

# VILLAGE OF VERMONTVILLE

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EATON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

## MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 19, 2002



In accordance with Municipal Planning Act, PA 285 of 1931 and MCL 125.329(2) the Master Plan for the Village of Vermontville has to be reviewed, updated or start anew. The Master Plan for the Village of Vermontville was adopted as of February 19, 2002. The Planning Commission is the agency tasked to do the 5-year task.

The Planning Commission followed the guidelines from the Michigan Municipal League. These guidelines are:

- Have there been major changes in the community not anticipated in the current master plan?

This could include events such as new utilities, major road improvements, or large development approvals among other things.

- Are there instances where the planning commission has departed from the master plan? Do the reasons for these departures demonstrate a need for an overall revision of the master plan?

- Are the goals and policies set out in the plan still relevant? An effective master plan will have a series of carefully crafted goals and policies describing the community's vision for its future. Is the community still willing to take the actions necessary to implement them?

- How does the future land use map and text compare with zoning actions taken since the plan was first adopted? Do the land use descriptions need to be revised to account for new development? This element contains the land use descriptions and map that depict specific land use arrangements.

The Planning Commission discussed and answered the questions. The Planning Commission sent letters of the Village review and asked for input from neighboring Counties, Villages and Townships. The Planning Commission had a public hearing on the matter on 12 June 2007. The Planning Commission at this time felt that the Review of the Village Master Plan to be complete.

In accordance with Municipal Planning Act, PA 285 of 1931 and MCL 125.329(2) the Planning Commission believes that the current Master Plan to be intent of the Village. Minor changes might have occurred, but nothing worth amending or starting a New Master Plan.

Therefore the Village of Vermontville is in compliance with Municipal Planning Act, PA 285 of 1931 and MCL 125.329(2) as of 12 June 2007.

If there are any questions or concerns about this process, please contact a Planning Commission Board Member.

Respectfully

Jason S. Sheridan

Planning Commission Chairperson

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Master Plan is the result of a collaborative effort of many individuals, agencies and organizations. The following individuals have provided key input to this Plan:

|                 |                |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Gene Baker      | Dale Berry     | Denise Berry    | Kyle Booher    |
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## SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

**This Plan reflects the community's deep concern for the character of the Village and a strong commitment to retain and strengthen local quality of life.**

This Master Plan represents the culmination of over twelve months' work by numerous local residents and local officials. It reflects the community's deep concern for the "small town" character of the Village and a strong commitment to retain and strengthen local quality of life. The plan outlines the preferred future for the community and a master plan to realize it. The Plan is appropriately general, recognizing that planning for the future is a delicate blend of art and science and that sufficient flexibility will be needed to respond to the challenges of the future.

The fundamental purpose of the Master Plan is to enable the Village to establish a future direction for the Village's physical development. The Municipal Planning Act (Public Act 285 of 1931, as amended) specifically gives a Village Planning Commission the authority to prepare and officially adopt a plan. The City and Village Zoning Act (Public Act 207 of 1921) as amended, authorizes Cities and Villages to adopt and enforce zoning ordinances based upon a plan for the Village as recommended to the Village Council by the Planning Commission. Once prepared, officially 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.

Because of constant change in our social and economic structure and activities, the Plan must be maintained through periodic review and revision so that it reflects contemporary trends while maintaining long range goals. The Plan will be effective to the degree that it:

- ◆ reflects the needs and desires of the citizens of the Village of Vermontville;
- ◆ realistically interprets and reflects the conditions, trends and the dynamic economic and social pressures that are brought about by change; and
- ◆ inspires consensus and cooperation among the various public agencies, developers, and the citizens of the Village toward achieving common goals.

## COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

**With this collaborative effort put forth, the entire Vermontville community will enjoy greater compatibility when new development proposals come forth.**

This Master Plan was founded on a unique inter-local planning exercise including officials and residents from both the Village and the Township of Vermontville. Throughout the entire planning effort Vermontville Township and the Village of Vermontville combined efforts to build a positive working relationship, create compatible land uses along the jurisdictional boundaries, and to make the process more efficient. Joint Master Plan Study Teams met on a monthly basis for approximately six months and then held a joint Futuring Session to gain community input. Between the Futuring Session and Study Team input, individual goals and objectives were produced for each community. The Village and Township then began having separate meetings to focus specifically on the future land use of each community based from the Current Assessment, Futuring Session and many open Master Plan meetings. The Township and Village held one last joint meeting to compare Future Land Use Maps and resolve any potential land use conflicts between the two communities.

With this collaborative effort put forth, the entire Vermontville community will enjoy greater compatibility when new development proposals come forth. For example, it is a goal of the Village of Vermontville to retain a strong commercial core in the center of the Village and keep intense land uses close to public water and sewer facilities. The Township Futuring Session participants also felt that it is logical to retain traditional agricultural and residential uses in the Township and not create new commercial areas that detract from the Village of Vermontville commercial center. This clearly illustrates the benefits of combining future land use efforts and exposing each jurisdiction to each other's goals and objectives.

Since the land use decisions made in the Township are likely to impact the Village of Vermontville, and vice versa, much of the information that is provided in Section II of this Plan includes data from Vermontville Township. This allows the community to compare information and identify any relevant trends that may influence the future.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**The planning process was seen as an opportunity to build and strengthen a community consensus about the future land use patterns in the Village.**

When the Village of Vermontville began the plan preparation process, it had several objectives. First, it was important to achieve an understanding of the scale and scope of growth and development and the likely future trends in the community. Secondly, the Village sought to clearly define community priorities with regard to growth and development and land use. Thirdly, the planning process was seen as an opportunity to build and strengthen a community consensus about the future land use patterns in the Village. Finally, the Village sought realistic and effective mechanisms to achieve the plan's objectives.

This Village Master Plan accomplishes all these objectives. More specifically, this Plan will serve the Village in the following ways:

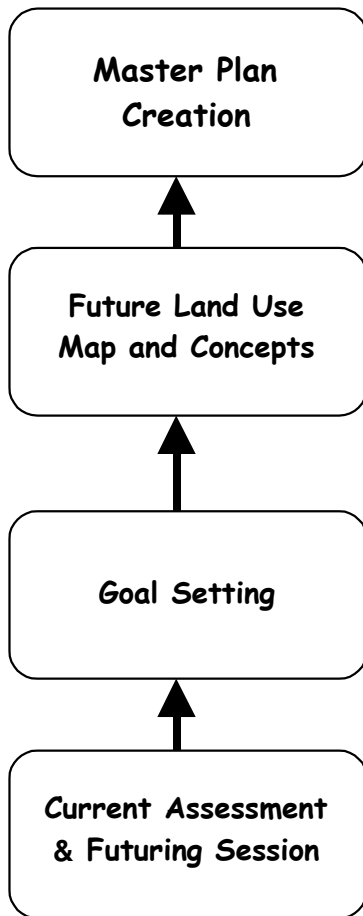
1. It provides a comprehensive means of integrating proposals that look years ahead to meet future needs regarding conservation and development throughout the Village;
2. It serves as the official advisory policy statement for encouraging orderly and efficient use of the land for agriculture, residences, businesses and industry, and for coordinating these uses of land with each other, with streets and highways, and with other necessary public facilities and services;
3. It creates a logical and defensible basis for zoning, subdivision design, public improvement plans, and for facilitating and guiding the work of the Village Planning Commission and the Village Council, as well as other public and private endeavors dealing with the physical conservation and development of the Village;
4. It provides a means for private organizations and individuals to determine how they may relate their building and development projects and policies to official Village planning policies; and
5. It offers a means of relating the plans of the Village of Vermontville to the plans of other communities in the region.



The relationship between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance is a critical one that should be clearly understood.

- **A master plan is a statement of policy and the zoning ordinance is a law.** A master plan is a policy that states the general principals on which development will be based and identifies specific issues related to development. The master plan is adopted by the Planning Commission only, a quasi-legislative body, which gives the document no direct legal authority. It is only through the zoning ordinance that the use of land may be legally and immediately controlled.
  
- **The master plan refers to future land use while the zoning ordinance affects current land use.** The master plan is a future land use oriented document, while the zoning ordinance regulates current land use. The master plan is not intended to be immediately translated into zoning; rather the master plan should be implemented over an extended period of time. The future land use map and zoning map should not be identical, although some immediate zone changes may be necessary and appropriate where land use intensities need to be adjusted to conform to the future land use plan.

## PLAN METHODOLOGY



The planning process involved four inter-related phases:

- ◆ Data Analysis - A Current Assessment,
- ◆ Goals and Objectives - Creating a Policy Foundation,
- ◆ Plan Preparation - Defining the Preferred Future, and
- ◆ Implementation Strategies - Getting There from Here.

The first phase of the effort involved a summary review and analysis of available data gathered from local and regional sources. Its purpose was to develop a comprehensive impression of the patterns of growth and the challenges that will impact the Village. This phase culminated in the preparation of a Current Assessment Report. That report served as a technical resource for the Study Team and the consultant and it also represents the essential Community Profile which constitutes Section II (Chapters 1 through 5) of this Plan.

The objective of the second phase was to establish a policy basis for the Village's planning and land use regulations. Part of this process included conducting a futuring session where local residents were invited to a "town hall" type of meeting to express their opinions about the future of the Village. The results provided the Study Team with valuable feed-back, which began the process of defining goals and objectives for the future of the Village. The results may be found in Appendix of this document.

The third phase involved preparing a Future Land Use Plan, which is reflected in Section III of this Plan. The future land use designations and map (Chapter 7) were developed in a series of interactive meetings and the process involved several iterations of the draft map and descriptions.

The final phase of the process involved the development of specific implementation strategies to carry out the plan. These are reflected in general terms in Chapter 8. At the conclusion of the fourth phase, a public hearing on the entire plan was held by the Village.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

This Plan is organized into three sections, each consisting of one or more chapters. Section I includes an introductory section which outlines the purpose of the plan, the process for its development, and acknowledgements to those involved. Section II, is the Community Profile, which presents an overview description of the Village of Vermontville from the perspective of:

- ◆ Natural Features and the Environment. (Chapter 1)
- ◆ Population (Chapter 2)
- ◆ Income, Housing and Economic Development (Chapter 3)
- ◆ Land Use and Development Patterns (Chapter 4), and
- ◆ Transportation (Chapter 5)

Section III constitutes the Master Plan, which includes the Village's Goals and Objectives (Chapter 6), the Future Land Use Plan (Chapter 7) and the Implementation Strategies (Chapter 8).

The final section of the Plan includes a Bibliography, which outlines all of the various resources consulted in the completion of this Plan, and Appendix A, which describes the results of the Vermontville Futuring Session.

## SECTION II COMMUNITY PROFILE

**The purpose of the Community Profile is to define current conditions and provide a basis for drawing conclusions about the future.**

Producing a Master Plan requires a solid foundation of data from both original research and from secondary resources. Analysis of this data can reveal trends and conditions that may be obvious, or not so obvious, to the residents of the Village. This data can be used to support the Master Plan and to defend the goals that are made for the future.

Planning for the long-term should be a process that is carried out at a general level that recognizes the potential for change and provides flexibility. This method will provide a Master Plan that can be useful well into the future instead of becoming obsolete if or when demographic and economic trends stray from those outlined in the Community Profile.

This Community Profile section provides a “snapshot” of current conditions in the Village with respect to five key aspects of land use planning. Its purpose is to generally define current conditions and trends and, more importantly, to provide a basis for drawing broad conclusions about the implications they will have on the future of the Village. Each chapter includes an overview of its subject matter along with a brief discussion of the planning trends that are relevant.

## CHAPTER 1. NATURAL FEATURES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

It is important to begin a profile of the community with a description of its natural attributes. This chapter presents a description of the topography, soils, water resources and woodlands that provide the physical basis of the community and the utility systems that protect and utilize its groundwater.

