

VILLAGE OF VERMONTVILLE



EATON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

MASTER PLAN



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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.

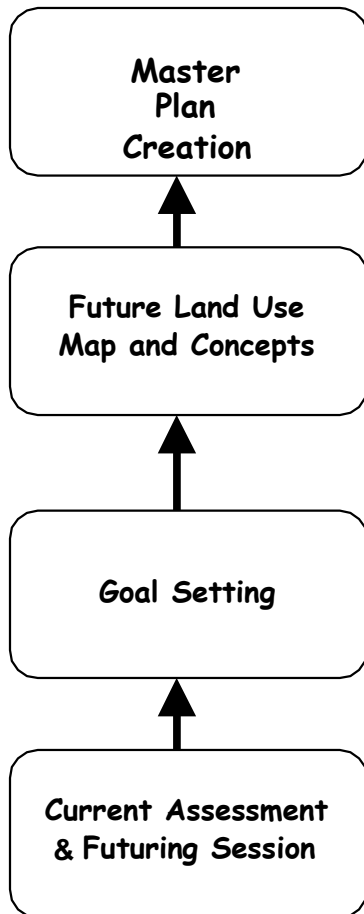
This Village Master Plan accomplishes all these objectives. More specifically, this Plan will serve the Village in the following ways:

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 principles 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.

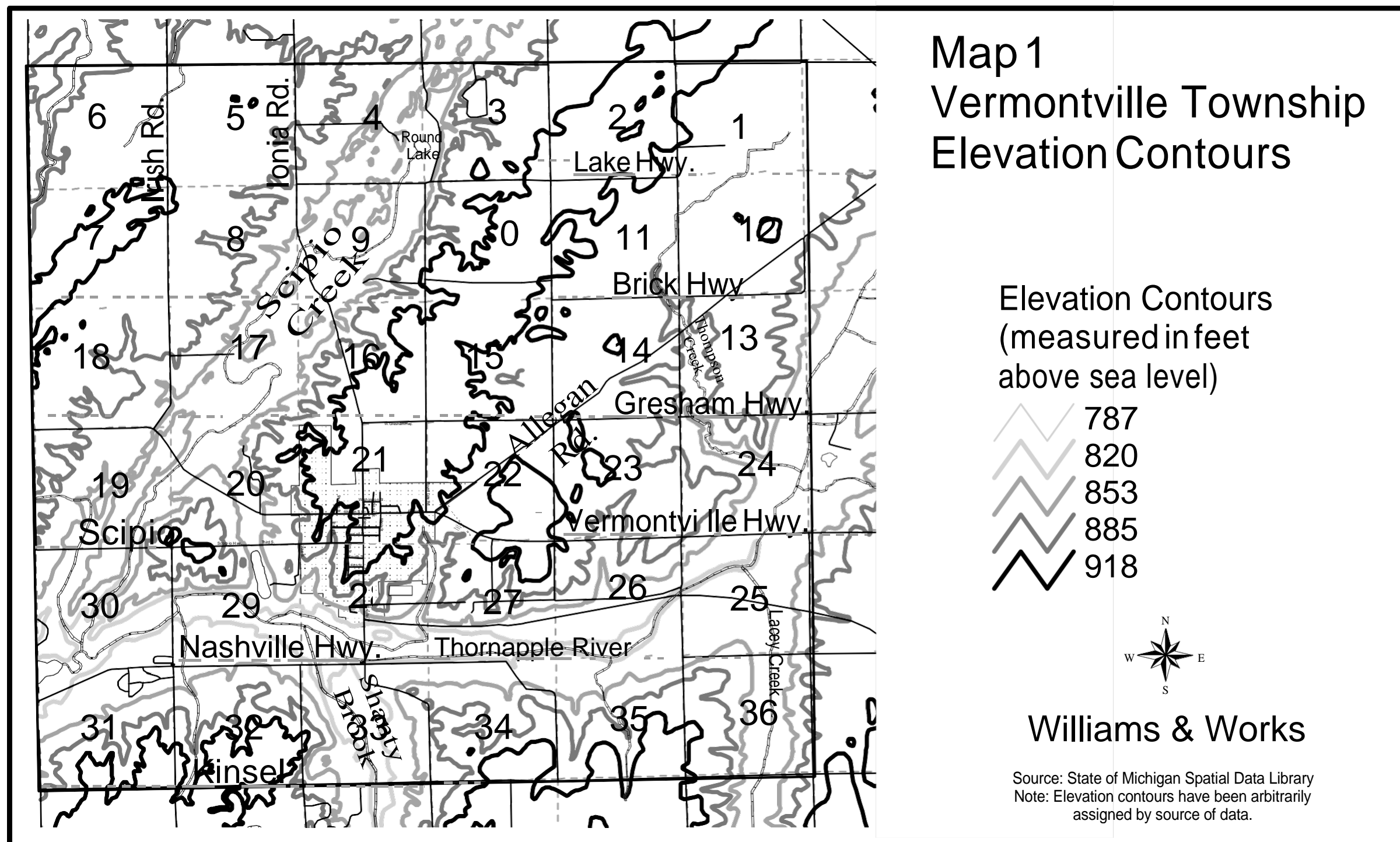
The Village of Vermontville is situated in Eaton County, approximately 25 miles southwest of Lansing. One of the most important features of the Village is its location. Even though the Village is not served by a major State or Federal highway system, it is approximately fifteen (15) miles west of Interstate 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

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

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.



