

A nighttime photograph of a street in Lowell, Michigan. The image shows a row of historic, multi-story brick buildings with arched windows. Streetlights illuminate the scene, creating bright starburst effects. Bare trees are planted along the sidewalk. In the foreground, a road with white crosswalk markings is visible, and a long, horizontal light streak from a passing vehicle cuts across the lower portion of the frame. The sky is dark.

Master Plan

City of Lowell

Kent County, Michigan

Master Plan

City of Lowell

Kent County, Michigan

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TABLE of CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	ii
Introduction	iv
1. Demographic and Housing Analysis	1
Demographics	1
Housing	9
2. Existing Conditions	12
Existing Land Use	12
Natural Features	17
Utilities	20
Boards and Commissions	22
Public Facilities, Services, and Recreation	23
Community Input Survey Results	26
3. Goals and Objectives	32
Vision Statement	32
Goals and Policies	32
4. Future Land Use	36
Development Areas	36
Future Land Use Categories	38
Downtown Design Guidelines	44
Green Development	53
5. Implementation	54
6. Appendix: Community Input Survey Results	A.1

LIST of MAPS

Regional Location	vi
Existing Land Use.....	15
Natural Features.....	19
Future Land Use	43

LIST of TABLES

Table 1.1: Total Population and Population Growth Rate.....	2
Table 1.2: Median Age, Percentage of Population Under 18 and Over 65.....	3
Table 1.3: Households.....	5
Table 1.4: Household Size	5
Table 1.5: Married and Female Head of Household with Children.....	6
Table 1.6: Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older	6
Table 1.7: Annual Household Income.....	7
Table 1.8: Occupation	7
Table 1.9: Growth in Housing Units	9
Table 1.10: Comparison of Housing Types as a Percentage of Total Housing Units	10
Table 1.11: Occupancy	10
Table 1.12: Age of Housing.....	10
Table 1.13: Value of Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units and Median Housing Value.....	11
Table 2.1: Existing Land Use	16

LIST of FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Comparison of Age Groups by Percentage of Total Population	3
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INTRODUCTION

The City of Lowell is located on the east side of Kent County and features a diverse population, strong industrial base, charming neighborhoods, and a distinct historic character. The City grew at the confluence of the Flat and the Grand Rivers, and in successive years benefited from the coming of both rail transportation and interstate highways. Currently, Lowell is an important activity node within the greater Grand Rapids area. From a regional perspective, the City of Lowell serves as the downtown for the surrounding Townships.

This document builds upon the 1984 and 1995 Comprehensive Plans, and sets forth the vision that City leaders and residents have for the future of the City of Lowell. This document also serves as a guide for continuing community improvement actions and a blueprint for the future development of the community. Through the careful implementation of this plan, both private and public interests can work together to ensure a bright and successful future for the City of Lowell.

LEGAL BASIS for the MASTER PLAN

The Municipal Planning Act of the State of Michigan (PA 285 of 1931) expressly authorizes cities and villages to engage in planning and zoning. The Act states that the Planning Commission's planning activity shall consist of the development of a master plan, which is:

"...made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs which, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development; including, among other things, adequate provision for traffic, the promotion of safety from fire and other dangers, adequate provision for light and air, the promotion of the healthful and convenient distribution of population, the promoting of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and adequate provision of public utilities, and other public requirements." (M.C.L. 125.37)

PURPOSE of a MASTER PLAN

A master plan is used for a variety of purposes. At the most basic level, a master plan is used as the basis for a community's zoning ordinance. One of the requirements that make zoning constitutionally valid is that the ordinance be based on a comprehensive plan for the development of the jurisdiction. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 100 of 2006, as amended) requires that zoning ordinances be based on a plan.

In the context of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, the master plan is a study of the present and future growth of a municipality that identifies the land needed for various types of activities, including agriculture, single family and multiple family residences, commerce, and industry. After a master plan is adopted, a municipality can then adopt zoning regulations to insure that land is available and allocated to meet the community's long term needs.

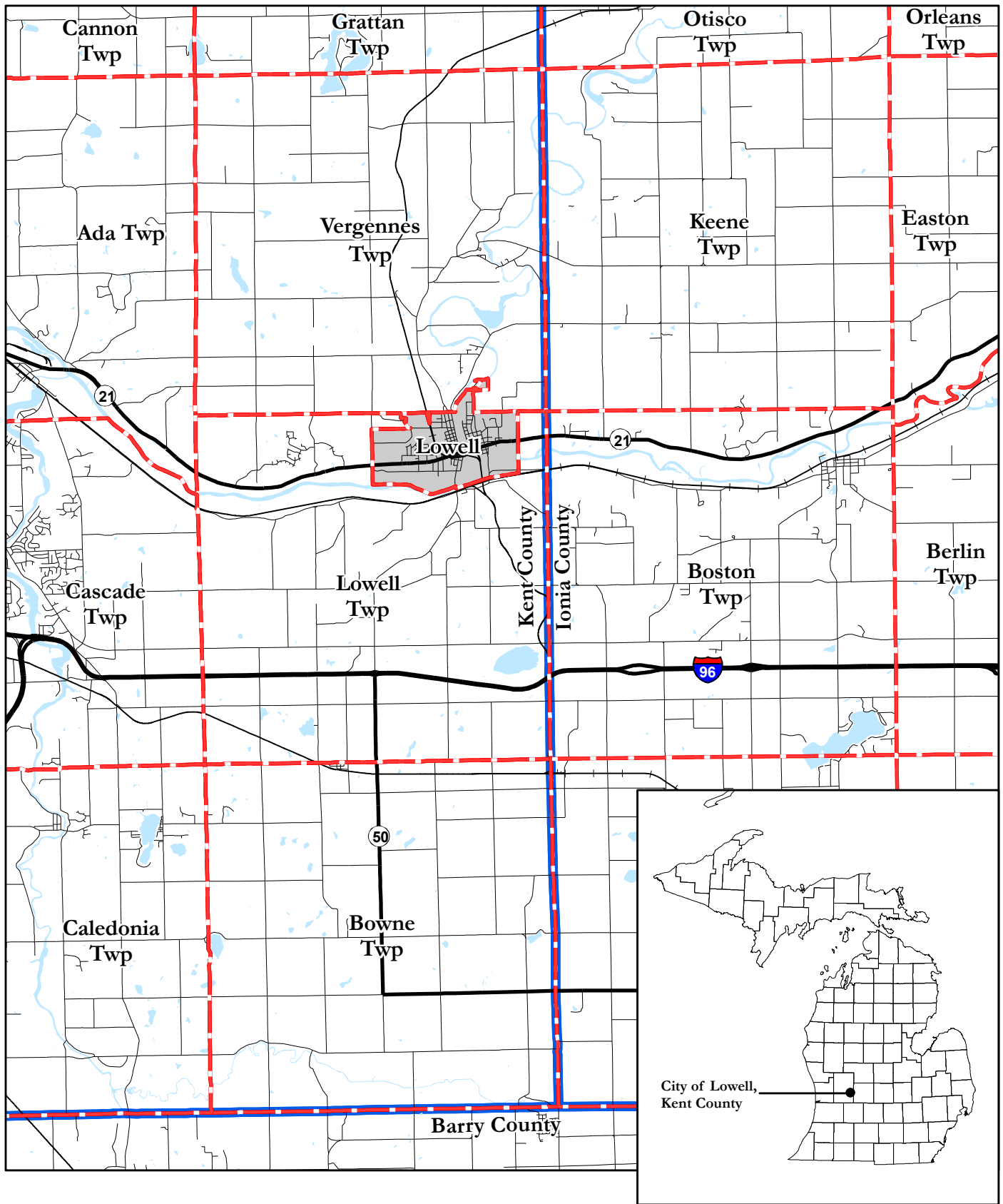
A common use of the master plan is for reference for zoning changes and special use permits. One of the primary considerations in a rezoning is compliance with the master plan and the future land use map.

Another important function of the master plan is providing guidance to developers, landowners and potential homeowners when making investment decisions. Consistent and reasonable application of the master plan by the City reduces risk and uncertainty in the real estate market.

The master plan provides guidance and coordination in the provision of public services. Understanding long term growth patterns is helpful in making decisions for public investments such as parks, roads, and water and sewer infrastructure.

A master plan can be the basis for proactive projects and programs to improve a community. A fundamental part of the master planning process is the public involvement that forms the basis for the future land use plan and indicates the community's desires for the future and its long-term vision. The goals and objectives of a master plan reflect desires for physical development.

A master plan presents the vision of a community over the coming 20 years, but also includes a number of specific, short term implementation activities intended to realize the overall vision of the plan.



Regional Location Map

City of Lowell,
Kent County, Michigan

Data Source: Michigan Geographic Framework,
Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 6a.

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10/22/2007

Chapter 1



Demographics and Housing

DEMOGRAPHICS and HOUSING

This chapter examines existing demographic (a statistical description of the people who live in Lowell) and housing (a statistical description of the housing stock in Lowell) conditions in the City.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the master plan analyzes demographic and housing trends, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau. For purposes of analysis and where appropriate, comparisons have been made with neighboring communities and Kent County as a whole.

Demographic analysis is a fundamental element of master plans. Planning for future growth and development requires some consideration of “how much” – how many people will need City services, how much housing is affordable, or how many new houses will be built.

The intent of a demographic analysis is to paint a general picture of the City. The analysis identifies those demographic characteristics in which the City is different from other communities within in Kent County. A differential in demographic characteristics may indicate issues or areas in which land use planning and public policies beyond the typical scope of a master plan are warranted.

The demographic analysis concludes with an assessment of the effects of demographic trends on future growth and development patterns in the City of Lowell.

POPULATION

Total Population

Growth of a community’s population is a primary force driving new development and redevelopment, while a decline in a community’s population can lead to abandoned buildings and blight. Therefore, population trends are an important component of a demographic analysis. The total population and percentage of change is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 compares the population growth trends for the City against adjacent and comparable communities. Over the 10-year period from 1990 to 2000, the City of Lowell experienced the smallest population growth rate compared to the adjacent two townships and similarly sized villages and cities in Kent County. The City’s limited growth rate is not unexpected, given the largely built out nature of the City. As noted in our existing land use analysis, the City does not contain large

tracts of undeveloped land, which limits the potential for detached single family housing development.

Table 1.1
Total Population and Population Growth Rate,
City of Lowell and Surrounding and Comparable Communities, 1990 to 2000

Government Unit	1990 Population	2000 Population	% Change 1990-2000
City of Lowell	3,983	4,013	0.8%
Lowell Township	4,774	5,219	9.3%
Vergennes Township	2,492	3,611	44.9%
Kent County	500,631	574,335	14.7%
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	6.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

AGE

The age of a community's population has very real implications for planning and development, whether it is an increased or decreased need for schools to serve the population under the age of 18, or a need for housing alternatives for empty nesters and elderly residents. This section analyzes the age of the City's population – based on age structure, median age, and percentage of population under 20 and over 65 – and assesses the implications of age on land use and development.

Common Measures of Age

The age analysis begins with three common measures of the age of the population. The first measure is the median age, which is the age at which one-half of the population is older and one-half of the population is younger. Median age is the most often used measure of age because it can be used to compare populations of different sizes. The second measure is the percentage of the total population under the age of 20. Individuals under the age of 18 are usually recently graduated, enrolled in the school system, or preparing to enter school, and thus require services not required for the general population. The third measure is the percentage of the total population that is aged 65 and over. Many individuals approaching retirement age seek alternative housing. As individuals age, they may lose their ability to drive and means of transportation and other community services can become a new but important issue. These measures of community age are presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

**Median Age, Percentage of Population Under 18 and Over 65
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 2000**

	Median Age	Population Under 18	Population Over 65
City of Lowell	34.0	29.3%	13.8%
Lowell Township	35.4	30.2%	8.2%
Vergennes Township	34.4	33.5%	6.9%
Kent County	32.5	28.3%	10.4%
State of Michigan	35.5	26.1%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

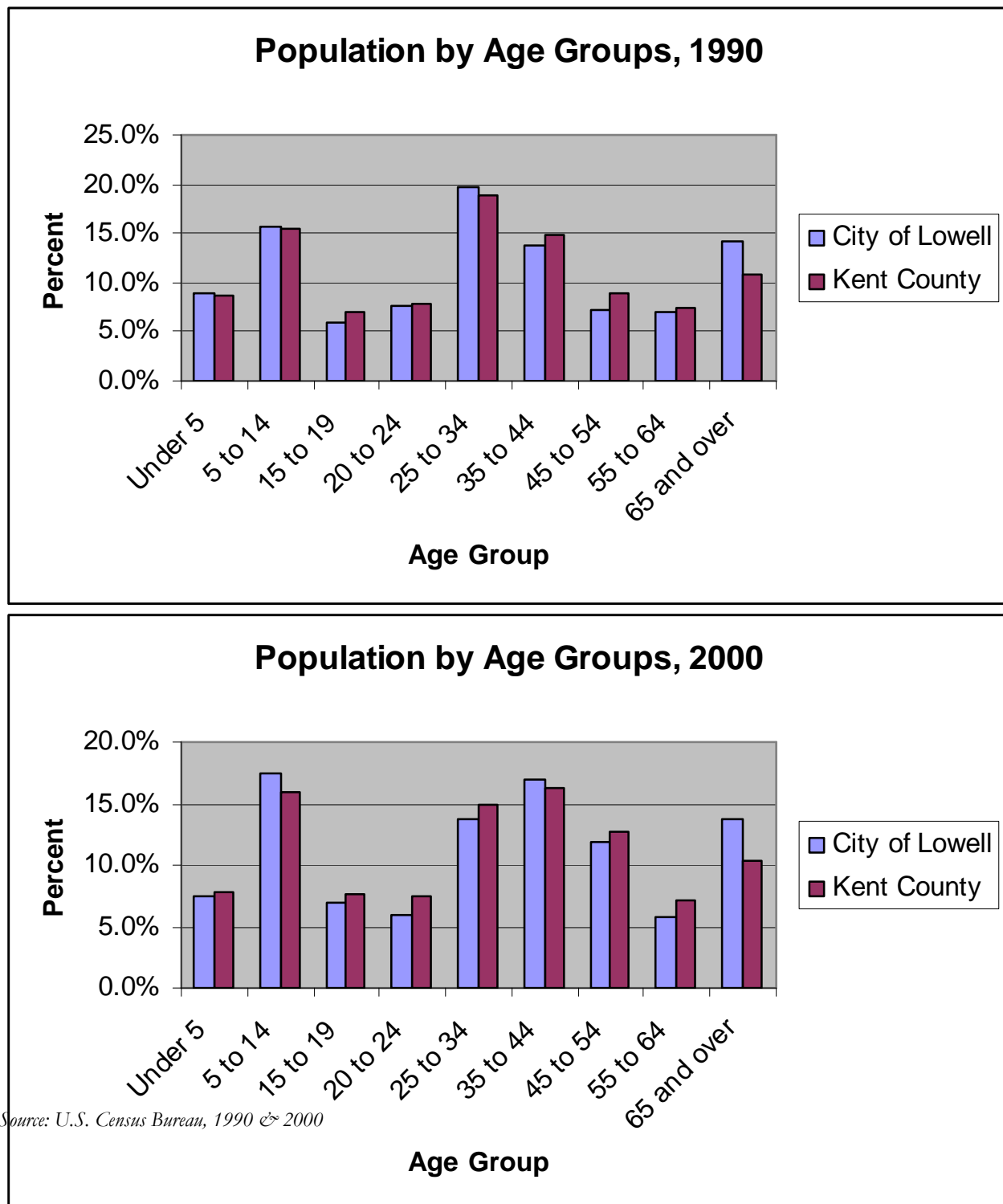
Age Structure

Age structure refers to the portion of the community's population in each age cohort. To compare the age structure of the City and County, the population is divided into several basic age groupings.

Under 5	(Pre-school)
5 to 19	(School age)
20 to 44	(Family forming)
45 to 64	(Mature families)
Over 65	(Retirement)

The data in table 1.3 and figure 1.1 indicate that the City of Lowell's population is somewhat older than the population of surrounding Townships, Kent County, and the State. However, the City of Lowell does have a comparable proportion of population aged 18 or younger, and the median age is consistent with that found in neighboring Townships or statewide. It is interesting to note that the median age in Kent County (32.5) is particularly low, indicating high birth rates, high rates of immigration by younger workers, the presence of a high percentage of college students, or some combination of the three.

Figure 1.1
Comparison of Age Groups by Percentage of Total Population
City of Lowell & Kent County, 1990 & 2000



HOUSEHOLD GROWTH AND COMPOSITION

This section of the demographic analysis assesses the composition and characteristics of households in the City. Households are an important unit of analysis because changes in the number of households are an indication of an increased or decreased demand for housing units. Households are also the basic purchasing unit that creates demand for retail services.

