

VILLAGE *of* FRANKLIN

2025 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT JANUARY 8, 2026

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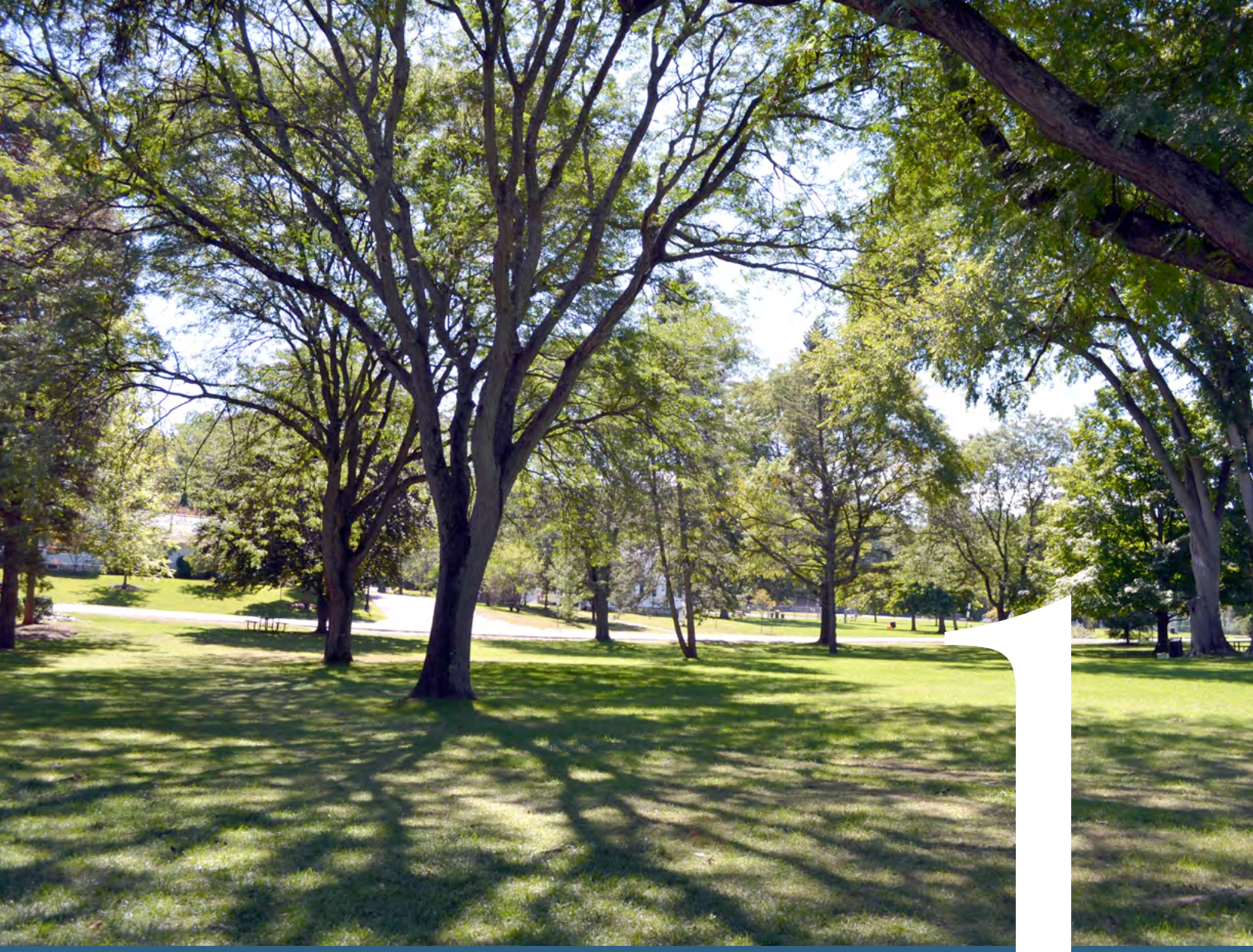
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Franklin Village Green looking south.

Planning Goals for Franklin

INTRODUCTION

The Village of Franklin Master Plan 2025, otherwise known as "Plan 2025" provides Franklin Village residents with a means for successfully managing future change in the community. By following the goals and planning recommendations presented in this Plan, effective management of growth and change will be possible, and a high-quality environment ensured. The beauty and rural-like nature of the Village will be enhanced, the natural environment preserved, human-made surroundings enhanced, and historical character protected.

Planning Approach

The process of drafting the 2025 update to the Master Plan commenced in 2019 with review of the 2015 Master Plan, a task that was spearheaded by the Planning Commission.

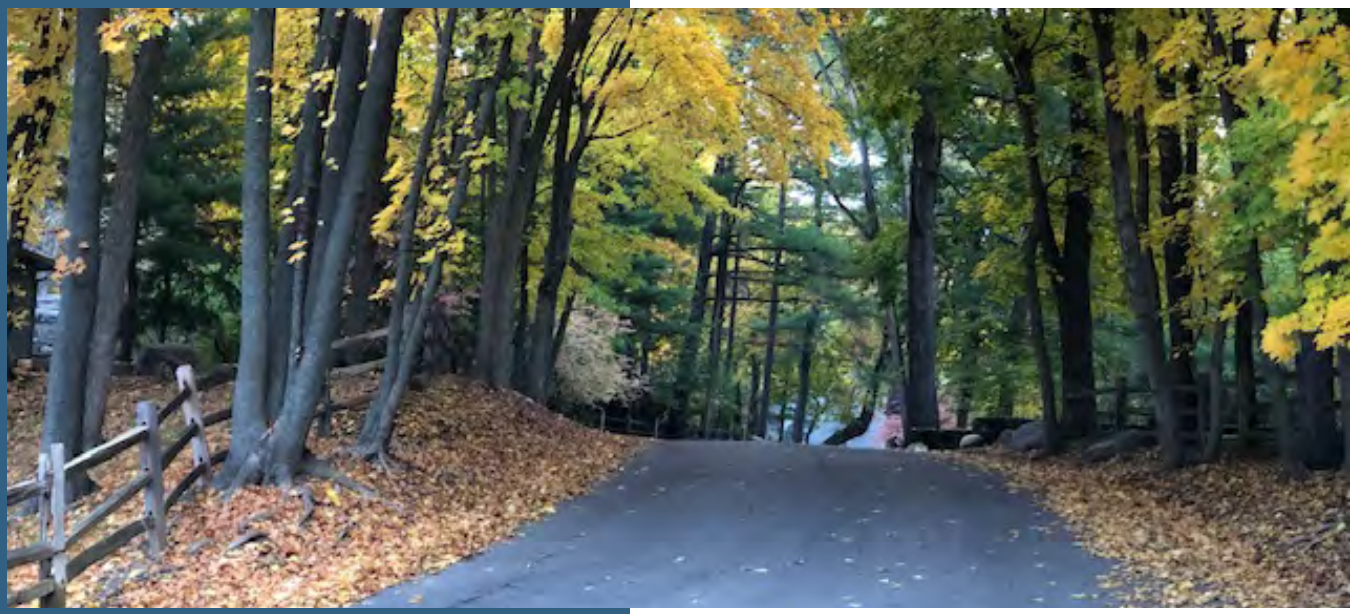
Initially, a subcommittee composed of two Planning Commissioners and a Planner from McKenna reviewed the 2015 Plan in detail, chapter by chapter. The subcommittee's work was then brought to the full Planning Commission for review and recommendation to the Village Council.

The Planning Commission relied on public engagement sessions and committee meetings that influenced the update of Plan 2015, which were found to still be relevant. These included:

- A three-day design charrette held in August 2011, by Main Street Oakland County.
- A public forum held in December 2013, by McKenna Associates and the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission also considered the following:

- Public input received by the Downtown Streetscape Committee in 2019 at multiple public meetings held for the purpose of designing the streetscape plan, which was implemented in 2020-21.
- Revisions to the Village Charter that were approved by voters in 2021, allowing sidewalks on Franklin and Thirteen Mile Roads.



Regional Context

Franklin Village is centrally located in the southern portion of Oakland County and is part of the Detroit Metropolitan Area (see Map 1). Rapid urbanization has been common in Oakland County, and much of the urbanization has been coincident with the construction of freeways and major arteries. Regional access to and from Franklin Village is convenient given the location of Interstate 696 to the south of the Village and Telegraph Road (M-24) to the east. Access to areas adjacent to Franklin is also convenient due to the presence of Northwestern Highway, and Twelve, Thirteen and Fourteen Mile Roads.

During the late 2000s and early 2010s, the nation underwent major structural economic shifts, due largely to the subprime mortgage crisis and subsequent economic recession. While the Detroit Metropolitan Area (and entire state) was particularly hard-hit, Franklin did not experience the same proliferation of foreclosure, blight and vacancy. The character and social and economic strength of the Village—relative to the region—was maintained.

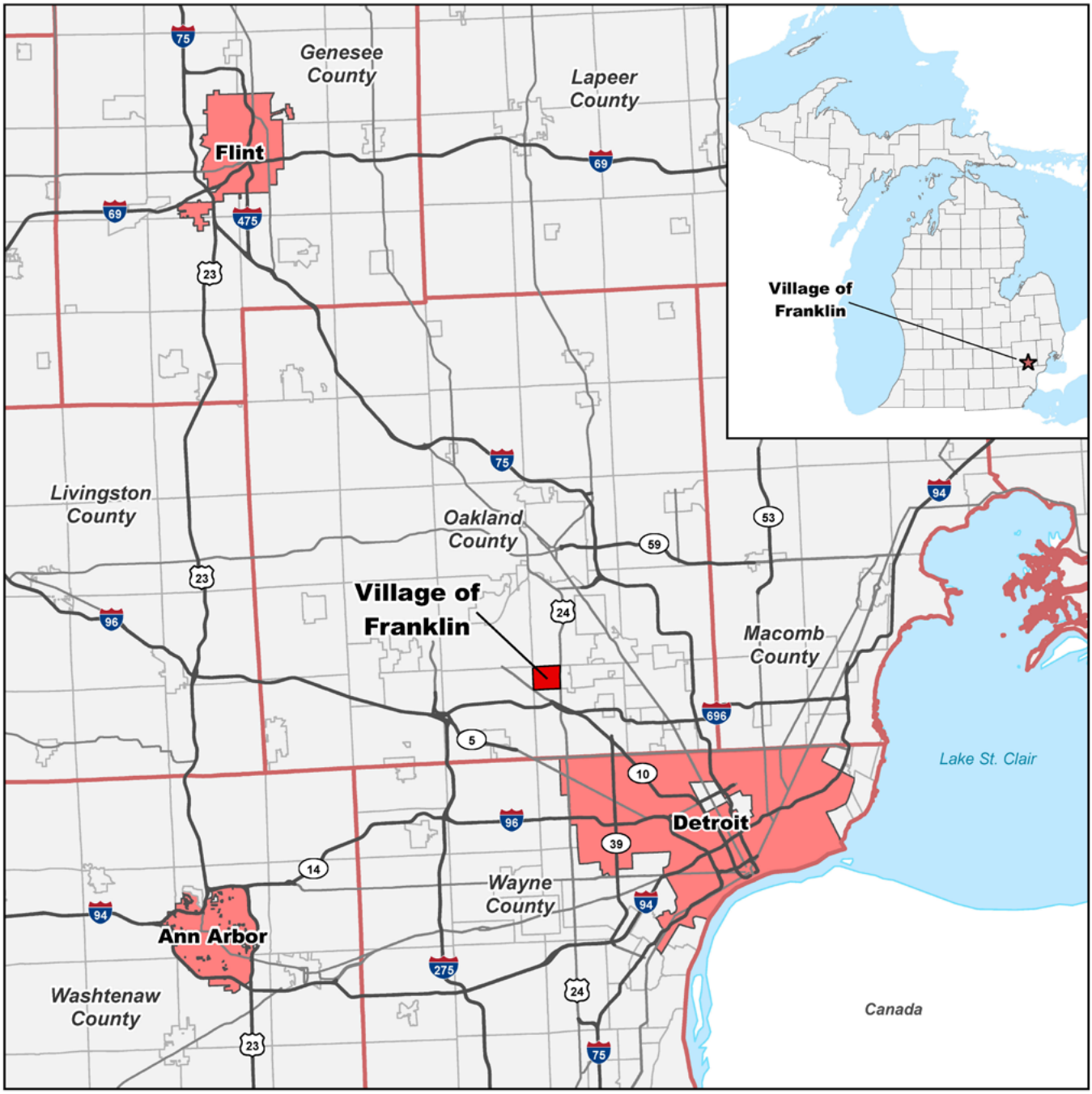
Since early in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has been the most significant event affecting people's lives and operation of the government, business, and planning, not only in Franklin but in the entire world. Perhaps the biggest impact has been on communications, with Zoom meetings and other virtual media substituting for face-to-face communication. From a planning perspective, there is a renewed interest in community, neighborhoods, walkability, and the home, resulting from work-at-home and learn-from-home requirements.

Regional planning for the entire area is the responsibility of Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), although other agencies have a role in some aspect of regional planning, such as the Road Commission for Oakland County, Michigan Department of Transportation, the Oakland County Water Resource Commission, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

Oakland County and other communities in the region are particularly important to the Village because they provide and maintain a number of regional services and employment centers which are important to the residents of the Village. Communities near to the Village provide the major portion of the daily needs of Village residents. Franklin residents commute to Auburn Hills, Birmingham, Detroit, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Troy and other places for employment, goods and services, such as professional services, entertainment, furniture, clothes and appliance purchases.

Franklin is a lush and wooded enclave surrounded by the more typical urban and suburban development prevalent in Oakland County. Increased urbanization in surrounding communities has caused development pressure in the Village for wider roads, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, public water, and requests to rezone land for more intensive uses. Previous Master Plans recognized these pressures and suggested zoning ordinance changes to limit density, many of which have been implemented—and revisited—over the intervening years.





Map 1
Regional Location

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

December 7, 2020

0 5 10
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2020. McKenna 2020.

MCKENNA

Local Context

Between 1920 and 1950, recorded land planning efforts were limited to simple subdivision development by Village "forefathers," who had formed a deep conviction that the charm and natural beauty of the area should be rigidly controlled by building restrictions and architectural standards. By acquiring and subdividing many properties in Franklin, the Village forefathers were able to lay the foundation for the Village's current rich historical character —transforming what they had deemed "a little western ghost town" into the vital place it is today.[1]

By 1954, formal incorporation of the Village was concluded, and a zoning ordinance adopted which continued zoning controls then in effect in Southfield Township. Additional efforts to manage growth included the completion of Master Plans in 1969, 1977, 1997, 2007, and 2015.[2]

The planning efforts of the 1950s and 1960s were largely in response to major shifts of population that occurred in the Metropolitan Region. At the time of incorporation, less than 1,000 persons resided in the Village. During the next 15 years, the Metropolitan area sought the amenities of the Village, and Franklin's population grew to over 3,300. During the 1970s, though, the pace of population growth slowed appreciably. In the 1970s through the 2010s, planning efforts were largely in response to pressures to use undeveloped land within the Village, install public sewers and stem perceived degradation of Village character.

The same kinds of pressures have also been experienced by adjacent communities that responded somewhat differently. Development in Southfield and Bingham Farms in particular, was rapid and emphasized commercial, as well as residential, growth. These developments placed pressure on the Village to rezone certain properties to more intensive land uses, especially those properties along Telegraph Road.

Additional housing growth pressures were placed on the Village by the installation of pressure sanitary sewers that made previously undevelopable property more suitable for development.

Future pressure to develop may be placed on the Village by regional highway construction, though nearby roads are unlikely to be improved in the short-term (Telegraph Road and Northwestern Highway were improved in recent years).

Development pressures like these have tremendous implications for the Village relative to future land use, as well as for the maintenance of its existing character. Presently, the distinctive character of the Village is rooted in its history and in the early Nineteenth Century architecture of the Village Center, in the quality of the Village's large, treed residential lots, in quiet residential neighborhoods and along the river. Development and redevelopment, particularly as it has occurred by replacing smaller houses with much larger ones, has threatened the Village's existing character. The Village responded to this threat by implementing a contextual zoning ordinance in 2005 to preserve neighborhood character and visual open space.

Evidence remains in the Village Center area of the historic or essential character of early settlement. Reflecting this early settlement character is a mix of residential and commercial uses which are in proximity to each other. The residential lots have landscaped, enclosed lawns and mature trees that make major desirable contributions to the environment of the Village Center.

Main Street Franklin, a nationally accredited non-profit organization with the primary focus of improving the quality of place in the Village Center, has also contributed to the Center's desirable character. Since the program's inception in 2008, Village Center properties have been noticeably improved with respect to signage, occupancy, and site and building quality and design. Not unlike many retail districts, the Village Center business corridor faced challenging conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic, which the Village sought to address by hiring its first full-time Main Street Executive Director in an effort to revitalize the downtown business district.

Because Village residents prize the rural, historic and open qualities so highly, it is essential that these basic qualities remain unchanged. Recommendations regarding future planning efforts reflect this inherent pride and serve to protect and enhance the Village's existing character as much as possible.

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1 Cannon, Bettie Waddell. All About Franklin, From Pioneers to Preservation. Franklin Historical Society, 1979.

2 Comprehensive Development Plan, August, 1969; General Development Plan, 1979; Master Plans, 1997, 2007, and 2015,

VISION

Plan 2025 is based upon a vision and a set of 13 goals. These reflect the desires and attitudes of the Village residents, as discerned and stated by the Planning Commission and as adopted by both the Planning Commission and the Village Council.

The Planning Commission, with the assistance of the citizens of Franklin Village, the Village Council, and other citizen committees, will develop strategies to bring the goals and objectives of this Plan to realization.

Visioning Process

Much of the work completed in preparation for previous Master Plans to define a vision for the Village of Franklin remains valid in 2025. The visioning process first began with statements made by Franklin Village residents at a town meeting in January of 1996. Residents were asked to imagine themselves living in Franklin Village twenty years into the future. Residents then talked about what they imagined would make Franklin an ideal place to live. Their statements were recorded and compiled into a draft vision, which was reviewed and refined by the Planning Commission. As part of the current Master Plan update, this vision was largely reaffirmed by the Planning Commission.



Vision Statement

Despite the impacts of massive suburbanization in Southeast Michigan, the Village of Franklin has moved into the 21st century as one of the most desirable places to live within Michigan. Residents and businesses in Franklin Village enjoy a rich quality of life and are reaping the benefits of commitments made years ago. The visual, social and economic characteristics that initially attracted residents to the Village have not only been maintained over time, but enhanced.

The Village of Franklin is comprised of widely spaced houses with large lawns, thickly planted tree lined streets, extensive naturally vegetated ravines and protected wetlands, curvilinear streets without curbs, and a small, compact commercial center with buildings no taller than three stories, in part comprised of and surrounded by historic structures. The Village appears to be a small rural town that stands out as an oasis in the suburbs of Southeast Michigan. It is locally known with pride as "The town that time forgot."

There is a sense of entry to the Village due to unique signs that reflect the historic flavor of Franklin Village and its character. Franklin Village is more peaceful and has less stressful traffic conditions than surrounding communities. There is also more wildlife. Some horses remain on larger lots with paddocks and barns, some of which are more than one hundred years old. Historic barns are also part of the Village's future as they possess unique potential for adaptive rehabilitation and reuse as a means for preservation.

Many homes reflect a period of prior centuries, while others are contemporary to the early, middle or late twentieth century. All homes sit comfortably on their lots among a mix of bright flowering ornamental trees and shrubs and plants with a more naturally occurring appearance than most communities in Southeast Michigan.

Residents appreciate and take care of the natural environment, protecting wetlands and floodplains from encroachment and from siltation or dumping. Villagers plant and maintain buffer vegetation that helps increase water quality by filtering runoff and cooling flowing water. The extensive ravines and creeks are protected and flourish with natural vegetation and clean flowing water. A wide range of species contribute to both plant and animal diversity. As a result, Franklin is a model of residential resource protection, a haven for wildlife and a lush view for the eye. Each generation learns about being stewards of their community from spending time with the previous generation via walks along the streets, trails and natural areas of the Village.

The Village has a small, thriving, historic commercial area of various types of businesses. Residents of the Village can shop, bank, put gas in their cars, stop for coffee, or go to a restaurant in the Village Center. Parking is largely out of view and pedestrians are delighted by architectural and landscape beauty. There are spring flowers, brick walks and attractive buildings of scale, colors and architectural detailing that remind people of the nineteenth century. Traffic is slow through the Village Center. Sidewalks and street lighting have been added to enhance walkability and connectivity in the Village Center.

People are comfortable and secure while shopping or participating in seasonal community events steeped in tradition, such as the Labor Day Round-Up (since 1944), Octoberfest in the fall, Frankenstein Frenzy at Halloween, and Music and Movies on the Green during the summer. Parents enjoy watching their children play on the Village Green and adjacent open space.

The Village Center is connected to most of the residential areas by open spaces, pedestrian and bike paths and narrow, winding two-lane streets. Open spaces and paths follow natural features such as woods and the Franklin River. The Village Center includes several public and community facilities including the Village Green, the Village Hall, the Franklin Public Library, the Franklin Community Center (Kreger House), the Franklin/Bingham Farms Police Station and the Franklin Community Church, and provides a center for residents to participate in a diverse spectrum of activities.

The Historic District lies within the Village Center and has many authentic period homes, public and commercial buildings with special lights, signs, and plantings, along with new street lights and sidewalks, which contribute to an attractive, unified appearance.

Franklin Village continues to be a modern, efficiently-run community with a Village Administrator and administrative staff complemented by volunteers and elected and appointed officials. Its public services are housed in buildings that fit with the Village character.



COMMUNITY VALUES AND PLANNING GOALS

The 2025 Master Plan Update offers a combination of seven Community Values and three Planning Goals to guide planning efforts in the next several years.

In the context of this Plan, **Community Values** are defined as attitudes and behaviors toward which residents and leaders of the Village have a long-term, lasting positive emotional regard.

Under each Community Value stated on the following pages there are Objectives and Policies that relate to the Community Value. Objectives are statements related to how the Community Value can best be attained. A Policy is a statement of belief, or a principle that will guide behavior. A Policy describes an action that Village officials will take to maintain the integrity of the plan in pursuit of the Community Value.

Planning Goals are high level aims toward which Village leaders and residents wish to dedicate concerted effort. Goals are intended to provide general guidance and direction, but they are supposed to be achievable within five years.

Under each Planning Goal stated on the following pages there are Objectives and Proposed Actions that relate to the Planning Goal. Objectives provide more specific ideas on how to accomplish the Planning Goals. Proposed Actions are measurable, practical activities that can be undertaken in the short term to help accomplish the Planning Goals.

Community Value 1: Village Character and Identity

Preserve, promote, and enhance the unique rural-like character and identity of the Village, which is so distinct from the intensive development patterns in surrounding communities. Maintain open spaces and the predominance of large lot, single-family residences, with a single downtown Village Center that serves as the gathering place for residents.

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain zoning standards that protect Village character, including zoning regulations to preserve residential neighborhood character and open space.
- Encourage homeowners' associations (HOAs) to enforce deed restrictions that aid in preserving Village character.
- Continue ordinance enforcement efforts.
- Encourage the use of underground utilities where feasible.
- Use zoning to preserve low intensity residential development at the Village periphery.
- Periodically evaluate opportunities for public acquisition of property along the Village periphery and in environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, ravines, and floodplains.

POLICIES

A. Encourage creative design and planning for both housing and land development to produce visual harmony without monotony, preserve special physiographic features, and protect vital natural resources.

B. Preserve the simple rural atmosphere of Franklin by maintaining and enhancing the rural scenic nature of roads.

C. Maintain large residential lots except in the Village Center.

D. Encourage the establishment of land conservancies and the donation of land to the Village as a means to augment open space within Franklin.

E. Show a preference for detached single-family housing with new residential development.

F. Encourage the maintenance and updating of private deed restrictions regarding minimum lot size and area.

G. Encourage the provision of landscaped buffers to shield residential properties from adjacent nonresidential development.

H. Maintain and, if appropriate, seek opportunities to enhance joint operating agreements with Bingham Farms and other surrounding communities.

I. Encourage citizens to participate in volunteer organizations in the Village.

J. Encourage diversity, equality, and inclusion in all aspects of Village government.

Community Value 2: Historic Identity

Preserve, promote, and enhance the historic identity of the Village, recognizing that the Historic District is distinctive example of a Nineteenth Century Michigan Village.

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain zoning regulations pertaining to the Historic District to protect historic character.
- Maintain the Historic District designation.
- Ensure continuation of an effective, well-educated Historic District Commission.
- Build Franklin officials' and residents' awareness of the requirements and benefits of a Historic District designation.

POLICIES

A. Encourage the preservation of historic structures and spaces in the Village, particularly in the Village Center and the Historic District.

B. Promote the use of architectural and landscape materials in the Village Center that emulate the Village's Nineteenth Century historic character.

C. Ensure that site development in the Village Center relates to and is compatible with nearby buildings, land uses, and the rural and historic character of the Village.

D. Provide residents with information on assistance programs related to preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties.

E. Ensure that Franklin officials have knowledge of historic preservation techniques and zoning provisions.



Community Value 3: Natural Resource Preservation

Preserve the natural resources of the Village, including its open spaces, woodlands, wetlands, the Rouge River Valley and floodplain, and visual resources along roads, to prevent damage to the environment or harm to these resources.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop guidelines for property owners to help them manage their properties to protect sensitive natural resources, including the outstanding tree canopy that contributes to the Village's rural character.
- Acquire conservation easements, where possible, to the banks of the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River and to wetlands, including buffers along the edges of wetlands.
- Develop guidelines that promote and regulate acquisition of land for use as public space and for preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Develop a tree management program that ensures there will always be a richly abundant tree canopy throughout the Village, especially along public roads.



POLICIES

A. To the extent possible, develop and enforce regulations to ensure that residential development occurs in a harmonious relationship with natural landscape and waterscape. A harmonious relationship is one in which residential development and recreational use fosters the continued biological and physical health of water, plant and animal communities, and appreciation of the beauty people derive from natural landscapes.

B. Protect sensitive environmental lands and open spaces by directing development to the more buildable portions of parcels.

C. Protect water bodies and drainage ways, flora and fauna, and unique landforms.

D. Prohibit development in floodplains and wetlands and avoid disrupting or infringing on environmentally sensitive slopes and woodlands.

E. Consider public acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands for open space and passive recreation purposes.

F. Use natural drainage systems along roads.

G. Implement best management practices for stormwater control, including non-structural and structural methods, to reduce flow into streams, rivers, and wetlands.

Community Value 4: Balancing Property Owner Rights

Preserve and promote the rights of the individual property owner. Balance the rights of the individual landowner and the need to enhance property values with actions necessary to preserve the public good.

OBJECTIVES

- Allow individuality in the design of new construction and renovation that both complements and helps protect the rural character of the Village.
- Adopt or retain zoning regulations that protect Village character, neighborhoods, and property owners.

POLICIES

A. Strongly support the interests of homeowners when considering land use and environmental preservation regulations to ensure the preservation of the rural-like character of the Village.

B. Enforce Village ordinances to promote and preserve individual property owner rights as well as public interests inherent in preservation of the rural character of the Village.



Community Value 5: Village Center

Enhance and support the economic vitality and attractive appearance of the Village Center, including the commercial district, the residences, and the public facilities.

OBJECTIVES

- Support the vision for the Village Center, including the cohesive image for the Village commercial district put forward by Main Street Franklin, and develop and implement recommendations to achieve the vision.
- Maximize use of property in the Village Center for retail, restaurant, and similar business uses, as opposed to office uses.

POLICIES

A. Participate in Federal, State and County initiatives to improve the Village Center.

B. Require property owners to maintain structures and grounds in attractive condition, consistent with the Village Center objectives and Historic District design guidelines.

C. Encourage property and business owners to proactively participate in efforts to improve the commercial vitality of the Village Center.

D. Capitalize on the proximity of the Franklin Cider Mill, located just outside the Village, by erecting wayfinding signs to and from the Village Center.

E. Develop cooperative activities that involve Village Center businesses and the Franklin Cider Mill to promote economic vitality and placemaking.

Community Value 6: Regional Development

Protect the Village from development that endangers essential services and security of Franklin residents.

OBJECTIVES

» Develop cooperative relationships with adjacent communities so that the Village of Franklin will be a partner in adjacent municipalities' planning efforts affecting lands abutting the Village.

» Encourage adjacent communities to plan and develop lands that abut the Village in ways that are compatible with Village land uses.

POLICIES

A. Participate in planning activities with adjacent communities and regional planning bodies.

B. Through the Village Council and Planning Commission, monitor and present to the appropriate bodies the Village's position on proposals for development by private and public entities on lands adjacent to the Village.

C. Encourage adjacent communities to minimize the expansion of development that places burdens on Village of Franklin services.

Community Value 7: Village Business

Conduct day-to-day Village business through a small, professional staff while relying on volunteer and elected officials for policy decisions.

OBJECTIVES

» Continue to employ a professional Village Administrator, Village Clerk, and small support staff to manage Village operations.

» Maintain the Village website as a means to communicate timely Village information to residents and other interested parties.

» Use the Village website to convey answers to frequently asked questions regarding property development, building improvements, frequently abused codes (e.g., fences, lot coverage), and so forth.

POLICIES

A. Use citizen committees and commissions to assist Village officials in carrying out their responsibilities.

B. Encourage open communication and discussion of Village policies and proposed actions between Village officials, employees, and citizens.

C. Encourage volunteer citizen participation in Village activities.

D. Ensure that Village officials, have training in zoning, land use planning, and historic preservation



Planning Goal 1:
Community Connectivity and Traffic Safety

Accommodate non-motorized travelers throughout the Village to provide safe and convenient connections for pedestrian and bicyclists of all ages. Take measures to improve traffic safety and reduce congestion through enforcement of traffic regulations. Discourage and oppose projects that have as their primary benefit the enhancement of traffic flow at the expense of the environment, pedestrian safety, or quality of life in Franklin.

OBJECTIVES

- Create a connected network of safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to move around the Village and gain access to the Village Center.
- Improve roads to be "complete streets" where possible within existing rights-of-way, and when financially feasible.
- Maintain circulation and parking systems that encourage the preservation of the rural character of the Village.
- Develop scenic road corridor plans for roads in the Village, considering traffic calming measures, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and scenic qualities.
- Approve site plans that provide for planting of street trees and other design elements that contribute to Village character, provided that such improvements do not block sight lines for drivers.
- Develop an access loop through the parking areas behind buildings in the Village Center.
- Develop and implement traffic calming strategies to minimize the effects of traffic in the Village.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

A. Develop pedestrian ways and bicycle paths connecting major activity points in the Village, utilizing open areas, floodplains, and road rights-of-way.

B. Maintain the Village Center as a destination point for community activities.

C. Develop paths to connect neighborhoods to each other and to connect neighborhoods to the Village Center.

D. Design local roads as country lanes in order to preserve the rural character of the Village and to protect roadside vegetation.

E. Make efficient use of existing roads and parking areas before changes are made to increase capacity.



Planning Goal 2: Signage

Limit signs within the Village to those that are informative, contribute to safety, enhance the businesses of the Village, and contribute to and reinforce the rural character, while protecting First Amendment rights.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a uniform design for street name signs that reflects the historic and rural character of the Village.
- When it is time to replace traffic control signs, consider alternative designs that are more in character with the Village's heritage, particularly in the Village Center.
- Develop a unified street and public facility sign system that reflects the character of the Village.
- Maintain distinctive entry signs for major road entries into the Village.
- Maintain the sign ordinance based on best practices to ensure signs in the Village of Franklin reflect its rural character and high quality of development.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

A. Limit traffic signs to the minimum necessary for safe travel on Village streets.

B. Redesign and install street signs throughout the Village to enhance visibility, readability, and wayfinding.

Planning Goal 3: Technology

Facilitate appropriate use of up-to-date technology.

OBJECTIVES

- Because of Village residents' increasing reliance on wireless devices as a means of voice communication and accessing information, develop plans that allow the Village to access the latest in technological advancements while still maintaining the rural character of the Village.
- Encourage the use of unobtrusive means of expanding and improving cellular telephone reception and internet access.
- Recognize the inherent public safety concerns created by an inability to make or receive wireless telephone calls in the Village.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

A. Identify suitable locations and install charging stations for electric vehicles.

B. If possible, develop a system of free wireless internet access within the Village Center.



FUTURE LAND USE

The intent of the Future Land Use Map is to maintain the Village of Franklin as a predominantly large lot, single family community in a rural setting, with a single vibrant, historic, mixed use Village Center.