Soils

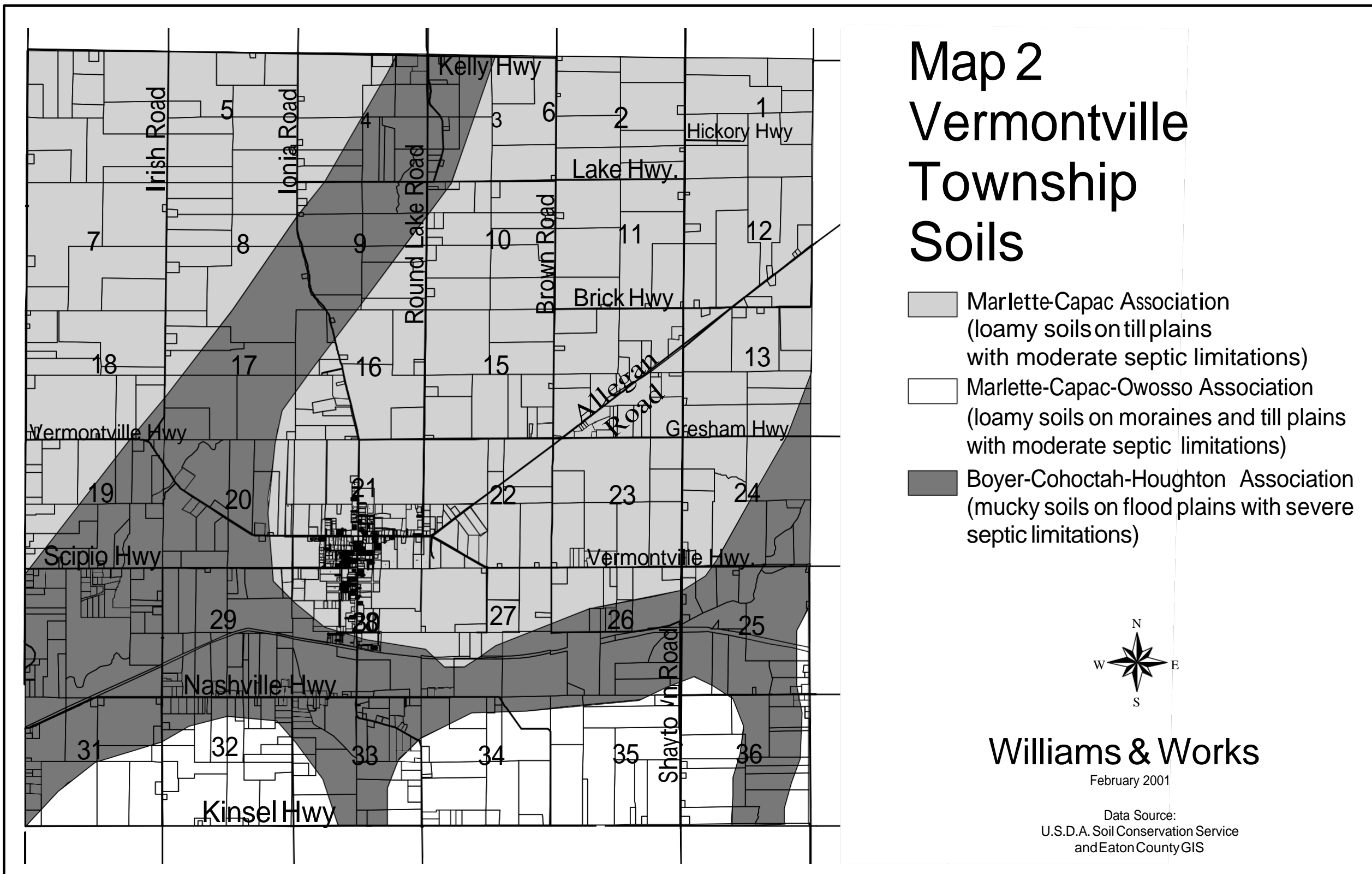
The soils in the Village are characterized by two broad categories according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (refer to the Vermontville Township Soil Map). A majority of the Village is classified as Marlette-Capac Association, which is a nearly level soil that is well 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.

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.

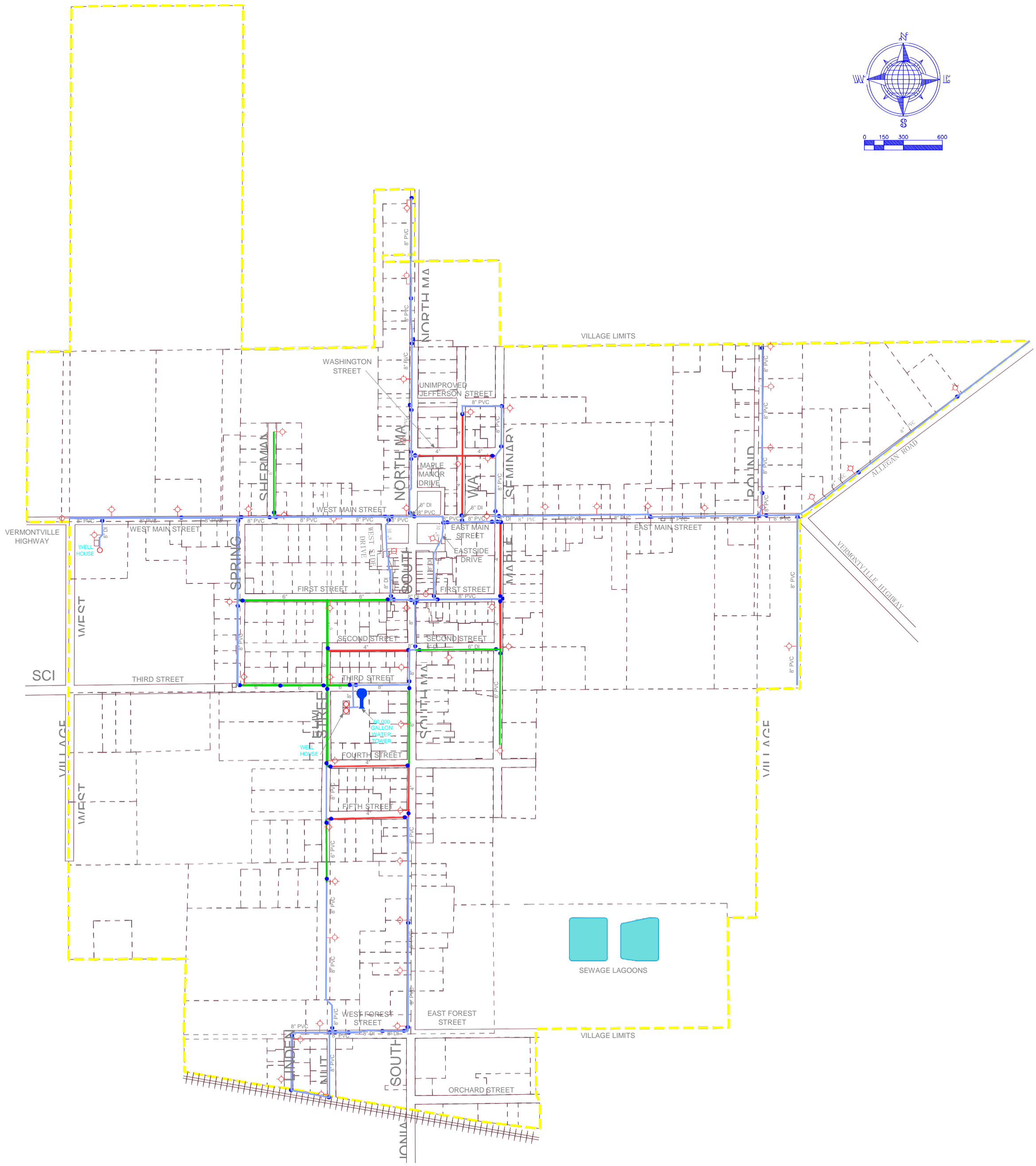
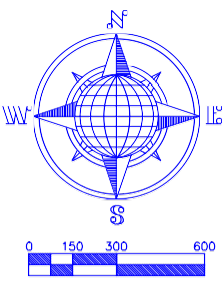
The tree species in the Township and Village vary greatly. Sugar maples, beech, hickory, red oak, and white oak are the typical hardwoods found in the area. Wet soils are typically home to elm, red maple, swamp oak, and ash.

