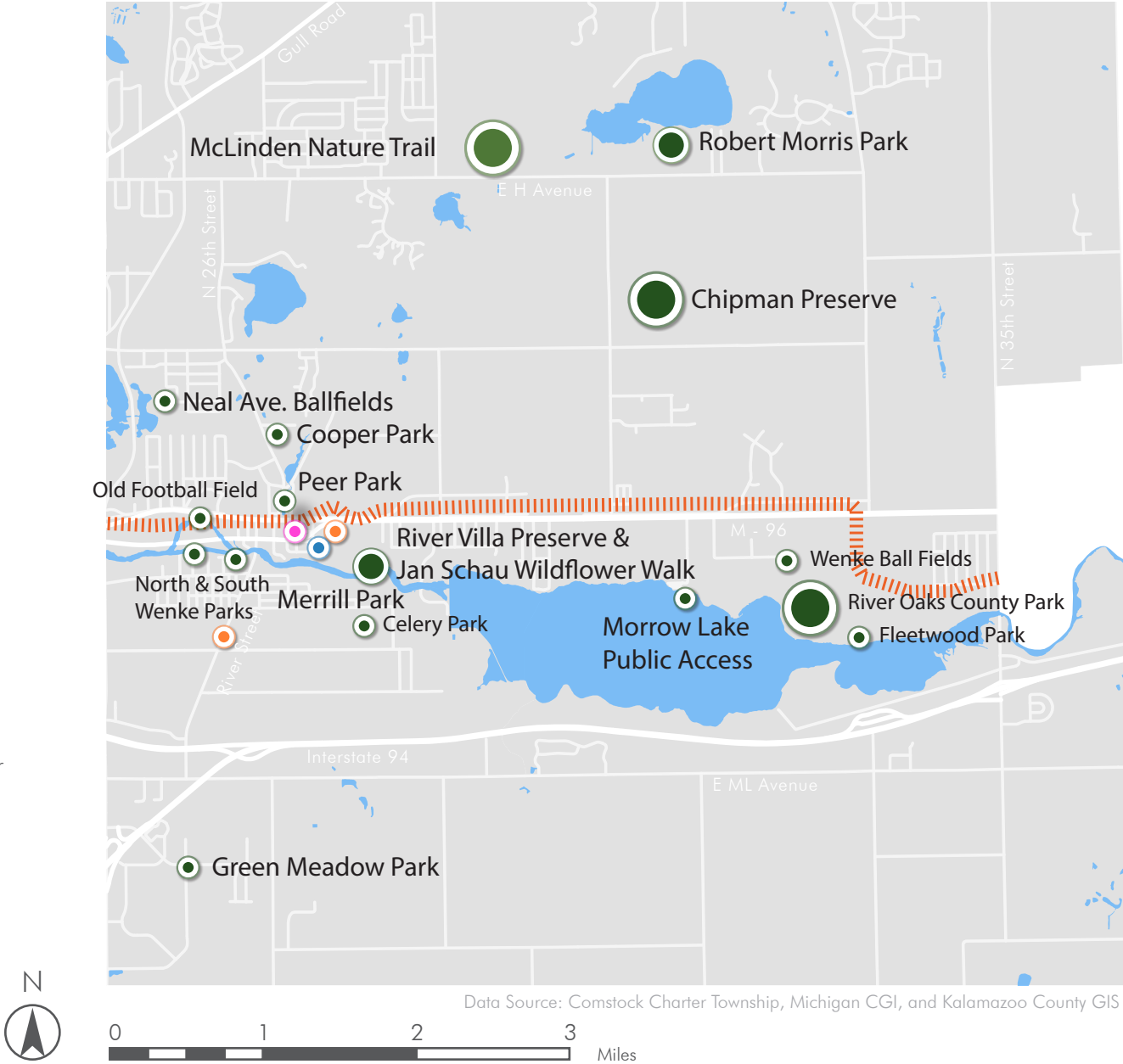
	Acerage	Softball Fields	Baseball Fields	Basketball Court	Disc Golf	Picnic	Shelter	Playground Equipment	Nature Trails	Swimming	Boat Launch	Fishing	Restrooms	Water Feature
Celery Street Park	2			x		x	x	x						
Chipman Preserve	228								x					
Cooper Park	3					x		x				x		x
Fleetwood Park	3					x	x	x						x
Fred McLinden Nature Trails	400								x					
Green Meadow Park	16		x			x		x						
Jan Schau Wildflower Walk	10								x					
Merrill Park	4		x			x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Morrow Lake Public Access	1											x		x
Neal Avenue Ballfields	2	x	x											
North Wenke Park	2					x						x		x
Peer Park	1					x						x		x
River Oaks County Park	330	x				x	x	x	x		x			x
River Villa Preserve	40								x					
Robert Morris Park	40	x		x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
South Wenke Park	1					x	x							x

Source: Comstock Charter Township

Figure 2.15:

Recreation Facilities

- Park
- Trail
- Township Office
- Community Center
- Library



Data Source: Comstock Charter Township, Michigan CGI, and Kalamazoo County GIS

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

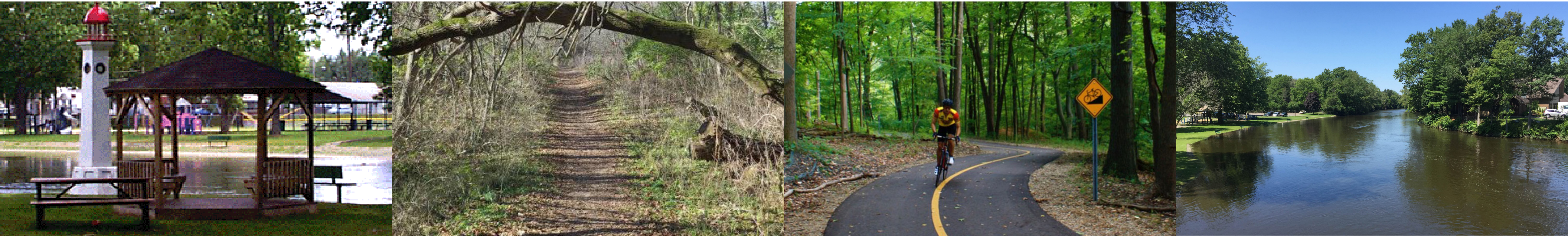


Photo credit: TrailsMichigan.com

The preceding **Recreation** analysis and data can be summarized in the following conclusions that affect the long-term future of Comstock Charter Township:

The Township has an abundance of recreational opportunities through a variety of parks that have the potential to attract thousands of residents and visitors to its facilities every year. Comstock Vision 2025 fully supports the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission in its mission to enhance and maintain recreational opportunities in the Township.

The recent development of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVT) in the Township is a positive step in the development of a non-motorized trail network serving Comstock Township, the City of Kalamazoo, and surrounding townships. There are numerous funding opportunities available to assist with the development of future trails and the Township could explore ways to construct additional trails to serve residents and visitors.

The KRVT could be the beginning of an economic boon for the Township as it brings residents of other communities through the center of the Township and allows them access to Township parks, and the new Town Center.

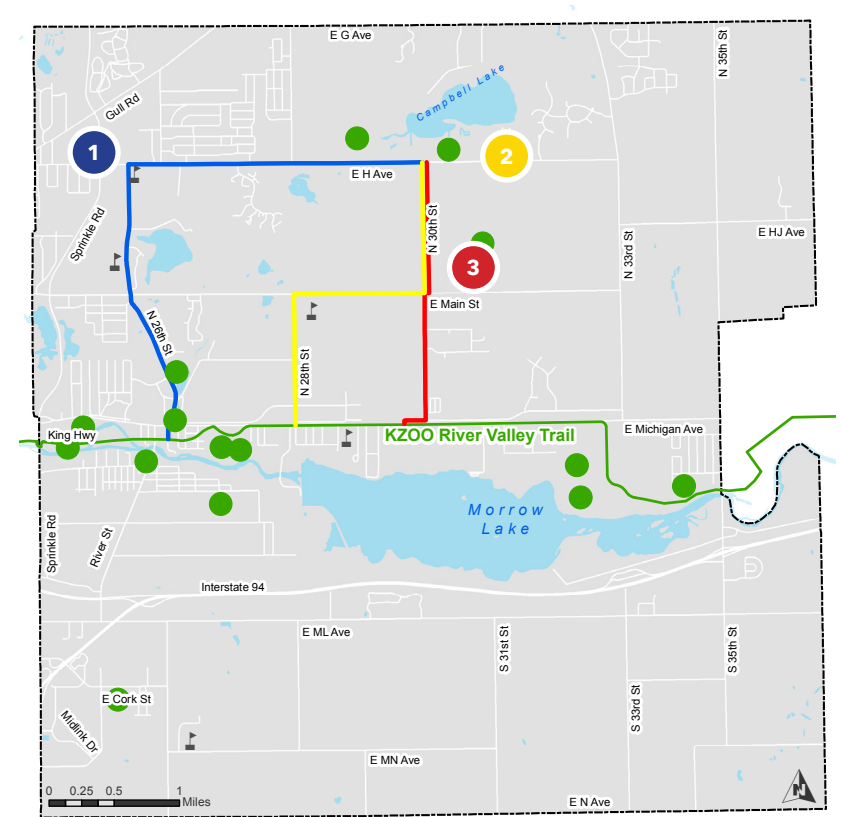
PUBLIC INPUT

Input Boards

Public Input Boards were placed at the Community Center and Township Hall and displayed during a Community Open House at the Comstock Township Hall and Library in August 2015.

As an interactive task of the **Recreation** public involvement board, participants were invited to determine a preferred non-motorized trail route which would connect the various Township and County park facilities in the community.

Sixty-seven percent of participants preferred Route 1 along North 26th Street and East H Avenue. Twenty-seven percent of participants preferred Route 3 along North 30th Street to East H Avenue. Seven percent of participants preferred Route 2 along North 28th Street and East Main.



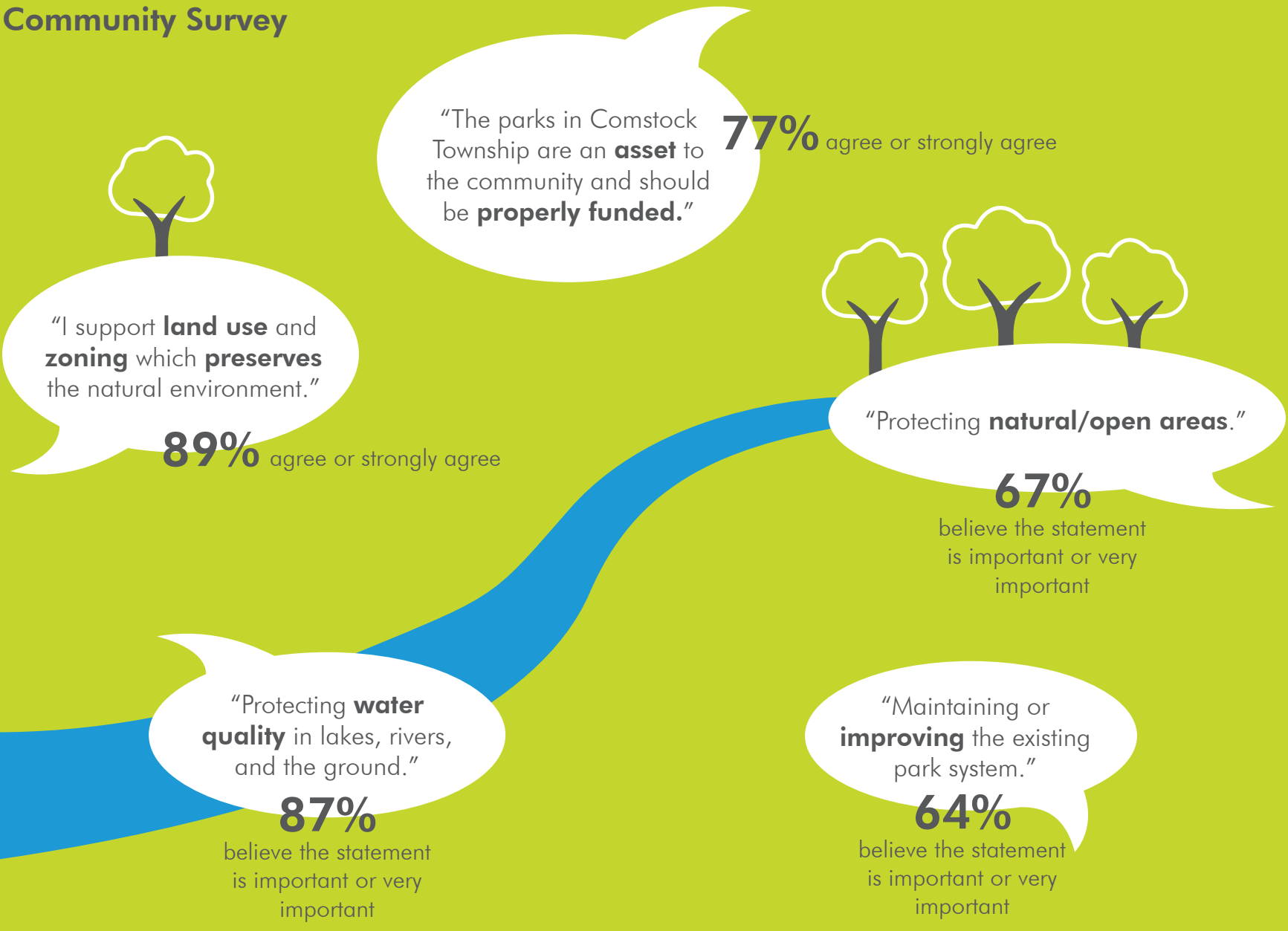
Imagine an expanded trail system which connects the various Township and County parks. Place a sticker in the box corresponding to the route you prefer.

1 ROUTE ONE

2 ROUTE TWO

3 ROUTE THREE

Community Survey



GOAL

GOALS FOR COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP

Comstock Township residents will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of highly educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth, and complementary uses will support workforce needs.

Comstock Township will be a healthy community by ensuring that each resident has access to a public recreation facility that meets their recreational needs. Investing in parks and recreation is an economic development strategy. Healthy communities with robust place-based recreation features provide a desirable amenity to existing and prospective residents and employers.

Comstock Township will have a variety of safe and affordable modes and means of travel choices available to its diverse population, which is considered a retention and attraction strategy. Transportation choices support local business, increase student performance outcomes, and result in better community health.

Comstock Township will be a place of natural beauty, and its neighborhoods will provide a safe environment for residents through quality building stock, regular code enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and planned development where services (roads, utilities, transit, and schools) exist.

Comstock Township will be a healthy community by ensuring that each resident has access to a public recreation facility that meets their recreational needs. Investing in parks and recreation is an economic development strategy. Healthy communities with robust place-based recreation features provide a desirable amenity to existing and prospective residents and employers.

OBJECTIVES

- 1

To ensure broad provision of park and open space facilities, acquire park or open spaces within the northeast quadrant of the Township where recreation amenities are lacking and where new housing starts and high concentrations of school-age children are living.
- 2

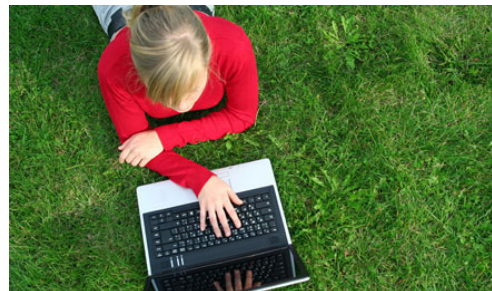
To adequately fund parks and recreation facilities, commit to increasing funding for park and recreation facilities either through increased programming, strategic land acquisitions, or additional staff support. Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to study a reliable or dedicated funding source such as a millage, commensurate with inflation, tied to population growth projections or a percent of building permits.
- 3

To engage local businesses, partner with employers, for example Landscape Forms, to sponsor recreation facilities or create an adopt-a-park program. Additionally, inquire whether Landscape Forms or the bedding plant industry may wish to test new products at community parks.
- 4

To amenitize park facilities, provide free wi-fi at Township parks to increase utilization by the community and provide an added benefit for park pavilion rental.



Connecting parks via trailways and sidewalks will increase use and attract users from outside of the Township, helping to support local business.



San Fransisco, California provides free wifi access in public parks.

- 5

To facilitate increased utilization, connect Township parks to community assets, including the Township Hall and Library, as well as schools and high density neighborhoods via pathways and sidewalks. Pay close attention to intersection design and pedestrian-first planning and design by working with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County in project design.
- 6

To diversify the mix of users, become a viable recreation hub for land and water trail users. Offer amenities such as bike repair, small water craft storage, concessions, shelter, charging stations, etc. at trailheads to encourage the use of these important linear trail resources, being the Kalamazoo River and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. Consider appropriate, complementary land uses around these trail heads, including retail and restaurants, which can become popular destinations along recreation routes.
- 7

To provide additional recreation opportunities in developing areas of the Township, amend the subdivision and site condo ordinance to require open space and sidewalks.



Grand Rapids, Michigan has begun to install bike repair stations near schools, transit stations, and colleges.



Douglas, Michigan offers safe launching areas for kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards.



WORK

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Comstock Charter Township's local business community has a national reputation. Opportunities to leverage the Township's unique location with Interstate and rail access make the community desirable for employers. Through sound land use policy and community development initiatives, the Township can better attract and retain employers and employees.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Education

Comstock Charter Township is unique in that it is served by three separate public school districts. While the majority of the Township is served by Comstock Public Schools, the northeast quadrant of the Township is served by Gull Lake Community Schools and the eastern portion of the Township is served by Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools.

Comstock Public Schools

Comstock Public Schools are seeing an overall decline in enrollment. While several schools in the district saw an increase between the 2012/2013 school year and the 2013/2014 school year, five year trends indicate an overall district loss of approximately 305 students between 2009 and 2014.

Gull Lake Community Schools

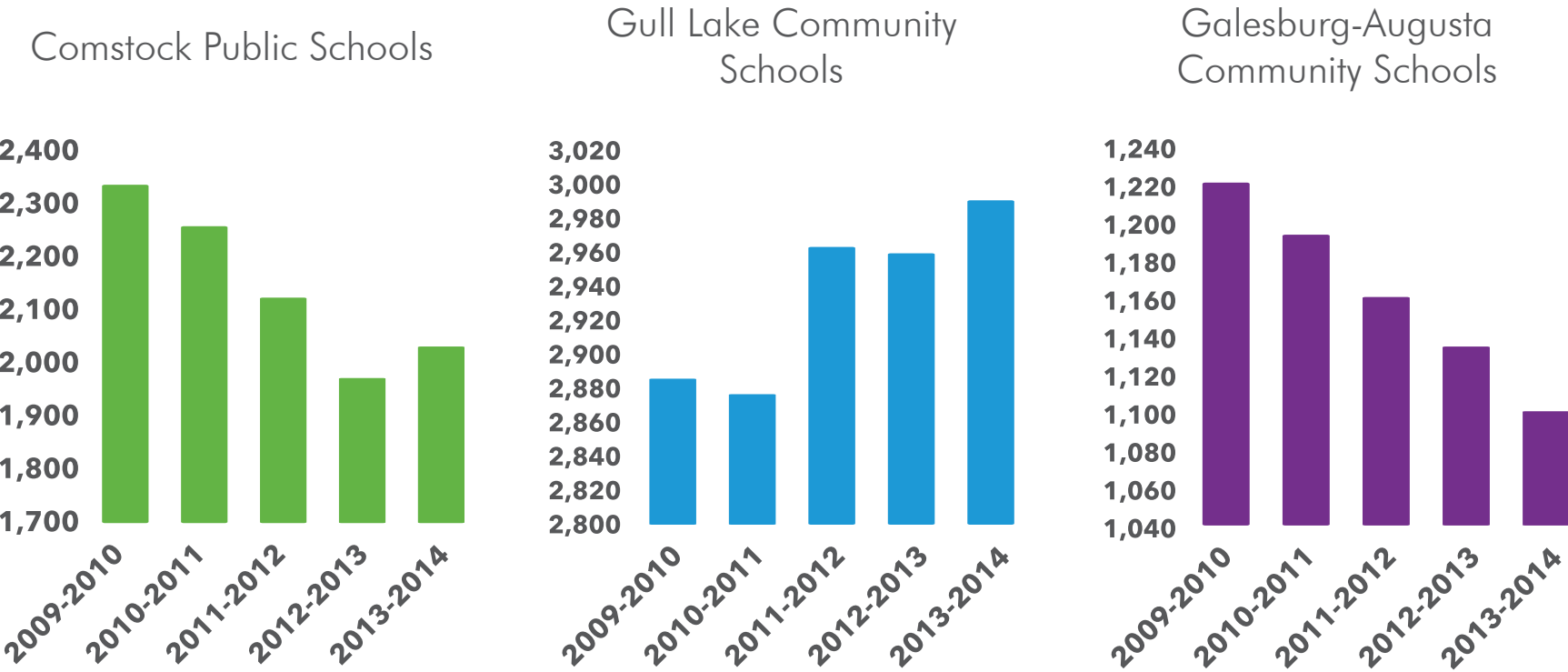
Gull Lake Community Schools are seeing an overall increase in enrollment. While several schools in the district saw slight decreases between the 2012/2013 and the 2013/2014 school year, five year trends indicate an overall district gain of approximately 108 students between 2009 and 2014.

Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

Similar to Comstock Public Schools, Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools are seeing an overall decrease in enrollment. While the High School saw a slight increase between the 2012/2013 and the 2013/2014 school year, five year trends indicate an overall district loss of approximately 121 students between 2009 and 2014.

School District Enrollment

Figure 2.16:



Source: MI School Data

Average annual number of students lost or gained:



Figure 2.17:
**Comstock Township
School Districts**

- Comstock Public Schools
- Gull Lake Community Schools
- Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools

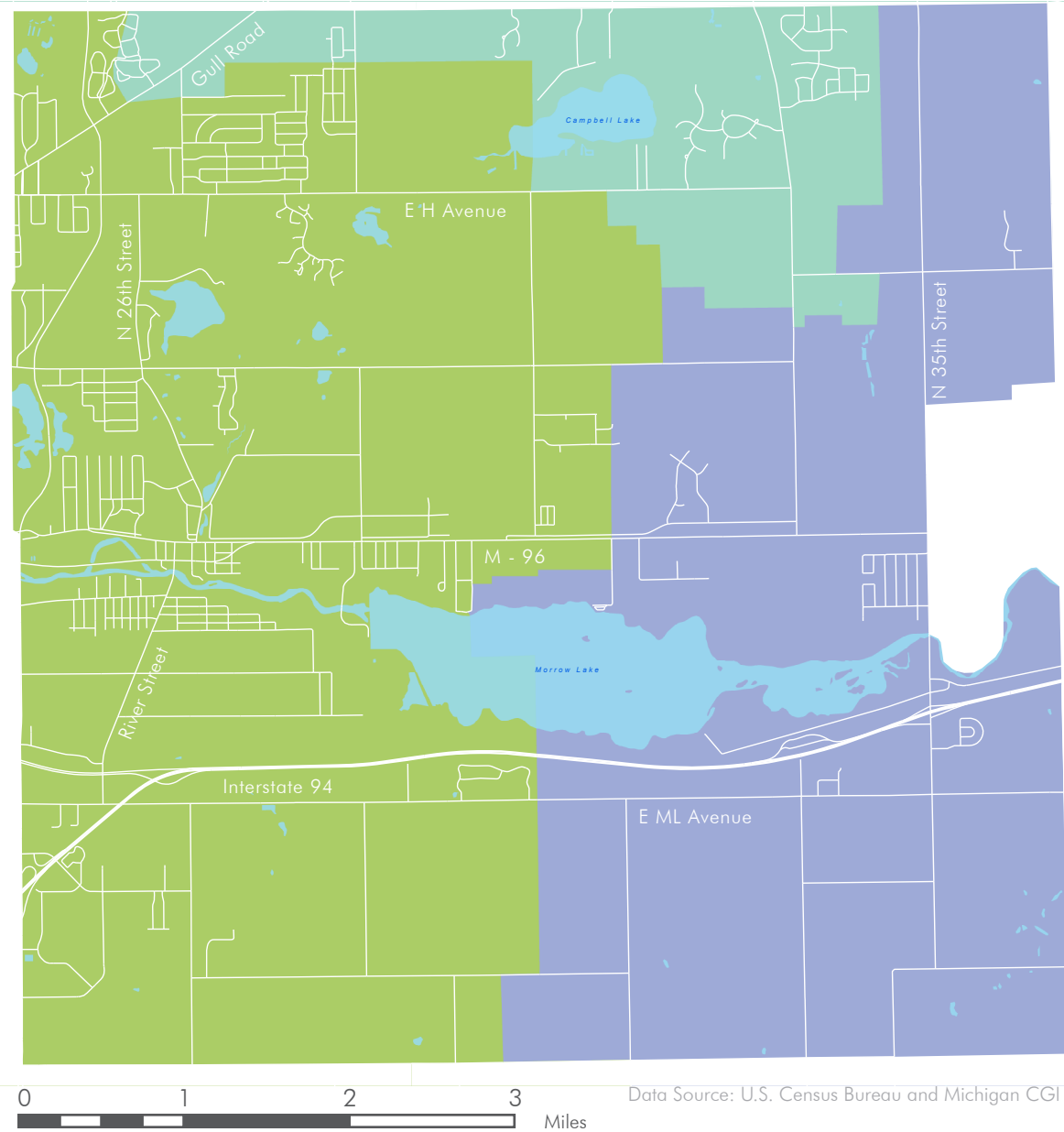
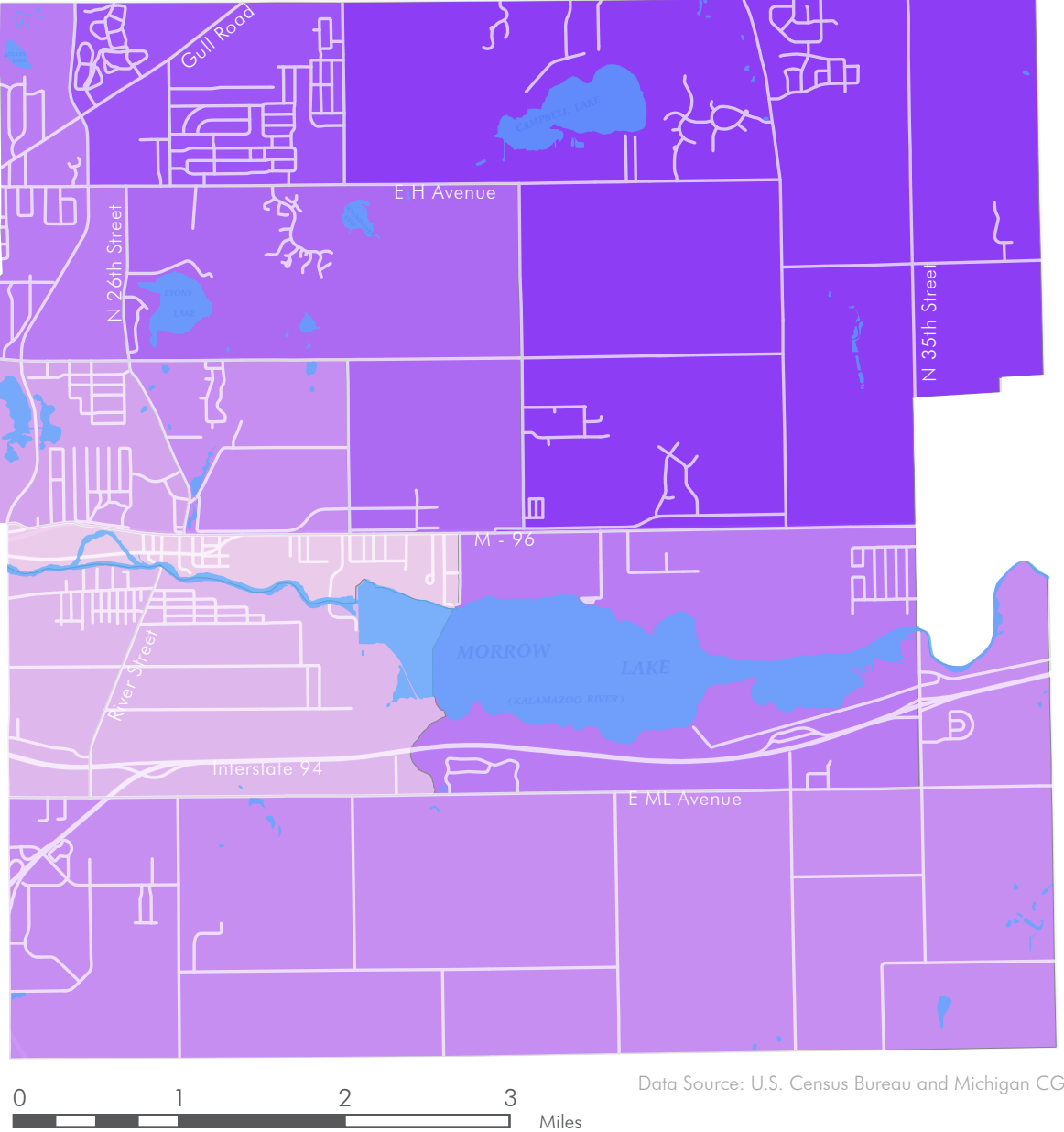


