

City of Allegan

Michigan



Master Plan - 2015 Update

Approved by the Planning Commisison [DATE]

Approved by the City Council [DATE]

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1. SUMMARY

It reflects the community's deep concern for the historic character and small town charm in Allegan.

This Master Plan represents the culmination of many months of work by numerous local residents and local officials. It reflects the community's deep concern for the historic character and small town charm in Allegan. The effort that went into this plan illustrates a strong commitment to retain and strengthen local quality of life. The plan outlines the preferred future for the community and a comprehensive 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.

This Plan was developed in response to a desire in the community to rebuild and strengthen existing assets. The earlier master plan was nearly twenty years old and no longer acted as a relevant guide to planning in Allegan. The plan views the potential of the City in the context of long term planning. The fundamental purpose of the Master Plan is to enable the City's Planning Commission to establish a future direction for the City's physical development. 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 Allegan;
- ◆ 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 City toward achieving common goals.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

When the Planning Commission began the plan preparation process it had several objectives. First, it was important to clearly define the priorities of the City with regard to community character and land use. Secondly, the City sought to develop a plan that is tailored to local conditions and yet coordinated with the planning activities of the larger area. Thirdly, the planning process was seen as an opportunity to build and strengthen a community consensus about the future land use patterns in the City. Finally, the Planning Commission sought realistic and effective mechanisms to achieve the plan's objectives.

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

1. It provides a comprehensive means of integrating proposals that look years ahead to meet future needs regarding general and major aspects of physical conservation and development throughout the City.
2. It serves as the official, advisory policy statement for encouraging orderly and efficient use of the land for 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 basis for zoning, subdivision design, public improvement plans, and for facilitating and guiding the work of the Planning Commission and the City Council as well as other public and private endeavors dealing with the physical conservation and development of the City.
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 City planning policies.
5. It offers a means of relating the plans of the City of Allegan to the plans of other communities in the Southwest Michigan region.



PLAN METHODOLOGY

The planning process involved four inter-related phases:

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

The first phase of the effort involved the formation of a citizen input structure (Advisory Group) and a summary review and analysis of available data gathered from local and regional sources. The Advisory Group was appointed by the Mayor and City Council. It included residents, business owners, public officials from the City and school district, as well as the members of the Planning Commission and the City Council. The Advisory Group was formed as an *ad hoc* entity to assist the Planning Commission in guiding the planning process and to serve as a sounding board for the consultant throughout the process. During the first phase, demographic, economic and land use data was gathered to support the Plan. The purpose of this effort was to develop a comprehensive impression of the patterns of growth and the challenges that will impact the City. This phase culminated in the preparation of the Community Profile Report. That report served as a technical resource for the Advisory Group and the consultant and it also represents the essential Community Profile which constitutes Section II (Chapters 2 through 8) of this Plan.

The objective of the second phase was to establish a policy basis for the City's planning and land use regulations. A futuring workshop was held on March 6, 2003 to gather public input through a nominal group process. Using the output of the futuring workshop, the Advisory Group began the process of defining goals and objectives for the future of the City of Allegan. These are presented in Chapter 9 of this Plan.

The third phase involved drawing together the input from the previous two and preparing a revised Future Land Use Plan, which is reflected in Section III of this Plan. The future land use designations and map (Chapter 10) were developed in a series of interactive meetings of the Advisory Group and Planning Commission with the assistance of other Boards and Commission members and City staff.

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 11. At the conclusion of the fourth phase, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the entire plan.

2010 UPDATE

The City initiated a Plan update process in late 2009. As stated on the first page of the Plan, constant social and economic changes justify the periodic review and maintenance of a land use plan, so the plan reflects current trends and challenges. Moreover, State planning legislation suggests that a comprehensive land use plan be reviewed at least once every five years and revised accordingly as needed.

While periodic review and adjustment of the March 2004 Comprehensive Plan was warranted in 2009, a complete re-write was not necessary and many of the original policies developed in 2004 have been kept. This was based on the finding that the 2004 Plan reflected many current conditions and trends facing the City; and therefore an entirely new master plan was uncalled for.

As part of the process to complete this update, the City reviewed the March 2004 Plan for areas where it could be strengthened, corrected, or updated to meet current needs and desires without undermining the policy foundations set in the 2004 document. The future land use plan was scrutinized and modified to reflect changes in zoning or land use and to reflect new ideas or concepts. Chapters 9, 10, and 11, which comprise Section III, the Future Land Use Plan, received the bulk of the updates and include coordination with Allegan Township primarily in an effort to harmonize the future land use designations for the two jurisdictions.

2015 UPDATE

In late 2014, the City, along with Allegan Township, began the process to update their respective Master Plans using a joint planning process. Joint Planning Commission meetings were held throughout the process to work on each plan and to ensure effective communication between the communities. As stated earlier, constant social and economic changes justify the periodic review and maintenance of a land use plan, and it is important that a Master Plan reflects current trends and challenges. Moreover, State planning legislation suggests that a

comprehensive land use plan be reviewed at least once every five years and revised accordingly as needed.

This Plan retains many of the planning policies originally adopted in 2004 and 2009. This was based on the finding that the 2009 Plan reflected many current conditions and trends facing the City; and therefore an entirely new master plan was uncalled for.

On March 12, 2015, the City of Allegan and Allegan Township held a joint Master Plan Open House. The open house solicited input from both City and Township residents on issues and trends facing the greater Allegan Community. The Open House also asked participants to review and evaluate current planning policies. The results from the joint Open House are included as Appendix 1.

As part of the process to complete this update, the City reviewed the previous Plans for areas where it could be strengthened, corrected, or updated to meet current needs and desires. Another important component of the update was to ensure that the City's practices identified under the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Certification are incorporated into the long-term plans of the City.

Furthermore, the future land use plan was scrutinized and modified to reflect changes in zoning or land use and to reflect new ideas or concepts. Chapters 9, 10, and 11, which comprise Section III, the Future Land Use Plan, received the bulk of the updates and include coordination with Allegan Township primarily in an effort to harmonize the future land use designations for the two jurisdictions.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

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

- ◆ Natural and Cultural Features (Chapter 2)
- ◆ Population (Chapter 3)
- ◆ Housing and Economic Development (Chapter 4)
- ◆ Land Use and Development Patterns (Chapter 5)

- ◆ Community Facilities and Services (Chapter 6)
- ◆ Transportation and Public Utilities (Chapter 7)
- ◆ Guiding Issues (Chapter 9)

Section III constitutes the Future Land Use Plan, which includes the City's Goals and Objectives (Chapter 9), the Future Land Use Plan (Chapter 10) and the Action Plan (Chapter 11).

The final section of the plan is the Bibliography which outlines all the various resources consulted in the completion of this Plan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process to prepare this Plan has involved numerous community residents as well as public officials. The citizens of Allegan that contributed their knowledge in the process to develop this Master Plan are greatly appreciated. The City values meaningful public participation in the master planning process and the individuals that contributed key input are gratefully acknowledged.

SECTION II. COMMUNITY PROFILE

In this section of the Master Plan, a general profile description of the City of Allegan is presented. This section is not intended as an exhaustive inventory of all the numerous aspects of the community. Rather, its purpose is to give some general impressions of the natural features, demographics, land use patterns and infrastructure that make up the City.

The material in this section presents a “snapshot” of current conditions within the City and recent trends in population and housing. It sets the stage for the finalization of plan goals and objectives, the future land use plan and map, and implementation strategies. All of those materials form the actual Master Plan set forth in Section III of this document.

**The plan’s approach
provided an efficient
use of the resources of
the City.**

Each of the following chapters includes an overview of its subject matter along with a brief discussion of the planning trends that are relevant. The material presented in the Community Profile has been drawn from existing research and published texts. This approach provides an efficient use of the resources of the City in the completion of the Plan. However, in a few instances, this approach may result in some unanswered questions. Further research or analytical work could be undertaken to find answers to those questions, but extensive refinement of the details at this stage of the process seldom results in large-scale shifts in policy. The City and the consulting team have found that the resources available for the completion of the Plan are best directed at forming the general outlines of land use policy with the intent of refining the details of strategies as implementation proceeds.

CHAPTER 2. NATURAL & CULTURAL FEATURES

The City of Allegan is located in southwest lower Michigan in Allegan County. (see Map 1). Allegan is a classic, Midwest small town of two square miles in area. It benefits by its prime location on the Kalamazoo River and central position for trade. The natural and cultural features of Allegan are what brought the City to its heyday in the early 1960's with strong industry, quality housing and beautiful public amenities. As historian James Green puts it, "Altogether the village has one of the most picturesque sites to be found in any portion of Michigan."¹

The following discussion addresses significant natural and cultural features in the community of Allegan.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FEATURES



Map 1. Location Map. "All roads lead to Allegan."

Allegan is located on both sides of the Kalamazoo River at the site of an Indian village. Michigan statesman and historian, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, named Allegan after the Alleghen Indian tribe in 1837. Archaeological evidence shows that the Kalamazoo River Valley attracted people who lived by hunting and gathering during the Late Woodland period (A.D. 600 to A.D. 1650). The Ottawa were the dominant Indian tribe in the Allegan area when Anglo-American settlers arrived.²

Anglo-Americans began arriving in 1833. In 1835, Allegan became the County seat for Allegan County, helping to ensure the town's future growth. The community's location on the River made it desirable for a number of industries. Allegan was officially organized as a village in 1838 and incorporated as a city in 1907.

Allegan's commitment to historic preservation has defined the city and allowed it to remain a uniquely elegant small town. A preservation effort began comprehensively in the 1980's. Energized by

¹ Green, James J. (1980) "Readin' and 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic." Allegan County Historical Society.

² www.historicalallegan.org

the protection of the Second Street Bridge, the City surveyed its historic resources, adopted a local historic preservation ordinance in 1985, and listed community landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places. Map 3 illustrates all the City's protected historical resources.

Oftentimes when a community sets out to protect the historic integrity of its notable structures, it is property owners that bear the burden of preserving these amenities for the remainder of the community. Allegan has taken positive steps to act as partners with property owners in the preservation process. The City has developed a Downtown Façade Improvement Program that offers assistance for historic rehabilitation work. The City received a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to provide a website and brochures of historic preservation information and locations for financial assistance and tax credits. To commend their efforts, the City presents awards to property owners who have completed successful preservation projects.

Historical Landmarks



Allegan's rich history is evident in its unique neighborhoods and homes.

Allegan's rich history is evident in its neighborhoods, museums, downtown, and antique shops. Via the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City designated historic districts throughout the City. These seven districts include historical landmarks listed on the State and/or the National Register of Historic Places as well as locally identified resources. Map 3 identifies the registered historical and cultural resources in the City.

Climate

According to the NOAA Climate Survey³ that recorded annual climatic conditions between 1960 and 1995, temperatures in the City averaged 24.7°F in the winter. These temperatures, along with an average of 80 inches of snowfall annually, are conducive to many wintertime activities such as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing.

During the summer, the average temperature of 73°F makes for a pleasant and comfortable environment for fishing, golfing, hiking and

³ National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration Website, National Climate Data Center, 2001.

many other outdoor summer activities. The average annual rainfall for the City is 36 inches.

TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY & SOILS

Soils in the region developed from unconsolidated glacial till weathered by the action of the climate, animals and vegetation. The most significant relief occurs as part of the River ravine. The City is blessed with beautiful views of the River and City that are the result of the erosion related to drainage of the Kalamazoo River watershed.

Soil topography is a characteristic of soil that generally illustrates the slope or "lay of the land." 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 have, therefore, been determined by where and how much glacial debris was deposited in particular areas.

The slopes and drainage of the area have 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 City rarely exceeds twenty-percent slope and, therefore, does not create severe development limitations. Potential development limitations may exist in the flood plains of the community as these soils can experience constant or seasonal wetness and steeper slopes. The Kalamazoo River, being the largest drainage of Allegan, generates some of these topographical attributes.

Soils

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Allegan County (1984)⁴, the soils in the City of Allegan fall into four distinct soil groups; the *Glendora-Adrian-Granby Association*, *Capac-Rimer-Pipestone Association*, *Chealsea-Ockley-Oshtemo Association*, and *Oakville Association*. The following discussion describes the characteristics of each

Nearly all of the City, as well as the majority of the Kalamazoo River Valley, is classified as the *Oakville Association*. This association is a nearly level to steep soil type that is moderately well-drained to well-drained. This soil is typically sandy, is often associated with outwash and lake

⁴ Soil Survey of Allegan County, Michigan, U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, 1984.

plains, and is not typically associated with prime farmland. Depending upon the particular location, this soil may be suitable for individual septic systems.

The second most common soil association is the *Capac-Rimer-Pipestone association*, which is comprised of nearly level and undulating, somewhat poorly drained soils formed in loamy, sandy and silty material. This soil type is associated with the prime farmland areas in the remainder of the County. According to the Allegan Septic System Suitability Map produced by Allegan County, this soil type has severe restrictions for individual septic systems. This soil is found in small areas of the northeast and southwest corners of the City.

The north-central area of the City consists of the *Chelsea-Ockley-Oshtemo Association*. This soil type is typically nearly level and gently rolling and is made up of sandy and loamy material. Limitations for individual septic systems are generally moderate. The areas that are level enough for farming are considered prime farmland.

LAKES, WATERSHEDS, WETLANDS AND DRAINAGE

A defining element of the City is the Kalamazoo River. Today, the riverfront offers excellent recreational destinations, residential locations and wildlife habitat. However, development can produce potential water quality impacts due to fertilizer application and other human-related activities. With continued development along the riverfront, unspoiled natural watershed areas are becoming rare.

Water quality within a watershed is directly related to the land management practices within that watershed.

Watersheds

A watershed is a region of land that is drained by a particular river or river system. Watershed systems include many smaller tributaries such as creeks and streams that feed into a larger river and are influenced by elevation or the lay of the land. The Kalamazoo River Watershed is the primary watershed in Allegan, which is fed by several sub-watersheds.

Watersheds are a reminder that natural processes do not follow political boundaries, and planning for healthy environments can transcend the abilities of individual jurisdictions. Allegan Township and the City of Allegan have recently combined efforts and have applied for a grant to prepare a watershed plan for the area that would include the Kalamazoo River and its tributaries. Both jurisdictions are located in the Kalamazoo River Watershed, and the current and future land uses in these areas will

have a direct impact on the water quality. The purpose behind the plan will be to maintain, improve, and ensure quality water resources in the region. If the grant is obtained, the plan will take approximately two years to complete and will include the identification of pollutants, goals for watershed management, and methods to meet those goals.



The Kalamazoo River is a defining feature of Allegan.

Other watershed projects in the area include the Rabbit River Watershed Planning Project in the northern portion of Allegan County. This project, in association with the Allegan Conservation District, will provide landowners, farmers, and residents an opportunity to establish goals for local water quality. The project will include the identification and establishment of critical watershed areas, propose best management practices, and production of a Watershed Management Plan.

Lake Allegan is located in the northwest portion of the City of Allegan. This man-made lake is a direct result of damming the Kalamazoo River in Valley Township to the west of Allegan Township. Similar to the Kalamazoo River, this water body was contaminated by past industrial operations, but water quality has been improving, and the lake still serves as an excellent resource for recreation opportunities, such as fishing and boating.

Water quality in Lake Allegan and the Kalamazoo River has been improving; and these features are excellent resources for recreation opportunities, such as fishing and boating.

Water quality within a watershed is directly related to the land management practices within that watershed. For example, if a new development creates a large amount of impervious surface (i.e., asphalt) and stormwater is not properly managed, it is possible that the rate and volume of flow into the creek, stream, or river will increase to a point that stream bank erosion occurs. Stream bank erosion will increase silt material on the streambed, changing the chemistry of the water with phosphates, nitrogen, and other chemicals, and altering the turbidity of the water. All of these changes may have an effect on the wildlife that is dependent on the stream or river for survival. Map 2 illustrates the rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands in the City.

Flood

Much of the area in and around the Kalamazoo River, the Rossman Creek, and other streams fall within the Federal Emergency Management's designation of the floodplain. In areas where the River

runs through a steeper gulch, water flow, even during flood conditions, is limited to the river banks. However, flatter areas, such as the entire area around the peninsula, have wide areas outside of the normal riverbanks that flood. These flood inundation areas will pose challenges for development and redevelopment in areas within the floodplain.

Groundwater and Surface Water

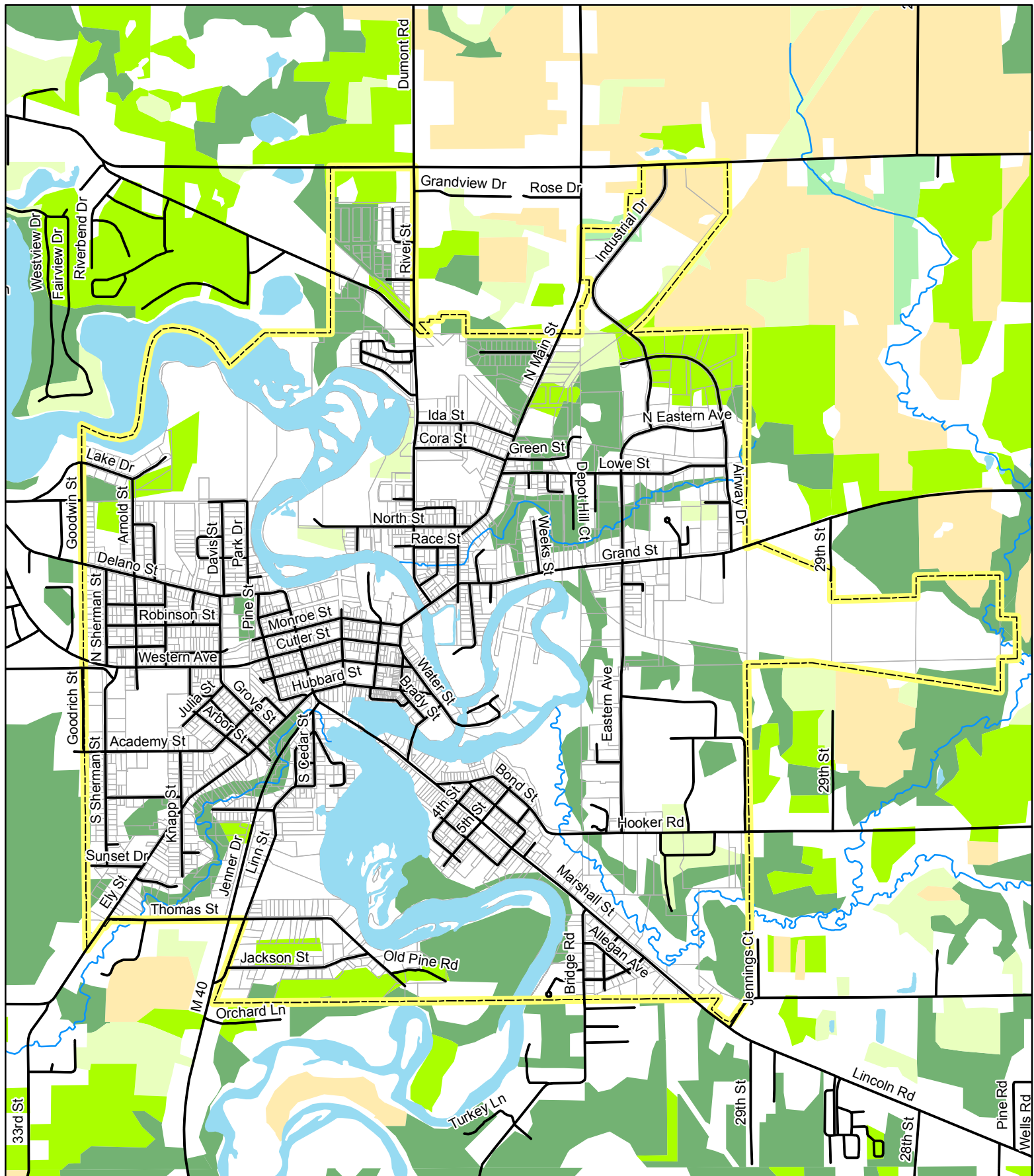
The City of Allegan uses a groundwater-based public water supply. The groundwater supplies in the City, even though abundant, can be affected as more area becomes impervious and with greater demand placed on groundwater supplies.