Consistent with the Goals and Objectives, which call for protecting the periphery of the Village from nonresidential encroachment, nonresidential development is reserved for two areas only: the Village Center and the single parcel currently occupied by an office located at the southwest corner of Thirteen Mile and Telegraph Roads. The desire is to concentrate commercial, governmental, and civic functions in the Village Center so as to enhance its economic vitality, attractive appearance, and sense of place. Map 3 highlights the amount of periphery property that contains landscaping and buffering to protect and maintain the natural character of Franklin's boundaries.

In terms of the pattern of development in the Village Center, most of the commercial development is planned for the east side of Franklin Road, with parking located to the rear. Farther east off of Franklin Road, Medium High Density Residential (the Village's highest density residential classification) is planned, consistent with existing condominium development in the area.

Continuing south in the vicinity of German Mill, Carol, and Bowden Roads, Medium Density Residential is planned, respecting the historic settlement pattern and density of the nineteenth century. The Huda School, a private school that is planned as Public & Quasi-Public, anchors the Village Center at the south, at the corner of Romany Way and Franklin Road. Across from the Huda School is the Franklin Cemetery.

The most prominent feature on the west side of Franklin Road in the Village Center is the large swath of Public & Quasi-Public land that encompasses the Broughton House (Village Hall), the cemetery, the community church, the Village Green, and the FCA grounds. The Village Center is truly the center of village activity and the main place that residents gather when they come together in the Village of Franklin.

North of Wellington on the west side of Franklin Road there is a block of historic homes that are classified as Medium Density Residential. Between Evelyn and Vincennes Roads, with the exception of the Fire Station at the corner of Vincennes and Franklin Roads, older homes on shallow lots have been converted into commercial. Some of these buildings have historic value. This block frontage is designated Office or Commercial on the Future Land Use Map, except for the Fire Station, which is designated Public & Quasi-Public.



The residential land use classifications on the Future Land Use Map correspond closely to similarly named zoning classifications, as noted in Table 1.

Table 1. Zoning Plan

Future Land Use Classification	Corresponding Zoning Classification	Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft. and acreage)
Estate Residential	R-E, Estate Residential	130,000 sq. ft. (2.98 ac.)
Large Lot Residential	R-L, Large Lot Residential	65,000 sq. ft. (1.49 ac.)
Modified Low Density Residential	R-M, Modified Low Density Residential	42,000 sq. ft (0.96 ac.)
Low Density Residential	R-1, Low Density Residential	30,000 sq. ft. (0.69 ac.)
Medium Low Density Residential	R-2, Medium Low Density Residential	22,500 sq. ft. (0.52 ac.)
Medium Density Residential	R-3, Medium Density Residential	15,000 sq. ft. (0.34 ac.)
Medium High Density Residential	R-4, Medium High Density Residential	12,000 sq. ft. (0.28 ac.)
Office or Commercial	R-O, Restricted Office C-1, Local Business	None Specified None Specified
Parking	P, Vehicular Parking	None Specified
Public & Quasi-Public	R-1, Low Density Residential R-2, Medium Density Residential	30,000 sq. ft. (0.69 ac.) 15,000 sq. ft. (0.34 ac.)

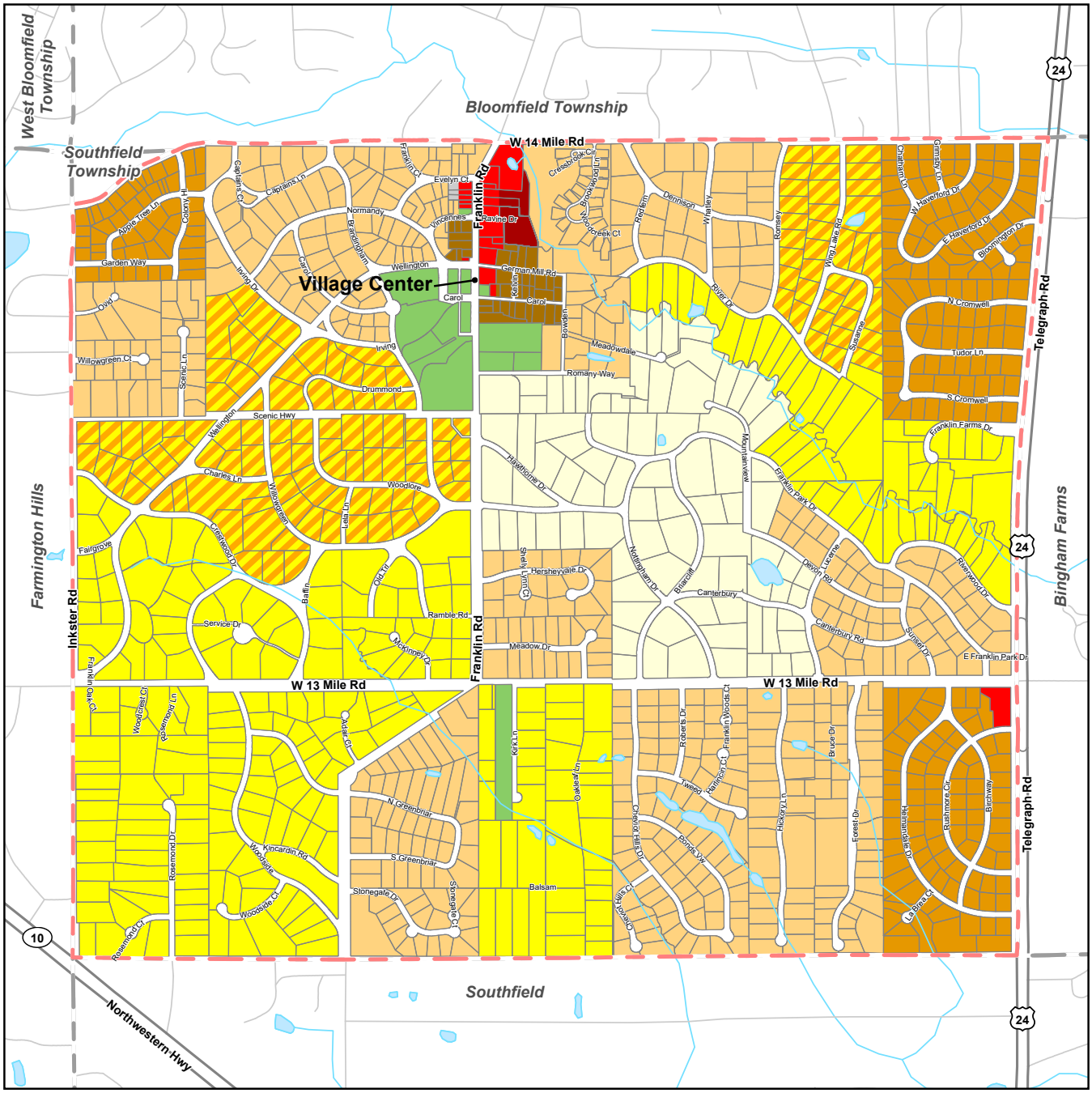
There is a single large area of Estate Residential in the center of the Village, east of Franklin Road and north of Thirteen Mile Road, extending as far north as the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River. Along most of the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River, the land is designated Large Lot Residential, which is appropriate from an environmental perspective. Two other areas are designated Large Lot Residential, one in the southwest corner and another in the vicinity of Oak Leaf Lane and Kirk Lane.

Most of the remainder of the Village's residential areas are designated Low Density Residential, with the exception of Medium Low Density Residential areas designated at the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners of the Village.

Over ninety-seven percent of the Village's land use is planned as residential, with Low Density Residential being the predominant land use in the Village, as noted in Table 2.

Table 2. Future Land Use Percentages

Future Land Use Classification	Acreage	Percent
Estate Residential	161.4	11.3
Large Lot Residential	421.0	29.6
Modified Low Density Residential	164.0	11.5
Low Density Residential	460.8	32.3
Medium Low Density Residential	163.4	11.5
Medium Density Residential	11.6	0.8
Medium High Density Residential	4.2	0.3
Office or Commercial	10.5	0.7
Parking	0.4	0.0
Public & Quasi-Public	27.1	1.9



Map 2
Future Land Use

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 27, 2021

LEGEND

- Estate Residential
- Large Lot Residential
- Modified Low Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium High Density Residential
- Office or Commercial
- Parking
- Public & Quasi-Public

0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

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Map 3 Periphery Properties

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 12, 2021

LEGEND

- Franklin Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries

Periphery Conditions

- With Structure
- With Structure and Buffer
- Vacant/Wooded

0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

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Private home in Franklin Historic District.

2

Inventory & Analysis

Effective planning for Franklin Village must be based upon a thorough understanding of the unique resources and characteristics of the Village. Therefore, an information base composed of those relevant facts describing the resources and characteristics of the Village has been established. This information base is the cornerstone of the Master Plan and, consequently, should be referred to as adjustments to the Plan become necessary.

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN AND THE ENVIRONS

With the gradual recession of the glaciers 12,000 years ago came the first appearance of nomadic people in the Franklin area following the trails of mammoths and mastodons. As the ice receded northward, the mammals and the hunters followed. The fertile lands did not remain vacant long, for they soon became the home of a resourceful people - the Paleo Indian. Skillful hunters, they lived on the elk, deer, and bear that flourished in the wake of the larger animals. Streams and lakes were fished and traversed in dugout canoes.

It was around 100 B.C. that the Hopewell Indians moved into this area of Southeastern Michigan. Named for an Ohio farmer on whose land their remains were first found, this group is known for extensive earthworks and burial mounds. Their society was the most complex to date and diversified for effectiveness.

They raised corn, squash, beans, and possibly tobacco, developing and perfecting agricultural methods and implements. Extensive burial mounds were erected to commemorate the dead. To provide a variety of exotic materials to produce tomb gifts, the Hopewells established far ranging trade routes. They obtained conch shells from the Gulf Coast, obsidian from the Rocky Mountains, copper from the Upper Peninsula, and mica from the Appalachians. Highly skilled artisans, their talents are seen in carved pipe bowls, which take the form of humans and animals, and in cloth woven from the inner fibers of bark.

Around 700 A.D., the Hopewells vanished for unknown reasons. Archaeologists speculate that their social system may have broken down under increased population, or perhaps that their affluence and wealth were overly tempting to less skilled, aggressive neighbors.

The Hopewells' disappearance opened the way for many diverse groups, with the dominance of no single band. Tools were further developed, lands tilled, and hunting, fishing, and pottery skills perfected. The tribes recognized no boundaries and frequent warfare broke out over lands or possessions.

By the time of the arrival of the French explorers and missionaries, Oakland County provided a home to many established tribes united only by the various dialects of the common Algonquin tongue. Although there were frequent skirmishes, the founding of Fort Pontchartrain in Detroit in 1701 united the Indians in fur trading. With the opening of the fort, Indian trails became major arteries. The best known, the Saginaw Trail, became Woodward Avenue.

Formalized treaties with the territorial and state government pushed Indians slowly north and westward. For a time there were three reservations in Oakland County: two on the south bank of the River Rouge in what is now Southfield, and the third on 145 acres on the shore of Orchard Lake, including Apple Island. The last of these was sold at a government auction in 1827.

By 1824, all the Indian tribes that had once lived in Oakland County had been dispersed. Speaking some fifty years after settlement, but with a remembrance for the awe the first white settlers felt when they discovered that their fields had been tilled centuries previously, O. Poppleton gave an address before the Oakland County Pioneer Society:

"Oakland County is not barren of tradition and legendary events of deep interest to the historian and to her people. When the Jesuit fathers and French fur traders first visited this region of the county, and following them the very early pioneers, they found many evidences of a prior occupation in the tillage of the soil by unknown and extinct agriculturists of a very remote period. Many crude agricultural implements have been found in the clearing and tillage of the land and by excavations. Traditions were that corn, beans and other vegetables and grains were raised on aboriginal fields – that they sustained a numerous population, who were proficient in the arts of silver and copper ornaments, stone axes, hammers, mortars and pestles, flint arrow heads, graining and skinning knives, many of which have been found during early explorations of the missionaries and traders and since by the first settlements of the pioneers of the county."

Early Settlement

Although Detroit had been a growing center for over a century, Oakland County and the area north were not rapidly settled. The surveyors ventured little past the southern swamps and bogs, who took them as indicative of the entire territory. Their reports of Michigan and Oakland County characterized the land as:

"...low, wet, intermittent with bad marshes – uniformly covered from six inches to three feet (and more at times) with water ... Taking the county altogether so far as has been explored, it is so bad there would not be more than one acre out of a hundred, if there would be one out of a thousand, that would in any case admit of cultivation."

As can be readily seen, this report, which was the only information available to prospective settlers in the east, would not be particularly encouraging.

Another important factor in settlement was the availability of transportation. Although steam vessels were known on Lake Erie since 1818, the trip overland from New York City to Buffalo was both lengthy and expensive. The main route west for settlers was the easily navigable Ohio River, approximately 200 miles south of Michigan. Oakland County's settlers, largely New Yorkers and New Englanders, came with the completion of the Erie Canal in 1826. By the 1830s, thousands of hearty settlers would use this route to speed their journey westward.

Once begun, Oakland County's settlement continued at a phenomenal rate. The county was organized in 1820 with fewer than twenty families, but by the 1830 Federal census, there were 4,910 people, and by 1840, 23,646 people.

Following county organization, townships were platted. Southfield Township was among the earliest. Transactions in 1821 linked the Township with the educator John Monteith and the French merchant Peter Desnoyer. It is doubtful if either ever saw the property. Each purchased the land for speculation or investment.

The first settler in Southfield Township was John Daniels, who in 1824 purchased property in Section 4. Franklin Village, which lies in Sections 5 through 8 of Southfield Township, was settled later that same year.

In 1824, Dillucena Stoughton purchased the east half of the northeast quarter of Section 6 (the area roughly bounded by the present Fourteen Mile Road, Franklin Road and Scenic Highway) and built a house the following year. Elijah Bullock joined Stoughton in 1825, purchasing the 240 acres west of Franklin Road between Fourteen Mile Road and the Cemetery.

The clearing and establishing of a settlement took great effort, usually achieved through the cooperation of neighbors and family. Bullock arrived with four sons, and his son-in-law, George Gage. Stoughton was soon joined by his father, Amaziah Stoughton, Sr., and four brothers, William, Amaziah, Jr., Charles, and James, who settled in the southwest corner of Section 6 (presently Thirteen Mile and Inkster Roads).

Dr. Ebenezer Raynale arrived in the Stoughton and Bullock Settlement (as it was then known) and established his medical practice early in 1828. He was the only physician among widely scattered homesteads. Raynale established the Franklin Village post office in the winter of 1828, having himself named postmaster. Mail was distributed along with his calls on the sick.

The fledging community of 1828-29 contained nine families with skills including the doctor, Raynale; a blacksmith, Henry S. Smith; a carpenter joiner, Richard Bignall; a mason and bricklayer, Dorus Morton; and a shoemaker, Harvey Lee. Within a decade of the settlement of the Village, the roster of businesses included flour and feed mills, lumber mill, brick and tile yard, wagon shop and sleigh maker, cooperage, distillery, and small factories or shops that produced soap, harnesses, shoes and boots.



Franklin Cider Mill

Growth of the Village

An important moment in Franklin's development was the prospect of a railroad. A charter in 1830 granted the Pontiac and Detroit Railroad Company the right to build a line between those cities. This was the first charter in not only Michigan, but also the entire Northwest Territory.

Methods of construction and materials were not perfected, the terrain was difficult, and the tools primitive. The track from Detroit to Royal Oak took four years to lay. From there to Pontiac, two routes were proposed. One paralleled the Saginaw Trail northward through Birmingham, contending with the lowland and hills. An alternate route, it is thought, was proposed to go through Franklin to Orchard Lake and on to the county seat. In Franklin, a parcel was set aside for the proposed depot. Although Birmingham was much smaller than Franklin, the commissioner decided to construct the Birmingham route.

With the completion of the line, Birmingham prospered and grew at a tremendous rate. Franklin, bypassed by the rail line and removed from any major road, settled back into a contented, quiet existence.

1828 saw the erection of the first frame house in the village, that of Henry Smith, and the establishment of a school under the charge of Miss Sophia Gotie. In 1829, Dillucena Stoughton built a brick house, which was not only the first of its kind in the Township but is reputed to be so for the county. The bricks made of Franklin River Clay came from Bigelow's kiln, less than a mile west in Farmington. Dorus Morton built the house in exchange for property on which to build his own house. This bartering or trading of goods and services was characteristic of early settlements and settlers.

Improvements continued in the settlement, keeping pace with the increasing settlement. In about 1840 Dr. Raynale, now with an established practice, returned to Pennsylvania for a wife. Although his absence was only for 25 days, he found upon his return that forty families had come in and settled within four miles of Franklin.

Elijah Bullock built the first public house, a log structure, in 1830. The same year William Houston of New York opened the first Village store. Bullock countered with a store of his own the next year above his tavern.

Peter Van Every moved to Franklin from Detroit in 1837, purchasing Dorus Morton's property. Van Every constructed a grist mill on the river north of town. For a number of years, attempts at milling further upstream had failed, but Van Every's venture proved successful.

For a time Van Every's was the only grist mill in Oakland County where a farmer could sell wheat for money. Water was delivered by a long millrace from the upstream dam to a wooden undershot wheel. Along the south bank a wooden spillway was constructed. The wheel was replaced in the 1920's by James Flynn who installed a giant overshot waterwheel, which is still in seasonal use to grind and press apples for cider.

By 1877, the size and composition of the Village had undergone very little change. At that time a church, schoolhouse, post office, temperance hotel, two flour mills, three general stores, a drug store, a hardware, tin shop, four blacksmiths and two wagon makers were located in the Village. These businesses served the scattered farms around the Township. For other items, farmers and settlers journeyed to Pontiac, two hours away by horse and wagon.

The Automobile Age

Life in the Village had no reason to change until the advent of the automobile and the subsequent construction of improved highways. By 1920, both cars and roads were improved to the point that it was possible to work in Detroit and live as far away as southern Oakland County.

In the 1920's, a local developer laid out a plan calling for curving roads and large single-family lots. Building restrictions were established to maintain a high quality of construction.

Steady growth continued to occur. Many residents moved into older homes in the Village, often rebuilding or constructing additions along the lines of the homes that already existed. Gradually, however, the character of the village, and especially the Village Center, began to change. Residences were converted into offices or stores. Older buildings were demolished and replaced, with no guidelines in place to regulate their outward appearance. The Village Center became in danger of losing its traditional historic character.

Recognizing the desirability of historic preservation, the Franklin Historical Society was founded in 1962. The Village adopted a Master Plan in 1968 and, in 1969, the Franklin Historic District was established and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (it was updated and re-nominated in 2005). In 1970, the Michigan's first laws regarding historic districts and their preservation were enacted. In 1971, the Franklin Historic District Ordinance was passed by Council in an effort to implement some methods of preserving the Historic District's early character. Clearly, the Village was now well aware of and protective of its place in history.

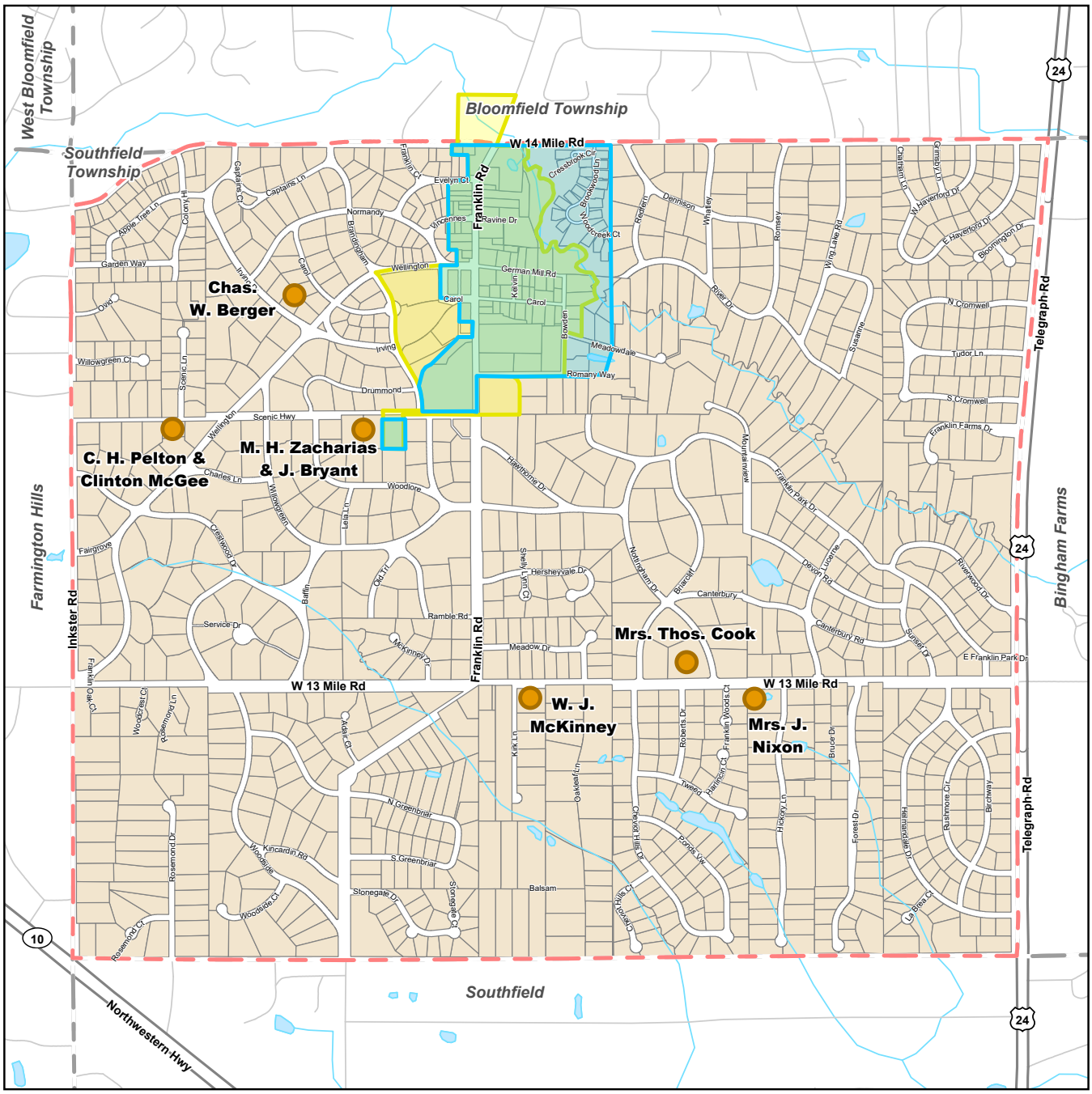
In 1990 and again in 2003, initiatives to permit the Village to link to water supplied by the City of Detroit (replacing individual wells currently used by all residents) failed by substantial margins. However, in the mid-1990's, pressure sewers were installed throughout the Village after a Village-wide vote, with some homeowners being required to connect to them for reasons of sanitation and others being allowed to "opt in." In 2002, Village Historic District Guidelines were produced to guide homeowners in the appropriate maintenance of their property. In approximately 2003, Village Council voted to bypass installation of a cell tower in favor of a distributed antennae system.

In 1995, a professional Village Administrator was hired. A new Police Station was constructed in 2000 on property that was removed from its designation as a portion of the Historic District to allow its construction, but it was designed and built in consultation with the Historic District Commission to assure it would be consistent with the surrounding area. 2005 saw the construction, following much public debate, of the Cressbrook Condominium Development, on the property formerly known as the Kahn Estate, on the south side of 14 Mile Road, east of Franklin Road.

In 2008, mirroring the recommendations in the 2007 Master Plan, Franklin joined the Main Street Oakland County program. The goal of Main Street Franklin, or "MSF," as it has become known, is to preserve Franklin's historic business district while creating an attractive commercial area that houses an appropriate business mix and offers a welcoming streetscape that complements its natural feel and historic architecture.

In 2008, the historic Kreger Farm buildings were physically moved from their original location on Scenic Drive to a site just west of the Franklin Village Offices where they now are known as the Franklin Community Center.

In 2020-2022, the Village completed a major streetscape upgrade in the Village Center, costing approximately $2.7 million. Franklin Road was repaved, curbs and gutters were added, streetlights were installed, street trees and other landscaping was planted, and sidewalks were constructed.



Map 4
Historic Properties

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 12, 2021

LEGEND

- Franklin Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers
- Believed to be First Settlers
- Local Historic District
- National Historic District

0 500 1,000
Feet

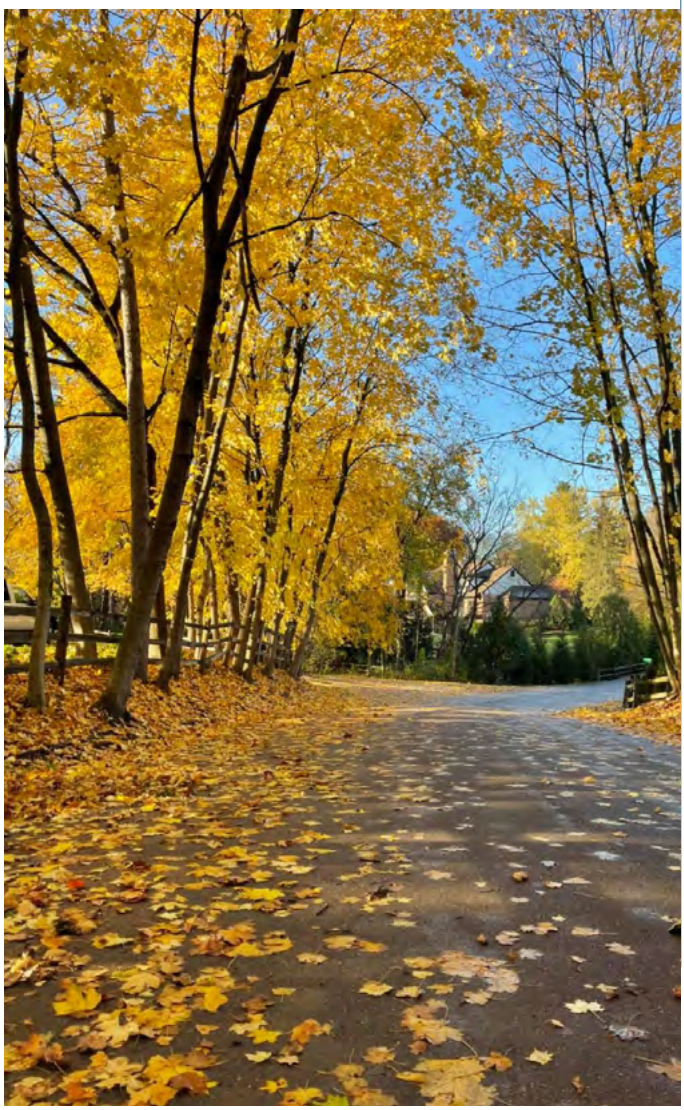
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

The natural context refers to those ecological systems that describe the physical and biological character of an area. Geology, physiography, soil characteristics, hydrology, and vegetation are all important factors in Franklin Village, and each plays an important role in both the visual character of the Village and the quality of life. It is important to understand that these factors exist in relation to each other and, in combination, affect the overall capacity of the environment to accommodate development and change.

A variety of local ordinances have been adopted to protect these resources and natural features, including floodplains, wetlands, and wooded areas.



Geology

The surface geology of the Franklin Village area is entirely of Wisconsin glacial origin. Glacial ice covered the region as recently as 13,000 years ago and waters of the Maumee and Whittlesey glacial lakes occupied parts of the region even more recently. Franklin Village straddles the boundary zone between the Inner Defiance morainic upland and the Maumee Whittlesey lake plain.

Within the morainic zone, large blocks of ice broke off from the glacier, became buried, and eventually melted, forming small depressions, or kettles. These kettles tend to be poorly drained and often intercept the groundwater table, creating small lakes.

The lake plain consists of well-sorted sandy and clayey sediments 150 to 200 feet thick. Most of the lake plain has a veneer of clay and sandy clays. As the lakes receded, bars and beach ridges remained to mark former shorelines. These features provide relief in the otherwise gentle plain, but more importantly, they consist of well-drained sands and gravels.

Before the glacial lakes inundated the area to the southeast, extensive deposits of till were laid down by the glacial ice. These deposits were then covered by a clay veneer of lacustrine origin. It is this mantling of clay deposits which is responsible for the poor soil percolation characteristics of the southeast area.

Three bedrock formations underlie the extensive glacial deposits of Franklin Village.

These bedrock formations are not known to be near the surface anywhere in Franklin Village. Therefore, they do not present any significant environmental problems or opportunities for the Village.

Coldwater and Sunbury shale underlie the northwest portion of the Village. Both groups are members of the Marshall formation, which is the most consistently reliable source of water among the formations in the region.

Most of the Village is underlain by the 140-foot-thick Berea formation. This sandstone has low permeability and is not a good source for large water supplies, although in many places it will yield sufficient water for small domestic supplies

Physiography

Franklin Village is characterized by a sharply contrasting topography that reflects the effects of the Wisconsin glacial period. The western and northern portion of the Village is a rolling, often rugged morainic upland, while the eastern and southern portion is predominantly a level lake and till plain (see Map 5: General Relief).

Elevations range from over 850 feet above sea level in the morainic zone to about 700 feet above sea level on the plain. Except for some subtle rises associated with former beach lines, relief on the plain is virtually unnoticeable. Within the upland, however, relief of as much as 100 feet is common, resulting in numerous steep slopes generally ranging from twenty to forty percent. Considerable relief also exists where the Franklin River abuts morainic ridges.

Soils

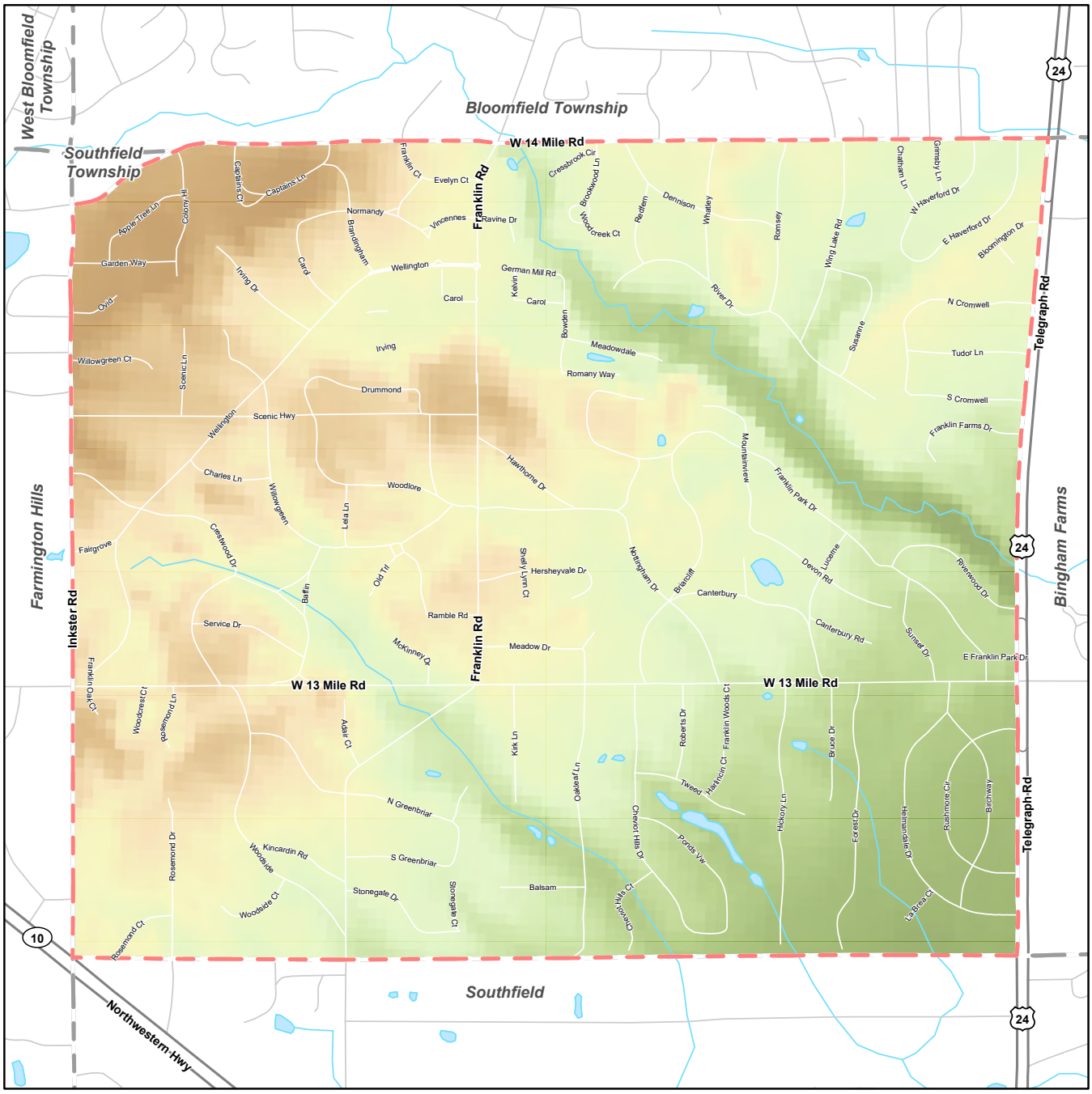
Most soils in the Franklin Village area are derived from the parent glacial deposits and from the lacustrine sediments of the glacial lakes. Sands and loamy sands predominate in the morainic northwest portion of the Village, whereas silts and silt loams predominate in the southeast lake plain. Muck soils are found in poorly drained lowlands. The floodplain of the Franklin River is generally comprised of alluvial soils, which are compositionally diverse.