Number of Households

The number of households in the City increased slightly from 1,456 in 1990 to 1,492 in 2000, an increase of 36 households (2.5%). Compared with neighboring communities, Kent County, and the State, Lowell experienced a much lower rate of household growth. Household information for the City is presented in Tables 1.3 and 1.4. Lowell and most surrounding communities also experienced a decline in average household size. This observation is consistent with national trends towards fewer nuclear family households and more single person households as younger singles wait longer to get married and as life expectancies increase for the senior population.

Table 1.3
Households
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 1990-2000

	1990 Households	2000 Households	Change 1990-2000
City of Lowell	1,456	1,492	2.5%
Lowell Township	1,502	1,726	14.9%
Vergennes Township	788	1,142	44.9%
Kent County	181,740	212,890	17.1%
State of Michigan	3,419,331	3,785,661	10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

Table 1.4
Household Size
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 1990-2000

	1990 Household Size	2000 Household Size	Change 1990-2000
City of Lowell	2.73	2.69	-1.5%
Lowell Township	3.16	3.02	-4.4%
Vergennes Township	3.16	3.16	--
Kent County	2.75	2.70	-1.8%
State of Michigan	2.71	2.62	-3.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

Households With Children

Table 1.5 displays the percentage of households with children in 2000 for Lowell and comparison communities. The table indicates married family households and households with a female householder. The table indicates that the City of Lowell has a higher percentage of female headed households with children than the state, county, or surrounding communities. The two Townships display high levels of married family households with children and lower incidences of female headed households with children.

Table 1.5
Married and Female Head of Household with Children
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 2000

	Married Family Households	% of all Households	Female Head of Household	% of all Households
City of Lowell	390	26.1%	146	9.8%
Lowell Township	606	35.1%	104	6.0%
Vergennes Township	488	42.7%	33	2.9%
Kent County	55,614	26.1%	16,276	7.6%
State of Michigan	873,227	23.1%	283,758	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

EDUCATION AND INCOME

Education

Table 1.6 displays the highest level of educational attainment for persons aged 25 or older in 2000. The table indicates that the Lowell is similar to surrounding communities, the county, and the state in the percentage of persons without a high school diploma or some college. However, Lowell has a higher percentage of persons with a high school diploma and a lower percentage of persons with a bachelors degree or higher. On the other hand, Vergennes Township displayed the highest levels of educational attainment, with the highest percentage of persons holding bachelors degrees or higher, and the lowest percentage of persons without a high school diploma.

Table 1.6
Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older,
City of Lowell, Kent County, and Michigan, 2000

	Less Than High School Graduate	High School Graduate	Some College or Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
City of Lowell	14.1%	41.9%	28.6%	15.5%
Lowell Township	13.2%	33.4%	31.9%	21.5%
Vergennes Township	5.9%	36.4%	30.4%	27.4%
Kent County	15.4%	28.3%	30.6%	25.8%
State of Michigan	16.5%	31.3%	30.3%	21.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Household Income

The estimated median household income for City of Lowell residents in 1999 was \$42,326, which is \$3,654 less than the \$45,980 median household income for Kent County.

Table 1.7 shows the median household income levels for City of Lowell, Lowell Township, Vergennes Township, Kent County, and the State of Michigan in 1999. The City of Lowell had the lowest median household income of any of the comparison communities.

Table 1.7
Annual Household Income
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 1999

	Median Household Income
City of Lowell	\$42,326
Lowell Township	\$58,639
Vergennes Township	\$61,500
Kent County	\$45,980
State of Michigan	\$44,667

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Occupation

Table 1.8 summarizes the occupation of employed workers for the City of Lowell and surrounding communities in 2000. The City of Lowell had a lower percentage of workers employed in the management and sales fields, and a higher percentage of workers employed in the service and production/transportation fields. The percentages employed in each type of occupation is consistent with the educational attainment figures summarized in Table 1.7.

Table 1.8
Occupation
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 2000

	Management	Service	Sales and Office	Farming, Fishing and Forestry	Construction and Extraction	Production and Trans.
City of Lowell	23.0%	20.1%	24.4%	0.0%	8.8%	23.7%
Lowell Township	28.4%	14.8%	25.3%	0.0%	6.7%	24.8%
Vergennes Township	34.7%	8.8%	28.5%	0.7%	8.7%	18.7%
Kent County	31.1%	13.3%	26.8%	0.4%	7.7%	20.7%
State of Michigan	31.5%	14.8%	25.6%	0.5%	9.2%	18.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

DEMOGRAPHICS: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The foregoing analysis identifies demographic characteristics of the City that differ from those of the surrounding communities, and the region. The primary findings of the demographic analysis are:

1. Lowell did not experience significant growth in either population or households during the 1990-2000 period. Most surrounding communities did experience steady growth in households and population, with Vergennes Township experiencing the highest rate of growth.
2. The City's age structure is comparable to surrounding communities and the State of Michigan, although Lowell does have a somewhat higher proportion of elderly residents.
3. The median household income and educational attainment are lower for the average resident of the City of Lowell, with a higher percentage of employed residents being employed in the service and production/transportation industries.

Conclusions

The primary findings of the demographic analysis have several implications for the City's land use and development policies.

1. As evidenced by the stagnant household and population growth, the City is largely built out. Increases in population and household will have to come from increases in density on already-utilized parcels of land.
2. School enrollment is anticipated to be fairly stable given the age distribution of the population in 2000.
3. As the mature families age group moves towards retirement, their housing choices may have implications for the demand for new and different housing types on the South Side of the Township.
4. As the retirement age group increases in size, demand for services for senior citizens and elderly residents are likely to grow.

HOUSING

This section of the existing conditions analysis examines the City's housing stock and development trends. The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of the local housing market and to project future housing demand to guide the formulation of the Future Land Use Plan.

Number of Housing Units

Table 1.9 compares the increase in housing units between the City and comparison communities. The growth in housing units is similar to the growth in households presented in Table 1.3. The City experienced growth and construction of new housing units during the 1990's, just at a very low rate.

Table 1.9
Growth in Housing Units,
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Percent Increase
City of Lowell	1,510	1,564	3.6%
Lowell Township	1,543	1,764	14.3%
Vergennes Township	826	1,209	46.4%
Kent County	192,698	224,000	16.2%
State of Michigan	3,847,926	4,234,279	10.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 & 2000

Housing Type

To understand the City's housing stock, the type of housing is analyzed. The available census data includes the following housing categories:

- One-family, detached (single-family homes)
- One-family, attached (attached condominiums)
- Two-family / Duplexes
- Multi-unit Structures
- Mobile homes
- Other units (includes boats, RVs, etc.)

Housing Type Comparison

The types of housing in the City are compared to housing types in the County as a whole in Table 1.10. Single-family detached housing constitutes 63.7 percent of the total housing in the City, compared to 63.5 percent in the County as a whole. The composition of the housing stock in the City of Lowell is comparable to the county and state. The housing stock in the surrounding Townships is predictably dominated by detached single family dwelling units.

Table 1.10

**Comparison of Housing Types as a Percentage of Total Housing Units
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 2000**

	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	Two-Family	Multiple Family	Mobile Home	Other
City of Lowell	63.7%	1.6%	5.0%	20.0%	9.7%	0.0%
Lowell Township	82.6%	0.0	0.3%	0.9%	16.1%	0.0%
Vergennes Township	96.1%	1.3%	1.1%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%
Kent County	63.5%	4.6%	6.1%	20.9%	4.9%	0.0%
State of Michigan	70.6%	3.9%	3.5%	15.3%	6.5%	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Tenure

Tenure refers to the ownership status of occupied housing (housing units that are vacant were not included in the data). Tenure for the City is presented in Table 1.11. The City has a strong occupancy rate, with over 95% of all housing units being occupied. The percentage of owner occupied units, 65.7%, is consistent with state and national figures.

Table 1.11

**Occupancy
City of Lowell, 2000**

Occupancy	Number of Units	Percentage of Total
Owner Occupied	1,028	65.7%
Renter Occupied	464	29.7%
Vacant	72	4.6%
Total Dwelling Units	1,564	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000

Age of Housing

The age of the City's housing stock is presented in Table 1.12. The largest percentage of housing in the City was constructed prior to 1939, while the surrounding Townships have seen most of their housing constructed in the past 30 years. This underscores Lowell's position as the established center of the area.

Table 1.12

**Age of Housing
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 2000**

	Prior to 1939	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000
City of Lowell	31.5%	13.9%	14.5%	19.4%	13.5%	7.3%
Lowell Township	12.8%	7.3%	8.7%	32.0%	18.1%	21.1%
Vergennes Township	12.7%	6.6%	5.5%	15.8%	19.2%	40.3%
Kent County	18.8%	21.1%	12.7%	15.4%	13.9%	18.2%
State of Michigan	16.9%	26.5%	14.2%	17.1%	10.5%	14.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Housing Value

The data for median housing value represent “specified owner occupied housing units”, which are defined by the Census Bureau as “owner occupied housing units described as either one family home detached from any other house or a one family home attached to one or more houses on less than 10 acres with non business on the property.” The median value of housing units in 1990 and 2000 are presented in Table 1.13. The 1990 median housing values have been adjusted to 2000 equivalent dollars to permit a calculation of the real appreciation of housing during the 1990’s. The table indicates that the City of Lowell and the surrounding townships experienced greater home value appreciation than did Kent County as a whole, but less appreciation than did the State of Michigan.

Table 1.13
Value of Specified Owner Occupied Housing Units and Median Housing Value
City of Lowell and Surrounding Communities, 1990-2000

	1990 Median Value*	2000 Median Value	Percent Increase
City of Lowell	\$73,120	\$98,500	34.7%
Lowell Township	\$89,050	\$119,600	34.3%
Vergennes Township	\$104,480	\$158,700	51.9%
Kent County	\$89,850	\$115,100	28.1%
State of Michigan	\$79,840	\$115,600	44.8%

* 1990 median values have been converted to equivalent 2000 dollars

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 & 2000

HOUSING: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The City of Lowell contains a similar housing stock to the county and the state as a whole.
2. Housing unit growth in the City was very low during the 1990’s, again reflecting the largely built out nature of the City.
3. Median housing values in the City are lower than the comparison communities, although the growth in median home value is consistent with those communities. This indicates that home values in the City are a relative bargain when compared to the surrounding areas, particularly given the expectation that the home will continue to appreciate at a rate consistent with the surrounding areas.

Chapter 2



Existing Conditions

Chapter 2

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter examines existing land use, environmental conditions, utility service and capacity, recreation and public facilities, and the results of a community input survey in the City.

EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use analysis describes what land uses exist on the ground in the City at this moment in time. The first step in conducting an existing land use survey is to define land use categories, a field survey is then completed, and a map is created to determine the amount of land in each category.

McKenna Associates completed a parcel-by-parcel inventory of existing land uses in April of 2006. The Existing Land Use Map on page 15 was created based on that inventory.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The following is a description of the land use categories that are used in the survey, along with a brief explanation of where those land uses are generally found in the community.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL. The single family residential land use category includes detached residential dwelling units located in subdivisions or site condominiums, as well as dwelling units on unplatted acreage parcels. Single family residential land uses are the most common land use in the City, covering approximately 565 acres.

While all single family residences are included in one category on the land use survey, significant differences exist in the type and style of single family residential developments found in various locations throughout the City. The type and style of single family homes reflects the year in which they were constructed. For instance, single family residences located on either side of the Flat River are located in older, traditional neighborhoods with a grid street pattern. Newer homes are located to the east and west of the oldest neighborhoods in subdivision developments with curvilinear street patterns. Finally, homes located on larger, unsubdivided lots are located on the eastern and western edges of the City.

SINGLE FAMILY ATTACHED. Single family attached dwelling units consist of owner-occupied housing that has one or more common building walls with another unit. Single family attached dwelling units are most typically townhouse-style condominiums, however, loft condominiums on upper stories in a downtown environment also qualify as a single family attached unit. Single family attached land uses cover approximately 14 acres.

MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL. This category includes land that is occupied by predominately residential structures containing dwelling units for two (2) or more households. Multiple family residential land uses consist of for-rent apartments, and cover approximately 33.2 acres.

MOBILE HOME. The mobile home category includes parcels of land designed and developed to accommodate three (3) or more mobile homes. Land uses included in this category include manufactured home parks. There is one mobile home community in the City – the Valley Vista Mobile Home Park - located on the south side of Fulton Street west of downtown. The mobile home community covers approximately 16.7 acres of land.

COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL. Areas designated Commercial/Residential on the existing land use map consists of commercial uses located in a residential structure. These uses are typically located on the outskirts of downtown where former residences have been converted to commercial use due to the impacts of M-21. Commercial/Residential land uses cover approximately 2.8 acres of land.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL. Commercial land uses that are designed using the standard suburban model of development are included in the Highway Commercial land use category. Development in this land use category is designed around automobiles, and features large parking lots between the building and the street. Highway commercial land uses may be large superstores, such as the Tractor Supply Company or a movie theatre, smaller strip retail centers, or smaller stand-alone buildings such as banks or restaurants. Highway Commercial land uses are predominantly located on the west side of town along Fulton Street, and cover approximately 52.4 acres of land.

DOWNTOWN. The Downtown land use category includes traditional downtown buildings. This category describes not so much the use of the building, but rather the design, function, and location of the building. Downtown buildings usually include mixed land uses, with retail, restaurant or office uses on the first floor and office or residential uses on the second floor. These buildings are located at the sidewalk, close to the street, with parking provided on the street or in parking lots located behind the buildings. Downtown buildings cover approximately 3.7 acres.

AUTOMOTIVE COMMERCIAL. Automotive commercial land uses serve cars. These land uses include gas stations, oil change shops, car washes, auto parts stores, and other uses that service automobiles and/or sell automotive products. These land uses cover approximately 24.7 acres.

OFFICE. The office land use category includes professional and business offices, financial institutions, and medical or dental offices. These offices are usually smaller in scale, and may deal with the general public. Office uses cover approximately 8.7 acres, and are located along Fulton Street west of downtown.

INDUSTRIAL. This category includes both light and heavy industrial uses. Uses such as light fabricating or assembly are considered light industrial uses. Large, truck intensive operations such as the grain and feed operations are considered heavy industrial uses. Industrial uses cover approximately 103.3 acres of land.

COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL. Commercial industrial land uses are uses that produce, manufacture, or refine products for wholesale and/or sale to the general public. Commercial industrial land uses must include both the manufacturing and sales components on the site in order to

be considered a commercial industrial establishment instead of an industrial establishment. Commercial industrial land uses cover approximately 27.3 acres of land.

SCHOOL. Public school buildings are included in this land use category, and cover approximately 49.9 acres of land.

SEMI-PUBLIC. The semi-public land use category includes a wide variety of privately-owned buildings and facilities that are open to at least some segment of the general public. Cemeteries, Boy Scout facilities, private clubs and churches are all included in this land use category. Approximately 60.4 acres of land are used for semi-public land uses.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE. This land use category includes protected open space that has been preserved in conjunction with development. Private open space is land that is protected from development, but commonly owned by the residents of the subdivision or condominium in which it is located. Private open space lands often include significant natural features such as steep slopes, wetlands or woodlands. Private open space covers approximately 16.3 acres of land.

PARK and RECREATION. Publicly owned parks and municipal buildings such as City Hall and the Library are included in this land use category. Public park and recreation uses cover approximately 135.4 acres of land.

AGRICULTURE and EXTRACTION. This category includes land area used for agriculture or extraction including crop land, pasture land, gravel pits, and similar uses. Agricultural land uses cover approximately 14.6 acres of land.