The City of Allegan has adopted a Wellhead Protection Plan (WHPP) based on a careful determination of the wellhead protection area delineation. The goal of the Wellhead Protection Area Management is to provide a mechanism to prevent existing and potential sources of contamination from reaching the public water supply or well field. Intelligent land use decisions regarding development can be much more effective if guided by wellhead protection policies and specific management techniques. Incorporation of the wellhead protection management strategies in the Plan should assist community leaders in the recognition of the Wellhead Protection Area and the importance of wellhead protection. Planning elements are intended to provide guidance in the development of land use and land protection measures supporting wellhead protection.

OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS

For the purposes of this community profile and master plan process, open space will be considered undeveloped lands. A greenway is a corridor of protected open space that is managed for conservation and/or recreation. Generally, greenways follow natural land or water features, like ridges or rivers, or human landscape features, like abandoned railroad corridors or canals. The newly improved Riverwalk Park is a wonderful example of a greenway.

Greenways can link natural reserves, parks, cultural and historic sites with each other and connect populated areas. Greenways not only protect environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife but also can provide people with access to outdoor recreation opportunities.



City of Allegan Master Plan

Map 2. Natural Features

Legend

- Forestland
- Cropland
- Openland
- Pasture
- Shrubland

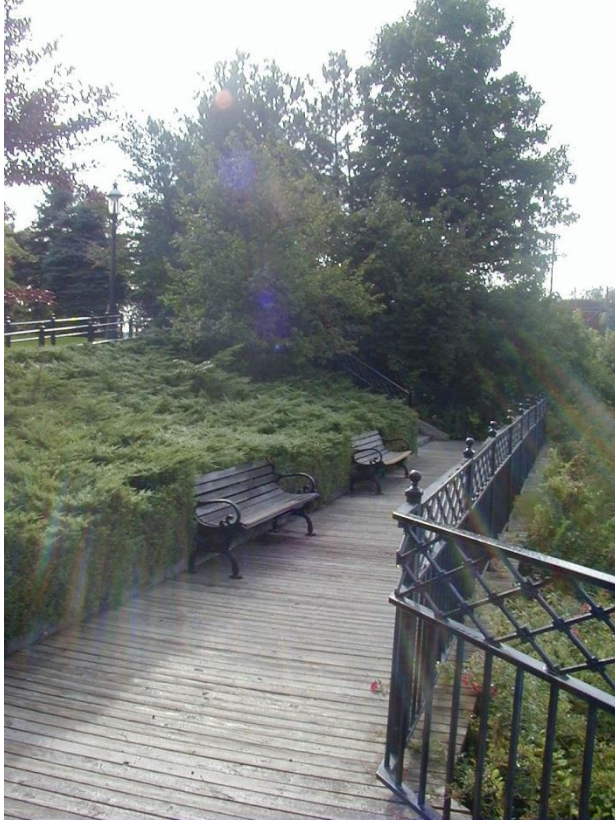
0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Williams & Works

Within the landscape, greenways can serve at least three major functions: 1) they protect and/or enhance remaining natural, cultural and historical resources; 2) they can provide linear open space for compatible human use and; 3) and they maintain connectivity ~ between

conservation lands, communities, parks and other recreational facilities, and cultural and historic sites. The Center for Smart Growth writes, “Connectivity is a critical landscape characteristic important to the health, well-being, and aesthetic values of human communities and vital to the maintenance of functional native ecosystems.”⁵ While the ability of greenways to “link” other resources is important, not every greenway is a connector. Some stand on their own as important linear recreational resources, like trails and bikeway



The newly improved Riverwalk Park is a wonderful example of a greenway.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has been working through the development of a master plan to expand the City’s greenways network. This includes making improvements and expansions to existing facilities as well as incorporating new projects. As this Master Plan was prepared, the Parks and Recreation Commission completed the update of the City’s Parks and Recreation Plan. The new plan identifies development and expansion locations of a Paved Recreation Trail System and improvements to rail rights-of-way.

⁵ The Center for Smart Growth, [Greenways Planning](#), 2000.

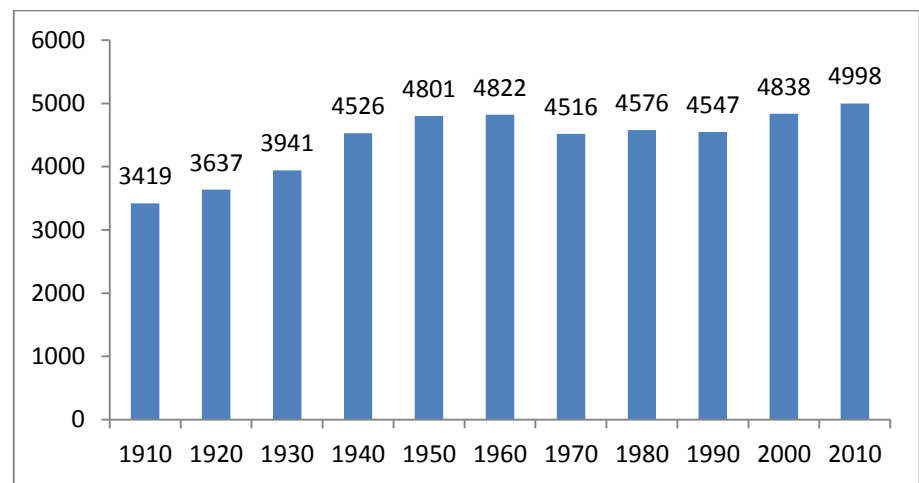
CHAPTER 3. POPULATION

Population is among the most important measures to express growth and its likely impact on land uses in a community. Therefore, it is vitally important to achieve an understanding of the City's population and its growth trends in order to prepare a meaningful and realistic Master Plan. This section of the Community Profile Report is intended to achieve an initial understanding of the characteristics of the City's population and demographic trends.

The City's population fell slightly during the 70s and 80s but rebounded to 4,998 by 2010.

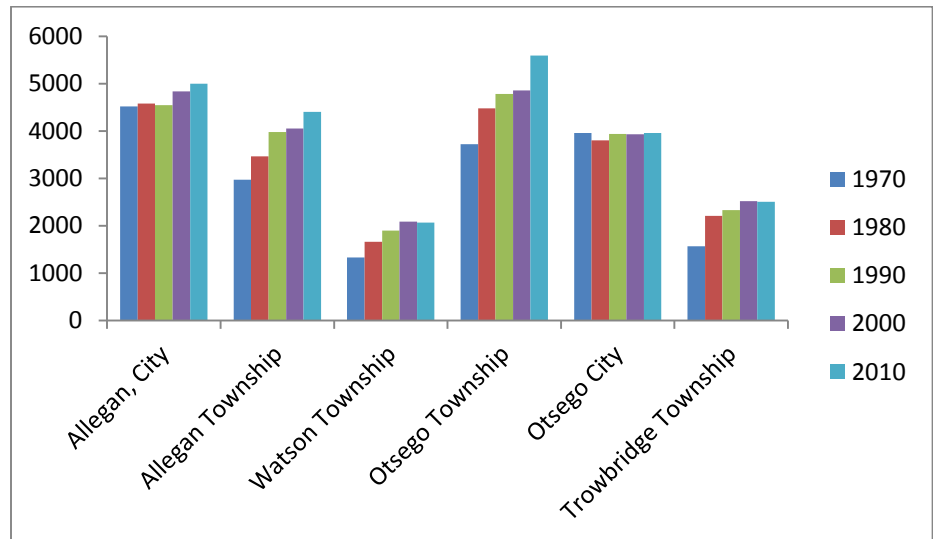
To begin with, it is appropriate to determine the overall growth the City has experienced in the recent past.⁶ The community experienced significant growth over the first half of the 20th century, with a slight decline in the 60's, 70's, and 80s followed by a rebounding in the 90's and 00's, which reported a total City population of 4,998 in 2010.

**Figure 1. City of Allegan
100 Year Historic Population**



It is also helpful to put the City's population shifts into the context of the region and compare population growth with neighboring communities. Figure 2 compares the 40-year population growth history in Allegan with that of other communities in the County. The older communities in the comparison (i.e., Allegan and Otsego) have struggled to maintain their population base. The suburban and rural areas of the County have seen relatively healthy increases. This may document the overall pattern of out-migration from the urban to suburban and rural areas commonly found in Michigan.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2. Comparative Rates of Population Growth

Projections

For the purposes of this Community Profile, statistical averaging techniques were utilized to project the City's population growth to the year 2040. These approaches are adequate to give a general sense of growth trends but have limitations, especially in areas of rapid growth or decline, that may run counter to statistical trends. Future trends are based on past trends documented by the United States Bureau of Census.

These approaches help give a sense of scale to future land use requirements as well as the demand for various public services and capital improvements. The following summarizes the projection techniques.

West Michigan Regional Planning Commission Projections for the City and County are as follows. The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission calculates population projections for the all of Region 8 after the release of each Census of Population. The projection was based upon growth trends from 1970 to 2010 and extrapolated to 2030 and then to 2040.

WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION PROJECTION*

	2010 Population	2020 Population Projection	2030 Population Projection	2040** Population Projection
City of Allegan	4,998	5,166	5,335	5,511
Allegan County	111,408	123,454	135,498	149,378

* From the WMRPC: Projections are based on trends (10, 20, 30, & 40 year percent and numeric change) and may not be the best indicator of a community's future.

** The WMRPC does not project City or County population through 2040, this figure results from an extrapolation of the rates of growth projected from 2010 through 2030 for another ten years.

The Growth Rate (or geometric) **Method** projects future population growth or decline based on the rate of growth in the City in the past. Utilizing the growth rate method, the following assumes that growth in the future will occur at the same average rate as has occurred annually since 1960. As indicated above, the City's population declined slightly in the 1970s and 1980s but recovered in the 1990s and 2000s. Using this approach over a five-decade time span helps to smooth out this variance, but it also results in a very modest annual rate of growth.

GROWTH RATE METHOD

	Average Annual Growth Rate 1960-2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
City of Allegan	0.0729%	4,998	5,034	5,070	5,107

The Arithmetic Method is similar to the growth rate method in that population projections are based on growth that occurred in preceding decades. This method, however, bases population growth on the overall average increase in the number of persons per year, rather than on growth rates. The following projections are based on the average net increase of 176 persons between 1960 and 2010, in the City of Allegan, based on U.S. Census figures as reported in the County Plan.

ARITHMETIC METHOD

It is reasonable to predict that the population will approach approximately 5,078 persons by the year 2020; 5,158 by the year 2030; and almost 5,240 by the year 2040.	Average Increase Each Decade				
		2010			
	<u>(Number of Persons)</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>2040</u>
	City of Allegan	35.2	4,998	5,033	5,068

Each of the projection techniques illustrated here assumes that the C

Each of the projection techniques illustrated here assumes that the City will continue past patterns of growth. However, growth in housing and population in Allegan will be impacted by many factors. These include the types and quality of housing permitted or encouraged within the City, the image of Allegan as a desirable place to live, the public school systems, the quality and quantity of commercial and industrial development, and the overall economic health of Southwest Michigan.

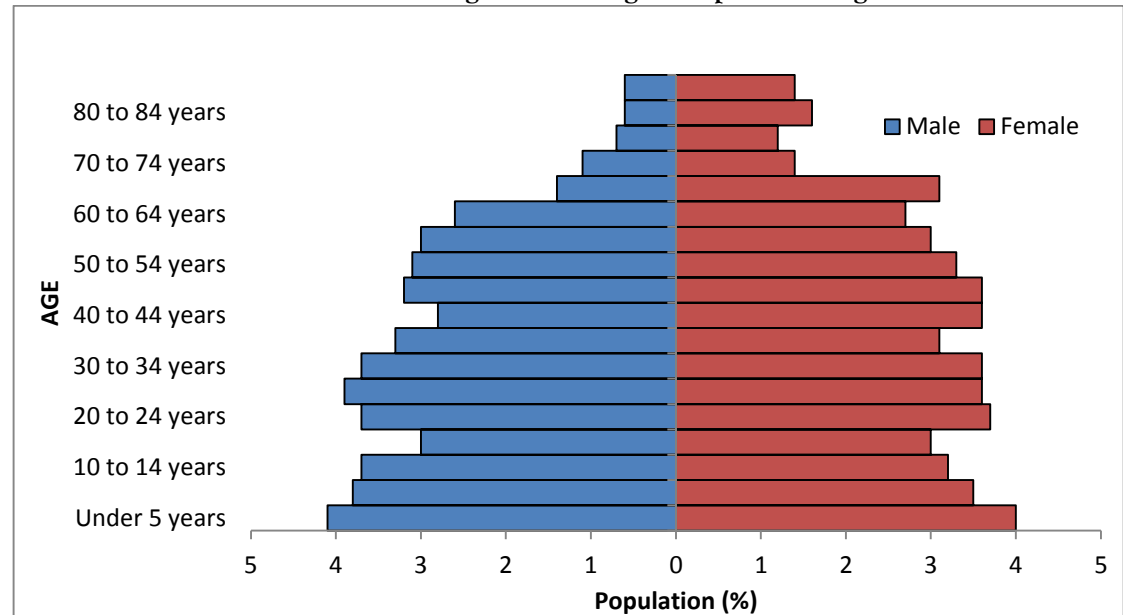
SUMMARY POPULATION PROJECTION SUMMARY

	2010	2020	2030	2040
WMRPC	4,998	5,166	5,335	5,511
Growth Rate	4,998	5,034	5,070	5,107
Arithmetic	4,998	5,033	5,068	5,103
Average	4,998	5,078	5,158	5,240

Age, Gender and Racial Characteristics

Comparing the age distribution of a community over time provides another opportunity to measure change. Also, an age breakdown of a community's residents helps to determine the type of housing demands and recreational facilities that may be needed. In 2010, the median age of Allegan residents was 34.6 years which was less than that of the County (38.9 years) and less than that of the State and the U.S. (38.9 and 37.2 years, respectively). The median age represents the mid-point in the range of all ages within the City and County with one-half of the population younger and one-half of the population older than the median. Typically, the median age is viewed as an appropriate measure of the overall age of the population. Defying national and local trends, the population of the City of Allegan is getting younger. In 2000, the median age of the City was 35.2 years; and by 2010 it had fallen to 34.6 years.

Defying national and local trends, the population of the City of Allegan is getting younger.

Figure 3. Allegan Population Age⁷

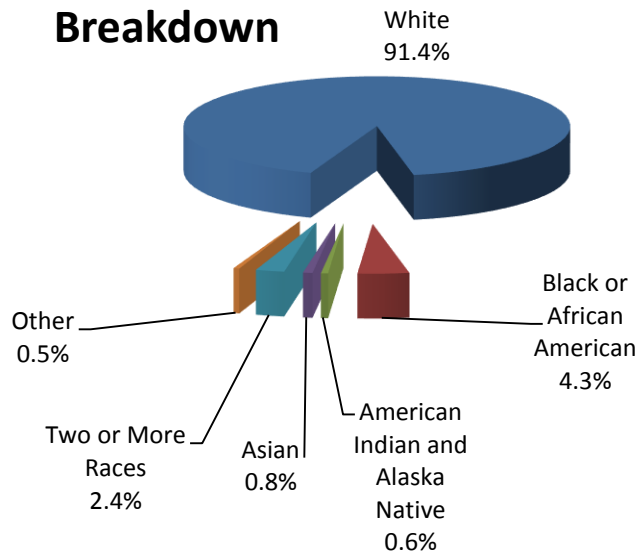
In general, it is possible to identify more uniformity in the age distribution as the population ages. The aging of the “baby boomer” generation (46 to 64 year-olds in 2010) is clearly evident. As the children of that generation continue to mature and have children, there is less variance in the numbers of individuals from one cohort to the next. This greater uniformity suggests a slowing in the rate of natural growth of the City’s population after the year 2020. Of course, growth through in-migration may continue and at least partially offset this trend.

The 20 to 64 years age group is important as it represents the prime wage-earning population and includes the sub-set for family formations. About 58.2% of the County’s population falls in the 20 - 64 age group, while about 59.5% of the City also falls into this category. Within this group is the prime family formation years (20 to 44 year olds = 35%) and the “empty nesters” (45 to 64 year olds = 24.5%). These combined age groups include the majority of the population. They represent the demand for single-family housing stock and recreational facilities; and they signal future increases in the under 5, and 5 to 19 years age groups, and increases in retail trade.

As a sub-set, the “empty nesters” group comprises nearly 25% of the City’s residents. Persons in this age group typically have reached their peak earning potential and have higher disposable incomes. The age

⁷ US Census Bureau, 2010.