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 2010 population at 759, the sewer facility is being approximately 76% utilized. The water system consists of a 62,000 gallon elevated storage tank with a 120 gallon per minute pump. There are 325 water meter connections and 323 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.

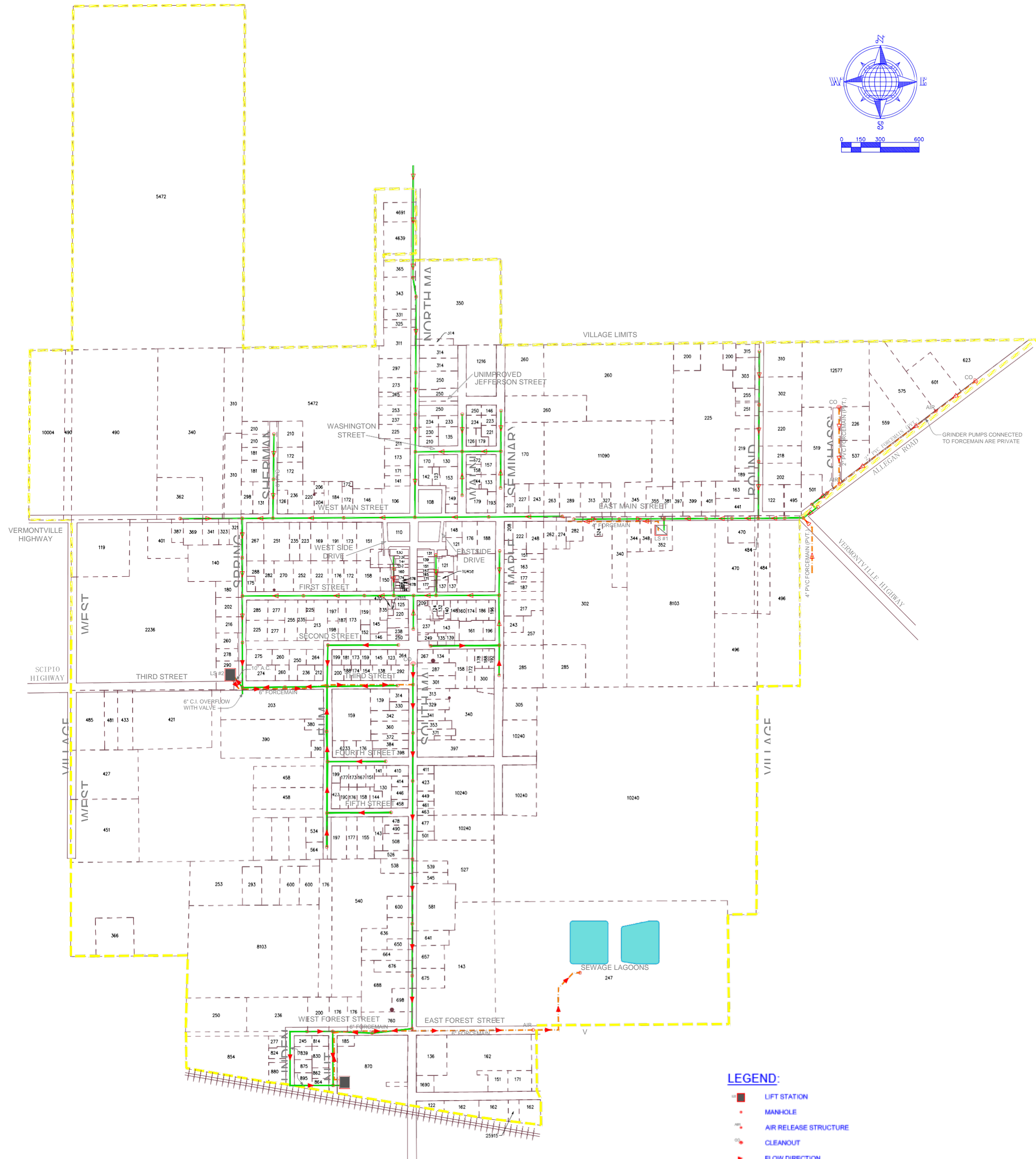
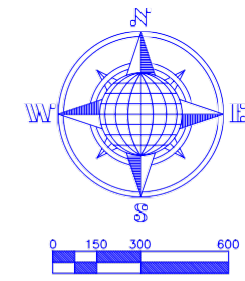


SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

WATER DISTRIBUTION MAP



- LEGEND:**
- EXISTING HYDRANT
 - EXISTING ISOLATION VALVE
 - EXISTING WELL
 - 8" (24,831 FT)
 - 6" (6,478 FT)
 - 4" (4,628 FT)
 - TOTAL WATERMAIN = 6.80 MILES (35,933 FT)



SANITARY SEWER MAP

Village of Vermontville

AUGUST 1, 2012

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 8 residents between 2000 and 2005, illustrating a 1% gain according to the U.S. Census. In comparison, the Vermontville Township population increased by an estimated 144 residents or 11% between 2000 and 2005 and the Eaton County population increased by 3,739 residents, or 3.6% between 2000 and 2005. 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							
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Numeric Population Change	Percent Increase 2000-2005
Eaton County	103,655	104,675	105,469	106,523	106,826	107,394	3,739	3.6%
Vermontville Village	789	793	796	799	796	797	8	1.0%
Balance of Vermontville Township	1,311	1,346	1,374	1,402	1,428	1,455	144	11.0%
Sunfield Village	591	592	594	596	594	595	4	0.7%
Balance of Sunfield Township	1,586	1,618	1,645	1,672	1,697	1,725	139	8.8%
Chester Township	1,778	1,809	1,837	1,865	1,890	1,918	140	7.9%
Kalamo Township	1,742	1,778	1,807	1,836	1,862	1,890	148	8.5%
Muliken Village	557	558	559	561	560	561	4	0.7%
Bellevue Village	1,377	1,375	1,376	1,379	1,373	1,375	-2	-0.1%

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 2000 and 2009, approximately 3.5% 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 1.3% 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: 2000-2009									
Population			2000-2009 Change		4/1/00-7/1/09		Natural Increase	International Migration	Domestic Migration
4/1/00	7/1/08	7/1/09	Number	Percent	Births	Deaths	2000-2009	2000-2009	2000-2009
103,655	106,816	106,077	2,422	2.30%	11,257	7,631	3,626	748	-1,336

Source: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget

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 gain population throughout the next 20 years.