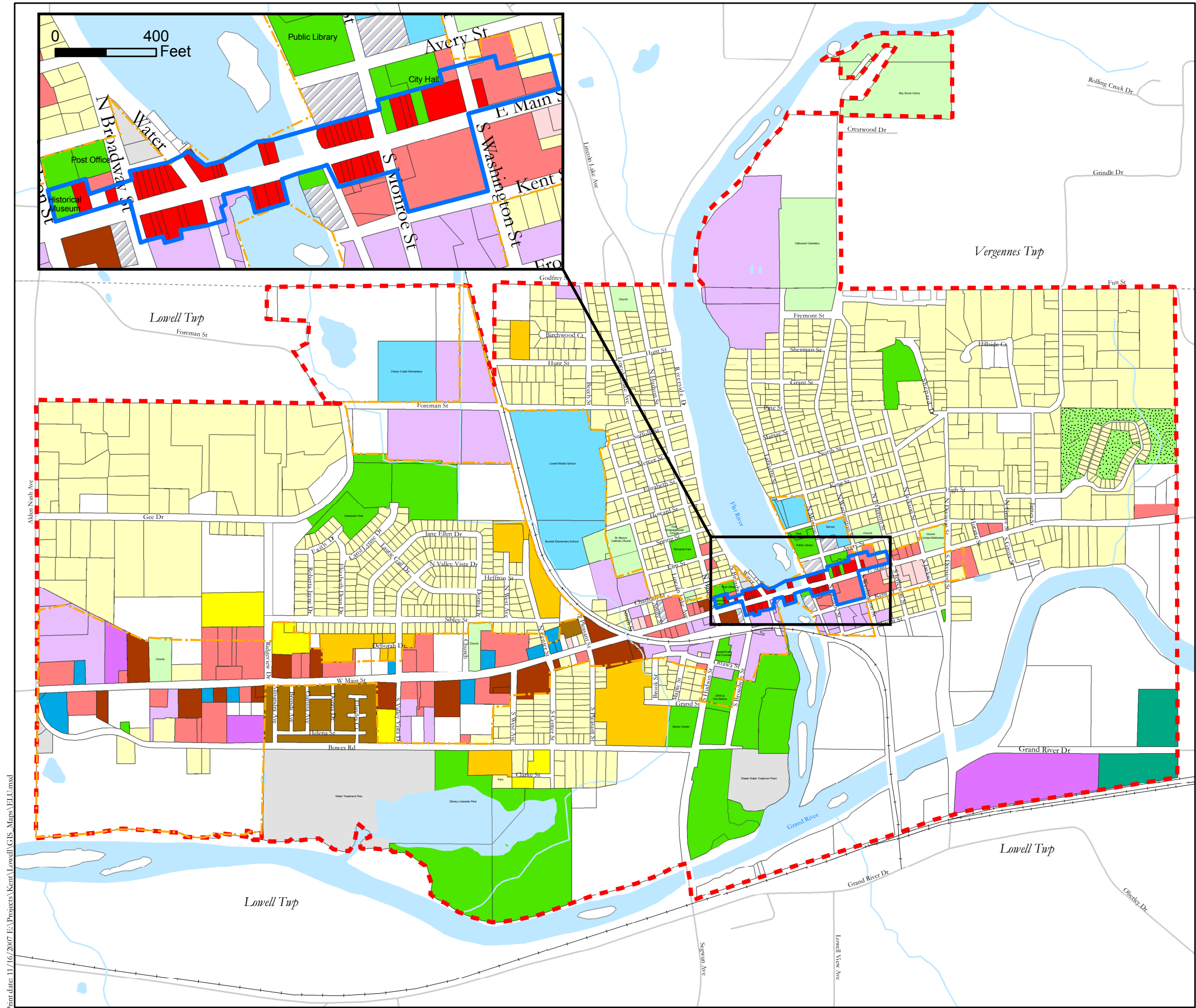
UTILITY. Approximately 61.3 acres of land are used for utility corridors and other public utilities throughout the City.

VACANT. Approximately 423 acres of vacant land exist in the City. Most of the remaining vacant parcels are located south of Fulton Street adjacent to the Grand River. Most of these parcels are located in floodplains, and therefore have limited development potential. Other vacant parcels of land are located on the west side of the City in areas that are otherwise characterized by larger lot residential development.

DOWNTOWN PARKING. Downtown parking lots are included in this land use category. Approximately 2.2 acres of public parking is available in off-street lots in the downtown area.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP

The existing land use map on page 15 shows the location of the above described land uses in the City. Table 2.1 on page 16 lists the area covered by each land use category.



Existing Land Use

City of Lowell, Kent County, Michigan

- Single Family Residential
- Single Family Attached
- Multiple Family
- Mobile Home Park
- Commercial/ Residential
- Highway Commercial
- Downtown
- Automotive Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Commercial Industrial
- School
- Semi-Public
- Private Open Space
- Park and Recreation
- Agriculture & Extraction
- Utility
- Vacant
- Downtown Parking
- City of Lowell
- Railroads
- Surrounding Municipalities
- Roads
- Historic District Boundary
- DDA Boundary

ELU based on windshield survey performed by McKenna Associates, April 2006.

Road centerlines are only shown outside of the City of Lowell.

Base Map Source: Kent County Geographic Framework, Michigan Center for Geographic Information, 2006.

Parcels Source: Moore & Bruggink, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001. Parcels were modified by McKenna Associates to resemble REGIS parcel data. Parcel lines are approximate and may not match legal property descriptions.

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0 1,250 Feet

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Table 2.1
Existing Land Use
City of Lowell, 2006

Land Use Category	Parcels	Acres	Percent of Total Land Area
Residential Land Uses			
Single Family Residential	1,124	565.5	35.0%
Single Family Attached	6	14.0	0.9%
Multiple Family	12	33.2	2.1%
Mobile Home Park	8	16.7	1.0%
Non-Residential Land Uses			
Commercial/Residential	8	2.8	0.2%
Highway Commercial	60	52.4	3.2%
Downtown	45	3.7	0.2%
Automotive Commercial	20	24.7	1.5%
Office	12	8.7	0.5%
Industrial	46	103.3	6.4%
Commercial Industrial	3	27.3	1.7%
Public and Semi-Public Land Uses			
School	8	49.9	3.1%
Semi Public	19	60.4	3.7%
Private Open Space	2	16.3	1.0%
Parks and Recreation	27	135.4	8.4%
Agriculture and Extraction	2	14.6	0.9%
Utility	6	61.3	3.8%
Vacant	72	423.0	26.2%
Downtown Parking	4	2.2	0.1%

Source: McKenna Associates, Incorporated, 2006

SUMMARY

The City of Lowell is largely built out, with most of the remaining vacant land area located along the Grand River in floodplain area. Single Family residential land uses cover the most area in the City. Industrial and Commercial land uses each cover approximately 6% of the City's land area.

Given the constrained nature of the remaining vacant land in the City, new projects will be the redevelopment of existing uses. This is an important consideration to keep in mind as the City develops first the future land use plan, and then adopts zoning regulations to implement the vision of the Master Plan.

NATURAL FEATURES

STEEP SLOPES

The 30 Meter Digital Elevation Model Map on Page 19 identifies land elevation data for the City of Lowell. The map indicates that most of the City is located on level ground, and that the most intensive development in the City has occurred on the lower-lying level areas. However, there are two areas of the City where significant steep slopes and elevated ground are located: at the northeast and northwest corners of the City.

The Map on page 19 shows how the road system has developed around these areas of elevation change, along with the resulting change in land division patterns. These steep slope areas are important natural areas, and the City should consider protecting the existing slopes from degradation as a result of development through the adoption of steep slope development regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. Steep slopes are particularly susceptible to erosion and failure as a result of poorly executed development. Slope failure can lead to loss of property, as well as having deleterious impacts on the natural environment.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are important community resources that provide both aesthetic and ecological benefits. Wetlands:

- Provide important refuges for wildlife in drought;
- Have intrinsic natural beauty and provide opportunities for recreation activities such as boating, swimming, bushwalking and bird watching;
- Provide a natural hydrological balance in the landscape and help to provide protection against floods;
- Provide water quality protection in the catchment by filtering pollutants such as sediments, nutrients, organic and inorganic matter and pathogens; and
- Provide nursery areas for fish, and breeding grounds for wildlife, particularly waterbirds.

The National Wetlands Inventory Map on Page 19 identifies areas where wetlands are located in the City of Lowell. Wetland areas are primarily located along the Grand River, with a significant wetland area also being located on the west side of the City.

FLOODPLAINS

A river, stream, lake, or drain may on occasion overflow their banks and inundate adjacent land areas. The land that is inundated by water is defined as a floodplain. In Michigan, and nationally, the term floodplain has come to mean the land area that will be inundated by the overflow of water resulting from a 100-year flood (a flood which has a 1% chance of occurring any given year).

Floods are a natural process with which the City of Lowell has a historic familiarity. In the past, there were little or no regulations on development in floodplains. However, Michigan Public Act 451 of 1994, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), created the State of Michigan Floodplain Regulatory Authority. The Authority requires that a permit be obtained prior to any alteration or construction in the 100-year floodplain of a river, stream or drain. There are also specific requirements for different types of development in a flood plain. For instance, the State requires that the lowest floor in a single family residence be constructed at least one foot above the flood elevation of the 100-year floodplain. Local communities may further regulate land uses and permitted activities in floodplains through the Zoning Ordinance.

The FEMA Floodplains Map on Page 20 identifies the 100 and 500 year floodplains within the City limits.

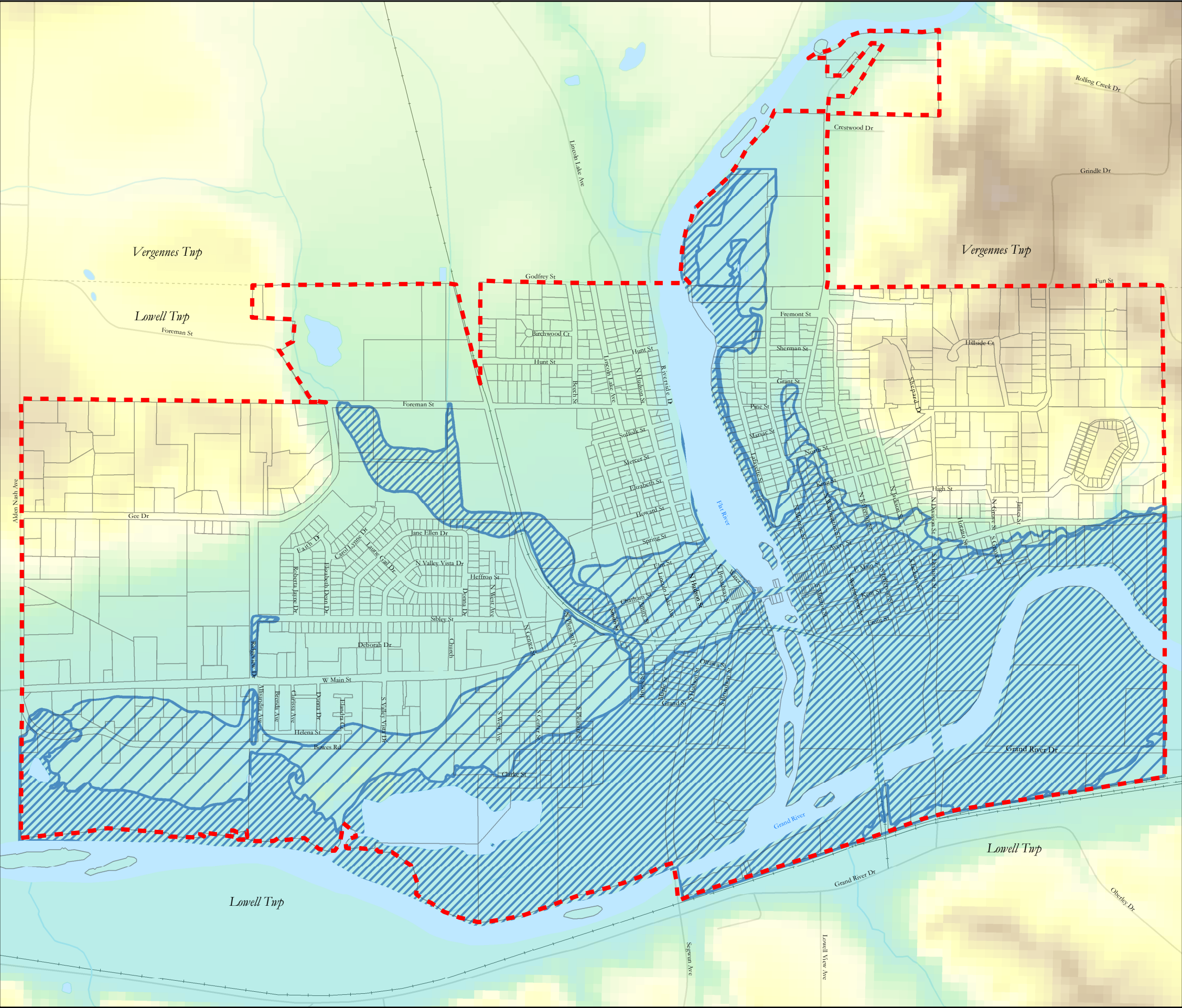
WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS

The City's Public Water Treatment Plant has developed a Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP). The WHPP is a program that minimizes the risk of contamination to public groundwater supplies by managing the land area surrounding a well. The intent of the program is to protect areas around municipal wellfields from contamination through the identification of potential contamination sources, the development of contingency plans in the event of groundwater contamination, and establishing standards to be considered in the selection of new municipal well locations.

Through scientific study, a WHPP defines a wellhead protection area (WHPA). The WHPA is defined as the land surface and subsurface area surrounding a wellfield through which water (or contaminants) can enter the ground and move toward the wellfield within a specific time period. The purpose of implementing a WHPP is to provide a foundation for preventing groundwater contamination by identifying contaminant sources within the WHPA and developing a management plan for the WHPA.

The City is in the process of implementing the Wellhead Protection Program to protect the Wellhead Protection Area. Lowell and Vergennes Townships are cooperating in the process. The City should examine its Zoning Ordinance to ensure that requirements supporting wellhead protection efforts are included in the Ordinance.

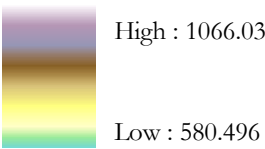
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



Natural Features

City of Lowell, Kent County, Michigan

Elevation



-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  500 Year Flood Plain
-  Approximate Parcel Boundaries
-  City of Lowell
-  Surrounding Municipalities
-  Roads
-  Hydrology
-  Railroads

Road centerlines are only shown outside of the City of Lowell.

Base Map Source: Kent County Geographic Framework, Michigan Center for Geographic Information, 2006.

Parcels Source: Moore & Bruggink, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001. Parcels were modified by McKenna Associates to resemble REGIS parcel data. Parcel lines are approximate and may not match legal property descriptions.

Elevation Source: Kent County DEM, Michigan Center for Geographic Information, 2006.

Flood Plain Source: Kent County Q3 Flood Data, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1996. Data is only available within the city limits.

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UTILITIES

WATER SUPPLY

The City of Lowell operates its own water system, including a treatment plant and water mains. In addition to serving properties within the City, water is also provided to parts of Lowell and Vergennes Townships under a contract with Lowell Township. There is no specific allocation on the amount of water that may be extended into the Townships, only a limitation in terms of geographic area that may be served. The ultimate water service area is defined in the 1992 water service contract with Lowell Township.

The water treatment plant is built to handle 1.5 million gallons per day and the plant currently treats 600,000 gallons per day on average (approximately 40% of overall capacity). The plant currently serves 5,000 people. According to its operator, in practical terms there is a half of a million gallons per day in reserve. Service is provided on a first come first serve basis. As of May 2006, a city resident would pay \$1.43 per 1000 gallons of water and a monthly “readiness to serve” charge of \$21.99 if they have a typical 5/8-inch water meter. There are no plans for expansion of the water treatment facility or overall capacity of the plant, and the next large capital improvement item is to repaint the ground storage tank for a cost of \$80,000 to \$100,000.

The Water Supply Agreement includes a provision that requires a Joint Water Advisory Committee to study, review, and advise the City and Lowell Township of the need for and options available to expand the water system when the water usages reaches 80% of system design capacity.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The City of Lowell operates its own wastewater treatment plant and 90,000 linear feet of sewer main. In addition to serving properties within the City, sanitary sewer service is also provided to parts of Lowell and Vergennes Townships. The Lowell Township sanitary sewer contract also provides limited service in Vergennes Township and stipulates that Lowell Township own and maintain the pipes in their contract area. The wastewater treatment plant currently services 4,750 people.

The plant treats wastewater in a two-step process, the second step being an oxidation ditch, an oval-shaped concrete tank that ultimately discharges its clean effluent into the Flat River. The City separated storm and sanitary sewers from each other in the 1970's.

The engineered capacity of the wastewater treatment plant is 1.42 million gallons per day. Over that last five years, the average daily flow through the plant was 1.08 million gallons. Per the Lowell Township wholesale contract, 18% of the engineered capacity of the plant is reserved for its use (252,000 gallons per day) anywhere within the Township. Lowell Township currently uses around 9% of the overall plant's capacity. Other than Lowell Township's reserved 18%, wastewater service is provided on a first come first serve basis. As of May 2006, a typical city resident would pay \$2.91 per 1000 gallons and a monthly “readiness to serve” charge of \$16.50 if they have a typical 5/8-inch water meter.

LIGHT and POWER

Like many Michigan cities, Lowell began supplying power to its residents around 1900. However, by the 1930's most communities had sold off their power plants. Lowell and approximately 40 other Michigan cities continue to supply power to their communities. In addition, Lowell also supplies electricity to parts of Lowell and Vergennes Townships.