2010 Allegan Racial Breakdown



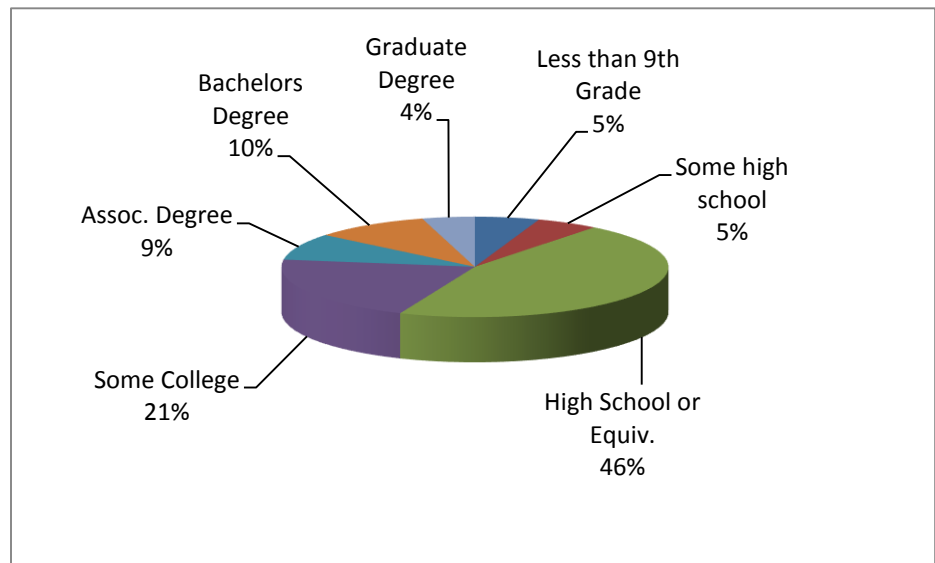
group of 65 and older represented over 13.1% of the City's population in 2010, and it comprised about 13% of the population in the County.

The City is approximately half male (48.4%) and half female (51.6%). Racially, Allegan is a predominantly white community. Approximately 8% of the population of Allegan is of a racial minority. However, the total diversity of the community decreased over the past decade despite increases between 1980 (6%), 1990 (9.9%) and 2000 (12%).

Education

The Allegan Public School District (APSD), the Allegan County Intermediate School District (ACISD) and the Allegan County Area Technical & Education Center serve the residents of Allegan. Schools within the City include three elementary buildings and the Allegan Alternative High School building. Located within Allegan Township are Allegan High School, L.E. White Middle School, and Pine Trails Elementary. Total enrollment within the Allegan Public Schools for the 2013/2014 school year is currently over 2,631 students.

The 2010 5-year American Community Survey indicates that within the City of Allegan approximately 89.4% of the population over 25 years of age have the equivalent of a high school education or higher, with 14.1% having a bachelor's degree or higher. In Allegan County overall, approximately 88.9% of the population has at least a high school education with 19.4% reporting a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 4. 2010 Educational Attainment in Allegan⁸

By way of comparison, the U.S. Census reports that **88.0%** of the population in Michigan has a high school education **or higher** and **25.0%** has a bachelor's degree, or higher.⁹ Therefore, a greater percentage of the population of Allegan has attained at least a high school education, when compared with the State overall. However, a greater percentage of the state's population has attained advanced degrees at the college or graduate level.

Income

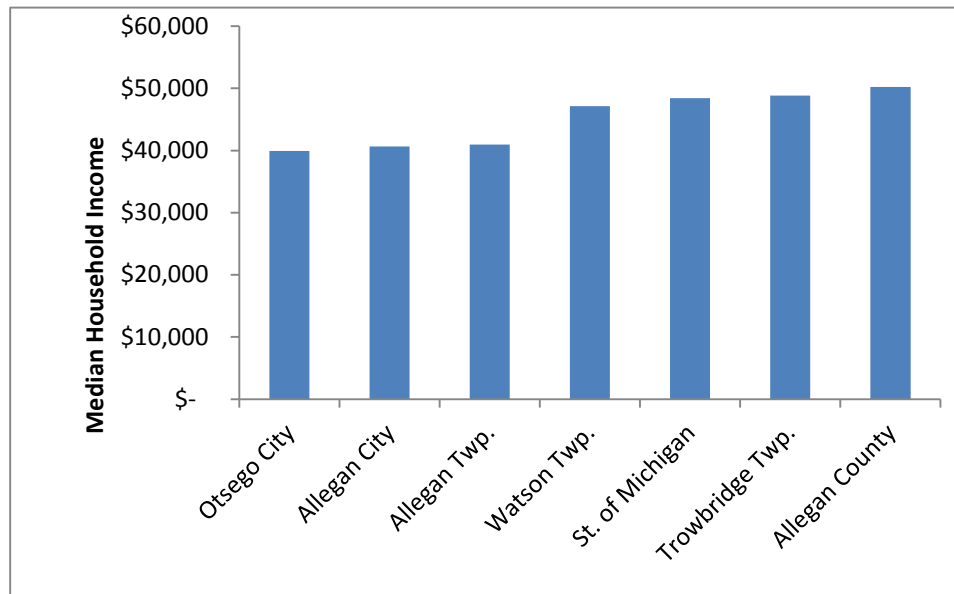
With the exception of the City of Otsego (\$39,938), all of the communities that neighbor Allegan reported greater median household incomes.

Median household income is commonly used as a fair measure of the comparative economic strength of an area. It is also a helpful indicator to identify differences among jurisdictions. Figure 5 below compares the median household income in the City with its nearby neighbors, the County and the State of Michigan. The median household income in the City was **\$40,673** compared with **\$50,240** in the County and **\$48,432** in Michigan. With the exception of the City of Otsego (**\$39,938**), all of the communities that neighbor Allegan reported greater median household incomes.

Income growth is frequently cited as a better indicator of economic health than static information on median incomes. It is, therefore, appropriate to determine whether the purchasing power of Allegan residents has improved relative to that of their neighbors.

⁸ American Community Survey, 5-Year, 2010.

⁹

Figure 5. 2010 Comparison of Household Incomes¹⁰

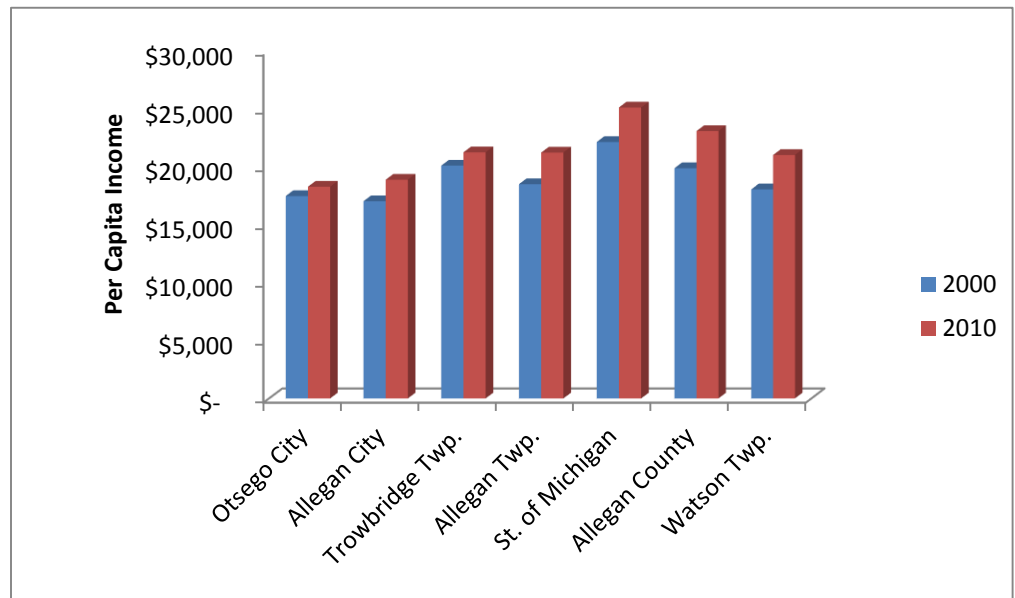
Total per capita income change is another important indicator of the economic viability of a community. This measurement simply divides total income in the community by its population. Neither median household income nor per capita income is a perfect measure of economic health, because each has limitations. Per capita incomes can seem to understate the economic viability of a community as compared to its neighbors if a greater percentage of the population is not employed (ie., children or retirees). On the other hand, median household income reflects the midpoint in the range of all household incomes. Medians are a useful measure, but can be skewed by outlying values that distort the range.

While the entire Allegan region has seen moderate improvement in incomes during the 2000s, City residents experienced one of the smallest increases.

In 2000, the per capita income in the City of Allegan was \$17,075 and by 2010 increased to \$18,928, an increase of almost 11% over ten years.¹¹ During this period, per capita incomes in Allegan County increased from \$19,918 to \$23,108, an increase of 16%, while per capita incomes in Allegan Township increased by 15%. In fact, per capita incomes in the City grew at a rate significantly below most of the comparison communities, as illustrated in Figure 6.

¹⁰ American Community Survey, 5-Year, 2010

¹¹ The U.S. Census Bureau reports per capita income in current year dollars and to develop an accurate evaluation of true income growth it is necessary to adjust earnings to a common dollar value.

Figure 6. Comparative Growth in Per Capita Incomes¹²

While the entire Allegan region has seen fairly **modest** improvement in incomes during the **2000s**, City residents experienced **one of the smallest increases**.

Although the relative improvement in incomes in the City was quite modest, City residents did experience real income growth in the 2000s. In fact, the Consumer Price Index reflects an overall rate of inflationary growth of about 29.34% during the decade.¹³ Thus, after accounting for inflation, the gross per capita income increased in the City of Allegan by about 52%, resulting in an actual increase in purchasing power of about 21% during the 2000s.

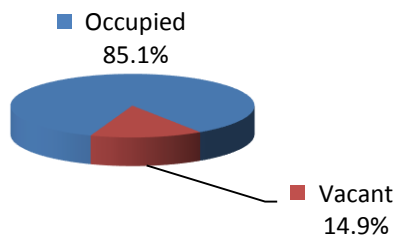
¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 **and American Community Survey, 2010.**

¹³ US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

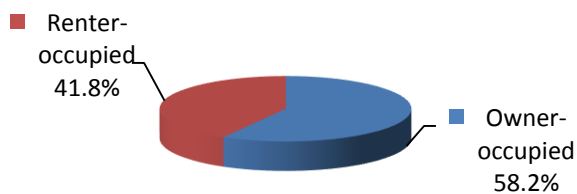
CHAPTER 4. HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A broad mix of housing types throughout the City characterizes Allegan. Multi-family units are mixed in the single-family units. Owner-occupied homes neighbor rental properties. This provides a good balance in many neighborhoods and improves stability. The homes in Allegan have long been the source of pride for local residents. Much of the housing stock is older and beautifully maintained. These homes are a good indicator of long-term financial and social investment in the community.

Figure 7. 2010 Housing Occupancy



2010 Housing Tenure



Housing

There are 2,334 housing units in the City. Of those 347 (14.9%) were vacant. Generally, when housing vacancy rates exceed 5%, there is some concern for neighborhood stability. If vacancy rates exceed 10%, the neighborhood may be experiencing blight. The City has demolished vacant and rundown homes by ordinance in the past, although there is no formal housing demolition program.

Another good test of the health of a community is the ratio of renter-occupied housing to owner-occupied housing. Generally communities strive to achieve a 2:1 or even 3:1 ratio of owner-occupied to rental housing within the market. The City's ratio of less than 2:1 reflects a fair balance of both types of housing tenure for an urban area.

It is important that the rental units are not heavily concentrated in one area. Instead, rental housing should be well distributed throughout the community as it is in Allegan.

Locating single-family rental housing among owner-occupied housing helps to hold rental property owners to the same standards as surrounding homeowners.

In the 2010 American Community Survey 830 rental housing units were reported. While some of those rental properties are part of larger housing complexes or hotels, most are not. According to the Code Enforcement Officer, most of the landlords in the City do an excellent job maintaining their properties. However, it can often be difficult for a

single person to manage multiple properties and maintain them at a high level of quality.

New Development and Redevelopment

New residential growth has been limited to none in recent years; this has been primarily because the city is nearly built-out. The new projects that have been proposed and constructed have been conversions of existing structures to senior living facilities and complexes to maximize the yield of the limited remaining lands.

Figure 8

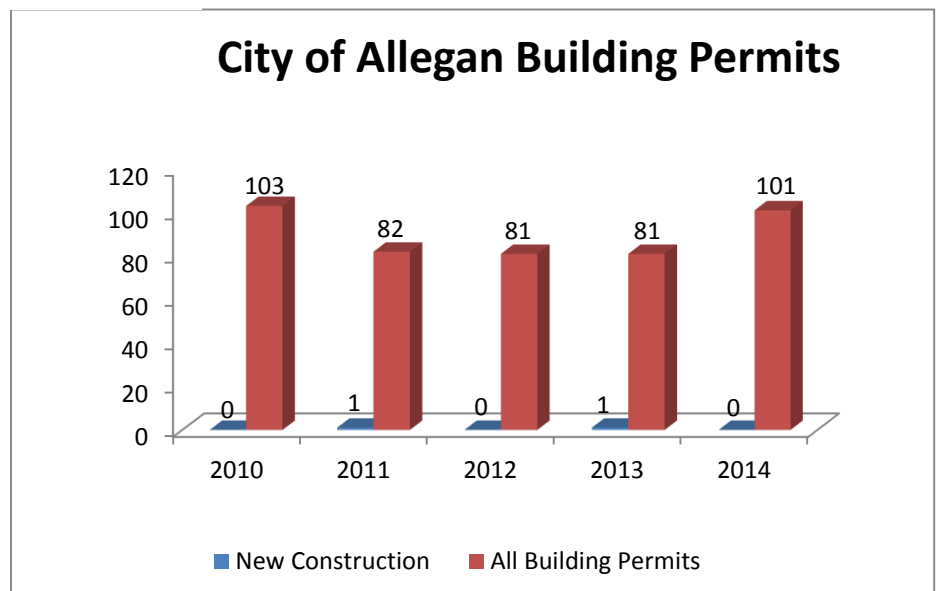


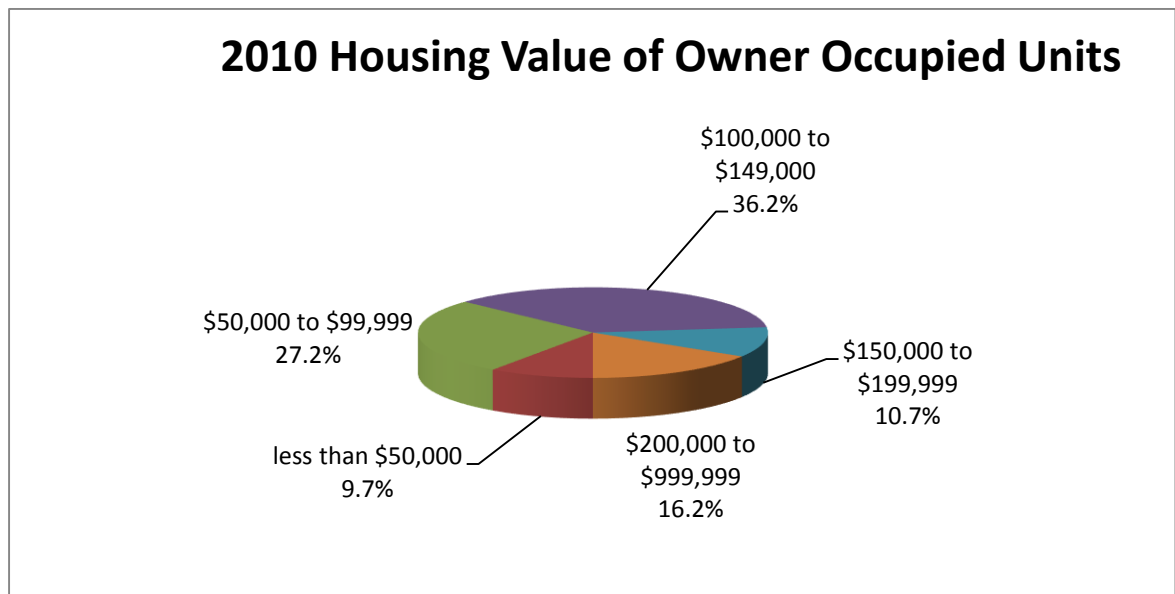
Figure 8 above breaks down the yearly construction activity in new housing construction and all other types of building activity. The almost complete lack of new construction illustrates the lack of available residential land in the City. The higher numbers of rehabilitation and additions demonstrates an investment in older homes and shows there is still significant value in the existing housing stock.

There are a few vacant or underutilized parcels throughout the City that could be developed or redeveloped for residential uses. As currently zoned, these developments would need to be single-family in nature. In addition, some scattered parcels exist throughout the City for infill development.

The 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates reported that the majority of owner-occupied homes in the City of Allegan are valued between \$50,000 and \$149,000 (63.4%). Nearly ten percent of the

homes were reported to be valued at less than \$50,000, suggesting a fair amount of affordable housing opportunities. In addition, 46.7% of homeowners reported their monthly costs for their homes to be less than 20% of their household income. This demonstrates the affordability of the housing stock in Allegan. The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development uses one-third of household income as a typical upper limit for housing costs.

Figure 9



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010

Historic Districts

Several Historic Districts were established to preserve the historic character of the housing stock in parts of the City. Four of these districts are on the National Register of Historic Places. The remaining three districts are protected by local ordinance. Improvements to homes within these districts must meet historic guidelines established by the Historic District Commission. Map 3 illustrates the location of the City's Historic Districts and sites.