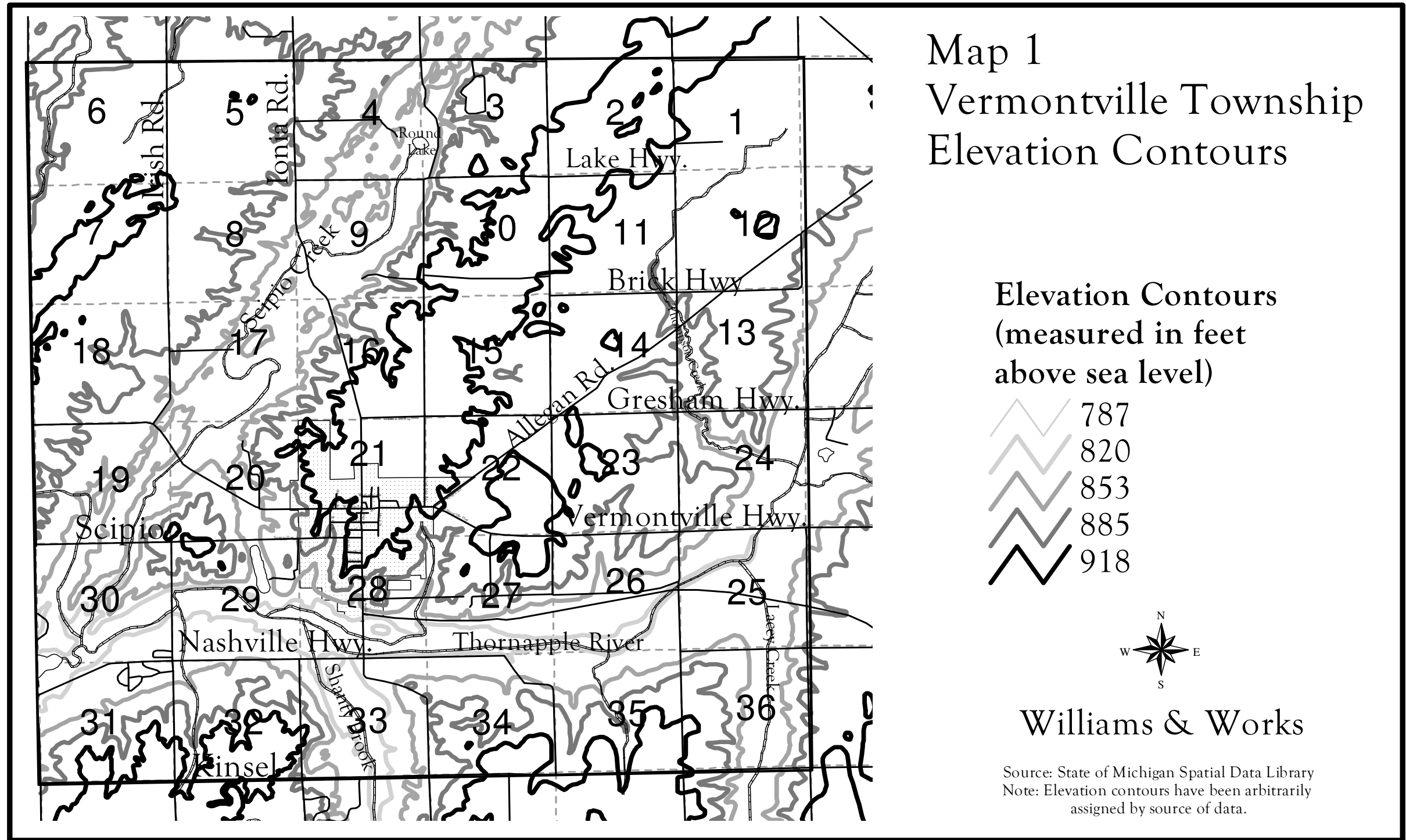
The Village of Vermontville is situated in Eaton County, approximately 25 miles southwest of Lansing. One of the most important features of the Village is its location. Even though the Village is not served by a major State or Federal highway system, it is approximately fifteen (15) miles west of Interstate 69, twenty-five (25) miles south of Interstate 96 twenty-five, (25) miles north of Battle Creek, and close to developing areas of Lansing. These factors may increase the potential of new development in or around the Village if new industry and population expand along these corridors. It is therefore important that the Village be prepared for potential future land use changes.

### Topography

Soil topography is a characteristic of soil that generally illustrates the slope or "lay of the land." The topography of the Vermontville Community is a direct result of historical glacial activity. As the glaciers melted and receded to the north, they deposited debris (i.e. soils sediment and rocks) in the form of till and moraines. Till was typically deposited in a uniform manner as the glacier receded, while moraines were created when the glacier essentially "dumped" its debris in one particular location. The slopes and drainage of the area has therefore been determined by where and how much glacial debris was deposited in particular areas.

Topography can create limitations for development if the slopes are too extreme. The topography in the Township rarely exceeds twenty percent slope and therefore does not create severe development limitations. Potential development limitations are more likely to exist in the flood plains of the area streams and rivers as these soils can experience constant or seasonal wetness and steeper slopes. The Thornapple River is the primary drainage of Vermontville Township and exhibits some of these attributes. Map 1 illustrates the elevation contours of the Village and Township.

**The topography of the Vermontville Community is a direct result of historical glacial activity.**



## Soils

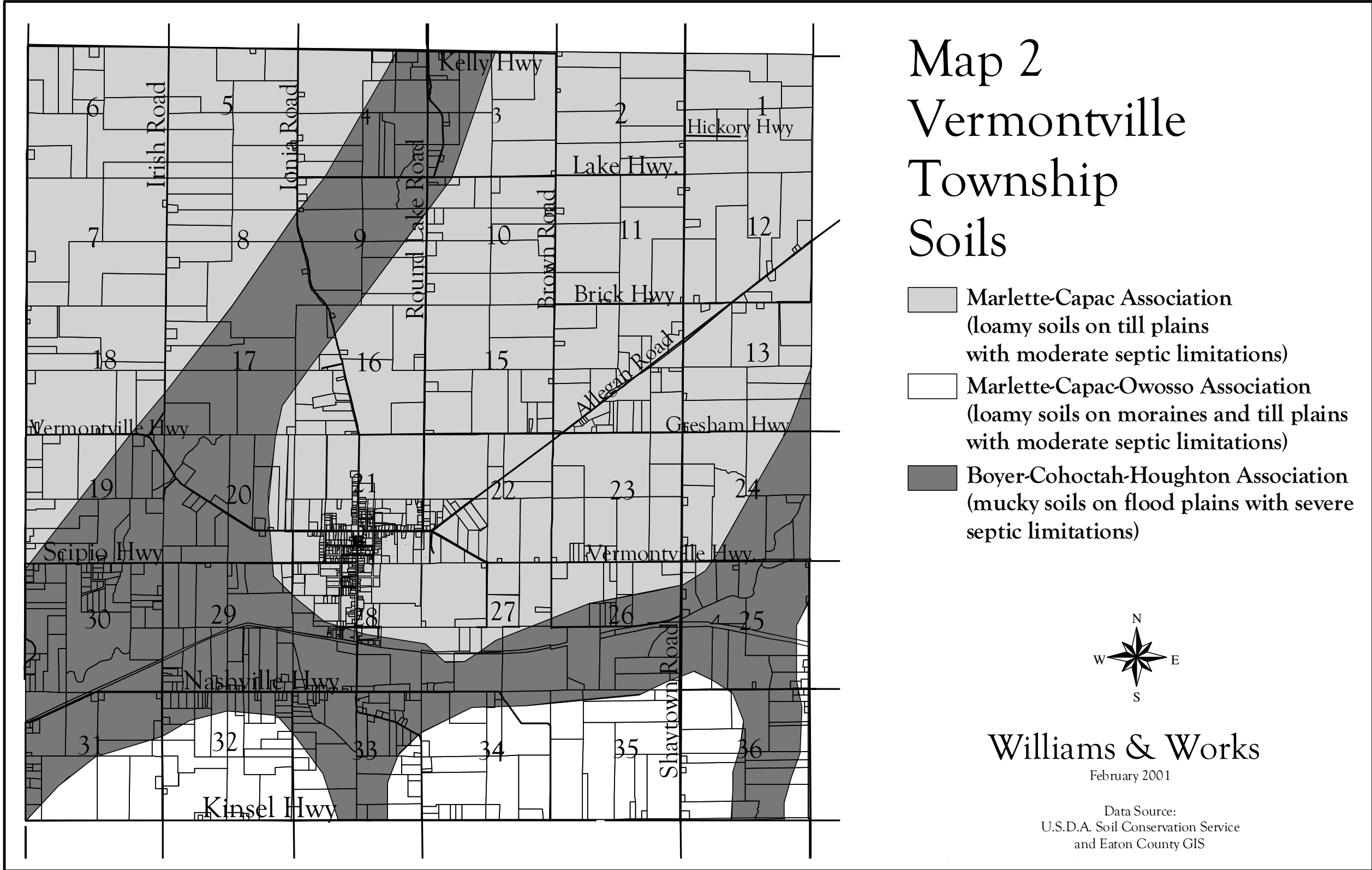
The soils in the Village are characterized by two broad categories according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (refer to the Vermontville Township Soil Map). A majority of the Village is classified as Marlette-Capac Association, which is a nearly level soil that is well drained to somewhat poorly drained. This soil type can be very productive farmland as corn, soybeans, wheat and navy beans have been successful cash crops. These soils are typically suitable for structures and development, although drainage and erosion may cause limitations in particular locations.

A small portion in the southwest portion of the Village, associated with the Thornapple River flood plain, is the Boyer-Cohoctah-Houghton Association. This soil consists of nearly level to hilly soils that are typically sandy and loamy. These soils, dependent upon the particular location, can be used for farming, recreation, wildlife, and development. The crucial determining factor for land use in this classification is drainage. If the drainage is good, it is suitable for farming crops such as apples, various berries and is typically not stable for foundations. These soils are typically associated with floodplains and open bodies of water.

## Lakes, Ponds, and other Water Bodies

One small creek is located in the Village of Vermontville. The small creek, a tributary to the Thornapple River, flows south in the eastern part of the Village.

The Thornapple River, Thompson Creek, Shanty Brook, Scipio Creek, Lacey Creek, and Round Lake are the named water bodies within the Township surrounding the Village. The Thornapple River, located just south of the Village, is the primary drainage of the Township and is the recipient of all other waterways in the Township.





Scipio Creek originates from Round Lake, located in north central part of the Township, and flows south through the eastern Vermontville Township to the Thornapple River.

Lacey Creek originates in Kalamo Township from Lacey Lake, located southeast of Vermontville Township, and flows north into the southeast portion of the Township. Lacey Creek is also a tributary to the Thornapple River.

The Thornapple River, positioned in the south half of the Township, flows from the east side of the Township to the west. The River originates in eastern Eaton County, meanders west into Barry and Kent Counties, and eventually terminates in a confluence with the Grand River just east of the City of Grand Rapids. The Thornapple also receives the treated wastewater effluent for the Village sewage system.

### **Drainage**

The Village of Vermontville and Vermontville Township experience similar drainage patterns. The Thornapple River is the primary watercourse through the Township. In general, the area north of the River drains south and the area south of the river drains north. All creeks and streams within the Township eventually contribute to the Thornapple River.

In 1995, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), proposed a flood plain study for the Thornapple River. As of January 2001, the project, officially called the *Thornapple River Flood Plain Management Study*, was approved and work is to begin in the summer of 2001. The project will include detailed hydraulic and hydrologic studies with the management study scheduled for completion in 2004.

The study area will include a 38-mile stretch of the Thornapple from McKewan Road, southeast of Hastings in Barry County, to the headwaters in Eaton County. The goal will be to identify the 10, 50, 100, and 500-year flood plains. With these flood plains identified, wise land use decisions can be made that will promote public health and safety.

## Woodlands

Historically, when the settlers arrived, logging was one of the main activities. Not only did this provide a source of income, it also cleared land for farming activities. Most of the productive land has remained in farming, while other lands have been replanted and consist of healthy second growth timber. Replanting was not only for timber purposes, it also contributed to wildlife habitat, recreation, and yard screens.

The tree species in the Township and Village vary greatly. Sugar maples, beech, hickory, red oak, and white oak are the typical hardwoods found in the area. Wet soils are typically home to elm, red maple, swamp oak, and ash.

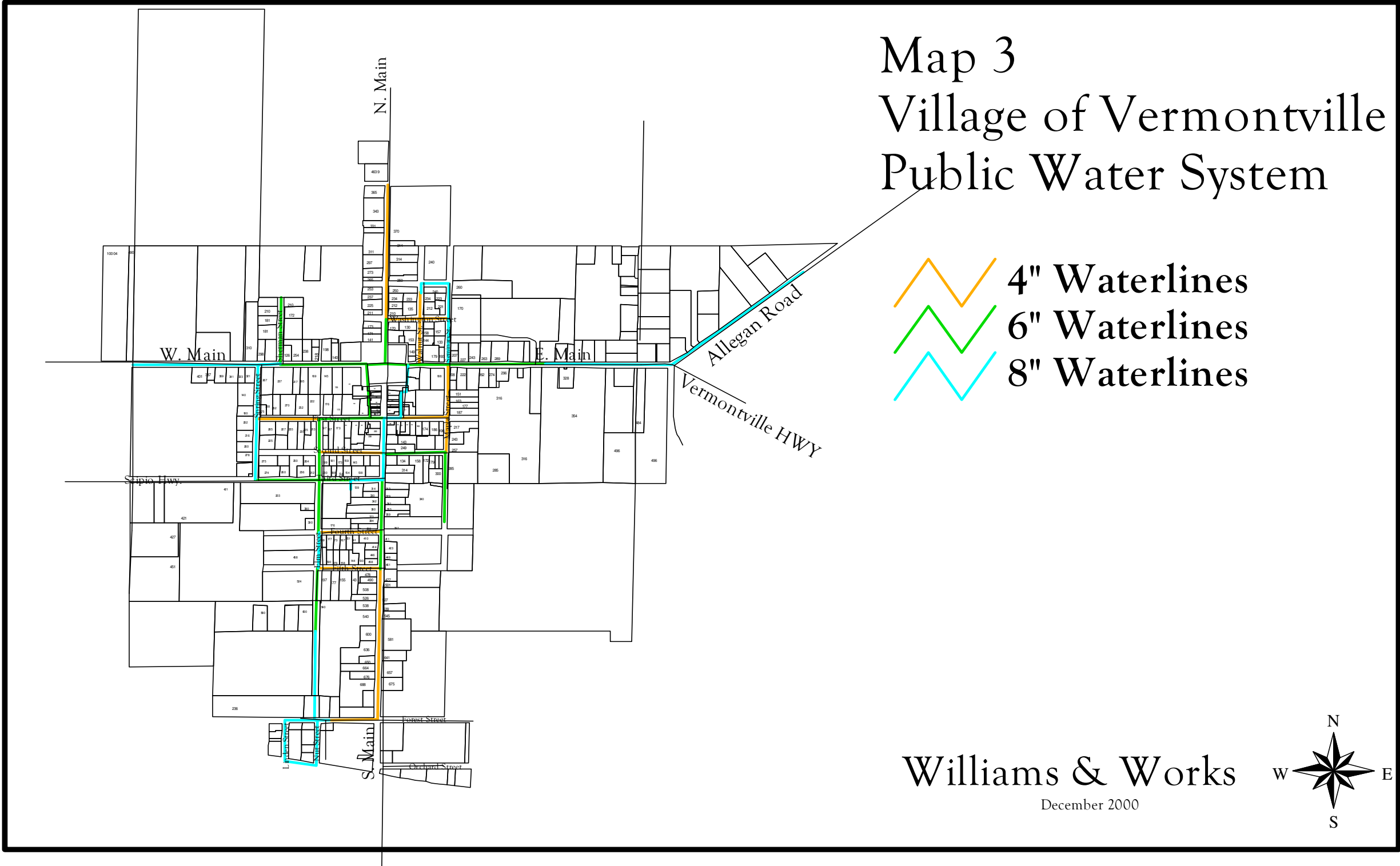
## Utilities

Although the Village of Vermontville is small in area, it utilizes a public water and sewer service system. The water system was built in the 1940s due to many individual wells within the Village providing water that was silty and not pleasurable to drink. The wastewater treatment plant was built in the early 1970s and the lagoons for the system are located just south of the Village boundary. According to the Village Department of Public Works, the system is capable of serving additional development. The presence of such a system is beneficial to the community as it protects the ground water resources from individual septic system pollution. Further, it increases the possibility to support high-density development. Treated wastewater is discharged into the Thornapple River.