A soil survey of the Village was conducted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. The Soils map (Map 6) is based on this survey. As shown, most of the Village, particularly to the north and west, is dominated by the Arkport loamy fine sand. Except on steep slopes, this soil has few to no limitations for septic fields or building development. Some of the loamy sands in the northwest pose septic limitations because of excessively rapid percolation.

The Blount and Lenawee silt loams predominate in the east and southeast areas. These soils tend to be poorly drained, having slow percolation rates and high groundwater tables and posing severe limitations for conventional septic tank systems. Other silt loams in the southeast area have no serious limitations for development.

Since steep slopes, often up to forty percent, characterize an appreciable area of Franklin Village, the potential exists for serious soil erosion. Although the sandy soils of the morainic area tend to be the most erodible, all soil types in steep slopes may undergo serious erosion if de-vegetated. Moreover, soils that are inclined in slopes of twenty-four percent or more have limited utility as private septic drain field sites.





Map 5
General Relief

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 12, 2021

LEGEND

Franklin Boundary

Other Municipal Boundaries

Elevation (ft)

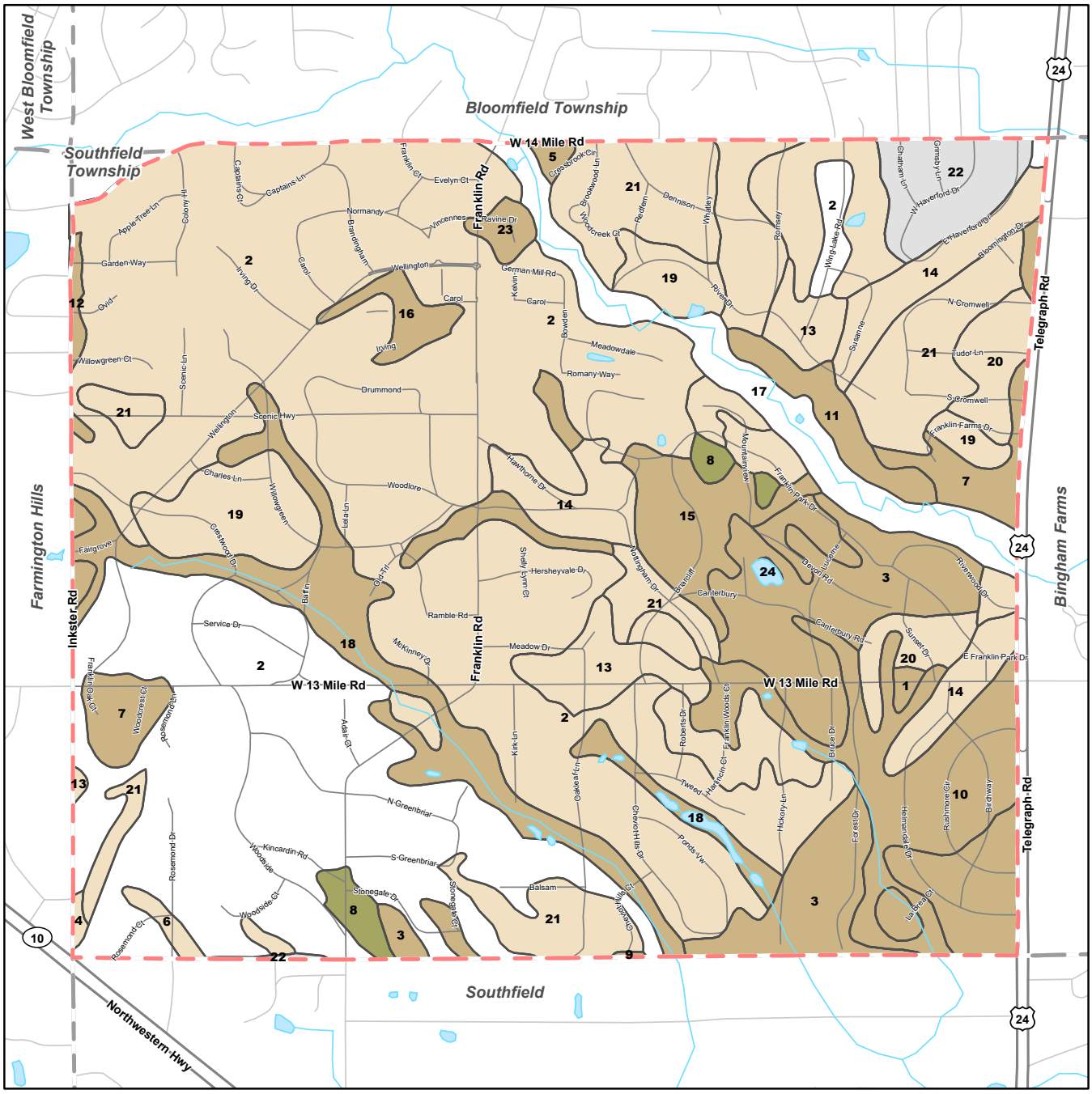
High: 871

Low: 703

0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

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Map 6
Soil Types

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 12, 2021

General Soil Types

- Sand
- Loam
- Muck
- Other

Label Soil Type

1 Aquents
2 Arkport loamy fine sand
3 Blount loam
4 Dixboro loamy fine sand
5 Gilford sandy loam
6 Granby sandy loam
7 Gynwood loam
8 Houghton and Adrian mucks
9 Kibbie fine sandy loams
10 Lenawee silty clay loam
11 Marlette loam
12 Marlette sandy loam
13 Oakville fine sand
14 Oshtemo-Boyer loamy sand
15 Owosso sandy loam
16 Sebewa loam
17 Sloan-Marlette
18 Sloan silt loam
19 Spinks loamy sand
20 Tedrow loamy sand
21 Thetford loamy fine sand
22 Urban land
23 Wasepi sandy loam
24 Water

0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

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Map 7 Environmental Features

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 12, 2021

LEGEND

Slope Gradient (%)
- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-30

Wetland Type
- Emergent
- Forested
- Scrub-Shrub

Flood Plains
- 100 Year
- 500 Year

Streams and Drains

Lakes and Rivers

0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

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Hydrology

The major surface hydrologic feature of Franklin Village is the Franklin River branch of the River Rouge. Most of the drainage basin of the stream is in Bloomfield and West Bloomfield Townships, and its headwaters are near the community of Orchard Lake Village. The stream enters the River Rouge about two miles south of the Franklin boundary.

Although most of the Franklin River watershed is urban or urbanizing, the river and its floodplain retain a highly natural character. Three factors - the absence of sewage treatment plants, the close relationship of wetland and lakes to the river, and the basically undisturbed nature of the floodplain - are largely responsible for this natural condition. Within the Village itself, the river and its floodplain constitute a locally unsurpassed natural system.

The Franklin River floodplain is shown on Map 7, Environmental Features. The floods used to delimit the floodplain boundary have approximate recurrence intervals of 100 and 500 years, or about 1 and 0.2 percent chances, respectively, of occurring in any given year.

The Franklin River floodplain through the Village is generally topographically confined by steep valley walls. Floods of a much larger magnitude than that of the mapped flood would be contained within these valley walls. Development has encroached on the floodplain in only one area within the Village.

Field evidence suggests that minor-to-moderate flooding with a rise in the river of about five feet occurs frequently, and that such flooding is more common now than in the past. With further urbanization and structuring of county drains, such as the Edwards Drain, these flood peaks will continue to increase. In addition, climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of large storm events. These large flows will accelerate the erosion of the valley walls and as sediment loads are reduced following development, the stream will entrench its channel.

Several stream systems also drain Franklin Village. Most are small and several have been impounded to create ponds. Others flow through Village wetlands. All the streams have the capacity to flood, but floodplains on such small streams are difficult to determine. Additional development will increase the flows of these streams and the importance of their floodplains. Their environmental quality also depends on the maintenance of natural channels and floodplains.

One method to evaluate and rank the importance of stream and creek systems is to rank them by the number of tributaries or the drainage area for each stream segment. Streams are ranked according to the following measures:

- **Flow Characteristics** - Steady or not - perennial.
- **Status of Water Quality** based on a visual evaluation.
- **Quality of Vegetation** along channel banks and floodplain.
- **Overall Natural Character** or quality of the stream channel.

The hydrology indicates a rough dimension on either side of the thread (or center) of the stream to approximate a rough floodplain.

The various wetlands of Franklin Village are also delineated on the Environmental Features Map. In addition to the impoundments on the small creeks, some of the kettle depressions contain sloughs (an area of soft, muddy ground). Other areas in the lake plain zone have groundwater tables at or near the surface through most of the year and could be classified as swamps.

In many parts of the lake plain section of the Village, poor drainage results from impermeable clay lenses. The high groundwater situation can be serious because it leads to failing septic tanks, contamination of groundwater, basement problems, and excessive frost cracking. Soil conditions or percolation tests which seem suitable for septic installation in some years or seasons are unsuitable in other years or seasons as the groundwater table varies to reflect antecedent precipitation. Thus, very careful site and near-site investigations need to be undertaken before any development is permitted in these high groundwater areas.

Private individual wells provide the domestic water supply in the Village. Most of the wells in the northwest sector of the Village tap the till deposits of the Inner Defiance moraine at a median depth of 120 feet. Production from these wells averages 30 gallons per minute, which is adequate for domestic purposes. However, the yields are variable given the highly diverse sand-clay-gravel character of glacial till.

In the lake plain section of the Village, wells are generally less than 100 feet deep and yield an average 20 gallons per minute, although the yield may vary considerably. The lower yields of this section are largely attributable to the silt and clay deposits of the lake plain. These deposits have very low permeability and, as such, are incapable of providing large quantities of water.

The mineral content of the groundwater tends to be high. High iron and chloride levels make the water hard to very hard. This condition does not vary significantly with depth or geologic material. The high chloride levels are due to natural conditions rather than groundwater pollution.

Vegetation

Most of the natural vegetation of Franklin Village has been severely disturbed by residential development. Clearing in the mid-1900s removed large stands of mature trees. Scattered areas of significant natural vegetation remain. They were mapped according to major structural units and community vegetation types in 1976.

The structural units of natural vegetation include mature woods, plantations, brush, and wetland groups. The mature, secondary growth woods are concentrated in three zones, all of which reflect severe development constraints. The first zone consists of the floodplain areas of the Franklin River and several major drainages. The very steep slopes of the morainic western part of the Village make up the second zone, while the high groundwater table areas of the southeast lake plain constitute the third zone. Brush and wetland groups are scattered throughout the Village.

Community-type delineations were based on species composition where sufficient information was available. Typically, two types dominate: oak-hickory communities, in the upland morainic areas and floodplain communities, alternately dominated by basswood, elm, red maple and green ash in stream valleys and lowland areas.

Since soil moisture variations largely determine species dominance, some wooded zones vary markedly in their composition over very short distances. A community type determination in these areas is difficult to make, so they have been mapped as mixed communities.

The brush cover types typically consist of invasions of old fields by seedlings from nearby woodlots or legacies from previous agricultural use. Depending on drainage characteristics, their species dominance ranges from hawthorn and cherry on drier sites to willow and cottonwood on wetter sites. Variations within the wetland vegetation types reflect the depth and duration of standing water. The cattail and reed marshes have the greatest depth and duration of standing water. Swampy areas covered by dogwood, willow, cottonwood, and alder are typically covered by water in the spring but have a relatively high groundwater table throughout the year.

Much of the natural vegetation in the Village was in areas that should have been reserved from development for floodplain or wetland preservation and to protect Franklin's rural character. Efforts should be made to protect the remaining existing vegetation.

While much of the vegetation that plays an important role in Franklin's rural character is natural, much is also ornamental, planted in yards following home construction. This urban forest stand is reaching maturity and needs to be inter-planted with new trees.



Natural Features Inventory

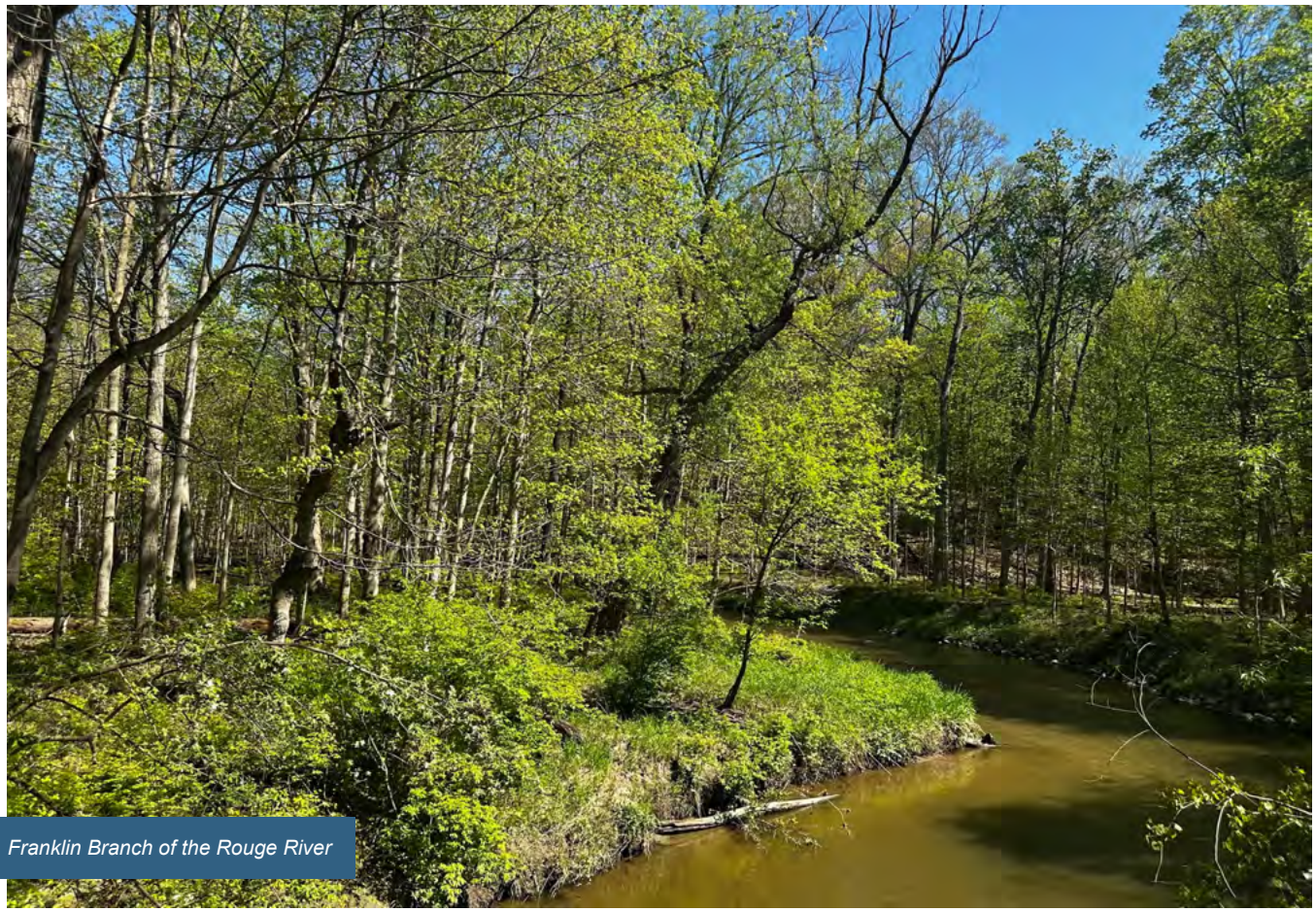
In 1987, the foundation for preserving Oakland County's natural heritage was put in place when the County contracted with Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) to conduct the first inclusive natural area survey of Oakland County. The survey identified 37 sites of high natural quality and relatively undisturbed native vegetation.

In subsequent years, Oakland County contracted with MNFI to complete more comprehensive and refined studies of natural areas using the best available digital aerial photography. The refined studies, which were completed in 2002 and 2004, identified over 800 potential natural areas, representing the least disturbed natural areas remaining in Oakland County.

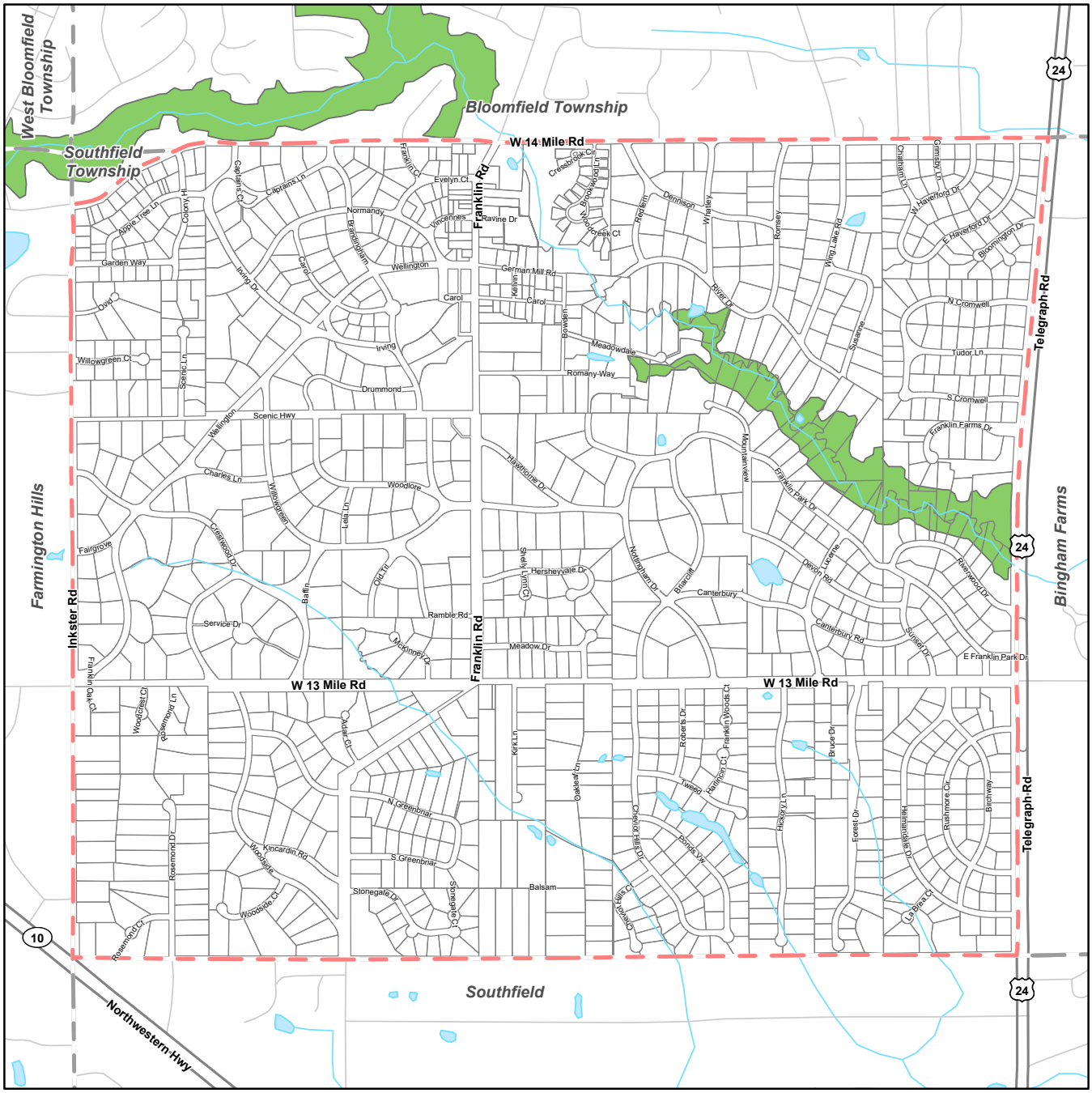
The natural areas were then ranked based on several universally accepted principles of biodiversity conservation. Ecological principles considered were primarily based on patch size and shape, landscape context, habitat condition, ownership patterns, and rarity.

Total potential natural area scores ranged from 22 points (out of a possible 25) to a low of 1 point. Once the total scores were tabulated, the potential natural areas were divided into priority one, priority two, and priority three sites using a statistical formula called Jenks optimization.

One of the County's high quality natural areas is in the Village of Franklin, along the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River, on the east side of the Village (see Map 8). This Priority 3 natural area is also a FEMA recognized floodplain.



Franklin Branch of the Rouge River



Map 8
Natural Features Inventory

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 12, 2021

LEGEND

- Franklin Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers
- Streams and Drains

Michigan Natural Features Inventory (2017)

- Priority One
- Priority Two
- Priority Three

0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a.
Data Source: MNFI (2017)

MCKENNA

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Population

At the time of its incorporation in 1954, the Village had an estimated population of 959 persons. Growth during the remainder of the 1950's was steady as the Village attracted substantial numbers of new residents. By 1960, more than 2,200 people resided in Franklin Village. An additional forty-six percent increase in population occurred between 1960 and 1970.

After 1970, the rapid population growth experienced during the previous two decades ceased. Lower birth rates and an increasing scarcity of developable land in the Village helped account for the decline in the rate of population growth (see Table 3).

Franklin's population declined to 2,626 by 1990, but increased to 2,937 in 2000. From 2000 to 2010, the population of Franklin experienced a seven percent increase in growth to 3,150 individuals. The 2020 U.S. Census indicated the population of the Village decreased 0.3% to 3,139.

Table 3. Franklin Village Population Growth

Year	Population	Percent Change
1954	959	
1960	2,262	136%
1970	3,311	46%
1980	2,864	-14%
1990	2,626	-8%
2000	2,937	12%
2010	3,150	7%
2020	3,139	-0.3%
2030 (projected)	2,873	-8.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SEMCOG (2030)

The number of households (consists of the number of people occupying one household unit) increased slightly between 2000 and 2010, from 1,073 to 1,118 and is projected to increase slightly to 1,179 by 2045. There were 1,177 housing units in 2010, according to the U.S. Census, an increase of 59 units since 2000. According to the Oakland County Assessing Department, there were approximately 25 vacant residential lots in the Village in 2013, though the vacant lots may not be buildable.

The average number of persons per household was 2.94 in 1980, 2.69 in 1990, 2.73 in 2000 and 2.82 in 2010. SEMCOG estimates that household size decreased to 2.61 person in 2020, and projects the average number of persons per households in 2045 to decrease further to 2.59 persons. The limited amount of developable land, the small increase in the number of new homes, and the decrease in household size are responsible for the projected decrease in the population in the coming decades.

Franklin's population is older than that of Oakland County as a whole (see Table 4). The Village has proportionately more middle-aged and senior individuals (45-65 plus years) than Oakland County. As a result, the median age in 2019 in Franklin Village (45.7 years) was higher than that of the County (40.9 years), according to American Community Survey (ACS) data. [1]

The median age in Franklin is comparable to the median age in neighboring communities, such as Beverly Hills (47.9 years), West Bloomfield Township (46.3 years), Bloomfield Township (48.7 years), and Southfield (42.9 years). Bingham Farms is an outlier, with a median age of 64.5 years.

Additional stability in the Village is evident when length of residence statistics are reviewed. For example, approximately 63% percent of Franklin residents moved into their home before 1994.[2] Historically, those families have elected to reside in suburbs.

1 The American Community Survey (ACS) is a demographics survey program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It regularly gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census. Sent to approximately 295,000 addresses monthly, it is the largest household survey that the Census Bureau administers. The Census Bureau aggregates individual ACA responses into estimates at many geographic summary levels, including villages such as Franklin.

2 Census 2000

Maintaining the character and quality of life of the Village may be a challenge. High demand for new, upper end housing in Oakland County resulted in the expansion of the number of subdivisions in Franklin. Some of these developments were made possible by the construction of pressure sanitary sewers, while others became available when families that held the land for many years sold. In addition, many existing homes have been enlarged and others razed with new, larger homes built in their place.

With increased development, communities tend to experience a loss of tree cover and open space, and increased traffic. To preserve the rural character of Franklin, future development and redevelopment should be designed to mitigate the loss of tree cover and preserve open space with an emphasis on protecting mature trees and native vegetation. Franklin has developed several policies to maintain the natural character of the Village which are discussed further in Chapter 4: Village Character and Neighborhoods.

Other indicators that are important in describing Franklin Village's social composition are race, education, occupational status, and income.

Table 4. Population by Age Groups in 2010 and 2019

Age Group	2010		2019		Positive or Negative Change (2010—2019)	
	Franklin Village	Oakland County	Franklin Village	Oakland County	Franklin Village	Oakland County
65 +	16.19%	13.23%	21.1%	16.4%	+	+
55—64	14.41%	13.16%	14.0%	14.3%	-	+
45—54	19.97%	16.49%	17.5%	14.4%	-	-
35—44	12.16%	14.12%	9.4%	12.5%	-	-
25—34	4.32%	11.93%	3.7%	13.0%	-	-
20—24	2.79%	5.27%	3.8%	6.0%	+	+
15—19	8.57%	6.74%	8.0%	6.2%	-	-
5—14	16.92%	13.36%	17.9%	11.8%	+	-
Under 5	4.67%	5.70%	4.5%	5.4%	-	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey

RACIAL COMPOSITION

Most of the population, 73.4% is considered White with the next two highest categories being African American (11.1%) and Asian (6.7%).

Table 5. Franklin Village Racial Composition, 2019

Race	Number	Percent
White	2,428	73.3%
African American	366	11.1%
Asian	222	6.7%
Some Other Race	9	0.3%
Two or More Races	173	5.2%
Hispanic	112	3.4%
Total	**3,310**	**98.7%**

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

EDUCATION

Franklin is a highly educated community. The Village surpassed the County in the percent of persons over 25 years of age who earned a high school degree or higher, a bachelor's degree and a graduate or professional degree in 2019.

Table 6. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years or Older, 2019

	Franklin Village	Oakland County
High School Degree or Higher	98.6 %	94.1 %
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	75.9%	47.2 %
Graduate or Professional Degree	46.6 %	20.4 %

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The educational achievements of Franklin's residents have allowed them to assume an unusually high number of professional and managerial positions.

According to 2019 ACS data, 66.7% of the Franklin work force was employed in management, professional, and related occupations, an increase over the amount in 2010 (see Table 7). There was also an increase in the percentage occupied in service occupations. Although there was a slight decrease in the percentage occupied in sales and office occupations, this category still accounted for one fifth of all employment in 2019.

The educational and occupational status held by many individuals in the Village is reflected in the median family income for Franklin. By way of comparison, Franklin's median family income in 2019 was $161,607, roughly two times greater than Oakland County's $79,698. Per capita income statistics for 2019 show roughly comparable results with Franklin at $91,122 and Oakland County at $44,629.

Table 7. Labor Force Characteristics for Franklin Village, 2010 - 2019

Occupation for Employed Population 16 Years and Over	2010		2019	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
Management, professional, and related occupations	838	65.6%	1,010	66.7%
Service occupations	70	5.5%	149	9.8%
Sales and office occupations	280	21.9%	302	19.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	49	3.9%	14	0.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	40	3.1%	39	2.6%
Total	**1,277**	**100 %**	**1,314**	**99.9%**

Source: U.S. Census 2010, American Community Survey 2019

Economy

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Franklin Village's commercial sector is quite small, in part due to the limited supply of available commercial buildings within the community. There are approximately 31 commercial units in the Village Center (2021 count, includes retail, service, and office), of which at least nine are vacant. Most of the establishments are sole proprietorships. [1]

Due to the availability of abundant commercial facilities in surrounding communities, residents of Franklin do most of their shopping and entertaining-beyond the limits of the Village. Most businesses in Franklin's Village Center do not own the buildings in which they are located, and many buildings are owned by nonresidents of Franklin. These businesses rely on nonresidents as well as Village residents for their clientele.

TAX BASE

Cities and municipalities in Michigan rely primarily on taxes levied on real and personal property for revenue. Property tax revenues are then used to provide public services that are in demand by the communities' residents. Usually, the bulk of an area's tax dollars come from industrial and commercial enterprises. Residential taxes, by comparison, are generally substantial but tend to supplement the larger tax dollar received from business.

1 Oakland County Planning Commission, Economic Development Division, November 1974.

In Franklin Village these relationships do not hold. There is no industry in the Village, and commercial and office development is limited. Due largely to the lack of extensive suitable building sites, these land use conditions are not likely to change. The Village has relied and will continue to rely on a tax base founded on residential properties.

To maintain pace with increasing costs and greater demand for facilities in the Village, the rise in state equalized valuation (SEV) on real and personal property has been substantial over the years. Of course, homeowners have been called upon to absorb a high percentage of the increased valuations. From 1969—2005, state equalized valuation of real and personal property increased for Franklin (see Table 8).

Table 8. Franklin Village State Equalized Value of Real and Personal Property

Fiscal Year	S. E. V.
1969	$18,007,215
1977	$35,049,146
1984	$73,682,400
1996	$155,596,270
2005	$389,310,400
2013	$299,100,140
2021	$460,050,800

However, during the period from 2005—2013, Franklin experienced a significant loss in the SEV of real and personal property due to the collapse of the subprime mortgage market and subsequent economic recession.

The figures in Table 8 show that property values rebounded as the economy grew following the Great Recession, so that by 2021 the State Equalized Value had increased to $460 million. It is not likely that Franklin Village will undergo a major land use transition, regardless of the ups and downs of the S.E.V. The stability of the households, the general maturity of the families that are attracted to the Village, and correspondingly high incomes all suggest that a major change is unlikely.

Although Franklin Village can expect to rely on residential land uses for the bulk of its tax dollars, the Village's tax rate compares favorably with neighboring municipalities (see Table 9). Among the eight municipalities surveyed, Franklin's millage rate is the lowest. Although funding for improvements discussed in this Plan will be sought from outside sources, it is expected that Franklin residents will bear most of the financial responsibility.

Table 9. 2020 Tax Rates, In Mills

Municipality	Mills per $1,000 / SEV	Homestead Mills per $1,000 / SEV**	Non-Homestead Mills per $1,000 / SEV**
Village of Bingham Farms	9.0000*	36.9615—44.3105	47.1997—47.9997
City of Bloomfield Hills	10.9750	36.9553—37.3514	48.0462—48.3896
West Bloomfield Township	11.7840	31.2537—40.4494	49.2537—53.1734
Village of Franklin	8.0807*	36.0422	47.0804
City of Farmington Hills	18.5326	40.2277—45.5774	56.3323—58.2277
Bloomfield Township	12.3579	31.8276—39.7194	49.8276—55.0576
Village of Beverly Hills	12.8053*	40.7668	50.8050
City of Birmingham	14.1870	41.5485	52.5867
Average	12.2153	36.9479—40.7195	50.2415—51.5650

** Landowners of villages also pay Southfield Township taxes.*
*** Rates listed as a range are reflective of multiple school districts being present.*
Source: Oakland County Equalization Department

INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE

Community Facilities

Since the original settlement of the Village in 1825, community facilities have been an important element in Franklin. A post office was the first facility to serve the Village and surrounding four townships at that time and has since been joined by schools, recreation areas, a library, and police and fire facilities.

Table 10 lists community facilities and quasi-public facilities owned by the Village.