Housing Quality and Violations

The housing code is enforced through biannual inspections of rental properties and by complaint. The City has not undertaken a comprehensive housing quality survey to evaluate the impact of its

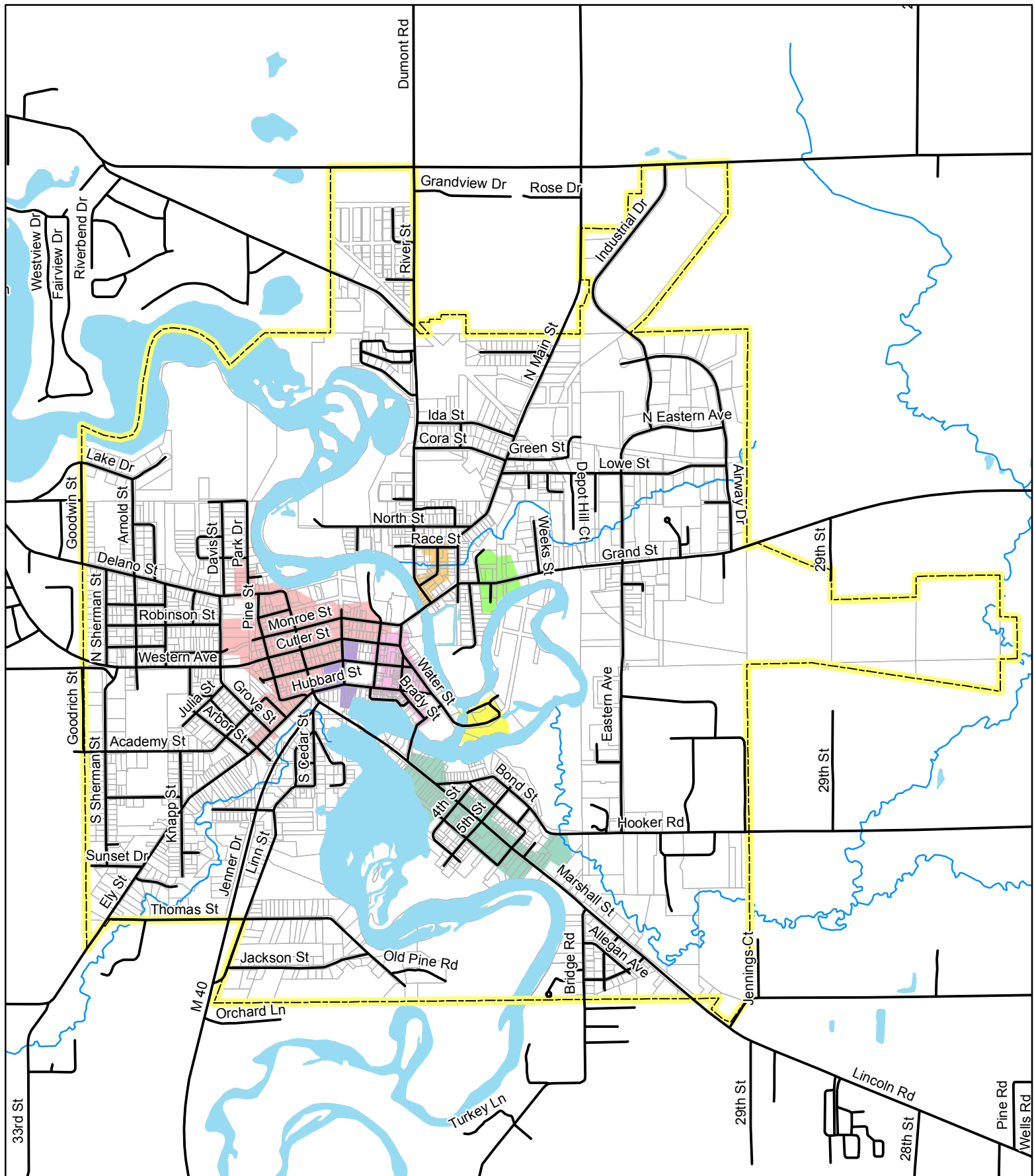
housing code enforcement program. A housing quality survey can be a good tool when there is a marked decline in the quality of housing stock in a particular area. Such a survey targets homes for improvements and seeks funds for the rehabilitation. The survey can evaluate such exterior home elements as foundation, roof, façade conditions, porch structure, paint, and other detailing. This type of evaluation can be an important benchmark to gauge progress in neighborhood improvement.

Neighborhoods

Neighborhood association programs can be very effective in building community capacity and improving quality of life in neighborhoods.

Many older urban cities have developed neighborhood associations to facilitate housing improvements and other social issues at a neighborhood level. These associations may form under City-sponsorship or spontaneously. Neighborhood association programs can be very effective in building community capacity and improving quality of life in neighborhoods. The City of Allegan has not designated neighborhood boundaries aside from the Historic Districts and does not have a neighborhood association system in place at this time. However, the City is laid out in a manner that easily lends itself to the formation of such a neighborhood association system.

Such groups can organize community and neighborhood events such as neighborhood clean-ups, house painting, or assisting elderly and others in housing improvements. In addition, the organizations generally have a social component that organizes educational programs related to employment, child care or domestic violence. They can set up neighborhood watch groups and engage citizens in community policing training.



City of Allegan Master Plan

Map 3. Historic Districts

Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
| Brooklyn District | Old Town Allegan District |
| Griswold Civic District | Priest Hill District |
| Marshall Street District | Pritchards Overlook District |
| Mill District | |

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Williams & Works

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Table 1 illustrates occupation categories for Allegan, Allegan County and the State of Michigan, which have been broken down into Census categories.

Table 1
Categorized Occupations for 2010

Occupation Categories	City of Allegan		Allegan County		State of Michigan	
	Employment	% of Total	Employment	% of Total	Employment	% of Total
Farming & Natural Resources	23	1%	1,600	3%	54,946	1%
Construction & Manufacturing	735	35%	13,043	32%	1,001,020	23%
Trade & Sales	454	21%	7,902	15%	629,908	14%
Transportation & Warehousing	41	2%	2,516	5%	181,648	4%
Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative	453	21%	9,883	19%	1,092,843	25%
Education, Art, Healthcare, and Social Assistance	416	20%	12,872	25%	1,409,420	32%
TOTALS	2,122	100.0%	51,416	100%	4,369,785	100%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year, 2010

Relative to the State, employment in the City tends to fall more heavily in the “construction and manufacturing” and “trade and sales” categories than the “professional and management” and education and healthcare” trades. These occupations can be characterized by lower wage rates than the professional/management and education/healthcare categories. This is consistent with the income information reported in Chapter 3, which shows both per capita and household incomes in the City tend to be somewhat lower than in surrounding areas.

The major businesses that impact the City of Allegan, their products, and the number of current employees are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Major Employers in the Allegan Area

	No. of Employees	Product
Perrigo	3,198	Pharmaceutical Products
Allegan Metal Finishing	90	Zinc Plating
Road Commission	50	Road Maintenance
Allegan Public Schools	475	Education

Table 2, cont'd
Major Employers in the Allegan Area

	No. of Employees	Product
Allegan Tubular	85	Tubing Fabrication
B&G Custom Works	35	Custom Metal Fabrication
Allegan General Hospital	350	Healthcare
Milbocker and Sons, Inc.	99	Road and Bridge Construction
Allegan Area Educational Service Agency (AAESA)	425	Education
Allegan County	400	Public service

Service sector businesses such as Allegan County, the Allegan Area Education Service Agency (AAESA), Allegan General Hospital, and Allegan Public Schools have all expanded in physical size, although employment in these areas has not necessarily increased.

Service sector businesses have all expanded in physical size, although employment in these areas has not necessarily increased.

Due to the Great Recession, Haworth eliminated its Allegan manufacturing location in 2009, laying off approximately 200 workers. The resulting increase of unemployment is not strictly localized to Allegan Township. Surrounding Townships may have also been affected by the economic slowdown and resulting layoffs. The impact of the Great Recession on the unemployment rate in Allegan County and the State of Michigan is shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Annual Unemployment Rates 2007-2013

Community	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Allegan County*	6.2%	7.4%	12.6%	12.1%	9.0%	7.7%	7.2%
State of Michigan*	7.1%	8.3%	13.5%	12.7%	10.4%	9.1%	8.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

*Not seasonally adjusted

Table 4
Comparison of 2001 Real Property Valuation ¹⁴

Jurisdiction	Agricultural		Commercial		Industrial		Residential	
	TCV (millions)	% of Total	TCV (millions)	% of Total	TCV (millions)	% of Total	TCV (millions)	% of Total
Allegan City	\$ 0.0091	0.01%	\$ 17.336	20.09%	\$ 9.430	10.93%	\$ 59.504	68.97%
Allegan Co.	477.075	14.3%	335.250	10.05%	185.626	5.56%	2,320.39	69.56%
Allegan Twp.	15.259	13.94%	11.081	10.12%	4.144	3.79%	78.594	71.80%
Otsego City	0	0	10.342	13.60%	9.638	12.67%	56.072	73.73%
Otsego Twp.	12.218	9.62%	23.352	18.38%	1.001	0.79%	90.495	71.22%
Trowbridge Twp.	23.947	33.94%	2.984	4.23%	0.085	0.12%	43.37	61.47%
Watson Twp.	14.595	28.17%	3.801	7.34%	0.172	0.33%	33.239	64.16%

Note: The % of Total figures are based on the total real property valuation for the jurisdiction which, for some communities, also includes the “developmental property classification.”

¹⁴ Allegan County Equalization Department, 2001 Equalization Report, April 26, 2002.

The tax base for the City of Allegan is approximately proportional to that of the County. That is, residential properties account for about 70% of the tax base in both the City and the County. However, commercial and industrial property are more prevalent in the City while the County overall also includes significant lands in agricultural uses and the City has only one such property.

This is reflective of the relatively “built-out” nature of the City compared to its rural neighbors and the County overall. Interestingly, when comparing Allegan to its most similar neighbor, the City of Otsego, Allegan’s total real property base shows a greater balance among property types.

This balance, or lack thereof, in the local tax base may be a factor in future land use decisions and municipal revenue-expense projections for both the City and local school districts, as residential properties tend to require government and school services valued in excess of the property tax revenues they generate. Typically, residential uses require between \$1.10 and \$1.30 in municipal services (i.e., schools, police, fire, roads, parks, etc.) for every \$1.00 contributed in tax base.¹⁵ This can be overcome somewhat by encouraging higher-density housing development and other more revenue-intensive projects, since denser developments utilize land and utility services more efficiently.

¹⁵ Thomas, Holly L. *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*, Planning & Zoning News, January, 1993.

CHAPTER 5. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The total land area of the City of Allegan is about 4.28 square miles or 2,744 acres. Allegan has developed as an urban area surrounded by agricultural uses and open lands. The City has a well-defined downtown located in the center of the town around the Kalamazoo River and surrounded by fairly dense residential uses with commercial and industrial uses following transportation corridors.

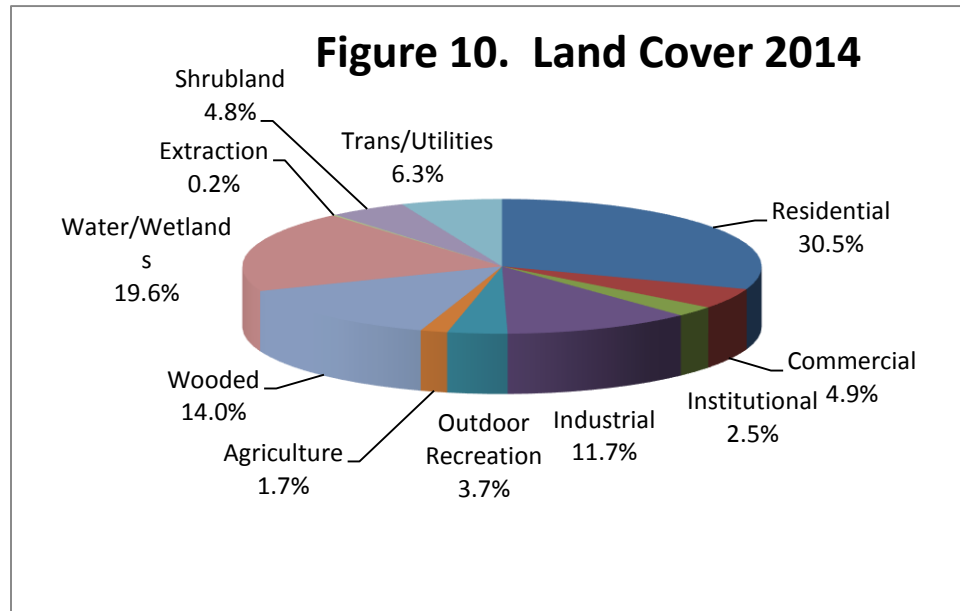
LAND COVER/USE

Land cover in the City of Allegan spans the entire range from sensitive environmental features to intense urban development.

Land use describes the vegetation or land use that occupies the land in a given community. The land use in Allegan is reflected in Map 4. The map is based on computerized mapping prepared by the Allegan County GIS Department from Michigan Resources Information System (MIRIS) and updated for 2014 by Williams & Works using the most recent aerial photography. MIRIS is an effort to create a "statewide computerized database of information pertinent to land utilization, management, and resource protection activities."¹⁶ It is important to note that the map was prepared from aerial photography and reflects composite groupings of land uses categories. MIRIS information is not bounded by parcel lines but instead follows natural systems. The original mapping for Allegan County was done in 1978 and was updated with a land cover change comparison in 1996. Thus, the MIRIS mapping system is useful for general impressions of land cover but can include some misinterpreted features. Therefore, this Community Profile Report includes both the MIRIS map and a land use (Map 4) and zoning map (Map 5).

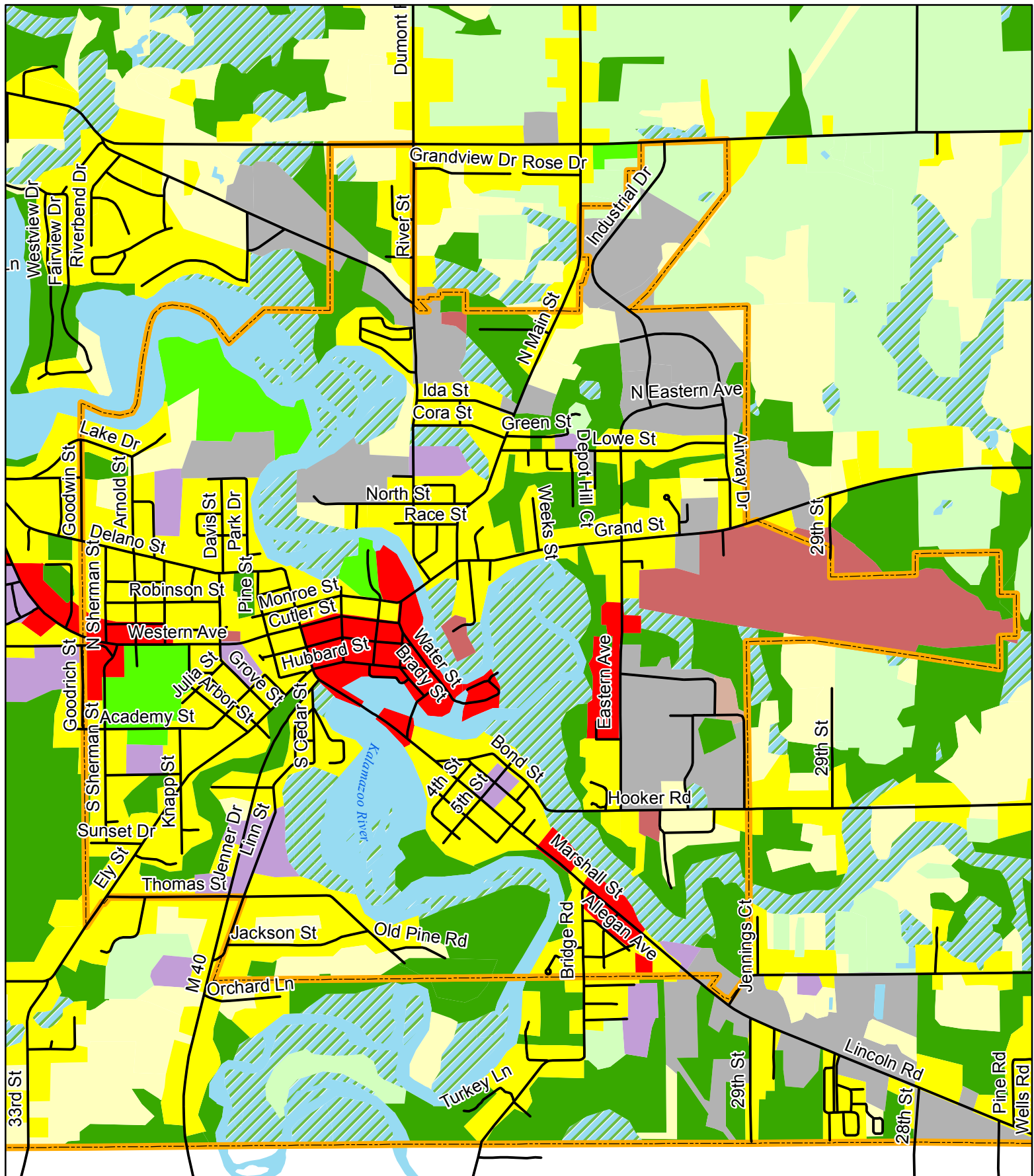
MIRIS data depicts some 52 categories of urban, agricultural, wooded, wetland, and other land cover types for the entire State of Michigan. Since the City of Allegan has maintained an urban development pattern for many years, the 1978 and 1996 MIRIS maps are still fairly accurate in comparison to other communities. The 2014 update reflects only minor changes including slight expansions of residential areas and a shift of some expansions of industrial development in formerly vacant areas. In the completion of Map 4, the 52 land cover categories of the MIRIS system have been consolidated into eleven categories which are more descriptive and useful for the purposes of this Community Profile Report. The results of the 2014 update are as follows:

¹⁶ Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Resource Inventory Program established under the Michigan Resource Inventory Act, 1979 PA 204.



LAND USE CATEGORY

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>LAND COVER DESCRIPTION</u>
Residential (835 acres)	Including single- and multi-family dwellings
Commercial (135 acres)	Neighborhood scale commercial and highway commercial areas
Industrial (321 acres)	Industrial, utilities, assembly manufacturing
Institutional (69 acres)	Colleges, schools
Agricultural (46 acres)	Cropland, orchards, permanent pasture, other agriculture
Water/Wetlands (537 acres)	Lakes and streams, wetlands
Wooded (383 acres)	Woods and tree plantations
Shrubland (132 acres)	Herbaceous and shrubland
Trans/ Utilities (173 acres)	Airport and utilities
Extraction (6 acres)	
Outdoor Recreation (102 acres)	Parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, dunes, and beaches



City of Allegan Master Plan

Map 4. 2014 Land Use

Legend

	Extraction		Institutional
	Agriculture		Mobile Home Park; Residential
	Recreation		Transportation; Utilities
	Commercial		Wooded Areas
	Herbaceous and Shrubland		Water
	Industrial		Wetlands



Williams & Works

0 1,000 2,000 4,000
Feet

Land Use and Zoning

Map 5 is the City's existing zoning map. As a nearly fully built-out community, Allegan's zoning and land use maps are reasonably consistent. In addition, a zoning map typically follows property lines and rights-of-way, so it results in a more recognizable pattern in the community. It does have the limitation, however, of characterizing an entire parcel by its principal use, even though much of the site may be vacant land.