Maps 3 and 4 illustrate the location of the public water and sewer system available in the Village of Vermontville. The sewer lagoon system was designed and is capable of handling a population of up to 1,000 individuals. With the 2000 population at 789, the sewer facility is being approximately 79% utilized. The water system consists of a 62,000 gallon elevated storage tank with a 120 gallon per minute pump. There are 329 water meter connections and 325 sewer line connections.

A majority of the homes are served by natural gas (90 % of the Village and 51% of the Township), while the remaining fuel types are bottled/tank or liquid petroleum gas, wood, fuel oil/kerosene, and finally electricity.

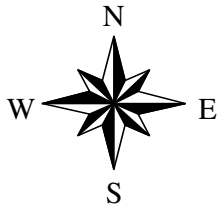
# Map 3 Village of Vermontville Public Water System



- 4" Waterlines
- 6" Waterlines
- 8" Waterlines

Williams & Works

December 2000



## CHAPTER 2. POPULATION

Understanding the trends of population growth or decline in the Village of Vermontville is an essential component when creating a viable Master Plan. Trends of the past and future projections help create a vision of the type and amount of development associated with the population. Further, comparing the Village and Township to the neighboring villages, townships, and Eaton County will create a well-rounded analysis.

The Village of Vermontville had an estimated increase of 94 residents between 1990 and 1998, illustrating a 12.1% gain according to the U.S. Census. In comparison, the Vermontville Township population increased by an estimated 120 residents or 10.7% between 1990 and 1998 and the Eaton County population increased by 8,211 residents, or 8.8% between 1990 and 1998. There has clearly been a consistent local jurisdictional population increase in the recent past.

Table 2.1

| Eaton County Jurisdictional Population Estimates |                             |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |                           |                            |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Area Name  | Census Estimated Population |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              | Numeric Population Change | Percent Increase 1990-1998 |
|  | April 1990                  | July 1991    | July 1992    | July 1993    | July 1994    | July 1995    | July 1996    | July 1997    | July 1998    |                           |                            |
| Eaton County                                     | 92,879                      | 94,532       | 95,322       | 96,016       | 97,565       | 98,892       | 99,716       | 100,373      | 101,090      | 8,211                     | 8.8%                       |
| Vermontville Village                             | 776                         | 794          | 804          | 813          | 831          | 843          | 853          | 861          | 870          | 94                        | 12.1%                      |
| <b>Balance of Vermontville Township</b>          | <b>1,120</b>                | <b>1,142</b> | <b>1,162</b> | <b>1,176</b> | <b>1,195</b> | <b>1,219</b> | <b>1,234</b> | <b>1,239</b> | <b>1,240</b> | <b>120</b>                | <b>10.7%</b>               |
| Sunfield Village                                 | 610                         | 624          | 631          | 639          | 651          | 663          | 669          | 675          | 682          | 72                        | 11.8%                      |
| Balance of Sunfield Township                     | 1,476                       | 1,505        | 1,531        | 1,550        | 1,574        | 1,606        | 1,625        | 1,632        | 1,633        | 157                       | 10.6%                      |
| Chester Township                                 | 1,602                       | 1,634        | 1,662        | 1,683        | 1,709        | 1,744        | 1,765        | 1,772        | 1,774        | 172                       | 10.7%                      |
| Kalamo Township                                  | 1,665                       | 1,698        | 1,727        | 1,749        | 1,776        | 1,812        | 1,834        | 1,842        | 1,844        | 179                       | 10.8%                      |
| Mulliken Village                                 | 590                         | 601          | 609          | 615          | 624          | 634          | 637          | 644          | 649          | 59                        | 10.0%                      |
| Bellevue Village                                 | 1,401                       | 1,428        | 1,441        | 1,455        | 1,478        | 1,496        | 1,506        | 1,517        | 1,526        | 125                       | 8.9%                       |

Trends indicate the population is growing throughout the various jurisdictions in the County. With this increase identified, it is important to understand the rate of population increase and the nature of the new population. For example, the natural rate of increase (births minus deaths) and in-migration (amount of population moving into the Village or Township) will help identify new housing needs. Further, determining

the age distribution can indicate what type of service demands will be created.

The component change of population, while only figured at the County level, provides insight into the population increase throughout the County. Between 1990 and 1999, approximately 5.1% of the population increase was natural. In other words, this increase was directly related to new births minus deaths in the County. Through the same time period, approximately 4.3% of the population migrated into the County from another location. These U.S. Census figures indicate that the population increase is fairly balanced between natural increases and migration.

Table 2.2

| Component Change of Population in Eaton County: 1990-1999 |         |         |                  |         |               |        |                  |         |                         |                    |
|---|---------|---------|------------------|---------|---------------|--------|------------------|---------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Population  |         |         | 1990-1999 Change |         | 4/1/90-7/1/99 |        | Natural Increase |         | International Migration | Domestic Migration |
| 4/1/90  | 7/1/98  | 7/1/99  | Number           | Percent | Births        | Deaths | Number           | Percent | 1990-1999               | 1990-1999          |
| 92,879  | 101,022 | 101,612 | 8,733            | 9.40%   | 11,159        | 6,415  | 4,744            | 5.10%   | 465                     | 3,124              |

Source: U.S. Census and Michigan Information Center, State of Michigan Budget Office.

**Projections**

Population projections can be prepared with a variety of techniques. The constant proportion, growth rate, and arithmetic techniques are all used in population projections. Constant proportion determines the population as a proportion of a larger jurisdiction and applies that proportion over the future based on past growth/decline trends. The growth rate method determines the rate of population change in the past and applies it towards the future. The arithmetic method determines the actual amount of population change (loss or increase) over the past population and applies to the future. The population projections provided from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission include not only these methods, but also other complex considerations such as built-out lands, accessibility, households, aging population and migration.

Table 2.3, compiled by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, illustrates that the Village of Vermontville and Vermontville Township are expected to lose population throughout the next 20 years. This is similar to Chester Township located to the east of Vermontville

Township and the Village of Mulliken to the north. The other jurisdictions surrounding Vermontville Township are expected to gain population in the next 20 years.

Table 2.3

| Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Population Projections |             |             |             |             |             |                    |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Jurisdiction   | 2000        | 2005        | 2010        | 2015        | 2020        | % Change 2000-2020 |
| <b>Vermontville Township</b>                                   | <b>1084</b> | <b>1067</b> | <b>1046</b> | <b>1030</b> | <b>1012</b> | <b>-6.6%</b>       |
| Village of Vermontville  | 744         | 732         | 720         | 707         | 695         | -6.6%              |
| Kalamo Township  | 2877        | 2926        | 2965        | 2999        | 3028        | 5.2%               |
| Chester Township   | 1546        | 1525        | 1503        | 1482        | 1461        | -5.5%              |
| Sunfield Township  | 1503        | 1515        | 1525        | 1533        | 1540        | 2.5%               |
| Sunfield Village   | 615         | 620         | 624         | 628         | 631         | 2.6%               |
| Bellevue Village   | 1405        | 1417        | 1428        | 1433        | 1439        | 2.4%               |
| Mulliken Village   | 542         | 528         | 513         | 499         | 485         | -10.5%             |

Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

While the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission projects a loss in population over the next twenty years in the Township and Village, other sources of information suggest a population gain. For example, over the last nine years (1990-1999), there has been a consistent amount of new home construction within the Village and Township. The Village had seven new homes built during this time period. This suggests a growth rate of approximately 19 residents every nine years, based on the average household size of 2.67 persons in Eaton County.

Vermontville Township had approximately 64 new home permits issued from 1990-1999. Therefore, there has been an approximate gain of 170 new residents within the Township over this time period. In a fairly simplistic analysis, it is appropriate to project population growth at about 170 persons every nine years, or about 9 persons per year. This suggests an annual rate of increase of nearly 1.0% as opposed to the 0.3% decline indicated by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission in table 2.3.

Table 2.4

| Eaton County New Home Building Permit Activity |                         |                              |              |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Year   | Village of Vermontville | <b>Vermontville Township</b> | Eaton County |
| 1990   | 0                       | <b>6</b>                     | 185          |
| 1991   | 1                       | <b>9</b>                     | 188          |
| 1992   | 2                       | <b>4</b>                     | 192          |
| 1993   | 1                       | <b>4</b>                     | 197          |
| 1994   | 0                       | <b>5</b>                     | 209          |
| 1995   | 0                       | <b>3</b>                     | 208          |
| 1996   | 0                       | <b>3</b>                     | 232          |
| 1997   | 1                       | <b>4</b>                     | 199          |
| 1998   | 0                       | <b>7</b>                     | 217          |
| 1999   | 2                       | <b>12</b>                    | 270          |
| Jan00-<br>June00                               | 0                       | <b>7</b>                     | 229          |
| Total  | 7                       | <b>64</b>                    | 2326         |

Source: Eaton County Building Department

The U.S. Census provides another indication that the population is growing in the Township. Between 1990 and 1998, Vermontville Township was estimated to have grown by 10.7% and the Village of Vermontville by 12.1% (see Table 2.1). Multiplying this percentage increase by the 1998 population, then adding it to the 1998 population, the estimated 2006 population is the result. Using this methodology, which is generally dependent on past conditions, the population of the Village, Township and surrounding communities clearly increases over the next 22 years.

Table 2.5

| Growth Rate Population Projection Method |            |            |                            |                           |                           |                           |
|--|------------|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jurisdiction                             | April 1990 | July 1998  | Percent Increase 1990-1998 | Estimated 2006 Population | Estimated 2014 Population | Estimated 2022 Population |
| Eaton County                             | 92,879     | 101,090    | 8.8%                       | 110,027                   | 119,754                   | 130,341                   |
| <b>Vermontville Village</b>              | <b>776</b> | <b>870</b> | <b>12.1%</b>               | <b>975</b>                | <b>1,094</b>              | <b>1,226</b>              |
| Balance of Vermontville Township         | 1,120      | 1,240      | 10.7%                      | 1,373                     | 1,520                     | 1,683                     |
| Sunfield Village                         | 610        | 682        | 11.8%                      | 762                       | 852                       | 953                       |
| Balance of Sunfield Township             | 1,476      | 1,633      | 10.6%                      | 1,807                     | 1,999                     | 2,211                     |
| Chester Township                         | 1,602      | 1,774      | 10.7%                      | 1,964                     | 2,175                     | 2,409                     |
| Kalamo Township                          | 1,665      | 1,844      | 10.8%                      | 2,042                     | 2,262                     | 2,505                     |
| Bellevue Village                         | 1401       | 1526       | 8.9%                       | 1662                      | 1810                      | 1972                      |
| Mulliken Village                         | 590        | 649        | 10.0%                      | 714                       | 785                       | 864                       |

### Age Characteristics

An age breakdown can help determine the type of housing and recreational facilities that may be needed. Table 2.6 illustrates that the portion of population under the age of 17 is slightly higher in Vermontville Township and the Village of Vermontville than in the County or State. With this younger population, both communities may need to commit more resources to schools, recreation programs, day care, and parks to sufficiently meet their needs. This also indicates a strong family presence in the community. Families typically desire single family residential development, quality jobs, convenient commercial services, and efficient transportation routes.

However, there is a slight disparity in the "family forming" years of ages 25 to 54 between the Township and the Village. This important age cohort is slightly greater in the Township than in the Village, suggesting that the greatest demand for family-type land uses would be found in the Township.