Figure 2.18:
**Education Attainment:
Bachelor or Higher**

- Higher
- Lower

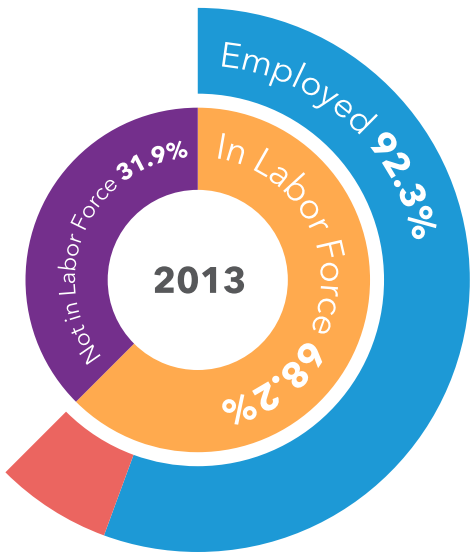


Employment

Labor Force and Employment Status

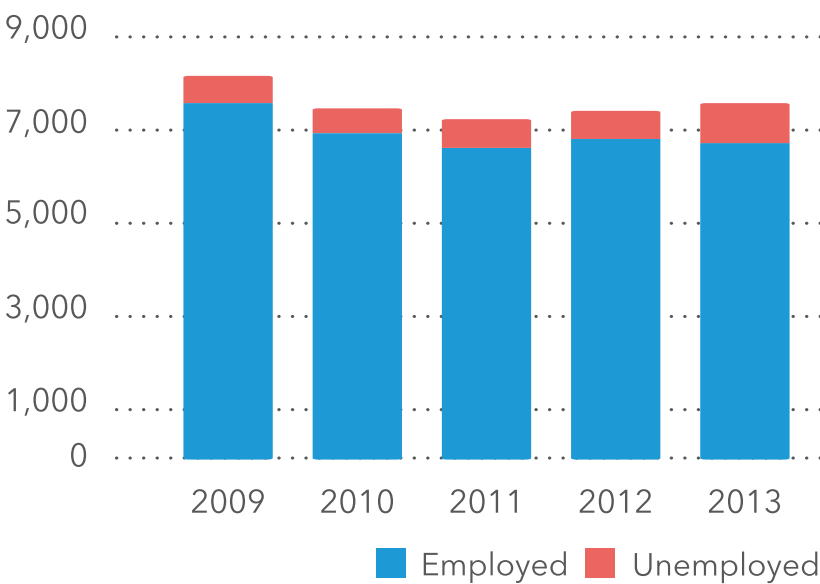
The estimated labor force for Comstock Charter Township (residents only) was 7,640 persons in 2013 out of 12,005 total persons 16 years and over. Comparatively, 6,816 persons were estimated to be employed while 812 persons or 10.6% of the estimated labor force were unemployed. An estimated 4,365 persons were estimated to not be in the labor force at all.

Figure 2.19:



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Figure 2.20:



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

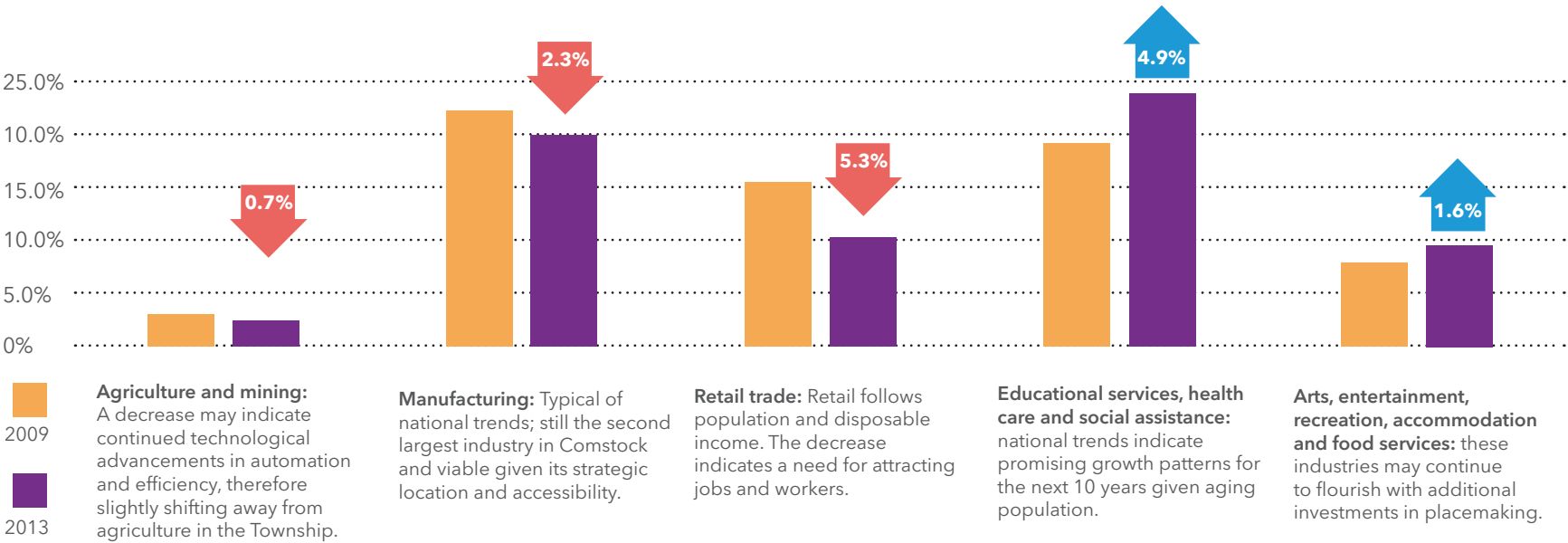
Major Employers

Figure 2.21:



Occupation

Figure 2.22:



Source: American Community Survey, 2010 & 2013

The population in Comstock Charter Township is employed largely by the educational services, health care, and social assistance industry (23.8%), followed by manufacturing (19.8%), and retail trade (10.1%). Comstock Township’s employment by industry ratios are similar to that of the regional comparison community Texas Township, Kalamazoo County and the State of Michigan as a whole. However, Comstock Township’s large number of greenhouse operations is evident in a higher percentage of workers in the agricultural industry (2.4%).

Occupation Detail and Comparison

Table 2.5:

Industry	Comstock Township	Texas Township	Kalamazoo County	State of Michigan
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining	2.4%	0.7%	1.2%	1.4%
Construction	4.9%	3.8%	3.5%	4.8%
Manufacturing	19.8%	20.3%	17.0%	16.9%
Wholesale Trade	4.3%	3.5%	2.4%	2.5%
Retail Trade	10.1%	9.9%	11.9%	11.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	4.4%	2.2%	2.8%	4.1%
Information	1.0%	0.7%	1.1%	1.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	4.6%	7.4%	6.1%	5.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	7.8%	13.4%	8.9%	9.2%
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	23.8%	24.9%	27.0%	24.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	9.5%	5.7%	10.7%	9.4%
Other services, except public administration	5.5%	5.4%	4.9%	4.9%
Public administration	1.8%	2.0%	2.5%	3.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Household Income Comparison

Table 2.6:

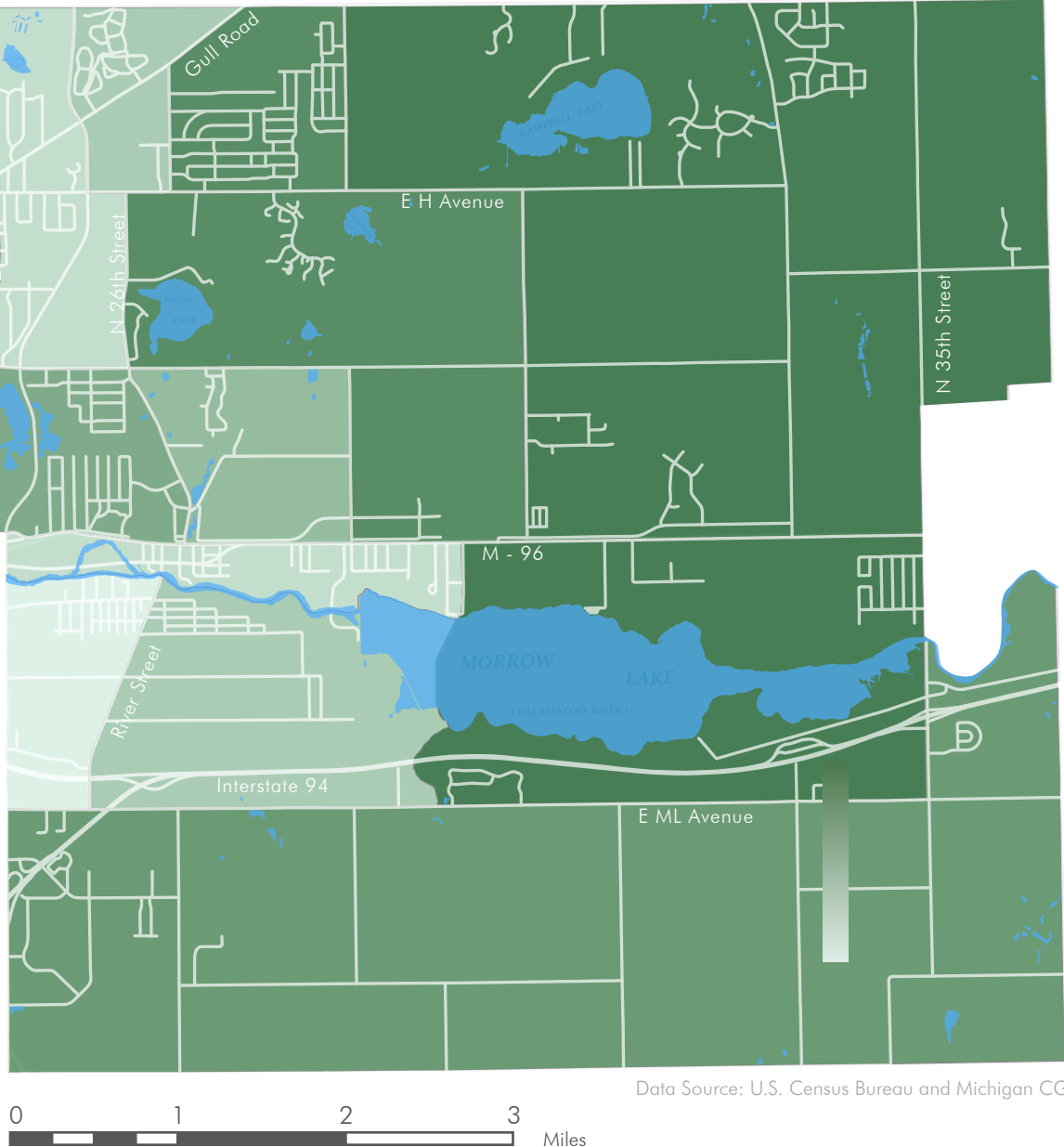
Household Income	Comstock Township	Kalamazoo County	State of Michigan
Less than \$10,000	7.0%	8.8%	8.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.0%	6.4%	5.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12.6%	12.6%	11.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10.0%	11.7%	11.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	17.4%	14.2%	14.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	23.3%	17.5%	18.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.2%	11.0%	11.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	10.2%	11.0%	11.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.6%	3.5%	3.8%
\$200,000 or more	2.7%	3.3%	3.1%
Median	\$50,041	\$45,775	\$48,411

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Comstock Charter Township households had a median income of \$50,041 in 2013, which slightly higher than the County (\$45,775) and the State of Michigan (\$48,411). Comstock also had a larger proportion of households in the middle class income range with 41% of households earning between \$35,000 and \$75,000 compared to the County (32%) and the State of Michigan (33%).

Figure 2.23:

Median Household Income



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Michigan CGI

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS



The preceding **Work** analysis and data can be summarized in the following conclusions that affect the long-term future of Comstock Charter Township:



Attraction and retention of young families may become an issue if Comstock Public Schools continue to lose enrollment. The quality of school districts largely correlate with funding, which is determined by the number of students a district enrolls.



Similar to other suburban townships in America, most commercial development in the Township is located along major highway corridors despite the existence of a historic "town center." It is important that the Township encourage a variety of forms of commercial development so as to create a sense of place.



As the bedding plant industry continues to grow and thrive, it will be vital to the Township's future to direct growth toward areas of the Township which will be accessible by freight as well as harmonious to surrounding neighborhoods. Maintaining infrastructure such as roads and truck routes that support existing industry as well as subsequent growth will be imperative to the Township's future.

Public Input

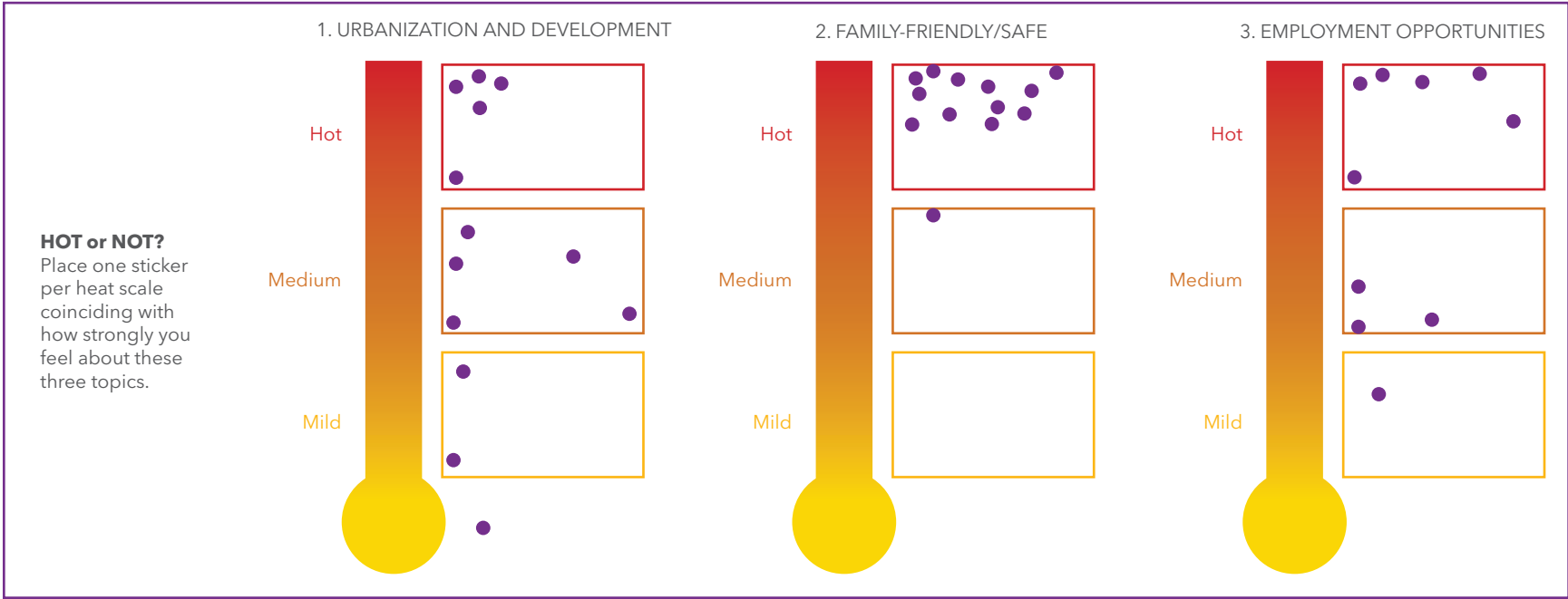
PUBLIC INPUT

Input Boards

Public Input Boards were placed at the Community Center and Township Hall and displayed during a Community Open House at the Comstock Township Hall and Library in August 2015.

As an interactive task of the **Work** public involvement board, participants were invited to decide how strongly they felt about urbanization and development, family-friendliness and safety, and employment opportunities.

Ninety-three percent of participants believed that family-friendliness was a hot issue. Forty-six percent of participants believed that employment opportunities were at hot issue. Thirty-eight percent of participants believed that urbanization and development was a hot issue.



Community Survey



GOAL

GOALS FOR COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP

Comstock Township will have a variety of safe and affordable modes and means of travel choices available to its diverse population, which is considered a retention and attraction strategy. Transportation choices support local business, increase student performance outcomes, and result in better community health.

Comstock Township residents will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of highly educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth, and complementary uses will support workforce needs.

Comstock Township will be a place of natural beauty, and its neighborhoods will provide a safe environment for residents through quality building stock, regular code enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and planned development where services (roads, utilities, transit, and schools) exist.

Comstock Township will be a healthy community by ensuring that each resident has access to a public recreation facility that meets their recreational needs. Investing in parks and recreation is an economic development strategy. Healthy communities with robust place-based recreation features provide a desirable amenity to existing and prospective residents and employers.

Comstock Township residents will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of highly educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth, and complementary uses will support workforce needs.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 To support transit, designate areas in and around the Sprinkle Road/I-94 corridor for industrial, office, and mixed use to support a campus-style walkable work atmosphere where services are available to meet daily needs, such as child care, eating and drinking establishments, financial institutions, etc.
- 2 To heighten the quality of development, amend the zoning ordinance to include standards for site development of commercial and industrial properties that place a high value on sustainable site design that minimizes large expanses of pavement, requires areas for landscaping and screening, establishes standards for building appearance, and encourages interconnected motorized and non-motorized pathways for shared access to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflict and centralize curb cuts.
- 3 To encourage job growth, continue to support business development through tax incentive programs, recognizing that job growth is important for Township residents.
- 4 To enhance communication between employers and Township residents and elected officials, consider organizing a local business group that could host job fairs, invite speakers, offer tours to local businesses, and provide an opportunity to share knowledge, lessons learned and other resources to foster a supportive business climate in the Township.



Hundreds of communities in Michigan have established a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) which have the ability to utilize tax increment financing to fund economic incentives and improvements.



The Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center in Muskegon, Michigan supports a business incubator as an economic development strategy.

- 5 To capture tax increment, study, and if beneficial, establish one or two corridor improvement districts (one on Gull Road, one at the Sprinkle/I94 corridor and interchange area) to utilize tax increment financing to enhance and beautify the public realm along these main commercial corridors.
- 6 To capture tax increment, study, and if feasible, establish a DDA, Principal Shopping District, or Redevelopment Project Area within the Comstock Town Center to help enhance, manage and promote the downtown. With all three designations mentioned above, among the many benefits is the ability for owners interested in a food and beverage establishment to qualify for a Redevelopment Liquor License, which are more affordable and are not limited by population thresholds like quota or Class-C licenses.
- 7 To better connect the Township leadership with the school districts, convene regular meetings amongst the education institutions and development community to discuss matters such as student retention, land use policy, connectivity and mobility, recreation, etc. Inquire with leadership as to ways the Township can help support an environment of high expectation and achievement for youth in the community. Discuss ways for the Township to promote the quality education choices available to prospective employers and residents.
- 8 To attract and retain businesses in the Township, develop a Township promotional brochure as a marketing tool.



The City of Suwanee, Georgia created a promotional brochure to attract and retain workers and young families to the community.



Industrial and office parks are increasingly being built as mixed use live/work centers that are walkable and aesthetically pleasing.



MOBILITY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Choice is important. In a community with an aging population, and a desire to attract and retain millennials and families to provide a workforce desirable to future employers, **having choices about how to safely and conveniently move about the community is essential.** How we connect neighborhoods and where we plan for new growth can impact the viability of **alternative modes of travel such as walking, biking, and transit.**

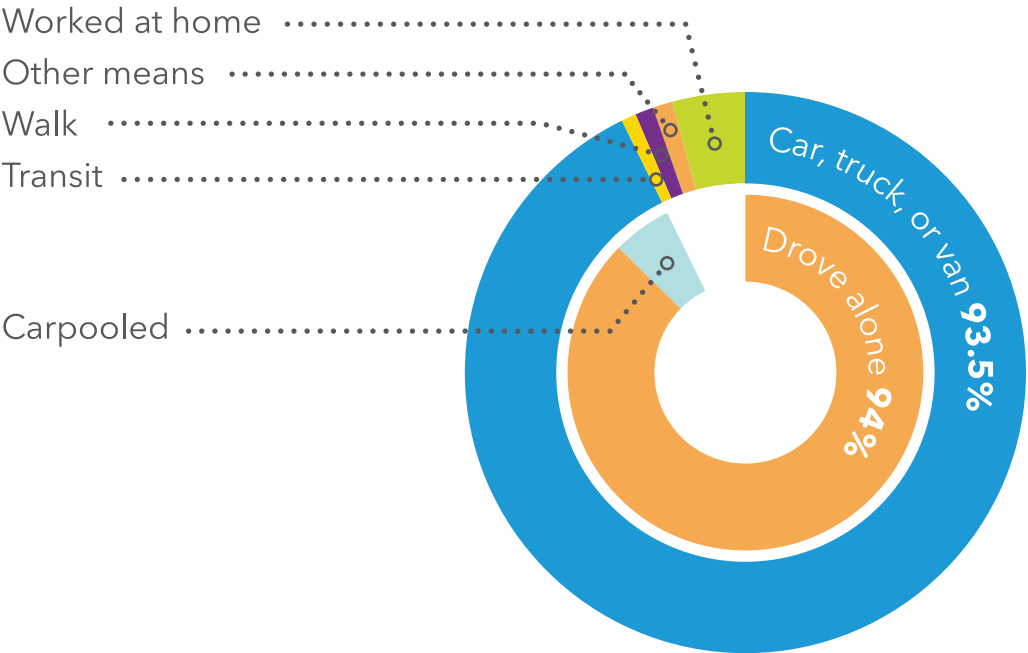
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Means of Transportation to Work

Similar to the majority of suburban America, the majority of Comstock residents commute to work via a personal automobile. The 2013 American Community Survey indicates that 93.5% of employed Comstock residents aged 16 or older commute to work by car, truck, or van. Of those 93.5%, 94% of the drive alone while 6% carpool. 4.1% of residents work from home while less than 1% walk or take public transportation. Around 1% find other means of commuting to work. The high utilization of single passenger vehicles may indicate that the Township is underserved by alternative means of transportation.



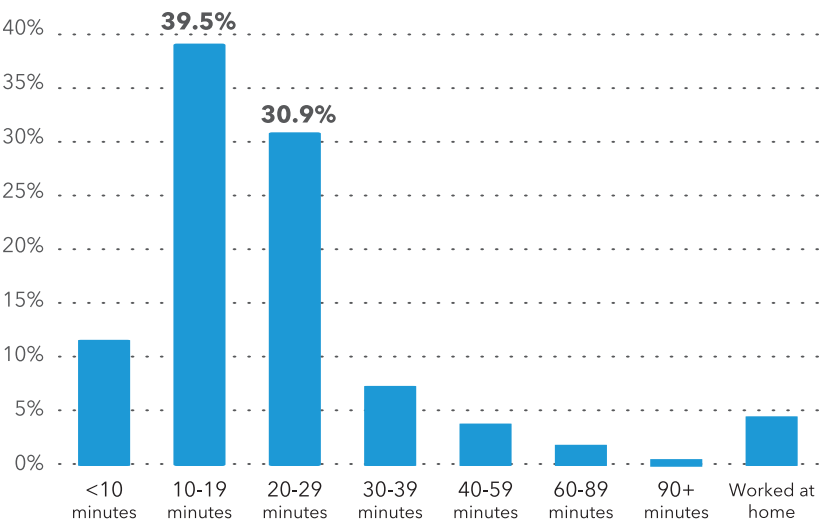
Figure 2.24:



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Travel Time to Work

Figure 2.25:



Source: American Community Survey, 2013

As of 2013, Comstock residents had a mean travel time to work of just over 19 minutes. Figure 2.25 specifies that over 70% of Comstock commuters have a travel time to work of 10 to 29 minutes. It is likely that the majority of Comstock residents are commuting within the Kalamazoo Metropolitan Area. Short commutes may indicate that if given the opportunity, Comstock residents would utilize alternative modes of transportation such as biking or transit if given a viable option to their place of employment.