Fire Department

Schools

Franklin Village is included within the Birmingham School District, which also serves communities in the surrounding area. Public schools that are primarily used by children of Franklin residents include West Maple Elementary School located at Maple Road and Inkster Road, Berkshire Middle School located at Fourteen Mile Road and Lahser Road, and Wylie E. Groves Senior High School located on Thirteen Mile Road at Evergreen Road.

The adequacy of these facilities can best be evaluated when compared to the following general guidelines:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- 1 mile maximum walking distance
- 400-700 student capacity
- One acre/100 pupils; 5-acre minimum

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 1.5 mile maximum walking distance
- 800-1,200 student capacity
- One acre/100 pupils; 15-acre minimum

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

- 1.5 mile maximum walking distance
- 2,000-2,100 optimum student capacity—maximum capacity 2,400
- One acre/100 pupils; 25-acre minimum



Wylie E. Groves Senior High School

Table 10. Franklin Community Facilities and Open Spaces in 2022[1] (Please Note: All sizes are rough estimates)

Publicly Owned Facilities	Location		Size
Village Office (Broughton House)	32325 Franklin Road	(Sidwell # 24-06-257-022)	First Floor 1,700 sq. ft.
Franklin Library	32455 Franklin Road	(Sidwell # 24-06-257-022)	1,600 sq. ft.
Franklin Police Station	32311 Franklin Road	(Sidwell # 24-06-257-022)	4,600 sq. ft.
Franklin Community Center (Kreger House)	26225 Carol Avenue	(Sidwell # 24-06-257-022)	2,645 sq. ft.
Publicly Owned and Quasi-Public Facilities*	**Location**		**Size**
Derwich Property/Historical Museum[2]	26165 13 Mile Road	(Sidwell # 24-06-203-021)	5 acres
Village Green	32455 Franklin Road	(Sidwell # 24-06-253-024)	240' by 225' (54,000 sq. ft.)
Broughton House Land	32455 Franklin Road	(Sidwell # 24-06-257-022)	Irregular Shape 130' by 285'
Lot	On Bowden	(Sidwell # 24-06-279-002)	81-Foot River Frontage
Traffic Island	On Wellington	(Sidwell # 24-06-352-006)	Irregular Shape 250' by 210'
Traffic Island	On Irving	(Sidwell # 24-06-255-001)	Irregular Shape 600' by 160'
Traffic Island	Circle On Service Dr. Between Crestwood & Woodside	(Sidwell # 24-06-376-006)	140-Foot Diameter
Traffic Island	By Baffin	(Sidwell # 24-06-377-001)	Triangle Shape 172' by 207' by 200'
Traffic Island	On Captain's Lane	(Sidwell # 24-06-128-001)	Triangle Shape 150' by 125' by 125'
Traffic Island	On Irving	(Sidwell # 24-06-179-001)	Triangle Shape 106' by 86' by 112'
Traffic Island	On Rosemond		Teardrop Shape 100' by 25'
Franklin Cemetery (owned by the Franklin Cemetery Association)	Franklin at Scenic	(Sidwell # 24-06-257-023)	442' by 366' Plus Land Purchased
Franklin-Bingham Fire Station	32707 Franklin Rd.	(Sidwell # 24-06-203-021)	50' by 125' Lot

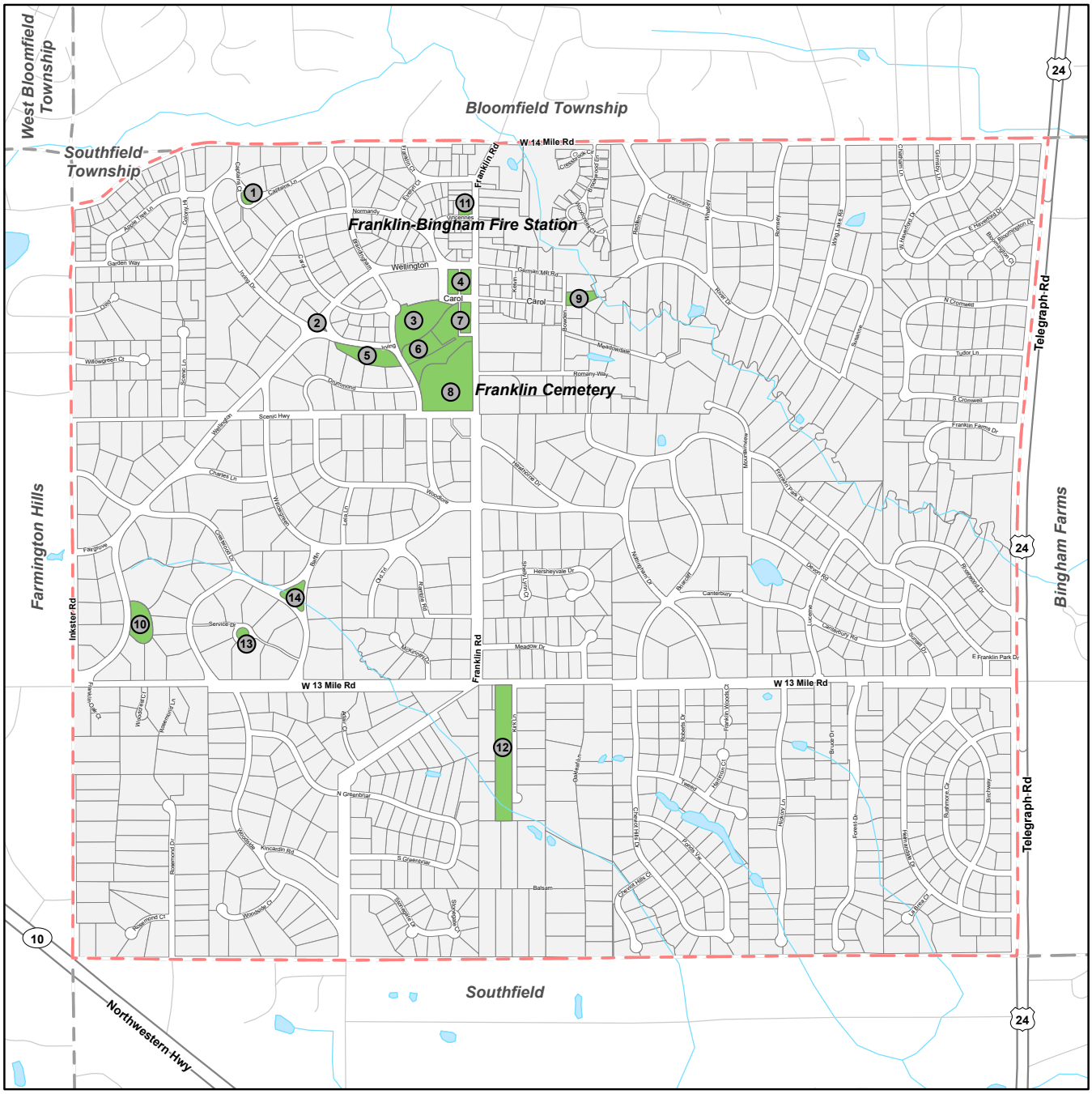
Table 11. Properties Owned By The Village, As Identified By The Facilities And Open Space Committee

Properties Identified In Tax Records As Being Owned By The Village	
Traffic island on Captain's Lane	Sidwell # 24-06-128-001
Shown on plat maps as traffic island at the northeast corner of Wellington and Irving, but one part of road never developed.	Sidwell # 24-06-179-001
Franklin Community Association	Sidwell # 24-06-252-010
Village Green and Library	Sidwell # 24-06-253-024
Land on south side of Irving between ball fields and Wellington	Sidwell # 24-06-255-001
Land with Broughton House	Sidwell # 24-06-257-020
Land between Broughton House and the Franklin Cemetery	Sidwell # 24-06-257-022
Land on Bowden donated by Marion Green	Sidwell # 24-06-279-002

Based upon these guidelines and the standards of the Birmingham School District, the public schools serving Village residents have sufficient capacity to serve the Village needs and to meet the standards of the National Education Association, the American Public Health Association, and the National Council on Schoolhouse Construction. However, young children do not have the opportunity to walk to school from any location within the Village.

1 Excludes dedicated, undeveloped road rights-of-way and roads, existing or platted.

2 The Village owns the rear three acres of Derwich property, including the nature trail, (Sidwell # 24-07-226-006) while the Historical Society owns the northern two acres and the house. The deed specifies that should the house cease to act as a museum, it shall be torn down and property ownership transferred to the Village. The deed also specifies that the property is to remain as a nature preserve and cannot be developed.


West Bloomfield Township
Bloomfield Township
Southfield Township
Farmington Hills
Bingham Farms
Southfield
Franklin-Bingham Fire Station
Franklin Cemetery
W 14 Mile Rd
W 13 Mile Rd
Franklin Rd
Telegraph Rd
Inkster Rd
Northwestern Hwy
Wellington
Carol
Scenic Hwy
Meadow Dr
Hershey Dr
Canterbury
Balsam
S Greenbriar
N Greenbriar
Kincaid Rd
Rosemond Ct
Windcastle Dr
Oakhurst Hills Ct
Forest Dr
Brookway
Bushmoor Dr
Brookside Dr
Tudor Ln
S Cromwell
N Cromwell
Franklin Farms Dr
E Franklin Park Dr
Shelburn Ct
Service Dr
Fairground
Charles Ln
Woodside
Oak Dr
Ralston Rd
Normandy
Vincennes
Garden Way
Willowgreen Ct
Scenic Ln
Irving Dr
Drummond
Romany Way
Meadowview
Tyler
Keeler
Whalen
Bowsley
Whig Lake Rd
Cheltenham
Cranbrook
Ridgeway Dr
Bloomfield Dr
Hartsdale Dr
Maplefield Way
Fairfield Park Dr
Bluecrest
Denton Rd
Lorraine
Castlebridge Rd
Somerset Dr
Hartfordshire Dr
Oakhurst Ln
Kirkhill Ln
Rosemont Dr
Rosemond Dr
Rosemont Ln
Woodgate Ln
Oakhill Dr
Franklin Woods Ct
Boxberry Dr
Tweed
Hampton Dr
Hickory Ln
Pondside Dr
Cherry Hill Ct
Pondside Ct
Brookside Ct
Bushmoor Ct
Brookway
Le Mans Ct
Franklin Glen Ct
Franklin Glen Cir
Franklin Woods Cir
Rosemont Cir
Oakhurst Ln
Cranbrook Ct
Cranbrook Cir
Normandy Ct
Garden Ct
Garden Ln
Cathaire Ln
Cathaire Ct
Apple Tree Ln
Colony Ln
Irving
Wellington
Carol
Kathryn
Dawson
Meadowview
Romany Way
Tudor Ln
S Cromwell
N Cromwell
Franklin Farms Dr
Maplefield Way
Fairfield Park Dr
Hartfordshire Dr
Hershey Dr
Canterbury
Denton Rd
Lorraine
Castlebridge Rd
Somerset Dr
E Franklin Park Dr
Meadow

RECREATION

Both local and regional recreation facilities are available for use by the residents of Franklin Village. Local recreation facilities include sports fields and the Village Green. Regional facilities within 15-20 miles include Pontiac Lake Recreation Area, Highland Recreation Area, Marshbank Park, and Kensington Metropolitan Park. These facilities provide for the major recreation needs of the Village residents. In addition, various private facilities, like the Franklin Racquet Club, are available for use.

According to National Recreation and Parks Association Standards, approximately five acres of local recreation area, including playgrounds, neighborhood parks and playfields, should be provided for a population of 1,000 people. Based upon these standards, approximately 15 acres of local recreation area should be provided within the Village. Approximately six acres are currently provided. Although the size of Franklin's local recreation area is smaller than national standards, this number is not indicative of the recreational opportunities within the Village. The Village Green provides a centralized location for both active and passive recreation and is considered the nucleus of community activity. Tree lined streets are often filled with residents walking and bicycling. Additionally, with lot sizes typically larger (one-acre average) than the national average, it is not uncommon for residents to have private recreational amenities such as swimming pools, playground equipment, and basketball and tennis courts.

Residents cherish the existing open space and recreational area that the Village enjoys. While residents seem to understand that there are few large open spaces available within the Village to develop as recreational space, many residents have expressed the desire for paths for biking and walking. On September 15, 2009, the decision whether to install a network of pathways was presented to voters. Although the proposal was defeated, residents continue to express an interest in pathway options. One option currently being explored is strategic pathway connections between neighborhoods, which would allow access throughout the Village without having to travel on arterial roads.

FRANKLIN LIBRARY

Founded in 1936, the Franklin Public Library is owned by the Village, supported by a dedicated property tax millage, and administered by an elected Board to Trustees.

The library holds over 15,000 items in its collection, including books, audio books on CD, DVDs, magazines, and a large print collection. It is a member of The Library Network, the largest library co-operative in Michigan, which provides for inter-library loans and reciprocal borrowing with over 65 member libraries. The library has four public access computers and free Wi-Fi access (inside, in the parking lot, and in the Reading Garden), a copy machine, and faxing and scanning services.

The Franklin Public Library offers a number of programs for children and adults. These include book discussions, lectures, story hour, playgroups, monthly Saturday programs for youth, and a summer reading program for all ages.

In addition to on-site resources, library patrons can avail themselves of on-line access to eBooks, audiobooks, movies, music magazines, test prep (ACT, SAT, etc.), and information databases of all kinds, including the contents of the Michigan Electronic Library.

The Franklin Public Library is located on the west side of Franklin Road, on the northwest corner of the Village Green, in a building once occupied by the village offices. In 2016, improvements were made, resulting in the addition of 300 sq. ft. on the south side of the building and a Reading Garden at the rear. The Reading Garden was designed by Spurlock's Natural Stone in conjunction with Goldner-Walsh Nursery. With the addition, the library is more functional.



Franklin Public Library

Utilities (Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment)

Currently, potable water for residences and businesses in Franklin is supplied by private individual wells. Public pressure sanitary sewers serve many parts of the Village, but several homes still have individual septic systems. As the Village experiences land use changes, two planning factors that affect natural resources have become important.

First, the ability of geologic aquifers to provide potable water supplies to the community is dependent upon the limitations of the aquifer and the existence of any land uses or activities that may affect the quality and quantity of groundwater. If groundwater supplies were depleted or rendered non-potable because of pollution, the introduction of a public system that treats and distributes potable water to residents may become a necessity.

In 2018, contamination of the groundwater was detected, affecting approximately 40 properties. The primary source of the contamination was a dry cleaners located in the Franklin Village Plaza, although other historic sources of contamination were found. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, conducted contamination investigation, including groundwater, soil, and vapor sampling. Contamination of drinking water wells was not detected, but EGLE is continuing the monitoring.

Presently, all Village residents rely on private individual wells to provide domestic water supplies. These groundwater supplies are adequate. However, the quality and quantity of groundwater supplies varies based on the location of the well and the source of groundwater. Sources of groundwater in Franklin include the geologic overburden, as well as the bedrock formations. The capabilities of these water supply sources are identified in the groundwater hydrology section.

If it ever became necessary, public supplies of domestic water may become available through the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA). There is also the potential of working with the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office (OCWRC) for the construction and maintenance of the water system with the water supplied by the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA).

Previously, GLWA constructed a 60-inch main in Inkster Road between Eight Mile Road and Fourteen Mile Road, and the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority extended a 30-inch main along Twelve Mile Road from Inkster Road to Telegraph Road and a main along Fourteen Mile Road through Franklin.

Franklin Village could easily be served by this water network. On November 17, 2003, the decision whether to install a public water system was put before voters, and the proposal was defeated by an almost 2 to 1 margin.

In the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021, Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc. (HRC) oversaw the design, preparation, and distribution of a Village-wide survey concerning property owners' general satisfaction with their well water. Slightly more than half of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with their existing well water system. Some residents reported concerns, though, such as small issues and low well capacity and volume.

The ability of soil layers to treat and filter domestic wastewater is dependent upon the septic suitability of a given area and soil type. Whenever the soil characteristics of an area are incapable of accommodating septic wastes or whenever the proposed land use exceeds the septic capabilities of the land area, sewer systems are typically constructed to collect the wastes. They are then transported to a treatment plant. Because of failing septic systems in a few areas of the Village, Franklin connected to the Oakland County sewer system beginning in 1993 and the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office currently provides pressure sewer services.

Circulation

Franklin is served by a well-maintained network of regional and local roads, which represent both an asset and a liability to the Village and its historic character. For an analysis of the Village's circulation network and traffic issues, please refer to Chapter 9, Traffic and Circulation.

Wireless Communication

There is a need to improve wireless voice and data transmission and communication service for residents, businesses, and government operations in the Village.

In December 2003, Village Council President James Pikulus appointed a Cell Tower Advisory Committee to review and advise the Village Council on the "pros and cons of the ... proposed [cell] tower location and alternative sites within the framework of the Village's existing ordinances and legal commitments, the needs of the cell tower companies and available technology."

The Committee met 11 times, compiling a substantial record of information, and producing a Draft Interim Report, dated June 11, 2004. The Committee found that technology was changing providing a broader range of wireless options suiting the Village's demonstrated preference for minimal visual impact and the desire for efficient wireless communications. As noted in the conclusion to the Draft Interim Report, "Carriers and the Village have largely moved beyond the "cell tower" and are focusing on appropriate communications for Village residents within the existing legal structure." One such carrier was Extenet Systems, which has successfully installed a distributed antenna cellular system in the Village without installing any poles.

As technology changes, the Village must be flexible enough to accommodate the changes that are consistent with the aesthetic and environmental goals of the Village. To position the Village with this flexibility, it may be necessary to create a Wireless Communications Master Plan and amend the Wireless Communications Ordinance.



Franklin Road

LAND USE PROFILE

The Existing Land Use Map identifies six classifications of land use in Franklin Village. Residential development is the predominant land use and comprises over 1,000 acres of land. Non-residential land uses primarily exist in the Village Center and include commercial and office uses and public, quasi-public, and recreation uses. The remaining classifications include woodland and water areas, which comprise 16 acres of lands; and transportation corridors, which comprise over 277 acres of land (see Table 12).

The characteristics of these land uses can be described as follows:

- Residential development is scattered throughout the Village Center and the various neighborhoods of the Village. Single family housing on spacious lots is the predominant form of development, although attached residential condominiums were built in the Village Center in the early 1970s.
- Non-residential land uses are located primarily in the Village Center. Commercial and office uses are clustered in older adapted residential buildings or in newer buildings. Office uses are predominant in the Village Center, according to a 2021 survey (see Table 13).
- Outside of the Village Center, the only other non-residential land use is the office use located at the southwest corner of Thirteen Mile Road and Telegraph Road.
- Transportation corridors consist of dedicated rights-of-way within which roadways and utilities are constructed. These corridors are the second largest uses of land in the Village.
- Vacant land includes those parcels that are platted or assembled but not used for any specific purpose. Vacant lands are scattered throughout the Village, but the largest parcels exist along Telegraph Road and the southern boundary of the Village.
- Surface water is the remaining land use category in Franklin and includes those areas that have significant environmental features but are not publicly owned. The Franklin Branch of the Rouge River is the major surface water area.

Table 12. Franklin Village Land Use, 1977 - 2021

	1977		2021	
Land Use	**Acres**	**%**	**Acres**	**&**
Residential	1,046	62.4 %	1,240	72.6 %
Commercial and Office	6	0.4 %	13	0.8 %
Public, Quasi-Public and Recreation	10	0.6 %	67*	3.9 %
Woodland and Water	125	7.4 %	16**	0.9 %
Vacant	225	13.4 %	95	5.6 %
Transportation	265	15.8 %	277	16.2 %
Total	**1,677**	**100.0 %**	**1,708*** **	**100.0 %**

Source: 1977: Johnson, Johnson & Roy; 2021: Oakland County, updated by McKenna

* *The data for 2021 is divided into Public and Quasi-Public = 28 acres; Recreation = 39 acres land use categories.*

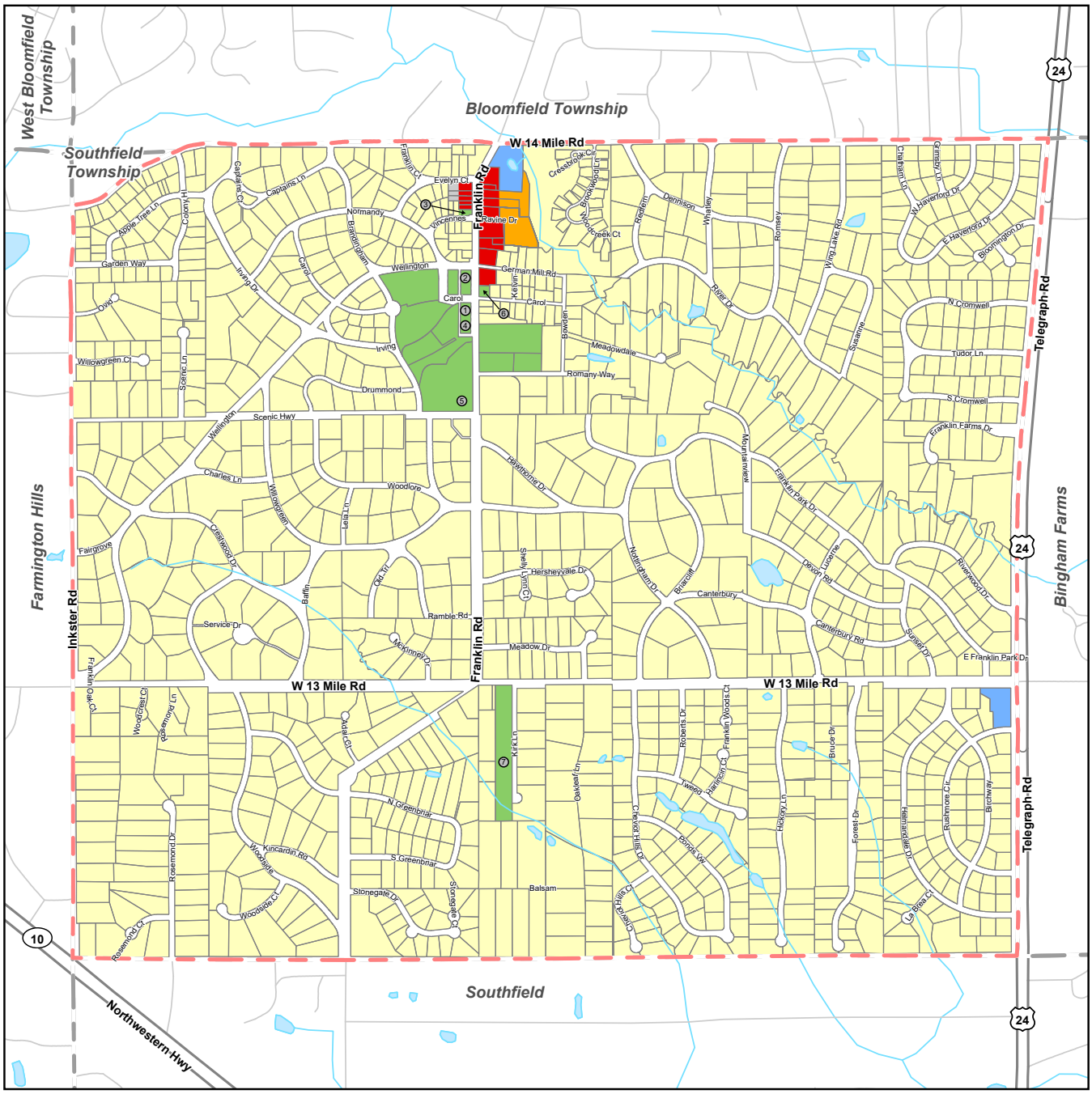
** *The data for 2021 only includes water (woodlands are classified under the recreation category).*

*** *The 2021 data show a different total acreage than the 1977 data. The Village has not expanded its borders; the discrepancy is due to different collection methods.*

Table 13. Franklin Village Center Uses

Use	Percentage
Retail (including restaurants, gas stations)	15.6 %
Service	13.3 %
Office	20.0 %
Public & Quasi-Public	13.3 %
Single Family Residential	17.8 %
Vacant	20.0%

Source: McKenna Field Survey, 2021



Map 10
Existing Land Use

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

July 13, 2021

LEGEND

- Single-Family and Vacant Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Public & Quasi-Public
- Parking

Public Use Key:

1. Broughton House Village Hall
2. Franklin Library
3. Franklin-Bingham Fire Department
4. Police Department
5. Franklin Cemetery
6. U.S. Post Office
7. Franklin Historical Museum

0 500 1,000 Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Franklin 2021. McKenna 2021.

MCKENNA

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3

Village Character & Neighborhoods

VISION

Franklin is possessed of a unique physical character, which is comprised of several distinct traits. Those traits are prized by its residents and admired by its visitors. Franklin is distinguishable from its neighboring communities because of its mature tree cover, large residential lots with well-maintained homes and grounds located on narrow tree lined streets, and carefully preserved historic and natural resources. These traits contribute to the rural, small town atmosphere that has become a hallmark of Village of Franklin.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

There is a significant contrast between the physical appearance of Franklin and the communities that border it. The observation that Franklin is more "rural" than its neighboring suburbs is frequently made and is a characteristic that residents in general seem to wish to preserve.

A number of traits contribute to the rural-like atmosphere of Franklin Village. The Village's historic background and resources constituent one important aspect of the Village's rural character. These resources are discussed in detail in Chapter Four, Historic Areas, which includes a discussion of the Village Center, Franklin's Historic District, and some of the other historical aspects of Franklin.

The Village Center is perhaps the most readily definable aspect of Franklin's rural character. It is comprised of the Village Green, the FCA (Franklin Community Association) grounds and recreational facilities (baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and a playground), Franklin's historic cemetery, numerous homes and small independent businesses, and its government buildings (the Franklin Village offices, Police and Fire Stations, Franklin Public Library, and the U.S. Post Office).

The Village Center is arranged along a half-mile stretch of Franklin Road from Scenic Drive to Fourteen Mile Road. The Franklin Cider Mill, which is situated just north of Fourteen Mile and is actually outside the Village boundaries, nonetheless has a Franklin mailing address and is considered by most to be a part of the Village Center. The foregoing components of the Village Center project a small-town rural image, which is highly valued by most residents.

Franklin's abundant trees and plant life, even in portions of the Village Center, give Franklin a woodland atmosphere. Mature and heritage trees line the streets and grace the lawns of most of the homes in Franklin. Additionally, heavily wooded areas, both on undeveloped lots and on empty portions of developed lots exist throughout the Village. Further, tree and plant-based natural barriers between properties are very common in Franklin, rather than fences. These wooded areas provide privacy and act as noise buffers. They also provide natural habitats for the bountiful wildlife that make Franklin their home.

Franklin's residential lots are larger, on average, than those of most, if not all, surrounding communities. The average residential lot in Franklin is slightly larger than one acre. Over 20 homes are situated on lots of three acres or more. These spacious and luxurious lots are one of Franklin's most treasured resources and cannot be found in such abundance in any of its adjacent communities.

Franklin's homes are, for the most part, located on narrow, winding, tree lined streets with little, if any signage to spoil the natural beauty. The homes are generally well maintained with lawns and grounds that are equally well tended. Landscaping styles vary from the extremely well-manicured to the more rustic. Housing styles include contemporary, classic, and historic.

While Franklin was once home to numerous horses, their declining numbers caused the framers of the 2007 Master Plan to relegate their discussion to Franklin's past legacy. A few remain but are no longer considered a significant part of Franklin's current culture. Additionally, a few barns still remain, both on residential property and throughout the Village Center. Many of the barns are used for storage and would benefit from rehabilitation. The adaptive reuse of the barns—and acknowledgment of their role in the way the Village was enjoyed by residents and visitors in the past - could enhance the quaint character of the Village.

Each of these above-described traits is vulnerable to environmental and economic pressures, which necessitates active maintenance if they are to be preserved.

Preservation mechanisms have been established, such as the Franklin Historic District (FHD) with its corresponding limitations on changes to the character of the District. Other preservation mechanisms include Franklin's Tree Management Ordinance, and the Zoning Ordinance, which has setback requirements and height limitations on new construction that are designed to preserve the community's rural character. These preservation measures are discussed in greater detail below.

While these measures preserve rural character, they also may limit an owner's ability to use or alter their property.

Accomplishments

In the years since the last Master Plan review and revision was competed, numerous steps have been taken to further the letter and spirit of the Master Plan. Many of those efforts focus on maintaining the visual quality of the Village, which is so highly prized by both residents and visitors, while others focus on enhancement of the Village Center by expanding permitted uses, making better use of scarce parking resources, and alleviating sign clutter and enhancing the visual appeal of permitted signs.

ZONING ORDINANCE: TREE COVER

In addition to the implementation of the Contextual Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2008-01), and the Tree Management Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2010-04,) both of which were mentioned in the 2007 Master Plan, the Tree Management Ordinance was amended to provide greater clarity by delineating the varieties of trees which are and are not protected. Additionally, the amended ordinance defined responsibility for the removal of dead or dying trees that endanger the public or adjoining properties.

In 2005, the Village planted approximately 200 trees paid for with a combination of Village funds and a DNR tree replacement grant. A DTE grant was secured in 2011 for the planting of 16 trees on public property. In 2013, Franklin undertook a Village wide hazardous tree removal and trimming program to reduce the number of dead and hazardous trees in the Village road rights-of-way. Due to budget pressures, grants are necessary for the continued funding of replacement trees.

As noted previously, as part of the 2020—2022 streetscape program, several street trees were planted along Franklin Road in the Village Center.

Franklin has been recognized as a Tree City since 2005. It is a designation by the National Arbor Day Foundation and Federal Forest Service that endorses the Village's commitment to maintaining a healthy tree canopy cover.

ZONING ORDINANCE: PARKING IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Following a parking study in 2011, ordinances were adopted to regulate the use of off-street parking. Plans for off-street parking are now subject to site plan review by the Planning Commission and approval by Village Council.

An effort was made to protect residential areas from visual clutter by restricting the numbers and types of vehicles which may be kept in driveways or parked on residential streets. For example, commercial vehicles may not be stored or parked in residential districts, other than for short periods of time, except in enclosed structures, as must any inoperable or unlicensed automobiles.

ZONING ORDINANCE: FENCES

A comprehensive ordinance was enacted to regulate the location, permeability, dimensions, and materials of which fences may be constructed. Amendments to the fence regulations were enacted in 2022 to allow taller garden fences.

ZONING ORDINANCE: SIGNAGE

A thorough revision of Franklin's Sign Ordinance was accomplished by the Village Council, Planning Commission and Historic Commission in order, primarily, to enhance the visual appeal of the Village Center; the Ordinance also was reworked to have stricter provisions with respect to temporary signs in residentially zoned areas throughout the Village. Amendments to the sign regulations were enacted in 2022 to bring them into compliance with recent case law, and to adjust the temporary sign regulations.

ZONING ORDINANCE: VILLAGE CENTER

Permitted uses within the C-1, Local Business District (parcels zoned which are solely located in the Village Center) were expanded to allow for a mixture of uses—specifically, residential use of second floors of buildings that would have only allowed for single use in the past. Additionally, outdoor dining at Village restaurants is expressly permitted.

SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

The site plan approval process was streamlined to eliminate initial submission to Village Council. Instead, site plans proceed directly to the Planning Commission for review after submission, making the process more efficient.

HUDA SCHOOL

The area surrounding the Huda School also saw significant improvement, which was enabled through the site plan review process. The Huda School applied for a site plan review to repave its parking lot, which evolved into an opportunity to rethink the layout of the parking lot and traffic flow. The efforts culminated in improved parking and a change in traffic flow patterns which benefited the surrounding area during peak use times. The building's exterior was also improved with new plantings, which not only created a visual enhancement of the property, but also served as a shield for neighboring homes from automobile lights that sometimes shined onto neighboring properties. Drainage concerns were also addressed during the process.

PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL ZONING DISTRICT

Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance were enacted in 2021 to create a new Public/Institutional Zoning District. This district is intended to encompass lands that are designated Public and Quasi-Public on the Future Land Use Map but are currently zoned Single Family Residential. The purpose and use of these lands is different from what is considered appropriate in residential zoning districts, so they should have their own stand-alone zoning district.

CHALLENGES TO VILLAGE CHARACTER

Despite existing efforts to maintain Franklin's character, a number of challenges remain, while balancing individuals' ability to enjoy their own properties and continue to establish the Village's desirable presence.

Teardowns and Out-of-Scale Building

Residential construction across the country has been trending towards larger and larger homes, and Franklin has not been immune to this trend. Out-of-scale construction can dwarf older and smaller neighboring homes in many neighborhoods. This is a concern both on unbuilt lots and in cases where older homes are torn down and replaced with much larger homes.