Current capacity of the overall system is between 25 and 30 megawatts of power. Current peak usage is around 15 megawatts of power. Using conservative estimates, the City can service its residents and those of Lowell and Vergennes Townships for the next 20 years within its existing capacity. As such, the Board of Light and Power aggressively seeks new customers to add to its current base of 2,182 residential and 420 commercial customers.

The City of Lowell is a member of the Michigan Public Power Agency, a consortium of communities that have invested in and own entitlement shares in power plants across the state. The City receives most of its electricity through this consortium. A third of its power comes from a plant in St. Clair, a third from a plant in Kalkaska and a third from a plant in Holland. Only on peak usage days does the plant in Lowell generate power for local use. Lowell's plant is primarily fueled by natural gas, but can also use diesel fuel and can generate 4 megawatts of power. No major upgrades to the plant are anticipated within the next 10 to 15 years.

CABLE TV

The City of Lowell provided cable television services to its residents and parts of Lowell and Vergennes Townships since 1982. Cable services are extended if a threshold of a least 20 customers per linear mile can be established. There are approximately 2,000 basic cable subscribers at \$33.40 per month and between 300 to 400 high-speed internet subscribers. The cable system was recently sold to a private operator.

BOARDS and COMMISSIONS

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)

The City Council adopted an ordinance creating a Downtown Development Authority in November of 1992. The DDA is operated by a 9-member board and is charged with the responsibility of maintaining and revitalizing the downtown area.

The principal method of funding for the DDA is tax increment financing. Tax increment financing (TIF) operates by “capturing” increased tax revenues generated by revitalization efforts – the idea is that the DDA pays for itself. When a TIF district is established, the state equalized value of all property in the district is recorded, providing a baseline for tax revenues. Every year thereafter, the property tax revenue generated by property value up to baseline continues to be collected by the City, County, school districts, etc. The property tax revenue generated by any increase in assessed value over and above the baseline value is captured by the TIF and is available for use by the DDA. In this manner, the TIF is funded exclusively by increases in property value and does not reduce the City’s general fund below what it collected when the TIF was formed.

The DDA issued a TIFA bond of \$1,100,000 in December 1999 to fund downtown improvements. The bond is repaid using TIF funds captured by the DDA, and will be paid in entirety on December 1, 2013.

To date, the DDA has completed numerous streetscape improvement projects, extension of the riverwalk, parking lot improvements, contributions to assist land and building owners in reinvesting in downtown properties, street lighting improvements, and has made contributions toward the renovation of City Hall. The DDA’s fiscal year 2006-2007 budget allocates \$75,000 towards capital improvements, \$50,000 towards maintenance and administration, \$208,886.25 on debt service, and \$25,000 towards marketing efforts to promote the downtown. The Chamber of Commerce leads the marketing effort.

DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Downtown Historic District was registered with the State of Michigan in 1996 and was added to the National Register a few years later. There are 54 commercial properties along Main Street (M-21) within the historic district. One of the buildings, the city-owned Graham Building at 325 W. Main Street, houses the Lowell Area Historical Museum. The district is governed by a 5-member commission that administers its Historic District Ordinance and Guidelines. Lowell’s Downtown Historic District Commission has had the unique advantage of being a funded Commission. Over the past 10 years, the Historic Commission has cumulatively received around \$290,000 in grant monies from the Lowell Area Community Fund. With this funding, the Historic Commission has been able to offer property owners within the district the opportunity to apply for grants to cover 30% of various project costs. To date, the Commission has contributed to 70 projects within the district and its \$290,000 of public funding has spurred approximately \$2.5 million of investment in the historic district. Occasionally, the Commission has even been able to offer grants that cover 50% of project costs for things like painting and masonry repair. The Historic Commission activities, along with district’s property owners and the Lowell Area Community Fund, have had a direct positive impact on the appearance of downtown Lowell.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES and RECREATION

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The City has a variety of municipal facilities, including: City Hall with the attached Police Station, a Fire Station, the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants, a Department of Public Works garage, Light, Power and Cable facilities, and Airport, several parks and Oakwood Cemetery. The City Hall was extensively renovated and rededicated for service on July 12, 2003.

POLICE

The City of Lowell Police Department serves the City of Lowell proper. The many duties of its police officers include, but are certainly not limited to: patrols, responding to calls about criminal and non-criminal matters, accident investigation, and enforce city code violations. The Department is staffed with both full-time and part-time officers, dispatchers and various other personnel.

FIRE

The Lowell Area Fire Department services the City, Vergennes Township and the northern two-thirds of Lowell Township. This multi-jurisdictional fire department is not a Fire District and therefore, does not have a separate dedicated millage supporting it. This 60-square mile geographic area contains a population of approximately 15,000 people. The department responds to all fires, accidents with injuries and medical emergencies. One part-time person, 25 Paid on Call Firefighters and 5 Cadets staff the Department. Over the last 5 years (2001-2005), the Department on average responded to 620 calls annually. The Fire Station is located at 315 S. Hudson Street and also houses the Lowell/Rockford Ambulance Service. Mutual aid agreements are in place with surrounding communities.

STREETS and SIDEWALKS

In the 1970's sanitary and storm sewers were separated throughout the city, with all of the city's streets being redone at the same time. As a result, the majority of streets in the City are the same age and are in need or soon will be in need of repair. This is a difficult situation to deal with from both a budgetary and pavement management standpoint.

A fairly recent study inventoried all street and sidewalk conditions and included a prioritization of suggested repairs. The funding to repair all of the pavement at once, like that which occurred in the 1970's will not be available in the foreseeable future, so repairs will have to be completed as funding becomes available or necessity demands.

All the streets in the City are paved, with the exception of two dead end streets. The City snowplows its own roads and 2 miles of city-owned sidewalks.

WASTE

The City has a contract with one waste hauler, but residents are free to contract with another hauler if they so chose. Recycling service for paper, glass and cans is available to City residents along with curbside yard waste pick up. No burning is allowed within City limits.

AIRPORT

The Lowell City Airport is located north of the City on the east side of Lincoln Lake Avenue. Under contract, the School of Missionary Aviation Training (SMAT) operates the Lowell City Airport. SMAT has been located at the airport since 1997 (although missionary aviation training has occurred at the airport since 1975). According to the SMAT President, on average there are five or six training flights a day, six days a week and a number of recreational flights. The runway facilities include a 100-foot wide 2,700-foot long grass runway, a 100-foot wide 1,900-foot long grass runway and a 48-foot wide 2,395-foot long paved runway. The runways can handle single-engine and light twin-engine airplanes. The hangers on site accommodate approximately 30 airplanes from which the City receives rents. Planned capital improvements include widening and lengthening the paved runway and adding a taxiway, rotating beacon and perimeter fence. These planned upgrades to the facilities will add additional safety measures and enable the airport to qualify for future grants. The aforementioned upgrades could qualify the airport to also upgrade its classification from a Basic Utility Airport to a General Utility Airport. Such classification and site improvements would allow for corporate twin-engine airplanes to use the facilities.

ENGLEHARDT BRANCH LIBRARY

The Lowell public library was established in 1878 and joined the Kent District Library in 1956 as a branch. The library branch moved to its present location along the Flat River north of Main Street in 1997. The 8,800-square foot facility is named after its major benefactor, Harold Englehardt. The facilities include tutor rooms, computer access, and a community room that is available for rent.

LOWELL AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Lowell Area Historical Museum is located in the Graham Building at the northeast corner of the Hudson/Main Street intersection. The Museum was founded in 1990 and moved into its current location in 2001. The Museum is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors chosen from the community and funded by a variety of grants, community funds, and a ¼ mil property tax. The Museum strives to provide innovative ways to enrich, delight, and inspire the community and visitors with the City's rich culture and heritage, and serves as an important and vital member of the Lowell community.

PARKS

There are six City parks: Recreation Park, Creekside Park, Richards Park, McMahon Park, and Stoney Lakeside Park. Various recreational opportunities are available in the parks, including scenic walkways picnic facilities playgrounds, soccer, football and softball fields; basketball courts and 4-H facilities. School grounds, the Oakwood Cemetery, and nearby public and private recreational facilities provide city residents with additional recreational opportunities.

The last City Parks and Recreation Plan was completed in 1995. Since that time, growth in the Lowell area has continued and several changes in park facilities have occurred. Communities are eligible to apply for park improvement grants through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund if a community has an adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan is less than five years old and that has been approved by the Department of Natural Resources, meaning that Lowell is no longer eligible for these grants. In the last number of years, monies for park upgrades have come from a separate fund that the City has earmarked for park improvements, and the Lee Fund, an endowment established in the 1940s, has provided \$10,000 annually.

TRAILWAYS

The Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA), comprised of individuals from the City of Lowell, Lowell Township and Vergennes Township, was formed in November 2004 in part to create a multi-jurisdictional trailway. Phase 1 is intended to connect the Wittenbach Agriscience Center, Lowell High School, Cooper Woodland Preserve, Cherry Creek Elementary School, Creekside Park and the Middle School. According to LARA, “the trailway will provide a place for hikers, walkers, cyclists, runners, inline skaters, cross-country skiers, snow shoers, children, and physically challenged individuals to experience nature in a way that promotes exercise and good health.” The trails will link recreational and cultural facilities together and connect to other trail systems where feasible. One such additional trail system is the North Country National Scenic Trail, whose planned route is through the City. This seven-state hiking trail spans from North Dakota to New York. Presently 1,700 miles of trail have been certified with 2,900 miles to go until completion. The Trail’s headquarters are located on Main Street in Lowell near the trail’s geographic center.

COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY RESULTS

A community input survey was conducted by the City during October of 2006 in order to gain public input on a wide range of topics related to planning and governance in the City of Lowell. The community survey provided residents of the City the opportunity to comment on what attracted them to live in the City of Lowell, what characteristics of the City they liked or disliked, issues affecting the future development of Lowell, the quality of government services, and recreational facilities and opportunities.

294 persons responded to the survey. The following is a summary of the results, with the complete results of the survey being available in Appendix A.

RESPONDENTS

Respondents were asked to indicate their age and sex, along with how long they have lived in the City, what kind of housing unit they live in, if they own or rent their house, and if they participate in community activities.

Age and Sex. Respondents were typically between the ages of 25 and 84, with 31% of respondents being between the ages of 25 and 44, 43% of respondents being between the ages of 45 and 64, and 20% of respondents being between the ages of 65 and 84. The very old and very young were underrepresented in the survey, with just seven respondents (2%) being between the ages of 18 and 24, nine respondents (3%) being between over the age of 85, and no respondents being under the age of 17. 57% of the respondents were women, and 43% were men.

Housing. The survey was overwhelmingly responded to by homeowners. Fully 99% of the survey respondents were homeowners, with 92% of the respondents living in a detached single family house. Respondents who live in townhouse, apartment, duplex, manufactured homes represented between 1-2% each. Most respondents have also lived in Lowell for a long time – 50% of respondents have lived in the City for more than 20 years. Those that have lived in the City less than five years represented 19% of respondents, those that have lived in the City for 6-10 years represented 13% of respondents, and those that have lived in the City for 11-20 years represented 18% of respondents.

CITY CHARACTERISTICS

Community Qualities. Respondents were asked to identify the top three community qualities that were important when they decided to move to Lowell. The top 5 qualities that were identified by respondents included:

Community Quality	Votes	Percentage that chose this quality
Small Town Character	183	62.2%
Quality of Schools	136	46.3%
Family Nearby	106	36.1%
Rivers, Trees, and Other Natural Features	80	27.2%

Community Quality	Votes	Percentage that chose this quality
Low Crime Rate	68	23.1%

Community Character. Respondents were also asked to rate a number of statements dealing with community character. Respondents were asked to indicate if they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral towards, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement. The following are the statements which generated the strongest feelings, either of agreement or disagreement:

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Strongly Agreed or Agreed	Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed
I feel safe in my neighborhood	42.9%	86.7%	4.8%
I am proud to say I live in the City of Lowell	48.3%	80.3%	3.1%
Lowell has a strong historical character and buildings that should be preserved	48.0%	77.6%	6.1%
Development is acceptable if the City keeps its small town character	31.6%	76.5%	9.2%
The City should carefully control the rate and location of growth	31.0%	73.8%	8.2%
New commercial development should be kept out of the City	8.2%	22.1%	46.9%

Respondents appreciate and are proud of their City. It is notable that the most disagreed with statement was “new commercial development should be kept out of the City.” This reinforces the idea that residents have some tolerance for continued commercial development. This fact, coupled with the strong support for the statement that historic buildings should be preserved and that the rate of growth should be carefully controlled lends support to the idea that new development Downtown may be more preferable to residents than in other locations of the City.

City Features. Residents rated a number of features as being very important for the City. Between 86% and 89% of all respondents rated trees, my neighborhood, schools, downtown, parks and open spaces, and rivers as being important for the City. The lowest rated features were the showboat, industries, and commercial areas west of downtown, however, those features were still rated as important by 53-58% of respondents.

Problems. Respondents were asked to indicate if they found a number of conditions to be problems in the City. Most items were not found to be problems, with only one item being rated a problem by more than half of the survey respondents. The conditions that were rated the most problematic were, in order from most problematic to less: traffic on West Main Street, lack of sidewalks and bike paths, traffic on East Main Street, condition of City streets, and traffic safety on City streets. Most of the problematic items relate to traffic congestion.

LAND USE and DEVELOPMENT

New Development. Respondents were asked to identify what kind of new development the City should promote or try to attract. A balanced approach was by far the preferred method.

Type of Development	Votes	Percentage
A balance of residential, commercial, and industrial	144	50.2%
A mixture of residential, commercial and industrial, with an emphasis on residential	57	19.9%
Lowell should not try to attract any new development	35	12.2%
Commercial and industrial uses	27	9.4%
A mixture of residential, commercial and industrial, with an emphasis on commercial and industrial	22	7.7%
New residential growth only	2	0.7%

Housing. Survey respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements regarding housing in the City of Lowell. The statements are listed below, along with the percentage of respondents who agreed and disagreed with each statement:

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
There are a broad range of housing types available in the City	81.0%	6.8%
The homes in my neighborhood are well-kept	63.6%	12.6%
Families can find affordable homes in Lowell	58.2%	17.0%
My home is assessed in a fair and equal manner	44.2%	21.8%
I plan to make improvements to my home within the near future	40.8%	26.9%

Housing Type. Survey respondents were asked if Lowell should have more, fewer, or the same amount of different types of housing. The following is the list of choices presented in the survey, along with the percentage of respondents who felt the City should have more, the same, or fewer of each type of housing.

Housing Type	More	Same	Fewer
Affordable single-family homes	40.4%	44.6%	8.2%
Senior citizen housing	40.1%	43.0%	7.2%
Single family detached homes on large lots	27.9%	44.9%	12.4%
Housing for lower income families	15.9%	36.1%	35.0%
Single family detached homes on small lots	12.5%	39.1%	31.9%
Attached single family homes	10.2%	39.8%	28.8%
Apartments	6.1%	35.4%	45.5%

Downtown. Respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements regarding Downtown Lowell. The following is a summary of the percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with each statement:

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
The downtown is well kept and clean	87.4%	2.7%
Downtown merchants are considerate and helpful	83.0%	3.1%
I can usually find a parking space Downtown	77.9%	10.5%
The quality of Downtown stores is good	73.5%	6.1%
I like to shop in Downtown Lowell	65.6%	9.2%
Downtown store hours are convenient	52.7%	19.0%
I am concerned about growth in nearby areas affecting Lowell	41.5%	23.5%
The selection of goods downtown is adequate for my needs	40.8%	31.3%

There are two notable things about the responses to this question. First, there is a perception that parking is ample in the Downtown area and it is not hard to find a parking space. This indicates that there is probably adequate parking already provided Downtown, and if there is a surplus of parking available, there is room for additional development Downtown without the need to provide more parking spaces. Second, respondents indicated that the selection of goods downtown is not adequate for everybody's needs. Responses were roughly split for this consideration.

RECREATION

Recreation Opportunities. Respondents were asked to indicate which recreation opportunities were important to them, and respondents could choose as many of the opportunities as they liked. The following is a summary of the number of votes cast for each recreation opportunity, and the percentage of respondents who chose that opportunity.