Highways

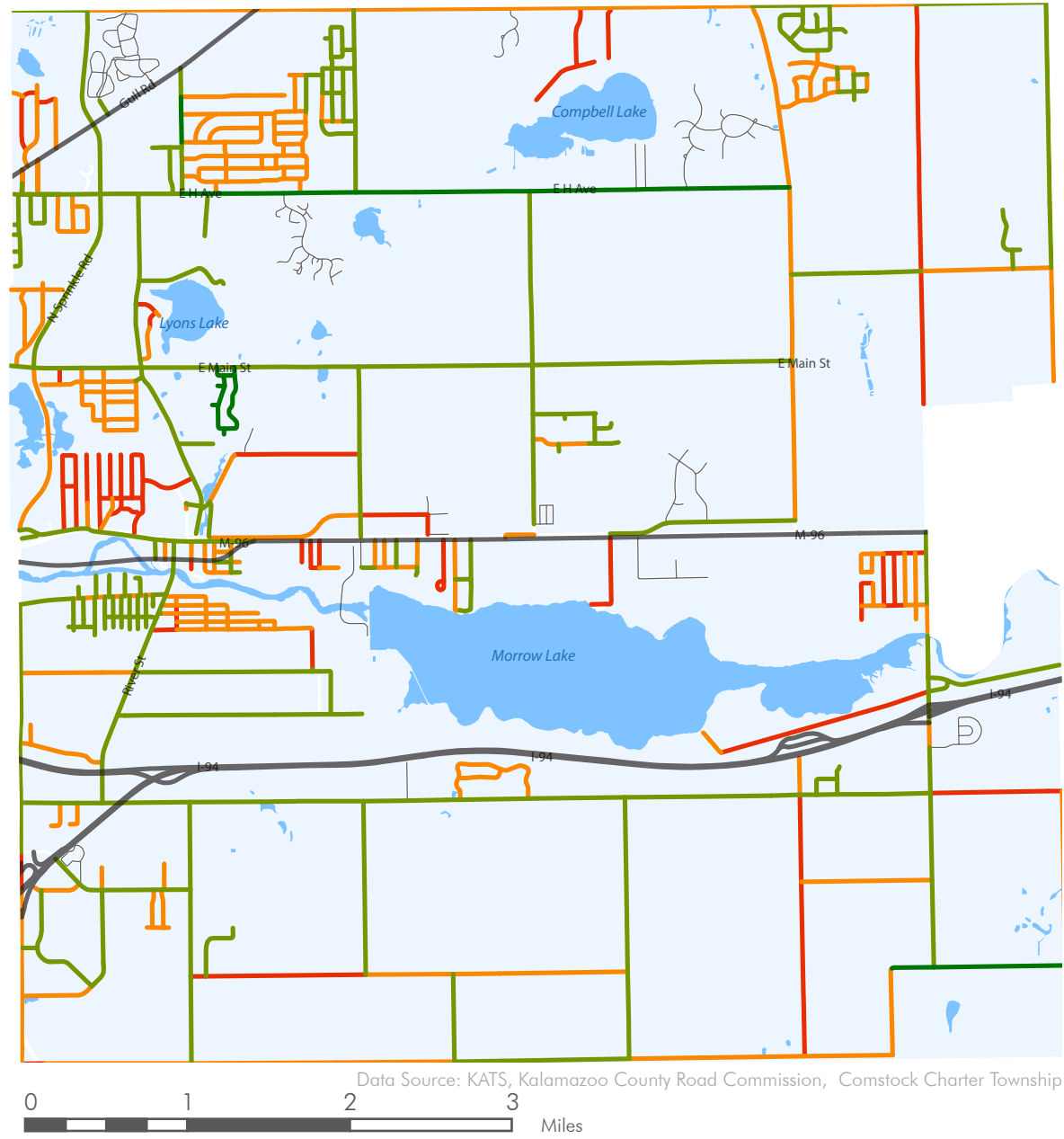
Comstock Township is served by two state trunklines, Michigan Highway 96 (M-96) and Michigan Highway 43 (M-43). The Township is also accessed by Interstate 94 (I-94) and Business Loop 94 which connects Downtown Kalamazoo to I-94. I-94 is the primary access route to and from the Township from outside of the Kalamazoo Metropolitan Area with Battle Creek and Detroit being to the east and Chicago being to the west. M-96, also known as King Highway in Downtown Comstock and Michigan Avenue east of downtown, provides access to the City of Kalamazoo to the west and the City of Battle Creek to the east, while M-43, also known as Gull Road, provides access to the City of Kalamazoo to the west and Richland to the east. M-43 is also home to the Township's primary commercial corridor.



Photo credit: Comstock Charter Township

Figure 2.26:
**Road Conditions, 2015
(PASER score)**

- Very Good (8, 9, 10)
- Good (6, 7)
- Fair (4, 5)
- Failed, Very Poor or Poor (1, 2, 3)
- Highway
- Not Rated (private)



Road Conditions

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS), in coordination with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, and Comstock Charter Township, have conducted Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) road ratings of all Federal Aid Eligible roadways and local roadways in the Township. Roadways are rated on a 1 to 10 scale, 1 being failed and 10 being a new road. PASER uses visual inspection to evaluate pavement surface conditions. Pavement will only be a 10 the first year of its life and will automatically degrade to a 9 its second year. Any condition of 8 or greater is considered to good while 5 to 7 is fair and 4 or lower is poor.

Selected Traffic Counts

As expected, traffic counts were high along major MDOT corridors such as Gull Road and M-96. Sprinkle Road had the highest 24-hour two-way traffic count in the selection, reinforcing its status as the major north south corridor on the east side of Metropolitan Kalamazoo as well as in Comstock Charter Township. Large scale commercial retail has a tendency to congregate along corridors with larger traffic counts.

Table 2.7:

Road Name	Location	Year	Two-Way 24-hour
River Street	N. of Market	2013	5,235
River Street	S. of King Highway	2014	6,948
Sprinkle Road	S. of King Highway	2014	27,797
Sprinkle Road	S. of Gull Road	2013	17,878
Gull Road	At Sprinkle	2004	26,993
Gull Road	At G Avenue	2004	23,552
26th Street	S. of East Main	2013	4,188
M-96	At 28th Street	2004	10,362
35th Street	N. of I-94	2015	16,475
Comstock Avenue	E. of Sprinkle Road	2015	3,209
East Main Street	E. of Sprinkle Road	2013	4,292

Source: KATS



Photo credit: Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo



Photo credit: MLive Media Group

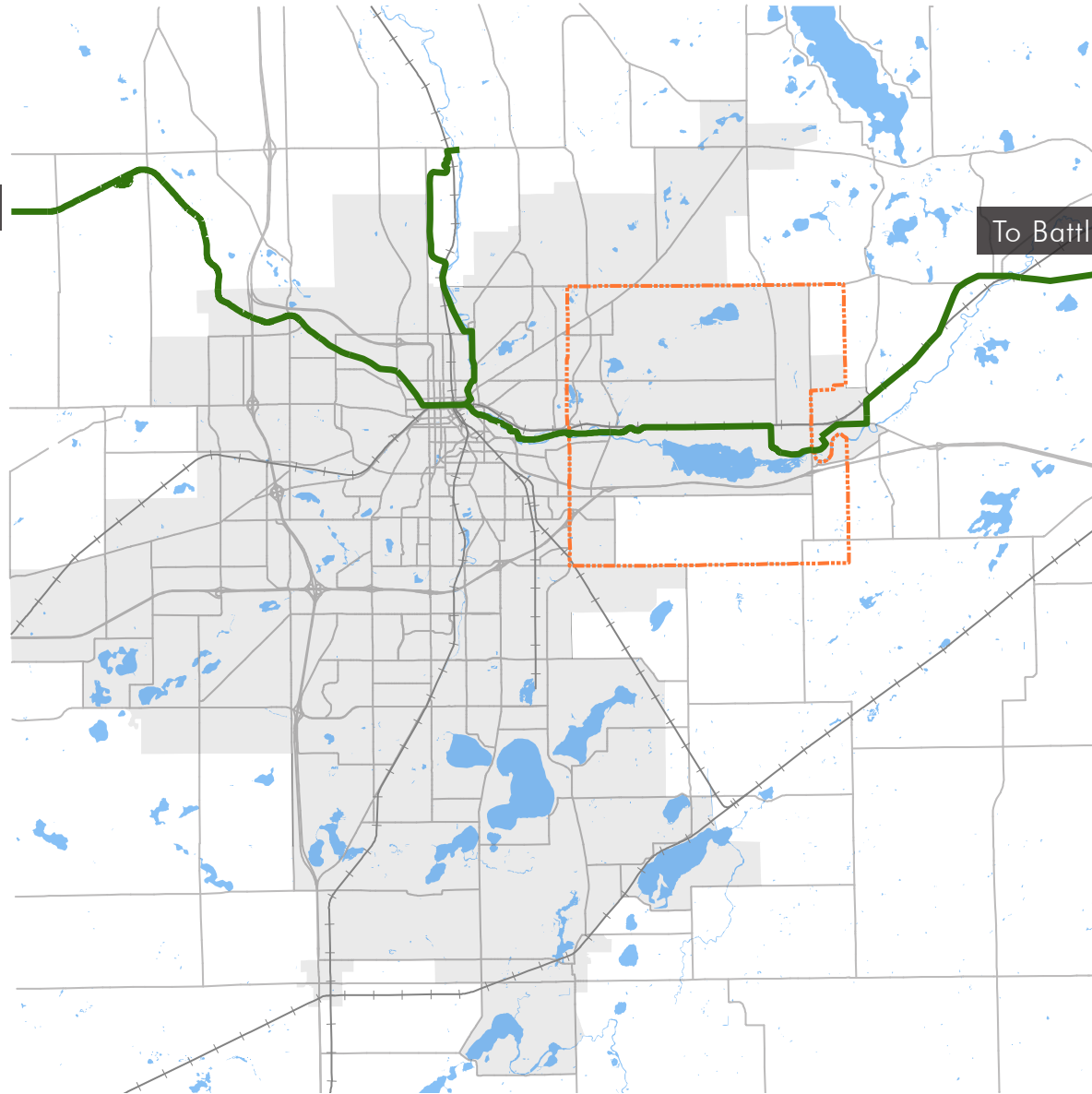
Kalamazoo River Valley Trail

The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVT) is a 12-foot wide asphalt-paved multi-purpose trail that crosses and connects multiple jurisdictions. When completed, the trail will stretch 35 miles across Kalamazoo County and eventually connect Battle Creek to Lake Michigan. The trail will ultimately connect metropolitan Kalamazoo to a 140 mile trail system that includes the Battle Creek Linear Park, Kal-Haven State Park Trail, and the Portage Bicentennial Park Trail. As of 2015, there were nearly 22 miles completed with a significant portion crossing Comstock Charter Township. The segment of the KRVT that crosses Comstock Township runs primarily along the Kalamazoo River and Michigan Highway 96 (M-96). The trail connects multiple township parks, Kalamazoo County’s River Oaks Park, public river access, and Downtown Comstock.

The KRVT is the only multi-jurisdictional regional trail system in the Township; however, the Township is creating strategies to support it. The most recent Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (2015-2019) includes an objective that states that the “Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission will continue to support the development of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (a non-motorized pathway system aka the trail-way) through the Township and its immediate connections to provide healthy lifestyles through exercise, enjoyment of the environment, and non-motorized opportunities linking homes, schools, parks and commercial areas.” The Plan also includes action steps which state that the Township shall “evaluate on-street bikeways as connectors to meet the growing needs of non-motorized vehicles and to utilize the existing parks and trail access points to leverage economic growth and quality of life within the community.”

Figure 2.27:
Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Regional Map

- Comstock Township
- KRVT
- Census Urban Area



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Michigan CGI, and Kalamazoo County GIS

9.6 Miles

Paved Shoulder

Figure 2.28:

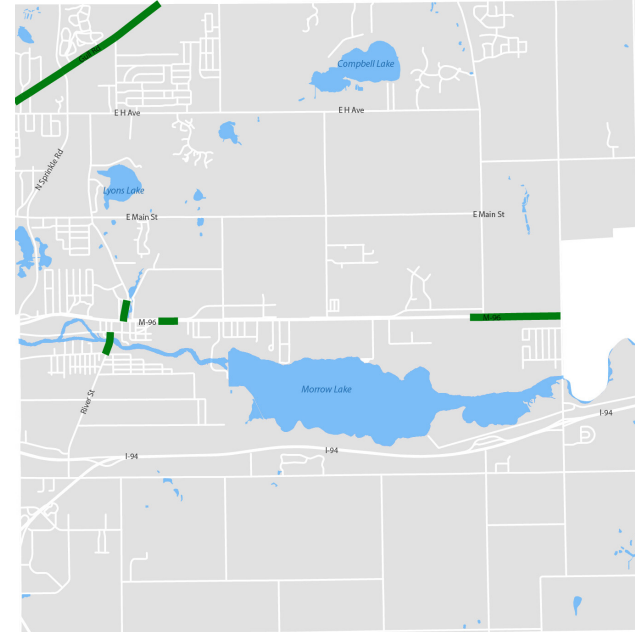


Data Source: Comstock Charter Township & Michigan CGI

3.6 Miles

Sidewalk

Figure 2.29:



Data Source: Comstock Charter Township & Michigan CGI

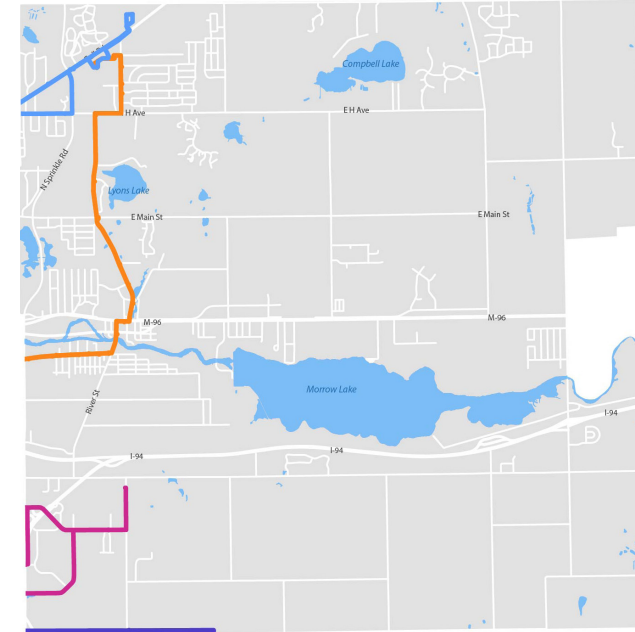
Sidewalks and Non-Motorized Access

Comstock Township is largely underserved by sidewalks or any other form of non-motorized pedestrian facilities. There are presently 3.6 miles of sidewalk in the Township. Sidewalks currently exist along the entirety of Gull Road on the north side of the road but not on the south side east of Sprinkle Road, the eastern portion of King Highway, and in several short segments near Downtown Comstock. Paved shoulders, which are often used as an emergency stopping lane but are also utilized by pedestrians and bicyclists, are more numerous, totaling 9.6 miles Township wide. However, the quality of paved shoulders in the Township varies and they are not safe alternatives to off-street facilities. As of 2015, the Township does not have a non-motorized transportation plan or a complete streets policy adopted.

4 Lines

Transit Routes

Figure 2.30:



Data Source: Kalamazoo County GIS & Michigan CGI

5.8 Miles

KVRT

Figure 2.31:



Data Source: Kalamazoo County GIS & Michigan CGI

Public Transportation

Comstock Township is served by the City of Kalamazoo Metro Transit (Metro), soon to be called the Central County Transit Authority, via four dedicated routes. Route 9 (Gull) runs from Burdick in Downtown Kalamazoo along Gull Road to Walmart and back along the same route. Route 10 (Comstock) runs from Burdick in Downtown Kalamazoo to Meijer located on Gull Road along a jogged route that follows Lake Street to Comstock Avenue through Downtown Comstock, and north along 26th Street. The route then returns to Downtown Kalamazoo through the same course. Route 8 (Egleston) from Rose in Downtown Kalamazoo along Portage, Fulford, and Cork to the industrial park on Covington. Route 8 offers limited service into Comstock Township via offering limited times through the Midlink industrial area. Route 27 (East Romence) runs from the Crossroads Mall in Portage along N Avenue to Pavilion Estates in Pavilion Township.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS



The preceding **Mobility** analysis and data can be summarized in the following conclusions that affect the long-term future of Comstock Charter Township:

The local road network in the Township is likely to continue to expand as new developments are built in greenfields. This will ultimately put increased strain on the public road network and the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County for road maintenance and snow removal. When new roads are constructed, sidewalks should be included in their construction so as to offer a non-motorized alternative.

As the population of the Township grows and new denser infill development is constructed, the Township may wish to petition the Central County Transit Authority for additional or expanded transit routes. Particular attention should be paid to transit stop locations, and locating new transit stops where Future Land Use calls for walkable neighborhoods, commercial corridors or employment centers. The Township should educate the public about the importance of transit so that a future millage may be supported.

The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail will likely bring additional pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the Township, particularly in the Downtown Comstock Area Town Center. Additional pedestrian facilities in these crossing areas will likely be necessary so as to avoid vehicle and pedestrian conflicts.

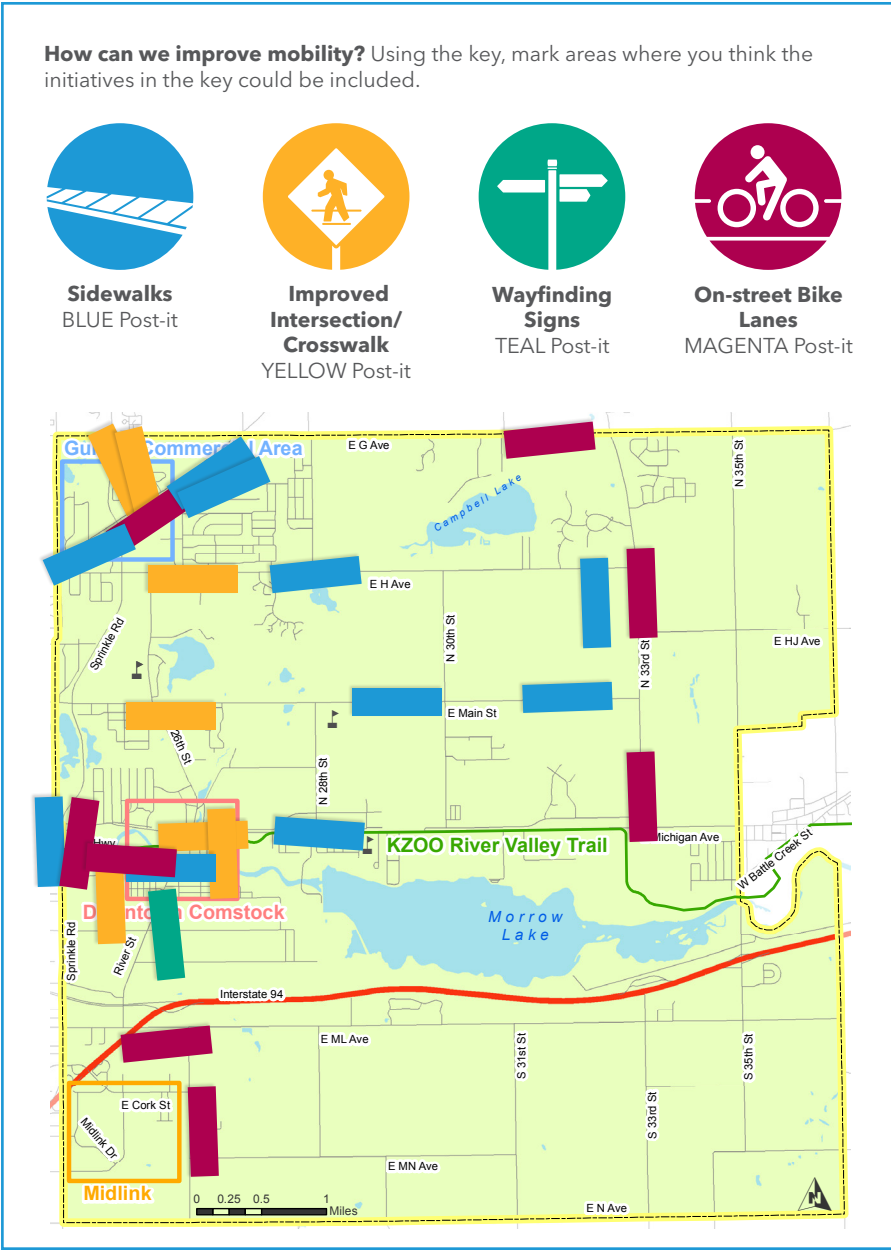
PUBLIC INPUT

Input Boards

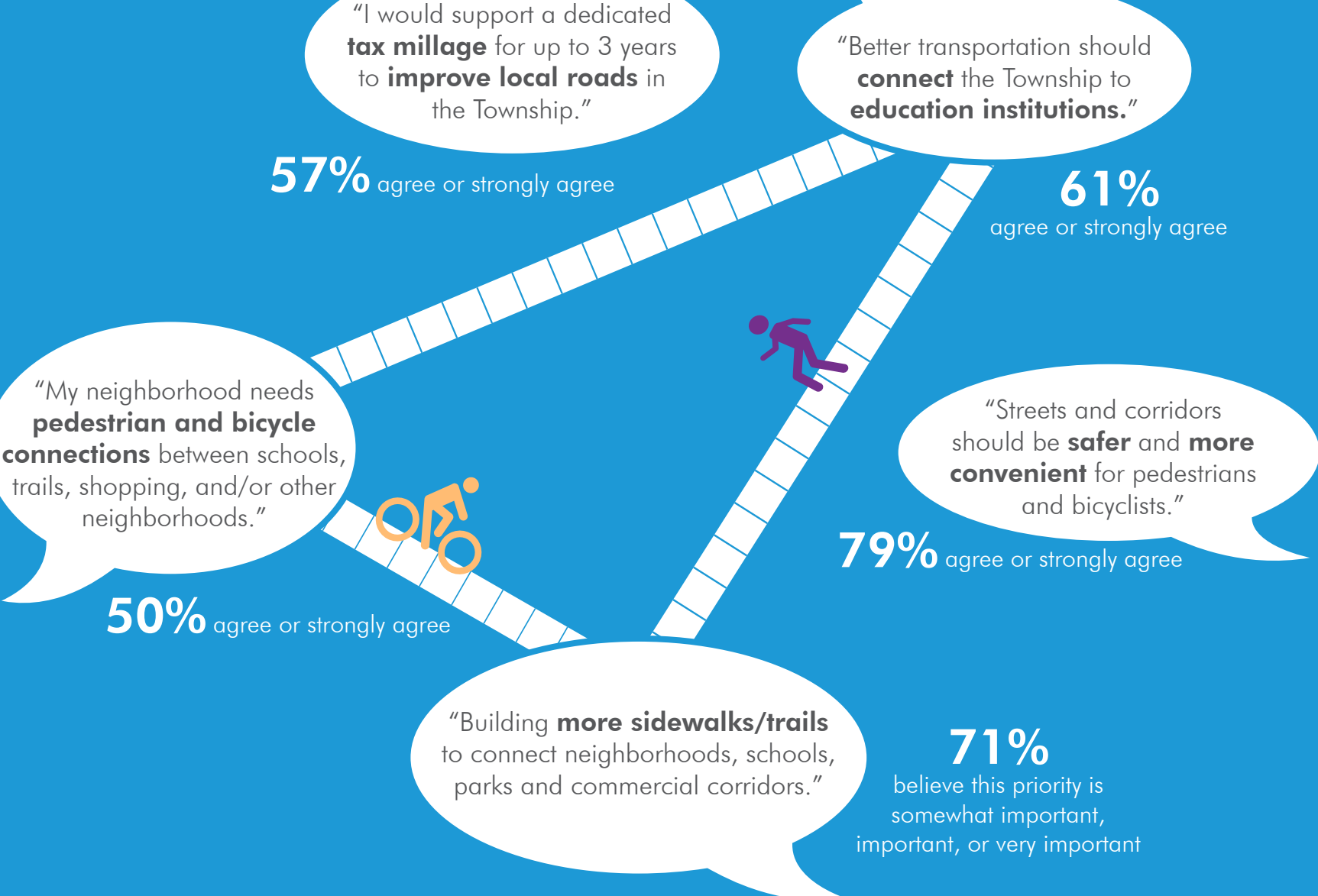
Public Input Boards were placed at the Community Center and Township Hall and displayed during a Community Open House at the Comstock Township Hall and Library in August 2015.

As an interactive task of the **Mobility** public involvement board, participants were invited to determine where they thought improved intersections and crosswalks, sidewalks, wayfinding signs, and on-street bike lanes are needed in the community.

Participants predominantly indicated their desire for improvements in the vicinity around Downtown Comstock as well as the Gull Road corridor; however, bike and sidewalk improvements were desired along multiple road corridors throughout the Township. In particular, improved intersections/crosswalks and sidewalks were desired in Downtown Comstock while sidewalks, bike lanes, and improved intersections/crosswalks were desired along Gull Road. Participants also indicated a preferred location for wayfinding signs near Merrill Park as you enter Downtown Comstock from the South.



Community Survey



GOAL

GOALS FOR COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP

Comstock Township will be a place of natural beauty, and its neighborhoods will provide a safe environment for residents through quality building stock, regular code enforcement, upgraded infrastructure, and planned development where services (roads, utilities, transit, and schools) exist.