The jurisdictions surrounding Vermontville Township are also expected to gain population in the next 20 years.

Table 2.3

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Population Projections							
Jurisdiction	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	% Change 2010-2035
Vermontville Township	1294	1294	1309	1339	1376	1415	9.4%
Village of Vermontville	759	759	765	777	791	806	6.2%
Kalamo Township	1842	1842	1860	1898	1945	1994	8.3%
Chester Township	1747	1747	1759	1785	1816	1849	5.8%
Sunfield Township	1419	1419	1436	1470	1512	1556	9.7%
Sunfield Village	578	578	582	589	599	609	5.4%
Bellevue Village	1282	1282	1290	1305	1325	1345	4.9%
Mulliken Village	553	556	577	603	626	642	16.1%

Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission projects a gain in population over the next twenty years in the Township and Village. For example, over the last nine years (2006-2015), there has been a small amount of new home construction within the Village and Township. The Village had two new homes built during this time period. This suggests a growth rate of approximately 5 residents every nine years, based on the average household size of 2.61 persons in the Village.

Vermontville Township had approximately 14 new home permits issued from 2006-2015. Therefore, there has been an approximate gain of 38 new residents within the Township over this time period. In a fairly simplistic analysis, it is appropriate to project population growth at about 38 persons every nine years, or about 4 persons per year. This suggests an annual rate of increase of 0.3%.

Table 2.4

New Home Building Permit Activity		
Year	Village of Vermontville	Vermontville Township
2006	1	5
2007	1	3
2008	0	1
2009	0	0
2010	0	1
2011	0	4
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	0	0
2015	0	0
Total	2	14

Source: Eaton County Construction Code Department

Table 2.5

Growth Rate Population Projection Method						
Jurisdiction	April 2000	April 2010	Percent Incr/Decr 2000-2010	Estimated 2020 Population	Estimated 2030 Population	Estimated 2040 Population
Eaton County	103,655	107,759	3.96%	112,025	116,461	121,072
Vermontville Village	789	759	-3.80%	730	702	675
Balance of Vermontville Township	1,311	1,294	-1.30%	1,277	1,260	1,244
Sunfield Village	591	578	-2.20%	565	553	541
Balance of Sunfield Township	1,586	1,419	-10.53%	1,270	1,133	1,014
Chester Township	1,778	1,747	-1.74%	1,717	1,687	1,657
Kalamo Township	1,742	1,842	5.74%	1,948	2,060	2,178
Bellevue Village	1365	1282	-6.08%	1,204	1131	1062
Mulliken Village	557	553	-0.72%	549	545	541

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 19 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.

Figure 2.6

2010 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 19	597	29.1%	220	29.0%	28,160	26.2%	2,648,885	26.80%
20 to 24	130	6.3%	44	5.8%	6,701	6.2%	669,072	6.80%
25 to 54	788	38.4%	310	40.9%	42,929	39.8%	3,952,156	40.00%
55 to 64	264	12.9%	78	10.2%	14,861	13.8%	1,251,997	12.70%
Over 65	274	13.3%	107	14.1%	15,108	14.0%	1,361,530	13.70%
Total	2,053	100.0 %	759	100.0%	107,759	100.0%	9,883,640	100.0%

Source: 2010 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.

2010 U.S. Census Population Update

According to the 2010 Census, the Village of Vermontville's population declined by 30 persons between 2000 and 2010, representing a 3.8% decrease. The U.S. Census estimates between 2000 and 2005 were high as the Village was estimated to have gained 8 new residents in this five-year period. Another projection method is related to the number of new homes and the average population associated with each new home (i.e. 2 new homes built between 2006 and 2015 multiplied by the household size of 2.61 persons results in a new population of 5). The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission projected the Village to not gain or lose population (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.7 - Vermontville Village and Surrounding Community Population Change 2000-2010				
	Population		Population change 2000-2010	
	2010	2000	Number	Percent
Village of Vermontville	759	789	-30	-3.8
Vermontville Township	2,053	2,100	-47	-2.2
Sunfield Village	578	591	-13	-2.2
Sunfield Township	1,997	2,177	-180	-8.3
Chester Township	1,747	1,778	-31	-1.7
Carmel Township	2,855	2,626	229	8.7
Kalamo Township	1,842	1,742	100	5.7

Source: U.S. Census

Between the years 2000 and 2010, the population in Vermontville Township has decreased by 3.8% or by 30 persons. In comparison, Eaton County had an overall increase of 4%, or 4,104 persons, during the same time period. The population in the Townships surrounding Vermontville Township, including Chester and Sunfield have decreased, while Kalamo and Carmel Townships increased.

The median age in the Village of Vermontville was 36.3 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 14.1% of the total population. This percentage was comparable 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 2000, the portion of the population over the age of 65 was comprised 10.5% of the total. This has increased to 14.1% in the year 2010. With an increase 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 34.9% of the total at or under the age of 19, to 29% at or under the age of 19. These numbers have shifted somewhat, as the median age in 2000 was 33 and has only risen to a median age of 36.3 in 2010, 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 449 new persons representing a 20.7% 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 - 2010 Eaton County Population, Age and Household Size