Recreation Opportunity	Votes	Percentage
Hiking, walking, and nature trails	189	64%
Sidewalks and bike paths	187	64%
Indoor swimming pool	134	46%
Picnic areas	117	40%
Playgrounds and tot lots	106	36%
Community/youth center	103	35%
Ball fields	83	28%
Outdoor ice rink	81	28%
Organized recreational opportunities	75	26%
Tennis courts	57	19%
Skate/BMX park	56	19%
Off-leash dog park	56	19%
Cross-country skiing trails	47	16%
Soccer fields	42	14%
Basketball courts	41	14%
Volleyball courts	31	11%

City of Lowell Master Plan

Recreation Facilities Use. 43% of respondents indicated that they used city parks often, while 70% or more of respondents indicated that they rarely or never used softball fields, leisure classes, or the school gymnasium.

Recreation and Public Facilities. Respondents were asked to evaluate a number of statements and to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The results are as follows:

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
City parks are well-maintained	76.2%	3.1%
Parks are in locations convenient to me	74.8%	3.1%
The Showboat should be kept as a City landmark	64.3%	10.2%
City parks have the activities and facilities that I like to use	41.8%	12.2%
The City of Lowell should sponsor organized recreation programs	36.4%	17.0%
A RV park would be a good addition for the City	36.4%	17.0%
The City should build and maintain an all-purpose community building for recreation, meetings, etc.	31.6%	29.3%
There are adequate recreational opportunities for teenagers in the City	18.4%	42.2%
The Showboat should be removed	8.8%	63.3%

GOVERNANCE

Public Services and Government. Respondents were asked to evaluate a number of statements and to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The results are as follows:

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
City personnel have treated me fairly and efficiently	62.2%	7.8%
A City newsletter would be a valuable source of information	54.8%	15.6%
The City should improve planning and coordination with adjacent communities	46.9%	7.5%
Zoning enforcement should remain complaint-driven	28.9%	28.2%
I watch cable TV broadcasts of City meetings	28.6%	42.5%
I feel my interests are represented by the City Council	27.9%	22.1%
I would volunteer my time to help in organized City projects	27.6%	25.9%
I watch cable TV broadcasts of School Board meetings	20.4%	52.4%
I would like to become more involved in City government	13.6%	33.7%
The City should hire a full-time Zoning Enforcement Officer	10.5%	40.8%

Quality of Public Services. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion of the quality of public services. The following are the results of that question:

Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Library services	46.3%	38.4%	7.5%	0.7%	4.4%
Police protection	35.0%	49.0%	9.5%	1.7%	2.4%
Fire protection	33.3%	46.3%	9.5%	1.0%	7.1%
Electric services	31.6%	43.5%	15.0%	6.1%	1.0%
Park maintenance	29.6%	51.4%	12.9%	0.7%	3.1%
Snow plowing	27.6%	51.7%	14.3%	2.0%	1.0%
Emergency medical services	26.9%	36.4%	13.6%	2.7%	17.3%
Street lighting	24.5%	48.0%	18.4%	4.8%	1.4%
Trash collection	24.5%	43.9%	19.0%	5.4%	4.4%
Public water	21.1%	43.2%	13.9%	11.6%	7.1%
Public sewer	20.1%	38.4%	16.3%	12.6%	9.9%
Street/sidewalk maintenance	14.3%	43.5%	25.5%	11.6%	2.0%
Cable TV	8.5%	27.9%	23.1%	22.1%	14.6%
Building inspections	8.5%	23.8%	30.3%	3.4%	29.6%
Property assessment	3.1%	22.1%	34.7%	19.4%	16.3%

Financial Support. Respondents were asked to indicate if they would support an additional millage for a range of public services. Respondents could choose yes or no for as many of the choices as they wished. It is important to note that no service received more than 50% yes votes.

Service	% Yes	% No
Police protection	40.5%	50.0%
Fire protection	39.5%	51.4%
Road maintenance and repair	32.7%	57.5%
Street/sidewalk maintenance	28.6%	61.6%
Recreation improvements	28.2%	61.2%
Park maintenance	22.8%	66.0%

Chapter 3



Goals and Objectives

VISION STATEMENT

Lowell will be a city of citizens who work with each other and with our neighboring communities to keep our small town character and maintain quality services. We will have a strong sense of community in order to address the problems and opportunities created by the growth that will occur in the region.

GOALS and POLICIES

GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT GOALS and POLICIES

- **Lowell will create an economic identity for the Downtown and begin a long-term economic and physical revitalization program to capture those businesses and services that uphold that identity.**
 - The City will work with downtown property and business owners interests to investigate the appropriate mix of retail, service, and public uses for the downtown.
 - Activities and attractions will be planned that encourage people to be downtown. These may include such features as a cultural and educational center, an Open Air/Farmer's Market, river front improvements, Arts Festivals, and historical displays, among others.
- **Lowell will undertake cooperative efforts with surrounding Townships to increase opportunities for new industrial development that will benefit all communities.**
 - The City will work with surrounding Townships to develop a mutually acceptable policy for provision of services and appropriate locations for industrial development that will benefit all communities.
 - The City and Townships will encourage the development of new industries to the Lowell area that fit the community, are environmentally friendly, and encompass light manufacturing.

COMMUNITY IMAGE GOAL and POLICIES

- **Lowell will foster its image as an historic community, featuring turn of the century architecture, rich cultural history, and important natural features such as the Flat and Grand Rivers.**
 - The image of Lowell will emphasize the heritage of the Flat and Grand Rivers. Measures will be undertaken to improve access and views to the Rivers from Downtown and other areas of the City and Township, including demolition of view blocking buildings and structures, building of paths, construction of view overlooks, and others.
 - Building owners will be encouraged to restore building fronts to their original style. Information on historic district regulations, tax incentives, architectural styles, and other issues will be made available.

LAND USE GOALS and POLICIES

- **Lowell will promote a walkable community with stable neighborhoods, and conveniently located public, commercial, and service uses.**
 - Strategies will be drawn up to improve access to and walking along the Flat and Grand Rivers. Walks will be designed to connect various activity areas along the Rivers.
 - The streetscape and river front improvements will be constructed to make walking to and within the Downtown safer and easier. Pedestrian crossings at the River in Downtown will receive special attention in this regard.
 - A land use pattern will be developed that permits residents to walk to businesses and services that they need. Appropriate pedestrian connections and improvements will be made available to do so.
 - New development in the City will be encouraged to located in and around the downtown area to build off of that important existing resource.
- **Lowell will work with adjacent communities to develop a compatible land use pattern that will promote a regional community, cooperating with, but independent of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area.**
 - The City will cooperate with the adjoining Townships to develop a plan for coordinated and compatible land uses along M-21.
 - The City will work with surrounding Townships to develop mutually acceptable service agreements and compatible land uses for development that will benefit all communities.
 - The City will consider cooperating with the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council on issues of regional concern to the Lowell area communities.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS and POLICIES

- **Lowell will maintain a transportation network that is sensitive to the land uses it serves, protects the integrity of residential neighborhoods, and promotes safety within all areas of the City.**
 - The City will continue to work with the Michigan Department of Transportation and adjacent communities to promote and implement improvements to M-21. These improvements should target problem areas such as Hudson Street, Bowes Street, and the Downtown.
 - The City will maintain an awareness of regional transportation issues that affect the Lowell area, including such proposed projects as the Snow Avenue bridge across the Grand River and improvements to Alden Nash Avenue.
 - Traffic and roadway improvements will first consider the potential impact on those uses adjacent to the roadway and ensure that such improvements are consistent with the Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **To promote an appropriate image of the community, Lowell will maintain an attractive appearance at the major entrances to the City and along its principal transportation corridors.**
 - The City will work with community groups and Downtown interests to initiate and coordinate efforts to provide a clear sense of entry into the community on M-21 and Alden Nash/Lincoln Lake Avenue.
 - The entryways to the City will emphasize the heritage of the Rivers and their importance to the image of the City of Lowell.
 - As part of improvements to the Downtown, gateways will be provided to “announce” the entry to the Downtown.

HOUSING GOALS and POLICIES

- **The City, through proper zoning and other appropriate measures, will facilitate opportunities for the provision of adequate amounts of quality, affordable homes for younger families and seniors.**
 - The City will vigorously pursue a program of economic development to provide the job opportunities that will help increase the population of the City and create a demand for new housing.
 - Residential zoning will foster a variety of housing opportunities by including a range of lot sizes and requirements that will allow affordable housing for the range of incomes found in the City.

- The City will monitor housing conditions and seek the means, when needed, to provide assistance in maintaining older homes.
 - The City will cooperate with Kent County to provide information and assistance regarding housing rehabilitation and improvement assistance.

COMMUNITY SERVICES GOAL and POLICIES

- The City will maintain a level of services that is appropriate to the funds available to provide those services.
 - The City, Lowell Area Schools, and other governmental units will cooperate to construct and utilize the facilities for both the benefit of the people of the community.
 - The City will work with County agencies to provide regional/branch offices to improve access to County services. Information about existing regional offices will be distributed to City residents.

Chapter 4

Future Land Use



This chapter outlines the future land use plan for the City of Lowell. The future land use plan first classifies the various neighborhoods and areas of the City as one of three kinds of development area, and then establishes a recommended land use plan for each area.

DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The following three development areas serve as the organizing principle around which the Future Land Use Map is based. Each of the following development areas have specific characteristics, either existing or proposed, that form the basis for future land uses planned for that area. This will help guide future development and redevelopment in the City in an ordered and attractive pattern that protects and enhances property values within the City, promotes job creation, and provides attractive residential areas that include a range and diversity of housing styles and prices.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhoods are the building blocks out of which a town or city is built. Traditionally, neighborhoods are pedestrian-friendly and are centered around a small commercial area, civic use such as a City building, school, or church, or park. These centering features are important, as they help define a sense of place and significantly contribute to the neighborhood's image for both those who reside in the neighborhood as well as those who live outside of the neighborhood. Other important benefits of these centering features is that they provide residents of the neighborhood with a destination to walk to and serve as a place for social interaction that is conveniently located outside of the home.

In any neighborhood, most of the land area will be devoted to residential use. The density and type of dwelling units that are found in the neighborhood will define the character of the neighborhood. A neighborhood that contains apartments, townhouses, or detached houses on small lots will have a more urban feel than a neighborhood that primarily consists of detached houses on larger lots. The remainder of the neighborhood can also contain other non-residential land uses such as offices.

While every city, town, or township will contain the building blocks of a neighborhood, those building blocks are often separated into single-use areas that are not located within close and convenient proximity to each other. That arrangement of land uses requires residents to use automobile transportation to get to most of the daily activities of life, and creates development that is at a scale that is not consistent with the neighborhood concept.

It is the intent of this master plan to strengthen the existing character of neighborhoods in parts of the City where they already exist and to promote the creation of distinct neighborhoods in parts of the City where they currently do not exist. As a historic City, Lowell contains many existing and well-defined neighborhoods, so the primary intent of this plan is to preserve their existing character.

Generally speaking, neighborhoods should have the following characteristics: they should be pedestrian-friendly; they should incorporate mixed uses; they should have boundaries that are based on the distance a person can walk in 5 minutes (which is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, or 1,320 feet); and many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance to permit independence for those who do not drive and to reduce the number of automobile trips necessary for all residents of the neighborhood.

DISTRICT

Districts are unique places within the City that are easily identifiable by all residents, but do not contain the necessary range of land uses to be considered a neighborhood. Lowell contains the following districts:

Downtown. The Downtown District, as defined by this Master Plan, is located along Main Street and is bounded by the railroad tracks on the west and Jackson Street on the east. The Downtown District extends one or two blocks north and south of Main Street. The Downtown District contains the historic downtown area along with other complementary areas. It is envisioned that new development in the Downtown District will be consistent in form and character with the existing “main street” buildings in the downtown.

Industrial. There are four primary industrial districts that are identified on the Future Land Use Map. These industrial districts are planned for continued industrial land uses.

CORRIDOR

Corridors are areas where a single land use type is located along a transportation artery. Lowell contains the following corridors:

West Main Street Commercial Corridor. This commercial corridor extends from the railroad tracks on the east to the City boundary on the west. The existing character of this commercial corridor is consistent with contemporary suburban strip development. Each use is located in the middle of a parcel with ample parking being located between the building and the road. It is the intent of this Master Plan that this style of commercial development be limited to the West Main Street Commercial Corridor.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

LOW DENSITY SINGLE FAMILY – 2 Units Per Acre



The Low Density Single Family land use category is intended to permit detached single family development at a density of 2 units per acre or less. The minimum lot area in Low Density Single Family areas should be a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft.

SINGLE FAMILY 1 – 3.5 Units Per Acre



The Single Family 1 land use category is intended to correspond to the existing R-1 Zoning District, and permits up to 3.5 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate land uses in Single Family 1 areas are detached single family residential dwelling units and uses that may be compatible with single family dwelling units such as schools, churches, and municipal and civic buildings.

SINGLE FAMILY 2 – 4.5 Units Per Acre



The Single Family 2 land use category is intended to correspond to the existing R-2 Zoning District, and permits up to 4.5 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate land uses in Single Family 2 areas are detached single family residential dwelling units and uses that may be compatible with single family dwelling units such as schools, churches, and municipal and civic buildings.

MIXED RESIDENTIAL – 6 Units Per Acre



The Mixed Residential land use area is intended to permit a residential development at a density in between that permitted in the single family 2 and multiple family residential areas. Residential development in the Mixed Residential area should occur at a density of 6 units per acre, with both attached and detached dwelling units being permitted. Attached dwelling units should not account for more than 40% of all dwelling units in a new development.

MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL – 10 Units Per Acre



The Multiple Family Residential land use area is intended to correspond with the existing R-3 zoning district, which permits 10 dwelling units per acre.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING



The Manufactured Housing land use category corresponds with the location of the existing manufactured housing park.

HIGHWAY BUSINESS



The Highway Business land use category is located along M-21 west of the railroad crossing. Appropriate land uses in Highway Business areas include retail, office, and service uses that are oriented towards automobile traffic. The Highway Business land use category is intended to correspond with the regulations and land uses permitted in the C-3, General Business District.

DOWNTOWN EDGE



The Downtown Edge land use category is intended to create buildings with a similar size and scale as those recommended in the Downtown area, but with a more limited range of uses permitted in those buildings. The Downtown Edge area should serve as a transition between the Downtown area located along M-21 and the residential neighborhoods surrounding the greater downtown area. Recommended land uses in the Downtown Edge include office and residential land uses – retail commercial land uses are not permitted due to the larger impact in terms of hours of operation and traffic generation.

Buildings constructed in the Downtown Edge area should comply with the recommendations of the Downtown Design Guidelines section of this chapter. It will be particularly important to adopt new zoning standards for the Downtown Edge area, as most of the land planned for Downtown Edge land uses is currently zoned R-3, which requires suburban-style multiple family development. In order to build on downtown Lowell, it will be important to craft new zoning regulations that promote desirable development.

DOWNTOWN



The Downtown land use area is intended to permit a mixture of residential, office, and commercial land uses in traditional “main-street” style buildings. New development in the Downtown area should be pedestrian-scaled, and should be built to complement the existing downtown buildings. Appropriate land uses in the Downtown area include a wide range of retail, commercial, office, and residential land uses. Residential land uses should only be located on the second story or above in the Downtown area, with retail or office uses located on the first floor.

New zoning regulations will have to be created to implement the recommendations of this plan. Refer to the Downtown Design Guidelines section below for specific design recommendations for the Downtown area. These design guidelines should form the basis of any zoning amendments adopted for the Downtown area.

MIXED USE



The Mixed Use land use category is intended to permit a mixture of residential, office, and commercial land uses but not necessarily in a downtown style building. The mixed use development concept can be used to redevelop existing areas and/or to create new activity areas within the City. Notable areas where mixed uses are planned include:

1. At the western gateway to the City along M-21.
2. Along M-21 between Valley Vista Drive and West Avenue.
3. North of the library between Monroe Street and the Flat River.
4. At the eastern gateway to the downtown area along M-21 at Grove Street.

While new development in Mixed Use areas need not occur in main street style buildings, mixed use areas should still be pedestrian oriented. In order to accomplish this, new buildings in mixed use areas should be located close to a street (buildings may be oriented towards new local or collector streets, not necessarily a major thoroughfare), with on-street parking provided on the street. Parking should generally be located behind the building or in a side yard. Front yard parking between the building and the street is not desirable.

INDUSTRIAL



Areas planned for Industrial land uses are intended to accommodate continued industrial uses. Areas planned for industrial land uses correspond to areas currently zoned I-L or I, so no new zoning regulations need be developed for industrial areas.

PUBLIC



Areas planned for public land uses include municipally owned facilities.