Figure 2.6

| 1990 U.S. Census Age Group Comparison |                       |            |                         |            |              |            |                   |            |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
|                                       | Vermontville Township |            | Village of Vermontville |            | Eaton County |            | State of Michigan |            |
| Age                                   | Population            | % of total | Population              | % of total | Population   | % of total | Population        | % of total |
| Under 17                              | 583                   | 30.7%      | 247                     | 31.8%      | 25,629       | 27.6%      | 2,458,765         | 26.5%      |
| 18 to 24                              | 193                   | 10.2%      | 73                      | 9.4%       | 9,234        | 9.9%       | 1,004,527         | 10.8%      |
| 25 to 54                              | 810                   | 42.7%      | 314                     | 40.4%      | 45,349       | 48.8%      | 3,928,821         | 42.3%      |
| 55 to 64                              | 150                   | 7.9%       | 68                      | 8.8%       | 8,768        | 9.4%       | 794,723           | 8.5%       |
| Over 65                               | 160                   | 8.4%       | 74                      | 9.5%       | 3,899        | 4.2%       | 1,108,461         | 11.9%      |
| Total                                 | 1,896                 | 100.0%     | 776                     | 100%       | 92,879       | 100.0%     | 9,295,297         | 100.0%     |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Note: The age group representations are divided into groups for planning purposes. For example, the 25 to 54 age group represents the largest percentage of population and also the largest age group bracket. This has been done to better illustrate the population that is in the child rearing and economically productive years of their life.

### 2000 U.S. Census Population Update

During the formulation of population data for the Village of Vermontville Current Assessment, 2000 U.S. Census information was unavailable. Part of the Census information has recently become available and is summarized in the following tables and text:

According to the 2000 Census, the Village of Vermontville gained a new population of 13 persons between 1990 and 2000, representing a 1.7% increase. The U.S. Census estimates between 1990 and 1998 were quite high as the Village was estimated to have gained 94 new residents in this eight-year period. The most accurate projection has therefore been related to the number of new homes and the average population associated with each new home (i.e. 7 new homes built between 1990 and 2000 multiplied by the household size of 2.67 persons results in a new population of 18). The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

projected the Village to lose population (figure 2.3) while it actually gained population between 1990 and 2000.

Figure 2.7 - Vermontville Village and Surrounding Community Population Change 1990-2000

|                         | Population |       | Population change 1990-2000 |         |
|-------------------------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|---------|
|                         | 2000       | 1990  | Number                      | Percent |
| Village of Vermontville | 789        | 776   | 13                          | 1.7     |
| Vermontville Township   | 1,311      | 1,120 | 191                         | 17.1    |
| Sunfield Village        | 591        | 610   | -19                         | -3.1    |
| Sunfield Township       | 1,586      | 1,476 | 110                         | 7.4     |
| Chester Township        | 1,778      | 1,602 | 176                         | 11.0    |
| Carmel Township         | 2,626      | 2,433 | 193                         | 7.9     |
| Kalamo Township         | 1,742      | 1,665 | 77                          | 4.6     |

Source: U.S. Census

Between the year 1990 and 2000, the population in Vermontville Township has increased by 17.1% or by 191 persons. In comparison, Eaton County had an overall increase of 11.6%, or 10,776 persons, during the same time period. The population in the Townships surrounding Vermontville Township, including Kalamo, Chester, and Sunfield Townships all increased.

The median age in the Village of Vermontville was 33 in 2000 and was lower than many other surrounding jurisdictions. Services such as schools, grocery stores, good transportation connections and recreational areas for families are quite likely to remain important community attributes. The population over 65 years, on the other hand, constituted approximately 10% of the total population. This percentage was on the low side in comparison to the County and many other Townships.

Comparing Table 2.6 and 2.8 illustrates that the age characteristics of the population in the Village have changed quite dramatically over the last ten years. In 1990, the portion of the population over the age of 65 was comprised 9.5% of the total. This has increased to 33% in the year 2000. With over one third of the population in this age bracket, services geared towards senior citizens may now be in demand more than ever. The younger population has also transitioned during the same time

period going from 31.8% of the total at or under the age of 17 to 11.3% at or under the age of 19. Even though these numbers have shifted dramatically, the median age in 1990 was 29.7 and has only risen to a median age of 33 in 2000, indicating that a younger population is still an important part of the community make up.

The fastest growing area in the County was the City of Potterville, ten miles to the east of the Village of Vermontville, which gained 645 new persons representing a 42.4% increase. Close proximity to Lansing, new industrial and residential development and close proximity to Interstate 69 may all contribute to the significant increases in population.

| Figure 2.8 - 2000 Eaton County Population, Age and Household Size |                  |              |              |                   |            |                    |                        |
|---|------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|   | Total population | 19 and Under |              | 65 years and over |            | Median age (years) | Average household size |
| Eaton County  | 103,655          | 30,139       | 29.1%        | 11,751            | 11.3%      | 36.4               | 2.54                   |
| <b>Village of Vermontville</b>                                    | <b>789</b>       | <b>83</b>    | <b>11.3%</b> | <b>262</b>        | <b>33%</b> | <b>33</b>          | <b>2.73</b>            |
| Bellevue TWP  | 3,144            | 932          | 29.6%        | 390               | 12.4%      | 36.9               | 2.7                    |
| Benton TWP  | 2,712            | 752          | 27.7%        | 254               | 9.4%       | 39.4               | 2.72                   |
| Brookfield TWP  | 1,429            | 409          | 28.6%        | 171               | 12.0%      | 38.8               | 2.66                   |
| Carmel TWP  | 2,626            | 787          | 30.0%        | 267               | 10.2%      | 38.5               | 2.83                   |
| Chester TWP   | 1,778            | 521          | 29.3%        | 212               | 11.9%      | 39.2               | 2.74                   |
| Delta charter TWP   | 29,682           | 7,587        | 25.6%        | 3,899             | 13.1%      | 38.4               | 2.33                   |
| Eaton TWP   | 4,278            | 1,272        | 29.7%        | 421               | 9.8%       | 37.5               | 2.76                   |
| Eaton Rapids TWP  | 3,821            | 1,188        | 31.1%        | 308               | 8.1%       | 37.6               | 2.85                   |
| Hamlin TWP  | 2,953            | 944          | 32.0%        | 256               | 8.7%       | 36.8               | 2.83                   |
| Kalamo TWP  | 1,742            | 519          | 29.8%        | 166               | 9.5%       | 36.9               | 2.78                   |
| Oneida charter TWP  | 3,703            | 1,082        | 29.2%        | 452               | 12.2%      | 40.5               | 2.74                   |
| Roxand TWP  | 1,903            | 582          | 30.6%        | 216               | 11.4%      | 37.1               | 2.88                   |
| Sunfield TWP  | 2,177            | 662          | 30.4%        | 244               | 11.2%      | 36.7               | 2.78                   |
| Vermontville TWP  | 2,100            | 683          | 32.5%        | 212               | 10.1%      | 35.8               | 2.8                    |
| Walton TWP  | 2,011            | 640          | 31.8%        | 161               | 8.0%       | 35.2               | 2.85                   |
| Windsor charter TWP   | 7,340            | 1,958        | 26.7%        | 1,097             | 14.9%      | 42                 | 2.57                   |

Source: U.S. Census

## CHAPTER 3. HOUSING, INCOME, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An analysis of housing values, personal income, and economic development in the Village give a good indication of potential growth, or lack thereof. This chapter identifies trends and examines current conditions to support future decisions facing the community.

### Incomes

**The Township and the Village of Vermontville were lower than the County median household earnings, but the Township surpassed the State median.**

According to the 1990 U.S. Census<sup>1</sup>, the Village of Vermontville had a median household income of \$25,855. In comparison, Vermontville Township had a median household income of \$32,167 and Eaton County and the State of Michigan had a median household income of \$35,734 and \$31,020, respectively. The Township and the Village of Vermontville were lower than the County median household earnings, but the Township surpassed the State median.

More significantly, the Village median household income was nearly \$10,000 less than the County. Reasons for this dramatic difference may vary, but one obvious fact is apparent: the unemployment rate for the Village has been historically higher than the Township and County, according to the State of Michigan. A larger percentage of unemployed residents in the Village will have a significant impact on median income. Note: An analysis of unemployment rates is provided later in this chapter on page 19.

The per capita income allows for analysis of individual earnings and may reveal current trends in the community. According to the U.S. Census, the per capita income of the Township in 1990 was \$11,491 and \$9,790 for the Village. In comparison, Eaton County had a per capita income of \$14,896 and the State of Michigan had a per capita income of \$14,154. Similar to median household income, the Village per capita is consistently lower than the Township and County.

Table 3.1

| State of Michigan and Eaton County Per Capita Income 1990-1998 |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | 1990     | 1991     | 1992     | 1993     | 1994     | 1995     | 1996     | 1997     | 1998     |
| Eaton County   | \$17,905 | \$18,498 | \$19,459 | \$20,302 | \$22,067 | \$23,244 | \$22,598 | \$23,586 | \$23,978 |
| State of Michigan  | \$19,022 | \$19,318 | \$20,278 | \$21,390 | \$22,862 | \$23,975 | \$24,447 | \$25,780 | \$26,885 |

<sup>1</sup> 2000 Census Income information is not available at the time of this writing. State and county per capita income data are updated annually by the U.S. Census.

The unemployment rate of the Township, which includes the Village, has continued to fall throughout the 1990's indicating that the economic prosperity that reached the rest of the Country also reached into the Vermontville community. While these unemployment percentage rates have fallen, they have not fallen as fast or to the point that the State or County has (3.7% for the State in 2000 and 2.4% for the County in 2000).

The lower per capita income and household income appear to have an indirect correlation with unemployment rates. For example, if there is a larger portion of the population that is unemployed, it will obviously bring down the per capita income for the community. This indicates that there may also be a large disparity between incomes within the community and for those that are employed and those who are not.

Table 3.2

| Vermontville Township<br>Unemployment Rates |       |
|---|-------|
| Year  | Rate  |
| 2000  | 4.0%  |
| 1999  | 4.2%  |
| 1998  | 5.4%  |
| 1997  | 4.6%  |
| 1996  | 5.8%  |
| 1995  | 5.9%  |
| 1994  | 6.2%  |
| 1993  | 8.7%  |
| 1992  | 9.3%  |
| 1991  | 12.7% |
| 1990  | 10.4% |

**The "downtown" area, or central business district, has experienced a trend of storefront buildings on S. Main Street becoming multi-family residential buildings.**

### Housing

The housing stock in the Village and Township of Vermontville consists primarily of single family homes. Some of these single-family homes have been modified into multiple living units (apartments) in the Village. The "downtown" area, or central business district, has experienced a trend of storefront buildings on S. Main Street becoming multi-family residential

buildings. This may be due to the lack of commercial investment in the Village center or a response to the need for affordable housing in the Village.

According to the Eaton County parcel map, there are approximately 406 parcels within the Village limits. With the total area of the Village being approximately 713 acres, the average parcel size is 1.75 acres. A majority of these are privately owned residential parcels. The Township's total acreage is 22,440 acres with 757 parcels giving an average parcel size of 31.5, indicating that agriculture uses or vacant land are predominate.

A majority of the homes in Vermontville Township and Village are "stick built" single family dwellings. There is a very low occurrence of modular homes, although the trend for this type of structure is slowly increasing.

### **Economic Development**

Attributes that can make an area suitable for industrial development are generally infrastructure, soil stability, proximity to a central market, demand, and compatibility with surrounding land uses. These attributes may also include a railroad system, an all weather truck route system, and proximity to commercial development.

At this time, there are few industrial uses in either the Township or Village. This may be due to agricultural uses that are the primary land use in the community, distance to an interstate highway system, and limited public water and sewer facilities.

General Motors Co. has chosen a location in Delta Township, approximately twelve miles east of Vermontville, for a new, high-productivity, manufacturing plant. According to the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, the manufacturing plant, referred to as the "Platinum Complex," is expected to be in full operation by mid 2002 and employ approximately 2800 workers directly. While the plant will not necessarily employ as many people as a typical GM manufacturing plant, substantial employment opportunities will be created within the supply sector. The exact number of suppliers that will be necessary and the total jobs created under full operation is not known at this time.

For efficiency purposes, the GM facility has required that certain suppliers be located within a particular maximum distance. For example, certain suppliers will be required to be no farther than 20 to 30 miles from the complex, while others may have more flexibility, all dependent upon the part produced. The overall maximum distance that will be

tolerated for a supplier has not been determined, but it is conceivable that suppliers may locate in various areas throughout Eaton County.

The population that may be associated with this new plant and its suppliers could create local housing demands throughout the County that may stretch into Vermontville Township and the Village of Vermontville. If a new population influx occurred, demands for housing, commercial services and improved infrastructure will develop.

On the other hand, if plants were closed in the greater Lansing area in conjunction with the operation of the new plant, the jobs lost and gained may be balanced and simply result in the geographic relocation of the available jobs.

One of the largest employers in the Vermontville community is the Maple Valley Schools, which employs approximately 250 people throughout the district. Maple Wood Elementary is within the Village limits and Maple Valley Junior-Senior High School is located in Vermontville Township on Nashville Highway. Other large employers in the area are Michigan Magnetics, employing approximately 60 people, Citizens Elevator employing approximately 20 people, and Non-Ferrous (plastic molds) employing approximately 8-10. Michigan Magnetics and Non-Ferrous Company both produce industrial products while Citizens Elevator is agriculture related. Many small, privately owned, businesses in the Village provide income for one to three employees.