Comstock Township will have a variety of safe and affordable modes and means of travel choices available to its diverse population, which is considered a retention and attraction strategy. Transportation choices support local business, increase student performance outcomes, and result in better community health.

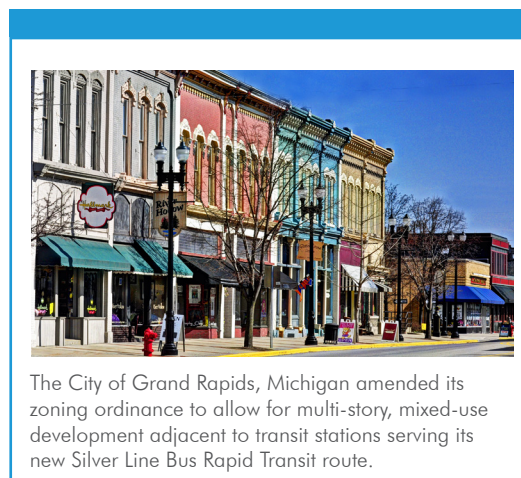
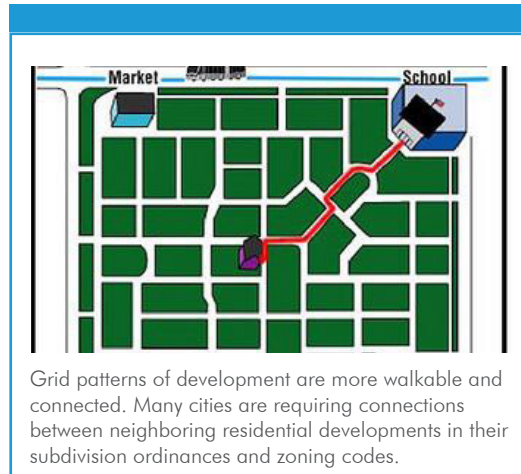
Comstock Township will be a healthy community by ensuring that each resident has access to a public recreation facility that meets their recreational needs. Investing in parks and recreation is an economic development strategy. Healthy communities with robust place-based recreation features provide a desirable amenity to existing and prospective residents and employers.

Comstock Township residents will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of highly educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth, and complementary uses will support workforce needs.

Comstock Township will have a variety of safe and affordable modes and means of travel choices available to its diverse population, which is considered a retention and attraction strategy. Transportation choices support local business, increase student performance outcomes, and result in better community health.

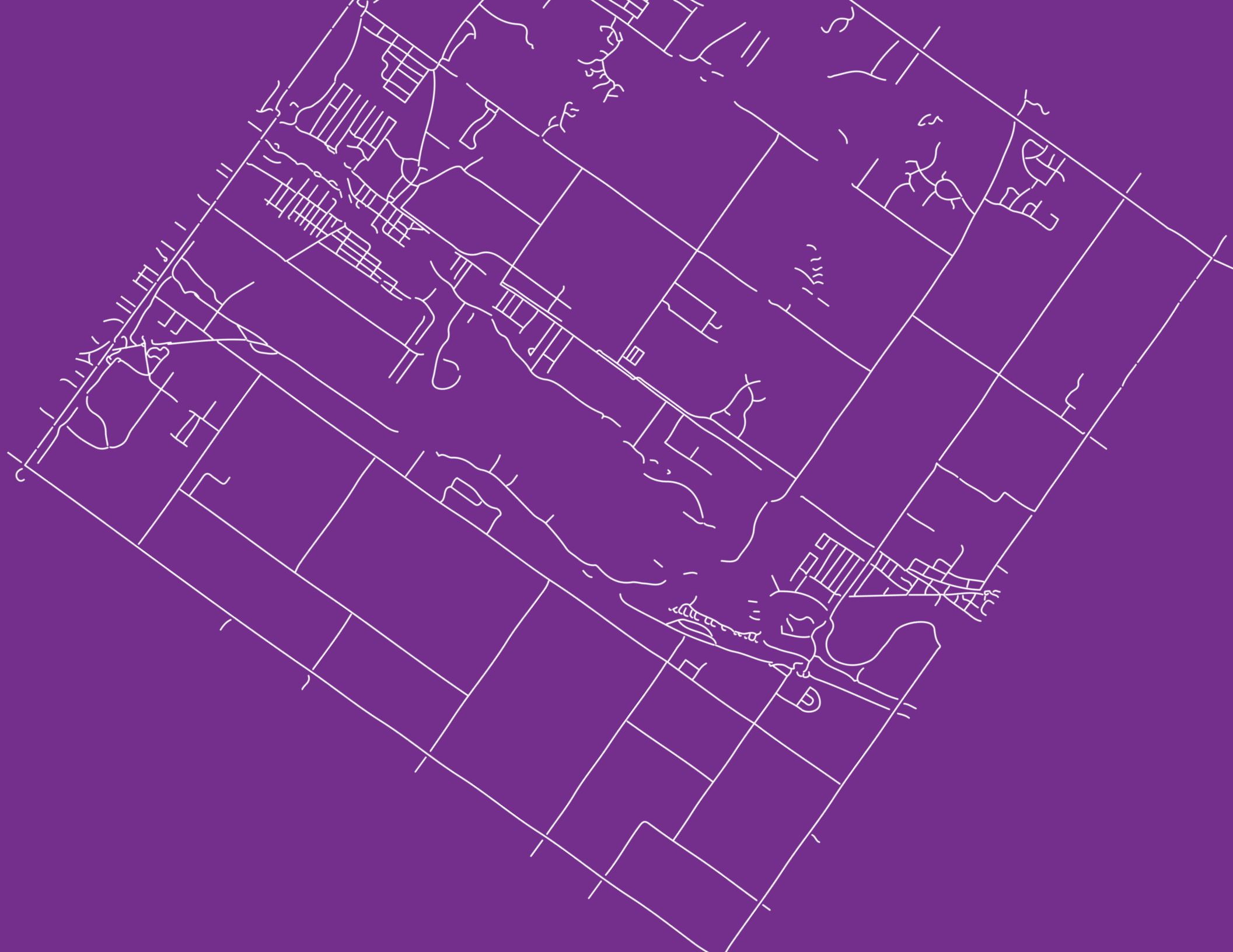
OBJECTIVES

- 1 To enhance connectivity, require grid patterns of development and sidewalks in all new residential developments. Additionally, work with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to minimize pavement width of streets in neighborhoods. These features will slow traffic within a neighborhood while providing safe spaces and connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- 2 To support transit within a quarter mile of planned or existing transit and allow for transit oriented development, allow for mixed uses, buildings up to 3-4 stories, active ground floor uses, and a requirement for transit amenities, including shelters, bicycle parking, sidewalks or pathways, and a pedestrian-scale street space.
- 3 To discourage sprawl patterns of development and help protect greenspace and natural areas from growth pressures, concentrate development by providing housing and development opportunities where services exist. Low density or farmland designations in areas where natural features, wetlands, or prime farmland exist should be maintained or expanded.



- 4 To enhance walkability and healthy communities, require all new development and redevelopments to build a pathway if located in the pathway priority area. Pathways would be placed within the road right-of-way, and will include maintenance and repair clause to ensure the property owner maintains the public facility, which is customary throughout Michigan.
- 5 To connect recreation amenities, expand the trail network in the Township by linking the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail north to Gull Road and Richland.
- 6 To improve transit amenities, support the addition of shelters, more transit routes, benches, bike racks and maintenance. Land use policies, zoning ordinance amendments, and form based code additions or replacements can support transit by allowing for mixed-uses, flexibility in form and function, and a reduction in parking. The Township should educate the residents in the Township about the importance of transit.
- 7 To decrease parking and paved surfaces, thereby reducing storm water runoff and improving water quality, incentivize reduced parking near transit stops and mixed-use areas and require shared access.





Chapter 3: **Future Land Use**

EXISTING LAND USE

The Existing Land Use Map provides a simplified overview of current development patterns in the Township, as well as areas of potential growth. Utilizing the most recent aerial photography of the Township and the 1978 MIRIS land use and land cover data as a base, the 2015 existing land use map was created.

While the majority of the Township remains largely undeveloped, the western quarter of the Township contains large tracts of single-family homes, retail commercial corridors, and planned industrial areas. The western half of the Township is also home to the majority of the greenhouses that support the large bedding plant industry in the community.

In order to analyze and predict future growth and changes in land use over time, the 2015 existing land use was compared to the land use inventory completed in 1978. Please note that calculating existing land use is not an exact science. Due to different interpretation methodologies, changes in land uses indicated in the following table does not necessary indicate precise land use change. The intention is to draw a general picture of development trends in the Township and understand the rate and location of development.

EXISTING LAND USE COMPARISON

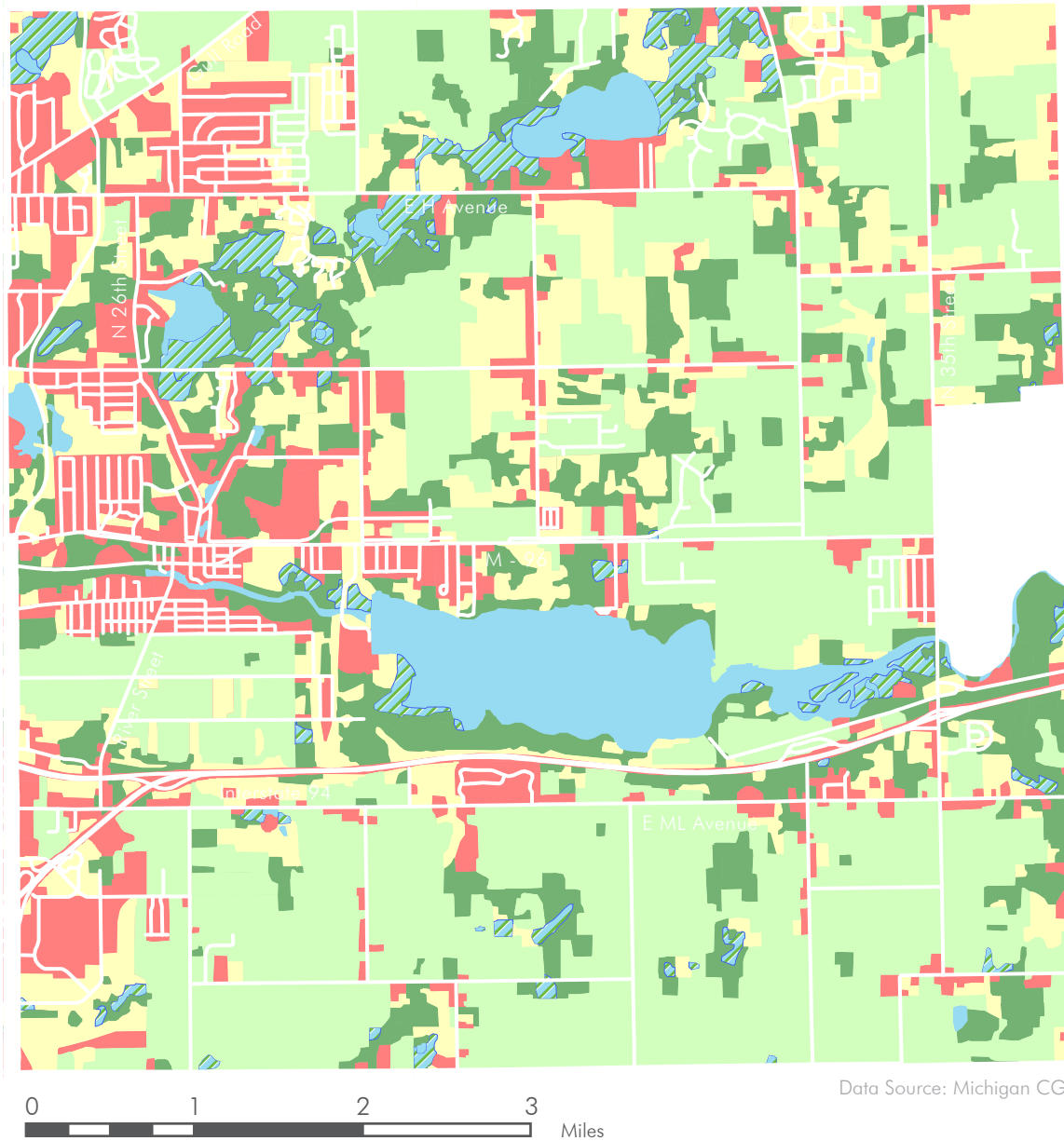
Table 3.1:

Classification	1978 Percent of Total	2015 Percent of Total	1978 to 2015 Percent Change
Agricultural	41.7%	35.2%	-15.6%
Forest Land	16.3%	18.1%	+11.1%
Scrub/Shrub	16.8%	12.5%	-25.7%
Urban and Built-Up	16.7%	25.4%	+55.4%
Water	5.5%	5.4%	0.0%
Wetlands	3.4%	3.4%	0.0%

Comstock Charter Township is developing. As indicated in the above table, the Urban and Built-Up classification increased from 16.7% of Township land in 1978 to 25.4% in 2015 resulting in an increase of more than 55% of suburbanized area. Similarly, the Township is losing agricultural land. Much of this increase is likely the result of development along the Gull Road corridor in the form of retail, restaurants, and apartment buildings. In 1978, the agricultural classification made up 41.7% of total land in the Township compared to 35.2% in 2015, a loss of 15.6%. Comparatively, scrub/shrub land decreased by 25.7% and water and wetlands remained stagnant. Some of the loss in the agricultural and scrub/shrub classifications are likely the result of second growth forest as the forest classification grew by 11.1% making up 18.1% of Township lands.

Figure 3.1:
**Existing Land Use,
1978**

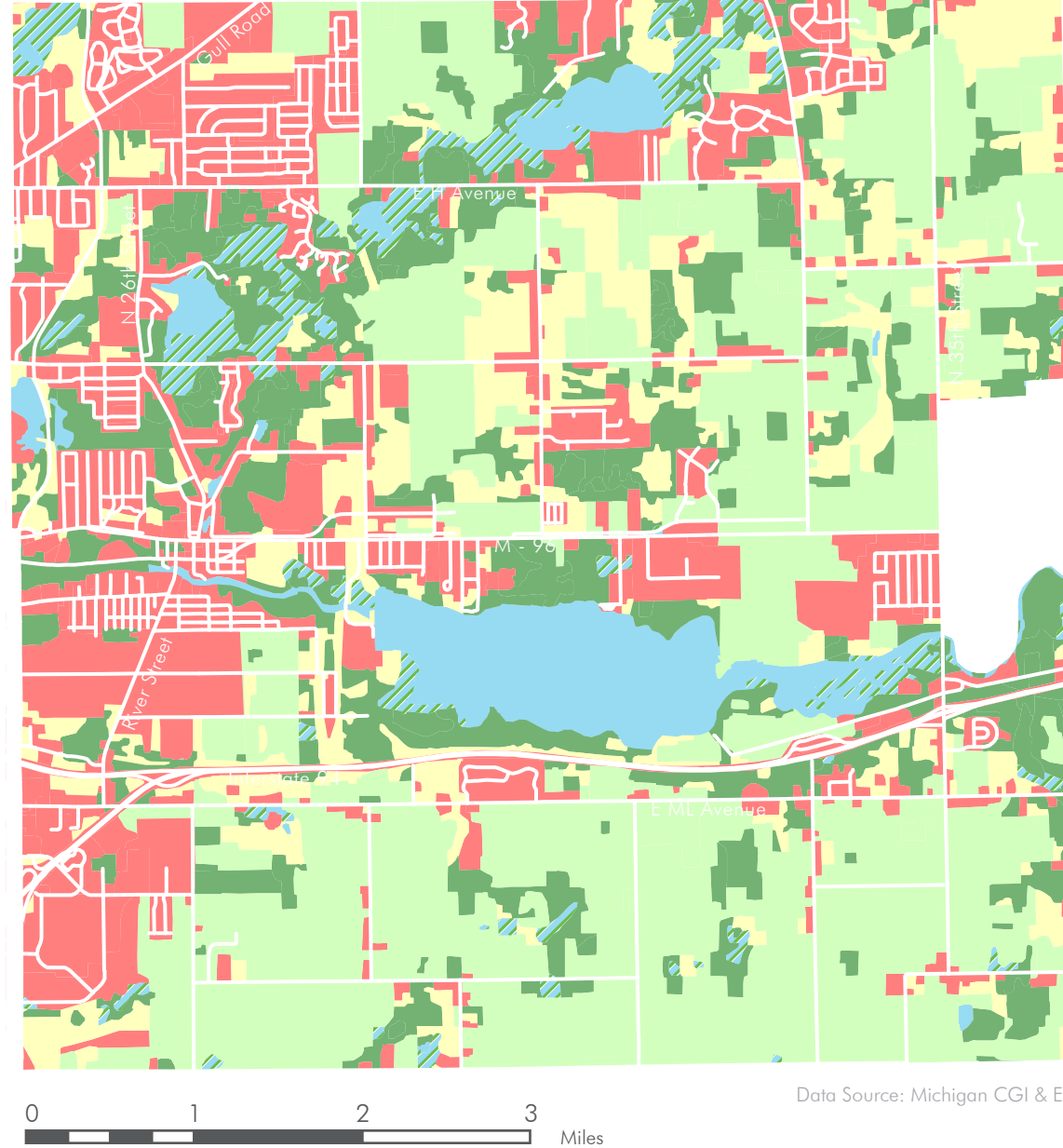
- Urban / Built Up
- Scrub / Shrub
- Forest Land
- Agricultural
- Wetlands
- Water



Data Source: Michigan CGI

Figure 3.2:
**Existing Land Use,
2015**

- Urban / Built Up
- Scrub / Shrub
- Forest Land
- Agricultural
- Wetlands
- Water



Data Source: Michigan CGI & ESRI

FUTURE LAND USE

Comstock Vision 2025 establishes desirable land use patterns to guide growth in the Township for the next decade. The future land use plan is a compilation of descriptions and recommendations for future development and open space preservation. It serves as an overall framework for the management and regulation of future development and also serves as the basis for evaluating rezoning requests.

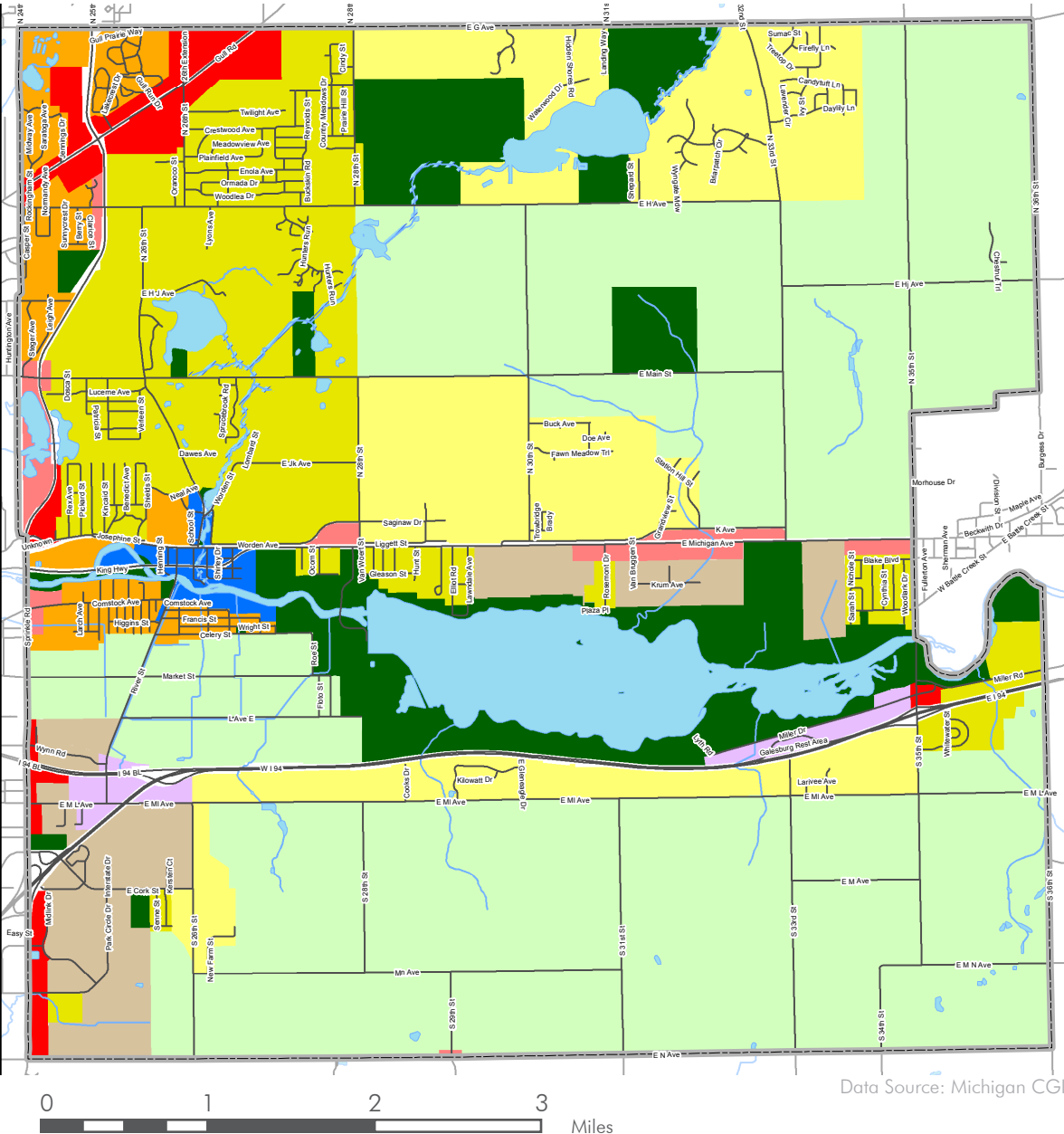
Ten future land use designations and one overlay have been created and represent the future vision of land use in the Township. Each of the designations and overlay are described in detail and are organized into one of four land use contexts: RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, and HORTICULTURE and PRIME FARMLAND PRESERVATION.

The most recent aerial photography of the Township was used in combination with site visits and tours of the community to determine the most suitable future land use development pattern. Additionally, the locations of natural features were considered, along with the location of publicly owned lands, parks, and nature preserves.

Finally, the land use vision implements the goals and objectives of the four master plan themes of **Community**, **Recreation**, **Work**, and **Mobility**.

Figure 3.3:
Future Land Use Map

- Comstock Charter Township
- Creek Overlay
- Agriculture
- Suburban Residential
- Compact Residential
- Core Residential
- Town Center
- Mixed Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Transitional Industrial
- General Industrial
- Parks and Open Space





RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT



RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT

Suburban Residential (1-2 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the need and desire for single-family development in a low density suburban pattern. These areas are not intended to be served with public sewer systems and may be only served by water.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on half-acre or larger lots.

Compact Residential (3-8 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the need for denser housing options that help to protect open space by utilizing higher densities while providing a mix of housing in a pattern that currently exists in the Township. These areas are intended to be served with public water and sewer systems.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on 1/3 acre lots or smaller and duplexes.

Core Residential (4-12 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the need for walkable, mixed-density, and mixed-income neighborhoods adjacent to the Town Center and existing commercial corridors. These areas are intended to be served with public water and sewer systems.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on quarter-acre lots or smaller, condominiums, duplexes, multi-family townhouses and small multi-plexes, and rowhouses.

Town Center (8-16 dwelling units per acre)

This land use designation is intended to address the desire for an identifiable focal point of the Township. It is intended to provide a walkable mixed-use development pattern where residents within and from adjacent neighborhoods can obtain goods and services as well as provide for a place to attract those from outside the Township. This area is intended to be served with public water and sewer systems.

Desired building types: Single-family homes on 1/8 acre lots or smaller, condominiums, duplexes, multi-family townhouses, small and large multi-plexes, rowhouses, and mixed-use structures with retail, and offices.



COMMERCIAL CONTEXT

Corridor Commercial

This land use designation is intended to provide goods and services to meet the needs of the larger Greater Kalamazoo Area as well as those traversing Kalamazoo County for work or recreation along Gull Road, Sprinkle Road, and Interstate 94. Corridor Commercial uses may include large-scale retail, eating and drinking establishments, personal service establishments, professional and support offices, and medical facilities. Corridor Commercial areas that contain regional commercial and office facilities must accommodate considerable vehicular travel; however, the Township should stress shared access, enhanced pedestrian facilities and attractive landscaping to soften development and make these corridors more inviting and attractive. This may be accomplished with landscape standards, mandatory but rewarded shared access provisions, options for reduced or shared parking areas, and site and building design requirements that work to balance the vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns with aesthetics. Parking areas should be placed behind new development when possible and buildings should be built out to the street with limited setbacks to encourage the calming of traffic and pedestrian safety.



COMMERCIAL CONTEXT

Mixed Commercial

This land use designation is intended to provide goods and services for adjacent neighborhoods and industrial areas as well as provide for additional housing opportunities via mixed-use buildings or mixed land use patterns. Mixed Commercial uses may include small-scale retail, small contractor's offices, eating and drinking establishments, personal service establishments, professional and support offices, and medical facilities. In Mixed Commercial areas adjacent to existing residential uses, a multiple-family residential component should be encouraged for new development. Mixed Commercial areas should support access by non-motorized transportation options as well as transit.



INDUSTRIAL CONTEXT

Photo Credit: Keystone West



INDUSTRIAL CONTEXT

Photo Credit: Trip Advisor

General Industrial

This land use designation is intended to provide employment opportunities for area residents as well as manufactured goods for the Greater Kalamazoo Area and beyond. General Industrial uses may include warehousing, manufacturing and assembly, mini-storage, contractor’s offices and yards and shipping facilities. Facilities will be developed with appropriate utility and transportation connections and in harmony with surrounding uses.

Transitional Industrial

This land use designation is intended to provide for small-scale industrial activities, research and development operations, shipping establishments, offices, business incubators, educational institutions, or other similar light industrial uses. Transitional Industrial areas may also include retail, eating and drinking establishments, hotels and motels, existing residential areas, apartments and rowhouses, or other such uses that may support employment and workers. Transitional Industrial areas should be walkable and include pedestrian facilities which connect places of work with retail, eating and drinking establishments, and residential areas. Additionally, appropriate screening and landscaping should be present so as to properly separate potentially incompatible uses.