PARKS and RECREATION



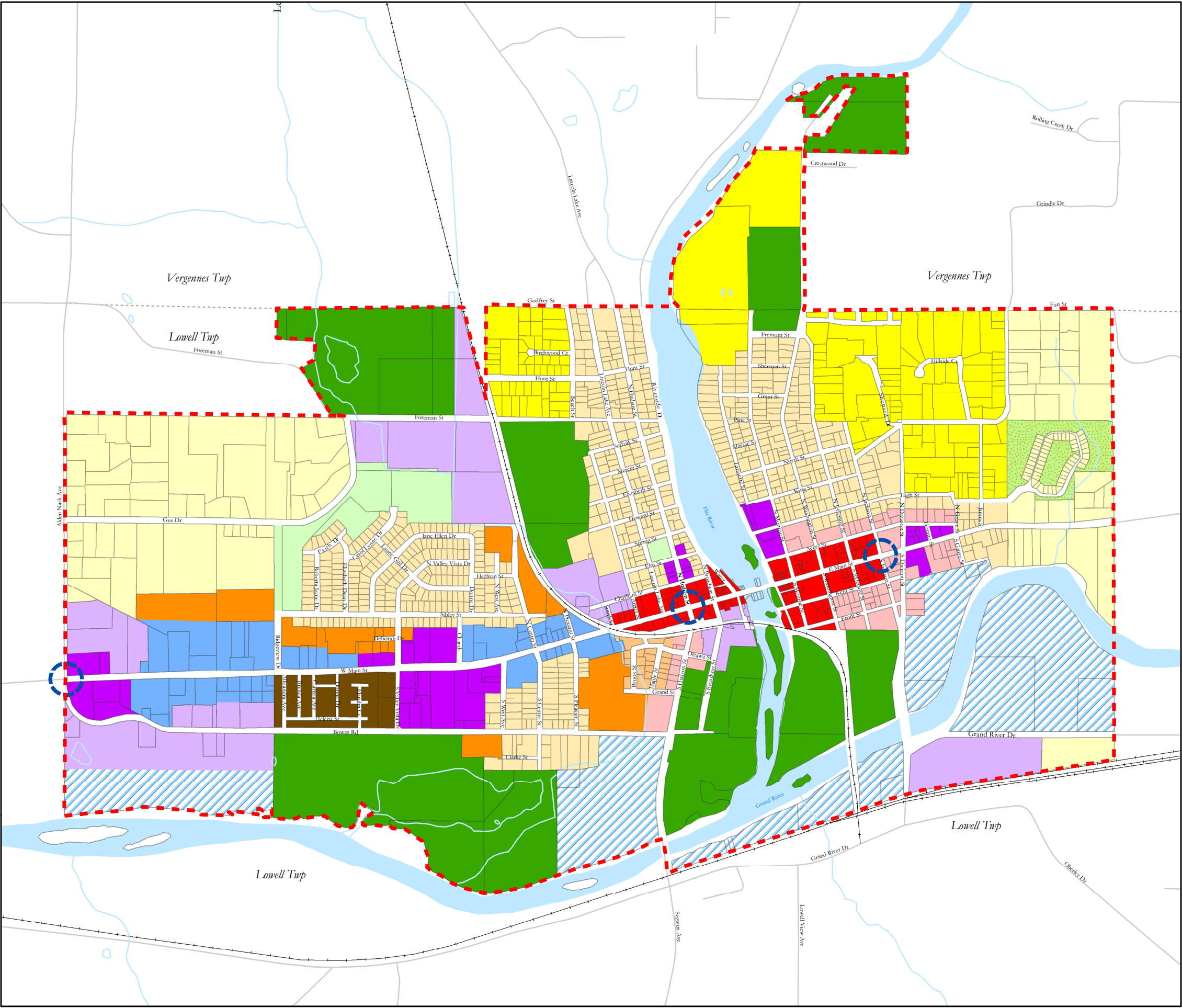
City parks are appropriate uses in this land use category.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE



Private open space includes land that has been preserved in conjunction with a development, such as open areas within a PUD. Private open space is owned by a homeowners association or other group, but must be maintained as open space as part of the development agreement, so no land uses are planned for private open space areas.

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Future Land Use

City of Lowell,
Kent County, Michigan


- Low Density
- Single Family 1
- Single Family 2
- Mixed Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Manufactured Housing
- Downtown
- Downtown Edge
- Mixed Use
- Highway Business
- Industrial
- Park
- Public
- Private Open Space
- Flood Plain
- City of Lowell
- Railroads
- Roads
- Surrounding Municipalities
- Community Gateway

FLU by McKenna Associates, March 2007.

Road centerlines are only shown outside of the City of Lowell.

Base Map Source: Kent County Geographic Framework, Michigan Center for Geographic Information, 2006.

Parcels Source: Moore & Bruggink, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001. Parcels were modified by McKenna Associates to resemble REGIS parcel data. Parcel lines are approximate and may not match legal property descriptions.

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0 1,250 2,500 Feet

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Downtown Lowell has an existing character that provides the foundation for the following design guidelines. These guidelines are set forth to encourage new development that continues the existing building pattern in the downtown area. These design guidelines will result in development that is pedestrian friendly. In fact, these design guidelines are structured so as to create a viable pedestrian realm that includes pedestrian-friendly improvements that are necessary to generate a high level of pedestrian activity.



The key idea is to ensure that new development in the Downtown area is designed for the pedestrian first and automobiles second. Implementing these design guidelines will require the City to adopt some amendments to the existing Zoning Ordinance, however, these design guidelines are written as specifically as possible with the idea that any revisions to the Zoning Ordinance will closely follow the recommendations of this section.

CREATING PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT

Pedestrian-friendly development consists of three major components:

1. A **block structure** that creates a walkable arrangement and positioning of uses. When blocks are too large or when no block structure exists, a development is not walkable.
2. A **street network** to define block edges, create continuous pedestrian connections, and integrate pedestrian travel with other modes of transportation.
3. **Building placement, orientation, and design** to enhance the pedestrian environment and streetscape.

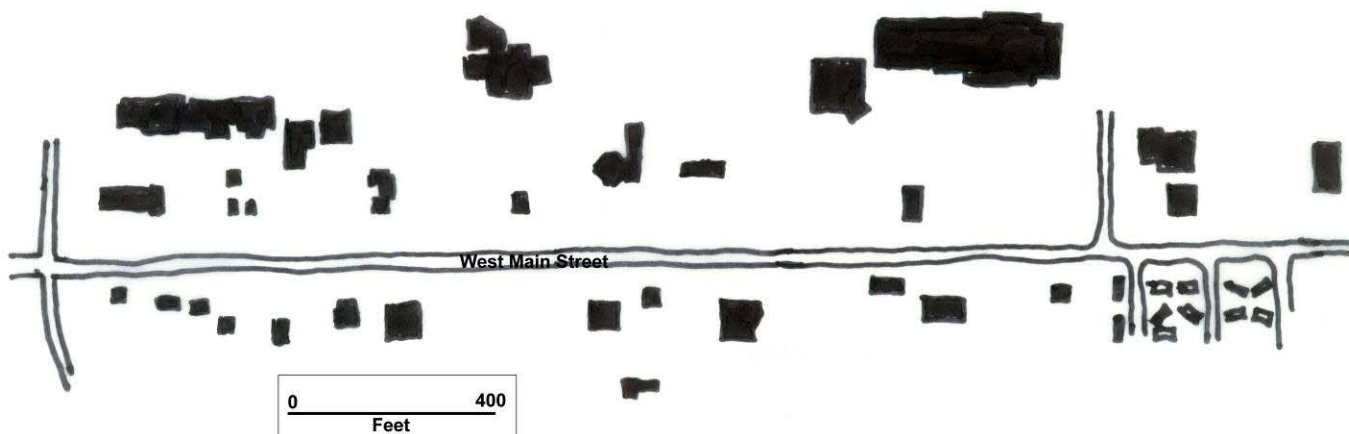
This section is based on the above framework for creating pedestrian friendly development. The illustrations from different parts of the City on page 31 illustrate this. The first illustration is of the Downtown area, while the second illustration is of the west Main Street area where recent commercial development has occurred at an automobile-oriented scale.

The purpose of the comparison on the following page is not meant as a polemic statement against either conventional or traditional development, nor is it meant to imply that one particular style of development is better, more worthy, or more moral than another style of development. Rather, the illustrations on the following page are meant to highlight the differences between the two styles of development to clarify what design characteristics are essential in creating traditional downtown development. In this manner, we can identify what the particular design guidelines for the downtown area need to be.

FIGURE GROUND 1: TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN



FIGURE GROUND 2: AUTOMOTIVE STRIP DEVELOPMENT



COMPARISON of DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

	Traditional Downtown	Automotive Strip
Block Perimeter:	1,200 feet or less	No block structure
Street Network:	Fully formed blocks	Linear street, no blocks
Building Placement:	At sidewalk	Set back at least 30 feet from road
Parking Placement:	On the street or in rear yard parking lots	Front yard parking lots between the building and the street
Lot Coverage:	Buildings cover 50% or more of the lot	Buildings cover 25% or less of the lot
Building Height:	2 or more stories	Typically one story

BLOCK and STREET NETWORK STANDARDS

Lowell is fortunate in that new development in the downtown area simply must follow the existing block pattern, which is ideally suited to creating pedestrian-friendly development. The fact that the necessary infrastructure already exists in the downtown area provides a strong foundation for new development in the downtown area.

For new development areas that do not have an existing block pattern or street network, particularly the areas designated for Mixed Use development along West Main Street between West Avenue and Valley Vista Drive, a street network must be created. The total block perimeter should not exceed 1,200 feet, and no street should exceed a length of 600 feet without an intersection. These standards will ensure that block perimeters or block faces are not too long to be easily and conveniently traversed by pedestrians.

BUILDING PLACEMENT, ORIENTATION and DESIGN

Building design and placement are important factors that impact the pedestrian-friendliness of a particular place. The following building design and placement guidelines will help create the desired style of development in the downtown area.

Building Placement

The design characteristic that is regulated in nearly every zoning ordinance is the placement of buildings on a lot. This is regulated through setback requirements, which most typically include only a minimum setback requirement. There is little that the City can do to prevent a landowner from constructing a building that far exceeds the minimum setback, even though buildings that are set back far from the street may not be consistent with the City's vision for a particular area.

In a downtown area, it is critically important that buildings have the correct relationship with the street. Much like walls for the edges of a room, buildings serve to form the edges of a street. The enclosure ratio is the ratio of building height to the distance between buildings. For instance, if you have 25-foot tall buildings on both sides of the road, and the front of those buildings are 75 feet apart, the enclosure ratio is 25:75, or 1:3.

The feeling of enclosure created by this height-width ratio of a space is related to the physiology of the human eye, and if the width of a public space is such that the cone of vision the enclosure ratio is too large. As a general rule, a greater sense of place is created with the enclosure ratio is tighter. In fact, enclosed shopping malls are very precisely designed to create proper enclosure ratios.

For an example of the impact of enclosure ratios, refer to the following illustrations of the same intersection. The image on the left shows the intersection without significant buildings at the street, while the image on the right shows the intersection with buildings located at the street to define the street space. This is an example of how important building location and mass is in creating a sense of enclosure and place.



Poor Spatial Enclosure at Intersection



Strong Spatial Enclosure at Intersection

Creating Spatial Enclosure

Spatial enclosure is created by requiring that buildings be located close to the street. For an example of how spatial enclosure is created, refer to the figure ground illustrations on page 45. Figure Ground 1 illustrates how buildings are located close to the street in the downtown area while Figure Ground 2 illustrates how buildings are located far from the street along West Main Street.

Build-To Zones and Building Frontage

The zoning ordinances can require the creation of spatial enclosure by requiring that new development in the Downtown and Downtown Edge areas comply with build-to zones. Build-to zones are a common zoning tool used for urban areas that establish a minimum and a maximum setback. The front building wall of new buildings must be located within the build-to zone, which creates a continuous building wall near the street.

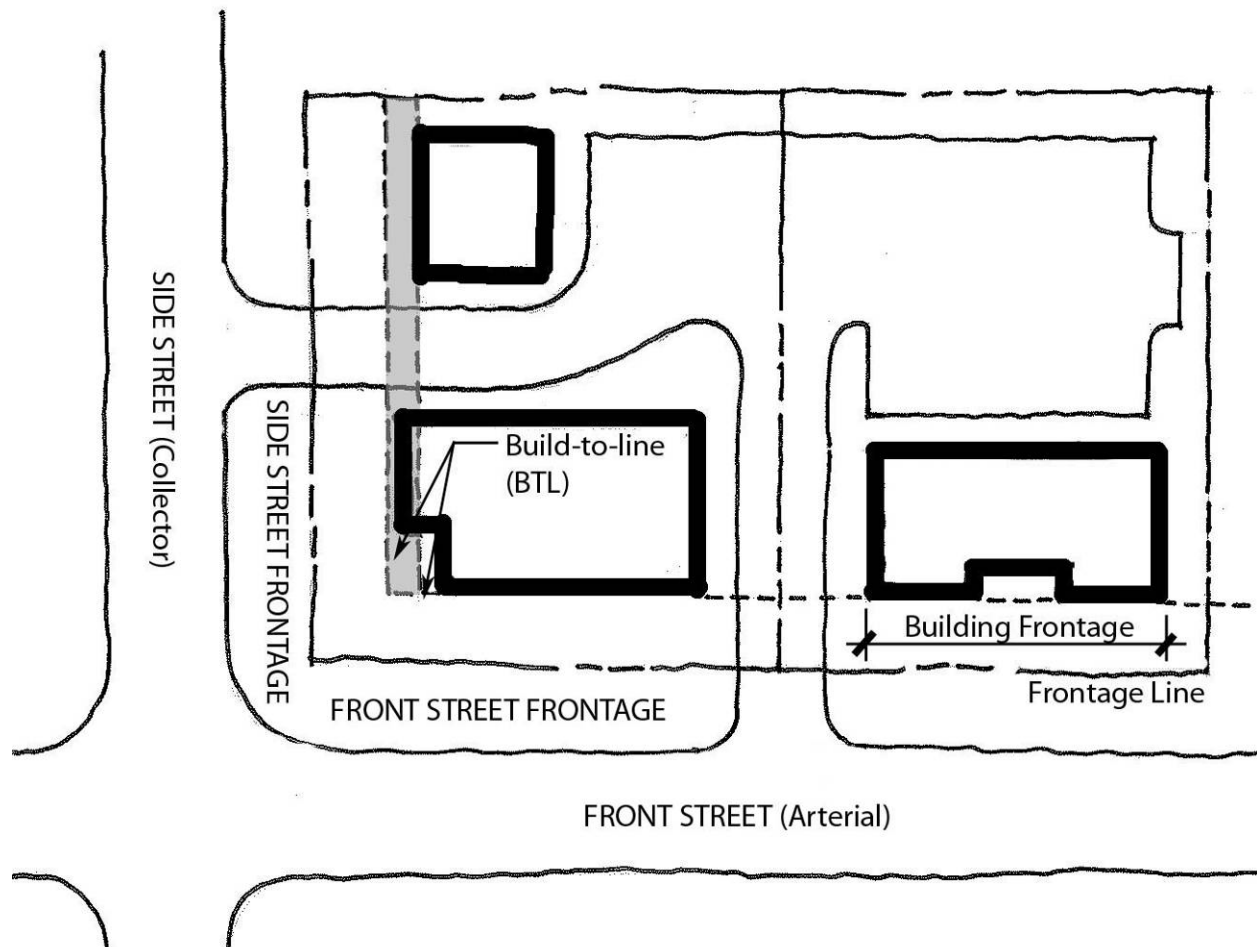
In order to create a continuous streetwall, a minimum percentage of a lot's width should have a building located within the build-to zone – this is the building frontage percentage. For instance, if there is a 100-foot wide lot that contains an 80 foot wide building within the build-to zone, the lot has 80% building frontage. Higher building frontage percentages create a continuous streetwall to frame a street. Higher building frontage requirements are important because they eliminate the creation of large gaps in the streetwall, which can eliminate a sense of enclosure.

The table on the following page sets forth recommended minimum and maximum front setbacks and frontage requirements for the Downtown and Downtown Edge areas, while the illustration demonstrates the build-to zone and building frontage.