**Reopened in December of 2000, the grocery store may once again become a stable convenient local market that helps draw in customers for the whole CBD.**

The "central business district" (CBD) of the Village is located south of the intersection of N. Main and S. Main on S. Main. Businesses such as a hardware store, tractor/mower sales, laundromat, restaurant, bars, and a gas station exist in this area. The unique and historical CBD provides a strong center and gathering point for the Vermontville community. A key commercial site in the CBD is the grocery store. Having been out of business for approximately 2 years, it provided a convenient local location to obtain groceries and created positive consumer traffic for other local businesses. Reopened in December of 2000, the store may once again become a stable convenient local market that helps draw in customers for the whole CBD.

Eaton County, at one point in time, was the primary maple syrup producing county in Michigan. Keeping up with tradition, the Village of Vermontville hosts an annual Maple Syrup Festival every spring. Highlights include a full carnival, camping, parades, and special events. The festival has also been known to be one of the first gatherings of the year for many motorcycle enthusiasts. A structure located downtown,

dedicated solely to the maple syrup function, serves as the hub of activity and many other businesses and proprietors cater to the visitors. Drawing up to 30,000 people, the festival not only provides positive exposure for Vermontville, it funds many of the community organizations and citizen groups. For example, funds were raised at past festivals to make improvements to the historic opera house in the Village.

### **Recreation**

Although there is a relatively low occurrence of public land in the Vermontville area, recreational opportunities in the Vermontville area include biking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. These attributes add character to the community and provide excellent outdoor activities for residents and visitors.

Located south of the Village and along the Thornapple River floodplain is an abandoned railroad track. While this corridor is no longer used for transportation or freight traffic, it reportedly contains an easement for a communications conduit. Further research must be conducted to verify the legal standing of this corridor, but it may serve as a community trail that skirts the Thornapple River in unique flood plain marshes.



## CHAPTER 4. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The Village of Vermontville Land Use Map illustrates the variety of land uses in the Village. The Existing Land Use Map is based on an inventory created by the citizens participating on the Master Plan Study Team.

### Land Use

**The Existing Land Use Map is based on an inventory created by the citizens participating on the Master Plan Study Teams.**

The Village is located southwest of the City of Lansing, North of Battle Creek, and southeast Grand Rapids, along the western border of Eaton County. The total land area of the Village of Vermontville is approximately 713 acres or just over one square mile in area. Vermontville Township is approximately 35 square miles or 22,439 acres in area.

Land use in the Village is typically single-family residential with a small central business district located in the center of downtown. Some multi-family units exist randomly throughout the Village while agricultural land and larger parcels exist on the outer edges of the Village. A few parcels are also dedicated to light industrial uses.

Surrounding Vermontville Township land uses are primarily agricultural with accompanying single family residential uses. The residential areas are typically on larger lots with no high-density development generally located along the main county roads. The few existing commercial/industrial land uses are not centralized in any one particular location.

For the purposes of this community profile, the land uses have been consolidated into the following categories:

1. Agricultural: Land that is, or has recently been, primarily used for the raising of various crops, orchards, and typical farm animals. This category is typically a commercial farm that raises cash crops or pasture for farm animals.
2. Single Family Residential: Land that is used primarily for one family on one parcel of land.
3. Multi-Family Residential: Land that is used to house two or more families. These homes may have been originally intended for one family, but have since been divided into separate apartment units. This land use may also include apartment buildings.

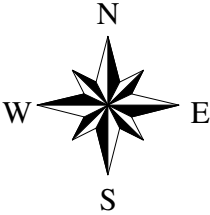
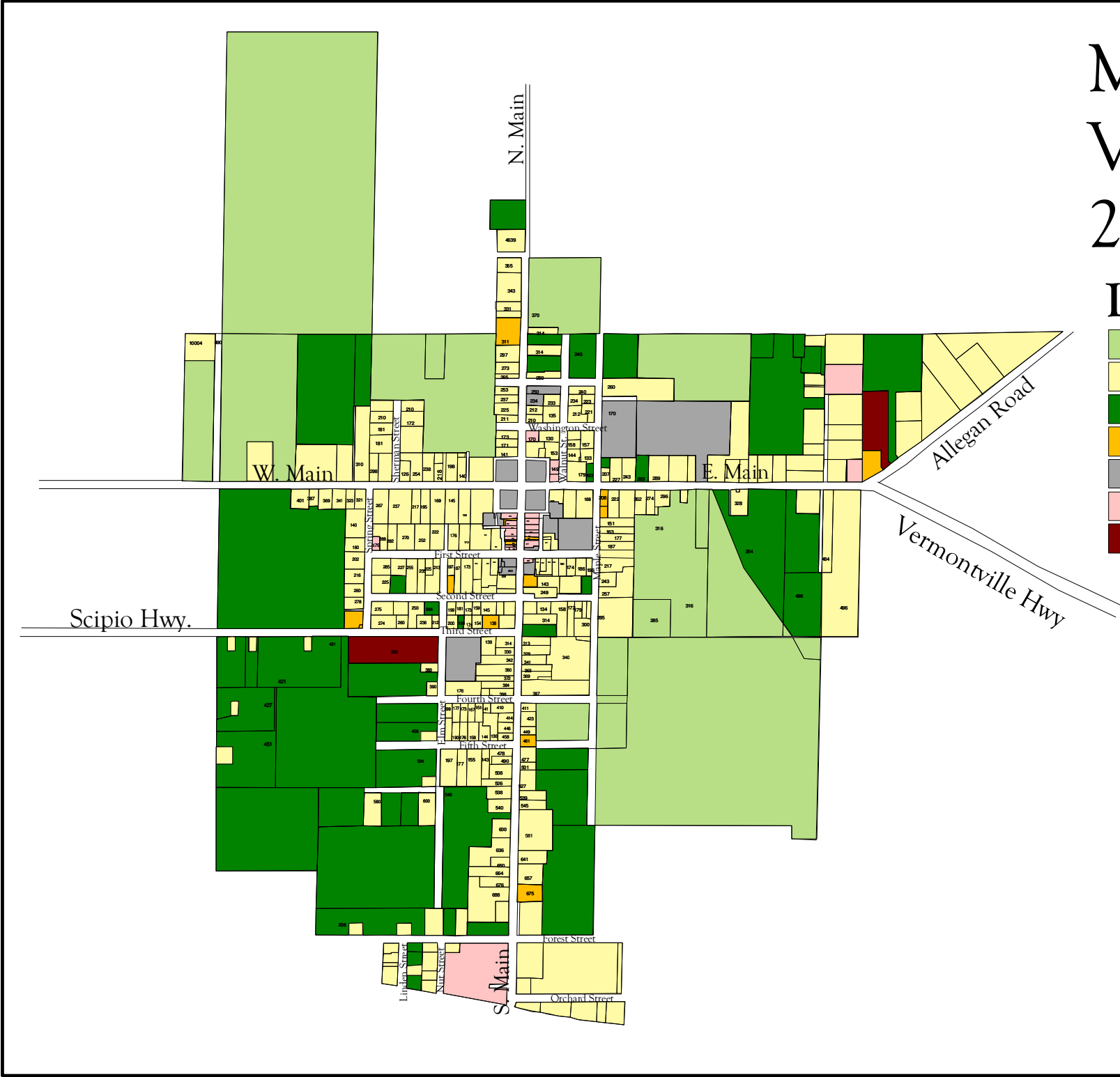
4. Parks/Schools/Institutional: Land that includes parks, playgrounds, schools, churches, cemeteries, and publicly owned buildings (fire station, village offices, etc.). No dwelling units are present on this category.
5. Commercial: Land used for the sale of goods or services. This category may include gas stations, retail shops, auto repair and sales, restaurants, self-storage and specialty type businesses.
6. Vacant: Land not used for any other category and does not have any developed use. This may include forested land, open land, wetlands, fallow fields, or vacant lots.
7. Industrial: Land used for production, storage, manufacturing, or assembly purposes. This may include developed uses such as factories, warehouses and other heavy production business. This use does not typically allow for direct sales on the premises.
8. Extractive: Land that is used for mining purposes. In Vermontville Township, gravel pits are the only types of extractive processes in operation.

The Current Land Use Maps on the following pages utilize the above listed land use classes. These maps were created through efforts of the Village and Township Master Plan Study Teams. Individual team members were assigned specific areas of the Village and Township and recorded the type of land use that occurred on each parcel. These generalized land use maps allow a "birds eye" view of the land uses in the community and offer a new perspective of overall land use.

# Map 5 Village of Vermontville 2001 Land Use Map

## Land Use Classification

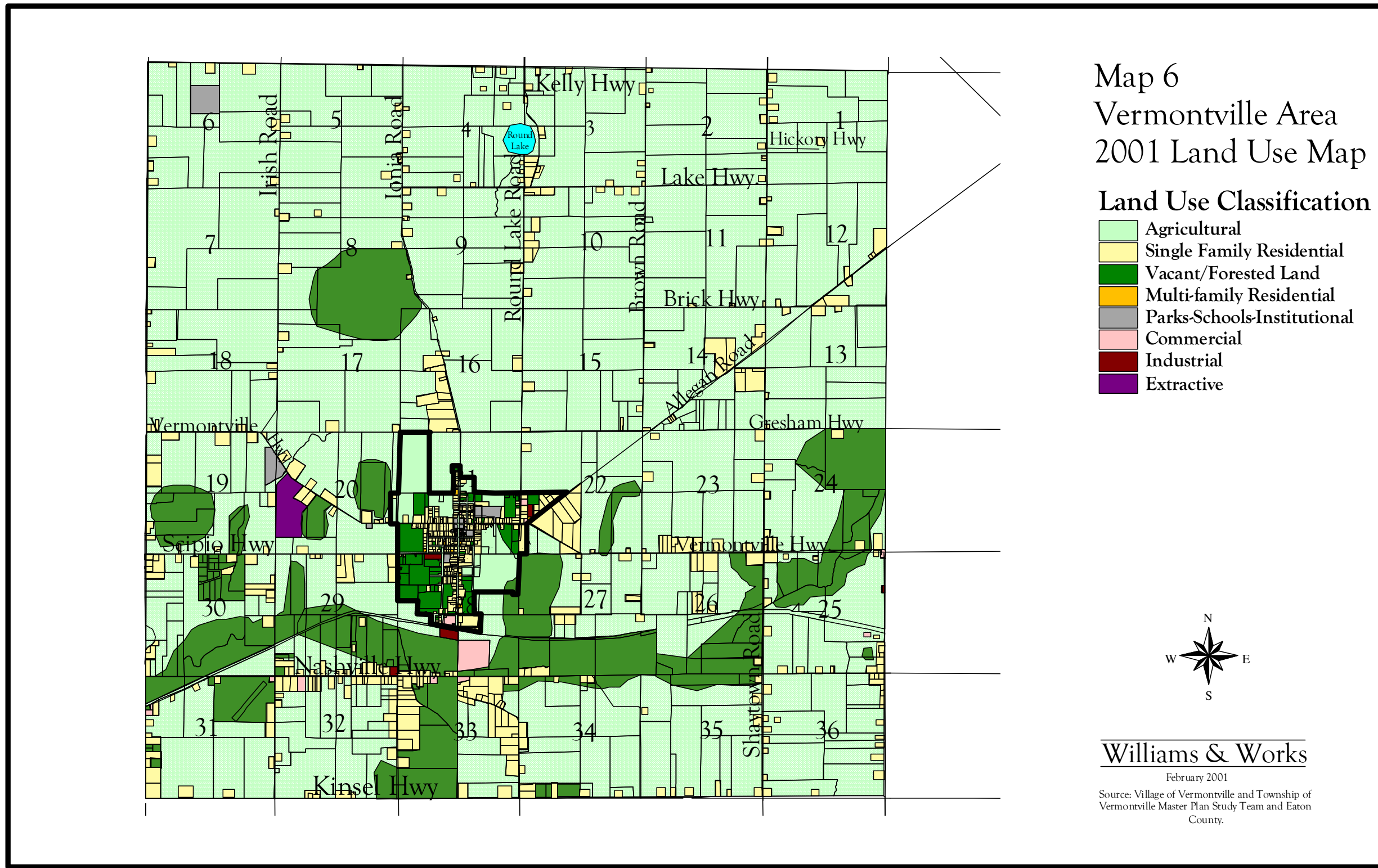
-  Agricultural
-  Single Family Residential
-  Vacant Land
-  Multi-family Residential
-  Parks-Schools-Institutional
-  Commercial
-  Industrial



**Williams & Works**

February 2001

Source: Village of Vermontville and Township of Vermontville Master Plan Study Team and Eaton County.

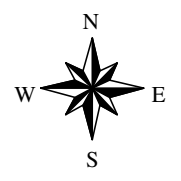


Map 6  
 Vermontville Area  
 2001 Land Use Map

**Land Use Classification**

- Agricultural
- Single Family Residential
- Vacant/Forested Land
- Multi-family Residential
- Parks-Schools-Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Extractive

(Township)



**Williams & Works**

February 2001

Source: Village of Vermontville and Township of Vermontville Master Plan Study Team and Eaton County.

## CHAPTER 5. TRANSPORTATION

The Village of Vermontville and Vermontville Township are served by a series of gravel and paved two-lane county roads. A majority of the county roads run north-south and east-west, generally following the Township section lines. The roads are organized by the terminology "highway" and "road." All roads running east-west are considered a "highway." All roads running north-south are considered "roads."

The main county roads used for access into the Village and Township are the Vermontville Highway, Nashville Highway, Ionia Road, and Allegan Road. These roads provide direct access to and from the main transportation routes of M-66 and M-43 from the west, M-50 from the east and north, and M-79 from the south. Roads within the Village are maintained by Village, which includes repairs, construction and plowing.