	Total population	19 and Under		65 years and over		Median age (years)	Average household size
Eaton County	107,759	28,160	26.2%	15,108	14.0%	40.3	2.44
Village of Vermontville	759	220	29.0%	107	14.1%	36.3	2.61
Bellevue TWP	3,150	849	26.9%	415	13.2%	40.5	2.56
Benton TWP	2,796	685	24.6%	391	14.0%	43.6	2.61
Brookfield TWP	1,537	402	26.2%	231	15.1%	42.4	2.63
Carmel TWP	2,855	796	27.9%	397	14.0%	41.6	2.68
Chester TWP	1,747	435	24.9%	250	14.3%	45.3	2.64
Delta charter TWP	32,408	7,641	23.6%	5,159	15.9%	41.4	2.26
Eaton TWP	4,073	989	24.2%	600	14.8%	44.5	2.63
Eaton Rapids TWP	4,113	1,069	25.9%	515	12.6%	43.4	2.71
Hamlin TWP	3,343	941	28.2%	416	12.4%	41.4	2.75
Kalamo TWP	1,842	496	26.8%	265	14.3%	40.5	2.65
Oneida charter TWP	3,865	964	24.9%	610	15.9%	46.1	2.64
Roxand TWP	1,848	489	26.5%	218	11.8%	39.6	2.66
Sunfield TWP	1,997	520	26.1%	280	14.1%	42.1	2.57
Vermontville TWP	2,053	597	29.1%	274	13.3%	39.6	2.74
Walton TWP	2,266	679	29.9%	235	10.3%	38.8	2.84
Windsor charter TWP	6,838	1,391	20.4%	1,309	19.1%	49.6	2.37

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

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Village of Vermontville had a median household income of \$39,861. In comparison, Vermontville Township had a median household income of \$52,734. Eaton County and the State of Michigan had median household incomes of \$54,885 and \$48,432, respectively. The Township and the Village of Vermontville were lower than the County median household earnings, but the Township surpassed the State median.

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 \$15,000 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 2010 was \$23,176 and \$17,985 for the Village. In comparison, Eaton County had a per capita income of \$32,793 and the State of Michigan had a per capita income of \$29,143. 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 2004-2011								
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Eaton County	\$29,134	\$29,084	\$30,458	\$32,004	\$33,313	\$32,106	\$32,793	\$33,655
State of Michigan	\$29,396	\$29,291	\$29,231	\$29,573	\$29,713	\$28,503	\$29,143	\$29,944

Source: Michigan Dashboard

The unemployment rate of the Township, which includes the Village, continued to rise until 2010 when it began to steadily decline.

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 Unemployment Rates	
Year	Rate
2015	4.3%
2014	5.7%
2013	6.7%
2012	6.9%
2011	8.0%
2010	9.6%
2009	10.4%
2008	6.1%
2007	5.3%
2006	5.4%
2005	5.5%

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

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.

Housing

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.

One of the largest employers in the Vermontville community is the Maple Valley Schools, which employs approximately 250 people throughout the district. Maplewood 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.

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.

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.

Bike Trail

The 2.56 mile (17 acre) Eaton County Parks portion of the Paul Henry-Thornapple Trail is a beautiful section of linear park trail that crosses a trestle bridge over the Thornapple River. This non-motorized trail provides an access route to the Maple Valley Schools, a 35 acre Eaton County Conservation District prairie restoration project and Park with a walk-down canoe launch on the Thornapple River.

Under a 2012 Safe Routes To School (SRTS) grant, approximately one mile of the Trail was paved and opened in September of 2014. This segment runs from Linden Street on the south side of Vermontville, travels along and over the Thornapple River, and ends at Mason Road. Sidewalks are included in the SRTS grant to connect the Trail to the school property.

A connecting route between Nashville and the Maple Valley High School campus extends 1.2 miles West from Mason Rd., past the Maple Valley High School campus, and ends at Barry County/Nashville Village limits. From there, a 3.5 mile section of the Paul Henry-Thornapple Trail travels West into Barry County.

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.

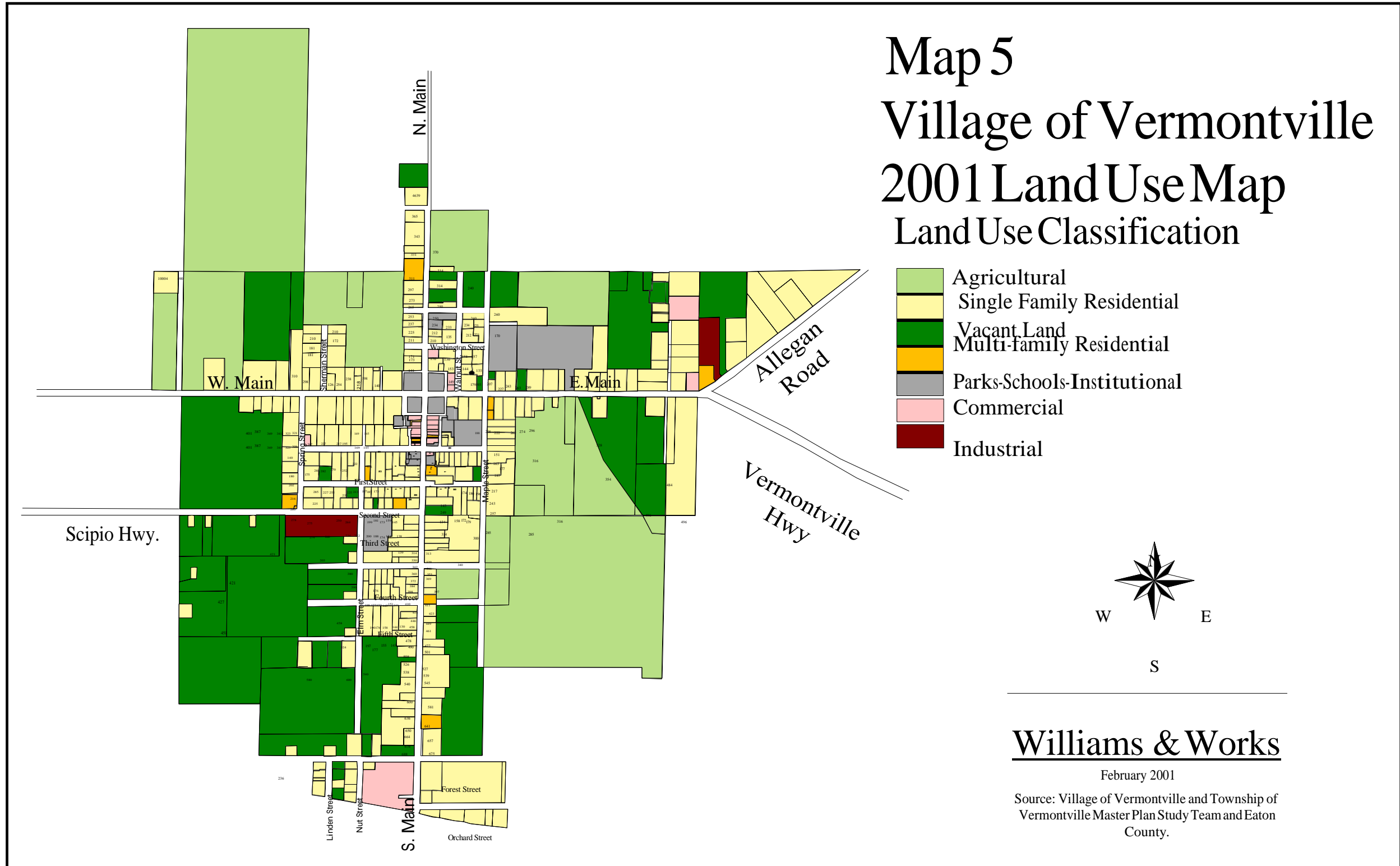
The Current Land Use Maps on the following pages utilize the above listed land use classes. These maps were created through efforts of the Village and Township Master Plan Study Teams. Individual team members were assigned specific areas of the Village and Township and recorded the type of land use that 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.