Although residential land uses predominate and constitute more than a quarter of the City, Allegan has maintained almost as much land as open and natural land.

Although residential land uses predominate and constitute more than a quarter of the City, Allegan has maintained almost as much land as open and natural land. There is a significant area planned and zoned for industrial uses. However, much of the industrial areas on the east side of the City remain vacant and open, awaiting private investment.

The open space uses naturally tend to follow the Kalamazoo River, with a large block of forested land in the southwest corner of the City. The community is blessed with this important natural feature which offers the benefits of recreational opportunities and natural beauty. Of course, the river's floodplain must be respected as an important limitation in any land use analysis (see Chapter 2 and Map 3).

Many of the downtown property owners have found the use of upper stories to be difficult.

Commercial areas are concentrated within the downtown area and along M-89. The uses in the downtown tend to be traditional small town commercial buildings of two- and three-stories, with retail uses on the ground floors and office or residential uses above. However, many of the downtown property owners have found the use of upper stories to be difficult. In addition, the Allegan community has seen the development of suburban commercial "strip center" patterns along the M-89 right-of-way on both the east and west sides of the City, extending into Allegan Township. Land uses in these newer commercial strips include fast food, convenience retail and services. To date, Allegan has not witnessed "big box" suburban retail, although such development forms are found in the Plainwell/Otesego community immediately to the east.

As the County seat in an agricultural setting, Allegan is the home of the County Fairgrounds. The facility provides a unique combination of services and facilities that are used by residents of the City of Allegan for recreational pursuits. The Fairgrounds contain 83.2 acres of land area with over one mile of frontage on the Kalamazoo River. The Fairgrounds contain an undeveloped small boat launch facility, and the shoreline is frequently used for access to the River by fishermen. The Fairgrounds contain a number of display buildings, used for the annual

County Fair activities, plus an 8,500 seat performance stage and a one-mile oval direct horse track.

The Fairgrounds also contains *Pioneer Village*, a group of 15 buildings, relocated from various sites within the County, which depict the life and time of the area in the 1890's. The Village is open for visitation during weekend events and at other scheduled times.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

The City has worked on a number of planning projects since the last Master Plan updated, and one of the purposes of this plan is to incorporate previous efforts into this comprehensive Master Plan.

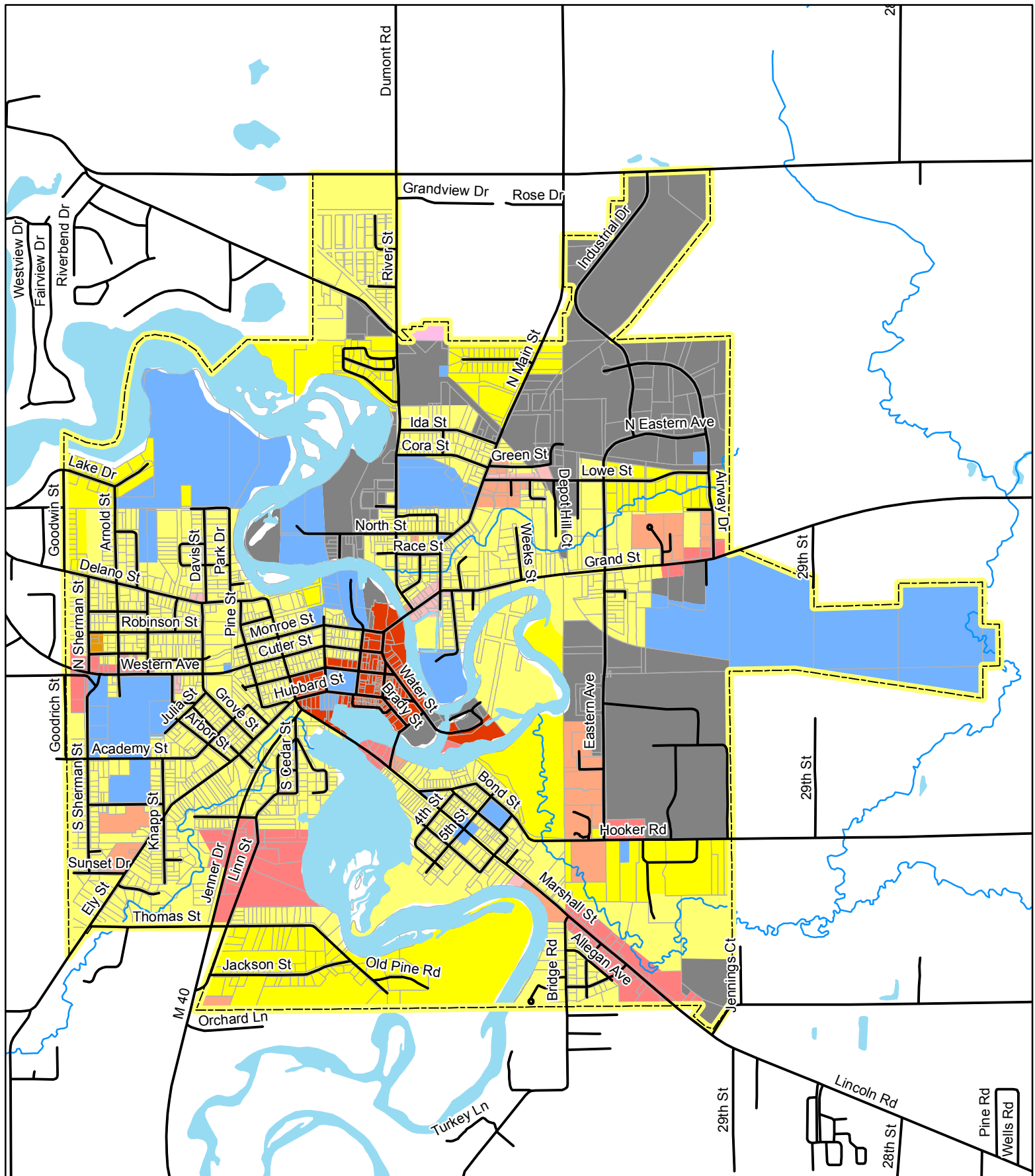
Downtown Allegan Riverfront Development Project

This Plan, adopted in 2013 included the preparation of a design concept and accompanying urban planning strategies for a riverfront redevelopment project. The proposed site includes the Kalamazoo Riverfront that borders Downtown Allegan along Hubbard Street. The City of Allegan, the Allegan Downtown Development Authority, and local stakeholders envision transforming the identified riverfront site into a quality destination space recognized throughout the region.

Downtown Strategic Plan

In 2004, the City of Allegan adopted the Downtown Strategic Plan. This plan serves as a development guidebook by which decisions affecting the downtown commercial area can be evaluated, and thus is a key document, and its goals and objectives should be reflected in this Master Plan.

This Downtown Strategic Plan also addresses development which will occur in downtown Allegan in the next ten to fifteen years, what the nature of that development should be, and in what manner the City and the DDA can promote such development. It establishes actions which the City can take in order to improve the existing conditions in the district and promote desired development.



City of Allegan Master Plan

Map 5. Zoning

Legend

 R-1 Single Family Residential	 C-2 General Commercial
 R-2 Single Residential	 C-3 Restricted Commercial
 R-3 Multi-Family Residential	 M-1 Manufacturing
 R-4 Mobile Home Residential	 PGL Public and Government
 C-1 Central Business District	 Unknown Zoning

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Williams & Works

CHAPTER 6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilities, such as schools, parks and public buildings, play an important role in maintaining and improving quality of life. This chapter discusses these facilities and the comprehensive development needs of the City. Map 6 illustrates the location of the community facilities discussed in this chapter.

Public Schools

Community facilities, such as schools, parks and public buildings play an important role in maintaining and improving quality of life.

The Allegan area is served by Allegan Public Schools and the Allegan County Intermediate School District. Private and parochial schools provide alternatives to public education. All Allegan schools are fully accredited through The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

The district includes one high school, one alternative high school, one middle school and four elementary schools. As of September 2013 there were 2,625 students enrolled in the district. The school district has a 71.1% graduation rate and the high school has a 91.3% graduation rate.

The following schools are located within the City of Allegan:

- ◆ Administration Building; 550 Fifth Street
- ◆ Allegan High School; 1650 M-40
- ◆ Alternative High School, 550 Fifth Street
- ◆ White Junior High School
- ◆ Dawson Elementary School; 125 Elm
- ◆ Pine Trails Elementary School; 2950 Center
- ◆ North Ward Elementary School; 440 River Street
- ◆ West Ward Elementary School; 360 Vernon

There are no opportunities for higher education in the City, although several colleges are within an hour's driving distance. Hope College is a private school located a 35-minute commute to the northwest in Holland. Several schools in the Kalamazoo area including, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Western Michigan University are just a half hour commute to the southeast. Schools located in Grand Rapids, include Grand Valley State University, Aquinas College, Calvin College, and Davenport University are all approximately an hour to the north.

Park Facilities and Recreation Plans

The City of Allegan Parks Commission was established by ordinance in June of 1990. The Commission's primary responsibilities include the improvement of parks and the establishment of organized recreation programs. This commission develops short and long-term plans involving public parks and recreational facilities and programs.



Sue Lange Memorial Park provides a very attractive oasis in the City.

The City of Allegan completed the City Parks System Master Plan in the spring of 2003¹⁷. The plan described the community, inventoried all of the recreational facilities for the City, created an action program and created a basis for action. The plan was tailored to meet the recreational needs of the City through 2008. The City of Allegan Parks Commission, as well as the Allegan Township Planning Commission prepared a joint recreation plan in 2014 with help from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission¹⁸. The joint recreation plan provides an update to the 2003 plan and incorporates both the City of Allegan and Allegan Township into a comprehensive coordinated parks plan.

Within the City there are 78.7 acres of parks, six schools with park facilities, and the Allegan County Fairgrounds. In addition, there are a number of private recreational businesses in Allegan. The following parks are located within and maintained by the City of Allegan:

◆ JayCee Park	6.2 acres
◆ Rossman Park	2.5 acres
◆ Sue Lange Memorial Park	0.4 acres
◆ Hanson Park	1.2 acres
◆ Mahan Park	0.7 acres
◆ Riverfront Park	1.3 acres
◆ Trestle Trail Park	2.5 acres
◆ Water Street Riverfront Park	0.9 acres
◆ Wellness and Sports Complex	63.0 acres

¹⁷ City of Allegan, City Parks System Master Plan, 2003.

¹⁸ City of Allegan & Allegan Township Joint Recreation Plan: 2014-2018

Together these parks total 78.7 acres of recreational facilities.

Other Publicly Owned Facilities

Allegan is blessed with many community facilities that support a wide variety of cultural activities. These facilities include:

- ◆ Griswold Auditorium
- ◆ The Regent Theater
- ◆ The Allegan Area Community Center
- ◆ The Allegan Area Arts Council
- ◆ Allegan County Historical Society & Old Jail Museum
- ◆ The Allegan Community Players
- ◆ The Allegan Library
- ◆ The Allegan County 4-H Club
- ◆ The Allegan County Fairgrounds

The Parks Commission has a strong interest in the development and expansion of a Paved Recreation Trail System. Currently the Trail System exists in segments throughout the City with several portions developed along the River. These sections include the Riverwalk, the Water Street Park and the Trestle Trail. Given the popularity of such facilities in other Michigan communities, it is likely that the updated Parks System Plan will further this goal.

Public Safety Services & Facilities

Allegan is divided into five sections for the purpose of community policing. Each officer is assigned a section and is responsible for maintaining contact with citizens and captains of that section. Section liaison officers are trained in recognizing problems in their section. These officers report on patrol hours in their section, including foot, bike and cruiser patrol. Officers attend school programs and special programs in their section.

The Police Department's Vision Statement for the Community Policing Program is to lead in developing collaborative working partnerships with all of our community and service providers so that each and every citizen may enjoy the highest quality of life. Personalized community service shall be provided through Section Liaison Officers. Through our leadership, courage and relentless pursuit of service excellence, the City of Allegan will lead the Law Enforcement Community into the twenty-first century.

The City's Fire Department is located at 300 Monroe Street and provides one full-time staff member and 22 paid-on-call professional staff. The City cooperates with surrounding communities in a mutual aid agreement so that the City's fire protection facilities can be augmented as needed with personnel and equipment from neighboring communities.

The Allegan Fire Department offers programs for youth education about fire safety. The Department facilitates two hands-on workshops a year in elementary school classrooms throughout Allegan to teach children about the dangers of fire within the home.

The Allegan Fire Department completes fire code inspections when buildings are new or when complaints are received.

Downtown Development Authority

The City of Allegan Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has been in existence for more than a decade and has sponsored a number of

redevelopment activities in the core of the community. A DDA is an instrumental of the municipality, created under the auspices of the Downtown Development Act (Act 197 of the Public Acts of 1975), with responsibility for planning and carrying out redevelopment of a targeted area of the City. The focus of the DDA has largely been on aesthetic improvements to the streetscape and the riverfront areas of the community. Several businesses have responded to the stimulus of public investment with private redevelopment initiatives that help to foster the momentum of renewal in the community.

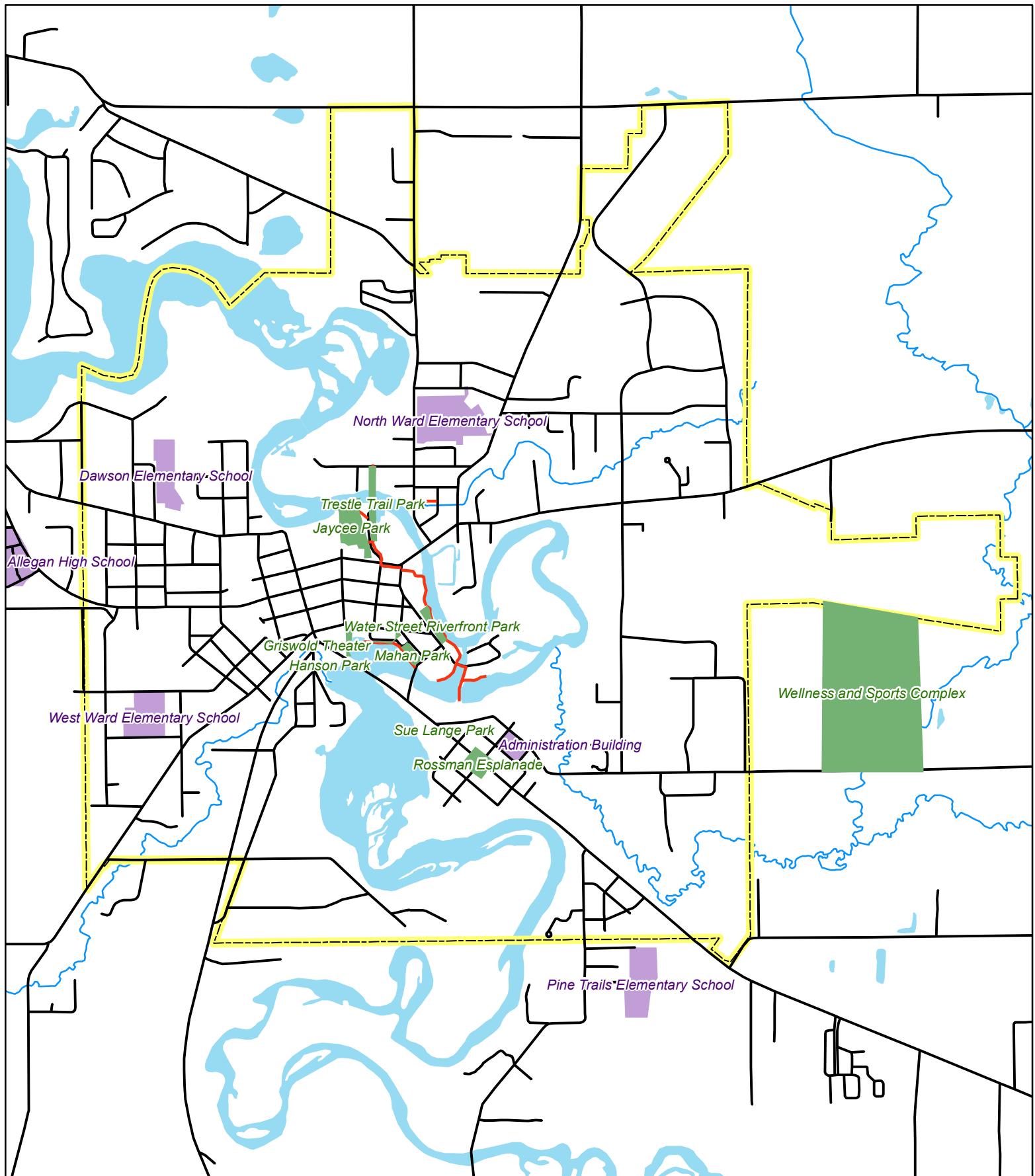


An example of private investment in the improvement of the downtown area

The potential exists that at least one of the County facilities may be acquired for redevelopment.

The City of Allegan is the County seat of Allegan County. As such, downtown Allegan has historically been home to most of the Allegan County governmental offices. The County facilities occupied two square blocks with offices in several buildings and surface parking lots. These included administrative offices, Courts, the Sheriff's Department and the County Jail. In 2002 the County announced plans to relocate some of the County operations to an annex facility located north of the City in Allegan Township. As of 2015, most of the Allegan County government

offices have been moved out of downtown Allegan to the Allegan County Services Complex at Dumont Lake. The complex includes the animal shelter, 911 dispatch/emergency management building, youth home, county services building, community mental health, medical care facility, and human services building. Despite the relocation of the majority of Allegan County buildings, the Allegan County Courthouse still remains in downtown Allegan.

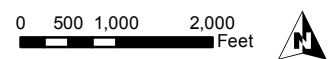


City of Allegan Master Plan

Map 6. Community Facilities

Legend

- Parks
- Non-motorized Trails
- Schools



Williams & Works

CHAPTER 7. TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

ROADWAYS

As the City's logo proclaims, "All Roads Lead to Allegan."

Transportation linkages between Allegan, west Michigan and the larger Midwest region are quite good. As the City's logo proclaims, "All Roads Lead to Allegan." Three State highways converge on the community, intersecting in the downtown area of Allegan. M-222 (Grand Street and Monroe Street) enters the community from the east and provides a direct link to the US-131 corridor about ten miles to the east. M-40 and M-89 unite about five miles northwest of the City. The combined roadway becomes Western Avenue on the west side of the City.