"All Weather Truck Route Systems" are road systems that are not subject to springtime seasonal weight restrictions, have priority for winter maintenance, and are built to a higher standard than typical county roads. Two of these systems exist in Vermontville Township. The first system is from the Vermontville Highway and M-50 intersection to the Village boundary and from the intersection of the Vermontville Highway and M-66 to the Village boundary. This provides a trucking route from M-50 to M-66 through the Township. The second system runs south of the Village on Ionia Road to the Nashville Highway and then west to the County line. It is appropriate for industrial/commercial developments utilizing heavy truck traffic to be located near or on an "All Weather Truck Route System."

**The intersection of North, South, East, and West Main in the heart of the Village is said to be one of the busier intersections in rural Eaton County.**

The intersection of North, South, East, and West Main in the heart of the Village is said to be one of the busier intersections in rural Eaton County. This is due to the east-west traffic flow through the county, the presence of schools, the Village center, and a fair concentration of population.

According to the Eaton County Road Commission, traffic volumes are heaviest on Ionia Road south of the Village to Nashville, averaging 2,707 average daily trips (ADTs) in 2000 and on Vermontville Highway east of the Village, experiencing 2,360 ADTs. Vermontville Highway west of the Village had 1,306 ADTs, Ionia Road north of the Village had 814 ADTs, and Allegan Road east of the Village had 680 ADTs. This indicates the heaviest traffic is on Vermontville Highway, Ionia Road and Nashville Highway. While the County Road

Commission concurs that Vermontville Highway is traveled quite extensively, the state highways, especially M-79, carry the majority of the east and west traffic.

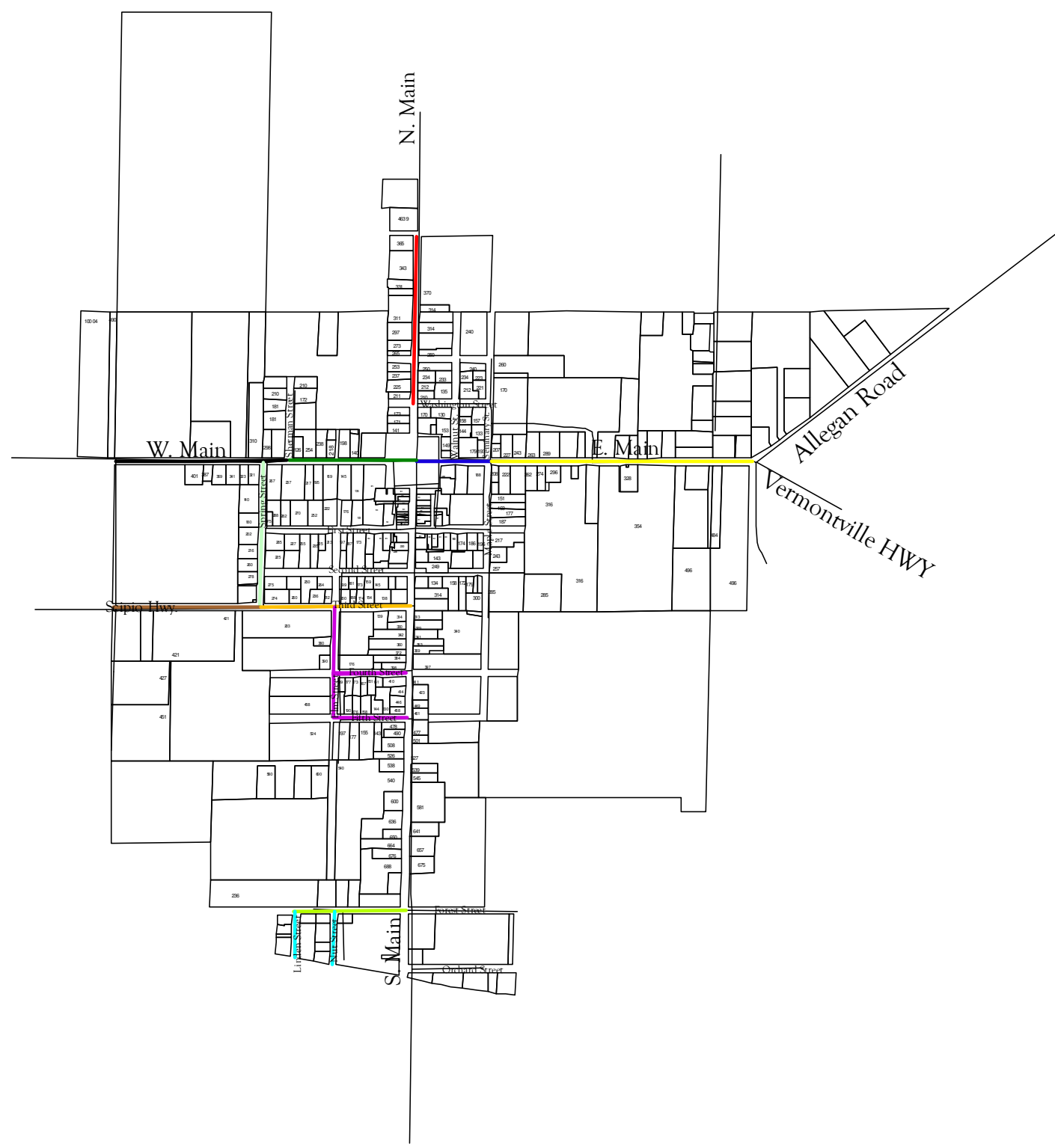
In comparison, other county roads, such as Battle Creek Highway west out of Charlotte with 4,944 ADTs and Island Highway east out of Charlotte with 3,000 ADTs, obviously experience heavier traffic volumes. Part of the reason is the proximity to a population concentration and the fact that these roads pick up traffic from rural areas that utilize the central business district of Charlotte.

The relative isolation of the Village may have had an effect on the overall residential and commercial growth. The community is about fifteen miles from I-69 and twenty-five miles from I-96 via rural two lane roads. Typically, an interstate highway system provides the population with a commuting route which may increase the overall bedroom community population. This isolation factor may contribute to lower property values, and the lack of corporate investment, on one hand, and the desirable rural character and small town lifestyle, on the other.

Road improvements and maintenance are an on going activity in any growing community. Map 7 illustrates that some of the streets in the Village that may eventually need to be upgraded, improved, or developed, according to the Village Public Works Department.

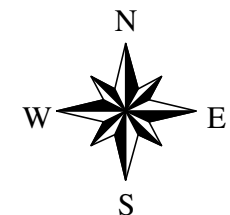
# Map 7 Village of Vermontville

Village streets that may require future finishing and development.  
(Highest to lowest priority)



1. E. Main
2. W. Main
3. N. Main
4. Elm, Fourth and Fifth Street
5. Thrid Street
6. E. Main
7. W. Main
8. Spring
9. Forest Street
10. Third Street
11. Nut and Linden Street

Williams & Works  
October 2001



### SECTION III MASTER PLAN

This section of the Plan is the culmination of the entire planning process. It includes the overall goals and objectives of the Village as development through the futuring process and ultimately as expanded in the preparation of this plan.

It also sets forth in Chapter 7 the future land use plan and map for the Village. Finally, in Chapter 8, the Master Plan offers a framework for the implementation of the Plan.



## CHAPTER 6. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**The Study Team members used the results of the futuring session along with their own experience and perspectives to prepare the goals and objectives in this Chapter.**

As a part of the effort to develop this plan, the Village of Vermontville Study Team undertook a community-wide effort to obtain the Village resident's opinion about the preferred future of the community. In February of 2001, nearly fifty members of the Vermontville community attended a Futuring Session organized by the Township and Village of Vermontville Study Teams. The purpose of the Futuring Session was to gain an understanding of how the residents of the Vermontville community felt about the future and potential new growth. The Study Team members used the results of the Futuring Session along with their own experience and perspectives to prepare the goals and objectives in this Chapter.

The result is a series of seven broad goal statements each supported by more specific objectives. This plan is founded on the policies outlined in the following statements. The goals are intended to describe a desirable end state or the condition of the Village about twenty-five years into the future. They are intentionally general but all are felt to be attainable through concerted effort. The objective statements tend to be more specific and may be regarded as milestones in the journey to achieve the larger goal.

### 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Land uses will be balanced to achieve an environment that enhances and strengthens local businesses and a diverse tax base.

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Identify industrial uses that are compatible with the current public sewer lagoon system.
- B. Identify sites in the Village that are suitable for new industrial sites.
- C. Develop a "CBD" plan that offers new solutions to the parking problems in the Village and enhances economic opportunity to local businesses.
- D. Purchase or develop property in the Village to create more parking in the commercial center.
- E. Create an ordinance that regulates multi-family housing units and determines the areas in which they are allowed.

### 2. HISTORICAL PRESERVATION.

The Village of Vermontville will be a community that offers a unique historical experience through the encouragement of maintenance and restoration of historically significant buildings and landmarks.

### **Objectives**

- A. Identify historical structures, landmarks and other features that are historically significant in the community.
- B. Develop a Village Historical District that encourages the preservation of historical community features.

### **3. NATURAL FEATURES, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.**

Complementing the community's rural character, the Village will offer a network of natural areas developed in cooperation with the private sector and area institutions. Development in environmentally sensitive areas will be discouraged. The creation or expansion of recreational pathways or trails will be a priority.

### **Objectives**

- A. Identify and map existing and potential trail systems.
- B. Identify significant woodlots, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development.
- C. Develop a combined recreation plan for the Township and Village.

### **4. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

The Village will encourage attractive and creative neighborhood forms for a diverse population, which will provide efficient and aesthetic use of the land while enhancing the rural character of the Village.

### **Objectives**

- A. Develop site plan and land division standards that require all development be carefully and thoughtfully located in respect to natural features, suitability of soils for on-site utility systems or availability of public water and sewer.
- B. Identify potential locations for a manufactured home community.

### **5. UTILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES.**

Public facilities, including utilities and roadways, will be located to complement the Village's Land Use Plan and designed to serve the public safely while conserving the community natural resources.

### **Objectives**

- A. New utilities, facilities, and infrastructure will effectively guide and direct growth in the Vermontville Community.

## 6. RURAL CHARACTER PRESERVATION

The rural character of the community will be preserved by protecting significant open lands, important transportation corridors, scenic views, road side trees, other natural vegetation, and rural night sky conditions.

### **Objectives:**

- A. Establish zoning standards that create buffers between intense land non-intense land uses.
- B. Create site plan standards that require a lighting plan to be submitted, ensuring preservation of night sky conditions.
- C. Create a tree ordinance that encourages minimal loss of natural vegetation with an emphasis on productive maple trees.
- D. Identify and map scenic views and corridors.

## 7. COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING.

The Village and Township of Vermontville will cooperate on subjects of mutual interest and for the benefit of all residents. The Village and Township will cooperate with other local jurisdictions in the effort of creating a common land use vision throughout the Vermontville region.

### **Objectives**

- A. Conduct annual Village and Township joint Planning Commission meetings.

## CHAPTER 7. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

**The over-arching intent is to foster efficient patterns of development that preserve the community's important natural and historical features and rural character while accommodating growth.**

The Village of Vermontville Master Plan establishes general patterns of land use to guide growth and development for the next twenty to twenty-five years. The intent is to foster efficient patterns of development that preserve the community's important natural and historical features and rural character while accommodating growth. This Future Land Use Plan seeks to promote efficient and aesthetic growth while promoting the preservation of a commercial center, historical attributes, and quality of life.

By encouraging residential, commercial and industrial development to occur in appropriate and historical patterns, it will be possible for the Village to continue to protect, preserve, and enhance the important positive features that residents currently enjoy well into the future. The following describes each of the future land use designations as illustrated on Map 6.

### *Commercial*

Central Business District: The Central Business District purpose is to provide a primary commercial area. This commercial area will be central to residents in the Village, Vermontville Township, and other surrounding jurisdictions. Residential uses will be allowed only as a secondary use to existing and proposed commercial uses, promoting a strong commercial core. No residential uses will be allowed on the ground floor of buildings in this district. The general location for this area is along South Main Street (north and south of First Street) and around the four-corners area. Designed to be pedestrian friendly with adequate parking available, the Central Business District will be encouraged to attract tourist and local business. Historical preservation and restoration will be encouraged.

General Commercial: The General Commercial area is intended to serve local and regional commercial needs that provides goods and services without detracting from the Central Business District. This area is located on the east end of the Village near the Vermontville Highway/Allegan Road intersection on the north side of Allegan Road. Commercial uses should be connected to public water and sewer and designed to serve commercial needs oriented towards vehicular traffic. Commercial uses will be compatible with the surrounding residential development and will not detract from the rural character of the Village. Some examples of commercial developments appropriate for this area may be gas stations and car washes.

### *Parks/Recreation/Public*

The Parks/Recreation/Public designation is intended to provide areas for playgrounds, trails, ball fields, and any public open lands and publicly owned facilities including offices, parking lots, and schools. It is not the intention of the Village to limit the use of these lands to only the mentioned lands uses, although this area is a priority for these uses if the opportunity presents itself. If these areas are not utilized as parks, open space, and public facilities, single family residential development consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods may be permissible. Any new residential development should also be consistent with the intent of the Residential designation within the Master Plan Concepts.

If areas within the Parks/Recreation/Public designation are utilized for residential purposes, new areas should be considered for this designation, to assure sufficient public use areas and retain the high quality of life is a priority of the Village of Vermontville. Planting of sugar maple trees will be encouraged on all public and private lands to help retain the legacy of the Vermontville maple syrup history.