HORTICULTURE / PRIME FARMLAND PRESERVATION CONTEXT

Agriculture/Agri-Business/Horticulture/ Farmland

This land use designation is intended to protect the Township's existing agricultural land as well as support the ever expanding bedding plant and greenhouse industry in the Township. Greenhouses are likely to continue to concentrate in the western half of the Township near existing greenhouse establishments. Additional greenhouses may be ideally centrally located in the Township south of Campbell Lake.

HORTICULTURE / PRIME FARMLAND PRESERVATION CONTEXT

Comstock Creek Protection Overlay

This land use overlay is intended to protect the water quality of Comstock Creek and the Kalamazoo River. The purpose of this overlay is to protect the delicate ecosystems and water quality in the Township by providing a 100-foot shoreline buffer on each side of Comstock Creek, while permitting careful and low intensity development, where feasible.

Parks and Open Space

This land use designation is intended to protect existing parks and open space within the Township. This designation is established in recognition of natural assets within Comstock Township and the Kalamazoo River Watershed. Where appropriate, properties falling within this designation could be developed into very low-density, single-family residential (less than one dwelling unit per acre) using cluster style development patterns, cabins, boat/kayak rental establishments, sledding or tubing hills, cross-country ski trails, or other similar recreational uses.

ZONING PLAN

Section 33, (2), (d), of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires that Master Plans adopted after September 1, 2008 include a Zoning Plan that explains how future land use categories in a Plan relate to the zoning districts incorporated in a community’s Zoning Ordinance. The following table relates Comstock Vision 2025’s future land use categories with the Township’s zoning districts.

Evaluation

In considering a request to rezone property in Comstock Charter Township, the Planning Commission shall consider the future land use map and the future land use descriptions provided in this plan. The Zoning Plan table shall be used to evaluate the degree to which the proposed rezoning is consistent with this plan, together with an evaluation of the specific request. The Planning Commission will also consider whether the proposed site may be reasonably used as it is currently zoned, whether the proposed site is an appropriate location for any and all of the land uses that may be permitted within the requested zoning district, and any potential detrimental impacts on the surrounding properties that could result from the proposed rezoning.

Due to the structure of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission and Township Board should pay particular attention to any and all uses permitted in a zoning district as well as any uses that may be permitted in a less restricted or intense zone. In all cases, the Zoning Plan shall be applied as a guideline for the Planning Commission subject to the appropriate application of the discretionary authority permitted to the Planning Commission and the Township Board by statutory authority, case law, and good planning practice. Nothing in the Zoning Plan will preclude the Planning Commission and the Township Board from considering amendments to this Master Plan to better serve the public interests of the community.

ZONING PLAN

Future Land Use Designation	Primary Compatible Zoning District(s)	Potentially Compatible Zoning District
Suburban Residential	R1 -A Single Family	Agriculture-Residential, R1 -B Single Family*
Compact Residential	R1-B Single Family, R1-C Single Family/ Multiple-Family	R1 -A Single Family, Multiple Family Residential, Mobile Home Park District
Core Residential	R1-C Single Family/Multiple Family, Multiple Family Residential, Senior Citizens Multiple-Story Residential	R1 -B Single Family
Town Center	None**	None**
Mixed Commercial	Neighborhood Business	Community Business
Corridor Commercial	Community Business, General Business	Neighborhood Business, Office
Transitional Industrial	Restricted Industrial, Light Manufacturing, Office	General Business, Multiple Family Residential, R-1B Single Family
General Industrial	Manufacturing, Light Manufacturing	Restricted Industrial, Office
Agricultural/Agri-Business/ Horticulture/Farmland	Agriculture-Residential, Agriculture- Horticulture	Open Wetlands
Parks and Open Space	Open Wetlands	Agriculture-Residential
Creek Protection Overlay	Any district	Any district

* Unplatted only
** A zoning district which supports the vision of the Town Center future land use designation does not exist at the time of this writing, but is included as an implementation step in the Sub Area Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

For Comstock Vision 2025 to have its intended impact on the Comstock Community, it must be implemented. The following Implementation Chapter includes general implementation steps and strategies as well as strategies for three sub areas (COMSTOCK CENTER, GULL ROAD, AND SPRINKLE ROAD), Area Transportation and Trailways, as well as Floodplains, Water Resources, and Wetlands. The strategies provided for in each section are established to implement the goals and objectives and future land use recommendations of this Plan. Thus, both short term and long term strategies are outlined.



Responsibility

Primary responsibility for implementing Comstock Vision 2025 rests with the Township Board, the Planning Commission, and Township staff. Many entities and organizations in addition to Comstock Charter Township will need to cooperate in order to fully implement the recommendations of this Plan. As implementation steps are completed, it will be important to modify the strategic elements of the Plan according to progress and changes in the dynamics of the community.

1

Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Map

The Township Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory mechanism for implementing Comstock Vision 2025. The following action items outline the changes or modifications necessary to bring the Township Zoning Ordinance and General Township Ordinances into conformance with the vision of this plan:

- Modify or create new zoning districts that reflect the goals and Future Land Use Designations in Comstock Vision 2025.
- Identify and rezone properties which are clearly incompatible with the Future Land Use map.
- Create new land development regulations within each zoning district to reflect the density recommendations in the Future Land Use map and Text.
- Review the site plan requirements and make any changes necessary to better reflect the goals and objectives of Comstock Vision 2025.

Other implementation strategies involving amending the Zoning Ordinance and Map can be found in each of the Sub Area Plans, the Area Transportation and Trailways Plan, and the Floodplain, Water Resources, and Wetlands Plan.

The above action items should be addressed primarily by the Township Planning Commission with support from Township staff and/or planning consultants.

2 Business Recruitment and Retention

Participants in the survey and public open house voiced concerns over the lack of good paying jobs and certain services in Comstock Charter Township. While it is likely that the market will continue to determine the types of businesses, goods, and services which are available or locate in the Township, Comstock should continue to work with Southwest Michigan First and other economic and community development organizations in the recruitment and retention of new and existing businesses. The Township may also wish to take the lead role in establishing a business organization such as a chamber of commerce or other similar organization.

- The Planning Commission, Township Board, or staff may wish to take the lead on the organization and establishment of a chamber of commerce. The Township Supervisor should be the lead contact with economic development organizations such as Southwest Michigan First.

3 Develop a Public Utility Plan

Public water and sewer are primarily located in the western half of the Township. Nonetheless, certain neighborhoods and plats in the western half of the Township are not served by public water and sewer despite being located adjacent to developments and neighborhoods which are served. A public utility plan or strategic plan should be developed which correlates with the goals and objectives and Future Land Use map of Comstock Vision 2025.

- The Planning Commission and Township Board should work with the Township Engineer and Township Planning and Zoning Administrator on developing a public utility plan or strategy.

4 Cooperate with Neighboring Governments, Businesses, and School Districts

The goals and objectives in Comstock Vision 2025 are not achievable without the direct cooperation of neighboring or affiliated government entities, businesses, and school districts. Monthly or quarterly meetings may be beneficial between certain groups to keep an open line of communication. The Township should facilitate collaboration between local employers and the school districts, and continue to support the community center, library and other resources that provide a safe and secure environment for afterschool programming.

- The Township Board, Planning Commission, and Township staff should work to build alliances with Kalamazoo County, the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, Comstock Public Schools, as well as businesses and stakeholders.

5 Recreation Strategic Plan Implementation

In 2015, the Township adopted a five-year Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. The adoption of this plan enables the Township to apply for grants from several sources within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to improve recreation offerings in the Township. Goals and objectives of the plan have been included in the goals and objectives of Comstock Vision 2025. The Strategic Plan’s recommendations should be implemented to ensure that recreation offerings match local needs, and it should be updated every five years to maintain DNR grant eligibility.

- The Planning Commission should work with the Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission in recreation planning activities and should receive direction from the Township Board, since the Board is the final authority on recreation expenditures.

6 Sub Areas and Implementation

Three sub areas were intently studied. Each sub area includes information about the area, existing conditions, existing land uses, and zoning. A vision and design drawings are included with a focused future land use overview that identifies each future land use category proposed for the sub area. Each sub area includes implementation strategies to guide the sub area toward meeting the goals and objectives of Comstock Vision 2025. An in depth analysis of each sub area can be found later in this Chapter.

- The Planning Commission and Township Planning and Zoning Administrator should take the lead on the implementation of each sub area. The involvement of the Township Board will be necessary for any amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

7 Area Transportation and Trailways

The Area Transportation and Trailways Plan supports complete streets policy. Existing conditions of area transportation and trailways are outlined in the Mobility section of the Community Elements chapter. Multiple objectives were gleaned from public input data obtained from primary and secondary sources. Public and private rights of way were inventoried so that the Township could identify which areas should be targeted for a sidewalk installation program. It is evident that a large quantity of the Township is underserved by non-motorized transportation options such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Through data and public input, a recreational trailway and alternative trailway are proposed for the Township. Additionally, four sidewalk and pathway priority areas are identified. An in depth overview of this Plan can be found later in this Chapter.

- The Planning Commission and Township Board should work with the Township Engineer and Township Planning and Zoning Administrator on implementing the Area Transportation and Trailways Plan.

8 Floodplain, Water Resources, and Wetlands

To achieve the goals and objectives of this plan and seek to utilize the Township’s natural resources and open spaces as an economic development strategy, an inventory of natural and water features was conducted. This inventory includes mapping products of the Township’s wetlands, watersheds, floodways, and topography. Additionally, a creek overlay to protect Comstock Creek is proposed as well as multiple implementation strategies for the protection of water resources in the Township. An in-depth overview of this Plan can be found later in this Chapter.

- The Planning Commission, Parks Commission, and Township Planning and Zoning Administrator should work together to implement the strategies identified in the Floodplain, Water Resources, and Wetlands Plan.

9 Community Clean-Up and Image

The image and character of Comstock Charter Township were identified as a point of contention for many community survey respondents. In particular, survey questions pinpointed increased enforcement and policing as a way to clean up the Township. The Township should work with the Kalamazoo County Sheriffs Department or hire a full-time ordinance enforcement officer to enforce the General and Zoning Ordinances and other Township codes. In addition, a Township marketing pamphlet should be produced which helps set forth an improved image of the Township. Township signage, logo, and wayfinding may also be a product of the improved image strategy of the Township set forth by the pamphlet.

- Township staff should take the lead on ordinance enforcement and the development of a marketing pamphlet. The Township Board will be required to take the lead on the hiring of a full-time enforcement officer.

COMSTOCK CENTER SUB AREA

Location

The Comstock Center Sub Area is located at the intersection of King Highway and River Street in the western third of the Township along the Kalamazoo River.

Existing Conditions, Land Use, and Zoning

Figure 4.1 outlines existing land uses in the Comstock Center Sub Area. The Sub Area is dominated by single-family residential and commercial uses. The sub area is largely built out with the exception of a few areas of green space next to the Kalamazoo River and adjacent to North and South Wenke Park. Parking areas in front of the building and moderate setbacks dominate the form of the commercial uses in the Sub Area.

The Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVT) passes through the Sub Area adjacent to King Highway. Sidewalks are present exclusively along River Street and the Sub Area is under-served by non-motorized transportation options with the exception of the KRVT. Other public facilities in the Sub Area include the Township Hall, Township Library, Merrill Park, and North and South Wenke Park. Merrill Park and Wenke Park provide access to the Kalamazoo River. The entirety of the Sub Area is also served by public water and sewer service.

Figure 4.8 outlines the zoning of the Comstock Center Sub Area. The Sub Area is divided primarily between the B-2 Community Business District and R-1B Single Family District. Several parcels are also zoned B-3 General Business District and O-1 Office District. Despite a large portion of the Comstock Center Sub Area being residential, the B-2 Community Business District does not permit residential dwellings by right.

Existing Uses

- Single Family Residential
- Commercial
- Public or Institutional

Existing Zoning

- B-2 Community Business District
- R-1B Single Family District
- B-3 General Business District
- O-1 Office District

COMSTOCK CENTER EXISTING CONDITIONS



COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP

Master Plan 2025/Comstock Center - Sub Area Plan

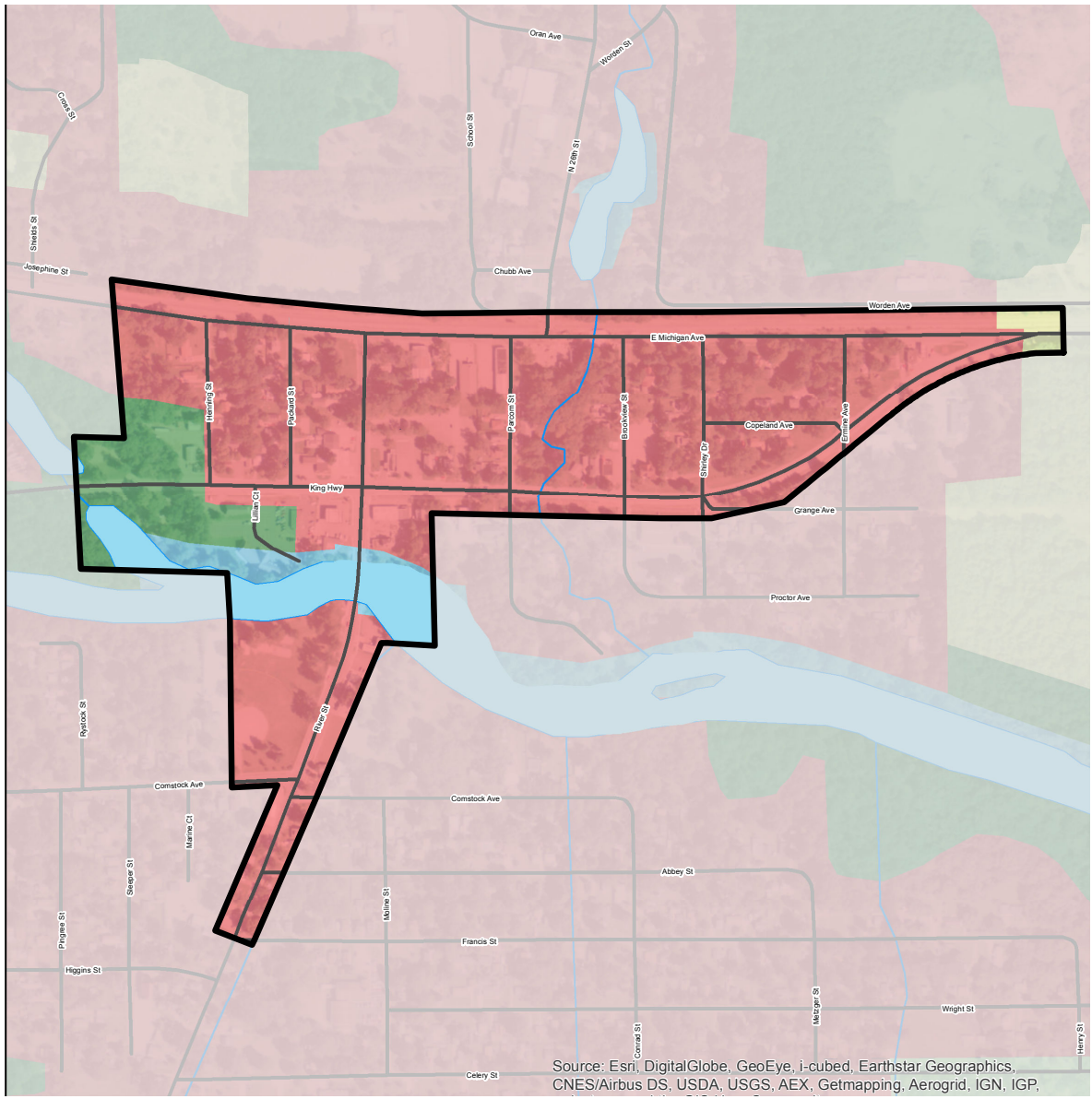
Williams & Works

VRIDIS



Figure 4.1:
**Existing Land Use Zoom
Comstock Center**

- Urban / Built Up
- Scrub / Shrub
- Forest Land
- Agricultural
- Wetlands
- Water

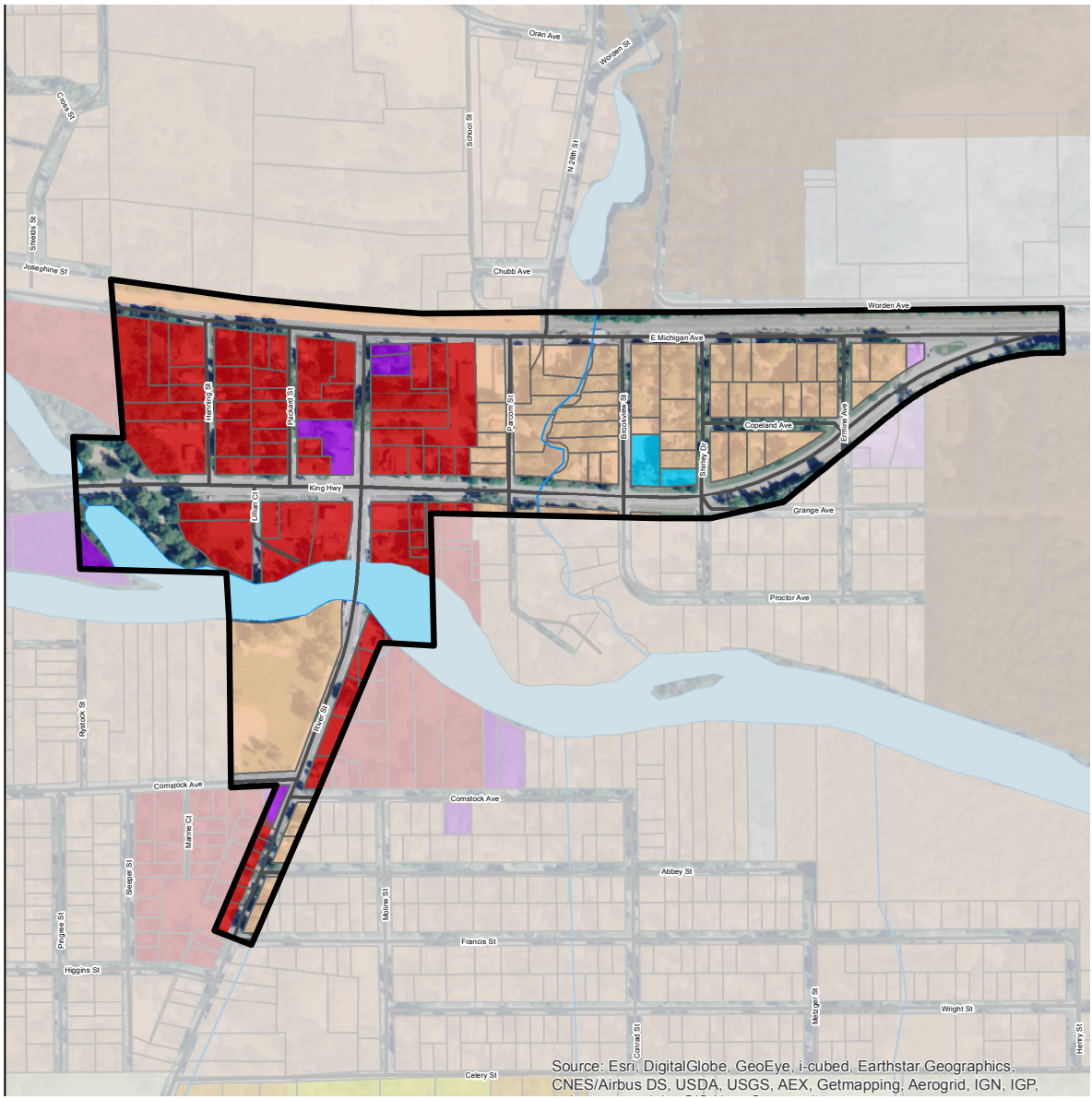


Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP,

Data Source: Michigan CGI

Figure 4.2:
**Zoning Zoom
Comstock Center**





- R-1B Single Family District
- O-1 Office District
- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 Community Business District
- B-3 General Business District

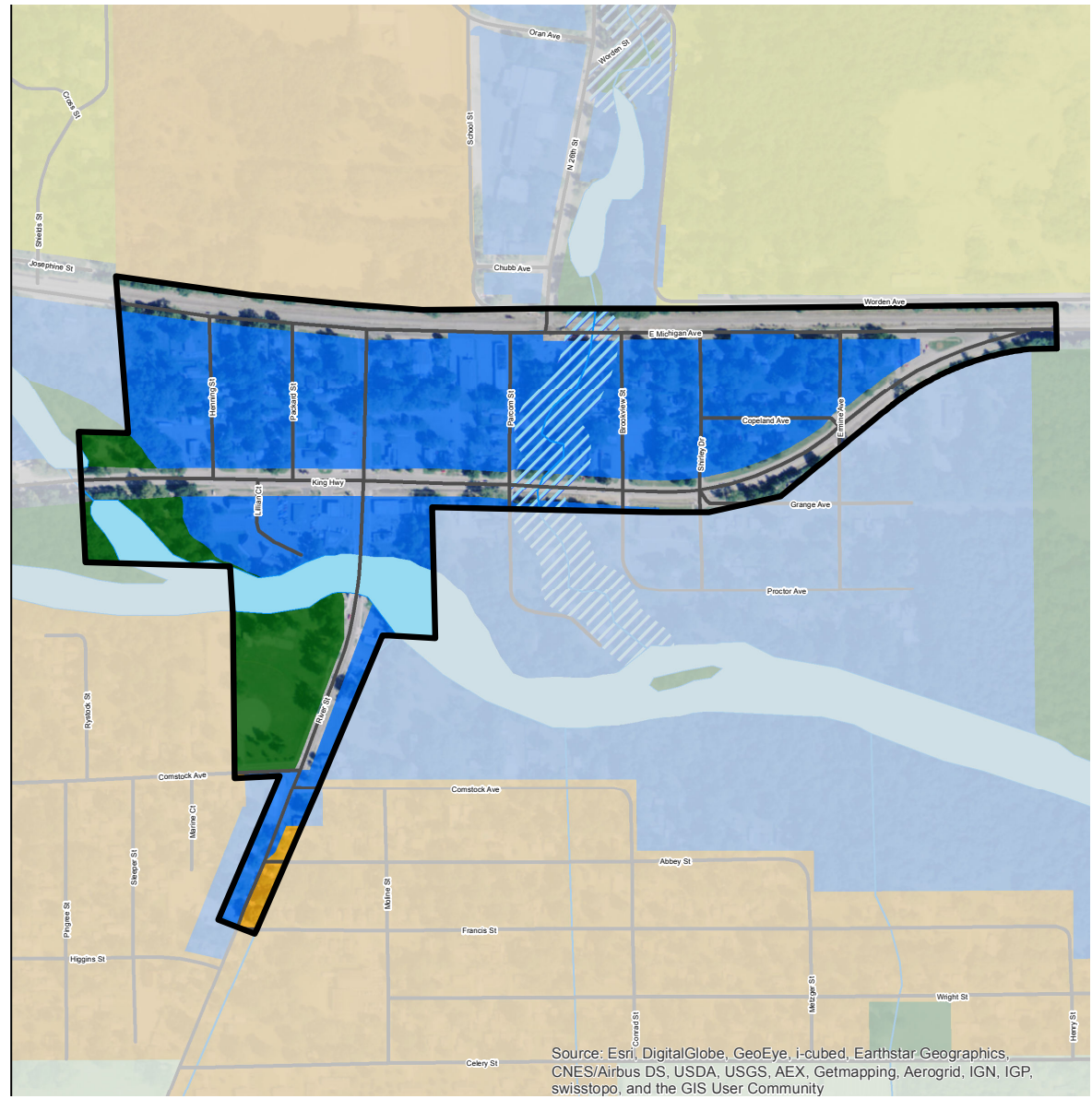


Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP,

Data Source: Michigan CGI, Comstock Charter Township

Figure 4.3:
**Future Land Use Zoom
Comstock Center**

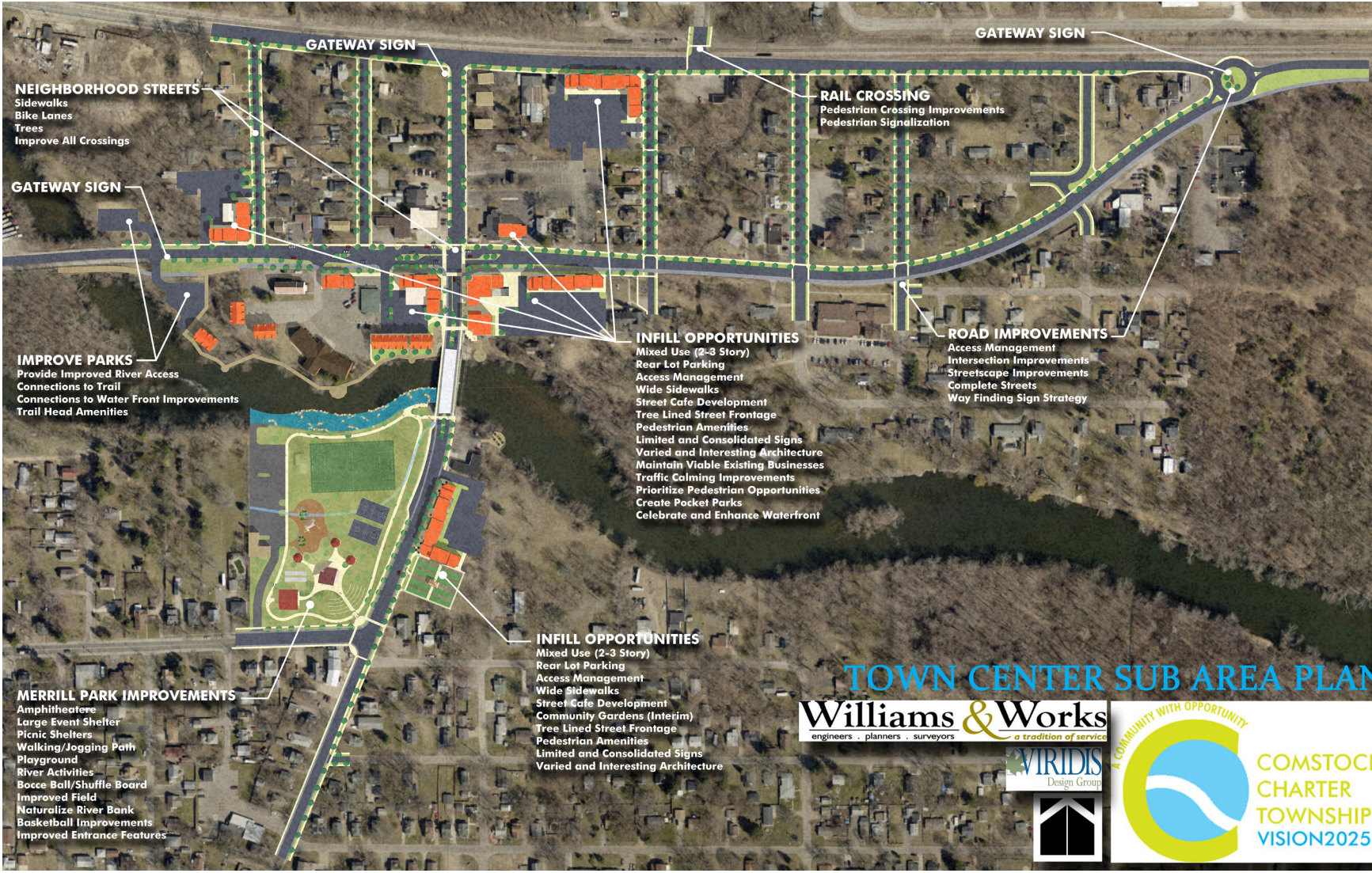
-  Creek Overlay
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Core Residential
-  Town Center



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Data Source: Michigan CGI

COMSTOCK CENTER PLAN DETAIL



COMSTOCK CENTER ENTRYWAY ON RIVER STREET



The vision for Comstock Center includes a signed entryway and pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Signage and lighting design and placement may differ from what is depicted.