Additionally, the Village's ability to prevent lot splits is limited by State legislation. Within the minimum lot size requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, lot splits may be possible that would allow new construction to crowd existing homes.

The Zoning Ordinance was revised to tie building height to setbacks, limiting the height of buildings that could be built close to lot lines. Out-of-scale construction must be monitored and addressed through additional zoning revisions, if necessary.

Non-Residential Encroachment on Village Borders

Platted lots that have not been built upon located on the edges of the Village present tempting opportunities to commercial developers. This is particularly the case along Telegraph Road and near Northwestern Highway, which are heavily developed outside of the Village. While Franklin's location on these major roads makes the Village particularly desirable to developers, allowing commercial or other non-residential development on Franklin's edges would erode the distinct boundaries of the community; entering the Village would no longer be such a notable visual transition. This and past Master Plans have found that the public benefit is maximized by preserving the periphery properties for residential use.

Apart from the development pressures on periphery properties, various neighborhoods around Franklin's edges are disconnected from the Village Center due to a lack of access and the suburban-style road network, which is especially concerning for non-motorized travelers. Without a connected system of pathways that lead to the Village Center, neighborhoods along the periphery face a sense of disconnect from the community and have limited access opportunities.

Light and Noise Pollution

Some threats to Franklin's character are generally outside of the Village's control. Franklin's internal streets are low speed, and the Village's Outdoor Light Ordinance minimizes intrusive illumination, glare, or shadowing on adjacent properties. Light and noise from adjacent development outside the Village limits spills over into Franklin, given its proximity to such major thoroughfares as Telegraph Road, Northwestern Highway, and I-696. While these roads provide Franklin residents with excellent automobile access throughout the metropolitan area, this proximity also brings traffic noise and nighttime light pollution from street and parking lot traffic and lights. While these factors detract from the desired rural feel of living in Franklin, little if anything can be done to mitigate the sources.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAINTAINING VILLAGE CHARACTER

Maintenance and enhancement of Franklin's character is intertwined with other issues in the Village. Recommendations from other chapters in this Master Plan, such as creating walking paths along major roads, preparing a Landscape Master Plan, and preserving the Village Center's small independent businesses, contribute to Franklin's overall character. Both positive and negative factors should be considered when contemplating any such recommendations within the Master Plan. All Village character-based decisions should be done with sensitivity to the concerns of the neighborhoods, individual residents, and business owners.

1. Maintain residential uses along boundaries.

One of the goals of previous Master Plans is to "Maintain the integrity of the periphery of the Village so as to prevent intrusion or encroachment of intense development," which continues to be an important land use imperative. Franklin's municipal borders are the clearest and most sensible point at which to draw a clear distinction and notable transition into the Village. From a developer's standpoint, the Telegraph Road frontage, in particular, is a good place to consider commercial or other non-residential development.

Single-family homes already exist along the major roads within and around the periphery of Franklin, which demonstrates that unbuilt lots are well suited for development as currently zoned. Maintaining the perimeters of Franklin as single-family homes, in addition to the occasional vacant woodlots, and encouraging reinvestment in existing structures, will provide a better buffer for sound and light than more intense development will.

2. Encourage permanent preservation of open space.

The Village should pursue the preservation of natural open space to maintain mature tree cover. The benefits of mature tree cover include: (a) buffers from noise and light pollution, (b) habitat for wildlife, and (c) natural stormwater filtration.

When appropriate, the Village could work with property owners to acquire or seek conservation easements on individual lots where preservation efforts would provide important benefits. Owners may not wish to grant conservation easements without compensation. Compensation may include a combination of funding sources, including: (a) partial donation of development rights by the owner, (b) combined Village and neighborhood association contributions, and (c) outside funding sources.

The Village of Franklin's fiscal capacity to purchase land and development rights alone is limited; however, the Village's participation may be leverage for conservation easements efforts on strategic parcels. Easements on strategically located parcels could be used for pathways that connect neighborhoods and provide safe pedestrian and bicycle paths from neighborhoods to the Village Center.

3. Encourage a variety of housing styles.

Several homes have been built or undergone major renovations in the past two decades. The outcome is a broad variety of styles of architecture, from traditional to Avant Garde. Modern-day examples of building design coexist with older homes from every decade back to the mid-1800s. This mixture of housing styles, sizes, materials, and designs is a part of the Village's character. Such variety ought to be encouraged, for it adds interest to the community, in contrast to the dull sameness of housing in so many suburbs. Notwithstanding the great variety of housing, the rural characteristics of the Village are the threads of commonality that holds the neighborhoods together.

4. Design pathways to blend in the rural landscape.

A goal of this Plan is to develop pathways in strategic locations to connect neighborhoods throughout the Village. The purpose of pathways is to create a network of safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to move around the Village. Pathways should be designed to blend into the scenic rural landscape of the Village. Concrete is a suitable pathways material along major thoroughfares but not within neighborhoods.

5. Continue deed restriction updates.

Deed restrictions can be used to define and protect valued contributions to character at a more detailed level than the Zoning Code. They may be used to protect the Village's character with greater sensitivity to the concerns and property interests of neighborhood residents. The Village should continue to support neighborhoods in renewing and updating deed restrictions.

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Historic Areas: Appearance & Identity

VISION

The Village of Franklin is a peaceful, verdant enclave with safe, attractive neighborhoods, and a charming, historic downtown. The edges of Franklin are tree-lined and filled with native plants and grasses. Pathways provide easy access to the Village Center. The winding, tree-lined streets have well-kept homes in a variety of architectural styles spanning the early nineteenth century to the present. Homes with their outbuildings in the Historic District have been preserved by Ordinance and preservation easements.

The echo of Franklin's rural past can be seen in remaining barns and paddocks. The landscape is soft with natural features such as wetlands, woodlands, ravines, streams, open spaces, and abundant wildlife. The vibrant Village Center has an attractive, unified look, with architecture and landscaping reminiscent of the nineteenth century and is filled with locally owned specialty shops, restaurants, and services. Government buildings, the library, the church, a private school, and the Village Green all contribute to the small town charm that is Franklin. Consistent efforts to preserve Franklin's historic buildings and landscapes have made Franklin's unique character and sense of place possible.[1]

PRESENT APPEARANCE OF THE VILLAGE CENTER

The entrance to the Village Center from the north is sudden and formal because of the quick transition from tree-lined roads to the Village Center buildings. The entrance to the Village Center from the south is also subtle, but gradual, even though the Village Center arguably begins with the vast Village Green and its community buildings. Some of the more distinct elements of the Village Center include:

- Varying building sizes and side-yard setbacks, or separation between the buildings, contributes to the sense of intimate scale.
- A mixed-use development pattern that appears "organic" and authentic, which makes the district layout unexpected and not typical of other Southeast Michigan downtowns.
- "Village" atmosphere reinforced by varying front-yard setbacks and a relatively narrow main street (Franklin Road).
- Wide array of architectural resources from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid- twentieth century (both residential and commercial types).
- Historic ancillary buildings in rear yards. These buildings are visible between the main commercial buildings on Franklin Road, which gives an impression of space and reinforces the notion of Franklin as a Village (rather than a dense "city" with an unbroken street wall). The visual porosity between the building frontages enriches the pedestrian experience and gives the impression of an evolution from a rural farming village to a commercial core with modern amenities.

1 While this Chapter primarily addresses the area commonly known as the "Village Center" or the historic downtown area, including both businesses and homes located in the Historic District, the general principles expressed are applicable to the Village as a whole and should be viewed and applied as such.

FRANKLIN'S BUILT HERITAGE

The built environment plays a vital role in how Franklin is perceived by residents and visitors alike. The built form is the first indication of a community's character, as experienced and seen by people traveling to and through the area. If the most visible locations in Franklin are not desirable or attractive, it is unlikely visitors will want to find out what assets the community has to offer. Preservation of the Village's built heritage offers a visual reminder of the past, which can serve to bolster pride in a shared community heritage. In this way, proper and innovative management of the built environment plays a vital role in the economic, social, and political vitality of Franklin. Tools that can enhance the positive view of the built environment include:

- Adequate green space and amenities encourage people to be outside enjoying the Village year-round, which requires a system of pathways as well as publicly conserved open spaces.
- The ability for all users to move safely and conveniently throughout the Village on a network of sidewalks and pathways.
- Streets that are easy to cross with signs and crosswalks designed to enhance the pedestrian experience and retain historic character.
- Consideration of the addition of benches, bike racks, trash and recycling containers, public restrooms, public art, and drinking fountains to enhance outdoor gathering spaces and create a sense of "place."



Adding up the Details

Public. The Village's public investment in its infrastructure includes thousands of small details: pressure sewer covers, catch basins, curb and ramp details, sidewalk paving textures, street trees, utility lines, traffic signs and signals, fencing, and many more. The cumulative effect of these details, in conjunction with more substantial investments in public buildings and spaces, defines the standard of quality for Franklin's built environment. Public buildings should set an example by defining a standard for high quality, creative site design, energy efficiency, and green building techniques.

Private. New construction and building renovation include numerous details that impact the design quality of the Village. Gas and electric meters, electrical transformers, heating, ventilating and air conditioning equipment, mailboxes, barrier-free access ramps, refuse and recycling facilities, and other service features can seriously detract from a building's appearance if not properly located or screened. While the nature and purpose of such equipment imposes certain requirements on their location, these details are often added to a building at the end of the process, leaving few creative options. Whenever possible, these service features should be integrated into the building and site design from the beginning so as not to distract from the quality of a building or its site.

Gateways. Gateways create a "sense of arrival" for those entering the Village. This feeling can be created with appropriate signs and landmarks, plantings, buried utility lines, important views, and distinctive pavement and architectural elements at intersections. Each gateway to the Village or its neighborhoods should reflect the particular characteristics of its setting and provide a welcoming introduction.

Utility Lines. Overhead utilities, including electric, telephone, and cable, present a dominant visual element throughout many parts of the Village. This is especially concerning where street trees and other streetscape improvements are desired.

Many large trees have been radically pruned to accommodate power lines. Consequently, utility lines dominate the view along some roads, rather than the mature tree canopy. Unfortunately, the Village found during the 2020-2022 streetscape project that it would presently be prohibitively expensive to place the utility lines underground or relocate them behind buildings.

PROTECTING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Village of Franklin has retained a substantial number of buildings which were used as homes and businesses by the early settlers of the area. Many of the buildings in the Village Center date back to Franklin's early period of growth, as discussed in Chapter Two, Inventory & Analysis. A number of outlying historic home sites are scattered throughout the Village, though perhaps the most well-known of Franklin's historic buildings, the Cider Mill, is located just outside of the Village boundaries, on the north side of Fourteen Mile Road.

As the Village has grown through the twentieth century, this historic landscape has faced continued incremental change. Some historic buildings have been demolished for contemporary construction or lost to neglect. Additionally, two historic residences have lost their designation as historically contributing buildings due to multiple modifications. Historic landscapes have also been lost to road construction, parking, modern landscaping tastes, and utility work.

Recognizing the losses taking place, Village residents acted to preserve some of Franklin's remaining historic landscape several decades ago. In 1969, the Village Center and several significant buildings, including the Cider Mill, were placed on the newly created National Register of Historic Places. This action set up a process for controlling change as well as providing access to tax benefits to owners of historic buildings.

In 1971, the Village Center area became the first local Historic District registered in the State of Michigan. This designation mandated that the Franklin Historic District Commission review any exterior modifications to buildings according to the US Department of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation and Renovation. Thus, the demolition or out-of-character alteration of important historic structures was checked.

By taking advantage of these tools as they became available, the Village of Franklin has managed to continue to preserve a number of its early historic buildings, including both commercial and residential properties, as well as land sites such as the Village Green and cemetery.

Historic District Design Guidelines

One of the most significant recommendations of the 1997 Master Plan Update with regards to Franklin's character was to "prepare detailed, illustrated design guidelines for business and residential properties within the Village Center." The guidelines were intended to provide owners with clear and specific information on historic preservation and renovations within the Village. In early 2006, the Village Historic District Commission (HDC) created a 40-page manual, ***Village of Franklin Historic District Design Guidelines***, which sought to establish a resource to facilitate this objective.

The document provides a detailed history of the Historic District, the role of the Historic District Commission, and concrete guidelines, according to the US Department of the Interior Standards, for historic preservation and renovation.

The Design Guidelines for the Historic District are informative and help interpret the Standards. In order to accommodate elements beyond the Standards that are still critical to maintaining the character of the District, it may be beneficial to look at how the Design Guidelines might be tailored specifically for the commercial district. For instance, because of the many ancillary structures behind the main buildings, HDC review has occasionally addressed the backs (non-primary) façades of the main buildings.

An addendum to more clearly specify what is expected on rear façades and auxiliary elements (such as dumpsters, enclosures, fences, HVAC pads, utility connections) could provide this clarification. An addendum can also address preferred sign design, lighting design and positions, site designs, and landscaping. The National Associations of Historic Preservation Committee's (NAHPC) online resource library of Design Guidelines can assist in the preparation of a commercial-specific addendum. NAHPC and statewide Historic Preservation Commission associations have annual conferences and email list serves that can provide networking opportunities and forums for additional insight.

Franklin's Historic Character

Effective preservation of Franklin's character requires a definition of the elements that combine to create it and an identification of the modern influences and changes that have affected it. These elements include the architecture of individual buildings, the size and position of buildings on their lots and their relationships to other buildings, landscaping, the character of the streets, signage, outbuildings, and other visual aspects of current Village life that helps define the character of Franklin. These elements that shape the Village's identity and appearance also include the types of facilities, both public and private, located within the Historic District. Modern influences on Franklin's character have typically manifested themselves in numerous ways, such as the use of more modern architectural styles, building materials, and signage. Some of these changes are the result of voluntary action by the Village and landowners, and in other cases, they are the result of governmental regulation of roads and buildings.

The architecture of individual buildings is the best defined and most readily identifiable of these elements and is protected in the Village Center by the Historic District Commission's review process. Franklin's historic buildings represent various architectural styles which were popular between the initial settlement in the 1820s and the mid-twentieth century. The ***Design Guidelines*** document presents characteristic features of these styles, listing Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Vernacular, American Foursquare, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman as dominant styles throughout that period.

Of particular significance to the historic character of Franklin is the existence of a Village Center area that includes a complete set of municipal and community facilities harmoniously intermingled with a variety of businesses and residences. Collectively, these governmental, community, commercial, and residential components help maintain Franklin's identity as an independent and autonomous nineteenth century village. Existing community facilities include village administrative offices, a police station, fire department, post office, library, park, sledding hill, tennis courts, community church and playground, cemetery, private school, and the Kreger buildings. The Kreger buildings consist of a pigsty repurposed as public restrooms, a mid-eighteenth-century Greek Revival farmhouse repurposed as a Community Center, and a barn used as a large gathering space for Village activities. Based on an inventory conducted in mid-2021, businesses included five specialty retailers, a bank, seven service-type businesses (beauty salon, nail, and spa, etc.), two dentists, a full-service restaurant, an automobile gas and service station, real estate agency, personal fitness trainer, interior design firm, hairdresser, and two law offices. The Franklin Office Center, built in the contemporary style in the 1970s, is set behind trees and a meadow on the north end of the Village.

Most of the buildings in the Village Center have been repurposed over time. The Congleton Buggy Works is now the Franklin Grill (32760 Franklin Road). At the north end of the Village, the Peter Van Every house (ca. 1837) provides space for four businesses. The Village Plaza was once a gas station and now houses several commercial and retail businesses. The Franklin Hotel (ca. 1830), located south of Evelyn Court, houses four businesses.

Some buildings have been moved from their original locations, such as the library and the Kreger buildings, to the Village Center.

Only three new developments have occurred in the Village Center since the 1970s: the Ravine's condominiums, the Franklin Office Center, and the police station.

In addition to the use and architecture of the buildings themselves, there is a historic aspect to site design. Within the Village Center, buildings are mostly stand-alone structures, set back varying distances from Franklin Road, but close enough together to support walkability. Parking, a necessary part of today's lifestyle, is mostly located behind or to the side of buildings, maintaining a human-scaled street design.

Within Franklin's Historic District residential neighborhoods, there are nineteenth century residences of various styles as noted above. Outside of the downtown area are scattered nineteenth century farm buildings that provide a reminder of the rural character that Village residents have repeatedly identified as a valued trait in past Master Plan updates. While these historic farms have since been platted and largely developed, a number of landscape features maintain the historic feel throughout the Village:

- Natural features, such as wetlands, woodlands, ravines, streams, and wildlife.
- Mature trees and shrubs lining streets and found throughout lots.
- The presence of small horse barns and paddocks.
- Large, extensively landscaped lots around homes.
- Abundant natural open spaces.
- "Soft" boundaries between lawns and natural spaces, created by unmanicured shrubs and other vegetation.

Some of these residential features have been preserved by deed restrictions that regulate accessory buildings, tree removal, fences, building materials, and setbacks,. Deed restrictions are often more stringent than zoning regulations. A report prepared by the Village in 1997 reviewed existing deed restrictions, some of which date to the 1930s.

Among the concerns noted was that the deed restrictions typically did not include maximum standards. For instance, minimum home sizes are mandated in several

neighborhoods but Franklin now more commonly faces home construction or renovations that are too large for the lot on which they are situated rather than too small. The report also suggested that updated or new deed restrictions should be discussed with neighborhood groups to set aside natural open space on lots or restrict lot splits.

Included in the rural feel of the neighborhoods is the absence of sidewalks, which the Village Charter forbids in residential areas, except on Franklin Road and Thirteen Mile Road. As discussed in Chapter Nine, Traffic & Circulation, internal neighborhood streets have low enough traffic levels and speed limits to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to safely share the road with automobiles. Some residents have expressed an interest in side paths that would allow pedestrians to walk or bicycle safely next to major streets and that would have a more natural, unobtrusive design than standard concrete sidewalks. A proposal for the construction of safety paths on Thirteen Mile, Fourteen Mile, and Franklin Road was defeated by voters in 2009. A Charter amendment approved in May 2021 provided the opportunity for sidewalks to be constructed on Franklin Road, from the Village Center south to the boundary with Southfield. (Chapter XI, Section 5, of the Village Charter now reads: "The Council shall not have the power to construct any new sidewalks in residential areas, except that construction of new sidewalks shall be allowed along Franklin Road and Thirteen Mile Road.")



THREATS TO HISTORIC CHARACTER

The balance of current tastes and trends—often out of character with a strictly rural landscape—with the preservation of the Village's valuable historic heritage is an ongoing effort. The creation of the Historic District was only one piece of that balancing act. A number of issues and concerns currently impacting the Village's historic character must be addressed.

Architectural Style

Within the Historic District, review of changes to building exteriors provides for the preservation of this architectural heritage, protecting many of the most significant historic structures.

The review process for buildings outside of the Historic District is not as thorough, relying primarily on a single design compatibility requirement. The Building Official must compare the design and position of exterior features of dwellings within 1,000 feet of a proposed home, so as to promote compatibility and harmony.

The ***Historic Design Guidelines*** and Historic District Commission members may serve as a useful resource for property owners outside of the Historic District who wish to build or renovate structures in a historic character, but this is a voluntary and informal process. Of particular concern is the replacement of older homes with new structures that are out of scale with the lot and with other homes in the neighborhood. As the average size of newly constructed homes continues to trend significantly larger, the current Zoning Ordinance standards may not be sufficient to preserve the desired scale of the neighborhood.

Another means of maintaining contextual compatibility would be the addition of form-based elements to the Zoning Ordinance. This style of zoning concerns itself primarily with the physical characteristics of a building—its shape, orientation, and relation to its neighbors—rather than with the use of the building, and has gained popularity as a tool in traditional neighborhood development. Since physical form is the most important aspect of historic preservation, form-based zoning for the Village should be strongly considered.

Site Design Characteristics

Some of the non-architectural aspects of historic character can be guided through zoning and the site plan review process for new development. While the Village does not expect much growth, developers have periodically expressed interest in new residential or commercial development, particularly around the edges of the Village. Franklin has repeatedly stressed the desire for a distinct edge separating the Village, through the maintenance of an established visual boundary (such as green space and residential neighborhoods) from the more modern, suburban character of adjacent communities.

New development around the perimeter of the Village could blur this edge, and the Zoning Ordinance should be used to ensure that the appropriate character is maintained. As most of the perimeter is currently zoned for residential use, any commercial development would require both a rezoning and a site plan review, providing two opportunities to ensure the continuance of these buffer zones.

Some of the site plan issues that can be addressed through zoning are active concerns even in the Village Center, where building placement and parking locations are not as pressing as in new development.

Signs that are not consistent with the historic nature of the Village Center are a concern and must be constantly monitored for conformity to HDC guidelines, as well as the Village's Sign Ordinance. Signs are necessary for businesses to communicate with potential customers, but the design of a sign can be tailored to the environment to ensure appropriate style, proportions, and character. Considering the low speed of traffic through the Village Center, businesses do not need the same large, attention grabbing signs that a business set back from the road in a suburban strip mall would. The Village's Sign Ordinance, updated as recently as 2022, seeks to address the needs of both business owners and historic preservation. In an effort to facilitate attractive signage, property owners are encouraged to work with Main Street Franklin in creating appropriate signage.

Screening and Landscaping

Screening and landscaping in the Village Center are also concerns. Parking, dumpsters, electrical transformers, and other exterior utilities are part of modern business functioning, but in some places, these modern site elements clash with and detract from the overall feel. Properly screening these features from the street and from nearby residential or recreational areas could improve commercial buildings' contribution to Franklin's historic appearance.

Both natural and landscaped features throughout Franklin are an essential part of the Village's character. Without maintenance, however, these features deteriorate.

In some neighborhoods, cutting of mature trees, fence styles, and other landscape characteristics are limited by deed restriction and by Village Ordinances. Utility and road maintenance often takes a toll on mature roadside trees, and invasive species can directly attack native plant life, as the emerald ash borer has decimated mature ash populations, or slowly out-compete and replace native plants, as in the case of Common Buckthorn. These types of threats mean that maintaining a traditionally Michigan natural environment will require more active planning and management than is provided by standard controls on tree cutting and fencing. Franklin's hazardous tree removal and pruning program, undertaken in 2013, hopefully aided in controlling invasive plant species. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) provides information on Michigan native species that can be incorporated in future landscaping projects.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of potential Ordinance changes, programs, and other actions could help protect and reinforce the Village of Franklin's historic character. Several of these options are detailed below.

1. Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance.

As the Zoning Ordinance is the most basic control on development in the Village of Franklin, it should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it encourages the type of development necessary to preserve Franklin's character. The Ordinance should be examined for consistency with the Village's goals, such as goals dealing with the footprint of proposed new construction or renovations.

- Off-street parking and loading requirements should be reviewed for issues such as the location of parking on a site and the quantity of parking mandated—requiring too much parking can affect the character of the site; requiring too little results in overflow.
- Residential design standards should be reviewed to determine how they have taken form when applied, and what changes might address concerns about "out of scale" construction, despite technical compliance with the existing Zoning Ordinance.
- Area, height, bulk, and setback requirements for commercial development should be reviewed against existing structures, to encourage compatible development.
- Screening requirements should be reviewed to minimize the visual impact of rubbish containers, external utility enclosures, and parking areas for commercial uses.
- Sign design requirements should be reviewed to allow sufficient yet more historically accurate signage for businesses. Sanctions for nonconforming signs must be more strictly enforced.

2. Create a landscape master plan.

Since so much of Franklin's character is in its natural features and landscaping, a Landscape Master Plan could help identify related priorities within the Village. Such a plan could provide for maintenance of public areas, guide new development to be compatible with the Village's character, and serve as a resource for individual homeowners and business owners seeking to landscape their own properties. Areas of emphasis could include:

- Define a unifying landscaping character for the Village Center, including consideration of trees native to the area, canopy trees, seasonal flowers, and screening of parking areas.
- Use landscaping to define the entryways to Franklin along major roads, particularly Village Center entry points along Franklin Road.
- Rehabilitate the river valley with native plants.
- Provide information for residents seeking to maintain woodlots and open spaces in good condition.
- Use landscaping to create "soft boundaries" against hard elements such as utility equipment, parking lots, etc.

Largely because of its historic character and layout, the landscape in the Village Center is different from the rest of the Village. At the same time, the landscape in the Village as a whole stands apart from surrounding communities because of the preservation of natural and wooded areas and the distinctive treatment of more formal landscaping.

3. Consider education and increased code enforcement.

While some of the zoning revisions mentioned earlier could help ensure new construction, or significant expansions, fits into the character of Franklin, ongoing care of existing properties is an additional concern

If the century old historic buildings are not properly maintained, the Village Center will begin to look shabby and deteriorated. Even newer commercial districts require continual investment to remain competitive.

Code enforcement provides a means of mandating certain repairs, but code enforcement is not a panacea. A multi-faceted business-improvement program is needed, which should include a number of strategies to encourage businesspeople and landlords to take the initiative to upgrade their buildings, grounds, and businesses. Such strategies could include, but are not limited to, financing tools, grants for sign or façade upgrades, educational programs, fast-track approvals, and so forth. Educational programs could address such topics as building rehab options, technological innovations for revitalization of historic buildings, local regulations, Historic District standards, and modern techniques of retailing.

Homeowners outside of the Historic District, whose homes are historic in nature, should be encouraged to build or perform renovations according to the US Department of the Interior Standards. The ***Design Guidelines*** provide a good first step, by clearly defining historic design details and explaining the Standards. Further steps might be to sponsor homeowner consultations with architects or other experts experienced in renovating historic buildings, and provide a database of contractors who work with traditional building styles and materials, and are familiar with the US Department of Interior Standards. A booklet of contractors and architects who do this type of work is provided by the State Historic Preservation Office and is available in the Village Office. However, this resource needs to be better communicated to Village residents.

4. Educate the public about the potential benefits of applying for placement on the Natural Register of Historic Places.

The National Register listing is an honorary designation that comes with no restrictions and does not impose any review (binding or recommendatory) of contributing buildings, unless the building receives federal grants or permits (which is highly unlikely for private residences). Placement on the National Register does not protect against demolition or alteration, nor does it hinder the sale or reuse of a building. Structures on the National Register are eligible for preservation easements, which can be financially advantageous. The formation of a National Register district (which has no restrictions) is not the same as the formation of a local historic district (which does come with mandatory design review). The HDC or MSF's Design Committee can function as the primary point of contact for the public if there are questions.

Placement on the National Register of Historic Places offers protection for "great places," carries a distinct cachet, and protects public and private investment in real estate by buffering it from significant reductions in value.

Franklin's residential neighborhoods are filled with many mid-twentieth century resources Colonial Revival, Cape Cod, and ranch houses that enhance Franklin's bucolic, village-like atmosphere. The Franklin HDC can apply for grants to help fund surveys of these residential neighborhoods. The Main Street Franklin Design Committee, Historical Society, and HDC should partner to educate the community about benefits of a listing on the National Register.

5. Investigate the availability of tax incentives to promote historic preservation.

The Village and Main Street Franklin may consider studying the availability of tax incentives and preservation easements as a tool to increase historic preservation and economic development. Information on any such programs should be actively shared with the public.

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The Village Center

VISION OF THE VILLAGE CENTER IN THE FUTURE

The Village Center is the vibrant core of Franklin life. The carefully preserved nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings are filled with one-of-a-kind specialty retail shops, restaurants, a coffee house, an ice cream parlor, and other locally owned and operated services. Shoppers, children on bikes, families with strollers, joggers, and dog walkers are among the people enjoying Franklin's "sense of place" and the diverse amenities it provides.

Trees, perennials, seasonal flowers, native plantings, rain gardens, brick walks, benches, and human-scale historic buildings remind people of the nineteenth century village Franklin once was. Stately large trees on both sides of Franklin Road provide shade for pedestrians, replacing the unsightly utility lines.

Juxtaposed among and in proximity to the businesses are neighborhoods of carefully preserved nineteenth and early twentieth century homes. The Village Center is the location of the Village Administrative Offices, the Police and Fire Stations, the Library, the Franklin Community Church, and the Kreger buildings.

The Village Center is connected to all the residential areas by open spaces, pedestrian and bike paths and narrow, winding two-lane streets. Open spaces and paths follow natural features such as woods and the Franklin River. An integrated system of, bicycle routes, and pedestrian paths are increasingly competitive with individual automobiles as the preferred mode of travel, thus reducing the need for single-passenger automobiles.

Parking is largely out of view and contiguous behind buildings with trees, bushes, and flowers interspersing and softening the parking lots. Traffic is calm through the Village Center. People are comfortable and secure while shopping or participating in community events.

Gentle lighting enhances the nighttime experience in Franklin. The building fronts are architecturally illuminated with shielded ground lights. Where appropriate, signs are lit with subtle lighting. The display windows are creative and inviting. In the parking lots behind the east side of Franklin Road, appropriate lighting promotes the sense of safety.



In the fall, the Franklin Cider Mill visitors are beckoned towards the Village Center via sidewalks between the Cemetery and the Cider Mill. The ambiance of the Village Center is enjoyed by al fresco diners at the multiple full service restaurants. The Labor Day Round-Up and Franklinstein Frenzy attract families from all over to share in Franklin's charm.

All summer long, the Farmers Market on the Village Green serves residents and visitors alike with a cornucopia of locally sourced goods. Events such as Music on the Green and Movies on the Green encourage families to relax in the heart of the Village. The crack of a baseball bat and the thump of a tennis ball can be heard, as well as the chirp of the crickets and the chime of the church bells.

In winter, the skating rink and the sledding hill are alive with rosy-cheek children and their parents who might then head over to the coffee shop for some hot chocolate and conversation after a day out of doors. These activities all combine to create a strong sense of community within the Village.

The Historic District encompasses the Village Center, protecting and enhancing the historic buildings and landscapes. Vacant and underutilized land and buildings, such as barns, have been adaptively reused for housing and retail shopping.

Well-designed signs, benches and plantings all contribute to an attractive, unified appearance that respects the Village's architectural heritage and natural environment.

INTRODUCTION

Franklin's character and sense of place is celebrated—both locally and statewide. For instance, the first designated State Historic District in Michigan is in the Village. The Village's character has evolved over time by respecting historical development patterns and architecture; cultivating "community" in our neighborhoods; protecting valuable natural and recreational resources; and developing lively cultural events and activities. However, as Franklin continues to evolve, we must meet the challenges of accommodating future populations without destroying our character. Franklin's Village Center—considered the heart of the Village—is of primary importance; there, Franklin's sense of place, human-scale character and social opportunities are most fully expressed. It is where its residents go to vote and conduct governmental business, to educate themselves at the library, to attend services and events at the church, to visit the dentist, to see a lawyer, and to play a game of baseball. For a select few residents, the Village Center has even more personal significance, for they live there.

This chapter of the Master Plan deals with the Village Center in a general sense, while Chapter Six deals more specifically with the commercial element of the Center.



VILLAGE CENTER HISTORY: A CASE STUDY IN PIONEER SETTLEMENT

The Village of Franklin was established on land that was originally purchased in 1824 by Dillucena Stoughton and Elijah Bullock, both from Niagara County, New York.[1] The village grew with many settlers coming from the Detroit area. One of the first settlers, Dr. Ebenezer Raynale, gave Franklin its name in 1828. A business center was beginning to develop by 1830, adding many homes and businesses over the next few years, including blacksmith shops, buggy works, grist mills, taverns, hotels and a general store. Two mills were built, the first in 1837, to take advantage of the Rouge River's waterpower.

George Matthews became the first land developer in Franklin, buying part of Bullock's farm in 1833 and dividing it into lots. He also built what is now the Franklin Cider Mill, just north of the Village boundary. By 1855 there were approximately 20 dwellings of various patterns and proportions in the Village. After the railroad was constructed through Birmingham, bypassing the Village, Franklin grew relatively slow for the rest of the nineteenth century. The early history is important because it established the basic pattern of development that exists in the Village Center today.

The Franklin area, including Southfield and Bloomfield Townships, experienced influxes of residential development after WWI and more significantly, after WWII. Several new subdivisions were built in the areas surrounding the historic district. New homes, commercial and civic buildings and the Franklin Community Church were constructed within the Village Center area during this period.

History tells us that the Village Center is a collage of period styles conjured by constantly changing tastes and advances in building technology. For example, the style and technology from the early nineteenth century is most evident in the buildings and tight plat patterns in the heart of the Village Center along Franklin Road. This pattern dissipates the farther east or west of the Village Center one moves.

This is not only an interesting phenomenon to observe for historical purposes. These patterns of development from the nineteenth century lay the groundwork for planning and zoning today. Accordingly, the Zoning Ordinance's most intense classifications—the C-1, Local Business and R-3, Medium Density Residential—correspond roughly to the boundaries of the oldest plats in the Village Center.