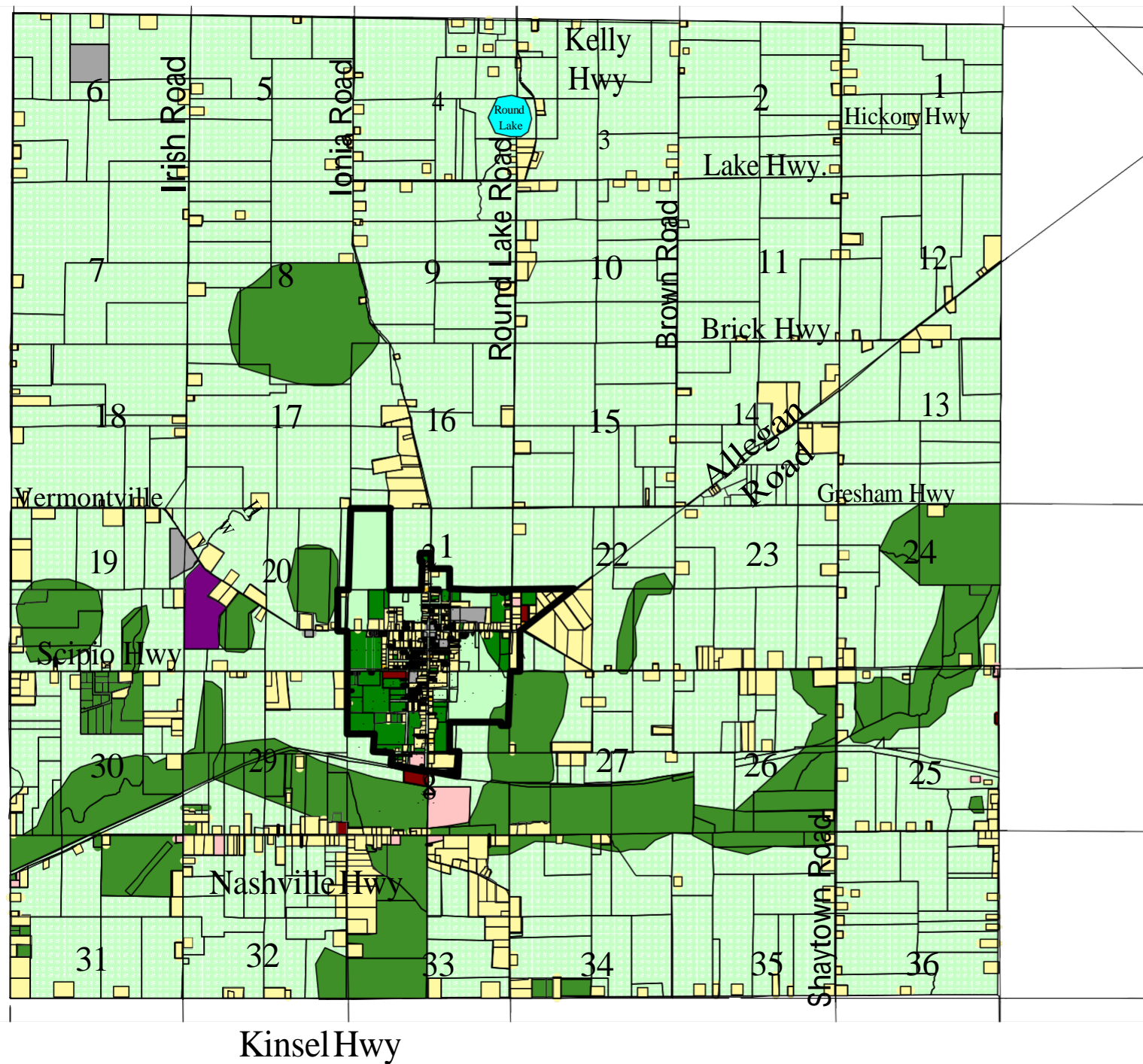
Map 5

Village of Vermontville

2001 Land Use Map

Land Use Classification



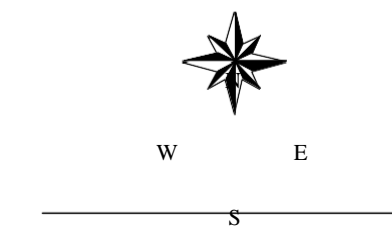


Map 6 Vermontville Area 2001 Land Use Map

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 2,695 average daily trips (ADTs) in 2011 and on Vermontville Highway east of the Village, experiencing 1874 ADTs. Vermontville Highway west of the Village had 856 ADTs, Ionia Road north of the Village had 675 ADTs, and Allegan Road east of the Village had 553 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 3678 ADTs and Island Highway east out of Charlotte with 2814 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.