RECOMMENDED BUILDING PLACEMENT STANDARDS

	Downtown Edge	Downtown
Minimum Front Yard Setback:	5 ft.	0 ft.
Maximum Front Yard Setback:	10 ft.	5 ft.
Minimum Building Frontage:	60%	80%
Lot Coverage:	30% - 70%	60% - 100%
Building Height:	2-3 stories	2-6 stories

BUILD-TO ZONE and BUILDING FRONTAGE

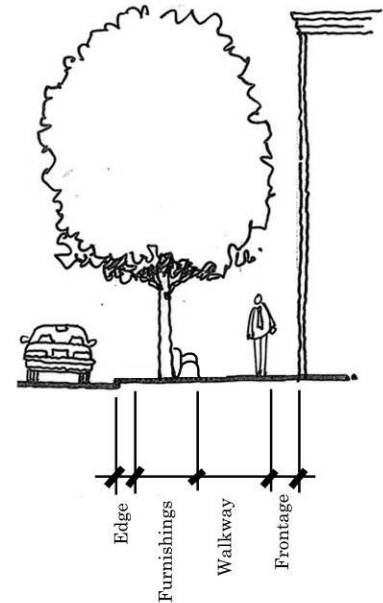


Building Height

- Buildings in the Downtown Edge area should be permitted by right to have a maximum height of 2 stories; however, building heights of 3 stories may be appropriate in some locations that are located at least 150 feet away from any single family residential neighborhood.
- Buildings in the Downtown area should be permitted by right to have a maximum height of 4 stories, however, buildings with a height of 6 feet may be appropriate in the downtown area along main street between Broadway and Washington Streets.

Sidewalk Width

- The minimum sidewalk width in the Downtown Edge area should be 6 feet, with the ideal sidewalk width being 10 feet.
- The minimum sidewalk width in the Downtown area should be 8 feet, with the ideal sidewalk width being 12-16 feet.
- The sidewalk area can be divided into four zones, the edge, furnishings, walkway, and frontage zones.
 - The edge zone serves to allow enough space to open the door of a car parked on the street and should be 1.5 feet wide.
 - The furnishings zone accommodates streetscape improvements such as street trees, benches, bike racks, outdoor seating for restaurants, etc. The furnishings zone should be 4-8 feet wide.
 - The walkway zone is the clear pedestrian travel area and should have a minimum width of 6 feet.
 - The frontage zone provides area for window shopping and sometimes an clear area for outward-swinging doors. The frontage zone should have a minimum width of 2 feet.
- Not all sidewalk zones need be provided, however the edge and walkway zones are important and should be provided on all sidewalks.
- Street trees should be planted along all sidewalks in tree grates in the Downtown Edge and Downtown areas.



Building Design

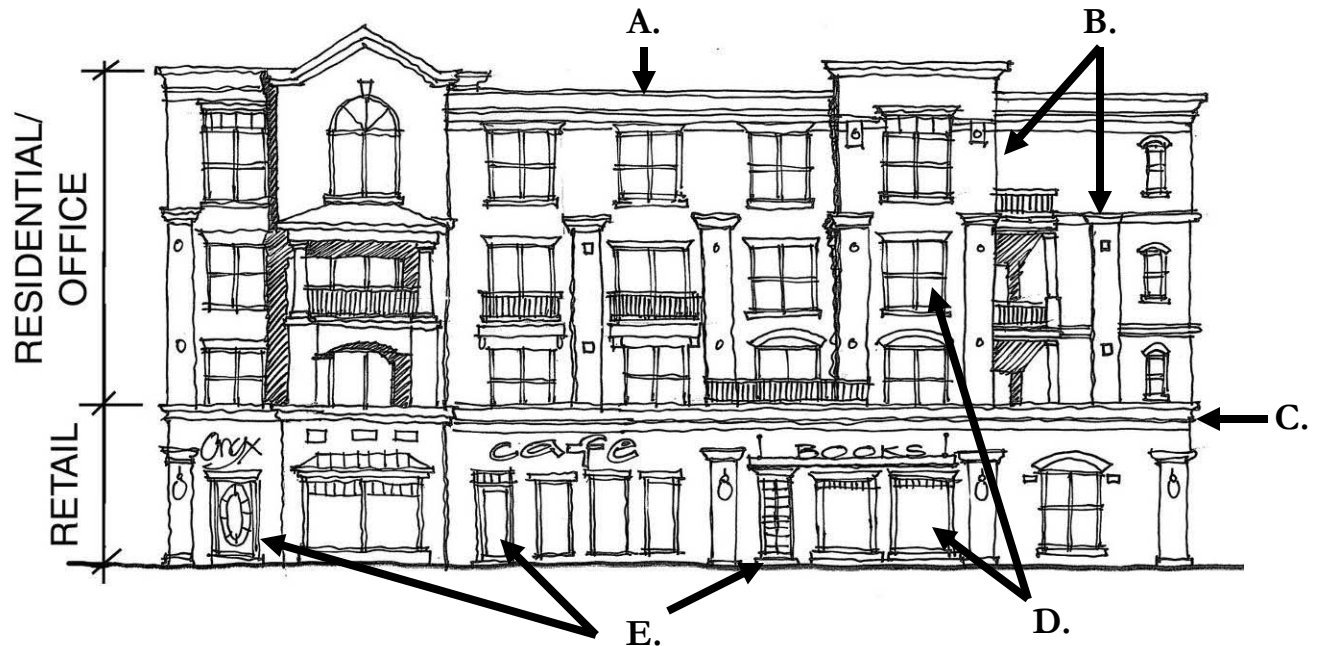
These following building design recommendations are intended to require a minimum level of design in new buildings, but are not intended to serve as architectural standards. It is not the intent of these guidelines to require a unified architectural theme in the City or to dictate architectural choices in a development, although consistent architecture can help create coherence in a place.

These guidelines are intended to be flexible and to permit a wide range of architectural themes and choices that incorporate quality design and materials.

- Entrances and Windows. Buildings should be designed with at least one pedestrian entrance facing a perimeter or internal street, or a pedestrian walkway connected to a public sidewalk. When a building has frontage on more than one street, it should have an entrance on each frontage or at the corner of the building. Buildings should also have a high degree of the front façade area dedicated to windows. This increases the transparency of the building and creates both visual interest for passing pedestrians, but also results in “eyes on the street,” increasing personal safety and a feeling of security for pedestrians in the Downtown and Downtown Edge area.
- Articulation. Long stretches of unarticulated wall are to be avoided. Projections, recesses and reveals with a minimum change of plane of 6 inches should be provided at regular intervals along the building frontage, typically dividing the building into bays that are not more than 30-40 feet in width. Human scale detailing such as reveals, belt courses, recessed windows or doors, color or textural differences, or strongly expressed mullions are also encouraged.
- Visual Interest. New buildings should create visual interest in ways that are compatible with the architectural character of the surrounding area. This may be accomplished through the use of similar or consistent rooflines, materials, colors, windows, or other architectural details.
- Roofline. A well-defined cornice or fascia should be used to create a strong roofline, which visually “caps” the building, gives the facade a finished appearance, and helps to unify buildings within a block.
- Blank Building Facades. Monotony of design, including long and blank building facades should be avoided. Single story buildings with high rooflines should include vertical elements and design details on the upper portion of the façade.
- First Floor Definition. First floors should be defined and articulated by architectural elements such as building materials and colors or horizontal elements to define the transition between the first and second floor.
- Use and Building Character. Buildings in the Downtown area should have a traditional main-street character, and may not have residential uses on the first floor, but may have residential uses on upper stories. Buildings in the Downtown Edge area should not include retail commercial land uses, but may contain office and residential uses. Residential land uses should be permitted on the first floor in the Downtown Edge area, however, if a

building contains both office and residential land uses in the Downtown Edge, office uses may not be located above or on the same floor as residential uses.

The following annotated illustration visually depicts many of the building design recommendations presented on the preceding page.



- A. Roofline highlighted by a heavy cornice line.
- B. Façade articulation and detailing used to break up the mass of the building.
- C. Horizontal expression line used to separate first and second floors.
- D. Many windows create a high degree of transparency on the front building façade.
- E. Primary building entrances face onto the sidewalk. Secondary entrances can also be provided on the rear of the building.

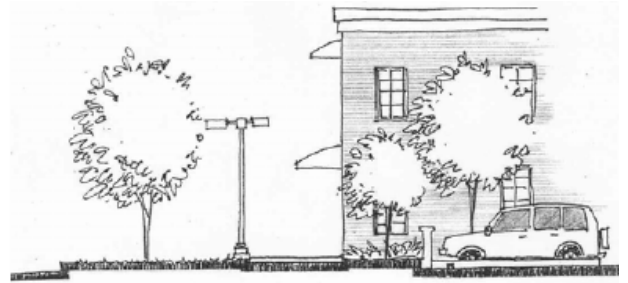
Parking

Parking presents one of the most difficult management challenges in a downtown area. Surface parking requirements can make parking one of the largest consumers of land in a development, which can result in significant design impacts on the overall layout and image of the City. Parking placement, quantity, and access must be convenient and meet the needs of all of the nearby uses, but it must not dominate the design of the downtown.

The purpose of the parking design guidelines is to ensure that the location and layout of off-street parking balance the needs of pedestrians with the use of the automobile in the downtown. The location and layout of parking areas should support the pedestrian environment while providing efficient and convenient automobile access and circulation.

- Location. Parking should be located in the rear of buildings or along side streets that intersect with East Main Street. In no case should any off-street parking space be located within 60 feet of East Main Street. On street parking should be permitted on both sides of all streets in the Downtown and Downtown Edge areas. The illustration on page 36 shows the recommended location for off-street parking within the Downtown and Downtown Edge areas.

- Parking Lot Street Frontage. When a parking lot is proposed adjacent to a street, a separation should be provided between the edge of the street pavement and the edge of the parking lot pavement. The frontage should consist of a buffer zone with a minimum width of 6 feet incorporating a low brick wall with landscaping planted between the wall and the sidewalk. The wall should have a high enough height to shield the headlights of parked cars from shining onto adjacent streets.



Parking Lot Street Frontage

- Minimum parking requirements. The City should examine the parking requirements for the Downtown and Downtown Edge areas. In some cases minimum parking requirements could be eliminated or greatly reduced, particularly where municipal parking lots are provided. The City could also consider requiring new development in the downtown area to pay into a parking fund in lieu of each use being required to provide off-street parking for itself. The City could then use the parking fund to construct or maintain City parking lots or structures.
- Parking Structures. While parking structures are not anticipated to be necessary in Lowell in the foreseeable future, the following design guidelines for parking structures are offered in case a parking structure is necessary or proposed. Parking structures should be decorative in nature to ensure that parking structures enhance the overall appearance of the City. Flat or unarticulated walls are to be avoided; instead, parking structures should be similar in appearance, design and scale to adjacent buildings. The ground floor of parking structures that are adjacent to a street should be designed to incorporate uses permitted in the vicinity.

GREEN DEVELOPMENT

The built environment has a profound impact on our natural environment, economy, health and productivity. For instance, the U.S. Green Building Council reports that in the United States buildings account for 36% of total energy use, 65% of total electricity consumption, 30% of greenhouse gas emissions, 30% of raw materials use, 30% of waste output (136 million tons annually), and 12% of potable water consumption.

“Green Development” refers to environmentally friendly and energy efficient site and building design. Breakthroughs in building science, technology and operations are available to designers, builders and owners who want to build green and maximize both economic and environmental performance.

Environmental benefits include the use of less electricity, the reduction of solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and the conservation of natural resources, while economic benefits include reduced operating costs, reduced strain on local infrastructure, increased employee satisfaction and performance, and increased life-cycle economic performance, and increased sales at retail stores.

In summary, green buildings typically require a small additional cost (estimated to be 1-5%) to construct when compared to conventional construction, however, green buildings are less costly to operate and maintain, are energy- and water-efficient, have higher lease-up rates than conventional buildings in their markets, and are a physical demonstration of the values of the organizations that own and occupy them.

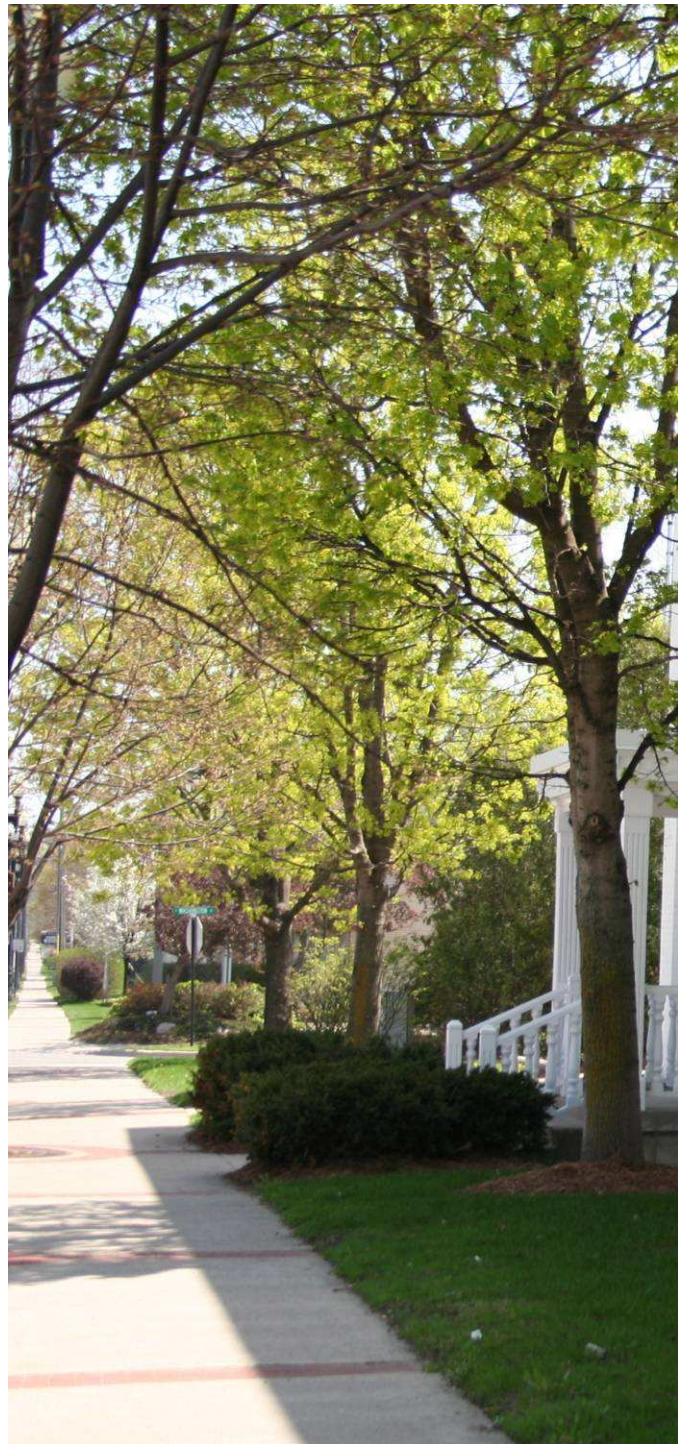
The United States Green Building Council sponsors the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating systems. While LEED systems are not the only green building rating systems, the LEED standards are the best known benchmarking systems for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. Specific LEED programs include:

- New commercial construction (LEED-NC)
- Core and shell development (LEED-SC)
- Homes (LEED-H)
- Schools (LEED-S)

The City should encourage new construction in the City to become LEED certified using the appropriate rating system. LEED compliance can also be incentivized in the form of small density or height bonuses that may be granted by the City in exchange for a project receiving LEED certification.

Chapter 5

Implementation



INTRODUCTION

The master plan represents the vision for the future of the City of Lowell – a vision to preserve and enhance the best existing characteristics of the City while making the most of opportunities that come with new development. The Plan in itself is a vision and provides goals and objectives that will guide decision-makers and stakeholders in making decisions that are consistent with the overall vision. Successful implementation of the Plan will be the result of actions taken by elected and appointed officials, City staff, public sector agencies, and private developers, citizens and organizations.

This chapter identifies and describes actions and tools available to implement the vision created in this master plan. Broadly stated, the Plan will be implemented through:

- Regulations and ordinances.
- Continuous planning actions by the City Council, Planning Commission, and other appointed boards.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CITY REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES

Land development review and regulation is a key implementation tool to achieve the vision of the master plan. In order to realize that vision, the City must ensure that ordinances and regulations permit the type and style of development recommended by the master plan, and discourage or prohibit development that is contrary to the master plan's vision.

A comprehensive review of the City's ordinances, particularly the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Control Ordinance, is necessary to determine the scope of amendments necessary to achieve the goals of the master plan.

1. **Zoning Ordinance Amendments.** A variety of zoning tools exist to achieve the vision of this plan, however, some amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will need to be adopted in order to permit development to occur in the envisioned manner.