1 A detailed history of the Village Center is provided in Chapter Two.



APPEARANCE AND IDENTITY

The Village Center boundaries are considered for planning purposes to be coterminous with the boundaries of the National Historic District. Thus, Village Center extends from the Huda School on the south to the Franklin Cider Mill at Fourteen Mile Road north. Within the Village Center are several additional landmarks, including the Broughton House, Police Station, Village Green, Library, and Fire Station.

This small district contains structures that display a variety of styles of architecture, reminiscent of the various periods of development. Century-old buildings are still in active use, providing links to the people and events of earlier times. Styles of architecture prevalent in the district include: Greek Revival (1830-1860), vernacular (1830-1890), Queen Anne (1880-1910), Colonial Revival (1880-1960), American Foursquare (1900-1930), and Craftsman (1905-1930). The mix of architectural styles is unified by a landscape of trees and shrubs.

The Main Street Franklin Resource Team Report in April 2010 made the following observations about the Village Center:

- As Franklin is a suburb within a large metropolitan area with many shopping districts, its commercial district does not have to provide the full spectrum of goods and services that more traditional commercial districts do.
- Downtown Franklin does not have a formal sensibility about it. Entry sequences are subtle and muted. One comes upon the downtown while meandering through the Village, which further defines the character of the district.
- The density of the district is low, relative to traditional commercial districts. Franklin's buildings are set back from the street and tend to be separate from each other. Traditional business districts are defined by solid blocks of buildings built to their lot lines, adjacent to each and the street. Downtown Franklin's porous character is more akin to traditional residential districts with each building roughly centered on its lot. As such, there is less visual distinction between Franklin's historic residential zones and its historic commercial core.
- The character of the commercial district changes from one end to the other, distinguishing it from other districts. The Village Green on one end provides sweeping vistas towards the Franklin Community Church, surrounded by governmental structures. As Franklin Road winds towards 14 Mile Road, the scale becomes more intimate. The building stock begins as a mixture of commercial and residential forms (regardless of use) but gradually progresses to solely commercial. The intersection of 14 Mile and Franklin Roads opens up again to large swaths of landscape. The Franklin Cider Mill terminates this end of the district.
- The building stock is comprised of a combination of detached houses and commercial buildings. The sense of scale has as much to do with the voids in the street wall as it does with the buildings themselves. This very unusual condition is unlike the vast majority of historic commercial districts.
- The detached nature of the buildings in the commercial district opens up views through and between the street wall to the structures and landscaping beyond. Several of the structures behind the frontage buildings are contributing resources in the National Register District.
- The commercial district enjoys larger parking lots behind the buildings on the east side of Franklin Road.
- Except for two small areas near the Post Office and in front of Tangerine Wine (32731 Franklin Rd.), there is no on-street parking.
- In the winter of 2009-10, through the efforts of several community groups, the mid-nineteenth century Kreger Buildings were saved from demolition and relocated to Village property. This action not only preserved a rare and significant architectural resource, but also added additional architectural definition to the south side of the Village Green (their new location).

VILLAGE CENTER CHARACTER

A workshop was held in 1993 regarding the Village Center. The following statements from that workshop summarize the character of the Village Center, then and now:

- The Village Center is human-scaled.
- It has a small village feeling.
- It has an inherent "rural" quality.
- There is a strong sense of historic continuity in the Village Center.

Effective preservation of the character of the Village Center requires the identification of elements that combine to make up the physical environment, together with an understanding of the evolutionary change affecting their existence.

In the Village Center, a number of what were originally historic residential structures have been adapted to commercial and office uses. "Newer" buildings have introduced the "Colonial Revival" style of architecture to the Village and mid-century is now considered historic.

Most recently, contemporary structures not related to the nineteenth or early twentieth century Village character have been constructed adjacent to the Village Center in the form of residential condominiums and an office building. The mix of building styles contributes to the eclectic nature of the Village.

Changes in landscape features and decorative elements have followed changes in land use and architectural styles. Signs, lamp posts, walkways, fences, and landscape materials have been added to sites in the Village Center with seemingly little regard for the overall character of the district. While some of these elements support the original Village character, others detract from it.

The 1997 Master Plan analyzed and summarized Village Center character as being either essential, simulated, or changed. This classification has validity today and is presented below.

The ***essential character*** consists primarily of the historic architectural and landscape features that are still evident in the Village and are largely responsible for its distinction and appeal, both past and present. Features of this character include:

An architectural heritage unique to Michigan and worthy of all efforts to ensure preservation and maintenance.

- Buildings set back from the road at varying distances in a pattern characteristic of early settlement.
- Commercial uses sometimes face non-commercial uses across Franklin Road.
- Front lawns, mature shrubs, and trees enhance the environment of the Village Center.
- The substantial depth of the original lots that has allowed activities generated at rear doors of commercial and other uses to be kept at some distance from abutting residential properties.



One way to preserve essential character is through adaptive reuse of historic structures, which has aided Franklin in maintaining and contributing to its sense of place. This has been a prevalent and long standing tradition in the Village. Examples include the following:

- The Congleton Carriage Shop is now the Franklin Grill and Tavern (32760 Franklin Rd.).
- The Broughton House is now the Village Offices.
- Bullocks Tavern, once a jeweler, hardware store, bookstore, and barbershop, is now Tangerine Wine.
- Odd Fellows Hall burned in 1872 and the building was rebuilt in 1900 to house Macabees Hall. Today, it occupied by Driven by Lisa MacDonald, Personal Trainer (32652 Franklin Rd.).
- Methodist-Protestant Church, Franklin's first church, is now a private residence.
- The Franklin Hotel is now occupied by four businesses.

Simulated character occurs when construction of new buildings is designed to look historic and leads to the creation of new "old" character. The new "Colonial Revival" architectural style structures are included in this category. Taken to the extreme, this simulated character would produce a theme-park type environment of contemporary structures designed to present an image of historic character.

Contemporary late-twentieth century development reflects a ***changed character*** that is not incompatible with the Village Center as long as individual sites are widely-dispersed, located in out-of-the-way areas, blended with architectural features to prevent less visual disruption, or effectively and creatively screened and enhanced by greenery, if appropriate. The shape, scale, details, colors, materials, and landscape elements reflect little or nothing of the historic nature of the Village and are readily apparent as foreign. If the historic character of the Village is to be maintained, contemporary changed character development should be discouraged.

Characteristics of this category of development include:

- Removal of existing historic architectural and landscape elements.
- Introduction of metal and glass as primary building materials.
- Vehicular, rather than pedestrian, focus to land uses.
- Widening of Franklin Road.







ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There have been several accomplishments in the Village Center since 2007, including the following:

- **2008:** Village Council authorizes participation in the Main Street Oakland County program.
- **2008-2010:** The Kreger Buildings are saved from demolition and moved onto Village property.
- **2009:** Farmhouse Coffee and Ice Cream (32644 Franklin Rd.) opens with an exterior design from Main Street Oakland County (the Farmhouse has been replaced by Madeleine's French Patisserie and Market).
- **2011:** Main Street Design Charrette is held with a focus on a vision for the Village Center.
- **2011:** First Farmers Market held.
- **2012:** Village Plaza receives a façade grant from Main Street Franklin (design courtesy of Main Street Oakland County).
- **2012:** Kreger pigsty is repurposed as public restrooms.
- **2013:** Kreger House is available for small group meetings as a community center.
- **2013:** Village Plaza redesigns its parking lot and installs a rain garden, designed by the Main Street Franklin Design Committee and funding from the Village Major Road fund and a County grant.
- **2013:** The BP gas station (32725 Franklin Rd.) receives a façade grant.
- **2020:** Village enacted a business license ordinance that requires annual inspection.
- **2020-2022:** Village implements Franklin Road streetscape program, which includes paving of Franklin Road in the Village Center, the addition of curbs, sidewalks, and streetlamps, and the installation of street trees and other landscaping.



RELEVANT ISSUES FOR THE VILLAGE CENTER

Numerous planning efforts, supported by public engagement sessions, have reaffirmed the visions and views of the Village Center.

2005 Master Plan Meeting

At the October 6, 2005, Master Plan Meeting, the Village Center was identified as one of the Ten Main Issues. Participants cited the need for more businesses, more foot traffic, more community activities, more enforcement of ordinances for absentee landlords, and the possibility of a special character zone for frontage parcels along Franklin Road.



2011 Design Charrette

Over three days in August 2011, a Design Charrette was conducted by Main Street Oakland County. Participants recommended that any alterations to Franklin's physical appearance should be consistent with the Village's long standing early settlement character of informal landscape design: mature vegetation, informal paths, and large open areas interweaving between commercial and residential uses. Some minor adjustments are needed to achieve this goal. Additional conclusions from the Charrette included:

CIRCULATION

- Calm traffic.
- More crosswalks, specifically at Evelyn Ct., Vincennes/ Ravine, Wellington/German Mill, and Carol.

IMPROVED LIGHTING

- Definition between roads and pedestrian paths with an informal design.
- Signage that is informative, high quality and scaled to the commercial site.

PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

- Informal in design and incorporate a variety of materials.
- Desire to have paths on both sides of Franklin Road, extending from the Cider Mill to the Village Hall, but not at the loss of landscape or Village character.
- Paths on the east side of Franklin Road need improvement.
- Connect parking lots with an informal, landscaped pathway system.

LANDSCAPE

- Descriptions of ideal landscaping include "informal and natural" to "scruffy, shabby, and weedy".
- Keep the open green space at 14 Mile and Franklin Road as a "meadow".
- Need landscape enhancement plan.
- Reestablish the tree canopy and add more flowers and shrubs.

ARCHITECTURE

- Preserve architecture context and character.
- Improve building façades.
- Focus on adaptive reuse of barns and outbuildings instead of new infill.

PARKING

- Parking is mostly private but governed by the Village Zoning Ordinance. It was strongly expressed that private landowners should consider that Village parking should be shared.
- Maintain vegetation and landscaping in parking lots.
- Define parking spaces without conventional surface striping, i.e. landscaping and fencing.
- Improve parking circulation at Market Basket (now Driven by Lisa MacDonald, Personal Trainer).
- Develop pedestrian paths linking the parking lots even when vehicle access is not possible.
- Develop parking lots with permeable surfaces and reduce the asphalt / concrete.

2013 Public Forum for the 2015 Master Plan

On December 4, 2013, a public forum was held at the Franklin Community Church to discuss the vision for the Village of Franklin. A strong majority of participants indicated the current goals and objectives, as presented in the 2007 Master Plan, remained relevant and those which have yet to be accomplished should be pursued.

Guided Growth

Development pressures and changing demands threaten to alter the appearance of the built environment in the Village Center. While it is important to preserve the unique historic character of the Village, careful changes must be embraced to prevent stagnation and decline.

New or expanded civic and cultural facilities must complement the essential character of the Village, as is evident in the recent addition to the Franklin-Bingham Farms Fire Department station, and moving and adaptively reusing the Kreger Buildings next to the Village Office. Buildings can also be sited and or landscaped so as to minimize their visual impact on the overall character of the Village Center; a good example of this is the police station which is tucked into a hillside behind the Broughton House.

By learning from previous development and staying mindful of the effects of new construction on a historic area, the needs of today's residents can be fulfilled while respecting the heritage of centuries that is inherent to the Village Center.

The local government can actively promote the preservation of the ancillary structures in the Village Center as an example of how to preserve and enhance the historic ethic. Originally constructed as unheated stables, barns, carriage houses, or garages, these structures may be among the only tangible (and certainly the most visible) links to Franklin's equestrian past. They greatly contribute to the character of the district and are often visible from the street. They can be effectively rehabilitated into small retail spaces for seasonal use or into incubators for new retail businesses by furring out the interior walls for insulation and by turning the vehicular openings into window walls that have the appearance of large doors.

Walkability of the downtown—a deficiency identified in previous Master Plans—has been addressed by the 2020-2022 Franklin Road streetscape program. Sidewalks have been constructed on both sides of Franklin Road in the Village Center, and a sidewalk extends along the east side of the road south to Thirteen Mile Road. This sidewalk is planned to eventually extend further south to the boundary with the City of Southfield.

Even though the Franklin Cider Mill is located just outside of the Village boundary, it is an inseparable part of Franklin's identity and a major contributing building to Franklin's National Register District. The streetscape program improved pedestrian access to the Cider Mill.

Destination: Franklin

Driving north on Franklin Road offers an opportunity to panoramically present the Village Center to visitors. Driving over the crest of the hill by the cemetery you descend into **"The Town that Time Forgot."**

Attracting visitors to the Village Center as a destination could help to strengthen the economic base of Franklin, providing the means to fund historic preservation initiatives or Village-initiated infrastructure projects. Carefully-designed wayfinding signage and clear non-motorized connections through the Village Center from the cemetery to the cider mill could encourage visitors and residents alike to leave their cars behind and experience the Village as the early settlers did: by human power.

Village Center Residential

An important visual cue in the nineteenth-century character of the Village Center is the presence of residences among commercial and civic uses. Although a few residences remain, several nineteenth-century residences along Franklin Road have been converted over the years to commercial use.

Among the remaining residences along Franklin Road a dichotomy exists. Some of the homes are stately in their appearance, with tasteful landscaping and towering trees. Other houses are heavily landscaped to buffer the private space within from the public world of the Village Center.

Within the Village Center, but not fronting on Franklin Road, there is a charming historic neighborhood with more nineteenth and early twentieth century homes, many of which have been tastefully restored and maintained. The juxtaposition of the homes, the fascinating architecture and landscaping, and the scale of development contribute to this being a very appealing, walkable neighborhood.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen the Village Center as a destination by promoting its historic and cultural attributes.

- Continue to support Main Street Franklin and its Four Point Approach.
- Continue to support community activities, such as the Garden Walk, which is sponsored by the Garden Club, and activities sponsored by the Franklin Library and Historical Society.
- Continue to support retail events such as the Franklinstein Frenzy and Sip, Shop, and Stroll.
- Continue to support Franklin Community Association activities such as the Labor Day Parade and Round-Up, Music and Movies on the Green and the Farmers Market.

2. Protect and maintain the diverse architecture of residential structures in the Village Center.

- Encourage the preservation of existing building styles which currently comprise the Village Center.
- Encourage landscaping that echoes historic treatments and creates a sense of unity throughout the Village Center.

3. Preserve the essential historic and rural-like character of the Village Center.

- Encourage visitors and residents alike to use non-motorized forms of transportation in the Village Center.
- Create clear connections (sidewalks, paths, alleys) among activity centers throughout the Village Center and to the Franklin Cider Mill.
- Maintain existing zoning and use of essential character sites unless (a) there is sufficient Village demand for change, and (b) the change conforms to adopted Village plans and is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- Protect existing setbacks along Franklin Road from encroachment by building additions or automobiles, including parking areas.
- Review proposed building changes for compatibility with historic development in terms of scale, materials, and location.

4. **Define desirable design treatments for front setbacks including small picket or wrought iron fences, and light standards and street signs that are compatible with the existing character.**

5. **Preserve the Village Center context when contemplating changes in land use or additions to structures.**

   The scale, materials, and arrangement of structures and landscape should relate to those of the older buildings in the Village. Proposed changes must be reviewed and approved by the Historic District Commission.

6. **Prevent Village Center expansion onto the steeper slopes of the valley of the Franklin branch of the Rouge River.**

   The woodlots and vegetation masses in this area should be protected.

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The Village Center: Commercial

VISION

The Village Center is the core of what many people, especially those residing outside of the Village, consider to be the essence of Franklin. The carefully preserved nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings are filled with one of a kind, owner-operated, specialty retail shops, as well as a number of fine service establishments. Restaurants, a coffee house, a tea room, a bakery, and an ice cream parlor create gathering spaces for both residents and visitors. Proprietors and employees of locally owned and operated businesses greet customers by name and treat them like family.

Trees, perennials, seasonal flowers, native plantings, rain gardens, sidewalks, benches, and human-scale historic buildings are inviting and beckon passersby to stop and explore the rich retail and service environment. Parking is largely out of view and contiguous behind the buildings with easy access and egress. Traffic is calm but steady through the Village Center and people are comfortable and secure while shopping.

Since the Village Center is connected to all the residential areas by pedestrian paths and bicycle routes, residents can easily access the shops and services without the necessity of a vehicle. Merchant, Village, and organization-sponsored events are well attended. Wayfinding signs, especially those located near the Franklin Cider Mill, encourage exploring.

Gentle, indirect lighting enhances the nighttime experience. The retail display windows are creative and inviting. Ancillary buildings like the barns have been adaptively reused for housing and retail shopping. The historic buildings are well maintained.

There is a robust retail mix and business recruitment is easy in the charming, historic, and walkable Village Center.

CONTEXT

Downtown Franklin has a small cadre of excellent retail businesses that provide a foundation for building a stronger retail destination. Greater retail space could be obtained through the conversion of barns and outbuildings to commercial uses, by building sensitively designed mixed-use infill, and by converting first-floor office space to retail or restaurant space. Parking and pedestrian amenities must be maintained to assure the success of current and prospective businesses. Upkeep of buildings is essential if Franklin is to attract quality retailers.

The community's ability to build a more active downtown is uncertain. Strict use of zoning and historic codes has helped Franklin maintain a strong sense of place but, in doing so, may have limited the reuse of some historic structures. Moving forward, the vitality of downtown will benefit from site and structural improvements designed to be contextually sensitive—perhaps, even, informed by an urban design plan which emphasizes thoughtful adaptive reuse. For a context sensitive design plan to be effectively applied to downtown Franklin, business and resident stakeholders will need to provide significant input and their informed consent.

In **Rural by Design**, Randall Arendt notes that "...in order to be successful, town centers possess both a strong ***civus*** (town hall, commons, post office, churches, etc.) and a healthy retail base." The Village Center has survived for so many years and thrived in part because of its combination of public, retail, service, and other uses.

There is no question that the Franklin Village Center possesses a strong ***civus***, with the presence of the Village Office, Village Green, Library, Post Office, Kreger Buildings, Police and Fire Station, and FCA owned recreational facilities within the Village Center. Whether there is a healthy retail base is one of the primary concerns of this portion of the Plan. An inventory conducted in June 2021 revealed there are 37 non-residential uses in the Village Center. Only 7 (18.9%) are commercial (retail, gas station, restaurant). The retail businesses supply specialty goods, gifts, and boutique items.

Another seven businesses are service-oriented, including a beauty salon, nail and spa establishment, personal trainer, and cleaners. Nine of the businesses (24.3%) are professional offices, consisting of dental and doctor's offices, law offices, interior designer, real estate office, and a bank. Public and quasi-public uses account for 13.5% of the non-residential uses in the Village Center.

Perhaps of greatest significance, the inventory revealed there are at least nine (24.3%) vacancies in the Franklin Road commercial district. A similar inventory in 2014 found only three vacancies.









The Village Center does not have a strong retail sector. Rather, professional office and service-type businesses are predominant. This information provides a partial understanding why there is not the level of foot traffic desired by non-service businesses in the Village. Professional office and service-type businesses do not generate as much foot traffic as retail, which encourages foot traffic from business to business, within a reasonable distance. Thus, over time the business district has changed considerably from one that provided essential retail goods and services to a predominantly office-service type district. In the seven years since the previous inventory was completed, the retail sector has weakened, resulting in fewer retail businesses and more vacancies.

The business mix reveals one aspect of Village Center context. There are three other dimensions of context that are important:

- At the local level, the Village Center is an integration of mixed uses and characteristics—residential, commercial, recreational, cultural, historic, and rural. It is not only a place to shop, but also a residential neighborhood. Not unlike other residents of the Village, residents of the Village Center are looking for privacy, security and a sense of well-being. Planning and zoning efforts should respect the neighborhood context within which the Village Center operates. Living in the Village Center brings a different set of expectations than living on a substantially larger lot outside of the Village Center.
- At the Village-wide level, the Village Center is the true focal point of the Village because it functions as the center of local government, the main gathering place, a centralized area for recreation, and the center of commerce. The Village Center thus creates an identity for the entire Village. When people think of Franklin, it is often the Village Center that comes to mind. It is a very powerful image and offers a compelling reason why maintaining the health of the Village Center is critical.
- At the regional level, the Village Center, particularly the retail uses, are in competition with all the other retail development in surrounding communities, particularly Southfield, Bloomfield Township, Farmington Hills, Birmingham, and Royal Oak. Village Center businesses must offer some combination of convenience, acceptable price, exceptional service, unique products or other amenities if they are to successfully compete with regional retailers. Some retailers in the Village Center have said that up to 80% of their customers come from outside the Village, providing a perspective on the regional context within which the Village Center operates.

RELEVANT ISSUES

A comprehensive listing of relevant issues facing the Village Center evolved out of a February 27, 2006, meeting, at which Village Center business and property owners participated in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). About 14 business and property owners participated in the session. The SWOT analysis revealed the following (please see Table 14). Many of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities were reaffirmed during the Main Street Resource Team Report of 2009; the August 2011 Charrette; and the MSU Small Town Design Initiative conducted in 2013 and 2014.

Strengths

Not surprisingly, the Village Center's unique historic character topped the list of strengths. People recognized that, if not for the historical buildings and character, the Village Center might be just another small downtown or strip commercial area. People also recognized that the Village Center is more than just a business center—it is a gathering place for a multitude of purposes, it is the center of local government, and it is also the recreation and cultural center of the Village.

Traffic levels were cited as a strength, providing high visibility for businesses. Vehicles passing by are considered essential for the success of retail trade, so significant and steady levels of traffic along Franklin Road would be considered good for business. However, traffic volumes were also cited as a weakness because, at the time the SWOT analysis was completed, Franklin's lack of sidewalks and blurred pedestrian/vehicle demarcation made walking risky, particularly along Franklin Road. This weakness has been addressed by the construction of sidewalks and curbs, which were part of the 2020-2022 Franklin Road streetscape project.



Weaknesses

Many of the weaknesses cited by business and property owners relate to the compact character of historic buildings and plats of the Village Center, which produce small buildings on small lots where landscaping can be a challenge. In addition, the commercial district itself is relatively small. The size constraints affect the ability of local businesses in the district to compete with larger businesses on more spacious sites in larger commercial districts in surrounding communities.

As important as it is as a strength, the historic character of the Village Center can also be viewed as a weakness. In particular, some business owners consider the historic district regulations too restrictive. It is a delicate balance: maintaining the character of the historic district while providing enough flexibility for businesses to compete in the modern marketplace. Village revitalization will need support from the public, the Village government, and especially the owners of the commercial establishments themselves.

Economic and aesthetic revitalization of the Village Center is a critical issue facing the Village of Franklin. When a community participates in a comprehensive revitalization effort, its traditional downtown or commercial neighborhood can experience increased economic vitality. Benefits include:

- Protecting and strengthening the existing tax base;
- Creating a positive community image;
- Creating visually appealing and economically viable downtown buildings;
- Attracting new businesses;
- Creating new jobs;
- Increasing investment in the downtown; and
- Preserving historical architectural resources.

To address the issue of economic revitalization, the Village Council authorized participation in the Main Street Oakland County (MSOC) program in August 2008, as recommended in the 2007 Master Plan. Main Street Franklin demonstrated the following successes:

» The Currin building was refreshed and repurposed as Farmhouse Coffee and Ice Cream (the Farmhouse has been replaced by Madeleine's French Patisserie and Market, located at 32644 Franklin Road).

» The Jones Building façade has been repainted and features new signage, and the parking lot has been improved.

» The building formerly occupied by the Market Basket was refreshed and cleaned up with new signage, paint, electrical, and awnings. The building is now occupied by Driven by Lisa MacDonald, Personal Trainer (32652 Franklin Road).

» MSOC design services, the MSF Design committee, and the HDC all worked together to improve these buildings according to the US Department of the Interior Standards. Other building owners have requested MSOC design services.

» MSF has also helped to create at least two events designed to draw people to the Village Center, a goal of the 2007 Master Plan, and include:

- **The Franklinstein Frenzy:** This half-day event is held shortly before Halloween and features a parade, family-friendly games and activities, and offers merchants a chance to showcase their business.
- **The Shop, Sip, and Stroll:** An evening event, held during extended business hours, merchants offer refreshments to the public while they shop for holiday gifts.

» Additionally, MSF initiated the Farmers' Market, which is currently held in the Village Center. Operation of the Farmers' Market has since been taken over by the FCA.

» Franklin's "brand" logo and accompanying slogan: "Franklin—Experience It", which is available for use by any business, was developed by MSF.

» The Franklin Grill added covered patio dining.

Opportunities

The SWOT analysis identified several opportunities, some of which were linked to identified weaknesses. Design, in the form of urban design guidelines and landscape design guidelines, was seen as a key opportunity. Design guidelines empower communities to direct changes rather than become subject to market forces and less than careful expansion. By taking care that new additions or alterations to the landscape do not diminish existing historic properties, design guidelines encourage the dynamic interaction of old and new traditions. By encouraging the creation of new buildings that contribute equally enduring examples of contemporary design to the historic streetscape, design guidelines invigorate and enrich community character. Design guidelines protect and encourage the authentic and unique qualities of a neighborhood and by doing so they would help Village Center merchants achieve their number one goal: to distinguish themselves from the competition.

Seeking design assistance, in 2013 Main Street Franklin and the Village contracted with Michigan State University's Small Town Design Initiative to create visual images of the Village Center with suggestions for increasing the Village's sustainability; MSF and the Village shared the cost equally. A public visioning meeting was held in July of 2013, with a follow up meeting in October to review preliminary images. The report was released in March 2014 and contained over 150 images of the Village Center based on residents' input. However, to truly see these visions come to fruition and be implemented, additional steps are required. The recommendations must be evaluated for their practicality. The most appropriate recommendations need to be converted into a formal policy document or translated into zoning regulations to create a workable template for revitalization of the Village Center.

Another important opportunity identified was the creation of an organization for collaborative promotion, such as a Chamber of Commerce. The Merchant's Association was reconstituted in 2007 and has since been folded into the Main Street Promotions committee.

Threats

The Village Center faces the following principal threats according to the SWOT analysis:

Competition from commercial developments in the region. The lack of critical mass to maintain a competitive position in the marketplace is a threat.

Shrinking retail base. The MSF Economic Restructuring committee proposed a "Minimum Retail Percentage for First Floor Available Floor Space" ordinance to preserve existing retail establishments and to promote more retail space. The Village governing bodies did not adopt this request and much more community input and further study is needed. In the meantime, the retail base has shrunk considerably, as noted previously.

Character. The construction of new buildings (or modification of existing structures) that are out of character/scale with the established Village Center is a threat. The Village should adopt contextual design guidelines that aim to create a consistent look.

Table 14. Franklin Village Center SWOT Analysis, February 27, 20061

Strengths	Weaknesses
Unique historic character	Small size of buildings
Wealthy local population	Small size of commercial district
Traffic levels provide high visibility	Old buildings require a lot of maintenance
The gathering place for the Village	Traffic levels make walking risky
Neat, but not overly trim; quaint	Overhead utility lines are unsightly
High canopied trees visually unite the varied uses and styles along Franklin Road	Historic district regulations restrict changes Lack of room for landscaping in front
Seat of local government	Parking is not coordinated
The Village Green	Mix of uses may not be ideal
Presence of the Post Office and Library	Downtown is tacky, needs to be refreshed
Plenty of parking	
Visually interesting buildings	
Mixed use	
Opportunities	**Threats**
Encourage or develop uses that enhance existing attractions, such as a farmers' market	Traffic and speeds that detract from historic charm and hinder pedestrian enjoyment
Create a Chamber of Commerce or similar organization for collaborative promotion	Competition from commercial development in the region
Develop architectural design guidelines	Tree disease, pests, and age
Link parking in the rear, particularly on the east side of Franklin Road	Lack of critical mass to keep commercial district going
Develop landscape design guidelines. Enhance existing trees with new plantings	New development and renovation not in keeping with existing character
Create/schedule events that bring people to the Village Center	
Set up Special Assessment District to collectively fund improvements[2]	

1 Table 14 provides a complete list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that were identified in February of 2006. Some of the issues identified in the SWOT analysis have been addressed, but overall the Village Center commercial district appears weaker today than it was in 2006.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Continue to participate in the "Main Street Four-Point Approach," promulgated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.**

2. **Continue to use and promote the brand essence of Franklin developed by Main Street Franklin.**

3. **Work with Main Street Franklin on comprehensive revitalization of the Village Center commercial district.**

4. **Encourage coordinated parking behind buildings, specifically:**
   - » Vehicles should be discouraged from parking in front of commercial buildings, except as necessary, such as for the Franklin Post Office.
   - » Parking is limited in the Village Center, but there are a sufficient total number of spaces. Ideally, parking should remain hidden from Franklin Road by placing all parking behind buildings, where feasible.
   - » On the east side of Franklin Road, more efficient use of existing land set aside for parking could be achieved by joining or combining parking lots. By joining or combining parking lots, it may be possible to reduce the number of entries onto Franklin Road, a measure that would improve traffic safety and upgrade the pedestrian environment.

5. **Piggyback on the attention the Franklin Cider Mill gets to create greater awareness of the Village Center commercial district.**

6. **Actively encourage retail development within the Village Center, particularly on the first floors of Village Center commercial buildings.**

7. **Leverage Village investments into securing grants and/or other funding for revitalization of the Village Center.**

8. **Consider brownfield redevelopment options for contaminated sites in the Village.** Underutilized sites may benefit from redevelopment funding provided by a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Since the Village does not have its own Authority, it can partner with Oakland County through the Oakland County Brownfield Consortium, which would allow the Village to access Environmental Protection Grants for site assessment work. When a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority has designated a property eligible, local and school property tax revenues can be used for approved activities, such as environmental response, demolition, infrastructure improvements, and site preparation.



7

Community Facilities & Open Space

VISION

Community services and facilities in the Village of Franklin have evolved consistent with the needs and expectations of this small, fiscally prudent, close-knit community. Accordingly, community services are professional and friendly, not bureaucratic. Facilities are community oriented to meet essential needs and are not extravagant. Quality is the most important characteristic that defines all community services and facilities in the Village of Franklin.

VILLAGE SERVICES

A primary purpose of municipal government is the delivery of services designed for the health, safety, and welfare of the local population. The Village of Franklin coordinates with local organizations and neighboring municipalities to provide residents with high quality community facilities and services while remaining mindful of residents' tax dollars. Administrative services, police and fire protection, open spaces, social and cultural opportunities, as well as other services and the public infrastructure are provided and/or managed by the Village, Oakland County, the Birmingham Public School District, Franklin Community Church, Franklin Community Association (FCA), the Franklin Library, and other public and private groups.



Broughton House (Village Hall) and Public Meeting Spaces

Village administrative offices are housed in the historic Daniel Broughton House (32325 Franklin Rd.), built in the 1830s. The Village Hall includes the offices of the Village Administrator and Village Clerk, the Building Department, and a meeting space for the Village Council, Planning Commission, and other community groups. Work space in the Village Hall is at a premium, as the structure was not originally designed for municipal offices.

A continuing problem in the Village is the lack of public meeting space. Only three small publicly-owned spaces for meetings are available: Broughton House, the library, and the Kreger House. The room at the Broughton House can seat between 20 and 30 comfortably; stored items would need to be relocated to permit the maximum capacity of 40 persons. The room in the library can hold a meeting of about one dozen persons, but it cannot be closed off from other library functions, limiting its usefulness. The layout of the Kreger House is typical of a residential home and thus, seating for larger groups is limited. However, the house as a whole, including the kitchen facilities, provides a very comfortable and intimate gathering space not found in traditional municipal meeting rooms.

Although having to work around scheduling conflicts is common, the Franklin Community Church can accommodate large public meetings.

While community meeting facilities are lacking at times, the Village has always managed to accommodate needs by adjusting schedules and moving groups to the properly-sized facility. Due to budget constraints, Historical Society restrictions, political considerations and other reasons, it is likely that the Broughton House, library, Kreger Buildings, and Franklin Community Church will continue to be the Village's main meeting facilities. The Historical Museum building located on Kirk Lane at Thirteen Mile Road, which is owned by the Historical Society, is also a potential small-scale meeting place.

Franklin-Bingham Fire Department

The Franklin-Bingham Fire Department (32707 Franklin Rd.) is a private, non-profit corporation, founded in the 1930s. It has achieved distinction among surrounding communities because of its unique organization (a form of privatization) and quality of service. During 2020, for example, the department achieved a very respectable average response time of under 5 minutes.