COMSTOCK CENTER LOOKING SOUTH WITH INFILL DEVELOPMENT



The vision for Comstock Center includes a walkable downtown which focuses on river access and Merrill Park. The above conceptual drawing is for visualization and illustrative purposes only. The number of building stories, building placement, and design may differ from what is depicted.

COMSTOCK CENTER AND MERRILL PARK



The vision for Comstock Center includes the modernization and enhancement of Merrill Park as a center of community activity and recreation. The amenities and design depicted are for illustrative purposes only.

COMSTOCK CENTER SUB AREA

Goal and Selected Objective

Comstock Center will serve as the focal point, identity, and gathering place of Comstock Township residents and visitors. Land uses surrounding Merrill Park, the Kalamazoo River, and Township Hall will be mixed, dense, walkable, and accessible by transit and non-motorized forms of transportation. The architecture, form, and signage of Comstock Center will be consistent with the overall vision for the Township.

To capture tax increment, study, and if feasible, establish a DDA, Principal Shopping District, or Redevelopment Project Area within the Comstock Town Center to help enhance, manage and promote the downtown. With all three designations mentioned above, among the many benefits is the ability for owners interested in a food and beverage establishment to qualify for a Redevelopment Liquor License, which are more affordable and are not limited by population thresholds like quota or Class-C licenses.

Future Land Use and Implementation Strategies

Figure 4.3 outlines the future land use categories envisioned for the Comstock Center Sub Area. By and large, the Comstock Center Sub Area is envisioned to be within in the Town Center future land use designation. Small areas of Parks and Open Space and Core Residential future land use designations are also envisioned in Comstock Center.

In order to implement the vision of the Comstock Center Sub Area Plan strategies and steps must be identified. The Comstock Center Sub Area may be implemented in the following ways:

- Create a Town Center or specific Comstock Center zoning district with form based code design standards and language which allows for a mix of uses.
- Organize a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Business Improvement District (BID) or other tax increment financing district to help finance improvements in the Sub Area and acquire properties to be redeveloped by others.
- Amend the B-2 Community Business District standards to incorporate the intent and vision of the Comstock Center Sub Area.
- As properties become available, acquire them for future redevelopment and use toward the vision of the Comstock Center Sub Area.

GULL ROAD SUB AREA

Location

The Gull Road Sub Area is located along and adjacent to Michigan Highway 43 (M-43, Gull Road) in the northwest quadrant of the Township and intersects with Sprinkle Road.

Existing Conditions, Land Use, and Zoning

Figure 4.4 outlines existing land uses in the Gull Road Sub Area. The Sub Area is dominated by regional commercial, retail, and restaurant uses. The Sub Area is largely built out with the exception of existing farmland to the west of the Walmart, east of the Tractor Supply Company, and on the south side of Gull Road near the northeast end of the Sub Area. Automobile oriented retail with large parking areas and significant setbacks dominate the form of the commercial uses in the Sub Area.

Sidewalks are present along both sides of Gull Road between Sprinkle Road and the southwest terminus of the Sub Area and on the north side of Gull Road between Sprinkle Road and the north east terminus of the Sub Area. The Gull Road corridor contains the longest stretch of sidewalk in Comstock Charter Township. The entirety of the corridor is also served by public water and sewer service.

Figure 4.5 outlines the zoning of the Gull Road Sub Area. The Sub Area is primarily divided between the B-2 Community Business District and B-3 General Business District. Several parcels are also zoned R-1A Single Family District, B-1 Neighborhood Business District, and O-1 Office District. Adjacent to the Sub Area, large tracts are zoned R-1A Single Family District and RM Multiple Family Residential District.

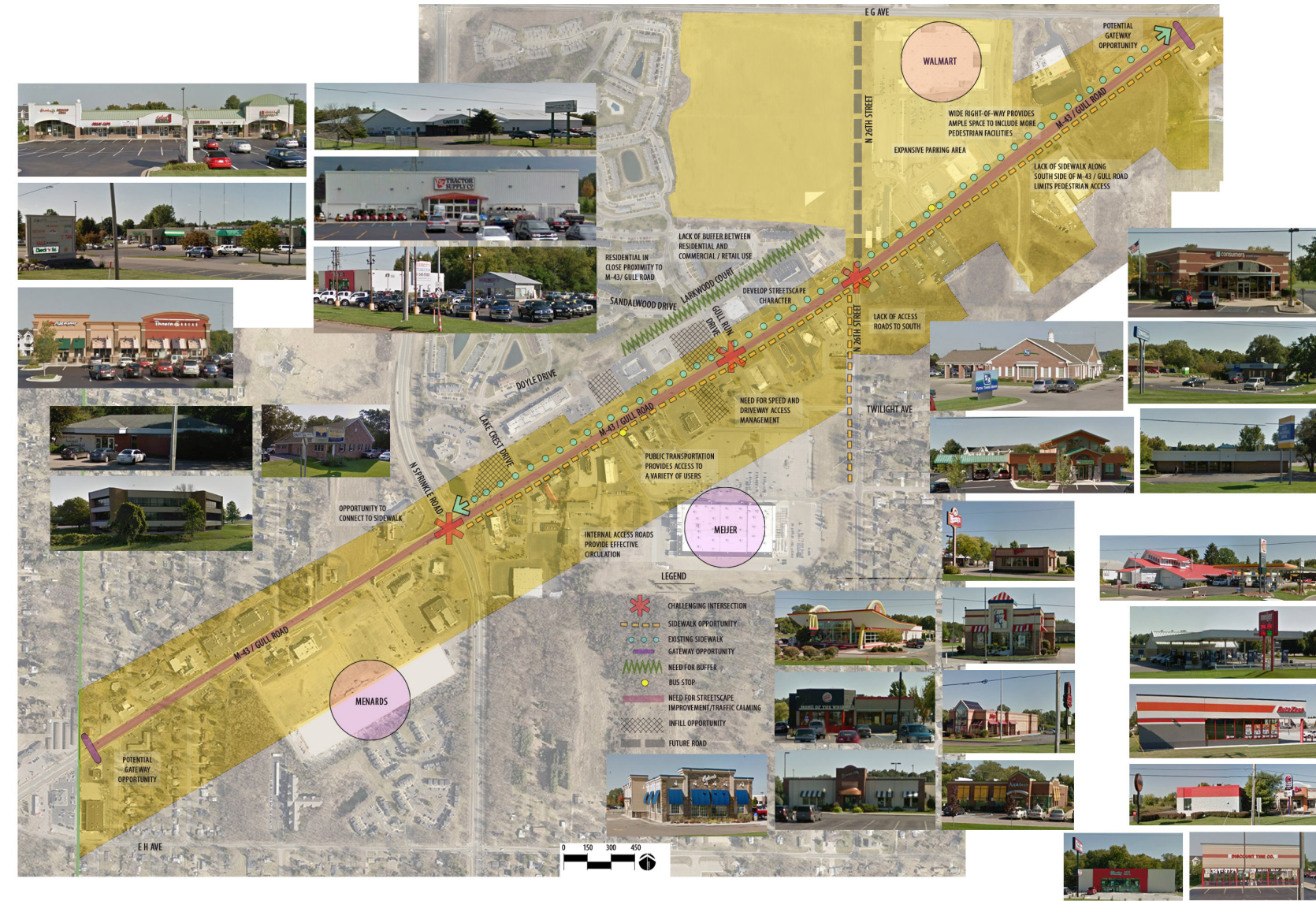
Existing Uses

- Regional Commercial
- Retail
- Restaurant

Existing Zoning

- B-2 Community Business District
- B-3 General Business District
- R-1A Single Family District
- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- O-1 Office District

GULL ROAD EXISTING CONDITIONS



COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP Master Plan 2025/Gull Road - Sub Area Plan

Figure 4.4:
**Existing Land Use Zoom
Gull Road**

- Urban / Built Up
- Scrub / Shrub
- Forest Land
- Agricultural
- Wetlands
- Water

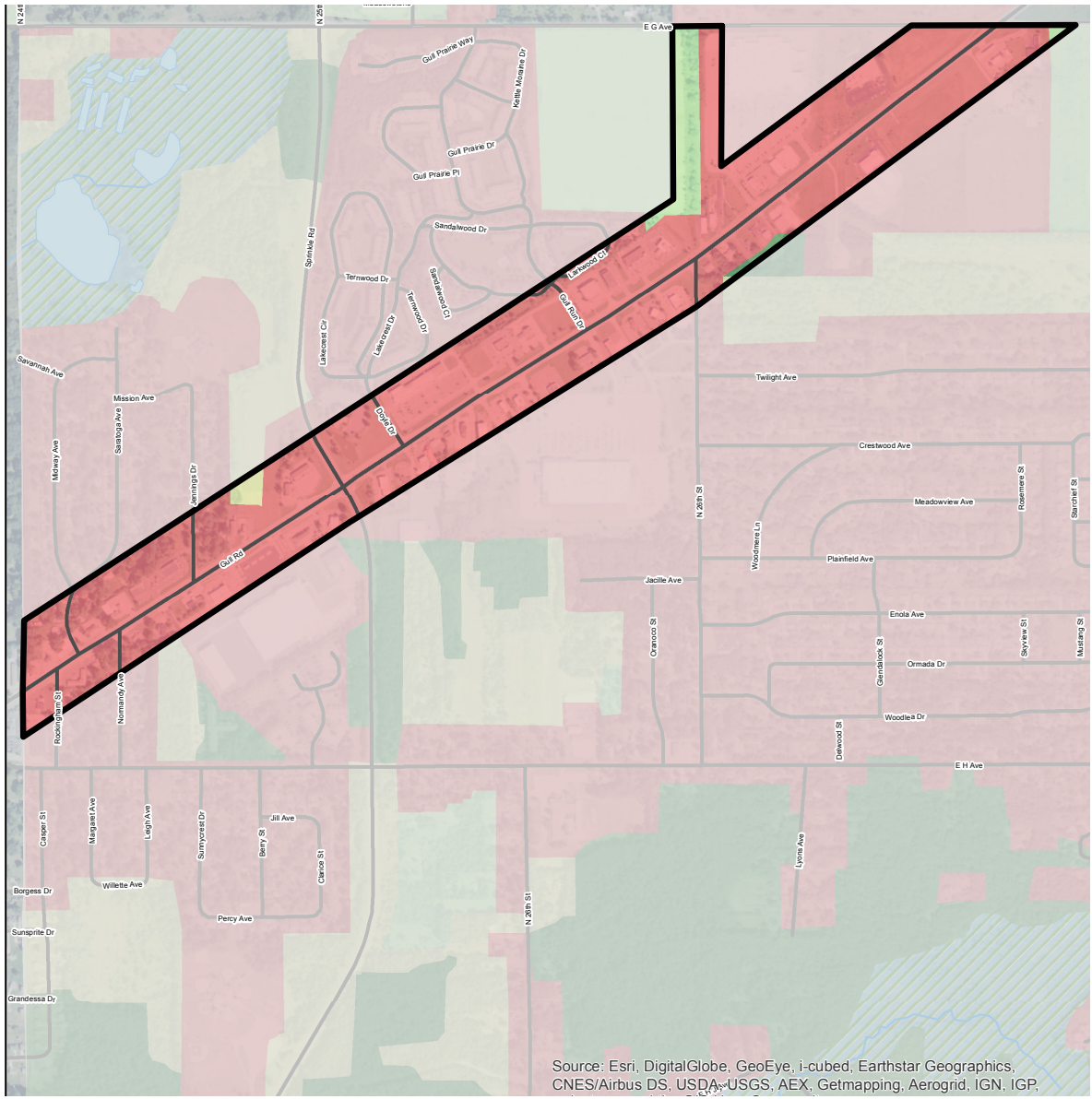


Figure 4.5:
**Zoning Zoom
Gull Road**

- R-1A Single Family District
- RM Multiple Family Residential District
- O-1 Office District
- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 Community Business District
- B-3 General Business District

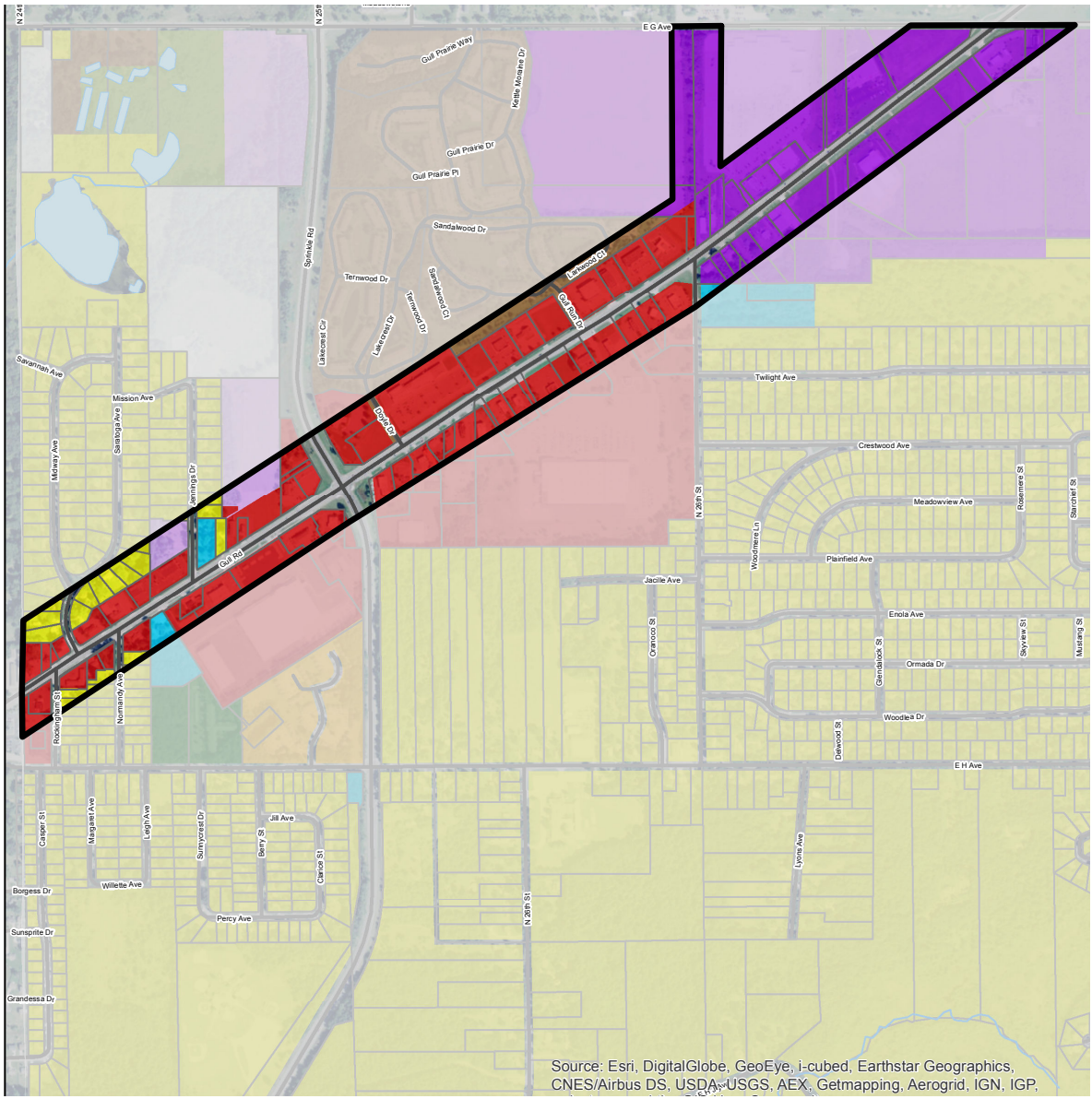
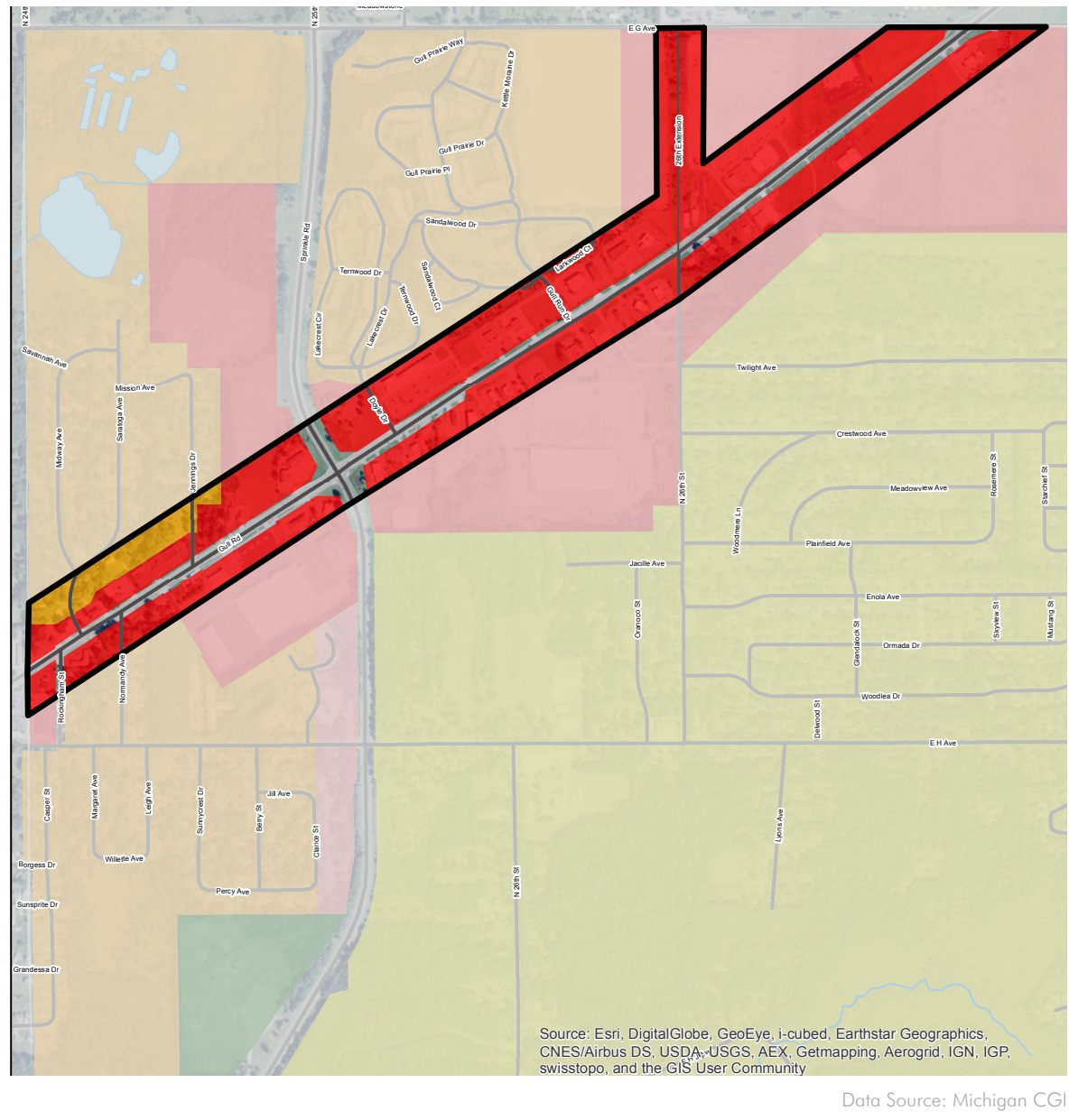
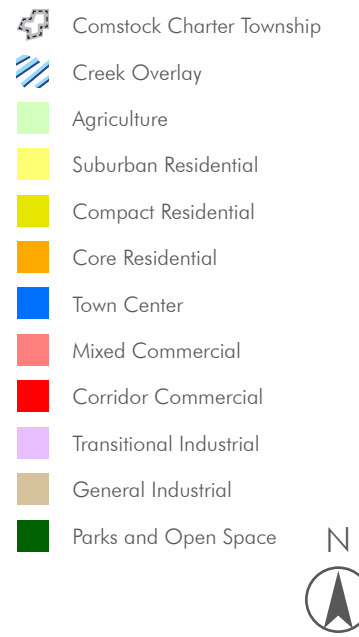


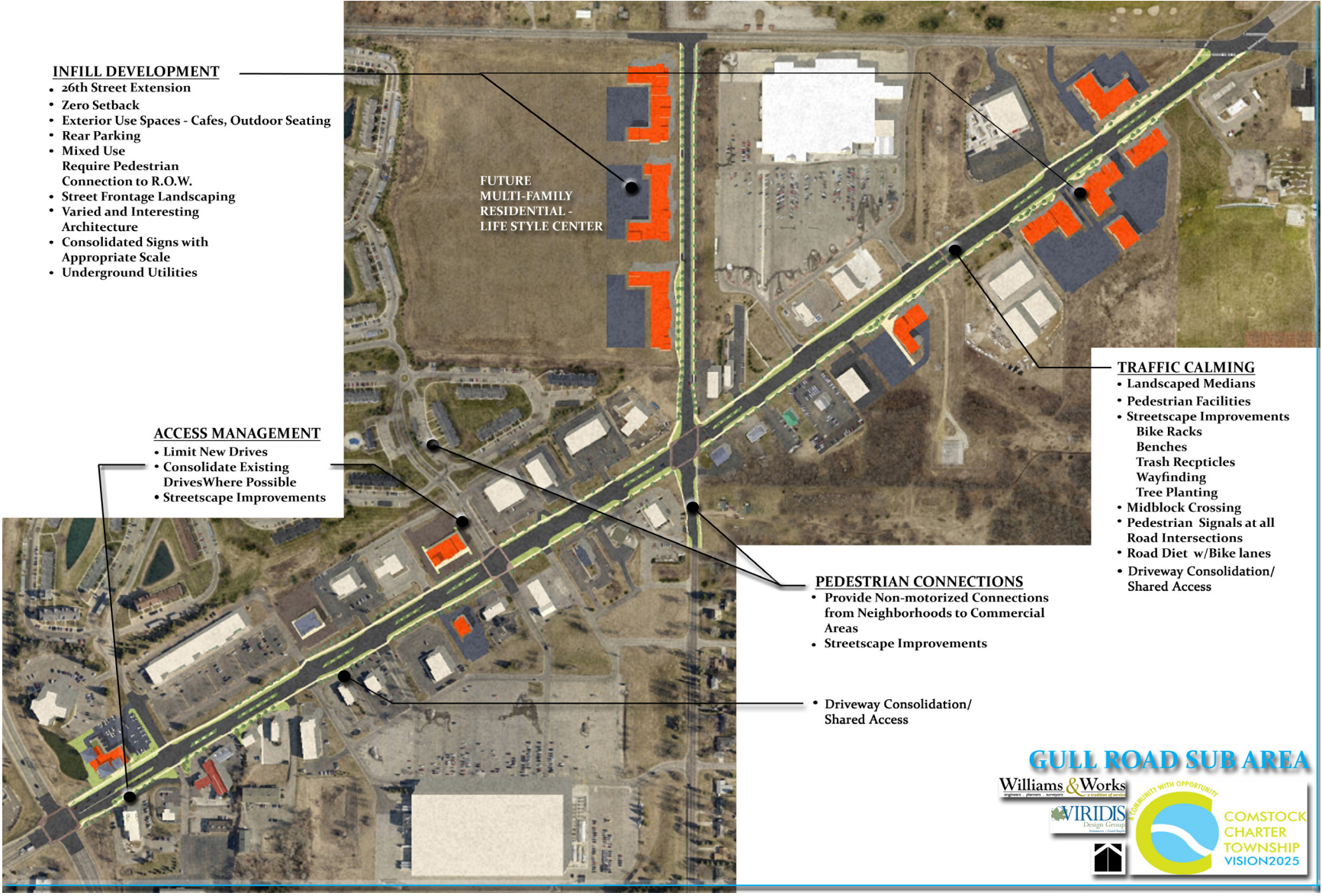
Figure 4.6:
**Future Land Use Zoom
Gull Road**



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Data Source: Michigan CGI

GULL ROAD PLAN DETAIL



GULL ROAD AT SPRINKLE ROAD LOOKING EAST WITH INFILL DEVELOPMENT



The vision for Gull Road includes infill development built out to the right-of-way with parking behind the building and non-motorized facilities lining both sides of the street. The design and location of infill development will vary depending upon market conditions and private investment.