Adopt New Downtown Zoning Standards. A minimum of two new zoning districts corresponding to the Downtown and Downtown Edge future land use categories should be adopted to ensure that new development in the downtown area matches the recommendations of this plan. The City's existing zoning ordinance requires suburban-style

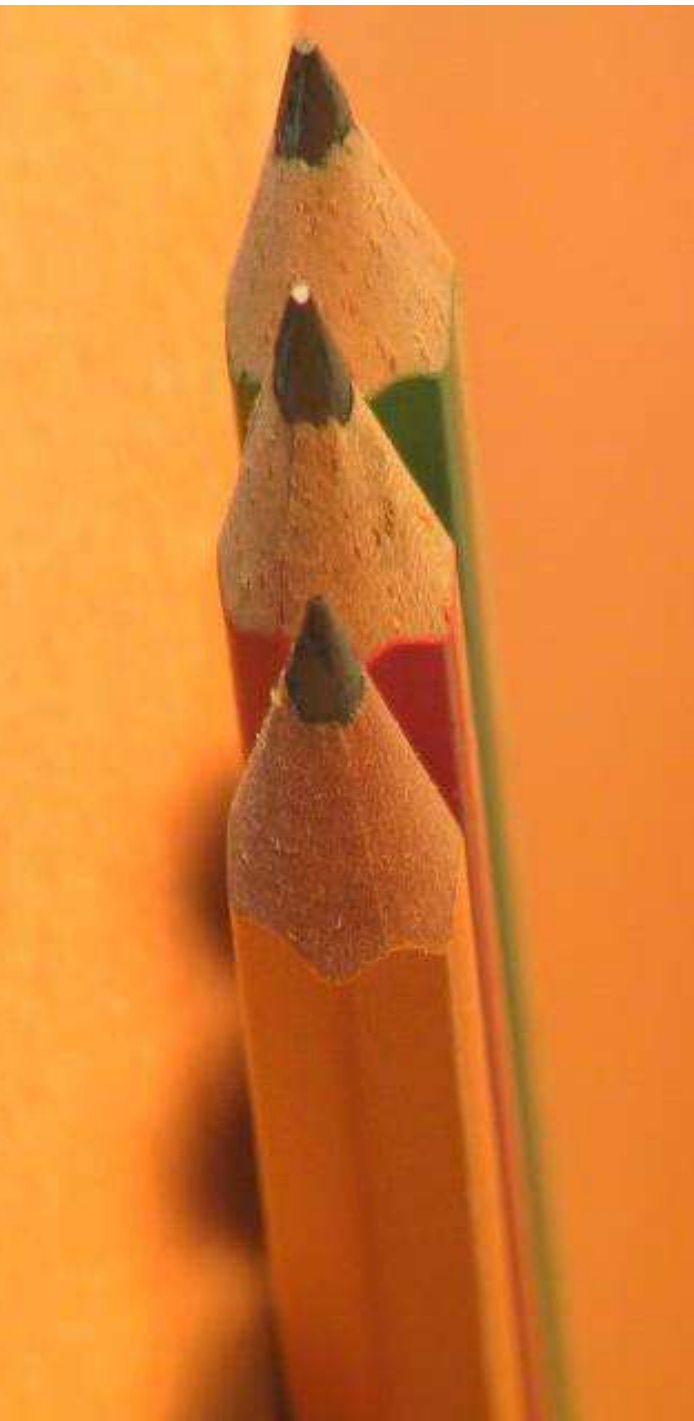
development with large setbacks and an automotive character for a large portion of the downtown area. The new zoning standards should incorporate the design guidelines set forth in Chapter 4.

- a. *Mixed-Use Zoning District.* It will be necessary to adopt a new Mixed-Use zoning district to permit development to occur in accordance with the recommendations of this Plan. The mixed-use standards should be based on the recommendations contained in Chapter 4.
 - b. *Landscaping, Parking, and Lighting.* The City should revise the landscaping, parking and lighting standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate up-to-date standards that better reflect the City's existing and planned character.
 - c. *Green Building Incentives.* The City should incorporate incentives in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage new construction to be LEED certified.
2. **Revise the Subdivision Control Ordinance and Condominium Ordinances.** The City should revise its subdivision control ordinance to reflect the neighborhood design principles reflected in Chapter 4. Elements that could be added to the subdivision control ordinance include flexible lot size regulations that would encourage the creation of park space, physical design standards that encourage traditional neighborhood style development, and natural features protection measures.
 3. **Conditional Rezoning.** Public Act 579 of 2004 allows for the conditional rezoning of property based upon a proposal presented by an applicant. This approach permits the City to approve a rezoning contingent upon conditions offered by the applicant that are attached to the rezoning approval. This approach can permit flexibility in site design, and also can be used to ensure that undesirable uses will not occur on a particular site if rezoned. If this is a tool that the City intends to consider, a conditional rezoning ordinance should be adopted establishing the review procedures and submittal requirements for a rezoning with conditions application.

CONTINUOUS PLANNING

1. The master plan is not intended to be and should not become a static document. For this reason, it is imperative that the Planning Commission periodically **review the master plan** to evaluate, and potentially update portions of it. The plan should be reviewed at least once every three to five years to determine if updates or amendments are necessary.
2. The City should **adopt a Sanitary Sewer master plan** to make sure that future infrastructure investments are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. As part of a sanitary sewer master plan, the City could work to establish an urban services boundary, which would encourage new development to locate within the City.
3. In order to qualify for State funding for parks and recreation improvements, the City must **review and update the Parks and Recreation Plan** at least once every 5 years.

Appendix



Community Input Survey Results

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

1. How Old Are You?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
0-17	0	0%
18-24	7	2%
25-44	91	31%
45-64	127	43%
65-84	60	20%
85+	9	3%

2. What is your Gender?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Male	165	57%
Female	126	43%

3. Which of the following best describes your home in the City of Lowell?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Single Family	270	92%
Townhouse	2	1%
Apartment	6	2%
Duplex	4	1%
Manufactured Home	5	2%
Other	5	2%

4. Do you own or rent your home?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Own	290	99%
Rent	4	1%

5. How many years have you lived in Lowell?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
0-5	56	19%
6-10	37	13%
11-20	52	18%
20+	147	50%

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

6. Where did you live before moving to your current address?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Another home in Lowell	93	33%
Elsewhere in Kent County	119	43%
Another county in Michigan	49	18%
Another State	19	7%

7. Are you currently involved in any city, school, or charitable organization?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	130	46%
No	151	54%

8. Please circle the top 3 community qualities that were important when you decided to move to/live in the City of Lowell

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Small town character	183	62.2%
Quality of schools	136	46.3%
Family nearby	106	36.1%
Rivers, trees and other natural features	80	27.2%
Low crime rate	68	23.1%
Housing prices reasonable	61	20.7%
Job	57	19.4%
Quality of neighborhoods	42	14.3%
Availability of housing	31	10.5%
Church	30	10.2%
Good air and water quality	16	5.4%
Parks and recreation facilities	14	4.8%
Sense of independence from Grand Rapids	14	4.8%
Other	0	0.0%

9. How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Agree ← → Disagree </div>					<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>			
I feel safe in my neighborhood	126	129	20	10	4	1.7439	2	2
I am proud to say that I live in the City of Lowell	142	94	44	7	2	1.7301	2	1
Lowell has a strong historical character and buildings that	141	87	43	13	5	1.8028	2	1
Development is acceptable if the City keeps its small town	93	132	38	17	10	2.031	2	2
City should carefully control the rate and location of growth	91	126	47	14	10	2.0486	2	2
Development should be allowed only if adequate services are	102	114	48	16	9	2.0173	2	2
Growth and development are not a problem as long as natural	92	123	51	17	8	2.0584	2	2
I have a strong sense of belonging in Lowell	92	102	71	14	9	2.1181	2	2
I will still live in the City even if present rate of growth continues	67	127	60	20	13	2.2509	2	2
	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Agree ← → Disagree </div>							

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
Commercial and industrial development should be encouraged in the City as long as residential areas are not	78	115	58	24	15	2.2517	2	2
Lowell is the best place I have ever lived	85	97	70	22	16	2.2655	2	2
The people in my neighborhood look out for each other	58	118	78	24	11	2.3862	2	2
Commercial/industrial development is necessary to keep my taxes reasonable	74	90	80	27	15	2.3671	2	2
I am concerned about residential growth in nearby areas	62	76	91	41	21	2.5979	3	3
Lowell should encourage more industrial/commercial uses	50	76	86	42	36	2.7862	3	3
New development will cause the City to lose small town character	51	75	82	67	14	2.7163	3	3
I am concerned about commercial/industrial growth in nearby	41	72	97	56	22	2.8125	3	3
Noise is a problem in my neighborhood	35	56	48	90	60	3.2907	4	4
New industrial development should be kept out of the City	41	50	93	66	41	3.055	3	3
New commercial development should be kept out of the City	24	41	87	81	57	3.3655	3	3

10. What kind of development should the City attract?

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
New residential growth only	2	0.7%
A mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial, with an emphasis on residential	57	19.9%
A balance of residential, commercial, and industrial	144	50.2%
A mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial, with an emphasis on commercial and industrial	22	7.7%
Commercial and industrial uses	27	9.4%
Lowell should not try to attract any new development	35	12.2%

11. How important is each of the following features for the City of Lowell?

	Very				Not			
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
Trees	185	77	24	3	0	1.4637	1	1
My neighborhood	159	103	24	3	0	1.5536	1	1
Schools	222	40	25	1	2	1.3483	1	1
Downtown	145	112	28	3	2	1.6379	1.5	1
Parks and open spaces	168	87	29	3	2	1.5606	1	1
Rivers	181	73	32	3	0	1.5052	1	1
Historic buildings	129	102	43	7	9	1.8448	2	1
City Government	106	109	57	10	8	1.9828	2	2
Showboat	91	81	75	21	21	2.308	2	1
Industries	71	98	97	20	4	2.269	2	2
Commercial areas west of downtown	57	101	103	17	9	2.3728	2	3
Other	36	5	4	1	1	1.4255	1	1

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

12. How much of a problem are the following conditions?

	Significant ←————→ Not							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
Traffic on West Main Street	48	102	68	38	34	2.6828	2	2
Lack of sidewalks and bike paths	51	84	60	41	55	2.8797	3	2
Traffic on East Main Street	39	95	74	39	43	2.8345	3	2
Condition of my or city streets	40	84	48	48	70	3.0828	3	2
Traffic safety on my or city streets	49	71	73	45	52	2.931	3	3
Condition of sidewalks	27	76	59	57	66	3.207	3	2
Congestion on my or city streets	36	59	68	54	72	3.2318	3	5
On-street parking in my neighborhood	27	45	63	43	111	3.5744	4	5
Lack of enough bridges across rivers	27	40	72	43	106	3.559	4	5
Lack of public bus service	19	33	87	44	103	3.6341	4	5
Timeliness of snow removal	18	32	54	65	119	3.816	4	5
Signs in commercial areas west of downtown	8	38	104	38	98	3.6376	3	3

13. Housing in Lowell - do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree ←————→ Disagree							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
There are a broad range of housing types available	88	150	28	18	2	1.9371	2	2
The homes in my neighborhood are well kept	72	115	58	31	6	2.234	2	2
Families can find affordable homes in Lowell	57	114	63	28	22	2.4507	2	2
My home is assessed in a fair and equal manner	20	110	89	40	24	2.7809	3	2
I plan to make improvements to my house within the near future	50	70	84	34	45	2.8375	3	3

14. Should the City of Lowell have more, about the same, or fewer of the following housing types?

	<u>More</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Fewer</u>	<u>No Opinio n</u>
Affordable single family homes	113	125	23	19
Senior citizen housing	112	120	20	27
Single family detached homes on large lots	79	127	35	42
Housing for lower income families	44	100	97	36
Single family detached homes on small lots	35	109	89	46
Attached single family homes	28	109	79	58
Apartments	17	98	126	36

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

15. Downtown Lowell. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Agree ← → Disagree </div>					<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>			
The downtown is well kept and clean	118	139	20	8	0	1.7123	2	2
Downtown merchants are considerate and helpful	122	122	31	7	2	1.75	2	2
I can usually find a parking space in downtown	96	133	24	26	5	1.9824	2	2
The quality of downtown stores is good	74	142	51	15	3	2.0561	2	2
I like to shop in downtown Lowell	78	115	63	17	10	2.1731	2	2
Downtown store hours are convenient	39	116	72	41	15	2.5654	2	2
I am concerned about growth in nearby areas affecting Lowell	61	61	94	47	22	2.6772	3	3
The selection of goods downtown is adequate for my needs	35	85	73	67	25	2.8667	3	2

16. Recreation Opportunities. Circle as many of the following recreational opportunities that are important to you.

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Hiking, walking, nature trails	189	64%
Sidewalks, bike paths	187	64%
Indoor swimming pool	134	46%
Picnic areas	117	40%
Playground, tot lots	106	36%
Community/youth center	103	35%
Ball fields	83	28%
Outdoor ice rink	81	28%
Organized recreational activities	75	26%
Tennis courts	57	19%
Skate/BMX park	56	19%
Off-leash dog park	56	19%
Cross-country skiing trails	47	16%
Soccer fields	42	14%
Basketball courts	41	14%
Volleyball courts	31	11%
Other	1	0%

17. Recreation Facilities Use. How often do you or a member of your family use the following?

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Often ← → Never </div>					<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>			
City parks	60	67	99	34	22	2.6135	3	3
Picnic areas	15	54	106	55	51	3.2598	3	3
Softball fields	16	18	43	74	129	4.0071	4	5
Leisure classes	4	13	46	78	138	4.1935	4	5
School gymnasium (evenings/weekends)	7	9	38	54	172	4.3393	5	5

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

18. Recreation and Public Facilities. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Agree ← → Disagree </div>					<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>			
City parks are well-maintained	75	149	46	7	2	1.9677	2	2
Parks are in locations convenient to me	88	132	52	6	3	1.9466	2	2
The Showboat should be kept as a City landmark	135	54	65	13	17	2.0246	2	1
City parks have the activities and facilities that I like to use	29	94	119	22	14	2.6331	3	3
The City of Lowell should sponsor organized recreation programs	45	62	122	28	22	2.7133	3	3
A Recreational Vehicle park facility would be a good addition for the City	46	60	87	33	54	2.9607	3	3
The City should build and maintain an all-purpose community building for recreation, meetings, etc.	42	51	97	45	41	2.971	3	3
There are adequate recreational opportunities for teenagers in the City	18	36	102	76	48	3.3571	3	3
The Showboat should be removed	16	10	68	51	135	3.9964	4	5

19. Public Services and Government. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Agree ← → Disagree </div>					<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>			
City personnel have treated me fairly and efficiently	74	109	70	18	5	2.1703	2	2
A City newsletter would be a valuable source of information	52	109	74	29	17	2.4662	2	2
City should improve planning/coordination with adjacent communities	47	91	117	12	10	2.4477	3	3
The City should be more aggressive in enforcing the Zoning Ordinance	38	58	142	26	15	2.7204	3	3
Zoning enforcement should remain complaint driven	24	61	109	54	29	3.0108	3	3
I watch cable TV broadcasts of city meetings	19	65	70	52	73	3.3405	3	5
I feel my interests are represented by the City Council	20	62	133	48	17	2.9286	3	3
I would volunteer my time to help in organized City projects	15	66	120	37	39	3.0686	3	3
I watch cable TV broadcasts of School Board meetings	12	48	61	64	90	3.6255	4	5
I would like to become more involved in City government	6	34	140	53	46	3.3548	3	3
The City should hire a full-time Zoning Enforcement Officer	11	20	126	61	59	3.4946	3	3

20. Quality of Public Services. In your opinion, what is the quality of the following public services?

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> Excellent ← → Poor </div>					<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>			
Library services	136	113	22	2	13	1.7517	2	1
Police protection	103	144	28	5	7	1.8467	2	2
Fire protection	98	136	28	3	21	1.9965	2	2
Electric services	93	128	44	18	3	1.986	2	2
Park maintenance	87	151	38	2	9	1.9373	2	2

City of Lowell Community Input Survey Results

	<div> <div>Excellent</div> <div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> </div> <div>Poor</div> </div>					Don't Know		
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
Snow plowing	81	152	42	6	3	1.9366	2	2
Emergency medical services	79	107	40	8	51	2.4561	2	2
Street lighting	72	141	54	14	4	2.0772	2	2
Trash collection	72	129	56	16	13	2.1923	2	2
Public water	62	127	41	34	21	2.386	2	2
Public sewer	59	113	48	37	29	2.5245	2	2
Street/sidewalk maintenance	42	128	75	34	6	2.4175	2	2
Cable TV	25	82	68	65	43	3.0671	3	2
Building inspections	25	70	89	10	87	3.2278	3	3
Property assessment	9	65	102	57	48	3.2491	3	3

21. Financial Support. Please indicate if you would support an additional millage for the following services?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Police protection	119	40.5%	147	50.0%
Fire protection	116	39.5%	151	51.4%
Road maintenance and repair	96	32.7%	169	57.5%
Street/sidewalk maintenance	84	28.6%	181	61.6%
Recreation improvements	83	28.2%	180	61.2%
Park maintenance	67	22.8%	194	66.0%

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