The department serves Franklin and Bingham Farms plus seven houses in Southfield Township. In 2020, the department made about 500 runs. Approximately 70 percent were medical service runs, 20 percent were false alarms, and 10 percent were fire runs and other calls. The department participates in the MABAS 3201 mutual aid agreement with 31 other communities in the area.

The mutual aid agreement benefited surrounding communities several years ago during a regional U.S. black out. The Franklin—Bingham Fire Department was on stand-by to deliver water using its tankers to communities on public water, since water pressure dropped to zero in those communities. Franklin does not have a public water system, so the Fire Department maintains a fleet of two pumper tankers. Other vehicles in the fleet include a ladder truck, an engine, two rescue vehicles and a command vehicle.

The fire hall, built in 1959, has limited space and parking. An addition built in 2005 added a second, larger truck bay at ground level and two rooms on the second floor. The department has a full-time Chief, three full-time firefighters, a part time clerk, and 25 volunteers. Nearly all of the volunteers live outside of Franklin Village.

The Department has been able to adequately handle any fire-related problems that the Village has experienced to date. Because future development is not expected on a larger scale than currently exists, it is expected that current Fire Department capabilities will be adequate to provide high-quality service now and in the future.

Franklin Police Department

The Franklin Police Department provides public safety services to residents of the Villages of Franklin and Bingham Farms. The Department is a full-service law enforcement agency that provides professional service to residents and visitors 24 hours a day throughout the year.

Police Department staff include the Chief of Police, plus ten full-time and two part-time officers. The Department is authorized to hire an additional two part-time officers. The Department also has a Reserve Unit and a small Mounted Unit.

In 2020, the Patrol Division responded to 4,943 calls for service, a decrease of 24 percent from the previous year. Franklin accounted for 2,660 of the calls.

The complaints summary for 2020 revealed that home alarms, suspicious activity, citizen assists, and traffic accidents were predominant in Franklin and Bingham Farms, accounting for almost 92 percent of all complaints. There were no homicides and only one residential breaking and entering in 2020.

The Villages of Franklin and Bingham Farms compare very favorably to nearby communities due to the low number of felonies committed within the jurisdictions. The Police Department aggressively pursues community-based policing strategies to deter crime.

Franklin has a Mobile Watch Program which was established in 1982. A volunteer group of about 20 Franklin residents patrol the streets and bring suspicious activities to the attention of the Franklin Police. Their efforts in this "neighbors watching the neighborhood" program, with the assistance of the Franklin Police Department, keeps Franklin's homes and businesses as safe as possible. Mobile Watch meets once a month and new volunteers are always welcome.

The Franklin Police Department provides a vacation house check program for residents who are away for an extended period of time. During 2020, officers conducted several thousand residence checks to ensure their security.

In 2000, a 4,500-square foot police station was constructed which provides much needed secure and dedicated space for the Department to fulfill its functions and duties. As the building is now over 20 years of age, typical maintenance issues have developed and are addressed through budgeted funding. A large expense that is anticipated is replacement of the police station's cedar shake roof. The Police Department also proposes to acquire body cameras for officers.

Franklin's Community Center Project

In 2008, the Franklin Historical Society initiated a major effort to save from demolition three historic farm buildings located at 26565 Scenic Drive, previously owned by the Kreger family, by physically relocating the buildings adjacent to the Broughton House on the Village Green. The team that spearheaded this project envisioned use of the buildings as meeting space for residents and government-related functions.

The buildings were moved in December 2008, whereupon years of renovation occurred. The three buildings, which are now recognized as the "Franklin Community Center," include:

- The Kreger house, a Greek Revival style farmhouse built in 1860. It now has a fully functional kitchen, conference rooms for small groups, and casual seating in the original parlor.
- The tool shed, which was converted into public restrooms that are open every day from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- The gabled barn, which has a large gathering room with a capacity of 60, a kitchen, and restrooms.

The Franklin Community Center is an outstanding community asset that enhances the aesthetics of the Village Green and, because of its "gathering place" function, strengthens the sense of community.

Water Supply

In the Village, potable water is provided by individual private wells. A 2003 referendum of Village residents showed that a 2-1 majority favored staying on private wells.[1] A village-wide survey in the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021 found that a majority of residents are satisfied with their well water. Chapter 2 addresses this subject in more detail.

Future changes in the water supply method should consider such issues as cost, fire protection benefits, growth potential, reliability of a public system, water quality, and environmental considerations.

1 There was 65% voter turnout, and 935 voted against and 509 voted in favor of a public water system. 934 voted against an increased millage to fund a public water system, and 497 voted in favor. A 2003 water study was also conducted.

Wastewater Treatment

Residential neighborhoods in Franklin Village are served by sanitary pressure sewers or individual septic systems. About fifty percent of the residences are hooked up to the sanitary sewer system. Septic field failures prompted the installation of sanitary sewers in the Village in 1995.

The primary motivation for providing sanitary sewer service in the Village is the protection of public and environmental health. Failing septic systems create the potential for untreated wastewater to enter the local streams and rivers, exposing Village residents to unhealthy conditions and creating negative effects on natural resources.

As an additional means of protecting public health within the Village, under court order all septic systems are required to be pumped out every three years and proof of this septic system maintenance must be sent to the Village offices, along with a nominal fee.

Pursuant to a Federal Court order, a pressurized sewer system has been installed in the right-of-way along all streets within the Village. Any homeowner has the option of connecting to this system for an installation cost and quarterly fee. The system uses a grinder pump at each residence or business that pushes the sewage into the sewer lines in the rights-of-way. This sewer lines connect to a pump station at the Village edge where it is discharged into the gravity-flowing Detroit sewage system.

Storm Water

In addition to wastewater treatment, storm water management is also an essential part of pollution control within the Village. Few of the streams located in the Village are designated as County drains, and there are no guidelines available for permissible activities within non-designated drain areas. Map 6 shows the locations of streams and floodplains in the Village. Storm water management operations will be enhanced by following these recommendations:

- The floodway area, which bounds the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River, should be preserved and protected.
- To protect the natural ability of the drains and drainage swales to absorb and convey storm water flows, no development, filling, or change in the character of the vegetative cover should be permitted in such drainage courses.

By granting special consideration for these drainage areas, environmental integrity of these zones will be preserved, and the storm water management objectives of the Village may be achieved.

Runoff from streets and parking lots is a major source of pollutants to the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River. Wherever possible, on-site detention should be sought to encourage stormwater infiltration into the ground.

As an alternative to detention or retention basins, low-impact alternatives should be used where possible. A rain garden is a low-impact development (LID) technique which creates an impression in the landscape and is designed and planted to trap, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff and improve the local water quality. The rain garden vegetation and soils filter stormwater naturally, removing pollutants (sediment, heavy metals, etc.) from nearby impervious surfaces (i.e. parking lots, sidewalks). In clay soils (typical of Franklin), the rainwater is absorbed by the compost and plants. A functioning rain garden should be dry within 48 hours to avoid mosquito problems. Native plants indigenous to the Midwest offer many advantages: less water and fertilizer, and natural resistance to pests. Native plants also create small ecosystems, attracting birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects.

Utility Wires

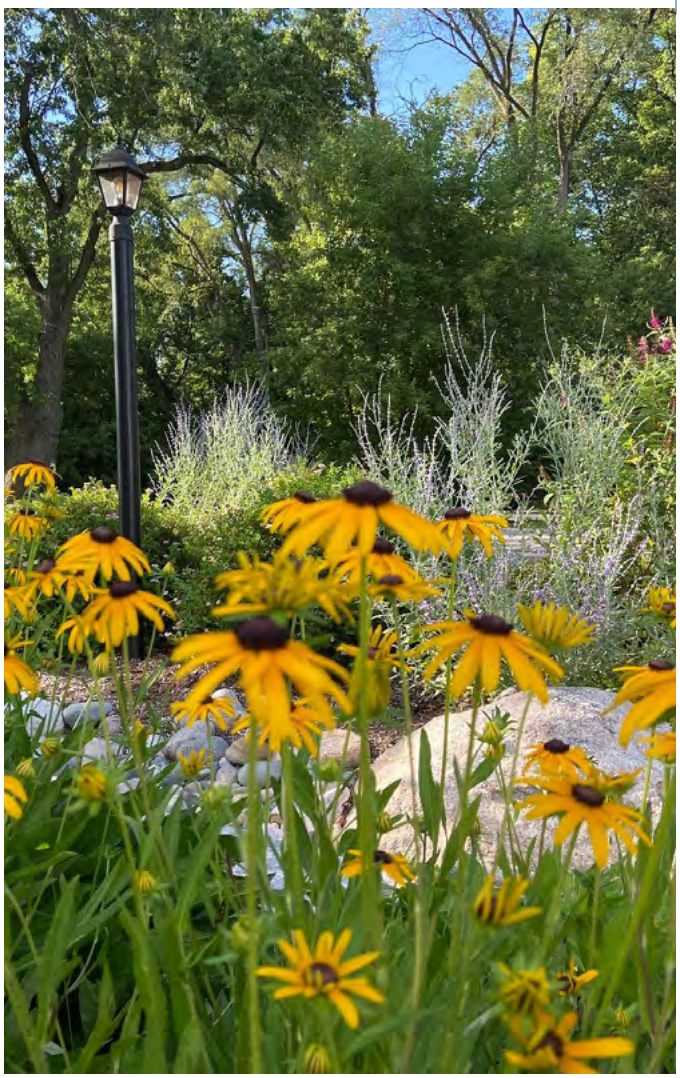
Overhead utility wires and poles are among the most visually disruptive elements in the rural landscape in Franklin. The aesthetic quality of the streetscape is diminished by the presence of wires lining and crossing the streets. In the design phase of the 2020-2022 streetscape program for Franklin Road, the designers thoroughly investigate moving overhead wires in the Village Center to the rear of properties or burying the wires. Both alternatives were found to be prohibitively expensive.

COORDINATED SERVICES

Franklin Public Library

The Franklin Public Library, located since 1938 on the Village Green, has operated as a public library since 1973. The Franklin Community Library Association was formed in 1940, accepting responsibility for the library's collection from the Franklin School Parent-Teacher Association.

In 2016 substantial improvements were made to the library, which are described in Chapter 2. Assets and features of the library are also described in Chapter 2.



Schools

The Village of Franklin is part of the Birmingham Public Schools (BPS), which serves approximately 7,400 students in thirteen schools from kindergarten through 12th grade (based on 2021-22 student count). There are no district facilities within the Village; elementary students attend the West Maple Elementary School, located two miles away in Bloomfield Township. Middle school students attend Berkshire Middle School on Fourteen Mile, east of Lasher, and high school students attend Groves High School on Thirteen Mile and Evergreen Road. Students in grades 3—8 also have the option of attending Covington School, a magnet school.

The historic Franklin School, built in 1922, is located in the Village Historic District, but is no longer owned by the school district. Huda School, a private school, now operates in the building.

A bond passed by voters in 2020 will provide $195 million for school facility upgrades and repairs, technology, and additional security throughout the school system. Specifically, the bond includes:

- Building and site improvements to every school within the District.
- High school athletic field enhancements.
- Midvale preschool and senior center site improvements.
- Purchase of buses.
- Security system and technology enhancements.
- Critical infrastructure improvements involving HVAC systems, roofing, plumbing, and electrical.

Because of the lack of space for new development, and the projections of school-age children in the Village, no new school facilities should be necessary within the Village of Franklin.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Due to the existing recreational opportunities in the Village (provided by the Franklin Community Association) and neighboring communities, Franklin has little need to construct additional active recreation facilities within the Village limits. However, as opportunities present themselves, consideration should be given toward the acquisition of new, publicly-owned open space areas within the Village. One such potential recreational opportunity is the riverfront. Developing a river access program may require community efforts to coalesce but it would bring river access to the community at large. Existing easements currently provide some level of public access to the riverfront. Additional easements or land acquisition by the Village, together with physical improvements, such as a bridge or river walking path, would increase public access and enjoyment of the river.

Village Green and Franklin Community Association (FCA) Grounds

VILLAGE GREEN

The Village Green, the open area between the library and north of Broughton House is owned by the Village. There are no active recreational facilities on this land, but it is fully accessible to the public and is part of the Village Center. It is a particularly useful gathering place for Village events, such as Music on the Green, Movies on the Green, and the seasonal Farmers' Market. The Village Green is also used for Art on the Green during the Labor Day Round Up.

A steep hill, located on Village property between the cemetery and the Village Green, just south of Broughton House also provides an additional recreational opportunity as a jogging path and sledding hill.

FCA GROUNDS

On approximately five acres of land owned by the Franklin Community Association (a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the people of Franklin Village), and located west of the Broughton House, there are three baseball diamonds, two tennis courts, a gazebo, and ample open space for a variety of activities. This is the primary site of the Village's Annual Labor Day Round Up.

A playground, which was refurbished almost in its entirety by the FCA in 1998 through an extensive fundraising campaign, is also largely maintained by the FCA, although it is located on property belonging to the Franklin Community Church. One of the three FCA baseball diamonds is also located on the Church's property.

Volunteerism in Franklin

By necessity, certain day to day administrative operations and first responders must be paid professionals. However, the center of Village government maintains a long tradition of volunteer service to the community. The various boards and commissions that serve the Village should be preserved as they currently exist unless changed circumstances dictate otherwise. Beyond a largely volunteer government, the community receives meaningful contributions from over 20 purely volunteer organizations for which the facility needs must be met or preserved.



Open Space

Village residents take pride in Franklin's undeveloped places and natural areas. Wetlands, wooded thickets, ball fields, Charlotte's Garden (adjacent to Broughton House), and the Village Green are essential to the image of Franklin.

Most of the undeveloped areas are privately owned and are not protected from future development. With the exception of scattered small publicly owned parcels, the only sizable publicly owned open spaces are the Village Green and the adjacent land owned by the Franklin Community Association. (See Map 8 and Table 11 in Chapter 2 for more information about Village-owned properties.)

The loss of open spaces could significantly change the character of the Village if development occurs on the few remaining open parcels. The incremental expansion of cleared area for lawns can, over time, have as detrimental an effect as wholesale land clearing for construction of new houses. The deed restrictions in place for some neighborhoods provide only a minimal level of protection for open spaces. These restrictions may not cover all potential losses of open space, may not remain in force over the long term, or may not be enforced because of inactive homeowners' associations.

Recognizing the importance of open space and natural areas to the character of the Village, preparation of an open space plan would be a worthwhile endeavor. The intent of such a plan would be to inventory public and private open spaces, evaluate their function from aesthetic, ecological, and economic perspectives, and develop appropriate strategies for preservation. It is likely that such a plan will find that some open spaces are more valuable to the community than others. The use of Village resources should be focused on preservation or strategic use of these highly-valued open spaces. Toward this end, in 2022 the Planning Commission has begun studying potential uses for certain Village-owned properties, including the Jenstan Nature Preserve located adjacent to Kirk Lane, and property on the south side of Irving Road just west of the Village Center.

Franklin Cemetery

Franklin Cemetery, established in 1827, is owned and managed by the Franklin Cemetery Association, a non-profit corporation of cemetery plot owners. The cemetery comprises approximately six acres of land in the southwest corner of the historic district.

The cemetery holds over 3,500 graves, with 532 dated from the nineteenth century. A war memorial to Franklin's veterans holds a place of honor in the cemetery. Additional spaces in the cemetery are available for sale to residents; purchases are conducted through the Cemetery Association.

The Cemetery is the primary gathering place for the annual Memorial Day observance, which is well attended by Village residents.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prepare open space guidelines for the Village of Franklin.

Open space guidelines would help preserve undeveloped areas throughout the Village, maintaining and protecting the rural character of the Village, and the functioning of natural ecosystems. An inventory of undeveloped parcels, natural areas, and publicly owned land would be the basis for a preservation program. Acquisition of development rights, obtaining conservation easements, or outright land purchases are tools that can be used to implement the program.

Priority areas include:

- Securing access to publicly owned parcels and protected natural areas.
- Preserving visible locations that define the character of the Village, such as intersections.
- Identifying opportunities for a public pathway system linking neighborhoods to the Village Center.
- Preserving private open spaces using conservation easements or permanent deed restrictions.

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Example of Franklin Village green open space.

8

Trees & Vegetation Management

VISION

More than any other natural resource, trees and natural vegetation mark the rural character of Franklin Village. The preservation of healthy trees and the regular replacement of dead or dying vegetation assure the Village of the continued visual and ecological benefits provided by a mature, diverse tree canopy, and corresponding, complementary smaller species of vegetation.

INTRODUCTION

Wooded areas and tree-lined streets contribute an invaluable benefit to the character of the Village. Trees and other vegetation provide an experience for all the senses and mark Franklin as a unique community within the region. Pressures of growth and development, coupled with age and disease, compel foresight and sound management plans to maintain this fragile, critical resource.



HISTORY

The 1977 Master Plan included a map of the major stands of vegetation in the Village. During the 1996 Plan update, it was determined that these stands had changed little over the previous twenty years. Four major patterns of vegetation were apparent in the Village, which are still relevant today:

- Over-mature deciduous canopy and evergreen trees, with an understory of ornamental trees and shrubs on maintained turf grass lawns.
- Mature deciduous canopy trees with mixed evergreens and a naturally occurring understory of shrubs and small trees.
- Mixed-age and mixed-species stands of vegetation, primarily on undeveloped portions of residential lots.
- Semi-mature deciduous and evergreen trees on smaller lots with turf grass lawns.

The availability of the pressure sanitary sewer to owners of undeveloped property in Franklin meant that areas that were previously unbuildable could be developed. This put major tree stands in the Village at increased risk.

Because of the great importance of trees and vegetation to residents, a Vegetation Management Report was completed in 1997, based on field surveys performed in the spring of the previous year. The report outlined the status of vegetation in Franklin, noting the age, relative health, and potential threats to trees and vegetated areas throughout the Village. The field data collected gave a general picture of the Village as a whole and was not intended to be exhaustive.

However, the data were not encouraging. It suggested that the tree canopy and other vegetation so important to Villagers was at great risk of disappearing in the next few decades and would result in drastic change in the microclimate and visual character of the Village.

RELEVANT ISSUES

Four major issues were identified. First, much of the existing vegetation was decades-old and mature or over-mature. The effects of developed areas (higher temperatures, compacted soils, increased pollution) can significantly shorten a plant's life expectancy. Trees can be in a state of decline for many years and still appear healthy, but they will eventually succumb to the pressures of age, development, disease, and weather.

Second, the low diversity of vegetation species and ages in the Village is a concern. Many canopy trees are one of only a few species (silver maple, Colorado spruce, Norway spruce). In the chance that a pest or disease appears that affects a particular species (e.g., Dutch Elm Disease or the Emerald Ash Borer), a significant portion of the Village's tree cover and vegetation may be quickly lost. Additionally, same-aged stands of trees become susceptible to the effects of age (weak branches or roots leading to vulnerability to wind or ice) at the same time, creating a potential for one severe event to wipe out numerous trees.

Third, there was no replacement plan to provide young trees that will grow and provide a canopy when the existing trees are gone, or to replace trees removed because of development and redevelopment. Trees are slow growing, and decades of time will be required to replace the current canopy and undisturbed areas with newly planted vegetation.

The fourth issue of concern to Franklin's vegetation was its location in road and utility rights-of-way. As companies and agencies outside the Village make decisions on road improvements or utility maintenance, the existing trees and vegetation that are "in the way" can suffer removal or irreparable damage. Adverse effects of location near roadways (high salt concentrations, automotive pollutants, physical damage from vehicles) also contribute to the decline of vegetation in rights-of-way.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 1997

Tree Protection Ordinance

In 2001, the Village Council adopted an ordinance to promote the health, safety and general welfare of Village residents through a regulatory program of tree protection. This program was designed to protect, preserve, and conserve mature trees, to manage and provide oversight of the removal of problem trees, and to provide for the subsequent replacement of trees removed in the Village.

The ordinance requires a permit for removal of any protected tree, mandates physical barriers to prevent damage to trees during construction activities and regulates the replacement of removed trees on a one-for-one basis. Penalties for violation of the ordinance include stop-work orders, liability for a civil suit brought by the Village, and such penalties as accompany a municipal civil infraction.

Heritage Tree List

The heritage tree list, adopted in 1970 and revised in 2001, lists trees that by virtue of their size (and therefore, age) are regarded by the Village to be of unique importance and worthy of special protection. Consideration was given to removing from the list trees that are undesirable as street-side plantings or that do not contribute to the rural character of the Village, such as crabapple or honey locust.

Tree City USA

The Village of Franklin received Tree City USA designation in 2004 from the National Arbor Day Foundation, a designation that continues today. As a Tree City, the Village promotes trees as an important element of local character and is eligible for grant funding and educational materials related to planting and maintaining trees. To maintain its status as a Tree City USA, the Village must satisfy the following requirements:

- Issue an annual Arbor Day proclamation by the Village Council and organize an Arbor Day celebration. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April.
- Appoint a citizen tree committee or park board that has responsibility for the care of trees within public rights-of-way and other public spaces.
- Adopt guidelines specifying appropriate species for planting within the Village and typical planting details.
- Spend at least $2 per capita on trees, whether for purchase of new trees or maintenance of existing trees. A cycle of pruning street trees and trees on public property on a three-to-five-year basis is often satisfactory. Inspection of street trees and trees on public property should occur several times a year.

Contextual Zoning

Prior to 2005, residential zoning regulations were quite generous, allowing up to 35% lot coverage and substantial grading. Grading was permitted to allow construction of a lower-level walkout, even when not warranted by the natural topography. Overbuilding, out of scale construction, and widespread loss of tree cover were often the result.

A measure of control over these impacts was achieved in 2005 with the adoption of contextual zoning regulations. These regulations disallow significant altering of grade. Equally significantly, the regulations establish increased side setback requirements, requiring minimum total side setbacks to be not less than one third of the lot width. The significance of the contextual zoning regulations with respect to trees and vegetation management is that less of the total lot will now be impacted by construction activity.

Tree Survey and Tree Planting Program

The Village has taken several steps to study and document the health characteristics of trees in the Village. A study was completed in 2004 in which twenty percent (20%) of the trees in the right-of-way or on public spaces were surveyed to determine species, health, age, and other pertinent characteristics.

A tree planting program was initiated in 2005, using a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, resulting in the planting of trees in road rights-of-way and on public lands, such as the Village Green. The Village followed up with a second tree planting in the summer of 2006, resulting in a total of 250 trees being planted. The MDNR grants paid for $20,000 of the cost and the Village paid $60,000 of the cost of the tree planting. A DTE grant was also used to plant an additional 17 trees in 2011.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 2007

Since 2006, 267 trees have been planted by the Village. This number is insignificant in comparison to actual loss to the mature tree canopy. Steps must be taken for the Village to preserve the tree canopy which is so highly prized by Franklin residents and visitors alike, and which is essential to Franklin's character.

Hazardous Tree Removal and Trimming Program

In 2012, the Village authorized a $77,000 hazard tree removal and trimming program for trees in the public right-of-way. Recognizing that trees present a danger to life and property, approximately 296 trees, which were dead, dying, or showed signs of splitting or decay, were removed. Approximately 40 more trees required removal due to uprooting, severe lean, or showed unhealthy signs such as sucker growth. As part of this program, the sides of the roads were pruned back to increase visibility and to remove invasive species, such as buckthorn and box elders.

Village Center Tree Planting

As part of the 2020-2022 Franklin Road streetscape project, over twenty deciduous trees were planted in the right-of-way in the Village Center. Over time, these trees will grow to provide a beautiful canopy over Franklin Road.

Health and Energy Benefits

The landscape which knits Franklin together not only contributes to the Village's unique visual character, but also provides health and energy benefits. The rich vegetative cover cleans polluted air via the process of photosynthesis, taking in carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. Dust and other airborne particles adhere to leaf surfaces, leaving the air clearer and cleaner.

Transpiration through leaves provides moisture in the air which, in combination with summer breezes, provides natural air conditioning. The summer comfort level in the wooded Village is noticeably different than the hot, dry "heat island effect" of more developed communities nearby. Trees, both large and small, provide a cooling shade canopy and respite from the summer sun.

During the winter, evergreen vegetative cover blocks harsh winter winds, protecting buildings from heat loss and providing wind breaks for drifting snow. Deciduous trees which provide cooling shade in the summer allow radiant heat to passively warm south-facing buildings during the winter months.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of the recommendations from the 2015 Master Plan, as well as the accomplishments since then, suggest that the Village needs to take a more aggressive and proactive approach with respect to preserving and enhancing trees and other natural vegetation. It is recommended that the following steps be taken:

1. **Conduct a new vegetation management survey and tree inventory at least every ten years, like the one conducted in 1997, and prepare a corresponding report to assess the health of the forested and vegetated areas of the Village.**

2. **Create, fund, and implement a Village-wide Vegetation Management and Sustainability Program.**

3. **Hold Village-wide informational seminars or use the Village website to educate residents about the condition of Franklin's trees, the requirements of the Tree Protection Ordinance, and practical steps that Villagers can take to protect and enhance tree cover and vegetation.**

4. **Vigorously enforce the Tree Protection Ordinance and all other ordinances that protect, enhance, or preserve Franklin's vegetation and tree canopy.**

5. **Hire experienced specialists to perform routine pruning and inspection of trees on public property and in the rights-of-way.**

6. **Maintain and enhance the Village's vegetative cover through the tree maintenance, planting, and replacement program.**

   - » Implement a shrub and tree replacement program so that the natural, vegetative look of Franklin is maintained as existing plantings are removed.
   - » Promote planting of trees now to replace dead or diseased trees to maintain a desirable tree canopy.
   - » Replace dead, dying, or nuisance vegetation in utility rights-of-way with shrubs, grasses, and shorter trees that provide habitat and groundcover without interfering with overhead utility lines.

7. Take practical action to minimize damage to vegetation from pests, disease, and human activity.

- » Ensure that trees and other forms of vegetation planted along Village streets are planted in locations where they will not be damaged from road repairs and utilities maintenance.
- » Coordinate with utility companies regarding the location and long-term maintenance of new plantings near underground and overhead utility rights-of-way. Encourage utility crews to use sound pruning techniques to maintain a proper form for trees in the Village.
- » Address major pest or disease infestation through regular vegetation inspection and treatment of identified problems.
- » Review the current Tree Protection Ordinance and update as necessary to achieve desired results.

8. Encourage the preservation of the simple rural character of the Village by enhancing and preserving the rural scenic nature along main roads and boundaries, enhancing, and protecting large open areas, and planting and maintaining vegetation along roads in public areas that contribute to rural character.

9. Make use of CISMA, the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, to manage invasive species in the Village.

- » Collaborate with Oakland County CISMA to support functioning ecosystems and enhance quality of life through invasive species management.
- » Make use of CISMA's education and outreach materials, technical assistance, best practices, and funding for protecting and improving natural habitats.

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9

Traffic & Circulation

VISION

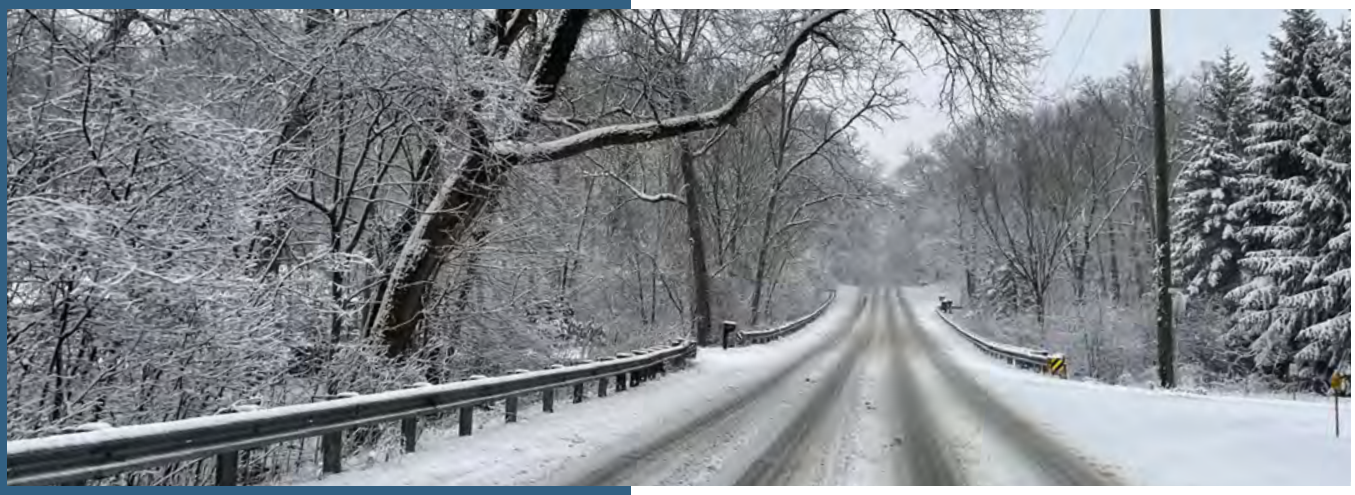
The circulation system in the Village of Franklin consists of roads and pathways that provide a safe, efficient and pleasant way to travel by vehicle or on foot. The road system consists of a network of interconnected roads designed for moderate speeds, so that drivers can enjoy the pleasures of the natural roadside environment. Equally important are the pathways for non-motorized transportation, which extend throughout the Village and are designed to curve in and around natural features so as to blend into the environment.

HISTORY AND PRESENT CONTEXT

Franklin residents are primarily dependent on automobile travel and the region's arterial road network for access to employment, schools, shopping, and services. The low-density character of Franklin and its lack of employment centers requires travel to other communities to meet these needs, and, in turn, most of the Village Center patrons come from outside of Franklin. Fortunately, Franklin is well-served by the regional road network, with Telegraph Road and Northwestern Highway providing vehicle access throughout the area.

In addition to providing good access to and from Franklin, the local arterial and collector roads carry heavy traffic along the periphery of the Village. Franklin Road, Inkster Road, and Thirteen Mile Road carry a substantial amount of traffic through and around Franklin. Traffic levels, driven by the past few decades of development in western Oakland County, continue to be a concern for the community.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, Inventory and Analysis, the older major roadways are connected to Franklin's neighborhoods by a local system of curvilinear residential streets in a pattern of development begun in the 1920s. These narrower winding streets and cul-de-sacs carry neighborhood traffic at lower speeds, and are shared by pedestrians and cyclists.



Compliance with Michigan Planning Enabling Act

It is the express intent of this Master Plan to be in full compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended. The MPEA was amended in 2010 to include a requirement that master plans for Michigan communities include planning activities for "complete streets." Complete Streets are designed to accommodate a variety of users and aim to create comfortable environments for the safe and enjoyable movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users and drivers. This approach not only looks at the roadway itself but the adjacent land within the right-of-way and intersections to efficiently provide transportation options for multiple types of users.

Specifically, the MPEA requires that master plans detail "all components of a transportation system and their interconnectivity including streets and bridges, public transit including public transportation facilities and routes, bicycle facilities, pedestrian ways, freight facilities and routes, port facilities, railroad facilities, and airports, to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a manner that is appropriate to the context of the community and, as applicable, considers all legal users of the public right-of-way."

In Franklin's case, an interconnected transportation system includes streets and bridges, bicycle facilities and pedestrian ways for Village residents and visitors. This chapter details both motorized and non-motorized priorities for the Village and is in compliance with the MPEA.

Roadway Role in Defining Village Character

In addition to providing access to regional amenities, the arterial road system provides context and definition for the Village. Franklin is bounded on three sides by Telegraph Road, Inkster Road, and Fourteen Mile Road which provides distinct and recognizable edges to the Village. These edges are reinforced by the existing zoning, which designates the lots along these borders as low-density residential, and are buffered by ample landscaping. In contrast to the office developments and parking lots across the street at many points on Franklin's borders, past construction projects on Telegraph Road have been limited and only when appropriate to include adequate landscaping for screening and buffering.

The surrounding major roads remain important places from which individuals view and/or experience the community. Sections of Thirteen Mile Road, Fourteen Mile Road, and Franklin Road remain country like roads that are pleasant to drive when traffic volumes are low. These streets are lined with visual elements that help to define the character and history of the Village: fences of pickets, iron, or split rails, older trees, wildflowers, and glimpses of manicured lawns and gardens.

While residents may rely on vehicle travel to reach work and shopping, they have expressed an interest in creating and maintaining paths or trails within the Village for recreational use, as noted in Chapter 2. The goal of these paths would be to provide for walking or cycling, without traveling on the major arterials, and to connect neighborhoods to natural areas within the Village and the Village Center. Pathways should be designed as part of the landscape, curving around trees and natural contours.