FUTURE 26TH STREET EXTENSION INTERSECTION



The vision for Gull Road includes enhanced intersections with clearly identifiable pedestrian crossing points and planted medians. Planted medians and street trees help to protect the pedestrian and calm traffic. Enhancements to the public-right-of way will require coordination with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

GULL ROAD SIGN CONSOLIDATION



The vision for Gull Road includes sign consolidation and the decluttering of the public realm by streamlining sign design. Sign standards adopted by the Township may result in signs that appear different than what is portrayed.

GULL ROAD SUB AREA

Goal and Selected Objective

The Gull Road corridor will serve as the regional commercial hub of Comstock Township. Future development within the corridor will enhance access and safety for multiple modes of transportation and improve the quality of life for those living, working, and playing in Comstock Charter Township. The architecture, form, and signage of Gull Road will be consistent with the overall vision for the Township.

To decrease parking and paved surfaces, thereby reducing storm water runoff and improving water quality, incentivize reduced parking near transit stops and mixed-use areas and require shared access.

Future Land Use and Implementation Strategies

Figure 4.5 outlines the future land use categories envisioned in the Gull Road Sub Area. The majority of the Gull Road Sub Area is envisioned to be within in the Corridor Commercial future land use designation. Small areas of Core Residential future land use designations are also envisioned in the Gull Road Sub Area.

In order to implement the vision of the Gull Road Sub Area Plan strategies and steps must be identified. The Gull Road Sub Area may be implemented in the following ways:

- Create a corridor commercial or Gull Road specific commercial zoning district with form based code design standards which require low profile signs, cohesive architecture, and shared access.
- Create a Gull Road overlay district with specific design standards related to landscaping, access management, and building form.
- Organize a Corridor Improvement District (CID) or Business Improvement District (BID) which finances improvements envisioned for the Sub Area.
- Amend the B-2 Community Business District and B-3 General Business District standards to incorporate the intent and vision of the Gull Road Sub Area.

SPRINKLE ROAD SUB AREA

Location

The Sprinkle Road Sub area is located along and adjacent to Sprinkle Road in the southwest quadrant of the Township along the Township border with the City of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Charter Township. The Sub Area is also intersected by Interstate 94.

Existing Conditions, Land Use, and Zoning

Figure 4.7 outlines existing land uses in the Sprinkle Road Sub Area. The Sub Area is dominated by industrial, storage, commercial, and service uses. The Sub Area contains a large area of undeveloped frontage along the eastern side of Sprinkle Road south of Interstate 94. The area to the north of Interstate 94 is largely built out.

The Sub Area does not contain sidewalks on either side of Sprinkle Road. However, pedestrian crossings exist at Sprinkle and ML Avenue as well as Sprinkle and Park Circle Drive. The Sub Area is completely underserved by non-motorized transportation options. The entirety of the corridor is served by public water and sewer service.

Figure 4.8 outlines the zoning of the Sprinkle Road Sub Area. The Sub Area is primarily divided between the M Manufacturing District and B-3 General Business District. Several parcels are also zoned R-1B Single Family District and LM Light Manufacturing District. The majority of land Zoned M Manufacturing District adjacent to the Sub Area is part of the Midlink Planned Unit Development.

Existing Uses

- Industrial
- Storage
- Commercial
- Services

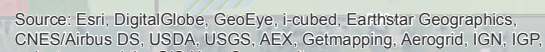
Existing Zoning

- M Manufacturing District
- B-3 General Business District
- R-1B Single Family District
- LM Light Manufacturing District

SPRINKLE ROAD EXISTING CONDITIONS

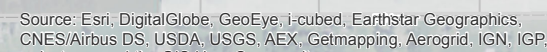


Figure 4.7:















134 Implementation

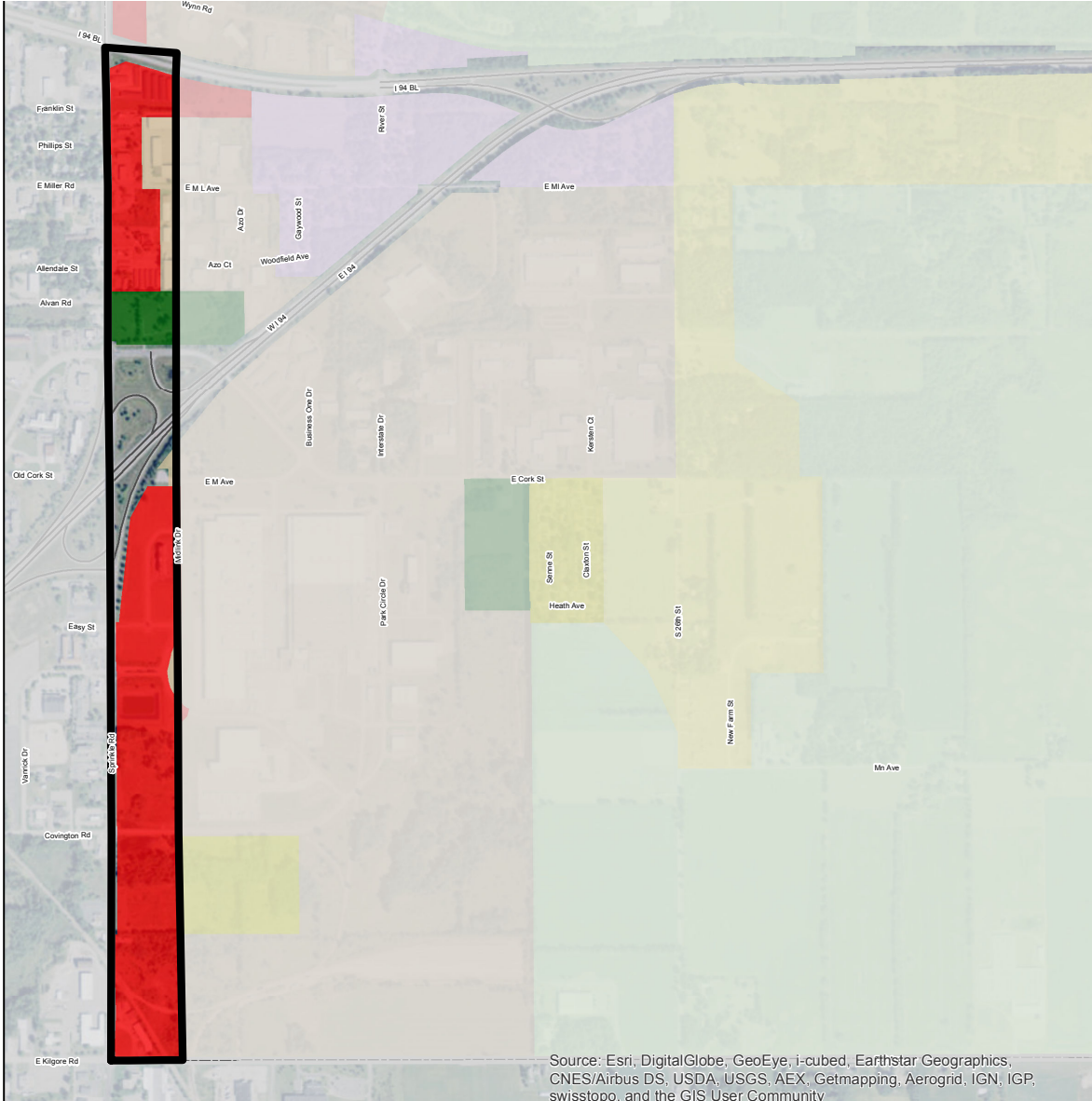
Figure 4.8:



Implementation 135

Figure 4.9:
**Future Land Use Zoom
Sprinkle Road**

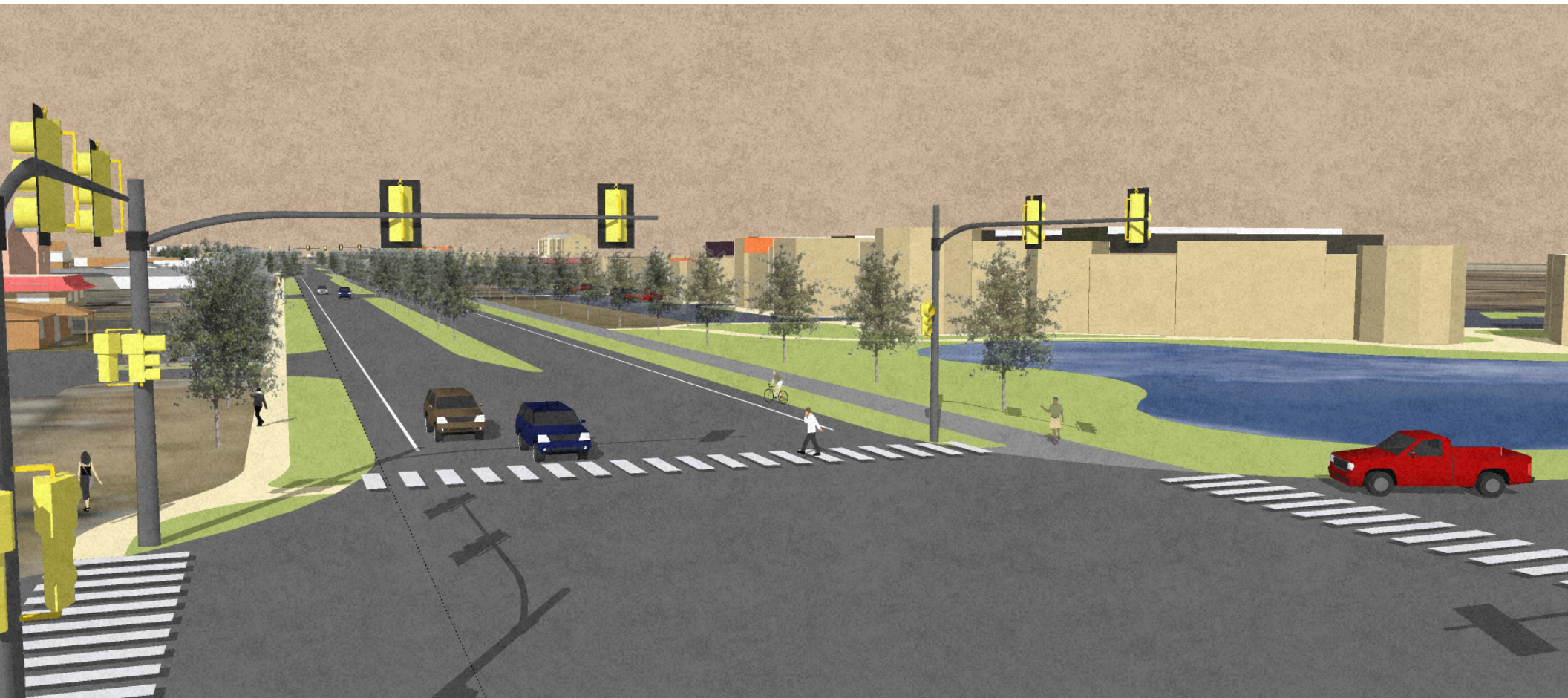
-  Comstock Charter Township
-  Creek Overlay
-  Agriculture
-  Suburban Residential
-  Compact Residential
-  Core Residential
-  Town Center
-  Mixed Commercial
-  Corridor Commercial
-  Transitional Industrial
-  General Industrial
-  Parks and Open Space



SPRINKLE ROAD PLAN DETAIL

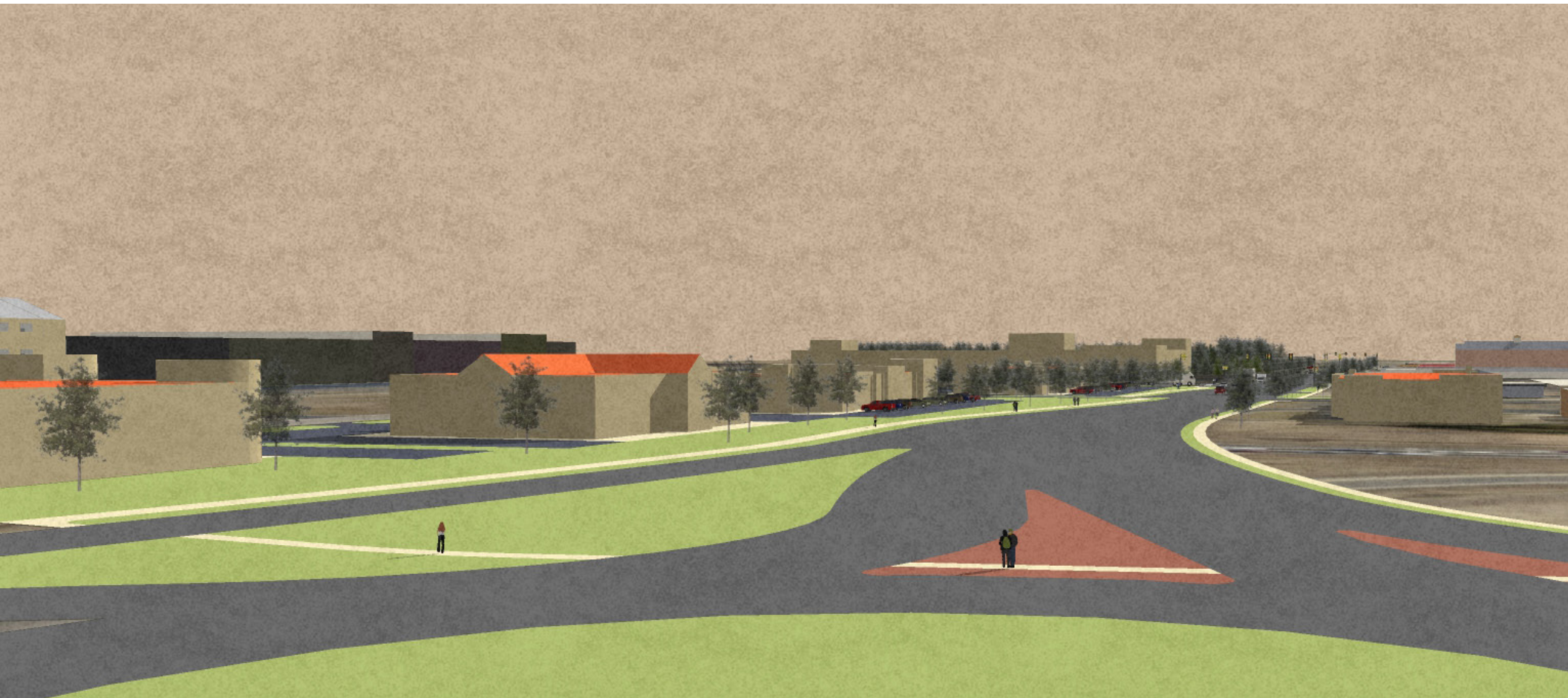


SPRINKLE ROAD LOOKING NORTH



The vision for Sprinkle Road includes the addition of bicycle facilities and sidewalks on both sides of the street. Intersections should include striped cross-walks and ADA compliant facilities. Enhancements to the public-right-of way will require coordination with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

SPRINKLE ROAD INFILL DEVELOPMENT LOOKING SOUTH



The vision for Sprinkle Road includes commercial infill development along road frontage that takes advantage of higher traffic counts in front of industrial and office buildings. The design and location of infill development will vary depending upon market conditions and private investment.

SPRINKLE ROAD SIGN GATEWAY



The vision for Sprinkle Road includes a gateway with unified identification signage and street trees. Depicted gateway signage design may differ once implemented.

SPRINKLE ROAD SUB AREA

Selected Goal and Objective

Comstock Township residents and others will have ample employment opportunities within the community and employers will find a talent pool of highly educated and skilled workers. Land in close proximity to transportation networks will be available for industry growth, and complementary uses will support workforce needs.

To support transit, designate areas in and around the Sprinkle Road/I-94 corridor for industrial, office, and mixed use to support a campus-style walkable work atmosphere where services are available to meet daily needs, such as child care, eating and drinking establishments, financial institutions, etc.

Future Land Use and Implementation Strategies

Figure 4.9 outlines the future land use categories envisioned in the Sprinkle Road Sub Area. The majority of the Sprinkle Road Sub Area is envisioned to be within in the Corridor Commercial future land use designation. Small areas of General Industrial and Parks and Open Space future land use designations are also envisioned in the Sprinkle Road Sub Area.

In order to implement the vision of the Sprinkle Road Sub Area Plan, strategies and steps must be identified. The Sprinkle Road Sub Area may be implemented in the following ways:

- Create a corridor commercial or Sprinkle Road specific commercial zoning district with form based code design standards which require infill and redevelopment to be built out to the street with more than one story and permit a mix of uses to serve the surrounding industrial uses.
- Create a Sprinkle Road overlay district with specific design standards related to landscaping, signs, access management, building form, and features which benefit nearby employment and industrial uses.
- Organize a Corridor Improvement District (CID) or Business Improvement District (BID) which finances improvements envisioned for the Sub Area.
- Amend the M Manufacturing District and LM Light Manufacturing District standards to incorporate the intent and vision of the Sprinkle Road Sub Area.

AREA TRANSPORTATION AND TRAILWAYS

A major component in Comstock Vision 2025 is the role that transportation plays in the daily lives of residents and visitors. While the Township does not have jurisdiction over local roads or state trunk-lines, the Township does have the ability to encourage non-motorized forms of transportation by requiring sidewalk and other forms of non-motorized transportation and creating policy environment that is supportive of alternative modes of transportation.

Complete Streets

Comstock Vision 2025 supports complete streets policy. Complete streets are planned, designed and constructed to allow access to all legal users safely and efficiently, without any one user taking priority over another. Users of streets in Comstock Charter Township include pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and users of assistive devices. Complete streets can result in increased safety for non-motorized users, improved public health, a cleaner environment, mobility equity and enhanced quality of life through increased modal choices and more inviting streets.

Furthermore, a key motivation to enact complete streets policies is that Michigan law encourages the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to give additional consideration to enhancement and other grant applications with such policies adopted. The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) has adopted a complete streets policy as well requiring context appropriate provisions of complete streets on federal projects. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act has also been amended to stipulate that transportation improvements be respectful of the surrounding context, further ensuring that more equitable and attractive streets become a reality.

Some complete streets features may be accomplished through simple road restriping and the addition of signage. Other projects may be more involved and may only be practicable when coordinated with major roadway reconstruction. The Township should work with neighboring communities, the County Road Commission, MDOT, and other pertinent agencies in the continued implementation of complete streets policy.

Figure 4.10:

Rights of Way

- Abandoned
- Private
- Public
- Railroad
- Unclassified



Rights-of-Way

Similar to most communities in the State of Michigan, the majority of the rights of way in Comstock Charter Township are under public ownership. Nonetheless, approximately 34 miles of right-of-way in the Township is under private ownership. The majority of private rights-of-way and private roadways in the Township are associated with condominiums, planned unit developments, and apartment developments. When implementing a sidewalk or non-motorized transportation plan in the Township, including these private developments may be difficult. The Township should look to work with these existing developments and their neighborhood associations on non-motorized facilities and connections to the larger non-motorized network. New developments with private streets should be required to provide non-motorized facilities.

Proposed Recreation Trail Connections

Figure 4.11 outlines existing and proposed recreational trail connections. Two Township trail connections are proposed. The preferred route as indicated by residents in the Township is located along 26th Street, past Comstock High School and North Elementary School, and then continues along H Avenue to McLinden Trails and Robert Morris Park. The secondary route was established as an alternative due to the concern that there may not be adequate room along 26th Street for a full non-motorized trail. The purpose of these proposed trail connections is to connect the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVt) to various Township parks and recreation facilities as well as public facilities such as schools.

Figure 4.11:

Proposed Recreation Trail Connections

- Preferred Route
- Secondary Route
- KRVt



Data Source: Michigan CGI, Kalamazoo County GIS

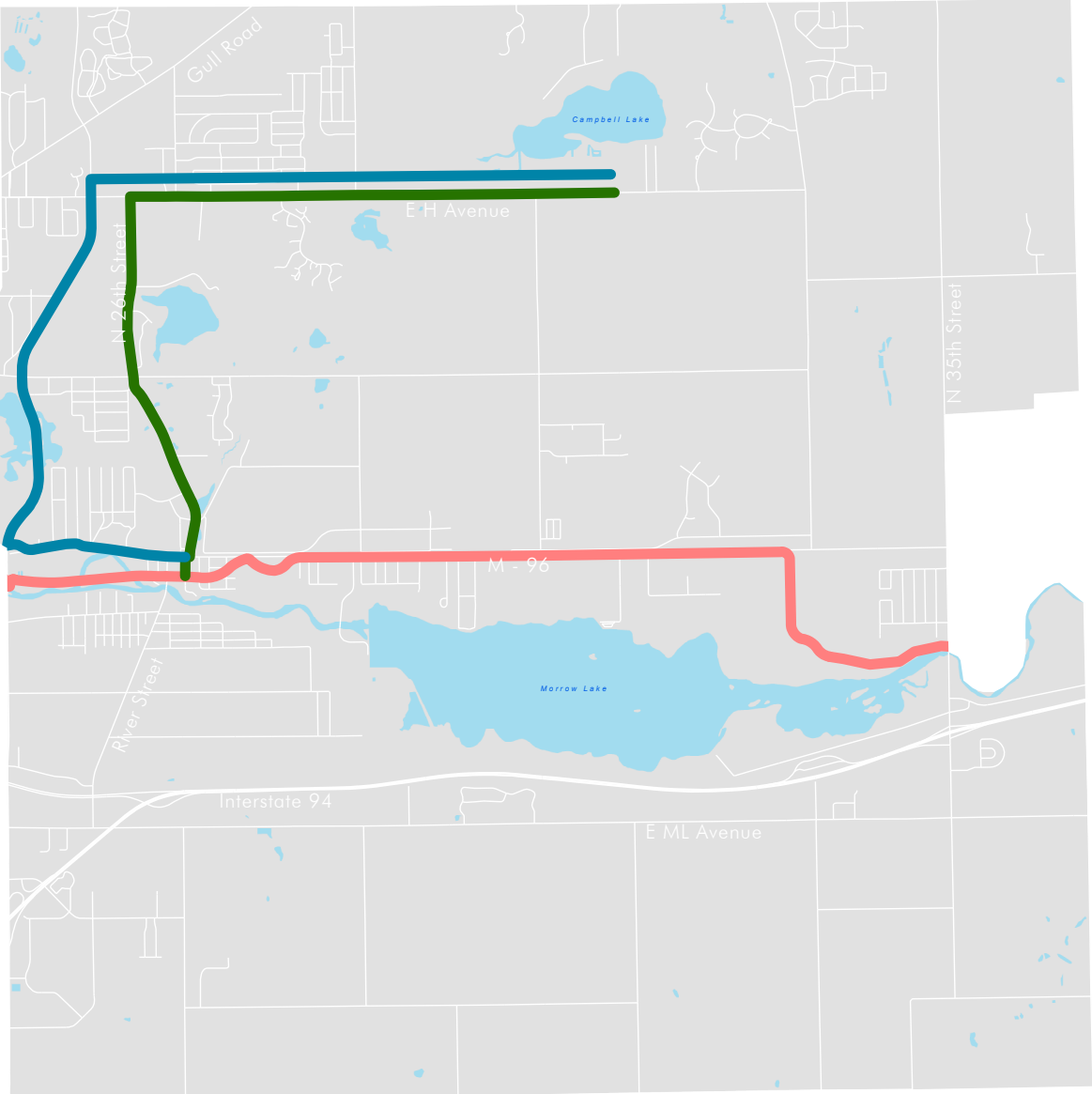
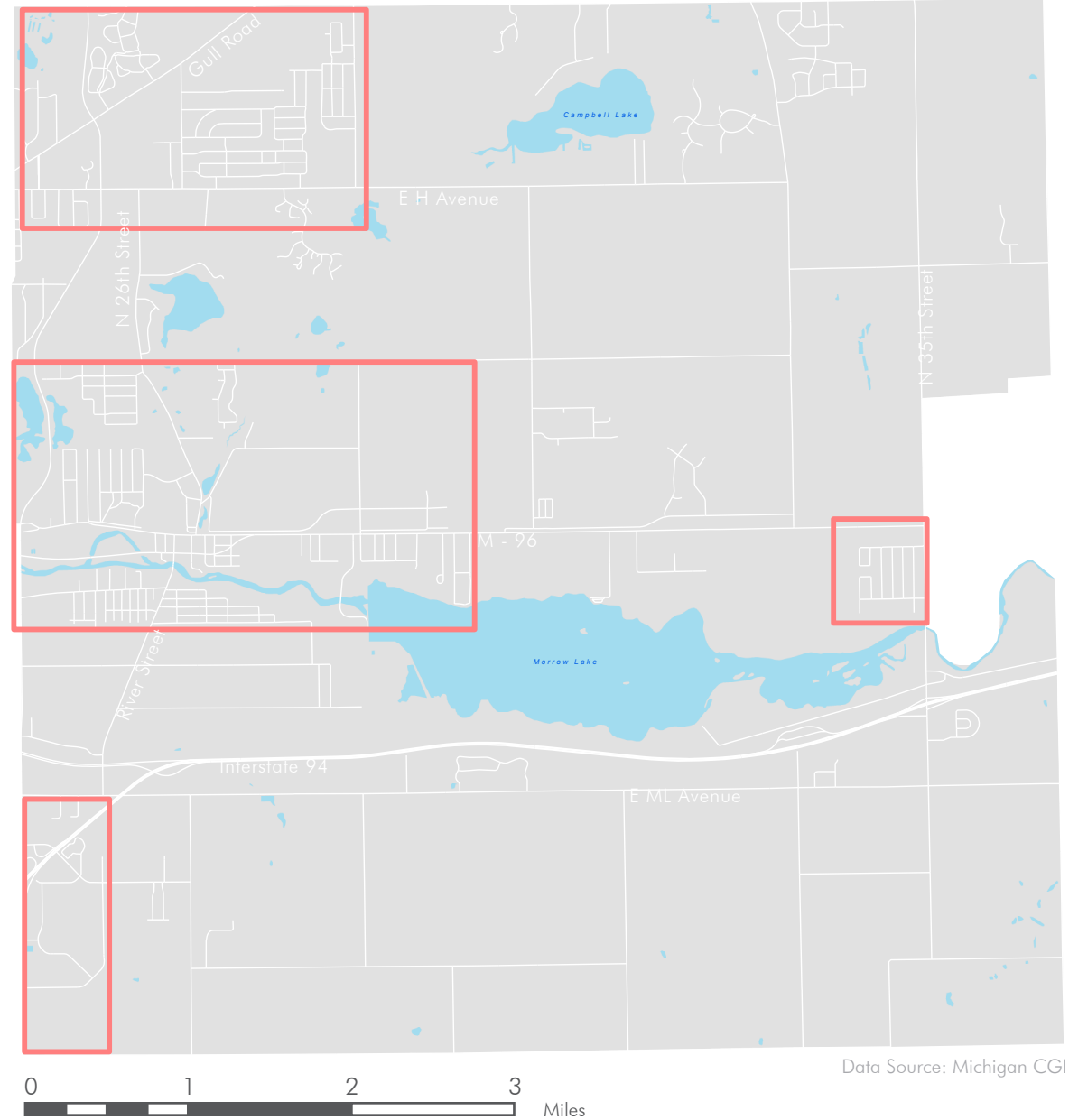


Figure 4.12:
**Sidewalk and Pathway
Priority Areas**

 Priority Area







Sidewalk and Pathway Priority Areas

Figure 4.12 outlines sidewalk and pathway priority areas identified in the Township. These priority areas have been selected as under-served by non-motorized transportation options in the more densely developed or commercial areas of the Township. All four priority areas are partially built-out; however, all have vacant properties or parcels which could be developed in the near future. The Township should focus any sidewalk installation program within the sidewalk and pathway priority areas.