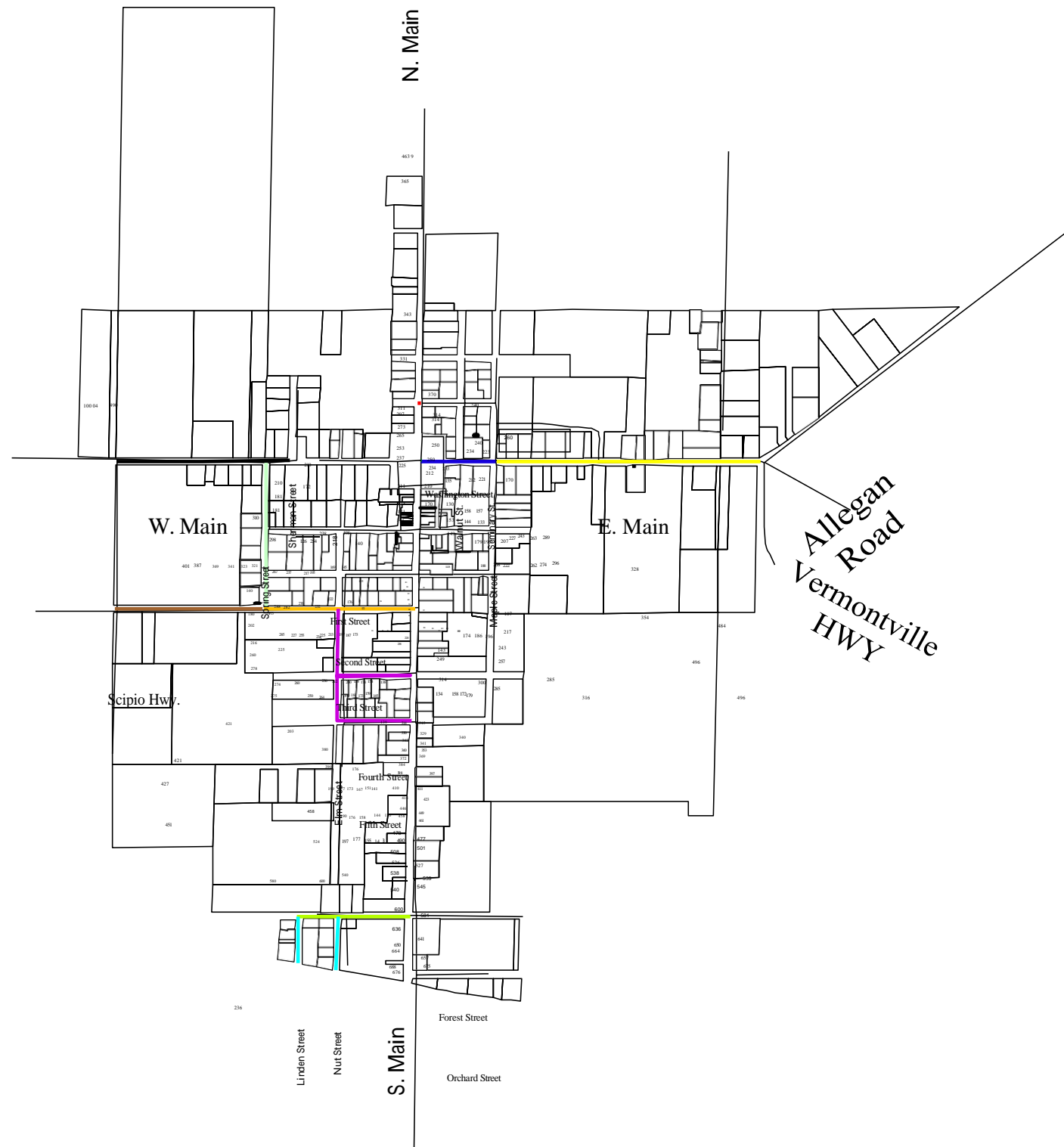
The relative isolation of the Village may have had an effect on the overall residential and commercial growth. The community is about fifteen miles from I-69 and twenty-five miles from I-96 via rural two lane roads. Typically, an interstate highway system provides the population with a commuting route 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.

Public Transportation












Existing Services. Eaton County Transit System (EATRAN) is the public transportation provider for Eaton County and has been in operation since 1980. EATRAN operate a demand response service throughout the county. Curb-to-curb service is provided and riders must provide their own attendants or escorts. Under a cross boundary agreement with Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), EATRAN operates a Lansing Express from Charlotte, Grand Ledge, and Delta Township arriving in downtown Lansing at 7:45 a.m. and returns from downtown Lansing around 5:15 p.m. Both EATRAN and CATA provide public transportation services throughout Eaton County. Out-of-county medical trips are available on weekdays for senior citizens and persons disabilities during limited hours. The majority of trips are within Eaton County, but a significant number are outside of the County. Ridership is comprised of about 50 percent advance reservation and 50 percent subscription or standing order riders. EATRAN has experienced a general upward trend in ridership through 2004, when ridership reached a high of 217,435. In 2008, ridership was 172,252 and in 2013, ridership was 148,104.

Map 7 Village of Vermontville



future finishing and development.

(Highest to lowest priority)

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



Williams & Works
October 2001

W

E

S

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.

- A. 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:

- B. Identify and map existing and potential trail systems.
- C. Identify significant woodlots, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development.
- D. 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

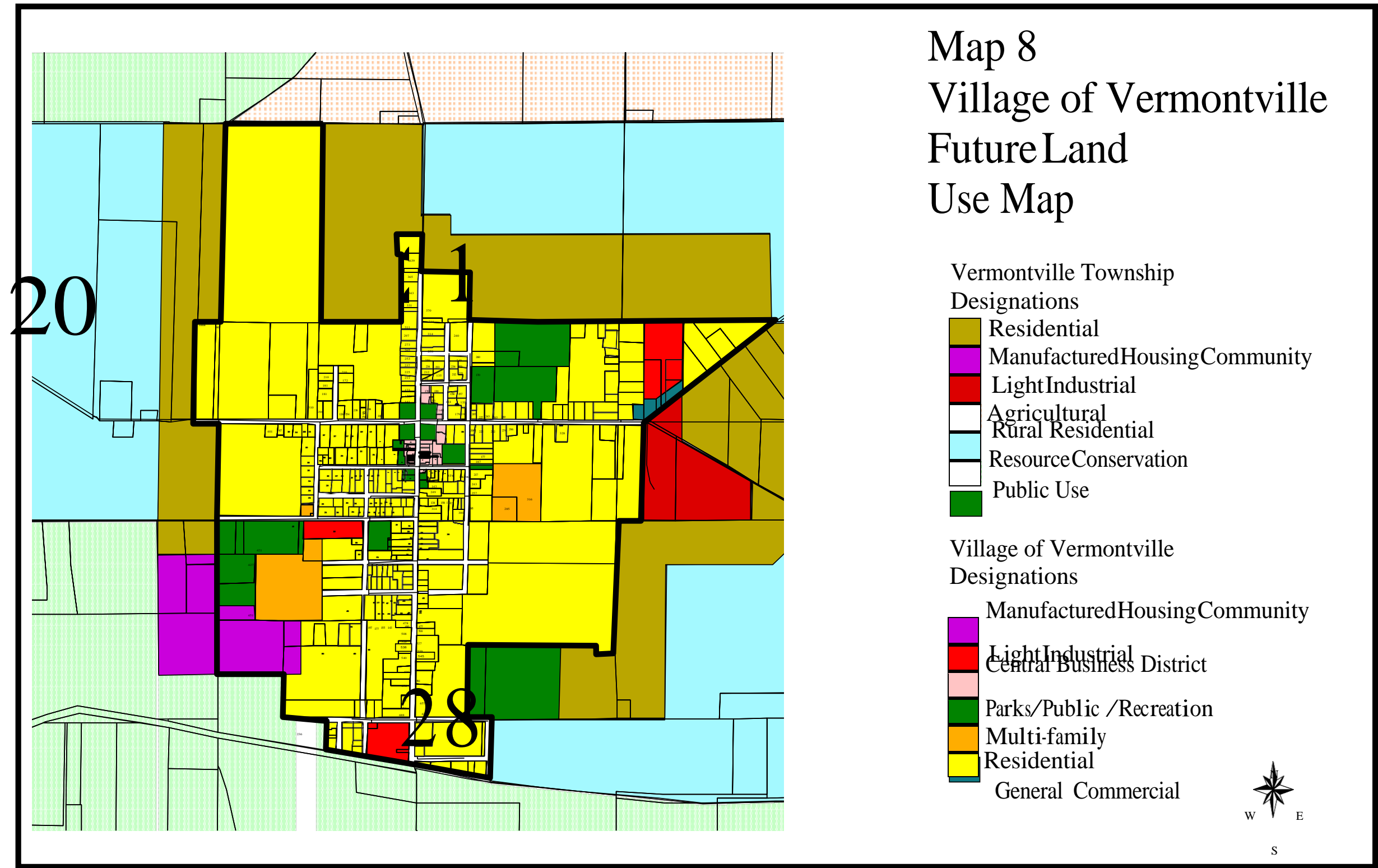
will encourage and reward the preservation of large trees and vegetation that characterize the neighborhood.