To the northwest, M-40 provides connections to the Holland area, and M-89 connects to the US-31 corridor about eighteen miles to the west along the Lake Michigan shoreline. M-40 and M-89 separate in Allegan with M-40 (Jenner Drive) continuing south into Van Buren County and eventually connecting with I-94 near Paw Paw. M-89 (Marshall Street) extends to the southeast into the communities of Otsego and Plainwell. It also provides another connection to US-131 and continues eastward through northern Kalamazoo and Calhoun Counties and eventually to the City of Battle Creek.

To the north, North Main Street becomes 30th Street (A-37, a County primary road) and continues about twenty miles into Ottawa County connecting with I-196 near the junction of M-6, currently under construction.

According to information provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation, all of the State roads in Allegan function within their design standards, based on average daily traffic volumes.

Traffic volumes are an important indicator of growth and development. According to 2013 information provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), all of the State roads in Allegan function within their design standards, based on average daily traffic volumes. Marshall Street carries the greatest volumes, immediately to the east of downtown, with a two-way ADT of 12,100 trips per day. M-40, south of the downtown, carries a two-way ADT of about 4,400 trips per day, and M-40/M-89 to the northwest carries about 8,300 trips per day.

Considering the MDOT volume listings for the State highways in Allegan, most roads appear to function within their design limitations. By way of comparison, under normal circumstances, a two-lane paved road with normal design and geometrics can safely carry volumes approaching 20,000 ADT. Of course, as development increases in the region, volumes are likely to be somewhat greater.

All of the arterial road networks in the City consist of paved roads in relatively good condition. In addition, most local streets are paved and in serviceable condition, although some portions of the community's roads will need rehabilitation in the foreseeable future.

A review of the current Five-Year Road and Bridge Program published by the Michigan Department of Transportation for the Southwest Region¹⁹ reflects no program road or bridge improvements in Allegan County.

Increased volumes of traffic along arterials may be anticipated with further expansion of the housing stock both in the City and in the surrounding areas of the County. A typical single-family residence generates about 9.57 trips per day.²⁰ As indicated in Chapter 3 of this plan, the population of the City of Allegan could increase by 242 persons by the year 2040. Based on an average household size of 2.40 persons, this results in almost 101 additional households in the City and the immediate vicinity. At 9.57 trips per household per day, this means an additional 967 car trips per day will be generated on local roads. Of course, these estimates do not take into account additional trips emanating from outside the immediate area and either passing through to destinations elsewhere or destined for local facilities.

An additional 967 car trips per day can be expected on local roads.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transit services in Allegan County and available to Allegan residents is limited to services provided by the Allegan County Community Mental Health Agency and the Allegan County Resource Development Committee. Both services are offered to disadvantaged populations and operate on a combination of demand-response and fixed-route formats. The fixed route service consists of the larger buses that travel a daily scheduled route. The demand-response system is a service that transports seniors and the disabled County-wide based on specific user request. The Allegan County Community Mental Health Agency operates seventeen vehicles that provide this service to a specific, needs-based clientele.

Allegan County Transportation began providing demand-response and advance reservation service to the residents of Allegan County in July of 2000. The system provides service to two-thirds of the County but nearly

¹⁹ The MDOT Southwest Region include Allegan, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph and Branch Counties.

²⁰ Institute of Traffic Engineers, *Trip Generation*, 7th Edition, 2003.

40% of those calls either originate or terminate in the City of Allegan. The program is funded by Job Access grants, MDOT, and local funds.

Intercity regional bus service is available in Holland, Plainwell and Otsego, making connections in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, operated by Indian Trails Bus Lines and Greyhound Bus Lines.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Padgham Field, located in the City of Allegan, offers general aviation services, primarily serving corporate and recreational aviation needs. The airport property extends west of the City and into Allegan Township. Padgham Field is surrounded by park and agricultural lands with some higher intensity uses in the area. The airport's runway is currently 4,300 ft. long by 75 ft. wide. Padgham field also contains a turf runway which is 1,830 ft. long by 150 feet wide.

Commercial passenger air service is available through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek International Airport. Both facilities provide daily jet and turboprop service to regional hubs in Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Minneapolis and Cleveland.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION



Sidewalks can provide an attractive alternative to automobile travel in the City.

The City of Allegan provides sidewalks in many of its neighborhoods and throughout the downtown area. The occasionally steep topography of the community and the winding course of the Kalamazoo River present some challenges to effective non-motorized connections through the community. In addition, pedestrian and cyclist safety are primary concerns with the three State highways intersecting in the City.

However, the relatively compact form of the community, the River and the varied terrain contribute to the community's charm. Thus, as indicated above, the Parks Commission has placed a high priority on expansion of a Paved Recreation Trail System to link existing and planned segments both for recreational purposes and as an attractive alternative for automobile travel in the City.

UTILITIES

The City of Allegan provides water for domestic and commercial use and fire fighting as well as wastewater collection and treatment. Both systems serve virtually the entire City, with some modest extensions into Allegan Township.

Public Water

Currently, the City is undertaking a comprehensive system reliability study pertaining to both the water and wastewater systems.

The City's municipal water system draws water from a municipal well field. The system has treatment capacity for approximately 2.3 million gallons per day. The distribution system provides adequate service to most of the City, although the City plans to continue system upgrades in areas where low service conditions are occasionally experienced.

The water system is extended into Allegan Township along Lincoln Road to serve Allegan High School. In addition, the City has completed a wellhead area delineation study and is considering land use limitations to protect the aquifer.

Public Wastewater

The City's wastewater collection and treatment system serves the entire City and portions of Allegan Township. The system's treatment design capacity is approximately 1.8 million gallons per day, with current average daily flows of about 800,000 gallons per day, leaving an available capacity of about 1 million gallons per day.

The City and Allegan Township have entered into an agreement for the extension of sanitary sewer service into the Township, given the uses to be served pose no conflict with Allegan's downtown. Sanitary sewers are extended into the Township along Marshall Street to the southeast and along Lincoln Road to the northwest to provide service to areas of more intense development on the M-89/M-40 corridor.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Recently, the City and Township adopted the M-89 Corridor Plan. The purpose of the plan is to "to provide the framework for cooperative planning and the future development of the M-89 Corridor," and this plan is incorporated in to this Master Plan. The M-89 Corridor Plan also sought to:

- Provide a series of development options for the roadway that allow for vehicular and pedestrian circulation;

- Discuss improvements to enhance the aesthetic character of the buildings and surrounding landscape along the Corridor;
- Establish a framework for on-going communication and cooperation between the City of Allegan and Allegan Township;
- Provide resources, additional capacity and support material(s) for the development of the Corridor; and Compliment the work and recommendation outlined in previous planning efforts within the community.

CHAPTER 8. GUIDING ISSUES

Chapters 2 through 7 describe the existing physical, economic, and demographic conditions in the City of Allegan. It is important to also consider what the data presented may imply about future conditions in the City.

A preliminary analysis of the data suggested the following general implications:

1. In the next twenty-five to thirty years, population in the Allegan region will grow significantly, with as many as 1,213 additional persons living in the City of Allegan and Allegan Township. This growth, while manageable, will have implications on land uses, institutions, infrastructure, roads and services.
2. The demolition of the former Allegan County Jail at the corner of Hubbard and Walnut Street downtown Allegan is a notable change in the City's landscape, and the County's planned reuse of the site as a parking lot was disappointing to many residents. However, the City's successes in downtown renovation and renewal can continue with this change and should look for ways to work cooperatively with the County to ensure that the lot is used effectively and efficiently as an asset to downtown. With the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification (RRC), the City, including the downtown, remain uniquely positioned to attract and retain robust and diverse businesses and a strong tax base.
3. The relatively modest income levels of the Allegan population speaks to some stagnation in the local economy. However, the strength of the local manufacturing community suggests that much of the income earned in the Allegan area is benefiting residents of other areas more than City residents. Therefore, a significant challenge to the City will be to make its neighborhoods an attractive alternative to isolated, rural homesites that likely draw many of the employees of local businesses.
4. The attractive nature of the City with its walkable neighborhoods and excellent housing values could serve as a very enticing inducement for residents to return to the City. These neighborhoods are further enhanced by the many historic structures and districts that grace the City. Grassroot efforts to organize and strengthen these neighborhoods will need to be encouraged to

A significant challenge to the City will be to make its neighborhoods an attractive alternative to isolated, rural homesites.

reverse some indications of disinvestment and to foster redevelopment in the City.

5. The City's water and wastewater systems are important magnets for growth and development. Although the City itself is nearly built-out, the larger Allegan community is clearly poised for growth; and through cooperative measures, both the City and its neighbors can benefit from that growth. Thus, the City will need to be prepared for the public investment necessary to assure sufficient capacity in these vital systems and ensure that its Capital Improvements Plan accounts for potential expansions.
6. The natural amenities of the City, including the mature urban forests and the Kalamazoo River, will also prove to be very important to the identity and personality of the City. Despite the existing contamination in the River sediments, the aesthetic qualities of the stream and the impoundments downstream, are strong magnets for development. In addition, the varying wooded terrain of the City located in the River Valley and the potential for improved non-motorized connections are largely unrealized assets of the City. As more walking connections are made in the community, its neighborhoods and shopping areas will be enhanced and strengthened.
7. Due to a downward trend in enrollment, Allegan Public Schools have room for growth. Continuing to attract and retain individuals in their 20s and 30s will be important for the future of the district's enrollment as those age groups begin to have families.

SECTION III. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This section of the Plan builds on the Community Profile presented in Section II and extends the Community's vision into the future. The Future Land Use Plan begins with the broad policy foundation upon which the Plan is formed. This foundation is found in Chapter 11 which includes the goals of the City and the objectives or milestones that support them.

Based on the goals and objectives of the City, the future land use plan is presented in Section III. That section includes the Future Land Use Map, and a description of the general land uses planned for the City. Finally, this section concludes with the Action Plan. This is a series of implementation strategies that outline a course of action to realize the vision of this Plan.

CHAPTER 9. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master Plan is founded on the following goal statements, each supported by more specific objectives. The goals are intended to describe a desirable end state or conditions of the City 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.

With these standards in mind, we have gathered the comments from the community involvement workshops to develop the following goals and objectives statements for review. The goals and objectives have been strengthened and updated based on previous planning activities and public involvement efforts conducted in support of the 2015 Master Plan update. Public input was received in March 2015 during a community-wide open house held with Allegan Township. Overall, residents expressed support for the continuation of existing planning efforts and policies. Of particular interest to residents were working to strengthen the downtown, development of a non-motorized trail network, increased access to the river, and preservation of natural features.

The goals and objectives form the policy foundation of the Plan, and most will require the active effort of the City or other agencies in the area.

A. NATURAL FEATURES, PARKS AND RECREATION

1. The natural areas of Allegan, including the Kalamazoo River, wetland areas and natural ravines, will be healthy and attractive elements of the community, providing an aesthetic amenity for residents and visitors and natural habitat for a diverse range of native wildlife.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Prepare a detailed inventory of both regulated and non-regulated important natural features along with a determination of appropriate uses for each feature.
- b. Establish regulatory and zoning standards and/or incentive mechanisms to preserve and protect natural areas.
- c. Prepare access plans for features that can support human activities.

- d. Develop a strategy to encourage responsible and ecologically-friendly development in the City's Mill District.
2. Residents of Allegan will enjoy natural areas and a broad range of recreational facilities and opportunities, interconnected with neighborhoods by trails and walking paths to promote walking, biking and healthy lifestyles.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Prepare and implement a non-motorized facilities plan for the City and the region.
 - b. Develop assured funding for non-motorized facilities.
 - c. Develop safety improvements for roadway crossings (duplicate of J, 1, d).
 - d. Implement a plan to maintain and repair sidewalks and to develop new sidewalks, utilizing the City's existing 50/50 plan for sidewalk improvements.
 - e. Continue to implement complete streets plans and policies to provide for all forms of transportation.
3. The City of Allegan will prepare and carry out an aggressive program to plan, expand, equip and maintain public parks and recreation facilities and services.

OBJECTIVES.

The key objectives in support of this goal are reflected in the City of Allegan Parks System Master Plan.

B. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

1. Allegan area residents and businesses will be served with abundant clean water, and wastewater systems will efficiently serve the needs of industry and the community while protecting and improving water quality in the Kalamazoo River.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Maintain and implement water and wastewater system reliability studies.
 - b. Inventory and characterize areas of soils and groundwater contamination.
 - c. Develop and implement comprehensive stormwater management site plan requirements.

2. Public water and wastewater services will be extended strategically to encourage growth and development that is consistent with cooperatively-developed local and regional land use and economic development goals.

OBJECTIVES.

- ~~a. Implement balanced and mutually beneficial water and wastewater extension agreements with Allegan Township.~~
- a. Cooperatively with Allegan Township, review and evaluate the water and wastewater facilities to ensure that future growth can be accommodated.
- b. Review and update water and wastewater rate structures to assure adequate funding for maintenance and capital replacements.
- ~~c. Identify long-range expansion sites for treatment and water supply facilities.~~

C. PLANNING, CODE ENFORCEMENT AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. Residential and commercial property in Allegan will consistently meet Code standards through a broadly-supported program of fair and balanced code enforcement and redevelopment incentives.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Review and evaluate ~~existing building and zoning codes~~ the Zoning Ordinance and zoning codes to assure that regulatory standards create desired results, workable solutions, along with a streamlined and efficient review and permitting process.
- b. Develop and implement a program of education to promote code compliance as a means to enhance investment values.
- c. Review, and modify as appropriate, the rental unit ordinance to help ensure a higher quality of life and to improve the quality of dwellings and neighborhoods.
- d. Work with state and federal agencies and foundations to develop incentives and assistance for redevelopment and code compliance (duplicate of G, 1, d).
- e. Maintain the practices outlined by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification and the City's

Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification Report, and enhance them where feasible.

- f. Annually review the City's Capital Improvements Plan to evaluate priorities, review completed projects and identify new opportunities for improvement.

- 2. The Allegan area will be known for the effective and cooperative working partnership of the City, the County and area Townships to balance growth, manage services and share resources for the benefit of area residents.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Identify and promote common "Allegan Area" goals.
- b. Develop and implement programs to continuously strengthen communication between and among the City, the County and the Township.
- c. Develop and maintain a continued and consistent presence with state and federal legislators.
- d. Seek opportunities for joint purchases with other units of government to achieve economies of scale.
- e. Continue to schedule regular meetings between the City of Allegan and Allegan Township Planning Commissions to ensure an open dialogue on important issues affecting the larger community and work cooperatively toward pursuing common goals. Joint meetings should be held at least four times a year.

D. HISTORY, DESIGN AND AESTHETICS

- 1. Allegan's unique historical character will be preserved and enhanced through effective property improvement and maintenance and through the efforts of an active and well-supported network of public and private sector organizations.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Develop and implement a program of education to promote historically-accurate maintenance and redevelopment.
- b. ~~Increase~~—Maintain housing, zoning and building code enforcement activities (duplicate of G, 1, a).
- c. Develop and implement programs to strengthen neighborhood organizations and communication.

- d. Develop and implement programs to encourage and strengthen home ownership.

E. DOWNTOWN

1. Downtown Allegan will be the economic and commercial core of the region, with a vibrant and economically healthy mix of businesses, institutions and housing oriented to enjoy and take advantage of the unique riverfront location.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Complete an evaluation of the Zoning Ordinance to coordinate with the City's downtown improvement goals including the Downtown Strategic Plan and Downtown Allegan Riverfront Development Project.
 - b. Establish downtown redevelopment and investment incentives that are consistent with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.
 - c. Develop and implement programs to facilitate and promote full occupancy of upper stories of downtown properties. Maintain a record of downtown vacancies for analysis of creative property assembly opportunities.
 - d. Complete a parking needs analysis and undertake corrective measures, if necessary.
 - e. Expand the role of the downtown as an entertainment venue for area residents.
2. Allegan's community heritage will be reflected in the sensitive design of new and existing development incorporating attractive design elements to promote inviting and walkable patterns of growth.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Implement streetscape enhancement efforts, including storefront art, murals, and Christmas or other cards in City parks.
- b. Develop and adopt realistic downtown design standards that create a sense of place, provide access to the riverfront and connect residents to recreation opportunities and non-motorized trails.
- c. Expand walking connections through the downtown and into the Mill District.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Allegan will be a vibrant economic center that hosts a diverse mix of industrial, professional and service industries and county government offices.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Develop and implement a program of business attraction that focuses on industries new to the market and businesses and services that compliment and strengthen Allegan's identity.
 - b. Maintain Allegan's status as a Certified Redevelopment Ready Community by utilizing best practices as outlined in The Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification Report for the City of Allegan.
 - c. Meet regularly with local business leaders and major employers to assist in the maintenance and annual review the City of Allegan's Economic development strategies.
 - d. Maintain positive and fruitful relationship with Positively Allegan to ensure that economic outreach initiatives are viable and supported by the Allegan community.
 - ~~b. Work with Allegan County in a possible relocation of the County jail.~~
 - f. Review existing available economic development incentives and develop and expand programs to promote and support their use to assist business retention and expansion and to attract new investment.
 - g. Contemplate and implement additional policies which would encourage innovative industries and businesses to locate in the City, particularly in an effort to fill vacant buildings.
2. Employment in Allegan will offer competitive wages and benefits to attract and retain a highly-skilled workforce in the area.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Expand opportunities for advanced education and vocational training for area residents.
- b. Develop and implement programs to improve housing quality and strengthen neighborhoods as attractive alternatives for local workers (duplicate of G, 2, c).

G. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

1. Allegan's residential neighborhoods will support an attractive mix of housing for all segments of society, designed to provide safe and inviting walking connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks and the downtown.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. ~~Increase~~ Maintain housing, zoning and building code enforcement activities (duplicate of D, 1, d).
 - b. Review, and modify as appropriate, the rental unit ordinance to help ensure a higher quality of life and to improve the quality of dwellings and neighborhoods (duplicate of C, 1, c).
 - c. Develop and implement programs to strengthen neighborhood organizations and communication (duplicate of G, 3, c).
 - d. Work with state and federal agencies and foundations to develop incentives and assistance for redevelopment and code compliance (duplicate of C, 1, d).
 - e. Encourage neighborhood ~~associations~~ organizations to support, promote, and reward exemplary property maintenance.
2. Housing in the City will be predominately owner-occupied and located in new and existing neighborhoods that compete favorably with any rural or urban setting for all income levels.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. In partnership with local and regional agencies, establish programs of incentives to expand owner-occupancy and rehabilitation of Allegan homes.
 - b. Develop and implement programs to improve housing quality and strengthen neighborhoods as attractive alternatives for local workers (duplicate of F, 2, b).
 - c. Revise the Zoning Ordinance and subdivision control ordinance to require full urban amenities in all new residential areas in the City.
 - d. Develop and implement a program to recognize and publicize extraordinary investment in residential properties.
3. The City's neighborhoods will be supported by strong diverse social networks that work together to maintain the housing stock and

promote neighborhood identity and a sense of belonging in every neighborhood.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. ~~Continue and expand the~~ Maintain community policing program efforts.
- b. Encourage the establishment of social and recreational activities to foster interaction and understanding among all residents of the City (duplicate of H, 1, d).
- c. Develop and implement programs to strengthen neighborhood organizations and communication (duplicate of G, 1, c).

H. SENSE OF COMMUNITY, IDENTITY FOSTERING

1. Allegan will be known for its friendly and inclusive social climate. It will be known as a positive and “can do” community that overcomes its challenges, and as a community with a healthy mix of social and entertainment activities for residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVES.

- ~~a. Establish and implement a citizen’s academy to foster effective communication between the City and its citizens (duplicate of I, 1, a).~~
- a. Continue to ensure that planning and development projects include broad public participation in accordance with the City’s public participation policy.
- b. Annually review the City’s public participation policy to look for new and creative ways to engage and receive input from the community.
- c. Build a network of involved and capable volunteers to support city plans and programs (duplicate of I, 2, a).
- d. Continue to develop and implement a program of community promotion to tout the community’s strengths.
- e. Encourage the establishment of social and recreational activities to foster interaction and understanding among all residents of the City (duplicate of G, 3, b).
- f. Enhance the City’s online and social media presence to continually foster open communication between the City and residents.

I. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONS

1. The community will hold a shared value for high quality and responsive local government, public schools and medical services supported by a thoughtful and informed citizenry willing to provide the necessary political and financial support to sustain superior local services.

OBJECTIVES.

- ~~a. Establish and implement a citizen's academy to foster effective communication between the City and its citizens (duplicate of H, 1, a).~~
 - a. Continue to pursue transparency and communication through the City's established public participation policy and engage new methods of public participation as they are identified.
 - b. Complete a citizen's survey to measure levels of community understanding regarding services and to identify desired service improvements.
2. Allegan residents will take an active and informed role in institutions of local government, schools and the private sector to strengthen local quality of life.

OBJECTIVE.

- a. Build a network of involved and capable volunteers to support city plans and programs (duplicate of H, 1, b).

J. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

1. Local roadways will effectively manage local and regional traffic, including truck traffic on the State highway systems, to maintain acceptable levels of service without sacrificing comfort, safety or accessibility for Allegan residents and businesses.

OBJECTIVES.

- a. Working with other units of state and local government, establish adequate funding to support a program of road maintenance and repair resulting in a 20-year replacement cycle for all City roads.
- b. Establish and implement a pavement condition monitoring and management system.
- c. Complete a study of traffic patterns and volumes through the downtown, evaluating speeds and one-way versus two-way road configurations.

- d. Develop safety improvements for roadway crossings (duplicate of A, 2, d).
- e. Evaluate and implement traffic calming alternatives and land use changes, where deemed appropriate, along highly-traveled highway corridors to protect neighborhoods.
- f. Implement recommendations from the M-89 Corridor Plan in cooperation with MDOT, Allegan Township and other entities, particularly those that provide for complete streets, streetscaping/landscaping to provide for a greater sense of place in the community.

CHAPTER 10. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The primary purpose of this plan is to encourage the enrichment of existing development patterns that preserve and augment the City's strengths.

The City of Allegan Future Land Use Plan establishes a general blueprint of land usage to guide growth, development, and redevelopment for the next twenty years. Since the City is almost fully developed, the primary purpose of this plan is to encourage the enrichment of existing development patterns that preserve and augment the City's historic charm, neighborhood development, downtown investment opportunities, and industrial potential. The Plan also is intended to encourage improvements to the present aging housing stock and set the stage for future growth.

By adopting a Plan for the future, Allegan is realizing objectives and setting the pace for continued progress. For example, by establishing a Waterfront Residential area, fundamental vistas will be preserved while high-profile housing may be developed. Furthermore, by continuing to strengthen the Central Business District, Allegan will champion efforts to redevelop downtown as a regional destination and a fascinating hot spot for entertainment, dining, shopping, and living. Other future land use designations help strengthen Allegan as an area employment and recreation center.

The Future Land Use Plan is inevitably linked to the zoning districts in the City of Allegan. Zoning is the act of regulating the use of lands, while planning is essentially scheduling in advance general patterns of land use within a community. To this end, the Future Land Use Plan uses a map to visually express the intended conditions of land uses in the City. Even though Allegan is a well-established community, these uses illustrate how the City desires to grow in an effort to boost positive characteristics and to reverse disinvestment in the City.

Map 7 is intended as a general guide for growth and development. While it includes future land use designations, the margins between designations are meant to permit graceful and inviting transitions from one area to the next. The following describes the future land use designations as illustrated on Map 7 on the following page.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District is intended to promote efficient and livable forms of development in the downtown core of the City. With attractive and inviting patterns of development in the geographical and social center of the City, higher density residential and commercial uses

here allow for a charming living, entertainment, working and shopping environment. This land use designation is meant to serve the greater Allegan community with goods and services while developing in accord with the surrounding residential, commercial and residentially mixed neighborhoods. Finally, this district is meant to serve as a cultural focal point and social gathering place for area residents as City Hall, the Allegan Library, the riverfront amphitheater, greenspace areas and amenities several Riverfront Parks, the Allegan Area Community Center, and the Griswold Auditorium are located downtown. The City has been successful in recent downtown renovation and renewal objectives, and with unwavering commitment this area of the community may emerge with an enhanced social climate and a stronger tax base.

As the downtown area of Allegan, the Central Business District sits generally north and west of the Kalamazoo River, south of Grand Street, and east of Marshall Street, with Locust Street as the foremost thoroughfare.

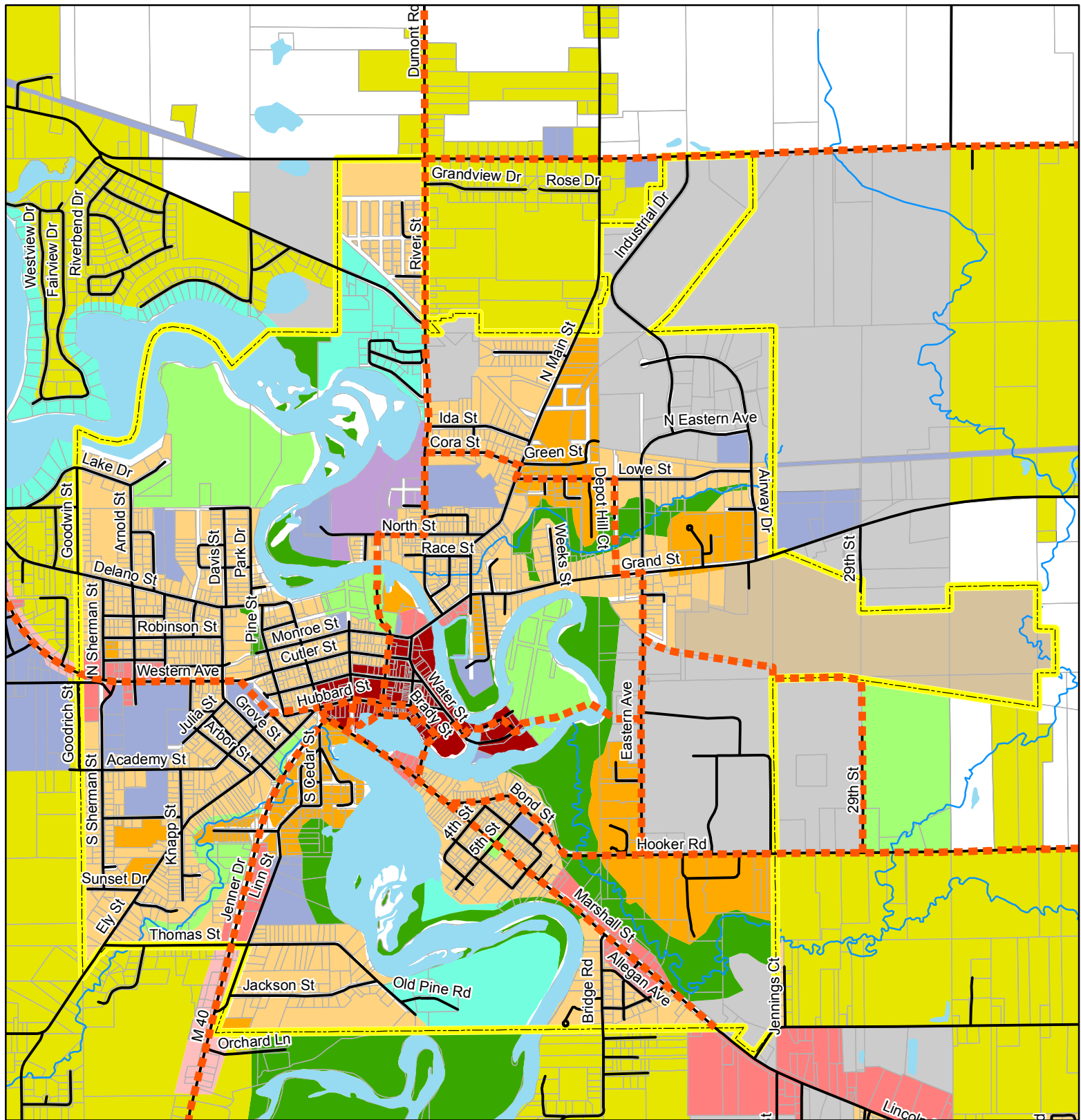
By continuing to strengthen the Central Business District, Allegan will champion efforts to redevelop downtown as a regional destination and an attractive spot for entertainment, dining, shopping, and living

The key to distinguishing the Central Business District from the other land use classifications in the City of Allegan is high-density mixed uses and building form. For example, redevelopment plans could include a mixture of commercial and residential apartment or condominium uses. New development should be in buildings with minimal setbacks. Off-street parking requirements should be minimized to the greatest extent feasible. Planned uses in this district include, but are not limited to, commercial (retail and services), office, entertainment, civic, high-density residential, and pocket parks.

Conversely, industrial uses are to be discouraged in the Central Business District, as they may generate off-site impacts that conflict with the desired uses planned.

INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC LANDS

The Institutional/Public Lands land use designation includes government buildings, public institutions and schools that are not located in the Central Business District. These include publicly used facilities like the hospital, as well as community facilities normally not accessible to the public such as the water and wastewater treatment plants. A primary purpose of this designation is to facilitate public meetings, civic services, education, and culture for the City of Allegan. Uses in the Institutional/Public Lands land use areas should be in harmony with governmental and educational purposes, and the public good.

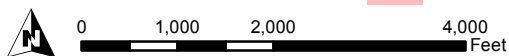


City of Allegan Allegan Township Master Plan

2015 Joint
Future Land Use

Legend

- Joint Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- Agricultural (Township only)
- Rural (Township only)
- Low Density Residential (Township only)
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Waterfront Residential
- Office/Local Retail (Township only)
- General Commercial
- Central Business District
- North Street Redevelopment Area
- Industrial
- Airport
- Institutional/Public Lands
- Community Recreation
- Resource Protection



GENERAL COMMERCIAL

This land use classification is intended to provide goods and services for the greater Allegan area, including jobs for residents and goods for visitors. Developments should, to the greatest extent possible, be designed and built to preserve unique natural features and to support smooth traffic movements.

The General Commercial areas in the City are along Marshall Street, Western Avenue, Sherman Street Grand Street and Jenner Drive. Goodrich Street, Marshall Street, Eastern Avenue, Bond Street and Hill Street.

Parking areas should include landscaping to minimize an oppressive, asphalt dominated appearance.

Facilities in the General Commercial designation are likely to include large-scale retailing, automobile-related services, lodging, and entertainment services. General commercial uses typically exist in strip development form with abutting parking areas separating the structures from the road. It is desirable for such facilities to be designed in architectural good taste and for parking areas to include adequate landscaping to minimize the oppressive, asphalt-dominated appearance, frequently associated with strip commercial patterns, while respecting the need for easy access. Such uses serve the Allegan region with non-Central Business District services such as gas stations, fast food, auto-repair and grocery stores.

INDUSTRIAL

The Industrial land use classification is meant for assembly manufacturing, utilities, shipping and heavy commercial employment opportunities to serve the greater Allegan area. Facilities ought to be developed with suitable utility and transport links and with respect for the City's environmental features. In addition, professional and corporate office uses for various occupations are also encouraged in the Industrial areas. Approximately 383 acres of the City are presently utilized for industrial purposes.

These areas abut similarly planned areas in Allegan Township, setting the stage for the rational and sequential expansion of employment and investment in the community.

The Future Land Use Map clusters Industrial areas in three sections of the City: the northeastern-most portion around Airway and Industrial Drives; along and east of Eastern Avenue, north of Hooker Road and

south of Grand Street at the City's easternmost boundary; and, at the southeastern-most point in the City Limits off of Marshall Street.

Traditionally, the Industrial designation has the following purposes:

- To shield residential areas against potentially undesirable effects of manufacturing, such as noise, odors, fumes, and truck traffic;
- To provide sufficient lands for industrial and professional office employment and investment; and,
- To establish appropriate land use controls intended to protect industrial and office uses, and neighboring residential developments, from congestion and pollution.

COMMUNITY RECREATION

Opportunities for leisure activities abound in the City of Allegan, as the City offers many locations for varied recreational interests. Places such as JayCee Park and the Wellness and Sports Complex are Community Recreation land uses that provide healthful opportunities in the community. In addition, this designation includes the various small neighborhood parks which offer opportunities for passive recreation and contemplation. With careful planning, these common areas and others can be preserved and enhanced for future populations of Allegan. These lands are a vital part of the community's identity and health. The Community Recreation land use designation is intended for community parkland, trails facilities and the Allegan County Fairgrounds.

A portion of the Mill District is also within the Community Recreation designation. This plan envisions the development of the Mill District with recreational uses along with some commercial, office or residential uses closer to downtown Allegan. Recreational uses in the Mill District should be carefully planned through a participatory planning process that focuses solely on this unique area.

Other Community Recreation areas hug the Kalamazoo River, though there are other lands for recreation that collect around the City. For example, though located in Allegan Township, the Wellness and Sports Complex is a City facility that serves the broader Allegan community with field sports. ~~and a skate park~~. The areas falling under this land use designation are intended for public ownership and use. Maintaining and promoting more green-space and safe public meeting places is essential to quality of life in Allegan.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

The Resource Protection land use category is protected, unbuildable land within the City of Allegan. These lands include ravines, stream valleys, muck soils, wetlands, and steep slope areas. Most of the lands with these characteristics are adjacent to the River, or embracing a tributary associated with the River. This property is not suitable for land development and gives the City valuable natural resource areas to preserve.

Any areas that are designated within the Resource Protection future land use classification that do have suitable land for building, may pursue conservation cluster or other approaches that would preserve unique natural features- such as cliffs, wetlands, floodplain and scenic views of the River —while permitting some single-family development.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Most of these neighborhoods are scaled for an overall increase in density in the future, and for safe pedestrian connections to commercial and institutional land uses nearby.

A fundamental goal of this Master Plan is the development of high quality and aesthetic forms of development that increase density while creating a very attractive living environment for residents. The High Density Residential designation is key to this goal. The primary purpose of this designation is to establish walkable neighborhoods with mixed density, often in close proximity to commercial and recreational services with amenities and design that work with the area's natural features. Most of these neighborhoods are scaled for an overall increase in density in the future, and for safe pedestrian connections to commercial and institutional land uses nearby.

The primary land use within this area will be dwelling units developed in clusters of detached units, in multi-unit buildings or in condominium environments. Some small-scale commercial and office uses exist in these areas of the community. Conservation design techniques will be encouraged, where appropriate, to establish small pockets of natural or park lands within this relatively intense development form. Innovative design techniques will be considered to accommodate mixed uses that complement one another, but significant commercial areas that might compete with the Central Business District are not anticipated. Overall residential densities from five (5) to ten (10) dwelling units per acre will be achieved.

The four largest areas of High Density Residential exist in the following locations: northwest of the Grand Street and Airway Drive intersection; east of North Main Street; north of North Street between River Street and the River; and, between Jenner Drive and the River. In addition, seven other areas of the City fall under the Residential Mix future land use category. The High Density Residential areas will accommodate town-homes, condominium projects, multiple family housing, single-family homes and senior housing developments as well as small pockets of neighborhood-based commercial.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

A primary goal of the City of Allegan is the preservation of family living environments by encouraging attractive residential neighborhoods. The main focus of this district is to establish, preserve and enhance inviting and walkable neighborhoods at suitable densities with one (1) to five (5) dwelling units per acre to accommodate empty nesters, families with children, and single residents. This designation is meant for single-family houses on individual lots on a traditional grid street neighborhood.

Most of the City is classified as Medium Density Residential, with a heavy influence in every section but the far eastern edge of the City. The principal land use in this district will be single-family detached housing. While Allegan is a nearly built-out community, where new development is proposed, it should mirror existing neighborhood form and scale or employ cluster patterns. Clustered patterns on larger parcels would be encouraged to allow for the conservation of natural land within this land usage category. Such conservation design could establish small pockets of natural lands essential in maintaining clean air, open space, and growing property value. On a restricted basis, higher densities might be considered where the effects of that density on natural features and quality of life can be mitigated, and where impacts on neighboring residences can be effectively buffered.

The existing Medium Density Residential areas of the City include numerous well-maintained older homes, many with historic characteristics and located within designated historic districts. The preservation of these resources is fully consistent with the character of this future land use designation.

WATERFRONT RESIDENTIAL

Allegan is blessed by the presence of the Kalamazoo River. Priceless bluffs overlooking brooks, stream valleys, woodlands and the River itself make much of the developable land situated adjacent to the River very alluring. The two largest areas of undeveloped land in the City with River frontage boast these valuable assets.

Priceless bluffs overlooking brooks, stream valleys, woodlands and the river itself make any developable land situated adjacent to the river very alluring.