Implementation Strategies

The Township Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory mechanism for implementing Comstock Vision 2025. The following action items outline the changes or modifications necessary to bring the Township Zoning Ordinance and General Township Ordinances into conformance with the vision of this plan:

-  Amend the subdivision ordinance and condominium standards to require grid patterns of development and sidewalks.
-  Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incentivize reduced parking for site inclusion of transit features, pedestrian facilities, and bike parking, and for certain uses, allow the applicant or property owner to determine how much parking is necessary for their development or business.
-  Adopt a sidewalk and pathway ordinance to require all new development and redevelopments to build a pathway if located in the pathway priority area.
-  Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for mixed uses with a requirement for transit amenities, including shelters, bicycle parking, and a pedestrian-scale street space.

The above action items should be addressed primarily by the Township Planning Commission with support from Township staff and/or planning consultants.



FLOODPLAIN, WATER RESOURCES, AND WETLANDS

A central idea of Comstock Vision 2025 is to reinvent and refresh the community's perspective of the Kalamazoo River and other tributaries in the Township as an economic development strategy. A key component of doing so is the preparation of an inventory of important natural features and the role they play in water quality, land use, and recreation.

The following pages include maps which identify the location of wetlands, watersheds, varying topography, and 100-year floodways.

Wetland areas are often low-lying areas adjacent to surface water which are prone to flooding. Often, these features work as a natural filter and barrier to open water and are a benefit to water quality.

Comstock Township is home to five watersheds, the largest of which is the Kalamazoo River. Other watersheds include Comstock Creek, Davis Creek, Gull Creek, and the Portage River. Figure 4.14 identifies watersheds in the Township.

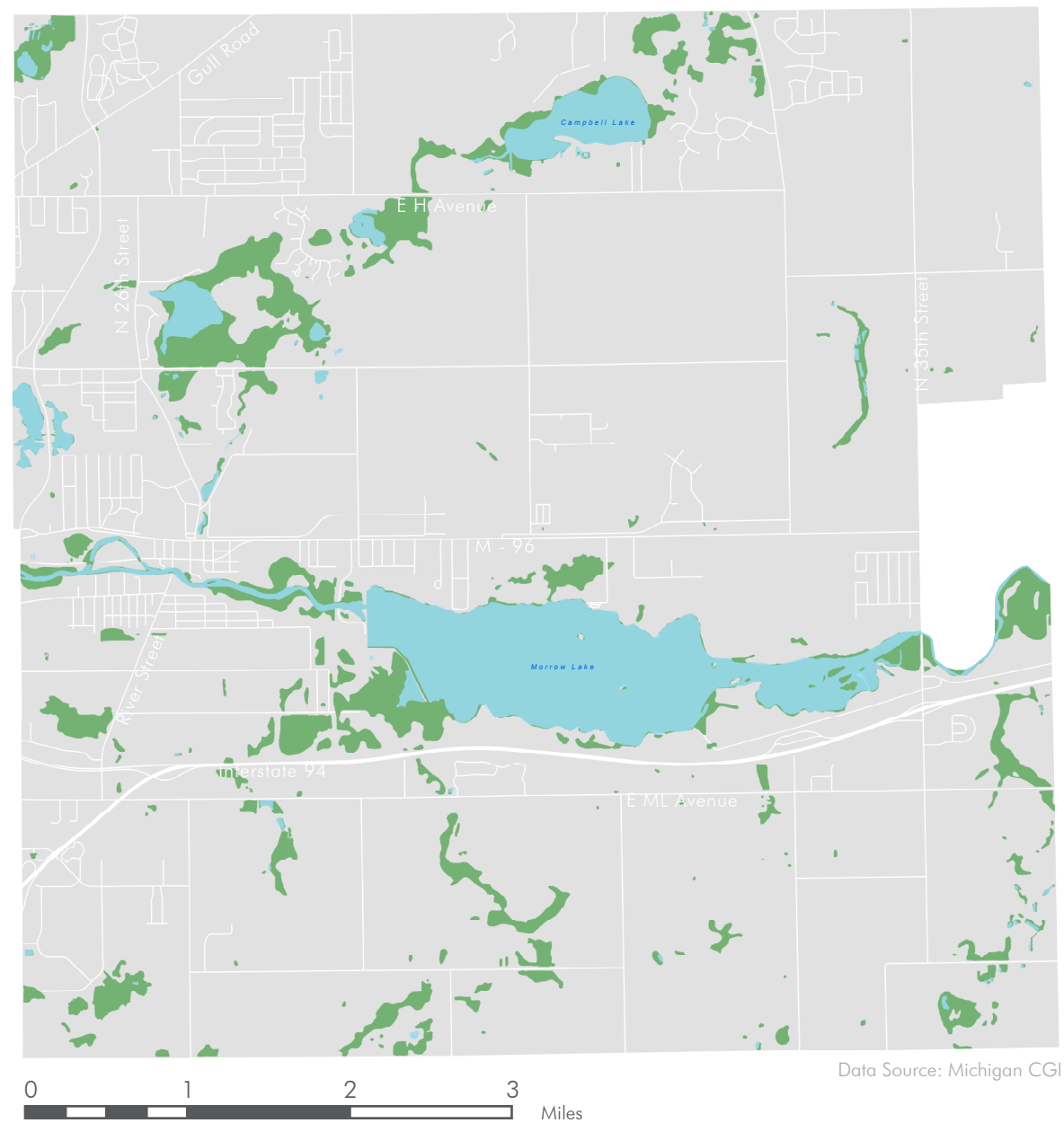
The Township also has several low-lying areas, as indicated by the topographic and flood hazard maps, which are prone to flooding. 100-year floodplain areas are those determined to annually have a 1% chance of being inundated by water.

Construction within a 100-year floodplain is generally restricted; however, new residential construction is specifically prohibited in a floodway by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The floodplain is divided into two parts, the floodway which carries most of the flow during a flood event, and the floodway fringe which is an area of very slow moving water.

In general, construction and fill may be permitted in the portions of the floodplain that are not floodway, if local ordinance and building standards are met, and compensating excavation is provided equal to the volume of fill placed in the floodplain.

Figure 4.13:
National Wetlands Inventory

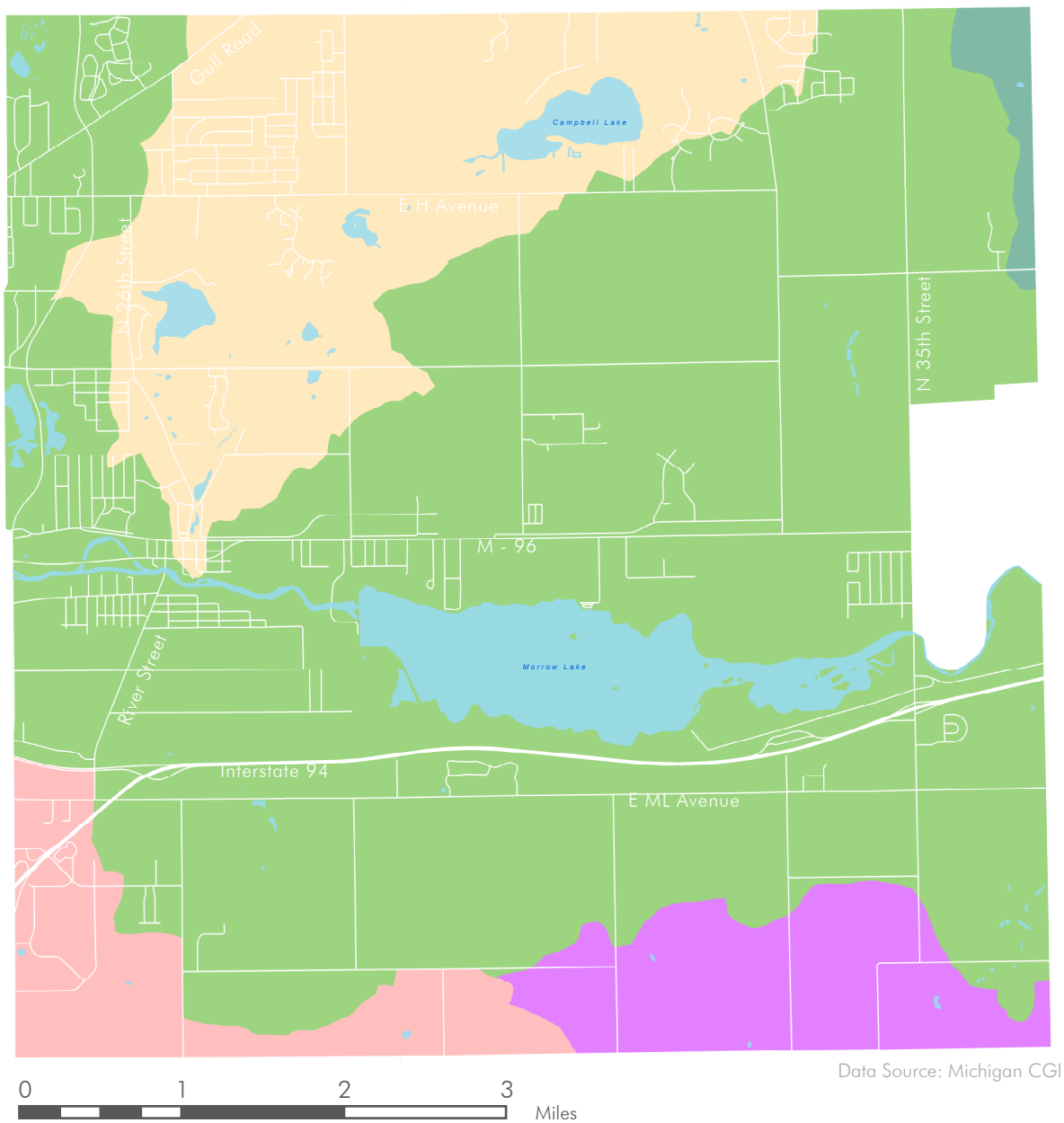
 National Wetlands Inventory



Data Source: Michigan CGI

Figure 4.14:
Watersheds

-  Comstock Creek
-  Davis Creek
-  Gull Creek
-  Kalamazoo River
-  Portage River



Data Source: Michigan CGI

Figure 4.15:
Topography

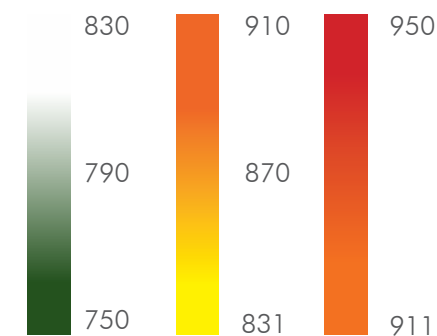
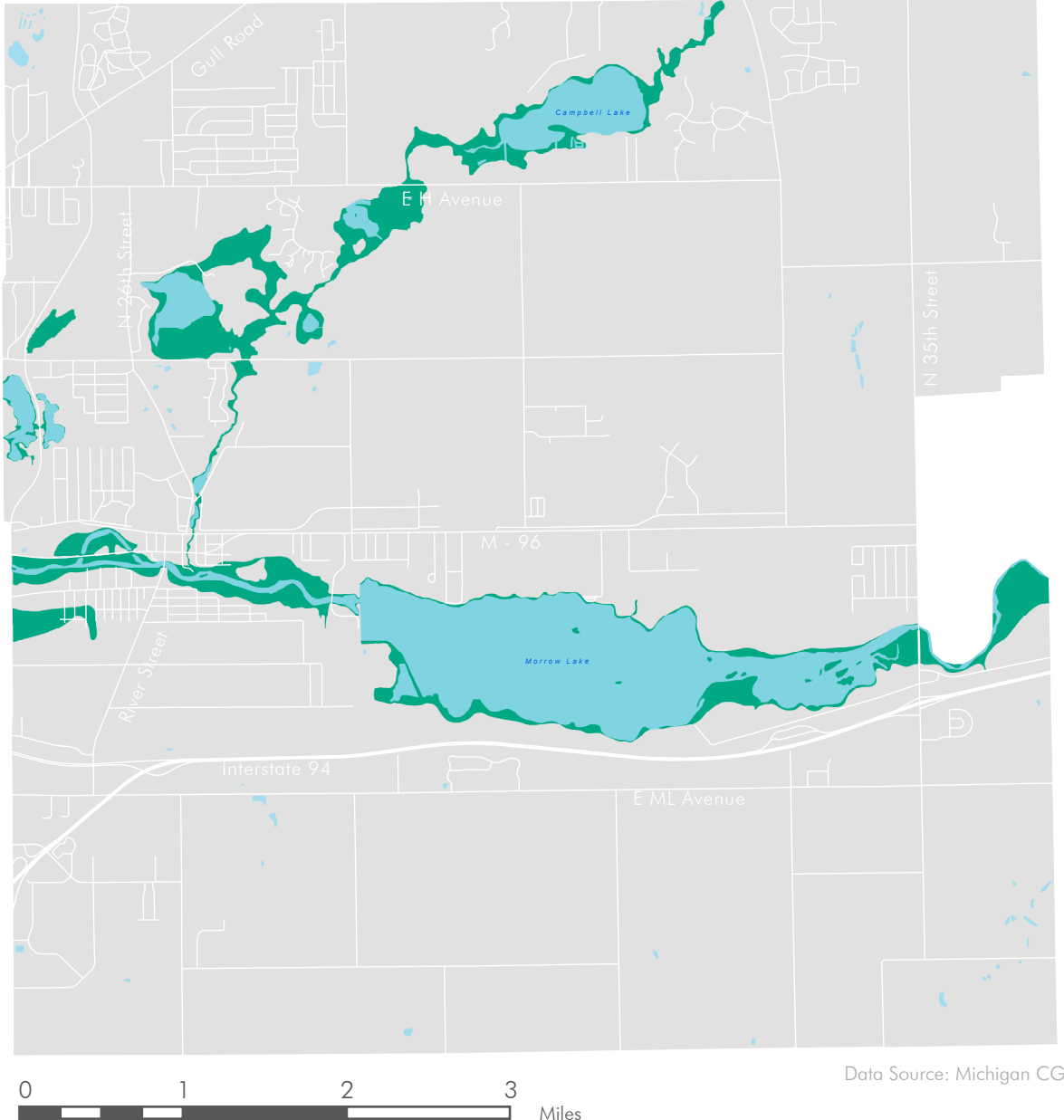


Figure 4.16:
100 Year Flood Hazard

 100 Year Flood Hazard



Implementation Strategies

The Township Zoning Ordinance is the primary regulatory mechanism for implementing Comstock Vision 2025. The following action items outline the changes or modifications necessary to bring the Township Zoning Ordinance and General Township Ordinances into conformance with the vision of this plan:

- Establish buffer or overlay districts as outlined in the Future Land Use map and Figure 4.17, with an emphasis on Comstock Creek, to preserve inland lakes, streams, the Kalamazoo River, and surrounding wetlands.
- Expand or utilize the existing Open Wetlands Zoning District to protect sensitive areas and existing wetlands around Morrow Lake.
- Develop standards in the Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Zoning Districts that seek to minimize point and non-point sources of pollution into the local watershed. These standards may include the creation of a separate storm water runoff ordinance developed in cooperation with the Kalamazoo County Drain Commission. These standards may also incorporate rain gardens or other sustainable water filtration design features.
- Amend the current landscaping standards to allow for total landscaping calculations to include rain gardens or other such water absorbing or filtering landscaping. These standards may be an incentive or a requirement if located with a certain distance to any water resource.

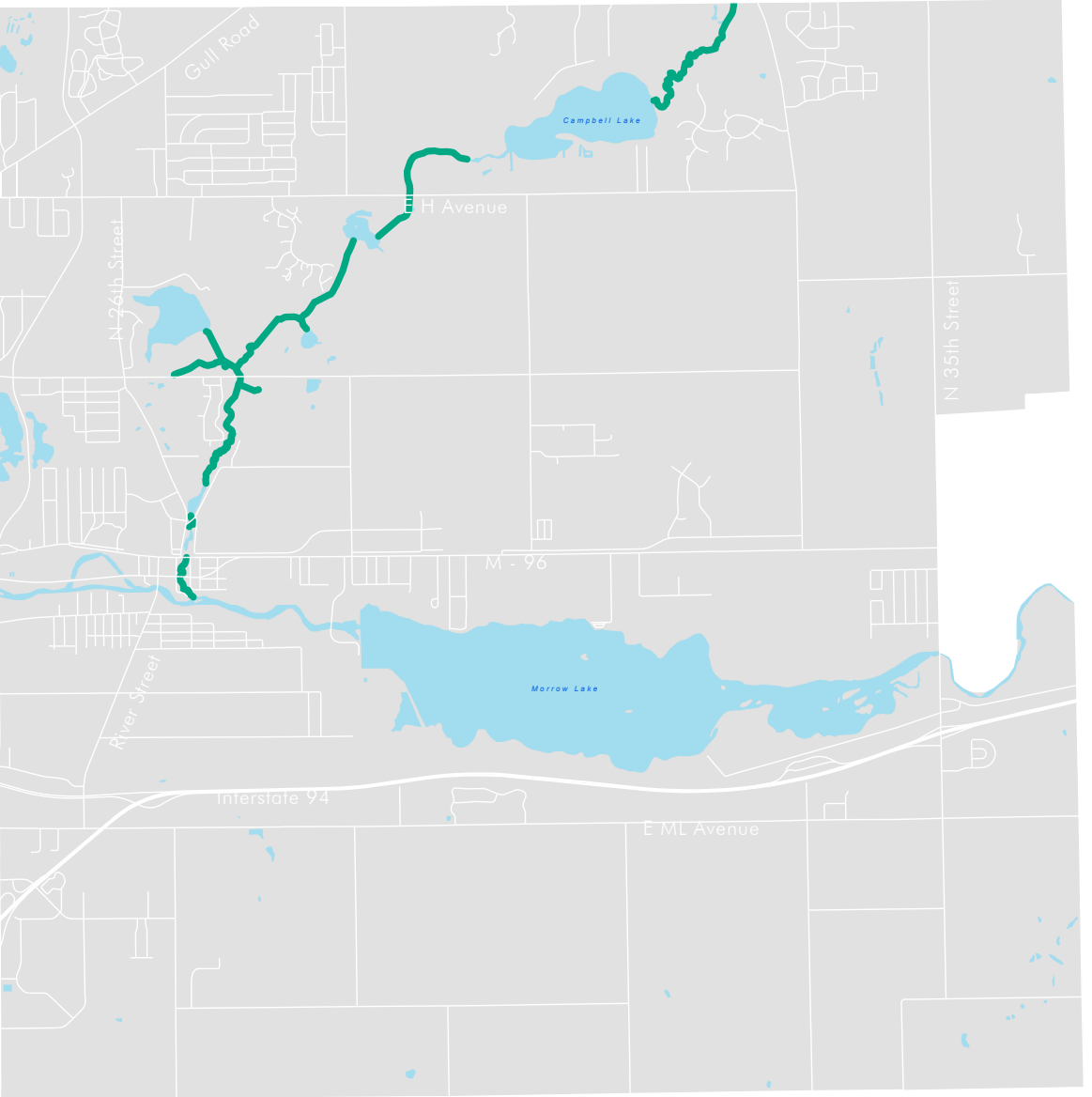
The above action items should be addressed primarily by the Township Planning Commission with support from Township staff and/or planning consultants.

Figure 4.17:
Proposed Creek Overlay

■ Comstock Creek Overlay



Data Source: Michigan CGI



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Implementation Step	Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility
Develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for water, sewer and other public infrastructure and assets, and annually update.	A1	0-1 years, then ongoing	TS, PC, PZA
Draft landscaping provisions in Zoning Ordinance to beautify corridors, enhance aesthetics of commercial sites and to screen incompatible uses.	A2	0-1 years	PC, PZA
Investigate viability of creating a Downtown Development Authority.	A2	0-1 years	TS, PZA
Draft outdoor lighting standards to better reflect goals and objectives to enhance compatibility of nonresidential development and the residential and rural character of the Township	A2	0-1 years	PC, PZA
Continue economic development efforts and relationship building with Township businesses, industries and Southwest Michigan First.	A3	Ongoing	TB, TS, PZA
Produce a Township marketing pamphlet which helps set forth a positive image of Comstock.	B	1-2 years	TS, PZA
Identify and rezone properties which are clearly incompatible with the Future Land Use Map.	B	2-3 years	PC, PZA, TB
Develop a non-motorized plan for adoption.	B	2-3 years	PC, PZA, TS, input from RCKC and MDOT

PC = Planning Commission TB = Township Board
PZA = Planning & Zoning Administrator TS = Township Superintendent
RCKC = Road Commission of Kalamazoo County

Implementation Step	Priority	Timeframe	Responsibility
Work with Comstock Public Schools on the redevelopment of the Old High School site.	B	2-3 years	TB, PC, PZA, CPS
Draft updated parking provisions to be more flexible and modern reward shared and/or reduced parking to lessen impervious areas.	C	2-3 years	PC, PZA
Create new land development regulations within each zoning district to reflect the density recommendations in the Master Plan.	C	2-3 years	PC, PZA
Modify or create new zoning districts that reflect the goals and future land use designations in Comstock Vision 2025.	C	2-3 years	PC, PZA
Draft access management guidelines for the Zoning Ordinance.	C	2-3 years	PC, PZA, input from RCKC and MDOT
Draft a sidewalk and non-motorized facilities ordinance and incentives for new construction and expansions.	C	2-3 years	PC, PZA
Construct a non-motorized connection of the KRVT to the Township park system.	C	Ongoing	TB with assistance of RCKC and MDOT
Draft a creek overlay district to protect Comstock Creek.	D	2-3 years	PC, PZA, TB

PC = Planning Commission TB = Township Board
PZA = Planning & Zoning Administrator TS = Township Superintendent
RCKC = Road Commission of Kalamazoo County CPS = Comstock Public Schools

Appendix

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMSTOCK
RESOLUTION TO
APPROVE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed Master Plan, Vision 2025, and submitted the plan to the Township Board for review and comment, and

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2016, the Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA, and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 14, 2016 to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan, Vision 2025, and to further review and comment on the proposed Master Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed Master Plan, Vision 2025, is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township, and

WHEREAS, the Township Board may assert by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS, the Planning Commission hereby approves and recommends that the Township Board adopt the Vision 2025 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables contained therein.

This Resolution was offered by D. Burgess, and supported by R. Sportel, with the roll call vote being as follows:

YEAS: Bates, Burgess, Beuster, Jones-Newton, Katje, Sportel
NAYS: none
ABSTAIN: none
ABSENT: Faust

This Resolution declared adopted on the 14th day of July, 2016.


Jennifer Jones-Newton, Secretary
Comstock Charter Township Planning Commission

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the Resolution adopted at a Regular Meeting of the Charter Township of Comstock Planning Commission on the 14th day of July, 2016.


Jennifer Jones-Newton, Secretary
Comstock Charter Township Planning Commission

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMSTOCK
RESOLUTION TO
ADOPT MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of all lands in the Township, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission prepared a proposed Master Plan, Vision 2025, and submitted the plan to the Township Board for review and comment, and

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2016, the Township Board received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA, and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 14, 2016 to consider public comment on the proposed Master Plan and to further review and comment on the proposed Master Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Township Board finds that the proposed Master Plan, Vision 2025, is desirable and proper and furthers the use, preservation, and development goals and strategies of the Township, and

WHEREAS, the MPEA authorizes the Township Board to assert by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed Master Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:


- Adoption of the Vision 2025 Master Plan.** The Township Board hereby approves and adopts the Vision 2025 Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables contained therein. Pursuant to MCL 125.3843, the Township Board has asserted by resolution its right to approve or reject the proposed master plan and therefore the approval granted herein is the final step for adoption of the plan as provided in MCL 125.3843.
- Distribution to Notice Group.** The Township Board approves the distribution of the adopted plan to the Notice Group.
- Findings of Fact.** The Township Board has made the foregoing determination based on a review of existing land uses in the Township, a review of the existing Master Plan provisions and maps, input received from the Planning Commission and public hearing, and with the assistance of professional planners and finds that the Vision 2025 Master Plan will accurately reflect and implement the Township's goals and strategies for the use, preservation, and development of lands in Comstock Township.

4. **Effective date.** The Vision 2025 Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.


This Resolution was offered by Amos, and supported by Bloomfield, with the roll call vote being as follows:

YEAS: Nieuwenhuis, Goodsell, Padgett, Amos, Bloomfield, Bogema, Burgess
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

This Resolution declared adopted on the 18th day of July, 2016.


Anna L. Goodsell
Charter Township of Comstock Clerk

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the Resolution adopted at a Regular Meeting of the Charter Township of Comstock Board on the 18th day of July, 2016.


Anna L. Goodsell
Charter Township of Comstock Clerk



COMSTOCK
CHARTER
TOWNSHIP
VISION2025