Light Industrial:

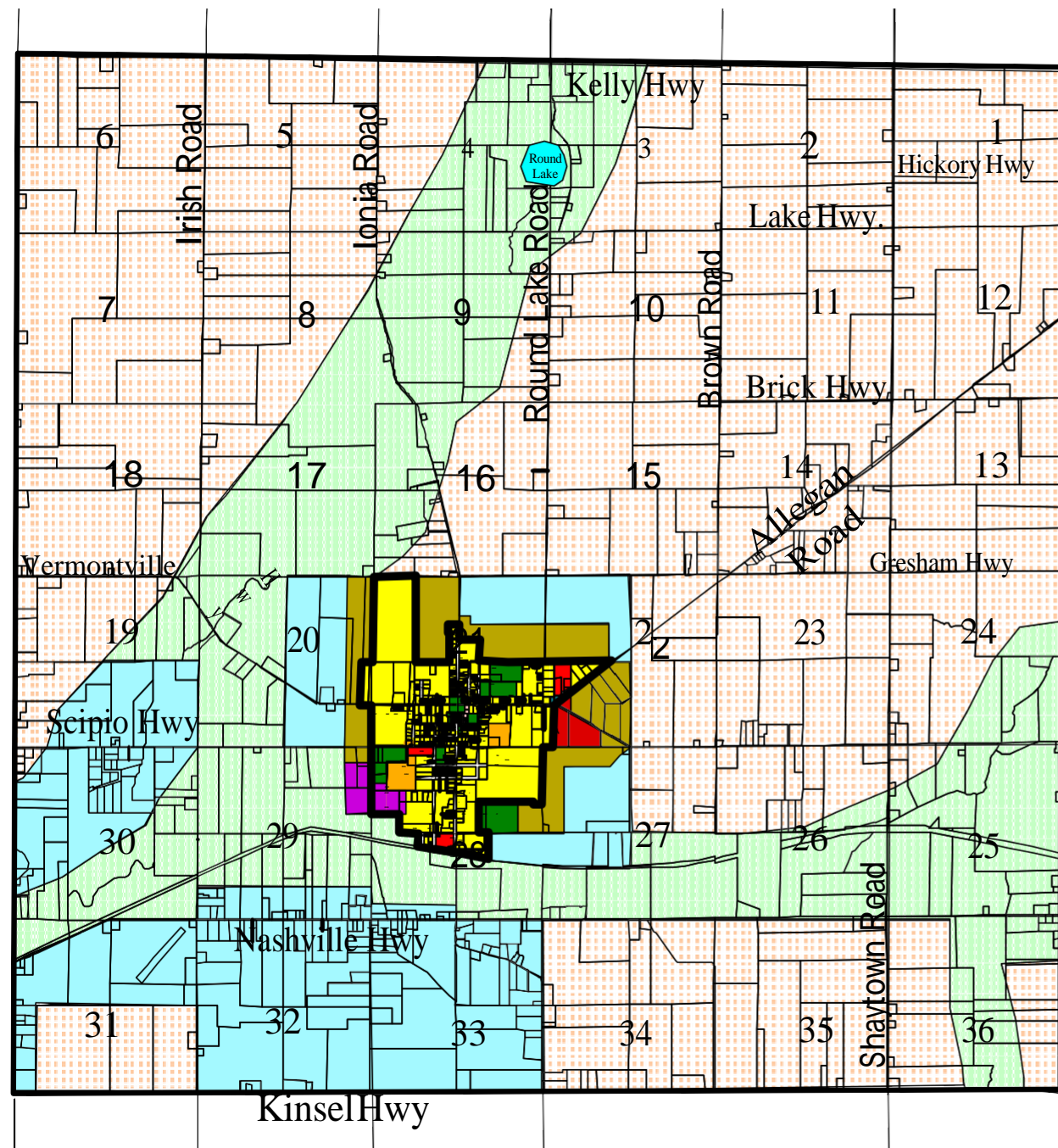
The Light Industrial designation is intended to provide employment for the local area. Development will utilize public utilities along with appropriate transportation connections and adequate roads for sites requiring heavy truck traffic. Industrial uses should be centralized, efficiently utilizing the available land. Vegetative buffers and larger building setbacks 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 9 Vermontville Township Future Land Use Map



Vermontville Township Designations

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

Designations

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



S

Zoning Plan

Table 7.1. Relationship of Zoning Classifications to Future Land Use Designations

Future Land Use Designation	Zoning District
Resource Conservation	Resource Conservation (RC)
Primary Agricultural	Limited Agricultural (RA)
Secondary Agricultural	To be Developed (RA)
Rural Residential	Low Density Residential (RS-1)
Moderate / High Density Residential	Medium Density Residential (RS-2)
Moderate / High Density Residential	High Density Residential (MFR)
Local Commercial	Local Business (B-2)
General Commercial	General Business (B-1)
Industrial	Industrial (D-1)

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. 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.

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

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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

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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