### *Residential:*

The Residential designation is primarily intended for single family neighborhoods. The development will be scaled and designed for vehicular and pedestrian mobility. Architectural designs will be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and compliment the historic character of the Village. Density patterns will range from three to four units per acre and will continue to reflect those of developed residential neighborhood densities. Preservation of large trees and vegetation that characterize the neighborhood will be encouraged.

### *Multi-family Residential:*

The Multi-family Residential designation is intended to provide areas for housing that may include duplexes, apartments, and attached condominium developments. These types of developments should be close to community facilities and should be designed to be consistent with, and add character to, the community. Density patterns will allow up to 8 units per acre and architectural designs will be compatible and blend with the surrounding neighborhood.

Minimum open space for private or public use will exist within each new development that may be considered. The review process of the Village

will encourage and reward the preservation of large trees and vegetation that characterize the neighborhood.

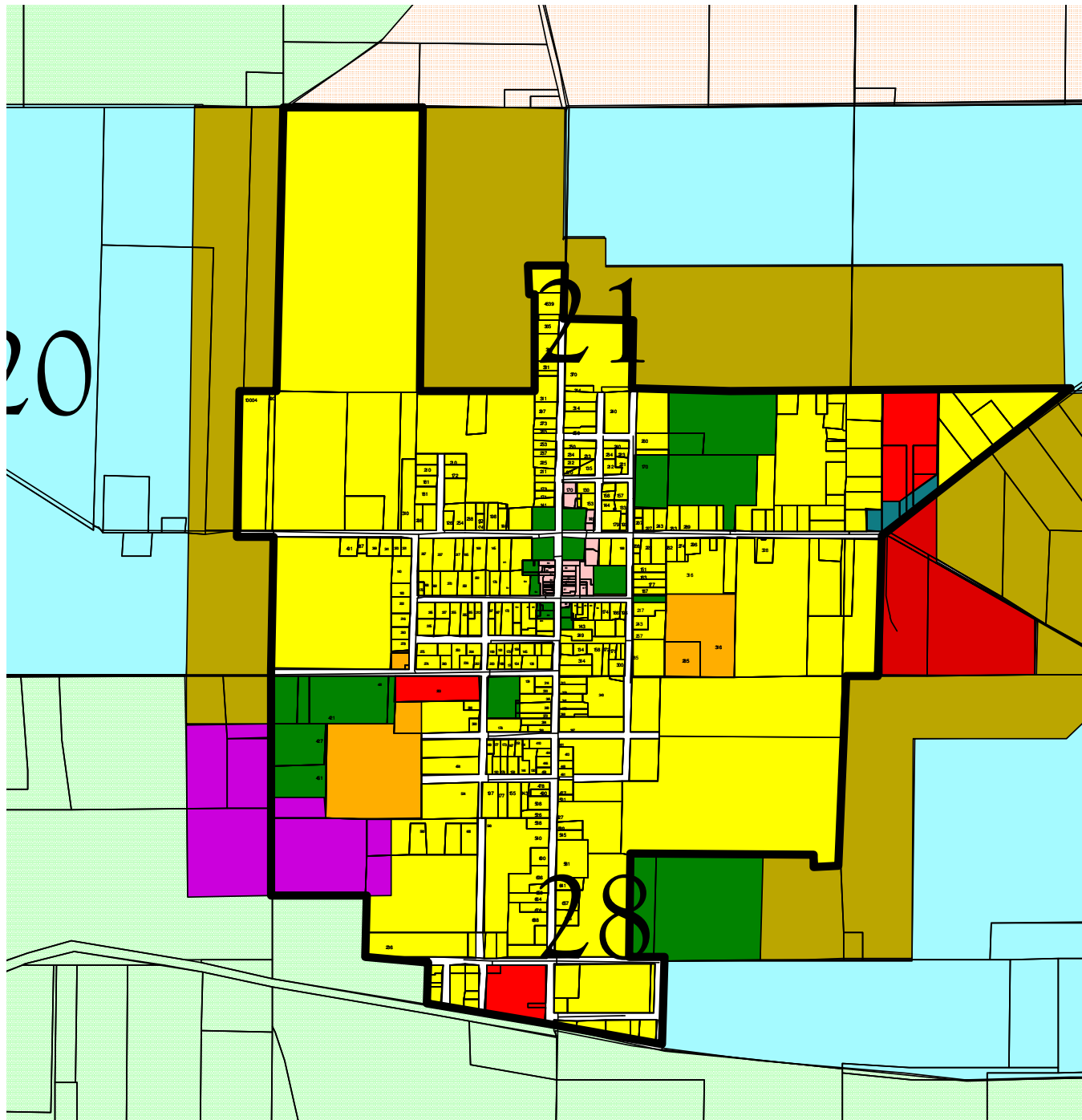
***Light Industrial:***

The Light Industrial designation is intended to provide employment for the local area. Development will utilize public utilities along with appropriate transportation connections and adequate roads for sites requiring heavy truck traffic. Industrial uses should be centralized, efficiently utilizing the available land. Vegetative buffers and larger building set backs will exist between any less intense land use and industrial use. Industrial activities will be limited to those that do not produce high strength or toxic wastewater that the Village lagoon system cannot properly treat and to those that blend well with the surrounding land uses. Noxious odor and noise control, lighting, transportation, and site development will be the primary considerations for any new facility.

***Manufactured Housing Community:***

The Manufactured Home designation will provide a place for a medium to high-density (four to six units per acre) manufactured home community, which may include a mobile home park. Availability of public utilities will be necessary to a development of this density. Natural vegetative buffers between land uses and retention of significant natural features will be required. A greater road frontage setback will help to provide visual buffers from local roadways. Open space areas within any new development will be encouraged to provide areas for recreation and natural buffering.

# Map 8 Village of Vermontville Future Land Use Map

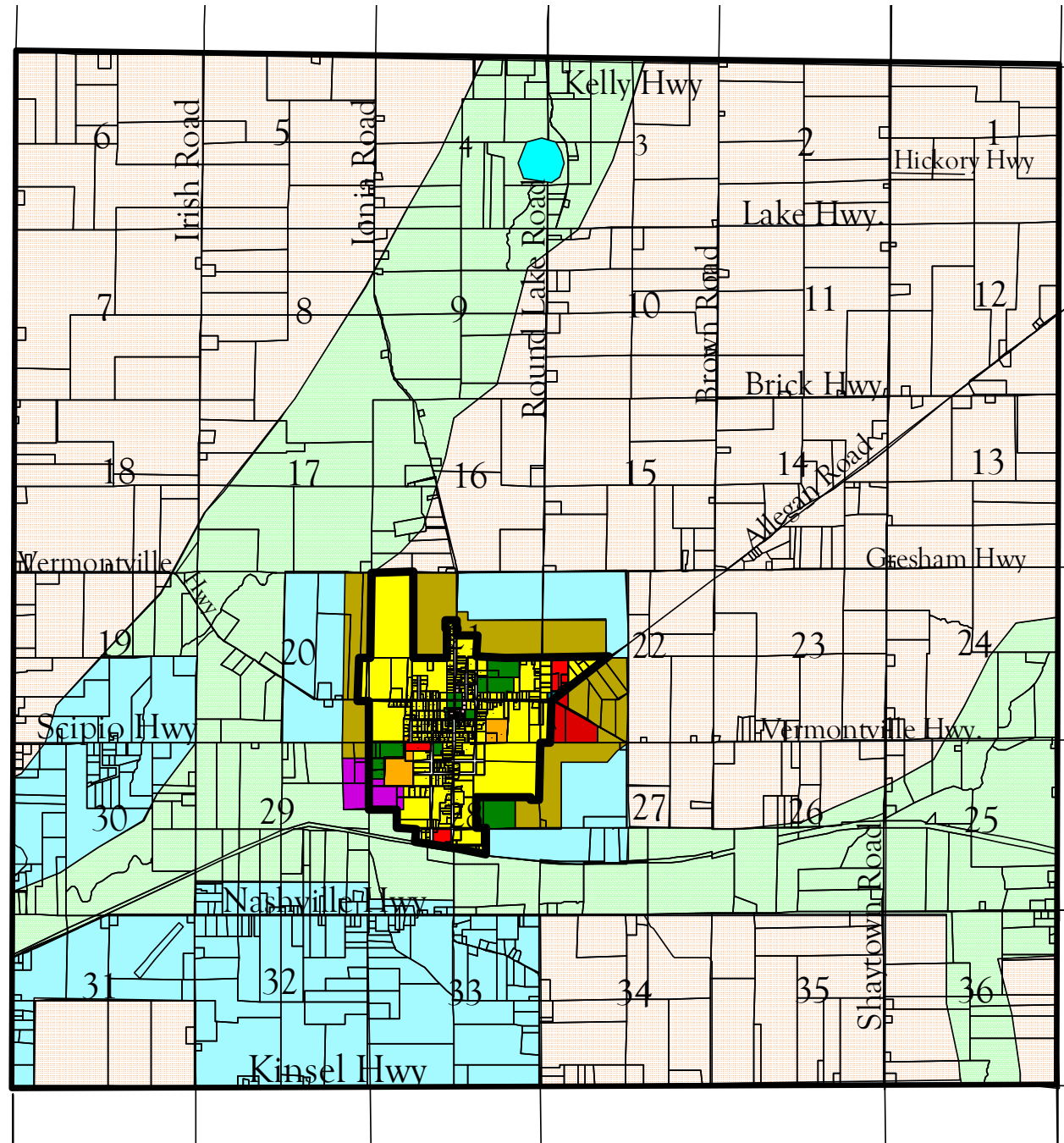


- Vermontville Township  
Designations
- Residential
  - Manufactured Housing Community
  - Light Industrial
  - Agricultural
  - Rural Residential
  - Resource Conservation
  - Public Use

- Village of Vermontville  
Designations
- Manufactured Housing Community
  - Light Industrial
  - Central Business District
  - Parks/Public /Recreation
  - Multi-family
  - Residential
  - General Commercial



# Map 9 Vermontville Township Future Land Use Map



- Vermontville Township  
Designations
- Residential
  - Manufactured Housing Community
  - Light Industrial
  - Agricultural
  - Rural Residential
  - Resource Conservation
  - Public Use

- Village of Vermontville  
Designations
- Manufactured Housing Community
  - Light Industrial
  - Central Business District
  - Parks/Public /Recreation
  - Multi-family
  - Residential
  - General Commercial





## CHAPTER 8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following strategies are established to implement the goals and objectives and land use recommendations of this Plan. It is recognized that many strategies will be long-term in nature and that many entities in addition to Village of Vermontville will need to cooperate in order to fully implement this Plan. In many instances, the Village's role is that of facilitator for some of the strategies listed in this Chapter.

This Chapter presents the action strategies for the Master Plan. Each strategy is numbered sequentially and the relevant Goals and Objectives statements are identified by their outline designation from Chapter 6. In some instances, a strategy may relate directly to more than one objective statement. A general description of each strategy is provided along with a suggestion of the roles and responsibilities of one or more agencies in carrying it out and a general timeframe for implementation.

### 1. CREATE A NEW ZONING ORDINANCE AND OTHER LAND USE ORDINANCES OR REGULATIONS.

**Description.** The Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool for implementing the goals, objectives and strategies of the Master Plan. The Zoning Ordinance is a document intended to regulate current land uses while the Master Plan addresses future land uses. Creating an entire new Zoning Ordinance will offer the Village the opportunity to fairly administer and regulate the lands within the Village of Vermontville ensuring consistent development. Regulatory mechanisms that further the goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan will be incorporated into the new Village Zoning Ordinance.

Part of this strategy will include implementing a zoning district that encourages commercial land uses in the Central Business District area on the Future Land Use Map and lighting standards for new dense developments that preserve rural night sky conditions. The Village will also develop site plan and land division standards that require all development be carefully and thoughtfully located in respect to natural features, suitability of soils for on-site utility systems or availability of public water and sewer.

**Timeframe.** Following the adoption of this Master Plan, the creation of the Zoning Ordinance should occur in early 2002.

**Responsibilities.** This strategy may be implemented by the Planning Commission and recommended to the Village Council for adoption. Outside support will be provided for this task.

**Support and Funding.** Outside consulting services have been contracted to complete the creation of a new zoning ordinance with Village staff and electorate.

**Related Goals and Objectives.** This strategy supports the following goals and objectives found in Chapter 6:

Goal #1 Objective E

Goal #4 Objective A

Goal #6 Objective A, B, C and D.

## 2. IDENTIFY AND MAP HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT AND UNIQUE BUILDINGS AND LANDMARKS WITHIN THE VILLAGE AND ENHANCE THE CHARM AND CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.

This strategy will encourage private property owners to maintain or restore structures and retain large trees that characterize the Village of Vermontville. The Village will help organize a historical district that creates an attractive tourist destination and supports local community businesses.

**Timeframe.** The Planning Commission should begin discussing and researching the possible successful methods of historical preservation around mid 2002.

**Responsibilities.** This strategy may be implemented by the Planning Commission, the Village Council, or by a separate special interest committee.

**Support and Funding.** Support should come from the involved citizens of the community and funding needs should be quite low, as this effort could be successful through voluntary action.