The area designated as Waterfront Residential includes approximately 120 acres. Anticipated for the Waterfront Residential area is high-value cluster development that would preserve unique natural features- such as cliffs, wetlands, floodplain and scenic views of the River- while permitting high-quality single-family development. Residential densities will vary depending on the terrain, but the overall densities are anticipated to be less than three units per acre. The City is subtly in regional competition for development, and this picturesque acreage establishes itself as both an opportunity for development and preservation. The open space neighborhoods expected for these areas will, therefore, preserve significant riparian attributes while clustering homes for the region's professionals.

NORTH STREET REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The North Street Redevelopment Area is located prominently along the Kalamazoo River, between the municipal wastewater treatment plant and residential areas. The area is characterized by a vacant industrial lot, breathtaking views of the river, steep slopes, and the unexpected presence of dense woodlands. Some existing structures in the vicinity lend themselves to reuse, while new construction may be desired throughout other portions of the site. Unique topography, the riverside setting, the location between the treatment plant and residential uses, and existing buildings make it difficult to select one single, definable use for the property.

These complexities are viewed as an opportunity for creative mixed-use development. One of several land use categories or a mixture of those land uses could be appropriate. The purpose of the North Street Redevelopment Area designation is the conservation of woodlands and other natural features; the use of land in accordance with its character and adaptability; site planning innovation; reuse and redevelopment of existing structures, where feasible; and compatibility of design and use between neighboring properties.

Possible uses in this area include single-family residential, multiple-family residential, limited personal service establishments to serve residents, office and light industrial, or a fusion of these uses. Commercial uses should be limited in scale and should not compete with downtown establishments. In addition, strip commercial or pole barn industrial buildings are not encouraged.

While this designation does not dictate any specific use, new development should be well-designed and context-sensitive. Uses which generate a large amount of night light, odor, fumes, noise, semi-truck traffic, vibration, fire hazards, dust, smoke and glare will need to be designed to minimize these impacts on residential areas. Orientation and layout of parking and other elements should be non-intrusive to neighboring residential areas, with low-impact lighting and extensive landscape buffering to protect the integrity of nearby residential uses.

AIRPORT

On the eastern edge of the City lies the Padgham Field, which provides general aviation primarily serving corporate and recreational needs. The airport is generally surrounded by the Industrial category, which buffers most noise impacts from nearby residences. The airport is therefore amenable to residents and provides a valuable service to the Allegan area.

ZONING PLAN

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) requires that a Master Plan include a “zoning plan.” The purpose of a zoning plan is to explain how the future land use categories coincide with the current zoning districts of the City. The following table is the zoning plan for the City of Allegan.

The zoning plan explains which zoning districts of the City implement the recommendations of the future land use designations. The following table outlines an approach to guide zoning decisions under this Master Plan. It identifies zoning districts that may be supported by and compatible with each of the above future land use designations. The zoning plan may be used as guidance for the Planning Commission, the City Council and the public is considering compatibility.

The zoning plan is meant as a point of beginning in a rezoning decision, and may not be viewed as the only factor to be considered. There may be extenuating circumstances that could apply to any rezoning request and the reader is cautioned to pay attention to existing and potential land use conflicts and to changing conditions that could impact a rezoning decision.

To use this table, the reader should begin with the future land use map, identifying the future land use classification applicable to a specific property. The left-hand column lists future land use classifications; and the reader should find the row stating the applicable future land use category. The middle column lists the zoning districts that are frequently, but not always, compatible with the applicable future land use designation. Finally, the right-hand column lists some considerations.

It is important to note that the zoning map and ordinance, as well as the future land use narrative on preceding pages, must be referenced for an accurate depiction of what land uses and development form are encouraged or permitted in specific land use categories or zoning districts. Nonetheless, the zoning plan will serve as a guide and a starting point for determining which zoning districts carry out the intent of the future land use designations of this Plan.

Zoning Plan		
Future Land Use Designations	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Considerations
Medium Density Residential	R-1, R-2	Densities in this designation will be between 1 and 5 dwellings per acre.
High Density Residential	R-2, R-3, R-4, C-3	Predominate land uses in this designation include single-family and multiple-family dwellings at a density of 5 to 10 units per acre. Small-scale mixed-use areas may be encouraged, with appropriate buffers to protect nearby residential uses and where such mixed-uses respect existing patterns and densities.
Waterfront Residential	N/A	A new district should be created or the Planned Unit Development process should be employed. Density will depend on the extent of natural features to be preserved, but should not exceed 3 dwellings per acre.
General Commercial	C-2, C-3	
Central Business District	C-1	
North Street Redevelopment Area	N/A	A new district should be created or the Planned Unit Development process should be utilized.
Industrial	M-1	
Airport	M-1	
Institutional/Public Lands	PGL	
Community Recreation	PGL	
Resource Protection	Various	The sensitive environmental features described in the preceding pages fall into several zoning categories; and should be protected from the encroachment of development no matter the zoning district.

CHAPTER 11. ACTION STRATEGIES

In order for the Future Land Use Plan to serve as an effective guide for the continued growth in Allegan, it must be implemented. A methodical and incremental approach to implementation of the Plan will build momentum and result in the changes contemplated. The Action Plan is the point in the Master Plan that we describe “how we get there from here.”

The Action Plan is the point in the Master Plan that we describe “how we get there from here.”

Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Allegan City Council, the Planning Commission and the City staff. The tools available to the City vary depending on the task. They include ordinances, programs, and administrative procedures which are described in this chapter. Most of the action strategies require significant public and private investment. Some are small enough to be implemented immediately. Others will take time. All are important, as they contribute individual elements that will help build the overall vision expressed by the Master Planning process participants.

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary implementation mechanism for this Plan. This strategy contemplates a continual evaluation and update of the Ordinance. ~~a complete evaluation of the entire Ordinance; efforts to continually evaluate and update the Ordinance will be ongoing.~~ This will include evaluation of ~~revisions to the~~ Zoning Map to support the future land use map, and revisions to some zoning classifications to better conform to the future land use designations in this Master Plan, over time and as deemed appropriate. In addition, the Ordinance should be evaluated for flexibility to address innovative development techniques and for its ability to control undesirable development patterns. Some issues that have been identified throughout this process include:

- a. Open space preservation mechanisms to protect important features while encouraging development.
- ~~b. Site plan standards to meet stormwater management requirements.~~
- b. Revisions to the subdivision control ordinance.
- c. Exploration design concepts for the North Street Redevelopment Area and Mill District Sub Area and develop zoning standards to facilitate proper development in those areas, in keeping with the future land use description in Chapter 10.

- e. Looking at potentially developing zoning standards in response to the Waterfront Residential future land use concept and the Downtown Allegan Riverfront Development Project.

Review of existing zoning regulations and adoption of zoning amendments is primarily a task implemented by the Planning Commission, although adoption by the City Council is necessary. Zoning amendments generally can be adopted in a matter of months and should be accomplished within 1-3 years.

2. Mill District Area Specific Plan

The Kalamazoo River flows through Allegan and is the most important natural feature in Allegan, and this Plan seeks to capitalize on this unique asset by encouraging responsible development or redevelopment of waterfront areas in the City.

One such key area is the Mill District. It is an area of local historic importance, located in the heart of the community just east of the central business district. It is mostly undeveloped except for a number of buildings located on Mill District Road near the Allegan City Dam. Previous planning activities have contemplated the future of the district as an area utilized primarily for recreational purposes.

This plan recommends that previous planning activities be furthered by developing an area-specific plan for the Mill District. This planning process should include extensive public outreach in accordance with the City's public participation plan and set forth a comprehensive land use plan, as well as an illustrative design Master Plan for recreational areas. Most of the Mill District is within the 100-year floodplain, so low-impact and passive recreational uses are recommended in those areas to ensure continued viability.

Areas where residential and/or commercial use are feasible should be explored for those purposes, and those areas that are more suitable for recreational uses should be designed to include desired amenities. The Plan should explore trail connections, appropriate passive and active recreational uses based on the needs and desires to residents and stakeholders.

This project will be driven by the Planning Commission and it is likely that outside support will be needed. However, the City Council, DDA, EDC and others should be involved as well. This project should follow the City's public participation policy. It is anticipated that this would take approximately one year to complete and may be initiated within 1-3 years if funding is available.

3. Home Ownership and Rehabilitation Program

Allegan's neighborhoods are characterized by high quality older homes, many of which, if properly maintained, are very important to stabilizing the community. The current 2:1 ratio of owner-occupied to rental housing is considered healthy, but there are signs of an increase in the number of homes converting to rental properties. This trend may erode neighborhood stability if rental units begin to predominate in a neighborhood and housing maintenance suffers. This task will involve information assembly to assist renters in acquiring their homes as well as efforts to encourage owner-occupancy of two-family units. This latter element can be an effective means to enable the economic use of large older homes, without the potentially detrimental complete conversion to rental properties.

The City will also partner with local and regional entities in developing and expanding programs that promote rehabilitation of existing dwellings. Residents of the City have expressed an interest in seeing existing homes renovated to preserve the celebrated historic character of the community. Several **can be pursued rehabilitation entities exist** - locally and at the State level - and the City will **seek partnerships** with these institutions to ensure that all property owners are knowledgeable of available programs.

This is a task that should be implemented by City staff with oversight and direction by the City Council. This can be accomplished at any time, although this plan anticipates that it be accomplished within 3-5 years.

4. Continue efforts to preserve historical resources

Allegan is blessed with a significant share of historic homes and structures which help to define the community's character. The City will encourage efforts to preserve this history by supporting the Historic District Commission, and also by exploring additional means to protect historic resources. Historic preservation can establish eligibility for tax incentives, stimulate an increase in property values and neighborhood desirability, promote economic development and community revitalization, and strengthen quality of life and sense of place. Downtown and many neighborhoods would benefit from continued efforts to further preservation while encouraging maintenance and investment.

This task is an ongoing cooperative effort between City Council and the Historic District Commission.

5. Inventory key natural features

In addition to regulated features, like floodplain or wetland areas, Allegan has pockets of natural amenities that give the City its small town character. Such features as woodlots, steep slopes, ravines and viewsheds help to define the community but are often taken for granted, until they are threatened by growth and development. This activity would involve the preparation of a listing of such features, whether in public or private ownership. The listing would describe the feature(s), the important values they represent, ownership interests, physical characteristics that may either act to preserve or encourage development of the feature and suggested preservation techniques. Preparation of a Land Features Map in June 2009 was the start of this process. The map identifies significant forests, wetlands and water features. Information on the specific properties mapped will be compiled, as well as methods to protect features from development, to complete this recommended action step.

This is likely to be a project driven by the Planning Commission and it is likely that outside environmental expertise will be needed. This project will likely take several months to complete. Its results could be incorporated into a series of zoning amendments that would be prepared by the Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council. This should be implemented within 3-5 years.

6. Strengthening Allegan's Identity

Allegan has many unique characteristics and a tremendous potential. One of Allegan's great assets is the passion its residents have for the community. The citizens in the Allegan area, in cooperation with the Allegan Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce, have City developed the "Only One Positively Allegan" campaign to market these characteristics and to build on the community's potential successes. The goal of Positively Allegan is to "show the great things in Allegan." Positively Allegan was formed in 2012 and has been instrumental in working to engage and inform residents and visitors about all things positive in the Allegan Area. It is noted that this marketing program will continually be refined and utilized over time. This Master Plan is supportive of Positively Allegan and it is recommended that City leadership continue to develop and work cooperatively with the Positively Allegan committee to engage the community.

This is an ongoing strategy that should be monitored by City staff and City Council cooperatively with the EDC and Chamber of Commerce.

7. Improve and Construct a Non-motorized Transportation Network

As a fairly dense, small-town community with a balanced mixture of uses, it will be important to develop safe and effective pedestrian connections throughout Allegan, but particularly between parks and public amenities. Pedestrian linkages are important to provide residents with options other than private automobiles, to encourage healthy lifestyles and to reduce the number of traffic-pedestrian conflicts.

The City will continue to explore options to improve pedestrian connections through public and private investment in sidewalks, as well as in subdivision control requirements to assure all new development incorporates pedestrian facilities. In addition, the City's Parks and Recreation Plan includes significant emphasis on non-motorized connections and the City's land use regulations need to carefully coordinate with its objectives.

The Future Land Use Map illustrates a non-motorized transportation plan. It is based on the nine-county non-motorized transportation plan prepared by the Southwest Regional Planning Commission and the local input received at the March 2015 Open House. This Master Plan recognizes that additional or alternative trail locations may present themselves that differ from what is shown on the Future Land Use Map, and this map is not intended to discourage the City from pursuing additional or alternate routes.

The Safe Routes to School Program is another means to pursue an improved non-motorized transportation network in the City. The purpose of the program is to encourage and enable school-aged children to walk and bike to school in a safe and fun manner. Additionally, the program will assist in planning, construction and implementation of projects that will reduce vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian safety near school facilities. This program has been utilized near the intersection of M-222, M-89 and M-40; and will be explored for pedestrian issues near the middle and high schools, as well as some of the elementary schools. The City will partner with school administrators, teachers, parents, students, law enforcement officers and others who are interested in pedestrian safety and well-being.

The entire network of trails is likely to take several years to fully implement, and will be a cooperative planning effort between the City Council, Planning Commission and Parks Commission, although primary drivers of the project should be the Parks Commission. The City should work toward developing a phasing plan within three years and set a realistic goal for completion within

5-10 years. Outside support will likely be needed for design, engineering and construction, and the City should seek grant opportunities to aid in funding.

8. Access management and traffic calming

Along most segments of major roadway, access should be coordinated with neighboring properties to minimize traffic conflicts and to foster safe vehicular movement. This can be accomplished with shared access and service drives, and by requiring larger distances between street intersections and commercial driveways. Regulations can be incorporated into the zoning ordinance to help ensure that the appropriate standards are applied.

In addition to encouraging access management policies and implementing standards via zoning or other means, traffic calming is another important tool that the City can use to equalize use of streets among motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic calming tools can include speed humps, raised crosswalks or speed tables, traffic circles, and other roadway installations.

Moreover, it will be important to recognize some challenges. Several state highways intersect within the City, which brings regional, thru-traffic on a daily basis. In addition, the confluence of the river with several smaller streams in the City creates a natural impediment to vehicular route alternatives. These constraints may exacerbate congestion in certain areas of the community. To counter this inconvenience, the City will support the completion of a detailed analysis of traffic patterns in the downtown area and along major roadways and develop approaches to slow traffic, without creating bottlenecks. Alternate traffic patterns, adjusted signal patterns, modifications in turning lanes and road widths **will be evaluated.** ~~may all result from such an analysis.~~ Specifically, roadways to continually evaluate include: Marshall and Cutler Streets (M-89), Grand Street (M-222), Jenner (M-40) and North Main (A-37). These roadways will likely continue to carry regional traffic, and it will be important to minimize conflicts between neighborhoods and regional transportation patterns. Collaborative efforts in resolving concerns are anticipated, and should include the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Allegan County Road Commission and surrounding townships.

The M-89 Corridor Plan and its principles and recommendations are incorporated into this Master Plan. The City should also work cooperatively with Allegan Township and MDOT to evaluate and improve M-89 both north and south of the City. This road has experienced some new development in recent years and this may

continue as economic conditions improve. Future improvements to M-89 should include bike lanes and sidewalks, access management improvements, streetscape improvements and similar features to help create a sense of place for this key corridor in the community.

This task will require extensive cooperation with Allegan Township, Allegan County and MDOT. It may also need to be coordinated with non-motorized transportation initiatives discussed in item 7 on page 91. The City Council, with input from the Planning Commission and City staff, will be the primary body tasked with implementing this task. This will be an ongoing task over the next ten or more years as the City should continually look for opportunities to improve access management and calm traffic where appropriate.

9. Complete Streets

The development of non-motorized transportation facilities has become an important component of long-range planning throughout the region. Further, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act now requires that the City define a complete streets policy in its Master Plan. Input from local officials and the public indicates that there is a strong desire to develop an extensive non-motorized network in the Allegan area, and this plan supports that desire.

In 2010, the Allegan City Council adopted a resolution supporting complete streets policies. Also in 2010, the City Council approved a nine-county non-motorized transportation plan that was prepared by the Southwest Michigan Regional Planning Commission. This plan recommended a number of on- and off-road non-motorized trails connecting the city to the township and region. This Master Plan strongly supports that regional plan and it is hereby incorporated by reference into this Master Plan.

Complete streets give people the option to drive, use public transportation, walk, or bike if they choose. A comprehensive non-motorized network is crucial to the mobility of some parts of the population, especially the elderly, the disabled, and the disadvantaged. Further, complete streets and a healthy non-motorized transportation network supports mass transit and can help to improve air quality, provide local economic benefits and help drive economic development by increasing tourism and improving community health and local quality of life for residents.

For areas where complete streets or non-motorized trails are existing or proposed by this plan, streets should be reviewed during construction and/or reconstruction to ensure compliance with complete streets principles. The City should review budgets and

look for available grant opportunities to construct facilities that connect the community.

The implementation of complete streets policy should be implemented primarily by City staff, the City Council and Planning Commission on an ongoing basis, although it is likely that other City departments and organizations will be needed to effectively implement this policy. The Planning Commission and City Council may also need to review and amend the Zoning Ordinance to fully implement complete streets policy.

PLANNING FROM HERE FORWARD

The completion of this Master Plan is an important milestone in a continuing journey, but it is not the end of the journey. The success of this Master Plan will depend on the creativity, energy and dedication of the officials and citizens of the City of Allegan. This Master Plan must be continuously challenged, reevaluated, and even modified within the context of shifting market conditions and, hopefully a strengthening level of community support for its goals. City Boards and Commissions should annually review the goals, objectives and action strategies of this plan in light of available opportunities and funding capabilities and prioritize strategies for Plan implementation.

The plan will be and has already been enhanced by the results of several complementary planning efforts in the City. The City and Township adopted a Joint Recreation Plan in 2014 that provides an expanded vision for the future of Allegan's public lands and establishes eligibility for both communities to apply for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Downtown Development Master Plan and the Cultural Plan will further refine the City's course. The M-89 Corridor Plan will reshape and improve a key corridor in the community.

New ideas and information must continue to enliven this document to avoid the obsolescence that plagues many plans. As the City continues its journey coordination and cooperation between City groups and regional interests will enhance the effectiveness and implementation of this Master Plan

At the same time, it is important that the citizens of the City stay informed and involved and the growth and development of the community. The challenge going forward will be to maintain the momentum and continuously refresh the message. The goals of this Plan are challenging, but the rewards in terms of quality of life are well worth the effort.

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