Regional Conditions

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed the National Functional Classification (NFC) system to classify all highways, streets, and roads according to their function. This system has been in place since the 1960s and is recognized as the official road classification system by the FHWA.

The major roads that serve Franklin are classified as follows and represented on Map 10: Traffic Analysis.

These two street types - principal arterials and minor arterials - have characteristics that distinguish them from one another. Principal arterials are the prominent road type in NFC hierarchy and provide high speed, uninterrupted travel with limited access or restricted access to regionally important urban areas and amenities. Minor arterials are similar in function to principal arterials but generally carry less traffic and connect to smaller urban centers. All of the remaining roads in Franklin are consider local roads which primarily provide access to property and include residential streets.

Table 15. Road Classifications

Road	Type
Telegraph Road	Principal Arterial
Northwestern Highway	Principal Arterial
Fourteen Mile Road	Minor Arterial
Thirteen Mile Road	Minor Arterial
Inkster Road	Minor Arterial
Franklin Road	Minor Arterial

Based on FHWA National Functional Classification

TELEGRAPH ROAD

Telegraph Road, a multi-lane state highway (M-24), forms the eastern boundary of the Village. Telegraph Road is a major north-south route, providing residents with access to Oakland County facilities in Pontiac, M-10 and Interstate 696 to the south, and Metro Airport and Wayne County to the south. In addition to being a regional carrier of through traffic, Telegraph Road handles thousands of trips generated by offices and commercial establishments that front the corridor.

NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

This multi-lane divided highway slices along the southwestern boundary of the Village to Twelve Mile Road and then continues as the Lodge Freeway (M-10) into Southfield and Detroit. The highway is important to Franklin because of the accessibility and entry to the Village provided at Franklin Road as the link to Interstate 696 and the northern boundary of land outside the Village proposed for intensive development.

Northwestern Highway has a right-of-way of 204 feet with primary intersections at both Franklin Road and Inkster Road. According to SEMCOG, the highway accommodates regional traffic volumes destined toward Southfield and Detroit.

The narrowing of Northwestern Highway from six lanes to four adjacent to the Village of Franklin can create a bottleneck at peak traffic periods, causing traffic to divert through the Village. The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Road Commission for Oakland County have discussed widening Northwestern Highway to six lanes. However, these discussions have not led to widening in the past, because improved traffic flow for this segment would not lead to a comparable network at its northern terminus.

FOURTEEN MILE ROAD

This road is classified as a minor arterial road and the current right-of-way varies from 66 to 120 feet in width. The intersection at Telegraph Road is signalized to control traffic speeds and congestion. Fourteen Mile is not currently paved between Franklin Road and Inkster Road, and conditions on that segment of road limit speed significantly. Currently, there are no posted speed limit signs on the unpaved segment.

A traffic impact study is needed to determine the impacts of hard surfacing the unpaved segment of Fourteen Mile Road. One of the benefits may be a reduction in traffic on Thirteen Mile Road, making Thirteen Mile less hazardous for pedestrian and bicyclists. The benefits must be balanced against the potential detrimental effects for residents on Fourteen Mile from increased traffic. A thoughtfully prepared traffic impact study would sort out the benefits and detriments so that the Village leaders can make an informed decision.

Table 16. Franklin Village Traffic Volumes

Location	AADT	AADT
Fourteen Mile Road		
2-WAY, between Inkster and Franklin	2,170	2018
2-WAY, between Telegraph and Franklin	4,040	2019
Thirteen Mile Road		
2-WAY, between Inkster and Franklin	4,040	2018
2-WAY, between Telegraph and Franklin	7,750	2018
Inkster Road		
NB, south of Fourteen Mile Road	4,613	2014
NB, south of Thirteen Mile Road	3,470	2019
SB, north of Thirteen Mile Road	2,910	2019
SB, north of Northwestern Hwy.	2,817	2012
Franklin Road		
NB, south of Fourteen Mile Road	3,050	2016
SB, north of Fourteen Mile Road (in Bloomfield Twp.)	2,250	2016
NB, south of Thirteen Mile Road	2,220	2016
SB, north of Thirteen Mile Road	2,070	2016
Telegraph Road		
NB, south of Fourteen Mile Road	34,740	2008
NB, south of Thirteen Mile Road	32,360	2009
SB, north of Thirteen Mile Road	33,070	2009

AADT = Annual Average Daily Volume
NB = Northbound SB = Southbound
Sources: SEMCOG

THIRTEEN MILE ROAD

Thirteen Mile Road is classified as a minor arterial and will continue to accommodate through traffic and local trips of moderate length. With the improvement of Twelve Mile and Maple Roads (Fifteen Mile) as regional east-west arterial roads, Thirteen Mile Road should be retained as a minor arterial.

The character of the road and the function it serves by bisecting the Village should be carefully evaluated before any improvements to the road are recommended. Maintaining the rural character along the roadside will be important.

INKSTER ROAD

Inkster Road forms the western boundary of the Village and exists as a minor arterial road. The road serves moderate traffic volumes that are generated by land uses along the road, plus through traffic making connections with Northwestern Highway.

FRANKLIN ROAD

Franklin Road is a two-lane minor arterial road that forms the spine of the Village Center. It is also an important element in defining the character of the Historic District. The road varies in both right-of-way and pavement widths along its route, and parking is provided along certain portions of the road within the Village Center. The road has become an important local route that is primarily used by residents of Franklin Village and Bloomfield Township and the major traffic generators in these communities.

Traffic Volume, Speed, and Safety

Traffic volumes and speeds have been concerns of Franklin residents for decades. With respect to traffic volumes, the data collected by SEMCOG indicate that traffic in the Village has general been decreasing on most arterial roads, with the exception of Fourteen Mile Road, between Inkster and Franklin Roads; Inkster Road, between Thirteen and Fourteen Mile Roads; and Northwestern Highway in the vicinity of Inkster Road.

Reducing the volume of traffic traveling within and around Franklin is an unrealistic goal, considering the continued development of areas to the north and west, and the region's reliance on the road network for transportation. With respect to the Village Center, reducing traffic would be counterproductive because commercial businesses rely on passby traffic to generate customers.

Franklin can minimize the impact of traffic on the Village by preventing capacity-increasing road projects within the Village and implementing proven traffic calming measures. Such efforts would deter the diversion of traffic through the Village.

Speeding is a concern in Franklin, especially on the segments of Thirteen Mile, Fourteen Mile, and Franklin Roads where hills or curves limit sight distances. Where speeds cannot be reduced through enforcement of existing limits, other tactics may be used to address the concerns caused by speeding. Such tactics might include, for example, installation of chicanes (artificial narrowing of the road) or raised center medians on high-speed roads. Creating alternate routes for pedestrians and cyclists would also help ensure their safety.

Table 17. Traffic Crashes at Franklin Village Intersections[1]

Location	Annual Crash Average[2]	2019 Total
Inkster at Fourteen Mile	1	0
Franklin at Fourteen Mile	1	2
Telegraph at Fourteen Mile	12	13
Inkster at Scenic Highway	0	0
Franklin at Scenic Highway	0	0
Inkster at Thirteen Mile	5	6
Franklin at Thirteen Mile	7	8
Telegraph at Thirteen Mile	19	16
Inkster at Northwestern Highway	8	7

Footnotes: [1] *Data cover crashes within 150 ft. of the intersection.*
[2] *Annual Crash Average covers the years 2015 to 2019.*
Source: *SEMCOG*

Not surprisingly, most traffic crashes in the Village of Franklin take place at the major intersections at the periphery of the Village, where traffic is heaviest. As shown in Table 17 and Map 11, Telegraph Road at both Thirteen Mile and Fourteen Mile Roads have high crash rates.

The Franklin Road/Thirteen Mile Road intersection experiences a relatively high number of crashes, due in part to the design of the intersection as Franklin Road approaches from an angle from the south. A reduction in crashes could possibly be achieved through installation of updated signalization.

Accomplishments

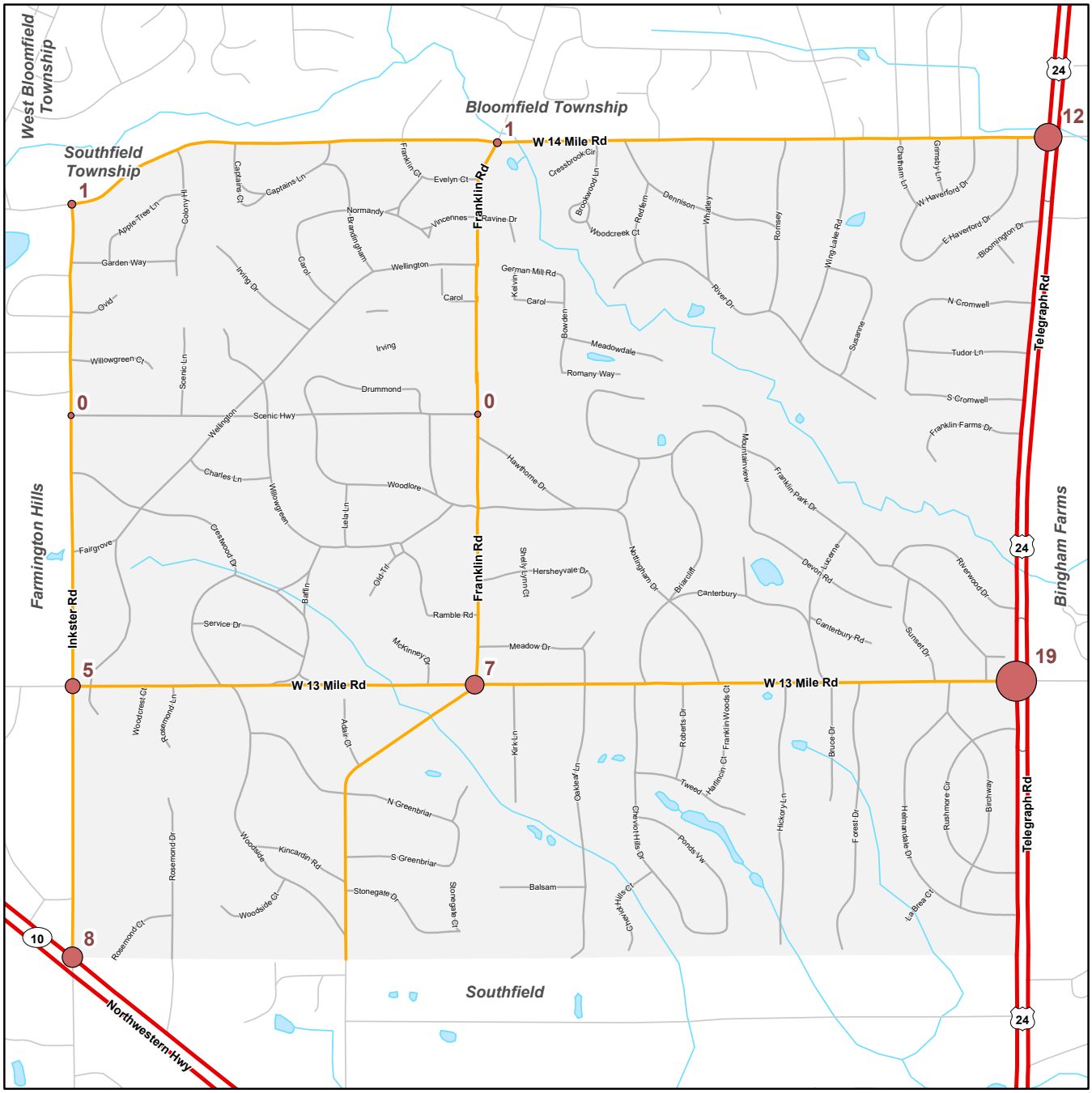
To Franklin Village residents, both the character of Franklin Road and its ability to accommodate traffic and parking are important concerns. In 2001, Franklin Road, between Thirteen Mile and Fourteen Mile Roads was repaved at a cost of $1.2 million. Crosswalks and new signage were included in the project.

Signalized traffic controls have been located at Thirteen Mile Road and Fourteen Mile Road. A flashing light also exists at the Scenic Highway intersection. Nevertheless, residents have complained about excessive traffic speeds along Franklin Road since the early 1970s. The speed limit through the Village Center has been reduced to 25 miles per hour, which has also resulted in complaints about an "unnatural" slowing of normal traffic patterns. In 2005, the Village installed a speed indicator on northbound Franklin Road to help people be more aware of their speeds as they enter the historic district.

Crosswalks in the Village Center provide visual and sound cues to drivers to slow down, and the on-street parking at the Post Office creates a visual narrowing of the roadway. Together, these measures should cause traffic to move more slowly and cautiously through the Village Center.

In 2019, the Village completed a Village-wide residential street improvement program at a cost of approximately $1.3 million.

As noted previously, in 2020-2022, the Village completed a major streetscape upgrade in the Village Center, costing approximately $2.7 million. Franklin Road was repaved, curbs and gutters were added, streetlights were installed, street trees were planted, and sidewalks were constructed. Sidewalks now exist along Franklin Road from Thirteen Mile Road to Fourteen Mile Road.



Map 11
Traffic Analysis

Village of Franklin
Oakland County, Michigan

December 20, 2021

LEGEND

- Village of Franklin
- Principal Arterial Roads
- Minor Arterial Roads
- Local Roads

Figures in red denote the Annual Crash Average for crashes within 150 feet of the intersection (2015 to 2019).

0 500 1,000
Feet

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: SEMCOG.

MCKENNA

CIRCULATION SYSTEM ISSUES

In addition to the ongoing concerns of traffic volumes, speed, and safety, other challenges and opportunities surround Franklin's circulation system.

Access Control on Major Roads

One way to reduce congestion on Franklin roads is to implement traffic control measures to facilitate the smooth flow of traffic on arterial roads surrounding Franklin. Such action will encourage through traffic to use the arterial roads rather than travel on roads through the Village.

Cul-de-sac streets found in some locations in Franklin exacerbate congestion on minor arterial roads in the Village. Cul-de-sacs force all traffic out to the arterial roads, even when a resident only wants to travel from one neighborhood to the next.

Village Center Parking

Off-street parking in Franklin primarily serves the Village Center businesses and civic facilities. The 2011 analysis of the state of parking in Village Commercial District recognized that the businesses had enough parking overall, but that the parking was fragmented and required use of Franklin Road to travel between parking areas. That Plan recommended that parking areas be better connected to one another to allow more efficient use and reduce the effect of parking entrances and exits on congestion. The large number of access points pose a safety problem, particularly where driveways are adjacent to one another. The frequent vehicle access points create potential conflicts not only with vehicles on Franklin Road, but with pedestrians walking between businesses.

The recommendation that parking areas be better connected to one another has not yet been widely implemented—most of the parking lots behind Village Center businesses are still physically separated, though joining them in some cases would require only removal of a chain or other barrier between them.

Prompted by concern over parking problems in the Village's Commercial District, the Planning Commission was charged with identifying parking issues and identifying ways to solve them. A Parking Committee, consisting of various stakeholders, members of the Village government, and a representative of the Planning Commission was formed to prepare a systematic review. A key finding was that, on a district-by-district basis, there was sufficient parking to meet the Village's needs. Some themes that were consistent with prior reports included:

- Franklin Road would benefit from a reduction in the number of ingress and egress points;
- Benefits could be achieved by combining and restriping adjoining parking lots;
- Parking facilities could be better identified for patrons;
- Maintenance for parking facilities to ensure they are in prime condition is important to avoid casting a negative image on the respective businesses and the Village as a whole; and
- Greater efficiency could be obtained by restriping or striping existing unstriped lots.

The Parking Committee reported that it did not find parking deficiencies to be a serious problem, except during special events. The Committee also felt strongly that there are several vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements that should be addressed in the interest of the safety and aesthetics, and to make the best use of buildings in the Village Center. The Committee provided specific recommendations for the parking lot serving Driven by Lisa MacDonald, Personal Trainer and Madeleine's French Patisserie and Market (previously Market Basket and Farmhouse coffee shop). These businesses are located at 32652 and 32644 Franklin Road.

The analysis, dated August 5, 2011, is quite detailed and any attempt to accurately summarize the data or corresponding findings is not feasible within the confines of this Master Plan update. Accordingly, that analysis is incorporated herein by reference so that the underlying data and findings may be viewed in their entirety.

Fire Department Parking

The Franklin Bingham Farms Fire Department has limited space and inadequate parking. The fire hall was built in 1959 and was added onto in 2005. Currently, the department has a full-time Chief, 3 full-time fire fighters, a part-time clerk, and 25 volunteers, nearly all of whom live outside of Franklin. A dozen may be at the fire hall at any time with several more present on occasion for meetings. There is little delineation between the department's lot and the adjoining service station, so vehicles accessing or waiting for service next door occasionally intrude onto the fire hall lot. These conditions are tolerated, however, as no space exists to provide for the department's peak parking needs. When needed, firefighters park their vehicles along the street.

Roadway Rural Character

Preserving roadside rural character is essential in maintaining Franklin's sense of place. The 1997 Master Plan Update called for scenic corridor protection plans to be created for this purpose, though this project has not progressed. The roadside image of Franklin could be harmed in the processes of development, future road expansion or repairs, or utility work, without policies in place to mitigate damage and reinforce the existing character. Some action has been taken to prevent damage, such as maintenance tree trimming by the Village to prevent utility companies from seeing a need to make more drastic cuts.

Roadway Maintenance Needs

Roads under the jurisdiction of Franklin are in excellent condition as a result of two multi-million-dollar road improvement programs in 2018-2019 and 2020-2022. Ongoing improvement to roads under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission for Oakland County is warranted (Thirteen Mile Road, and Fourteen Mile Road, between Franklin Road and Telegraph Road. A preservation overlay project is planned for Thirteen Mile Road, between Inkster and Telegraph Roads, by the Road Commission in 2023.

Franklin has a few unpaved roads, notably Fourteen Mile Road, west of Franklin Road. While this gravel road is prone to potholes and produces dust, which are nuisances to neighboring residents, road conditions here force low traffic speeds and limit the total volume of traffic using this road. Paving would likely encourage an increase in traffic by making Fourteen Mile an alternative east-west route, which might have a negative effect on neighboring residents.

As noted previously, a traffic impact study is needed to weigh the benefits and detriments of paving Fourteen Mile Road. Paving the road could improve traffic flow in the northwest quadrant of the Village as well as reduce traffic on Thirteen Mile Road, making it safer for residents in the south part of the Village to access the Village Center by foot or on a bicycle.



Fourteen Mile Road

Non-motorized Transportation

The high-traffic roads running through and around Franklin limit the enjoyment of pedestrians and cyclists. As most of the Village lacks off-street pedestrian facilities, the traffic speeds or volumes on arterial roads can make pedestrians feel unsafe. This is particularly an issue for the neighborhoods to the south of Thirteen Mile Road, which serves as a barrier to visiting the Village Center and civic facilities. Within the Village Center, sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks ease pedestrian circulation.

While sidewalks are prohibited in most of Franklin by the Village Charter, as part of the effort to maintain rural character, residents have indicated support for non-motorized facilities that have a "trail" or "path" feel.[1] These non-motorized trails could run in the rights-of-way of major roads, pulling away from the street and buffered by landscaping where space allow. Marked pedestrian crossings with push-button activated flashing lights are an option for safe passage. To date, these trails have not been created, though interest still exists.

The cul-de-sac layout of some of Franklin's residential streets presents another pedestrian concern; while these neighborhood streets are themselves safe and peaceful, many of them have outlets only onto arterial streets, providing residents without good walking or cycling routes to other neighborhoods or the Village Center. Some of these cul-de-sacs might be connected to one another to provide better access within the Village for all types of local users; connecting cul-de-sacs to each other or to major roads with non-motorized trails could be effective even in those locations where new vehicle connections are not appropriate. Additional non-motorized trails could be added to link neighborhoods together. These trails could provide new, shorter and safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists to move within the Village limits.

Thirteen Mile Road is a barrier that separates residents in the southern third of the Village from the amenities in the Village Center. The Village has investigated the possibility of constructing a sidewalk or pathway along one side of Thirteen Mile Road, from Telegraph Road to Inkster Road, with crosswalks at various locations. This would be a valuable infrastructure addition, which the Village should continue to pursue.

The Village should also seek opportunities to connect to trail systems in adjoining communities, to link to the regional trail system in southeast Michigan. Possible connections include extension of a sidewalk southerly on Franklin Road into Southfield, to connect with Northwestern Highway; coordination with the City of Farmington Hills to construct a path along Inkster Road; and, crossings on Fourteen Mile Road to connect to extensive sidewalk system in Bloomfield Township.

Because of the area's land use patterns, little is within walking distance outside of the Village limits, with the regional arterials of Telegraph Road and Northwestern Highway creating special challenges for pedestrians. While public transit lines do not run through the Village, the Telegraph Road route run by SMART does have stops along the edge of Franklin (Route 375, which runs between Pontiac and Old Redford).

1 As a result of action taken by voters on May 4, 2021, Chapter XI, Section 5, of the Village Charter reads as follows: "The Council shall not have the power to construct any new sidewalks in residential areas, except that construction of new sidewalks shall be allowed along Franklin Road and Thirteen Mile Road."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions could be taken by the Village to address some of the issues mentioned and take advantage of opportunities to improve the Village's circulation network.

1. Plan to preserve scenic corridors.

To preserve the contribution that roadside views make to the image and character of Franklin, corridor plans should be prepared for the arterial roads that border and pass through Franklin. Where adjacent land use in neighboring municipalities is compatible, such as along Fourteen Mile in Bloomfield Township, stakeholders in those communities should be involved to maximize the impact. Corridor planning should involve community members to define the visual elements that enhance or detract from the desired character and identify opportunities and constraints along each of the major roads in the Village.

This statement of the desired character would be used to examine the Zoning Ordinance and ensure that setbacks, landscaping, and other requirements contribute positively. The defined character would also serve as a reference when considering walking and biking paths along the road corridors. While the roads within Franklin do not qualify for the State's Natural Beauty Roads or Michigan Heritage Routes programs, the corridor plans would help to ensure that any future road work done in the Village adds to the stated character, rather than detracting, providing guidance for the "context sensitive design" process that is gaining acceptance by road agencies.

2. Improve amenities for pedestrians and other non-motorized users.

A number of potential projects could improve residents' access to the Village Center and throughout Franklin. Creating paths for pedestrians and cyclists would allow these users to travel more safely. Paths connecting local roads to one another could provide for easier access to the Village Center's amenities and foster more of a sense of connection between neighborhoods. Safe pedestrian crossings of Thirteen Mile Road and Fourteen Mile Road, particularly at Franklin Road, would increase activity in the Village Center, encouraging enjoyment of the historic district and support for the local businesses located there.

Creating paths alongside major roads in Franklin would allow for pedestrians and cyclists and other users to move around Franklin more safely and pleasantly. Since the look and feel of roadside areas is a significant part of Franklin's character, paths will need to be designed to complement the atmosphere of the Village. To provide a more trail-like character, paths should be curved to follow land contours and to integrate with landscaping, as the road right-of-way allows. A variety of path materials is available and should be evaluated.

Thirteen Mile Road is of special concern to non-motorized users. Since the highest traffic volumes internally within the Village occur at the intersection of Thirteen Mile and Franklin Road, and Thirteen Mile generally cuts off the southern neighborhoods of Franklin from the Village Center, a safe crossing of Thirteen Mile is needed for pedestrians and other non-motorized users. The 1997 Traffic Calming Report rejects the option of pedestrian bridges as being unsightly and only addressing the needs of some non-motorized users. The report suggests tunneling under Thirteen Mile, where terrain permits, to provide a more accessible and less visually obtrusive crossing. This option has been deemed impractical, because of engineering and funding concerns. A less costly option that should be investigated involves the designation of crossing areas with pavement striping and possibly pedestrian-activated flashing traffic signals.

Since these non-motorized amenities are a priority for Village residents, the Planning Commission should continue to review and seek implementation of pathway plans.

3. Design for speed control on Village streets.

The physical features in the Village Center that limit speeding, such as textured crosswalks, on-street parking at the post office, and the electronic sign displaying drivers' speeds, would not be appropriate for other areas in Franklin. The Village should reject "road improvements" that encourage faster speeds, such as road widening and added lanes. Design options for reducing speeds from current levels are limited on arterial roads, but include using trees and other landscape features within the right-of-way to provide a visual narrowing effect, encouraging drivers to slow down.

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Implementation Plan

INTRODUCTION

A continual planning process involving close cooperation among the Village Council, Planning Commission, and other Village organizations, such as the Historic District Commission, is required to carry out this Master Plan. The Planning Commission has a major responsibility to communicate the Plan to Village residents, to encourage compliance with the standards and policies contained herein, and to actively pursue the implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

To achieve the goals of the Village residents, additional responsibilities should be assigned to the Planning Commission. The responsibilities contained in Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, are appropriate. The Commission should seek to continue a planning process founded upon clear communication and a sharing of decision-making among the Village Council, appointed commissions, and Village residents.



METHODS

Local planning efforts should consider the needs, trends, and changing conditions that affect the Village, including new research in the area of community planning. To accomplish this, the Planning Commission should work to improve the tools (ordinances and regulations) available to the Village in order to achieve the goals established in this plan. The following recommendations suggest methods the Planning Commission can use to advance the planning process:

1. The preparation of special studies focusing on specific planning issues should be considered to address, including but not limited to:

A) Preservation and enhancement of the Village's tree canopy;

B) Developing neighborhood connectivity through a system of pedestrian pathways;

C) Economic and aesthetic revitalization of the Village Center; and

D) Other such measures designed to preserve and enhance the essential character of Franklin.

2. The use of special workshops and public meetings, such as those used in the preparation of this Master Plan, should be continued.

A) The Commission should coordinate its planning with neighboring governmental units, both on a formal and informal basis, as necessary to accomplish of the goals and objectives set forth in this Master Plan;
The Commission should continue to refine the land use and environmental regulations and controls recommended in this Plan;

B) Based upon the goals, policies, and standards contained in this Plan, a coordinated program for the development of public structures, land acquisition, tree and vegetation management, and public capital improvements should be prepared on an annual basis. The program should recommend the priorities for public improvements that the Planning Commission judges to be needed or desirable. This program should be adopted by the Village Council as part of the Village budget. This program should be prepared with the assistance of the Village Administrator; and

C) The Planning Commission should undertake its responsibilities to review, hold public hearings, and prepare recommendations for the following public actions when they are proposed.

1. The opening, closing, widening, or extension of roads.
2. Acquisition, enlargement, or improvement to any park, playground, or other public open space.
3. The construction, acquisition, or authorization of public buildings or structures.
4. The use, height, area, and bulk requirements and restrictions governing buildings and premises within a subdivision plat or condominium.

3. The Planning Commission should hold an annual workshop to consider the past year's progress towards the Plan's implementation, set priorities for the coming year's planning activities, and outline the nature of changes or additions to be considered in the Plan. These activities should be embodied in an annual report and work program submitted to the Village Council along with the Planning Commission's proposed budget for the next year.

ORGANIZATION

The Planning Commission should continue to maintain Bylaws and Rules of Procedure for transaction of business and establish committees with responsibilities for particular planning activities, such as the Capital Improvement Program, ordinances and regulations, zoning, and Master Plan studies. Residents of the Village can be encouraged to serve on special committees, with one or more members of the Planning Commission, to assist in the preparation of special planning efforts.

The complexities in dealing with planning issues, both within the Village and in conjunction with surrounding communities, and in providing services to Village residents are too great for volunteers of the community. The recommendations of this Master Plan update will require both volunteer efforts, such as the Planning Commission and other ad hoc committees, and the guidance of the professional Village Administrator. There are thousands of hours of work to be done in order for these recommendations to be implemented. If the recommendations are not acted upon, Franklin Village will cease to retain the visual and environmental qualities that residents enjoy.

The Village Council should continue to maintain a close working relationship with the Planning Commission, including having a Council member serve as liaison to the Planning Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

The following ***Recommendations for Implementation*** are taken from the recommendations set forth in Chapters 3-9 of the 2025 Master Plan for the Village of Franklin. Michigan's Planning Enabling Act 33 of 2008 requires that a Master Plan include recommendations for implementing the Master Plan.

This Planning Commission believes that all of the recommendations set forth in this Master Plan are sound and should be implemented with all deliberate speed. History has taught us, however, that budgetary considerations and constraints, public sentiment, and the views of the Village Council, can and do influence when, and even if, such recommendations are implemented. Accordingly, the 2025 Master Plan does not set forth a time frame for implementation of these recommendations since such matters are largely outside of the Planning Commission's control and jurisdiction.

The Commission wishes to strongly emphasize that a number of recommendations have consistently been recognized as priorities by this Planning Commission, as well as a substantial number of residents of the Village. These include, but are not limited to, protection of Franklin's tree canopy, developing neighborhood connectivity through a system of pedestrian pathways, economic and aesthetic revitalization of the Village Center, and other measures designed to preserve and enhance the essential character of Franklin.

Recommendations toward achieving those goals are set forth in this Master Plan. This Commission believes that these recommendations are too important to simply be memorialized herein and then allowed to remain dormant. The Planning Commission therefore calls upon the Village Council and the public at large to take whatever steps are necessary and prudent to permit the prompt implementation of the following recommendations, as organized by chapter.

Chapter 3: Village Character & Neighborhoods

- Maintain residential uses along Village boundaries;
- Permanently preserve public open space;
- Encourage a variety of housing styles;
- Design pathways to blend in with the rural-like landscape; and
- Encourage enforcement of deed restrictions that further the Master Plan goals.

Chapter 4: Historic Areas

- Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to achieve the Master Plan goals;
- Create a Landscape Master Plan;
- Use the Village website and other methods to educate residents about zoning regulations and code enforcement;
- Educate the public about the benefits of applying for placement on the Natural Register of Historic Places; and
- Investigate the availability of tax incentives to promote historic preservation.

Chapter 5: The Village Center

- Strengthen the Village Center as a destination by promoting its historic and cultural attributes;
- Protect and maintain the diverse architecture of residential structures in the Village Center;
- Preserve the essential historic and rural-like character of the Village Center;
- Define desirable design treatments for front setbacks including small picket or wrought iron fences, lighting, and signs that are compatible with the existing character;
- Preserve the Village Center context when contemplating changes in land use or additions to structures; and
- Limit Village Center expansion onto the steeper slopes of the valley of the Franklin Branch of the Rouge River.

Chapter 6: The Village Center: Commercial

- Continue to participate in the "Main Street Four-Point Approach," promulgated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation;
- Continue to use and promote the brand essence of Franklin developed by Main Street Franklin;
- Participate, through Main Street Franklin, and through other appropriate programs, in a comprehensive revitalization effort of the Village Center;
- Implement the plan for coordinated parking behind buildings;
- Creatively utilize local "high traffic" attractions, such as the Franklin Cider Mill, as a means of increasing awareness of the Village Center as a destination;
- Actively encourage increased rates of retail uses within the Village Center, particularly on the first floors of Village Center commercial buildings; and
- Leverage Village investments into securing grants and other funding sources to help foster revitalization efforts within the Village Center.

Chapter 7: Community Facilities & Open Spaces

- Develop an Open Space Plan for the Village of Franklin;
- Develop landscape guidelines to protect the character of the Village Center with appropriate plantings and retention of existing vegetation;
- Monitor improvements in wireless communications technology in the interest of improving connectivity in the Village; and
- Develop a plan for providing charging stations throughout the Village Center for electric vehicles.

Chapter 8: Trees & Vegetation Management

- Conduct a new vegetation management survey;
- Conduct a new tree inventory and evaluation;
- Develop and implement a Village-wide Vegetation Management and Sustainability Program;
- Hold Village-wide informational seminars about the condition of Franklin's trees, the requirements of the Tree Protection Ordinance, as well as practical steps that Villagers can take to protect and enhance tree cover and vegetation;
- Vigorously enforce the Tree Protection Ordinance;
- Hire experienced specialists to perform routine pruning and inspection of trees on public property or in the rights-of-way;
- Maintain and enhance the Village's vegetative cover through a tree maintenance, planting, and replacement program;
- Take practical action to minimize damage to vegetation from pests, disease, and human activity; and
- Encourage the preservation of the simple rural-like character along arterial roads and Village boundaries, enhance and protect large open areas, and plant and maintain vegetation along roads that contribute to the rural-like character.

Chapter 9: Traffic & Circulation

- Preserve scenic corridors by avoiding road widening and removal of the tree canopy along Village roads;
- Improve amenities for pedestrians and other non-motorized users; and
- Design for speed and traffic control on Village streets.

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