**Related Goals and Objectives.** This strategy supports the following goals and objectives located in Chapter 6:

Goal #2 Objective A & B

Goal #6

## 3. DEVELOP A COMBINED RECREATION PLAN FOR THE VILLAGE AND TOWNSHIP.

This strategy's purpose is to combine efforts with Vermontville Township and identify and map potential and existing trail systems, significant woodlands, wetlands, and hunting areas that may prove to be recreationally/environmentally beneficial for the entire Vermontville community. Since the Township and Village are closely related

communities, a combined effort will ensure a cohesive plan and may save both jurisdictions valuable resources. A well-prepared recreation plan will allow the community to apply for grants that may be available through State and Federal agencies. Grants may be used for land acquisition and/or facility upgrades.

The Recreation Plan should include the following:

- A community description.
- Inventory of existing facilities within both jurisdictions.
- A basis for action program that lists specific goals and objectives.

**Timeframe.** The beginning of a new recreation plan should be discussed immediately by the Planning Commission and begin the process between 2002 and 2004.

**Responsibilities.** This strategy should be implemented by the Planning Commission, a separate committee or through an appointed "Recreation Board" in conjunction with other Village Council members, Village staff and Township representatives.

**Support and Funding.** Outside services may be contracted to support the community with this effort. Depending upon the level of detail, the cost to prepare recreation plans can typically range between \$5,000 and \$15,000.

**Related Goals and Objectives.** This strategy supports the following goals and objectives found in Chapter 6:

Goal #3- Objective A, B, & C

Goal #7

#### 4. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION.

Educating the community is a key component to successfully implementing the overall goals of the Master Plan. With education and distribution of information, the residents of the Village of Vermontville are more likely to provide support and input for new regulatory measures that are derived from the Plan. By inviting the involvement of residents, property owners, and business owners, a sense of ownership in the Master Plan will develop and strengthen the planning process.

Educational Programs may consist of a condensed version of the Village Master Plan for public distribution, informational brochures on various topics important to rural communities, and providing informational sessions by the Village Council or Planning Commission.

**Timeframe.** Efforts towards this strategy should commence immediately after the adoption of the Master Plan and may be expected to continue through its life.

**Responsibilities.** The Planning Commission will be the primary party responsible for creating and providing educational opportunities.

**Support and Funding.** Funding needs should be minimal, although any outside services contracted may create occasional costs.

**Related Goals and Objectives.** This strategy supports all of the goals and objectives.

## 5. CONDUCT ANNUAL VILLAGE AND TOWNSHIP JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS.

The Village of Vermontville and Vermontville Township will conduct joint Planning Commission meetings on an annual basis to encourage cooperation on subjects of mutual interest for the benefit of all residents. This will also help the efforts of creating and sustaining a common land use vision throughout the Vermontville region. Depending on the level of involvement, other surrounding jurisdictions may also be invited.

**Timeframe.** Efforts towards this strategy should commence immediately after the adoption of the Master Plan.

**Responsibilities.** The Planning Commission will be responsible for this effort.

**Support and Funding.** Funding needs should not be necessary for this strategy.

**Related Goals and Objectives.** This strategy supports all of the goals and objectives.

## 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The residents and business owners in the Village of Vermontville will develop a "Central Business District" (CBD) Plan that will create methods to enhance and strengthen the economic opportunities in the commercial area of the Village. The Plan will serve the existing commercial enterprises and will encourage new businesses to locate in this area. Due to the general shortage of parking in the CBD, plans for obtaining additional public parking in the Village will also be explored. The Plan will also encourage the local business owners to meet on a regular basis and discuss future opportunities and challenges.

Part of this Plan will include a section that describes the technical capabilities of the existing wastewater treatment facility and the types of industrial wastes that are treatable by the current facility.

**Timeframe.** Efforts towards this strategy should commence immediately after the adoption of the Master Plan.

**Responsibilities.** The Planning Commission or Village Council may instigate this process by creating a sub-committee that specifically discusses CBD issues along with working closely with the property and business owners of the Village.

**Support and Funding.** Support should come from the Village Council, Village Planning Commission and local business and property owners. Funding for Plan creation could vary depending on how it is produced and level of detail within the Plan.

**Related Goals and Objectives.** This strategy supports the following goals and objectives located in Chapter 6:

Goal #1; Objective A, B, C, and D.

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The following agencies, websites, and official reports were consulted in the compilation of the Village of Vermontville Master Plan.

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Eaton County Construction Code Office, Building Permit Information, 2000.

Eaton County Road Commission.

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Michigan Department of Education Website, 2001.

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## APPENDIX A

Through the efforts and involvement of the Vermontville Township and Village residents, approximately forty-five people attended the Community Futuring Session and participated in creating a common vision for the future. The Township utilized this information to build a strong foundation on which to build the Goals, Objectives and Future Land Uses.

Summaries of each group's most important "opportunities" and "threats" have been organized below. This valuable information, along with past discussions and the Current Assessment, provided the direction in the goal setting elements.

Table 1, facilitated by Gretchen Duever, had the following top results:

| Table 1 |                                  |      |  |
|---------|----------------------------------|------|--|
| Rank    | Opportunities                    | Rank | Threats  |
| 1       | Interest in the Futuring meeting | 1    | Growth of Schools                              |
| 2 (tie) | Small Business Development       | 2    | Trailer Parks                                  |
| 2 (tie) | Historic Preservation            | 3    | Lot sizes in country (breaking up of farmland) |

Table 2, facilitated by Larry Nix, had the following top results:

| Table 2 |  |         |                                     |
|---------|--|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Rank    | Opportunities  | Rank    | Threats                             |
| 1       | Good water and sewer system                              | 1 (tie) | Non-farm home [trespassing on farm] |
| 2       | Small Town (only allow controlled growth)                | 1 (tie) | Loss of animal habitat              |
| 3 (tie) | Historic Character                                       | 1 (tie) | Mobile Home Community               |
| 3 (tie) | Central Location to Regional Services                    | 1 (tie) | Loss of storefronts to residences   |
| 3 (tie) | Not many businesses (But existing ones are good quality) |         |                                     |

Table 3, facilitated by Jay Kilpatrick, had the following top results:

| Table 3 |  |      |  |
|---------|--|------|--|
| Rank    | Opportunities                                    | Rank | Threats  |
| 1       | Maple Syrup Festival                             | 1    | Lack of adequate public utilities (water & sewer etc.) |
| 2 (tie) | Grants and Subsidies for common vision           | 2    | Growth occurring too fast                              |
| 2 (tie) | New GM plant (creating home owners- not rentals) | 3    | Lack of meaningful opportunities for youth             |

And Table 4, facilitated by Lukas Hill, had the following results:

| Table 4 |  |      |  |
|---------|--|------|--|
| Rank    | Opportunities  | Rank | Threats  |
| 1(tie)  | Rural Character (natural beauty/open spaces/traffic)       | 1    | Senior quality of life (services, income, taxes) |
| 1 (tie) | Good for families (safety, schools, community involvement) | 2    | Low income housing                               |
| 2       | Good school system   | 3    | Declining Central Business District              |

While the top results offer a variety of viewpoints of the community, the review of all of the group lists indicate a trend of similar ideas. For example, the lists generally indicate that an increasing population is viewed as an opportunity as well as a threat. New population may increase the ability of small family businesses to prosper with more people needing goods and services. At the same time, however, new population growth may threaten the rural lifestyle by increasing traffic, overcrowding schools, and consuming open spaces with residential development. The consensus of all groups seemed to favor controlled organized growth along with proper preparation for future public services.

Some groups expressed the desire to keep schools small even if the population could support a larger school.

The availability of public water and sewer in the Village was on almost every group list as an opportunity. This provides the Village with



potential for dense growth and possible industrial development. The current limited capacity of these systems was also mentioned as a threat.

Interest in preserving and enhancing the historical aspects of the community was an opportunity that was mentioned by each group. The presence of the Amish community and the annual Maple Syrup Festival were also considered a positive attribute of the area. In some groups it was mentioned that this could create positive tourism in the community, and encouraging tourism seemed fairly popular among most of the groups. Tourism is another possible way of increasing the economic viability in the Village and Township without increasing the permanent population.

The recreational opportunities that surfaced included the Thornapple River and the possible trail opportunity along the old railroad corridor in the Township. Bike paths, hunting, and fishing were also listed as opportunities for the Township and Village.

Restoring the storefronts in the heart of the Village to commercial uses was a popular future opportunity. At the same time, interest was expressed in expanding the availability of multi-family housing in the community. Senior citizen interests were expressed, which may include housing that is affordable and convenient for an aging population. Parking and aesthetics (i.e. flowers) were also listed as something that could be improved in the Village.

One of the major threats found throughout all lists was the possibility of low-income housing and mobile home parks. It seemed to be understood that some of this type of housing is needed in a community, but the participants were mainly concerned about the size and intensity of such a development.

Lack of opportunities for youth in the community was listed as a threat. This included youth under 18 and economic opportunities for youth just entering the work force.

Splitting farmland into smaller parcels for residential purposes was considered a threat due to the loss of farmland.

The following charts illustrate all of the opportunities and threats listed at each table:

| Table 1 |                                  |      |  |
|---------|----------------------------------|------|--|
| Rank    | Opportunities                    | Rank | Threats  |
| 1       | Interest in the Futuring meeting | 1    | Growth of Schools                              |
| 2 (tie) | Small Business Development       | 2    | Trailer Parks                                  |
| 2 (tie) | Historic Preservation            | 3    | Lot sizes in country (breaking up of farmland) |
| 3       | Increase population              | 4    | Increasing Population                          |
| 4       | Outdoor Recreation               | 5    | Over taxing Village services                   |
| 5       | Community Housing (condos)       | 6    | Loss of syrup heritage                         |
| 6       | Recreational Trail               | 7    | No activities for kids under 18                |
| 7       | Small Manufacturing              | 8    | Industrial size farms                          |
| 8       | Aesthetics (flowers in Village)  | 9    | Parking  |
| 9       | Better law enforcement           | 10   | No building updates, restoration               |
| 10      | Strategically plan out schools   | 11   | Environmental Issues                           |
| 11      | Multi-family housing             | 12   | Apartment housing                              |

Table 2

| Rank    | Opportunities                             | Rank    | Threats   |
|---------|---|---------|---|
| 1       | Good water and sewer system               | 1 (tie) | Non-farm home [trespassing on farm]                   |
| 2       | Small Town (only allow controlled growth) | 1 (tie) | Loss of animal habitat                                |
| 3 (tie) | Historic Character                        | 1 (tie) | Mobile Home Community                                 |
| 3 (tie) | Central Location to Regional Services     | 1 (tie) | Loss of storefronts to residences                     |
| 3 (tie) | Not many businesses (good quality)        | 2       | More Traffic  |
| 4       | Friendly people                           | 3       | Roofs and Driveways (Drainage Problems, farm impacts) |
| 5       | Streets                                   | 4       | Growth adds burden on police, fire, sewer, and water  |
| 6       | Room for growth                           | 5       | Loss of farmland                                      |
| 7       | Schools                                   | 6       | Growth a change of community character                |
| 8       | Churches                                  | 7       | Loss of wood lots                                     |
| 9       | Bank                                      | 8       | Cell Towers   |
|         |   | 9       | Limited Parking                                       |

Table 3

| Rank    | Opportunities                           | Rank | Threats  |
|---------|---|------|--|
| 1       | Maple Syrup Festival                    | 1    | Lack of adequate public utilities (water & sewer etc.) |
| 2 (tie) | Grants and Subsidies for common vision  | 2    | Growth occurring too fast                              |
| 2 (tie) | New GM plant (home owners- not rentals) | 3    | Lack of meaningful opportunities for youth             |
| 3       | Upgraded Schools                        | 4    | Uncontrolled growth                                    |
| 4       | Need development and population         | 5    | Population base too small                              |
| 5       | New jobs                                | 6    | Limited regulations on septic tanks-better alternative |
| 6       | Alternate AG opportunities              | 7    | High land values                                       |
| 7       | Store with daily needs                  | 8    | Too many land divisions                                |
| 8       | Thornapple River opportunities          | 9    | Lack of Parking  |
| 9       | Tourism (Rural nature, Amish)           | 10   | Declining natural habitat                              |
| 10      | Opera House draw                        | 11   | Uncertainty of GM impacts                              |
| 11      | Hunting-Fishing-Bike Path-Horse Trails  | 12   | Large lot sprawl                                       |
| 12      | Light Industrial                        | 13   | Large number of renters (socioeconomic problem)        |
| 13      | Private Enterprise                      | 14   | Crime rate   |
| 14      | New Entertainment (electronic)          | 15   | Surface water diversion                                |

Table 4

| Rank    | Opportunities  | Rank | Threats  |
|---------|--|------|--|
| 1 (tie) | Rural Character (natural beauty/open spaces)               | 1    | Senior quality of life (services, income, taxes) |
| 1 (tie) | Good for families (safety, schools, community involvement) | 2    | Low income housing                               |
| 2       | Good school system   | 3    | Declining Central Business District              |
| 3       | Casino   | 4    | Transient Population                             |
| 4       | Family Businesses  | 5    | Splitting of Farmland                            |
| 5       | New Population   | 6    | Cell Towers                                      |
| 6       | Heritage Tourism   | 7    | Open minded creative politics                    |
| 7       | Zoning to maintain character                               | 8    | Community involvement                            |
|         |  | 9    | Too many businesses on one road                  |
|         |  | 10   | Schools over crowding                            |
|         |  | 11   | Property upkeep                                  |
|         |  | 12   | Crime  |

